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EDITION

ADVENTURE

THE DOGS OF WAR



DAVIS CHENAULT





# THE DOGS OF WAR

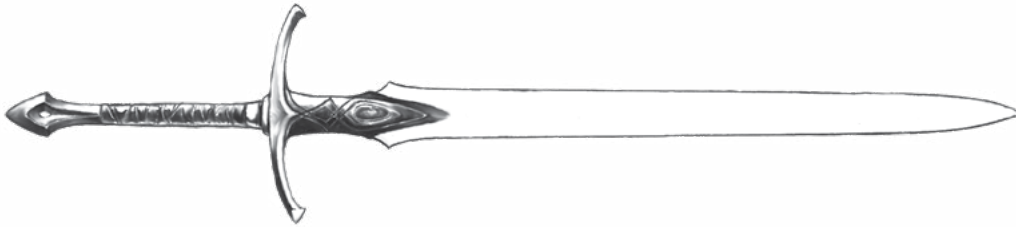
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*Whaaattt? At DZEEBAGD!!!' The stones of Hrad shake with Grodge's fury. The gigantic Zjerd hefts a black iron spear over his head and jams it toward an infernal sky, "By all that breathes! By all that sees! I will find these foul humans and hang them from the Horns of the Dragon. I will see their bodies quiver before me, I will raze the towns of those gross slaves, I want them to die, to Die, TO DIE!" Grodge's voice cascades furiously down the hall, across a littered courtyard and into the barracks of his fiercest warriors.*

*The Hrad, muffled, quiet with anticipation, wary of Grodge's rage, slowly begins to ripple with tension and expectation. Grodge thunders for revenge, screams for a massive bloodletting, his red eyes roll in his head, his veins pulse and throb as his vengeful blood courses to his black heart.*

*The troops emerge from their reticence and begin to gather around their leader, thumping their feet on stone and chanting their deep throaty war songs. Within moments, the barracks empties and the courtyards and hallways become scattered with warriors chanting and crying out for war, for booty, for power, for land, for their place in the world.*

*"Gather my armies, gather the arms, gather your hatred my warriors for we are going to the North." Grodge, his muscles groaning with effort and rippling with power, thrusts his dark spear into the stone floor, where the tip strikes deep into flagging. It quivers for a moment and silence falls upon the Hrad. There, engraved upon the floor is an ancient map. Carved in those first days after the building of the Hrad it has seen no attention for generations, until now, and the tip of that ever so sharp spear sits in the heart of small town near the*

*coast of the Interzae, resting astride that great road, the Kambreea. It is Halpveg.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

This is an 'epic' adventure module that contains a great deal of combat. Much of the action late in the adventure orients around large scale battles. Roleplaying and pacing are significant factors in making the epic nature of this adventure come to life in a memorable way. In each section, advice is offered on how to use action as a vehicle to enhance roleplaying events. I cannot stress enough how crucial are the proper casting, management, and roleplaying of NPCs. It would be best to familiarize yourself with the goals and aspirations of NPCs of all ilk before playing them.

The module concerns a war that is brewing in the Dampfrat and the Graffenvold and the role the characters play in its unfolding. Initially, the characters are trying to escape from the clutches of an advancing Zjerd army. They will, however, eventually have to face this army in battle. This combat occurs in one of two places, Felsentheim or Vakhund. Both are large scale combats involving hundreds of goblins and dozens of humans. The rules for running these combats are detailed at the end of the module. Although I dislike 'railroading' players into choosing particular courses of action, in some adventures, it is sometimes best to place the characters on the path to glory, rather than allow them the easy way out and down the road to ignominy. With this in mind, it would be best to steer the characters towards Felsentheim.

**LEVELS:** The module is prepared for 4-6 characters of levels 3-5. All classes are useful and are likely to contribute significantly to the successful execution of the adventure. But, one cleric and one ranger greatly increase the party's chance of survival. Most important, heroes are needed, characters of high mind and grand ideas, characters who are willing to lay their life on the line for little material reward. This is an adventure from which potentially truly heroic characters are molded, and with personages and events that linger long in the memory of roleplaying.

This module can be run independent of its two predecessors *Vakhund: Into the Unknown* and *Dzeebagd: Under Dark and Misty Ground*, and can be placed in any campaign setting, however for the adventure to be logical and useful in a setting outside the one described in the module, a few structural elements should remain the same. There is a kingdom of goblins (the Zjerd) along a frontier region who are initiating a war against weak and widely dispersed human settlements. There should be two crossings on a river over which the goblins must move their armies to attack. The fords should be at least 40 miles apart, but probably a little further. To meld the module into an existing setting requires some tweaking with the names of the locations and persons involved.

Just prior to the beginning of the adventure, a Zjerd outpost, Dzeebagd (see map), was attacked. The Zjerd are looking for the perpetrators. At the same time, a Zjerd army is moving in the direction of the nearest human settlements and is attacking them as an act of revenge and conquest. The characters begin the adventure between Dzeebagd and the human settlements. The Castle Keeper should supply reasons for the characters being there (see inset for suggestions). If the adventure is not continued from *Dzeebagd*, the Zjerd mistake the party for those who attacked the outpost. If the module is continued from *Dzeebagd*, the characters are likely to be aware that a Zjerd army is on the march (or shortly become aware of this), but do not know the size or intent of the army.

**INVOLVING THE CHARACTERS:** The following is a list of reasons the Castle Keeper may use for placing the party near Dzeebagd.

- 1: A local baron has hired them to scout Dzeebagd.
- 2: A merchant has hired them to rescue a member of their family taken to Dzeebagd.
- 3: The characters are on their way back from a previous adventure.
- 4: The party was trailing another group of adventurer's whom are thought to know the location of the famed bandit fortress, Magershole.

#### PROLOGUE

An attack on Dzeebagd, a short time before the beginning of the adventure, has enraged the local Zjerd warlord, Grodge, and he

wants revenge for the act. It is a revenge that coincides nicely with his plans for conquest of the Graffenvold. In order to accomplish the conquest, Grodge needs to galvanize the disparate Zjerd tribes in the Dampfrat and meld them into an army. To unite the tribes under his banner, Grodge must prove his worth in battle. He reasons that revenge for the attack on Dzeebagd offers the perfect means to unite them under his command.

Also, like all Zjerd warlords, Grodge has a tenuous hold on power in Klednij. He realizes that unless he acts in a manner suiting both his troops and the Zjerd tribes as a whole, he will be disposed of in the most bloody of rituals. He decides to immediately attack the nearest human settlements of the Graffenvold to satisfy their code of revenge. And, as a very personal act of revenge, Grodge intends to find the perpetrators of the attack on Dzeebagd and have them captured or killed because his only nephew by his older brother died in that raid. The disposition and stats of the troops currently under the command of Grodge are detailed at the end of this module.

**PLAN OF ATTACK:** Grodge divides his army into three groups. He sends one group to each of the two settlements nearest Klednij, Vakhund and Felsentheim, while one group remains in Klednij with him. Vakhund and Felsentheim are located near crossings over the Treklant Creek. His intention is to use Vakhund and Felsentheim as bases for future attacks and, at the same time, to gain control of passage over the upper reaches of the Treklant Creek. As Grodge is greatly concerned with garnering support for his war in the Graffenvold, he commits the majority of his army to the battles to insure victory. It takes the groups 10 days to reach Felsentheim and 13 days to reach Vakhund. Each army is preceded by units of scouts. The remainder attempt to stay in a formation while traveling very fast. The armies are divided as follows, and representative statistics are found at the end of the module.

**KLEDNIJ:** These troops remain in Klednij with Grodge. 6 regular troops (100 in each troop), 1 elite troop (100), 2 cavalry troops (25 wolf riders in each troop), 3 scout troops (5 spider riders in each troop), 5 trackers.

**VAKHUND:** These troops travel through the Dampfrat going directly towards Jzunad and thence to Vakhund. They are commanded by Odeevichk. 2 troops (100 in each troop), 1 cavalry troop (25 wolf riders in each troop), 1 scout troop (5 spider riders in each troop).

**FELSENHEIM:** These troops travel straight from Klednij to the Hiitenford and thence to Felsentheim. They are commanded by Preeozjit (see Act III). 4 troops (100 in each troop), 1 cav troop (25 wolf riders in each troop), 2 scout troops (5 spider riders in each troop), Chazrim (10).

**SCOUTING:** These troops spread out to the north of Klednij acting as messengers for Grodge. They inform the outlying elements of his armies that a war is in the making. 2 scout troops (5 spider riders in each troop).

#### TIME TUMBLES AND DEATH BREATHES HOT ON THE TRAIL

The characters begin the adventure camped 15 miles north of Dzeebagd. They should be heading in a northerly direction, presumably for a civilized clime. If they are not, it shortly becomes obvious that their only hope for escape from the Zjerd is to get to civilized lands as quickly as possible. Behind them, to the south, the lead elements of Grodge's army are gathering. As Grodge's scouts spread out before the army, Preelezjit, the commander of the Zjerd army heading towards Felsentheim, sends several scouts and his mercenary Chazrim to locate and slay the party.

The ensuing chase to the edge of the Dampfrat is the first part of the adventure. It should be a fast-paced event and the characters should be made to feel pressed and increasingly desperate. For these purposes, keep random encounters to a bare minimum. This is somewhat logical because, once word gets out and the scouts and Chazrim start to race across the Dampfrat in front of the party, they scare away most of the inhabitants of the region. Everything is on alert and very wary. However, the party is in front of the army's main elements and some encounters may occur. See **Dampfrat Random Encounter Table**.

From Dzeebagd, the trip to the Hiitenford, the crossing nearest Felsentheim, is 6 days of normal overland travel on foot or 4 days mounted. Scenes detailing four encounters that occur along the way are described below. The Castle Keeper is encouraged to interject or delete scenes to allow the tension of the chase to build.

To exploit the chase sequence, pace the action slowly at first and allow the tension to build as the characters come to realize they are being followed. Each successive encounter should have a greater sense of urgency than the previous, and carry greater potential threat. The final encounter in the chase, at the Hiitenford, should be climactic and theatrical. When it ends, the characters should have developed a false sense of security having defeated a large contingent of Zjerd and safely crossed the ford.

#### **DAMPFRAT RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE**

The Dampfrat is the remnant of a volcanic cone. It is a morass full of steamy swampy grasslands, hot springs, geysers, warm creeks and pools, thick evergreen copses, and tangled underbrush. Travel is arduous and time-consuming. The trails are difficult to follow, only made possible by wood markers sticking several feet out of the ground every 100 yards. Many of these have rotted and fallen down, but generally, with a few hours search, another can be located. From where the party begins there is a marked trail leading north as well as one leading to the west. The northern trail goes to the Hiitenford and the eastern one to Jzunad (see Vakhund for information on Jzunad).

With each day, following the trail becomes more difficult and a single DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) tracking check should be made to see if the characters stay on the trail. A failure indicates one day of wandering before the trail is found again. This trail (and the only marked one) leads directly to Dzeebagd. It should take the characters anywhere between 4 and 6 days to reach Dzeebagd if they manage to stay on the trail.

The following table is a list of encounters for the Dampfrat. Check for encounters two times during the day and once at night. A 1 on a d12 indicates an encounter. Roll 1d8 to determine the encounter.

1 **Elk:** A heard of elk is sunning or resting at the edge of a pasture. They are easily frightened and will run if approached.

2 **Giant Boar**

**Elothar:** *There are 1-4 giant boars are foraging for food. As winter has arrived, the Elothar have become more aggressive. If they are disturbed, 1 or 2 attack. Killing any one of the Elothar causes the others to run squealing into the woods.*

**ELOTHAR** (Unaligned Large beast) HP 42 (HD 5d10+15), AC 12, Spd 40 ft. Str 17 Dex 10 Con 16 Int 2 Wis 7 Cha 5. Perception -2(8). Tusk +5 (2d6+3). SA Charge (move 20 ft. straight at target and hits with tusk, target takes extra 2d6 slashing damage. Target must make DC 13 Strength save or be knocked prone). Challenge 2 (450 XP).

