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CASTLES & CRUSADES

A STRANGER AMONG US



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A thief has broken into Lord Wynn's keep and stolen some carvings. Lord Wynn is offering a bit of gold for the return of the stolen goods, but he is offering a king's ransom for the return of the thief. "A king's ransom? For a thief?" The sheriff will not follow the thief further. No one seems willing to track the thief and bring him to justice.

Are you willing to cross the Hruesen River and head to the Blacktooth Ridge in search of this thief who is worth a king's ransom? Or do the horrors of that place terrify you? The Blacktooth Ridge is no place for the weak, the inexperienced, or the fearful. The dangers there are many and the rewards paltry. And this thief, this thief is anything but a common thief.

A STRANGER AMONGST US

This adventure takes place west and east of the Blacktooth Ridge in Airdhe. It is designed for at least 4 characters of level 5-7. A ranger, druid, or character capable of tracking in the wilderness is necessary to begin the adventure. If the party does not have a character with that ability or a manner of tracking an individual through the wilderness, the Castle Keeper should provide them with a suitable NPC to do what tracking may be necessary. It is possible to use the NPC Valaski. See below for details.

The adventure begins with the characters being offered a reward for bringing a thief to justice. Should the characters choose to undertake the task, they must track the thief through the forest, up the Blacktooth Ridge and into the wilderness beyond. The trail eventually leads the characters to an ancient walled village now occupied by a Rakshasa. Once there, the characters can attempt to retrieve what was stolen and bringing the thief to justice or choose another path.

BACKGROUND

To the far east of the Blacktooth Ridge, a great conqueror, Urghi of the Sampi, has been on the move for much of his life. He has invaded many lands and killed hundreds of thousands, building an empire stretching thousands of miles from one end to the next. None have been able to stymie his advancing horde. Whole tribes and peoples are on the move to the south, east, and north to avoid the depredations of the conquering army. This massive migration has lasted twenty or more years. People are moving in groups of as few as a dozen to hundreds and many thousands. The lead groups of these refugees (a people known as the Fa' Aedyn, see the end of the module for a description) are just now beginning to reach the forests southeast of the Blacktooth Ridge. They bring with them hope for a new future in safer lands. But they also bring with them the evils and curses of their own lands as they seek a new home. A new home for which they must fight.

Amongst those who have come with the Fa' Aedyn are some evil beasts and creatures more common in the east than in the west. One such magical beast, a rakshasa named Yesfir Zeba, enmeshed itself with a small group of refugees heading in the direction of the Blacktooth Ridge. It was not by accident that Yesfir did so. Yesfir and many of his kind have been slaughtered by the Fa' Aedyn over the millennia. Many rakshasa have

aligned themselves with the Sampi ruling elite and helped in the conquest of the Fa' Aedyn.

Yesfir chose to travel with this group of Fa' Aedyn to the Blacktooth Ridge for a reason. Ages ago, two of Yesfir's kin were imprisoned by some foul magic while west of the Blacktooth ridge. They were transformed into incorporeal being and were placed inside the crystals which adorned the carvings that, until recently, were hanging on a wall of Castle Wynn. Yesfir has known of the carvings and their location for many decades but has done nothing about it, having neither the opportunity, need, nor inclination; that is, until quite recently.

Yesfir disguised himself as a Fa' Aedyn and joined a small group of refugees heading west. Several months ago, the group arrived at a very old fortified village abandoned some centuries ago. This village is located about 60 miles east of the Blacktooth Ridge. The refugees decided to rebuild the village and claimed it as a new home. Yesfir joined them in the endeavor and helped as he could and as was necessary. After a few months passed, Yesfir convinced a few of the more capable members to travel further west to see what could be found. He then used various magics and threats to convince these three people to help him sneak into the Castle Wynn and steal the two carvings. After accomplishing this, the four escaped but were quickly tracked. One member of the group died in a fight, one was killed by the Rakshasa, and another captured. Yesfir is still on his way back to the village as the characters are contacted.

The lord of Castle Wynn wants his carvings returned. More than that though, he wants the perpetrators brought to justice. Currently the sheriff, Walrun Seblin, is offering a 1000gp bounty for the thief and another 500gp reward for the return of the carvings. A notice is placed in the tavern in Vasseltun while Walrun is searching for and asking for more famous or well renowned people to undertake the job. This is where the characters enter the story. They have recently, for whatever reason, arrived at the Blackbend tavern in Vasseltun, near the Blacktooth Ridge. The sheriff, having heard of their exploits, approaches the character and asks if they might be interested in offering their services.

PART I

LOCATIONS: 1) The town of Vasseltun and Castle Wynn, near Blacktooth Ridge. 2) The Village founded by Yesfir Zeba.

PROTAGONISTS: 1) Belfast Wynn, The lord of Castle Wynn and Vasseltun 2) The sheriff, Walrun Seblin, in service to Lord Belfast Wynn

ANTAGONISTS: Yesfir Zeba, a rakshasa.

ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE: Crystal carvings containing the beings of two rakshasas, the kin of Yesfir Zeba.

NOTABLE GROUPS: The Fa' Aedyn, refugees from the east.

VASSELTUN: The Offer

2 CASTLES & CRUSADES

Blacktooth Ridge



1. Castle Wyrm
2. Vasseltun
3. Dead Thief in Tree
4. The Defiles
5. The Miserable Swamp

0 5 10 20
miles



This is a small walled village with roughly 300 inhabitants. A ten-foot-tall berm surrounds the village. A fifteen-foot tall wooden wall is on top of the berm. One gatehouse affords entry to the village.

There are forty houses inside. All are wattle and daub construction with associated pens where cattle, pigs, chicken, or other animals are kept. There are fields outside of town. One tavern, the Blackbend, is located near the gate. A small stone tower, Roston's Crow, is found nearby the tavern. Castle Wynn is located some 10 miles west of Vasseltun.

BLACKBEND

This tavern has a single floor. There is a large common room where beer, ale, food, and various supplies are sold. There are a few rooms for rent in a separate building located right behind the main house. Supplies are scanty and mostly consists of farm tools, implements, and equipment used by the locals. The beer and food are inexpensive and common fair.

Bariston Ottenman runs the establishment. He is a garrulous man, worn by years of hard living, but rather sprightly and optimistic despite a life of travails. Bariston is normally welcoming to strangers but takes a quick dislike to those who are rude, impolite, or fail to keep his and the townsmen's needs a priority. Bariston and the sheriff do not like one another. Bariston does not believe the sheriff has the best interest of the locals in mind and views the sheriff as little more than a lackey of Lord Wynn (whom Bariston truly dislikes).

Bariston has lived near the Blacktooth Ridge his whole life. He has seen the ridge several times but rarely travels far from town.

***BARISTON** (He is a neutral good, human 2nd level adherent whose vital statistics are HD 1d4, HP 2, AC 11, BtH +0, and Move 30 feet. He has no primary attributes. His significant attributes are wisdom 13 and dexterity 13. He wears a smock. He wields a club in combat. He has 20gp in coin on his person.)*

ROSTON'S CROW

This tower houses the sheriff and several of Lord Wynn's soldiers. Though called Roston's Crow by nearly everyone, it is not officially named that. Lord Wynn, the sheriff and others of a more 'elite' status call it Wynnrock. It is named Roston's Crow because crows gather on the roof in huge numbers and the foreman who oversaw its construction is named Roston.

The tower is four floors high with a conical roof. A guard usually watches the town and surrounding area from the parapet on the roof. There is one entry on the second floor. It can be reached by wooden steps. The second floor is reserved for eating and meetings. The third floor for sleeping, the fourth floor for the captain of the guard and storage. The ground floor is used for sleeping, storage, and cooking.

A small dungeon beneath the tower is used solely for storage. There is a "secret tunnel" leading outside the walls from the dungeon. Everyone knows about the tunnel.

WALRUN SEBLIN, SHERIFF

Walrun is from the area of Blacktooth Ridge. He has found employment as a sell-sword over the years and only in the past half-decade has he been employed by Lord Wynn. Walrun is dispirited. A life's labor has garnered him nothing but a cold bed in a small castle. His latest position is a little better than his previous and slightly more precarious since he is not trusted by anyone. Walrun has, ultimately, become self-serving. His loyalty and sense of duty have long since vanished, transforming to necessity and drudgery.

