

NYRI-04

Cattle Call

A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK®

Nyrond Regional Adventure

Version 1

by Craig Hier

By Heironeous, it's hard to say which is more intolerable in Rel Mord: the midsummer heat or the midsummer boredom. When it was announced that adventuring parties were needed to survey road conditions around the Kingdom, you jumped at the chance, and thus found yourselves walking the main road from Rel Mord to the provincial Almorian capital of Mithat. You've heard plains and hills here are home to a great variety of humanoids, monsters and animals, with new settlers wanting to add to the local populace. What could possibly go wrong? For characters level 1-4.

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This is an RPGA® Network scenario for the Dungeons & Dragons® game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for each round of this scenario, but the actual playing time will be closer to three hours. The rest of the time is spent in preparation before game play, and scoring after the game. The following guidelines are here to help you with both the preparation and voting segment of the game. Read this page carefully so that you know and can communicate to your players the special aspects of playing an RPGA scenario.

Preparation

First you should print this scenario. This scenario was created to support double-sided printing, but printing it single sided will work as well. There is enough room along the inside margin to bind the adventure, if you desire.

Read this entire adventure at least once before you run your game. Be sure to familiarize yourself with any special rules, spells, or equipment presented in the adventure. It may help to highlight particularly important passages.

When you run an RPGA D&D adventure we assume that you have access to the following books: the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. We also assume that you have a set of dice (at least one d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20), some scrap paper, a pencil, an RPGA scoring packet, and your sense of fun. It is also a good idea to have a way to track movement during combat. This can be as simple as a pad of graph paper and a pencil, as handy as a vinyl grid map and chits, or as elaborate as resin dungeon walls and miniatures.

Instruct the players either to prepare their characters now, or wait until you read the introduction, depending on the requirements of the scenario as described in the introduction.

Keep in mind that you must have at least four players (not counting the DM), for the game session to be a sanctioned RPGA event. As well, you cannot have more than seven players participating in the game.

Once you are ready to play, it is handy to instruct each player to place a nametag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players (and the DM) to keep track of who is playing which character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core rule books during certain times of play. For example, the players are not free to consult the *Dungeon Master's Guide* when confronted with a trap or hazard, or the *Monster Manual* when confronted with a monster.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the

players will be in gray boxes. It's strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text instead of reading it aloud. Some of this text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

Scoring

After the players have completed the scenario or the time allotted to run the scenario has run out, the players and DM score the game. The RPGA has three ways to score its games. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use for this scenario:

1. No-vote scoring: The players write their names and RPGA numbers on the scoring packet grid. You fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. Partial scoring: The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the event coordinator wants information on how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. Voting: Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the "best" amongst the group, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes.

When using voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities. It's a good idea to have the players vote while you determine treasure and experience awards for the scenario.

After voting, give the Scoring Packet to your event coordinator.

This is a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure. As a Living™ adventure, it is expected that players will bring their own characters with them. If players do not have a LIVING GREYHAWK character generated, get a copy of the current LIVING GREYHAWK character generation guidelines, a character sheet, and a LIVING GREYHAWK log sheet from your convention coordinator or the RPGA Web site, and then have any players without a character create one. Once all players have a LIVING GREYHAWK character, play can begin.

Along with the other materials that you are assumed to have in order to run a D&D game, it is also recommended that you have a copy of the LIVING GREYHAWK Gazetteer.

LIVING GREYHAWK Tier Structure

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK campaigns, this adventure is tiered. Basically, the challenges in this adventure are proportioned to the average character level of the characters participating in the adventure. To determine the tier that you will use to run this adventure, add the character levels of all the characters. In addition, add the levels of any cohorts or animals according to the values on their certificates. Cross-reference the total and the number of players participating in the game using the chart below to determine the tier used for this adventure.

	<u>4 players</u>	<u>5 players</u>	<u>6 players</u>	<u>7 players</u>	<u>Lvl Cap</u>
T1:	4-12	5-13	6-14	7-15	4 nd
T2:	13-22	14-24	15-26	16-28	6 th

The level cap indicated is the highest level of character allowed to play this adventure. Characters of levels higher than the highest level shown for the highest tier cannot be played.

Is it a Full Moon?

Since the hazards of lycanthropy are a current part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign, it may be necessary to determine if this adventure takes place during a full moon. For game purposes, the full moon lasts three days of each month. For a given scenario that does not state the phase of the moon, roll 1d10 before play begins. On a result of 1, the first day of the scenario is a night of the full moon (roll 1d3 to determine where in the sequence of three nights it falls).

Lifestyle

At the beginning of every scenario, each PC is required to pay upkeep costs matching the level of lifestyle they wish to maintain. The lifestyles, and the effects that each has on play, are:

Destitute: You have no living space, and must carry all your gear everywhere. You eat poor

quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, your only change of clothes.

Poor: You sleep in poor accommodations, and eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, and have two sets of clothing.

Common: You have common lodgings, and eat common quality food. You have normal clothing for your profession (adventuring); nothing fancy. You probably have two or three sets of clothing.

High: You stay in good quality lodgings, and eat good quality food. You wear anything in value up to courtier's outfits, and generally buy a new set of clothing every two weeks.

Luxury: You have luxurious accommodations (twice the cost of good accommodations), and you eat excellent foods. You can throw a banquet for your friends every day, and frequently do. You wear clothing up to the value of noble's outfit, and buy a new set of clothes every week.

Lifestyles come with bonuses or penalties to Diplomacy, Intimidate, Disguise, and Bluff skill checks. These penalties, shown below, should be applied at the DM's discretion, and can sometimes backfire—for example, a PC with a poor lifestyle would not have a penalty when talking to a beggar, but would when talking to a city official. A PC with a high lifestyle should have a penalty when dealing with a group of street thugs, where a PC with a destitute lifestyle might not.

DMs are encouraged to role-play these reactions whenever possible.

Lifestyle	Cost	Skill Modifier
Destitute	14 sp	-2
Poor	43 sp	-1
Common	12 gp	0
High	250 gp	+1
Luxury	500 gp	+2

Adventure Summary and Background

Notice to Judges and Con Coordinators

Before for you run this scenario and other Living Greyhawk Nyronid Scenarios, please contact the Nyronid Triad (NyronidTriad@aol.com) to get a copy of the Nyronid Judge's Kit for the scenario you are running. This kit will include additional background for the Kingdom's major NPCs, historical data, current events, crime and punishment, and other useful information. This information will be constantly updated, so it is important to get this information with every new scenario. It is important to understand that the Nyronid Judge's Kit is only for the campaign judges and not for player consumption.

