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# EDITION

## ADVENTURE

# INTO THE UNKNOWN



DAVIS CHENAULT





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## INTO THE UNKNOWN

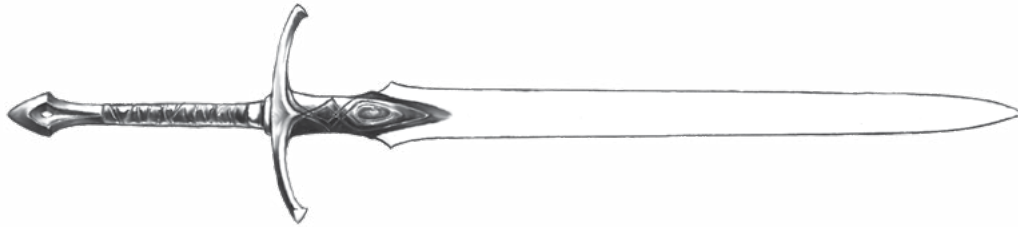
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*“Greetings, my friends. There are no introductions necessary here, for I know well who you are, my intrepid adventurer. A weary traveler indeed? Have a seat my fine fellow and let me speak with you a moment before you enter the bleak Graffenvold and traverse its winding paths and muddy byways. But first I must ask, have you come here seeking quick glory and easy wealth? Perhaps you have come here to beat down the lords of this land and submit them to your will? Do the deadly paths and glistening edges of the world’s revenge frighten you? Eh my friend? What was that?”*

*“Regardless! I fear you have gone beyond yourself here in Inzae. This place has neither easy roads nor abundant wealth. The lords of this land are powerful and care not for the lives of the foolish and weak. Here, in Inzae, simple mistakes may be your unmaking and doom. For beyond yonder door is a fearful world clinging desperately to its life. Inzae’s denizens struggle against a vast array of malignant forces seeking to drag them deeper into the pits of the Maelstrom. And even here, in this backwater region called the Reintier, you will find no respite from this meaningless and overwhelming struggle. So take heed traveler, take heed as you enter the Graffenvold, it will do you well to remember that this is a deadly world and lest you take care, you will be engulfed in its dying spasms.”*

## INTRODUCTION

This module is designed to be read only by the Castle Keeper, with those sections in boxed text to be read aloud to the players at the appropriate time. The general map of the region should be made available to the players, while the map of Vakhund and Jzunad are for the Castle Keeper only.

This adventure challenges players tactically and requires a party capable of combat, stealth, cunning, and cohesive implementation of strategies and tactics. The party should contain 4-6 characters of levels 1-2, with at least two fighter types and one cleric. Several portions of the adventure involve overland travel and in these areas a ranger or character with wilderness skills enhances the party’s chances of survival.

The characters begin the adventure in a forested region called the Graffenvold at a small town named Frisia. It is located close to the southern border of the barony of Halpveg. The barony borders a goblin kingdom to the south called the Drazkleed. The characters are traveling with some traders who are bringing goods for trade with the neighboring goblins. A wealthy merchant and his daughter are traveling with the caravan. After leaving Frisia with the characters, the caravan stops for several days at a border post called the Vakhund. Here, the characters are told to wait while the traders go further south into the Drazkleed. While the caravan is away, the Vakhund is attacked and the merchant’s daughter kidnapped. Her father requests the characters give chase and rescue his daughter. Thus begins a series of adventures away from the lands of man and into the goblin kingdoms and, perhaps, back again.

## INVOLVING THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

It is important that the characters have agreed or agree to travel with the caravan; otherwise the adventure may not go anywhere. The Castle Keeper is encouraged to develop individualized reasons for the characters to be accompanying the caravan. However, often that proves difficult or time consuming so some advice is offered.

**ONE:** The characters are hired to accompany the caravan as far as The Vakhund and thence to Jugensborg and offer protection along the way. Payment is 1sp per person.

**TWO:** The characters are traveling with the caravan for safety until it reaches its final destination at Jugensborg.

**THREE:** The characters have been hired to reconnoiter and determine the nature of the goblin activity in the region, or to map the otherwise poorly known region north of the Treklant Creek and are traveling with the caravan as far as the Vakhund before starting their activities.

**FOUR:** The characters have been hired to locate a stronghold controlled by the infamous Magdole Gang purportedly located south of the Treklant Creek and in the Dampfrat.

The characters could be given a vested interest in the location by giving them important missions to undertake.

## PART I: A COZY BED

Bear in mind, the adventure's beginning should be mundane. Nothing exciting is *supposed* to happen at all while in Frisia or with the caravan, but rather at the Vakhund. The caravan is travelling to a town named Jugensborg though it is taking a long path in order to conduct some trading with goblins south of Halpveg (see map) and has stopped in Frisia. This is where the characters get to familiarize themselves with one another, their surroundings and various people in the adventure.

The adventure begins in the town of Frisia, a small farming and timber community of no more than 500 inhabitants in the Barony of Halpveg. Frisia lies in the northern periphery of the Graffenvold, sixty miles north of The Vakhund and 100 miles south of Halpveg. Surrounding the town is an earthen embankment topped with a wooden palisade with walkways. It overlooks a dry moat, which is in the process of being constructed. Frisia's buildings and houses are one and two story wood or wattle and daub constructions with a few stone ones, either shingled with wood or thatched with hay. Most buildings have simple wood cat chimneys, while the homes of the wealthier inhabitants have rock chimneys.

Frisia is the last human village on the road south into the goblin kingdoms. There is a fairly regular trade between the goblins to the south (the Kdyzj of the Drazkleed) and the Barony of Halpveg. Goblin traders come to Frisia for trade while the human traders go as far as Mejketek (120 miles south of Frisia) and no further. This trade has brought some wealth to the community but mostly to the merchants who ply their trade here.

Other than for farmers and woodsmen, there are four places in Frisia of interest to the characters; the Keep, the Bierkeller, Merkel's and the Kreut. All are described below. The economy of Frisia is run almost entirely on barter. Someone bakes some bread and trades it for firewood or perhaps someone trades firewood for some cheese. Monies come to Frisia by way of traveling merchants and traders who purchase rare woods or others passing through to Mejketek in need of food, shelter or other such items.

Kaptane Friger and his retinue administer the town. Other than those laws imposed upon him by his lord in Halpveg and tradition, Kaptane Friger is free to do as he chooses. He keeps the town orderly, and neither overtaxes nor under-taxes the inhabitants. In times of need, Kaptane Friger can call upon a small militia to do his bidding.

**THE KEEP:** The Keep is a large squat round building made entirely of stone with a wooden parapet atop it. It houses the local ruler, Kaptane Niklas Friger, and his retinue. The Keep is circular and 80 feet across. It consists of three levels, the roof and a dunjon. The ground level is the sleeping, cooking, eating and storage quarters for the fifteen troops garrisoned here. Four horses can be stabled here in time of conflict. The second level is used as a meeting hall as well as having separate rooms for the lieutenants and advisor serving Kaptane Friger. The third floor is reserved as Kaptane Friger's personal residence, eating chamber, chapel and storage (this is where the city's taxes are stored).

The roof is wooden with a small cone on it but room enough for a walkway around its circumference. The dunjon is used for the storage of food, beer, weapons, building materials and other supplies. All the floors are accessible from two stairways. The donjon is only accessible from a ground level trapdoor. The Keep is well maintained and flies the banner of Halpveg – a flag split horizontally with a black top and green bottom.

Kaptane Friger is responsible for collecting the taxes from Frisia and the surrounding area, enforcing the laws of Halpveg and protecting this town and other outlying villages. He is concerned with little else and rarely interacts with the locals. He is, like many rulers in the baronies along this stretch of the Graffenvold, a remote and autocratic leader. He enforces the laws of Halpveg, dealing justice with an iron hand. In all other respects, Kaptane Friger dispenses justice, as he wills. He is not considered a good man though not a bad one either. He is a capable ruler. Kaptane Friger has a wife and children and all but one lives in Halpveg. His youngest son, Karl, is serving duty at The Vakhund at his father's request.

**KAPTANE FRIGER** (LN Medium Humanoid (human))  
HP 44 (HD 8d8+8), AC 18 (chain & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 17 Dex 15 Con 12 Int 13 Wis 11 Cha 16. Perception 10(+0). +1 Longsword +6 (1d8+3) or Spear +5 (1d6+3 or 1d8+3 wielded both hands, range 20/60ft.), Longbow +4 (1d8+2, range 150/600ft.). He always carries 1d4 potions of healing with him if in battle. In addition to his +1 longsword, his personal wealth consists of 1,300gp in various forms of jewelry, gems, adornments, plate gold and silver.

Milken Federman is Kaptane Friger's advisor. He belongs to an order of ecclesiastics who act as advisors to many rulers (often called Black Cloaks for they always dress in black frock coats). Milken is an ambitious man and seeks to remove himself from this small town and Kaptane Friger's lordship and go to a larger city with more powerful lords. He is a little greedy and capable of subterfuge to retrieve more monies and influence for himself. In other respects, he carries out his duties with the faith and fervor of one who knows any disobedience to the deities results in nothing less than eternal suffering upon the Mountain of Pestilence or an endless afterlife spent on the Bleak Plains. He encourages Kaptane Friger to fairly implement the laws of the land, pay homage to the gods and be forthright to his calling as a lord.

**MILKEN FEDERMAN** (LN Medium Humanoid (human))  
HP 27 (HD 6d8), AC 14 (breastplate), Spd 30ft. Str 12 Dex 11 Con 10 Int 15 Wis 16 Cha 14. Perception 15(+5). Quarterstaff +3 (1d6+1). SA Cleric spells (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks), Cantrips (at will): light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy; 1<sup>st</sup>-level (4 slots): bless, cure wounds, protection from evil and good; 2<sup>nd</sup>-level (3 slots): hold person, lesser restoration. He carries a gold holy symbol worth 300gp, a potion of healing, and vial of holy water. When not adorned for combat, he wears a black frock coat and carries his staff.

**LIEUTENANTS X2** (LN Medium Humanoid (human))  
HP 22 (HD 4d8+4), AC 18 (chain & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 14 Dex 13 Con 14 Int 10 Wis 11 Cha 12. Perception 10(+0). Longsword +4 (1d8+2) or Spear +4 (1d6+2 or 1d8+2)

wielded both hands, range 20/60ft.), Longbow +3 (1d8+1, range 150/600ft.). They each have 10-100gp worth of jewelry and items of value.

**KEEP GUARDS X15** (Medium Humanoid (human)) HP 11 (HD 2d8+2), AC 13 (leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 12 Dex 10 Con 14 Int 10 Wis 11 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Longsword +3 (1d8+1) or Spear +3 (1d6+1 or 1d8+1 wielded both hands, range 20/60ft.), Shortbow +2 (1d8, range 80/320ft.).

**MILITIA LIEUTENANT** (NG Medium Humanoid (human)) HP 16 (HD 3d8+3), AC 14 (leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 14 Dex 13 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 13 Cha 11. Perception 13(+3). Longsword +4 (1d8+2).

**MILITIA X20** (Medium Humanoid (human)) HP 9 (HD 2d8), AC 11 (leather), Spd 30ft. Str 11 Dex 10 Con 11 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Spear +2 (1d6 or 1d8 wielded both hands, range 20/60ft.).

**MILITIA X10** (Medium Humanoid (human)) HP 9 (HD 2d8), AC 11 (leather), Spd 30ft. Str 11 Dex 10 Con 11 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Spear +2 (1d6 or 1d8 wielded both hands, range 20/60ft.), Shortbow +2 (1d6, range 80/320ft.).

**MERKEL'S:** Merkel's is little more than a large rambling wooden house with a smithy attached to it. The front portion of the house has been given over as a shop. Merkel, the owner, has a keen eye for a deal so buys and trades items to and from caravans for a slim profit. Merkel is an older man with a wife and several grown children, some of whom have children of their own, and all of whom live with him. Sixteen people are crowded into this house. All help where they can, cutting timber, working in the smithy or bartering with travelers.

Merkel and several members of his family are a good source of information about the goblin kingdoms to the south. Should the characters have the time or inclination, he can tell them of Mejketek (the goblin trading post), the tribal differences of the Zjerd (goblins of the Dampfrat) and Kdyzj (the goblins with whom trade is conducted), a little about the trade and how it occurs. Also, one of Merkel's older sons, Stoffel, knows the location of a group of bandits to the east. He has told Kaptane Friger, but Friger has yet to do anything about the bandits awaiting help from Halpveg. The bandits are located in a remote and marshy area 60 miles east of Frisia in the ruins of an old fort. Stoffel shows the characters the location of the fort on a map should they care to know.

The goods Merkel sells are mostly useful to travelers and caravans. His smithy, though used to helping the locals, derives much income by repairing items for the caravans. There are harnesses, ropes, wheels, nails, dry goods, cloaks, blankets, lanterns, pitch and other tools in his stock of goods. In all, Merkel's inventory is small and limited. Importantly, oil is difficult to come by and costs 4gp per pint. The Castle Keeper should use discretion in deciding whether an item is in his shop or not. Also, prices are really cheap, generally being 70% less than those listed in the *Castles and Crusades Players Handbook*. Merkel has 200gp worth of plate, ornaments and coin in his house.

He has a few swords, shields and common weapons acquired over the years, though by no means are selling these items a significant source of Merkel's income. He has no armor, though can do minor repairs in his smithy. The weapons Merkel does own are old and have not been well cared for. Each weapon purchased suffers a -1 to damage. His arrows are not well made and they suffer a -2 to hit. With any weapon purchased there is a 50% chance these penalties are doubled. Finally, Merkel is keen judge of men's wealth. When bartering, if he succeeds at a Wisdom check with a DC equal to or higher than 10 + the customer's Charisma bonus, he ascertains if the customer can pay more and charges 50% more for the item than it would regularly cost.

**MERKEL** (CN Medium Humanoid (human)) HP 9 (HD 2d8), AC 11, Spd 30ft. Str 10 Dex 12 Con 11 Int 13 Wis 14 Cha 13. Perception 14(+4). Dagger +3 (1d4+1 melee, or range 20/60ft.). He wears a wool cloak and trousers and carries a dagger and 10sp.

**STOFFEL** (CG Medium Humanoid (human)) HP 18 (HD 4d8), AC 14 (leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 13 Dex 13 Con 11 Int 10 Wis 16 Cha 11. Perception 15(+5). Longsword +3 (1d8+1), Shortbow +3 (1d8+1, range 80/320ft.).

**BIERKELLER:** The Bierkeller is Frisia's only tavern. It is a large wooden building with two floors and a slate roof. The lower floor is broad and deep with a common room stretching from one end to the other. Having gained a little wealth from those traveling through Frisia to Mejketek, Ronart Tonnahor, the owner, adorned the common room with two stone fireplaces, a stone floor and even plastered the walls. The common room is crowded with tables. The rear of the lower floor is given over to a kitchen and storage. The upper floor is half the size of the lower floor, has four rooms and one large common room, all but one of which are rented to travelers. A barn, stables and a large barnyard are in the rear.

Ronart, whose entire family died of a plague years ago, has, depending on the number of customers, 2-4 people from Frisia helping him cook meals and serve food. Many of Frisia's inhabitants come here on a daily basis to have some beer. They often trade foodstuffs, blankets and other items for the courtesy. The busiest time is after the sun sets when everyone is finished working.

