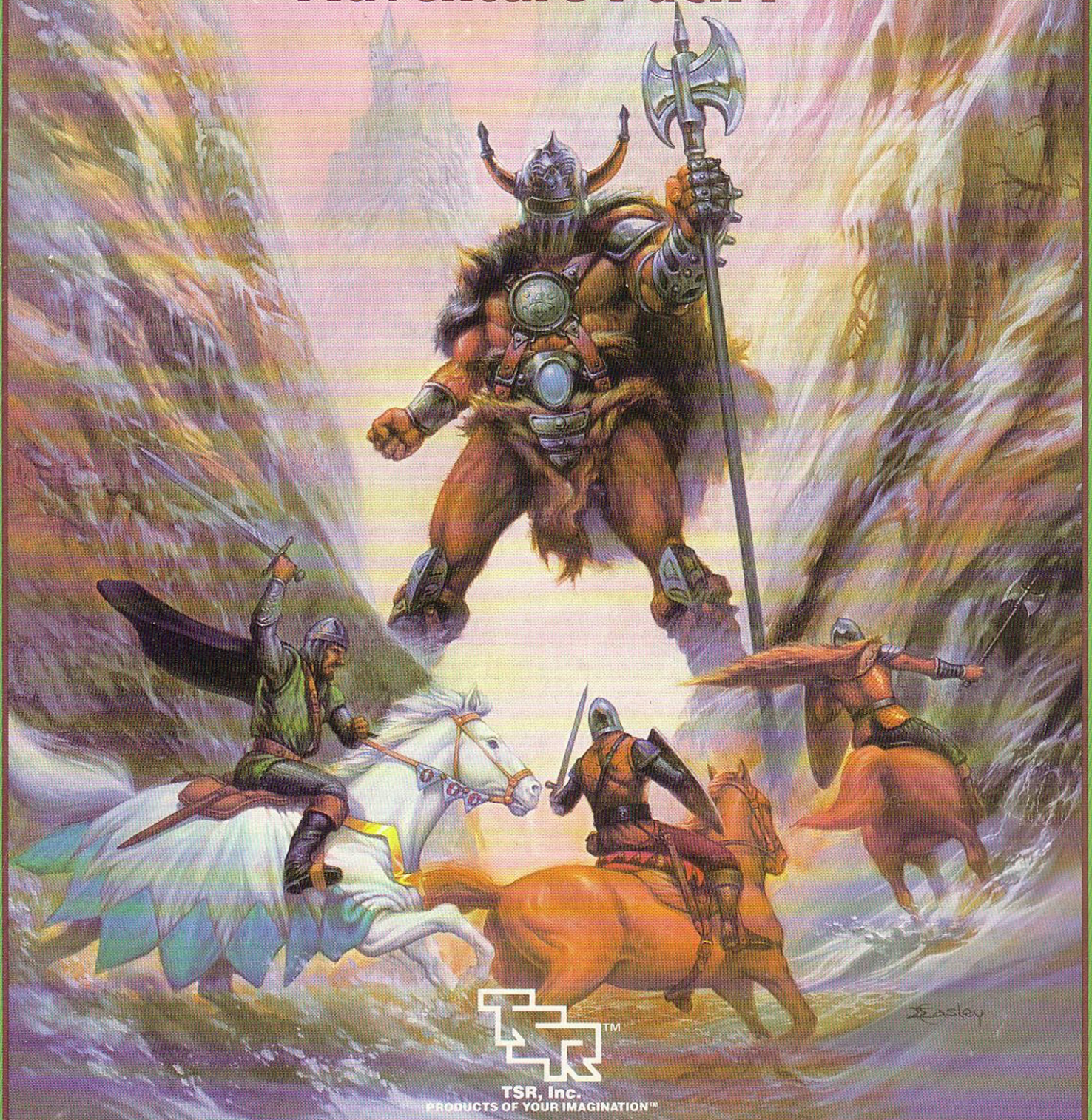


# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

Official Game Accessory

## Adventure Pack I



# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons

OFFICIAL GAME ACCESSORY



# ADVENTURE PACK I

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This book provides the referee with a series of pregenerated adventures for use in AD&D games. Each mini-module is a stand-alone scenario, suitable for incorporation into an on-going campaign or for one-time play as a unique adventure. The modules are brief, and can be easily used with a minimum of preparation by the referee.

## How This Book Is Arranged

The modules in this book are arranged alphabetically. A brief notation about plot content is included in the Table of Contents. The adventure- are also indexed by length, difficulty level, and, where applicable, by terrain (see *Adventure Index* table.)

## Module Format

Each mini-module in *Adventure Pack I* is presented in several sections. The referee should be thoroughly familiar with this material before playing an adventure. Modules are generally presented as follows.

The *introductory paragraphs* of each module indicate the level of difficulty and recommended number of characters for each adventure. If the group playing the adventure is more or less powerful than the level and characters for which the adventure was designed, adjustments can be made to alter the level of difficulty. To adjust the encounter difficulty downward for a weaker party, the referee may reduce the monster hit points and/or decrease the damage done by traps. If the adventure must be made tougher for a more experienced party, increasing the number of creatures encountered can raise the difficulty level to where it should be. In both of these cases, a modification to the X.P. awarded for monsters should be made.

The heading *DM's Information* is used to present set-up and background information, plot synopsis, and other material of interest to the referee. Where there is little information solely for the DM, or where the material is scattered throughout the module, the heading is omitted.

The *Adventure* designates the end of introductory and background material and marks the beginning of the game itself. Where encounters are handled separately from the bulk of the text, this information is marked with the heading *Encounter Key*. These major divisions are found throughout *Adventure Pack I*, and will help the referee to quickly locate the needed material.

## Terms Used in

## Adventure Pack I

There is a set of fairly standard terms used throughout the text of this work that are defined here. Every DM should be familiar with these terms.

When a new monster is introduced in an adventure, its statistics are given in the following paragraph so that the DM will not have to thumb through the book looking for the creature's statistics.

ST: Strength is a measure of muscle power and is also a factor in extra hitting and damaging abilities.

Strength Score	To Hit Damage		
	Adj.	Adj.	Doors
3	-3	-1	1
4-5	-2	-1	1
6-7	-1	None	1
8-9	None	None	1-2
10-11	None	None	1-2
12-13	None	None	1-2
14-15	None	None	1-2
16	None	+1	1-3
17	+1	+1	1-3
18	+1	+2	1-3
18(01-50%)	+1	+3	1-3
18(51-75%)	+2	+3	1-4
18(76-90%)	+2	+4	1-4
18(91-99%)	+2	+5	1-4(1)
18(100%)	+3	+6	1-5(2)
19	+3	+7	7in8(3)

IN: Intelligence represents the reasoning and learning abilities of a character or creature.

## Intelligence

Rating	Represents
0	Non-intelligent or unrateable
1	Animal intelligence
2-4	Semi-intelligent
5-7	Low intelligence
8-10	Average (human) intelligence
11-12	Very intelligent
13-14	Highly intelligent
15-16	Exceptionally intelligent
17-18	Genius-level intelligence
19-20	Supra-genius
21+	Godlike intelligence

WS: Wisdom is a combination of a character's judgment, will power, and intuitiveness.

DX: Dexterity deals with a number of physical attributes, from eye-hand coordination to speed of movement.

Dexterity Score	Attack	Defensive
	Adj.	Adj.
3	-3	+4
4	-2	+3
5	-1	+2
6	0	+1
7	0	0
8	0	0
9	0	0
10	0	0
11	0	0
12	0	0
13	0	0
14	0	0
15	0	-1
16	+1	-2
17	+2	-3

## Adventure Index

Title	Author	Length*	Terrain
Blood and Laurels	Ray Winninger	M	Mountainous island
The Circus of Gandolfo	Warren Spector	M	Any
The House of Long Knives	Steve Perrin	M	City
The Lauros Road Bandits	Deborah Christian	S	Forested mountains or hills
Reign of Triumph	Anne Gray McCready	M	Hills; Farmland
Scavenger Hunt	Anne Brown	M	Mountainous island; Ocean
Sharla's Zoo	Rick Swan	M	Jungle
Steaks	Allen Varney	S	City; Mountainous or Any
Terror in Skytumble Tor	Paul Jaquays	S	Any
To Kill a Kraken	Scott Bennie	L	Ocean; Any
The Weird Woods of Baron Orchid	Harold Johnson	L	Forest

\* Length: L = Long, M = Medium, S = Short

Terrain type and player levels may be modified considerably; see specific adventures.



**CN:** Constitution encompasses the character's physique as it affects his resistance to **hardship**.

**CH:** Charisma is a combination of a character's persuasiveness and personal magnetism and is used if a character gets the chance to talk.

**CM:** Comeliness is a measure of a character's physical attractiveness, and can have a negative or positive influence on Charisma.

**AC:** Armor Class is a measure of how difficult it is to hit a creature. It reflects the type of protection worn or inherent protection a creature has due to its physical or magical nature or its speed.

**Move:** Movement represents the usual speed a monster is able to maintain for lengths of time. Short bursts of greater speed are possible. If more than one speed is listed, the monster can travel via two or more different methods.

- X" = ground speed
- /X" = flying speed
- //X" = swimming speed
- (X") = burrowing speed
- \*X" = climbing in a web
- @X" = climbing in trees

**HD:** Hit Dice are used to calculate the number of hit points a monster has. This number also determines the THAC0 of the creature (see below) and saves of a creature.

**hp:** Hit points is the amount of damage a creature can take before it is killed. Typical monsters have 1-8 hit points per Hit Die.

**#AT:** Number of attacks shows the number of physical attacks the creature is able to **make during a given** melee round. A listing such as 3/2 means a creature can attack three times every two melee rounds: i.e., one attack on the odd melee rounds, and two attacks on the even melee rounds.

**Dmg:** Damage per attack indicates the **hit point range** a creature can inflict after a successful strike.

**THAC0** This is an acronym for "To Hit Armor Class 0 (zero)." This gives the number that needs to be rolled on 1d20 for that being to hit Armor Class 0. To determine whether the attack hits another Armor Class, subtract the target's Armor Class number from the THAC0 to see what number needs to be rolled for a hit. If a creature with a THAC0 of 15 attacks a PC with an Armor Class of 4, the creature needs to roll an 11 (15 - 4) to hit. If the PC is Armor Class -3, however, the creature needs to roll an 18 (15 - 3) = 15 + 3).

This number eliminates the need to consult tables or keep charts tells you whether the attack hits. You will find that this calculation quickly becomes automatic.

**SA:** Special Attacks detail such things as dragon breath, magic use, and similar special abilities of creatures.

**SD:** Special Defenses detail things like defensive magic, camouflage abilities, etc., that must be factored into a fight with that type of creature.

**MR:** Magic Resistance is the percentage chance that a creature is able to ignore the effects of a spell cast at it.

**AL.** Alignment indicates the behavior of the monster, whether it is of good or evil intent.

**X.P.:** X.P. stands for *experience points*, the points awarded to characters for their defeat of monsters and winning of treasure. Recommended experience points to be awarded are included in some of the monster descriptions.

- gp: gold pieces
- cp: copper pieces
- sp: silver pieces
- ep: electrum pieces
- pp: platinum pieces

## Ability Checks

In an effort to simplify life for both players and DM's and to give a character's abilities the importance they deserve, recent TSR products have made use of a mechanism for resolving actions called the *Ability Check*.

When asked to make an Ability Check (e.g., a Wisdom Check, a Dexterity Check, etc.), roll 1d20 against the character's appropriate ability score. A roll equal to or less than the appropriate score means the action succeeded; a roll greater than the ability score indicates **failure, and the character** suffers whatever dire consequences await. Sometimes an Ability Check enables a character to avoid all or some of **the damage** from an attack. Some actions are especially easy or difficult and add bonuses or penalties to the ability score to reflect the level of difficulty.

The Ability Check is a wonderful mechanism for resolving the results of almost any action. The DM needs to decide which ability applies to the situation, whether there should be any modifiers due to circumstances, and then roll way.

## Saving Throw

A Saving Throw reflects the character's ability to avoid dire consequences based on his character class and experience level. The appropriate number is found on the *Dungeon Master's Guide* Saving Throw table- A 1d20 is rolled and any result equal **to or greater than the saving throw number** is successful. This type of roll is also referred to as a *save*, and when used includes the name of the saving throw column to roll under (e.g., "save against paralyzation").

## AD&D Rulebooks

Most of the modules in *Adventure Pack I* can be played with a minimum of AD&D rulebooks. The DM should have the *Dungeon Master's Guide* **and the Player's Handbook**; the *Monster Manual* is desirable as well, but not strictly necessary for all encounters, since monster statistics and behavior are outlined in the text. DM's will find the *Fiend Folio Tome*, *Monster Manual II*, and *Unearthed Arcana* helpful; *The Dungeoneer's* and *Wilderness Survival Guides* are optional, but may be used if desired.



This adventure has been specifically designed to allow easy integration into an ongoing campaign, and is short enough to be played to conclusion in one or two nights gaming. Although intended for a party of three to five adventurers of 5th to 7th level, it is possible to alter the events and encounters herein to provide a challenging adventure for almost any party.

The *Dungeon Master's Guide*, the *Player's Handbook*, *Monster Manuals I and II*, and the *Fiend Folio Tome* are necessary for play. *Unearthed Arcana*, *Legends and Lore*, and the *Dungeoneers* and *Wilderness Survival Guides* are not necessary, but may be used as desired.

## DM's Information

In *Blood and Laurels* the players compete in the Achean games described below. The winner of the games is entitled to one request of the Achean king. This provides a device to link the adventure to many campaigns. If the players are ever in need of a particular item or service, make it known that the Achean king possesses the item, or is capable of rendering the service, and relate to them the legend of the games given below. For example, suppose the players are told by a powerful wizard, whom they hired to help them construct a magical item, that a *wand of fire* is needed for the item's completion. The players can be involved in the adventure by passing along the ancient legends of the games, and of a peculiar flame-throwing wand that was possessed by an old Achean hero and is now rumored to be in the hands of the Achean king. By including exact dates with the legends, the players will be able to figure out that the games are coincidentally scheduled to take place in this same year. Now all they need do is find Achea, win the games, and request the item of the king—probably not as easy as it sounds. As another example, suppose the players' home territory is about to be overrun by orcs. Relate to the players the information about the games. In this case, they may decide to travel to Achea, win the games, and request that the King send Achean troops to support them in their struggle.

## The Myth of King Meleus

There are several methods you can use to relate the legend of the games to the players. An old sage or bard can tell the tale of the Achean games, for example, perhaps for a small fee. Another option is to have the players discover a

copy of "The Myth of Meleus and the Contest of Worthiness" in an ancient tome. If you choose this option you should photocopy the myth and allow the players to read it themselves. Reading aloud long passages to the players slows the game down considerably. The myth is as follows.

Long ago, in an age before the birth of our grandfathers' grandfathers, there was a wise old king name Meleus, who ruled over the distant island of Achea. In his younger days, Meleus was a great hero who scoured the land looking for heroic deeds to perform and foul beasts to vanquish. The good king's heroism brought prosperity to the people of Achea, and won him the favor of the goddess Athena, from whom he often asked advice. In the most famous of his many heroic outings, Meleus, with the advice of Athena, was able to best the dreaded gorgon, a hideous man-ox whose breath could turn a man to stone.

When Meleus was beginning to enter his fourth score of years, he began to grow weary of his kingly burden and resolved to groom Arymachus, his young son, to become his successor. Arymachus had the good fortune to inherit a very peaceful kingdom. Long ago Meleus had rid the island of most of its fierce monsters and aggressors, and the prosperity he brought to the land won the love of the people for both himself and his family. Achea had not been involved in a foreign war for almost twenty-five years, and the reverence of its inhabitants won the gods' favor, bringing them bountiful harvests and plentiful fishing waters.

On the day that Arymachus was to assume the throne, the people of Achea prepared a celebration like no other. there was a huge feast followed by the revelry and dancing of the townsfolk and a special sacrifice to Athena, Meleus patron. Late in the evening, after the Acheans were exhausted from their merry-making, the King finally took the rostrum and prepared to proclaim his son the next king of the land.

At that moment, the celebration was interrupted by a terrible tragedy. A foul gorgon, identical to the one slain decades before by Meleus himself, burst into the mead hall and promptly turned Arymachus and several of the king's own guard to stone. In a thundering voice the gorgon claimed to be the



son of the original gorgon felled by Meleus, and that he had been hiding in the deep catacombs outside the main city waiting for such an occasion and a chance to avenge his father's death. In further retribution he promised to continue to plague the people of Achea until Meleus had been dead for two hundred years, and then left unchallenged.

Meleus was gravely shaken by his son's death at the hands of this old enemy. He knew he could not rest until this gorgon was slain, his son avenged, and his people safe. Though eighty years old, the king picked up his sword and pilum. once again and tried to prepare to do combat with the beast. No matter how hard he strained, however, he just could not find the strength in his old bones for fight. In despair, he called upon Athena for advice.

He cried, "What am I to do in such dire straits? My people are again threatened by the menace of the gorgon, my son and only successor is dead, and every day I grow nearer and nearer to joining him. If Achea is to prosper again, Lady Fortune will have to be kind, indeed."

Athena answered him with the radiant splendor reserved for the gods themselves. "The answer is simple, my aged friend. You must find a champion, wise and true, Such a man could slay the gorgon and inherit your kingdom, bringing prosperity to your people."

"But tell me, great goddess, essence of wisdom where am I to find such a man? The Acheans are a peaceful people. None are bred for battle."



"Again, the solution is readily at hand. Announce throughout the land and **across the sea that you are** to hold a great contest of worthiness. The winner of such a contest will earn the right to call himself the most noble man in all the realms, and will be allowed to wear the laurel as a symbol of his chivalry. Such a noble creature would certainly be willing to relieve your people of the burden of the gorgon, and after he does so you can adopt him, allowing him to inherit your kingdom."

"An excellent proposal, milady, but I feel ill at ease putting my people in the hands of a total stranger."

"My dear Meleus," replied the goddess, "who better to rule over your precious subjects than the most noble man in the realms?"

"Very true. I shall see to it at once." With that, Meleus sent his criers to all the city-states of the realms, announcing Athena's contest. The competition attracted the bravest and worthiest heroes from all the lands, and Meleus put each and every one of them to the test. The process of selecting a winner was laborious, but at last only one competitor, Anatus, remained.

After winning the games, noble Anatus set out to slay the foul gorgon without question, and was able to end the creature's reign of terror by bringing back the beast's head, which was then mounted in the grand banquet hall of Meleus' palace. The King found Anatus to be a noble successor, and was more than happy to adopt him and step down in his favor. Before doing so, however, he made one final decree. In gratitude to the goddess Athena for her special favor, a similar competition was to be held in the land every twenty years in her honor. The winner of the contest would receive the right to wear the laurel and, as a special gift, would be entitled to any one request of the people of Achea. This is how the great Achean games came to be. Since the time of Meleus, the contest has been held every twenty years, and has been won by some of the world's most noble champions and heroes.

### Getting to Achea

*Blood and Laurels* takes place entirely on the island of Achea. Before running the adventure you should determine just how far the island of Achea lies from your regular adventuring frontier. The island can be grafted onto the milieu as part of a distant, obscure league of

city-states, or part of a relatively close democracy, depending on your campaign needs. Note that Achea is only one of a number of small city states in the area. Most of the others are located on small islands in the vicinity and along a continental coast. Based on the culture of the ancient Greeks, the lands around Achea should provide a rich new area for adventuring, and an adequate setting for countless adventures in the Greek and Roman traditions.

The island itself is accessible only by certain sea routes, and you should feel free to make the voyage as perilous as you like. DM's who wish to develop detailed adventures that take place en route to Achea, are encouraged to read Homer's *Odyssey*, which should provide inspiration for a number of seaborne adventures in the ancient Greek tradition.

### The Games

The Achean games consist of six contests, and take place over a period of seven to eight days. Anyone is eligible to enter the games, and a competitor need not compete in all the contests himself. Each competitor may be accompanied by a retinue of up to five companions, each of whom may be appointed to compete in one or more of the individual contests in the competitor's stead.

The six contests test the competitor's (and his retinue's) strength, speed, stamina, skill, wisdom, and valor. The competitor (or faction) that wins each of the contests is awarded a *noble*, or point. The competitors that come in second or third are each awarded a *crown*, or half-point. At the end of the games, the competitor with the most points is declared the victor, and is entitled to wear the laurel and make a request of the King.

### The Adventure

#### Synopsis

*Blood and Laurels* begins with the players arrival in Achea, and their presentation of one or more of themselves as competitors in the great games. In encounter 1, the players attend a special opening banquet thrown by the Achean king, Melinore. In addition to providing them with a hearty meal, the banquet gives the players a chance to meet their competition and become acquainted with some of the Achean customs. In a particularly dramatic moment the *sybil*, or prophetess, closes the banquet by predicting that the games will be marked by tragedy.

The next day begins with encounter 2, the trial of strength, in which each of the competitors wrestle each of the others. The players face stiff

competition in this event from Theracles, a strong-man from Achea's mountainous coast. Later in the afternoon is **encounter 3, the trial of speed**, in which competitors run a twenty-five mile foot race. The second day ends with encounter 4, the nightly banquet, in which the players have a chance to partake in the celebration and witness an event that will later provide an important clue.

The third day begins with encounter 5, the trial of stamina, in which the competitors must scale a dangerous mountain to retrieve a rare plant. During the trial of stamina Theracles disappears. The strongman has actually been the victim of the secret machinations of Drusus, a competitor from the nearby Alexandrian Empire. Drusus sent some of the members of his retinue to ambush Theracles under a rock slide during the event because of the strong-man's impressive showing early in the competition. Drusus, on a mission for his emperor, plans to win the games using whatever steps necessary, allowing him to request of King Melinore the Princess Emily's hand in marriage. After he has married Emily, the villain will kill Melinore, ascend to the Achean throne, and sign the island and all its territories over to the Alexandrian Caesar, who will then have a strong base to use in an upcoming war against the city-states. The usual nightly banquet will be foregone during the evening in favor of a religious ceremony in honor of Theracles.

The games continue on the fourth day with encounter 6, the trial of skill, in which the competitors fight mock battles with broadsword and shield. Again the players face stiff competition, this time in the person of Polinexes, a skillful combatant from a nearby city-state. Later in the afternoon is encounter 7, the trial of wisdom, in which the players must try to answer a riddle posed by Meno, the king's philosopher and high priest. During the evening there is the nightly banquet (encounter 8), during which the competitors are each assigned a task of nobility to perform for the trial of valor. After the banquet, Polinexes will be discovered dead, the victim of a poisoner hired by Drusus to insure that the swordsman's fine showing in the trial of skill will in no way upset his own chances for victory.

On the fifth day encounter 10, the trial of valor, begins as the players set off to slay Maldrach, a foul beast that has been blocking access to a religious shrine—an oracle located on Achea's southern coast. The journey to and from the south should take about two days, and during this time the players will have to outwit



assassins sent by Drussus to make sure the players do not challenge him for the laurel. Located on the persons of these assassins is a valuable clue which, when pieced together with something the players witnessed earlier, will tip them off to Drussus' plans.

After all the competitors return from the trial of valor, Melinore adds up the points and determines a winner. At this time, the players will be able to accuse Drussus of treachery; and may have to face the villain in a trial by combat in encounter 11 in order to determine the outcome of the games. Drussus, however, still has one more trick up his sleeve...

## Timeline

### Day 1

7:00 PM - Encounter 1: The Opening Banquet.  
The Sybil delivers her prophecy.

### Day 2

10:00 AM - Encounter 2. The Trial of Strength  
3:00 PM - Encounter 3: The Trial of Speed  
7:00 PM - Encounter 4: The Evening Banquet

### Day 3

9:00 AM - Encounter 5. The Trial of Stamina  
7:00 PM - Religious Mourning Ceremony

### Day 4

10:00 AM - Encounter 6: The Trial of Skill  
3:00 PM - Encounter 7: The Trial of Wisdom  
7:00 PM - Encounter 8: Evening Banquet  
12:00 AM - Encounter 9: A Discovery

### Day 5

9:00 AM - Encounter 10: The Trial of Valor

### Day 6 - 7

Trial of Valor continues.

### Day 8

Reward Ceremony

## NPC Capsules

**King Melinore:** AC 10; Move 12"; FTR 2; hp 13; ST 11 IN 13 WS 16 DX 12 CN 12 CH 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; THAC0 20; AL LG. Melinore has a *broadsword* + 1.

Melinore is the reigning monarch of Achea and a direct descendant of Anatus, the winner of the first Achean games. Melinore is a kind, passionate man, and cares for little more than the welfare of the Achean people. He has acquired

great wisdom through his long life (he is now more than seventy years old), though his benign nature makes him, perhaps, too trusting.

**Emily:** AC 10; Move 12"; HD 0 - level human; hp 3; ST 10 IN 13 WS 13 DX 13 CN 10 CH 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; THAC0 20; AL LG.

Emily is Melinore's fair young daughter, and the future queen of Achea. She is seldom seen without a smile on her face, and her basic likability has made her the target of marriage proposals from many young Achean nobles. Emily enjoys studying literature with Meno, and hopes to one day enter the priesthood.

**Meno:** AC 10; Move 12"; CLE 4; hp 24; ST 9 IN 15 WS 17 DX 10 CN 9 CH 13; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; THAC0 18; AL LG.

Meno is the court philosopher and the high priest of Athena, the patron goddess of Achea. His wizened appearance is often misleading, and it is not uncommon for visitors to the city-state to mistake him for a beggar or waif. While performing his religious functions, however, he is always splendidly attired. Meno likes to spend most of his free time discussing philosophy with the Achean nobles on the steps of the temple, and has built himself quite a following. He is a great friend of King Melinore and his daughter Emily. Meno owns a *pearl of wisdom* which was given to him as gift by one of his more adventurous students.

**Typical Achean Hoplite (guard):** AC 3; Move 9"; FTR 1; hp 7; ST 13 IN 11 WS 11 DX 13 CN 13 CH 11; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; THAC0 20; AL LN. Hoplites carry banded mail, shield, broadsword, and a pilum (spear).

The Hoplites are the elite Achean guard. They take their orders directly from King Melinore, and there are more than fifty of them protecting the main city.

## The Competitors

**Drussus:** AC 2; Move 9"; FTR 7; hp 42; ST 14 IN 14 WS 13 DX 12 CN 13 CH 9; #AT 3/2; Dmg 2-8 + 2; THAC0 14; AL LE. Drussus has *banded mail* + 1 and a *broadsword* + 2.

Drussus is the players' main adversary in this adventure. As explained in the DM Synopsis, Drussus is on a secret mission from the Alexandrian emperor, and plans to win the games using whatever means necessary. If **victorious he plans** to use his one request of King Melinore to secure Emily's hand in marriage, putting him next in line for the Achean Throne. While in Achea, Drussus will do his best to act noble and civil, though at times his true cold-hearted personality will bleed through.

**Drussus' Retinue:** Drussus is the only competitor (with the probable exception of the players) to invoke his right to have a group of followers accompany him. Though he plans to compete in all the events himself, some of Drussus' followers will accompany him during the Trial of Valor. Also, Drussus will use members of his retinue to ambush Theracles during the Trial of Stamina, and to pursue and hopefully destroy the player characters during the Trial of Valor. Drussus has ten followers. Assume they all have the following statistics.

**Assassins (10):** AC 7; Move 12"; ASN 4; hp 20; ST 13 IN 13 WS 11 DX 16 CN 12 CH 10; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; THAC0 20; AL LE. Assassins have leather armor, shields, and broadswords.

**Theracles:** AC 8; Move 12"; FTR 6; hp 54; ST 17 IN 12 WS 11 DX 12 CN 16 CH 1.5; #AT 1; Dmg 2-7; THAC0 16; AL NG. Theracles has leather armor and a footman's mace.

Theracles is the powerful son of a shepherd from Achea's mountainous district. His entering the Achean games has made him the pride of his village, and many say he is one of the favorites to win. Theracles is jovial and good-natured, and he will immediately try to form friendships with the other competitors. Unfortunately, he will be killed by Drussus' men during the Trial of Stamina.

**Polinexes:** AC 2; Move 9"; FTR 7; hp 48; ST 13 IN 12 WS 10 DX 16 CN 12 CH 12; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon; THAC0 15; AL LN. Polinexes has chain mail, shield, broadsword, and pilum (spear).

Polinexes is a valiant warrior from Partha, a nearby city-state. The Parthans have a reputation for being very skilled warriors, and Polinexes is no exception. Like many Parthans, he has been trained since birth to become a soldier, and his exceptional training and discipline have made him one of the finest swordsmen in the land. While not on the battlefield he is stoic and reserved, but the players should find him likable enough. Polinexes will be poisoned by one of Drussus' hirelings just after the Trial of Skill.

**Alleyn:** AC 4; Move 9"; RGR 4; hp 30; ST 13 IN 13 WS 14 DX 11 CN 14 CH 13; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; THAC0 18; AL NG. Alleyn has chainmail, shield, longsword, and dagger.

Alleyn is a ranger from the regular campaign area that was shipwrecked on a small island just south of Achea. After arriving on the island, Alleyn fell in love with the way of life, and decided to give up any chance to return home. Lately, he has become the self-appointed guardian of a small farming community, and has won acclaim by defeating a number of horrible



monsters and invaders. Almeyn is kindly and solemn, and there is a certain air of the romantic about him. he is really only entering the games for the joy of competition, and does not expect to win.

**Phaedythro:** AC 4; Move 9"; FTR 4; hp 24; ST 12 IN 12 WS 13 DX 13 CN 13 CH 14; #AT 1; **Dmg 1-6 + 1; THAC0 18;** AL CG. Phaedythro has banded mail and a spear +1.

Phaedythro is a prince of Corthia, a nearby city-state. He is competing in the games to represent his people, though he doesn't expect to win. His regal background is obvious, and he is a master of protocol and manners. In battle he is brave and unrelenting.

## Encounter Key

### 1. The Opening Banquet

Read this to the players as they approach the island.

Ahead you can see land; a large, rocky island. Surrounding it is a light mist which seems to set it apart from the rest of the world. There is something different about the island that just can't be pinned down. It is a foreign island, an alien island. It is an island of legends and heroes.

What sort of hearty people could have build those splendid structures high on the coastal mountains? This is it, all right. You have finally come to Achea.

The players will have no problem landing their vessel on the beach near the main city, and once they do so and debark they find themselves caught up in the middle of a large parade in celebration of the games. The parade goes from the harbor and up the steps of the Acropolis to the royal palace. There are more than three hundred Acheans participating in the parade, most of them singing, laughing, and playing musical instruments. If any of the Acheans are asked where they are going or why, they won't hesitate to answer cheerfully. If the players ask how they can compete in the games they are told simply to follow.

The parade finally arrives at the king's palace where Meno, Emily, and Melinore are waiting at a balcony. With a flourish, King Melinore declares the games open to all and asks any would-be competitors to step forward. The five competitors described above then declare their intentions, one by one. The players should feel free to jump in whenever they wish. As each competitor comes forward he is greeted by

cheers from the crowd, and hoisted off his feet by the townspeople. If role-played well, this scene can be very dramatic. It is recommended that only one PC be allowed to compete in the games directly, but experienced DM's that are willing to expend a little time and effort can allow as many players as desired to enter.

After all the competitors have announced their intentions, King Melinore orders his guard to open the gates of the palace so that the opening banquet can commence. In the courtyard a huge feast is already laid out. The townsfolk carry each of the entrants to a special table at the head of the banquet; it seats the competitors, their retinues, the King, and Meno. The townspeople then take their places **at long tables arranged in a circle around the main banquet table.**

The food at the banquet is of the highest quality, and the players will be quite satisfied with it. After the meal, the entertainment begins. The women of the town will be led in dance by Emily herself, and some of the best Achean poets come forth and deliver their epics. Eventually the banquet decays into general revelry, with the women laughing and swapping stories while the men gamble.

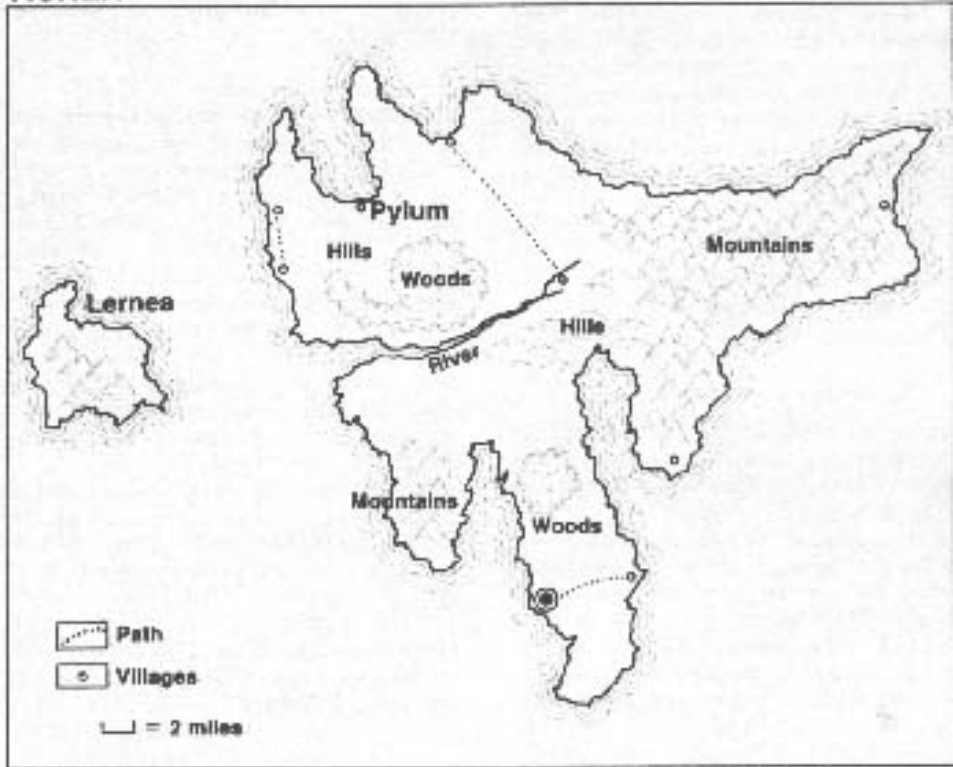
During the banquet the players are seated next to Theracles, who introduces himself, describes

his background, and asks that the players do so as well. It is very important that you have Theracles reveal to the players that he is from the mountains, as this provides them with a clue for later.

### A Friendly Dart Game

While the festivities are going on, the players should feel free to participate. If they wish, they can gamble with some of the local townsfolk (see DMG, Appendix F) or some of the other competitors. Theracles produces something akin to a dart board and challenges all the competitors to a game he calls "Coyns." The object of coyns is to throw three small knives (similar to darts) at a red circle on the board. Every knife that sticks in the circle is worth a point. The winner is the player with the most points after two throws of the knives. Many of the other competitors will accept Theracles' challenge and play the game. After the first game the competitors begin to lay wagers. If the players wish to accept the challenge you can simulate the game as follows: treat the red circle in the middle of the board as though it had an Armor Class of 0. A successful hit means the knife struck the circle and stuck ' Remember to figure in the non-proficiency penalty for any

## ACHEA







characters not proficient in darts (Theracles is the only NPC competitor with dart proficiency).

Drussus becomes involved in Theracles' game, and it is very important that the players overhear the following exchange sometime during the banquet:

Theracles: *Oh, my Mend, I believe you have made a mistake. Our wager was for five gold coins, and you have only paid me three.*

Drussus: *Those are Alexandrian coins, you dolt, and worth more than twice as much as your Achean rubble!*

This exchange will later prove to be an important clue. If the players don't participate in Theracles' game, they should definitely overhear it somehow.

Towards the end of the banquet, King Melinore calls the townsfolk to order and asks for silence. He then brings on the sybil, who delivers the traditional prophecy concerning the games. The sybil whirls in the air, lets out a scream and sinks to the floor. After a dramatic pause she proclaims the following in a deep, raspy voice:

*Lady fortune spins her wheel,  
Heroes prepare with blood and zeal,  
But from Olympus gods decree  
These games be wrought with tragedy.*

## 2. The Trial of Strength

During the night all the competitors and their retinues are offered lodgings in the royal palace. The Trial of Strength takes place early in the morning of Day 2 in the royal courtyard on the Acropolis. The Achean villagers begin to gather hours before the competition starts. Like all the events in the Achean games, the Trial of Strength is accompanied by great fanfare and ceremony. As the competitors are led out onto the field they are accompanied by the roar of trumpets and the cheers of the crowd. Read the following to the players.

As you are led out onto the field you can hear the roar of the spectators. **Their excitement is real, tangible.** It seems to hover in the air and swell. Your pulse quickens as you walk down the long row of trumpeters in their carefully steamed robes. Your blood warms as you look over the trees and down the steps of the Acropolis toward the empty city below. This is the Achean spectacle. It is the event that the people measure the lengths of their lives by.

Melinore takes the rostrum. "People of Achea-let the games begin!" The excitement in the air grows thicker.

During the Trial of Strength, each of the competitors wrestles each of the others. The competitor with the best overall record is awarded the noble. The two players with the next best overall records are each awarded crowns. In case of a tie, each of the tied competitors wrestle one another until there is a clear winner. For example, if two competitors finished with 3-2 records, they would wrestle each other again to determine the victor. If three competitors finished with 3-2 records, each one would wrestle the other two again, and the competitor with the best showing would be the victor. If a tie still exists at the end of these second matches, the process is repeated until a clear winner is determined.

### The Wrestling Matches

The results of all the matches between the NPCs are given below. The matches between the players and each of the other competitors should be simulated using the following rules. Each wrestling match consists of three rounds: a strength round, an intelligence round, and a final strength round. During a round, each of the competitors adds two times his experience level to the appropriate characteristic, rolls a d20, subtracts the result, and records the figure on a piece of paper. At the end of the match, each competitor adds up his three figures, and the wrestler with the higher total is the victor.

For example, Theracles (FTR 6, ST 17, IN 12) is wrestling Polinexes (FTR 7, ST 13, IN 12). On the first round Theracles rolls a 6 and Polinexes rolls a 23. Theracles; records a 23 [(2x6)+17-6=23], and Polinexes a 15 [(2x7) + 13-12 = 15]. On the second round Theracles rolls an 11 and Polinexes rolls an 8. Theracles records a 13 [(2x6) +12-11 = 13] and Polinexes records an 18 [(2x7)+12-8 = 18]. On the final round Theracles rolls a 7, recording a 22 and Polinexes rolls an 11, recording a 16. Theracles' total over three rounds is 58 [23 + 13 + 22 = 58], Polinexes is 49 [15 + 18 + 16 = 49]. Theracles, is the victor.

While resolving the important wrestling matches try to use dramatic description to embellish the die rolls. For example, after the first round in the above match, the DM might say, "Theracles uses his superior strength to wrench Polinexes over to his back. The lithe swordsman struggles to escape to no avail." This description is very important. If done properly it

will make the matches seem like much more than mere random dice rolls.

The results of the matches not involving the players are given below. Add the results of matches simulated for players to determine a victor.

Theracles: 4-0  
Drussus: 3-1  
Polinexes: 2-2  
Alleyn: 1-3  
Phaedthro. 1-3

## 3. The Trial of Speed

The Trial of Speed takes place later in the afternoon of Day 2. The competitors will run a twenty-five mile foot race. The winner is awarded the noble, and the second and third finishers are each awarded a crown. The race course heads straight out of the main city and down the coast toward a small village where it turns around and comes back. The players run on a dirt road, and along the path there are periodic groups of spectators.

Use the following system to simulate the race. The course is 130 marks long (65 marks to the village, 65 marks back). Every *period* each of the competitors moves Experience Level + 1d6 + 12 marks along the course. Go through the race period by period and have each of the competitors roll their die and figure out how far they move. The first competitor to cross the finish line (move 130 marks) is the winner. If two or more runners finish in the same period, whomever crossed the line by the greatest amount is the winner. If there is a tie, each runner is granted the full noble or crown. Each period represents ten turns and each mark is approximately 330 yards.

Again, the DM should detail description to embellish the race: ". . . And Theracles pulls ahead of Drussus who is running hard, but seems to be slightly off pace!", etc. If this is done properly the race will be very exciting.

If the players come up with any clever ploys to increase the odds in their favor it is up to you to determine the chances of success or failure. The only rules in the race are that 1) no weapons are allowed, and 2) the competitors must run the full distance along the course. Anything else is legal.



#### 4. Nightly Banquet

Day 2 ends with a banquet similar to the opening banquet in encounter 1. During the banquet the competitors are briefed on the next day's events, and the townspeople dance and sing. Once again, Theracles tries to get the other competitors involved in a game of coyns. He will also wager five g.p. that he is able to wrestle the largest bull in Melinore's herd to the ground. (If challenged, he will be successful).

hours, 40 mins), Alleyn returns in 80 turns (13 hours, 20 mins), and Polinexes returns in 83 turns (13 hours, 50 mins). If the player is able to return sooner than any of these three competitors he will be awarded the appropriate points. During the event, the locations of the NPC competitors is unimportant. No matter where the player characters travel on the mountain they will not encounter any of the competition. After every five turns of movement, roll 1d8 for an encounter on the *Mountain Encounters* table.

#### 5. The Trial of Stamina

You arise the next morning to the summons of King Melinore's steward. The Trial of Stamina is scheduled for this morning. It is, perhaps, the most grueling of all the games, usually taking hours to complete. Such a thought is not very comforting to one who is already weary from the previous day's contests. Reluctantly, however, you manage to haul yourself out of bed and dress. You meet up with the other competitors; the hoplites lead you out of town to the base of Mt. Moriah some ten leagues distant, where Melinore and Meno are waiting.

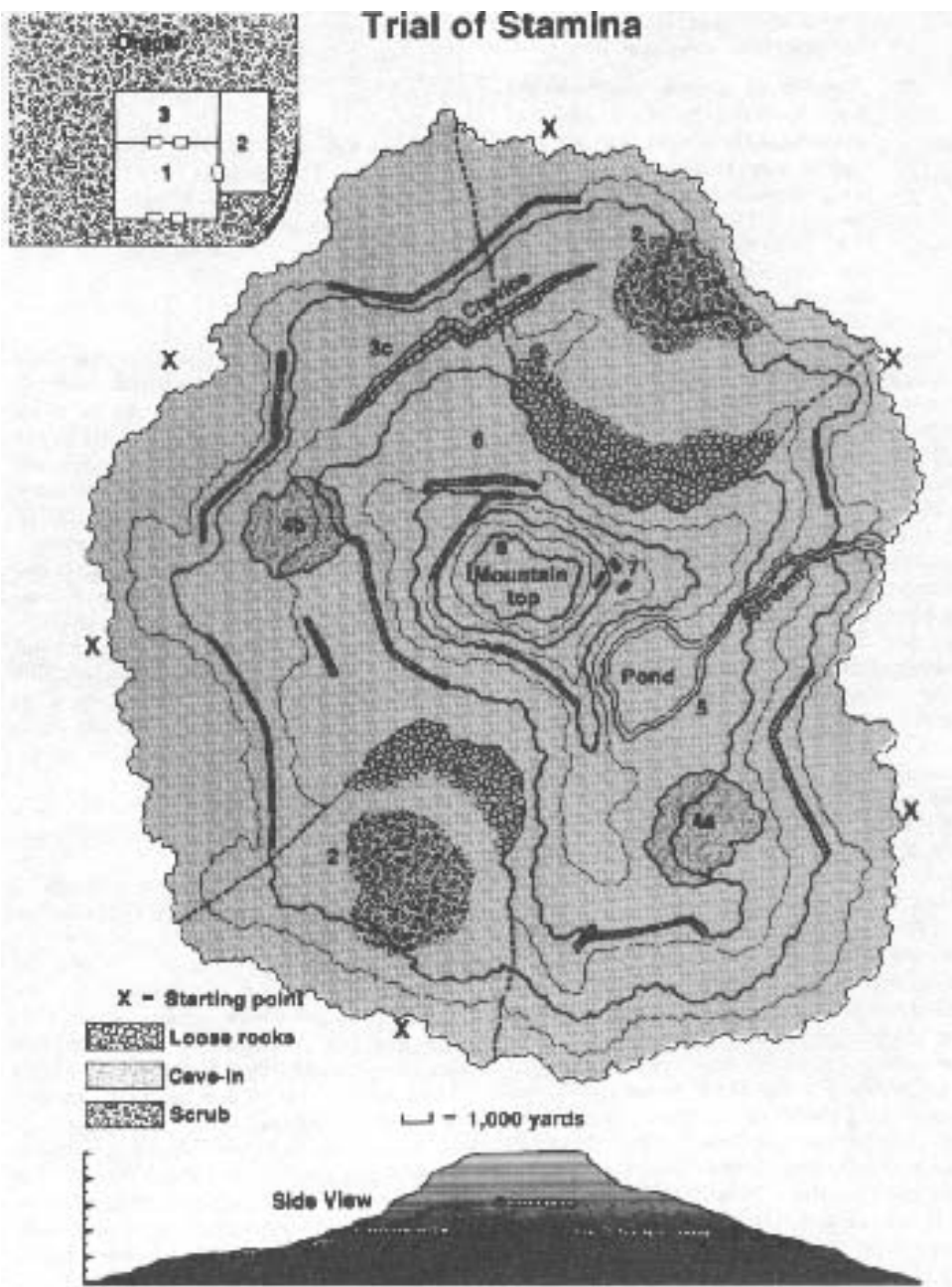
"The rules are simple, gentlemen . ' The first person to get to the top and come back down with a sample of the Golden Lotus is the victor. The Lotus grows only on the pinnacle of the mountain. I must warn you, however. The mountain is deadly. Avalanches, crags, steam vents, and fearsome creatures are not uncommon. Are there any questions?"

Drussus steps forward. "Where are the townsfolk? Up until now they seemed to have taken a very active interest in the games.

King Melinore laughs. "That is simple, my good man. There is no one in Achea that will set foot within a mile of Moriah. Good luck!"

During the trial the competitors are allowed to bring along any desired equipment. Only the competitor himself (or a single member of his retinue) is allowed to participate. One competitor begins at each X marked on the map. Randomly choose the player's starting point. If more than one of the PCs are competitors, run each of them through the event separately while the others leave the room.

The map is a top view of the mountain. The peak is located at the center. Each square on the map represents 1000 feet. Chart the players progress up and down the mountain turn by turn, keeping a careful record of time. Drussus returns with a leaf of the Golden Lotus in 70 turns (11





## Mountain Encounters

- | Roll | Description  |
|------|--|
| 1-4  | No Encounter   |
| 5    | Fierce mountain wind: no movement possible for 1-3 turns.  |
| 6    | Twist Ankle: move at half speed for the next 1-3 turns.  |
| 7    | Volcanic Pressure: Vent of hot steam bursts forth in character's path. ST vs. Breath or take 2-12 points of damage. If character is in scrub terrain, treat as 8, below.   |
| 8    | Amphisbaena: An amphisbaena rolls down the mountain slope and attacks. If the player is in an avalanche zone, treat this encounter as an avalanche instead.<br><i>Amphisbaena</i> : AC 3; Move 12"; HD 6; hp 18; #AT 2; Dmg 1-3/1-3; THAC0 14; SA two heads, poison; SD unaffected by cold attacks; AL N |

## Mount Moriah

Each of the special areas on the mountain slope are described below. The straight lines represent sheer cliffs. Such cliffs cannot be climbed by non-thieves unless the DM is using *The Dungeons Survival Guide*. All cliffs are forty feet high.

**1. Loose Rocks.** On the northeast and southwest faces of Mt. Moriah there are dangerous accumulations of loose rock and rubble, that occasionally tumble down the slopes. The area depicted on the map between the dotted lines is an avalanche zone. Any time the player is in such a zone and the result of the random encounter die roll is an 8, there is a minor rockslide and the character takes 2-12 points of damage. ST vs. Paralyzation for half damage.

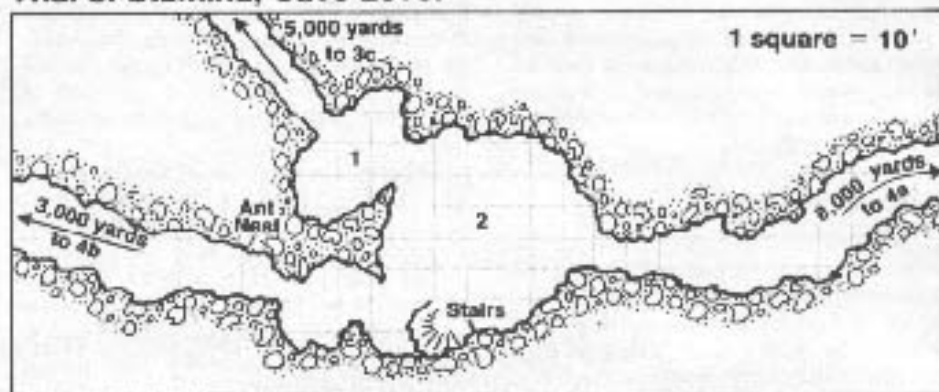
**2. Scrub.** Such areas represent regions of thick brush and undergrowth. All characters moving through scrub are slowed to 50% of their normal movement rate.

The *amphisbaena* often make their nests in the scrub, and any random encounter rolls made while in such terrain are twice as likely to produce an *amphisbaena* encounter (statistics given in the *Mountain Encounter* table).

**3. Crevice.** The crevice is a large crack that runs along the slope. Its width varies along its length from 6 to 15 feet. The crevice can be bridged by inventive players, or jumped by thief-acrobats (or any other class if the DM is using the DSG). Anyone who falls down the crevice falls 30 feet to the cave level (see below).

**4. Cave-Ins.** The cave-ins are undetectable areas of loose dirt and rock lying above the hollow

## Trial of Stamina, Cave Level



tunnels of the cave level. For every turn a character moves on a cave-in area there is a 15% chance of the ground giving way below him, causing him to fall 30 feet to the cave level below.

**5. Mountain Stream.** A hollow on the slope of Mt. Moriah serves as a natural reservoir for rain water, which flows down the slope and into a nearby valley. The water in the pond is superheated by the nearby volcanic vents and is scalding hot. Any character that enters this water takes 6d6 points of burn damage with no saving throw, though anyone with magical protection against fire is allowed a - 2 modifier to each die of damage with a minimum of one point per die.

By the time the water leaves the pond and enters the stream it is much cooler. The stream area is a spawning ground for *giant crayfish*, and it is 60% likely that any character that moves within 30 feet of the stream will encounter 1-2 of them.

Giant crayfish (2): AC 4; Move 6" //12"; HD 4 + 4; hp 12, 12; #AT 2; Ding 2-12/2-12; THAC0 15; AL N.

**6. Sinkhole.** A set of natural steps leads 30 feet directly down from this location to the cave level.

**7. Volcanic Vents.** This is an area of great seismic activity on the mountain. The region is covered with scalding steam geysers and hot volcanic ash. Any character moving through this area suffers 1d8 points of damage per turn unless he or she can save vs. Breath Weapon.

**8. Mountain Top.** Mt. Moriah's pinnacle offers an ironically beautiful view of the Achean wilderness and the main city. Growing all over the pinnacle is a curious root, the Golden Lotus, which has been found only in this particular place. The Lotus is the object of the competitors' quest.

## Cave Level

There are four entries to the cave level: areas 3c, 4a, 4b, and 6 above. In all areas but 6 the player falls 30 feet down onto hard stone (taking the appropriate damage) and finds himself in a long, dark corridor. Each of these corridors eventually lead into the two main caves described below. The natural stairs in Cave #2 that lead up to area 6 are the only natural way of climbing back to the surface.

**1. Ant Cave.** This cave is used as a refuse area by a colony of giant ants that has made its nest in a series of small wormholes found on the south wall of the cave. As the player enters the cave he will encounter four *worker ants* and one *warrior ant*. In the main nest he will find the skeleton of an unfortunate carbuncle that happened to fall down one of the cave-ins. Still imbedded in the small carbuncle's skull is a gem of 100 g.p. value.

Worker Ants (4): AC 3; Move 18"; HD 2; hp 7 each; #AT 1; Ding 1-6; THAC0 16; SA sting; AL N. Warrior Ant: HD 3; hp 11; Ding 2-8; all other statistics as above.

Scattered about the cave are skeletons and carrion left by the ants. From time to time the ants have victimized the occasional foolhardy human and anyone digging through the rubble has a 15% chance per turn of finding 1d8 sp.

**2. Otyugh Chamber.** This cave is inhabited by a young *otyugh* that feeds on the carrion in the antechamber and the occasional slow ant. Scattered around the chamber are skins, bones, scraps of metal and cloth and crumpled papers. Among the crumpled papers is a scroll containing two magic user spells; *lightning bolt*, and *blink*.

Otyugh (1): AC 3; Move 6"; HD 6; hp 20; AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/2-5; THAC0 13; SA disease; AL N.



In the south part of the chamber are a set of natural stairs that lead up to the surface. When extremely hungry, the otyugh climbs out of the cave in search of game.

### The Final Fate Of Theracles

After several hours, all of the competitors but Theracles have returned from the mountaintop. After a while Meno suggests that the competitors organize a search team. Drussus agrees and volunteers to lead. The players may accompany the team if they wish. Melinore places a party of the Hoplites at the search team's disposal.

Eventually the team comes across Theracles' body buried under a rockslide on the northwest face. The rockslide was actually engineered by a group of assassins from Drussus' retinue who were planted on the mountain before the competition began. The fact that Theracles was from the mountains and had a lot of climbing experience (which the players learned during the opening banquet) should probably lead them to suspect foul play.

## 6. The Trial of Skill

It has been a mere fifteen hours since the Trial of Stamina and Theracles' tragic death, but already you are being led out onto the combat field once again for the Trial of Skill. The crowds of townspeople are back, but they seem much more subdued.

In this event you will face each of the other competitors in a mock sword and shield duel. The victor is the competitor that amasses the most victories. May Athena be with you.

The Trial of Skill is very similar to the Trial of Strength from encounter 2. The only exception is that the competitors are now fighting with sword and shield. The swords are made of wood and have been dulled so that they do no actual damage. Treat them as short swords, and simulate the combats as per AD&D combat rules. The winner is the first one to knock his opponent unconscious by reducing him to below zero hit points. All damage suffered is stun damage, and is automatically healed at the end of the match. During the match the use of armor and any equipment other than the swords and shield provided is prohibited. The results of the bouts between the NPC competitors are listed below:

Polinexes: 3-0

Drussus: 2-1 (lost to Polinexes)

Phaedythro: 1-2 (lost to Polinexes and Drussus)  
Alleyn: 0-3

The competitor with the best overall record is awarded the noble; those placing second and third are each awarded crowns. Resolve any ties with the procedure described in encounter 2.

## 7. The Trial of Wisdom

Later in the day the competitors gather in the courtyard of Melinore's palace for the Trial of Wisdom. During this event, Meno poses a riddle and the first competitor to answer is awarded a noble. It is impossible to earn a crown in this event. During the contest only the competitor himself (or any one member of his retinue he designates in advance) is able to speak. The competitors are not allowed to consult with their followers or each other in any manner. Meno's riddle is presented below.

*Easy to carry, hard to hold*

*This thing abounds, as it is told.*

*Weaker than tin, stronger than steel,*

*To it the mighty mountains kneel.*

*It never walks, but often runs,*

*And now it seems I'm out of puns.*

The answer to the riddle is *water*. Read the riddle and allow the player (or players if more than one of the PCs are competitors) a chance to answer. If none of the players are able to respond after a suitable time has passed, Drussus will shout out the answer and win the contest.

## 8. Nightly Banquet

The third day ends with a banquet similar to those held before the games (encounter 1) and on Day 1 (encounter 4). The banquet again features excellent food and the dancing of the townsfolk, but the mood is somber due to the passing of Theracles, a local favorite. Towards the end of the banquet Melinore makes the following speech.

*Noble competitors. Tomorrow begins the Dial of Valor, the final event in the games. I will assign each of you noble tasks which should occupy yourselves for the next days. The noble will be awarded to the first person who returns hence; the crowns to the next two.*

*Polinexes, you are to travel to the village of Stymphalia on the eastern seaboard and drive off the terrible birds plaguing the people.*

*Alleyn, you are to climb the slopes of Mt. Zelos south of the city, and retrieve the manuscript of Phaedo, lost in the City of Dragons.*

*Phaedythro, you are to kill the foul Basilisk of Forta.*

*Drussus, you are to slay the hideous Hydra on the island of Lernea, a danger to all travelers in the region.*

*And finally, (player's name), you are to slay Maldrach, the ignoble creature which has overrun the Oracle at Pylum on Achea's northern shore.*

If more than one player is competing in the games the DM will have to design one or more additional quests. During the Trial of Valor it is permissible for the competitors' retinues to accompany and assist them.

## 9. A Discovery

The players are awakened in the middle of the night by a sharp scream coming from just down the hall. When they rush to the scene they find a servant boy standing over the body of Polinexes, who is dead in his quarters. Melinore, Meno, and the competitors soon arrive. Meno pronounces Polinexes dead of natural causes ("May the gods smile upon his soul").

Actually, Polinexes has been poisoned by a member of Drussus' retinue who was able to slip the venom into his water jug during the banquet.

## 10. The Trial of Valor

In order to successfully complete their task, the players must travel to the oracle at Pylum and defeat the cruel Maldrach, who has killed the resident priests and made the oracle's shrine his home, preventing any pilgrims from asking the oracle's advice. King Melinore provides the players with any provisions they need to make the journey, although horses are prohibited by the rules of the games. Before they leave, Melinore warns them that they will be traveling through a very dangerous area. Just north of the woods that separate the area around the city from the rest of the island lies an uninhabited region which serves as a hunting ground for several strange beasts.

The players are able to cover approximately thirty miles per day. While they are traveling, roll 1d4 for an encounter three times per day—once in the morning, once in the afternoon, and once in the evening. A roll of 4 signifies an encounter. Roll again on the *Achean Random Encounters* table.



Achean Random Encounters

Roll	Result
2	Tri-flower Fronds (1-4): AC 9; Move 0; HD 2 + 8; hp 16, 13, 12, 11; #AT Special; Dmg Special; THAC0 16; SA sleep /dissolve/drain (see MMII P. 121).
3	Griffons (1-2): AC 3; Move 12" //30"; HD 7; hp 35, 30; #AT 3; Dmg 14/1-4/2-16; THAC0 13; AL N.
4	Mantrap (1): AC 6; Move 0; HD 8; hp 40; #AT 3; Dmg Special; THAC0 12; SA ST vs. Poison or <i>fascinated</i> , damage inflicted is points equal to victims AC per round; AL N.
5	Giant Scorpions (2): AC 3; Move 15"; HD 5 + 5; hp 25, 18; #AT 3; Dmg 1-10/1-10/1-4; THAC0 15; SA poison; AL N.
6	Wild Boars (2-5): AC 7; Move 15"; HD 3 + 3; hp 20, 18, 16, 13, 8; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; THAC0 16; SD fights down to - 6 hp; AL N.
7-8	Ogres (1-4): AC 5; Move 9"; HD 4 + 1; hp 25, 18, 17, 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; THAC0 15; AL CE.
9-10	Giant Wasps (1-3): AC 4; Move 6" /21"; HD 4; hp 21, 16, 12, 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/1-4; THAC0 15; SA poison; AL N.
11	Troll (1): AC 4; Move 12"; HD 6 + 6; hp 28; #AT 3; Dmg 5-8/5-8/2-12; THAC0 13; SD regeneration; AL CE.
12	Harpies (1-4)- AC 7; Move 6" /15"; HD 3; hp 18, 13, 12, 7; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; THAC0 16; SA charm; AL CE.

Space necessitates that the above be presented as the mere bare bones of an encounter. Enterprising DM's are encouraged to add details to each of the encounters above. In addition to the above, the players will also face two planned encounters, one on the way to the oracle, the other on the way back.

### The Mad Wizard

Just as night begins to fall on the first day of the players' journey, a fierce rainstorm will strike, drenching them. On the path up ahead they make out the outline of a small cottage.

If the players proceed to the cottage and ask for shelter, they are met by a wizened old man wearing spacious robes. The old man introduces himself as Clito, and seems happy to have the adventurers as guests. His cottage is a small, two-room affair (bedroom and common room) with a fire place and chimney. In the common room are several bookshelves holding many unintelligible books, a table, five chairs, two cupboards, and two chests. In the bedroom are a bed, a desk and a dresser.

If asked about the books, Clito claims to be something of a scholar. He prefers to live where he does because it is isolated, allowing him more time to himself and his studies. His only companions are his two dogs Alpha and Omega. Clito offers the group lodging for the night and converses with them for a while. During his conversation his mind tends to wander, but he seems likable enough.

Dogs (Alpha and Omega) (2); AC 6; Move 12"; HD 2 + 2; hp 14, 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; THAC0 16; AL N.

After a while Clito asks the players if they are hungry and would like some soup. He goes out behind the cottage, brings in a large iron cauldron, and suspends it in the fireplace. Clito happily begins to add water and vegetables to the cauldron, chatting with the players all the while, telling them how much he loves good soup. He finally proclaims, "There is *just one more ingredient-the meat!*" He rushes the adventurers with his cleaver while setting Alpha and Omega on them. During the battle he will comment on what tasty morsels the characters should make.

Clito: AC 7; Move 12"; M-U 5; hp 18; ST 9 IN 17 WS 8 DX 17 CN 8 CH 11; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; THAC0 20; AL CE. Clito is permanently insane. He knows the following spells.

- Level 1: *Magic missile* (x2), *shield*
- Level 2: *Invisibility*, *ray of enfeeblement*
- Level 3: *Phantasmal force*

There are only two items of any value in Clito's cottage: his spell book (containing all his spells listed above), which is carefully hidden under a loose floorboard under his bed, and a 25 g.p. gem fitted into Alpha's collar.

### The Oracle

You come to the top of a gentle slope. Just up ahead you see the object of your quest, the oracle at Pylum. The oracle Shrine was once, no doubt, a very beautiful building, though now it has been fouled by dirt and refuse. Many of the ornately carved Ionic columns have collapsed, and more of the stuccoed marble tiles lie on the ground next to the shrine than remain attached to the walls.

As you approach the shrine you hear a low, rhythmic wheezing. Maldrach, perhaps? The flooring of the shrine around the entrance is badly scuffed. What could have come in through here?

#### 1. Entry Chamber

This area was once the main entrance to the shrine. It was splendidly decorated by elaborate tile mosaics and ornate tapestries. Now however, most of the tiles are smashed and the tapestries are ragged and moth-eaten.

Maldrach now uses this area as a pen for his cattle. There are currently 75 sheep in the chamber. At the first sign of any disturbance, such as loud noises, strangers pushing their way through the room, etc., the sheep slowly start making noise, alerting Maldrach.

Sheep (75): AC 8; Move 9"; HD 1; hp 4 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; THAC0 19; AL N. Movement is limited to 1" as long as sheep are penned.

Maldrach breeds the sheep as a source of food. Every afternoon he takes the sheep out into the meadow for some time to graze. Their presence in the entry area has destroyed anything of value that was stored there.

#### 2. Priests' Quarters

This room used to serve as the living area for the two priests who tended to the shrine. All the furniture in the room has been smashed. Maldrach uses the chamber as a refuse disposal area. Scattered around the room are several sheep bones, smashed wine caskets, pieces of rotting meat and moldy cheese, and the skeletons of the two priests whom Maldrach has devoured. Mixed into the garbage are 65 g.p., 2 silver necklaces worth 10 g.p. each, and a *ring of feather falling* which was worn by one of the priests. Tucked in one corner of the room is a



case of fine wine (worth 25 g.p.), which by some miracle Maldrach seems to have missed.

