

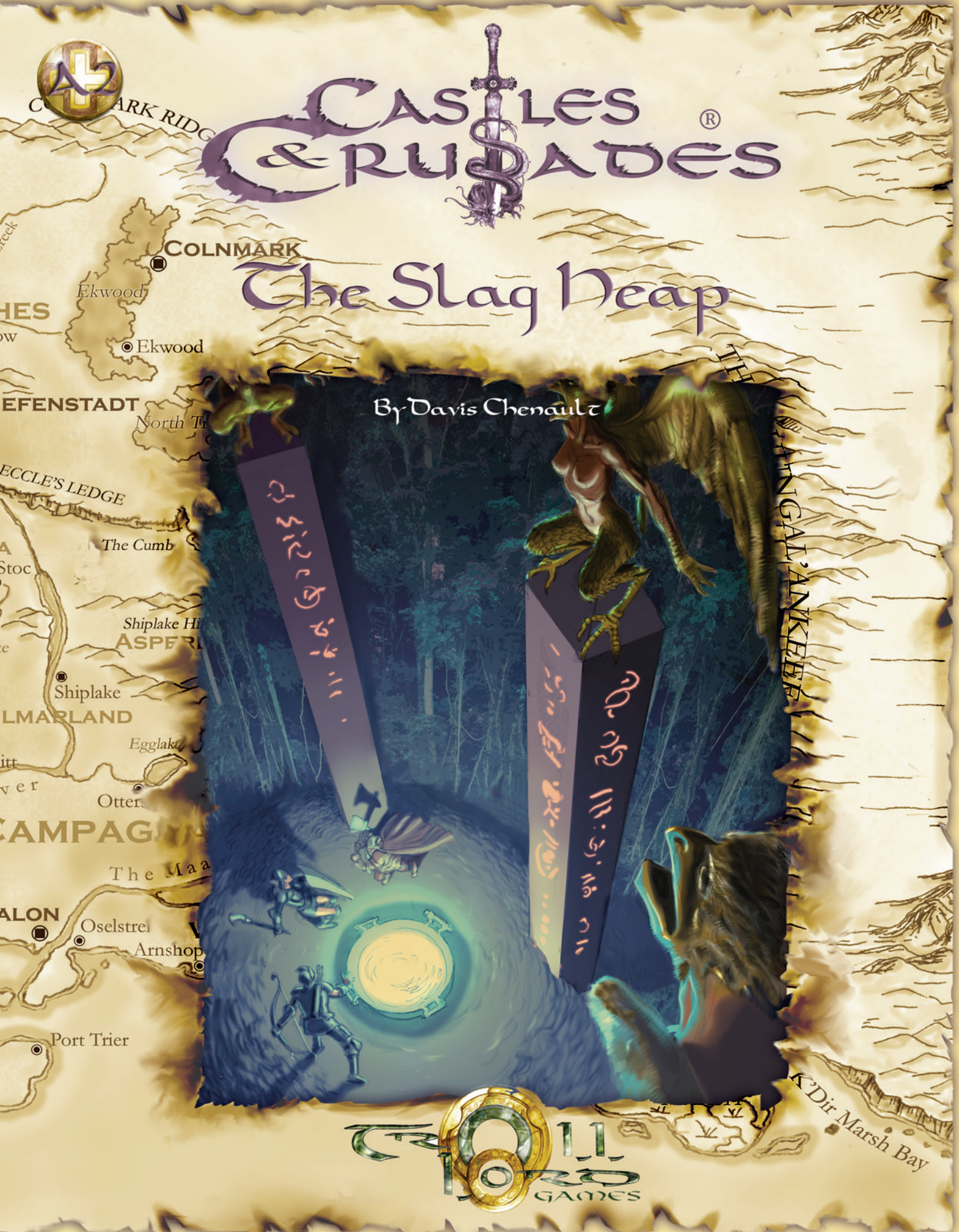


# CASTLES & CRUADES<sup>®</sup>



## The Slag Heap

By Davis Chenault



# The Slag Heap

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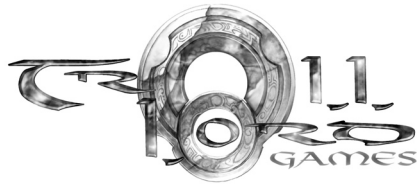
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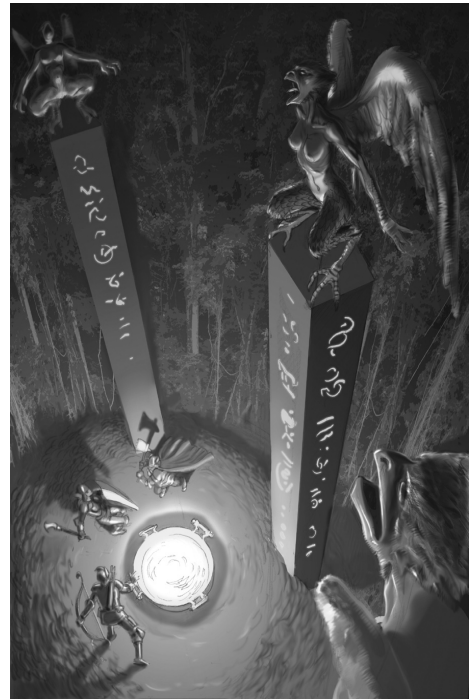


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# The Slag Heap

This module is designed primarily for those adventurers and heroes who have only recently wet their appetite for glory and fame. Should any characters brave enough care to venture deep into the Barren Wood, they will find many enemies to battle and some to spare. Here they can engage in combats and battles under the eaves of an ancient forest and beneath the black earth of the Slag Heap where they will face creatures of mythic evil and dire portent. In these dank and forbidden holes, glory and wealth lie for the taking as well as those iron bonds of friendship that only adventurers forge. Beware though, for death lingers at every corner and beneath every tree. And should their time come, it is theirs to choose: die valiantly against mighty foes or fall, a craven coward in a vain attempt to forestall the inevitable.

This adventure is best suited as a gateway to other adventures and escapades of the Castle Keeper's making. The module's monsters, characters and settings, though tied together by themes and plots, all offer an abundance of interesting asides and the potential for other adventures which are wholly unrelated to *The Slag Heap*. It is strongly recommended that the Castle Keeper develop and expand upon the encounters and associated adventures the characters may find themselves engaged with or interested in. Allow them to explore what interests them most and greater fun will be had by all.

Those picking up the adventure after exploring *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge* will find the material related in *The Slag Heap* both different and familiar. *The Slag Heap* details a region south of the Hruesen River, Ludensheim and Botkinburg and the events that unfold here are only loosely connected to those related in the previous module. Though it is recommended it is not necessary that this module be played in conjunction with *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*.

*The Slag Heap* is presented in three parts. It begins with a brief description of the two small thorpes which set the stage for the trip to the Slag Heap. This is followed by a similarly brief exposition on the areas between the thorpes and the Slag Heap and what may be encountered along the way. The final portion of the module details the Slag Heap and what lies in its winding tunnels.

This adventure is designed for 3-5 characters of 2nd-3rd level. Should a larger party of adventurers be involved, increase the number of creatures encountered and their armor class or give them better weapons to adequately challenge the party. For the major non-player characters or monsters, increasing hit points and levels might also be necessary. This should suffice to maintain a challenge for the characters. Further, attribute check challenge levels should be between 0 and 2. Those of special note are described in the module.



# Introduction

A great empire once spread across the known world and enclosed all within its grasp. These were cold and wretched times for many peoples. Winters were long and thick snowy blankets lay across the world like a white mantel for many months out of the year. The skies were perennially overcast, gray and carried cold winds from the fortress of Aufstrag. It was an unhappy time for many and was known as the Winter Dark.

Through much of this time, the gnomes of the world remained far from the grasping fingers of the empire's governors, generals, ambassadors, armies and tax men. They hid themselves far away in remote hills and mountains, deep forests and trackless savannahs. The Barren Wood was just such a place. Its expanse of ancient trees and undulating hills are dotted with hidden dales and valleys that are known only to a few. So the Barren Wood provided a perfect place in which to escape the choking hold the empire had on much the rest of the world. In these woods resided many fey of varying nature but all of the same mind concerning the Emperor in Aufstrag. They cared nothing for him and labored ceaselessly to prevent his finding their most sacred and holy spots.

In one such hidden dale a large family of gnomes settled. Long friends of the fey, these gnomes were guided there and offered safety. The dale they settled in was nestled at the foot of a large hill, and their new home they named Havenwale for it was a place of safety to them. The fey called it Syvanwale, which is, the speech of man, Sparkling Hill. They called it thus, for all the quartz crystals that were found in the area and, in this particular spot, the diamonds.

For many a long year the gnomes lived there in safety, having little contact with the world at large. The clan grew and prospered though never so much as to expand beyond the dale. Only with the passing of the evil lord in Aufstrag and the return of the long summers did the gnomes begin venturing forth again into the wide world.

They quickly established commercial ties with several nearby communities of men. Ludensheim was the nearest large town and

it was here that the gnomes began trading diamonds for goods and wares they had long grown accustomed to living without. The folk of Ludensheim coined the name Diamond Dale for the gnome community, and it soon stuck, while the name Havenwale was used almost only by the gnomes. The new name proved a propitious event.

In the long years after the passing of the Winter's Dark the gnomes relaxed and became less watchful. They did not see that the Horned One's passing only diminished the power of those in far off Aufstrag, but not the evil that resided in the hearts of man and the other nefarious creatures of the Barren Wood.

Soon miners and diggers of all sorts came to the Barren Wood in search of diamonds and similar wealth. Several mining communities were established. These were often peopled by greedy types, eager to make a quick fortune and move on. The gnomes hid their homes and trafficked less with the folk of Ludensheim. The mining towns never prospered and shortly became the abodes of bandits, brigands, outlaws and the general flotsam of society.

In more recent days the gnomes watched with growing concern when the Lords of Ludensheim fought amongst themselves and the rightful lords were turned out. They sought only the protection of the Vale and the magic of the fey to keep them safe. This proved a disasterous move for long before the Red Caps fell into the employ of the Baron Dietbold (see *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*), the gnomes of Diamond Dale fell to ruin.

A creature, called the Witch Queen by her servants, had come from the ruin of Aufstrag seeking to cast her power upon the people of the Barren Wood. Hearing rumors of limitless wealth of the Diamond Dale, she thought to gird herself for war with the coin of gnomes. Her servants soon invested the mining towns and, through means magical and foul, dissevered the location of Havenwale. She sent her loyal cohorts into that dale and they quickly overcame the gnomes. Few survived and those that did were either ensorcelled and enslaved or fled deeper into the Barren Woods or abroad.

For several decades it has been such. The Witch Queen's servants have fortified Havenwale and dug many a pit in search of diamonds and other precious minerals. All to little or no avail as they have neither the inclination nor skill to mine the diamonds with any efficiency and have delivered very little to the Witch Queen. The once beautiful gnome village and dens became a warren of viperous fiends and brigands. The foul debris of these folks turned it all to brackish rock and a heap of ruin, so that in time it came to be called The Slag Heap.

Seroneous, the present ruler of The Slag Heap cares little for any of this history. This abomination from the pits of Aufstrag was sent here for one reason only; to make ready for war and conquest. He was supposed to have helped sew the seeds of war and discord in the communities about and make Diamond Dale a gathering point for the cohorts of the Witch Queen in her planned conquest of the area. Had the Witch Queen a reliable servant, her desires may be closer to fulfillment and war already be upon the land. Yet, Seroneous is a faithless servant to the Witch Queen and her goals are a long way off. Though the wheels have been put in motion and winds of war are blowing, her servant's self-obsessions have delayed her plans; such are the ways of the evil malcontents of the world.

Of late, however, a new arrival in the dale may change things and this loyal servant of the Witch Queen fulfill his mission and her desires

with greater relish and efficiency than Seroneous. It is into this gathering storm that our heroes are heading.

## For the Castle Keeper

The hunt is on: the infamous Red Caps are raiding along the Hruesen River and the Baron Volkmar Botkin of Botkinburg wants their depredations to end. It is rumored an agent has hired the Red Caps to undertake the raids that are causing so many problems or even that a sinister alliance between the bandits of the Barren Wood and the Red Caps of the Blacktooth Ridge has been arranged. Baron Volkmar Botkin is in need of men of stout heart to uncover the truth of this, find the perpetrators and have them brought to justice. The truth is, of course, both less and more than the Baron suspects.

Dietbold Heimer, the Baron of Ludensheim, has indeed contracted the Red Caps to undertake raids in and around Botkinburg and they are being paid for it. His agent managed this agreement through various meetings with the leaders of this nefarious group of goblin raiders. Baron Dietbold Heimer had hoped that Baron Volkmar Botkin would come to him for aid. Aid which would be given in exchange for an oath of fealty.

However, things have gotten out of hand and the goblin's persistent raids have raised the ire of Baron Volkmar Botkin, but he has not called upon Ludensheim for aid. But rather he has turned to those folk who wander these lands of Outremere. To the great annoyance of Dietbold, Volkmar has called for aid from knights, rangers, adventurers, bounty hunters and whatever other folk he can rouse. To further Baron Dietbold Heimer's problems, the Red Caps are now demanding more gold than was agreed upon to discontinue their raids. If he does not pay, they have also threatened to expose him to the folk of Botkinburg and the other lands about.

Baron Dietbold is desperate to prevent anyone from discovering the truth of his machinations. The gathering of notables and nefarious characters alike in Volkmar's Botkinburg presages disaster, so Dietbold has sent agents out to waylay anyone attempting to dissever his plans and some others to pay the Red Caps to cease raiding.

The hotbed of this activity is centered on two old mining communities in the Barren Wood, Gipsheim and Dreddstun. It is here that the agents of Dietbold Heimer have met and meet with the Red Caps and the bandits of the Barren Wood. And it is here that they are now gathering. These two thorps are ostensibly overseen by Miles Freland, a notorious brigand, and his crew of malcontents. Though not initially involved in any of Baron Dietbold's shenanigans, he has become enmeshed in solving the problem as bounty hunters and others have started to make their way to his hideouts. He would rather all Baron Dietbold's men leave and the bounty hunters be eliminated.

There are several important personalities involved in this rather complicated mess the Castle Keeper should be aware of; Deertrik Shelentz, Kreetkruk the Ogre, Miles Freland and Ragnar the Toothless.

Deertrik Shelentz, an agent of Baron Dietbold, has come to Gipsheim to pay off the Red Caps. He has brought several of his henchmen with him to ensure that the issue is resolved. If the Red Caps do not accept a final payment and promise to stop the raiding, he has been instructed to kill his contact and send the head back with a threat of martial retaliation if the Red Caps do not quit raiding.

Kreetkruk is Deetrik's new contact with the Red Caps. His previous intermediary has gone missing and in his place is this nasty ogre with a jutting jaw and cruel disposition. With him are several of the more capable and sneaky Red Caps. Kreetkruk has been instructed to demand even more money from Deetrik and should he be refused, to kill Deetrik and send his head back to Ludensheim and threaten even more pillaging should they not be paid.

As both parties to this negotiation have brought conflicting demands and the forces to back up their demands, both have retired from their negotiations while they plan their next move. Deetrik is in Gipsheim while Kreetkruk is in Dredstun.

Miles Freland and his crew of ne'er-do-wells are spread out between Gipsheim, Dredstun and the surrounding territories. Miles is concerned about harming either of the above mentioned parties as this will bring down the wrath of one or both the Red Caps and the Baron of Ludensheim. Miles also has a claim to the Barony at Ludensheim – a claim he intends to make good on (see below).

