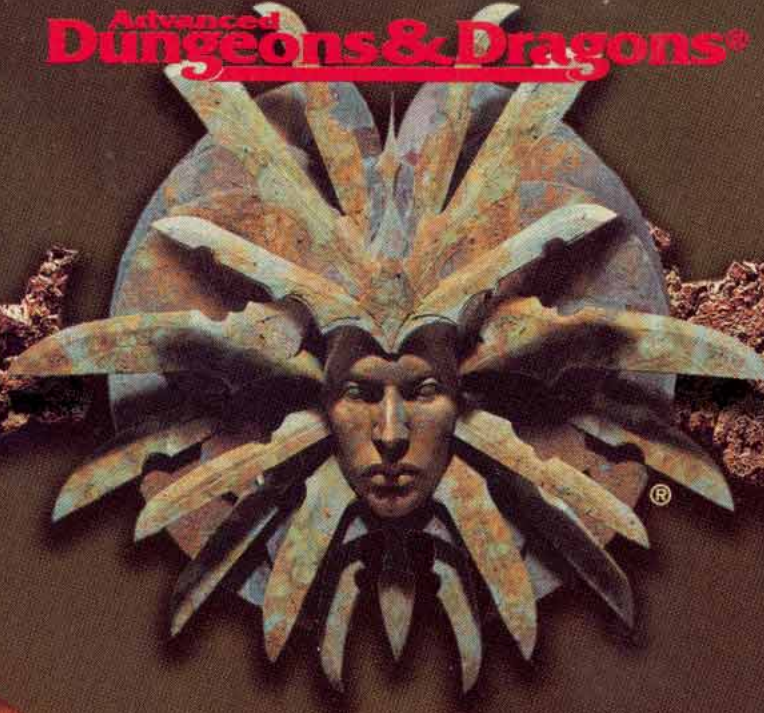


PLANE

SCAPE™

ADVENTURE



SOMETHING WILD

Ruppel 55

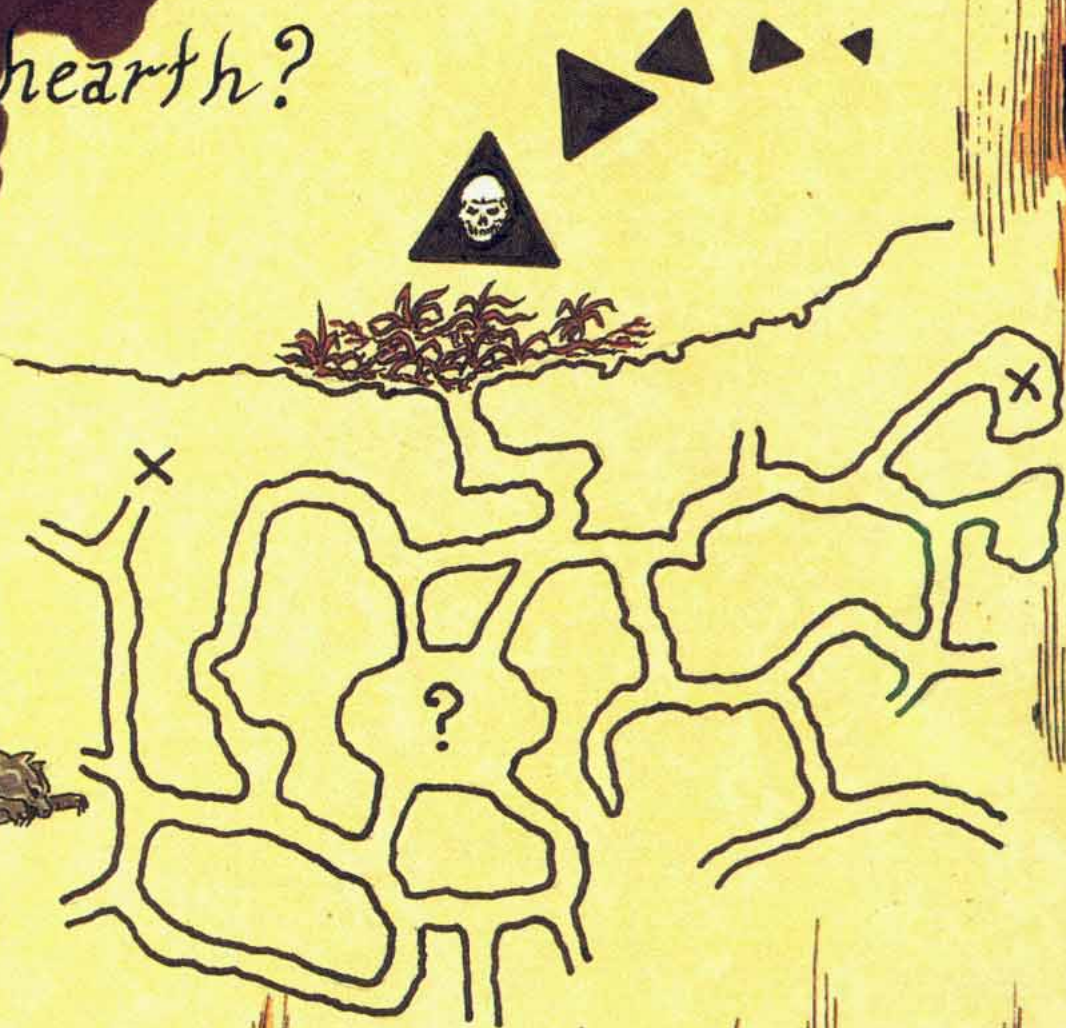
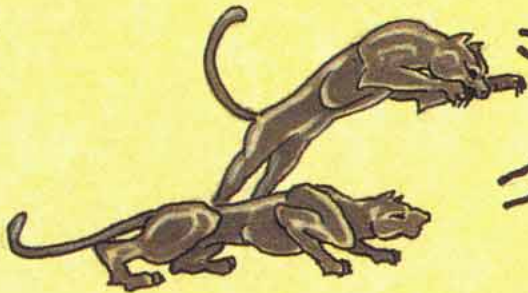




Check:

- The cup of freedom
- Parts & Pieces
- Planar Trade Consortium

Sign
hearth?



802 85

Land of the Hunt

- Guilder Starhad's den
- Garond the Claw's den

stalking grounds - careful!

700ft

1100ft

'Let's!

10 miles

KRIGALA

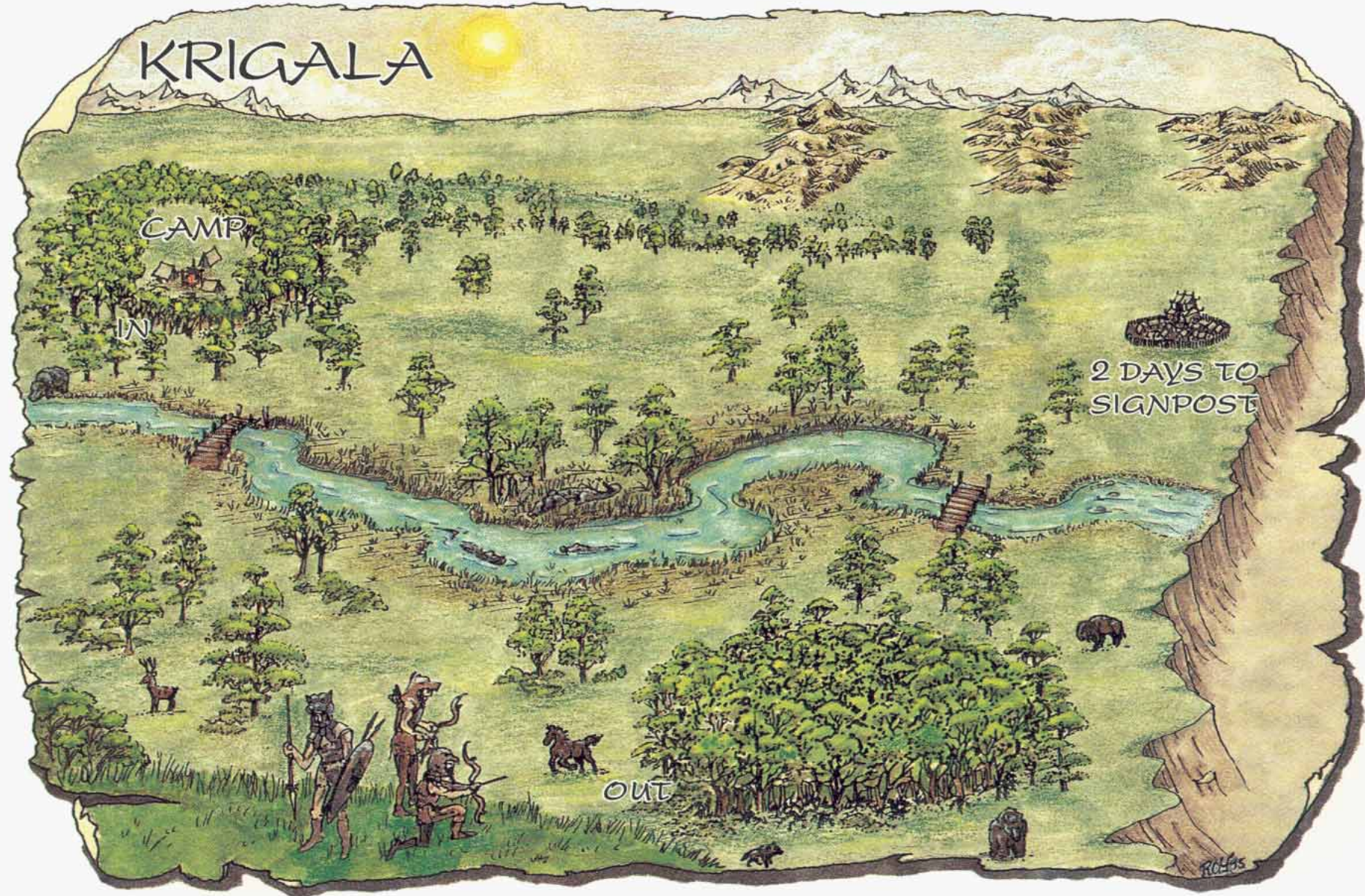
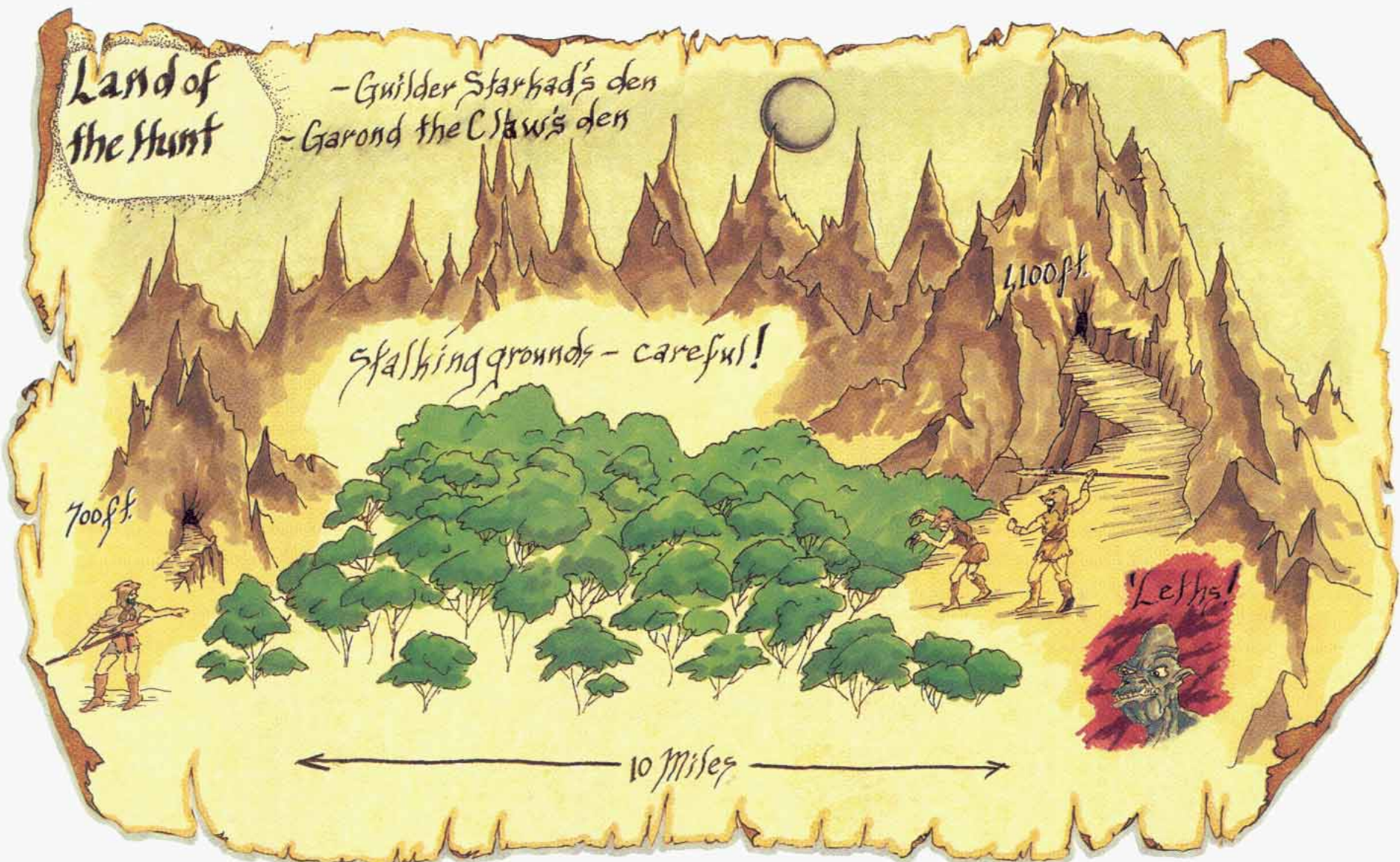
CAMP

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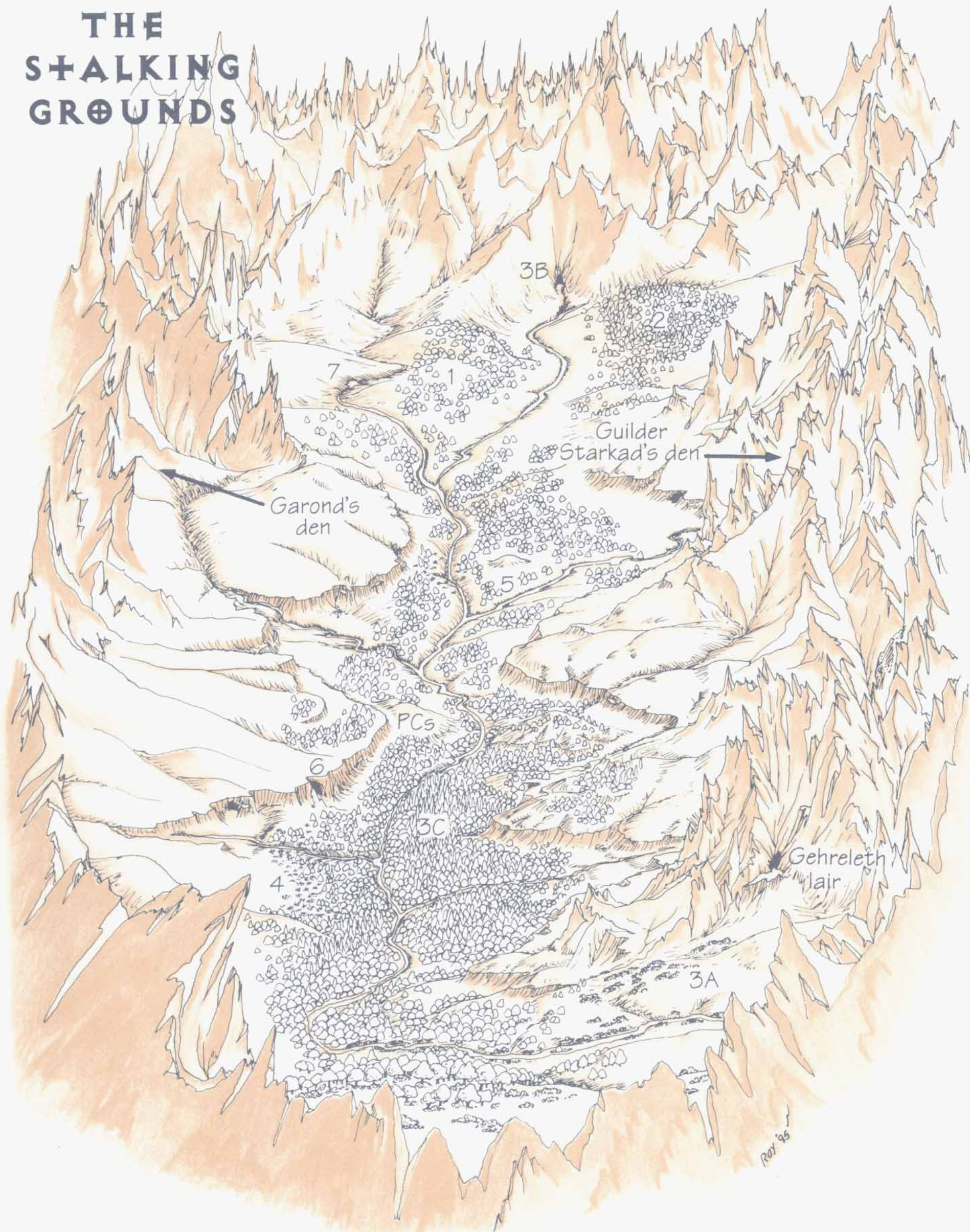
2 DAYS TO
SIGNPOST

OUT

ROGAS



THE STALKING GROUNDS



THE GEHRELETH LAIR

The Stalking Grounds



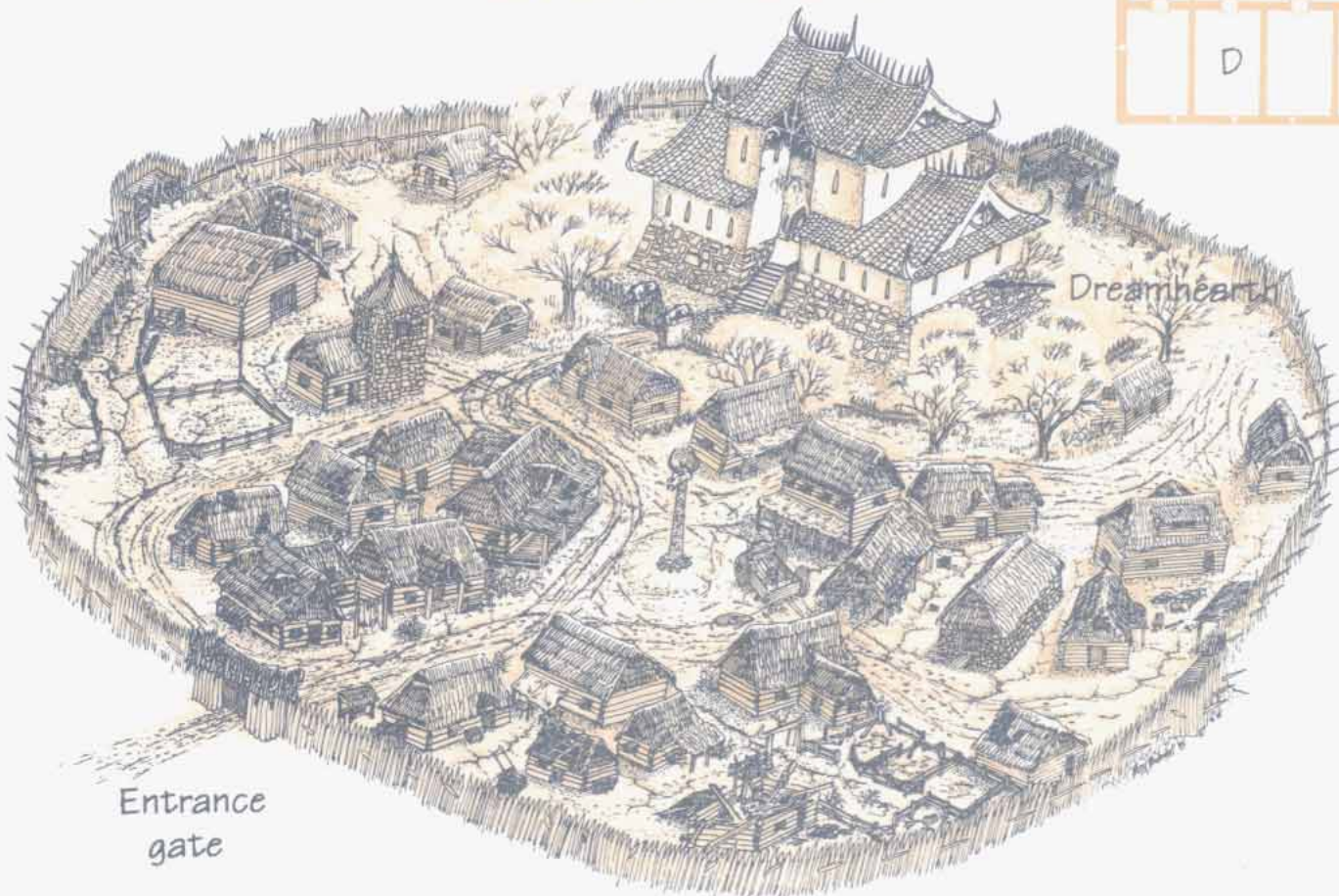
KEY

-  bottled 'leths
-  vargouilles
-  prisoners
-  gate to Krigala
-  farastu path

DREAMHEARTH



SIGNPOST



KEY

-  Illusionary wall
-  Wizard lock
-  Magic mouth
-  Deliverers
-  Garond
-  Vile Huntsmen

SOMETHING WILD

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AN INTRODUCTION

I dream of the hunt. Bursting recklessly through ripping thorn bushes, slinking through silent clearings, losing myself in forests black enough to swallow me whole. Hot wind on my skin, sharp roots cutting my legs. The

air thick with the pungent scent of blood. The prey is near, crouching, cowering, quivering as it imagines the points of my

teeth pressing into its throat. A heartbeat pounds in my head like a war drum, punctuating my belly's screams for meat.

Suddenly, brittle ferns crash to the ground before me. A monstrous shadow rises from nowhere to make the forest darker than black. My den is not near but I turn and run and jump and run, sweating and grunting and panting as the war drum pounds

double time but the shadow dwarfs me still, becoming the starless night.

As I am caught and crushed in its jaws, as the

breath and life are squeezed from my body, as my blood stings my eyes and stains its teeth, I scream for release for daybreak for waking, but there is only pain and cries and death.

Powers help me, this is not a dream!

THE TALE OF GAROND THE CLAW

I THINK
IT'S TIME I TOOK
SOME HUNTERS
ON A LITTLE FIELD TRIP.
— GAROND THE CLAW

More of us died in the raid than I'd expected. The 'leth tunnels were so ripe with the scent of fiends that we couldn't sniff out a trail until the farastu had already found us. First thing the stinking monster did was summon two more of its blasted friends, then all three gehreleths tore into our pack — vanishing from sight, slashing, biting, sapping our strength, filling my hunters with some kind of magical fear.

I hit back with magic of my own, but the 'leths shrugged off most spells. They're hard game to hurt — not like our usual prey, the kind that fights with fang and claw. Tougher than the prisoners we stalk through the canyons. Harthen flew at one farastu with his bare fists. Stuck to the beast's gummy flesh. Before he could pull free, one of the other 'leths ripped his head off. I killed that fiend myself.

All told, the pack lost eight. But we took down two 'leths and drove the third deeper into the maze of tunnels. By Malar's claw, those sodding fiends will learn to keep out of our dens and hunting grounds!

My mate, Venia, and I were the only ones left to bury our dead. One of the fallen 'leths wore a black stone triangle in a loop around its neck; before we left I ripped it free and tied it around my own neck. To honor Harthen and the others.

As we tried to sniff our way back out of the tunnels, we found that the attack had muddied the trail. Took several wrong turns. I crept down one low passage to see where it led when a sudden flash of bright light blinded me. I crouched, still as death, ready to pounce. When I regained my sight I found myself hunched deep in tall weeds, insects buzzing in the air, a warm breeze

on my face, a blistering sun
beating down on me.

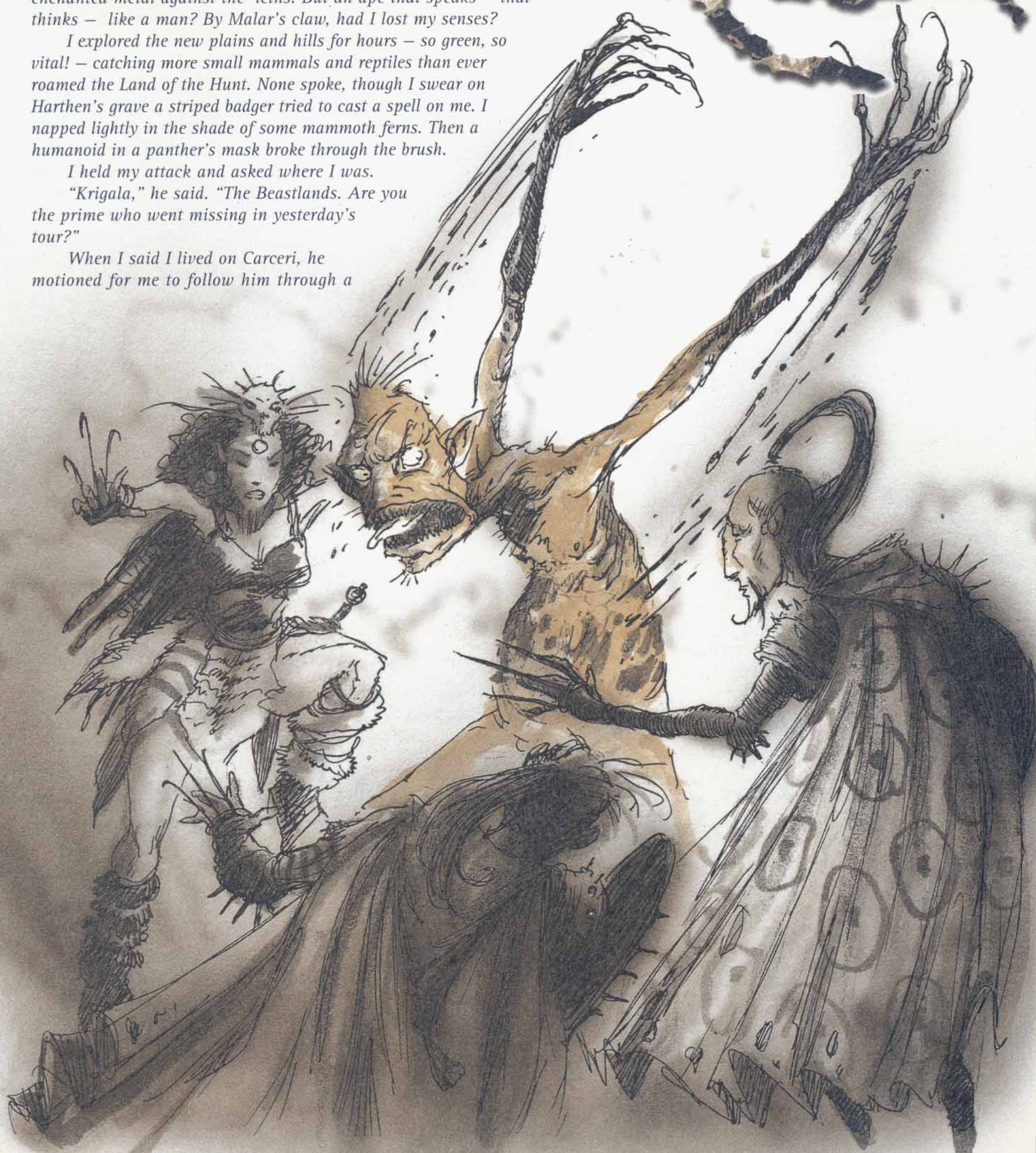
I smelled the ape just before he swung down
from a nearby copse of trees. Played dead to draw him
closer, then lunged up. The beast spoke – spoke! – cry-
ing “No, wait!” But too late – I broke its neck, a clean
kill. Glorious to work with my hands again after using
enchanted metal against the ‘leths. But an ape that speaks – that
thinks – like a man? By Malar’s claw, had I lost my senses?

I explored the new plains and hills for hours – so green, so
vital! – catching more small mammals and reptiles than ever
roamed the Land of the Hunt. None spoke, though I swear on
Harthen’s grave a striped badger tried to cast a spell on me. I
napped lightly in the shade of some mammoth ferns. Then a
humanoid in a panther’s mask broke through the brush.

I held my attack and asked where I was.

“Krigala,” he said. “The Beastlands. Are you
the prime who went missing in yesterday’s
tour?”

When I said I lived on Carceri, he
motioned for me to follow him through a



forest. I tracked him for hours until he stopped at a pair of bent oak trees whose high branches twined together. The mask-wearer rapped in a pattern on the trees, and the space between them crackled and showed me a canyon I knew to be in the Land of the Hunt.

Instinctively I leapt through the tree-gate and found myself back in the familiar dry mountains. I hurried to my pack's cave. Venia was there, telling the others of our raid and my disappearance.

"Hold your tongue!" I called. All heads turned toward me. "I've got a better tale. Call the pack leaders. Tell Guilder Starkad that Garond the Claw has found a path to another land of prey. Tell that fool there is a gate close by, hidden in the 'leth tunnels – a gate that takes us off this plane." The pack gathered around me. "Tell Starkad that we can journey to this land to stalk game – game that speaks, game that thinks! That we can send such prizes here for our lord to hunt at his pleasure!"

I fingered the black triangle that still hung from my neck. "Tell him that – blood will-ing – this gate may be the key to unlock our lord's prison. Tell him Malar may yet stalk the planes again."

◆ BACKGROUND ◆

Something Wild is an AD&D® PLANESCAPE™ adventure that takes the player characters (PCs) from Sigil to the prison-plane of Carceri and the dark jungles of the Beastlands. Malarites – followers of Malar, the evil god of the savage hunt – are trying to free their lord from his exile on Carceri and loose him upon the ripe stalking grounds of the Beastlands. There, the prey is more abundant, and – thanks to the intelligent animal petitioners – more challenging. But the plan is having nasty repercussions on the Beastlands itself, causing each person and animal on the plane to become more feral. And now the corruption is rippling beyond the borders of the plane, reaching into Sigil itself, the heart of the multiverse. . . .

The rest of this section explains the Malarites' plot in full. The section called "Forces of Contention" (page 8) gives more details about the groups and NPCs involved.

THE EXILE OF MALAR

The story really begins with Talos the Destroyer, the greater power of Toril that embodies the dark side of nature. Malar the Beastlord, evil king of the savage wild, once served Talos – until the Destroyer grew jealous of Malar's growing flock of worshipers. So Talos imprisoned him in a small realm in Colothys, the mountainous fourth layer of the bitter, wind-whipped plane known as Carceri.

Many of Malar's devoted worshipers followed him there, to the game-filled canyons of the Land of the Hunt, where they continued to honor their god with the meat of fresh kills. Petitioners of Malar – evil folks who died on the Prime and reformed in the realm – were just as trapped as their power. But primes and planars could come and go as they pleased, as long as they hiked up to the first layer, Othrys, where the only known off-plane gates were found.

Travel wasn't easy, but the Malarites had no choice – attacks by the plane's gehreleths forced them to trade animal pelts and parts for enchanted metal and other manu-

factured tools. Malarite traders also

arranged to have some of Sigil's

most violent criminals – im-

prisoned in the escape-

proof Vault high on a

mountain peak in

Colothys – released in

the Land of the Hunt,

where they

made for clever

and dangerous

prey.

But Malar's no

longer content to stalk his realm, no matter *what* the

game. After all, the Land of the Hunt's just one small patch

of land in the vast multiverse. And a force as bloodthirsty

and predatory as Malar can't be fettered for long, endlessly

hunting the same canyons. The Beastlord has struggled for

eons to break the planar chains that bind him to Carceri,

that all prey everywhere might tremble at the merest whis-

per of his name, that he might spread terror and savagery

to each spoke of the Great Ring, that he might feed on the

soft underbelly of the planes and rip out the beating heart

of the multiverse.

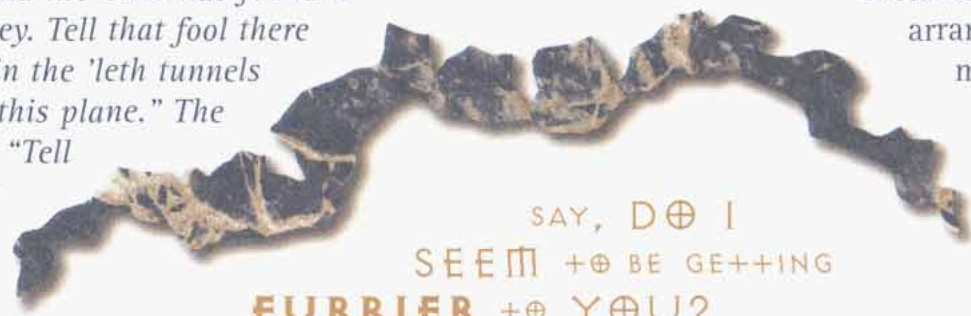
Garond the Claw has found a way.

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Garond, the wizard leader of a small den of Malarites, stumbled across a hidden gate that led from the Land of the Hunt to Krigala, the first layer of the Beastlands. Garond and his band of hand-picked hunters – an elite group called the Deliverers – began to lead packs of Malarites to the Beastlands for fresh hunting. What's more, they sent intelligent animals back through a gate to Carceri so Malar could stalk some new game as well.

Then Garond had a bright idea. See, petitioners who die on their home plane join with the essence of that plane. If a petitioner dies *off* his home plane, his spirit's got nowhere to go – it dissipates into nothingness. But what if a sod died off his home plane – say, an animal petitioner from the Beastlands was killed on Carceri – and his spirit was *caught* before it dissolved away?

That spark became a flame in Garond's brain: Send animal petitioners to Carceri to be hunted and killed, but



SAY, DO I
SEE IT BE GETTING
FURRIER + YOU?
— ONE HUNTER + ANOTHER,
ON THE BEASTLANDS

trap their essences for Malar to devour. Maybe the consumed spirits would somehow attune Malar to the Beastlands – maybe even pull Malar *to* the plane. After all, towns, realms, and whole layers could shift from one plane to another as their makeup changed – why not powers?

Garond just needed a way to catch the spirits of the animals killed on Carceri. He found it in the *spiritbowl*, a new magical item (see the Appendix, page 61). A spot of garnish paid to a Sigil representative of the Planar Trade Consortium got the Malarites a small shipment of *spiritbowls* meant for Mount Celestia.

But Garond wants to cover all of his bases. He figures that if he can prepare the Beastlands for Malar's arrival – making the place more wild, more savage, more *evil* – his god'll have a better shot at moving onto the plane. And that's where the Signers come in.

THE TAINED DREAMSCAPE

At the border between the Beastlands' first two layers is a frontier town called Signpost. There, the Sign of One maintains a manor known as Dreamhearth, where faction members tried an experiment they called the *dreamlink*. With the help of a tabaxi dream hunter named Meuronna, a single Signer with a powerful mind – a githzerai whom some call the One – tried to dream his way into contact with the essence of the Beastlands itself.

Unfortunately for the One, Garond learned about the *dreamlink* from hunters in Signpost who belonged to the Vile Hunt. The Deliverers infiltrated Dreamhearth; the few sods guarding the One offered little resistance. Garond cast a *domination* spell on Meuronna and forced her to corrupt the sleeper's dreams.

See, the One had intended merely to contact the primal nature of the Beastlands through his dreams. But Garond had Meuronna create a nightmarish dreamscape – a psychic bubble on the Ethereal Plane. Then she cast the One's dream-self into the dreamscape, trapping him there while his physical body still lay in Dreamhearth.

'Course, the dreamscape ain't a place of sunshine and flowers – Garond forced Meuronna to create a land of terror, a dark world in which the One's dream-self is tormented by fear, savagery, and evil. The One is stalked, toyed with, and torn apart by large, shadowy, catlike figures – images of Malar.

The subconscious mind of the One is so powerful, it channels that trauma back through the sod's physical body and into the Beastlands. And the nightmares are poisoning the very nature of the plane, a change reflected in the berks who live there.

