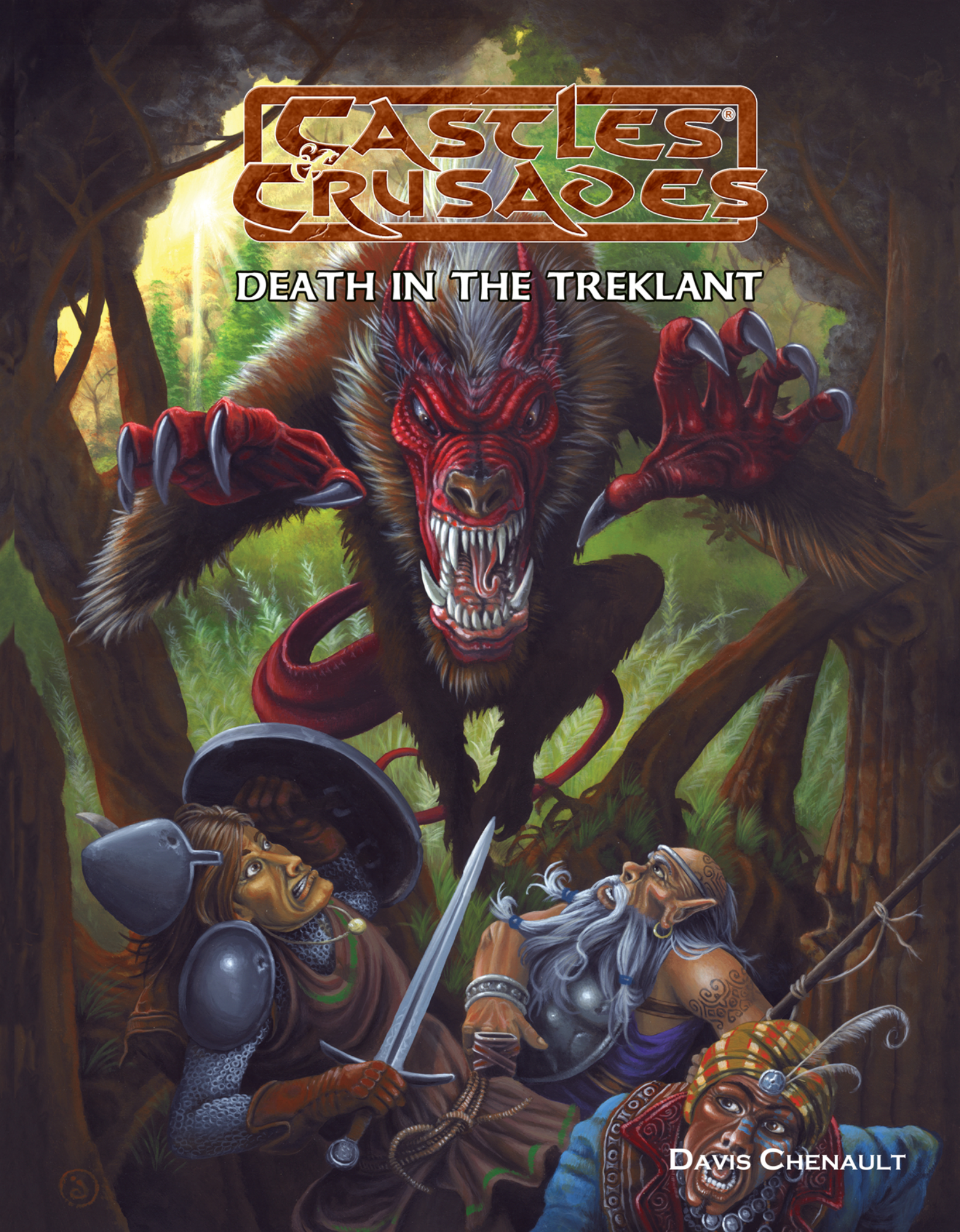


CASTLES & CRUSADES[®]

DEATH IN THE TREKLANT



DAVIS CHENAULT



DEATH IN THE TREKLANT

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Printed in the United States of America



Death in the Treklant is an adventure designed for 4-6 characters starting at levels 1-2, with at least two fighter types and one cleric.

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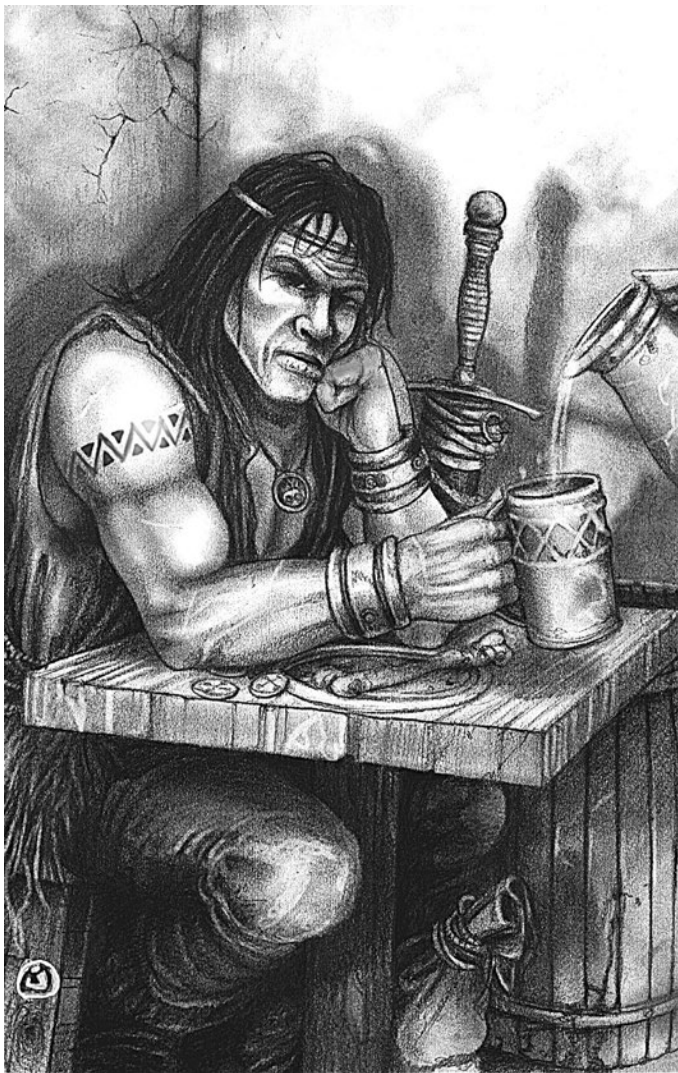
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VAKHUND

“Greeting my friends. There are no introductions necessary here, for I know well who you are, my intrepid adventurer. A weary traveler indeed? Have a seat my fine fellow and let me speak with you a moment before you enter the bleak Graffenvold and traverse its winding paths and muddy byways. But first I must ask, have you come here seeking quick glory and easy wealth? Perhaps you have come here to beat down the lords of this land and submit them to your will? Do the deadly paths and glistening edges of the world’s revenge frighten you? Eh my friend? What was that?”

“Regardless! I fear you have gone beyond yourself here in Inzae. This place has neither easy roads nor abundant wealth. The lords of this land are powerful and care not for the lives of the foolish and weak. Here, in Inzae, simple mistakes may be your unmaking and doom. For beyond yonder door is a fearful world clinging desperately to its life. Inzae’s denizens struggle against a vast array of malignant forces seeking to drag them deeper into the pits of the Maelstrom. And even here, in this backwater region called the Reintier, you will find no respite from this meaningless and overwhelming struggle. So take heed traveler, take heed as you enter the Graffenvold, it will do you well to remember that this is a deadly world and lest you take care, you will be engulfed in its dying spasms.”



INTRODUCTION

This module is designed to be read only by the Castle Keeper, with those sections in boxed text to be read aloud to the players at the appropriate time. The general map of the region should be made available to the players, while the map of Vakhund and Jzunad are for the Castle Keeper only.

This adventure challenges players tactically and requires a party capable of combat, stealth, cunning and cohesive implementation of strategies and tactics. The party should contain 4-6 characters of levels 1-2, with at least two fighter types and one cleric. Several portions of the adventure involve overland travel and in these areas a ranger or character with wilderness skills enhances the party’s chances of survival.

The characters begin the adventure in a forested region called the Graffenvold at a small town named Frisia. It is located close to the southern border of the barony of Halpveg. The barony borders a goblin kingdom to the south called the Drazkleed. The characters are traveling with some traders who are bringing goods for trade with the neighboring goblins. A wealthy merchant and his daughter are traveling with the caravan. After leaving Frisia with the characters, the caravan stops for several days at a border post called the Vakhund. Here, the characters are told to wait while the traders go further south into the Drazkleed. While the caravan is away, the Vakhund is attacked and the merchant’s daughter kidnapped. Her father requests the characters give chase and rescue his daughter. Thus begins a series of adventures away from the lands of man and into the goblin kingdoms and, perhaps, back again.

INVOLVING THE PLAYERS’ CHARACTERS

It is important that the characters have agreed or agree to travel with the caravan; otherwise the adventure may not go anywhere. The Castle Keeper is encouraged to develop individualized reasons for the characters to be accompanying the caravan. However, often that proves difficult or time consuming so some advice is offered.

ONE: The characters are hired to accompany the caravan as far as The Vakhund and thence to Jugensborg and offer protection along the way. Payment is 1sp per person.

TWO: The characters are traveling with the caravan for safety until it reaches its final destination at Jugensborg.

THREE: The characters have been hired to reconnoiter and determine the nature of the goblin activity in the region, or to map the otherwise poorly known region north of the Treklant Creek and are traveling with the caravan as far as the Vakhund before starting their activities.

FOUR: The characters have been hired to locate a stronghold controlled by the infamous Magdole Gang purportedly located south of the Treklant Creek and in the Dampfrat.

The characters could be given a vested interest in the location by giving them important missions to undertake. This can provide interesting roleplaying as the characters would have to come back to Frisia (or not) and report on their activities.



PART I: A COZY BED

Bear in mind, the adventure's beginning should be mundane. Nothing exciting is *supposed* to happen at all while in Frisia or with the caravan, but rather at the Vakhund. The caravan is travelling to a town named Jugensborg though it is taking a long path in order to conduct some trading with goblins south of Halpveg (see map) and has stopped in Frisia. This is where the characters get to familiarize themselves with one another, their surroundings and various people in the adventure.

The adventure begins in the town of Frisia, a small farming and timber community of no more than 500 inhabitants in the Barony of Halpveg. Frisia lies in the northern periphery of the Graffenvold, sixty miles north of The Vakhund and 100 miles south of Halpveg. Surrounding the town is an earthen embankment topped with a wooden palisade with walkways. It overlooks a dry moat, which is in the process of being constructed. Frisia's buildings and houses are one and two story wood or wattle and daub constructions with a few stone ones, either shingled with wood or thatched with hay. Most buildings have simple wood cat chimneys, while the homes of the wealthier inhabitants have rock chimneys.

Frisia is the last human village on the road south into the goblin kingdoms. There is a fairly regular trade between the goblins to the south (the Kdyzj of the Drazkleed) and the Barony of Halpveg. Goblin traders come to Frisia for trade while the human traders go as far as Mejketek (120 miles south of Frisia) and no further. This trade has brought some wealth to the community but mostly to the merchants who ply their trade here.

Other than for farmers and woodsmen, there are four places in Frisia of interest to the characters; the Keep, the Bierkeller, Merkel's and the Kreut. All are described below. The economy of Frisia is run almost entirely on barter. Someone bakes some bread and trades it for firewood or perhaps someone trades firewood for some cheese. Monies come to Frisia by way of traveling merchants and traders who purchase rare woods or others passing through to Mejketek in need of food, shelter or other such items.

Kaptane Friger and his retinue administer the town. Other than those laws imposed upon him by his lord in Halpveg and tradition, Kaptane Friger is free to do as he chooses. He keeps the town orderly, and neither overtaxes nor under-taxes the inhabitants. In times of need, Kaptane Friger can call upon a small militia to do his bidding.

THE KEEP: The Keep is a large squat round building made entirely of stone with a wooden parapet atop it. It houses the local ruler, Kaptane Niklas Friger, and his retinue. The Keep is circular and 80 feet across. It consists of three levels, the roof and a dunjon. The ground level is the sleeping, cooking, eating and storage quarters for the fifteen troops garrisoned here. Four horses can be stabled here in time of conflict. The second level is used as a meeting hall as well as having separate rooms for the lieutenants and advisor serving Kaptane Friger. The third floor is reserved as Kaptane Friger's personal residence, eating chamber, chapel and storage (this is where the city's taxes are stored). The roof is wooden with a small cone on it but room enough

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for a walkway around its circumference. The dunjon is used for the storage of food, beer, weapons, building materials and other supplies. All the floors are accessible from two stairways. The donjon is only accessible from a ground level trapdoor. The Keep is well maintained and flies the banner of Halpveg – a flag split horizontally with a black top and green bottom.

Kaptane Friger is responsible for collecting the taxes from Frisia and the surrounding area, enforcing the laws of Halpveg and protecting this town and other outlying villages. He is concerned with little else and rarely interacts with the locals. He is, like many rulers in the baronies along this stretch of the Graffenvold, a remote and autocratic leader. He enforces the laws of Halpveg, dealing justice with an iron hand. In all other respects, Kaptane Friger dispenses justice, as he wills. He is not considered a good man though not a bad one either. He is a capable ruler. Kaptane Friger has a wife and children and all but one lives in Halpveg. His youngest son, Karl, is serving duty at The Vakhund at his father's request.

KAPTANE FRIGER (*This lawful neutral, 6th level knight whose vital stats are HP 42 and AC 19. His primary attributes are strength, intelligence and charisma. His significant attributes are: strength 17, dexterity 15 and charisma 16. He carries a +1 full chain mail suit, a shield that reduces damage from attacks by 2 but never less than 1, a +2 broadsword, spear of wounding that causes +3 damage when it hits and a longbow. He always carries 2-4 one draught healing potions with him if in battle. His personal wealth consists of 1,300gp in various forms of jewelry, gems, adornments, plate gold and silver.*)

Milken Federman is Kaptane Friger's advisor. He belongs to an order of ecclesiastics who act as advisors to many rulers (often called Black Cloaks for they always dress in black frock coats.). Milken is an ambitious man and seeks to remove himself from this small town and Kaptane Friger's lordship and go to a larger city with more powerful lords. He is a little greedy and capable of subterfuge to retrieve more monies and influence for himself. In other respects, he carries out his duties with the faith and fervor of one who knows any disobedience to the deities results in nothing less than eternal suffering upon the Mountain of Pestilence or an endless afterlife spent on the Bleak Plains. He encourages Kaptane Friger to fairly implement the laws of the land, pay homage to the gods and be forthright to his calling as a lord.

MILKEN FEDERMAN (*He is a lawful neutral, 4th level cleric whose vital stats are HP 21 and AC 15. His prime attributes are intelligence, wisdom and charisma. His significant attribute is: wis 16. He carries a steel breastplate, +2 staff, an amulet of +3 protection against charm, an amulet of +3 lie detection, a gold holy symbol worth 300gp, a potion of healing and vial of holy water. When not adorned for combat he wears a black frock coat and carries his staff. He can cast the following number of spells: 0-4, 1st-4, 2nd-3.)*

LIEUTENANTS X2 (*These are lawful neutral, 3rd level fighters whose vital stats are HP 23, 19 and AC 16. Their prime attributes are strength, dexterity and charisma. Their significant attributes are: str 14 each. They carry mail hauberks, shields, spear, broadsword, longbows and each have 10-100gp worth of jewelry and items of value.*)

KEEP GUARDS X15 (These are humans whose vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 4 and AC 14 each. Their prime attributes are physical. They carry laminar leather, shields, spears, short bows and broad swords.)

MILITIA LIEUTENANT (This is a neutral good, 2nd level fighter whose vital stats are HP 14 and AC 13. His prime attributes are strength, constitution and dexterity. His significant attributes are: str 14, dex 13 and wis 13. He carries leather armor, a shield and broadsword.)

MILITA X30 (These militiamen's vital stats are HD 1d6, HP3 and AC 12. Their prime attributes are physical. They carry spears or polearms that inflict 1-6 damage and wear leather armor.)

MILITA X10 (These militiamen's vital stats are HD 1d6, HP3 and AC 12. Their prime attributes are physical. They carry spears and short bows and wear leather armor.)

MERKELS: Merkel's is little more than a large rambling wooden house with a smithy attached to it. The front portion of the house has been given over as a shop. Merkel, the owner, has a keen eye for a deal so buys and trades items to and from caravans for a slim profit. Merkel is an older man with a wife and several grown children, some of whom have children of their own, and all of whom live with him. Sixteen people are crowded into this house. All help where they can, cutting timber, working in the smithy or bartering with travelers.

Merkel and several members of his family are a good source of information about the goblin kingdoms to the south. Should the characters have the time or inclination, he can tell them of Mejketek (the goblin trading post), the tribal differences of the Zjerd (goblins of the Dampfrat) and Kdzyj (the goblins with whom trade is conducted), a little about the trade and how it occurs. Also, one of Merkel's older sons, Stoffel, knows the location of a group of bandits to the east. He has told Kaptane Friger, but Friger has yet to do anything about the bandits awaiting help from Halpveg. The bandits are located in a remote and marshy area 60 miles east of Frisia in the ruins of an old fort. Stoffel shows the characters the location of the fort on a map should they care to know.

The goods Merkel sells are mostly useful to travelers and caravans. His smithy, though used to helping the locals, derives much income by repairing items for the caravans. There are harnesses, ropes, wheels, nails, dry goods, cloaks, blankets, lanterns, pitch and other tools in his stock of goods. In all, Merkel's inventory is small and limited. Importantly, oil is difficult to come by and costs 4gp per pint. The Castle Keeper should use discretion in deciding whether an item is in his shop or not. Also, prices are really cheap, generally being 70% less than those listed in the *Castles and Crusades Players Handbook*. Merkel has 200gp worth of plate, ornaments and coin in his house.

He has a few swords, shields and common weapons acquired over the years, though by no means are selling these items a significant source of Merkel's income. He has no armor, though can do minor repairs in his smithy. The weapons Merkel does

own are old and have not been well cared for. Each weapon purchased suffers a -1 to damage. His arrows are not well made and they suffer a -2 to hit. With any weapon purchased there is a 50% chance these penalties are doubled. Finally, Merkel is keen judge of men's wealth. When bartering, he makes a charisma check (minus the charisma modifier of the customer). If successful, he is able to ascertain if the customer can pay more and charges 50% more for the item than it would regularly cost.

MERKEL (He is a chaotic neutral commoner whose vital stats are HD1d6, HP 5 and AC 11. His prime attribute is mental. He wears a wool cloak and trousers and carries a dagger and 10sp.)

STOFFEL (He is a chaotic good, 2nd level ranger whose vital stats are HP 13 and AC 13. His prime attributes are strength, dexterity and wisdom. His significant attributes are: dex 13 and wis 16. He carries leather armor, a broadsword, shield and short bow.)

BIERKELLER: The Bierkeller is Frisia's only tavern. It is a large wooden building with two floors and a slate roof. The lower floor is broad and deep with a common room stretching from one end to the other. Having gained a little wealth from those traveling through Frisia to Mejketek, Ronart Tonnahor, the owner, adorned the common room with two stone fireplaces, a stone floor and even plastered the walls. The common room is crowded with tables. The rear of the lower floor is given over to a kitchen and storage. The upper floor is half the size of the lower floor, has four rooms and one large common room, all but one of which are rented to travelers. A barn, stables and a large barnyard are in the rear.

Ronart, whose entire family died of a plague years ago, has, depending on the number of customers, 2-4 people from Frisia helping him cook meals and serve food. Many of Frisia's inhabitants come here on a daily basis to have some beer. They often trade foodstuffs, blankets and other items for the courtesy. The busiest time is after the sun sets when everyone is finished working.

Ronart is a gangly and friendly fellow who constantly busies himself with the daily chores necessary to run the Bierkeller efficiently. He spares a little time for small talk though but takes an active dislike to rumor mongers, braggarts and the like. A lifetime of keeping bar in this region, serving in the militia and travels to Mejketek, Halpveg and other places has garnered Ronart an encyclopedic knowledge of the area, though he rarely parts with this information unless to his benefit. He makes decent coin off of the merchants who make their way to Frisia and has accumulated 140gp in various coin and valuables. He keeps this in his kitchen, where he sleeps, under the floor beneath his bed.

One of the rooms on the upper floor has become permanently occupied by a goblin, Geejzdnard. This is a goblin from the Drazkleed and is a member of the Kdzyj. This is an old and friendly, though well guarded, goblin who acts as a translator for other goblin merchants plying their trade in Frisia. He has become, to the chagrin of many of Frisia's residents, a permanent fixture in the community. He speaks Inzaen and goblin fluently. Geejzdnard has a few personal possessions in his room but nothing of value or interest. He dresses in garish yellow and red clothing and always wears a slouch hat with red and yellow stripes.

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RONART TONNAHOR (He is a neutral, commoner whose vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 5 and AC 11. His primary attributes are strength, wisdom and charisma. His significant attribute is dexterity 13. He wears normal cloths, a smock and wields a dagger or club in combat.)

GREJZDNARD (This goblin's vital stats are HD 2d4, HP 6 and AC 12. His prime attributes are mental. He can perform the following actions as if a 2nd level rogue conceal, move silent, pick pockets and backstab. He carries a dagger, leather armor and 3-12gp on his person.)

KREUT: In the center of the village is a large stone. It is about the size of a man in height and as broad as small house. It is covered in carvings and glyphs. This is the Kreut and is well known to all and would immediately be recognized by the characters. It is a holy relic and conduit to the gods. People come to pray, touch it for luck and leave offerings around it in hopes of garnering the beneficence of the gods.

There are two people of note who live in Frisia, whom the characters may encounter: Gunther and Hempel. The Castle Keeper is encouraged to create a few other people with whom the players can interact that may propel the game in whatever direction desired.



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Gunther is a woodsman who works with six others in Frisia. They search out rare woods and trees for lumber or other needs. He is gruff and disagreeable most of the time, though friendly to those who spend much time in the woods. He has seen many a battle in his years and served several lords in Halpveg in the local militia. He is familiar with the Dampfrat and its ways.

GUNTHER (He is a chaotic neutral 3rd level ranger whose vital stats are HP 25 and AC14. His prime attributes are strength, wisdom and dexterity. His significant attributes are strength 17, wisdom 16 and charisma 8. He carries reinforced laminar leather armor conferring +4 to AC, an expertly made +1 bow, 20 expertly made arrows which cause +1 to damage, a broadsword, hand axe and has 80gp worth of valuables in his house.)

Hempel is a priest. He is from Frisia though lived in Kreutzmark (a nearby holy place) for so many years he is almost considered a stranger. He returned here to care for his aging parents. After their death he remained. He tends to the Kreut and the religious needs of Frisia. He takes care of the wounded and offers what services he can for his fellow villagers. He does not volunteer nor desire to travel far from Frisia for any reason, though is active in its defense should that ever be necessary. He expects material return for any services rendered. Coin is not considered an adequate return.

HEMPEL (He is a chaotic good, human, 4th level cleric whose vital stats are HP 21 and AC 14. His prime attributes are strength, wisdom and charisma. His significant attribute is wisdom 14. He carries a metal breastplate and broadsword. He has 50gp in various items of value at his house. He can cast the following number of spells: 0th-4, 1st-4, 2nd-2.)

THE LAST WARM MEAL

The day begins on a blistering cold winter's morning in the common room of the Bierkeller, though, the Castle Keeper should not feel constrained by this and may want to begin the adventure a few days earlier to allow the characters to become familiar with Frisia and several of its inhabitants. In any respect, the morning the caravan leaves begins as such....

A chilly early morning mist rises off sodden fields stretching away from the wooden palisade and earthen embankment that wraps tightly about a cluster of small clapboard houses, rambling barns and squat stone buildings. This is Frisia. The bellowing of cattle mixes with the dull clang of metal bells, awakening any who might be sleeping past the sun's rise. Misty tendrils of smoke rise from Frisia's many chimneys then, lingering momentarily above graying rooftops, disappear into the massive dark green firs ringing the fields and crowding the horizon. The clanging of bells is interrupted by the braying of oxen that have been tacked too early to a harness.

Once the characters have awoken and come down to the common room....

The hall of the Bierkeller is cold. The morning's sun barely shines through the open door and Ronart, the gangly tavern keeper, has just started a fire in one of the tavern's two fireplaces. Outside, the noise of the drovers barking orders as they load their wagons is periodically drowned out by the braying of steers protesting their job. At the far end of the hall, wrapped in a thick sheepskin cloak, sits an old wrinkled goblin with a yellow cloak, red pants and a yellow and red striped slouch hat. He is balanced precariously on a tall stool and hurriedly eats out of a steaming bowl.

Ronart spares little time to talk with the newcomers as he is busy preparing for the day gathering wood, starting fires, cooking meals and cleaning. He is not unknown to quit a conversation in mid-sentence should work need done. He has little valuable information he is willing to impart this morning and mostly bemoans the arrival of another cold winter. Ronart offers that the Kdysz goblins of the Drakleed are friendly enough and Mejketek is a fine place for goblins or their kin. He might also warn the characters that the Zjerd goblins of the Dampfriet are notoriously violent though often too lazy to actually fight should the characters inquire.

Geejzdard, the goblin, speaks to the characters obsequiously trying not to offend anyone. He knows much about The Drakleed and trade in the south and clearly indicates that travel south of the Treklant Creek and to Mejketek is very dangerous as there are groups of marauding bandits and horrible monsters about as well as his cousins, the Zjerd. He also intimates that his kin at Mejketek's might feel threatened by a well-armed group of travelers arriving at their doorstep.

While the characters gather in the common room, Meister Rothenheimer and Evanna appear.

From the dark hallway emerge two stunningly dressed people, nobles or merchants by their clothing. There is tall man, hefty yet handsome, with a graying mustache flowing over his mouth and down his cheeks. He smiles broadly with gleeful eyes as he enters the common room. He laughs quietly as he places a hand on the shoulder of a young maiden with rivers of blonde hair cascading down her shoulders. She is a lean, even a thin figure, moving gracefully though weighed down by a thick ermine-lined cloak. She laughs demurely and glances backward at the two drovers struggling up the hallway, each managing elaborately decorated large wooden trunks.

Meister Rothenheimer and Evanna are gracious and in good spirits. While the Meister oversees the loading of his baggage, Evanna waits inside. Both have a meal before leaving. The Meister is more than willing to converse with anyone. Evanna, however, is very reserved about speaking with anyone without her father at her side. The Meister claims to be traveling to Jugensborg and then on to Firstenfeld for business and in an effort not to alarm his daughter, claims that he is checking the trade routes for safety and efficiency and meeting with fellow merchants in Firstenfeld. Any of the characters from this region recognize the name Rothenheimer as one of Bergholt's ruling families.

After finishing their meal, Stansley, the lead driver of the caravan, enters the common room and announces it is time to pack and leave.

"Allo, my friends!" Stansley hollers into the room, his haggard face cheerful, despite the cold and the long journey ahead. "We are about at it, so throw your belongings on the wagon and lets away to the land o' the Kdysz." With this, Stansley turns and goes back outside.

Outside, Stansley and Klamart help Meister Rothenheimer and Evanna onto the lead wagon. The drovers, Milter, Arkus and Frieland are gathered in the square stomping away the cold and joking loudly with one another. The steers stretch in their harnesses, anxious to be on the road. Ahead, the gates of Frisia stand open beneath a churlish sky and the muddy track known as the Unterbasser beckons travelers and merchants alike.

There are two wagons in the caravan. The drivers are Stansley and Klamart. The drovers, Milter, Arkus and Frieland, provide the help. The lead wagon carries barrels of salted carp and the famous mead, Gaddners, as well as the Meister and Evanna's belongings. The other wagon carries several large burlap bags of pepper (16gp), numerous crates of bronze ingots (30gp), a large ceramic vase filled with vellum (8gp), a chest with a bolt of purple cloth (100gp), and a chest with purple glass jars (10gp).

The Unterbasser is well traveled during the summer months, but as winter closes in, fewer and fewer caravans enter The Drakleed. Winter weather in the region is harsh and unpredictable often bringing sleet mixed with wet snow that piles deep on the gloomy forest floors making travel increasingly difficult. Stansley's winter route usually takes him from Halpveg to Mejketek, back to The Vakhund, thence along the Treklant to Jugensborg, on to Firstenfeld, and finally back to Halpveg.

Stansley is the caravan's manager and lead driver. He owns both wagons and is very careful with them. He has been trading in this area for many years and has friends in every town along his routes. Stansley is old, but strong and thickly muscled from years of hard labor. He speaks goblin fluently, but only resorts to its use when absolutely necessary. He has a short sword in the wagon.

STANLEY (A neutral commoner whose vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 6 and AC 11. His primary attributes are physical. His significant attribute is strength 16. He carries leather armor, shield and 200gp worth of coin and jewelry in pouches around his waist.)

The driver of the second wagon is Klamart. He is an unusually quiet person and speaks only if spoken to. He then tends to talk incessantly until distracted by a job to which he must turn his mind and hands. He is also a petty thief. If it so happens, he will pilfer small items left unattended. Stansley only recently hired Klamart and has yet to develop an opinion of him.

KLAMART (He is chaotic neutral and his vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 3, AC 10. His primary attributes are mental. He carries clothing and 1-2gp in coin.)

Militer, Arkus and Frieland are the drovers. They are friendly but know they are low in the pecking order and act accordingly. At night Frieland tells good stories, Arkus laughs a lot while Militer curses an inordinate amount.

DROVERS X3 (*The drover's vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3 each and AC 10. Their prime attributes are physical. They carry clothing, food and 1-2gp in coin.*)

Concerning the plots and machinations of Meister Rothenheimer and his daughter Evanna.

Evanna is the somewhat naive daughter of Herbert Rothenheimer. She is a young, blonde haired, woman of obvious refinement and fine dress. She is well educated, well mannered and very well aware of what is expected of a wealthy merchant's daughter. If addressed, she makes pleasant conversation in a soft voice that reveals her high level of education. She never complains nor inquires as to other activities or intents and tries to keep all conversation simple and neutral in tone.

Evanna loves and respects her father and is accustomed to looking to him for guidance and care and rarely questions his opinions and actions. However, if left unattended by her father and prompted, she wonders aloud where her father is going and why they left Bergholt in such "unusual circumstances." Evanna is at an impressionable stage in her life and is easily influenced by anyone that takes her into his or her confidence. She speaks Inzaen, Leucrotian, Orillian and Todavian fluently.

EVANNA (*She is a lawful neutral commoner whose vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3 and AC 10. Her primary attributes are intelligence, wisdom and charisma. Her significant attributes are dexterity 17, con 15, int 16 and cha 18. She wears expensive clothing and jewelry worth 280gp.*)

Meister Herbert Rothenheimer is the nephew of the head of the Rothenheimer family. This is an influential and powerful merchant clan and one of the lesser of the eleven families that rule Bergholt. The Meister is a gregarious person who enjoys telling tales of Bergholt's docks and its patrons. He attempts to make friends wherever he goes, and willingly drops gold coin if necessary. He jokes constantly and while his sense of humor borders on crass, it is never vulgar. He enjoys good drink and food but rarely overindulges.

The Meister is the son of Meister Jurgen Rothenheimer. Jurgen married Henrette Gabel. She, unbeknownst to Jurgen, was the last living child of the Steffens family in Esterheim. The Steffens family was, some many decades prior to now, a very powerful family within the elites of Juttaland. Their influence spread to many regions within the Juttaland and were believed to be the power behind many a corrupt monarch. Despotic, vengeful, greedy and avaricious are all adjectives that would readily suit a description of that family.

In time, many lords and others of the Juttaland grew weary of the Steffens family and their ways. So weary they were that a secret society developed to bring them down. This society is commonly known as the Geis' Tot, called such after their calling card was placed upon anyone they killed. This calling card was

a card from a deck of cards common to the region and depicted a dying jackal. The Geis' Tot simply means the 'killing jackal.'

It just so happens that in the assassinations, murders and general slaughter that occurred to rid the Juttaland of the Steffens, one young girl was overlooked. Henrette Steffens survived by being spirited away from her house by a friendly (or mischievous) fey. He took her to Bergholt and with much gold, bought her a house, renamed her Henrette Gabel and proceeded to lay the groundwork for her ascension to power.

The plan of the fey worked well. Henrette grew up well attended, well educated and wealthy. So wealthy in fact that the Rothenheimer family decided she should be married into their clan. A marriage was arranged and Jurgen became Henrette's husband. She bore one child to Jurgen, Herbert. The fey, having done what it needed to do, promptly disappeared. Shortly afterward Henrette died but not before revealing her true identity to Jurgen. Many years later, when Jurgen was old and Herbert a strapping youth, Jurgen told Herbert about his maternal lineage. Herbert, sensing an opportunity to make money, began to inquire about the Steffens family, their properties and any potential rights he might have over them. As his inquiries became more specific and occurred in ever more places, it goes without saying that some ears that should not have heard, heard.

Although the purpose of the Geis' Tot had long since passed, as it happens with these organizations, it lingered and grew in power and influence – an influence it cares not to share nor have challenged. Upon hearing of the inquiries of this Meister Herbert Rothenheimer and some delicate investigation, a decision was made to find this Meister Herbert Rothenheimer and kill him and all his children. An attempt on the life of Herbert Rothenheimer was made but failed. The Meister, sensing something more than mere thuggery, feared for his and his daughter's lives and immediately fled Bergholt, taking his daughter with him. Unknown to Herbert Rothenheimer, a Geis' Tot assassin, Markus, followed him to the hinterlands and has joined with a band of pirates (see below) who are also seeking Rothenheimer.

You must know that Meister Rothenheimer's has many associates of a nefarious nature. One such is Ubert von Beck, a notorious pirate. Rothenheimer's departure from Bergholt complicated his attempts to pay a debt to Ubert von Beck. (Herbert Rothenheimer purchased stolen goods to sell in other cities). Upset with being unpaid, von Beck sent several men (Klaus and Tindle) to find Rothenheimer and retrieve the money he was owed. If the Meister refused to pay, von Beck ordered that he be slain.

And, to further his ambitions, von Beck also commanded that Evanna be taken and returned alive to Bergholt. His intention is to marry Evanna. For, as it turns out, von Beck has two identities. On the one hand he is Ubert von Beck the notorious pirate and on the other, the wealthy Baron Ildin Savil from the Troke. A landless noble, von Beck took to pirating for income but kept his identity hidden and trounces around Bergholt and other cities as Baron Ildin Savil. His marriage to Evanna will allow him to enter into the local mercantile classes and become an accepted member of the community.

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MEISTER ROTHENHEIMER (*He is a lawful neutral commoner whose vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 5 and AC 10. His primary attributes are intelligence, wisdom and charisma. His significant attributes are: con 7, int 16 and cha 13. He has expensive clothing and a stout walking cane that he can wield for 1d4 points of damage. He has 120gp worth of jewelry and coin on him as well as his signet ring – described below.*)

The Rothenheimer's carry a lot of baggage with them. The Meister's trunk is large and ornately carved, bound with brass straps and locked with a large padlock (the key to which is in the Meister's purse). The trunk contains several pairs of pants, a fine heavy cloak worth 150gp in coin, a few hats, a few dozen sheets of vellum, an ink well with several quills, a pair of gloves, a large belt and one pair of boots. There is a false bottom that contains two letters of debt from merchants in Firstenfeld and a note guaranteeing a loan of 1,000gp from a Baron Savil.

Evanna's trunk is similar to her fathers. She has the key in her purse. It contains dresses and clothing as well as one book, "The Geometries of Inzae, the Angles of the Heavenly Objects as Determined by Melequintus, Servitor of Narsitiblus".

MUDDY ROADS

And so begins the characters trip to The Vakhund. It takes three days to get there from Frisia if nothing unusual occurs along the way. Other than a chance encounter with wandering monsters, the trip is uneventful. The referee should encourage roleplay to create an affinity between the players and members of the caravan. The Castle Keeper is encouraged to instill a sense of drudgery in the days that pass as well. This is simply the calm before the storm and the players should be restless by the time the action begins.

The Unterbasser meanders south beneath the majestic green firs of the Graffenvold. The days pass with moody skies alternating between rumbling dark clouds and cold drizzles to bright winter afternoons filled with warm breezes coming off the marshes of the Dampfrat. Stansley and Klamart drive their wagons hard and the oxen pull with might along the track. Yet, despite their efforts, the wagons occasionally become mired in the slick mud requiring the efforts of all to push and pull them free.

The wagons become stuck a few times each day. Each time, the drivers ask for the characters help, though they pointedly do not ask help of the Meister and Evanna. Each evening, the steers are unhitched and tethered, and a large fire built. The drovers do most of the cooking and offer to cook for the characters if they supply their own food. The drivers and drovers make themselves comfortable wherever they can, sleeping as close to the fire as possible. Evanna sleeps near her father, underneath a tarp attached to a wagon. On the second evening the Meister cheerfully offers to purchase a barrel of beer from Stansley. He shares it with everyone in an effort to make friends with his traveling companions. Storytelling by both the Meister and Frieland is a constant around the fire.

WANDERING MONSTERS

There is a chance of encountering wandering monsters while on the trip to The Vakhund. In general, if the players' stay with the caravan, nothing occurs as the monsters simply go away. However, there are a few that may prove problematic and, should a lone character stray from the caravan at the right moment, an encounter can be deadly.

There is a 2 in 10 chance for encountering monsters. This should be checked once during the day and twice at night. Some encounters can occur only while the caravan is moving, during the day or at night. These are noted and if they occur when the caravan is still, simply roll again. Also, no encounter can occur more than once so simply roll again should this happen.

1. HUNGRY WOLF: This wolf attacks any small sized character that appears vulnerable. Otherwise, it will run away once spotted.

WOLF (*This creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 14 and AC 13. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks by biting for 1d6 points of damage.*)

2. MIRCHKA THE GOBLIN: This encounter can only occur north of the Treklant Creek. This is a goblin spy who works for Ubert von Beck. He has followed the caravan from Halpveg. At the moment he is encountered, Mirchka has decided to race ahead to Jzunad and inform his companions of the caravan's location and what he believes to be its likely destination – as if there were any question. If encountered and captured, he reveals little and lies as much as possible to conceal his true identity. The only item of value on him is a necklace with a pendant hanging from it. The pendant is a tiny platinum inverted dagger and is worth 30gp. By showing it to the Apothocary in Isenborg one can gain access to one of Ubert von Beck's safe houses.

MIRCHKA, GOBLIN (*He is a chaotic evil creature whose vital stats are HD 2d4, HP 7 and AC 13. His prime attributes are physical. He carries leather armor, shield, small bow, dagger, shortsword and 5gp. He can hide and move silent like a 2nd level rogue.*)

3. OWLS: The owls are active only at night. The hooting of these owls is strange and other worldly. Any character not familiar with the local wildlife must make a wisdom check or mistake the sound for the groaning and screaming of humans. Searching for the 'humans' will, of course, reveal nothing. Stansley and the other locals know that it is an owl. This encounter can be used to heighten tension in the party. Allow for some question to arise as to whether or not the locals are telling the truth or bending it to avoid trouble. Though the characters do not see any of the owls, they are called Yanule and are commonly known as a sign of death.

4. COYOTES: Coyotes are generally only active at night. A large pack of coyotes gathers around the camp hoping to find easy prey. Initially, one howls, calling others to the campsite. Within a few minutes, nearly 15 coyotes show up yipping and howling. Though they will linger for a while, any aggressive action scares them off. They only attack lone individuals who wander outside the camp or away from the others.

COYOTES X15 (These neutral creatures vital stats are HD 1d8, HP variable and AC 15. Their prime attributes are physical. They attack with a bite for 1d4 damage. They have scent and move silent abilities.)