Ragnar the Toothless is an old fashioned assassin. Thoroughly evil and inconveniently capable, he has been hired by Baron Dietbold to rid the woods and lands about of bounty hunters, treasure seekers and other ilk. He is currently in Gipsheim awaiting his first target.

Other than greed, iniquity, depravity and villainy (characteristics one can liberally sprinkle upon all the aforementioned), what currently propels the action in this area is none other than the arrival of an ungerm battle lord, Froithmot, the Slag Heap.

Froithmot has been sent to the Slag Heap by the Witch Queen in order to bring fire back to the rule of Seroneous. He has taken to the Witch Queen's mission with religious zeal and is trying the sew discord in the region as never before. He has managed to engage the Red Caps and pays them generous sums to continue raiding along the Hruesen River and is even offering aid in their endeavors. He has also agreed to help Deetrik negotiate with the Red Caps, knowing full well it will come to naught. And finally, Froithmot has cast his support behind Miles Freland's desires to regain the throne of Ludensheim.

So, this is the stage upon which the characters will make their appearance. Where it shall end up, none may know until all the die are cast. As the adventure begins, the situation is static with each party gauging the other's capabilities and their own options. The characters may be able to connect the trail of deceit and treachery or they may not, depending upon their want, desire and action. Nevertheless, upon their arrival at the Slag Heap they should find Froithmot or any of his various minions, and be introduced to even more strange and horrible monsters as the characters first meet the servants of the Witch Queen.

The Castle Keeper should keep the motivations of the various actors in mind when running encounters in the adventure as any activity can have great or small impacts on the others in the adventure. In essence, the Red Caps are after more gold, Froithmot simply hopes to cause strife and war between the local barons while Miles Freland ultimately desires a return to his birth right. As the negotiations, actions and conflicts are in a stagnant stage, alliances can shift and plans can change. The character's actions will have much impact on this should they choose to become enmeshed within the rivalries or even should they enjoin each as enemies or allies collectively or individually.

## Involving the Characters

As with most adventures, only the most general of reasons can be supplied that encourages players to stroll down a particular boulevard of adventure. In the case of *The Slag Heap*, encouraging players to travel to dangerous places with such unattractive names as Gipsheim and Dreddstun can almost only be done by bounty or greed. Several manners of bringing the characters into the action are described below. Of special note: if continuing the adventure from *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge* read the final entry.

**Hook 1.** A 500gp bounty has been offered for the capture of Miles Freland, a notorious bandit known to be in the area. This can offered by either Baron Dietbold Heimer or Baron Volkmar of Botkinburg.

**Hook 2.** Numerous peasant and merchant families in and around Ludensheim have demanded that Baron Dietbold locate and free the slaves thought to be in Gipsheim and Dreddstun. The characters are hired to locate the slaves and report back on their condition and who is holding them or rescue them if possible.

**Hook 3.** Rumors abound that agents of the Witch Queen are south of the Hruesen River. An order of goodly knights or river wardens has contracted the characters to discover if this is true. They point to Dreddstun and Gipsheim as possible locations for these nefarious and evil people.

**Hook 4.** It is rumored that there is a town named Diamond Dale somewhere in the Barren Wood. A long abandoned mining community where many a sparkling bauble was found, the mines are said to be ripe for the picking as the gnomes have all but disappeared.

**Hook 5.** If continuing this adventure from *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*, the characters attention might turn to the Slag Heap for a number of reasons. Barldus Mikenfird, if he escaped the Vargolg, will go to Gipsheim and thence to Dreddstun to escape the characters should they be giving chase. As a last resort, he will make his way back to Ludensheim. While in Gipsheim or Dreddstun, Barldus and Deetrik will work together to eliminate those who trail him.

If Barldus is killed and the characters have cleared the Vargolg, they quickly find that the Red Caps are still raiding. Baron Volkmar may have been impressed by the characters mighty prowess and ask them to go to Gipsheim where he suspects something sinister is up as the Red Caps have been seen in the vicinity of the two small mining communities. Further, Miles Freland has been raiding the lands about again and he needs to be stopped.

**Hook 6.** As a final option and perhaps the most promising, the characters hear a tale of Diamond Dale from several of the Halfflings in Botkinburg or even from an itinerant gnome at the House of Sludge. So impressive should this tale be, that no self-respecting adventurer would consider anything other than going to investigate.

## In the Barren Wood

In any respect, the characters must travel to Gipsheim for the adventure to get underway. They will likely begin their travels from either Ludensheim or Botkinburg along the River Road or, as it is known in Ludensheim, the Ludensway. From here the characters must travel south along Riggler's Trail until they reach the town of Gipsheim and thence to Dreddstun.

## Riggler's Trail

Riggler's Trail is the path leading to Gipsheim and thence onto Dreddstun. It leaves off the Hruesen River Road about midpoint between Botkinburg and Ludensheim. A mere sixty miles must be crossed before arriving in Gipsheim. Rarely used anymore, this thickly overgrown track passes over gentle hills, through shallow dales and across occasional grassy fields before finally ending in Gipsheim.

*The trail appears to be laid out in a fairly haphazard fashion, moving first one way then another. In many places the road has been completely washed out or covered with so much bramble as to be nearly impossible to make out. At other times, it crosses soggy lowlands flush with tall grasses. It also crosses numerous small creeks which flood to impassable in the late spring and early summer. These aspects combined with the usual chiggers, ticks, spiders, ants, gnats, mosquitos, snakes and other small pests make travel along Riggler's Trail an altogether unpleasant experience unless one prefers lonely abandoned byways in which to spend time.*

Several old farmsteads and abandoned shacks are also located near the old trail. Of course, all that is left now are the weed shrouded husks of houses, barns and outhouses. Some have been used recently as is evidenced by fire pits and refuse, but none are inhabited. Occasional wheel ruts and horse tracks are also noted along the trail revealing that some traffic passes this way.

But that is not the least of it. The trail passes through a region uncontested by any civilized baron or lord or most anyone or anything of good will. This stretch is wild and untamed by any standard, such that roaming bands of humanoids, wild beasts and some even say giants terrorize any caught moving through here.

Of the bandits and thieves, the most notorious is Miles Freland and his surly band of cut throats. These are known to be robbers and thieves of the most nefarious kind and any encounter with them is "surely to lead to death - or even worse," the locals often say. They never say what the "worse" might be though. The Baron of Ludensheim has placed a 500gp bounty upon the head of Miles and a 25gp bounty upon the head of any of his followers. One is left to wonder though, if Miles is so evil and a wanted man. Why so many have had encounters with him and live to tell the tale.

### Riggler's Trail Random Encounters

Check twice during the day and once during the night for encounters. Roll a d10 and a 1 indicates an encounter has occurred. Then roll a d20 and refer to the table below for the type of encounter.

1	2-8 Brigands, members of Miles' band with 3 <sup>rd</sup> level fighter
2	4-12 Goblins, members of the Red Caps with 3hd leader
3	2-6 Bounty Hunters, see below
4-5	3-12 Fey
6-7	2-8 Orcs
8-9	1-6 Boars
10	1 Brown Bear
11	2-4 Ogres
12	Knight and 2-4 retainers, see below
13-15	Herd Animals
16	Traveler, see below
17-18	Cougar
19	Giant Owl, see below
20	Escaped Captive, see below

**Bounty Hunters** This band consists of a mix of characters. Minimally there is one tracker (1<sup>st</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> level ranger) and a capable fighter (1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> level fighter). The Castle Keeper should determine the class of the others (though they should all be 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>).

**Knight and Retainers** This group consists of a knight (4<sup>th</sup> level) and his esquire (2<sup>nd</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> level fighter). The knights will be mounted but the others may not be. Half the retainers should be men-at-arms (HD 1d8) and the remainder more stout warriors (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> level fighters).

**Traveler** The lone traveler should be any one of the following characters.

Lars Birghit is a priest in search of a holy relic believed to be located in the woods south of Dreddstun. (*He is a lawful neutral, human, 3<sup>rd</sup> level cleric. His vital stats are HP 16, AC 15. His primary attributes are strength, wisdom and intelligence. His significant attributes are wisdom 14 and constitution 14. He carries a chain shirt, shield, heavy mace, staff, spear, 10gp, and two potions of healing as well as some traveling equipment. He can cast the following number of spells: 0-4, 1<sup>st</sup>-3, 2<sup>nd</sup>-1.*)

Liesl Lamprekt is the daughter of a wealthy merchant who is believed to have been killed by Miles Freland and she seeks revenge for this act. (*She is a chaotic neutral, human, 2<sup>nd</sup> level fighter. Her vital stats are HP 12, AC 16. Her primary attributes are strength, constitution and dexterity. Her significant attributes is dexterity 17. She carries a chain shirt, halberd, dagger, mace, 2pp, 14gp, 2sp and traveling equipment.*)

Darin Gobbleneck is a gnomish prospector looking for his distant family in Havenwale. (*He is a neutral good, gnome, 2<sup>nd</sup> level monk. His vital stats are HP 17, AC 12. His primary attributes are constitution and strength. His significant attribute is dexterity 13. He carries a staff of maiming that delivers +2 damage, a light flail and 2 throwing daggers, 2gp, 15sp and some traveling equipment.*)

Farl Turkl is an escaped convict from Ludensheim seeking to join Miles' band (*He is a neutral evil, human, 3<sup>rd</sup> level rogue. His vital stats are HP 8, AC 13. His primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence and wisdom. His significant attributes are dexterity 14 and charisma 8. He carries leather armor, 3 throwing daggers, short sword, short bow, 35sp and traveling equipment.*)

Litheriam of Solin Felthium is an elf traveling east and searching for his ancient birthright (*He is a chaotic good, elf, 2<sup>nd</sup> level ranger. His vital stats are HP 14, AC 16. His primary attributes are strength and dexterity. His significant attributes are strength 15 and dexterity 16. He carries scale mail, shield, longsword, longbow, dagger 120sp, 55gp and traveling equipment.*)

**Giant Owl** This large owl is of an ancient breed. They are intelligent and wise, knowing a dozen languages or more. The owl is seeking out an ancient roost. When the characters meet the owl, it has been wounded and can not fly.

*Giant Owl (This creature's vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 28, AC 14. His primary attributes are mental. It can attack two times with its claws for 1d4 points of damage each or once with its beak for 1d8 points of damage. It possesses the bardic ability legend lore.)*

**Escaped Captive** This fellow has escaped from Miles' band and is making his way back to Ludensheim – or so he hopes. He is the

nephew of the head of the Shepherder Guild in Ludensheim and his safe return will be greeted with much enthusiasm by his uncle. It is also not improbable that he is being chased by none other than Miles Freland.

*Arad (He is a neutral, human commoner. His vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3, AC 10. His primary attribute is intelligence. He carries only clothing.)*

## Miles & his Malcontents

Miles Freland is detailed in the following paragraphs, though he may never be used in this adventure. Miles is provided as a bogeyman for the adventure and for future adventures which the characters may undertake. He is a notorious bandit whom all the characters should fear to meet and should be used only to propel the story forward or scare the characters into action, such as being approached and given the information that "Miles is coming." Before bringing the characters into contact with Miles, the Castle Keeper should make them aware that he is of some repute and not a person to be trifled with. In fact, Miles and his close companions are capable of quickly dispatching a low level party of adventurers. The real value of this non-player character is not as a typical adversary, rather he is a potential ally and offers a whole slew of adventures unrelated to the one at hand, should the characters chose to ally themselves with him.

Miles and his close companions are rarely in Gipsheim or Dreddstun. Often he is out raiding, carousing or traveling. Miles and his companions (the 'Malcontents') travel the road between Ludensheim and Botkinburg, the South Way and the Hruesen River Road, raiding and waylaying travelers. For the most part, they are careful not to kill people as that would bring down the wrath of those at Ludensheim, Botkinburg, the Guilds and others. So simple thievery is considered the safest route to prosperity and safety. While in Gipsheim or Dreddstun though, there is little to prevent them from doing as they please to whomever they please and whenever they please as there is no authority other than the capacities of the inhabitants. For the most part however, they leave the inhabitants alone and occasionally offer protection to them from goblins and others. Many of his brigands however, the less reliable and capable, remain in Gipsheim and Dreddstun. These are described below.

Should he arrive, or be used in this or following adventures, the following knowledge will be of use. The crew is lead by Miles Freland, a notorious thief and brigand. Miles has a past! His grandfather was the lord of Ludensheim before the arrival Dietbold Heimer. Some three decades before the present day, Miles' grandfather and father, along with most of his family, were killed in a violent palace coup lead by an upstart mercenary from the south, Dietbold Heimer. Since that time, Miles has sought alternately to regain what was lost to him or to forget it. His banditry is in part personal and at other times survival. Often times he sees himself attempting to start a revolt, destabilize Dietbold's hold on power and regain his rightful inheritance. At other times he views himself as nothing more than a renegade out to gather some gold, food or goods. In all though, he is neither an evil man nor a good man. Though capable of evil deeds, he is also capable of profoundly good acts. He is simply a man whose time has passed or, perhaps, whose time lies somewhere in his future.

Miles Freland and the Malcontents consist of those listed below and others of lesser note with little or no repute who occasionally follow him on raids. The actual wealth they gather from brigandry is hoarded

in a small cave some 2 dozen miles from Gipsheim's location only known to those named below.

