

# Gnomes, Badgers and Crabs

## A One-Round Dungeons & Dragons<sup>®</sup> Living Greyhawk<sup>™</sup> Introductory Regional Adventure set in Ratik

Version 1.1

by **Crystal Greaves and Glenn Fitzpatrick**

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You are looking forward to putting your feet up after completing a simple guard job escorting dwarven goods to the gnome town of Daebersted when you hear of a plea for help from the gnome village of Baerlen deep in the Lofthills. A one-round Regional introductory adventure set in Ratik for 4-6 characters of first level.

Resources for this adventure [and the authors of those works] include *Frostburn* [Wolfgang Bauer, James Jacobs, George Strayton]

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS<sup>®</sup> rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison. This game product contains no Open Game Content. No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without permission of Wizards of the Coast. To learn more about the Open Gaming License and the d20 SYSTEM license, please visit

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This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2008.

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### Players Read No Farther

If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.

### Preparing for Play

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D rule books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*.

Throughout this adventure, text in **bold italics** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate.

Sidebar contains important information for you, including special instruction on running the adventure. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in Appendix 1. For your convenience, that appendix is split by APL.

Along with this adventure you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure Record (AR).

## LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportionate to the modified average character level of the PCs participating in the adventure. To determine this modified Average Party Level (APL) follow the steps below:

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure. Each PC may bring one animal, plus any creatures gained from class abilities to help in combat. (PCs can bring more creatures but they cannot help in combat). If you deem that the animal bestows a significant benefit in combat add the animal's CR to the level of the PC it is accompanying for calculating APL. (Animals gained from class abilities and one standard horse, warhorse, or riding dog for a PC with Mounted Combat do not affect APL).
2. Sum the results of step 1 and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.
3. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience and gold a PC can gain at the end of the adventure. A player character more than three levels higher than the APL at which the adventure is played cannot participate. If a player character is more than two levels away from the APL at which the adventure is played, he suffers a 50% penalty to the amount of gold and XP

gained in the adventure. This simulates the fact that either the PC was not challenged as much as normal or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Four or five 1st-level characters may find the challenge of an APL 2 adventure difficult. Suggest the following to these groups to help increase their chances of success:

1. Enlist a sixth player.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them and fight for them.

These APL calculation rules reference version 7.0 of the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*. If you are playing this adventure in 2008, check the current version of the *LGCS* and follow any updated rules presented within.

## TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round regional adventure, set in Ratic. Characters from Ratic pay one (1) Time Unit per round, while all other characters pay two (2) Time Units per round.

Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12 gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50 gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100 gp per Time Unit. Characters that fail to pay at least Standard Upkeep will retain temporary ability damage until the next adventure, must buy new spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may suffer other in-game penalties (or possibly gain in-game benefits) as may be detailed in this adventure.

A character that does not pay for at least Standard Upkeep may also avoid the above-described penalties by living off the wild. If the character possesses four or more ranks in the Survival skill and succeeds at a DC 20 Survival check, the character will heal temporary ability damage as if he or she paid for Standard Upkeep, may refill spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may restock up to 20 arrows or bolts if the character has at least four ranks in Craft (bowmaking). The player is allowed to Take 10 on this roll.

More information about Lifestyle and Upkeep can be found in the "Lifestyle and Upkeep" section of Chapter 3 of the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Overall there are about 3,000 gnomes living in Ratic in about 8 major clans. They are the

predominant gem miners of the area. Most Ratic gnomes make their homes in the Lofthills, the rugged foothills in southern Ratic feeding into the Rakers. The largest concentration of gnomes in Ratic is the town of Daberestead (known to Northern Raticans as Nonizihold). The surrounding land, under control of the gnomes, is spotted with small clans who mine the mountains and highlands that surround them.

The gnome clans tend to be less unified than the dwarves. There are reports of longstanding rivalries between some of the more remote clans, and skirmishes between these clans, or even within branches of the same clan, are not unknown (although outright war is rare). Most of the clans are cordial with the nearby human and dwarven populations. Several smaller villages including Baerlen, Skoradinfen and Arumagaelen are well known among merchants and travellers, trading exceptional quality cut gems as well as intricately made trinkets and ingenious tools, toys and other devices.

There are exceptions. Some of the clans located deep in the Lofthills near the Rakers are isolationist, verging on xenophobic. These remote clans often do not speak common and are treated with suspicion even by other gnomes. There are even rumours of strange cults and inbreeding.

Politically, the gnomes usually do not get involved in the political manoeuvring and subterfuge commonly known as "The Game of Houses" that occupies much of the time of the rest of Ratic. The major Ratican gnome clans have promised to support their allies against barbarian or North Kingdom raids, although they are not always pleased with the way Lady Evaleigh is ruling Ratic.

Gnome artillery made a significant contribution to the defence of Ratikhill under Alain in 586 cy. In more recent times (591cy) gnome clerics of Garl Glittergold assisted in tending the wounded on the battlefield in defence of Fort Bredivan. Gnomish minipult units made a small but significant contribution to the same battle. Gnome forces have also been involved in a number of other small engagements over the past few years. Two companies of gnomes, from Daberestead (one of artillerists and the other of quartermasters) are trusted with the operation and maintenance of the half dozen catapults and three ballistae situated on the summit of the Bastion, the fortification which defends the Ratic capital of Marner.

Gnomes often hold positions of some status in Ratic. Gnomes provide many of the teachers, librarians and historians for the Ratic human population. A number of illustrious past professors from the Ratikhill Academy of Wizardry have been gnome illusionists. Its common among the great human houses to

engage the services of a gnomish bard who is usually busily employed writing epic poems and ballads about the deeds of the family's ancestors and the virtues of the current baron.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure begins with the adventurers relaxing after escorting a dwarven merchant from House Ukakane, to the gnomish town of Daberestead. The party is approached by an apprentice gem crafter named Lama who asks them to assist his home village Baerlen.

**Encounter 1:** The party is waylaid on the journey to Baerlen by a couple of starving wolves (chased out of their hunting grounds by the same orcs that are harassing Baerlen).

**Encounter 2:** The party reach the designated location but unless they get a very good spot check do not find any sign of the village. If they fail they can don "badger hats" given to them as a joke by Lama and the villagers will show themselves. They meet Brom, leader of the militia and Jaroo, a talented journeyman tinkerer.

**Encounter 3:** The party are taken by Jaroo to meet the town council. Mayor Yipwyg explains the problems that face the village, there has been an incursion of orcs that have built a fortification nearby.

**Encounter 4:** The PCs are shown around the gnome training area and see a mysterious large wooden badger. Brom gives the PCs their first mission – find the reason the river has stopped flowing freely. Jaroo mentions that he has lost a valuable "object" in the same area the PCs will be scouting. The PCs are advised this mission will be a test of their ability to ascertain if they are up to their role in the main attack.

**Encounter 5:** The PCs discover what is wrong with the water. Five orcs are positioning large logs on a barricade blocking the flow of the river. If the PCs act quickly they can catch the orcs unarmed. Once they dispatch the orcs and destroy the barricade they can search the orc camp and will find an unusual triangular gem with a gnomish word on it.

**Encounter 6:** Once the water recedes the PC will find an unusual barrel shaped object which of course is Jaroo's missing device. It is in fact an "Apparatus of Kwalish". The PCs will need to find the secret hatch and then disable the trap protecting the device using either a disable device check or the strange triangular key they

found in the orc camp. Once they can safely enter the device they need to work out how to "drive it back to home base".

**Encounter 7:** Jaroo is ecstatic to get his device back intact. Meanwhile Brom and Avin outline the "secret plan" to the PCs. They will hide in the badger, which will be wheeled up to the orc encampment and left outside as a "tribute". Under cover of darkness they will sneak out and create a distraction before opening the gates to the fortress. The PCs job is to take out a Orc snow mage that is manning a trebuchet before she decimates the attacking gnomes with it.

**Encounter 8:** The attack goes ahead as planned. If the PCs succeed the gnomes rout the orcs. If the PCs fail the gnomes are hit by alchemist fire from the trebuchet and run resulting in the PCs capture.

## PREPARATION FOR PLAY

Be sure to familiarise yourself with the various gnome characters in the module as the gnome names can be confusing. In addition check whether any of the PCs speak gnome as this can be significant at a number of points in the game.

## INTRODUCTION

***You cannot help but feel disappointed as your expedition comes to an end. You and your fellow party members have spent a very eventful couple of days escorting a dwarven merchant from the southernmost dwarven clan, House Ukakane, to the gnomish town of Daberestead, deep in the hills near the Loftwood forest.***

***Your journey has taken you down from the clan hold to Ratikhill and around the foot of the Lofthills to Optwall before following what has locally been dubbed the Gnome Road back up through the Lofthills, eventually reaching your destination of Daberestead. The mule train you were escorting seemed to have attracted more than its fair share of interest from the local orcs and goblins giving you ample opportunity to test out your battle prowess.***

***Perhaps there was actually some truth to those rumours that the numerous Bags of Holding strapped on the mules you escorted contained rare starmetal from the mines of House Ukakane! According to gutter gossip the shipment was a fortune in starmetal sent as payment for an earlier shipment of***

**precious gems sent by the gnomes to House Ukakane.**

**Such trades between the two mining races in Ratic are not uncommon. Gnomes prefer to avoid the deep mining operations needed to acquire the heavier metals whilst dwarves find gem mining frivolous and unsatisfying.**

**Certainly the shipment was extremely well guarded. Regardless of what the bags contained, you were sensible enough not to ask questions of the gruff dwarf who employed you. People that poke their nose into House Ukakane business uninvited tend to find that nose suddenly reshaped without notice.**

**Kicking back and enjoying a well earned drink (on the house) at the Green Badger Inn you finally get a chance to chat with your new companions. You are interested to learn that, like yourself, many of your companions are equally new to the adventuring lifestyle.**

Allow the PCs to introduce each other. Feel free to improvise the role playing at this point. PCs have been paid the sum of 5gp each for their work escorting the Clan Ukakane caravan.