### 3. Oracle Chamber

At the head of this room is a tarnished silver altar which once served those wishing to make sacrifices to the oracle. This room, too, was once decorated with ornate friezes and tapestries, and they now lie in a condition similar to those in the entry chamber. Now the decor consists entirely of half-finished casks of wine and haunches of meat. As the adventurers enter they find the cyclops Maldrach sleeping in the center of the room, snoring loudly.

Maldrach (cyclops): AC 3; Move 15"; HD 8; hp 49; #AT 1; Ding 3-18; THAC0 12; SA hurl rocks; AL CE.

If the characters manage to get past the sheep in the entry chamber without alerting Maldrach, they automatically gain surprise. In Maldrach's personal chamber there are no valuable items save for a *dagger + 1* he took from a passerby he killed. He is now using the dagger as a toothpick.

If the players manage to kill Maldrach, the room will suddenly be filled with a low humming, and the oracle will burst into life. These words seem to come from nowhere:

*"Thank you for liberating me from that foul beast, my friends. In return for your kindness, I grant you one prophecy."*

The players are now entitled to the effects of one *augury* spell as though they had cast it themselves.

### Drussus' Assassins

After leaving the city for Pylum, the party is followed at a very discreet distance by a group of assassins from Drussus' retinue. There is one for every player character in the party. Drussus has ordered the assassins to kill the adventurers to remove any chance they have of winning the games, just as he had Theracles and Polinexes killed. They will wait until after the characters confront Maldrach, and will probably attack them on the road back to the city.

The assassins are disguised as foreign merchants, traveling in a caravan. At the appropriate moment they show themselves, claiming to be lost and asking for directions. When the players come into range, the assassins try to strike with surprise. Their statistics are as listed under Drussus' retinue.

The assassins are carrying no clues to their identity, and the only items of value they have on their persons are 10 g.p. each. If the players

examine the gold, however, they notice that the coins were minted in the Alexandrian Empire. This, combined with the conversation overhead between Drussus and Theracles in encounter 1, should provide the players with all the clues they need to deduce Drussus' treachery.

### Winning the Trial of Valor

No matter how fast the players are able to return to the city, Drussus has beaten them back and is awarded the noble. If the players are able to return successfully they automatically come in second place and are awarded a crown.

### 11. Trial by Combat

King Melinore waits for one day after the players return from the Trial of Valor, and then announces that Alleyn and Phaedythro both failed to return from their assigned tasks and must be presumed lost. He then makes that following announcement before the townspeople and competitors.

*Alas, the meaning of the sybil's prophecy is all to clear to us now. These games have indeed been wrought in tragedy, with only two of our original competitions remaining. But let the occasion of the crowning of a new victor be a happy one. We must move ever on in life if we are to possess virtue.*

*The winner of the games is indeed a fine and worthy person, Step forward, (victor's name), and receive the laurel. Ask your request of the Achean people and king. If there are any here who wish to refute the champion's nobility, let him too come forward.*

There are two situations that can occur at this point. Either Drussus won, or one of the players won. If Drussus won, the players have a chance to accuse him of treachery and present their evidence. Melinore then initiates a trial by combat as explained below. If one of the players won, Drussus comes forward and accuses him or her of murdering Theracles and Polinexes. Drussus produces a member of his retinue that swears he saw one of the adventurers carry a fresh water jug into Polinexes' room just before laced with poison and then insinuates that the players were involved in Theracles' death as well. In this case, too, Melinore declares a trial by combat to determine the true champion. If the players have not figured out that Drussus was involved in the killings, or can present no real

evidence of this, they will just have to go home and accept defeat.

### The Duel

The rules of the games state that any disputes must be settled by combat. If either Drussus or the players accuse one another of treachery and the other denies the accusation (Drussus will), Melinore declares a trial by combat. Drussus then escalates the situation by challenging his opponent to a battle to the death. If the opponent refuses he automatically wins.

The duel is fought immediately, before the gathered townsfolk and the King. Only one member from each faction is allowed to participate in the battle. Drussus fights for himself. All weapons and equipment are permissible. If after three rounds Drussus is losing, he reaches into a fold in his armor and produces a small dagger. The dagger is coated with Type D insinuating poison. Whoever wins the trial by combat wins the games, and is awarded with the laurel and the request. If the player manages to defeat Drussus, he confesses his crimes just before the moment of his death and details the plans of the Alexandrian caesar.

### The Reward

If one of the players won the games, he is indeed entitled to any one request of the Achean king. This can range from providing military support to obtaining some item in the King's possession. In addition, the player is entitled to wear the laurel, which is a sign of great respect in the area around Achea.

### Glossary

Achea	The name the ancients gave to the Greek mainland
Hoplite	A heavy foot soldier. The Hoplites usually wore sturdy breastplates and greaves and fought with spears and swords.
oracle -	A divine manifestation from which pilgrims would often seek advice from the gods.
pilum -	A short spear akin to a javelin. Treat pilums as javelins as per the AD&D game rules.
sybil -	Prophetesses who were part of the ancient Greek religious hierarchy.



# The Circus of Gandolfo

*The Circus of Gandolfo* is designed for up to six characters of 6th to 9th level. It is playable as a stand-alone adventure or as the beginning episode in an on-going campaign. Characters of any level can be included without too much trouble; during the course of play, the PCs will likely be stripped of all their abilities and spells, making the adventure a test of creativity rather than firepower.

The weakened PCs regain their abilities gradually, according to a schedule described below. If they finish the adventure quickly, when they are weakest, they will get lots of experience; if they wait until they're back up to full strength, they get virtually no experience at all.

## DM's Information

### Synopsis

*The Circus of Gandolfo* begins in a small town. This can be any town-the PCs' home, a town they happen to be passing through, or whatever. The town is preparing for its annual Fall Festival, held on a grassy field nearby. The fair is about the most excitement the area ever sees, and people come from far and wide to take part. That means lots of strangers-and lots of opportunities to get into trouble.

Among the newcomers to town is the circus-owner and illusionist, Gandolfo. He has brought his troupe of clowns, acrobats, animal trainers, and wild animals-and his freak show-with him. The freak show is more hideous than any the PCs have ever seen.

Like everyone else in town, the PCs spend a day at the fair, checking out various attractions and interacting with shopkeepers and other carnies. That night, they stumble upon a graverobbing scheme. Clues point to Gandolfo's involvement in the robbery.

As the PCs deal with the activity in the graveyard, several circus animals run amok through the streets of the town. Gandolfo's animal handlers try to recapture the beasts, but PCs notice acrobats from the circus using the confusion to sneak into town and carry off children, drunks, the feebleminded, and any troublemakers (like the PCs) who get in their way.

Obviously, Gandolfo is behind all this. His scheme goes like this:

The circus enters town. The show goes on, wowing the locals, and Gandolfo makes some money. Long after everyone's gone to bed one

night, his clowns head for the graveyard to collect bodies and body parts to be stitched together in the creation of Gandolfo's freaks-which aren't really freaks of nature, but the product of science and magic.

That same night, the animal trainers let loose their animals, causing panic in the streets, so the acrobats can round up living specimens whose minds Gandolfo uses to bring his patchwork freaks to life.

The player characters can confront Gandolfo any time they think they've figured out his scheme-and find themselves fighting his entire circus.

If the player characters avoid falling into Gandolfo's clutches, they can follow him to his fortress and try to free the captives and defeat the villain.

In all likelihood, however, they will be captured by Gandolfo and awaken in the castle. There, they'll find that Gandolfo has turned them into freaks. The players must figure out what has happened to them, how to reverse the process, or, at the very least, how to survive in their new, deformed bodies. Only then can they defeat Gandolfo in his stronghold.

There is one other complication: word is out all over the kingdom that the Princess has been kidnapped. The King has offered a sizable reward for her return. Gandolfo is responsible for the Princess' disappearance.

His plan was to use her to coerce the King into granting him the Princess' hand in marriage, making him next in line for the throne. He transferred her mind into the body of a freak, and threatened to leave her trapped in a strange, hideous body unless the King acceded to his "requests." The King's choice is simple: gain a son or gain a freak daughter. During the course of their investigations, the PCs will stumble across this plot and may be able to do something about it.

## The Adventure

It is fall. The leaves are turning and the nip in the air is a welcome relief from the heat of summer. It's time for the annual Fall Festival, celebrating the year's good harvest. The whole town is abuzz with excitement.

The fairground - a grassy field just outside of town-is hopping. Merchants and farmers from all around have made their way to the town in order to sell their wares at the festival. Fortune-tellers, con-artists, and thieves arrive, too, ready to fleece the unwary. But most exciting of all is the news that a traveling circus is on the way.

## Fun at the Fair

Within hours of the fair's opening, the grass of the fair-site has been worn away leaving a hard-packed dirt surface. Rains which drench the site from the very first day turn the site into a huge mud-puddle, but that doesn't faze the revelers: it just makes the reveling a little dirtier.

The fair was thrown together hurriedly, and walking around in it is like finding one's way through a large maze. The outer edge of the fair is a dense jumble of booths in which merchandise is offered for sale by merchants-some honest, some decidedly crooked.

Here the PCs have little trouble finding most any item or service they want, as the fair attracts merchants of all sorts from all parts of the country-there are armorers, physickers, food vendors, rug merchants, and the like.

The DM might want to encourage players to send their characters to fortune-tellers, head-bump readers, and other seers. Some of the soothsayers give accurate clues about what is to come in the adventure;

*"You can learn much in the freak show tent. I can say no more."*

*"I see a stone ... a stone will be your salvation."*

*"Know the difference between reality and illusion-such knowledge may be your salvation."*

Other seers get players worrying about utter nonsense

*"Trouble awaits you in the big-top."*

*"Beware of short women."*

*"A stranger will bring you riches."*

Within the outer circle of booths is a circle of competitive booths and magical rides. Here PCs find ring tosses, archery booths, and ten-pin games-all crooked. Here is a golden opportunity for a little intra-party competition, or some warm-up fighting with crooked booth owners (or town police determined to prevent bloodshed).

The rides in this part of the fair are quite marvelous: huge ferris wheels powered by magically-enlarged hamsters; mock train rides which, through the use of painted backdrops and illusion spells convince "travelers" they are passing through the various planes of existence. (An interesting adventure might involve actual magical travel among the planes-and random encounters with the denizens of those planes.)

The shops, competitions, and rides can provide random encounters with friend and scum alike, but the real excitement lies within the inner circle. There, fair-goers find the huge,



brightly-colored tents of Gandolfo's circus and freak show.

## What the PCs Can Learn

Allow the PCs to wander around the fair, attend the circus, interact with NPCs to their hearts' content. Eventually, they'll be led to Gandolfo's circus by events which follow. If, at any time, the players ask around about Gandolfo and his circus, they learn very little—he's a mystery man. None of the carnies know much about him and many wonder how he makes enough money to support himself and his troupe. Some think he's got to be crooked.

Many of the carnies and townsfolk are convinced Gandolfo is a sorcerer who uses magic to keep his troupe in line. His freaks? They must be magical. He must polymorph animals into things resembling men, and men into things Mother Nature never dreamed of.

If the PCs check, most of the freaks are not what they appear to be—they're permanent illusion spells. A few, however, are all too real (though by no means natural, as Gandolfo claims). These are the unfortunate victims of Gandolfo's "scientific" inquiries. These freaks don't detect as magical and *polymorph other*, *dispel magic*, and other spells players think might help, won't.

The most common topic of conversation at the fair is the Princess' disappearance. About two weeks ago, she was snatched from the castle and the whole kingdom is up in arms. She was scheduled to marry the Prince of a rival kingdom and, if she doesn't, war will result. As far as anyone in town knows, she disappeared without a trace—some even think she ran off to avoid the marriage. (In fact, Gandolfo's acrobats sneaked in later one night and spirited her away.)

## Gandolfo's Circus

**The Big Top:** The larger of the two tents is home to the circus. The entrance to the big top is on one side of the tent (call this the "front"). This entrance is manned by a fasttalking barker/ticket-seller, a couple of clowns, and six acrobats in full costume. At the least hint of trouble the barker signals to the clowns and acrobats, who descend upon rowdies and pound them quite efficiently into pulp.

Animals are kept in cages and in the tent. These can include lions, elephants, gorillas, and so on, or more unusual creatures like dinosaurs, hydras, or whatever's appropriate in your game world.

A narrow canvas tunnel leads from the animal area into the big top. This tunnel is always



guarded by three burly animalhandlers armed with whips. They have two jobs: to keep animals from escaping, and to prevent anyone from sneaking into the big top.

Inside, the audience sits on box section bleachers arranged around a single circus ring. There, three performances a day are held. The old wizened Gandolfo acts as ringmaster, introducing acrobats, clowns, animal acts—the usual circus fare. Curiously, Gandolfo's circus is quite ordinary: the clowns are awkward, graceless, and unfunny; the acrobats are skilled, but lack flair and imagination; the animal trainers can make their charges jump through hoops, but Bungle, the town drunk, can make his dog do that. The performers seem to be going through the motions before suitably unimpressed audiences.

If the PCs investigate the big top, they'll find nothing of interest beyond the fact that Gandolfo's guards are quite alert. The circus guards will discover them sneaking about in the tent and try to kick them out. If the PCs resist, play out the fight. If the party wins, they can continue their investigations (but there's still nothing to find here). If the party loses, go to *You Don't Feel Quite Like Yourself*, page 18.

**The Freak Show and Wax Works:** The circus of Gandolfo may be ordinary, but the freak show in the second tent is anything but.

There is only one entrance, and it is always guarded by two giants (actual giants, if the DM's game world allows them, really big humans if it doesn't). During the day, a dozen tough guards stand watch around the perimeter of the tent. At night, half that number guard it. You'd almost think Gandolfo had something to hide...

A barker works this tent entrance, occasionally calling out freaks from inside to parade around on a small platform by the

entrance. ("Here's a sight you won't soon forget: Shara the walrus-woman, actually born of man and woman!") The crowds and pickpockets are thick here.

Inside, customers who surrender a copper are herded into a section of the tent containing a dozen figures in costumes of several countries and several historical periods. A second barker informs the crowd that these are wax figures of heroes, villains, and prodigies from history (in original costume). The common response to this display is "Big deal—where are the freaks?"

The freaks are in a section of the tent immediately behind the display of wax figures. Passing through a curtained entranceway, PCs find filthy pens circling the rear of the tent. A large stake is driven into the ground in each pen, close to the canvas of the tent. A rope leads from this stake to a manacle clamped to the neck of the freak in the pen. The freaks sleep on straw-covered 2x2x6-foot boxes. (The boxes, used to store tools, ropes, and the like when the circus is on the road, are empty during the circus' run.)

There are about fifty freaks on display: minotaur-like creatures, beasts with human bodies and bloated insect-heads, gigantic snakes with human heads, and many, many more. All are alive, as advertised, and patrons can gawk at them, taunt them, feed them, even touch them (if they dare get close enough).

The freak show is made particularly horrifying by the constant pleading of the freaks. "Help me," they cry. "Trapped," they say. "Evil magic make me like this," they claim.

If PCs want to sneak into the freak show tent, remember that it is always guarded and Gandolfo's guards are ever vigilant. Once inside, however, they'll find themselves in the freak section in back or the wax works in front.

If they enter from the rear, they emerge in a pen with one of the freaks. Most of the freaks seem oblivious to the PCs' presence. Six of them, scattered around the tent, respond with pathetic gibbering.

The gibbering freaks are quite stupid, but they'll insist they weren't always freaks, that Gandolfo is evil, and that lightning and rocks are the source of their troubles—most of their gibbering sounds like nonsense. (The gibbering freaks are, in fact, the victims of experiments conducted by Gandolfo. The others are nothing more than the results of *permanent illusion spells* cast by the illusionist.)

Beyond the fact that most of the freaks might as well be dead to the world, searching the freak show reveals nothing of interest. Searching the





## The Circus of Gandolfo

wax works is more productive. The “wax” figures aren’t wax at all: they’re people who seem alive and yet not-alive. They can’t be revived. Nothing the PCs can do will rouse them. A close look reveals a black, triangle-shaped scar on the forehead of each body.

**The Wagons:** The circus workers- the clowns, acrobats, animal-trainers, roustabouts, barkers, and so on live in wagons parked behind the freak show tent. One of the wagons - Gandolfo’s - is quite a bit larger than the rest, and ornately decorated. Gandolfo lives here while the circus is on the road. Investigation of the wagon can be revealing.

Snoopers find a chest containing 500 cp, 240 sp, and 5 gp; a rack holding three small vials (in which PCs find potions of *animal control*); and three books: “Principles of Human Anatomy,” “Vivelectrica,” and “Heart, Mind and Soul I

Unless one of the characters is a trained scientist or alchemist, these books will be meaningless to the party. A scientist or alchemist who makes a Wisdom check understands that Gandolfo is mucking about with the life-giving properties of electricity, but more detailed information can only be gleaned by reading the books thoroughly-something for **which there just isn’t time**. Each book is worth 1 gp to an alchemist, but they’re nearly worthless to anyone else.

Tucked away among the books are two maps: one shows how to get from the town to a fortress in the mountains two days away; the other is a map of the fortress itself. The player characters must examine each book individually in order to discover the maps. If they simply stuff the books in a bag or ignore them entirely, the maps will remain hidden.

There’s a small four-drawer dresser in the wagon as well. In the top two drawers, PCs find Gandolfo’s clothing. In the third drawer down, they find several fist-sized rocks. A Wisdom check reveals that most of these are ordinary rocks, but one seems odd. It doesn’t detect as magical, but when held up to the light at just the right angle, a glow can be seen within it, (This is the powerstone of Gandolfo’s mindtransference device, but at this point, the PCs know only that it’s a strange rock.)

The bottom drawer of the dresser is locked and trapped. The lock must be opened and then each drawer, from top to bottom, must be opened in that order, or a gas is released which knocks intruders out in three melee rounds. The gas dissipates in ten minutes. (A save vs. poison

allows PCs to escape unharmed, but without any knowledge of what’s in the drawer.)

In the bottom drawer, the PCs find some very interesting correspondence between Gandolfo and the King (or other high official of the land). Reading through the scrolls, PCs learn that Gandolfo kidnapped the King’s daughter and threatened to turn her into one of his freaks. Gandolfo has two demands which must be met before he will return the Princess to her normal self-he and the Princess must be wed, and he must be named heir to the throne of the kingdom. The date on the last letter tells the PCs that, if Gandolfo is true to his word, they have but two days before the Princess is turned into a freak. Further, the Princess’ transformation will become permanent three days after that. Unless they save her, the Princess is doomed to remain a freak for the rest of her life.

### A Friend in Need

Okay, so the PCs have wandered around the fair, maybe caught the circus and freak show, bought some stuff, gotten into a little trouble. Now what? Well, as darkness falls, and before the PCs leave the fairgrounds, a thunderstorm hits the area. As everyone scrambles for shelter, a young girl sneaks up on the richest-looking PC and tries to snatch his or her purse.

This is Jane, a young girl recently orphaned. Her primary function is to drag the players into the action if they’re unwilling (or unable) to jump into the thick of things. She can also be used to save reckless players from themselves. When roleplaying Jane, make sure she endears herself to the PCs (despite getting off to a bad start). She can be the key to leading the characters into the real heart of this adventure.

A PC whose pocket is being picked can make an Intelligence check to notice the pickpocketing ragamuffin. A successful check allows the character to grab her before she can run away. Once grabbed, Jane will start crying and shaking like a leaf.

If asked, she’ll tell the characters that some bad men with scary faces threatened to take her mommy and daddy away if she didn’t give them money.

Astute questioning should reveal that the men were wearing makeup-clown makeup-and that she was to bring the money to one of the circus wagons. If the groups pursues matters, Jane tells them that her mother and father died not long ago, and their remains were recently laid to rest in the town graveyard.

The players shouldn’t have to think too hard to figure out that the men were after the remains

of Jane’s parents. Why they’d be interested in dead bodies is still open to question.

The PCs can glean background information from Jane: she’s been living in doorways and barns since her parents’ death, stealing what little food she needs-but little else. She’ll offer to take the PCs to the graveyard, if they want. (See *Everybody Loves a Clown*, below.)

A failed Intelligence check means the PC didn’t notice the little pickpocket until it was too late. She eludes the party and runs away, heading in the general direction of the big top. If they follow, the PCs find her standing transfixed near Gandolfo’s wagon. Gandolfo’s voice can be heard quite clearly.

Jane turns to the PCs as they approach, gesturing for them to keep silent. If the PCs approach Gandolfo’s wagon quietly, they can listen to what Gandolfo is saying.

“Well, my fine clowns. Tonight is the night! Go. Round up your compatriots. Dig. Bring back many bodies. Fresh bodies. Yes. Only fresh bodies will do for the Princess! She must have a special body ... my finest creation. Bring back fresh bodies or I’ll use yours!” At that, Gandolfo begins laughing maniacally.

The chilling laughter continues as the door of Gandolfo’s wagon swings open and two tough-looking clowns (Grimmas, the leader of the troupe, and Flatto, his second-in-command) emerge, shovels on shoulder. These are the scary-faced men who threatened Jane-and they planned to steal her parents’ bodies whether she paid up or not, by the way.

Grimmas: AC 7; Move 12”; M-U 4; hp 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (pick); THAC0 20; ST 10 IN 16 WS 14 DX 12 CN 11 CH 10 CM 10; AL CE. Grimmas has a *ring of protection +3*, and **knows these spells**; *charm person*, *magic missile*, *dancing lights*, *levitate*, *stinking cloud*.

Flatto: AC 9; Move 12”; M-U 3; hp 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (pick); THAC0 20; ST 10 IN 12 WS 10 DX 15 CN 18 CH 5 CM 9; AL CE. Spells: *magic missile*, *shield*, *scare*.

If the PCs are hidden, the clown-mages call out to their compatriots. Together, they lead a troupe of five 3rd-level fighters in clown makeup through the rain and muck toward the cemetery.

If the PCs are out in the open, and caught in the light from the wagon, the clowns raise a cry, bringing five 3rd-level fighters in clown makeup, armed with picks and shovels, and ten 3rd-level thief/acrobats armed with clubs also appear. The party is now surrounded. (See *Talk or Tussle*, right.)



Clowns (5): AC 8; Move 12"; FTR 3; hp 25 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (pick) or 1-4 (shovel); THAC0 18; ST 14 IN 8 WS 9 DX 13 CN 11 CH 7 CM 12; AL LE.

Acrobats (10): AC 6; Move 14"; T/A 3; hp 16 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (club); THAC0 20; ST 12 IN 13 WS 10 JDX 16 CN 10 CH 8 CM 10; AL LE.

If the PCs ignore Jane's warning to keep silent, they hear Gandolfo's voice cut off in mid-sentence inside the wagon. A sharp whistle blows, and the clowns and acrobats described above show up. (See *Talk or Tussle* right.)

At this point Jane disappears into the night, but she'll always be close at hand. Anytime the PCs get too cautious, just have her get into trouble. She'll drag them right along with her. Anytime they get into more trouble than they can handle, she'll show up to help them out.

**Talk or Tussle**

If the PCs want to fight Gandolfo's minions here and now, in the dark, in a driving rainstorm, let them; if they want to talk their way out of trouble, Gandolfo will appear, silhouetted against the light streaming from the doorway of his wagon. He'll be quite charming about the whole affair. He'll even invite them in for a cup of warming tea-just the ticket on a cold, wet

night. The tea is drugged, however.

If the PCs fail to save vs. Poison and succumb to the drugged tea, go directly to *You Don't Quite Feel Like Yourself*, page 18

A successful save vs. poison allows the PCs to fight or escape. Unless absolutely necessary, Gandolfo will have his minions fight while he remains in the background. If it appears his troops will lose, he'll try to *blind* the PCs in an attempt to tip the balance. If this doesn't put the PCs on the defensive, he'll become *invisible* and sneak off, using whatever other defensive magic may be necessary. Once away from the battle, he rounds up his roustabouts and freaks and makes a quick getaway to his fortress.

**Gandolfo**

Gandolfo: AC 2; Move 10" ILL 12; hp 38; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon or spell; THAC0 16; ST 11 IN 15 WS 13 DX 16 CN 11 CH 15 CM 14; AL CE. Gandolfo has a *wand of lightning*, *adder serpent staff*, *wings of flying* and a *ring of protection* +6. He knows these spells: *wall of fog*, *color spray*, *change self*, *light*, *hypnotism*, *hypnotic pattern*, *blindness*, *mirror image*, *magic mouth*, *misdirection*, *illusionary script*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *paralyzation*, *non-detection*, *phantasmal killer*, *minor creation*, *improved invisibility*, *maze*, *shadow*

*magic*, *permanent illusion*.

Gandolfo is a scientist and chaotic evil illusionist who takes perverse pleasure in inflicting pain and suffering on those around him.

Gandolfo is a man for whom knowledge is the be-all and end-all of existence. Being mad, however, he believes that the quest for knowledge justifies any action-no matter how immoral or abhorrent. He also believes that, having knowledge, he should wield political power over those who lack knowledge (in his mind, everyone else).

His latest experiments involve the restoration of life to non-living human and animal tissue. This can be done only by violating the graves of the recently deceased and by stealing the life from unwitting subjects, but this concerns him very little. All that matters to him is stitching together parts of dead bodies and using electricity to power an arcane magical device which transfers the minds of innocents into his unnatural creations, bringing them to life. He must keep the body of the mind-donor alive or the consciousness-and the life soon fade from the "recipient's" body.

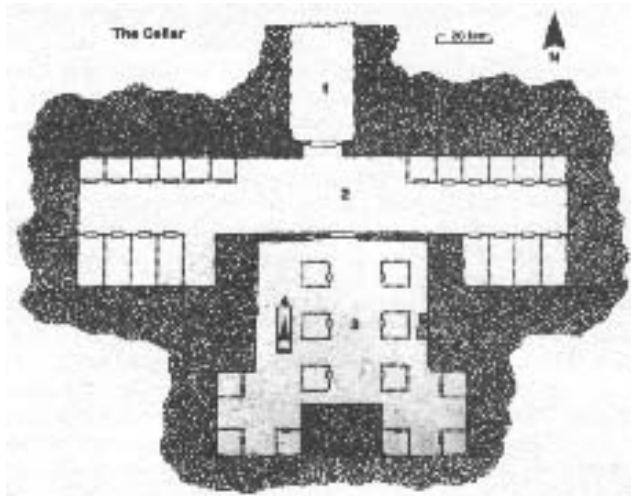
**Everybody Loves a Clown**

If the PCs avoided detection by Gandolfo or





## The Circus of Gandolfo



his minions, if they managed to escape with their lives, or if they avoided the situation above entirely, they can check out Jane's story by investigating the graveyard.

There, lightning flashes reveal the eerie silhouettes of several clowns armed with picks and shovels, digging up grave after grave. There are seven clowns in all—five flunkies plus Grimmas and Flatto (statistics given earlier)—but under the circumstances, the characters have no way of getting an exact count. Despite Gandolfo's warnings about fresh bodies, the clowns aren't being choosy about what they dig up. Carts pulled by nervous mules are piled high with bodies and skeletons.

If the PCs return to town to get help, the clowns and the bodies will be gone when they get back, but the trip won't be dull: they'll find themselves in the middle of a wild animal stampede (see *Never an Ark When You Need One*, below)

If the PCs rush right in and fight, use the clown statistics given above. Grimmas attempts to *charm* one of the PCs and turn him against his friends. He then *levitates* high above the graveyard. From this vantage point, he casts *magic missiles* at the PCs. Flatto uses his *scare* spell and then he, too, fights from a distance, using his *magic missiles*. The other clowns, hoping their leaders can keep the PCs distracted, try to sneak around behind the party and knock them silly before they can react. Check against Intelligence to notice this.

If the PCs try to talk to the clowns, Grimmas and Flatto will be happy to talk while the other clowns attack from behind. Again, an Intelligence check allows PCs to notice the attempt. Once the attack from the rear begins, the mages join the battle as detailed above.

If the PCs defeat the clowns, they can return to the circus and investigate the tents or Gandolfo's wagon, or they can go to town (see *Never an Ark When You Need One*). If they are defeated, they wake up briefly and find themselves naked, unarmed, and bound in a wagon full of dead bodies. Then, blissfully, they pass out. Go to *You Don't Quite Feel Like Yourself*, page 18.

### Never an Ark When You Need One

If the PCs were defeated in the graveyard, they miss out on this episode. If, however, they never bothered with the graveyard, left the graveyard seeking help or escaped the fight with the grave-robbing clowns, they find the town in chaos.

The excitement is caused by the lions, apes, elephants, and other circus animals stampeding through the streets. Gandolfo's four 3rd-level trainers appear to work valiantly to recapture the escaped creatures, but it's slow going, and before long nearly everyone in town is out on the streets trying to figure out what's going on—or trying to get as far away as possible

If the PCs make successful Intelligence checks, they'll notice that the animal trainers only appear to be rounding up the animals; in fact, they're guiding the animals with hidden hand signals. They want the animals rampaging through shops and homes, destroying property and trampling innocent people.

Animal Handlers (4): AC 10; Move 12"; FTR 3; #AT 1; Ding 1-4 (dagger); THAC0 18; ST 10 IN 12 WS 12 DX 13 CN 11 CH 10 CM 10; AL LE. Each handler has ingested a *potion of animal control* and has four circus animals under his command.

If the PCs try to help the animal handlers, or stop the animals on their own, they'll find

themselves under attack by the animals. If the characters are defeated, go to *You Don't Quite Feel Like Yourself*, page 18. If they stop the animal stampede (or ignore it entirely), they notice Gandolfo's acrobats lurking about, up to no good.

No check of any kind is required to see that Gandolfo's ten acrobats are acting strangely. In the darkness, it's hard to tell what they're up to, but they're clearly not helping capture the escaped animals.

One of them is rolling Bungle, the town drunk; another does an incredible flip into a first floor window and emerges with a squirming bundle; others form a human pyramid, climb onto a roof, and clamber down a chimney, emerging with more squirming bundles. One of the PCs sees an acrobat carrying a struggling Jane toward the circus. The PCs may be able to stop most of the acrobats from hot-footing it back to the fairground, but the one carrying Jane is long gone. The next time they see her, they will all be in Gandolfo's fortress.

If the PCs defeat the obviously-thieving acrobats, they discover that all of the bundles are filled with struggling children, potted drunks, and uncaring village idiots, but none of the money or jewels one might expect. Having learned this, the party can return to the circus (the tents are still there, but Gandolfo's wagon, the roustabouts, and the freaks are gone), or they can return to the graveyard (the clowns are gone and several graves are now empty).

If the PCs are defeated, go to *You Don't Quite Feel Like Yourself*.

### Gandolfo's Stronghold

At this point, things are about ready for a change of scene. Either Gandolfo has accomplished his goals in town and returned to his fortress, or his minions have been defeated, leaving him to beat a hasty retreat. One way or another, the scene shifts to Gandolfo's fortress in the mountains; one way or another, the PCs must get there.



They can accomplish this in several ways. One is by tracking Gandolfo there as he makes his escape from the town. Another is by following the map found in his wagon. Yet another is to arrive there as Gandolfo's captives.

Assuming the PCs have the map, it's a two-day journey on foot from the town to the illusionist's mountain retreat. Add a day to the trip if the PCs didn't find the map. Travel time can't be reduced by traveling on horseback—the mountainous terrain makes the going slow.

If the PCs know of the Princess' peril, a random encounter or two may be thrown in to slow them down, just to make them sweat a little. However long it takes the party to get to the fortress, Gandolfo will reach it before the PCs can catch him. When they do arrive, go to *Gandolfo's Fortress*, below.

If the PCs fell into Gandolfo's clutches, they'll have no trouble getting to the fortress. They awaken in the cellar, barely able to open their eyes.

#### You Don't Quite Feel Like Yourself

This section is to be used if the PCs have been defeated by Gandolfo's minions. It doesn't matter how far along in the adventure they were when they met defeat; they will awaken to find themselves in strange surroundings—For one thing, they will be in the cellar of Gandolfo's fortress; for another, they will be in brand new bodies: freak bodies created by Gandolfo.

When this happens, assign each player a new body from the list below, or the DM can make up an original hideous freak. Roll attributes as if creating a new character, except where noted below. Note that Intelligence and Wisdom are unchanged by the mind transfer, and no freak can have a Charisma above 5 or Comeliness above 4.

**1. Two-headed man/woman.** Two PCs' minds are implanted in a single two-headed freak body. In all other respects, this body should be treated like an ordinary human. If desired, a PC and an NPC can be combined in this body.

The two players sharing the body must roll 1d20 each time they are confronted with a situation involving choices (do we attack or not; do we go left or right, etc). The high roller gets to decide.

**2. Bigfoot.** Gandolfo took legs thick as tree-trunks and grafted them to a puny, 98-pound weakling's torso. This body is immensely fast (DX 18, Move 24"), but has little arm strength (ST 6). Can't use any weapon heavier than a long sword.

**3. Chesty.** Gandolfo took the torso that used to go with Bigfoot's legs and grafted it to the legs from the 98-pound weakling. This freak has a huge upper body (STR 18/ 50), but puny legs. It is very slow (DX 6, Move 6").

**4. Arachnoid.** This is one of Gandolfo's most hideous creations: a man's torso with six puny arms, two normal legs, and a human head. It stands upright like a man, but can manipulate several small objects simultaneously (including as many as four weapons). The catch is that no one arm has much strength (ST 4; can't use any weapon heavier than a short sword; roll randomly for other attributes). This body also has the ability to climb sheer walls at 6" per turn, but can't carry anything in its arms while doing so.

**5. Wolverman.** Put the head, feet, and paws of a giant wolverine on the shoulders of a man and you've got a wolverman. His attacks and damage are as follows: #AT 3; Dmg 2-5/2-5/2-8 (claw/claw/bite). There are two main drawbacks to this body: the wolverman can't grasp objects, and the character trapped in this body can't speak.

**6. Snake-person.** Gandolfo took a large constricting snake and grafted the head of a man and two child's arms to it. With a few days to get accustomed to this body, these tiny arms make it capable of finer manipulation than most humans can manage. It gets all thief specialties at 90 % except for picking pockets and climbing walls, which it can't do at all. Attacks and damage are: #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/2-8 (bite/ constrict). In most respects, the snake-person should be treated as a giant constrictor snake (see MMI).

#### Waking Up is Hard to Do

When the PCs awaken in their new bodies, they find that they're in metal cages. Gandolfo stands outside the cages and explains that their minds have been transferred into the bodies of freaks he's built himself. He explains that their intelligence and wisdom, at normal levels now, will drop a little bit each day. At the end of six days, he says, they'll be idiots, permanently. Then, they'll be ready to join the other freaks in his traveling circus.

When he leaves, the PCs discover that none of their abilities work. Magic spells are gone, wiped from their memories; talents and abilities requiring manual dexterity are useless because their brains don't know how to control or command their new bodies. They're like babies again.

Each day follows the same routine. Twice daily, the guards bring food. After eating their

morning meal, the PCs are let out while two clowns (not in makeup) clean their cages. After the evening meal, they're let out, two at a time, for fifteen minutes of exercise.

Each day that passes sees the PCs regain some of their abilities and/or spells. Each day, they feel a little stronger, a bit more in control, according to the following schedule:

**Day 1.** The PCs can barely open their eyes. Their senses are dulled and they feel no warmth, no cold, no pain—nothing. Intelligence and Wisdom are at normal levels, but the shock of transfer is so great that no spells can be cast. Movement is limited to rolling around on the ground. The PCs can think and mumble a few words, but that's it.

If the foes are defeated and the Princess freed on this day, give them six times normal experience points for the adventure.

**Day 2.** Senses return. Intelligence and Wisdom seem unaffected. Transfer shock is wearing off, so the concentration required for simple spells is now possible (first level spells only). The PCs can stand and speak, but they're still weak as babes. Treat them as if they had 1/4 the normal Strength and Dexterity of their new bodies, down to a minimum score of 2. Running, jumping, and fighting are pretty much out of the question; it's all they can do to walk and make a fist.

Award five times normal experience points for the successful conclusion of the adventure on this day.

**Day 3.** The PCs can now move about rather well in their new bodies. They can run, jump, fight, and hold on to objects. Consider them to be at 1/2 the normal Strength and Dexterity of their new bodies. Figure damage and 'to hit' modifiers accordingly. For the first time, PCs notice a slowing down of thought processes. The PCs lose five points of Intelligence and Wisdom. Magic-users, growing accustomed to the transfer, recover second level spells.

Award four times normal experience for the successful conclusion of the adventure on this day.

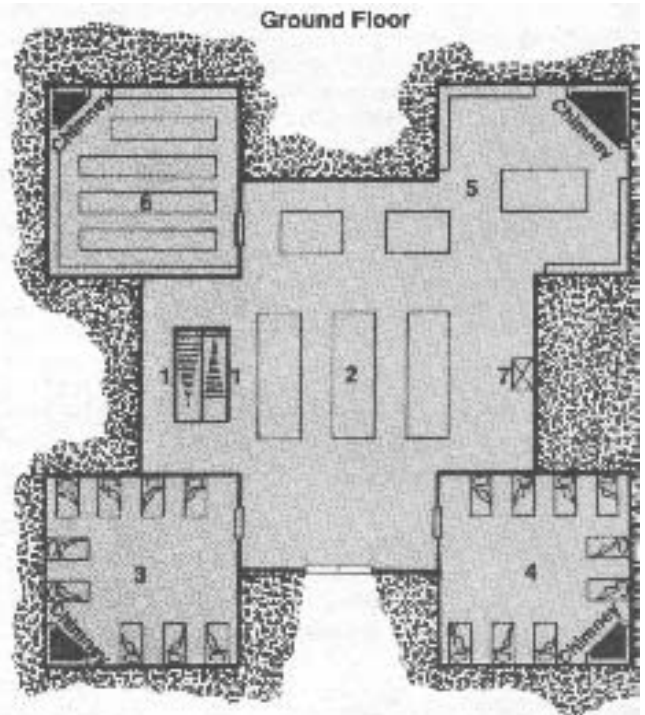
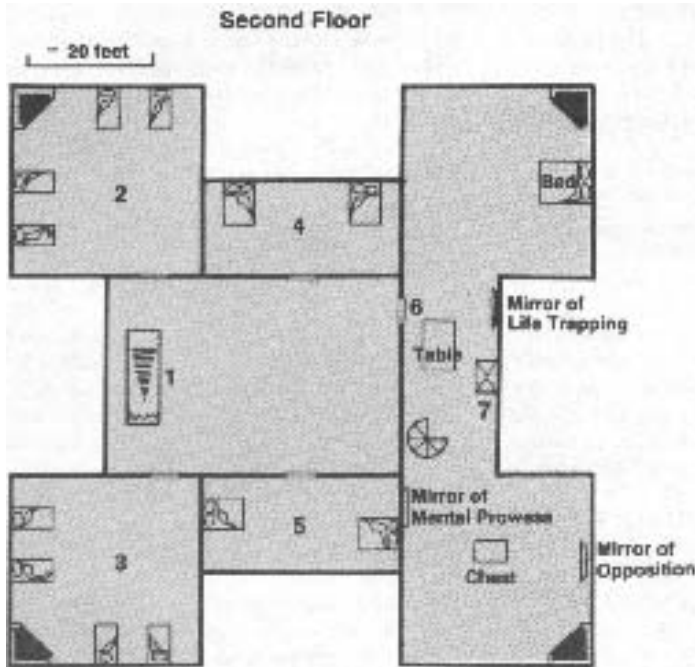
**Day 4.** Strength and Dexterity are back to normal for the new PC bodies, but Intelligence and Wisdom drop another 5 points. The PCs are now in complete control of their new bodies, but their minds are slipping away fast. Magic-users regain third level spells.

Award three times normal experience points for the successful conclusion of the adventure on this day.

**Day 5.** Strength and Dexterity are at normal level for the PCs' new bodies, but Intelligence



# The Circus of Gandolfo



and Wisdom drop another five points, down to a minimum of three. All spells return, assuming characters have the Intelligence and Wisdom to use them.

Award normal experience points for the successful conclusion of the adventure on this day.

**Day 6.** As on Day 5, but PCs are stuck in this body permanently. Normal experience points are awarded.

## Gandolfo's Fortress

The fortress is a three-story tall structure atop a mountain. The mountain can be climbed, but this takes a solid day of sweat and toil, so Gandolfo's few visitors generally follow the winding road from the mountain's base to the fortress at its peak.

A circular stone wall 20 feet high Surrounds the fortress. The wall has a threefoot-wide walkway on its inner face, from which his clowns and acrobats can *spill* boiling oil upon attackers. Ladders placed 25 feet apart provide access to the walkway from the inner courtyard.

There is only one opening in the wall - a set of heavy wooden doors 15 feet high and wide. These doors open onto a courtyard. It is about 30 feet from the wall to the corners of the fortress, about 50 feet from the wall to any side.

The fortress itself is a large stone square with four smaller squares attached to each corner. There are two ways into it: the front door, and a

secret underground passageway leading into the animal pens.

## The Cellar

Located in the bowels of the fortress keep, the cellar is home to Gandolfo's circus animals and his prisoners. A stone wall separates the animal pens from the prison cells, with a door between the two areas.

The cellar can be reached by descending the stairs from the main floor or by entering through an underground passage leading directly from the mountainside to the animal pens.

**1. Underground Passage.** The entrance to this passage is outside the fortress wall, but a heavy stone slab blocks the entrance, and a *permanent illusion* spell prevents its discovery. Two Bear-men, created by Gandolfo, stand guard in the passage, guarding this entrance against intruders. They attack any stranger who enters the tunnel.

Bear-man (2): AC 6; Move 12"; HD 6 + 6.; hp 40; #AT 3; Ding 1-8/1-9/1-12; THACO 13; SA hugs 2-16; SD none; MR standard; AL N. The bear-man appears as the body of a large bear with a human head. Treat it as a *cave bear* (MMI) with IN 12.

**2. Animal Pens.** The circus animals are kept here when the circus isn't on the road. There are twenty wooden pens in all: 12 10X10 foot pens for smaller animals, 8 10X20 foot pens for

larger ones. A door connects the animal area with the prison area (2).

The PCs may think to set the animals free. If they do, the well-trained beasts will just sit in their pens awaiting a command from their trainers. If any of the players have any magical or alchemical means of *controlling animals*, they can get them moving. Apes and the like can be herded into the fortress proper, where they'll keep Gandolfo's minions busy. Larger animals will stampede out the secret entrance.

**3. Prison Area.** Gandolfo keeps his freaks, as well as captives awaiting mindtransference, in cells here. The six 10X10 foot cells in the corners are of wood just like the animal pens. When the PCs awaken, there are two freaks in each of these pens.

Freeing the freaks will keep Gandolfo's cellar guards and anyone on the main floor occupied for hours, allowing the PCs to turn all their attention to Gandolfo and the Princess. Gandolfo's troops on the second floor are unaffected by the freaks.

Six cells in the middle of the room are made of metal bars. This is where captured PCs awaken, two to a cell. Prisoners awaiting mind-transference fill the other three cells. The PCs recognize some of these prisoners, including Bungle and Jane, as residents of the town. Jane is just small enough to squeeze between the bars and escape, if that will help the party's cause.



**4. Dumbwaiter.** Against the east wall of the cellar, PCs find a dumbwaiter which carries food from the kitchen upstairs to the animal handlers and guards in the cellar. A system of ropes and pulleys allows heavy loads to be raised or lowered easily.

**5. Stairway.** To the west is a stairway which leads to the main floor. Entrance to the upper floor is blocked by a locked, wooden trap door.

The key to the door is in the possession of one of Gandolfo's guards. Two 6th-level fighters armed with long sword and spear stand guard day and night, but they are not very attentive, even nodding off occasionally. The guards taunt the prisoners unmercifully, and have even been known to let prisoners and freaks loose, prodding them into fighting one another anything to stave off boredom. These guards are quite stupid and shouldn't be too hard to outwit.

Guards (2): AC 8; Move 12"; FTR 6; hp 40; #AT 1; Dmg 2-9 (long sword) or 2-7 (spear); THAC0 16; ST 16 IN 6 WS 5 DX 12 CN 14 CH 4 CM 5; AL LE. Guards have leather armor and do + 1 to damage for their strength.

#### Ground Floor

The fortress' front door opens onto a large dining hall. Once inside, PCs find the following.

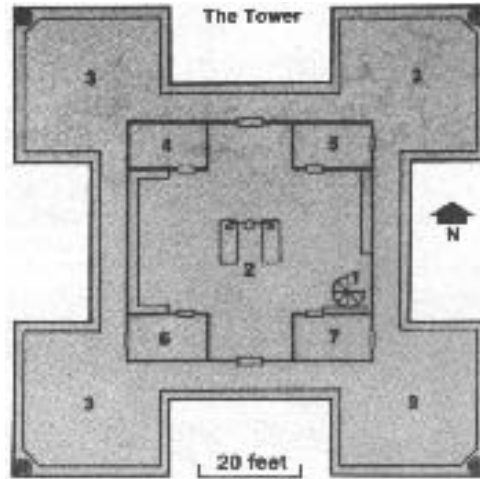
**1, Stairway.** To the west is a stairway which also leads to the upper stories. A locked trap door to the west seals off the staircase leading down to the cellar.

**2. Communal Dining Area.** Three tables nearly 20 feet long dominate the room. Here, PCs will find five of Gandolfo's clowns (not in makeup), plus as many as survived the earlier portions of the adventure. They are scattered about the room, eating.

**3 - 4. Acrobat Living Quarters.** To left and right of the front door are two rooms, 30 X 30 feet. A large fireplace dominates one corner of each room, providing heat for the occupants.

Gandolfo's acrobats live in these rooms, putting them in perfect position to guard the fortress. During the day, there are four acrobats armed with short swords in the west room. The survivors of the adventure in the town (if any) are recovering in the east room. They, too, have short swords. Use the acrobat statistics provided above, with 1-6 damage for short swords. At night, ten acrobats sleep in each room.

**5. Kitchen.** The irregularly shaped area to the north and east of the main floor is used for the preparation of food. A large fireplace is used for cooking. During the animal handlers prepare food here for Gandolfo's minions as well as for



the animals in the cellar. They have no weapons, but can use their large wooden spoons like clubs for 1-4 damage.

**6. Pantry.** Food is stored here in the northwest corner of the fortress. There are rats scurrying about in here (as there are throughout the fortress), but nothing of interest to the PCs.

**7. Dumbwaiter.** Against the eastern wall is the dumbwaiter which carries food down to the cellar and up to the second floor.

#### The Second Floor

**1. Staircase.** To the west is a staircase leading down to the main floor.

**2 - 3. Clown Living Quarters.** Five of Gandolfo's clowns sleep in each of these rooms. This puts them in position to defend the upper levels of the fortress from intruders. During the day, two clowns can be found in room 2 and three clowns in room 3. If PCs engage the clowns in combat, each clown will grab a club kept handy for just such emergencies. One clown in each room has a leather pouch filled with *dust of sneezing and choking*. A Dexterity check allows a PC to grab the pouch before it can be used, however. One of the clowns in room 3 has a *horn of bubbles* as well.

**4 - 5. Animal Handler Living Quarters.** The animal handlers live here in relative luxury. Two handlers sleep in each room, but only one will be found in each during the day. (The other two serve in the kitchen.) The animal handlers are unarmed, but in room 4 a cat will leap from hiding (hissing and spitting, claws extended) as soon as a stranger enters, giving Gandolfo's men the initiative for a first attack. In room 5, the PCs find a *ring of mammal control* in a dresser drawer.

**Gandolfo's Living Quarters.** A locked door provides access to Gandolfo's living quarters. The door is, in a sense, trapped; a *mirror of life trapping* is hung on the wall directly opposite the door. PCs entering the room must look into it unless they specify they're covering their eyes or they make a Dexterity check, allowing the PCs to duck out of the way.

The illusionist sleeps in the north end of the elongated room. Here, the room appears quite sumptuous. The south end is strangely empty. In the area between is a spiral staircase leading up to the tower laboratory and a table where Gandolfo eats.

If the players take the time to investigate they will find all of their clothes, weapons, and magical items (if any) in a locked (but not trapped) chest in the middle of the southern room. Burlap cloths cover the east and west walls. Behind each cloth is a Mirror: a *mirror of opposition* to the east, and a *mirror of mental prowess* to the west.

**7. Dumbwaiter.** The dumbwaiter brings food from the main floor directly to Gandolfo's quarters.

**8. Stairway.** A narrow circular stairway leads up to a trap door which is always kept locked. This is the door to Gandolfo's tower laboratory.

#### The Tower Laboratory

The fortress tower is just 50 X 50 feet and sits like a cap atop the lower floors.

**1. Spiral Staircase.** A narrow, winding staircase leads from the tower down to Gandolfo's quarters on the second floor.

**2. The Lab.** Here Gandolfo turns ordinary animals and children into hideously deformed mockeries of nature's works. His lab is a mad scientist's dream: wooden workbenches against



## The Circus of Gandolfo

the west wall and to either side of the spiral staircase are covered with scientific and medical paraphernalia. Here can be found beakers containing: *potions of extra healing* and of *invulnerability*; several different poisons; racks hold scalpels, bone saws, and large needles with gut thread attached to them; fluid-filled glass containers hold disembodied hands, arms, legs, and even heads; beakers, flasks, ceramic bowls, and more are piled on the workbenches.

Two doors, one to the north and one to the south, lead from the tower to a balcony. Four 10x15-foot rooms sit in the corners of the tower, open to the elements.

When the players enter the lab, they find Gandolfo hunched over Bungle, whose unconscious form lies prostrate on one of two metal operating tables in the center of the room. There is a snake-man freak body on the other table.

Between the two tables is a small metal box. Gandolfo turns and begins fiddling with something inside it. There is a receptacle in the box which, investigation and an Intelligence check will reveal, is the same size and shape as the strange rock from Gandolfo's wagon.

Two wires snake from a metal pole on the roof of the fortress, through small holes in the back of the box, and into the receptacle. Two more wires attached to the receptacle extend from the box to the operating tables. Each wire ends in a small pyramid-shaped plug one of which adheres to the snakeman's forehead; the other is attached to Bungle's forehead. This is the mindtransference apparatus of Gandolfo.

The metal pole on the roof is a lightning rod. When lightning hits it, electrical current flows through the wires to the receptacle, energizing the magic stone. When the stone is placed in the receptacle, the device is ready to operate. By turning the stone clockwise, the current flows to the donor mind and then to the recipient body. Turning the stone counter-clockwise reverses the process, and returns the mind to the donor.

If the PCs were captured earlier, the stone is already in the receptacle, and Gandolfo is beginning the transference as they enter. He's energizing the stone with his *wand of lightning*. If the PCs weren't captured, Gandolfo turns to them and hisses, "Where is the powerstone?" He then attacks the party, first calling up *phantasmal killers*, then using all the magic at his disposal.

If the PCs appear to be winning the fight, Gandolfo *paralyzes* as many of them as he can and then dashes into room 4 or 7 (detailed below), whichever is closer.

**3. Balcony.** The balcony is ten feet wide at its narrowest point and 20 feet wide at its widest. A three foot stone wall rises from its outer edge. Chimneys rise above the top of the tower at all four corners.

Two doors, one to the north and one to the south, allow access to the lab from the balcony. Large windows in each of the four rooms in the lab can also provide access. They are kept wide open, to allow frigid mountain air into the cold-storage rooms.

**4. Cold-Storage Room.** Here the PCs will find their real, mindless, bodies. If the original body "dies" before the transfer becomes permanent, the transplanted mind dies as well. These bodies can't be raised or animated, but physical damage can be inflicted upon them as usual.

If the battle in the lab goes against Gandolfo, he may dash into the room, locking the door behind him. As the PCs try to get in, he'll start slashing away at the bodies with a scalpel, doing 1-4 points of damage per melee round to each PC body. If a body "dies" before the PCs get it, the character dies.

Gandolfo will stop as soon as the PCs burst in, however, and leap onto the balcony and over the edge. Once out of sight, he will use his *wings of flying* to escape but he will be back some day.

**5. Cold Storage Room.** As above, except the four bodies in the room are those of strangers.

**6. Cold Storage Room.** As above, except the PCs find just two bodies.

**7. Cold Storage Room.** As above except this room is nearly empty. It is occupied by one of Gandolfo's freaks: an amorphous, gelatinous, translucent yellow blob. The Princess' body is in a clear coffin-like box propped against one wall.

A human brain pulsates within the blob. Four black eye-spots float on the surface of the blob, connected to the brain by thin bundles of nerve tissue. As the party enters the room, these spots are clustered on the portion of the blob facing the Princess' body, but they dart quickly to the surface facing the player characters. An Intelligence check reveals that the blob must be the new body of the Princess.

If the battle in the lab goes against him, Gandolfo may run into this room, locking the door behind him. Once inside, he uses his *change self* spell to make himself look like the orphan Jane. Then he grabs the Princess' body.

"Quick, look, Gandolfo leaped off the balcony!" the illusionist will say, hoping the PCs will rush to see. If they do, he will try to get one or two to help him with the Princess. His plan is

to split the party up and, if successful, take the PCs out a few at a time. If they see through his disguise, he'll press the head of his *serpent staff* against his captive's throat and say, "Leave now or the Princess dies!"

If the party hesitates, even for an instant, he throws the Princess' body at them, leaps onto the balcony, and falls out of sight. When he can no longer be seen, he activates his wings of flying and departs, but rest assured he'll be back some day...

### Is That All There Is?

If you want to use this adventure as the first episode in a continuing campaign, Gandolfo's defeat isn't strictly necessary. It is sufficient for the PCs to free the Princess, reverse the magical process that transformed her and the characters into monsters, and escape with their lives.

Assuming they freed the Princess, the PCs are due a big reward from the King - a plot of land, knighthood, lots of money, whatever will really impress a party in the DM's particular campaign world. The King could even become the party's patron. A good first mission would be to track down and capture Gandolfo.

Alternatively, a campaign could revolve around PCs stuck in freak bodies. Adventures could involve the PCs learning to cope with being monsters in the eyes of the world, or trying to get their real bodies back. Meanwhile, good luck to them in the great, big, bigoted world!

However the campaign progresses, a party that didn't kill Gandolfo made a new and immensely powerful enemy. Maybe someday they'll have the power to confront Gandolfo again and send him to his well-deserved doom.





*The House of Long Knives* is designed for characters with a combined total of about 80 levels, with an average level of 10. In this scenario, PCs get to confront the most dangerous monsters of all: other adventurers. In this case, the other adventurers are a few retired adventurers and their followers. The kicker is that they all happen to compose an Assassin's Guildhall.

## DM's Information

Some PCs with ability in thief-like skills are absolutely necessary to play this adventure. Check the number and quality of magic items available to the NPCs. If the PCs of comparable levels have less, decrease the amount available to the NPCs. If the PCs have more, beef up the NPCs with some additional weapons, armor, and other magic.

Getting into this adventure can be difficult without the right preparation. The PCs have to have some reason to interact with assassins. A few possibilities are listed below under *Reasons for Interaction*.

## The Town

The town remains nameless for convenience in fitting it into an ongoing campaign. However, there are some aspects that are important for the success of the adventure.

Politically, the town is essentially Lawful Neutral in general alignment. No outright Chaotic Evils are tolerated, but anything else goes. They don't care what anyone does, actually, as long as he is Lawful about it.

Laws of the town include prohibitions against mass-destruction magic. *Move earth, weather control, summoning* large monsters, massive *fireballs, meteor swarms, ice storms*, and the like are discouraged because they bother the neighbors. **Carrying most personal weapons** is permissible, but long weapons like halberds are forbidden unless in the hands of the town watch.

The town watch consists of relatively low-level fighters, but they have high-level backup in the rulers of the town, most of whom are retired adventurers who don't like to be disturbed, and react badly to anyone responsible for disturbing them.

The Assassins' Guild is tolerated as a necessary evil. The town fathers wouldn't mind seeing it eradicated, but some of them have made some use of the assassins, and so do not want to actively persecute them for fear of revealing their previous connections.

Geographically, the town is very old and large, with a population in excess of 10,000. It is

an old "Imperial" city, either formerly or currently a part of a larger empire that created good roads, aqueducts, and-most importantly-planned cities with sewage systems. The town is big enough to have several districts, including at least one affluent district somewhat separate from the masses.

## The Adventure

### Reasons for Interaction

Most residents and transients of a town can live their whole lives without ever contacting the Assassins. Maneuvering the PCs into contact with the Assassins can be handled in one of the following ways.

1. A player character assassin is contacted by a representative of the Prime Assassin of the Guild (see Character lists). Herban is ready to make his move to become Guildmaster, but needs help to ensure his success in forming his new order. The PC assassin, and any friends he might bring along (the party) would gain great reward (Herban offers 1/5 the wealth of the treasury) for helping him in his endeavor.

This is a good chance for a party to destroy an assassin's guild by pretending to play along, or just assist the usurper and claim their reward.

2. An NPC friend of a player character has just been assassinated. Another friend of the PC saw the act, and also remembers seeing a person looking like the assassin hanging around the Cup and Blade (or even going into the House of the Onyx Court).

3. Same as above, except an important city official or local noble is the victim, and the city will pay well to bring his murderer to justice.

4. Have one of the 5th level assassins provided with the adventure attempt to kill one of the party, perhaps in retaliation for some previous activity of the PC, or even by mistake. That should be all that's needed to get them interested in destroying the power of the assassins in the town.

5. If the party has many demi-human members, state that some of the demi-human assassins betrayed by Kilburn when he took over the Guild are friends or relatives of the player characters. This gives the players a good revenge motive.

### Rumors and Knowledge

Once the PCs have decided that the Assassins must go, they have to find them. The following material can be passed on to the players if they made a determined attempt to discover

something about the Assassins' Guild or about Kilburn the Wizard.

Asking around town will gain the following information.

### About Assassins

Assassins tend to work at night. (*Common knowledge.*)

Assassins can usually be contacted at the Cup and Blade. (*Only available to someone who puts on a convincing act of needing and assassin and of being discreet.*)

There has been a shakeup recently in the Guild. Some new guy is the Guildmaster. (*Only available to a thief, an assassin, or someone with good street contacts.*)

The city watch claims to have raided the Assassin's Guildhall and put them out of business. (*Common gossip, particularly among the city watch.*)

When the city watch raided the Guildhall, it had just been abandoned. All they caught were a couple of old half-orc assassins without any "kills" left in them. Not a single human assassin was found- (*Available to anyone with connections in the city government.*)

A lot of known town toughs with rumored connections with the Assassins are now missing. All were demi-humans. (*Common gossip among beggars, thieves, assassins, and habitues of most of the lower dives in town.*)

### About the People at the House of the Onyx Court

The new owner, Kilburn the Wizard, and his followers moved in about six months ago. They keep to themselves- (*Available from anyone in the neighborhood.*)

It seems like the people at the House of the Onyx Court are mostly active at night. (*Available from anyone in the neighborhood who has cause to be out at night.*)

The new owner of the House of the Onyx Court is very tight with a coin. He's an old adventurer, so he's probably loaded. (*Available from local tradesmen.*)

Kilburn the Wizard is a powerful magic-user who made a good reputation as an adventurer. He's definitely Lawful, though some of his actions seem pretty evil as well. Now he seems to be acting more like a hermit, refusing to have anything to do with mere adventurers. (*Available from anyone who consorts with adventurers.*)

Kilburn the Wizard didn't like working with demihumans of any kind, no matter what alignment. (*Available from adventurers, particularly local demi-human adventurers.*)





Apparently there's a priest at the House of the Onyx Court who worships some evil Darkness god. (Available from anyone who has some reason to sense the presence of evil gods.)

Parter Blacksword is the Guard Captain at the House of the Onyx Court. He's a good, if bloodthirsty, fighter. Good man to have on one's side, not one to make an enemy. (Available from any local fighter).

## NPC Capsules

### The Guildmaster

Kilburn the Wizard is the younger son of a noble from another province. He left his family as a teenager and spent several years as an assassin. His upper class upbringing and connections gave him access to victims that no other assassin could have, and at the same time shielded him from discovery.

When he reached 12th level, he realized that his further progress in his own guild was blocked by the current Guildmaster and Prime Assassin. As a Chief Assassin, he learned some of the secrets of magic, and realized that he had some aptitude for it. He left his old city and Guildhall and began the slow road to success as an adventuring magician, using a new city (this one) where he was not known as his base. He gained the 13th level of proficiency; then switched once again to the assassin's art and joined the Guildhall in his new home city as a Chief Assassin by proving his proficiency at some missions that the old Guildmaster, Rogir the Ruthless, set for him.

He worked his way up to Prime Assassin and then used his magic to dispose of Rogir. Kilburn is now a 14th level assassin, the Guildmaster.

Kilburn is heavily prejudiced against demi-humans. He arranged for the capture or elimination of all the demi-humans in the Guild. Then he moved the Guildhall to his new residence and allowed the town watch to raid the old one.

Kilburn maintains his identity to the outside world as a reclusive wizard who has retired to a townhouse. He is known as a magic-user in adventuring circles-most of his old comrades have no knowledge of his status as an assassin.

Kilburn now looks to be in his late 40s, still strong and vital. Many of his former comrades (he has very few friends) wondered from time to time why he took up the magic arts instead of fighting, but no one denies his ability with magic.

**Kilburn the Wizard (Assassin Guildmaster):** AC 1; Move 12"; M-U 13/ASN 14; hp 60; #AT 1; Ding by weapon; THAC0 11;

ST 14 IN 18 WS 12 DX 17 CN 15 CH 15; AL LE. Kilburn has *bracers of defense* AC 2, *ring of spell turning*, *ring of protection + 1*, *periapt of proof against poison +2*, *bastard sword +3*, *wand of secret door and trap location* with 52 charges, and a *wand of conjuration* with 49 charges. Kilburn knows the following spells.

Level 1: *Magic missile* (x2), *sleep*, *charm person*, *unseen servant*

Level 2: *Detect invisibility*, *ESP knock*, *strength*, *invisibility*

Level 3: *Explosive runes*, *slow*, *protection from normal missiles*, *fly*, *haste*

Level 4: *Charm monster*, *dimension door*, *polymorph self*, *wizard eye*

Level 5: *Telekinesis*, *passwall*, *feeblemind*, *wall of force*

Level 6: *death*, *disintegrate*

### The Lieutenant

Herban Redhand has been a member of this Assassins' Guildhall from his start as an assassin, slowly working his way up through the ranks to the position of Prime Assassin. Everyone felt that he was the natural successor to Old Rogir, and he was as surprised as any to find the newcomer Kilburn installed in Rogir's place one morning.

Since the usurpation, Herban has given Kilburn no excuse to think him disloyal, but plots secretly to depose him. In game terms, Herban has all the experience points necessary to become a Guildmaster. He could leave (taking almost half the guild with him) and set up in another town, but he has lived all his life in this one, and is determined to be the Assassin Guildmaster in this town, preferably over Kilburn's dead body.

Herban is a tall, strong, square-jawed, bluff sort of fellow. He looks more like a farmer than someone who would stab his mother for a song. In fact, he was a farmer in his youth and often masquerades as a country man when making his initial contacts and gathering information.

**Herban Redhand:** AC 3; Move 9"; ASN 13; hp 65; #AT 1; Ding by weapon; THAC0 10; ST 17 IN 15 WS 16 DX 16 CN 18 CH 16; AL NE. Herban has *leather + 1*, *sword + 2*, *shield +3*, *ring of feather falling*, *ring of water walking*, and *boots of elvenkind*.