Walrun has no desire to chase the last thief any further. Walrun and his men cornered the thieves on the Hruesen River a few days back. Though he and his men captured one of them, one of Walrun's men was killed and two others grievously wounded in the process. Two escaped and headed to the Blacktooth Ridge. The Blacktooth Ridge is a dangerous place, and Walrun is not looking for an early death, especially over the theft of some artwork, no matter how valuable. Hence, Walrun actively seeks someone to find the thief for him and is willing to give as much aid as he can to anyone going on the mission to locate the thief.

Walrun has captured one of the thieves and has him imprisoned in the Crow's Roost. No one knows his name because he speaks no known languages. Walrun does not want to release the prisoner but is willing to allow someone to try and speak with him. The prisoner is the only thing he now has to show for his efforts and may need him when returning to Lord Wynn. A deal might be struck with a character whereby the prisoner is released if the characters turn over something of value equal to or greater than that of the reward.

Walrun explains what happened with the theft of the artwork in Lord Wynn's castle. Four men snuck into the keep and robbed two small wooden statues from the throne room. In the process, several guard dogs were killed, as well as three soldiers. Chase was immediately given and the thieves were caught near the Hruesen River. One of the thieves was killed in a skirmish and one nearly drowned crossing the Hruesen River but was captured by Walrun. After a day of tracking the remaining two thieves, Walrun came upon the body of one hung up in a tree, ripped to pieces as if shredded by a panther. Giant panther tracks were found all around where the body was found. The fourth one escaped, but they picked up his tracks later. It appeared that the last thief was being followed by whatever killed his companion. Neither Walrun nor the others dared go any further as both sets of tracks were heading south and east toward the Blacktooth Ridge.

Walrun takes the characters as far as the location where the third thief was killed by the panther, but no further. This is about fifteen miles from Vasseltun. Though a few days to a week old (depending on the timeline chosen), the tracks are still visible. The tracks are a mix of panther and human. A fight occurred, but little other information can be gleaned. One set of human tracks leads away from the place. The tracks indicate the person left at fast pace. A tracking check that is five points greater than required for success reveals that the 'panther' was not a normal panther, rather it must have been huge with talons more spread out and longer than the panthers found on the Blacktooth Ridge.

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Walrun describes the statues for the characters at some point. Each looks very similar to the other. They are of unusual wolves, each biting into the throat of a panther. The eyes of the wolves each contain a small red gem.

Walrun remains in Vasseltun for one month awaiting the character's return. After this, the sheriff returns to Lord Wynn's keep though he does not forget about the arrangement. If the statues are returned, Lord Wynn is true to his word and requests more information. If the captured thief is kidnapped, the sheriff does not give chase; rather, he writes the whole thing off while keeping the identity of the players in mind for later arrest and execution.

WALRUN (*He is a lawful neutral human 4th level ranger whose vital statistics are HD 4d10, AC 16, HP 27, BtH +3, and Move 30 feet. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and wisdom. His significant attributes are strength 15 and wisdom 13. He wears scale mail, shield and +1 bracers of defense. He wields a +1 shortsword, dirk, and +1 short composite bow in combat. He carries a potion of cure light wounds, a potion of tracking conferring +1 to all tracking checks, a ranger's backpack, and 1200gp in jewelry and coin on his person.*)

THE THIEF VALASKI

The thief Walrun capture is named Valaski. He is from the far east and speaks no tongue known to the locals or most anyone in the west. His dress is unusual, being more colorful, made of quilted cotton and wool, with a pleated shirt. His hair is long and dark, tied in half a dozen tight braids. Valaski's skin is swarthy dark with a slight ochre tinge to it. He has no beard but does have a small mustache and no body hair. His eyes are slightly curved and dark brown. He is quite obviously from a foreign land.

Valaski only speaks his native tongue and can not communicate outside of hand gestures and drawings. Spells that mitigate this communication problem to allow full communication but only while the spell or power is in effect. Without communication, Valaski can only convey limited information but willingly tries to explain what has occurred. If asked, he can draw a map to the area of the village he came from. But the map is inaccurate and only conveys two things; the Defiles and a village beyond that. The actual distances are based on travel times relating to the passage of a day. For example, two days to travel through the swamps, three days to the river, etc. It took him ten days to get here.

If spells or other methods are used to communicate with Valaski, he tells as much as he can about the events leading up to and after the theft, until the moment he was caught. The explanation should include where he came from, the conqueror, the threats and the magical prowess of Yesfir. However, he will not reveal that he can turn into a tiger or tiger-like humanoid. Valaski still does not know this, nor why the statues were of such importance to Yesfir. Regardless, he is quite willing to travel with and help the characters, as he believes Yesfir is going to do something horrible to his kin.

VALASKI (*He is a neutral good 3rd human 3rd level ranger whose vital statistics are HD 3d10, HP 19, AC 11, BtH +2, and Move 30 feet. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and wisdom. His significant attributes are strength 14 and dexterity 14. He wears a smock.*)

THE BLACKTOOTH RIDGE: THE TRAVAIL

A portion of the adventure involves travel overland to the village where the rakshasa is located. The characters move through the forest to the Blacktooth Ridge, then across the Blacktooth Ridge, and then through the escarpment above the ridge. If the characters follow the trail left by Yesfir, it takes them to an area of the Blacktooth Ridge called the Defiles. Here, they find remnants of an old road and should travel through the Defiles to the marsh above it. After crossing the marsh, the characters cross a rather barren area until they reach the village.

The trail through the forest up to the Blacktooth Ridge should be difficult to follow but manageable. No storms or rain have fallen to wash away the tracks. The tracks lead through dense forest and scrub and do not follow any animal trails. The weather should remain clear for most of the time the characters are searching, making tracking easier for an experienced ranger. But once the characters get close to reaching the Defiles, the weather will take a turn for the worse with rain. All tracking checks should be normal up until the characters enter the Defiles. The distance to the Defiles from the village is roughly sixty miles. The Hruesen river needs crossing though this should not be much of an issue if Walrun accompanies the characters.

At the point where Walrun quit tracking, the characters take over. The tracks reveal one person and one creature with panther-like paws following him. Roughly five miles before reaching the defiles, the tracks change slightly, and it appears three creatures with panther-like paws are following the thief. Two of the tracks are slightly smaller than the original track. Roughly one mile before reaching the defiles no more human tracks are found, just three paw prints, one of which is the larger set.

An observant character might note that the human tracks and the paw tracks never appear in the same place. It is always one or the other. Also, the characters observe three sets of paw tracks at that point, five miles from the Defiles, and should they spend more time searching that location, they may find something more interesting. If a tracking check is ten points higher than necessary for success, then the tracker discovers the two statues. They are broken and have no jewels in the eyes. For each hour spent searching the area, the tracker receives a +1 to their check to locate the broken pieces.

FOREST WANDERING MONSTERS

The following is a wandering monster chart for travel through the forest up to the Defiles. The distance from Vasseltun to the Defiles is roughly 60 miles. There are no trails, so it is considered travel through dense woodland. The chart covers wandering monsters on the west side of the Blacktooth Ridge. Check four times each day: once at dawn, noon, sunset, and midnight. Roll a d12. A '1' indicates an encounter. Several of the encounters may involve the creatures picking up the characters' tracks or scent and decide to follow them and take them unawares. Roll a d10 to determine the type of encounter. Each encounter only occurs once.

- 1 Herd animal 1d10+20
- 2 Wolves 4d4
- 3 Cave bear 1
- 4 Owlbears 1d2+1
- 5 Gnoll War Party (40 Gnolls)
- 6 Hill Giant 1d3+1
- 7 Giant Spider 1d3
- 8 Worgs 1d3+3
- 9 Satyr 1d3
- 10 Sprites 2d6 +12

THE DEFILES

Where the trail of the panthers enters the Blacktooth Ridge, there is a large area of deep ravines and crevices that crisscross back and forth against one another, creating a maze of deep and steep walled ravines. This area is known to only a few and they call it the Defiles. This entire area was once a city populated by tens of thousands of people. That was ages ago, and long before the arrival of the Dark Lord Unklar. The city was blasted into nearly complete ruin and has now become little more than a part of the landscape and none know of its ancient past.

The trail leading into the Defiles is clear. The crevices and ravines of the Defiles are visible along the Blacktooth Ridge as the characters follow the paw tracks. Just before the tracks enter one of the crevices, the remnants of a raised earthen mound with cobbles atop it is located. The cobbles, broken and scattered, can be periodically seen heading in a nearly straight line into a ravine. Following it is easy at first. The broken cobbles and the remains of a small bridge crossing a deep pool lead into the Defiles, and is clear for the first quarter mile. Then it becomes more difficult to locate, vanishing altogether within a half-mile of being in the Defiles. The characters have now entered the Defiles. Valaski remembers moving through the Defiles but does not know the path.