Adventure Summary and Background

The wars devastated the population of Almor. Farmers were called to arms and left prosperous farms in the hands of their families or to grow wild. Those that were left behind soon felt the ravages of war as the invading Army overran Almor, destroying everything in sight. Wildfires claimed many crops as fiends scorched the earth and left the land barren. The once thriving agricultural area had been reduced to a barely self-supporting collection of small farms.

Years have passed and Almor is on the mend. General Younard and the Nyronian army have reclaimed the land. Fiends no longer terrorize villages and many of the humanoids have retreated back to their borrows and caves. Patrols have also reduced the amount of banditry along the roads and rivers.

To restore the land, the governor of Hillshire has issued land grants to farmers and ranchers that want to settle the area. Bearing these land grants settlers are heading into Hillshire to reestablish the region's agricultural base. One such group has founded the town called Newtown.

The land has been very sparsely populated for many years. Although efforts to settle the area have met with some success, Bandits and centaurs constitute a bulk of the population. The bandits stay mostly to the hills and prey on the traffic between Mithat, the capital, and Wotham. Monsters have been sighted in the rest of the area. One group of these monsters, Centaurs, have laid claim to a section of the plains--the very same plains the settlers of Newtown have called home.

This is when our heroes fall into the mix. While traveling on the main road from Rel Mord to Mithat, the heroes have stopped at an Inn with other travelers (the other Heroes) for the safety that it provides.

Unbeknownst to the party, a cattle drive is also in the area. Bandits have attacked it and both sides have taken heavy casualties. The men of the cattle drive have been wiped out and the bandits have lost enough men that they cannot drive the cattle away. In order to cut his losses, Equester, the leader of the bandits took some of the cattle and sold them to the nearby Inn. While there he hatched a fiendish plan. He would get some adventurers to help him move the cattle and then kill them and take their money as well. This is where our adventure begins.

Equester has sent one of his men back to their camp with a note explaining his plan to the other bandits. He then sends one of his men, Joren, to the Inn to get help. Joren tries to get the PCs to join him to help his group.

The PCs and Joren rush back to the camp. The leader of the cattle drive, Riddick (A.K.A. Equester), explains that the recent bandit attack left them without enough men to get the cattle to their destination. The PCs, being the good

Samaritans that they are most probably offer to help the cattle drive.

Once under way, the PCs are quickly introduced to the proper way to drive cattle. After following the trail for a few hours, there is a disturbance among the lead cattle and they refuse to go forward. Once the PCs get to the front (or are called to the front) they see the problem, giant scorpions. The trail at this point goes between two steep hills. At this point the PCs can go around or kill the scorpions. If the PCs try to go around, they lose some of cattle to the scorpions. Centaurs placed the scorpions here. They do not want the cattle or those driving them in their territory.

As the day progresses the drive master tells the PCs to go look for stragglers. Some cattle have, in fact, wandered off from the main group. After trying to round up the cattle the PCs notice a run down shack. An old miner owns the shack and he is currently at home. If the PCs' approach is detected, he has a sword ready, threatening the PCs with harm if they do not leave. He thinks that the PCs might be bandits after his copper. If the PCs can convince him that they are not bandits and merely looking for cattle he tells them to be careful, there is a group of bandits in the area.

After talking to the miner, the PCs see a centaur standing on a hill far away. The PCs have a choice; follow the centaur or go back to the cattle drive. If the PCs go back and mention the centaur to the drive master the drive master tell the PCs that the centaur they saw was part of a bandit group that harasses travelers in the area.

The centaurs are seen through out the next day getting closer and closer. Riddick tells Joren and the PCs to sneak around the centaurs and take them out before they can attack the cattle drive. The centaurs ambush the group with a hit and run. For the purposes of this tournament, Joren is the only one to be attacked in this combat.

Riddick leads the drive into a small ravine that has been fenced off at both ends. A grungy looking thug is waiting at the front of the ravine. He hails Riddick and he waves back. The cattle are placed in the pen. It is at this point that he mentions to the PCs that he thanks them for helping them steal the cattle but is afraid he can't let them live. An attack ensues.

A few rounds after the fight concludes, the PCs notice some centaurs on the top of the canyon. Some more coming around one of the hills quickly follows this. The centaurs accuse the PCs of being evil and threaten them. The PCs should convince the centaurs that they are not evil. The centaurs tell the PCs that they can leave. Unfortunately, the centaurs do not want the cattle to leave, just the PCs.

As the PCs are leaving, a young man on horseback intercepts them. He was sent from Newtown to help the cattle drive. He takes the PCs to Newtown. Once there, they are directed to

the local magistrate and mayor. He suggests that a meeting with the centaurs would be in order. The next morning the PCs and Bortran (the mayor) head out to meet the centaurs.

Upon arriving at the canyon, the contingent of centaurs is still present. It is up to the PCs to help Bortran negotiate with the centaurs to release the cattle before a battle breaks out. Of course, the centaurs only want to be rid of the humans all together so it is a hard negotiation.

The centaurs consider themselves the true natives of this land, so it is appropriate to draw parallels between the centaur/NPC relationship in this scenario with the native American/settlers relationship in the old American west.

It is assumed the PCs are on the road to Mithat because they have volunteered for the crown's infrastructure survey project, and because they want to escape the heat and boredom that is Rel Mord in midsummer. PCs who are militia members are doing this because it is their duty, whereas PCs who are not have accepted a 5 noble payment for the hike. Any PCs who would not meet these conditions should not be played in this scenario.

Introduction

The land was at war. Army after army marched over the Prelacy of Almor. When the dust settled, the land was devastated. Once thriving farms were laid waste by the forces of the Overking. People fled to Nyronnd or Ahlissa to escape the ravages of war. When peace came, so did a new order. Nyronnd had laid claim to the western half of Almor and started to rid it of the evil that had done so much damage. That was five years ago. The people have come back and started to work the hard land. Even now, the evil that infested this land can still be felt. Bandits, evil humanoids, monsters and worse still roam and terrorize the innocent. Traveling the roads is best done in groups and it is advisable to find shelter at night.

It is in one of the many inns that have sprung up along the road that you find yourself today. The plaque outside named this place the Crossed Arms Inn. The sun is still rather high in the sky, but you dare not risk leaving the inn alone and camping along the road. Several other fellow travelers seem to have made the same choice. Looking around the inn, you notice a sign of the times--a board filled with wanted posters. The faces of the bandits seem to taunt you. "Come outside," they seem to say.

