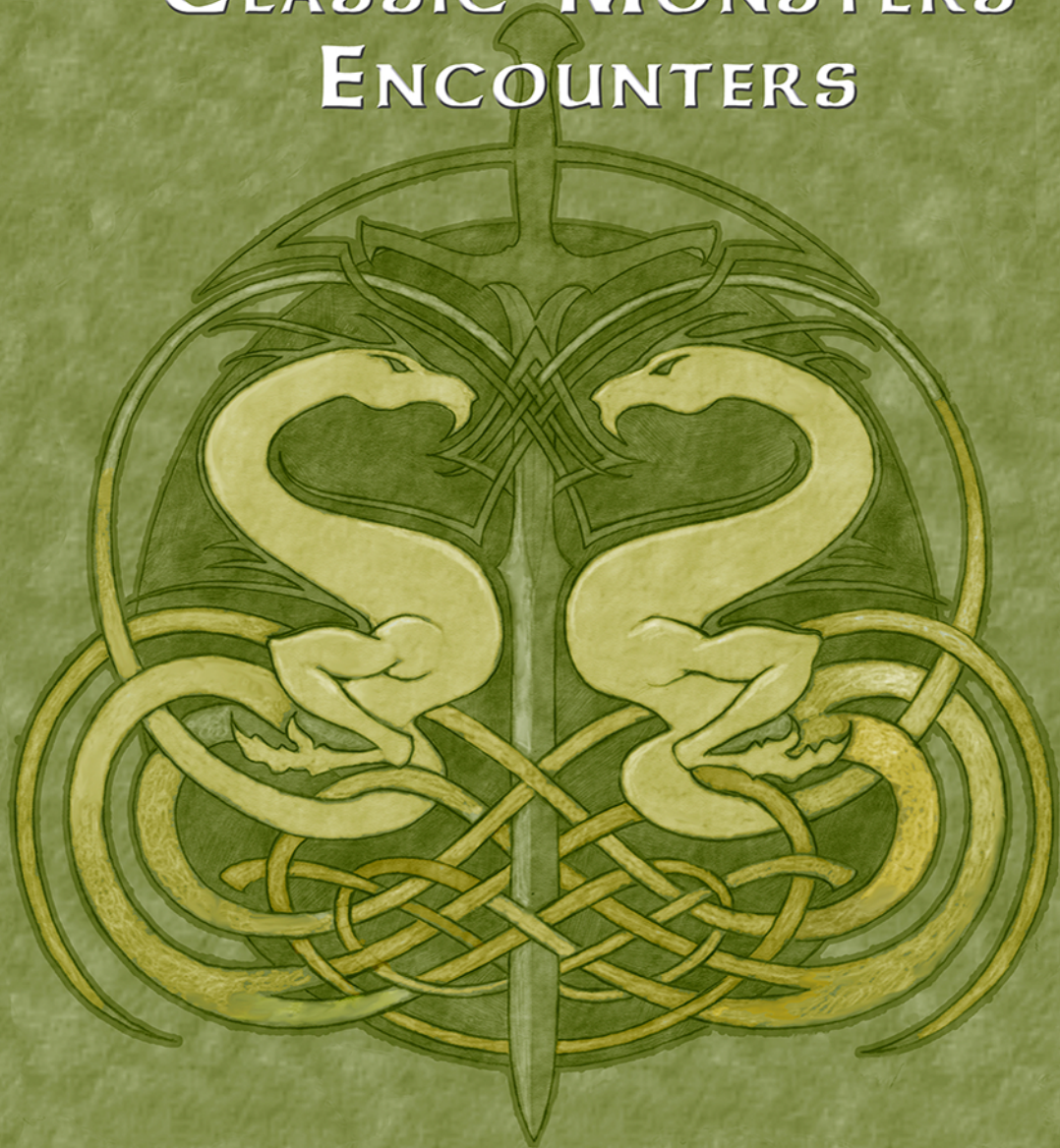


# CASTLES<sup>®</sup> CRUSADES

## CLASSIC MONSTERS ENCOUNTERS



KIM HARTSFIELD

# CASTLES & CRUSADES®

## CLASSIC MONSTERS ENCOUNTERS

BY KIM HARTSFIELD

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## 2 CASTLES & CRUSADES

# THE TOMB OF THE FORGOTTEN PALADIN

## THE STORY SO FAR . . .

In ages past, the kingdoms of man warred with one another, as men are wont to do. The reasons were as varied as the men who died, with each believing they were justified in the slaughter of the other. One of the kingdoms sought to end the wars by summoning a powerful demon to fight for them. In their foolishness, they pitied the fiend, allowing it to escape their bindings. Breaking free, it murdered its summoners and walked free upon the earth. It left nothing but misery and pain in its wake.

Eventually the demon came to the small mining town of Silver Bluff. Standing outside the city stood a man in shining plate mail and wielding a great sword. His name has been lost, but a Paladin he was, strong and true. He alone stood against the demon.

The battle between the two was horrific. The demon, in his hubris, toyed with the Paladin at first, enjoying the pain he inflicted. In short order, the Paladin struck back, ending the arrogance of the fiend and showing it true fear for the first time in its life. With the power of the gods at his back, the Paladin fought valiantly and cowed the demon. As it succumbed to death, the demon cursed the Paladin, whispering, "You shall never be free of me," as its mortal body fell and its spirit returned to the lower planes.

The wounds inflicted upon the Paladin never healed. Priests from the town could not remove the pain as the wounds bled and eventually festered. Rot began to set in and the Paladin eventually succumbed to the wounds. After weeks of agony, the valiant knight was laid to rest in a tomb built by the townsfolk. It was, at first, a holy site and garnered a fair amount of attention from the church and pilgrims. Alas, the silver mines petered out and Silver Bluff gave way to time. The town exists no more except in tales and the mouths of the dead.

A century and a year have passed since the forgotten Paladin slew the demon. All this time, unknown to all, the demon festered in the soul of the hero. Each day, the demon edged closer and closer into the heart of the Paladin, his dying curse slowly coming to fore. The tomb, forgotten by all but time, has reopened. The demon is awaiting guests . . .

For whatever reason deemed appropriate by the CK, the party has found its way to the old town of Silver Bluff. Perhaps in their journeys from here to there, they just happened upon the ruins by chance. Or, perhaps chance plays little part in this meeting. Regardless of how, the

party should have no knowledge of the town or the tomb below. It should all be quite a surprise.

The old town is nothing but ruins now. The silver mines were never the boon the founders hoped it would be and the town of Silver Bluff never rose to prominence. The buildings were mostly wooden structures, hastily built and easy for the ravages of time to tear down. The road through town has been overgrown and little still stands to show a town once stood. A ranger or druid, or perhaps one knowledgeable in all things nature, should be able to tell that a town once occupied this area. Perhaps some of the old wooden buildings left behind tell-tale signs. The town itself is unimportant, save to hint that something once stood and that something still exists from the place.

Less than a mile to the north, near the hills where the mines once stood, the party can find an opening into the earth. Sealed by a priest just over a century ago, the stone has fallen and the path into the side of the hill is clear. The tomb of the forgotten paladin is once again open.

The tomb is small, housing one body. The CK is encouraged to change the details to fit the god(s) of his realm. As time passed and the demon grew in strength, the symbols and signs of the paladin's god have been wiped away or desecrated. Anyone knowledgeable in religious symbology should be able to easily tell something is amiss.