Ronart is a gangly and friendly fellow who constantly busies himself with the daily chores necessary to run the Bierkeller efficiently. He spares a little time for small talk though but takes an active dislike to rumor mongers, braggarts and the like. A lifetime of keeping bar in this region, serving in the militia and travels to Mejketek, Halpveg and other places has garnered Ronart an encyclopedic knowledge of the area, though he rarely parts with this information unless to his benefit. He makes decent coin off of the merchants who make their way to Frisia and has accumulated 140gp in various coin and valuables. He keeps this in his kitchen, where he sleeps, under the floor beneath his bed.

One of the rooms on the upper floor has become permanently occupied by a goblin, Geejzdnard. This is a goblin from the Drazkleed and is a member of the Kdyzj. This is an old and friendly,

though well guarded, goblin who acts as a translator for other goblin merchants plying their trade in Frisia. He has become, to the chagrin of many of Frisia's residents, a permanent fixture in the community. He speaks Inzaen and goblin fluently. Geejzdnard has a few personal possessions in his room but nothing of value or interest. He dresses in garish yellow and red clothing and always wears a slouch hat with red and yellow stripes.

**RONART TONNAHOR** (N Medium Humanoid (human)) HP 9 (HD 2d8), AC 11, Spd 30ft. Str 11 Dex 13 Con 11 Int 10 Wis 11 Cha 11. Perception 10(+0). Club +2 (1d4) or Dagger +3 (1d4+1, range 20/60ft.). He wears normal clothing and a smock.

**GREEJZDNARD** (N Small Humanoid (goblinoid)) HP 7 (HD 2d6), AC 14 (leather), Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 16 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 11 Cha 8. Perception 10(+0), Stealth +5. Dagger +5 (1d4+3, range 20/60ft.). SA: Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action), Sneak Attack 1/Turn (deals extra 1d6 damage when hits a target and has advantage on the roll, or when ally of his is within 5ft. of him and isn't incapacitated and Greejzdnard doesn't have disadvantage on the roll). He carries 3-12gp on his person.

**KREUT:** In the center of the village is a large stone. It is about the size of a man in height and as broad as small house. It is covered in carvings and glyphs. This is the Kreut and is well known to all and would immediately be recognized by the characters. It is a holy relic and conduit to the gods. People come to pray, touch it for luck and leave offerings around it in hopes of garnering the beneficence of the gods.



There are two people of note who live in Frisia, whom the characters may encounter: Gunther and Hempel. The Castle Keeper is encouraged to create a few other people with whom the players can interact that may propel the game in whatever direction desired.

Gunther is a woodsman who works with six others in Frisia. They search out rare woods and trees for lumber or other needs. He is gruff and disagreeable most of the time, though friendly to those who spend much time in the woods. He has seen many a battle in his years and served several lords in Halpveg in the local militia. He is familiar with the Dampfrat and its ways.

**GUNTHER** (CN Medium Humanoid (human)) HP 22 (HD 5d8), AC 14 (studded leather), Spd 30ft. Str 17 Dex 14 Con 11 Int 10 Wis 16 Cha 8. Perception 15(+5). Longsword +5 (1d8+3) or Hand Axe +5 (1d6+3, or ranged 20/60ft.), Longbow +4 (2d8+2, range 150/600ft.). SA Archer (does one extra die weapon damage with longbow [already included above] or shortbow). He has 80gp worth of valuables in his house.

Hempel is a priest. He is from Frisia though lived in Kreutzmark (a nearby holy place) for so many years he is almost considered a stranger. He returned here to care for his aging parents. After their death he remained. He tends to the Kreut and the religious needs of Frisia. He takes care of the wounded and offers what services he can for his fellow villagers. He does not volunteer nor desire to travel far from Frisia for any reason, though is active in its defense should that ever be necessary. He expects material return for any services rendered. Coin is not considered an adequate return.

**HEMPEL** (CG Medium Humanoid (human)) HP 27 (HD 6d8), AC 12 (breastplate), Spd 30ft. Str 12 Dex 10 Con 11 Int 10 Wis 14 Cha 11. Longsword +3 (1d8+1). SA Cleric spells (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks), Cantrips (at will): guidance, sacred flame, resistance; 1<sup>st</sup>-level (4 slots): command, cure wounds, shield of faith; 2<sup>nd</sup>-level (3 slots): enhance ability, hold person. He has 50gp in various items of value at his house.

#### THE LAST WARM MEAL

The day begins on a blistering cold winter's morning in the common room of the Bierkeller, though, the Castle Keeper should not feel constrained by this and may want to begin the adventure a few days earlier to allow the characters to become familiar with Frisia and several of its inhabitants. In any respect, the morning the caravan leaves begins as such....

A chilly early morning mist rises off sodden fields stretching away from the wooden palisade and earthen embankment that wraps tightly about a cluster of small clapboard houses, rambling barns and squat stone buildings. This is Frisia. The bellowing of cattle mixes with the dull clang of metal bells, awakening any who might be sleeping past the sun's rise. Misty tendrils of smoke rise from Frisia's many chimneys then, lingering momentarily above graying rooftops, disappear into the massive dark green firs ringing the fields and crowding the horizon. The clanging of bells is interrupted by the braying of oxen that have been tacked too early to a harness.



Once the characters have awoken and come down to the common room....

The hall of the Bierkeller is cold. The morning's sun barely shines through the open door and Ronart, the gangly tavern keeper, has just started a fire in one of the tavern's two fireplaces. Outside, the noise of the drovers barking orders as they load their wagons is periodically drowned out by the braying of steers protesting their job. At the far end of the hall, wrapped in a thick sheepskin cloak, sits an old wrinkled goblin with a yellow cloak, red pants and a yellow and red striped slouch hat. He is balanced precariously on a tall stool and hurriedly eats out of a steaming bowl.

Ronart spares little time to talk with the newcomers as he is busy preparing for the day gathering wood, starting fires, cooking meals and cleaning. He is not unknown to quit a conversation in mid-sentence should work need done. He has little valuable information he is willing to impart this morning and mostly bemoans the arrival of another cold winter. Ronart offers that the Kdyzj goblins of the Drazkleed are friendly enough and Mejketek is a fine place for goblins or their kin. He might also warn the characters that the Zjerd goblins of the Dampfrat are notoriously violent though often too lazy to actually fight should the characters inquire.

Geejzdnard, the goblin, speaks to the characters obsequiously trying not to offend anyone. He knows much about The Drazkleed and trade in the south and clearly indicates that travel south of the Treklant Creek and to Mejketek is very dangerous as there are groups of marauding bandits and horrible monsters about as well as his cousins, the Zjerd. He also intimates that his kin at Mejketek's might feel threatened by a well-armed group of travelers arriving at their doorstep.

While the characters gather in the common room, Meister Rothenheimer and Evanna appear.

From the dark hallway emerge two stunningly dressed people, nobles or merchants by their clothing. There is tall man, hefty yet handsome, with a graying mustache flowing over his mouth and down his cheeks. He smiles broadly with gleeful eyes as he enters the common room. He laughs quietly as he places a hand on the shoulder of a young maiden with rivers of blonde hair cascading down her shoulders. She is a lean, even a thin figure, moving gracefully though weighed down by a thick ermine-lined cloak. She laughs demurely and glances backward at the two drovers struggling up the hallway, each managing elaborately decorated large wooden trunks.

Meister Rothenheimer and Evanna are gracious and in good spirits. While the Meister oversees the loading of his baggage, Evanna waits inside. Both have a meal before leaving. The Meister is more than willing to converse with anyone. Evanna, however, is very reserved about speaking with anyone without her father at her side. The Meister claims to be traveling to Jugensborg and then on to Firstenfeld for business and in an effort not to alarm his daughter, claims that he is checking the trade routes

for safety and efficiency and meeting with fellow merchants in Firstenfeld. Any of the characters from this region recognize the name Rothenheimer as one of Bergholt's ruling families.

After finishing their meal, Stansley, the lead driver of the caravan, enters the common room and announces it is time to pack and leave.

"Allo, my friends!" Stansley hollers into the room, his haggard face cheerful, despite the cold and the long journey ahead. "We are about at it, so throw your belongings on the wagon and lets away to the land o' the Kdyzj." With this, Stansley turns and goes back outside.

Outside, Stansley and Klamart help Meister Rothenheimer and Evanna onto the lead wagon. The drovers, Milter, Arkus and Frieland are gathered in the square stomping away the cold and joking loudly with one another. The steers stretch in their harnesses, anxious to be on the road. Ahead, the gates of Frisia stand open beneath a churlish sky and the muddy track known as the Unterbasser beckons travelers and merchants alike.

There are two wagons in the caravan. The drivers are Stansley and Klamart. The drovers, Milter, Arkus and Frieland, provide the help. The lead wagon carries barrels of salted carp and the famous mead, Gaddners, as well as the Meister and Evanna's belongings. The other wagon carries several large burlap bags of pepper (16gp), numerous crates of bronze ingots (30gp), a large ceramic vase filled with vellum (8gp), a chest with a bolt of purple cloth (100gp), and a chest with purple glass jars (10gp).

The Unterbasser is well traveled during the summer months, but as winter closes in, fewer and fewer caravans enter The Drazkleed. Winter weather in the region is harsh and unpredictable often bringing sleet mixed with wet snow that piles deep on the gloomy forest floors making travel increasingly difficult. Stansley's winter route usually takes him from Halpveg to Mejketek, back to The Vakhund, thence along the Treklant to Jugensborg, on to Firstenfeld, and finally back to Halpveg.

Stansley is the caravan's manager and lead driver. He owns both wagons and is very careful with them. He has been trading in this area for many years and has friends in every town along his routes. Stansley is old, but strong and thickly muscled from years of hard labor. He speaks goblin fluently, but only resorts to its use when absolutely necessary. He has a short sword in the wagon.

**STANLEY** (*N Medium Humanoid (human)*) HP 4 (HD 1d8), AC 13 (leather), Spd 30ft. Str 16 Dex 10 Con 10 Int 11 Wis 12 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Shortsword +5 (1d6+3). He carries 200gp worth of coin and jewelry in pouches around his waist.

The driver of the second wagon is Klamart. He is an unusually quiet person and speaks only if spoken to. He then tends to talk incessantly until distracted by a job to which he must turn his mind and hands. He is also a petty thief. If it so happens, he will pilfer small items left unattended. Stansley only recently hired Klamart and has yet to develop an opinion of him.



**KLAMART** (CN Medium Humanoid (human)) HP 4 (HD 1d8), AC 10, Spd 30ft. Str 10 Dex 10 Con 11 Int 11 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). He carries clothing and 1-2gp in coin.

Milter, Arkus and Frieland are the drovers. They are friendly but know they are low in the pecking order and act accordingly. At night Frieland tells good stories, Arkus laughs a lot while Milter curses an inordinate amount.

**DROVERS XZ** (N Medium Humanoid (human)) HP 4 (HD 1d8), AC 10, Spd 30ft. Str 12 Dex 10 Con 11 Int 11 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). They carry clothing, food and 1-2gp in coin.

#### **CONCERNING THE PLOTS AND MACHINATIONS OF MEISTER ROTHENHEIMER AND HIS DAUGHTER EVANNA.**

Evanna is the somewhat naive daughter of Herbert Rothenheimer. She is a young, blonde haired, woman of obvious refinement and fine dress. She is well educated, well mannered and very well aware of what is expected of a wealthy merchant's daughter. If addressed, she makes pleasant conversation in a soft voice that reveals her high level of education. She never complains nor inquires as to other activities or intents and tries to keep all conversation simple and neutral in tone.

Evanna loves and respects her father and is accustomed to looking to him for guidance and care and rarely questions his opinions and actions. However, if left unattended by her father and prompted, she wonders aloud where her father is going and why they left Bergholt in such "unusual circumstances." Evanna is at an impressionable stage in her life and is easily influenced by anyone that takes her into his or her confidence. She speaks Inzaen, Leucrotian, Orillian and Todavian fluently.

**EVANNA** (LN Medium Humanoid (human)) HP 6 (HD 1d8+2), AC 13, Spd 30ft. Str 10 Dex 17 Con 15 Int 16 Wis 10 Cha 18. Perception 10(+0). She wears expensive clothing and jewelry worth 280gp.

Meister Herbert Rothenheimer is the nephew of the head of the Rothenheimer family. This is an influential and powerful merchant clan and one of the lesser of the eleven families that rule Bergholt. The Meister is a gregarious person who enjoys telling tales of Bergholt's docks and its patrons. He attempts to make friends wherever he goes, and willingly drops gold coin if necessary. He jokes constantly and while his sense of humor borders on crass, it is never vulgar. He enjoys good drink and food but rarely overindulges.

The Meister is the son of Meister Jurgen Rothenheimer. Jurgen married Henrette Gabel. She, unbeknownst to Jurgen, was the last living child of the Steffens family in Esterheim. The Steffens family was, some many decades prior to now, a very powerful family within the elites of Juttaland. Their influence spread to many regions within the Juttaland and were believed to be the power behind many a corrupt monarch. Despotic, vengeful, greedy and avaricious are all adjectives that would readily suit a description of that family.

In time, many lords and others of the Juttaland grew weary of

the Steffens family and their ways. So weary they were that a secret society developed to bring them down. This society is commonly known as the Geis' Tot, called such after their calling card was placed upon anyone they killed. This calling card was a card from a deck of cards common to the region and depicted a dying jackal. The Geis' Tot simply means the 'killing jackal.'

It just so happens that in the assassinations, murders and general slaughter that occurred to rid the Juttaland of the Steffens, one young girl was overlooked. Henrette Steffens survived by being spirited away from her house by a friendly (or mischievous) fey. He took her to Bergholt and with much gold, bought her a house, renamed her Henrette Gabel and proceeded to lay the groundwork for her ascension to power.

The plan of the fey worked well. Henrette grew up well attended, well educated and wealthy. So wealthy in fact that the Rothenheimer family decided she should be married into their clan. A marriage was arranged and Jurgen became Henrette's husband. She bore one child to Jurgen, Herbert. The fey, having done what it needed to do, promptly disappeared. Shortly afterward Henrette died but not before revealing her true identity to Jurgen. Many years later, when Jurgen was old and Herbert a strapping youth, Jurgen told Herbert about his maternal lineage. Herbert, sensing an opportunity to make money, began to inquire about the Steffens family, their properties and any potential rights he might have over them. As his inquiries became more specific and occurred in ever more places, it goes without saying that some ears that should not have heard, heard.

Although the purpose of the Geis' Tot had long since passed, as it happens with these organizations, it lingered and grew in power and influence – an influence it cares not to share nor have challenged. Upon hearing of the inquiries of this Meister Herbert Rothenheimer and some delicate investigation, a decision was made to find this Meister Herbert Rothenheimer and kill him and all his children. An attempt on the life of Herbert Rothenheimer was made but failed. The Meister, sensing something more than mere thuggery, feared for his and his daughter's lives and immediately fled Bergholt, taking his daughter with him. Unknown to Herbert Rothenheimer, a Geis' Tot assassin, Markus, followed him to the hinterlands and has joined with a band of pirates (see below) who are also seeking Rothenheimer.

