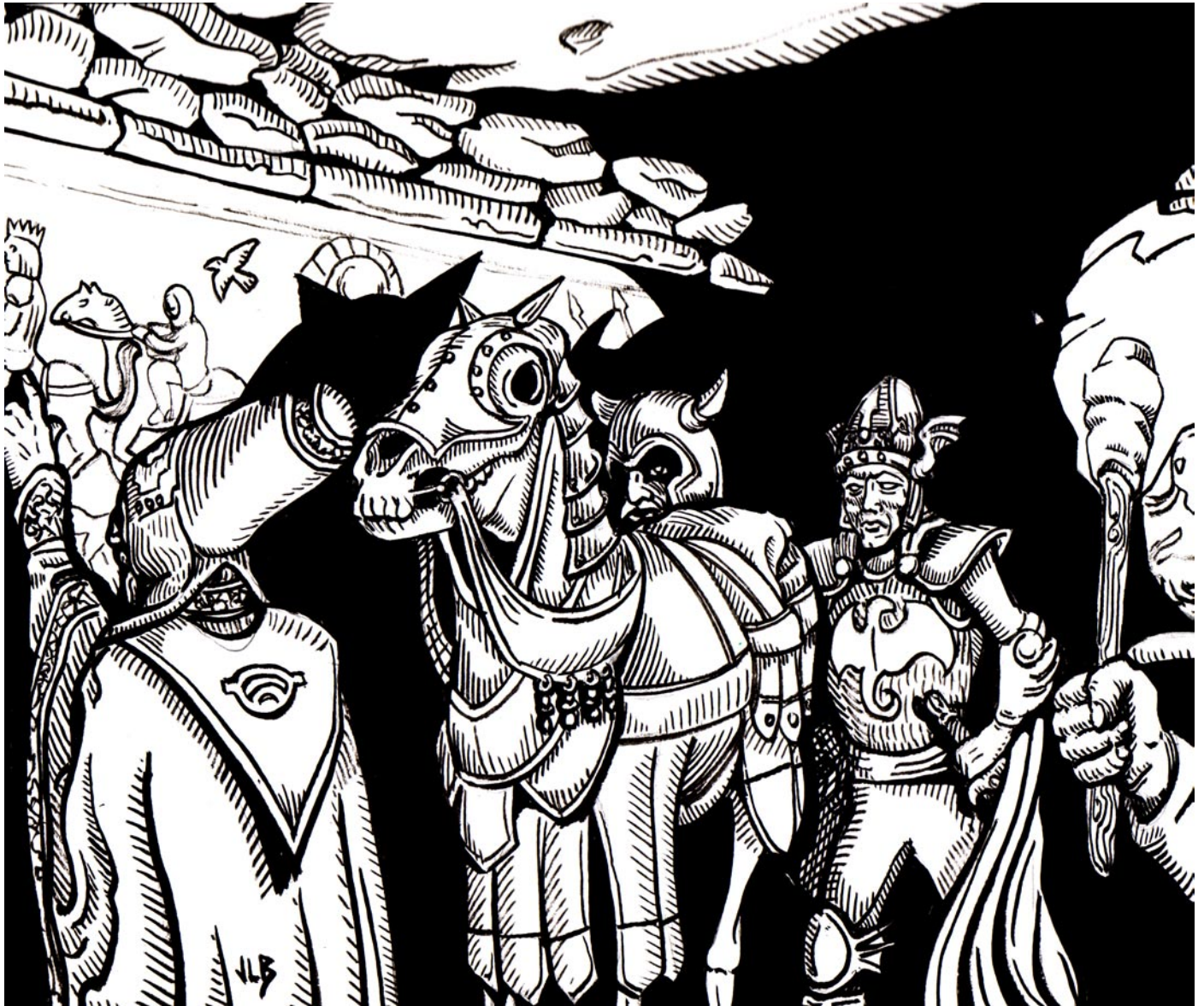


ADVANCED ADVENTURES MODULE #19

The Secret of the Callair Hills

by Geoff Gander

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 3-5



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THE SECRET OF THE CALLAIR HILLS

Introduction: Something is rotten in the Callair Hills. Over 10 farms have recently been raided and the farmers slain in their homes. Their animals are left alive and either escape when food and water run low or suffer a piteous death in cages or pens sealed-fast. Most unusually, all the farms' worldly possessions are left undisturbed. There is something rotten in the Callair Hills, and it seems bent upon murder most foul...

Notes for the Game Master: This module is intended for use in any campaign. The encounters are designed to be challenging for a party of 4-6 adventurers of levels 3 to 5 (for a total party level of 18-20). It is not essential for the party to have a cleric, but some sort of access to minor healing (i.e., via healing potions, herbs, etc.) would be useful.

This module has been structured so that it may be easily inserted as a brief side quest while the adventuring party is on the road or actively fulfilling another quest. Place names, where given, may be changed to accommodate the GM's campaign.

STOP! If you plan to participate in this adventure as a player, then stop reading here. Prior knowledge of this module's contents will only spoil your enjoyment of the game.

Background: The Callair Hills are a true frontier region. Bounded to the east by impassable mountains, to the southeast by dark forests, and to the north by goblin lands, these windy hills are largely cut off from more civilized realms. If it were not for the rich veins of silver that lie close to the surface here and the passable soils, this region would have been ignored entirely. But this place was home, centuries ago, to a proud warrior people known as the Ynlar. Led by brave chieftains, they worked the land, mined silver for their own use, and acted as a shield for other lands by keeping the more numerous goblins at bay.

The greed of the southern kingdoms – for land and silver – proved to be a greater danger than any goblin horde. Roughly 500 years ago the southern realms began sending explorers northwards in search of overland trade routes to more distant realms as well as land suitable for colonization. Relations between the southerners and the Ynlar were peaceful at first. The explorers possessed fabulous knowledge and bore strange gifts. The men from the south were amazed at the Ynlar's skill at working silver, and recognised the role the local clans played in blunting the advances of their common enemy, the goblins.

Eventually, word spread of the intricate works of the Ynlar and of the rich veins of silver that supposedly waited to be mined. Prospectors and traders came north in force; and after them workers began to clear trails, and finally settlers began to stake their claims. Within 100 years, the Ynlar began to be pushed off of their lands. At first they gave ground gracefully, but when the newcomers began to encroach on Ynlar burial grounds, regardless of any treaties signed years before, the Ynlar fought back. Led by their chieftains, they burned hundreds of homesteads and drove away the prospectors.

The response from the south was quick, and predictable. Hundreds of soldiers marched north, ostensibly to protect the remaining settlers. Wherever the Ynlar were defeated, no quarter was given, and in the soldiers' wake nothing remained but burned bodies and ruined homes. The final and greatest battle of this campaign was fought at the Barrowfields – a region of rich soils bounded by several rivers and a number of Ynlar burial mounds. The fighting lasted a night and a day; at its conclusion the greatest Ynlar warriors lay dead, and the survivors were driven from their lands.

Since that time, knowledge of the Ynlar and their deeds faded. The nations of the south soon became embroiled in other conflicts, and they paid less attention to the hard-won Callair Hills, which once again came to be viewed as remote wilderness. With no one to stop them, the goblins moved south to claim the region as their own. But the legacy of the Ynlar did not entirely die; their chieftains

were so passionate about their land that their spirits remained bound to it. Wherever the goblins settled, they were ruthlessly slaughtered by the fallen heroes of the Ynlar. The goblins retreated northwards and have never returned in force since.