You have arrived in time to get an early dinner. Glancing at what passes for a menu, you notice that "fresh beef two commons" has been scribbled at the bottom of the menu. Well, it seems somebody has come across some good fortune. It will be a good feast tonight.

The Inn has been lucky today. A man named Riddick has sold them a few of his cows that died on the trail. The innkeeper, an old soldier named Gristler, is glad to share this information with anybody that asks. He is just glad to have some meat to sell. Gristler has also heard about several mounted figures to the northeast. He has only heard vague stories and has never seen one himself.

The wanted posters all offer 25 nobles for the various bandits. It seems that is the going price. If any PCs take a special note of the wanted posters they find one that does not have a description and is offering a whopping 500 nobles. The bandit's name is Equester. The poster goes on to say that this bandit never leaves witnesses, but does leave a note taunting those that would try and capture him. This is, of course, Riddick.

At this point Riddick has already ambushed the cattle drive. In the attack, a few cows were killed. He sold these to Gristler while pretending to be the head of the cattle drive. While at the inn, his mind hatched a plan. He would get some adventurers to help him steal the cattle! Adventurers are very bad for business and getting rid of a few would only enhance his reputation. He sent a messenger ahead to build a make shift stockade and wait for him to show up and ambush the PCs.

Wait a few minutes before proceeding to Encounter One.

Encounter 1: Help!

The peace and quiet of the inn is shattered as a man bursts into the room. He is dressed in well-kept leather armor and has freshly bandaged wounds. "Help! We were attacked by bandits! Several members of our party were killed and now we are unable to complete our task. The fate of a whole village hangs in the balance!" He motions for everybody to follow him.

If the PCs start to ask questions he again emphasizes the need for haste as the bandits may come back after dark. If pressed, he tells them that he is part of a caravan taking much needed supplies to a settlement called Newtown. While they stopped to sell some of the surplus supplies to the Inn, his camp was attacked. The attack ended a little over an hour ago when they managed to drive the bandits away. He and two others survived. The leader, Riddick, sent him here to get help.

Encounter 2: Cows

The trip to the cattle driver's camp is a quick one. When you arrive, there are only two men in the camp. One is bent over the other one applying a splint to an injured arm. There are two piles of

bodies in the camp as well. The man tending the other turns with a start as you approach and starts to draw his weapon but relaxes when he sees that Joren is with you.

"Joren, Loot was badly wounded during the bandit attack. See what you can do for him." He gestures to you. "Are these people here to help us?" he asks Joren. "Yes. These fine people wish to aid us." Joren turns to you and says, "This is Riddick--he's the boss."

"I am glad Joren could get us some help. We are driving these 150 head of cattle to a small farming community northeast of here called Newtown. These cattle represent salvation to those people. We must get them through. Unfortunately, bandits attacked us as we stopped to sell some beef to the Inn. Godless curs!" He points to one of the piles of bodies. "They managed to kill six of my men, but we managed to drive them away." He gestures to the bodies of the bandits. "As I'm sure Joren told you, the three of us cannot possibly get enough cattle to Newtown to help them survive the winter. Since you would like to help us on this noble endeavor, please introduce yourself. It will be a pleasure working with you to complete this journey."

If the PCs are hesitant to join the cattle drive to save a community on the brink of starvation, Riddick plays on the party's conscience and mentions that some of the men killed were from Newtown and their families will suffer if they can't get the cattle to them. Riddick's only motivation at this point may seem to be the welfare of the town. If pulling on the PCs heartstrings doesn't seem to work, Riddick offers to pay the PCs. Since Riddick intends to kill the PCs anyway, he raises the price until they agree.

Once the PCs agree to join them, he sets Loot and Joren to the task of burying the bodies and assesses the abilities of the various party members. He asks each PC if he has any skill in Ride or Animal Handling. He trains the PCs as well as time permits but he doesn't think it will be all that involved or hazardous.

If anybody tries to detect evil, they note that all the men in Riddick's gang are not evil. Loot is a cleric and has cast *undetectable alignment* on Joren and himself from a scroll. Riddick has an amulet that masks evil alignments. This amulet was a gift from an evil wizard who hired Riddick to steal some spell components from a rival. It has proven quite a boon for his chosen occupation.

A search of the bandits' bodies reveals five short swords, leather armor so beat up that it is useless, a map (**Player Handout 2**) and 7 silver pieces. The map is a clever fake. It is a rough copy of the map Riddick has in his pocket with a red 'X' marking this spot. If the PCs show Riddick the map, he pulls out his map and compare them. Since Riddick made both maps they are the same. He claims that this is the route they plan to take to Newtown and the bandits must have had

inside help if they have a copy of the route. In reality, it is a map back to his make shift stockade. The map is a combination red herring and insurance policy. On one hand, he wants the PCs to not be worried about future bandit attack. The map indicates that this was where the bandits were going to make a grab at the cattle and they failed. On the other hand, if something happens to him or his men, the PCs continue to drive the cattle into his ambush.

The statistics for the NPCs are presented in **Appendix A**.

Encounter 3: Scorpions

Riddick arranges the cattle drive as follows. At point he assigns two PCs. If anybody in the party has Animal Handling, he picks them. The rest of the party is balanced on the left and right side with Riddick joining the side with the least amount of Ride skill. Since his men are injured, they take drag. (Drag is cattle drive slang. It means to ride behind the herd to fetch stragglers.) If any PCs have a problem with this arrangement, he informs them he has done this before and that this is the best way to make sure the cattle arrive safely. Besides, it puts at least two of the PCs in harms way.

The dawn seemed to arrive all too quickly this morning as you prepare to drive the cattle early this morning. After a quick head count you head down the trail. Driving the cattle seems to be quite easy, you have no idea why Riddick made it seem hard. Up ahead the path leads through two hills. As you approach the pass, the cattle start to get nervous. "Get up there and see what the problem is," Riddick yells at you. "I'll try to keep the ones in the rear calm." Riddick rides to the back of the cattle.

This encounter is important for two reasons. First, the fact that Riddick is supposed to be a seasoned driver who has traveled this road before would indicate that he knew the route and it was clear. If he is questioned about it, he explains it away by saying that the scorpions just moved in or that scorpions move around. Secondly, it gives the PCs some flavor for handling the cattle and generates some strays. If handled poorly, this encounter could stampede the cattle.

The PCs on point may notice the scorpions first (Spot DC 12). If the PCs that are ahead of the cattle do not spot the scorpions, they attack with surprise, otherwise each side is flat footed.