Full-blooded animals – from the fiercest tiger to the most docile hare – are becoming more vicious, more violent, more *evil*. Even hybrid creatures like centaurs and werebears, disturbed by the psychic disharmony, are becoming more aggressive (though the change in them is more gradual). Most chillingly, however, humanoid natives

and even visitors to the

Beastlands are actually changing

shape, taking on animal forms

reflective of their dominant characteristics. Normally, a visit to the Beastlands temporarily grows whiskers or fur on most any basher, but the corruption of the *dreamlink* has pushed that even further, slowly turning sods into full animals. Only the Malarites are unaffected by these changes, as Malar needs them to carry out the plan.

And Meuronna? Well, after she trapped the One in the tainted dreamscape, Garond sent her through to Carceri to be hunted as game. Only she could reach the Signer's dream-self now, so Garond naturally wanted to get rid of her. Unknown to Garond, though, Meuronna wasn't killed in a hunt – she was captured by farastu and is now being held prisoner in a gehreleth cave.

THE FALL GIRL

The crowning touch to Garond's plot lies with the blame for the changes sweeping the Beastlands – it's laid squarely at the feet of the cat lord, the quasipower who rules over all felines. See, the Deliverers captured the *previous* cat lord and sent him through to Carceri, where the sod was hunted and killed. (He made excellent game.) A new, female cat lord rose to take his place on the Beastlands. But the other animal lords don't know the circumstances behind the switch; they're suspicious of the "usurper." And that fits in perfectly with Garond's plan.

Remember, the One dreams of being stalked by catlike figures, and his emotional turmoil is fed back onto the Beastlands. Thus, all animals, hybrids, and humanoids on the Beastlands dream each night of being prey to shadowy cats. The animal lords can't keep nightmares from invading their realms, but they do have enough power to keep their small domains relatively free of the feral changes – for the time being. However, they still feel the suffering of their charges. They blame the new cat lord for all the trouble. Obviously, she's gone barmy and must be stopped.

UNLOCKING THE CAGE

The effects of the corrupted *dreamlink* are not confined to the Beastlands. They're rippling outward and reaching into Sigil, the City of Doors, whose planar energies link it to every known plane of existence. In the Cage, domesticated animals turn on their masters, bariaur find themselves at each other's throats, and other folks in tune with nature – like rangers and druids – are slowly becoming more aggressive. Many of the affected sods are Signers – even those who know nothing of the *dreamlink* feel the ripple effect of the One's nightmares. And everyone in Sigil, whether or not his behavior is affected, still has troubled dreams of being hunted by cats.

◆ ADVENTURE SUMMARY ◆

Chapter I begins in Sigil, where the PCs meet Sashell, a seeming barmy from the Beastlands who turns into a tiger and attacks them. Notes in the barmy's dream journal point to a number of spots in Sigil, and the group's investigation slowly leads them to the plot to free Malar. At the same time, a Mercykiller paladin asks the PCs' help in finding criminals who've mysteriously vanished from the Prison. However, the heroes' investigation seems to indicate that the Mercykillers themselves are involved in a cover-up to mask the disappearances. What's more, people and animals in the Cage are growing more savage and primal. The chapter ends when the PCs leave Sigil and follow a trail of clues to Carceri or the Beastlands.

In Chapter II, the PCs enter the Land of the Hunt, Malar's realm on Carceri. There, the heroes are caught in a battle for supremacy between the dens of Garond and Guilder Starkad, and they can play each against the other in order to learn the dark of the hunters' plans. While exploring the dangerous stalking grounds of the realm, the PCs meet a kidnapped animal petitioner from the Beastlands and witness a Deliverer trap a beast's spirit and feed it to Malar. Finally, the heroes must rescue Meuronna the dream hunter from the gehreleth lair. The chapter ends when the PCs leave Carceri with Meuronna and head for the Beastlands.

In Chapter III, the characters arrive in Krigala, the first layer of the Beastlands, where the corruption of the plane begins to transform them into animals. They journey to the abandoned town of Signpost, where the One lies dreaming, guarded by Garond and his Deliverers. However, the Signer can't be awakened by conventional means — Meuronna must cast the PCs into the tainted dreamscape. There, they must rescue the One from his nightmares and lead him back to the waking world. Only by freeing the Signer from his terrifying dreams can they turn back the tide of corruption washing across the Beastlands.

◆ PREPARING FOR PLAY ◆

Something Wild is designed for a party of four to six player characters (PCs) of 4th to 7th level — about 28 total levels. In order to run the adventure, the Dungeon Master (DM) needs the PLANESCAPE boxed set. In addition, the following products are recommended, but not required: the *Planes of Conflict* boxed set (detailing Carceri and the Beastlands), the PLANESCAPE MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Ap-

pendix, *In the Cage: A Guide to Sigil* (for maps of Sigil), and *The Factol's Manifesto* (for maps of faction headquarters in Sigil). Finally, although this adventure presents all the rules necessary for using dreamscapes, the DM may wish to consult the RAVENLOFT® boxed set *The Nightmare Lands* for more information on dream rules.

Italicized text printed in amber should be read aloud or paraphrased for the players; all other information is for the DM's eyes only. Several kinds of special notes appear throughout the adventure:

- ◆ Sections marked **DM NOTE** are intended to call attention to important information.
- ◆ Sections marked **THE REAL CHANT** help make clear what's *really* going on.
- ◆ Sections marked **SLIPPING THE BLINDS** give directions for dealing with problems.

The Appendix, starting on page 61, provides a full description of the *spiritbowl* used by the Malarites, the claws of Malar that many hunters fight with, and full game statistics for all NPCs, animals, and monsters the PCs might battle during the course of the adventure. The Appendix also gives three tables for easy reference: the effects of magic on Carceri, the effects of magic on the Beastlands, and random encounters on the Beastlands.

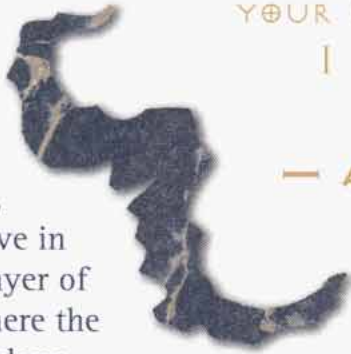
The enclosed mapsheet provides three color handouts for players: a map of Krigala, a map of the Land of the Hunt, and a page from a journal. You can cut the three pieces apart or make copies so as not to damage the sheet, but don't give anything to the players until their characters discover the information during the game.

The inside panels of the adventure folder provide maps for the DM's eyes only: the stalking grounds and the gehreleth lair on Carceri, the town of Signpost in Krigala, and the town manor called Dreamhearth.

Finally, remember that a PLANESCAPE adventure should stress ideas and role-playing, not just mowing down monsters and grabbing treasure. The end of the adventure provides experience point bonuses (beyond those for creatures defeated) for accomplishing story goals.

FACCTIONS ◆ IN THIS ADVENTURE ◆

Player characters of all factions can take part in this adventure. Certain factions have more reason than others to investigate the ripple effect; for example, both the Sign of One and the Free League suffer the effects strongly, and both the Fraternity of Order and the Harmonium want to put a stop to the violence.



SORRY I BASHED
YOUR SKULL, OFFICER.
I DUNNO WHAT
CAME OVER ME!
— AN ANARCHIST,
AFTER TAKING A POKE
AT A HARDHEAD

But when nobody can sleep, everyone has a foul temper, and the City of Doors is threatening to fly apart in bestial chaos, every faction has a stake in finding out the real chant. No matter what faction a PC belongs to, if he goes to his headquarters or faction comrades in Sigil for information, he's likely to pick up some advice, and he'll definitely get a mission: Find out the dark of the trouble and do something about it!

ATHAR: Defiers in the Shattered Temple worry that the outbreaks of animal behavior might be some so-called deity's attempt to push its way into the city. But the fact that Signers seem to be affected the most makes the Athar peery. After all, the Signers always rattle on about imagining things into existence – could they have imagined a power into the Cage?

BELIEVERS OF THE SOURCE: Life is a test; if a body does well, he'll progress to a higher life form and take the next test. But savagery is a sign of regression, not advancement. It could just be that the affected victims are berks who've failed their current test.

BLEAK CABAL: Bleakers feel that the multiverse makes no sense. What's more, the Signers – who think they can sculpt the multiverse to their will – are fools. Faction high-ups in the Gatehouse instruct Bleaker PCs to figure out why the primal changes are hitting Signers hardest – just so the Bleakers can exploit the situation even further.

DOOMGUARD: Animals are lashing out? Friends are turning on each other in the street? The Doomguard find the entropy of the situation delicious. They want to find out what's going on just so they can make sure it *keeps* going on.

DUSTMEN: The Dead dislike the sudden eruption of passion in animals and people; they think all beings should strive to shrug off the chains of emotion. Dustmen PCs who visit the Mortuary are told to get to the bottom of the changes in case they might eventually threaten the faction's stability.

FATED: Few members of the Fated seem to be affected by the changes, but if they figure out what causes this effect, they might turn it to their benefit (gaining jink, power, knowledge, and so on).

FRATERNITY OF ORDER: Guvners as a whole are too logical and exacting to be influenced by the ripple effect from the Beastlands. 'Course, the violent changes in the populace are a threat to law and order – not to mention a strain on the City Court – so the faction would like its members to stem the tide.

FREE LEAGUE: The faction counts many hybrids (bariaur, centaurs, and the like) among its members. Because folks with animal sides feel the ripple effect quite strongly, the faction mistakenly thinks its members are the primary targets – perhaps it's a plague, or a Harmonium plot to wipe out Indeps.

HARMONIUM: The Hardheads are working overtime putting down wild beasts and scragging all the berks who lose their heads. Faction high-ups in the City Barracks *definitely* want to put a stop to the chaos.

MERCYKILLERS: The Red Death is pretty sure that whatever has happened to Sigil, someone must have broken a law to do it. This someone should be found and punished. Even though some Mercykillers in the Prison sell criminals as prey to the Malarites, the faction has no idea that the hunters are also behind the ripple effect.

REVOLUTIONARY LEAGUE: Anarchists tell anyone they can tackle that they don't support random destruction. Anarchy means the freedom to make your own choices, not chaos. The goal is to bring down factions, not buildings, and the ripple effect just might be an effective tool for achieving that goal.

SIGN OF ONE: The Signers in the Hall of Speakers know nothing of the *dreamlink* on the Beastlands. However, they realize that members of their faction seem to suffer the most from the strange changes in Sigil and would like a Signer PC to investigate. But self-absorbed as they are, the high-ups of the faction offer no organized help.

SOCIETY OF SENSATION: Many folks in Sigil think the Sensates have something to do with the changes – after all, the faction's always trying to get sods to let go of their inhibitions. Sensate high-ups in the Civic Festhall don't want to see the faction blamed; they encourage their members to prove the group's innocence by uncovering the real perpetrators.

TRANSCENDENT ORDER: Though Ciphers don't embrace savagery and destruction, they do like the changes sweeping the city. Folks are finally freeing themselves of the need to think a matter to death before they act. High-ups in the Great Gymnasium encourage faction members to help each "victim" learn to deal with his new state of existence in a less violent manner.

XAOSITECTS: Like the Sensates, the Xaositects are hit with much of the blame for the ripple effect – they're always spreading chaos through the Cage in one form or another. Fact is, many Xaositects in the Hive don't mind taking credit for the changes. But some think it's unwise to make enemies needlessly and want a Xaositect PC to exonerate the faction.

◆ FORCES OF CON+EN+ION ◆

Six different forces or groups are enmeshed in the struggle to bring Malar to the Beastlands. This section describes each group and its major NPCs. Statistics for these NPCs appear in the Appendix.

THE DELIVERERS

Not long ago, the Malarite known as Garond the Claw, a tiefling wizard, led a raid on a nearby gehreleth lair. The 'leths had troubled the hunters' caves for some time. After a hard-won battle, Garond took a dead farastu's obsidian triangle – the fiend's symbolic link to its three-sided god – and hung it from his own neck in triumph.

The berk didn't know that the triangles acted as keys for off-plane gates hidden in the farastu lair. As he was leaving the tunnels, Garond inadvertently stepped through a gate into Krigala, the first layer of the Beastlands. He was amazed to find that many of the animals there had intelligence. Before long, a member of the Verdant Guild came across Garond and showed him a gate that led back to the Land of the Hunt.

That trip was all it took. Garond soon returned to the gehreleth tunnels with his five most trusted hunters. The Malarites stumbled across a small collection of obsidian triangles (kept for 'leths who'd liquified themselves and been stored in bottles in the tunnels). Each of the five hunters took a triangle to wear around his or her neck. Garond rechristened the group the *Deliverers*, for he felt sure that, under his leadership, they would finally free their lord Malar from his long exile on Carceri.

The six Deliverers travel back and forth between the Land of the Hunt and Krigala, leading other Malarites on hunting expeditions and overseeing the capture of animal petitioners. Garond remains on the Beastlands to direct D'kess and his crew (see "The Vile Hunt," page 9), and to make sure that the body of the One, lying in Dreamhearth, is protected from harm.

Garond's a stout tiefling, but he's still nimble enough to hunt prey with great stealth and speed. Small horns protrude from his forehead; Garond considers them a sign of virility. He wears the ebony pelt of a panther around his torso like form-fitting leather, leaving his arms and legs free for movement, and when he can't use his spells he fights with his *rod of smiting* or *dagger +3*. As leader of the Deliverers, Garond is proud and fierce, and he carries himself with a noble bearing. He feels contempt for anyone, including the PCs, who does not follow Malar.

GUILDER STARKAD

Garond's plan to free Malar threatens the ego and prestige of Guilder Starkad, the human leader of the largest pack of hunters in Malar's realm. As a result, Starkad's willing to do anything necessary to bring down the tiefling wizard. As a priest of Malar, Starkad wants to see the power freed, but he wants credit for it himself.

Starkad can't afford to fight Garond openly, because they're supposedly working toward the same goal. But Starkad is doing whatever he can to undermine his rival. Recently he discovered Garond's use of *spiritbowls*, and Starkad arranged to pick up his own shipment of *bowls* in Sigil. He hopes he can eventually corner the market and slide Garond out of the picture.

Whereas Garond is an ambitious idealist, Starkad has already achieved his goals and wants to protect what he's got. He's a shrewd pragmatist. If he believes the PCs could be useful tools, he'll treat them with respect – as long as they serve his needs, and not a second longer.

THE SIGN OF ONE

Like most factions, the Sign of One has a headquarters in Sigil – the Hall of Speakers – and a base of operations on another plane. For the Signers, that's the Beastlands; they think animals have the right idea about life. A lion worries about the world only as far as it affects him personally – if he can't eat it, mate with it, or be killed by it, he doesn't give it a second thought. Signers feel much the same; each faction member views the world only in terms of how it applies to him. An animal's viewpoint is the kind of outlook all Signers strive for.


That's what led to the *dreamlink*. Dreamhearth, the faction's manor in Signpost, is a place for Signers to retreat and refine their meditations, boosted by the natural, primal forces of the Beastlands. Recently, a few Signers launched an experiment at Dreamhearth to see if one of them could dream his way into touch with the essence of the plane itself. After all, it's through dreams that a body frees himself from reason and the restraints of physical form. Perhaps through the *dreamlink*, Signers could learn to adopt the perfectly focused vision of the Beastlands' animals – maybe even imagine a whole new state of existence for their faction.

The Signer chosen for the *dreamlink* was a local cutter known around town as the One (Pl/♂ githzerai/B5/Sign of One/CG). See, faction members believe that each body imagines the multiverse for himself. But some take that idea a step farther, claiming that a single Signer, somewhere, keeps the whole multiverse



MASTER YOUR THOUGHTS
OR THEY
WILL MASTER YOU.

— THE ONE



going, just through the power of his mind. The githzerai in Signpost never claimed to be that special blood, but his strong ability to think things into existence made folks in town start calling him “the One” anyway.

Sarazh (Pl/♂ tiefling/P14 [Deneir]/Sign of One/LG), the high-up of Signpost and Dreamhearth, agreed to watch over the One and make sure the *dreamlink* went smoothly. However, apart from the two of them and a small handful of berks in Dreamhearth, no one knew about the experiment – not even faction high-ups in Sigil. The dream crew just didn’t see how the experiment would affect anyone but themselves, and they wanted to keep it secret until they found success.

To help boost the One’s power, Sarazh enlisted Meuronna, a tabaxi (leopard-woman) dream hunter from Bast’s realm on Ysgard. Meuronna’s powers kept the One deep in the *dreamlink* and guarded his mind from psychic dangers. ‘Course, Garond forced Meuronna to trap the berk in a tainted dreamscape and then sent her to Carceri, where she’s now held prisoner by gehreleth.

Meuronna’s tall and lithe, with bright yellow eyes and a spotted, rusty orange coat. She’s stronger and more powerful than most tabaxi; her training as a dream hunter developed her body as well as her mind.

Three of Meuronna’s dream powers come into play during this adventure. The first is *message*, an ability that lets her send messages to the PCs through dreams and mental images. The second is *ward*, by which Meuronna can safeguard the PCs from troubling nightmares while they sleep. The third power is *send*, which allows Meuronna to place herself into a trance and send a sleeper’s dream-self into a dreamscape.

THE VILE HUNT+

The Vile Hunt is a group of lawful evil humanoids who can’t stand the idea that a beast might be smarter than they are. Led by a nasty berk named D’kess, the hunters think the intelligent animal petitioners of the Beastlands are abominations, good for nothing but the dead-book. When the Malarites came to the plane, Garond made the Hunt unwitting pawns in his own plan.

Garond has convinced D’kess to round up as many animal petitioners as possible and send them through the gate to Carceri. ‘Course, the tiefling left out the part about draining the petitioner’s spirits to feed Malar – D’kess just thinks the Deliverers want to rid the plane of abominations. Naturally, he’s glad to help out.

As for the corrupted *dreamlink*, D’kess knows only that the Signers were trying to reach the core of the Beastlands, and that the Deliverers wanted to stop them. But when Meuronna threw the One into the evil dreamscape, the Vile Hunt, like everyone else, started having nightmares of cats. Worse still, they began to turn into that which they hated most – animals with the minds of men.

Garond told D’kess not to worry – the changes were just a temporary stage of a plan that’d rid the plane of petitioners for good. “Besides,” he said, “the best way to strike at a foe is from within. The beasts would never suspect killers cloaked in animal guise.” ‘Course, the changes *aren’t* temporary, but Garond figures that by the time D’kess and his bashers wise up, it’ll be too late, and Malar will already be on the Beastlands. Then the Vile Hunt will just be more prey.

THE VERDANT+ GUILD

Opposing the Vile Hunt is a sect called the Verdant Guild, who try to protect the Beastlands – and all wild, natural places – from hunters and ecological despoiling. Members call themselves Wylders, and any nonevil, nonlawful cutter can join. Each Wylder wears an animal mask that lets him *speak with animals* once per day with the kind of beast depicted on the mask.

Wylders see the changes wracking the Beastlands but know nothing of the *dreamlink*, Meuronna’s dreamscape, or the influence of the Malarites. They know only that the foul berks of the Vile Hunt are killing some animal petitioners right there on the plane and sending others somewhere off-plane to die. But the Wylders are changing, too – the hybrid members are turning savage, and the humanoid members are becoming animals. What’s more, their ghastly nightmares lead them to blame the new cat lord. Is she getting the Vile Hunt to dispose of her enemies so she can take over the whole plane?

THE CAT+ LORD

Needless to say, the new cat lord detests being blamed for the changes affecting the Beastlands. But the increased savagery in the beasts, the shapeshifting of humanoids into animals, and the constant nightmares of cats all seem to point the finger in her direction.

The cat lord keeps out of the affairs of humanoids, so she doesn’t know about the *dreamlink* or the tainted dreamscape. What’s more, she knows only the basics about the Malarites and the Vile Hunt – felines who’ve been stalked by either group have told their lord that evil berks are hunting the animals. But the cat lord knows nothing of the plot to bring Malar to the Beastlands.

With a trusted pride of great cat and lycanthrope petitioners, the cat lord prowls Brux, the second layer, looking to defend her charges and stop the chaos. She sends out her scouts and warden beast to learn whatever they can about the madness ravaging the plane.

In human form, the cat lord is a tall, slender female with shoulder-length black hair and catlike green eyes (they have vertical pupils). In cat form, she becomes a fierce black panther with flaming red eyes.

CHAPTER I: RATTLING THE CAGE

The first part of *Something Wild* takes place in Sigil. Sashell, a member of the Verdant Guild, has fled the Beastlands and come to the Cage to

find help for his troubled plane. Unfortunately, he's pursued by Nojas, an assassin from the Vile Hunt. Meanwhile, a Mercykiller named Blander Mul searches the Cage for criminals who've gone missing the Prison. Mul

doesn't realize that greedy high-ups in his own faction sell the berks to Malarites on Carceri. And the Malar-

ites are in Sigil themselves, selling parts of slaughtered animals and buying *spiritbowls* to take back to Carceri.

The section called "Getting the PCs Involved" presents two different lines of investigation for the PCs. In "The

Wylder," they meet the barmy Sashell, who transforms into a tiger before their eyes; in "The

Prisoners," they learn of the

missing criminals in an ominous meeting with Mul. Regardless of how you begin, be sure to present *both* "The Wylder" and "The Prisoners" early in the adventure. These encounters give the PCs two different trails of clues to follow; they can investigate the shapeshifting Wylder or try to track down the missing prisoners. The rest of the encounters in this chapter can occur in almost any order, depending on how the PCs conduct their search.

Eventually, the PCs should realize that the two plot trails cross – and that the Malarites are the common element in each. The chapter ends when the PCs decide to leave Sigil and head to the Beastlands or Carceri; see "Moving On" (on page 23) for the various methods of speeding them on their journey.

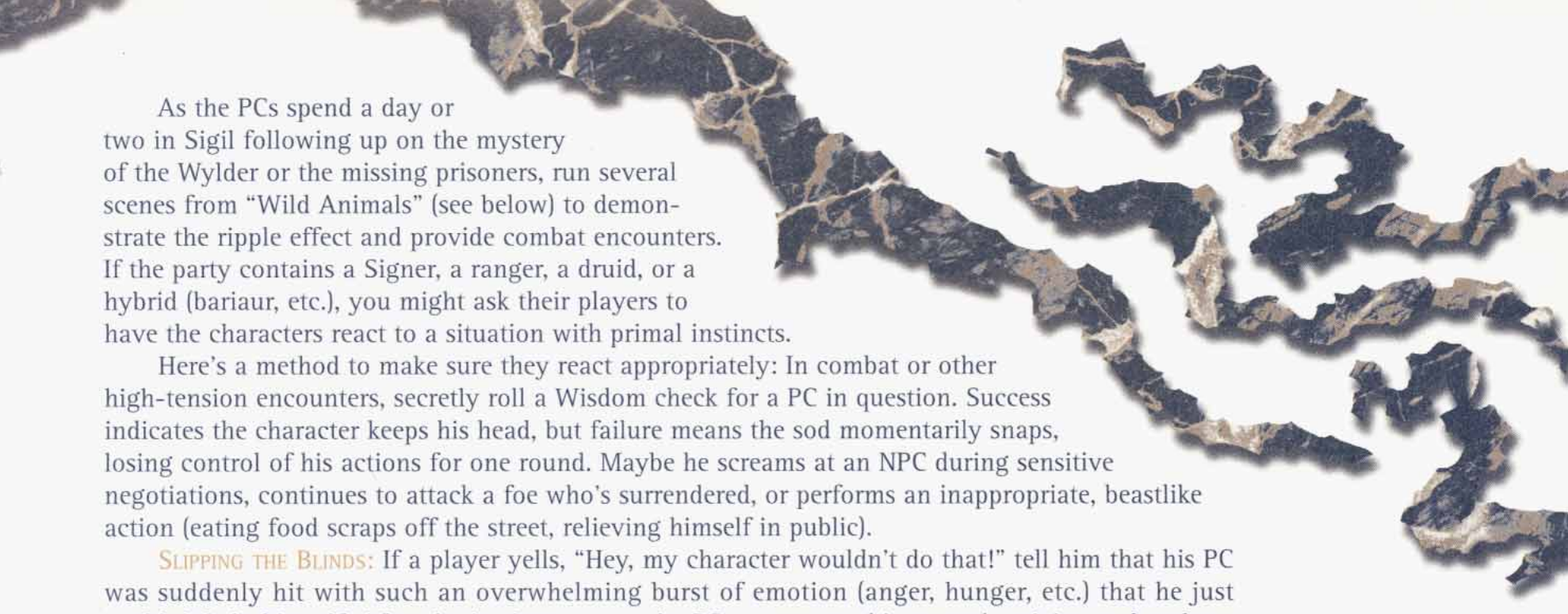
Course, while the PCs chase clues around Sigil, the city's being hit by the ripple effect from the corrupted *dreamlink* on the Beastlands – not to mention a wave of feral nightmares.

DM NOTE: *In the Cage: A Guide to Sigil* contains a poster map showing many streets and sites mentioned in this chapter. *The Factol's Manifesto* features interior maps of the Prison, the Hall of Speakers, the City Court, and the City Barracks. Don't worry if you don't have these references. Create your own maps, and just set all locations far enough apart to make the PCs do some legwork.

◆ THE RIPPLE EFFECT ◆

Sigil, the City of Doors, sits at the center of the multiverse. It's a nexus for all planes, all places – somehow, some way, everything reaches into the Cage. The city is particularly sensitive when one of the Outer Planes starts to sour. So, as the One's tainted dreamscape turns the Beastlands more savage and evil, the blight has begun to leak into Sigil. Mild or domesticated animals turn on their masters or the public. Worse, citizens who're normally quite level-headed resort to violence or other less enlightened behavior. The folks most affected are members of the Sign of One faction, cutters like rangers and druids who're strongly attuned to nature, and bashers who're already part animal – bariaur, centaurs, wemics, and so on.

THIS IS THE
BEST THING
HIT THE CAGE
SINCE THE
BLOOD WAR.
— A DOOMGUARD BRUISER,
ENJOYING THE
RIPPLE EFFECT



As the PCs spend a day or two in Sigil following up on the mystery of the Wylder or the missing prisoners, run several scenes from “Wild Animals” (see below) to demonstrate the ripple effect and provide combat encounters. If the party contains a Signer, a ranger, a druid, or a hybrid (bariaur, etc.), you might ask their players to have the characters react to a situation with primal instincts.

Here’s a method to make sure they react appropriately: In combat or other high-tension encounters, secretly roll a Wisdom check for a PC in question. Success indicates the character keeps his head, but failure means the sod momentarily snaps, losing control of his actions for one round. Maybe he screams at an NPC during sensitive negotiations, continues to attack a foe who’s surrendered, or performs an inappropriate, beastlike action (eating food scraps off the street, relieving himself in public).

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: If a player yells, “Hey, my character wouldn’t do that!” tell him that his PC was suddenly hit with such an overwhelming burst of emotion (anger, hunger, etc.) that he just couldn’t help himself. After the instinct passes, the PC can resume his normal activity, and perhaps try to undo or account for his momentary lapse.

◆ NIGH+MARES ◆

Whereas Signers, rangers, druids, and hybrids are the most likely victims of primal behavior, nearly everyone in Sigil feels the effects of the tainted dreamscape in the form of nightmares. As the PCs move about town and you describe what they see, be sure to remark on how tired folks look. Bleary-eyed Harmonium patrolmen lose their cadence while marching, traders in the Great Bazaar snooze at their booths – even the mute dabus seem to sweep Sigil’s trash with less vigor. The general weariness of the public affects ordinary encounters, as yawning merchants give incorrect change (in the PCs’ favor!), normally prim Guvners slouch and daydream while talking to the party, and so on. If the PCs get any tired folks talking, they might even learn that the berks suffer from the same basic nightmare – that of being stalked in darkness by a huge, black, catlike shape.

Unless the PCs speed through the events of Chapter I and leave the Cage before bedtime, they probably experience the bad dreams as well. When they fall asleep at a favored inn or flophouse, the PCs have nightmares of being hunted by felines. You can wait until morning and describe the dreams in general to the whole party, or you can pick a sleeping PC and let him experience a few moments of his nightmare as if it were really happening. The nightmares are disturbing and prevent restful sleep, but they have no serious effect on the PCs.

DM NOTE: Feel free to make up wild, disturbing nightmares for the PCs, tailoring them to individual characters’ fears, histories, and abilities. (For examples to draw from, see the One’s nightmares on pages 55–59.) Remember, each nightmare stems from the corrupted *dreamlink* on the Beastlands and is a side-effect of the fear, savagery, and evil the One faces in the tainted dreamscape. Thus, each should be a tense, frightening, malicious game of cat-and-mouse between the PC and shadowy, cat-like figures.

◆ WILD ANIMALS ◆

This section contains several short encounters involving animals touched too strongly by the ripple effect from the Beastlands. The animals completely lose control and attack those around them. As the adventure begins, and between later encounters, run a few of these scenes to demonstrate the severity of the ripple effect. For instance, before the party gets together to begin its investigation, each individual PC may witness one of these scenes. This dramatizes the crisis facing Sigil and helps motivate the PCs to investigate it.

In one of these encounters, have the rampaging animal kill Aleron, an elf petitioner from Arborea. Then, once the battle is over, a friend of the slain elf – a tiefling named Minda (Pl/♀ tiefling/0-level/Society of Sensation/CN) – bemoans the permanent loss of Aleron’s spirit. “It’s all my



fault,” cries Minda. “If only Aleron had stayed on Arborea, his essence could have flowed into his plane. But because he came to Sigil to visit me, he’s gone forever!”

If the PCs ask, Minda explains that the spirit of a petitioner killed on his home plane joins with that plane, but the spirit of a petitioner killed *off* his home plane has nowhere to go and quickly dissipates into nothingness. “I’ve heard that aasimon can catch the spirits of a dying petitioner,” adds the tiefling. “If I’d known the dark of it, my friend’s spirit might still be alive.”

DM NOTE: This scene lets the PCs know what happens when petitioners die, so that later they’ll understand the Deliverers’ plot to trap spirits for Malar.

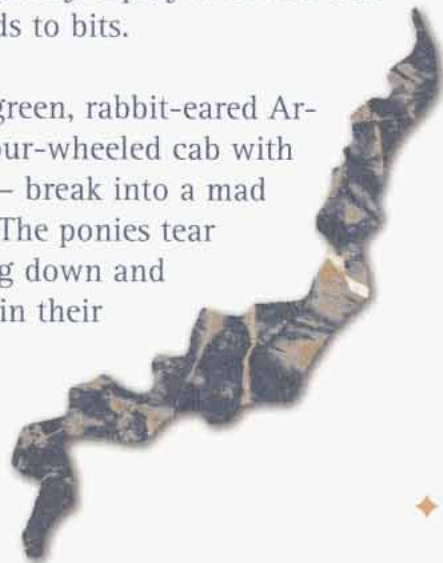
CRANIUM RATS: A pack of 42 cranium rats runs boldly through the streets like a seething, chittering carpet, using spells and fangs to attack one fleeing sod after another. The rats are looking for scraps of food, but they try to eat any victims they can bring down. Folks can’t understand why the pack’s out in the middle of the day – cranium rats are usually only seen at night. (If a lone PC witnesses this, reduce the pack’s size to just a few rats.)

ETHYK: A monkeylike ethyk (see the *Monstrous Supplement* in *Planes of Conflict*) turns its power to cause aggression on its owner, a four-armed reave, driving him into a berserk rage. As the PCs fight the reave, be sure to let them see the ethyk watching the battle. If the reave is defeated, the ethyk spurs up to five more berks to violence (one at a time), sending them against the PCs.

RAVENS: Five executioner’s ravens stop eating the flesh of deaders hanging in Petitioner’s Square and decide to feast on the living. The huge gray birds wheel high in the sky above their chosen prey, trying to swoop down and blind victims with eye attacks before descending *en masse*.

AOSKIAN HOUNDS: A Mercykiller out walking two trained Aoskian hounds is himself torn apart by the animals. The two-headed hounds then run wild through the streets, using their magical *bark* to paralyze prey with fear and then ripping the stunned sods to bits.

ARCADIAN PONIES: Two light-green, rabbit-eared Arcadian ponies – pulling a four-wheeled cab with a driver and one passenger – break into a mad gallop, throwing the driver. The ponies tear through the streets, knocking down and trampling anyone who gets in their way. The rider in the cab screams for help.



OTHER REACTIONS

Creatures aren’t the only ones hit by the ripple effect – ordinary folks feel it too. As the PCs explore Sigil, run a few of the following encounters in between other scenes to add more color to the story.

- ◆ A Cipher (Pr/♂ halfling/T3/Transcendent Order/NG) walks through the streets and praises the changes that are causing citizens to act on instinct – a total union of mind and body, the ultimate goal of every Cipher.
- ◆ An Indep swanmay (Pl/♀ swanmay/F4/Free League/N) loudly expresses her belief that the ripple effect is the work of the Harmonium. “After all,” she says, “the sodding Hardheads hate us Indeps, and *we’re* the ones who suffer the most from this savagery!” (Not true; it just seems so, because many hybrids belong to the Free League.)
- ◆ A thin man (Pl/♂ human/0-level/Sign of One/CN), distraught over his nightly, haunting dreams of being stalked by cats, hunts down and kills every housecat he can find, hoping to stop his nightmares.
- ◆ Two bariaur (Pl/♂ bariaur/F5/Free League/LN), engaged in a friendly argument in the street, suddenly attack each other with murderous rage. If the PCs break up the fight, neither bariaur can say why he snapped – it just came over him.

GETTING THE PCs INVOLVED (#1): ◆ THE WYLDER ◆

This opening scene can be set in any public place in Sigil – it can take place as the PCs relax in a tavern, browse in a shop, or just walk down the street. A male human named Sashell – a Wylder of the Verdant Guild sect – has fled the Beastlands and come to Sigil looking for an answer to the changes twisting his plane. For the past four days, he’s lodged at a kip in the Clerk’s Ward called the Slumbering Lamb, spending most of his time poring through tomes in the Cup of Freedom library and haunting various sites in the Cage for information that might help him.

Unfortunately, the poor sod’s been hit pretty hard by the psychic corruption of the tainted dreamscape; fact is, by the time the adventure begins he’s degenerated into little more than a paranoid, frenetic barmy. Sashell’s taken to recording his constant, troubling dreams in a leather-bound journal, which he left at the Slumbering Lamb.

What’s more, Sashell’s got a stalker on his trail. D’kess, the leader of the Vile Hunt, ordered a githzerai huntsman named Nojas to track the Wylder to Sigil and put him in the dead-book. This encounter begins when Sashell tries in his incoherent way to get help from the PCs, just moments before he himself is found by Nojas.



D. Miracola

Out of the corner of your eye, you notice a short, stocky human talking to himself and sneaking furtive glances in your direction. He has long, stringy black hair and looks like he hasn't had a bath or a good night's sleep in weeks. When he sees that you've spotted him, he stumbles shakily toward you and grabs one of you by the shoulder.

"They're working for her, you know, it's her, I'm sure of it, they send them all off to die, to be killed I tell you! Better watch your spirit, you know – they'll eat it. Lock it in the prison. That's where I put my journal. No, the Slumbering Lamb, that's where I left it. Dangerous to carry around. Got to keep it safe."

With thick, dirty fingers, the man paws at a triangular black pendant hanging by a cord around his neck. "They'll be coming for me, they will. From the prison. The killers walk through triangles, can you? I've seen it. I've seen the monsters come and the spirits go."

Like many Wylders, Sashell thinks the cat lord – the mysterious “she” – is behind the trouble on the Beastlands. But before he fled the plane, he picked up a few hints on the spirit-reaping of the animal petitioners. Sashell even stole a Deliverer's obsidian triangle, which he now wears around his neck. 'Course, Sashell's now-addled mind can only communicate his knowledge to the PCs in rambling, disjointed speech, peppered with odd references to triangles, prisons, dreams, and catching and eating spirits.

Allow the PCs to question Sashell for a few minutes if they wish. Role-play the Wylder's stammering speech to give the heroes obscure hints without letting them learn much. The only solid facts they can drag out of Sashell are his name and the location of the Slumbering Lamb – the kip where he's staying.

Before long, Nojas sneaks into the background of the scene and spots Sashell talking to the PCs. The githzerai tries to kill the Wylder, triggering a dramatic change in the barmy – Sashell transforms into a tiger!