You must know that Meister Rothenheimer's has many associates of a nefarious nature. One such is Ubert von Beck, a notorious pirate. Rothenheimer's departure from Bergholt complicated his attempts to pay a debt to Ubert von Beck. (Herbert Rothenheimer purchased stolen goods to sell in other cities). Upset with being unpaid, von Beck sent several men (Klaus and Tindle) to find Rothenheimer and retrieve the money he was owed. If the Meister refused to pay, von Beck ordered that he be slain.

And, to further his ambitions, von Beck also commanded that Evanna be taken and returned alive to Bergholt. His intention is to marry Evanna. For, as it turns out, von Beck has two identities. On the one hand he is Ubert von Beck the notorious

pirate and on the other, the wealthy Baron Ildin Savil from the Troke. A landless noble, von Beck took to pirating for income but kept his identity hidden and trounces around Bergholt and other cities as Baron Ildin Savil. His marriage to Evanna will allow him to enter into the local mercantile classes and become an accepted member of the community.

**MEISTER ROTHENHEIMER** (LN Medium Humanoid (human)) HP 5 (HD 2d8-4), AC 10, Spd 30ft. Str 10 Dex 10 Con 7 Int 16 Wis 11 Cha 13. Perception 10(+0). He has expensive clothing and a stout walking cane that he can wield for 1d4 points of damage. He has 120gp worth of jewelry and coin on him as well as his signet ring – described below.)

The Rothenheimer's carry a lot of baggage with them. The Meister's trunk is large and ornately carved, bound with brass straps and locked with a large padlock (DC 10 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to pick), the key to which is in the Meister's purse). The trunk contains several pairs of pants, a fine heavy cloak worth 150gp in coin, a few hats, a few dozen sheets of vellum, an ink well with several quills, a pair of gloves, a large belt and one pair of boots. There is a false bottom (detected with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check) that contains two letters of debt from merchants in Firstenfeld and a note guaranteeing a loan of 1,000gp from a Baron Savil.

Evanna's trunk is similar to her father's. She has the key in her purse. It contains dresses and clothing as well as one book, "The Geometries of Inzae, the Angles of the Heavenly Objects as Determined by Melequintus, Servitor of Narsitiblus."

## MUDDY ROADS

And so begins the characters' trip to The Vakhund. It takes three days to get there from Frisia if nothing unusual occurs along the way. Other than a chance encounter with wandering monsters, the trip is uneventful. The referee should encourage roleplay to create an affinity between the players and members of the caravan. The Castle Keeper is encouraged to instill a sense of drudgery in the days that pass as well. This is simply the calm before the storm and the players should be restless by the time the action begins.

**The Unterbasser meanders south beneath the majestic green firs of the Graffenvold. The days pass with moody skies alternating between rumbling dark clouds and cold drizzles to bright winter afternoons filled with warm breezes coming off the marshes of the Dampfrat. Stansley and Klamart drive their wagons hard and the oxen pull with might along the track. Yet, despite their efforts, the wagons occasionally become mired in the slick mud requiring the efforts of all to push and pull them free.**

The wagons become stuck a few times each day. Each time, the drivers ask for the characters help, though they pointedly do not ask help of the Meister and Evanna. Each evening, the steers are unhitched and tethered, and a large fire built. The drovers do most of the cooking and offer to cook for the characters if they supply their own food. The drivers and drovers make themselves comfortable wherever they can, sleeping as close to

the fire as possible. Evanna sleeps near her father, underneath a tarp attached to a wagon. On the second evening the Meister cheerfully offers to purchase a barrel of beer from Stansley. He shares it with everyone in an effort to make friends with his traveling companions. Storytelling by both the Meister and Frieland is a constant around the fire.

## WANDERING MONSTERS

There is a chance of encountering wandering monsters while on the trip to The Vakhund. In general, if the characters stay with the caravan, nothing occurs as the monsters simply go away. However, there are a few encounters that may prove problematic and, should a lone character stray from the caravan at the right moment, can be deadly.

There is a 2 in 10 chance for encountering monsters. This should be checked once during the day and twice at night. Some encounters can occur only while the caravan is moving, during the day or at night. These are noted and if they occur when the caravan is still, simply roll again. Also, no encounter can occur more than once so simply roll again should this happen.

1. **Hungry Wolf:** This wolf attacks any small sized character that appears vulnerable. Otherwise, it will run away once spotted.

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

2. **Mirchka the goblin:** This encounter can only occur north of the Treklant Creek. This is a goblin spy who works for Ubert von Beck. He has followed the caravan from Halpveg. At the moment he is encountered, Mirchka has decided to race ahead to Jzunad and inform his companions of the caravan's location and what he believes to be its likely destination – as if there were any question. If encountered and captured, he reveals little and lies as much as possible to conceal his true identity. The only item of value on him is a necklace with a pendant hanging from it. The pendant is a tiny platinum inverted dagger and is worth 30gp. By showing it to the Apothocary in Isenberg one can gain access to one of Ubert von Beck's safe houses.

**MIRCHKA, GOBLIN** (CE S humanoid (goblinoid)) HP 7 (HD 2d6), AC 15 (leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 14 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 8 Cha 8. Perception 9(-1). Stealth +8. Shortsword +4 (1d6+2) or Dagger +4 (1d4+2, range 20/60ft.) or Shortbow +4 (1d6+2, range 80/320ft.). SA: Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide as bonus action). Carries 5gp on his person.

3. **Owls:** The owls are active only at night. The hooting of these owls is strange and other worldly. Any character not familiar with the local wildlife must make a wisdom check

or mistake the sound for the groaning and screaming of humans. Searching for the ‘humans’ will, of course, reveal nothing. Stansley and the other locals know that it is an owl. This encounter can be used to heighten tension in the party. Allow for some question to arise as to whether or not the locals are telling the truth or bending it to avoid trouble. Though the characters do not see any of the owls, they are called Yanule and are commonly known as a sign of death.

4. **Coyotes:** Coyotes are generally only active at night. A large pack of coyotes gathers around the camp hoping to find easy prey. Initially, one howls, calling others to the campsite. Within a few minutes, nearly 15 coyotes show up yipping and howling. Though they will linger for a while, any aggressive action scares them off. They only attack lone individuals who wander outside the camp or away from the others.

**COYOTE X15** (*Unaligned Medium beast*) HP 5 (HD 1d8+1), AC 11, Spd. 50ft. Str 11 Dex 13 Con 12 Int 2 Wis 12 Cha 5. Perception 13(+3), Stealth +3. Bite +2 (1d6). SA Keen Smell (advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell). Challenge 0 (10 XP).

5. **Zwetter Rorer:** These cats are active day and night. These are massive saber-toothed tigers with mottled black and gray hides. They stand four feet at the shoulder and can range up to six feet in length. This immature male has decided to make a meal of one of the people in the caravan if possible. It stalks the caravan and attacks any average-sized or Small humanoid that is alone or far removed from anyone else. Larger and/or numerous foes are attacked only if the zwetter rorer is pressed and guarding a kill or very frightened and cornered. Should the characters (even an individual) act aggressively towards the creature before it attacks, the cat must succeed at a DC 12 Wisdom check or run away. It suffers disadvantage on this save if it faces more than one creature.

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

6. **Deer and Urfin:** These are active day and night. A small herd of deer moves through the area. A successful DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check allows a character not wearing heavy armor to successfully sneak up to the deer. Upon doing so, they notice a “man” walking with the herd. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals the true nature of the “man.” It is half elk and half man, an Urfin. Any movement or noise sends them scattering. The Urfin speaks no known tongue and cares not for man or their ilk and makes its way as quickly as possible into the depths of the wood.

**URFIN X1** (*N Medium fey*) HP 22 (HD 4d8+4), AC 12, Spd 30ft. Str 13 Dex 14 Con 12 Int 11 Wis 12 Cha 9. Perception 13(+3), Stealth +4. Club +3 (1d4+1) or Shortbow +4 (1d6+2, range 80/320ft.).

7. **Worg:** Worgs are active day and night. This lone worg seeks easy prey. It follows the group for some time until a straggler or someone becomes an easy target. If spied prior to an attack and beaten off, everyone seeing the animal that succeeds at a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the “wolf” had a bit and harness still in its mouth. This worg was once ridden by a Zjerd warrior.

**WORG** (*NE Large monstrosity*) HP 26 (HD 4d10+4), AC 13, Spd 50ft. Str 16 Dex 13 Con 13 Int 7 Wis 11 Cha 8. Perception 14(+4). Bite +5 (2d6+3, target creature must succeed DC 13 Strength save or be knocked prone). SA Darkvision 60 ft., Keen Hearing and Smell (advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell). Challenge 1/2 (100 XP).

8. **Corpse of a woodsman:** This encounter can occur only north of the Treklant Creek. This is the body of a recently killed woodsman. The wounds are punctures, but are obviously not from animals. A large chopping axe and a small knapsack with some crusts of bread and dried meat in it lie nearby. He is from a town near Frisia though no one knows him.

- 9-11. **Deer:** These are common woodland deer encountered day or night. They run if disturbed.

12. **Bear:** This encounter can occur at any time. A small black bear is encountered. The only way to get near it is by surprise and stealth. Unless cornered, the bear runs away as soon as it is aware there are people nearby. If tracked, killed and skinned, its hide brings 5sp in Frisia and 1gp in Halpveg.

**BEAR** (*Unaligned Medium beast*) HP 19 (HD 3d8+6), AC 11, Spd 40 ft., 30 ft. (climb). Str 15 Dex 10 Con 14 Int 2 Wis 12 Cha 7. Perception 13(+3). Multiattack (one bite, one claw), Bite +5 (1d6+2) Claws +4 (2d4+4). SA Keen Smell (advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell). Challenge 1/2 (100 XP).

- 13-19. **Elk:** These are common woodland elk. They run if disturbed.

20. **Goblins:** There are 6-13 goblins on a raid. These are Zjerd goblins from the Dampfrat. They enter into battle naked excepting some feathers tied to their hairy heads and gold earrings or nose plugs. They all carry a lot of arrows and try to use them to great effect before entering into combat.

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



## A SHORT RESPITE BEFORE A PERILOUS JOURNEY

The Vakhund rests ponderously in a very lonely, wide pasture. It is a squat tower constructed half of stone and half of wood, no taller than the great fir trees hemming in the glade. Nearby, an aged but sturdy bridge crosses the Treklant Creek. All about, the land is trampled and muddy from the recent rains. Stumps of trees and the refuse from hundreds of merchant camps clutter the pasture. Fire rings, piles of chopped and half burnt wood, tethering posts, broken and busted barrels and boxes, shreds of cloth and other debris mark where the Unterbasser begins its treacherous journey into the Drakkleed.

The tower is the only structure in the vicinity. The ground level walls, constructed of stone, bear no windows. A thick wooden door set in the center of the east wall and bound with iron straps provides the only entrance. The upper level is faced with stout wood and has an arrow slot cut in each wall. An overhanging wooden battlement tops the tower where a guard stands solidly beneath the unfurled black and green banner of Halpveg.

A sign between the tower and bridge lists the costs to those wishing to travel across the Treklant Creek.

### By Order of The Meister Premiger of Halpveg

Man on foot - 1 copper

Man with load - 2 copper

Cart pulled by man - 2 silver

Cart by animal - 6 gold

Wagon - 10 silver

About 50 feet to the east of the tower is a large tree with a bench and table beneath it. When not in the tower or attending other business, this is usually where everyone spends their time. There are five militiamen stationed at The Vakhund, including the leader, Kaptane Steigler. They remain at the tower at all times except when hunting or when accompanying merchants to Mejketek.

Kaptane Steigler is the haggard militia leader at Vakhund. Though old and graying, Steigler is a striking and powerfully built warrior. After serving for many years with the armies of the east, Steigler finds his current assignment on this desolate border post boring. As a result, he has resorted to excessive drink to pass the time. He welcomes everyone to The Vakhund in a stern way and is unyielding on the taxes. If slighted, insulted or his authority challenged, Steigler lashes out violently and is not unwilling to put anyone in irons for a few days.

**STEIGLER** (N Medium humanoid (human)) HP 26 (HD 4d8+8), AC 18 (chain & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 15 Dex 11 Con 14 Int 10 Wis 11 Cha 11. Perception 10(+0). Longsword +4 (1d8+2). He carries a pouch with 12gp in it. Challenge 1/2 (100 XP).

Gottfried von Frisia is a young militiaman who is very excited about his first posting at Vakhund. Poorly educated, Gottfried's speech is simple but colorful. He is a loyal friend to Karl.

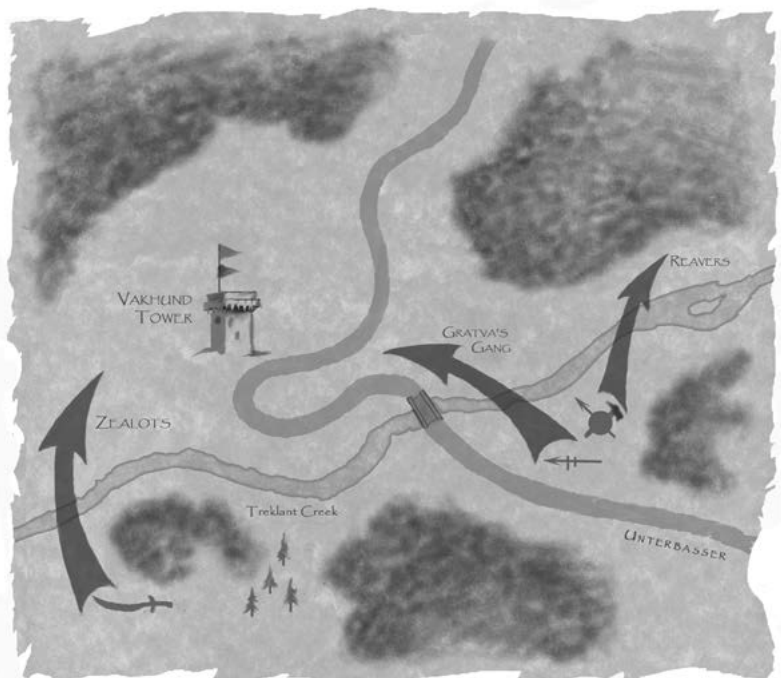
**GOTTFRIED** (NG Medium humanoid (human)) HP 9 (HD 2d8), AC 14 (leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 12 Dex 12 Con 11 Int 9 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Battleaxe +3 (1d8+1 or 1d10+1 with two hands) or Short Sword +3 (1d6+1). He also carries a knife. Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

**MILITIA X2** (NG Medium Humanoid (human)) HP 9 (HD 2d8), AC 11 (leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 11 Dex 10 Con 11 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Longsword +2 (1d8) or Light Crossbow +2 (1d8, 80/320ft.). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

Karl is another militiaman from Frisia assigned to the Vakhund. Karl is the youngest son of Kaptane Friger and is very aware of the duties required by his position. He is friendly and of honorable bearing though somewhat aloof. His loyalty to Gottfried is matched only by his loyalty to his family. In combat he is steadfast. Only under the greatest of duress will he or Gottfried leave the protection of the tower. Karl will tell his father (should he survive) of the deeds of the characters – whether good or bad. This can gain Kaptane Friger's undying gratitude or enmity depending on how they act.