Tier 1 (EL 5)

Monstrous scorpion, Medium vermin (5): CR 1, HD 2d8+4, hp 13, Init +0, Spd 40, AC 14 (+4 natural), Atks 2 claws +2 melee (1d6+1 [crit x2], claws) and sting -3 melee (1d4 and poison, sting), SA Improved Grab, Squeeze, Poison, SQ Immune

to mind-influencing effects, AL N, Sv Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Hide +8, Spot +7.

Special Attacks—Scorpion poison (Ex): Injury DC 13, Primary none; Secondary 1d2 Str.

Tier 2 (EL 7)

Monstrous scorpion, Large vermin (5): CR 2, HD 4d8+4, hp 26, Init +0, Spd 50, AC 14 (-1 size, +5 natural), Atks 2 claws +5 melee (1d8+3 [crit x2], claws) and sting +0 melee (1d6+1 and poison [crit x2], sting), SA Improved Grab, Squeeze, Poison, SQ Immune to mind-influencing effects, AL N, Sv Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 14, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +3, Spot +7.

Special Attacks—Scorpion poison (Ex): Injury DC 14, Primary 1d3 Str; Secondary 1d3 Str.

The cattle cannot stop. If the PCs on point are not far enough ahead of the drive, the cattle close with the combat. They get one round for every five yards the PCs are ahead. If the cattle do make it to the combat, they will try and skirt it. If more than one scorpion is attacking any single target, it breaks off and attacks the cattle. This causes the cattle to spook and stampede.

Encounter 4: Strays

If the cattle did not stampede:

After diverting the cattle around the scorpion nest, Riddick rides to the front. “I think we need to give the cattle a break; those scorpions made them really nervous. There is a water hole over there—let’s take them there.” Riddick points to a small lake in the distance.

After the cattle have stopped at the lake for a drink and some rest, Riddick approaches you. “Some of the cattle have strayed. By my count about 12 head have wandered off. I need you to find them while we look after these here.”

If the cattle did stampede:

The cattle run for about a half hour, but finally tire out and stop at a small lake. You welcome the rest from the hard riding you had to do. After getting off his horse and stretching, Riddick approaches you. “Some of the cattle have strayed. By my count about 12 head have wandered off. I need you to find them while we look after these here.”

The cattle have headed for water. The PCs must make Wilderness Lore checks (DC 12) to find water holes. Tracking the lost cattle is very hard (Track DC 22) due to the sheer number of the cattle in the drive. At each water hole that they find there is a 50% chance to find d6 cattle. The

last water hole is the miner’s lake and **Encounter Five**. If the PCs head east, Riddick reminds them that the cattle are back to the west.

Encounter 5: Miner

At last you find the remaining stray cattle. They are by a very small water hole next to a shack. The shack is run down having seen many better years. The shutters are hanging loosely on the windows and the door appears to have several small holes in it. You begin to wonder if anybody has used this shack in years when a voice rings out, “Stay away from mah house, ya yella varmints. Ya git outta here fore I run the lot of ya through. We don’t tek kindly to bandits in these here parts.”

Brudwick the miner (male human Exp1; Str 14, Cha 8) lives in the shack. He mines the nearby hills for copper. It isn’t the best living, but it works for him. He takes whatever copper he can and sells it back at the inn where the PCs started this adventure. While there he has heard about the bandits in the area. While he personally has escaped the notice of bandits, he has a great fear of them coming and stealing all his copper. Brudwick gladly shares all the information he can about the bandits with the PCs once they convince him they aren’t the bandits.

Brudwick really would like to buy one or more of the cattle the PCs have with them. He offers as much as a whole pouch of copper (worth about 3 nobles). If any PCs start talking to him, he keeps talking to them. He is really lonely.

Brudwick’s Information:

- The bandits have never left any footprints. When he has come across a place where bandits did attack, he hasn’t found any footprints not belonging to the person being robbed. Apparently they have always been mounted.
- He has never seen a bandit. (Nor has he ever seen a centaur and doesn’t even know what one is.)
- Some people have reported seeing a mounted figure in the distance just before a bandit attack.
- He has never traveled more than a mile east of here (and thus, never entered the centaurs’ land).
- Bandit attacks have occurred all through this area.

Encounter 6: Lone Figure

As you leave the miner’s shack with the cattle in tow, you notice a lone figure on the top of a far away hill. Your first inclination is that it must be a man mounted on a horse but something in the back of your mind tells you that the silhouette

isn't right. As you watch the figure, it seems to notice that you are watching and turns to head down the backside of the hill. As it turns you can tell what was bothering you, the horse has no head. Rather it has a human torso where it's head and neck should be. It is a centaur.

By now the PCs have enough clues to think that the centaurs are bandits, maybe even the infamous Equester. After the first encounter, ask for a Spot check (DC 17). Anybody making a roll sees a centaur watching from a stand of trees or on top of a far away hill. Once spotted the centaur retreats into the trees or behind the hills.

The PCs may want to track the centaurs. If so have them make a Tracking skill check (DC 22). A successful tracking check indicates the PCs can track the centaurs. Unfortunately, the centaurs lead them in circles. Don't forget the PCs have the stray cattle with them.

As dusk settles in you return to the lake. Riddick is glad to have the cattle back safe and sound. "Good work! I might make cattle men out of you yet!" jokes Riddick. He glances around and says, "We'll make camp here for the night. It is too late to get any further down the road. I hear tell that this area is crawling with bandits. Good thing we should get to Newtown tomorrow. Did you guys notice anything or anybody while you were out there?"

Riddick is worried about the centaurs. He knows that they are there and they won't like all these cattle grazing on their hunting grounds. They also seem to have a particular dislike of bandits. If the PCs mention that they saw something that looked like a centaur, Riddick indicates that the centaurs might be bandits since the bandit Equester is notorious for not leaving footprints or witnesses.

Encounter 7: Home on the Range

The light is fading rapidly. It's time to camp. What do you do?

Collect PC reactions then continue.

The night passes uneventfully. Riddick, already on horseback, wakes you up just before dawn. "We should get an early start, I want to make sure we get to Newtown before dusk." He rides off to start herding the cattle. As the day lightens, you notice that the centaurs are closer and seem to have gotten braver. They only start to leave if you move toward their position. Riddick is obviously nervous about this turn of events.

Time passes. Get PC reactions then continue.

When the drive stops to rest the cattle at a water hole, he pulls you aside. "I think those centaurs mean to attack. We need to find out for sure! Can you follow the next one back to their camp and report back? I think we can handle the cattle for a little while, just don't take too long. By the way, take Joren. He is an excellent tracker.