3 **Mammoth:** The party notices a herd of 5-10 mammoth. The mammoth are grazing, resting or sunning themselves. Mammoth are generally unafraid of most things and the characters can move in or around them rather closely if they so choose. However, like many large herbivores, they are capable of aggressive action if threatened. There is a 20% chance that a bull attacks if the party moves within 100 yards of any of the herd. Further, if any member of the party moves within 50 yards of the herd, there is a 50% chance a cow reacts violently. For every 10 yards closer the party moves to the herd, the chance of violent reaction increases 10%. If the bull reacts violently, the rest of the herd moves away; if the cow reacts violently, the entire herd charges forward and attempts to trample the party.

**MAMMOTH** (Unaligned Huge beast) HP 126 (11d12+55), AC 13, Spd 40 ft. Str 24 Dex 9 Con 21 Int 3 Wis 11 Cha 6. Perception 10(+0). Gore +10 (4d8+7) or Stomp +10 (4d10+7). SA Trampling Charge (move at least 20ft. straight and hits with gore attack on same turn, target must make DC 18 Strength save or be knocked prone. Mammoth can make one stomp attack against prone target as bonus action). Challenge 6 (2,300 XP).

4 **Bear:** A very large bear, weighing nearly 700 lbs., is wandering nearby. The bear is not aggressive unless the encounter occurs around a campfire or where food is out. Then, it first tries to scare the characters off before it attacks.

**BEAR, BLACK** (Unaligned Medium beast) HP 19 (HD 3d8+6), AC 11, Spd 40 ft., 30 ft. (climb). Str 15 Dex 10 Con 14 Int 2 Wis 12 Cha 7. Perception 13(+3). Multiattack (one bite, one claw), Bite +4 (1d6+2) and Claw +4 (2d4+2). SA Keen Smell (advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell). Challenge 1/2 (100 XP).

5 **Zwetter Rorer:** *This saber-toothed tiger is looking for easy prey. If a character is scouting or wanders far from the party, the tiger attacks him if he appears vulnerable. The nature of these hunters is such that, when faced with numerous foes, they back down.*

**ZWETTER RORER** (*Unaligned Large beast*) HP 30 (HD 4d10+8), AC 12, Spd 50ft. Str 18 Dex 14 Con 15 Int 3 Wis 12 Cha 6. Perception 13(+3), Stealth +6. Bite +6 (1d8+4) or Claw +6 (2d6+4). SA Keen Smell (*advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell, Pounce (move at least 20 ft. straight toward creature and hits with claw attack on same turn, target must make DC 14 Strength save or be knocked prone; if target is prone, make one bite attack as bonus action)*). Challenge 1 (200 XP).

- 6 **Deer:** There are 10-30 deer resting, grazing or sunning themselves. They flee if approached.
- 7 **Fenath:** The Fenath are tree spirits, kin to the great trees – the Grundl, those first trees nurtured and grown by the Inzal. They exist in human form and live deep within the bole of massive dying Grundl, caring for them in their last days. The Fenath appear as human, though their sex is indeterminate. Women perceive them as gorgeous men, and men perceive them as gorgeous women. They are usually very reclusive and never leave the bowl of the Grundl unless to gather information of the passing of years or, after the death of a Grundl, to seek out another tree. They speak any tongue. Fenath skin is tinted green or dark brown and gleams with the color of moonlight. They always attempt to escape if attacked, fleeing far from the tree they consider home only to return once the danger has passed. They usually carry a walking stick that seconds as a cudgel if forced to defend themselves.

In this instance, the Fenath is leaving a tree to discover why the forest is in such a frenzied state. Whispers of war and the thunder of Zjerd armies has piqued this Fenath's interest and

it seeks information. The Fenath follows the party for a short time, and makes itself known when it determines whether or not they are dangerous. It then asks questions in an effort to discover what is happening in the Dampfrat. If the party appears good or is otherwise kind to the Fenath, help is offered by giving the party direction to the Hiitenford or Felsentheim and giving them a healing salve made of various herbs that cures 1d4 hit points 24 hours after applied to a wound. It gives 10 such applications.

**FENATH** (*N Medium Fey*) HP 22 (HD 5d8), AC 11 (16 w/barkskin), Spd 30 ft. Str 10 Dex 12 Con 11 Int 14 Wis 15 Cha 18. Perception 14(+4). Stealth +5. Cudgel +6 (1d8+4; shillelagh). SA Darkvision 60ft., magic resistance, plant/beast speak, tree stride, fey charm (24 hrs.; DC 14 Wis neg), innate spellcasting (save DC 14): At will: druidcraft; 3/day: entangle, goodberry; 1/day: barkskin, pass without trace, shillelagh. The Fenath can commune with trees at will. They can step "into" any Grundl at will as well.

- 8 **Wolves:** There are 8-12 ferocious and hungry wolves on the prowl. They follow the party for a long time looking for a weak character or straggler to attack. They stick with a basic attack plan and try to lead one of the characters off to attack them individually. They fight ferociously to protect any kill. If no prey becomes available during the day, they await nightfall and attack the camp, again focusing on one character, especially anyone that steps out of the firelight.

These wolves, as with most other natural predators in Inzae, are not mindless killing machines. They are efficient, quick, brutal, and powerful. Their environment requires cunning and caution for they instinctively know that a single wound





or broken bone can be a death sentence. When faced with superior odds or a powerful foe they rarely stay to fight. Generally the only time they give themselves entirely to the fight is in defense of the young or when cornered.

**WOLF** (*Unaligned Medium beast*) HP 11 (HD 2d8+2), AC 13, Spd. 40ft. Str 12 Dex 15 Con 12 Int 3 Wis 12 Cha 6. Perception 13(+3), Stealth +4. Bite +4 (2d4+2; target creature DC 11 Strength save or be knocked prone). SA Keen Hearing & Smell (*advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell*), Pack Tactics (*advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and ally isn't incapacitated*). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

## THE CHASE

The party begins the adventure in the early morning in a thick copse of evergreens. It is cold as winter has arrived. Snow flurries occur occasionally throughout the day and night, but snow accumulation is slight due to the heat from the geysers and hot springs. If the characters follow the trail they are currently on it will take them to Felsentheim via the Stairs of Hiiten and across the Hiitenford.

There are several options the party has in trying to escape the armies of Grodge. Because of the nature of the module, all the directions the characters might choose to pursue cannot be addressed. The Castle Keeper should predetermine how the various groups of Zjerd react to the party's decisions. If need be, the CK should encourage the party to trek north towards the lands of men, perhaps mentioning the lack of food, the approaching winter storms, or warm beds awaiting them in the hospitable lands of the Friilander, those erstwhile settlers along the frontier of the Dampfrat.

The likeliest action the character might take that is not addressed by the adventure is to go deeper into the Dampfrat, heading east, west or south from Dzeebagd and away from Felsentheim. If this should happen, the party is still be tracked by the scouts and attacked by the Chazrim should they ever be caught. This takes place within the Dampfrat proper. Once the characters manage to cross the Shatten Escarpment both the trackers and Chazrim halt their pursuit. If the characters cross over the Shatten Escarpment through named passes, they are attacked by the Zjerd who are guarding them (see below) unless they employ stealth in their movements.

If the party never realizes that they are being followed, it could be problematic. The results may be disastrous if the Chazrim overtake them, as they surely will do. Try to give the party as many hints as possible if they do not seem to understand the perilous situation they are in.

The scenes should be played with verve and excitement. The action should be fast paced, disallowing the party time to complete actions and formulate plans. Always stay one step ahead of the party and the tension will rise. It is also important to encourage roleplaying during combat by not allowing the players long periods of time to ponder actions, plan strategies or

talk amongst themselves excessively. By keeping them reacting instead of acting, the sense of desperation increases. Also, if the encounters are too weak for the characters and an easy victory seems likely, increase the number of Chazrim and/or their hit points accordingly.

## WHITE SNOW AND BLEEDING EARTH

The characters are camped near Dzeebagd and are preparing for the day's journey. There are two trails before them, one heading west and one north.

A breezy wind flurries through the tree tops, whipping up snow and cold. A darkened sun hides behind black clouds frothing across the sky. Gigantic fir trees stretch away to all sides, their overhanging boughs dipping low to the ground and their tops reaching up to the sky. A beaten trail twists away to the north disappearing into the green boughs of the trees and twining about small geysers frothing blood red steam and water.

## SET ENCOUNTER #1

This encounter occurs within 2 days of the adventure's beginning. Up to this time, the armies of Grodge have been organizing themselves and have just begun marching north.





The Zjerd scouts have located the party's tracks and are closing in on them. As soon as the party's trajectory was determined, Preeozjit sent messengers to a Zjerd patrol at the Hiitenford and all the passes over the Shatten Escarpment informing them that a group of Graffenvolders is headed in their direction and that they should prepare to ambush and slay them. The Chazrim are trailing close behind the Zjerd trackers, awaiting their chance to attack the party.

This encounter should indicate to the party that they are being followed. Play this scene out slowly and calmly, giving the players a little time to think and figure out what is happening. Try to intone the militaristic nature of the Zjerd (banners flapping, military insignia gleaming) and the threat of the Dampfrat with descriptions emitting entrapment (enshrouding fog, overhanging trees)

The last watch of the evening or the first watch in the morning of the second day, the party sees the following:

A large glade extends for miles around and below the small rocky rise upon which you stand. A gentle mist shrouds the earth, wraps around your legs, blankets over your companions, and envelops the boles of the massive trees beyond. The morning is silent and the wind is dead. Overhead, black clouds sprawl against a reddish morning sky, mixing tumultuously with the Dampfrat's deadly desire.

And out of the black night beneath the eaves of those great trees across the glade, creeps a stooped and wary Zjerd. His pale green skin contrasting with the white mists, his purple headband hangs limply from its perch, and a pinion of emerald, wrapped to the shaft of a gleaming spear, flutters in an occasional breeze. The Zjerd, intent upon the ground, bends to the earth, sweeping at the mists. He rubs the ground for a few moments.

This Zjerd tracker is nearly 300 yards away and out of the range of most weapons. He spends several rounds inspecting the ground, so the party has an opportunity to act before the Zjerd sounds his horn. Ten more trackers are with him, spread out in a ragged line to his left and right. After a few rounds, during which the Zjerd locates the tracks of the party, he sounds a small horn.

The Zjerd suddenly straightens, grabbing for a horn. He sounds it, and a deep blast rolls into the sky. A few dreadful moments pass as the Zjerd stands erect, his spear aloft and his eyes scanning the horizon. Then the tree line is again breached. Several Zjerd, in a ragged line and spread over several hundreds of yards, slowly emerge from amongst the trees and make their way towards the one with the horn.

After the Zjerd trackers gather, they have a short conversation, spread out again and head up the rise toward the encampment. They have no intention of fighting. The first one to make contact immediately signals his compatriots who quickly flee in the direction they came. They were instructed to inform the Chazrim and allow them deal with the party. If possible, they trail several hours behind the party.

**ZJERD, GOBLIN TRACKERS X10** (CE Small humanoids (goblinoids)) HP 7 (HD 2d6), AC 16 (studded leather & shield), Spd 30 ft. Str 8 Dex 15 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 14 Cha 8. Perception 14(+4). Stealth +6, Survival +6. Shortsword +4 (1d6+2) or Shortbow +4 (1d6+2, range 80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

## SET ENCOUNTER #2

Within two days of the previous encounter this encounter should occur. The Zjerd trackers have been following the party and have informed the Chazrim of their whereabouts. The Chazrim, unable to track, have spread out and moved ahead to the point they believe the party is headed. As they start zigzagging back and forth to find the party, one lone Chazrim manages to locate his prey.

The somber and thick forest shrouds the ground in darkness. Periodically, these tangled copses open onto broad glades where a cruel sun glares down from on high, illuminating the malicious desires of the Dampfrat.