### The Chaplain

One new addition to the membership of the Guild since Kilburn's advent is Zebahn Darkfeeder, Priest of the Lawful Evil god Aiburn Darkspawn. Kilburn and Zebahn are old adventuring friends, and when Kilburn used his

treasure-hunting earnings to set up his house in the city, he installed Zebahn as his chaplain.

Zebahn is a slim, cold-featured man who loves the dark. He is rarely up and about in the daytime, preferring to keep his activities to the time presided over by his deity.

Unlike most of Kilburn's former adventuring associates, Zebahn knew of his assassin's suited his own inclinations. He likes being a chaplain to assassins.

**Zebahn Darkfeeder.** AC 3; Move 9"; CLE 10; hp 34; #AT 1; Ding by weapon; THAC0 12; ST 7 IN 13 WS 16 DX 10 CN 13 CH 12; AL LE. Zebahn has *chain + 1*, *mace +2*, *staff of commanding* with 9 charges, and a *scroll of neutralize poison* with three spells on it. He knows the following spells.

Level 1: *Bless*, *curse*, *cure light wounds*, *darkness*

Level 2: *Augury*, *know alignment*, *slow poison*, *speak with animals*

Level 3: *Cause disease*, *dispel magic*, *speak with dead*

Level 4: *Cause serious wounds*, *divination*, *protection from good 10' radius*

Level 5: *Flame strike*

### The Guard Captain

Parter Blacksword is another former adventuring associate of Kilburn's. He was not aware of Kilburn's assassin heritage until Kilburn approached him to assume command of the guard of Kilburn's house. This new knowledge does not bother Parter unduly.

A doughty fighter, Parter is not overly bright. He gets along well with the fighters under his command, genially disdains the thieves and, to a lesser extent, the assassins, and stays out of the inner politics of the Guildhall. His job is to protect the house, which he does to the best of his ability. He would like more men under his command, but Kilburn's parsimonious nature does not allow for a bigger budget.

Parter is a solidly-built, balding man with light-colored hair (what's left of it) and the reddened nose of someone who has knocked back many ale mugs over the years. He is in his later forties, but still quick.

Parter Blacksword: AC 0; Move 6"; FTR 10; hp 55; #AT 1; Ding by weapon; THAC0 11; ST 15 IN 10 WS 11 DX 15 CN 15 CH 14; AL LE. Parter has *chain +2*, *shield +2*, *sword +11+3 vs. regenerating creatures*, and a *ring of regeneration*.

### The Visiting Monk

Yura recently failed to supplant the Master of the North Winds and is visiting his old comrade



Zebahn while he contemplates what he did wrong. He does not act as an assassin and stays out of Hall politics, but of course considers the assassins his hosts. Yura will do anything to assist them in defending their home.

Yura is in his mid-thirties, short and blocky, with sallow skin and short-cut hair. He is always looking about him from the corners of his eyes, and looks ready to spring like a cat at the source of any disturbance.

**Yura, Master of Dragons:** AC 4; Move 22"; MON 8; hp 25; #AT 3/2; Dmg 2/12 w/hand, 2/7 w/spear; THAC0 16; ST 15 IN 10 WS 16 DX 17 CN 14 CH 10; AL LE. Yura has a *spear + 1* and a *ring of flying*.

### The Guildsmen

The Guildmaster has a polyglot staff of followers to assist him. Some Kilburn brought with him, others remain from the previous establishment. In his house are the individuals listed on the *Assassins' Guild Members* table,

Guildsman Winclor is the former official Guildhall Mage, now Kilburn's "assistant." He has a *ring of spell turning* and a *wand of frost* with 33 charges. His spells are: *charm person*, *detect magic*, *unseen servant*, *read magic*, *scare*, *invisibility*, *clairaudience*, and *dispel magic*.

Guildsman Xerxan is Kilburn's apprentice. He has a scroll on which is inscribed the spells *magic missile* (x2), *shield*, *hold portal* (x2), *feather fall*, and *sleep*. He has these spells memorized; *detect magic*, *read magic*, and *locate object*.

## Encounter Key

### The House

The House of Long Knives is not called that by any of its neighbors. It is known as the House of the Onyx Court, named for the unique crystals in its central courtyard garden. It is a noble's villa, bought by Kilburn the Wizard out of his adventurer's loot.

Assassins either enter and leave the villa in disguise, or move through the tunnel which connects to the city's main sewer. This sewer in turn connects to the Cup and Blade tavern, which has been a contact point for the Assassin's Guild in the city for centuries.

The House is large and rectangular, surrounding an interior courtyard. It is two stories tall. Beneath ground level is a basement.

### Ground Floor

#### 1. Garden

Assassin's Guild Members

Name	AC	Level	hp	AL	THAC0	Notes
Jack	7	A1	3	LE	20	
Timas*	7	A1	5	NE	20	
Dela	7	A1	4	NE	20	
Abal	7	A5	15	LE	19	sword + 1
Barda*	7	A5	16	NE	18	leather + 1
Corrol	6	A5	13	LE	19	axe + 2
Echan	7	A5	17	NE	17	
Fodel*	7	A5	15	NE	19	sword +2, cloak of displacement
Garbo	5	9	30	LE	14	
Hilga	9	35	NE	16		leather +1, shield +2, sword +1 (type D venom if time allows)
Iger	4	9	32	LE	15	
Kilray*	8	T3	13	NE	20	sword + 1
Leon	8	T3	15	NE	19	ring of protection +1
Marik	7	T5	18	LE	19	dagger +1
Neel*	8	T5	20'	NE	18	ring of protection +2
Obert	6	T5	17	NE	19	
Quent*	4	F5	28	NE		Chain +1, sword +1
Rogas	3	F5	27	LE	15	
Shuran*	4	F5	29	NE	16	STR 18/55, +2 hit/ +3 Dmg
Uhrkan	4	F5	32	NE	14	
Veltor*	4	F5	31	NE	16	See text under <i>Guildsmen</i>
Windor*	9	M6	14	NE	19	See text under <i>Guildsmen</i>
Xerxan	9	M3	7	LE	20	

\* These members are sure supporters of Herban in a takeover attempt.

This rectangular area is overgrown and neglected since Kilburn moved in. Essentially a night person, he doesn't much care what it looks like during the day. However, all shrubs and growth within ten feet of the house have been cleared out and replaced with flagstones. On nice days, the guards and some of the other personnel use it for taking care of small weapon and armor repair chores, or for eating their meals. At night the gate guard and door guard take turns keeping an eye on it.

#### 2. Stables

The stables have space for seven animals, but the only ones kept here full time are the personal mounts of Kilburn, Zebahn, and Parter. Parter's horse is an aging heavy warhorse, left over from his days as an adventurer. The other two horses are well-bred medium horses with no combat training. The fighters employed as guards take turns acting as grooms for the horses.

#### 3. Portico

This sheltered overhang allows visiting riders to get off their horses under cover before entering the house. The horses are then led to the stable.

#### 4. Front Hall

This rectangular room is empty except for a couple of hard stools along the north wall and a small table. The north door leads into the courtyard, the west door into Kilburn's office, and the east door leads to the old great hall. There are three shuttered windows along the north wall which can be opened to bring in the breeze from the courtyard on hot days.

#### 5. The Office

Kilburn uses this room only for meeting with outsiders. It has a half-dozen hard chairs and a table, which Kilburn sits behind at such meetings. A hutch built into the south wall holds some second-rate cups and other crockery to serve refreshments in if Kilburn is feeling hospitable (a rare event). The door in the north wall leads to the Courtyard; it is flanked by two shuttered windows which open into the courtyard. The door in the east wall leads to the front hall, and the west door leads to the hallway.



## 6. Hallway

This connects the stairs going down to the cellars, the stairs going up to the second floor, Kilburn's office, the Assassins' Quarters, and Kilburn's magic laboratory.

## 7. The Magic Laboratory

This is a two-floor-tall room in which Kilburn and his apprentice Xerxan work. Currently under preparation are two scrolls for Xerxan to use, though nothing has been done with them for a while. The place is fairly empty, with just three workbenches and two reference works on a shelf built into the east wall. The prominent item of furniture is a luxurious couch on which Kilburn meditates. Xerxan is supposed to sleep on a mattress in the northeast corner of the room, but uses the couch whenever he's sure Kilburn won't know it.

On the central bench is a sword. It was stolen recently from a victim of the Guild and found to be magic. Kilburn and Xerxan are attempting to discover its abilities, but so far have had little luck. The weapon is actually a *sword* +3, IN 13, EGO 5, AL NG. Its special abilities are *detect magic 1" radius*, and *detect secret doors in a 1/2 radius*.

Along the north wall are stairs leading to Kilburn's quarters on the second floor, and in the northwest corner is a door leading to a stairway down to the cellar treasury. The door is opened with a latchstring which must be pulled down quickly, parallel to the door. Pulling slowly, or in any other direction, moves a bar across the door and rings an alarm bell in the laboratory, in Kilburn's quarters, and in the treasure room itself. Only Kilburn is supposed to know the secret of the latch, but Xerxan once saw him work it.

Against the south wall of the room is a gong, a chime, and a bell. These are the instruments that ring when various traps go off around the house. Each has a distinctive tone.

## 8. Assassins' Quarters

This area consists of four rooms arranged around a "T"-shaped corridor.

**8a. Apprentice Room.** The two male apprentices, Jack and Timas, have the dubious privilege of sharing their room with the garderobe. Since there are only two of them and the room is spacious, it also acts as an informal lounge for the whole group of assassins. As apprentices, neither of these lads has any money or special goods of his own. However, the table used for general gambling might have coins on it, depending on the time of day it is discovered.

**8b. Women's Room.** The three female assassins, Dela, Barda, and Hilga, share this room. It is decorated like a highborn lady's boudoir, to get the women accustomed to the sort of places they might find themselves in the course of their work. As the apprentice assassin, Dela gets to keep it clean.

While Dela has no more possessions than do the male apprentices, Barda has a jewel box in which she keeps 10 gp, a gem worth 32 gp, a gem worth 20 gp, and a necklace worth 1,600 gp (although she doesn't realize its value).

As the senior assassin in the room, Hilga has certain privileges, including a lock box that no one can open but herself. In it she keeps a bracelet worth 150 gp, 3 pp, 43 ep, and the first silver piece she ever stole. It also holds a *chime of opening* with 30 charges, unless Hilga is away on a mission in which she knows she might have to open magically locked rooms or devices.

**8c. Senior Assassins' Room.** The two male ninth-level assassins, Garbo and Iger, share this room. It is sparsely furnished with beds and chests for their gear. Along the south wall, Iger has a small poisons workbench set up. Iger provides the blade venom for the traps to the treasure room.

In Garbo's chest is an ornate, beaded and bangled cloak which is actually a *robe of blending* that he uses on special missions. In a secret compartment in the chest is 50 pp and 90 sp. On Iger's workbench is an unassuming, half-empty bottle which actually holds two applications of *Keoghtom's ointment*. In his chest, Iger has hidden 50 gp and a cloak pin worth 760 gp.

**8d. Thugs' Room.** The four male thugs, Eachan, Fodel, Abal, and Corrol, share this room. It is furnished similarly to the Senior Assassins' Room. Abal's chest contains an old black cloak, actually *wings of flying* for which he knows the command word. None of the other assassins even know he has the wings.

The four thugs also have an average of 30 gp and 80 sp hidden about their mattresses and chests.

## 9. Armory

This combination smithy and weapons storage area is presided over by the resident blacksmith, Jonas, who lives overhead. Jonas is a former 4th-level assassin, crippled during a job, who learned smithy work to support himself. He has lost most of his assassin's skills, though he still likes to trade stories with the working assassins.

Weapons stored here are primarily extras and specialty polearms not normally needed.

Personal weapons are kept by the various individuals. This area also contains the stairs leading to the fighters' and thieves' sleeping rooms above.

## 10. Servants' Quarters

This open area is cut up into smaller areas by various improvised screens. The kitchen servants live here. A diligent search will uncover a total of 42 sp hidden here and there about the area by different servants.

## 11. Main Garderobe

This two-hole "outhouse" is built into the servant area so that those who must use it (i.e., everyone but the assassins, who have their own) can stay out of inclement weather. It is built so that the upstairs soil can pass through a well to the cess pit below without disturbing those using the garderobe on the ground floor.

## 12. Kitchen

The kitchen is attended by a staff of two cooks and five servers, all of whom sleep in the servants' quarters. There are two fireplaces on the east wall with attendant ovens, and all the other paraphernalia of a medieval kitchen.

On the west wall is the door to the servants' quarters and a panel which can be opened to allow slops to be dumped in the well from the second floor garderobe. The swinging door in the south wall leads to the great hall.

## 13. Great Hall

When the house was built, this two-floor-tall hall was meant for great feasts, small ceremonies, and general merry-making. Since Kilburn bought the house, it has been used for general meals and very occasional entertaining, but mostly it acts as storage for things anyone is too lazy to put into the properly designated storage areas. It is also used as a training area for the apprentice assassins and thieves.

Low quality, uninteresting tapestries try to contain the drafts that blow through this hall. Two large tables are set up permanently in the center of the hall. There is a large, inefficient fireplace on the east wall, contiguous with the ones in the kitchen.

The west wall of the hall has a balcony which is level with the second floor. It can be reached either through that floor or by a set of freestanding stairs leading to it. In happier times, the balcony was used by musicians playing for feasts. Now it is mainly used by kitchen servants taking material to and from the upstairs kitchen.



storage room, and by assassins and thieves practicing *move silently*.

Parallel to the balcony stairs, between them and the west wall, are stairs leading down to the basement storage areas and the chapel.

## 14. Courtyard

This open court is the center of most of the activity in the house. This is where fighting practice takes place, and where residents can take any repair or building projects they have on hand when the weather is nice. In the center of the courtyard is a raised flower bed, built up with tiles inlaid with the onyx which gives the house its name.

## Second Floor

### 15. Corridor

This connects all the rooms on the second floor.

### 16. Watch Room

There is a guard (sometimes a fighter, sometimes an assassin or thief) stationed in this room at all times, watching over the surrounding wall and keeping an eye through a murder-hole on anyone in the Front Hall.

### 17. Windor's Rooms

Windor sleeps in the eastern room and uses the western room in which to perform what magical research he can. On the eastern wall of his sleeping room, several pendants hang from a set of pegs. One of the pendants is a *talisman of the spheres*. One of Windor's far-fetched plans to regain his former station as official Guild mage is to somehow find a *sphere of annihilation* and use it against Kilburn.

### 18. Kilburn's Quarters

This luxurious apartment, though somewhat overlarge and drafty, is Kilburn's private room. It can be reached either from the magic laboratory or from the second floor corridor. In the room is Kilburn's private garderobe (in the northwest corner), which has its own well separating it from the assassin's garderobe below, and a stove which is kept hot almost all the time. At this time Kilburn is the sole regular occupant of this room.

On a shelf next to his bed, which occupies most of the northern wall, are his magic books. With his Intelligence, Kilburn has learned at one time or another of learning. Spells of first through fifth level *not* in his books are *burning hands*, *friends*, *mending*, *ventriloquism*, *audible*

*glamer*, *Leomund's trap*, *stinking cloud*, *blink*, *suggestion*, *dig*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *distance distortion*, and *stone shape*. He has not really tried to learn any sixth level spells besides the ones he carries normally.

Behind a secret panel in the outside wall of the garderobe is 200 gp, 50 pp, and a *ring of fire resistance*. Kilburn uses the ring to get to an insulated compartment in the stove which contains his *robe of scintillating colors* (which, however, he does not have the Wisdom to use), and his *crystal ball with clairaudience*.

If anyone attempts to touch the stove without fire *resistance*, he takes 2-12 points of damage.

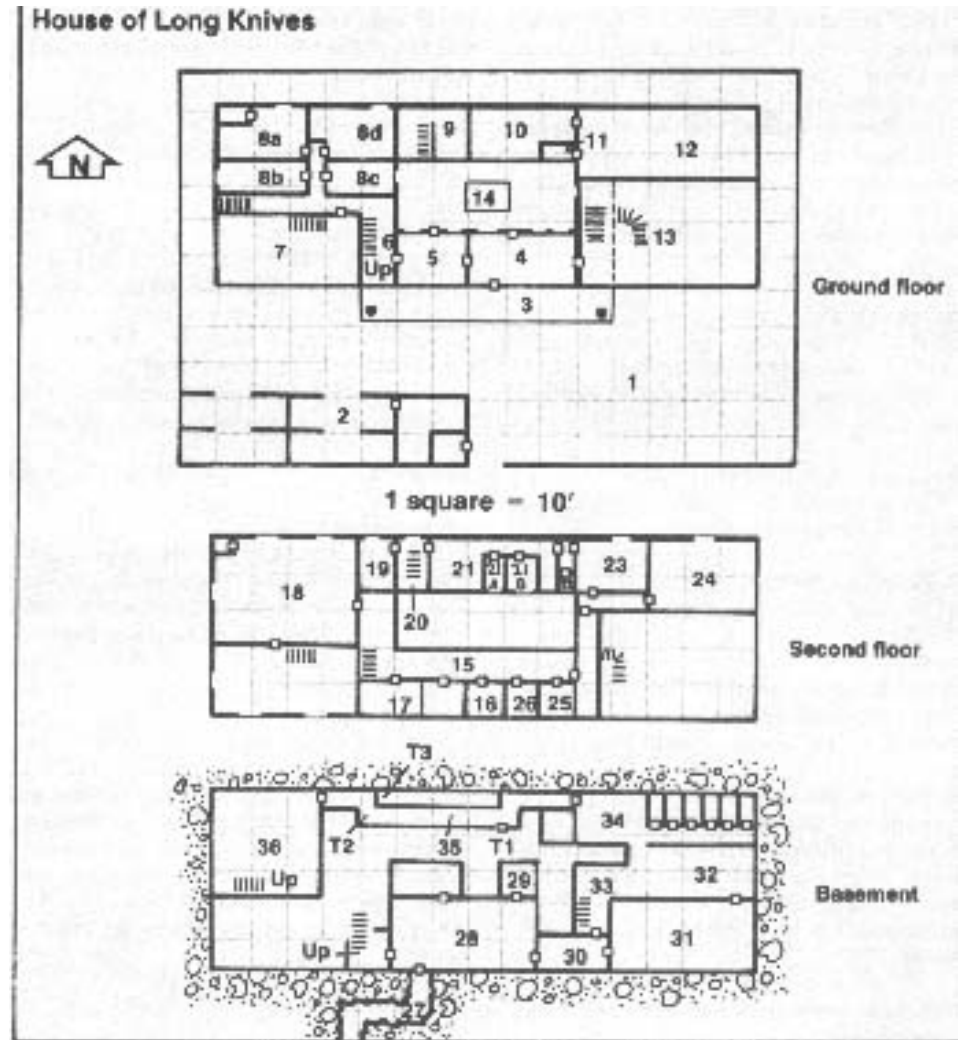
The furnishings in the room are worth over 350 gp, if delivered with a minimum of damage to the right merchant.

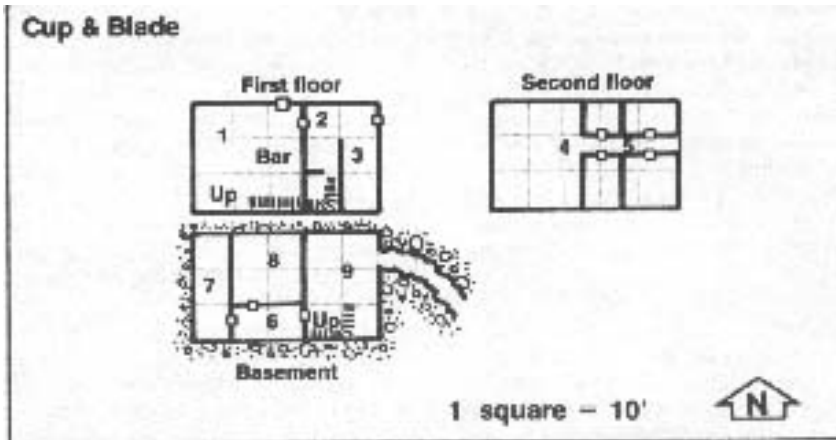
Against the south wall of the room is a chime

and a bell. These are instruments that ring when various traps go off around the house. Each has a distinctive tone.

### 19. Jonas' Quarters

Jonas the blacksmith lives in this spartan room, which holds a small table, a bed, and a chest for his personal belongings. He spends most of his time in his beloved smithy. On his wall hangs a *dagger +1* he used while an assassin. He has 55 sp and 14 gp in a small tin chest under his bed.





**20. Stairwell**

This leads from the courtyard to the armory and up to the upstairs barracks,

**21. Guard Barracks**

The four male guardsmen share this room. They sleep on wooden bunks and have chests for their clothes and belongings. Searching the room reveals 64 gp, 168 sp, and 250 cp.

**21a. Shuran's Room.** Shuran, the only female guard, has this room to herself. Since she is the only one of Herban's followers to have her own room, it often acts as a meeting place for conspirators, Shuran is also Parter's mistress, a role she assumed as part of Herban's master scheme to destroy Kilburn.

Shuran has a small valuables chest in which she has 5 pp, one gem worth 250 gp and one worth 100 gp, and a ring worth 700 gp. The ring also happens to be a *ring of free action*, but Parter, who gave it to her, never thought to have it checked for magic, and she doesn't wear it because it is too valuable-looking.

**21b. Parter's Room.** The Guard Captain sleeps here, and occasionally retires here to think, but he spends most of his time either in Shuran's room, talking to the cooks or Jonas, or checking the efficiency of his guards.

On the wall is a crossbow of *distance* and Parter's last three *quarrels + 1*. Hidden in his clothes chest is a bag containing 5 matched pearls worth 400 gp each and 15 pp, plus a *stone of controlling earth elementals*.

**22. Upstairs Garderobe**

This is another two-holer, with a direct well to the cess pit below.

**23. Thieves' Quarters**

The five thieves associated with the Guildhall for scouting and other nonmurdering roles live in this room. Hidden artfully about the room are

7 pp, 52 gp, and 60 ep. In one bedroll, Neel has hidden a gem worth 55 gp and another worth 30 gp.

**24. Kitchen Storage**

This large room is mostly used for storage of non-perishable goods and materials. It is largely empty because under the current regime much of what would have been stored here has been left in the Great Hall instead.

Old, often broken, furniture left over from the previous occupant is stacked along the north wall.

**25. Guest Room**

Yura the Monk currently occupies this room and, true to his calling, he lives in spartan style, with nothing but a sleeping mat and a short table.

**26. Herban's Quarters**

This opulently furnished room is ostensibly Herban's headquarters. However, he does not plotting in this room, for fear of being spied on by Kilburn.

In a small chest under his bed, he keeps 400 gp, 20 pp, a gem worth 800 gp, another worth 600 gp, two others worth 300 gp each, and a *ring of x-ray vision* that he uses for special missions. The furnishings in this room are worth 200 gp if delivered with a minimum of damage to the right merchant.

**Basement**

**27. Tunnel**

This tunnel leads to the city sewer which connects with another tunnel leading to the Cup and Blade Tavern. The assassins and thieves use it when leaving on and returning from their missions.

**28. Cellars**

Here are stored the wines, beers, dried fruits, salt meats, and vegetables for the kitchen. In the south wall is the entrance to the tunnel to the Cup and Blade. In the west wall is the stair well to the stairway outside Kilburn's office, a door to another storage room kept for other pantry items, and the major access to the central cess pit for the house.

**29. The Main Cess Pit**

This pit's floor is 20 feet below the floor of the basement. The pit catches the runoff from the pits directly below the two twofloor garderobes. The door is for ultimate cleaning of the pit, and has also been used for dumping a couple of potentially embarrassing bodies into the pit.

**30. The South Hall**

This corridor runs to the Chapel of Aiburn Darkspawn. The north wall has a crudely drawn mural showing Aiburn bringing the balm and protection of his darkness to a light-blighted world. The mural is interrupted by a door to the corridor which contains the stairs leading to the Great Hall above and leads to the dungeons.

**31. The Chapel**

The Chapel is under a *continual dark* spell set up by Zebahn as part of the consecration ceremonies. Part of the worship of Aiburn is the requirement to do it entirely in the dark.

Decoration is unnecessary in this circumstance. The altar is along the east wall, and under the altar are compartments containing a ritual assassin's knife for the sacrifices Aiburn sometimes demands. Hidden behind a secret panel in the altar is a *talisman Of pure good* which Zebahn hides here for safe keeping.

Zebahn has, of course, memorized everything in the room, and can move around it with ease. He has also erected ropes to guide the worshippers to the proper places for worship ceremonies. The regular worshippers (Kilburn, Jack, Abal, Corrol, Garbo, Iger, Rogas, Xerxan, and Yura) have memorized the rope positions. Normal rules for fighting in the dark apply to anyone else attempting anything in this room.

In the west wall is the door leading from the South Hall to the Chapel, On the north wall is the door to Zebahn's apartment.

**32. Zebahn's Apartment**

This room is kept at a low light *level* and is furnished entirely in black fabrics. Zebahn's prayer books are kept here, along with his



personal magic items when he isn't elsewhere in the house. Zebahn is almost always either here or in the chapel.

### 33. Dungeons Corridor

This corridor leads to the dungeons, torture room, and Guild treasure room.

### 34. The Dungeons

This room has six holding cells and a small but well-stocked torture room. Both are unused at the moment. Assassins rarely take prisoners, and the lockup and torture instruments are only used for punishments for minor crimes committed against the Guild and Guildmaster. Major crimes are punishable by instant death.

### 35. Corridor to the Treasure Room

There are three traps along this corridor. Only Kilburn, Zebahn, Parter, Herban, and Windor know their secrets. In each case, walking single file along the southern wall (and western wall in the jog) is perfectly safe. Otherwise, pressure plates in the floor set off the traps. There are also hidden switches in the torture room and the treasure room itself that turn all the traps on and off.

**Trap 1.** This opens up a chute which sends up to four victims (depending on how they are standing) into the cess pit. The chute door closes immediately after them.

**Trap 2.** This shoots five arrows through holes in the wall, each doing 1-8 points of damage as if shot by a 7th level fighter at the lead person(s) of a party. If more than one person is in the front rank, randomly determine which arrow is shot at which target. These arrows also have blade venom type D (see DMG, p. 20) on them, which affects the victim if any damage is done by the arrow. The blade venom is renewed by Kilburn himself every three days.

**Trap 3.** This is identical to Trap 2 except that it shoots 10 arrows, and there is a pause of 10 second between activation and the barrage, hopefully time enough for the entire party to go through the jog and be eligible as missile fire targets. Randomly determine which party members in the affected area are the targets for each arrow. Note that the only way to approach this trap without setting it off is to turn off the trap switch in the torture or treasure rooms.

If any trap goes off, a chime rings in the treasury itself, in the magic laboratory, and in Kilburn's room. The chime can also be heard in the assassins' quarters and in Windor's quarters.

### 36. The Treasure Room

This large room contains the entire treasure of the Guild. Under Kilburn's rule, all monies received for any reason are put here, and Kilburn rations out money for his followers' personal expenses. This is one of his policies which has made him unpopular, especially since he is notoriously tightfisted. As can be seen in the various descriptions of the upstairs rooms, several of the residents have held out on Kilburn.

In this room are 5,000 pp, 10,00 gp, 10,000 ep, 20,000 sp, 20,000 cp, 57 gems (10 x 400 gp, 12 x 80 gp, 5 x 50 gp, 20 x 28 gp, 10 x 10 gp), and 12 items of jewelry (1 x 3,000 gp, 2 x 1,500 gp, 5 x 1,000 gp, 4 x 5,000 gp).

There are two entrances to this room, one from the dungeons, and another from the magic laboratory. The entrance from the dungeons is a thick oak door which is locked by a key held only by Kilburn.

Against the south wall of the room is a chime and a bell. These are the various instruments that ring when traps go off around the house. Each has a distinctive tone.

### Normal House Activity

If the inhabitants are unsuspecting, there will be one of two setups encountered by the characters, depending on whether it is day or night.

#### Day Time

There is always one guard on the front gate of the property, another in the entry hall and a third in the watch room. Two out of three of these are fighters, the third is either one of the thugs or one of the thieves. This duty rotates among them.

At least one assassin from each quarters area is sleeping-recovering from a nighttime foray or getting ready for one. The thieves are mostly sleeping, except for any who have drawn watch duty.

Kilburn generally sleeps when the sun is highest in the sky, as does his apprentice. Herban is awake during this period, and through a good share of the night. He prefers to take one to two hour naps, rather than sleep several hours straight through. Parter generally sleeps during the day as well.

Zebahn is also a day sleeper.

Someone in the kitchen is awake 24 hours a day, ready to feed anyone whenever they are hungry. The only major meal in the house is the one at sundown, where reports of the previous day and night's activities are taken and new assignments (if any) are handed out.

#### Night Time

At night, the day sleepers are awake, Parter is making his rounds, and 2-8 of the thieves and assassins are probably out working. The actual guard details are the same, but the chance of running into someone who is active and alert is much higher.

Once an alert is sounded, the sleeping guards arm and race towards the source of disturbance, following the basic plan given below as best they can.

#### Defending the House

If the house has been warned of imminent attack, the fighters establish a place close to where the attack is expected, but with enough room to let their thief and assassin allies get at the backs of their foes. Defense of the house then develops not so much as a static defense but as a continual series of ambushes, with fighters and magic-users distracting the attackers so the thieves and assassins can do their work.

While waiting for an attack, the guard is doubled and the apprentices and junior thieves are sent to the roof, both as lookouts and to act as a ready reserve for any action necessary.

If all seems lost, Kilburn will race for the Treasure room, grab all the gems and jewelry, which are in three relatively small casks, and *dimension door* as far away as he can.

### The Cup and Blade Tavern

This tavern is the center of assassin activity in the town. It is a two-story building and its location near the North Gate of the city gives it a lot of transient trade, though the normal run of adventurers tend to go to the Staff and Shield in the next block.

The Cup and Blade is run by a retired assassin and his family. Naturally, only the Guild knows that Old Bilkins used to kill people for money. Its general clientele is lower class tradesmen and slumming nobility. The common room is usually thick with people.

At any time, one or two of the thugs from the House are hanging around the common room of the tavern. If anyone seems to be in need of an assassin, the contact man makes the initial contact. If the job seems at all promising, the contact then leaves to get **someone to talk terms** with the prospective customer. Usually, the negotiator is Herban, but sometimes he sends Iger, Garbo, or Hilga, depending on the situation as reported.



## First Floor

### 1. Common Room

Most of the first floor of the Cup and Blade is taken up by the common room, which features a fireplace on the west wall, a bar along the east wall, and stairs leading up to the second floor on the south wall. The common room is packed with tables, with barely room for the barmaids to move between them, Old Bilkins or his son, Tandy, presides over the bar. Behind the bar is Bilkins' money box for immediate needs. It contains 20 ep, 55 sp, and 250 cp.

### 2. Kitchen

The kitchen serves up bread, cheese, stew, and meat pastries (don't ask what's in them) to the clientele. Bilkins' wife, Charie, and a hired assistant handle the cooking chores. Stairs in the southern part of the room lead to the cellar.

### 3. Owners' Apartments

Bilkins and Charie sleep in this small room but spend as little time as possible in it. Tandy has a room on the second floor.

### 4. Balcony

This overlooks the common room

### 5. Upstairs Rooms

These are the only accommodations for transients (or whomever) in the tavern. The rooms are small and sparsely furnished. Tandy sleeps in the southwestern room unless the tavern is packed for some festival or other, at which time he sleeps in the kitchen. The barmaids and cooking assistant do not sleep at the tavern.

## Basement

### 6. Central Room

This little room is a general storage area whose main function is to connect the wine cellar, root cellar, and keg room with the stairway.

### 7. Wine Cellar

Bilkins has a good stock of local wines and brandies (winterwines) here, but hardly anything from more than a day's travel away. He is not really knowledgeable about wines, and is likely to recommend whatever is in greatest supply, rather than what is good.

### 8. Root Cellar

The Root Cellar is full of roots and vegetables which go into the stews and meat pastries for flavor.

Under the turnip bin is an unlocked strong box with Bilkins' life savings in it. It contains 5 pp, 300 gp, and 500 ep.

### 9. Keg Room

The keg room is locked with a key held only by Bilkins. He tells everyone that this is to protect his secrets of brewing, and indeed he has a good reputation in town for producing an "honest brew" with a good taste.

However, one of the kegs is actually a secret door leading to the tunnel to the sewers and thence to the new Guild Hall.

## The Sewer

The sewer leading down the center of the original town is more than a mile long and over 20 feet wide. It has an oval crosssection that gives it a 15-foot high ceiling, measuring from the walkways. There is a 14-foot-wide central channel with 3-foot-wide walkways on both sides of the channel. The walkways are only covered during heavy rainstorms when the whole sewer is flooded. The central channel is a further 15 feet deep. The smell is always abominable.

Since the sewer was built many years ago, its stone walls have crumbled slightly in places, people have dug unauthorized tunnels into it so they don't have to clean out their own cess pits, and beggars, thieves and assassins have turned it into a private thoroughfare. While the basic sewer is just one long tunnel, the walls are ragged enough to provide ample shadows, shelters, and niches for hiding in.

The sewer is remarkably free of monster inhabitants, mostly because both the assassins and thieves dislike random impediments to their travel plans. However, it is full of rats, spiders, and other pest life which can make anyone unused to it very wary. If the player characters enter the sewers, emphasize the darkness, the spooky sounds, the eyes peering out of shadows, and all the other indications of possible disaster.

In fact, the only hazards the play characters are likely to face are assassins or thieves who happen to be using the sewer at the same time.

### Sewer Encounters

Roll 1d100 and use the *Sewer Encounters* table every ten minutes of real time the player characters are in the sewer.

## Sewer Encounters

Roll	Result
01-75	No result
76-80	1 thief
81-85	Party of 3 thieves
86-90	1 assassin (Lvl 1 -9)
91-95	2-4 assassins (Lvl 5 -9)
96-100	Roll 1d20 + 75 twice on this table

### Thieves

If members of the local Thieves' Guild see adventurers in the sewer, they will climb the walls and hide in shadow until the adventurers are past, then race off to report to their Guildmaster. If the adventurers stay in town after the adventure is over, they will receive messages from the thieves' brotherhood indicating that they should stay away from other peoples' territory.

If discovered in the sewer, a thief will protest innocence, pretending to be a simple beggar who has come down to trap rats for his supper. He knows nothing of any assassins, and doesn't want to know about them. If pressed, he can say that he has seen assassins in the area and he knows about where they enter the sewers. He will then take them to the entry tunnel to the Cup and Blade or to the entry to the old, disused Guildhall.

Some thieves know about the entrance to the new Guildhall, but will not reveal it for fear of retaliation.

### Assassins

Any assassin found in the sewer is a member of the local Guild. If the assassin sees the party coming, he will do the same thing as the thief, except he will follow the party after it passes and try to see where it is going.

If caught, the assassin will resist giving any information on how he got into the sewer, where he was going, or where he came from. If successfully interrogated, he knows all about the entrances to the Cup and Bland and House of Long Knives (and to the old warehouse which used to be the Guildhall, for that matter). He even knows about the trip wire in the tunnel to the House of Long Knives.

## The Tunnels

The 200-foot tunnel leading from the Cup and Blade is a simple, stone-lined, tunnel leading directly to the main sewer of the city, built when the city was constructed and leading to the nearby waterway. The stones of the tunnel are old and worn with the tramp of the feet of



generations of assassins. The only encounter possible in this tunnel is with assassins coming or going on their usual errands. The tunnel connects to the sewer with a door which is concealed on the sewer side. It can be found with a *find secret doors* roll.

The 100-foot tunnel leading from the sewer to the Guildhall is likewise concealed by a secret door. It is made of hard-packed earth and held with wooden bracings. In the middle of the tunnel is a tripwire. A character who can see has

the normal chance of spotting a secret door as a chance of seeing the trip wire. Otherwise, there is a 60% chance for each character passing of hitting the tripwire.

Anyone tripping the wire pulls down the tunnel roof on them for a space of 10 feet on each side of the wire. This also sounds a gong in Kilburn's magic laboratory which can be heard anywhere on both floors of that wing of the house.

Anyone caught in this cave-in takes 2-12 points of damage and is buried. The adventurer must make a roll as if *bending bars* to move five feet through the cave-in toward a safe area. Remember that the total distance covered by the cave-in is 20 feet.

Once a cave-in happens, anyone wishing to clear the tunnel again will probably have to use magic of some sort, or employ a gang of dwarves.

This is the only trap in the tunnel.







This adventure is designed for a 5th to 6th level Ranger and three to four mid-level companions.

### DM's Information

Orcs from the Bloody Barb tribe and some half-orc companions have set up a bandit camp on the Lauros Road. These raiders are preying on farmers and occasional tradesmen who use the road most often. Though pickings aren't great, they are content to do this for a while until something better comes along. In the few weeks they have been in the area they have already paralyzed trade. Villagers from Dernau tried to deal with this threat, but the volunteers who marched out were ambushed by the brigands. The townsfolk need any help they can get to deal with this problem.

### The Adventure

The party arrives in Dernau shortly after the death of the volunteers; the mood in town is grim.

Dernau is a small village with a handful of shops and many farmers. All shops but the inn are closed, and you can't help but notice the silent, frowning faces of the villagers.

Services for the volunteers are being held on this day. Locals warn the adventurers not to continue on the road out of town because of the danger from bandits. Any questions to villagers will draw out information about the bandits, the deaths, and the wish to find someone to help with the problem. If the characters do not volunteer their services, Fen, the town Elder, will approach them and ask for aid. Dernau can offer only supplies such as food and simple equipment in payment, but any booty taken from the bandits may be kept as well.

The bandits work an area five miles north of Dernau on the Lauros Road. The countryside is mountain foothills, with sheer drop-offs along part of the road, and densely overgrown ridges along the other. Roll 1d6 for encounters while traveling on the Lauros Road, or select an appropriate one for the party.

### Road Encounters

#### 1-2. Sawyers

Two wagons full of cut wood draw slowly up the road ahead of you. They block most of the road at this narrow point, and are heading in the same direction you are.

Sawyer Peter Karnnor and his five sons are north-bound on the Lauros Road. The party is transporting two wagonloads of cut lumber. They live isolated in the hills and haven't heard about the bandits. When told of the bandits, they are fearful of being held up and refuse to travel ahead of the party.

Sawyers (6): AC 8; Move 12"; HD 0-level humans; hp 5, 5, 4, 4, 4, 3; Ding 1-8 (axes); THAC0 20; AL NG. They carry 120 sp in the wagons.

#### 3-4. Thief

You see a pilgrim sitting by the side of the road. He stands up as he sees you, extends his begging bowl and looks hopeful as you draw near.

Renaldo, a thief, is disguised as a pilgrim begging alms by the roadside. He uses this ploy to assess potential victims, picking the occasional pocket and slitting the throats of lone travelers he wants to rob. He is looking for one last likely mark before he leaves this area. Renaldo, carries a quarterstaff, but is not proficient with it. A hand knife is concealed up his sleeve, and a throwing dagger hangs in a sheath around the back of his neck.

Renaldo the Thief: AC 9; Move 12"; THF 5; hp 23; #AT 1; Ding 1-4/1-3; THAC0 18; AL NE (Q). Renaldo carries a dagger + 2 up his sleeve, wears boots of *elvenkind*, and has 60 gp, 110 sp, and 3 gold rings worth 50 gp each.

#### 5-6. Bears

You hear crashing in brush by the side of the road. Suddenly, a brown bear cub rolls down a slope and sprawls into the road before you. The cub sits up and squalls in dismay. An answering bawl comes from nearby: mother bear is coming, and you are between her and her cub!

Bear cub (1): AC 8; Move 9"; HD 3; hp 12; #AT 3; DMG 1-3/1-3/1-4; THAC0 16.

Mother bear (1): AC 6; Move 12"; HD 5+5; hp 30; #AT 3; DMG 1-6/1-6/1-8; THAC0 15. SA paw hit with an 18 or better gives hug for 2-12 damage, continues to fight for 1d4 melee rounds after reaching 0 to - 8 hit points; AL N.

#### Bandits' Ambush

The bandits have recently changed the location of their ambush. There are no obvious signs that this is a dangerous part of the road, and travelers will be surprised on 1-7 in 8.

A harsh voice orders you to halt as you near a bend in the road. On the hillside above you there is movement, and three archers become partly visible through the brush. You hear running to your rear as brigands close off your retreat, and two more bandits step onto the road ahead.

Three archers are concealed behind trees on the hill (A2 on map), and four bandits hide in the brush off the side of the road. Travelers are ordered to stop as two brigands appear on the road ahead of them and two behind. Archers stand up from cover, prepared to fire at travelers who do not obey promptly or who attempt to flee.

These raiders have been ambushing only poorly armed locals, and will not attack any travelers in a large, heavily armed group. If surprised or successfully counterattacked, the brigands will flee the scene and follow their escape route back to camp. Garsk, the leader of the ambush party, has a *wand of frost* which he will use only as a last resort for his personal defense if cornered. He believes the wand holds only one more charge; in fact, it has four.

Garsk, brigand leader: AC 4; Move 12"; HD 3; hp 18; #AT 1; Ding 2-8 + 1; THAC0 16; AL LE. Garsk carries a *wand of frost* with four charges, 10 gp and 20 sp.

Orc roadside brigands (3): AC 6; Move 12"; HD 2; hp 15, 12, 8; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; THAC0 17; AL LE. They carry 2d10 sp each.

Half-orc archers (3): AC 7; Move 12"; HD 3; hp 13, 12, 10; #AT 2; Ding 1-6/1-6; THAC0 16. Archers also carry a short sword and 2d10 sp each.

#### Approaching the Position

If the ranger scouts along the ridge beside the road, he may discover the bandits' escape trail leading to the archers' position (see map), or see the ambushers themselves. Characters on the hillside also have a 20% chance of spying the concealed brigands in the roadside brush below. The ridge is 80 feet in elevation and can be ascended by hiking. Movement rates are reduced by 75% because of the incline.

#### The Escape Route

The raiders have a carefully planned escape route which is meant to delay or kill pursuers until the bandits have time to rally companions at their camp. The trail leads down the back side



of their ambush ridge, cuts across the Lauros Road, and disappears into a notch in a hillside. This notch is a steep, narrow ravine. A bandit is posted at the top of the ravine (location U) as rearguard and lookout.

Orc rearguard lookout (1): AC 8; Move 12"; HD 1; hp 6; #AT 2; Ding 1-6/1-6 (short bow); THAC0 19; AL LE. He carries 16 sp.

The lookout guards a rope ladder which hangs to the floor of the ravine, and has additional ropes for hauling up booty taken from travelers. Fleeing bandits come this way and pull the ladder up behind them. The ladder will also be pulled up if anyone other than brigands enters the ravine. The rearguard stays to snipe at enemies; once the party is forced to take cover, he too will flee the scene. It is a 50' climb from the ground to the top of the ravine.

### Trail Traps

The escape route follows an old deer trail, now booby-trapped at intervals with traps intended for pursuers. Characters who follow slowly and carefully have a chance equal to their intelligence of noticing and avoiding the traps. The ranger has a 40% chance of noticing the traps; this should be reduced to his Intelligence score if he is hurrying down the trail, and increased to 75% if he is actively searching for traps as the party progresses. Active searching will reduce the ranger's movement rate by 50%.

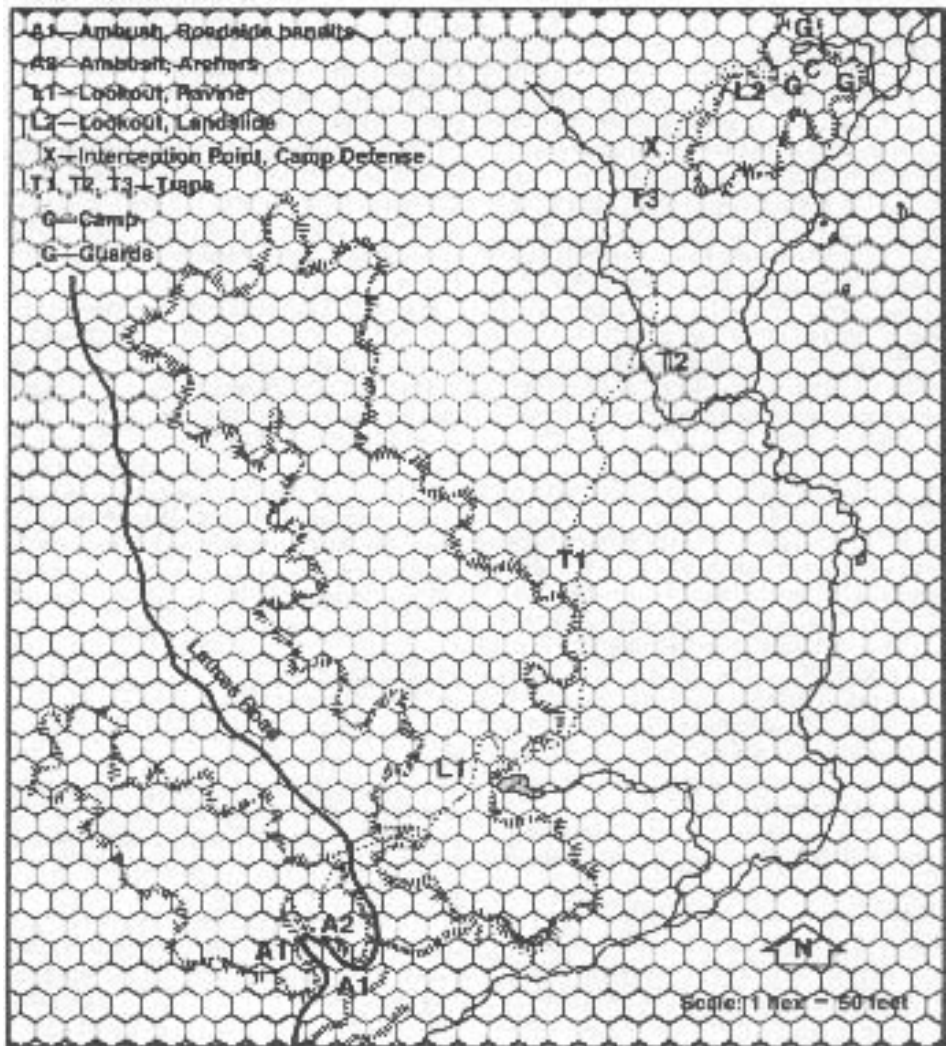
The following traps are keyed to the map locations as labeled.

**T1. Deadfall.** A log falls on the first character to pass this point on the trail. The log does 1d8 + 4 damage; reduce this amount by I& if a helmet is worn. There is a 40% chance of the character getting hit on the head; if so, make a Constitution check at + 4 to the roll. If the check fails, the character is unconscious for a number of rounds equal to damage sustained.

**T2. Leg snare.** When this trap is encountered, a rope snares the ankle and a sapling whips the character off the side of the road and up into the air. The path the character travels drags him through thorn bushes that do 1d4 dmg. He then dangles 20' above the ground, suspended from a sapling which is surrounded by thorn bushes. Characters failing into the brush suffer 1-3 points of damage.

**T3. Slashing branches.** Characters triggering this trap release tree branches which snap back into their normal position across the trail. Three daggers are affixed to the ends of the branches.

### Lauros Road Bandits



Roll for each dagger as a separate attack; the trap will hit Armor Class 0 on a roll of 20. Each successful attack does 1d4 + I damage.

The ranger has a 30% chance of noticing that this is a double trap. After the first character has passed this spot and sprung the trap, a similar trap is set a mere 5' farther down the trail. Statistics are the same as for the first trap.

### Landslide Lookout

The deer trail nears the foot of a rocky hill, and skirts a stony bluff. One lookout is posted on the outcropping above (marked L2 on the map), and has a good view of the trail below for 100' of its length.

Half-orc lookout (1): AC 6; Move 12"; HD 2; hp 13; #AT 2; DMG: 1-6/1-6 (short bow) or 1-6 + 1 (short sword); THAC0 17. He carries 10 sp.

This guard has 90% cover and is difficult to spot. He only notices a party on the trail itself. If adventurers pass near the foot of the rocky hillside, the lookout starts a landslide intended to crush those on the trail below. He then flees to alert camp of approaching enemies.

The landslide begins to hit the trail two segments after it has been started. Rubble falls for 1 round; check for hits each segment of the round. Stones do 1d4 damage per character hit each segment, and hit Armor Class 0 on a roll of 15. Dexterity Checks are allowed for characters to dodge the slide.

### The Bandit Camp

Led by their shaman, the orcs lounge around camp and debate where to go raiding next. The bandits carry weapons but are unprepared for defense until alerted by the returning ambushers



or the lookout from L2. If surprised, half of the orcs (including the archers detailed below) rally to protect the shaman, who will use magic against the intruders when he has a chance to organize an attack. The other orcs will scatter and fight the party immediately.

The party should be given this description of the camp if they succeed in sneaking up on it.

The orcs camp near crumbled ruins, mostly buried by an old landslide. Many brigands lounge around the campfire, chewing on bones and picking at the remains of a meal. One is adorned with feathers and a claw necklace, and leads a heated discussion.

If the brigands have been alerted to their approach, adventurers will instead glimpse this scene when they are near.

The bandit camp stands near crumbled ruins, mostly buried by an old landslide. The campfire smolders, deserted and littered with the remains of a meal. There is no sign of the brigands.

### Guards and Snipers

Regular guards are posted at spots marked G on the map. Each is within hailing distance of the camp and will call for help if intruders are sighted.

Orc Guards (3): AC 7; Move 12"; HD 2; HP 13,9,8; #AT 1; Ding 1-8; THAC0 17; AL LE. They carry 15 sp each.

Once the camp is alerted to danger, these perimeter guards fade back to 75 % concealment in the brush while three additional guards act as snipers to protect the camp. The snipers are posted in trees at spots marked S, and fire short bows from 75% concealment with surprise for the first round.

Half-Orc Snipers (3): AC 7; Move 12"; HD 2; HP 12,9,9; #AT 2; Ding 1-6/1-6; THAC0 17; AL LE.

There is a 50% chance of telling the direction an arrow came from, but only a 25% chance of noticing which tree. There is a base 25% chance per round (noncumulative) of spotting a sniper in concealment; add 25% to this if the sniper's tree has been noted. The ranger has a base 75 % chance to pinpoint snipers if he uses his tracking skill successfully near the base of any of the sniper's trees.

### The Shaman

If they are forewarned of approaching danger, Uhrak the shaman and half the orcs in camp will advance through the woods and intercept intruders at point X on the escape route trail. If the adventurers are past that point and the bandits know it, the orcs will follow the party and attempt to attack them from the rear. The remaining orcs disperse through the woods around the camp, and hide until they have an opportunity to attack with surprise. If the fight goes against them and the shaman is still alive, Uhrak will order the bandits to fall back to the ruins and make a final defense there.

Uhrak the Shaman: AC 5; Move 12"; CLE 4; hp 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 or Spell; THAC0 20; AL LE. Spells: *Cause light wounds, darkness, protection from good cause blindness, prayer*. Uhrak carries a *potion of speed*, 30 gp, and the key to the bandits' strongbox (see *Bandit Loot*, below).

Orcs in camp (6): AC 6; HD 2; hp 10 each; #AT 1; Ding 1-8; THAC0 17. They carry 10 sp each.

### Bandit Morale

As long as the shaman is alive (or if unseen, believed to be alive), the bandits' morale is high and need be checked only if 75% of the raiders are killed or out of the fight. If a Morale Check is failed, the remaining bandits will break off combat and flee to the north. A Morale Check is made on 1d20; on a roll of 15 or less the brigands continue to follow the last orders of the shaman. If the shaman is killed, morale is checked again (successful on a roll of 9 or less). Morale should be checked thereafter each time a bandit dies, with a -2 to the roll for each player character that has been killed or is no longer able to fight.

### Bandit Loot

The bandits in this area have succeeded mostly in taking food from farmers. The few valuables they have collected both here and elsewhere on their raids are contained in a strongbox the shaman placed in the ruins for safekeeping. Uhrak has also poked about in the rubble out of curiosity; he knows something of the ruins, but if interrogated refuses to say anything and will under no circumstances admit that the bandits' treasure is safe. However, lesser bandits may squeal if they fail a wisdom check while under interrogation. Assume Wisdom scores of 8 for this purpose.

## The Ruins

### Entrance

The stones of an old ruin are barely visible here. The rubble is jumbled stone covered with dirt; it is overgrown in spots with brush and saplings. A section of a tower fell onto one of the interior buildings and forms an entry into and under the rubble.

To the west of the entrance, a garbage heap from the bandit camp has accumulated. Here can be seen offal, bones, scraps of clothing, and other refuse. Tracks of small animals are visible in the muck in and around the heap; a belt is visible on top of the mess and remnants of other personal items can be seen scattered about.

Dwarves and gnomes are likely to note the danger of disturbing rubble here. Throughout the ruins there is a 2% chance (non-cumulative) per turn of stone dislodging and falling. Collapsing stone does 1d6 point of damage, but a successful Dexterity check avoids damage. If rubble is tugged or moved in a deliberate attempt to clear space or dislodge a stone, there is a 20% chance per disturbance that stone will collapse doing the same damage as above. If rubble underfoot is disturbed, check Dexterity to avoid slipping. Roll again to avoid falling for 1 point of damage.

The garbage heap contains odds and ends taken from travelers that the bandits had no use for. A pouch of stale pipeweed will be found if the refuse is searched carefully. Inside it are concealed two matched opals worth 50 gp each. The heap also shelters rotgrubs.

Rotgrubs (15): AC 9; Move 1"; HD 1 hit point; Dmg special; THAC0 20; SA burrow into flesh of victim, burrowing to heart and killing host in 1-3 turns; can be killed by applying flame to the wound immediately (1-6 hp dmg each application) or casting *cure disease* on the victim; AL N.

### Armory

The rubble at the entrance appears fairly stable: rocks are counterbraced against each other where a falling tower has crushed part of a wall. An opening in the debris slopes downward 10' into a hollow under the stonework.

The entrance slopes down at a 30-degree angle. It may be carefully descended and there is



no chance of loosening debris, but movement is reduced by 50%. Once down the slope, adventurers have descended 10' to the level of the buried armory

The ceiling is close overhead, braced only by jammed timbers and large slabs of stone. This room may once have been an armory or guardroom: weapon racks have burst from the walls of shattered stone, and old and rusted spears are scattered on the floor. A collapsed wall has buried the remains of wooden planking; a skeletal hand extends from beneath the debris. A viney plant with yellowish flowers grows in the dirt, washed down by rain, which covers the floor.

A *yellow musk creeper* lies here, apparently relaxed. It grows in rubble and dirt, but the floor 10' around it is clear- Closer examination reveals that its color is faded and the flowers withered-in fact, the plant is dead. Mat treasure it once held beneath its roots has been collected by Uhrak and added to the strongbox.

The fire beetles that live here are still alive, however. They lair in the stones of the wall, and there is a 50% chance that 1d3 beetles will be out in the armory when the party enters. The beetles freeze when sensing noise or light; they prefer to bolt and attack only if cornered, or if a light source approaches within 10 feet.

Fire beetles (3): AC 4; Move 12"; HD 1 + 2; hp, 9, 8, 6; #AT 1; Ding 2-8; THACO 18. Fire beetles have two glands above their eyes and one near the back of the abdomen which gives off a red glow. The light continues for 1-6 days in a 10' radius after the gland is removed from the beetle.

On the wrist of the skeleton is a copper wristband, green with age. It has no value except as a curio. The spears on the floor are too weathered and warped to be useful as weapons. A short hall leads from here to the Guard's Quarters.

#### Guards' Quarters

Tables, chairs, beds, and chests are scattered and crushed where the ceiling collapsed and a wall caved in. An area barely 20 by 20' square before the fireplace is the only clear space left in the room. A doorway can be seen blockaded behind slabs of stone. Next to the fireplace is a 5' wide gap in the wall.

This room is in great disarray. Chances of stone failing here are increased by 10 %. The door is sealed on the other side by fallen timbers. The gap in the wall leads to the Library.

There is nothing of value in sight, since Uhrak has collected candlesticks and similar items he found here. Any chest that is safely accessible has long since been plundered. With great effort and danger it is possible to salvage three chests mostly buried in the debris; they contain 2d20 gp each hidden among clothes and personal belongings.

#### Library

Bookshelves poke from the stones like fractured wings. Debris is scattered across the floor along with scrolls and books. The walls here are barely visible, for most seem to have collapsed or been obscured by the falling ceiling. A layer of dirt covers the floor, washed down through a gap in the rubble at one end of the room.

Footprints are visible in the muck that covers the floor. Uhrak has been here. Closer examination will reveal that at some time he has both entered and exited through the gap in the rubble overhead. Sloping stones and timbers lead up to it; rain has washed down it and covered the floor with dirt.

Near the surface only someone 5 feet tall or shorter and weighing less than 100 pounds can get through safely. Anyone else attempting to do so causes the rubble to slide and may collapse the ceiling. A rubble slide causes 2d6 damage (Dexterity check allowed for half damage).

There is a 40% chance the ceiling will collapse, doing 3d6 damage to anyone with 10' of the accident area. Characters climbing through this gap safely will find themselves on the far side of the ruins from the bandit camp, There is only a 10% chance of discovering this entrance by searching the outside of the ruin.

Concealed under a loose timber (lifted without hazard) is the bandits' strongbox. Here also is a sack with Uhrak's gleanings from the ruins. Many of the books in the room are valuable as well. A careful reader may be able to salvage valuable titles no longer common; they are worth 2d10 x 100 gp each to sages and scholars.

**Locating valuable books:** There is a + 10 % chance per turn of dislodging stones while searching for books. Make a Dexterity check to avoid injury; or the character suffers 1d2 points of damage. There is a 10% chance for every three turns searched of locating one valuable book. The searcher must read Common and must check Intelligence in order to recognize a rare work. A maximum of 10 costly works are in the room, although up to 50 books in all may be salvaged.

**Uhrak's Sack:** These goods have been collected in the ruins by Uhrak: Gold ink and sand pot with quill stand (100 gp value); via] of black powder (ink powder, can be reconstituted in water, worth 20 gp); seven bronze goblets (5 gp each); two silver rings (10 gp each); three staghorn-handled eating knives (3 gp each); two silver candlesticks (50 gp each).

**Bandits' Strongbox:** The strongbox contains the following: 500 gp, 2000 sp, 300 ep; a leather pouch containing 10 gp, 15 ep, 12 sp, 30 cp, four blue glass marbles and a wishbone (non-magical); three gold rings (50 gp each); two brooches (40 gp each); one decorative dagger, tourmaline in hilt (worth 100 gp; if used as a weapon treat as -1 to hit/dmg); one silver dagger (non-magical); a *potion of levitation*, and a *potion of undead control*.



*Reign of Triumph* is an adventure designed for four to six characters of intermediate level. However, lower level players will also enjoy this adventure if it is properly adjusted for their level of play. The adventure can be played by itself in an evening or two as an independent adventure or it may be inserted in an existing campaign.

## DM's Information

The adventure occurs several miles from a civilized area, in gently rolling, partlywooded lands. The terrain to either side of this area looks a bit rougher. Also, part of the land is rather swampy-travel through the swamps is at half speed at best, and the swamps are covered by dangerous quicksand-like muddy areas. Passing through the Barony of Caryll appears as if it is the safest way for the party to go.

Try to time it so that the party enters the barony in the early afternoon. This is a new barony tucked within the safety of the gentle hills which surround it. Atop the highest hill, in the middle of the district, is the castle of Ian, the ruler of this newly-formed territory. He normally oversees the well-being of about 130 families who traveled from the crowded outskirts of the city of Trilial. But for the past several days he has been in the city, reporting on the astounding success of his small barony, which has prospered under his leadership and direction.

The barony has begun producing wines of high quality-they are mild and fruity wines so far, since the young barony has had little time to age them. But they hold promise of being the best produced in the area. Already their wines are purchased in great amounts by those from the city and other wealthier settlements. The red wines are the most in demand, but those who truly enjoy their wines also stock up on the blackberry wine that is produced in much smaller quantity.

The Barony of Caryll also has small deposits of gold strewn throughout the tiny rivers that cross the land, and buried within the dark, rich soil. While the residents use some of the gold to adorn themselves, much of it must go to the dwarves that reside in small hollows formed by the hills. Unable to drive them from the land when they arrived, the residents of Caryll have learned to placate the irascible little creatures with some of the gold. The dwarves have threatened to cut off the necessary water supply to the barony if they do not receive half of the gold that is mined or panned each month.

Ian left two days ago and plans to return in about a week-if he does not find other things

that may distract him. He has left his son-in-law, Shamus, in charge of the castle and the barony until he returns. Shamus married Ian's eldest daughter, Cameron, who is expecting their first child very shortly. Shamus is a bit on edge lately since Cameron is almost ready to have their baby, but he is still able to maintain control of the operations of the castle. Cameron's two younger sisters, Zarah and Ariel, have been instructed to see to the coordination of the household duties of the castle while Ian is away.

### Zarah and Ariel

Zarah and Ariel have never gotten along well. Only 10 months separate the two and they have always been treated somewhat as a single person, much the same as twins might be regarded. Zarah turns 17 next month while Ariel was 16 just last month. Cameron was delighted at the age of four to have two new sisters, but she eventually learned to hide from them both: trouble followed when they were near.

A quiet brunette with wisdom beyond her years, Zarah was often envious of her outgoing younger sister. Ariel, an energetic, golden-haired girl, was usually the one to get into mischief-mostly quite innocently, but often with nasty consequences. Cameron did her best to smooth things over between the two whenever she dared get involved. Cameron, for example, was there to handle the problems caused when Zarah accidentally dripped blackberry juice on Ariel's hair, permanently staining her shining, pale locks with purple dots. Ariel in turn consulted some of the elves who lived just beyond the gates of Trilial, where the girls lived at the time. The elves could not help her restore her hair, but they could help her retaliate. The elves supplied her with the juice of the vLOURATE plant which Ariel quietly spread across Zarah's hair while she slept. In the morning, Zarah, as normal, rose to comb out her long brown hair, but found there was none to comb. Zarah's hair has since grown back, but the patient tolerance for her sister has not.

## The Adventure

*You now enter the Barony of Caryll. Only the bravest need enter,* reads the crooked sign nailed to the tall, rough oak tree bending protectively over the soggy dirt road. The freshness of the spring day blows through your clothes with a slight gust of wind. The scent of burning green wood is barely noticeable.

As the breeze quiets, you see a tiny stream of smoke casually drift over a small rise

directly ahead. The dirt road curls around the rise and disappears.

If the party heads down the road toward the smoke, they encounter a young dwarf near a small fire that was built between two low hills.