5. ZWETTER RORER: These cats are active day and night. These are massive saber-toothed tigers with mottled black and gray hides. They stand four feet at the shoulder and can range up to six feet in length. This immature male has decided to make a meal of one of the people in the caravan if possible. It stalks the caravan and attacks any average sized or small humanoid that is alone or far removed from anyone else. Larger and/or numerous foes are attacked only if the zwitter rorer is pressed and guarding a kill or very frightened and cornered. Should the characters (even an individual) act aggressively towards the creature before it attacks, it must make a successful charisma check or run away. The check is penalized by the number of foes it faces and the highest hit dice or level of any one individual in the party.

ZWETTER RORER (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 4d10, HP 28, AC 14 and MV 50ft. Its primary attributes are physical. A zwitter rorer attacks with two claws for 1d8+8 points of damage and a bite for 3d6 points of damage. They can jump up to eight feet. If a successful hit is scored with both claws, the opponent must make a strength check or be knocked prone. The zwitter rorer receives the bonus for attacking prone creatures.)

6. DEER AND URFIN: These are active day and night. A small herd of deer moves through the area. On a successful check (CL 5) any character that successfully moves silently up to the deer notices a "man" walking with the herd. A successful intelligence check reveals the true nature of the "man." It is half elk and half man, an Urfin. Any movement or noise sends them scattering. The Urfin speaks no known tongue and cares not for man or their ilk and makes its way as quickly as possible into the depths of the wood.

URFIN X1 (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 3d10, HP 21 and AC 14. Its primary attributes are physical. It carries a short bow with 20 arrows and a club.)

7. WORG: Worgs are active day and night. This lone worg seeks easy prey. It follows the group for some time until a straggler or someone becomes an easy target. If espied prior to an attack and beaten off, everyone seeing the animal that makes an intelligence check notices that the "wolf" had a bit and harness still in its mouth. This worg was once ridden by a Zjerd warrior.

WORG (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 25 and AC 14. The worg's primary attributes are physical, and it attacks with a bite for 2d4 points of damage.)

8. CORPSE OF A WOODSMAN: This encounter can occur only north of the Treklant Creek. This is the body of a recently killed woodsman. The wounds are punctures, but are obviously not from animals. A large chopping axe and a small knapsack with some crusts of bread and dried meat in it lie nearby. He is from a town near Frisia though no one knows him.

9-11. DEER: These are common woodland deer encountered day or night. They run if disturbed.

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12. BEAR: This encounter can occur at any time. A small black bear is encountered. The only way to get near it is by surprise and stealth. Unless cornered, the bear runs away as soon as it is aware there are people nearby. If tracked, killed and skinned, its hide brings 5sp in Frisia and 1gp in Halpveg.

BEAR (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 19 and AC 13. Its primary attributes are physical, and it attacks with 2 claws for 1d6 and a bite for 1d8.)

13-19. ELK: These are common woodland elk. They run if disturbed.

20. GOBLINS: There are 6-13 goblins on a raid. These are Zjerd goblins from the Dampfrat. They enter into battle naked excepting some feathers tied to their hairy heads and gold earrings or nose plugs. They all carry a lot of arrows and try to use them to great effect before entering into combat.

GOBLINS X6-13 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3, AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry short swords, short bows, small round shields and 1-2gp worth of jewelry.)

A SHORT RESPITE

BEFORE A PERILOUS JOURNEY

The Vakhund rests ponderously in a very lonely, wide pasture. It is a squat tower constructed half of stone and half of wood, no taller than the great fir trees hemming in the glade. Nearby, an aged but sturdy bridge crosses the Treklant Creek. All about, the land is trampled and muddy from the recent rains. Stumps of trees and the refuse from hundreds of merchant camps clutter the pasture. Fire rings, piles of chopped and half burnt wood, tethering posts, broken and busted barrels and boxes, shreds of cloth and other debris mark where the Unterbasser begins its treacherous journey into the Drakkleed.

The tower is the only structure in the vicinity. The ground level walls, constructed of stone, bear no windows. A thick wooden door set in the center of the east wall and bound with iron straps provides the only entrance. The upper level is faced with stout wood and has an arrow slot cut in each wall. An overhanging wooden battlement tops the tower where a guard stands solidly beneath the unfurled black and green banner of Halpveg.

A sign between the tower and bridge lists the costs to those wishing to travel across the

Treklant Creek.

By Order of The Meister Premiger of Halpveg

Man on foot - 1 copper

Man with load - 2 copper

Cart pulled by man - 2 silver

Cart by animal - 6 gold

Wagon - 10 silver

About 50 feet to the east of the tower is a large tree with a bench and table beneath it. When not in the tower or attending other business, this is usually where everyone spends their time. There are five militiamen stationed at The Vakhund, including the leader, Kaptane Steigler. They remain at the tower at all times except when hunting or when accompanying merchants to Mejketek.

Kaptane Steigler is the haggard militia leader at Vakhund. Though old and graying, Steigler is a striking and powerfully built warrior. After serving for many years with the armies of the east, Steigler finds his current assignment on this desolate border post boring. As a result, he has resorted to excessive drink to pass the time. He welcomes everyone to The Vakhund in a stern way and is unyielding on the taxes. If slighted, insulted or his authority challenged, Steigler lashes out violently and is not unwilling to put anyone in irons for a few days.

STEIGLER (He is a neutral, 4th level fighter whose vital stats are HP 28 and AC 17. His primary attributes are strength, wisdom and dexterity. His significant attributes are: strength 15 and con 14. He carries a longsword, full chain suit, large steel shield, broadsword and a pouch with 12gp.)

Gottfried von Frisia is a young militiaman who is very excited about his first posting at Vakhund. Poorly educated, Gottfried's speech is simple but colorful. He is a loyal friend to Karl.

GOTTFRIED (He is a neutral good, 1st level fighter whose vital stats are HP 4 and AC 13. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity and charisma. He carries a small battle-axe, leather armor, shield, knife and short sword.)

MILITIAMEN X2 (These are neutral good militiamen whose vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3 and AC 13. Their prime attributes are physical. They carry leather armor, shields, light crossbows and broadswords.)

Karl is another militiaman from Frisia assigned to the Vakhund. Karl is the youngest son of Kaptane Friger and is very aware of the duties required by his position. He is friendly and of honorable bearing though somewhat aloof. His loyalty to Gottfried is matched only by his loyalty to his family. In combat he is steadfast. Only under the greatest of duress will he or Gottfried leave the protection of the tower. Karl will tell his father (should he survive) of the deeds of the characters – whether good or bad. This can gain Kaptane Friger's undying gratitude or enmity depending on how they act.

KARL (He is a neutral good, human, 1st level fighter whose vital stats are HP 6 and AC 12. His primary attributes are strength, intelligence and constitution. He carries a scimitar, leather armor, a large iron shield and small metal helm.)

Dominating the ground floor of the tower is a large fire ring. It sits in the center of the earthen floor. An open staircase runs up the north wall to the first floor. Neatly stacked in the room are 2 barrels of fresh water,

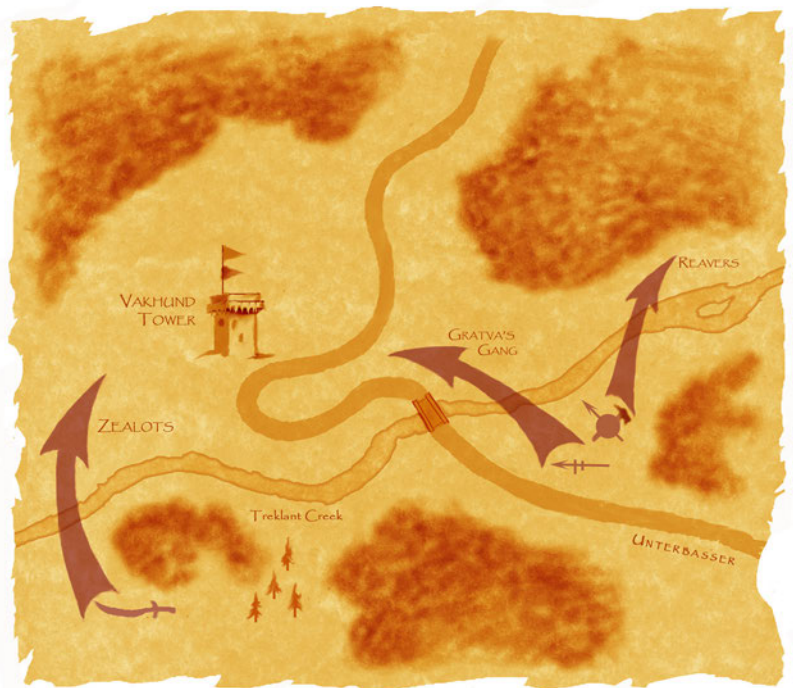
3 large burlap sacks filled with flour, a crate of dried meat, a large burlap sack of grain and another full of beans. There are several tin pans, some wooden spoons, a pile of fire wood, two chopping axes, a pile of kindling, a tinder box, a lantern, 12 torches, a small barrel of oil (equivalent of 12 flasks), and a pile of ten wool blankets. The door can be barred with a stout crossbeam. The door can take 50 points of damage before shattering.

Vakhund's first floor is constructed of wooden planks. There is a narrow arrow slit in each wall. The slit in the east wall is placed directly above the door on the ground floor. Inside, along the edge of the northern wall, an open wooden staircase leads to a trapdoor between the first floor and the roof. On this floor there are two small barrels containing 50 crossbow bolts each, 4 light crossbows, 4 shields, 4 spears, 4 small helms, 20 torches, an iron brazier, and 4 empty barrels. The Kaptane's bed sits next to the west wall. It bears a hay mattress. Underneath the bed is the iron tax box, locked with a padlock. Inside are 13gp, 56sp and 120cp.

The roof of the tower has a low wooden battlement, 2 iron braziers and a flagpole in its center flying the banner of Halpvæg. One can see as far as the tree line in every direction.

The day following their arrival, Stansley asks the characters, Meister Rothenheimer and Evanna to wait at Vakhund until he returns from his trip to Mejketek. He assures everyone he will return within the week. The two militiamen accompany the caravan to Mejketek, while Karl and Gottfried remain at the tower. This is the custom. Stansley neither asks nor does he want anyone to accompany him to Mejketek. It may upset the trading and his hosts. Kaptane Steigler backs up this request.

Three uneventful days pass after the caravan leaves. Any character straying far from the tower has a 2 in 10 chance of encountering a Wandering Monster (see previous encounter table.)



PART II: THE SWIFT AXE

Unbeknownst to the characters, two days into their trip, Stansley's caravan crossed paths with the Magdole Gang and some of Ubert von Beck's Reavers. They were all killed except Stansley and Frieland.

The Magdole Gang belongs to a larger organization of bandits headquartered far to the east of The Dampfrat and have traveled this far to locate and slay the members of a band of "sheriffs" who attacked their stronghold some weeks back. They are led by an urk named Gratva. While chasing the sheriffs, the Magdole Gang stopped at Jzunad where they met several of Ubert von Beck's Reavers, led by a man named Klaus. These sheriffs met up with Stansley after crossing the Treklant and before their arrival at Mejketek.

The Magdole Gang and Ubert's Reavers met at Jzunad and joined them because, as Gratva put it, "we being so close to human lands tis far more dangerous alone ya see." Klaus, for his part, just wanted extra help in getting the Rothenheimers, whom he thought were with the caravan. Though the Magdole Gang succeeded in killing the last of the sheriffs when attacking Stansley's caravan, Klaus was left dissatisfied when he discovered the Rothenheimers were at The Vakhund. Gratva agreed to help Ubert's Reavers with their attack on The Vakhund in exchange for a percentage of the loot gained there.

Everyone in the caravan was slain except Frieland and Stansley. Stansley was taken back to Jzunad. Frieland escaped the attack as he was indisposed when it began, and is making his way back to The Vakhund, thinking he has outrun the bandits. The bandits know Frieland has escaped, though, and are planning to use him as bait. Late on the morning of the 4th day after the departure of Stansley's caravan, the Magdole Gang arrives at The Vakhund just prior to Frieland's arrival.

So, the Magdole Gang and Ubert von Beck's Reavers are lurking together just south of Jzunad. Each has their reasons for attacking The Vakhund and each intends to fulfill their particular desires. Each group and its major members are described below. This is followed by the initial plan of attack. The Castle Keeper should bear in mind the various motivations, and personalities when playing out the attack on The Vakhund and then its aftermath.

THE MAGDOLE GANG

The Magdole Gang is little more than bandits or marauders who reside in an old keep on the eastern fringes of the Dampfrat. This group is but a small band of the Magdole Gang. It is a motley collection of races under the command of an urk warrior named Gratva. They killed the last of the 'sheriffs' with the attack on Stansley's caravan so their only real interest here is the loot to be gathered from The Vakhund. Gratva is not that intent upon the purported treasure though. He and his retinue would really rather just head back to their keep but being so close to what may be an easy haul is too tempting to pass up. Ultimately, Gratva is not willing to sacrifice too much on this attack and the two human bandits traveling with him care even less about the treasure.

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GRATVA, URK (This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 25 and AC 16. Its primary attributes are physical. He carries a chainmail shirt, large wooden shield, small metal helm w/nose guard, expertly made heavy mace conferring +1 to hit, heavy crossbow, 12 bolts, dagger, pouch holding 30pp, and a jeweled necklace worth 200gp.)

There are six urk warriors that are itching for some combat. They have very high moral and will fight ferociously and attack with near reckless abandon caring nothing for their lives.

URK X6 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d10, HP 8, AC 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with scimitar and carry leather armor, a small wooden shield and 1d8gp in jewelry or coin.)

There are 5 zjerd goblin warriors travelling with Gratva also. They are primarily used for missile support. These goblins are miffed about this "excursion" and flee if they have a chance. They dress in nothing but feathers and gold or silver jewelry.

ZJERD X5 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3 and AC 11. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry small round shields, short swords and short bows.)

Two human bandits travel with Gratva. These two are thoroughly evil sorts who are wanted north of the Treklant Creek. They have been traveling with the Magdole gang for some time. They actively fight, but have little loyalty to Gratva and greater loyalty to themselves. They are seeking an opportunity to escape further north.

BANDITS X2 (These are neutral evil, 1st level fighters. Their vital stats are HP 6 each and AC 13. Their primary attributes are strength, constitution and dexterity. They carry leather armor and shield, longswords and knives. One of them has a short bow with 14 arrows. They have heavy, woolen cloaks and 1d10sp apiece.)

There are 5 urk zealots from Jzunad here as well. They accompanied the group, at their master's request. They are here to gather corpses and to fight. They do not fear death and fight accordingly. A spell cast on the urks, the protection of Kleejd, bestows upon them a high armor class but reduces their movement. The spell causes the skin to turn hard and become ochre colored. (See 'The Protection of Kleejd' and the urk priest for details.)

URK ZEALOTS X5 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d10, HP 8 and AC 18. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry scimitars and axes. They are under the spell Protection of Kleejd.)

UBERT VON BECK'S REAVERS

Klaus, von Beck's right hand man in Bergholt, leads several of Ubert von Beck's pirates on this venture. Klaus and his friend Tindle are both familiar, though uncomfortable, with this area as von Beck occasionally works with the Magdole Gang on raids near the coast or trades with them. Klaus and Tindle picked up a few thugs in Bergholt and met up with some of

von Beck's privateers and headed to this region after receiving word Rothenheimer was in Halpveg and heading south. Having propitiously encountered some of the Magdole Gang at Jzunad, Klaus promised them a large portion of the loot if they helped him attack The Vakhund. Klaus did not tell Gratva that he is really after Herbert Rothenheimer and his daughter. Unbeknownst to Klaus, of the thugs Klaus contracted in Bergholt, a Geis' Tot, Markus, joined the lot.

Klaus is here to kill Herbert Rothenheimer or get his payment and kidnap Evanna. Nothing else concerns him. As soon as this is accomplished, he is ready to leave. To slake Gratva's need for treasure and maintain good relations with the Magdole Gang, he stays throughout the day of the attack and helps where he can but under no circumstance will he or Tindle place themselves in harm's way. They intend to leave with their reavers and thugs the night after the attack begins.

Klaus is a tall and thin man with wisps of hair on his head and chin. He is acne scarred, beady eyed, and thin lipped. His clothing is simple, fairly dirty and unkempt but quite functional. He speaks with a lisp and gesticulates wildly when excited. Klaus is motivated by little other than Ubert von Beck's desires. He is wily and quite unwilling to lay his life down for anything, obsequious when necessary, and blustering when useful. Klaus carries a longbow and spiked chain into battle. In combat, he uses the spiked chain to disarm or trip an opponent while Tindle moves in for the kill.

KLAUS (He is a chaotic neutral, 5th level rogue whose vital stats are HP 15 and AC 14. His primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence and constitution. His significant attributes are strength 15, dexterity 15 and intelligence 13. He carries a +2 short sword, a spiked chain that deals 1d4 points of damage and can be used to trip opponents at the same time, an expertly made suit of leather armor that confers a +1 to armor class, longbow, 12 arrows, thief's tools, and 100gp in coin and jewelry.)

Tindle is a fairly handsome man with stubble covering his face. His eyes are a piercing blue and his voice firm and powerful. Tindle walks "tall" and carries himself pompously, glowering at most that bother to talk to him. He is fairly loyal to Klaus, having traveled with him for nearly five years. Tindle carries a battle axe or a longsword with a shield into combat. As a combat tactic, he tries to knock opponents prone with his shield and deal with them one at a time or attack those Klaus has tripped.

TINDLE (He is a chaotic neutral, 3rd level human fighter and 2nd level rogue whose vital stats are HP 30 and AC 18. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity and constitution. His significant attributes are strength 16 and constitution 15. He carries expertly made scale mail conferring a +1 to AC, an expertly made large metal shield conferring a +1 to AC or to hit, a longsword, battle axe, thief's tools, platinum armet (5gp), 2 rings (25sp, 15sp), a belt with silver emblazoned upon it (10gp), and 10sp in a pouch.)

Krees is a human bandit working for Klaus. Krees is a difficult person to like. His asinine and pointlessly insulting comments invite hatred and anger. His immediate intention is to leave the Dampfrat and make his way to a bandit stronghold near Frisia.

KREES (He is a chaotic neutral, 1st level fighter whose vital stats are HP 4 and AC 15. His primary attributes are dexterity, wisdom and constitution. His significant attribute is: dexterity 17. He carries a short sword, longbow, studded leather armor, traveler's clothes and a pouch holding 10gp in coin.)

Nurjd is a veteran urk warrior, loyal and stalwart servant to Ubert von Beck and relentless enemy in combat when bent on revenge. He is a quick thinker who has survived many years as a pirate on the Interzæ due to his uncanny ability to estimate his enemies' will in combat.

NURJD (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 16 and AC 16. Its primary attributes are physical. It carries splint mail, a large, iron shield with painted markings on it that cause opponents a -1 to hit on a failed wisdom check, a spear, scimitar and 35gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

There are three humans in the band who were hired by Klaus in Bergholt. They are uncomfortable working with the orcs and goblins and quickly feel that this job presents more risk than they are willing to undertake. One, Markus, is a spy for the Geis'Tot and does not risk himself. He is going to try and kill Evanna as soon as he can and then attempt to make an escape.

MARKUS (He is a chaotic evil, 3rd level assassin whose vital stats are HP 14 and AC 13. His prime attributes are dexterity, intelligence and constitution. His significant attributes are: dex 14. He carries leather armor, a short sword and dagger.)

BANDITS X2 (These are neutral evil, 1st level fighters. Their vital stats are HP 6 each and AC 13. Their primary attributes are strength, constitution and dexterity. They carry leather armor and shield, longswords and knives. They have heavy, woolen cloaks and 1d6sp apiece.)

There are five orcs here. They are pirates from von Beck's flagship, are very loyal to von Beck and generally carry out his orders but are ready to return to the open seas as the land is not their friend.

ORCS X5 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 5 and AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry scimitars or axes, polearms, leather armor, small wooden shields and 1d4gp in coin and jewelry.)

THE PLAN OF ATTACK

Everyone agrees to allow Gratva to be in charge of the attack on The Vakhund. Not everyone intends to adhere to Gratva's plan though. Nevertheless, he plans to attack the tower from the east, the west and the south. He splits the lot under his command into three groups. The smallest group crosses the Treklant west of The Vakhund with the zealots; another group, lead by Klaus, crosses the Treklant east of the tower; the largest group remains in the tree line south of the Treklant and awaits the other two groups signal (a horn) before attacking. The idea is that Gratva, who is near the bridge, is to draw the defenders out of the tower and to the bridge and then the others move into attack. That, of course, is the plan. Yet, as everyone knows, the fog of battle causes many disruptions.

DEATH IN THE TREKLANT 13

Gratva intends to use a survivor from the attack on the caravan to draw the defenders out of the tower. Frieland escaped the attack. No one gave chase initially, thinking to have sport with him later. Gratva realized that the escapee could be used as a ruse to draw out Vakhund's defenders. By racing ahead of the escaping Frieland and positioning his troops correctly, Gratva could shoot Frieland as he approached the bridge and leave him wounded and on the ground. When the defenders come to rescue him, the attack would commence.

The group attacking from the west stumbles across Steigler, who is drunk to the point of passing out and trying to fish. Steigler puts up a fight but is killed. This delays the group's movement somewhat, but they continue going forward towards the tower. Whenever the fight begins, they come in 2-8 rounds late.

After crossing the Treklant, Klaus's group propitiously finds the Meister and Evanna on a walk. A scuffle ensues that leaves Rothenheimer mortally wounded and Evanna prisoner. Klaus gives the signal that he is ready to attack by blowing a horn. He and his men then move back across the Treklant and do not join in the initial attack on The Vakhund, much to Gratva's dismay and later, fury.

Gratva and his men remain in the treeline until Frieland runs out of the woods toward the tower. Gratva then orders the goblins to shoot Frieland before he reaches the bridge in the hope that the wounded person draws out the tower's defenders. If the characters opt to rescue Frieland, as soon as they reach him, Gratva's troops attack. If no rescue attempt is made, Gratva waits until the band from the west is in sight. He slays Frieland along the way as an after thought.

It is best that the Castle Keeper determine the composition of each attacking group bearing in mind the player character's capabilities and the following factors: Gratva leads the largest group which contains at least three goblin archers, Klaus leads the group which crosses the Treklant east of the tower and his unit should contain Markus, while the group crossing west of the tower should contain several zealots. The following is a suggested composition.

There are three groups. One group is moving to the east, one in the center and one to the west. The eastern group should contain Klaus, Tindle, Markus and three orcs. The central group should contain Gratva, Krees, three urks, 2 zealots, 5 zjerd and two bandits. The western group should contain Nurjd, two orcs, three zealots and three urks.

A MORNING AT THE VAKHUND

When the attack begins, Meister Rothenheimer and Evanna are on a walk east of the tower, and Kaptane Steigler is fishing on the Treklant about ½ mile west of the tower. Only Karl, Gottfried and the characters remain at the tower.

To build suspense and surprise for the players, the Castle Keeper should ask the players for their daily routines and position the characters accordingly prior to the attack or use the table below to randomly place the characters. The Castle Keeper is encouraged to place the characters in such a manner as to make the initial attack challenging, though not deadly.

- 1 Roof of the tower
- 2-3 Inside the tower
- 4 Several hundred yards west of the tower
- 5 Several hundred yards east of the tower
- 6-8 At the table outside the tower
- 9 On the creek bank or at the bridge washing
- 10 In the tree line south of the tower

The attack begins in this manner...

The rains have chilled the air and the afternoon's sun is hidden behind boiling gray clouds. A brisk wind whips from the north carrying the crisp smells of the Interzae. Earlier, Kaptane Steigler meandered down the Treklant Creek, promising to bring back trout for the noonday's meal. The Meister Rothenheimer, in an ochre cape, and Evanna, brilliant in a white ermine overcoat, just disappeared behind the trees at the pasture's edge on a morning walk up the creek.

"AAHHEEEEEEE! Beware! We are set upon! Heeelllllp!!" Frieland's voice shreds the air as he races down the road across the creek, screaming desperately. His clothing is tattered and his face streams with blood.

A few heartbeats pass and arrows course through the air. From the treeline across the creek emerge several savage goblins hefting bows. They let fly deadly shafts and one pins Frieland in the back. He falls to the ground, screaming in agony.

Gratva uses several strategies in the attack on Vakhund, but is not willing to sacrifice many of his group for the purported treasure. Gratva leaves the wounded Frieland in the road allowing a few Zjerd to be seen but not revealing his full strength. If this does not rouse the defenders of the tower, Gratva enjoins two urks to retrieve Frieland. They then place the wounded boy on a stake and drag this out to the bridge. Here, they prop him up and begin to torture him. Frieland screams in agony the whole time and pleads for help while the laughing urks go about their business.

He then attempts to draw the defenders out of the tower by pelting the tower with burning arrows. If this does not work, he tries threatening the defenders with torture should they not give over the treasure. He uses subterfuge and makes any promises to retrieve the gold without being killed. If unsuccessful, Gratva finally resorts to a direct assault. The archers are used to pin down anyone on the roof while the remainder of the group attack from several directions. While Gratva is bargaining, his troops will be busy constructing makeshift ladders and a battering ram.

If it so happens than any of the group is out in the open, the urks attack pell-mell and the urk zealots sneak up from the west and try to storm the tower.

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The attackers remain near the tower throughout the day, launching attacks as necessary. Other than the zealots, there is quite a bit of reluctance to fight an all-out pitched battle. A few casualties and the lot pulls back to regroup and rethink their strategy. At nightfall, Gratva pulls the bandits back to the south side of the Treklant, and makes camp in the woods near the road. An argument breaks out between Klaus and Gratva over the fate of Evanna breaks out and Klaus's failure to attack earlier in the day. Klaus claims he wishes to ransom her to the Rothenheimer family in Bergholt and bring the money back. Gratva wants an assurance that he will get his money and refuses to allow Klaus to take the girl. The argument ends when Markus, as instructed, makes an attempt on Evanna's life while none are paying attention to him. Before Markus succeeds, Tindle slays him. After the scuffle, Gratva and Klaus agree to take the girl to Jzunad to determine her fate. They leave early on the morning following the attack.

THE CLOSING

The Meister Rothenheimer yet lives, and it is imperative that the characters find him as the remainder of the adventure hinges upon this. There are two means of accomplishing this. The first is to have him wander back to the tower, falling mortally wounded into the hands of the characters or the characters can search the woods east of the tower and find him. Each encounter is described separately, but the outcome of both is the same.

In this encounter, the Meister returns to the tower.

Night has fallen and a deadly black pall hangs over the tower. A reddish light spills out of the thicket of trees across the creek and carries with it sounds of camp, and chants of war and death common to both goblinoids. Violent intent spills over the open spaces while a lone, hulking figure emerges from the shadows, moving toward the tower. The Meister Rothenheimer's arm raises, but no sound escapes him. He collapses outside Vakhund's door.

In this encounter, the characters find the Meister in the woods where he was attacked.

The Meister Rothenheimer lies propped up against a tree, his body broken and shattered. Blood pours from many wounds, his clothing is soaked a dark red. Words bubble out of his mouth in bloody spasms between haggard breaths, "Evanna... Evanna..."

The Meister has been shot with a poisoned arrow and become terribly infected and bleeds to death within a day (healing spells will cure the wound but not the infection). He makes a dying request of the characters that they find his daughter. He promises that returning her safely to his family in Bergholt will earn them a great reward. Should the characters hesitate in accepting the Meister's passionate plea, he assures them that any request will be met by his family and offers them his signet ring as a sign of faith and tells them to give it to his uncle with the words 'my body, my blood, my family.'

He has nothing else of value on his person, other than his signet ring (which he has not worn but kept hidden in a false pouch in his pants). There is a letter tucked in the same pouch, which the characters may take from Herbert (he does not willingly give it). It reads: "R. Our failed communication of late has left me little choice, either return to me what is mine or I shall have my Klaus settle the account permanently. V. Beck."

The V. Beck needs no explanation as everyone in this region knows of this famed pirate. If pressed about what is owed to V. Beck, Rothenheimer says that 'tis only gold, that greedy man could not wait but one settling moon for it.'

Meister Rothenheimer's signet ring is one of only seven family rings. It is worth 1000gp. Selling it in Bergholt could be problematic as it brings attention to the characters and some might wonder where they procured such an item. Crimes committed against citizens of Bergholt are prosecuted quickly and violently. Justice in Bergholt is unrelenting, unfair and deadly. Returning the signet ring to the Rothenheimer family and asking no reward, garners the characters the beneficence of the family. Selling the ring in Halpveg will, at best, bring 50% of its value. Selling the ring in Firstenfeld or further afield will bring its full value, if not more.

PART III: THE CHASE

Should the characters decide to rescue Evanna, take revenge on the attackers, or discover what happened to Stansley, they must follow the bandits across the Treklant Creek down the Unterbasser and into the Drakleed. The trail leads them to the site of the attack on the caravan and thence to Jzunad, a holy place for many goblins and their kin, or Mejketek, the goblin trading post. The bandits have made no effort to conceal themselves or their movements so they should be easy to track. The Wandering Monster Chart should be checked twice per day and once at night with a 2 in 10 chance of an encounter each time. Again, there is no duplication of encounters and Mirshka should be excluded. It is 30 miles from the Vakhund to the site where the caravan was attacked and 60 miles from there to Jzunad and 20 or so to Mejketek.

The Unterbasser stretches into the dreary south. Its muddy trails and byways are traveled by few other than merchants, goblins, and those of ill intent. There is no law here to protect the honest, so it is with much haste that wise travelers make their way between The Vakhund and Mejketek.

The surviving bandits move with great haste south along the Unterbasser and then break off east to Jzunad at that point where the caravan was attacked. It is unlikely the characters would be able to catch them since they are moving so fast. The place where the caravan was attacked and the one encounter between the caravan site and Jzunad are described below. Mejketek is also described as the characters may make their way to this goblin trading post should they not locate the trail leading to Jzunad.

THE CAMPSITE: This is the site where the bandits camped after attacking the tower. It is on the south side of the river, just inside the tree line and near the road. There are two stakes in the road, just up the road, with heads on them.

As you cross the bridge where the Unterbasser disappears beneath the dark bows of the Graffenvold, a grizzly reminder of the previous day's battle sits in the middle of the road. Two heads placed atop small poles rest awkwardly in the middle of the road. Kaptane Steigler's eyes stare blankly at the tower and an unfamiliar dwarf's head mimics his gaze. Beyond are the dying embers of a large fire, and the discarded scraps of a night's meals and one dismembered corpse.

The encampment provides little valuable information. Several yards beyond the smoldering fire, lies the dismembered body of Markus. Markus has no valuables, but a tattoo of two quarter-moons facing each other can be found on his back. Several pieces of Evanna's cloak can be located. The Kaptane's body can be found down the creek about 1/2 mile. The dwarf's head belongs to one of the "sheriffs" Gratva was after. The dwarf was a goblin slayer and one of the sheriffs. There are a series of small dots on his forehead. These are indication of the number of goblins he

has slain. Each dot representing one dozen goblins. He has 7 dots. The bandits left obvious tracks on the road leading south.

THE DEAD AND WASTED FOOD:

Two days travel further south the Unterbasser brings the characters to where Stansley's caravan was destroyed by the bandits.

Rounding a bend in the road, you are greeted by a long stretch of the Unterbasser hemmed in tightly by massive green firs dusted with snow. Down the road are the burnt husks of two wagons. Peaceful and still, the charred remains are the sole marker of those you traveled with merely a week earlier. The crates, boxes, sacks, and barrels are spilled, broken and scattered up and down the road, and the steers, tack and harnesses are gone.

Several days before, Klaus and Tindle were disappointed to discover that Meister Rothenheimer and Evanna were not with the caravan and decided that they must be at the tower, hence the attack on The Vakhund. A search of the area reveals few useful items as the bandits have thoroughly ransacked the caravan for anything of value. Conspicuously, only one corpse can be located. That is the headless corpse of a dwarf. It is the body belonging to the head at the campsite. The dwarf, a goblin slayer and one of the sheriffs who attacked the Magdole Gang, had come upon the caravan and decided to travel with it for safety. Searching him reveals nothing other than a body scarred from many years of horrible fighting. Again, the tracks of the attackers are easily followed. They lead east into the woods towards the Dampfrat.

UBERT VON BECK'S REAVERS: Should the characters try to back track the bandits who attacked The Vakhund, they must leave the Unterbasser and travel through the woods along an animal trail. The gang is easy to track for a ranger, as they are not making any effort to hide their passing. All tracking checks are conducted with a +3 modifier. If it happens to be raining or snowing that day, the checks are at -1.

After leaving the Unterbasser and a little over midway to Jzunad, the players encounter three orc reavers, Nurjd and Krees (if he survived), traveling along the same trail but heading back to the Unterbasser (for stats see previous section). This group split from the others after reaching Jzunad and is heading back to the Unterbasser and thence down the Treklant Creek to the Interzae. Their intention is to bring word of their actions to Uber von Beck. If possible, these are survivors from the attack on The Vakhund. If Krees has already been killed, the human Jeester Strumbert should be used as a replacement.

None of these are attentive to their surroundings because they are in an argument and are easily surprised (+2 on surprise checks). Characters capable of speaking orc discern that the three orcs are arguing about the quickest route back down the Treklant to the Interzae. An observant character notes the lead orc has a limp, and the human has a bloody bandage dangling out from under his hat.

The Dampfrat is a dark and silent place. The massive green boughs of the firs smother most noise and cast dark shadows even in the brightest of afternoons. A light snow filters from the sky, whipped by a spiteful wind that, for once, brings more than chill and bitter cold. The wind carries a noise, the muffled grumbling of voices not far in the distance.

From around the trees stomp three fierce orcs hefting long, thin curving blades and hauling small packs upon their backs. Their dress is unusual outside the bays and ports of the Interzae as they wear padded armors of bright colors and hats of colorful hue. With them is a lone human, attired in a similar fashion but with a great hooked polearm in tow and behind the lot is a very tall orc growling at the others and carrying a spear in one hand and shield in the other. The orcs are barking at each other in their angry tongue while the human limps quietly behind.

If confronted by obviously superior foes, the Reavers offer no resistance and ask for mercy and even offer their monies for safe passage. If interrogated, they may impart valuable information to the party. Keep in mind, these are life-long pirates. They have been interrogated in the past and have interrogated foes. They can instinctively sense danger and give the players false and misleading information to escape unharmed. If pressed or attacked they fight as is necessary, but flee at the first possible moment.

The leader, Nurjd, only divulges what is necessary to ensure his survival. The human, Krees, is quite willing to talk about what he believes to be Evanna's current location. Other than that, Krees knows little, as he is a newcomer to the group. The others divulge information as the Castle Keeper deems necessary to propel the game forward.

All of the Reavers know that "the blonde human woman" is being held at Jzunad. No one knows exactly where. Nurjd does not guess, but one of the orcs claims she is at the bar. Krees thinks she has to be taken deep into the Dampfrat to a stronghold named Magdole. They all claim to be working for Ubert von Beck, hoping the name will cause fear in the players and therefore save their lives (Ubert von Beck is a well know pirate). They say they were sent here to get money from Rothenheimer but they have no idea why the girl was taken prisoner. They impart that Jzunad is a temple complex erected to the god Kleejd. They tell the players of Klaus and Tindle, their leaders.

Krees, tired of the company of orcs, gladly joins the party if given the opportunity and disavows his loyalty to von Beck, offering to turn over his weapons and change his ways if offered a chance. He will not, however, go back to Jzunad. "A death sentence, ya see!" If allowed to travel with the party, he escapes at the first possible moment seeking to join another group of bandits that reside near Frisia. For Nurjd and Krees' stats see Ubert von Beck's Reavers above.

MEJKETEK

Should the characters continue to travel the road, for whatever reason, they come to Mejketek.

Deep in the wilderlands beyond the Treklant Creek lies the famed goblin trading post Mejketek. This is the northernmost outpost of the Kdyzj. These are goblins of the Kingdoms of Drazkleed and have rule over the lands they name Unkzjar. Merchants from the far ends of the Interzae come here and trade in all manner of goods, the most prized of which and for which the Kdyzj are famous are the small mechanical contraptions used for keeping time.

Mejketek is 60 miles south of Vakhund and about 2 days walk from where the caravan was attacked. Movement is slowed due to the sodden track and slick viscous mud. Use the Random Encounter Chart. Again, there is no duplication of encounters and Mirshka should be excluded.

As you top a rise in the road, a valley expands before you. It is broad and shallow with the Unterbasser twisting down its sodden middle. The valley is bare, except for one structure, and hemmed in by dark green firs on all sides. In the center of the marshy expanse is an almost round building with a conical roof. Smoke lazily billows out of its center and floats off into the skyline. Muddy tracks cover it all around and piles of debris are scattered hither and yon. Atop the roof is a small banner with the two curved blades, in black, crossed over and on a white background. There is a small woodshed attached to the rear of the building. In front of the building are three green skinned goblins dressed in thick furs and hefting long spears.

Mejketek is a trading and guard post used by the Kdyzj. No one is allowed further south of Mejketek without the goblins permission or a fight. The goblins here are guarded but not entirely unfriendly. Much trade takes place between these goblins and the humans to the north. They receive grains, beers, metal, worked items and other material they consider valuable. In exchange, they sell clocks, gems, iron ingots and other material besides.

The goblins here are a mixture of warriors, merchants and servants. Each one has their own place within the hierarchy of Mejketek, but overall leadership belongs to an old grizzled goblin named Cherktrag. He is keenly intelligent, capable of speaking Inzaen and his own tongue, enjoys barter and can 'read' a human face like an open book. The remainder are discussed below as warrants.

The characters, should they come in peace and make it obvious they are doing so, will be cautiously welcomed. In time, if the characters gain the goblins trust, they will be invited into the Hall for the near nightly gatherings. If not, the characters must stay outside while under the obtrusive watch of several of the guards.

There are perhaps 30 Kdyzj staying in Mejketek at the moment. This number swells significantly during the busy trading months, but trade is slowing as the snows of winter move in. There is

one Kdyzj merchant and his retinue of seven helpers here. The merchant was going to meet Stansley to purchase some goods. His wagons and other help are to arrive in about a day or so. Ten of the Kdyzj are warriors and lead by Gzeejert. The warriors switch watches outside the building. There are three at a time and they hold watch for about 6 hours at a time. Finally, there are ten servants of Cherktrag's. These are permanent here and maintain the building, gather food and do other chores as necessary.

CHERKTRAG X1 (This chaotic neutral creature's vital stats are HD 2d4, HP 7 and AC 12. His prime attributes are mental. He carries clothing and a thick leather jerkin that acts as leather armor, a dagger and 55gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

MERCHANT X1 (This chaotic neutral creature's vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 2 and AC 10. His prime attributes are mental. He carries clothing, a dagger and 155gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

MERCHANT'S HELPERS X7 (These chaotic neutral creature's vital stats are: HD 1d4, HP 1 and AC 10. Their prime attributes are physical. They carry clothing, tools and a dagger.)

GZEEJERT X1 (This chaotic neutral creature's vital stats are: HD 3d4, HP 10 and AC 15. His prime attributes are physical. He carries scale mail, shield, spear, small mace, a dagger and 25gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

WARRIORS X10 (These chaotic neutral creature's vital stats are HD 2d4, HP 6 and AC 13. Their prime attributes are physical. They carry leather armor, shield, spear, small mace and a dagger.)

The inside of the structure is not subdivided, all of the goblins live, sleep, eat, cook and undertake all other activities together in this one room. It is a crowded, filthy, noisy wreck in here at all times. A huge stone lined fire pit takes up the center of the room. The floor is bare (that is, those parts which can be seen) but covered in hay, old blankets, and a mess of other things like blankets and rugs. There are long benches around the fire pit and pushed up against the walls. At the southeast end of the room is a large wooden chair draped in loose, red, silken cloth and framed by two braziers. Crates, barrels, boxes and other assorted storage devices lie akimbo about the place. A dozen kettledrums sit on the floor to the west of the fire pit.