### 1. FOYER

The short tunnel gives way to a room carved into the earth. At first, one may think this is part of a mine, but signs seem to point to something else. In the center of the room is an old fountain, dried out ages ago. If examined, one can see faint traces of a carving in the marble of the fountain. It has been removed, however, as if something has wiped away at the stone repeatedly for years. Any dwarf examining the marble should make a Stonecraft check (CL 3). Success reveals that the stone here seems to have suffered centuries worth of wear while the stone itself is but a single century old. In other words, the wear on the fountain is older than the fountain and the stone itself. Quite the oddity. The carving in the fountain was once the holy symbol of the paladin's god, but the demon's spirit has spent the last century wearing away at the symbol. A cleric, or other holy character, can make an intelligence check (CL 7) to garner enough knowledge to ascertain what the symbol once was. The beams holding back the hills have crumbled and part of the room has collapsed. A hallway travels further north, into the darkness.

## 2. ANTE-CHAMBER

The floor of the small room once was a beautiful relief showing the holy symbol of the paladin's god. The townsfolk carried stone into the chamber, laying it carefully and lovingly for their savior. A stone smith was hired to level the floor and to carve the symbol once the floor was complete. Anyone with sufficient knowledge of stonework can tell the floor once held a symbol of some kind. Here, the demon was not content to wear away at the symbol slowly. Mustering the power of his hatred, he crushed the floor and sundered the stone. When the party enters, they find a stone floor that is cracked as if stricken by a heavy object. As before in the fountain, a cleric or holy character can make an intelligence check (CL 5) to discover the symbol, now cracked and splintered, that once dominated the floor. It should be noted that no object of any size, much less of a size needed to shatter the stone, can be found in the room. A door leads further north.

## 3. THE TOMB

Upon entry, all characters should make a wisdom check (CL 3). Holy characters of good alignment get a +3 to the check. Success reveals a darkness in this room, an omnipresent evil that seems to take the breath away. A single sarcophagus sets in the center of the room. The lid shows signs of scratches and desecration. Where the holy symbol once laid in the stone, another symbol has been carved over it. The old symbol, that of the paladin's god, can no longer be seen. The new symbol, however, is quite visible. Any cleric or paladin can immediately tell the new symbol is unholy and vile (others should make an intelligence check (CL 3)).

Inside the sarcophagus lies the twisted and desecrated body of the paladin. The demon has successfully fulfilled his curse, the paladin is no longer what he used to be. Listening to the vile curses and whispers of the demon for a century has turned the spirit of the paladin to a dark mirror of his former self. A few rounds after the party enters the tomb, the body will rise from the sarcophagus, in the form of a Death Knight.

**DEATH KNIGHT** (This undead creature's vital stats are HD 9d10, HP 57, AC 20. Its primary attributes are mental and physical. It attacks with a +2 two-handed sword (2d6+5).)

The Death Knight will first cast *Mass Harm*, reducing his adversaries to 4 hit points and inflicting a wasting disease. The disease imparts a  $-X$  to hit where  $X$  is equal to the number of rounds afflicted. For example, on the third round after being afflicted, the victim suffers a  $-3$  to hit. The disease only lasts 1d4 hours and will at most impart a  $-5$  to hit. While the hit point loss cannot be avoided,

anyone that suffers the Death Knight's *Mass Harm* spell is granted a constitution save to avoid the disease.

Once defeated, the party will find a single coin of an unknown land in the sarcophagus. It is The Sampo (see below). The death knight itself wields a +2 two-handed sword and wears plate mail +2.

**The Sampo:** A relic of Finnish mythology, the Sampo was said to be created by Ilmarinen, the Eternal Hammerer. Ilmarinen was one of the Finnish gods and said to be creator of a great many relics. The Sampo appears as a non-descript coin of an unknown land. After carrying the Sampo for a week, the lucky carrier gains the following benefits:

- Will always know true north
- Can accurately predict the weather for the next twenty-four hours
- Will always have just enough coin to pay for a good room and a fine meal
- Gains a +1 on all rolls
- Gains a further +2 on all charisma checks

It is said that one does not find the Sampo, the Sampo chooses its next owner. If the Sampo is ever stolen, it becomes inert and will never function for the thief.



## 4 CASTLES & CRUSADES

# THE PRIEST'S CABIN

## THE STORY SO FAR . . .

As the party walks along the old road from this town to that city, a small church is seen a few hundred feet to the south. As the sun seems to be sinking for the day, and the smell of rain hangs heavy in the air, the old church looks rather inviting. A few tombstones dot the front of the shack and one may glimpse a garden behind. A light shines from under the door and smoke bellows from the chimney. Atop the building, a weathervane creaks as the wind blows it about. It is this weathervane that gives away the purpose of the shack, for it is in the shape of the holy symbol of a local agriculture god worshiped by the farmers of this land. As the rain begins to fall, the door opens and a figure steps out. It waves its hand and, even at this distance, it is obvious it is beckoning the party inside.

The creature in the shack is a huecuva. The shack did indeed once house a priest of the faith, but the undead now living here murdered him a few days ago and buried the body in the garden out back. Once it is sure the party is intent on entering the shack, it will use its polymorph ability and turn into a small, black crow. It will then fly into a cage of its own making. The huecuva has carried this cage for years and uses it while in its mundane form. The cage is magicked to hide the alignment of anything within it. If a detect alignment spell is cast upon the crow, it will reveal it as neutral. Anything placed in the cage will reveal a neutral alignment as well, though it is quite small. When the party enters, the shack will be empty save the crow. The huecuva is loath to leave the cage and will not do so unless forced. If someone reaches in in an attempt to grab it, the huecuva will peck at the person (which are the actions of a normal crow in this instance).

The party finds the shack sparsely furnished, with two small cots in the back, a table in the center and a fireplace with a pot in the smoldering ashes. A wooden holy symbol hangs on the wall and various mundane holy items (books, prayer beads, fetishes, etc.) are strewn about. Aside from these items, and a back door to the garden, nothing of importance is visible. It appears that whoever waved them inside has vanished.

Outside, the rain has begun in earnest. The crackle of lightning followed by bellowing thunder shakes the old building and water begins to leak near the window. It looks like it will weather the storm, however, and the beds look warm and inviting. If the party goes out the back door, they are greeted by a nice sized garden, tended to and apparently yielding a tidy harvest. It is dark and stormy, so not much is visible in detail. One thing that the party

can make out in the lightning is a scarecrow guarding the garden from varmints.

The scarecrow is a malevolent beast summoned by the huecuva. In all appearances, it looks to be just a regular scarecrow. A detect magic or detect alignment (evil) will reveal it is more than it appears, however. The scarecrow will not attack unless the party ascertains its true identity, tries to destroy it (i.e. burning it) or attempts to dig up the body of the old priest.

If the party waits inside and rides out the storm, the huecuva, in the guise of the crow, will listen and use its telepathy to gently probe the mind of one party member. The CK can randomly choose a character or pick one of his choosing. The huecuva has no preference.

In the morning, as the party is eating breakfast or making to leave, the crow will fly from the cage and alight somewhere in the room. It will then use its polymorph ability and attempt to murder its victim using its illusionary powers. Once killed, the huecuva will again polymorph into a crow and fly away.



