

CASTLES[®] CRUSADES

QUICK THREATS & SIDE TREKS



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1 A DELIGHTFUL EVENING

There is a tavern famed for its delightful food, happy customers, tasty brews and hospitality. It is situated by a fast flowing creek on a well-traveled road. Merchants, peasants, knights, and others stop at the Bottomless Mug regularly. Almost every evening at the tavern there is delightful music or humorous entertainments of some sort for the customers. The food is delicious, the drink on par with the best in the kingdom and the rooms well-made and clean. The proprietor of the tavern, Weldon Shacklesbeard, a gnome of unusually small size, is a gracious and uncannily funny host.

The characters find themselves at the tavern in the late winter or during that time of year when travel is much reduced such as long after harvest, planting season, or other times when seasonal activities decrease travel. The Bottomless Mug is open. However, there are only a few patrons at the tavern, and these are peasants or peddlers moving from one place to another. When the characters arrive, they are greeted by Weldon with fresh warm mead and heaps of food. He offers discounts and rooms for all. Later in the evening, the entertainment, for which the Bottomless Mug is famous, begins. Several men and women come out and begin singing humorous and bawdy songs combined with readings from various famous comedies.

Weldon has a problem. Although he is not an evil person, he has been driven to evil or nefarious ends to solve a problem. Weldon is under the daily threat of a boggart and has been for years. The boggart keeps Weldon in a constant of fear because it threatens to kill the gnome on a weekly and sometimes daily basis. It also occasionally wanders around the tavern causing problems for those staying here. These are small prank-like problems because the boggart lives off the proceeds of the tavern and does not want the source of its easy sustenance to disappear. It takes both food and gold from Weldon.

The boggart also gave Weldon a korred as a prisoner. The korred is in the basement and in magical shackles keeping it in place. The korred is an instrumental part of the boggart's control over the tavern. The korred knows how to play a flute of charming. The korred does so when the entertainment comes out. The music of the flute is mingled with the entertainer's music and is nearly imperceptible to most people. The patrons all must roll a charisma check CL5 to determine if one of the characters notices the new notes and likewise for a save. A fail indicates the listener is charmed. Once the charm is enacted, the performers go around to the patrons asking for donations. The whole point of the of the charming is to gather more tips. That's it. Nothing more is ever done.

To encourage the players to have their characters tip more without giving away the charm is to explain that the music is extraordinary, and perhaps puts them in a better mood, relaxes them or adds greatly to their night. If these encouragements do not work, have the performers come around twice for tips or even have one or more of the performers offer that 'look' of disapproval for the amount tipped. However, the characters should never be forced or required to tip.



If a character noted the extra tune in the music, the other sound, the origin of which was not apparent, they have to do some exploring to find the korred. The korred is kept in the basement of the tavern, underneath the common room where the performers play. It is chained to a wall with manacles on both feet and legs. The door to the basement is found in the personal chamber of Weldon.

While the korred plays, the boggart is there. After the korred is finished, the boggart places a gag over the korred's mouth and leaves to find Weldon. It then takes some money and leaves. The boggart comes back occasionally in the form of a guest just to check up on Weldon and threaten him. If the korred is found, Weldon explains his situation and hopes the characters can free him from the boggart menace without causing himself or his establishment much damage. The korred is very grateful if it is freed and helps the characters exact revenge on the boggart if it can and offers all the help it can to capture the boggart.

BOGGART (*This chaotic evil, aberration's vital statistics are HD 5d10, HP 35, AC 26, and MOVE 40 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a shocktouch for 2d6 damage. Its special abilities are darkvision to 30 feet, immunity to magic, invisibility, confusion and change form.*)

2 CASTLES & CRUSADES

2 A DEVIL OF A TIME

A screaming devilkin is in the town of Harrisburg and has made life very difficult for those in town. It has been in Harrisburg for nearly a whole month. The devilkin comes out every few days to cause problems and strike terror in the populace. Its screeching has caused many problems in town as it brings all communication to a halt for as long as it shrieks. The devilkin has also flown around town biting people and stabbing them with its tail. Though it has not killed anyone to date, the devilkin has injured quite a few people, and the town leaders have offered 500gp or more for the capture or killing of the devilkin.

The reason the devilkin is in Harrisburg is that a wizard attempted to summon a familiar before he was capable of controlling it. The screaming devilkin managed to kill the wizard. The devilkin, once summoned to the world, had no choice but to stay and is doing what all devilkin's do; causing problems. The devilkin is moving from place to place in Harrisburg trying to remain hidden from those who are searching for it. It then comes out late at night, in the afternoon or some other random time and flies up and down streets or alleys screaming. It occasionally attacks people but generally just weaves in and out of the surrounding buildings and all the various obstructions around town wreaking havoc, knocking things over, breaking things and occasionally even stealing stuff.

The devilkin moves from place to place every night. It has no lair or places it consistently goes to for rest. It, in fact, never needs to rest. The devilkin is always awake and alert to what is happening around it. The only reason it stops moving around causing problems is that it has to recuperate its voice to scream. It takes the devilkin 12 hours to recover its voice. Most of the time it just sits and waits. Time has no meaning to the devilkin so what may seem like a long time to a human is absolutely nothing to a devilkin.

The devilkin prefers to go to high places to recuperate. It stays in attics, right inside chimneys, under eaves on roofs, tower tops or similar. It always has an avenue to escape wherever it decides to rest. Though found inside, it is always near at least one window it can escape from. It has no desire to engage in combat and tries to escape before doing anything else. It does move to the other burgs around Harrisburg.

Catching the devilkin or killing it should be an onerous task. Just finding the devilkin is a problem because it is constantly on the move. Once the devilkin senses there is a worthy foe coming after it, it changes its tactics and actively avoids those persons while increasing its number of attacks and the type of attacks around Harrisburg. It begins to kill people and perhaps even kidnap smaller children.

This is a walled town, though small, with only 900 inhabitants living inside the walls. Another 1000 people live nearby and just outside the walls in three small burgs, Burlston, Applecart and Rendering on Valleybreak (a creek). Rendering is the furthest burg from Harrisburg and is located some half a mile away on a creek. All are under the leadership of Harrisburg's current



baron, Laird Niven. Laird Niven has called out all the city guard and militia to deal with the devilkin but it has proven very difficult for them to catch the beast.

The wizard's body can be found near the Rendering. He has a small house near the creek and a little outside of town. None in the area knew he was a wizard. He rented the house from a local farmer, coming and going as he pleased. Often he was gone for months at a time. His death has not been discovered. The farmer thinks he is away on one of his trips. Sometime after the characters arrive in Harrisburg, the body is discovered. The remains of the ritual to summon a familiar are also discovered and much talk is spread around town about that. The characters should hear of this eventually.

SCREAMING DEVILKIN (*This lawful evil, extraplanar's vital statistics are HD 3d8, HP 17, AC 18, and MOVE 30 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a tail for 1d6 damage. Its special ability is scream.*)

3 A TERRIBLE SWIFT DEATH

A call has gone out and salvation is needed for a remote region. Peasants, farmers, merchants and, craftsmen are streaming out of the area and headed to safer confines further into the kingdom. A great beast, a terrible calamity, a scourge, and horrible monster has descended upon the land and is destroying everything and killing all it can find. The land is strewn with the dead. The castles and forts have either been abandoned or are filled with those fearful of leaving the safety of the stone walls. A dragon or even worse is said to be scouring the region and none are brave enough to face the mighty creature and save the people of that land.