The most amazing object in the room however, is the ceiling. It has a burnished copper interior. It appears that a massive copper cone is suspended precariously from the roof. The item stretches nearly the entire length of the chamber. It is as if one were in a teapot and looking up at the lid. The copper cone suspended from the ceiling serves to heat the room. When a fire is lit inside the heat is reflected back by the copper. There are dozens of small holes drilled into it that let some smoke escape through the roof though generally this room becomes a haze of smoke fairly quickly should a large fire be lit.

Should the characters be friendly, the goblins take them in and converse with them. The Kdyzj know a lot about the region and can impart that to the characters. They are very willing to divulge the whereabouts of Jzunad and speak of the Zjerd in the Dampfrat. Cherktrag tells the characters to travel east and north to the Mammoth Tusk and take the trail heading east from that location. If they follow that trail, they will arrive



in Jzunad in a couple days time. They tell the characters that an urk priest is now in residence at Jzunad. They are not aware of Evanna. They know of the Magdole Gang and that they are headquartered in a large fortress on the east end of the Dampfrat known as the Magershole. Any other information that the goblins reveal is up to the Castle Keeper.

The characters may be invited to the goblin's nightly feasting. This is a raucous affair in which the goblins drink copious amounts of grog, chant chants, play the drums and cook mushrooms. The mushrooms are hallucinogenic and incapacitate any who eat them for 4-32 hours (they work on goblins for only 1-4 hours). A successful constitution check reduces the length of time by a half.

Should the characters show ill intent or be terribly disrespectful, the goblins fight. They try several gambits though. The first is to feign surrender and then attack or perhaps even leave the building and come back at night or when the characters are vulnerable. They also, if circumstances permit, feign friendship and get the characters drunk on the mushrooms and slay them while they are incapacitated.

THE MAMMOTH TUSK

If the characters take the advice of Cherktrag and travel north and east along a small trail for one day, they come upon a Kdyzj holy spot. A great mammoth died here many years ago and all passing Kdyzj stop to pay their condolences to the Great Mammoth, Chachkuk. There are trails heading east and south from this spot. Traveling south takes the characters deeper into the lands of the Kdyzj where they are not welcome.

The Unterbasser rises and falls with the hills in the region. Upon one such rise all the trees have been cleared and the debris common to the forest floor removed. To the side of the road lie the massive skeletal remains of a mammoth. It sits there, as if keeping watch over the road and all those who pass. It's bleak and yellow bones are festooned with small colorful ribbons of silk and cloth; all over the mammoth, other than the gleaming white tusks that is.

This is where a great mammoth fell and died. Mammoths are revered by the Kdzyj and are used as pack animals and war beasts, though this is very rare. To maintain the good graces of the 'lord of beasts' they pay homage to their dead. The little slivers of cloth all contain prayers for bringing the Kdzyj a new mammoth to serve them.

JZUNAD

It is important that when the characters arrive at Jzunad, the Castle Keeper decide whether to end the adventure here or to continue it in the second part of the Death on the Treklant series, "Dzeebagd." If the Castle Keeper is of a mind to end the adventure at Jzunad, Evanna is located in Barrow A, Area 3 under the watchful eye of the urk priest. Gratva, Klaus, Tindle and the other bandits have moved on to the abandoned fortress of Dzeebagd with Gratva and most of his retinue to arrange for the fate of Evanna. If the Castle Keeper has decided to continue the adventure, the characters should discover that Evanna has been taken to an old goblin stronghold deep in the Dampfrat called Dzeebagd. The adventure then continues in Part 2, Dzeebagd: Under Dark and Misty Ground.

Jzunad is a holy site to the goblins centered on a megalith that has been here for ages. The complex of buildings surrounding it, however, is of recent construction. A powerful urk priest and several religious zealots manage it. Jzunad, though a goblinoid temple, is not a closed place. Goblins, humans, giants and other nefarious agents of the Dampfrat frequent it to worship and conduct other activities peculiar to their lifestyles.

The characters arrive by a trail that leads to the temple itself. In addition to the megalith, there is an encampment for the urk zealots, a bar/storehouse, a prison wagon, a torture pit and several barrows. The encounter areas are arranged in such a manner that there is no specific chronological or special order of encounters, but events in one area almost always affect other areas of the complex.

Though by no means safe, Jzunad need not be considered unapproachable. Most of the inhabitants are accustomed to strangers coming here (including humans – though not dwarves or elves) and do not initially act violently unless provoked. If no one recognizes the players as the defenders of the tower, the current inhabitants care little about the travelers unless they cause trouble. The majority of the Magdole Gang has already departed, though several of those who attacked The Vakhund are staying at the bar unless the Castle Keeper decides otherwise.

THE TEMPLE

The trail ends at an open glade of vibrant green grass. In the center of the glade is a large, round earthen mound, built to a man's height and covered in thick flowing grass. Thrusting out of the embankment's center is a massive red megalith topped by a slab of black slate like a saucer atop an upturned cup. A rough hewn, ebony stone staircase rises up the mound's side. At the steps end are two ochre hued statues of urks hefting broad-bladed spears. Two hulking bare-chested urks are here as well. Their skin, unlike the typical greenish hue, is the color of burnt grass and red mud, each carries broad bladed axes and wickedly curved blades.

On the far side of the glade is a small wagon set amidst a bewildering array of stakes and poles roped together. The wagon has been formed into a cage with wooden bars. Clearly discernable from this distance are three human figures and a dwarf with their arms held aloft by heavy chains.

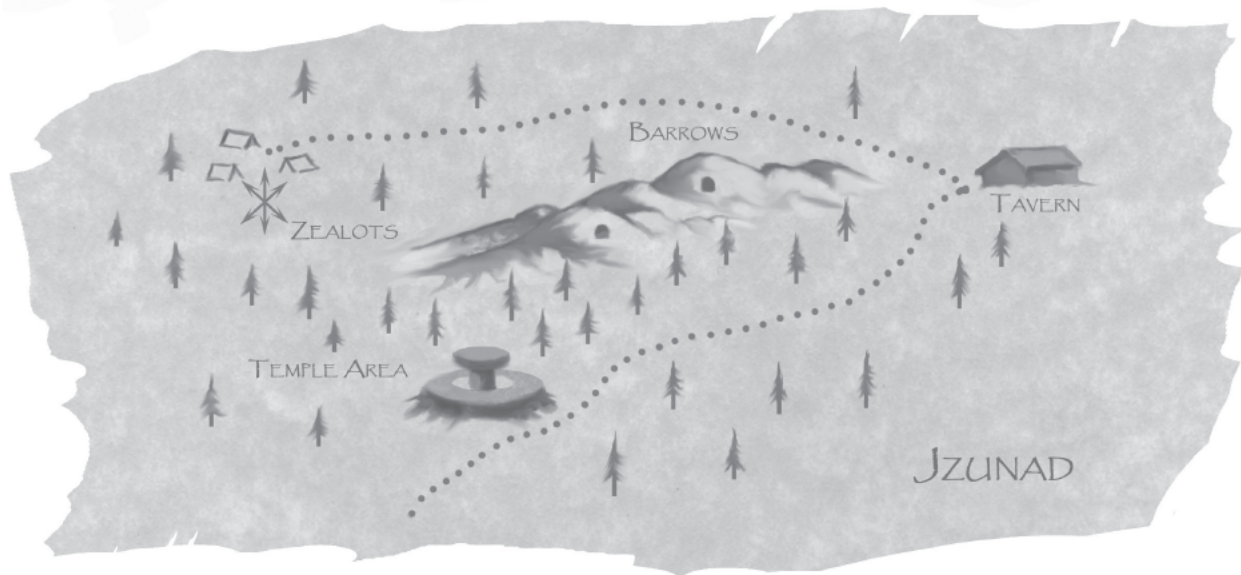
On the opposite side of the glade, a massive octagonal shaped building rests upon beaten and churned ground. Its split-log sides and thatched roof seem hastily constructed. From a hole in the center of the roof a ghastly smoke lingers and spills liquidly into the sky.

THE MEGALITH: It consists of an earthen embankment in the shape of a circle, with a large red megalith atop it. The stone has a large, oblong black disc on top of it. It is made of an otherworldly material that defies common perceptual understanding, but appears as red marble with white veins. Close examination reveals its exotic nature. The disc is in motion. The white veins wriggle like small worms and it grows and shrinks up to two feet within short periods of time. When touched by anyone who does not worship Kleejd, the disc delivers a withering welt of slow pain causing 1-4 points of damage over as many rounds. It continues to do so as long as the disc is being touched. The only access to the top of the slab is through the shaman's room in Barrow B, Area 3.

There are four urk zealots who are always on duty at the temple. There are 1-4 zealot guards on the temple platform while the remainder are within the vicinity and only 1-3 rounds away. These guards wear no armor, but are under the shaman's protective spell (*see The Protection of Kleejd, below*). They carry huge spears and cleavers. Their mission is to protect the temple, and unless the temple is approached or the wagon tampered with, they ignore any travelers.

One guard carries a horn and sounds it if an attack occurs. This brings the urk priest (*see Barrow A, Area 2*) and the urk zealots from their encampment. The Shaman *teleports* onto the black slab atop the column in 3-6 rounds (*see Barrow A for the shaman's teleportation ability*).

The urk zealots on guard duty at the temple are under the thrall of the urk high priest and the protection of Kleejd. They worry only about their prisoners and those approaching the temple. Because of the spells, they speak only when necessary and fight to the death if challenged.



URK ZEALOTS X4 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d10, HP 6, AC 18. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with scimitar or axe. They carry nothing other than their weapons.)

THE PRISON WAGON

The prison wagon sits north of the temple. Its wheels, harness and tacking have been removed and is now a temporary holding cell for those destined to be sacrificed to Kleejd. Stanley is being held here along with two other humans and one dwarf. Stanley, though injured and grieving for the loss of his friends and goods is eager to help the party and energetically assists them whenever possible. The other two humans are Ulrich and his wife, Marrianna. They traveled from the east by coach and were attacked near Jugensborg. Although they try to be helpful, between age, wounds and Ulrich's resignation to death, they can manage very little. The dwarf, Nilfur, is in descent health, and as soon as he sees the characters, his spirits immediately rise. He joins the party but knows little about Jzunad because he was brought here unconscious and has seen nothing other than his cell. These are detailed below.

Additionally, the Castle Keeper can place any number of other persons in the wagon, to replace player characters, for plot devices, to increase the party's strength, or to enhance the game. The guards at the temple watch any characters that approach the wagon, but they do not interfere unless the characters tamper with the wagon or attempt to free the prisoners. If the guards observe the characters attempting to free the prisoners, one will sound the horn, bringing the urk priest and the remaining zealots from the encampment.

MARIANNA: She is an older woman with graying auburn hair and a face etched with the wrinkles of a hard life. She is stalwart and has accepted life's twists and turns with grim resignation. If given the chance, she fights viscusly to make her escape and gladly introduces the characters to a very grateful family and community if they ever make it to Bergholt or Firstenfeld.

MARRIANA (Her vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 3 and AC 10. She has no primary attributes. She has no equipment.)

URLICH: He is Marrianna's husband, was grievously injured and is barely capable of walking. The older man is pained and believes his life is spent. This resignation remains despite his wife's pleas. It is only overcome if escape appears certain.

URLICH (His vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 1 and AC 10. He has no primary attributes. He has no equipment.)

NILFUR: The dwarf was kidnapped recently as he wandered lost in the Graffenvold. He had been tracking a group of people headed into the Dampfrat for a lord in Bergholt. Though he will try his best to lie and obscure the nature of his business in the Dampfrat, the dwarf is very helpful to the party. He is an experienced traveler and warrior.

NILFUR (He is a neutral good, dwarf, 3rd level ranger whose vital stats are HP 24 and AC 11. His primary attributes are strength and dexterity. His significant attributes are: strength 14, dexterity 15 and constitution 13.)

THE TORTURE PIT

A grisly site lies on the far side of the wagon. Here, a shallow and wide pit festooned with tall stakes, ropes, manacles and benches drenched in blood and ichor and gore holds a horrible site. Within the pit are the remains of giant. He has been tethered to the ground, his limbs obviously pulled from their joints, his body bear to the sun and the cold and the weather. Yet, this is not the worst of it. He has been partially de-fleshed. His lower legs are but bone and sinew with some small strips of meat clinging here and there. His bicep muscles have been removed, his ears shorn off and his chest horribly mangled with strips and ribbons of flesh torn away revealing muscle and tissue beneath. Rats, mice and crows peck at the giant. Roaches, beetles and other tiny vermin crawl about him.

And then it groans...

This horrid spot is the torture pit the urk priests uses to make his enemies suffer. All who displease him are taken here and slowly

dismembered and de-fleshed by Pejznog, the Flayer. Currently, a giant who happened to wander into Jzunad and caused a bit of trouble when he realized an urk priest was in residence, was taken down and placed here for the priests pleasure. The priest comes here nightly along with Pejznog and several other zealots to strip flesh from the giant and eat it in front of him. The priest then heals as many wounds as is possible hoping to keep the giant alive for a very long time. The giant has been here for a week or more.

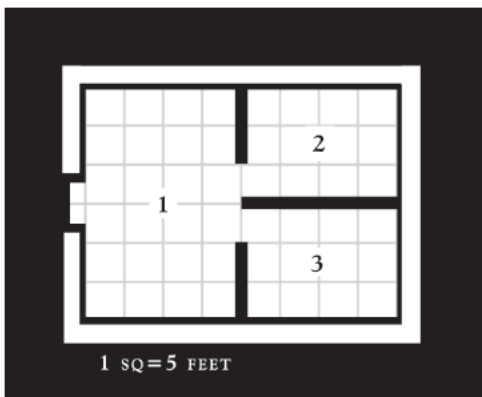
The giant, a fearless and noble Trottigen, is named Hurstinvegnig. He is dying, albeit slowly, and there is little that can be done about it. The giant is still alive though. If roused and given some water or food or healed, he comes out of his stupor, though only for small bursts of time. He is willing to give his name so that it can be passed on to his brothers in Kreutzmark and the nature of his death at the hands of this foul urk priest from lands far to the east. He asks the characters take his life so that he suffers no more.

If the characters do take his life and after speaking to him, they receive a boon as the giant passes into the Maelstrom. Each character who is good in nature receives a +3 to any one attribute for 24 hours.

THE PREPARATION HOUSE

A split-log, octagonal structure sits in a trampled clearing near the red column and mound. It is a broad low building with a thatched roof and no windows. Its large wooden door faces the temple and another faces away. The foul stench of decay and rot pervades the air around it. The ground in the front of the complex is muddied with bits and pieces of broken bone and slabs of flesh scattered haphazardly about while the mud bears a crimson hue.

This is the Preparation House, the area where prisoners are shredded in preparation for the urk priest's needs. The complex consists of three rooms. The overseer, Pejznog, is inside going about his ghastly work. He pays little attention to those who enter the abode's first chamber, for this is not a sacred place and many make their way into its confines. He only glances occasionally at any intruders to make sure they are not interfering with his work. If disturbed, bothered, questioned or distracted from his work, however, he goes berserk and attacks the party.



PEJZNOG: "The flayer of the dead and living." This great urk, huge after years of working Preparation Houses for the god Kleejd, loves inflicting pain on all those around him. Pejznog is blithely unaware of his surroundings the majority of the time as his mind is blurred by the constant use of exotic herbal grogs and potions. Only when distracted from whatever business he is at, does he react. Then, his anger rises and he attempts to kill whoever pestered him. Only the urk priest has any control over the flayer.

PEJZNOG (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 27, AC 14. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a massive, jagged-edged meat cleaver that does 1-10 points of damage. The weapon's edge flakes constantly and leaves slivers of metal in inflicted wounds so that on a roll of 19 or 20 it inflicts a further 1d2 points of damage. He has a leather smock, heavy pants but is otherwise unadorned.)

AREA 1

This door swings inward onto a grisly site as the horrid smell of a slaughterhouse engulfs you. A massive red stained wooden table sits heavily in the center of a large triangular room. Upon it and on the floor are piles of bone and heaps of rotting flesh. The fetid remains of innumerable creatures are piled about the room as if an orgy of butchery had occurred here. A gigantic cleaver and saw, encrusted with blood, hang on the wall to the right, while a brazier smolders to the left. At the apex of the triangle is an open space, entry into rooms that lie beyond. A rustling can easily be heard as shadows dance in the portal.

This is the chamber in which the bodies of those used by the urk priest are prepared. Generally all the tissue is removed and the bones kept separate. From the tissue certain organs are kept separate – the heart, liver, brain, etc. The priest also uses these in rituals.

If Pejznog comes in here, he uses the cleaver as a weapon. With it he deals 1-10 points of damage.

AREA 2

Storeroom: Looking beyond the open portal into this room is a bizarre sight. There are three dismembered corpses laid on large wooden tables. In front of the tables is a huge, pale urk, with rolls of fat like cascades of white lava. It grunts and groans as it picks up a barrel of bones. Hanging on the walls about the room are all manner of ghastly cutting and sawing instruments illuminated red by a brazier of blazing coals.

This is the flayer, Pejznog, and it is the only time the characters catch him by surprise. For several rounds he tries to pick up the barrel. When finished, he notices the players. Although he remains busy, he keeps an eye on the characters and never turns his back to the entrance again. Other than directly pestering Pejznog, he is not bothered unless someone enters Area 3. It is his personal room. Pejznog is a powerful fighter though somewhat slow. His hands are powerful weapons but he uses the instruments on the wall if a fight ensues. The corpses are from the caravan.

AREA 3

Pejznog's Bed Chamber: Beyond the opening to this room is a huge pile of hay with many tattered woolen blankets thrown upon it. A fire pit has been dug into the floor and a small fire burns within. A pot of thick steaming soup rests beside it.

A search of the bedding reveals several pouches of valuables that the flayer has filched from his victims. There is an assortment of coins totaling 100gp and jewelry valued at 200gp.

A COLD DRINK AT DZEEGLE'S

This building was formerly a stable and storehouse for those constructing the embankment, barrows and other places at Jzunad. Since construction has stopped, it has now become a bar for the urks, goblins and others that gather at Jzunad. Though no one owns the establishment, Dzeegle, an urk, currently runs it. He has several large vats sitting outside the rear of the building in which he brews a foul tasting though stout brew.

The trail leads to a large trampled clearing in which stands an expansive, ramshackle structure. It has a thatched roof, split-log and bark siding and a single mud chimney. They rest upon each other as if each was constructed independently and were simply dumped here for convenience. In front of the building is a broad porch with a stone fire ring built in its center. Several chairs and tables are scattered upon the porch, with mugs, plates and the rubbish of a recent dinner upon them. The bitter rumbling and choked laughter of goblins echoes from within.

In the mud next to the porch lies a single urk. His fat vicious head rests upon his arms and his bloodshot eyes look skyward. Uhhhhhhhg... "deeg'thud" he says, and continues to peer upwards.

This urk is harmlessly drunk and offers little resistance if roughed up. He can only speak urk and if the characters choose to wake him, he just blabbers on about the recently arrived mead. Those inside hear any commotion or conversation and investigate. Anyone who looks through the doorway is likely spotted right away. Though everyone is suspicious, none of the occupants initially act with hostility. Bandits and others passing through have accustomed those here to strangers.

Beyond the loose hung doors is a large room with a planked floor rotting in many places. Darts of light shoot through many cracks in the ceiling, and a blue haze of pipe smoke lingers thickly in the air. In the center of the room is a stone lined fire pit and a long thin table piled high with dried meats, mugs and other refuse for drinking and mealtime eating. Around it is gathered four hulking urks and two haggard looking humans. A tapped keg sits alone near the table of urks, slowly dripping its contents into a puddle on the floor. Sitting at a low table perilously close to the door, playing cards, are four naked goblins playing cards. Only their feathers give them away as Zjerd. The room silences immediately, and one of the urks stands as you enter.

As soon as the goblins realize there is no danger, they return to their game, ignoring the party. The two urks are not currently under the spell of the priest. Though drunk, they manage to fight if challenged. The two humans are part of the Magdole group, but they do not recognize the characters. The urk rising from his seat is Dzeegle, the bartender. To make sure the characters are legitimate customers, he walks toward them in a threatening manner.

Though aggressive, Dzeegle does not want to fight. He sizes up the party before serving them and asks sidelong questions to determine where they have come from and where they are going. An astute beer taster may notice that the beer is the same as that from the caravan.

The three other urks at the table pay little attention to the newcomers unless a fight breaks out. They continue gambling and drinking. The tone of their conversation is muted and dull. However, it does concern the recent attack on the tower and, by careful listening, or joining in the conversation, it can be gleaned that a girl has been taken to Dzeebagd by the Magdole Gang (or that the urk priest has taken her - depending on the ending the Castle Keeper chooses). Other information is left to the Castle Keeper's discretion, such as the names of those involved in the various activities over the past week, the argument at the tower, and false information to throw the players off the trail.

Dzeegle the urk runs the bar. He is an average sized, ugly, green skinned urk and of a decidedly evil temperament. Though he is unfriendly Dzeegle is well disposed towards gathering copper and silver. He is always open to the possibility of beneficial financial arrangements resulting from new found acquaintances and betrays his kin and acquaintances in a breath should coin present itself. He treats most patrons with a level of disrespect commonly reserved for mortal enemies.

One of the humans is a member of the Magdole Gang and the other a member of Ubert von Beck's Reavers. They have been left here to either watch over the girl and insure she is not killed or they have been left here awaiting the outcome of the negotiations at Dzeebagd.

DZEEGLE (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 8 and AC 14. Its primary attributes are physical. He carries scale mail, club, small axe and 1d4gp in coin and jewelry.)

URKS X3 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d10, HP 8 and AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry scimitars and axes. They are currently drunk and receive a -2 penalty to all to hit rolls and attribute checks.)

GOBLINS, ZJERD X4 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3, AC 11. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry short swords, short bows and small round shields. Otherwise they are generally naked.)

BANDITS, 2 (These are neutral evil, 1st level fighters whose vital stats are HP 6 and AC 12. Their primary attributes are strength, constitution and dexterity. They carry leather armor, longswords, knives and 2-8gp in various coin.)

This is a one-room structure. At the far end of the bar are piles of boxes, crates and sacks. If investigated, several of the newer crates have the stamp of Halpveg upon them. They contain apples, potatoes, metal ingots, crossbow bolts and silk. These were stolen or legitimately purchased from goblin merchants. What remains of Stansley's goods are in here as well. The far end of the bar is piled high with boxes, sacks and racks of drying meat.

A WARM TENT AND A DECENT MEAL

The tangy smell of burning pine wisps through the thick firs ahead. A well-beaten path twists amongst the trees and leads to a small clearing with a large fire raging in its center. Several crimson colored urks stand near the fire, their massive hands outstretched to the flames and their great guffaws of laughter breaking the silence. Surrounding the clearing are black canvas bedrolls tucked neatly between and underneath the trees. A large grinding stone sits near the fire and a stack of spears and assorted polearms rests nearby.

The zealot's camp consists of 18 sets of bedrolls. There are 5 urks at the camp when the party arrives. Two are at the fire, one is asleep, one is dressing a recently killed deer, and one is in his tent mending his armor. They are very aggressive and attempt to scare the players away with threats and resort to violence if necessary. There is little information to be gained from these urks. The guards know little about the recent events and care less. Their conversation consists of joke after joke.

There is treasure spread throughout the sleeping blankets that include trinkets and coin collected over years of travel and plunder worth 97gp. There is one particularly fine expertly made battleaxe (+2 to damage) in the area with the sleeping urk. Seven of the remaining oxen from the caravan are tethered up nearby.

URK ZEALOTS, X5 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 8, 5, 5, 4, 1 and AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with club or small axe for 1-6 points of damage. They carry leather armor, small wooden shield and 1d4gp and 2d12sp.)

BARROWS OF THE DEAD

The dense branches of the fir trees open to reveal two large earthen mounds, starkly bare of any vegetation. The mounds are surrounded by muddy trails, pools of brackish water, shafts of wood and broken tools. The pall of death lingers over them like an abysmal cloud.

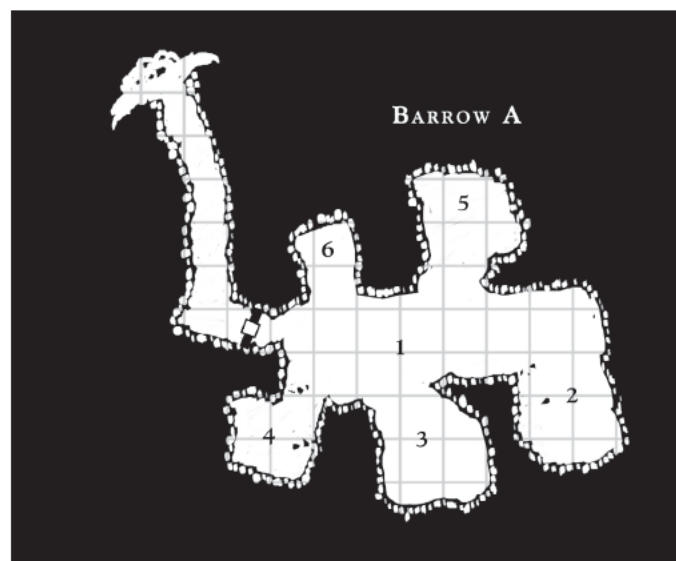
These barrows house the Shaman and the first few 'Children of Kleejd' that he has summoned. If Gnarjd has not been warned either by the guards, the bell, the glyph or some other method that interlopers are in Jzunad, he is located in Area 2.

BARROW A

Giant obsidian slabs frame the entry to this mound. The narrow passage beyond is dark, moist and cramped. From within its confines, a low pitched, barely audible keening is heard.

The entryway is just over three feet wide and six feet high. The hall extends 20 feet then swings left to a wooden door. Fighting in the passage is cramped and combat modifiers should be adjusted accordingly.

A rune of protection is upon the floor in front of the door. Anyone making a successful intelligence save (CL 2) notices the rune. It is a spiral set within a cloudbank, the sign of Kleejd. When the rune is passed by or stepped on by any other than a zealot or the urk priest, the rune releases a bluish gas in the shape of heavily muscled arms. The arms wrap around the person stepping on the rune and immobilize them causing 1-2 hit points of damage per round for 1-4 rounds unless they make a successful wisdom saving throw (CL 2). A held individual must make a successful strength save to escape (CL 2) the arms. At the same time, it emits a loud whistling sound. The gas cannot be physically attacked, but it can be dispelled. The mist dispels automatically in 1d4 rounds. A *bless* or *consecrate* also dispels the mist. The arms can hold only one individual and, unless the character is very large and blocks the entire passage, others can pass around him. The door opens freely.



If this ward is activated, the priest investigates and attacks the interlopers if he feels he can win the combat. Otherwise, he runs to Area 3 and transports to the black slab atop the column. From there, he calls upon all the zealots to attack the intruders.

Gnarjd is an old and powerful urk priest. His travels have taken him over several thousand miles and many decades to come to this area and fulfill a mission given him as a youngster. His mission has not been revealed to any, but the genesis of his holy war is in the making. All his life has been spent looking for the blood column at the center of Jzunad and accumulating the knowledge to cast the incantations to bring forth the "Children of Kleejd." He now intends to build his army and begin his war.

GNARJD, URK (*This is a chaotic evil urk priest whose vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 28 and AC 18. Its primary attributes are constitution, intelligence and wisdom. His significant attributes are constitution 14, intelligence 16 and wisdom 15. He carries a +2 scimitar, thick gray wolf skin cloak and staff. He can cast spells as a 4th level cleric. He can cast the following number of spells 0th-4, 1st-4, 2nd-2.*)

SPECIAL: *Gnarjd suffers from a peculiar lycanthropy brought on by his religious zeal. When particularly aggrieved or desirous of combat he begins to change form and begins to assume some of the aspects of a jackal. Gnarzd appears as a large jackal with red scaly skin on his underside and tail, with bristling white hair on his back and shoulders. His long claws and gnashing fangs can deliver terrible blows while his very countenance may strike fear into the hearts of the bravest of men. While in this state, his movement rate is doubled and he receives a +2 to hit and damage. He cannot cast spells nor can he break off from combat. He can voluntarily undertake this once a day and it takes him two rounds to assume the form. While assuming this form he is considered AC 5 with normal hit points. When he finally assumes the new form, he heals all damage taken previously.)*

AREA 1, ENTRY:

The door opens into a large room quivering with the deep red light from several braziers. The floor is paved with small gray rocks and the walls are constructed of the same massive black slabs as those in the passageway. In the center of the room is a broad, rock-lined pit. There are five portals leading out of the chamber, each with a brazier next to it.

Although there are several separate chambers, they are situated so that all areas inside the mound are at least partially visible from the others, excepting the inner portion of Room 2. The Castle Keeper should bear this in mind when running the encounter.

AREA 2, SLEEPING CHAMBER:

This is a small, narrow chamber with a fireplace and rock chimney. It bears a wood-framed chair, and a plain bed with a wooden trunk at its foot. A large gleaming scimitar leans against the wall next to the bed.

This is the Shaman's sleeping chamber. The simple wooden trunk banded with metal is not locked. Within are two

ceremonial bearskin cloaks with the heads still attached, thick boots and wool pants, a pair of fur gloves, a huge fur hat, a small metal box about arm's length and no taller than a mug for beer. The scimitar is a +2 enchanted scimitar that never dulls or rusts. He carries this scimitar with him into battle.

The metal box is locked. The lock is easily picked, but if picked without the correct key, a small glob of poison in a glass tube inside the mechanism breaks and spills onto the lock. An ungloved touch of the lock imparts a mild poison, time having reduced its effect, which causes 2-5 points of damage, the damage accruing at one point per round. Within the box is a small pouch containing 15 gems (each valued at 50gp), 60gp and a gold ring with a ruby (500gp).

AREA 3, WORKROOM:

This chamber is the Shaman's workroom. If the adventure is to end with this module, Evanna will be here, tied and gagged in a chair.

Two long wooden tables dominate this broad room. A plush chair, hung with thick blankets and skins is in the corner, and a cauldron filled with a black liquid sits over a low fire. A shelf against the back wall is full of boxes, cases, and small ceramic jars.

The urk priest is currently preparing a concoction for his protection spells. The jars and boxes contain various materials such as hogswart, rat jaws, cockroach shells, hemlock and aspen leaves, roots and other items used for mystical purposes. There are some rare items, such as the scale of an Amber Dragon, the tooth of a paladin, the beak of an eagle, and ruby dust (the value of these items vary but collectively range up to 1,500gp). There is also a huge vat of blood and entrails.

AREA 4, LIBRARY:

This small aperture contains nothing more than a rickety wooden shelf bearing a few scrolls, vials and a box. On the center of the floor, carved into the flagstones, is a bizarre series of glyphs forming a circle.

This is the Shaman's library. Three scrolls bear instructions, written in urkish, detailing various and sundry concoctions and spells including the protection spell the Shaman casts on the zealots to increase their armor class. The box contains several quills and a small sharpening knife. The vials contain writing ink. The engraving on the floor is a teleportation rune. Speaking the urkish command word for war transports the speaker to the black slab on top of the column at the temple.

AREA 5, STORE ROOM:

This room is crammed with boxes and crates and a pile of polearms.

The boxes and crates contain foodstuffs, clothing, armor and the bric-a-brac of day-to-day living. There are 6 halberds in decent condition.

AREA 6, GUARD CHAMBER:

A wooden table with a pile of meat on it, two chairs, and a large open barrel are in this room.

Two orcs are usually in this room. In the event the characters have made it this far though, it is unlikely they are here. However, this is best left up to the Castle Keeper. The barrel contains water.

BARROW B

This barrow is used to house and raise the “Children of Kleejd” which the urk priest plans to use in his holy war.

A huge slab of black rock covers the entry to this mound, locked in place by smaller square stones. A black space peers out from around its imperfect fit and the smell of death coalesces here. The area around the mound is eerily quiet.

The slab of rock can be rolled to the side once its supports are removed. It reveals a muddy, cramped passage. If entered, creaks and moans rise from within the bowels of the mound. The children of Kleejd below sense the characters and are immediately drawn to them.

The descending passage rapidly expands into a wide, low-slung room. An appalling sight greets your eyes. Several figures saunter out of the shadows toward you, ghastly creatures half man and half jackal with red and white fur, large gnashing teeth and slender hairless tails.

A horde of the children of Kleejd inhabits this lower room and attacks any who enter other than the priest. The wide room has a low ceiling, which hampers combat. Several of the children, yet to be completely summoned, litter the corners. The only interesting object in the room is a banner. It leans against a wall, tightly furled. When unfurled, the emblazoned symbol of the urk god of death, a blood red bone set on a black background, stares at the characters.



CHILDREN OF KLEEJD, X4-16 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d12 and AC 11. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with one bite for 1-6 damage and two claws for 1-4 damage.)

CLOSING THE ADVENTURE

The first decision the Castle Keeper must make when closing this adventure, is whether or not to continue it with the next adventure in the series. If continuing it, the players must be given a reason to go further into the Dampfrat and on to Dzeebagd. The easiest and most convenient method is to have Evanna taken there and the characters find out and then give chase. Other than this, the characters could learn of Dzeebagd through any number of the inhabitants (to include Marianna and Dzeegle) and make the decision to go there and kill off the rest of the Magdole Gang.

Should the adventure end here and the characters manage to escape Barrow A with Evanna or immediately vacate the area of the temple, the Gnardj does not give chase. He does not have enough power for a prolonged search and fight at this juncture, and only tries to control events at the temple. Also, he has traveled a long time and over great distances to come here. He will not sacrifice himself senselessly in revenge or to regain some lost prisoner. His mission is far more important than defeating the party.

The trip back to Vakhund is uneventful unless the Castle Keeper chooses otherwise. However, the repercussions of the raid on Jzunad are far reaching. The priest, should he survive, goes to the Zjerd capital and begins to raise the ire of the goblins there and instigates war. He then returns to Jzunad in force and continues the process of summoning the children of Kleejd.

The players, if Evanna is not rescued and they continue their search for her, become embroiled in a war that forever changes the political landscape of the southern Interzae. The adventure continues in Part II of The Death on the Treklant Trilogy, **Dzeebagd: Under Dark and Misty Ground** on the following page.

DZEEBAGD



"I believe our sun is setting my dear cousin," Me'enup hisses in a nearly inaudible tone and stares into the warm stagnant pool of water at his feet. The stifling and earthy odor of the tunnel fills his nostrils and months of accumulated filth forces pain to his eyes. "It seems fate has dealt us a horrible blow... I pray and no answers are forthcoming... I cannot clear my mind nor find balance. I am dying my cousin and it seems you all must die with me!"

Ti'ulan looks up at Me'enup with unblinking eyes, remorse wrinkles the scales at the back of his mouth, "I know m'Lord, we all feel the time is near. We can run and hide no longer. I am lame; my brother has lost all his strength, your wife is dying and your child . . . I yearn to see the sun's eye shine upon my home, to feel the breeze from our high keeps, to walk the paths of my forefathers. This will never again be, I am ready m'Lord."

The pronouncement is final and the knell of death struck clear in the red wavering light of the fire. Me'enup places his talons tenderly upon the brow of his cousin . . .

A NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION

A note on pronunciation: Almost every word is spelled phonetically. The difficult combinations are described below.

zj or jz - This is an interchangeable combination and should be pronounced by combining the two letters, placing the tip of the tongue to the front end of the roof of the mouth and at the base of the upper incisors, exhale, drop the tongue to the rear of the lower incisors while pronouncing the letters.

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dz - This combination is pronounced similarly to "zj" but the tongue is initially located directly behind the front incisors.

' - This indicates a glottal stop.

All double letters are long.

ie - Pronounced as a long "e".

ei - Pronounced as a long "i".

eu - Pronounced as "oi" in oink.

ou - Pronounced as "ou" in ouch.

u - Pronounced as "oo" in look.

th - Pronounced as "th" in thus.

The "a" in Inzae is long and the "e" is short.

INTRODUCTION

Only the Castle Keeper should read this module with those boxed sections read aloud to the players. Do not make maps available to the players until the adventure's end, except the regional map. If playing as a stand alone the party should contain 4-8 characters of levels 2-4. The average level should be 3 and cumulative levels should be about 16. A Ranger, Cleric, and several Fighters greatly enhance the chances of survival.

This module continues the adventure began in "Vakhund - Into the Unknown", though it can be played independently. If used as a continuation of "Vakhund", alter the Magdole Gang's makeup in accordance with previous occurrences. All other events and encounters can remain unchanged.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

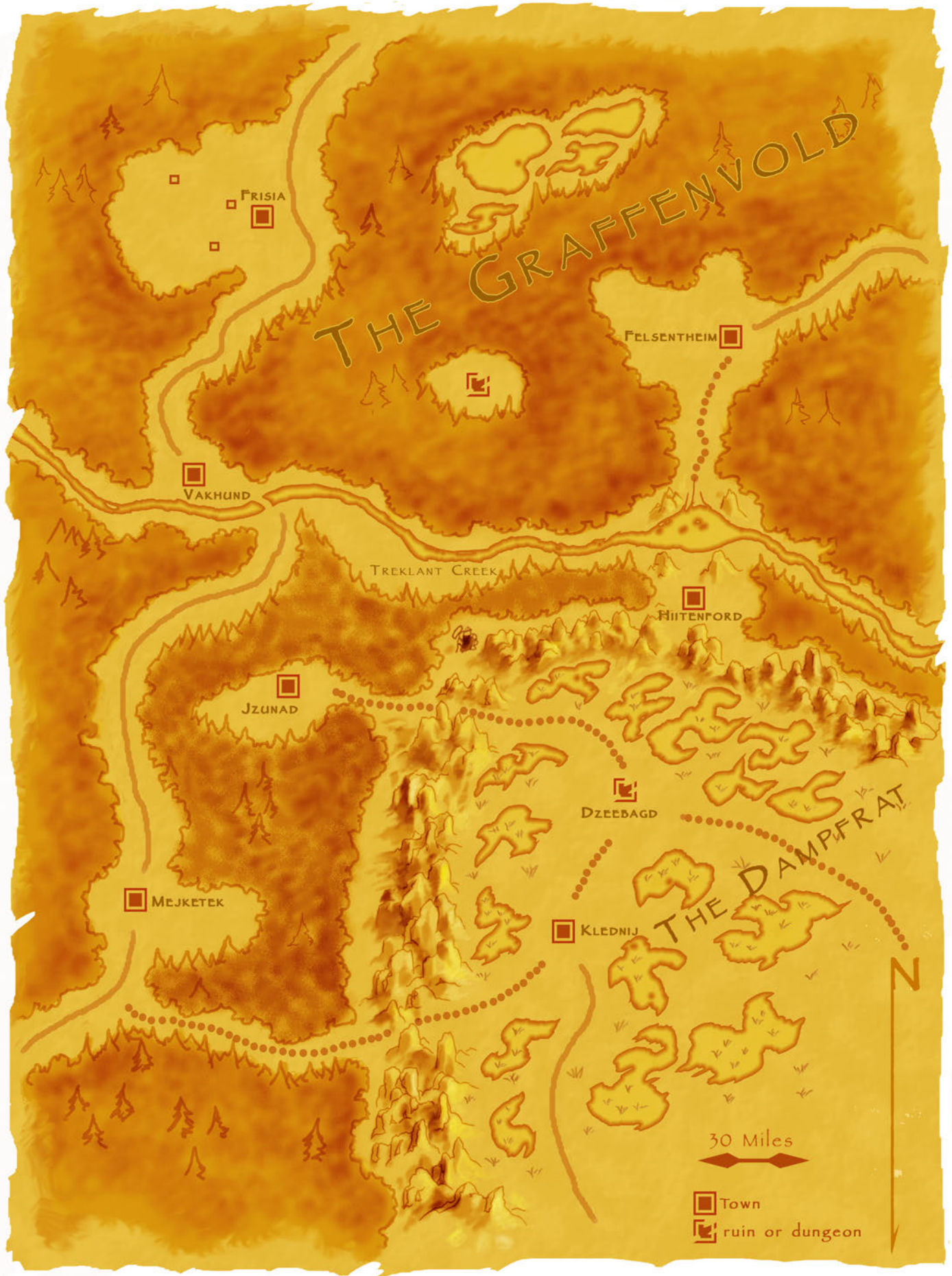
This adventure takes place in a swampy upland named the Dampfrat located in forested region known as the Graffenvold. The Dampfrat borders the frontier region of a sparsely inhabited land to the north, the barony of Halpveg. The entire upland is bordered by an uplift called the Shatten Escarpment. The Zjerd, a tribe of ruthless goblins, inhabit this region. Dzeebagd is an abandoned fort centrally located in the Dampfrat. Several unrelated plots are unfolding here when the characters arrive.