If the PCs take the mission, they can travel in any direction and run into a centaur watching them within 10 minutes. Once the party starts toward the centaur, he takes off. Joren can track the centaur easily since it wants to be tracked. If a PC wants to track instead of Joren, have them make a Tracking skill check (DC 10).

You track the centaur as it makes its way away from you. Its path takes him into a small ravine between two hills. As you proceed through the ravine, you have to ride single file. Just before you can get a bad feeling about this, four centaurs appear at the top of the ravine looking down at you with bows drawn. They let their arrows loose at Joren and disappear up into the hills.

The centaurs know that Joren is a bad man even if the PCs do not. An arrow hits Joren, for 3 points of damage per Tier. The PCs may get a shot off at the centaurs before they make it into the woods.

The centaurs want to gauge the PCs strength and reactions. If the PCs make a concerted effort to combat the centaurs, the centaurs use this fact against the PCs in the negotiations later on. Of course the centaurs do not hang around. If the PCs allow the centaurs go, it will make things better for them in the end. The statistics for the centaurs are presented in **Encounter 9**.

Encounter 8: Bandits!

You have seen the centaurs in the distance watching you all morning. It is getting close to midday when Riddick points toward two tree-topped hills. "There it is! That's the corral," he yells. Up ahead you see that the steep sides of the hills form a ravine. Two fences have been erected at either end forming a corral. There is a man opening the gate of the front fence. After driving cattle the last two days, it is an easy matter to get the herd into the corral. Riddick rides over to you, dismounts, and hands his reins to Loot. "If you'd like, Loot will take care of your horses while we discuss business."

Riddick waits until all the PCs have dismounted or a reasonable amount of time before continuing:

Loot takes the horses to the far side of the corral and ties the horses to the fence near a water trough. Riddick smiles at you and says, "Thank you for your help; I couldn't have done it without you. It really is a shame that those people in Newtown probably won't make it through the

winter. I know you won't mind, because I am going to have to kill you now."

He then makes a signal and his band attacks. The man at the gate pulls two daggers and attacks the nearest PC. There is also a bandit (Wistril) in the trees on the hill to the left waiting in ambush. He uses his bow on any mounted PCs first. Once the battle has started, Riddick makes a break for the horses and tries to escape leaving his men to take care of you. If he gets a lead on any PC, have them make a Ride skill check (DC 20). Each time the PCs make a check, they close a round on Riddick. If a PC can catch Riddick, have them make a Ride skill check (DC 22) to try to either stop Riddick horse or jump on him. If any roll fails, Riddick uses his knowledge of the area to escape.

A check of the bodies reveals a note on the Wistril, the bandit in the trees. The note instructs him to prepare the corral to house 250 head of cattle that he has stolen. It also mentions that he will try to get help from some adventures and to prepare an ambush for them. It is signed Equester (**Player Handout 3**). It is written on the back of a wanted notice for Equester (**Player Handout 1**). Riddick also has a map on his body. It is a copy of the one the PCs received in **Encounter Two (Player Handout 2)**.

The statistics for all NPCs in this encounter can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Encounter 9: Centaurs

The battle with Riddick and his men is over. As you start to contemplate what you are going to do with the cattle since you don't know where Newtown is and you can't take them back to the Inn, you hear the sound of hoofs approaching.

Get PC reactions, then continue:

Glancing around, you notice that two centaurs have replaced the bandit on the hill with bows drawn. A look to the other hill also reveals a pair of centaurs standing with bows drawn. To complete the set, another set of centaurs is approaching from around the hill carrying long spears. A third centaur, a large palomino with gray streaked hair, is leading them. He is carrying a long bow across his back.

The centaurs make no other hostile actions other than having their bows drawn. As the centaur leader approaches, he raises his hand in a gesture of peace. Once the PCs have lowered all weapons, the centaurs on the hills relax their bows. The leader of the centaurs, Standing Oak, is a large palomino with a tanned human torso. His gray streaked hair is the only sign of his age. Having been raised in a forest populated with Elves, he can speak Elven, but isn't as fluent in that as he'd like to be. If none of the PCs speak Elven, they must use hand gestures to communicate.

The centaurs were driven out of their forestlands to the east by the evil humanoids and demons in service of Ivid. They have settled in this area mainly because it was, at the time, unpopulated by humanoids. Now the humanoids have returned bringing with them their destructive ways and evil tendencies.

The bandits and the townspeople are the only humans the troop has run across since settling in this area and both of them have acted in ways contrary to the beliefs of the centaurs. The bandits have attacked them and the town has cleared forests so that they could build houses and buildings.

He wants to know why the party has killed the other humans. It is an evil act to kill one's own kind and he doesn't take kindly to evil humans. The only reason he is talking to the PCs is that they have defeated the obviously evil bandits so they must be good or a greater evil. Since the PCs were seen working with the bandits, the latter must be the case.

He also asks about the cattle, stating that the settlers destroyed much of their prime hunting grounds when they came, and in order to preserve the balance of the forest, the cattle must remain here, under the protection of the troop.

The PCs must convince him that they are not evil otherwise the centaur attack to rid their land of this great evil. Not being an evil group, this is mainly a hollow threat, but since the PCs are looking down the arrow shafts of skilled archers the threat must be taken seriously. If the PCs fail to convince the centaurs that they are good people the centaurs on the hill fire warning shots at the PCs and ask the PCs to leave their lands before they are forced to attack them. If the PCs do not run or sue for peace, the centaurs attack.

Eventually the PCs may state that the cattle are the rightful property of Newtown. Standing Oak listens to any claims but then dismisses them. His logic is that the humans have already had a negative impact on the area and must not be entrusted to the care of these cattle. Play up the fact that the centaurs believe that the villagers have wronged them and can not be trusted to preserve nature.

Modify the next encounter to reflect just how the PCs leave the area. The centaurs busy themselves with tending the cattle.

All Tiers (EL 10)

Standing Oak, male centaur, Rgr7: CR 7, Large monstrous humanoid (7' 6"), HD 7d8+10, hp 58, Init +2 (Dex), Spd 50, AC 13 (-1 Size, Dex, +2 natural), Atks+3 melee (1d6+2, 2 hooves) or +4 ranged (d8+2/x3, masterwork long bow), AL NG, Sv Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy -1, Hide +8, Listen +10, Move Silently +8, Spot +8, Wilderness Lore +10; *Weapon Focus* (long bow, hoof).

Equipment: masterwork longbow, 20 arrows.