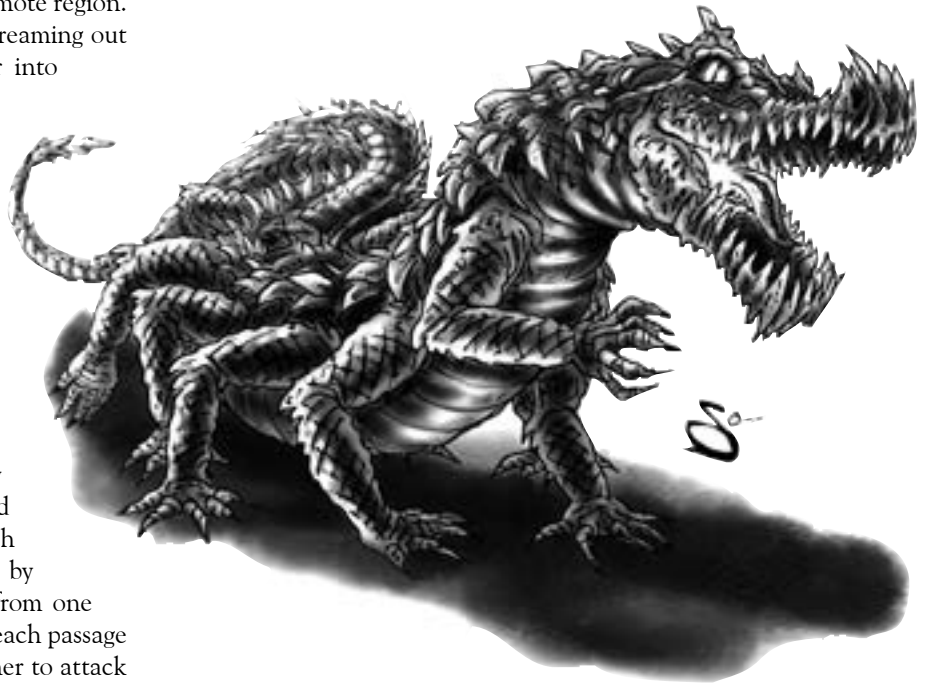
A behir has moved into the area and laid a clutch of 86 eggs. It's planning on killing everything nearby to make the area safe for its young. The eggs are laid in 11 different locations throughout the area. Each nest contains at least five eggs and are separated by a half dozen miles. The behir is making its way from one clutch to the next in a fairly regular pattern. With each passage from nest to nest, the behir ranges out a little further to attack and kill any potential threats to its young.

The behir actively hunts and kills any predators in the area. In this regard, it has been successful in killing bears, wolves, or any of the other larger predators. It has also driven off most large game in the area. Once it found a village, the behir went on a very aggressive attack against all the humans and demi-humans in the area which it instinctively knows are the direst threats to its young.

The villages and habitations in the area are small, usually numbering a few dozen people or more. Some small keeps have been constructed in the area as well. These are square towers, built of stone or wood and meant to hold a handful of people or a family and are fortified manor houses more than keeps. In its initial sweep of the communities, the behir killed dozens of villagers and attacked one keep destroying both.

The behir's range is about 100 square miles at this point. It has not cleared the whole area of threats, but it has caused enough devastation to cause many animals to leave. This is easily noted by any ranger or druid who travels through the forest. The behir is also easy to track. It is quite large and leaves signs for other animals to indicate its presence. It rips up trees, leaves scratch marks and a strong marking stench easily smelled for a hundred yards. It travels quickly and rests only for a few hours during the day until it arrives at a nest. The behir lingers at each nest for one or two days before moving to the next nest.

If the behir is attacked, it fights back ferociously, but once it takes 50% damage, it attempts to retreat to heal its wounds. If this is not possible, it attempts to break contact, again and again, to lead the characters away from any nest and into the forest. If the behir escapes fights, it attempts to hide in any of the various overhangs and holes in the forest. It does not go to any of its nests, at least not initially; the behir is trying to



keep the others from finding its nest. Once healed, the better, recognizing the scent of those who attacked it, attempts to track them down and kill them.

If not killed, the behir continues this process for about a month before it moves to a different territory leaving the eggs hidden in the mounds of dirt placed on top of them. If the characters do not locate all of the eggs and destroy them, there is the possibility for several young behir to hatch. There is only a 10% chance that an egg contains a viable behir and of that, there is only a 10% chance it survives long enough to hatch. The eggs are worth about 5000gp each. However, each egg only has a 10% of producing a viable behir and some purchasers may just want their money back. Years from now, if one of the behir young survive, the local community may put out a call for help again.

BEHIR (*This neutral evil, magical beast's vital statistics are HD 9d10, HP 87, AC 20, and MOVE 40/15 feet walk/climb. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a bite for 2d4 damage, a slam for 1d4+1 damage and six talons for 1d6 damage each. Its special abilities are breathe weapon, constrict, improved grab, rake, swallow hole, cannot be tripped, darkvision to 60 feet, full immunity to electricity and twilight vision.*)

4 CASTLES & CRUSADES

4 CUPID'S ARROW

Prince Albert Innacan has offered a job to those willing to undertake it. The prince relates the following tale. Ten years ago, his wife, Princess Fatazz Oonfafeful, accompanied the prince and his retinue on a hunt. While away chasing boar, a band of satyrs snuck up on the encampment where the princess rested and ensorcelled her. The satyrs escaped into the forest with the princess. Years of hunting for her produced nothing. The prince gave up searching for her several years ago. Now, suddenly, word has come from several of his rangers that the princess and a satyr have been located. The princess and the satyr are in an area of that vast forest most fear to tread, the Dreadful Forest. The prince has asked the characters to enter the Dreadful Forest, find his wife and bring her back to the palace.

Much of the story the prince relates is true. However, Prince Albert does not include essential elements of his tale. The princess and the satyr knew each other from her youth. The princess is of low birth, but her beauty was so great that elites from near and far sought her hand. After she grew up, she married the prince. This coupling was disapproved above by the prince's mother and, later, by the prince himself. Prince Albert became involved with another princess of noble lineage whom he planned to marry.

Princess Fatazz, knowing that she would ultimately be cast aside and left in penury, contacted her friend and youthful companion, the satyr Xenephon. Xenephon devised an escape for the princess during the aforementioned hunt. The two disappeared into the forest for the past decade and have fallen madly in love with one another. Though one may think this a boon for the prince, this was not the case. The prince's inability to defend his bride and honor left a smirch on his character and no princess would agree to marry him.

The prince spent the past decade seeking the satyr and his wife to enact both revenge and regain his honor, and perhaps even a wife. Recently, the two were spied by a group of rangers. A fight ensued in which all but one of the rangers were killed and the satyr wounded by a poisoned arrow. The satyr, the princess, and now the satyr's companions have no cure for the poison. If the characters come in search of the satyr and the princess, they are easily located near the place where the last battle occurred.

The satyr and the princess are accompanied by three other satyrs. One of the satyrs is keeping watch for more hunters. Once spied, the satyrs inform Xenephon, and the princess informs the



others, and three satyrs move to hinder the party in their efforts to find Xenephon and the princess. If the characters are wise enough to engage the satyrs in conversation, the truth of the situation may come out before the characters locate the princess. Otherwise, the satyrs fight or do what they can to confuse the party before resorting to mortal blows.

In the case that an actual fight breaks out with the possibility of the death of one of the satyrs, the princess makes an appearance. She implores the characters to leave the satyrs in peace and explains what happened in the past. She further explains that she does not want to return to the prince or civilization and asks the characters to help her remain free rather than live as a slave to a cruel master.

Xenephon is struck with a type IV poison. Once the party locates the satyr and princess, the satyr has 4 - 6 days to live. During this time, if the characters find a cure or cure

the satyr, they receive double experience for a kill, a lifetime friend, and a satyr eternally indebted to the party.

The prince has also sent one of his rangers to follow the party an insure they do what they are being paid to do. If the party does not, the princess is even more angered and starts the process of seeking mercenaries to kill the party, the satyr and the princess.

PRINCESS (She is a chaotic good, human whose vital statistics are HD 1d6, HP 6, AC 11, and MOVE 30 feet. Her primary attributes are wisdom, intelligence, and charisma. Her significant attributes are dexterity 16 and charisma 15. She wears a cloak of hiding and carries a +1 baculus.)

XENEPHON (This neutral fey's vital statistics are HD 3d8, HP 19 (4), AC 15 (10), and MOVE 30 feet. Its primary attributes are mental. It attacks with a head butt for 2d4 damage and by weapon type. Its special abilities are pipes, SR 6, twilight vision, and blend. It carries a +2 short bow, 24 arrows and a +2 short sword. It wears 3000gp worth of jewelry.)

SATYR X3 (These neutral fey's vital statistics are HD 3d8, HP 16, 14, 14, AC 15, and MOVE 40 feet. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with a head butt for 2d4 damage and by weapon type. Its special abilities are pipes, SR 6, twilight vision, and blend. They carry short bows, 24 arrows, and a +1 scythe. They wear 1000-3000gp worth of jewelry.)

5 DANCE PARTY

A family of sixteen grigs is making their way through the woods to a new home. They are in a very good mood having much drink and food in tow and having had no ill encounters on their travels so far. The grigs encounter the party on their trip and, being a bit tipsy, decide to engage the party in a little fun.