**KARL** (NG Medium humanoid (human)) HP 11 (HD 2d8+2), AC 13 (leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 13 Dex 10 Con 12 Int 11 Wis 10 Cha 11 Perception 10(+0). Scimitar +3 (1d6+1). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

Dominating the ground floor of the tower is a large fire ring. It sits in the center of the earthen floor. An open staircase runs up the north wall to the first floor. Neatly stacked in the room



are 2 barrels of fresh water, 3 large burlap sacks filled with flour, a crate of dried meat, a large burlap sack of grain and another full of beans. There are several tin pans, some wooden spoons, a pile of fire wood, two chopping axes, a pile of kindling, a tinder box, a lantern, 12 torches, a small barrel of oil (equivalent of 12 flasks), and a pile of ten wool blankets. The door can be barred with a stout crossbeam. The door can take 50 points of damage (it has resistance to piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons, immunity to poison and psychic damage) before shattering.

Vakhund's first floor is constructed of wooden planks. There is a narrow arrow slit in each wall. The slit in the east wall is placed directly above the door on the ground floor. Inside, along the edge of the northern wall, an open wooden staircase leads to a trapdoor between the first floor and the roof. On this floor there are two small barrels containing 50 crossbow bolts each, 4 light crossbows, 4 shields, 4 spears, 4 small helms, 20 torches, an iron brazier, and 4 empty barrels. The Kaptane's bed sits next to the west wall. It bears a hay mattress. Underneath the bed is the iron tax box, locked with a padlock; it can be picked with a successful DC 10 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. Inside are 13gp, 56sp and 120cp.

The roof of the tower has a low wooden battlement, 2 iron braziers and a flagpole in its center flying the banner of Halpveg. One can see as far as the tree line in every direction.

The day following their arrival, Stansley asks the characters, Meister Rothenheimer and Evanna to wait at Vakhund until he returns from his trip to Mejketek. He assures everyone he will return within the week. The two militiamen accompany the caravan to Mejketek, while Karl and Gottfried remain at the tower. This is the custom. Stansley neither asks nor does he want anyone to accompany him to Mejketek. It may upset the trading and his hosts. Kaptane Steigler backs up this request.

Three uneventful days pass after the caravan leaves. Any character straying far from the tower has a 2 in 10 chance of encountering a Wandering Monster (see previous encounter table.)

## PART II: THE SWIFT AXE

Unbeknownst to the characters, two days into their trip, Stansley's caravan crossed paths with the Magdole Gang and some of Ubert von Beck's Reavers. They were all killed except Stansley and Frieland.

The Magdole Gang belongs to a larger organization of bandits headquartered far to the east of The Dampfrat and have traveled this far to locate and slay the members of a band of "sheriffs" who attacked their stronghold some weeks back. They are led by an urk named Gratva. While chasing the sheriffs, the Magdole Gang stopped at Jzunad where they met several of Ubert von Beck's Reavers, led by a man named Klaus. These sheriffs met up with Stansley after crossing the Treklant and before their arrival at Mejketek.

The Magdole Gang and Ubert's Reavers met at Jzunad and joined them because, as Gratva put it, "we being so close to

human lands tis far more dangerous alone ya see." Klaus, for his part, just wanted extra help in getting the Rothenheimers, whom he thought were with the caravan. Though the Magdole Gang succeeded in killing the last of the sheriffs when attacking Stansley's caravan, Klaus was left dissatisfied when he discovered the Rothenheimers were at The Vakhund. Gratva agreed to help Ubert's Reavers with their attack on The Vakhund in exchange for a percentage of the loot gained there.

Everyone in the caravan was slain except Frieland and Stansley. Stansley was taken back to Jzunad. Frieland escaped the attack as he was indisposed when it began, and is making his way back to The Vakhund, thinking he has outrun the bandits. The bandits know Frieland has escaped, though, and are planning to use him as bait. Late on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> day after the departure of Stansley's caravan, the Magdole Gang arrives at The Vakhund just prior to Frieland's arrival.

So, the Magdole Gang and Ubert von Beck's Reavers are lurking together just south of Jzunad. Each has their reasons for attacking The Vakhund and each intends to fulfill their particular desires. Each group and its major members are described below. This is followed by the initial plan of attack. The Castle Keeper should bear in mind the various motivations, and personalities when playing out the attack on The Vakhund and then its aftermath.

### THE MAGDOLE GANG

The Magdole Gang is little more than bandits or marauders who reside in an old keep on the eastern fringes of the Dampfrat. This group is but a small band of the Magdole Gang. It is a motley collection of races under the command of an urk warrior named Gratva. They killed the last of the 'sheriffs' with the attack on Stansley's caravan so their only real interest here is the loot to be gathered from The Vakhund. Gratva is not that intent upon the purported treasure though. He and his retinue would really rather just head back to their keep but being so close to what may be an easy haul is too tempting to pass up. Ultimately, Gratva is not willing to sacrifice too much on this attack and the two human bandits traveling with him care even less about the treasure.

**GRATVA, URK** (LE Medium humanoid (urk)) HP 27 (HD 5d8+5), AC 15 (chain shirt & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 18 Dex 12 Con 12 Int 11 Wis 10 Cha 13. Perception 10(+1), Intimidation +2, Survival +2. Multiattack two mace attacks, Mace +6 (1d6+4) or Heavy Crossbow +3 (1d10+1, range 100/400ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Challenge 2 (450 XP). He also carries a handsomely crafted dagger, a leather pouch holding 30gp, and a jeweled necklace worth 200gp.

There are six urk warriors that are itching for some combat. They have very high morale and will fight ferociously and attack with near reckless abandon caring nothing for their lives.

**URK X6** (CE Medium humanoid (urk)) HP 15 (HD 2d8+6), AC 14 (leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 16 Dex 12 Con 16 Int 7 Wis 12 Cha 10. Perception 11(+1), Intimidation +2, Survival +3. Scimitar +5 (1d6+3) or Heavy crossbow

+3 (1d10, range 100/400ft.). SA *Darkvision* 60ft., *Aggressive* (bonus action, move its speed toward hostile creature it can see). Challenge 1/2 (100 XP). Each carries 1d8gp in jewelry or coin.

There are 5 zjerd goblin warriors travelling with Gratva also. They are primarily used for missile support. These goblins are miffed about this "excursion" and flee if they have a chance. They dress in nothing but feathers and gold or silver jewelry.

**ZJERD, GOBLIN X5** (CE Small humanoid (goblinoids)) HP 7 (HD 2d6), AC 14 (shield), Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 14 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 8 Cha 8. Perception 9(-1). Stealth +6. Shortsword +4 (1d6+2) or Shortbow +4 (1d6+2, range 80/320ft.). SA *Darkvision* 60ft., *Nimble Escape* (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

Two human bandits travel with Gratva. These two are thoroughly evil sorts who are wanted north of the Treklant Creek. They have been traveling with the Magdole gang for some time. They actively fight, but have little loyalty to Gratva and greater loyalty to themselves. They are seeking an opportunity to escape further north.

**BANDITS X2** (NE Medium humanoid (human)) HP 11 (HD 2d8+2), AC 15 (leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 13 Dex 14 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Leather armor. Longsword +3 (1d8+1) or Shortbow +4 (1d6+2, 80/320ft.). Challenge 1/8 (25 XP). Only one of these bandits has a short bow with 14 arrows. They wear heavy, woolen cloaks and carry 1d10sp apiece.

There are 5 urk zealots from Jzunad here as well. They accompanied the group, at their master's request. They are here to gather corpses and to fight. They do not fear death and fight accordingly. A spell cast on the urks, *The Protection of Kleejd*, bestows upon them a high armor class but reduces their movement. The spell causes the skin to turn hard and become ochre colored. (See '*The Protection of Kleejd*' and the urk priest for details.)

**URK ZEALOTS X5** (CE Medium humanoid (urk)) HP 15 (HD 2d8+6), AC 18 (magic), Spd 20ft. Str 18 Dex 12 Con 16 Int 7 Wis 12 Cha 10. Perception 11(+1), Intimidation +2, Survival +3. Scimitar +6 (1d6+4) or Battleaxe +6 (1d8+4). SA *Darkvision* 60ft., *Aggressive* (bonus action, move its speed toward hostile creature it can see), under effects of *The Protection of Kleejd*. Challenge 1/2 (100 XP). Each carries 1d8gp in jewelry or coin.

#### UBERT VON BECK'S REAVERS

Klaus, von Beck's right hand man in Bergholt, leads several of Ubert von Beck's pirates on this venture. Klaus and his friend Tindle are both familiar, though uncomfortable, with this area as von Beck occasionally works with the Magdole Gang on raids near the coast or trades with them. Klaus and Tindle picked up a few thugs in Bergholt and met up with some of von Beck's privateers and headed to this region after receiving word Rothenheimer was in Halpveg and heading south. Having propitiously encountered some of the Magdole Gang at Jzunad, Klaus promised them a large portion of the loot if they helped him attack The Vakhund. Klaus did not tell Gratva that he is really

after Herbert Rothenheimer and his daughter. Unbeknownst to Klaus, of the thugs Klaus contracted in Bergholt, a Geis' Tot, Markus, joined the lot.

Klaus is here to kill Herbert Rothenheimer or get his payment and kidnap Evanna. Nothing else concerns him. As soon as this is accomplished, he is ready to leave. To slake Gratva's need for treasure and maintain good relations with the Magdole Gang, he stays throughout the day of the attack and helps where he can but under no circumstance will he or Tindle place themselves in harm's way. They intend to leave with their reavers and thugs the night after the attack begins.

Klaus is a tall and thin man with wisps of hair on his head and chin. He is acne scarred, beady eyed, and thin lipped. His clothing is simple, fairly dirty and unkempt but quite functional. He speaks with a lisp and gesticulates wildly when excited. Klaus is motivated by little other than Ubert von Beck's desires. He is wily and quite unwilling to lay his life down for anything, obsequious when necessary, and blustering when useful. Klaus carries a longbow and spiked chain into battle. In combat, he uses the spiked chain to disarm or trip an opponent while Tindle moves in for the kill.

**KLAUS** (CN Medium humanoid (human)) HP 27 (HD 6d8), AC 14 (studded leather), Spd 30ft. Str 15 Dex 15 Con 10 Int 13 Wis 10 Cha 9. Perception 10(+0). SV Dex +4 Int +3. +1 Short Sword +5 (1d6+3) or Spiked Chain +4 (1d4+2, reach 10ft., target hit DC 12 Strength save or be pulled prone) or Longbow +4 (1d8+2, range 150/600ft.). SA *Evasion* (if effect allows Dex save, he takes no damage with successful save or 1/2 damage with failed save), *Sneak Attack* 1/Turn (3d6 bonus damage if has advantage on the roll or target is within 5 ft. of an ally that isn't incapacitated and he doesn't have disadvantage on the attack), *Cunning Action* (Dash, Disengage, or Hide action as a bonus action). Challenge 1 (200 XP). His studded leather armor is of exceptional quality. In addition to his +1 Short Sword, he also carries thieves' tools, as well as 100gp in coin and jewelry.

Tindle is a fairly handsome man with stubble covering his face. His eyes are a piercing blue and his voice firm and powerful. Tindle walks "tall" and carries himself pompously, glowering at most that bother to talk to him. He is fairly loyal to Klaus, having traveled with him for nearly five years. Tindle carries a battle axe or a longsword with a shield into combat. As a combat tactic, he tries to knock opponents prone with his shield and deal with them one at a time or attack those Klaus has tripped.

**TINDLE** (CN Medium humanoid (human)) HP 39 (HD 6d8+12), AC 18 (scale & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 16 Dex 14 Con 15 Int 11 Wis 10 Cha 11. Perception 10(+0). SV Str +5 Con +4. Multiattack (two melee attacks with main weapon, one melee attack with short sword), Longsword +5 (1d8+3) or Battleaxe +5 (1d8+3), Short Sword +5 (1d6+3; 1d6 in off hand). SA *Parry* (add +2 to AC against one melee attack that would hit, must be able to see attacker). Challenge 2 (450 XP). In addition to his weapons and steel shield, he carries a set of thieves' tools, a platinum amulet (5gp), 2 rings (25sp, 15sp), a belt with silver emblazoned upon it (10gp), and 10sp in a pouch.



Krees is a human bandit working for Klaus. Krees is a difficult person to like. His asinine and pointlessly insulting comments invite hatred and anger. His immediate intention is to leave the Dampfrat and make his way to a bandit stronghold near Frisia.

**KREES** (CN Medium humanoid (human)) HP 11 (HD 2d8+2), AC 15 (studded leather), Spd 30ft. Str 11 Dex 17 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 11. Perception 10(+0). SV Str +2, Con +4. Short Sword +5 (1d6+3) or Longbow +5 (1d8+3, range 150/600ft.). Challenge 1 (200 XP). He wears traveler's clothes and carries a pouch holding 10gp in coin.

Nurjd is a veteran urk warrior, loyal and stalwart servant to Ubert von Beck and relentless enemy in combat when bent on revenge. He is a quick thinker who has survived many years as a pirate on the Interzæ due to his uncanny ability to estimate his enemies' will in combat.

**NURJD, URK** (CE Medium humanoid (urk)) HP 19 (HD 3d8+6), AC 19 (splint & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 17 Dex 14 Con 14 Int 10 Wis 11 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0), Intimidation +2. Scimitar +5 (1d6+3) or Spear +5 (1d6+3 or 1d8+3 wielded with two hands, range 20/60ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Aggressive (bonus action, move its speed toward hostile creature it can see). Challenge 1/2 (100 XP). He carries a large iron shield painted with eldritch markings of dark magic. An enemy creature that sees this sigil must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or suffer disadvantage on attacks against Nurjd until the start of his next turn. Once a creature succeeds at this save, they become immune to the sigil for 24 hours. He carries 35gp worth of jewelry and coin.

There are three humans in the band who were hired by Klaus in Bergholt. They are uncomfortable working with the orcs and goblins and quickly feel that this job presents more risk than they are willing to undertake. One, Markus, is a spy for the Geis'Tot and does not risk himself. He is going to try and kill Evanna as soon as he can and then attempt to make an escape.

**MARKUS** (CE Medium humanoid (human)) HP 22 (HD 5d8), AC 13, Spd 30ft. Str 11 Dex 14 Con 10 Int 13 Wis 11 Cha 10. Short Sword +4 (1d6+2) or Dagger +4 (1d4+2, range 20/60ft.). SA Evasion (if effect allows Dex save, he takes no damage with successful save or 1/2 damage with failed save), Sneak Attack 1/Turn (1d6 bonus damage if has advantage on the roll or target is within 5 ft. of an ally that isn't incapacitated and he doesn't have disadvantage on the attack), Cunning Action (Dash, Disengage, or Hide action as a bonus action). Challenge 1 (200 XP). He carries leather armor, a short sword and dagger.

**BANDITS X2** (NE Medium humanoid (human)) HP 11 (HD 2d8+2), AC 15 (leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 13 Dex 14 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Leather armor. Longsword +3 (1d8+1). Challenge 1/8 (25 XP). They wear heavy, woolen cloaks and carry 1d6sp apiece.