As you manage your way out of another brushy copse and begin to cross one of these muddy and damp glades, you spy a dreaded Chazrim, sitting astride his great war beast, lingering at the edge of another copse and watching you closely.

He rests astride a dreaded Olekotheer, one trained and harnessed for battle. This great boar-like creature sits nearly as high as a horse at the shoulder. Its broad hairy chest heaves while it pants. Two massive tusks stick up from its lower jaw, the size of daggers while two long curved horns erupt from its forehead, each capped in a brilliant silver casing.

The Chazrim, a greater goblin, is thickly cloaked in tattered wools and skins, a splintered shield, gouged from innumerable battles, hangs from his saddle while a massive and deadly lance lays across his lap. The green skin of his arms, brightly reflected in the sunlight, ripples with muscle and sinew as he adjusts his lance, shifting it upward and into his right hand. His broad face, dominated by ragged and huge fangs surveys the horizon in your direction. The Olekotheer, panting a misty breath, stands silent, its tusk bobbing slowly in the quiet. Then it snorts.

Chazrim are great hulking warriors who have spread terror from one end of Inzae to the other. They are powerfully built, massive cousins of the goblins. The Chazrim rides a large boar-like creature called an Olekotheer. When the Chazrim notices the characters, he observes them momentarily, then grabs a horn with his left hand. In moments the characters hear a short deep baritone blast that is followed by several others coming from far away in different directions. The Chazrim then approaches the party, at an increasing pace, and lowers his lance.

The Chazrim knows little fear and intends to test the party's strength. He fakes a few charges, attempting to draw one of the characters out and away from the other party members. As soon

as it appears opportune, he attacks one character, attempting to run him down or lance him. If the Chazrim suffers enough damage to reduce him to half of his hit points, he breaks off the attack and awaits reinforcement.

This encounter should be played in such a manner as to give the players an indication that, not only are they being followed, but that powerful creatures are following them. Impress upon the players the fierceness and power of the Chazrim. The Olekotheer are exceedingly powerful mounts, as large as a horse and as broad as a giant boar. These creatures are capable of withstanding quite a pounding before falling.

**CHAZRIM** (CE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)) HP 12 (HD 2d8+2), AC 17 (scale & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 14 Dex 12 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 9. Perception 10(+0). Battleaxe +4 (1d8+2) or Lance +4 (1d12+2) or Longbow +3 (1d8+1; 150ft/600ft). SA Darkvision 60ft., Extra damage (1/round +2d6); Challenge 1/2 (100 XP).

**OLEKOTHEER** (Unaligned Large beast) HP 42 (HD 5d10+15), AC 12, Spd 40 ft. Str 17 Dex 10 Con 16 Int 2 Wis 7 Cha 5. Perception 9(-1). Tusk +5 (2d6+3 slashing). SA Charge (moves at least 20 ft. straight at target and hits with tusk on that same turn, target takes 2d6 extra slashing damage; DC 13 Strength save or knocked prone), Relentless (if takes 10 damage or less that would drop it to 0 hp, it has 1 hp instead). Challenge 2 (450 XP). If ridden in combat, the Olekotheer and rider cannot both attack the same opponent on the same round except as part of a charge.

#### SET ENCOUNTER #7

This encounter occurs within 24 hours of the previous or about the 5<sup>th</sup> day of travel. Several of the Chazrim have gathered and located the party, and they shadow behind and in front of them. Their intent is to slow the party down until reinforcements arrive. They manage this by circling the party, making fake charges, and generally getting in the party's line of march. When the first Chazrim makes his appearance, the party is in a copse of trees.

The deadly quiet of day is drowned by a black noise churning in the air, the snorting and huffing, pawing and mauling of an Olekotheer. The great beast and its rider come into view through the dark trees ahead. A fierce Chazrim sits abreast the Olekotheer. He hefts a large round shield and a massive axe, which he clangs challengingly against his armor and accouterments. He bellows with laughter and anticipation, and suddenly urges the boar forward, disappearing into the trees. Shortly after, the woods echo with a deep, bellowing blast.

There are three Chazrim mounted on their olekotheer gathered near the party. They make themselves known one at a time and finally, when the party has entered a clearing, they appear together. At that point, they charge the party and attempt to run them down. When the Chazrim attack they attempt to charge through the party, turn around, and charge again, repeating the process as often as necessary to defeat the characters or force them to hole up in one place.

If fighting the party proves to be easy, they continue charging and fighting until victory is achieved. If two of the Chazrim are killed, the third breaks off the attack to find the other Chazrim in the vicinity. At this point, the players should be made to feel the desperation of their situation. They hear horn blasts from several places not far away shortly after the fight has ended. The Chazrim are closing in.

Up to seven Chazrim locate the party within six hours if they do not move. Once they locate the party, they attack in mass, only quitting after 4 of their number have been killed. The party is only a day's trip from the Stairs of Hiiten when this previous attack occurs. Once the party reaches the Stairs of Hiiten, the Chazrim break off the search and attacks, realizing their superior maneuverability is useless in the tight confines of trails through the Shatten Escarpment.

## OVER SLIPPERY ROCK AND ACROSS WATERY DEMISE

### THE SHATTEN ESCARPMENT

The Shatten Escarpment is an uplift of steep cliffs, precipitous rock faces, and boulder fields bounding the northern and eastern edges of the Dampfrat. There are several well-known passes through it. The pass on the north side of the escarpment is named the Steps of Hiiten, so called because it is a series of steps hewn into the rock ages ago. The steps are large (carved by Trotting Giants) and follow the stratigraphy of the land, going up and down with the slopes. They are worn with time and use.

The foot path ends at the Stairs of Hiiten, massive steps carved into the stone of the Shatten Escarpment and offering egress from the dreadful Dampfrat. The steps are large, but not so large that they cannot be traveled upon. They twist and turn, rounding massive boulders and following the course of the land.

The steps lead through the Shatten Escarpment's rocky ridges, jumbled with massive sandstone boulders, crumbling cliff faces, and thick underbrush. Giant firs, heavy with a scent of pine and dark with green needles, shadow the trail. The sky lets fly a misty white snow that whips and twirls in the powerful Inzaen winds.

There are few other trails through the Shatten escarpment. Those that do exist are rocky, steep, difficult to navigate, and usually the home of some foul denizen of the marshes. The Stairs of Hiiten are often guarded by a troop of Zjerd, but they have decided to move below the Stairs to the Hiitenford and ambush travelers there. Travel across the Stairs takes a day. They end at the base of the escarpment on the flood plain of the Treklant Creek, about 1 mile from the ford. The Hiitenford is the easternmost crossing of the Treklant Creek.

### THE AMBUSH

Grodge had several small troops of Zjerd patrolling the Dampfrat. He contacted this troop immediately and ordered them to guard the Hiitenford. Though nervous, and not knowing what to expect,

the Zjerd patrol's leader, Krazjim, is prepared for action. In this troop are Krazjim, 2 subchiefs, one shaman, and 30 Zjerd warriors.

**KRAZJIM, ZJERD GOBLIN** (CE Small humanoid (goblinoid)) HP 33 (HD 6d6+12), AC 16 (chain shirt & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 13 Dex 13 Con 14 Int 10 Wis 8 Cha 10. Perception 9(-1). Multiattack (two melee weapon attacks), Morningstar +4 (1d8+1) or Shortbow +3 (1d6+1, range 80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1 (200 XP).

**SUBCHIEFS, ZJERD GOBLIN X2** (CE Small humanoid (goblinoid)) HP 27 (HD 6d6+6), AC 14 (chain shirt), Spd 30ft. Str 11 Dex 13 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 8 Cha 10. Perception 9(-1). Multiattack (two melee weapon attacks), Short Sword +3 (1d8+1) or Shortbow +3 (1d6+1, range 80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1 (200 XP).

**BRKEK, ZJERD GOBLIN** (NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)) HP 21 (HD 6d6), AC 12 (leather), Spd 30ft. Str 10 Dex 12 Con 10 Int 11 Wis 14 Cha 11. Perception 14(+4). Short Sword +3 (1d6+1) or Shortbow +3 (1d6+1, range 80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action), Cleric spells (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks), Cantrips (at will): light, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy; 1<sup>st</sup>-level (4 slots): bane, cure wounds, inflict wounds; 2<sup>nd</sup>-level (3 slots): hold person, silence; 3<sup>rd</sup>-level (2 slots): spirit guardians. Challenge 1 (200 XP).

She lingers back from combat and runs when it appears as though the Zjerd are losing. She is the ranking individual in the Zjerd hierarchy and does not feel it is her duty to die in a messy creek so far from home.

**ZJERD PATROL, GOBLINS X70** (NE Small humanoids (goblinoids)) HP 7 (HD 2d6), AC 14 (shield), Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 14 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 8 Cha 8. Perception 9(-1). Stealth +6. Short Sword +4 (1d6+2) or Shortbow +4 (1d6+2, range 80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

#### DISPOSITION

The patrol is divided into two camps. 15 warriors and the two subchiefs are located on the north bank of the ford, while 15 warriors, the shaman, and Krazjim are located on the ford's south bank. Those on the north bank are widely dispersed in a semicircle amongst the trees about 100 yards from the ford. The group on the south side is hidden in a dense copse upriver about 200 yards away, waiting for the most opportune moment to strike. Several scouts are spread out along the south bank on the lookout for trouble.

If anyone approaches the ford from either bank, the group farthest away waits until the enemy are in the middle of the creek and then attacks with ranged weapons. If the enemy retreats, the party on the opposite bank then attacks. If the enemy presses forward, the group being pressed backs away while the other party moves in from behind. Ranged weapons are used as much as possible, with melee only occurring at the last possible moment. Any enemy troops that are mounted are to be pulled off their horses with the appropriately armed troops.

#### THE SETTING

The Treklant Creek tumbles and careens through its narrow banks and deep channels, rushing wildly towards





**the Interzae. Only at the Hittenford does the swirling river offer easy passage over its cold waters. The creek widens and flows roughly across a broad frothy and shallow crossing. Two massive Kreuts settle on both sides of the Treklant Creek, marking and guarding the Hiitenford.**

If the ground at the ford is examined, it becomes obvious that it has been churned up with the passage of many feet. A successful track check reveals the tracks to be Zjerd. The general direction of movement cannot be determined. Further investigation in a broader sweep reveals that many goblins were in the area very recently. A careful tracker will be able to follow the tracks back to the Dampfrat or to the area where Krazjim and his troops are hidden with a successful DC 11 Wisdom (Survival) tracking check. If the characters discover him, he eschews combat, beating a hasty retreat towards the interior, only to double back on the party in a few moments.

The Hiitenford is broad, 80 feet wide, and nearly 100 feet long. The rocks across the ford are moss covered and very slippery. When a creature crosses the ford, they must succeed at a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall into the water. A creature moving across the ford while in combat must make a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. The water is cold and nearly 3' deep at its center. While in thigh-high water, a creature receives only half their Dexterity bonus to AC; at waist high, a creature receives no Dexterity bonus to AC. Two large Kreuts stand on both sides of the creek. They are 10' tall and 3' in circumference. Each is covered with carvings and runes.

When the characters begin to cross the ford, read the following:

**While crossing through the chilly waters of the Treklant Creek, precariously balancing on each moss covered rock, the thick brown underbrush across the creek explodes with activity as many green skinned Zjerd leap from hiding, screaming, and brandishing bows that are being pulled tight. The groaning and creak of bows being pulled taught is followed by a sharp snap and the whistle of arrows slicing through the air.**

The Zjerd have fairly high morale as they believe they can best the party. Krazjim leads the attack from the south side of the ford hanging back from battle while urging his troops forward. Brkek remains to the rear and casts spells as necessary. If Krazjim is killed, the troops on his side of the Treklant begin to lose morale. Essentially the same is happening on the north side of the creek. The subchiefs are urging the troops forward. If they are killed, their troops begin to lose morale. In any case, if 50% of the troops die, all begin to lose morale. They break and run when 65% of the troops are killed or down.

