

CASTLES & CRUSADES[®]

GIANT'S RAPTURE

STEPHEN CHENAULT



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GIANT'S RAPTURE

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This adventure is designed for 4 to 8 characters of 6th-8th level or higher. If more players join, the Castle Keeper should tweak the hit points and number of monsters involved.

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GIANT'S RAPTURE

INTRODUCTION

This adventure comes in three parts. It is designed so that each part may be run separately, or they may be run together as a trilogy. The adventure is a basic journey, where PC's escort an item from the Castle Olmutz south to the southern Kingdom of Kayomar. The player challenge is to get the cargo successfully to its destination in one piece. The Castle Keeper's challenge is to bind the wagon masters to the characters in such a way as to allow the final encounter to be gripping and fun, but also an emotional roller coaster.

This adventure is designed for 4 to 8 characters of 6th-8th level or higher. If more players join, the Castle Keeper should tweak the hit points and number of monsters involved.

The first adventure, *A Stone's Wager*, introduces the characters to the task at hand, as well as the rewards. It carries them through an overland journey to the Great Wall, where they encounter a network of open tunnels occupied by stone giants. The giants seek a contest of arms with the adventurers. Should the adventurers win, they may cross in peace. If they fail to win, they must pay a tax.

The second adventure, *Winter's Promise*, pits the characters against both the weather and a band of frost giants. A storm overtakes them, dumping a great deal of snow upon the ground. As their journey slows, a second storm hits, forcing the column to stretch out and slow down. The second storm is the work of a band of frost giants on sleds, being pulled by large bears. The giants are merciless in their attack. Here the Princess flees and/or is kidnapped, vanishing in the snow.

The third adventure, *Trial by Fire*, is slightly more challenging, and far more dangerous. The Princess is taken by a frost giant and hauled rapidly across the Wilds. At the edge of the Tar Kiln she is sold to a fire giant and there hauled into the pits of the Tar Kiln. The characters must rescue her and finally deliver her to the King of Kayomar.

The adventures are each designed to run within a three hour time-span, allowing players to come and go after each game.

BACKGROUND

When the Winter Dark Wars ended and the old Empire collapsed, a plethora of kingdoms, counties, baronies, and free towns rose up in the ashes. In the lands of eastern Ethrum there were nine districts, as established by the empire. The districts were comprised of old aristocratic families that in many cases predated the Empire itself. In the ashes of its collapse, many of these districts declared themselves independent. The first of these districts was Anglamay-ot-Neider. Its leading family declared themselves the County of Anglamay, and all the other districts followed suit.

Kleaves, the westernmost of these new Counties, comprised the lands of ElithianWood and the rolling plains that abutted the Great Wall, which itself was a catastrophe of ruin left of from the Winter Dark. Kleaves struggled with the ghosts of the wall

2 CASTLES & CRUSADES



and the rising power of Anglamay in the north. When those lords declared themselves Kings and demanded fealty of many of the other counties, it sparked years of war.

Such a war is even now under way. The present Count of Kleaves, Eurich Gunshoff IV, recently called his knights to battle, and through the long hard spring and summer, contested the fields with the King's much larger armies. Several castles fell to the King's army, and the fortified crossings of the Tot River were overthrown. Thus the campaigning season ended, leaving Count Eurich in a horrible position, for come spring only a few castles held the way against the King of Anglamay.

Thus he is reaching out for aid.

No small power would do. So he looked south to the vast and powerful Kingdom of Kayomar. Here the Count numbers many as his friends, for there the Paladin Kings rule, Knights of the Holy Flame are held above all men, and almost all worship St. Luther. And thus the ties are bound. For over sixty years, the Counts of Kleaves have paid homage to St. Luther and protected his temples and sacred places against all comers. Eurich's great grandfather himself sent a reward of 100,000 golden crowns to the Paladins for the upkeep of their sacred grove.

So Eurich has secretly turned to the Kings of Kayomar for aid. To secure this, he has promised his daughter to the King of that realm, Eadore I, with a promise of an army to fight the King of Anglamay. The Kayomarese have agreed to this, their only demand being that the girl be delivered to them at the large town of Twin Forks.

His daughter, the beautiful and kind Carolisa has agreed.

THE CHALLENGE

There are many spies in the County and traitors in Eurich's own court who would see the war end in the King's favor, and they would do anything to stop the alliance from being formed if they knew about it. The Count's daughter traveling south would certainly bring attention to it.

So the Count has decided to arm and equip a troop of mercenaries and adventurers, led by a young knight or paladin, to escort his daughter, who shall be safely placed in a covered wagon, and transported south across the wilderness to the Kingdom of Kayomar. This will release the King's gold and arms to support Kleaves and save the County.

The rewards are generous.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

As this adventure was designed for tournament play at Gencon 2013, the characters should all have some common background. All are from the County of Kleaves, and are adventurers well known in those parts for their deeds great and small. The rogues should have some criminal record, the clerics some connection to the community, rangers known as hunters, etc. If someone chooses to play a knight or paladin (as noted in the pre-gens) allow that they are from a minor noble house who has fallen on hard times, possessing little land or wealth.

The game begins in the Count's meeting hall, with all the characters gathered there. The noble in his role is a minor noble, the rogue released from prison, the ranger pulled from his hunt. All the characters know each other and have traveled together at one point or another. The Count explains the rewards as noted below. The CK should make notes of the specific class rewards offered to further entice the characters to push on.

Running all three adventures involves overland journeys, with small encounter areas, and one final adventure in the fire giant's hold. The Castle Keeper should not be overly focused on the day to day machinations of the caravan, but also should not totally ignore them. The overall journey should take about thirty days, assuming the party does not have to rest due to wounds, or repair wagons, both of which are very likely to happen.

Each overland trek is detailed below with sample descriptions given to use, elaborate on, or ignore and replace. The CK is encouraged to elaborate on the descriptions and have some interaction with the drovers. If the CK chooses not to do this, the adventure will simply propel forward from one encounter to the next and lose a great deal of its effectiveness.

Interaction with the drovers is important, as it establishes a link with the party that shall be tested in the second adventure against the Frost Giants. Allow for the drovers to sing and dance around their camp fire. Stress their common goodness and willingness to help, but, more importantly, stress the fear they experience with each encounter, and also how they stand regardless of it. It is stressed in the adventure below.

The weather, and the subsequent wear and tear on the vehicles, all play a part in the adventure, and will be outlined below, to be used or discarded as the CK sees fit.

The CK should pull the knight aside and inform them of the mission, for they are charged with it before the party is gathered. The knight is appointed the caravan's leader. It is up to him to organize the group and the caravan.

REWARDS

Each character shall be given 1000gp and a ring of silver with the Count's symbol emblazoned upon it, giving them safe passage in the lands of Kleaves. All of the adventurers' past crimes and misdemeanors shall be forgiven.

Everyone in the party shall be given a patent of nobility and counted amongst the Knights-Errant of Kleaves. Further, they shall be granted lands of 100 parcels apiece. They shall have to pay homage for these lands, but they can improve the lands, fortify them, sell them, or derive rents from them.

The leader (the knight/paladin or noble) is granted 200 parcels of allodial land that includes two small castles along the Tot River, and is given the title of Baronet. This land is freely given, meaning, though he must pay homage for it, it cannot be taken from him/her, or their family. This type of land is the bedrock of any noble houses' longevity.

SPECIFIC CLASS REWARDS:

- The cleric/druid is awarded a small building, either in town or outside of it, to outfit as he sees fit as temple to their deity of choice.
- Any wizard or illusionists are given access to Eurich's personal library to make copies of what sorceries they may find there. This will include up to fifteen new spells.
- A bard is given a post at court with a 10gp a month stipend.
- Rogues are given choice of post at court to serve the Count and his staff, making them Doge of Spies.
- Rangers are made Wards and given fifty square miles of land to govern. Ownership is retained by the Count.

THE ESCORT

The escort party consists of three wagons and two carts. There are eight drovers who accompany the expedition. The princess remains in one of the wagons, hidden from all for the entire trip.

The adventuring party should consist of at least one cleric, one ranger and a knight or paladin. If a knight or paladin is not being played, allow that one of the characters is of noble blood. It is to this individual that the Count assigns the duties of escort, and this individual alone knows the nature of the cargo and the importance of the missions. On pain of forfeiture of all titles, rights and lands (and possibly their life), they are charged both with keeping the princess safe and with the success of the mission. It is up to that individual to inform the party of what is in the wagon or not. The drovers are not to be informed at all.

NOTE: The Count plays upon the honor of the character charged with leading the expedition.

THE DROVERS: There are eight drovers, two on each wagon and one each for the carts. The drovers are all zero level non-player characters and are not trained to fight. Each drover carries his own personal affects with him in his wagon or cart. These include clothes, a sleeping roll, personal effects such as holy symbols, and each has 20sp for the journey.

The drovers have a number of musical instruments with them, and they are quite apt at playing them and singing. If given the chance, they sing and play music in the evenings, occasionally while on the road as well.

The drovers are not heroes, but neither are they cowards. They are fearful of the monsters that are encountered below, but so long as the characters stand their ground, the drovers do as well . . . even if that is on the wagons. They do not openly attack, and if they are attacked by large monsters, they scatter, but will return. If the opportunity presents itself to leap in and aid a fallen character for instance, they do so, dragging them from the melee.

THE BOX WAGON: This wagon is heavy with large iron bound wheels. Its large axels are braced with shocks to soften the road. It has no visible doors. Access is gained through a hatch in the bottom of the wagon. It is hidden (CL 8). Inside

4 CASTLES & CRUSADES



the wagon are comfortable pillows and decorations. The wagon is driven by two of the drovers, Fastred and Artur. Fastred is the main driver. The wagon is pulled by four oxen.

NOTE: Artur knows who is in the wagon.

FASTRED (This neutral good drover's vital stats are level 1, HP 6, AC 11. He is armed with a club and a dirk. He has a strength of 17. He is kind but bull headed, and listens to Artur in all that he does. Fastred is an able singer.)

ARTUR (This neutral good drover's vital stats are level 1, HP 8, AC 13. He is armed with a club and a dirk. He has a dexterity of 17 and a strength of 16. Artur is smart and rather quiet. He uses two spoons as instruments.)

WAGON 1: This wagon is much smaller and carries the expedition's food supplies. There are 420 days' worth of foods stuffs in the wagon. They are packaged in bundles of 1 day standard rations and stored in 10 crates. The wagon is pulled by two oxen. Behm and Sauer drive this wagon.

BEHM (*This neutral good drover's vital stats are level 1, HP 5, AC 11. He is armed with a club and a dirk. He has a strength of 18. Behm is an expert hunter, and can set snares and traps. He carries a small hunting bow and 16 arrows that do 1d4 points of damage each. He carries a hunter's horn.*)

SAUER (*This neutral good drover's vital stats are level 1, HP 6, AC 11. He is armed with a club and a dirk. He has a strength of 15. Sauer carries a mouth harp and is quite good at it.*)

WAGON 2: This wagon is much like wagon 1 and carries the expedition's water and travel supplies. There are 8 barrels of water and four barrels of beer in the wagon. There is only a ten day supply of water. The wagon also carries the following: 200 feet of heavy rope, a wood axe, four extra wagon wheels, three crowbars to replace wheels, four small barrels of oil, six pots of pitch, 500 strips of linen (each two inches wide and 36 inches long for bandages and other uses), a small fire-furnace for minor blacksmith repairs, a hammer, a set of tongs, two small beaver traps, cooking kettles, and a bucket. The wagon is pulled by two oxen. Behm and Sauer drive this wagon.

MAIER (*This neutral drover's vital stats are level 1, HP 5, AC 11. He is armed with a club and a dirk. He has a strength of 15. Maier has a large family and wants to return home to them.*)

THONES (*This neutral drover's vital stats are level 2, HP 10, AC 11. He is armed with a heavy hammer. He has a strength of 20. Thones is huge and wields the hammer affectively for 1d10 +4 points of damage. He is not particularly brave, just very strong. He carries the holy symbol of St. Luther openly. Thones is proficient in the lute.*)

CARTS: The first cart carries fifteen days' worth of grain for the oxen. The second cart carries various supplies for the journey: boards to fix broken wagons, coal to heat the blacksmith's furnace (a 24 hour supply), sixteen heavy wool cloaks, sixteen pairs of woolen gloves, eight pairs of snow shoes, two large shovels, a wood chopping axe, and a lute.

CART DRIVERS, LEO AND LEON (BROTHERS) (*These neutral good creature's vital stats are level 1, HP 4 each, AC 11.*)

THE PRINCESS

The princess remains in the heavy wagon. Her quarters are comfortable, pillows and blankets covering the wagon. Her food she gains from a decanter of endless water and a small box given to her by the priests of St. Luther that can create food and water for 35 days. The days are cool, the wagon closed, so that she is warm and comfortable. She is able to hear what is going on around her due to several smallish holes cut in the wagon here and there.

She passes her waste through a small hatch in the floor of the driver's seat, giving it to Artur, who treats it as his own and dumps it on the road.

Her only contact is with Artur and the leader of the expedition, should he choose to communicate with her.

Carolisa is a calm woman, and she devoutly worships St. Luther. She spends most of her days in quiet meditation, so as not to suffer from boredom or bring unwanted attention to herself.

CAROLISA (*The lawful good princess' vital stats are level 1, HP 7, AC 10. Her primary attributes are constitution, wisdom and charisma. Her significant attributes are constitution 17 and charisma 15. She has no particular skills beyond those normal to a woman of her station. She can read and write vulgate and Ethrum, and she speaks Vulgate, Ethrum, Aenochian and Elvish. She is a skilled seamstress, has some skill in the healing arts, and is able to bind wounds, etc., as she has spent many hours in the healing houses tending the wounded and sick. She is only 17.*)

If for whatever reason she is removed from the wagon, she proves to be a very agreeable person. She is kind, thoughtful, and looks to the welfare of others. Her greatest concern is for her father, their County and the people that live within. She has a backbone and will do nothing to dishonor her family. She will fight if needed (though she has no skill in that regard). She will help the wounded where she can, and is not squeamish in doing so.

REVEALING THE PRINCESS

Carolisa is a beautiful young woman, and her face is known by many who travel the roads; merchants, vagabonds, circus folk, even some bandits recognize her on sight. Being seen by anyone of any importance from Olmutz to Ashflat runs a tremendous risk of exposing who she is.

If word gets out, the King of Anglamay (who has troops not fifteen miles from the Great Wall) quickly learns of it, and in a snap understands what the Count is doing and where he is sending his daughter. He dispatches riders to pursue her. They are mounted knights and men-at-arms who move 60 miles in a day. There is only one road beyond the Great Wall, through the wilderness to Kayomar, and that is the road the knights take.