There are five orcs here. They are pirates from von Beck's flagship, are very loyal to von Beck and generally carry out his orders but are ready to return to the open seas as the land is not their friend.

**ORCS X5** (CE Medium Humanoid (orc)) HP 15 (HD 2d8+6), AC 14 (leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 16 Dex 12 Con 16 Int 7 Wis 11 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0), Intimidation +2, Survival +2. Scimitar +5 (1d8+3); some orcs instead wield a greataxe +5 (1d12+3) and thus have AC 11 (no shield). SA Darkvision 60ft; Double move as bonus action. Challenge 1/2 (100 XP). Each orc carries 1d4gp in coin and jewelry.

## THE PLAN OF ATTACK

Everyone agrees to allow Gratva to be in charge of the attack on The Vakhund. Not everyone intends to adhere to Gratva's plan though. Nevertheless, he plans to attack the tower from the east, the west and the south. He splits the lot under his command into three groups. The smallest group crosses the Treklant west of The Vakhund with the zealots; another group, lead by Klaus, crosses the Treklant east of the tower; the largest group remains in the tree line south of the Treklant and awaits the other two groups signal (a horn) before attacking. The idea is that Gratva, who is near the bridge, is to draw the defenders out of the tower and to the bridge and then the others move into attack. That, of course, is the plan. Yet, as everyone knows, the fog of battle causes many disruptions.

Gratva intends to use a survivor from the attack on the caravan to draw the defenders out of the tower. Frieland escaped the attack. No one gave chase initially, thinking to have sport with him later. Gratva realized that the escapee could be used as a ruse to draw out Vakhund's defenders. By racing ahead of the escaping Frieland and positioning his troops correctly, Gratva could shoot Frieland as he approached the bridge and leave him wounded and on the ground. When the defenders come to rescue him, the attack would commence.

The group attacking from the west stumbles across Steigler, who is drunk to the point of passing out and trying to fish. Steigler puts up a fight but is killed. This delays the group's movement somewhat, but they continue going forward towards the tower. Whenever the fight begins, they come in 2-8 rounds late.

After crossing the Treklant, Klaus's group propitiously finds the Meister and Evanna on a walk. A scuffle ensues that leaves Rothenheimer mortally wounded and Evanna prisoner. Klaus gives the signal that he is ready to attack by blowing a horn. He and his men then move back across the Treklant and do not join in the initial attack on The Vakhund, much to Gratva's dismay and later, fury.

Gratva and his men remain in the treeline until Frieland runs out of the woods toward the tower. Gratva then orders the goblins to shoot Frieland before he reaches the bridge in the hope that the wounded person draws out the tower's defenders. If the characters opt to rescue Frieland, as soon as they reach him, Gratva's troops attack. If no rescue attempt is made, Gratva waits until the band from the west is in sight. He slays Frieland along the way as an after thought.

It is best that the Castle Keeper determine the composition of each attacking group bearing in mind the player character's capabilities and the following factors: Gratva leads the largest



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group which contains at least three goblin archers, Klaus leads the group which crosses the Treklant east of the tower and his unit should contain Markus, while the group crossing west of the tower should contain several zealots. The following is a suggested composition.

There are three groups. One group is moving to the east, one in the center and one to the west. The eastern group should contain Klaus, Tindle, Markus and three orcs. The central group should contain Gratva, Krees, three urks, 2 zealots, 5 zjerd and two bandits. The western group should contain Nurjd, two orcs, three zealots and three urks.

### A MORNING AT THE VAKHUND

When the attack begins, Meister Rothenheimer and Evanna are on a walk east of the tower, and Kaptane Steigler is fishing on the Treklant about ½ mile west of the tower. Only Karl, Gottfried and the characters remain at the tower.

To build suspense and surprise for the players, the Castle Keeper should ask the players for their daily routines and position the characters accordingly prior to the attack or use the table below to randomly place the characters. The Castle Keeper is encouraged to place the characters in such a manner as to make the initial attack challenging, though not deadly.

- 1 Roof of the tower
- 2-3 Inside the tower
- 4 Several hundred yards west of the tower
- 5 Several hundred yards east of the tower

- 6-8 At the table outside the tower
- 9 On the creek bank or at the bridge washing
- 10 In the tree line south of the tower

The attack begins in this manner....

The rains have chilled the air and the afternoon's sun is hidden behind boiling gray clouds. A brisk wind whips from the north carrying the crisp smells of the Interzae. Earlier, Kaptane Steigler meandered down the Treklant Creek, promising to bring back trout for the noonday's meal. The Meister Rothenheimer, in an ochre cape, and Evanna, brilliant in a white ermine overcoat, just disappeared behind the trees at the pasture's edge on a morning walk up the creek.

"AAHHEEEEE! Beware! We are set upon! Heeelllllp!!" Frieland's voice shreds the air as he races down the road across the creek, screaming desperately. His clothing is tattered and his face streams with blood.

A few heartbeats pass and arrows course through the air. From the treeline across the creek emerge several savage goblins hefting bows. They let fly deadly shafts and one pins Frieland in the back. He falls to the ground, screaming in agony.

Gratva uses several strategies in the attack on Vakhund, but is not willing to sacrifice many of his group for the purported treasure. Gratva leaves the wounded Frieland in the road allowing a few Zjerd to be seen but not revealing his full strength. If this does not rouse the defenders of the tower, Gratva enjoins two urks to retrieve Frieland. They then place the wounded boy on a stake and drag this out to the bridge. Here, they prop him up and begin to torture him. Frieland screams in agony the whole time and pleads for help while the laughing urks go about their business.

He then attempts to draw the defenders out of the tower by pelting the tower with burning arrows. If this does not work, he tries threatening the defenders with torture should they not give over the treasure. He uses subterfuge and makes any promises to retrieve the gold without being killed. If unsuccessful, Gratva finally resorts to a direct assault. The archers are used to pin down anyone on the roof while the remainder of the group attack from several directions. While Gratva is bargaining, his troops will be busy constructing makeshift ladders and a battering ram.

If it so happens than any of the group is out in the open, the urks attack pell-mell and the urk zealots sneak up from the west and try to storm the tower.

The attackers remain near the tower throughout the day, launching attacks as necessary. Other than the zealots, there is quite a bit of reluctance to fight an all-out pitched battle. A few casualties and the lot pulls back to regroup and rethink their strategy. At nightfall, Gratva pulls the bandits back to the south side of the Treklant, and makes camp in the woods near the road. An argument breaks out between Klaus and Gratva

over the fate of Evanna breaks out and Klaus's failure to attack earlier in the day. Klaus claims he wishes to ransom her to the Rothenheimer family in Bergholt and bring the money back. Gratva wants an assurance that he will get his money and refuses to allow Klaus to take the girl. The argument ends when Markus, as instructed, makes an attempt on Evanna's life while none are paying attention to him. Before Markus succeeds, Tindle slays him. After the scuffle, Gratva and Klaus agree to take the girl to Jzunad to determine her fate. They leave early on the morning following the attack.

### **THE CLOSING**

The Meister Rothenheimer yet lives, and it is imperative that the characters find him as the remainder of the adventure hinges upon this. There are two means of accomplishing this. The first is to have him wander back to the tower, falling mortally wounded into the hands of the characters or the characters can search the woods east of the tower and find him. Each encounter is described separately, but the outcome of both is the same.

In this encounter, the Meister returns to the tower.

**Night has fallen and a deadly black pall hangs over the tower. A reddish light spills out of the thicket of trees across the creek and carries with it sounds of camp, and chants of war and death common to both goblinoids. Violent intent spills over the open spaces while a lone, hulking figure emerges from the shadows, moving toward the tower. The Meister Rothenheimer's arm raises, but no sound escapes him. He collapses outside Vakhund's door.**

In this encounter, the characters find the Meister in the woods where he was attacked.

**The Meister Rothenheimer lies propped up against a tree, his body broken and shattered. Blood pours from many wounds, his clothing is soaked a dark red. Words bubble out of his mouth in bloody spasms between haggard breaths, "Evanna... Evanna..."**

The Meister has been shot with a poisoned arrow and become terribly infected and bleeds to death within a day (healing spells will cure the wound but not the infection). He makes a dying request of the characters that they find his daughter. He promises that returning her safely to his family in Bergholt will earn them a great reward. Should the characters hesitate in accepting the Meister's passionate plea, he assures them that any request will be met by his family and offers them his signet ring as a sign of faith and tells them to give it to his uncle with the words 'my body, my blood, my family.'

He has nothing else of value on his person, other than his signet ring (which he has not worn but kept hidden in a false pouch in his pants). There is a letter tucked in the same pouch, which the characters may take from Herbert (he does not willingly give it). It reads: "R. Our failed communication of late has left me little choice, either return to me what is mine or I shall have my Klaus settle the account permanently. V. Beck."

The V. Beck needs no explanation as everyone in this region knows of this famed pirate. If pressed about what is owed to V. Beck, Rothenheimer says that 'tis only gold, that greedy man could not wait but one settling moon for it.'

Meister Rothenheimer's signet ring is one of only seven family rings. It is worth 1000gp. Selling it in Bergholt could be problematic as it brings attention to the characters and some might wonder where they procured such an item. Crimes committed against citizens of Bergholt are prosecuted quickly and violently. Justice in Bergholt is unrelenting, unfair and deadly. Returning the signet ring to the Rothenheimer family and asking no reward, garners the characters the beneficence of the family. Selling the ring in Halpveg will, at best, bring 50% of its value. Selling the ring in Firstenfeld or further afield will bring its full value, if not more.

### **PART III: THE CHASE**

Should the characters decide to rescue Evanna, take revenge on the attackers, or discover what happened to Stansley, they must follow the bandits across the Treklant Creek down the Unterbasser and into the Drazkleed. The trail leads them to the site of the attack on the caravan and thence to Jzunad, a holy place for many goblins and their kin, or Mejketek, the goblin trading post. The bandits have made no effort to conceal themselves or their movements so they should be easy to track. The Wandering Monster Chart should be checked twice per day and once at night with a 2 in 10 chance of an encounter each time. Again, there is no duplication of encounters and Mirshka should be excluded. It is 30 miles from the Vakhund to the site where the caravan was attacked and 60 miles from there to Jzunad and 20 or so to Mejketek.

**The Unterbasser stretches into the dreary south. Its muddy trails and byways are traveled by few other than merchants, goblins, and those of ill intent. There is no law here to protect the honest, so it is with much haste that wise travelers make their way between The Vakhund and Mejketek.**

The surviving bandits move with great haste south along the Unterbasser and then break off east to Jzunad at that point where the caravan was attacked. It is unlikely the characters would be able to catch them since they are moving so fast. The place where the caravan was attacked and the one encounter between the caravan site and Jzunad are described below. Mejketek is also described as the characters may make their way to this goblin trading post should they not locate the trail leading to Jzunad.

**THE CAMPSITE:** This is the site where the bandits camped after attacking the tower. It is on the south side of the river, just inside the tree line and near the road. There are two stakes in the road, just up the road, with heads on them.

**As you cross the bridge where the Unterbasser disappears beneath the dark bows of the Graffenvold, a grizzly reminder of the previous day's battle sits in the middle of the road. Two heads placed atop small poles rest**



awkwardly in the middle of the road. Kaptane Steigler's eyes stare blankly at the tower and an unfamiliar dwarf's head mimics his gaze. Beyond are the dying embers of a large fire, and the discarded scraps of a night's meals and one dismembered corpse.

The encampment provides little valuable information. Several yards beyond the smoldering fire, lies the dismembered body of Markus. Markus has no valuables, but a tattoo of two quarter-moons facing each other can be found on his back. Several pieces of Evanna's cloak can be located. The Kaptane's body can be found down the creek about ½ mile. The dwarf's head belongs to one of the "sheriffs" Gratva was after. The dwarf was a goblin slayer and one of the sheriffs. There are a series of small dots on his forehead. These are indication of the number of goblins he has slain. Each dot representing one dozen goblins. He has 7 dots. The bandits left obvious tracks on the road leading south.

### **THE DEAD AND WASTED FOOD:**

Two days travel further south the Unterbasser brings the characters to where Stansley's caravan was destroyed by the bandits.

Rounding a bend in the road, you are greeted by a long stretch of the Unterbasser hemmed in tightly by massive green firs dusted with snow. Down the road are the burnt husks of two wagons. Peaceful and still, the charred remains are the sole marker of those you traveled with merely a week earlier. The crates, boxes, sacks, and barrels are spilled, broken and scattered up and down the road, and the steers, tack and harnesses are gone.

Several days before, Klaus and Tindle were disappointed to discover that Meister Rothenheimer and Evanna were not with the caravan and decided that they must be at the tower, hence the attack on The Vakhund. A search of the area reveals few useful items as the bandits have thoroughly ransacked the caravan for anything of value. Conspicuously, only one corpse can be located. That is the headless corpse of a dwarf. It is the body belonging to the head at the campsite. The dwarf, a goblin slayer and one of the sheriffs who attacked the Magdole Gang, had come upon the caravan and decided to travel with it for safety. Searching him reveals nothing other than a body scarred from many years of horrible fighting. Again, the tracks of the attackers are easily followed. They lead east into the woods towards the Dampfrat.

**UBERT VON BECK'S REAVERS:** Should the characters try to back track the bandits who attacked The Vakhund, they must leave the Unterbasser and travel through the woods along an animal trail. The gang is easy to track as they are not making any effort to hide their passing. All Wisdom (Survival) tracking checks gain advantage. If it happens to be raining or snowing that day, however, these tracking checks do not gain advantage.

After leaving the Unterbasser and a little over midway to Jzunad, the players encounter three orc reavers, Nurjd and Krees (if he survived), traveling along the same trail but heading back to

the Unterbasser (for stats see previous section). This group split from the others after reaching Jzunad and is heading back to the Unterbasser and thence down the Treklant Creek to the Interzae. Their intention is to bring word of their actions to Uber von Beck. If possible, these are survivors from the attack on The Vakhund. If Krees has already been killed, the human Jeester Strumbert should be used as a replacement.

None of these are attentive to their surroundings because they are in an argument and are easily surprised (treat their passive Perception scores as being 5 lower). Characters capable of speaking orc discern that the three orcs are arguing about the quickest route back down the Treklant to the Interzae. An observant character notes the lead orc has a limp, and the human has a bloody bandage dangling out from under his hat.

**The Dampfrat is a dark and silent place. The massive green boughs of the firs smother most noise and cast dark shadows even in the brightest of afternoons. A light snow filters from the sky, whipped by a spiteful wind that, for once, brings more than chill and bitter cold. The wind carries a noise, the muffled grumbling of voices not far in the distance.**

**From around the trees stomp three fierce orcs hefting long, thin curving blades and hauling small packs upon their backs. Their dress is unusual outside the bays and ports of the Interzae as they wear padded armors of bright colors and hats of colorful hue. With them is a lone human, attired in a similar fashion but with a great hooked polearm in tow and behind the lot is a very tall orc growling at the others and carrying a spear in one hand and shield in the other. The orcs are barking at each other in their angry tongue while the human limps quietly behind.**

If confronted by obviously superior foes, the Reavers offer no resistance and ask for mercy and even offer their monies for safe passage. If interrogated, they may impart valuable information to the party. Keep in mind, these are life-long pirates. They have been interrogated in the past and have interrogated foes. They can instinctively sense danger and give the players false and misleading information to escape unharmed. If pressed or attacked they fight as is necessary, but flee at the first possible moment.