**HUECUVA** (This extraordinary undead creature's vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 20, AC 17. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a touch attack that causes 1d6 damage. Against a chosen victim, the creature appears as an illusion of its greatest fear, exactly mimicking the spell phantasmal killer.)

In the morning the rain will have let up and the garden can be searched. Anyone actively searching should roll a wisdom check (CL 4) to discover a pile of newly tilled soil in the shape of a grave. Digging here will reveal the body of the priest that lived here, buried about three feet below. At this, the scarecrow (if still alive) will leap from its stand and attack.

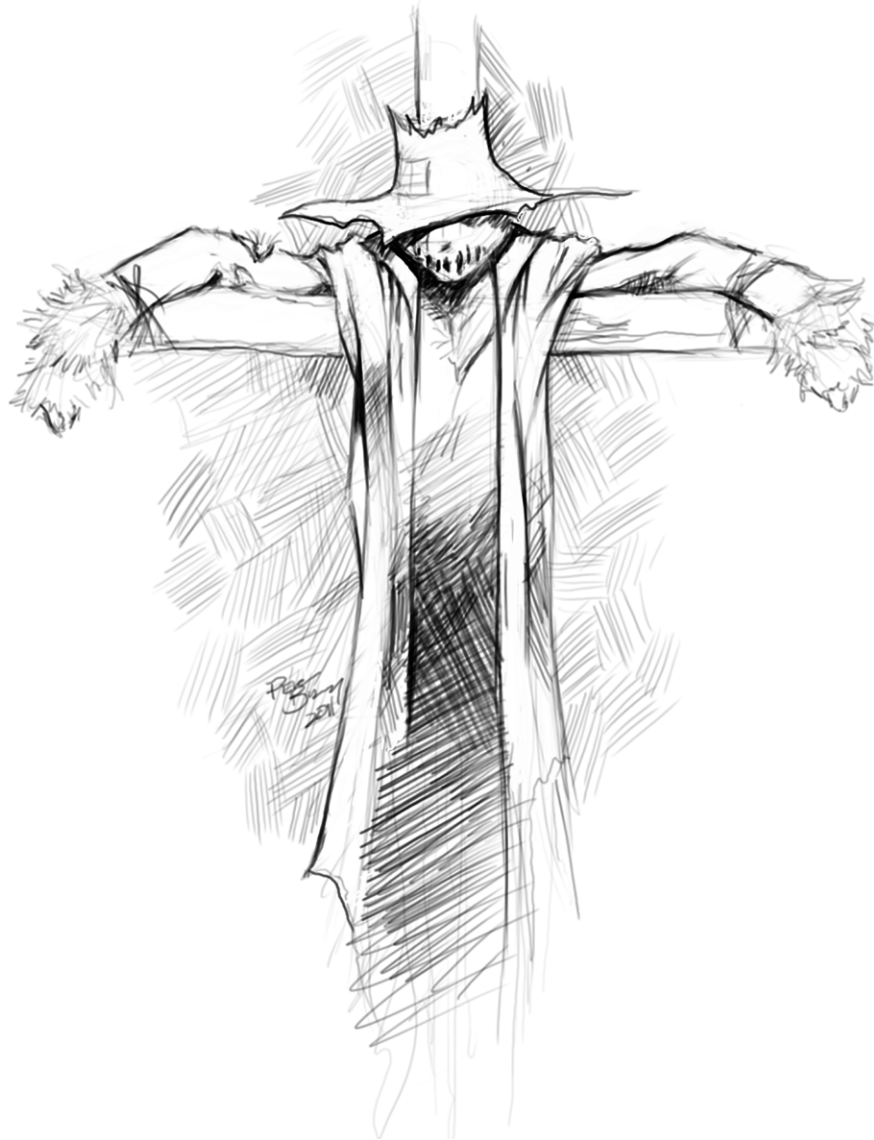
Buried with the priest, one will find his personal treasure. Strapped to his side is a bone-hilt dagger with a blade of gold known as Varunastra. The weapon will only let itself be known to a cleric, druid or paladin. Others will never know the true identity of the item.

**SCARECROW** (This aberration creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 23 each, AC 14. Its primary attributes are physical.

It attacks with a touch attack that causes ability drain. Each successful attack does 1d6 damage and drains one point of constitution. If a victim is reduced to 0 constitution they are slain.)

#### VARUNAstra

Only exceptionally holy and pious individuals are granted access to the powerful weapons known collectively as Varunastra. When first granted, the weapon appears as a small knife with a hilt of bone and a blade of gold. In this form, it is a +2 weapon that does 1d3 damage. Once wielded by the chosen recipient for a week, he will learn the true power. In combat, the wielder can wish the weapon to change form into any weapon he can desire and it will twist and grow into the desired form. No matter the weapon, the wielder can use it with no penalty. The damage for the weapon is that listed in the **Player's Handbook** plus an additional 1d4. Aside from the extra damage, the new weapon is of the +2 variety. The weapon can be ranged or melee and is limited only by the imagination of the wielder (or a mean CK). Regardless of weapon, it will always be fashioned of bone and gold.



# MASSACRE IN THE FIELDS

## THE STORY SO FAR . . .

The land between the Gold Coast and the Jemfar Mountains, formally known as The Green Steppes, is more colloquially known as simply The Fields. The vast expanse, about two hundred miles across, is known for tall grass and cool breezes, but not much else. Traders make the trek across from the mineral rich mountains to the coast with regularity, stopping only long enough to sleep and eat along the way. While many would think the expanse would offer peace and tranquility, many think of it only as tedious and boring.

How the party find themselves in The Fields is immaterial, but find themselves here they do. A few days of travel has left them disinterested and weary. A bit of excitement, they think, would do them good. Or so they think.

As the winds blow in their faces, they catch the faint sound of screams in the distance in front of them. Hurrying east (or possibly venturing with caution and stealth), the party sees activity in the distance. A wagon, almost certainly a merchant, can be easily seen as well as a dozen or so people. One breaks free and runs south, only to be chased down and attacked from behind. At this distance it is hard to tell, but things look bad for the merchants.