After the battle at the Hiitenford, the party should be able to make its way quite easily to Felsentheim. To enhance the aura of safety, it is suggested that no random encounters be used during the final leg of the trip. The town is only 15 miles from the ford, and no Zjerd between it and the ford.

The battle at the ford should seem climactic, but it is a false

lead for the party. The characters should feel as though they have overcome a major Zjerd force and are now moving into safer lands. The battle should be motion heavy to increase the cinema and theatrics. Allow the party to spread out and act heroically in their fight. Do not, however, overwhelm the party; the real battle is yet to come. Yet, do not make the battle so easy that there is no real threat to the characters' lives. If necessary, add a few Zjerd to an attacking party or have several Chazrim working with Krazjim.

### **THE SWELTERING HEAT OF BATTLE AND THE SWIRLING MISTS OF DEATH**

The dogs in the woods begin barking, baying wildly at a setting sun. The woodsmen look up from their work. The whack of their axes stop, and all of them feel their doom. "What is it?"

"Quiet son, quiet, pick up your axe boy!"

"Father."

"Do as your father says son." Kruger of Frugborg glances fearfully to his left, then to his right, a bead of sweat rolls across his temple, his hands shake a little as he grips his axe more tightly, as it does before every fight.

Ulrike looks around and feels the breath of Odesfale, the whiff of death lingers ominously in the cold air. A tear comes to his eye and the words of the Fates of Kreuzmark come to his mind, "When your time comes, you will know." The dogs go quiet.

### **FELSENTHEIM**

This small thorp consists of a large two-story wooden building, a wooden palisade, a watch tower, and several outbuildings (see *map*). In addition to the specific personalities detailed below, it has 54 inhabitants: 13 children under the age of 14, 22 adult females, and 19 adult men. There are three extended families in the town: the Thyans, the Heise, and the Alsleben. Several are intermarried, but most are married to family members from other villages.

The town has been settled for less than 30 years and is considered little more than an outpost in the region. The town owes allegiance to none, though Olaf Thyan, the head of the Thyan family, pays homage to Lord Isen in Isenborg

The party's arrival at Felsentheim is greeted with suspicion and disapproval by most, though not outright hostility. The characters should be introduced to most of the major NPCs and encouraged to interact with them. The primary goal at Felsentheim, initially, is to increase the players' sense of security and encourage them to engage with the community, which, hopefully, encourages the characters to act heroically when the Zjerd attack finally occurs.

**The welcoming walls of Felsentheim lay open beneath the mid-afternoon sun. It is a small thorp, no more than an expansive long house which the families of the frontier so often build. A small palisade with a single scaffolded tower surrounds a large yard. Tendrils of smoke waft**

lazily into the chilly sky. The sound of laughter, and the calls of men and women working echo with the clucking of chickens, the braying of sheep, and mewing of cows. Across fields of frozen earth scattered with small clumps of snow, are several men and women gathering hay. Others tramp through the snow and mud with loads of firewood on their backs, heading for the compound.

As you break the clearing a man upon the tower gives alarm by banging on a metal rod and yelling out to the people below, "Hoaaa travelers, travelers from the south!!!"

Initially, the community acts with reserve and caution, though not hostility. Several men gather weapons, including farm implements such as shovels and pitchforks. The Thane, Schildea Heise, and the other Elders of Felsentheim (*see below*) gather and approach the characters. The party's attitude upon arrival determines, to a great degree, the villagers' attitude. Haughty or domineering party members are treated poorly and rudely. Those along the frontier in this region are a proud and independent people who, though very hospitable and usually friendly, brook little disrespect, especially from strangers. If the party presents themselves well, the Thane offers food and a place to stay at her expense.

Schildea and the other Elders attempt to gauge the characters worth and honesty during their initial meeting. They act politely, but reveal a certain amount of concern about the arrival of people from the south - a none too hospitable place teeming with wild and vicious creatures, not to mention the Zjerd. As the meeting develops, the inhabitants of Felsentheim gather around the party and the Elders, asking questions and trying to discern where the party has been and what they were doing. Reactions vary from dismay, shock, and curiosity to concern and distrust.

However, the members of the community have jobs to do and shortly return to them. Other than the Elders, the villagers leave the party alone until the evening. The elders show the party to the long house, invite them in, and bring food for them. They aid those injured. During the evening, all the villagers gather in the long house to eat and sleep (*detailed below*). While there, they ask the party about the Dampfrat and discuss the many mysteries that lie shrouded over that dismal swamp. They crack their keg of mead, and several younger men stay up late into the evening discussing forays into the dark south, with its lure of gold, wealth, and adventure.

The following are some of the significant people in Felsentheim and their general reactions to the party:

**Schildea Heise is a tall, middle-aged women, stoutly built, with long brown hair, large eyes and thin lips. She moves with a sturdy gait and bears herself with much dignity.**

Schildea is the Thane of the community. She inherited the position from her father who died the previous winter. She is unmarried and intends to stay that way. Though her lineage cannot be traced back many generations, she is proud to be descendent of the founding family of Felsentheim. Through a

straight line, from her great grandfather down to her, have come the rulers of Felsentheim.

She reacts friendly towards the party. Being of little ill will, she rarely notices it in others. Much of her conversation concerns the coming of winter, the storage of food, and the safety of those under her leadership. She has a running 'entanglement' with Olaf concerning marriage. He has thrice proposed and she has thrice denied. The banter between the two is friendly, and both poke fun at the other for their respective obstinance.

As Thane, Schildea is responsible for insuring that the day-to-day needs of the villagers are met. She defers to Olaf in military matters and to Tattiana in religious matters. In combat she carries a shield emblazoned with the family emblem (a green tree with a snake wrapped around its trunk), a battle axe, and wears scale mail.

**SHILDEA HEISE** (NG Medium humanoid (human)) HP 39 (HD 6d8+12), AC 16 (scale & shield), Spd 40 ft. Str 18 Dex 10 Con 14 Int 11 Wis 13 Cha 16. SV Str +6, Con +4. Perception 13(+3), Intimidate +5. Multiattack (two melee weapon attacks), Battleaxe +6 (1d8+4). SA Reckless (at start of turn, gain advantage on all melee weapon attacks that turn, but rolls against her have advantage until start of her next turn).

**Olaf Thyan is a grizzled older man, slightly stooped, with a face covered by a bushy gray beard. His keen eyes glitter from beneath heavy eyebrows and a balding pate. He is powerfully built with broad shoulders, lean frame, and tremendous arms.**

The Hetman of Felsentheim, Olaf's family lineage can be traced back 15 generations to the famed Thyan of Smootfort in the Troke. He is a proud man, stern but mentally tired. A long, hard life has left him slowed, wizened, and jaded. He helps the party, recognizing fellow travelers, but acts hospitably only so long as the characters are good guests. He is Felsentheim's lone blacksmith.

If pressed and encouraged with a little mead, Olaf regales the party with a family history cluttered with warriors, princesses, fell beasts, Knights of great renown and battles lost and won. As an added bonus, if the characters seem interested in his stories, he recites, from memory, his entire family tree extending back to Tryshtian Thyan 250 years ago. He explains that he is one of the few survivors of the battle at Foxingham, and that shortly after the battle, he packed his family and belongings and headed west, looking to settle in the more peaceful lands on the south shores of the Interzae.

As Hetman, Olaf is charged with organizing the militia and is responsible for defending Felsentheim from internal and external enemies. In combat, Olaf uses a longsword or spear. The former when he is charging into battle, and the latter when he directs troops.

**OLAF THYAN** (CG Medium humanoid (human)) HP 45 (HD 6d8+18), AC 12 (scale), Spd 30 ft. Str 18 Dex 6 Con 17 Int 10 Wis 11 Cha 11. SV Str +6, Con +5. Perception 10(+0). Multiattack (two melee weapon attacks), Longsword +6 (1d8+4), Spear +6 (1d6+4 or 1d8+4 wielded with two hands; range 20/60ft.), Dagger +6 (1d4+4, range 20/60ft.).

SA Parry (reaction triggered by melee attack he can see, roll 1d6 and add to his AC if he wields a melee weapon). He carries a pouch containing 62 gp.

**Tattiana Heise** is a young plump lady with heavy, wrinkled eyes. Her long blonde hair is tied into three thick braids. Her hands move gracefully while she speaks. She constantly mutters short poetic odes, locally referred to as Keepel, to the gods.

For ten years Tattiana has acted as community arbiter, healer, and undertaker. This job has leached away much of her youthful exuberance and she now seems somewhat disillusioned. Tattiana takes kindly to humble party members and offers to use her powers of healing to help them. She mostly uses herbs, but she does have the ability to a few healing spells a day in. She only uses these spells in the case of grievous wounds.

She rarely speaks and certainly does not partake in small talk or gossip. When Tattiana decides to add to a conversation, however, she does so with sage words and deliberate advice. To a person, everyone in the village respects her opinions and judgment and quietly listens when she speaks. Tattiana does not sleep with the other families in the long house. She sleeps outside, beside the village Kreut, near a large fire beneath a mound of firs and blankets. She does so to better hear what the gods are whispering in the night skies.

**TATTIANA HEISE** (LN Medium humanoid (human)) HP 27 (HD 6d8), AC 11, Spd 30 ft. Str 10 Dex 13 Con 11 Int 13 Wis 17 Cha 11. SV Int +3, Wis +5. Perception 15(+5), Nature +3. Cudgel +3 (1d6+1). SA Druid spells (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks), Cantrips (at will): druidcraft,

mending, produce flame; 1<sup>st</sup>-level (4 slots): animal friendship, cure wounds, goodberry, healing word; 2<sup>nd</sup>-level (3 slots): barkskin, darkvision, moonbeam; 3<sup>rd</sup>-level (3 slots): call lightning, plant growth; Wild Shape (recharge, short or long rest, bonus action, assume shape of a dire wolf, reverts if unconscious or drops to 0 hp). Besides her cudgel, she always carries a satchel filled with various healing herbs (a healer's kit).

**Krirke Albensen** is young and robust, with a scraggly beard on a lean and square face. He smiles broadly and laughs loudly. His swaggering walk is reminiscent of a young man who has never known defeat.

The eldest member of the Albesen family, Krirke is married to Hanna Albensen, lately of Keerkinheim. They have two children and both brought several cousins to Felsentheim with them a few years previous. New to the community, Krirke holds no position of authority. He quietly waits for Olaf to pass into the Halls of Heimdal so that he can take over as Hetman of Felsentheim. Krieke is in good health, strong and powerful. A good host, though a reluctant one, he watches the characters carefully to ensure that they are honest and mean no harm to the town. He carries a shield and battle axe into combat. He also owns a chain mail shirt bequeathed to him by his father.

**KRIRKE ALBENSEN** (CN Medium humanoid (human)) HP 21 (HD 4d8+3), AC 15 (chain shirt & shield), Spd 30 ft. Str 14 Dex 11 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 11 Cha 13. SV Str +4, Con +3. Perception 10(+0). Multiattack (two melee weapon attacks), Battleaxe +4 (1d8+2).

**Markus Heise** is tall and handsome with flowing black hair. He is clean-shaven and sports a wry grin. He





smells of cattle and dirt, and cradles a pitchfork as if it were a child.

Markus is the brother of Tattiana. He loves the fresh breezes, the animals, and farming. One rarely sees him when he is not busy working in the field, pestering the cattle, or about some other farming business. The blood of the trees flows in the family's veins and it truly shows in Markus. His infectious good mood captivates and keeps happy most anyone around him. His wife's name is Else, a beautifully spirited women of open heart and open mind. They have three children, all of whom cling to their mother and father as heat to fire.

Within the community Markus has a special standing. He is the keeper of chants and lore, a teller of tales, and repository of oral history. Without so much as a word, he will begin chanting to any audience, be it man, beast, or plant. For this reason, the earth likes Markus and tends to his needs and wants.

Hidden beneath this mirth and grand appearance is a horrible past. Stricken as a child with a debilitating wisdom, close observation will reveal Markus is rather emotionally weak, stricken by the knowledge that the earth, from whence he came, is coming to reclaim him.