BERTHOLD, ANGLAMAY KNIGHTS (*This neutral 7th level knight's vital stats are HP 61, AC 18. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. His significant attribute is dexterity 14. He wears full chain mail and a shield. The Knight Berchtold carries a lance, a +2 flail and has a ring of spell resistance +2. The knight carries 250gp worth of jewelry and coin. He rides a medium warhorse.*)

JEPBEDAH, ANGLAMAY KNIGHTS (*This neutral 7th level knight's vital stats are HP 59, AC 19. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. His significant attribute is dexterity 14. He wears +1 full chain mail and a shield. The knight carries a lance and a +2 claymore in battle, or a +1 battle axe. The knight carries 250gp worth of jewelry and coin. He rides a medium warhorse.*)

ANGLAMAY SERGEANTS X 4 (*They are neutral 5th level fighters whose vital stats are HP 45 and AC 15. Their primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. They wear mail hauberks, and carry broadswords, knives and a lance. Each has 50gp worth of coin and jewelry. They all ride light riding horses.*)





ANGLAMAY GUARDSMEN X 20 (*These are neutral, 2nd level fighters whose vital stats are HP 13 and AC 15. Their primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. Their significant attributes are strength 14. They wear scale mail and shields, carry battle axes, and have 10-20gp worth of jewelry and coin upon them. They all ride light riding horses.*)

ANGALMAY CROSSBOWMEN X 10 (*These are neutral, 1st level fighters whose vital stats are HP 9 and AC 15. Their primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. Their significant attributes are dexterity 14. They wear scale mail, and carry crossbows, twenty bolts, short swords, and have 10-20gp worth of jewelry and coin upon them. They all ride light riding horses.*)

THE JOURNEY BEGINS (#1 ON MAP)

As noted, the Count has gathered all the characters into his private meeting hall. The room is sparsely decorated, reflecting the Count's nature. A large wooden chair stands at the end of the rectangular room, and six torches flutter in the cool air brought in from the two arrow slits. A large fireplace fights off the early autumn chill. The characters are brought in and made to wait for a short while, after which the Count enters with one of his guards.

The Count is a tall man, bearded, with a stern if comforting look. He wears a suit of banded chain mail, with an iron sword strapped to his side. He wears no mark or symbol reflecting his rank. Everyone knows who he is.

Read or paraphrase the following:

I have gathered you all here, for I have a task for you to complete. If you are successful, the rewards shall be great. Failure is not an option. For if you fail, we are all lost. As you know, we have been at war with the bastards of the north and that self-styled King. They have spent the spring and summer ravaging our holdings beyond the Tot River and have only just recently seized the castles of Ire and Peth, those same bergs that hold the river crossings. Next spring they will cross with their armies and sack the County, despoiling all who live here- our families, the people... everyone.

So we must seek aid. And that aid I can only find with our friends in the south, in the Kingdom of Kayomar. To do this, I am sending a gift of wondrous value to the Lords of those Lands. It must be escorted to the town of Twin Forks and it must be done so secretly. The bastard has spies along all the roads surrounding Kleaves, and watches even in the wilderness. Beyond that there are bandits and monsters who would take the gift as their own, slay it or despoil it. This gift I have placed in a wagon so that none may know of it. The wagon will be with a caravan, so that none shall suspect it is special.

It is a dangerous journey, made more so by the caravan. The journey is long, over 200 miles, taking you through the wilds where no power rules. I have charged the Knight here with this task, and I call upon you as friends of his, and from whatever loyalty you have to me and my people, to carry out this task.

I have chosen you for this task because there are many of the bastard's spies about, and few will look to a caravan of wagons leaving the town, led by a party of adventurers. They shall suspect only that you are leaving the County before the King overwhelms us.

I do not expect your loyalty to be free, so I offer you further recompense. Each of you shall be given 1000 golden ducats. You shall be pardoned of any crimes against you or charges against your family. Further, upon your return I shall grant you, or in case of your demise, your next of kin, a patent of nobility and the title of Knight-Errant, as well as one hundred parcels of land to sell or rent or dwell upon as you see fit. But to each, reward is due, and for each of you the following . . .

Here he grants the class specific rewards to each party member. All this is guaranteed upon success of the mission.

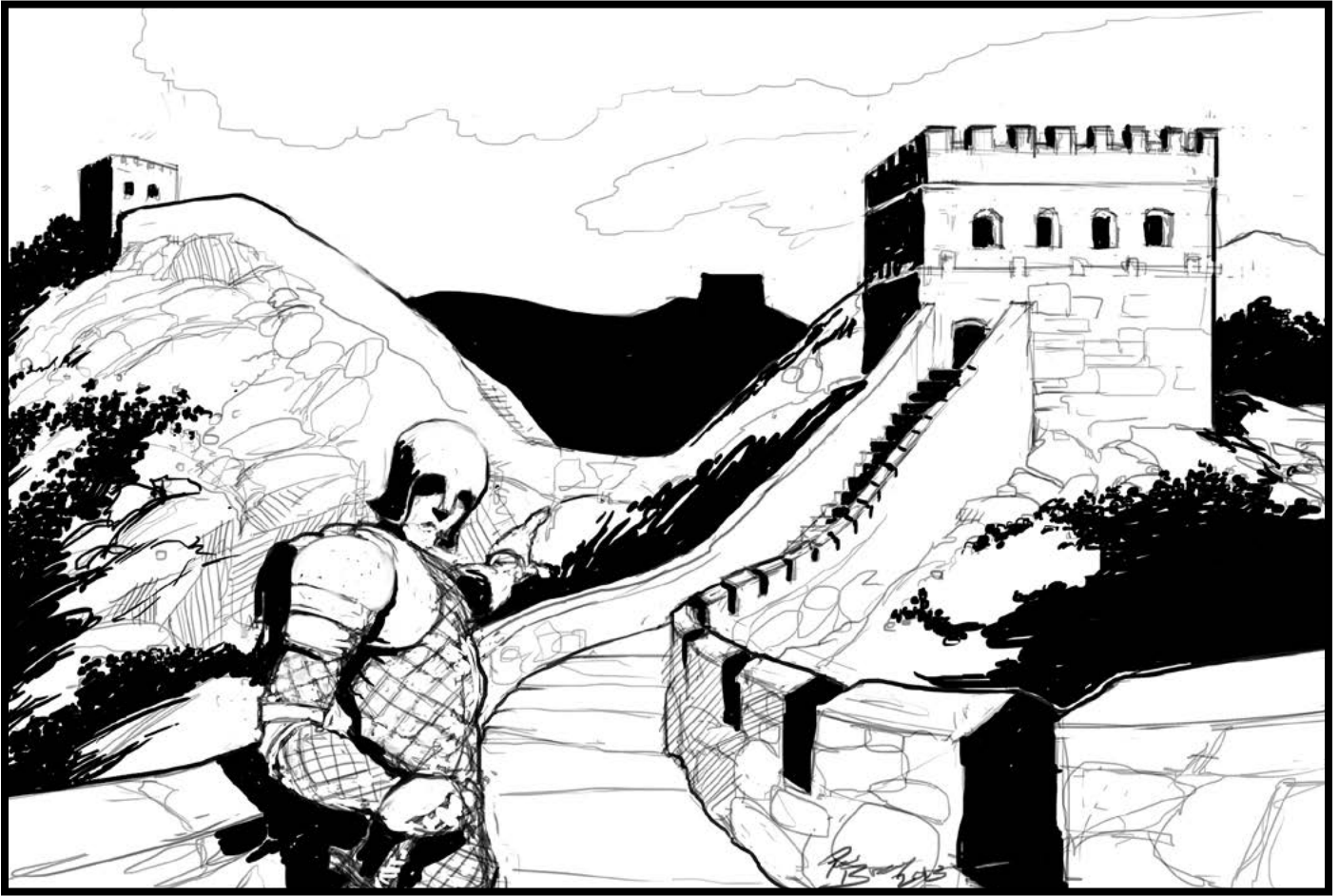
ORGANIZING THE JOURNEY

The adventure is designed to play out in 3 three-hour sessions. Each of the three adventures includes overland travel, which breaks down as follows:

- Sixty miles and six days from Castle Olmutz to the Great Wall.
- Twenty miles and two days from Great Wall to Ashflat (end of A Stone's Wager)
- 80 miles and eight days from Ashflat to the Mettlock Hills
- Eight miles and one day through the Mettlock Hills
- 25 miles and -three days from Mettlock Hills to Eil Wood (end of Winter's Promise)
- 225 miles and 25 days from Eil Wood to the Tar Kiln and Hells Furnace
- 25 miles to the headwaters of the Ardeen River and Safety (end of Trial by Fire)

It is a 24 day journey if there are no mishaps or delays. This roughly equates to ten miles per day for the wagons and carts. Clearly if the wagons are abandoned for whatever reason the journey may pick up in speed. Doing so of course exposes the princess to harm and the spies of the King, if she is seen on the road.

A STONE'S WAGER



If the knight does not organize the caravan, Artur, the natural leader amongst the drovers does. He places it in the following order:

Wagon 1

Box Wagon

Wagon 2

Cart 1

Cart 2

The party leaves early in the morning, mid-Autumn. The skies are clear and the weather calm, if a little cool. Read or paraphrase the following:

As the wagons lumber out of the courtyard and pass beneath the castle's outer gates, the open road unfolds before you. A massive sky welcomes you into the fading greens of the plains as a cool wind buffets you. Immediately the hustle and bustle of the castle is left behind, replaced by the calm and quiet of a journey. Creaking axles on the wagon wheels settle into a rhythm that only adds to the calm; leather harnesses jangle in the cool wind that gingerly feels its way through armor and clothing.

The first three days go by without happenstance. The CK should

roll for encounters, but have none with monsters. Attempt to play out each day, though not spending more than a few minutes on each day. Here the characters should determine the watch order and get to know the drovers.

Each night the drovers help set up camp then retire to their own camp and sing, eat, drink and talk late into the evening. If asked at any point to stop, they do so without much complaint. They are a bit standoffish, and also nervous about the journey that lies ahead. This should be made clear to the characters, though not so much that they have contempt for them; the drovers are just that - drovers, and not warriors or wizards.

ENCOUNTERS

The roads are safe and the lands are occupied by various small farm houses. People stop from their daily toil and wave the caravan by, watching it as it passes in idle curiosity. Every few hours they pass another group on the road, mostly merchants, but some travelers. These are all from the north, and not the south, where the characters are headed. If asked about news, they have little, but the road seems clear.

NOTE: The characters should be made to realize here that there are many eyes on the road to discourage them from pulling the princess out of the wagon and riding pell-mell across the countryside.

There is only one encounter of significance during these three days.

KEIL THE MULE

Keil the Mule is a friar in the service of the Horse God Ores Tsar. He is well traveled and has, some years past, followed the south road, called by men the Hollows Road. Whether he joins the party for dinner or just meets on the road, he freely passes on what information he has.

The road they are on splits after about 30 miles. One goes north to the Hanse City, while the other, the Hollows Road, goes south to the Great Wall and Wilderness. The Hollows road splits into two roads just before the Great Wall, with both sections directed toward two different gates in the Wall. These gates are the only easy way to get through the wall unless you climb it. The northernmost gate, Keil is almost certain, is held by a large band of hobgoblins. The second one he cannot comment on, as he does not know. He has heard that giants have settled on the Hollows Road and warns the party to be cautious.

At no point does he ask about the wagons or their content. Nor does he show interest in their journey. If detected he is chaotic good.

ONTO THE HOLLOWS ROAD

After three days, the characters come to a split in the road. One branch turns due north, heading up toward the Hanse City States. The south track splits off, heading in a southwesterly direction. A wooden placard marks the spot. A sign pointing south says "Hollows Road/Wall" while a second sign reads "Hanse Road" and points north. Read or paraphrase the following:

The weather continues to hold as you turn your caravan to the south and head down the Hollows Road. The sky is a light blue with no clouds in sight. The rolling plains tumble into the west, vanishing into the dark-lined horizon. The road itself appears to be little traveled, the dirt tracks overgrown with grasses of many colors.

Any ranger, druid or bard knows that that dark line on the horizon is actually the Great Wall, that massive fortified line that stretches from the Bergrucken Mountains in the south to the Inner Sea in the north.

Also, anyone with any weather sense can make a wisdom check (CL 5). If successful they realize that the light blue sky, is a sign of cold weather to come.

The fourth day is much as the first three, slow moving and eventless. By the end of the day everyone can clearly see the massive wall in the distance. It now becomes a permanent part of the horizon.

On the morning of the fifth day whoever wakes first must make a spot check (CL 6). If successful they see a mounted figure some 1000 yards off from the camp. It is clearly watching them. The figure is mounted on a nag horse and possesses a long spear with a red rag hanging from it. The figure seems to be wearing armor but with the distance it is difficult to determine. If there is

an elf in the party, or they have some type of spy-glass they can determine what it is with a successful intelligence check (CL 7).

It is a hobgoblin scout.

The hobgoblin watches the party for a short while, and then turns and rides off. If anyone even shows signs of pursuit he rides pell-mell to the west.

About five miles north of the road lies a large party of hobgoblins. They are mounted on a breed of rugged horses, tall and stout. If the hobgoblin scout is pursued, he leads his pursuers directly toward the larger war band. If he is not pursued he rides to the war band, alerting them to the caravan. They all immediately mount up and attack.

There are 51 in all. They are all mounted and dressed similarly. There is one chieftain here, and one sub-chief. They attack in a semi-organized manner. Splitting into two parties of roughly fifteen each, they sweep out into a pincer movement, trying to hit the caravan from the front and rear simultaneously.

In hobgoblin society, hierarchy is extremely important. If the hobgoblins suffer the loss of their Chief and Sub-Chief, their morale begins to break. The Chief and Sub-Chief cannot break and run or they lose face (as well as their place in the hobgoblin hierarchy), so those two at least stand and fight until they are killed or all the characters are dead.

The Castle Keeper should roll a strength check for the band (CL is equal to the number of fighting characters still standing).

Any character with experience with hobgoblins, or with a legend lore or similar ability, may make a successful attribute check (CL 4) for knowledge of the hobgoblin hierarchy.

HOBGOBLIN, CHIEF (*This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d10, HP 19, AC 17. His primary attributes are physical. He carries a long spear that he uses as a lance. He is wearing chain with plate on his arms and legs. He also has a short bow with twelve arrows. He has darkvision. The chief carries a pouch of magical nord stones. There are eight of these stones. If placed in the sunlight they flake. The flakes can be chewed, healing 1-2 points of damage. Each stone can create 1-2 flakes per hour while in sunlight.*)

HOBGOBLIN, SUB-CHIEF (*This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d10, HP 14, AC 16. His primary attributes are physical. He carries a long spear that he uses as a lance. He is wearing chain with plate on his arms and legs. He also has a short bow with twelve arrows. He has darkvision.*)

HOBGOBLIN (*These lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d10, HP 7 (all), AC 15. His primary attributes are physical. They carry long spears that they use as lances. They are wearing chain with greaves on arms and legs. Every fourth hobgoblin carries a short bow with twelve arrows. They have darkvision.*)

NOTES: Two things to keep in mind.

- 1) Nord stones are not common, but most clerics, rangers, druids and the like know of them and how they work. If

10 CASTLES & CRUSADES

there is one such person in the party, they can readily figure out what they are and their value to the party.

- 2) This encounter is partially designed to establish a relationship between the party and the drovers. They behave with courage, though with obvious terror. They respond to commands given quickly (nervously) and help where they can, grabbing wounded, horses or what have you.