Seventy years ago, a republic arose from the ruins of the squabbling southern kingdoms. As differences were put aside, civilization began to spread northwards once more, aided by a handful of border lords who keep the peace and watch the frontiers. Explorers returned to the Callair Hills and found them strangely free of goblins and blessed with rich soils. Settlers followed not long after, and now the ancient lands of the Ynlar are once more being put under the plough. This latest incursion did not go unnoticed by a particularly vengeful spirit of a great chief, the Barrow Lord. The first attacks took place last year against homesteads erected (unknowingly) close to a series of undefiled tombs near the Barrowfields, a region ruled by the Barrow Lord in life. At first, the settlers thought it was the work of bandits, but their unease grew when they realised that nothing of value was taken. The attacks continued through the winter, and some people claimed to have seen skeletal warriors on the march at night. Recalling fragmentary tales about troubles in the Callair Hills in an earlier time, many farmers have grown fearful, but the Ynlar will not rest until the last settler has been driven away.

Beginning the Module: there are a number of ways to begin this adventure. A couple of ideas are presented below.

Collum's Farm: While the characters are en route to their next adventure or returning after completing one, they see an oddly quiet farm roughly one hundred feet from the road. This should strike them as odd, as farmers in nearby regions have been working the fields for weeks. The farmhouse seems to be intact, and sheep are visible in their pens. Assuming the players investigate, they will find no signs of violence outside – there are no scorch marks or any other signs of battle, the animals are in good health, and there appears to be no evidence that the farmers fled. The tools are stacked neatly, the door and windows are intact, and everything appears orderly. A casual inspection shows that the farm itself was under cultivation until very recently.

Close inspection will reveal the presence of a number of relatively fresh footprints around the farmhouse. They appear to originate from the Barrowfields. If these tracks are noticed and further study is made, the characters will learn that the tracks were made by around half a dozen individuals. The party will see little through the windows (it is too dark inside), but the door shows signs of having been forced open.

If the party enters the house, the weathered wood door swings inwards silently as they duck to pass under the low door frame. Lying in the middle of the room next to a table are a middle-aged man and woman, along with two younger men; all dead, their faces bear expressions of utter horror.

The older man and woman were the married couple who owned this farm, the larger of the two men was their grown son, and the other man was a hired hand. If the characters look at the bodies, they will notice that none are holding any weapons. Furthermore, the nature of the wounds indicates that they did not die fighting; they were cut down where they stood.

The house itself is very simple. The floor is rough wood planking, there is a large stone hearth in the east wall, and along the west wall are two beds. On the opposite wall from the door is a ladder, which leads up to a small loft that overhangs the beds. There is nothing up there aside from an old straw mattress and a small wooden chest (this is where the hired hand slept). Several large iron hooks have been driven into the fieldstone walls at regular intervals from which hang cooking pots, canvas sacks, and various household tools. Hanging from the rafters are bunches of dried herbs. Close to the door is a simple wooden



table. Generally, everything in the house looks undisturbed aside from the chairs which were knocked over in haste.

If the party searches the house and farm for clues, it should be obvious that the family was poor. Under each of the beds in the main room is a small wooden chest, containing clothing and other personal items of no value. The contents of the hired hand's chest are the same. Hanging over the hearth is a large pot containing the family's last meal – a watery stew. If someone chooses to dig in the dirt underneath the hearth, they will find a small clay pot containing the family's wealth – 15 sp and 34 cp.

Further examination will reveal a clear trail of dirt that has been tracked into the house from outside. Anyone skilled in tracking can follow the trail outside and then towards the Barrowfields. The trail vanishes after half a mile.

The Fleeing Family: While the characters are en route to their next adventure or returning after completing one, they encounter a family riding a wagon heading in their direction. Even a casual glance will reveal that the family has hurriedly packed their worldly possessions, and the expressions on their faces make it clear that they are anxious and in a hurry. The man driving the wagon notices the party and calls out to them, urging them to turn back before they are "kilt like the others." If questioned, the man explains (the GM should read or paraphrase the following):

"It started 'round about last winter, a couple homes up Barrowfield way got hit. No lootin' or nothin'; just families gettin' kilt. Some as was livin' near there packed up an' left right quick after that! We couldn't find nothin' at the homes, 'cept some tracks, but none'd follow 'em.

"We thought that was it. But it's started agin' – first Brackley's stead got done a few days back, an' early this mornin' I called in at Collum's. All of 'em dead! Oi! Collum, his wife and son, an' their hired hand Edric. Good folk they were, but it's close to our home, an' it's easy to see we're likely next!"

If asked about the location of the two homes mentioned, the man will tell them that Brackley's farm lies about half a mile to the north, and Collum's farm sits a few miles down the road. If anyone asks whether the man has any idea what could have made the attacks, his wife will share what she knows (again, the GM can read or paraphrase the following).

"I heard that a long ways back a lot of big battles was fought near here. Some say that them who died never gave up, an' they never left the places where they fell. Can't say as I believe it, but others around here did."

The family knows nothing else, but they can tell the party where the other farms in the region are located, and which have been attacked (the players can consult The Callair Hills Map). Information about Collum's farm is presented above. Should the PCs decide to check out Brackley's farm, the trip will take four hours (roll on the Callair Hills random encounter table, below); the farm itself is abandoned, and all signs of the attacks have been erased.

A Job Offer: While in the nearest large town, the PCs are approached by the representative of the local border lord who asks whether they are adventurers interested in a job. If the PCs express interest, the official explains that local tax collectors have noticed that a growing number of farms in the nearby Callair Hills are either vacant or show signs of having been attacked. Local authorities are too busy dealing with other troubles, but as the PCs are seasoned adventurers, the lord is willing to pay them to investigate. The initial offer is 50 gp per person plus one-third of all loot obtained. If the PCs negotiate, the payment can go up to 100 gp per person and half the loot.