The grigs first try to determine the nature of the characters. This can be one by observing the characters actions, the clothes they wear and the symbols they carry. They begin their interaction with the party by playing a few practical jokes on them. Using their invisibility, the grigs might make their way into camp and tie shoelaces together, empty food pouches, place bugs in food pouches, place rocks in backpacks (to add weight), cut holes in shoes, etc. The grigs do not intend harm with their practical jokes thought the characters might see this a little differently.

After a day or two of these jokes, the grigs attempt to spike the drink of the characters. This would be done at night or some advantageous time, especially if the characters leave their equipment unattended for some time. The brew they place in the water pouches of the characters is tasteless but quite strong. Each character who drinks of it must make a constitution check or they come under the effects of the drink. Primarily the drink causes one to sing or laugh a lot. The drink places the imbibers in a good mood but cause a -1 to all dexterity checks. If the character continues to drink from the spiked water, they must make a constitution check CL 3 or become even more inebriated. Most everything, at that point, becomes funny. The character also suffers a -3 to dexterity checks and -1 to all other checks and attack related rolls.

At the point any of the characters become inebriated and if the party is not acting aggressively or otherwise angrily, several of the grigs, using their change-self ability, make themselves appear as poor gnomish beggars and approach the party during the day. As gnomes, they create a humorous tale of woe and poor tidings to garner some sympathy from the party. They also complain of odd occurrences while traveling in the area as well. The water tastes funny, their stuff keeps disappearing, and there appears to be some beetle infestation eating up their food stuff and silver bugs destroying their woolen blankets.

If this encounter goes well, the grigs (as gnomes), ask to camp with the party, "for safety sake." Once camped, the gnomes offer to cook. If allowed, they create a staggeringly good meal that gives everyone a temporary +2 boost to their constitution. This boost lasts 1d6 hours. All accompanying extra hit points and saving throw adjustment should be tracked for that period. This key ingredient to this meal is several area herbs the grigs have collected. The grigs use the meal to boost their energy level before a dance party. They are giving it to the character to increase their stamina for the upcoming dance party.

Later in the evening, after the meal, the rest of the grigs gather in the nearby tress. There are two fiddle players in the midst. One begins playing the fiddle. Every character has to make a saving throw or start dancing. If any succeeding in the saving throw, they do not have to dance. Once that is noticed by the

other grigs the second fiddler begins playing. This grig is very good so all save are at an additional -2 to their rolls.

At some point, the grigs come out and dance with the party as well. If the party is friendly they remain all night offering drink and food to the characters. They do explain, if asked, that they are headed to their new home and invite the party to travel with them. They also offer the meal ingredients if asked.

MEAL: The ingredients to the meal the grigs cooked earlier are given to the characters should they ask. The only important ingredient in the meal is four herbs. Each is exceedingly rare. Each has to be collected in a different season. So, it takes a whole year to collect the herbs. In any given square mile, there is a 10% chance of finding one measure of the herb in question. This is increased by 20% for a ranger and 30% for a druid. It takes a whole day to search a square mile. The meal can only be eaten once a week or it wears the system out and begins to poison the person overeating it. For each meal over the first, a saving throw versus poison must be made. Failure indicates a type I poisoning. To continue eating it requires more saving throws. Failure the second time causes a type II poisoning, the third, type III, etc.

GRIGS X16 (These neutral, fey's vital statistics are HD 1d4, HP variable, AC 18, and MOVE 20/40 feet walk/fly. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with three darts for 1d3 damage or two daggers for 1d4 damage. Their special abilities are spell-like abilities, fiddle, agile, twilight vision, and SR4.)

6 CASTLES & CRUSADES

6 DUTY CALLS

A goodall has been watching over the village of Silent Green for a decade or more. It has kept the village safe from harm all that time. The goodall has chased off goblins, orcs, a giant, and many other creatures of malevolent nature. It is very proud of its accomplishments. The goodall has made itself known to several of the villagers but, as is its' nature, generally prefers to remain incognito and its acts go unrewarded.

Recently, a nafuel has moved into the region. The goodall has managed to keep the nafuel confused and distant from the village for several weeks. However, in an encounter with the creature a short time ago, the nafuel wounded the goodall so badly, the goodall had to lie low for a week to heal itself. During this time, the nafuel moved in close to the village and killed a few cows. This was followed by a villager being killed.

Those few who the goodall had informed of its presence left the village to find the goodall. These too were killed before finding the goodall. The goodall has just discovered the death of the villagers. The goodall is planning to return to the village and protect it as best it can. Because it disappears during the daylight, it is seeking out others to aid it in saving the village from more slaughter.

The characters are traveling along the road to the village while this is occurring. Before the characters reach the village and while camped at night, the characters are approached by the goodall. The goodall has an innate ability to communicate with other good-aligned creatures. It appears as a crow and, using its telepathic ability, attempts to contact one of the characters whose alignment is lawful good or good. Once in touch, the goodall can only give impressions and general warnings but can convey that evil afoot and that a great danger is posed to the characters and all those nearby. The intent is to encourage the characters to go to the village and protect it.

Once at the village. The characters quickly discover that something has killed several of the villagers and livestock. All this has occurred within the past week. The villagers are terrified and do not know what has happened. They ask the characters for help in ending the threat or discovering what has killed the villagers.

This village of 400 people has a hedge wall surrounding most of the houses and barns. Those who lived outside the walls have moved inside the hedge for safety. In the center of the village is a large wooden statue of a horse. It is crudely made but has been taken care of very well. There are numerous offerings at the feet of the statue. The villagers explain that a local deity, they name Buvine, has protected them for many years. The villagers fear they have done something to offend the deity and that it has abandoned them. To rectify this, some are making more offerings while others are beginning to curse the deity and others still looking for the person or persons who offended the deity. The village is in dire need of spiritual leadership and protection.

The tracks of the nafuel are easily found outside the village. It stalks just outside the hedge just after sunrise and before sunset.



During the evening, the nafuel wanders off into the nearby forest to hole up and hide from the goodall. It now hunts only during the day. If the tracks are followed into forest, there is one area where there are so many tracks, it appears that a whole pack of the creatures gathered. This is the place where the goodall fought the nafuel and its blood cloned 6 other nafuels. The goodall comes to the characters aid during the evening and uses its telepathic ability to 'speak' with the character it spoke with earlier.

GOODALL (This neutral good, magical beast's vital statistics are HD 5d8, HP 23, AC 20, and MOVE 30 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. Its attacks depend on its form. Its special abilities are multiple shapes, detect evil, protection from evil, and limited telepathy.)

NAFUEL (This chaotic evil, aberrant's vital statistics are HD 9d8, HP 65, AC 15, and MOVE 40 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a tail for 2d6 damage. Its special ability is create clone.)

7 HORDE

This adventure takes place in and around the small village of Big Rock in a region that has been at peace for a century or more. The area is so safe that there are no walls nor barriers of any sort protecting the village. The nearest fortification is over twenty miles away. Big Rock is a farming community of approximately 300 inhabitants. There are 30 houses spread out on the road bordering a sluggish and deep creek.

Big Rock had a sister village, Little Rock, located some ten miles up the road and on the same side of the creek. Until seven months ago, Little Rock enjoyed much the same benefits as Big Rock. Little Rock was a peaceful, productive and uneventful place. This peace was disrupted by a virulent infection that swept through the village in a matter of days, killing most of the inhabitants. Believing the infection to be of an unholy origin, the only person of any power in the area, a cleric named Millicent, left on a mission to discover the infection's source. She has not been seen nor heard from since she left. This is because she is dead.

In the months after the infection ravaged Little Rock, the village was abandoned and the surviving inhabitants moved to Big Rock or even as far away as the town of Boulder. Only a few people dared return to Little Rock to gather the dead. A few of the dead were buried. Then the infection spread to those who returned. They were either killed or died. All the others were left to rot in the fields or houses where they died. None have entered nor even been near the village in months.

The contagion was not of natural origin. A necromancer, Baleful One Eye, caused the contagion to spread through Little Rock. In the months since that time, Baleful has been raising the dead in Little Rock and created a horde of zombies. The necromancer is planning to use the zombies to overrun Big Rock.