First, a merchants's daughter, Evanna Rothenheimer, was kidnaped by a local bandit organization and taken to Dzeebagd for safekeeping. She is being given over to a "neutral" third party until the negotiations for her release are settled. (See Vakhund: Into the Unknown, for further details on her kidnaping.)

Second, there is a group of refugees hiding in the dungeon at Dzeebagd. They are being hunted down and systematically killed by assassins sent to the Dampfrat for that express purpose. The assassins are currently roaming the Dampfrat awaiting their next chance to strike.

Finally, a local goblin warlord is gathering an army for conquest. He is attempting to reclaim Dzeebagd in an effort to broaden his sphere of influence.

The characters arrive in this milieu of activity to be pushed and pulled in many different directions. The plots are detailed in the appropriate sections of the module.



INVOLVING THE PLAYERS

If the players are continuing the adventure from Vakhund, they are looking for Evanna. Other reasons can easily be developed and those listed should be altered to complement the campaign setting in which the adventure is placed. The following lists possibilities for placing the players in the Dampfrat:

- 1: The Rothenheimer family has hired the players to locate and rescue Evanna.
- 2: A local Baron has hired the players to reconnoiter the Dampfrat and Dzeebagd to determine the nature of goblin activity in the region.
- 3: A noble has hired the players to find out why a group of adventurers entered the Dampfrat some months previous and what happened to them.
- 4: The players have been hired to locate a stronghold controlled by the infamous Magdole Gang. It is believed that Dzeebagd may be their stronghold.
- 5: The players are exploring and mapping an otherwise poorly known region.

PART I: OVER DARK AND MISTY GROUND

The players are traveling to the Dampfrat, a dismal upland swamp fed by hot springs, geysers and innumerable underground waterways. To enter the Dampfrat, one must travel through an uplift of steep cliffs, precipitous rock faces, and boulder fields called the Shatten Escarpment. The lands of the Dampfrat are ostensibly controlled by the Zjerd, ruthless and warlike goblinoid tribes adapted to these swamplands. Yet, the Zjerd exert little true control over these lands. Other denizens walking its dank pathways include giants, trolls, wolves, bandits and the dreaded Zwitter Rorer.

ACROSS TWISTING PATHS AND TUMBLING ROCKS

If this adventure is being run as a continuation of Vakhund, the module picks up when the characters leave Jzunad. If not, the players enter from any appropriate peripheral area of the Dampfrat.

There are few trails through the Shatten Escarpment. They are rocky, steep and occasionally difficult to navigate. They also act as funnels for those traveling in and out of the Dampfrat, thus, the chances for encountering something or someone is relatively high. Use the table below for encounters in the Shatten Escarpment. It can take anywhere from 1 to 2 days to navigate the trails leading through the area.

Upon leaving Jzunad, a rocky path trails up a series of ridges jumbled with massive sandstone boulders, crumbling cliff faces, and thick underbrush. Giant firs, heavy with a scent of pine and dark with green needles, shadow the trail while a dusky sky boils with fierce intent.

The trails through the escarpment are 10 - 20 miles long. The time it takes to traverse the escarpment depends upon the party's

speed. Due consideration should also be given to the players and referees desires. Should either want to get to Dzeebagd hurriedly, a one day trip is all that is necessary or, if the players seem interested in the escarpment, then it should take several days of travel. The map of the region is intentionally absent of an absolute scale so that the referee may alter it as necessary.

SHATTEN ESCARPMENT ENCOUNTER TABLE

Check for encounters 3 times during the day and 2 times at night when the players are on the trail. If the players are traveling far off the trail, check 1 time during the day and 1 time at night. An encounter occurs on a 1-2 on d10. Roll a d8 to determine the type.

- 1: Sumpfgroll (Marsh Troll)
- 2: Zjerd (Goblins)
- 3: Zwitter Rorer (Saber Toothed Tiger)
- 4: Elothar (Giant Boar)
- 5: Miiween (Snow Fairy)
- 6: Tracks
- 7: Wolves
- 8: Dead Elothar

All encounters are described in the following section.

1: SUMPFGROLL (MARSH TROLL): This moldering blue-skinned, big headed, toothy troll is heading to the lowlands for easy prey and, it hopes, a little loot. The troll's name is Cheeztnov. The troll does not care to fight, but if he perceives the party as weak, it attempts to bluff and threaten them into giving him food and/or gold. He exchanges information about the Dampfrat with the players if they approach him properly, but the information is mostly lies or of a nature to cause the players mischief. If threatened, Cheeztnov runs away while intoning eternal revenge. He calls upon his brothers for help as they are, he says, "nearby ugly lowlanders, my brudders Kluartz and Treznond are nearby!" His brothers, however, are not in the vicinity. Do not indicate to the players that this is a troll, let them discover this on their own. When, or if it dies, let it appear dead to the players. He may come back in future adventures and trolls have awfully long memories.

Cheeztnov carries a large mallet for fighting and several bags full of foodstuffs. He wears a thick bearskin cape and a tattered, yellow, wool skirt. He smells like rotting fish. He carries several of his prized possessions: a thick gold band being used as a bracelet (25gp), a string of pearls (70gp) tucked safely away with his jerky, and a thick leather belt, studded with glass gems, wrapped tightly about his waist (10gp). He has also managed to scare up some coin on this trip: 3gp, 25sp, and 55cp.

CHEEZTNOV, SUMPFGROLL (He is a neutral evil creature whose vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 25 and AC 16. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a large mallet (1d8) or with claws (1d4) and a vicious bite (1d6). His significant attribute is strength 20. He is able to regenerate 4hp a round. Fire/acid deal normal damage.)

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The only manner to utterly destroy a Sumpfgroll is to burn the head and spinal column to cinders including the associated bones. Generally, the only method of attaining the temperatures needed to accomplish this is by magical fire or furnace. The Marsh Troll recovers from death very slowly. Once at 0 hp, the troll heals 1 hp a day. If reduced to -11hp or lower, the troll heals at 1 hp a month. Only one portion of the body, the largest section of head or spine, heals, if it has been dismembered.

THE ZJERD

The Zjerd are a vicious race of goblinoids. In centuries past, they split from their cousins, the Kdzyj, over territorial disputes and moved to the Dampfrat. From here, Keretzeva the father of the clan, planned a conquest of the Graffenvold. His plans came to naught as family and tribal disputes escalated into open warfare and the Zjerd splintered into ever smaller groups. They have resided ever since in the Dampfrat and grown accustomed to its difficulties, nursed their heritage and created a hardy, but divisive and warlike race.

The Zjerd are taller than most of other goblinoids, but thinner. They have a very light green skin that yellows with age. Their ears are large and keen and their eyes are bright and shifty. Hair grows on only a few, but is considered a sign of leadership.

They are not altogether cowardly but prefer tremendous odds before entering the fray. Though not as industrious or as learned as their cousins, the Kdzyj, the Zjerd have a keen sense in battle and instinctively understand warfare. In combat, they prefer to use ranged weapons to soften up the enemy. They then charge into the fray led by a priest and warlord, carrying their sundry swords and pole arms only to retreat and attack again.

Tales of and desires for conquest still echo in Zjerd halls and their kings rise and fall on their ability to fulfill this unrequited dream. They primarily worship Mortzva, the handmaid to the fates. They believe that Mortzva, when she decides the time is right, will deceive the fates and arrange for the Zjerd great conquest and magnificent reward.

2: 3-10 ZJERD (1D8+2): These stealthy forest goblins, upon encountering the party, do not initiate hostile actions unless necessary. All the Zjerd carry bows and melee weapons. They are traveling to Jzunad and then on to Mejketek for trade. Morale is high since there is a shaman, Yedem, traveling with them. He carries several precious items with him for trade in Mejketek, including three rubies (20 gp each), a platinum head band (35 gp), and a jeweled dagger (12 gp. The jewels are of poor quality and the blade is poorly set. The dagger is -2 for combat purposes.). Each of the Zjerd carry 10 - 30 cp. If forced to fight, they scatter into the marsh and use hit and run tactics to escape or defeat the party.

YEDEM, ZJERD (He is a chaotic evil creature whose vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 8 and AC 13. His primary attributes are mental. He attacks with a short bow (1d6) or short sword (1d6). He can cast spells as a 3rd level cleric. Suggested spells, Level 0: create water, detect poison, light, detect good; Level 1: command, cure light wounds; Level 2: hold person)

YEDEM'S FAMILIAR, BAT (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 3d6, HP 3 and AC 16. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks by biting for 1d4 points of damage.)

ZJERD (These neutral creatures vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3 and AC 12. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a short sword (1d6) or short bow (1d6).)

3: ZWETTER RORER: This saber-toothed tiger is looking for easy prey. If a character is scouting or wanders far from the party, the tiger attacks him if they appear vulnerable. The nature of these hunters is such that, when faced with numerous foes, they back down.

ZWETTER RORER (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 4d10, HP 28, AC 14 and MV 50ft. Its primary attributes are physical. A zwitter rorer attacks with two claws for 1d8+8 points of damage and a bite for 3d6 points of damage. They can jump up to eight feet. If a successful hit is scored with both claws, the opponent must make a strength check or be knocked prone. The zwitter rorer receives the bonus for attacking prone creatures.)

4: 1-4 ELOTHAR There are 1-4 giant boars foraging for food. As winter has arrived, the Elothar have become more aggressive. If they are disturbed, 1 or 2 attack. Killing any one of the Elothar causes the others to run squealing into the woods.

ELOTHAR (These neutral creatures vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 23 and AC 16. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a gore attack for 1d8 damage.)

5: 3-6 MIIWEEN: These are small, female snow-fairies. They are only encountered during a snowfall. They are friendly but usually timid. In this instance, they follow the party for a while to determine their general disposition (having recognized them as unusual travelers in the region.) If the party appears congenial or good natured, they make contact and travel with them for 1-2 days. They gladly exchange knowledge of the Dampfrat for good stories and gracious hospitality. When they leave the characters, they heal any wounded players and give one, if deserved, a chime that, when struck on during a snowfall, lets the Miiween know that the character is in need. If so chimed, they will, if possible, come to the characters aid though they almost never fight. Other than the chime and some weapons, the Miiween carry nothing with them.

MIIWEEN (These chaotic good creatures vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 2 and AC 16. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with a tiny dagger (1d4). They can cast clerical spells. Suggested spells, Level 0: create water, purify food and drink, light; Level 1: cure light wounds x2. Special Abilities: fascinate (see below, New Monsters). Miiweens have the ability to fascinate their victims. Miiweens can cause a single creature to become fascinated with them. The creature to be fascinated must be able to see and hear the Miiween and must be within 90 feet. The distraction of a nearby combat or other dangers prevents the ability from working. The target can negate the effect with a wisdom saving throw (CL 1). If the saving throw fails, the creature sits quietly and listens to the Miiween's voice for up to 4 rounds. While fascinated, the target's wisdom and

charisma checks suffer a -4 penalty. Any potential threat allows the fascinated creature a second saving throw. Any obvious threat, such as casting a spell, drawing a sword, or aiming, automatically breaks the effect. The Miiween only appear when snow is falling. Once the snow has stopped, the Miiween disappear. They can disappear at will as well. Doing so means they cannot return to the 'world' until another snowfall. They can appear anywhere in the world snow is falling.)

The Miiween appear as small females with pointed ears, skin as pale as the moon, fiery red hair, large eyes, and broad wings of the most brilliant colors. They speak in very high-pitched tones.

6: TRACKS: The players find the tracks of a giant in the snow and mud. The tracks lead to a large, recently used fire pit, with a half butchered elk dangling limply from a tree nearby. It will be fairly easy for the players to track the giant if they so choose (CL 1), but he is traveling far and fast. The giant's name is Unthangarimin and he is searching for a Kreut. Tracking him is outside the purview of this module, but feel free to elaborate as necessary.

7: 8-12 WOLVES: There are 8-12 ferocious and hungry wolves on the prowl. They follow the party for a long time looking for a weak character or straggler to attack. They stick with a basic attack plan and try to lead one of the characters off to attack them individually. They fight ferociously to protect any kill. If no prey becomes available during the day, they await nightfall and attack the camp, again focusing on one character, especially anyone that steps out of the firelight.

These wolves, as with most other natural predators in Inzae, are not mindless killing machines. They are efficient, quick, brutal, and powerful. Their environment requires cunning and caution for they instinctively know that a single wound or broken bone can be a death sentence. When faced with superior odds or a powerful foe they rarely stay to fight. Generally the only time they give themselves entirely to the fight is in defense of the young or when cornered.

WOLF (This creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 12 and AC 14. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks by biting for 1d6 points of damage. Special Abilities: Trip, scent.)

8: DEAD ELOTHAR: The party finds a dead elothar. At first glance, it appears to be nothing unusual. However, if investigated, the party discovers a harness on it and a successful wisdom Check (CL 2) indicates it was killed by a weapon and not other beasts. It has been dead for several days. No tracks can be found leading away from it.

MALICIOUS DAYS AND MALEFICENT NIGHTS

When the players approach the end of the Shatten Escarpment and enter the Dampfrat proper, read the following:

As the trail gains in elevation, a silky snow falls softly atop the trees and a frigid air chills your bones. The sun sets, the cliffs diminish, and the ridge line is crossed. Beneath a crimson sun, lingering low in the sky, you catch your first glimpse of the dreaded Dampfrat - a large glade extending in every direction filled with a vast expanse of lush green grasses and steamy sodden earth. Tiny clumps of stunted firs are clustered on top of small mounds, while the white husks of long dead trees dot the plain for as far as the eye can see.

The Dampfrat is the remnant of a volcanic cone. It is a morass of steamy swampy grasslands, hot springs, geysers, warm creeks, pools, thick evergreen copses, and tangled underbrush. Travel is arduous and time consuming. The trails are difficult to follow through the grassy areas and only made possible by wood markers sticking several feet out of the ground about every 100 yards. Many of these have rotted and fallen down, but generally, with a few hours search, another can be located.

With each day, following the trail becomes more difficult and a single track check should be made to see if the characters stay on the trail. A failure indicates one day of wandering before the trail is found again. This trail (and the only marked one) leads directly to Dzeebagd. It should take the characters anywhere between 4 and 6 days to reach Dzeebagd if they manage to stay on the trail.

There is a chance of random encounters while traveling through the Dampfrat. Several of the encounters are benign, offering a glimpse of the area's wildlife. Others, however, are potentially hazardous. See the **Dampfrat Encounter Table** below for details. There is one set encounter for the characters just prior to their reaching Dzeebagd, "White Steam and Red Devils." Several of the Wandering monsters can be used for mini-adventures and can easily consume a whole night's play. To get the most out of the module, we encourage this, but if your goal is to get the characters to the dungeon, forgo all encounters except herbivores.

DAMPFRAT ENCOUNTER TABLE

Check for encounters 3 times during the day and 1 time at night. An encounter occurs on a 1 on d10. Also, once a day there is a 30% chance for 1-3 inches of snow. The snow melts quickly in the areas around hot pools and geysers, but slowly accumulates in the remainder of the Dampfrat.

Combat in snow is slightly more difficult since the characters are fighting on a slippery surface and may fall prone during each round (dexterity check at +2, CL 0). Also, unless the characters are adequately prepared for cold weather, the cumulative exposure to the weather has adverse effects on their abilities. After 3 days an unprepared character must make a constitution check. A failure indicates that all physical abilities suffer a -1 to their respective checks. Each day thereafter, the character must make another constitution check. A second

failure doubles the effects and causes a -1 to all mental checks. This process is repeated until the character finds or build shelter and recuperates for as many days as failed checks.

Encounters noted by an “*” should not be duplicated.

- 1: Omen* then Miiween**
- 2: Elk
- 3: Zjerd on Patrol*
- 4: Mammoth
- 5: Zwitter rorer
- 6: Sumpfgroll*
- 7: Deer or herd animal
- 8: The Magdole Gang*
- 9: Bear
- 10: Musk Ox
- 11: Elothar (Giant Boar)
- 12: Wolves

1: OMEN* OR MIIWEEN: A holy animal (be it an owl, eagle, stag, or bear) is spotted by one of the more spiritual members of the party. The animal in question makes its presence known and lingers for a few moments before heading off in the direction of Dzeebagd. The players must interpret the omen’s meaning. The referee might use this encounter to get a lost party back “on trail”. This encounter should only be used once.

If another ‘1’ is rolled, use the Miiween encounter from the Shatten escarpment if it has not already been used. If so, wandering herd animals are encountered.

2: ELK: A heard of several hundred elk are sunning or resting at the edge of a pasture. They are easily frightened and run if approached.

3: ZJERD ON PATROL*: The Zjerd wander the Dampfrat in small groups hunting and scouting. This is a hunting party. Initially, the Zjerd try to parley with the party to determine who they are. They may mistake the party for members of the Magdole Gang, who have been given rights to move freely here. They attack only if threatened or if they believe there is an opportunity for capturing and killing the party. They also eventually inform Klednij, a local Zjerd Lord, of the party.

The Zjerd are led by a local war chief, Brneezd, and a shaman, Krettzd. They carry little of value with them as they are on patrol, but Brneezd has a copper necklace with trinkets hanging from it (5cp), an expertly made short sword with a wicked back curve (+1 to damage), and a silver ring (1gp). Krettzd has a silver ringlet on his head (5gp), and an exceptionally beautiful mace (though small) with silver lettering etched into the flanges (50 gp).

BRNEEZD, ZJERD (He is a chaotic evil creature whose vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 7 and AC 15. His primary attributes are physical. He fights with an expert short sword (1d6+1) or short bow (1d6).)

KRETTZD, ZJERD (He is a chaotic evil creature whose vital stats are HD 2d4, HP 6 and AC 13. His primary attributes are physical. He carries leather armor, shield, small bow, dagger, mace and 13cp. He can cast spells as a 2nd level cleric. Suggested spells, Level 0: create water, darkness x2, detect good; Level 1: command, cause light wounds)



ZJERD X8 (These chaotic evil creatures vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3 and AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a short sword or short bow.)

4: MAMMOTH: The party notices a family of 5-10 mammoth. The mammoth are grazing, resting or sunning themselves. Mammoth are generally unafraid of most things and the players can move in or around them rather closely if they so choose. However, like many large herbivores, they are capable of aggressive action if they feel threatened. There is a 20% chance that the bull attacks if any party member moves within 50 yards of the herd. Further, if any member of the party moves within 30 yards of the herd, there is a 50% chance a cow will react violently. For every 10 yards closer to the herd the party moves, a check should be made with a 10% chance increase of the herd reacting violently. If the bull reacts violently, the rest of the herd moves away; if the cow reacts violently, the entire herd charges forward and attempts to trample the party.

MAMMOTH (These neutral creatures vital stats are HD 15d8, HP 67 and AC 16. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a slam attack for 3d6 damage, stamp attack for 4d4 x2 damage, or a gore attack for 3d8 damage. A mammoth can knock opponents prone. Anything that is the recipient of a slam attack must make a successful dexterity check or be knocked prone.)

5: ZWETTER RORER: The party encounters 2-3 saber toothed tigers hunting for food. See **Shatten Escarpment Encounter Table** for details of the zwetter rorer.

6: SUMPFGROLL (Trolls from the Dampfrat)*: The trolls, Kluartz and Treznond, are the brothers of Cheeztnov (See Shatten Escarpment Encounter Table). Unlike him though, they are out hunting. Having dealt with humans before, they know it is easy to dupe humans with the promise of gold and hidden treasure. As such, they try to parley with the party and offer knowledge of treasure in exchange for food. If asked about Dzeebagd, they tell the party exactly where it is and how far they have to travel to get there. Whatever deal or agreement they strike with the party, they have no intention of keeping it. They wander off, if allowed to, and appear to be going about their business. As soon as possible, however, they backtrack and light upon the party at night or in an awkward situation, hoping to find them relatively defenseless.

Kluartz, the larger of the brothers, wears baggy yellow pants and a thick sheepskin vest. He carries a mallet into combat and wears a choker with a bauble in it (10gp). In addition to foodstuffs in his sack, he has a small pouch containing 40cp, 13 sp, 2 gp and one sapphire (25 gp). Treznond is a short and burly troll whose skin is almost azure in color. He wears a black wool cape, vest, and red breeches. He hefts a massive halberd in combat and carries a long sword at his side. In his bag of belongings are several items of value: a gold platter (dented and bent but still worth 3gp), a silver candlestick (10sp), and a small ivory carving of one of the five fates. This is a Statue of Well Tiding.

The Statue of Well Tiding has a value of 100gp, but this rarer variety has magical qualities as well though it never radiates magic. The character carrying it is allowed one dice reroll a

day. This reroll is at the Castle Keepers discretion until the players makes the connection. The reroll should occur in a circumstance in which the character's fate may change for the better (ie. A failed hit, poor damage, poor heal, failed attribute check etc). Once the player becomes aware, the player should be allowed to choose.

KLUARTZ AND TREZNOND (They are Neutral evil creatures whose vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 21 and 23 and an AC 16. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a large mallet and sword for 1d8 damage or with claws for 1d4 damage and a vicious bite for 1d6 damage. Their significant attribute is strength 20. They are able to regenerate 3hp a round. Fire and acid deal normal damage. See the Shatten Escarpment encounter for more details on the Sumpfgroll. Remember to allow Treznond one reroll.)

7: DEER: There are 10-30 deer resting, grazing or sunning themselves. They flee if approached.

8: THE MAGDOLE GANG*: There are 5-10 members of the Magdole gang traveling through the Dampfrat". They are unaware of the events surrounding Vakhund and Dzeebagd, having traveled straight here from Magershole, skipping Dzeebagd on the way. Their leader, Johann, is traveling to the lowlands for a more comfortable wintering stay. Because of an agreement they have with bandits north of the Treklant Creek, there are only humans in this group. If they spot the party first, they scatter and attempt to set up an ambush. If not, they challenge the party and attempt to scare them into giving them money. Johann's tactic is to avoid direct contact and a melee that may cost him his life and that of his men. If an ambush is set, they target one character and attack him with ranged weapons, telling the remaining party members to give them gold. Any amount is appropriate but not so much that it forces another combat.

JOHANN (He is a chaotic neutral, 3rd level human fighter whose vital stats are HP 7 and AC 14. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity and constitution. His significant attributes are strength 14 and dexterity 13. He carries studded leather armor, a long sword, a longbow, a dagger, and a pouch containing 20 gold pieces in various coin.)

BANDITS (They are chaotic neutral, 1st level human fighters whose vital stats are HP 3 and AC 13. Their primary attributes are strength, dexterity and constitution. They wear studded leather armor and carry a longbow and long sword or mace, battle axe, or warhammer. They also carry a pouch holding 1d6 gold pieces in coin each.)

9: BEAR: A very large bear, weighing nearly 700 lbs, is wandering nearby. The bear is not aggressive unless the encounter occurs around a campfire or where food is out. Then, it tries to scare the characters off before eating some food. It may even attack the characters if angered such as with an arrow.

BEAR, BLACK (These neutral creatures vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 17 and AC 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with claws for 1d8 x damage and a bite for 1d8 damage.)

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10: MUSK OX: The party notices a herd of 5-20 musk ox. They are grazing, resting or sunning themselves. Musk Ox are generally unafraid of most things and the players can move in or around them rather closely if they so choose. However, like many large herbivores, they are capable of aggressive action if threatened. There is a 30% chance that a bull will attack if the party moves within 50 yards of any of the herd. Further, if any member of the party moves within 25 yards of the herd, there is a 50% chance a cow will react violently. For every 5 yards closer to the herd the party moves, a check should be made with a 10% chance increase of the herd reacting violently. If the bull reacts violently, the rest of the herd moves away; if the cow reacts violently, the entire herd charges forward and attempts to trample the party.

MUSK OX (These neutral creatures vital stats are HD 6d8, HP 40 and AC 16. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a slam for 2d6 damage or stomp for 2d4 x2 damage.)

11: ELOTHAR: See Shatten Escarpment Encounter Table for details.

12: WOLVES: See the Shatten Escarpment Encounter Table for details.

WHITE STEAM AND RED DEVILS

On the 4th or 5th day into the Dampfrat or a few days before the characters arrive at Dzeebagd, they encounter the Krung' Thep, a breed of intelligent, lizard-like creatures who have come to the Dampfrat to conduct some heinous business – the

killing of their kin, the Ban' Thout, who are currently hiding in the dungeon beneath Dzeebagd. The party finds several of the Krung' Thep gathered around a steamy geyser:

Not far from you is the tumultuous and contorted, violent cone of a massive geyser. Steam billows from its mouths, apertures, and openings, lingering above its bulk before being whipped away by a winter's breeze. Rivulets of pyretic water leak out across the earth gathering in small pools covered by misty air. Nearby, the husks of long dead trees stand stark and white against a churning sky.

Lingering on the larger limbs of the trees and about their massive bowls are numerous crimson scaled lizards. Most of them are belly up, basking in a scanty sun. Their heads lolling back, revealing rows of keen, white teeth. Many lie perilously close to the pools of scalding water, their backs, crisscrossed with black stripes, bare to the sun while their bulky tails occasionally rise up and linger for a moment in the breeze, before crashing back to the ground.

The Krung' Thep are short and hairless, dinosaur/lizard-like, with large heads and toothy mouths. They have thick red torsos, and long broad tails covered with small black stripes. The Krung' Thep walk on two thin legs with clawed feet and, when moving, stoop over, nearly bringing their snouts to the earth.

The Krung' Thep are gathered around the geyser absorbing as much heat as possible from the winter's sun and the scalding water. Upon seeing the party, they slowly rise or drop from the trees, hissing at one another, though not at the characters. They begin to gather weapons and armor, slowly backing away from the party.

If the party initiates hostile action, the Krung' Thep offer no resistance but run to a large encampment about a mile away. There, they gather the remainder of their men and counterattack if still pressed. If not, the Krung' Thep slowly back away and retreat to their encampment.

KRUNG' THEP SUB-CHIEF (He is a lawful evil 3HD creature whose vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 18 and AC 16. His primary attributes are physical. He carries studded leather armor, a small brass shield, two shortspears that do 1d6 damage, curved short sword 1d6, a light crossbow that delivers 1d4 damage, 10 bolts, jewelry and coins valued at 30gp total. If sold to an antiquarian or collector of strange and unusual jewelry or artifacts the value is close to 300gp.)

KRUNG' THEP X10 (These lawful evil creatures vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 3 and AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry leather armor, curved short swords, shortbows, and 12 arrows that suffer a -1 damage due to poor construction of the heads, bedrolls, camping equipment and wood-working tools.)

DANGEROUS FRIENDS AND INSIDIOUS PLANS

The Krung' Thep, having been in the Dampfrat for several months, realize that the characters are an unusual group in this



area. The leader, Nipt' Than, decides to follow the characters for a day to "get their measure." As the characters approach Dzeebagd, Nipt' Than, the leader of the Krung' Thep, sees an opportunity and decides to ask the party for help.

Nipt' Than presents himself, unarmored, to the party, bearing several severed heads similar to the Krung' Thep except they are blue and a little larger. By signing and drawing pictures in the sand and mud, Nipt' Than attempts to convey to the characters that he wants them to enter Dzeebagd's dungeon, find the Ban' Thout, and kill them. After Nipt' Than believes he has adequately explained the situation, he presents the characters with a bag of silver coins (50 large, square silver coins worth 1 gp each). If the party accepts the offer, Nipt' Than indicates that they should meet at the geyser when they have accomplished the task.

Nipt' Than intends to keep the bargain. However, he will insure it is carried out or finish the job himself. His intent in paying the characters to find the Ban' Thout is to have them kill the goblins in Dzeebagd and clear the way for him to enter the dungeon. Nipt' Than then plans to follow the party into the dungeon to observe their actions and then help them if necessary or fight them if they fail to live up to their bargain or interfere with his task of killing his kin. If the party enters the dungeon, Nipt' Than waits several hours and then follows, hoping that the characters have killed the Ban' Thout or, at the very least, cleared his path of many potential obstacles. If the characters defeat the goblins at Dzeebagd, and attempt to leave, he considers trapping them in the fortress and forcing them into the dungeon, thus effecting his initial strategy. If the party attempts a forceful breakout, Nipt' Than retreats and allows them to leave.

If the characters elect to confront the Krung' Thep rather than bargain with them, Nipt' Than retreats and they avoid the characters whenever possible and any battles unless absolutely pressed. Nipt' Than is in the Dampfrat to kill some of his kin, the Ban' Thout, and not enact petty revenge at any slights the characters may enact. The Ban' Thout have taken refuge in the dungeon beneath Dzeebagd. Nipt' Than does not believe he has the strength to enter the dungeon with all the goblins there, hence his desire to have the characters clear his path. For details on the Krung' Thep, the Ban' Thout and their origins, see the chapter at the end of the module, "Usurpers Delight".

The Krung' Thep are organized into three troops. Two troops contain 10 members, the other contains 8 members. Each is led by a sub-chief. Nipt' Than usually travels with the weakest troop, and holds them in reserve during a fight, using them at the most opportune moment or in a flanking maneuver. Nipt' Than and the sub-chiefs do not lead during attacks, but maintain a distance until their presence is necessary.

NIPT'THAN, KRUNG' THEP (He is a lawful evil 5th level rogue whose vital stats are HP 20 and AC 18. His primary attributes are wisdom and dexterity. His significant attributes are strength 12, dexterity 18 and wisdom 13. He carries expertly studded leather (+1 AC non magical), a small brass shield, a

halberd, a scimitar, a light crossbow that delivers 1d4 damage, 10 bolts, an ivory headband worth 10sp, 5 silver armlets worth 20sp each, and carries a pouch with 5 magical rubies in it worth 10gp each as rubies. These are called Te' Ma' Loos. See the description at the end of the module. Nipt' Than uses these to watch the characters or his prey, the Ban' Thout.)

KRUNG' THEP SUB-CHIEF (He is a lawful evil 3HD creature whose vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 18 and AC 16. His primary attributes are physical. He carries studded leather armor, a small brass shield, two shortspears that do 1d6 damage, curved short sword 1d6, a light crossbow that delivers 1d4 damage, 10 bolts, jewelry and coins valued at 30gp total. If sold to an antiquarian or collector of strange and unusual jewelry or artifacts the value is close to 300gp.)

KRUNG' THEP X10 (These lawful evil creatures vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 3 and AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry leather armor, curved short swords, shortspears, and 12 arrows that suffer a -1 damage due to poor construction of the heads, bedrolls, camping equipment and wood-working tools. Each is a fairly accomplished wood workers and knappers. Most of their arrows are produced with local wood and knapped from stone.)

PART II: DZEEBAGD

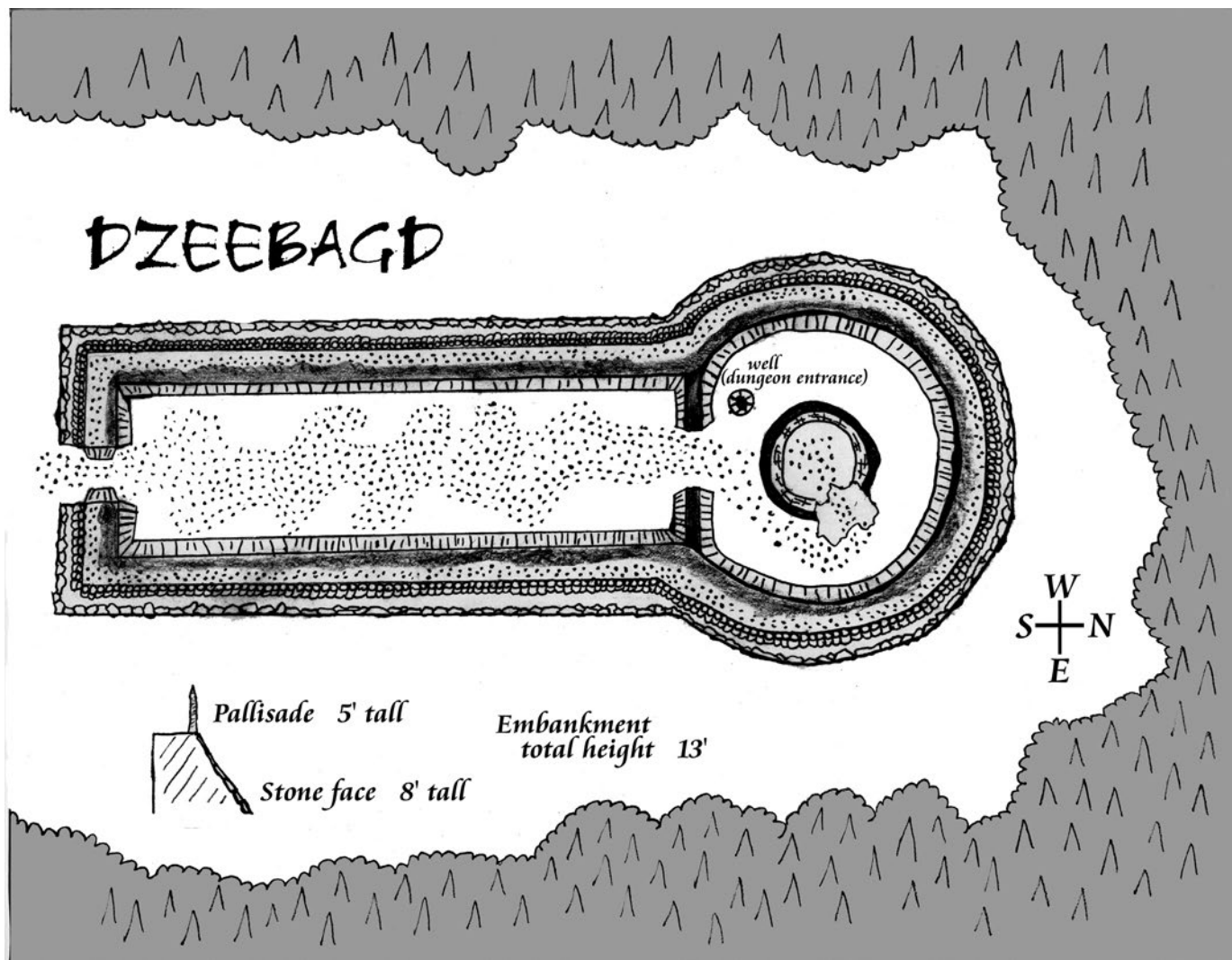
After 7 or 8 days travel, the party reaches Dzeebagd.

The trail twists through a thick copse of stunted evergreens before opening onto a glade in the center of which hunkers a teetering round tower, half collapsed and crumbling from disrepair. A low earthen embankment topped by a rickety, wooden palisade surrounds the tower. From within the palisade, wisps of smoke trail off into the sky and the raucous noise of many Zjerd breaks the still air of the Dampfrat. A makeshift wooden platform stretches across the tower's top and a single Zjerd, hefting a bow, stares lazily over the tree tops.

Dzeebagd consists of an earthen embankment shaped like a keyhole topped by a partially constructed wooden palisade. The embankment is 8' high and the completed sections of the palisade are 5' high. Several sections of the palisade have small footings from which Zjerd archers can launch ranged attacks. At the base of the key is an opening. A gate has not been constructed, though a removable section of the palisade is placed there in emergencies.

In the center of the circular portion of the embankment is a stone tower 40' high. About one quarter of the tower has collapsed, and the stones are piled around its base. None of the original floors or staircase remain. A wooden platform, accessible by a rope ladder, has been placed on top of the tower.

Near the tower is a well. It used by the Zjerd to draw water and the only entry to the dungeon beneath Dzeebagd. The well shaft appears normal upon a cursory glance. There is even a



drawing pale on the lip. Peering down it when there is enough light available reveals the shaft only goes down 20 feet or so before opening up wider, as if to a cistern. The original entry to the dungeon was beneath the tower. That has been buried and collapsed and is currently unusable. Descending through the well shaft is the only manner of entering the dungeon.

When the party arrives, Dzeebagd is occupied by a Zjerd warband, members of the Magdole Gang and their partners, Nidzim (a goblin merchant), Evanna, and one other prisoner. Each band and the significant characters at Dzeebagd are described separately below.

A note should be made on scaling the adventure. The number of Zjerd at the tower should be high enough to challenge the players though not so high as to destroy them. This encounter serves to prepare the players for entry into the dungeon, not to kill them. Note, however, if the players choose to attack the tower and its inhabitants immediately they will, in all likelihood, die. Optimally, they recon the tower and try to find weak points and places to attack. In the time it takes to do this, most of the towers inhabitants leave. Yet all players make silly decisions and should suffer the consequences thereof.

Sometime before the party arrived, a group of bandits, the Magdole Gang and their partners (Von Beck's Reavers), came to Dzeebagd with a prisoner, Evanna Rothenheimer. They intend to ransom her to the Rothenheimer family in Bergholt. There has been a disagreement between the Magdole Gang and Von Beck's Reavers about how this exchange should occur. To ensure an equitable exchange and distribution of the ransom, Evanna is being left in the hands of a neutral third party - the Zjerd - for safekeeping until the arrangements for the ransom are completed. (See "Vakhund: Into the Unknown" for details on Evanna and the motivations of the various parties mentioned above.)

THE ZJERD: There are 11-20 Zjerd in the fortress, led by one chief and one shaman. The Zjerd are part of a permanent contingent at Dzeebagd. A local Zjerd warlord is attempting to reclaim the old fortress and has sent them here to begin construction and groundwork for eventual occupation. The Zjerd occasionally raid in the south with the Magdole Gang, and the chief has agreed to safe-guard Evanna in return for some portion of the ransom. The Zjerd encampment contains all manner of woodworking tools, stores of food, firewood, blankets, and other necessities for a long winters stay and construction.

KLUARD, ZJERD CHIEF (He is a chaotic evil creature whose vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 16 and AC 17. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a battle axe and wears chain mail armor.)

GLIZZD, ZJERD SHAMAN (He is a chaotic evil creature whose vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 14 and AC 13. His primary attributes are mental. He attacks with a short bow or short sword. He can cast spells as a 3rd level cleric. Suggested spells, Level 0: create water, light x2, detect good; Level 1: cure light wounds, protection from good; Level 2: hold person)

ZJERD WARRIORS X11-20 (These chaotic evil creatures vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3 and AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a short bow or short sword.)

THE MAGDOLE GANG: These are bandits from the stronghold of Magershole. Gratva, an Urk, leads them. There are 4 goblins (renegade Zjerd) and 3 orcs with Gratva. The Magdole Gang, with the help of Ubert von Beck's Reavers, attacked the Vakhund a few weeks back and kidnapped Evanna Rothenheimer. As payment for services rendered, Gratva wants a portion of the money garnered from ransoming Evanna. The renegade Zjerd no longer have allegiance to their Kingdom and have sworn an oath, for what it is worth, to the Magdole Gang. Gratva's main use for these goblins is missile support in combat. They are all very weary and ready to return to their hideout. The orcs have sworn an oath as well, and Gratva uses them in melee. Like the goblins, they are very weary.

GRATVA, URK (This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 25 and AC 16. Its primary attributes are physical. He carries a chainmail shirt, large wooden shield, small metal helm w/nose guard, expertly made heavy mace conferring +1 to hit, heavy crossbow, 12 bolts, dagger, pouch holding 30gp, and a jeweled necklace worth 200gp.)

ZJERD RENEGADES X4 (These chaotic evil creatures vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3 and AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a short bow or short sword.)