The leader, Nurjd, only divulges what is necessary to ensure his survival. The human, Krees, is quite willing to talk about what he believes to be Evanna's current location. Other than that, Krees knows little, as he is a newcomer to the group. The others divulge information as the Castle Keeper deems necessary to propel the game forward.

All of the Reavers know that "the blonde human woman" is being held at Jzunad. No one knows exactly where. Nurjd does not guess, but one of the orcs claims she is at the bar. Krees thinks she has to be taken deep into the Dampfrat to a stronghold named Magdole. They all claim to be working for Ubert von Beck, hoping the name will cause fear in the players and therefore save their lives (Ubert von Beck is a well known pirate). They say they were sent here to get money from Rothenheimer but they

have no idea why the girl was taken prisoner. They impart that Jzunad is a temple complex erected to the god Kleejd. They tell the players of Klaus and Tindle, their leaders.

Krees, tired of the company of orcs, gladly joins the party if given the opportunity and disavows his loyalty to von Beck, offering to turn over his weapons and change his ways if offered a chance. He will not, however, go back to Jzunad. "A death sentence, ya see!" If allowed to travel with the party, he escapes at the first possible moment seeking to join another group of bandits that reside near Frisia. For Nurjd and Krees' stats see Ubert von Beck's Reavers above.

## MEJKETEK

Should the characters continue to travel the road, for whatever reason, they come to Mejketek.

Deep in the wilderlands beyond the Treklant Creek lies the famed goblin trading post Mejketek. This is the northernmost outpost of the Kdyzj. These are goblins of the Kingdoms of Drazkleed and have rule over the lands they name Unkzjar. Merchants from the far ends of the Interzae come here and trade in all manner of goods, the most prized of which and for which the Kdyzj are famous are the small mechanical contraptions used for keeping time.

Mejketek is 60 miles south of Vakhund and about 2 days walk from where the caravan was attacked. Movement is slowed due to the sodden track and slick viscous mud. Use the Random Encounter Chart. Again, there is no duplication of encounters and Mirshka should be excluded.

As you top a rise in the road, a valley expands before you. It is broad and shallow with the Unterbasser twisting down its sodden middle. The valley is bare, except for one structure, and hemmed in by dark green firs on all sides. In the center of the marshy expanse is an almost round building with a conical roof. Smoke lazily billows out of its center and floats off into the skyline. Muddy tracks cover it all around and piles of debris are scattered hither and yon. Atop the roof is a small banner with the two curved blades, in black, crossed over and on a white background. There is a small woodshed attached to the rear of the building. In front of the building are three green skinned goblins dressed in thick furs and hefting long spears.

Mejketek is a trading and guard post used by the Kdyzj. No one is allowed further south of Mejketek without the goblins permission or a fight. The goblins here are guarded but not entirely unfriendly. Much trade takes place between these goblins and the humans to the north. They receive grains, beers, metal, worked items and other material they consider valuable. In exchange, they sell clocks, gems, iron ingots and other material besides.

The goblins here are a mixture of warriors, merchants and servants. Each one has their own place within the hierarchy of Mejketek, but overall leadership belongs to an old grizzled

goblin named Cherktrag. He is keenly intelligent, capable of speaking Inzaen and his own tongue, enjoys barter and can 'read' a human face like an open book. The remainder are discussed below as warrants.

The characters, should they come in peace and make it obvious they are doing so, will be cautiously welcomed. In time, if the characters gain the goblins trust, they will be invited into the Hall for the near nightly gatherings. If not, the characters must stay outside while under the obtrusive watch of several of the guards.

There are perhaps 30 Kdyzj staying in Mejketek at the moment. This number swells significantly during the busy trading months, but trade is slowing as the snows of winter move in. There is one Kdyzj merchant and his retinue of seven helpers here. The merchant was going to meet Stansley to purchase some goods. His wagons and other help are to arrive in about a day or so. Ten of the Kdyzj are warriors and led by Gzeejert. The warriors switch watches outside the building. There are three at a time and they hold watch for about 6 hours at a time. Finally, there are ten servants of Cherktrag's. These are permanent here and maintain the building, gather food and do other chores as necessary.

**CHERKTRAG, GOBLIN** (NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)) HP 7 (HD 2d6), AC 13 (leather), Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 14 Con 10 Int 12 Wis 11 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Stealth +6. Dagger +4 (1d4+2, range 20/60ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP). He carries clothing and a thick leather jerkin that acts as leather armor, a dagger, and 55gp worth of jewelry and coin.

**MERCHANT, KDYZJ** (NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)) HP 3 (HD 1d6), AC 10, Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 11 Con 10 Int 12 Wis 8 Cha 11. Perception 9(-1). Stealth +6. Shortsword +4 (1d6+2) or Shortbow +4 (1d6+2, range 80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 0 (10 XP). He carries clothing, a dagger and 155gp worth of jewelry and coin.

**MERCHANT'S HELPERS, GOBLINS X7** (CN Small humanoids (goblinoids)) HP 3 (HD 1d6), AC 10, Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 11 Con 10 Int 8 Wis 8 Cha 8. Perception 9(-1). Stealth +2. Dagger +2 (1d4, range 20/60ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 0 (10 XP). They carry clothing, tools, and a dagger.

**GZEEJERT, GOBLIN** (NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)) HP 10 (HD 3d6), AC 18 (scale mail & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 14 Con 10 Int 12 Wis 11 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Stealth +6. Dagger +4 (1d4+2, range 20/60ft.) or Spear +1 (1d6-1 or 1d8-1 wielded with two hands, thrown range 20/60ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP). He carries 25gp worth of jewelry and coin.

**KDYZJ WARRIORS X10** (CN Small humanoids (goblinoids)) HP 7 (HD 2d6), AC 13 (leather armor), Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 14 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 8 Cha 8. Perception 9(-1). Stealth +6. Shortsword +4 (1d6+2) or Dagger +4 (1d4+2, range 20/60ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP).

The inside of the structure is not subdivided, all of the goblins live, sleep, eat, cook and undertake all other activities together in this one room. It is a crowded, filthy, noisy wreck in here at all times. A huge stone lined fire pit takes up the center of the room. The floor is bare (that is, those parts which can be seen) but covered in hay, old blankets, and a mess of other things like blankets and rugs. There are long benches around the fire pit and pushed up against the walls. At the southeast end of the room is a large wooden chair draped in loose, red, silken cloth and framed by two braziers. Crates, barrels, boxes and other assorted storage devices lie akimbo about the place. A dozen kettledrums sit on the floor to the west of the fire pit.

The most amazing object in the room however, is the ceiling. It has a burnished copper interior. It appears that a massive copper cone is suspended precariously from the roof. The item stretches nearly the entire length of the chamber. It is as if one were in a teapot and looking up at the lid. The copper cone suspended from the ceiling serves to heat the room. When a fire is lit inside the heat is reflected back by the copper. There are dozens of small holes drilled into it that let some smoke escape through the roof though generally this room becomes a haze of smoke fairly quickly should a large fire be lit.

Should the characters be friendly, the goblins take them in and converse with them. The Kdyzj know a lot about the region and can impart that to the characters. They are very willing to divulge the whereabouts of Jzunad and speak of the Zjerd in the Dampfrat. Cherktrag tells the characters to travel east and north to the Mammoth Tusk and take the trail heading east from that location. If they follow that trail, they will arrive in Jzunad in a couple days time. They tell the characters that an urk priest is now in residence at Jzunad. They are not aware of Evanna. They know of the Magdole Gang and that they are headquartered in a large fortress on the east end of the Dampfrat known as the Magershole. Any other information that the goblins reveal is up to the Castle Keeper.

The characters may be invited to the goblin's nightly feasting. This is a raucous affair in which the goblins drink copious amounts of grog, chant chants, play the drums and cook mushrooms. The mushrooms are hallucinogenic and render those who eat them incapacitated for 4-32 hours (they work on goblins for only 1-4 hours). A creature that succeeds at a DC 12 Constitution saving throw is only incapacitated for 1d4 hours.

Should the characters show ill intent or be terribly disrespectful, the goblins fight. They try several gambits though. The first is to feign surrender and then attack or perhaps even leave the building and come back at night or when the characters are vulnerable. They also, if circumstances permit, feign friendship and get the characters drunk on the mushrooms and slay them while they are incapacitated.

#### **THE MAMMOTH TUSK**

If the characters take the advice of Cherktrag and travel north and east along a small trail for one day, they come upon a Kdyzj holy spot. A great mammoth died here many years ago and all passing Kdyzj stop to pay their condolences to the Great

Mammoth, Chachkuk. There are trails heading east and south from this spot. Traveling south takes the characters deeper into the lands of the Kdyzj where they are not welcome.

**The Unterbasser rises and falls with the hills in the region. Upon one such rise all the trees have been cleared and the debris common to the forest floor removed. To the side of the road lie the massive skeletal remains of a mammoth. It sits there, as if keeping watch over the road and all those who pass. It's bleak and yellow bones are festooned with small colorful ribbons of silk and cloth; all over the mammoth, other than the gleaming white tusks that is.**

This is where a great mammoth fell and died. Mammoths are revered by the Kdyzj and are used as pack animals and war beasts, though this is very rare. To maintain the good graces of the 'lord of beasts' they pay homage to their dead. The little slivers of cloth all contain prayers for bringing the Kdyzj a new mammoth to serve them.

#### **JZUNAD**

It is important that when the characters arrive at Jzunad, the Castle Keeper decide whether to end the adventure here or to continue it in the second part of the Death on the Treklant series, "Dzeebagd." If the Castle Keeper is of a mind to end the adventure at Jzunad, Evanna is located in Barrow A, Area 3 under the watchful eye of the urk priest. Gratva, Klaus, Tindle and the other bandits have moved on to the abandoned fortress of Dzeebagd with Gratva and most of his retinue to arrange



for the fate of Evanna. If the Castle Keeper has decided to continue the adventure, the characters should discover that Evanna has been taken to an old goblin stronghold deep in the Dampfrat called Dzeebagd. The adventure then continues in Part 2, Dzeebagd: Under Dark and Misty Ground.

Jzunad is a holy site to the goblins centered on a megalith that has been here for ages. The complex of buildings surrounding it, however, is of recent construction. A powerful urk priest and several religious zealots manage it. Jzunad, though a goblinoid temple, is not a closed place. Goblins, humans, giants and other nefarious agents of the Dampfrat frequent it to worship and conduct other activities peculiar to their lifestyles.

The characters arrive by a trail that leads to the temple itself. In addition to the megalith, there is an encampment for the urk zealots, a bar/storehouse, a prison wagon, a torture pit and several barrows. The encounter areas are arranged in such a manner that there is no specific chronological or special order of encounters, but events in one area almost always affect other areas of the complex.

Though by no means safe, Jzunad need not be considered unapproachable. Most of the inhabitants are accustomed to strangers coming here (including humans – though not dwarves or elves) and do not initially act violently unless provoked. If no one recognizes the players as the defenders of the tower, the current inhabitants care little about the travelers unless they cause trouble. The majority of the Magdole Gang has already departed, though several of those who attacked The Vakhund are staying at the bar unless the Castle Keeper decides otherwise.

## THE TEMPLE

The trail ends at an open glade of vibrant green grass. In the center of the glade is a large, round earthen mound, built to a man's height and covered in thick flowing grass. Thrusting out of the embankment's center is a massive red megalith topped by a slab of black slate like a saucer atop an upturned cup. A rough hewn, ebony stone staircase rises up the mound's side. At the steps end are two ochre hued statues of urks hefting broad-bladed spears. Two hulking bare-chested urks are here as well. Their skin, unlike the typical greenish hue, is the color of burnt grass and red mud, each carries broad bladed axes and wickedly curved blades.

On the far side of the glade is a small wagon set amidst a bewildering array of stakes and poles roped together. The wagon has been formed into a cage with wooden bars. Clearly discernable from this distance are three human figures and a dwarf with their arms held aloft by heavy chains.

On the opposite side of the glade, a massive octagonal shaped building rests upon beaten and churned ground. Its split-log sides and thatched roof seem hastily constructed. From a hole in the center of the roof a ghastly smoke lingers and spills liquidly into the sky.

The Megalith: It consists of an earthen embankment in the

shape of a circle, with a large red megalith atop it. The stone has a large, oblong black disc on top of it. It is made of an otherworldly material that defies common perceptual understanding, but appears as red marble with white veins. Close examination reveals its exotic nature. The disc is in motion. The white veins wriggle like small worms and it grows and shrinks up to two feet within short periods of time. When touched by anyone who does not worship Kleejd, the disc delivers a withering welt of slow pain causing 1d4 necrotic damage. It inflicts this damage each round a creature continues to touch the disc. The only access to the top of the slab is through the shaman's room in Barrow B, Area 3.

There are four urk zealots who are always on duty at the temple. There are 1-4 zealot guards on the temple platform while the remainder are within the vicinity and only 1-3 rounds away. These guards wear no armor, but are under the shaman's protective spell (see *The Protection of Kleejd*, below). They carry huge spears and cleavers. Their mission is to protect the temple, and unless the temple is approached or the wagon tampered with, they ignore any travelers.

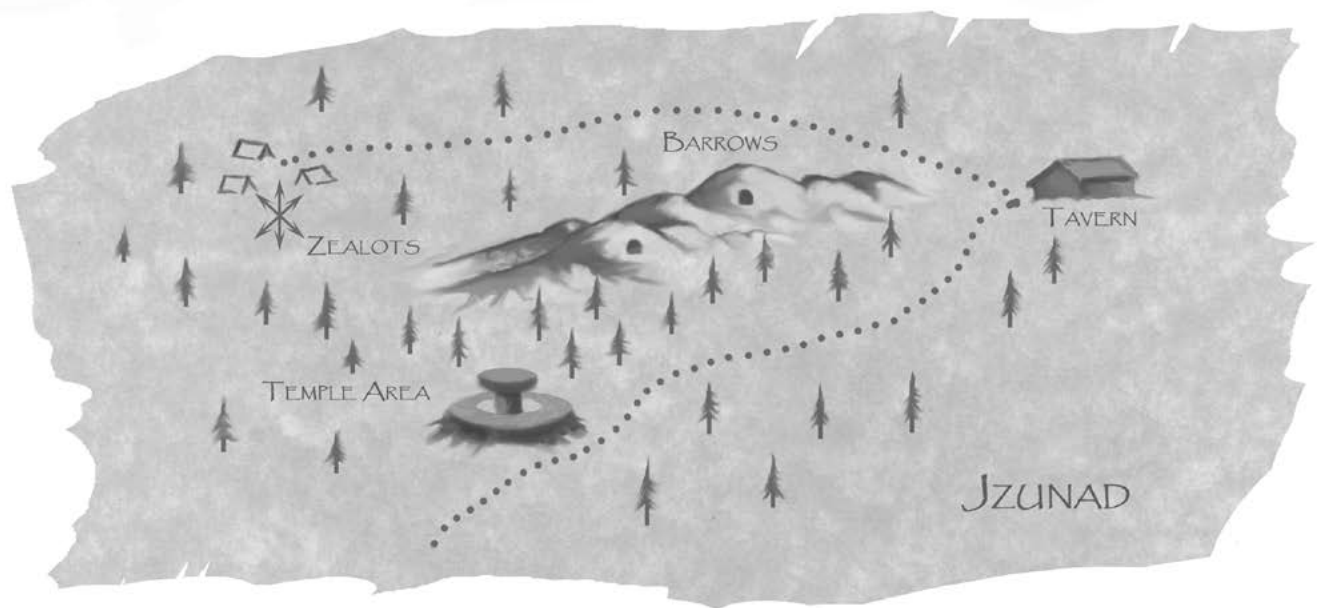
One guard carries a horn and sounds it if an attack occurs. This brings the urk priest (see Barrow A, Area 2) and the urk zealots from their encampment. The Shaman *teleports* onto the black slab atop the column in 3-6 rounds (see Barrow A for the shaman's teleportation ability).