Markus plays an instrument much like an oboe that produces deep resonant notes. In combat he carries a short sword.

**MARKUS HEISE** (CN Medium humanoid (human)) HP 36 (HD 8d8), AC 12 (leather), Spd 30 ft. Str 11 Dex 13 Con 10 Int 11 Wis 10 Cha 14. SV Dex +3, Wis +2. Perception 10 (+0), Acrobatics +3, Performance +6. Short Sword +3 (1d6+1). Bard spells (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks), Cantrips (at will) friends, light, mending; 1<sup>st</sup>-level (4 slots): charm person, create or destroy water, cure wounds, faerie fire; 2<sup>nd</sup>-level (3 slots): calm emotions, enthrall; Song of Rest (during short rest, allies who hear song gain an extra 1d6 hp at end of rest), Taunt 2/Day (bonus action, target creature within 30 ft., target must hear bard, DC 12 Charisma save or have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until start of bard's next turn). In addition to his armor and short sword, he always carries an oboe-like musical instrument.

**Friilof Heise is a grizzled middle-aged man with a grim look and thick black hair and beard graying at the edges. His frame is powerful, and stuck in the crook of his arm is a massive sword of unusual make.**

Another of the well-thought of members of the community, Friilof has fought alongside the Baron Premiger of Halpveg in his many conflicts with Isenborg and Bergholt. He is very honorable, honest and concerned about the well-being of his family and friends. He is the most reserved towards the characters and suspects there is always something more than what is being said. He, like many others in the communities of the Friilanders, is proud of his heritage and is capable of telling, in very compelling ways, stories of heroes and the great sacrifices they have made.

His sword is a present from the Baron Premiger. It is of Todavian make and rarely is its kind found in these parts. It is wielded with 2 hands.

**FRIILOF HEISE** (NE Medium humanoid (human)) HP 39 (HD 6d8+12), AC 13 (unarmored defense), Spd 40 ft. Str 13 Dex 12 Con 14 Int 11 Wis 13 Cha 16. SV Str +6. Con +4. Perception 13(+3), Intimidate +5. Multiattack (two melee weapon attacks), Greatsword +4 (2d6+2+1d4). SA Reckless (at start of turn, gain advantage on all melee weapon attacks that turn, but rolls against him have advantage until start of his next turn). The Todavian greatsword of maiming he wields does an additional 1d4 slashing damage on a hit.

## OTHER NPCs OF NOTE

**GERHART THYAN:** Woodworker and mead maker. Mean-spirited and a drunkard.

**RASAALA ALBENSEN:** Cousin of Hanna. Ward of the Long house. Rasaala became the ward of the long house due to her tremendous ability to organize the run of the kitchen.

**TAAGEN HEISE:** Younger brother of Shildea. Usually keeps watch in the tower.

**ORDINANA HEISE:** Cousin of Shildea. Keeper of the Seal. She keeps the Seal of Felsentheim, a large banner with the Heise family symbol, a green tree with a snake wrapped around its trunk, emblazoned upon it. She is also in charge of the 'communities' finances.

**ANKUFT THYAN:** The village merchant. He is responsible for shipment of goods to larger towns. He is somewhat dishonest and always looking out for himself.

## 1 THE LONG HOUSE

This is a rambling affair like many of the abodes found amongst the Friilanders. Built of the sturdiest woods by some of the finest craftsmen of the Graffenvold, these buildings withstand the harsh winters, dry summers and fierce storms of the Graffenvold for decades, even centuries. This long house is two stories tall with an attic. The long house itself is adorned with elaborate woodwork, carvings, and symbols garnering protection from the gods.

The backside of the long house provides a rear wall to the compound. There are three arrow slits in the back wall on the second floor. The sturdy walls of the Long house are AC 15, 100 hp, and have a damage threshold of 6.

### THE FIRST FLOOR

This space is broad and nearly all open. All the cooking and communal activities take place here. The west half of the room is dominated by a large round table with no center. In the middle of the table is a large fire pit, and there is usually a fire blazing in it. Many implements of daily use are stored here as well as weapons and numerous bedrolls. The unmarried adult men sleep in this space. On the west end of the room is the cooking area. There are several ovens, a large roasting pit, and sacks and packs and boxes of foodstuffs. There is also a trapdoor leading to the basement. At the very east end of the

room is a sleeping area where the unwed adult women sleep. They have a small fireplace, four makeshift beds, and their personal belongings.

## THE BASEMENT

This is a small cramped space. Many dried goods are stored there with water, mead, meats, fruits and grains. There is a lot of food. The floor is comfortably strewn with hay, but it is a little chilly. The community's wealth is also stored here, in a small iron lockbox behind the barrels of mead (DC 12 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to pick). The box holds 120gp, 400 sp, and 890 cp.

## THE SECOND FLOOR

The second floor is divided into upper and lower spaces with several partitions of wood and fabric. All the married couples sleep in partitioned rooms or spaces. The Thane's room is in the far east end of the floor. The rooms and floors are sumptuously piled with blankets and skins of animals. Each space has a brazier and lantern. The upper floor remains a little chilly.

## 2 THE STOREHOUSE

Set outside and along the wall is the storeroom for the larger farming implements, harnesses, and grinding stones. The back space is where Tattiana keeps her herbs and other belongings.

## 3 THE SHEEP STALL

This is a small pen where the sheep are put up at night, as well as Felsentheim's few cows.

## 4 THE KREUT

This is the village Kreut. Felsentheim was located here because of the Kreut. This one is rather small, standing only 10 feet tall, but its base is almost 8 feet in diameter. It is covered in moss and carved with ancient runes worn almost to nothing by the ages. The Trottigen who placed this Kreut died on the selfsame spot. Surrounded by the fell beasts of Inzae's imaginings, he defended it until his last breath was drawn.

Any citizen of the village, as well as their friends and allies gain bonuses in combat when fighting within 10 feet of the Kreut. They receive advantage on initiative checks, ability checks, and attack rolls. In addition, any healing spell cast within 10 feet of the Kreut has maximum possible effect.

## 5 THE PALISADE

The palisade is nearly 10 feet tall, constructed of the trunks of thick fir trees (about 2 feet in diameter), and has a parapet circumnavigating its entire length. The wall is AC 15, 90 hp, with a damage threshold of 6.

## 6 THE GATE

The gate is a little flimsy and has not been repaired recently. There is no parapet on the gate section. It is the same height

as the wall but the logs are only about 10 inches in diameter. It has AC 15, 50 hp, and a damage threshold of 2.

## 7 THE TOWER

The tower is a wooden scaffold with a covered and walled platform on top. It is 40 feet tall with an AC of 15, 80 hp, and damage threshold of 4.

There is a plentiful supply of arrows, nearly 600 stored throughout the compound (enough for 12 - 15 flights of arrows). There are also numerous halberds, axes, bows and shields found in the longhouse. This area is famed for its large round shields that the men use to form "shield walls." There are hundreds of large planks of wood, 2 barrels of oil, rope, and other sundry items that would likely be found in any farming community.

Below are the stats for the Inhabitants of Felsentheim other than those mentioned above. There are 19 Males and 22 females of fighting age (14 and above), and 13 children.

**FIGHTERS, MALE X15** (NG Medium humanoids (human) HP 11 (HD 2d8+2), AC 10, Spd 30 ft. Str 11 Dex 10 Con 11 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Short Sword +2 (1d6) or Halberd +2 (1d10).

**COMMONER, MALE X4** (LG Medium humanoids (human) HP 4 (HD 1d8), AC 10, Spd 30 ft. Str 10 Dex 10 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Dagger +2 (1d4, range 20/60ft.) or Shortbow +2 (1d6, range 80/320ft.).

**FIGHTERS, FEMALE X15** (CG Medium humanoids (human) HP 11 (HD 2d8+2), AC 10, Spd 30 ft. Str 11 Dex 10 Con 11 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Short Sword +2 (1d6) or Shortbow +2 (1d6, range 80/320ft.).

**COMMONER, FEMALE X11** (NG Medium humanoids (human) HP 4 (HD 1d8), AC 10, Spd 30 ft. Str 10 Dex 10 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Dagger +2 (1d4) or Shortbow +2 (1d6), range 80/320ft.

**COMMONER, CHILDREN X17** (LG Medium humanoids (human) HP 2 (HD 1d8), AC 10, Spd 30 ft. Str 8 Dex 10 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0).

The goal with the Felsentheim setting is to create a bond between the characters and the inhabitants of the village. Thus, it is hoped that the characters or players have, with the encounters at the village, developed a desire to fight with the villagers in the last moments of their lives or to at least, fostered a desire on the part of the players to save some of the villagers if possible. If it appears that a few days are necessary to allow this bond to grow, by all means have the Zjerd army arrive much later.

## RUNNING THE SIEGE OF FELSENTHEIM

Grodge's army has traveled speedily to reach Felsentheim. They camped for one night after crossing the Hiitenford and are well rested and set for a long battle. The leader, Preelozjit, has laid siege to many Zjerd villages and outposts over the years, and is intending a quick overrun of Felsentheim but is prepared for a short siege.

The timing of Preeozjit's arrival is of great importance. The troops should arrive at the moment the characters begin to feel comfortable, when they believe the worst is behind them. If this requires the passage of several days to a week, allow it. But, if it appears as though the characters are in a hurry to leave the town, have the Zjerd attack immediately. Remember, the point of the adventure is to cause the characters to either act heroically or dastardly. It would not be unkind as a Castle Keeper to give the players a push or nudge to act heroically.

## **THE MORNING DEW**

The morning air is heavy, but a clear blue sky and bright sun welcome in another day. The cattle are being herded towards the gate, the chickens are chattering loudly in the yard, and several sheep are baying for feed. The aroma of fresh bread and stewing meat wafts lazily through the compound. Taagen is climbing the ladder up the tower, and the large gate slowly grinds open.

The characters should be going about their morning activities. The sun has just risen and the inhabitants of Felsentheim are preparing for another day. While they are doing so, a sense of calm should pervade the setting. When it appears that the characters are settled, the cattle are out of the gate, and people are just settling into the morning routine, the lead element of Grodge's army makes its presence known.

**Taagen screams a terrifying warning, "Welfenzjerd!!! WELFENZJERD!" The warning is cut short by the baying and howling of wolves that burst from the tree line across the fields.**

Within a few moments the wolf-riding zjerd break into the clearing. Allow one or more of the characters time to get a vantage to see them.

**Huge, ferocious wolves slavering at the mouth, anticipating slaughter are scattered along the tree line. The air reverberates with the rage in their throats and the earth shudders at their coming. Astride these mighty beasts are the green skinned Zjerd, handling their short spears and screeching war chants, their shrill voices mingling with the deep tenor of the wolves' howls. Crimson banners attached to the ends of spears waver in the wind, as the wolves hurtle across the frozen fields towards Felsentheim.**

**Before they even reach the town, their reeking odor pervades the air with a deep moldy aroma mingled with oiled leather and animal grease. The Welfenzjerd spread wide as they cross the fields, swooping and swirling like a tornado towards the gate.**

Here is a chance for heroic action. The gates need closing and the people in the fields need saving.

As soon as the villagers note the presence of the goblins they run for the compound and shut the gates. There is general panic all around as the leaders begin to gather and formulate a plan for defense or negotiation. Some want to strike a bargain with the

Zjerd, others want to flee, and others still want to fight. After the death of their significant leaders, if the characters make an effort to take the lead, most of the inhabitants will follow them.

Several people immediately blame the characters for the arrival of the Zjerd army and intend to offer them up to the Zjerd as a peace offering unless convinced otherwise. As the attack begins, chaos reigns. No one knows quite what to do. And one villager screams at the characters (or one of them)....

**"Foul scum, look what you have done, you have brought the Zjerd with you. Go to them now you brave one, oh great heroes.... You have killed my children, do you see their eyes, feel their beating hearts? They will be no more because of your greed and your bravery.... Go save us now you beasts and offer yourself up to the Zjerd!"**

To allow the characters a pivotal role in the battle from its earliest moments, have Olaf die fairly quickly or request the characters aid. If the characters volunteer to help, place them in the 'hottest' spots (inside the long house, on the tower, at the gate), allow them to organize the defenses, and encourage them to act like heroes when the time comes.