Suddenly, the man's face twists with pain and surprise as a sleek arrow buries itself in his shoulder! The barmy shrieks and claws the air. As he falls screaming to his knees, his skin starts to ripple and grow orange fur, his nose and mouth grow outward from his face, and his howl becomes a feral, rumbling growl.

The pain of the attack (coupled with Sashell's disturbed mental state) has triggered the ripple effect's most dramatic manifestation: a change into animal form. Though most sods must be on the Beastlands to change, Sashell's a Wylder, and is susceptible even in Sigil.

Each PC should roll 1d10 for surprise; any who aren't surprised can take one action before Sashell turns fully into a tiger and viciously attacks those nearest to him – the hapless party. Nothing the PCs do can prevent or reverse the transformation.

FIGHTING SASHELL

Once battle is engaged, Sashell fights until killed or subdued. As he's not a lycanthrope, he can be harmed by ordinary weapons, though the PCs may not realize this. If slain, Sashell remains a tiger instead of turning back into human form, which should dispel any notions of lycanthropy in knowledgeable PCs. The heroes can take the triangle that still hangs from the beast's neck; however, a piece of one corner is broken off, so they can't use it as a gate key when they get to Carceri.

Two turns after the battle ends, five Harmonium bashers (PI/var human/F5/Harmonium/LN) arrive to investigate reports of the disturbance. They question the PCs about what happened but refuse to believe that the tiger used to be a man – there's no evidence of such a wild claim, and no passersby back up the story. *"It's just another animal that went barmy,"* says one Hardhead. *"They're attacking folks all over the Cage. Fact is, a good number of people've been acting crazy, too."*

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: If the PCs attack Sashell before Nojas shows up, the Wylder immediately begins his transformation and attacks the party. Nojas arrives and watches the battle, sneaking away if the PCs win.

If the PCs calm Sashell or knock him out, he remains a tiger; the transformation is permanent as long as the ripple effect continues. If the PCs get a wizard to *polymorph* Sashell back to his human form, he is grateful to them but more deranged than before. Too incoherent to tell them anything else, he plays no further part in this adventure.

If the PCs kill Sashell but don't take his obsidian triangle, Dustmen who cart away the body claim it instead. If the PCs decide they want the triangle later, they can try to recover it from the Mortuary with jink or a convincing story.

CHASING NOJAS

In the round before Sashell completes his transformation and attacks, the PCs might look for the source of the fired arrow. Any searchers who make Intelligence checks spot Nojas – a thin, sallow, shaven-headed githzerai – fleeing from the scene. If a PC pursues Nojas immediately, the huntsman stops running after three rounds and tries to lie his way out of trouble. He claims he was sent from Limbo to execute Sashell, a murderous lycanthrope who slew many githzerai on that plane.

Alert PCs may note that Nojas himself looks somewhat animal-like. His eyebrows are unusually bushy (many githzerai have no eyebrows at all), and his movements have a certain beastlike grace. Like other bashers on the Beastlands, he's been gradually succumbing to the ripple effect. Bringing Nojas's animal traits to his attention provokes his furious denials.

If Nojas is attacked or his story challenged, he tries to cause a public ruckus and escape; if that fails, he fights to

the death. Nojas sacrifices his life for the Vile Hunt's cause – the extermination of intelligent animals.

A ring of clear thought Nojas wears prevents the PCs from magically controlling or extracting information from him. If they remove or neutralize the ring, they might force the surly, fanatical Nojas to tell them about the Vile Hunt; about its leader, D'kess; and about the Hunt's fierce hatred of the Wylders, the group to which Sashell belongs. However, Nojas knows nothing about the ripple effect, Garond, or the plot to free Malar. He's just following orders.

GETTING THE PCs INVOLVED (#2): ◆ THE PRISONERS ◆

Like “The Wylder,” this opening can take place in any public place in Sigil, though it works best if the PCs are relaxing in a tavern or inn. A Mercykiller paladin named Blander Mul (Pl/♂ human/Pal8/Mercykillers/LG) comes looking for criminals who've disappeared from the Prison and might have escaped.

What Mul doesn't know is that the missing berks were secretly transferred to the super-prison on Carceri known as the Vault – an escape-proof jail set high on a mountain peak in Colothys. Only the Mercykillers, the Harmonium, and the Fraternity of Order even know the place exists; they're the bloods who run the facility. The Vault was built to hold Sigil's most dangerous, incorrigible, or “inconvenient” criminals, who get sent there through a secret portal in the depths of the Prison.

However, a number of evil Mercykillers have decided to turn a profit by sending criminals to the Vault and then selling them. And the Malarites are steady customers, buying criminals and then releasing them in the Land of the Hunt as prey to be stalked.

Blander Mul knows that the Vault exists, but he has no idea that some Mercykillers send prisoners there for sale to the hunters. Mul thinks the Vault is used only for noble purposes, and he won't reveal its existence to the PCs.

This encounter begins when Mul bursts into the chosen setting, accompanied by a faction guard dog – an Aaskian hound.

The din of carousing Cagers quiets to a low murmur as an armor-clad basher clanks into the place, a snarling, two-headed hound on a leash at his side. The ash-gray beast snaps at a few sods who scurry out of its way as the man loudly addresses the crowd. “I am Mul of the Mercykillers,” he says in a crisp, clear voice. “Despite my faction's reluctance, I find it my personal duty to warn you of a possible threat to the community. A number of the guilty have gone missing from their prison cells and may be running loose in the streets.” The man pauses and looks slowly around the room. “Good rewards will certainly fall upon any citizens with information to share.”

YΘU'RE LUCKY I DΘN'T FINE YΘU
FΘR WALKING YΘUR PE+
WI+HΘU+ A LICENSE.

— HARMΘNIUM ΘFFICER,
UPON SEEING SASHELL'S CΘRPSE

Five or six greedy berks immediately converge on Mul (cautiously, thanks to the growling hound) to find out how much jink's involved. Mul tells them that a good deed is its own reward, and the crowd promptly disperses. The PCs can approach the paladin if they wish to learn more, but they won't be offered money either – only the gratitude of Mul and his faction. If the PCs show any interest, Mul joins them at their table and tells them everything he knows:

Over the past few months, a dozen or more prisoners have simply disappeared from their cells, with no sign of forced escape. Mul and other lawful good Mercykillers are bent on recapturing the berks, but they haven't found any strong leads thus far and are turning to the public for help. If asked for specifics, Mul describes the three escapees he considers the most dangerous:

- ◆ Ankis, a githyanki assassin with rosy skin;
- ◆ Picand Four-Teeth, a mad, carnivorous bariaur;
- ◆ Hoacher the Foul, a bladeling bruiser who's dyed his body spikes black.

As for his faction's “reluctance” to inform the public, Mul remarks that some Mercykillers fear a loss of respect should the truth about the missing prisoners leak out. He also notes sadly that other, less-dedicated members of the faction are lax in their guard duties. Unfortunately, Mul's wrong on both counts. Some of his superiors are part of the prisoner trading ring, and they don't want do-gooders running around town calling attention to the empty cells.

After a few minutes of talking, Mul prepares to leave. He tells the party to ask for him at the Prison if they dig up any chant or have more questions. But he also invites them to stop by the Woodman's Retreat, a pub in the Guildhall Ward where he spends most evenings.

THE REAL CHANT: The PCs can search Sigil as much as they like for the three named prisoners. They won't find the berks – they've all been sold to the Malarites on Carceri. However, feel free to drop rumors, false sightings, and red herrings into the adventure as desired. When the PCs visit the Land of the Hunt in Chapter II, they'll run into Hoacher the Foul. They never meet the others.

◆ SEARCHING THE CAGE ◆

Once you throw the PCs into the story with “The Wylder” and “The Prisoners,” what happens next is pretty much up to them. The encounter with Sashell points them to the Slumbering Lamb, and from there to the Cup of Freedom, Parts & Pieces, the Planar Trade Consortium, and the Hall of Speakers. The scene with Mul suggests visits to the Woodsman’s Retreat and the Prison, and from there, the City Court and the City Barracks. This chapter contains an encounter based around each location.

Meanwhile, don’t forget to run scenes from “Wild Animals” and “Other Reactions,” and to give the PCs nightmares. When the party decides to leave Sigil, proceed to “Moving On” (page 23).

◆ THE SLUMBERING LAMB ◆

A simple stone kip on the border of the orderly Clerk’s Ward and the foul Hive Ward, the Slumbering Lamb is run by a wrinkled old tiefling woman folks call Toozer (Pl/♀ tiefling/T3/Free League/NE). The sparse, boxy rooms cost only 5 cp per night, pulling in boarders who’re either frugal or broke. When Sashell arrived in the Cage four days ago, he got a room at the Lamb, but he was hardly a model tenant. If the PCs describe the Wylder to Toozer, she reacts with anger.

“You’re after him, too, eh?” asks the haggard, rail-thin tiefling, sneering. “That berk’s got a lot o’ friends. Or maybe he just owes a lot o’ jink. He’s stiffed me 15 coppers for the last three nights! I tell ya, I oughta make him pay double, the way he keeps me up all sodding night with his screaming and crashing around. Sounds like he’s wrestling dire wolves in his room! I tell ya, when he comes back tonight, I’m gonna give him the heave – after he pays up. Got me a silver dagger, too, just in case – you know – in case he’s one o’ them weremongrels.”

If asked about Sashell’s other “friends,” Toozer remarks that a “bald gith basher” (Nojas) came looking for him yesterday. She told him the same thing she tells the PCs: Sashell stayed in his room only a few hours each night – “though it sure didn’t sound like he slept much” – and he filled his days running all over Sigil.

If the PCs give Toozer a convincing story or pay at least double Sashell’s bill – a whopping 30 cp – she lets them into the Wylder’s small, messy room. A flimsy cot sits upended in the corner, obviously unused. But the rest of the room looks like it was hit by a tornado, with blankets, garbage, papers, and soiled clothing strewn about. The papers are random pages ripped from Sashell’s dream journal, which is buried under several blankets and wrapped in a smelly tunic. PCs who search the room can easily find the brown, leather-bound journal. The loose

pages and those still in the book are filled with doodles and tortured accounts of the Wylder’s nightmares.

A careful search of the room also turns up the painted tiger mask worn by Sashell as a member of the Verdant Guild. The PCs can’t be harmed or aided by wearing the mask, but the fact that a barmy who turned into a tiger owned a tiger mask should make them curious.

THE JOURNAL: The same dreams and images repeat over and over again in the journal entries – hunting small prey and being hunted in turn by giant cats, horned shapes bursting out of inky triangles, being locked behind steel bars that turn into blood-stained fangs, and devouring life forces from shining bowls.

PCs who read the journal from front to back notice that the writing style gets progressively more rambling and sloppy – evidence of the deterioration of Sashell’s mind. One page near the back of the book contains doodles, notes, and a map. That page is reproduced on the mapsheet in this adventure; hand it to the players.

The page names places in Sigil that Sashell felt had some connection to the Malarites: the Cup of Freedom, Parts & Pieces, and the Planar Trade Consortium. The page also contains smudged references to both Signpost and Dreamhearth, and has a crude map of the gehreleth lair on Carceri where the Malarites’ gate to the Beastlands is found. The doodles and notes are clues for the PCs to pursue.

Any PC who leafs through the entire journal also finds a yellowed, folded-up note stuck between two pages; an Intelligence check discerns that the handwriting on the paper does not match Sashell’s. Sashell stole the note from a Deliverer; it contains a list of a dozen names. The note doesn’t identify the list, but the names are criminals who were sent from the Prison to the Vault and then sold to the Malarites as game. The “escapees” named by Mul – Ankis, Picand Four-Teeth, and Hoacher the Foul – appear in the list.

◆ PARTS & PIECES ◆

If the PCs ask around about Parts & Pieces, folks direct them to a freestanding stone arch on a corner in the Great Bazaar. A sign scrawled in black blood over the arch reads “Parts & Pieces,” and a bowl of rat’s teeth is attached to the side of the arch.

The arch is actually a portal leading to the shop, which lies far underground; the teeth are gate keys for the portal. Carrying a tooth through the arch deposits a body at the end of a cold, dark, rough-hewn tunnel. Dim light at the far end of the passageway beckons to the cavernous shop, which is stuffed with bins, barrels, and display cases full of foul-smelling merchandise.

Parts & Pieces sells animal parts and by-products (teeth, claws, hides, tails, organs, eggs, venom, and so on) for spell components, the creation of magical items, snacking – whatever customers need. It’s run by a gaunt, purple-robed mephit named Seamusxanthuzenus (Pl/♂ dust

mephit/HD 6/N), a pompous, fickle berk who gives off clouds of dust every time he moves or shakes his small wings. As the PCs arrive, Seamus stands on the long wooden counter beside a pickled gorgon's head (marked "Denatured"). He's trying, in vain, to clean up.

If asked about Sashell, the mephit remembers the Wylder – primarily because the berk asked lots of questions but didn't buy anything. Seamus remarks that Sashell wanted something to protect himself from cats; the mephit was stumped, but tried in vain to sell him a velvet box with two teeth said to be from the cat lord himself. (Seamus doesn't know about the new, female cat lord).

"How did I get the fangs?" says the mephit. "From a band of hunters who stop by every few weeks with some truly exotic parts! They're not much for chatting, but they do bring me the most wonderful supplies."

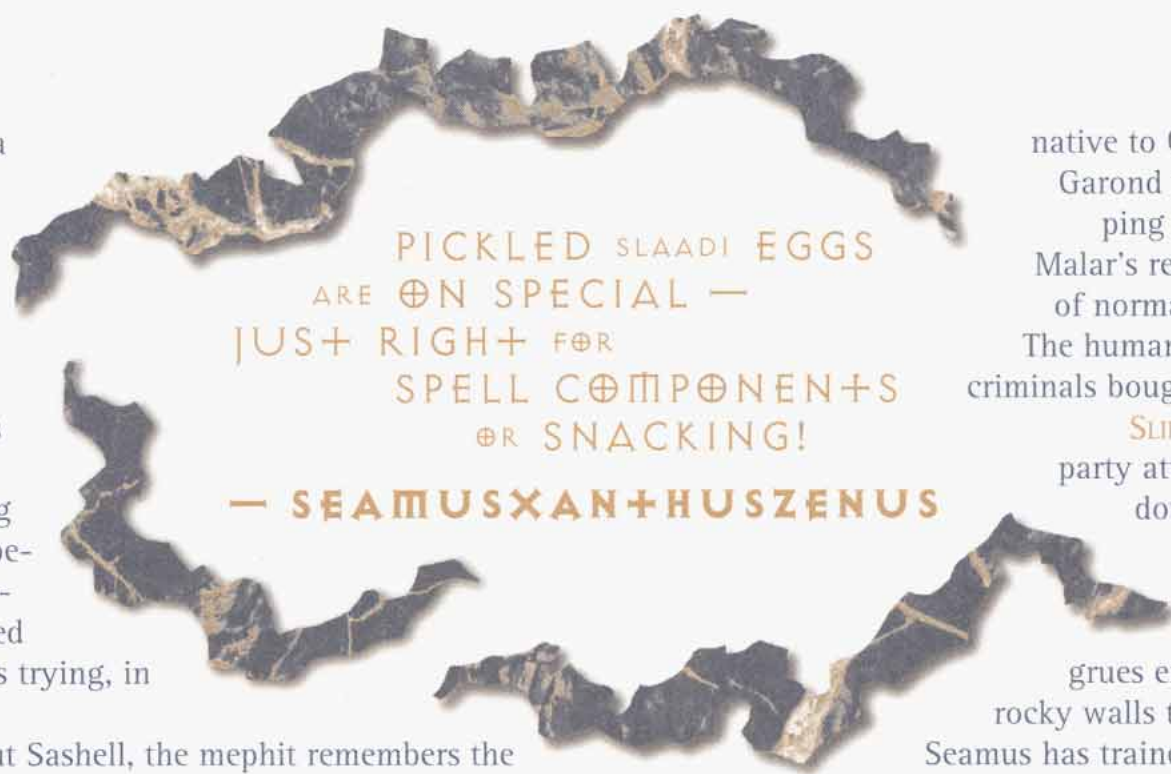
He points to several items around the shop. "See that? The burrowing tendrils of a vaath. And there's a pair of wings ripped right from a vargouille's head. Oh, and here's a corked bottle with a liquified farastu inside! Careful – those fiends are dangerous when unbottled!"

"Still," Seamus says, "lately those fellows have brought me too many normal parts – things like zebra pelts, cheetah claws, and the like. Items I can't charge as much for." The mephit drops his voice to a whisper. "Once in a while they even bring me parts from humanoids – material I'm proud to say I won't touch with a ten-foot staff!"

If shown or told of the obsidian triangle, Seamus reacts with surprise: "Why, I've tried to buy a pendant like that from those hunters I told you about! A few of those bloods wear them 'round their necks; don't you think it'd look just great on me?" He offers the PCs 10 gp for the triangle and is willing to pay up to 100 gp.

The only customer exit from the shop is a portal at the end of another long tunnel that branches off the main room; the gate key is a feather. But Seamus won't reveal the portal – or give the PCs a feather – unless they buy something or sell him the obsidian triangle. If the PCs take a feather through the exit portal, they end up back in the Bazaar, across the street from the freestanding arch.

THE REAL CHANT: The hunters Seamus mentions are Malarites – specifically, members of Guilder Starkad's den, who all wear reddish furs. They often sell parts of their kills to the mephit, usually bringing pieces from creatures



native to Carceri. But ever since Garond the Claw started shipping Beastlands animals to Malar's realm, they've had a lot of normal animal parts to sell. The humanoid pieces come from criminals bought from the Vault.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: If the party attacks Seamus, he flees down another branching tunnel to a personal escape portal, while eight earth grues emerge from the shop's rocky walls to defend their master. Seamus has trained them to slice whole carcasses into saleable pieces.

◆ THE CUP ⊕F FREED⊕M ◆

The Cup of Freedom is an open reference library in the Clerk's Ward, funded and run by bashers of the Revolutionary League. The Anarchists want to bring as much pure information to the masses of Sigil as possible – after all, knowledge is the key to throwing off the chains of oppression. Sashell spent many long hours here, looking through dog-eared books on dreams, cats, and the Lower Planes (he suspected that's where animals from the Beastlands were being sent). If the PCs visit the Cup, the Anarchist "on duty" is Fiery Polk (Pl/♂ bariaur/F5/Revolutionary League/CG), an intense, gleeful berk who was also present during Sashell's visits.

If asked, Polk remembers the Wylder, noting that he visited several times in the past few days, desperately tearing through books on all different subjects. 'Course, the library isn't very organized – Anarchists can only take discipline so far. Its volumes are piled in tottering stacks all over the floor, and they look like the dust mephit from Parts & Pieces took a stroll among the stacks. The PCs can't find anything without Polk's help, and the bariaur's not agreeable unless the party makes a donation of 50 gp. "It takes jink to keep freedom flowing," he says smugly.

Once paid, Polk's glad to search the stacks for books he remembers Sashell combing through, finding three: *The Dark World of Dreams* (which has one well-worn chapter on dream hunters from Bast's realm on Ysgard, who chase down nightmares), *Tert's Guide to Planar Cats* (a zoological study), and *The Big Book of Evil* (a guide to the Lower Planes). Improvise clues from these books as required, but in all likelihood the PCs won't want to spend hours lingering over them. Add an irrelevant book or two if the players are solving the mystery too quickly.

If shown or asked about any of the following subjects, Polk digs through the stacks and eventually finds relevant books for the party:

- ◆ **SASHELL'S TIGER MASK:** A tome on factions and sects identifies the mask as a decorative and spiritual item used by members of the Verdant Guild, a sect on the Beastlands. The book notes that the Sign of One faction also has a strong presence on that plane.
- ◆ **THE OBSIDIAN TRIANGLE:** A book on fiends mentions that the gehreleth of Carceri carry the triangles as mystical links to Apomps, their three-sided deity.
- ◆ **ANIMALS FROM PARTS & PIECES:** If the PCs ask about the parts the Malarites sell to Seamus, Polk finds a volume about the Lower Planes that identifies each creature (vaath, vargouille, and farastu) as a native of Carceri.

If asked about the primal behavior sweeping the Cage, Polk angrily sounds off about the blame unjustly placed on Anarchists. *"Bar that! Who wants to be free in a city burned to the ground? People who think 'freedom' means 'rampage' are just buying the Guvners' line."*

He feels different if told about the "escaped" prisoners – more power to them! In fact, Polk wistfully hopes that Anarchist comrades posing as Mercykillers helped the prisoners escape. After all, the berks surely couldn't get out without some inside help.

"I've heard through the razorvine that prisoners get sent to fight on Acheron's cubes," he says, "or even in the Blood War on Carceri! Just shows how the high-ups'll turn stag in a minute if they can make a bit on the cross-trade. Get rid of the high-ups, and then we'll all be high-ups, I say."

◆ THE PRISON ◆

After hearing Blander Mul talk of escaped prisoners and his faction's desire to keep the news quiet, the PCs might decide to follow up at the Prison in The Lady's Ward. However, the Mercykillers who meet with them are part of the prisoner trading ring; they're not happy to learn that Mul's now getting others involved.

To get into the Prison, the PCs must first explain their business to three guards (Pl/♂ human/F4/Mercykillers/LN) who can *detect lie*. If

the PCs ask for Mul or tell the truth about why they've come, they're marched down long, wide, empty hallways, then down a few

more echoing hallways, then – for a change of pace – down long, narrow, empty hallways, and finally to a dismal meeting room. There, five other guards (Pl/var/F6/Mercykillers/LE), all members of the prisoner trading ring, greet them coldly.

One of the five Mercykillers – a broad-chested human male – stands up and offers you a bone-crushing handshake. "I'm Captain Rullin Clave. I don't know how you got the idea that any of our inmates have escaped, but I'd like you to stop engaging in groundless rumor-mongering that can only frighten the citizenry. They have enough to worry about, what with beasts and decent folks suddenly turning to violence."

If the PCs mention Mul, Clave remarks that he'll have a talk with the "overzealous" paladin about spreading rumors. If the PCs ask about the criminals Mul named (or others from the yellowed note in Sashell's journal), Clave dispatches a guard to fetch the requested records. Before long, the guard returns to say that none of the names are in the files; clearly, those people never entered the Prison.

"You see?" says Clave. *"A simple error on your part. If those sods were ever arrested or tried, they must have been judged innocent and released, or they'd surely be under lock and key now."*


A Mercykiller PC can enter the Prison for a quick look around; he alone is admitted and given a very brief tour, escorted at all times by four guards. On a successful Wisdom check, the PC notices that too many cells seem empty (especially when the chant picked up in other encounters has it that the Prison is overcrowded). If asked, the guards say that the prisoners are on work duty elsewhere in the building.

If the PCs show or ask about Sashell's obsidian triangle, Clave recognizes it as a sacred gehreleth object – and, more importantly, as a badge of honor worn by some of the Malarites who buy prisoners for hunting. Naturally, he won't reveal that to the heroes, but he does try to get the triangle.

"Where did you get that?" Clave asks, trying to contain his growing unease. *"Are you sure it's yours? We received a complaint this morning from a man robbed of a sentimental family heirloom – a black triangle pendant, just like yours – and he's offering 100 gold for its return."* Clave offers to pay the PCs the reward and hold onto the triangle until the man returns. If the PCs ask to hand over the triangle themselves, Clave refuses to divulge the man's name or location, citing "victim's confidentiality." ('Course, there *is* no victim; Clave wants the triangle so he can sell it back to the Malarites for a tremendous profit.)

That's all the PCs can find out here. Clave hustles them out, saying, *"Support your constabulary."*

DM NOTE: Before the PCs enter the meeting room, the guards secretly activate the room's *antimagic shell*, preventing the use of magic within. If need be, any of them can deactivate it with the words "shell off."



DON'T WORRY
ABOUT BLANDER MUL.
HE WON'T BOTHER YOU
AGAIN.

— CAPTAIN RULLIN CLAVE,
AT THE PRISON

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: If the PCs start a fight, any guard can blow a whistle that summons 1d6 more guards each round. The Mercykillers fight only to subdue the party and toss them into the street, not to kill them.

◆ THE CITY COURT ◆

After getting nowhere with the Mercykillers at the Prison, the PCs might decide to visit the City Court in The Lady's Ward. The Fraternity of Order's court records might confirm that the missing criminals were, indeed, tried and turned over to the Red Death.

The trip through The Lady's Ward to the Court shows how Sigil is upset by the ripple effect. The place is ordinarily sedate, clean, even a touch sterile. Now the PCs hear distant shouts of routine muggings down every third alley. The illustrious solid citizens have withdrawn into their illustrious solid houses, where they keep missile weapons pointed at the front door. Even the cutpurses, housebreakers, and cross-trading knights have given up their worthy work; the ones who haven't gone barmy are just sitting out the crisis in the gambling halls. ("Too much competition today," they say.)

From a distance, the City Court looks as regal as ever. But when the PCs arrive, the Court's a beehive of activity as harried judges, advocates, and clerks struggle to keep up with the influx of sods scragged for going barmy. The PCs

must cool their heels for an hour or so until a clerk can attend to them. While they wait, show them several examples of Harmonium guards dragging in folks touched by the tainted dreamscape: a spitting, raging wemic; a druid who shed his robes and scampered about town dressed only in his beard and birthday suit; a halfling Signer who snapped and chopped off his employer's head.

Finally, a plump, overworked clerk named Vorbert Pebbletoss (Pr/♂ gnome/0-level/Fraternity of Order/LG) sees to the party's needs. If asked, Pebbletoss can't recall the cases of any specific prisoners – except one.

"Hoacher the Foul, certainly," says the gnome, wiping his spectacles. "I was a recorder at his trial. Forget exactly what he was arrested for – you might check at the Barracks for that. But that bladeling was a terror. He let loose a razor storm of black spikes when Judge Ogustus pronounced him guilty. It took four Mercykillers just to muscle him into the Prison."

The PCs might ask for files on the three criminals Mul named (or others from the yellowed note in Sashell's dream journal). The processing fee is 10 gp per search, but if a Guvner in the party makes the request, Pebbletoss cuts the price in half.

Unfortunately, the Mercykillers bribe evil Guvners to destroy the files of criminals they sell from the Vault. Thus, Pebbletoss can't find a single record the PCs ask for. In



fact, the gnome notes that over a dozen files are missing. "Odd," he admits, "but it is quite a madhouse here lately. The files are bound to turn up."

If asked about the wave of primal behavior, Pebbletoss sighs and complains about how much harder his job's been lately – not to mention how overcrowded the Prison must be. "But at least we in the Fraternity of Order can keep our heads – that's the reward of a disciplined mind." The gnome admits that he and other faction comrades have had bad dreams, but they're not deeply affected by the savage changes hitting the Cage – not as much as Signers or Free Leaguers. (Guvners rarely commune with nature and count few passionate hybrids among their members.)

◆ THE CITY BARRACKS ◆

After talking to the Mercykillers at the Prison (or learning of the missing records at the City Court), persistent PCs might get the idea to check with the source – the Harmonium bashers at the City Barracks who first arrested all the berks that seem to be missing.

Unlike the City Court, the Barracks aren't hopping. 'Course, they never are even during the best times. No basher with a brain would linger around that dull, windowless, granite building. Fact is, most every available Hardhead is patrolling the Cage, trying to cap the sudden outbursts of violence and lewd behavior. Like the Fraternity of Order, the Harmonium contains few rangers, druids, or hybrids, so few Hardheads feel the ripple effect.

A crude, flame-haired desk sergeant named Jostos the Quick (PI/♀ half-elf/F5/Harmonium/LN) meets with the PCs. Stuck indoors filing reports, she'd much rather be out in the fray bashing skulls. If asked, she remembers hearing talk of how it took five Hardheads to scrag the thieving bladeling called Hoacher and drag him into court.

The PCs can have Jostos hunt down records for Hoacher or any berks from the yellowed note in the dream journal. She'll dig up arrest records at 10 gp per request, but she does it for free if a Hardhead, Guvner, or Mercykiller PC agrees to finish filing her reports (a matter of three hours) so she can go out on patrol.

'Course, she comes back empty-handed from the search; the Mercykillers bribe evil Hardheads to remove all records dealing with prisoners sold from the Vault. If told that the Mercykillers claim not to have the berks in jail, Jostos sneers, "That ain't my problem; all we do is scrag 'em." If pressed on the matter, Jostos laughs and suggests that the prisoners probably didn't so much escape as disappear.

"Those Prison cells're jam-packed. Plenty of Mercykillers'd toss a berk to the hounds or the fiends as soon as keep 'im locked up. Personally, I say it wouldn't be such a bad thing if more berks 'escaped' from the Prison now and again."

If shown or asked about Sashell's tiger mask, Jostos spits and curses. "Those beast-loving berks're nothin' but trouble – seems like we chase one or two Wylders away every month! They're always cuttin' loose hounds, unhitchin' Arcadian ponies from their cabs, or pullin' other pranks. Wouldn't surprise me none if they had somethin' to do with the animals in town goin' barmy!"

If asked, Jostos relates the basic facts of the sect, including that they come from the Beastlands. "Same place those blasted Signers keep their kips," she adds. "And I don't trust them much neither. After all, half the berks scragged for goin' barmy've been Signers!"

THE WOODMAN'S ◆ RETREAT ◆

A few blocks into the Guildhall Ward from the Ciphers' Great Gymnasium, the Woodman's Retreat is a relaxing pub where everything – from the walls and the chairs to the cups and the plates – is made of some type of planar wood. The paladin Blander Mul liked the Retreat for the general good manners of the patrons and the simple, homespun values espoused by the slightly satyrlike owner, Lucas Lappsell (PI/♂ aasimar/HD 3+3/Transcendent Order/CN).

However, if the PCs come to the Retreat looking for Mul, they won't find him. By this point in the adventure, the poor sod's been recalled to the Prison, transferred to "guard duty" in

the Vault, and sold to the Malarites for refusing to drop his search for the missing prisoners. 'Course, the PCs don't know that. They're likely to wait for Mul, especially if they ask Lappsell.

"This isn't like Blander," the aasimar notes, looking around the filled room for his absent friend. "He's hours late. By now, he's usually downed three mugs of cider and told me how much he'd really like to write poetry."

No matter how long the PCs wait, Mul doesn't arrive; the only other place Lappsell thinks he could be is at the Prison. But the party won't see Mul again until Chapter II. When they do, he'll be dead.



AN ORDERED MIND
CANNOT BE CORRUPTED.

— VORBER+ PEBBLE+OSS



THE PLANAR ◆ TRADE CONSORTIUM ◆

While on the Beastlands, Sashell overheard talk between two Malarites discussing a payment to the Planar Trade Consortium in Sigil for the *spiritbowls* diverted from Mount Celestia. When he got to the Cage, the Wylder sought out the Consortium office and tried in vain to wring information on the hunters out of the merchant lord Estavan (Pl/♂ ogre mage/HD 5+2/Fraternity of Order/LE).

If the PCs follow up on the lead in Sashell's dream journal and seek out the Consortium themselves, any trader in the Great Bazaar can tell them that the Bytopian outfit handles a wide variety of commerce across the planes. One of the Cage's branch offices is in a narrow, two-story building in the Clerk's Ward. A sign out front depicts the silhouette of a caravan trudging through a series of portals (the Consortium's symbol) and directs customers up a steep flight of stairs to the second floor. There, Estavan, a sky-blue ogre mage in tailored, exotic clothing, pores through trade treaties behind a mammoth desk.

If the PCs describe Sashell, Estavan grins.

"Sure, he was here – for about two minutes. Then I tossed him down the stairs. The fool tried to bully me into giving up the dark of some of my clients – wanted to know if they were selling animals. Huh! The Consortium deals only in goods and services. I told him to try that mephit over at Parts & Pieces."

If shown or asked about the obsidian triangle, Estavan mistakenly thinks the PCs are associated with the Malarites (a triangle-wearing Deliverer often meets with the ogre mage to arrange shipments of *spiritbowls*). Estavan promptly says, "Don't worry. I told your leader he'll have his *bowls* by midday tomorrow, and none the wiser among the folks who might miss them!"

If the PCs pretend to know what Estavan's talking about, he pulls out contracts for them to sign, tells them to pick up the *bowls* outside the Hall of Records campus, and bids them good day.

On the other hand, if the PCs admit they know nothing of the shipment, Estavan apologizes for the mistake, explaining that the folks who ordered the merchandise sometimes sport triangles similar to the party's. "Got to hand it to those cutters, too. Most sods on Carceri have a balor of a time finding a way out; they don't call it the Red Prison for nothing."

Estavan remarks that the traders might need guards for their cargo on its way back to Carceri. If the party's interested, they should meet the traders outside the Hall of

Records campus at midday tomorrow. "Tell them Estavan sent you," he says with a toothy smile. "They owe me a favor or two, so they should take you on. Then you'll owe me a favor. Or two."

If and when the PCs pursue this lead, go to the section "Moving On" (page 23).

THE REAL CHANT: Estavan doesn't know anything about the Malarites (whom he calls "those traders from Carceri") except that they wear furs and pelts; sometimes the furs are olive green, sometimes reddish. The traders have visited him several times at irregular intervals over the last few weeks.

But here's the dark of it: The Deliverers recently bribed Estavan to intercept a few shipments of *spiritbowls* meant for Mount Celestia (that's the favor he spoke of). Estavan won't reveal the transaction to the PCs. If they pry too close to the truth, he just claims that the deal was legitimate. The PCs can't prove otherwise. (Mount Celestia's aasimon may make Estavan's life hard later, but they don't figure in this adventure.)

Estavan doesn't know that one group of traders (in olive furs) belongs to Garond's Deliverers, and the second (in red) follows Guilder Starkad. See, Starkad uncovered Garond's need for the *bowls* and his source of supply. Starkad sent one of his high-ups, a human named Kek, to acquire the items through Estavan.

◆ THE HALL OF SPEAKERS ◆

Once the PCs learn that both the Verdant Guild and the Signers have a base on the Beastlands – and realize that the Signers are touched strongly by the ripple effect – they might stop by the Hall of Speakers, the faction's headquarters in Sigil. The building is a covered oval hall in the Clerk's Ward, topped with a spiky spire that rises hundreds of feet into the sky.

As the PCs arrive, there's an argument on the Speaker's Podium. A centaur diplomat from Ysgard, Yent Remellian, is engaged in a scheduled debate with a stern Harmonium elf, Seliadon. ("Resolved: A disciplined central authority is vital to the achievement of universal harmony.") The two shout from identical lecterns at opposite ends of the curving podium. The standing-room-only audience, members of the Harmonium and Fated factions, turn back and forth as the speakers alternate, following each exchange like spectators at a tennis match.

Suddenly, the argument gets out of hand, thanks to the ripple effect from the Beastlands – Remellian fiercely kicks aside his lectern and gallops across the room toward the elf! Seliadon (AC 6, 12 hp) is weaponless, but he side-

steps the mad centaur's first charge
The PCs can intervene, though they may
have trouble making their way through the
crowd. The audience turns as one and rushes for
the doors, shouting like a herd of cattle.

If the heroes manage to fight Remellian, the centaur
won't stop until reduced to 5 hit points or less, at which
point he passes out and is carried away by late-arriving
hall guards. But if the PCs don't help Seliadon by the end
of the second round, the centaur tramples and kills the
poor sod in front of the horrified crowd, then gets brought
down by tardy Harmonium guards. Murmuring a faction
blessing over their associate's body, the guards lead Re-
mellian away in chains.

Whether or not the PCs fight the centaur, asking folks
for information on the Verdant Guild leads them to
Xaniche (Pl/♂ githzerai/M4/Sign of One/CN), a faction
high-up. At first, all the Signer can talk about is the recent
incident. "That centaur was a diplomat from Ysgard. And
now he's just another victim of the bloodlust cursing this
city." If asked, Xaniche admits that an inordinately high
number of Signers seem to suffer from the behavioral
plague; personally, she thinks
the madness is the work
of the Sensates or the
Xaositects.

If shown or told of Sashell's tiger mask,
Xaniche admits that it's probably from the Wylders
of the Beastlands. "But we have little contact with
the sect," she says. "On the Beastlands, not many
Wylders visit us in Signpost or Dreamhearth." Xaniche
explains that Signpost is a small Signer-run town on the
border of Krigala and Brux (the first two layers of the
plane), and that Dreamhearth is the faction's town manor,
a retreat where they research the power of the mind.