**Your mission complete, you are invited to join your hosts at the Grand Hall of Daberestead, an impressive underground amphitheatre, to experience a night's entertainment gnome style. With money in your pocket, good food to be had and excellent drink on tap the night seems perfect and you can sit back and enjoy the entertainment.**

You may add performers as you see fit. The PCs may join in these performances if they please (even if they have no ranks in perform) as regardless of how well they do they will get a round of applause as most of the gnomes are too drunk to care. If any PC with actual ranks in perform or tumble passes a DC 10 check, they get sufficient applause to win the party a free round of drinks from the bar.

**First to the stage is a gnome bard who, you are surprised to discover, cannot sing a note. She instead specialises in a particularly corny brand of stand-up comedy which has you groaning, but the gnomes in the audience apparently find her hilarious.**

Feel free to add in your own selections of jokes making them as corny as possible. Here are a few examples to get you started.

**Orcs really are a fastidious people. The men are fast and the women are hideous.**

**Two Half-Orcs walk into a bar. The Halfling walks under it.**

**Question: How do you get a one armed half-orc out of a tree?**

**Answer: Wave at him!!**

**Question: Why did the badger fall out of a tree?**

**Answer: Badgers can't climb.**

**Question: How many clerics does it take to fix a lantern?**

**Answer: Just the one to cast "cure light".**

**A dwarf walks out of a bar.**

**(long pause)**

**What? It could happen.**

Allow any PC with spellcraft a DC 15 check. If they succeed they are aware something magical is going on. A DC 15 knowledge arcana check will reveal the performer is in fact using her abilities as an Arcane Trickster

**Next a very serious young gnome reads a philosophical treatise about the gnomish deity Garl Glittergold and his eternal battle with his brother Gelf Darkhearth. You notice a few of the older gnomes nodding approvingly at some of the more perceptive points in the argument, especially those regarding the nature of truth and illusion. You have a sneaking suspicion that the young bard might actually sympathise with the efforts of Garl's annoying chaotic neutral sibling to bring change to the world.**

Should the PCs for some unfathomable reason actually want to know about the content of the treatise, the basic argument is that the true nature of the world is illusion and the way to best understand illusion and hence the universe is by way of the practical joke.

**The audience listen thoughtfully for a while but the mood quickly changes again as a dauntingly energetic group of gnomes come together for a grand dance, swinging batons with flamboyant gestures and impressively high kicks and leaps that remind you of stories of the Dervishes.**

**As the last performer finishes with a flourish, and the grand hall begins to empty, a male gnome approaches your group, an anxious look upon his face. "Hello there, I**

***am in need of some help. I heard you had escorted the Ukakane merchant and was wondering if you are in need of some further employment?"***

At this point wait for the PCs to respond. If the PCs are friendly or show interest the gnome will continue:

***My name is Roombalama Jucklen Derino Saderinar, or Lama for short. I recently received a brief but urgent message from my cousin Jaroo Pokkalun Bondiba Gundigoot that my home town Baerlen is having a spot of trouble.***

Jaroo's father, Yipwyg Nobblywhop Tugglebun Herawever Bokin Gundigoot, the mayor of Baerlen, is looking for outside help. The message asked Lama to keep an eye out for able adventurers.

The message provided no details of the actual problem at hand though if pressed Lama will state that it " ... probably involves orcs as problems in my home area usually do ... ". Lama is an apprentice gem-crafter to a master in Daberestead, and as such he cannot leave his position to travel with the PCs but can give them a map and directions.

Should the PCs ask about payment, Lama explains that his uncle is the one they should ask about such matters, however he is certain they will be amply rewarded.

Once the PCs accept, Roombalama appears relieved.

***"I thank you immensely, I cannot go myself and it is a weight of my heart to hear you will assist. I'm sure such able adventurers will solve this matter in no time." He smiles with immense happiness as he draws out a rough map (Players handout 1) showing the route from Daberestead to Baerlen.***

***"You will need to talk to my Uncle Yipwyg, he is the mayor. He is a happy, jovial sort and prone to make jokes without notice, often at inappropriate times, but do not worry he is a good mayor and when things get serious he is very competent.***

***"The village like all gnome villages may be just a little difficult to spot" he says with a chuckle, "being half buried and all." Suddenly he pulls out a hat that looks to all the world like a stunned badger with a look of utter surprise on its face. "However if you wear one of these you are bound to be recognised and greeted by someone from the town" he grins.***

Lama hands around enough hats for the whole party. He insists the hats are traditional attire in his home region and everyone wears them. He says they are the best way for the party to identify themselves as friendly to the villagers as an orc would never think to wear one.

The hats will indeed identify the PCs to the villagers and they will probably need to don them at some point. The claim that "everyone wears them" is quite untrue. Lama providing the PCs with the badger hats is both a means of identification and a typical gnomish prank.

***You watch as the gnome happily hops away, following the last few intoxicated gnomes to exit the hall. Looking more closely at the hats he handed out you suspect they may in fact actually be made from stuffed badgers as the heads and eyes look very realistic indeed. It is all very strange but if the gnomes want you to stick badgers on your heads then that is what you will do.***

The next morning the PCs have time to prepare for the journey ahead. There is a small general store selling players handbook items up to 200gp. There is also a Temple of the Earthfriend (Segojan Earthcaller) attended by the head priestess Naomi Rakerschild, which sells LGCS core access cleric potions and scrolls valued up to 150 gp each.

If the PCs wish to gather information they discover the following:

- **DC 5:** There are rumours of a Kraken spotted off the coast of Ratic near the port of Fadric
- **DC 8:** Something important is going on in Marner. This is the third time this year the conductor of the gnomes Digwel Grosseschnozz has been called to Marner on official business.
- **DC 10:** There have been a lot more orcs spotted around the Loftwood and up in the Lofthills of late.
- **DC 15:** Baerlen is a small village on the edge of the Lofthills.
- **DC 20:** Whilst many gnome villages on the frontier are isolationist the gnomes of Baerlen have always been known as friendly with a keen interest in trading.
- **DC 25:** Despite being a small village, Baerlen is renowned for both it's high quality gems and the unique devices, tools and toys that are made there.

Once the PCs are ready to move on proceed to Encounter 1.

**Treasure:** The PCs are paid 5 gp each for escorting the Clan Ukakane caravan.

**APL 2:** Coin 5 gp; Total 5 gp.

## ENCOUNTER 1: BAD PUPPIES!!

The PCs will need to travel for about a day and a half to reach Baerlen. This means they will need to camp or they will be fatigued the second day.

Ask if the PCs wish to set watches for the night and have them make listen checks throughout the night. The encounter actually occurs in the morning, as they are about to leave.

*With the night passing without incident, and the camp packed, you turn your attention to the route ahead. Just as you take the first steps, a low growl catches your attention. Two emaciated wolves prowl warily into the clearing with a hungry gleam in their eyes.*

The wolves' attitude to the PCs is initially unfriendly and automatically changes to hostile at the end of the first round if the PCs do nothing to alter it.

**Creatures:** Two hungry wolves have picked up the scent of the remains of the PC's discarded breakfast.

### APL 2 (EL 2)

**Wolves (2):** hp 13 each; *Monster Manual* 283.

**Tactics:** Any PCs who travel mounted will begin the encounter mounted. This gives the PCs one round to react before the wolves attack. A Knowledge Nature check (DC10) will reveal the wolves are mainly interested in food.

As the wolves are far more interested in food than combat, give the PC's a +5 circumstance bonus on a rushed Wild Empathy check (DC 20 after the +5 bonus).

If the PCs think to throw food to the animals, the wolves will ignore the PCs and focus on the offered food. Once hostile, the wolves will attack the PC's mounts first as they are looking for food.

**Treasure:** The PCs do not gain any treasure here. The wolves are starving having been driven from their normal hunting grounds by the orcs, even their pelts are worthless.

## ENCOUNTER 2: GNOME SWEET GNOME

The wolves dealt with the PCs continue on to the destination marked on the map.

*Ahead of you the beautiful rolling hills gradually give way to steeper terrain with rocky outcrops cut by steep valleys. Majestic mountains in the distance silhouette this vista against a clear blue sky. You clearly are entering the lower Lofthills and assume you are getting close to the place indicated on the roughly sketched map.*

*Eventually you spot a river crossing near a distinctive grove of trees. This location appears much like that indicated by Lama's map as landmarks of the village. Just as Lama implied, you see no sign whatsoever of a village. Either this is the wrong spot or there is more to it than the village being partly buried.*

*You strongly suspect your difficulty finding the village is in some way related to the renowned gnomish natural abilities in the area of illusion and glamours.*

If the PCs are not wearing their badger hats allow a spot check to notice the hidden sentries. Because the sentries have had time to properly hide themselves the DC is 25. If the PCs manage to spot the sentries and approach them, the sentries will cautiously step out.