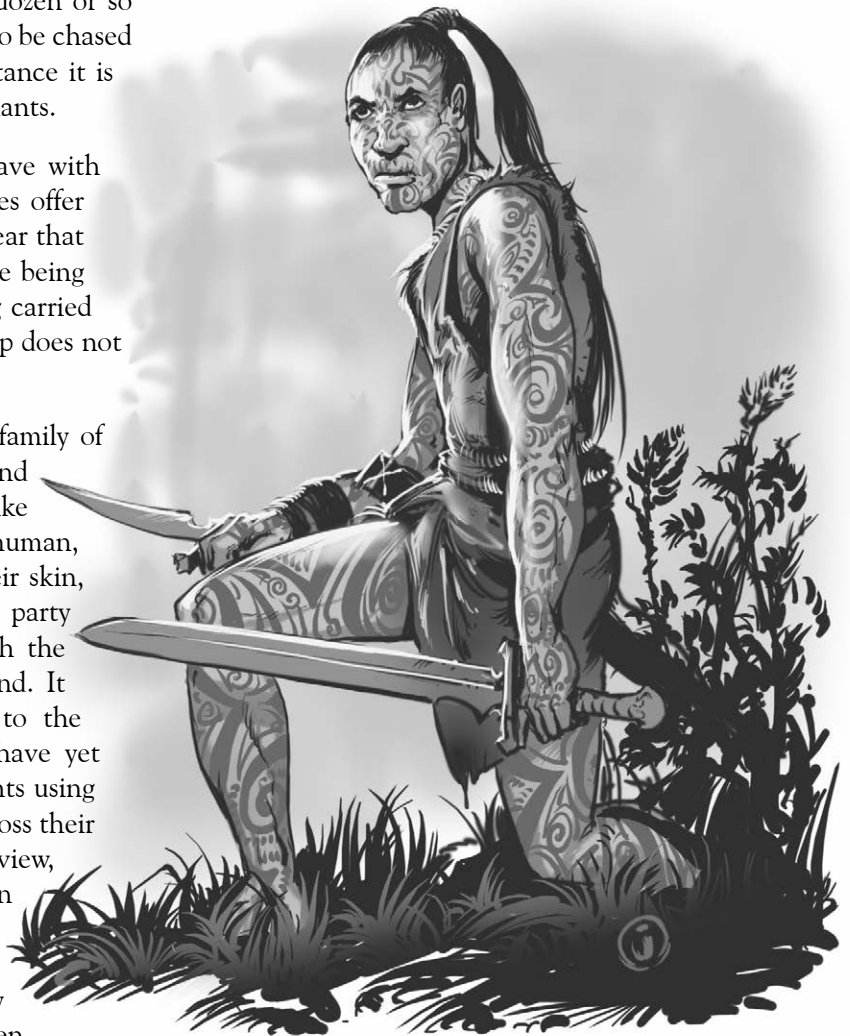
It is impossible to sneak up to the scene, save with magic, since it is daytime and the flat steppes offer no coverage. If the party hesitates, make it clear that someone, more than likely the merchants, are being killed. Screams catch the wind and are being carried to the party like a macabre concert. The group does not seem to notice the party as of yet.

The victims of this massacre are, indeed, a family of merchants. About a dozen, including women and children, are being slain by a group of human-like creatures, about ten in all. Looking decidedly human, but decorated with blue tattoos all about their skin, these creatures are very odd indeed. As the party approaches, the attackers are splattered with the blood of their victims. Dead litter the ground. It seems the victims offered little resistance to the attackers. More disturbingly, the attackers have yet to draw a weapon. They killed these merchants using their hands and, seeing the blood smeared across their face, their teeth. As the party comes into view, the tattooed men draw broadswords and turn their attention to the new arrivals. While it is almost a certainty that the party will attack, the men will hold any attack at first and merely stare at the party. As there are ten of these men,

the party may find itself outnumbered, which may give them pause. If attacked, they will reciprocate, however. Anyone that approaches within twenty feet of the men are confused, as the spell confusion (CL-2), by the tattoos and sigils that adorn their skin.

If the party does not attack, the men will not speak but merely stand and stare. If questioned, they seem to not recognize or care what the party asks. After 2d4 rounds of questioning, one of the men will attack seemingly at random. The rest will join the next round. They will attack the weakest first, which, in their eyes, are women, wizards and those that look particularly young.

Once the battle begins, the creatures attack with an eerie calm. Using their wicked broadswords, and relying upon their confusing appearance, things could turn ugly for





the party. The tattooed men will never yield or listen to reason. Despite all conditions, they keep attacking.

At some point (CK's discretion), the party will hear an odd sound emanating from the tall grass that surrounds them. Deep baritone singing, in an unknown tongue, in harmony with other voices, high and clear. Small creatures, looking like feral dwarves from the waist up but having the legs of a goat, come pouring from the grass. Their song will force the party, and the tattooed men, to make a wisdom save (CL 5). Failure means the victim drops all gear and begins dancing to the song of these creatures. If the tattooed men fail, however, they flee. Any of these men that fail by more than 5 will scream in pain, grab their heads at the temple and fall dead.

These new creatures, while carrying cudgels and obviously ready to fight, will hold any attacks. They come not to fight but to end the battle. If the party recognizes this and does not engage the creatures, these feral singers will instead turn upon the tattooed men (who will turn their attacks on the newcomers). With the help of these creatures (numbering eight), they should finish off the tattooed men.

The small rescuers are korred and will assist the party if treated without malice. If attacked, they will attempt to kill the party. They are chaotic in nature, but a chaos tempered with frivolity and drunkenness, not malice. Indeed, within minutes after the battle, the korred will begin drinking and dancing, asking the party to join in. They do this regardless of the dead, unless they have suffered casualties. In this case, a few will carry the dying away into the tall grass while a few stay with the party. (These few will seem to brighten up rather quickly and begin drinking wine within minutes after the dead and dying are carried away).

That night, the korred will have a grand party and invite the characters. There, they mourn any dead (with song

and dance) and celebrate the life of those still living (with song and dance). They speak their own language, though a few speak a smattering of common. They have stout wine and mead and sing beautifully. A party with korred is quite an event, one the characters will not forget soon.

The tattooed men, known as ruel, carry no treasure save their swords, which are probably not very impressive after they are dead. The merchants have all been killed. The party can take the time to bury them, but the korred will not assist. They have better things to do, namely drink, sing and dance. The cargo consists of dry goods and cloth, mainly. Markings on the crates indicate the trading house, so the party can deliver the goods to the intended people if they so desire. Doing so will net them 500gp.

**RUEL x10** (These humanoid creature's vital stats are HD 2d10, HP 8, 9, 9, 10, 11, 11, 11, 12, 13, 13, 14, AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with broadswords (2d4). These swords are +5 at the start of combat and lessen by 1 each round until they are of a normal variety. They also project a constant confusion spell.)

**KORRED x 8** (These humanoid creature's vital stats are HD 5d10, HP 24, 25, 26, 27, 27, 28, 29, 30 AC 15. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack cudgels (1d6+5). Their song can charm.)



# GARDEN OF STONE

## THE STORY SO FAR . . .

The party finds itself along a long stretch of road in a desolate countryside. The sun is slowly disappearing under the horizon and a chill is creeping into the air. In the distance, they see a large, ominous tree standing alone in a field. As they draw closer, they see the tree stretches its boughs over a cemetery, seemingly unaffiliated with any church or religion. A spot of land consumed by the dead of the locals years ago. In the center of the graveyard stands a small mausoleum, thick ivy clinging to the marble walls and twisting along the columns framing the door. A wind blows through the tree causing a soft, hollow moan to echo across the yard.

If the party approaches, the slabs of grey stone that note the graves are devoid of any writing, save a name. No dates are listed, nor any epitaph. The names are simple (and align with the naming conventions of the area locals as defined by the CK). It seems the graves and stones are very old. Any dwarf trying to ascertain information on the stone should make a Stonework check (CL 1). Success reveals the stone is around a century old and of human make. Nothing of note can be found in the actual graveyard. If the players attempt to dig up the graves, they will find only what they would normally expect: a decomposed corpse about six feet down laying in a wooden box ravaged by time. The corpses are devoid of any treasure.

The mausoleum is fairly plain from the outside. Like the rest of the stone here, time has weathered the once proud structure to a shadow of its former glory. Inscribed above the door is a single name, "Lombre". The door is not locked and is, in fact, slightly ajar as the party approaches. The smell of dirt and time seeps through the crack, simultaneously ominous and inviting.