If the PCs offer what they've learned of Sashell and
ask to go to the Beastlands, Xaniche shows little interest –
she's too self-centered. "Innocent folks here, in this city,
are falling prey to the terrors of their minds," she says.
"And it's here that we'll deal with the problem." However,
Xaniche tells the PCs to ask for Sarazh if they visit Dream-
hearth – she's the tiefling high-up there, a blood who's al-
ways got her ear to the ground.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: If the PCs somehow persuade
Xaniche to help them reach the Beastlands, she agrees to
rendezvous with them at the Hall in two hours. But she
never arrives; instead, she succumbs to a spell of feral
madness and gets arrested.



◆ MOVING ON ◆

At some point the PCs will decide to leave Sigil and continue their investigation elsewhere. Clues they might have uncovered while searching the Cage point to two places: Carceri and the Beastlands. This section outlines different methods by which the PCs might try to head to either plane.

DM NOTE: Preferably, the heroes should visit Carceri first (Chapter II), but if they're determined to go to the Beastlands first, let them. Before long, they'll realize they must go to Carceri to rescue Meuronna, the dream hunter (see Chapter II for details).

CARCERI

If the PCs went through most of the encounters in this chapter, they know that criminals are vanishing from the Prison (and perhaps that they're being sent to Carceri), and that hunters from Carceri are picking up *spiritbowls* for a return trip to their plane. Thus, the party can try to get to Carceri by going through the Prison, by hiring on to help the Malarites, or by just following the hunters.

THE PRISON: The PCs may try to break into the Prison or bluff their way inside, but any such plan most likely fails. However, the easiest and most obvious method of getting into the Prison is getting arrested. If the PCs take this route, they need to stage some kind of punishable crime (preferably nothing too serious), after which they're scragged by the Harmonium and taken to the City Court for trial by Guvner judges. Once deemed guilty, the PCs are taken to the Prison, stripped of their equipment, and thrown into cells.

Feel free to run short encounters while the PCs are in jail – a fight with blustering inmates in the exercise yard, a stint at work detail in the kitchen, and so on. However, before long the PCs are noted to be strong and clever sods, perfect for sale to the Malarite hunters. The characters are hustled out of their cells, given their equipment, and sent through a secret portal (in the bowels of the Prison) to the super-prison on Carceri known as the Vault. Each PC unknowingly carries a tiny marker that tells the Vault guards to sell the “new fish” to the Malarites.

In the Vault, the guards drug the PCs' food, knocking them unconscious. Hunters from Guilder Starkad's den collect the berks and take them back to the Land of the Hunt. Proceed to Chapter II.

DM NOTE: The “Prison Break” adventure in *Planes of Conflict* features a detailed map of the Vault.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: If the PCs don't try to get themselves arrested, you can have them framed – after all, the Mercykillers don't want the party getting too close to their involvement in the prisoner trading ring. High-ups in the operation hire a master thief to frame the party. Once the

PCs realize what's happening, they might choose to go along with the set-up just to get inside the Prison.

THE TRADERS: After talking to Estavan of the Planar Trade Consortium, the PCs might try to help the Malarites guard their *spiritbowls* on the trip back to Carceri.

A berk named Kek and eight other hunters pick up a shipment of four *bowls* at midday outside the Hall of Records campus. The Malarites, members of Guilder Starkad's den, dress in reddish furs. They're hostile and peery of the PCs, but if the party says “Estavan sent us,” the hunters grudgingly hire them as carriers. (They owe Estavan a favor for the *spiritbowls*.) Naturally, the hunters don't go through the Prison. They use another portal, known only to them – an inconspicuous alley doorway in the Clerk's Ward, not far from the Hall of Records. This gate leads directly to the Land of the Hunt. Proceed to Chapter II.

The PCs can also shadow the Malarites. The gate stays open long enough for the party to make its way after Kek's hunters onto Carceri. Or the PCs can overhear Kek speak the key phrase, “Red Prison.” However, if the PCs try to travel alongside the hunters invisibly, note that the Malarites' keen senses let them *detect invisibility* 75% of the time.

DM NOTE: If the PCs openly display Sashell's obsidian triangle, Kek recognizes it as a symbol of the Deliverers, though he pretends to know nothing about it. Kek assumes that the PCs are in league with or pawns of Garond, Guilder Starkad's enemy. As soon as the group has returned to the Land of the Hunt, Kek orders his bashers to attack the party (as detailed in Chapter II).



THE BEAS+LANDS

After learning that Sashell was a Wylder from the Beastlands and realizing that the Signers – frequent victims of the ripple effect – also have a base on the plane, the PCs might decide to head straight there. But as they found out from Xaniche at the Hall of Speakers, the Signers in Sigil aren't particularly inclined to help the party out – not even if one of the PCs is a Signer. Attempts to use the Beastlands portal in the Hall of Speakers should run into constant ripple-related troubles.

'Course, the heroes can try to bluff or force their way to the portal (assuming they know where it is and can figure out the gate key), but that isn't likely to work. The best way to get to the Beastlands is to find another portal. The PCs might even find a portal to the Outlands gate-town of Faunel, and from there head onto the Beastlands. In any case, proceed to Chapter III.

Chapter II takes the PCs to the Land of the Hunt, Malar's mountainous realm in Colothys, the fourth layer of Carceri. Depending

on the events of Chapters I and III, the heroes can arrive in the realm as prisoners to be hunted or as bashers helping Malarite traders, or they can come from the Beastlands to rescue the captive dream hunter.

CHAPTER II: THE HILLS ARE ALIVE

The PCs are soon caught in a caustic feud between two Malarites – Guilder Starkad, the leader of the largest pack in the realm, and Garond the Claw, the tiefling wizard whose plan to free Malar threatens to knock Starkad out of power. Both dens can pass on important clues about

Garond's scheme, but only to PCs who earn that information – by helping each den against the other.

And a Deliverer from Garond's pack currently hunts

the game-filled stalking grounds between the two dens. He hopes to use a *spiritbowl* to steal the life essence of animal petitioners from the Beastlands and feed the energy to Malar.

Meanwhile, Meuronna, the tabaxi dream hunter, is trapped in the gehreleth lair at the bottom of the canyon. She sends out signals for help, which the PCs receive in the form of dreams or hallucinatory images. While exploring the stalking grounds, the PCs find the lair, rescue Meuronna from the farastu, and escape through the lair's hidden gate to the Beastlands.

The mapsheet contains a half-page player map of the realm. Give this to the players when their characters discover the map (in "The Dead Bullywug," page 28). The adventure folder contains a DM map of the stalking grounds and another of the gehreleth lair.

DM NOTE: For full details on Carceri and Malar's realm, refer to the *Planes of Conflict* boxed set. For the dark of how magic is altered on Carceri, see Table I in the Appendix (page 64).

HERE WE'LL KILL YOU,
EAT YOU, WEAR YOU,
AND SELL YOU.
BUT YOU'VE ONLY GOT
TO WORRY ABOUT
THE FIRST BIT.

— SKITLERCLAW,
A MALARITE

◆ THE RIPPLE EFFECT ◆

The tainted dreamscape from the Beastlands reaches into Sigil because the City of Doors is a physical and psychic nexus for the Outer Planes. But Carceri's *not* a nexus, so the berks who live there don't feel a thing. Fact is, the only sods on Carceri who feel any different are the animal petitioners sent through from the Beastlands as prey. The corruption of their home plane – the place from which they draw their energy – makes the creatures more aggressive than usual, providing the Malarites with exciting, challenging hunts.

While on Carceri, the only time the PCs feel more hostile is during a close encounter with Malar himself (see "The Feeding Pit," page 34, or "Malar," page 35). The sheer proximity of the savage god temporarily drives the sods mad with bloodlust, but the feeling passes as soon as Malar does.

◆ DREAMS ◆

Although the tainted dreamscape of the Beastlands makes folks in Sigil dream of cats, those nightmares don't reach Carceri (for the same reason the ripple effect doesn't touch the plane). However, while in the Land of the Hunt, the PCs have other strange dreams.

Remember, Garond the Claw forced Meuronna to trap the One in an evil dreamscape, then pushed her through the gate to the stalking grounds. Garond sent his hunters to find and kill the tabaxi, but the farastu gehreleth near the grounds found her first. 'Course, Meuronna's not much better off; the farastu want to use her body as a husk for a new 'leth. But she's still alive – at least for the time being.

Meuronna wants to make sure she stays that way, so she uses her *message* power to issue calls for help. These pleas take the form of recurring images that haunt the PCs in their sleep. At first, they only receive vague mental pictures of a spotted, bloody cat, weeping, bound in chains. But as time passes and the PCs explore more of the realm, Meuronna intensifies her signals, sending out the following images:

- ◆ the cool, earthy darkness of a tunnel hewn through miles of rock (the gehreleth lair);
- ◆ a cave mouth, surrounded by crimson plants, at the bottom of a canyon (the lair's entrance);
- ◆ foul, toadlike humanoids with sticky skin (her farastu captors).

As the PCs explore the realm's stalking grounds – especially the area near the entrance to the gehreleth lair – Meuronna's signals grow sharper and more frequent. She's trying to draw the heroes toward the lair. Meuronna doesn't send dreams to every berk on the plane – just to the PCs and the animals in Malar's realm. After all, if the Malarites knew where she was, they'd come looking for her head. Fact is, hunters from Garond's den and Guilder Starkad's den have been combing the canyons, each hoping to find the dream hunter first.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: In order to receive Meuronna's messages, the PCs need to sleep and dream. If they speed through the chapter without sleeping, have them pick up the messages in the form of daydreams or hallucinatory images (druids, rangers, or bariaur are good receptors). They can also learn of the images from animals who sleep and dream (they can speak with the petitioner Uril Kabo or use magic to talk to normal beasts).

◆ CARCERI OR BUS+ ◆

Depending on what happened in Sigil in Chapter I, the PCs have a number of different options for entering Carceri. This section outlines how to handle the three most likely methods.

FROM THE VAULT: If the PCs were arrested, thrown into the Prison, and transferred to the Vault in Colothys, they're knocked out by Mercykiller guards and sold to the Malarites. The guards steal the PCs' jink (and any magical items that would endanger the adventure or make it too easy). But the PCs keep their weapons and armor, because Malarites find hunting unarmed prey too dull.

A small band of hunters from Starkad's den collects the PCs from the Vault and carries them back to the nearby Land of the Hunt. There, the characters are deposited in the lush stalking grounds that fill the realm's canyon bottom, where they're to be hunted as prey. As soon as the characters awaken, proceed to "The Stalking Grounds" on page 31.

FROM THE BEASTLANDS: If the PCs went directly to the Beastlands from Sigil, it won't be long before they end up on Carceri, anyway. They'll realize that they must visit the Land of the Hunt to rescue the dream hunter Meuronna (see Chapter III for details). The gate they take leads right into the stalking grounds at the canyon bottom, which is perfect for the Malarites – the animals that come through from Krigala can be hunted immediately (and so can the PCs). As soon as the characters arrive through the gate, proceed to "The Stalking Grounds" (page 31).



WITH THE TRADERS: If the PCs helped Kek and his bashers guard the transport of *spiritbowls* from Sigil to the Land of the Hunt, the group emerges on the side of a mountain, not far from the den led by Garond. They travel toward Guilder Starkad's den, a journey that takes most of a day.

If Kek takes a dislike to the PCs for any reason, he fires them with a token payment of 2 sp apiece and points them toward Garond's den. He says, "Ask for Guilder Starkad – he'll get you back to Sigil." Of course, Kek knows that the hunters of Garond's den hate Starkad, and that the mere mention of the high-up's name might get the party killed. It's just Kek's way of "accidentally" getting rid of the PCs.

If the PCs display or discuss the obsidian triangle they took from Sashell, Kek recognizes the object as a badge of the Deliverers and assumes that the PCs are Garond's spies or pawns. As soon as the group arrives in the Land of the Hunt, Kek orders his hunters to capture the party, saying, "Guilder'll want to see these berks!"

The PCs must fight nine Malarites (Kek and his eight hunters); use the "Standard Malarite" statistics for each. The Malarites battle only to subdue the PCs, not to kill them. Thus, any PC who's reduced to 0 hp is merely captured, and only 25% of the damage inflicted remains; the rest is bruises that fade in 1d6 hours. The PCs might surrender or allow themselves to be subdued to be brought to the group's leader. In any case, if the PCs are subdued, Kek drags them to Starkad's den.

THE LAND ◆ OF THE HUNT ◆

Malar's a lesser power, so his realm ain't infinite, but it'd still take a body many weeks to hike from one end to the other – mainly because the whole place is a batch of mountains. It's a rugged, steep area, but the cliffs aren't as sheer, as sharp, or as hostile as the hundred-mile-high peaks that fill most of Colothys. What's more, footpaths and rope bridges help folks move through the mountains, and sprawling forests and jungles carpet the canyons between the hills. This greenery's a stalking ground full of native game, animals sent from the Beastlands, and prisoners bought from the Vault.

This chapter takes place in the portion of the realm between Garond and Guilder Starkad's dens, an area about 10 miles on a side.

THE MALARITES

Malar's hunters are a mean, primal bunch. They're a varied lot, humans and tieflings and githyanki and more, though humans predominate. They dress in pelts, leather armor,

and headpieces culled from fallen prey, and adorn their bodies with necklaces and other jewelry made from teeth and bones. Most hunters kill with spears, chunks of sharpened bone, or their bare hands. Some fighters – and all priests of the Beastlord – wear *claws of Malar* instead (see the Appendix for details). The bite of a Malarite is an effective weapon, too. The victim suffers 1d4 points of damage immediately and must save vs. poison or contract a disease that saps 1 additional hit point per hour until cured.

After feasting on their kills, the Malarites trade surplus parts – furs, organs, claws – to obtain manufactured goods. They need weapons, enchanted metal to fight the gehreleths, and (more recently) *spiritbowls* to trap the Beastlands petitioners' essences for Malar.

Malarites have natural senses that help them hunt with chilling accuracy. Through hearing and smell, Malarites can *detect invisibility* 75% of the time (living beings only) and find hidden prey 90% of the time. Each Malarite also has the following proficiencies: animal lore, direction sense, hunting, mountaineering, survival (mountains), and tracking.

Malarites cluster in groups, living in hundreds of dens dug into the sides of the realm's mountains. Each den holds anywhere from a dozen to several thousand hunters and is ruled by a single pack leader. Most dens are set miles apart – the packs are too competitive and territorial to be next-door neighbors. The hunters constantly feud over supplies, prey, and how best to serve Malar. Each den dyes its furs a unique color, so a body can tell a Malarite's pack by the pelts he wears.

DM NOTE: For combat with adult Malarites, use the "Standard Malarite" statistics in the Appendix. Young Malarites fight at half the level of adults (round down).

A BITTER RIVALRY

The largest den in the realm is run by a calculating human priest named Guilder Starkad, the man who oversees much of the trade going in and out of the Land. All the folks in his pack wear reddish furs. It was Starkad's idea to buy criminals from the Vault to spice up hunts.

However, Starkad's been replaced as top wolf in the eyes of many Malarites by Garond the Claw, the arrogant tiefling leader of one of the *smallest* dens in the realm. Garond's hunters all wear olive green furs, and they get to share a stalking area with hunters from Starkad's den. That alone grates on Starkad's ego, but even worse is Garond's plan to move Malar to the Beastlands.

See, Garond won kudos for shipping intelligent animals from the Beastlands to the stalking grounds as prey. The dens also rallied behind his plan to free Malar from Carceri. The tiefling even cut into Starkad's domain of trade by selling animal parts in Sigil, buying prisoners from the Mercykillers, and buying *spiritbowls* for his den. Filled to his scalp with rage, envy, and bile, Starkad's made it his goal to bring Garond down.

WHERE THE PCs CAN GO

In this adventure, the heroes can explore four main areas of the Land of the Hunt:

- ◆ **GAROND'S DEN:** The 20 or so Malarites led by Garond the Claw live in a den dug into the face of a small mountain. The cave mouth is 700 feet above the ground. Garond himself is currently away from the den on the Beastlands. The PCs won't meet him until Chapter III.
- ◆ **STARKAD'S DEN:** Across from Garond's hill is a much larger mountain, home to the thousands-strong pack led by Guilder Starkad. The cave mouth is 1,100 feet above the ground. If the PCs travel with Kek, they'll arrive here first.
- ◆ **STALKING GROUNDS:** The bottom of the canyon between the two peaks is a lush hunting area shared by both dens. The distance between the mountains is about 10 miles.
- ◆ **GEHRELETH LAIR:** A small tribe of farastu live in tunnels at the base of Starkad's mountain. The fiends creep through the realm via a cave mouth that opens into the stalking grounds.

To get from Garond's den to Starkad's (or vice versa), the PCs must travel down one mountainside, cross the stalking grounds, and climb the other face. Because of the dense growth and rugged terrain, crossing the stalking ground takes eight to 10 hours.

The mapsheet has a player map that provides a view of the area. The folder has DM maps of the stalking grounds and the gehreleth lair.

THE REAL CHANT: Once the PCs have entered the Land of the Hunt, they can't leave the realm except through a gate. It takes a special key – a canine tooth from a Malarite – to physically cross the borders of the Land. Thus, the party's adventures on Carceri are confined to Malar's realm, unless you let them procure either a tooth or a Malarite escort.



THE DEAD BULLYWUG

This should be the PCs' first encounter after entering the Land of the Hunt, as it gives them a partial map of the realm. The heroes find the body of Nillock, a bullywug trader from the Abyss who often dealt with the Malarites. Unfortunately, the sod blundered into the wrong pack of hunters, was mistaken for a gehreleth, and got sliced to ribbons.

The corpse of a dark green, froglike being lies sprawled across the rocky ground, brutally sliced from head to toe by the deep gashes of many sharp claws, its tan cloak all but torn to shreds.

The freshness of the wounds and the moistness of the hide indicates that Nillock was killed within the last day. If the PCs search his cloak, they find a pocket containing a hand-drawn map of a portion of the Land of the Hunt, focusing on the dens of Garond and Guilder Starkad (Nillock's two best clients). The map appears on the adventure mapsheet; give it to the players. Note that the map doesn't say which den is Garond's and which is Starkad's.

◆ GAROND'S DEN ◆

While Garond remains on the Beastlands to coordinate the kidnapping of the animal petitioners and ensure that the dreaming One is not disturbed, his mate, a stern githyanki named Venia, leads the den. The cave currently holds only 12 adults and eight children, all in olive green furs – Garond took his Deliverers and a hand-picked crew of Malarites with him to Krigala.

Under Venia's leadership, the pack is hostile toward other dens (particularly Starkad's) and downright brutal toward outsiders. They've captured a dwarf named Pendell, a Mercykiller guard from the Vault who came to the realm to meet with Starkad.

In addition to running the pack in Garond's absence, Venia's main task is to guard the den's nine *spiritbowls*. Eight silver bowls hang on pegs in the cave walls; one peg is empty (a Deliverer, Bredge, is currently using a bowl to hunt animal spirits). Under no circumstances will Venia let the PCs handle the *spiritbowls*. If they have any *bowls* from Kek's shipment, she tries bargaining coolly (concealing her avid desire for the items), and will trade information for them. See "What Venia Knows," page 29.

A WARM RECEPTION

If the PCs follow Kek's advice (or misread Nillock's map), they arrive at Garond's small, unkempt den with the idea that it's Guilder Starkad's kip. If they show up wearing reddish furs taken from Kek and his bashers, Venia believes them to be members of Starkad's den. "So, Guilder's dogs have slipped their leashes!" she says, sneering. "Off with you. If you make trouble for us, we can make 10 times the trouble for you!"

If the PCs are fur-free, but ask at the den for Guilder Starkad, the pack erupts in snorts and grumbles. Venia curses Starkad's name, warning that "berks who give a hand to that jackal pull back a bloody stump!" Unless the PCs seem to agree with Venia's assessment, the Malarites mock, condemn, and ultimately try to force the party from the den.

If the PCs ask for Garond, Venia makes it clear that *she's* in charge now and the party'd better have a good reason for coming. The only way to get on the githyanki's good side is to praise her skills as a huntress and pack leader. 'Course, putting down Guilder Starkad doesn't hurt. If the PCs mention the prisoners from Sigil, Venia claims that the plan to buy prisoners from the Vault was Garond's idea, not Starkad's.

If the PCs show Venia their obsidian triangle, she assumes that they killed a Deliverer to get it. Insistent that they return "the pack's rightful property" to her, she demands an explanation. Unless the PCs offer a convincing story (the truth won't convince her), and unless she believes they're more useful to her alive than dead, Venia sends her pack's best archers after them when they leave, to ambush them at an opportune moment.


If the PCs merely ask about the triangles, Venia wants to know why they're interested. "The pendants are only for Garond's chosen," she says. "The ones called the Deliverers." She knows that the triangles come from gehreleths, and that the Deliverers carry them through the 'leth lair to journey to another land of prey.

PENDELL + THE HOSTAGE

If the PCs get Venia talking, she mentions that her hunters have come across a "tidy little prize" that might interest Guilder Starkad: a guard from the Vault who came to meet with him about selling prisoners. "Pity we found the berk first," she says, smirking.

The guard is Pendell (Pr/♂ dwarf/F4/Mercykiller/LE), a hairy dwarf with a broken nose. He's been stripped of all his belongings, and he's tied and gagged in one of the small, dark caves that wind through the den. Venia lets one PC visit the captive. Two armed Malarites escort the PC through the tunnels to where Pendell's held, even allowing the character to speak with him briefly.

GUILDER STARKAD'S
A MONGREL —
YOU CAN'T TRUST A WORD
HE SAYS.
— VENIA



The bruised and bloodied dwarf blinks when he sees you, as if recognizing that you aren't like his tormentors. One of the hunters pulls a bundle of cloth from the dwarf's mouth; the captive coughs and spits. "Pendell," he says, in a voice as dry as sand. "Mercykiller. Came — came for Starkad. Prisoners — trade — gold." The dwarf strains against his bonds, but only falls weakly to one side.

The PCs can't free Pendell without fighting the entire den. However, Venia offers the party a deal. The heroes can journey to Starkad's den and negotiate with him for the dwarf's release. The githyanki explains: "Starkad's said to have caught a lamb that we're interested in. Bring his prize back here and we'll let the dwarf go."

If the party agrees, Venia won't release Pendell until she has the "lamb" at her side. (As Starkad is just as distrustful, the PCs need to arrange some kind of switch that's agreeable to both sides.)

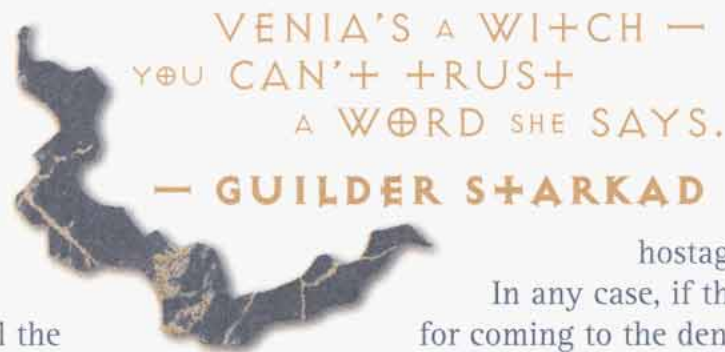
Hidden in a recess at the back of the den are Pendell's possessions: a dwarf-sized suit of chain mail, a warhammer, 10 sp, some tobacco, and a *potion of extra-healing*.

THE REAL CHANT: The "lamb" is Frax, a berk from the Vile Hunt who got pushed through the gate from Krigala to Carceri (see "Frax Turns Stag," page 30). Venia received orders from Garond to find and kill Frax. 'Course, the githyanki keeps that to herself, figuring the PCs wouldn't bring Frax if they knew it meant his death. She just says the berk's a member of her den.

WHAT+ VENIA KNOWS

Although no one in the den knows the details of Garond's plan, they do grasp the basics. The hunters are too strong-willed to talk under duress, but if the PCs grovel to Venia, *charm* her, or agree to help with the hostage exchange, they might learn the following:

- ◆ Animals magically appear in the middle of the stalking grounds, sent by Garond from "another land of prey." However, the gehreleths that live near the bottom of the canyon often grab the prey first. "Those 'leths are tough, and Garond doesn't mess with them unless he needs to get into their lair."
- ◆ The Deliverers lead teams to kill the animals, catch a piece of them in the "silver bowls," and take the bowls to a shrine in the stalking grounds where Malar feeds. A Deliverer named Bredge is leading a team through the grounds right now, hunting elephant.
- ◆ Garond is off trying to make the other land of prey more like the Land of the Hunt so that Malar can more easily journey there. He and the Deliverers travel to the other land by "using the triangles



to walk the tunnels" of the gehreleth lair. (She's a bit vague on the details of planar travel.)

- ◆ A beast-woman helped Garond do something with dreams, but then he sent her to the stalking grounds to be killed. She was slain by hunters from Guilder Starkad's den. (Wrong; Meuronna's a prisoner in the gehreleth lair.)

◆ STARKAD'S DEN ◆

Guilder Starkad, a powerful priest of Malar, leads the largest pack in the realm. His den numbers several thousand hunters, all distinguished by their reddish furs. A single cave mouth high on a mountainside opens into the massive den, but many tunnels and caverns burrow deep into the heart of the hill. Starkad coordinates much of the realm's trade with merchants in Sigil and guards in the Vault. His den's always hopping: children cut animal carcasses into valuable parts, hunting groups depart for the stalking grounds, and so on.

However, the priest is incensed that he's lost power and status to Garond and will do anything to reclaim that glory. 'Course, he doesn't want to risk losing even more face by getting directly involved, so he needs tools to do the job for him — and that's where the PCs come in.

MEETING STARKAD

The kind of greeting the PCs get at the den depends on their approach. Force is met with force, as dozens of Malarites try to toss the party back down the mountainside. Asking for Garond's a bad idea, too — hunters fiercely dedicated to Starkad demand to know where the PCs' loyalties lie, and the wrong answer results in a cold shoulder. If the PCs are captured by Kek's bashers, they're brought to the cave as prisoners to be interrogated. Likewise, if they

enter in disguise, the hyper-senses of the hunters quickly spot the intruders.

The best options for the party are to arrive with Kek's trading group or request negotiations for a hostage exchange (as Venia insisted).

In any case, if the PCs have a legitimate reason for coming to the den, they're ushered into the presence of Guilder Starkad himself, who's busy overseeing the crude dissection of three dead rams.

The stench from the slaughtered beasts twists your stomach into knots. But it doesn't bother the imposing man in regal auburn furs who checks a young hunter's carving work. Then he turns to you, his thick hands stained red from the rams' hot blood. "I believe you're here to help me," he says quietly, with a crooked smile.

If the PCs arrived with Kek, Starkad first asks for and examines the four *spiritbowls*. He shows satisfaction, but in fact neither he nor anyone else in his den knows how to make the *bowls* work. However, he treats this as only a temporary obstacle; he plans to ambush a Deliverer and gouge the information out of him.

If the PCs ask about the sale of prisoners from the Vault, Starkad brags that the scheme is all his idea, then brings up a problem the PCs might help him solve (see “Frax Turns Stag,” below). If the party asks about the den’s trading trips to Sigil, Starkad takes further credit for his own genius and wants to know what the heroes can offer the pack.

Any mention of hunters wearing black triangles drives Starkad into a rage — he angrily demands to know if the PCs are spies for Garond or the Deliverers. If satisfied that the party’s not working for his foe, Starkad takes the PCs into a private chamber. He tells how Garond has “gotten too ambitious” and says he’d like to see the tiefling take a fall.

THE OFFER

“I’d prefer that it not be my hand that cuts off Garond’s head,” Starkad says. “It would look bad in the eyes of those dens that honor that fool. But you could act as my agents in this matter. You could make your way to the Beastlands and crush that tiefling’s skull — with my help, of course.”

Starkad plays on the party’s sense of honor and decency, warning them that Garond, if not stopped, will wreak havoc across the planes. Starkad promises the PCs safe passage through the Land of the Hunt in the future (a lie). As a last resort, the priest explains coolly that the PCs can’t leave the realm without his help — they can’t walk out, and he won’t show them any gates. What’s more, unless they agree to the job, “I wouldn’t be able to stop over-enthusiastic hunters from tracking and killing you.”

If the PCs agree to help, Starkad tells them all he knows about Garond’s plans (see “What Starkad Knows,” page 31). He reveals the true nature of the obsidian triangles: They act as keys to the gate hidden in the gehreleth lair at the bottom of the canyon. Starkad points out that the PCs’ triangle — with its broken corner — probably won’t work.

“You’ll have to get a new one from a gehreleth,” he says. “But the shapes are sacred relics to the fiends — not easily stolen. Watch out for those monsters; they’re extremely deadly. Of course, you could rip a triangle from around the neck of a Deliverer — one of the hunters who aid Garond in his work. That witch Venia is sure to know if one of those fools is about. Once you have a triangle, you can jump to the Beastlands from the gehreleth lair. The gate’s in the tunnels somewhere.”

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: The PCs might try to avoid the gehreleth lair entirely, wanting instead to return to Sigil and find their own gate to the Beast-

lands. Starkad advises against this, noting that only the gate in the lair is sure to take the PCs close to Garond’s location. “Besides,” he adds, “you can’t use or even find a gate to Sigil without my help, and I don’t plan on helping.”

FRAX TURNS STAG

If the PCs bring up the purchase of prisoners from the Vault (or ask about a hostage exchange for Pendell), Starkad becomes quite interested. “The dwarf who gets me criminals from the Vault was due here days ago,” he says. “I’m afraid he might have blundered into Venia’s clutches. That witch is like a razor in my paw. She won’t give an ear to me or my hunters, and if we just swarm into her den, she’d surely kill Pendell before we could find him.”

Starkad notes that he’s got something the githyanki wants — a hunter named Frax. He asks the PCs to negotiate a hostage swap with Venia: Frax for Pendell. But the priest won’t let Frax go until the dwarf is brought to him. Of course, because Venia’s just as stubborn, the PCs must find a way to make the switch acceptable to both leaders — perhaps by arranging a guarded swap in the neutral stalking grounds.

THE REAL CHANT: What Starkad doesn’t tell the PCs is that Frax is a member of the Vile Hunt from the Beastlands. The changes there had started to turn the sod into a hyena. Frax went to Garond to complain but overheard the tiefling laugh about how he’d duped the berks of the Vile Hunt into becoming beasts. Unfortunately, Garond caught Frax eavesdropping and had him thrown through the gate to the Land of the Hunt. Hunters from Starkad’s den captured him in the stalking grounds two days ago.

Frax told the priest all he knew of Garond’s plan (see “What Starkad Knows,” page 31). Now, Starkad’s got no more use for the berk and is, in fact, glad to be rid of him. Starkad knows that Venia’s likely to kill Frax, but he doesn’t reveal that to the PCs — after all, the do-gooder sods probably won’t want to lead Frax to certain death.

TALKING + FRAX

If they agree to arrange the hostage switch, Starkad lets the PCs see Frax. Frax is a “guest” of the den and isn’t tied up, but the party can’t escape with him — they’d have to fight off several thousand Malarites. Frax himself is quite a sight, as he’s currently half human, half hyena. His pale skin has begun to sprout a coarse coat of gray fur, his nose and mouth jut forward into a strong snout, and his newly sloping back forces him to lean forward when walking — though he hasn’t yet taken to all fours.

Frax explains that something Garond is doing on the Beastlands is turning him into a hyena, and turning many other sods into other kinds of animals.



"He got to D'kess somehow – that's the leader of the Vile Hunt," the half-man says in a guttural voice. "See, we're used to just killing the beasts and being done with it. But now we've got to send them through the gate to this place – don't know why. Garond told us he'd help us get rid of all the abominations, all the beasts who think like men. He even said we'd turn into those things ourselves, just for a while. But I overheard him laugh that he'd duped us – that the change was permanent!"

Frax raises one foot to scratch his ear. "And then there's the Wylders – those tree-hugging leatherheads who call themselves the Verdant Guild. Somehow, Garond's got those beast-lovers thinking the cat lord's behind all the trouble. See, he's peeling them just like he's peeling us!"

Frax won't return to the Beastlands under any circumstances. His change seems to have stopped, but not reversed, since he left the plane, and he'd rather die than go back there. However, he does offer to sell the PCs a rough map of Krigala for 200 gp (or a useful magical item), though he gives them the map for nothing if they find a way to set him free.

"If you're going to the Beastlands, take this, too," growls Frax, slipping a silver ring off a swollen, hairy finger. "I can't wear it any more – not like this. Find D'kess. Give him my ring, let him know what's happened to me – what'll happen to them, too, if Garond gets his way!"

DM NOTE: If the heroes obtain the map from Frax, give the players the color map of Krigala from the mapsheet.

WHAT STARKAD KNOWS

Only Garond and his Deliverers know the full details of his plan. But Frax found out quite a bit as a member of the Vile Hunt and spilled it all to Starkad; that's how Starkad learned where to buy *spiritbowls*. If the PCs try to force information from the pack

members, dozens of Malarites descend on the PCs, trying to drive them from the cave. But if the PCs promise to do away with Garond or agree to make the hostage exchange, they might hear some of the chant:

- ◆ Malar was exiled to Carceri by Talos the Destroyer, a god of the prime-material world of Toril. Garond plans to break the chains that keep the Beastlord on the prison-plane and move Malar to another, more fertile hunting ground: the Beastlands.
- ◆ Garond got a dream hunter, a cat-woman, to force nightmares on the inhabitants of the Beastlands, hoping that it'd somehow draw Malar. (Starkad knows nothing of the One or the dreamscape.)
- ◆ Once she'd done her evil deed, the dream hunter was banished to the stalking grounds of the Land of the Hunt. Now, Garond wants her dead so she can't reverse the nightmares.
- ◆ Starkad's had his hunters search the canyons for the dream hunter, figuring that she'd be useful in turning the tables on Garond. But they haven't found her yet; Starkad fears that Venia got to her first – and killed her.

THE STALKING GROUNDS

The PCs' arrival on Carceri determines where they enter the stalking grounds. Refer to the map of the area on the adventure folder. If the PCs were sold to the Malarites as prisoners from the Vault, they wake up at the spot marked

"PCs" on the map. If they came through the gate on the Beastlands, they appear at the spot marked "1." Coming from Garond's den or Starkad's den, they can enter the stalking grounds at any point.





This section provides encounters the PCs can have while exploring the grounds; each scene is keyed to a particular spot on the map. When the PCs reach or get near a numbered encounter, run that scene. (If you wish, have the NPCs and animals roam the stalking grounds so that some encounters could take place anywhere.)

DM NOTE: Remember to intensify Meuronna's dream messages while the PCs explore the stalking grounds – especially near the entrance to the gehreleth lair.

I. THE GATE

When animals from the Beastlands are pushed through the gate to Carceri, they appear in this location. As the gate is one-way, they can't return – they just become more prey for the stalking grounds. If the PCs come through the gate from Krigala (see Chapter III for details), describe their new surroundings without revealing where they are:

This side of the gate doesn't look that much different from where you just were. You're standing in a wide, grassy clearing, surrounded on all sides by a thin patch of trees, many of which are bent and broken. But the bright sun of Krigala is gone, replaced by a small orb that hangs dimly in the gray sky. Everywhere you look, mountain peaks of various heights jut into the air, as if you stood in a fertile oasis in the middle of a range of rocky hills.

If the PCs leave this area and return later, or if they entered the stalking grounds by another method and approach the gate for the first time, they see a wild boar pushed through from Krigala.

A crackle like lightning alerts you just seconds before a hole opens in the air a few feet above the ground – a hole that leads somewhere else. Suddenly, a tusked boar with mottled, bloody fur bursts squealing through the hole! The beast hits the ground running, but when it sees you standing nearby, it wheels and charges right for you!

The boar's not an intelligent animal petitioner – it's just an ordinary beast. However, it is enraged and confused by being captured and sent to Carceri, and it attacks the first things it sees – the PCs. The heroes must roll for surprise when the boar appears; once battle is joined, the animal fights to the death or until calmed or subdued.

The "hole" in the air closes after 10 seconds, but the PCs can't go through it anyway. However, any PCs who aren't surprised by the boar can roll an Intelligence check. Those who succeed catch faint glimpses of what's on the other side of the hole: jungle-like terrain and leather-clad humanoids with swords (Vile Huntsmen who sent the boar through the gate).