THE WALL (#2 ON MAP)

On the morning of the sixth day the party should be within ten miles of the wall. It dominates the horizon. As they approach a little down the road, they come to the crossroads. Read or paraphrase the following.

The wall, which has loomed in the distance for many miles, now comes into sharp focus. It dominates the horizon, winding over the flat lands to the north like a shaft of iron; to the south it climbs into the mountains which now hem your journey in. Its bulwarks are some sixty feet high, though the ruins of it leave many breaches. Towers and bastions top the wall here and there, but many of these have fallen to the wayside, leaving nothing but an echo of fallen stone. The road splits here, one track heading due west, the second winding on to the south.

The Great Wall of Ethrum is several hundred miles long, and ranges in both height and width. The average width is 100 feet and the average height about sixty feet. The towers that remain are higher still. A broad road mounts much of it, with many forts and castles built upon its height. Barracks and dungeons, with corridors to connect them, run throughout the complex structure.

In the early days of man, the people of Ethrum and Aenoch struggled for mastery of the lands of Ursal, the lands to the east and west of the Ursal Straights. The Aenochians conquered much of the world, so that only the Tarvish Emperors remained to struggle against them.

During the great battles, called the Isles of Mark, the Tarvish Emperors saw that they could not master the Aenochians, so they reflected upon how best to defend their homeland of Kayomar. First, they fortified the fjords and bridges which crossed the rivers Saline and Ardeen. They did likewise throughout the Bergrucken Mountains. There they constructed mighty fortresses. But in the north, the rolling lands of Angouleme offered easy access for any invading armies, so there they set to building a great wall. Artisans, engineers and laborers worked for many long years building the edifice. All the while, the Tarvish Emperors spent their strength in blood to hold back the Aenochians. In the end it proved to no avail, for the Aenochians crossed the Bergrucken instead and plundered the rich valleys beyond. The wall was breached, many sections burned out, despoiled, and eventually utterly abandoned.

The wall stood for many hundreds of years, sometimes occupied, sometimes abandoned. So great is its size that the wall became home to whole peoples of all races. Soon it became laced with

tunnels, dungeons and more fortifications. During the Winter Dark it suffered neglect, and the harsh climate did much to reduce it, with entire sections falling into ruin. But since those days the Great Wall has become an attractive place for adventurers, for its chambers, forts, and castles are reputed to be full to overflowing with treasures and wonders of the old world.

The Hollows Road continues to the far southern reaches of the Great Wall, dividing about six miles out into two smaller roads, both of which go on to the wall, penetrating it roughly ten miles apart. The characters can chose to go either way, the warning of the traveling friar notwithstanding.

NORTH GATE

This gate is in ruins, with much of the whole wall has collapsed and been carted off or tossed to the side so that it looks as if a huge axe has cloven the wall in half. In only a few places is the wall still connected over the gate, allowing passage from one side to the other.

The Northern Gate is held by a large tribe of hobgoblins, in fact, the very same tribe that assaulted the party the previous day. They live within the wall, on both sides of the gate. Their scouts have long since alerted them to the caravan's approach. They have fortified the gate against them, piling all manner of debris inside the wall's road to block the wagons' passage.

Even though the gate is blocked, the hobgoblins are plain to see. There are hobs moving here and there about the structure, making it obvious that passage through here will be difficult to say the least. The party's options are limited:

- 1) Bargain with the hobgoblins. This is possible but the hobs will require all the wagons and their content.
- 2) Attack the hobs and force the gate. This will be difficult, as they are dug in and have numbers on their side. Even a conservative estimate on the task of clearing enough debris from the gate to get the wagons through would put it at a week's task.
- 3) Head south for the southern gate. The plains here are easy enough that the party can just cut south looking for the gate, or they can back track to it.

If the characters attack, the hobs cannot be dislodged until all their Chiefs, Sub-Chiefs, War Chiefs and Shaman are killed. Even then they only retreat to inside the wall, from where they continue to hound the characters.

NOTE: Make it clear to the characters that the hobs are well entrenched, and unlike most humanoids, they are able tacticians.

The hobs have fortified the gate house very well. Large stone blocks set at various angles disallow any quick movement through the tunnel. Some twenty heavily armed hobs, in half plate with halberds and awls hold the tunnel about mid way, fifty feet in. They have placed another thirty or so on the upper wall and thirty occupy each side of the gate (for a total of sixty). These are armed with crossbows, burning pitch, fire hoops and other incendiary devices.

Refer to the stat blocks above if the party attempts to force the gate.

SOUTH GATE

The south gate is in far better shape than the north. Where it intersects with the wall, it is in very good order. The gate itself is arched, thirty feet wide and eighteen feet tall. The tunnel cuts through with few obstructions. It is the most commonly used gate and the road here shows all the normal signs of traffic.

TRACKING: If a ranger checks for recent traffic, a successful track check (CL 5) reveals that no wagons or carts have passed through on the road in several months, not since late spring, as far as the signs reveal. Roll a second check (CL 8); if successful, this check reveals the signs of large bare feet. If he succeeds in his knowledge check on the tracks, he can tell with a certainty that the tracks were made by a human or humanoid type creature that stands roughly ten feet tall and is very heavy.

The tracks of course belong to the stone giants who have taken up residence in the wall. They have moved down from the Bergrucken Mountains in search of more interesting hunting grounds, and settled upon the Great Wall, for its stone facade and massive size appealed to them. Now they occupy the gate.

They have settled upon the sides and top of the Great Wall, constructing huge towers of stone into their homes.

The gate comes into view, wide and tall, with no obvious obstructions. It leads into a tunnel that passes beneath the Great Wall, and the tunnel looks to be at least a hundred feet long. The wall and gate are in amazingly good condition and show only the slightest signs of age. The mortar has chipped away, some stones are cracked, and the wall has settled, making it dip here and there. Pillars of stone stand out from the wall; some are very high, and some are attached to the wall. They appear incongruous with the greater edifice, almost as if they were stalagmites, grown from the wall itself.

The pillars are stone giant homes. Stone giants prefer the sun, wind and rain to the cold dark of the underground. They live upon escarpments, ledges and the edges of high mountain cliffs. When they build their homes, they stack rocks one upon the other, using their rock shaping ability to meld the stones together. These pillars are easy to climb for a stone giant, with ledges wrapping around the pillar until they get to the uppermost heights, where the stone giant itself perches, melding with the stone upon which he sits. There they rest, watching the world unfold.

There are nine of these pillars visible. From the top of the wall (if someone should brave it) there are a full 23 of them. Six are unoccupied.

SPOTTING THE GIANTS

There are seventeen stone giants in and around the gate, some on the far side, and some on this side. Anyone able to legend lore or who possesses a similar ability can attempt an attribute

check for stone giant knowledge (CL 6). If successful they know how stone giants live, and know that these oddly shaped pillars are the homes of such creatures.

Anyone studying the pillars has a chance to spot the creatures sitting upon their ledges (CL 10). It is difficult as they do not move except to breathe, and even that is in long, shallow breaths that are almost impossible to discern.

The stone giants keep their personal wealth, always in the guise of gems or melded precious metals, upon their highest ledge, where they themselves sit. Here they place the treasure into the stone. Anyone looking has a chance for a normal spot check (CL 7) of spying some of these treasures on any one of the pillar glinting on high.



FORCING THE GATE

If the party desires to force the gate and battle the giants they may do so. In this case at least half of the seventeen giants eventually become involved and join the fray, many simply hurling stones from above.

GIANT, STONE, 17 (*This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 10(d8), HP 54, AC 24. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a slam for 2d8 points of damage. If he wields a weapon, he uses it with deadly proficiency, striking opponents for 2d6+6 points of damage. He is able to throw rocks, has twilight vision and dark vision. Greater stone giants have the power of rune magic and are able to shape and meld stone.*)

THE FIVE CHALLENGES

Stone giants are not evil, nor particularly violent. However, they do love to gamble. When they see the party approaching, their leader, the largest of the giants who lives upon the top of the wall, takes note. He immediately determines that the party might offer him some form of entertainment. He watches them for a short while and waits to see what they do.

If they proceed to pass through the wall as a group, he breaks free of his ledge and begins to climb down to confront them. He moves slowly, with a methodical pace.

If they set up camp, he waits until the following day to come down and stop them.

If they send a scout through he waits until the main party begins passing through and climbs down to stop them.

If the party sees him first and wishes to parlay, he comes down from on high to parlay.

In any case, he attempts to come down to stop the party and challenge them to a contest. Read or paraphrase the following:

The highest of the dozen pillars stands directly over the gate, lashed by wind and rain. From its highest point, a figure breaks free and begins to climb down the pillar. He is tall, thin, well muscled and agile. The rock proves little challenge to him. His descent is methodical, though far more rapid than expected. In short order a large stone giant, some eleven feet tall stands before the gate, blocking your entry to the tunnel beyond.

The giant hails the party and asks them to stop. He is not even vaguely curious about their mission, and does not ask any personal questions about them or it. He talks slowly, and shows no obvious signs of aggression. His voice is deep and full. Read or paraphrase the following:

"This gate is mine - as are the walls as far as I can see from my perch above - and you cannot pass, for it is closed to you. But I am feeling generous today and will make a wager with you. I'll wager you the gate's passage that you cannot overcome five simple challenges. If you win, you may pass unmolested. If you lose, the

gate remains closed and you can go north where the hobgoblins live, or south and climb the impassable mountains."

When queried what his terms are, he says that to pass through the gates, the party must best him at four challenges simultaneously, and a fifth challenge after the four are completed. If they succeed, they can pass without harm. If they fail, they must move on their way.

By this time the other giants have come to join the leader, or have gathered on the walls above to watch the players tackle the challenge.

PLAYING THE CHALLENGES: The challenges are not designed to kill the party, nor make it impossible to get through the gate and tunnel. The giant's true purpose is an afternoon of entertainment. They fully intend to allow the party, wagons and all, to pass unmolested so long as the characters offer them no true violence. If the party attacks the giant, at least half the other giants come to join the brawl.

The giant presents the first four challenges to the party, holding the fifth for last, as it is the most dangerous. If asked, he says just that. The challenge are: 1) One of the party must climb the wall to the top taking with them a magic jar; 2) Someone must move the stone that blocks the tunnel; 3) Someone must wrestle the giant; 4) Someone must retrieve a gem from beneath the wall, 5) A nest of cockatrices have taken up residence in one of the pillars, they must be cleaned out.

DIVINING THE GIANT'S INTENTION: Any spell or ability that allows characters to determine what others are thinking or feeling reveals, upon a successful check if necessary (CL 10), that the giants mean them no true harm but desire entertainment only.

THE DROVERS: The drovers are clearly not equipped to fight, or in any other way engage the giants. During the encounter they stay close to the wagons and carts. If for some reason combat breaks out most flee but the wagoners on the princess's wagon do stay with the wagon, trying to get her to safety. They do not run far, returning after the combat is over. Assuming the characters take up the challenges, the drovers remain at their wagons, terrified, but holding their own. They help the characters if the opportunity presents itself.

NOTE: The challenges themselves are designed to engage all the party members. It is best not to run them separately, but rather all together. The rogue should be climbing the wall and fighting the air elemental while the fighter and fighter types are wrestling the giant and the wizard and cleric are moving the stone. In this way no one at the table is sitting still, bored while someone else is completing a challenge.

CLIMBING THE WALL

The first challenge involves climbing the wall. Someone must begin at the bottom, next to the arched gateway and climb to the top. The climb itself is about 140 feet, and on the surface does not look terribly difficult. The wall itself is made of large blocks of stone, quarried from the Bleached Hills in the west

and mortared together. There are plenty of cracks in the stone, dissolved mortar and broken rocks to allow rogues and rangers to find ready foot and hand holds.

The giant says: "You must climb the wall without recourse to magic, and place this bottle for the wind upon the top."

He hands them a blue jar with a leather strap upon it and a simple stopper.

The challenges lie in the wall's height, and in the air elemental that has taken up residence upon the wall above.

HEIGHT: The wall is 140 feet high. Rangers and rogues are able to climb the wall without a check; anyone else must make a successful dexterity check every twenty feet. Because the rocks are old and loose, it is easy enough to make the climb. Pulling out sections of the wall for hand and toe holds the greatest challenge, though the challenge per attempt is not high (CL 2).

The danger comes from sections of the wall falling down and taking the character(s) with them. At least three times during the climb, allow the characters to make a successful intelligence check (CL 4). If they fail, a section of the wall falls away and they fall with it. For each twenty feet they slide and tumble down the walls, they take 1d6 points of damage. Every twenty feet they may make a dexterity check (CL 6) to grab ahold of the wall and arrest their fall. If they fail, a small section of the wall falls away and they fall with it. For each ten feet they tumble down they suffer 1d3 points of damage. Every ten feet they may make a dexterity check to grab ahold of the wall and arrest their fall.

Do not repeat these steps. At no point should they make more than 3 intelligence checks, no matter how many times or how far they fall down the wall.

ELEMENTAL: There is an air elemental that dwells upon the side wall. It inhabits the crevices between the stones, moving back and forth along the surface of the wall, utterly undetected from below or above. It is extremely playful and completely unaware of any other creature's inability to fly or ride the winds.

As soon as someone reaches sixty feet up the wall, the elemental takes notice and moves toward the individual. Allow that person a perception or class check (roll on highest primary attribute) (CL 5). If successful, they notice moss or lichen moving in a very deliberate straight line pattern meaning either something odd is afoot, or a very tiny and very focused straight line wind is moving along the surface of the wall.

The elemental moves to the characters' locations, stopping directly in front of their face. It then proceeds to kick out dust and mortar between stones, making the wall weaker. The elemental continues to do this for four full rounds as the characters either goes up or down. The characters should be made to fear whatever is pursuing them.

After four rounds, the elemental detaches itself from the wall and harasses the players with wind by changing into a whirlwind and picking up the characters. Once picked up, it brings the character back down the wall forty feet, and leaves

them hanging on the wall again. The elemental does this until reduced to half hit points, killed, or trapped in the bottle.

THE BLUE BOTTLE: The bottle contains an extra-dimensional space that mimics the elemental plane of air. If opened within the proximity of the air elemental, the creature is immediately drawn into the bottle. Whoever is holding the bottle can feel the power of the creature as it passes into the bottle (much like the air being sucked out of a high flying plane); as soon as the noise stops the elemental is contained. It remains there until the bottle is opened and the creature summoned. Whoever possesses the blue bottle can command the air elemental. Though the creature will not fight to the death for the bottle's owner, it will follow simple commands.

ELEMENTAL, AIR (*This neutral creature's vital stats are HD8d8, AC 17 and HP 341. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with slam for 2d8 damage and whirlwind that is not subject to a modified save for 2d6 points of damage. It possesses all the properties of an air elemental as presented in Monsters & Treasure.*)

COMBAT

This challenge involves fighting the stone giant. He takes four stones and sets them on the ground in a square 50 feet wide on each side, clearly marking out an arena. Once is considered thrown out of the box if they one foot or half their torso is forced out.