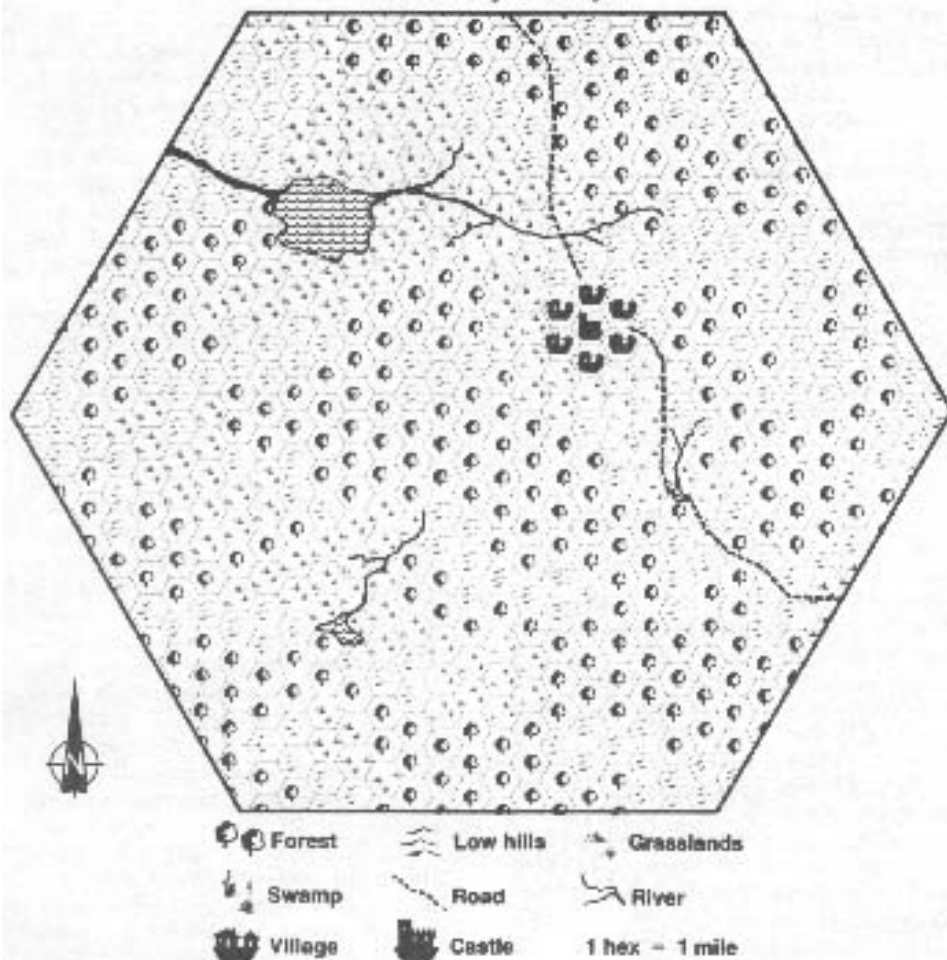
"I share with no one. Is a secret place just for me. Go from here before they find me. Go!!" whispers a young, plump dwarf huddled near a tiny fire. Only a fine spray of fuzz covers his chin, hinting at the beard that will soon sprout and cover much of his homely face. Pleading with his dark eyes, he says no more, but merely stares, waiting for you to move on. Clothed only in thin fur breeches of a soft brown color, he holds a long, thin green branch over the sputtering fire made from greenish sticks. Speared on the stick is a small animal that has been skinned. At the dwarfs feet lies the skin of the rodent, whose fur pattern matches that of his breeches. The skinned animal is a bright pink on top, but as the dwarf stands motionless, the underside of the creature starts to smolder and smoke. He steps back quickly and gives your party a sharp look of irritation. "All right. What you want?" he asks impatiently.

This is the dwarf, Tolimay. Tolimay: AC 4; Move 6"; HD 1; hp 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); THAC0 20; AL LG.

If the party asks about the barony and why only the bravest should enter, the dwarf snorts and emits a sound which resembles a laugh. "You believe sign? You think it dangerous here? You funny people. No problem here, just tough talk," he chortles. If asked where the Baron might be found, he instructs the party to "go over these two hills and turn this way," motioning to the right. If the party turns to leave the area, the dwarf calls after them, "If you here for gold too, you go wrong way. Go to castle. They help you there! He then gives directions to reach the castle. When the party moves on he makes them promise to tell no one that they saw him. "I not here, fine? You not see me. Big trouble for me if caught eating again. Hush!"



## The Barony of Caryll



If the party follows the dwarf's direction on how to reach the castle, once they cross the second hill, they can see the narrow dirt road that will guide them all the way to the small village outside the castle. If they take a direction of their own, they become lost and somehow manage to wend their way back to the dirt road where they find the dwarf slowly wandering along. He munches on a roasted rodent. "You listen now," he says, smacking his lips. "Follow road, no get lost, silly people!"

The characters will have some flying visitors if they have strayed from the path. After they find Tolimay a second time and once again head for the castle, they first notice an unusual buzzing noise if they are reasonably quiet as they move along. If they take no precautions, they are attacked by three giant dragonflies who are out seeking dinner. They can avoid the

dragonflies if they either hid somewhere or lie motionless on the ground. The dragonflies are moving quickly through the area and it is possible that they will miss the characters entirely. If the characters are not being quiet, the dragonflies will have the initiative on the attack. Giant dragonflies (3): AC 3; Move 1" /36"; HD 7 (8 + 1); hp 48, 45, 40; #AT 1; Ding 3-12 (4-16); THAC0 12; SD + 2 on initiative; save as 16th lvl M-U; AL N.

The dragonflies fight to the death. They have no treasure.

As the party descends the second hill, they see a castle in the distance on a flat, round hill. Scattered around the castle are many homes and garden plots. As they emerge from a small copse at the base of the hill, the party happens upon Zara and Ariel. Zara watches her sister from behind a large, ragged tree.

A small pool of water beyond the trees is disturbed by the splashing of a young, blond-haired girl and two half-clothed elves. Her sheer white dress becomes even more so as the water splashes on her. She is bare-footed and her hair hangs loosely around her shoulders. Another girl in a bright red dress peers carefully from behind a big tree, as if the blond girl is unaware she is there.

Ariel, the blond girl, splashes about in the pool of water which is fed by a thin stream. Two elves play happily with her, rushing in and out of the water as she kicks water at them. As the party approaches, both girls turn, startled at the intrusion. The elves duck behind the tree and discover Zarah, which again frightens them. They then scurry across the water to take refuge behind Ariel.

The blond girl lets out a gasp at the party's presence and then turns to the elves to see what frightened them the second time. After a brief, quiet exchange with the elves, she calls out, "Zarah, come over here," all the while keeping her eyes fixed on the party. The girl in the red dress stands emotionless but wide-eyed, and slowly side-steps over to the other girl. I

Zarah (4th-level cleric): AC 5; Move 12"; CLE 4; hp 22; #AT 1; Ding by weapon; THAC0 18; ST 11 IN 15 WS 15 DX 10 CN 12 CH 10. Spells: *light*, *protection from evil*, *animate dead*, *dispel magic*.

Ariel (6th-level thief): AC 4; Move 12"; THF 6; hp 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; THAC0 19; ST 12 IN 14 WS 10 DX 13 CN 11 CH 16.

If the party approaches in a hostile manner, the girls have enough time to escape. They hurry to take cover behind a hill and run for home. The party is unable to catch them by ordinary means. The elves run off in the opposite direction. If the party does not draw weapons and approaches in a friendly manner, the girls let out a sigh of relief and smile.

Zarah and Ariel introduce themselves confidently. The elves shyly step forward and call themselves Cody and Kemi. The girls are freely adorned with gold jewelry about their bodies and their clothes are fine quality silk. They explain who they are to the party and offer to show them to the village where they can rest, get more provisions, or even stay a few days. Zarah warns the characters, however, that some



trouble may be brewing with the dwarves in the Barony. Ariel was supposed to be checking on the dwarf activity, but instead ended up here, wading in the stream with the elves.

The elves wear plain brown leggings, but each has a short braided ponytail in back woven with fine golden threads. As the elves step forward to introduce themselves, Zara notices the golden threads in their hair and scoldingly says, "Ariel, you know what will happen if anyone sees that I " Ariel says nothing but an angry expression covers her pretty face.

Zarah has been watching Ariel to see if she may be one involved in a slight problem that could escalate into a full-fledged skirmish. Lately the dwarves have caught wind that someone within the castle has been withholding some of the gold that is due them. Ariel sees no harm in stealing small bits of it so that her elf friends may "look pretty, too Her sister wants to stop this before the dwarves become angry enough to not only start a skirmish, but cut off the water supply so important to their grapes, berries, and other crops.

The girls lead the way to the town and see that the party gets what they need. They encourage the party to stay for the evening, ensuring them a comfortable place to stay in the village. "The next city you will come to is about a day's journey from here. You might as well stay," Ariel says, eyeing one of the better-looking party members-one who would notice and appreciate her beauty. The girls talk openly with the party, but occasionally can be heard talking harshly to each other in quiet tones. "You shouldn't have been spying on me 'Well, you shouldn't even be

*touching* that gold...' "Wait until father gets back!" "Oh, never mind father! You'll have *me* to deal with!" When they see that the party is settled or has what it needs, the girls say goodbye and head for the castle.

If the party wishes to talk with the Baron, Zarah explains that her father is gone for a few days, but that they can direct any questions or problems to Shamus, their sister's husband. Shamus will be unavailable to the party until the next day. The adventurers may stay at an inn, The Gray Dove, which sits above a warm, cozy tavern, or they may camp in the outskirts of the village. If they stay at the inn and dine there (the only place in the village that serves food), go to *The Gray Dove*. If they decide to camp, go to *The Camp*.

### The Gray Dove

The Gray Dove stands proudly in the center of the village. Its sturdy boards are washed with a gray stain and flower boxes line the numerous windows. Sparkling clean windows are draped with bright red curtains. It is a startling contrast to the simple buildings that surround it. The front door is slightly ajar and the sounds of a congenial crowd float from within.

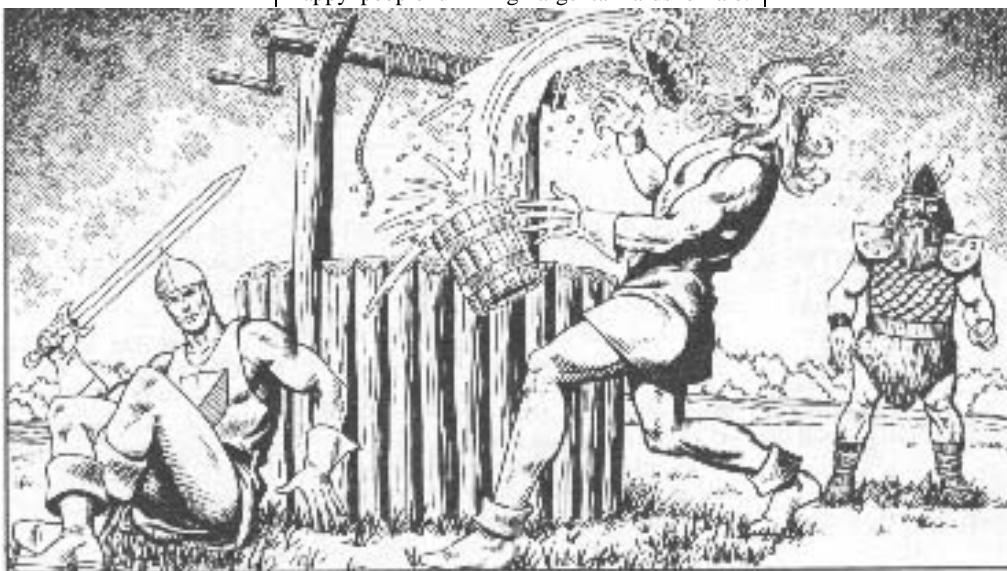
If the characters do not choose to go inside yet, but would rather explore the village, go to *The Village of Caryll*. If they go inside, read the following.

The inside of the Gray Dove is crowded with happy people drinking large tankards of ale.

The floor is covered with a thin gray rug and is spotless. Several tables fill the inn and a narrow bar is tucked into a far corner. Near this corner are several men, deep in discussion, with frowns frequently flashing across their faces. Two of them stand while three more rest on the table top, their feet propped on the chairs. A serving girl takes the orders from behind the bar while a serving boy whisks about taking orders for those who are seated. A sign above the doorway behind the bar lists the limited offerings of food and drink. Occasionally a man in a white apron pokes his head through the half door behind the bar.

If the party inquires about staying at the inn, they are shown to comfortable, quiet suite of rooms upstairs (enough beds for seven people) by the man in the apron. He says his name is Roj and that he owns the Gray Dove. Pointing to the trunks at the foot of each bed, he shows the characters the keys waiting in the locks so "you'll feel a bit safer here, not that we have many thieves among us:" He also says that the payment to stay at the inn (a mere 3 gp per night) includes all meals. "Come on down when you're ready to eat," he instructs and leaves, lightly closing the heavy wooden door.

If the party does not go down to eat dinner, they hear a light knock on the door. If asked to identify himself, the knocker says that he is Abin and lives in the village. He says he has several others with him and would the characters care to heed some advice from them. If the characters open the door wielding weapons, several men on





the other side recoil in horror. "We are not here to harm you, we just want to warn of some trouble in the village," says the one who identified himself as Abin. He says nothing more until the characters drop their weapons. It is clearly evident that the men have nothing more than simple daggers and that they do not intend to use them on the party.

Villagers (6): AC 9; Move 12"; HD 1; hp 8 each; #AT 1; Ding 1-4 (dagger); THAC0 20; AL LN.

Abin and the others warn the party that some dwarves who live in the area are acting up and may be planning to cause some trouble. They tell the party to be on guard for any trouble and asks them to report to the castle anything suspicious they see. They then turn to leave, saying nothing more.

If the party goes down for dinner they unavoidably take a wrong turn into a cool, dim room filled with wine kegs and bottles. "Hello there," calls a voice from behind a stack of kegs. "What can I do for you?" a young man asks as he appears from the darkness. He bears a striking resemblance to Abin and is in fact his son, Lowell. Lowell will steer the party in the right direction if asked, but calls after them. "Wait! Will you taste something for me, please? I think it's gone a bit bitter but I can't tell." Lowell holds out a clear bottle filled with a very golden wine. "This is from our secret store. It is made from golden grapes, but it looks like it's made with pure gold, does it not? We usually keep it for ourselves. Taste it for me.

The cool wine is sweet and delicious and Lowell seems relieved to hear that it is fine. He will sell a small amount to the characters if they wish to buy some, but charges no less than 5 gp per bottle. The wine has no magical properties and is in no way unusual, other than its color.

When the party finally finds the tavern, the serving boy seats them at a table in the corner opposite the somber men who are talking near the bar. As the party dines, one of the men will approach them in a friendly way and tell them of the impending danger with the dwarves. He says the dwarves are quite angry about being shorted of their fair share of the gold that is found in the barony. They are threatening to cut off the water supply. He and the others who are gathered at the table feel that it is only a ploy, that the dwarves really plan to attack, and that tomorrow morning they may see the full wrath of the stout, angry men. The man, named Herley, says that the party should watch carefully for anything suspicious, and that they will be warned if things become more dangerous.

If the party remains at the inn, they are awakened in the night by Ariel. She apologizes for startling them, but explains that their help may be badly needed. Since they look like seasoned adventurers (at least compared to those in the barony), they may be able to help. She says that dwarvish forces are threatening to attack. She begs them to come to the castle to help figure out what to do. If the party refuses, she first says that they will then die a horrible death like the rest of them. Then she offers them gold from the castle's stores if they still do not want to help. Go to *The Castle* once the party has been persuaded to go.

### The Village of Caryll

The village is quiet. Activities and the normal sounds and noises associated with a bustling village have become almost muffled, as if the people are all concerned about things other than their daily tasks. Some people carry large bundles or trunks and are headed in the direction of the castle entrance. If the characters talk to anyone on the streets, they speak in hushed, concerned tones, all the while checking around them as if they were looking for something or someone.

If the characters ask anyone why they all seem so quiet, they answer that they fear an attack from the dwarves. They admit that it may just be a rumor that the dwarves may attack, but they do not wish to take any chances. They have worked hard to establish the barony and now it is in danger of being destroyed. They do not know how many dwarves there are in the barony, and so they are quite worried.

The characters will come across a goldsmith in their wanderings. The outside of the shop is very plain, but the sign on the door ("Meade's Gold Shop") and the inside of the goldsmith's shop is quite elegantly decorated compared to the other shops. Normally anxious to trade, the goldsmith will refuse to accept any gold if the characters ask to do so. "No, sir. No trades today. It's all the more those little grimy things will get their hands on. It's all the more they'll steal from me I Come back when things have quieted down," he instructs the party. If the party wishes to acquire some gold from the smith, he says that all his store has been locked up in the castle for safekeeping. He will not take any of it out until the dwarves are no longer a threat. He will, however, loan the characters a few coins from the time being, to see them through the night.

Goldsmith (4th-level thief), AC 4; Move 12"; THF 4; hp 22; #AT 1; Dmg 3-8 (dagger 1-4 + 2); THAC0 20; AL LE.

Many of the other businesses in the village are closed for the day, mostly because of the impending danger the dwarves pose. Some of the buildings have even been boarded up to protect them from attack. After the characters have wandered about the village and are ready to turn in for the evening, go to *The Gray Dove* if they choose to stay there. Go to *The Camp* if they decide to stay there.

### The Camp

The characters must cross the village to get to the campground. They cannot help but pass through the main part of the village. If they stop along the way, go to *The Village of Caryll* (if the party has not already been through the village).

A small grassy area has been designated as a camping ground by a crude wooden sign that says "Camp Here." The grass is surrounded by a neat wooden fence. By one corner of the area is a large, low stone well about five feet across and two feet high.

If the characters carefully examine the area, one will discover a tiny golden leaf resting on the ground. Its stem curls around so that it may be worn on a cord or chain as it is a finely crafted, beautiful leaf. Engraved on the back in almost invisible letters is the word "Solitar." If the leaf is worn every day (it does not matter if it is worn at night), the wearer begins to turn a pale gold color. The gold color intensifies and the wearer's joints become stiff and eventually immobile if the leaf is still worn. After two weeks of daylight wear, the wearer turns to solid gold. If the leaf is taken off, the effects reverse themselves after the same amount of time it has been worn. All body hair, however, permanently remains a sort of metallic gold color.

If the party decides to stay here for the night, they are completely safe except for the well. Each time a character takes water from the well, roll 1d4. On a roll of 1, the character is attacked by water termites. The character is automatically surprised.

Water weird (2): AC 4; Move 12"; HD 3 + 3; hp 24, 19; #AT 0; Dmg nil; THAC0 16; SA save vs. paralysis or be dragged into water; SD 1 point of damage from sharp weapons; AL CE.

If the characters defeat the termites, they are able to safely drink from the water with no





further attacks. If a character checks carefully, he can find a fine gold chain (worth 25 gp) caught on a rock about six inches below the surface of the water, and 3 sp along the rim at the bottom of the well.

A magical spell guards all within the confines of the camping area, but no one tells the party that. They are able to sleep soundly on the soft grass until the character whom Ariel had her eyes on earlier is awakened by her insistent shaking.

"Wake up! Wake up!" Ariel urges frantically but quietly. "There is trouble stirring among the dwarves. We need all the help possible. Can you help us? We expect trouble as soon as the sun comes up.

Ariel eventually wakes everyone in the camp with her frantic pleas. If the party is reluctant to help, Ariel explains that the dwarves have the village and castle surrounded. "You'll never get out alive. You haven't a chance. Come to the castle with everyone else. You want to live, don't you?" Ariel tells the party she and Zarah have mobilized the available men for battle and are prepared for the dwarves when they attack, but any others who can wield a weapon are *desperately needed*. If the party questions why, if Shamus was left in charge he is not organizing the troops, "Ariel, answers that her sister has gone into labor and the baby will be born soon. "Shamus has lost his head. He is in a terrible panic, but he is also terribly excited. He does not pay attention for long with Cameron moaning in pain."

If the characters still do not want to go to the castle or become involved, Ariel offers to pay them gold if they will help. Her offer will start low and she will bargain, but she does not go higher than 200 gp per person. If the characters agree to help, Ariel leads them to the castle. Go to *The Castle*.

## The Castle

A neat cobblestone road leads to the front entrance. Scatterings of brightly colored wild flowers line the road. This does not look as though the people of the barony are serious fighters. Huge wooden doors hinged with brass and silver are wide open. A single guard with a polearm stands by the entrance. A pleasant expression seems locked on his face.

Guard: AC 6; Move 9"; FTR 3; hp 19; #AT 1, Dmg 1-6 (polearm); THACO 18; AL LN.

Zarah meets the party at the door and instructs them to follow her to a meeting room inside. They pass through fine stone hallways covered with brilliantly-colored tapestries depicting people enjoying themselves in the outdoors.

Zarah, with Ariel right behind her, leads you to a large meeting room beyond wooden doors almost as huge as the two at the entrance. The doors are left open as you enter. A big wooden table spans the length of the meeting room. At the end nearest the door are several men dressed in battle gear. A few women among them are equipped similarly. About ten elves are gathered around with them, talking- One larger elf stands somewhat away from the rest; he is heavier and about a half foot taller. His features are larger and rougher than the other elves. His pointy ears are cocked and unnatural-looking, as if he may have burned them once. A couple of large hunting dogs drift in and out of the room, sniffing hungrily at the elves. The people all talk in concerned tones, rather loudly and excitedly. Suddenly a man shoots into the room, a panicked look on his face. "Shamus," Zarah exclaims, "What's wrong?"

"It's time. It's time. What shall I do?" the man cries, and dashes from the room. Zarah runs after him, yelling, "Wait. I'll help!" But the people in the room do not hear that. They become quite agitated and anxious.

Shamus' baby will be born soon, but he is too nervous to stay with Cameron. He flits in and out of the room several times, asking what he should do and exclaiming that he's in trouble. Each time, Zarah herds him out of the room, and each time, the people in the room start to panic a bit more.

A tall man approaches the party and asks if they have had any large-scale battle experience. Whether the party has or not, the man replies, "Well, we'll soon put your abilities to the test. Shamus is useless and I am just a farmer, like most of the rest of us. Zarah and Ariel are now running things, but we think they could use your help" Ariel steps forward and announces that she thinks the forces should be made ready to attack at dawn. With the first sign of any dwarvish activity, she would like to let loose with all the army's might. Zarah returns to the room just as Ariel finishes this statement and argues that the dwarves can probably be placated, if given a chance to handle this situation peaceably. She also announces that she has checked the water level in the castle wells. It has gone down

significantly and the wells look as though they will be almost dry in a matter of hours.

The party is given a chance to voice their opinion, but the general decision is to wait and see what happens, Ariel and Zarah, however, both have their own ideas \* The elves think that the barony should eliminate the dwarves totally, all of the men but one nodding in agreement as their spokesperson Meech declares this. The larger elf merely grunts as Meech finishes his statement. The other elves turn to stare at him. They are not prepared for a show of disrespect at a time like this, Now that the attention is on this large elf, the other elves form puzzled looks on their faces.

As the full attention of the group is brought to the stocky elf, he slowly begins to back out of the room. "Now I know who you are," shouts an elf, "He's, he's..:' *Before* he can finish, the large elf turns to run, but trips over one of the hunting dogs. The dog gives a brief squeal and rights itself to stand guard over the disturbing bundle lying on the floor. The dog takes a couple of nips at *the elf* and manages to sink its teeth into one of the pointed ears. A gasp of horror arises from those watching as the dog lifts its head with what appears to be part of an ear in its mouth. "Stop, stop," yells the elf in a voice that is much too low to be an elf's. An elf, meanwhile, hurries over to the dog and removes the ear from the dog's mouth. "It's not real I" he shouts. "This *thing* is an impostor!"

Just then, Shamus dashes into the room again. "It's time! It's time! Help! Help!" he cries. "Do you know what's happening?" He questions the entire room, and runs off. His appearance is just enough distraction to let the dwarf try to crawl quietly, but quickly, out of the room. He has little luck doing so if the characters are aware of his movement.

The characters can easily capture the impostor as the commotion settles. They discover that he is actually a dwarf in elf disguise. His ears were fashioned from fine, pale brown mud to match his skin, and he was sent into the castle to spy. The castle inhabitants can simply hold him captive, or they may use him as a bargaining tool if one of the characters thinks of it. If the dwarf's life is threatened, the other dwarves agree to talk, but will attack the castle anyway before any talking is done.

When the people in the room once again become calm, Zarah explains that she thinks this uprising can be squelched quickly by giving the dwarves more gold, Ariel thinks the dwarves have gotten enough gold and wants to stage a full-scale battle to quiet the dwarves once and



for all. The characters need not unanimously decide which sister to side with, since they will be able to take orders from whomever they choose once the battle starts.

Both sisters agree that a call should go out to those outside the castle walls informing them that they may come to the fortress until the impending battle is over. Several of the castle guards head out immediately for the village.

**The “Peace Party”**

Zarah prepares to go with a party of three others to see if the dwarves will listen to reason. Any of the PCs may choose to go with them. She instructs the “peace party” to try any method possible to calm the dwarves, bribing them, if necessary, so they do not attack. Her final ploy is to give them a bit more gold that she has taken from the storeroom. Under no circumstances, she says, is there to be any violence. The party must go immediately to the dwarf leader, as time and tempers are wearing thin.

The PCs can take any equipment they wish with them, but an obvious show of weaponry will agitate the dwarves and make them less cooperative. The others in the party, including Zarah, carry only small knives as weapons. If any of the PCs think to take some of the golden wine they may have acquired, the locals think it strange, but do not question it further. The party may take torches to light their way.

Once the peace party is several hundred feet outside the castle walls, they begin to hear quiet whispers and muffled footsteps. No matter how quietly they attempt to move, they are discovered by dwarf lookouts.

The quiet whispers you bear as you walk suddenly grow louder. A distinct command to “Stop where you are,” is frightening enough to make anything come to a dead stop. The hoarse voice says, “Don’t move or you look like porcupine!”

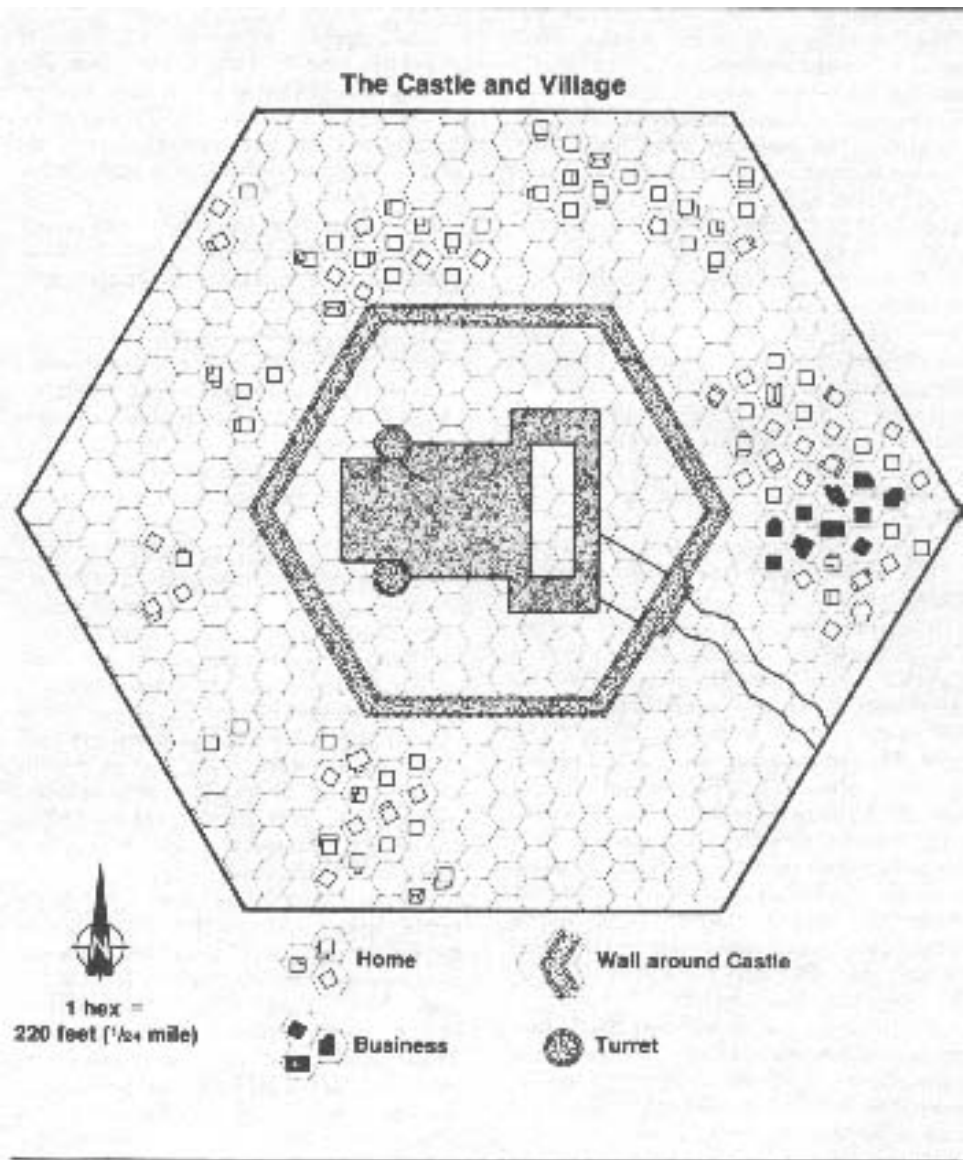
If the party carries any torches, the fire is snuffed out by a heavy spray of dirt so those in the castle cannot follow the progress of the party. If the party stops where they are, the voice commands them to follow it. If the party says they wish to see the leader, the voice snaps, “That’s where you go!” If the party does not stop, they find themselves instantly surrounded by six frumpy but snarling dwarves armed with spears. They gruffly tell the party to “Get moving. Someone wants to talk at you!”

After only a few minutes of walking they come across a small clearing filled with dwarves. Dressed in what is supposed to be their battle gear, they look more humorous than deadly, but if the party is not careful, they could soon learn the fierceness of which the dwarves are capable. Thick animal skins are pieced together in a haphazard fashion to serve as their sole protection. Some hold crude spears and shields. A few also have short swords. What looks like a struggle among the men is merely the leader’s attempt to wend his way through the crowd, shoving aside all who remain in his path. As he breaks through the final barriers, he looks up, wipes his brow, and exhales loudly. Staring

directly at Zarah, he exclaims, “His majesty’s daughter! Won’t this be interesting? What a fine prisoner you’ll make, huh? Well . . . speak!!” he roars, and lifts a shining sword upright in front of his face.

The dwarf leader is dressed in a collection of fine tanned skins of much better quality than those of his warriors. It is quite warm for the springtime, and the sweat from the weight and heat of this outfit rolls down his body in tiny rivers. The discomfort of the battle gear makes him surly and impatient.

Rewin (dwarf leader): AC 4; Move 6”; HD 1; hp 8; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; THACO 20; AL N.





Dwarf warriors (28): AC 4; Move 6"; FTR 1; hp 6 each; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; THACO 20; AL N.

If anyone but Zarah speaks, the leader, Rewin, curses at them and tells them that Zarah is the one that will speak. Zarah tries to placate Rewin by explaining that no wrong-doing was intended and that any gold due the dwarves was not purposely withheld. She asks that they not attack, and give the humans a second chance to prove they are not cheating the dwarves. This seems to quiet him as he ponders it for a few seconds, frowning with concentration. After this, whoever tries to speak will be allowed to proceed with whatever they wish to say. Any PCs can try bribes, lies, or whatever they can think of.

If a character tries to convince Rewin that he or she has wine made from gold, the dwarf leader is skeptical, but curious. He asks that some be poured into a glass for him to inspect. As the wine is poured, several astonished gasps can be heard. They have never seen wine of this color and will be able to be convinced that it is truly made from gold. The wine delights Rewin so, it almost appears as though he has been appeased. He laughs in between sips of the pale liquid and marvels at its color, saying that surely it is worth more than all the gold in the world. For some strange reason, though, whether the party has tried this tactic or not, Rewin suddenly has a drastic change in mood and says, "Not good enough. You all die." This signals several of his dwarves to move in closer to the party, ready to follow his next command. This also signals Zarah to try one last thing before they are taken away or disposed of she offers them the gold she has brought along.

Zarah carefully reaches into a pouch that is hidden beneath her clothes-carefully, because a dozen spear points now aim for her throat. "Is this enough? Will this make you stop this foolishness and go home?" she asks bravely, but with a hint of strain in her voice.

Rewin appears to be quite interest in her offering and steps forward to reach for the gold. But at that instant, something prevents him from doing so.

Nearby, a horrible crunching noise vibrates through the trees. Followed by a huge thud, the crunching stops after a few seconds. "They found us!" announces a cry from the distance. The dwarves begin to scatter in a confused manner.

If the party acts quickly enough, they are able to escape as a second thud lands nearer and creates a panic among the party's captors. (Ariel was getting impatient and decided to hurl a few rocks.) In all the confusion, the dwarves will have trouble keeping the party together. They will be able to get back to the castle before dawn, just before the dwarves plan to attack. The party members each suffer 1-4 points of damage from being scratched by bushes and branches as they hurry back to the castle.

The party may decide not to return to the castle, feeling that another plan may be more desirable-such as circling back and attacking the dwarves from the rear. In this case, they also suffer slight injuries from their escape (1-4 points of damage each). Zarah decides that she must return to the castle, and heads off by herself before anyone can even offer to go with her. By the time the party circles back, the dwarves will have organized themselves enough to attack. Most of the 115 dwarvish fighters have gathered in this centralized area and have been instructed to begin spreading out in a semi-circle to attack the castle from the west.

In a situation where the PCs in the peace party are deliberately trying to antagonize Rewin or the other dwarves, have Ariel attack a bit sooner, just before Rewin is pushed to the point of having the whole party eliminated on the spot. Rewin will have a chance to strike a blow at the character who is the most irritating. Roll a 1d6. On a roll of 1 or 2, the character received 1-6 points of damage from a glancing blow from Rewin's sword.

If any of the party has remained behind in the castle, they are unable to convince Ariel that she shouldn't antagonize the dwarves before her sister has returned. She realizes she is endangering her sister's life, but feels that since Zarah left without discussing any plans, and since Ariel must protect the entire barony, her actions are warranted.

The dwarves attempt to organize themselves quickly to attack as soon as the sun peeks over the horizon. Those inside the castle should have had plenty of time to ready for the dwarves' onslaught.

### The Battle

The Barony of Caryll has 78 men and women who are able to fight. Fifteen fighters have heavy crossbows, five have light crossbows. Twenty-five fighters have three small spears each. Another ten of the weaker fighters throw stones and bits of whatever they can lift.

Fourteen fighters have blowguns with which they shoot thorns coated with a substance that causes victims to fall asleep for one turn. Nine men handle three catapults which alternately send large rocks and burning oil into the air.

The dwarves have 115 able fighters. All are armed with spears and crude but impenetrable shields. About half also have short swords. The dwarves have three leaders of 4th level each.

### The Struggle Begins

When Zarah returns to the castle, a smaller, but not less vicious, battle begins inside. Each sister has decided that she is endangering not only her life, but the lives of the others she was with. "Well, we didn't all agree that you should have gone to talk with those beasts!" Ariel defends herself. "You were endangering your own life by going out there!" she continues. Meanwhile, Shamus continues to appear periodically, screeching, "It's coming! It's coming! What do I do?" "Who can I turn to?" The sisters and Shamus successfully create a scene of confusion and uncertainty.

And so the battle goes on. In between barbs and jabs, Zarah and Ariel are somewhat able to ready their forces for the attack. They will not argue if a party member tries to assist them and their forces at this time, as long as they are informed of any major decisions. The sisters wish to station troops all around the wall of the castle, but beyond that have no specific battle plans. They will agree with most any reasonable battle plan proposed by the PCs.

The dwarves send a line of 25 fighters to begin an assault on the west side of the castle. As these dwarves are eliminated, more are sent in, until the dwarvish forces are reduced to about half their numbers. They will then retreat, admitting defeat. The dwarves do not try attacking the village at all since they are bright enough to realize all the villager's valuables are probably safe within the castle walls by now.

At about the mid-point of the battle, the castle gets a new visitor from the skies.



A huge, hot gust of wind blows over the castle and the sweat on the fighters increases, dripping off their already soggy clothing. A minute later, a dark cloud quickly passes overhead, casting huge shadows across the castle walls-but this cloud has a long red tail and it appears to be circling above the castle. The quietly ominous feeling is suddenly shattered by the quick appearance of Shamus. His cheerful but frazzled announcement of, "It's here! It's here!" barely turns the heads of the fighters-but it does elicit a reply from the skies. An ear-splitting screech fills the air and slowly fades as the cloud returns.

The dwarves have unleashed their final hope, Erasthenes, a red dragon, It circles the castle twice and then begins its attacks.

Erasthenes (red dragon): AC - 1; Move 9"/24"; HD 10. hp 78; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/3-30; THAC0 10; SA breath weapon and *sleep* spell; AL CE; XP 3,200.

If the characters defeat Erasthenes or subdue him, they are able to remove the thick gold collar that circles his neck. The heavy collar is worth 850 gp. The dwarves gifted the dragon with the collar, telling him it was a token of their friendship. The collar actually has a spell cast on it so that the dwarves have the dragon under their command. The spell is broken once the collar is touched by anyone except a dwarf.

The dragon has recently swallowed three large rubies which remain in its stomach. They are worth 300 gp, 410 gp, and 420 gp.

### Ending the Battle

To determine the victors of this battle, keep track of the following points that the party

members or the citizens of the Barony score. When the Barony scores 100 points or more, it has successfully subdued the dwarves. They are also victorious if the dwarves retreat. However, if the dwarves manage to score 100 points or more first ' they have successfully subdued the Barony.

### Barony of Caryll

#### Points Action

- 2 Per dwarf eliminated
- 5 Per dwarf captured
- 5 Per dwarf subdued
- 5 Not bribing dwarves with gold
- 10 Defeating the red dragon
- 10 Capturing dwarf leader

### Dwarves

#### Points Action

- 5 Per opponent eliminated
- 10 Capture or eliminate Zarah
- 10 Capture or eliminate Ariel
- 10 Red dragon returns alive or stays uncaptured
- 10 Breach castle walls

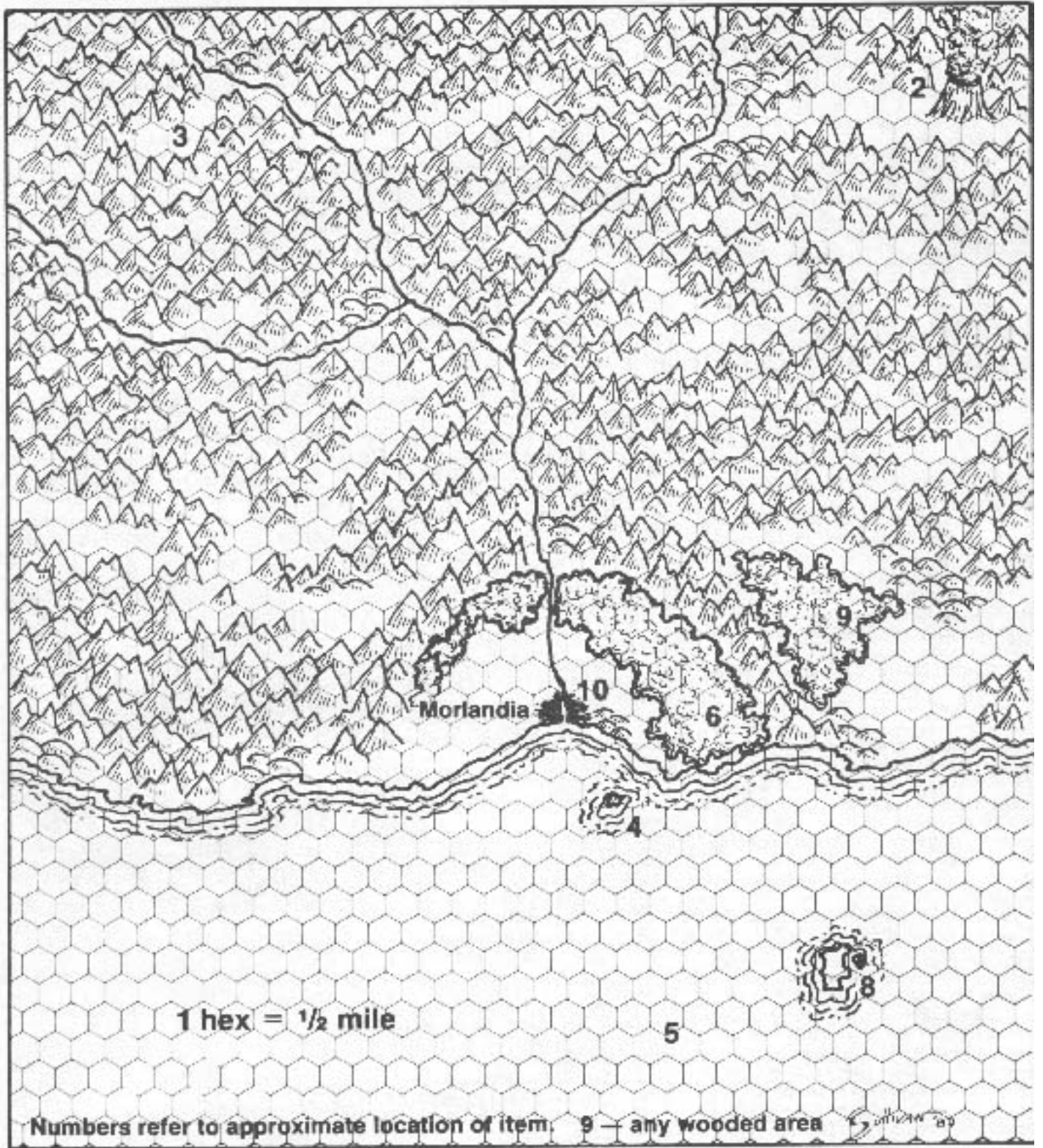
If the dwarves are able to subdue the forces in the castle, they demand only that the entire store of gold be given them. They do not wish to harm anyone since there are several people in the castle who are the only ones who know how to properly extract the gold from the earth and process it into perfect gold bars of various sizes.

If the dwarves are subdued, they calmly accept the proposal that they shall now receive only 30% of any gold discovered in the barony. Because of the horrible defeat, they wish to exist quietly in the barony until they can heal themselves and rebuild their lives. Their new respect for the strength of the forces of the barony and the fine display of leadership have made them realize that they may never be able to achieve control of the land that was once theirs.



**Postscript:** A seven-pound, eight-ounce, 21-inch boy, named Adrian Jacob, was born to Shamus and Cameron of the Barony of Caryll] at 6:47 A.M. the day of the battle. Mother and son are doing well. Father's condition is fair.

# Scavenger Hunt





*Scavenger Hunt* is an adventure for six to eight characters of 5th to 7th level. Teamwork is especially important in this adventure, so players should have some experience with each other. This adventure is suitable for play by a single team as well as for tournament play. Instructions for tournament play are included in the DM's section.

### DM's Information

This adventure can be used for tournament play in two ways. First, a time limit may be imposed in which the team who returns with the most items will be declared the winner. Second, if no time constraint exists, teams may play until one of the teams returns with all ten items. Finally, the adventure may also be used for a single party. In this event, the groups's success may be determined once they have collected all ten items, based on the calculations as the end of this adventure.

### Background

The town of Morlandia is a peaceful, sleepy town wedged in a small valley in the center of a volcanic mountain range. There the mountains divide and meet the ocean, the valley spread along the beach and up the mountainside. The terrain of the mountains protects the village from potential lava flows, even though the volcano has not erupted in over two centuries, and lies about 12 miles away. However, during the last eruption, the town was spared by the high collar of rock which circles the valley.

A more idyllic setting is difficult to imagine. The winters are cold, but not harsh, and the summers are long and balmy. The ocean offers protection from heat in the summer, as well as a steady food supply. The mountains provide an abundant source of fresh water, grazing lands, and fertile soil. The people of Morlandia have become accustomed to a comfortable, prosperous, crime-free lifestyle. The town is completely self-sufficient and even sells excess products to merchants who pass by ship. The 1,400 inhabitants are carefree and relaxed, and recognize each other on sight.

The tiny village is ruled by King Nolar. Nolar is at least 80 years old, and has ruled Morlandia for about 50 years. The job is not a difficult one, since life in Morlandia is so peaceful. Nolar's most important job, therefore, is the planning of the Spring Festival.

Every year, during the first full moon of spring, the residents of Morlandia hold their Spring Festival. It consists of an entire week of eating, drinking, and merry-making. The

highlight of the festival is the annual Scavenger Hunt. It is prepared by Nolar himself, and boasts a prize of 1,000 gp to each member of the winning team. Applications for the event are solicited from far and wide, and Nolar chooses anywhere from three to six of the best teams to compete. He spends a good portion of his winter preparing the event, for it is the townfolks' favorite form of entertainment. The people love to bet on the event, assist the teams, and watch the insanity of chasing around after Nolar's impossible list.

### The Adventure

This year, the party was chosen as one of the lucky teams to enter the Scavenger Hunt competition. An entry fee of 25 gp per person, payable to King Nolar upon arrival in Morlandia, covers lodging and all meals for the week, as well as wine and ale (for celebration purposes, of course). Once introduced to the townfolks the party members are welcomed like long-lost relatives, and drawn into the merry-making.

The party has arrived in Morlandia by ship, docking in the secure harbor. One of the king's aides is quickly summoned and escorts the party to Nolar's castle. Nolar is delighted to greet the party, and his eyes twinkle as he rubs his hands together in anticipation of the coming week. He chats with the party over a few bottles of calaberry wine, a surprisingly light and refreshing concoction which is just the thing to take the edge off a long sea journey. Realizing that supper time is drawing near, Nolar summons another aide to show the party to their inn, and bids the group good afternoon. That evening, the Spring Festival is to be launched with a tremendous feast, during which the competing parties will be introduced to the townfolks.

The adventurers are then escorted to the Inn of the Singing Dolphin. The quarters are small but cozy and the party is housed together on the second floor, taking up all of the existing rooms in the establishment. Teams staying at inns in town are referred to by the townfolks according to their inn. The DM may thus utilize the Singing Dolphin team as well as five others: the Blue Mermaid team, the Steaming Mountain team, the Rusty Meadow team, the Greedy Pelican team, and the Lost Wizard team. The DM may also create additional inns and teams as necessary.

After settling into their rooms, the party is called to supper by Pelly, their innkeeper. Pelly leads them into the town square and shows them

to one of the long tables set up in the street. Here the feast is served and the Spring Festivities are opened by King Nolar. After eating dinner and then introducing the teams, the crowd dissolves into a mass of dancing, singing, drinking people. The adventurers meet many townfolks but will not learn anything of the scavenger hunt. The townfolks are too busy carrying on to think of anything but ale, and besides, King Nolar's list is kept a secret until the Hunt is officially begun the next day.

After in unforgettable evening of fine wine, ale, and celebrating, the party is awakened around ten o'clock by Pelly. He has prepared a hearty breakfast for the party, and hurries them along in order to be back in the town square by noon, when King Nolar will officially open the scavenger hunt.

The entire town has already assembled when the party reaches the town square. Precisely at noon, King Nolar greets the townspeople and again welcomes the teams. He explains the tradition of the scavenger hunt and its importance to the people of Morlandia as their annual sporting event. The Morlandians regard the hunt with the utmost seriousness as to fair play and a sporting spirit. They wish to see the hunt carried out in the spirit in which it was created; good, hard, competitive fun, and nothing more. Therefore, the Morlandians do not tolerate cheating or foul play, and King Nolar has established this set of rules.

### The Rules

1. King Nolar will have the final word in judging a winner. (The DM at this point should declare a method for winning based on the most items in a given time limit or the shortest time to gather all ten items.)

2. All items will be subject to examination to verify authenticity. This will be determined by the king's best clerics and magic-users. Any forgeries will result in immediate disqualification and ineligibility for future scavenger hunts, as well as a hasty escort to the first ship leaving Morlandia.

3. Competing teams may not exchange information or items. Violation of this rule will be subject to the same punishment as stated in rule number 2.

4. Competing teams will be required to keep their distance from other teams during the contest. This is to prevent cheating or stealing and to protect each team's work. After the contest, however, the teams will be expected to be cordial to one another.



5. Since the people of Morlandia regard the scavenger hunt most seriously, all will be watching for signs of unfair play. Cheating or unsportsmanlike behavior will be reported to Nolar without hesitation and violators will be dealt with based on the severity of the crime.

Nolar has no other rules. He emphasizes that the scavenger hunt is simply a game and was designed for the entertainment of his people. He hopes that it will be played in the spirit of fun and friendly competition.

Nolar then offers a few suggestions and helpful hints. Party members may choose to hold all their items until all ten have been found, or they may drop items off at the castle as they find them. A tally board will be kept of deposited items so that the townsfolk and teams can keep track of each team's progress. Nolar favors dropping off items so that they may be safeguarded and also so the verification process can begin early. However, a team's choice to drop off items or to hold them will not affect the outcome of the game.

Nolar also suggests choosing an order for locating the items, rather than randomly chasing after items. The items need not be found in any specific order- However, Nolar adds that finding the items in a certain order will save many steps.

Finally, Nolar adds that his list is not exactly straightforward. It will take some deciphering and careful consideration in order to locate the correct items.

Nolar than asks one member from each team to step forward to receive a copy of the scavenger hunt list. He hands a tied scroll to each individual, announces that the game is officially open, and bids each team good luck.

### The Scroll

Upon opening the scroll, characters will find what they believe to be a blank piece of paper. This is one of Nolar's little jokes; he has written all of the lists in lemon juice. If the teams realize this and attempt to hold the paper up to a heat source, the words will turn brown and become visible. If the teams simply cannot figure this problem out, they will be forced to wait until noon on the following day, when the list will be published on the tally board at the castle.

Nolar's list reads as follows.

1. A handful of both the feathers and fur on the same piece of hide from the mysterious creature which stalks the upper valley.
2. The rock which floats in water and comes from the hot country.

3. A signal of acceptance from the mountain monks.
4. The lost wizard's secret spicy herb.
5. A greeting from Morlandia's nearest elven neighbors.
6. A cluster of growing liquid plant.
7. A memory from Nolar's childhood.
8. A liquid flame.
9. A new song for celebrating like the song the flying woodland creatures sing.
10. Nolar's favorite treat which he hasn't had since his boyhood.

### Clues

The party may begin anywhere they choose. The Morlandians, being lawful good, will do their best to aid and be fair to all the teams. Several of the townsfolk have received instructions from the king and actually have inside information which will help the teams, provided they ask the right questions.

The innkeepers all have the same information. The king is always quite careful about this, lest one team gain an unfair advantage. The innkeepers are able to provide teams with a map of the mountainside, directions to any place in town, and a handful of very interesting clues. The innkeeper's clues are the following:

1. Recently some of Morlandia's sheep have been found mutilated. The unusual thing about this is that the carcasses were found covered with feathers- The map will provide directions to the grazing lands.

2. Nolar used to play in a small cave near the beach as a boy. Once, he fell asleep in the cave while the whole town searched for him. The map also gives the approximate location of this cave.

3. The innkeeper's mother used to talk of a healing plant with a liquid center. It used to be quite common, but is now believed to be extinct. A small group set out to search the woods for the plant once, but never returned. The map will indicate the direction the group was heading when last seen.

4. The "lost wizard" refers to an old mage who used to visit town every few weeks. He was always drenched from head to toes, and spent most of his time speaking with the town's apothecary when he visited.

The innkeeper has one other clue, but this one is meant only to add confusion to the hunt: Nolar is terrified of the ocean.

Other townsfolk who have clues are:

**The Apothecary.** He did indeed spend a considerable amount of time with the lost wizard, whom he identifies as Sedgon. Sedgon claimed to have lived underwater, but the

apothecary never believed him. Sedgon even invited the apothecary to come for a visit, but he never had the desire. The apothecary can provide directions to Sedgon's home, and also has a large flask of a potion which Sedgon gave him, claiming that it allowed men to swim underwater without needing to breathe. The apothecary will dispense a small amount to each party member.

**The Sheep Herders.** If the party tries to question the sheep herders about their missing sheep, they will only hear frightened stories about evil creatures trying to destroy their village. As the party takes leave of the farm, however, they are approached by a boy about 14 years old who introduces himself as Korin. Korin says that he has seen the beast and can lead the party to its cave.

**The General Store Owner.** The general store is owned by Makk, and from his physical appearance, the party can correctly guess that he is the same age as Nolar. Makk doesn't remember things as clearly as he used to, however, and babbles about the weather, the town, the harvest, and past harvests. If questioned carefully, however, the party learns that Makk and Nolar used to play together as children. Makk even remembers that as boys, they used to carve their initials on an old pine tree, along with the names of girls who interested them. Makk doubts that Nolar would even remember that tree after all these years' but Makk even recalls where the trail began that led to the pine tree.

**Clerics.** The clerics are able to tell the party the proper procedure for visiting the mountain monks. If they follow these instructions to the letter, the monks will reward their efforts with a medallion made of woven lamb's wool, which is the symbol which Nolar is seeking.

Following are a few "misconceptions" which the party may encounter. None of these townsfolk are trying to deceive the teams; they just happen to have heard things a little differently.

**Sailors.** The teams will encounter a number of entertaining stories if they talk to people on the docks. Unfortunately, all of these stories are quite convincing. One tale is that the lost wizard is actually the name of a boat which went down in a storm off Morlandia about 100 years ago. Another tale is that on Midsummer's Eve, precisely at sundown, flames can be seen shooting out of the water all across the ocean. Finally, there is also a tale which describes flying sirens who come out of the woods on



summer evenings and attempt to make sailors jump ship.

**Pubs and Taverns.** If the party spends any amount of time in the local Pubs, they will hear that evil creatures have been seen in the waters off Morlandia. One of the old men can also be overheard proclaiming that the volcano is ready to erupt "any day now." Finally, the party hears that the nearest elvish settlement is over 150 miles away.

Again, these tales were not planted by Nolar—they just happen to be local lore which will confuse the teams.

## Encounter Key

Following is a list of encounters which will lead the teams to the quickest ending. Some events need not be accomplished in this order.

### Item 1.

The creature Nolar is looking for is an owlbear. If the party follows Korin, he leads them directly to the lair, but leaves the party as soon as they are within sight of the cave. Since Korin is responsible for chores, he can only escort the party at sundown.

There are no creatures in sight when the party approaches. As they near the mouth of the cave, they notice fallen feather and clumps of fur lying about. Torches or lanterns will be needed once the party has entered the cave.

The cave splits into two tunnels. The left tunnel leads to a larger cave in which various bones, bits of fur, and feathers are strewn about. In some corners of the cave, there are feathers and straw pushed together to form a nest. No treasure or eggs will be found in either of these two caves, for the owlbears have only recently moved in. The right tunnel leads to a smaller cave which appears to be uninhabited. Lying about are more bones and a few sheep carcasses. This cave is considerably more damp than the other.

As the PCs prepare to leave the caves, they encounter two or three owlbear returning from their nightly hunt.

Owlbears (2-3): AC 5; Move 12"; HD 5 + 2; hp 36 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-12; THAC0 15; SA hugs if victim is hit with an 18 or better, inflicting 2-16 damage per round until victim is dead; AL N.

The party needs to remember to save enough hide that is covered by both feathers and fur to present to King Nolar. This hide yields an extremely unpleasant odor.

### Item 2.

The party finds themselves teleported to an area near the top of the volcano following the location item 4. This will be the simplest way to find the rock. In this event, they spend two full days climbing to the summit and another two days climbing back down. The climb is hot, dusty, and exhausting, and sleep is difficult due to the rocky ground. Once per day, there is a 75% chance that the party will be attacked by a group of bowlers.

Bowlers (4-8): AC 4; Move 6" plus 1" per round until 15" is achieved, HD 2-5 hp each; #AT 1; Ding 4; THAC0 20; SA after crushing its prey, the bowler rolls onto its prey to consume it; only a 50% chance that prey will notice a bowler before they are within 40 feet of their victim; AL N.

Near the summit, the party also encounters a field of sand which houses from five to seven dustdiggers.

Dustdiggers (5-7): AC 4/7; Move 3"; HD 4; hp 21 each; #AT 1; Ding 1-8 plus AC of victim; THAC0 15; SA hides under sand until victim steps on it; 20% of dustdiggers project an illusion of a pool of water amid the sand; AL N.

Once the party arrives at the summit, they will have a 05 % cumulative chance per turn of finding the type of rock which, when placed in water, will float. The king is not looking for cork.

### Item 3.

The mountain monks live on the mountain which stands opposite the volcano. Their fortress is at a higher altitude than the mouth of the volcano and has always been protected from lava flows. The fortress has existed for over three centuries, and was built before Morlandia was settled.



The clerics in town inform the party that their journey must begin at dawn, and the fortress must be reached by dusk. Although it is farther than the volcano, the trail is well-worn and easily traveled if a quick pace is maintained.

The clerics also inform the party that once the fortress is reached, the team must follow the monks' orders to the letter. Any deviation from these orders may result in the monks refusing the party their reward.

The journey to the fortress is not a difficult one. However, there is one river to cross, and like all rivers during the springtime, it is rushing at full speed. The river is approximately six feet deep in the center and measures about 45 yards across.

As the party assembles on the opposite bank, they are attacked by giant frogs.

Giant frogs (6-8): AC 7; Move 3" //9"; HD 2; hp, 12 each; #AT 1; Ding 1-6; THAC0 16; SA victims hit by tongue are drawn to the frog next round and take maximum damage, swallows small creatures (elf, halfling) whole on a hit of 20; AL N. If victim hits tongue, frog will not attack that victim again. Hits on frog have 33 % chance of doing equal damage to a swallowed victim.

The remainder of the journey to the fortress is uneventful. Upon arrival, the party is greeted by a monk named Elevar who provides instructions.

Elevar shows the team to a small room with many empty shelves and coat pegs. He instructs the party to store all of their belongings and to change into the robes and sandals which he has provided. Once they have done so, they are shown to a small dining room where a supper of porridge and bread is served. The party is then allowed to sleep until midnight, then they are awakened to begin a 36-hour meditation. Bodily functions may be relieved as long as a monk provides an escort.

Any clerics or druids in the party will have no problem completing the meditation. Magic-users have an 85% chance of success, while fighters and thieves have a 75% chance of success, Lawful characters may add 10% to their chance of success.

Following the meditation, the party is fed a substantial meal of eggs, bread, and fresh fish. During the meal, the monks initiate a conversation examining the life experience gained by taking part in the scavenger hunt. If the party responds intelligently and expresses an interest in more than just the money, the clerics reward the party with the symbol Nolar seeks. They are given rooms for the night, and, at dawn, are shown a shorter path back to





Morlandia. The party should arrive back in Morlandia around mid-afternoon.

#### Item 4.

Sedgon, the lost wizard, really does exist, and the apothecary's directions will prove to be accurate. The party must row or swim 200 yards out into the ocean and place themselves directly in front of a crossshaped rock formation on the beach. Using the *potion of water breathing*, the party must then swim to the bottom of the ocean, where they will find Sedgon's home. The party encounters from one to four giant garfish during their swim.

Giant gar (1-4): AC 3; Move 30"; HD 8; hp 48 each; #AT 1; Ding 5-20; THAC0 12; SA swallows victim whole on hit of 20; AL N. A swallowed creature may cut its way out if it can inflict 25% of the fish's hit points with a sharp edged weapon. There is a 20% chance that a swallowed creature will receive damage equal to that inflicted upon the gar by sharp weapons.

Sedgon's home is quite unusual looking. It is built out of sandstone, smooth pebbles, and large pieces of coral. The roof is rounded, giving the home a bubble-like appearance. Each of the four walls has two round windows cut out of the stone, and Sedgon has placed a permanent wall of *force* over each opening.

The house has no door, but Sedgon has devised an ingenious entry system to keep his home dry. The party notices a huge tube shaped like an inverted letter U attached to the roof. One end disappears into the house, while the other end stops about four feet off the ocean floor. The tube is about four feet in diameter and looks as if it were made out of some type of discarded barrels.

Any character sticking his head into the tube finds that the tube is not filled with water. Instead, the air pressure forces the water out of the tube and provides a dry entrance for Sedgon. A rope ladder hangs inside the tube for easier access. Characters have to climb up into the tube, navigate a hairpin turn, then climb down about six feet and drop to the floor.

There is a 75% chance Sedgon will be at home. Since his windows are so large, he is able to see the party approaching and invite them into his home.

Sedgon (magic-user): AC 1; Move 12"; M-U 16; hp 47; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; THAC0 13; ST 13 IN 17 WS 14 DX 16 CN 15 CH 13; AL CG. He is a human male, about 55 years old, 5' 10" tall and weighing 170 lbs. His hair is gray as well as his closely trimmed beard. Sedgon prefers to dress in shades of blue or green, so as not to

clash with the underwater scenery. He wears a *ring of protection +2*, *ring of water walking*, *cloak of the manta ray*, *boots of swimming* which function like *boots of speed*, enabling the wearer to swim at a rate of 24", and *bracers of defense AC 5*. He also owns a *folding boat*.

Sedgon has access to a great many spells, and has an 80% chance of having any spell he wishes in his spell book. He knows the following spells:

Cantrips: *Warm* (x2), *freshen* (x2)

Level 1: *Magic missile*, *read magic*, *charm person*, *identify*

Level 2: *Invisibility*, *levitate*, *preserve*, *know alignment*, *strength*

Level 3: *Dispel magic*, *fly*, *lightning bolt*, *water breathing*, *slow*

Level 4: *Dimension door*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *monster summoning II*, *wall of ice*, *wizard eye*

Level 5: *Airy water*, *cone of cold*, *hold monster*, *passwall*, *teleport*

Level 6: *Lower water*, *part water*, *Otiluke's freezing sphere*

Level 7: *Drawmij's instant summons*, *limited wish*

Level 8; *Permanency*

Sedgon rarely has visitors, and therefore is glad to have some company. He is quite a pleasant fellow and enjoys chatting with the party. Before anything can be accomplished, however, he insists upon hearing how things are in Morlandia. He asks about several famous landmarks, then inquires about the Spring Festival and is surprised and delighted to hear that the party is entered in the scavenger hunt. Sedgon then asks to see Nolar's list, and whistles or giggles at some of the items as he reads them. He is thrilled to see his name mentioned, and is glad to help the party after they have a drink and a bite to eat. Sedgon disappears through a door, babbling about "whipping something right up;" and the party hears pans and utensils clattering away.

Sedgon's babbling gives the party little time to notice his home until he exits to the kitchen. The tube which dropped the party into his home placed them in a small 8' x 8' room. The walls are wooden, and there is nothing decorating it. An open door-way leads into a living room, where the party is now seated. The walls to the outside are made of shells, and the inner walls are wooden. The room is 45' long and 15' wide, with two windows on the long outside wall, and one window on each of the short walls. There are two doors on the inside wall, one through which Sedgon has just disappeared.

The party is seated on comfortable wooden benches and chairs. The room also contains a few small tables, four oil lamps, some unusual seashells, and a mobile made out of seashells. Sedgon loves the ocean, and has spent a great deal of time arranging his living quarters to make the most of its resources.

Sedgon has disappeared into his kitchen. This is a 15' x 15' room with two windows, and an L-shaped counter running along both outside walls. A round table with two chairs stands in the center of the room. Rows of shelves line the walls above the counters, and they are well-stocked with flour, sugar, salt, home-canned fruits, vegetables, juices, spices, and other types of supplies.

Sedgon owns a *decanter of endless water*, as well as one other unusual cooking device. He has created a type of burner which uses oil, but has eight wicks arranged in a circle with four more wicks in the center of those\* These twelve wicks heat a kettle most effectively, and fewer can be used if a lower heat is desired. The wicks all share a common oil source so that the unit is not too bulky.