The Defiles cover a seemingly large area, but that's not true. The Defiles only stretch for twelve miles along the ridge and extend about ten miles into the escarpment. The unusual formation is a riddle of narrow, cramped, dark, moist, watery, wretched, and miserable crevices and ravines. Moving through them is almost like moving through a cavern. During the brightest days, it's dark and at night, it is pitch black. Some of the crevices are no more than an arm's length across with a few having space for more than two people abreast. The cliffs are nearly vertical, stretching 200 feet or more in height in many places. Movement is hindered by the pools, puddles, and rivulets found at the bottom of nearly every narrow crevices. These dank sluggish waters, puddles, and murky pools are usually shallow but a few are six or more feet deep.

The escarpment above the Defiles is a broad swamp stretching many miles all directions from the Defiles. Water dribbles over the cliff walls in many of the lower portions of the cliffs. These slow drips and dribbles increase in volume during rains. The

entire area of the cliffs often turns into a huge waterfall During heavy rains.

The Defiles is dotted with numerous shallow caves and a few old dungeons. Being the subterranean portion of the city, the characters are actually walking through what was once corridors and, in many cases, once utilized chambers. In a few areas, there are a series of interconnected chambers remaining, but these are rare. Many caves have formed over the years and are more common than the dungeon areas. Close inspection of the walls may reveal this past. Unless the player's characters specifically describe examining the ravine walls, that knowledge should be kept secret and only discovered by accident or through exploration.

The Defiles are avoided by most living creatures; even squirrels and the otters found so plentifully on the Hruesen River find the area too dangerous to enter. The area is mostly inhabited by frogs, snakes, mosquitoes, gnats, flies, rats, vermin, spiders, beetles, salamanders, and the like. It is a rather miserable place.

There are a few other creatures as well. Many hundreds of years ago, a tribe of trolls took up residence here. That tribe has only grown over the centuries, and now there are a few hundred trolls who live in the Defiles. They typically hunt in the swamps above or the forest around the Defiles. Occasionally they hunt and eat one another. The trolls have made pets of some volts, whose population has also increased over the centuries. A few massive and ancient magical beasts and horrifying creatures of nightmare and terror live in the deeper parts of the Defiles in subterranean tunnels and chambers.

MOVEMENT THROUGH OR AROUND THE DEFILES

It would be difficult to convey the complexity of the Defiles, so no map is offered. However, the following should suffice to make movement through it interesting and challenging. Movement is reduced to a meager half-mile an hour for an unencumbered group familiar with moving in wilderness areas. Otherwise, movement is reduced to a one-quarter mile per hour. This can be reduced further by those carrying heavy loads and unfamiliar with the difficulties of moving in wilderness areas.

Because the crevices generally run in an east-west direction, a constant move in an easterly or westerly direction is possible. However, not all the crevices run that direction with many running north-south or at odd angles. Some crevices end suddenly while others track backward in slow loops or sudden turns. As such, for every half mile moved through the Defiles, a tracking check must be made to see if the characters are moving east-west, north-south, or at an angle. Modify the check by -2 at dusk or dawn and -5 at night. Roll a d6 every fourth check, and subtract from the tracking check. Failure means the characters have accidentally or been forced to move at an angle and must add one more mile to their trek to get back on track. A direct march through the defiles is 10 miles long. This means at least 20 checks and 20 hours of walking are minimally required to get through the Defiles. Maybe more depending on circumstances. Should the characters move at less than the normal pace, they get to add +1d4 to every tracking check depending.

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Towards the central and eastern periphery of the Defile, the ravines become shallow and eventually end with either sheer cliffs or gradual rocky climbs up to the escarpment on top of Blacktooth Ridge. In several places, the remnants of staircases, carved into the walls of the ravine, are found. These are easily ascended.

Moving around the Defiles is an option. The characters would have to travel at least 15 miles away to find a suitable location to ascend the cliffs. This requires normal climb checks for success. The cliffs are 200 feet high. Moving more than 30 miles in either direction, the characters find a way up the cliffs that does not require a climb check. Afterward, the characters must travel back to the swamp on top of the escarpment, then around the swam looking for some indication of the direction to go or locate the tracks of what they were following. This would be extremely difficult because Yesfir changed form in the Defiles and moved as a tiger for the rest of his travels. See the ending portion of the "The Swamp" below for more details on finding the trail.

DEFILES WANDERING MONSTERS

Every day the characters are in the Defiles, there is a chance the characters may encounter a troll or other creature wandering around. A check should be made four times a day, once during the following time frames; morning, afternoon, evening, and night. Roll a d10. A '1' indicates an encounter. A short sample cave is provided for encounter 9. The CK can elect to have the characters come across these areas rather than use them as encounters. They can also serve to illuminate the nature of the Defiles.

- 1 Violet Fungus 2-6
- 2 Green Slime 2-6
- 3 Gibbering Moulder 1
- 4 Volt 1d4
- 5 Trolls 2d4
- 6 Architectural elements noted as part of a ravine wall.
- 7 Broken statues
- 8 Pile of cobbles
- 9 Shallow Cave (see below) or roll again.
- 10 Roll again or create a small 3-6 room dungeon.

CAVERN IN THE DEFILES

This cavern consists of seven chambers and several hundred feet of corridors. It is occupied by several trolls and volts. The volts are kept as pets. One troll is in front of the cavern entry. It is not paying any attention to what's in the crevice. All checks to sneak up on the troll are made at +6. Troll and volt statistics are provided at the end of the encounter.

All trolls and volts in the cavern conform to the following statistics except those in Area 7, the chief's chamber.

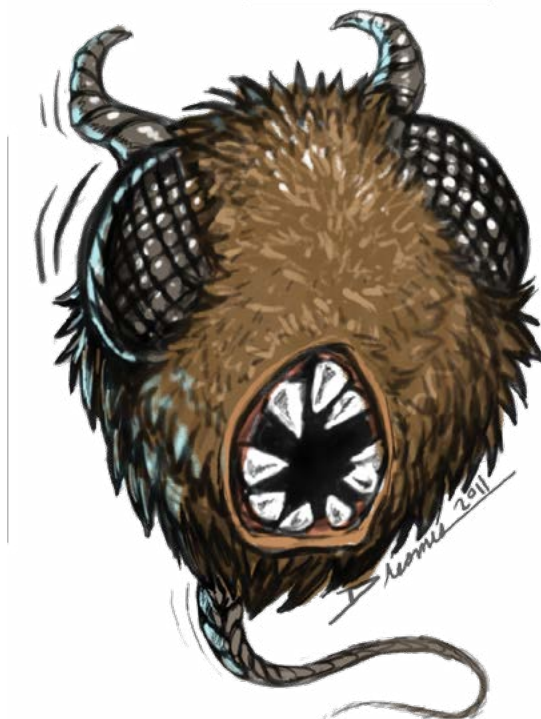
TROLL (These are chaotic evil giant's whose vital statistics are HD 6d8, HP 29, AC 16, BtH +5, and Move 30 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 2 claws for 1d4, a bite for

2d6, or by weapon type with +3 damage. Its special abilities are: rend, darkvision to 60 feet, twilight vision, and regeneration 2.)

VOLT (These neutral magical beast's vital statistics are HD 2d8, HP 10, AC 17, BtH +2, and Move 20 feet. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a bit for 1d4 damage or tail whip for 2d6 damage.)

TROLL CHIEF (This chaotic evil giants' vital statistics are HD 8d8, HP 47, AC 17, BtH +8, and Move 30 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 2 claws for 1d4+2 damage, a bite for 2d6+2 damage, or giant mace for 2d4+3 daage. Its special abilities are: rend, darkvision to 60 feet, twilight vision, and regeneration 2.)

VOLT GUARDS (These neutral magical beast's vital statistics are HD 3d8, HP 16, AC 17, BtH +3, and Move 20 feet. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a bit for 1d6 damage or tail whip for 2d6+2 damage.)



ENTRY (1 TROLL)

The narrow crevice is littered with bones and carcasses. Fetid waters gurgle with some toxic stench that makes one nearly gag. The walls of the crevice have crude symbols scraped into them, bizarre and twisting patterns, which almost make sense before ending in some chaotic scribble. Some distance down the crevice, barely discernable in the bluish darkness, a large beast, naked, muscular, humanoid, bulging, pussy, bald, scaly, rancid with putrid twisting horns, hulks over a carcass. It is angrily ripping into the meat, sputtering inchoate and pulling a bloody stump up with a groan and gurgling laugh. Blood dribbles down its fractured face as it angrily chews into the bloody and furry stump.