If the PCs do not spot the sentries they will need to don the badger hats, before the villagers make themselves known. Calling out loudly the reason they are here to the apparently empty clearing may also elicit a response.

If the PCs at any point approach the village wearing the badger hats paraphrase the following:

*All of a sudden, a dozen or so gnome children appear from nowhere and race around you and your fellow party members, gleefully chanting, "Badger, Badger, Badger!!!" all the while laughing hysterically. Echoing the laugh, two male gnomes step out from their, now apparent, hiding places, "So you fell for the badger hat joke as well?" one laughs, as you realise you are now the object of a typical gnomish prank. "It's just like our Yipwig to include a silly prank in his scheme to identify visitors. Do not worry everyone falls for it, don't take offence."*

Regardless of whether the PCs used a spot check or donned the hats continue with:

**You are now talking to Bromnuckle Dinarumen Uranvan Soramoota, head of the village guard. Brom is a mature aged gnome with dark hair and dark blue eyes. Brom is wearing a chain shirt and has a short sword at his side.**

**Standing to his left is Jaroo Pokkalun Bondiba Gundigoot. Jaroo is a very handsome young gnome. His black hair is pulled back into a carefully plaited ponytail. He has tan skin and light blue eyes and is wearing a simple deep tan doublet with bottle green sleeves. He has a rather unusual looking loaded crossbow pistol in his hand.**

The crossbow pistol is one of Jaroo's many inventions. If asked about it, Jaroo will happily tell the PCs he made it himself. He will explain its many levers and knobs and demonstrate how, depending on its settings, it will fire one of three different types of crossbow bolt from its multiple magazines. It currently will fire cold iron, silver or alchemical bolts depending on what Jaroo selects.

Jaroo encourages the PCs to try the pistol, and if one accepts, read the following:

**You carefully double check the positions of the various levers before lifting the unwieldy weapon and aiming it at a rocky outcrop about 50' away. You peer through the odd looking sights on the top of the crossbow pistol, lineup the cross hairs and gently squeeze the trigger.**

The crossbow will randomly fire cold iron, silver or alchemical bolts. Jaroo will be very amused by their attempts to get consistent results (the crossbow fires perfectly for Jaroo as the design requires prestidigitation to select the appropriate round).

If one of the PCs attempts to fire it and the result is an alchemical round, there is a 50% chance every shot of an alchemical bolt jamming in the breach and doing D4 fire damage to the firer. If this unfortunate mishap occurs paraphrase the following:

**A blast of purple and red flame erupts from the weapon scorching your face and leaving you covered in black soot. Jaroo looks sheepish and mumbles something about how "... there be a few wee glitches that perchance still need to be sorted ..."**

Regardless of the results of the PCs attempts, continue with the following:

**Brom looks on with raised eyebrows, a look of restrained amusement on his face. You gain the impression you have been the butt of yet another example of gnomish humor. "That sort of pyrotechnics happens a lot around Jaroo" Brom says. "I think he gets it from our Maester of Magics, Ginnott Pantucket. Jaroo, please put that ridiculous weapon away and take these kind people to see your uncle."**

**Jaroo has a roguish glint in his eye. "It's not my fault if things randomly explode when I happen to pass by" he says impishly, "Not to matter, I presume you are here to see my father the mayor. Please, follow me."**

Jaroo does not actually work with Ginnot, he is apprenticed to Quonzer the maester of inventions and is in fact ready to submit his major project for assessment so he can progress from journeyman to provisional Maester status. Unfortunately his completed project currently lies abandoned in what is now orc occupied territory. It appears he may be doomed to remain a mere journeyman for some time to come.

Once the PCs are ready Jaroo will take them to the Mayor.

## **ENCOUNTER 3: GNOME SERVICE**

The PCs follow Jaroo into the hidden complex of tunnels that is Baerlen.

**Jaroo leads you to a well hidden burrow. You follow underground the taller among you stooping slightly, quickly you find yourselves emerging into a large cavern. Well, large for a gnome, but at least you can all stand straight.**

Any PC taller than 5' will have to crouch or crawl through the main tunnels of the gnomish town though most major caverns have higher ceilings. Taller PCs will notice that they are the object of some amusement to the younger gnomes who seem to regard medium creatures as unwieldy oversized oddities.

**The cavern is about 80ft across, it has a number of tunnels leading off in many directions, each one with a different coloured lantern above the entrance, dimly lighting the cavern like a spectrum. Gnomes of all ages wander down the many tunnels to whatever destination awaits them.**



**Jaroo gestures for you and wanders down a tunnel not far from where you came in. About halfway down you come to a sturdy oak door. Jaroo motions for you to wait before knocking and entering. A short while later the door opens and Jaroo's head appears, he ushers you in before excusing himself.**

The PCs are now before the town council which is made up of:

- Mayor Yipwyg Nobblywhop Tugglebun Herawever Bokin Gundigoot,
- Maester Quonzer, Maester Artificer and Tinkerer
- Maester Ginnott Allanettic Fittonan Pantucket, Maester of Magic
- Maester Anetinee Violana Kindi Grevefin, Maester of Arts and Law
- Sheriff Avinoff Binertill Bockledon Haggle.

**As your eyes adjust to the dim room you see five gnome faces looking down upon you from a raised semi-circle bench. The middle gnome is somewhat portly and his shoulder length silver hair is gleaming, as he leans forward to inspect you with twinkling dark blue eyes.**

**“So” He says solemnly, “You wore the badger hats, yes?”**

The moment any PC say yes, proceed with the following;

**The portly gnome burst's into fits of laughter, making his round stomach shake with every chuckle, the moment he appears to regain his composure he resumes his chuckling all over.**

**A charismatic and beautiful young woman to his right cuts him short and addresses your group, “I dislike interrupting your mayorship, but we did call these adventurers for a more serious reason than a joke or two, I am Maester Anetinee Grevefin”.**

Anetinee has deep blue eyes and is wearing a light purple dress with blue stitching. She clearly disapproves of Yipwig's frivolous manner and sees him playing jokes on the PC's as quite inappropriate. Anetinee and Yipwig have had a long standing but friendly conflict over Yipwig's incessant prank's since they were both quite young.

**Anetinee looks at the PC's and smiles, “I offer my apologies for the nonsensical behaviour of our beloved but somewhat eccentric Yipwig. He is a good mayor but his sense of propriety is somewhat challenged..”**

**“Now, now Anetinee, it was all in good fun and I am sure no-one was offended. You may keep those silly hats if you wish”, the portly gnome chuckles, “I am Mayor Yipwyg Nobblywhop Tugglebun Herawever Bokin Gundigoot. This is the beautiful but overly serious Anetinee, she is the maester of our arts and lore”.**

Yipwyg has a very long name even for a gnome, something he is very proud of as he believes a long name is a sign of great respect and prestige. Maester Anetinee is quiet and thoughtful and appears to be observing the PC's with interest.

**Anetinee frowns disapprovingly at Yipwig and then inclines her head gracefully towards your group. “... and this”, Yipwyg continues gesturing to the far side of Anetinee, “Is Ginnott Pantucket, our maester of magic”. Maester Ginnott, who has soot on his face, smiles happily at your group.**

Apparently something Ginnott was fiddling with recently must have exploded; he often tinkers with all sorts of magical creations seemingly without regard of the possible consequences.

He is not overly interested in the PCs but takes an interest in any mechanical devices or magical items the PCs may have and will attempt to talk them into letting him try to take whatever it is apart. He will assure the PC that he will have no trouble putting it back together and it work as well as always, though the other gnomes look somewhat sceptical of this claim.

**Yipwyg then gestures towards the solemn looking gnome on his left, “Maester Quonzar, is our chief artificer and tinkerer. He is also maester to my boy Jaroo, whom you have met”.**

Quonzar is a serious gnome, he only speaks when he has something to say (as opposed to Yipwig who will prattle on endlessly if allowed).

**Quonzar inclines his head ever so slightly towards the PC's, “Lama unfortunately seems to have inherited his uncle's fondness for inane practical jokes but do not worry, we actually have a very serious task for you and will reward you appropriately.”**

If the PCs ask why, unlike every other gnome, Quonzar only has one name Yipwyg will chuckle and say Quonzar believes long names are childish and a distraction from more serious matters.

**Finally Yipwyg waves a hand towards the last gnome, seated beside Quonzar, "And lastly, Sheriff Avinoff Binertill Bockledon Haggie. You will be working closely with him and his second in charge Bromnockle, should you accept the work offered".**

Avinoff has light brown hair and piercing blue eyes. He is wearing a breastplate and has a gnome hooked hammer at his side.

**At this point the gnome's features grow serious. "Now all jokes aside for the moment, you may be aware that orc incursions into the Lofthills from the south are getting more frequent. Our town is struggling, we can no longer rely upon numbers to see us through this war, for indeed, it has become a war of survival. We need those who are strong of arm to assist us in vanquishing this menace that threatens our homes and those we hold close, can we rely on you?" Yipwyg's eyes and those of the other council members look toward you in a silent plea of hope.**

At this point the PCs have to state whether or not they will assist the town. Use the following examples to answer the PCs questions.