There are two more doors which lead out of the kitchen in addition to the one that leads to the sitting room. One of these doors leads to a large closet housing brooms, cleaning supplies, extra blankets and pillows, clothing, and supplies generally used by magic-users. A door on the other side of this closet leads into a tiny 10' x 10' workshop.

The workshop is tiny, but houses an incredible amount of supplies. There are bottles and jars lined up on shelves along two of the walls, and there is a long table taking up the center of the room. The table holds many pipettes and decanters and some are bubbling away with potions in the making. The table also has drawers underneath it, and these are filled with spell components and examples of ocean life which could be the envy of a marine biologist.

The other door out of the kitchen leads to a 5' wide, 15' long hallway which runs through the center of the house, between the sitting room and the workshop, and leads to Sedgon's bedroom. The walls of the hallway are wooden, and there are two oil lamps hanging from the wall to provide light. Only one of them is lit.

Sedgon's bedroom is at the end of the hallway. The room is 15' X 15' and contains a single bed, a dresser, and a writing table with a chair. A large drawer in the writing table contains Sedgon's spell books and this drawer is kept *wizard locked*. Above the table is a shelf



holding nine reference books, two of which are about marine life and two of which are about plant life. The shelf also holds a stack of writing paper and a few extra bottles of ink.

Sedgon's bed is plain, but is covered by many blankets and quilts. The dresser holds an extra blanket and more of Sedgon's clothing. On top of the dresser is a necklace made up of a gold chain holding a single sapphire, and a ring with a similar sapphire, each valued at 800 gp. They do not radiate magic; they are Sedgon's next project and are waiting to become magical items.

The bedroom has one window, and it is the only window in the house with a curtain. During the daytime the curtains are kept pushed to one side.

The floor throughout the entire house is made of flagstone, and the floor in the bedroom is covered by a large, handwoven rug. The whole house is remarkably clean, thanks to Sedgon's weekly cleaning which makes use of many cantrips. There is a 14 % chance that the party arrives on Sedgon's cleaning day. On cleaning day, Sedgon is carrying the following cantrips in place of four of his first-level spells: *clean* (A), *dust* (x10), *polish* (x1), and *stitch* (x1).

After about 20 minutes of clattering in the kitchen, Sedgon returns carrying a huge pot of seafood stew and a pitcher of fresh water. Another trip to the kitchen produces bowls, spoons, and drinking mugs. The dishes and glasses have been carved out of bone or shell, as have the spoons. While eating, Sedgon again asks to see the scavenger hunt list. He ponders it, then tells the party that he can assist them in finding the elven neighbors, the flaming liquid plant, and the spicy herb. He first sends them off in search of the plant, and, if they are successful, he helps them in finding the other two items.

Sedgon recommends that the group get an early start. He loans them his folding boat and provides a means for the party to reach the water's surface, and also gives them directions for reaching a tiny island. Sedgon asks that, in return for his aid, the party bring back a quantity of the plant for himself as well. He has heard stories of this legendary plant, called ballantqui. It is said to contain a hot, red liquid inside a white pod, on a red stalk with red flame-shaped leaves. The liquid is said to cause burns on skin, but, if diluted, will warm food or drink, or can also be used to cure frost-bite and colds. As far as Sedgon knows, no one has ever found the plant, but it is rumored to grow on a tiny island nearby. He helps the party to get started in the morning.

The team can spend the night in Sedgon's living room. He has a few extra blankets and pillows. The evening is spent playing cards and chatting with Sedgon. He turns in early, and recommends that the party does the same. The living room is dark, but the party may have trouble falling asleep due to the passing ocean life. Once asleep, however, they sleep soundly and the night passes uneventfully.

In the morning, Sedgon provides breakfast, gives the characters his folding boat, and provides enough *potion of water breathing* for them to reach the surface. Once on the surface, the boat can be erected and the party will set out shortly after dawn.

It takes one full day of hard rowing to reach the island. During the late morning, the party notices three narwhales about 100 yards away, heading in the opposite direction. During the mid-afternoon, the boat is attacked by a giant sea snake.

Giant sea snake (1): AC 5; Move 1"; HD 9; hp 54; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/3-18; THAC0 12; SA poison and constriction; AL N.

Within about one hour of sundown, the party reaches the island. It seems to glow a faint red from a distance. When the party lands, they notice that there is not a spring chill in the air; the island is as warm as an August afternoon. Thick woods grow down to the edge of the beach. The island is uninhabited and an eerie hush surrounds the area. Since the island is only two miles in diameter, it does not take long to find the "liquid flame" The plant must be dug up with roots intact and placed in a protective container so as to preserve the plant and protect characters from burns. If a pod breaks open, the liquid splatters for a four-foot radius and does 2-8 points of damage to anyone who is hit. The liquid does not affect metal items, pits leather

items, and burns small holes in cloth. Anyone involved in digging up the plant or in its transportation has a 60% chance of being splattered. At least a one-foot-square section of the plants must be dug in order to ensure its survival. Therefore, the party needs at least two square feet of the plant to satisfy both Nolar and Sedgon.

The island yields plenty of firewood, but nothing edible except coconuts, which are not yet ripe. The only place suitable for camping is either the boat or the beach. Persons who sleep on the beach need to save vs. poison when they awaken or be stricken with a low-grade fever for 2d20 hours. These persons are capable of normal activity such as eating or walking, but are too weak to fight or use any spells higher than second level. The fever is a result of the high concentration of Ballantqui plants. Fever results if more than one square foot of plant grows in a ten-foot-square area. Indoors, there can be no more than one square foot of plant for each five-foot square area. The fever cannot be cured magically and must be allowed to run its course.

Shortly after midnight, the team encounters a will-o-wisp. It appears either on the boat or over the water, and will attempt to lure characters into the water in hopes of drowning them in order to absorb their life energy. The will-o-wisp looks like a glowing lantern or torch or dancing lights.

Will-o-wisp (1): AC 8; Move a"; HD 9; hp 45; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16 (electrical); THAC0 12; SA can grow bright or dim or change position to confuse prey; SD can turn off its glow for 2-8 rounds if it does not attack, but can be seen by creatures who see invisible objects; MR not affected by any spells except magic missile, maze, and protection *from evil*; AL CE.

The party must now return to Sedgon with the plant. In the morning, they may set out again, but for every person stricken with fever travel will be two hours slower since there will be one less person rowing. If the party arrives back at Sedgon's during the night, they are forced to wait until morning to swim to his home due to the darkness.

Sedgon warmly welcomes the team and offers another round of his seafood stew. He does not speak of anything else until he has heard every word about locating this plant. He is especially interested in hearing about the narwhales. He seems to associate some meaning with their sighting.

#### Item 5.



Sedgon congratulates the party on their success. He asks for the return of his boat, then begins talking about a way that the party can meet the elves. The team may be somewhat confused by this if they have heard the rumor that the nearest elves are 150 miles away. Sedgon laughs at this and explains that there is a unique tribe of seaelves living nearby. They rarely associate with humans, but humans frequently see them in their sea-form, that being the form of a dolphin. Sedgon explains that these seaelves live under the ocean and can change form to a dolphin whenever they wish. This is not to say that all dolphins are sea-elves; ordinary dolphins inhabit the oceans as well.

Sedgon says that he will try to arrange a meeting with the sea-elves. He walks over to the mobile in his living room and rattles the shells a few times. Within one turn a porpoise arrives outside Sedgon's window whom Sedgon introduces as Torsina, his familiar.

Torsina the porpoise: AC 5; Move 30"; HD 2; hp 12; #AT 1; Ding 2-8; THAC0 16; SD save as 4th level fighter; AL CG.

Sedgon communicates a message to Torsina and then waits for here to repeat it back to him. The pair nod to each other, and then Torsina is off to find the sea-elves.

After 40 minutes Torsina returns, followed by as many dolphins as there are party members. Sedgon dispenses the potions of water breathing, and the group exits via the tube. Each dolphin tows a party member and Torsina tows Sedgon until the group reaches the sea-elves' kingdom.

The dolphins enter a cave which slopes upward, gently at first, then more steeply, until the cave becomes a vertical tunnel. After about 100 yards, the group breaks the surface of the water.

The party finds themselves in a cave larger than any they imagined possible. Inside is a town the size of Morlandia, including what looks like a large lake about 200 yards across, in which the party swims at this moment. A beach extends all around the lake, and boat docks have been built to one side. An underwater shelf of rock extends about 50 yards beyond the beach into the water, making the area suitable for swimming. Near the docks, elvish children and dolphins are splashing in the water.

The village looks just like any other elvish village which exists on dry land. It is surrounded by green fields with grazing animals, and most homes have gardens planted. The cave is as brightly lit as a summer afternoon, thanks to the elf who discovered this cave. His name was Deamandil, and when he found the cave, cast a

series of continual light spells on the ceiling of the cave until he had a spot large enough to duplicate the light of the sun. He then commissioned a clockmaker to create a huge timepiece, consisting of many pulleys and gears which would duplicate sunup and sundown by gradually pulling a thick, black cloth over the artificial sun and, during morning hours, uncover the "sun." Thus, from dawn until noon, the cave grows gradually brighter, and from noon to dusk, the light decreases. This feature has enabled the sea-elves to lead a normal, though underwater, life for over 12 centuries. The town is named Deamandil after that first ingenious elf.

The party can leave the water by swimming over to the beach and walking onto dry land. The cave climate is comfortable, for it is heated from underground by the nearby volcano.

The residents of Deamandil are friendly and polite but curious. They are all lawful good, but rarely, if ever, have seen strangers other than Sedgon. Like Morlandia, Deamandil is completely self-sufficient. Sedgon usually trades the performance of a spell for any supplies he might need.

Sedgon's opinion is that Nolar had heard legends about this village, that curiosity finally got the better of him and he had to learn if it really existed. The scavenger hunt provided the perfect means to find the village without placing any great risk on himself or his subjects.

Sedgon and the accompanying elves (who have changed to terrestrial form) escort the party through town to see their mayor. The mayor decides whether the elves can reveal their position for the sake of the scavenger hunt, and then decide what clue to provide for Nolar.

Near the edge of town the party comes to a spacious stone building. It is the home of the mayor and is the largest building in town, but no nicer than any other home in the village.

The mayor is acquainted with Sedgon and respects him, but worries that he is a bit irresponsible. However, any human who goes out of his way to live underwater can't be all bad.

The mayor, who is a 7th-level magic-user, will see the party. Her name is Dylea.

Dylea: AC 4; Move 12"; M-U 7; hp 21; #AT 1; Ding by weapon; THAC0 19; ST 12 IN 18 W 15 DX 15 CN 11 CH 16; AL LG. Dylea knows the following spells.

Level 1: *Magic missile, read Magic, unseen servant, precipitation*

Level 2: *Detect evil, levitate, ESP*

Level 3: *Fly, lightning bolt*

#### Level 4. *Plant growth*

Dylea is of extremely small size and quite pretty. The townsfolk love her, for she is an excellent governess. The position of mayor is achieved through heredity in Deamandil. She wears simple clothing, like the rest of the town. Under her clothing she wears *bracers of defense AC 5*. She also owns a *gem of seeing*, which is handed down from mayor to mayor, and a *ring of protection from evil* (as first-level clerical spell at loth level of ability). She prefers the quarterstaff and dagger as her weapons but rarely, if ever, has a need to use them.

Dylea uses her *precipitation* spell to assist the farmers and gardeners, and uses her *plant growth* spell when timber is needed for building or vines are needed for basketweaving. Some of the elves mine the rock of the cave wall for building materials, and an occasional *lightning bolt* makes their job easier

In a first encounter with a stranger, Dylea always makes use of the ESP spell. She is concerned about persons of questionable character harming her village and therefore is extremely cautious about strangers, despite the fact that the village is almost impossible to locate. Even persons who have visited Deamandil usually are not able to locate it again until a fourth or fifth visit.

Dylea engages the party in some pleasant conversation to help her determine the party's motivation. If she finds them to be exploitive, questionable or demonstrating evil tendencies, she gets rid of them as soon as possible. She will smile and agree to their request, and hand the party an object which is woven of seaweed and shells. It is the official seal of Deamandil. The object remains intact while it is in the village or underwater, but disintegrates once the party reaches land. If Dylea sees a need to do this, she will advise Sedgon and both will make use of *hallucinatory terrain spells* to hide their dwellings against retaliation. Under these conditions, a party has no way of locating Sedgon or the village again.

If Dylea favors the party, she asks them to perform a favor in exchange for her aid. The village has one neighbor who causes them a great deal of trouble. The townsfolk refer to it as "the terrible fish;" for it scares away other fish and amiable sea creatures. On other fish and amiable sea creatures. On occasion it has even attacked a few of the townspeople, Dylea's favor, then, is to locate this creature and eliminate it. She will send along three of her strongest men, in dolphin form, to assist the party and help them locate this fish. The characteristics of the



dolphins are identical to those of Torsina, mentioned previously, with the exception that the dolphins are lawful good and have 15 hp each.

The dolphins lead the party, who have again been outfitted for *water breathing*, out of the tunnel, into the open ocean, and toward another cave. This cave is unusual, however, because some of the rocks which make up its entrance appear to have been cut by humans or dwarves. The “terrible fish” arrives in 1d8 turns in response to the scent of the humans and dolphins.

Dinichtys: AC 7; Move 21” ; HD 10; hp 62; #AT 1; Dmg 5-20; THAC0 10; SA swallows prey on a score of 20; AL N. The effects of swallowing are the same as the effects of being swallowed by a giant gar.

The dolphins took the dinichtys, which is a prehistoric fish, back to their village as proof of the kill. In return, Dylea provides the party with the city's official seal, this time meticulously engraved on a polished oyster shell, and a representative of the village, on the conditions that this person's identity be revealed only to Nolar and his staff. Dylea is grateful for the removal of this fish, and also provides supper for the party. She makes arrangements with Sedgon for the party to contact Torsina, who in turn will contact the elves for a representative to meet them on the beach at Morlandia.

After bidding farewell to Dylea and Deamandil, Sedgon and Torsina return with the party to the cave where the dinichtys was encountered. Sedgon sends Torsina on her way, and then explains to the party that he must teleport them to the location where he gathers his spicy herb, but that he will teleport himself back home immediately. The party will have six turns to accomplish their mission before they will be teleported back to Morlandia.

Sedgon casts his spell, and the group teleports into a large patch of a strange, yellow plants growing on the beach. The area looks strikingly similar to Morlandia, but looks terribly peculiar, much like Earth during the Mesozoic Era. Sedgon instantly teleports away, giving the party no time to ask questions. They must dig up a patch of this plant and survive for one hour before they are teleported back to Morlandia.

The party will undoubtedly be surprised by their surroundings, but will be even more surprised when they realize that a 70-foot long, 40-ton brontosaurus is munching on the same patch of plant that they have just discovered. The brontosaurus will not attack unless

provoked. It does, however, tend to step on things in its way, causing 4-40 points of damage.

Brontosaurus: AC 5; Move 6”; HD 30; hp 161; #AT 1; Dmg 3-18; THAC0 7; AL N.

The party is able to safely dig up a sufficient quantity of the plant without disturbing the brontosaurus if they make a Dexterity check successfully. Within 2-4 turns, the party's scent is noticed by a gorgosaurus, who will run in to attack.

Gorgosaurus: AC 5; Move 15”; HD 13; hp 55; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/7-28; THAC0 9; AL N.

There is a 20% chance during both the fifth and sixth turns that the party will be attacked by a pteranodon. If attacked during the fifth turn, they will not be attacked again during the sixth.

Pteranodon (1-3): AC 7; Move 3”/15”; HD 3 + 3; hp 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; THAC0 16; AL N. The pteranodon is a flying reptile with a four-foot long beak, weighing about 45 pounds.

At the end of the sixth turn, the party is teleported back to Morlandia and finds themselves at the top of the volcano. If they have not already done so, they may search for Item 2, and will still be subject to attack by the dustdiggers. If the party has already found the rock, they are able to avoid the dustdiggers and descend the mountain. In both cases, during descent the party will be subject to attack by bowlers. Teleportation to the mountaintop will either save or waste two full days for the party, depending upon whether or not they had located the stone prior to meeting Sedgon.

After descending the mountain, if the party heads for the beach, they find Torsina waiting. Within 1-4 turns, she returns with a sea-elf in dolphin form, who will become an elf again in order to visit Nolar.

#### Item 6.

The story which Pelly's mother told is true. The healing plant really did exist, and still grows deep in the woods. Pelly's map indicates the beginning of a trail and a direction. The path is overgrown and weedy, and movement is slowed to 5”. The party requires 1d4 + 2 turns to locate the patch, which is guarded by giant centipedes.

Giant centipedes (8-16): AC 9; Move 15”; HD 1/4; hp 3 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2; THAC0 20; SA weak poison; AL N.

Once the party has overcome the centipedes, they are free to dig up as much of the plant as they wish. Pelly called it *jordvana*, and it is a low, green plant with spherical-shaped leaves which are about 1” in diameter. If the leaves are broken open, it releases a sticky, oozy substance which

is soothing to burns and draws poison out of bite wounds. It must be grown in a shady area.

#### Item 7.

The tree which Makk speaks of is indeed still standing. The trail, however, is barely discernable. Makk can only show the party the beginning of the trail and point them in the general direction of the pine tree. Movement on the trail will only be 2”, with a 50% chance per turn of getting lost. The chance of finding the trail again is 25 % per turn. If the trail cannot be found within five turns, the party needs to find their way out of the woods, find the start of the trail, and start over. Finding the tree without getting lost requires about six hours. Time spent being lost should be added accordingly.

Approximately half-way to the tree, the party notices a small cave opening to the left of the trail. The entrance is large enough for an average human to enter, crouching slightly. Once inside the entrance the cave opens into a chamber about 15 feet in diameter. There is a dirt floor, but no items of interest.

A split in the rock yields an opening into another chamber. Characters must squeeze through the opening single-file, and find themselves in another cave about 20 feet in diameter. What is unusual about this room is that in three different places an upsidedown, five-pointed star is painted on the wall in white. If the characters study the positions of these stars, they might realize that by drawing a straight line down the wall and across the dirt floor from the bottom point of each star, the lines converge. If the party digs down five feet at this point, they find a two-foot long wooden chest. The chest makes a rattling noise and is held shut with a rusty padlock. The lock radiates magic, but it is simply *Nystuls Magic Aura*. The lock can be broken but not picked. The lock breaks after taking 12 points of damage from a blunt object.

Inside the chest the party finds 350 gp, three rubies valued at 100 gp and 50 gp (x2), and two pearls worth 75 gp each. The chest appears to be the buried treasure of some old pirate who made use of the area before Morlandia was settled.

The DM must use care in this encounter if this adventure is used for team play. Only the first team to reach the cave will find the treasure.

After leaving the cave, the party must continue along the trail, checking various pine trees, until the correct tree is located. There is a 20% chance that the party will pass the correct tree and venture farther into the forest than necessary. If they double back along the same



path, the party finds the tree on their way out of the woods. Use of a *locate object* spell will not assist the party in this encounter.

Once the tree is found, the party must write down all of the information carved on the tree. Nolar will not remember it at first, but after a few hours and a few reminders about Makk, the memory comes back to him.

#### Item 8.

See encounter for locating Item 4.

#### Item 9.

During the course of this adventure, the team will be required to camp overnight at least once. During any campout which the **DM chooses, the party will** be visited by 1d4 firefriends. These creatures resemble giant fireflies and love to visit with humans just for conversation- They approach parties of humans at night, very quietly, and then attempt to make contact. They do not attack unless provoked, and approach in order to hear stories from the campers. They also tell stories or sing songs. If the party tells the firefriends an entertaining story, they will in turn teach the team any type of song they wish. Nolar has heard the singing of the firefriends in the woods at night, and has been dying to learn their songs. The party must successfully remember the song (they may write down the words, if desired) and then teach it to Nolar.

Firefriends (1-4): AC 4; Move 3"/15"; HD 1 +4; hp 9 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; THAC0 18; SA can shoot a beam of light 14 feet long from its tail for 5-20 damage, save vs. wands for half damage; SD immune to fire and electrical attacks; AL NG.

#### Item 10.

Pelly knows the story about Nolar and the hidden cave. The map shows the approximate location. Once per day, the party can search for the cave. Rangers have a 30 % chance of locating it; thieves, a 25 % chance; fighters, a 15% chance; clerics or magic-users, a 10% chance.

The cave is empty, but inside, there grows a fungus relative to a mushroom. It is thin, flat and crunchy, and completely edible. If the cave is carefully searched, the party will find a small, round can filled with a white crystalline substance. It is merely sugar. Nolar used to love to much on these fungi dipped in sugar but one year, the supply ran out. Nolar assumed the



patch to be extinct, but proper growing conditions returned and the patch flourished again. Nolar has not been aware of its existence for many years.

#### Wild Goose Chases

It is entirely possible that teams may find themselves on wild goose chases. The town rumors will contribute to this possibility. If a party sincerely believes that they are on the right track, they will more than likely follow their leads until they reach a dead end or discover their mistake. Depending on which townsfolk they choose to speak to, their information will change. Only the people appointed by Nolar will be persuasive in placing the team on the right track. None of the townsfolk will intentionally mislead any of the teams.

#### Determining the Winner

Winners will be determined differently depending upon the initial set-up of the game.

If the game is played without a time restraint, the first team to gather all ten items will be declared the winner. The DM must use care to record time accurately, preferably in game time rather than actual playing time. If none of the teams are able to gather all ten items, then the DM must stop the time after all reasonable leads are exhausted and declare the team with the highest score the winner. Rather than simply counting the actual items, each item is assigned a score.

If the game is played under a time restraint, the DM must again use caution in measuring

time. At the end of the time limit, scores may be calculated as follows, assuming that all items are authentic.

- Item 1 - 5 points
- Item 2 - 14 points
- Item 3 - 14 points
- Item 4 - 20 points
- Item 5 - 16 points
- Item 6 - 6 points
- Item 7 - 7 points
- Item 8 - 12 points
- Item 9 - 3 points
- Item 10 - sugar & fungus, 7 points  
fungus only, 4 points

In the event of a tie, the team who lost the least amount of hit points is the winner.

If a single team enters the scavenger hunt, assume five imaginary competing teams. If the single team played until all ten items were found, use the following calculations.

1. Roll percentile dice for each additional team to determine if any teams cheated. There is a 20% chance per team that the team was disqualified.

2. Roll a d20 for each of the ten items and add 4 to each roll. If the number is greater than the point value for the item, that team was successful in locating that item. Do this for all ten items for each remaining team. If any team has located all ten items, use the tiebreaker explained above. If none of the teams found all ten items then the single team has won.

If the single team was under a time restraint, add up their score. Repeat step 1 as described above. Now roll 1d4 for each day of game time or hour of actual time. Add these rolls to get a score for each team. Highest score is the winner.

If the single team was not able to locate all ten items, roll 1d10 for each team to determine the number of items found by each team. Use 1d10 again to determine which items were found, then score each item according to the instructions labeled 2.

Once the teams have returned, Nolar's clerics and magic-users authenticate the items, and Nolar declares a winner at a great banquet. The winners are awarded their money the morning after the banquet and are welcome to stay in Morlandia for as long as they wish. King Nolar officially closes the scavenger hunt, and invites the winning party to return again the next year.



This adventure is designed for three to six characters of 4th to 6th level. Because of the unusual nature of many of the encounters, a party including a variety of character classes is suggested.

The boxed information may be read to the players. Unboxed information is for the use of the DM.

## Introduction

Ustar Vandilisk and his wife, Selvia, are poor but honest farmers who live in Mendon, a remote village bordering on a vast unexplored jungle. Their only child, a precocious five-year-old daughter named Sharla, disappeared three days ago, and the Vandilisks are frantic. The entire village rallied to search for Sharla, but with no success.

The Vandilisks have reason to believe that Sharla has wandered into the jungle. Their only possession of value, a silver helmet that has been passed through the family for generations, is also missing. Sharla often fancied herself to be a mighty hunter, and the family fears she took the helmet and went off into the jungle on her own hunting expedition.

The villagers, however, have been reluctant to venture too deeply into the jungle as it is rumored to be the home of many terrible monsters. No amount of pleading from the Vandilisks has been able to convince them to change their minds. The villagers have regretfully concluded that if Sharla has wandered into the jungle, it is unlikely that she will ever be seen again.

The timely arrival of the PCs may be the last hope the Vandilisks have of finding their daughter, and they will beg the PCs to help them.

## DM's Information

Little Sharla has always loved animals, and living next to a jungle has been a temptation she has found hard to resist. Although her parents had warned her not to go near it, Sharla had made up her mind to explore the jungle at her first opportunity.

The opportunity came three days ago when her mother was taking a nap. She carefully removed the family's prized silver helmet from its display case and put it on her head. Wearing her new hunter's helmet, she crawled out a window and scampered off to the jungle, about a half mile away from her house.

Unknown to either Sharla or her family, the helmet was actually a magical helmet, granting

the wearer a wish. Once in the jungle and confronted with a dazzling assortment of creatures, Sharla whimsically wished for all of them to do exactly what she wanted. Under the spell of her wish, even the most ferocious monsters became as docile as lambs, obediently trotting behind her as she searched for more to add to her collection.

In the late afternoon of the first day, Sharla happened upon an abandoned camp. The camp consisted of several empty bamboo buildings and the entire camp was surrounded by a high wall made of logs. Sharla decided this would be a perfect place to keep her animals. "I'll make it into a zoo," she thought. "The best zoo in the world!" She ordered the animals into the buildings, even teaching some of them circus tricks which they clumsily tried to master.

While searching for more animals the next day, Sharla and her two bear companions were accosted by a band of human bandits who wanted the helmet. Sharla commanded the bears to chase away her attackers. The bandits were no match for the bears, but Sharla was shaken by the experience. Back at the "zoo," she gave a standing order to all of her animals to get rid of anybody else they saw unless she told them otherwise. (This clumsily-worded command will prove to be a major source of problems for the PCs.)

Sharla spent the rest of the day searching the jungle and stocking her zoo. She had just returned to the camp at sunset with her latest find, a dragonne, when disaster struck. She had been exploring one of the buildings to find a place to keep the dragonne when the stairway collapsed from their combined weight. Both Sharla and the dragonne fell into the basement below. The dragonne was unharmed, but Sharla was knocked out.

At the present time, Sharla is still lying unconscious on the basement floor. The dragonne is standing guard over her body. And as ordered, the dragonne is ready to get rid of anybody who dares to come near.

## Starting the Adventure

While traveling through the countryside, the PCs meet a merchant named Bomey Borter who tells them the sad tale of a couple in the nearby village of Mendon whose only daughter, a five-year-old named Sharla, was discovered missing three days ago. The villagers found no trace of her and fear the child may have wandered into the jungle. The merchant tells the PCs that the villagers are too cowardly to search the jungle because it supposedly is the home of

many fearsome creatures. "The parents are beside themselves," says the merchant. "They could certainly use some help." The cowardly Bomey adds that he would have helped them if he didn't have pressing business elsewhere.

Assuming the PCs are sufficiently touched by this story, Bomey will direct them to Mendon which lies just beyond the next hill. Once there, the PCs can ask any resident where the distraught family lives, and they will be directed to the Vandilisk home.

Desperate for help, the Vandilisks invite the PCs into their modest home and, between sobs, relate how three days ago, little Sharla disappeared while Mrs. Vanderlisk was taking a nap. "I was only asleep for a few minutes," sobs Selvia. "And when I woke up, she was gone." Ustar tells the PCs how Sharla fancied herself to be a hunter, and that they are afraid she has gone into the jungle. "We've searched everywhere," he says. "We can't find her. And everybody's afraid to go into the jungle. I'd go myself, but..." Ustar gestures to his wooden crutches in the corner; when he moves, the PCs can clearly see that Ustar has a bad leg.

Ustar tells the PCs that their family heirloom, the silver helmet, disappeared at the same time. "I'm sure Sharla took it," he says. "She always said it'd be good for a hunter to wear. If you can find her, you can keep the helmet. I just want my little girl back."

Ustar can show the PCs the most likely entry into the jungle, located about a half mile from the Vandilisk home. He explains that about 25 years ago, a group of ambitious city planners decided to clear a roadway through the jungle, feeling that it could be eventually developed into a trade route. The project was abandoned when the jungle proved to be too formidable, but portions of the original pathway are still visible. It is reasonable to assume that Sharla followed this crude pathway, as the rest of the jungle border is extremely dense.

Before entering the jungle, the PCs may wish to do their own investigation of the village. They will find no trace of Sharla; no one has seen her or knows anything about her disappearance. The villagers are sincere in wanting to help, but their fear of the jungle is obvious. Not only do they refuse to search the jungle, they discourage the PCs from going in as well. "The child is surely gone," they say. "What good are more useless deaths?"

Only the most basic supplies are available in the village, such as food, water, rope, torches, and sacks. No magical items of any kind are available.



## Into the Jungle

The jungle is a thick tangle of trees, shrubs, and creeping vines, frequently washed in rains that come in quick, hard showers. The hot, humid air promotes insects and disease. Although inhospitable to humans, a variety of animal life thrives here. After the PCs have trudged through the jungle for about 50 yards, read them the following.

The jungle is oppressive and dark, due to the huge palm trees which block most sunlight from reaching the jungle floor. The damp air, heavy with the stench of dead vegetation, is difficult to breathe. The dense patches of weeds reach nearly to your waist, but moving carefully enables you to follow the crude pathway, visible as bare patches on the jungle floor.

Making your way through a particularly thick obstruction of weeds, you hear the sound of a child crying. The sound comes from a bamboo cluster just ahead.

Once past the bamboo stalks, the PCs find a young boy sitting in the weeds with tears streaming down his face. He is dressed in old clothes and looks to be about eight years old. He appears to be unharmed, but is quite upset.

If asked if he is hurt, he snuffles and shakes his head that he isn't. If asked his name, he says shyly, "Rindy Rumpin." If asked what he's doing here, Rindy replies, "Spot go lost. I know he's in here and I've got to find him." Rindy will call out for Spot and begin sobbing again. If asked about Spot, Rindy says, "He's my kitty. He's black all over and has a big white spot right here," pointing to his forehead.

If pressed, Rindy tells the group that his parents don't know where he is and, yes they're probably worried, but he needs to find Spot before a tiger eats him.

Rindy came into the jungle a couple of hours ago and has no knowledge of Sharla. The DM should discourage the PCs from taking Rindy with them by emphasizing the concern of his parents. Rindy can safely find his way back, but will leave only if the PCs assure him that they'll look for Spot. (Spot has been captured by Sharla and is currently part of her zoo; the PCs will have a chance to rescue Spot in encounter 3 below.)

## Random Encounters

To impress the PCs with the danger of the jungle, the DM may wish to have the PCs experience one or more of the following

encounters. The DM may make a specific selection or choose randomly. As the PCs are invading their territory, all of these monsters will fight to the death, pursuing if necessary.

**1. Manticore (1):** AC 4; Move 12" /18"; HD 6 + 3; hp 31; #AT 3; Ding 1-3 /1-3 /1-8; THACO 13; SA tail spikes; AL LE.

**2. Tiger (1):** AC 6; Move 12"; HD 5 + 5; hp 26; #AT 3; Ding 2-5/2-5/1-10; THACO 14; SA rear claws for 2-8/2-8 if both forepaws hit in same round; SID surprised only on 1; AL N.

**3. Basilisk (1):** AC 4; Move 6"; HD 6 + 1; hp 29; #AT 1; Ding 1-10; THACO 13; SA gaze turns to stone; AL N.

**4. Rhinoceros (1):** AC 6; Move 12"; HD 8; hp 38; #AT 1; Ding 2-8; THACO 12; SA charge; AL N.

**5. Cockatrice (1):** AC 6; Move 6" /18"; HD 5; hp 21; #AT 1; Ding 1-3; THACO 15; SA touch turns to stone; AL N.

**6. Wild boars (3):** AC 7; Move 15"; HD 3 + 3; hp 16, 15, 12; #AT 1; Ding 3-12; THACO 16; AL N.

## The Signs

About a mile into the jungle, the PCs come to a large palm tree with a trunk five feet in diameter. Painted across the tree trunk, about four feet from the ground, are the words, "This way to Sharla's Zoo", painted in red in the scrawl of a child.

The PCs will come upon similar signs two more times before they get to the hunters' compound.

## The Hunters' Compound

After traveling through the jungle for about two miles, the PCs arrive at the abandoned hunters' compound which Sharla has taken over for her zoo. What the PCs see is described in encounter 1.

The compound was established a number of years ago by a group of hunters who intended to use it as a base for their expeditions into the jungle to hunt for valuable animals. Unfortunately, the terrors of the jungle proved to be too much for them, as the compound was continually besieged by carnivorous creatures bent on having the hunters for dinner. When a pride of lion leaped over the compound wall one night and ate five of the hunters, including the leader, the survivors decided they'd had enough. They hastily gathered their possessions and fled, never to return.

The compound consists of nine buildings constructed in a clearing about 175 feet by 250 feet. The entire compound is surrounded by a

wall of logs seven feet high. A single gated entrance provides access. The buildings inside are made of bamboo stalks held together with jungle vines. The walls of the buildings are quite flimsy; the hunters mistakenly assumed the log wall would provide them with all the protection they would need. The windows are impossible to see through as they are all covered with opaque netting to keep out insects. The netting is secured to the window by a tight lattice of bamboo strips.

## Encounter Key

Note to the DM

Most of the monsters encountered below would not be hostile to the PCs under ordinary circumstances. However, because of Sharla's wish, they are under orders to "get rid of anybody they see." Unless otherwise specified, the monsters will interpret this as a literal command to do whatever is necessary to dispatch intruders, fighting to the death if necessary to kill them or drive them back into the jungle.

Sharla has also ordered these creatures not to hurt each other. Consequently, some which might normally be enemies (such as the swans and the python in encounter 7) will work together. Sharla, incidentally, has no idea why her animals obey her; she assumes it's because she's nice to them.

Since most of these monsters are ordinarily docile, the DM should feel free to appeal to the consciences of the PCs if they seem intent on slaughtering everything in sight. The DM may wish to encourage less violent methods of subduing the monsters, such as roping them or securing them in a sack, by subtly pointing out their natural beauty (the swans in encounter 7), their innate harmlessness (the domestic cats in encounter 3), or their value (the horses in encounter 5). Of course, the PCs are free to react any way they like, but the DM may wish to consider withholding experience points for excessive bloodshed and reward them for appropriate restraint.

### 1. The Guards at the Gate

You have now traveled about two miles since first entering the jungle. Hacking through a cluster of bamboo stalks and pushing aside a high mass of weeds, you see a strange structure in a clearing not more than 25 yards ahead of you. It appears to be a fortress of some kind. A wall seven feet high and made



of logs lashed together with jungle vines encloses the entire clearing, making a rough circle about 200 feet across. Inside the wall are many high palm trees, and you can barely make out the tops of some bamboo buildings.

Directly in front of you is the entrance to the fortress, a gateway about eight feet across. The gate is made of thick tree branches tied together with vines. Across the gate in crudely painted red letters are the words, "Welcome to Sharla's Zoo", as if written by a child.

Near the gate behind the wall are several large palm trees. Standing among the trees, just barely visible through the leaves, is a 12-foot-tall giraffe. The giraffe is idly munching palm leaves. Next to the giraffe, also behind the wall, is what appears to be a large green-skinned monkey with brownish fur. The monkey apparently is standing on a platform, as most of his body can be seen over the top of the wall. The monkey is juggling three coconuts in a circular pattern. One of the coconuts is purple.

The juggling monkey is actually a banderlog. The banderlog and the giraffe are two of Sharla's animals, ordered to stand guard here at the front of the compound. The giraffe is tied to

a tree (an unnecessary precaution by Sharla), and the banderlog is standing on the roof of a small bamboo guardhouse. Sharla thought the banderlog would make a good juggler for her zoo and has ordered him to practice while standing guard. The purple object is really a retch plant globe, the banderlog has another on the roof with him- In all, the banderlog has a supply of six coconuts and two retch plant globes.

**Banderlog (1): AC 6; Move 6" \*12"; HD 4; hp 19; #AT 1; Ding 2-5 (coconuts or bite); THAC0 16; AL N.**

**Giraffe (1): AC 7; Move 24"; HD 4; hp 20; #AT 1; Ding 1-8 or 1-3 (hooves or bite); THAC0 15; SA stampede; AL N.**

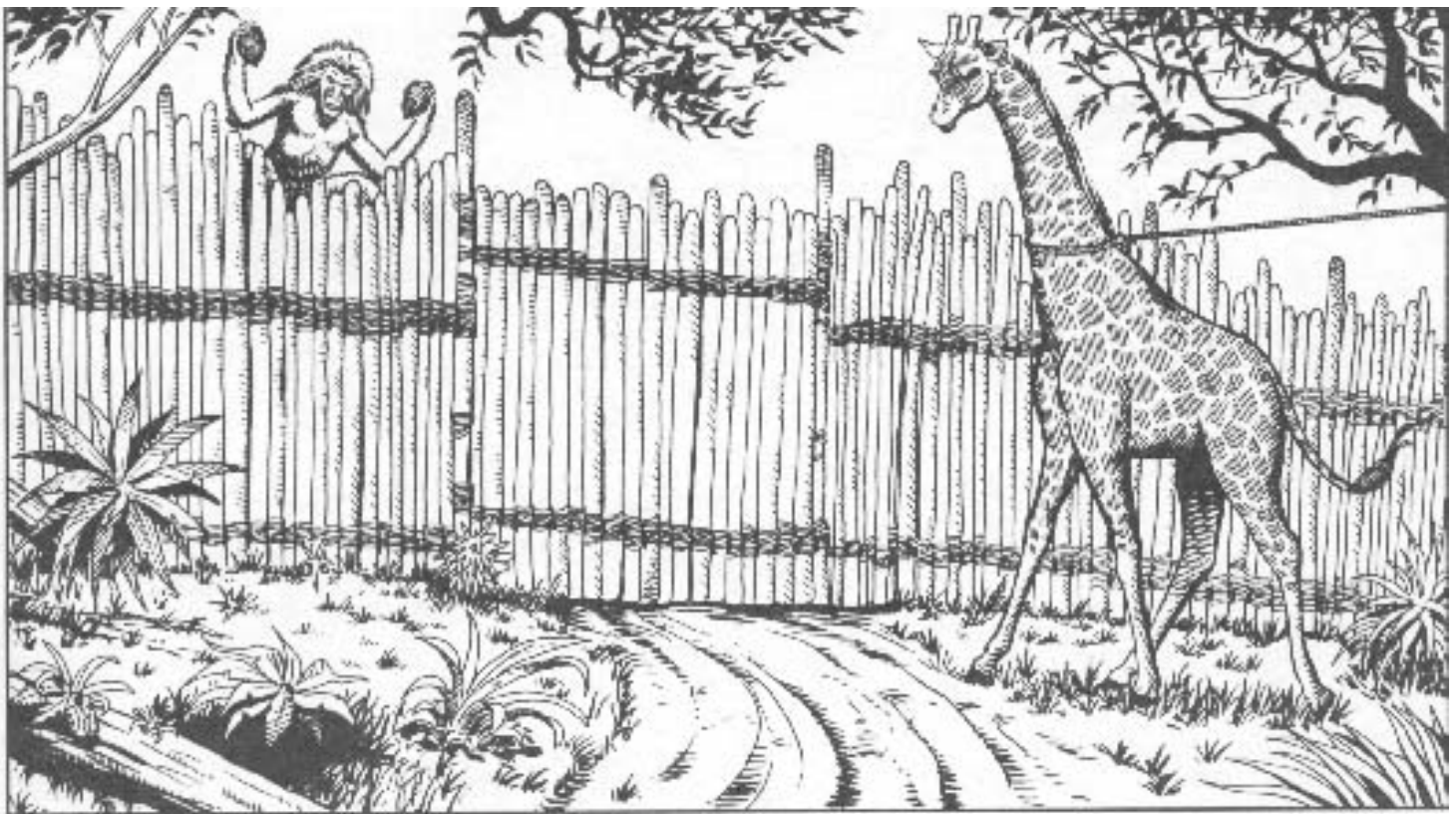
Because of the dense foliage surrounding the wall, the gate is the only practical way of gaining access to the compound. The lack of cover in front of the compound will prevent the PCs from sneaking up to the gate, especially since little will escape the sharp eyes of the giraffe. Even invisible PCs will be detected by his sensitive nose.

In any case, the guards won't do anything until a PC is within 30 feet of the gate. At that time, the giraffe will bray and bolt and the banderlog will quickly follow this attack by

throwing a retch plant globe. The retch plant will burst on contact, splashing its sticky fluid over a five-foot radius (with a 25 % chance of splashing on a PC within nine feet). A PC splashed by the foul fluid will retch for the next three rounds and for an hour after will be at 50% normal strength.

The banderlog will then shinny up the neck of the giraffe with his last coconut, and from this vantage point he will attack the PCs again. The next round, the banderlog returns to the roof for another coconut (or the other retch plant globe at the DM's discretion), then shinnies back up the giraffe's neck to attack. The banderlog alternates trips to the roof and attacks from the giraffe's neck until his supply of missiles is gone, effectively attacking every other round. While the banderlog is attacking from the giraffe's neck, the PCs will make any ranged attacks at - 2, as the banderlog is partially hidden by the palm leaves.

The banderlog only attacks when the PCs are within 30 feet of the compound. When the banderlog scores a hit, he claps his hands and jumps up and down. When he runs out of missiles, he leaps from the roof and chases the PCs, attacking with his teeth. Since the giraffe is tied up, he can do nothing but stomp and







snort until the PCs are actually inside the compound and are within his range.

If the PCs defeat the banderlog and enter the compound through the gate, read them the following.

The gate is unlocked and swings open easily. Once inside, it is clear that this indeed is a manmade compound, although there is no sign of intelligent life. The overgrowth of weeds in areas once kept clear suggests that no one has been here in a long time.

There are a number of small bamboo buildings in the area, some of them partially hidden by palm trees. All of the buildings are similar, about eight to ten feet high, made of bamboo shafts tied together with vines. The roofs are made of palm leaves. The buildings look very flimsy.

Just inside the gate is a small building about 15 feet square. Apparently the green monkey was using this for a platform. There is a single thatched door on the east side.

If the giraffe is still active, he will attack any PC he can reach. The giraffe is tied to a tree with a 15-foot-long rope, and with his long neck he can easily reach any PC who comes within five feet of the building. He attacks with his bite and also kicks any PC who gets too close.

The building was formerly used by the hunters as a guardhouse. There is little of interest inside, only a small wooden table, a chair, and a bed frame.

## 2. The Clown

This bamboo building is about 30 feet long and 20 feet wide. A closed thatched door is on the west wall. The words "Sharla's Clown Show" are painted on the door in bright red letters.

A high squeaky voice can be heard from inside. "Stay away from me, you dirty beasts!" says the voice, then "No, no ... stay back! I was only kidding!" The voice trails off in muttered curses.

The voice belongs to a frightened elf named Merrel Fingerton. He and his friend, Standle Skystar, had found a secluded spot in the jungle to share a drink when they were discovered by Sharla. Sharla thought the strange little people would be good additions for her zoo. The elves were too drunk to put up much resistance, particularly when confronted by the two bears accompanying her. Sharla brought them both back to the compound and dressed Merrel like a clown, leaving him here to "practice being funny." (Standle is in the building in encounter 11.) Sharla's spell had no effect on the elves, so to ensure Merrel's cooperation, she left the bears to guard him. Whenever Merrel makes a move towards the door or fusses with his clown costume, the bears give him a swat.

Black bears (2): AC 7; Move 12"; HD 3 + 3; hp 16, 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; THACO 16; SA hugs: dmg 2-8; AL N.

Merrel Fingerton (elf): AC 7; Move 12"; HD 1 + 1; hp 9; ST 9 IN 14 WS 13 DX 9, CN 12 CH 12; #AT 1; Ding by weapon; THACO 18; SA normal elvish advantages; SD normal elvish

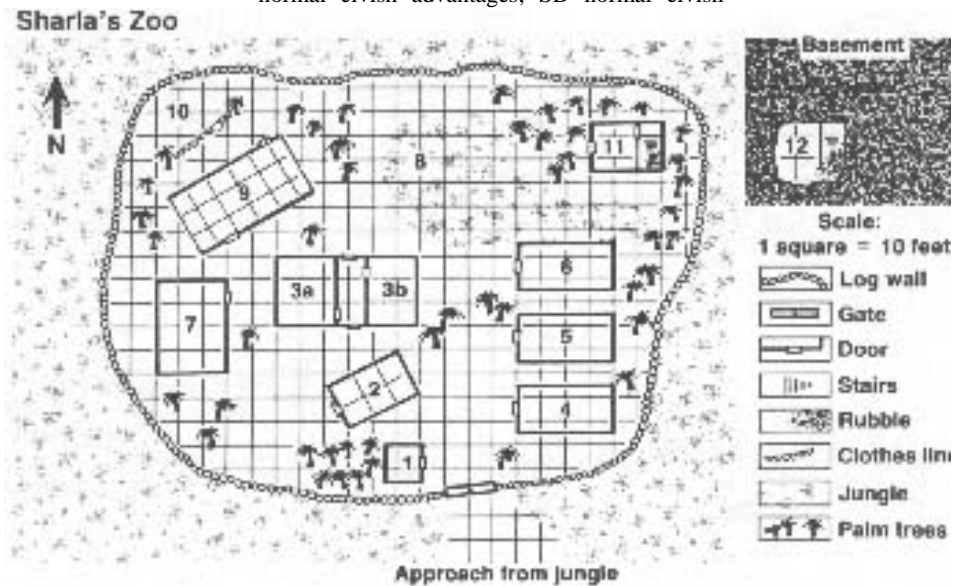
defenses; AL LG.

If the PCs call out to him, or if they open the door, Merrel cries out, "Help! Save me! Get me out of here!" He won't say much more than this, as he's too afraid of the bears.

The bears attack as soon as they are alerted to the presence of the PCs, most likely by Merrel's cries. The bears can easily break through the door if necessary. They chase the PCs if they try to run and will attack with their jaws and claws, attempting to embrace them in a bear hug if possible. Merrel covers inside the building for the duration of the fight.

If the PCs defeat the bears, they may speak with Merrel. Merrel has dark hair and green eyes and is barely four feet tall. Over his regular leather clothing he is wearing a ridiculous clown costume Sharla has made for him out of various scraps; he has a red polka-dotted burlap sack he wears like a dress, oversized floppy boots, a paper hat shaped like a cone, and a large red berry stuck on the end of his pointed nose. He has no weapons or personal items of any kind, as Sharla left all of his possessions back in the jungle.

Merrel is not particularly brave, but he is very loyal to his friend, Standle. He immediately asks the PCs about him. If the PCs ask what has happened, Merrel will indignantly tell them how he and Standle were accosted in the jungle by an awful little girl and her two ugly pet bears. Merrel remembers that the girl told the bears that he and his friend would be good for her "zoo." She brought him here and told the bears to guard him. She forced him to wear the clown suit and told him to "practice





being funny.” Merrel has no idea where she is now.

Merrel will ask the PCs why they're here. He will be unconcerned about Sharla, but is deeply worried about his friend and will insist on joining the party. As explained below, it is to the advantage of both the DM and the PCs if Merrel joins.

Merrel is in a building that was used for storage by the hunters. Among the debris are a few items the PCs may find useful. There are a dozen coils of strong rope, each about 100 feet long. There are also ten burlap sacks, each big enough to hold a grown man, and a stack of wooden planks which could be used for clubs. An open can of red paint is in the corner next to some recently used paint brushes. Sharla used these materials to make her signs. (The paint was originally brought to the compound by a hunter who mistakenly thought that certain monsters were afraid of the color red.)

#### Note to the DM

Merrel is too cowardly to help the PCs in a fight, but he will insist on staying with them until they find Standle. Merrel can be a very helpful character for three reasons:

1. Merrel will impulsively run to any location the DM wishes, thus directing the PCs to any area the DM wants them to go. Merrel will demand they thoroughly search every building on the compound for his friend.

2. The DM may use Merrel to discourage the PCs from using excessive violence. Being a fellow jungle inhabitant himself, Merrel will be quite disgusted at any display of disrespect for animal life from the PCs.

3. The DM may use Merrel to feed the PCs information about the habits or traits of the monsters if they get in a jam. Merrel also knows the monetary value of certain creatures, such as the horse in encounter 5 and the parrot in encounter 10.

### 3. The Cat House

This flimsy bamboo building is about 50 feet across and 30 feet wide. There is a thatched door on the south side with the words, “Big and Little Kitties” painted in red letters.

This building was used as barracks for lodging the hunters. It is divided in half by a narrow hallway with a doorway on each end. Both rooms are identical. All of the doors open easily.

#### 3A. The First Door

This door, located on the West wall of the narrow hallway dividing the building in half, is labeled, “Big Black Kitties” in red letters.

This room contains two giant skunks. The skunks have heard the PCs enter the building and are prepared to attack. One of them has backed towards the door, ready to spray, and the other is ready to jump into the hall.

Giant skunks (2): AC 7; Move 9”; HD 5; hp 22,19; #AT 1; Ding 1-6; THAC0 15; SA squirt musk; SD squirt musk; AL N.

Any PC opening the door even a crack is blasted by the skunk spray. The spray covers an area two feet wide, two feet high, and six feet long. Any PCs within this area are affected.

If the PCs enter the room, the skunks will attack as outlined below. If the PCs shut the door and take no immediate actions, the skunks will break down the door in two rounds to attack the PCs, chasing them if necessary.

The skunks attack with their claws. Because of their plump bodies, they can make only one claw attack per round. They will also attempt to back towards the PCs to blast them with their spray when they feel especially threatened. It takes one round for a skunk to maneuver into position for a spray and another round to release it. The skunks are capable of running backwards if necessary at half their normal speed.

The room contains only a dozen empty bed frames.

#### 3B. The Second Door

This door, located on the east end of the hallway, is labeled, “Mommy Kitty and Her Babies” in red letters. Scuffling sounds can be heard from behind the door.

This room contains a male lion and five domestic cats. The cats were innocently roaming through the jungle when Sharla found them and decided to pair them up with the lion she had found earlier. The male lion was appointed the “mommy” for the “babies”.

The domestic cats are all pets of the people of Mendon. They are all various colors and breeds and are all well groomed. One small black cat has a white patch on his forehead. This is Spot, the cat belonging to little Rindy Rumpin.

Lion (1): AC 5; Move 12”; HD 5 + 2; hp 27; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-10; THAC0 15; SA rear claws for 2-7/2-7 if both front paws hit in same round; SD surprised only on 1; AL N.

Domestic cats (5): AC 6; Move 5” ; HD 15 hp; hp 5, 4, 3, 3, 2; #AT 1; Ding 1-2; THAC0 19; SA rear claws for 1-2 if front paws hit; AL N.

The scuffling sounds heard behind the door are the cats playing with each other. If the PCs open the door, the cats will stop playing and the lion will growl at them. If the PCs go in, the cats and the lion attack as outlined below. If the PCs take no immediate actions, the lion will break down the door in two rounds and attack the PCs, chasing them if necessary. The cats will be right behind the lion and will also attack. Both the lion and the cats attack with claws; the lion also attempts to bite. They attack as many different PCs as they can.

The PCs should recognize Spot, but if they don't Merrel will point him out along with the other well-groomed cats and say, “Hey! Take a look! I bet these are somebody's pets!”

The DM should discourage the PCs from killing the cats, freely playing on their consciences by reminding them of poor little Rindy. The best way to deal with the cats is to capture them in burlap sacks; they will hiss and fuss, but will be unable to claw their way out.

There is nothing else in the room except a dozen empty bed frames.

### 4. The Musical Amphibians

This large building, made of bamboo and vines, looks like a barn. It is 10 feet high, about 25 feet wide and 40 feet long. It is windowless and has a single large door in front bearing the words, “Singing Frogs” in large red letters. A song performed in musical croaks drifts from inside.

The hunters originally built this barn, along with the ones in encounters 5 and 6, to store their captured animals. This one contains three giant frogs that Sharla heard croaking by a pond in the jungle. Site decided she would teach them to sing and demonstrated a song for them to practice. Musically inclined DMs may simulate this by croaking the first few phrases of “Three Blind Mice.”

Sharla also put a tuskless elephant in the barn to serve as conductor for the musical frogs. Sharla found a silver rod in the storage room (encounter 2) and gave it to the elephant to use for a baton. While the frogs obediently try their best to croak out the tune Sharla taught them, the elephant holds the rod in his trunk and rhythmically waves it in front of them.



On the door of this large barn is the word "Unicorns" painted in huge red letters.

Sharla loves unicorns but was unable to find any in the jungle. She did, however, find three beautiful wild horses with sleek black coats and flowing silver manes- She made them into counterfeit unicorns by typing pointed branches to their heads.

Wild horses (3): AC 7; Move 24"; HD 2; hp 14,13, 11; #AT 1; Ding 1-3; THACO 18; AL N.

As soon as the PCs open the door, the horses smell them and attack, breaking down the door if necessary to get at them. The horses rear and attack with their hooves; the branches tied to their heads cannot be used for weapons. When the PCs attack, Merrel cries out to them not to hurt the horses, saying that such magnificent steeds would surely sell for thousands of gold pieces if brought back to civilization'

The easiest way to secure the horses is with ropes. The PCs may lasso them by making a Dexterity check at - 2. The horses must be secured with at least two ropes, or they will break free.

#### 6. Sharla's Soldiers

On the door of this large barn are the words "The Brave Soldiers", painted in huge red letters.

In this barn are five baboons, each riding a goat. Each baboon is armed with a short sword which Sharla found in the storage room (encounter 2). Following Sharla's orders, the mounted baboons are practicing formation marching, parading in a circle inside the barn.

Baboons (5): AC 7; Move 12"; HD I + 1; hp 9, 8, 8, 7, 7; #AT 1; Ding 1-4 (weapon or bite); THACO 18; SD climbing; AL N.

Goats (5): AC 7; Move 15"; HD 1 + 2; hp 10, 8, 8, 6, 6; #AT 1; Ding 1-3; THACO 18; SA charge for +2 to hit and additional 1-2 points of damage; AL N.

If the PCs enter the barn, the baboons and goats attack as outlined below. If the PCs peek and then take no immediate actions, the baboons will take two rounds to hack open the door. They then charge the PCs on their goats.

The charging goats attempt to hit with their horns, and the baboons attempt to hit with their swords. The baboons will not voluntarily leave their goats, but dismounted baboons continue to attack on foot, attempting to bite.

#### 7. Latrine

There is an open doorway to this bamboo building which appears to have been used for a bathhouse and latrine. There are a number of metal buckets against the west wall near a small wooden table with a metal basin. Against the south wall are three large wooden tubs filled with water.

Two white swans are sitting in the largest tub. When they see you, they tumble out of the tub and waddle towards you, flapping their wings and honking.

This indeed was used by the hunters as a latrine and bathhouse. Sharla found the swans swimming in a stream and though this would be a good place to keep them. In the bottom of the same tub, out of sight of the PCs, is a 25-foot python. Sharla put the python here so the swans wouldn't get lonely.

Swans (2): AC 7; Move 3" /18"; HD 1 +2; hp 10, 8; #AT 3; Dmg 1/1/1-2 (wing/ wing/bill); THACO 18; SA flying strike with 50% chance of disorienting opponent to prevent return attack on that round; SID surprised only 1 in 10; AL N.

Python (1): AC 5; Move 9"; HD 6 + 1; hp 28; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/2-8 (bite/constrict); THACO 13; SA constriction; AL N.

The swans make flying leaps at the PCs, attacking with both wings and a bill strike. Two rounds after the PCs make their appearance, the python slithers out of the tub. The python attacks with its bite and also attempts to grab a PC in its coils to inflict constriction damage.

Although they have no particular monetary value, Merrel protests loudly if the PCs look like they're hurting the beautiful swans. (Merrel has no such reservations about killing the snake.) If the PCs heed Merrel's plea, they may be able to tie up the swans in burlap sacks.

The latrine contains only buckets and tubs; there is nothing of value to the PCs here.

#### 8. The Forgotten Treasure

This entire area is filled with weeds and tall palm trees. Apparently the foliage here was too dense to clear by whoever built the compound.

Passing on the west side of this area, you see a mound of earth just inside a patch of high grass. It appears that something is buried there.

This mound is where the hunters buried their garbage. If the PCs investigate, they find old bones, partially eaten food, filthy rags, and

Unknown to Sharla, the baton is actually a rod of cancellation. The rod of cancellation drained Sharla's helmet of all its magical properties (although it had no effect on Sharla's wish, already in effect).

Giant frogs (3): AC 7; Move 3" //9"; HD 3; hp 18, 17, 15; #AT 1; Ding 1-3/1-6/2-8; THACO 17; SA surprise on 1-4, leap up to 18", tongue strike at +4 to hit; AL N.

Elephant (1): AC 6; Move 12"; HD 10; hp 38; #AT 3; Ding 2-12/2-12/2-12 (trunk squeeze/trample/trample); THACO 11; AL N.

If the PCs peek in, they see the scene as described above. If they enter the barn, the elephant and frogs attack as outlined below. If the PCs take no immediate actions, the elephant will break down the door in two rounds and attack the PCs with the frogs right behind.

The elephant will not let go of the rod and will attempt to whack the PCs with it. The light rod does no damage, but any magical item touched by the rod of cancellation may be drained of its properties (see DMG, p. 133).

The elephant also attempts to trample the PCs. If he loses the rod of cancellation, he will attempt to grab a PC and squeeze him with his trunk.

The frogs are hungry and attack the shorter members of the party and attempt to eat them. They definitely go after Merrel and will also pursue any PC under five feet tall. They attempt to strike with their tongues and drag their victims to their mouths.

If the PCs defeat the elephant, they may take his rod of cancellation (it had 40 charges just prior to this encounter). There is nothing in the barn except a few piles of straw and weeds.

#### 5. The Counterfeit Unicorns



other refuse. However, if they dig deep enough, they find a small cache of treasure: a leather bag containing 155 gp, three white pearls worth 250 gp each, and a silver ring worth 800 gp. There is also a tin flask containing three doses of potion of extra healing.

The treasure belonged to the leader of the hunters. Several of the hunters used to play high stakes poker to while away the time, and the leader hid his treasure here to keep it out of the hands of his card playing friends.

### 9. The Bird House

Another flimsy bamboo building, this is about 50 feet across, 30 feet wide, and 10 feet high. The door on the south side bears the words, "Bird House" in painted red letters.

This building was used by the hunters as a kitchen and dining hall and also for storage. Sharla thought the large building would make a good bird house, but she was only able to find one suitable specimen, an ostrich, before she met with her accident. The building had been filled with tables, chairs, and long shelves containing assorted bottles and bags, but the ostrich has just about demolished it all in search of food. The ostrich has eaten everything that appeared to be vaguely edible, including the last of a potion of *speed* and a potion of growth. As a result of consuming these potions, the ostrich has grown to a height of 12 feet and now can barely fit in the building. This has put him in a very bad mood.

Ostrich (1): AC 7; - Move 18"; HD 3; hp 24; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 or 2-8 (peck or kick); THAC0 17; AL N.

If the PCs peek inside the room, they see the remnants of broken tables, chairs, and bottles scattered around the room. They also see the giant ostrich. If the PCs enter the room, the ostrich attacks as outlined below. If the PCs take no immediate action, the ostrich will break down the door and squeeze through the opening to attack them. This takes him two rounds.

The ostrich attacks by pecking or kicking. Because of the potion of *speed*, the ostrich moves at twice his normal speed and can make two attacks per round.

If the PCs defeat the ostrich, they will find a glass bottle containing one dose of potion of fire resistance that the ostrich overlooked.

### 10. The High Wire Act

If the PCs look through the back door of the building in encounter 9 or walk around the building's east side, read them the following.

In a clearing behind this building are two small palm trees spaced about 30 feet apart. A rope has been secured between the trees about six feet from the ground.

A dozen black squirrels are sitting in the branches, continually trying to walk across the rope from tree to tree on their hind legs. Some of the squirrels are quite good at this while others tumble to the ground, then scamper back up the trees to try again.

Perched in one of the trees is a beautiful golden parrot. The parrot is watching the squirrels with great interest.

The rope was originally used by the hunters for a clothes line. Sharla has ordered these squirrels to practice their high wire act here, believing this will be an impressive addition to her zoo when the squirrels master their technique.

Sharla found the golden parrot in one of the trees here and told him to stay and keep an eye on the squirrels. The parrot, who can talk, used to watch the hunters when they gathered here for their card games, and he picked up a number of phrases from listening to them.

Giant black squirrels (12): AC 6; Move 12"; HD 1 + 1; hp 8 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; THAC0 18; AL N.

Parrot (1). AC 7; Move 1" /24"; HD; hp 4; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; THAC0 19; AL N.

The squirrels have very sharp eyes and will see the PCs as soon as the PCs see them. If the PCs don't attack immediately, the squirrels and the parrot chase them. If the PCs hide in the building in encounter 9, the squirrels and parrot slip in through the ceiling to attack them.

The squirrels attack ferociously with their sharp teeth. The parrot spends most of the fight hovering in the air, squawking phrases like "Hit me!" and "I'm calling your bluff I" (The DM is free to add to the list.) Now and then, the parrot swoops at a PC to peck him from behind.

If the PCs can capture the parrot, he can be safely kept in a burlap sack, although he will continue to squawk.

### 11. The Haunted House

This bamboo building is nearly hidden by high palm trees. It is about 20 feet wide and 30 feet across. It is windowless and has a

single door in front with the words "Sharla's Haunted House" painted on it in red letters.

The hunters planned to use this building for additional storage, but it was never completely finished. It has no windows and except for what light enters when the door is open, it is completely black inside. Sharla thought this dark building would be a good place for a haunted house.

Inside are two carnivorous apes wearing white sheets with eyeholes to make them look like ghosts. There is a third, shorter sheet-covered figure as well. This is Standle Skystar, Merrel's friend, Sharla thought Standle would make a good baby ghost for the two ape ghosts. Because Standle wouldn't be quiet, Sharla gagged him. She has ordered the apes to swat him if he takes off his sheet or his gag.

Carnivorous apes (2): AC 6; Move 12"; HD 5; hp 31, 26; #AT 3; Ding 1-4/1-4/1-8; THAC0 15; SA rending damage of additional 1-8 hit points if both hands strike; SD surprised only on 1; AL N.

Standle Skystar (elf): AC 7; Move 12"; HD I + 1; hp 9; ST 12 IN 11 WS 10, DX 8 CN 11 CH 11; #AT 1; Ding by weapon; THAC0 18; SA normal elvish advantages; SID normal elvish defenses; AL LG.

If the PCs open the door, they see two large sheet-covered figures rushing towards them. The third shorter figure stays in the back of the room, hopping up and down and hollering in muffled grunts.

If the PCs enter the room, the apes attack as outlined below. However, the apes have been ordered by Sharla to stay inside; if the PCs don't enter, the apes won't come after them.

Merrel will be convinced that the third figure is his friend, Standle, and will demand that the PCs take whatever actions are necessary to rescue him. If the PCs hesitate, Merrel will barge in.

The apes attack the PCs by striking with their fists. At all times, they stand between the PCs and Standle. If the PCs don't pull them off, the sheets fall off by the fourth round to reveal the apes underneath. Freed from the sheets, the apes will also be able to attack with their teeth.

If the apes are defeated, the party discovers that the third figure is indeed Standle. Standle is about four feet tall, pudgy, and in general resembles Merrel. Once his gag is off, he and Merrel embrace and chatter excitedly in elvish. Standle thanks the party, but knows no more about what's going on than Merrel.