The inside of the crypt is relatively large, about thirty feet square. A single sarcophagus stands in the center of the room. Sigils are carved into the marble walls. Anyone trying to ascertain the meaning should make an intelligence check (CL 3). Per the CK's discretion, wizards or those trained in the arcane should get a +3 to the rolls. Success reveals the runes are of the protection sort, possibly keeping unwanted visitors out of the tomb. Or keeping unwanted wanderers from leaving.

The sarcophagus lid is heavy and flush with the sides, giving no purchase in removing it. Players using swords or daggers (or similar flat objects) should be given a strength check (CL 5). If the roll fails by 5+ (and if the item is breakable), the sword or similar item will snap in two, rendering it useless. To successfully lift the lid, two

characters must make a strength check at the same time. If they both succeed, the lid falls loudly to the ground. At that exact moment, the door will slam shut and a strong wind will whip about the chamber, extinguishing all light.

If the party does not try to remove the lid, or fails repeatedly, the occupant will arise after six rounds on its own. When it does, the same action as above occurs: the door will slam shut and a wind will whip about, snuffing out torches and uncovered lanterns.

The occupant is a Shade, returning to the realm to protect its home. The cemetery only appears briefly and at random times. The party has happened upon the macabre scene at just the wrong time. Or, perhaps, the fates have deemed them to be here at just the right time. The Shade haunts these lands when he returns, creeping out at night to visit death and evil on the occupants of this land. Peasants, farmers and simple folk that barely remember the previous visits. The Shade's visit occur so randomly, they are whispered as a myth by the locals.

One resident is a Chawl Witch that lives in an old shack just over the horizon to the north. She alone has



ascertained the timings of the visits and hopes tonight to destroy the Shade and confiscate his treasure. The arrival of the party is a blessing to the creature.

If the party attempts to open the door during the encounter with the shade, they must make a strength check (CL 6). Anyone trying will incur the wrath of the Shade as it tries to keep the light from entering its crypt. Even if the door is opened, the light will only be “night”. If the party attempts to relight torches or lanterns, the Shade will likewise attack them, doing what it can to keep the room in complete darkness. (Note: torches or lanterns will change the lighting conditions to “shadowy”.)

After a few rounds, the Chawl Witch will burst into the room from the outside. Without a word, she will join the party in defeating the Shade. She will only use her cudgel to attack, refraining from using her *screach* ability. If she and the party are successful in defeating the Shade, she will claim to be a victim of the creature's curse and is, in fact, a young woman that lives near here. (The Shade has no curse ability, but the Witch hopes the party is unaware of this. A benevolent CK may allow his party an intelligence check to pick up on this lie, though the CL should be difficult, possibly a 7 or 8).

The Shade was quite a warrior in his former life. His stats as a fighter are listed below.

Once the Shade has been dispatched, the Witch will accompany the party, asking them to escort her home. Once there, she claims, her father will reward them. She also claims the curse will break at daybreak. If the party

does not find the Shade's treasure (see below), she will “discover” it on her own. Her plan is to wait until the party sleeps, kill them and take the amulet. She claims to not know the way home (“it has been years...”) and convinces the party to take refuge under the night sky at some point.

**CHAWL WITCH** (*This humanoid creature's vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 20, AC 18. Its primary attributes are mental. It attacks with cudgel (1d8) or claws (1d4)x2. The chawl witch has the following spell like abilities: blindness (1/day), burning hands (3/day), command (3/day), curse (1/day), darkness (2/day), jump (1/day), gaseous form (on victim) (1/day).*)

**SHADE** (*This aberration's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 30, AC 15. Its primary attributes are physical. Its stats are S:17, I:12, W:13, D:9, C: 15, Ch: 10. It attacks with a Longsword of Pain (1d8) (see below).*)

**Longsword of Pain:** This dark-bladed weapon acts as a +1 weapon. In addition, any successful hit forces the victim to make a constitution save (CL 2). Failure means they suffer wracking pain for an additional 1d4 damage. Failure by 5+ also causes the victim to faint, effectively stunned for 1d4 rounds. Once the Shade is slain, his sword will dissolve into an ethereal, black mist before floating away into nothingness.

**Amulet of Ill-Fortune:** Once per day, the holder of the amulet can reroll any d20 roll, be it a check, a save or an attack (or any other roll the CK may use). To do so, the owner must sacrifice a hit point to the amulet. If the reroll is a “1”, the lost hit point is permanent.



# THE DRAGON WYRM'S LAIR

## THE STORY SO FAR . . .

The dwarves of the Gold Hills are a small, peaceful clan that mine the minerals that run through the southern hills. While their actual clan name is Darokin, most refer to them as simply the Gold Dwarves. Centuries ago, the Darokin clan was much larger and lived much further north, in the mineral-rich heart of the mountains. A great red dragon moved in and killed many of the dwarves, sending them on an exodus to the south, where they live to this day.

Word has come from travelers and scouts that the red dragon Varshanal, has died. A band of adventurers invaded the beast's lair and eradicated the threat, leaving the Darokin clan's old home once again open. Hearing this, the dwarves sent a contingent of scouts north to investigate. They returned with mixed news.

In the interim, another creature swooped in. The dwarves did their best to run the beast off, but more than a few were killed and the rest made a hasty retreat back home. They tell stories of a small dragon, purple in color with two great horns. It is great in size, though smaller than Varshanal, and thankfully lacks the fiery breath of its predecessor. Still, it has sharp claws, a deadly bite, and a swift anger. These dwarven miners, so close to reclaiming their homeland, seem to be denied yet again.

How the party comes in contact with these dwarves is up to the CK. It could simply be a chance meeting while traveling or word could have spread to local human settlements nearby that the Gold Dwarves were seeking help. The party may be familiar with the Gold Dwarves or may ask about them. Regardless of how they come about the information, they should be aware that the Gold Dwarves are not warriors but are simply skilled miners that have mined the gold and other minerals for many generations. They are respected as merchants by nearby humans for their integrity and honesty.

Once contact is made with the dwarves, their leader (an elderly male named Fritzugh, but simply called Fritz by most of the dwarves) asks the party to travel to their old home and see about eliminating this new threat. The remaining scout team, three dwarves, will tell the story of the ambush by the dragon (which they repeatedly call 'the damned wurm'). The description they give is a large, thin creature almost forty feet in length. It slithered along the ground before rising up on its multiple legs and attacked. It was purple fading to white near the head. It did not speak. Fritz tells the party they will pay the party 100gp to each party member that returns if they bring the head

of the beast with them. Depending upon various role-playing and charisma checks as seen appropriate by the CK, this amount could go up, or down.

The journey from the dwarves to their old home takes about a week. Most of this is through the Gold Hills as they transition into the Auxin Mountains. This can be a quick trip or fraught with encounters as the CK sees fit. It is known that gnolls patrol this area during the warm months and travel south when winter comes.

The entry to the dwarves' old home is large and conspicuous. Although touched by time, the great entry way is still guarded by two great statues of dwarves wielding hammers. Above the old entrance is written in dwarvish, "The people of Darokin Clan wish you health, happiness, and good friends. We hope you find them all inside. Welcome!" The large entry way quickly shrinks to a more moderate tunnel that heads deeper into the mountain.

Varshanal destroyed most of the old town here, knocking down pillars and walls to more accommodate her large size. Now, great boulders and cave-ins have turned the once proud city to rubble. Small tunnels run away from



the central area, many ending in dead-ends, some opening into smaller rooms. The adventurers that killed Varshanal cleared out the caves quite well and nothing much still stands. Aside from the new residence, and their meager belongings, the caves are empty.