This troll is busily eating a deer it caught a few days prior and dragged back to its home. The troll is paying no attention to anything other than the sound of its own eating. All sneak and

Cavern in the Defiles



conceal checks necessary to sneak up on the troll receive a +3 bonus. If not silenced in some manner, by the third round of battle, it starts to yell and groan a warning to the others. This may wake the troll sleeping in Area 3. Make a physical check to wake the troll in Area 3. A success indicates it wakes and comes to investigate. It does not warn any other trolls unless attacked. If attacked, it tries to run away and into the cave looking for support from the other trolls found inside.

AREA 1 (4 VOLT)

The entry to the cavern is covered in ragged and rotting skins. Threads of leather and rope dangle with bones and small, primitively carved wooden figurines and objects. Inside is a long chamber that has been carved out in several places. The floor is littered with bones, tree limbs, leaves and other debris that were dragged in from the outside. Puddles of water are all around the room. The ceiling is high and irregular.

The ceiling is about 40 feet high and quite irregular. Several volts are up in one of the crevices sleeping. After the characters enter, they wake but do nothing until the characters leave. They then follow the characters hoping to catch a straggler by surprise and kill them.

AREA 2 (1 TROLL)

This is a roundish cavern with a high center. The central area has been cleared of all debris. The floor of the raised portion is painted in dull colors of swirling patterns mixing and mingling with one another chaotically. The chamber dips to trenches all around the center. These trenches are about 3 feet deep. A troll sleeps in one. Light wakes it, but the troll does not move out of the trench; rather, it stays in the trench, peeking over the edge, waiting for a chance to attack.

If any troll fights while on the patterns painted on the floor in the central area of the chamber, its regenerative powers are increased by 2 points. Destroying the patterns with fire cause all trolls who fight in the room to lose all regenerative powers.

AREA 3

This is a large cavern with an irregular floor that rises and drops in places by up to ten feet. The surface is moist and slick. The room is difficult to walk through and fight in. Toward the far end of the room is a pile of bones that have been carved on and shaped much like those dangling on the strings at the entry.

Fighting in this room requires anyone except the trolls to make a dexterity check every round. Failure indicates a potential fall. Another dexterity check is made. If successful, the character cannot make an attack but remains standing as they balance themselves. Failure indicates the character falls and must get up in the following round.

AREA 4 (4 VOLTS)

This broad and deep room is slightly aglow in an orange, misty light. The room is hot, and the air extremely moist. The glow emanates from a luminous fungus growing on the wall. The floor is almost completely covered in about 1 foot of water. A huge curtain of rock drapes from the ceiling. The lower portions have been knocked off and the rubble is scattered under the water.

A spring wells up from below and keeps the room full of murky water. The floor is uneven a difficult to walk on because no one can see the actual floor. If fighting, follow the rules from Area 3. Four volts are resting up behind the curtain. They come to investigate should anyone enter the room. The heat from any torches or lanterns eventually causes the fungi to lose its luminescence and go dormant. As soon as the room returns to a normal temperature, the fungi light up again.

AREA 5 (1 TROLL AND 1 VOLT)

This room has been rigged with lots of limbs and branches to form a trellis about twelve feet off the floor. The trellis is hung with various bones and pieces of wood crudely carved and shaped into unusual figures and shapes. A pile of stones, bones, and wood is situated near one side of the room. Others

are scattered around the room. A thin troll is sitting at the far end of the room. It is curled over a large bone and seems to be using its fingernails to scratch away at it. A round toothy blob of flesh floats in the air beside the troll. It glances up as the party enters the room.

The troll is carving a figure out of wood and is engrossed in that activity. It is likely the troll will see any light before the characters see the troll. If so, it moves to investigate but has no intention of fighting. It runs to warn any others, especially the chief. The vol, floating above the troll's head, is its pet and very much on the watch for dangers. The volt informs the troll of the characters' entry if it sees them. It does so by making a chattering noise.

AREA 6 (2 TROLLS AND 2 VOLTS)

The narrow chamber is roughly one hundred feet long, bending and turning before eventually narrowing to a corridor. The chamber is unique in that it is wide enough for several people to walk abreast. The floor is fairly level though scattered with so many broken bones, tree limbs, and debris it is difficult to walk on. Narrow fissures line the walls and seem to stretch back into the earth a dozen feet or so before ending.

The trolls often sleep in the fissures. Two are sleeping in here now. Light will not wake them, but a lot of noise does, or the troll from Area 6 might wake them. Walking on the floor quietly is difficult due to the dense scatter of bones and limbs. A -2 to all move silent checks is required if attempting that in this room.

The debris scattered on the floor is mostly animal bones and animal parts. Mixed amongst those are a few remains of humans, elves, dwarves, orcs, or others. Some old rusted weapons such as swords and axes are scattered in here, as well as what little remains of the materials they carried with them. Additionally, should the characters spend 1d4 hours searching, they find 300gp in coin, a +1 piercing axe, a belt of spell resistance 2, a box of candles with one candle of invocation in it, and a gauntlet of strength 17.

AREA 7 (TROLL CHIEF AND 3 VOLT GUARDS)

This is a roundish chamber and has obviously been cut and carved over the years. It is still rough and lacks any formal architecture. The floor is covered in rubble, half eaten animals, bones, and a few limbs. A makeshift chair sits in the middle of the room. It is assembled from bones, rocks, and tree limbs. A massive troll slumbers on the throne. In one mighty fist is the jawbone of a giant bear and in the other it holds huge chunk of flesh. A mighty flanged mace leans against one leg. The entire room has that horrible stench of a meat market on a sunny and hot summer afternoon. Small gnats and bugs fly around the room in a cloud. Roaches, rats, beetles, and others crawl all over the pile and the chief troll.

Three large volts are in the room as well. These just linger near the chief troll or up in the crevices. They are asleep when the characters arrive at the dungeon but may have been alerted by the time the characters arrive in this room. They are alerted by light and noise and make a clicking sound when alerted, scared, or become aware of intruders. This wakes the troll chief.

The chief of the trolls resides in this room. As the characters enter the dungeon, this mass of meat is in a deep sleep. If the chief is not woken by another member of the clan, it remains asleep until woken up either by light, sword, fire, or its pet volts. The troll stands about ten feet tall and has huge bulging muscles, massive jaw, and wide eyes. Its belly is rounded and yellow as if a pimple about to pop.

The trolls here care little for treasure, weapons, or other odds and ends of the civilized. They have not needed them in ages and do not collect these items. The only thing of value in this chamber is the flanged mace the troll chief uses. It is a +2 heavy mace of wounding.

MISERABLE SWAMP

The marsh on the escarpment above the Defiles is a large and complex affair. It stretches for ten miles around the Defiles as if a watery barrier. The marsh denotes what was once a city serviced by a complex series of canals. Since the time the city was obliterated, the waters flowing into the city just collected and soaked the ground as the discharges were clogged or damned with debris. Over the centuries, all the remains of the city have worn away or became completely obscured by the marsh's growth.

There are still a few extant towers located in the Marsh. Ages ago, many of the towers were constructed with the aid of powerful magics and withstood the withering attacks the city underwent. Some have also stood, all these years, slowly being engulfed by water and vegetation. Others have slowly crumbled due to fading magics and subsiding foundations. Occasionally a huge block of cut stone is found, or a massive mound of rubble is exposed. The exposures are rare.

The marsh is now a complex series of waterways, mounds of debris covered in lush vegetation, and undergrowth so thick it can take hours just to move a mile. Long stretches of the marsh will not support large trees and are covered in little more than tall, prickly brush. Other areas are too waterlogged to support anything more than water grasses and other water plants. Some areas have trees growing to hundreds of feet in height. These trees are limbless for much of their height, only branching out at the uppermost reaches of the tree. In other areas, only low vegetation grows as the ground is ill-suited for most plant life.

Few things of any size live in the swamps other than large snakes. Some of the snakes are old and gigantic in size. A few magical beasts live here, but these are rare. Some hippogriffs reside in uppermost reaches of a set of towers near the southern periphery of the swamp. These typically hunt further south but do occasionally fly over the more barren areas of the swamp. A tribe of lizardmen live in the northern area of the swamp. They hunt in the swamp and occasionally in the plains nearby.