Merrel and Standle may leave the party at this time if the PCs insist, but the elves prefer to accompany the party the rest of the way. (They don't particularly want to be left alone in the compound.) They still decline to participate in any battles.

There is a doorway on the east wall of this room. If the PCs open it, read them the following.

The doorway leads to a descending stairway. The stairs are made of rotten wood and are poorly constructed. About half way down, a large section of the stair way appears to have collapsed,

The stairs lead to a basement the hunters dug out under this building. The hunters never got around to reinforcing the stairs. When Sharla and her dragonne tried to walk down the stairs collapsed, and they fell into the basement below.

## 12. The Basement

The hole in the stairs is about six feet wide. If the PCs peer into the hole or maneuver across the hole and go into the basement, read them the following.

The stairs lead to a basement room about 20 feet square. The walls are made of solid earth, and the room smells very musty.

A large winged creature with the claws and face of a lion and the body of a brass dragon crouches in the corner. Beside the creature is the body of a girl. Beside the girl is a silver helmet.

This, of course, is Sharla. The creature is a dragonne brought here by Sharla as she searched for an appropriate place for him in her zoo. Sharla has been unconscious for some time and the dragonne, as ordered, is standing guard.

Dragonne (1): AC 6/2; Move 15"/9"; HD 9; hp 54; #AT 3; Ding 1-8/1-8/3-8; THAC0 12; SA roar; AL N

The dragonne stays where he is and growls at the party until they make the first move. At the first sign of hostilities, the dragonne attacks with its roar and then attacks with his claws and fangs. The sound of the roar causes *weakness* to all within 12" of the dragonne unless they save against paralyzation. Any member of the party within 3" of the dragonne is deafened and strikes at 1. These effects last 2-12 rounds. The dragonne fights to the death.

If the PCs defeat the dragonne, they will be able to revive Sharla. She is very weak and has



a bump on her head, but is otherwise unharmed. When she sees the PCs, she will begin to cry in their arms and ask to go home to see her mother and father.

If the PCs ask Sharla about what happened, she snuffles and says, "I don't know, but I wish it never did. I wish everything was just like it was." This effectively cancels her wish, and the animals in the compound resume their natural dispositions and wander back into the jungle. Otherwise, the effects of the wish and Sharla's magical ability wear off within the next 48 hours.

## Epilogue

The party's return trip to Mendon is uneventful. Once in Mendon, Sharla's parents are overjoyed to see her and are so grateful to the PCs that they give them the helmet. The helmet is no longer magical, but the fine workmanship makes it worth 8,000 gp.

If the PCs returned with the wild horses, they are free to keep them as personal mounts. In any city, these magnificent horses can be sold for 3,000 gp each. The obnoxious golden parrot is worth 2,500 gp to a collector of exotic birds.



This is an adventure for four to six characters of 6th to 9th level. It stresses roleplaying and problem-solving, but concludes with a combat likely to challenge any intermediate-level party. The plot is best suited to fighter and thief characters, less so to clerics or magic-users.

## The Adventure

### The Meal

The scene is any medium-sized to large city in the campaign world. The PCs have just returned from an expedition which lasted at least a week- They walk down a side street toward a main thoroughfare... right into the beginning of the adventure. Read this aloud to your players.

Returning to town from a hard journey, you're heading to a tavern for a chance to relax and brag about your adventures. You walk through narrow, sooty streets between close-set houses, and the familiar smells of the city are all around: the warm smell of lots of people living, working, and eating close together.

But unlike the smells, the sounds of the city are curiously absent. There's no clatter of ox-cart wheels on cobblestone, or slamming of doors and shutters, or squeaking of clotheslines. Very few people are around; no mother is calling to her children, no vendor selling his wares, no neighbor yelling at the neighbors. It's not exactly an eerie silence, but it's curious.

Then you turn a corner and see where everybody's gone. There's a whole crowd of folks standing at one corner of a major thoroughfare, beneath a sign showing a picture of a dish of food and a glass of ale. The people are yammering at each other, apparently arguing about who's ahead of whom in line.

And when you see this, you also notice a new smell joining those ordinary city smells: the delicious aroma of a well-cooked steak. This aroma, in fact, smells exceptionally delicious. Maybe that's because you're hungry after a long day in the wilderness.

The building is a small restaurant named Aldo's, and the commotion concerns who is next to be served there. People shout, "We've been waiting here for three hours!" or "Look,

how about an order to go?" They seem to be very eager to eat at this particular restaurant.

Characters talking with the impatient customers learn that Aldo's is the most prestigious restaurant in town, and has been for about a week-"since word got around." The restaurant has actually been in the present location for years; but just recently, the quality of their char-broiled beefsteaks has improved tremendously. "Splendid! Scrumptious! Tantalizing to the nostrils, and flavor to die for!" say Aldo's would-be patrons. When their devotion is described, really lay on the praise. Play it for laughs.

Mention that the PCs are hungry. They have money for any meal they want. They may want to eat at Aldo's, or they can go somewhere else.

### If They Choose Aldo's

If the characters choose Aldo's, they can wait in line politely (the waiting list is about four hours long). They can try to bribe the maitre d' to jump them to the top of the list (he's a sniffing snob, and not buyable for less than 10 gp). Or they can try to muscle or intimidate their way in.

If they try this last course (boy, what an uncouth bunch), the maitre d' or a nearby waiter raises an alarm, attracting the attention of a group of city guardsmen dining in style at a nearby table. The six guardsmen and their leader politely but firmly tell the PCs to get out.

City Guards (6): AC 2; Move 12"; FTR 6; hp 30; ST 13 IN 12 WS 10 DX 14 CN 14 CH 9 CM 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; THAC0 15; AL LG.

Sergeant (1): AC 1; Move 12"; FTR 7; hp 36; ST 14 IN 14 WS 11 DX 14 CN 13 CH 11 CM 10; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; THAC0 14; AL LG.

Remind the players that attacking city guards is a really bad idea. Not only is it a tough fight; not only will it bring down the entire municipal police force on their necks; perhaps most important, a fight will mess up the restaurant and nobody will serve the PCs their food anyway. Best to move on instead.

However, if the PCs act civilized and get into the restaurant peacefully, read this aloud.

Aldo's is a small restaurant filled with big eaters. Every table is full of people, and every plate is full of steak-big, thick cuts of beefsteak, served plainly with a side of corn or beans. The steak is going fast, and the diners are getting as full as the restaurant is. They're eating vigorously, noisily, and fast. It's as if they can't get enough of the food.

Other than the enthusiasm of the customers, the restaurant seems ordinary. The tables and chairs are made of thick pine boards, and every table has a checkered cloth and a candle. The walls are cheap wood, the torchlight is dim, the waiters are hustling. One hustles over to you, a thin perspiring fellow with menus under his arm. "Good evening;" he says, trying to speak above the noise. "Would you like to see the menu, or will you be ordering steak tonight?"

The PCs can order what they wish. Aldo's has a typical menu of simple dishes cooked plainly. Prices are maybe a little high, but nothing out of line. Everything but the steak is ordinary food. Take the players' orders, just as a real waiter would.

The waiter, Clarence, is too rushed to answer many questions, but he can assure the adventurers that the steak is good, it's not harmful, and in the past week there have been no harmful side effects on people who eat it. Clarence can assure the players in whatever way needed that nothing bad will happen to them if they eat it. This is true.

If asked, he'll say that Aldo Venhall, the restaurant's owner, invented this recipe for cooking steak just over a week ago. The recipe is secret.

The steak is indescribably delicious. But try to describe it anyway: the succulent juices, the amazing tenderness, the melting sweetness of the fat, the intense pungent flavor near the bone. It's the best food any of the PCs has ever eaten. Everything else they've had in the past is just ... food. This-this is magical.

If the players haven't already thought of this angle, suggest it to them. They can ask the waiter if magic is used in the preparation of the meat. Clarence just smiles, saying, "Everyone asks that, I don't know; Mr. Venhall says it's a trade secret. But I wouldn't be surprised if it's true- this meat is supernaturally good."

The PCs can't meet Aldo - "He's slaving over a hot stove in back" - and if they try to go back to the kitchen, Clarence or another waiter calls over the city guards to prevent the intrusion ("Sorry, city health regulations prohibit customer entry into food preparation areas.") If the PCs get into the kitchen in spite of all this, go to the description in the section *The Methods*, below.

The meal passes without incident, and the check is brought. As they leave Aldo's, the PCs see the line stretches even longer than when they went in. They walk down the street, and



are hailed by a tall, well-mannered, well-dressed middle-aged stranger.

This old man is Dominic Dargent, a rival restaurant-owner. He asks the PCs to hear “a business offer.” Go to *The Mission*, below.

### If They Go Somewhere Else to Eat

Any other restaurant is open for business, and there's definitely no waiting to be served. Every eating establishment in the vicinity is almost deserted; all the customers are waiting in line at Aldo's.

This makes life hard for the other eateries in town. In fact, Dominic Dargent, who is one of Venhall's greatest rivals in the Guild of Restaurateurs and Innkeepers, wants to put Venhall out of business. His first step toward this goal is to find the secret of Venhall's steak recipe. He's tried buying it, but Aldo isn't selling. So Dargent is ready for desperate measures.

By some chance, Dominic Dargent runs the very restaurant the PCs pick for dinner. He serves them a good meal personally, treating them well and sizing them up. Then after the meal is over, he offers to tear up the check if the PCs listen to his offer. There in the deserted restaurant, he pulls up a chair and gives them *The Mission*, below.

### The Mission

Whether in a restaurant or on the street, Dargent asks the PCs to find out Aldo's recipe and how to duplicate it. Other information, such as where he got it and how, is useful but not primarily important. The investigation must be secret.

The mission is not strictly illegal, but may make extremely lawful characters uneasy. If necessary to gain the party's aid, Dargent will claim to be a highly placed member of the Guild (true) looking into claims of health hazards (false). Magical attempts to divine further information about Dargent are blocked by an *amulet of protection vs. ESP*.

Dargent: AC 7; Move 12”; HD 1; hp 5; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); THAC0 19; ST 10 IN 13 WS 11 DX 11 CN 11 CH 11 CM 12; SD *amulet of protection vs. ESP*; AL N.

If the PCs attack Dargent, he cries for help. If you feel like staging a fight, the city guards described above show up; if combat would slow the adventure at this point, the PCs can do what they wish with Dargent. If they turn him in to the police, he's quickly released on his own recognizance as an influential citizen (and the PCs have gained an enemy). In any case, if

they turn down the mission, other impoverished restaurateurs repeat the offer to them at regular intervals, until the players get the idea.

Players might pretend to accept the mission, and plan to turn in Dargent later on. This is fine, so long as they do intend to investigate Venhall. If they don't, there is no adventure.

### The Methods

The players may take several approaches in solving the mystery of Aldo's delicious food. Some of the likelier ones are listed below. You can handle others using the information given here. The investigation isn't time-dependent. The PCs can pursue any or all of these avenues at their leisure.

#### 1. Get into the kitchen while it's open.

Aldo's is open from 11 AM to midnight. During that time PCs can't enter the kitchen without magic (such as *invisibility*, trickery (like pretending to be health inspectors or somesuch), or bribery (10 gp to a waiter, 20 to the maitre d')). Entry by force brings a horde of guards.

The kitchen is a clean 30' x 15' room, with swinging doors into the restaurant and a single back door leading to garbage containers outside. Grease-covered windows are space evenly high along the brick walls, but most of the kitchen's light comes from an ordinary *continual light* spell.

The room is completely dominated by the brick grill in its center. The grill, 20 feet long and 6 feet wide, has racks of steel bars over a wood fire, and a vent in the ceiling above. On these sizzling bars the steaks are cooked, the bread toasted, the vegetables fried. Clean marble slabs for food preparation are spaced every few feet along the grill's edge.

Around the edge of the kitchen are racks of pots and pans, sinks of steaming dishes, wooden chopping blocks, and a large walking icebox that holds fresh meat and perishables.

The air is smoky, the sounds of cooking steak and clattering dishes are everywhere, and the smells of grease and food are almost overpowering.

The place is a madhouse during all business hours: three cooks stoop over the grill cooking vast numbers of steaks, while waiters and scullery help crowd by them through the narrow aisles. Everybody shouts at everyone else. *Invisible* characters are soon detected in all this hubbub, as people repeatedly bump into them.

The only unusual points that separate Aldo's kitchen from those in other restaurants are the cooks' outfits and the odd bottles on a shelf above the grill vent. The three cooks wear weird multicolored robes dotted with odd astral symbols, and tall pointed wizard hats of the same fabric. They look like wizards.

However, prolonged observation (and, if the DM wishes, an Intelligence check) shows that these cooks don't gesture magically or chant; they behave like regular cooks. They have no magical items, and do not detect as magical.

On a narrow shelf surrounding the ceiling vent are long rows of cut-glass bottles, of many shapes and sizes. They contain liquids of exotic colors. They look like potion bottles. However, if a PC manages to make off with any of them and tastes their contents, he or she finds they contain nothing but colored water.

In fact, there's nothing magical in this room (except the *continual light*), though someone has clearly gone to pains to create the impression that there is. The “magic” in the kitchen is simply a red herring, created to foster the idea that the steaks are magically prepared. The *light* spell was cast by an itinerant spellcaster in return for a meal.

#### 2. Get into the kitchen after it's closed.

This is a straightforward task; the restaurant is locked with ordinary steel locks (the regular chance to pick them). The windows can also be opened by a competent thief who can climb up to reach them, and magic allows easy entry as well.

The restaurant is guarded at night by two fierce dogs, trained to attack anyone but their owner (a professional trainer in town).

Dogs (2): AC 7; Move 15”; HD I + 1; hp 8; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; THAC0 18; AL N.

No meat or vegetables are kept in the kitchen after it's closed: the vegetables are thrown out, and the steaks are always sold out by the close of business. However, the glass “potion” bottles are still on their shelf. The wizard robes are stored in a trunk under a sink, to be worn as uniforms when the new day begins.

#### 3. Question or follow the staff.

The restaurant employs (besides Aldo) a maitre d' and four waiters, three cooks, a couple of busboys, and three dishwashers.

All are ordinary 0-level people. All have been threatened with immediate dismissal if they reveal anything about Aldo's to strangers, so bribery or coercion will probably be necessary to gain anything useful.



There isn't much useful to be gained, anyway. The help knows that the cooks aren't magic-users, and no magic is used in cooking the meat. The steaks are delivered each morning by a cart, before the restaurant opens. No one on the staff knows where the cart comes from.

Following the staff when they leave work leads nowhere useful.

#### 4. Question or follow Aldo.

Aldo can usually be found in the kitchen (see #1), but he is hostile to questions about his food, and flatly refuses to sell, a beefy any steaks to non-eating customers. Aldo is, appropriately, a very big man. He's not tall, but is very hefty and completely hairless, so that in his white cook's outfit he looks not unlike a white canvas balloon. But his appearance is deceiving: Aldo is all muscle (he lives on a protein-rich diet, after all) and an experience unarmed fighter.

Not a friendly sort, Aldo comes on as strong, arrogant, and unflappable as a major-league umpire. His lips constantly pout out, and he smells slightly of sweat and grease. The difference between a king in his court and Aldo in his kitchen is that Aldo doesn't have a throne. Otherwise, his attitude is equally imperious, and no PC is likely to get far before Aldo orders him and all his friends out of the restaurant.

Aldo is protected from *charm* spells and mind-reading by an amulet identical to Dargent's.

Aldo: AC 4; Move 12"; HD 6; hp 30; ST 17 IN 14 WS 10 DX 13 CN 14 CH 9 CM 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (haymaker punch); THAC0 15; SA tremendous wrestling skill; *SID amulet of protection vs. ESP*; AL N.

#### 5. Hang around Aldo's looking for clues.

This is the most productive route. During the day Aldo's receives deliveries around back from heavy carts drawn by lumbering oxen. Each cart is operated by some farmer or merchant selling a particular item to the restaurant. The carts contain milk and eggs, bread, fresh vegetables, laundry (tablecloths and napkins), and yes- steaks.

Most of the carts (including the one with the steaks) arrive in the hour or two after dawn each morning. More carts (including one more with steaks) arrive between lunch and dinner, bringing more food and picking up garbage and dirty laundry. If any player cares, final garbage



and laundry pickups come after the restaurant closes.

The cart drivers are 0-level normal humans who know nothing important except for the meat-cart driver. He's a sullen, slovenly fighter named Argus. His chainmail is rusty, his sword scabbard cracked and stained, and he smells like he should be picking up the garbage instead of delivering the meat.

Argus isn't especially dumb, though, and won't fall for tricks to learn where he brings the steaks from. He's been instructed to make sure no one sneaks aboard the meat cart while he's not looking.

A clever move by the players can fool him on this point. The cart delivers large wooden crates filled with steaks, and then it retrieves empty crates from earlier trips on the return journey. Argus checks the crates thoroughly for unwanted passengers. The trick is, he doesn't check anything else in the cart, and there's a nice hollow beneath the bed of the cart where any number of PCs can perch on the axle or cling to the bottom of the cart itself. And, of course, magic is always useful. Argus can be *charmed* or otherwise baffled by a clever spell.

Argus: AC 4; Move 12"; FTR 5; hp 25; ST 13 IN 10 WS 10 DX 13 CN 12 CH 9 CM 8; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; THAC0 16; AL N.

Argus hasn't been instructed to take precautions against being followed. His employer figures the path of the cart will shake off most pursuers,

#### The Trail

When he leaves Aldo's, Argus drives the cart to the edge of town and down a dusty, winding trail. In his wake come a dozen or so followers, all trying very hard to avoid looking like

they're trailing him. The PCs observe them immediately, though.

If the player characters question these followers, they may learn that other competing restaurant -owners have hired these NPCs for missions like their own. Or, more likely, the NPCs simply tell the characters to shove off. A fight is possible; treat the NPCs as groups of four 4th- to 6th-level fighters. They flatly refuse to join the party. ("Why split the reward any further?")

The trail to Argus's destination should be designed to throw off all but the most persistent pursuers. The details are left as an exercise for the DM, but likely traps and dangers include the following.

1. The trail suddenly vanishes by a rocky outcropping- Careful searching in the dust shows that the cart's track vanishes into the rock. The outcropping is in fact hallucinatory terrain, concealing a bend in the trail. This throws off the majority of the NPC followers.

2. Argus's cart passes beneath a high stone ledge. Followers are attacked by 12 4th-level bandits armed with longbows and axes, hired by Aldo to discourage pursuit.

This situation can create a nice conflict for lawful characters who have stowed away in the meat cart. Tell them they see a band of fighters struggling to survive the bandits' onslaught, and force them to choose between continuing their mission in secret or rushing to help the victims against the bandits. Paladins and other lawful good characters should be penalized experience for letting outnumbered fighters die.

Bandits (12); AC 4; Move 12"; FTR 4; hp 24 each; ST 13 IN 11 WS 10 DX 13 CN 12 CH 9 CM 9; #AT 1; Ding 1-6 (longbow) or 1-8 (axe); THAC0 17; AL N.

These tricks and others the DM can improvise, throw off all the NPCs from Argus's trail. By the time he reaches his destination, the PCs are the only ones still tailing him.

#### The Source

The countryside they're passing through is hardly good terrain for a cattle ranch. It is practically a desert, with hard rocky soil and only a few scrub plants here and there. There is no sign of livestock.

Now and then the cart passes a villager type walking by the roadside. If the PCs are in a position to stop and talk with these pedestrians, they can ask about the source of the meat. But the natives are baffled; there have never been cattle or sheep in this area, and none have





passed through. The villagers know nothing about the source of the meat.

Argus's destination is a fenced complex quartered in a box canyon in the hills. It covers about two acres, and is surrounded by a 12-foot-high wooden fence. The only opening in this hardwood fence is a gatehouse facing the outlet of the canyon. The gatehouse is staffed by two guards identical to the city guards described in Aldo's restaurant, and another guard stands watch on each of the three other walls of the fence. The whole place looks more like a stockade than a cattle yard.

Observers inside the fence or around the edge of the canyon can see the layout of the complex. A small building beyond the gatehouse is an office. Behind it, and filling most of the fenced area, is a mysterious large stone building.

The building is long, low, rectangular, and has no windows. Its roof is covered with black pitch. It smells rich, musky, tangy- the smell of blood. One pair of very large wooden doors forms the only entrance to this building.

When the PCs are captured, they see the insides of both the office and the mysterious long building in turn. Yes, they're captured. Make sure of it.

### The Trap

Let the players scout the general layout of the complex, if they're playing well, and even decide on a course of action. When they attempt to enter the complex, or leave the area, bring out any force you need to capture them (relatively) harmlessly. Some possibilities are:

1. Twelve to eighteen 7th-level fighters in *plate armor* +2 with *battle axes* +1. They instruct the PCs to come along quietly.

2. A spell cast on the fence which stuns whoever touches it and all others in a 10-foot radius, and sounds an alarm with a *magic mouth* spell.

3. Glass vials, broken by tripwires, that release poisonous fumes which incapacitate the PCs for a few minutes.

Poison, magic, brute force, battleships... whatever is used to render the PCs helpless, have them seized by guards, trussed with heavy ropes, and take to the office. There, the PCs are confronted by a virtual twin of Aldo Venhall; short, stout, hairless, sweaty, arrogant. The guards address him (very respectfully) as "Butcher."

Butcher is in fact Aldo's identical twin; use Aldo's statistics, given earlier. After the scene is established, read the following aloud.

Butcher speaks in a raspy drawl. "I know why you're here," he says. "In fact, I know everything important about you, which is to say, that you're my enemies and you're about to die. This is very good to know." He snickers under his breath.

He continues. "You've come to find out how my brother's steaks taste so delicious. Now you will find out. You will become food for our *cattle*." He stresses the word *cattle*, and the guards all smile. Butcher finishes by ordering them to take you to the slaughterhouse, "and return their weapons to them before you leave" he says to the guards. "Their efforts will save us the trouble of slaughtering the animals ourselves."

The PCs are dragged out of the office to the large, long building behind it. The wooden doors are opened, they're shoved inside, their ropes are cut to allow them to struggle free in a few moments, and their weapons are thrown after them. The doors are closed and locked.

This is the slaughterhouse. The interior is a room about 50 feet long and 30 feet wide. The stone walls curve up to form a 20-foot high arch for the building's ceiling. The only light is from flickering torches every dozen feet or so along each wall. The smell of blood and animal waste is tremendous.

Make it clear the PCs have no chance to attack their guards or escape the building. They must face the livestock.

### The Truth

As everyone has probably guessed, Aldo's beefsteak does not come from cows. In fact, the animals that produce the meat are monsters from the *Monster Manual*.

The DM may choose which type of monster Aldo and Butcher are raising. It should be hostile and dangerous, and the very idea of eating one should be repellent. A good choice is a purple worm; some players may be more revolted by the notion of eating something benevolent like a unicorn, or intelligent life a dragon. These example monsters are described below. The DM can improvise another monster description from the entries below.

Regardless of the monster chosen, the PCs are thrown into its lair and have to fight their way out. It is a tough battle. Though these ranch animals are usually confined like veal calves, completely helpless (how else does Aldo's crew butcher these ferocious beasts?), the ones that fight the PCs have been let loose. Captivity has made them fierce and violent;

they never check morale, and attack as soon as the PCs have freed themselves.

### Purple Worms

These two giant specimens are normally locked in heavy wooden cages that give them no room to move. There they are fed garbage and animal carcasses. They grow fat, and segments are cut from the living flesh of their hind ends. The segments eventually regenerate and are harvested again.

Now freed from their cages, the worms have total freedom to move and attack with both bite and sting. The cages may provide protection for fast-moving PCs, but the worms will soon smash them to timber.

Purple worms (2): AC 6; Move 9"; HD 15; hp 75 each; #AT 2; Dmg 2-12/2-4 (bite/ sting); THAC0 19; SA swallows victim whole on roll of 20, or 4 more than required to hit, swallowed victim dies in six rounds; poison sting on tail, save vs. poison or die; AL N.

### Unicorns

In the stone building is a wooden corral, where a herd of ten adult unicorns circles tightly, horns outward, around a center group of five young colts. The building has an anti-magic shield to prevent them from teleporting to freedom. The adult unicorns charge in two groups of five.

Unicorns (10): AC 2; Move 24"; HD 4+4; hp 24; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-2; THAC0 15; SA horn attacks at +2 to hit and double damage; SD immune to poison, *charm*, *hold*, and death spells; SD *dimension door* up to 36" once per day, saves as M-U 11; AL CG.

### Dragons

A large green mother dragon crouches amid the fragmented shells of her eggs. Seeing her young hatch and grow, only to be slaughtered for food, has driven her Chaotically insane. The dragon attacks without provocation, and cannot be subdued.

Her two surviving offspring join in the attack. A PC who hurts either of them provokes the mother's vengeance. She will not attack any other PC until that one is dead.

Mother green dragon (1). AC 2; Move 9" (unable to fly in slaughterhouse); HD 9; hp 45; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-10; THAC0 12; SA chlorine gas breath weapon, save vs. poison or take 4d6 damage; AL LE. Spells: *charm person*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *sleep*.

Young dragons (2): AC 2; Move 9" (unable to fly in slaughterhouse); HD 7; hp 14 each;



#AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-10; SA chlorine gas breath weapon, save vs. poison or take 2d6 damage; AL LE. Spells: *magic missile, shield*.

Butcher's urge to gloat is the key to a dramatically fitting climax to the adventure. The slaughterhouse manager is observing the fight through a small eye-level opening in one wooden door. When the PCs are having a bad time of it, Butcher giggles repulsively - and, by a trick of sound, the laughter carries throughout the stone building.

The surviving animals hear him laughing, and freeze in the midst of battle. They look toward the wooden door. Then, with a roar, they break free of the combat and lunge for Butcher. He has a moment to scream before they hit the door, shatter it to splinter, and burst through to kill him.

The animals chase the guards around the fenced compound, dispose of a few, then break

through the fence to freedom, never to be seen again.

In Butcher's office the PCs can find a locked petty cash box containing 100 sp. A concealed wall safe holds 1000 gp.

#### Aftermath

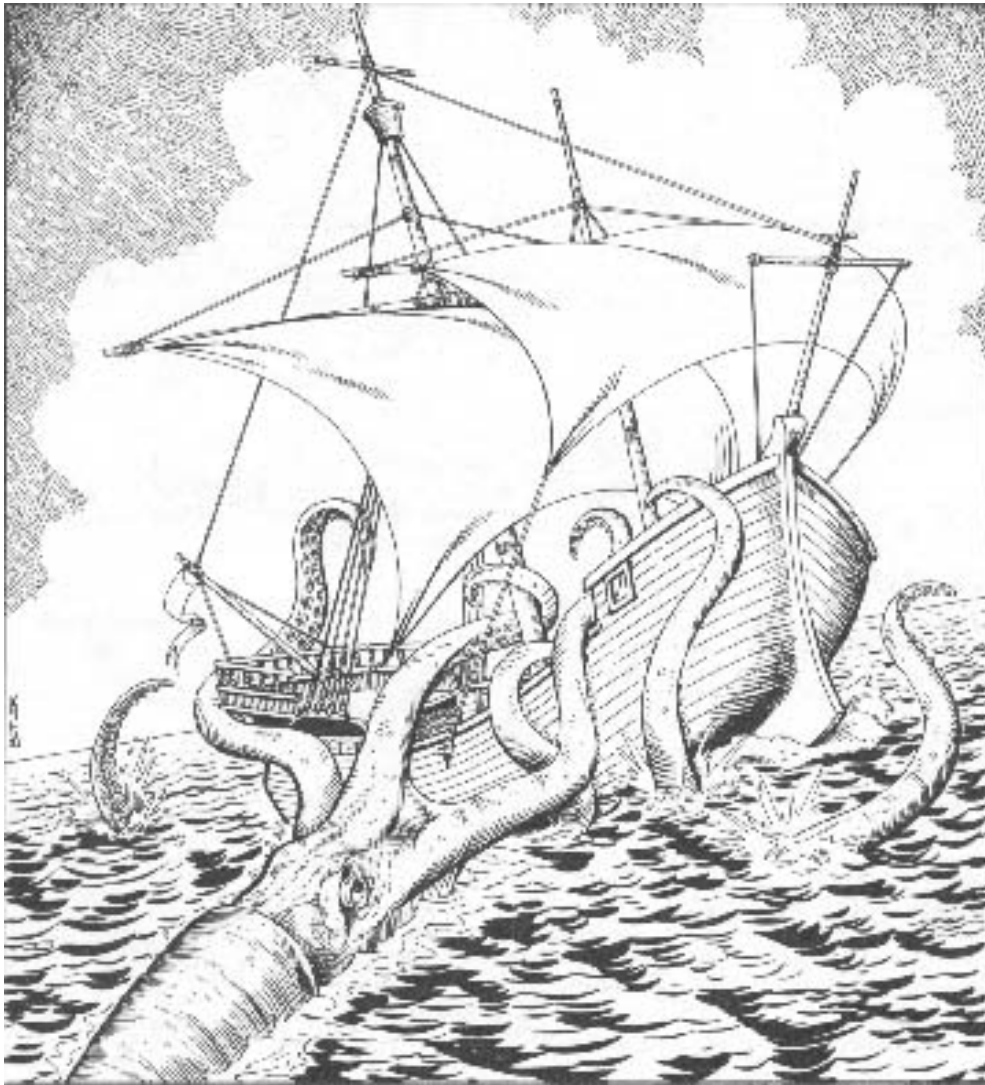
The compound guards, understandably demoralized, make no effort to prevent the PCs from departing. The trip back to the city is uneventful.

In town, the PCs can report to Dargent, who is horrified and delighted to hear what Aldo has been serving... delighted, because now he can spread the word to Aldo's customers about what they are eating. He rewards the PCs with 10,000 gp - "a year's profit at my place, but it was worth it!" he says.

The characters' natural inclination may be to beat up somebody, but this is not productive.

Dargent has given them as much as he can, while Aldo would have them arrested for assault. Anyway, there's really nothing technically illegal about anything either man has done - that can be proven.

The players' true reward should come as word gets around about the source of the steaks. Within hours the characters can walk by Aldo's deserted restaurant. No one will cat there on a bet, ever again, and Aldo has to find either a new town or another line of work.





This is an adventure for five to eight characters of 4th to 6th level.

## DM's Information

Tumbling, turning and twisting, the floating fortress of the storm giant Maelstrom Thunderclash has begun its final journey. Gargantuan Skytumble Tor has lost its stability and magic as its master lies dying. The giant has attempted to summon aid with messenger griffons, but none has come.

When the adventure begins, the castle's descent has brought it low in the sky over the wild borderlands of a civilized land on a collision course with its major city. If it is not destroyed, or shifted into another dimension, the castle will destroy the city by the adventure's end. The time of impact is given in the *Sequence of Events* table at the end of this adventure.

Slakslime the rakshasa, along with a band of deluded adventurers and a company of unprincipled mercenaries, has sailed to Skytumble Tor in an ancient flying galley, accompanied by a flock of perytons. This small army is slowly working its way through the perilous tumbling castle slightly in advance of the player characters. They come to loot the decaying castle of its guarded secret—a cubic gate, a magical item that gives its possessor access to four planes of the multiverse. With this item, the rakshasa seeks to free more of its kin from exile in Acheron.

Nevertheless, the presence of a few more evil spirits in the world is a minor problem—almost nothing when compared to the eventual cataclysmic destruction of a heavily populated city when the castle finally crashes to earth.

The forces of nature and evil greatly outclass the adventurers. To save the city, the PCs must convert several of Slakslime's followers to their side and defeat the rakshasa's forces.

### Slakslime the Rakshasa

Slakslime uses his ESP illusion powers to convince others that he is a human mage adventurer called Slack. His followers believe that he must gain the *cubic gate* to free his earlier companions-in-adventure from their banishment on another plane. He actually intends to free his kin from the plane of Acheron, where they have been exiled. He drives his followers towards this end and tolerates no disobedience. Slakslime is always closely guarded by Erskin Wulfhere and two of the mercenary company. In combat, Slakslime uses his magics to cause confusion, then takes on the form of one of his foes.

**Slakslime the rakshasa:** AC -4; Move 15"; HD 7; hp 48; #AT 3; Ding 1-3/1-3/1-4 + 1; THAC0 13; SA spells; SD hit only by magical weapons, weapons below +3 do half damage; MR 100 % against spells below 8th level; AL LE. Slakslime knows the following spells.

Level 1: *Charm person (x2), friends, spider climb, sanctuary, curse*

Level 2: *Invisibility, darkness 15' radius*

Level 3: *Fly, fireball*

Slakslime has hired the aid of two adventuring groups. The first is a band of adventurers, none of whom look like appropriate henchmen to an evil monster. When first encountered, two of the adventurers have already died in mishaps. In contrast the mercenaries are a mangy crew of desperate thugs; dangerous because of their numbers and apparent loyalty to Slack. Jezz of Northwood initially appears as a most unsavory member of this contingent.

Convincing these characters to change sides should be presented as a matter of survival for the PCs. The player characters must make a Charisma check to convince an NPC character to change sides. Following each NPC description is the best way to convince the character into changing allegiances, including a modifier (in parentheses) to the character's die roll. Add the modifier to the roll. If the Charisma check succeeds, the argument succeeds. The DM may add or subtract additional modifiers to the character's roll, depending on the nature of the character's reasoning or bargaining.

Once allied, each NPC will behave true to his or her nature and personal motivations.

### The Adventurers

The adventurers are similar to the player characters, seeking gold and glory. They believe Slack's story about rescuing trapped adventurers and are unaware of both Slack's true nature and the castle's eventual fate.

### Erskin Wulfhere

Bold, brash, and handsome, Erskin Wulfhere makes all the decisions for his band by sheer force of personality. Where he goes, they go—regardless of the wisdom of the venture. Thus, it was relatively easy for Slakslime to gain the assistance of the adventurers after he *charmed* Erskin.

*To convince: (+4) Dispel the charm person spell and reveal that Slack is a rakshasa who charmed the barbarian.*

*As an ally:* Erskin will assume that he is group leader and will always lead into combat,

making no plans other than “We charge in and slay them all I”

Erskin Wulfhere: AC 2; Move 6"; FTR 6; hp 45; #AT 1; Ding 1-8 + 1; THAC0 16; ST 17 IN 12 WS 5 DX 15 CN 13 CH 17 CM 14; AL CN. Erskin has a *longsword + 1, ring of delusion* (believed to be a *ring of human control*), a *potion of invulnerability*, plate mail and a shield.

### Brother Udolf

Rotundly overweight, Brother Udolf spends most of his life whining about how unfit and unworthy he is for the type of life he leads (between mouthfuls of rations). He believes himself to be under the power of Erskin's bogus *ring of human control*, and that he has no responsibility for the outcome of his actions. Unless prodded by Erskin, he is slow to take action of any kind.

*To convince: (+8)* Must be convinced that Slack is an evil rakshasa and that Erskin is probably under its power.

*As an ally:* Will not make his own decisions, fight or use magic offensively unless prompted. He always saves at least one healing spell or potion for himself.

Brother Udolf: AC 3; Move 9" ; CLE 7; hp 37; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 + 2; THAC0 16; ST 14 IN 12 WS 14 DX 9 CN 10 CH 10 CM 10; AL NG. Brother Udolf has a *shield +1, mace +2, potion of healing (x2)*, *potion of extra healing*, golden holy symbol, holy water (x2), and chainmail. He knows the following spells:

Level 1: *Bless, sanctuary, detect magic*

Level 2: *Hold person, spiritual hammer*

Level 3: *Remove curse, dispel magic*

Level 4: *Cure serious wounds*

### The Mercenaries

Other than Jezz of Northwood, the disguised ranger, none of the mercenaries are particularly proficient fighters, but rather are mostly street thugs and bandits. Slack provided good money up front and a promise of much more should he succeed in his goal.

The average low-life mercenary who follows Slack willingly changes sides if the price is right. The mercenaries in Slack's troop will initially outnumber the original PC party by a ratio of five to one.

*To convince: (+ 5) 20 gp for each member of the encountered mercenary band.*

*As allies:* They will be loyal only to the PC who hires them, not his or her companions. Will fight former allies, but will not perform brave heroics.



**Jezz of Northwood**

Although Jezz (short for Jezzelda), the Ranger of Northwood, is actually a stunningly beautiful woman, she hides both her beauty and her ranger skills for reasons she does not immediately disclose. She disguised herself to join Slack's followers and cause his downfall, completing the job her mentor, a powerful druid, began long ago when Slakslime and his exiled brethren preyed on the villages of Northwood. She is not aware of his plan to release the other rakshasas. She will wait until the final confrontation in the castle's great hall to launch her dramatic attack on Slack.

*To convince:* (-6) Tell her the PCs mission. Agree to aid her against Slack. Have one or more clerics present in the group.

*As an ally:* She does not reveal her true profession, appearance or Slakslime's nature until the final confrontation, playing the part of a sulky mercenary seeking vengeance on Slack. She wants a cleric's *bless* spell on a crossbow bolt to slay Slakslime with.

Jezz of Northwood: AC 2; Move 12"; RGR 10; hp 72; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-8 + 2 (scimitar), 1-6 (crossbow); THACO 12; ST 16 IN 15 WS 17 DX 16 CN 13 CH 17 CM 4 (18); AL LG. Jezz has

*studded leather armor + 1, shield + 1, scimitar + 1 (sword of sharpness), potion of extra healing, boots of levitation, and a heavy crossbow (disassembled). She knows the following spells.*

Level 1: *Detect magic, faerie fire, jump*

Level 2: *Obscurement*

**The Adventure**

Cold, intermittent rain and slashing winds make for miserable travel as the party crosses the open wilderness.

An aerial commotion attracts your attention to the gray skies. Through the rain, a lone, wounded griffon struggles against a flock of large antlered birds- It notices you and dives frantically earthward, bringing the battle with it. Its plaintive cries beg for aid.

The giant's messenger griffon is besieged by a flock of four perytons. The injured griffon lands within three rounds. It has only 13 hit points remaining.

The perytons follow the griffon down, but direct their attacks against the PCs, attacking in pairs. They retreat to the castle if one of the

flock is killed. If the griffon survives, it is friendly towards the PCs. After the combat, the PCs will note an immense (3' wide) scroll strapped to the griffon's chest. It is written in huge common language script.

*Celestia Soulshadow,*

*I die and Skytumble Tor dies with me. My castle will soon crash into one of thy human cities. I beseech thee, do what thou canst to stop it. My griffon will bring thee here and my treasures will aid thee.*

*-- Maelstrom Thunderclash*

The PCs recognize the name of a renowned wizardess who died long ago, but the writer of the letter is unfamiliar. Once the letter has been read, the following occurs.

A cold shadow darkens the ever-present gloom. Above you, rolling across the leaden sky, is a gargantuan castle. The ruined hulk tumbles end over end like a rolling barrel, slowly losing altitude,

As the castle passes, a hailstorm of gigantic





debris falls around the group. Be quite serious when describing the huge pieces of masonry and timber that plummet toward the characters and suggest that Dexterity checks might allow them to avoid serious damage. No PCs will be hurt, but the area surrounding them is pulverized.

As the shadow passes, more of Maelstrom's griffons descend from the sky and land near the PCs, enough for each character to have a mount. Riding griffons, the characters can reach the castle in two turns.

### Skytumble Tor

When viewed at close range, the ruins are obviously larger than human scale. Crumbling rooms and towers surround a gargantuan great hall. The only safe entrance (and the only one the griffons will approach) is the 35-foot-tall opening to the roc's aerie beneath the great hall. A second flock of six perytons swarms out of the opening when the griffons come near. Executing a dizzying maneuver, the griffons dive for the opening and dump their riders, then rise to attack the perytons with a vengeance, driving them away from the castle.

### Castle Physics

The castle rotates in a clockwise direction along a north/south axis drawn through the center of the great hall (room 10). The main wind force is opposite the direction of rotation. Direction in these rooms is given relative to a hypothetical north. Floor and *ceiling* refer to those parts of the rooms and are not relative.

The castle ruins are little more than massive bare stone walls. In most rooms the furnishings have been bashed into flinders and flung to the winds. Several of the rooms have ceilings and/or floors that have fallen away. Open to the wind, rain and ice, these rooms have slippery floors and walls (see DSG, p. 22).

The castle's encounter areas have unusual physics caused by its magical nature and rotation. Gravity may be towards the floors, the walls, or not present at all. Characters may be able to walk on walls or even swim through the air.

The fate of the castle is governed by the *Sequence of Events* table. These events occur as the players work their way through the castle. The apparent effect of most events is a shudder during which the castle seems to drop sharply. When this occurs, all characters must make a Dexterity check or fall "down" (in the direction of any gravity effect). Tell the players any other effects as they occur.

### Vertigo

Inside the castle, its tumbling is not readily apparent. However, characters who even look momentarily at the spinning sky must make a save vs. paralyzation or be subject to vertigo. The frightening dizziness of vertigo penalizes all the character's subsequent dice rolls (including attack and saving throws, ability checks, etc.) by 1d4 points for a full turn after leaving the area causing the effect. Play up the terror caused by even momentary vertigo.

### Encounter Key

#### 1. Roc's Aerie

Sheltered from the wind, the acrid stench of scorched feathers lies heavy in the air of the empty roc's lair. Near the opening, an ancient galley ship rests on its keel, its tattered sail flapping in the biting wind.

The galley is an ancient flying boat. Close inspection reveals that it floats a few inches above the floor. Its fading magic retains sufficient power for the PCs to use it to escape the castle and fly (Move 21") for 12 hours before sinking slowly to ground.

The gravity in the room is towards the floor. The steps to the stair are three feet high and four feet deep. Midway up the stair, gravity changes towards the "west"

#### 2. Hall

Massive doors lead to several chambers off this passageway. Gravity is toward the west wall (east is up). The doors to areas 3 and 5 hang open and a rope dangles down from area 5. The door to area 4 is locked.

When the PCs begin moving around in here, the dying giant in area 3 hurls pieces of rock down the hall (at - 10 to hit) and **hoarsely** berates the PCs as ghoulish tormentors come to loot his belongings. The first stone knocks the cast door to area 3 off its hinges. If there is no response, he bellows, '-rake my treasure, kill me, loot my halls, but whatever you do, destroy the *cubic gate* in the great hall or cause the deaths of thousands!"

With a sharp crack, Event 1 occurs. Meanwhile, the rain outside escalates into an icy thunderstorm.

#### 3. The Death of a Giant

The ceiling of this windy, rain-drenched room is open to the sky. The slight gravity in here is towards the floor. Anything smaller than a halfling will be sucked skyward instantly.

As death nears, Thunderclash clings tightly to a great bed, his gaunt face a pale death mask. If the PCs explain who they are, the giant thankfully tells them of Slack who is not human, and his followers, that they have come to steal the cubic gate. He tells the PCs to destroy the gate to save the doomed city. In return, he offers his treasure in area 4. Event 1 occurs as the adventurers leave the area.

#### 4. Treasure Tower

This 50-foot tall, topless tower housed much of the giant's treasure. However, anything not nailed down has long since been hurled away. What remains is hidden beneath a five-foot diameter trap door centered in the room's floor. The gravity is towards the west wall. Beyond 35 feet up the slippery tower walls, the characters must make Strength checks against centrifugal force or be flung into the sky.

Treasure: 5,000 gp in 10-gp-sized coins; 30 gems, valued as follows: 8 x 1000 gp, 5 x 500 gp, 10 x 50 gp, 7 x 10 gp; potions of *flying* (x2), polymorph *self*, *super-heroism*, *human control* (humans), potion of *storm giant strength*; *deep red ioun stone* (x2), pale *lavender ioun stone* (x2); scroll of *protection from petrification*.

#### 5. Trapped!

The rope from area 2 is tied to a spike set in the door frame. The gravity in the room is primarily toward the west wall. The floor may be climbed as if it were a sloping wall (see DSG, p. 14-15). Deep, arching pilasters (half columns) support the vaulted ceiling and can act as ledges for climbers. The east pair of pilasters hid the rear guard of Slaklime's troop: Brother Udolf and a number of mercenaries equal to the size of the PC party. The guards now find themselves trapped by the flock of perytons who wait outside the dizzily spinning ledge in area 6. Regardless, the mercenaries feel obliged to pepper the PC party with arrows. The pilasters provide + 4 AC to Udolf and the mercenaries (50% cover).

#### 6. Vertigo Ledge

This storm has picked up, slinging sleet across this slippery wind-whipped ledge. Gravity pulls towards the floor, but nowhere is the spinning of the castle more evident than here. A taut rope connects the door from area 5 to the door of area 7.

Characters who venture onto the ledge with open eyes are subject to severe vertigo (-4 on the saving throw). During each round of combat on the ledge, an involved character must make a



Strength check to hold onto the rope. Walking or fighting or falling on the ledge without a rope requires a Dexterity check to not fall.

When at least two characters are out on the ledge, four perytons attack. They direct their attacks at less armored targets (like magic-users and mercenaries). After two rounds of combat, one peryton will try to bite through the rope (takes 1-4 + I rounds). If a character falls off the ledge, a peryton will leave the battle to feast on the body.

### 7. Floating

Pieces of debris float tranquilly motion less in this room without gravity. In marked contrast are the scorched bodies hovering near the titanic, forty-foot-tall doors at the north end of the room.

The bodies are those of a magic-user and two mercenaries. They were killed by the forked 10d6 lightning bolts that arc outwards from the door handles when they are touched. The door is barred from inside with a 40-foot log. It is impossible for anyone with less than storm giant strength to break it down or move the log.

To move in the room, characters must push off from a fixed surface and make a Dexterity check to land without collapsing in a heap. If combat occurs, flying creatures or characters may attack normally; all others attack at -2. Remember these two laws of motion: *objects put in motion tend to stay in motion*, and *for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction*.

### 8. Jezzelda

As the player characters open the doors from area 7, they hear the voice of a woman haranguing some obviously reluctant mercenaries to support her in some type of action. The creaking of the door serves to cut her speech short.

Treat the floor as a wall sloping down towards the gravity on the multi-room area's east walls. Jezz and the mercenaries are standing on the wall at area 8a. There are two mercenaries here for each member of the original PC group. Check for surprise. The mercenaries will immediately shoot one round of missile fire at the PC group, then fight a delaying action, retreating back towards area 9. Jezz stands her ground (wrongly assuming that the mercenaries are backing her up).

At area 8b, the sloping floor is slippery from its icy coating, impossible to climb without using tools. The mercenaries make it across to area 9, taking their rope with them. They will



fire from cover at the party. The hole in the east wall is open to the spinning sky.

### 9. Wind Tunnel

Sleet borne on a cutting wind howls up through the missing floor between the rows of pillars and screams out the missing ceiling.

Gravity pulls toward the east wall. An iced-over rope ladder spans the gulf to connect the stair landings at the north end of the room. Both the west door above and the east door below the rope are open. Climbing the ladder requires an averaged Strength/ Constitution check. Climbing with eyes closed requires a Dexterity check but avoids a vertigo check.

### 10. Battle at the Gate

Ten massive chairs and a 50-foot long table float weightless in Skytumble Tor's great hall. Tiny human forms flit about the cavernous hall like buzzing flies in the chill wind.

The east and west walls, floor and cathedral-style ceiling all have about 1/10 normal gravity and will allow characters to stand upright on them. The drop from the east and west pillar-supported balconies to the floor is 30 feet. The ceiling connects the balconies with the tops of the sculpted 100-foot-tall columns. The columns support a 20-foot-tall windowed clerestory.

In all cases up is the central axis of the room, where the small carnelian cube of the *cubic gate* floats 50 feet above the floor.

A deadly wind shrieks through the clerestory. Any character who fails a save vs. petrification

upon entering the clerestory is flung out into the sky. Making the rolls allows the character to grab onto something.

The first characters up through the door are attacked by Erskin and four mercenary bowmen perched on the balcony railings 20 feet above. The total number of mercenaries in the hall is equal to twice the original number of members in the PC party.

The petrification trap on the cubic *gate* explodes in an oily green sphere of *flesh to stone* vapor, causing the castle to shudder.

Jezz chooses this moment to issue her challenge to Slakslime and rips off her disguise. Winter-pale hair whips about her in the wind as she pulls out her crossbow, bolt ready to be *blessed*. Slakslime casts *darkness 15' radius* and assumes the guise of a mercenary.

The mercenaries begin shooting at the PCs from positions on the furniture. The furniture provides then with +2 AC cover.

After 1d3 rounds of combat, a stray arrow will hit the cubic *gate*, causing it and its deadly gas to move towards the clerestory (Move  $\frac{1}{2}$ ). It will be blown out the windows and lost in 12 rounds.

Slakslime will try to get the cube (he is unaffected by the trap). If in range, he has a 35% chance of grabbing it on each attempt. Each round after Slakslime has the *gate*, he can make one attempt to contact Acheron. His success chance is initially 1 on a 1d6. Each successive round, his chance increases by one. If it opens on Acheron, 1-6 rakshasas come through the nexus. The rakshasas all cast *fly* spells on themselves and fly off, dragging off screaming NPC victims.

### Destroying the Cubic Gate

Any destructive attack (see DMG, p. 80) will destroy the cubic gate if it fails to make its saving throw (saves as a stone or small gem). Destroying the gate causes the castle to shudder violently as it shifts from the Prime Material Plane to the Ethereal Plane.

### Epilogues

If the cubic gate is destroyed: The PCs look out upon the endless void of the ethereal plane. Vague shapes can be seen through the eternal grayness as something large but indistinct swims ever closer.

If the gate is not destroyed: The survivors must return to the flying ship if they wish to escape alive. They must exit through the barred doors at the south end of the hall. The galley leaves the castle just before it crashes into the



city, nearly leveling it and taking a horrible toll of life.

**Monster Statistics**

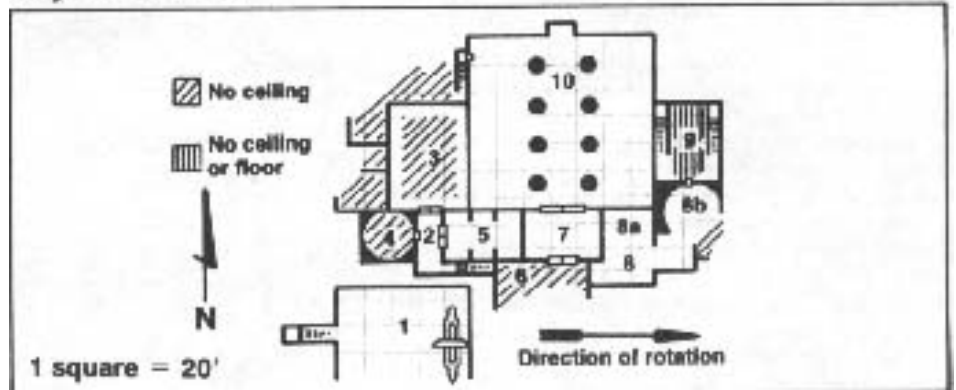
**Griffons (8):** AC 3; Move 12"/30"; HD 7; hp 13 (45), 42, 36, 42, 40, 35, 46, 50; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/2-16; THAC0 13; AL N.

**Perytons (7):** AC 7; Move 12"/21"; HD 4; hp 23, 25, 30, 15, 20, 24, 26; #AT 1; Dmg 4-16; THAC0 15; SA +2 to hit; SD hit only by magical weapons; AL CE.

**Typical Mercenary-** AC 7; Move 12"; HD 1; hp 8; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (sword) or 1-6 (bow); THAC0 20. A mercenary has leather armor, shield, broadsword, short bow, spikes, and 45 feet of rope.

**Maelstrom Thunderclash, storm giant:** AC 2; Move 15"; HD 18 + 1d8; hp 35; #AT 1; Dmg 7-42; THAC0 8; SA magical powers and rock hurling; SD unaffected by electricity; AL CG.

**Skytumble Tor**



**Sequence of Events**

Event	Effect
1. Area 3 falls (see text for area 2 & 3)*	shudder
2. A room* falls on 3rd turn	shudder
3. A room* falls on 5th turn	shudder
4. Area 8 falls** on 10th turn	shudder
5. Area 9 falls* * on 12th turn	shudder
6. Castle crashes on 28th turn destruction	

Not a numbered area on the map

\* Only if PC group passes previous area



*To Kill a Kraken* is an adventure for four to six characters of 8th to 10th level in an adventure that combines the destruction of a much feared monster, the kraken, with political intrigue.

The political intrigue requires player character involvement in the politics of Hurva, a coastal nation. Any similar nation may be substituted for Hurva; some alterations in the scenario will be required. It is possible to use Hurva as part of an "otherworld," an alternate Prime Material plane that the players may venture to by accident or design.

## DM's Information

Hurva is at war with Harat. Wars are expensive, and Hurva has been investing heavily in exploring a new continent recently found in the west. To finance the war, King Gerdant borrowed several million gold pieces from a wealthy mage, Terrigant, who made several fortunes from plundering ancient ruins. Now Terrigant demands either Gerdant's money, or his throne.

Terrigant has the power to usurp the throne, with an army of several thousand mercenaries permanently stationed at his island fortress to back him (some followers are high level). Rather than attack Terrigant, Gerdant desires to repay his debt \* Hope came in the form of treasure ships' bringing back the plundered wealth of newfound lands. However, a monster, the kraken, is sinking these ships. Gerdant hires the party, who are not as well known as other Hurvan adventurers, to perform three important tasks: kill the kraken, recover the jetsam from the sunken treasure ships, and try to determine if the kraken has been spurred on to his destructive acts by one of three factions: the enemy King of Harat; Rulkar, Gerdant's exiled younger brother; or Terrigant himself. In return, Gerdant offers the adventurers titles as *Lords of the Realm* (fief holders in the king's own barony of Gessel), and one third of all recovered wealth.

The reward is great, but it is not less than is deserved- These will not be easy tasks, for the truth of the matter is this: About a century ago, the mage-vampire Gastion discovered that there was more water than land on the world. Gastion discovered a process that allowed a vampire to breathe water permanently, and then decided that he would make himself the Lord Under Wave.

But Gastion soon discovered that he had a nemesis. An immense diabolical kraken was also trying to become master of the sea. Naturally, the ocean was not large enough for the two of

them. Their war has lasted for nearly a quarter of a century.

Recently, the arch-mage Terrigant learned about the conflict. Deciding that Gastion was a threat to his plans, he instructed his ally Saladar-one of King Gerdant's barons- to make contact with the kraken and offer it assistance. Saladar was not pleased with his assignment, but eventually his underlings successfully contacted the kraken and a pact was forged. This pact is responsible for the kraken's destruction of the ships.

## Background Information on Hurva

### History

Hurva is a nation founded centuries ago by several invading tribes which pushed out the native culture and eventually established their own unique culture. Hurva is a large peninsula, separated from the main continent by high mountains.

The economy of Hurva has been based on agriculture and fishing; it is self-supporting, except for fine textiles, which it imports, and for gold and gems, which it exports. Its traditional enemy is Harat, against which Hurva has fought several wars.

The government of Hurva is feudal. There is a King (or Queen, on rare occasions; Hurvan society is quite patriarchal), and six barons; the king or his heir is also administrator of the sixth barony, Gessel. The king is the absolute master of the kingdom, and the barons are masters of the barony who owe taxes, men and fealty to the king. In return, the barons form a privy council, sending representatives to the king's council.

In the last century, vast fortunes were recovered from ancient ruins called Dungeons. This wealth stimulated Hurva's economy (as well as that of many other nations) and created a new social class, the wealthy non-titled. These individuals strive for power; they usually marry into impoverished noble families, adding new blood to the upper class. The dungeoneers, as they are called, are becoming a powerful social force.

The current government is the House of Werax; King Gerdant (CAV 10) is the fifth king of that royal house. The King is a gruff, tyrannical sort, but no more so than most of the other monarchs in the world. Gerdant prizes peace and stability; unfortunately, even kings do not get what they ask for. Hurva has been involved in a major war against Harat for nearly a decade.

### Baronies

There are six baronies, each of which is important to the stability of Hurva.

The northernmost barony is Tolon, ruled by Baron Jurenst. Jurenst is a magic-user of high standing (M-U 7, LN); his barony houses the College Amagigo, the College of Mages. Jurenst is the puppet of the College; this fact is well known. His representative at the court is Rulens (M-U 9, LN), who has angered Gerdant several times with an attitude of superiority commonly found in wizards. Rulens is not well-liked, but his job isn't to be popular; he is required to maintain the aura of mystery and power that mages feel earns them respect from the commoners. (The college of mages do not approve of Terrigant's business practices, which they believe sullies their image, but Terrigant is far more powerful than any of them.)

The northeast barony is Valsar, a mountainous region. This is ranger country~infested by giants and humanoids. The rangers hold Valsag Pass, a citadel on the land bridge between Hurva and Harat.

Valsar is governed by Baron Wadel (RGR 8, LG), an honorable, well-liked man. His representative at the king's court is Belthurst (RGR 6, LG). Belthurst is the spokesman for the council of representatives, but his advice rarely changes the king's mind.

The northwest barony is Fyd, an area of wide forests and tall mountains. Grugach dwell here; they do not tolerate humans, nor do the few scattered goblin and kobold tribes. Fyd's forests harbor a number of outlaws: the Lords Dremmon and Scaiz (FTR 16, NE, and M-U 14, CE, respectively) are the most prominent; they are dungeoneers who thought that the throne of Hurva was theirs by right of power (they were wrong). Also in the mountains are three families of dragons (black, red, and green) known as the Fiends, who raid civilized lands on numerous occasions.

Fyd's Baron is Dalon (DRU 3/FTR 5, N), a quiet, conservative man. His representative at court is his son, Jale (FTR 5, N), an obnoxious man whom Dalon probably appointed as representative to keep him out of his court. Dalon is a strong supporter of Gerdant's wishes.

**Suress** is a large western barony positioned below Fyd and Valsar. It is a land of rolling hills and fertile fields, the heartland of Hurvan agriculture. Suress is the home of a small high elven kingdom, with whom the Suressese are quite friendly; the Baroness of Suress has at least quarter-elven blood

That baroness is Gelia (RGR 6, NG), a close friend of Princess Juril. Her representative at





court is her son, Galion (CAV 9, NG), a knight of great reknown, champion of the last royal tournament; he is more of a courtier than a councillor.

Durid is an island Barony west of Hurva. It is a wild, wooded land, troubled by orcs and by human barbarians, the Red Bear Clan. This tribe is led by Adurad (BAR 11, N). The clan is negotiating a treaty with Hurva to protect their homeland and guarantee them sovereignty; historically, much blood has flowed between the tribe and the Hurvans; Gerdant would like to free his Durid garrison to attack the Haratense.

The Baron is Kaliar (FTR 9, LN(E)), who is against peace with the Red Bears. His representative at court, Hadoc (FTR 7, LN(E)), is scheming to break off the peace talks. Hadoc is a treacherous, cunning, cruel man, and is secretly allied to Saladar of Gessel.

Gessel is the southern barony of Hurva. It is a mostly flat land, used for agriculture; it is home to one-third of Hurva's population. Rich mineral deposits are common in the east; these resources make this area a prime target of Haratense conquest.

Gessel is the barony which belongs to the King. Normally, it is ruled by the King's son, but all three princes were killed in battle against Harat. Gerdant refuses to name his daughter Juril as heir; instead, the barony is governed by Lord Saladar (CAV 11, LE). Saladar is considered to be the best swordsman in Hurva; he is bold and wily, but very treacherous. Saladar's goal is to force Gerdant to give him Juril in marriage, and then be named as heir to the throne. Also, Saladar has allied himself with a number of the King's enemies, including Terrigant, as he seeks to weaken the King and make him vulnerable to possible overthrow.

### Religions

Religious freedom is permitted in Hurva, where clerics do not have great temporal power. Death cults are persecuted, of course. There are five major deities in Hurva: Estereal (God of Law, Ceremony, Truth, most popular of deities, LN); Azkal (God of War, Fire, a soldier's god, LN(E)); Jvelto (God of Water, Ocean, and Sailing, CN); Wajen (Goddess of Fertility, Druidism, N(G)); and Torodin (God of Shadow, Vision, Dreams, and Theft, N). Religious worship in Hurva is polytheistic; people have one deity to whom they offer their primary allegiance, but all save clerics and religious champions pray to a number of different deities depending on circumstances.

### Laws

Hurva is a lawful neutral nation with harsh laws for many crimes, as was common in medieval law. Hurvan law also contains a number of restrictions unique to a culture of adventurers and magic.

No magical spells may be cast unless one is a member of the Affiliates Amagigo. Cost for affiliation is 10 gp per annum to cast cantrips, 100 gp per annum to cast 1st- and 2nd-level spells, 500 gp per annum to cast 3rd- and 4th-level spells, 5,000 gp per annum to cast 5th- through 7th-level spells. This applies to all classes, including clerics. Those guilty of this crime are tried by the College, and the penalty is death, subject to royal pardon.

Weapons may be worn but not drawn in Hurvan cities. Duels are legal only on specified dueling grounds outside the city, and the longsword is the standard duelling weapon; non-lethal, unarmed combat is the only allowable alternative. The King, the Barons, their representatives and bodyguard may not be challenged without permission from the King.

No weapons or armor may be worn in the presence of the King or a Baron without their permission; the penalty is death. No spells may be cast in their presence (healing spells are exempted), and they may not be scried.

All thieves must belong to the Hurvan Thieves' Guild, to which most wealthy people pay protection money. The penalty for those who do not join is whatever the thieves think of doing when they catch the miscreant. All magical items must be cataloged and licensed with the College Amagigo or the King's Mage; the fee is a simple 10 gp per item (no charge for potions). The King may exempt his agents from this requirement.

### Politics

There are several political factions in Hurva, each seeking supremacy. Most are supporters of the King, who wish to defeat Harat and return things to normal. Many have been urging King Gerdant to remarry and try to have a male heir to replace his dead sons. The King seems receptive to the idea. Then there are other factions, who have other ideas.

**Keath:** General Keath, commander of the Hurvan forces (currently campaigning on the southwestern shore of Harat) wishes to annex a large piece of Haratense territory and establish a seventh Barony. Keath (CAV 8, LN) has supporters in the King's bodyguard.

*Allies:* Keven, captain of the King's guard (CAV 9, LN).

*Enemies:* The Barons do not approve of this idea, nor does Saladar.

Note: The war is going reasonably well against Harat, and Keath is quite popular with the common people. They are a fickle lot, though.

**Juril:** Juril's mother, Jasil, recently fled Hurva to avoid imprisonment. Juril (CAV 3, L(G)) wishes to be named Baroness of Gessel and heir to the throne; Gerdant refuses. Juril is estranged from the king, but refuses all alliances. She detests Saladar, saying she'd rather marry a leper. She is very highspirited, and has engaged in many dangerous actions. She loves Holdafax (PAL 10) grand master of the Order of Paragons, a paladin brotherhood that is out of favor; it is probably a doomed romance.

*Allies:* Baroness Gelia, the Order of Paragons  
*Enemies:* Saladar

Note: Juril is very popular and beloved by the people of Gessel, but there is concern over her marriage and the succession, and that she would not have the strength to hold Hurva together by herself.

**Rulkar/Jasil:** Rulkar, Gerdant's brother, attempted to usurp the throne using assassins. He failed, and fled to Harat. Recently, fearing that Gerdant would take action against her, Jasil fled Hurva and found herself in Rulkar's "court-in-exile" a traitor's nest located in the Haratense capital. Harat pretends to support them, but in truth they would rather conquer Hurva than have it ruled by unreliable puppets. They are protecting Rulkar to use as a figurehead in civil war in case the current war fails.