Baleful is doing this because of the slights and abuses he received as a child in these self-same villages. The necromancer is from Big Rock. Born a gimp, the necromancer was constantly ridiculed for his infirmity. After his parents died, the ridicule became abuse. The child, who had become an indescribably angry person by his early teen years, was 'rescued' by a cruel and malicious sorcerer and made a servant and, quite by accident, an understudy. Years of study and travel with his grim master did not dim the anger of his youth and he has returned to kill everyone in both Little Rock and Big Rock.

The characters walk into this situation. None of the past events should be made known to the characters until well after the adventure is underway – if ever. For all the characters know, Big Rock is a completely forgettable village, not unlike hundreds of others the characters have passed through on their adventures.

The first sign of trouble should occur a little over a mile from Big Rock, after the characters have left the village. They see a shambling humanoid wandering down the road. This is a zombie. It should be easy to dispatch. A few minutes later, a few more zombies are seen shambling through the fields off of the road. Then a few more to the left of the road. After killing a



dozen or more, the number of zombies should increase and, the characters should note the zombies have moved around them and are walking in the general direction of Big Rock.

The zombies are indeed headed toward Big Rock. The necromancer is using an ancient spell to control the zombies and make them nominally do what he desires and is sending the zombies to Little Rock to kill everyone. The zombies travel in small packs of 1-20. There are 246 zombies making their way to Little Rock. They are spread out along the road and in the woods or fields to the left and right of the road. The zombies have not crossed the creek.

It takes the zombies roughly four hours to move the mile to the Big Rock. Assuming everything is going as planned. Baleful has already left the region, area, and even plane. He did leave behind a small memento of his return to the villages. A note is found attached to a door in Little Rock. It reads, "To my friends and family of old, Die! Your beloved gimp."

ZOMBIES X246 (These neutral evil, undead's vital statistics are HD 2d8, HP 6 each, AC 12, and MOVE 20 feet. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a slam for 1d8 damage. Their special ability is slow.)

8 CASTLES & CRUSADES

8 IN THE VALLEY OF EVIL

Some time ago, an evil lord summoned a pack of shadow mastiffs to do his bidding in the world. For years this lord kept the mastiffs under his control and let them loose only to hunt those he could not find or those he could not reach. These horrid canines have slunk through the forests, hills, and savannahs of the region for several decades dispensing death and fear amongst all the locals. The pelt, darker than midnight, is easy to recognize and their glowing yellow eyes are feared, for they portend nothing but death. This lord, a calamity akin to anything that nature could let loose upon the lands, has died. The locals are grateful, and the shackles of his rule have been thrown off.

The mastiffs remained.

Since that time, some years ago, the shadow mastiffs have roamed the area killing and maiming travelers and others with little or no hinderance. There are few who would brave searching for these hounds and killing them. The locals have grown used to their presence, take what precautions they can and have a standing offer of 200gp per head of the mastiffs. Over the years, three of the mastiffs have been killed, and their skulls are proudly displayed on a town wall. None know exactly how many remain, but estimates range from four to ten.

The characters are traveling through the area where the mastiffs roam. The mastiffs have a range of 100 square miles. There are seven mastiffs remaining from a pack of twelve. The mastiffs split up and roam the entire region. When one finds a potential victim for their unusual appetite, it follows them for a time and then calls the other members of the pack together to hunt and kill that person. The forest is a haunting place during these calls as the howls and baying of the mastiffs frighten almost all who hear them. The mastiffs are drawn to good aligned people and are especially drawn to lawful good people.

It can take the mastiffs a day or two to gather. Once gathered the whole pack waits patiently for a chance to attack. These extraplanar creatures have a staggering amount of patience. They feel absolutely no sense of urgency on their quest to consume good only an insatiable appetite to do so.

During the day, the mastiffs hide in deep holes in the ground or any location they can find where there is no sunlight. They remain in these dark places until well after the sun sets. They rarely rest together except when they are hunting a specific individual. The shadow mastiffs leave no trace when they travel. They are completely invisible unless they move into some type of light or they growl, howl or make other noise. The only time that a shadow mastiff leaves tracks is when it is in the light such as from a lantern, fire or some magical source of light. It is important to note that in sunlight or magic that mimics sunlight, the shadow mastiff is instantly destroyed.

As the mastiffs gather closer to their prey, the howling and baying increase in tempo and pitch until they have all gathered. After this the mastiffs hunt in near silence until they have located their prey and launch an attack.



If there is a good-aligned character in the party, one of the mastiff's crosses the party's path and it decides to hunt that person. After locating them, the mastiff begins its howling. It should take several days or more for the other mastiffs to find one another. The initial mastiff follows the party wherever they go. It lingers outside a town or city if necessary and sneaks in at night. Eventually, the whole pack gathers and then they patiently wait for an opportune time to attack.

The entire adventure hinges on the creation of tension and impending doom. One or more of the characters should become aware they are being followed or, preferably, they should figure it out by the howling and baying of the creatures. The lack of tracks should indicate something of supernatural origin and a late night glance revealing glowing red or yellow eyes and teeth should add a degree of fear to the party.

SHADOW MASTIFF (These neutral evil, extraplanars' vital statistics are HD 4d8, HP 32, 32, 31, 30, 29, 29, and 28, AC 14, and MOVE 50 feet. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a bite for 2d4 damage. Their special abilities are bay, trip, blend, darkvision to 60 feet, and sunlight vulnerability.)

9 ONE PUDDLE TOO FAR

The town of Belfort is beset. Someone or something is killing the people of Belfort, and none have any idea who or what it might be. This fortified town sits on a rise above a river overlooking a broad expanse of farmland. The well-tended fields, lush with fresh, spring, growth spread out from the hill upon which the town sits, like a flower in bloom. Fences and hedges demark fields and enclose cows, sheep, and pigs. Barns, granaries, storehouse, work sheds, and a few houses dot the land before it gives way to a dark forest of oak and beech.

Belfort has a population of roughly 600 people. Most of those who live in Belfort are farmers or herdsman. Additionally, there is a blacksmith, a bowyer, several families involved in the production of leather, the knight who rules Belfort and his few personal attendants. Belfort is on top of a hill. A thirty-foot tall wooden wall wraps the entirety of the village. A small gatehouse guards the only entry to Belfort. In addition to the manor house (the only stone structure in Belfort), there are about thirty other houses and buildings.

Estry Holdinhous, the knight and owner of Belfort, is young and an inexperienced warrior and leader only having been given this hold as a favor to Estry's father. His chief aide, Valry Purse, is just as ill-equipped to rule as Estry and the few men-at-arms in Belfort add little of value to the whole. The recent turn of events has caught Estry off-guard, and he is at a loss as to what to do. He has taken as many precautions that he could think of, even allowing the vassals to carry arms for protection openly. Extra guards have not stopped the killings, and his best huntsman is at a complete loss as to what is happening.

Six people have been killed in Belfort in a few weeks. Four of the people killed were working in the fields when they were murdered. One person was killed on the road between the fields and Belfort, and the last person was murdered inside Belfort only a few days before the arrival of the characters. The victims were either smothered, suffocated, beaten to death or just, "broken." There were no cut marks other signs of violence. None were robbed. There is no connection between those killed, and all were considered upstanding members of the community. Those in the town are in a panic, and they fear something supernatural might be hunting them. Estry is not convinced and believes there is a murderer in his midst.

Two events have led to the current state of affairs. A cleric, traveling the region, happened to spend the night outside Belfort underneath a tree in the fields. While packing up to leave, he accidentally dropped a clay charm of elemental summoning. The charm needed only to have become immersed in water to dissolve and activate. It is the rainy season in Belfort. A few days after the cleric left, the charm was immersed in enough water to dissolve. A mud elemental was summoned. The elemental is doing what mud elementals do, kill things. It does this about once a week or after enough rain has fallen that can arise from the ground. It usually does in mud puddles. The mud elemental has moved from the fields to Belfort because the people quit going to the fields after the four were murdered.

The mud elemental is too stupid to do anything other than kill. When the ground is dry, it has to remain in the earth. The mud elemental can only form in puddles or very muddy ground. This also has to be where the mud elemental went to ground. So, for example, if the mud elemental were to go to ground on the ground floor of a house and the area never became muddy or puddles formed, it could never form again. The mud elemental is currently in Belfort in the ground beside a house. It remains there until a heavy rain inundates the dirt roads. This should occur within 1-12 days. Once it materializes, the mud elemental waits until night or another opportune moment to attack and kill some lone person. It can move around to do this.