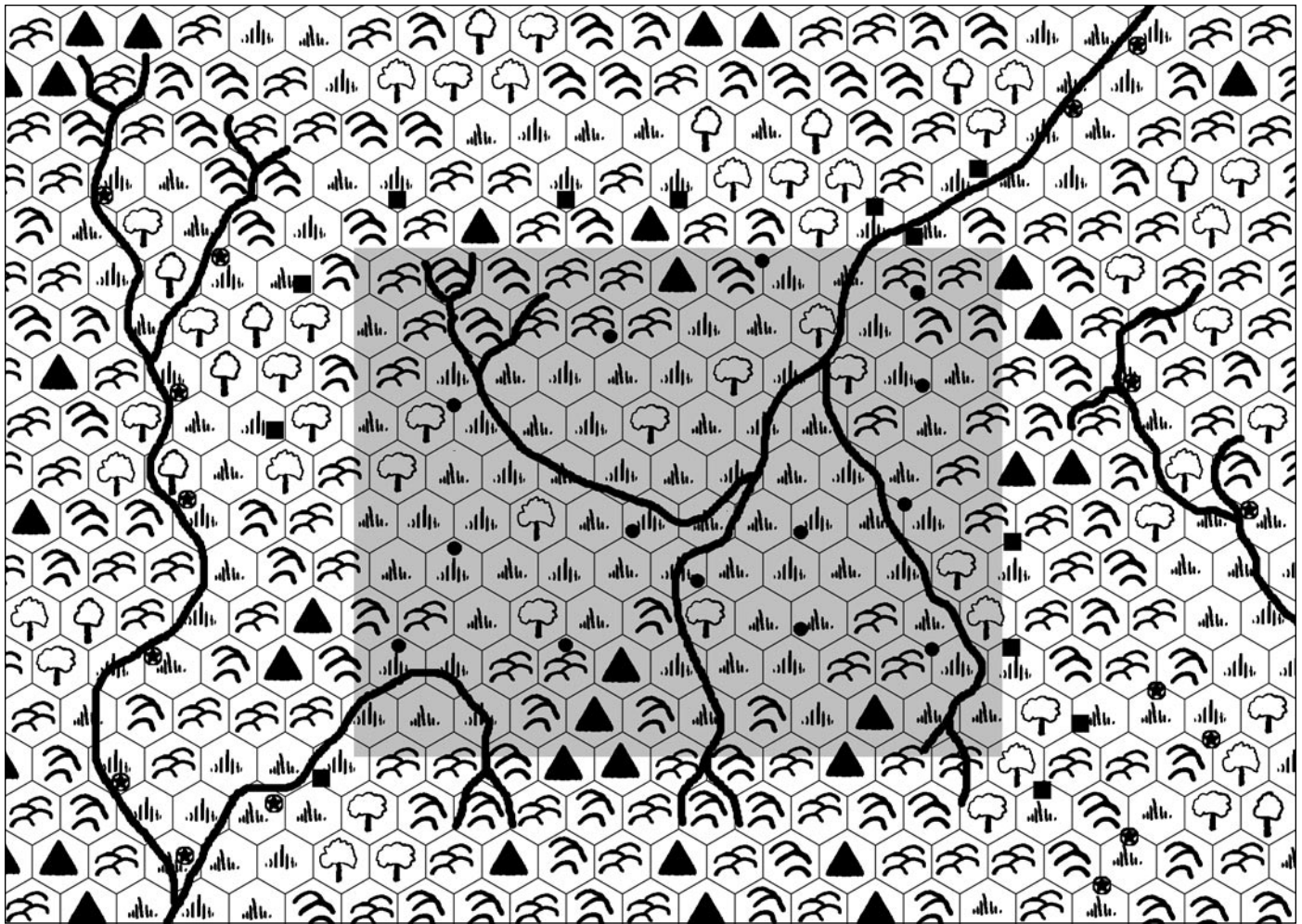
EXPLORING THE CALLAIR HILLS

It should soon be apparent that the source of the disturbances originates from somewhere farther into the wilderness. The trail left by the undead is easy to follow close to the farms, but tracking checks will be required after a mile or more of travel. The party can wander the Callair Hills for as long as they wish in search of clues; everything will point to the Barrowfields. While they are exploring, they can visit other farms in the region. If the party speaks to any farmers in the region, they may gain access to the Callair Hills map to go over the territory quickly. Otherwise, they will have to explore on their own. The various farms (destroyed, abandoned, or inhabited) are outlined below.

Wandering Monsters: While wandering the Callair Hills, the party may encounter a variety of things day or night. Check for encounters by rolling 1d6 once per hour during the day, and 1d8 once per hour during the night. A result of "1" indicates an encounter; roll on the table below. During the night use the undead encounter listed in place of encounters with humans. listed below. Once the party has encountered the undead, the GM should re-roll the same result.

THE CALLAIR HILLS MAP

EACH HEX EQUALS 1 MILE: THE SHADED AREA IS DETAILED IN THE BARROWFIELDS MAP



- 1 - **1-2 Deer** (AC 7, HD 2, hp 6 each, MV 240 ft., #AT 1 gore, D 1-3, AL N). The deer normally live in one of the nearby copses, but the reduced human presence has emboldened them to venture further afield. There is a 40% chance that a fawn (2 hp) will be present, in which case the deer may attack the party.
- 2 - **2-8 Wolves** (AC 7, HD 2+2, hp 12 each, MV 180 ft., #AT 1 bite, D 2-5, AL N). Wolves were the traditional apex predator of the region but in recent years had been driven away by settlers. They have returned to the area since the disturbances. A large pack, if hungry enough, may attack an adventuring party.
- 3 - **Black Bear** (AC 7, HD 3+3, hp 16, MV 120 ft., #AT 2 claw/1 bite, D 1-3, 1-3, 1-6 AL N). The bear is foraging and will try to avoid the PCs if possible but an unfavourable reaction roll or hostile behaviour could provoke it to attack.
- 4 - **1-4 Humans** (AC 9, HD 1, hp 3 each, MV 120 ft., #AT 1 weapon, D by weapon, AL LN). There is a 60% chance that the humans are farmers abandoning their land due to the continued attacks. Otherwise, they are hunters from further south who know nothing about local events.
- 5 - **1-6 Goblins** (AC 6, HD 1-1, hp 4 each, MV 60 ft., #AT 1 weapon, D 1-6, AL LE). Although the local clans have

given the Callair Hills a wide berth for centuries, scouts visit regularly to hunt and to raid the occasional farm.

- 6 - **2-8 Giant Ants** (AC 3, HD 2, hp 8 each, MV 180 ft., #AT 1 bite, D 1-6, AL N). The ants are foraging but will attack the PCs if encountered. There is a 25% that the ants' nest will be nearby, housing 4-16 giant ants. If the PCs search the nest, the GM should randomly generate treasure.
- 7 - **2-8 Bandits** (AC 6, HD 2, hp 11 each, MV 120 ft., #AT 1 weapon, D 1-6 (axe) or 1-8 (sword), AL NE). These outlaws were raiding in the more-settled southern lands, but they have fled north to avoid pursuit, and to look for rumored treasure. They will not hesitate to attack the PCs. They have little treasure.
- 8 - **1-2 Ogres** (AC 5, HD 4+1, hp 22 each, MV 90 ft., #AT 1 giant club, D 1-10 +2, AL CE). These ogres used to live up in the hills but have come down in pursuit of easy game (deer and escaped livestock).

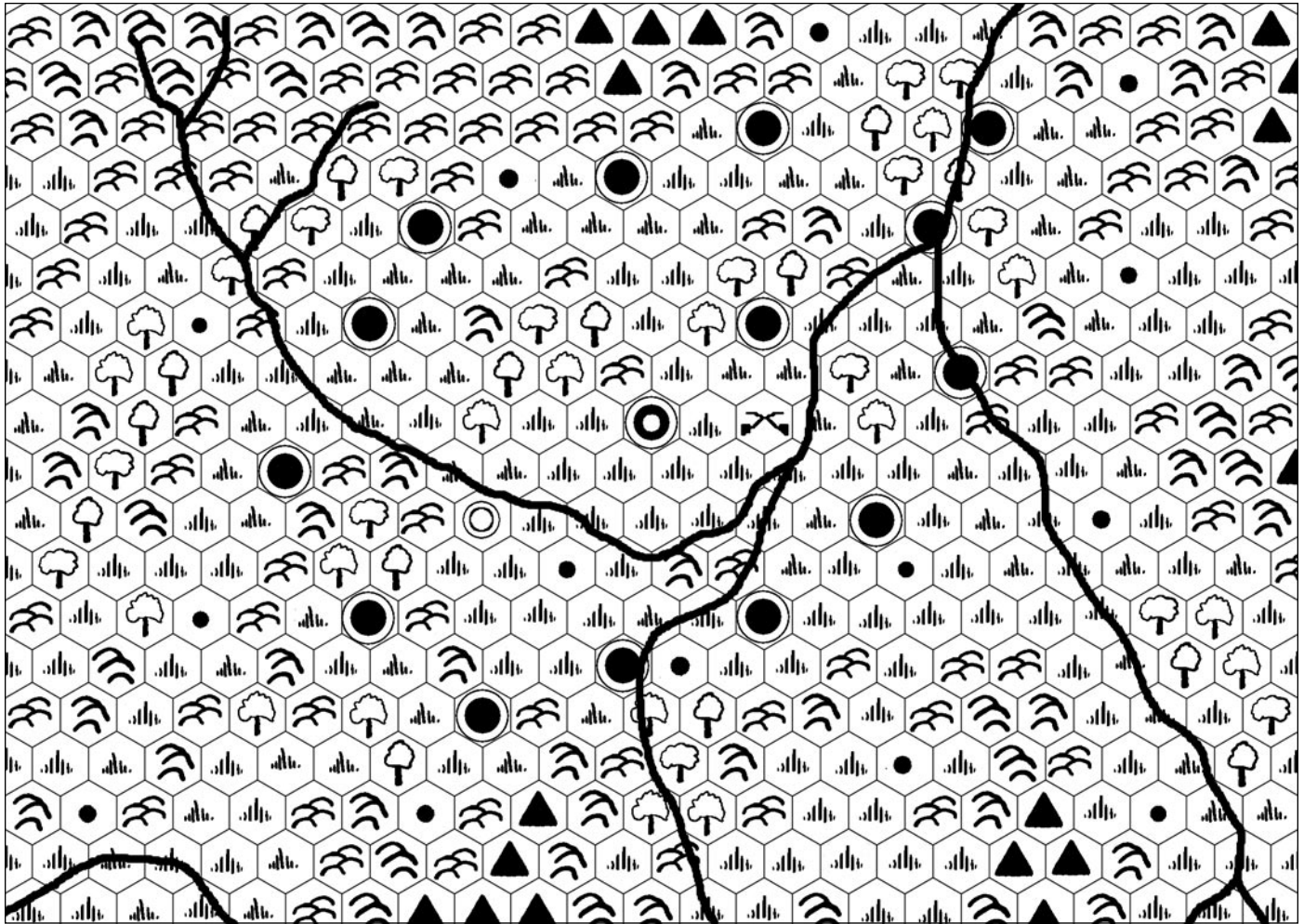
Special Night Encounter: 4 Powerful Skeletons (AC 6, HD 3, hp 14 each, MV 120 ft., #AT 1 weapon+1, D 1-6+1, AL N). These fallen Ynlar heroes serve the Barrow Lord even in death. They wander the Callair Hills in search of farms or homesteads but will attack the PCs if encountered. They wear the remnants of their armor