The urk zealots on guard duty at the temple are under the thrall of the urk high priest and *The Protection of Kleejd*. They worry only about their prisoners and those approaching the temple. Because of the spells, they speak only when necessary and fight to the death if challenged.

**URK ZEALOTS X5** (CE Medium humanoid (urk)) HP 15 (HD 2d8+6), AC 18 (magic), Spd 20ft. Str 18 Dex 12 Con 16 Int 7 Wis 12 Cha 10. Perception 11(+1), Intimidation +2, Survival +3. Scimitar +6 (1d6+4) or Battleaxe +6 (1d8+4). SA Darkvision 60ft., Aggressive (bonus action, move its speed toward hostile creature it can see), under effects of *The Protection of Kleejd*. Challenge 1/2 (100 XP).

## THE PRISON WAGON

The prison wagon sits north of the temple. Its wheels, harness and tacking have been removed and is now a temporary holding cell for those destined to be sacrificed to Kleejd. Stansley is being held here along with two other humans and one dwarf. Stansley, though injured and grieving for the loss of his friends and goods is eager to help the party and energetically assists them whenever possible. The other two humans are Urlich and his wife, Marriana. They traveled from the east by coach and were attacked near Jugensborg. Although they try to be helpful, between age, wounds and Urlich's resignation to death, they can manage very little. The dwarf, Nilfur, is in decent health, and as soon as he sees the characters, his spirits immediately rise. He joins the party but knows little about Jzunad because he was brought here unconscious and has seen nothing other than his cell. These are detailed below.



Additionally, the Castle Keeper can place any number of other persons in the wagon, to replace player characters, for plot devices, to increase the party's strength, or to enhance the game. The guards at the temple watch any characters that approach the wagon, but they do not interfere unless the characters tamper with the wagon or attempt to free the prisoners. If the guards observe the characters attempting to free the prisoners, one will sound the horn, bringing the urk priest and the remaining zealots from the encampment.

**Marianna:** She is an older woman with graying auburn hair and a face etched with the wrinkles of a hard life. She is stalwart and has accepted life's twists and turns with grim resignation. If given the chance, she fights viscosly to make her escape and gladly introduces the characters to a very grateful family and community if they ever make it to Bergholt or Firstenfeld.

**MARRIANA** (N Medium humanoid (human)) HP 4 (HD 1d8), AC 10, Spd 30ft. Str 8, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10. She carries nothing on her person.

**Ulrich:** He is Marrianna's husband, was grievously injured and is barely capable of walking. The older man is pained and believes his life is spent. This resignation remains despite his wife's pleas. It is only overcome if escape appears certain.

**ULRICH** (N Medium humanoid (human)) HP 3 (HD 1d8-1), AC 10, Spd 30ft. Str 8, Dex 10, Con 8, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10. He carries no equipment.

**Nilfur:** The dwarf was kidnapped recently as he wandered lost in the Graffenvold. He had been tracking a group of people headed into the Dampfrat for a lord in Bergholt. Though he will try his best to lie and obscure the nature of his business in the Dampfrat, the dwarf is very helpful to the party. He is an experienced traveler and warrior.

**NILFUR** (NG Medium humanoid (dwarf)) HP 27 (HD 5d8+5), AC 12, Spd 25ft. Str 14 Dex 15 Con 13 Int 10 Wis 12 Cha 10. Perception 13(+3), Stealth +4, Survival +3. SA Darkvision 60ft., Resist poison, Dwarven Resilience (advantage on saves vs. poison), Horde Breaker 1/Turn (after making weapon attack, can make another attack with same weapon against another creature within 5ft. of the first target). Challenge 1 (200 XP).

#### THE TORTURE PIT

A grisly site lies on the far side of the wagon. Here, a shallow and wide pit festooned with tall stakes, ropes, manacles and benches drenched in blood and ichor and gore holds a horrible site. Within the pit are the remains of giant. He has been tethered to the ground, his limbs obviously pulled from their joints, his body bear to the sun and the cold and the weather. Yet, this is not the worst of it. He has been partially de-fleshed. His lower legs are but bone and sinew with some small strips of meat clinging here and there. His bicep muscles have been removed, his ears shorn off and his chest horribly mangled with strips and ribbons of flesh torn away revealing muscle and tissue beneath. Rats, mice and crows peck at the giant. Roaches, beetles and other tiny vermin crawl about him.

And then it groans...

This horrid spot is the torture pit the urk priests uses to make his enemies suffer. All who displease him are taken here and slowly dismembered and de-fleshed by Pejznog, the Flayer. Currently, a giant who happened to wander into Jzunad and caused a bit of trouble when he realized an urk priest was in residence, was taken down and placed here for the priests pleasure. The priest comes here nightly along with Pejznog and several other zealots to strip flesh from the giant and eat it in front of him. The priest then



heals as many wounds as is possible hoping to keep the giant alive for a very long time. The giant has been here for a week or more.

The giant, a fearless and noble Trottigen, is named Hurstinvegnig. He is dying, albeit slowly, and there is little that can be done about it. The giant is still alive though. If roused and given some water or food or healed, he comes out of his stupor, though only for small bursts of time. He is willing to give his name so that it can be passed on to his brothers in Kreutzmark and the nature of his death at the hands of this foul urk priest from lands far to the east. He asks the characters take his life so that he suffers no more.

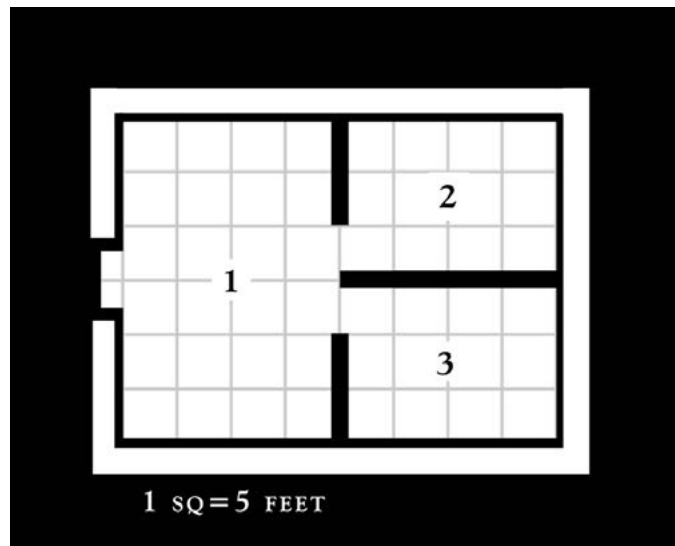
If the characters do take his life and after speaking to him, they receive a boon as the giant passes into the Maelstrom. Each character proficient in Intelligence (Nature) adds +2 to their choice of one ability score for the next 24 hours.

### THE PREPARATION HOUSE

A split-log, octagonal structure sits in a trampled clearing near the red column and mound. It is a broad low building with a thatched roof and no windows. Its large wooden door faces the temple and another faces away. The foul stench of decay and rot pervades the air around it. The ground in the front of the complex is muddied with bits and pieces of broken bone and slabs of flesh scattered haphazardly about while the mud bears a crimson hue.

This is the Preparation House, the area where prisoners are shredded in preparation for the urk priest's needs. The complex consists of three rooms. The overseer, Pejznog, is inside going about his ghastly work. He pays little attention to those who enter the abode's first chamber, for this is not a sacred place and many make their way into its confines. He only glances occasionally at any intruders to make sure they are not interfering with his work. If disturbed, bothered, questioned or distracted from his work, however, he goes berserk and attacks the party.

**Pejznog:** "The flayer of the dead and living." This great urk, huge after years of working Preparation Houses for the god Kleejd, loves inflicting pain on all those around him. Pejznog is blithely unaware of his surroundings the majority of the time as his mind is blurred



by the constant use of exotic herbal grogs and potions. Only when distracted from whatever business he is at, does he react. Then, his anger rises and he attempts to kill whoever pestered him. Only the urk priest has any control over the flayer.

**PEJZNOG, URK** (CE Medium humanoid (urk)) HP 60 (HD 8d8+24), AC 14 (leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 20 Dex 10 Con 16 Int 7 Wis 8 Cha 14. Perception 9(-1), Intimidation +4. Meat Cleaver +7 (1d10+5 slashing). SA Dark-vision 60ft., Aggressive (bonus action, move its speed toward hostile creature it can see). Challenge 2 (450 XP). Note, the meat cleaver's jagged edge flakes constantly, leaving slivers of metal in wounds. If Pejznog lands a critical hit, he also inflicts a bonus 1d4 slashing damage. He has a leather smock, heavy pants but is otherwise unadorned

**Area 1:** This door swings inward onto a grisly site as the horrid smell of a slaughterhouse engulfs you. A massive red stained wooden table sits heavily in the center of a large triangular room. Upon it and on the floor are piles of bone and heaps of rotting flesh. The fetid remains of innumerable creatures are piled about the room as if an orgy of butchery had occurred here. A gigantic cleaver and saw, encrusted with blood, hang on the wall to the right, while a brazier smolders to the left. At the apex of the triangle is an open space, entry into rooms that lie beyond. A rustling can easily be heard as shadows dance in the portal.

This is the chamber in which the bodies of those used by the urk priest are prepared. Generally all the tissue is removed and the bones kept separate. From the tissue certain organs are kept separate – the heart, liver, brain, etc. The priest also uses these in rituals.

If Pejznog comes in here, he uses the cleaver as a weapon. With it he deals 1d10+5 slashing damage.

**Area 2, Storeroom:** Looking beyond the open portal into this room is a bizarre sight. There are three dismembered corpses laid on large wooden tables. In front of the tables is a huge, pale urk, with rolls of fat like cascades of white lava. It grunts and groans as it picks up a barrel of bones. Hanging on the walls about the room are all manner of ghastly cutting and sawing instruments illuminated red by a brazier of blazing coals.

This is the flayer, Pejznog, and it is the only time the characters catch him by surprise. For several rounds he tries to pick up the barrel. When finished, he notices the players. Although he remains busy, he keeps an eye on the characters and never turns his back to the entrance again. Other than directly pestering Pejznog, he is not bothered unless someone enters Area 3. It is his personal room. Pejznog is a powerful fighter though somewhat slow. His hands are powerful weapons but he uses the instruments on the wall if a fight ensues. The corpses are from the caravan.

**Area 3, Pejznog's Bed Chamber:** Beyond the opening to this room is a huge pile of hay with many tattered woolen blankets thrown upon it. A fire pit has been

dug into the floor and a small fire burns within. A pot of thick steaming soup rests beside it.

A search of the bedding reveals several pouches of valuables that the flayer has filched from his victims. There is an assortment of coins totaling 100gp and jewelry valued at 200gp.

### **A COLD DRINK AT DZEEGLE**

This building was formerly a stable and storehouse for those constructing the embankment, barrows and other places at Jzunad. Since construction has stopped, it has now become a bar for the urks, goblins and others that gather at Jzunad. Though no one owns the establishment, Dzeegle, an urk, currently runs it. He has several large vats sitting outside the rear of the building in which he brews a foul tasting though stout brew.

The trail leads to a large trampled clearing in which stands an expansive, ramshackle structure. It has a thatched roof, split-log and bark siding and a single mud chimney. They rest upon each other as if each was constructed independently and were simply dumped here for convenience. In front of the building is a broad porch with a stone fire ring built in its center. Several chairs and tables are scattered upon the porch, with mugs, plates and the rubbish of a recent dinner upon them. The bitter rumbling and choked laughter of goblins echoes from within.

In the mud next to the porch lies a single urk. His fat vicious head rests upon his arms and his bloodshot eyes look skyward. Uhhhhhhhg... "deeg'thud" he says, and continues to peer upwards.

This urk is harmlessly drunk and offers little resistance if roughed up. He can only speak urk and if the characters choose to wake him, he just blabbers on about the recently arrived mead. Those inside hear any commotion or conversation and investigate. Anyone who looks through the doorway is likely spotted right away. Though everyone is suspicious, none of the occupants initially act with hostility. Bandits and others passing through have accustomed those here to strangers.

Beyond the loose hung doors is a large room with a planked floor rotting in many places. Darts of light shoot through many cracks in the ceiling, and a blue haze of pipe smoke lingers thickly in the air. In the center of the room is a stone lined fire pit and a long thin table piled high with dried meats, mugs and other refuse for drinking and mealtime eating. Around it is gathered four hulking urks and two haggard looking humans. A tapped keg sits alone near the table of urks, slowly dripping its contents into a puddle on the floor. Sitting at a low table perilously close to the door, playing cards, are four naked goblins playing cards. Only their feathers give them away as Zjerd. The room silences immediately, and one of the urks stands as you enter.

As soon as the goblins realize there is no danger, they return to their game, ignoring the party. The two urks are not currently

under the spell of the priest. Though drunk, they manage to fight if challenged. The two humans are part of the Magdole group, but they do not recognize the characters. The urk rising from his seat is Dzeegle, the bartender. To make sure the characters are legitimate customers, he walks toward them in a threatening manner.

Though aggressive, Dzeegle does not want to fight. He sizes up the party before serving them and asks sidelong questions to determine where they have come from and where they are going. An astute beer taster may notice that the beer is the same as that from the caravan.

The three other urks at the table pay little attention to the newcomers unless a fight breaks out. They continue gambling and drinking. The tone of their conversation is muted and dull. However, it does concern the recent attack on the tower and, by careful listening, or joining in the conversation, it can be gleaned that a girl has been taken to Dzeebagd by the Magdole Gang (or that the urk priest has taken her — depending on the ending the Castle Keeper chooses). Other information is left to the Castle Keeper's discretion, such as the names of those involved in the various activities over the past week, the argument at the tower, and false information to throw the players off the trail.

Dzeegle the urk runs the bar. He is an average-sized, ugly, green skinned urk and of a decidedly evil temperament. Though he is unfriendly Dzeegle is well disposed towards gathering copper and silver. He is always open to the possibility of beneficial financial arrangements resulting from new found acquaintances and betrays his kin and acquaintances in a breath should coin present itself. He treats most patrons with a level of disrespect commonly reserved for mortal enemies.

One of the humans is a member of the Magdole Gang and the other a member of Ubert von Beck's Reavers. They have been left here to either watch over the girl and insure she is not killed or they have been left here awaiting the outcome of the negotiations at Dzeebagd.