In the investigation of what is going on, the characters should learn that the people were killed after a rainstorm, they were each alone when it happened, the victims were not cut but beaten to death and exhibited broken bones or they were suffocated. They were always found in mud puddles or muddy ground. The latter information is not generally given because it is assumed. It's the rainy season; there's always mud everywhere.

MUD, LESSER ELEMENTAL (*This neutral evil, elemental's vital statistics are HD 6d8, HP 36, AC 16, and MOVE 10/30 Feet above ground/under the ground. It attacks with a slam for 1d6 damage. Its special attack is suffocation.*)

10 CASTLES & CRUSADES

10 ROCKY FOUNDATIONS

A small castle sits atop a steep-sided hill and overlooks a valley with scattered farmsteads. Durbin's Keep has been occupied for hundreds of years by a dozen generations of the Durbin family. Loyal to the crown, they have always sent their best to serve at the king's request. Their lands have known peace for generations. The region is not known for its productivity nor resources and does not produce much income for the Durbin family.

Because of the lack of funds, the Durbin keep has not been well maintained and shows its age. The mortar is giving way; the roof needs repair, the wooden ramparts are old and rotted in many places. However, up until recently, it has remained intact and still delivers on its primary function of being a defensible fortification in case of attack. This changed about a month ago when one of the walls started to crack. The crack turned into numerous cracks, and that quickly spread. Within a week of the first appearance of a crack, the portion of the wall collapsed.

It is within days of this that the characters should arrive in the valley that Durbin's Keep protects. The village of Durbinshine is nestled at the bottom of the hill upon which the keep was built. Durbinshine consists of around thirty building and a dozen or more outbuildings such as barns and sheds. The valley floor is cultivated or turned to pasturage. Several larger houses are spread around the valley. There is no tavern or bar per se, but there is a large general store that has areas in its stall for people to stay. The merchant also serves brew but has to gather it from whoever it is in Durbinshine who most recently made some.

In any conversations at the merchants, the collapsed wall at the keep comes up as there is little else for anyone to talk about other than sheep, cattle, and grass. Should the characters choose not to engage in conversation with any of the locals, they overhear someone at the general store talking about the collapsed wall from one of the Durbin family retainers.

The lord of the Keep, Mac Hanon, has just received information from his retainers working on the collapsed wall that something is amiss. They discovered a tunnel beneath the wall, and it is not of natural make. Over the course of the day that the characters are in the town, Mac Hanon sends several workers down into the tunnels to figure out what it is that is digging the holes.

They do not return by nightfall, but as the sun sets, something else emerges from the tunnel and kills a few people. This causes panic in the keep. The retainers and Mac Hanon abandon the fort and head down the hill to the village. Once there, Mac Hanon engages the local seeking to lead some people into the keep and clear it of whatever it is that has moved in under the keep. No one is sure what it is that has moved in under the keep. Several believe it to be a dragon. Others to be great lizards and a few say that the pets of those who dwell under the world are coming to the surface.

Should the characters appear capable or venture to volunteer themselves to discover what it is under the tower, Mac Hanon quickly agrees to allow them. He offers "great bounty" to



those who discover and rid Durbin's Keep of that which lives underneath the hill.

The fort is ancient. Centuries ago, one of the Durbins was buried beneath the keep with all his mortal goods. In the trove of treasure that went into the tomb was a large blue vase. The vase was a magically enhanced and contained a dozen tavis worm babies. Eventually, the magic of the vase wore down and the tavis worms escaped. Since that time, the worms have been burrowing into the rock in the hill. They burrowed down for many years and then came back to the surface seeking whatever it is in the rock on the hill that they find so delightful and nourishing. The worms are scattered throughout dozens of tunnels spreading deep into the earth and around the hill. Although they do not normally congregate, they can hear if within 100 yards of each other. In a fight they call for aid from their companions.

TAVIS WORMS X12 (These neutral, extraplanars' vital statistics are HD 3d8, HP variable, AC 16, and MOVE 30/20 feet crawl/burrow. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a bite for 1d8 damage. Their special abilities are heat, darkvision to 60 feet, vulnerability to cold and fire protection.)

11 SCRAMBLED EGGS

This adventure should take place in a region that is unexplored or abandoned by men and other civilized people. The characters come across a dead silver dragon. The corpse is splayed out on the ground and has numerous large puncture wounds spread across its body. Blood is still seeping from the wounds, indicating the kill occurred only a short time before the arrival of the characters. While the characters are exploring the area or examining the corpse, they hear a horn blowing in the distance. It's almost a shrill sound and warbles slightly. The first note is long then followed by two shorter notes without warbling. The sound is enough to send shivers through everyone's body.

The direction of the sound is easy to determine, and the characters can move toward it with some accuracy. If a ranger is in the party and does a tracking check, the ranger notes the presence of some type of tracks in the ground. There are large indentions, the size of postholes, on the ground around the dragon's corpse. The tips of the indentions are pointed, indicating some type of claw at the end. These tracks lead off from the dragon and into the surrounding wilderness. The tracks are easy to follow. Not only are the tracks easy to see, the creature that made them is huge and is making no effort to conceal its movement (as if it could or even cared to).

After a day or so travel through the wilderness, the characters come upon a tall and broad white tower. The tower is wide, perhaps 100 feet in diameter and nearly 200 feet tall. It has been beautifully constructed with many wide windows in its upper portion. On top of the tower is a massive spider-like creature with eight legs. It is grasping onto the side of the tower using four of its legs to pound the walls. The top of the tower has been destroyed, and lies scattered on the ground or collapsed into the tower. Occasionally, a screeching sound can be heard from within.

The characters have stumbled into a conflict between a silver dragon and a demon. A demon who loathed the silver dragon the characters found earlier, sent a retriever to the world to kill both the dragon and its offspring. The tower is where the silver dragon resided and given birth to its only offspring. There was a retinue of five elven knights living in the tower who protected the dragon. They have all been killed trying to fight the retriever – having been taken by surprise. A very young silver dragon is inside the tower planning to fight the retriever as best it can.

The retriever is focused on the silver dragon in the tower at the moment of the characters' arrival and pays no heed to them. Only when the retriever is attacked does it respond. Once the retriever has noted the arrival of the characters, it commences solely attacking the party members knowing that the dragon is not very powerful and the least of its worries. The retriever is powerful and cunning for its kind. It focuses its attacks on clerics then wizards or those that seem to be able to do the most harm. The retriever fights to the death.

The silver dragon comes out to help the party when an advantageous moment arrives. It is unwounded at the beginning of the battle. Afterward, the silver dragon is immensely grateful

to the characters. The dragon explains that its mother had been in a long war with a demon and the retriever was sent to kill both itself and its mother. The elves, whose bodies are found scattered around the tower and within, are members of an order who offer to protect those few dragons who are in the region.

There are some valuable pieces of treasure in the tower. The dragon offers these to the characters. However, the characters would be best to leave the treasure and thereby garner the trust of the dragon. The dragon will then, in the future, offer to aid the characters when possible. That is the greater treasure. The dragon also asks that the characters escort it to the nearest elven community for protection. Should the characters go so far as to bring the elven dead and treasure to the elven community, they should be granted a selection of powerful magical items, but more importantly, they have the undying friendship of the silver dragon as well as the elven community. The Castle Keeper should choose treasure appropriate to the characters.

RETRIEVER (*This neutral evil, extraplanar 's vital statistics are HD 10d8, HP 65, AC 22, BTH +10, and MOVE 45 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with four claws for 3d6 damage each. Its special abilities are fear and spell-like abilities. It has a gem of healing embedded in its forehead. This gem allows the retriever to cast a heal spell on itself twice a day. If removed, the gem loses most of its magic, but does allow any entity who sews or embeds the gem physically to their body the capacity to cast a cure serious wounds upon themselves once a day.*)

12 CASTLES & CRUSADES

12 STRIPES AND ARROWS

This encounter takes place in a rainforest or jungle with old growth trees of great height. A tribe of tail-goblins has recently moved into the area through which the characters are traveling. The tail-goblins village is located about 5 miles from where the initial encounter occurs. There are 21 adult males, 11 females, and 9 young in the village. The village is located in the uppermost canopy of the forest amongst several dozen trees. Here, there are a dozen huts connected by rope bridges, wooden bridges, and ropes or vines. Hammocks, small landings, and other places of repose or use are scattered amongst the tangle of limbs in the canopy.