The giant says: "Here you must fight me with hands and no weapons. Three of you pitted against me should prove a fair match. The object is to push me or the three of you out of the box."

This is a strait forward grappling challenge. Any form of combat is permitted other than use of weapons. Though the stone giant possesses a tremendous armor class, AC 24, this is greatly reduced in hand to hand combat. Consult the Players Handbook when necessary. The giant will punch an opponent, but all damage taken is pummeling, and for every ten hit points in damage he deals, it equates to only one actual point of damage.

GIANT, STONE (*This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 10(d8), HP 67, AC 24. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a slam for 2d8 points of damage. In combat this stone giant chief wields a huge stone club that deals out 1d12+4 points of damage. He is able to throw rocks, has twilight vision and dark vision. Greater stone giants have the power of rune magic and are able to shape and meld stone.*)

MOVE A GIANT STONE

This challenge requires the party to move a large block of stone that lies in the middle of the tunnel. The giants set it here in order to block easy passage through the tunnel, and because they like to make people move stones. The catch is that the stone is a feliu stone, a stone possessed by the spirit of a fallen dwarf.

THE GIANT SAYS: "This challenge shows you the true face of the living stone. On yonder road stands a great boulder that must be moved. Be gentle, for rocks possess more spirit than you might guess."

14 CASTLES & CRUSADES

Approaching the stone reveals its great weight and the absolute necessity of moving it before the wagons will fit in the tunnel. It is about twelve feet in diameter and perfectly round. It weighs several tons. Due to its great weight it has settled into the ground about six inches, pushing the flagstones of the road down where ever it touches.

The characters can attempt to move it through brute force but this is not likely to happen. Pushing the stone out of the divot it has caused will be nearly impossible. Its weight alone makes moving it hard (CL 17). Character may attempt to build machines to leverage it out, and, though it is possible, it should be very difficult. Tools exist in the wagons, but no lumber is anywhere around.

The stone is of course living, and any detect magic or similar scrying spell reveals the spirit within. The spirit is of a dwarf, and is good and therefore not subject to turning as evil feliul stones are. However, the stone is highly susceptible to suggestion spells, commands, and even influence from charisma based classes, such as the bard.

Refer to New Monsters below for the full monster.

Killing the monster is possible, though difficult. If it is killed, it shatters.

FELIUL STONE (*His vital stats are HD 14, HP 84, AC 22, MV 10'. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks by rolling down a slope or falling from above and crushing his victims for 5d10 points of damage. His special abilities include stone spray. See New Monsters at the end of this adventure for more on defeating the feliul stone.*)

The giant is indifferent as to how this task is completed, whether the characters resort to killing the stone or convincing it to move on its own. However, if the party magically moves the stone without having to kill it, the creature rolls out of the way of the tunnel, heading due east, in the direction of the party. It takes up a new roost on the far side of the gate.

As the stone rolls out of the tunnel it leaves in its wake four figurines of wondrous power. They are silver raven, onyx dog, obsidian steed, and serpentine owl.

RETRIEVE THE GEM

This challenge involves exploring a short tunnel and retrieving a gem from a crypt. The tunnel is too small for the stone giants, and worse, it is guarded by a banshee. Within the crypt is a sarcophagus containing the body of a woman, buried long ago. Beneath her feet is a small chest filled with rubies.

The giant says: "Just within the tunnel lies a small doorway. It leads to a tunnel, wherein lie the remains of some forgotten child of your people. Her feet rest upon a chest of gems, or so she tells us as she howls in the late night darks of winter storms. Remove ONE of the gems from the crypt."

Just within the tunnel, beyond the gate entrance, is a small portal, with steps leading down about twenty feet. These steps

lead down to a tunnel burrowed through the wall's foundations. The tunnel goes sixty feet to a crypt, within which lies the body of the woman he spoke.

AREA 1: THE DOOR

The door to the crypt is made of stone, and is set on two hinges on the inside of the room, with one heavy iron bar on the outside of the door set in two brackets. The bar slides into the brackets, locking the door from the outside.

To open the door, the bar must be slid back. It requires a successful strength check (CL 3). The check may be made three times by the same person, but each time a new check is done, the CL increases by one. When the bar is broken free of its moorings and slides back, it does so with a horrendous noise, as the metal grinds against the metal brackets. Flakes of iron and rust fall to the floor. As soon as the iron bar is moved the door settles a little, making securing it with the bar very difficult.

The door swings inward.

AREA 2: THE CRYPT

The crypt is forty feet long and thirty feet wide. The walls, floor and ceiling are all made of stone. Four half round pillars built into the walls mark the room with its only décor, aside from a chair sitting in the corner of the room, to the right of the head of the sarcophagus that dominates the room's center.

The door swings wide reluctantly, dragging on the floor where it settled after the bar's release. A cold, dry air wafts out, carrying with it the telltale scent of marigolds on a late spring day; warmth and sun come to mind. Before you stands a sparsely decorated stone crypt. A chair with red velvet cushions sits in the far corner facing a large stone sarcophagus, upon which lies the frieze of a noble woman carved into the lid.

The room is haunted by a banshee, the spirit of the woman in the sarcophagus. She lingers on the edge of sight and is visible to any cleric or paladin upon a successful wisdom check (CL 7). She is sitting in the chair looking forward with a vacant stare. If anyone sits in the chair while she is there, they feel a bitter cold creep through their bones. After 4 rounds they suffer 1d4 points of damage.

The banshee cannot see anyone in the room until they touch the sarcophagus lid. As soon as they do, she is alerted to them and sees them as shadows of hell coming to drag her body to Aufstrag. She begins a low keening sound, a moan that anyone can hear on a successful wisdom check (CL 4).

NOTE: The banshee has not fully materialized at this point and doesn't until someone reaches their hand into the sarcophagus. So she cannot be turned as of yet.

Removing the lid is not difficult; it is surprisingly light and unattached. It is held in place by stone shelving on the inside

of the lid. It must be lifted off the tomb. Doing so requires a successful strength check (CL 4). Anyone can attempt this action 3 times. The CL increases by 1 for each attempt.

As soon as the lid is free and clear of the tomb, the banshee begins to howl and moan. Anyone and everyone can hear the sound. Her voice is deep, filled with despair tinged with rage. The temperature in the room falls precipitously. Within a few rounds the noise is a loud keening that begins to affect everyone's concentration. Everyone suffers a -1 to any initiative roles.

AREA 3: THE SARCOPHAGUS

As soon as someone reaches their hand into the tomb the banshee materializes in the chair. She howls like madness and attacks the party. Now she can be turned.

BANSHEE (*This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 7d8, HP 48, AC 20. Her prime attributes are mental. She attacks with a chilling touch that does 1d8 damage. Her special abilities are keening wail and immunity to cold and electricity. Her spell resistance is 10. Her keening wail does not cause death, but strikes fear in whoever fails their save, forcing them to flee for four rounds.*)

If the banshee is turned she only leaves for ten rounds, at which point she returns to the chair. If there are people still mucking around in the sarcophagus, she attacks again.

Inside the sarcophagus is the wrinkled body of a woman, dressed in finery that has long since lost its luster. She wears no jewelry, but beneath her feet is a small metal box. The box is unlocked and contains 25 rubies. Each of the dark, red gems scintillates in the light (assuming there is a torch, lantern or magic item), which seems to bounce around the rubies' cut sides until it slows passes away.

MISSY'S RUBIES: Each of the rubies is magical. If held up in any light the ruby captures that light and tosses it about the gems. Anyone unaware of the ruby's properties must make a saving throw (intelligence, CL 6) or be mesmerized by the gem for one round.

If the characters take one ruby (and one only), and bring it to the giant, they have succeeded the challenge. When they show him the ruby he tells them to keep it as a reward for the challenge.

If they take more than one, they fail. Even if they hide the rubies the giant will know, as his affinity for stones and gems in particular allows him knowledge of the stones. If they have done this, he hints that perhaps the creature that dwells in the crypt has suffered too much and it would be a shame to relieve her of all her gems. If they opt to return the gems he lets them. However, they will have to fight the banshee again if they put their arms in the sarcophagus.

EXTERMINATORS

The fifth and final challenge is brought up only after the rest of the challenges are completed, whether successfully or not.

16 CASTLES & CRUSADES

The largest and tallest of the pillars stands upon the top center of the wall. It is sixty feet high and forty feet round at the base, narrowing to thirty feet at the top. A pack of 6 nasty cockatrices have taken up residence beneath the top stone. The stone giant desires the characters to clean it out.

The giant says: "Upon the wall above lies a pillar of stone, fashioned by one of our Masons not long ago. It has become infested with wilderland birds. The challenge is for you to clean out the nest. But be wary, for their bite is like poison to us and stone to you."

Anyone can make a knowledge check (CL 6) for knowledge of stone giant poisons. Upon a successful check they know that the only poison a stone giant fears is the bite of a cockatrice. Where it turns a normal man to stone, for a stone giant it destroys all their affinity with stone; they cannot shape stone in any way, and even the touch of it is repulsive. For this reason the stone giants will not clean out the nest themselves.

The characters can all act together now. There are six cockatrices living in a small cleft beneath the uppermost stone. They infested the pillar soon after it was made, nested, had young ones and now dwell there, leaving periodically to hunt. The stone giant who dwelt here was bitten, went insane and fled into the wilderness.

There is rock shelving that leads all the way around the pillar to the top so that the characters can walk, single file up the pillar. It is sixty feet high. The top of the pillar is flat, made of four flat, very smooth stones stacked one on top of the other. The upper most stone weighs about 300 lbs, and is not melded to the others. There is a cleft here. This is where the cockatrices live.

COCKATRICE, X 6 (*These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 5d10, HP 35, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a bite for 1d3 points of damage. They have dark and twilight vision. They can turn anyone to stone that they bite. The victim must make a strength save or turn immediately to stone.*)

END OF A STONE'S WAGER

Once the characters have destroyed the nest and climbed back down the pillars, the giant, who watched the entire battle from the Wall, approaches the party. He thanks them for their good spirited nature, remarking that they are free to go through the tunnel, whether they won or not. If they failed any of the challenges he forgives them their trespasses and commits them to good journeys.

HIS FINAL WORDS: "Beware the road south, for the spirit of fire possesses some, and they have built Hell Furnaces upon the road." He gives them each a flask of water collected at the base of the shaman's pillar. This water has little taste, but is cold and very refreshing. Each drink (and there are 5 per flask) heals 1d8 points of damage.

WINTER'S PROMISE

If you are picking up this adventure from *A Stone's Wager*, there are several items that the party should have acquired that may help them out. The healing water, Missy's Ruby, the four figurines of wondrous power: silver raven, onyx dog, obsidian steed, and serpentine owl and the blue bottle with the air elemental in it. These items are not necessary to successfully complete *Trial by Fire* or *A Winter's Promise*, but they may be very helpful.

If characters have not played in the preceding adventure, the items listed above should be doled out. Explain to the party that they recently passed through a gate and tunnel held by storm giants by overcoming several challenges, and not only were they allowed to pass, but they were given these magical items.

The adventure begins just west of the Great Wall. It is a day's long journey to Ashflat where they can resupply, hire guides or what have you.

THE WEATHER BREAKS

After the party passes through the gate, they officially enter the wildness, leaving behind them the last vestiges of the settled lands. The weather breaks and the cold arrives. The weather is important, as it sets the stage for the coming encounter with the frost giants.

As the Great Wall slowly fades behind, and the road pulls ever closer toward the mountains, a cold wind picks up. Brought on currents from the mountains, the temperature seems to drop within a few hours. The sky remains a pale blue and the sun recedes in the distance, seeming smaller than it truly is. The drovers, shivering in the chill, pull cloaks from packs or blankets from beneath their benches, wrapping their heads and bodies in warmth.

It is a day's journey to the town of Ashflat.

ASHFLAT (#3 ON MAP)

This small town exists in the middle of the wilds, falling prey to all manner of beasts from the woods, the mountains and the plains. Her people are rough around the edges, but tough and resilient. Here, the weak die.

There is no one ruler here. However, one strong arm or the other takes charge of the town's defenses, and the town has somehow managed to build a wooden wall around the bulk of its houses. Her streets are dirt, and muddy in the rainy seasons. The buildings are a wide mixture of wood, stone, wood and stone and mud houses. There are several small taverns, but a large two floor affair in the center of town called the Frost Giant's Rift.

The townsfolk are friendly, always looking for fresh faces to buy and sell their wares to. It is the perfect place for the party to resupply, and the only place left to them. Almost anything can be bought in the town.



LUTKE

Assuming the characters enter the town and do not wholly bypass it, they pique the interest of a number of people, not the least of which are the scouts for a bandit troop. One of these, Lutke by name, watches them for a while and tries to find the most agreeable individual, approaching them while they are alone.

He approaches in a very friendly manner, and asks only general questions. In the course of the conversation he drops careful hints about his skill as a tracker and hunter as well as his voluminous knowledge about the Hollows Road. He clearly knows they are headed south (as everyone in town does), so he mentions that moving wagons south in the winter months is dangerous.

Around this point he offers his services as a guide. If they take him up on it, he needs only a few hours to settle his affairs, pay his tabs, and get enough food for the journey. He knows the



THE LESSER MARL

KANU BASIN

LAKE HUL

PERRIN'S BREAK (PASS)

THE WHITE TOWER

AERALUTH WOOD

CITY OF LYNTH

MAENLUTH PLAINS

CEALUTH RIVER

TWR ISLE

TEISICH RIVER

SUZ RIVER

GRUNDLE'S KNOB

SOUTH BRANCH (SUZ) RIVER

RHODOPE MOUNTAINS

MYTHON EYES FOREST

THE TAR-KILN

(BIG) MUD RIVER

ODAY BREAKS

THE DIVIDE

MOVNT SIL

MICKLEWOOD

STEIR

THE V

LAKE CAPUAN

LITTLE MUD

MAROWDELL

ROETTENBERG

CROSS RIVER

HAI-DUN STEPPES

ARU HOLLOWES

TURM GEHWIR

LANDS OF HELLIWEL

GREAT LOTH

FELDUM GAP

RAUS

KINGSMARCH

LARANK GORGE

BETTLEWOOD

VENDOM WOOD

LAKE KATHRYN

UPPER WATERS DANAU RIVER

PENDEGRA



country and is happy to guide them as far as the headwaters of the Eark Fork Run. The cost will only be 25gp.

Lutke is actually a bandit scout and he has set up an ambush in the Mettlock Hills. When he mentions he has gone to settle his affairs the party can attempt to follow him to see where he goes. He is very careful, however, and following him in this unknown town is difficult (CL 9), barring magical means. He goes to one of the small stores, pays a tab and tells the store owner to get let his Captain know that he'll have the caravan in the Mettlock Hills in 8-10 days, where they can then ambush them .