LEGEND FOR THE MAPS



THE BARROWFIELDS MAP

EACH HEX EQUALS 1/2 MILE



and wield short swords or hand axes. They have nothing of value. They turn as wights.

THE BARROWFIELDS

Destroyed Farms: These are in much the same condition as the Collum's Farm (see above). Nothing of value has been taken, and if the party searches carefully, they will find a handful of silver and copper coins and possibly one or two low-grade pieces of jewellery (maximum value 10 gp). All of the bodies have been burned by the other farmers, and the animals have been taken. The farms located closest to the tombs were attacked first – this detail can be confirmed if the PCs ask any other fleeing farmers they meet.

Abandoned Farms: The families living here have already fled taking everything of value. There may be a handful of old tools or other items lying about. There is a 50% chance that the party may find tracks here – these were left by undead who visited after the occupants left. With a successful tracking attempt, the party may follow these tracks back to the Barrowfields and the lair of the Barrow Lord.

Inhabited Farms: These farms are still occupied. There will be 3-7 people living here plus enough common animals (sheep, pigs, chickens, oxen, etc.) to sustain them. The occupants will be suspicious of the party at first, but if they demonstrate their honorable intentions, they will relax somewhat and provide much the same information as the fleeing family did. The party may try to convince the families to leave their farms for their own safety – good roleplaying will be required as the PCs are asking farmers to abandon their farms. The GM may wish to award the party an extra 100 experience points for every family they save in this manner.

In the midst of the lands claimed by the farmers is a region of hilly grasslands broken only by the occasional stream or stand of trees (the shaded area of Map 1). During their height, the Ynlar buried their clan chieftains and greatest warriors in burial mounds here; according to their mythology, this region was where the gods first set foot in the mortal realms. Over time, a large number of burial mounds were erected, some so large that they were mistaken by later settlers for hills. During the early years of relations between the Ynlar and the people of the south, settlers gave the region a wide berth as they understood it was sacred ground. After the Ynlar mastery of silversmithing became more widely known, treasure hunters began looting the tombs. By the time the Ynlar had been dispersed, most of the largest mounds had already been picked clean, but a handful, including the ones the party will ultimately visit, escaped notice.

Few people today know that this area was once the cemetery of the greatest Ynlar heroes. Only the name – the Barrowfields – gives a clue as to its origin. Ever since the dead have become restless, animals and the locals have avoided the region; therefore, the party will have no random encounters here aside from the undead. During the day, the land will be oddly silent (the GM should not roll any random encounters), but during the night 1d6 should be rolled each hour. A roll of "1" indicates an encounter with undead (use the stats provided with the Callair Hills encounter table, above). Two such encounters may be had before the Barrow Lord realizes that something is fighting back and recalls his warriors.

Since the barrow lord has started stirring, there is a 40% chance that the PCs will witness a ghostly battle sometime during the night. The land suddenly becomes misty, and a massive spectral

horde of leather-clad warriors materializes. To the north, a wooden palisade seems to grow out of the ground. The warriors attack the fortification ferociously, weathering many volleys of arrows. One of them, a large man riding a horse, leads a small band of men to the gates. Despite his injuries, he scales the palisade and proceeds to attack the defenders. Although he is mortally wounded, his actions create enough of a distraction that the other warriors manage to smash the gates and wreak havoc. The scene then fades.

The battle scene lasts for about an hour and is loud enough that it can be heard up to two miles away. The brave warrior the PCs saw was the Barrow Lord at his final battle. Once viewed, the phantasm of the past does not reveal itself again.

In addition to possible encounters with undead and the ghostly battle, the PCs may come across a number of places of interest which are described below. Please refer to the Barrowfields map found below.

Ruined Towers: There are dozens of dilapidated towers built by any number of the southern kingdoms during the final campaign against the Ynlar throughout the area. The GM should place these towers as he sees fit. Each was garrisoned for a short time afterwards, but the soldiers were withdrawn once the kingdom began to decline. Since then, the floors have rotted away leaving empty shells. Over the centuries, various creatures have made the ruins their home, but most are easily scared away being only small, common animals. However, there are some towers housing more fitting challenges. Below are two possible tower encounters, and the GM is encouraged to create more as is appropriate for his game.

Tower the First: The latest inhabitants are a swarm of 20 killer bees and their queen who have found the tower perfect place to build their hive. If the PCs come within 30 feet of the ruins, the bees will attack.

Killer Bees (AC 7, HD ½, hp 3 each, MV 30 ft. (90 ft. flying), #AT 1 sting, D 1-3 + poison, AL N).

Queen Bee (AC 7, HD 2, hp 16, MV 30 ft. (90 ft. flying), #AT 1 sting, D 1-3 + poison, AL N).

If the PCs search the ruins, they will find a half-buried metal strongbox that is locked. Anyone wishing to pick the lock must do so at a -20% penalty due to the poor condition of the locking mechanism. Otherwise, it can be smashed open (AC 3, 40 hp). The box holds 30 gp, 72 sp, and 134 cp.

Tower the Second: This tower is inhabited by a hive of giant ants. Recently settled, the nest is very small, composed of only 25 workers, 5 soldiers, and the queen.

Worker Ants (AC 3, HD 2, hp 8 each, MV 180 ft., #AT 1 bite, D 1-6, AL N).

Soldier Ants (AC 3, HD 3, hp 12 each, MV 180 ft., #AT 2 bite & sting, D 2-8, 3-12, AL N).

Queen Ant (AC 4, HD 10, hp 49, MV 0 ft., #AT 0, D 0, AL N).