*Miles Freland (He is a chaotic neutral, human, 7<sup>th</sup> level monk. His vital stats are HP 51, AC 17. His primary attributes are constitution, dexterity and intelligence. His significant attributes are strength 13, dexterity 13 and constitution 14. He carries a +2 spiked gauntlet, a ranseur of tripping which causes anyone hit with it to fall prone unless a successful dexterity check is made, a +3 armband of protection, a gem studded belt worth 500gp, fine (if not worn) clothing, 50gp and traveling gear.)*

*Thads Mullingin: He is Miles' right-hand-man. Loyal and brutal, Thads is feared by all who know him. (He is a neutral, human, 6<sup>th</sup> level ranger. His vital stats are HP 45, AC 19. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity and intelligence. His significant attributes are strength 16 and dexterity 17. He carries +4 leather armor, +1 ring of protection, +1 flail, a longbow, 5 gems worth 10-100gp, 20gp and traveling gear.)*

*Abner Dirst: This priest is Miles' spiritual advisor. Abner is a secretive person and dedicated to the Miles who saved him from an execution many years ago. He is obsessed with Miles' heritage and placing him back on the throne of Ludensheim (see above) but is quiet about it. (He is a lawful neutral, human, 5<sup>th</sup> level cleric. His vital stats are HP 28, AC 15. His primary attributes are wisdom, intelligence and strength. His significant attributes are wisdom 14 and intelligence 17. He carries a +5 blessed cloak of protection which confers this armor class only to those who worship his ancient and uncommon deity of the dead, a +1 mace, a flail, a holy symbol worth 1,000gp, 30gp and traveling gear. He can cast the following number of cleric spells: 0-4, 1<sup>st</sup>-4, 2<sup>nd</sup>-2, 3<sup>rd</sup>-1.)*

*Nelly "The Axe" Jegger: She is Miles' significant other and one mean spirited agitator here for very personal reasons. (She is a neutral evil, human, 5<sup>th</sup> level assassin. Her vital stats are HP 22, AC 14. Her primary attributes are dexterity, wisdom and intelligence. Her significant attribute is dexterity 18. She carries padded armor, +2 dagger of paralyzation that causes anyone hit by it to be paralyzed for 1d12 rounds unless a successful constitution check is made, a hand crossbow, 10gp and traveling gear.)*

*Martzten Sludgehurn: He is Miles' mild mannered schemer with a bent towards self-serving stratagems. (He is a lawful evil, human, 5<sup>th</sup> level illusionist. His vital stats are HP 16, AC 11. His primary attributes are wisdom, intelligence and charisma. His significant attributes are intelligence 18, dexterity 7 and charisma 17. He carries a +3 ring of protection, a +2 dagger, a vial of gaseous form, a vial of invisibility, a scroll of color spray, 50gp and traveling gear. He can cast the following number of illusionist spells: 0-5, 1<sup>st</sup>-5, 2<sup>nd</sup>-4, 3<sup>rd</sup>-2.)*

*Killian Stemster: The gem in Miles' crew is this shrewd and hawkish thief. Often called "The Nose" or simply "Stem," Killian is an expert thief, burglar, pick pocket and sneak. (He is a neutral, human, 7<sup>th</sup> level rogue. His vital stats are HP 32, AC 15. His primary attributes are dexterity, wisdom and intelligence. His significant attribute are dexterity 17 and intelligence 15. He carries +1 leather armor, +1 short bow, gloves of the rogue conferring a +2 to all rogue ability checks, a dagger, 16gp and traveling gear.)*

## Gipsheim

*Before you lies a small thorp consisting of several dozen dilapidated buildings and a score or so of small cottages in various states of disrepair. A single muddy lane twists through the center of town, with a few houses on either side of it. The other buildings are spread out to its left and right amongst small farm plots and animal pens. Only two structures stand out. There is a two story wooden structure with a large sign hanging above its doorway. This is the Ram's Head Tavern. The other is a mill house, just visible over the brush and scrub, located on a small creek north of town. There are a few folk moving about, some working their plots and fields. They are a mangy lot, being ill clothed and generally poor. Some however, those employed with sitting on steps or generally hanging about, are armed with light weapons and armor. They look as surly and suspicious as the others do poor and tired.*

Gipsheim was once a community of miners and prospectors. That was some time ago. Most of the inhabitants have since left, having given up on finding diamonds or any other precious stone in the nearby hills. Those that remain now 'make a living' farming small plots of land and raising cattle. They sustain themselves and even sell or trade their extra food to Miles' crew. Most of these would prefer to leave the area but are simply not allowed to do so at this point. Miles has ordered that any caught leaving are to be brought back or executed. Occasionally Miles takes prisoners and forces them to work the fields and care for the cattle. This is the source of all the slavery rumors in Ludensheim and elsewhere.

Several members of the community are nothing more than bandits and thieves from Ludensheim and elsewhere. There are also numerous members of Miles Freland's band here. They rarely leave the town and then only to go on raids where large numbers of people are needed. Those who profess loyalty to Miles usually stay at the Old Mill House.

The thorp is ostensibly controlled by Miles. In practice however, he offers little in the way of enforcing anything other than the fulfillment of his immediate desires, wishes or needs. Miles keeps his men in check for the most part as he needs this thorp as a place of refuge. In general, when newcomers arrive, they are not immediately accosted. Rather, they are 'sized up and measured' for their strength and intent. If perceived as weak or working for the authorities of any local baronies, they are often robbed and used or sold as slaves, or simply killed.

Gipsheim is also a place of refuge for several escaped convicts, petty criminals and other nefarious individuals. Though not members of Miles' crew, they still abide by his wishes while in Gipsheim. They travel through here taking a room at the Ram's Head or occupying any of the abandoned buildings in town. Often they must pay Miles a fee or do some service for him for the right to remain here. Some few agents of the Witch Queen also pass through here.

The remainder of the inhabitants of the community are made up of commoners. Almost all are kept here entirely against their will and some have been kidnapped from merchant caravans and farms near Ludensheim. They do some farming and raise a few cattle to feed Miles' crew. All would enjoy being freed. The commoners can and should be used for further adventures or even replacement characters should any die in this adventure. These are not all humans either. There are dwarves, gnomes and halflings amongst their numbers.

The farmhouses and shacks in which these people live are almost all dilapidated and rotting. The interiors are dark, dank and moldy since no one cares for them in the least. Several are abandoned and can be occupied should the characters choose – though that might cause some issues with those in the Mill House.

*Commoners (These humans' vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10. They have no primary attributes. They also have no equipment.)*

Overall, Gipsheim is a potentially dangerous place. It is little more than a den of thieves and bandits who bide themselves only because of the threat posed by Miles and his close compatriots. Few bother challenging him or the status quo. Those who have stayed or are being forced to stay here live a precarious existence as serfs or slaves and have only a thin veil of protection from the thieves and brigands who also live there. The characters will be treated with suspicion and wariness (it is not just anyone who would walk into such a place) but little will be done to them unless they start any trouble with the farmers or with any of Miles' crew. Then all of Miles' men will attack the party and likely dispatch them.

### The Ram's Head Tavern

*This is an old dilapidated two story building with a broad balcony on the front. It is a wood frame structure with little in the way of ornamentation. A large sign dangles below the balcony with an engraving of a ram's head drinking from a mug of brew engraved upon it. The place was built more than fifteen years ago when Gipsheim had many miners and travelers passing through. Its prosperity was short lived though and, after most of the town's inhabitants left, it fell into disrepair.*

The ground floor has a large single common room with several chairs and tables in it. A large door, often propped open, leads to the rear of the ground floor where the kitchen and living quarters of the owners are located. The upper floor has a half a dozen small rooms with several cots in them and one large dormitory or common room. All the furniture in the place is rickety and old, barely serving its purpose as furniture. Candles are often used to light the common room at night or, during the winter, the fireplace is used for light and heat.

The owners, Jakoby and Nate Fardelnerl, live in the rear and make a living serving brew to the locals. They often do not charge for brew, rather giving it to whomever asks and receiving goods in return. As for Miles' and his men, they are the ones who give Jakoby and Nate the brew more often than not so are, of course, not charged. Jakoby and Nate essentially watch over the Ram's Head at Miles' pleasure. His men occasionally stay in the rooms on the upper floor.

The rooms themselves are unfurnished, and if available, are free to whomever wants them. There is no care for the rooms though. They are dirty, unkempt and foul. Newcomers are charged a few silver coins for a cot, nothing too steep for the establishment. This is usually done simply to see how much coin the person has. Food costs vary for newcomers (Miles' men and those working the land do not pay) running between 5cp and 1gp, depending on the amount of food requested. Payment is always in advance. Beer costs between 1cp and 1sp depending on the desires of Jakoby and how much he believes the characters may have on them.

The arrangement works as well as could be expected for those involved. Although Nate would rather be in Ludensheim or some other place which offers more safety and greater anonymity from the powers-that-



be. Jakoby, for his part, concerns himself with little of anything, other than tapping the keg that is. Most especially, he avoids thinking about what a future might hold and focuses on simply surviving the present. They think anyone who comes here is escaping the law, but do try and figure out what the characters are doing in town.

Deertrik Shelentz and several of his men are here. They are staying in the common room so, unless they have gone, no one else should be allowed to stay in this room. Barldus Mikenfird is also here if he was not killed or captured, (see *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*, page 22, room 23). Deertrik's companions are: Karl-Heinz, a drunk with an attitude and always ready to fight; Stafen Goodlemier or 'Lurch', a quick witted, rapsallion and knave; Ralfin-albitron Thedemoneous, a mean and lowly maker of magic; and Gisela Lector, a devoted servant to the Lords of Death.

Deertrik and the others do not suspect any newcomers are after them, believing themselves to be on a secret mission that is unknown to anyone else. The only exception to this will be if Barldus is here. He may recognize the characters immediately upon their arrival (assuming they may in *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge*). If this is the case, Deertrik and his men will attempt to ambush the party and kill them. In all other cases, Deertrik's men ignore - as much as possible - the party. However, drunks, taverns and weapons are a notoriously bad combination. Deertrik and his men often gather in the tavern but do not discuss business there. This is reserved for when they are in the common room. It should be noted, the walls in the inn are flimsy and easy to hear through. All attempts to listen through the walls are made at +3.

If Deertrik and his crew get into a fight with the party, they will attempt to kill all of them to a person. If the party manages to defeat Deertrik and his entire crew, upon interrogation, several do reveal their plans and mention Kreetkruk. Those that escape, if any, go to Kreetkruk for help claiming that they are found out and it would be in their best interest to help dispatch the party. Deertrik may also decide that the characters are perfect pansies and try to use them to defeat Kreetkruk. He does this by secretly confiding in them that he is an agent of 'powerful people' in Ludensheim sent here to eliminate some Red Caps known to be in Dreddstun. He also throws in the untruth, but seeming possibilities, that Miles is in cahoots with the Red Caps.

*Deertrik Shelentz (He is a neutral evil, human, 4<sup>th</sup> level assassin. His vital stats are HP 17, AC 15. His primary attributes are dexterity, wisdom and intelligence. His significant attributes are dexterity 14 and intelligence 16. He carries +2 leather armor, +1 hand crossbow, thief's tools, a short sword, 6 vials of poison causing paralyzation upon contact for 3d12 rounds, a dagger, 56gp and traveling gear.)*

*Barldus Mikenfird (He is a chaotic neutral, human, 3<sup>rd</sup> level rogue. His vital stats are HP 13, AC 11. His primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence and charisma. His significant attribute is dexterity 13. He now carries leather armor, a short sword, a dagger, 1gp and traveling gear.)*

*Karl-Heinz (He is a chaotic evil, human, 3<sup>rd</sup> level fighter. His vital stats are HP 22, AC 16. His primary attributes are strength, constitution and charisma. His significant attributes are strength 17, dexterity 14 and charisma 13. He carries a chain shirt, shield, falchion, short bow, dagger, club, 12gp, 22sp and traveling equipment.)*

*Stafen Goodlemier (He is a neutral evil, human, 3<sup>rd</sup> level rogue. His vital stats are HP 12, AC 13. His primary attributes are dexterity,*

*wisdom and intelligence. His significant attribute are dexterity 14 and wisdom 13. He carries leather armor, crossbow, thief's tools, a short sword, a dagger, 6gp and traveling gear.)*

*Ralfin-albitron Thedemoneous (He is a lawful evil, human 2<sup>nd</sup> level wizard. His vital stats are HP 6, AC 12. His primary attributes are wisdom, intelligence and dexterity. His significant attributes are intelligence 16 and dexterity 16. He carries a poisoned dagger that deals +1d6 damage unless a constitution save is made, 3 scrolls of comprehend languages, 20gp and traveling gear. He can cast the following number of wizard spells: 0-4, 1<sup>st</sup>-3.)*

*Gisela Lector (She is a chaotic evil, human, 3<sup>rd</sup> level cleric. Her vital stats are HP 16, AC 14. Her primary attributes are wisdom, dexterity and strength. Her significant attribute is strength 15. She carries a chain shirt, mace, flail, a holy symbol worth 100gp, vial with one sip of a strength potion, scroll with sanctuary on it, 10gp and traveling gear. She can cast the following number of cleric spells: 0-4, 1<sup>st</sup>-2, 2<sup>nd</sup>-1.)*

## The Old Mill

*Upon the banks of a slow moving, wide creek stands the remnants of an old water mill. A turn wheel, still in some decent shape moves slow in wide, lazy circles as the creek gently pushes it on. The outside of the mill is a wreck. Weeds, tangled briars and small scrub oak dot the area and grow up to the long untended building. Old wagons and broken and discarded material are thrown all around. Years of plundered goods that have been discarded litter the area. There are big fire pits, piles of rotted food and refuse everywhere. Big-leafed clinging vines camouflage much of the building. A half dozen, slovenly, brutes lounge around outside the mill playing games, wrestling, slinging knives or occasionally fishing.*

This is an abandoned mill house. It is a large structure sitting on the banks of the Rizin Creek. A large turn wheel still moves ponderously when the waters of the Rizin are flowing fast. Although once used to mash grain, it is now occupied by Miles' men. These men are a fairly useless lot as far as Miles' is concerned. Though ruffians, they are poorly motivated and utterly undependable. As such, they stay in Gipsheim until Miles needs them. The latter case is rare and only when big raids are being planned. Within are always 3-36 of Miles' men.

They set no guards and spend most of their time drinking and joking and gambling and fighting one another and whatever else it is lazy criminals do. There are no guards nor lookouts in the place. If confronted with a fight, many simply run away. Each common brigand here must make a successful mental saving throw or run should a fight break out. The few ringleaders present are not required to make the check, though should over half the brigands run or are killed, they begin looking for a way to escape or surrender.

**The First Floor:** This floor is spacious but cluttered with the belongings of those staying here. In the center of the room is a large grindstone and the trough in which the wheat was once ground to meal. The mechanism is broken so no longer works. There are half a dozen trunks, opened and emptied except for common goods: piles of rope, 2 barrels of nails, some woodworking tools, boxes of salted fish, several kegs of beer, cloth, grain, rotted apples, and other goods taken from plundering over the years. The brigands do most of their cooking here and outside by the creek. A large fire pit is near one end of the room while piles of food scraps are littered about the floor.

**The Upper Floor:** This floor houses the machinery for turning the grindstone on the first floor. The connection to the water wheel is snapped so none of the gears are turning. Furthermore, the machinery is so old and poorly kept that it would not work even if the connection were fixed. This is also the sleeping quarters. There are 3 dozen blankets and a few beds haphazardly scattered about this room. There is little loot except what is carried by the brigands, but many common items can be found up here such as rope, hats, shields, arrows, knives, some chain, pots, tinder boxes, a few flasks of oil and other sundries. Most valuables are kept on the brigand's persons.

Brigands x3-36 (These are neutral evil, human, 1st level fighters. Their vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 12 or 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They wear leather armor with a 50% chance of having a shield. They use a club, a short sword or longsword determined randomly and 20% have short bows. All carry daggers. Each also has 2-20cp, 1-10sp and 16gp.)

Brigand Ringleaders: 1 for every five brigands (These are neutral evil, human, 3rd level fighters. Their vital stats are HP 15, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry studded leather armor, shield, crossbows, longswords and 2-20gp in various coin.)

## Dreddstun

Dreddstun is located some 35 miles south and west of Gipsheim. It too sits upon the banks of the Rizin Creek, though here the water moves a little faster and the creek is a little wider.

*The road leading to this little ramshackle hamlet is little more than a muddy track. It is rarely used and overgrown. At times one might have difficulty even locating it. The road ends on top of a knobby hillock cleared of all vegetation. There are several old shacks and houses that seem to be piled atop it.*

During its most prosperous times, Dreddstun was a backwater and poor community. Now, it is little more than a dozen or so small houses and shacks teetering and leaning askew awaiting a strong wind to blow them over. At the center of the hamlet is a broad two story building that was once the general store, tavern, trading depot, and religious center. Now it is nothing more than a home for the most powerful ne'er-do-wells in the vicinity. It has been renamed by its latest inhabitants – the Ogre Inn.

Other than those in the Ogre Inn, there are only 30 or so people and several of Miles' men in Dreddstun. All but Miles' men are kept here against their will and essentially used as slaves by the others. They raise some pigs, a few cattle and have several vegetable gardens. Mostly though, they just serve beer, run errands and get kicked around and beat a little too much. There is one family of gnomes here as well, the Guttleburs. As for Miles' men, they do not stay in the Ogre Inn, rather, they have moved to another house a few doors down.

All newcomers to Dreddstun are treated with outright distrust and hostility until they prove themselves to be of the mean sort and capable of fighting. This does not mean that the locals will attack strangers immediately, but they will threaten any interlopers and test their will. It takes only a little to slight any of those here and a fight to the death could be had in moments. If any of Miles' men or those in the Ogre Inn suspect the interlopers are bounty hunters or working with any "de pantylooned curs in Ludensheim," they will dispatch them forthwith.