2. HOACHER THE FOUL

Hoacher the Foul, a bladeling (see the *Monstrous Supplement* in the *Planes of Law* boxed set), was one of the criminals transferred from Sigil's Prison to the Vault and then sold to the Malarites as prey. He and three other prisoners have been hunted through the stalking grounds for the last six days; Hoacher is the only one still alive. He is hungry, desperate, and bordering on both nervous breakdown and neutral evil.

At spot 2 on the map, the PCs come upon the body of a prisoner – a red-skinned tiefling slashed to death by the Malarites. Hoacher watches them from the high branches of a nearby oak tree, motionless, until he realizes that they aren't part of the ruthless Malarite packs.

He calls out from the branches to get the party's attention (unless they've already spotted him), says *"I didn't kill him – it was them,"* and climbs down to meet them. He's haggard, his chest exposed and bleeding (he used his razor storm attack on a vaath two days ago), and many of his metallic black spikes are now chipped or broken.

At first, Hoacher maintains that he and the tiefling were innocent explorers, but if pressed, he admits that they're criminals from Sigil sent to the Vault and sold to "the hunters."

"It was brutal," says the ink-black bladeling. "They dropped four of us in here a week ago. A bear got Ossalk, and poor Thackwich got his spine snapped by a sodding vaath." He points to the tiefling. "Mex there got cut up by those furry hunters. My black spikes're the only things that've kept me alive this long."

If the PCs remember Hoacher from their investigation in Sigil, they might decide that they can use the bladeling to expose the evil Mercykillers' prisoner trading ring. If asked, Hoacher's certainly willing to testify that Prison guards sent him to the Vault and sold him. 'Course, the PCs aren't heading back to Sigil any time soon, so they either have to hold on to Hoacher for a while or figure out how to get him back to the Cage on his own (perhaps by enlisting Guilder Starkad's aid).

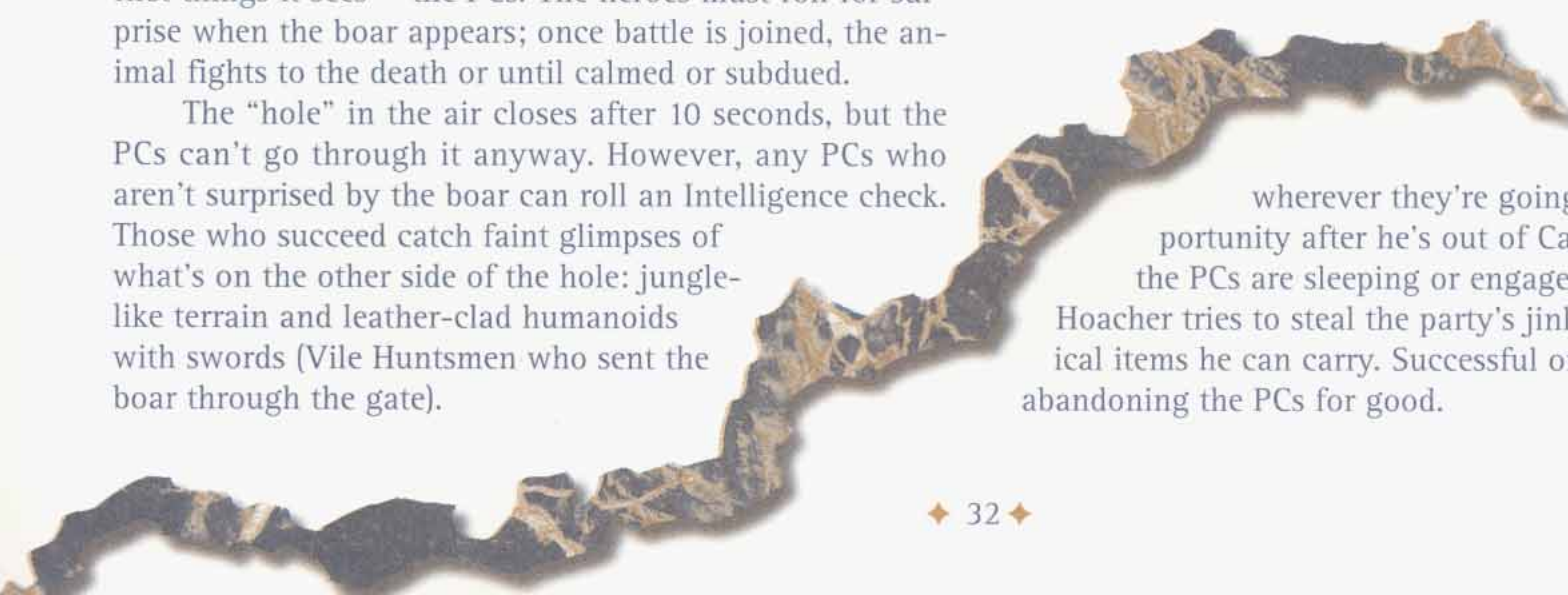
If the PCs decide to let Hoacher travel with them, the bladeling's selfish, thieving nature becomes apparent before long. He won't risk himself in combat, and he regards

the PCs strictly as a way off the plane.

He hopes to follow them to the

Beastlands or

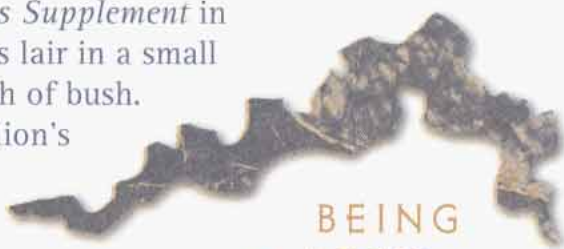
wherever they're going. At his earliest opportunity after he's out of Carceri (perhaps when the PCs are sleeping or engaged in another battle), Hoacher tries to steal the party's jink or any small magical items he can carry. Successful or not, Hoacher flees, abandoning the PCs for good.



3. VICIOUS ANIMALS

At several locations throughout the stalking grounds, the PCs might run into the following creatures.

3A. A vaath (see the *Monstrous Supplement* in *Planes of Conflict*) has made its lair in a small clearing beneath a thick growth of bush. Prizes from previous kills – a lion's skull, a Malarite's hand, a few fingers from Hoacher's friend Thackwich – hang in the foliage above the lair. If the PCs approach the hidden lair, the vaath emerges and attacks with its poisonous bite and burrowing tendril, intent on adding bits of the party to its collection. It flees when reduced to half its hit points.



BEING
AN APE'S
NOT SO BAD.
BETTER THAN
BEING A DRUID,
ANYWAY.

— URIL KABO



3B. This den is the home of a brown cave bear that's grown accustomed to fighting off Malarite hunters. It emerges from the darkness of the cave only if the PCs approach the mouth. If the heroes actually enter the den, the bear attacks without hesitation, trying to drive the intruders from its home. It flees if it takes more than 8 points of damage in one blow or if it's reduced to half its hit points; fire also frightens it away.

3C. As the PCs pass through this dense area of forest, two su-monsters in the branches above watch them intently. When the characters reach spot 3C, one su-monster drops to the ground and attacks with its *psychic crush* ability, while the other hangs by its tail from a low branch and attacks with four claws and a bite. These two cowards flee from any show of determined resistance.

4. KABO THE PETITIONER

When the PCs reach spot 4 on the map, they encounter Uril Kabo, an intelligent animal petitioner of the Beastlands. Kabo was a 5th-level human druid on the Prime who died and reformed on the Beastlands as a large ape. Unfortunately, the sod got captured by the Vile Hunt and pushed through the gate to the stalking grounds.

Though reluctant to take life, Kabo's been using his spells and animal skills to stay alive by any means necessary. When he sees the PCs, he assumes that they're just more hunters out for his blood. The changes wracking the Beastlands have made Kabo more savage and instinctual than usual, so he attacks first with his claws and bite. During this time, he won't speak to the PCs or give any sign of real intelligence.

However, after a round or two of combat, Kabo gains better control of his actions; he steps back from the fray and casts *heat metal* (to force the PCs to shed their armor)

or *plant growth* (to entrap the party), following either with *flame blade* (to better fight his foes). The sight of an ape casting spells might give the PCs pause. If they speak to Kabo, the petitioner responds.

"You'll not take me, you devils," growls the ape.
"You may murder gentler beasts without fear of spilling your own blood, but I'll tear your throats out with my teeth, if need be, to make sure I see my home again!"

If the PCs demonstrate their good intentions and explain that combat was a mistake, they can calm Kabo down. However, the petitioner insists on casting *know alignment* on the party to check their nature; the presence of nonevil PCs reassures him. He explains that he was forced from Krigala to "this evil place," and he knows that many other petitioners have been sent through, as well – apparently for the sport of the fur-clad hunters.

"Are these monsters so evil that they would deny us the chance to merge with our plane?" he asks. Kabo explains that the intelligent animals of the Beastlands are petitioners of the plane; they seek only to live out their natural lives and then join with the plane upon death. "If we die here – wherever this vile place is – our spirits are lost forever!"

Kabo also notes that, before he was kidnapped from the Beastlands, he saw a change come over many of the animals there – "a change that brought out rage and evil in even the most docile creatures." Because of his nightmares about being stalked by cats, Kabo blames the new cat lord for the trouble, figuring that it's part of her bid to take over the whole plane.

If asked, Kabo joins the party. However, he attacks any Malarites he sees without hesitation. What's more, the ripple effect begins turning him more savage and evil. In 1d10+10 hours, Kabo loses his ability to speak or cast spells. After that, he can stave off the psychic corruption for another 1d8+8 hours, at which time he turns on the PCs and tries to kill them.

5. GATHERING SPIRITS

As Venia mentioned, a Deliverer named Bredge recently returned from the Beastlands to the Land of the Hunt. He led a team from Garond's den into the stalking grounds. Bredge also took one of the den's *spiritbowls*, hoping to kill a few animal petitioners and collect their spirits for Malar. Bredge wears an obsidian triangle, but the rest of his team does not.

At spot 5 on the map, the hunters are battling an elephant petitioner; the PCs hear the ruckus if they travel within 300 yards of the site. The Malarites have already

lost two hunters in the fight, reducing their number to five, but they've weakened the animal considerably.

The scene would be impressive if it weren't so appalling: Four hunters in olive green furs surround a slate-gray elephant, fiercely slashing the beast with claws and spears. The animal tries repeatedly to grab the hunters in its trunk or gore them with its tusks, but the warriors are nimble and the beast seems dead on its feet.

Then you notice a fifth hunter – a tall man who wears a black triangle around his neck and holds a small, silver bowl out in front of him. The man stands on the other side of the fray, chanting and waving one hand over the bowl.

If the PCs remain at a distance, neither Bredge nor the other hunters notice their presence – the battle has captured their full attention. The PCs have missed the first part of Bredge's incantation, and so they cannot replicate it to use a *spiritbowl* themselves.

Regardless of the PCs' actions, the elephant dies in the round after the party arrives, and Bredge catches the petitioner's spirit in the *spiritbowl*.

The bloodied elephant crashes to the ground like a redwood, nearly crushing the hunters as it dies. The hunter with the bowl continues to chant and wave his hand over the dish, and you notice a swirling cloud of red light emerge from the elephant's body. The light moves toward the chanting man, and, within seconds, is sucked into the bowl like a djinni into a bottle.

Once he's got the spirit in the bowl, Bredge and his hunters head for the feeding pit (see encounter 6, below) to offer the essence to Malar. As long as the PCs stay at a distance, they can follow the group to the pit; the hunters are too steeped in the scent and rush of the kill to notice that they're being trailed.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: If the PCs try to save the elephant by attacking the Malarites, the hunters hold off the party while Bredge captures the dying petitioner's spirit. He heads for the feeding pit alone, leaving the four wearied Malarites to fight the party. Encourage at least one PC to follow him; he runs well ahead, leading pursuers to the next encounter, "The Feeding Pit." The PCs can also learn Bredge's destination by interrogating a surviving hunter.

If the PCs stop Bredge here, or before he reaches the feeding pit, he can call for Malar, perhaps with his dying breath. The Beastlord passes through, drawn by the *spiritbowl*; run encounter 7, "Malar" (see page 35).

6. THE FEEDING PIT+

Spot 6 on the map is a cave that serves as a secret trough for Malar. The entrance is camouflaged with a *permanent illusion* spell to make it blend seamlessly with the rest of the rocky cliff face. If the PCs followed Bredge from the site of the elephant attack, they watch him pass right through the solid rock of the mountain and vanish! Each PC who then tries to disbelieve the illusion can save vs. spells; heroes who see the cave mouth and describe it to their comrades bestow a +4 bonus to the comrades' saving throws. But even PCs who see only the illusory rock wall can still walk right through it – as long as they saw Bredge do the same.

The small, dark cave is littered with faded bones and nauseating heaps of rotting meat – offerings to Malar. A stone statue of the Beastlord in the form of a crouched panther is perched at the lip of a rough-hewn, 12-foot-deep pit. Unlike the rest of the cave, the pit is clean and empty. That's because Deliverers toss only full *spiritbowls* into the pit; once Malar devours the trapped life essences, the Deliverers return to collect the emptied bowls.

Here's what happens if the PCs didn't follow Bredge or don't interfere: One round after Bredge enters the cave, he tosses the *spiritbowl* containing the elephant's life force into the pit, spends two rounds praying to Malar, then leaves the cave and waits. A few minutes later, he returns to the cave to collect the empty bowl.

However, if the PCs confront Bredge in the cave, the Deliverer attacks, fighting to the death to protect the *spiritbowl* and the obsidian triangle around his neck. Two rounds after combat begins, the invisible, intangible presence of Malar himself swoops into the pit to devour the petitioner's trapped spirit – driving everyone in the cave momentarily mad with bloodlust.

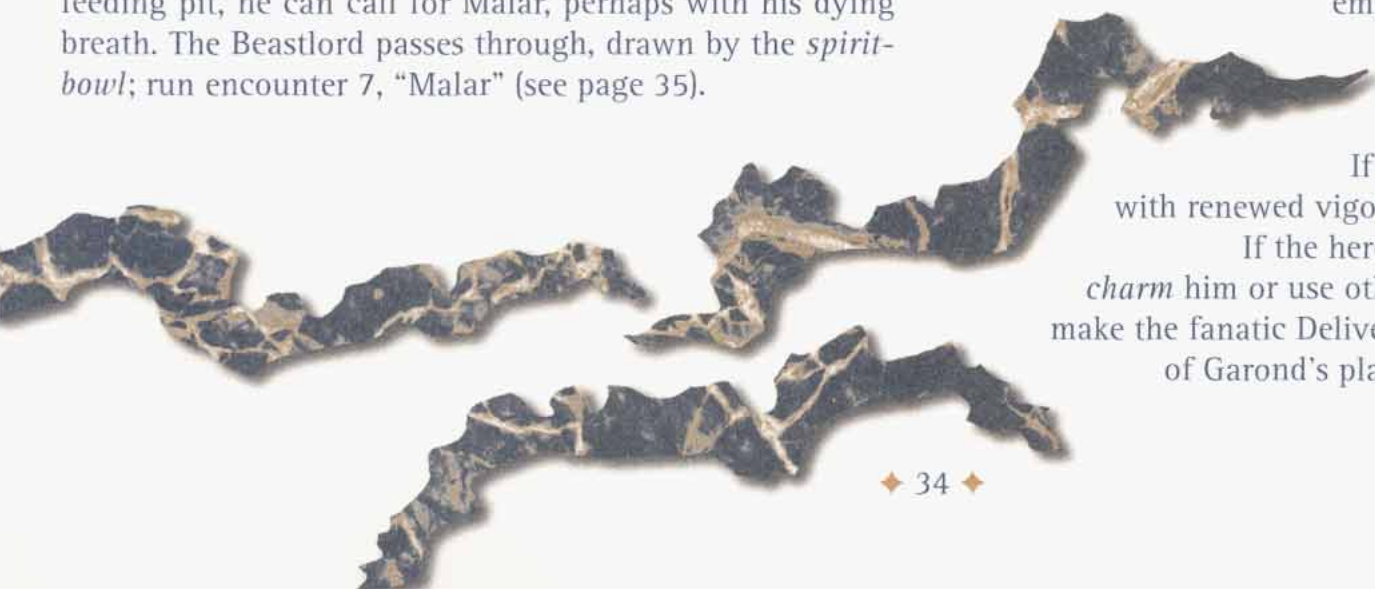
Every hair on your body stands on end, and you're deafened by a rush of blood in your ears. A crushing presence sweeps through the cave. You grind your teeth in a sudden burst of fury. Every fiber of your being screams to tear the guts from the Malarite, your comrades – someone, anyone! Just as it becomes impossible to hold back any longer, the urge drains away, leaving your body feeling like it was trampled by a herd of baku.

After Malar passes, the *spiritbowl* returns to normal, emptied of the swirling red light.

Bredge praises his god's name, then tries to retrieve the bowl and escape.

If the PCs block him, he attacks with renewed vigor.

If the heroes capture Bredge, they must *charm* him or use other extraordinary measures to make the fanatic Deliverer talk. He knows the details of Garond's plan to free Malar, including the



location of the 'leth gate and the role of the One's tortured dreaming on the Beastlands. He believes Meuronna the tabaxi to be dead, so he can't explain the vivid images the PCs have been experiencing. Bredge says that the One's dreaming doesn't affect Carceri — just sods who come there from the Beastlands.

THE REAL CHANT: The PCs can do nothing to free the elephant's spirit from the bowl. However, if they carry the bowl out of the cave, they save the spirit from Malar. Later, if they get a Deliverer to release the spirit on the Beastlands, it merges with its home plane.

7. MALAR

This encounter — a brush with Malar — takes place when the PCs move within 200 yards of spot 7 on the map. Run this encounter only if the PCs did not experience Malar's presence in the feeding pit.

The invisible, intangible presence of Malar passes very near the PCs, causing them to erupt in rage and bloodlust for a terrifying moment. After they return to normal, the heroes could realize that the same force — Malar — is responsible for the outbreaks of savagery they witnessed in Sigil and heard about on the Beastlands.

Modify the italicized player text from "The Feeding Pit," above, and use it for this encounter instead.

◆ THE GEHRELETH LAIR ◆

The PCs might explore the gehreleth lair if they come looking for Meuronna, the gate to the Beastlands, or a 'leth's triangle. As the heroes near the entrance to the lair, the dream images they receive from Meuronna get stronger and more insistent, compelling them to venture inside. Within the lair, Meuronna, the paladin Blander Mul, and a criminal from the Vault are held prisoner — the farastu plan to use their husks as receptacles for new 'leths.

Luckily for the PCs, however, the tunnels are mostly abandoned; one farastu guards the prisoners, while another works to relocate the lair's collection of liquified, bottled gehreleths. It wasn't the Malarites that drove the fiends away — the 'leths are busy doubling their numbers in preparation for a particularly nasty stage of the Blood War that looms just around the corner.

When the PCs approach the lair's entrance in the stalking grounds, read the following:

You see a wide, dark opening in the face of the mountain, a mouth that leads only to blackness. The weeds and bushes around the cave entrance are a deep crimson, as if stained by the blood of a thousand fallen hunters. What's more, a haunting whine fills the air like a swarm of insects. But as you get closer to the cave mouth, you realize that the whining sounds issue from the red plants themselves — they're crying.

Any PCs who make a successful Wisdom check realize that the red plants are the same ones in the dream images they've experienced while in the Land of the Hunt.

DM NOTE: The crude map from Sashell's journal (on the player map-sheet) shows part of the gehreleth lair.

Sashell picked up on Meuronna's dream signals and sketched out the result in his journal. The letter "X" marks the locations of the captive tabaxi and the gate to the Beastlands.



HEY —
I'M THE WIZARD!
I THINK I KNOW
HEALING POTIONS
WHEN I SEE THEM!
— QUANGO THE GREEN,
IN THE 'LETH LAIR,
+ THE REST
OF HIS PARTY

I. STORAGE ROOM

Farastu gehreleth can liquefy themselves and then be stored in bottles; thus, each tribe of 'leths can keep an "instant army" of fiends that can be poured out and reformed when needed. This large cave contains the bulk of the bottled 'leths for the farastu that live in the Land of the Hunt. As the PCs approach the tunnel outside the cave, they see a faint glow of yellow-green light from within. When they actually enter the cave, read the following:

The dim lime glow that you saw comes from dozens of corked bottles and flasks, each of which is filled with some kind of thick, incandescent ooze. The containers sit in many rough alcoves dug all around the walls of the cave.

Written on the outside of each bottle is the true name of the liquified farastu within. However, the markings, written in the gehreleth language, are completely alien and indecipherable to the party without magical aid.

If the PCs remove a cork from a bottle, the 'leth within stirs and begins to ooze out the opening. If the cork is not replaced immediately, the 'leth pours itself out onto the ground and begins to reconstitute its shape, a process that takes six rounds. During that time, the 'leth can't hurt the party, though the PCs can hurt *it*. Once fully formed, the new farastu attacks the heroes (if they're nearby) or wanders off into the caves (if they're not). If the PCs break a bottle, the 'leth within falls to the ground and begins to reconstitute itself that same round.

If the heroes spend more than three turns in this cave without freeing a 'leth, the farastu keeper (if not already killed; see encounter 2, below) enters to move more bottles. Enraged to see the PCs, it attacks; see the following encounter for its tactics. If it loses more than half its hit points, the keeper tries to escape. If escape is impossible,



the fiend tries to gain an ally by opening or smashing a bottle (it's already used its *gate* for the day).

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: A careless party might find itself facing several farastu at the same time. If the odds seem stacked against them, try any of the following methods to keep the PCs alive:

- ◆ Extend the time a bottled farastu takes to reconstitute itself, so that the party need not fight more than one at a time.
- ◆ Have a newly reformed farastu, disoriented, attack one of its fellow fiends by mistake, provoking an enraged counterattack from the wounded 'leth.
- ◆ Let the PCs obtain the vial of 'leth-weakening blue vapor from encounter 3 (see below).
- ◆ Have any farastu's *gate* attempt fail.
- ◆ Make the 'leth bottles very hard or impossible to shatter by accident.

2. FARASTU KEEPER

Don't run this encounter if the PCs have already faced one or more 'leths in the first encounter.

Although most of the farastu that lived in these caves went deeper into the tunnels, one remained to transport the tribe's collection of liquified 'leths. While the PCs explore, the keeper follows the path marked on the DM's map, carrying one bottle at a time from the storage room to a safer place farther into the tunnels.

If the PCs encounter the keeper on its way from the storage room, the fiend has a bottle that it can open to gain an ally for the fight. If the PCs run into the keeper on its way *to* the storage room, the 'leth is empty-handed, and it tries to smash any bottles the party might be carrying. The keeper won't deviate from its path unless the PCs attract its attention elsewhere.

Regardless of the circumstances, when the keeper sees the party, it turns invisible and attacks.

The slimy gray humanoid shouts in a guttural language you can't understand and shambles toward you, sharp fangs protruding from its oversized jaw. The thing's at least seven feet tall. Around its slender neck hangs a black triangle. Suddenly, the creature vanishes!

The keeper fights with its claws and fangs, also making use of *fear*, *fog cloud*, *invisibility*, and *weakness* as needed. But it's already used its *gate* ability for the day, so it can't summon more farastu.

If the PCs kill or incapacitate the keeper, they can take its obsidian triangle to use as a key for the gate to the Beastlands. If they leave the keeper alive, the 'leth doesn't rest until it has recovered the stolen item — it might later locate another triangle and follow the PCs through the gate, attacking them on Krigala.

If the PCs force the keeper to talk, it uses its *tongues*

ability to answer their questions. It might say any of the following, depending on what the PCs ask:

- ◆ "The triangles are sacred gifts from our god, Apomps, the Three-Sided One. Without them, we are nothing."
- ◆ "The hunters in the caves above often raid our tunnels, thinking that they can kill us for sport, destroy our numbers, steal our triangles. Thus we raid their dens, take their prey."
- ◆ "The others have gone — moved deeper into the darkness of the tunnels. The Blood War threatens to surge. We face danger from the hateful baatezu and the stinking tanar'ri. We must ready ourselves and grow our numbers."
- ◆ "My duty is to tend to our bottled ranks and move them to our new location, where they can rejoin us in safety."
- ◆ "We take prey from the green hunting grounds beyond the cave mouth. The bodies of slain humanoids make fine husks for our god to fill with the spirits of new farastu."



3. BARMY 'LETH

Apart from the keeper, the only other gehreleth currently in the lair is a barmy farastu assigned to guard the prisoners. But it's not much of a guard — it just sits at the end of the tunnel leading to the captives, cross-legged, eyes closed, chanting to itself. However, the 'leth's chanting in the *elven* language, and if the PCs listen to what it's saying, they find the words very odd indeed.

As the mucus-coated creature rocks back and forth in the dirt, you can just make out its whispered, gravelly words: "The sleeping creators stir . . . the enslaved behemoth forgets . . . the endless foes are broken . . . the war of wars begins anew."

The 'leth shows no signs of even noticing that the PCs are present. It won't communicate with the party, won't defend itself if attacked, and won't try to stop the PCs from rescuing the prisoners. It just sits in the dirt, mumbling the same few phrases over and over again. Award no experience points for defeating it.

THE GAS VIAL: The farastu wears no obsidian triangle, but it does carry one item that can help the PCs: a finger-sized glass vial of blue vapor. This foul-smelling gas, though harmless to the PCs, affects gehreleths the way catnip affects cats. One round after breathing the gas, a 'leth

becomes groggy and capricious; it cannot attack, and its AC suffers a +4 penalty. The vial holds enough gas to affect all the 'leths in a combat, but it disperses after three rounds. The vial is sealed with wax. An adroit PC can get a whiff of the vapor and restore the seal without releasing all the contents.

THE REAL CHANT: This 'leth went barmy just recently for some reason (perhaps overuse of the blue gas) – it's particularly sensitive to undercurrents of evil building on the Lower Planes. The fiend senses that a violent upheaval in the Blood War is about to take place, a strike that transcends the squabbling between tanar'ri and baatezu that's characterized the war for so many eons.

The forthcoming PLANESCAPE boxed set *Hellbound: The Blood War* (available in summer 1996) chronicles the events foretold by the barmy 'leth. The repercussions will set a new direction for the rest of the Blood War and forever alter the baatezu and tanar'ri. What's more, *Hellbound* lays bare the dark of the war from its inception to the present day – the players, the arsenals, the battlefields, and the secrets.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: If no PCs in the party speak elven, have the 'leth chant in a language that someone does understand – as long as it's not common and not a tongue that any farastu should know.

4. THE PRISONERS

At the end of the tunnel guarded by the barmy 'leth are three prisoners intended as husks for new farastu: the dream hunter Meuronna, the Mercykiller paladin Blander Mul, and a criminal from the Vault – an albino named Jerune (Pl/♂ githzerai/F5/Xaositect/CN). The three are "webbed" to the wall by thick, sticky coatings of farastu slime. Blander Mul is dead, but Meuronna and Jerune are alive, though trapped by the tarlike adhesive.

Three bodies seem to cling to one rocky wall of this cave like leeches. After a moment, you can see that the sods have been stuck there. Glistening sheets of green-black slime hold them up in standing positions; only the heads of the captives poke out from the goop. One of them – a human male – seems dead, with his head slumped forward. The other two – an orange, spotted cat-woman and a white-skinned githzerai – are very much alive.

"You came!" cries the cat-woman. "I'm Meuronna. Did you understand my messages? Oh, never mind – just free me from this ooze before the fiends return!"

If the PCs hit the slime with weapons, their items just stick; it takes a full round to yank them free. Acid also has no effect on the goop. However, the party can use flame to burn away the slime (taking care not to burn the captive), or cold to harden the slime and make it brittle enough to break. Several PCs with a combined Strength of 50 or more can also plunge their hands into the slime and pull the captive out; the chance of success is equal to their combined Strength plus 10 (roll percentile dice).

Meuronna is reluctant to answer any questions until she's freed from the slime, afraid that the farastu might return. Once freed (or if the PCs refuse to help her without some answers), she explains what happened:

"I'm a dream hunter, from Ysgard," she says. "I was helping the Sign of One faction with an experiment on the Beastlands – the dream-link. A cutter they called the One wanted to reach the primal essence of the plane through dreams. But a tiefling hunter named Garond came out of nowhere – he used a spell to make me create an evil dreamscape and trap the One in it!

"I was thrown through a gate and ended up in the forests outside these tunnels. More hunters came looking for my skin, but I avoided them – until fiends caught me and brought me here!"



Meuronna is a kind-hearted and savvy leopard-woman, but the urgency of her present situation makes her nervous and excitable. As the agent of the One's current torment, she feels intense guilt, and she seeks allies to rescue him so that she can atone for her crime.

Meuronna begs the PCs to help her get back to the Beastlands. She has no idea why Garond forced her to trap the One in a dreamscape, but she wants to rescue him. "I can't destroy the dreamscape," she says. "The best I can do is enter it myself – or send others in to find the One." If the PCs don't suggest it first, Meuronna asks their help in bringing the One out of the dreamscape.

As for Jerune, the githzerai screams pitifully to be released from the slime as well. If the PCs get him down, he won't help or harm them – he just uses his *plane shift* ability to leave Carceri immediately. (The farastu secretion had been blocking his power.)

DM NOTE: If the PCs encountered Hoacher the Foul in the stalking grounds and refused to let the bladeling join them, you can have him be the third prisoner instead of Jerune. Just assume that the bladeling was captured by farastu soon after ditching the party. The PCs may be more inclined to help Hoacher the second time around, but they'll still find it wise to keep a sharp eye on him.

THE REAL CHANT: After his investigation into the missing prisoners hit a little too close, Blander Mul was recalled to the Prison, transferred to the Vault for "guard duty," and sold to the Malarites as prey. But the farastu nabbed him first.

If the PCs inspect Mul's corpse, they recognize him from their meeting in Chapter I. They can also find, tucked in his armor, a scrawled testament that makes sad reading. Mul documents in meticulous detail what he knows of the conspiracy to sell prisoners to the Malarites. Despite this, the paladin bequeaths all his goods to his faction, "in hopes that the worthy may use them to drive out the unworthy."

5. THE GATE +0 KRIGALA

One of the tunnels in the lair contains a gate to Krigala, the first layer of the Beastlands – the gate used by Garond and the Deliverers. If a PC carrying an obsidian triangle passes spot 5 on the map, he activates the gate and is transported to the Beastlands; the gate remains open long enough for the rest of the party (and Meuronna) to jump through as well. See "Leaving Carceri," below.

DM NOTE: The triangle the PCs obtained from Sashell will not open the gate, because it's missing a corner.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: If the PCs split up to explore the tunnels and can't all get to the gate before it closes, they need to find another triangle to re-open the gate. The farastu keeper and Bredge the Deliverer each have one, but you can also let the PCs run across more triangle-wearing farastu, or just stumble across a triangle half-buried in the caves (see "Deeper Tunnels," below).

6. DEEPER TUNNELS

The DM map of the gehreleth lair shows only the tunnels used in this adventure. However, the tunnels extend much farther under the mountains. If the PCs try to follow those passageways, they're attacked by eight shrieking vargouilles – humanlike heads with bat wings for ears and tentacles for hair – when they reach spot 6 on the map.

Feel free to create new areas of the 'leth lair for the PCs to explore. But if you want to prevent the PCs from exploring the deeper tunnels, have more and more vargouilles join the attack until the party decides to go back. Also, if Meuronna accompanies the party, she warns of the risk of blundering into a large number of farastu – after all, the fiends seemed to be moving deeper into the tunnels – and urges the group to make haste to the Beastlands.



I'M NEVER GOING +0 GET +HIS
G00P 0U+ 0F MY FUR.

— MEURONNA, FREED FROM
+HE FARASTU SLIME



◆ LEAVING CARCERI ◆

As Guilder Starkad warned, the gehreleths' gate to the Beastlands is the only method by which the party can leave the Land of the Hunt. They can't physically cross the borders of the realm without a special key (a Malarite's canine tooth), and Starkad won't help them find or use any other gates.

However, if you wish, you can allow the party to obtain a tooth (or a Malarite guide), leave the realm, and find their own way off the plane. The only other known gates are on Othrys, the first layer; the PCs can climb to that layer and find an off-plane gate or sail the River Styx (which only takes them to other Lower Planes).

You can also let the PCs stumble across other gates in the gehreleth lair. But if the heroes leave Carceri by any of these methods, they must make their own way to the Beastlands.

CHAPTER III: THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

Chapter III takes the PCs to Krigala, the first layer of the Beastlands, where Garond the Claw is preparing the plane for Malar's arrival. The burg

of Signpost lies at the border between Krigala and the second layer, Brux. There, in the manor called Dreamhearth, the Deliverers guard the sleeping body of the One – the Signer whose nightmares are turning the plane savage and evil.

If the PCs came to the Beastlands straight from

Sigil, various encounters in Krigala point them toward Meuronna and the Land of the Hunt (Chapter II). If they've already rescued the dream hunter from Carceri, they must head for Signpost. Meuronna needs to be

close to the One before she can send the heroes into the tainted dreamscape. During the

journey, the PCs run into the

Vile Hunt, the Verdant Guild, and numerous beasts out for their blood. What's more, the characters develop animal characteristics as the corruption of the plane changes them into animal form.

'Course, the heroes can't just plop their bodies down anywhere in the jungle while their dream-selves head into the One's nightmares – they need a safe place to camp. And that's where the cat lord comes in. Infuriated with being blamed for the changes sweeping the plane, the cat lord offers to guard the PCs' bodies while they adventure in the dreamscape.

DM NOTE: If the PCs dealt with Frax, the half-man, half-hyena in the Land of the Hunt, they might have obtained his map of Krigala. For more details on Krigala and Brux, refer to the *Planes of Conflict* boxed set. For information on how magic is affected on the Beastlands, refer to Table II in the Appendix (page 64).

THIS PLACE REALLY
BRINGS ⊕U+ THE ANIMAL IN ME.

— A WYLDER IN KRIGALA

◆ DREAMS ◆

While the PCs were in Sigil, the tainted dreamscape caused them nightmares of being stalked by shadowy, catlike shapes. Now that the PCs are on Krigala – the very center of the corruption's effects – those nightmares grow worse. Roll 1d20 each time a PC falls asleep to determine the type of nightmare he has. A roll of 1 to 15 means that the sod has a nightmare that merely tires him out the next day, but a roll of 16 to 20 means that he has a *vivid* nightmare. Upon awakening from a vivid nightmare, the PC must make a system shock roll with a 25% penalty or suffer a -1 penalty (not cumulative) on all die rolls made until he next falls asleep.

If the PCs travel with Meuronna, the tabaxi can try to use her *ward* power to protect the party from such nightmares. To do this, Meuronna enters a trance when the PCs fall

asleep. Once in the trance, she makes a separate Intelligence check (against Int 14) for each sleeping hero. Success indicates that she quiets that PC's mind, allowing him to sleep peacefully through the night. If a check fails, roll 1d20 for the sleeper to determine the type of nightmare experienced, and relate a suitable bad dream. (For examples to draw from, refer to the One's nightmares on pages 55–59.)