- Why play practical jokes on people who come to help you ?

**It's partly just what Yipwig does, but it also serves a more serious purpose. We need competent self-assured adventurers who would not be distracted from a serious task when the going gets tough. Individuals like that are not put off by a prank.**

- What about pay? Will we be rewarded?

**The village is not poor and will pay you very well for your services. I am prepared to offer you 20 gp each, payment upon successful completion of your mission.**

- What are we to do? What is the job?

**It's quite simple ... You will assist Avinoff and Bromnockle with a few tasks until such time as we attack the orc encampment.**

- What tasks?

**Nothing overly onerous, Brom and Avin will fill you in on the details. Speak to them after the meeting.**

- Orc encampment? Tell me about the orcs.

**"The source of our troubles", Yipwyg sighs "In the past the orc patrols have left this area alone".**

**Avinoff address your group at this point, "When out hunting recently, young Brom and I spotted the beginnings of a orcish camp. It is to the south west of here, which is why you did not see them on your way in. We were not immediately worried as the uneven terrain and lack of water made it almost impossible for them to establish a stable encampment", the gnome's brow furrow's into a worried crease, "But this time they bought a orc with them who is different. She is organised, and knows what to look for. Now the camp is a formidable force, too strong for us alone to tackle. Every day they get closer and closer to us, and already several of my best fighters have been injured, one fatally".**

- Different orc? How is the orc different?

**The orc is tougher and seems a lot more experienced. She is definitely in charge of the other orcs. She also appears to be capable of casting spells. We can handle the normal orcs but this one is too much for us, we are just craftsmen and gem miners after all. Avinoff has trained a few of the willing older gnomes but we lack the martial training and experience to handle a situation such as this.**

- Can we just assault the encampment?

**The encampment is far to well fortified. We also believe they may have brought in siege weapons. To attack the walls would be suicidal with the forces we have at our disposal. Not to worry, we have a better plan; it involves getting someone inside to open the gates and let us in.**

- You have a plan to open the gates?

**Yes, yes, a most cunning plan indeed. Speak to Sheriff Avinoff and Bromnockle Soramoota as they have all been working on the plan together with the other council members for weeks.**

The PCs are dismissed by the council and told to take further questions to Sheriff Avinoff or Bromnockle Soramoota. Accommodation has been arranged for the PCs at the towns Inn, run by Bromnockle's father, Tinkertont. Any PC who inquires about suitability for characters taller than gnomes will be assured that the Inn is prepared for taller guests, the village often welcomes

passing traders, and so the Inn has been constructed to cater for all races.

## ENCOUNTER 4: GNOME ON THE RANGE

*As you leave the council chamber, you hear a chuckle that sounded suspiciously like 'badgers', the thought quickly leaves your mind as you see Jaroo leaning nonchalantly against the tunnel wall waiting for you.*

*"So you agreed, yes?" he grins, his excitement quite visible, "I've been told by my father to make sure you don't get lost, your no good to us lost down an abandoned tunnel, but before I show you your accommodations, you're to meet Brom and Avin over at the barracks, this way"*

*Jaroo promptly leads you back down the tunnel and up a slope leading above ground. As you move into the open, relieved to be able to stand straight again, you observe the area is occupied by various gnomes, bustling in and out of small huts (that from a distance look like boulders) intent on various errands.*

*You pass a group of younger gnomes doing weapon drill with gnome hook hammers. They are swinging the hammer end of the vicious looking weapons two handed with more enthusiasm than skill at some makeshift practice dummies. Jaroo looks on with obvious pride, "As a precaution, the younglings will be defending the village while the rest of us mount the attack on the encampment"*

The younger gnomes of the village are being given an accelerated version of basic martial training. At this early stage of training they are using the weapon as a double handed war hammer to surprisingly good effect.

They will be replacing the normal militia that usually guard the village freeing every available adult gnome for the attack. If the PCs stop to talk to the young gnomes they will find a likable bunch of young larrikins who are young and enthusiastic, but nevertheless realise the seriousness of the job assigned to them and as a consequence are training hard.

*Jaroo leads you further into the training area. To one side Avin is about to demonstrate something to a group of adult gnomes dressed as militia. He begins to twirl the gnome hook hammer in his hands a little like a baton, except much faster.*

*The weapon becomes a blur and you can hear a distinct whooshing sound, even from your distance, as Avin steps forward and begins to twist and whirl in a fashion very reminiscent of the grand dance you witnessed at Daberestead. He whirls towards a set of practice dummies which suddenly seem to explode as they are hit first by the hammer and then by the hook of the twirling weapon in rapid succession. You gain a new respect for the odd looking weapon and the warriors that wield it.*

At the end of the demonstration Avin spots Jaroo and the PCs and moves over to greet them.

*"Ah Jaroo, you have brought our friends, good, good," he turns towards you, "Welcome to our training area, please come this way I have something important to show you"*

If the PCs question Avin about his demonstration he explains he was by trade a bard who specialised in dancing. He found it just made sense back in his adventuring days to combine traditional double weapon gnome hook fighting with the Dervish combat style. He explains that it is not actually Dervish dancing, which uses scimitars and other slashing weapons, its his own special style.

Avin leads the PCs across to the other side of the field.

*Approach the other end of the clearing you find a hive of activity. A large number of gnomes are working busily on some sort of construction. The centre of the gnomes' attention is a large wooden construct looking a lot like a badger. It is clearly unfinished, with gnomes working tirelessly hammering more wood and supports onto the growing masterpiece.*

*"It is something isn't it?" a voice says with pride. Dragging your eyes away from the animalistic wood pile you see Brom smiling with pride.*

*"Its part of our plan," Brom grins.*

*"Supposedly secret plan Brom" Avin says in a staged hush.*

*"That aside", Avin continues, "I have an important task for you adventurers. It will serve as a test of your prowess as well. Our water supply is slowly decreasing with each new day. The river, which once gushed through our little patch of mountains, now only clings to what it once was. So tomorrow you will find our water, for we cannot last on what our once beautiful river now gives us" he says, his voice now serious.*

Allow the PCs to ask Avin, Brom and Jaroo questions. Use the following to answer the PCs questions,

- You just want us to find water?

***“A town cannot survive without a steady supply of water”, Avin says “Besides if we are to fight beside you in battle we need more than adventurers stories as proof you are dependable. If you make it back in one piece, you’re obviously what we are looking for. We will get our water back, you prove your prowess, we all win” he grins.***

- You’re testing us?

***“Why not?” Brom asks, “We are relying on you to assist us in saving our town, if you fail during the attack we all fail, we will lose everything – possibly including our lives. Don’t you think that justifies a test of your ability?”***

- What about ‘The Plan’? or What is that strange Badger about?

***“It is a most cunning plan” Avin grins, “which I will divulge to you in full when you return.”***

The gnomes will say no more about ‘the plan’ or the badger until after the PCs return from finding the water – or more to the point, if they return.

- Where are we going? What do we do to find the water? How should we proceed from here?

***“Follow the river to the west and find out what is blocking the flow” Jaroo answers, “The river starts from a spring deeper into the wild hills. It has never stopped flowing before. We think the orcs have something to do with it, but as we have not ventured that far since the orcs came, we cannot say what has occurred” he pauses a moment, “I had to leave a object of great importance to me near there, if you happen upon it please retrieve it by any means you can”***

- What object?

***“A restored clan artefact I was testing in a pool near the main river crossing. It was to be my research project to qualify me for progression from Journeyman to provisional Maester status. It was the culmination of several years work and I fear if it is lost that I***

***may be a journeyman forever. I doubt the orcs could damage it and it was protected from interference but it still worries me greatly being left in their hands.”***

- Protected from interference?

***“Yes, there is a simple contrivance to dissuade the likes of orcs from interfering with it. Nothing adventurers like yourselves will have a problem with.”***

If the PCs push the point on the “protection” let them know that it is part of their “test” and that being forewarned is enough.

At this point the PCs have all the information they need to “find the water” and recover the device that Jaroo has mentioned. They may rest up overnight.

## ENCOUNTER 5: GNOME DELIVERY

***Leaving at daybreak you head west. It’s not long before you come upon reach a point where the river cuts through a steep sided gorge.***

***Under other circumstances you would most likely pause to take in the majestic view. Through the early morning mist you can see a wild river running along the bottom of a heavily timbered gorge, the water tumbling over jagged rocks and fallen timber***

***Today, however, something draws your attention away from the stunning view. From your position the reason for the reduced flow in the river downstream is obvious. Five orcs are positioning large logs on a barricade blocking the flow of the river. They appear to have set up a small encampment on the opposite side of the river from your vantage point.***

***The orcs seem to be having problems getting a particularly cumbersome log into position. You can hear on the breeze fragments of orcish (that sound a lot like swearing) as the orcs struggle with the log.***

The only access to the river is at the spot the orcs are working, clearly they have built their barricade on top of the old river crossing. It is obvious the orcs are trying to establish their own stable water supply by damming the river.

***The orcs are preoccupied with their work and not expecting trouble. The water rushing past***

***the logs is very loud and the sides of the gorge are heavily timbered.***

Unless the PCs draw specific attention to themselves in some way (by calling out loudly or somehow falling from the cliff top for example) they will not be spotted in their initial approach to the combat zone.