There is much to be learned in Dreddstun and much to be feared. The slaves and Miles' men are well aware of the forces of evil gathering to their south in the Slag Heap. They have all seen the ungerin in Dreddstun and the Ogre Inn talking. They impart this information to the characters if a reasonable rapport has been established.

## The Ogre Inn

*Before you is a ramshackle building, long and low, fashioned of stout trees with a thatched roof. Its size is greatly diminished however, as half of it lies in ruins. Some poor excuse for an artisan has sketched a crude portrait of an ogre bashing a gnome with a club on the buildings teetering door. A lone bench sits outside the door, upon which sits an old man, whose lackluster appearance denotes both dumbness and deafness.*

The Ogre Inn is a broad, two story wooden building with a thatch roof. One half of it has collapsed and lies in ruins. The roof leaks and during a heavy rain, water pours into the upper floor and down into the lower floor. The lower floor consists of three large rooms.

**Main room:** Here is the main room and bar area. It is approximately 50 x 100 feet in size. There are many tables and chairs of all type in here as plundering has afforded some comforts. There is one large red velvet stuffed chair which Kreetkruk sits in. No one else does and should anyone attempt it, a fight will occur. Kreetkruk and/or some



of his goblins will almost always be here or in the kitchen unless they are away on some business. There are large kegs of beer in the room and many cups piled near it. Additionally, there is always some village inhabitant or two in the room to serve Kreetkruk. It is up to the Castle Keeper to decide upon the disposition of Kreetkruk and his goblins in order to best serve the adventure.

**Kitchen:** In the back is a narrow room once used as a kitchen but now used for sleeping and storage as it is the driest place in the whole building. It is about 20 x 40 feet in size with a door leading to the outside at its rear. Kreetkruk and his goblins all sleep in here. They rarely keep watch, stay up late drinking and gambling and get up well after the sun rises, sometimes near dusk sleeping the whole day away. There are a dozen crates of food in here, bolts of cloth, barrels of beer, several lanterns, a large barrel of pitch, a dozen small ceramic containers with oil in them, a grappling hook, some woodworking tools and a plethora of cooking utensils.

There is also a small metal trunk in a cabinet. This contains some of the pay-off offered by Baron Dietmold to put an end to the raids. The trunk is locked and trapped. Kreetkruk has the key on a chain around his neck. A trap is inside the lock and impossible to locate by detecting traps, until one tries to pick the lock. If the key is used, the trap is disabled. Once the lock is being picked, the character must roll a detect traps check. If successful, the character notes an odd sound of glass clinking and can stop his action. He has detected the trap. At this point, the character can attempt to disable the lock but must roll a disable lock and pick lock at the same time to be able to do so. Both rolls must be successful in order to succeed at the task. If either fails, the trap is sprung. If the character elects to stop and remove his tools and try to disable the lock without picking it at the same time, the trap will spring also. The Castle Keeper may warn the character that this latter might occur by indicated his tool seems to be caught on something inside the lock.

If the trap is sprung, a poisonous gas is emitted that covers 20 square feet. It causes all within its sphere to collapse, paralyzed for 2-24 hours and take 1d6 damage unless they make a successful save versus poison. In this case, paralyzation for 1d6 hours occurs. It is a powerful toxin. The trunk contains 100pp and 10 gems each worth 100gp.

**Room of Worship:** The other room was once a chamber for worship but is now simply abandoned and desecrated. In the center is a large stone basin. Once filled with holy water, it now is scribed in foul runes and filled with trash. No one enters this room anymore.

**Upper Floor:** The upper floor of the Ogre Inn is usually abandoned. Occasionally one of Kreetkruk's men will come up here to sleep off a drunk but other than that few ever come up here. There are six small rooms sitting over the main room down below. They are separated by a hallway such that three rooms are on each side of it. Each of the rooms is empty except for broken furniture and other debris. They are moldy and, depending on the time of year, lice and flea infested.

The following are the important members of Kreetkruk's band. Each wears a dark red cap.

**Kreetkruk:** He is a mean spirited and cruel ogre of massive proportions. He is also quick witted and smart – unusual for an ogre. He is not in Dreddstun to start any trouble, just to kill Deertrik or get some more gold. That said, he is not unwilling to smash a few heads. Kreetkruk speaks the common tongue of the region but in a somewhat broken manner.

**Kreetkruk** (This chaotic evil ogre's vital stats are HD 5d10, HP 32, AC 15, His primary attributes are physical. He receives a +1 to hit and damage. He carries both a ball and chain as well as a large club into combat. He uses the club to knock opponents down and follows up with a swing of the ball and chain for 2d8 points of damage. He carries a leather jerkin, a key hangs around his neck on a chain, and has a pouch with 45gp in it.)

**Nordin the Vulture:** He is the only human in the bunch. He has come along as a translator to aid Kreetkruk if necessary. His keen eyes combined with the moist grimace constantly etched on his face makes him look like a vulture, hence his nickname.

Nordin (He is a chaotic evil, human, 3<sup>rd</sup> level assassin. His vital stats are HP 15, AC 14. His primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence and wisdom. His significant attributes are intelligence 17 and dexterity 16. He carries leather armor, short sword, 6 x throwing daggers, a potion of levitation, a potion of healing, 22gp, a ring valued at 150gp and traveling gear.)

**Grazsh:** This goblin is a spiritual leader for the band. He is a cruel fighter and enjoys entering the fray. He also knows the location of the Slag Heap and is planning on making a trip there in the near future to confer with Froithmot.

Grazsh (This chaotic evil goblin's vital stats are HD 3d6, AC 15. Its primary attributes are intelligence and wisdom. This goblin can cast spells as a 4<sup>th</sup> level cleric. He carries a shield, chainmail hauberk, large mace, 3x javelins, onyx holy symbol in the shape of three javelins worth 100gp and traveling gear. He can cast the following number of cleric spells: 0-4, 1<sup>st</sup>-3, 2<sup>nd</sup>-2.)

**Ooglz:** is cunning and sneaky even for a goblin. He attempts to escape should serious trouble occur and return to the Vargolg. He too knows the location of the Slag Heap as he once followed Grazsh there – without Grazsh's knowledge.

Ooglz (This chaotic evil goblin's vital stats are HD 3, HP 12, AC 14. Its primary attributes are strength and constitution. It receives a +2 to armor class, it is so fast. He can make back attacks and climb as a 3<sup>rd</sup> level rogue. He carries a shortsword, leather armor, 3x throwing daggers, thieves tools, 15sp and clothing.)

**The Red Caps:** These are Kreetkruk's foot soldiers. They are a wily, tough band of goblins. They all wear the familiar red caps.

Red Caps x 12 (These goblins' vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield shortswords and do 1d6 points of damage in battle. They carry light crossbow, shortsword, studded leather armor and 1-10sp.)

## The Knockers

The Knockers are a dozen or so members of Miles' crew. They have been here for some time rarely going to Gipsheim or raiding with Miles. They are here at Miles' behest as part of his effort to lay claim to the territory – for what that is worth. In truth though, these are some of the least reliable of those who claim allegiance to Miles and have been sent here to keep them from causing trouble elsewhere. They are an abusive lot who fight with one another more than with anyone else.

They are currently staying in a large house on the north edge of town and close to the fast flowing Rizin Creek. The house is dilapidated but,

unlike the rest of the town, has wooden shingles and is thereby a little drier during wet weather. It is a single story structure with only two rooms. There is a large room where the Knockers gather and eat and sleep and another smaller room where they have stored their material. In here they have some foodstuffs, clothing for winter and various and sundry items taken from raids. Most of it is worthless.

The group is lead by Reglar Mud, a ruffian of the highest order and his companion in arms, a dwarf named Gratl Durhill. Reglar is aware that there are some unger and orcs located somewhere to the south of Dreddstun but he does not know where and has not gone looking for them. He cares little for anything other than what immediately effects him.

The two have taken as much loot as they can hide from Miles, and hidden it in a small box buried beneath an old oak across the Rizin Creek. In it are 80gp, 175sp, 575cp and 22 pieces of jewelry worth between 1-10gp each. There is also a box of goods in the mess in here that belonged to the Guttleburs. Within it are several pieces of cookware, some candles and other sundries. Along with this are several sheets of paper listing items which they carried with them and a genealogical note establishing heritage to the clans at Havenwale. This latter sheathe of paper is actually a map to Havenwale (the Slag Heap) disguised as something else. To access the map though, a simple word must be said over it – Havenwale. The map reveals the quickest and easiest route to Havenwale.

*Reglar Mud (He is a neutral evil, human, 4<sup>th</sup> level ranger. His vital stats are HP 24, AC 15. His primary attributes are dexterity, strength and intelligence. His significant attributes are strength 17 and dexterity 14. He carries a chain shirt, large crossbow, 10 x +2 non-magical bolts, a halberd, dagger, 26gp, 47sp, a 20gp and traveling gear.)*

*Gratl Durhill (He is a neutral evil, dwarf, 2<sup>nd</sup> level fighter. His vital stats are HP 24, AC 17. His prime attributes are strength and constitution. His significant attributes are strength 15, constitution 13 and dexterity 14. He carries a chainmail, shield, crossbow, shortsword, +2 throwing dagger, 16gp, 97sp and traveling gear.)*

*The Ruffians x10 (These neutral evil humans' vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 12 or 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by weapon. They wear leather armor with a 50% chance of having a shield. They use a club, a short sword or longsword determined randomly and 20% have short bows. All carry daggers. Each also has 2-20cp, 1-10sp and 16gp.)*

## Guttleburs

The Guttleburs are a family of gnomes who came here in search of their cousins in Havenwale. The father of the family, Nurfin, and his two sons, Hopple and Neeble, are the only ones left in town. Reglar sold (or traded as he likes to think) Nurfin's wife, Frema, and daughter, Owlin, to Froithmot the unger in return for some gnomish wine (which Froithmot took from a wine cellar at the Slag Heap). This arrangement also ensures that Nurfin and his sons will stay here and acquiesce to Reglar's requests as he promises to return his wife and daughter as soon as possible. Reglar is of course lying.

Nurfin, Hopple and Neeble care for some hogs and have a little garden with which they supply food to Reglar and for those in the Ogre Inn. They are exceedingly despondent as a result of their situation but imagine no way out of it until Frema and Owlin are returned. They will be grateful for any help the characters can give them. They will

even agree to leave Dreddstun with the characters and guide them to Havenwale if the characters promise to free Frema and Owlin – or at least try.

However, they do not know exactly where Havenwale is. That information is located on a map which Reglar took from them when they were captured. Without it, they can only guess where Havenwale is and will most likely end up getting the party lost.

*Nurfin, Hopple and Neeble (These gnomes vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They have no equipment.)*

## The Inhabitants of Dreddstun

The inhabitants of Dreddstun are kept here against their will. Their fear is palpable, and they all would be happy to be freed of the place. However, they fear the wilds about Dreddstun almost as much as they fear staying in Dreddstun. They will request the characters lead them to Ludensheim or Botkinburg should they be freed. There are 35 humans here. Six are children, eight are adult women and the remainder are adult males.

Many of the inhabitants have seen the comings and goings of many people here. Several will mention Miles' passing through on occasion. However, what is interesting are the Red Caps. Recently they have been here in large numbers and they have been having many men of Ludensheim. Further, a great unger chief comes to Dreddstun on rare occasions. This should inspire concern and fear in any hearing it. Ungern are rare south of the Hruesen River. They are the true minions of the Horned One, made in his image, and their loyalty resides to him above all things. With them around, nothing good can be in the making. Many here have also heard of Havenwale or Diamond Dale, though none know where it is.

*Commoners (These humans' vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10. They have no primary attributes. They also have no equipment.)*

## To the Slag Heap

The trip to the Slag Heap from Dreddstun is long and arduous. There is a trail, but it is indistinct and so rarely used that it is virtually indistinguishable from the forest floor. Without a guide or the map, travel to the Slag Heap is nearly impossible. One other option is to trail one or more people moving to and from Dreddstun and Slag Heap. Froithmot and several of his orcs will eventually go to Dreddstun to meet with Kreetkruk and then travel back. Grazsh and Ooglz know the location and may reveal it if forced to or they can be tracked to it.

If the characters attempt it on their own, they must make a successful tracking check every day of the trip. This tracking check begins at a -1 penalty. The penalty increases by -1 each day so that on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of travel, the tracking check is at -5. It takes 6 days to get to the Slag Heap from Dreddstun assuming 10 miles of movement a day.

And 10 miles of movement a day will be a challenge. This ancient forest is littered with dead fall, small mires, thick undergrowth and all manner of obnoxious critters that bite, sting, slither, crawl, latch, buzz and simply annoy. All this and the constant attention needed to keep an eye on the trail makes movement very slow. Overland movement is halved. It is about 60 miles to the Slag Heap.

Should the characters lose the trail, they are on their own, as is the Castle Keeper. They must find their way back to Dreddstun, Gipsheim or wander around until they find Havenwale. The author trusts that at this point the Castle Keeper will find method to entertain the party in a most horrible and deadly fashion.

### Overland Encounters

This chart details encounters that occur while traveling in the region. Check for encounters twice during the day and twice at night. A roll of 1 on a d10 indicates an encounter. Then roll a d20 to determine the type.

d20	Encounter
1-2	Bandits (2-8) / ambush, after a raid, encamped
3-4	Goblins (7-12) / spying, raiding, stealing cattle
5	Lost traveler (1-3) / villager scared, hiding, fleeing
6	Mountain Lion (1) / tracking party, may attack
7-10	Herd Animals / deer, elk, oxen, boar, or other
11-12	Wolves (4-12) / eating, tracking party, moving
13	Giant Spiders (2-8) / nest area, with prey, moving
14	Brown Bear (1) / hunting food 1 in 10 with cubs
15-16	Fey (2-8) / pixies
17-18	Orcs (2-8) / raiding, scouting, lost, encamped, after fight
19-20	Ogre (1) / traveling, searching for home, raiding

### The Barren Wood

This chart details encounters that occur along the region of the Blacktooth Ridge. Check for encounters twice during the day and three times at night. Roll a d10 and a 1 indicates an encounter. Then roll a d20 to determine the type.

d20	Encounter
1-2	Goblins (7-18) / spying, raiding, stealing cattle
3-5	Orcs (3-12) / raiding, scouting, lost, encamped
6	Bandits (3-12) / ambush, after a raid, encamped
7	Hyenas (4-16) / hunting, around carcass, sunning
8-9	Wild Boar (2-6) / rooting around, relaxing at mud hole
10-12	Stirges (1-3) / hunting, with prey, flying overhead
13-14	Ogre (1-2) / hunting, traveling, looking for a home
15	Wolves (3-18) / eating, tracking party, moving
16	Bear, large (1) / aggressive male or female with cub
17-20	Herd Animals / deer, elk, oxen, boar, or other

## The Slag Heap

Slag Heap sprawls over a wide area and consists of loosely linked encounter areas. These are made up of small mines and barrows, a haunted wood/shrine and a host of tangled, winding tracks. There is little left of the gnomish community. Most of it has been uprooted or buried. What is left is occupied by servants of the Witch Queen. The Shrine of Waters, a one time holy place, has been befouled by harpies. The Deepening Well is an active mine filled with gnome slaves. Black Hole is the pit within which Seroneous dwells. The Collapsing Caverns serve as a compound for the orcs and ungerm and the Maze serves as a house for prisoners.