LUTKE (*This 6th level, neutral ranger's vital stats are HP 52, LVL 6, AC 16. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity and intelligence. His significant attributes are dexterity 17, constitution 16. In battle he uses a +2 long sword for 1d8+2 points of damage and a dagger coated in Type 1 poison. He wears padded scale armor and wears a +2 ring of protection. On his horse he carries a short bow with 36 arrows in a bundle. He has a small pack he carries with four days' worth of food, a water flask and flint and steel. He keeps 89gp and a 100gp gem in a pouch hidden inside his shirt.*)

TO THE METTLOCK HILLS (#4 ON MAP)

This journey to the Mettlock Hills takes eight days from Ashflat. The road is bumpy but sound, the ground slowly freezing over as the weather continues to be cold and stay cold. Every few days snow flurries hound the party. Read or paraphrase the following:

The rocky slopes of the Bergrucken curve to the south and the road follows them; to the north and west the heavy eaves of the Blandun Timberland hem you in. The pale blue sky is lost beneath a rolling blanket of clouds. The temperature drops precipitously, and the light mist in the air turns to flurries of snow, promising a freezing night and a long journey ahead.

It is unnecessary to cover each day in detail. But cover each day with small events, such as setting up camp, post guards, etc. In the course of the journey the drovers continue to prove their worth, working very hard to keep the wagons on the road and the caravan moving. Four events are listed below to use or discard as necessary; these may help supply real context to the journey and the great distance it covers.

1) **Crossing small river:** The caravan comes to a small river winding down the mountain slopes. It spills into a gully that crosses the valley floor and meanders to the forest beyond. It is not deep, but recent rain or snow has increased its depth to about 3 feet. The road vanishes into the water.

Lutke explains that the bottom is very muddy and pushing these wagons is going to be extremely difficult, so the more hands on deck the better.

Getting the wagons across requires each team (or the characters) to dismount and push the wagon through the muddy water. The first wagon requires a strength check (CL 10) to push it through. Each person that pushes the wagon adds their strength bonus to the check. One individual should make the check. For each wagon or cart

that goes through the water add 1 to the challenge level as the bottom becomes more muddy. Everyone on the ground pushing must make a successful dexterity check (CL 5) or fall into the water while pushing the wagon.

A failed strength check means the wagon is stuck in the mud and the characters are going to have to unhitch a team of mules and oxen and hitch it to the moribund wagon to get it out.

The water is extremely cold.

2) **Wagon wheel breaks:** In the course of the journey one of the wagon wheels on the main wagon breaks; four of the spokes shatter while going over a rock. As the wagon lurches to a halt so does the caravan. Everyone up front must be alerted to the wagon's stopping as well. The wheel snaps with a loud crack and the wagon crashes to the ground, and the princess inside lets out an involuntary shout. Any characters near the wagon must make a successful wisdom save (CL 7) in order to hear her shout.

Repairing the wheel is not easy as the wagon is heavy. As the drovers move about the wagon, lifting it up to fit the new wheel, the princess moves, requiring the same check as above. The new wheel is pulled from the other wagon's supplies, the axel greased and it is put on in only a few hours.

During this time Lutke wants to take a scouting trip and asks several characters to go with him. He explains that they are deep in bandit country and they should keep a sharp look out. He takes the group and travels in a wide circle around the caravan.

3) **Track becomes lost:** A heavy snow falls, accompanied by powerful wind, and snow soon covers the narrow plain from mountains to forest. Lutke loses the track in the drifting snow and wind. He rides back to the column and asks for assistance in finding it. If asked about going off road (as it is clear by the terrain where they should be going), he explains that the ground is hard enough to take the wagons, but off the track the going will be very difficult and they risk losing a wagon wheel or axel.

Whoever goes out with Lutke must make a successful wisdom check to find the track check (CL 6) or intelligence check (CL 8) in order to locate it. The more eyes on the problem, the better.

This encounter allows the party to establish a bond of trust with Lutke.

4) **Drover breaks leg:** The ground has become moist with rain and snow melt. At some point a wagon becomes stuck. The drover dismounts and, taking a long pole from the wagon, begins to leverage it out. The team pulls forward, the wagon lurches, the pole snaps with a loud crack and the wagon rolls back, catching his leg and crushing it.

Allow any character near the drover a dexterity check (CL 6) to pull the drover out of harm's way.

If his leg is broken, someone is going to have to set it, wisdom save (CL 6) and make something of a cast.

His movement is cut in half and he'll be largely useless in walking and setting up camp. He volunteers to cut firewood, grease axels, etc.

NOTE: Lutke joins in and helps in any and all of the encounters. His personality comes out. He is neutral good, being kind and attentive. He takes watch and sets to any burdens asked of him. Assuming the characters are kind to him, he begins to lose his desire to set them up, and is having second thoughts about taking them to the Mettlock Pass.

WEATHER

At this point in the journey winter weather settles in. It begins snowing off and on, and does so for many days until a good two to three inches with much deeper drifts blanket the ground.

The caravan is not necessarily slowed, as the oxen are well versed in this weather and unaffected by the light snow on the ground. Even gathering firewood from the forests to the north is easy enough for the party.

NOTE: The snow sets up the coming encounter with the frost giants.

AMBUSH

Lutke sent word ahead to set an ambush in the Mettlock hills, where the road doubles back to the east and enters a very narrow valley only a mile or so across. Here his troop of 25 bandits lies in wait.

If the characters have treated him decently, Lutke has a complete change of heart and desires only to keep the party from being attacked.

As they approach the canyon, on day nine from Ashflat, he calls a halt so that they can rest and then pass through the valley in one long day, and not be forced to spend the night there. That night he attempts to slip out of camp. He uses all his ranger abilities to hide and sneak in the wilderness. He takes his horse and heads rapidly south to shy off the bandits.

He meets the troop about midnight and tells them to not attack the caravan. It's too dangerous. The bandits will have none of it and order him to return to the caravan to keep the party from becoming suspicious.

The characters may discover he's missing, either through seeing him leave, or checking his bedroll. If they do, it is up to Lutke to keep himself alive. He will come clean if forced to, but his desire is to just skip the whole ugly incident. If questioned, or if he goes undiscovered, he tells them that he has scouted the pass for the morrow's ride and discovered bandits on the road. He then suggests an alternate route that will put them out of their element, but should put them back on track beyond the Eil Wood.

The alternate route bypasses the bandits by placing them on a trek that leads into the Blaudun Timberland, north of the Mettlock hills.

THE SHORTCUT (#5 ON MAP)

The shortcut takes the caravan through a narrow forest track that hardly accommodates the wagons. It is dark, dreary, snow drifts against the trees, and it is very slow going. The drovers have to leave the wagons constantly and clear the trek of bramble, limbs and other forest debris.

The caravan must spend at least one night in the forest. At some point on the journey they pass under or camp beneath a nest of feulk. These

huge, amorphous creatures occupy the tops of trees. When viewed from the ground they look like little more than tangles of vines. Any ranger or druid might detect them on a spot check (CL 8).

Regardless of whether the creature is detected or not, it attacks the party, dropping huge tendrils down from above to grab up the nearest mule or oxen, following that with attacks on the party.

FEULK (These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 10d8, AC 18, HP 66. Its primary attributes are mental. It attacks with an improved grab that allows it to bite for 1d10 points of damage. The creature has 3 tendrils that cling to the tree like vines. It attacks by attempting to grab a victim; if the target fails their dexterity check, they are snatched and lifted in 2 rounds to the creature's beak high in the tree where the feulk attempts to bite it. Victims may attempt to break free with a strength check. Any victim grabbed suffers 2d4 points of damage until they break free. The feulk can secrete acid that acts as a 7th level web spell. Anyone caught suffers 1d4 points of damage from the acid per round. The feulk is little more than a mound of tentacles and mucus like substance that is bound together where its beak is. Striking the tentacles damages the creature and can kill it.)

The feulk should kill at least one mule or ox. This impairs the wagon's rate of speed as they enter the next round and the frost giant encounter.

TREASURE: If killed, the feulk has 1000gp in coin and gems; a set of +3 leather armor, dwarven thrower, 4 spells for a wizard or illusionist and a horn of goodness.

NOTE: At least one drover should be killed in this encounter. Later the other drovers bury him or at least give services, requesting the cleric to officiate and perhaps sanctify the ground.

FORCING THE PASS

If they force the pass they are attacked by the mounted bandits. The bandits attack in two groups spread out, and their intent is to scatter the wagons and the party to keep everyone from supporting each other. They attempt to kill some, but not all of the oxen, to slow or stop the wagons.

Lutke fights for the party against the bandits, unless he was horribly mistreated.

BANDIT CAPTAIN KABAL (He is a neutral evil 7th level ranger whose vital stats are HP 56 and AC 18. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. His significant attribute is dexterity 14. He wears full chain mail, a shield, and ring of +3 magic resistance, and carries a +2 warhammer and 250gp worth of jewelry and coin.)

BANDITS X24 (These are neutral evil, 2nd level fighters whose vital stats are HP 13 and AC 14. Their primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. Their significant attributes are strength 13. They wear mixed mail and carry a sword or axes (50/50) and short swords, and have 10gp worth of jewelry and coin upon them.)

NOTE: At least one drover should be killed in this encounter. Later the other drovers bury him or at least give services, requesting the cleric to officiate and perhaps sanctify the ground.

CONFRONTATION WITH LUTKE: Lutke is (or was) a bandit. His back story is simple. He's fallen on hard times and has joined this bandit crew, as he can track and hunt. His job was to lure the caravan into the pass where it could be sacked. If the party has been truthful, and the paladin or knight (or any character) acted nobly toward the others, then Lutke has a complete change of heart and desires to convert to whatever deity is worshipped. He asks for no mercy, but swears his faithful service if given the chance.

If not, and it looks like death is in the offing for the hapless ranger, he'll try to escape into the wilds at the first opportunity.

LAST LEG

Whether they pass through the forest or go through the Mettlock hills, the next stage of the journey takes them south, pass the Eil Wood to the Ruins of Pendelion. This should take two days. Two more days past the ruins, they come to the Wet Fork Run, which is a small river spanned by an old stone bridge.

The journey should allow them time to heal from their previous encounter and make what adjustments they need to the wagons. At this point their food may be running out as well. Encounters on the road are left entirely to the CK's discretion. But as always, the drovers behave well. Read or paraphrase the following

The track winds across the snow covered plains beneath the empty sky until it comes to a stone bridge spanning a small river. It is old, as are many such constructs in these lands, but well built and seems sturdy enough. Beyond it lies the open plain, free of mountains and forests, and the last leg of your journey to the south.

It is a two day journey to Twin Forks, but the caravan is never slated to get there.

THE FROST GIANTS (#6 ON MAP)

Frost giants live in a realm beyond the northern wind where they mock the sun and sky, and revel in a hatred of all things good and pure. In their realms of ice and snow they brew storms; they conjure the cold, harness the wind and rain, and stir it all into a maelstrom great enough to carry them into the realms of mortal men. Once they harvest their brew they unleash it upon the world. Storms lash the lands and sea, while ice and snow, and wind and hail all pummel the world, and these unnatural blizzards bring the giants upon their backs.

At such times the giants adorn themselves in armor of bone plate, leather, gold and silver. They take up weapons that rend and hack, that crush tissue and break bones. These giants love helms as well. They adorn them with tusks, claws, wings, and fangs. They carry horns to sound the storm and call their comrades and bring terror to their victims. They ride in huge iron sleds drawn by mighty elk that bray at the torment of their masters' lashes. The chariots they carve friezes into, recounting the story of their lives and deeds.

These giants, above all creatures wild and moribund, are fearless. They have no thought of death, or life, loss or sufferance. They laugh at all things. And this is no maniacal laugh, but rather

a jovial side of evil that is rooted deeply in the suffering they bring. For these giants are evil, foul creatures who have no echo of the All Father, but only a design for destruction.

The giants revel in the hunt, knowing their blizzards are bound to catch some in the open. They ride their sleds into the storm seeking signs of any that might be housed therein.

THE STORM

The storm breaks within a few hours after the caravan crosses the bridge. There is little warning of it. It rises from the north, from the timberland, and rolls across the plains like an avalanche.

The first thing the characters notice is a sudden drop in temperature. Shortly thereafter, a wall of clouds, black above and white below, grows on the horizon. However, the storm does seem to be heading in an easterly direction, which means the bulk of it should pass by them. There is a slight chance to out run it.

Anyone with any knowledge of weather, weather sense, or outdoors (this would include bards, druids and rangers) may make a wisdom check (CL 5) to determine if it is a natural storm or not. If successful they know the storm is not natural. Its source is more elusive, but its speed and sudden appearance are beyond natural weather patterns.

SAFE HARBOR: Lutke, if he is still with the party, imparts the knowledge that there are ruins of a temple a day's ride or more ahead. They could push hard for them and take shelter there.

Waiting out the storm: Some may suggest that they wait out the storm. While this is possible, any ranger, druid, or naturalist in the group knows that they run a serious danger of losing the livestock if they do so. The animals are not particularly adapted to severe cold weather and tend to hunker down and freeze to death during such storms. Loss of even a few of these beasts could be problematic. For this reason, coupled with the fact that they have a chance to outrun the storm, the characters should vote to move on.

NOTE: If they do not move on, and they hunker down, the nature of the encounter doesn't change. The frost giants strike and try to scatter the herd of oxen and mules first.

The party has about two hours to prepare for the blizzard. When it hits, it is blinding, carrying the following attributes:

- 1) Movement is cut to 10% of normal speed.
- 2) Vision is largely obscured, allowing close up vision of only a few feet. The wagons and horses are visible as shadows up to thirty feet away.
- 3) The oxen are unaffected, but the mules are nervous.
- 4) The carts offer particular problems. They can follow the one wheel in one track of the wagons in front, but the second wheel will be in the snow, this causes them to veer off course every few hundred yards. Furthermore, their movement is slowed to 5% of normal. Where the wagons are going one mile per hour, the carts are only able to travel about 1/2 a mile per hour.

The caravan's tendency is going to be to elongate. As vehicles slow down, and the carts become stuck they have to be cleared out. No one in the front is going to be able to

see what is going on in the rear of the caravan. So if it stops, for whatever reason, the front continues to move forward. This exacerbates the problem.

All this should be played up. Use the following short encounters for the snow storm:

- 1) **Stuck wagon:** One of the wagon's wheels falls into a cleft and becomes stuck. The wagon must be pried out of the snowdrift and put back on track. Refer to the strength check above for the river crossing.
- 2) **Dead mule:** A mule dies from the effort. The teams must be switched up, with the loads abandoned or moved to other wagons. A character horse can be substituted for the mule.
- 3) **Lost in the Snow:** A character becomes temporarily lost in the snow. This should not last long, and should allow them to find the caravan again with necessary dexterity checks.
- 4) **Hypothermia:** One of the drovers suffers from hypothermia and falls off the wagon. He narrowly avoids being crushed, but the wagon master stops the wagon to help his friend. He can be revived with spells or what not, but should be bundled up, etc.

These encounters lead up to the main frost giant attack, which begins with a cart or wagon in the rear of the caravan.

STRAYING CARTS

It is going to be difficult to keep the wagons and carts together. The carts (if there are any left) move very slow, and the deeper the snow gets, the harder time they have. If there are no carts, the wagons suffer the same problems, though not as severe. Each team moves at a different pace, particularly if there are any wounded beasts.