Having only recently moved into the territory, the tail-goblins are aggressively clearing their immediate vicinity of immediate threats and marking their territory. A patrol of 10 adult males ranges throughout their territory killing what animals they consider threats and placing marks and warning signs for others to see. There are other creatures in the area who are in dispute with the tail-goblins, though they do not know whom. Hence, the patrol and its members are highly agitated and on guard against any potential threat.

A member of the patrol spots the party moving through the jungle (this can either be on a road or traveling through the jungle). The tail-goblins are in the treetops when the party is spotted. The tail-goblins follow the party as they move through the forest. They are trying to determine the intent of the members before acting. They remain in the treetops for a full day, tracking the party the whole time.

It is impossible for all of them to move quietly while jumping from tree to tree, so the characters should quickly become aware they are being followed. The characters may see the tail-goblins, but usually, they appear as little more than large striped monkeys. When they talk, they even sound somewhat like howler monkeys. Close observation of the howler monkeys reveals that they are carrying long sticks and small bows.

Before attacking the party or any of its members, the tail-goblin patrol leader attempts to determine where the party is going. If the character's movement indicates they are moving out of tail-goblin territory, they follow the party for some time but do not attack. Eventually, they return to their village. However, should it appear the characters are going further into tail-goblin territory, the shaman in the group begins placing signs and symbols on the party's likeliest path of movement. These symbols are scratched into trees or small stick figures are placed in the trees. As a final warning before attacking the party, the shaman places a shrunken head inside a spherical ball of sticks and drops it into the party's encampment at night or their feet as the party is moving. If this last warning does not dissuade the party to leave the area, the tail-goblins commit to hit-and-run attacks until the party leaves or is killed.

The tail-goblins can move quite speedily through the tops of the trees. From the upper canopy, they can hurl spears and use arrows to attack the party. They can do this for days on end. Making spears and arrows can be done fairly quickly and there is a ready supply



at the village. They will only leave the canopy if they have to or if they feel that the party is nearly defeated. One of their strategies is to surround the party and attack it variously from place to place, essentially trying to corral the characters in one area as smaller groups forge off for resupply or to make more weapons.

All the males and females in the community eventually join this fight. The only manner to end the fighting is to leave the area, die, destroy the village, or kill 50% of the tribe's members.

TAIL-GOBLINS X32 (These chaotic evil, humanoid's vital statistics are HD 1d6, HP variable, AC 15, BtH +1, and MOVE 20/40 feet walking/trees. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by weapon type. They carry short spears, javelins, daggers and axes.)

TAIL-GOBLIN CHIEF (This chaotic evil, humanoid's vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 10, AC 17, BtH +2 and MOVE 20/40 feet walking/trees. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with javelins and short sword. It carries one +2 short spear.)

TAIL-GOBLIN SHAMAN (This chaotic evil, humanoid's vital statistics are HD 2d6, HP 8, AC 14, BtH +2 and MOVE 20/40 feet walking/trees. Its primary attributes are mental. It attacks with javelins and hand axe. It carries a wand of magic missiles and 12 goodberries. It can cast spells as a 3rd level druid.)

TAIL-GOBLIN YOUNG X9 (These chaotic evil, humanoid's vital statistics are HD 1d2, HP variable, AC 10, BtH 0, and MOVE 10/20 feet walking/trees. They have no primary attributes. They do not attack.)

13 THE DESOLATE MESA

Four hieracosphinxes live and hunt a region of scrubland roughly 200 square miles. The hieracosphinx came to the area some hundred or more years ago. At the time, there was a temple with a few priests in residence and a regular flow of worshipers bringing offerings to the deities worshipped there. The hieracosphinx, ploddingly dim but of voracious appetite and keen predatory instincts, found the pilgrims easy targets. Over a few years, the hieracosphinxes stymied the flow of pilgrims and managed to kill all the priests as well. The hieracosphinxes now live in the area of the temple.

No one has been to the temple in ages and the whole area around the temple has been abandoned because of the hieracosphinxes. It is told, amongst those who tell such tales, that the temple contains great treasures accumulated during that time when pilgrims were plentiful and gold flowed like wine.

The region is an arid grassland with a range of cliffs demarcating an upper steppe and lower steppe. The cliffs average around 300 feet in height. The lower steppe is dominated by large mesas and buttes that extend all the whole length of the range of cliffs and a dozen or more miles out from the cliffs. Vegetation is sparse with short grasses and thorny bushes clustering around the base of the mesas and along the few creeks.

The temple complex is a series of rooms and chambers built into the cliff face. There are seven separate temples. Each of these consists of a door carved into the wall of the cliff and minimally one chamber on the other side of the door. The cliff faces outside the entries have been carved into elaborate statues of the gods or depictions of mythological events. Some of these are quite impressive and very tall, reaching to 40 and even 50 feet in height. There is at least one chamber behind each door. This chamber is typically no more than 40 feet deep and 100 feet wide. Only one of the temples has more than one room. One can add more if desired.

The middle temple is the most important of the seven. It has six chambers built into the cliff. The entry chamber is roughly 200 feet long and 50 feet deep. Five corridors lead off of this chamber like spokes on a wheel. Each corridor leads to a separate chamber. Corridors connect each of these five chambers. All of the rooms in all the temples show evidence of having been lived in, at one time or another, by animals. The rooms contain the personal artifacts of those who once lived here; broken furniture, bedrolls, storage crates, etc.

There is a very large nest of bramble and grasses in one of the chambers. The central temple is where the hieracosphinxes have collected their treasures – though to what end, no one knows. There are 23,000cp, 9000sp, 500gp, 11 gems worth 10d10gp each, a 5-foot diameter gong worth 1000gp, and a pair of +2 golden bracers.

The hieracosphinxes live separate from one another though near each other. They roost on top of one of the many mesas or buttes in the region. They change their nest locations occasionally, even taking up residence in the temples though they prefer the



taller mesas or buttes. The hieracosphinxes only hunt once a week or more depending on how nourishing their last meal was. Much of the rest of their time is spent doing nothing but sitting in the sun or hiding from the sun in the shade or even in one of the temples.

When the characters enter the area, it is possible that the hieracosphinxes will not know of their presence for quite some time. For each day spent in the region, there is a 10% chance the hieracosphinxes find the characters (increasing by 10% each day). Once one of the hieracosphinxes has located the characters, it tests them to see how strong they are with a few attacks. If the characters appear strong, the hieracosphinx goes and gets its kin. If not, it will spend a few hours slowly attacking its prey until they are completely exhausted or spent. Only then does it move in for the kill.

EXPANDING: Something brought the Hieracosphinxes here. Nothing, it is said, happens by chance. As evil cabal is headquartered in another temple complex nearby.

HIERACOSPHERIX X4 (These chaotic evil, magical beasts' vital statistics are HD 9d10, HP 80, 75, 58, and 54, AC 19, BTH +9, and MOVE 30/90 feet walk/fly. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with two claws for 2d4 damage and a bite for 1d10 damage.)

14 CASTLES & CRUSADES

14 THE ENDLESS CHATTER OF THE MARSH

The swamps spread out for hundreds of miles beyond the uplands and hills. Along the border of the wet, humid, moist, steamy, green, marsh are several villages with a few dozen to a couple of hundred inhabitants. The people who live here make their meager living off of the swamp and its bounty. What little it offers is grudgingly given, and life is difficult for those who live here. Though the villages are independent of one another and other outside rulers, the villages are closely connected by trade and marriage.

The marsh is rife with dangers and even the most experienced travel through it with care and caution. Alligators swarm the murky waters, huge snakes twist amongst the roots of the massive cypress that stand like pillars erupting from stagnant pools. Lizards and carnivorous monkeys live in the high canopy and descend to eat whatever may come their way — poisonous plants grown in the murky waters and dangle limply from trees. Insects and vermin carry disease and pestilence. The swamps are an altogether uninviting place and might wonder why anyone has ever settled here.

The daily challenges of living near the swamps have become even more difficult. A few villagers have disappeared recently. At first, this was considered nothing more than a bad year with aggressive carnivores seeking easy prey. However, a young man was abducted from within a village while on watch. The tracks leading away from the village were unlike anything the locals had ever seen before. A large beast, walking alternately on four legs or two and bearing claws much like the local lizard only longer and larger snuck into the village, crawling out of a sluggish creek and left the same way. This happened two more times in separate villages over the following weeks.