Male Centaurs (6): CR 3, Large monstrous humanoid (7' 3"), HD 4d8+8, hp 26, Init +2 (Dex), Spd 50, AC 13 (-1 Size, Dex, +2 natural), Atks +7 melee (1d10+4, greatclub), or +3 melee (1d6+2, 2 hooves) or +5 ranged (1d8/x3, composite longbow), AL NG, Sv Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Hide +2, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Wilderness Lore +5; Weapon Focus (hoof).

Equipment: composite longbow, 20 arrows, great club.

Encounter 10: Newtown

You leave the cattle with the centaurs and head on. After a few hours of travel, a lone rider approaches you. "Ho friends! I trust that you are friends. My name is Cleven. You haven't seen any cattle in your travels have you?"

Cleven is from Newtown. He was sent out to help the cattle drive arrives safely. He does not know that it was hijacked. He insists on taking the PCs to town once they mention any part of the story.

As dusk is approaching, you see the place called Newtown. There are several houses spaced out with three larger buildings in the center. Cleven takes you to the largest building. A sign on it indicates that it is the City Hall and Jail. The other buildings seem to be an Inn and General Store but they are still under construction.

Cleven rushes into the building and is followed out a few scant seconds later by a tall man in leather armor. "Hello, my name is Bortran. I am the magistrate of Newtown. Cleven here tells me you know something of our cattle?"

Bortran listens to the PCs story and informs them that they must have the cattle to survive the winter as their farms did not do well this year. All the villagers pooled their savings to buy the cattle from a dealer in Rel Mord. If the cattle are not delivered, it would indeed spell doom to all 40 men, women and children that call Newtown home.

The people of Newtown do not know of the centaurs and any mention of them is met with shock and bewilderment. When they find out that the centaurs are holding the cattle, Bortran asks the PCs to set up a meeting between him and the leader of the centaurs.

Since it is getting late, Bortran is glad to house the PCs in the jail so they can get an early start in the morning.

Encounter 11: Meetn'

You and Bortran get an early start this morning but it seems like a late start considering how early you've been getting up. You find the corral

after a few wrong turns by midmorning. The centaurs are still there. "Standing Oak" approaches and you come near.

Bortran does speak Elven and the above conversations are in Elven. Bortran interprets for anybody who does not understand Elven.

Bortran is nervous about not getting the cattle back. Standing Oak speaks to Bortran. "You are the chief of the village?" Bortran replies that he is the mayor of Newtown. Standing Oak nods and says "You must stop destroying the land and leave our hunting grounds." Bortran counters by saying, "These are our cattle and you have no right to them."

Standing Oak looks to the cattle then back at Bortran. "The centaurs lived in peace with nature here for thirty-three moons before you humans appeared." Bortran retorts, "We have a land grant from the King. We are entitled to be here!"

"I know not this King. I obey only nature and your presence upsets it." Standing Oak hastily replies.

Bortran thinks for a minute. He turns to you. "I could use some help here. Apparently he is as stubborn as his namesake. We need to get him to give us the cattle. If we could also form an alliance with the centaurs, it would also benefit Newtown in unimaginable ways."

Bortran thinks that getting the centaurs to support then town will have two immediate benefits. First, they will be able to help with taking care of the surrounding area. This will provide the residents of Newtown and the centaurs with good hunting and better crops. Secondly, they could help them rout out bandits and other unwanted humanoids that may wander into the area.

Conclusion

If the negotiations are mediated smoothly and both sides are treated fairly and feel good about the deal read the following.

Standing Oak smiles at the deal he has made with the human settlers. The mayor of Newtown, Bortran, has agreed to an alliance with the centaurs that will benefit both groups.

Standing Oak takes the bow from his back and hands it to Bortran. "Take this as a token of our alliance and friendship." Bortran thanks him for the bow.

Bortran then turns to you and says, "Without your help, our town would surely have perished. I want you to have this bow as a token of friendship not only from the centaurs, but from the people of Newtown as well."

If the negotiations do not result in an alliance between the town and centaurs or

benefits both sides equally well the centaurs agree to turn over the cattle but not help the villagers with the land, cattle or anything else that may threaten them in the future.

Standing Oak ponders the agreement. *“Take your cattle. It is clear we cannot share the bounty nature has provided. We will leave you in peace and wish the same from you. Now we will go and leave you to your fates.”*

The End

Experience Point Summary

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the discretionary roleplaying experience award. The roleplaying award should be given for consistent character portrayal and contribution to the fun of the game. You can award different roleplaying amounts to different characters.

Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Encounter Two

Finding map 25 xp

Encounter Three

Defeating Scorpions 100 xp
Not stampeding the cattle 25 xp

Encounter Eight

Defeating the Bandits 150 xp

Encounter Nine

Not attacking the centaurs 25 xp

Encounter Ten

Coming to an amicable agreement 100 xp

Total experience for objectives 425 xp
Discretionary role-playing award 0-50 xp

Total possible experience: 475 xp

Treasure Summary

Player characters may keep items from the scenario that are listed on the treasure list below or which meet the following conditions:

1. The item must be non-magical and specifically listed in the text of the adventure (e.g armor on foes). If it is not listed in the text, the characters cannot keep it. Items of this nature can be sold for 50% of book value, or recorded on a log sheet.
2. Animals, followers, monsters, henchmen, and so forth (any living being, basically) may not

be kept from a scenario for any reason unless the treasure summary lists the being specifically. It is okay for the player characters to form relationships with NPCs, but these will not be certified and cannot bring material benefit to the character. Contacts (sources of extra information) must be specifically certified.

3. Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some player characters. Items which are worth more than 250 gp that are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), and all magical items, will be discovered in the possession of the character by one means or another. The character must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives campaign-decided penalties for being known as a thief. For other stolen items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment and the circumstances within the game to determine whether a PC thief gets away with the theft or not.

Any item retained according to these rules, which does not have a certificate, will not ever have a certificate issued for it.

The campaign staff reserves the right to take away any item or gold acquired for things which it later finds unreasonable but which were allowed at the time.

Encounter Two

- Map (**Player Handout 2**)
- 7 shields

Encounter Five

- Bag of Copper dust worth 3 nobles

Encounter Eight

- Wistril: Short bow, Leather Armor
- Arstwill: 2 Daggers, Leather Armor
- Loot: Leather Armor, Large Wood Shield, Long Sword, Heavy Flail, Holy Symbol of Hextor
- Joren: Leather Armor, Long Sword
- Riddick: Leather Armor, Long Sword, 3 *potions of undetectable alignment*, Copy of Map

Encounter Ten

- Reward for bandits. 25 nobles for each and 500 nobles for Riddick (Equester)

Encounter Eleven

- Token of Friendship from Standing Oak—masterwork long bow.