The Slag Heap, or Havenwale as it was once known, sits in a remote vale deep in the Barren Wood. Steep hills, tangled forest and a mish mash of ravines, ridges and washes hide the vale from most interlopers. However, in recent years many of the trees have been cut down to feed the fires of Slag Heap, leaving a swath of destruction apparent to all a mile or so before arriving in the vale. Once an idyllic community

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of small colorful houses, deep comfortable barrows, dark green grass and many a spring flower, it is now a jumble of dark and dingy huts, churned earth, muddy pits, dark unforgiving barrows. Heaps and mounds of detritus from the diggings and tossings of the orcs and ensorceled gnomes lay all about. Fires are constantly burning, day or night, as the orcs and ungerm enjoy the heat and ashen smoke the fresh wood renders. Within the vale, one can observe the movement of orc and ungerm alike as they make their way to and from barrows and shacks.

Much of the Slag Heap mines are in horrible condition and many portions have collapsed or are nearing collapse. The debris and wreckage offer a host of good and safe hiding places from watching eyes.

However, entering the vale can be very dangerous. Should the characters attempt to storm the complexes in the vale with no thought to stealth, the entirety of the inhabitants will come out and work together in its defense. Only through stealth, wit and playing off one group against another will the characters manage to clear this place of its filthy inhabitants. Cautious characters will soon discover that entering local areas does not necessarily rise the ire of all the inhabitants as there are many conflicting loyalties. For instance both the ungerm chief and drider would welcome the others death so that one or the other could take over the entire complex. So, if either knows that the other is in trouble, he will not respond.

There is the option for numerous other burrows and mines which can be designed and populated as the Castle Keeper desires. Manners of handling this are discussed at the end of this section.

### Traiters and Servant

The Slag Heap is loosely controlled by the drider Seroneous, an agent of the Witch Queen. He was sent to the area to find the diamonds of Havenwale, and to build an outpost and gathering place for others in the Witch Queen's service. Seroneous has proven to be less reliable than the Witch Queen hoped. His mistress is far from the Slag Heap, and being vile and evil by nature, he has decided to pursue his own grotesque needs and amusements while giving little attention to those of the Witch Queen.

Seroneous, through intermediaries in Dreddstun or his spider minions, captures or purchases demi-human chattel and uses them for sacrifices, food, torture and simple execution. Occasionally Seroneous uses them to help the ensorceled gnomes. But only occasionally. These past-times consume Seroneous to such a degree that he cared little for what else occurred in his compound or even the region.

That was until the arrival of Froithmot, an ungerm in the service of the Witch Queen. Having been sent by the Witch Queen to augment Seroneous' forces, Froithmot quickly discovered that Seroneous was a fool and bent only on the pleasures of his tortured flesh. In the few short weeks since his arrival, Froithmot has gained virtual control of the vale and all of Seroneous' forces. Froithmot cares little for Seroneous and would just as well see it dead as alive.

## Area I: The Shrine of Waters

The Shrine of Waters is holy ground. The spring and waters are magical and served as a shrine for the wood fey and gnomes. That was in happier times.

Years past, the princess Adel, a fey of wondrous beauty, fell into the grasp of one of the Horned God's eldritch goblins. Ezelweed was twisted and foul, his body the mirror of his soul. He forced Adel to consume a potion that would strike her mind dumb, so that he could force her to love him. But Adel consumed the potion reluctantly and was taken with madness. She broke free of Ezelweed's clawed grasp and fled from him. His short and stubby legs were no match for her long stride and she quickly left him behind. In rage he cursed her and flung a dart after her fleeing form. It struck true, though Ezelweed did not know it, for she fled on, deep into the Barren Wood.

At last, Adel came to the end of her road and life. She lay down beneath the shade of an old willow tree and clutched at her dying heart. A pod of sprites found her thus and they wondered at her end. She could not speak but they fussed over her nonetheless and begged her life to remain. To their dismay she passed beyond them and died there beneath the willow tree. But their magic had worked an enchantment upon her.

In time her blood became a pool of water and flowers grew where she fell. Short, wide mouthed blue bells sprung to life everywhere her form had lain, except where the dart pierced her. There, a briar grew, long and perilous thorns springing from its horned hide. The sprites formed a bowl of wood into which the water could flow and there, in later days, they gathered to frolic and dance and from it they drew much sustenance. The arrival of the gnomes changed little and they too enjoyed the sustenance of the waters of the shrine. They then built a pedestal of stone upon which the wood bowl was placed and up to which the water would flow.

The arrival of Witch Queen's servants ended all this. Seroneous, the drider, befouled the Shrine of Waters and had two columns of stone erected by it. Between them he hung foul webs and laid many an egg so that his venomous offspring would forever keep the place unclean and the waters unavailable. "Evil begets evil," as they say. So arrived four harpy sisters. Aged enemies of the fey, the harpies delighted in the befouling of the shrine and they came and lit upon the columns as if in victory. They feasted upon Seroneous' hatchlings and grew fat.

The harpies have made the Shrine of Waters their home. Their nest has been built in the willow tree and they often rest upon the tops of the columns waiting easy prey – be it orc, goblin, man or gnome. Their favorite food is, of course, the fey and their kin, most especially elves. Two of the harpies are often in the Barren Wood hunting prey and trying to lure them back to the Shrine spot where they are killed and devoured. For Seroneous' part, he wants them gone and he has continually concocted plans to rid the vale of the harpies or alternately, bring them under his control. The harpies guard the shrine better than he or his hatchlings ever could and are devilishly difficult to kill in any respect.

*Before you are two large, ivy covered, blocky, stone columns sitting upon either side of a small stone pedestal. Upon the pedestal is a great wooden bowl of seeming common make. The ground is a shrine of some type. About the shrine, the ground is churned and dug up such that nothing grows but weeds and briars. The trees have been chewed upon and chopped at. They are only ghostly reminders of their once great selves. An old willow survives this ruin, but it is sorely bent and scarred. All about are bones. Some are picked clean, glistening white in the light of the moon, but fresher kill is patched with rotten skin and tawny half-chewed muscle.*

The Pedestal and Bowl: Water flows up the pedestal and spills into the bowl such that the pedestal's column is damp and the bowl always full. The water and shrine are not actually befouled, simply occupied and surrounded by foul creatures. The harpies have tried dumping the wooden bowl over but have not been able to do so, as the magic of the wood fey is too great. They have tried emptying the bowl but it fills back up almost immediately. They have tried fouling the waters but within moments, it returns to its clear, crystalline nature.

The harpies content themselves by sitting on their perches, devouring what they can and littering the landscape with the wretched remains of their victims. The bones offer solace to the harpies and a warning to any interlopers.

Depending on the size and power of the party, the Castle Keeper should have either two or four of the harpies at the Shrine of the Waters. Whichever the case, the harpies hide themselves in the canopy of the trees nearby and begin to sing a song attempting to woo the characters in. In general, they each sing a song in turn and not together. In this manner they attempt to attract as many victims as possible to the Shrine of the Waters. Once they have them at the shrine, they attack those characters not suffering from their particular charms. The harpies will also leave the area if they are being sorely pressed, as they, like many living things, would prefer not to die.

Harpy x 4 (*These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 3d8, AC 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack from the air with two claws for 1d3 points of damage each, or with darts for 1d3 points of damage. Their special ability are captivating song and captivating chorus. Captivating chorus allows the harpies to sing a song together. For each harpy joining in the song, a -1 modifier adjusts all saves versus their song. A maximum of six harpies can join a captivating chorus for a total of -6 to saving throws.*)

Should the characters choose to search through the bones of the dead, they will find some items of interest amongst the rotting debris. In addition to shredded armor, ripped clothing, rotted foodstuffs, bits and pieces of weaponry and traveling materials is a set of scrolls in a wooden case. There are three scrolls in the case, each having one 1<sup>st</sup> level spell written upon it. The Castle Keeper should choose the spells to fit the party. There is a large +1/+2 kite shield which shows no signs of rust or decay. Anyone who uses the shield gains a +1 armor class, in the hands of a knight it offers a +2 to armor class. There are some coins here, 55gp, 122sp and 120cp. There is a necklace with a jewel dangling from it valued at 210gp and a silver ring worth 30gp.

The water in the shrine is magical. When a drink is taken, 1d8 hit points of damage are instantly restored and all charisma checks and charisma saving throws receive a +2 bonus for 24 hours. Its effects only occur once per day, per person. The water must be taken directly from the bowl. Furthermore, it only effects lawful and chaotic good characters, all other alignments are refreshed by the water, but gain no other benefit.

## Area 2: The Black Hole

What was once an airy, homely abode for a family of gnomes is now a dreadfully dark maze of crisscrossing tunnels, chutes, holes and dens wherein live many a grotesque aberration and unctuous malediction. This is the lair of Seroneous the drider, a one time servant of Aufstrag, and now a Captain of the Witch Queen's. Seroneous has occupied this barrow for many years, peopling it with his minions so that the place is now a hive filled with them. They scurry, creep and crawl through the wet, slick, ichor covered warren of tunnels hoping to avoid the ire and hunger of Seroneous. Mostly, they are kin to those horrid spiders that linger yet on the out-walls of Aufstrag.

The complex is small, originally of gnomish make. As such, the tunnels, though well made and lined with wood panels and stone flags, are small. They are usually five feet wide and six feet tall. Exceptions are noted on the map and in the description. The tunnels the spiders have made are very small, usually several feet in diameter. Room 6 The Hive is wholly made by the spiders, beyond this area the spider tunnels are easy to spot as they are rough hewn and horribly out of place.

### Random Encounters

There are very few areas of this barrow that are anything other than empty rooms with destroyed furniture and rotted material in them. However, the complex is overrun with hatchlings of Seroneous. Every half hour the characters are in here, the chance for a random encounter occurs. A 1 on d6 indicates an encounter. Then roll a d6 to determine the type.

1	1 small spider
2	1-2 small spiders
3	1-3 small spiders
4	1-6 small spiders and 1 medium spider
5	2-4 medium spiders
6	1 drider

**Room 1: The Entry** The entry to this complex is unguarded. A door was once here but it has long since been removed, as have all the other doors in the complex.

*The entry tunnel is wide and about six feet in height. Within is a small, dark room filled with cob webs and a moist air, thick with the stench of death and decay. Beneath the foul coat you note the remains of paneled walls, and cobbled floors. The ruins of an old bench lay on the floor and the stubs of broken pegs line the walls, no doubt for hats, coats and the like. Once, no doubt, this place was an inviting home to those who came before the servants of Aufstrag.*

There is nothing of value here. A door on the far side of the room leads to the Long Hall beyond. A few bones, with marrow sucked out of them, lie beneath the rubble of the bench.

**Room 2: The Long Hall** This was once used as a foyer by the gnomes who lived here.

*The room is long and largely empty. Webs dangle from the thick, wooden beams that line the ceiling. Like the entry, this room is rank with the stench of death. A host of doors line the walls to the left and right. Some are closed, others lay upon the floor, rubble and debris spilling out of the apertures.*

There is little of value in the hallway. Most of the doors are inaccessible, revealing only rubble and collapsed rooms. The doors that do lead to rooms are marked on the map.

**Room 3: The Kitchen** Here the gnomes of old cooked wondrous meals and brewed cider for themselves and neighbors.

*The room was once obviously a kitchen. Cabinets and counters line the walls, a large island counter sits in the middle of the room and huge fireplace dominates the back wall. Cans, barrels, and all manner of cooking ware lay scattered and ruined about the floor. The only thing that seems to be in tact is a huge brewing barrel, wherein, no doubt some creatures concoct their foul brew.*

The room has little of value in it. A search reveals some few good pans and a little bit of old, stale, bad tasting beer in the brew barrel.

**Room 4: The Living Room** Once a hall for entertaining guests, it is now a storage room for junk.

*Upon entry you are greeted by mountains of junk. Five huge piles of stuff from wheel barrels and buckets to garden implements to crockery and furniture dominate the room. There is no order, nor rhyme or reason to the collection. On the far end of the room stands an ornate mantel, crafted of brass and iron. It enshrouds a fireplace, before which stands a cot and a small table. A gurgled snoring rises from the cot. The room has the strange smell of cinnamon and garlic.*

Idglu the orc lives here. He is tall and lanky, his legs being longer than his torso. Idglu serves Seroneous as a runner, baring news about the Slag Heap or even beyond to the Witch Queen. He is a coward and has little fight in him and no loyalty to Seroneous or his chief's ungern rival, Froithmot. He is presently drunk on old gnome cider, a stash of which he keeps for himself, and filled to the gills on fried red spider.

*Idglu (He is a lawful evil creature whose vital stats are HD 2+2, HP 15, AC 14. His primary attributes are physical. He uses a long dagger in combat which does 1-4 points of damage. He wears a leather shirt and has an earring worth 25gp.)*

Stashed in the rubble not far from his cot are four bottles of gnome cider and a roll of unused paper. A bucket next to his cot has four dead drider offspring in it and two pouches with garlic and cinnamon in them. He's using a bundle of robes as a pillow. These are elaborate ceremonial robes fashioned from spider silk that he has bound together with twine. There are six of these purple robes, two each with white, red and black trim. These are for servants of the Witch Queen to wear when entering the Jadrul Ziggurat (see forthcoming adventure module *The Wicked Cauldron*.)

**Room 5: Collapsed Tunnel** Beyond the rubble lies a hidden chamber that the Witch Queen's servants never found.

*The Long Hall ends in a door which leads into an antechamber. The far end of this antechamber is collapsed.*

Anyone entering the small entryway should make a wisdom check. If they succeed they notice that there is a pattern to the roof's rubble. All the beams seem to be lined up in an almost orderly fashion.

# The Black Hole

Area #2



Any miner, dwarf or gnome makes this check at a +4. Removing the rubble reveals an empty wall. The empty wall has a secret door of course. If this is discovered, it opens into a room.

You see a small room before. It is paneled in gorgeous wood relief, with stone cobbles on the floor. There are several trunks and cabinets within. A large tapestry hangs on the far wall and two velvet chairs sit beneath it. Sitting in one is the skeleton of a small humanoid creature. The remnants of a dress cover its bones and a crossbow, unfired, sits in its lap.

The gnomes who held this place against the Witch Queen's minions fought them off for some time. The matron of this barrow fled into this inner chamber and pulled the lever that collapsed the ceiling beyond. She died here, with the gathered wealth of her family.

The trunks are filled with clothes, cloaks, boots and the like. The cabinets are filled with crockery, fine plates, silver dinner ware and candelabra. There is a strong box under one of the cabinets that has 42pp and a diamond necklace worth 100gp. There are also papers

here, which, when examined, reveal the names of the gnomes who lived here. There are four small glass balls within which burn small fires. The silverware is worth 100gp and the tapestry 500gp. If it is returned to the Micklewax family, the remnants of which now live in Ludensheim, they will give the party 1000gp in reward.

*True Fire Balls: (When hurled or tossed these glass balls explode on contact, engulfing the victim in an oily flame. Each ball does 2-12 points of damage, save for half.)*

## Room 6: The Hive

*All the tunnels, passageways and chutes throughout this area of the complex are covered in a wet slimy and viscous material. These are spider trails and rotted webs. In many areas, webbing dangles from the ceilings and walls, covers any remaining furniture and occasionally presents obstacles for passage. Fighting and moving through these tunnels is difficult and dangerous. The tunnels are narrow, slick and cramped and the webs can catch up anyone moving through them.*



Here reside the host of Seroneous' children. They are small, red, thin legged spiders with human-like faces. They are constantly hungry. They attack anything that comes their way, including Seroneous himself. Generally however, they stay in the hive area for they are eaten by most everything. The orcs find them a wonderful delicacy, grilling the drider's offspring, and smothering them with garlic and cinnamon. Seroneous himself eats his children when he finds them.