URKS X3 (These chaotic evil creatures vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 4 and AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a battle axe.)

UBERT VON BECK'S REAVERS: Ubert von Beck is a nefarious pirate who plies the waters around Bergholt. There are two members of von Beck's Reavers at Dzeebagd, Klaus and Tindle. Both Klaus and Tindle were sent to the Vakhund to retrieve money from Evanna Rothenheimer's father, Herbert Rothenheimer. As Rothenheimer had no money, Klaus and Tindle executed him and kidnaped his daughter instead. However, they had not foreseen the need for Gratva and the Magdole Gang to accomplish the attack on Vakhund, or Gratva's request for gold in return for services rendered. Because Gratva believes he will receive his gold only by ransoming Evanna, Klaus and Tindle have to agree to Gratva's demands and leave Evanna in the company of the Zjerd while the ransom is being negotiated. Even so, presently Klaus and Tindle have no

intention of ransoming Evanna. They will go back to Ubert von Beck, explain the situation, and let him decide whether the girl is worth the money or the effort for her safe return.

KLAUS: Klaus is a tall and thin man with wisps of hair on his head and chin. He is acne scarred, beady eyed, and thin lipped. His clothing is simple, fairly dirty and unkempt but quite functional. He speaks with a lisp and gesticulates wildly when excited. Klaus is motivated by little other than Ubert von Beck's desires. He is wily and quite unwilling to lay his life down for anything, obsequious when necessary, and blustering when useful. Klaus carries a long bow and spiked chain into battle. In combat, he uses the spiked chain to disarm or trip an opponent while Tindle moves in for the kill. He also now carries an expertly designed short sword that confers a +2 to damage on unarmored opponents. He is still getting used to the weapon and only uses it in close quarters fighting.

KLAUS (He is a chaotic neutral, 5th level rogue whose vital stats are: HP 15 and AC 14. His primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence and constitution. His significant attributes are strength 15, dex 15 and int 13. He carries an expertly designed short sword that confers a +2 to damage on unarmored opponents, a spiked chain that deals 1d4 points of damage and can be used to trip opponents at the same time, an expertly made suit of leather armor that confers a +1 to armor class, longbow, 12 arrows, thieves tools, and 100gp in coin and jewelry.)

TINDLE: Tindle is a fairly handsome man with a stubble of growth covering his face. His eyes are a piercing blue and his voice firm and powerful. Tindle walks "tall" and carries himself pompously, glowering at most who bother to talk to him. He is fairly loyal to Klaus, having traveled with him for nearly 5 years. Tindle carries a battle axe and a longsword for melee. As a combat tactic, he tries to knock opponents prone with his shield and deals with them one at a time.

TINDLE (He is a chaotic neutral, 3rd level human fighter and 2nd level rogue whose vital stats are HP 30 and AC 18. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity and constitution. His significant attributes are strength 16 and constitution 15. He carries expertly made scale mail conferring a +1 to AC, an expertly made large metal shield conferring a +1 to AC or to hit, a longsword, battle axe, thieves tools, platinum armband (5gp), 2 rings (25sp, 15sp), a belt with silver emblazoned upon it (10gp), and 10sp in a pouch.)

THE PRISONERS OF DZEEBAGD

Gratva and Klaus have reached an agreement on the ransom and the process of the exchange of Evanna by the time the characters arrive at Dzeebagd. Klaus and Tindle are to return to Bergholt, gather the ransom, and meet Gratva at Dzeebagd in two months. Gratva has agreed to accept 1000gp in exchange for his services and his rights to the prisoner. In the interim, Evanna remains with the Zjerd, who have agreed to watch her in exchange for 50gp.

The agreement having been reached, everyone spends a little time "relaxing" and then beds down for the night. Numerous guards walk the perimeter of the fortress, and Tindle stays awake all evening as does one of Gratva's urks.

Evanna is bound and kept in the tower. Zapetero and Nidzim (discussed below) are there as well. They have a small fire burning. Zapetero, being insane, lies huddled by a fire. He is not bound, but so incapacitated that he can do nothing.

EVANNA: The somewhat naive daughter of Herbert Rothenheimer has matured significantly since her abduction from the Vakhund. Most importantly, her innate magical qualities have manifested themselves.

Her personality has transformed also. Previously, Evanna maintained a soft-spoken, demure interaction with others. She no longer acts in this manner. Evanna is survival driven, never complains, is steely eyed, and has become virtually emotionless. She wants to return to Bergholt and force the family to enact revenge upon the perpetrators of her father's murder and her abduction. If Evanna is allowed, she actively helps the party, though she knows little of the surrounding area and nothing of the dungeon. She does not allow herself to be used as cannon fodder, she has not survived this long to die for another's greed or stupidity. She has been befriended by a Kdyzj merchant, Nidzim, and works to ensure his safety.

Evanna is potentially a very powerful NPC with whom the characters may interact in future adventures. Try to indicate this to the players and they may find saving her a little more profitable. Further, play Evanna as both cautious and cunning but noble and charismatic at the same time. The month or more in captivity has not weakened her spirit but ennobled and empowered her. See "Vakhund, Into the Unknown" for information on Evanna.

EVANNA (She is a lawful neutral, 1st level human cleric whose vital stats are HP 4 and AC 12. Her primary attributes are intelligence, dexterity, and charisma. Her significant attributes are intelligence 16, charisma 18, constitution 15 and dexterity 17. She can use a quarter staff or similar weapon for 1d4 damage.)

NIZDIM: Nidzim is a goblin of the Kdyzj tribe. He and his cousin, Geejdnard (see Vakhund), come from a long line of translators and merchants working in the Drakzleed and beyond. Nidzim is young, robust, and ambitious to explore the world. He has a tuft of yellow hair tied in a tight ball on top of his head, and is clothed in fine and colorful silks. He carries an ornamental saber and a pack with some foodstuffs, a book ("Exacting Tolls", or literally translated as Taking Money. This is a listing of the Lord's taxes throughout the kingdom - Drakzleed that is), a quill, some ink, and a few sheaves of paper. Nidzim happened to be in Jzunad when the Magdole gang arrived with Evanna. Gratva retained Nidzim's services to help in the translations and transactions between himself, Klaus, and Evanna. Nidzim, for his part, did not care to be involved in the matter, but knew of the Rothenheimer family (though not Evanna) and felt that if he were in part responsible for her safe return, he might gain a lucrative trading contract in Bergholt. In an effort to ensure this, Nidzim has been taking care of Evanna, feeding her extra, and sharing his bedroll to keep her warm. Indeed, he has helped her survive this calamity.



NIDZIM, KDYZJ GOBLIN (*He is a neutral creature whose vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 2 and AC 13. His primary attributes are mental. He carries leather armor, scimitar, food for 3 days, book, quill, ink, paper.*)

ZAPATERO: There is one other prisoner in the tower, an older man, nearly naked, with scraggly gray hair and a kinky beard. He is horrifying to behold - his eyes have been gouged out, his tongue split, and the ends of his fingers removed. He babbles and yells constantly. He is very mad. Little can be gleaned from this man, though he does mumble two significant words again and again: Geis'Tot and Magershole. Upon his back is a tattoo of two half moons coming together. Nidzim knows a little about the madman. From speaking with Gratva and the others, it appears that this human and others of his kind stole into the fortress of the Magdole gang. A protracted fight occurred, and the Magdole Gang chased the humans across the Dampfrat and slaughtered or captured all of them. This man was brought here by the some members of the Magdole Gang, and then tortured and left to die.

ZAPATERO (*He is a neutral human whose vital stats are HP 7 and AC 10. His primary attributes are immaterial. His significant attributes are immaterial. He was formerly a level 6 Wizard but is now quite mad and can do nothing more in combat than die.*)

ORCHESTRATION AND DEVASTATION

After the party's arrival at Dzeebagd, the Castle Keeper must orchestrate all subsequent events with the exception of one. The morning following the arrival of the party, the Magdole Gang and Ubert von Beck's Reavers leave Dzeebagd. The Magdole Gang heads to Magershole, and Von Beck's men go to Klednij (the Zjerd capital) and thence across the Dampfrat to Mejketek and down to Firstenfeld to meet with Ubert von Beck.

All subsequent events at Dzeebagd will depend on the characters actions and conform to these following general specifications:

The Zjerd, though concerned about Evanna, are not quite willing to fight to the death to protect their interest or her life. "Dats not part o' dee agreement yo see!" But if attacked, they defend themselves. The chief attempts to get word to Klednij that they are being attacked by sending several runners in that direction. (See "Wrapping up the Adventure" for more details.) The Zjerd keep a constant guard with at least one Bowman on the tower's platform. The others busy themselves with clearing away debris and cutting wood.

Klednij, the Zjerd capital, is located 35 miles south of Dzeebagd. This is an old Zjerd town that has gone through periods of decline and prosperity. Currently, the town is undergoing a revival. By uniting several warring factions, a local warlord has gained significant power in the region. His plans are to move north out of the Dampfrat to the fertile plains along the west bank of the river Vindig. The town itself currently barracks his armies.

Evanna remains in the tower for warmth and safety. Should an attack occur, she remains hidden until the fighting is over, in order to best gauge her chances for survival.

Likewise, Nidzim remains hidden in the tower until all fighting has ceased. As he speaks Inzaen, he attempts to negotiate with the players to garner his release or placate them as necessary to ensure his survival. If he believes there is an opportunity to travel with the party, he offers his services as a translator or in any other capacity he may be qualified to fill.

Attacking either the Magdole Gang or Klaus and Tindle after they leave could have disastrous consequences. Not only are both groups made up of very capable combatants, but they immediately try flee back to Dzeebagd or Klednij and, if possible, inform the Zjerd of the danger and prepare for a fight followed by a hunt.

The Krung' Thep, having trailed the party, follow the events with care and determine whether they should try to force the party into the dungeon, allow them to escape, or await further developments. A concern of Nipt' Than's is the army of Zjerd nearby. He is also under a "time crunch" and knows it. Nipt' Than is aware of the escape tunnel in the dungeon (see Room 25). He has not informed the characters about it, however, hoping to catch either the Ban' Thout or the characters leaving through it in case he chooses not to enter the dungeon himself.

PART III: BENEATH INZAE

The entry to the dungeon is through the well shaft. If the players cannot figure this out, drop several hints through Zapatero. He could babble about his book of magic being dropped down the well or point down the well a lot. That should be enough to get any adventurer worth his salt to follow that route. If the characters elect to leave Dzeebagd and Nipt' Than does not stop them, then the adventure essentially ends. Consult "Wrapping up the Adventure" for further details.

DUNGEON DRESSING

In general, the dungeon conforms to the following specifications and any exceptions are noted in the appropriate areas. All floors are flagstoned. The bricked and plastered walls are shored up by wooden supports placed every 5'. The ceilings are supported with intricate crisscrossing wooden beams. Unless noted otherwise, all doors are constructed of wood and have 10 hp, the corridors are 5' wide and 6' tall, while room height is generally 7'. The wood in the dungeon is far too wet to be used for lighting sources. There are sconces placed along the walls at 20' intervals and at least one in each room.

Much of the dungeon is subsiding. Portions of it are submerged under a few inches to several feet of water. While walking in the submerged portions of the dungeon, the characters should make a dexterity check (CL 1) every turn or they slip and fall. Movement is reduced 20% in submerged areas. Fighting on these surfaces requires a dexterity check (CL 2) every round. Fighting in thigh high deep water has a combat penalty of -2, and chest deep water has a penalty of -4.

Also, each day the characters spend in the dungeon requires a successful constitution check (CL 3) or a lung infection is



acquired. The infection sets in after 1 week causing a 1 point loss in constitution the first week, a 1 point loss in strength the second week, a 2 point loss in constitution the third week, a 2 point loss in strength the fourth week, a 3 point loss in constitution etc. until the player reaches 0 in both categories, at which point he dies unless healed.

Pacing the action in the dungeon is very important. The Referee should carefully observe the players to determine when or if the Krung' Thep should appear. The Krung' Thep should be used to build tension and for a final encounter in or outside the dungeon. If the action and tension begin to lag, have the Krung' Thep arrive to help or kill the party. First they appear in small numbers, then in increasingly larger numbers. If they attack the party, the final Krung' Thep attack should be the climactic action sequence of the dungeon and occur after, during or just before the encounter with the Ban' Thout. Refer to rooms 23-25 to determine the activities and reactions of the Ban' Thout.

1 ENTRY CHAMBER

The tight confines of the well shaft give way as you are lowered into a dark wide space. The plunking of pebbles dropping into water rises from below, as a moist, steamy, air engulfs you and your flickering light. Below your dangling feet is a mire of steamy, slimy water reeking with the fetid odor of stagnation. Crawling out of this blanket of ichor and muck are several small mounds of dirt and rubble covered with large, broad bloomed red mushrooms and white flowering vines. A circle of large columns stretches up to a ceiling crisscrossed with sagging wooden beams that reach out to moldy and timeworn walls. A low semicircle of small, cut stones rises out of the water below your feet.

This is the entry chamber to the lower halls of Dzeebagd. The upper portion of the staircase, located beneath the tower and in the circle of columns, has long since collapsed. The well shaft is one of two remaining access points to the lower halls. The players are being lowered into the well shaft. The well shaft continues on the floor of this room, it just has no walls so that those who were down here could access the

water as well as those above. The shaft descends ten feet below the surface of this room. There is a two foot tall lip around the shaft just poking out of the water. If lowered too far, read the following:

As your feet enter water, feeling for solid ground, you descend deeper into the warm, thick muck. You suck in a last breath of moist air before entering the water's hot, soupy depth. A long time passes before your feet meet resistance, but it is a slimy surface and slowly, ever so slowly . . . you sink into it.

Entering the shaft could have disastrous consequences. Anyone at the bottom of the well shaft will sink 1' per round deeper into the mud. Once a character starts to sink into the mud, it becomes progressively more difficult to pull him out. To retrieve a character, a strength check at CL 3 is required, with a -1 modifier on the roll for every 1' the character has descended into the muck. The character has to hold his breath until pulled up.

Once out of the well shaft, and exploring the room:

Green slimy tendrils stick to your legs and clothing as you slosh through the shallow, thick water. You feel a solid surface beneath you, though one strewn with the detritus of the ages, making movement precarious and difficult. There is a constant dripping as the moisture clinging to the walls plunks into the water. A warm draft flows upwards, carrying wisps of steam with it. As your body slowly warms to the confines beneath the earth, your hair tingles and your eyes try desperately to pierce the threatening gloom. The chamber slowly expands in your flickering, yellow light. To the right, on the nearest wall, is a broad opening with a vaulted ceiling. To the left, a small wooden door stands half open. A once massive staircase surrounded by stone columns rests drearily and in crumbles in the center of the room. Its steps were wide and low, constructed of rough hewn stone piled without aid of chinking or mortar. Heaps of dirt, rubble and other debris are banked up against and around the columns. Covering these tiny islands are broad bloomed mushrooms and vines gathered in patches, as if for protection from the surrounding gloom.

The water in the room is 1'-2' deep. Close inspection of the dirt mounds near the staircase reveals the tip of a large spear. The metal is rusted, pitted, and tangled in the white flowering vines. If the players elect to dig into the mound, they slowly uncover the remains of a large humanoid skeleton buried with shreds of his armor and several rusted weapons. A pouch is found on a successful wisdom check (CL 8 with a +1 for each five minutes of excavation undertaken). It holds 6 large round pieces of silver (worth 10sp each) and 45 square pieces of tin (worth 45 cp). Digging in any of the other mounds is little more than time consuming, revealing only shards of pottery



and other debris. The mushrooms are called Veerdentoot. Only a few know of their enchanted qualities (see magic items at the end of the module).

2 GARGOYLE GUARDIAN

Beyond the door is a narrow corbeled passage with crumbling plaster walls that stretch into darkness. A scone hangs crookedly on the wall to the left. As you move forward, the water shallows and a flagstoned floor becomes discernable. Ahead, the shadows dance and move against the invading light.

The corridor empties into a cramped chamber dominated by a marble statue of a gnarled and knuckled winged beast. It is perched upon a red pedestal sitting in a pool of shimmering, crystalline water. The room has a higher ceiling than the passage. Several emaciated rats scurry about the room, disappearing underneath two doors at the far end of the room.

The small, rectangular pool is surrounded by a red-tiled lip. The water is clear and clean, and peering into it reveals several glimmering jewels resting as well as a few gold and platinum coins.

A lawful good character who stares at the column for 2 rounds notes that the column's small white veins wriggle ever so slightly. The statue on the pedestal is a gargoyle guardian. If the water is disturbed, the gargoyle animates and leaps at the person who disturbed the water. It attacks until that person is dead or it is destroyed. The gargoyle dissipates upon death and reanimates on its perch if it kills the intruder or is reduced to 0 hit points or lower. If the gargoyle rests on the perch for at least one round it regains all lost hit points. If the gargoyle is roped and pulled into the water, it animates in 2 rounds and attacks whoever is holding the rope. The gargoyle only attacks characters while they are in the room. Essentially, the Gargoyle cannot be killed, but only put out of commission until someone touches the water again. Every time it dies and comes back, it receives another HD and d8 hit points.

Because this is a classic set-up, the encounter needs to be handled uniquely to make it interesting. The spirit of the Gargoyle lives in the room not in the statue. The statue is nothing more than functional form and the water in the pool is the catalyst that brings it into being. Have the characters see shadowy flutterings in the corners of the room, have the torchlight dance in bizarre ways, anything to throw the characters off the statue and have them start looking behind their backs.

In the pool lies 50 gp, 15 pp, 11 pieces of jewelry valued at between 10-120 gp each, and a wooden rod with a gold spider attached to its end. The rod casts 3 entangle spells if the appropriate command word ("TANGLE" etched in arcane runes on the side) is spoken.

GARGOYLE (This chaotic evil creatures vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 17, and AC 16. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a bite for 1d6 damage, gore for 1d4, and two claws for 1d3 damage each.)

3 ANTECHAMBER

Beyond the door lies a small musty chamber. A table, upturned and missing two legs, with its underside facing the door, lies at the far end of the room. On the floor to the right, refuse, rat scat, small pieces of rotted wood, and insect husks litter the floor. From a hook in the ceiling, a large black iron chandelier hangs precariously by a length of chain. To the left, on the adjacent wall, is a wheel mechanism with a coil of chain wrapped about it. There are three metal loops attached to one of the beams in the ceiling. The loops run in a line from the chandelier to the wheel mechanism.

Across the room is a small, closed wooden door. It is loosely banded with metal straps and a rough shaped metal ring in its center acts as a handle. The door's bottom is ragged, with nearly a hands-width of space between it and the floor.

Nearing the table causes several large rats to scurry beneath the door to room 4. The mechanism raises and lowers the



chandelier. Moving the chandelier causes it to fall because it is weakened by rust. Any player underneath it must make a dexterity check (CL 3) or it will hit them for 1d4 hp. The chain is generally useless as it will snap underneath 100 lbs of weight.

4 COMMANDER'S CHAMBER

This is a squat room with a low ceiling. At the far end are the shattered and rotted remnants of a bed. A dilapidated armoire fills the wall to its side. From the ceiling clings a bizarre arrangement: a series of small and large gears attached to a metal ball from which extrude 4 thin blades of wood. A series of metal rings attached to the ceiling lead from the contraption to a narrow niche in the wall.

This was the personal room for Dzeebagd's commander.

THE MECHANISM

The niche in the wall is barely an arms length wide and twice as tall. Within are three long metal cylinders attached to small chains that run through loops in the roof above it. Squealing pink baby rats are nestled in the aperture's bottom.

This mechanism was used to turn the ball in the roof, making a fan. The mechanism works similar to that of a Grandfather Clock. If the baby rats are disturbed, four large rats, which have crawled up into a hole at the back of the aperture, attack.

RATS X4 (These neutral creatures vital stats are HD 1d2, HP 1 and AC 12. They have no primary attributes. They attack with a bite for 1d2 damage. A successful bite might cause an infection. The character bitten must make a constitution check or suffers the effect of an infection in 6-24 hours. The effects are a fever, 1/2 move, -2 to all checks and -3 to all combat actions. This infection lasts until the character makes a successful constitution check. The effects then dissipate in 6-24 hours)

THE ARMOIRE

The old dilapidated chest sits askew from the wall, leaning precariously into the room. The doors are ajar, and from within reeks the acrid smell of urine and feces.

If the door is touched or moved it falls off. Looking inside the armoire reveals a rough cut tunnel with an earthen floor going into the wall behind it. The hole in the back of the cabinet is not large. Once the cabinet is moved a larger opening becomes visible (see room 5 below).

5A RATS NEST

A rough hewn corridor dripping mud and slime, braced by moldy wooden beams, proceeds straight back a few lengths before turning hastily to the right. The floor is damp and puddled, and from within, the rank odor of rot, urine and fecal matter causes you to gasp and heave for fresh air.

The tunnel is only 4' wide and 5' tall. Use of weapons in the tunnel is nearly impossible for medium-sized creatures. Small creatures can use weapons with appropriate modifiers. The tunnel zigzags back and forth, and with each bend the air becomes more difficult to breathe until the acidic air causes breathing to come in ragged heaves while the eyes begin to water. As the characters move down the corridor, rats emerge from the darkness ahead. As they turn the last corner:

As you proceed down the tunnel, a noise like the chittering of grasshoppers and the crackling of leaves increases with each step. Suddenly, dozens of foul rats pour around the corner. They scurry wildly down the tunnel around you making a tremendous amount of noise as they go. They begin to crawl over and on you as they pass, attempting to bite and scratch any exposed flesh.

As the rats swarm down the corridor, 1d6 will attack each character in the corridor for each round the swarm lasts. It takes three rounds for the swarm to pass. Four rounds after the initial encounter, the swarm enters room 4. Only 1d4 rats attack each character in Room 4 each round before they pass. The rats run to Room 1 and scatter from there.

RATS (These neutral creatures vital stats are HD 1d2, HP 1 and AC 12. They have no primary attributes. They attack with a bite for 1d2 damage. A successful bite might cause an infection. The character bitten must make a constitution check or suffers the effect of an infection in 6-24 hours. The effects are a fever, 1/2 move, -2 to all checks and -3 to all combat actions. This infection lasts until the character makes a successful constitution check. The effects then dissipate in 6-24 hours)

5B RATS NEST

About you is a tight room, barely larger than the corridor behind. Wooden beams lean into the room, somewhat teetering on their ends and barely holding up the roof. The cracked and rotted wooden beams of the floor are covered with heaps of filth; the accumulated debris of years of rat habitation. The walls of the room are covered with small holes and nests out of which peer the tiny glowing eyes of rats and more rats.

There is little of interest in this room. If the rat filth is searched, three opened and empty metal trunks are found amongst it. A successful wisdom check (CL 1) uncovers one small metal trunk, closed with a rusted padlock. Inside are 12 small rubies worth 10-20gp each. Sadly, for all the effort, any of the characters who managed their way this far have to make a constitution save (CL 6) or contract the lung disease described in the **Dungeon Dressing** section.

6 FORGOTTEN TEMPLE

The hallway curves and opens into a large reddish colored round room with a conical ceiling. The room is half submerged in brownish water. The visible portion of the floor has an engraving etched into it. Though half of the engraving is beneath the water, the other portion seems to be a circle set within a circle, the interior of which is engraved with contorted bright red glyphs. About the wall, in concentric circles, are many hundreds of small hand-sized niches, many of which contain eerie, ceramic figurines. Across the room is a broad copper door braced by thick iron bands.

The etchings in the floor glow red, though there is nothing in the grooves. It is a magical aura associated with Mortzva, a goblin god that works as a handmaid to the Fates. Any characters knowledgeable of the religions of Inzae recognize the engravings. They are not magical, but their combination and orientation make them nodes of power. Defiling the engravings is a dangerous undertaking, and it garners the wrath of Mortzva.

If any engraving is scratched or defaced in any manner, the character so doing receives a -1 to all rolls until blessed by a cleric of the Fate's, or a remove curse is cast upon him.

Most of the niches are empty, but some bear figurines. The figurines are crudely made, ceramic and virtually featureless. In the belly of each figurine is a personal item of the person it represents. Most of them died long ago but a few still wander the lands. Several examples are: A platinum coin from paladin long since dead, a tuft of hair from a notorious bugbear, a bony finger from a giant still wandering the land, a copper ring of a merchant long since dead, and **a tooth from a Minotaur hidden in a chamber beneath the crumbling walls of Isenburg.**

7 SHAMAN'S CHAMBER

The copper door swings inward, groaning against rusted hinges and the soupy water behind it. Your light spills into a nearly submerged round chamber with aged and musty ochre-colored walls. The light reflects off of the walls, making the water appear as congealed blood. Flotsam floats atop the water, and brown vines grow along the walls, massing on the sconces at either end of the room. In the left end of the room, a large cone-shaped brick structure juts from the water like the tooth of an ancient dragon.

This was once the chamber of Dzeebagd's Shaman. Here, he baked the figurines in room 6, lived, and worshiped. The water in the room is about 3' deep and very warm. The cone shaped object is the top of a kiln. Feeling around the kiln reveals a small opening just beneath the surface of the water and a larger one near the floor. The upper portion is where the dolls were placed to bake. About the room on the floor are the following items: the legs and bowl of a brass brazier, a shallow metal trunk (empty), and the rotted remains of various pieces of furniture.

THE WALL

The wall is constructed of brick overlaid with a dark crimson plaster. Most of the plaster has cracked off and fallen into the water. Those sections of plaster remaining on the wall are covered with a series of pictographs, glyphs, and symbols of all types.

Players familiar with the religions of Inzae recognize that most of these symbols reference goblin mythology. A close inspection of the wall reveals a small hidden door (1' x 6") near one of the sconces (wisdom check at CL 2). It opens by pulling down on the western sconce.

Behind the door is a nook containing **a small, femur-shaped bone with a gold clasp on it** (the finger bone of a dragon used as a case for small pieces of parchment), **two rotted pouches** (the first one, when shaken, produces a dull sound like pebbles and contains 18 goblin teeth. The second pouch rips when

opened, dropping small black stones into the water, 4-9 can be recovered. These have divinatory power words engraved on them. When the power word on the stone is uttered, the holder of the stone receives a +1 on all rolls for the next 1-10 melee rounds), **a ceramic figurine with a tuft of hair on its head and a tooth embedded in its stomach** (this figurine represents Dzeebagd's last chief), and one **brittle piece of parchment** (when opened it crumbles into pieces and has no readable portions remaining).

There are animated vines living in the muck. These vines were the last experiment of the goblin shaman who lived here. He was attempting to create vines that would do his bidding, and the experiment half succeeded. After the characters are in the room for 10 minutes, the vines begin to animate. One tendril slowly closes the door and tries to keep it closed (opposing strength checks are necessary to open it). Then one vine per round comes to life. The vines wrap around a leg of a character and attempt to drag the character under the water. Each round the vines will wrap around another limb until it suffocates the character.

ANIMATED VINES (These neutral evil creatures vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 1 and AC 13. They have no primary attributes. The vine has only one mechanism for attacking. It entangles a character and attempts to strangle him. Each round, it attempts to wrap a tendril around a character's limb. If the attack is successful, a dexterity save is required to remain standing, and a strength check is needed to break free. Each tendril receives a separate attack and the character must make successful checks for each tendril. First, the tendrils will secure the limbs and then wrap around the throat. Once a tendril wraps around the throat of a character, they must make a successful constitution save at CL 0 each round to remain conscious. For each round after the first, the character receives a -2 to the check and an additional -2 for each successive round.)

8A TO THE TRAINING ROOM

Moving down the narrow passage, a grisly sight awaits you. A large ghoulish skeleton is propped up against a half collapsed wall. It is easily 7' in length with the tattered remnants of thick leather cloaks still clinging tenaciously to its skeletal torso and arms. Upon the grinning and fleshless face is a tuft of gray and withered hair. A massive hand still grasps a gigantic club, the top of which is driven through with daggers and a short sword.

This is the remains of an ogre that once lived in the dungeon. He is the father of the baby ogre (long since dead) found in room 12. The lifeless skeleton animates if the party disturbs the skeleton in room 12. (See room 12 for details)

An examination of the skeleton reveals several shattered ribs and a broken leg. Much of what was on its person has long since rotted away. The only objects of value are a gold medallion worth 10gp and which was once a small platter for receiving offerings, as well as a silver armband worth 20 sp.

44 CASTLES & CRUSADES

8B THE TRAINING ROOM

Before you is a large misty octagonal room with a conical ceiling and a recessed floor. In the steamy midair listlessly float a vast assortment of bones, femurs, ribs, skulls, whole spines, hands and other parts both large and small. The large round beams crisscrossing the ceiling have long since ceased to do their job, as the roof is collapsing and large mounds of dirt and debris have fallen in the room. The lower portion of the floor is submerged in steamy water.

This was once a training room for the goblins. When ogres occupied the dungeon, the room became a temple to the ogre god, Shtroomsh. The bones are bits and pieces of animals and others killed on the hunt or in war. They are strung from the rafters with spider webbing woven as rope, a fact initially invisible in the torchlight and the steamy air. If the characters elect to pull down the bones (there are 3 or 4 dozen hanging from the ceiling), there is a chance this causes the roof to collapse. For the first bone pulled down there is a 10% chance of collapse. Each successive bone pulled increases the chance by 1%. A collapse brings down the roof, and any character within 5' of an exit must make a dexterity save to escape before the collapse. All characters within 10' of an exit must make a dexterity save for ½ damage, and those who fail take full damage (5d10) as a good portion of the roof collapses.

9 KITCHEN

Beyond the archway lies a narrow rectangular room. A narrow slit is inset into the middle of the floor. From each end of the slit protrude bent and twisted metal bars. At the other end of the room are three small, cone-shaped clay ovens. Three narrow, dark, wooden doors stare at you from across the room. Thick and loose silvery webs dangle in long strands from the ceiling's bowed rafters. Near and around the rafters the webbing is bundled into knots and tight wads.

The webbing does not contain spiders; but dozens of small flying animals about the size of a bumble bee. These animals, Yaalings, nest in the knots and wads of webbing, and when roused, emit a silvery glow. They are harmless and will not attack under any circumstance. They are semi-intelligent fairy pets. The webbing is very difficult to burn (CL 5 intelligence check to determine where to apply direct flame to make it catch).

The Yaalings reaction to the players depends upon the party's actions in the room. Any hostile move towards the webs or the Yaalings results in their flying out of the room and up the well shaft in two rounds. When roused, they begin to glow (from within the nest), and then slip out of the balls and wads of webbing.

The balls of webbing begin glowing with a silvery light, illuminating the entire room with their bright beams. Then, as suddenly as they begin to glow, bright balls of light fall out of the webbing and glide quickly through the door and down the hall.

If the characters are curious and not aggressive, the Yaalings will, one by one, awaken and slip out of their nests. Curious, they hover around the party until they act aggressively or the characters are involved in a melee, at which point they leave.

If the characters act in a friendly manner towards the Yaalings, they let the faeries of the Dampfrat know as much. Fairies can speak with them with much clarity and a description of the party and their actions is forthcoming. If the Yaalings are disposed towards the party, the faeries in the Dampfrat seek them out and offer them favors. This is especially important in the module following Dzeebagd, Felsentheim, Death on the Treklant. If the party acts aggressively towards the Yaalings, the faeries seek out the party to harm them instead.

Yaalings are exceptionally difficult to hit (AC 25) due to their speed and size. They have only 1 hp and have no form of attack.

The ovens contain nothing but ash, coal and a few beetles. The narrow slit in the floor is a grill, most of which is bent and twisted. There is nothing in it except ash and bone.

9A

A solid black, wood-slab door with a crooked handle in its middle bars your way. The door swings into a narrow, long room with a low ceiling studded with small metal loops and hooks. A short length of chain dangles from one of the loops. Upon the floor are the remains of boxes crates and barrels.

This room contained boxes of foodstuffs, but everything has long since been eaten or rotted away.

9B

This is a small planked door with no apparent handle, resting slightly ajar. Beyond is low ceilinged, narrow and long room bearing numerous, shattered, large ceramic vessels lying in a brown sludge. Both walls are lined with shelves, most of which are broken. There are, however, three whole jugs still sitting on the shelves.

The brown sludge sticks to the characters feet when they enter the room. It is the harmless inedible remnants of goblin food. The first jug contains a congealed glob of yellowish goo (if ingested, acts as a type II poison). The second jug is sealed airtight. Within is a solid mass of a black tarry substance. When opened, a wretched stench fills the room, almost bringing tears to the eyes of those inside. If this substance is eaten, it acts as two days worth of food and the player heals at twice his normal

rate for 2 days. Heal spells also heal twice the amount given on the dice. The third jug is corked. Inside is a bitter goblin wine turned to vinegar.

9C

This is a solid wooden door with a round metal handle in the middle. Small scraps of metal and a large dagger are jamming the door shut. It opens into a narrow room jumbled with skeletons wrapped in the tattered remains of clothing and armor. On the ceiling are hooks and rings bearing frayed rope.

This is the room where the ogres placed their prisoners and let them languish until death. Examination of the skeletons reveals all types of skulls and assorted limbs, though most are goblin skulls. There are pieces of armor, bits of leather and some personal items, but nothing of value.

10 MESS HALL

A low and broad opening leads from the hallway into a long room. Barely a stone toss across the room is another identical opening. Four stone benches, barely coming to the height of a human knee, stretch across the room. The floor is littered with debris fallen from the ceiling and the detritus of the previous inhabitant's lives. Nearly an inch of water is pooled in the center of the room.

This room was the Zjerd mess hall. If the debris is searched, the party finds several metal spoons, a wooden bowl, splintered scraps of wood, and similar odds and ends. The stone benches were just that, benches. The tables have long since disappeared. The pool of water in the center of the room is caused by seepage from underneath it. An underground waterway has eroded most of the ground underneath the floor. It is ready to collapse. If more than 200lbs of pressure is placed in the area indicated on the map, the floor collapses. The player falls through the opening into 15' of very hot water, taking 1d3 damage from the heat. The waters flow is not strong enough to push anyone along with it, but unless rescued, the character may drown.

11 LOOTED ARMORY

Peering around the corner of this cramped portal is a small dark room mostly filled with foul black water. Metal rods protrude menacingly from midway up the walls and then again near the ceiling. Sconces are located at either side of the room. A small dented and shorn metal shield lies partially in the water, and in the corner of the room by the door is a splintered and molded wooden barrel being held together by rusted metal bands.

This was one of two Zjerd armories. The water is 1' at its deepest and not as warm as in other portions of the dungeon. The barrel contains the rusted heaps of arrow tips.

12 ABANDONED TROLL DEN

Beyond the narrow stone aperture lies a fairly long and narrow chamber with a peaked ceiling. The ceiling and walls are black with soot, and the floor is piled with jumbles and heaps of rotted debris and furs. Dominating the center of the room is a large makeshift table cluttered with junk, including the tattered remains of a large sack with a small sword pinioning it to the table. Against the west wall is a drying rack, the shreds of a skin still attached to it. Along the east wall are two massive twisting tusks spreading nearly its entire length. Several large spears and planks of wood stand in the far corner of the room.

There are five distinct piles of furs, and each was a bed. Beetles, mice and vermin have nested in them over the years and still scurry about if the piles are moved. In one of the beds is a skeleton. It is small, about dwarf-size, and curled up in a fetal position. This is the skeleton of an ogre child who starved to death after his parents died. His father is the skeleton found in 8A. If the child's skeleton is disturbed, the ogre skeleton in 8A animates.



HUGE SKELETON (These neutral creatures vital stats are HD 4d12, HP 28 and AC 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with claws for 1d8 each or a club for 2d6 damage.)

The souls of these skeletons are forever locked within Dzeebagd's walls; the capricious hand of fate denied them entry into the other world. The father died trying to get to his son, and when his son's skeleton is bothered, the father's soul animates in the skeleton. It then lumbers towards his son in an effort to save his child again. When entering the room, it attacks all there, first shoving them around in an effort to get near the child's skeleton. There is nothing that will quench his thirst to kill once it realizes his son is dead. The skeleton chases the characters and fights them until it is defeated. If any other creatures happen to encounter the skeleton, it attacks them also. Its ghost then haunts the dungeon until the remains of the ogre's body are burned. It would take a hot fire indeed to burn the bones to ash.

The table is cluttered with several bowls, gourds, spoons, small pieces of bone, and the pinioned sack. The sack is large and clumpy, and loot tumbles out of it when it is ripped open, including: a large gold candelabra (10 gp), a silver platter (30 gp), some silver flatware (10 gp), an ornately carved ivory box (20gp), 17 gp, 110 sp, and 230 cp. An examination of the box reveals religious icons of the 5 fates. If the box is returned to the temple of the Fates at Kreuzmark, the players are reimbursed at half its value but gain +1 on every roll they make for 1d4 weeks thereafter.

The two tusks are mammoth tusks. They are valued at 200 gp each. Each weighs appx. 120 lbs and is 15' long. Along with the pile of lumber there are three very large spears (-2 to hit and damage due to the age and the brittleness of the metal), and a large war hammer of exceptionally fine dwarven make that has a metal head. The ore used to make the hammer never rusts. Although the head is still good, the haft no longer sits tightly in its slot. This makes the weapon virtually useless in combat in its present condition. However, reset with a new haft, the warhammer receives a +1 in combat. This is a non-magical adjustment resulting from the quality of the workmanship and material.

By the tanning rack is a piece of wool covering a cage. Once the wool is removed, read the following:

Beneath the wool is a metal cage, only large enough to hold a good-sized dog. But inside is no dog. There is a blue humanoid creature curled up in a ball, its ribs nearly poking through its skin. Shallow breaths move its chest. The light apparently rouses it, and its head pokes up from between its arms. It has a long face with razor sharp fangs protruding from a yellowish mouth. Great bulbous eyes begin to open.

This is a sumpfgroll captured long ago by the ogres. These trolls never die unless burned to cinders. This one has had nothing to eat but beetles, roaches and an occasional rat in over 50 years. It is in hibernation, and the light and noise has roused



berserk, screeching at the top of its lungs, lashing out, grabbing and banging on the bars trying to get out. The cage has a door with a padlock that has long since rusted shut. If released, the troll takes off wildly down the halls in search of easy food and lingers in the dungeon until it can find a way out.

SMALL SUMPFGROLL (troll) (These chaotic evil creatures vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 5 and AC 17. Their prime attributes are physical. They attack with a bite (1d2) and claws (1d4 x2).)

13 SPIDER CAGES

Three chambers line the hallway each closed off by metal portcullises in varying states of disrepair.

These chambers once contained spiders. One for males, another for females, and the center one for the eggs. The chambers are 10'x10'x10'. The portcullises are 10'x10'.

13A

This chamber's portcullis, thick with rust, has small sections snapped out of it and the upper rivets have nearly come out of the ceiling, causing it to lean awkwardly into the hallway. The door in the portcullis, taking up nearly three quarters of its size, hangs slightly ajar. Beyond is a square chamber several strides across and deep. Midway between the floor and the ceiling, stretched from one wall to the other are five metal rods. The floor is thick with rubbish and clumps of moss and mold.

If anyone attempts to open the door, they have a 25% chance of causing it to fall into the hallway and possibly onto party

members. Anyone in the way of the collapsing portcullis takes 1d4 hp unless a dexterity save (CL 1) is made, in which case they take ½ damage.

13B

This portcullis is very tightly woven, making it difficult for even a small human hand to fit through its openings. In the center of the portcullis is small door which, in turn, is set within a larger door that covers fully three-quarters of the portcullis. The chamber beyond is covered in dust and pebbles. In a far corner of the chamber lies a cluster of moldy spheres.

The six round balls have a small layer of mold growing on them and are attached to one another. They are very light, and colored a dull reddish brown with faded yellow swirls. They are the dried-out remains of spider eggs and are very fragile. Manhandling them causes them to crack and release a light dust. The dust is potentially deadly, affecting any character that fails a constitution save (CL 2) as a type III poison.