***Descending quietly and carefully through the heavy undergrowth you manage to get within 50' of the barricade without being spotted. You come to a halt, as to proceed any closer would put you within clear sight of the orcs working on the barricade.***

The orcs are working in the centre of the barricade at least 10' from either end. The orcs weapons can be seen (DC 15 spot check) near the encampment end of the barricade. Refer to DM aid 2.

The barricade itself is 10' wide and broaches the river at a point where the river is 40' from bank to bank.

- Crossing the river using the barricade is normal movement.
- Crossing the river upstream of the barricade requires a swim check as the river has been dammed by the barricade.
- Crossing the river downstream of the barricade counts as difficult terrain limiting movement to half speed. Whilst treacherous, there is insufficient rubble to provide cover so PCs crossing downstream will be in full view of the orcs.

**Creatures:** Five orcs are working on a barricade blocking the flow of the river. They are currently unarmed as their weapons and equipment (including potions) are stashed on the opposite side of the river from the PCs near their camp. Note that they have not removed their studded leather armor.

#### **APL 2 (EL 3)**

**Orcs (5):** hp 5 each; *Monster Manual* 283.

**Tactics:** The orcs' initial reaction will be to retrieve their weapons. If the PCs delay, or choose to use ranged attacks, the orcs will retreat to the opposite side of the river to retrieve the weapons. The orcs have a stash of cure light potions (one each) hidden with the weapons.

If the PCs attack, any engaged orc will fight back using the smaller of the logs they have been using to build the barricades as improvised weapons (-4 penalty to hit, d6 damage). Meanwhile the unengaged orcs will retreat to the

opposite side of the river to retrieve their Falchions and Javelins.

**Treasure:** Each orc has a falchion and a javelin and is wearing studded leather armour. Each orc was carrying a *potion of cure light wounds* and 10gp.

**APL 2:** Loot 51 gp; Coin 50 gp; Magic 20 gp; 5 *potions of cure light wounds* (4 gp each); Total 121 gp.

**Development:** If the PCs search the orc encampment they will find (DC 15 search check) amongst the bric-a-brac and rubbish an unusual ebony colored triangular gem about 10cm across with a single glowing red word in gnomish, "Gaer". If any of the PCs can read gnomish the word "Gaer" translates as "Protect".

If any orc is captured and a PC speaks orc they will only say "Orcses building da big pond so orcses have lotsa water for da new camp."

## **ENCOUNTER 6: CRABBY OLD STUFF**

The PCs can at this point proceed to dismantle or destroy the barricade that has been damming the river. Any reasonable plan to break up the barricade is acceptable. If the PC's decide to simply sunder or break up the barricade by force then a DC20 strength check will suffice to break loose a few critical logs that cause the rest to collapse.

Once the barricade has been destroyed paraphrase the following.

***With the barricade gone the large body of water held back by the logs rushes free with a great roar. Soon the flow of water downstream is restored to normal.***

***As the water recedes you are surprised to see sitting partly submerged in the mud what appears to be a large metal barrel, about 10 ft long. There seem to be a few minor dents in the barrel, as if it had been hit a few times with a blunt object.***

The barrel is Jaroo's missing project, his "mechanical crab", a device intended to mine gem stones from the bottom of lakes and rivers. It is a restored and heavily modified version of an ancient clan artefact. It was unwillingly

abandoned by Jaroo when the orc incursions in this area made it too dangerous to retrieve.

The device is in fact an example of an *“Apparatus of Kwalish”*. Any PC casting detect magic will determine that it emits strong evocation and transmutation aura's. To all intents and purposes the device looks, while deactivated, like a large metal barrel. Knowledge checks will therefore only reveal that it is probably some sort of device or construct.

**Apparatus of Kwalish:** magic device; *Dungeon Masters Guide* 247; Appendix 1.

The dents are the result of the orcs unsuccessful attempts to break into the device. They were unable to find the secret hatch in the rear (DC20 search) and then resorted to hitting it. The orcs were only able to do minor damage to the device.

To gain access to the device the PCs will need to locate the secret hatch. If none of the PCs can locate the hatch remind them that they can take 20 on a search when not in combat. Once the PCs locate the hatch paraphrase the following.

***The hatch swings open to reveal a hollow interior cluttered with levers and knobs. A dull globe of continual flame lights the interior with an eerie red light. It appears large enough to comfortably fit two medium creatures or up to 4 small creatures. Just inside the hatchway is a small panel with a large button and a triangular recess about 10 cm across.***

The panel is the deactivation panel for a burning hands trap that Jaroo has set up to protect the device from vandalism by wandering orcs and bugbears. Fortunately for the orcs that found the device, they were unable to open the hatch.

Note that the trap will not trigger unless a PC actually climbs inside the device. The alarm trigger area and the area of effect of the burning hands spell are limited to the area of the hatch. Accessing the deactivation panels does not set off the trap.

### **APL 2: (EL 3)**

**Heightened Burning Hands Trap:** CR 3; magic device; proximity trigger (alarm); automatic reset; spell effect (heightened *burning hands*, 3rd-level wizard, 3d4 fire, DC 12 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26; special disable mechanical key; Cost 3000 gp, 240 XP

The panel can be recognised as a trap component with a DC 26 search check (by a PC

able to find magical traps). The trap can be disabled via the panel with either a DC 26 disable device check or by using the ebony triangular key. If the key is inserted into the triangular recess paraphrase the following:

***“ You press the ebony triangular key into the recess in the panel and press the large button. There is a low hum followed by a loud click.***

If no PCs can understand gnome read:

***The odd glowing red symbol disappears and is replaced by a green one.***

Otherwise read:

***The gnomish glyph on the key changes from a red glowing “Gaer” (protect) to a green glowing “Baer” (open).***

Once the hatch is found and the trap deactivated the PCs next task is to activate the device (see Appendix 1 for details) so it can be returned to Baerlen. Each time a PC tries a new lever roll randomly on the table in Appendix I to see which lever they selected. If they get the same number twice re-roll.

- The PCs will not be using the device in combat at this stage they only need to work out how to open the forward port holes, close the hatch, move forward and backward and steer the machine.
- Some levers will have no effect at all until the appropriate function of the device is activated or the environment is right. For example the move forward and backward lever will appear to do nothing until the legs are extended.
- If they return to Baerlen without the device Jaroo, upon hearing of the find, will immediately ask them to go back out and retrieve it.

Should the PC's wish to hide the device for retrieval at a later point advise them that they would be unable to move it out of the lower Loft Hills as the terrain is not suitable for transportation of the device by cart and even if they could move it they could not sell or use it. If they insist on attempting to abscond with Jaroo's project or simply decide not to bother returning it they will receive the unreliable disfavour on the AR.

## ENCOUNTER 7: HEADING BACK GNOME

It takes most of the morning to get the device back to Baerlen under its own power.

*The odd contraption is finally safely back when you hear an excited cry from behind you. Turning, you see Jaroo running toward your group a look of ecstasy upon his face. "You found it!!! You found my underwater gem mining machine, and it still works!!!" An equally pleased looking Brom is following close behind, "And more importantly you're alive. Now we can finally put our secret plan into action!!!!"*

At this point Brom takes the PCs to meet with Avin who is overseeing the finishing touches on the wooden badger. The badger is being painted in a colourful combination of green and yellow.

*With Brom leading the way you quickly find yourselves back in the barracks. Ahead of you Avin is talking to a small group of gnomes painting the completed wooden badger a distinctly orcish jagged pattern of bold yellow and green triangles and squares. He turns to address your group as you approach, "Ahh, you're back, and in one piece I see. I guess you win the bet Brom" he chuckles, "Tell me what do you think of our badger? It is part of our secret plan which, no doubt, you will want to hear now"*

Allow the PCs to comment on the badger, if they ask about the coloration, Avin will tap his nose and say it is part of the plan, with a knowing grin.

*"As you already know the orc compound is well fortified, an attack on the walls would be fruitless as we have not the siege weapons or numbers for such a foolish endeavour. Instead we plan to attack them from the inside out."*

*"We have discovered that the totem animal of this orcish clan is a raging dire badger, they value it for its ferocity and recklessness in battle. This clan also seems to favour the colors green and yellow so we believe it may be their clan colours. That is why we have made ourselves this most excellent green and yellow wooden badger. Brom and myself will hide inside our badger with some of the more stealthy gnomes."*

*"Now we have the crab back it solves one problem for us, getting the badger to the encampment safely. We will be able to tow the badger up to the gate of the orc*

*encampment with the aid of the mechanical crab. The orcs will think the badger was left as a tribute to them."*

*Brom joins in his voice full of excitement, "The orcs are not bright, they will take the badger into their camp, then under cover of darkness we will sneak out and create a big diversion, opening the gates in the process. That's when all of the militia run in catching the silly orcs by surprise"*

*Avin grins at your group, "Your job, is to get in through the back gate. You can use the crab to smash though.. Once you are inside find the female orc leader, you will have no trouble recognising her for she is different. She is powerful and will likely be preparing to fire their trebuchet. Our badgers have scouted and forewarned us of it. She must not fire it, it would mean disaster"*

The gnomes are planning to leave for the encampment the moment the paint dries, the attack will occur at dawn tomorrow.