Movement in this hive is slowed to half. Moving any faster may result in the character becoming caught in a strand of webbing. Characters over five and a half feet in height suffer an additional movement penalty for a total of 3/4 penalty. Once caught up in the webbing, they are stuck and must make a strength or dexterity saving throw at -4 to get out. They can try this once a round but failure indicates that they are even more wound up in the webbing and the next saving throw is made at -5. This penalty increases by one after each failure. For example, on the tenth try, the character makes a save at -14. They must be cut free if they can not save themselves. The webbing does burn and a torch, judiciously applied destroys the web and frees those ensnared.

Combat in the hive is likewise difficult. For any character over five and a half feet in height, they suffer a -2 penalty to hit. Further, lengthy, slashing weapons cannot be used effectively in such close quarters. Slashing weapons over 3 feet in length suffer a -1 to hit. Those over 4 feet in length suffer a -3 to hit. Slashing weapons over 5 feet in length can only be used as thrusting weapons and only do 1d6 points of damage and still suffer from the penalties mentioned above. Bows and crossbows are excepted. Polearms and spears can be used as thrusting weapons but cannot be used once combat is closed the space inside is just too cramped for effective use of these weapons. These rules do not apply in those areas greater than 10 x 10 feet in size. In all cases, the Castle Keeper should use their best judgement.

Check the map for the locations of tunnels and rooms. It is very dark and the characters could easily become lost in there. There are hosts of spiders in here, at least a hundred already hatched.

*Dridets (These neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a vicious sting for 1 point of damage and a bite for 1 point of damage. Anyone stung by a dridet must make a successful constitution save or suffer a further point of damage. Medium dridets have HD 1, AC 12 and sting for 2 points of damage. There is a 10% chance that any medium dridet will be a young drider (see Monsters & Treasure and half all stats).*

**Room 7: Seroneous' Lair** Once a staircase and lower pantry, this room has become the lair of the dreaded Seroneous.

*The doorway opens to a stairwell caked in filth. Webs cloak the walls and a viscous slime covers the floor and oozes down the stairs. Bones hang from the webs here and there. But the stair leads to a darker opening. The tunnel of webbing leads to a wide chamber filled with a stench that is palatable. You can taste the horror of it as you enter. Beyond lies a room, wide and long, tunnels of webs flow to and from the ceilings and walls. Dried husks of corpses lie or hang about the room. One in particular catches your eye. Hanging to the right, about 40 feet in, it holds a dimly glowing sword in its hand.*



As soon as the party enters, or if they hesitate, as soon as one or two of the party members enter, a trap door is sprung and seals the room. The trap door is made of web and blends seamlessly with the webbing in the tunnel. It can be detected only by a dwarf and this at a -2 from their normal check.

Once the door is closed it takes 10 rounds to hack through. It cannot be burned or otherwise destroyed except by magical fire. Those within the room take the full brunt of the drider's attack. He does not kill any of them if he can avoid it. But rather preserves them in his webbing to be eaten later. He talks constantly, in combat and out of it. Most of his conversation is devoted to the harpies, cursing them and wishing to be rid of them. He looks upon the interlopers as little more than dinner, driven here, no doubt by his servants.

Seroneous rarely leaves his pit in the bowels of this maze. When he does it is usually to torture some hapless slave or meet with Froithmot the unger. With him he concocts overly zealous and dastardly plans of regional conquest; or on off days, some less than savory and feasible route by which to exploit the slaves in the mines. Seroneous is not an altogether intelligent creature, but his cunning and seeming loyalty to the Witch Queen have given him a prominent place in her schemes.

Currently, Seroneous is trying to figure out how to get the harpies at the Shrine of the Waters to quit that place so that he can reclaim the magical water. Seroneous has tried all manner of traps and other devices to capture and kill the harpies, all to no avail. Now he is attempting to enlist them as his allies with promises of loot and treasure. The harpies are, not surprisingly, reluctant to form any alliance with Seroneous as they know his nature. His latest gambit has been that of offering sacrifices to the harpies. At first these were just slaves, captured humans or even the occasional gnome. This had little affect on the disposition of the harpies though, so Seroneous changed his plan and sought out fey of whatever sort to sacrifice to the harpies.

## Area 3: The Deepening Well

The latter idea worked well for Seroneous, who was able to gainfully employ and distract Froithmot, as the unger lord takes great joy in the sport of capturing fey. He especially enjoys the prospect of capturing the various sprites that roam the wilderness area of the Barren Wood as it harkens back to his youthful days as a hunter in the plains north of the Hruesen River. The harpies are also somewhat pleased with the development as they consider the sprites, the most common of the fey in the Barren Wood, mortal enemies. Several have already been sacrificed and Froithmot has a few more in his dens awaiting sacrifice.

If the party is overwhelmed, it is possible for them to make a deal with Seroneous. If they gleam through his babbling that he needs the harpies destroyed, they may offer him a deal for their freedom.

*Seroneous (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 36, AC 17. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a large +1 mace for 1d8+1 points of damage. His special abilities include web, poison and elf traits.)*

Seroneous has a great deal of treasure stored in a hollow in the rock behind his webbing.

*Treasure: (He has there 356gp, 700sp, 10 gems worth a total of 500gp, various pieces of jewelry worth 200gp. He also has a +1 mace, a scroll case with three scrolls in it, a magical stone horse and the mirror of the witch queen (see below). Each scroll has one first level spell on it. They are dancing lights, magic missile and shield.)*

**Mirror of the Witch Queen:** The mirror is one of 12 created in the pits of Aufstrag by Nulak-Kiz-Din in ages past. They are oval shaped, tall and narrow and framed in ornately carved cherry wood. They mimic the mirror through which the Horned One stepped as he came to Erde before the Winter Dark. Nulak made them so that he could communicate with the Witch Queens, those dread servants of the dark. During the Winter Dark Wars they were destroyed or scattered.

Each mirror is a communication device. It allows the users to speak and hear as if they were in the same room. Powerful spell casters can cast spells through them and powerful creatures can actually travel through them, though the last maneuver is dangerous and can end in the user's death.

Fresh blood must be sprinkled on the mirror to activate it. A minimum of 5 hit points of damage must be dealt to the person who spills the blood. At the same time as the blood is being spilled, one must intone the incantation written upon the mirror's frame. Once this is done, any other open mirrors can be seen as if looking through a window.

If a spellcaster is 10<sup>th</sup> level or higher and makes a successful intelligence check they can cast a spell through the mirror. Any 15<sup>th</sup> level/HD creature can pass through the mirror so long as they are intelligent and make a successful intelligence save. A failed save means instant death.

This is the only active mine in Havenwale. "Active" may be an overstatement as only ensorceled gnomes are working it and their overseers are quite lazy and know nothing of mining. For their part, the gnomes who have been ensorceled are not quite themselves and incapable of mining to the peak of their abilities. However, despite these problems some diamonds are recovered once in a while.

When the gnomes were overtaken and ensorceled by the Witch Queen's servants, this mine was the only one still producing wealth. The gnomes of Havenwale had been taught some fairy magic in their time here and knew a spell that could divine the general location of diamond clusters beneath the earth. Casting this spell allowed the gnomes to dig in a fairly organized fashion and find a fair amount of diamonds. Seroneous had no idea that the gnomes were using a spell when he took over Havenwale and ensorceled and enslaved the gnomes.

Since that time, the gnomes, malnourished, overworked and not a little deranged due to the effects of the ensorclement, have dug deep, twisting tunnels into the earth. This is a near maze as the gnomes only guess where the gems are clustered and rather than branching the tunnels out in an organized fashion they dig randomly, first this way, then that. All sense of organization and even maintenance is lost and the gnomes are digging pell-mell into the ground.

**The Entry:** Currently, the mine entry is well guarded to prevent any of the gnomes from leaving as well as to protect the mines against the more nefarious occupants of the Slag Heap from getting in and snatching something of value. The unger who guard the entry are of small mind, but singular in purpose. If approached by any other than the Witch Queen, Seroneous or Froithmot, they tend to react and attack. They prefer not to ask questions neither before and or after a confrontation.

*The trail here opens up to a deep and wide bowl-shaped crevice in the ground. There is an opening to a mine on the far side. But in the middle is a small encampment of tall, thick muscled humanoid creatures. They are well armed and seem to possess more than common discipline. They are presently gathered around a fire pit, listening to one of their number recount some tale or command.*

These are the four unger and six orc guards placed upon the mines by Froithmot. They are fiercely loyal to their chief and will not permit any other to pass unless it is Seroneous or the Witch Queen. If attacked they form into a wedge formation, hurl their spears at the oncoming enemy and attack with axes, crowbills and military picks. If any of the characters speak the tongue of Aufstrag they can overhear the standing unger recounting a tale of the days when the tower of the horned god stood great in the annals of the world.

*Ungern x 4 (Their vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 14. They are lawful evil. Their primary attributes are physical. Ungern have twilight vision and a spell resistance of 2. They attack with either 2 claws for 1-2 points of damage, or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage, or with weapon. They always favor chopping or cutting weapons, i.e. axes, bardiches, cleavers and the like. All the unger are armed with battle axes, crowbills or military picks. One of the unger has maximum hit points and is the troops leader. They are wearing bits and pieces of chain, scale and leather armor. Each unger has 2-12sp.)*

Orcs x 6 (These creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield scimitars in battle that do 1d8 points of damage. They also use heavy crossbows that shoot for 1d10 points of damage. They carry studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, heavy crossbow, 8 bolts, dagger and 1-6sp.)

When the guards are overcome the characters can investigate the mine. They discover a squalid pit of interconnecting holes and tunnels filled with several hundred gnomes. The gnomes are scattered through the complex. They are not particularly friendly, but nor are they hostile. Anyone who observes can determine that they are under some type of spell.

The Castle Keeper does not need to bog down the game with a lengthy exploration of these tunnels. Suffice it to say that a few hours exploration will convince anyone that the place is a squalid mess and has little of apparent value. If characters persist in exploring the mines, after about 6 hours a change of guards from the Collapsing Caves comes to relieve the ungerm.

**The Gnomes:** The gnomes have been ensorcelled by the Witch Queen and currently obey the commands of Seroneous. It is as if they are in a trance. This was accomplished after Havenwale was raided. All the surviving gnomes were rounded up and brought before Seroneous. He forced each of the gnomes to look into the *mirror of the witch queen*. When the gnomes saw her, they were ensorcelled through the mirror.

Currently, the gnomes live to mine and eat. They do not harvest any of their own food and depend upon the ungerm and others to bring it to them. They live inside the mine and have not seen the light of day in many a long year. They are all wasting away. Time, poor nutrition, the lack of sunlight, a heavy workload and diminished mental capacities have taken their toll.

The gnomes will fight if they are attacked, but they make only a meager showing before trying to run away, hide or surrender. The ungerm, orcs and others have never attacked them so they are not considered the enemy. The gnomes were ensorcelled long before their arrival.

There are a few evil gnomes who gladly joined the Witch Queen's forces when they arrived. They are rarely found in the mines here, but live alone in the only habitation not despoiled by the current inhabitants, the Larder Hole. When they do come by, it is to collect the bodies of the dead or weigh the diamonds drawn out of the mines.

Breaking the ensorcelment on the gnomes can be done in one of three manners. The first is to locate the Witch Queen and dispatch her, thereby ending her spell and its influence. She is far to the north (see the forthcoming adventure module *Wicked Cauldron*). The other is to locate the *mirror of the witch queen* in The Black Hole (see above) and break it. This destroys the link between the Witch Queen and those ensorcelled. The final manner is to give each of the gnomes a draught of liquid from the Shrine of Waters.

If the gnomes are freed, their memories return and they are aware of everything that has happened to them in these many years. Most of them, beaten and worn out, flee the mines and into the surrounding woods. Some however, are still young and possess some strength. They arm themselves with mining tools, or with equipment from the dead ungerm and will join the party in eradicating the remaining evil or at the very least take to the hills to fight a guerilla war against the Seroneous and his folk. They are 12 in number and led by Boris

Micklewax (see The Black Hole above). If they are able to, they attack and kill every evil gnome at the Pick & Axe.

Boris Micklewax (He is a chaotic good, 3<sup>rd</sup> level gnome fighter whose vital stats are HD 3d10, HP 17, AC 12. His primary attributes are wisdom and constitution. His significant attributes are strength 17, wisdom 14, dexterity 15 and constitution 17. He has no weapons but what he picks up on the field.)

Gnomes x 11 (They are chaotic good, 1<sup>st</sup> level gnome fighters whose vital stats are HD 1d10, HP 7, AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They have no weapons but what they pick up on the field.)

## Area 4: The Pick & Axe

This is an inn located in the vale's center. The last standing structure of Havenwale, it is occupied by a group of evil gnomes who have joined forces with Seroneous.

*The building is old and rickety with obvious fire damage. There are no windows but gaps in the walls where frames of windows probably once stood. A warped porch runs along the front of the building and offers a little shade to the entry. A sign, with a pick and axe on it, has been tacked to a post outside.*

The Pick and Axe is occupied by miscreant gnomes. They hitched their wagons to Seroneous' train years ago and it is only that which has kept them alive. The inn has little in the way of hospitality, serving as a bunkhouse for the gnomes. If they are approached in a friendly fashion they serve the characters food and drink, assuming that they are bandits. However, at the first sign of trouble the gnomes flee, particularly if the gnomes of Deepening Wells have been freed and are present. If any are captured they fall to the ground at the feet of the character they deem the most 'good' and grovel, begging for their lives. They promise to give up any secrets of the Slag Heap they may know. Some of them are aware of the trap door in Seroneous' lair in The Black Hole (above).

## Area 5: The Tall Wall

This complex is separated from the rest of the mine area by a small palisade. The 12 ungerm and 30 orcs who live here have little to do with the rest of the vale or its occupants. They serve Froithmot and act as guards for the Deepening Wells. The palisade surrounds several buildings and a small burrow that once belonged to the chief of the gnomes of Havenwale.

Froithmot, their chief, is an ungerm of dreadful reputation. He is clever, cautious and a skilled tactician. He is old enough to remember Aufstrag in its waning years and to have tasted the power of his dreaded master. He relishes a return to the old days. Froithmot maintains tight control of those under his command and does not allow them to raid or plunder needlessly. He seeks to remain hidden from the nearby human communities of Ludensheim and Botkinburg until such time as he has raised enough forces to overthrow them. He is also concerned with pleasing the Witch Queen, for he has placed his hopes in her for a return of the "good times." He also avoids the attention of his erstwhile commander, Seroneous, who he seeks to kill.

## 1: The Palisade

***This is an 8 foot tall wall made of logs sharpened at the tops. There is a small berm built up around the outside of the wall.***

The inside wall of the palisade has four stands to allow archers or others to defend the walls. Only one gate allows entry or egress inside the palisade. If the complex is ever attacked, the palisade will be manned by at least eight orcs with crossbows. There are always two orcs on guard here, standing in one of the stands. They are supposed to keep an eye on the vale, but there is an 80% chance that they are in the guard house (see below).

Orcs x 2 (These creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield scimitars in battle that do 1d8 points of damage. They also use heavy crossbows that shoot for 1d10 points of damage. They carry studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, heavy crossbow, 8 bolts, dagger and 1-6sp.)