13C

This aperture is broad and opens onto a small room. A portcullis, ripped from its hinges, lies on the floor half in and half out of the room. Large metal bars crisscross the room at varying heights.

The metal bars were placed in the room to facilitate web construction for the spiders.

14 COLLAPSED ARMORY

The ceiling in this armory has collapsed, filling the room with dirt and debris. It is piled up behind the door, nearly bursting it open. The door is now jammed and no amount of pushing or pulling will loosen the door. The only way to open the door is to break it and allow the debris to pour into the hallway.

This door bulges out into the hallway. The nails in its metal bands are squeezing out, and the wood is splintered and cracked.

This is a simple wooden door. The only manner of opening it is to break it down. Any individual directly in front of the door when it is shattered has a chance of being wounded by the debris that comes pouring out of the room. The player must make a dexterity check (CR 1) or take 1-2 hp of damage. There is nothing of interest in the room.

As the door splits open, mud, dirt and debris tumble into the hallway. Before you is a passage nearly filled with a jumble of mud and rock. Just visible at the top of the pile of dirt is a space just large enough for a small man to crawl through.

Climbing over the debris, the characters enter a small chamber. The central area of the ceiling has collapsed, there is a large pile of broken beams, dirt and debris spread across the room. The walls have not yet collapsed, and those portions that are visible have large wooden pegs and metal hooks placed in it at regular intervals.

15 EXCAVATIONS

At the corner of the hallway is a tall and narrow portal. Beyond is a long room covered in decades of dust, dirt and mold. In the center of the room is an overturned, metal wagon. Along the north wall is a large pile of flat stones and along the southern wall is a pile of wooden beams. In the furthest corner of the room is a roughed out portal leading into the blackness beyond.

The wagon is a small metal box set on metal wheels. The wheels are rusted, making the wagon very difficult to move. The stone pile is of hundreds of thin sandstone slabs. The wood pile stands about three feet high and consists of several dozen, large, rotting and molded planks. Moments after a character pulls a piece of wood from the pile, it seems to come alive with small spiders. The spiders pour out from between the planks, crawling all over and descending like a wave onto the floor. They crawl up the character's legs, onto their arms and try to find bare flesh. Everyone in the vicinity of the wood pile must make a constitution save (CL 3) or they are bitten by one of the small spiders. If bitten, another save must be made at CL 0 or the character becomes ill within 24 hours. The illness immobilizes the character for 1d6 hours, and causes 1 hit point damage per hour for 1d4 hours or until healed. Upon leaving the room, all the characters should repeat the save process to determine if a spider eventually managed to find bare flesh.

There opening at the far end of the room:

The portal opens onto a passage only several strides deep. The crumbling roof is supported by precariously balanced, bulging wooden beams. Scattered about the floor of the tunnel are several picks, a hammer, and a few spikes. A length of chain dangles from the ceiling.

Behind the furthest beam, hanging on a hook, is a metal hooded lantern. The hood is open, and within is a small tin can. The can has a narrow opening at its top, but no wick can be seen. The lantern is not magical, but it is a useful device. The can holds a solid fuel mixture developed by the Kdzyj ages ago. If a fire is placed over the hole in the can, the fuel ignites and burns for 12 hours. It casts light to 50 ft. The fuel is useful if damp, though it then only burns at half brightness. The canisters weigh ½ lb and are 6" tall and 3" wide. They fit any normal lantern. The canisters cannot be used as grenades because without oxygen the fuel cannot light and in confined spaces, snuffs itself out. The fuel burns very very slowly and hot. The contents of one can cover 1sq feet. Walking through a 5 ft x 5ft area covered in lit fuel causes 3d8 damage.



16 SLANTED HALLWAY

Beyond the columned entry is a broad hallway that slants down as the water comes closer and closer to a cracked and crumbling ceiling. In the center of the hallway, several strides beyond the entry, is a portcullis, its bars cracked with rust and wrapped with small creeping vines. Beyond the metal bars, the corridor mounts again, the floor slowly creeping out of the sludge, while broad openings lurk on both sides of the corridor.

As the party approaches the portcullis:

Your footing becomes insecure as you wobble over cobbles, stones and other debris. Then the corridor descends and the floor drops quickly beneath your feet!

The hallway slants down (see illustration) to the portcullis and slants back up on its far side. The flagstones are very slippery, requiring a dexterity check at CL 2. The water is nearly 5ft deep (bear in mind the tunnel is only 6' tall). The door in the portcullis is rusted shut. It is impossible to open it in the normal fashion; the door must be broken off. A successful strength check (CL 8) succeeds in breaking off the door. Another method would be to dig around the edges of the portcullis and remove it from the wall. The walls are nearly eroded and barely hold the portcullis in place.

If the party remains here more than 10 minutes, the snake that lives in room 17 might visit them. There is a 1 in 8 chance every minute after the first turn of this happening. Though it has enjoyed a feast of only rats and an occasional goblin these past few years, it is not beyond an attack on a smaller-sized humanoid.

17 CARPENTERS WORKROOM

A wide archway stretches across the north side of the hall. The chamber beyond is nearly immersed in murky water that laps only a hands breadth away from the ceiling in the furthest corners of the room. Large chunks of the ceiling and wall have collapsed and fallen into the water. Piled up haphazardly, at the water's edge are several piles of half rotted bones, bits and pieces of metal, and shreds of rusted chainmail.

Most of the room has subsided, filling the room almost to the rim with water. This is fairly obvious as the ceiling is very uneven and dips low where it still remains. The water is shallow at the entry but gets deeper beyond, reaching nearly 7' in depth at the far end. This was the carpenters' room, but little is left. Most of the wood rotted away and the tools are buried beneath silt and dirt that has accumulated over the years. The bones and pieces of metal found near the entry are the regurgitated, undigestible vomit from the snake. If the party searches the room, they find a few tools near the entry - Read:

Feeling through the muck with hands and feet you pull up a several pieces of water soaked wood, the head of a hammer and a chisel.

If the players enter the room and continue to search, a successful wisdom check (CL 0) will uncover a metal chest:

Scraping around, you come across a small metal box. It is a flat topped metal chest with a latch.

The chest is 1"x1'x6' and has nothing in it but a mass of rusted nails, hinges, and braces. When the players locate the chest, the giant snake is roused if it has not already attacked them. It begins swimming around, searching for a suitable meal read:

As you are working your way through the water, something brushes up against your leg and the water ripples just slightly.

If the party does not hastily make a retreat to shallow water, the snake picks a suitable character and attacks. It attempts to wrap itself around a character, drag him under, and drown him before beginning its feast.

SNAKE, HUGE CONSTRICTOR (*These neutral creatures vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 20 and AC 15. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a bite for 2d4 damage and use a constrict attack. Upon a successful grapple check against medium-size or smaller creatures, the snake deals 2d4 additional damage.*)

18 SMITHY

A broad opening leads into a large room with a gigantic, centrally located fire pit. Above it is a massive cone-shaped copper venting tube, green with age, grudgingly held up by two large metal rods suspended from the ceiling. The rods holding the far side of the vent have broken, causing the vent's far end to fall, nearly scraping the floor. At the other end of the room is another broad arch leading into darkness.

Scattered about the room are several anvils on stumps, a bellows, slag piles, coal piles, some boxes and sacks piled against a wall, and all manner of tools. The left wall is covered by a metal rack with shelves, hooks, holes, and slots. Many tools still hang from their pegs, several lengths of chain dangle silently in the gloom, and a coil of frayed rope rots at the bottom of the rack.

The fire pit is circular, low and dug into the floor. A short stone wall runs its circumference. Inside the pit is a pile of ash and cinder mixed with large chunks of coal.

The vent dangles precariously from the ceiling. The rods that once held the other end of the vent lie useless on the floor beside it.

If any character yanks, pulls or leans against any portion of the vent, there is an 80% chance it falls to the ground and brings a portion of the ceiling with it. Any character in the room must make a dexterity save (CL 3) or be struck by falling debris for 1d8 hp damage. If any character is unlucky enough to be in the fire pit when the vent falls, they take 2d10 hp.

There are four rotten burlap sacks in the corner. Each rips if hoisted. Two sacks contain walnut-sized metal ingots. Two sacks contain fist-sized metal ingots. All the ingots are a precious and rare white metal. It is used in making the finest weapons and metal implements. A character familiar with smithing or mining may recognize them as such (CL 3). There are 250 lbs of ingots in the sacks. There are four long and shallow wooden crates lined up next to one another. Inside each crate is a sand cast; short sword, dagger, spear, and a polearm.

THE WALL

Hanging from the wall are several small hammers, tongs, clamps, clippers, straps of leather, fraying lengths of rope, pliers, and varying lengths of chain.

If any particular item is searched for, there is a 40% chance it can be found. Each further search reduces the chance for an item to be on the rack by 10%. These are rusted and aged tools that would need new hafts to be useful.

19 BALLISTA ROOM

This broad chamber is dominated by a single object, a ballista. Smaller than most, it has a bow nearly twice as long as the base but it has slots for four bolts. It is in a horrible state of repairs, much of it having rotted away. Many portions dangle by threads of rope and metal brackets. The bow itself has a large crack down its center. Around the room are a workbench cluttered with tools, a large wooden chest, several coils of rope and four large bolts leaning against the wall.

The ballista cannot be repaired, but the plans for its construction can be found in room 22. Treat the items on the table as those on the wall in room 18, only there is a 30% chance of the first item being found. The chest contains fine woodworking tools such as tiny drills, brackets, and lathes. The coils of rope contain rat nests and are rotted and useless.

20 STOREROOM

At the end of the corridor is a low doorway. Beyond lies a small square room. Its' sagging ceiling and crumbling walls cover a room empty of anything other than a single, small disintegrating wooden crate.

This was a storeroom. The small crate was very sturdily constructed, but it has rotted with the ages. It contains 75 tin canisters as described in room 15.

21 STOREROOM

At the end of the hallway is a thick door clasped with broad metal bands.

The door is locked. Amazingly the mechanism still works. It can easily be picked (CL 1). The door itself, however, is swollen and is difficult to pull open.

The door grinds open, revealing a cramped room, wide with a partial earthen floor. Around the room are small wooden partitions reaching halfway to the low ceiling. In each partition are boxes, crates, barrels, sacks, tools, mining equipment and other items.

The room is full of supplies. It was well stocked before the last army left the fortress. They never returned. There are six partitioned areas. Most of the material is useless due to age and decay.

PARTITION #1: Six wooden crates and several burlap bags are here. They all contained foodstuffs, which have long since rotted away or been eaten by rats.

PARTITION #2: This partition contains several shovels, picks, metal rods, a crate of spikes, hammers, rope and chain. All this equipment is old and rusted. The spikes and metal bars are weak, and the handles to all the tools are virtually useless. All the metal objects, when used, have a 50% chance of breaking, increasing 1-10% with each use. The handles of the shovels and picks have 90% chance of breaking.

PARTITION #3: This partition contains several barrels, neatly stacked against the wall. They once contained beer, but are now empty.

PARTITION #4: Hanging from the wall of this partition are numerous pulleys of different shapes and sizes, hooks, metal loops, and coils of rope. These instruments are decayed and break if used.

PARTITION #5: Axes, adzes, froes and other forestry tools comprise this partition's contents. These items are decayed and useless.

PARTITION #6: This partition contains numerous crates and barrels. These once contained foodstuffs that have long since rotted away or been eaten.

22 CARTOGRAPHER'S CHAMBER

Originally, this room had a secret door for an entry with a trap door in front of it. The secret door is closed and can be opened by pulling down the sconce at the end of the hall on the wall between rooms 20 and 21. The trap door is no longer working and is stuck open. It is covered an 8' deep pit that is now filled with water. When the pit filled with water, it caused a section of earth beneath the door and in the room to erode and collapse. If the sconce is not pulled, the door has to be forced open.

A section of the hallway, immediately beyond the small pool of water, grinds and jerks inward, dropping plaster and stone as it moves. It is a short and narrow bricked passage several strides of which are sunk beneath water. Beyond, the passage opens up and continues to the right, around a corner. Clearly visible before the turn is a small wooden bed, covered with the dust and grime of the years, though still intact. A faded red blanket and pillow rest silently on it.

The water in the hallway is between 8" and 2' deep. After traversing the water read the following:

Moving through the hot water, you find yourself standing on a cracked flagstone floor next to the bed. Around the corner is a cramped room, barely a leap across and only several long, with a low slung ceiling barely the height of a man. In the center of the room is a dusty, web strewn table scattered with a jumble of feathers, small ceramic vials, a pile of parchment, and various curious small metal contraptions crusted in rust.

Against the wall is a low slung wooden shelf with nine separate racks. Clustered on the shelves are several scrolls, a few scroll cases and piles of parchment. At the far end of the room is a desk, much like any scribe's desk, very high with a stool slid up underneath it. All the walls are plastered with cracked sections revealing the brick beneath.

Your attention is drawn to the left wall though for, though cracked, faded and grimy, a map is visible upon it. The map covers the wall from one end of the room to the other.

The map on the wall is a very simple local map showing the tower and the surrounding countryside. If the dungeon is being used in its local setting, refer to the map included. If using a different campaign setting, be sure to draw it out for the characters with several sections missing, though be sure to include a town 35 miles to the south.

The Bed: The small wooden bed is covered by a red blanket and a pillow.

Pulling back the blanket reveal a mattress made of straw with a rat's nest situated in the middle of it. There is a small wooden trunk underneath the bed. It is closed and locked by a small padlock (CL 3). Inside the trunk is a wool blanket, a leather jerkin and a small box. Upon picking up the blanket, a small gold key falls out from its folds. It fits the trunk in the secret compartment in the ceiling above the desk (see below). The box can be opened easily and inside is a cluster of small steel shafts that cling together when lifted out - they are magnetized.



The Table: An hourglass with three vertical containers, a small rusted metal contraption, a wooden basin with a piece of cork in it, a sliver of metal poking through the cork, three metal candle holders, each with half burnt candles in them, a pile of parchment, five small clay vials, a wooden cup, and several quills sit on the table.

The hourglass has three different glass tubes. It measures two times. Holding it one way it will measure out ten minutes, and the other way thirty minutes. The rusted metal contraption is an astrolabe. The clay vials are the size of a child's fist and have dried ink in them. The parchment has nothing on it and is brittle to the touch. The metal sliver in the cork is magnetized.

The Shelf: This shelf has nine separate units on it and all but three are empty. An upper shelf bears rolled up parchment, two wooden scroll cases, and the third has a pile of sheaf parchment, two round, hand-sized wads of a dirty material, and a wooden bowl.

There are twelve rolled up pieces of parchment on the upper shelf each of which is tied with a cloth strip. Upon picking one up, it will be noticed that they are covered in a thick waxy substance. The scrolls were dipped in wax to preserve them. The wax cracks off when the scrolls are opened and drawn on them is a map of the local area. It is similar to the one on the wall. Each scroll contains an absolutely identical map and any character

examining the maps and making a successful intelligence check (CL 1) will notice that the maps are identical, down to the last scratch. The maps were made with the magic pen located in the compartment above the desk.

One of the two wooden scroll cases is empty. The other contains several sheets of parchment full of lines, arrows, numbers, and a drawing of a ballista. It is a blueprint. The ballista design is unique and creates a more accurate and better ranged weapon than those currently in use. If the plan on the blueprint is followed correctly, the ballista produced will be more accurate (+1 to hit) and have greater range than normal ballista (an increase of 20%). Due to its complexity, and the nature of the wood necessary to make it, an expert needs to be contracted for its construction. That person making the ballista only succeeds if they make a successful intelligence check (CL 8). With each successive try, add +2 to the checks.

The Desk: This is a scribe's desk. The top of it nearly reaches the ceiling. Underneath it is a tall stool with rungs, like a ladder, that lead up to its seat.

There is nothing of interest at the desk. However, if a character makes a successful wisdom check (CL 8), they note a small square patch of ceiling that does not quite match the color of the surrounding ceiling. If a character is actively looking at the ceiling or searching around the desk top, the CL is 2. Behind the slab is a secret compartment, and the piece of ceiling need

only be moved aside. Inside, is a small metal box that can be opened with the key from the trunk under the bed. It can be picked (CL 3) or shattered. Within is a magical quill capable of drawing a map of the countryside within 100 miles. The quill will only draw on a piece of parchment blessed by Letario, or any God of Knowledge. The command word in Arcane is "map," and must be spoken to activate the quill. Then, if left alone for 24 hours, the quill draws a completed map. It will not draw underground maps and will not reveal every detail of the land, only major, commonly known landmarks.

Rooms 23-24

These rooms house the Ban' Thout. Refer to "White Steam and Red Devils" for their relationship to the Krung' Thep and at the end of the module the section entitled "Histories" for more information. The leader of the Ban' Thout is Me' enup Tan' Meth. He is a Paladin and the others are of a lawful or good alignment. The Ban' Thout are similar in most respects to the Krung' Thep, though they are slightly larger with thinner heads and blue skin.

These rooms were built by the Ban' Thout over several months. Since its construction, much of the family has been killed. All that remain are their leader, Me' enup Tan' Meth, two guards, the leader's wife and one child. One of the guards is usually checking this tunnel and the dungeon and would likely have note the players arrival. If not, a guard is in room 24A and the remainder of the family will be in room 24B.

The characters may never locate room 23, the only egress from the dungeon other than the well shaft and possibly the only

area the players encounter the Ban' Thout. If it appears that this may occur and you would like the encounter to occur, there are two suggested manners of accomplishing this. First, have the characters encounter a Ban' Thout in melee with several Krung' Thep. If the players choose to rescue the Ban' Thout, Me' enup shows them rooms 23 and 24 and the encounter with the Ban' Thout can commence. Or, during the battle between the Krung' Thep and the players, have a Ban' Thout join in the fray and help the players. The encounter with the remaining Ban' Thout can then follow. The latter is the less preferable manner of enabling this encounter.

Several events will propel the Ban' Thout into action. When the Krung' Thep enter the dungeon, the Ban' Thout find out shortly thereafter. If one of the Ban' Thout guards noted the characters presence in the dungeon, he follows them as quietly as possible in order to determine what they are doing. In general, the Ban' Thout will not react negatively to the characters as they try to discern their motives first. The leader is a paladin and can detect evil, though he has lost many of his other powers. In the case of evil characters, the Ban' Thout react negatively. The activities of the Ban' Thout are fluid because their actions depend on character actions and numerous other circumstances. Keep their whereabouts in mind and place them accordingly.

This band of Ban' Thout consist of a male leader, Me' enup Tan' Meth, his wife, their son and two guards (cousins of the leader). Me' enup Tan' Meth is a Paladin and wears extraordinarily well crafted armor, dented and shorn with time and usage. He carries a magical sword named the Heldetot though Me' enup calls it Sel'enot.

Me' enup Tan' Meth is doomed and he knows it. After leaving Imfal he slowly lost his inspiration as he became embroiled in the desperate struggle for survival. He has abandoned many of his principles and codes to ensure that his family lived, not realizing that their only hope laid in his faith. Only with the most recent turn of events has he belatedly come to realize this mistake. Me' enup Tan' Meth knows that his wife and child will likely not survive another trek in the Dampfrat and one of his guards legs is nearly useless. He will not abandon his family and would rather die here than run any further. Further, he knows there are more Krung' Thep beyond waiting to kill him. As such, he believes that his fate and that of his family's is sealed.

Me' enup Tan' Meth is able to sense evil characters and will react accordingly. He is also able to sense good characters and will react in the following manner. As he knows he is about to die and in an effort to regain "favor," he stays in the dungeon and agrees to hold off the Krung' Thep or Zjerd as long as he can while allowing the players to escape. Further, he gives a good character (best behaved, bravest) his sword. His guards show the characters the way out. He also offers each character a small wood carving (see room 24).

As Me' enup Tan' Meth does not speak Inzaen or any other local tongue, all communication must be performed in some manner other than speech (unless done as a magic feat or if a party member happens to speak Uruk as Me' enup does).



ME' ENUP TAN' METH, BAN' THOUT (He is a lawful good, 5th level paladin whose vital stats are HP 32 (currently 15) and AC 19. His primary attributes are strength and charisma. His significant attributes are strength 16 and charisma 15. He carries an expert breastplate which confers a +1 to AC, the Heldentot described in the section 'magic items' below, and a +1 small metal shield. He has lost his paladin abilities to lay on hands, cure disease, and turn undead. The breastplate cannot be worn by a humanoid.)

BAN 'THOUT, GUARDS X2 (These lawful good creatures vital stats are HD 3d10, HP 20, currently 14 and AC 15. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a battle axe for 1d8 damage and carry expert studded leather that confers a +1 AC, and small metal shields.)

ME' ENUP TAN' METH'S WIFE, BAN' THOUT (She is a lawful good creature whose vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3 and AC 13. Her prime attributes are mental. She carries a short sword.)

The Ban'Thout's child has 1 hp and is incapable of fighting.

23 SECRET TUNNEL (QUESTION HERE REFER TO MAP)

Access to this room is through a tunnel in the floor of room 21. Any character who happens to walk over this area will slip into it. It is nearly 8ft deep. If the character cannot swim, or is not helped, he may drown. Otherwise he can move down the tunnel several feet and will pop up in another darkened tunnel with 5' of water in it.

The floor disappears beneath your feet and you slip into a hole underneath the water.

Moving several feet through the warm underwater darkness your head pops up into dank and stuffy air. The floor is slippery, though firm, and the walls seem sturdy.

There is no illumination in Room 23. The tunnel walls are cramped, making it difficult to fight here. By the time the characters reach the far end of the tunnels the water is only 2' deep and they will see light from room 24.

24 ACTIVITY AREA

As you exit the narrow tunnels, you enter a broad chamber awash in a husky firelight. The water here is about knee depth and spreads a short way to the left and right. Small fires are burning beyond the water's edge in hewn caverns supported by weak timbers.

The only Ban' Thout that are always in here are the wife and the child. The others will be in and out as necessary. Area "A" has a fire going as does Area "B".

Area "A" is used as a guard post. There are three light crossbows here, a bundle of bolts, two spears, a makeshift table, and one chair. There are some animal skins that have been poorly tanned. The fire is in a large pit lined with rocks.

Area "B" is the main encampment of the Ban' Thout. There are ten bedrolls here, a large makeshift table with a few stools, three fire pits, a pile of wood, and various weapons. There is also a small pile of wood squares with engravings on them. These are bizarre engravings, rectilinear in form, showing various Ban' Thout in places of obvious distinction, palaces, castles etc. They appear to have been carved recently.

25 ESCAPE TUNNEL

This is a dark and narrow tunnel collapsing in places and shorn up with large logs. It traces through the ground for quite some time (nearly 1/2 mile), when it comes to a stop. There is a makeshift ladder leading up into darkness.

This is the Ban' Thout access to the Dampfrat, from here they can leave to gather food and other materials as needed. The ladder goes up to the hollowed out bole of a tree. Me' enup and the others are now aware that the Krung' thep who are looking for them have discovered this tunnel. They have quit using it and have consigned themselves over to death.

WRAPPING UP THE ADVENTURE

By the end of the adventure there should be few loose ends to tie up. The Krung' Thep are bent on killing the Ban' Thout and not the party. They only chase the party if it is expedient and Nipt' Than appears likely to gain something.

The most significant short and long term effect of the party's attack on Dzeebagd is to garner the ire of the local Zjerd warlord,



54 CASTLES & CRUSADES

Grodge, the lord of Klednij. Klednij is only a few days away by foot and Grodge is in the process of reclaiming Dzeebagd and sends regular patrols to there.

If Grodge is warned of the attack by a messenger from Dzeebagd, he sends a small force (around 50 Zjerd) to find out what happened. They arrive within 6 days of the messenger leaving Dzeebagd.

If no messenger warns Grodge, then a routine patrol does. The routine patrol arrives at Dzeebagd 3 days after the characters. They immediately send word to Grodge of the events there and he dispatches the small force to Dzeebagd to discover what happened. They will arrive 6 days after the messengers do or 9 days after the characters arrive.

Woe to the party that still remains at Dzeebagd when the Zjerd forces arrive under Grodge's command. They will attempt to hedge the party in, call for reinforcements, and kill them. If the party has left, they are safe for the moment. But once the Zjerd discover humans have been at Dzeebagd - and they will discover this unless the party specifically attempts to hide their presence - the warlord seeks revenge. He mobilizes an army and heads north to the Graffenvold to find the attackers and exact a revenge on the communities of the Graffenvold. The players must now escape the goblin army. How they do this is up the Castle Keeper, unless the adventure is continued in *Felsentheim: Dogs of War*. If the latter is the case, the characters should be encouraged to move in the direction of the Treklant Creek and then to the settlement of Felsentheim. Bear in mind the goblin army numbers in the hundreds.

As the warlord had intended to move an army north the following spring anyway, it brings his planned war to fruition early. Part of his army moves to Vakhund while the other portion moves to Felsentheim, the closest human community, while a smaller group chases the party.

If Evanna is not killed, her safe return to the Rothenheimer family in Bergholt is greatly appreciated. Those responsible for her rescue receive a substantial reward. Further, there are several aspects of Evanna's rescue to consider. Ubert von Beck wants her and spares nothing to find her before she reaches Bergholt and Gratva most certainly wants her back.

If the referee intends to continue the adventure, all these activities and more are detailed in the final module of the series, **Felsentheim: Dogs of War** on page 57.

A SHORT HISTORY OF DZEEBAGD

Many years ago an assassin tried to kill Dvagnik, the Lord of the Drazkleed. The assassin, a Zjerd, failed to complete his task. Dvagnik, a Kdzyj, decreed that all Zjerd would thenceforth never be allowed in the hallowed halls of Gnorgorakrad, the capitol of the Drazkleed. The Zjerd revolted and cast the kingdom into the maelstrom of a civil war. The Kdzyj drove the Zjerd out of the Drazkleed, pushing them further east and to the north jamming them into the tight confines and murky swamps of the Dampfrat. Here, the Zjerd attempted to build a kingdom of their own, one that would rival that of the Kdzyj.

Keeps, fortifications, towns, and villages sprang up throughout the Dampfrat. The Zjerd toiled endlessly at their smithies,

built dams, drained swampy grounds, and cut the hard timber of the Dampfrat. But this swarm of development availed them naught in the long haul. Cut off from the chief byways of trade, knowledge, and power, racked by internal squabbles for leadership and facing the infernal black morass of the Dampfrat proved too much for the Zjerd. They quickly slipped into the chaos of a primeval past, abandoning their houses and forts, and splitting up into chiefdoms, clans, and thence family units, only to reunite and band together under the most powerful and charismatic of leaders. For years beyond their reckoning they have waited for their hoped for salvation, a warlord to conquer the surrounding kingdoms and deliver them from the abysmal Dampfrat. They occasionally make forays into the surrounding lands but are considered little more than a nuisance by their neighbors.

Dzeebagd was constructed in those first days after the arrival of the Zjerd. Its designer, and first commander, Megdzar, knew well the traditions and laws which guided his people. As such, the tower was built to a height above the largest tree within site and an encircling rampart in the shape of the Gdeez, the symbol of Mortzva. The opening was duly pointed to the south. Beneath the keep, the dungeon spread in the three appropriate directions, with each hall assigned its appointed task. The nearby village of Klednij served as Megdzar's source of soldiery and workers while the lands of man and dwarf to the north supplied slaves and booty.

It was shortly after the completion of Dzeebagd that Megdzar was killed on a raid against a rival in the fortress of Magershole. For several generations, his descendants ruled Dzeebagd and Klednij. But with time, all things fall into the chaos of creation and the armies and family splintered. Numerous clans and groups, warlords and captains were vying for control over the town and keep. No leadership was ever solidified and Dzeebagd and Klednij slowly collapsed into ruin. So Dzeebagd never stood against an army of humans, Kdzyj, dwarf, or others, but only felt the sharp edge of war waged by those who created it. Hardly six decades passed before the keep was entirely abandoned and Klednij nearly so.

When the Zjerd arrived in the Dampfrat they had forced most of its denizens, ogres, trolls, and the like, out of its dismal swamps. But, as Zjerd rule decentralized and became mute, they slowly returned. Many had long memories and came back to reclaim ancestral homes, others came for revenge, and others for refuge from the teeming lands of man and dwarf.

In time, some ogres returned to the area around Dzeebagd, their ancestral home, and set up residence in the abandoned fortress. They were not well versed in the mechanics and the nature of complex constructions, so Dzeebagd quickly fell into horrible disrepair and water slowly seeped into its dungeons. From here, the ogres terrorized the surrounding lands and raided as far north as Kreuzmark and Frisia. This clan of ogres struck fear into the hearts of men and became known as the Kilbaric, meaning those who slay at night.

It happened one day that the staircase, weakened by a sagging foundation and misuse, collapsed upon several of the ogres, including their notorious leader, Garoonsh, killing them

instantly. One survivor, with a terribly shattered leg, crawled down a hallway looking for his child, only to die a lonesome and painful death in the darkness beneath the earth, never seeing his son again. The Kilbaric dispersed into the hinterlands, fearing they had angered a god by living in Dzeebagd and their name became myth and then tale and is used now as a way to keep children from lingering too long in the woods at night.

For many years after, Dzeebagd was no more than a place to throw up a hasty camp or used as a short-lived refuge from the dangers of the Dampfrat. It has hosted other ogres, bandits of nefarious reputation, fugitives, Chazrim, haggard trolls, and other sordid travelers. Yet the dungeons were not entered again until the arrival of the Ban' Thout.

The Ban' Thout lived far to the south, in the mountain's tops and near the rim of the world. A society with a great intrigue, where political upheaval created a massive flow of refugees in all directions across the world. So came Me' enup Tan' Meth and the remnants of his family. The warm waters of the Dampfrat attracted Me' enup Tan' Meth and the accidental discovery of Dzeebagd and its long disused dungeon was too good an omen. He and his clan took up abode and began carving out their own home and their own entry. Yet Me' enup Tan' Meth was followed by assassins from his kingdom and had abandoned his gods. So the assassins found him and have whittled away at the clan until only a few remain, hidden deep in Dzeebagd, hoping for some redemption in the eyes of their gods.

USURPERS DELIGHT

The Krung' Thep are from Imfal, a kingdom south of the Graffenvold and on the far side of the distant Kragenmores. Until recently, Imfal was ruled by several great families of the

Ban' Thout, the greater cousins of the Krung' Thep. A delicate balance of power between its competing families that had lasted for centuries only recently collapsed into open and brutal warfare. Many of the elite fled for their lives to lands distant and unknown where they could hide from the usurpers.

The Krung' Thep have come to the Dampfrat seeking the remaining members of a family of Ban' Thout named the Tan' Meth. They are of noble heritage and were ranked as members of the most powerful families in Imfal. Their fall from eminence was rapid and violent. Most were killed. One survivor, Me'enup Tan'Meth, managed to gather his closest kin, wife, and child, and fled Imfal, hoping to settle safely in a land far from his home. They crossed vast mountains and dark forests, through malignant kingdoms and foul lands, overcoming terrible beasts and vicious animals to arrive in the Dampfrat a short time ago.

The Tan' Meth were followed by some Krung' Thep. The Krung' Thep were close behind, and it was not long before they discovered the location of Me' enup and his family. Slowly and methodically the Krung' Thep began killing the Tan' Meth. Me' enup, seeing no chance of escape and having only recently discovered Dzeebagd, barricaded himself in the dank dungeon beneath Dzeebagd awaiting the Krung' Thep's final assault. Sardonic Fate intervened on behalf of the Tan' Meth in the form of the Zjerd.

The arrival of the Zjerd has postponed the demise of the Tan' Meth by accidentally intervening between them and the Krung' Thep. The Krung' Thep do not believe they have the strength to overcome the Zjerd and then the Tan' Meth. So, they have languished in the Dampfrat awaiting a moment to strike. But, the arrival of winter has made them desperate to conclude the matter since their leader fears they will not survive the cold months in the forsaken swamp.

FELSENTHEIM



Whaaatt? At DZEEBAGD!!!' The stones of Hrad shake with Grodge's fury. The gigantic Zjerd hefts a black iron spear over his head and jams it toward an infernal sky, "By all that breathes! By all that sees! I will find these foul humans and hang them from the Horns of the Dragon. I will see their bodies quiver before me, I will raze the towns of those gross slaves, I want them to die, to Die, TO DIE!" Grodge's voice cascades furiously down the hall, across a littered courtyard and into the barracks of his fiercest warriors.

The Hrad, muffled, quiet with anticipation, wary of Grodge's rage, slowly begins to ripple with tension and expectation. Grodge thunders for revenge, screams for a massive bloodletting, his red eyes roll in his head, his veins pulse and throb as his vengeful blood courses to his black heart.

The troops emerge from their reticence and begin to gather around their leader, thumping their feet on stone and chanting their deep throaty war songs. Within moments, the barracks empties and the courtyards and hallways become scattered with warriors chanting and crying out for war, for booty, for power, for land, for their place in the world.

"Gather my armies, gather the arms, gather your hatred my warriors for we are going to the North." Grodge, his muscles groaning with effort and rippling with power, thrusts his dark spear into the stone floor, where the tip strikes deep into flagging. It quivers for a moment and silence falls upon the Hrad. There, engraved upon the floor is an ancient map. Carved in those first days after the building of the Hrad it has seen no attention for generations, until now, and the tip of that ever so sharp spear sits in the heart of small town near the coast of the Interzæ, resting astride that great road, the Kambreea. It is Halpveg.

INTRODUCTION

This is an 'epic' adventure module that contains a great deal of combat. Much of the action late in the adventure orients around large scale battles. Roleplaying and pacing are significant factors in making the epic nature of this adventure come to life in a memorable way. In each section, advice is offered on how to use action as a vehicle to enhance roleplaying events. I cannot stress enough how crucial are the proper casting, management, and roleplaying of NPCs. It would be best to familiarize yourself with the goals and aspirations of NPCs of all ilk before playing them.

The module concerns a war that is brewing in the Dampfrat and the Graffenvold and the role the characters play in its unfolding. Initially, the characters are trying to escape from the clutches of an advancing Zjerd army. They will, however, eventually have to face this army in battle. This combat occurs in one of two places, Felsentheim or Vakhund. Both are large scale combats involving hundreds of goblins and dozens of humans. The rules for running these combats are detailed at the end of the module. Although I dislike 'railroading' players into choosing particular courses of action, in some adventures, it is sometimes best to place the characters on the path to glory, rather than allow them the easy way out and down the road to ignominy. With this in mind, it would be best to steer the characters towards Felsentheim.

LEVELS: The module is prepared for 4-6 characters of levels 3-5. All classes are useful and are likely to contribute significantly

to the successful execution of the adventure. But, one cleric and one Ranger greatly increase the party's chance of survival. Most important, heroes are needed, characters of high mind and grand ideas, characters who are willing to lay their life on the line for little material reward. This is an adventure from which potentially truly heroic characters are molded, and with personages and events that linger long in the memory of roleplaying.

This module can be run independent of its two predecessors *Vakhund: Into the Unknown* and *Dzeebagd: Under Dark and Misty Ground*, and can be placed in any campaign setting, however for the adventure to be logical and useful in a setting outside the one described in the module, a few structural elements should remain the same. There is a kingdom of goblins (the Zjerd) along a frontier region who are initiating a war against weak and widely dispersed human settlements. There should be two crossings on a river over which the goblins must move their armies to attack. The fords should be at least 40 miles apart, but probably a little further. To meld the module into an existing setting requires some tweaking with the names of the locations and persons involved.

Just prior to the beginning of the adventure, a Zjerd outpost, Dzeebagd (see map), was attacked. The Zjerd are looking for the perpetrators. At the same time, a Zjerd army is moving in the direction of the nearest human settlements and is attacking them as an act of revenge and conquest. The characters begin the adventure between Dzeebagd and the human settlements. The Castle Keeper should supply reasons for the characters being there (see inset for suggestions). If the adventure is not continued from *Dzeebagd*, the Zjerd mistake the party for those who attacked the outpost. If the module is continued from *Dzeebagd*, the characters are likely to be aware that a Zjerd army is on the march (or shortly become aware of this), but do not know the size or intent of the army.

INVOLVING THE CHARACTERS: The following is a list of reasons the Castle Keeper may use for placing the party near Dzeebagd.

- 1: A local baron has hired them to scout Dzeebagd.
- 2: A merchant has hired them to rescue a member of their family taken to Dzeebagd.
- 3: The characters are on their way back from a previous adventure.
- 4: The party was trailing another group of adventurer's whom are thought to know the location of the famed bandit fortress, Magershole.

PROLOGUE

An attack on Dzeebagd, a short time before the beginning of the adventure, has enraged the local Zjerd warlord, Grodge, and he wants revenge for the act. It is a revenge that coincides nicely with his plans for conquest of the Graffenvold. In order to accomplish the conquest, Grodge needs to galvanize the disparate Zjerd tribes in the Dampfrat and meld them into an

army. To unite the tribes under his banner, Grodge must prove his worth in battle. He reasons that revenge for the attack on Dzeebagd offers the perfect means to unite them under his command.

Also, like all Zjerd warlords, Grodge has a tenuous hold on power in Klednij. He realizes that unless he acts in a manner suiting both his troops and the Zjerd tribes as a whole, he will be disposed of in the most bloody of rituals. He decides to immediately attack the nearest human settlements of the Graffenvold to satisfy their code of revenge. And, as a very personal act of revenge, Grodge intends to find the perpetrators of the attack on Dzeebagd and have them captured or killed because his only nephew by his older brother died in that raid. The disposition and stats of the troops currently under the command of Grodge are detailed at the end of this module.

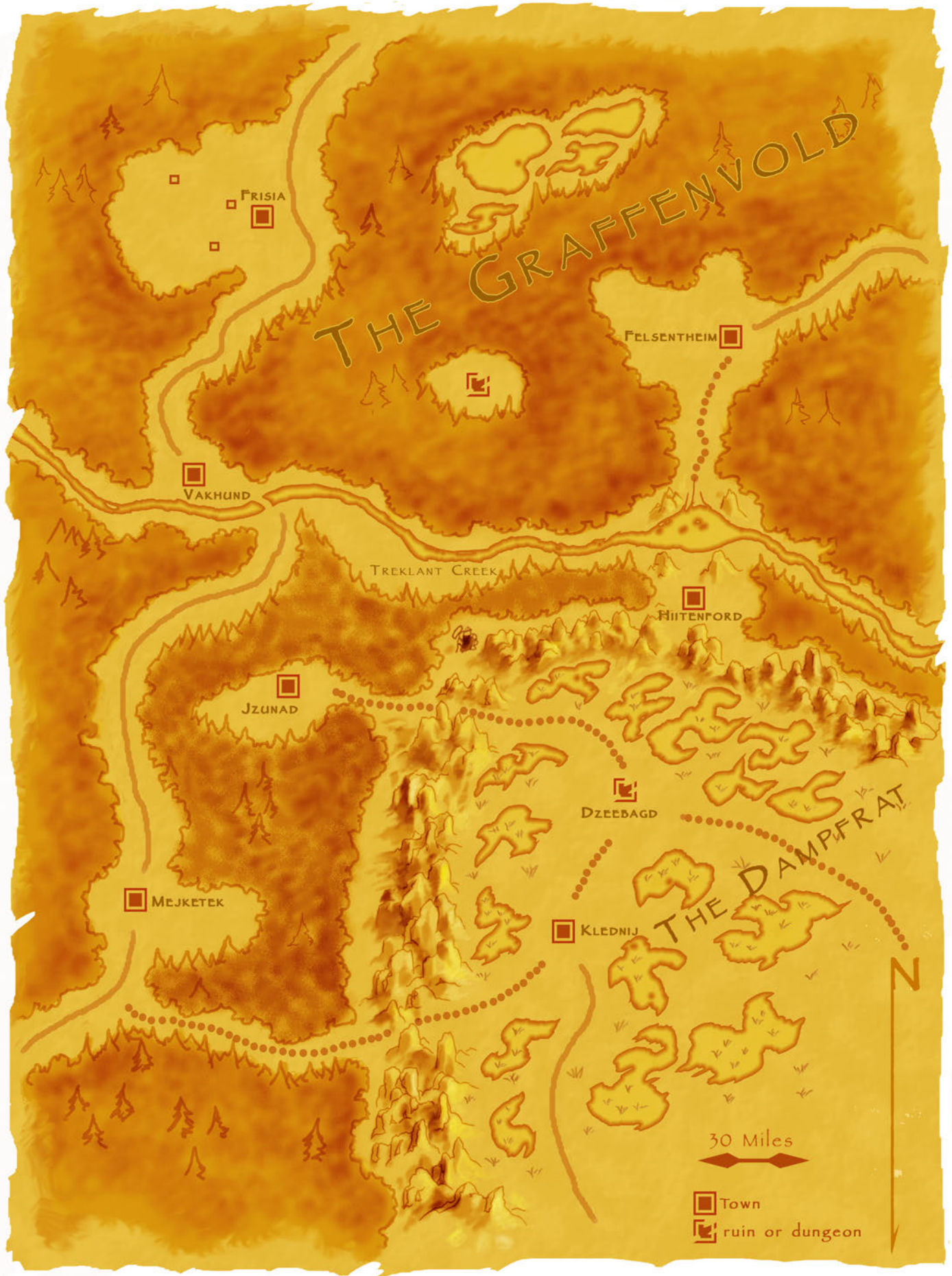
PLAN OF ATTACK: Grodge divides his army into three groups. He sends one group to each of the two settlements nearest Klednij, Vakhund and Felsentheim, while one group remains in Klednij with him. Vakhund and Felsentheim are located near crossings over the Treklant Creek. His intention is to use Vakhund and Felsentheim as bases for future attacks and, at the same time, to gain control of passage over the upper reaches of the Treklant Creek. As Grodge is greatly concerned with garnering support for his war in the Graffenvold, he commits the majority of his army to the battles to insure victory. It takes the groups 10 days to reach Felsentheim and 13 days to reach Vakhund. Each army is preceded by units of scouts. The remainder attempt to stay in a formation while traveling very fast. The armies are divided as follows, and representative statistics are found at the end of the module.