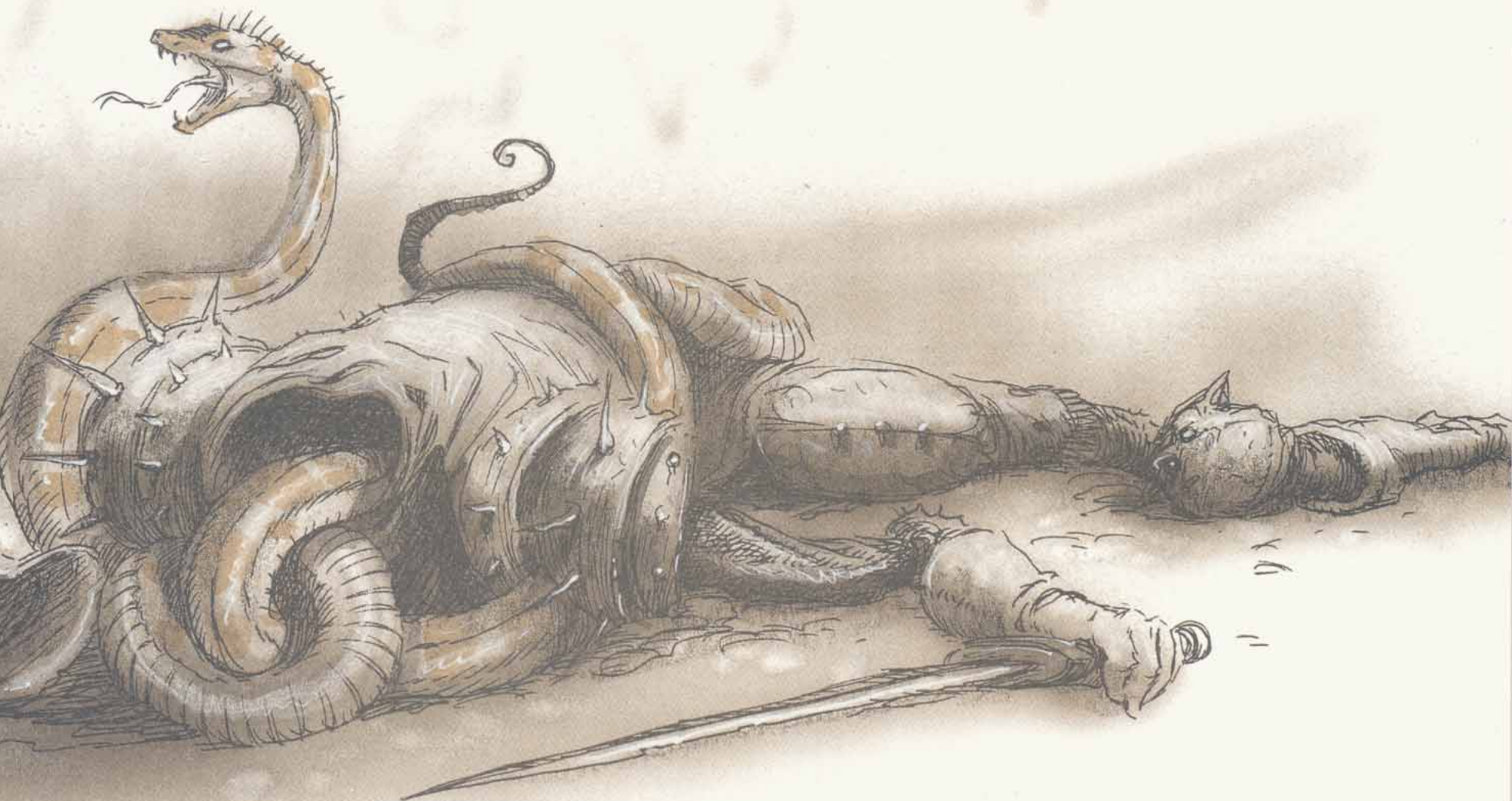
THE REAL CHANT: Although this section speaks of “night,” there really is no night on Krigala – the bright sun, Selera, makes the layer a place of eternal noon. “Night” is just whenever the PCs go to sleep.

◆ PRIMAL CHANGES ◆

Normally, visitors to the Beastlands find that they take on a few harmless physical traits of an animal that mirrors their personality – for example, a strong fighter might grow bear fur. However, because of the tainted dreamscape, humanoid on the plane are taking on full animal form.

The PCs also feel these primal changes while on the Beastlands. Each hero should turn into an animal (your choice) that best fits his highest ability score or his personality. Here are examples:

- ◆ **STRENGTH:** bear, crocodile, elephant, gorilla, great cat.
- ◆ **DEXTERITY:** antelope, monkey, rabbit, raccoon, snake.
- ◆ **CONSTITUTION:** boar, camel, horse, ox, ram.
- ◆ **INTELLIGENCE:** ape, dog, fox, great cat, wolf.
- ◆ **WISDOM:** elephant, lion, owl, raven, tortoise.
- ◆ **CHARISMA:** deer, eagle, lion, peacock, squirrel.



Feel free to add to or alter this list; for example, a PC with a high Strength, Dexterity, or Intelligence could conceivably turn into any type of great cat (tiger, panther, and so on). You can also assign animals based on the PCs' personalities; thus, a gluttonous hero might turn into a pig, no matter what his ability scores. In any case, turn the PCs into creatures with different skills, so that the party has one or two strong animals for combat, one that can fly, one with hands that can manipulate objects, and so on. No matter what type of animal a PC becomes, he should still be useful to the group – for example, a small, nimble squirrel makes an excellent scout, spy, or thief.

FROM MAN + BEAST

The transformation into animals occurs in stages, taking three full days to complete. (Despite the constant sun, one full day on the Beastlands is still 24 hours.)

- ◆ The first day (stage 1), the PCs grow only a few physical traits of the animal they're going to become – feathers, scales, fur, long ears, a tail, etc.
- ◆ The second day on the plane (stage 2), the PCs' bodies begin to change, making them half-animal. Their bodies grow, lengthen, shrink, and bend; their hands and feet become more like paws; and they develop snouts, fangs, and so on. These changes might affect the use of equipment (see "Equipment," below).
- ◆ The third day (stage 3), the PCs complete their transformation, becoming full animals.

ABILITIES: When a PC fully turns into an animal, he gets the creature's physical abilities – armor class, movement rate, number of attacks, damage per attack, and any special attacks, defenses, and weaknesses. The PC keeps his own mental abilities – Intelligence, speech, magic resistance, and alignment. As for THACO and hit points, the PC either gets the animal's or keeps his own, whichever is better. The PC casts spells and makes saving throws as his normal class and level.

Animal PCs can still talk, just like animal petitioners on the Beastlands.

BENEFITS: As a full animal, the PC loses all racial benefits (such as a tiefling's power to create *darkness*). However, he keeps his class benefits (such as spellcasting, thief abilities, or a paladin's healing touch). Adjust thief abilities

by 10–20% to reflect the skills of the animal – for example, a squirrel's chance to pick pockets would drop, but his chance to hide in shadows would increase.

As a full animal, the PC also gains a number of animal-related proficiencies: animal lore, direction sense, hunting (predators only), running, survival, tracking, and weather sense. You can also grant additional proficiencies based on the animal: fishing (bear), jumping (rabbit), swimming (beaver), and so on.

EQUIPMENT: The PCs can still use most weapons and equipment until the transformation is complete (though they must shed armor as their bodies change during the second stage). As full animals, they most likely can't swing swords, fire arrows, or use shields – they must fight and defend themselves as the beasts they've become. Wizards and priests can cast memorized spells, unless their new shapes interfere with somatic components.

But they might need help manipulating their spellbooks. Decide case by case whether a particular animal can wear a magical ring, cloak, etc. Unless the PCs figure out a way to tote their equipment around, they must find a safe place to store it until they change back to normal.

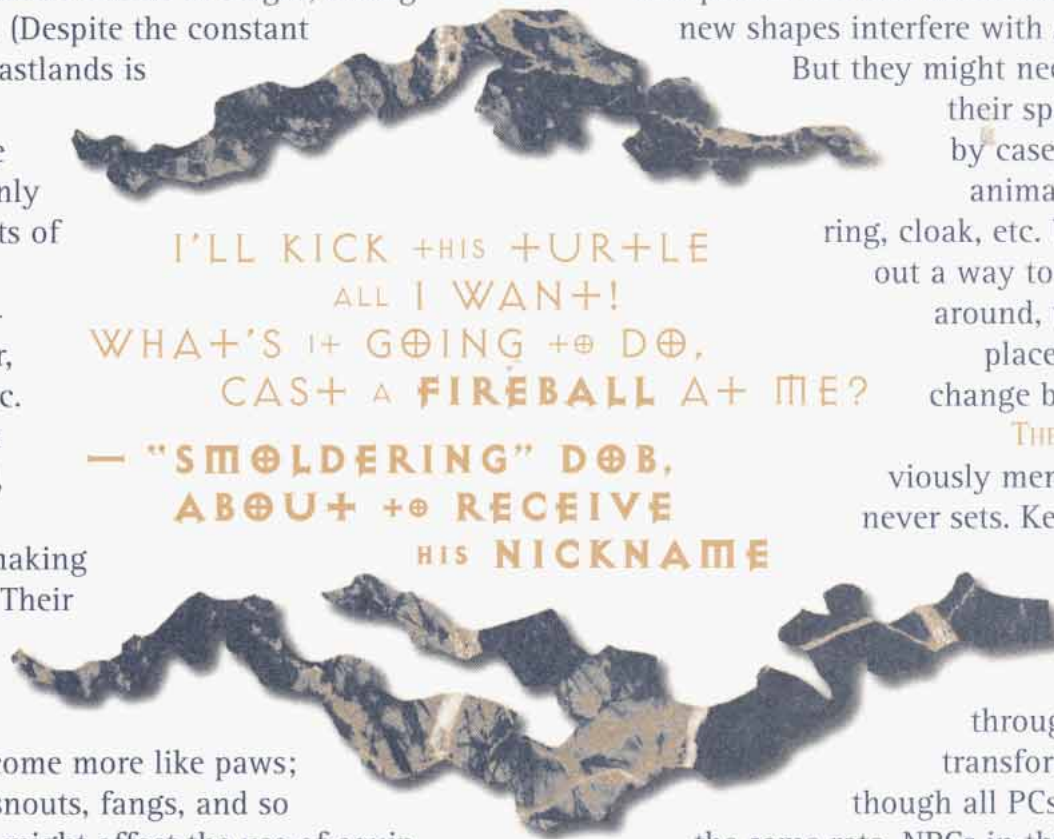
THE REAL CHANT: As previously mentioned, Krigala's sun never sets. Keep track of how long the PCs travel, fight, and explore to determine how quickly they go through the three stages of transformation. Note that although all PCs turn into animals at the same rate, NPCs in this chapter experience the effects differently.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: If a hero already has animal characteristics, have him turn into a beast similar to his original form. For example, a bariaur becomes a ram, a wemic becomes a lion, and so on.

If the PCs leave the Beastlands after they've started to change, the transformation stops but *does not* reverse itself. The only way for the PCs to return to normal is to rescue the One trapped in the tainted dreamscape – his psychic trauma is being channeled into the Beastlands and forcing all humanoids to change shape.

ROLE-PLAYING ANIMALS

The point behind turning the PCs into animals is to give them a role-playing experience they'll remember. Note how well a player acts the part of his animal – a rabbit should be nervous, a tiger fierce, a monkey curious, etc. What's more, make sure the players remember what it



means to be an animal in terms of everyday functions like movement (slithering, hopping), sleep (curling up on the ground, nesting in a tree), food (eating plants, raw meat, or insects), and so on.

Another part of role-playing is cooperation. A large animal like a horse or bear can carry slower, smaller friends, or even some of the party's equipment. A rogue who becomes a raccoon can flip the pages of a spellbook for a wizard who turns into a fox.

At the completion of the adventure, award bonus experience points to players who role-play their animal well (see page 60 for details).

◆ ARRIVAL ⊕N KRIGALA ◆

If the PCs come through the gate from the gehreleth lair, they appear in Krigala near the banks of the River Oceanus (the spot marked "In" on Frax's map), about two days' walk from the town of Signpost.

You're standing in a lush field of weeds that're rich enough to please a Sensate. Nearby, a wide, blue river flows slowly by, vanishing into the horizon in each direction. A blindingly bright sun looms above you in the cloudless, azure sky – already, you feel drops of sweat trickle down your chin. Dragonflies hum in the air by the water, and from many distant places you hear screeches, hoots, and the sounds of creatures padding through brush.

The river's waters are clean, sweet, and immeasurably deep. The banks at this point are about 200 yards apart. Two bridges span the waters elsewhere in Krigala. If Meuronna is with the party, she says, "We must hurry and follow the river's flow to Signpost – it could be many days' walk."

DM NOTE: If the PCs took the triangle from the farastu keeper in the gehreleth lair but left the fiend alive (see Chapter II), it follows the party to reclaim its relic, appearing in Krigala 2d6 hours after the PCs. It senses the location of its property and makes a beeline for the triangle, fighting whatever's in the way.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: If the PCs come to Krigala from someplace other than the gehreleth lair, feel free to start them anywhere on the layer. If they follow the River Oceanus in the wrong direction, relocate Signpost so that they eventually stumble upon it.

WHA+ +⊕ D⊕ NEX+

Here's what needs to happen in this chapter: Soon after the PCs arrive on Krigala, the cat lord learns of their presence and tries to enlist their aid in stopping the madness that plagues the plane – she hates being blamed for the trouble. The PCs need only accept her invitation and travel



to her realm (just across the border between Krigala and Brux); the trip takes a bit more than two days. From the safety of the cat lord's realm, Meuronna sends the PCs into the tainted dreamscape, where they can free the One from his nightmares and undo the corruption of the plane.

Along the way, the PCs visit the empty town of Signpost, fight the Deliverers that guard the One in Dreamhearth, and probably have encounters with the Verdant Guild, the Vile Hunt, and Sarazh (who's hiding out in Skerrit's Glade, the centaur realm).

If the PCs haven't yet rescued Meuronna from Carceri, they'll have a bit more work to do. At some point, they must find and use the gate to the Land of the Hunt, free Meuronna from the gehreleth lair, and then return with her to Krigala. They can't finish the adventure successfully without her.

MEURONNA'S POWER

If the PCs have brought Meuronna with them to Krigala, she explains how she hopes to rescue the One.

"As a dream hunter," she says, "I can place myself in a trance and step into another's dream. But the 'leths took too much out of me. I beg you – let me send you into the dreamscape instead. You can save the One from his nightmare and lead him back to his physical body. Once he's awake, whatever's happening to the Beastlands should stop – and, I hope, set itself right."

If the PCs ask Meuronna to send them into the dreamscape right away, she notes that first they must get into the town manor, Dreamhearth. She needs to be near the One to tap into his dreamscape. They also need a safe place to leave their physical bodies – with Meuronna in a trance and the PCs in the dreamscape, they can't protect themselves from animals or other dangers.

The section called "The Dreamscape" (page 54) explains how Meuronna sends the PCs into the nightmares, what they must do there, and how they get back out.

DM NOTE: Although she's needed primarily for her dream powers, in combat Meuronna fights at the party's side with claws and fangs.

THE REAL CHANT: Encounters on Krigala will point the party to the cat lord's realm. Fact is, the cat lord's glad to protect the PCs' bodies while they journey into the dreamscape. She's been tagged as the villain behind the savage changes sweeping the plane, and she wants to stop the madness and put things right.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: When the PCs get near Dreamhearth, they might try to set up their own shelter (with spells, magical items, and so on) where Meuronna can use her power. Judge the success of these arrangements based on their merits; remember that Garond the Claw, a 9th-level wizard, will be trying to interfere with the PCs' mis-

sion. As the heroes prepare their protections, run “The Call” (page 52), and try to have them meet the cat lord before they enter the One’s dreamscape.

IF MEURONNA DIES

Without Meuronna, the PCs can’t enter the tainted dreamscape and rescue the One. ‘Course, if the tabaxi gets put in the dead-book first, she must be raised, reincarnated, or resurrected. The centaurs in Skerrit’s Glade (see page 47) have the dark of many natural cures and restorations; they can bring Meuronna back to life if need be.

Alternately, the heroes may find another dream hunter. Though they primarily serve Bast on Ysgard, the cat lord has enough power and authority to draw one to the Beastlands. Within a day, a messenger brings word of the arrival of a new dream hunter. But the heroes must undertake a difficult trip across the Beastlands, hounded by the Vile Hunt, to meet with and enlist this tabaxi.



◆ RANDOM ENCOUNTERS ◆

While on the Beastlands, the PCs run into animals that have been driven to evil by the tainted dreamscape. Run a random encounter soon after the party’s arrival on the Beastlands, then a few more to maintain excitement during the rest of the adventure.

Table III in the Appendix (page 64) gives basic statistics for 20 different animals. When the party has a random encounter, choose an animal or roll 1d20 on the table to find the animal type, and then roll 1d4 (or use common sense) to determine how many animals appear.

DM NOTE: The 20 animals in Table III are just examples. Feel free to change or add to the list. A beast might even be an intelligent petitioner (perhaps a spellcaster).

THE CAT LORD’S ◆ SCOUT ◆

Fleia, a petitioner of the Beastlands in the form of a giant lynx, is one of the cat lord’s minions. She’s been sent to prowl Krigala, looking for possible answers to the savagery and nightmares troubling the plane.

Fleia finds the PCs soon after they arrive on Krigala. For a time she watches the party from a distance to assess their intent – they might be vicious killers from the Vile Hunt. If she gets a chance, Fleia also casts *detect evil* on the group. Let each PC make a Wisdom check with a –2 penalty. Those who succeed glimpse a spotted gray shape disappearing into a thick tangle of trees.

If the PCs spot Fleia and attack or come crashing through the brush after her, she calls out to them from hid-

ing, hoping to reduce the tension: “Greetings, travelers!” If this doesn’t defuse the situation, the lynx casts *summon swarm*, drawing a cloud of stinging wasps that attack the party and prevent spellcasting. Then she tries to flee. Her later relations with the PCs will be colored by distrust.

If, on the other hand, the party presents no immediate threat, she emerges cautiously from the brush.

The lynx is huge – about five feet long, with sleek, dusty gray fur dotted by black spots. Its cold yellow eyes seem to peer right into your heart. “Well met,” it says in a purring voice. “Why do you cross these lands?”

Fleia is restraining her savage impulses by sheer force of will – after all, she must do her lord’s bidding. She has many questions about what the PCs know about the madness: “Do you dream of cats, like the others? Have you seen many beasts turn wild? Have you felt that dark urge yourselves? Why do the wretches of the Vile Hunt send us away rather than slay us?”

If Meuronna accompanies the party, Fleia asks the tabaxi’s purpose. If she learns that Meuronna is a dream hunter, Fleia becomes quite excited. “A dream hunter! Perhaps you could bring our nightmares to an end. I must inform my mistress.”

Whether or not Meuronna is present, once the PCs answer Fleia’s questions, the lynx races off, either to bring news of the dream hunter to the cat lord, or to continue her search for answers elsewhere. “Keep well, travelers,” she says in parting – and yet her voice carries a snarl. “The taint infesting our lands turns us all to madness. We must hold to our reason, and think before we act.” If the PCs try to follow her, Fleia loses them in the brush.

◆ FRAX’S CAMPSITE ◆

If the PCs obtained the map of Krigala from Frax, they might head for the spot marked “camp” – a small collection of tents for Vile Huntsmen when they’re not on duty rounding up animals to send through the gate. If the PCs don’t have the map, they can hear about the campsite from the Wylders (see “The Verdant Guild,” page 46); they can follow a Huntsman from the gate (see “The Gate to Carceri,” page 48); or they can simply stumble on the camp by accident.

The camp holds 10 two-man tents, arranged in a circle around a fire for cooking small game. The tents are dyed in various shades of green to blend into the lush surroundings and mask the bright flames of the central fire. Unless the PCs fly overhead or climb high into tree branches, the tents block the flames almost until the party’s right on top of the camp.

The site’s just one of several across Krigala; Frax used it as his kip when he wasn’t out hunting (that’s why it was marked on his map). The Huntsmen here stalk game in shifts, so at least a few berks are always hanging out at the

camp. Fact is, when the PCs arrive, the camp contains 11 Vile Huntsmen: Eight sleep in the tents, while three roast rabbits on spits in the fire.

The corruption from the tainted dreamscape has started to turn the hunters into animals – eight of them are half-human, half-animal; three are as yet unaffected. However, they believe what they heard from D'kess, leader of the Vile Hunt – that the changes are only temporary. ('Course, they're *not*, but D'kess doesn't know that either.)

The hunters protect their camp from unwanted intruders – they never know when a spellcasting bear or a barmy Wylder might come after them. They've ringed the camp with a circle of *alarm* spells, set 80 feet away from the tents. If anything bigger than a squirrel crosses the circle of spells without speaking the password "vile," a loud ringing peals through the area, guaranteed to alert the hunters (and possibly scare off the intruder).

If the PCs set off the *alarm*, six hunters are armed and ready by the time the party reaches the camp, and the other five emerge the next round. However, if the PCs observe the camp for more than half an hour, they see a hunter who's become part wolf emerge from a tent and head into the woods to relieve himself.

The man – that is, you think it's a man, though his face and arms grow a coating of gray, bristly fur, and two triangular ears twitch on top of his head – stretches, scratches himself, and starts to walk away from the tents. Before long, he freezes in his tracks like he nearly stepped off a cliff, mumbles a word you can't hear, and then continues into the woods.

The PCs can try to capture the berk and force him to explain about the *alarm* circle; using this method, the PCs might sneak into the camp and perhaps catch the rest of the hunters by surprise. 'Course, the captive does his best to alert the rest of the camp – if possible, he charges right across the *alarm* circle without speaking the password, setting off the loud clanging.

DM NOTE: If the PCs stay outside the *alarm* circle and observe the camp for more than four hours, all hunters awake from their tents, eat, and begin to equip themselves. Half an hour later, 15 more Vile Huntsmen return to the camp, ready to take their places in the tents. If the PCs are well hidden, there's a 50% chance that they'll be spotted by the returning hunters. If the PCs are poorly hidden, the chance increases to 90%.

THE HUN+SMEN

If the PCs get into the camp without setting off the alarm, roll to see if the three Huntsmen by the fire are surprised; in any case, the three try to stir their comrades as soon as

possible. However, no hunters attack unless the PCs attack first – the lack of animal masks proves that the heroes aren't enemies from the Verdant Guild.

The hunters shoot you peery looks, swords drawn. A few of them are fully human, but most seem to be part human, part animal – one sports a lion's mane and snout, another's lost his hair entirely and seems to be growing scales, and still others resemble jackals, vultures, and dogs.

"You aren't Wyldersss," hisses the snake-man.

"Not unless you've left your masks at home," says the jackal-man. "Are you more of Garond's berks?"

If the PCs pretend to be with Garond (perhaps supporting their claim by showing an obsidian triangle), the hunters complain about the changes they're undergoing. "Go tell your boss that we're tired of looking like this," croaks the vulture-man. "He told us it'd stop, that we'd change back soon. But it's none too soon for me. I don't want to end up like that poor sod Frax." (When Garond threw Frax through the gate to the Land of the Hunt, he told the others that Frax was dead – drowned in the River Oceanus.)

If the PCs mention their encounter with Frax on Carceri, the hunters laugh in disbelief. However, showing them Frax's silver ring makes them pause. At first, they

accuse the PCs of killing Frax themselves and robbing the corpse. But the ring does put doubts into their minds. They believed the animal transformations were only temporary; now they don't know what to believe.

If the PCs haven't yet rescued Meuronna from Carceri, the hunters give the party a clue. At some point dur-

ing the conversation, have

one of the hunters say, "I *knew* it'd bring us bad luck to send that sodding dream hunter through the gate!" The hunters explain

that Garond had them throw Meuronna through the gate to Carceri, though they don't know why – *she* wasn't an animal petitioner. See, D'kess told them that Garond wanted all petitioners sent through the gate.

"Something about bowls and spirits." If the PCs want to know more, they need to see D'kess – he's usually watching over the operation at the gate. The hunters say to look for him "across the river, halfway between the two bridges."

If, at any time during this encounter, the PCs attack or claim to be members of the Verdant Guild, the hunters attack the heroes on the spot. If the battle turns against them, the hunters try to band together and retreat in force. Finally they break and run, individually trying to reach safety at a distant Vile Hunt camp.



WH⊕⊕PS —
HEY, GUYS, I ⊕HINK
I JUS+ KILLED BURL.



— VILE HUN+SMAN,
PULLING HIS SPEAR
⊕U+ ⊕F A ZEBRA

◆ THE VERDANT GUILD ◆

This encounter can take place at any point south of the River Oceanus (see Frax's map). Four masked Wylders of the Verdant Guild, looking to put a few Vile Huntsmen in the dead-book, come across the PCs and may mistake them for members of that evil group. The four Wylders (P1/var human/F6/Verdant Guild/CN) have all begun to turn into animals that match the masks they wear – one resembles a bear, one a wolf, one an eagle, and one a zebra.

The Wylders stalk the party as soon as the PCs cross the river into the lower “half” of Krigala, waiting for a chance to strike from the shadows (when the PCs eat, sleep, etc.). The Wylders have spears, blowguns, and needles coated with type O poison (victims who fail a saving throw are paralyzed for 2d6 hours; the poison takes effect within 20 minutes). As they follow the party, they try to shoot as many PCs as possible with poisoned needles to wear down the group before a full attack. Impose penalties or bonuses to the Wylders' attack rolls, depending on how well the party protects itself. A sleeping target grants a +2 bonus to the Wylder's attack roll; an alert, heavily armored target imposes a -2 penalty to the roll.

While being stalked, the PCs have a 10% chance per hour (not cumulative) of noticing the Wylders. If a PC is hit by a needle, it injects the poison and falls away in one round; the PC mistakes the sting for an insect bite unless he sees the needle. The Wylders move in with their spears only if the PCs become aware of the Wylders or the needle attacks, or if half the party is paralyzed. Fortunately, they spend a round or two making threats.

Four shapes leap out of the trees, brandishing feathered spears in your direction. The creatures look half-human, half-animal, and each wears a brightly painted beast mask. The largest of them, a bear-man, wears a black grizzly mask, and the others – one part eagle, another part wolf, the third part zebra – also wear masks that reflect their body's physical characteristics.

“How's it feel to be hunted, hunters?” growls the bear-man, as the four move in to attack. “You've rounded up your last batch of beasts.”

The bear-man is the small group's leader, a cutter named Pawlock. If the PCs have Sashell's tiger mask (see Chapter I), Pawlock assumes that the party killed the Wylder – no member of the Verdant Guild would surrender his mask while still alive. “You'll pay dearly for Sashell's blood,” Pawlock cries, pointing to the tiger mask. “We'll make sure his mask is stained with *your* blood before long!”

If Meuronna is with the party, the eagle-Wylder accuses her of being in league with the cat lord, whom they blame for the madness. “Go tell your barmy lord that we're on to her,” he snarls. “We see her in our dreams, stalking the poor sods of this plane. We know she's got you Vile Hunt berks rounding us up – sending us away! But if she

thinks she can take over the plane by getting rid of us or driving us mad, she's wrong!”

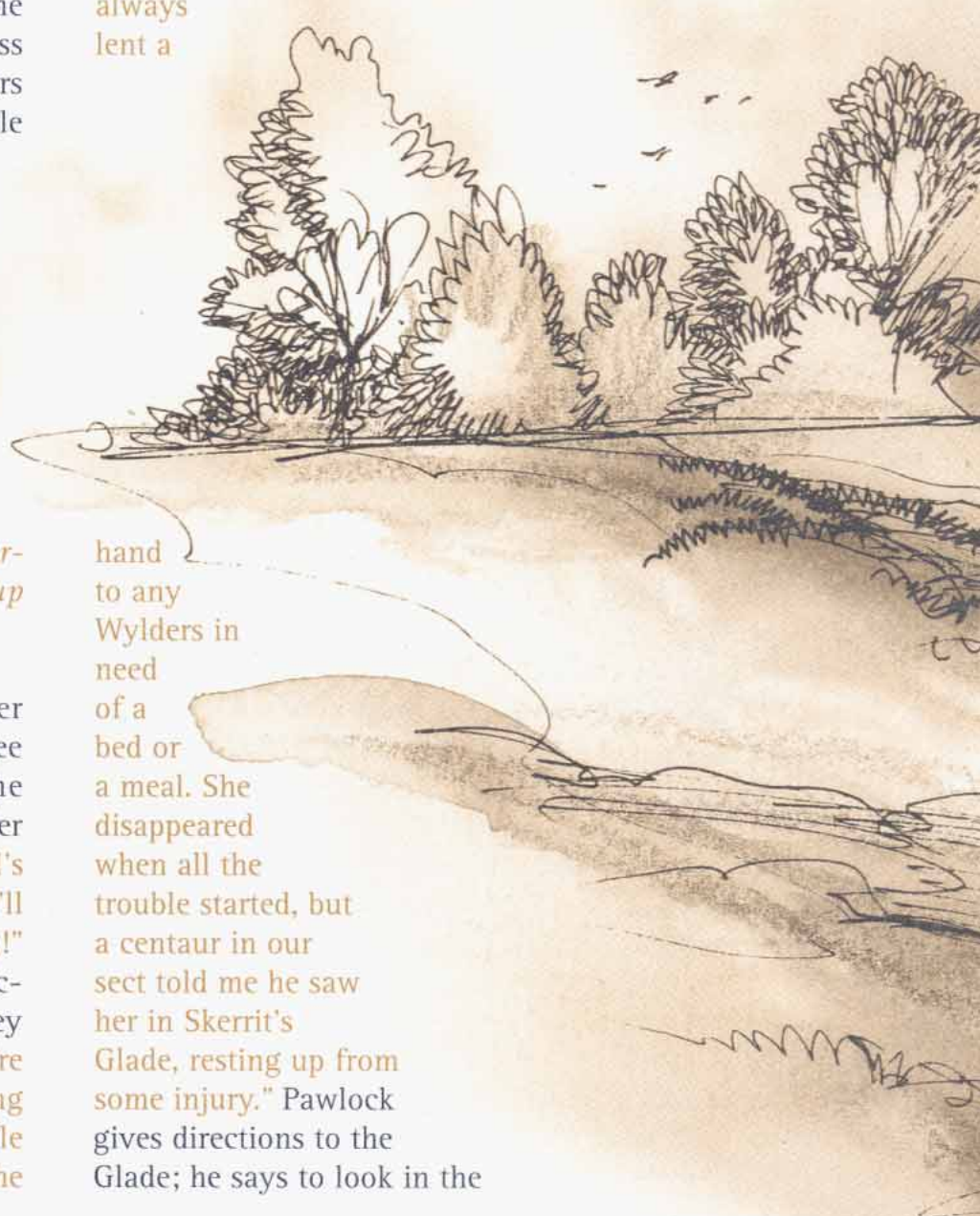
The Wylders attack as long as they believe that the PCs are members of the Vile Hunt. If the PCs restrain the Wylders or convincingly explain who they are (and how they got Sashell's mask), the four pause to listen to the PCs' tale. They even explain what they know of the troubles sweeping the plane.

“Poor Sashell was hit the worst,” says the bear-man. “He couldn't handle the nightmares, the changes. When he disappeared, we looked for him in Signpost, but everyone there was gone, too – it's like a ghost town, now. Every sod's turned into a beast, running wild through the land. Some berks in the Verdant Guild like the changes – they think everyone should let their animal side free. Freedom's one thing, but what's happening here is just madness.”

If the PCs inquire about Signpost, Pawlock growls that at least he knows that Sarazh is all right. “She ran the town and the Signers' kip there, Dream-hearth,” he says.

“She always lent a

hand to any Wylders in need of a bed or a meal. She disappeared when all the trouble started, but a centaur in our sect told me he saw her in Skerrit's Glade, resting up from some injury.” Pawlock gives directions to the Glade; he says to look in the



centermost of three sets of foothills, far on the other side of the River Oceanus.

DM NOTE: Any PCs paralyzed by a needle must be carried by the others until the poison wears off, though the centaurs in Skerri's Glade might offer healing.

◆ SKERRI'S GLADE ◆

Skerri, god of centaurs, maintains a peaceful realm in the foothills of a ridge of mountains – a quiet glade in the middle of a lush temperate forest. On the player map of Krigala, the Glade lies on the north side of the River Oceanus, in the centermost of the three sets of foothills. The centaurs here live in huts scattered throughout the



Glade, and they sometimes open their realm to friends and visitors seeking solace or physical healing.

They did so for Sarazh, who was severely injured when the Deliverers invaded Dreamhearth. The tiefling tried to defend Meuronna and the One, but the hunters chased her away. She fled to Skerri's Glade to hide from the Deliverers and recover from the attack. However, the centaurs want to keep the matter private; they won't allow anyone to see Sarazh and won't even admit that the Signer is there without good reason.

When the PCs approach the Glade, Arcadeon Russetmane (Pl/♂ centaur/R10/Sign of One/CG) – who patrols the realm's borders with six warriors – tries to turn them away.

As you wind your way through the dark pine woods, an arrow suddenly whisks by overhead and splits the bark high up on a tree: a warning shot. Up ahead, you can see the silhouette of a bariaur or centaur nocking another arrow. "Beat it, sods," he calls, "or my next shot'll split your head 'stead of a pine."

Russetmane confronts the PCs alone – he wants to see if they're the type of berks who'd attack a lone defender. 'Course, his warriors crouch nearby in the darkness of the forest, ready to come to their leader's aid if necessary. Russetmane won't let the PCs pass unless they show him wounds that obviously need healing or mention that Pawlock sent them. The presence of an elf, bariaur, or centaur in the party makes him more agreeable.

If the PCs pacify the border patrol, they're escorted through the thick pines and maples into a large clearing full of huts and lean-tos. (If the heroes fight their way into the Glade, they're attacked by 1d12+10 centaurs; use the statistics for "Russetmane's Warriors.")

The forest that seemed so impenetrable a moment ago suddenly starts to thin. You emerge in a huge clearing. Twenty or more thatched huts dot the grassy glade, and numerous centaurs stop their chatting and laughing and cast peery eyes at your group. One of them – a light brown female in a gold ornamental vest – steps forward. "I'm Deelah Chestnut, shaman of the Glade," she says. "If Russetmane let you through, you must need help."

If the PCs ask the centaurs for healing for their wounds, Chestnut (Pr/♀ centaur/P7/Sign of One/NG) directs them to a number of huts where they can rest and enjoy the benefits of natural healing. The centaurs of the realm have no potions or magical items of healing. However, if the PCs impress upon them a dire need for aid, Chestnut is willing to cast any of

the following spells: *cure light wounds*, *cure disease*, *neutralize poison*, or *remove paralysis*.

Chestnut knows that Sarazh is recuperating in a well-hidden hut, and she's determined to protect her friend from any disturbances. If the heroes ask any questions about Sarazh, Chestnut just frowns. "No, we haven't seen her since all the troubles began." If the PCs try to search the Glade for Sarazh, they're forced from the realm at swordpoint.

The PCs can get to Sarazh by convincing Chestnut that they heard about the tiefling's injuries from Pawlock (see "The Verdant Guild," page 46). However, if the heroes display an obsidian triangle, Chestnut demands to know where they got the stone. Sarazh warned that the hunters who attacked her wore black triangle pendants.

Chestnut asks the party to submit to a *detect lie* spell. If they do and they've told her the truth, or if they have otherwise put her fears at rest, she leads them down a little-known path through the Glade to the hut where Sarazh rests.

Sarazh (Pl/♀ tiefling/P14 [Deneir]/Sign of One/LG) is still weak from the wounds she suffered at the hands of the Deliverers; her wrinkled skin and wispy gray hair contribute to her helpless appearance. But she's one of the sharpest bloods in the faction. Due to her wisdom, she's begun to turn into an owl, sprouting downy white feathers from head to toe.

Once the PCs get her talking, Sarazh spills the dark of the *dreamlink* and what went wrong. Don't read the following text from start to end; piece out the information in normal conversation and let the PCs ask questions.

"It was all my fault," says the old, feathered tiefling. "All I had to do was safeguard the One – he's a Signer who can think things into being as easy as sneezing. Don't know if he really is the cutter who's imagining our whole multiverse, but I took to calling him 'the One' anyway. He wanted to try to dream his way into touch with the essence of the Beastlands, and I brought in a tabaxi dream hunter from Ysgard to boost his power.

"Then those sodding hunters showed up and ruined everything! They burst into Dreamhearth – we didn't know, weren't ready to defend ourselves! They forced the tabaxi to throw the One into some kind of evil psychic bubble – I heard them say they wanted to turn his dreams sour and channel that trauma back into the plane. They said it'd change the Beastlands, make it more savage and evil, pave the way for their wild god – whoever he is – to show up and make himself at home!



SARAZH?
SHE LEFT DAYS AGO.
I MEAN, SHE WAS NEVER HERE.
ACTUALLY, I'VE NEVER
HEARD OF HER.



— ARCADEON RUSSEMANE,
A VERY POOR LIAR

"I think they're sending animal petitioners through a gate back to their land.

They want to feed the sods' spirits to their god – they figure it'll attune him to the Beastlands, make him more likely to cross over.

"Whatever they've done, it must be working. Half the animals on the plane have gone mad, and half the people have turned into beasts!"

If Meuronna is with the party, Sarazh warns the PCs to keep the tabaxi safe – only she can free the One from the dreamscape now. If the PCs haven't yet rescued Meuronna from Carceri, Sarazh warns that they must find out where the hunters sent her, then go there and bring her back to Krigala – fast.

THE REAL CHANT: For the time being, Skerrit can keep his realm free of the savage taint that sweeps the rest of the plane (though the realm's inhabitants still suffer from nightmares). If the PCs spend a day in the Glade, its soothing nature grants them a +1 bonus to all Wisdom checks for the rest of their stay on the plane.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: If the PCs want to try to enter the tainted dreamscape from the safety of Skerrit's Glade, Meuronna rejects the idea – she's still too far from the One for it to work.