## 2: Guard House

***The entry to the palisade consists of a stout wooden gate with a small wooden structure to the door's right. The rough hewn logs denote the place as relatively new and within the compound it is unusually clean and tidy.***

The gate is usually open and two orcs are supposed to be on guard here at all times. Inside the guard house is a fire pit and table. There is a small box with a store of biscuits and jerky here as well. Although the orcs are supposed to be guarding the entry, as often as not, they are not even here and are off gambling, drinking, sleeping, arguing, fighting or engaged in other activities which they are not supposed to be doing. There is a 50% chance the orcs will not be here when the palisade is first approached. If the mine complex is ever attacked, the guard house will always have at least two guards and the gates will be closed and locked.

Orcs x 2 (These creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield scimitars in battle that do 1d8 points of damage. They also use heavy crossbows that shoot for 1d10 points of damage. They carry studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, heavy crossbow, 8 bolts, dagger and 1-6sp.)

## 3: Smithy

***This is a three walled wooden structure with the open side facing the setting sun. Within is a large bellows and stone fire pit with a two foot lip. Heaps of wood and coal are stacked outside of it. A fire is burning inside the pit.***

The unger ordered the smithy built outside, underneath the sun. Although orcs find the glare of the sun uncomfortable, the unger do not and the unger smith, Thucklus, prefers to work in the full light of day to better see what he is doing. Its upkeep is the responsibility of the gnome slave, Stoin Brittlewood, who is chained to a large rock. Numerous benches and buckets of iron ore ingots are arranged against the far wall. The smithing tools are scattered amongst the benches and near the forge. Stoin is chained to a large post and ensorcelled. The chain only allows him access to the wood and the bellows but not near the tools.

Most days the smith is usually at the forge making some type of weapon, trap or interesting device for torture. He is often assisted by two orcs. There is a 25% chance that the smith is here. If he is not, he is either in his room in the barrow, with Froithmot or eating in the

Great Hall. If he is not here, at least one orc will be here. This orc is often preoccupied with pestering Stoin by throwing rocks at him or burning his skin with a piece of charcoal.

Thucklus is a very skilled smith and has several well made weapons and other devices. There are 40 crossbow bolts, three metal animal traps, 6 dozen short bow arrows, 3 spetums, 4 spears, two metal rimmed wooden shields, one broadsword and 4 battle axes. All are in good condition.

Thucklus (This creature's vital stats are HD 3d10, HP 15, AC 13. His primary attributes are physical. His significant attributes are strength 17. He wields a battle axe in battle for 1d8 points of damage. His equipment includes studded leather armor, battle axe, 25gp gold ring, 100gp silver necklace, 2gp each nose ring, 7x earrings, eyelid ring, 10x shoulder rings.)

Orc (This creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 4, AC 14. His primary attributes are physical. He uses a dagger in combat for 1d4 points of damage. He wears studded leather armor, and has a dagger and 1-6sp.)

Stoin Brittlewood (This gnome's vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 3, AC10. His primary attributes are physical. He has no equipment.)

## 4: Bunkhouse

***This building is built into the ground. The roof, covered in old tile and slanted is almost level with the ground, the door lies at the bottom of earthen steps that lead down into the ground. There are no windows and only a small chimney from which a little smoke curls up into the sky.***

This building houses those unger and orcs not on patrol, or hunting or guarding the gnomes of the Deepening Wells. The place was once a meeting hall for the gnomes. The walls were paneled in tongue-in-groove pine slates, the floor cobbled and a great four-faced fire place set in the middle of the room. The orcs use it as a bunkhouse. Froithmot's troops have been living here for some time and the place shows it. The walls are scarred and the floors damaged and fouled. The fireplaces have all been ruined, only one working enough to cook meals. The unger sleep at the far end of the room, there they have organized their bunks and keep the place clean. The orcs, on the other hand, sleep nearest the door and have piled all their refuse in heaps with their sleeping gear.

There are 6 unger and 30 orcs stationed at the Collapsing Caves. Four of the unger and six of the orcs are always at the Deepening Wells. Any orcs encountered at the palisade, guard house, or smithy should be subtracted from those at the Bunkhouse. Furthermore, 2 unger are always guarding Froithmot and will be with him in the Barrows or wherever he is presently located. If they are caught unawares in the daytime they will most certainly be sleeping. A few may be up and about, going to the latrine or eating. In battle, the unger let the orcs soften the enemy before they attack. The orcs will scatter or surrender if a third of their number has been slain. The unger fight to the death unless ordered to halt by Froithmot. Every 4<sup>th</sup> unger has maximum hit points and is that squad's leader.

Unger x 6 (Their vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 14. They are lawful evil. Their primary attributes are physical. Unger have twilight vision and a spell resistance of 2. They attack with either 2 claws for 1-2 points of damage, or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage, or with

*weapon. They always favor chopping or cutting weapons, i.e. axes, bardiches, cleavers and the like. All the ungerm are armed with battle axes, crowbills or military picks. Each ungerm has 2-12sp.)*

Orcs x 24 (These creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield scimitars in battle that do 1d8 points of damage. They also use heavy crossbows that shoot for 1d10 points of damage. They carry studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, heavy crossbow, 8 bolts, dagger and 1-6sp.)

#### 5: Latrine

**A foul wretched smell rises from this small cleft, the sides of which are stained with blackish crud and a host of crumpled leaves. A few wretchedly hanging bushes dot the area around the cleft.**

This is the compound's latrine. The orcs and ungerm use it frequently and it stinks to high heaven. They make the gnome, Stoin (see The Smithy above) climb down and slop it out once in awhile, more to torture him than to actually clean the latrine. However, he has the last laugh for he has stolen a number of items from the ungerm and hidden them down in a small crevice in the latrine. He has 4gp, 21sp, 3 10gp gems, a sapphire ring worth 25gp, a Knight's Ring and, his most prized possession, a *philosopher's stone*. This last he took from Thucklus after that ungerm took it from one of the gnome chiefs. Thucklus did not know of its power. Stoin is patient, knowing that if he can escape alive, he can take the Knight's Ring south to Ascalon and there use the stone to make himself fabulously rich.

Finding Stoin's treasure will require the searcher to completely dig out the latrine as he has hidden it in a box, in a crevice under great heaps of orc and ungerm dung. It cannot be found casually.

*Knight's Ring: These rings are given by the Empress in Ascalon to those Knights who have done great service to the throne. They are not altogether rare, but are given only to those who command her respect and attention. Possessing one grants the possessor immediate entry into many levels of the Imperial government and almost all high brow social events in Ascalon. They cannot be sold in the open market, but on the black market can bring up to 500gp. If returned to the court the one responsible is granted 25 acres of land in truage and granted citizenship.*

### Area 6: The Barrow Mound

**This small ridge, located at the far northern end of the vale is punctuated with one large hill located in its center, this hill has a doorway in it, leading down beneath the ridge. Trees and shrubs once decorated the slope and a creek tumbled down its face to pool at the vale's center. But all that is gone, the trees burned out, the shrubs stomped to earth, the creek scarred and the pool is now little more than a mire.**

The small "hill" in the ridge's center was actually the burial mound for the gnomes of Havenwale. Called simply "The Barrow" by the gnomes it was the last place they defended when Seroneous entered the vale. It consisted of a number of rooms and tunnels, dug out, paneled and floored by the gnomes. Rooms were used for individuals or whole families depending upon their burial arrangements.

The orcs of Seroneous cared little for the dead. They slew the last of the gnomes and fey who held the vale and ransacked the whole place.

### 20 Castles & Crusades

Much of it collapsed or was pulled down, leaving the whole place in ruins. They piled all the gnome dead in one room, desecrating them and eating what they could. But their violations did not last long for 3 of the gnomes rose from the dead and fell upon the orcs. Ghostly creatures, these ghouls were mad for revenge. They slew several orcs before the rest fled the Barrow, sealing the door behind them.

*Ghouls X 3 (These chaotic evil, creature's vital stats are 2d8, 14 AC. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two claw attacks for 1d3 points of damage or 1 bite for 1d6 points of damage. Their special abilities include undead traits and paralysis. They possess a small treasure scattered in the mountain of bones located in the great hall's center. 44pp, 200gp and 400gp is jewelry. There is a +1 short sword, 4 +2 bolts and a helm of comprehend languages and read magic.)*

### Area 7: The Burrows

The Burrows were the center of Havenwale. The gnome chief made his home here as did other prominent members of the clan. Here too were the town's large brewery, storage for the militia and other administrative offices. When Seroneous arrived his folk plundered the Burrows and slew everyone inside. They set about making the place their headquarters. However, they found the quarters too cramped. To open them up they dug up the floors, making the halls and rooms deeper. They used rough cut logs to hold up the walls and ceilings. This rebuilding is readily apparent to anyone who takes a moment to look. However, a skilled miner, dwarf or gnome will note that several of the walls have collapsed due to all the digging and many more are on the verge of collapse.

Seroneous has of course left the Burrows and made his new home in The Black Hole (see above). But he left the bulk of his troops behind to live in the Burrows. These comprise 45 orcs. Some are in residence, but at least half are always on patrol or keeping watch in the woods. The rest are within. Froithmot has recently moved into the thrown room of the Burrows. He has done this with the specific intention of undermining Seroneous' command by billeting with the drider's troops. He is meeting with a great deal of success.

There are presently 22 orcs in the burrows. Unless a general alarm has been raised in the Vale, they will be caught unawares. If they meet any party members they will initially suspect that they are part of Mile's men and are here on business. For this reason they will be slow to raise the alarm and bring out the whole compound. If any battle occurs that is prolonged or orcs are allowed to escape then they will raise the alarm and all the orcs in the compound try to assemble in Room 2.

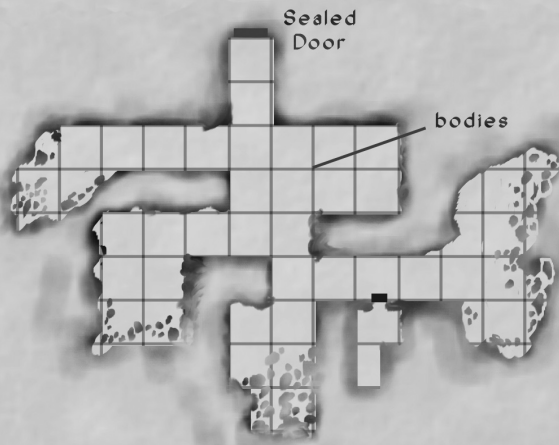
#### 1: Entry to the Burrows

**The entry to the burrows has been dug out and widened. Piles of debris are heaped around the entry and a mountain of detritus and trash lies scattered down the slope of the ridge. There are broken plates, chairs, tables, strips of cloth, rugs, broken weapons, glassware, empty bottles and shattered kegs and other such debris. All in all, the entry is a messy place and the stench is overwhelming. The door to the burrow sits in a steep sided but small hill. It is large and square made of hard oak, and recently bound with metal straps. A large iron ring serves as its handle. The door opens outward.**

This is the entry room to the burrow. It is some 40 feet in diameter with a dome shaped ceiling. It is paneled in oak and has a flagstone

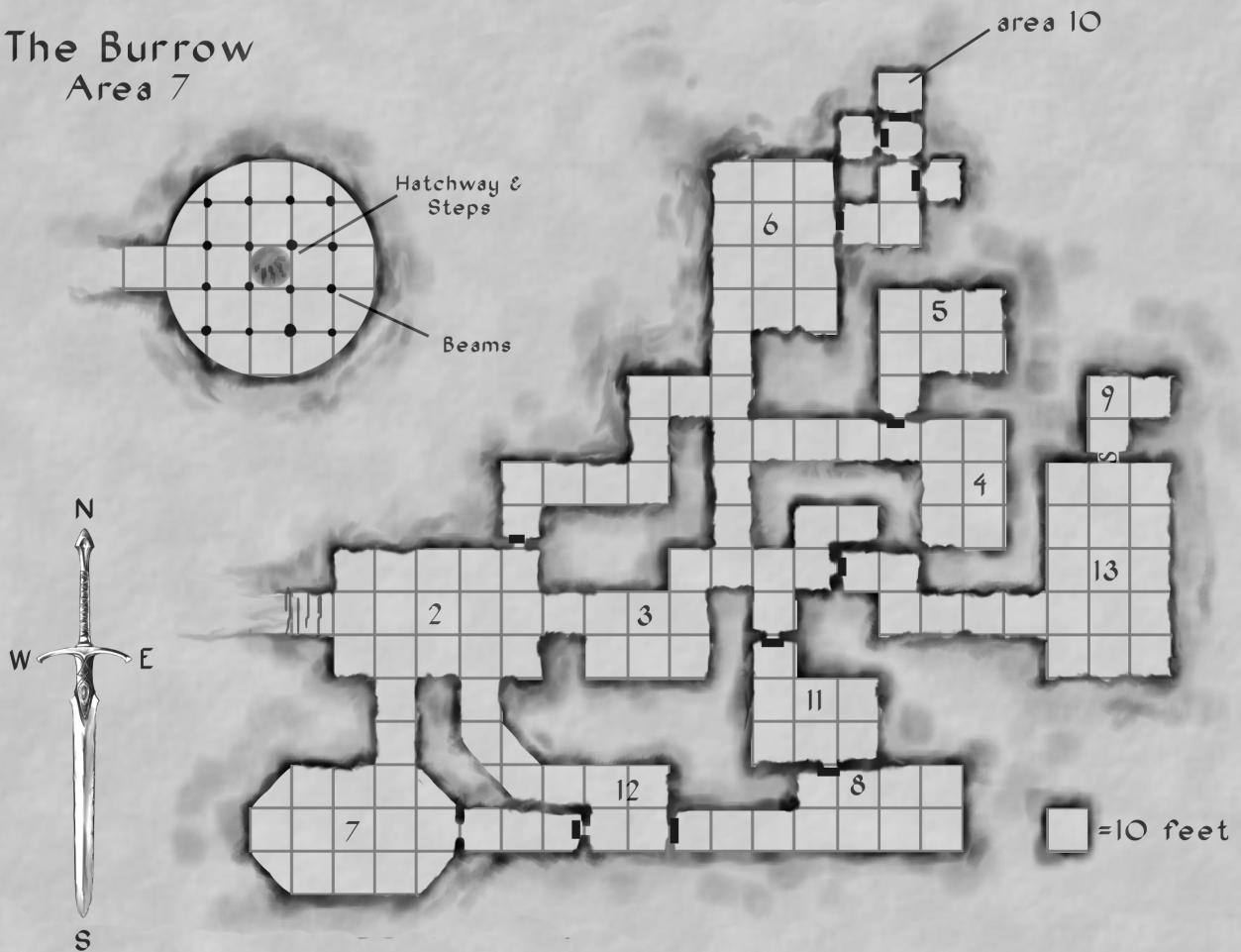
# The Barrow Mound

## Area 6



# The Burrow

## Area 7



floor. The ceiling is supported by large wooden beams placed at 10 foot intervals around the room. In the center of the room is an open hatchway with stone steps leading down. It is fairly dark inside the room as the wood is old and darkly stained. As well, only a few lanterns, hanging from the beams are lit. This is the only area where the orcs have not done reconstruction of the barrow as the roof is high enough to allow them freedom of movement.

Two large dogs are chained up on the far side of the room. These are surly, half starved beasts and unless enticed with food or magic they start barking ferociously whenever anyone enters.

Dogs x 2 (*Their vital stats are HD 2, AC 18. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a bite for 1d4 points of damage.*)

**2: Lower Hall** A wide set of stairs lead down to a lower hall that was used as a gathering point for the gnomes.

*The room is very large, being nearly a spear toss in all directions from the center. The floor has some flagstones on it but it has obviously been excavated and dug deeper. The support beams have been replaced and are fairly new. There are four large central pillars holding up an arched wood ceiling stained with smoke and grease from ages of use. There are six exits from this room. Though each had a door at one time, currently only two have doors.*

The orcs and unger use the room for weapons and arms storage, repair and occasionally have pit fights here. The center of the room is dominated by a wide circular space that has no flagstones but only dirt and sand. The floor in this area is dark in color and stained with blood. Close inspection will reveal a few fingers, flakes of blood bone and bits of metal from those killed in the pit fights.