MOVEMENT THROUGH THE SWAMP

Movement through the swamp is difficult and treacherous. Following mounds and exposed areas is possible, though much back-tracking, retracing of steps, and lateral movement is necessary to make any headway. There are many dangers; areas

where the water is twenty or more feet in depth, quicksand or mud sinks, and vines that are so thick with thorns they can tear through leather armor. The gnats, flies, mosquitoes, and other flying insects move in clouds of disease-ridden irritation.

Normally, movement ranges from a tenth of a mile an hour to one mile an hour. For each hour traveled, roll a d10. A 1 indicates a 10th of a mile was moved, a '2' indicates a fifth, etc. up to a '10', which means a whole mile was moved. However, if the characters came up from the Defiles on some steps, they will have arrived on a higher point where a major road was once located. There may be trees and brush on this trail and it will mostly be above the water and movement is easier. If the characters follow one of these trails, movement through the swamp is 1-2 miles per hour. To stay on any trail, a successful tracking check must be made every hour. If one gets off the trail, to get back on the trail a tracking check at -1d4 must be made. Otherwise, the characters have to wander for 1d2 hours before being able to make another tracking check. For each failure, an additional -1 penalty is accrued. It is possible for a ranger to choose a direction and generally stay on that course. The trip through the swamp can take as little as a day if everything goes well or as many as 20 days if everything goes horribly wrong.

WANDERING MONSTERS FOR THE SWAMP AND PLAINS

This chart covers wandering monsters in the swamp. Roll a d12 three times a day. Once in the morning, once in the afternoon and once in the evening. A '1' indicates an encounter. Then roll a d8 and refer to the chart below.

- 1 Assassin vine
- 2 Poisonous snake
- 3 Giant snake
- 4 Hippogriffs 2-6
- 5 Trolls hunting party 2d4
- 6 Lizardmen hunting party 11-30
- 7 Mudslick/quicksand*
- 8 Architecture**

* In this case, the lead character or one of the characters has stumbled into a mud slick or quicksand. The character needs to make a CL 3 dexterity check. Failure indicates the character is stuck and cannot get out on their own. A combined strength of 23 is required to extricate the person. If not removed, on the following round, the character sinks 1 foot and makes a dexterity check at CL 5 with failure indicating they continue to sink. At this point, a combined strength of 25 is required to get the character out of the quicksand. The process is repeated every round with the CL and the strength requirement increasing by 4 points, then 8 points, then 16 points, then 32 points, and on. Once the character is submerged in the sand, drowning rules apply.

** When the characters find an architectural element, it should be a large block of cut stone, a portion of a large wall, or perhaps that of some building. There should not be much left of the structure. The city was destroyed thousands of years ago. There are larger structures in the swamp, and the Castle Keeper is encouraged to explore that if so desired.

10 CASTLES & CRUSADES

FINDING YESFIR'S TRAIL AND WALKING AROUND THE SWAMP

After the characters have crossed the swamp or traveled around the swamp and Defiles, they have a chance of finding the Yesfir's tracks or the remnants of the road he traveled on. The characters must be in the area Yesfir traveled to even have a chance of finding the tracks. This area is indicated on the map. Once there, a tracking check can be made 3 times a day. The checks start at -10, and each check reduces the penalty by one point. For example, the fourth check is -7. Eventually, the characters should find the tracks. Once found, they are easy to follow. The trail leads heads through dry terrain with sparse undergrowth.

The tracks follow an old road. This becomes evident after only a few hours of travel. The village is located along this track about thirty miles from the swamp and into the escarpment.

THE ESCARPMENT

The escarpment is a rather pleasant place. Although it is arid, the air carries enough moisture to keep the region's vegetation growing. Most of the year, winds from the east are mild and cool. Summers can be scorchingly hot, but shade is plentiful from the trees. Grasses are high, and bushes tend to clump but not cover vast swaths of territory. There are numerous annual springs. These are easy to spot since the vegetation around them is much greener and thicker. During the rainy seasons (spring and fall), dry riverbeds fill and many more springs can be found. The escarpment is rife with wildlife. Huge herds of herbivorous animals wander the regions. Some of these herds number in the tens of thousands. Predators roam the region as well. There are lions, tigers, panthers, hawks, and other rarer beasts as well.

Once the characters discover the tracks or the road Yesfir used, they have but 60 miles to travel before reaching the village. A dry riverbed is to the north of the road, and the riverbed and tracks run parallel to one another for one hundred miles or so. Other than the possibility for a random encounter, little of interest occurs on the trail. Once the characters have traveled roughly thirty miles, they can see the area of the village.

While traveling through the escarpment roll a d12 for encounters once during the morning, afternoon, and evening. A '1' indicate an encounter. Roll a d10 and consult the wandering monster chart below.

- | | |
|------|----------------|
| 1 | Hippogriffs |
| 2 | Pride of Lions |
| 3 | Lion |
| 4 | Boar |
| 5 | Jackal |
| 6 | Bonesnapper |
| 7-10 | Herd animal |

THE RAKSHASA'S ABODE

The abandoned village is occupied by a rakshasa, two of its kin, and those Fa' Aeyden prisoners still remaining alive. The Rakshasa has killed almost all the prisoners by the time the

characters arrive. It decided it did not need so many prisoners, and only kept the most skilled alive to serve it. The 'beings' of his kin were freed from the statues before Yesfir reached the Blacktooth Ridge. Both currently reside in the village as well.

Yesfir is in service to Urghi of the Sampi. Or, more correctly, there is an alignment of desire between one of Urghi's generals, Agrit Kha of the Iraha, and Yesfir. As such, Yesfir offered his service to the conqueror to better achieve his desires. One of Yesfir's goals was to free those captured and placed in the stones. He has done so. The other goal of Yesfir is to move further west and set up residence in the city of Ihlsa. Yesfir has no intention of staying in this village for long. He agreed to move forward with some of the refugees and, once they started to settle, report back what he knew and discovered and once in Ihlsa to do the same. In return, Yesfir was given the magic to free his kin from the spell that bound them inside the gems of the statues. Yesfir is taking his time in penning a description of what has occurred and what he knows. He intends to send the information via a magic portal as soon as it is finished.

Yesfir does not expect any more trouble. He plans to remain in the village for a few months before moving on. The rakshasa is contemplating his next move while finishing his description for the general. Yesfir's kin are keeping watch over the remaining prisoners and instructing them on what to do around the village. When the characters arrive, Yesfir is in Area 14, his kin freed from the gems are weartigers. They are located in Area 10 and Area 13.

The village has been abandoned for nearly five centuries. Those who lived here were some of the final descendants of an empire that once thrived on the escarpment a thousand or so years ago (associated with the city mentioned in the Defiles). They have since disappeared into the mists of time or been absorbed into the populations to the east. One of the reasons the Fa'Aeadyn decided to stay here is because they recognized some of the remaining statues as representing their pantheon (the two peoples melded many centuries ago).

Currently, the area around the village has been trampled and beat down by the movement of the Fa' Aeadyn. Ten horses wander nearby the walls of the village. These horses have bridles but no saddles on them. Two are painted with yellow and red stripes. It is clear much wood has been chopped nearby, and some ground shows evidence of being cleared for growing plants. But that was obviously abandoned. A few trails are leading out of the area. The smell of smoke and cooking lingers in the air.

HORSE, RIDING 10 (*These neutral animals' vital statistics are HD 2d10, HP 14, AC 13, BtH +2, and Move 60 feet. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two hooves for 1d4 damage or a bite for 1d2 damage.*)

HOWLER MONKEYS

A clan of howler monkeys' lives in the branches of the three trees arching over the house. If the characters get to the roofs of any of the buildings in the village, the creatures note the characters and come down to investigate. If the characters appear aggressive or violent, they begin screeching to alert the



others. Eventually bringing the whole tribe of howler monkeys to that location. They generally do not attack and most any violent action scares them away. However, the alpha males challenge characters by standing near them and screaming very aggressively. If those they challenge do not back down within 2-4 rounds, the alpha jumps on a character. This can cause a cavalcade of attacks from nearby members. Otherwise, they do make a lot of noise when an intruder shows up and acts aggressively. This alerts the rakshasa and his minions to the presence of something new around the village.

HOWLER MONKEYS 100 (These neutral animals' vital statistics are HD 1d3, HP variable, AC 14, BtH +0, and Move 40/50 feet ground/tree. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with 2 claws for 1 damage or a bite for 1d2 damage. Their special abilities are a howl that can be heard 1 mile away.)