Appendix A: The Bad Guys

Riddick, Loot and Joren join the PCs in **Encounter Two**, while Wistril and Arstwill are part of the NPC bandit attack in **Encounter Eight**.

Tier 1 (EL 6)

Riddick (Equester), male human Ran2: CR 2, Medium Humanoid (5' 11"); HD 2d10; hp 15; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30; AC 15 (Dex, leather armor); Atks +5 melee (1d8+2/19-20; longsword); AL LE; Sv Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +4, Forgery +4, Hide +5, Intuit Direction +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Search +3, Sense Motive +2; Armor Proficiency (medium), Favored Enemy (orcs), Improved Initiative, Martial Weapon Proficiency (longsword), Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Track.

Possessions: longsword, leather armor, 3 *potion of nondetection*, map (same as **Player Handout 2**).

Loot, male human Cl3 of Hextor: CR 3, Medium humanoid (5' 6"); HD 3d8; hp 16; Init +0 (Improved Initiative); Spd 30; AC 14 (leather armor, large wooden shield); Atks +4 (1d10+2 [crit 19-20 x2], heavy flail; favored weapon) or +4 (1d8/crit 19-20 x2, longsword); AL LE; Sv Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +6.

Str 14, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Concentration +5, Heal +6, Knowledge (religion) +4; Armor Proficiency (heavy), Combat Casting, Brew Potion, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Possessions: leather armor, large wooden shield, heavy flail, longsword, holy symbol (well hidden).

Spells (4/4/3): 0-lvl – *cure minor wounds*, *detect poison*, *mending*, *resistance*. 1st level – *command*, *magic weapon*, *obscuring mist*, *protection from good*. 2nd level – *bull's strength*, *undetachable alignment* (2x – *Cast everyday on Joren and himself*)

Joren and Arstwill, male human Rog1 (2): CR 2; Medium humanoid (5' 10"); HD 1d6+1; hp 6; Init +2; Spd 30; AC 14 (Dex, leather armor); Atks: +3 melee (1d6+3/19-20, short sword) or +2 ranged (1d8/ 19-20, short bow); AL NE; Sv Fort +1, Ref +4, Will –1; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +5, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +4, Hide +4, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Open Locks +4, Search +3, Use Rope +4; Armor Proficiency (light), Evasion, Point Blank Shot, Shield Proficiency, Sneak Attack (+1d6).

Possessions: short sword, short bow, 20 arrows, leather armor.

Wistril, male human Rog1: CR 1; Medium humanoid (5' 10"); HD 2d6+Con; hp 11; Init +2; Spd 30; AC 14 (Dex, leather armor); Atks: +4 melee (1d6+3/19-20, short sword) or +3 ranged (1d8/19-20 x2, short bow); AL NE; Sv Fort +1, Ref +5, Will –1; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +3, Hide +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Open Locks +4, Search +4, Use Rope +2; Armor Proficiency (light), Evasion, Point Blank Shot, Shield Proficiency, Sneak Attack (+1d6).

Possessions: short sword, short bow, 20 arrows, leather armor.

Tier 2 (EL 8)

Riddick (Equester), male human Ran3: CR 3, Medium Humanoid (5' 11"); HD 3d10+Con; hp 20; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30; AC 15 (Dex, leather armor); Atks +7 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword); AL LE; Sv Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +5, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +5, Forgery +5, Hide +5, Intuit Direction +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Search +3, Sense Motive +3; Armor Proficiency (medium), Favored Enemy (orcs), Improved Initiative, Martial Weapon Proficiency (longsword), Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Track, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: longsword, leather armor, 3 potions undetectable alignment, map (same as **Player Handout 2**).

Loot, male human Cl4 of Hextor: CR 4, Medium humanoid (5' 6"); HD 4d8; hp 20; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 30; AC 14 (leather armor, large wooden shield); Atks +5 (1d10+2/19-20, heavy flail; favored weapon) or +5 (1d8/19-20, longsword); AL LE; Sv Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Concentration +5, Heal +7, Knowledge (religion) +5; Armor Proficiency (heavy), Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Possessions: leather armor, large wooden shield, heavy flail, longsword, holy symbol (well hidden)

Spells (5/5/4): 0—cure minor wounds, detect poison, mending, resistance, create water. 1st—command, magic weapon, obscuring mist, protection from good, doom. 2nd level — bull's strength, hold person, undetectable alignment (2x — Cast everyday on Joren and himself)

Joren and Arstwil, male human Rog3 (2): CR 3; Medium humanoid (5' 10"); HD 3d6+Con; hp 15; Init +2; Spd 30; AC 14 (Dex, leather armor); Atks: +5 melee (1d6+3/19-20, short sword) or +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, short bow); AL NE; Sv Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Disguise +6, Escape Artist +6, Hide +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Open Locks +6, Search +5, Use Rope +5. Armor Proficiency (light), Evasion, Point Blank Shot, Shield Proficiency, Sneak Attack (+2d6), Uncanny Dodge.

Possessions: short sword, short bow, 20 arrows, leather armor.

Wistril, male human Rog2: CR 2; Medium humanoid (5' 10"); HD 2d6+Con; hp 11; Init +2; Spd 30; AC 14 (Dex, leather armor); Atks: +4