*"If you are injured after your recent excursion you should see my sister Kylikie" Brom smiles "She may only be a apprentice but she knows a thing or two about divine magic and healing. After that you should get an early night, you need to get to the far western side of the encampment unnoticed by dawn tomorrow"*

*No sooner has Brom finished speaking than a gnome appears at Avin's side and utters a word in his ear. Avin nods to the gnome then looks at you, "We leave now, remember your mission adventurers"*

*With that final word Avin and Brom walk to the badger climbing into a hidden door on the badger's chest, they are followed by 3 more gnomes before the door is closed. You see ropes being attached to anchor points on the front of the badger as Jaroo reverses the crab device into towing position. Finally, it is all connected and you watch the strange sight of a wooden wheeled badger being towed by an eight legged metal barrel down the road and into the sunset to the west.*

## ENCOUNTER 7: BADGERING THE ORCS

The PCs are awakened before dawn by Jaroo who has been appointed as their guide.

*After a quick breakfast you head out. The sun rising over the Lofthills is a breathe taking*

***sight to behold, the sky streaked with golden yellows, majestic oranges and burning reds, painting long eerie shadows across the narrow path you now walk upon. Jaroo leads you through the early morning mist to a vantage point behind the orc encampment. The crab device sits parked under a large tree, you notice it has been cunningly camouflaged with tree branches bracken and undergrowth making it very hard to spot in the shadows.***

***You quickly take your position, your breath making wispy patterns in the cold morning air. Jaroo wishes you luck and heads off to join the frontal assault. Your job is to take Jaroo's device into the fray and assault the rear gate. You quickly decide who will be operating the device and who will be riding on the outside. The time has come to move out.***

Make some dice rolls to keep the PCs on edge. The device has room for two medium or 4 small creatures. The PCs that "ride" on top of the device can gain a secure mounting with a ride check or balance check (DC5). Once the device assaults the gates the PCs will have to dismount as it will be impossible to stay on top once it is attempting to smash through the gates.

***As you move out, several of you inside the crab and the rest riding on top, holding onto whatever you can get a hold of, you find yourself wondering how things went with Brom and Avin. If all has gone according to plan the gnomes will have snuck out of the wooden badger under cover of darkness and by now should have taken up their assigned positions.***

***No sooner had you finished that very thought than a loud ruckus erupts from within the encampment accompanied by a series of brightly coloured bursts of light. It is clear the gnomes have made good use of their ghost sounds and dancing light to create a distraction so they can open the front gates unhindered.***

***Suddenly the rear gate lies before you and those of you riding on top of the device leap to the ground. With a massive crash the device rams the gate almost taking it off the hinges. A few decent whacks on the high hinges with the crab's pincers should do it.***

It is now up to the PC's to finish the job. The ramming has meant the gates are almost off. They just need to do another 30 damage to the upper hinges using the device to get through the gate. They must use the device they cannot get to the hinges with normal weapons. Attacking the

gate with the snap pincers lever requires the PC to roll d20 + BAB against AC10. The pincers do 2d8 damage on a successful hit.

***Suddenly the hinges let go and the gates collapse landing on top of the device. The device appears undamaged but is definitely stuck, there is no way it is moving until the gates are lifted off. Those of you inside crawl out the rear entrance as grabbing your weapons you charge forward through the huge maw that is the now demolished gate.***

***You are greeted with the sight of bewildered orcs tripping over one another in a frantic race to find their weapons as you spot, through the opposite gate, gnomes charging up the hill towards your position. The scene would be almost comical if it weren't for the large female orc standing by a massive trebuchet looking more than a little annoyed with the current state of affairs.***

***As you watch she hastily barks commands at 3 orcs who drop what they are doing and run to prepare and load what appears to be alchemist's fire into the gigantic weapon. It is clear that the charging gnomes will be massacred should she get a chance to fire the trebuchet.***

The gnomes are more than capable of handling the disoriented orcs providing the PCs can handle Angwagh and her offsideers and stop the trebuchet firing. If Angwagh is defeated the gnomes will quickly clear out the remainder of the orcs.

The trebuchet needs 5 charges before it can fire. Begin counting charges from the first round of initiative. The weapon automatically fires the instant the fifth charge is loaded.

- It takes one orc one standard action to load a charge and incurs attacks of opportunity.
- Extra orcs assisting do not speed the process one charge per round is the limit.
- If the loading process is interrupted it can be started again by any orc and the count continues from the stage it last reached.
- There is insufficient time for the PCs to disable the trebuchet. The only viable option is to defeat Angwagh and her companions before it can be fired.

If the trebuchet fires, the assaulting gnomes retreat, leaving the PCs to be overwhelmed by the orcs who will then capture any surviving PCs as hostages.

***Creatures:*** The PCs need to stop Angwagh and the orc warriors under her direct command.



## APL 2 (EL 4)

**Angwagh the Cold:** Female orc adept 3; hp 18; Appendix 1

**Orcs (3):** hp 5 each; *Monster Manual* 283

**Tactics:** See DM Aid 3 for a tactical map. Angwagh will order two of the orcs to delay the PCs while the third continues loading and then cast *bleed* on herself and her companions. The following round she will attempt to cast *cause fear* on the most threatening melee opponent (using her scroll only if the first attempt fails) before moving into combat and attempting to use her touch of fatigue on the PCs engaged by the orcs. The third orc will continue to attempt to fire the trebuchet even if attacked. If the loading orc is eliminated, one of the surviving orcs will full withdraw towards the trebuchet and continue the loading sequence. If all the other orcs are killed, Angwagh will abandon the fight and attempt to complete the firing sequence herself.

**Treasure:** Angwagh has 100 gp, leather armor, heavy wooden shield, Morningstar, *Ring of Protection* +1 and a scroll of *cause fear*. Each orc has 10 gp, studded leather armor, a falchion and a javelin.

**APL 2:** Loot 27 gp; Coin 130 gp; Magic 168 gp; *ring of protection* +1 (166 gp), *scroll of cause fear* (2 gp); Total 325 gp.

**Development:** If the trebuchet fires the gnomes retreat and the PCs are captured. Paraphrase the following and Proceed to Conclusion A.

*The instant the last charges land in the bucket, the massive arm of the trebuchet swings forward and flings the huge load of alchemist fire upwards in a long high arc. It plummets downwards and lands right amongst the front ranks of the charging gnomes, many of whom fall to the ground screaming and rolling attempting to extinguish the flames. With alchemist fire raining from above the surviving gnomes can only turn and run.*

*With the main gnome force routed the entire garrison of orcs turn and surround Brom, Avin, you and your companions. There is no choice but to drop your weapons and surrender.*

If Angwagh and her companions are defeated paraphrase the following instead and then proceed to conclusion B.

*As the last orc defending the trebuchet drops at your feet you turn to see the exciting sight of the gnome militia, many mounted on wardogs, charging the orc force while*

*shouting gnomish war cries. With the orc leader vanquished and no trebuchet to blunt the charge of the attacking gnomes the orcs quickly collapse in disarray before the flurry of gnome hook hammers and the charging lances and those few orcs that stay and attempt to fight are rapidly dispatched. The retreating orcs have clearly panicked in the face of the gnome's bold and daring frontal attack and its not long before the militia are running them down. It's clear very few orcs will survive the day. With your assistance the gnomes have done the near impossible and routed the orcs.*

## CONCLUSION

### CONCLUSION A:

*Your period of capture by the orcs is uncomfortable and unpleasant. Eventually, after some weeks of negotiation, Mayor Yipwyg of Baerlen makes a deal with the surviving orcs agreeing to pay tribute and homage to the orc clan in return for the release of Brom, Avin, yourself and your companions.*

*You are all eventually released, but without any of your possessions and left unceremoniously on the roadside to make your way, unarmed and barefooted, back to civilisation. Extricating yourself from the brambles where you were dumped by a burly orc and looking back, you notice the orc encampment has been enlarged and is far more fortified than before. There are new barracks under construction and the encampment is a flurry of activity, showing all the signs of being built to last. The orcs have established a foothold in the Lofthills and who knows what the long term consequences of that will be.*

The PCs are captured and when released have lost all their possessions and have used an additional 4 time units. The orcs have now established a foothold in the Lofthills and the village of Baerlen must now pay tribute and homage to Angwagh and her clan.

### CONCLUSION B:

*A quick review of the now burnt out fortifications reveals extensive preparations to fortify and enlarge the encampment. It is very fortunate, perhaps for all the Lofthills, that this incursion was stopped now as it is*

*clear that once entrenched in this harsh terrain the orcs would have been very costly in both lives and resources to remove.*

*Upon returning to Baerlen, you and your fellow party members are greeted with great applause as gnome children swarm all over your party in excitement. You have accomplished your task, saved the gnomish town of Baerlen and prevented a major orc foothold from being established in the Lofthills.*

*The night is full of good food, boisterous entertainment and expensive drink provided by the mayor himself. Everybody seems to be in a great mood. You all chuckle as you spy a group of younger gnomes riding the green and yellow wooden badger as it is towed about the village by the crab. Brom and Avin insisted on bringing the badger back, they did not want to waste all that hard work by abandoning it in the burning remains of the orc camp.*

*Nearby a bard is reciting to herself a newly written epic poem about the day's events. Just as you think the night could not get any better Maester Quonzer stands and calls the gnomes to order,*

*"Our very own Jaroo has demonstrated remarkable skill in developing his gem mining invention and furthermore displayed incredible bravery in defence of our town", he declares, "and so now, Journeyman Jaroo, it is my honour to proclaim you Maester and grant you your new name, step forward Maester Arumskorlun".*

Any PC that understands gnome will know that this name means "Heroic Wise Inventor".