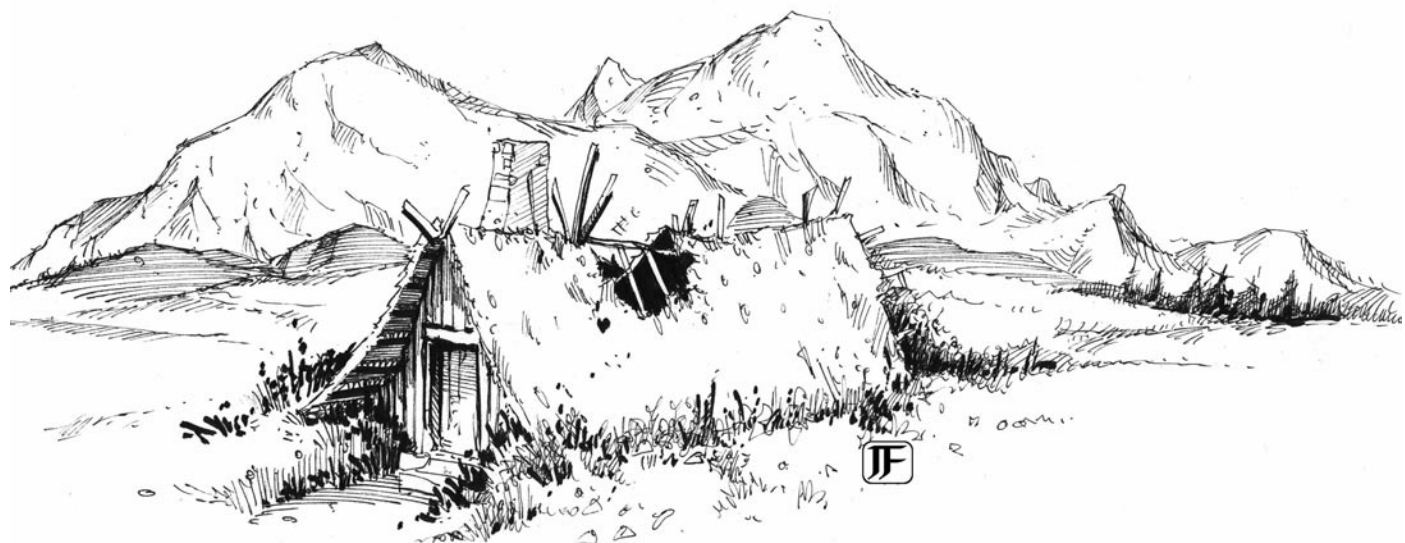
The Standing Stones: The Ynlar erected numerous stone circles across their land to worship their gods and commemorate their dead before burial. This ring, composed of ten-foot tall pillars of granite arranged in a 40-foot wide circle, is the only one remaining. In the exact center of the circle is a stone dais on which a six-foot long obsidian slab (an altar) has been placed. Although the slab is cracked and pitted, faint runes can be discerned. If translated with magic, the runes will be revealed to be prayers to the Ynlar gods for protection and guidance.

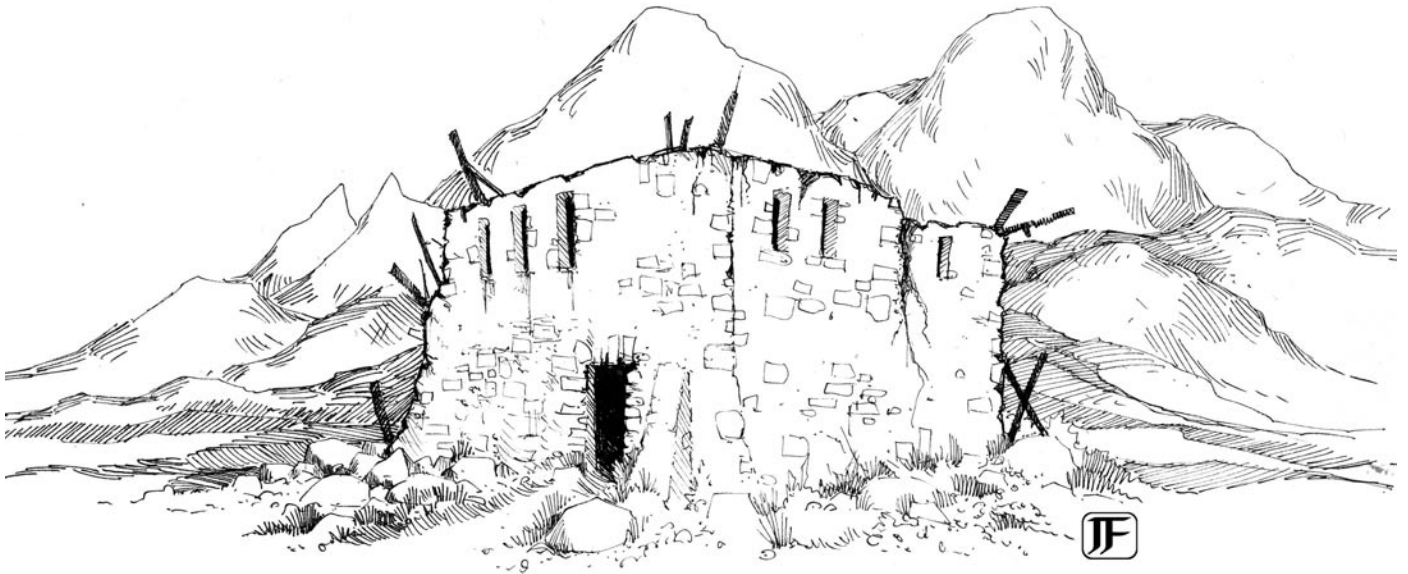
Hidden in a secret compartment in the base of the slab is a finely crafted silver bowl (worth 800 gp), a holy relic of the Ynlar. If it is taken, the Barrow Lord will know immediately and send four powerful skeletons to investigate (use the stats given above); they will arrive in 1-4 turns and attack anyone within the circle. If the Barrow Lord sees the bowl in the party's possession at any time, he will become enraged and attack immediately with a +2 bonus on all attacks until he is destroyed.

Lesser Burial Mounds: Lesser mounds resemble round grassy hills, and contain burial chambers averaging six feet wide and ten feet deep - large enough to accommodate one person lying down plus some personal effects. These were the final resting places of lesser Ynlar heroes who had sworn fealty to the Barrow Lord in life and fell honorably in battle. A quick study of the mound entrances will reveal that they appear to have been dug out from the inside.

If the PCs search the mounds at night, they will find them empty, and containing rotting piles of straw (formerly baskets containing foodstuffs), clay pots (which once held ale, but will now make any imbiber deathly ill for 1-4 days), and an assortment of knives and small pieces of silver jewellery of high quality (worth a total of 2-200 gp). All of the items are adorned with scenes of men armed with spears and axes hunting beasts and fighting each other.

If the mounds are visited during the day, their skeletal occupants will be present, seemingly at rest, with their swords and axes laid on their chests. If anything in the tomb is disturbed, the fallen warrior will rise up and attack (roll for surprise). Each powerful skeleton warrior will fight until destroyed. If searched, the skeletons each wear 1-2 items of silver jewellery (necklaces, armbands) worth 4-40 gp each. Although their armor has long since rotted away, their weapons are well made. Once two warriors have been destroyed





in their tombs, the Barrow Lord will become aware that something is attacking his followers, and he will gather his remaining forces at his own tomb.

There are 14 lesser mounds in total – the GM should be keeping track of encounters with undead, as some occupants may already have been destroyed.

Powerful Skeletons (AC 6, HD 3, hp 14, MV 120 ft., #AT 1 weapon+1, D 1-6+1, AL N).