KLEDNIJ: These troops remain in Klednij with Grodge. 6 regular troops (100 in each troop), 1 elite troop (100), 2 cavalry troops (25 wolf riders in each troop), 3 scout troops (5 spider riders in each troop), 5 trackers (each is a Ranger).

VAKHUND: These troops travel through the Dampfrat going directly towards Jzunad and thence to Vakhund. They are commanded by Odeevichk. 2 troops (100 in each troop), 1 cavalry troop (25 wolf riders in each troop), 1 scout troop (5 spider riders in each troop).

FELSENTHEIM: These troops travel straight from Klednij to the Hiitenford and thence to Felsentheim. They are commanded by Preelozjit (see Act III). 4 troops (100 in each troop), 1 cav troop (25 wolf riders in each troop), 2 scout troops (5 spider riders in each troop), Chazrim (10).

SCOUTING: These troops spread out to the north of Klednij acting as messengers for Grodge. They inform the outlying elements of his armies that a war is in the making. 2 scout troops (5 spider riders in each troop).



TIME TUMBLES AND DEATH BREATHES HOT ON THE TRAIL

The characters begin the adventure camped 15 miles north of Dzeebagd. They should be heading in a northerly direction, presumably for a civilized clime. If they are not, it shortly becomes obvious that their only hope for escape from the Zjerd is to get to civilized lands as quickly as possible. Behind them, to the south, the lead elements of Grodge's army are gathering. As Grodge's scouts spread out before the army, Praelozjit, the commander of the Zjerd army heading towards Felsentheim, sends several scouts and his mercenary Chazrim to locate and slay the party.

The ensuing chase to the edge of the Dampfrat is the first part of the adventure. It should be a fast-paced event and the characters should be made to feel pressed and increasingly desperate. For these purposes, keep random encounters to a bare minimum. This is somewhat logical because, once word gets out and the scouts and Chazrim start to race across the Dampfrat in front of the party, they scare away most of the inhabitants of the region. Everything is on alert and very wary. However, the party is in front of the army's main elements and some encounters may occur. See **Dampfrat Random Encounter Table**.

From Dzeebagd, the trip to the Hiitenford, the crossing nearest Felsentheim, is 6 days of normal overland travel on foot or 4 days mounted. Scenes detailing four encounters that occur along the way are described below. The Castle Keeper is encouraged to interject or delete scenes to allow the tension of the chase to build.

To exploit the chase sequence, pace the action slowly at first and allow the tension to build as the characters come to realize they are being followed. Each successive encounter should have a greater sense of urgency than the previous, and carry greater potential threat. The final encounter in the chase, at the Hiitenford, should be climactic and theatric. When it ends, the characters should have a developed a false sense of security having defeated a large contingent of Zjerd and safely crossed the ford.

DAMPFRAT RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE

The Dampfrat is the remnant of a volcanic cone. It is a morass full of steamy swampy grasslands, hot springs, geysers, warm creeks and pools, thick evergreen copses, and tangled underbrush. Travel is arduous and time consuming. The trails are difficult to follow, only made possible by wood markers sticking several feet out of the ground every 100 yards. Many of these have rotted and fallen down, but generally, with a few hours search, another can be located. From where the party begins there is a marked trail leading north as well as one leading to the west. The northern trail goes to the Hiitenford and the eastern one to Jzunad (see Vakhund for information on Jzunad).

With each day, following the trail becomes more difficult and a single track check should be made to see if the characters stay on the trail. A failure indicates one day of wandering before the

trail is found again. This trail (and the only marked one) leads directly to Dzeebagd. It should take the characters anywhere between 4 and 6 days to reach Dzeebagd if they manage to stay on the trail.

The following table is a list of encounters for the Dampfrat. Check for encounters two times during the day and once at night. A 1 on a d12 indicates an encounter. Roll 1d8 to determine the encounter.

1 ELK: A heard of elk is sunning or resting at the edge of a pasture. They are easily frightened and will run if approached.

2 ELOTHAR: There are 1-4 giant boars are foraging for food. As winter has arrived, the Elothar have become more aggressive. If they are disturbed, 1 or 2 attack. Killing any one of the Elothar causes the others to run squealing into the woods.

(These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 23 and AC 16. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a gore attack for 1d8 damage.)

3 MAMMOTH: The party notices a herd of 5-10 mammoth. The mammoth are grazing, resting or sunning themselves. Mammoth are generally unafraid of most things and the characters can move in or around them rather closely if they so choose. However, like many large herbivores, they are capable of aggressive action if threatened. There is a 20% chance that a bull attacks if the party moves within 100 yards of any of the herd. Further, if any member of the party moves within 50 yards of the herd, there is a 50% chance a cow reacts violently. For every 10 yards closer the party moves to the herd, the chance of violent reaction increases 10%. If the bull reacts violently, the rest of the herd moves away; if the cow reacts violently, the entire herd charges forward and attempts to trample the party.

(These neutral creatures vital stats are HD 15d8, HP 67 and AC 16. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a slam attack for 3d6 damage, stamp attack for 4d4 x2 damage, or gore attack for 3d8 damage. A mammoth can trample medium size or smaller creatures for automatic stamp damage the round after a successful slam attack. Opponents can attempt a Dexterity save CL 8 to halve the damage.)

4 BEAR: A very large bear, weighing nearly 700 lbs, is wandering nearby. The bear is not aggressive unless the encounter occurs around a campfire or where food is out. Then, it first tries to scare the characters off before it attacks.

(This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 17 and AC 13. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with claws for 1d8 x2 damage and a bite for 1d8 damage.)

5 ZWETTER RORER: This saber-toothed tiger is looking for easy prey. If a character is scouting or wanders far from the party, the tiger attacks him if he appears vulnerable. The nature of these hunters is such that, when faced with numerous foes, they back down.

60 CASTLES & CRUSADES

ZWETTER RORER (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 4d10, HP 28, AC 14 and MV 50ft. Its primary attributes are physical. A *zwetter rorer* attacks with two claws for 1d8+8 points of damage and a bite for 3d6 points of damage. They can jump up to eight feet. If a successful hit is scored with both claws, the opponent must make a strength check or be knocked prone. The *zwetter rorer* receives the bonus for attacking prone creatures.)

6 DEER: There are 10-30 deer resting, grazing or sunning themselves. They flee if approached.

7 FENATH: The Fenath are tree spirits, kin to the great trees – the Grundl, those first trees nurtured and grown by the Inzal. They exist in human form and live deep within the bole of massive dying Grundl, caring for them in their last days. The Fenath appear as human, though their sex is indeterminate. Women perceive them as gorgeous men, and men perceive them as gorgeous women. They are usually very reclusive and never leave the bowl of the Grundl unless to gather information of the passing of years or, after the death of a Grundl, to seek out another tree. They speak any tongue. Fenath skin is tinted green or dark brown and gleams with the color of moonlight. They always attempt to escape if attacked, fleeing far from the tree they consider home only to return once the danger has passed. They usually carry a walking stick that seconds as a cudgel if forced to defend themselves.

In this instance, the Fenath is leaving a tree to discover why the forest is in such a frenzied state. Whispers of war and the thunder of Zjerd armies has piqued this Fenath's interest and it seeks information. The Fenath follows the party for a short time, and makes itself known when it determines whether or not they are dangerous. It then asks questions in an effort to discover

what is happening in the Dampfrat. If the party appears good or is otherwise kind to the Fenath, help is offered by giving the party direction to the Hiitenford or Felsentheim and giving them a healing salve made of various herbs that cures 1d4 hit points 24 hours after applied to a wound. It gives 10 such applications.

(These neutral creatures vital stats are HD 2d6, HP 7 and AC 12. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with a cudgel. Special Abilities: A Fenath can cast charm person at a 6th level ability five times per day. The Fenath can commune with trees at will. They can step "into" any Grundl at will as well.)

8 WOLVES: There are 8-12 ferocious and hungry wolves on the prowl. They follow the party for a long time looking for a weak character or straggler to attack. They stick with a basic attack plan and try to lead one of the characters off to attack them individually. They fight ferociously to protect any kill. If no prey becomes available during the day, they await nightfall and attack the camp, again focusing on one character, especially anyone that steps out of the firelight.

These wolves, as with most other natural predators in Inzae, are not mindless killing machines. They are efficient, quick, brutal, and powerful. Their environment requires cunning and caution for they instinctively know that a single wound or broken bone can be a death sentence. When faced with superior odds or a powerful foe they rarely stay to fight. Generally the only time they give themselves entirely to the fight is in defense of the young or when cornered.

(This creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 12 and AC 14. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks by biting for 1d6 points of damage. Special Abilities: Trip, scent.)



THE CHASE

The party begins the adventure in the early morning in a thick copse of evergreens. It is cold as winter has arrived. Snow flurries occur occasionally throughout the day and night, but snow accumulation is slight due to the heat from the geysers and hot springs. If the characters follow the trail they are currently on it will take them to Felsentheim via the Stairs of Hiiten and across the Hiitenford.

There are several options the party has in trying to escape the armies of Grodge. Because of the nature of the module, all the directions the characters might choose to pursue cannot be addressed. The Castle Keeper should predetermine how the various groups of Zjerd react to the party's decisions. If need be, the CK should encourage the party to trek north towards the lands of men, perhaps mentioning the lack of food, the approaching winter storms, or warm beds awaiting them in the hospitable lands of the Friulander, those erstwhile settlers along the frontier of the Dampfrat.

The likeliest action the character might take that is not addressed by the adventure is to go deeper into the Dampfrat, heading east, west or south from Dzeebagd and away from Felsentheim. If this should happen, the party is still be tracked by the scouts and attacked by the Chazrim should they ever be caught. This takes place within the Dampfrat proper. Once the characters manage to cross the Shatten Escarpment both the trackers and Chazrim halt their pursuit. If the characters cross



over the Shatten Escarpment through named passes, they are attacked by the Zjerd who are guarding them (see below) unless they employ stealth in their movements.

If the party never realizes that they are being followed, it could be problematic. The results may be disastrous if the Chazrim overtake them, as they surely will do. Try to give the party as many hints as possible if they do not seem to understand the perilous situation they are in.

The scenes should be played with verve and excitement. The action should be fast paced, disallowing the party time to complete actions and formulate plans. Always stay one step ahead of the party and the tension will rise. It is also important to encourage roleplaying during combat by not allowing the players long periods of time to ponder actions, plan strategies or talk amongst themselves excessively. By keeping them reacting instead of acting, the sense of desperation increases. Also, if the encounters are too weak for the characters and an easy victory seems likely, increase the number of Chazrim and/or their hit points accordingly.

WHITE SNOW AND BLEEDING EARTH

The characters are camped near Dzeebagd and are preparing for the day's journey. There are two trails before them, one heading west and one north.

A breezy wind flurries through the tree tops, whipping up snow and cold. A darkened sun hides behind black clouds frothing across the sky. Gigantic fir trees stretch away to all sides, their overhanging boughs dipping low to the ground and their tops reaching up to the sky. A beaten trail twists away to the north disappearing into the green boughs of the trees and twining about small geysers frothing blood red steam and water.

SET ENCOUNTER #1

This encounter occurs within 2 days of the adventure's beginning. Up to this time, the armies of Grodge have been organizing themselves and have just begun marching north. The Zjerd scouts have located the party's tracks and are closing in on them. As soon as the party's trajectory was determined, Preeozjit sent messengers to a Zjerd patrol at the Hiitenford and all the passes over the Shatten Escarpment informing them that a group of Graffenvolders is headed in their direction and that they should prepare to ambush and slay them. The Chazrim are trailing close behind the Zjerd trackers, awaiting their chance to attack the party.

This encounter should indicate to the party that they are being followed. Play this scene out slowly and calmly, giving the players a little time to think and figure out what is happening. Try to intone the militaristic nature of the Zjerd (banners flapping, military insignia gleaming) and the threat of the Dampfrat with descriptions emitting entrapment (enshrouding fog, overhanging trees)

The last watch of the evening or the first watch in the morning of the second day, the party sees the following:

A large glade extends for miles around and below the small rocky rise upon which you stand. A gentle mist shrouds the earth, wraps around your legs, blankets over your companions, and envelops the boles of the massive trees beyond. The morning is silent and the wind is dead. Overhead, black clouds sprawl against a reddish morning sky, mixing tumultuously with the Dampfrat's deadly desire.

And out of the black night beneath the eaves of those great trees across the glade, creeps a stooped and wary Zjerd. His pale green skin contrasting with the white mists, his purple headband hangs limply from its perch, and a pinion of emerald, wrapped to the shaft of a gleaming spear, flutters in an occasional breeze. The Zjerd, intent upon the ground, bends to the earth, sweeping at the mists. He rubs the ground for a few moments.

This Zjerd tracker is nearly 300 yards away and out of the range of most weapons. He spends several rounds inspecting the ground, so the party has an opportunity to act before the Zjerd sounds his horn. Ten more trackers are with him, and are spread out in a ragged line to his left and right. After a few rounds, during which the Zjerd locates the tracks of the party, he sounds a small horn.

The Zjerd suddenly straightens, grabbing for a horn. He sounds it, and a deep blast rolls into the sky. A few dreadful moments pass as the Zjerd stands erect, his spear aloft and his eyes scanning the horizon. Then the tree line is again breached. Several Zjerd, in a ragged line and spread over several hundreds of yards, slowly emerge from amongst the trees and make their way towards the one with the horn.

After the Zjerd trackers gather, they have a short conversation, spread out again and head up the rise toward the encampment. They have no intention of fighting. The first one to make contact immediately signals his compatriots who quickly flee in the direction they came. They were instructed to inform the Chazrim and allow them deal with the party. If possible, they trail several hours behind the party.

ZJERD TRACKER X10 (These chaotic evil creatures vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 5 and AC 15. Their primary attributes are physical. Their significant attribute is dexterity 15. They attack with short swords, short bows and carry studded leather armor and medium shields. They can track as 3rd level rangers.)

SET ENCOUNTER #2

Within two days of the previous encounter this encounter should occur. The Zjerd trackers have been following the party

and have informed the Chazrim of their whereabouts. The Chazrim, unable to track, have spread out and moved ahead to the point they believe the party is headed. As they start zigzagging back and forth to find the party, one lone Chazrim manages to locate his prey.

The somber and thick forest shrouds the ground in darkness. Periodically, these tangled copses open onto broad glades where a cruel sun glares down from on high, illuminating the malicious desires of the Dampfrat.

As you manage your way out of another brushy copse and begin to cross one of these muddy and damp glades, you spy a dreaded Chazrim, sitting astride his great war beast, lingering at the edge of another copse and watching you closely.

He rests astride a dreaded Olekotheer, one trained and harnessed for battle. This great boar-like creature sits nearly as high as a horse at the shoulder. Its broad hairy chest heaves while it pants. Two massive tusks stick up from its lower jaw, the size of daggers while two long curved horns erupt from its forehead, each capped in a brilliant silver casing.

The Chazrim, a greater goblin, is thickly cloaked in tattered wools and skins, a splintered shield, gouged from innumerable battles, hangs from his saddle while a massive and deadly lance lays across his lap. The green skin of his arms, brightly reflected in the sunlight, ripples with muscle and sinew as he adjusts his lance, shifting it upward and into his right hand. His broad face, dominated by ragged and huge fangs surveys the horizon in your direction. The Olekotheer, panting a misty breath, stands silent, its tusk bobbing slowly in the quiet. Then it snorts.

Chazrim are great hulking warriors who have spread terror from one end of Inzae to the other. They are powerfully built, massive cousins of the goblins. The Chazrim rides a large boar-like creature called an Olekotheer. When the Chazrim notices the characters, he observes them momentarily, then grabs a horn with his left hand. In moments the characters hear a short deep baritone blast that is followed by several others coming from far away in different directions. The Chazrim then approaches the party, at an increasing pace, and lowers his lance.

The Chazrim knows little fear and intends to test the party's strength. He fakes a few charges, attempting to draw one of the characters out and away from the other party members. As soon as it appears opportune, he attacks one character, attempting to run him down or lance him. If the Chazrim suffers enough damage to reduce him to half of his hit points, he breaks off the attack and awaits reinforcement.

This encounter should be played in such a manner as to give the players an indication that, not only are they being followed, but that powerful creatures are following them. Impress upon

the players the fierceness and power of the Chazrim. The Olekotheer are exceedingly powerful mounts, as large as a horse and as broad as a giant boar. These creatures are capable of withstanding quite a pounding before falling.

CHAZRIM (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d10, HP 14 and AC 17. His primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a lance for 1d10 damage, or a battle axe and wears expertly crafted scale mail offering a +1 to AC, and carries a large metal shield.*)

OLEKOTHEER (*This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 27 and AC 16. Its primary attribute is physical. It attacks with a gore attack for 1d8+1 damage or a slam for 1d6 damage. If ridden in combat, the Olekotheer and rider cannot both attack in the same opponent in the same round.*)

SET ENCOUNTER #3

This encounter occurs within 24 hours of the previous or about the 5th day of travel. Several of the Chazrim have gathered and located the party, and they shadow behind and in front of them. Their intent is to slow the party down until reinforcements arrive. They manage this by circling the party, making fake charges, and generally getting in the party's line of march. When the first Chazrim makes his appearance, the party is in a copse of trees.

The deadly quiet of day is drowned by a black noise churning in the air, the snorting and huffing, pawing and mauling of a Olekotheer. The great beast and its rider come into view through the dark trees ahead. A fierce Chazrim sits abreast the Olekotheer. He hefts a large round shield and a massive axe, which he clangs challengingly against his armor and accouterments. He bellows with laughter and anticipation, and suddenly urges the boar forward, disappearing into the trees. Shortly after, the woods echo with a deep, bellowing blast.

There are three Chazrim gathered near the party. They make themselves known one at a time and finally, when the party has entered a clearing, they appear together. At that point, they charge the party and attempt to run them down. When the Chazrim attack they attempt to charge through the party, turn around, and charge again, repeating the process as often as necessary to defeat the characters or force them to hole up in one place.

If fighting the party proves to be easy, they continue charging and fighting until victory is achieved. If two of the Chazrim are killed, the third breaks off the attack to find the other Chazrim in the vicinity. At this point, the players should be made to feel the desperation of their situation. They hear horn blasts from several places not far away shortly after the fight has ended. The Chazrim are closing in.

Up to seven Chazrim locate the party within six hours if they do not move. Once they locate the party, they attack in mass,

only quitting after 4 of their number have been killed. The party is only a day's trip from the Stairs of Hiiten when this previous attack occurs. Once the party reaches the Stairs of Hiiten, the Chazrim break off the search and attacks, realizing their superior maneuverability is useless in the tight confines of trails through the Shatten Escarpment.

SLIPPERY ROCK AND WATERY DEMISE

THE SHATTEN ESCARPMENT

The Shatten Escarpment is an uplift of steep cliffs, precipitous rock faces, and boulder fields bounding the northern and eastern edges of the Dampfrat. There are several well-known passes through it. The pass on the north side of the escarpment is named the Steps of Hiiten, so called because it is a series of steps hewn into the rock ages ago. The steps are large (carved by Trottingen Giants) and follow the stratigraphy of the land, going up and down with the slopes. They are worn with time and use.

The foot path ends at the Stairs of Hiiten, massive steps carved into the stone of the Shatten Escarpment and offering egress from the dreadful Dampfrat. The steps are large, but not so large that they cannot be traveled upon. They twist and turn, rounding massive boulders and following the course of the land.

The steps lead through the Shatten Escarpment's rocky ridges, jumbled with massive sandstone boulders, crumbling cliff faces, and thick underbrush. Giant firs, heavy with a scent of pine and dark with green needles, shadow the trail. The sky lets fly a misty white snow that whips and twirls in the powerful Inzaen winds.

There are few other trails through the Shatten escarpment. Those that do exist are rocky, steep, difficult to navigate, and usually the home of some foul denizen of the marshes. The Stairs of Hiiten are often guarded by a troop of Zjerd, but they have decided to move below the Stairs to the Hiitenford and ambush travelers there. Travel across the Stairs takes a day. They end at the base of the escarpment on the flood plain of the Treklant Creek, about 1 mile from the ford. The Hiitenford is the easternmost crossing of the Treklant Creek.

THE AMBUSH

Grodge had several small troops of Zjerd patrolling the Dampfrat. He contacted this troop immediately and ordered them to guard the Hiitenford. Though nervous, and not knowing what to expect, the Zjerd patrol's leader, Krazjim, is prepared for action. In this troop are Krazjim, 2 subchiefs, one shaman, and 30 Zjerd warriors.

KRAZJIM, ZJERD (*He is a chaotic Evil, 4th level fighter and 1st level ranger whose vital stats are HP 31 and AC 16. His primary attributes are strength and dexterity. His significant attributes are strength 13, dexterity 13, and constitution 13. He carries a shortbow, and Morningstar (1d8).*)

SUBCHIEFS, ZJERD X2 (These chaotic evil creatures vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 19 and AC 12. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a halberd, short bow or short sword.)

BRKEK, ZJERD SHAMAN (She is a neutral evil creature whose vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 20 and AC 10. Her primary attributes are mental. She attacks with a short bow or light flail. She can cast spells as a 5th level cleric. Suggested spells, Level 0: create water, light x2, detect good; Level 1: cure light wounds, protection from good, sound burst; Level 2: hold person, darkness; Level 3: prayer.)

She lingers back from combat and runs when it appears as though the Zjerd are losing. She is the ranking individual in the Zjerd hierarchy and does not feel it is her duty to die in a messy creek so far from home.

ZJERD PATROL (30) (These chaotic evil creatures vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3 and AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a short bow or short sword.)

DISPOSITION

The patrol is divided into two camps. 15 warriors and the two subchiefs are located on the north bank of the ford, while 15 warriors, the shaman, and Krazjim are located on the ford's south bank. Those on the north bank are widely dispersed in a semicircle amongst the trees about 100 yards from the ford. The group on the south side is hidden in a dense copse upriver about 200 yards away, waiting for the most opportune moment to strike. Several scouts are spread out along the south bank on the lookout for trouble.

If anyone approaches the ford from either bank, the group farthest away waits until the enemy are in the middle of the creek and then attacks with ranged weapons. If the enemy retreats, the party on the opposite bank then attacks. If the enemy presses forward, the group being pressed backs away while the other party moves in from behind. Ranged weapons are used as much as possible, with melee only occurring at the last possible moment. Any enemy troops that are mounted are to be pulled off their horses with the appropriately armed troops.

THE SETTING

The Treklant Creek tumbles and careens through its narrow banks and deep channels, rushing wildly towards the Interzae. Only at the Hittenford does the swirling river offer easy passage over its cold waters. The creek widens and flows roughly across a broad frothy and shallow crossing. Two massive Kreuts settle on both sides of the Treklant Creek, marking and guarding the Hiitenford.

If the ground at the ford is examined, it becomes obvious that it has been churned up with the passage of many feet. A successful track check reveals the tracks to be Zjerd. The general direction of movement cannot be determined. Further investigation in a broader sweep reveals that many goblins were in the area very recently. A careful tracker will be able to follow the tracks back to the Dampfrat or to the area where Krazjim and his troops are hidden. If the characters discover him, he eschews combat, beating a hasty retreat towards the interior, only to double back on the party in a few moments.



The Hiitenford is broad, 80 feet wide, and nearly 100 feet long. The rocks across the ford are moss covered and very slippery. There is a chance of slipping every round while crossing the ford (dexterity check; while in combat, CL 4). Also, the water is cold and nearly 3' deep at its center. While in thigh high water, characters receive only ½ dex bonus to AC; at waist high, there is no bonus. There are two large Kreuts standing on both sides of the creek. They are 10' tall and 3' in circumference. Each is covered with carvings and runes.

When the characters begin to cross the ford, read the following:

While crossing through the chilly waters of the Treklant Creek, precariously balancing on each moss covered rock, the thick brown underbrush across the creek explodes with activity as many green skinned Zjerd leap from hiding, screaming, and brandishing bows that are being pulled tight. The groaning and creak of bows being pulled taught is followed by a sharp snap and the whistle of arrows slicing through the air.

The Zjerd have fairly high morale as they believe they can best the party. Krazjim leads the attack from the south side of the ford hanging back from battle while urging his troops forward. Brkek remains to the rear and casts spells as necessary. If Krazjim is killed, the troops on his side of the Treklant begin to lose

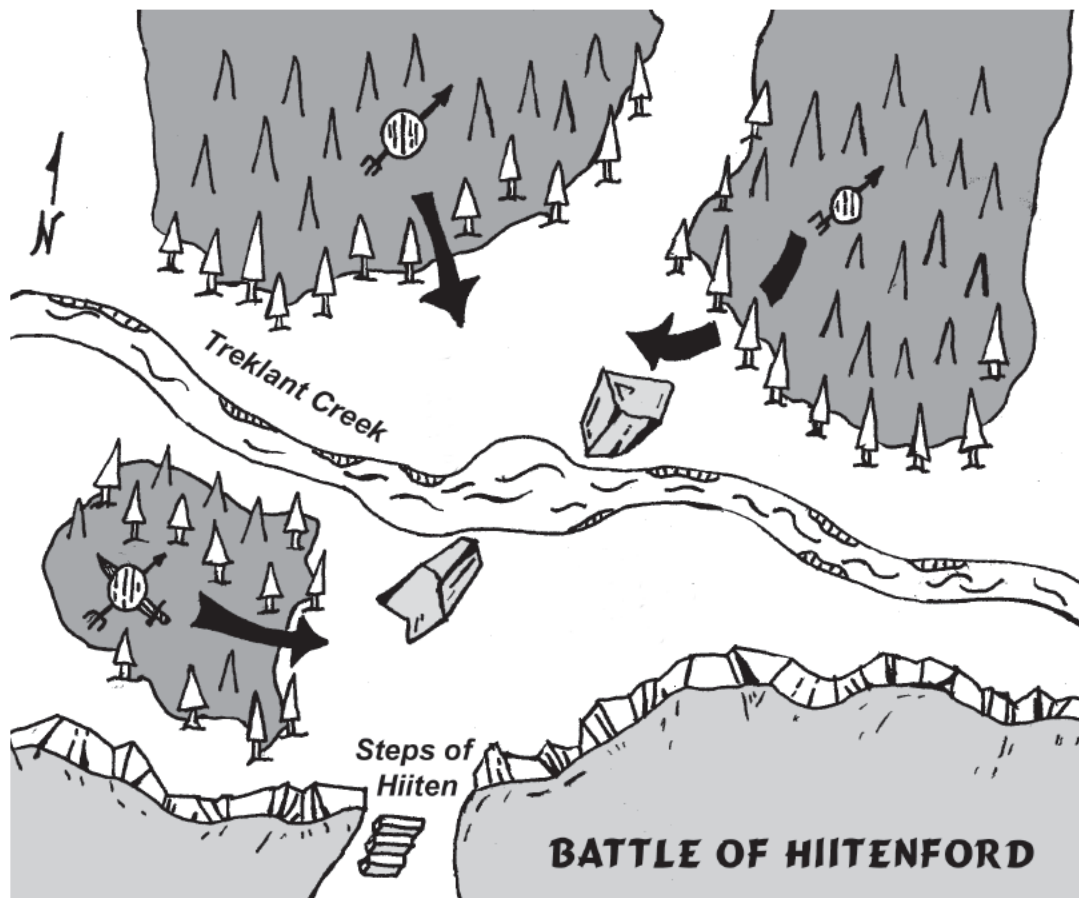
morale. Essentially the same is happening on the north side of the creek. The subchiefs are urging the troops forward. If they are killed, their troops begin to lose morale. In any case, if 50% of the troops die, all begin to lose morale. They break and run when 65% of the troops are killed.

After the battle at the Hiitenford, the party should be able to make its way quite easily to Felsentheim. To enhance the aura of safety, it is suggested that no random encounters be used during the final leg of the trip. The town is only 15 miles from the ford, and no Zjerd between it and the ford.

The battle at the ford should seem climactic, but it is a false lead for the party. The characters should feel as though they have overcome a major Zjerd force and are now moving into safer lands. The battle should be motion heavy to increase the cinema and theatrics. Allow the party to spread out and act heroically in their fight. Do not, however, overwhelm the party; the real battle is yet to come. Yet, do not make the battle so easy that there is no real threat to the character's lives. If necessary, add a few Zjerd to an attacking party or have several Chazrim working with Krazjim.

THE SWELTERING HEAT OF BATTLE

The dogs in the woods begin barking, baying wildly at a setting sun. The woodsmen look up from their work. The whack of their axes stop, and all of them feel their doom. "What is it?"



“Quiet son, quiet, pick up your axe boy!”

“Father.”

“Do as your father says son.” Kruger of Frugborg glances fearfully to his left, then to his right, a bead of sweat rolls across his temple, his hands shake a little as he grips his axe more tightly, as it does before every fight.

Ulrike looks around and feels the breath of Odesfale, the whiff of death lingers ominously in the cold air. A tear comes to his eye and the words of the Fates of Kreuzmark come to his mind, “When your time comes, you will know.” The dogs go quiet.

FELSENTHEIM

This small thorp consists of a large two story wooden building, a wooden palisade, a watch tower, and several outbuildings (see map). In addition to the specific personalities detailed below, it has 54 inhabitants: 13 children under the age of 14, 22 adult females, and 19 adult men. There are three extended families in the town: the Thyans, the Heise, and the Alsleben. Several are intermarried, but most are married to family members from other villages.

The town has been settled for less than 30 years and is considered little more than an outpost in the region. The town owes allegiance to none, though Olaf Thyan, the head of the Thyan family, pays homage to Lord Isen in Isenborg

The party’s arrival at Felsentheim is greeted with suspicion and disapproval by most, though not outright hostility. The characters should be introduced to most of the major NPCs and encouraged to interact with them. The primary goal at Felsentheim, initially, is to increase the players sense of security and encourage them to engage with the community, which, hopefully, encourages the players to act heroically when the Zjerd attack finally occurs.

The welcoming walls of Felsentheim lay open beneath the mid-afternoon sun. It is a small thorp, no more than an expansive long house which the families of the frontier so often build. A small palisade with a single scaffolded tower surrounds a large yard. Tendrils of smoke waft lazily into the chilly sky. The sound of laughter, and the calls of men and women working echo with the clucking of chickens, the braying of sheep, and mewing of cows. Across fields of frozen earth scattered with small clumps of snow, are several men and women gathering hay. Others tramp through the snow and mud with loads of firewood on their backs, heading for the compound.

As you break the clearing a man upon the tower gives alarm by banging on a metal rod and yelling out to the people below, “Hoaaa travelers, travelers from the south!!!”

Initially, the community acts with reserve and caution, though not hostility. Several men gather weapons, including farm implements such as shovels and pitchforks. The Thane,

Schildea Heise, and the other Elders of Felsentheim (see below) gather and approach the characters. The party’s attitude upon arrival determines, to a great degree, the villager’s attitude. Haughty or domineering party members are treated poorly and rudely. Those along the frontier in this region are a proud and independent people who, though very hospitable and usually friendly, brook little disrespect, especially from strangers. If the party presents themselves well, the Thane offers food and a place to stay at her expense.

Schildea and the other Elders attempt to gauge the characters worth and honesty during their initial meeting. They act politely, but reveal a certain amount of concern about the arrival of people from the south - a none too hospitable place teeming with wild and vicious creatures, not to mention the Zjerd. As the meeting develops, the inhabitants of Felsentheim gather around the party and the Elders, asking questions and trying to discern where the party has been and what they were doing. Reactions vary from dismay, shock, and curiosity to concern and distrust.

However, the members of the community have jobs to do and shortly return to them. Other than the Elders, the villagers leave the party alone until the evening. The elders show the party to the long house, invite them in, and bring food for them. They aid those injured. During the evening, all the villagers gather in the long house to eat and sleep (detailed below). While there, they ask the party about the Dampfrat and discuss the many mysteries that lie shrouded over that dismal swamp. They crack their keg of mead, and several younger men stay up late into the evening discussing forays into the dark south, with its lure of gold, wealth, and adventure.

The following are some of the significant people in Felsentheim and their general reactions to the party:

Schildea Heise is a tall middle aged women, stoutly built, with long brown hair, large eyes and thin lips. She moves with a sturdy gait and bears herself with much dignity.

Schildea is the Thane of the community. She inherited the position from her father who died the previous winter. She is unmarried and intends to stay that way. Though her lineage cannot be traced back many generations, she is proud to be descendent of the founding family of Felsentheim. Through a straight line, from her great grandfather down to her, have come the rulers of Felsentheim.

She reacts friendly towards the party. Being of little ill will, she rarely notices it in others. Much of her conversation concerns the coming of winter, the storage of food, and the safety of those under her leadership. She has a running ‘entanglement’ with Olaf concerning marriage. He has thrice proposed and she has thrice denied. The banter between the two is friendly, and both poke fun at the other for their respective obstinance.

As Thane, Schildea is responsible for insuring that the day to day needs of the villagers are met. She defers to Olaf in military

matters and to Tattiana in religious matters. In combat she carries a shield emblazoned with the family emblem (a green tree with a snake wrapped around its trunk), a battle axe, and wears scale mail.

SHILDEA (She is a neutral good, 5th level human barbarian whose vital stats are HP 38 and AC 15. Her primary attributes are charisma, strength, and constitution. Her significant attributes are strength 18 and charisma 16. She carries scale mail, shield, and a battle axe.)

Olaf Thyan is a grizzled older man, slightly stooped, with a face covered by a bushy gray beard. His keen eyes glitter from beneath heavy eyebrows and a balding pate. He is powerfully built with broad shoulders, lean frame, and tremendous arms.

The Hetman of Felsentheim, Olaf's family lineage can be traced back 15 generations to the famed Thyan of Smootfort in the Troke. He is a proud man, stern but mentally tired. A long hard life has left him slowed, wizened, and jaded. He helps the party, recognizing fellow travelers, but acts hospitably only so long as the characters are good guests. He is Felsentheim's lone blacksmith.

If pressed and encouraged with a little mead, Olaf regales the party with a family history cluttered with warriors, princesses, fell beasts, Knights of great renown and battles lost and won. As an added bonus, if the characters seem interested in his stories,

his recites, from memory, his entire family tree extending back to Tryshtian Thyan 250 years ago. He explains that he is one of the few survivors of the battle at Foxingham, and that shortly after the battle, he packed his family and belongings and headed west, looking to settle in the more peaceful lands on the south shores of the Interzae.

As Hetman, Olaf is charged with organizing the militia and is responsible for defending Felsentheim from internal and external enemies. In combat, Olaf uses a longsword or shortspear. The former when he is charging into battle, and the latter when he directs troops.

OLAF (He is a chaotic good, 5th level human fighter whose vital stats are HP 44 and AC 12. His primary attributes are strength, wisdom and constitution. His significant attributes are strength 18, dexterity 6 and constitution 17. He carries scale mail armor, a longsword, a shortspear, a dagger, and a pouch containing 62 gold pieces.)

Tattiana Heise is a young plump lady with heavy, wrinkled eyes. Her long blonde hair is tied into three thick braids. Her hands move gracefully while she speaks. She constantly mutters short poetic odes, locally referred to as Keepel, to the gods.

For ten years Tattiana has acted as community arbiter, healer, and undertaker. This job has leached away much of her youthful



exuberance and she now seems somewhat disillusioned. Tattiana takes kindly to humble party members and offers to use her powers of healing to help them. She mostly uses herbs, but she does have the ability to cast 2 heal spells a day in addition to her normal spell abilities. She only uses these spells in the case of grievous wounds.

She rarely speaks and certainly does not partake in small talk or gossip. When Tattiana decides to add to a conversation, however, she does so with sage words and deliberate advice. To a person, everyone in the village respects her opinions and judgment and quietly listens when she speaks. Tattiana does not sleep with the other families in the long house. She sleeps outside, beside the village Kreut, near a large fire beneath a mound of firs and blankets. She does so to better hear what the gods are whispering in the night skies.

TATTIANA (She is a lawful neutral, 6th level human druid whose vital stats are HP 22 and AC 11. Her primary attributes are wisdom, intelligence and dexterity. Her significant attributes are wisdom 17, intelligence 13, and dexterity 13. She carries a cudgel and various healing herbs. Suggested spells, Level 0: create water, detect neutrality, purify food and drink, detect poison, light; Level 1: detect snares and pits, goodberry, calm animals, pass without trace; Level 2: delay poison, warp wood, cure light wounds x2; Level 3: neutralize poison, plant growth.)

Krirke Albensen is young and robust, with a scraggly beard on a lean and square face. He smiles broadly and laughs loudly. His swaggering walk is reminiscent of a young man who has never known defeat.

The eldest member of the Albesen family, Krirke is married to Hanna Albensen, lately of Keerkinheim. They have two children and both brought several cousins to Felsentheim with them a few years previous. New to the community, Krirke holds no position of authority. He quietly waits for Olaf to pass into the Halls of Heimdal so that he can take over as Hetman of Felsentheim. Krieke is in good health, strong and powerful. A good host, though a reluctant one, he watches the characters carefully to ensure that they are honest and mean no harm to the town. He carries a shield and battle axe into combat. He also owns a chain mail shirt bequeathed to him by his father.

KRIRKE (He is a chaotic neutral 2nd level human fighter whose vital stats are HP 18 and AC 16. His primary attributes are strength, charisma and constitution. His significant attributes are strength 14 and charisma 13. He carries a steel breastplate, medium shield, and battle axe.)

Markus Heise is tall and handsome with flowing black hair. He is clean shaven, and sports a wry grin. He smells of cattle and dirt, and cradles a pitchfork as if it were a child.

Markus is the brother of Tattiana. He loves the fresh breezes, the animals, and farming. One rarely sees him when he is not

busy working in the field, pestering the cattle, or about some other farming business. The blood of the trees flows in the family's veins and it truly shows in Markus. His infectious good mood captivates and keeps happy most anyone around him. His wife's name is Else, a beautifully spirited women of open heart and open mind. They have three children, all of whom cling to their mother and father as heat to fire.