*The gnomes around you burst into applause as Jaroo walks over to his Maester tears of happiness in his eyes as Quonzer pins the badge of a Maester on his tunic. "Well done Jaroo Pokkalun Bondiba Arumskorlun Gundigoot, I always had high expectations of you." Quonzer says gruffly with what looks like a tear in his own eye.*

*The news of Jaroo's promotion brings cause for more celebration, and you feel content in a job well done, knowing your actions these last few days have made a lasting difference. Finally the gnome bard stands and recites her finished poem. She proudly proclaims it an epic tale of Gnomes, Badgers and Crabs.*

The mission is a success. Jaroo's missing project has been recovered and he is now a provisional Maester. The orc incursion into the Lofthills has been routed and the village of

Baerlen is safe once more. Furthermore word of the PCs part in the victory has spread amongst the gnomes of Ratik and they are held in good favour by the gnome clans.

**Treasure:** The PCs are rewarded for their efforts by the gnomes of Baerlen:

**APL 2:** Coin 20 gp; Total 20 gp

**The End.**

## EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the experience award. Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

### Encounter 1

Defeat the Wolves.

APL 2 60 XP

### Encounter 2

Defeat the orcs at the barricade

APL 2 90 XP

### Encounter 2

Find the hatch and disable the trap

APL 2 90 XP

### Encounter 2

Defeat Angwagh the Cold

APL 2 120 XP

### Discretionary roleplaying award

APL 2 90 XP

### Total possible experience:

APL 2 450 XP

## TREASURE SUMMARY

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a "treasure" section within the encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter's treasure.

The loot total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if the foes are plundered of all their earthly possessions. Looting the bodies takes at least 10 minutes per every 5 enemies, and if the characters cannot take the time to loot the bodies, they do not gain this gold. If you feel it is reasonable that characters can go back to loot the bodies, and those bodies are there (i.e., not carted off by dungeon scavengers, removed from the scene by the local watch, and so on), characters may return to retrieve loot. If the characters do not loot the body, the gold piece value for the loot is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

The coin total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if they take the coin available. A normal adventuring party can usually gather this wealth in a round or so. If for some reason, they pass up this treasure, the coin total is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the adventure. Many times characters must cast identify, analyze dweomer or similar spell to determine what the item does and how to activate it. Other times they may attempt to use the item blindly. If the magic item is consumable (a potion, scroll, magic bolts, etc.) and the item is used before the end of the adventure, its total is subtracted from the adventure totals below.

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate.

Loot = Looted gear from enemy; Coin = Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables; Magic = Magic Items.

### Introduction:

APL 2: Coin 5 gp; Total 5 gp.

### Encounter 5:

APL 2: Loot 51 gp; Coin 50 gp; Magic 20 gp; 5 *potions of cure light wounds* (4 gp each); Total 121 gp.

### Encounter 7:

APL 2: Loot 27 gp; Coin 130 gp; Magic 168 gp; *ring of protection +1* (166 gp), *scroll of cause fear* (2 gp); Total 325 gp.

### Conclusion:

APL 2: Coin 20 gp; Total 20 gp

### Total Possible Treasure

APL 2: Loot: 78 gp; Coin: 205 gp; Magic: 188 gp; Total: 471 gp (max: 450 gp).

### Special

**Favor of Jaroo:** You have performed a valuable service for Jaroo of Baerlen in the Lofthills and the character is deemed to have an Influence Point with Clan Baerlen. In addition word of your deeds has spread throughout Ratik due to the popular epic poem "Gnomes, Badgers and

Crabs” and the character gains a +1 bonus to diplomacy checks with all Ratik Gnomes.

**Captured by orcs:** You were captured by the clan of Angwagh the Cold and held for a considerable time before, eventually, being released (in return for payment of a tribute and homage by the gnomes of Baerlen). You survived, but lost all items in your possession at the time of capture, as well as expending 4 time units in captivity. Any treasure gained earlier in the module is not lost as you are deemed to have left that in Baerlen.

**Unreliable:** You have shown yourself too unreliable to be trusted, even in a place as individualistic as Ratik. For a period of one calendar year from the date the adventure record was issued, all items purchased in Ratik regional adventures by the PC incur a 10% increase in price. This includes items purchased specifically for the PC by other characters.

**Badger hats:** As a souvenir of the battle you have been presented with a hat that appears to be an amazingly lifelike replica of a badger. Or is a replica?

## APPENDIX 1: APL 2

### ENCOUNTER 6:

#### **Apparatus of Kwalish:**

This item appears to be a large, sealed iron barrel, but it has a secret catch (Search DC 20 to locate) that opens a hatch in one end. Anyone who crawls inside finds ten (unlabeled) levers:

Lever

(1d10) Lever Function

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- 1 Extend/retract legs and tail
- 2 Uncover/cover forward porthole
- 3 Uncover/cover side portholes
- 4 Extend/retract pincers and feelers
- 5 Snap pincers
- 6 Move forward/backward
- 7 Turn left/right
- 8 Open "eyes" with continual flame inside/close "eyes"
- 9 Rise/sink in water
- 10 Open/close hatch

The device has the following characteristics:

Speed: Forward 10 ft., backward 20 ft.

AC: 20 (-1 size, 11 natural)

Hit Points: 200

Attacks: 2 pincers, +12 melee

Damage: 2d8 each

Special Qualities: Hardness 15

Operating a lever is a full-round action, and no lever may be operated more than once per round. However, since two Medium-size characters can fit inside, the apparatus can move and attack in the same round. The device can function in water up to 900 feet deep. It holds enough air for a crew of two to survive 1d4+1 hours (twice as long for a single occupant). When activated, the apparatus looks something like a giant lobster.

### ENCOUNTER 7:

#### **ANGWAGH THE COLD**

**CR 2**

Female Orc Adept 3

CE Medium humanoid orc

**Init** -1; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0

**Languages** Common, Orc

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**AC** 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14

(-1 Dex, +2 leather armor, +2 heavy wooden shield, +1 deflection)

**hp** 18 (3 HD);

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +0, **Will** +5

**Weakness:** Light Sensitivity

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**Speed** 30 ft. in leather armor (6 squares), base movement 30 ft.,

**Melee** Morningstar +2 (d8+1)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

**Base Atk** +1; **Grp** +2

**Atk Actions** Spells

**Combat Gear** leather armour, heavy wooden shield, morningstar, +1 *ring of protection*, *scroll of cause fear*

**Adept Spells Prepared** (CL 3rd):

1st— *cause fear*, *bles*

0— *touch of fatigue (2)*, *detect magic*

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**Abilities** Str 12, Dex 9, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 8

**SQ** Darkvision 60 ft.

**Feats** Iron Will, Toughness

**Skills** Concentration +3, Heal +2, Spellcraft +1

**Possessions** combat gear

## DM AID 1: LIST OF NPCS

### **Mayor, Yipwyg Nobblywhop Tugglebun Herawever Bokin Gundigoot,**

Yipwyg is the mayor of Baerlen. He is a jovial portly gnome with a beer belly, balding on top with shoulder length straight icy white hair, and twinkling dark blue eyes. He delights in practical jokes and riddles and is something of a prankster. He has more names than any other gnome in the village and is very proud of this fact.

### **Jaroo Pokkalun Bondiba Gundigoot**

Jaroo is a young, charismatic, good looking gnome. He is something of a gentleman. He has a happy go lucky personality but is more serious than Yipwyg. He has tan skin and light blue eyes and wears his black hair pulled back into a ponytail tied with green leather. He prefers earthy colors wearing sturdy dark brown shin high boot sand deep tan earthy doublet with bottle green sleeves and dark blue trousers. He wears his apprentice robes over his normal attire. He is the only apprentice of Maester Quonzar. He wants to eventually be a full fledged master and hopes a recent invention will earn his provisional cap.

### **Maester Quonzar**

Quonzar is a stern gnome who takes his work as a tinkerer very seriously. A sensibly dressed middle aged gnome, he is fastidiously tidy. He has high expectations of Jaroo and is constantly pushing Jaroo to do better to the point of appearing insensitive. He only has the one name because he regards the gnome fascination with having too many names as frivolous and a waste of time that is better spent on something productive.

### **Maester Anetinee Violana Kindi Grevefin**

Anetinee is the maester of history and music. She has dark brown hair that is tied back with a blue ribbon and lightly tanned skin. Anetinee is a charismatic and beautiful woman. Her eyes are a deep blue. She wears a light purple dress with blue stitching along the hem, sleeves and down the centre, with practical shin-high purple boots, matching to her dress. Anetinee is young for a gnome maester, but is not lacking in talent. She knows the history of gnomes and other humanoids intricately, and is known in the town for her beautiful voice and instrumental abilities.

### **Maester Ginnott Allanettic Fittonan Pantucket**

Ginnott is the Maester of magic. He is an elderly gnome with thinning hair and pale blue eyes framed by a pair of spectacles. He is often seen with soot on his face from some sort of misused magic item. He wears robes made from a light material in orange and yellows. He is the oldest gnome in the town. He is kindly, and somewhat muddle-headed. He is the wisest gnome in the village, though few have the patience to hear what he has to say.