The Old Fort: Over a thousand years ago, the Callair Hills were controlled by the Kingdom of Ynlaska, a nation of proud warriors who were the ancestors of the Ynlar. At the height of Ynlaska's power, a series of forts were built across its northern frontier to keep out the goblins. This fort, the easternmost of these, fell to a goblin raid about 900 years ago, and the kingdom fell soon afterwards. The surviving inhabitants forgot their past and within a few generations came to regard the ruins as cursed ground. All that remains of the fort today is the shell of a single building and a heavily overgrown outer wall which averages nary a foot in height with many gaps. Opposite the lone building is a large grassy mound that was once a keep. The mound will look strange to the PCs as worn masonry pokes up out of the grass and shrubbery in many places – the result of the building collapsing in the siege and becoming overgrown with vegetation.

When the PCs arrive, they will see a man digging near a piece of masonry. The man introduces himself as Kareth Sashel, an historian and explorer who is currently studying the Ynlar. He suspects the true nature of the Old Fort, and is trying to find proof. Kareth has been alone here for at least a day; the two guides who accompanied him left in search of game and have not returned (they were killed by one of the Barrow Lord's patrols).

Kareth Sashel, 3rd-Level Magic User (AC 7, hp 9, MV 120ft., #AT 1 weapon or 1 spell, D 1-4 or by spell, AL CG).

Kareth is a friendly man who is fascinated by his research, but tends to be oblivious about most other things. He knows enough of the old Ynlar tongue to get by and can read their runic script. He carries a dagger and knows the following spells (those that are memorised are in italics):

1st-Level: *light*, *magic missile*, *read magic*, *shield*, *sleep*
 2nd-Level: *detect evil*, *knock*, *web*

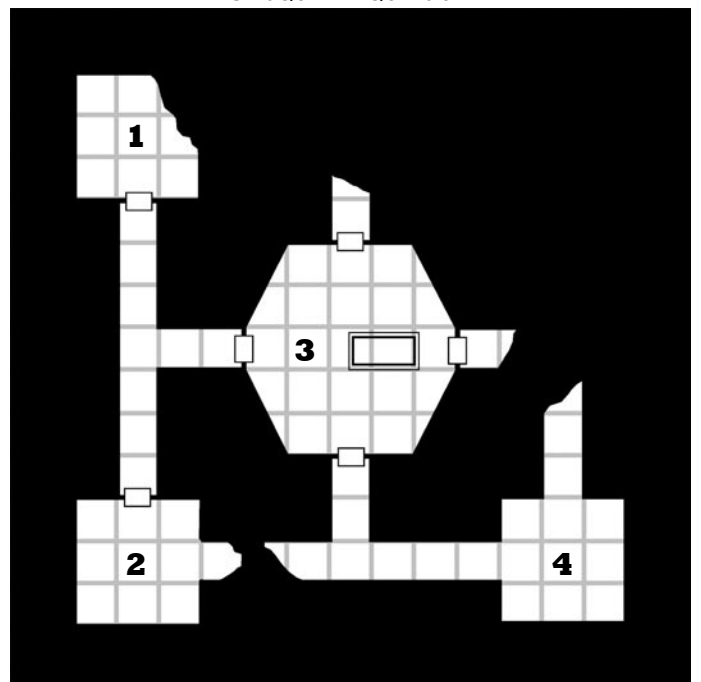
If the PCs help Kareth dig, there is a 30% chance per hour that they will discover the entrance to the buried lower level of the fort

(area 1 of The Old Fort Map). Much of the lower level has become choked with debris due to minor cave-ins. The walls are unmortared brick, and the ceiling averages six feet high. The ceiling is made of rotting timbers supported at regular intervals by wooden braces. It is very damp, and ominous creaks and groans from the wood are common. Should combat occur, there is a 10% chance per round that one or more braces might become sufficiently damaged to cause a minor cave-in. If this happens, anyone within 10 feet must save vs. death or take 1-6 damage.

1. NORTHWEST GUARD ROOM: This room is partially collapsed. There is a door to the south and a wall of rubble to the east. A stone staircase leads up to a wooden trapdoor, but there is now a man-sized hole in the ceiling leading outside. The trapdoor is so warped that it will not budge, but if it is smashed open (AC 8, 20 hp) it will release a small shower of rubble (1-2 damage to anyone underneath the opening). The door to the south is warped due to the moisture and requires a combined Strength of 30 to open.

THE OLD FORT

EACH SQUARE EQUALS 5 FEET



2. **SOUTHWEST GUARD ROOM:** The door to this room is ajar. This room contains a moldy wooden weapons rack on the south wall as well as a couple of benches. The doorway to the east is choked with debris. A stone staircase leads up to a wooden trapdoor. If the party tries to break open the trapdoor, a shower of rubble will fall on them (as in area 1). Four cave locusts are here feeding on the wood. They will immediately try to flee as soon as the PCs enter and have a 50% chance per round of bumping into them.

Cave locusts (AC 4, HD 2, hp 12 each, MV 60 ft., #AT 1 bite or 1 bump or 1 spit, D 1-2 or 1-4 or special, AL N). If cornered by a PC, a cave locust may spit a ball of goo at them – roll to hit against AC 9. Anyone hit must save vs. Poison or be immobilised for one turn by the smell, after which they will be used to it. Until the goo is washed off, anyone coming within 5 feet of the PC must also save or become violently ill.

3. **SANCTUARY:** All of the doors to this room are closed due to warping, and require a combined Strength of 30 to open them. This large chamber contains several rusting iron braziers and moldy wooden pallets covered with rotting grass mats. There is a small rectangular pool choked with algae in the middle of the room. In one corner is a pile of small wooden boxes. Four sturdy wooden doors, one in each wall, lead to other parts of this complex, and the south door is bolted. This room was intended to be a final redoubt for the garrison if the walls were taken. All of the doors can be bolted from the inside, and there was enough food and water available to supply 30 men for a week. Unfortunately, the water is tainted with foul parasites that will drive anyone insane if they drink the water for more than three days.

The boxes, which are sealed with wax, contain preserved rations (dried fish and vegetables with noodles – boil before serving). Some of the rations – about 10 meals' worth – are still edible but tasteless. The unique way that the food was preserved would be interesting to a scholar or historian who might pay up to 5 gp per preserved meal.

If the PCs open the southern door, a skeleton dressed in strange armour will collapse at their feet. The other side of the door will show signs of having been scratched by human hands. There is nothing of value on the skeleton.

4. **SOUTHEAST GUARD ROOM:** This room is filled with wooden fragments from the splintered furniture and the doors. There is a small pile of rubble under an opened trapdoor in the ceiling. Six skeletons dressed in rusted armor, are scattered around the room. Some of the remains have weapons stuck in them, and others are missing small pieces. These skeletons and the one behind the door, were part of the fort garrison. A goblin siege forced them into the sanctuary, and they all went mad after drinking the water while the fort collapsed above them. This group was locked in this part of the complex and slowly starved to death but not before trying to eat each other. The remaining survivors tried to dig their way out from the now-collapsed northeast guard room.

An Intelligence check (or Kareth, if he is present) will reveal some writing scratched into one of the walls. Unless the PCs can cast **comprehend languages**, or know the ancient languages of the region, they will not be able to read it as it is in the script of Ynlaska. Kareth can read it, and after a few minutes' study, he will tell the party that one of the soldiers had written that goblins had taken the fort and that he feared the tombs of the Great Lords might be defiled. Shakier writing lower down on the wall states that "madmen" had locked the writer and his companions away and that they were very hungry. Further down and almost illegible are the words, "*I am trapped with demons, but I must eat them if I am to live.*"

The Barrow Lord's Mound

The Barrow Lord's mound is a grassy, dome-shaped hill measuring almost 100 feet in diameter and 20 feet high at its crest. Set into the southern side of the hill is a man-sized archway of unmortared stone which was once choked with dirt and vegetation but is now mostly clear. A narrow passageway leads into the hill. Although numerous footprints are clearly visible, the site looks deserted.