The townspeople are scared, and one expedition into the swamps to locate or trap the creature in question garnered nothing, not even the remains of those missing. Some members of the community fear that the lizard men on the far side of the swamp have returned to this side of the swamp for food. All know they enjoy human flesh above all else. Some villagers have left while others have put out word for help.

Unbeknownst to the villagers, three babblers have moved into the area. Several centuries ago, when the swamp's edge was first being settled, the babblers who ranged this area of the swamp were eradicated. The gruesome slaughter of the babblers and the lizardfolk who lived here has not been forgotten by either of those creatures. At the behest of a lizardman shaman, several babblers have returned to the area to enact revenge on the villagers. Additionally, the shaman is using the babblers to test the fighting prowess of the villagers. If they fail to resist, the shaman will call for war against his people and launch an attack on the villages with the intent of driving off the inhabitants or killing all of them.

The babblers usually work independently of one another. They attack about once every two weeks either in the swamp or in a village. The attacks are occurring more frequently in the villages now because the expeditions to the swamp are rarer and



the numbers of people traveling together in the swamp have increased. The attacks are random in location.

Should one of the babblers be wounded and escape, it begins leaving marks and calling for its kin to help it. It should take them several days to gather. Once gathered they move and attack together.

Tracking the babblers is exceedingly difficult. They almost always travel underwater and stay underneath the murk and mire of the swamp for days at a time only sticking their snouts up occasionally for air. One indicator of babblers in an area is the complete lack of alligators or the corpses of alligators as the two are mortal enemies.

There is a shaman in one of the villages who makes alligator totems. He learned this from his father, who learned it from his and his before that. The totems are protective and give anyone who wears one a +1 AC, +1 hit, +1 to damage and +1 to initiative when fighting babblers.

BABLERS X3 (This neutral evil, magical beast's vital statistics are HD 5d8, HP 36, 32, and 28, AC 14, and MOVE 40/20 feet. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two claws for 1d4 damage and a bite for 1d6 damage. Their special ability is back attack.)

15 THE ROT IS MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

There is a district in which many crystals are found. Typically, the crystals are recovered from creek beds, doing embankments or even just on top of the ground. There are some who do excavate the earth and screen the dirt and rock to retrieve the crystals. There are a very few who mine the small hills and mounds of the district to recover those crystals which have not suffered the ravages of exposure. The excavations are typically shallow and undertaken for very short periods as most areas are quickly depleted of the crystals. The mines are small and usually quite shallow as well. These are not usually as productive as excavations but in specific incidences yield the largest and most treasured crystals.

The characters arrive in the village of Cryston on Thanberry. This village of 200 people is comprised mostly of farmers and a few professional crystal hunters. There is a wizard in residence as well. A druid occasionally makes an appearance but spends most of her time in the forests and grasslands nearby. There is a small wooden tower used by the local sheriff when in town. He is not currently in the village. The tower is occupied by the town's appointed leader, Braxton Farmandson.

When the characters arrive, the village is in an unsettled state. Several people who had gone into the surrounding hills to mine for crystals have returned. Shortly after their return from the mine, they died of horrible wounds that rotted their skin, turning it to a viscous soup. The two were part of a group of five people who went into the hills. The others are presumed dead. The two who survived spoke of some wretched beast which attacked them while in their mine. Not much more could be gleaned from their speech since their faces were partially rotted and the two could barely speak. Going through their packs, the sheriff found two small silver bowls and several pieces of parchment. One piece is a map to the Cryston on Thanberry. The other is a brief description of a warlord, Renard the Slayer, who was buried nearby.

The miners were grave robbers. They came to the region after stumbling upon some information about a mighty lord, Renard the Slayer, that was buried here some ages ago. They intended to act as crystal miners while digging into the grave mound. They were successful in that. Everything was going well until they dug into the actual burial chamber. Four guardian trikill's were placed in the burial chamber. They unleashed the trikill and it attacked and killed three of the miners while only injuring the two who escaped. The miners had inadvertently dug into the wrong mound. A druid of some significance was placed in the burial and a guardian placed inside the burial chamber.

There are many burial mounds in the area. The final battle of a great war was fought in the area, and many of those involved, both of high and low standing, had expressed desires to be buried on that battlefield. There are hundreds of such burials, to include the actual burial of Renard. The burial chambers are almost always placed in artificial mounds. Some of the mounds are quite large and enclose multi-chambered vaults while others are small and only contain the remains of a body. The grave

robbers did not find Renard's burial; they found the burial chamber of a druid who had a guardian placed in his tomb.

The mound in which the tomb is located is forty feet tall and two hundred feet in diameter. An entry has been dug straight into one side of the mound. The tunnel the miners excavated is four feet wide and four tall. It enters the tomb area in a tunnel near its middle. The tomb consists of a single corridor with two deep alcoves on either side of the corridor. At one end of the corridor is an 8x12 room in which the druid is buried and the trikill placed. The tomb has stone and timber walls and roof. The floor is stone.

A large stone was placed across the entry to the burial chamber, but this has been removed. Three corpses lie on the floor in the corridor. The trikills are wandering the corridor. It only remains in the tomb for a few weeks until it feels a need to feed again, then it leaves and wanders the world around.

The alcoves contain mementos of the druid's past and should give the characters some idea as to who is buried there. The burial consists of a rock pedestal with the bones of the druid laid on top. Most everything has rotted away at this point. A belt of strength +1, a wand of burning hands with 28 charges and a periapt of +1 wisdom remain on the body. There is 1,000gp worth of jewelry on the druid as well.

TRIKILL X4 (*These neutral aberration's vital statistics are HD 2d8, HP 15, 13, 13 and 10, AC 10, and MOVE 30 feet. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with three claws for 1d4 damage and a kick for 1d6 damage. Their special abilities are sonar, grab, decay, blindness and illusion.*)

16 CASTLES & CRUSADES

16 THE TERROR ON BENTBILL HILL

The town of Benson and Hedges has a problem. This small town has around 500 people living inside its tall walls. It is nestled safely on top of a hill overlooking a lush and productive valley with a wide, slow-moving creek coursing its way lazily down to a larger, but equally as a lazy, river. Once upon a time, Benson and Hedges was known for a menagerie kept by a wizard named Mercuriala the Hook. Many people from far and wide came to Benson and Hedges to see the bizarre and rare animals the wizard collected. As with all curiosities, interest waned, and the number of tourists trickled to nearly nothing. Mercuriala died, quite unexpectedly, one afternoon.

Benson and Hedge's mayor, Ballstum Angstian, his staff, nor any in the town had the knowledge, capacity, nor desire to take care of the creatures in the menagerie. The mayor hired some experts from the capital to remove the beasts in the menagerie. This time consuming and expensive process was financed through the sale of the wizard's belongings. The removal went smoothly until the very end.

The last beasts to be removed from the menagerie were cockatrices. Five cockatrices, to be precise. The removal went poorly. The cockatrices escaped. Most members of the "expert staff of Salubrious Removal Inc." were petrified because of their mishandling of the situation. Several townspeople suffered similar fates. The remainder of the two flew away from Benson and Hedges as quickly as possible. The town abandoned, the cockatrices have taken up residence in the various buildings and towers Benson and Hedges.

Salubrious Removal Inc. has refused to complete their job due to lack of staffing. The mayor, Ballstum Angstian, and the townspeople of Benson and Hedges are now homeless. The mayor and townspeople are seeking help to reclaim the town from the cockatrices. The pay is paltry. The town is poor by any reasonable measure. The only real wealth the town had was tied up in the wizard's presence and later, goods.

The wizard is dead and his goods sold. Most of the wealth of Benson and Hedges is tied up in commodities such as wheat, barley, and green beans. The mayor might reluctantly agree to give the wizard's tower away as compensation for removing the cockatrices, but he would rather no more 'famous' people, people his town.

The town is on top of a hill. A wall, about 30 feet tall with one entry (currently open), wraps around the village. Inside, there are roughly sixty multi-story buildings and a small keep. One main street runs around the interior of the village, and nearly all the structures, other than the keep, are on one or the other sides of this street. The keep is round, five floors high, and has two 80 foot towers stretching off of it. A series of animal pens are located near the entry of the village. The other place of note in the village is the wizard's tower. This is a 100 foot tall, stone tower with six floors. One large warehouse is attached to the tower and where the menagerie was located.