Most efforts to bring the people of Felsentheim under control works. They are in a desperate spot and realize it. They defer to the greater experience of the characters in the running of the battle. Essentially though, their plans for defense consists of manning the tower, barricading the gate and using the long house as the last line of defense. Should the characters decide to defend the town to the last man they will only be successful with a little luck, lots of bravery, and wise decisions. Bear in mind, several of the inhabitants do not leave Felsentheim, no matter the circumstance, Schildea, Olaf, and Tattiana especially.

A breakout from Felsentheim is likely to succeed as the Zjerd commander is not prepared for one. The best moment to implement this would be while an attack on the walls and gate is occurring (as most of the troops will be spread out and focused on their particular task at hand). In the event of a breakout, most of the troops will be intent upon looting rather than killing the escapees. It is unlikely Preeozjit will be able to control his troops at this juncture.

Do not allow the complexity of the battle hinder the pace of combat or the characters central role in it. The entire sequence should be played with the characters in mind. Their actions should always weigh heavily and always receive priority.

As the battle commences it is vital that the CK offer the characters an opportunity to act heroically. For instance, have one of the characters outside the gate amongst the field hands, have another near the gate, or have one on the tower with Taagen. It would be unwise to 'overtly place' them there, but if the players are not specific about what they are doing, give yourself some latitude in placing them in 'heroic' spots and encourage them, through NPCs to move to where 'hot spots' are likely to be. (For example, in the morning before the attack have one of the field hands ask a character to come out and help.) Further, as the battle commences, the villagers look to





them for leadership. They are adventurers who have braved the Dampfrat. And finally, at no point early in the battle should a character be completely overwhelmed, though they should definitely feel a sense of doom.

The attack by the Welfenzjerd (the wolf-riding goblins) is a typical terror tactic employed by the Zjerd. It is not intended to succeed in forcing the gate. If, however, the Welfenzjerd do force the gate, the rest of the army attacks in short order. Otherwise, the Welfenzjerd only attack those in the fields and easy prey. Their primary goal is to go up the road leading away from Felsentheim and keep a watch for reinforcements. See the Appendix for Welfenzjerd stats.

#### **DISPOSITION OF ZJERD ARMY**

**Commander:** Preelezjit, mounted on wolf

**4 troops:** Three troops with 100 regular warriors, 10 sergeants, 4 subchiefs, 1 warchief, and 1 shaman; one troop with 100 elite warriors, 10 sergeants, 4 subchiefs, 1 warchief, and 1 shaman.

**2 scout troops:** Each has 5 spider riders, 1 chief (ranger), and 6 spider mounts.

**1 cavalry troop:** 25 wolf riders, 5 sergeant riders, 1 war chief rider, and 1 shaman rider.

**Chazrim support troop:** 10 Chazrim, 10 Olekotheer mounts.

#### **TACTICS AND BATTLE**

After the Welfenzjerd have attacked, the remainder of the Zjerd army begins to move into position. The Zjerd do not attack pell-mell. They feel they have a good chance to easily win this battle, so they take time to ensure its outcome. Their initial goal is to rush the gates with the Welfenzjerd and get into the town. If successful in forcing the gates, the remaining Zjerd attack, one troop at a time, through the gates. This is the most devastating outcome as the townspeople and characters most likely will be slaughtered in short order. Otherwise, the Welfenzjerd head up the road leading away from Felsentheim.

The remainder of the army surrounds the town. Fifty Zjerd are placed on the east and west sides of the wall, another 100 position at the rear, 100 more at the front, with the 100 elite troops held in reserve. The cavalry move to the outside and protect the road. The scouts move to the rear.

All the troops remain in the tree line to avoid any arrows that may be shot their way. Once situated, they begin building ladders, rams, prepping nooses, and building shield walls. They also prepare fires, and take rags and douse them in oil. The ones near the road begin chopping down trees to lay across the road, and the cavalry fans out searching the area for other inhabitants, and guards against potential reinforcements.

Preelezjit pitches a tent near the edge of the wood line, lines up his personal bodyguard along with the chazrim and surveys the situation from atop a small scaffold. He then arranges for his drummers to begin the beat. They start a slow methodical

rhythm of deep and hollow resonance. It pervades the entire area and picks up in crescendo throughout the day.

#### **THE SIEGE**

The resonance of the drums weighs heavy in the air, their beat and rhythm unnerve the soul. Dark clouds of noise roll across the fields and bank up against the walls. The sound of death fast approaching, the doom of Odesfale is upon the land. All along the tree line, scurrying like ants in a hive, the Zjerd make their way through the woods. Dark green creatures, malevolence in their deep set eyes, they heft their spears, their bardiches, their swords, and clumsy maces screaming obscenities over the noise of the drums. Fires leap up in the woods, and the whack of axes, the crack of wood and the thunderous noise of trees falling to the ground fill the land about. War is upon Felsentheim.

Please read the final section of this module ‘Running a Large Scale Battle’ for rules on how to run this battle.

The Zjerd commander first attempts to negotiate with the inhabitants of Felsentheim. He demands forfeiture of all weapons, 20 hostages, and a blood oath swearing that the defenders will not be involved in any future conflict with the Zjerd. The negotiations are a ruse. He agrees to the above terms but as soon as the defenders are out of the town, he has his regiments attack, killing all those that resist and taking the rest back to the Dampfrat to be gainfully enjoyed as a gourmet dinner. His larger goal is to prevent, for as long as possible, the inevitable counterattack. He awaits reinforcements from Klednij. If negotiations are fruitless, the siege begins.

#### **SIEGE TACTICS**

The options during the battle are innumerable and detailing all the possibilities is an impossible task. It should suffice to mention a few courses of action. In all attacks, consider the following: the Zjerd are not idiots, they will not spend themselves senselessly on the walls or at the gate. They try every ruse available to them, from fire to magic in an effort to weaken the defenses of Felsentheim. Further, they are seasoned warriors and not prone to panic nor are they excessively fearful of death.

The initial attack consists of flights of flaming arrows to minimally clear defenders from the rampart and the tower while and hopefully catching the walls and building on fire. For each volley of arrows there is a possibility that the building, tower, or a portion of the wall, catches fire. Roll a d20 for each targeted structure with each volley of flaming arrows. The building catches fire on a roll of 9 or lower, the tower on a roll of 8 or lower, and the walls on a roll of 10 or lower. Once a fire starts, it takes 1d4 rounds and at least two creatures (villagers or characters) to extinguish it if water or sand can be dumped on it.

After several volleys of arrows are released, Zjerd troops charge the gate, the rear of the long house and the walls. The group attacking the long house has the sole intention of lighting it afire. This is actually the initial goal of the first foray and the



attacks on the wall and gate are a distraction. No effort is wasted to insure the house is set afire. Each Zjerd attacking the long house carries a torch and oil soaked rags and when reaching it tries to start a fire. The attacks on the walls provide a distraction for most of the defenders. The initial attack should not last long and, unless it is going exceedingly well, is called off as soon as the house catches fire. See above for chances of catching a fire per round, and in this case, per torch-wielding Zjerd adjacent to the long house.

If the house catches fire, the Zjerd allow it to burn for several hours before initiating the second attack. If the long house does not catch fire, the second attack occurs almost immediately. In the second attack, the Zjerd move in on all fronts using ladders and ropes to try and get over the walls or around the house. Also and significantly, the spider riders charge over the long house, burning or not, in an effort to get into the compound and cause disarray amongst the defenders. One troop charges for the gate with a battering ram attempting to break it down and rush into the compound. The battering ram does 2d10 bludgeoning damage per round as long as at least 10 Zjerd remain to use it. The subchiefs and clerics are intimately involved in close quarters combat.

To allow for dramatic combat sequences, the gate should be broken. This also allows the inhabitants and characters a point of departure should it be necessary. Further, the Zjerd attacking along the walls attempt to pull down or break through these sections. Allow this to happen also as they allow other points of retreat should they become necessary.

If the second attack does not manage to force entry into the town, the Zjerd pull back for several hours to recoup. They launch a third and final attack to gain entry to the town. This attack is preceded by numerous volleys of arrows followed by an all-out charge on all sides of the town. This is their make-or-break attack and all their forces will be committed, excepting of course Praelozjit and his personal guard.

## **RUNNING THE BATTLE**

The important aspect of this battle is its theatric nature. Do not get bogged down by the rules as they can spoil the fun. The battle is supposed to be climactic and dangerous; many innocents will be killed, possibly including the characters. Also, bear in mind the morale of the Zjerd -- it is high and breaking them will be some feat -- but the defenders are desperate. If the characters do not suggest a breakout, have one of the NPCs do so as it may be the only chance to survive the encounter.

Further, and importantly, if a character dies in a particularly heroic fashion (for example they die fighting 10 or more Zjerd, charge back into combat to save someone and die trying, etc.) give them a wonderful farewell: make their last swing dramatic, give them a last utterance, anything that adds to the drama. Consider also giving them a dream sequence where they are allowed to enter the next world and fight with the god Heimdel in the final battle. For example;

You stand tired and your arm is weighed down by your heavy weapon. Salty sweat stings your eyes, blood dribbles from your mouth and, your breath heaves raggedly. The storm of battle, the screams of pain and fear, the dull clanging of weapons, rage silently around you until the noise altogether dies. The dead lie in heaps, their arms and legs twitching, grasping for the last bits of life. But many of their souls are let go and are now traveling to another place. Their misty spirits are filling the ground, covering all signs of the dead and the massive trees begin to fade. Soon, a man emerges slowly from the distant stars. His walk is powerful, his shoulders massive, in his hand is a great hammer and in the other a massive shield. His brown braided locks hang to his waist, tied about with golden threads and red cloth. His eyes are friendly but wary, his brow heavy with expectation and anticipation. He is tall and thunderous but slowly bends to one knee, placing his hammer in front of him when out of the clouds at his feet emerges a wooden bridge stretching infinitely behind him. "It would be good to have you with me, to have you at my side in the coming battle. Will you stand at my side?"

"Make haste, your decision for the final battle is upon us!" With this, he points to your rear and you turn without choice and there you see the most horrible vision your nightmares could ever have concocted. The massive bulk, the densest place, the darkest hour is upon the bridge, blotting out the stars and consuming the darkness around her in even greater darkness. It is Inzaa, the Earth Dragon, come to reclaim her own.

"I am Heimdal, my son, and I seek your aid with those other brave souls in keeping the land free from her wrath... Come now and choose" He stands in haste.

Every character who dies a good death should receive a similar sequence.



## RUNNING A LARGE SCALE BATTLE

There are two considerations when running the battle at Felsentheim. The first and foremost is to maintain a level of excitement and motion throughout the battle. The second, the party can very well carry the day if they involve themselves in the battle. The CK may want to allow the players to assume the roles for NPCs or roll for them, and even allow them to make a few of their decisions. In any case, whether the CK plays the NPCs or the players play them, each person at Felsentheim has their own set of goals and dreams, some are cowardly, some are brave, some are scared, some want to leave, while others do not. If the individual NPCs are played individually it will add a whole new dimension to the game and allow heroic characters to become heroic in the eyes of NPCs and amongst one another.

Because the number of troops fighting at any single time will be small, it is possible, though not advisable, to run the battle on the individual level. For those instances in which the PCs are not involved, several simple dice mechanics can be used to resolve combat.

First, depending on the number of troops involved, all troops should be considered for combat purposes to be on a 5 to 1 or 10 to 1 ratio. This is referred to as a *unit*. Each unit can move and take actions just like a creature in normal 1-to-1 combat. If you choose the smaller scale (i.e., 5:1), there are more units, which means more choices, but it also means more dice rolls, which requires more time and calculation. A ratio of 10:1 means fewer dice rolls, but it also reduces some of the flexibility that smaller scale units provide.