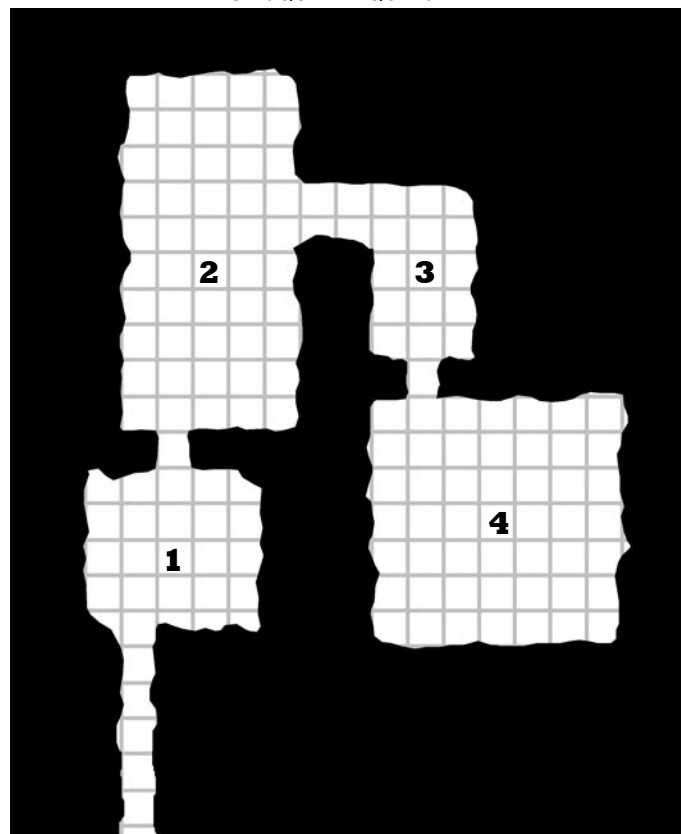
The Barrow Lord and his followers are active at night, and if the PCs arrive during that time, there is a 75% chance that he will be absent. Once the PCs enter the tomb, the Barrow Lord will know instantly and will return in 2-8 turns with 1-6 followers (or all of them if the PCs have attacked more than two lesser mounds). His reaction, as well as those of his followers, to the PCs' presence will depend on how they behave in his tomb. If the PCs looted or vandalised any tombs, he will attack as soon as he sees them.

If the PCs approach the Barrow Lord's tomb during the day, he will be dormant. If they begin actively searching the tomb (i.e., opening chests, moving things around) or if they take anything, he and his personal guards (in area 3) will awaken and attack. For every round that the battle continues, there is a 50% chance that one of the Barrow Lord's vassals will arrive in 1-6 turns. This will continue until all remaining vassals have arrived.

1. **ANTEROOM:** This chamber measures roughly ten feet square and is where the clan gave their chief his final gifts to ensure a comfortable afterlife. There are many clay pots here (containing now-poisonous ale) as well as bundles of dried flowers and rotting piles of straw (which were once baskets of food). There is a narrow doorway on the other side of the room leading deeper into the complex.
2. **TACK ROOM:** This rectangular room measures 10-feet wide by 20-feet deep and contains everything one might need to ride into battle. The walls are covered with scenes of men on horseback, either hunting wolves, deer and bears or riding into

THE BARROW LORD'S MOUND

EACH SQUARE EQUALS 2 FEET



battle. On a stone table in the far corner is an intricately carved saddle (inlaid with silver, worth 400 gp), while on a nearby hook hangs a bridle. The skeleton of a large horse, complete with fine leather and plate barding, dominates the room. A careful examination of the horse will reveal that its shoes are made of silver (worth 80 gp in total). Any attempt to disturb the remains will alert the Barrow Lord and his personal guards if they are in the tomb.

3. **GUARD ROOM:** This square room is barely large enough to accommodate the two stone beds and their occupants; two skeletal warriors. Each of them wears ornate leather and scale armor, and their silver inlaid weapons are gripped tightly in their bony hands. All of the walls bear scenes of adventure and heroism, chiefly concerning two men who hunted and killed great beasts, and fought numerous goblins and other adversaries. One particularly detailed scene features a great attack against a fortress in which a great warrior falls in battle. The two men are shown carrying the man back to his family where he is buried with honor, but not before they take their own lives.

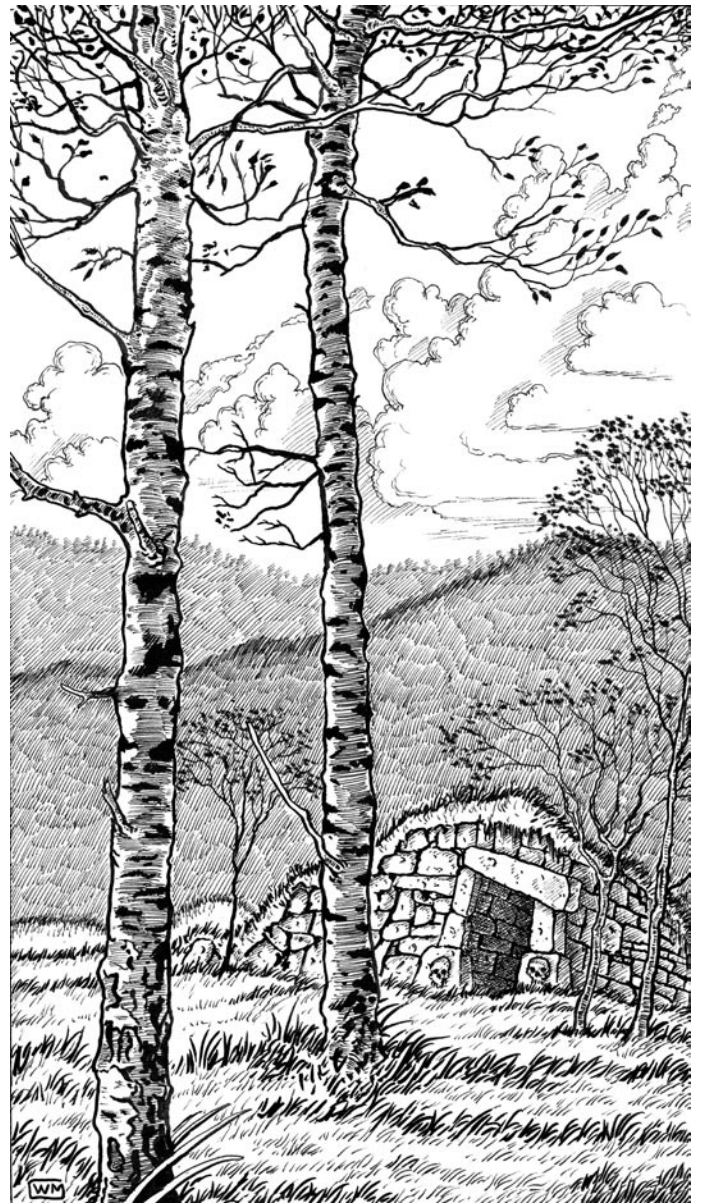
These skeletons are the remains of the Barrow Lord's two most faithful companions who decided to accompany him in the afterlife. If either body is touched, they will animate and attack, and the Barrow Lord will join them from his tomb (area 4) in two rounds. If the PCs pass them by and enter the Barrow Lord's chamber, they will rise quietly in order to attack them from behind. Unlike the Barrow Lord's other followers, these skeletons will not go outside.

Tomb Guardians (AC 5, HD 4, hp 22 each, MV 60 ft., #AT 1 weapon+1, D 1-6+1, AL C). They wield high quality short swords (treat as silvered), and each wears fine silver jewellery worth 2-40 gp.