The cockatrices have taken up residence in a few places around town. One prefers to linger near the animal pens. It drags its kills into the pen area and consumes them. One stays atop the tallest tower of the keep. This cockatrice is the loudest of the bunch and lets out a loud cockatrice caw whenever it sees anything moving close to the village. Otherwise, it remains nestled up on the roof unless hunting. Another stays further afield in search of food and lives in one of the barns outside the village. The other two are found in various places around the village and in the outlying areas.

There is a secret door, in the basement of the wizard's tower, hidden by magical enchantments, that's a CL 8 to detect. A small room contains Mercuriala's most treasured possessions – love letters to his childhood sweetheart. Letters he never sent. There is also a ring of wonderous power lying in one of the corners of the room. His childhood sweetheart, Perilius Ventoore, is now a despotic ruler of a faraway land.

COCKATRICE X5 (These neutral, magical beast's vital statistics are HD 5d10, HP 48, 45, 39, 35 and 30, AC 14, and MOVE 20/60 feet walk/fly. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a bite for 1d3 damage. Their special abilities petrification, darkvision to 60 feet, and twilight vision.)

17 TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

A small band of centaurs lives in a section of a remote and ancient forest. They have been living in and guarding their range in the woods for centuries. For a time, they thrived this far from civilization and the threats posed in many other areas of the world. They live a semi-nomadic, moving their small villages from one area to another. They do, however, have one central gathering place, a temple hidden deep in the forest.

A single road passes through the forest, leading from one city to another. The way is ancient, and none know its origin, but it is told, that those who leave the road in that area which passes through the old growth rarely ever return. This region is marked with wooden images of a forest deity who is said to live in and guard the area. Most of those who travel along the road leave offerings of food, fetishes, totems coin or even weapons to appease the deity who lives there.

No deity lives in the forest. The centaurs collect most of the offerings, though do so quite sporadically. They do ensure that those who come into the forest do not return alive or do so with terrifying stories of creatures and beasts of terrible nature haunting the interior. As the characters travel down the road, they come upon what appears, at a distance, to be an offering of a large animal. A horse is lying on the ground. This is not a horse; this is gravely wounded centaur.

When the characters find the centaur, it is passed out on the road. The centaur, Gorax, has been grievously wounded. It is bleeding from several punctures and has a couple of massive bruises. The centaur has 0 hit points and needs to revive before it can speak. Should the characters care for or heal the centaur, it is grateful but very guarded as it has only had a few interactions with any other humanoid or demi-humans in its life. The centaur also speaks its own language and a small amount of a local elven tongue.

If the centaur feels safe with the characters or if there is an elf in the party, it conveys the following information and then asks for help in saving the last of his band. Several giants started raiding the forest recently. The first of the giants were easily dispatched, but then, he and a war party were ambushed by three giants and all but he was killed. This occurred a few dozen miles away. The giants are huge and have two heads, the dreaded ettins. Only four other centaurs survive and these are at the temple they use for worship awaiting the war band's return. The centaur needs to get there soon and let them know the others have been killed before the ettins find them.

Unknown to the centaur, the ettins are not bothering to look for the other centaurs but have moved into a cave in the forest. Here they are roasting the remains of the centaur's war band. The ettins are easily tracked as they do not even bother trying to hide their tracks. The cave is more a massive overhang on a cliff face than a cave. The ettins names are Volf, Dolf, Bilj, Shtahnk, Filt and Arfuse. They quarrel with one another a lot.

18 CASTLES & CRUSADES



CENTAUR, GORAX (This is a chaotic neutral, monstrous humanoid whose vital statistics are HD 4d8, HP 29 [0], AC 14, and MOVE 50 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a weapon or two hooves for 1d6 damage each. It carries a battle axe and wears a silver medallion worth 100gp.)

CENTAUR X4 (These chaotic neutral, monstrous humanoids' vital statistics are HD 4d8, HP 25, 23, 19 and 16, AC 14, and MOVE 50 feet. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a weapon or two hooves for 1d6 damage each. Two carry short bows, war hammers and sword. Two carry shield and battle axe.)

ETTIN X3 (These chaotic evil, giants' vital statistics are HD 10d8, HP 76, 68, and 60, AC 18, and MOVE 40 feet. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two fists for 1d8 damage or one war club for 4d4 damage. They carry 14000gp worth of coin and jewelry, a bracelet of wound closure that heals 1d4 points of damage once a day, a ring of spell resistance 2, a jade totem that can be used to summon animals as the 4th level druid spell, and a diamond pendant that acts as an automatic delay poison spell.)

18 WITHOUT CRIME AND WITH PUNISHMENT

As is the way of things, there are those who travel into the wilderness and bring back from those wastes many prizes. It is a profession to adventure into far off untamed and wild lands, pillage ancient strongholds, and bring back the treasures or ill-gotten gains of those criminals and evil creatures who reside therein. Gold and silver, jewels and magnificent gems, and rare magic are the typical haul. But there are those who bring back other things as well. Strange or unusual animals are captured and brought back for sell to zoos or menageries. Some of these beasts are trained as mounts or kept as pets and some even slaughtered for food.

Not unknown are those demi-humans and humans captured in the wilds and brought back to civilization for interrogation, imprisonment, punishment, or occasionally out of curiosity. The characters are witness to just such a scene. This adventure can take place virtually anywhere that someone can capture some demi-human, humanoids or other creatures and bring them back to civilization for sell, perusal or curiosity. A group of adventurers traveled to distant lands and have come back with some treasure and some prisoners. The characters can encounter them on the road, in a village, town or city.

Salamon Bait and his companions have been away for nearly six months. In their time in the wilderness, disputed territories, or other places they consider uncivilized, the group pillaged and raided at will. They have returned with some treasures as well as a whole train of prisoners and creatures. Salamon Bait leads a group of ten people who help him in his endeavors. There are four large carts in the caravan. Each cart is hauled by four oxen. The carts each contain several creatures. Salamon's helpers ride or walk alongside the carts leading the carts. None ride on the carts.

It is left up to the Castle Keeper to determine the exact make-up of those imprisoned, but they should mostly be of decidedly evil bent such as orcs, goblins, hobgoblins or similar humanoids that most everyone finds despicable or at least enemies of man, elf and dwarf. Animals should be included in the group as well.

One cart contains a mixture of orcs and goblins and one mongrelman. The characters are witness to this caravan in the chosen setting. Should they examine or observe those inside the cages they note the mongrelman as usual. He is unusual because he is crying. The tears are barely perceptible as it is obvious it is trying to keep tears back, but they are evident.

This mongrelman is not evil nor were his people. He and his band lived peaceably in the wilderness moving from location to location for safety and to avoid contact with all others. They just happened to be in the path of Salamon's raid and pillaging expedition. The small band to which the mongrelman belonged were all killed. He was the last one alive and taken prisoner by Salamon. Not much of a fighter, the mongrelman accepted his fate. He mourns the loss of his family and friends and his impending life of drudgery or worse, execution for crimes he never committed.



Salamon and his followers are not entirely bad people. They do, in fact, wholeheartedly believe they are doing the world a favor by going into the wilderness and slaying evil monsters, retrieving lost treasures, and the like. As a general rule, the lot of Salamon's men do not consider the repercussions of their actions; they almost always assume that they are doing the right thing. They bring the prisoners back to be punished for crimes they are believed to have committed or to be sold to zoos or collectors.

In the case of the mongrelmen, they did not ascertain whether or not the group posed a threat. They happened to be occupying some ruins Salamon and his men wanted to loot. Assuming the worst, they launched an attack. The mongrelmen defended themselves as best they could but to no avail. Salamon intends to sell the humanoids to whoever wants them.

The characters, one witnessing the crying mongrelman, are left to decide what to do. If they approach the cage in which he is kept, they are brushed away by guards. If there is an offer to pay for him, Salamon sells him for the paltry sum of 10gp. For his part, the mongrelman is very grateful to those who freed him but has no idea what to do with himself once freed. He will linger with the party if they allow him.

MONGRELMEN (This is a neutral good, humanoid whose vital statistics are HD 3d10, HP 20, AC 15, and MOVE 20 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with fists for 1d3 damage.)

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