Each unit has its own speed, Armor Class, attack bonus (melee and ranged), and damage. As a general rule, it works best for all creatures in a unit to be roughly similar in these statistics. If a unit includes slightly dissimilar creatures (i.e., creatures with slightly different combat stats), you can either average the bonus or, to save time, go with the lowest or highest value in the group. Do not, however, lump creatures into a unit that are too dissimilar.

**Mounted Units.** For purposes of forming units, a rider and their mount represents one creature. Thus, a mounted unit of five actually includes five riders and five mounts. When a mounted unit makes a charge, roll *two* attack rolls for that unit—this represents an attack by the riders and an attack by the mounts. The attack bonus and damage rolls will likely be different (such as for a goblin rider and their wolf mount).

If a mounted unit is in combat but not charging, then each rider and their mount counts as a single creature. The unit's AC is the average of all creatures in the unit, as is the unit's attack bonus. To determine the damage from the attack, use the higher damage value of either the rider or the mount. When a mounted unit sustains damage, use the higher of the two hit points values but do not combine them to determine when a creature is slain. For movement purposes, use the mount's speed.

**Example.** A unit of five Zjerd wolf-riders consists of five Zjerd goblins and their five wolves. The unit's AC is 14 (average of 16 and 3, rounded down) with a speed of 40 feet (because

the wolves are the mounts). When this unit charges, it makes two attack rolls: +4 to hit for the goblins with their scimitars, and +4 to hit for the wolves and their bites. If the scimitar attack hits, this unit inflicts  $1d6+2 \times 5$  damage. If the wolves hit, the unit inflicts  $2d4+2 \times 5$  damage. In other combat situations when the unit attacks, make only one attack roll using its best attack: the wolves biting for  $2d4+2 \times 5$  damage.

When this unit sustains damage, each "creature" (a goblin and its wolf) is treated as having 11 hit points (the greater of the two hit point values for the two creatures). Thus, for every 11 points of damage the unit sustains, remove one rider and its mount.

**WOLF-RIDERS, ZJERD GOBLINS X25** (CE *Small humanoids (goblinoids)*) HP 7 (HD 2d6), AC 16 (*studded leather & shield*), Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 14 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 8 Cha 8. Perception 9(-1). Stealth +6. Scimitar +4 (1d6+2) or Shortbow +4 (1d6+2, range 80/320ft.). SA *Darkvision* 60ft., *Nimble Escape* (*take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action*). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

**WOLF MOUNTS X25** (*Unaligned Medium beast*) HP 11 (HD 2d8+2), AC 13, Spd. 40ft. Str 12 Dex 15 Con 12 Int 3 Wis 12 Cha 6. Perception 13(+3), Stealth +4. Bite +4 (2d4+2; target creature DC 11 Strength save or be knocked prone). SA *Keen Hearing & Smell* (*advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell*), *Pack Tactics* (*advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and ally isn't incapacitated*). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

Leaders and player characters are never considered part of a unit—always treat them as individuals.

Once you have the ratio figured out, use the following steps to resolve combat between different units.

- **Initiative.** Each unit involved rolls an initiative check, which is d20 plus a unit's Dexterity bonus (the same bonus as for an individual within the unit).
- **Movement & Action.** On its turn, a unit can move its speed. A unit also has an action, with which it can perform one of the actions described below. A unit can move and take its action in any order, and a unit can split up its movement and perform an action. Once a unit has completed its actions, proceed to the next unit in the initiative count.
  - *Attack.* The unit makes one melee or ranged attack.
  - *Dash.* The unit gains extra movement for the current turn, equal to the unit's speed, after applying any modifiers.
  - *Disengage.* A unit's movement does not provoke opportunity attacks for the rest of the turn.
  - *Help.* One unit assists an adjacent unit. The unit receiving the aid gains advantage on its next attack roll.

- *Ready.* The readied unit names a circumstance that triggers their reaction, and what their action will be. The unit can either take their reaction right after the trigger finishes or ignore the trigger.
- **Attack.** Each unit makes a ranged or melee attack roll. The unit rolls a d20 modified by the unit's attack bonus. The attack is made against the target unit's AC. If the attack hits, roll damage for one creature in the unit and then multiply the result by the number of creatures in the unit.

The resultant damage is applied *per individual* in the defending unit. The slain are removed, but any excess damage insufficient to kill one creature is ignored. For example, a unit with a unit with 5 humans attacks a unit with 5 Zjerd and hits. They roll 4 damage, multiplied by 5 comes to 20 points of damage. The Zjerd have 7 HP each, so only two Zjerd are slain and removed from their unit—the remaining 6 points of damage are ignored since this is insufficient to kill a single Zjerd. If the humans had inflicted 30 damage, this would have been enough to kill 4 Zjerd (with 2 points ignored).

- **Opportunity Attacks.** A unit triggers an opportunity attack by moving out of the threatened area of an enemy unit. The enemy unit can choose whether to spend its reaction for that turn or not.
- **Effects of Damage.** As a unit sustains casualties, its effectiveness decreases rapidly. Since the damage a unit inflicts is a multiplier based on the number of creatures in the unit, the loss of one or two members quickly reduces the amount of damage it can inflict.

**Modifiers.** All troops defending behind a parapet have three-quarters cover and thus receive +5 to their AC and Dexterity saving throws. A creature defending behind a shield wall has one-half cover and receives +2 to AC and Dexterity saving throws. (A shield wall requires a minimum of 5 individuals to be effective.)

**Morale.** The Zjerd have a high morale when they arrive: 80%. For every 20 troops lost, morale drops 5%. When morale drops to 50%, a percentile roll must be made. If the number is greater than the current morale, the Zjerd break and fall back. They regroup after the first failed morale roll and start the assault again several hours afterwards. The second assault begins with a 60% morale with the same mechanics as above being applied for making a morale save. If they break a second time, they regroup and leave. They do not launch another assault at that point but remain at the ford for several days until the Welefenzjerd return and then head back to Klednij. The only exception is when more than 20 Zjerd are in the town. This indicates a breach and Zjerd morale increases by 5% for every 10 who enter thereafter.

The villagers do not check for morale as they are defending their homes and families.

## WRAPPING UP THE ADVENTURE

War has been brought to the Graffenvold by those erstwhile adventurers who crossed the Treklant and disturbed the delicate balance of power in the realm. The war will have wide-ranging effects with many alliances and conquests soon to follow.

The Zjerd will continue to press to the north. The more successful they are, the larger their armies grow as neighboring tribes join them. Grodge's intent is to move as far north as Halpveg and get control of the trade route along the Kambria (the road stretching from the Kambrian Mountains in the West to the Troke in the East). He will then press on to Isenborg and attempt to gain control of all the towns and villages of the Halpvegtier. Importantly, for those who have *Vakhund: Into the Unknown*, if Gnarjd was not killed, he returns to the political scene. Gnarjd believes he can use Grodge's success to start a holy war in the Graffenvold. Gnarjd wants to gain control of Kreutzmark and presses hard for an attack on that town. Gnarjd can also rouse and gather Chazrim from the far east to come to the Graffenvold and fight.

The Baron Premiger of Halpveg, realizing his danger, attempts to sue for peace with Grodge and offers up the southern Halpvegtier to stave off an attack. At the same time he attempts to mend his relations with the rulers of Bergholt and Isenborg and draws on a long-standing alliance with the Lords of Firstenfeld to raise an army. Many troops eventually arrive to help defend Halpveg. But will they be too few and too late?

The Lords of Isenborg, so great their hatred for Baron Premiger of Halpveg, immediately offer alliance with Grodge to help bring the Baron Premiger down. They offer to Grodge all the Halpvegtier excepting those towns along the Vindig River - which includes Kreutzmark.

The Eleven Meisters of Bergholt are split in their desires. Much struggle between the Lords intensifies as they know the decisions made concerning the conflict could have disastrous economic effects. The warrior caste and several of the noble houses want to send aid to Baron Premiger, while the merchant and banking families want to stay aloof from the war and insure the trade routes stay open.

The towns in the southern Halpvegtier defend themselves as best they can. The bandits (the Magershole Gang) pour out of their castle in the Dampfrat, follow the armies and its battles, picking up the scraps and preying on the weak.

## STATISTICS FOR ZJERD AND ALLIES

**PREELOZJIT, ZJERD GOBLIN** (LE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)) HP 75 (HD 10d8+30), AC 20 (splint & shield), Spd 30 ft. Str 18 Dex 14 Con 16 Int 12 Wis 13 Cha 15. SV Str +5, Con +5. Perception 13(+3), Intimidate +4. Multiattack (two melee attacks), Scimitar +6 (1d6+4) or Spear +6 (1d6+4, range 20/60ft.). SA Darkvision 60 ft., Tactical Command, 1/Day (for 1 minute, as an action can utter command to one of its soldiers it can see within 30 ft., granting +1d4 bonus to an attack roll or save), Parry (reaction triggered by melee at-

tack he can see, roll 1d6 and add to his AC if he wields a melee weapon). Challenge 4 (1,100 XP).

**Preelozjit** is a massive, brilliant, and cruel Zjerd. He has climbed the merciless ladder of power in the Zjerd realm and knows his life is forfeit if Felsentheim is not conquered. As such, if it appears the battle will be lost, he mounts a wily wolf and charges into combat in an effort to rally his troops.

**WOLF, PREELOZJIT'S MOUNT** (Unaligned Medium beast) HP 11 (HD 2d8+2), AC 13, Spd. 40ft. Str 12 Dex 15 Con 12 Int 3 Wis 12 Cha 6. Perception 13(+3), Stealth +4. Bite +4 (2d4+2; target creature DC 11 Strength save or be knocked prone). SA Keen Hearing & Smell (advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell), Pack Tactics (advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and ally isn't incapacitated). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

**BODYGUARD, ZJERD GOBLINS X10** (CE Small humanoids (goblinoids)) HP 10 (HD 3d6), AC 17 (studded leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 16 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 8 Cha 8. Perception 9(-1). Stealth +6. Short Sword +4 (1d6+2) or Shortbow +4 (1d6+2, range 80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1/2 (100 XP).

**CHAZRIM, ZJERD GOBLINS X10** (CE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)) HP 12 (HD 2d8+2), AC 17 (scale & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 14 Dex 12 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 9. Perception 10(+0). Battleaxe +4 (1d8+2) or Lance +4 (1d12+2) or Longbow +3 (1d8+1; 150ft/600ft). SA Darkvision 60ft., Extra damage (1/round +2d6); Challenge 1/2 (100 XP).

**OLEKOTHEER** (Unaligned Large beast) HP 42 (HD 5d10+15), AC 12, Spd 40 ft. Str 17 Dex 10 Con 16 Int 2 Wis 7 Cha 5. Perception 9(-1). Tusk +5 (2d6+3 slashing). SA Charge (moves at least 20 ft. straight at target and hits with tusk on that same turn, target takes 2d6 extra slashing damage; DC 13 Strength save or knocked prone), Relentless (if takes 10 damage or less that would drop it to 0 hp, it has 1 hp instead). Challenge 2 (450 XP). If ridden in combat, the Olekotheer and rider cannot both attack the same opponent on the same round except as part of a charge.

**ELITE TROOPS, ZJERD GOBLINS X100** (CE Small humanoids (goblinoids)) HP 7 (HD 2d6), AC 16 (studded leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 15 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 8 Cha 8. Perception 9(-1). Stealth +6. Short Sword +4 (1d6+2) or Shortbow +4 (1d6+2, range 80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

**REGULAR TROOPS, ZJERD GOBLINS X70** (CE Small humanoids (goblinoids)) HP 7 (HD 2d6), AC 12, Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 14 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 8 Cha 8. Perception 9(-1). Stealth +6. Short Sword +4 (1d6+2) or Shortbow +4 (1d6+2, range 80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

**SERGEANTS, ZJERD GOBLINS X40** (CE Small humanoids (goblinoids)) HP 9 (HD 2d6+2), AC 17 (chain shirt

& shield), Spd 30ft. Str 10 Dex 14 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 8 Cha 8. Perception 9(-1), Stealth +6. Short Sword +4 (1d6+2) or Shortbow +4 (1d6+2, range 80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

**SHAMANS, ZJERD GOBLINS X4** (NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)) HP 9 (HD 3d6), AC 12 (leather), Spd 30ft. Str 10 Dex 12 Con 10 Int 11 Wis 14 Cha 11. Perception 14(+4). Short Sword +3 (1d6+1) or Shortbow +3 (1d6+1, range 80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action), Cleric spells (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks), Cantrips (at will): guidance, resistance, sacred flame; 1<sup>st</sup>-level (4 slots): bane, bless, cure wounds; 2<sup>nd</sup>-level (2 slots): aid, hold person. Challenge 1/2 (100 XP).

**SPIDER-RIDERS, 4-ARMED ZJERD GOBLINS X10** (CE Small humanoids (goblinoids)) HP 9 (HD 2d6+2), AC 14 (leather), Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 16 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 8 Cha 8. Perception 9(-1). Stealth +6. Multiattack (two melee weapon attacks with two different weapons), 2 Short Swords +5 (1d6+3) or Shortbow +5 (1d6+3, range 80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

**SPIDER-RIDER CHIEF, 4-ARMED ZJERD GOBLINS X2** (CE Small humanoids (goblinoids)) HP 18 (HD 4d6+4), AC 14 (leather), Spd 30ft. Str 10 Dex 16 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 8 Cha 8. Perception 9(-1). Stealth +6. Multiattack (two melee weapon attacks with two different weapons), 2 Short Swords +5 (1d6+3) or Shortbow +5 (1d6+3, range 80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

**GIANT SPIDERS, SCOUT MOUNTS X12** (Unaligned Medium beast) HP 15 (HD 2d8+6), AC 14, Spd 40 ft., 40 ft. (climb). Str 12 Dex 16 Con 16 Int 3 Wis 11 Cha 4. Perception 10(+0), Stealth +5. Bite +3 (1d6+1; DC 11 Con save or take 2d6 poison damage). SA Blindsight 10 ft., Darkvision 60 ft., Spider Climb (climb difficult surfaces without making an ability check).

**SURCHIEFS, ZJERD GOBLINS X16** (CE Small humanoid (goblinoid)) HP 27 (HD 6d6+6), AC 14 (chain shirt), Spd 30ft. Str 11 Dex 13 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 8 Cha 10. Perception 9 (-1). Multiattack (two melee weapon attacks), Short Sword +3 (1d8+1) or Shortbow +3 (1d6+1, range 80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1 (200 XP).

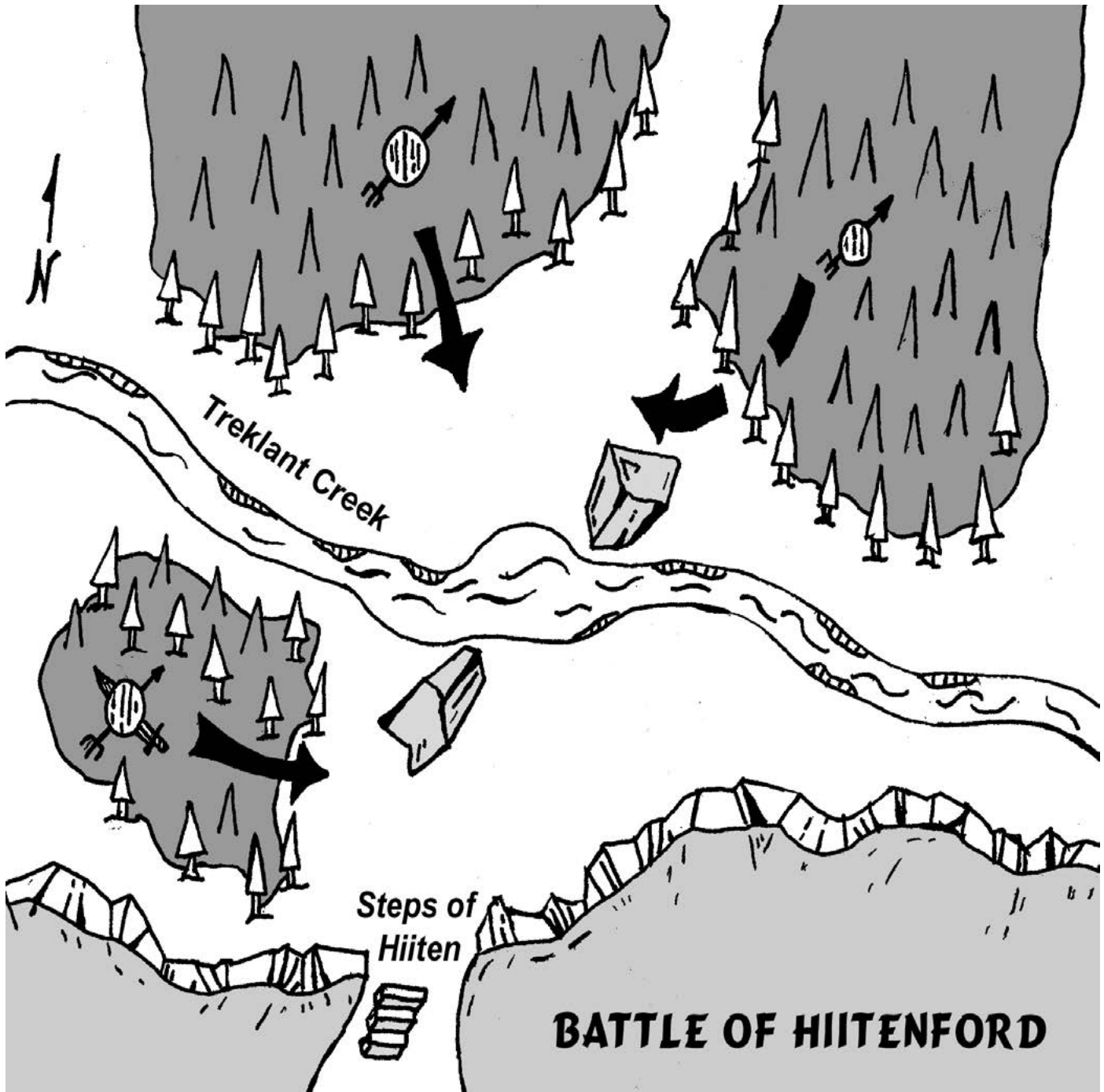
**WARCHIEFS, ZJERD GOBLINS X4** (CE Small humanoid (goblinoid)) HP 30 (HD 7d6+6), AC 18 (chain shirt & shield), Spd 30ft. Perception 9(-1). Str 12 Dex 16 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 8 Cha 10. Perception 9(-1). Multiattack (two melee weapon attacks), Morningstar +3 (1d8+1) or Shortbow +5 (1d6+3, range 80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1 (200 XP).

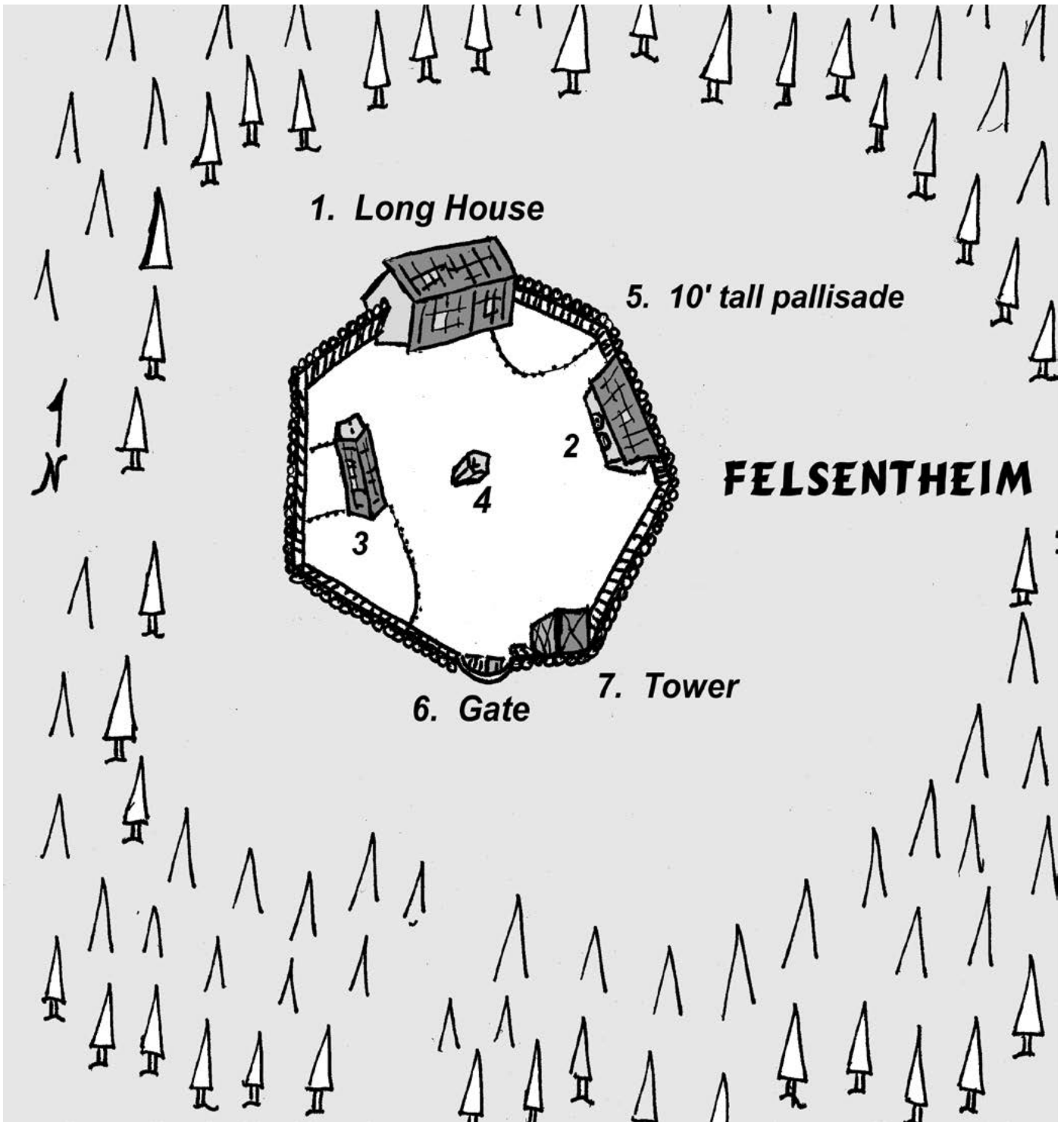
**WOLF-RIDERS, ZJERD GOBLINS X25** (CE Small humanoids (goblinoids)) HP 7 (HD 2d6), AC 16 (studded leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 14 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 8

Cha 8. Perception 9(-1). Stealth +6. Scimitar +4 (1d6+2) or Shortbow +4 (1d6+2, range 80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

**WOLF MOUNTS X25** (Unaligned Medium beast) HP 11 (HD 2d8+2), AC 13, Spd. 40ft. Str 12 Dex 15 Con 12 Int 3 Wis 12 Cha 6. Perception 13(+3), Stealth +4. Bite +4 (2d4+2; target creature DC 11 Strength save or be knocked prone). SA Keen Hearing & Smell (advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell), Pack Tactics (advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and ally isn't incapacitated). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).







1. Long House

5. 10' tall pallisade

**FELSENTHEIM**

6. Gate

7. Tower

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The logo features a large, stylized number '5' with a gold dragon-like creature coiled around it. To the right of the '5' is the word 'EDITION' in large, red, block letters with a gold outline. Below 'EDITION' is the word 'ADVENTURE' in smaller, gold, block letters with a red outline. The background of the entire page is a dark, atmospheric illustration of a forest with a goblin warlord in the upper left and a troll in the lower right.


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