AREA 1: THE WALL

There was once a fifteen-foot wall enclosing the village. It has long since decayed and crumbled to near ruin. Yet there are still portions remaining. The wall is constructed of small red clay bricks that are worn to nearly nothing now. Vines grow over much of it, and trees have collapsed or covered some portions. It is simple to scale the wall at any place or just enter through

any of the collapsed portions. Any knowledgeable person notes this type of construction is different than that used west of the Blacktooth Ridge. The only remains of the gate is a broken arch carved in the shape of a woman. Only the lower two-thirds of the arch remains intact. The apex of the arch has fallen and mostly shattered. The head is intact and lies to the side of the archway. It has been set upright and several wooden bowls are placed in front of it. This is a depiction of the goddess Amphoe Wan. This goddess is still worshipped by the Fa'Aeadyn.

AREA 2: HOUSE

This collapsed house was once two stories tall. Two-thirds of the building has collapsed, exposing the interior. A rickety fence of limbs and branches is attached to the building. Four riding horses are inside the fence. It's easy to clamber up to the top of the building and get to a small portion of the roof that still remains. Thin trees are growing up and around the building reaching two hundred feet or more in height.

HORSE, RIDING 4 (These neutral animals' vital statistics are HD 2d10, HP 14, AC 13, BtH +2, and Move 60 feet. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two hooves for 1d4 damage or a bite for 1d2 damage.)

AREA 3: HOUSE

This single-story house has been partially reclaimed. Much of the first floor has been repaired, although one wall is nothing more than tree limbs with an opening for entry. A wooden ladder gives access to the second floor. The roof is solid wood, roughly hewn, but serviceable. A father, his wife, and daughter live here. The three are all a little undernourished and living in terror of the rakshasa and its kin. There are a few axes and knives here. The father has hidden a bow and six arrows outside the building.

FA' AEADYN 3 *(These are neutral human adherents whose vital statistics are HD 1d6, HP 5, 5, 4, AC 10, BtH -4, and Move 30 feet. They have no primary attributes. They can each fire a bow a +0.)*

AREA 4: HOUSE

Though a portion of the wall for this house has collapsed and the exterior is covered in vines and surrounded by small brush, it is evident this house was cleaned out recently. Inside, four bloody rotting corpses have been mangled and half-eaten amidst a pile of personal items that have clearly been rummaged through.

AREA 5: HOUSE

This house has two floors. Both have been hastily repaired. The walls and roof are intact. The first floor has been cleaned of most debris. There is a pile of blankets for a bed, wooden bowls, a few iron pots and utensils, a musical instrument much like an oversized guitar, some rotting food, a broken bow, and a few other pieces of personal gear lying around. A ladder accesses the second floor.

The second floor has two bloody bodies lying in the middle of it. One is a female, the other a male. Both have been ravaged and half eaten by a predator. A large pile of blankets and a rug lay on the floor. A ladder accesses the roof. The bodies have 20gp worth of jewelry on them. A scimitar and two daggers lie on the floor.

Nothing is on the roof. However, from this vantage, one can clearly see the upper floor window of the house in Area 14 (Yesfir may be inside the house). The window is covered by a curtain.

AREA 6: COURTYARD

This was once the town's courtyard. It was being used as a corral for the horses by the Fa' Aeadyn. When Yesfir returned with his kin, they proceeded to slaughter and eat several of the horses. Others fled and have escaped into the wilderness. Four of the horses were captured and mostly eaten. The rotting corpses of the horses lie around the courtyard. There are a dozen saddles, a broken wagon, bits and bridles, and other accouterments belonging to horses scattered around the courtyard.

One of the saddles belonged to the leader of the group. He was killed when Yesfir returned. The saddle allows the rider to receive a +1 to all checks associated with riding horses as it relates to combat maneuvers, remaining seated, etc. It allows

one slightly greater control of the horse such that a war horse's attacks receive an additional +1 to hit and damage if the rider is not involved in attacks as well. It does not affect the speed of the horse, its training, armor class, or basic abilities.

AREA 7: HOUSE

This single-storied structure's roof has collapsed long ago, and all that remains is a rubble filled interior with a gigantic tree growing out of it. The door and windows have long since rotted away. There are windows in each of the walls. On the wall by the south window is an etched symbol of a deity. There are a few wooden bowls at the base of the symbol filled with rotting food.

The symbol of the deity Ara Maz has lasted all the long years because of the power of the deity. It is one of the reasons the Fa' Aeadyn decided to settle here because Ara Maz is worshipped amongst them. A successful wisdom check by a cleric, druid, or similar class strikes a memory or recollection, and that person can place the symbol as to be that of an ancient deity who guided man from the caves and gave them fire.

Ara Maz has been awakened to the evil in this village by the offerings of the Fa' Aeadyn. Any of the Fa' Aeadyn who come to this place and give an offering at the base of the symbol are healed of all damage. This occurs only once per individual. Any character who does so and pays homage to Ara Maz has half of all damage healed, and likewise only occurs once.

AREA 8: HOUSE

This house is intact and is occupied by six people. There is a pile of rubble outside the front door. The entry is covered by a long colorful curtain. There are three females, one adult male, and two younger children inside. The children were hidden as soon as Yesfir started his rampage. They are hiding on the second floor. During the day, the adults are in Area 14 working and return here after sunset.

There is a large pile of firewood, a large pot hanging over a crude firepit, several cloths, wooden bowls, plates, and drinking horns and four large barrels in the room. Some shovels, hoes, and a few other tools are arranged in another corner. Steps on the far end of the room lead up to the second floor. There are three javelins and a scimitar in the woodpile.

There are piles of cloth and four saddles in this room. When the children hear anyone, they hide under the blankets.

ADULTS 4 *(These are neutral human adherents whose vital statistics are HD 1d6, HP 5,5,4, AC 10, BtH -4, and Move 30 feet. They have no primary attributes. They can each fire a bow a +0.)*

CHILDREN 2 *(These are neutral human adherents whose vital statistics are HD 1d3, HP 2 and 2, AC 10, BtH -4, and Move 20 feet. They have no primary attributes.)*

AREA 9: HOUSE

There's always one. This Fa' Aeadyn, Jeerak, had become friends with Yesfir while on the journey from the east. Jeerak was

not liked by his companions due to his cruel nature and mean spiritedness. When Yesfir returned and began slaughtering the Fa' Aeadyn, Jeerak offered his services to Yesfir. Yesfir relented, allowing Jeerak to live. Yesfir has no intention of allowing Jeerak to leave here alive. Currently, Jeerak is responsible for watching over the remaining Fa' Aeadyn. This is something Jeerak delights in doing. He will either be here sleeping or supervising the others.

This is a single-story structure. A large portion of one wall has fallen in. A firepit is in one corner. There is a pile of blankets nearby where Jeerak sleeps. He has collected most of the valuables and important items from around the camp and keeps them here. There is 800gp worth of jewelry in a small wood barrel by Jeerak's sleeping area.

JEERAK (He is a chaotic evil human 4th level barbarian whose vital statistics are HD 4d10, HP 30, AC 17, BtH +3, and Move 30 feet. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. His significant attributes are strength 14, dexterity 13, and constitution 15. He wears a chain shirt, shield, and an armband of damage absorption 3 [this is only activated when no other armor is worn]. He wields a +2 scimitar, +1 short composite bow, and +1 hand axe in combat. He carries a potion of cure light wounds, a ring of tracking [allows tracking as a 3rd level ranger or gives a ranger to double their attribute bonus on tracking checks], expert overland pack, and 400gp worth of coin and jewelry.)

AREA 10: CHARIOT

There is a chariot in this courtyard, as well as two black draft horses. Yesfir came here in the chariot and intends to use it to carry him to Ihlsa. The chariot is finely made and encrusted with glass beads and blanketed in colorful fabrics. It is large enough to hold three people. The horses are well fed and trained though do not like riders. All the gear or the horses and chariot are in the back of the chariot. There are two bow slots, two arrow holders, and numerous straps in the chariot.

HORSE, DRAFT 2 (These neutral animals' vital statistics are HD 2d12, HP 17, AC 12, BtH +2, and Move 60 feet. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two hooves for 1d3 damage or a bite for 1d3 damage.)

AREA 11: HOUSE

This single-story house consists of four interconnected bedrooms. The exterior is, for the most part, intact. The interior has been cleaned of a lot of debris, though it is still clearly in a state of disrepair.

ROOM 1: This room has two rotting corpses in it. One of the weartigers has been eating on these corpses. There is a 50% chance the weartiger is in here when the characters arrive. A pile of firewood and foodstuffs are collected along one wall of this room.