4. **BURIAL CHAMBER:** This 14-foot by 14-foot room is the final resting place of the Barrow Lord. The walls are covered with paintings depicting the various heroic deeds of a young man, including hunting bears, fighting goblins, and challenging and defeating a hill giant, and finally leading an attack against a fortress. Along the far wall is a stone table bearing a sheathed sword, a wooden chest, and a pair of boots. A rectangular stone plinth on which is a richly dressed skeleton dominates the room. It wears a finely made but rusted suit of scale mail, and its hands clutch a sword and shield.

The PCs will not have time to take in much more before the Barrow Lord rises swiftly (roll for surprise). If the PCs have touched nothing in any of the tombs they have visited, the Barrow Lord will order his personal guards, who have approached from behind, to block the exit but not attack. He will then ask the PCs why they have trespassed on his land. Unless one of the PCs knows any obscure languages of this part of the world or can cast **comprehend languages**, or a similar spell, they will not be able to understand him, as the Ynlar tongue is no longer spoken. As an option, the GM may let the party follow what the Barrow Lord is saying by letting them make two halved INT checks. If the PCs show no signs of understanding him or make no effort, the Barrow Lord will attack.

Barrow Lord (AC 3, HD 7, hp 45, MV 90 ft., #AT 1 weapon +2 or 1 touch, D 1-8+3 or special, Save F6, ML 10, AL N). The Barrow Lord wears scale mail and a shield, and wields a **sword +1, +2 vs. goblins**. He also wears a **ring of protection +1**. The sheathed sword is a ceremonial blade (worth 300 gp, but useless as a weapon), and the chest contains silver jewellery worth 550 gp. The boots, although old, are finely made and still supple and will give the wearer a slight bonus when attempting to perform any special riding manoeuvres.



Dealing with the Barrow Lord

If the PCs show the Barrow Lord that they understand him, he will tell them that he has sworn to defend the land of his ancestors from all outsiders until nothing remains of him, and that the latest invaders will suffer like all the others. Through good roleplaying, the PCs may try to convince the Barrow Lord that the farmers his followers have been killing are harmless and are not the same people who attacked the Ynlar centuries ago. The GM may make reaction check or judge the argument on its own merit. If the PCs deliver a convincing performance, the Barrow Lord will concede that the farmers may not be his old foes, but he will still insist that they are trespassing on sacred Ynlar land.

The PCs need to find a way to convince the Barrow Lord that his personal war is over, and that he and his followers may rest in peace. He may become enraged if the PCs simply tell him that his people were either all killed or driven away. Clever PCs should be able to find a way to respect the Barrow Lord's wish that his lands and tomb be left alone while obtaining a promise from him to end the attacks. If they secure his agreement, he will insist on trading his sword for the best sword owned by the party – an ancient Ynlar method of concluding a deal. The party may then leave the tomb unmolested, and the remaining undead will return to their tombs. The GM should then award the PCs the experience points they would have gained by killing the Barrow Lord, plus a 10% bonus.

Conclusion and Further Adventures

Assuming that the PCs have dealt successfully with the Barrow Lord – either through negotiation or combat – news of the deed will spread once it becomes clear that the attacks have ended and that the undead will rest so long as the tombs remain untouched. If the PCs remain in the Callair Hills region, the locals will revere them as heroes and offer them as many provisions as they wish.

Word of the PCs' accomplishment will also reach the official charged by the republic with developing the region. A messenger will be sent to invite the PCs to his manor. Over dinner, he will discuss the many challenges faced by the Callair Hills, some of which can only be resolved by adventurers like themselves, and offer them further work. If the PCs accept his offer, they could find themselves assigned quests that could take them far and wide. Some ideas are presented below:

- 1. Tracing the Ynlar:** Although the Ynlar were dispersed after the Battle of the Barrowfields, their descendants live on. Many of these live on a fertile river plain many miles to the southwest. Over several generations, they mixed with the local farmers and herders and are largely indistinguishable except for a few odd traditions. These people may remember fragments of Ynlar lore which might help the PCs pursue other adventuring leads.
- 2. Settling the Callair Hills:** So long as the Barrow Lord's conditions are met, the Callair Hills will be safe for settlement, but that does not mean that the region is without danger. There are many wild animals to contend with as well as goblins and other monsters that will begin to encroach once it becomes clear that the Ynlar spirits are at peace. Bandits may also see the region as an ideal spot to establish a stronghold. The PCs could find themselves busy policing the region until it becomes more civilized.
- 3. Fighting the Goblins:** If the PCs manage to appease or defeat the Barrow Lord, the Callair Hills will finally be at peace. This will not go unnoticed by the goblin tribes to the north. The PCs may be asked to participate in, or even lead, a campaign to keep them out.
- 4. The Silver Wars:** It is only a matter of time before the region's silver is rediscovered and other nations begin paying attention to the Callair Hills. The republic's hold on these lands is loose, and it would not take much to conquer them. The PCs could be tasked with hunting down spies and scouts from other countries or perhaps doing some spying of their own. If rivalries explode into war, the PCs could play a decisive role.
- 5. The Tombs of the Great Lords:** If the PCs visited the Old Fort, they might know that the Ynlar were once part of a powerful kingdom ruled by the Great Lords. The Great Lords maintained a stronghold at what is now called the Old Fort and buried their dead in now-forgotten tombs scattered throughout the hills. Using clues found at the Old Fort, the PCs may be able to locate the tombs. The GM will need to develop and stock the tombs as dungeons.

New Monsters

BARROW LORD

SIZE: Medium
MOVE: 90 ft.
ARMOR CLASS: 4
HIT DICE: 7
ATTACKS: 1 weapon or touch
DAMAGE: By weapon +2 or special
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Paralysis
SPECIAL DEFENSES: None
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard
RARITY: Rare
NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1
LAIR PROBABILITY: 95%
TREASURE: 1-10k cp (5%), 1-12k sp (15%), 1-6k ep (25%), 1-8k gp (25%), 1-12 gems (15%), 1-8 jewelry (10%), any 3 magic items + 1 scroll (25%)
INTELLIGENCE: Average
ALIGNMENT: Neutral
LEVEL/X.P.: 5 / 465 + 8/hp

General information: Barrow lords are tribal or clan leaders whose desire to defend their lands and people is so strong that their spirits are unable to leave the mortal plane. They lie dormant as long as their territory remains untouched but arise as soon as outlanders encroach. Barrow lords retain their memories and skills after death and are capable of speech. Opponents who show respect may be given an opportunity to explain themselves and avoid battle. Barrow lords may not venture more than a couple of miles from their burial sites and are turned as a mummy.

In combat, barrow lords may use their weapons or they may touch an opponent. If a victim is touched, they must save vs. paralysis or be stunned for 1-6 rounds. Due to their former status as leaders, barrow lords command 5-20 undead followers (base 2-8, plus an additional 1-4 per Hit Die). These powerful skeletons are treated as skeletons with 3 Hit Dice, have a damage bonus of +1 on any wielded weapon, and are turned as wights.

In addition, there is a 50% chance that a barrow lord will have 1-4 special guardians. These are the remains of trusted followers who agreed to continue serving their master in death. These creatures are skeletons with 4 Hit Dice and a +1 damage bonus on any wielded weapon. They never leave the barrow lord's tomb.

The only way to permanently destroy a barrow lord is to burn its remains or destroy its lair completely after it has been defeated. Otherwise, it will reanimate the following night with full hit points. Destroying a barrow lord's lair without killing it will drive the creature mad with rage, and it will wander the land slaughtering anything it encounters.

Physical description: A barrow lord closely resembles the common skeleton, except for the small pinpricks of green light glow from within its eye sockets.



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