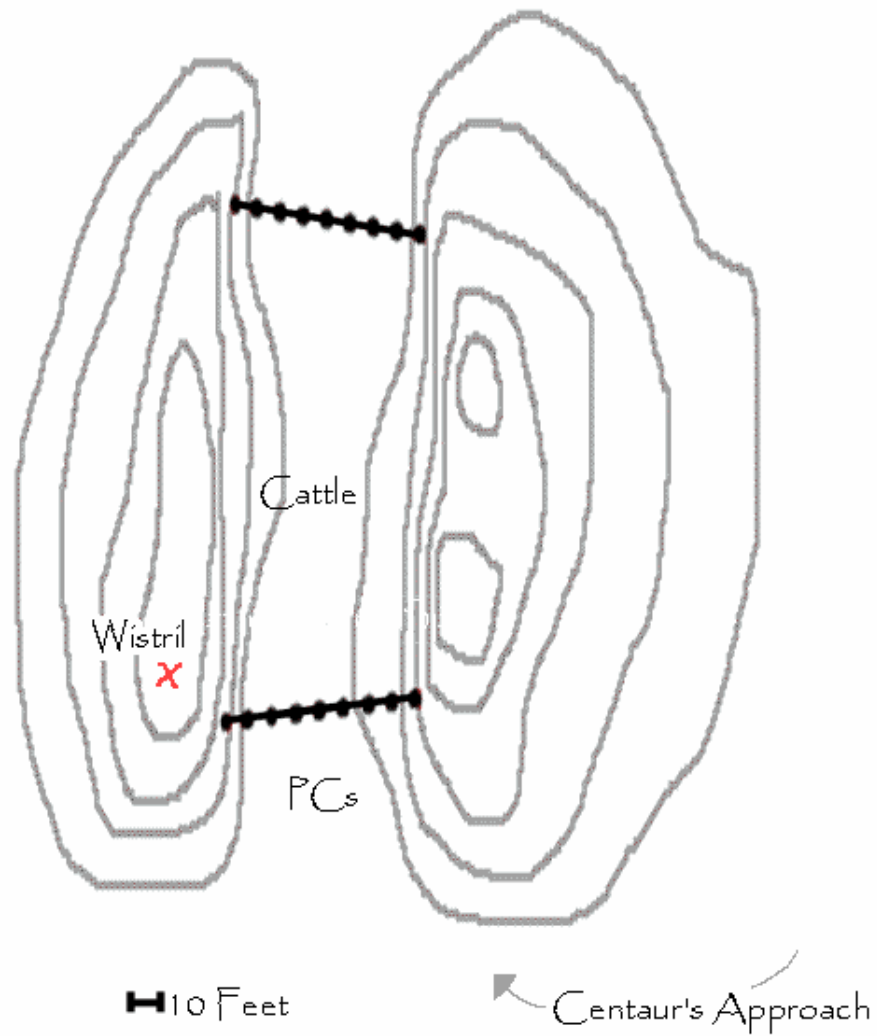
melee (1d6+3/19-20, short sword) or +3 ranged (1d8/19-20, short bow); AL NE; Sv Fort +1, Ref +5, Will -1; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +5, Disguise +5, Escape Artist +5, Hide +5, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Open Locks +5, Search +4, Use Rope +5. *Feats:* Armor Proficiency (light), Evasion, Point Blank Shot, Shield Proficiency, Sneak Attack (+1d6).

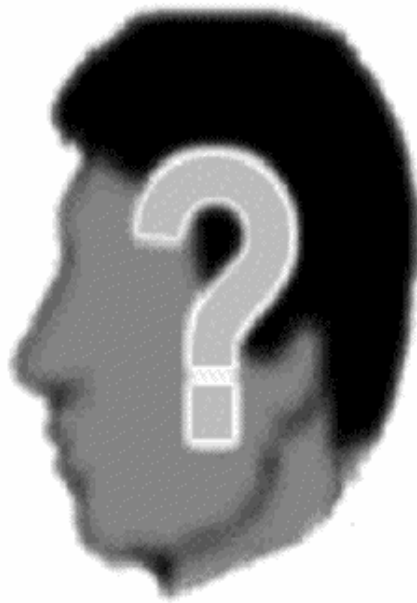
Possessions: short sword, short bow, 20 arrows, leather armor.

Judge's Map 1

Encounter Eight: Map of Voggath's Ravine (Bandit's Cattle Corral)



WANTED



Equestor

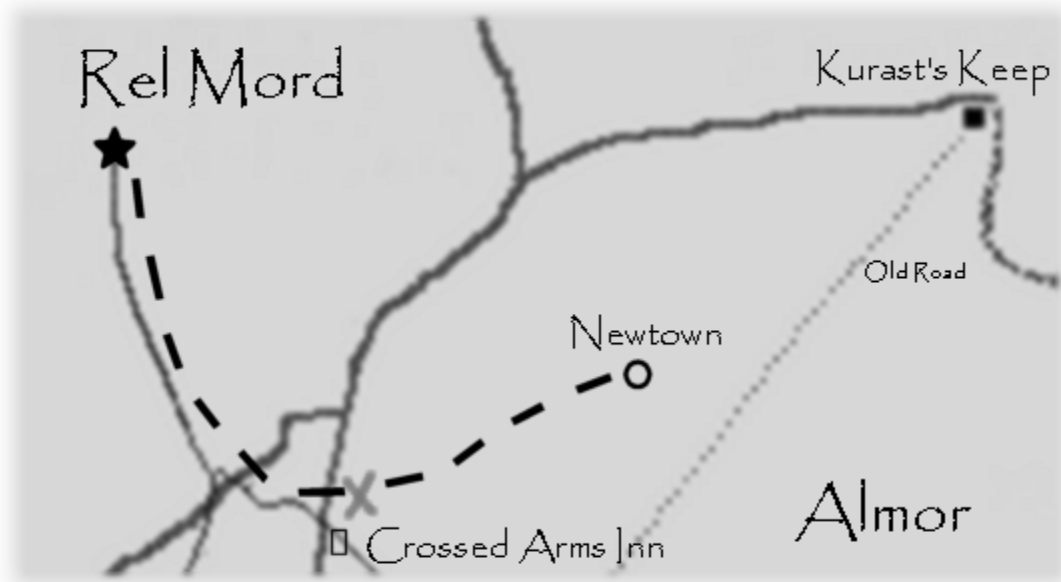
**Wanted for murder, robbery
and high treason.**

Reward of 500 crowns

DEAD OR ALIVE

Player Handout 2

This is the trail map found on the bandit bodies.



Wistril,

We have acquired a herd of cattle. Prepare a corral in Voggath's ravine. Several men were lost in the transaction so it was required to hire some seasoned travelers to aid us in driving the cattle back. Please make sure they are greeted with all due respect.

E.

Judge's Summary Sheet

The purpose of this summary sheet is to provide information to the Nyrond Triad to see how events in this scenario influence future happenings in Nyrond. Return this survey to the event coordinator or Steve Hardinger (partdragon@aol.com). Please give PC names, players names and RPGA numbers.

Did the PCs do anything extraordinary (significantly different from what the scenario implies they might do)?

Which PC served the mission objectives best? Provide a brief explanation.

Describe any events not outlined in the scenario that you feel could effect the future of the campaign in Nyrond in any way.

Which NPCs were killed, and which NPC escaped?

Which PC received the centaur's masterwork bow? Reason?

Did any PCs exhibit exceptional behavior towards the centaurs (exceptionally polite, heroic, obnoxious, etc.)? Please provide PC and player names, and very briefly describe their actions.