ROOM 2: There is a pile of blankets and clothing in the center of the room. They have been formed into a bed. Some packs, two saddles, and saddlebags have been thrown up against one

wall. Foodstuffs hang in baskets from the ceiling. Six spears, several scimitars, three bows, and a pile of arrows are arranged in a corner. Underneath the blankets is a small chest with 100gp worth of coin and jewelry inside.

This is where the weartiger sleeps. If not in room 1 or otherwise engaged, the weartiger will be in this area sleeping.

ROOM 3: Six Fa' Aeadyn, who survived the ravages of the rakshasa and weartigers, are gathered in here. The weartiger mentioned previously keeps them in here for later consumption. No one has dared tried to escape yet but several are thinking about it.

The room is empty except for a few ragged blankets and a bowl of water. The room smells rancid and uncomfortable. There are two windows, but both have been blocked by limbs.

ADULTS 4 (These are neutral human adherents whose vital statistics are HD 1d6, HP 5,5,4, AC 10, BtH -4, and Move 30 feet. They have no primary attributes. They can each fire a bow a +0.)

CHILDREN 2 (These are neutral human adherents whose vital statistics are HD 1d3, HP 2 and 2, AC 10, BtH -4, and Move 20 feet. They have no primary attributes.)

WEARTIGER (This neutral shapechanger's vital statistics are HD 6d8, HP 34, AC 16, BtH +6, and Move 30/40 feet human/tiger. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 2 claws for 1d4 damage and a bite for 1d6 damage. Its special abilities are rake, regeneration 3, curse of lycanthropy, alternate form, tiger empathy, and twilight vision.)

AREA 12: HOUSE

This three-story building is nearly intact. Several large trees grow outside it, and the walls are covered in thick vines. A pile of animal bones and skins lies outside the entry. There are six people inside. The four adults usually work in Area 14 during the day and into the evening.

FLOOR 1: This room has been cleared and somewhat cleaned. A firepit is in the middle of the room. A pile of wood, a few pan, wooden platters, and utensils lie nearby. Reed baskets and cloth bags are scattered around the room and opened, their contents (foodstuffs like dried beans, rice, and dried fruits) spilled on the floor. A ladder accesses the upper floor.

FLOOR 2: The second floor has several reed mats on the floor, six saddles, and some blankets. There is a chamber pot near the steps. Four Fa' Aeadyn are in the room. There are two males and two females. They are frightened and greet the characters warily. Two scimitars are hidden amongst the blankets. A ladder gives access to the floor above.

FLOOR 3: Two children are hiding in a pile of debris when anyone enters the house. There are a few saddles, blankets, bags and cloth lying around. Each of the children has a dagger. A ladder accesses the roof.

ADULTS 4 (These are neutral human adherents whose vital statistics are HD 1d6, HP 5,5,4, AC 10, BtH -4, and Move 30 feet. They have no primary attributes. They can each fire a bow a +0.)

14 CASTLES & CRUSADES

CHILDREN 2 (These are neutral human adherents whose vital statistics are HD 1d3, HP 2 and 2, AC 10, BtH -4, and Move 20 feet. They have no primary attributes.)

AREA 13: RUINS

This is merely a pile of rubble covered in grass, weeds, shrubs, and a few small trees. One of the weartigers enjoys sleeping in the bramble and bushes. Depending on the time of day, the weartiger is either here, wandering around, or with Yesfir. She typically sleeps in the morning and afternoon, prowling at night and during midday. This weartiger, at the first sign, she is in a fight she likely cannot win, races away into the wilds to avoid any conflict. However, her memory is long and revenge will always be on her mind.

WEARTIGER (This neutral shapechanger's vital statistics are HD 6d8, HP 34, AC 16, BtH +6, and Move 30/40 feet human/tiger. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 2 claws for 1d4 damage and a bite for 1d6 damage. Its special abilities are rake, regeneration 3, curse of lycanthropy, alternate form, tiger empathy, and twilight vision.)

14: YESFIR'S ABODE

Yesfir had claimed this house since it was in the best shape when the group arrived. He then ordered those who remained to begin repairing the house and making it suitable for him. All the floors have some type of construction underway. At the time of the character's arrival, a dozen or more people are regularly working on the building. Yesfir is located on the 3rd floor penning a letter. Once Yesfir becomes aware of the characters, it changes shape and goes looking for them.

A: GROUND FLOOR

This floor has three rooms, each connected by an arched doorway. Dingy red and yellow curtains with star patterns on them cover the archways. A ladder accesses the floor above.

The entry room is broad and open. The four windows have been repaired and have cloths covering them. The floor has been swept clean. One wall has been washed, revealing bits and pieces of a map that once covered the plaster. The map shows the lands east of the Blacktooth Ridge. Though the vast majority of the map has been destroyed, there are cities, roads, forests and mountains stretching into the east. A few scraps of words or writings remain as well. These are written in a completely foreign tongue.

The small room to the south is used to store wood, brick, stone, and other supplies used by those repairing the house. There are 10x50 foot sections of rope, several hammers, a saw, several axes, adze, chisels, a few mauls, and a one-gallon jug of lamp oil, a pile of wood, and stacks of bricks collected from around the village.

The room to the north has recently been plastered with a reddish clay. It is partially painted in swirling patterns and isometric shapes alternating in color from red to yellow or combinations of the two. Two large urns are placed in the middle of the room.



One contains a red 'paint' and the other a yellow 'paint.' The painting is crude and poorly made but functional. Yesfir has painted an image of his deity on the wall.

B: SECOND FLOOR

This is where Yesfir sleeps. There a magic stone in here that makes a screeching sound when anyone enters. A long trunk sits in the center of the room. Behind it is an elaborate carpet with geometric designs. Several broad pillows are arranged around the carpet. A brass narghile sits in the middle of the carpet. Curtains cover the windows. Several wooden bowls and one gold bowl are neatly arranged along a wall. Some silver utensils are laid on a napkin nearby. The room smells of garlic, onion, an unknown but pleasant smell, and overcooked meat.

The trunk contains valuable silk and cotton clothing spun with silver, gold, gems, and other rare metals. There are rings of various shapes and sizes, bejeweled gold and silver necklaces, shoes with curled toes or pointed toes, hats of various shapes, and similar personal items such as ivory combs, brushes, soaps, razors, and creamy perfumes and a stack of tobacco cubes. There are also four metal vials and two scroll cases. The trunk is only a third full. The jewelry is worth 5000gp. All the other material is worth 2000gp.

There are four metal vials wrapped in paper and cotton, and each is labeled in an indecipherable tongue. They each contain four draughts of the following potions: nondetection, gaseous form, protection from arrows, and neutralize poison.

The two scroll cases each contain two scrolls. The language is completely foreign. The following spells are on them;

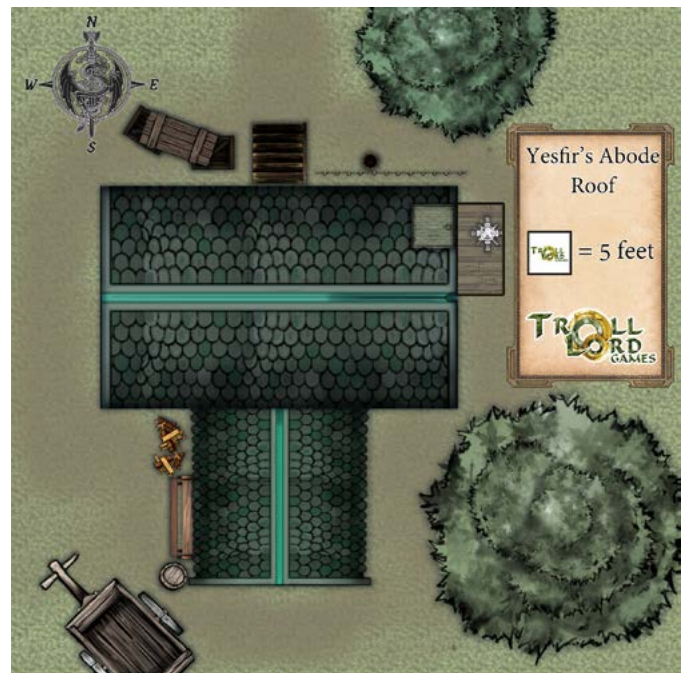
SCROLL 1: sanctuary, magic circle protection from good

SCROLL 2: shield of faith, protection from good

SCROLL 3: sleep, ray of enfeeblement

SCROLL 4: magic missile, see invisible

The carpet is a 5x5 carpet of flying. One Robe of Eyes in the trunk. This is an elaborate robe of red and blue silks elaborately



decorated in angular patterns and a 12-inch collar. The back of the collar has an eye on it.