◆ THE GATE TO CARCERI ◆

The gate through which the Vile Hunt sends beasts to Carceri lies at the edge of a forest on the south side of the River Oceanus, midway between the two bridges. The gate itself is the area between two bent oak trees whose high branches curve together; to open the gate, a body's just got to tap on the left tree three times and then the right tree once. The trip is strictly one-way; anything that goes through ends up in the stalking grounds in the Land of the Hunt (see Chapter II).

D'kess, leader of the Vile Hunt, leads the groups that send the animals through. He tries to make sure that the kidnappings go off without much trouble – and that his bashers don't accidentally fall through the gate themselves. The hunters'd rather just kill the beasts, but Garond has instructed them to send the creatures through the gate, promising that the sods'll meet a much worse fate on the other side. The hunters know only that it's got something to do with spirits and bowls; they don't realize that the spirits are being sucked out and fed to Malar.

The hunters at Frax's campsite can point the PCs toward the gate, but the heroes can find it themselves if they

head for the area marked “Out” on Frax’s map. When the PCs get within 100 yards of the gate, they see and hear quite a battle. D’kess and six Vile Huntsmen struggle to force an animal petitioner – an angry, mahogany-furred cave bear named Caphillus – through the gate.

A ponderous bear rears onto its hind legs, roaring in fury and swiping with bloody claws into a gang of leather-clad hunters. Six hunters jab the bear repeatedly with swords, but it seems more like they’re toying with the beast than trying to kill it. A seventh hunter – obviously the group’s leader – stands a dozen yards behind the bear, next to a huge pair of bent oak trees. “Get him over here, you leatherheads,” he screams. “I can’t open it till you’re in place to push him through!”

Unless the PCs act within two rounds, the hunters succeed in driving Caphillus toward the oak trees. D’kess and another hunter rap the trees in the pattern required to open the gate, and the others push the petitioner through; the PCs won’t see him again unless they also journey through the gate to Carceri.

If the PCs rush in to aid Caphillus, the hunters try to kill the do-gooders or push them through the gate as well (especially if the heroes have transformed into animals by this point). If more than three hunters fall, the others try to run for their camp (see “Frax’s Campsite,” page 44).

Neither D’kess nor his six comrades have yet shown more than cosmetic signs of turning into animals, but D’kess has heard plenty of complaints from his other hunters about their disturbing transformations. Thus, he listens if the PCs explain that Garond lied about how long the transformations would last.

If the PCs mention their encounter with Frax, D’kess suddenly becomes hostile. “Frax drowned in the river,” he says. “He was my friend. What do you want with him?” If the PCs show D’kess the silver ring, he gives more credence to their story – at the very least, it’s proof that Frax wasn’t washed away by the river. D’kess abandons his hunters and heads toward Signpost, where he plans to demand that Garond tell him what’s really going on.

But saving Caphillus from the gate doesn’t end the trouble. The petitioner, already in a state of rage and driven half mad by the tainted dreamscape, continues to attack whoever’s left around him – namely, the Vile Hunt and the PCs. If the PCs do nothing to stop the maddened bear, the Vile Huntsmen kill him on the spot. But if the party restrains Caphillus, goes three rounds without hurting him, or holds back the Huntsmen, the petitioner calms down, though he still reels with confusion.

“Forgive – forgive me,” says the bear in a deep, slurred voice. “I know you – you were just trying to help. I just . . . lost my head. It’s the plane. Something’s gone wrong, somewhere down deep. Making me barmy.”

All Caphillus can tell the PCs is that the Vile Hunt used to merely kill petitioners like himself, but now they’re sending them through the gate to some other place. He heard one of his tormentors joke about what a fine meal he’d make for “the Beastlord” (Malar).

If the PCs haven’t yet freed Meuronna from Carceri, they may want to go through the gate to the Land of the Hunt. They might have picked up the gate key by watching D’kess rap on the trees when he tried to send Caphillus through. If not, Caphillus knows what pattern opens the gate, and he’s glad to share the dark with his rescuers (though he doesn’t know where the gate leads).

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: If some PCs get pushed through the gate during the battle but others don’t, encourage the heroes still on Krigala to jump through the gate to save their friends. If the party is split, have the cutters emerge on Carceri near the gehreleth lair, so they can use the ‘leth gate and get back to the Beastlands as soon as possible.

◆ SIGNPOST ◆

If the PCs follow the flow of the River Oceanus, it leads from the Vile Hunt campsite to the town of Signpost, which sits near the cliffs that separate Krigala from the second layer, Brux (see Frax’s map). Here, the river flows right up to the edge of the cliffs and, instead of plunging over like a waterfall, just disappears into thin air. However, before that point, currents drive boaters to the Signpost shore. (The dark of it is that Oceanus actually continues into Arborea. Any PCs who make a determined effort to ride the waters past the edge of the cliffs get swept to Olympus, the first layer of that plane; it’s up to you to get back them into the adventure.)

Standing at the edge of the cliffs, the PCs can see the twilight land of Brux laid out thousands of feet below them; above the layer, the moon called Noctos shares the sky with the fading light of Selera. However, the heroes won’t be able to find a safe path down the cliffs to Brux without the cat lord’s warden beast as a guide (see “The Call,” page 52).

Signpost lies about a hundred yards from the edge of the cliffs. The burg’s less a town than it is a frontier settlement – just a collection of a few dozen buildings surrounded by a wooden palisade. The PCs can enter the town through an open gate on one side of the palisade, but within its protective wall, Signpost looks deserted, its streets, kips, and shops empty of life. Here, at the center of the corruption flowing from the One’s nightmares, the residents of Signpost have long since turned to full beasts – those that weren’t killed outright by the Deliverers or berks of the Vile Hunt, that is.

The only important building here is Dreamhearth, a huge stone manor at the far end of town from the gate – it’s where Garond guards the dreaming body of the One (see “Dream-

hearth," below). However, if the PCs want to explore the rest of Signpost, create whatever deserted buildings you'd like. Just remember, Signpost is a small, rough-and-tumble, frontier town, with dirt roads, earthy lodgings, and sparsely stocked shops.

What's more, everywhere the PCs look, they see signs that whatever happened to the people of this town, it wasn't pretty. Spilled food rots in the streets; barrels that held water lie empty and smashed; doors and gates hang broken from their frames; residences are cluttered with overturned cots, tables, and chairs; and a dozen corpses of small, half-eaten animals litter the roads.

At this point, if the players are spoiling for action, their characters get attacked by a giant gorilla – a resident of the burg who turned into a savage beast but retained a few remnants of its former life. It tries to grab items from the PCs and take them back to its home. The gorilla has turned its old kip into a den of sorts, with scattered layers of sticks and dirt, piles of uprooted ferns, and pieces of torn clothing.

Fact is, the gorilla still tries to drape shreds of clothing over itself – a clue to the PCs that the beast used to be something more. But they can't help the petitioner except by rescuing the One from the dreamscape.

◆ DREAMHEARTH ◆

The dream-self of the One is trapped in the evil dreamscape, but his physical body lies here, in the Signers' manor known as Dreamhearth. Apart from the One, there aren't any Signers left in the place. Fact is, when Garond and the Deliverers first arrived, they found only Sarazh, the One, Meuronna, and a few other sods – philosophical factioneers who weren't ready for Garond's spells or his hunters' claws. A few fell; the rest were chased into the wilds of Krigala, where they later fell victim to the savagery of the twisted dreamscape. (Sarazh alone managed to make it to a place of relative safety, Skerrit's Glade.)

Ironically, Garond needs to make sure that the One's body remains safe from harm. See, the body is the link that channels the nightmares into the Beastlands; if the body is destroyed, the nightmares are cut off, and the plane'll revert to normal. What's more, the One's dream-self is trapped in the dreamscape; the Signer can't be awakened unless his dream-self is led out of the nightmare.

If Meuronna is with the party as they approach Dreamhearth, she explains the sticky situation:

"Garond made me imprison the One's dream-self in that vile dreamscape," says Meuronna. "That means we won't be able to wake the poor sod – the link between his physical body and his dream-self has been cut off. The only way to rouse him is to go into his nightmare and lead his dream-self back to the waking world."

Hearing that, the PCs might decide to skip Dreamhearth altogether and instead search for a safe place to try entering the dreamscape; if so, run "The Call," on page 52. On the other hand, the party might want to try to rescue the One's body from Dreamhearth, perhaps to take it with them to a safer place. 'Course, as the PCs aren't even sure that the One's body is *in* Dreamhearth, they might want to go in and have a look around.

INSIDE DREAMHEARTH

The adventure folder features a small map of Dreamhearth that shows where the One lies sleeping. Garond has used magic to try to hide him from intruders. As shown on the map, a *magic mouth* has been placed on the entrance to the manor, an *illusionary wall* hides the room in which the One sleeps, and a *wizard lock* prevents anyone but Garond from entering the room. What's more, Garond remains in Dreamhearth at all times, along with four Deliverers. (If there are fewer than four PCs, use an equal number of Deliverers instead.)

When the PCs approach the manor, members of the Vile Hunt are also in Dreamhearth. The Huntsmen have recently started to turn into animals, and they're none too happy about it; they've come to hear Garond's "reassurances" that the transformations are just temporary. There is one Vile Hunt member per PC.

The only way into Dreamhearth is through a large, open archway at the top of a short flight of stone steps. The building has no other entrances, and in place of windows it has arrow slits – too narrow for anything bigger than a squirrel to squeeze through. If the PCs manage to enter the building without using the steps, they bypass the *magic mouth* that Garond placed over the entrance. However, touching any of the steps triggers the *mouth*.

As you touch the steps, a huge mouth suddenly appears in the stone above the archway. The black lips part wide, and the fang-filled mouth roars with deafening ferocity!

Garond intended for the mouth to frighten off any beasts that might wander into the manor, but it also alerts everyone within to the presence of intruders. If the *mouth* roars, Garond, the Deliverers, and the Vile Huntsmen rush into the central hallway from their respective rooms. All

NPCs converge on the heroes. The Deliverers fight with claws of Malar, the Vile Huntsmen attack with swords, and Garond hangs back to cast *hold person*, *burning hands*, or *magic missile* (if he gets the chance, he also casts *protection from good* on himself). The group attempts to drive the PCs from the manor; the Huntsmen pursue fleeing heroes for as long as they can.

If the PCs manage to pass the *magic mouth* without setting it off, they enter the wide central hallway of the manor. While they're inside, there's a 25% chance per turn that a Vile Huntsmen or a Deliverer enters the hallway, spots the heroes, and cries out. If this happens, all Deliverers enter the hallway within one round, all Vile Huntsmen enter in the following round, and Garond enters the round after that.

The *illusionary wall* that hides the One's room appears to be a flat stone wall draped with tapestries in the colors and symbols of the Sign of One – exactly like the wall at the other end of the hallway. It appears real no matter what the means of viewing, though it can be dispelled and physical objects pass right through it. If the PCs notice four sets of doors to the right of the entrance and only three to the left, they might tumble to the false wall.

If the PCs find the One's room, the *wizard lock* blocks them from opening the door. They can enter only if they cast *dispel magic* or *knock* on the door (both spells negate the *lock* for one turn), if they batter the wooden door down (by inflicting 40 points of damage to AC 6), or if they use some means to pass through the stone wall.

If the PCs get inside the One's room, read:

The chamber is barren except for a stone slab rising up from the middle of the floor, almost like an altar. On it lies the body of a male githzerai, a stocky berk with flaxen skin and a full head of graying hair.

If Meuronna is present, she identifies the sleeping githzerai as the One. 'Course, if the PCs try to carry the One's limp body out of Dreamhearth, Garond and the Deliverers take pains to stop them without harming the Signer – they've got to keep him alive to maintain the flow of nightmares to the Beastlands. The Malarites pursue the party doggedly to recover the dreamer.

DM NOTE: If Garond ever believes himself to be in mortal danger, he casts *dimension door* and vanishes, reappearing outside the wooden palisade surrounding Signpost. He takes one turn to recover from transport and then flees into the woods. The PCs won't see him again until they try to enter the tainted dreamscape (see "Garond's Last Stand," page 54).

THE REAL CHANT: Before the Deliverers arrived, the One attempted the *dreamlink* in the upper right chamber at the east end of the first floor. If the party sneaks into Dreamhearth and follows Meuronna's lead, she mistakenly leads them to that room, thinking that the Signer might still be there.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: Although the map of Dreamhearth shows a number of rooms on the first floor and stairs leading to a second floor, most of those locations aren't described in this adventure. All the PCs need to do in Dreamhearth is find the One – the other rooms aren't important, and are empty unless you decide otherwise.

THE VILE HUNSMEN

All of the Vile Huntsmen in Dreamhearth have begun to turn into animals – one a lizard, one a cheetah, one a weasel, and so on. They help the Deliverers fight the PCs; however, the party might try to turn the hunters against Garond by convincing them that they're being peeled – that their transformations aren't as harmless or as temporary as the tiefling led them to believe.

If any PC makes such an argument, role-play it. If you judge a hero's argument to be dramatically effective, one or more of the hunters pauses for one round to consider the hero's words. During that round, any PC can make another argument to the deliberating hunter and make a subsequent Charisma check. A successful check indicates that the hunter realizes the terrible truth of the hero's words and tries to attack Garond. For each hunter who is convinced by a PC's argument, similar attempts made against the other hunters become easier.

Furthermore, if the PCs planted similar seeds of doubt in D'kess (see "The Gate to Carceri," page 48), the leader of the Vile Hunt arrives at Dreamhearth while the heroes are inside. If he walks in on a fight, D'kess holds his action until he can determine what's going on, then throws in with whichever side's victory would benefit or satisfy him the most.

◆ KILLING THE ONE ◆

At some point, the PCs might decide that the quickest way to end the trouble is by killing the One. The nightmares are channeled into the Beastlands through his body; slaying that body might sever the connection. However, if any of the heroes bring up the idea, Meuronna is adamantly against it.

"I don't know for sure what will happen," she says. "It might separate him from the Beastlands, but it might make the problem worse! After all, you'd be stranding his dream-self in the nightmare forever. Besides, it'd be murder, plain and simple. What happened to him was my fault, not his – you can't just take an innocent life! We came all this way to *save* him, not *kill* him."



Try to dissuade nonevil characters from such a plan. However, if the PCs decide to go ahead and kill the One, impose immediate alignment changes as needed. Warn the involved players that their characters will also forgo all bonus experience points awarded at the end of the adventure.

Killing the One *does* stop the psychic trauma from infecting the Beastlands – the nightmares have no conduit through which to reach the plane (see “Aftermath,” page 60, for more details). It’s no longer necessary for the PCs to enter the tainted dreamscape. However, as Meuronna guessed, the One’s dream-self remains trapped forever – without his body, he can’t return. To rescue the doomed dreamer, the PCs would have to resurrect his corpse, a difficult and expensive gesture.

When Sarazh finds out what happened, she’s sure to bring the wrath of the Signers down on the party. But the PCs have more immediate concerns. If Garond and the other Deliverers are still alive, they stop at nothing to put the party in the dead-book.

DM NOTE: The One can’t wake up before the PCs lead his dream-self out of the dreamscape; until that time, he’s just a limp body. For the purposes of measuring damage inflicted against him, consider the One to be AC 10 with 26 hit points. Any PC’s determined attempt to kill him is automatically successful.

◆ THE CALL ◆

In this encounter, the PCs are approached by the cat lord’s warden beast, a spotted lion entrusted with the well-being of all cats on the Beastlands. The lion summons the group to an audience with his lord. This scene can occur anytime while the PCs are near the border between Krigala and Brux (see the player map). But run the encounter only if Meuronna accompanies the party – the cat lord got the news from her scout, Fleia, and sends her warden beast to fetch the group. If the PCs haven’t yet rescued Meuronna from Carceri, the cat lord has no interest in the party.

While the PCs are near Signpost or the cliffs, the lion warden beast approaches the group, seemingly out of nowhere.

A large, sleek lion pads softly toward your group, its ink-spotted, honey fur shining regally in the sun. You’re not sure where it came from – one minute it wasn’t there, the next it was. The beast advances slowly, but with purpose. Then it speaks, its voice heavy but crystal-clear: “Is this the group that boasts a dream hunter? My lord sends me with a summons: You are hereby granted an audience in her grace’s realm. Will you accompany me there now?”

The lion answers two or three questions put to him, but with a touch of irritation; after a few moments, he asks that the party give him an immediate reply to the summons. If the PCs refuse, the lion tries to impress upon them

his lord’s interest in the dream hunter and the possibility of an alliance with the party. If this fails, the lion moves sulkily away, and the encounter is over. If the PCs attack him, the lion casts *animal growth* to double in size and *animal summoning I* to attract four jaguars (see the statistics in Table III, page 64) as protection.

‘Course, the party should accept the lion’s invitation, in which case he leads them to the edge of the cliffs separating Krigala from Brux and down a precarious, winding path – one the PCs couldn’t have found on their own. Though the twilight layer below seems only a few hundred yards distant, the descent takes over an hour.

DM NOTE: The lion is much less tolerant of any questioning or reluctance if the PCs treated Fleia badly when they encountered the giant lynx.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: If any of PCs have transformed into animals unsuited for a steep, prolonged descent through rocky cliffs, the warden beast provides whatever assistance he can to help them down.

◆ THE CAT LORD ◆

When the PCs reach the bottom of the cliffs, the warden beast leads them toward a dark copse of trees not far from the cliffs – the Cat Lord’s Prowl.

Here, at the bottom of the cliffs, the bright light of Krigala dims to a ruddy glow; a white half-moon is now visible in the sky, a sign that you’ve passed into Brux, the layer of twilight. Mere yards from the rocky cliffs, the land suddenly becomes thick with shadowy brush, and the edge of a small, dark wood lies just ahead.

As you approach the tight cluster of trees, a pair of red eyes flashes at you from the darkness. Then another, and another, and another. Leaves rustle, twigs snap as a dozen or more shapes stretch and move all around you. Great cats begin to poke their heads through the trees – whiskered tigers, spotted cheetahs, and ebony panthers watch you in silence.

“So,” purrs a silky voice from above. “These are the ones with the dream hunter.” Suddenly you notice a tawny human female sprawled on a slim tree branch above you, as if she hadn’t a bone in her body. Her long, loose hair is the color of charcoal, her tan leather hugs her like a second skin, and her lime-green eyes sparkle in the shadows.

While numerous great cats brush past the heroes, the cat lord uses her natural ESP to discern the tabaxi’s role in the corruption of the Beastlands, and she asks to know the full dark of the matter.

“If your group has something to do with these dreams,” says the cat lord, dropping noiselessly to the forest floor in front of you, “then I ask you to stop them. But first, please – I’d love to hear you tell your tale.”



Whenever the PCs are speaking, the cat lord alternately acts fascinated, bored, and irritated. She constantly interrupts male PCs with flirtatious questions, some of which have little relation to the topic at hand (she might ask a PC to name his favorite breed of cat, tell about interesting items he carries, give his opinion of her appearance, and so on). From time to time, she turns aside to groom the tangled fur of a tiger, as if she couldn't care less about what the heroes were saying.

In short, role-play the cat lord as an alluring but fickle feline, teasing the heroes' patience as she mischievously breaks and picks up the thread of conversation. Make her a fascinating and capricious character, one who primps, preens, and gives the PCs every possible opportunity to stroke her ego. The more the heroes compliment her – whether her appearance, her intellect, her prowess, her realm, or whatever – the more closely she attends to them.

The cat lord knows nothing of Garond, the Deliverers, the One, or the tainted dreamscape. All she knows is that the berks of the Vile Hunt have changed tactics for some reason, sending their catches off-plane instead of just killing them. However, she does explain why she needs a dream hunter.

"I rose to this perch when my predecessor vanished," she says. "It's bad enough that the other animal lords scold me for his disappearance – I've no clue what befell that fool. But now they blame me for the savagery that's throttling the plane as well. They say I'm trying to warp their worshippers, snatch their power; they want me chained, whipped, skinned. And it's all because of the nightmares – lately, everyone on the plane has been tossing in her sleep, dreaming that a big, black cat is about to tear her to pieces."

The cat lord doesn't know why animals and folks are dreaming of being stalked by cats, but she feels framed and hopes that Meuronna can relieve the nightmares. "I hope that will cure the rest of the madness," she says, "but in any case, it will get my tail out of the fire."

If the PCs give her the dark of Garond's scheme and explain their own plan to rescue the One, the cat lord offers the sanctuary of her realm. "You'll be safe here," she promises. "That's rare on the Beastlands." With Meuronna's help, the cat lord might be able to clear her name, and she hopes the heroes won't ruin her shot at redemption.

DM NOTE: If the party's leatherheaded enough to attack the cat lord or her minions, the lord takes off like a cat, leaving her minions to fight the PCs. If cornered, she fights with her *long sword of wounding*, using *antimagic*

shell and *charm person* as needed. If she suffers more than 10 points of damage, she turns into a ferocious black panther and fights with claws and fangs. What's more, 1d12+15 great cats (use the jaguar statistics from Table III in the Appendix) attack the party at the first sign of hostilities. If two PCs fall, the cat lord offers the remaining heroes a chance to surrender.

Note that the cat lord's servants go out of their way to spare Meuronna during combat – she needs the dream hunter alive in order to clear her name.

◆ GAROND'S LAST STAND ◆

Run this encounter only if the PCs succeeded in rescuing the One's sleeping body from Dreamhearth – it provides a final battle with Garond

(if he's still alive). If the heroes have not removed the One's body from Dreamhearth, skip this encounter – they can have a final battle with Garond after adventuring in the dreamscape.

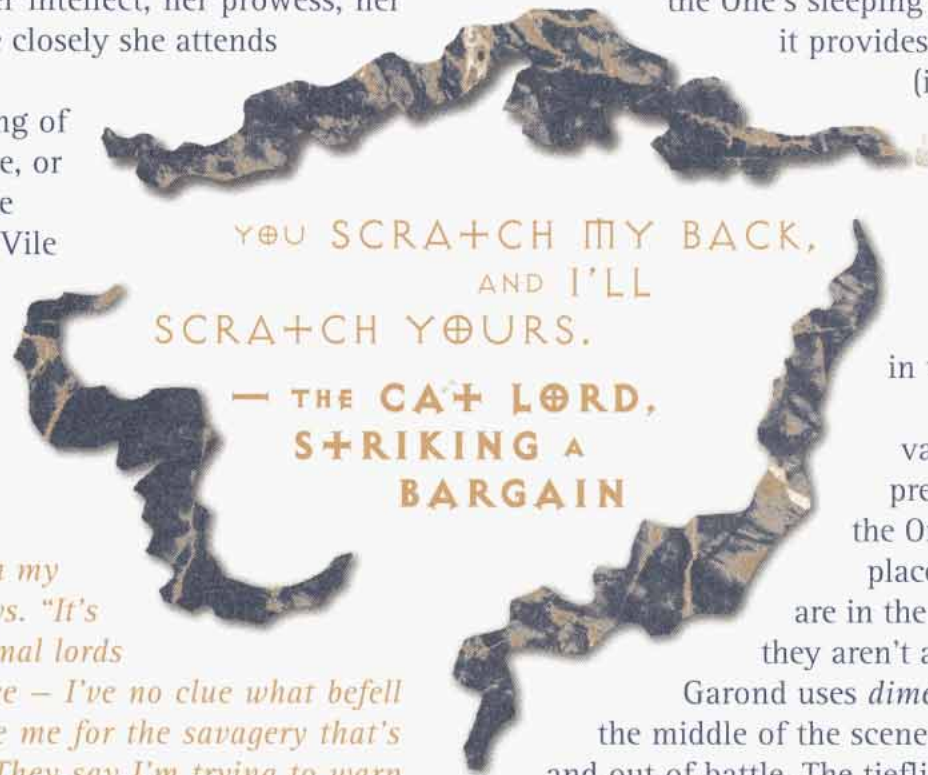
In this scene, Garond invades the Cat Lord's Prowl to prevent the PCs from entering the One's nightmares. It can take place any time while the heroes are in the cat lord's realm, as long as they aren't asleep in the dreamscape.

Garond uses *dimension door* to teleport into the middle of the scene, then casts *blink* to pop in and out of battle. The tiefling wants to kill Meuronna so she can't send the heroes into the dreamscape. If the One's body is present in the realm, Garond tries hard to protect and kidnap it.

Though she pleasantly cheers the heroes on to victory, the cat lord and her minions hold back from the fight – unless Garond attacks them or damages Meuronna. At that point, the cat lord tries to capture Garond alive so that she can play with him as a tabby plays with a mouse, making him suffer a slow, lingering death (especially if the heroes told her that Garond's the cause of her troubles). Good-aligned PCs in the party should speak out against such a plan, though their arguments must be persuasive to make the cat lord forgo her vengeance.

◆ THE DREAMSCAPE ◆

When the PCs are ready to rescue the One from his nightmares, Meuronna prepares to send them into the tainted dreamscape. All the heroes need do is fall asleep. Meuronna then places herself in a trance and use her dream



power *send* to cast the sleeping characters' dream-selves into the One's nightmares. But first, she explains what they must do.

"The Signer's unconscious mind is powerful indeed," warns the tabaxi. "His nightmares are infecting all the Beastlands. He can't break loose of those terrors alone – you've got to help him peel back the layer of each nightmare, help him overcome the power of his own mind. Only then can you guide him out of the dreamscape."

Meuronna explains that the exit to the dreamscape – a *nether portal* – takes the form of a howling, windy vortex in the air. The One's subconscious mind prevents the portal from being seen. But after the heroes free the One from his nightmares, the portal should become visible. At that point, they should take the One by the hand and jump into the vortex. Then their dream-selves will return to the waking world; the heroes and the One will awaken back in their physical bodies.

Meuronna has one final warning for the heroes:

"Be careful in the dreamscape – your dream-selves can bleed and die, just as you can in the waking world. Serious injuries won't expel you from the dreamscape, though when you return to your body you might suffer from mental weakness. But if you die in the dreamscape, you'll be forced back into your body immediately – and the shock of being 'killed' could cause you great harm."

If the PCs ask if they can free the One by killing his dream-self, Meuronna shakes her head. "His mind is too powerful," she says, gravely. "You can't defeat him in his own dreamscape."

DM NOTE: Time passes differently in the dreamscape – the heroes might spend hours trying to rescue the One, only to return to their bodies and find that just a few minutes have passed in the waking world.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: In the dreamscape, the heroes will face three different nightmares. If any PCs die during nightmare #1 or #2, they can re-enter the dreamscape. But they must wait for the start of the next nightmare in the sequence – that's the only time Meuronna can break her concentration long enough to send them back in.

If any PCs die during nightmare #3, they can't go back into the dreamscape – their comrades must struggle on without them. (See "If the PCs Die," page 59, for details).

IN THE DREAMSCAPE

Once the PCs enter the tainted dreamscape, they must help the One confront three different nightmares. First, they help him overcome fear (in "Stalked by Shadows"); second, they help him overcome savagery (in "The Nature of the Beast"); and last, they help him defeat a representation of Malar (in "The Beastlord"). After they've helped the One

through all three scenes, they can see the chains that bind him to the dreamscape. The heroes can then cut the chains and escape through the nether portal (in "Leaving the Dreamscape").

Even if the PCs turned to animals while on the Beastlands, each character appears in the dreamscape in normal form – a perfect representation of how the hero pictures himself. What's more, each PC carries dream versions of the weapons, armor, and equipment he usually carries in the real world. Each hero enters the dreamscape with all of his usual hit points and whatever spells he currently has memorized. Note that moving from one nightmare to another does *not* restore lost hit points or spells.

Combat occurs normally in the dreamscape, with the following exceptions:

- ◆ **EXPERIENCE POINTS.** The heroes earn only half the normal XP for creatures slain (already reflected in the Appendix statistics).
- ◆ **MIND CONTROL.** The One's mind is what powers the nightmares. Thus, the Signer is immune to all mind-affecting spells.
- ◆ **MENTAL WEAKNESS.** If a PC loses more than half his total hit points, when he awakens in the real world he must save vs. death magic. A successful save means that he suffers no mental weakness from the dream injuries. A failed save means that he loses 1d2 points of Intelligence, regaining one lost point per day.
- ◆ **DREAM DEATH.** If a PC falls below 0 hit points, his dream-self is instantly propelled back into his physical body. He must make a mental weakness check as described above. He must also make a Wisdom check; failure means that he's overcome by the shock of his dream death and suffers 1d10 points of damage.

DM NOTE: The dreamscape rules presented here are adapted from the rules given in the RAVENLOFT® boxed set *The Nightmare Lands*. If you wish, feel free to incorporate more rules from that product in the heroes' adventures in the dreamscape.

NIGHTMARE #1: ◆ STALKED BY SHADOWS ◆

After the PCs fall asleep, Meuronna enters a trance and casts their dream-selves into the dreamscape. They appear in the middle of a nightmare in which the One is stalked through a dark wilderness by nine fluid, feline shapes – shadow cats created by his subconscious mind. The cats fill him so full of dread that he can barely keep hold of his senses; in order to free the One from this nightmare, the PCs must slay the shadow cats or keep them at bay long enough to calm the Signer's frantic mind.

As soon as the PCs appear in the dreamscape, read:

Wherever you are, it's dark — so dark that you can barely make out the faces of your comrades at your side. The dim full moon overhead suggests that you're outdoors. Suddenly you hear a panicked scream in the darkness,

and you see a shape stumbling toward you. You make out a honey-skinned githzerai male, his gray hair dripping with sweat. "They're coming!" he cries between gasps. "They're right behind me! Help me, for powers' sake!"



The One runs toward the party, desperately screaming for help all the while. In the darkness of the dim moonlight, the shadow cats are 90% undetectable by any means of viewing; thus, the PCs might not even be able to tell what the sod's running from. Although the shadow cats can't kill the Signer, they stalk him mercilessly through the moonlit landscape, swiping at him to heighten his fear, toying with him as if he were a mouse.

However, the cats do try to kill the heroes, attacking them from the darkness. The cats can be hit by normal weapons. However, in the moonlight the PCs only have a 10% chance each round of spotting any of the cats. Any PC who sees a cat must roll for surprise at a -4 penalty (the cat cannot be surprised); if the hero is not surprised, he can try to attack the shadow creature.

No nonmagical light source functions in this nightmare, and infravision won't reveal the cats – the creatures aren't hiding in darkness, they're *made* of darkness. Magical light doesn't hurt the cats, but it does make them more visible. Any cat caught in a *light* spell (or the equivalent) can be seen 75% of the time, and any cat caught in a *continual light* spell (or the equivalent) is fully visible.

However, the shadow cats retreat from such light sources, concentrating their attacks on any targets still in the darkness. The PCs and the One are perfectly safe if they remain within the boundaries of the magical light.

Unfortunately, the One, half barmy with fear, doesn't realize that light helps their situation – he thinks it just makes it easier for the cats to find *him*. If the party provides a source of light, the One does whatever he can to extinguish the light, even if it means forcing a spellcaster to cancel his spell. Failing that, he tries to flee into the darkness. To save him from the cats, the PCs must keep the fear-crazed Signer within the boundaries of the light. He screams, pleads, and struggles to escape while he's forced to remain in light. If magical light is cast directly *on* him, he runs madly in one direction and another, trying in vain to escape the glow.

ENDING THE NIGHTMARE: The heroes can free the One from this nightmare by slaying six of the nine shadow cats, or by keeping the Signer safely in light for six consecutive rounds. Only then does the One overcome his fear of the creatures; the scene dissolves, and the PCs are thrust directly into the next nightmare.

NIGHTMARE #2: THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

In this nightmare, the One struggles to keep his own savage side in check. He's transformed into a carnivorous creature with the upper torso of a githzerai and the lower body of a tiger – and he's running amok in the town of Signpost, killing, devouring, and destroying everything in sight. The PCs must find the One and convince him to resist his primal, predatory urges.

Refer to the maps of Signpost and Dreamhearth on the adventure folder. The heroes appear in this nightmare the day after the One made a bloody rampage through the town, and just a short while before he returns to kill again.

The first thing you hear is the wail and groan of the wounded. Then you realize that you're at the scene of some kind of disaster. Crowds of injured folk mill about the streets of this small town, their spilled blood staining the dusty dirt roads black. A few cry and dash about madly, like racers unable to find their finish line. You turn at the smell of smoke to see several of the town's wooden buildings on fire, the residents weakly trying to beat the flames with blankets. But the worst part is the bodies – dozens of slashed corpses have turned the town into an open graveyard of rot.

If the PCs previously visited the real-world town of Signpost, they recognize where they are, though the dream-town is in much worse shape than the real one ever was. In any case, let them wander amidst the devastation for as long as they wish. There's plenty for them to do – they can put out fires, help tend to the injured, cart away corpses, and try to calm the berks running through the streets.

While in this dream scene, the heroes can't leave the borders of Signpost by any means. If they walk through the gate in the wooden palisade or try to fly over the wall, they just end up right back where they started.

If the PCs ask about the cause of the destruction, wounded and weeping bystanders tell of the horrible, savage monster that regularly menaces their town.

"The hateful thing is all fur and fangs and claws," says one tiefling. "It usually gives us just enough time to bury our dead and rebuild our homes before it returns to attack us again. But it showed up two days ago, and then again last evening, and I'm afraid it will come back tonight."

Everyone in town just seems to accept that the attacks are a regular (though distasteful) part of their lives – they all claim that nothing can be done to stop the carnage. What's more, none of the sods in town know anything about the One, no matter how well the heroes describe him. In this dream, the Signer's nothing but a raging monster, a creature that the townsfolk describe only as a tall, furry, striped beast that slashes and bites with razor-sharp claws and fangs.

Give the heroes some time to take full measure of the destruction wrought by the "monster." As they move about town, make sure that they notice dream versions of both Sarazh and Meuronna among the crowds (though neither seems to recognize the PCs). But before long, the One returns, intent on wreaking more havoc.

"The monster!" shrieks a human female, running wildly through the broken, littered streets. "It's back! It's

back! The thing's tearing its way through Dreamhearth! Listen – you can hear the screams!"

The news sends the town into a panic – people scream and run in every direction, knocking the weakest down and trampling the slowest under their feet. The PCs can spend a few minutes quelling the riot, but the citizens beg them to head to Dreamhearth and destroy the monster.

If the PCs enter the manor, they find the One in the same room in which Garond hid the Signer's physical body – the lower left corner room on the first floor. Slashed corpses and spatters of blood stain the hallway leading up to that room, and, inside, the One crouches by the wall farthest from the door. His yellowish upper torso grows, centaurlike, out of the sleek, striped body of a giant tiger. The fingers at the ends of his upper arms have grown long and spindly, and they sport six-inch claws. His eyes burn with crimson flame, his hair is wild and unkempt, and his jaws bulge with fangs.

In this form, the One cannot speak and has only low Intelligence. The PCs can still identify him from previous encounters, though he doesn't seem to recognize them. But instead of attacking, the One just hunches at the back of the room and fixes a feral gaze on the party.

The monster responds with fury if the PCs attack, but that's exactly what the heroes should *not* do. Stirring up such bloodlust only feeds the bestial part of the Signer and makes it harder to rescue him from this nightmare. If any of the PCs make successful attacks on the One, relate to

them that, instead of suffering damage, the creature seems to grow *larger*, seems to roar with more lusty fury.

ENDING THE NIGHTMARE: Before long, the PCs should realize that they can't defeat the One through combat – instead, they need to help him overcome his savage side. To do this, they must awaken in him the stirrings of his "real" life. The heroes can relate their previous encounter with the githzerai; offer his cherished tenets of the Sign of One's philosophy; rationally explain how the nightmare has caused him to turn into a beast; induce guilt by confronting him with bodies he's slain; and present any number of other arguments.

Try to judge the heroes' success on role-playing alone. If necessary, require that the PCs make Charisma checks to determine whether their arguments are effective. Regardless, with each successful piece of "evidence," the One seems to soften and grow a bit smaller. Slowly, his body returns to its natural githzerai form. If the heroes seek Sarazh or Meuronna in the town and bring them to confront the One, the sight of familiar friends helps to speed the "recovery."

When the One is restored to normal, the nightmare ends. The scenery dissolves, and the PCs enter the third and final nightmare.



NIGHTMARE #3: ◆ THE BEASTLORD ◆

Once the PCs have helped the One overcome his fear and conquer his savagery, they must still defeat a representation of the evil force that threatens the Beastlands – Malar.