The north wall has crates of arrows. There are about 400 in all. There are also 15 short composite bows and a large table scattered with tools where the arrows are assembled. The east wall has a series of racks with polearms piled on it. Beside this is a stack of 20 light crossbows. And a barrel with 200 bolts in it. The west wall has some benches and several tables clustered along the wall. These are pulled up during fights so that orcs and unger can sit around and watch the contestants. A huge barrel of bitter beer sits near the exit leading to area 3. This beer is watered down and not tasty, though safe to drink.

There is a 50% chance that while the characters are exploring this room that a troop of four orcs enter. The orcs are getting armed for a patrol. Anyone who is paying attention can hear them approaching from Room 3.

Orcs x 4 (*These creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield scimitars in battle that do 1d8 points of damage. They carry studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, dagger and 1-6sp.*)

**3: Upper Hall** This tunnel is narrow and cramped as it was not widened after the orcs took over. It is only four feet wide and use of any weapons over 5 feet in length cannot be used effectively, those from 3-5 feet in length suffers a -5 to hit, and those from 2-3 feet suffer a -3 to hit.

**4: The Scriptorium** This was once a study, but the orcs use it as their headquarters.

*A narrow table sits in the middle of the room with three large chairs around it. The table has several mugs, plates and flatware on it. There is a trunk in the room, a candelabra hanging from the ceiling, a barrel of beer and a large roasted boar hanging on a spit. Chunks have been removed from the boar as if something has cut them off. There are two exits from the room.*

The trunk is locked, though not trapped. Within are inks and quills, paper and some correspondence. The language used on the letters is the Imperial Script of Aufstrag and unless a character specifically has knowledge of it, cannot read it. A character well versed in languages may recognize it as such but still not be able to read it as the language is no longer taught in any civilized environment.

If the characters manage to decipher the letters, they learn that the letters are from the Baron of Ludenheim's one time agent, Barldus Mikenfird (see above page 8), to the goblin leader of the Red Caps Grallkrug, who are presently raiding along the Blacktooth Ridge. The letters outline payments and terms of payment from Baldrus to Grallkrug. It is clear from these letters that someone wealthy and powerful is paying Grallkrug to raid Botkinburg and that these raids were supposed to stop only when Baldrus said that it was time.

**5: The Chief's Quarters** This luscious two room area used to be a home for a gnome merchant, it has become a room for the orc captain and his lieutenants.

*The heavy wooden door gives way to a room in considerable disarray. The floor and roofs have been heavily worked on and a large fire pit sits in the middle of the room. The roof is blackened with soot and refuse from the pit and the room stinks of sewage and rotten meat. A large orc in an iron jacket is sitting on a hollowed out stool relieving himself. He's reading a tangled bit of a tapestry.*

The orc chief is caught totally unawares. He looks up and tells the party, in the common tongue, "Get out! I'm busy. Cursed Fried Red Dridets! Go bother Froithmot with your needs! Get out Dogs!"

If the party leaves, he goes on about his business. If the party attacks he reacts quickly, calling for his lieutenant while leaping to his feet and hurling the fouled stool, with all its contents, at the party. He has a huge battle axe at hand. He picks it up and uses it two handed.

Orc, Chief (*This creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, AC 16. His primary attributes are physical. He wields a two handed battle axe that does 1d12 points of damage. He has a heavy iron jacket on, shield, dagger and a pouch with 12gp, 32sp. He wears an earring worth 35gp.*)

Orc, Lieutenant (*This creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 15. His primary attributes are physical. He wield a morning star in battle that does 2d4 points of damage. He carries studded leather armor, shield, scimitar, heavy crossbow, 8 bolts, dagger, 3gp and 20sp.*)

The lieutenant is in a side chamber, resting on his bunk. He is armored as he has recently come from a patrol. He will call for aid with a small horn if given time. The Castle Keeper should allow for at least 4 rounds to pass as the orc will have to look in on his chief and see what the commotion is and then fetch his horn.

The room itself is a mess with little left of any real value. Seroneous has not given the chief any treasure. There are three bottle of orc brew that can each heal 1d4 points of damage. The liquid is foul, but nourishing.

**6: Guardhouse** Down a long corridor, half collapsed is a tunneled out doorway. This room was once the feast hall of the gnomes. The orcs have turned it into a bunkhouse. There is a troop of orcs here at present. They are presently resting, lately returned from a patrol.

*The tunnel is in shambles, half dug out and half collapsed. A foul stink lingers in the air. It ends in a wide opening that once may have been a door. Beyond you hear the plain speak of orcs. They are talking together and laughing in their cruel tongue. Peering into the room you see a mass of debris heaped against the far wall, and bunks and beds scattered haphazardly about the room. Some orcs are sleeping, others are talking and eating.*

Unless the alarm has been sounded elsewhere, the orcs are caught unawares. A determined fight will put them to flight and they will flee around the party if they can. They are led by two brothers, Lark and Ent. These are slovenly, foul mouthed beasts. Ark is always chewing a huge wedge of tobacco, often days old, and Ent is as often as not carrying a chunk of beef, half cooked or half eaten in hand. As long as these two brothers stay alive, the orcs have a will to fight. When they are killed, or if they flee, the other orcs yield.

Note: Lark and Ent are notorious orcs, well known throughout the lands of the Blacktooth Ridge and the Barren Wood. They are mean, foul, cuss constantly and are always fighting with each other. They will not stay and fight if they think they are going to be killed. Rather, they will use the smaller orcs as shields and throw them on the party and make good their escape. Ent has a *potion of invisibility* which he will share with Lark in order to allow them to escape. They both have 2d8 HD, Lark with 15 HP and Ent with 14.

Orcs x 12 (These creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They wield short swords in battle that do 1d6 points of damage. They also use light crossbows that shoot for 1d4 points of damage. They carry studded leather armor, shield, short sword, light crossbow, 8 bolts, dagger and 1-6sp.)

**7: Brewery** The gnomes had set up a very fine brewery in here. The orcs have managed to keep it working though the quality of the brew is not quite so tasty.

*The room is large and well used, smelling of brew. There are three large wooden vats for beer in the center of the room and a vast set of spoons and ladles used for tasting and stirring. Each vat is covered and has a spigot at the bottom. There is a large stove along the south wall, a dozen barrels filled with barley and grains and several crates of apples. There are also ten 5 gallon clay pots full of honey.*

The orcs do not know the refinements of brewing and have removed everything that hinders their simpler technique. All the pipes have been removed and placed to the side. Should any brew master be available, putting the whole thing back together again will take some time, but is possible.

Within are six orcs. At any given time, 2-3 will be inebriated while the others are tasting or prepping the hops. They are not armed nor are

they wearing armor, but do have weapons nearby should a fight occur. Fighting while inebriated incurs a -3 to hit for the orcs.

Orcs x6 (These creatures vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They have access to short swords that do 1d6 points of damage.)

## 8: Kitchen

*Obviously a kitchen, this room is still in use. Shelves and cabinets line the walls, a large cooking pit and several small tables are in the center of the room and two small pot bellied stoves are against the far wall. Stacks of foodstuffs abound, as do cooking implements and the like. The smell of cinnamon and garlic is everywhere.*

The kitchen is still in use as a kitchen. The orcs have fairly well smashed all the crockery and burned all the wooden plates. In general, the orcs and ungerm eat off of the remaining metal pans and cookware. They have accumulated some foodstuff over the past few months. This essentially consists of dried and salted meats or various types. They are not a discerning lot so there is racoon, squirrel, beef, pork, boar, fowl, etc. The dried and salted foods are piled on the shelves facing the wall. There is a sealed barrel filled with Seroneous' living offspring. If someone investigates the barrel they can hear the tell tale scratching sounds of the little spiders crawling about. If it is opened, the spiders attack anyone at hand.

Dridets (These neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a vicious sting for 1 point of damage and a bite for 1 point of damage. Anyone stung by a dridet must make a successful constitution save or suffer a further point of damage.)

**9: Treasury** This room is hidden very well. The door to the treasury is concealed in the closet of Froithmot's room. To open this door, one has to find it as well as find and trip the lock (see below), and then push on the door itself. When checking for secret doors, in the closet the check is made at -3 so well was it made.

If they find the door, there is no way of opening it without triggering the lock. To get to the lock, one must move aside the shelf in Froithmot's quarters and then find the lose brick in the wall. Finding the brick requires a successful search check (CL 11). Removing the brick reveals a small space. This space is about six inches deep. At the end of it is a small handle that must be turned to release a catch that keeps the secret door locked. Releasing this catch unlocks the door in the closet. The door does not swing open nor is it made more apparent. Once the lock is triggered, the door requires only a push to open it.

Froithmot discovered the room purely by accident, of course, but that mattered little as he came upon the stored wealth of the gnome community. The room is well made and solidly constructed. It has not been altered by the orcs so it is only ten feet square and 6 feet tall. Broad shelves run the entire length of the walls. Most are empty now. But there are six scroll cases (all with beer recipes), half a dozen books, a silver chalice, small music box and three vials with a different colored liquids in each. Underneath and on the floor are three old wooden trunks. Each is bound in metal straps and locked with a thick metal padlock.



Froithmot's Treasure Trunk 1: 1500sp, Trunk 2: 1000gp, Trunk 3: contains a velvet lined platform with a beautifully worked gold and platinum holy symbol of the horned gods, a crescent moon on short staff. It is unsullied. The books contain histories of the Winter Dark Wars (refer to the Codex of Erde). The chalice is worth 50gp. The small music box is worth 100gp and when opened plays a dirge of The Lay of Mourilee, a popular tune of Kayomar. Any Knight of Kayomar will give 1000gp for the music box.

3 potions (The potions are *potion of tongues*, *protection from arrows and sanctuary*.)

**10: Prison Area** These were once the rooms for the various family members of the clan. They have since been turned into cells for those captured by Froithmot. They are all empty at present. A search reveals the signs of many victims of many races, but little of any value.

**11: Storage Room** This room has always been and is still a storage room. It is filled with all manner of tools: shovels, pick axes, wedges, hammers, wheel barrows, etc. The room is often used, but in quite a bit of disarray.

**12: Well Room** This room was once used for drawing water to meet the needs of the gnome clan.

*The small chamber is walled and floored in stone. A wide circular opening sits in the middle of the room. It is deep and from down into its darkness you hear the gentle tapping of water falling. A bucket and long thin, chain sit next to it.*

The well is still working, though the crank and frame are long gone. The well is about 70 feet deep and touches into an underground waterway, that if explored goes far underneath the Barren Wood with openings in many places. Escape from the Slag Heap is possible through here but would require several days of deep caving and splunking.

**13: Throne Room** Calling this a throne room would be a stretch. When the gnomes ruled the vale, this was the room in which the chief

would sit in council with the clan leaders. Froithmot currently uses this room as his own personal residence, being fond of its large size.

*The hall is long and deep. The paneled walls here were high enough to allow the orcs to move in without destroying the place. Four columns hold up the vaulted ceiling and cobbles cover the floors. At the far end of the hall sits a large pile of debris, shaped loosely into a chair. A huge, wickedly horned ungerm chief sits upon the makeshift throne and standing around him are four armored ungerm warriors. In his rough, gravelly voice he speaks: "Enter, friends. Welcome to my pit. I'll have your names before I have to do with you."*

Froithmot will talk with the party if they talk with him. But he has no intention of doing anything but killing them. He'll make offers or pretend to listen to them while he sizes the party up. If an all out brawl is called for he will attack the strongest party member. If there is a paladin or knight in the party he will challenge them to a duel. In all concerns it is a fight to the death.

Froithmot (His vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 30, AC 18. He is lawful evil. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with either 2 claws for 1-2 points of damage, or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage, or with weapon. Froithmot is armed with a shield and longsword. He is able to fight multiple opponents at once and is an accomplished sword fighter. All ungerm have twilight vision and a spell resistance of 2. He carries chainmail, large +1 iron shield, +2 longsword, curved tulwar. He has a pouch with 5gp and a banded iron and a gold ring forged in Aufstrag worth 500gp.)

Ungern x 4 (Their vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 15 apiece, AC 14. They are lawful evil. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with either 2 claws for 1-2 points of damage, or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage, or with weapon. They always favor chopping or cutting weapons, i.e. axes, bardiches, cleavers and the like. All the ungerm are armed with battle axes, crowbills or military picks. Ungern have twilight vision and a spell resistance of 2. Each ungerm has 2-12sp.)





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The Slag Heap

Dredstun

Gipsheim

Rizen Creek

Riggles Trail

Hruesen River Road

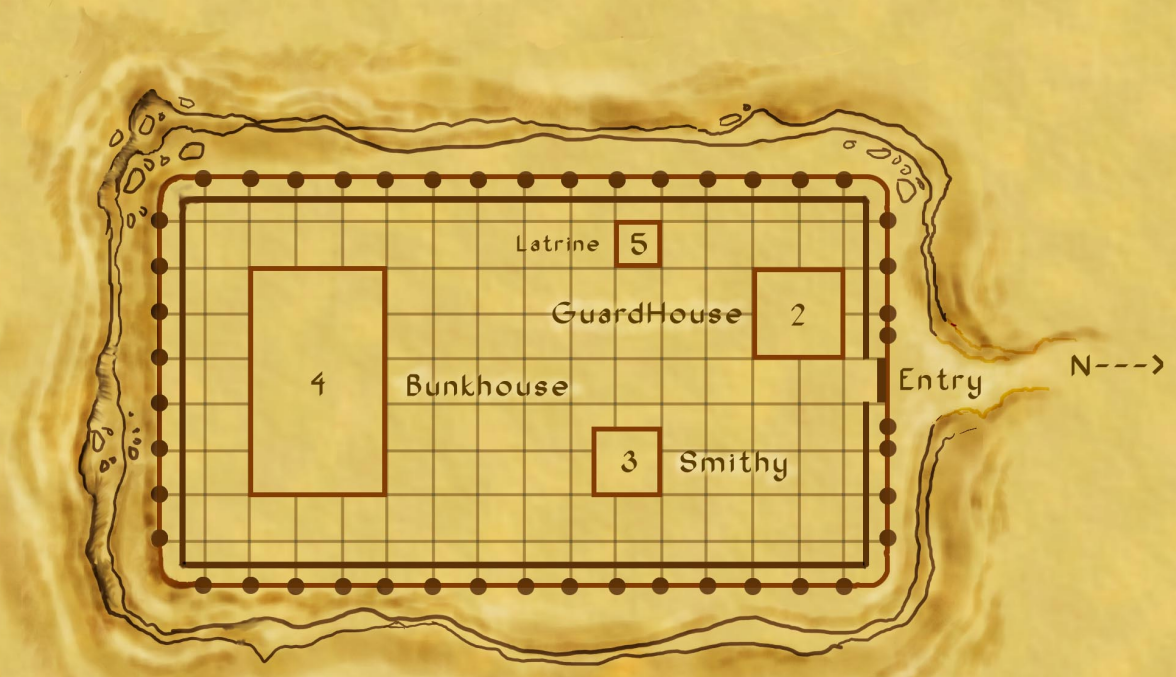
Hruesen River


To Ludensheim

To Botkinburgs



10 miles




 = 10 Feet

Area 5 The Tall Wall

### Slag Heap



 = 100 feet