There is an alarm stone by the narghile.

C: THIRD FLOOR

Yesfir is using this room to write a letter to Agrit Kha of the Iraha, an advisor to Tiglath. If Yesfir has not been otherwise warned of the characters' presence, he will be sitting in here at his desk penning a letter.

There is a small red carpet in the center of the room. A bundai with three drawers is on the carpet and small pillow is beside the bundai. A few bottles of ink, several quills, and a sheaf of papers are lying on top of the bundai. In front of the bundai is a small

mirror in a wooden stand. A lantern is hanging from the ceiling.

The mirror is magical. It connects to its paired mirror, and objects can be passed through it. Any object the size of the mirror, or smaller, can be passed through it. That objects sit in a pocket dimension until the other mirror's cover is removed. It then pops out onto whatever surface the mirror is resting. In all other respects, it acts as a mirror. It is 12 inches tall and six inches wide in a wooden stand inlaid with silver. The paired mirror is in possession of Agrit Kha.

If the characters pass the letter through the mirror, Agrit Kha of the Iraha will not suspect much, though thinks it odd the letter is unsigned and apparently unfinished. Agrit Kha will think Yesfir is just in a hurry. Should the message not arrive within a

day or so, Agrit Kha sends a message asking for an update and reprimanding Yesfir for his late reply.

The drawers to the bundai hold quills, paper, and ink. The lantern has continual flame cast in it.

The letter is written in a foreign tongue and needs translating. The letter relates a description of Yesfir's travel with the Fa' Aeadyn, what he saw, and where he is headed next. The trip with the Fa' Aeadyn was uneventful, but he noted some ten thousand of them headed in or near the Blacktooth Ridge. A description of Yesfir's location is given as well as that of nearby ruins that the other Fa' Aeadyn want to go to. He then mentions he is going to Ihlsa. He sent a warning as well. There is an ancient evil lurking in the ruins of that city which will have to be killed or it may stymie if not stop the advancing armies. Yesfir had looked through the Telescope of Toth earlier and discovered the threat to his life and, incidentally, to those of the advancing armies. It was not the characters. It is a creature that lives in the city that the Fa' Aeadyn want to go to (see the Telescope of Toth and Part IV below.)

D: ROOF

There is nothing on the roof except an elaborate brass telescope on a five foot tall tripod. See the Telescope of Toth below.

***YESFIR** (He is a lawful evil magical beast who vital statistics are HD 7d8, HP 43, AC 21, BtH +7, and Move 40 feet. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 2 claws for 1d3 damage or a bite for 1d4 damage. It has the following special abilities; detect thoughts, spell-like abilities, change shape, darkvision to 60 feet, SR 16, immunity to magic, and blessed invulnerability. It can cast spells as if a 5th level wizard and 1st level cleric. The number of spells it can cast are; wizard 5/4/2/1 and Cleric 3/1. Spells are:*

It wears a robe of damage absorption 2 and a ring of shooting stars. It wields a +2 scimitar and +1 dagger in combat. It has a ring of protection from missiles +3 and 4000gp worth of jewelry and coin on his person.)

TELESCOPE OF TOTH: This telescope was created in that age before the coming of the Dark Lord and was used by the priests of Toth to search for threats. As Unklar's conquest of the world began, several priests of Toth sought to hide the telescope in the far east of the world. They arrived at this village as they made their way east. An unger war party discovered them, and a total slaughter followed. Not knowing what they had in their possession, the unger just left it in a pile of debris and there it has set for five hundred or more years. Yesfir discovered the telescope buried in the rubble outside his abode shortly before leaving for Castle Wynn to retrieve the statues.

The telescope is a large affair. It sits on a five-foot-tall, three-legged, elaborately decorated iron stand. The telescope itself is about three feet long, made of bronze, and sitting on a complex gearing mechanism scribed in an ancient tongue. The telescope and stand weigh about 100 pounds. It only works when the telescope is placed on the stand and calibrated to the year, month, day, and minute. The latter can be done with the gearing mechanism.

Once geared properly, the crystal lenses glow with a slight greenish tinge. If one looks through the lens, it reveals the greatest threat to the characters within 100 miles. The telescope turns in the direction of the threat, and the gears start clicking off the minutes. The telescope remains locked on that target or threat for 1 hour, then shuts down and becomes a normal telescope. It can only perform that function once a week.

When the characters use it the first time, the telescope focuses in on an army of goblins. The person looking through the scope watches as it focuses through the woods, trees, and across the sky. It is as if the character were moving like a bird. It then comes to an open glade with a large group moving through it. It is a huge number of creatures kicking up clouds of dust. As the telescope focuses, the creatures become clear. These are goblins, riding wolves, boars, and other beasts. The goblins carry spears, bows, lances, and are girded for war. As the vision runs over this army of thousands, the character realizes there are heads attached to many of the spears; freshly bloodied heads and all the goblins are wearing blood red caps. Then the vision lands on a singular goblin surrounded by a hundred well-armed, hulking beastly goblins. The one goblin wears a bright red cap, an unnatural red, a red as if forged in the fiery pits of hell. Scarred, with broken fangs, and muscles rippling with hatred, that goblin pulls his wolf to a halt and looks around, as if searching for something. His guard stops interrupting the movement of one thousand other goblins. The goblin glances around, then his glance moves in the direction of the telescope. It stops and stares as if looking back through the telescope and toothy grin cracks its face. The goblin then urges his growling wolf forward while hefting his spear high.

The telescope finds Red Cap and his army of goblins. The goblins have just left the place where the Fa' Aeadyn came from and where other members of their tribe had gathered. Red Cap has slaughtered them all and is now moving back to the Blacktooth Ridge, heading directly to the swamp, and the characters are currently in Red Cap's army's path.

PART FOUR

ENDGAME

Once the rakshasa is killed or escaped, the characters should decide what to do next. The characters can return to their home, thus ending the adventure, or they could press forward. The surviving Fa' Aeadyn, if there are any, are seeking safety and no longer feel safe in the abandoned village. They are strangers in a new land and have only come to learn of the dangers along the Blacktooth Ridge and beyond. They naturally look to the characters for protection or guidance. Some of them want to go find other kin, some want to stay where they are, and others want to travel further west to what they believe are safer lands. Several specifically ask the characters to escort them back the east a few days to where their kin are encamped.

They all agree that war is coming to the region and try to let the characters know this. One of the members even uses the map on the wall of the ground floor in Area 14 to point out where

the armies were last known to have been and where they are coming from. The conqueror's name is Urghi of the Sampi, the One Who Strides the World. One of his most trusted generals, Tiglath Pelsor, The Iron Hoof, leads a great army, said to be one hundred thousand strong, in the direction of the Blacktooth Ridge.

One of the survivors uses the map in Area 14 to explain where they have come from and where they believe Tiglath and his armies to be located. Wherever they point, it is inaccurate. Tiglath has been recalled to the capitol by Urghi of the Sampi and is about one thousand miles away. His army has been somewhat scattered to outposts and patrols managing the conquered territory.

There is what appears to be a city on the map where the Fa' Aeadyn say a large group of their tribe remained while others were sent elsewhere to explore (theirs being one of those groups) and report back. Several of the survivors want to return to their group in the city and ask the character to accompany them for safety. They also inform the characters that, should they want more information, they should travel to that city and ask the leader, Kars Rigali Bilat. If asked about the city, the Fa' Aeadyn describes it as a large walled city that has fallen into ruin not more than a few days travel away. Their head priest was in the process of blessing the city when they left.

FA' AEADYN: The people who live in the east. These are mostly nomadic people with few known cities, though some are known in the south and west of their region. They have been attacked for generations and have been slowly moving to the south and east. The lead elements of this mass migration are just now reaching the Blacktooth Ridge.

AMPHOE WAN: Goddess of the people who once lived in the region. On occasion, the goddess still wanders the plains to the east but usually spends her time where goddesses spend their time.

KARS RIGALI BILAT: Fa' Aeadyn leader of other cities.

TIGLATH PELSOR THE IRON HOOF: A general in the army of the Sampi.

URGHI OF THE SAMPI: The leader of the Sampi.

ARA MAZ: Deity worshipped by those who once lived here and still worshipped by the Fa' Aeadyn.

AGRIT KHA OF THE IRAHA: An aide to Tiglath Pelsor. Agrit is in charge of spies and interrogation.

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