At some point, allow for a cart or wagon to drop behind the column to make sure the caravan elongates. If needed, read or paraphrase the following:

The snow is thick and heavy, and the wind biting. Whatever cover you have does little to stop the storm's sharp sting. Your flesh, your face and hands feel like glass, hard and cold, as if even a wrinkled brow might shatter your visage. Huddled over the saddles or on wagons, you lumber forward, the world barely visible. Somehow you notice, almost by instinct, that the wagons are moving at different paces and the caravan is becoming elongated.

The frost giants are out in the storm, waiting for a cart or wagon to break free from the caravan. As soon as this happens one of them launches forward on his sled, rapidly cutting through the snow to torment, kill, or capture his prey.

NOTE: The frost giants attempt to avoid the party members at first, targeting the drovers and beasts of burden, for these seem more sporting targets, with less fight in them. Anyone that shouts after being cut or wounded delights the giants, and in order to enhance the suffering, they are imparting the open tunnels in the wind and snow, allowing some others in the caravan to hear the tormented cries of the damned. Those at the front of the caravan are just too far removed.

When the giants attack, they do not do so to kill the victim. Rather, they ride by on their sleds and cut them with their long glaives, be it man or beast, whichever offers a more opportune target. Either way, whoever is struck shouts, brays or bellows into the snow, realizing that something is out there.

SPOTTING THE GIANTS: Spotting the giants is entirely possible, as they do not move at superhuman speeds, and aren't particularly concerned about being seen. With a successful wisdom check (CL 10) anyone within fifty feet of the giants has a chance to see the form of the creatures, the huge chariot, and the giant elk.

The giants then follow the victim deeper into the snow, continuing the torment.

Their design is to break up the whole caravan, forcing some members to hunt for the tormented victims, while others plod on or try to circle the wagons. Whenever another member of the caravan breaks off, a second, third or fourth giant strikes that one, attempting to capture, maim or kill their opponents.

CIRCLING THE WAGONS: If for some reason the wagons and carts are circled or kept together, this does not deter the giants. They ride past on their sleds laughing and singing. Whenever they get within fifty feet, they hurl their grapples with rope into the party, trying to pull people and/or beasts of burden over and out of the protective formation. They are not powerful enough to pull over any of the wagons. If they hook one, they drop the grapple, as it might disrupt their sled. Anything pulled into the snow is tormented and used to lure others out.

Eventually the giants storm the wagons, plowing their chariots into the caravan in rampant slaughter, attempting to capture anyone and pull them out into the snow.

THE DROVERS: Clearly the drovers are terrified during the whole encounter. The storm does not hold fear for them but the giants on chariots certainly do. The laughter unnerves them. At this point they have real faith in the party, calling to each other that the party will protect them. This should be used to play upon the emotions of the players involved, to aid the helpless.

GIANT, FROST (These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 11d8, AC 20, HP 61, 56, 53 and 53. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a battle axe for 4d6 points of damage or two fists for 2d8 damage each. They are able to throw rocks for a further 2d10 points of damage. They are vulnerable to fire but immune to cold.)

Each giant rides a large chariot-sled. They wear little in the way of clothing, relishing the sting of the air. They may wear some armor, but their power resides in the iron bands upon their arms. These bands each impart a +1 to their AC and each depicts that giant's accomplishments, creatures they've fought, items they've stolen, people they've tortured, and all the significant events in their lives. These armbands shrink to fit and can be used by mortals, though they carry the memories of the giant who wore them. They also carry a haunch of food, frozen and uncooked, a large ten gallon flask of beer, four grapples with 100 feet of stout coiled rope, and a variety of weapons. They prefer dull cleaving weapons, glaives, bardiches, axes and the like. Each wagon also

carries chains and manacles for those they wish to carry back to beyond the north wind. Each has a great horn as well, that when sounded correctly, summons storms (wisdom check CL 15).

SAFE HARBOR

The caravan, assuming it was traveling through the storm, covered a great deal of ground. Even as the giants strike, they are drawing near the ruins of the temple that Lutke (assuming he was spared and remained with the caravan) revealed to them.

As the rear of the caravan becomes enmeshed in chaos, the scouts or vanguard spy the ruins of buildings. Read or paraphrase the following:

Topping a rise, a long slope slides down before you, covered in a thin blanket of snow. The snow and wind break enough to allow the far side of the valley to come into view, along with the frozen waterway and the ruins of a large complex. An "L" shaped building dominates the scene; around it is a smattering of smaller structures and walls holding back snow drifts and the like. The building possesses two floors, more like a lodge in design; the lower half is stone, the upper is wood. It too is in some disrepair.

The giants, if there are any left, hound the party to the very doors of the temple. They do not enter the temple, for they detest enclosed places. However, they are easily distracted, so if they have captured any of the party, drovers or beasts of burden, they fall back to torment (though not kill) whoever is caught. This should give the party time to attempt to make the refuge. The pursuit may only include one or two of the creatures.

The wagons can only negotiate the ruins to the temple with great difficulty. For each wagon, allow a character to make four strength checks (CB 15) with no bonuses for the wagon. If anyone of the four checks fails a wagon wheel or axel shatters under the attempt.

The doors are too small to accommodate the wagons and the party is almost certainly going to have to open the box wagon and retrieve the princess to get her in the building. The door is jammed and only opens on a successful strength check (CL 6).

Assuming the party makes it in and the giants have not been defeated, the giants taunt and call to the party to come out and play. If this fails, and if they've captured anyone, the giants bring that person to the fore. If all else fails, the giants climb on top of the building and begin tearing holes in the roof. Though they detest enclosed places, they are not averse to opening those places up to their beloved storm.

The battle now either carries out on the steps, on the roof, or, if the giants open enough of the second floor roof to get themselves in, and fall upon the party. The giants do not use fire under any circumstances as they detest its use as a sign of weakness.

TERROR & TORTURE: The giants are not inclined to fight to the death. They find great joy in tormenting the living, not filling the halls of the dead. The lingering fear of storms is another joy the giants revel in, so allowing some to live to tell the harrowing story of their ordeals brings the giants satisfaction. Their real purpose is to capture a few, maim a bunch, then

leave into the storm. They do not press the party until they have slain them all; that utterly defeats their purpose.

THE PRINCESS: The world of Aihrde is a harsh world, filled with monsters foul and cruel. Those who tread her mountains and plains are a dour people, inured to the hardships of a world of violence. The princess is no exception. Her family is one of warriors and soldiers who have stepped to the fore to fight. Few in her line cowered behind others. As soon as she is out of the wagon and thrown into danger she arms herself with whatever she can. She defends herself if attacked and leaps to aid any who need it. She does not needlessly risk her life.

If the giants happen to capture the princess, skip forward to Picking up the Trail.

TWIN FORKS (#7 ON MAP)

The storm abates soon after the giants are slain or driven off. A foot or more of snow lies upon the ground. Drifts several feet deep stand against the walls.

It is a simple two day journey to the town of Twin Forks where the paladins of Kayomar wait. The Castle Keeper should roll encounters as desired.

Twin Forks is a large walled town that sits upon the plains between two rivers, the Ardeen and the Jung-Mul. It is the furthest point of the Kingdom of Kayomar, an outpost that borders the wild. Here the knights await for the arrival of the caravan. They have a few scouts on the look out for it or for any group of riders coming their way. Spotting the party's approach, they send messages, and within a few miles of the town, a troop of six knights and a forty mounted men-at-arms ride out to meet them.

As you cross the large wooden bridge that spans the Ardeen River, you spy the town of Twin Forks. Its massive, dark walls stand a bulwark against the white snow. Its roofs and towers, which jut over the wall, are plain to see. As you ride across the long plain you spy a troop of mounted men riding in your direction. Pennants are flying, in full color and carrying the glory of the realm of Kayomar.

The party is welcomed warmly by the Lord Commander and his men, and is escorted back to town, where they are housed in the main keep that lies at the center of town. There they are fed, reequipped and offered free housing until spring.

If they have not discovered the princess yet, she is introduced to them all, and thanks them profusely for their service in getting her across the wilds to Kayomar. She blesses them all and gives them each a ring. Each of the rings carries her coat-of-arms and a blessing. The ring is magical; it may be used once to heal the wearer for 2d8 points of damage.

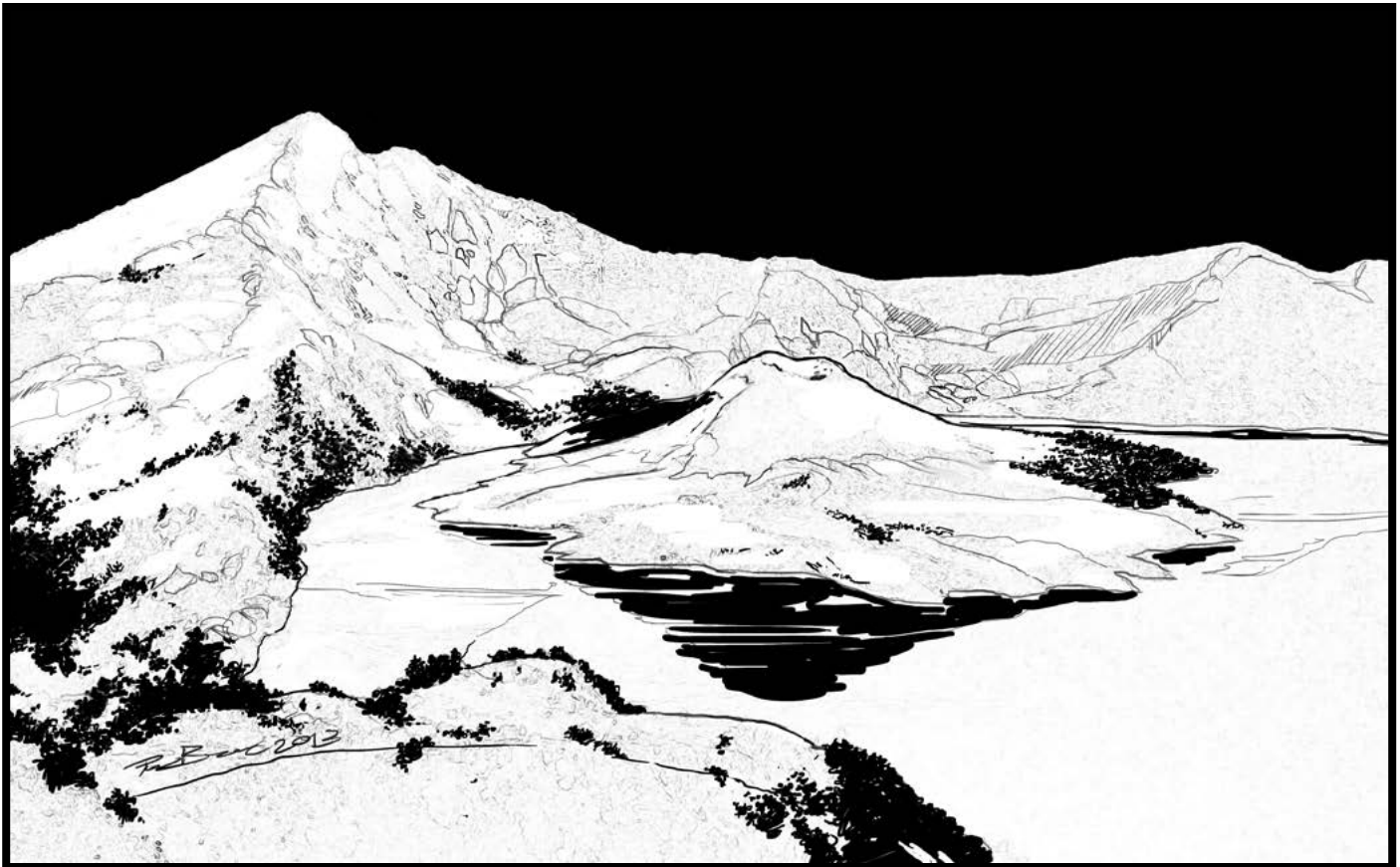
Each member is given 500gp for their service from the King of Kayomar. A great feast is also held in their honor.

The following day the knights head south with the princess.

Thus concludes A Winter's Promise.

24 CASTLES & CRUSADES

TRIAL BY FIRE



Trial by Fire begins with a quest for the princess whose troop was attacked by a large band of fire giants. The giants scattered the horses, slew most of the knights and men-at-arms, and kidnapped the princess. The adventure takes the party across the snowy wastes of the plains to the edge of the Tar Kiln where the fire giant hold lies.

KNIGHTS ATTACKED (#8 ON MAP)

Within two days, a knight, battered and wounded, finds the characters wherever they are at Twin Forks. He tells them that a band of fire giants attacked the troop, killed most of the knights and kidnapped the princess. He begs them to attend his master, who lies upon his death bed.

En route he describes the battle. In short, the giants fell upon the party in the early hours of the morning. They scattered their horses first and then proceeded to fall upon the knights and men-at-arms. In the melee, seven of the giants were slain, as well as 32 of the men-at-arms. One knight took the princess upon his horse and tried to escape per the Lord Commander's orders, but the horse was taken down by a spear. Both were trussed up and taken north, bound to poles like any common game animal. The Lord Commander survived, but the other five knights all died on the field.

The Lord Commander lies in a litter outside of town. He is grievously wounded. No amount of healing or magic can bring him back from the brink. He has given himself over to St. Luther. He does however beg the party to use their knowledge of giants, so recently acquired, to pursue the fire giants to their

lair in the Tar Kiln and fetch the both the princess and his liege man from their bondage if possible.

The pay will be handsome. They are promised title, land in the realm of Kayomar, a thousand gold pieces, and all the booty they can carry from the fire giant hold.

The Lord Commander has no men to give over to the effort-not quickly, at any rate. Help has gone south, but it will be a week's time before troops can be brought up. There are no seasoned troops in Twin Forks- only the town garrison, which is mostly militia. His knights are now dead, and the bulk of his professional soldiers are as well.

PICKING UP THE TRAIL

The lair of the giants is well known. It lies some 100 miles across the wilds at the edge of the Tar Kiln; a wilderness of scrub, breaks, tar pits, and forest. It is occupied by all manner of creatures, fire giants being only one. The characters need not, unless they desire it, return to the scene of the battle. A bridge spans the Jung-Mul River 20 miles west of town. And as it is the only one outside of the town for many miles, the giants no doubt crossed over it.

If they desire to investigate the battlefield it takes them about a day to get there. It is as described above, but much picked over by wolves. There are blood and remains everywhere. The trail of the giants is easy enough to pick up in the snow. It heads north to the bridge described above and leads into the wild.

The giants are moving pell-mell across the country, and within four days of the encounter have returned to their lair. The characters (if they left from town and are mounted) are probably only a few hours behind them. If they investigated the field first, they are only a day or two behind the giants.

THE TAR KILN

The Tar Kiln lies between the Wilds and the Maenluth Plains. Here the land rises in a mighty butte, a country hundreds of miles long and wide. The forests are sparse, mostly pine, with some hardwoods clinging to the banks of lakes; small wooded vales in the gulches mark the country. The Mud River cuts its western flank and the Oday Breaks mark the border with the broad and deep Blaudin Timberland.