When the heroes first appear in the nightmare, the scene seems peaceful and harmless.

The lush, grassy plain, the turquoise sky, and the pleasant warmth of the sun on your face – you know you're in Krigala. Only a few yards from you, the githzerai stands knee deep in the grass, his eyes closed, a gentle breeze ruffling his hair, a satisfied smile on his face.

Then you notice the black triangle pendant hanging around his neck, pressing into his chest – no, growing out of his chest. As you watch, the three-sided void grows larger and larger, occupying more and more of the githzerai's body. The blackness fades, and through the triangle you see mountains, as though you're looking through a window.

Suddenly, the githzerai shrieks and falls on his back into the grass. The hole is growing much larger and wider than his body. Something huge is rising out of it: an enormous, foul-smelling, jet-black panther with bloody fur. The luxuriant grass of Krigala wilts, the rich blue sky fades to a sickly gray, and the bright sun fills with blood, washing the plane in a stark bath of red light. . . .

Is this a genuine aspect of Malar, or merely the One's dream-conception of the power? The question should be left unanswered in the adventure. But make it clear that, authentic or not, this Malar is a serious threat – play up the grandeur of the occasion.

The heroes can't do anything to stop the growth of the triangular hole. The dream version of Malar is 30 feet long from nose to tail; it takes three rounds to emerge fully from the triangle. During that time, the heroes can attack the panther. Formed from the One's intelligence, the dream panther can speak in a rumbling voice:

"Weaklings! Would you fight a hurricane, or strive to block a tidal wave? No more can you fight your own savage nature! Feel the power of bloodlust – the thrill of the hunt!"

Make a secret Wisdom check for each PC who has already attacked the panther. Those who fail the check succumb to a murderous fury, such as they felt if they encountered Malar in Chapter II. (Be sure to leave at least one PC free of the fury.)

Enraged PCs attack the closest living things – in other words, their friends and the prone body of the One. The panther stays back from the fight. It defends itself if necessary, but it prefers to watch the battle, maliciously taunting any unaffected heroes as they try to hold off their berserk friends.

After three rounds of fury, make a Wisdom check for each enraged PC; those who succeed throw off Malar's influence and return to normal. If any PCs fail the check, make another Wisdom check each round thereafter, grant-

ing a cumulative +1 bonus to each roll, until all heroes finally return to normal.

Another way to restore enraged PCs to normal is to defeat the dream panther and end the nightmare. Malar fights savagely, and does not respond to threats, bargaining, or obvious trickery. However, it leaves the One alone, and even protects him from enraged PCs. The panther knows that the screaming githzerai is its link from Carceri to the Beastlands.

ENDING THE NIGHTMARE: To free the One from this nightmare, the PCs must kill or drive off the panther. Malar fights until reduced to 10 or fewer hit points, in which case it tries to flee back through the triangle-portal. If the dream beast flees or dies, all enraged PCs return to normal, the One's triangle shrinks back to its regular size, and the nightmare drains away.

IF THE PCs DIE

If any PCs die fighting the dream aspect of Malar, they return to their physical bodies, unable to re-enter the dreamscape. 'Course, if their fellows succeed without them, all is still well.

But if *all* of the PCs die in nightmare #3 without defeating Malar, the situation becomes much worse. At first, it seems as if the heroes have succeeded – they wake up back in their physical bodies, and so does the One. Everything apparently returns to normal (see "Aftermath," page 60, for more details).

But the heroes' "deaths" at the hands of Malar – even just a dream aspect of the evil god – have poisoned their minds. A few days after seemingly concluding the adventure, the PCs find themselves unable to sleep soundly. Each night, they awaken, screaming, from horrible nightmares, and they gradually grow more paranoid, savage, and hateful.

The heroes have, in effect, become pawns in a new plan to establish Malarite influence in the PCs' factions. The heroes can undo this corruption only by receiving *heal* spells from a powerful good-aligned priest, but this certainly requires them to undertake a mission of the priest's choosing.

◆ LEAVING THE DREAMSCAPE ◆

When the PCs have helped the One overcome all three of the nightmares – fear, savagery, and evil – they're able to perceive the dreamscape as it truly is. The Signer's mind no longer fills the dreamscape with scenes of terror, and the nether portal hangs plainly in the air nearby.

Suddenly, you're standing inside a gray, opaque bubble, at least 50 yards in diameter. The sphere feels soft and pliant under your feet. Lying on the ground in the center of the sphere is the githzerai from the dreams; a thick, black metal chain attached to a collar around his neck anchors him securely to the floor.

Floating in mid-air nearby is a swirling vortex of creamy light. A howl issues from its center.

The One is unconscious and won't wake up until the PCs take him through the vortex, back to his physical body. The heroes can't pull the chain out of the sphere's floor, but they can break it by inflicting 20 points of damage (AC 4 to hit it).

The heroes must carry the One's sleeping form over to the vortex and jump through. When they do, read:

As you leap into the swirls of light, you feel your body start to break slowly apart, like a wet sail in a hurricane. Your head fills with a warm buzzing of bees, and you become less and less cohesive, until you simply fade away into black nothingness.

Each PC who goes through the nether portal wakes up back in his body in the Cat Lord's Prowl, and Meuronna comes out of her trance. But because only a few minutes have passed in the waking world, it doesn't seem to the feline inhabitants of the realm that the heroes could have done much. In fact, the cat lord asks, "Well, when are you going to enter that man's dreams?"

Don't forget – if any PCs lost more than half their hit points while in the dreamscape, have them make a mental weakness check (as detailed on page 55).

DM NOTE: As the PCs relate the story to the cat lord, use Meuronna to fill in the gaps in their knowledge in case they don't understand what they did. The tabaxi explains that the heroes had to save the One from fear, savagery, and the embodiment of evil bloodlust.

SLIPPING THE BLINDS: If the PCs never rescued the One's physical body from where it lay in Dreamhearth, the Signer wakes up in that manor. If Garond and the Deliverers are still alive, the PCs must invade Dreamhearth and free the One from their clutches.

◆ AFTERMATH ◆

If the PCs bring the One's dream-self out of the dreamscape, they free the Signer from his nightmares and stop the corruption of the Beastlands. Without the turmoil of the One's subconscious, the plane returns to normal – the animals revert to their normal temperaments and the transformed humanoids regain their original forms (even if they're no longer on the Beastlands). This doesn't happen in an eyeblink; it takes several days for the damage to be undone.

D'kess and his Vile Huntsmen, relieved at regaining their natural shapes, stop sending animal petitioners through the gate to Carceri – and resume killing them instead. The PCs might try to stop the hunters' evil assaults, perhaps with help from the Verdant Guild. Most of the masked Wylders are glad that the corruption of the Beastlands has stopped (although a few preferred being animals). They throw any remaining Deliverers off the plane. The Malarites are *eager* to

flee once their plan to draw Malar is foiled.

After she's recovered from her injuries, Sarazh returns to Signpost and Dreamhearth to clean up the mess left by Garond and his berks. If the heroes rescued the One from the Malarites, the githzerai is extremely grateful to the PCs. Both he and Sarazh offer whatever favors are within their power to grant, although they can't guarantee that the Sign of One faction as a whole will show its gratitude – after all, most of them never even knew what was going on.

As for the PCs, they, too, slowly lose their animal characteristics and return to normal. They take as long to change back as they did to transform in the first place. Thus, a hero who spent three days turning into a beast needs three more days to shake off those changes. Back in Sigil, folks are no longer troubled by nightmares or violence, although no one in town knows what's happened.

If the PCs uncovered proof of the evil Mercykillers' prisoner trading ring, they can take their evidence to lawful good Hardheads, Guvners, or Mercykillers. Depending on the strength of the heroes' proof – they may have Blander Mul's written statement or the bladeling Hoacher's testimony – the authorities either look into the charges or dismiss them as barmy rot.

STORY AWARDS

In addition to experience points awarded during the adventure for defeating NPCs, animals, and monsters, the heroes might gain further XP for completing the following story goals:

ROLE-PLAYING ANIMALS: PCs who acted most like their animals gain 3,000 XP; others gain 1,000 XP.

RESCUING THE ONE FROM DREAMHEARTH: All PCs share an award of 2,000 XP for saving the One from the Malarites.

SAVING PETITIONERS: If they saved any animal petitioners from the Malarites or the Vile Hunt, all PCs share an award of 2,000 XP.

TURNING THE VILE HUNT AGAINST GAROND: If the PCs convinced any Vile Huntsmen that Garond lied to them about the animal changes, all heroes share an award of 1,000 XP for each swayed hunter.

STOPPING THE MERCYKILLERS: If the heroes expose the evil Mercykillers' prisoner trading ring, each PC gains 3,000 XP. If their evidence compels the other lawful factions to pursue the matter with diligence, each PC gains an additional 1,000 XP.

KILLING THE ONE: If the heroes stopped the corruption of the Beastlands by killing the One, each PC who participated in the act (or allowed it to happen) forfeits all additional XP for completing all story goals in this section.

BOY,
DID I HAVE SOME
WILD DREAMS!
LISTEN +⊕+ THIS . . .
— THE ⊕NE,
UPON AWAKENING
FROM +⊕
DREAMSCAPE

AN APPENDIX

◆ THE SPIRITBOWL ◆

A *spiritbowl* is a new magical item – a smooth, silver, metal bowl, with a diameter of one foot and a center depth of six inches. It's used to catch the spirits of petitioners from the Outer Planes. See, when a petitioner dies on his home plane, his spirit melds right into the plane – that's how he achieves union with his power. But if a petitioner dies *away* from his home plane, his spirit is lost forever. With no place to go, it just dissipates into nothingness.

Thus, *spiritbowls* are often used to save a petitioner's spirit until it can be released back on its home plane. Fact is, the device is primarily used by powerful creatures of the Upper Planes, particularly the aasimon of Mount Celestia. When a planetar sends a lantern archon or some other petitioner on a mission, there's always a chance that the sod'll get killed off-plane. With a *spiritbowl*, the planetar can grab the spirit before it vanishes, store it in the bowl, and carry it back to Mount Celestia.

In *Something Wild*, the Deliverers use *spiritbowls* to trap the spirits of dying animal petitioners from the Beastlands, which they then feed to Malar. Here's how it works: First of all, the bowl-user must be present at the site of the petitioner's death. As the sod dies, the bowl-user chants and waves his hand over the bowl in a particular pattern. If he's successful, the petitioner's spirit is sucked into the bowl and stored there. The spirit resembles a swirling cloud of red light. The bowl can be tipped over, thrown, or damaged, but the spirit remains in the bowl until it's released (or, in this case, eaten). Releasing the spirit involves chanting and waving hands in an inverted version of the storage ceremony. If the bowl is utterly destroyed (say, by a *sphere of annihilation*), the spirit is destroyed along with it.

A *spiritbowl* doesn't harm or kill anyone; it just absorbs the spirit of a petitioner who's in the throes of death while away from his home plane. And it won't work if the petitioner's already home – the plane takes his spirit before the bowl-user even knows what happened.

Only the Deliverers will use the *spiritbowls* during the course of the adventure. Ordinary Malarites don't know how to trap spirits in the bowls, and the PCs won't learn how to do it, either.



◆ THE CLAWS OF MALAR ◆

The claws of Malar are a special weapon used only by priests and followers of Malar – in other words, the PCs can't buy them off the street in Sigil. Similar to brass knuckles, the claws come in pairs, one worn over each hand. The tops of the claws are fitted with sharp, jagged points (much like lion's claws). If the wearer uses no other weapon, he can attack twice per round, once with each hand.

The claws are size S, weigh 1 pound each, and have a speed factor of 2. They inflict 1d6 points of slashing damage to S/M targets and 1d4 points to larger targets.

The claws of Malar were originally presented in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® *Adventures* hardcover book.

◆ ENCOUNTER STATISTICS ◆

IN SIGIL

SASHELL, IN TIGER FORM: AC 6; MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 38; THACO 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4+1/1d4+1/1d10 (claw/claw/bite); SA rear claws; SD surprise; SZ L (8' long); ML fearless (19); Int semi (4); AL N; XP 650.

Notes: SA—if both front claws hit, both rear claws rake for additional 2d4 damage each.

SD—surprised only on a 1.

Special equipment: obsidian triangle with broken point.

NOJAS (PI/♂ githzerai/F5/Vile Hunt/LE): AC 6 (leather, Dex); MV 12; hp 40; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (arrow or sword); SD *plane shift*; MR 50%; SZ M (6' tall); ML steady (12); XP 975.

Notes: SD—can shift to any plane (but not while in Sigil).

S 12, D 16, C 12, I 10, W 11, Ch 8.

Special Equipment: ring of clear thought, leather, short sword, short bow, flight arrow (8).

EARTH GRUE (8): AC 4; MV 12, Br 3; HD 5+5; hp 30 each; THACO 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4+2/1d4+2 (claw/claw); SA cling; SD +1 weapon to hit, immunities; SZ S (3' long); ML average (10); Int average (10); AL NE; XP 1,400 each.

Notes: SA—if both claws hit, the grue clings to the victim, causing an additional 1d6+6 points of damage per round.

SD—immune to earth-based/earth-affecting spells.

PRISON GUARDS (5) (PI/var/F6/Mercykillers/LE): AC 3 (banded mail); MV 12; hp 46 each; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (mace); SZ M (61/2 [MF] tall); ML champion (16); XP 270.

S 15, D 10, C 14, I 12, W 10, Ch 9.

Special Equipment: banded mail, footman's mace.

YENT REMELLIAN (PI/♂ centaur/HD 4/Fated/CG): AC 5; MV 18; hp 24; THACO 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (hooves); SZ L (9' tall); ML fanatic (18); Int average (10); XP 175.

CRANIUM RATS (42): AC 6; MV 15; HD 1; hp 6 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bite); SA spells; SD save as creature of Hit Dice equal to pack Intelligence; SZ T (6' long); ML unsteady (7); Int var (1 point per every five rats); AL NE; XP 65 each.

Notes: SA—pack casts 2 spell levels of wizard spells per day.

Spells: 1st—color spray, spook.

ETHYK: AC 4; MV 12; HD 1+3; hp 9; THACO 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1d2/1d2/1d3 (claw/claw/bite); SA anger; SD can't be surprised; SZ S (1' long); ML steady (12); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 175.

Notes: SA—six times per day, ethyk can induce anger in a single target within 100 feet. A victim who fails a save vs. spell becomes angry and attacks another target (in this case, the PCs).

REAVE (PI/♂ reave/HD 2+4/LE): AC 3 (plate mail); MV 9; hp 17; THACO 19; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4+2/2d4+2 (two-handed sword + Strength bonus); SD fading; SZ M (6' tall); ML fanatic (18); Int average (10); XP 175.

Notes: SD—becomes astral (takes 1 full round) and then reforms (takes 1 full round) 1d6 rounds later anywhere within 100 yards.

EXECUTIONER'S RAVEN (5): AC 5; MV 3, Fl 33 (C); HD 2; hp 12; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA blind; SZ M (5' wingspan); ML elite (13); Int semi (3); AL N; XP 120.

Notes: SA—attack blinds victim 10% of time unless he is protected by great helm or equivalent.

AOSKIAN HOUND (2): AC 7; MV 15; HD 2; hp 13; THACO 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10/1d10 (bite/bite); SA bark; SZ M (5' long); ML elite (14); Int semi (4); AL N; XP 120.

Notes: SA—stuns (1d6 rounds) unless victim saves vs. paralysis.

ARCADIAN PONY (2): AC 6; MV 15; HD 4; hp 25; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 (tentacle); SZ L (7' long); ML unsteady (16); Int semi (3); AL N; XP 120.

Notes: Five-foot tentacle in chest snaps like a whip.

THE LAND OF THE HUNT

STANDARD MALARITE (Pl/var/F4/CE):

AC 6 (leather, Dex); MV 12; hp 25; THACO 17; #AT 2 (with claws) or 1; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (claws) or 1d6 (spear) or 1d4 (bone) or 1d4 (bite). SA disease; SD enhanced senses; SZ M (6' tall); ML champion (16); XP 420.

Notes: 25% use spears; 25% use sharpened bones; 50% wear claws of Malar (see pg. 61), which allow two attacks per round.

SA—bite causes disease; victim must save vs. poison or lose 1 hp/hour until cured.

SD—detect invisible prey 75% of time, hidden prey 90%.

S 13, D 16, C 12, I 14, W 9, Ch 10.

Special Equipment: leather armor, bone/spear/claws.

VENIA (Pl/♀ githyanki/F7/CE):

AC 5 (studded leather, Dex); MV 12; hp 59; THACO 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (claws); SA disease; SD enhanced senses; SZ M (5' tall); ML fanatic (17); XP 1,400.

Notes: SA/SD—see "Standard Malarite," above.

S 12, D 16, C 14, I 13, W 11, Ch 10.

Special Equipment: studded leather, claws of Malar.

GUILDER STARKAD (Pr/♂ human/P11/CE):

AC 6 (Dex); MV 12; hp 64; THACO 14; #AT 2 (with claws); Dmg 1d6/1d6 (claws of Malar); SA disease; SD enhanced senses; SZ M (6' tall); ML champion (16); XP 5,000.

Notes: SA/SD—see "Standard Malarite," above.

S 10, D 18, C 11, I 10, W 12, Ch 14.

Special Equipment: claws of Malar.

Spells (5/4/4/3/2): 1st—*animal friendship, cause fear* (reverse of *remove fear*), *cure light wounds, detect snares & pits, invisibility to animals*; 2nd—*charm person or mammal, flame blade, slow poison, speak with animals*; 3rd—*create food & water, hold animal, plant growth, snare*; 4th—*free action, neutralize poison, speak with plants*; 5th—*animal growth, control winds*.

THE STALKING GROUNDS

WILD BOAR: AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 22; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10+2 (tusks); SD stubborn; SZ M (4' long); ML fanatic (18); Int animal (1); AL N; XP 175.

Notes: SD—fights until reduced to -7 hit points.

HOACHER THE FOUL (Pl/♂ bladeling/HD 6/LE):

AC 2; MV 12; hp 31; THACO 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (fists); SD immunities; MR 10%; SZ M (6' tall); ML average (8); Int very (12); XP 2,000.

Notes: SD—no damage from rust, acid, normal piercing missiles, bladed weapons, or metal-corroding spells; half damage from cold- and fire-based spells.

VAATH: AC 3; MV 15; HD 4+2; hp 22; THACO 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8/1d4 (bite/tendrils); SA poison, tendrils; SZ L (8' long); ML steady (12); Int average (10); AL NE; XP 975.

Notes: SA—bite kills victim in 1d4+1 rounds unless he saves vs. poison. Mouthlike appendage can shoot 10 feet to bite victim for 1d4 damage. If victim fails a Strength check, tendrils burrows into body, causing 1d4 damage per round, until it snaps the spine in 1d4+2 rounds; victim dies 1d6+4 rounds later unless magically healed.

CAVE BEAR: AC 6; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 41; THACO 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d12 (claw/claw/bite); SA hug; SD stubborn; SZ H (12' tall); ML average (10); Int semi (2); XP 650.

Notes: SA—on attack roll of 18 or more, hugs for 2d8 additional damage.

SD—fights for 1d4 more rounds after reaching 0 hp; dies if reduced to -9 hp.

SU-MONSTERS (2): AC 6; MV 9; HD 5+5; hp 28 each; THACO 15; #AT 5; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d4/1d4/2d4 (claw ×4/bite); SA psionics; SD ambush; SZ M (5' tall); ML average (10); Int average (9); AL CE; XP 650.

Notes: SA—has psionic powers *enhancement, psionic sense, and psychic crush*.

SD—hang from tails and make 5 attacks, imposing a -4 penalty on victim's surprise roll.

URIL KABO (Pe/♂ ape/HD 5/N):

AC 6; MV 12, 9 in trees; hp 33; THACO 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8 (claw/claw/bite); SA spells; SD +2 to surprise; SZ M (5' tall); ML elite (14); Int very (12); XP 650.

Notes: SA—casts spells as a 5th-level druid.

Spells (3/3/1): 1st—*animal friendship, cure light wounds, detect evil*; 2nd—*flame blade, heat metal, know alignment*; 3rd—*plant growth*.

BREDGE THE DELIVERER (Pl/♂ human/F5/CE):

AC 5 (studded leather, Dex); MV 12; hp 40; THACO 16; #AT 2 (with claws); Dmg 1d6/1d6 (claws of Malar); SA disease; SD enhanced senses; SZ M (6' tall); ML champion (16); XP 420.

Notes: SA/SD—see "Standard Malarite," above.

S 11, D 16, C 14, I 12, W 13, Ch 10.

Special equipment: obsidian triangle, *spiritbowl*.

THE GEHRELETH LAIR

FARASTU (2+): AC -1; MV 15, Fl 30 (C); HD 11; hp 62; THACO 9; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6+1/1d6+1/3d4 (claw/claw/bite); SA battle frenzy, spells; SD adhesive, immunities, infravision 120', +1 weapons to hit; MR 50%; SZ M (7' tall); ML champion (16); Int average (10); AL CE; XP 14,000.

Notes: SA—reaches frenzy (double #AT; all attack rolls at +2 bonus) after 6 rounds of melee or if reduced to half hit points.

SD—adhesive secretion has 5% chance of sticking to objects.

Immunities: half damage from cold- and fire-based attacks; immune to *fear*, illusions, and phantasms, acid, and poison.

Spells (at will, 1/round unless noted): *detect good, detect invisibility, detect magic, dispel magic (2/day), ESP, fear, fog cloud (3/day), gate (1d2 farastu, 40% chance of success, 1/day), invisibility, tongues, and weakness (reverse of strength, 3/day)*.

MEURONNA (Pl/♀ tabaxi/HD 5/CN):

AC 6; MV 15; hp 36; THACO 16; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d4 (claw/claw/teeth); SA rear claw rake; SD surprise; SZ M (6' tall); ML champion (16); Int high (14); XP 420.

Notes: SA—if both front claws hit, both rear claws rake for additional 1d4+1 dmg each.

SD—surprised only on a roll of 1; enemies suffer a -2 penalty to surprise rolls.

VARGOUILLE (8+): AC 8; MV Fl 12 (B); HD 1+1; hp 6 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (bite); SA poison, fear, kiss; SD infravision 120'; SW blinded by *continual light* or daylight; SZ S (head with 3' wingspan); ML average (10); Int low (7); AL NE; XP 650.

Notes: SA—bite damage is permanent unless victim saves vs. poison (or uses *heal*, *regenerate*, or *wish*); victims who view a shrieking vargouille must save vs. spell or be paralyzed with fear until attacked; kissed victim becomes a vargouille in 3d6 hours.

THE BEAS+LANDS

FLEIA (Pe/♀ giant lynx/HD 2+2/N):

AC 6; MV 12, Jp 15; hp 15; THACO 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1d2/1d2/1d2 (claw/claw/bite); SA spells, rear claws; SD hide, surprise, detect traps; SZ M (5' long); ML elite (14); Int high (14); XP 420.

Notes: SA—casts spells as a 4th-level wizard; if both front claws hit, both rear claws rake for additional 1d3 damage each.

SD—90% chance of avoiding detection when hiding; -6 to surprise rolls of prey when jumping; 75% chance of detecting traps.

Spells (3/2): 1st—*color spray*, *magic missile*, *protection from evil*; 2nd—*detect evil*, *summon swarm*.

ARCADEON RUSSETMANE (Pl/♂ centaur/R10/Sign of One/CG):

AC 5; MV 18; hp 74; THACO 17 (hooves) or 11 (bow); #AT 2 (hooves) or 3/2 (bow); Dmg 1d6/1d6 (hooves) or 1d8 (arrow); SZ L (8' tall); ML champion (16); XP 2,000.

S 13, D 12, C 12, I 10, W 14, Ch 8.

Special Equipment: long bow, sheaf arrows (12).

RUSSETMANE'S WARRIORS (8) (Pl/var centaur/R6/Sign of One/NG):

AC 5; MV 18; hp 43 each; THACO 17 (hooves) or 15 (sword); #AT 2 (hooves) or 1 (sword); Dmg 1d6/1d6 (hooves) or 1d8 (sword); SZ L (8' tall); ML elite (14); XP 270.

S 12, D 11, C 11, I 10, W 12, Ch 10.

Special Equipment: long sword.

D'KESS (Pl/♀ human/F7/Vile Hunt/LE):

AC 6 (studded leather); MV 12; hp 54; THACO 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+1 (long sword); SZ M (5' tall); ML elite (14); XP 420.

Notes: SA—Strength grants +1 to attack and damage rolls (already figured into the statistics).

S 17, D 14, C 16, I 12, W 11, Ch 10.

Special Equipment: long sword, studded leather, *dust of disappearance*.

CAPHILLIUS (Pe/♂ cave bear/HD 6+6/N):

AC 6; MV 12; hp 37; THACO 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d12 (claw/claw/bite); SA hug; SD stubborn; SZ H (12' tall); ML fanatic (18); Int average (10); XP 650.

Notes: SA—on attack roll of 18 or more, hugs for 2d8 additional damage.

SD—fights for 1d4 more rounds after reaching 0 hp; dies if reduced to -9 hp.

GIANT GORILLA: AC 4; MV 12; HD 8+2; hp 52; THACO 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d12 (claw/claw/bite); SZ L (8' tall); ML elite (14); Int semi (4); AL N; XP 975.

GAROND THE CLAW (Pl/♂ tiefling/M9/CE):

AC 6 (Dex); MV 12; hp 33; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+3 (*rod*; 3× dmg on attack roll of 20) or 1d4+3 (*dagger*); SA disease; SD infravision 60', darkness, immunities, enhanced senses; SZ M (6' tall); ML fanatic (18); XP 6,000.

Notes: SA/SD—see "Standard Malarite," above.

SD—tiefling abilities: *darkness 15' radius* (1/day); half damage from cold; +2 to saves vs. fire, electricity, and poison.

S 15, D 18, C 14, I 16, W 12, Ch 16.

Special Equipment: *rod of smiting* (26 charges), *dagger +3*, obsidian triangle pendant.

Spells (4/3/3/2/1): 1st—*burning hands*, *magic missile*, *protection from good*, *shield*; 2nd—*magic mouth*, *stinking cloud*, *wizard lock*; 3rd—*blink*, *hold person*, *vampiric touch*; 4th—*dimension door*, *illusionary wall*; 5th—*domination*.

LION WARDEN BEAST: AC 4; MV 12; HD 10+2; hp 74; THACO 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4+2/1d4+2/1d12+2 (claw/claw/bite); SD animal awareness; MR 25%; SZ L (8' tall); ML elite (14); Int average (10); AL N; XP 9,475.

SD—90% likely to be aware of major events within five miles of home; able to contact any animal within five miles.

Spells (at will, 1/round, unless noted): *animal friendship*, *animal growth* (1/day), *animal summoning I*, *commune with nature* (1/day), *cure light wounds* (1/day per being), *detect snares and pits*, *entangle*, *protection from evil*, *plant growth* (3/day), and *sticks to snakes* (1/day).

CAT LORD (Pl/♀ animal lord/HD 15/N):

AC 3; MV 21; hp 122; THACO 5; #AT 2 (human form) or 3 (cat form); Dmg 1d8+1/1d8+1 (*long sword of wounding*) or 1d4/1d4/1d10 (claw/claw/bite); SA rake; SD telepathy, danger sense, spell immunity; MR 50%; SZ M (6' tall or long); ML champion (16); Int exceptional (16); XP 18,000.

Notes: SA—if both front claws hit, both rear claws rake for additional 1d4 points of damage each.

SD—natural telepathy is always active; can't be surprised or deceived. When in mortal danger, the cat lord has a "bad feeling" 90% of the time and is 25% likely to know exactly what will happen. She is immune to all *charm*-related spells.

Special Equipment: *long sword of wounding*, *darts +2* (10).

Spells (1/round, at will, unless noted): *antimagic shell* (3/day), *charm person*, *plane shift*, and *teleport*. The cat lord can summon 2d6 cats (3/day, 100% chance of success).

NPC GROUPS ON THE BEAS+LANDS

DELIVERERS (Pl/♂ human/F5/CE):

AC 5 (studded leather, Dex); MV 12; hp 39; THACO 16; #AT 2 (with claws); Dmg 1d6/1d6 (claws of Malar); SA disease; SD enhanced senses; SZ M (6' tall); ML champion (16); XP 420.

Notes: SA/SD—see "Standard Malarite," above.

S 12, D 16, C 12, I 13, W 10, Ch 9.

Special Equipment: obsidian triangle, claws of Malar.

VILE HUNTSMEN (Pl/var human/F5/Vile Hunt/LE):

AC 6 (leather, Dex); MV 12; hp 38; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (sword); SZ M (6' tall); ML unsteady (7); XP 175.

S 14, D 16, C 13, I 12, W 9, Ch 9.

Special Equipment: leather, short sword.

WYLDERS (PI/var human/F6/CN):

AC 4 (studded leather, Dex); MV 12; hp 50; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (spear) or 1 (needle); SA poison; SD *speak with animals* 1/day; SZ M (5' tall); ML champion (15); XP 975.

Notes: SA—needles coated with type O poison (victim must save or be paralyzed for 2d6 hours; onset time 20 minutes).

S 13, D 17, C 12, I 10, W 14, Ch 12.

Special Equipment: animal mask, spear, blowgun, needles (10), studded leather.

THE DREAMSCAPE

THE ONE/MONSTER: AC 5; MV 18; HD 8; hp 55; THACO 13; #AT 4; Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d4/1d4 (claw x4); SD impervious; MR 10%; SZ H (12' tall); ML unsteady (6); Int low (5); XP 1,500.

Notes: SD—can't be injured by physical attacks. The PCs share 1,500 XP by convincing the beast to give up its savage form.

SHADOW CAT (9): AC 4; MV 24; HD 6; hp 38; THACO 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8 (claw/claw/bite); SA rear claws; SD can't be surprised, hide in darkness, immunities; MR 25%; SZ M (6' long); ML champion (16); Int high (14); XP 1,000.

Notes: SA—if both front claws hit, both rear claws rake for additional 1d4 damage each.

SD—90% undetectable in shadows or dim light; immune to fire- and cold-based attacks.

NIGHTMARE MALAR: AC 2; MV 360; HD 8; hp 55; THACO 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d10 (claw/claw/bite); SA rear claws; SD can't be surprised; SZ G (30' long); ML fearless (20); Int animal (1); XP 1,500.

Notes: SA—if both front claws hit, both rear claws rake for additional 1d6 damage each.



TABLE I: MAGICAL CONDITIONS ON CARCERI

- ALTERATION:** Spells produce evil or manifest themselves in a hostile manner.
- CONJ/SUMMON:** Conjured/summoned creatures are not bound to serve the caster and may attack.
- DIVINATION:** Spells require the spilled blood of a comrade as a scrying pool.
- NECROMANCY:** Spells that heal function at half normal power; spells that cause damage inflict an extra +1 point per level of the caster; undead raised by spells are automatically free-willed.
- ELEMENTAL:** Varies with layer; earth spells are enhanced in Colothys.

TABLE II: MAGICAL CONDITIONS ON THE BEASLANDS

- ALTERATION:** Spells that manipulate wind, air, or weather (including *fly*) won't work without a spell key.
- CONJ/SUMMON:** Creatures are not bound to serve the caster; *monster summonings* draw only residents of the plane.
- DIVINATION:** Spells that call upon otherplanar knowledge or beings automatically fail.
- ENCH/CHARM:** Spells that control or *charm* normal animals won't work on animals of the Beastlands.
- NECROMANCY:** Spells that cause damage function as if the caster is one XP level lower.
- ELEMENTAL:** Varies with terrain; fire spells are enhanced in Krigala.

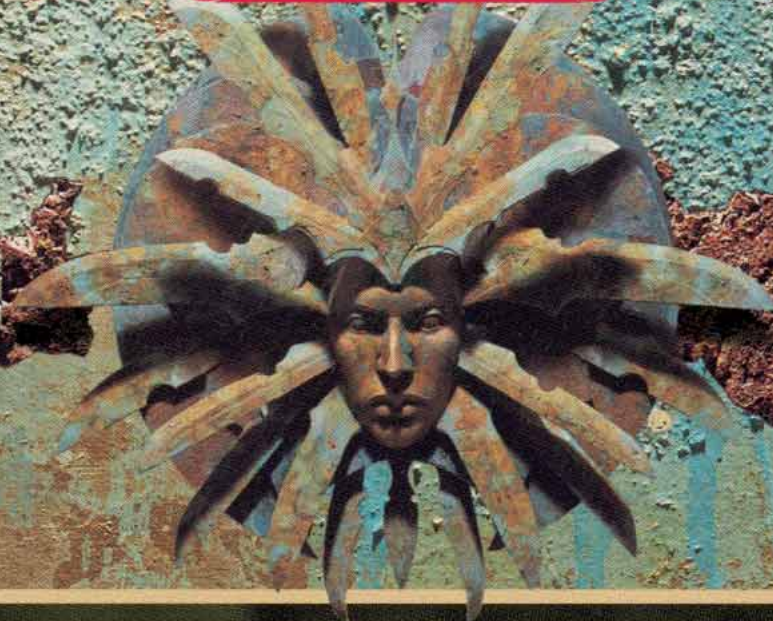
TABLE III: RANDOM ENCOUNTERS ON THE BEASLANDS

D20	AC	HD	THACO	#AT	DMG	SA/SD	XP
1 Aeserpent*	3	7	13	1	2d4+1	venom	2,000
2 Ant, giant	3	3	16	1	2d4	sting	175
3 Ape, carnivorous	6	5	15	3	1d4/1d4/1d8	+2 to surprise roll	175
4 Bear, black	7	3+3	17	3	1d3/1d3/1d6	hug	175
5 Buffalo	7	5	15	2	1d8/1d8	head is AC 3	175
6 Crocodile**	5	3	17	2	2d4/1d12	-2 to foe's surprise roll	65
7 Fox	7	1	20	1	1d3	-	15
8 Hawk, blood	7	1+1	18	3	1d4/1d4/1d6	-	120
9 Horse, wild	7	2	2	1	1d3	-	35
10 Hyena	7	3	17	1	2d4	-	65
11 Jaguar	6	4+1	17	3	1d3/1d3/1d8	rear claws	420
12 Lizard, giant	5	3+1	17	1	1d8	caught in mouth	175
13 Raven, giant	4	3+2	17	1	1d4+2	-	175
14 Scorpion, huge	4	4+4	15	3	1d8/1d8/1d3	poison sting	420
15 Spider, huge	6	2+2	19	1	1d6	Type A poison	175
16 Stag, wild	7	3	17	2	1d3/1d3	-	65
17 Stirge	8	1+1	17	1	1d3	blood drain	175
18 Toad, giant	6	2+4	17	1	2d4	-3 to foe's surprise roll	120
19 Wasp, giant	4	4	17	2	2d8/1d4	poison sting	420
20 Wereboar	4	5+2	15	1	2d6	silver/+1 weapons to hit	650

* See *Monstrous Supplement in Planes of Conflict*.

** Only near River Oceanus.

PLANESCAPE™
ADVENTURE



FOR 4 TO 6 CHARACTERS OF 4TH TO 7TH LEVELS

SOMETHING WILD

by Ray Vallese

EVERY BERK IN SIGIL STRUGGLES TO
KEEP HIS SAVAGE SIDE AT BAY.
BUT NOW THE BARS OF THE CAGE ARE BREAKING DOWN...

Don't go to sleep, cutter – that's where the shadows slink, gnawing at the frail cord of sanity. The dream-touched sods of Sigil are snapping one by one, turning on each other like wildcats in the streets. And as people become animals, animals become monsters, rending friend and foe alike with fang and claw. The lawful factions have enough trouble dealing with a rash of breakouts from the Prison. But when the shackles of society fall away, it's all a body can do to keep the beast within from bursting free – and running wild.

Something Wild is a PLANESCAPE™ adventure for four to six characters of 4th to 7th levels. When Sigil falls prey to disturbing nightmares and outbreaks of violent fury, the heroes must follow bloody trails to the treacherous peaks of Carceri and the savage jungles of the Beastlands. An ancient terror threatens the planes anew, and only the player characters can stop it from feasting on the flesh of the multiverse.

The PLANESCAPE Campaign Setting boxed set is required to run this adventure. The Planes of Conflict Campaign Expansion boxed set, the PLANESCAPE MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Appendix, and In the Cage: A Guide to Sigil are recommended as well.

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