Down one of the larger tunnels is the lair of the new ruler of this domain, a behir. Smaller and less intelligent than dragons, it is still a formidable foe. A few months after the behir settled here, a tribe of jarim wandered inside. The behir cares little for the jarim, but does nothing to run them away. The jarim hope to feast off the leavings of the beast.

As the party searches, the behir will slither in a parallel tunnel as they approach a merge. Here, it will leap and attempt to surprise the party. Characters should make a wisdom save (CL 6) or be surprised. The behir will attack without fear, attempting to take down spell casters quickly. It will not give ground or retreat but will fight to the death.

**BEHIR** (This aberration creature's vital stats are HD 12d8, HP 65, AC 16. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a bite (2d10) and two claws (1d4 each).)

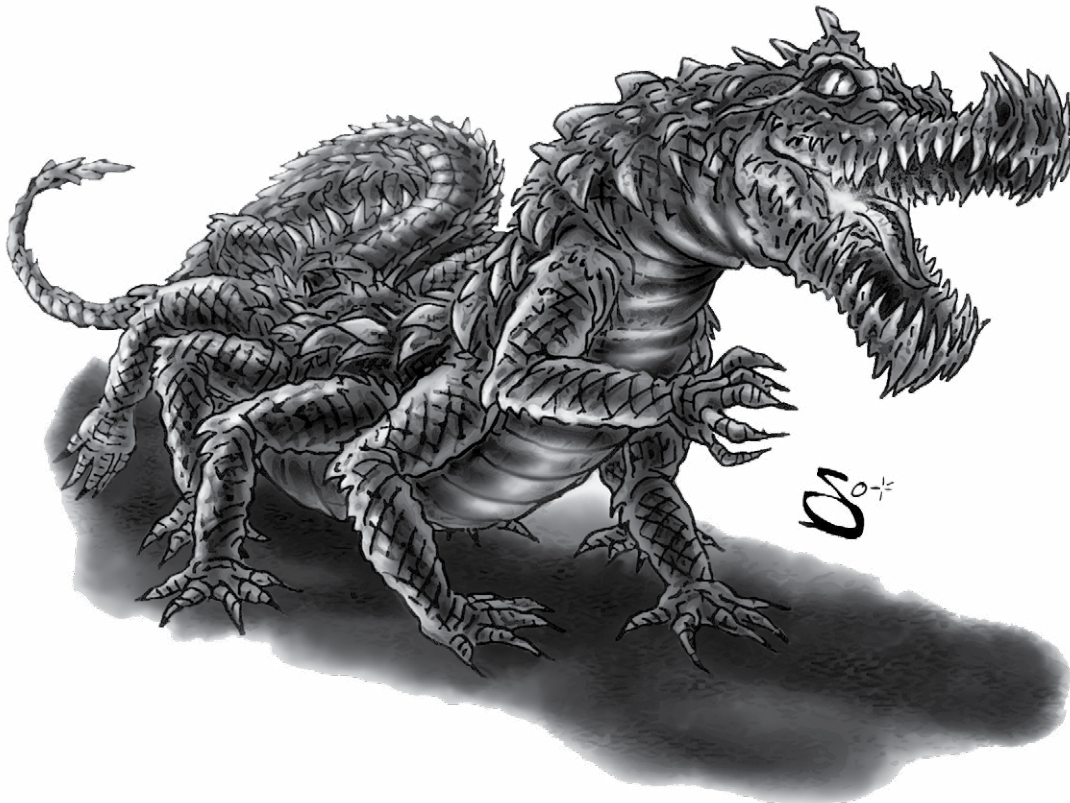
During the battle, a group of jarim will descend upon the group from inaccessible cubby holes and twisting tunnels that run through the ceiling and walls of the caves. If a

party member falls to 0 hp, and thus falls unconscious, the jarim will drop a net on the helpless victim and pummel it with their saps in an attempt to finish the job. It should be noted that the behir and jarim are not allies and the behir, in frustration and anger, may attack any jarim it feels are threatening or stealing its meal.

**JARIM x 25** (These lawful evil, small humanoid creature's vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 2 each, AC 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with various small weapons doing 1d2 damage. Multiple hits can cause loss of consciousness.)

If the party delves deeper in the tunnels, they will find the lair of the behir. Piled in the back are 214gp, 387sp and 529cp. There is also a mace, a suit of scale mail and a pot helmet (all non-magical). Buried amid the coins is also a short sword that is a Sword of Peleus.

**The Sword of Peleus:** The Sword of Peleus seeks always to have the upper hand in battle and will bestow powers upon its wielder to make this so. The weapon is initially a +1 weapon. With each missed strike, however, the weapon gains another +1. This can continue to grow as large as possible until a hit is achieved, at which point it resets to a +1 weapon. The user must intend to hit his victim for this to work, he cannot intentionally miss in order to make the sword stronger. Like most magical weapons, this bonus applies to both "to hit" and damage.



# THE POOL

## THE STORY SO FAR . . .

As the party meanders down the long, winding tunnel that eats into the side of the mountain, they find an opening large enough to stop and rest. Small by normal standards, it feels massive after hours of cramped space and rocks digging into your legs. Another tunnels leads out the opposite side, about twenty feet away. Snuggled up against the cavern is a pool of clear water, about ten feet across, possibly pooling here from an underground spring. Looking into the water, it is impossible to see the bottom. This is possibly due to the depth, the lack of good light, or the ripples that seem to rise up from the darkness. Small, blind cavefish scurry around in the pool. Algae covered rocks adorn the edges of the pool. Every few seconds, a drip can be heard echoing through the chamber.

One of the rocks (actually, a few lined together) is a bloodsucking wyrm, curled up on itself. It has lain here without eating for a few weeks and is starving. It lays on the far side of the pool, so can only be readily seen by someone that enters the pool. When someone comes within three feet, it will attack.

**BLOODSUCKING WYRM** (*This beast's vital stats are HD 6d8, HP 31, AC 16. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a bite (1d6) followed by an automatic blood sucking for 1d4 points of damage.*)

In the fight with the creature, the party should be given a chance to make wisdom checks to notice a hole in the wall of the pool, about three feet under the water line. Anyone in the pool should be given a +1 to this roll. The CL for discovering the hole is 3.

The hole is only about 2 feet across, just enough size for a human to crawl through. It travels in an upward direction and breaks ground after about thirty seconds into a small chamber on the other side of the wall from the previous one. Anyone traveling up the small tunnel will do so completely submerged under water until he emerges into the hidden chamber on the far side. It is also impossible to traverse the tunnel armed. Only one person at a time may use the tunnel.

Once breaking water, the traveler is met with a chamber draped in unnatural darkness. While it is impossible to bring a torch on the short journey, it is possible to bring some kind of magical or unnatural light. Unless this magic is quite strong, it cannot penetrate the darkness here more than a few inches. Indeed, anyone unlucky enough to bring light into this chamber will face the wrath of the inhabitant rather quickly.

If no light is used, the inhabitant will notice he has visitors after the second person emerges from the hole. It is then it will attack. If the first person through tries to use a light source, they will be attacked with haste.