The country is broken with many small hillocks, and is cut by deep gulches and creek beds. Worse, there are tar pits, great and small, scattered through the Kiln. The restless ground vomits the dark filth, belching it across the tortured land, or it seeps up through crevices to linger in the dying grass. Smoke drifts from the pits, and the wind picks up the stench of tar and burnt ground.

There are no roads through the Kiln, only tortured paths cut by beasts, or monsters. Here all manner of creatures find refuge from the world, from the bull-headed men, drakes, salamanders, and worse. Fire giants are not uncommon, living in the blasting heat of the tar pits, reveling in the world's torture.

And here lie the Kiln Halls.

THE TRAIL

Following the trail, the characters find that it leads up the slopes of the mountain, to the edge and down again into the crater, ending only at the water's edge, where a boat bobs up and down in the filth. Read or paraphrase the following:

The trail leads over a mountain rim and tumbles into a water filled crater. Though snow covers the land, it is clear that this was once a large mountain, reduced now by some ancient eruption. And if the crater failed to relay that story, the blackened lake at the bottom surrounds a smaller hump of a mountain, out of which spills a slow moving fiery magma. A small landing at the lake's edge and a boat show the only way across the lake, to a rift in the small mountain -The entrance to the fire giant hold.

The landing is not guarded, so taking the boat is simply a matter of walking down to the lake's edge and getting in it. There are oars within. The keel is covered in metal plates, suffering the scalding waters of the rancid lake. It takes only an hour or so to cross the lake.

There a path leads up the ash covered slope. Tracks in the soot are plain to see and easy for even the most unwary to follow. If a ranger is present they may make a tracking check (CL 6). If successful they determine that six fire giants came up the hill, five of whom were carrying odd shaped loads that affected their gait.

KILN HALLS (#9 ON MAP)

Upon the southern edge of the Tar Kiln lies a small, smoking mountain, Ranajak. Ranajak is a volcano that long ago blew the top off its mountain home and now remains as nothing more than a water filled crater, within which rises a second, much smaller plume. This one lies in the crater's center, surrounded by sulfurous water and smoldering steam; a constant gout of burning rock seethes from its craggy top.

A fire giant warlord has taken up residence here, carving a home for himself out of the guts of the mountain.

The Kiln Halls exist in the heart of an ever erupting volcano. The giants work hard to control the movement and flow of the lava so that the mountain itself never fully erupts. But it means that lava is constantly moving through the corridors of the Kiln.

The Kiln is extremely loud because of the constant moving lava, with the rising steam, rocks and stones popping and exploding, etc. Anyone entering the Kiln cannot hear normally. Unless someone is shouting or making some extremely loud and very unnatural noises, hearing is restricted to fifty feet. The giants are affected by this as well.

Vision suffers a similar problem. Creatures in the Kiln can see up to 100 feet, but not very well due to the heat and gases. Anyone attempting to look down a corridor over seventy feet must make a successful wisdom save or suffer their vision to be interrupted. If this happens, they may or may not see what is down the corridor. For example a failed check reveals a shadowy figure moving around the corner, when in fact there is none.

The temperature inside is very hot, though bearable. It generally averages about 110 degrees Fahrenheit (or 43 degrees Celsius). There is little air movement, making the whole area very stuffy. Anyone within the complex for over an hour starts to become dehydrated. They must drink a liter of water each hour or suffer severe fatigue. Each character that goes an hour without water must make a successful constitution check (CL 4 + 1 per hour). If they fail they suffer -1 to all physical attributes.

The giants cut stone to fit their own size, so when examining the map, note that each block in the dungeon is equal to twenty feet.

AREA 1 ENTRANCE

The front entrance is protected by a pool of lava, beyond which stands a closed gate. The gate is built into the mountain and consists of a stone arch and drawbridge. The bridge itself is iron and cast by the fire giants themselves, encrypted with runes, and safe from the ever present heat.

The path climbs the hill in a straight-forward manner until it reaches the cave's opening. Here funnels rise from the ground to either side of the cave, each vomiting the spoils of the earth in flame and tar. The lava pools in a pit before the gate, spilling over and slipping down the slope to either side of you. Beyond the pool is a gate, its iron grate of a drawbridge closed. Three demon heads adorn the wall above the gate, watching with lurid eyes.

The lava pool is roughly twelve feet wide and twenty feet long.

The drawbridge is opened by a pulley located above the arch. The pulley is operated by one fly wheel attached to another wheel by the arch on the left hand side. Turning this wheel raises and lowers the drawbridge.

Getting to the gate is difficult, as it is closed.

Climbing: The funnels are tall, ranging from a few feet to over ten feet in height. They are hardened stone and can support a great deal of weight. Anyone attempting to climb the funnels must make a successful climb check (CL 4) but also runs the risk of being struck by lava suddenly bursting from them. This happens on a roll of 1 in 8 for each round on the tubes. If struck the climber must make a successful dexterity save or suffer 1d10 points of burn damage. If successful they take no damage.

The door does not fully close, leaving a gap between the top and the entrance about fourteen inches wide. Once someone has mounted the gate they can climb down with ease and attempt to drop the draw bridge.

Brute Force: Forcing the gate open by pulling it down is going to be very difficult. First, ropes and chains must be secured to the gate, and then the whole must be pulled down. The giants have locked the gate pulley with a bar so this must be broken with brute force. It can be done so on a successful strength check (CL 10). If this is done the gate pulley starts unwinding and it quickly opens, crashing into the ground with a loud clang. Roll a check, (CC 8). If successful, the guardian in Area 2 is alerted.

AREA 2 GUARD CHAMBER

Once across the bridge, the tunnel turns immediately to the left and then again to the right. After that it opens into a broad, irregularly shaped room. Lava flows though the room, pooling here and there. Immediately inside, the floor is buckled from below, an obvious sign of volcanic activity under the floor.

There are four pools of lava in the room, each roughly 4 feet in diameter, but all oddly shaped.

Each of these pools houses a salamander.

SALAMANDER *(These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 5d8, AC 19, HP 40 each. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a tail slap for 1d6 points of damage, or a glaive or spear for 1d8 points of damage. Any attack gains +1d6 heat damage. If the tail slap is successful, the victim must make a successful strength save. failure means they are constricted for 1d4 points of damage plus the d6 for heat damage per round. The Salamander suffers a -2 on its AC while constricting anyone.)*

There is no treasure to speak of in the room. Anything the salamanders leave behind, the giants take.

AREA 3 GAS CHAMBER

The Guard Chamber gives way to a broad but short corridor. Anyone entering the corridor sees that it clearly ends in a

thick cloud of gas. The gas hovers several feet off the floor (24 inches), but rises all the way to the ceiling. The gas covers the entire area marked on the map, extending to both entrances, where the tunnel cuts into a Y, and leads to Area 4 and Area 5. The gas is difficult to see through, dropping visibility by 75%, and it is toxic.

The gas originates from a single point, rising up and filling the chamber. It leaves the chamber through several vents above. The gas is held in place and doesn't spread about the whole dungeon due to venting heat from the floor trapping it in the room.

Anyone entering the gas must make a successful constitution save (CL 9) or suffer 1d4 points of burn damage to their mouth, throat and lungs. For each round they are in the gas, the CL increases by 1 and the damage is cumulative. In the second round they suffer 2d4 points of damage, third round 3d4 points of damage, 4th round 4d4 and so on. For instance, a rogue enters the chamber and fails his save. In the first three rounds in the chamber he has suffered 6d4 points of damage.

Anyone crawling on the floor avoids the gas, but their movement is quartered.

After crawling half way down the corridor, they come to a stream of lava that must be crossed. The stream is one foot wide at its narrowest point. Touching it immediately imparts 2d8 points of damage and the lava clings to whatever it touches.

Finding the vent that emits the gas is easy enough, as it is located on the floor just around the first corner (see map). Covering the vent blocks the gas, forcing it out some other, crevice or crack. It takes about 10 rounds for the gas to clear from the room.

Improvised masks (such as urine soaked clothes) cut the damage above in half.

The gas can of course be moved by gust of wind or a similar spell.

AREA 4 SMITH'S CHAMBERS

This room is buried deep in the bowels of the mountain. It serves the fire giant smith as his quarters. It is a simple misshapen room, dominated by a short, squat funnel that oozes a constant stream of burning lava. The lava seeps across the floor slowly until it vanishes into a lava tube beneath solidified stone.

The hallway to the room has a trap door in the floor (detect traps CL 8). The trap does not spring until the giant activates it by stomping on a floor-plate by his table. When he does so two doors rapidly rise from the floor to the ceiling, trapping the giant and whosoever is there with him in the room. Anyone close can attempt to leap through the doors before they close with a successful dexterity check (CL 7, plus anything the CK deems necessary). Prying open the doors requires a successful strength check (CL 12) or triggering the pressure plate in the floor by his bench. A knock or similar spell opens the doors as well.

In the center of the room, bent over the river of lava, is a large fire giant. His dark red skin is burnt black from years of toil. He is even now putting the finishing touches on a two handed

sword. When the party enters he looks up at them and grins. He sets the sword gingerly aside and picks up his great maul. He attacks immediately.

FIRE GIANT (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 12d8, AC 23, HP 61. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two fists for 2d8 points of damage or by weapon for 5d6 points of damage. They can throw rocks 450 feet for 2d10 points of damage. They have full immunity to fire, but suffer double damage from all cold based attacks.)

He fights to the death, no quarter asked or given.

The giant's tools hang from stone pegs on the walls. These consist largely of hammers and tongs of various sizes, chisels and the like. In a box high on the wall, set upon some irregular stone are his prized possessions, a set of intricately worked stamps and bits. There are 120 in all, each designed to set in a small bar. These allow the fire giant to craft the exquisite armor that his comrades wear.

TREASURE: The giant has amassed a small fortune. It is kept hidden in a secret panel in the south wall (find secret door CL 7). Within he has a store of gems, ten 20gp gems and five 100gp gems. He has a small bar of platinum worth 1000gp. He also has a ring of restoration with 10 charges on it. The sword he was working is a magical +3 feather edged two-handed sword. Designed for a human client the blade is useful to anyone able to wield it.

AREA 5 COMMON AREA

Here lies the giants' common area. Fire giants do not sleep as do other creatures, but rather rest by sitting near a heat source. They have no beds, nor trunks to keep their equipment in. They wear their armor at all times, and most of them carry their portable wealth with them. For this reason the room is not furnished and is occupied by two giants and one rather large hell hound.

The giants are both resting from their battle and mad cap charge across the countryside. One is horribly wounded, having suffered a horrific head wound in the battle. Much of his right eye is gone and vision on that side permanently lost.

The room is extraordinarily loud as the noise from the two pits overwhelms almost any sound. It is very unlikely that the giants in the other rooms will hear anything. However, if the battle goes on for an extended period one may wander into the room. Every 10 rounds roll a d12, on a roll of 1 a giant comes from Area 8.

The tunnel broadens immediately into a huge room. Here fiery rock oozes through well cut flagstones and gathers in two large pools. A large flat rock sits in the middle of each pool, and upon each rock sits a fire giant. Both heavily armored giants are squatting on their haunches. One has removed his helm, revealing a horrific gash in his head that drips blood and pus. But even as you take in the scene a large black shadow detaches from the back wall, and with a deep guttural growl starts to cross the room. It is a huge hell hound.

FIRE GIANT (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 12d8, AC 23, HP 58. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two fists for 2d8 points of damage or by weapon for 5d6 points of damage. They can throw rocks 450 feet for 2d10 points of damage. They have full immunity to fire, but suffer double damage from all cold based attacks. In battle he uses a large two-handed maul. He always loses initiative. In a belt pouch he has a holy symbol of St. Luther that, if carried by a cleric or paladin, enhances all attribute checks by +1. There are also 400gp in assorted coins and gems.)

FIRE GIANT, ONE EYE (These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 12d8, AC 15, HP 29 (normally 55). Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two fists for 2d8 points of damage or by weapon for 5d6 points of damage. They can throw rocks 450 feet for 2d10 points of damage. They have full immunity to fire, but suffer double damage from all cold based attacks. He has no weapon, having dropped it on the field of battle. He suffers a -4 on all attacks. In his pouch he has the arm of one of the knights upon which is a signet ring. The ring is worth 500gp, but if returned to its family will bring five times that value.)

HELL HOUND (This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 8d8, AC 16, HP 46. Its primary attribute is physical. It attacks with a bite for 1d6 points of damage; any successful bite inflicts a further 1d6 points of heat damage. It has a breath weapon that inflicts 1 hit point of damage per hid dice. It is immune to fire based attacks and has darkvision.)

The room has little of value in it. In the far corner, next to the door that leads to Area 6 (the Kitchen) are four dead animal carcasses. Three of them are deer but the fourth is a minotaur. They are heaped unceremoniously upon the floor, the minotaur at the bottom. He bears some wicked wounds, the worst of which ended his life as it opened him from chin to waist. He has been stripped of all valuables. They are waiting to be taken into the Kitchen for cooking.

AREA 6 THE KITCHEN

Fire giants despise uncooked flesh and never eat it. However, their treatment of food cannot be construed as cooking. Taking the slabs of meat, they set them in an open flame, burning it beyond recognition. They then devour the charred remains.

The kitchen for the Kilns is little more than a square room with a pool of burning lava in it. The pool is fed by a small groove that channels the lava from Area 7 into the room. In turn, it leaves the room by another channel that cuts under the wall, sending it to the lake beyond.

The kitchen houses a single creature — the cook. The cook is a troglodyte slave. He is chained to the wall by a length of chain almost fifty feet long, just long enough to allow him to go out of the room and drag in the bodies of the evening's meal.

The trog is a horribly tormented slave and despises the giants. If the characters find some way to communicate with him they may make him a temporary ally if they desire. If they free him from his chains, he offers to join them. And if they offer him freedom from the dungeon, he'll actually serve them until they leave. If he is not offered eventual total freedom, he'll attempt to steal from the party and escape at the nearest possible opportunity.

He does know know about the secret door to Area 9 The Prison.

TROGLODYTE (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 15, HP 7. Its primary attribute is physical. It attacks with two claws for 1d2 points of damage, a bite for 2-5 points of damage or by weapon. It is able to emit a powerful stench that affects the combat rolls of anyone attacking it, wherein if they fail their constitution save, will suffer -1 all attacks and damage.*)

He has no treasure. His name is incomprehensible to any human, demi-human or humanoid. He is chaotic evil, and filled with hate, malice and madness.

There are charred remains of meat all over the room, but nothing of value.

AREA 7 HALL OF THE WARLORD

These are the personal quarters of the Warlord of the fire giants. He is resting at the moment, his wounds from the battle with the knight only recently healed. He squats in the corner, head bent down, his great helm still on. This helm, coupled with the raging fire pit of burning lava in front of him, blocks almost all sound from him. Unless someone comes into his room and purposely awakes him he continues to muse in his torpid state.

When roused he attacks with gusto.