### **Bromnuckle Dinarumen Uranvan Soramoota**

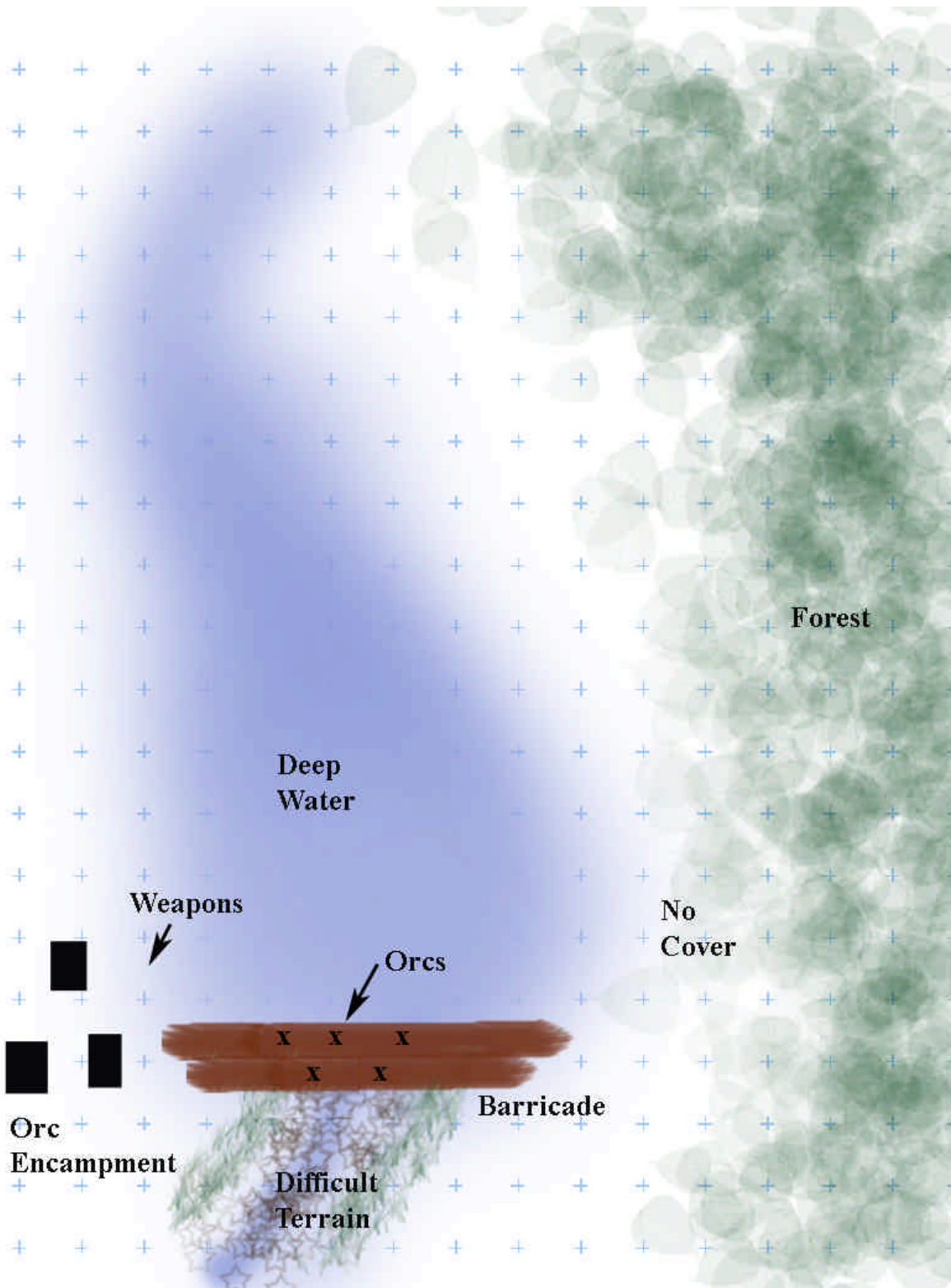
Bromnuckle (or Brom for short) is a mature aged, modest, hard working gnome. Brom is second in command to the town's militia. He has dark blue eyes, tanned skin and dark brown hair pulled back with a strip of plain brown leather - though he usually wears a helm. He has a dog trained for war, which he rides into battle; he affectionately calls the dog 'Thorn Tooth'. He often assists in attacks to ward off orcs and is the first called in by Avin in defense of the town. Often seen in chainmail, with leather trousers and knee-high boots, he wears a blue jerkin under his chainmail.

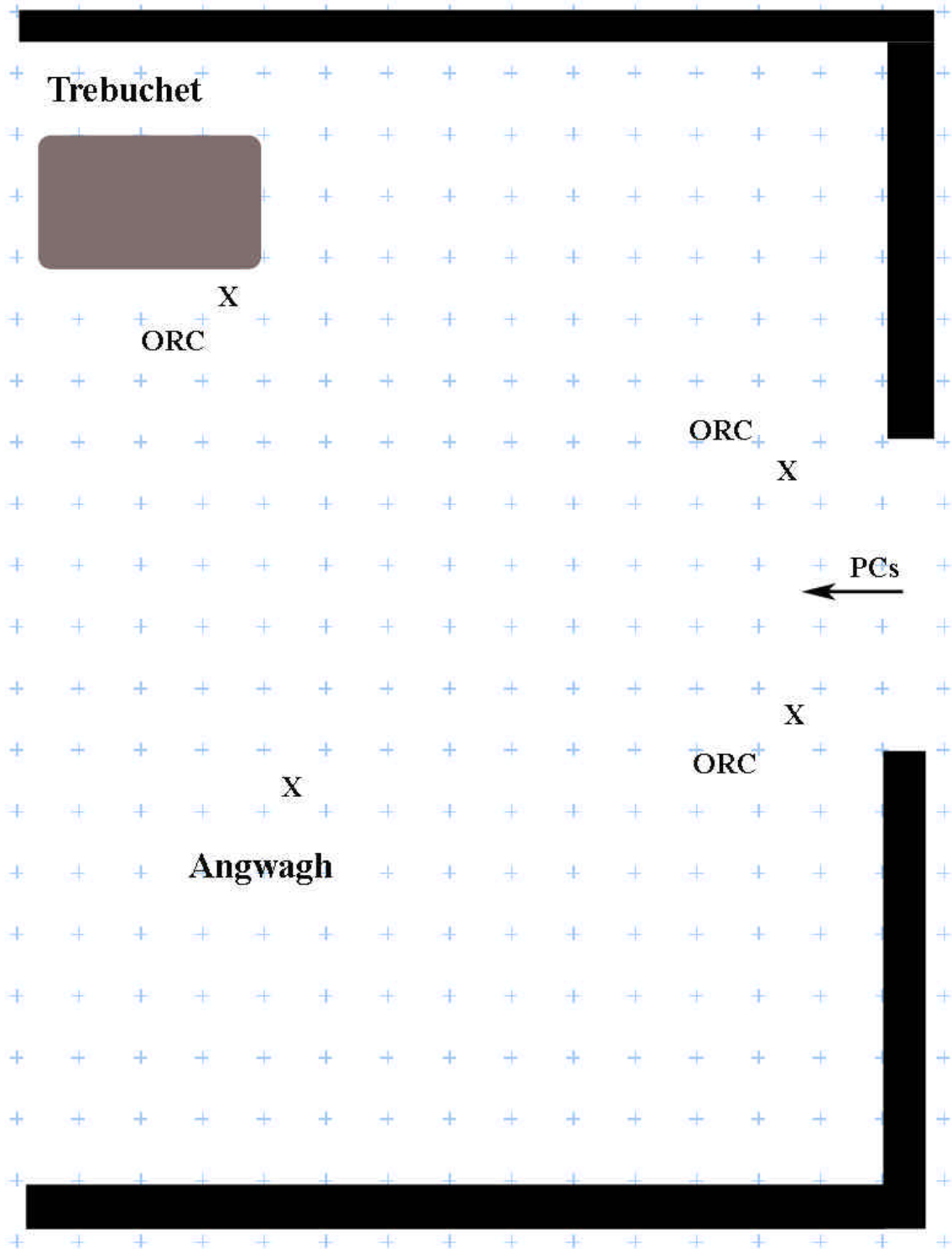
### **Kylikie Mikana Barcanie Soramoota**

Kylikie is a young female gnome with a happy-go-lucky, cheerful, optimistic attitude. She is always seen with a smile on her face. She has woody brown skin & light blonde hair and her eyes are light blue with flecks of green. She wears a light green dress, the colour of the first leaves of spring, with intricate gold stitching on the hem and sleeves, with comfy green slip-on shoes.

### **Sheriff Avinoff Binertill Bockledon Haggie**

Avin is the self proclaimed sheriff of Baerlen and leader of the militia. He is a retired adventurer, and got increasingly concerned over the orc activities so close to his home town. He has light brown hair and piercing blue eyes. He is seen in his breast plate amour, a little shield has been etched into it. His weapon is the gnome hooked hammer, if asked he will sigh contentedly and speak of how he slew many a foul beast with it. Recently he has been training the local militia in advanced two weapon fighting techniques with the gnome hooked hammer.







# PLAYER HANDOUT 1