*Allies:* None. Saladar has secretly contacted them, but has concluded they will not win and has cut ties with them.

*Enemies:* Nearly everyone in Hurva.

**Terrigant:** Terrigant (M-U 19, N(E)), arch-mage of the Scarlet Isle, is one of the wealthiest men in existence. Unlike most mages, he could never retire gracefully or pursue the usual avenues of power. Instead, Terrigant decided to meddle. Using his wealth, he is putting political and financial pressure on several kingdoms. His goal is a takeover; he would then band their military forces together and conquer the entire continent, over which he would be Overlord.

*Allies:* Pharas (royal mage, M-U 10), Saladar

*Enemies:* The College Amagigo

Note: Terrigant has absolutely no popularity with the Hurvan nobility, military or commoners; moneylenders are not well liked.

## The Adventure



Unless the DM wishes to incorporate Hurva into his campaign world setting, or alter this to fit the world setting, the players will likely enter Hurva via some freak accident, such as a *curse* scroll teleporting them onto the Hurvan continent. In that case, it will require at least one adventure to earn a reputation which will bring them to the attention of the King. This preliminary adventure can be many things, such as a monster-slaying expedition against the giants of Valsar or the fiends of Fyd.

Once they have earned a reputation as slayers of monsters, the characters will be brought to the King. Gerdant lives in a palace at the center of Geston, the capital of Hurva, where the adventurers will be treated as 'honored barbarians'-i.e., useful outsiders. They are given an advisor, whose job is to keep them from breaking Hurvan law and to provide information about the kingdom and its inhabitants. That advisor will be Ruthers, the King's Thief.

**Ruthers:** AC 5; Move 12"; THF 7; hp 31; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; THAC0 18; ST 11 IN 14 WS 12 DX 16 CN 16 CH 15 CM 16; AL N(G). Ruthers carries a *dagger +1* and wears *leather +1*.

Ruthers was caught trying to steal the crown treasury; amused by his efforts, Gerdant named him the King's Thief. He lives on a pension of 1 gp per week and is forbidden to steal except in the King's service. He is a cheerful fellow, always smiling, fluent in many languages, and knowledgeable about subjects ranging from Hurvan politics to the nature of the multiverse. He enjoys conversation.

Upon entering the palace, the characters are asked to strip themselves of armor and weapons; clothing will be provided. Ruthers makes it clear that under Hurvan law this *must* be obeyed, and that all items will be returned. Ruthers briefly

describes the people they meet in the court, and tell the adventurers that under no circumstances are they to touch the king's fool, who will undoubtedly insult them grievously.

### The King's Council

The characters are escorted to a large room with a long table in it. At the head of the table is the King: he is unarmored, and fitted in robes, and a small coronet is on his head. To his left sits his chancellor, Kalros, in chain mail. To his right are his justiciar, Saladar, in full plate, and his master mage, Pharas, wearing robes. Behind him is his fool, Jestus, the captain of the guards, Keven, and three knights in full armor. The statistics of the king and his council follow. Note effect of the weapon of choice on attacks per round for cavalier NPCs.

**Gerdant:** AC 4; Move 12"; CAV 10; hp 96; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8 +1 + 1-5; THAC0 9; ST 17 IN 16 WS 14 DX 17 CN 18 CH 16 CM 13; AL LN. Gerdant is protected by a *stoneskin* spell, and has these items; *amulet of life protection*, *periapt of proof against poison*, *rod of alertness*, *full plate armor +3*, *longsword +4 (defender)*, *ring of free action*, *coronet of mind shielding*, and a *ring of protection +3*.

**Saladar:** AC -5; Move 6"; CAV 11; hp 99; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8 + 11; THAC0 2; ST 18/ 84 IN 15 WS 15 DX 18 CN 17 CH 17 CM 18; AL LE. Saladar has *full plate armor +2*, *longsword +2*, *gauntlets of ogre power*, *dagger of venom*, *ring of mind shielding*, *ring of regeneration*, and a *necklace of adaptation*.

**Kalros:** AC 0; Move 9"; CLE 8; hp 51; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 + 3; THAC0 14; ST 13 IN 12 WS 17 DX 15 CN 15 CH 14 CM 12; AL LN (G). Kalros has *chainmail +4*, *mace +2*, *rod of flailing*, *phylactery of faithfulness*, and a *periapt of health*. He knows the following spells.

Level 1: *Command*, *cure*, *light wounds*, *sanctuary*

Level 2: *Hold person*, *resist fire*, *withdraw*

Level 3: *Dispel magic*, *prayer*

Level 4: *Neutralize poison*

**Pharas:** AC 7; Move 12"; M-U 10; hp 29; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 + 3; THAC0 16; ST 12 IN 16 WS 9 DX 15 CN 14 CH 10 CM 11; AL N. Pharas has a *wand of lightning bolts*, *cloak of displacement*, *ring of protection +2*, *dagger +3*, and a *gem of seeing*. He knows the following spells:

Level 1: *Charm person*, *feather fall*, *mount*

Level 2: *Knock*, *mirror image*, *shatter*

Level 3: *Dispel magic*, *suggestion*

Level 4: *Polymorph self*

Level 5: *Hold monster*

**Jestus:** AC 7; Move 12"; T/A 8; hp 36; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; THAC0 19; ST 15 IN 17 WS 7 DX 17 CN 14 CH 15 CM 10. Jestus has a *wand of wonder*, *deck of illusions*, *darts of homing*, and *ring of shocking grasp*.

**Keven:** AC -3; Move 6"; CAV 9; hp 79; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8 + 6; THAC0 5; ST 18/42 IN 13 WS 10 DX 15 CN 17 CH 13 CM 16. Keven has *full plate armor +1*, *longsword +1*, and a *shield +1*.

**Guards (Gryth and Torin):** AC -1; Move 6"; CAV 5; hp 45, 41; THAC0 14; AL LN. They each have a *longsword +1*, full plate armor, and a shield.

As the characters enter the King's hall, they are greeted by Jestus' insults. He says things like, "How many adventurers does it take to cast a *continual light* spell? Fiveone to cast the spell, and four to take turns blowing on the light to make sure it doesn't go out. Why did the adventurer go into the dungeon? To become smellier than he already is." After a few minutes of this, the king motions for his fool to stop. The chancellor offers greetings and the negotiations begin. King Gerdant prefers to deal with one party spokesman at the meeting, although all may attend. He would prefer this spokesman to be a cavalier; it must be a fighter.

The council is of mixed opinion regarding the mission, mostly because Saladar and Pharas both serve Terrigant (although each is unaware of the other's true loyalty)- The council can be described as follows.

**Gerdant.** Gerdant looks like an aging man who was quite active in his youth. He pretends to listen to his council, but he does not take advice very often. His main concern is making certain the characters are true to their word and do not betray him. "If you take a vow to execute all aspects of the mission," he tells the party, "then we will offer all possible assistance. However, you must agree to be examined so we may determine that you serve neither the Haratense nor Terrigant."

**Saladar.** Saladar looks like a true cavalier, tall and handsome, although his beard and piercing gray eyes give him a rather sinister look. He argues in a firm voice that foreigners (i.e., "barbarians") shouldn't be trusted to the mission. "Majesty," he says, "there is no need to involve outsiders, worthy though they be." Saladar dislikes most magic-users, unless he can manipulate them, and he despises Kalros.

**Kalros.** Kalros is a fat, seemingly lethargic man who can be quite shrewd when something strikes him as interesting. He is in favor of the mission and would be more generous than the King. "The monster must be destroyed. We have





no choice. Only an idiot would argue with that." He doesn't care for Saladar.

**Pharas.** Pharas is tall and middle-aged, his face cloaked and covered by a ceremonial mask; this is the custom for mages in Hurva in the presence of outsiders. He will remove the mask if the player characters ask the king to let them see his face. He argues along with Saladar that outsiders cannot be trusted, and he is much less polite about it. "Majesty, shall Hurva be shamed to embrace barbarians as its saviors?"

**Jestus.** Jestus makes jokes and agrees with everyone, regardless of what they say. When Kalros mentions that only an idiot would argue with killing the monster, Jestus jumps up and down, cartwheels, and shouts "I disagree!" He has no real opinion to offer.

**Keven.** Keven is young and tall; he is spying for General Keath, who is otherwise not involved in this adventure. Keven might break into the conversation to whisper support for the mission into the King's ear, but will otherwise keep silent.

If the characters refuse to take the mission, then they will go their own way, although mention of fabulous sunken treasure should whet their appetites. If the characters accept, King Gerdant sees them in private after the meeting. He will check their loyalties using the *detect lie* power of his *rod of alertness*. If they pass, he secretly loans them several magic items from the Hurvan nation's magical stores: a *ring of free action*, two *helms of underwater action*, and four *potions of water breathing*. These must be returned if unused when the mission is completed. He also gives them a map which shows where the kraken lives, and is readying a ship, the Royal Navy Ship *Pearl*, to carry them to the lair. In the meantime, there is a royal masque (ball) to celebrate the holy festival of Estereal; the characters are invited. Suitable clothing will be provided; characters may not wear armor, but may carry swords as long as they remain sheathed.

### The Masque of Estereal

The Masque of Estereal celebrates the triumph of law and reason over the force of mystery; at midnight, the guests must unmask, it is a suitable opportunity for skullduggery, a night the characters will never forget.

These affairs are not easy for the DM. It is suggested that each character be given a separate encounter to role-play. Such encounters include:

1. A masked representative of Terrigant asks a party magic-user whether he would like to join with the forces of Terrigant, who is one

of their own kind, rather than an arrogant cavalier. The magic-user must be certain that no money passes into Gerdant's hands. The stranger will answer no questions and, if apprehended, will turn out to be a low level magic user of the College Amagigo who will claim he was sent by Pharas to test the mettle of these barbarian adventurers.

2. A 6th-level thief is working busily. He is a renegade; the Thieves' Guild has been paid off to avoid the masque. The thief may either steal from a party member or be caught in the act by a party member. If the party member is himself a thief, then the thief will offer to form a one night partnership, covering each other as they loot the hall. The NPC thief will betray the adventurer as soon as possible.

3. A party member receives a note from a lady as she bumps into him - "Beware Saladar." If Saladar is approached about this, he smiles and says it is in all probability a joke. If the king is shown the note, he says of course, that they should beware of Saladar; he is the deadliest swordsman in the kingdom. If Gerdant did not have absolute trust in him, he would not have invited him to the meeting. The woman is Sharella, a lady-in-

waiting to Princess Juril. Saladar is on the lookout for her, and if he catches her, will take her into a corner and warn her in a menacing voice: "Never try that again, and give the same message to the tramp you serve." A character who keeps his eye on Saladar will notice this conversation with a successful Intelligence check.

Toward the end of the masque, a woman approaches a party member, and strikes up a conversation. She asks him to invite her to dance. If they do, they attract the attention of a jealous boyfriend named Belwast, a drunken cavalier in the service of Lord Rulens. Belwast will challenge the party member to a duel. He is moderately drunk; see DMG, p. 82. If the character refuses the duel, Belwast draws his sword, saying that he is determined "to skewer your cowardly carcass right here, if thou dost demand it."

Belwast: AC 10; Move 6"; CAV 6; hp 65; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-8 +5; ST 18/18 IN 10 WS 10 DX 15 CN 16 CH 13 CM 16; THAC0 13. Belwast owns *plate mail + 1*, *longsword +2*, and a shield. Due to his drunkenness, he is at -1 to hit. This is already added into the THAC0. His armor is available but not worn at the moment.

If the fight occurs in the ballroom, an area is cleared on the floor for such a duel, although it

is illegal. If either combatant is seriously hurt (down to one quarter of his hit points), the woman rushes into the area, gets down on her knees, and begs that the bloodshed cease. Belwast will be imprisoned, and the party member will receive a royal pardon if he only defended himself against attack. He will be in trouble if he attacked in a dishonorable manner, or did more than just defend himself.

The DM may add more encounters, as seen fit.

### Assassin in the Night

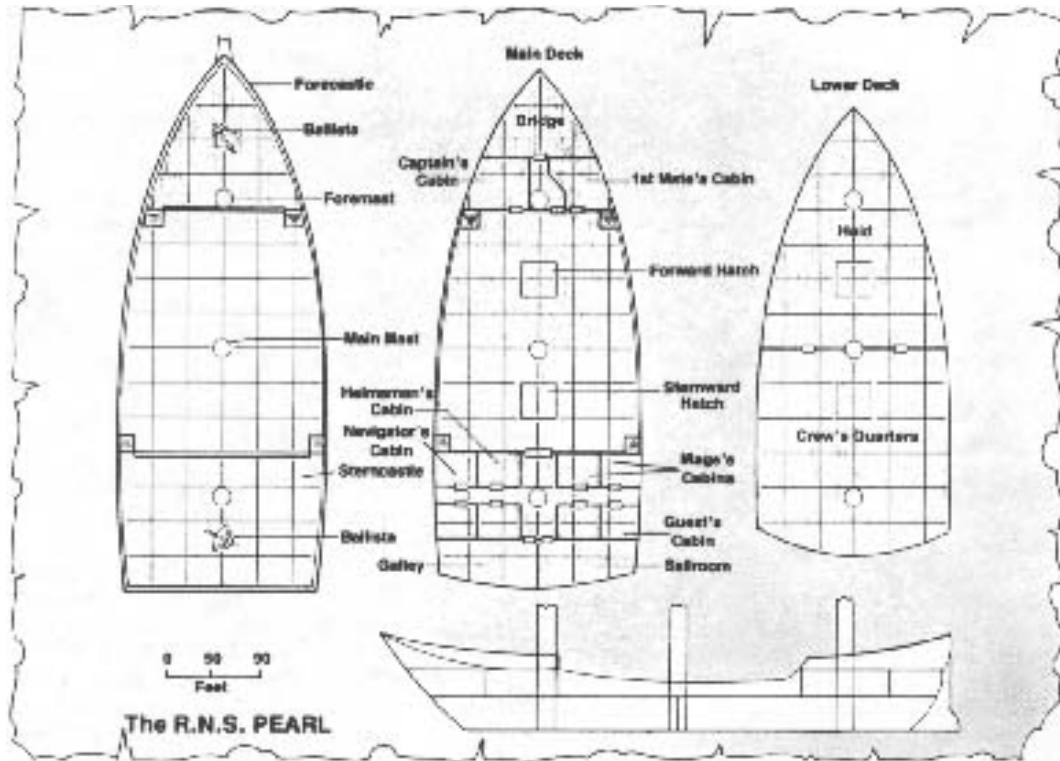
Following the masque, the characters are directed to their guest chambers in the royal palace. A single guard is stationed at their doorway; this guard, however, is a paid assassin in the service of Saladar.

Kroig: AC 6; Move 12"; ASN 6; hp 37; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; ST 16 IN 13 W 10 DX 16 CN 15 CH 11 CM 14; THAC0 13; AL NE. Kroig has a *dagger +1* and leather armor. His dagger is covered with poison; victim must ST vs. poison at + 2 or die.

First, Kroig will assassinate Ruthers, who insists on sleeping by himself, and then he will sneak into the least guarded room, killing henchmen first, then party members. There is a 20% chance henchmen victims cry out and wake party members if they are not protected by someone on watch or by a spell. If Kroig is caught, he claims that a hooded man who didn't show his face hired him. He is telling the truth; the hooded man was an illusionist in the employ of Saladar.

### A Pearl of Great Price

Following the death - or attempted murder - of Ruthers, Saladar will not strike again until they are on board the ship - The *Pearl* is a large merchant ship, commandeered by the king for use as a warship. It weighs about 130 tons and has a crew of ~2, including the sailors and the officers (but not the player characters). It has thirty-eight hull points, and is in very good condition. The middle deck is 13' above the waterline, the two upper decks (forecastle and stem) are 18' above water level. The *Pearl* is armed with two ballistae (see DMG, P. 108) as noted on the deckplans, and twenty harpoons are tied along the rail in easy reach perhaps, should there be a mutiny, in too easy a reach. *Pearl's* captain is Captain Sabatin (FTR 5, LN), a rather temperamental character who enjoys telling improbable stories and strongly dislikes it when their veracity is doubted. His first mate is Gorgon (FTR 3, LN(G)); 'Gorgon' is his



nickname), a huge man who loves to brawl and is a firm but fair disciplinarian. The navigator is a sullen, skinny kid named Reed who looks a bit young for the service FTR 2, NG; 'Reed' is also a nickname). The ship is staffed with two mages, Grent and Baril (M-U 5 and 3, respectively); each is armed with a pair of scrolls containing a total of seven *fireball* spells (as cast by a 10th level magic-user); these were part of the magical archives of Hurva. Both Grent and Baril are quite antisocial; they view adventuring types as too reckless.

Other important positions aboard ship include pilot (Ryarnos, FTR 1), navigator (Shend, 0-level), sailmaker (Gridontine "Grid," 0-level), chaplain/ surgeon (Balastar, cleric of Jvelto, CLE 3), and the cook (Rogg, half-orc, FTR 2).

In battle against warships, the ship employs the following tactics. It uses its superior speed to manipulate it into a position that will enable it to fire flaming ballista bolts at enemy vessels. Twenty-four sailors fire at targets with heavy crossbows, using flaming bolts, in groups of twelve firing on alternating rounds. Eleven men remain in reserve, to provide reinforcements and to serve as fire control if necessary. Four men are stationed on the appropriate ballistae, led by the ship's master-at-arms, Gorgon. Baril and Grent will fire on ships, using cover as they do so. The captain and the pilot direct the ship's

course using whatever help is available. The player characters will assist wherever possible.

Two days after the masque, the ship departs with the high tide. It will be entering dangerous seas and random encounters may occur. Roll 1d8 three times per day. On a result of 1 an encounter takes place; roll 2d10 on the *Aquatic Random Encounters* table to find the nature of the event.

### Aquatic Random Encounters

Roll	Encounter
2	Wereshark
3	Roc
4	Ixitxachtli
5	Whirlpool
6	Sahuagin
7	Man-o-War
8	Scrag (Marine Troll)
9	Demon, Type II (Hezrou)
10	Men, Haratese
11	Whale
12	Shark
13	Seaweed, Floating
14	Men, Pirate
15	Sea Hag
16	Squid, Giant
17	Magic-user
18	Kraken
19	Shark, Giant
20	Triton

Most of the creatures that inhabit this area have become ensnared in the grand campaign between Gastion and the kraken. Appropriate effects on their reactions are noted below.

**2. Wereshark (1):** AC 0; Move 12" / /21"; HD 10+3; hp 68; #AT 1; Dmg 5-20; THAC0 10; SD silver or +1 or better weapon to hit; AL NE; XP 2,452.



The wereshark is a spy for the kraken. If encountered, he tries to sneak aboard ship in a sailor's guise and find out what is going on. He then throws as many people overboard as possible, devours them in wereshark form, then leaves the area to inform the kraken.

**3. Roc (1):** AC 4; Move 3" /30" (E); HD 18; hp 108; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 3-18/3-18 or 4-24; THAC0 7; AL N. XP 7,700.

This roc is not out to harm the ship, but it does fly fairly low, investigating what is on the ocean, and if it draws fire it will attack.

**4. Ixixtachtli (11):** AC 6; Move 12"; HD 1 + 1; hp 9, 7 (x2), 6, 5 W), 4 (x2), 2; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; THAC0 18; AL CE; XP 388.

Ixixtachtli cleric (1): AC 6; Move 12"; HD 1 + 1; hp 7; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; THAC0 18; AL CE; XP 42. Spells: *darkness*, *protection from good*.

The ixixtachtli are spies for the vampire-mage, Gastion. They will follow the ship, but they cannot board or attack it due to their physical form.

**5. Whirlpool.** See MMII, p. 137.

**6. Sahuagin (20):** AC 5; Move 12" / /24"; HD 2 + 2; hp 17, 15 (x2), 14, 12 (x2), 11, 10 (x4), 9 W), 8 (x4), 7, 5; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (see below); THAC0 16; AL LE; XP 1,321.

Chieftain (1): AC 5; Move 12" / /24"; HD 4 + 4; hp 27; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (see below); THAC0 15; AL LE; XP 265.

Lieutenants (2): AC 5; Move 12"//24"; HD 3 + 3; hp 19,16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (see below); THAC0 16; AL LE; XP 310.

The chieftain and ten warriors are armed with trident, net, and dagger, while the two lieutenants and four others are armed with heavy crossbow and dagger. Six warriors wield spear and dagger. If encountered at night, the sahuagin will use grappling hooks and attempt to board the ship, killing those whom they can get their hands on.

**7. Man-o-War (2):** AC 9; Move 1"; HD 3; hp 17,14; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; THAC0 16; SA paralyzation; SD transparent; AL N; XP 492.

As one might expect, these creatures cannot harm the *Pearl*, but they can be a hazard to swimmers.

**8. Scrag (Marine Trolls) (5):** AC 1; Move 3" //12"; HD 6 + 12; hp 56, 51, 47, 42, 33; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/9-16; THAC0 13; AL CE; XP 7,248.

The scrag are servants of the kraken; they have been instructed to board passing ships and wreak havoc. They have difficulty climbing, and are 70% likely to fail if they attempt a boarding action.

**9. Hezrou (Type 11 Demons) (3):** AC -2; Move 6" //12"; HD 9; hp 59,51, 42; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/4-16; THAC0 12; MR 55%; SA *darkness 15' radius, cause fear, levitate, telekinesis* (3,000 gp wt.), *gate* (Type II demons, 20% chance); SD *detect invisibility, teleport*; AL CE; XP 8,268.

These demons have been summoned by Terrigant, to intercept the *Pearl* and slay all aboard. They will teleport aboard and attack anyone in sight.

**10. Men, Haratese.** This is the Haratese warship *Hippocampus*. The Haratese learned of the *Pearl's* mission through spies in the Hurvan court, and have sent this vessel to intercept and destroy the *Pearl*. It is similar to the *Pearl* in design (i.e., use the same deck plans): it has 33 hull points, is armed with a catapult in its stem, a ballista in its forecastle, and has a crew of 36. Sixteen 0-level crossbowmen are ready to attack as soon as the ship enters crossbow range. Ten men arm the catapult, four operate the ballista, the *Hippocampus'* captain, pilot and first mate direct the ship, and the special crew (see below) conducts itself in a manner typical of intelligent NPCs. The special Haratese agents are:

Hulrick: AC 1; Move 12"; ILL 11; hp 30; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 + 2; ST 13 IN 17 WS 12 DX 17 CN 13 CH 11 CM 10; THAC0 14; AL N; XP 3,530. Hulrick has a *quarterstaff* +2, *ring of swimming*, and *bracers of defense AC4*. He has the following spells memorized.

Level 1: *Chromatic orb* (x2), *color spray*, *detect illusion*, *phantom armor*.

Level 2: *Alter self*, *blur*, *fascinate*, *mirror image*

Level 3: *Phantom steed*, *phantom wind*, *wraithform*

Level 4: *Confusion*, *dispel magic*, *phantasmal killer*

Level 5: *Advanced illusion*, *projected image*

Hulrick sees himself as a born leader and a future Haratese noble. He is supremely confident in his abilities and the foolishness of his enemies. He enjoys tricking opponents with sophisticated illusions, viewing this as proof that his art is supreme.

Borosl: AC 5; Move 12"; M-U 9; hp 24; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; ST 11 IN 16 WS 12 DX 17 CN 11 CH 10 CM 8; THAC0 19; AL N (E); XP 2,286. Borosl has a *ring of protection* + 2, *bowl of commanding water elementals*, and a scroll with *fireball* (x3). He has the following spells memorized.

Level 1: *Jump*, *magic missile*, *sleep* (x2).

Level 2: *Flaming sphere*, *mirror image*, *web*

Level 3: *Fireball*, *hold person*, *lightning bolt*

Level 4., *Minor globe*, *wall of fire*

Level 5: *Conjure elemental*

Borosl is a nasty magic-user, but somewhat cowardly. He hides behind Hulrick and Maella wherever possible, trying to summon a water elemental to attack the enemy.

Maella: AC - 5; Move 6"; CAV 8; hp 57; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8 + 5; ST 17 IN 13 WS 11 DX 16 CN 15 CH 13 CM 15; THAC0 8; AL LN; XP 1,470. Maella has *field plate armor* +1, *longsword* +4, *shield* +3, and a *potion of extra healing*.

Maella is a cavalier who believes very strongly in honor. She will not fire a ranged weapon, but prefers to engage enemy fighters in simple combat. She has a deep loathing for Hurvans, typical of those who are stirred by patriotism to hate a national enemy.

**11. Whale (3):** AC 4; Move 21"; HD 24; hp 126, 120, 113; #AT 1; Dmg 10-40; THAC0 7; SA tail slap (Dmg 12 hp); AL N; XP 35,365.

These are large carnivorous whales. Nevertheless, they will not attack unless they are attacked first; they have a wicked temper when provoked. It is possible that an NPC crew member will try to harpoon one as it passes, and unless the player characters stop this, it will provoke an attack. Also note that the reputation of whales has not always been as good as it is today.

**12. Shark (7):** AC 6; Move 24"; HD 6; hp 40, 33, 29, 27, 25, 24, 22; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; THAC0 13; AL N; XP 2,250.

The sharks are in league with the sahuagin, but do not understand the significance of the characters' ship. They will attack creatures in the water.

**13. Floating Seaweed.** See MMII, p. 137.

**14. Men, pirates.** This is the pirate warship *Kraken*. Most pirates have accepted pardons and rejoined either the Hurvan or Haratese navies during the war, but the crew of the *Kraken* refused; instead, they are Saladar's agents. Saladar has instructed the captain, Bulgost FTR 11), to destroy the *Pearl*. As with the *Hippocampus*, the *Kraken* is similar in design to the *Pearl* (i.e., use the same deck plans); it has 31 hull points, and is equipped with two ballistae, one on its stem, the other on its forecastle. It has a small crew, due to the war, of only 39. The most dangerous thing about the *Kraken* is its prow, which is magical. Once per day it can breathe a billowing cloud of poisonous gas in a 1" wide by 12" long line. Creatures caught in this gas stream will take 5-20 points of damage; creatures making a successful save vs. poison take only half damage.



In combat the pirates use these tactics: eight men operate the ballistae; eight remain in reserve as fire control or reinforcements; three men control ship movement and the prow weapon, and sixteen crewmen fire heavy crossbows (two groups of eight shooting during alternate rounds). Meanwhile, exceptional characters take actions as need dictates.

The major crew members are Bulgost, Hejek (first mate, FTR 8), Jeru (navigator, FTR 1), Taith (pilot, FTR 2), Murgant (mage, M-U 6), and Vruud (chaplain, CLE 8).

Bulgost: AC -2; Move 12"; FTR 11; hp 85; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8 + 5; ST 17 IN 14 WS 10 DX 18 CN 16 CH 16 CM 15; THAC0 5; AL NE; XP 4,760. Bulgost has *leather armor* +3, *scimitar of speed* +4, *buckler* +2, *ring of protection* +2, and a *brooch of shielding*.

Hejek: AC 1; Move 12"; FTR 8; hp 64; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1-8 + 7; ST 18/68 IN 9 WS 10 DX 16 CN 15 CH 12 CM 14; THAC0 8; AL NE; XP 1,668. Hejek has *leather armor* + 2, a *longsword* +4, *crossbow of speed*, and a *shield* +2.

Vruud: AC 5; Move 9"; CLE 8; hp 41; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 + 3; ST 14 IN 13 WS 15 DX 11 CN 15 CH 12 CM 9; THAC0 19; AL N (E); XP 1,235. Vruud has *chain mail* +2, *flail* +2, and a scroll of *cure light wounds* NU. He knows the following spells.

- Level 1: *Command, create water, cure light wounds* (x2), *sanctuary*.
- Level 2: *Aid, hold person* (x2), *silence 15' radius*.
- Level 3: *Death's door, dispel magic, prayer*
- Level 4: *Cure serious wounds, protection from good 10' radius*.

Murgant: AC 5; Move 12"; M-U 6; hp 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; ST 9 IN 16 WS 11 DX 15 CN 12 CH 10 CM 10; THAC0 19; AL N; XP 452.

Murgant has *bracers of defense* AC 6 and a *wand of magic missiles*. He knows the following spells.

- Level 1: *Affect normal fires, feather fall, sleep* (x2)
- Level 2: *Invisibility, stinking cloud*
- Level 3: *Fireball, flame arrow*

In Bulgost's cabin there is a large chest filled with 3,000 gp, 20 gems worth 100 gp each, and letters from Saladar which prove the cavalier is a traitor. Saladar had commanded that the letters be burned, but Bulgost had other ideas, intending to blackmail Saladar after the war.

**15. Sea Hags (2):** AC 7, Move 15"; HD 3; hp 17,14; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; THAC0 16; MR 50 %; SA weakness, death gaze (3x day); AL CE; XP 1,293.

These sea hags are adrift on floating seaweed (see MMII, p. 137). They serve no one except themselves when they need food. They will attempt to board the ship, grab some food (men), and leave.

**16. Giant squid (1):** AC 7/3; Move 3" 18"; HD 12; hp 56; #AT 9; Dmg 1-6 (x8)/5-20; THAC0 9; SA constriction; SD ink; AL N; XP 2,896.

The squid is too stupid to serve anyone. It will attempt to ram the ship from below, crack it open, and bring it down, dragging food (men) with it.

**17. Magic-user.** To ensure the *Pearl's* destruction, Terrigant has commissioned a pupil, Durytus, to seek it out and destroy it. Durytus will use Terrigant's *crystal ball* to find it, use one of his *teleport* spells to get on to the ship, and then use spells and magicitems to wreak the vessel, then teleport out when he is done. He may use scrolls to repeat these tactics.

Durytus: AC 5; Move 12; M-U 12; hp 39; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; ST 10 IN 17 WS 10 DX 1~CN 15 CH 13, CM 11; THAC0 13; AL N (E); XP 4,174. Durytus has a *ring of protection* +2, *dagger* +3, *stoneskin* spell, a *cloak of displacement*, *pearl of the sirens*, *ring of animal friendship*, *philter of glibness*, and a *necklace of missiles* (one 9d6, two each of 7d6, 5d6, 3d6). He knows the following spells.

- Level 1: *Burning hands, jump magic missile, sleep*
- Level 2: *Flaming sphere, invisibility, mirror image, vocalize*
- Level 3: *Dispel magic, fireball, Melf's meteors, slow*
- Level 4: *Dimension door, fire shield, minor globe, polymorph self*
- Level 5: *Cloudkill, cone of cold, teleport* (x2)
- Level 6: *Death spell*

**18. Kraken (1):** AC 5/0; Move 113" (21"); HD 20; hp 95; #AT 7; Dmg 2-12 (x2)/2-8 (x4)/5-20; THAC0 7; SA constriction, ink, control temperature (40' radius), weather summoning (1x day), control winds (1x day), fish summoning III (3x day), faerie fire; SD airy water, ink; AL NE; XP 19,750.

This is *the* kraken, the creature that the king commissioned the *Pearl* to destroy. It will use its weather powers on the ship as a distraction, and then grab it with its tentacles and try to sink it. If the kraken is badly injured (e.g., 50% hit points lost, three or more tentacles severed), it will flee to its lair on the ocean floor, where it broods on vengeance.

**19. Giant Shark (2):** AC 5; Move 18"; HD 13; hp 71, 60; #AT 1; Dmg 5-20; THAC0 9; SA swallowing whole; AL N (E); XP 8,358,

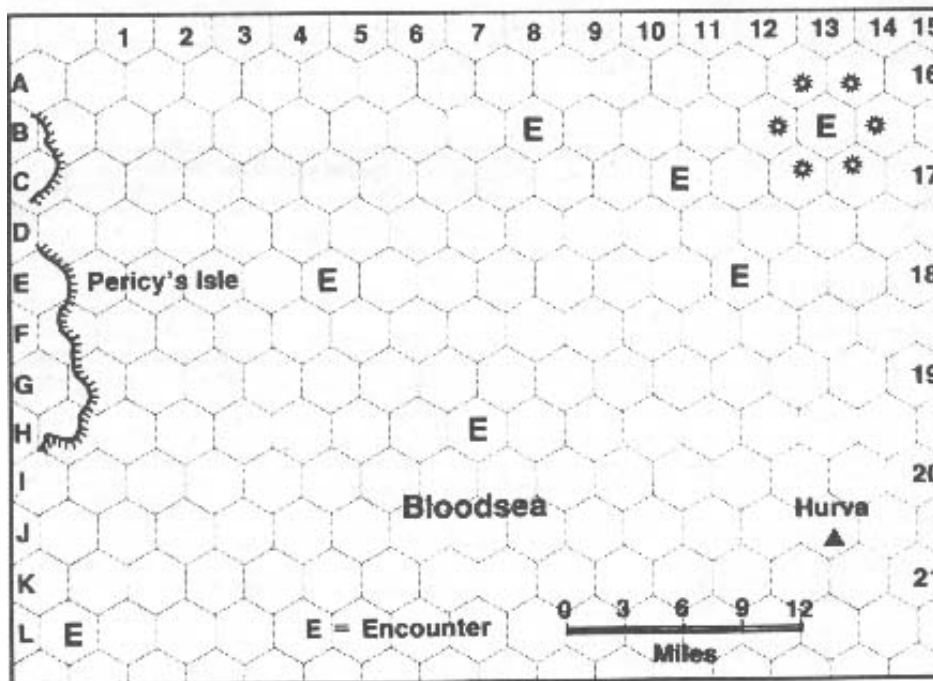
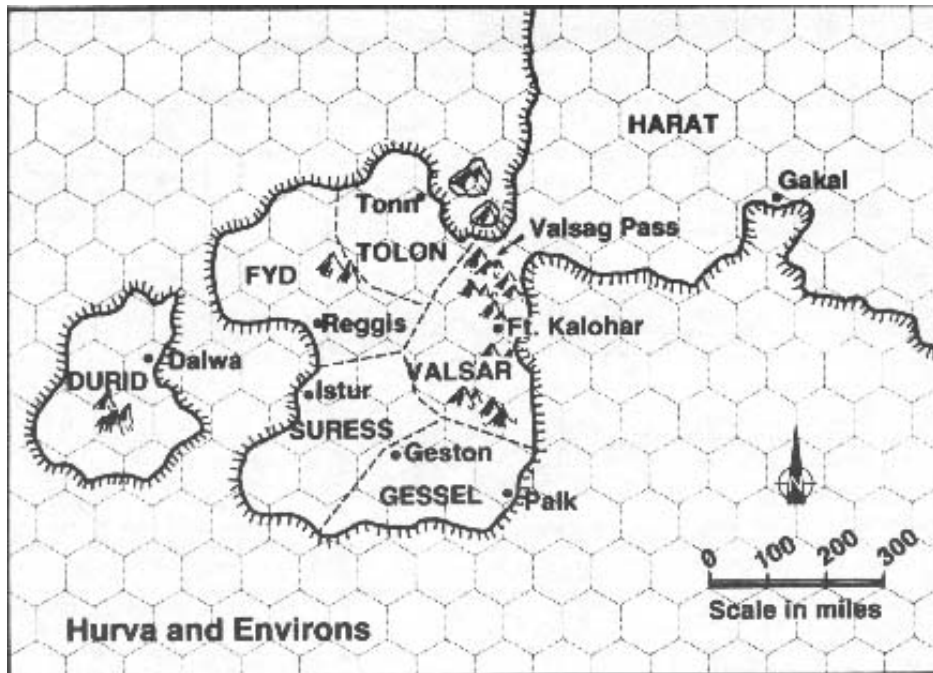
These sharks are used by the sahuagin, although they are not the most dependable of servants. They are vicious, and will attack anything moving in the water, including humans.

**20. Triton.** This is a small family of tritons, which once flourished in these waters but which have been forced to migrate to safer waters in recent years. This family has decided to stand and fight. They are very suspicious of others, having no trust of outsiders, although their friendship can be earned with the right gestures. If the party successfully negotiates with them (aiding them against their enemies), then their leader, Baldrin (CLE 8), will agree to join the party and aid them in their quest.

Baldrin: AC -1; Move 15"; CLE 8; hp 51; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 + 8; ST 18/81 IN 15 WS 17 DX 18 CN 15 CH 17 CM 18; THAC0 7; MR 90%; AL NG; XP 2,312. Baldrin has a horn of *the tritons*, +3 trident, *Keoghtom's ointment*, and *seashell armor* (improves by two steps). He knows the following spells.

- Level 1: *Bless, command, cure light wounds* (x2), *remove fear*
- Level 2: *Aid, hold person* (x2), *messenger, silence 15' radius*
- Level 3: *Deaths door, dispel magic* (x2), *prayer*
- Level 4: *Cure serious wounds, protection from evil 10' radius*

Baldrin is a triton who has learned to be suspicious the hard way. He is anxious to participate in any legitimate enterprise against evil. He is a born leader, and his ideas may not coincide with the party's, but he will give his life willingly for his friends. If he joins the party, he will pass control of the triton



community, and the *horn*, to his young son, Areodus.

Areodus: AC 3; Move 15"; HD 6; hp 38; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 + 3; ST 17 IN 15 WS 14 DX 16 CN 16 CH 15 CM 17; THAC0 10; MR 90%; AL NG; XP 1,004. Areodus has a *spear* +2.

Baldrin and Areodus are accompanied by five tritons. All seven are riding hippocampi, and there are two sea lions swimming with them. Two tritons are carrying heavy crossbows and daggers, another two wield trident and dagger, and the fifth is armed with a spear and dagger.

Tritons (5): AC 5; Move 15"; HD 3; hp 16, 15, 12 (x2), 10; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; THAC0 16; MR 90%; AL NG; XP 720.

Hippocampi (7): AC 5; Move 24"; HD 4; hp 29, 23, 20 (W), 18, 17, 15; #AT 1; Dmg 14; THAC0 15; AL CG; XP 988.



Sea Lions (2): AC 5/3; Move 18"; HD 6; hp 35, 26; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-12; THAC0 12; AL N; XP 666.

## The Voyage of the Pearl

The *Pearl* is sailing to lands only recently discovered. Instead of using a map, the ship's voyage will be measured in days. The destinations listed in this section are reached in a certain period of time, given a decent wind. A lull or a storm will add additional days, at the DM's discretion. Events listed here are in addition to the *Aquatic Random Encounters* above.

### Day Eight: Port Rogue

Port Rogue is an island controlled by Hurva, and is a base for Hurvan privateers (pirates who serve Hurva in wartime). There is a small settlement, Rogueston, which has many of the amenities that sailors enjoy. Rogueston is a place where ship repairs may be made safely, although the social life is quite rough and tumble.

### Day Fifteen: Assassins Strike!

On board the *Pearl* are two assassins, placed there by Saladar through his hooded friend. Their orders are to slay the mages on board and destroy their *fireball* scrolls. A single assassin, Galoz, will make this attempt. If the characters chose to place a watch outside their door, the assassin may be noticed if he fails his *move silently* roll, and if the character makes his Intelligence check with a +4 penalty to the roll. If the adventurers post a guard outside of the ship's mage's quarters, they will prevent their assassination.

Galoz: AC 4; Move 12"; ASN 8; hp 32; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 + 3; ST 16 IN 11 WS 9 DX 16 CN 15 Ch 11 CM 12; THAC0 17; XP 1,320. SA move silently 47%, hide in shadows 37 %, hear noise 20 %. Galoz has a *scimitar* +2, *leather armor* +2, and poison.

Dolgon: AC 2; Move 12"; ASN 10; hp 36; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 + 2; ST 14 IN 13 WS 11 DX 17 CN 14 CH 10 CM 10; THAC0 14; XP 2,904. SA move silently 67%, hide in shadows 54 %, hear noise 25 %. Dolgon has a *dagger* +2, *ring of protection* +3, *boots of striding and springing*, *leather armor*, and poison.

### Day Nineteen: Water, Water Everywhere...

The assassins lay low following the attempted assassination of the mages Baril and Grent, until the nineteenth day, just before they reach

Pericy's Isle. Then they poison the drinking water. This poison is a special one. It is quite undetectable in water, and has an onset time of 3-12 turns, during which the victims experience painful cramps (- 4 on all to hit rolls during this time period). The poison does 30 points of damage, or 15 points if a saving throw against poison is made. In all cases, this poison causes the loss of 2-8 strength points and 1-4 constitution points for 1-3 days; if any statistic is brought to 3 or less, the victim falls into a coma. A *neutralize poison* spell removes these effects. During this time, the surviving assassins attempt to flee in a ship's lifeboat, bound for Pericy's Isle.

### Day Twenty: Battle!

On day twenty, the ship arrives at Pericy's Isle, an island discovered by Captain Pericy on his second voyage to the New Lands. If the Haratese warship, the *Hippocampus*, has not met the *Pearl* in battle before now, it will do so here, since the warship hides in a cove on the island.

Captain Sabatin wants to fight unless the assassins have successfully struck, in which case he'll run. He will listen to any advice that the characters offer.

Use the tactics listed for the *Hippocampus* in the *Aquatic Random Encounters* section. If the *Hippocampus* is destroyed, ignore any further encounters with the ship (do not reroll).

Pericy's Isle is inhabited by swanmays and selkies, and is a small, tranquil paradise. By agreement with the natives of the island, the Hurvan navy may use Pericy's Cove as a base, and may clear a few trees for shipwright purposes if needs dictate.

### Day 21: Bloodsea

Off the west coast of Pericy's Isle, the parts that the swanmays and the selkies stay away from, is the heart of evil in the seas. This is the region that has been given the ominous nickname of Bloodsea. It is appropriate.

This area is on a flat undersea plate, although several rifts cleave these aquatic plains. The average depth of this area is 150 feet, which is marginally tolerable for diving.

The Bloodsea map indicates the places where encounters may be found. For random encounters, roll 2d10 and check the *Bloodsea Random Encounters* table. To attack the kraken, or to salvage treasure from the ocean floor, it will be necessary to enter the water.

#### Bloodsea Random Encounters

Roll Encounter

- 2 Water Weird
- 3 Wereshark
- 4 Ixitxachtl
- 5 Squid, Giant
- 6 Shark, Giant
- 7 Scrag (Marine Troll)
- 8 Sahuagin
- 9 Sea Horse
- 10 Whale
- 11 Shark
- 12 Ray, Sting
- 13 Demon, Type 11 (Hezrou)
- 14 Lacedon (Ghoul)
- 15 Kopoacanth (Gargoyle)
- 16 Hippocampus
- 17 Octopus
- 18 Kraken
- 19 Morkoth
- 20 Verme

Refer to *Aquatic Random Encounters* for statistics on the wereshark, ixitxachtl, giant squid, giant shark, scrag, sahuagin, whale, shark, Type 11 Demon, and the kraken. See triton encounter for hippocampus statistics. Remaining Bloodsea encounters are detailed below.

**2. Water Weird** (1): AC 4; Move 12"; HD 3+ 3; hp 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12; THAC0 16; SA drowning; SD weapon immunities; AL CE; XP 442.

**3 - 8.** See *Aquatic Random Encounters*

**9. Sea Horse** (5): AC 7; Move 21"; HD 3; hp 18, 15, 14, 12, 9; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; THAC0 16; AL N; XP 372.

**10 - 11.** See *Aquatic Random Encounters*

**12. Ray, Sting** (3): AC 7; Move 9"; HD 1; hp 6, 4, 2; #AT 1; Ding 1-3; THAC0 19; SA poison; SD camouflage; AL N; XP 282.

**13.** See *Aquatic Random Encounters*

**14. Lacedon (Ghoul)** (11): AC 6; Move 9" HD 2; hp 14,13 (x2),12, 10, 8 (x2), 7 (x2), 6, 4; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; THAC0 16; SA paralysis; SD various spell immunities; AL CE; XP 919, These lacedons are in the service of Gastion.

**15. Kopoacanth (Gargoyles)** (5): AC 5; Move 9" 1115"; HD 4 +4; hp 27,22, 21, 18, 12; #AT 4; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4; THAC0 15; SD + 1 or better weapon to hit; AL CE; XP 1,325. These kopoacanth are in the service of Gastion.

**16.** See *Aquatic Random Encounters*

**17. Octopus** (1): AC 7; Move 3"/12"; HD 8; hp 44; #AT 7; Ding 1-4 (x6)/2-13; THAC0 12; SA constriction; SD ink; AL N (E); XP 990.





### 18. See *Aquatic Random Encounters*

**19. Morkoth (1):** AC 3; Move 18"; HD 7; hp 29; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; THAC0 13; SA charm, hypnosis; SD spell reflection; AL CE; XP 1,282. The morkoth is in the service of Gastion.

**20. Verme (1):** AC 3/5; Move 18"; HD 18 +18; hp 109; #AT 1; Ding 7-28; THAC0 7; SA swallow whole; SD resistant to edged weapons, fire; AL N; XP 11,275.

Those characters who venture underwater should be made to realize the limitations of underwater combat beforehand. If the players do not already know, then someone—an experienced sailor perhaps, or Baldrin if he decided to accompany the party—will explain the limitations to the group in careful terms. Likewise, Hurvan mages may instruct the magic-users about the differences between normal and underwater spell-casting, and they may have access to a spell-alterations chart at the DM's option.

### Bloodsea Fixed Encounters

All encounters are keyed to the Bloodsea map.

### B9. Squid and Shipwreck

This is the final resting place of the *Duty*, a Hurvan merchant ship, which brought back goods from the New Lands. It lies amid a bed of coral and tangled seaweed vines.

The ship contains a giant squid, which views the ruptured carcass as its home and its territory, which it will fiercely defend against interlopers.

**Giant Squid (1):** AC 7/3; Move 3"/18"; HD 12; hp 65; #AT 9; Dmg 1-6 (x8)/5-20; THAC0 9; SA constriction; SD ink; AL N; XP 3,040.

The ship is filled with three huge chests: a chest filled with 4,000 gp worth of gold and 12,000 gp worth of mithril, a chest filled with 350 pearls worth 35,000 gp, and 10,000 gp in platinum ore, and a third chest filled with wooden artifacts, masks and carvings from a New World native tribe, worth about 100 gp if resold.

### B14. Kraken's Lair

If the *Pearl* enters hexes A13, A14, B13, B14, B15, C14, or C15, they will be attacked by the kraken. See *Aquatic Random Encounters* for its statistics.

The kraken's lair is located in a deep rift in the ocean floor, through which bubbles of steam emerge at sporadic intervals. The water pressure, perhaps due to the casting of many *airy water* spells, is tolerable in these normally crushing depths to creatures native to the shallows, and even humans. The lair is a large complex of vents and blowholes, with pillow lava boulders

scattered along the basalt seabed as a reminder to the kraken that there are powers even greater than his...

The entrance is guarded by a sahuagin war party and a pair of scrag. A large net is suspended along the downward passage, waiting to trap creatures who try to enter the vent (see DMG p 56). The guards are as follows.

**Chieftain (1):** AC 4; Move 12"/24"; HD 4 + 4; hp 26; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; THAC0 15; AL LE; XP 260.

**Lieutenants (5):** AC 5; Move 3"/18"; HD 3 + 3; hp 23, 20, 18, 17, 15; #AT 1; Ding by weapon type; THAC0 16; AL LE; XP 799.

The chieftain and one of the guards is armed with crossbow and dagger; the other four (who work with the nets) wield spear and dagger. They also have several shark guards.

**Sharks (3):** AC 6; Move 24"; HD 8; hp 51, 40, 38; #AT 1; Ding 3-12; THAC0 12; AL N; XP 2,475.

**Scrag (Marine Trolls) (2):** AC 1; Move 3"/12"; HD 6 +12; hp 48, 43; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/9-16; THAC0 13; SD regeneration; AL CE; XP 2,892.

Down in the vent two of the kraken's pet giant sharks guard about fifty ex-sailors, 0-level humans who work in an *airy water* area, expanding some of the tunnels to relieve the pressure and vent the steam so that an eruption will be less likely to take place. They also serve as appetizers for the kraken. The humans work in a state of shock, almost resembling zombies.

**Giant Shark (2):** AC 5; Move 18"; HD 15; hp 77, 69; #AT 1; Dmg 6-24; THAC0 8; SA swallowing whole; AL N; XP 10,820.

In a faraway vent, guarded by a curtain of bubbling water which does 4-16 points of heat damage if passed through, are five metal chests. The first chest contains 200 uncut emeralds, worth 200,000 gp when cut, and silver sculptures worth 20,000 gp. The second chest contains 3,000 gp in gold ore. The third chest contains a bar of adamantite worth 25,000 gp and 4,000 pieces of silver (200 gp). The fourth chest contains a magical wooden mask which radiates a protection from evil 10' radius continuously (this has a resale value of 10,000 gp, and an X.P. value of 1,200), and several other nonmagical wooden carving worth 500 gp, wrapped in otter pelts worth 4,000 gp. The final chest contains a scroll which reads "The bargain is sealed," signed "T". The page is inscribed with an albatross, the symbol of Terrigant. There are also 3,000 gp here.

### C12. Ixitxachtl's Wreck

This is the resting place of the good ship *Basilisk*; Rogg the cook, who served on it, calls it the "Mother of Pearl" due to its similarity to his current vessel. It rests on jagged coral. Unfortunately, it is currently being explored by a war party of *ixitxachtl* who have just finished a skirmish against the sahuagin for control of this ship. There are many dead forms floating in the water and blood is everywhere. Note that this is likely to attract sharks to the area.

**Ixitxachtl (22):** AC 6; Move 12"; HD 1 + 1; hp 8, 7 (x2), 6 (x3), 5 (x4), 4 (x6), 3 (x5), 1; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; THAC0 18; AL CE; XP 860.

**Vampiric Ixitxachtl (1):** AC 6; move 12-; HD 2 + 2; hp 17; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; THAC0 16; SA energy drain; SD regenerate; AL CE; XP 341.

The *Basilisk's* hold has been emptied except for a single secret compartment in its broken hold. This compartment contains a chest with 20,000 gp worth of platinum.

### E7. Scrag Lair

The ocean floor in this area is home to a family of scrag who roam the seas in a large radius looking for food. This is the source of marine trolls that guard the kraken's lair; there is an 85% chance that only Scrag #2 and #4 will be in the lair.

**Scrag (Marine Trolls) (4):** AC 1; Move 3"/12"; HD 6 + 12; hp 48, 45, 43, 33; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/9-16; THAC0 13; SA regeneration; AL CE; XP 5,628.

This area contains treasure stolen from sunken ships: 2,000 gp and 10 gems worth 1,000 gp each.

### E14. Sahuagin's Wreck

This ship, the *Coriolis*, is a large warship that was escorting a treasure ship when it was sunk by the kraken. This ship is now being searched by a sahuagin war party, which has beaten off one of a series of *ixitxachtl* attacks.

The party is led by a sahuagin baron who wields a glowing trident. There are three lieutenants, a cleric, twelve warriors, and three sharks. The lieutenants use trident, net and dagger, the cleric uses a spear and dagger, four warriors use trident and net, three wield spear and dagger and the last five are using heavy crossbow and dagger.

**Sahuagin Baron (1):** AC 3; Move 12"/24"; HD 6 + 6; hp 37; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 + 2; THAC0 11; AL LE; XP 646. He carries a *trident* +2

**Cleric (1):** AC 5; Move 12"/24"; HD 4 + 4 (C 4); hp 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; THAC0 16; AL LE; XP 260. Spells:



Level 1: *Command, curse, protection from good*

Level 2: *Chant, silence 15' radius*

Lieutenants (3): AC 5; Move 12"/24"; HD 3 + 3; hp 20,18,17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; THAC0 16; AL LE; XP 475.

Sahuagin (12): AC 5; Move 12"/24"; HD 2 + 2; hp 16, 13, 11 (x2), 10 W), 9 (x2), 8, 7, 4; #AT 1; Dmg By weapon type; THAC0 16; AL LE; XP 775.

Sharks (3): AC 6; Move 24"; HD 8; hp 50, 43, 39; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; THAC0 12; AL N; XP 2,435.

The remains of the ship contain a pair of scrolls, preserved in a water-tight leather and bone scroll case. One is a mage's *fireball* scroll, with *fireball* (x4) at 10th level inscribed on it. The other is a confidential letter, which reads as follows.

*"Galthrin, you are to lose yourself on the isle, and S. shall send a small boat for you. Keep strong, and the power of Lords shall be yours, the rulers of Hurva.*

*-Malanastra"*

Galthrin was the ship's mage, who died in the sinking of the Coriolis. Malanastra (illusionist, 7th level) is well-known as Saladar's right-hand man. Malanastra was the hooded man who hired the assassins.

Other than these items, there is no treasure.

### H11. Wereshark Lair

This place is the lair for the wereshark listed on the *Aquatic Random Encounters* table. The lair is a section where the ocean floor has collapsed, and there are short but wide tunnels leading into the treasure chamber. The lair is guarded at all times by four sharks,

Sharks (4): AC 6; Move 24"; HD 6; hp 36, 30, 28, 26; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; THAC0 13; AL N; XP 1,320.

### L6. Vampire Mage

This lair is in a cave along the wall of a great underwater cliff. The entrance is guarded by the morkoth (see *Bloodsea Random Encounters*).

If the characters get past the morkoth, they will find upon entering the cave that there are seven colored buttons on the wall. The buttons are each a different color of the spectrum. If the correct four-color code sequence is entered (Yellow, Green, Indigo, Blue), then the party will be *teleported* to Gastion, the under-water vampire-mage. The *ixitxachtl* nobles know the correct sequence; it is possible to obtain it from them via *telepathy*, *ESP*, or similar means (see *Bloodsea Fixed Encounters*, C 12).

The teleportal chamber sends the characters to long corridor, framed by statues of lamias holding jars. The floor is as smooth as pearl; everything is elegant, although impossible to see without light.

This corridor leads to Gastion's meeting room. The passage is unguarded, and a *wall of force* is in the door-way to the meeting room. There is another set of seven colored buttons; the series Red, Yellow, Blue, and Violet is required to pass. *Dispel magic* against the 14th-level *wall of force* will also be effective. The *ixitxachtl* nobles also know this code.

Gastion is in the meeting room; he appears to be a cross between a human and a sahuagin, with mannish features but deep blue skin. He tells the characters to leave and return only when they receive an invitation. If the adventurers refuse to go, or if they don't leave immediately, Gastion attacks.

Gastion: AC 4; MV //12"; HD 8 + 3; hp 53; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; THAC0 12; SA energy drain, charm, summon (see below); ST) +1 or better weapon to hit, regenerate (3/round), water form, limited immunity to mental spells; AL CE; XP 4,836. Gastion knows the following spells.

Level 1: *Alarm, magic missile, sleep, taunt*

Level 2: *ESP mirror image, vocalize*

Level 3: *Dispel magic, hold person, lightning bolt*

Level 4: *Dimension door, polymorph self*

Note these special changes in Gastion in marine vampire form. He is not affected by running water, but is affected by blowing air (wind) in the same way that his vulnerability to water used to affect him. He can turn himself into liquid rather than a *gaseous* form, and in this form cannot be struck by weapons. However, a *transmute water to dust* spell cast on him in water form inflicts 3-19 *permanent* hit points damage. He is affected by holy water, and his *summoning* brings 2-8 lesser sea *wolves* outdoors, and 5-30 normal lampreys indoors. It still requires 2-12 rounds for summoned creatures to appear.

Gastion attempts to *charm* rather than kill; he will send his new "friends" after his enemies, such as the kraken and its minions. If hard pressed, he turns to liquid form and flees his lair. He has secondary coffins located in vents under the ocean floor.

If the meeting room is examined, the party will find a hollow statue containing 30,000 gp in gems in a box marked "Coriolis.,

If the Pearl was destroyed during the adventure, and survivors can stay adrift, they will wash ashore on Pericy's Isle. There will be a wreck available on the isle that the selkies will help make seaworthy for the characters.

On the voyage back to Hurva, rolls must still be made on the *Aquatic Random Encounters* table. Creatures that were killed should be ignored. Two days from Hurva, however, there is an attack. If the *Kraken*, the pirate ship, has not already attacked the *Pearl*, it will do so here. Use the guidelines in the *Aquatic Random Encounters* section for tactics

If the characters are captured, they are sold into slavery and put into use on Haratense galleys. If the characters win, they are two days from Hurva, and may have the evidence to prove that Saladar is a traitor.

Upon entering Istur, the westernmost (and safest) Hurvan port, the ship is met by a mysterious messenger: the same woman who attempted to slip a message to the party at the masque. She is Sharella, a beautiful, proud-spirited daughter of a noble Hurvan family, and lady-in-waiting to Juril. She asks to see the party leader, the fighter regarded as party spokesman by the king. She brings disturbing news.

Since the group's departure, King Gerdant has fallen grievously ill. The physics and clerics are able to do nothing. Saladar has been named regent, and the Chancellor, Kalros, has been arrested for allegedly placing a curse on the king. Princess Juril has been imprisoned to keep her from fleeing while Saladar attempts to force the ill king to give her to him in marriage, which would ensure Saladar's grasp on the Hurvan throne. Sharella will ask the party's help in rescuing the princess, which will keep Saladar from claiming his prize.

At this point, the ship is greeted by militia of 30 0-level troops, led by a third-level fighter wearing the royal emblem. He says they have been commanded by the king, through his regent Saladar, to offer thanks and escort the party and the treasure to the king, where his regent Saladar shall use the treasure to pay the king's debts.

If the characters refuse, they will have a fight on their hands. If they have proof of Saladar's treason, Sharella will lead the characters into the royal palace. There, they may present their accusations to the king, who is sick but well enough to understand their implications and act upon them.

The castle is guarded by 50 0-level fighters, 20 1st-level squires, and 5 knights loyal to Saladar: Sir Royce (CAV 8, LE), Sir Drayl (CAV

## The Voyage Home



7, LN (E)), Sir Brice (CAV 7, LN (E)), Sir Raigant (CAV 5, LN), and Sir Pascolis (CAV 5, LE). Also, Pharas, the royal mage, is now supporting Saladar. Guards loyal to the king have been accused of being in league with the "traitorous" chancellor, and have been replaced by those amenable to Saladar.

If the characters sneak in and contact the king, Saladar denies the accusations and says that if he is to be accused of a crime, let him defend himself as is his right-in trial by combat against the fighter/leader of the party. The king will then (with a cough) tell the party leader that he has two options: withdraw the accusation, and abase himself before Saladar in a manner of the knight's choosing, or fight him to the death in a sacred duel before the power of Estereal ("before whose five eyes there can be no secrets"), knowing that Saladar is the best swordsman in Hurva.

The duel is fought in the royal courtyard, an exception for duels of this sort. The priest of Estereal performs a rite of truth, and the contest begins.

This is a fight that good must win, and Estereal is not ignoring this combat, although his ways are subtle. Saladar will fight at -2 to hit and -2 on all damage rolls, while the DM should secretly add +2 to hit and +2 to all damage rolls for the PC. If the character is still at a great disadvantage against Saladar, one of his wounds will close in battle, with an effect as a cure critical wounds spell. Also, tell the player that his character feels supremely confident, as if the knowledge of his righteousness gives him a power he has never known before.

If Saladar is losing, he will cheat. His guards fire on the hero, and mayhem breaks loose. Saladar attempts to flee. All of the party members should be engaged in the upheaval except the hero, so he may pursue Saladar and continue their contest in private.

When Saladar is slain, Pharas will change sides and begin attacking the enemies of the king, claiming that "Saladar forced my betrayal." Several knights will advance on the sick king, trying to slay him; it will be up to the characters to defend him.

At the end of the fight, either the King or Princess Juril (if the King is slain) will award the party with deserved honors. The treasure will be split fairly; royal treasurers collected it while the party was occupied with Saladar, just to make certain that greed doesn't rear its ugly head. The characters will be given titles and lands belong to the traitor knights, If any

character is so inclined, Sharella is available for marriage.

Terrigant, however, will be upset. General Keath will not be happy at being upstaged by a pack of barbarians. Things will remain interesting, and that's how they should be.

Special thanks to Kathy Luzzi for inspirational material.





This adventure is recommended for four to six characters of 4th to 8th level. The scenario is divided into two sections that can each be played in four to six hours.

## DM's Information

The idyllic, peaceful woods on the western shore of Lake Shimmerlight, a half-day's journey north of the village of Tristor in the Esterland Foothills, has recently gained an ill reputation. Strange new plants and twisted versions of common foliage have been reported by those few who returned from hunting trips near its edge. No one is sure of what is causing the bizarre change, though there are many speculations.

This grove has become the domain of a mad druid who calls himself Baron Orchid. His odd experiments with plant life have transformed this graceful grove into a nightmare land. He shuns people, caring only for his solitude and his creations. The townsfolk are unaware of his existence, and only another recluse or another traveler may have even heard of the Baron, who was exiled from southern lands for his cruel reign.

Once the heroes have been motivated to explore the Weird Woods they will first encounter the outdoor environs of this fearsome forest. Upon reaching the heart of the grove, they will discover the druid's tower and will seek to confront Baron Orchid himself. Where the story goes from here is up to the DM. The DM may ensure that Baron Orchid flees at the end after being severely trounced by the heroes, so that he may return another day to exact his vengeance. Alternatively, the DM may reward the heroes by presenting clues and motivations to a new adventure, such as a treasure map, a prisoner to return home, or a new mystery to solve. Whatever the choice, there is still plenty of adventure left if the DM wishes to make the heroes struggle to escape the Weird Woods or to return it to normal through some plot device of the DM's own creation.

## Notes About Forest Encounters

This forest does not just contain deadly challenges; there are many neutral but bizarre plants as well as beneficial phenomenon, if the heroes can only sort the good from the bad. A *Wandering Monster Encounter Table* and a master table for all monster statistics appears in the center of this adventure.

There is no map for traveling through the weird woods. This adventure is designed so that the heroes will have eight different encounters

before they reach the heart of the woods. The DM may select these encounters by choice, or he may roll random-dy to select the order of the numbered encounters in the *Weird Woods Encounters* below. Each result adjusts subsequent die rolls by adding a cumulative die roll modifier. Plant statistics are given in the *Combined Monster Statistics table*. Once these eight encounters have occurred, you may then proceed with the Druid's Tower. This free form of adventuring permits the player characters to choose their own route while guaranteeing a challenging adventure that cannot be avoided.

## The Adventure

Here are several ways you may introduce this scenario into your campaign.

**1. A Plea for Help.** An innocent farmer from the area approaches the heroes with a plea for help. His daughter, who has proven headstrong, took a liking to a man who was part of a band of adventurers. Despite her father's plea, she seemed determined to go against his will, and disappeared a week ago. The band had boasted that they were going to solve the mystery of the Weird Woods. His daughter had white-blond hair and a cross-shaped locket. The farmer can not offer much of a reward, only a couple of gold pieces and a prize boar. The daughter actually eloped with a local boy and will turn up one week later.

**2. Vendetta.** Baron Orchid has developed a vendetta against one of the player characters, either because this character is also a druid or because the character is unknowingly in line for the baron's title. Orchid, in disguise, asks around town about his foe, and word gets back to the heroes. Then he pulls several harmless but unnerving pranks followed by warnings for the heroes to get out of town and not come back. These pranks could include framing the characters for a theft, ransacking their rooms while they are gone and leaving a tanglevine surprise package for them, getting the heroes caught in a barroom brawl, or trying to bum down the inn where they are having dinner. These actions should be enough to set the heroes on Baron Orchid's track.

**3. Eerie Woods.** Use tales of the bizarre woods and hints to the heroes that whoever solves the mystery of that grove will be acclaimed champions of the village and gain much status. Or you may create other methods to motivate the characters such as punishment for a crime they were framed for, tales of one character's relative who was lost there, and so forth.