FIRE GIANT, WARLORD (*These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 12d8, AC 23, HP 70. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two fists for 2d8 points of damage or by weapon for 5d6 points of damage. They can throw rocks 450 feet for 2d10 points of damage. They have full immunity to fire, but suffer double damage from all cold based attacks. In battle he uses a large two-handed maul. He always loses initiative. The warlord wears magical armor, embossed with his life's deeds, the slaying of a dragon being the most prominent. He wields a huge black crowbill in combat. Upon a successful strike the end of the crowbill sticks into armor and/or flesh, when he pulls back the victim must make a successful dexterity save or be pulled and thrown to the ground. Upon his brow sits a crown of beaten silver, gold and platinum, topped by a large white diamond. The crown is worth 5000gp.*)

AREA 8 TEMPLE

Here lies the heart of the Kilns, the temple to their god Unklar. The room is the largest in the dungeon with multiple lava pools and channels crisscrossing the room. Funnels rise from the floor in multiple areas, belching gas and flame. The room is dominated by a large stone complex with an altar to the Horned One. This stands on the far wall, lava pooled at its feet and slowly oozing out and across the room.

The altar is a demon headed statue, carved into blocks of stacked stone. Dragon heads carved into the altar guide the lava, and wreath the whole in flame.

This is the main temple, and it houses four lesser hell hounds and two fire giants. The giants are well rested, having suffered the least from their battle with the knights. They are sitting

before the altar, gambling over a pile of treasure taken from the field of combat. When they spy the interlopers they attack.

FIRE GIANT X 2 (*These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 12d8, AC 23, HP 49, 50. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two fists for 2d8 points of damage or by weapon for 5d6 points of damage. They can throw rocks 450 feet for 2d10 points of damage. They have full immunity to fire, but suffer double damage from all cold based attacks.*)

HELL HOUND X 4 (*These lawful evil creatures' vital stats are HD 4d8, AC 16, HP 16. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a bite for 1d6 points of damage; any successful bite inflicts a further 1d6 points of heat damage. They have a breath weapon that inflicts 1 hit point of damage per hid dice. They are immune to fire based attacks and have darkvision.*)

The treasure consists of 1000gp in assorted monies, a +2 small shield, +3 leather armor, a+2 dagger, a +3 long sword, a +2 mace of wounding, a +1 bow, 12 good arrows and a quiver, a wand of wonder, a book of 12 magic user or illusionist spells, a lute of charming and a staff of curing with 15 charges.

The statue is large and heavy. Pulling it down is possible with a strength check of CL 14. The stones behind it offer the perfect brace to so. If it is pushed over into the flame it crashes into the lava with a screeching sound that wakens the warlord in Area 7 as well as the prisoners held in Area 9.

The funnels that dominate the wall that separates Area 8 and Area 9 climb almost to the ceiling. A careful investigation of the area reveals a room behind the funnels. Climbing through them is going to be very difficult, requiring a successful dexterity check (CL 11). Anyone who attempts this however, must make a constitution save or suffer 3d8 points of burn damage per round they are climbing on the funnel. A successful save reduces the damage by half. It takes 1-4 rounds to get through the funnels.

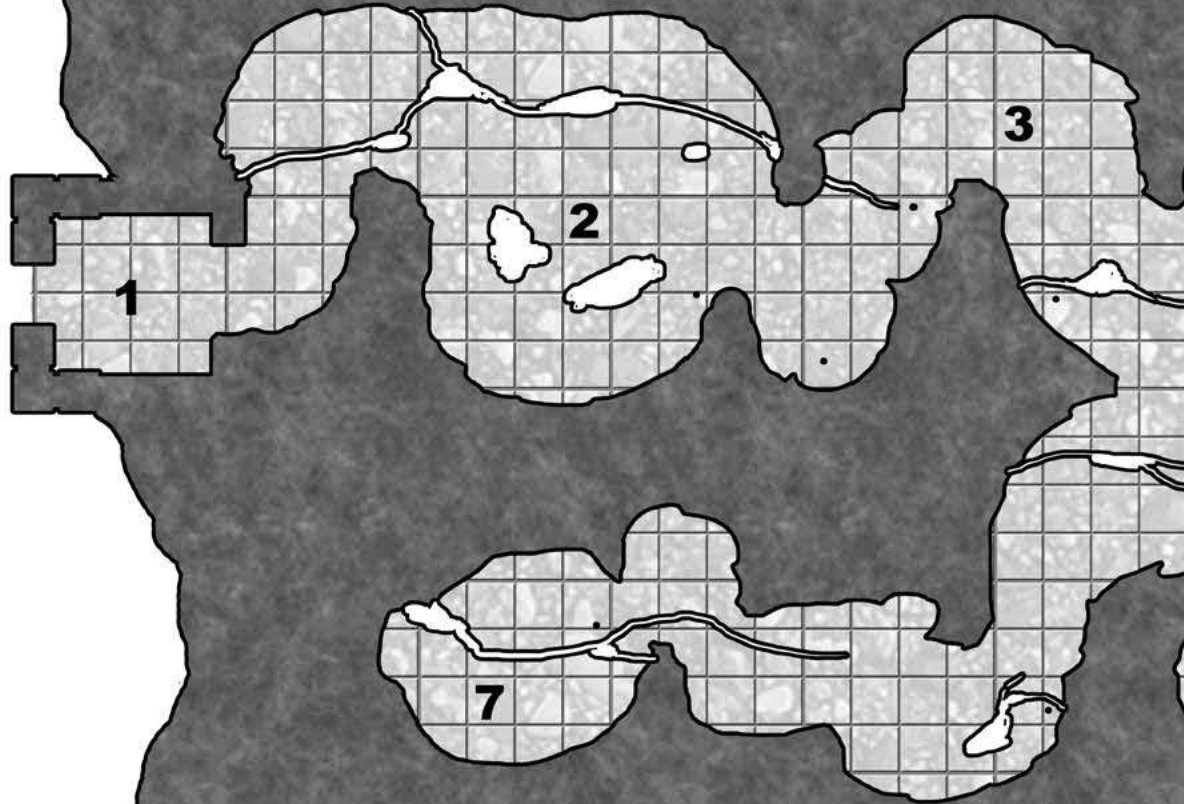
There is a secret door in the corner of the room, next to the funnels, leading to Area 9. It can be found on a successful check (CL 5). It opens the wall, allowing easy access to the room.

AREA 9 PRISON

This "L" shaped room serves as the prison. Here the princess Carolisa is kept, as along with the Knight they kidnapped with her. Both are heaped on the floor, tied, beaten, burned and blackened, lying beside the secret door.

Anyone who comes in wakens the princess immediately. Her eyes open in terror at first, but then soften at the sight of her rescuers. In a broken, parched voice she croaks the word "water." As soon as she gulps down the water she says "there is a demon in the flame!" If the characters manage to get her water within five rounds, they can be warned of the fire elemental taking shape behind them. If not, and if none are exploring or looking toward the pools, roll the necessary surprise rolls.

Within five rounds of entering the room, the fire elemental that keeps watch over the princess takes shape in the flaming pool on the far side of the room. He leaps from the pool, two huge



KILN HALLS

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



fists and arms extending from a writhing ball of liquid flame. He roars maddeningly and attacks.

ELEMENTALS, FIRE (*This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 4d8, AC 15 and HP 30. Its primary attribute is physical. It attacks with a slam for 2d6 damage and burn for 1d4 damage. It possesses all the properties of a fire elemental as presented in Monsters & Treasure.*)

Once the fire elemental is destroyed, the party can rescue the princess and the Knight, carrying both to safety.

ENDING GIANT'S RAPTURE

Upon returning to Twin Rivers the characters find a large army of 500 horsemen in the process of being assembled. Assuming they have the princess, they are welcomed as heroes and become the toast of the town.

They are given land grants in the Kingdom of Kayomar of 150 parcels apiece as well as the title of Knight. Each is granted a royal stipend of 25gp a year.

Similar awards, as outlined in the beginning of the adventure, are granted upon their return to the County of Karilia.

Thus ends A Giant's Rapture.

NEW MONSTERS

FELIUL STONE

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1

SIZE: Large

HD: 14 (d8) **MOVE:** 10 ft.

AC: 22

ATTACKS: Slam (5d10)

SPECIAL: Stone Spray

SAVES: P

INT: Inferior

ALIGNMENT: Any, neutral, neutral evil

TYPE: Undead

TREASURE: 9

XP: 3350 + 14

Feliul stones are magical stones that have been possessed by the spirit of a fallen dwarf, gnome, giant or goblin (far more commonly a dwarf). Usually the victim has died some horrible death, through torture or the like. Some feliul stones are possessed of the spirits of those that have died before some great task was completed. Whatever the case, the spirit lingers in the living world and takes up residence in the stone about it. These spirits live within the rock and stone, trying to fulfill their spent lives' lingering needs. After many years they are able to shape the very rock within which they reside. They shape it to resemble all manner of things from boulders to statues.

Feliul stones are undead creatures and as such they can be turned. Feliul stones are generally evil, for they possess some nascent memories of their past lives, which leaves them frustrated. These memories escape them like fleeting thoughts

and they brood on what they cannot wholly remember. In time, frustrations and rage twist them into creatures of ill intent and disposition. So they haunt the ground where they fell or were buried and terrorize those who come within their domain. They are not wholly stationary, but they never leave the ground around which they fell.

They do possess treasure, sometimes absorbing it into the stone that makes up their host bodies.

COMBAT: The feliul stone attacks by crashing into its opponent. They use whatever shape they have taken to their advantage. If they are humanoid shaped they punch or crush the enemy, a boulder rolls over them, etc. etc. Feliul stones do not, however, have faces and can never be surprised or attacked from the rear or flank. They are aware of everything around them.

All edged weapons inflict half damage against a feliul stone. Blunt weapons do normal damage.

STONE SPRAY: Aside from its normal slam attack a feliul stone is able to vomit chunks of rock upon its opponent. These attacks can come from any surface of the creature, back or front. They are able to conduct this attack three times a day. Anyone in the range of the spray must make a dexterity save (CL 5). If they are successful they take half damage, if they fail they suffer the full 3-24 points of damage.

DEFEATING THE FELIUL STONE

Defeating a feliul stone is not an easy task. Battering it to death is possible, but it is an arduous job. It can be hit by non-magical weapons and the stone can be destroyed. But the spirit is not destroyed and reconstitutes its stony shape within 1-4 days. Magical weapons will destroy the spirit. A successful turn forces the spirit to leave the host and flee. But it will return within 1-4 days. Any number of spells may work, such as rock to mud, rock to flesh, etc. but such spell craft does not destroy the creature. It is able to reconstitute itself in 1-4 days.

These creatures are very susceptible to suggestion. They long for a life they barely remember, and anyone who attempts to talk to the creature may meet with some success. A successful charisma check (CL 10, CL 6 for a dwarf) can stop the creature from attacking. Once it has stopped attacking, the feliul stone must be convinced that the interlopers are indeed friends and not an enemy. This can be done through a simple charisma check (again CL 10, CL 6 for a dwarf). Bards can be most effective by singing the creature into a calm state. Spells such as suggestion, esp, etc. can yield the source of the creature's pain, and promises to finish the task or remedy whatever happenstance kept the spirit in the world serve to calm the creature into not attacking. Anyone who attempts any of these things should be awarded extra experience points.

When a feliul stone is successfully killed or turned, the stone itself cracks and falls to pieces. Whatever treasure the creature may have falls to the earth where it stood.

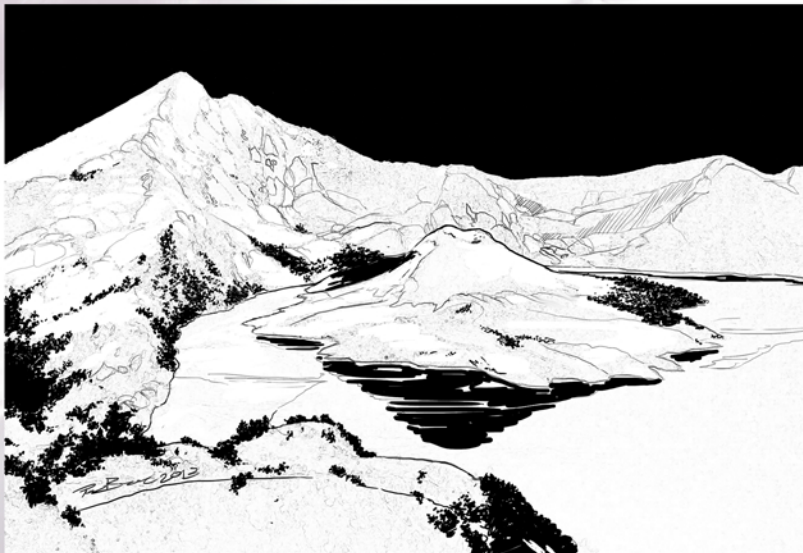
32 CASTLES & CRUSADES

CASTLES[®] CRUSADES

EURICH GUNSHOFF IV, COUNT OF KLEAVES, IS BESET BY POWERFUL ENEMIES. THE KING TO THE NORTH HAS LAID WASTE HIS HOLDINGS BEYOND THE TOT RIVER AND EVEN NOW THREATENS THE RIVER CASTLES. ONLY THE COMING WINTER HOLDS HIM AT BAY, GIVING THE COUNT TIME, IF ONLY A LITTLE, TO MUSTER HIS STRENGTH.

LONG HAVE THE PEOPLE OF KLEAVES WORSHIPED THE GODS OF THE SOUTH, AND IT IS TO THESE PEOPLE THAT HE TURNS, STRIKING A BARGAIN WITH THE POWERFUL KING OF KAYMOR. IN EXCHANGE FOR A PRECIOUS GIFT THE KAYOMARESE PROMISE TO AID EURICH AND HIS PEOPLE, BUT IT IS EURICH'S CHARGE TO DELIVER THE PRIZE. HE CAN SPARE FEW TROOPS, AND WITH SPIES ALL ABOUT HE CANNOT BE TOO CAREFUL.

THE PRIZE HE SETS IN A WAGON IN A CARAVAN AND AS ESCORT HE CALLS UPON THOSE WHO DWELL UPON THE FRINGES OF SOCIETY, ADVENTURERS WHO SEEK FAME, GOLD AND GLORY. THEY ARE CHARGED TO CROSS THE WILDERNESS AND DELIVER THE WAGONS SAFELY. BUT THE ROAD IS FRAUGHT WITH DANGER.



WALLS OF STONE BLOCK THE ROAD AND WINTER UPON THE OPEN PLAINS CARRIES DANGERS BEYOND THE BITING COLD. BUT MORE THAN STONE AND FROST, THE END PROMISES FIRE WITHOUT COMFORT. DESIGNED IN 3 PARTS GIANT'S RAPTURE OFFERS OVERLAND TRAVEL, DUNGEON, AND INTRIGUE, PITTING THE CHARACTER'S WITS AGAINST THE OPEN ROAD AND ONE ANOTHER.

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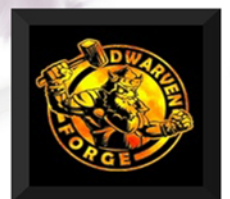
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