**DZEEGLE, URK** (CE Medium humanoid (urk)) HP 15 (HD 2d8+6), AC 15 (scale mail), Spd 30ft. Str 14 Dex 12 Con 16 Int 7 Wis 12 Cha 10. Perception 11(+1), Intimidation +2, Survival +3. Club +4 (1d4+2) or Handaxe +4 (1d6+2, range 20/60ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Aggressive (bonus action, move its speed toward hostile creature it can see). Challenge 1/2 (100 XP). He carries 1d4gp in coin and jewelry.

**URK X<sup>2</sup>** (CE Medium humanoid (urk)) HP 15 (HD 2d8+6), AC 14 (leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 16 Dex 12 Con 16 Int 7 Wis 12 Cha 10. Perception 11(+1), Intimidation +2, Survival +3. Scimitar +5 (1d6+3) or Heavy crossbow +3 (1d10, range 100/400ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Aggressive (bonus action, move its speed toward hostile creature it can see). Challenge 1/2 (100 XP). They are currently drunk and receive disadvantage to all attack rolls and ability checks.

**GOBLINS, ZJERD X<sup>4</sup>** (CE Small humanoids (goblinoids)) HP 7 (HD 2d6), AC 14 (shield), Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 14 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 8 Cha 8. Perception 9(-1). Stealth +6. Shortsword +4 (1d6+2) or Shortbow +4 (1d6+2, range

80/320ft.). SA Darkvision 60ft., Nimble Escape (take Disengage or Hide action as bonus action). Challenge 1/4 (50 XP). Other than their weapons, they are generally naked.

**BANDITS X2** (NE Medium humanoid (human)) HP 11 (HD 2d8+2), AC 15 (leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 13 Dex 14 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Leather armor. Longsword +3 (1d8+1) or Shortbow +4 (1d6+2, 80/320ft.). Challenge 1/8 (25 XP). Only one of these bandits has a short bow with 14 arrows. Each carries knives and 2-8gp in various coin.

This is a one-room structure. At the far end of the bar are piles of boxes, crates and sacks. If investigated, several of the newer crates have the stamp of Halpveg upon them. They contain apples, potatoes, metal ingots, crossbow bolts and silk. These were stolen or legitimately purchased from goblin merchants. What remains of Stansley's goods are in here as well. The far end of the bar is piled high with boxes, sacks and racks of drying meat.

#### A WARM TENT AND A DECENT MEAL

The tangy smell of burning pine wisps through the thick firs ahead. A well-beaten path twists amongst the trees and leads to a small clearing with a large fire raging in its center. Several crimson colored urks stand near the fire, their massive hands outstretched to the flames and their great guffaws of laughter breaking the silence. Surrounding the clearing are black canvas bedrolls tucked neatly between and underneath the trees. A large grinding stone sits near the fire and a stack of spears and assorted polearms rests nearby.

The zealot's camp consists of 18 sets of bedrolls. There are 5 urks at the camp when the party arrives. Two are at the fire, one is asleep, one is dressing a recently killed deer, and one is in his tent mending his armor. They are very aggressive and attempt to scare the players away with threats and resort to violence if necessary. There is little information to be gained from these urks. The guards know little about the recent events and care less. Their conversation consists of joke after joke.

There is treasure spread throughout the sleeping blankets that include trinkets and coin collected over years of travel and plunder worth 97gp. There is one particularly fine, expertly made battleaxe (+1 to weapon damage) in the area with the sleeping urk. Seven of the remaining oxen from the caravan are tethered up nearby.

**URK ZEALOTS X5** (CE Medium humanoid (urk)) HP 15 (HD 2d8+6), AC 14 (leather & shield), Spd 30ft. Str 18 Dex 12 Con 16 Int 7 Wis 12 Cha 10. Perception 11(+1), Intimidation +2, Survival +3. Scimitar +6 (1d6+4) or Club +6 (1d4+4). SA Darkvision 60ft., Aggressive (bonus action, move its speed toward hostile creature it can see). Challenge 1/2 (100 XP). They carry 1d4gp and 2d12sp.

#### BARROWS OF THE DEAD

The dense branches of the fir trees open to reveal two large earthen mounds, starkly bare of any vegetation. The mounds are surrounded by muddy trails, pools of

brackish water, shafts of wood and broken tools. The pall of death lingers over them like an abysmal cloud.

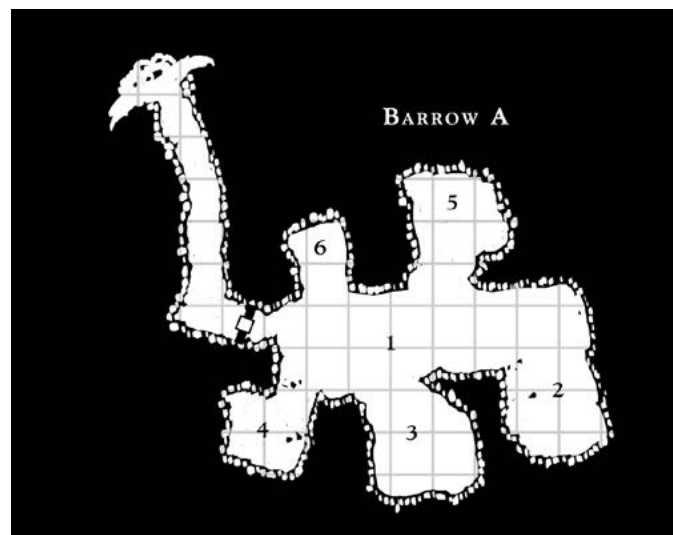
These barrows house the Shaman and the first few 'Children of Kleejd' that he has summoned. If Gnarljd has not been warned either by the guards, the bell, the glyph or some other method that interlopers are in Jzunad, he is located in Area 2.

#### BARROW A

Giant obsidian slabs frame the entry to this mound. The narrow passage beyond is dark, moist and cramped. From within its confines, a low pitched, barely audible keening is heard.

The entryway is just over three feet wide and six feet high. The hall extends 20 feet then swings left to a wooden door. Fighting in the passage is cramped and combat modifiers should be adjusted accordingly.

A special magical rune is etched upon the floor in front of the door. A searching creature notices the faint outlines of this rune with a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The rune is a spiral set within a cloudbank—the sign of Kleejd. When any other creature besides an urk zealot or Gnarljd himself (the urk shaman) passes or steps over the rune, it releases a bluish gas that solidifies into the shape of heavily muscled arms. The arms wrap around the person stepping on the rune and it makes a spell attack against the target with a +5 bonus. If the effect hits, the target becomes restrained and suffers 1d4 bludgeoning damage. Thereafter, at the start of each of its turns, the restrained creature can attempt a DC 14 Strength saving throw to escape. If it fails, it suffers an additional 1d4 bludgeoning damage and remains restrained. If the creature succeeds on this save, it breaks free and does not suffer the damage. During this time, the rune emits a high-pitched whistling sound that can be heard for some distance. The restraining mist dissipates automatically after 1d4 rounds. The mist cannot be attack, but it can be affected by *dispel magic*. The arms can hold only one individual and, unless the creature is very large and blocks the entire passage, others can pass around him. The door opens freely.



If this ward is activated, the priest investigates and attacks the interlopers if he feels he can win the combat. Otherwise, he runs to Area 3 and transports to the black slab atop the column. From there, he calls upon all the zealots to attack the intruders.

Gnarjd is an old and powerful urk priest. His travels have taken him over several thousand miles and many decades to come to this area and fulfill a mission given him as a youngster. His mission has not been revealed to any, but the genesis of his holy war is in the making. All his life has been spent looking for the blood column at the center of Jzunad and accumulating the knowledge to cast the incantations to bring forth the "Children of Kleejd." He now intends to build his army and begin his war.

**GNARJD, URK** (CE Medium humanoid (urk)) HP 52 (HD 8d8+16), AC 18 (magic), Spd 20 ft. Str 12 Dex 11 Con 14 Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 13. Perception 15 (+5), Intimidate +3. Multi-attack (two scimitar attacks), +1 Scimitar +5 (1d6+2). SA Darkvision 60 ft., under effects of *The Protection of Kleejd*, Cleric Spells (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks): Cantrips (at will): guidance, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy; 1<sup>st</sup>-level (4 slots): bane, command, inflict wounds; 2<sup>nd</sup>-level (3 slots): hold person, spiritual weapon; 3<sup>rd</sup>-level (2 slots): bestow curse; Aggressive (bonus action, move its speed toward hostile creature it can see). Challenge 3 (700 XP). In addition to his +1 scimitar, he wears a thick, gray wolfskin cloak and carries a sturdy staff.

**Special:** Gnarjd suffers from a peculiar lycanthropy brought on by his religious zeal. When particularly aggrieved or desirous of combat he begins to change form and begins to assume some of the aspects of a jackal. Gnarzd appears as a large jackal with red scaly skin on his underside and tail, with bristling white hair on his back and shoulders. His long claws and gnashing fangs can deliver terrible blows while his very countenance may strike fear into the hearts of the bravest of men. While in this state, his movement rate is doubled and his attacks gain +2 to hit and damage. He cannot cast spells nor can he break off from combat. He can voluntarily undertake this transformation once a day and it takes him two rounds to assume the form. While assuming this form he is considered restrained. Upon assuming this new form, he heals all damage taken previously.

**Area 1, Entry:** The door opens into a large room quivering with the deep red light from several braziers. The floor is paved with small gray rocks and the walls are constructed of the same massive black slabs as those in the passageway. In the center of the room is a broad, rock-lined pit. There are five portals leading out of the chamber, each with a brazier next to it.

Although there are several separate chambers, they are situated so that all areas inside the mound are at least partially visible from the others, excepting the inner portion of Room 2. The Castle Keeper should bear this in mind when running the encounter.

**Area 2, Sleeping Chamber:** This is a small, narrow chamber with a fireplace and rock chimney. It bears a wood-framed chair, and a plain bed with a wooden trunk at its foot. A large gleaming scimitar leans against the wall next to the bed.

This is the Shaman's sleeping chamber. The simple wooden trunk banded with metal is not locked. Within are two ceremonial bearskin cloaks with the heads still attached, thick boots and wool pants, a pair of fur gloves, a huge fur hat, a small metal box about arm's length and no taller than a mug for beer. Also in trunk, wrapped in sash of red cloth, is a +1 scimitar that never dulls or rusts. The shaman carries this scimitar with him into battle.

The metal box is locked. The lock is easily picked (DC 10 Dexterity check with thieves' tools), but if picked without the correct key, a small glob of poison in a glass tube inside the mechanism breaks and spills onto the lock. A creature touching the lock without the protection of a glove must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, taking 2d6 poison damage, or half as much damage on a successful save. A creature examining the lock can discern the presence of the poison with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. Within the box is a small pouch containing 15 gems (each valued at 50gp), 60gp and a gold ring with a ruby (500gp).

**Area 3, Workroom:** This chamber is the Shaman's workroom. If the adventure is to end with this module, Evanna will be here, tied and gagged in a chair.

Two long wooden tables dominate this broad room. A plush chair, hung with thick blankets and skins is in the corner, and a cauldron filled with a black liquid sits over a low fire. A shelf against the back wall is full of boxes, cases, and small ceramic jars.

The urk priest is currently preparing a concoction for his protection spells. The jars and boxes contain various materials such as hogswart, rat jaws, cockroach shells, hemlock and aspen leaves, roots and other items used for mystical purposes. There are some rare items, such as the scale of an Amber Dragon, the tooth of a paladin, the beak of an eagle, and ruby dust (the value of these items vary but collectively range up to 1,500gp). There is also a huge vat of blood and entrails.

**Area 4, Library:** This small aperture contains nothing more than a rickety wooden shelf bearing a few scrolls, vials and a box. On the center of the floor, carved into the flagstones, is a bizarre series of glyphs forming a circle.

This is the Shaman's library. Three scrolls bear instructions, written in urkish, detailing various and sundry concoctions and spells including the protection spell the Shaman casts on the zealots to increase their Armor Class. The box contains several quills and a small sharpening knife. The vials contain writing ink. The engraving on the floor is a *teleportation* rune. Speaking the urkish command word for "war" transports the speaker to the black slab on top of the column at the temple. It can thus teleport one creature at a time per round.

**Area 5, Store Room:** This room is crammed with boxes and crates and a pile of polearms.

The boxes and crates contain foodstuffs, clothing, armor and the bric-a-brac of day-to-day living. There are 6 halberds in decent condition.

**Area 6, Guard Chamber:** A wooden table with a pile of meat on it, two chairs, and a large open barrel are in this room.

Two orcs are usually in this room. In the event the characters have made it this far though, it is unlikely they are here. However, this is best left up to the Castle Keeper. The barrel contains water.

### BARROW B

This barrow is used to house and raise the “Children of Kleejd,” which the urk priest plans to use in his holy war.

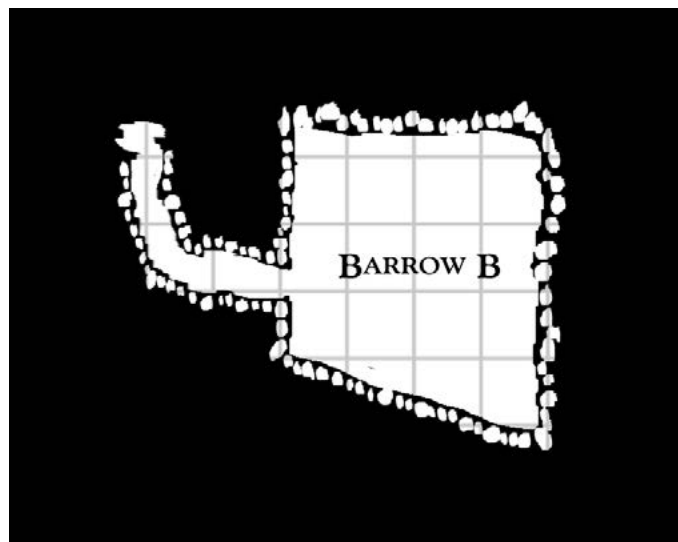
A huge slab of black rock covers the entry to this mound, locked in place by smaller square stones. A black space peers out from around its imperfect fit and the smell of death coalesces here. The area around the mound is eerily quiet.

The slab of rock can be rolled to the side once its supports are removed. It reveals a muddy, cramped passage. If entered, creaks and moans rise from within the bowels of the mound. The children of Kleejd below sense the characters and are immediately drawn to them.

The descending passage rapidly expands into a wide, low-slung room. An appalling sight greets your eyes. Several figures saunter out of the shadows toward you, ghastly creatures half man and half jackal with red and white fur, large gnashing teeth and slender hairless tails.

A horde of the children of Kleejd inhabits this lower room and attacks any who enter other than the priest. The wide room has a low ceiling, which hampers combat. Several of the children, yet to be completely summoned, litter the corners. The only interesting object in the room is a banner. It leans against a wall, tightly furled. When unfurled, the emblazoned symbol of the urk god of death, a blood red bone set on a black background, stares at the characters.

**CHILDREN OF KLEEJD** (CE Medium humanoid) HP 26 (HD 4d8+8), AC 11, Spd 30 ft. Str 14 Dex 13 Con 15 Int 11



Wis 10 Cha 13. Perception 10 (+0). Multiattack (one bite, one claw), