



5TH EDITION
ADVENTURE

GIANT'S RAPTURE



2013
STEPHEN CHENAULT

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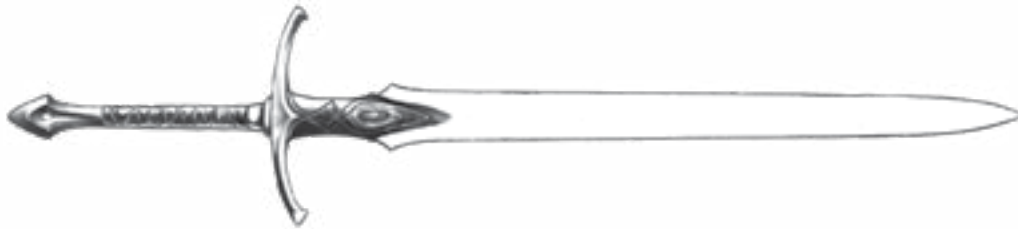
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INTRODUCTION

This adventure comes in three parts. It is designed so that each part may be run separately, or they may be run together as a trilogy. The adventure is a basic journey, where PC's escort an item from the Castle Olmutz south to the southern Kingdom of Kayomar. The player challenge is to get the cargo successfully to its destination in one piece. The Castle Keeper's challenge is to bind the wagon masters to the characters in such a way as to allow the final encounter to be gripping and fun, but also an emotional roller coaster.

This adventure is designed for 4 to 8 characters of 6th-8th level or higher. If more players join, the Castle Keeper should tweak the hit points and number of monsters involved.

The first adventure, *A Stone's Wager*, introduces the characters to the task at hand, as well as the rewards. It carries them through an overland journey to the Great Wall, where they encounter a network of open tunnels occupied by stone giants. The giants seek a contest of arms with the adventurers. Should the adventurers win, they may cross in peace. If they fail to win, they must pay a tax.

The second adventure, *Winter's Promise*, pits the characters against both the weather and a band of frost giants. A storm overtakes them, dumping a great deal of snow upon the ground. As their journey slows, a second storm hits, forcing the column to stretch out and slow down. The second storm is the work of a band of frost giants on sleds, being pulled by large bears. The giants are merciless in their attack. Here the Princess flees and/or is kidnapped, vanishing in the snow.

The third adventure, *Trial by Fire*, is slightly more challenging, and far more dangerous. The Princess is taken by a frost giant and hauled rapidly across the Wilds. At the edge of the Tar Kiln she is sold to a fire giant and there hauled into the pits of the Tar Kiln. The characters must rescue her and finally deliver her to the King of Kayomar.

The adventures are each designed to run within a three hour time-span, allowing players to come and go after each game.

BACKGROUND

When the Winter Dark Wars ended and the old Empire collapsed, a plethora of kingdoms, counties, baronies, and free towns rose up in the ashes. In the lands of eastern Ethrum there were nine districts, as established by the empire. The districts were comprised of old aristocratic families that in many cases predated the Empire itself. In the ashes of its collapse, many of these districts declared themselves independent. The first of these districts was Anglamay-ot-Neider. Its leading family declared themselves the County of Anglamay, and all the other districts followed suit.

Kleaves, the westernmost of these new Counties, comprised the lands of Elithian Wood and the rolling plains that abutted the Great Wall, which itself was a catastrophe of ruin left of from the Winter Dark. Kleaves struggled with the ghosts of the wall and the rising power of Anglamay in the north. When those



lords declared themselves Kings and demanded fealty of many of the other counties, it sparked years of war.

Such a war is even now under way. The present Count of Kleaves, Eurich Gunshoff IV, recently called his knights to battle, and through the long hard spring and summer, contested the fields with the King's much larger armies. Several castles fell to the King's army, and the fortified crossings of the Tot River were overthrown. Thus the campaigning season ended, leaving Count Eurich in a horrible position, for come spring only a few castles held the way against the King of Anglamay.

Thus he is reaching out for aid.

No small power would do. So he looked south to the vast and powerful Kingdom of Kayomar. Here the Count numbers many as his friends, for there the Paladin Kings rule, Knights of the Holy Flame are held above all men, and almost all worship St. Luther. And thus the ties are bound. For over sixty years, the Counts of Kleaves have paid homage to St. Luther and protected his temples and sacred places against all comers. Eurich's great grandfather himself sent a reward of 100,000 golden crowns to the Paladins for the upkeep of their sacred grove.

So Eurich has secretly turned to the Kings of Kayomar for aid. To secure this, he has promised his daughter to the King of that realm, Eadore I, with a promise of an army to fight the King of Anglamay. The Kayomarese have agreed to this, their only demand being that the girl be delivered to them at the large town of Twin Forks.

His daughter, the beautiful and kind Carolisa has agreed.

THE CHALLENGE

There are many spies in the County and traitors in Eurich's own court who would see the war end in the King of Anglamay's favor, and they would do anything to stop the alliance from being formed if they knew about it. The Count's daughter traveling south would certainly bring attention to it.

So the Count has decided to arm and equip a troop of mercenaries and adventurers, led by a young paladin, to escort his daughter, who shall be safely placed in a covered wagon, and transported south across the wilderness to the Kingdom of Kayomar. This will release King Eadore I's gold and arms to support Kleaves and save the County.

The rewards are generous.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

As this adventure was designed for tournament play at Gencon 2013, the characters should all have some common background. All are from the County of Kleaves, and are adventurers well known in those parts for their deeds great and small. The rogues should have some criminal record, the clerics some connection to the community, rangers known as hunters, etc. If someone chooses to play a paladin (as noted in the pre-gens) allow that they are from a minor noble house who has fallen on hard times, possessing little land or wealth.

The game begins in the Count's meeting hall, with all the characters gathered there. The paladin in his role is a minor noble, the rogue released from prison, the ranger pulled from his hunt. All the characters know each other and have traveled together at one point or another. The Count explains the rewards as noted below. The CK should make notes of the specific class rewards offered to further entice the characters to push on.

Running all three adventures involves overland journeys, with small encounter areas, and one final adventure in the fire giant's hold. The Castle Keeper should not be overly focused on the day to day machinations of the caravan, but also should not totally ignore them. The overall journey should take about thirty days, assuming the party does not have to rest due to wounds, or repair wagons, both of which are very likely to happen.

Each overland trek is detailed below with sample descriptions given to use, elaborate on, or ignore and replace. The CK is encouraged to elaborate on the descriptions and have some interaction with the drovers. If the CK chooses not to do this, the adventure will simply propel forward from one encounter to the next and lose a great deal of its effectiveness.

Interaction with the drovers is important, as it establishes a link with the party that shall be tested in the second adventure against the frost giants. Allow for the drovers to sing and dance around their camp fire. Stress their common goodness and willingness to help, but, more importantly, stress the fear they experience with each encounter, and also how they stand regardless of it. It is stressed in the adventure below.

The weather, and the subsequent wear and tear on the vehicles, all play a part in the adventure, and will be outlined below, to be used or discarded as the CK sees fit.

The CK should pull the paladin aside and inform them of the mission, for they are charged with it before the party is gathered. This person is appointed the caravan's leader. It is up to the leader to organize the group and the caravan.

REWARDS

Each character shall be given 1000gp and a ring of silver with the Count's symbol emblazoned upon it, giving them safe passage in the lands of Kleaves. All of the adventurers' past crimes and misdemeanors shall be forgiven.

Everyone in the party shall be given a patent of nobility and counted amongst the Knights-Errant of Kleaves. Further, they shall be granted lands of 100 parcels apiece. They shall have to pay homage for these lands, but they can improve the lands, fortify them, sell them, or derive rents from them.

The leader (the paladin or noble) is granted 200 parcels of allodial land that includes two small castles along the Tot River, and is given the title of Baronet. This land is freely given, meaning, though he must pay homage for it, it cannot be taken from him/her, or their family. This type of land is the bedrock of any noble houses' longevity.

SPECIFIC CLASS REWARDS:

A cleric or druid is awarded a small building, either in town or outside of it, to outfit as he sees fit as temple to their deity of choice.

Any spellcasters are given access to Eurich's personal library to make copies of what sorceries they may find there. This will include up to fifteen new spells.

A bard is given a post at court with a 10gp a month stipend.

Rogues are given choice of post at court to serve the Count and his staff, making them Doge of Spies.

Rangers are made Wards and given fifty square miles of land to govern. Ownership is retained by the Count.

THE ESCORT

The escort party consists of three wagons and two carts. There are eight drovers who accompany the expedition. The princess remains in one of the wagons, hidden from all for the entire trip.

The adventuring party should consist of at least one cleric, one ranger and a paladin. If a paladin is not being played, allow one of the characters to be of noble blood. It is to this individual that the Count assigns the duties of escort, and this individual alone knows the nature of the cargo and the importance of the missions. On pain of forfeiture of all titles, rights and lands (and possibly their life), they are charged both with keeping the princess safe and with the success of the mission. It is up to that individual to inform the party of what is in the wagon or not. The drovers are not to be informed at all.

NOTE: The Count plays upon the honor of the character charged with leading the expedition.

THE DROVERS: There are eight drovers, two on each wagon and one each for the carts. The drovers are all zero level non-player characters and are not trained to fight. Each drover carries his own personal affects with him in his wagon or cart. These include clothes, a sleeping roll, personal effects such as holy symbols, and each has 20sp for the journey.

The drovers have a number of musical instruments with them, and they are quite apt at playing them and singing. If given the chance, they sing and play music in the evenings, occasionally while on the road as well.

The drovers are not heroes, but neither are they cowards. They are fearful of the monsters that are encountered below, but so long as the characters stand their ground, the drovers do as well . . . even if that is on the wagons. They do not openly attack, and if they are attacked by large monsters, they scatter, but will return. If the opportunity presents itself to leap in and aid a fallen character for instance, they do so, dragging them from the melee.

THE BOX WAGON: This wagon is heavy with large iron bound wheels. Its large axles are braced with shocks to soften the road. It has no visible doors. Access is gained through a hatch in the

bottom of the wagon that can be spotted with a successful DC 16 Investigation check. Inside the wagon are comfortable pillows and decorations. The wagon is driven by two of the drovers, **Fastred** and **Artur**. Fastred is the main driver. The wagon is pulled by four oxen.

NOTE: Artur knows who is in the wagon.

FASTRED *Commoner, Human (N Medium Human):* HD1d8 (HP 6), AC 11, Mv 30ft. Str 17 (+4) Dex 10 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10 . Knife or hand axe +2 (1d4). SA None. Treasure: 1d6cp. Fastred is kind but bull-headed, and listens to Artur in all that he does. Fastred is an able singer.

ARTUR *Commoner, Human (N Medium Human):* HD1d8 (HP 8), AC 13, Mv 30ft. Str 16 (+3) Dex 17 (+4) Con 10 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10 . Knife or hand axe +2 (1d4). SA None. Treasure: 1d6cp., Artur is smart and rather quiet. He uses two spoons as instruments.

WAGON 1: This wagon is much smaller and carries the expedition's food supplies. There are 420 days' worth of foods stuffs in the wagon. They are packaged in bundles of 1-day standard rations and stored in ten crates. The wagon is pulled by two oxen. **Behm** and **Sauer** drive this wagon.

BEHM: *Commoner, Human (N Medium Human):* HD1d8 (HP 5), AC 11, Mv 30ft. Str 18 (+4) Dex 10 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10 . Knife or hand axe +2 (1d4). SA None. Treasure: 1d6cp. Behm is an expert hunter, and can set snares and traps. He carries a small hunting bow and 16 arrows. He carries a hunter's horn.

SAUER: *Commoner, Human (N Medium Human):* HD1d8 (HP 6), AC 11, Mv 30ft. Str 15 (+3) Dex 10 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10 . Knife or hand axe +2 (1d4). SA None. Treasure: 1d6cp. Sauer carries a mouth harp and is quite good at it.

WAGON 2: This wagon is much like wagon 1 and carries the expedition's water and travel supplies. There are eight barrels of water and four barrels of beer in the wagon. There is only a ten-day supply of water. The wagon also carries the following: 200 feet of heavy rope, a wood axe, four extra wagon wheels, three crowbars to replace wheels, four small barrels of oil, six pots of pitch, 500 strips of linen (each two inches wide and 36 inches long for bandages and other uses), a small fire-furnace for minor blacksmith repairs, a hammer, a set of tongs, two small beaver traps, cooking kettles, and a bucket. The wagon is pulled by two oxen. **Maier** and **Thones** drive this wagon.

MAIER: *Commoner, Human (N Medium Human):* HD1d8 (HP 5), AC 11, Mv 30ft. Str 15 (+3) Dex 10 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10 . Knife or hand axe +2 (1d4). SA None. Treasure: 1d6cp. Maeir has a large family and wants to return home to them.

THONES *Commoner, Human (N Medium Human):* HD1d8 (HP 10), AC 11, Mv 30ft. Str 18 (+4) Dex 10 Con 12 (+1) Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10. Warhammer +4 (1d8+4) bludgeoning. SA None. Treasure: 1d6cp. Thones is

not particularly brave, just very strong. He carries the holy symbol of St. Luther openly. Thones is proficient in the lute.

CARTS: The first cart carries fifteen days' worth of grain for the oxen. The second cart carries various supplies for the journey: boards to fix broken wagons, coal to heat the blacksmith's furnace (a 24-hour supply), sixteen heavy wool cloaks, sixteen pairs of woolen gloves, eight pairs of snow shoes, two large shovels, a wood chopping axe, and a lute. The cart is pulled by two oxen and driven by **Leo** and **Leon**.

CART DRIVERS, LEO AND LEON (BROTHERS) *Commoner, Human (N Medium Human):* HD1d8 (HP 6), AC 11, Mv 30ft. Str 17 (+4) Dex 10 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10. Knife or hand axe +2 (1d4). SA None. Treasure: 1d6cp.

THE PRINCESS

The princess remains in the heavy wagon. Her quarters are comfortable, pillows and blankets covering the wagon. Her food she gains from a *decanter of endless water* and a small box given to her by the priests of St. Luther that can *create food and water* for 35 days. The days are cool, the wagon closed, so that she is warm and comfortable. She is able to hear what is going on around her due to several smallish holes cut in the wagon here and there.



She passes her waste through a small hatch in the floor of the driver's seat, giving it to Artur, who treats it as his own and dumps it on the road.

Her only contact is with Artur and the leader of the expedition, should he choose to communicate with her.

Carolisa is a calm woman, and she devoutly worships St. Luther. She spends most of her days in quiet meditation, so as not to suffer from boredom or bring unwanted attention to herself.

CAROLISA *Acolyte, Human (LG Medium Human):* HD2d8+4 (HP 18), AC 11, Mv 30ft. Str 17 (+4) Dex 10 Con 17 (+4) Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 15 (+3). Perception 10. Treasure: 1d6cp. Carolisa has no particular skills beyond those normal to a woman of her station. She can read and write vulgate and Ethrum, and she speaks Vulgate, Ethrum, Aenochian and Elvish. She is a skilled seamstress, and her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Cantrips (at will): sacred flame, 1st Level (2 slots) bless, cure wounds. She is only 17.

If for whatever reason she is removed from the wagon, she proves to be a very agreeable person. She is kind, thoughtful, and looks to the welfare of others. Her greatest concern is for her father, their County and the people that live within. She has a backbone and will do nothing to dishonor her family. She will fight if needed (though she has no skill in that regard). She will help the wounded where she can, and is not squeamish in doing so.

REVEALING THE PRINCESS

Carolisa is a beautiful young woman, and her face is known by many who travel the roads; merchants, vagabonds, circus folk, even some bandits recognize her on sight with a successful DC 14 Intelligence check. Being seen by anyone of any importance from Olmutz to Ashflat runs a tremendous risk of exposing who she is.

If word gets out, the King of Anglamay (who has troops not fifteen miles from the Great Wall) quickly learns of it, and in a snap understands what the Count is doing and where he is sending his daughter. He dispatches riders to pursue her. They are mounted knights and men-at-arms who move 60 miles in a day. There is only one road beyond the Great Wall, through the wilderness to Kayomar, and that is the road the knights take.

BERTHOLD, ANGLAMAY KNIGHTS *Knight, Human (NG Medium Human):* HD 8d8 (HP 40), AC 16, Mv 30ft. Str 16 (+3) Dex 14 (+2) Con 10 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10. Treasure: 1d6cp. The Knight Berchtold wears a chain shirt, carries a shield and lance, a +2 flail and has a Ring of Resistance (Cold). The knight carries 250gp worth of jewelry and coin. He rides a medium warhorse.)

JEPREDAH, ANGLAMAY KNIGHTS *Knight, Human (NG Medium Human):* HD 8d8 (HP 35), AC 19, Mv 30ft. Str 16 (+3) Dex 14 (+2) Con 10 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 12 (+1). Perception 10. Treasure: 1d6cp. He wears +1 plate. The knight carries a lance and a +2 longsword in battle, or a +1 battleaxe.

The knight carries 250gp worth of jewelry and coin. He rides a medium warhorse.)

ANGLAMAY SERGEANTS X 4: Sergeant, Human (NG Medium Human): HD 5d8 (HP 25), AC 15, Mv 30ft. Str 14 (+2) Dex 12 (+1) Con 10 Int 10 Wis 12 (+1) Cha 10. Perception 11. Treasure: 1d6cp. Each wears breastplate and carries broadsword, knife and a lance. Each has 50gp worth of coin and jewelry. They all ride light riding horses.

ANGLAMAY GUARDSMEN X 20 Guardsman, Human (NG Medium Human): HD 2D8+2 (HP 12), AC 16, Mv 30ft. Str 12 (+1) Dex 12 (+1) Con 12 (+1) Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10. Treasure: 1d6cp. Each wears chain shirt and shield, carries a battleaxe, and has 10-20gp worth of jewelry and coin. They all ride light riding horses.

ANGALMAY CROSSBOWMEN X 10 Crossbowman, Human (NG Medium Human): HD 2d8 (HP 10), AC 11, Mv 30ft. Str 10 Dex 12 (+1) Con 10 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10. Treasure: 1d6cp. Each wears studded leather, and carries a crossbow, twenty bolts, short sword, and have 10-20gp worth of jewelry and coin. They all ride light riding horses.

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

As noted, the Count has gathered all the characters into his private meeting hall. The room is sparsely decorated, reflecting the Count's nature. A large wooden chair stands at the end of the rectangular room, and six torches flutter in the cool air brought in from the two arrow slits. A large fireplace fights off the early autumn chill. The characters are brought in and made to wait for a short while, after which the Count enters with one of his guards.

The Count is a tall man, bearded, with a stern if comforting look. He wears a suit of banded chain mail, with an iron sword strapped to his side. He wears no mark or symbol reflecting his rank. Everyone knows who he is.

Read or paraphrase the following:

I have gathered you all here, for I have a task for you to complete. If you are successful, the rewards shall be great. Failure is not an option. For if you fail, we are all lost. As you know, we have been at war with the bastards of the north and that self-styled King. They have spent the spring and summer ravaging our holdings beyond the Tot River and have only just recently seized the castles of Ire and Peth, those same bergs that hold the river crossings. Next spring they will cross with their armies and sack the County, despoiling all who live here- our families, the people... everyone.

So we must seek aid. And that aid I can only find with our friends in the south, in the Kingdom of Kayomar. To do this, I am sending a gift of wondrous value to the Lords of those Lands. It must be escorted to the town of Twin Forks and it must be done so secretly. The bastard has spies along all the roads surrounding Kleaves, and watches even in the wilderness. Beyond that there are

bandits and monsters who would take the gift as their own, destroy it or despoil it. This gift I have placed in a wagon so that none may know of it. The wagon will be with a caravan, so that none shall suspect it is special.

It is a dangerous journey, made more so by the caravan. The journey is long, over 400 miles, taking you through the wilds where no power rules. I have charged the Paladin here with this task, and I call upon you as friends of his, and from whatever loyalty you have to me and my people, to carry out this task.

I have chosen you for this task because there are many of the bastard's spies about, and few will look to a caravan of wagons leaving the town, led by a party of adventurers. They shall suspect only that you are leaving the County before the King overwhelms us.

I do not expect your loyalty to be free, so I offer you further recompense. Each of you shall be given 1000 golden ducats. You shall be pardoned of any crimes against you or charges against your family. Further, upon your return I shall grant you, or in case of your demise, your next of kin, a patent of nobility and the title of Knight-Errant, as well as one hundred parcels of land to sell or rent or dwell upon as you see fit. But to each, reward is due, and for each of you the following

Here he grants the class specific rewards to each party member. All this is guaranteed upon success of the mission.

ORGANIZING THE JOURNEY

The adventure is designed to play out in three 3-hour sessions. Each of the three adventures includes overland travel, which breaks down as follows:

Sixty miles and six days from Castle Olmutz to the Great Wall.

Twenty miles and two days from Great Wall to Ashflat (end of *A Stone's Wager*)

80 miles and eight days from Ashflat to the Mettlock Hills

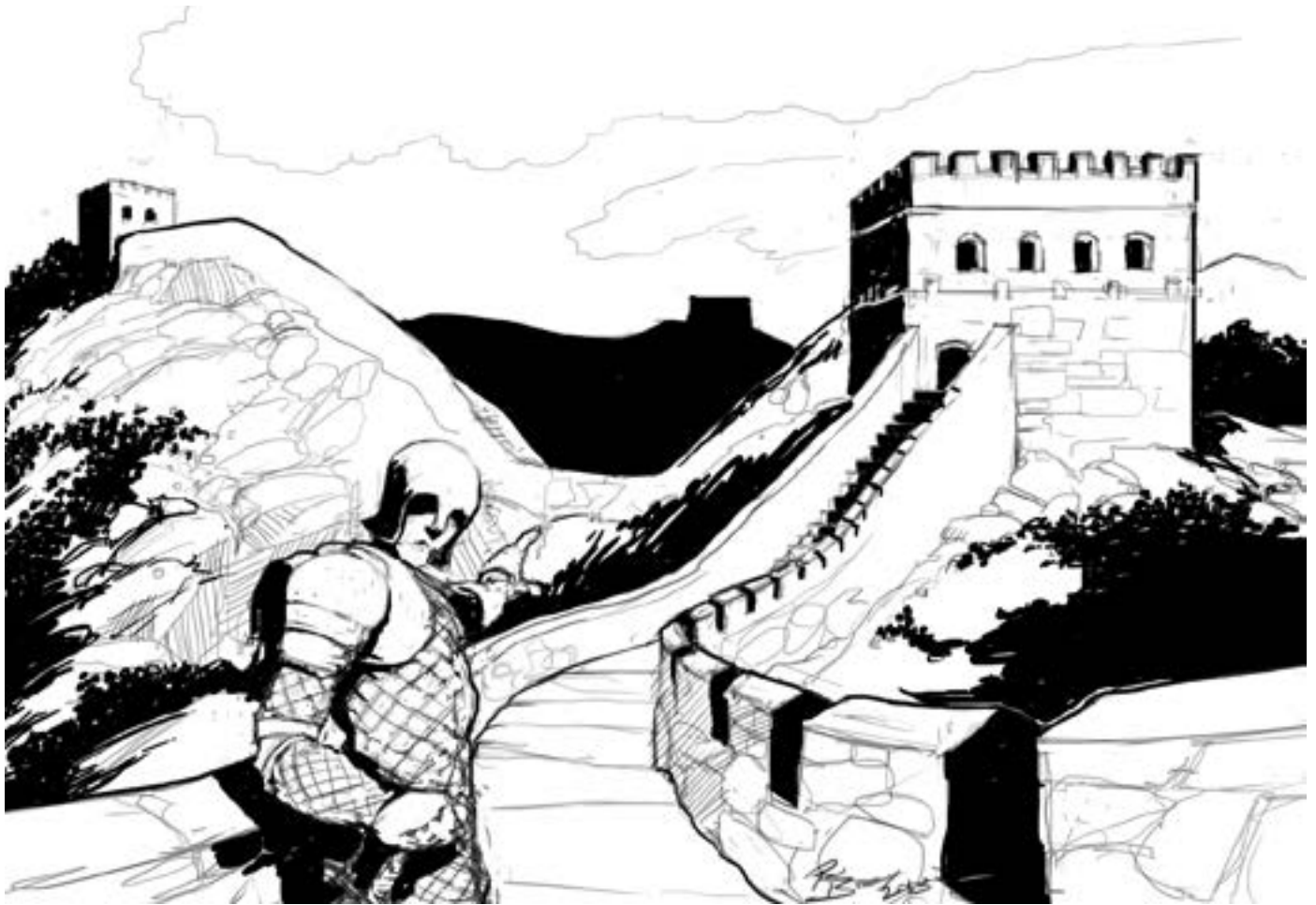
Eight miles and one day through the Mettlock Hills

25 miles and three days from Mettlock Hills to Eil Wood (end of *Winter's Promise*)

225 miles and 25 days from Eil Wood to the Tar Kiln and Hells Furnace

25 miles to the headwaters of the Ardeen River and Safety (end of *Trial by Fire*)

It is a journey of several weeks (indeed, of well over a month) if there are no mishaps or delays. This roughly equates to nineteen miles per day for the wagons and carts. Clearly if the wagons are abandoned for whatever reason the journey may pick up in speed. Doing so of course exposes the princess to harm and the spies of the King, if she is seen on the road.



A STONE'S WAGER

If the paladin does not organize the caravan, Artur, the natural leader amongst the drovers does. He places it in the following order:

Wagon 1

Box Wagon

Wagon 2

Cart 1

Cart 2

The party leaves early in the morning, mid-Autumn. The skies are clear and the weather calm, if a little cool. Read or paraphrase the following:

As the wagons lumber out of the courtyard and pass beneath the castle's outer gates, the open road unfolds before you. A massive sky welcomes you into the fading greens of the plains as a cool wind buffets you. Immediately the hustle and bustle of the castle is left behind, replaced by the calm and quiet of a journey. Creaking axles on the wagon wheels settle into a rhythm that only adds to the calm; leather harnesses jangle in the cool wind that gingerly feels its way through armor and clothing.

The first three days go by without happenstance. The CK should roll for encounters, but have none with monsters. Attempt to play out each day, though not spending more than a few minutes on each day. Here the characters should determine the watch order and get to know the drovers.

Each night the drovers help set up camp then retire to their own camp and sing, eat, drink and talk late into the evening. If asked at any point to stop, they do so without much complaint. They are a bit standoffish, and also nervous about the journey that lies ahead. This should be made clear to the characters, though not so much that they have contempt for them; the drovers are just that - drovers, and not warriors or wizards.

ENCOUNTERS

The roads are safe and the lands are occupied by various small farm houses. People stop from their daily toil and wave the caravan by, watching it as it passes in idle curiosity. Every few hours they pass another group on the road, mostly merchants, but some travelers. These are all from the north, and not the south, where the characters are headed. If asked about news, they have little, but the road seems clear.

NOTE: The characters should be made to realize here that there are many eyes on the road to discourage them from pulling the princess out of the wagon and riding pell-mell across the countryside.

There is only one encounter of significance during these three days.

KEIL THE MULE

Keil the Mule is a friar in the service of the Horse God Ores Tsar. He is well traveled and has, some years past, followed the south road, called by men the Hollows Road. Whether he joins the party for dinner or just meets on the road, he freely passes on what information he has.

KEIL THE MULE: *Acolyte, Human (CG Medium Human):*
HD2d8 (HP 10), AC 11, Mv 30ft. Str 15 (+3) Dex 10 Con
10 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10.

The road they are on splits after about 30 miles. One goes north to the Hanse City, while the other, the Hollows Road, goes south to the Great Wall and Wilderness. The Hollows road splits into two roads just before the Great Wall, with both sections directed toward two different gates in the Wall. These gates are the only easy way to get through the wall unless you climb it. The northernmost gate, Keil is almost certain, is held by a large band of hobgoblins. The second one he cannot comment on, as he does not know. He has heard that giants have settled on the Hollows Road and warns the party to be cautious.

At no point does he ask about the wagons or their content. Nor does he show interest in their journey. Keil's alignment is Chaotic Good, and a short conversation and successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal to the party that he is a trustworthy individual.

ONTO THE HOLLOWES ROAD

After three days, the characters come to a split in the road. One branch turns due north, heading up toward the Hanse City States. The south track splits off, heading in a southwesterly direction. A wooden placard marks the spot. A sign pointing south says "Hollows Road/Wall" while a second sign reads "Hanse Road" and points north. Read or paraphrase the following:

The weather continues to hold as you turn your caravan to the south and head down the Hollows Road. The sky is a light blue with no clouds in sight. The rolling plains tumble into the west, vanishing into the dark-lined horizon. The road itself appears to be little traveled, the dirt tracks overgrown with grasses of many colors.

Any ranger, druid or bard knows that that dark line on the horizon is actually the Great Wall, that massive fortified line that stretches from the Bergrucken Mountains in the south to the Inner Sea in the north.

Also, anyone with any weather sense can make a DC 12 Survival check. If successful they realize that the light blue sky, is a sign of cold weather to come.

The fourth day is much as the first three, slow moving and eventless. By the end of the day everyone can clearly see the massive wall in the distance. It now becomes a permanent part of the horizon.

On the morning of the fifth day whoever wakes first must make a DC 10 Perception check. If successful they see a mounted figure some 1000 yards off from the camp. It is clearly watching them. The figure is mounted on a nag horse and possesses a long spear with a red rag hanging from it. The figure seems to be wearing armor but with the distance it is difficult to determine. If there is an elf in the party, or they have some type of spy-glass they can determine what it is with a successful DC 10 Intelligence check.

It is a hobgoblin scout.

The hobgoblin watches the party for a short while, and then turns and rides off. If anyone even shows signs of pursuit he rides pell-mell to the west.

About five miles north of the road lies a large party of hobgoblins. They are mounted on a breed of rugged horses, tall and stout. If the hobgoblin scout is pursued, he leads his pursuers directly toward the larger war band. If he is not pursued he rides to the war band, alerting them to the caravan. They all immediately mount up and attack.

There are 51 in all. They are all mounted and dressed similarly. There is one chieftain here, and one sub-chief. They attack in a semi-organized manner. Splitting into two parties of roughly fifteen each, they sweep out into a pincer movement, trying to hit the caravan from the front and rear simultaneously.

In hobgoblin society, hierarchy is extremely important. If the hobgoblins suffer the loss of their Chief and Sub-Chief, their morale begins to break. The Chief and Sub-Chief cannot break and run or they lose face (as well as their place in the hobgoblin hierarchy), so those two at least stand and fight until they are killed or all the characters are dead.

Any character with experience with hobgoblins may make a successful DC 10 Insight or Nature check for this knowledge of the hobgoblin hierarchy.

HOBGOBLIN, CHIEF *Hobgoblin (LE Medium Humanoid) HP 21 (HD 3d8+6), AC 17, Spd 30ft. Str 15 (+3) Dex 13 (+2) Con 14 (+2) Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 9. Perception 10. Longsword +3 (1d10+1) or Longbow +3 (1d8+1; 150ft/600ft). SA Extra damage (1/round +2d6); Darkvision 60ft. He carries a long spear that he uses as a lance. He is wearing chain with plate on his arms and legs. He also has a shortbow with twelve arrows. The chief carries a pouch of magical nord stones. There are eight of these stones. If placed in the sunlight, a stone will flake. The flakes can be chewed, healing 1d4 points of damage. Each stone can create 1d4 flakes per hour while in sunlight.*

HOBGOBLIN, SUB-CHIEF *Hobgoblin (LE Medium Humanoid) HP 18 (HD 3d8+3), AC 17, Spd 30ft. Str 14 (+2) Dex 13 (+1) Con 12 (+1) Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 9. Perception 10. Longsword +3 (1d10+1) or Longbow +3 (1d8+1; 150ft/600ft). SA Extra damage (1/round +2d6); Darkvision 60ft. He carries a long spear that he uses as a lance. He is wearing chain with plate on his arms and legs. He also has a shortbow with twelve arrows.*

HOBGOBLIN (LE Medium Humanoid) HP 12 (HD 2d8+2), AC 11, Spd 30ft. Str 13 (+2) Dex 12 (+1) Con 12 (+1) Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 9. Perception 10. Longsword +3 (1d10+1) or Longbow +3 (1d8+1; 150ft/600ft). SA Extra damage (1/round +2d6); Darkvision 60ft. They carry long spears that they use as lances.. Every fourth hobgoblin carries a shortbow with twelve arrows.

NOTES: Two things to keep in mind.

1) Nord stones are not common, but most clerics, rangers, druids and the like know of them and how they work. If there is one such person in the party, they can readily figure out what they are and their value to the party.

2) This encounter is partially designed to establish a relationship between the party and the drovers. They behave with courage, though with obvious terror. They respond to commands given quickly (nervously) and help where they can, grabbing wounded, horses or what have you.

THE WALL

On the morning of the sixth day the party should be within ten miles of the wall. It dominates the horizon. As they approach a little down the road, they come to the crossroads. Read or paraphrase the following.

The wall, which has loomed in the distance for many miles, now comes into sharp focus. It dominates the horizon, winding over the flat lands to the north like a shaft of iron; to the south it climbs into the mountains which now hem your journey in. Its bulwarks are some sixty feet high, though the ruins of it leave many breaches. Towers and bastions top the wall here and there, but many of these have fallen to the wayside, leaving nothing but an echo of fallen stone. The road splits here, one track heading due west, the second winding on to the south.

The Great Wall of Ethrum is several hundred miles long, and ranges in both height and width. The average width is 100 feet and the average height about sixty feet. The towers that remain are higher still. A broad road mounts much of it, with many forts and castles built upon its height. Barracks and dungeons, with corridors to connect them, run throughout the complex structure.

In the early days of man, the people of Ethrum and Aenoch struggled for mastery of the lands of Ursal, the lands to the east and west of the Ursal Straights. The Aenochians conquered much of the world, so that only the Tarvish Emperors remained to struggle against them.

During the great battles, called the Isles of Mark, the Tarvish Emperors saw that they could not master the Aenochians, so they reflected upon how best to defend their homeland of Kayomar. First, they fortified the fjords and bridges which crossed the rivers Saline and Ardeen. They did likewise throughout the Bergrucken Mountains. There they constructed

mighty fortresses. But in the north, the rolling lands of Angouleme offered easy access for any invading armies, so there they set to building a great wall. Artisans, engineers and laborers worked for many long years building the edifice. All the while, the Tarvish Emperors spent their strength in blood to hold back the Aenochians. In the end it proved to no avail, for the Aenochians crossed the Bergrucken instead and plundered the rich valleys beyond. The wall was breached, many sections burned out, despoiled, and eventually utterly abandoned.

The wall stood for many hundreds of years, sometimes occupied, sometimes abandoned. So great is its size that the wall became home to whole peoples of all races. Soon it became laced with tunnels, dungeons and more fortifications. During the Winter Dark it suffered neglect, and the harsh climate did much to reduce it, with entire sections falling into ruin. But since those days the Great Wall has become an attractive place for adventurers, for its chambers, forts, and castles are reputed to be full to overflowing with treasures and wonders of the old world.

The Hollows Road continues to the far southern reaches of the Great Wall, dividing about six miles out into two smaller roads, both of which go on to the wall, penetrating it roughly ten miles apart. The characters can chose to go either way, the warning of the traveling friar notwithstanding.

NORTH GATE

This gate is in ruins, with much of the whole wall has collapsed and been carted off or tossed to the side so that it looks as if a huge axe has cloven the wall in half. In only a few places is the wall still connected over the gate, allowing passage from one side to the other.

The Northern Gate is held by a large tribe of hobgoblins (use the 5e MM Hobgoblin stats), in fact, the very same tribe that assaulted the party the previous day. They live within the wall, on both sides of the gate. Their scouts have long since alerted them to the caravan's approach. They have fortified the gate against them, piling all manner of debris inside the wall's road to block the wagons' passage.

Even though the gate is blocked, the hobgoblins are plain to see. There are hobgoblins moving here and there about the structure, making it obvious that passage through here will be difficult to say the least.

HOBGOBLIN (LE Medium Humanoid) HP 12 (HD 2d8+2), AC 11, Spd 30ft. Str 13 (+2) Dex 12 (+1) Con 12 (+1) Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 9. Perception 10. Longsword +3 (1d10+1) or Longbow +3 (1d8+1; 150ft/600ft). SA Extra damage (1/round +2d6); Darkvision 60ft. They carry long spears that they use as lances.. Every fourth hobgoblin carries a shortbow with twelve arrows.

The party's options are limited:

1) Bargain with the hobgoblins. This is possible but the hobgoblins will require all the wagons and their content.

2) Attack the hobs and force the gate. This will be difficult, as they are dug in and have numbers on their side. Even a conservative estimate on the task of clearing enough debris from the gate to get the wagons through would put it at a week's task.

3) Head south for the southern gate. The plains here are easy enough that the party can just cut south looking for the gate, or they can back track to it.

If the characters attack, the hobgoblins cannot be dislodged until all their Chiefs, Sub-Chiefs, War Chiefs and Shaman are killed. Even then they only retreat to inside the wall, from where they continue to hound the characters.

NOTE: Make it clear to the characters that the hobgoblins are well entrenched, and unlike most humanoids, they are able tacticians.

The hobgoblins have fortified the gate house very well. Large stone blocks set at various angles disallow any quick movement through the tunnel. Some twenty heavily armed hobgoblins, in half plate with halberds and awls hold the tunnel about mid way, fifty feet in. They have placed another thirty or so on the upper wall and thirty occupy each side of the gate (for a total of sixty). These are armed with crossbows, burning pitch, fire hoops and other incendiary devices.

Refer to the stat blocks above if the party attempts to force the gate.

SOUTH GATE

The south gate is in far better shape than the north. Where it intersects with the wall, it is in very good order. The gate itself is arched, thirty feet wide and eighteen feet tall. The tunnel cuts through with few obstructions. It is the most commonly used gate and the road here shows all the normal signs of traffic.

TRACKING: If a ranger checks for recent traffic, a successful DC 10 Survival check reveals that no wagons or carts have passed through on the road in several months, not since late spring, as far as the signs reveal. Roll a second DC 10 Survival check; if successful, this check reveals the signs of large bare feet. If the ranger succeeds in a knowledge check on the tracks, he or she can tell with a certainty that the tracks were made by a human or humanoid type creature that stands roughly ten feet tall and is very heavy.

The tracks of course belong to the stone giants who have taken up residence in the wall. They have moved down from the Bergrucken Mountains in search of more interesting hunting grounds, and settled upon the Great Wall, for its stone facade and massive size appealed to them. Now they occupy the gate.

They have settled upon the sides and top of the Great Wall, constructing huge towers of stone into their homes.

The gate comes into view, wide and tall, with no obvious obstructions. It leads into a tunnel that passes beneath the Great Wall, and the tunnel looks to be at least a hundred feet long. The wall and gate are in amazingly

good condition and show only the slightest signs of age. The mortar has chipped away, some stones are cracked, and the wall has settled, making it dip here and there. Pillars of stone stand out from the wall; some are very high, and some are attached to the wall. They appear incongruous with the greater edifice, almost as if they were stalagmites, grown from the wall itself.

The pillars are stone giant homes. Stone giants prefer the sun, wind and rain to the cold dark of the underground. They live



upon escarpments, ledges and the edges of high mountain cliffs. When they build their homes, they stack rocks one upon the other, using their rock shaping ability to meld the stones together. These pillars are easy to climb for a stone giant, with ledges wrapping around the pillar until they get to the uppermost heights, where the stone giant itself perches, melding with the stone upon which he sits. There they rest, watching the world unfold.

There are nine of these pillars visible. From the top of the wall (if someone should brave it) there are a full 23 of them. Six are unoccupied.

SPOTTING THE GIANTS

There are seventeen stone giants in and around the gate, some on the far side, and some on this side. A successful DC 15 Nature check will allow the party to know how stone giants live, and know that these oddly shaped pillars are the homes of such creatures.

Anyone studying the pillars may attempt a DC 12 Perception check to spot the creatures sitting upon their ledges. It is difficult as they do not move except to breathe, and even that is in long, shallow breaths that are almost impossible to discern.

The stone giants keep their personal wealth, always in the guise of gems or melded precious metals, upon their highest ledge, where they themselves sit. Here they place the treasure into the stone. Anyone looking may attempt a DC 14 Perception check to successfully spot some of these treasures on one of the pillars glinting on high.

FORCING THE GATE

If the party desires to force the gate and battle the giants they may do so. In this case at least half of the seventeen giants eventually become involved and join the fray, many simply hurling stones from above.

GIANT, STONE X 17 (N Huge Giant) HP 126 (HD 11d12+55), AC 17, Spd 40ft. Str 23 Dex 15 Con 20 Int 10 Wis 12 Cha 9. Perception 14 (+4). Athletics +12. Hurled Cow +9 (4d6; 60/240) or rock +9 (4d10+6; 60/240ft). SA Darkvision 60ft, Stone Camouflage, Rock Catching (DC 10 Dex). A greater stone giant can use the 4th-level transmutation spell Stone Shape at will, as a spell-like ability. If a stone is larger than 5 feet in all dimensions, they can target individual 5-foot sections, working over the entire larger stone in this manner, with each 5 foot section requiring one standard action to shape. This ability does not affect the Challenge or XP value of the giant.

THE FIVE CHALLENGES

Stone giants are not evil, nor particularly violent. However, they do love to gamble. When they see the party approaching, their leader, the largest of the giants who lives upon the top of the wall, takes note. He immediately determines that the party might offer him some form of entertainment. He watches them for a short while and waits to see what they do.

If they proceed to pass through the wall as a group, he breaks free of his ledge and begins to climb down to confront them. He moves slowly, with a methodical pace.

If they set up camp, he waits until the following day to come down and stop them.

If they send a scout through he waits until the main party begins passing through and climbs down to stop them.

If the party sees him first and wishes to parlay, he comes down from on high to parlay.

In any case, he attempts to come down to stop the party and challenge them to a contest. Read or paraphrase the following:

The highest of the dozen pillars stands directly over the gate, lashed by wind and rain. From its highest point, a figure breaks free and begins to climb down the pillar. He is tall, thin, well muscled and agile. The rock proves little challenge to him. His descent is methodical, though far more rapid than expected. In short order a large stone giant, some eleven feet tall stands before the gate, blocking your entry to the tunnel beyond.

The giant hails the party and asks them to stop. He is not even vaguely curious about their mission, and does not ask any personal questions about them or it. He talks slowly, and shows no obvious signs of aggression. His voice is deep and full. Read or paraphrase the following:

“This gate is mine - as are the walls as far as I can see from my perch above - and you cannot pass, for it is closed to you. But I am feeling generous today and will make a wager with you. I’ll wager you the gate’s passage that you cannot overcome five simple challenges. If you win, you may pass unmolested. If you lose, the gate remains closed and you can go north where the hobgoblins live, or south and climb the impassable mountains.”

When queried what his terms are, he says that to pass through the gates, the party must best him at four challenges simultaneously, and a fifth challenge after the four are completed. If they succeed, they can pass without harm. If they fail, they must move on their way.

By this time the other giants have come to join the leader, or have gathered on the walls above to watch the players tackle the challenge.

PLAYING THE CHALLENGES: The challenges are not designed to kill the party, nor make it impossible to get through the gate and tunnel. The giant’s true purpose is an afternoon of entertainment. They fully intend to allow the party, wagons and all, to pass unmolested so long as the characters offer them no true violence. If the party attacks the giant, at least half the other giants come to join the brawl.

The giant presents the first four challenges to the party, holding the fifth for last, as it is the most dangerous. If asked, he says just that. The challenges are: 1) One of the party must climb the wall

to the top taking with them a magic jar; 2) Someone must move the stone that blocks the tunnel; 3) Someone must wrestle the giant; 4) Someone must retrieve a gem from beneath the wall, 5) A nest of cockatrices have taken up residence in one of the pillars, they must be cleaned out.

DIVINING THE GIANT'S INTENTION: Any spell or ability that allows characters to determine what others are thinking or feeling reveals that the giants mean them no true harm but desire entertainment only. Similarly, a successful DC 10 Perception check will reveal the same.

THE DROVERS: The drovers are clearly not equipped to fight, or in any other way engage the giants. During the encounter they stay close to the wagons and carts. If for some reason combat breaks out most flee but the wagoners on the princess's wagon do stay with the wagon, trying to get her to safety. They do not run far, returning after the combat is over. Assuming the characters take up the challenges, the drovers remain at their wagons, terrified, but holding their own. They help the characters if the opportunity presents itself.

NOTE: The challenges themselves are designed to engage all the party members. It is best not to run them separately, but rather all together. The rogue should be climbing the wall and fighting the air elemental while the fighter and fighter types are wrestling the giant and the wizard and cleric are moving the stone. In this way no one at the table is sitting still, bored while someone else is completing a challenge.

CLIMBING THE WALL

The first challenge involves climbing the wall. Someone must begin at the bottom, next to the arched gateway and climb to the top. The climb itself is about 140 feet, and on the surface does not look terribly difficult. The wall itself is made of large blocks of stone, quarried from the Bleached Hills in the west and mortared together. There are plenty of cracks in the stone, dissolved mortar and broken rocks to allow rogues and rangers to find ready foot and hand holds.

The challenges lie in the wall's height, and in the air elemental that has taken up residence upon the wall above.

HEIGHT: The wall is 140 feet high. Rangers and rogues are able to climb the wall with a successful DC 8 Athletics or Acrobatics check; anyone else must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity check every twenty feet. Because the rocks are old and loose, it is easy enough to make the climb. Pulling out sections of the wall for hand and toe holds the greatest challenge, though the challenge per attempt is a successful DC 6 Strength check.

The danger comes from sections of the wall falling down and taking the character(s) with them. At least three times during the climb, allow the characters to make a successful DC 10 Dexterity check. If they fail, a section of the wall falls away and they fall with it. For each twenty feet they slide and tumble down the walls, they take 1d6 points of damage. Every twenty feet they must make another DC 10 Dexterity check to grab ahold of the wall and arrest their fall.

Do not repeat these steps. At no point should they make more than three Dexterity checks, no matter how many times or how far they fall down the wall.

ELEMENTAL: There is an air elemental that dwells upon the side wall. It inhabits the crevices between the stones, moving back and forth along the surface of the wall, utterly undetected from below or above. It is extremely playful and completely unaware of any other creature's inability to fly or ride the winds.

ELEMENTAL (AIR), LESSER (*N Medium Elemental*) HP 10 (HD 2d8), AC 12, Spd 90ft (fly). Str 13 (+2) Dex 14 (+2) Con 13 (+2) Int 8 (-1) Wis 12 (+1) Cha 7 (-2). Perception 11(+1). Slam +2 (1d8 bludgeoning). Immune to poison. Challenge 1/2 (100 XP).

As soon as someone reaches sixty feet up the wall, the elemental takes notice and moves toward the individual. Allow that person a DC 13 Perception check. If successful, they notice moss or lichen moving in a very deliberate straight line pattern meaning either something odd is afoot, or a very tiny and very focused straight line wind is moving along the surface of the wall.

The elemental moves to the characters' locations, stopping directly in front of their face. It then proceeds to kick out dust and mortar between stones, making the wall weaker. The elemental continues to do this for four full rounds as the characters either goes up or down. The characters should be made to fear whatever is pursuing them.

After four rounds, the elemental detaches itself from the wall and harasses the players with wind by changing into a whirlwind and picking up the characters. Once picked up, it brings the character back down the wall forty feet, and leaves them hanging on the wall again. The elemental does this until reduced to half hit points, killed, or trapped in the bottle.

THE BLUE BOTTLE: The bottle contains an extra-dimensional space that mimics the elemental plane of air. If opened within the proximity of the air elemental, the creature is immediately drawn into the bottle. Whoever is holding the bottle can feel the power of the creature as it passes into the bottle, in in-rush of air which creates a cacophonous sound, vastly increases the pressure in the room, and makes it impossible to breathe for a few seconds as the area gets unbelievably cold in a 30-foot diameter; as soon as the noise stops the elemental is contained and the pressure, temperature and air in the room quickly returns to normal. It remains there until the bottle is opened and the creature summoned. Whoever possesses the blue bottle can command the air elemental. Though the creature will not fight to the death for the bottle's owner, it will follow simple commands.

COMBAT

This challenge involves fighting the stone giant. He takes four stones and sets them on the ground in a square 50 feet wide on each side, clearly marking out an arena. One is considered thrown out of the box if they have one foot or half their torso forced out.

This is a straightforward grappling and unarmed combat challenge. Any form of combat is permitted other than use of weapons. The giant will punch an opponent, but all damage taken is pummeling, and when a PC reaches zero hit points, the giant chooses to render them unconscious. Under normal circumstances, a creature cannot grapple or shove another creature who is more than one size larger; in this case, it is permitted if at least two PCs remain standing. Each PC makes the appropriate check under the grappling and shoving rules found in the core *Fifth Edition Player's Manual*, and if both succeed, they win the contest. If even one fails, however, they lose the contest for that round.

MOVE A GIANT STONE

The giant says: "This challenge shows you the true face of the living stone. On yonder road stands a great boulder that must be moved. Be gentle, for rocks possess more spirit than you might guess."

This challenge requires the party to move a large block of stone that lies in the middle of the tunnel. The giants set it here in order to block easy passage through the tunnel, and because they like to make people move stones. The catch is that the stone is a *feliul stone*, a stone possessed by the spirit of a fallen dwarf.

Approaching the stone reveals its great weight and the absolute necessity of moving it before the wagons will fit in the tunnel. It is about twelve feet in diameter and perfectly round. It weighs several tons. Due to its great weight it has settled into the ground about six inches, pushing the flagstones of the road down where ever it touches.

The characters can attempt to move it through brute force but this is not likely to happen. Pushing the stone out of the divot it has caused will be nearly impossible. Its weight alone makes moving it hard and requires a successful DC 22 Strength check. Character may attempt to build machines to leverage it out, and, though it is possible, it should be very difficult. Tools exist in the wagons, but no lumber is anywhere around.

The stone is of course living, and any detect magic or similar scrying spell reveals the spirit within. The spirit is of a dwarf, and is good and therefore not subject to turning as evil *feliul stones* are. However, the stone is highly susceptible to suggestion spells, commands, and even influence from charisma based classes, such as the bard.

Refer to New Monsters below for the full monster.

Killing the monster is possible, though difficult. If it is killed, it shatters.

FELIUL STONE (*Neutral evil large undead*) HP 157 (HD 16d10+64), AC 17, Spd. 20ft., Str 20 (+5), Dex 8 (-2) Con 18 (+4) Int 7 (-3) Wis 10 (0) Cha 7 (-3). Perception 10 (0). Slam +8 (4d10+5), Stone Spray (recharge 5-6, 30ft. cone, 12d6, DC 14 Con half). SA: Darkvision 120ft, Immune Poison, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious, resist slashing and piercing from non-

magical weapons, disadvantage on Wisdom saves, plus will parlay on DC 12 Charisma (persuasion) check.

The giant is indifferent as to how this task is completed, whether the characters resort to killing the stone or convincing it to move on its own. However, if the party magically moves the stone without having to kill it, the creature rolls out of the way of the tunnel, heading due east, in the direction of the party. It takes up a new roost on the far side of the gate.

As the stone rolls out of the tunnel it leaves in its wake four figurines of wondrous power. They are *silver raven*, *onyx dog*, *obsidian steed*, and *serpentine owl*.

RETRIEVE THE GEM

This challenge involves exploring a short tunnel and retrieving a gem from a crypt. The tunnel is too small for the stone giants, and worse, it is guarded by a banshee. Within the crypt is a sarcophagus containing the body of a woman, buried long ago. Beneath her feet is a small chest filled with rubies.

AREA 1: THE DOOR

The door to the crypt is made of stone, and is set on two hinges on the inside of the room, with one heavy iron bar on the outside of the door set in two brackets. The bar slides into the brackets, locking the door from the outside.

To open the door, the bar must be slid back. It requires a successful DC 10 strength check. The check may be made three times by the same person, but each time a new check is done, the DC increases by 1. When the bar is broken free of its moorings and slides back, it does so with a horrendous noise, as the metal grinds against the metal brackets. Flakes of iron and rust fall to the floor. As soon as the iron bar is moved the door settles a little, making securing it with the bar very difficult.

The door swings inward.

AREA 2: THE CRYPT

The crypt is forty feet long and thirty feet wide. The walls, floor and ceiling are all made of stone. Four half round pillars built into the walls mark the room with its only décor, aside from a chair sitting in the corner of the room, to the right of the head of the sarcophagus that dominates the room's center.

The door swings wide reluctantly, dragging on the floor where it settled after the bar's release. A cold, dry air wafts out, carrying with it the telltale scent of marigolds on a late spring day; warmth and sun come to mind. Before you stands a sparsely decorated stone crypt. A chair with red velvet cushions sits in the far corner facing a large stone sarcophagus, upon which lies the frieze of a noble woman carved into the lid.

The room is haunted by a banshee, the spirit of the woman in the sarcophagus. She lingers on the edge of sight and is visible to any cleric or paladin upon a successful DC 12 Wisdom check. She is sitting in the chair looking forward with a vacant stare.

If anyone sits in the chair while she is there, they feel a bitter cold creep through their bones. After 4 rounds they suffer 1d4 points of damage.

The banshee cannot see anyone in the room until they touch the sarcophagus lid. As soon as they do, she is alerted to them and sees them as shadows of hell coming to drag her body to Aufstrag. She begins a low keening sound, a moan that anyone can hear on a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check.

NOTE: The banshee has not fully materialized at this point and doesn't until someone reaches their hand into the sarcophagus. So she cannot be turned as of yet.

Removing the lid is not difficult; it is surprisingly light and unattached. It is held in place by stone shelving on the inside of the lid. It must be lifted off the tomb. Doing so requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Anyone can attempt this action three times. The DC increases by 2 for each subsequent attempt.

As soon as the lid is free and clear of the tomb, the banshee begins to howl and moan. Anyone and everyone can hear the sound. Her voice is deep, filled with despair tinged with rage. The temperature in the room falls precipitously. Within a few rounds the noise is a loud keening that begins to affect everyone's concentration. Any hero who fails a DC 17 Constitution save suffers disadvantage to initiative checks.

AREA 7: THE SARCOPHAGUS

As soon as someone reaches their hand into the tomb the banshee materializes in the chair. She howls like madness and attacks the party. Now she can be turned.

BANSHEE (CE medium undead), HP 54 (HD 12d8), AC 12, Spd 40ft. (fly) Str 10 Dex 16 (+3) Con 10 Int 8 (-1) Wis 10 Cha 16 (+3). Perception 10. SA darkvision 60ft, brute, Necrotic touch attack +3 (2d6+6). SA: Detect life, incorporeal movement, horrifying visage (DC 13 Wis save or be frightened for one minute; new save each turn), wail (1/day; DC 13 Con save or drop to 0 hit points. Success = 3d6 psychic damage).

If the banshee is turned she only leaves for ten rounds, at which point she returns to the chair. If there are people still mucking around in the sarcophagus, she attacks again.

Inside the sarcophagus is the wrinkled body of a woman, dressed in finery that has long since lost its luster. She wears no jewelry, but beneath her feet is a small metal box. The box is unlocked and contains 25 rubies. Each of the dark, red gems scintillates in the light (assuming there is a torch, lantern or magic item), which seems to bounce around the rubies' cut sides until it slows and passes away.

MISSY'S RUBIES: Each of the rubies is magical. If held up in any light the ruby captures that light and tosses it about the gems. Anyone unaware of the ruby's properties must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw every round that they are in possession of the gem, or be charmed by the gem. Characters thus charmed will refuse to remove it, or to allow anyone else to remove it,

even unto violence against their allies. Characters thus affected are entitled to a new save at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect upon themselves with a success, but if they continue to possess the gem at the start of their next turn, the process begins anew each round.

If the characters take one ruby (and one only), and bring it to the giant, they have succeeded the challenge. When they show him the ruby he tells them to keep it as a reward for the challenge. At this point, the ruby's power to charm its bearer fades and the hero is no longer compelled to return it.

If they take more than one, they fail. Even if they hide the rubies the giant will know, as his affinity for stones and gems in particular allows him knowledge of the stones. If they have done this, he hints that perhaps the creature that dwells in the crypt has suffered too much and it would be a shame to relieve her of all her gems. If they opt to return the gems he lets them. However, they will have to fight the banshee again if they put their arms in the sarcophagus.

EXTERMINATORS

The giant says: "Upon the wall above lies a pillar of stone, fashioned by one of our Masons not long ago. It has become infested with wilderland birds. The challenge is for you to clean out the nest. But be wary, for their bite is like poison to us and stone to you."

The fifth and final challenge is brought up only after the rest of the challenges are completed, whether successfully or not. The largest and tallest of the pillars stands upon the top center of the wall. It is sixty feet high and forty feet round at the base, narrowing to thirty feet at the top. A pack of six nasty cockatrices have taken up residence beneath the top stone. The stone giant desires the characters to clean it out.

Anyone can attempt a DC 15 Wisdom (Nature) check for knowledge of stone giants and poisons. Upon a successful check they know that the only poison a stone giant fears is the bite of a cockatrice. Where it turns a normal man to stone, for a stone giant it destroys all their affinity with stone; they cannot shape stone in any way, and even the touch of it is repulsive. For this reason the stone giants will not clean out the nest themselves.

The characters can all act together now. There are six cockatrices living in a small cleft beneath the uppermost stone. They infested the pillar soon after it was made, nested, had young ones and now dwell there, leaving periodically to hunt. The stone giant who dwelt here was bitten, went insane and fled into the wilderness.

There is rock shelving that leads all the way around the pillar to the top so that the characters can walk, single file up the pillar. It is sixty feet high. The top of the pillar is flat, made of four flat, very smooth stones stacked one on top of the other. The upper most stone weighs about 300 lbs, and is not melded to the others. There is a cleft here. This is where the cockatrices live.

COCKATRICE, X 6 (Unaligned small monstrosity), HP 36 (HD 8d6+8), AC 10, Spd 20ft., 40ft fly, Str 8(-1) Dex 11

(+1) Con 12 (+1) Int 8 (-1) Wis 11 (+1) Cha 5 (-3). Perception 11. Bite +1, 1d4+1 piercing followed by DC 10 Con save or target is petrified, SA darkvision 60ft.

END OF A STONE'S WAGER

Once the characters have destroyed the nest and climbed back down the pillars, the giant, who watched the entire battle from the Wall, approaches the party. Read or paraphrase the following:

The giant approaches you from the wall, an ear-to-ear grin on his face. "I congratulate you, my friends, and thank you for your good-spirited nature. You are free to pass through my tunnels, and absolved of any trespasses you may have committed in my home. I wish you good journeys, but I must warn you:

Beware the road south, for the spirit of fire possesses some, and they have built Hell Furnaces upon the road."

He gives each of you a flask of water collected at the base of the shaman's pillar. "This drink," he says, "has special and magical healing properties. May it bring you succor in times of need."

THE GIANT'S WATER

In game terms, the water in the flasks has little taste but remains cold, regardless of how long the heroes keep it. In addition, each draught of water (five per flask) allows a hero to instantly roll one hit die and heal the result in damage, but the rolled hit die is not expended, nor does the character need to be resting to gain this benefit.

WINTER'S PROMISE

If you are picking up this adventure from *A Stone's Wager*, there are several items that the party should have acquired that may help them out. The *healing water*, *Missy's Ruby*, the *four figurines of wondrous power: silver raven, onyx dog, obsidian steed, and serpentine owl* and the *blue bottle* with the air elemental in it. These items are not necessary to successfully complete *Trial by Fire* or *A Winter's Promise*, but they may be very helpful.

If characters have not played in the preceding adventure, the items listed above should be doled out. Explain to the party that they recently passed through a gate and tunnel held by storm giants by overcoming several challenges, and not only were they allowed to pass, but they were given these magical items.

The adventure begins just west of the Great Wall. It is a day's long journey to Ashflat where they can resupply, hire guides or what have you.

THE WEATHER BREAKS

After the party passes through the gate, they officially enter the wilderness, leaving behind them the last vestiges of the settled lands. The weather breaks and the cold arrives. The weather is important, as it sets the stage for the coming encounter with the frost giants.



As the Great Wall slowly fades behind, and the road pulls ever closer toward the mountains, a cold wind picks up. Brought on currents from the mountains, the temperature seems to drop within a few hours. The sky remains a pale blue and the sun recedes in the distance, seeming smaller than it truly is. The drovers, shivering in the chill, pull cloaks from packs or blankets from beneath their benches, wrapping their heads and bodies in warmth.

It is a day's journey to the town of Ashflat.

ASHFLAT

This small town exists in the middle of the wilds, falling prey to all manner of beasts from the woods, the mountains and the plains. Her people are rough around the edges, but tough and resilient. Here, the weak die.

There is no one ruler here. However, one strong arm or the other takes charge of the town's defenses, and the town has somehow managed to build a wooden wall around the bulk of its houses. Her streets are dirt, and muddy in the rainy seasons. The buildings are a wide mixture of wood, stone, wood and stone and mud houses. There are several small taverns, but a large two floor affair in the center of town is called the Frost Giant's Rift.

The townsfolk are friendly, always looking for fresh faces to buy and sell their wares to. It is the perfect place for the party to resupply, and the only place left to them. Almost anything can be bought in the town.

LUTKE

Assuming the characters enter the town and do not wholly bypass it, they pique the interest of a number of people, not the least of which are the scouts for a bandit troop. One of these, Lutke by name, watches them for a while and tries to find the most agreeable individual, approaching them while they are alone.

He approaches in a very friendly manner, and asks only general questions. In the course of the conversation he drops careful hints about his skill as a tracker and hunter as well as his voluminous knowledge about the Hollows Road. He clearly knows they are headed south (as everyone in town does), so he mentions that moving wagons south in the winter months is dangerous.

Around this point he offers his services as a guide. If they take him up on it, he needs only a few hours to settle his affairs, pay his tabs, and get enough food for the journey. He knows the country and is happy to guide them as far as the headwaters of the East Fork Run. The cost will only be 25gp.

Lutke is actually a bandit scout and he has set up an ambush in the Mettlock Hills. When he mentions he has gone to settle his affairs the party can attempt to follow him to see where he goes. He is very careful, however, and following him in this unknown town will require a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check, barring magical means. He goes to one of the small stores, pays a tab and tells the store owner to let his Captain know that he'll have the caravan in the Mettlock Hills in 8-10 days, where they can then ambush them.

LUTKE *Infiltrator (NG medium human scout), HP36 (8d8), AC 17. Spd 30ft. Str 17 (+4) Dex 17 (+4) Con 16 (+3) Int 8 Wis 11 Cha 9. Perception 10. Morning star +4 (2d8+2) or Javelin +4 (2d6+2; 1d6+2 - 30ft/120ft). SA darkvision 60ft, brute, surprise attack (+2d6). In battle he uses a +2 longsword and a dagger coated in poison (on a successful attack, make a DC 15 Constitution save or be poisoned for ten rounds). He*

wears studded leather armor and wears a +1 ring of protection. On his horse he carries a shortbow with 36 arrows in a bundle. He has a small pack he carries with four days' worth of food, a water flask and flint and steel. He keeps 89gp and a 100gp gem in a pouch hidden inside his shirt.

TO THE METTLOCK HILLS

This journey to the Mettlock Hills takes eight days from Ashflat. The road is bumpy but sound, the ground slowly freezing over as the weather continues to be cold and stay cold. Every few days snow flurries hound the party. Read or paraphrase the following:

The rocky slopes of the Bergrucken curve to the south and the road follows them; to the north and west the heavy eaves of the Blaudun Timberland hem you in. The pale blue sky is lost beneath a rolling blanket of clouds. The temperature drops precipitously, and the light mist in the air turns to flurries of snow, promising a freezing night and a long journey ahead.

It is unnecessary to cover each day in detail. But cover each day with small events, such as setting up camp, post guards, etc. In the course of the journey the drovers continue to prove their worth, working very hard to keep the wagons on the road and the caravan moving. Four events are listed below to use or discard as necessary; these may help supply real context to the journey and the great distance it covers.

1) CROSSING SMALL RIVER: The caravan comes to a small river winding down the mountain slopes. It spills into a gully that crosses the valley floor and meanders to the forest beyond. It is not deep, but recent rain or snow has increased its depth to about three feet. The road vanishes into the water.

Lutke explains that the bottom is very muddy and pushing these wagons is going to be extremely difficult, so the more hands on deck the better.

Getting the wagons across requires each team (or the characters) to dismount and push the wagon through the muddy water. The first wagon requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to push it through. Assisting a person that pushes the wagon allows the check to be made with advantage. One individual should make the check. For each wagon or cart that goes through the water increase the DC by 1 as the bottom becomes muddier. A failed Strength check means the wagon is stuck in the mud and the characters are going to have to unhitch a team of mules and oxen and hitch it to the moribund wagon to get it out.

Anyone on the ground pushing must make a successful DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the water while pushing the wagon. The water is extremely cold and deals 1d4 points of cold damage per each round the character remains within. Climbing out against the current and through the mud requires a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

2) WAGON WHEEL BREAKS: In the course of the journey one of the wagon wheels on the main wagon breaks; four of the spokes shatter while going over a rock. As the wagon lurches to a halt

so does the caravan. Everyone up front must be alerted to the wagon's stopping as well. The wheel snaps with a loud crack and the wagon crashes to the ground, and the princess inside lets out an involuntary shout. Any characters near the wagon must make a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check in order to hear her shout.

Repairing the wheel is not easy as the wagon is heavy. As the drovers move about the wagon, lifting it up to fit the new wheel, the princess moves, requiring the same check as above. The new wheel is pulled from the other wagon's supplies, the axle greased and it is put on in only a few hours.

During this time Lutke wants to take a scouting trip and asks several characters to go with him. He explains that they are deep in bandit country and they should keep a sharp look out. He takes the group and travels in a wide circle around the caravan.

3) TRACK BECOMES LOST: A heavy snow falls, accompanied by powerful wind, and snow soon covers the narrow plain from mountains to forest. Lutke loses the track in the drifting snow and wind. He rides back to the column and asks for assistance in finding it. If asked about going off road (as it is clear by the terrain where they should be going), he explains that the ground is hard enough to take the wagons, but off the track the going will be very difficult and they risk losing a wagon wheel or axle.

Anyone who goes out with Lutke must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check to find the track. The more eyes on the problem, the better (if at least three characters with proficiency in Survival search, all gain advantage).

This encounter allows the party to establish a bond of trust with Lutke.

4) DROVER BREAKS LEG: The ground has become moist with rain and snow melt. At some point a wagon becomes stuck. The drover dismounts and, taking a long pole from the wagon, begins to leverage it out. The team pulls forward, the wagon lurches, the pole snaps with a loud crack and the wagon rolls back, catching his leg and crushing it.

Allow any character near the drover to make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw to pull the drover out of harm's way.

If his leg is broken, someone is going to have to set it; A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) save will allow someone to make a splint for the leg if a healing spell isn't available.

His movement is cut in half and he'll be largely useless in walking and setting up camp. He volunteers to cut firewood, grease axles, etc.

NOTE: Lutke joins in and helps in any and all of the encounters. His personality comes out. He is neutral good, being kind and attentive. He takes watch and sets to any burdens asked of him. Assuming the characters are kind to him, he begins to lose his desire to set them up, and is having second thoughts about taking them to the Mettlock Pass.

WEATHER

At this point in the journey winter weather settles in. It begins snowing off and on, and does so for many days until a good two to three inches with much deeper drifts blanket the ground.

The caravan is not necessarily slowed, as the oxen are well versed in this weather and unaffected by the light snow on the ground. Even gathering firewood from the forests to the north is easy enough for the party.

NOTE: The snow sets up the coming encounter with the frost giants.

AMBUSH

Lutke sent word ahead to set an ambush in the Mettlock hills, where the road doubles back to the east and enters a very narrow valley only a mile or so across. Here his troop of 25 bandits lies in wait.

If the characters have treated him decently, Lutke has a complete change of heart and desires only to keep the party from being attacked.

As they approach the canyon, on day nine from Ashflat, he calls a halt so that they can rest and then pass through the valley in one long day, and not be forced to spend the night there. That night he attempts to slip out of camp. He uses all his ranger abilities to hide and sneak in the wilderness. He takes his horse and heads rapidly south to shy off the bandits.

He meets the troop about midnight and tells them to not attack the caravan. It's too dangerous. The bandits will have none of it and order him to return to the caravan to keep the party from becoming suspicious.

The characters may discover he's missing, either through seeing him leave, or checking his bedroll. If they do, it is up to Lutke to keep himself alive. He will come clean if forced to, but his desire is to just skip the whole ugly incident. If questioned, or if he goes undiscovered, he tells them that he has scouted the pass for the morrow's ride and discovered bandits on the road. He then suggests an alternate route that will put them out of their element, but should put them back on track beyond the Eil Wood.

The alternate route bypasses the bandits by placing them on a trek that leads into the Blaudun Timberland, north of the Mettlock hills.

THE SHORTCUT

The shortcut takes the caravan through a narrow forest track that hardly accommodates the wagons. It is dark, dreary, snow drifts against the trees, and it is very slow going. The drovers have to leave the wagons constantly and clear the trek of bramble, limbs and other forest debris.

The caravan must spend at least one night in the forest. At some point on the journey they pass under or camp beneath a feulk nest. This huge, amorphous creature occupies the top

of trees. When viewed from the ground it looks like little more than tangles of vines. Any ranger or druid might detect it on a successful DC 15 Nature check. Regardless of whether the creature is detected or not, it attacks the party, dropping huge tendrils down from above to grab up the nearest mule or oxen, following that with attacks on the party.

FEULK (Unaligned large monstrosity) HP 132 (HD 15d10+45), AC 15 (natural armor), Spd 0ft. Str 18 (+4) Dex 16 (+3) Con 17 (+3) Int 2 (-4) Wis 12 (+1) Cha 6 (-2). Perception +4, Stealth +6, Survival +4. Bite +6 (1d6+4; must grapple first). Tentacle +6 (10ft., 1d8+4, plus 1d4 acid; DC 15 Strength save or be grappled, restrained and suffer 1d8+4 bludgeoning and 1d4 acid damage each round, plus automatic bite attempt. New save at the end of each of the victim's turns) SA darkvision 60ft, immune to acid, cold, poison, charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, unconscious, resistant to bludgeoning, vulnerable to fire, multiattack (3 tentacles).

NOTE: The feulk should kill at least one mule or ox. This impairs the wagon's rate of speed as they enter the next round and the frost giant encounter.

TREASURE: If killed, the feulk has 1000gp in coin and gems; a set of +3 leather armor, four spells for a wizard or sorcerer, and a horn of goodness.

See the **New Monsters** section at the end of this work for a full description of the Feulk, and **New Magic Items** for the horn of goodness.

NOTE: At least one drover should be killed in this encounter. Later the other drovers bury him or at least give services, requesting the cleric to officiate and perhaps sanctify the ground.

FORCING THE PASS

If they force the pass they are attacked by the mounted bandits. The bandits attack in two groups spread out, and their intent is to scatter the wagons and the party to keep everyone from supporting each other. They attempt to kill some, but not all of the oxen, to slow or stop the wagons.

Lutke fights for the party against the bandits, unless he was horribly mistreated.

BANDIT CAPTAIN KABAL (NE Human Ranger 8) HP 55 (HD 8d10), AC 17, Spd 30ft. Str 16 Dex 18 Con 14 Int 12 Wis 12 Cha 9. Perception 15(+4). Athletics +7, Bowyer +5, Nature +5, Stealth +8, Survival +8. Sv: Str +7, Dex +8. Warhammer +9 (1d8+7), Longbow +8 (1d8+4; 150ft/600ft). SA Favored Enemy (Orcs, Giants), Natural Explorer, Dueling, Colossus Slayer (+1d8 if enemy below hp max; 1/turn), Primeval Awareness, Extra Attack. Spellcasting: 1-level (4 slots) – Cure Wounds, Ensnaring Strike, Hunter's Mark; 2-level (3 slots) – Cordon of Arrows, Spike Growth. He wears chain mail armor and carries a +2 warhammer, ring of poison resistance, longbow, 20 arrows, pack, hunting gear, 12gp.

BANDITS X24 (NE Medium Human): HD 2D8+2 (HP 12), AC 16, Mv 30ft. Str 12 (+1) Dex 12 (+1) Con 12 (+1) Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10. Treasure: 1d6cp. Each wears chain shirt and shield, carries a battleaxe, and has 10-20gp worth of jewelry and coin.

NOTE: As with the prior encounter, at least one drover should be killed in this encounter. Later the other drovers bury him or at least give services, requesting the cleric to officiate and perhaps sanctify the ground.

CONFRONTATION WITH LUTKE: Lutke is (or was) a bandit. His back story is simple. He's fallen on hard times and has joined this bandit crew, as he can track and hunt. His job was to lure the caravan into the pass where it could be sacked. If the party has been truthful, and the paladin (or any character) acted nobly toward him, then Lutke has a complete change of heart and desires to convert to whatever deity is worshipped. He asks for no mercy, but swears his faithful service if given the chance.

If not, and it looks like death is in the offing for the hapless ranger, he'll try to escape into the wilds at the first opportunity.

LAST LEG

Whether they pass through the forest or go through the Mettlock hills, the next stage of the journey takes them south, pass the Eil Wood to the Ruins of Pendelion. This should take two days. Two more days past the ruins, they come to the Wet Fork Run, which is a small river spanned by an old stone bridge.

The journey should allow them time to heal from their previous encounter and make what adjustments they need to the wagons. At this point their food may be running out as well. Encounters on the road are left entirely to the CK's discretion. But as always, the drovers behave well. Read or paraphrase the following.

The track winds across the snow covered plains beneath the empty sky until it comes to a stone bridge spanning a small river. It is old, as are many such constructs in these lands, but well built and seems sturdy enough. Beyond it lies the open plain, free of mountains and forests, and the last leg of your journey to the south.

It is a two-day journey to Twin Forks, but the caravan is never slated to get there.

THE FROST GIANTS

Frost giants live in a realm beyond the northern wind where they mock the sun and sky, and revel in a hatred of all things good and pure. In their realms of ice and snow they brew storms; they conjure the cold, harness the wind and rain, and stir it all into a maelstrom great enough to carry them into the realms of mortal men. Once they harvest their brew they unleash it upon the world. Storms lash the lands and sea, while ice and snow, and wind and hail all pummel the world, and these unnatural blizzards bring the giants upon their backs.

At such times the giants adorn themselves in armor of bone plate, leather, gold and silver. They take up weapons that rend and hack, that crush tissue and break bones. These giants love helms as well. They adorn them with tusks, claws, wings, and fangs. They carry horns to sound the storm and call their comrades and bring terror to their victims. They ride in huge iron sleds drawn by mighty elk that bray at the torment of their masters' lashes. The chariots they carve friezes into, recounting the story of their lives and deeds.

GIANT, FROST (NE Huge Giant) HP 138 (12d12+60) AC 15, Spd 40ft. Str 23 Dex 9 Con 21 Int 9 Wis 10 Cha 12. Perception 13 (+3). Athletics +9. Saves Con +8, Wis +3, Cha +4. Greataxe +9, (3d10+6; 10ft), Rock +9 (4d10+6; 60/240). Immune to cold, Multiattack (2 greataxe).

These giants, above all creatures wild and moribund, are fearless. They have no thought of death, or life, loss or sufferance. They laugh at all things. And this is no maniacal laugh, but rather a jovial side of evil that is rooted deeply in the suffering they bring. For these giants are evil, foul creatures who have no echo of the All Father, but only a design for destruction.

The giants revel in the hunt, knowing their blizzards are bound to catch some in the open. They ride their sleds into the storm seeking signs of any that might be housed therein.

THE STORM

The storm breaks within a few hours after the caravan crosses the bridge. There is little warning of it. It rises from the north, from the timberland, and rolls across the plains like an avalanche.

The first thing the characters notice is a sudden drop in temperature. Shortly thereafter, a wall of clouds, black above and white below, grows on the horizon. However, the storm does seem to be heading in an easterly direction, which means the bulk of it should pass by them. There is a slight chance to outrun it.

Anyone with any knowledge of weather, weather sense, or outdoors (this would include bards, druids and rangers) may make a DC 12 Wisdom check to determine if it is a natural storm or not. If successful they know the storm is not natural. Its source is more elusive, but its speed and sudden appearance are beyond natural weather patterns.

SAFE HARBOR: Lutke, if he is still with the party, imparts the knowledge that there are ruins of a temple a day's ride or more ahead. They could push hard for them and take shelter there.

WAITING OUT THE STORM: Some may suggest that they wait out the storm. While this is possible, any ranger, druid, or naturalist in the group knows that they run a serious danger of losing the livestock if they do so. The animals are not particularly adapted to severe cold weather and tend to hunker down and freeze to death during such storms. Loss of even a few of these beasts could be problematic. For this reason, coupled with the fact that they have a chance to outrun the storm, the characters should vote to move on.

NOTE: If they do not move on, and they hunker down, the nature of the encounter doesn't change. The frost giants strike and try to scatter the herd of oxen and mules first.

The party has about two hours to prepare for the blizzard. When it hits, it is blinding, carrying the following attributes:

- 1) Movement is cut to 10% of normal speed.
- 2) Vision is largely obscured, allowing close up vision of only a few feet. The wagons and horses are visible as shadows up to thirty feet away.
- 3) The oxen are unaffected, but the mules are nervous.
- 4) The carts offer particular problems. They can follow the one wheel in one track of the wagons in front, but the second wheel will be in the snow, this causes them to veer off course every few hundred yards. Furthermore, their movement is slowed to 5% of normal. Where the wagons are going one mile per hour, the carts are only able to travel about 1/2 a mile per hour.

The caravan's tendency is going to be to elongate. As vehicles slow down, and the carts become stuck they have to be cleared out. No one in the front is going to be able to see what is going on in the rear of the caravan. So if it stops, for whatever reason, the front continues to move forward. This exacerbates the problem.

All this should be played up. Use the following short encounters for the snow storm:

1) STUCK WAGON: One of the wagon's wheels falls into a cleft and becomes stuck. The wagon must be pried out of the snowdrift and put back on track. Refer to the Strength check above for the river crossing.

2) DEAD MULE: A mule dies from the effort. The teams must be switched up, with the loads abandoned or moved to other wagons. A character horse can be substituted for the mule.

3) LOST IN THE SNOW: A character becomes temporarily lost in the snow. This should not last long, and should allow them to find the caravan again with a successful DC 12 Survival or Perception check.

4) HYPOTHERMIA: One of the drovers suffers from hypothermia and falls off the wagon. He narrowly avoids being crushed, but the wagon master stops the wagon to help his friend. He can be revived with spells or what not, but should be bundled up, etc. These encounters lead up to the main frost giant attack, which begins with a cart or wagon in the rear of the caravan.

STRAYING CARTS

It is going to be difficult to keep the wagons and carts together. The carts (if there are any left) move very slow, and the deeper the snow gets, the harder time they have. If there are no carts, the wagons suffer the same problems, though not as severe. Each team moves at a different pace, particularly if there are any wounded beasts.

At some point, allow for a cart or wagon to drop behind the column to make sure the caravan elongates. If needed, read or paraphrase the following:

The snow is thick and heavy, and the wind biting. Whatever cover you have does little to stop the storm's sharp sting. Your flesh, your face and hands feel like glass, hard and cold, as if even a wrinkled brow might shatter your visage. Huddled over the saddles or on wagons, you lumber forward, the world barely visible. Somehow you notice, almost by instinct, that the wagons are moving at different paces and the caravan is becoming elongated.

The frost giants are out in the storm, waiting for a cart or wagon to break free from the caravan. As soon as this happens one of them launches forward on his sled, rapidly cutting through the snow to torment, kill, or capture his prey.

NOTE: The frost giants attempt to avoid the party members at first, targeting the drovers and beasts of burden, for these seem more sporting targets, with less fight in them. Anyone that shouts after being cut or wounded delights the giants, and in order to enhance the suffering, they are imparting the open tunnels in the wind and snow, allowing some others in the caravan to hear the tormented cries of the damned. Those at the front of the caravan are just too far removed.

When the giants attack, they do not do so to kill the victim. Rather, they ride by on their sleds and cut them with their long glaives, be it man or beast, whichever offers a more opportune target. Either way, whoever is struck shouts, brays or bellows into the snow, realizing that something is out there.

SPOTTING THE GIANTS: Spotting the giants is entirely possible, as they do not move at superhuman speeds, and aren't particularly concerned about being seen. With a successful DC 12 Wisdom check anyone within fifty feet of the giants has a chance to see the form of the creatures, the huge chariot, and the giant elk.

The giants then follow the victim deeper into the snow, continuing the torment.

Their design is to break up the whole caravan, forcing some members to hunt for the tormented victims, while others plod on or try to circle the wagons. Whenever another member of the caravan breaks off, a second, third or fourth giant strikes that one, attempting to capture, maim or kill their opponents.

CIRCLING THE WAGONS: If for some reason the wagons and carts are circled or kept together, this does not deter the giants. They ride past on their sleds laughing and singing. Whenever they get within fifty feet, they hurl their grapples with rope into the party, trying to pull people and/or beasts of burden over and out of the protective formation. They are not powerful enough to pull over any of the wagons. If they hook one, they drop the grapple, as it might disrupt their sled. Anything pulled into the snow is tormented and used to lure others out.

Eventually the giants storm the wagons, plowing their chariots into the caravan in rampant slaughter, attempting to capture anyone and pull them out into the snow.

THE DROVERS: Clearly the drovers are terrified during the whole encounter. The storm does not hold fear for them but the giants on chariots certainly do. The laughter unnerves them. At this point they have real faith in the party, calling to each other that the party will protect them. This should be used to play upon the emotions of the players involved, to aid the helpless.

GIANT, FROST (NE Huge Giant) HP 138 (12d12+60) AC 16, Spd 40ft. Str 23 Dex 9 Con 21 Int 9 Wis 10 Cha 12. Perception 13 (+3). Athletics +9. Saves Con +8, Wis +3, Cha +4. Greataxe +9, (3d10+6; 10ft), Rock +9 (4d10+6; 60/240). Immune to cold, Multiattack (2 greataxe).

Each giant rides a large chariot-sled. They wear little in the way of clothing, relishing the sting of the air. They may wear some armor, but their power resides in the iron bands upon their arms. These bands each impart a +1 to their AC (already accounted for in stats) and each depicts that giant's accomplishments, creatures they've fought, items they've stolen, people they've tortured, and all the significant events in their lives. These armbands shrink to fit and can be used by mortals, though they carry the memories of the giant who wore them. The exact effects of these memories are left to the CK to determine.

They also carry a haunch of food, frozen and uncooked, a large ten gallon flask of beer, four grapples with 100 feet of stout coiled rope, and a variety of weapons. They prefer dull cleaving weapons, glaives, bardiches, axes and the like. Each wagon also carries chains and manacles for those they wish to carry back to beyond the north wind.

One of the giants also possesses a great horn, that when sounded correctly, summons a storm of vengeance. See New Magical Items for more information.

SAFE HARBOR

The caravan, assuming it was traveling through the storm, covered a great deal of ground. Even as the giants strike, they are drawing near the ruins of the temple that Lutke (assuming he was spared and remained with the caravan) revealed to them.

As the rear of the caravan becomes enmeshed in chaos, the scouts or vanguard spy the ruins of buildings. Read or paraphrase the following:

Topping a rise, a long slope slides down before you, covered in a thin blanket of snow. The snow and wind break enough to allow the far side of the valley to come into view, along with the frozen waterway and the ruins of a large complex. An L-shaped building dominates the scene; around it is a smattering of smaller structures and walls holding back snow drifts and the like. The building possesses two floors, more like a lodge in design; the lower half is stone, the upper is wood. It too is in some disrepair.

The giants, if there are any left, hound the party to the very doors of the temple. They do not enter the temple, for they detest enclosed places. However, they are easily distracted, so if they have captured any of the party, drovers or beasts of burden,

they fall back to torment (though not kill) whoever is caught. This should give the party time to attempt to make the refuge. The pursuit may only include one or two of the creatures.

The wagons can only negotiate the ruins to the temple with great difficulty. For each wagon, allow a character to make four Strength (Athletics) checks (DC 15) with no bonuses for the wagon. If even one of the four checks fails a wagon wheel or axle shatters under the attempt.

The doors are too small to accommodate the wagons and the party is almost certainly going to have to open the box wagon and retrieve the princess to get her in the building. The door is jammed and only opens on a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

Assuming the party makes it in and the giants have not been defeated, the giants taunt and call to the party to come out and play. If this fails, and if they've captured anyone, the giants bring that person to the fore. If all else fails, the giants climb on top of the building and begin tearing holes in the roof. Though they detest enclosed places, they are not averse to opening those places up to their beloved storm.

The battle now either carries out on the steps, on the roof, or, if the giants open enough of the second floor roof to get themselves in, and fall upon the party. The giants do not use fire under any circumstances as they detest its use as a sign of weakness.

TERROR & TORTURE: The giants are not inclined to fight to the death. They find great joy in tormenting the living, not filling the halls of the dead. The lingering fear of storms is another joy the giants revel in, so allowing some to live to tell the harrowing story of their ordeals brings the giants satisfaction. Their real purpose is to capture a few, maim a bunch, then leave into the storm. They do not press the party until they have slain them all; that utterly defeats their purpose.

THE PRINCESS: The world of Aihrde is a harsh world, filled with monsters foul and cruel. Those who tread her mountains and plains are a dour people, inured to the hardships of a world of violence. The princess is no exception. Her family is one of warriors and soldiers who have stepped to the fore to fight. Few in her line cowered behind others. As soon as she is out of the wagon and thrown into danger she arms herself with whatever she can. She defends herself if attacked and leaps to aid any who need it. She does not needlessly risk her life.

If the giants happen to capture the princess, skip forward to **Picking up the Trail**.

TWIN FORKS

The storm abates soon after the giants are slain or driven off. A foot or more of snow lies upon the ground. Drifts several feet deep stand against the walls.

It is a simple two-day journey to the town of Twin Forks where the paladins of Kayomar wait. The Castle Keeper should roll encounters as desired.

Twin Forks is a large walled town that sits upon the plains between two rivers, the Ardeen and the Jung-Mul. It is the furthest point of the Kingdom of Kayomar, an outpost that borders the wild. Here the knights await for the arrival of the caravan. They have a few scouts on the look out for it or for any group of riders coming their way. Spotting the party's approach, they send messages, and within a few miles of the town, a troop of six knights and forty mounted men-at-arms ride out to meet them.

As you cross the large wooden bridge that spans the Ardeen River, you spy the town of Twin Forks. Its massive, dark walls stand a bulwark against the white snow. Its roofs and towers, which jut over the wall, are plain to see. As you ride across the long plain you spy a troop of mounted men riding in your direction. Pennants are flying, in full color and carrying the glory of the realm of Kayomar.

The party is welcomed warmly by the Lord Commander and his men, and is escorted back to town, where they are housed in the main keep that lies at the center of town. There they are fed, re-equipped and offered free housing until spring.

If they have not discovered the princess yet, she is introduced to them all, and thanks them profusely for their service in getting her across the wilds to Kayomar. She blesses them all and gives them each a ring. Each of the rings carries her coat-of-arms and a blessing. The ring is magical; it may be used once to heal the wearer for 2d8 points of damage.

Each member is given 500gp for their service from the King of Kayomar. A great feast is also held in their honor.

The following day the knights head south with the princess.

Thus concludes **A Winter's Promise**.

TRIAL BY FIRE

Trial by Fire begins with a quest for the princess whose troop was attacked by a large band of fire giants. The giants scattered the horses, slew most of the knights and men-at-arms, and kidnapped the princess. The adventure takes the party across the snowy wastes of the plains to the edge of the Tar Kiln where the fire giant hold lies.

KNIGHTS ATTACKED

Within two days, a knight, battered and wounded, finds the characters wherever they are at Twin Forks. He tells them that a band of fire giants attacked the troop, killed most of the knights and kidnapped the princess. He begs them to attend his master, who lies upon his death bed.

En route he describes the battle. In short, the giants fell upon the party in the early hours of the morning. They scattered their horses first and then proceeded to fall upon the knights and men-at-arms. In the melee, seven of the giants were slain, as well as 32 of the men-at-arms. One knight took the princess upon his horse and tried to escape per the Lord Commander's orders, but the horse was taken down by a spear. Both were



trussed up and taken north, bound to poles like any common game animal. The Lord Commander survived, but the other five knights all died on the field.

The Lord Commander lies in a litter outside of town. He is grievously wounded. No amount of healing or magic can bring him back from the brink. He has given himself over to St. Luther. He does however beg the party to use their knowledge of giants, so recently acquired, to pursue the fire giants to their lair in the Tar Kiln and fetch the both the princess and his liege man from their bondage if possible.

The pay will be handsome. They are promised title, land in the realm of Kayomar, a thousand gold pieces, and all the booty they can carry from the fire giant hold.

The Lord Commander has no men to give over to the effort-not quickly, at any rate. Help has gone south, but it will be a week's time before troops can be brought up. There are no seasoned troops in Twin Forks- only the town garrison, which is mostly militia. His knights are now dead, and the bulk of his professional soldiers are as well.

PICKING UP THE TRAIL

The lair of the giants is well known. It lies some 100 miles across the wilds at the edge of the Tar Kiln; a wilderness of scrub, breaks, tar pits, and forest. It is occupied by all manner of creatures, fire giants being only one. The characters need not, unless they desire it, return to the scene of the battle. A bridge spans the Jung-Mul River twenty miles west of town. And as it is the only one outside of the town for many miles, the giants no doubt crossed over it.

If they desire to investigate the battlefield it takes them about a day to get there. It is as described above, but much picked over

by wolves. There are blood and remains everywhere. The trail of the giants is easy enough to pick up in the snow. It heads north to the bridge described above and leads into the wild.

The giants are moving pell-mell across the country, and within four days of the encounter have returned to their lair. The characters (if they left from town and are mounted) are probably only a few hours behind them. If they investigated the field first, they are only a day or two behind the giants.

THE TAR KILN

The Tar Kiln lies between the Wilds and the Maenluth Plains. Here the land rises in a mighty butte, a country hundreds of miles long and wide. The forests are sparse, mostly pine, with some hardwoods clinging to the banks of lakes; small wooded vales in the gulches mark the country. The Mud River cuts its western flank and the Oday Breaks mark the border with the broad and deep Blaudin Timberland.

The country is broken with many small hillocks, and is cut by deep gulches and creek beds. Worse, there are tar pits, great and small, scattered through the Kiln. The restless ground vomits the dark filth, belching it across the tortured land, or it seeps up through crevices to linger in the dying grass. Smoke drifts from the pits, and the wind picks up the stench of tar and burnt ground.

There are no roads through the Kiln, only tortured paths cut by beasts, or monsters. Here all manner of creatures find refuge from the world, from the bull-headed men, drakes, salamanders, and worse. Fire giants are not uncommon, living in the blasting heat of the tar pits, reveling in the world's torture.

And here lie the Kiln Halls.

THE TRAIL

Following the trail, the characters find that it leads up the slopes of the mountain, to the edge and down again into the crater, ending only at the water's edge, where a boat bobs up and down in the filth. Read or paraphrase the following:

The trail leads over a mountain rim and tumbles into a water filled crater. Though snow covers the land, it is clear that this was once a large mountain, reduced now by some ancient eruption. And if the crater failed to relay that story, the blackened lake at the bottom surrounds a smaller hump of a mountain, out of which spills a slow moving fiery magma. A small landing at the lake's edge and a boat show the only way across the lake, to a rift in the small mountain -The entrance to the fire giant hold.

The landing is not guarded, so taking the boat is simply a matter of walking down to the lake's edge and getting in it. There are oars within. The keel is covered in metal plates, suffering the scalding waters of the rancid lake. It takes only an hour or so to cross the lake.

There a path leads up the ash covered slope. Tracks in the soot are plain to see and easy for even the most unwary to follow. If a ranger is present they may make a DC 15 Survival check. If successful they determine that six fire giants came up the hill, five of whom were carrying odd shaped loads that affected their gait.

KILN HALLS

Upon the southern edge of the Tar Kiln lies a small, smoking mountain, Ranajak. Ranajak is a volcano that long ago blew the top off its mountain home and now remains as nothing more than a water filled crater, within which rises a second, much smaller plume. This one lies in the crater's center, surrounded by sulfurous water and smoldering steam; a constant gout of burning rock seethes from its craggy top.

A fire giant warlord has taken up residence here, carving a home for himself out of the guts of the mountain.

The Kiln Halls exist in the heart of an ever-erupting volcano. The giants work hard to control the movement and flow of the lava so that the mountain itself never fully erupts. But it means that lava is constantly moving through the corridors of the Kiln.

The Kiln is extremely loud because of the constant moving lava, with the rising steam, rocks and stones popping and exploding, etc. Anyone entering the Kiln cannot hear normally. Unless someone is shouting or making some extremely loud and very unnatural noises, hearing is restricted to fifty feet. The giants are affected by this as well.

Vision suffers a similar problem. Creatures in the Kiln can see up to 100 feet, but not very well due to the heat and gases. Anyone attempting to look down a corridor beyond seventy feet must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom save. If this happens, they may or may not see what is down the corridor. For example a

failed check reveals a shadowy figure moving around the corner, when in fact there is none.

The temperature inside is very hot, though bearable. It generally averages about 110 degrees Fahrenheit (or 43 degrees Celsius). There is little air movement, making the whole area very stuffy. Anyone within the complex for over an hour starts to become dehydrated. Each character must make a DC 12 Constitution check every hour. A failed check results in an increased level of Exhaustion. A long rest is required to remove one level of Exhaustion.

The giants cut stone to fit their own size, so when examining the map, note that each block in the dungeon is equal to twenty feet.

AREA 1: ENTRANCE

The front entrance is protected by a pool of lava, beyond which stands a closed gate. The gate is built into the mountain and consists of a stone arch and drawbridge. The bridge itself is iron and cast by the fire giants themselves, encrypted with runes, and safe from the ever-present heat.

The path climbs the hill in a straight-forward manner until it reaches the cave's opening. Here funnels rise from the ground to either side of the cave, each vomiting the spoils of the earth in flame and tar. The lava pools in a pit before the gate, spilling over and slipping down the slope to either side of you. Beyond the pool is a gate, its iron grate of a drawbridge closed. Three demon heads adorn the wall above the gate, watching with lurid eyes.

The lava pool is roughly twelve feet wide and twenty feet long.

The drawbridge is opened by a pulley located above the arch. The pulley is operated by one fly wheel attached to another wheel by the arch on the left hand side. Turning this wheel raises and lowers the drawbridge.

Getting to the gate is difficult, as it is closed.

CLIMBING: The funnels are tall, ranging from a few feet to over ten feet in height. They are hardened stone and can support a great deal of weight. Anyone attempting to climb the funnels must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity check but also runs the risk of being struck by lava suddenly bursting from them. This happens on a roll of 1 in 8 for each round on the tubes. If struck the climber must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity save or suffer 1d10 points of burn damage. If successful they take no damage.

The door does not fully close, leaving a gap between the top and the entrance about fourteen inches wide. Once someone has mounted the gate they can climb down with ease and attempt to drop the draw bridge.

Brute Force: Forcing the gate open by pulling it down is going to be very difficult. First, ropes and chains must be secured to the gate, and then the whole must be pulled down. The giants have locked the gate pulley with a bar so this must be broken with

brute force. It can be done so on a successful DC 20 strength check. If this is done the gate pulley starts unwinding and it quickly opens, crashing into the ground with a loud clang, alerting one of the salamanders in **Area 2**.

AREA 2: GUARD CHAMBER

Once across the bridge, the tunnel turns immediately to the left and then again to the right. After that it opens into a broad, irregularly shaped room. Lava flows through the room, pooling here and there. Immediately inside, the floor is buckled from below, an obvious sign of volcanic activity under the floor.

There are four pools of lava in the room, each roughly four feet in diameter, but all oddly shaped.

Each of these pools houses a salamander.

SALAMANDER (NE Large Elemental) HP 90 (HD 12d10+24), AC 15, Spd 30ft. Str 18 Dex 14 Con 15 Int 11 Wis 10 Cha 12. Perception 10(0). Spear +7 (2d8+4 plus 1d6 fire; 20/60 thrown), tail +7 (2d6+4 plus 2d6 fire plus grappled and restrained/DC 14, reach 10ft). SA Multiattack (spear and tail), Immune fire, resist damage from nonmagical weapons, vulnerable cold, heated body (2d6 fire w/in 5ft), heated weapons (any metal weapon salamander holds deals extra 1d6 fire).

There is no treasure to speak of in the room. Anything the salamanders leave behind, the giants take.

AREA 3: GAS CHAMBER

The Guard Chamber gives way to a broad but short corridor. Anyone entering the corridor sees that it clearly ends in a thick cloud of gas. The gas hovers several feet off the floor (24 inches), but rises all the way to the ceiling. The gas covers the entire area marked on the map, extending to both entrances, where the tunnel cuts into a Y, and leads to **Area 4** and **Area 5**. The gas is difficult to see through, dropping visibility by 75%, and it is toxic.

The gas originates from a single point, rising up and filling the chamber. It leaves the chamber through several vents above. The gas is held in place and doesn't spread about the whole dungeon due to venting heat from the floor trapping it in the room.

Anyone entering the gas must make a successful DC 15 Constitution save or suffer 1d4 points of burn damage to their mouth, throat and lungs. For each round they are in the gas, the DC increases by 1 and the damage is cumulative. In the second round they suffer 2d4 points of damage, third round 3d4 points of damage, 4th round 4d4 and so on. For instance, a rogue enters the chamber and fails his save. In the first three rounds in the chamber he has suffered 6d4 points of damage.

Anyone crawling on the floor avoids the gas, but their movement is quartered.

After crawling half way down the corridor, they come to a stream of lava that must be crossed. The stream is one foot wide at its

narrowest point. Touching it immediately imparts 2d8 points of damage and the lava clings to whatever it touches.

Finding the vent that emits the gas is easy enough, as it is located on the floor just around the first corner (see map). Covering the vent blocks the gas, forcing it out some other, crevice or crack. It takes about 10 rounds for the gas to clear from the room.

Improvised masks (such as urine soaked clothes) cut the damage above in half.

The gas can of course be moved by *Gust of Wind* or a similar weather control spell.

AREA 4: SMITH'S CHAMBERS

This room is buried deep in the bowels of the mountain. It serves the fire giant smith as his quarters. It is a simple misshapen room, dominated by a short, squat funnel that oozes a constant stream of burning lava. The lava seeps across the floor slowly until it vanishes into a lava tube beneath solidified stone.

The hallway to the room has a trap door in the floor that may be spotted with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check (or passive perception of at least 15). The trap does not spring until the giant activates it by stomping on a floor-plate by his table. When he does so two doors rapidly rise from the floor to the ceiling, trapping the giant and whosoever is there with him in the room. Anyone close can attempt to leap through the doors before they close with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. Prying open the doors requires a DC 18 Strength check or triggering the pressure plate in the floor by his bench. A *knock* or similar spell opens the doors as well.

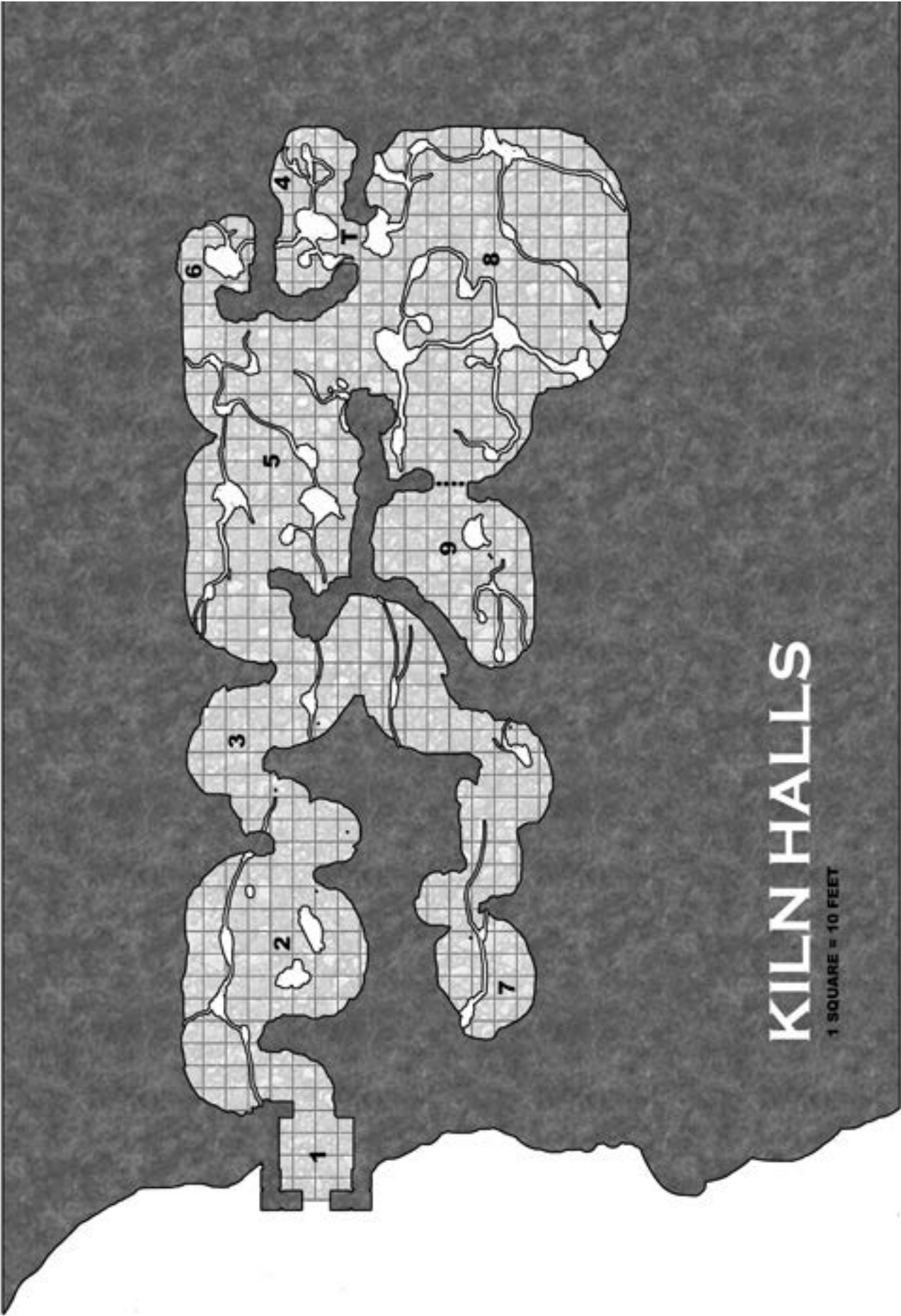
In the center of the room, bent over the river of lava, is a large fire giant. His dark red skin is burnt black from years of toil. He is even now putting the finishing touches on a two handed sword. When the party enters he looks up at them and grins. He sets the sword gingerly aside and picks up his great maul. He attacks immediately.

GIANT, FIRE (NE Huge Giant) HP 162 (13d12+78) AC 18, Spd 30ft. Str 25 Dex 9 Con 23 Int 10 Wis 14 Cha 13. Perception 16 (+6). Athletics +11. Saves Dex +3, Con +10, Cha +5. Greatsword +11, (1d12+7; 10ft), Rock +11 (4d10+7; 60/240). Immune to fire, Multiattack (3 greatsword).

He fights to the death, no quarter asked or given.

The giant's tools hang from stone pegs on the walls. These consist largely of hammers and tongs of various sizes, chisels and the like. In a box high on the wall, set upon some irregular stone are his prized possessions, a set of intricately worked stamps and bits. There are 120 in all, each designed to set in a small bar. These allow the fire giant to craft the exquisite armor that his comrades wear.

TREASURE: The giant has amassed a small fortune. It is kept hidden in a secret panel in the south wall (discoverable with a DC 15 Passive Perception check). Within he has a store of gems, ten 20gp gems and five 100gp gems. He has a small bar of



KILN HALLS

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET

platinum worth 1000gp. He also has a *ring of regeneration*. The sword he was wielding is a magical +3 *greatsword*. Designed for a human client the blade is useful to anyone able to wield it; in the hands of a human it deals 1d12+3 damage.

AREA 5: COMMON AREA

Here lies the giants' common area. Fire giants do not sleep as do other creatures, but rather rest by sitting near a heat source. They have no beds, nor trunks to keep their equipment in. They wear their armor at all times, and most of them carry their portable wealth with them. For this reason the room is not furnished and is occupied by two giants and one rather large hell hound.

The giants are both resting from their battle and mad cap charge across the countryside. One is horribly wounded, having suffered a horrific head wound in the battle. Much of his right eye is gone and vision on that side permanently lost.

The room is extraordinarily loud as the noise from the two pits overwhelms almost any sound. It is very unlikely that the giants in the other rooms will hear anything. However, if the battle goes on for an extended period one may wander into the room. Every 10 rounds roll a d12, on a roll of 1 a giant comes from Area 8.

The tunnel broadens immediately into a huge room. Here fiery rock oozes through well cut flagstones and gathers in two large pools. A large flat rock sits in the middle of each pool, and upon each rock sits a fire giant. Both heavily armored giants are squatting on their haunches. One has removed his helm, revealing a horrific gash in his head that drips blood and pus. But even as you take in the scene a large black shadow detaches from the back wall, and with a deep guttural growl starts to cross the room. It is a huge hell hound.

FIRE GIANT X2 (NE Huge Giant) HP 162 (13d12+78) AC 18, Spd 30ft. Str 25 Dex 9 Con 23 Int 10 Wis 14 Cha 13. Perception 16 (+6). Athletics +11. Saves Dex +3, Con +10, Cha +5. Greatsword +11, (6d6+7; 10ft), Rock +11 (4d10+7; 60/240). Immune to fire, Vulnerability to cold, Multiattack (2 greatsword). In a belt pouch one has a holy symbol of St. Luther that, if carried by a cleric or paladin, enhances all Wisdom checks by +1. There are also 400gp in assorted coins and gems.

HELL HOUND (LE Medium fiend) HP 45 (HD 7d8+14), AC 15, Spd 50ft. Str 17 Dex 12 Con 14 Int 6 Wis 13 Cha 6. Perception 15 (+5). Bite +5 (1d8+3), Fire Breath (recharge 6, 15ft. cone, 6d6 fire, Dexterity DC 12 half). SA Darkvision 60ft., Immune to fire, keen hearing and smell (advantage on Perception), pack tactics (advantage if within 5' of ally).

The room has little of value in it. In the far corner, next to the door that leads to Area 6 (the Kitchen) are four dead animal carcasses. Three of them are deer but the fourth is a minotaur. They are heaped unceremoniously upon the floor, the minotaur at the bottom. He bears some wicked wounds, the worst of which ended his life as it opened him from chin to waist. He has

been stripped of all valuables. They are waiting to be taken into the Kitchen for cooking.

AREA 6 THE KITCHEN

Fire giants despise uncooked flesh and never eat it. However, their treatment of food cannot be construed as cooking. Taking the slabs of meat, they set them in an open flame, burning it beyond recognition. They then devour the charred remains.

The kitchen for the Kilns is little more than a square room with a pool of burning lava in it. The pool is fed by a small groove that channels the lava from Area 7 into the room. In turn, it leaves the room by another channel that cuts under the wall, sending it to the lake beyond.

The kitchen houses a single creature- the cook. The cook is a troglodyte slave. He is chained to the wall by a length of chain almost fifty feet long, just long enough to allow him to go out of the room and drag in the bodies of the evening's meal.

The trog is a horribly tormented slave and despises the giants. If the characters find some way to communicate with him they may make him a temporary ally if they desire. If they free him from his chains, he offers to join them. And if they offer him freedom from the dungeon, he'll actually serve them until they leave. If he is not offered eventual total freedom, he'll attempt to steal from the party and escape at the nearest possible opportunity.

He does know about the secret door to Area 9 The Prison.

TROGLODYTE (CE Medium humanoid) HP 13 (HD 2d8+4), AC 13 (natural armor), Spd 30ft. Str 14 (+2) Dex 12 (+1) Con 14 (+2) Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 8 (-1). Perception 10. SA Blend (chameleon ability); Darkvision 60ft; Multiattack with one bite, two claws: Bite +2 (1d4 + 2) piercing, Claw +2 (1d4 +2) slashing.

He has no treasure. His name is incomprehensible to any human, demi-human or humanoid. He is chaotic evil, and filled with hate, malice and madness.

There are charred remains of meat all over the room, but nothing of value.

AREA 7 HALL OF THE WARLORD

These are the personal quarters of the Warlord of the fire giants. He is resting at the moment, his wounds from the battle with the knight only recently healed. He squats in the corner, head bent down, his great helm still on. This helm, coupled with the raging fire pit of burning lava in front of him, blocks almost all sound from him. Unless someone comes into his room and purposely awakes him he continues to muse in his torpid state.

When roused he attacks with gusto.

FIRE GIANT, WARLORD (NE Huge Giant) HP 243 (19d12+114) AC 18, Spd 30ft. Str 25(+7) Dex 9 (-1) Con 23 (+6) Int 10 Wis 14 (+2) Cha 13 (+2). Perception 16 (+6). Athletics +11. Saves Dex +3, Con +10, Cha +5. Crowbill +11, (6d6+7; 10ft), Rock +11 (4d10+7; 60/240).

*Immune to fire, vulnerable to cold, Multiattack (2 greatsword).
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)*

The warlord's armor is embossed with his life's deeds, the slaying of a dragon being the most prominent. He wields a huge black crowbill in combat. Upon a successful strike the end of the crowbill sticks into armor and/or flesh, when he pulls back the victim must make a successful DC 16 dexterity save or be pulled and thrown to the ground. Upon his brow sits a crown of beaten silver, gold and platinum, topped by a large white diamond. The crown is worth 5000gp.

AREA 8 TEMPLE

Here lies the heart of the Kilns, the temple to their god Unklar. The room is the largest in the dungeon with multiple lava pools and channels crisscrossing the room. Funnels rise from the floor in multiple areas, belching gas and flame. The room is dominated by a large stone complex with an altar to the Horned One. This stands on the far wall, lava pooled at its feet and slowly oozing out and across the room.

The altar is a demon headed statue, carved into blocks of stacked stone. Dragon heads carved into the altar guide the lava, and wreath the whole in flame.

This is the main temple, and it houses four lesser hell hounds and two fire giants. The giants are well rested, having suffered the least from their battle with the knights. They are sitting before the altar, gambling over a pile of treasure taken from the field of combat. When they spy the interlopers they attack.

Giant, Fire (NE Huge Giant) HP 162 (13d12+78) AC 18, Spd 30ft. Str 25 Dex 9 Con 23 Int 10 Wis 14 Cha 13. Perception 16 (+6). Athletics +11. Saves Dex +3, Con +10, Cha +5. Greatsword +11, (6d6+7; 10ft), Rock +11 (4d10+7; 60/240). Immune to fire, Multiattack (2 greatsword).

HELL HOUND X 4 (LE Medium fiend) HP 45 (HD 7d8+14), AC 15, Spd 50ft. Str 17 Dex 12 Con 14 Int 6 Wis 13 Cha 6. Perception 15 (+5). Bite +5 (1d8+3), Fire Breath (recharge 6, 15ft. cone, 6d6 fire, Dexterity DC 12 half). SA Darkvision 60ft., Immune to fire, keen hearing and smell (advantage on Perception), pack tactics (advantage if within 5' of ally).

The treasure consists of 1000gp in assorted monies, a +1 small shield, +2 leather armor, a +2 throwing dagger which returns when thrown, a +1 long sword, a +1 mace, a +1 bow, 12 silver arrows and a quiver, a wand of magic detection, a book of 6 wizard and 6 warlock spells, a dross lute Instrument of the Bards and a staff of healing.

The statue is large and heavy. Pulling it down is possible with a successful DC 18 Strength check. The stones behind it offer the perfect brace to so. If it is pushed over into the flame it crashes into the lava with a screeching sound that wakens the warlord in **Area 7** as well as the prisoners held in **Area 9**.

The funnels that dominate the wall that separates **Area 8** and **Area 9** climb almost to the ceiling. A careful investigation of the area reveals a room behind the funnels. Climbing through

them is going to be very difficult, requiring a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. Anyone who attempts this however, must make a DC 12 Constitution save or suffer 3d8 points of burn damage per round they are climbing on the funnel. A successful save reduces the damage by half. It takes 1-4 rounds to get through the funnels.

There is a secret door in the corner of the room, next to the funnels, leading to **Area 9**. It can be found on a successful DC 10 Passive Perception check. It opens the wall, allowing easy access to the room.

AREA 9 PRISON

This "L" shaped room serves as the prison. Here the princess Carolisa is kept, along with the Knight they kidnapped with her. Both are heaped on the floor, tied, beaten, burned and blackened, lying beside the secret door.

Anyone who comes in wakens the princess immediately. Her eyes open in terror at first, but then soften at the sight of her rescuers. In a broken, parched voice she croaks the word "water." As soon as she gulps down the water she says "there is a demon in the flame!" If the characters manage to get her water within five rounds, they can be warned of the fire elemental taking shape behind them. If not, and if none are exploring or looking toward the pools, roll the necessary surprise rolls.

Within five rounds of entering the room, the fire elemental that keeps watch over the princess takes shape in the flaming pool on the far side of the room. He leaps from the pool, two huge fists and arms extending from a writhing ball of liquid flame. He roars maddeningly and attacks.

ELEMENTAL (FIRE) (N Large Elemental) HP 13 HP 102 (HD 12d10 +36), AC 13, Spd 50ft. Str 10 Dex 17 Con 16 Int 6 Wis 10 Cha 7. Perception 10. Touch +6 (2d6+3, plus ignites for 1d10 per turn unless doused). Immune to fire, poison, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious; vulnerable to cold, resists bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons. Challenge 1/2 (100 XP).

Once the fire elemental is destroyed, the party can rescue the princess and the Knight, carrying both to safety.

ENDING GIANT'S RAPTURE

Upon returning to Twin Rivers the characters find a large army of 500 horsemen in the process of being assembled. Assuming they have the princess, they are welcomed as heroes and become the toast of the town.

They are given land grants in the Kingdom of Kayomar of 150 parcels apiece as well as the title of Knight. Each is granted a royal stipend of 10 gp per month.

Similar awards, as outlined in the beginning of the adventure, are granted upon their return to the County of Karilia.

Thus ends **A Giant's Rapture**.

APPENDIX A: NEW MONSTERS

FELIUL STONES

Feliul stones are magical stones that have been possessed by the spirit of a fallen dwarf, gnome, giant or goblin (far more commonly a dwarf). Usually the victim has died some horrible death, through torture or the like. Some feliul stones are possessed of the spirits of those that have died before some great task was completed. Whatever the case, the spirit lingers in the living world and takes up residence in the stone about it. These spirits live within the rock and stone, trying to fulfill their spent lives' lingering needs. After many years they are able to shape the very rock within which they reside. They shape it to resemble all manner of things from boulders to statues.

Feliul stones are undead creatures and as such they can be turned. Feliul stones are generally evil, for they possess some nascent memories of their past lives, which leaves them frustrated. These memories escape them like fleeting thoughts and they brood on what they cannot wholly remember. In time, frustrations and rage twist them into creatures of ill intent and disposition. So they haunt the ground where they fell or were buried and terrorize those who come within their domain. They are not wholly stationary, but they never leave the ground around which they fell.

They do possess treasure, sometimes absorbing it into the stone that makes up their host bodies.

BULLS IN A CHINA SHOP

The feliul stone attacks by crashing into its opponent. They use whatever shape they have taken to their advantage. If they are humanoid shaped they punch or crush the enemy, a boulder rolls over them, etc. etc. Feliul stones do not, however, have faces and can never be surprised or attacked from the rear or flank. They are aware of everything around them.

DEFEATING THE FELIUL STONE. Defeating a Feliul Stone is not an easy task. Battering it to death is possible, but it is an arduous job. It can be hit by non-magical weapons and the stone can be destroyed. But the spirit is not destroyed and reconstitutes its stony shape within 1-4 days. Magical weapons will destroy the spirit. A successful turn forces the spirit to leave the host and flee. But it will return within 1-4 days. Any number of spells may work, such as rock to mud, rock to flesh, etc. but such spell craft does not destroy the creature. It is able to reconstitute itself in 1-4 days.

These creatures are very susceptible to suggestion. They long for a life they barely remember, and anyone who attempts to talk to the creature may meet with some success. Spells such as *suggestion*, *charm person*, etc. can yield the source of the creature's pain, and promises to finish the task or remedy whatever happenstance kept the spirit in the world serve to calm the creature into not attacking. Anyone who attempts any of these things should be awarded extra experience points.

When a feliul stone is successfully killed or turned, the stone itself cracks and falls to pieces. Whatever treasure the creature may have falls to the earth where it stood.

FELIUL STONE

LARGE UNDEAD, NEUTRAL EVIL

ARMOR CLASS: 17 (natural armor)

HIT POINTS: 157 (16d10 + 64 HD)

SPEED: 20 ft.

STR:	DEX:	CON:	INT:	WIS:	CHA:
20 (+5)	8 (-2)	18 (+4)	7 (-3)	10 (+0)	7 (-3)

DAMAGE IMMUNITIES: Poison

CONDITION IMMUNITIES: exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

DAMAGE RESISTANCE: Slashing and Piercing from nonmagical weapons

SENSES: Darkvision 120ft., Passive Perception 10

LANGUAGES: Common, dwarf, goblin

CHALLENGE: 8 (3,900 XP)

SUGGESTIBLE. Feliul stones suffer disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws. In addition, a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check can stop the creature from attacking. Feliuls stopped in this manner will parlay with the attackers, who must then convince the creature they are not enemies.

Actions

MULTIATTACK. The feliul stone makes two slam attacks.

SLAM. *Melee weapon attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5ft., one target.
Hit: 27 (4d10+5) bludgeoning damage.

STONE SPRAY (RECHARGE 5-6). The feliul stone spews forth a cone of razor-sharp stone spars in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the cone must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) slashing damage on a failed save, half as much on a successful one.

FEULK

The feulk dwell in deep forests and jungles. Their bodies are amorphous masses of tissue clinging to the tops of trees through a series of adhesive secretions. The body has no definable shape, stretching from tree stem and branch in large globs. Though they cannot move, they do grow in their nests, often leaving one area for another. Older, dying sections of the feulk tend to fall over, lying on the ground or sticking to the trees. They have long arm-like, fully retractable tendrils they project from their body. These tendrils are similar to vines; complete with a hardened covering (the drying mucous) that resembles bark. The feulk are able to adapt to their surroundings changing color from green to brown and many shades thereby. They are not noticeable from the ground unless someone is experienced in finding these strange creatures.

Their young are born spontaneously, emerging from the mucous. The vast majority die by falling to the earth, where

they are eaten, though some are able to cling to birds and are carried off into the forest. They drop off when they come upon a suitable hunting ground, falling into the tree tops where they cling and slowly grow, feeding at first on insects and birds but slowly moving up the food chain.

Ambush Predators. The feulk cling to their treetop homes, waiting for creatures to pass over, under or near their vines. They prefer to wait until they can strike with several vines at once, but if their victim is moving away, they strike with whatever they can. They wrap their vines around the prey and proceed to lift them into the heights of the trees to feed upon them.

FEULK

HUGE MONSTROSITY, UNALIGNED

ARMOR CLASS: 15 (natural armor)

HIT POINTS: 155 (20d8+60 HD)

SPEED: 0

STR:	DEX:	CON:	INT:	WIS:	CHA:
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

DAMAGE IMMUNITIES: ACID, COLD, POISON

CONDITION IMMUNITIES: Charmed, exhaustion, Frightened, grappled, Incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

DAMAGE RESISTANCE: Bludgeoning

DAMAGE VULNERABILITIES: Fire

SENSES: Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 14

SKILLS: Perception +4, Stealth +6, Survival +4

LANGUAGES: None.

CHALLENGE: 7 (2,900 XP)

Acid Mucous. The feulk generates an acidic mucous from its tentacles; any creature grappled by the feulk suffers 2 (1d4) points of acid damage per round they are grappled. This damage persists each round after the creature is released, until it is thoroughly washed with water (immersion or soaking for at least 1 round). In addition, this mucous impairs movement, causing disadvantage on all attack rolls and dexterity checks and saves, until washed off.

Actions

Multiattack. The feulk makes three tentacle attacks every round.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) bludgeoning damage and target is grappled and restrained unless it succeeds at a DC 15 Strength saving throw. Creatures thus grappled suffer additional 8 (1d8+4) bludgeoning damage at the beginning of each of the feulk's turns, as well as acid mucous damage, and are subject to a bite attack. The creature may attempt a new saving throw at the end of each of its turns, freeing itself with a success.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage. The feulk may only bite creatures that are currently grappled by its tentacles.

APPENDIX B: NEW MAGIC ITEMS

ARM BAND OF ARMOR

WONDROUS ITEM, UNCOMMON (+1), RARE (+2), VERY RARE (+3)
(REQUIRES ATTUNEMENT)

These iron armbands resize to fit their wearer and provide a bonus to AC while you wear them. The exact bonus is either +1, +2, or +3, depending on the individual armbands found.

HORN OF GOODNESS AND EVIL

WONDROUS ITEM, RARE (REQUIRES ATTUNEMENT)

You can use an action to blow this trumpet. When blown, it provides protection; all allies within a 30 foot cone are subject to the effects of a *protection from evil and good* spell that lasts for 10 minutes. The horn has 3 charges. It regains 1d3 charges daily at dawn.

HORN OF STORMS

WONDROUS ITEM, VERY RARE (REQUIRES ATTUNEMENT)

You can use an action to blow this horn, and summon a churning storm cloud which functions exactly as the *storm of vengeance* spell. Once you blow this horn, you cannot use it again for 7 days. Each use of the horn's magic has a 20 percent chance of causing the horn to explode. The explosion deals 10d6 thunder damage to the blower and all creatures and objects in a 10-foot radius, and destroys the horn. The blower automatically suffers full damage from an exploding horn; others within the blast radius may attempt a DC 16 Constitution saving throw for half damage.





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The logo for '5th Edition Adventure' features a large, stylized number '5' with a 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.

Eurich Gunshoff IV, Count of Kleaves, is beset by powerful enemies. The King to the north has laid waste his holdings beyond the Tot River and even now threatens the river castles. Only the coming winter holds him at bay, giving the Count time, if only a little, to muster his strength.

Long have the people of Kleaves worshiped the gods of the south, and it is to these people that he turns, striking a bargain with the powerful King of Kaymor. In exchange for a precious gift the Kayomarese promise to aid Eurich and his people, but it is Eurich's charge to deliver the prize. He can spare few troops, and with spies all about he cannot be too careful.

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