## Weird Woods General Description

The Weird Woods is a grove of wooded hills on the western shore of a clear water lake. Beechwood and cattail marshes crowd the shore, while stately pines and tall ash mantle the western quarter where it borders a ridge of rocky bluffs. Now the wood has turned dark and shadowy. Leaves carpet the ground and a thick leafy canopy screens out the sunlight. In most places, thorny brambles and briars form a treacherous undergrowth that confines most travel to a few game trails. The rustle of leaves and flitting of shadows proves the existence of some hidden woodland life. Many trees are now dark and twisted, with gnarled vines draping and strangling much of the plant life. And here and there, this dreary place is disturbed by the presence of some monstrous creation of Baron Orchid's.

The forest should be described eerily. It is filled with strange sounds and sights, or sudden silence and an odd appearance of the normal amid the twisted nightmare copse. Give the player characters reason to pause and be uncertain of what dangers lie hidden beneath the leaf mold or behind a crooked stump. The DM could even create some fear by showing the heroes the remains of an earlier adventurer caught on some thorny branches high in a tree or dangling from some unnatural plant trap. In this place, the characters' imagination should be their worst enemy.

## Weird Woods Encounters

Roll	1-2	3-5	6-0
Mod	+2	+1	-2
Enc.	Beneficial	Neutral	Hostile
2	Firebush	Giant Sunflower	Hangman Tree
3	Topiary Plant	Walking Stick	Praying Mantis
4	Oblivix	Glue Moss	Lure Lichen
5	Lime Path	Coral Bells	Humming Leaves
6	Cattails	Snake Grass	<i>Living Pool</i>
7	Ironwood	Thistles	Vampire Vines
8	Termite Towers	Giant Dandelion	Spear Grass
9	Wormwort	Tangle Vines	Man Trap

**Using this table:** Roll 1d10 for type of encounter. Modifiers are cumulative for subsequent rolls. Roll 1d8 or select specific



encounter in appropriate column. Numbers 2 -9 to the left of the table refer to the number of the encounter description in the text.

**1. Warning**

Read boxed information to the characters.

The gently rolling hills and light forest are replaced by twisted, blackened woods and dark draping shadows. This must be the verge of the Weird Woods. As you walk, you pass crudely carved signs. The first sign says, "No Trespassing!" The second notes "Deadly Hazards Lye Ahead!" The last one is festooned with dead birds and a broken sword. It reads, "I'd Turn Back if I Were You!"

**2-B. Fire Bush**

Here is a cluster of fernlike bushes whose foliage is turning gold and russet, the color of flame. If one of these bushes is treated roughly it will burst into flame, causing 1d8 points of damage each round. The fire lasts for one turn and then dies out, turning the bush into a dried brown husk.

Tiny berries grow along the fronds of these bushes. If the party observes a bush for one full turn, they will see a bird alight on a branch and eat some of the berries. After a moment something will startle the bird and it will thrash in the bush, causing it to burst into flames-but the bird will be unharmed. Fresh berries bestow the equivalent of a *resist fire* spell for one turn after being eaten, but they lose their potency in 12 hours. Further, these berries only work once a day per creature.

**2-N. A Ray of Sunshine**

Ahead, the forest seems to clear, for sunlight can be seen streaming though the woods.

This is actually a stand of six transformed sunflowers. The sunflowers send forth a ray of light equivalent to sunlight and warm the clearing in which they grow. If a creature attempts to harm the sunflowers, they spit exploding seeds at their attacker at the rate of four per flower per round. Each blossom has 24 seeds. Once a blossom is cut it continues to glow for one hour and then will wilt and die. A flower will also wilt if it fires all of its seeds.

**2-H. Garroting Grove**

The leafy bowers thicken and the shade beneath these branches is a cool, bluegray hue.

Tough vines lace the branches, adding shades of red and gold to the verdant mantle. Pale yellow flowers growing on the forest floor dot the gloom like pools of candlelight. The flowers appear to shift and sway as you pass.

A hangman tree lurks here in the guise of a spreading oak. It will wait till the characters are distracted by the blossoms to silently attack the character in the rear of the party, lifting him into the shade of the leaves overhead. This monster only has six noose 'es' and once these are destroyed it will play dead. The creature holds no treasure, but buried beneath a hummock of leaf mold within ten yards of the trunk is a cache of banded mail in an oiled sack, a silver dagger, a pouch of five amethysts (100 gp each), and a flask of sweet oil. It is good for lubrication, but does not bum well.

**3-B. Topiary Plant**

Here is an oddity among the wilds, a small thorny bush trimmed to resemble a dog. This is actually a living creature and if the party looks away, when they look back the bush appears to have moved, although at the moment it is motionless.

This is a topiary plant, a strange scavenger that can adopt the shape of anything it consumes, gaining 1 hit point per hit die of its prey. The plant's hit dice equal one-fourth of its hit points. A topiary plant may grow no larger than 0 hit dice. It takes one turn for a topiary plant to alter its shape. This plant is non-aggressive, preferring dead prey to living. Its thorns exude a weak poison (save at + 4 to avoid its effects).

Any druid with a *speak with plants* spell may befriend this plant for one day.

**3-N. Walking Stick**

Against a vine-covered tree leans an eight-foot tall bare wood staff. There is no sign of its owner.

If the characters look away, when they look back the staff will have moved. This is a giant walking stick, a relative of the praying mantis, but not nearly as aggressive as one. It moves if touched, standing up and waving its four forelegs. If unmolested, it then walks away. If the creature is attacked, it retreats into a stand of tall grasses from which it can fight using cover and gaining +2 on initiative,

**3-H. Praying Mantis**



At last the forest thins and there is a return to the natural green hue of leaves, in contrast to the blue-green of the weird woods, Small leafy saplings, tall ferns and dwarf dogwood grace the copse.

Hiding within this copse is a giant praying mantis. It has disguised itself by pasting leaves to its carapace and standing stock still. When this mantis at last attacks, it is lightning swift and quiet. If threatened with flame or in dire straights, it leaps into the air and flies further into the woods in the direction the party is traveling, carrying any prey it can catch in its deadly embrace.

**4-B. Lost Spells**

You hear a thrashing ahead in the underbrush. As you approach the noise, you find a small deer with its antlers caught in the brambles. The animal is covered with scratches and draped with torn vines. Black moss hangs from its antlers.

The heroes may aid the beast; if not, it will manage to free itself in three rounds. This is really a zombie deer, as will be discovered on closer examination. The moss between its antlers is a patch of obliviax moss that has drained a 5th level magic-user. It will attack only if the party approaches within 60 feet. If the heroes approach too closely, the moss attacks also, rising up into the shape of a mossy man and casting its spells once each round, starting with the first level spells and working upwards. If the moss is grabbed and eaten by someone, that character learns and is able to cast any spells that



remain if he successfully saves vs. poison. If this character fails the save, he becomes sick for 3d6 turns and is unable to fight.

The moss knows the following spells:

Level 1: *Burning hands*, *magic missile* (x2), *sleep*

Level 2: *Knock*, *web*

Level 3: *Lightning bolt*

## 4-N. A Sticky Situation

Wind has swept the forest floor clear here and only a bed of moss forms a piecemeal carpet. Beneath a tall elm tree lies a gray mound.

The mound is the moldering remains of a decaying backpack. Inside are a mildewed travel cloak and a rolled sheaf of musty papers. The papers contain crude map scribbles, notes on adventures and personal finances, and a series of cryptic notations and sketches written on the back of a clerical scroll. The scroll has *bless*, *cure light wounds* and *neutralize poison* spells on it.

The moss growth is gluemoss, an odd variety of plant that sticks to metal, earth and animal material, but not to any plant material. This moss is securely fastened to the stony ground and anyone unfortunate enough to step on the moss becomes stuck fast. This moss will not burn, but is subject to corrosives. It has 8 hit points. A total strength of 25 points can tug an item free, but this inflicts 1d4 points of damage to stuck, bare flesh. The moss does not cover all the ground and may be cautiously stepped around, except when approaching the pack.

## 4-H. A Comely Bait

The undergrowth has thinned, and only a leafy carpet blankets the black earth of the forest floor.

There is a 1 in 6 chance each round of travel for the next 10 rounds that the lead character will fall into a leaf-filled pit. No harm will come to this person, but he must be dug out by his friends. While he is being rescued, one of the heroes sights a sleeping figure at the foot of a tree some fifty yards off the path. The figure appears to be female, with pale white hair and gown. No sounds or efforts from a distance will rouse the figure.

This is actually the lure of a deadly lichen. It has grown a part of its shape to resemble a woman. Anyone touching the woman causes it to explode into a cloud of spores, inflicting 3d8

points of damage to all within 10 feet and requiring a save vs. poison. A failure results in spore infestation similar to yellow mold. In addition, the lichen has set out rhizomes beneath the leaf cover that surround the lure for 20 yards. Anyone approaching the lure must make two saves vs. death ray when approaching or retreating. A failed save indicates that a rhizome has been triggered. The rhizome flings a spore cyst into the air that explodes, doing 1d8 points of damage to all within a 5' radius, but does not cause infestation.

Beside the lure is a cross-shaped leather locket. Within it is a long needle that has been coated with a sap that is deadly to all plants. Plants must save vs. poison at - 2 or die. The needle can only be used twice.

## 5-B. Safe Path

A pale white gravel path proceeds towards the heart of the forest for 200 paces. Its stark white ribbon forms a contrast against the green foliage, and is bare of all plant growth. As you look closer, you see that some of the plants beside the path have started to turn brown and shrivel.

This is a path of lime. It causes 1& points of damage per round to any bare flesh that comes in contact with it. This lime may be used as a weapon against plants, causing 2d4 points of damage per pouch of lime. It damages stitching and renders leather useless if kept in contact with the lime for 24 hours.

## 5-N. Coral Bells

The wind carries the distant tingle of chimes. The sound seems without source though it comes from a clearing through which the path winds. Stalks of tiny white flowers adorn the green of the tall grasses.

These are transformed coral bells that chime when blown by the wind or jostled. They overgrow the path and must be waded through. There is a 1 in 4 chance that the chiming created by the characters' passage will draw a wandering monster. If the heroes are not careful, or if they fall among the flowers, their actions may set the entire meadow to chiming loudly. All characters caught in this clamor will be deafened for a short time and will be automatically surprised by their next encounter.

## 5-H. Humming Leaves

An odd phenomena greets you as the forest opens out to a small vale. Here is a field of broad leaves that float a couple of feet above the ground. A bass humming from the vale sets the air vibrating.

These leaves appear harmless. They will part when a creature wades through them and their constant shifting in the wind reveals that nothing hides beneath their cover. However, the leaves are attracted to metal items, particularly weapons and armor. They cling to such items like a magnet and require a strength of 12 to remove two leaves per round. A stroll through the vale takes three rounds; a dash, only one. For each round a character is in the vale 1d6 leaves attach themselves to the character's items.

The humming of the items sets up a sonic aharmonic vibration that inflicts damage each round, causing one point of damage for each leaf on a metal item touched by a creature. These leaves may also be destroyed (AC 10; hp 5); cold or fire attacks cause a leaf to save vs. fire as if thin wood or fall off.

## 6-B. Cat Tale

The path wends its way beside a lake. Beyond a stand of reeds and cattails, sunlight dances off the lapping silvery waves. Here and there the path turns into puddles of leaves and mud.

Along the path are three patches of concealed quicksand. These patches are hidden by a cover of leaves floating on a puddle of water. Characters stumbling into the quicksand disappear beneath the leaf cover and sink into the quicksand. They may hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to 1/16th their Constitution, but each round thereafter must make a Constitution check at -2 per additional round or drown. For each round spent in the quicksand beneath the pool of water, a character must also make an ability check against half his Wisdom score or suffer 1d6 points of damage. Characters falling in the quicksand must be pulled free by another character.

As the heroes approach the patches of quicksand, a meow sounds from the nearby cattails in warning. The cattails will always meow when a creature approaches any natural or plant hazard within ten feet. A cattail plant and tubers may be uprooted and taken along, but can only survive for an hour after being uprooted. Cattails do not discern between friend or foe nor degree of danger, and they can only be silenced



by destroying them. This obviously can warn foes of traps and ruin surprise as well as prove beneficial to characters.

### 6-N. Snakes in the Grass

The path winds beside the lake shore past stands of reeds and floating lilies. Here and there the path turns into a patch of mud and leaves. Suddenly, you are brought to an abrupt halt by the sound of hissing and rattling that comes from a patch of segmented reeds that overgrows the path.

This is a patch of snake grass. This weird animated grassy reed bears the tiny head of a snake at its tip that hisses and curls its tongue at intruders. Anyone trying to cut a path through them will be attacked by the elongating reeds. Every time 5 points of damage is inflicted, a reed will be severed and another segment will be revealed beneath with another snake head. The snake grass injects a weak poison that causes a cumulative -1 penalty to all rolls for one day. Save vs. poison at -2 for no damage. There are 18 reeds.

### 6-H. The Living Pool

The overhead foliage thins and sunlight dances off the surface of a pond of water that languishes beside a beech grove. The water is delightfully transparent and clean where little else is in these weird woods.

The pool appears to be perhaps ten feet deep. Green algae and brown mud line the pond bed, and from this soil, small green leafy fronds float on the surface. No fish or bug swims in or on the clear water. Hidden among the weeds at the bottom of the pool a human skeleton in rusting armor may be sighted. Nearby lies an untarnished broad sword glinting silver.

This pool is actually a living predator, related to the parasitic fungi, oozes and jellies. It has the ability to change the consistency of its form from a thin syrupy liquid to a firm gel. It lures prey to drink or swim in its "water" and then attacks with pseudopods and digestive juices. Characters pulled beneath the surface of the creature not only suffer acid damage, but after the first round must make a save vs. death magic each round or suffocate.

The sword is not magical, but is perfectly balanced and coated with a silvery alloy that resists tarnish and rust.

### 7-B. Ironwood

The path twists and winds through a grove of strange, glowing, sparking brush. Spaced sporadically among the bushes are bare, spiky saplings with dark barkless limbs. Wind stirs the furry leaves of the glowing bushes, but seems to have no effect on the black saplings.

These are crackle bushes, with furry leaves, hard rubber branches and crystal roots. The action of the rubbing leaves builds up a static charge that spits and crackles along its branches. Anyone passing through the grove must make three saves vs. paralysis or suffer 1d points of electrical damage from static sparks. The static charge makes hair stand on end and fills the air with the smell of ozone.

The saplings are ironwood, and act as lightning rods, draining the static charge harmlessly into the ground through trailing metal wire roots. A sapling may be uprooted and used as a spetum; it may also be used to intercept electrical attacks as long as the roots trail into the ground and the ironwood is held with some insulating material.

### 7-N. Marshalling Thistles

The woods thin and grasses fill in the spaces on the hillside. Purple tufted thistles wave their tall stalks in the wind.

These thistles are animate and are attracted to noise. As the party crosses this hillside, the thistles become thicker and finally are detected moving to surround the party. In five rounds they crowd around the characters, trapping them. Their spines find their way even past the toughest armor and cause 1 point of damage per round. The thistles are densely packed and are difficult to hack apart. They are AC 3, each has 9 hit points, and they move 9".

Hundreds of these thistles continue to follow noises. If the party stands still and makes no noise, the thistles cease to press closer. Initially, the party is surrounded by 50 thistles; each round another 10 arrive. Only when the party outdistances them by 100 yards will the thistles stop following.

### 7-H. Vampire Vines

Trees press close to the path and form a canopy of leaves and vines. In the cool shade the smell of sweet basil and mint fill the air;

small white flowers growing on the vines glisten in the blue shadows.

Around a bend in the path, the heroes can make out a shape lying on the trail. It appears vaguely human and seems to be crawling slowly, painfully along. This is the corpse of an adventurer through which a bloodthorn, also called a vampire vine, has grown. Two other bloodthorns lurk in the trees before and behind the figure.

The bloodthorn vines erupt from the ground and the corpse's chest when he is moved. Then, while the heroes concentrate their efforts on the monster before them, the one behind attacks the rear of the party. The corpse has no treasure save for a brass chain worth 2 gp. However, in the shadow of a tree, embedded in its trunk, is an axe that has almost split the tree in half. This is an *axe of hewing*, +1/+3 vs. plants. In addition, the axe can cause as much damage to wooden structures as it does to plants.

### 8-B. Mud Towers

In a grove of thorn trees are several small nests of hardened mud, rising like towers from the branches of trees 30 feet off the ground. Each nest is two feet tall. These trees appear to be sickly and dying. Closer examination shows the trees to be riddled with holes.

These are termite nests. If a nest is carefully removed, one may be carried by the party. When one is broken open, the termites inside attack the nearest thing. If this item is made of wood, the termites bore into it and weaken the item at the rate of one turn per door-sized item. Weakened wooden structures must make a save vs. crushing blow as if made of thin wood whenever 6 points of damage per door-sized unit is inflicted. Failure to save indicates the item is broken. If the target of the attack is a creature, the victim must make a save vs. breath weapon to avoid the attack, or suffer from bites and stings for one round. The termites then proceed to the nearest sizeable wooden object. Sting victims suffer a -4 penalty to hit and saves, recovering at a rate of +1 per day or per every 4 points of damage cured.

### 8-N. Golden Field

A bittersweet odor fills the air, and the woods fall away to a field of giant golden blossoms, white downy puffs, and sprawling sawtoothed



leaves. The other grasses and brush are dwarfed and strangled by these giant weeds.

This is a field of giant dandelions. Jostling the stems of a plant or the impact of a sudden wind will fill the air with a shower of floating tassels. Three tassels will support the weight of a man like a parachute, but each tassel is fragile and easily damaged. Giant butterflies flit overhead, dancing from flower to flower to drink their nectar. While crossing the field by clambering over the leafy fronds and around the translucent hollow stems, the heroes encounter a large green branch that is actually the back of a giant caterpillar. The caterpillar attacks anyone walking across its back. This insect suffers double damage from cold-and firebased attacks.

## 8-H. Gantlet Run

The path has turned to parallel a stream on one side and a stony bluff on the other. The trail twists around looming rocky outcroppings. Tall stands of bamboo-like growth stretch along the trail's edges, lending a tenuous footing in the rocky sod. You notice that it has become uncommonly quiet for some time. Approximately 60 yards ahead, the path descends to ford the creek, which has drawn very near. A companion's foot slips and there is a loud crack of a snapping branch. The sound of rustling arises from one grove of bamboo-like plants near the stream-and then a spearlike object is flung to land, point first, in the path before you.

This cluster of spear grass is but one of several that line the bank the heroes have walked along for several minutes. The plants track by sound and then communicate with others of their kind using a rustling language. The party has just passed within short range of this cluster and it has flung one spear in an attempt to elicit more noise. Then the spear grass will alert the rest of the clusters to the presence of prey. Once alerted,



the way back will become a gantletrun of deadly missiles. Ahead, beyond the stream, there are no more stands of spear grass, and the characters will be out of range in two or three rounds.

Spear grass clusters have 24 missiles that they may fling four at a time, and another 12 immature stalks that may be used in melee with any creatures that attack it. The spears are attached to a thin hollow filament through which the plant may suck body fluids once prey is impaled, draining an additional I& points each round. These stalks are replaced at the rate of 12 a week

There are three clusters of spear grass within range of the stream crossing. The streambed is littered with 150 platinum coins that may be picked up at the rate of 10 coins a round. There are also three rubies worth 150 gp, 275 gp and 650 gp. It requires two round of searching to find one ruby.

## 9-B. Wormwort

The ground ahead is covered with a sickly gray mantle of slime. The reek of decay fills the air.

Anyone coming in contact with the slime suffers 2d4 points of damage from its acidic secretions. If the heroes examine the patch, they will sight an odd, barren, gnarled plant that sits to one side of the slime patch. Warty and woody, the growth occasionally writes at the spread of the slime and squirts a clear liquid. Where this fluid touches the slime, the ooze turns crystal clear and soaks into the ground like water.

This wormwort plant may be dug up and carried with the party, but it will live only 24 hours after being uprooted. Once every three turns, the plant excretes its fluid, which can *neutralize poison* or *cure disease* caused by a plant on one creature if applied within one turn of the secretion.

## 9-N. All Tangled Up

Thin vines with waxy leaves trail across the downhill slope and drape the trees to either side. Odd bushes of bluegray foliage coil and twist about themselves here and there. Strange corkscrew buds droop on long curling runners from them.

The vines seem innocuous enough, though a bit oily. Nothing untoward happens when they are touched. However, this slippery ivy excretes a very slippery oil, so that anyone walking



among them must make a Dexterity check or slip and fall sliding toward the tangled bushes.

The bushes are tanglevines. Any character who touches these bushes or falls into them will be swiftly bound by the flailing vines. This effect is equal to a double-strength *entangle* spell. A tanglevine bud starts to sprout in five segments after being exposed to body heat, forming a ten-foot wide barrier of halfstrength tanglevines. It takes five rounds to cut someone free of a tanglevine. Oil from the slippery ivy or from some other source will free a character in 1 round. Fire and alcohol will destroy the vines, but the victim will suffer half damage from the fire.

## 9-H. Mantrap

The trees tower like mighty giants here, and giant ferns, reeds and blue-tailed flies have transformed the woods into something from an ancient time. Only bell-shaped violet blossoms break the monotony here and there. A sweet, cloying scent fills the air.

The giant flies buzz about the party's heads annoyingly. They land on shoulders, arms and hats in search of some food. The flies can be driven off by flame, smoke, or a strong repellant odor, but not before one steals some small item, such as a cap. This fly will lead the PCs on a crazy chase through the prehistoric forest, alighting again and again. It will eventually perch near a mantrap.

The stalks of blossoms mark the locations of several mantrap plants. Anyone approaching within 60' of one of these plants must make a save vs. poison or become fascinated by the odor. Such individuals will hallucinate, viewing





the plants as offering a safe refuge, and will unwittingly proceed to he down in one of the large leafy traps. A victim must be rescued by comrades, as he will be unable to free himself.

One of the leafy traps of the mantrap which attacks the party already holds earlier prey. Thrusting out from the leaf trap is a man's hand. If the trap is opened, only dissolved jelly remains of the victim. His gear is in various states of decay, including fragments of parchment and leather armor, corroded metal weapon hafts, and melted gold. Only a soapy gray stone seems to have survived the acids. The stone is actually the remains of a partially dissolved potion bottle, and within its hollow middle is a potion of neutralize poison.

### 10. The Final Challenge

At last, the forest falls away before a stony bluff into a large clearing of baked earth. Blending into the cliff face is a gray stone tower, nearly 100 feet tall leaning against the bluff in the center of the 100 yard wide clearing. Ivy trails up its side, past several narrow windows; at a height of 40 feet, the cliff splits behind the tower into a steep canyon. Black clouds rumble overhead, and the wind blows clouds of dust across the barren hillside.

There is a wooden door at the base of the tower but it is shut. Once the characters leave the shelter of the trees, rain starts to fall and lightning crackles earthward to pock the hillside every round. Baron Orchid has used a scroll to summon weather. Each round one random

character in the open will be attacked by a lightning bolt with a THAC0 of 16. If the lightning hits, it causes 6d6 points of damage, though a save vs. paralysis will reduce this to half damage. The wooden door is locked.

### Wandering Monster Encounters

This list of wandering monsters is provided as a further aid to the DM. It should not be used during the initial exploration of the Weird Woods unless the heroes are avoiding most of the combat encounters. Monster statistics are given on the Combined Monster Statistics table.

**1. Giant Ants/Bees (2-8):** If the encounter takes place near water, fields of flowers or near the stony bluffs where a hive may be hidden, the encounter is with curious giant bees. Otherwise, use warrior ants searching for food.

**2. Barkburr (1):** This woody giant limpet grows on trees disguised as a bole. When a target passes within 20 feet it will spring to attack and attaches itself to its victim.

**3. Slicer Beetle (1-3):** These beetles lie buried beneath the leaf mold.

**4. Black Willow (1):** The deceptive black willow assumes the shape of a log bridge, a tree that has toppled across the path, or of a weeping willow.

**5. Giant Dragonfly (1-4):** Typically found beside the water and in fields.

**6. Giant Mouse (1):** This creature is 20 feet long and is scavenging for roots, berries and seeds. It should appear to menace the party in its curiosity, but retains the demeanor of mice of normal size, scurrying about and over everything.

**7. Snapper Saw (1):** This plant is hidden among the ferns that grow beneath the woodland

canopy.

**8. Strangle Vine (1):** This plant is found growing up a cliff face or draping a tree. The trunk is usually hidden at least 20 feet above the ground.

**9. Wolf-in-Sheep's-Clothing (1):** This deadly plant has adapted the shape of its lure into one of several forms: a crying child, a very intelligent bird who carefully watches the party and caws at them, a spinning, colorful top, or a wriggling sack.

**10. Zombie Animal (1-3):** The DM may pick the specific type to use; statistics for five types of zombie animals have been provided. These animals have been slain and reanimated by a dread fungus that each had eaten. They retain a semblance of their original habits, and harass trespassers in an effort to protect the woods.

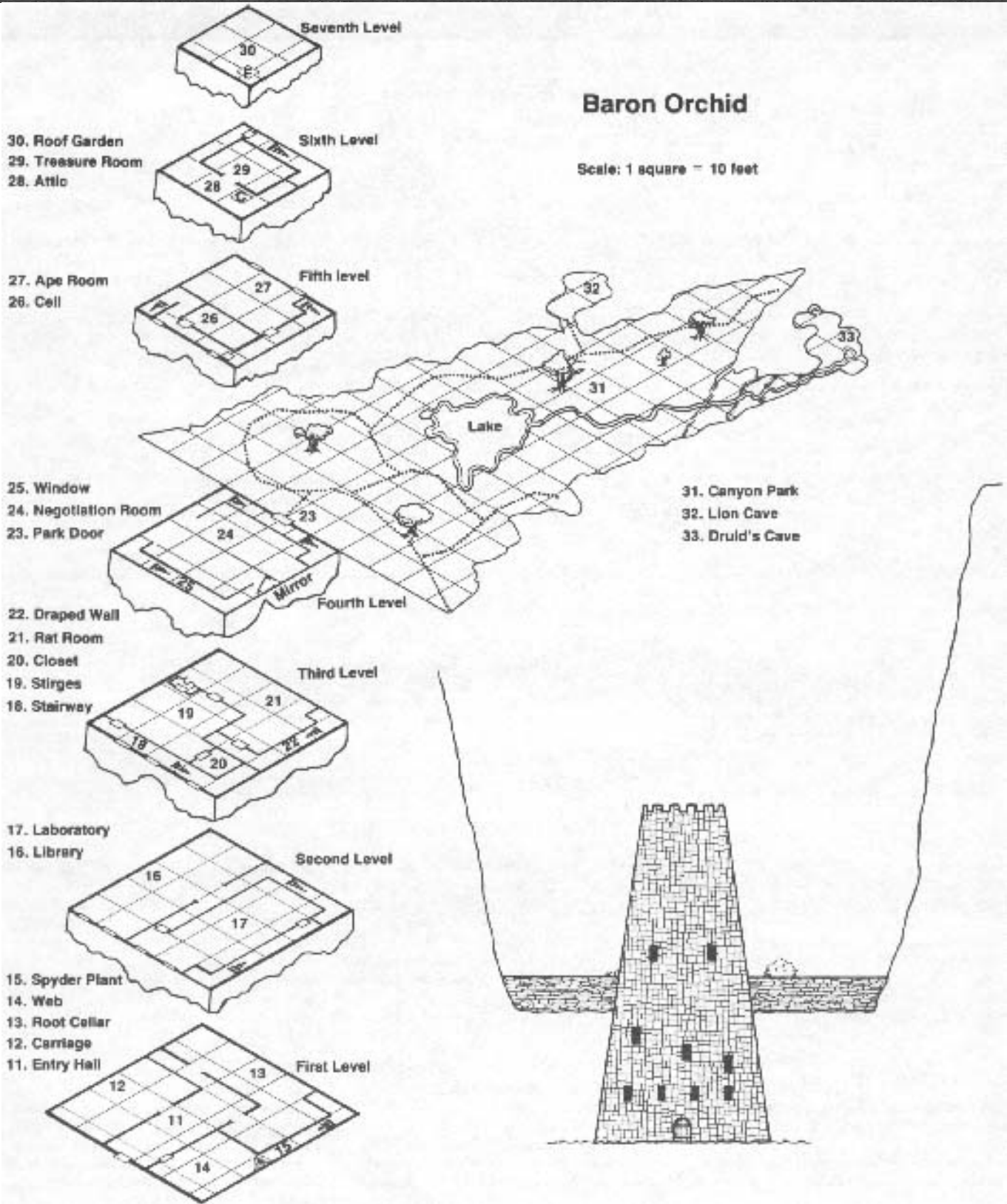


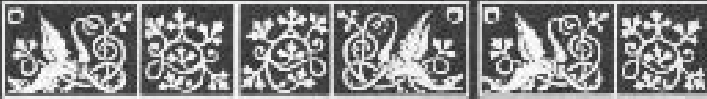
# The Weird Woods of Baron Orchid



## Baron Orchid

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet





## The Weird Woods of Baron Orchid

Name	AC	MV	HD	hp	#AT	Dmg	SA	SD	AL	THAC0	BOOK
Ant, Giant	3	18	3	13	1	2-8	Poison (+3-12)	Nil	N	16	M1-7
Ape, Carnivorous	6	12	5	25	3	1-4/14/1-8	Rend (1-8)	Nil	N	15	M1-8
Ape, Giant	6	12	10	50	3	2-8/2-8/2-16	Rend (2-16)	Nil	N	10	Orchid
Barkburr	0	20'	4	18	1	1	Turns to wood	Mental Immunity	N	15	M2-14
Bee, Giant	5	12/30	4+2	20	1	1-4	Poison (- 1 save)	Nil	N	15	M2-17
Beetle, Slicer	3	6	6	27	1	2-16	Severs on 19-20	Nil	N	13	M2-17
Black Willow	2	1/4	13	65	8	1-4 each	See book	Regenerates 1 pt/turn	N (E)	9	M2-126
Bloodthorn	3/4	0	10 45/8	6	2-5	Drains 25% hp		Nil	N	16	M2-18
Caterpillar, Giant	7	9	13	65	1	2-12	Spittle (1-6)	Camouflage	N	9	Orchid
Dragonfly, Giant	3	1/36	7	39	1	3-12	+2 init.	-2 to hit with missiles	N	13	M2-59
Fly, Bluebottle	6	9/30	3	13	1	1	Steal item	Jump 3"	N	16	N12-65
Hangman Tree	3/5	0	16	3500	3	1-3 each	(Acid (d10 + 2)	See book	N (E)	7	M2-74
Lion	6	9	3+1	16	3	1-3/1-3/1-6	Rear (1-4/1-4)	Surprised on 1	N	16	M1-61
Living Pool	7	3	13	100	1/target	3-12 each	Acid (1-8)	Disguise	N (E)	9	Orchid
Lure Lichen	4	0	3-5	23	1	3-24	Poison spores	Mines (1-8)	N (E)	Nil	Orchid
Mantis, Giant	3	6/12	10	54	1	2-12	Bite (3-12)	Camouflage	N	10	M2-83
Mantrap	6	0	7	32	Special	Victim's AC	Fascinate odor	Nil	N	Nil	M2-83
Mouse, Giant	7	9	12	56	1	2-12	Trample (4-16)	Digs	N	9	Orchid
Obliviah	10	0	1/4	2	1	Spells	Memory Drain	Nil	NE	15	M2-96
Rat, Giant	7	12//6	1/2	4	1	1-3	Disease	Nil	N (E)	20	M1-81
Rat, Gigantic	7	12//6	1	8	1	2-6	Disease	Nil	N (E)	19	Orchid
Snake, Giant	5	9	6+1	28	2	1-4/2-8	Constrict	Nil	N	13	M1-88
Snake Grass	10	0	1+1	15	1	1	Special poison	Multiple heads	N	18	Orchid
Snapper Saw Plant	9	0	5	30	4	2-5 each	Holds (5+5%/STR to escape)	Camouflage	N	15	M2-66
Spear Grass	7	0	7	49	4	1-6 each	Blood drain (1-4)	Nil	N	13	Orchid
Spyder Plant	8	6	1+1	5	1	1	Poison (save +2)	Nil	N	18	Orchid
Stirge	8	3/18	1+1	5	1	1-3	Blood drain (1-4)	Nil	N	18	M1-92
Strangle Vine	5/6	1/2	25 100/12	8	1-4 each	Strangles (10%)	See book	Nil	N	10	M2-25
Sunflower, Giant	8	0	3	15	1	1	Nil	Immune to heat	N	16	Orchid
Topiary Plant	7	12	3+2	14	1-4	2-5 each	Poison (save +4)	Shape change	N	16	Orchid
Walking Stick	5	6	9	54	3	1-2/1-2/1-4	Nil	Camouflage	N	12	Orchid
Witherweed	8	0	3	18	1/target	Special	Drains 1-4 Dex	Nil	N (E)	16	F-95
Wolf-as-Sheep	5/3/7	1	9	4 5 / 20/15	2	1-4	Bite (7-12)	Camouflage	N	12	M2-127
Zombie Bear	6	6	6+6	24	3	1-3/1-3/1-6	Hug (2-8)	Undead	N	is	Orchid
Zombie Birds	8	12	1	4	1/target	1	Dive (2x ding)	Undead	N	20	Orchid
Zombie Deer	7	9	4+1	13	1	1-6	Ram (2x dmg)	Undead	N	16	Orchid
Zombie Raccoons	7	6	2	7	1	1-4	Steal items	Undead	N	is	Orchid
Zombie Turtle	0/6	3	6	1		3-12	Break bone on 20	Shell/Undead	N	14	Orchid

### The Druid's Tower

This section of the adventure is given in two parts: the tower key and the druid's character sheet.

The key to the tower map describes the contents of each room, details any monsters located there, and recommends tactics that the druid might employ if encountered in that room.

The druid's character sheet lists Baron Orchid's abilities and any equipment he carries.

It also recommends ways in which he might utilize each ability, spell, or magic item against invaders.

The DM should run Baron Orchid as best suited to the actions of the heroes, perhaps casting spells to delay pursuers and to gain time to set some traps later on. Certain standard tactics are described for use in specific rooms to help the DM by creating several wily traps. Where these are noted without alternatives, the DM should be sure to save the particular spell or

ability noted until the indicated location is reached.

Baron Orchid, the druid, will act to defend himself once his tower is invaded, knowing he could not survive a pitched battle. He will flee up into his tower, placing obstacles and traps in his pursuers' path. He will only stand and fight as a last recourse. If it is apparent that he will lose further confrontations with the PCs and cannot flee further, he will transform into a raven and fly away.



Baron Orchid's retreat will take him from the second story of his tower up to the fifth. From there he retreats out the window in lizard form and climbs down the vine-covered wall to the park behind the tower. Then he retreats to the cave from which the stream flows and makes his last stand there.

## Baron Orchid

Following is Baron Orchid's character information. Since most of the encounters in the tower are with the Baron, this information should be studied carefully. All of the druid's abilities and special gear are detailed here along with suggestions on how and when he might utilize each power.

Feel free to create original encounters, following the pattern provided here. This may prove necessary when the player characters do something that is unexpected. For instance, Baron Orchid only uses two of the languages he knows to confuse the PCs. An encounter might be designed where he speaks in Green Dragon through a megaphone in an attempt to make them believe there is a dragon present.

**Baron Orchid:** AC 2; Move 12"; DRU 10; hp 70; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; THAC0 14; ST 16 IN 14 WS 15 DX 16 CN 16 CH 15 CM 12; AL N. Spells are listed below.

**Ability Modifiers:** +I to damage; +I to hit with missile weapons; -2 to AC for Dexterity; +15% to reaction rolls.

**Saving Throw Modifiers:** + I vs mind and willpower-affecting magic; +2 vs. fire and lightning attacks; +2 vs. directional magic attacks; +4 with cover.

**Natural Abilities:** *pass without trace* through undergrowth; *immune* to all woodland charms; *form change* three times each day, changing once each into an animal, bird and reptile and then back to human form. The forms Baron Orchid uses in this adventure are a giant rat, a chameleon lizard, and a raven, as noted in the adventure key. Each time he changes form from human to animal or back again, he *cures* 10 to 60% of all damage sustained up to the moment he changes.

**Languages:** Druid, Common, Neutral, Gnome, Centaur, Green Dragon, Manticore, Lizardman.

**Magical Items:** *Tanglevine roots* (x3), *potion of plant growth*, *fireberries* (x6), *scroll of animal growth*,

**Equipment:** *leather armor* +2, *ring of protection* +1, cudgel, ball of twine and knife, crock of grease, pouch of pollens,

Spells:

Level 1: *Entangle* (x2), *faerie fire* (x2), *invisibility to animals*, *shillelagh*

Level 2: *Charm*, *fire trap*, *heat metal*, *obscure*, *warp wood*

Level 3: *Protection from fire*, *spike growth*, *stone shape*

Level 4: *Animal summons*, *quench fire*, *cure serious wounds*

Level 5: *Wall of fire*, *rock to mud*

## Magical Items: Descriptions & Uses

### *Tanglevine Roots*

These roots start to grow when exposed to body temperature, and sprout to form a barrier of writhing vines 10 feet wide. Any creature caught by one of these vines will become *entangled* and must be cut free. It takes five rounds to cut someone free. Oil loosens the vines' grip and a victim may be freed in two rounds. Fire and alcohol kills and dissolves tanglevines.

### *Fireberries*

These are similar to *fireseeds*, but are nature's own variety. To activate a berry, it must be thrown onto the ground and a command word spoken. This causes the berry to burst into flame causing 1d8 points of damage and igniting any combustibles within contact. They may be thrown up to 10 feet. *Use:* The use of three of these berries is noted in encounters 12 and 24. Others may be used as missile weapons, or the druid may delay speaking the command word until someone picks up the thrown berry, causing it to explode.

### *Potion of Plant Growth*

This potion has the same effects as a *plant growth* spell. It causes plants to grow into a dense barrier of thorns and briars. To use it, the potion must be poured onto the ground; it will affect a 100' x 10' area.

*Use:* This potion is to be used in the park, encounter 31, to delay the party.

### *Scroll of Animal Growth*

This scroll works the same as the spell cast by a 10th level druid. It causes up to eight animals to grow to twice their normal size, doubling hit dice, hit points, and damage caused. C: 7 seg; R: 8"; D: 2 t.

*Use:* This scroll may be used either in encounter 27, or in 19 if the PCs are pressing too closely,

## Equipment: Descriptions & Uses

### *Ball of Twine*

If the druid is given sufficient time, he may prepare some traps using this twine. He will string trip lines or snares, or may attach it to stacks of crates and doors to pull down or shut things on top of characters,

### *Crock of Grease*

This holds enough grease to butter a tenfoot square area. This effect acts just like a *grease spell*. It may also be used to make an item too slippery to hold on to,

### *Pouch of Pollens*

The pollen dust in this pouch may be flung in the face of a pursuer, blinding him for one round. He must then make a Constitution check, and if he fails will sneeze and wheeze as his eyes water. This incapacitates the character for 2d4 rounds and causes a 1 penalty to all roll for eight hours. There are three doses in the pouch.

## Spells: Descriptions & Uses

### Level 1

*Entangle.* C: 3 seg; R: 8"; D: 1 t.

This spell causes plants to grow and entangle anything nearby, holding victims fast for the duration. If victim makes a successful saving throw vs. Spells, it only slows movement to half. *Use:* Cast upon poison ivy at windows, or on plants in the park to delay party.

*Faerie Fire.* C: 3 seg; R: 8"; D: 40 r.

This causes up to ten man-sized creatures within a 40-foot radius to be outlined by a violet flame, including invisible but sensed creatures. This flame can be seen at a range of 8" in the dark, and 4" in light, and causes all victims to become easier to hit (+ 2 to be hit) for the duration. There is no save vs. this effect.

*Use:* Use this spell when there are invisible characters and in melee in dim light to increase chances to hit.

*Invisibility to Animals.* C: 4 seg; R: Touch; D: 2 t.

This makes the recipient invisible to all animals, and he will not be attacked by them unless he harasses them first.

*Use:* Use this spell in encounters 19 and 20 to make sure the stirges attack the party instead of the druid.

*Shillelagh.* C: 1 seg; R: Touch; D: 1 t.

This changes the druid's cudgel into a + 1 weapon, causing 2-8 points of damage.



*Use:* This spell will be reserved for the final melee with the party.

### Level 2

*Charm Person. C:* 4 seg; R: 8"; D: Special. This convinces the victim that the druid is his friend, and he will agree to do anything that is not a command to commit suicide. *Use:* Intended for use at encounter 24, or whenever Baron Orchid is alone with a small group of characters.

*Fire Trap. C:* 1 t; R: Touch; D: Special

This makes anything that can be opened into a trap that explodes, causing 1d4 + 10 point of damage to all within five feet of the trap when it is triggered. A saving throw vs. spells will reduce this damage to half.

*Use:* The druid needs a lot of time to set this spell up. A good place is door #23, when the druid flees the tower.

*Heat Metal. C:* 4 seg; R: 4"; D: 7 r.

This heats all metal items causing damage to anyone touching the items. On the 1st and 7th rounds no damage is caused; on the 2nd and 6th rounds 1d4 points are caused; on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th rounds 2d4 points of damage are inflicted.

*Use:* This spell may be cast from a vantage point during combat, forcing a victim to drop weapons and strip out of armor or suffer damage.

*Obscurement. C:* 4 seg; R: 0; D: 4 t.

This spell clouds the area with a blanket of mist, obscuring all within a 10" cube, and reducing visibility to 2 to 8 feet. This obscuring mist makes missile fire impossible and provides all within the cloud with 90% concealment (+ 4 to AC).

*Use:* This spell may be used as a defense to hide the druid's escape if he becomes cornered. It may also be used to hide terrain hazards, such as deadly plants, pits and drop-offs, and conceal the druid so he can attack with surprise and retreat.

*Warp Wood. C:* 4 seg; R: 10"; D: Permanent

This spell warps up to two quivers full of arrows, five bows, or a door, so that three successful *open door* rolls must be made to force the door open.

*Use:* This spell should be used to destroy missile weapons or to block a door if the party gets too close- It may also be used to warp the tower steps to cause pursuers to trip and fall down the stairs.

### Level 3

*Protection vs. Fire. C:* 5 seg; R: Touch; D: 120 pts

This negates up to 120 points of damage from all fire attacks, both normal and magical, and then it fades.

*Use:* The druid casts this spell on himself as soon as the intruders enter the tower.

*Spike Growth. C:* 5 seg; R: 6"; D: 1d10 + 12 t.

This causes all plants within a 100-foot square area to become hardened and sharp while retaining their original appearance. Any character crossing this area will suffer as if from two attacks by the druid each round. Each attack causes 1d4 points of damage.

*Use:* This spell should be retained for use in the part, preferably at the mouth of the druid's hidden cave, so that attackers must cross the area.

*Stone Shape. C:* 1 r; R: Touch; D: Permanent

This can change the shape of 13 cubic feet of stone.

*Use:* This spell may be used to form a stone ball to roll down stairs (Ding 3d6), or to delay or trap the party with a stone block.

### Level 4

*Animal Summons I. C:* 6 seg; R: 40"; D: Special

This summons the two mountain lions who live in the park (encounter 31).

*Use:* This spell should be used in a location where the lions can exploit the ground cover to hide and attack with surprise.

*Cure Serious Wounds. C:* 6 seg; R: Touch; D: Permanent

This spell cures 2d8 + 1 points of damage. *Use:* It should be used when needed.

*Quench Fire. C:* 6 seg; R: 4"; D: 1 r.

This spell extinguishes all fire in a 12-foot square area, snuffing out torches. All humans must then fight at -4 to hit while in the dark.

*Use:* At encounter 19.

### Level 5

*Rock to Mud. C:* 7 seg; R: 16"; D: Special

This turns 20 cubic feet or 400 square feet of rock into mud. Though this affects only unfinished stonework, the stone of the druid's tower is unhewn and still in natural form, and thus subject to this spell. *Use:* This spell may be used to slow the party in encounter 19 and aid

the stirge attack, or it may be saved to be used on stairs somewhere to transform them into a muddy slide. Any character attempting to climb the muddy slide must make an Ability check every ten feet at half their Dexterity score, or slip and fall. Characters who slide down to the base of the stairs suffer I& points of damage.

*Wall of Fire. C:* 7 seg; R: 8" D: Special

This creates a 20-foot wall of flame that causes 1d4 points of damage each round to all within 20 feet, and 2d4 points to all within 10 feet. If a creature attempts to leap through the flaming barrier, it suffers 4d4 + 10 points of damage.

*Use:* This should be used in encounter 26, although it may be used earlier if the party gets too close.

## Tower Key

This gray stone tower is built into the base of a 200-foot-high cliff. The tower is 100 feet tall and climbing poison ivy grows across the face of its six stories. At a height of 40 feet, the cliff splits to form a narrow box canyon behind the tower. Baron Orchid has planted the canyon and made it into a thickly wooded park where many strange plants grow. A 10-foot-tall wall to either side of the tower, at the mouth of the canyon, closes off the garden. The top of the tower is flat, and there the druid has planted a box garden.

The interior of the tower is cool and smells earthy. Most of the corridors are 5 feet wide and the ceilings are 15 feet tall. The doors are all made out of heavy oak and swing into rooms, not out into the hallway. There are windows in several places and ivy grows in through them.

Anyone unfortunate enough to come in contact with the *poison* ivy will suffer a burning, itching rash that causes them to fight at - 1 to hit and damage rolls for the rest of the adventure. This may be cured by a *neutralize poison* spell.

### 11. Entry Hall

The door to the entry hall is locked.

The entrance hallway is 15 feet wide. It is damp, with moss and mildew growing on the stained walls. The floor is earthen and rutted. The hallway is empty.

### 12. Carriage

A large archway opens into the room. In the center of the room, in shadow, is a two-wheeled carriage and harness. The



carriage is made of twisted living vines; the seat has a cushion of growing moss, and the harness is made of woven grass.

This is the druid's carriage. He summons wild stags and harnesses them to pull it.

Growing in a chink in the wall on the left end of the room is a small vine. It is a clinging peeper; it has small yellow flowers and hard, white berries that appear to be little eyes. The plant bends and twists to follow motion in the room. If anyone reaches out to touch the peeper, it wraps a thin tendril around the object. These tendrils are easily broken with no other effects. The berries are bitter and sour.

### 13. Root Cellar

This room contains mounds of straw and earth piled up against the walls opposite the entrances. Strangely-shaped roots and tubers are stored beneath the straw. There are potatoes shaped like heads with many eyes, heart-shaped beets, hollow turnips, doubled carrots, and tulip bulbs that look like a type of clove. In the corner between the two entrances is a pile of manure with mushrooms and odd-shaped white plants growing on it.

These plants are mandrakes. If studied closely, they appear to be man-shaped, buried up to their necks. If anyone tries to pick a mandrake, it screams, causing pain to all upon the first floor (-2 to Dexterity and -4 on hit rolls for 2-20 turns).

### 14. Web

The door to this room is unlocked.

This room appears to be a tool room. In it are stacked baskets for harvesting herbs, a sack of soil, a watering can and several garden tools. Across the room in the left wall is a passageway, but a huge web drapes across the exit. In the middle of it huddles a dark shape.

The *web* is actually a network of vines and rootlets with a dark blossom in the center that looks distinctly like a large spider. The web can be attacked without harm to the party. Several of the baskets are filled with wood chips and dahlia tubers.

### 15. Spyder Plant

Just beyond the doorway is a spyder plant in a pot hanging in the shadows overhead. Two spyder plant shoots attack the first character to

walk through the doorway. The two shoots are attached by vines to the mother plant, which cannot move.

### 16. Library

A large archway opens into this room. There are two stone benches here and a stone table stands against the left wall. The other walls are lined with bookshelves. On the shelves are a few books; on a low bookshelf on the right wall are several strange tomes with bark coverings. On the table is an unlit oil lamp, a quill pen and several sheets of parchment. A large almanac rests open on one bench.

The books on the shelves are written in a strange, archaic script. They are books on gardening. The bark-covered books have dried but supple leaves for pages. They are written in druidic runes and detail some of the more important holidays for druids. One also cryptically details some of Baron Orchid's more bizarre experiments. The almanac is open to a page on today's weather: cloudy and cold.

### 17. Laboratory

The door to this room is locked.

This is Baron Orchid's laboratory. It contains several large tables with glass terrariums and various chemicals, roots, and clippings. Beneath the tables are casks of water, and sacks of soil and manure. There are also several trowels and other small gardening tools on the tables.

Baron Orchid is here when he becomes aware that there are intruders in the tower. He casts protection from fire on himself and waits for the party to break into the room. He then throws a tanglevine root in front of them to delay the party while he retreats out the opposite door.

Within one terrarium are several oddlyshaped tubers with blue flowers and small spiral-formed roots. If a character picks one up to examine it, a round later the tuber begins to grow, rooting itself in the character's hand. It will grow rootlets throughout the victim's body, causing one point of damage each round thereafter, until the tuber is destroyed by flame or a *cure disease* spell is cast on the character. The tuber takes half damage from fire and has 8 hit points. Its growth is activated by body heat.

In a canister on one counter is a small quantity of a pink powder, potassium nitrate. If this powder is burned it produces a cloud of

smoke in a 20-foot cube, lasting two rounds. There is also one quart of wood alcohol here.

### 18. Stairway

There are windows in this hallway. Ivy trails in through them and grows along the wall.

The ivy is poison ivy. If the party is pursuing too swiftly, the druid will cast *entangle* on it, or cast some defensive spell, such as *rock to mud*, on the stairs. Then he will cast *invisibility to animals* on himself.

### 19. Stirges

This room is filled with a loud squeaking. It comes from two wire cages on a table beside a door across the room. The cages hold 18 stirges- There are other tables and stools standing against the walls of this room, and a wooden cupboard stands opposite the stirge cages beside the entrance. To the right a door is just swinging shut.

The stirge squeaking is making a lot of noise and it is hard to hear much. There is a secret door in the back of the cupboard and spyholes cut into the cupboard door. Baron Orchid is hiding in the cupboard watching the party. Once they enter the room and seem distracted, he will cast *quench fire* on the party's light source and it will become dark. Then Baron Orchid will step out of the cupboard with surprise and open the stirge cages. The stirges fly to the attack, ignoring the druid who is invisible to them. The Baron then retreats through the door and locks it. The stirges will swarm over the party, attacking demi-humans in preference to humans.

If the druid is not immediately pursued, he will pile boxes in front of the door and return to the cupboard through the secret door. From here he will cast whatever spells he has time for: *rock to mud*, *faerie fire* and *warp wood* are some possibilities. If the party attacks the cupboard, they will see the secret door closing just ahead of them as the Baron retreats.

On the table next to the stirge cages are a pair of leather gloves, a long wooden ladle, and a decanter filled with blood.

### 20. Closet

The door to the closet is unlocked.

This room is a tiny closet holding a small cabinet. Thrown over the cabinet is a small mesh net, five feet square. Atop the net stands



a silver candle holder; three white soapberry candles lie beside it.

The candle holder is worth 50 gp; the cabinet is locked, but may be broken open. Inside are several bottles of reagent, one flask of acid, and a small metal box containing a *ring of fire resistance*.

### 21. Rats

The door to this room is unlocked.

This room is stacked with boxes, leather chests thrown open, and wicker baskets stuffed with straw, all in disarray about the room. At the right side of the room stands the druid, casting a spell. Several giant rats stand beside him.

If Baron Orchid has time to prepare (which he should not), the DM may wish to have him cast an *animal growth* here before the party enters the room. The spell the druid is casting may be any defensive spell, such as *faerie fire*, as the party enters the room. Then the good Baron will transform into a giant rat and all the rats will scatter behind the pile of crates, chests and baskets. From this cover, they attack with surprise as the room is searched. There are seven giant rats.

The Baron, while in rat form, will prove indistinguishable from the other rats. He runs behind a wicker basket in the rear wall. There is a small rat hole there into the hallway beyond.

The wicker baskets contain china and crystalware. The crates hold bolts of cloth and various knickknacks. There are also several rolled rugs here.

### 22. Draped Hallway

The door to this hallway is unlocked. This dusty corridor has old, dry, green drapes hanging on the right wall. Baron Orchid changes back to human form here and waits for the party. He pulls the drapes down upon the characters in the front of the party as they round the corner, and then tosses two *fireberries* as he shouts the command word. The drapes burst into flame and the druid retreats up the stairs.

The burning drapes cause 1d6 points of damage each round and burn for 10 rounds. The party may beat the fire out in one round using something to smother it with, such as a rug.

### 23. Park Door

This wooden door is barred from the inside and it does not appear that the druid has gone through it. The door exits into the canyon park.

Baron Orchid will not exit here. If the party goes through the door, they will not find any tracks in the soft dirt before the door. Later this door will be *fire trapped* as explained in encounter 31.

### 24. Negotiation Room

As the player characters reach the top of these stairs, they trip a cord at ankle height that sets a bell ringing. Here is a large room with a 25-foot-high ceiling. It is filled with stores in barrels and crates. In the right wall, at a height of 15 feet, is a small, partially curtained window onto a hallway beyond. Across the room is a corridor going straight ahead; a candlestick burns in a sconce on the wall lighting the end of the corridor. As the bell rings, the druid steps forth into the light from around a corner at the hallway's end.

Baron Orchid appears empty handed and asks the party to approach no further. He wonders why they have broken into his tower and are chasing him. If the group is reasonable, he asks for a chance to negotiate with just one party member, as the Baron feels safer that way. He requests that the rest of the party retreat down the stairs while he speaks with their leader.

If the player characters agree and only one character is left to talk with the druid, the Baron walks forward to the mouth of the corridor and tries to *charm* that person. If he succeeds, he attempts to have each party member come up one at a time; the druid and the charmed PC will try to quietly defeat each character until discovered.

Baron Orchid really begins this encounter standing in a corridor at right angles to the party. A mirror in shadows at the mouth of the passage is set at a 45 degree angle to make the hall appear to run straight ahead. Spells and missiles cast at the druid will not affect him; a *lightning bolt* will shatter the mirror and bounce back at the party off the stone wall behind it.

If the party decides to attack, the druid throws down another *tanglevine root* at the end of the hall to delay them. He has dropped a *fireberry* beside a cask of alcohol at the mouth of the hall. If the party charges, Baron Orchid will shout the command word to cause the *fireberry* to burst into flame if the party charges. The barrel then splits open and forms a 20-foot pool of flaming alcohol. This fire burns for three rounds and causes 1d6 points of damage each round. (See encounter 25 for further attacks made in this room.)

Stored in the room are barrels of water and wine, food, and crates of dried plants, bulbs and seeds.

### 25. Window

Baron Orchid retreats to this point and from the cover of this window tries to cast several spells, such as *charm person*, *heat metal*, *warp wood*, or *wall of fire* (instead of saving this spell for room 28). He has also stashed a sling and 20 bullets in a niche here, and can fire from the cover of the curtained window. The druid gains a +6 to his AC from the cover of the window.

If the party pursues too swiftly, the druid retreats to the top of the stairs. From there, the Baron may cast other spells, such as *stone shape*, on the small wall beside the landing in order to create a ball of stone to send crashing down the stairs. Characters struck by the stone sphere suffer 3d6 points of damage (saving throw vs. petrification for half damage).

Alternatively, the druid may cast a *rock to mud* spell on the stairs, transforming them into a muddy slide. Characters attempting to climb the muddy slide must make an Ability check at half their Dexterity score every ten feet, or slide to the bottom of the stairs, suffering 1d6 points of damage.

### 26. Cell

The door to the cell is locked. When the party passes this door, they hear cries of anguish in the Elvish tongue, coming from behind the door. If someone shouts back in Elvish, the voice warns them to flee; the druid is too powerful, and they should please save themselves, for he (the prisoner) is too weak to help.

If the party tries to break into the chamber, the voice greets them as saviors and urges them to hurry, for he is near the end of his strength.

Within the room is a wooden stool, a narrow table, and an old cot with straw ticking on which is slumped a figure in ragged clothes. Across the room is a bricked-up archway, and beside it is a small one-foot barred window cut into the wall.

This encounter is a carefully staged trap. Baron Orchid stood in the hallway beyond the window and cried out to the party in Elvish through the window. He altered his voice to disguise it and lure the party into the room.

If the party enters the room, the Baron will step back into the hallway behind them and cast a *wall of fire* spell through the doorway, trapping the party in the cell. Characters within 10 feet of the wall of *fire* suffer 2d4 points of damage each round, while those cowering away from the fire suffer 1d4 points. Baron Orchid will remain in the hall concentrating on the magical wall, until someone leaps through it or it is dispelled. Anyone leaping through the



flames suffers 4d4 + 10 points of damage. When this occurs, the baron will flee to the next encounter.

**27. Ape Room**

As you round this corner, you see Baron Orchid duck into a room and slam the door. From behind the door you can hear two voices, one deep and gruff speaking in Hill Giant language, and the other in the druid's

The party may attempt to break this door open, but it is barred and requires three successful *open door* Strength rolls to break the bar. If they break in they will see a large hairy figure with the Baron standing beside it, There are windows in the right wall.

Baron Orchid transforms into a chameleon lizard before their eyes and darts out one window while the hairy form moves to attack. This shadowy figure is a carnivorous ape. If the Baron is given enough time and has not yet cast *animal growth*, he will use this spell to enlarge the ape to giant size. If any character attempts to attack the druid as he climbs down the ivy to the park, he will use his chameleon ability to become 95 % undetectable when not moving.

The windows are too narrow for a character to climb through. There is nothing of value in this room, only fruit rinds and bones of small animals.

**28. Attic**

This room is empty and dusty. In one corner is a trap door in the ceiling that leads up to the roof. There is a pull-down ladder here.

**29. Treasure Room**

There is an open archway into this room. In the center of the room is a chest, overgrown by a dry, brittle plant with brown, razor-edged fronds.

This plant is a *witherweed*. The weed's attacks drain Dexterity points. Lost dexterity cannot be regained during the adventure. This plant readily burns, but produces a toxic, heavy, oily smoke; characters upon this floor who breathe it must save vs. poison or die. A fire will burn for 10 rounds.

The chest beneath the weed is locked. Within it is a *crystal ball*, a sack of coins, a sword, and a flask. This is a special *crystal ball of precognition*. To use the *crystal ball*, a character

must gaze into its depths and concentrate on a subject. First, he will see what the subject of his thoughts is doing at present; then the ball will cloud and he will glimpse something of the future. Anyone using this magical device must rest for one turn after each use, to recover from the strain of viewing the future.

If the party searches for Baron Orchid with the *crystal ball*, they first see him hurrying uphill through the park beside a stream. Then the ball fogs and they view the druid battling the party. He suddenly shifts form into that of a raven and escapes.

The sack of coins contains 50 pp and two gems (500 gp each). The sword glows green in the dark, but otherwise has no magical properties. The flask holds a *potion of extra-healing*.

**30. Roof Garden** The door to this garden is unlocked.

The roof of this tower has parapets around its edge, and two large box gardens have been planted here. This roof garden has smaller versions of the weird plants encountered in the warped woods surrounding this tower, such as archer bushes, strangle weeds, vampire vines, and so forth. Beside one of the box gardens is a small sack containing a white, chalky powder, a sack of black earth, a box of compost, and some gardening tools.

These plants are too immature to offer any real threat to the characters. They are more of a nuisance-firing thorns that hurt, catching and scratching, but not causing any real damage. The sack with white powder holds a modified lime powder that will harm plants, causing all vegetation within a ten-foot-square area to wither and die.

From the roof top, the party may survey the

park behind the tower,

**31. Canyon Park**

If Baron Orchid reaches the park a turn before the player characters do, he will have cast a *firetrap* on the exit to the park at encounter 23. When this door is opened, there will be an explosion and all within five feet of the door suffer 1d4 + 10 points of damage (saving throw vs. Spells gives half damage).

Baron Orchid uses his ability to *pass without trace* to enter the wilds of the park, and then casts a *plant growth* to delay the PCs' pursuit. This barrier may be destroyed in five rounds using the lime found on the tower roof or from the lime path of the Weird Woods. Otherwise it will take two turns to bum a path through.

The Baron will next cast animal summoning I, and two mountain lions who live in the park will answer the summons. These lions stalk the party through the underbrush and attack five rounds after the PCs break through the plant barrier. They will attack with surprise and attempt to drag prey off into the dense foliage. Any characters who pursue will also have to deal with the odd plants of this park, which will delay pursuers for 1d6 rounds. The lions will retreat from large groups of pursuers, returning to attack later with surprise.

The park is innocuous but bothersome. Party members may move freely along the paths without encountering any plant menaces. However, the DM may wish to portray the plants along the way as warped versions of common varieties to create bizarre encounters. None of these plants should cause any harm. Each plant should be warped to be a wordplay on the plant's name. For example, a sunflower might shine bright lights into a character's eyes, while a weeping will might be heard sobbing and drench any who walk beneath its boughs. Specific encounters are left for each DM to create. See

**Common Plants for Park Encounters**

Roll	1	2	3	4
1	Arrowhead	Duckweed	Snake Grass	Cattail
2	Weeping Willow	Firebush	Fir	Rubber Tree
3	Pin Oak	Quaking Aspen	Ash Tree	Milkweed
4	Hackberry	Iris	Toadstool	Snapdragons
5	Puffballs	Jelly Fungi	Cottonwood	Nightshade
6	Raspberry	Gooseberry	Sunflower	Slippery Ivy
7	Dogwood	Crab Grass	Tea Rose	Bird of Paradise
8	Skunk Cabbage	Crab Apple	Pigweed	Locoweed
9	Chestnuts	Locust Tree	Dwarf Apples	Comb Flower
10	Palm	Pitcher Plant	Tiger Lily	Sagebush





the table Common Plants for Park Encounters for a list of plants that might be encountered.

### 32. Lion Cave

This cave is empty, though there are fur balls in the comers and the cloying odor of musk fills the air.

### 33. Druid's Cave

To reach this cave, the party must climb up a hillside, following a stream. This is where the baron will make his final stand. From the mouth of this cave, Baron Orchid casts whatever offensive spells he has remaining, and then throws the darts he has stored here in the cave. There are 12 darts, and each round he can throw

3 a distance of 45 feet with a + 1 to hit (due to his Dexterity) and a + 1 to damage (due to his Strength); he suffers a - 2 at medium range and -5 at long range. At the last, he will cast shillelagh on his cudgel and attack with an additional +1 to hit, causing 2-8 points of damage.

If the Baron is losing the battle, he transforms into a raven and retreats into his cave. If the party has a net with them, they may attempt to catch him by rolling to hit AC 6. If the party follows the raven into the cave, he flees into the smaller chamber, where there is a bolt hole in the ceiling, Sitting on the edge of this shaft, he caws mockingly and then flies off.

The stream runs from a small spring-fed pool in the center of the cave. There is nothing of

value here. However, submerged in the spring is the druid's treasure, in a casket specially constructed to look like a stone. The casket has a firetrap rune upon it, and a needle in the lock (although the needle is not poisoned). The cask holds 19 milky pearls (worth 200-500 gp each), and a jade statuette of the moon goddess (worth 21100 gp). This is actually a potion bottle containing a potion of plant control. Here is also an ornate, curved silver dagger (25 gp), a silver and ivory necklace (777 gp), and three acorns. Two will explode as a small 3d6 fireball when split open, and the last will change the user into gaseous form for a number of days equal to his constitution.

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