Within the community Markus has a special standing. He is the keeper of chants and lore, a teller of tales, and repository of oral history. Without so much as a word, he will begin chanting to any audience, be it man, beast, or plant. For this reason, the earth likes Markus and tends to his needs and wants.

Hidden beneath this mirth and grand appearance is a horrible past. Stricken as a child with a debilitating wisdom, close observation will reveal Markus is rather emotionally weak, stricken by the knowledge that the earth, from whence he came, is coming to reclaim him.

Markus plays an instrument much like an oboe that produces deep resonant notes. In combat he carries a short sword.

MARKUS (He is a chaotic neutral, 4th level human bard whose vital stats are HP 21 and AC 13. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity and charisma. His significant attributes are dexterity 13 and charisma 14. He carries leather armor, shortsword, and an oboe-like musical instrument.)

Früilof Heise is a grizzled middle aged man with a grim look and thick black hair and beard graying at the edges. His frame is powerful, and stuck in the crook of his arm is a massive sword of unusual make.

Another of the well-thought of members of the community, Früilof has fought alongside the Baron Premiger of Halpveg in his many conflicts with Isenborg and Bergholt. He is very honorable, honest and concerned about the well-being of his family and friends. He is the most reserved towards the characters and suspects there is always something more than what is being said. He, like many others in the communities of the Früilanders, is proud of his heritage and is capable of telling, in very compelling ways, stories of heroes and the great sacrifices they have made.

His sword is a present from the Baron Premiger. It is of Todavian make and rarely is its kind found in these parts. It is wielded with 2 hands.

FRÜILOF (He is a neutral evil, 5th level human barbarian whose vital stats are HP 40 and AC 13. His primary attributes are strength, charisma and constitution. His significant attribute is strength 13. He carries leather armor, Todavian bastard sword of Maiming that cause 1d4 extra damage.)

Other NPCs of note

Gerhart Thyan: Woodworker and mead maker. Mean spirited and a drunkard.

Rasaala Albensen: Cousin of Hanna. Ward of the Long house. Rasaala became the ward of the long house due to her tremendous ability to organize the run of the kitchen.

Taagen Heise: Younger brother of Shildea. Usually keeps watch in the tower.

Ordinana Heise: Cousin of Shildea. Keeper of the Seal. She keeps the Seal of Felsentheim, a large banner with the Heise family symbol, a green tree with a snake wrapped around its trunk, emblazoned upon it. She is also in charge of the 'communities' finances.

Ankuft Thyan: The village merchant. He is responsible for shipment of goods to larger towns. He is somewhat dishonest and always looking out for himself.

1 THE LONG HOUSE

This is a rambling affair like many of the abodes found amongst the Friilanders. Built of the sturdiest woods by some of the finest craftsmen of the Graffenvold, these buildings withstand the harsh winters, dry summers and fierce storms of the Graffenvold for decades, even centuries. This long house is two stories tall with an attic. The long house itself is adorned with elaborate woodwork, carvings, and symbols garnering protection from the gods.

The backside of the long house provides a rear wall to the compound. There are three arrow slits in the back wall on the second floor. The walls of the Long house have 100 hit points and a hardness of 6.

THE FIRST FLOOR

This space is broad and nearly all open. All the cooking and communal activities take place here. The west half of the room is dominated by a large round table with no center. In the middle of the table is a large fire pit, and there is usually a fire blazing in it. Many implements of daily use are stored here as well as weapons and numerous bedrolls. The unmarried adult men sleep in this space. On the west end of the room is the cooking area. There are several ovens, a large roasting pit, and sacks and packs and boxes of foodstuffs. There is also a trapdoor leading to the basement. At the very east end of the room is a sleeping area where the unwed adult women sleep. They have a small fireplace, four makeshift beds, and their personal belongings.

THE BASEMENT

This is a small cramped space. Many dried goods are stored there with water, mead, meats, fruits and grains. There is a lot of food. The floor is comfortably strewn with hay, but it is a little chilly. The community's wealth is also stored here, in a small iron lockbox behind the barrels of mead. The box holds 120gp, 400 sp, and 890 cp.

THE SECOND FLOOR

The second floor is divided into upper and lower spaces with several partitions of wood and fabric. All the married couples sleep in partitioned rooms or spaces. The Thane's room is in the

far east end of the floor. The rooms and floors are sumptuously piled with blankets and skins of animals. Each space has a brazier and lantern. The upper floor remains a little chilly.

2 THE STOREHOUSE

Set outside and along the wall is the storeroom for the larger farming implements, harnesses, and grinding stones. The backspace is where Tattiana keeps her herbs and other belongings.

3 THE SHEEP STALL

This is a small pen where the sheep are put up at night, as well as Felsentheim's few cows.

4 THE KREUT

This is the village Kreut. Felsentheim was located here because of the Kreut. This one is rather small, standing only 10 feet tall, but its base is almost 8 feet in diameter. It is covered in moss and carved with ancient runes worn almost to nothing by the ages. The Trottigen who placed this Kreut died on the selfsame spot. Surrounded by the fell beasts of Inzae's imaginings, he defended it until his last breath was drawn. Any character fighting within 10 feet of the Kreut receives a +2 modifier to all combat rolls (initiative, to hit, AC, damage and it also positively affects any effective spell damage or healing if cast from within 10 feet of the Kreut).

5 THE PALISADE

The palisade is nearly 10 feet tall, constructed of the trunks of thick fir trees (about 2 feet in diameter), and has a parapet circumnavigating its entire length. The wall has 90 HP.

6 THE GATE

The gate is a little flimsy and has not been repaired recently. There is no parapet on the gate section. It is the same height as the wall but the logs are only about 10 inches in diameter. It has 50 HP.

7 THE TOWER

The tower is a wooden scaffold with a covered and walled platform on top. It is 40 feet tall and can take 80 points of damage before toppling.

There is a plentiful supply of arrows, nearly 600 stored throughout the compound (enough for 12 - 15 flights of arrows). There are also numerous halberds, axes, bows and shields found in the longhouse. This area is famed for its large round shields which the men use to form "shield walls." There are hundreds of large planks of wood, 2 barrels of oil, rope, and other sundry items that would likely be found in any farming community.

Below are the stats for the Inhabitants of Felsentheim other than those mentioned above. There are 19 Males and 22 females of fighting age (14 and above), and 13 children.

70 CASTLES & CRUSADES



FIGHTERS, MALE X15 (These neutral good level 1 human fighters vital stats are HD 1d10, HP 10 and AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a short sword or halberd.)

COMMONERS, MALE X4 (These lawful good level 0 humans vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 2 and AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a dagger or short bow.)

FIGHTERS, FEMALE X11 (These chaotic good level 1 human fighters vital stats are HD 1d10, HP 10 and AC 10. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a short sword or short bow.)

COMMONERS, FEMALE X11 (These neutral good level 0 humans vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 1 and AC 10. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with a dagger or short bow.)

COMMONERS, CHILDREN X13 (These lawful good level 0 humans vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 1 and AC 10.)

The goal with the Felsentheim setting is to create a bond between the characters and the inhabitants of the village. Thus, it is hoped that the characters or players have, with the encounters at the village, develop a desire to fight with the villagers in the last moments of their lives or to at least, fostered a desire on the part of the players to save some of the villagers if it is possible. If it appears that a few days are necessary to allow this bond to grow, by all means have the Zjerd army arrive much later.

RUNNING THE SIEGE OF FELSENTHEIM

Grodge's army has traveled speedily to reach Felsentheim. They camped for one night after crossing the Hiitenford and are well rested and set for a long battle. The leader, Preelezjit, has laid siege to many Zjerd villages and outposts over the years, and is intending a quick overrun of Felsentheim but is prepared for a short siege.

The timing of Preelezjit's arrival is of great importance. The troops should arrive at the moment the characters begin to feel comfortable, when they believe the worst is behind them. If this requires the passage of several days to a week, allow it. But, if it appears as though the characters are in a hurry to leave the town, have the Zjerd attack immediately. Remember, the point of the adventure is to cause the characters to either act heroically or dastardly. It would not be unkind as a Castle Keeper to give the players a push or nudge to act heroically.

THE MORNING DEW

The morning air is heavy, but a clear blue sky and bright sun welcome in another day. The cattle are being herded towards the gate, the chickens are chattering loudly in the yard, and several sheep are baying for feed. The aroma of fresh bread and stewing meat wafts lazily through the compound. Taagen is climbing the ladder up the tower, and the large gate slowly grinds open.

The characters should be going about their morning activities. The sun has just risen and the inhabitants of Felsentheim are

preparing for another day. While they are doing so, a sense of calm should pervade the setting. When it appears that the characters are settled, the cattle are out of the gate, and people are just settling into the morning routine, the lead element of Grodge's army makes its presence known.

Taagen screams a terrifying warning, "Welfenzjerd!!! WELFENZJERD!" The warning is cut short by the baying and howling of wolves that burst from the treeline across the fields.

Within a few moments the wolf riding zjerd break into the clearing. Allow one or more of the characters time to get a vantage to see them.

Huge, ferocious wolves slaving at the mouth, anticipating slaughter are scattered along the tree line. The air reverberates with the rage in their throats and the earth shudders at their coming. Astride these mighty beasts are the green skinned Zjerd, handling their short spears and screeching war chants, their shrill voices mingling with the deep tenor of the wolves' howls. Crimson banners attached to the ends of spears waver in the wind, as the wolves hurtle across the frozen fields towards Felsentheim.

Before they even reach the town, their reeking odor pervades the air with a deep moldy aroma mingled with oiled leather and animal grease. The Welfenzjerd spread wide as they cross the fields, swooping and swirling like a tornado towards the gate.

Here is a chance for heroic action. The gates need closing and the people in the fields need saving.

As soon as the villagers note the presence of the goblins they run for the compound and shut the gates. There is general panic all around as the leaders begin to gather and formulate a plan for defense or negotiation. Some want to strike a bargain with the Zjerd, others want to flee, and others still want to fight. After the death of their significant leaders, if the characters make an effort to take the lead, most of the inhabitants will follow them.

Several people immediately blame the characters for the arrival of the Zjerd army and intend to offer them up to the Zjerd as a peace offering unless convinced otherwise. As the attack begins, chaos reigns. No one knows quite what to do. And one villager screams at the characters (or one of them)....

"Foul scum, look what you have done, you have brought the Zjerd with you. Go to them now you brave one, oh great heroes.... You have killed my children, do you see their eyes, feel their beating hearts? They will be no more because of your greed and your bravery.... Go save us now you beasts and offer yourself up to the Zjerd!"

To allow the characters a pivotal role in the battle from its earliest moments, have Olaf die fairly quickly or request the

characters aid. If the characters volunteer to help, place them in the 'hottest' spots (inside the long house, on the tower, at the gate), allow them to organize the defenses, and encourage them to act like heroes when the time comes.

Most efforts to bring the people of Felsentheim under control works. They are in a desperate spot and realize it. They defer to the greater experience of the characters in the running of the battle. Essentially though, their plans for defense consists of manning the tower, barricading the gate and using the long house as the last line of defense. Should the characters decide to defend the town to the last man they will only be successful with a little luck, lots of bravery, and wise decisions. Bear in mind, several of the inhabitants do not leave Felsentheim, no matter the circumstance, Schildea, Olaf, and Tattiana especially.

A breakout from Felsentheim is likely to succeed as the Zjerd commander is not prepared for one. The best moment to implement this would be while an attack on the walls and gate is occurring (as most of the troops will be spread out and focused on their particular task at hand). In the event of a breakout, most of the troops will be intent upon looting rather than killing the escapees. It is unlikely Preelozjit will be able to control his troops at this juncture.

Do not allow the complexity of the battle hinder the pace of combat or the characters central role in it. The entire sequence should be played with the characters in mind. Their actions should always weigh heavily and always receive priority.

As the battle commences it is vital that the CK offer the characters an opportunity to act heroically. For instance, have one of the

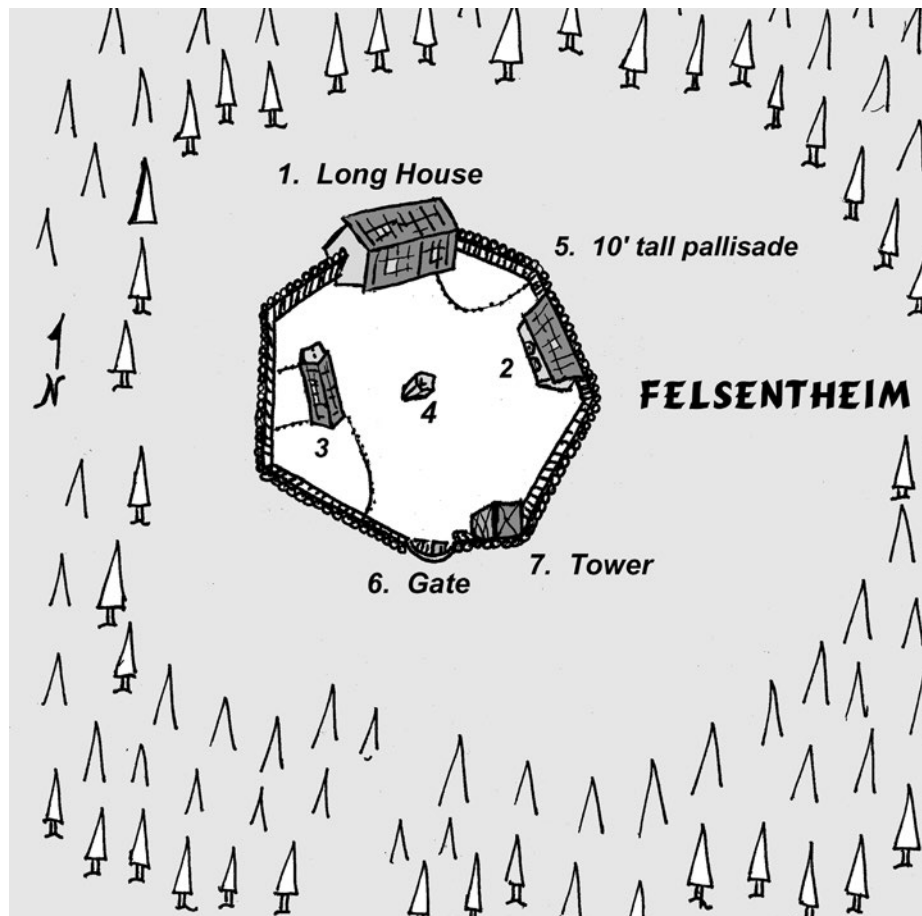
characters outside the gate amongst the field hands, have another near the gate, or have one on the tower with Taagen. It would be unwise to 'overtly place' them there, but if the players are not specific about what they are doing, give yourself some latitude in placing them in 'heroic' spots and encourage them, through NPCs to move to where 'hot spots' are likely to be. (For example, in the morning before the attack have one of the field hands ask a character to come out and help.) Further, as the battle commences, the villagers look to them for leadership. They are adventurers who have braved the Dampfrat. And finally, at no point early in the battle should a character be completely overwhelmed, though they should definitely feel a sense of doom.

The attack by the Welfenzjerd (the wolf riding goblins) is a typical terror tactic employed by the Zjerd. It is not intended to succeed in forcing the gate. If, however, the Welfenzjerd do force the gate, the rest of the army attacks in short order. Otherwise, the Welfenzjerd only attack those in the fields and easy prey. Their primary goal for the Welfenzjerd is to go up the road leading away from Felsentheim and keep a watch for reinforcements. See appendix for Welfenzjerd stats.

DISPOSITION OF ZJERD ARMY

Commander: Preelozjit, mounted on wolf

4 troops: Three troops with 100 regular warriors, 10 sergeants, 4 subchiefs, 1 warchief, and 1 shaman; one troop with 100 elite warriors, 10 sergeants, 4 subchiefs, 1 warchief, and 1 shaman.



2 scout troops: Each has 5 spider riders, 1 chief (ranger), and 6 spider mounts.

1 cavalry troop: 25 wolf riders, 5 sergeant riders, 1 war chief rider, and 1 shaman rider.

Chazrim support troop: 10 Chazrim, 10 Olekotheer mounts.

TACTICS AND BATTLE

After the Welfenzjerd have attacked, the remainder of the Zjerd army begins to move into position. The Zjerd do not attack pell-mell. They feel they have a good chance to easily win this battle, so they take time to ensure its outcome. Their initial goal is to rush the gates with the Welfenzjerd and get into the town. If successful in forcing the gates, the remaining Zjerd attack, one troop at a time, through the gates. This is the most devastating outcome as the townspeople and characters most likely will be slaughtered in short order. Otherwise, the Welfenzjerd head up the road leading away from Felsentheim.

The remainder of the army surrounds the town. Fifty Zjerd are placed on the east and west sides of the wall, another 100 position at the rear, 100 more at the front, with the 100 elite troops held in reserve. The cavalry move to the outside and protect the road. The scouts move to the rear.

All the troops remain in the tree line to avoid any arrows that may be shot their way. Once situated, they begin building ladders, rams, prepping nooses, and building shield walls. They also prepare fires, and take rags and douse them in oil. The ones near the road begin chopping down trees to lay across the road, and the cavalry fans out searching the area for other inhabitants, and guards against potential reinforcements.

Preelozjit pitches a tent near the edge of the wood line, lines up his personal bodyguard along with the chazrim and surveys the situation from atop a small scaffold. He then arranges for his drummers to begin the beat. They start a slow methodical rhythm of deep and hollow resonance. It pervades the entire area and picks up in crescendo throughout the day.

THE SIEGE

The resonance of the drums weighs heavy in the air, their beat and rhythm unnerve the soul. Dark clouds of noise roll across the fields and bank up against the walls. The sound of death fast approaching, the doom of Odesfale is upon the land. All along the treeline, scurrying like ants in a hive, the Zjerd make their way through the woods. Dark green creatures, malevolence in their deep set eyes, they heft their spears, their bardiches, their swords, and clumsy maces screaming obscenities over the noise of the drums. Fires leap up in the woods, and the whack of axes, the crack of wood and the thunderous noise of trees falling to the ground fill the land about. War is upon Felsentheim.

Please read the final section of this module 'Running a Large Scale Battle' for rules on how to run this battle.



The Zjerd commander first attempts to negotiate with the inhabitants of Felsentheim. He demands forfeiture of all weapons, 20 hostages, and a blood oath swearing that the defenders will not be involved in any future conflict with the Zjerd. The negotiations are a ruse. He agrees to the above terms but as soon as the defenders are out of the town, he has his regiments attack, killing all those that resist and taking the rest back to the Dampfrat to be gainfully enjoyed as a gourmet dinner. His larger goal is to prevent, for as long as possible, the inevitable counterattack. He awaits reinforcements from Klednij. If negotiations are fruitless, the siege begins.

SIEGE TACTICS

The options during the battle are innumerable and detailing all the possibilities is an impossible task. It should suffice to mention a few courses of action. In all attacks, consider the following: the Zjerd are not idiots, they will not spend themselves senselessly on the walls or at the gate. They try every ruse available to them, from fire to magic in an effort to weaken the defenses of Felsentheim. Further, they are seasoned warriors and not prone to panic nor are they excessively fearful of death.

The initial attack consists of flights of flaming arrows to minimally clear defenders from the rampart and the tower while hopefully catching the walls and building on fire. For each volley of arrows there is a possibility that the building, tower, or a portion of the wall, catches fire. A check is rolled for each one. The building catches fire on a CL1, the tower on a CL3, and the walls on a CL0. Once a fire is set it takes 1d4 rounds to extinguish it if water can be dumped on it.

After several volleys of arrows are released, Zjerd troops charge the gate, the rear of the long house and the walls. The group attacking the long house has the sole intention of lighting it afire. This is actually the initial goal of the first foray and the attacks on the wall and gate are a distraction. No effort is wasted to insure

the house is set afire. Each Zjerd attacking the long house carries a torch and oil soaked rags and when reaching it tries to start a fire. The attacks on the walls provide a distraction for most of the defenders. The initial attack should not last long and, unless it is going exceedingly well, and is called off as soon as the house catches fire. See above for chances of catching a fire per round, and in this case, per Zjerd adjacent to the long house.

If the house catches fire, the Zjerd allow it to burn for several hours before initiating the second attack. If the long house does not catch fire, the second attack occurs almost immediately. In the second attack, the Zjerd move in on all fronts using ladders and ropes to try and get over the walls or around the house. Also and significantly, the spider riders charge over the long house, burning or not, in an effort to get into the compound and cause disarray amongst the defenders. One troop charges for the gate with a battering ram attempting to break it down and rush into the compound. The battering ram does 2d10 points of damage per round as long as at least 10 Zjerd remain to use it. The subchiefs and clerics are intimately involved in close quarters combat.

To allow for dramatic combat sequences, the gate should be broken. This also allows the inhabitants and characters a point of departure should it be necessary. Further, the Zjerd attacking along the walls attempt to pull down or break through these sections. Allow this to happen also as they allow other points of retreat should they become necessary.

If the second attack does not manage to force entry into the town, the Zjerd pull back for several hours to recoup. They launch a third and final attack to gain entry to the town. This attack is preceded by numerous volleys of arrows followed by an all out charge on all sides of the town. This is their make-or-break attack and all their forces will be committed, excepting of course Preelozjit and his personal guard.

RUNNING THE BATTLE

The important aspect of this battle is its theatric nature. Do not get bogged down by the rules, they can spoil the fun. The battle is supposed to be climactic and dangerous, many innocents will be killed, possibly including the characters. Also, bear in mind the morale of the Zjerd -- it is high and breaking them will be some feat -- but the defenders are desperate. If the characters do not suggest a break out, have one of the NPCs do so as it may be the only chance to survive the encounter.

Further, and importantly, if a character dies in a particularly heroic fashion (for example they die fighting 10 or more Zjerd, charge back into combat to save someone and die trying) give them a wonderful farewell, make their last swing dramatic, give them a last utterance, anything that adds to the drama. Consider also giving them a dream sequence where they are allowed to enter the next world and fight with the god Heimdel in the final battle. For example;

You stand tired and your arm is weighed down by your heavy weapon. Salty sweat stings your eyes, blood dribbles from your mouth and, your breath heaves raggedly. The storm of battle, the screams of pain and fear, the dull clanging of weapons, rage silently around you until the noise altogether dies. The dead lie in heaps, their arms and legs twitching, grasping for the last bits of life. But many of their souls are let go and are now traveling to another place. Their misty spirits are filling the ground, covering all signs of the dead and the massive trees begin to fade. Soon, a man emerges slowly from the distant stars. His walk is powerful, his shoulders massive, in his hand is a great hammer and in the other a massive shield. His brown braided locks hang to his waist, tied about with golden threads and red cloth. His eyes are friendly but wary, his brow heavy with expectation and anticipation. He is tall and thunderous but slowly bends to one knee, placing his hammer in front of him when out of the clouds at his feet emerges a wooden bridge stretching infinitely behind him. "It would be good to have you with me, to have you at my side in the coming battle. Will you stand at my side?"

"Make haste, your decision for the final battle is upon us!" With this, he points to your rear and you turn without choice and there you see the most horrible vision your nightmares could ever have concocted. The massive bulk, the densest place, the darkest hour is upon the bridge, blotting out the stars and consuming the darkness around her in even greater darkness. It is Inzaa, the Earth Dragon, come to reclaim her own.

"I am Heimdal my son and I seek your aid with those other brave souls in keeping the land free from her wrath... Come now and choose" He stands in haste.

Every character who dies a good death should receive a similar sequence.

RUNNING A LARGE SCALE BATTLE

There are two considerations when running the battle at Felsentheim. The first and foremost is to maintain a level of excitement and motion throughout the battle. The second, the party can very well carry the day if they involve themselves in the battle. The CK may want to allow the players to assume the roles for NPCs or roll for them, and even allow them to make a few of their decisions. In any case, whether the CK plays the NPCs or the players play them, each person at Felsentheim has their own set of goals and dreams, some are cowardly, some are brave, some are scared, some want to leave, while others do not. If the individual NPCs are played individually it will add a whole new dimension to the game and allow heroic characters to become heroic in the eyes of NPCs and amongst one another.

Because the number of troops fighting at any single time will be small, it is possible, though not advisable, to run the battle on the individual level. For those instances in which the PCs

are not involved, several simple dice mechanics can be used to resolve combat.

First, depending on the number of troops involved, all troops should be considered for combat purposes to be on a 5 to 1 or 10 to 1 ratio. Initiative is rolled for each opposing troop (highest on a d10). For every 5 individuals in a troop (or every ten, depending on the ratio chosen), one d20 is rolled 'to hit.' Take the average 'to hit' bonus from the troops and the average of any other bonus' and apply to the 'to hit' roll. The defending troop's Armor Class is determined by averaging the AC of all the individuals in the troop. A successful hit occurs on a 'to hit' roll equal or equivalent to the defending units AC. Damage is applied as average per weapon type in the troop. Roll the appropriate dice and multiply the result by the number of people in the troop and apply that damage to the enemy. The resultant damage is applied per individual in the defenders troop, the dead are removed, and the excess ignored. (For example: 5 Zjerd vs. 5 humans. The humans roll a 4 for damage, thus hitting for 20 HP damage. The Zjerd have 4 HP each, 5 Zjerd are removed. Conversely, if 15 damage is applied, 4 Zjerd are removed - do not track excess damage.) The defenders then take their turn to swing. Again, however, all characters and leaders should be treated individually.

MODIFIERS: All troops defending on a parapet receive a +5 to their AC. All characters defending behind a shield wall receive a +3 to their AC (a shield wall requires a minimum of 5 individuals to be effective).

MORALE: The Zjerd have a high morale when they arrive: 80%. For every 20 troops lost, morale drops 5%. When morale drops to 50%, a percentile roll must be made. If the number is greater than the current morale, the Zjerd break and fall back. They regroup after the first failed morale roll and start the assault again several hours afterwards. The second assault begins with a 60% morale with the same mechanics as above being applied for making a morale save. If they break a 2nd time they regroup and leave. They do not launch another assault at that point, but remain at the ford for several days until the Welefenzjerd return and then head back to Klednij. The only exception is when more than 20 Zjerd are in the town. This indicates a breach and zjerd moral goes up 5% for every 10 who enter thereafter.

WRAPPING UP THE ADVENTURE

War has been brought to the Graffenvold by those erstwhile adventurers who crossed the Treklant and disturbed the delicate balance of power in the realm. The war will have wide ranging affects with many alliances and conquests soon to follow.

The Zjerd will continue to press to the north. The more successful they are, the larger their armies grow as neighboring tribes join them. Grodge's intent is to move as far north as Halpveg and get control of the trade route along the Kambria (the road stretching from the Kambrian Mountains in the West to the Troke in the East). He will then press on to Isenborg and attempt to gain control of all the towns and villages of the Halpvegtier. Importantly, for those who have *Vakhund: Into the Unknown*, if Gnardj was not killed, he returns to the political

scene. Gnardj believes he can use Grodge's success to start a holy war in the Graffenvold. Gnardj wants to gain control of Kreutzmark and presses hard for an attack on that town. Gnardj can also rouse and gather Chazrim from the far east to come to the Graffenvold and fight.

The Baron Premiger of Halpveg, realizing his danger, attempts to sue for peace with Grodge and offers up the southern Halpvegtier to stave off an attack. At the same time he attempts to mend his relations with the rulers of Bergholt and Isenborg and draws on a long standing alliance with the Lords of Firstenfeld to raise an army. Many troops eventually arrive to help defend Halpveg. But will they be too few and too late?

The Lords of Isenborg, so great their hatred for Baron Premiger of Halpveg, immediately offer alliance with Grodge to help bring the Baron Premiger down. They offer to Grodge all the Halpvegtier excepting those towns along the Vindig River - which includes Kreutzmark.

The Eleven Meisters of Bergholt are split in their desires. Much struggle between the Lords intensifies as they know the decisions made concerning the conflict could have disastrous economic affects. The warrior caste and several of the noble houses want to send aid to Baron Premiger, while the merchant and banking families want to stay aloof from the war and insure the trade routes stay open.

The towns in the southern Halvegtier defend themselves as best they can. The bandits (the Magershole Gang) pour out of their castle in the Dampfrat, follow the armies and its battles, picking up the scraps and preying on the weak.

STATISTICS FOR ZJERD AND ALLIES

PRELOZJIT is a massive, brilliant, and cruel Zjerd. He has climbed the merciless ladder of power in the Zjerd realm and knows his life is forfeit if Felsenheim is not conquered. As such, if it appears the battle will be lost, he mounts a wily wolf and charges into combat in an effort to rally his troops.

PRELOZJIT, ZJERD (*He is a lawful evil 8th level barbarian whose vital stats are HD 8d12, HP 81 and AC 17. His primary attributes are Strength and constitution. His significant attributes are constitution 16 and dexterity 13. He carries a short spear, scimitar, splint mail, and a large metal shield.*)

WOLF, PRELOZJIT'S MOUNT (*This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 16 and AC 15. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks by biting for 1d6 points of damage. Special Abilities: Trip, Scent .*)

ZJERD BODYGUARD, ZJERD X10 (*These chaotic evil creatures vital stats are HD 2d6, HP 12 and AC 16. Their primary attributes are physical. Their significant attribute is dexterity 16. They attack with short swords, short bows and carry studded leather armor and medium shields.*)

CHAZRIM X10 (*These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d10, HP 14 and AC 17. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a lance for 1d10 damage, a battle*

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axe and wears expertly crafted scale mail offering a +1 to AC and carries a large metal shield.)

OLEKOTHEER X10 (These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 27 and AC 16. Its primary attribute is physical. They attack with a gore attack for 1d8+1 damage or a slam for 1d6 damage. If ridden in combat, the Olekotheer and rider cannot both attack in the same opponent in the same round.)

ELITE TROOPS, ZJERD (100) (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 6 and AC 15. Their primary attributes are physical. Their significant attribute is dexterity 15. They attack with short swords, short bows and carry studded leather armor and medium shields.)

REGULAR TROOPS, ZJERD X300 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3 and AC 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with short swords, bardiches or similar weapons and shortbows and wear leather armor.)

SERGEANTS, ZJERD X40 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 8 and AC 16. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with short swords and shortbows and carry mail shirts and medium shields.)

SHAMANS, ZJERD X4 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 9 and AC 13. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with short swords and shortbows and wear leather armor. They cast spells as level 3 clerics. Suggested Spells: Level 0: create water, detect magic, first aid, light; Level 1: bless, cure light wounds; level 2: hold person.)

SPIDER RIDERS, 4-ARMED ZJERD X10 (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 12 and AC 15. Their primary attributes are physical. Their significant attribute is dexterity 16. They attack with short swords and shortbows) and carry leather armor. These zjerd all have four arms and are able to make 2 attacks per round)

SPIDER RIDER CHIEF, 4-ARMED ZJERD X2 (These chaotic evil creatures are 1st level rangers whose vital stats are HD 1d10, HP 10 and AC 15. Their primary attributes are physical. Their significant attribute is dexterity 16. They attack with short swords and shortbows and carry leather armor. These zjerd all have four arms and are able to make 2 attacks per round.)

SPIDERS, SCOUT MOUNTS X12 (These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 22 and AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. Their significant attributes are dexterity 17 and strength 15. They attack with a poisonous bite for 1d8. If a bite is successful a constitution check must be made or the recipient suffers the effects of a type II poison.)

SUBCHIEFS, ZJERD X16 (These chaotic evil creatures vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 16 and AC 17. Their primary attributes are physical. Their significant attribute is dexterity 16. They attack with short swords and shortbows and carry chain shirts and small metal shields.)

WARCHIEF, ZJERD X4 (These chaotic evil creatures vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 20 and AC 18. Their primary attributes are physical. Their significant attribute is dexterity 16. They attack with morning stars and shortbows and carry chain shirts and large metal shields.)

WOLF RIDERS, ZJERD X25 (These chaotic evil creatures vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 8 and AC 16. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with scimitars and carry studded leather armor and small metal shields.)

WOLF MOUNTS X25 (These creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 14 and AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by biting for 1d6 points of damage. Special Abilities: Trip, Scent.)

MAGIC ITEMS

TE' MA' LOOS: These five rubies have magic qualities which a *detect magic* reveals. When the proper command word is spoken, the gems float into the air and begin circling, forming a small whirling ball of red light. This small ball of light acts as a crystal ball. Whatever most concerns the character who spoke the command, the ball shows it. The command word is in Krung' Thep and a significant amount of research must be conducted to determine the nature of the ball and its command word.

VEERDENTOOT: The mushrooms are called Veerdentoot. Only a few know of their enchanted qualities. For each mushroom eaten, wizards and illusionists may gain temporary casting abilities, or if abused, may go temporarily insane. Each mushroom eaten requires a constitution check (CL 4) to determine its results. Thereafter, for each mushroom eaten within 48 hours, the CL is increased by 2. A successful save adds 1 level in spell casting ability to all arcane users of magic for 24 hours. This does not add upper level spell abilities, just more spells to cast. A failed save indicates temporary amnesia for 24 hours, eliminating all spell casting abilities for that player for that time. The mushrooms, if kept in a dry place, will keep for years. Transplanting them is difficult. To do so, the mushroom must be placed in the ground, in a place that stays warm year round (above 60 degrees) and that receives no direct sunlight, not even dappled sunlight. Of the mushrooms so placed, only one in a hundred will take.

HELDENTOT: This bastard sword has two magic capacities. First, it confers a +1 to hit and damage and armor class. Further, when the character reaches 0 hit points while using this sword in combat, the character becomes capable of fighting even if they are at negative hit points. The character continues to fight up to a negative hit point value equal to their maximum hit points (ie: if the character has a maximum of 36 HP, he could continue fighting until he is at -36 HP). If at the end of combat (or if they choose to disengage from combat) the character has negative hit points, he is immediately subject to the normal effects of going negative. If the hit points are -11 or less, the character dies instantly.

KREUT: When the world was young and the Gods warred for dominion, Heimdal and Inzae clashed in the skies above. Heimdal climbed high into the night and wrestled the stars from the heavens and sent them hurling down at Inzae, the Earth Dragon. The stars split and sundered upon her back, shattering into millions of shards that scattered far and wide across the world. The shards, the Kreuts, have been collected from time immemorial by the Trottigen Giants and placed in sacred groves and religious centers as an act of thanks to Heimdal for driving Inzae into the sea.

GLOSSARY

PLACES OF NOTE

Bergholt: A large city located on the south shore of the Interzae, near the Graffenvold.

Bierkeller: The largest Tavern in Frisia. Owned by Ronnart Tonnahor.

Dampfrat: A swampy upland filled with hot springs and geysers. Primarily controlled by a tribe of goblins known as the Zjerd.

Drakleed: The Kingdom of the Kdyzj. Located south of the Treklant Creek and west of the Dampfrat.

Dzeebagd: An abandoned fortress centrally located in the Dampfrat.

Felstheim: A community of men near the Hilttenford.

Frisia: A large trading town south of Halpveg. Located along the Unterbasser and where most trade with the Drakleed is conducted.

Graffenvold: A great forest on the southern shores of the Interzae. The Graffenvold is famed for its trees that are especially prized for building ship masts.

Jzunad: A recently constructed temple to honor Kleejd. Located near the Dampfrat.

Jugensborg: A small town located on a strategic crossing of the northern reaches of the Treklant Creek.

Halpveg: A city located on the Kambreea. The capitol city for the Halptier.

Halptier: An area comprising most of the lands between the Vindig River and the Treklant Creek.

Hiittenford: A commonly known ford located on the upper Treklant Creek.

Imfal: A little known kingdom in the southern Kambreean mountains inhabited primarily by the Ban' Thout and Krung' Thep.

Interzae: The great inland sea and the center of the world.

Isenborg: A large town situated on the southern Vindig. Loosely allied with Bergholt.

Kambreea: The road that stretches from the Kambreean Mountains in the West to the Troke in the East.

Kambreean Mountains: A large mountain range that lays to the west of the Interzae and stretches far into the south.

Kragenmores: A large range of mountains that lays to the south of the Graffenvold.

Klednij: A large Zjerd town located in the Dampfrat. Ostensibly the capitol of the Zjerd.

Kreutzmark: A religious center located on the banks of the Vindig River.

Mejketek: A Kdzyz trading post located at the southern terminus of the Unterbasser.

Shatten Escarpment: A very rocky volcanic remnant that surrounds the Dampfrat.

Treklant: A large creek that starts in the eastern periphery of the Dampfrat and empties into the Interzaa.

Troke: An large area of independent city states located on the southeast shores of the Interzaa.

Unterbasser: The road leading from Halpveg to Mejketek. It passes through Frisia and the Vakhund.

Vakhund: A Guard tower on the northern Border of Baron Premiger's realm. It is primarily used to tax merchants traveling to and from the Drazkleed.

Vindig: A large river that flows from deep within the Graffenvold and empties into the Interzae. Locally known as the "River for the Dead" and is believed to be a conduit between this world and the next.

PEOPLES OF NOTE

Geejzdnard: A Kdzyz living in Frisia.

Evanna: The daughter of a powerful merchant, kidnaped and taken to the Dampfrat.

Glizzd: The Zjerd shaman at Dzeebagd.

Gratva: A powerful captain in the Magdole Gang.

Grodge: Leader of the Zjerd of Klednij.

Jugensborg: A small town located where the Kambreea crosses the Treklant Creek. Closely aligned with Halpveg.

Keretzeva: This is the traditional father of the Zjerd. Said to have lead the Zjerd to the Dampfrat.

Klaus: A member of Ubert von Beck's Reavers. Primarily found in Bergholt.

Kluard: The Zjerd warchief at Dzeebagd.

Mariont Premiger: The Bergermeister of Halpveg.

Me' enup: A Ban' Thout and member of the Tan' Meth family.

Nipt' Than: A Krung' Thep leader seeking to kill the Tan' Meth family.

Nidzim: A Kdzyz merchant. He is a cousin to Geejzdnard.

Ronnart Tonnahor: The owner of the Bierkeller in Frisia.

Rothenheimers: A powerful merchant family from Bergholt that controls the docks. Evanna Rothenheimer is a niece of the

current Meister. Herbert Rothenheimer was Evanna's father and he was killed on an attack at Vakhund.

Tan' Meth: A family of Ban' Thout currently in exile.

Ubert von Beck: A very powerful and famed pirate plying the waters of the southern Interzaa.

Tindle: A member of Ubert von Beck's Reavers. Primarily stays in Bergholt.

Zapatero: A crazed magician located in Dzeebagd.

OTHER ITEMS OF NOTE

Ane: The God of War.

Geis' tot: A secret organization, the goals of which are unknown. They are traditionally described as a Todavian sect of mystical zealots.

Gdeez: A holy symbol associated with Mortzva.

Kdzyz: A tribe of goblins that reside primarily in the Drazkleed.

Kilbaric: A legendary clan of ogre bandits in the Graffenvold. Currently a tall tell told to scare children.

Kleejd: A God of the Chazrim. He is commonly associated with a war, primarily because the recent expansion of the Chazrim Kingdom in the East.

Krung' Thep: A lesser race found in Imphal. They primarily serve as the soldiery for the Ban' Thout, the ruling elite of Imfal.

Inzae: Used in two manners. Primarily it refers to the world. It also refers to the Earth Dragon, the creator of the world. (Note, the "a" is long and the "e" is short)

Inzaen: The language spoken in the areas around the Interzae.

Letario: A God of knowledge.

Magdole Gang: A notorious group of bandits based out of an abandoned fortress somewhere in the Dampfrat.

Megdzar: The first commander of Dzeebagd.

Mortzva: A goblin god that works as a handmaid to the Fates.

Miiween: A type of snow Fay peculiar to the Dampfrat and its surrounding regions

Shtroomsh: The God worshiped by most Ogres. Shtroomsh and his kin play a pivotal role in the pantheon of Inzae as the foot soldiers of Ane, the God of war.

Sumpfgroll: A race of trolls peculiar to the Dampfrat.

Ungern: A rare race in Inzae. The origin of this foul creature is unknown. They tend to be solitary and are usually found in desolate areas.

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