The inhabitant is a grue. It has lived in the desolate hole for years, protected by the pool on the far side. When hungry, it descends into the pool and feeds on the fish found there. It has been many moons since it fed on the flesh of men. If combat goes bad for the beast, or if someone uses a light the grue cannot extinguish, it will leap into the hole and take refuge in the pool. It cannot breath underwater, but can hold its breath longer than most and can still bite anyone entering the hole after it. It will flee further into the small chamber the party first entered, but will not go any further from here, as it is unknown to the grue and it fears the light beyond.

**GRUE** (*This aberration's vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 26, AC 20. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a bite for 1d6 damage. It is constantly surrounded by a magical darkness as cast by an 8<sup>th</sup> level wizard.*)



Inside the lair of the grue, once lit, the party will find an assortment of old armor and weapons as well as other accoutrements used by adventurers. While most are tarnished with age, a pair of boots seem to attract attention. While old and worn, they carry a sheen of magic about them.

**Seven-League Boots:** Appearing in many folk tales throughout Western Europe, these magical boots allowed

their wearer to travel seven leagues quickly and without tiring. Anyone wearing these boots can instantaneously travel up to seven leagues (approximately twenty miles), effectively teleporting them to their destination. Once used, they cannot be used again until the next sunrise. If used for three consecutive days, they lose all power and become old, but still quite comfortable, leather boots.



# THE DEVIL'S SCREAM

## THE STORY SO FAR . . .

The party is moving along any country road or lane. The day is late and their tired feet and weary backs are seeking a comfortable place to sleep. The weather threatens to turn foul any moment and they do not relish the idea of spending a cold, wet night under the stars. Even as these thoughts begin to roll around in their heads they spy a small homestead off the road, a large barn in the yard offers a warm place to sleep.

This is the homestead of Agoston Monger, his wife Timea and their four children, a boy Kristoff (the oldest at 14), and three girls Emoke (12), Borbala (11), and Verona (4).

Unbeknownst to the characters the homestead is suffering under the terror of a devilish nightmare. A screaming devilkin has taken up residence in the vicinity and watches the barn, bent on delivering torment to the farmers and their family. Each night he crawls from the filth that is his hovel and stalks the yard. He explores the barn, hoping that either the farmers or their children should need to come fetch some sundry or the other. When they don't he creeps around their house, clawing at the window, and, whenever a shadow appears on the other side, or one dares to look out, it screams its maddening scream to petrify the house's inhabitants.

They have tried to woo the screaming devilkin. They have tried to pay it. They have tried to make sacrifices to their house gods and those of the greater nobility or lords of the land. All these attempts failed. So they tried to attack it, with fire and axe, but this proved even worse as Agoston lost an eye and Kristoff was laid low with wounds so horrific that healing has been slow and he remains bed ridden with a fever high enough to roast him.

The devilkin does not watch the house during the day so when the party approaches, if they do so before nightfall, the devilkin is unaware of their arrival.

As it is dusk the family have all fled into the house, locked and barred the windows and the door.

## APPROACHING SECRETLY

If the party enters the yard and barn without alerting the Mongors they can do so unmolested. Even if they are heard the family does nothing as they assume it is the screaming devilkin. They do not even watch the yard, for they know if the devilkin sees them it will attack the house screeching its blood curdling yell. In this case, about an hour after dark, the devilkin creeps from its den and goes to the barn. When he discovers the occupants,

he commences to terrorize them in hopes to weed one out that he can kill.

## APPROACHING THE MONGORS

If the party approaches the house and announce their presence, the Mongors do not immediately open up, but speak through the door. They ask a few questions but are keen on warning the party that there is an evil outside that haunts them and they should flee while they can. Agoston is easy enough to convince to open the door, any decent explanation of who they are and a successful charisma check (CL 0, bonus +4) and the farmer will open the door. If they fail their check they are allowed 2 more before they have thoroughly shattered Agoston's confidence and he won't open the door.

Once in he explains the whole sorry story of their struggle with the devilkin and their attempts to drive it off. If they offer, he'll gladly accept their help.

After dark the devilkin comes calling, going to the barn first and moving to the house, looking for something to torment or kill.





**SCREAMING DEVILKIN** (*This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, AC 18, HP 22. His primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a barbed tail for 1d6 points of damage. It is able to unleash a scream so loud and unnerving that it jars the nerves of any in a 100 foot radius. Communications are nonexistent, spell casters cannot cast spells, and anyone who fails a constitution check suffers 1 point of damage and -1 from all rolls for 4 rounds. The devilkin can scream once every 3 rounds.*)

The devilkin has no real lair but has dug out a patch of soft earth beneath an old hangman's tree in the forest about half a mile from the barn. It is little more than pulp and

dead fall heaped over a small hole. It stinks of urine and sweat. Within the debris is a skull that speaks to whoever possesses it. The skull has as much, or as little, knowledge of the wide world as the CK desires.

#### **PAYMENT**

Agoston has no wealth to speak of but once the devilkin is slain, he offers each 7 days good traveling food and each a heavy, animal hide cloak for payment. If there is a cleric there and the cleric heals Kristoff, Agoston promises to build a shrine to the cleric's deity in the yard before the house.



# JUNGLE HORROR

## THE STORY SO FAR . . .

The jungles of the southern tip of the kingdom of Du'Ular are known to crawl with beasts of unknown origin. These creatures rarely travel north, leaving the civilized cities of Du'Ular alone. Every so often, a band of hearty adventurers travels into the jungles for wealth and fame. A few return, loaded with riches from ancient civilizations that once flourished in the jungles. Most, however, are never heard from again. While the party could find itself in the jungles for a variety of reason, it is likely they came here for wealth and fame. It is also likely they will never be heard from again.

The jungle itself imposes difficulties the party probably never encountered before. The omnipresent heat and humidity saps the strength from travelers. The constant barrage of stinging and biting insects foments aggravation, anger and annoyance. Any party member insistent on wearing armor will suffer a -1 on all rolls after every twelve hours so adorned. The CK should make this known to the party before imposing the penalty, allowing party members to doff armor as they see fit.

A few days into the journey, they will be assaulted by denizens of the jungle, a band of mongrelmen that have escaped civilization by living in the oppressive jungle. They harbor a deep hatred for civilized men and attack outsiders without question. The party should be given a wisdom check to notice the attack. The mongrelmen are quite adept at moving about their home undetected, however, so the CL should be set at 5.

There will a dozen mongrelmen, attacking with a variety of crude weapons. The first volley will come from five spearmen before the rest of the tribe descends into melee combat. The mongrelmen, as all of their type, are an amalgamation of a variety of humanoids. The leader of the band has the body of an ogre but the head of a gnoll (though it would be better described as a combination of the two and not an abrupt change from an ogre's body to a small gnoll head atop it). Others have aspects of orcs, trolls, goblins and bugbears. Some even have hooves, claws, scales or horns. The CK is encouraged to think up horrible abominations that combine the best aspects of various creatures. An orc with lobster claws squeezing his victims with great strength, a troll with four arms, each ending with a different appendage, all reattaching if severed. The possibilities are limited only by the CK's imagination.

The weapons of the mongrelmen are coated with a strong toxin. Anyone hit with a weapon attack must make a constitution save (CL 4) or be affected by the poison. At

first (within the first few hours), the poison manifests itself in a general lethargy that results in the victim taking a -1 to all rolls. After 2d4 hours, the victim will fall into a deep sleep. During the transition from first contact to sleep, the victim will feel worse and worse, taking a cumulative -1 each three hours. Anyone keeping watch on a sleeping victim will notice the victim begins breathing shallowly and with effort. The poison has a nasty habit of reemerging even after "cured". If curing magic is used to eliminate the poison, the victim is allowed a new saving throw. If this roll is failed, the poison seems to be cured but will come back in 1d3 hours.

After half the numbers of mongrelmen are killed, or the leader dies, the remainder will flee into the jungle. The party may not follow, but may find it advantageous to find the creatures after they realize how potent the poison is. The CK should subtly hint that the mongrelmen may have an antidote.

If followed, it will be quite easy to follow the creatures as they made no attempt to cover their tracks and left hastily. Their home, a group of hovels some quarter mile from the ambush, can easily be found. There, the mongrelmen will again take up arms against the party. If one of the party members attempts to talk to the creatures, they give pause. (If the party did not come to try to find a cure for the poison, the mongrelmen will appear aggressive but will not initially attack.) While they are evil and hate civilization, they are also quite clever and understand that anyone attempting to parlay may be able to offer assistance. As luck would have it, they are in need of assistance.

For years, the mongrelmen have worshiped a being known as Rapa Mangu, a great snake that lives in an old, ruined temple about a mile to the south. Lately, the Rapa Mangu has demanded more and more from the mongrelmen in the form of tribute. Recently, it has demanded sacrifices of their people to feed upon. He demands they be brought alive, but bound. At first the mongrelmen agreed, but the demand has surpassed even their cruelty. They greatly fear the Rapa Mangu and are loath to take up arms against it, but they will gladly give the antidote to the poison to anyone that eliminates the creature.

The Rapa Mangu is actually a weresnake that found the old temple long ago and claimed it as his own. The tribe of mongrelmen have worshiped him for almost the entire time, bringing him food and the occasional live victim, prisoners the mongrelmen have taken from unlucky travelers. In his old age, he has grown greedy and senile

and his demands have exceeded even the foul nature of the tribe. He cares not for the mongrelmen and desires only to eat and sleep.

When the party approaches the old jungle temple, they witness a huge edifice in the shape of a giant snake wrapped around a portal leading into darkness. Thick vines cover the statue and the temple expect where they have been hacked away over the portal. Before entering, they will be greeted by an elderly man that exits out the portal from the temple. He speaks halting common and seems, for all intents and purposes, harmless. He tells the party he is from a city on the southern shores deep in the jungle. He is but a simple scholar searching for clues to the old gods of the temple. He is tall and thin, shaved bald and without weapons or armor. He says his name is Alau. This is all a lie, for the man is the weresnake they seek, the Rapa Mangu. Any means to detect alignment will show him to be (Lawful) Evil. If questioned, he admits to being a selfish, dark-hearted man but also informs the party that evil men can be scholars.

The temple itself is fairly nondescript inside. Dark and gloomy, vines and weeds grow everywhere. Deep inside, the party will find the lair of the Rapa Mangu. Bones, trinkets and remains dot the large room. Snakes, hidden among the debris, will attack at once when the party begins searching. Also, the Rapa Mangu will transform into his snake form and engage the party.

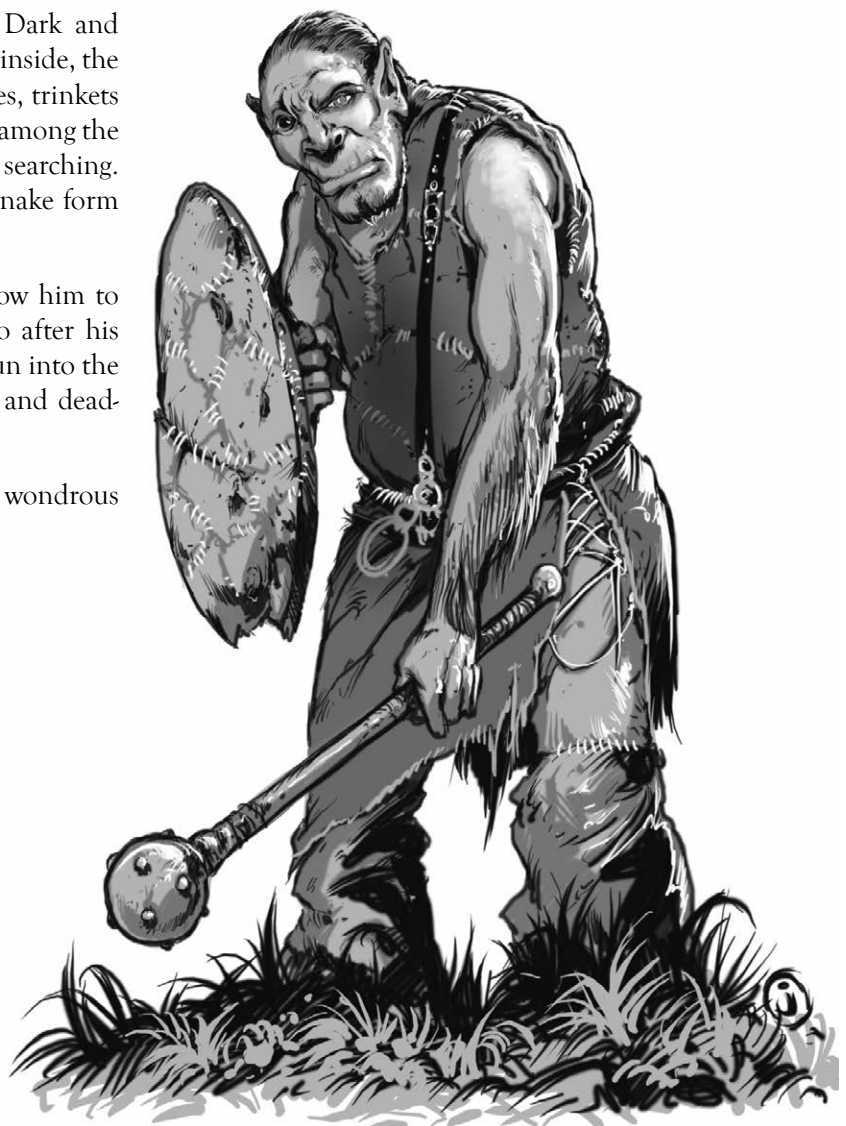
If the party drove "Alau" away and did not allow him to accompany them, he will appear a round or so after his snakes attack. If they attempt to attack, he will run into the temple, quickly losing the party in the tunnels and dead-ends.

Among the discarded debris, the party finds a wondrous suit of chainmail, gilded and shining.

**Armor of Kavacha:** Created by the Hindu god Surya for his son, the armor is a wondrous item to behold. Gilded chainmail of perfect silver links that shimmer in sunlight, the wearer causes onlookers to gawk at its beauty. It is effectively +3 full chain suit. If any attacker scores a critical hit on the wearer, the hit actually misses as the wearer supernaturally shifts just enough for the blow to swing wide.

**MONGRELMEN x12** (These humanoid creatures' vital stats are HD 3d10, HP 12, 13, 13, 15, 16, 16, 16, 17, 18, 18, 19, AC 15. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with various crude weapons, from spears to clubs.)

**WERESNAKE** (This humanoid creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 21, AC 15. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a spear (1d6) or by constriction (2d6). A strength check must be succeeded before breaking free of the constriction.)



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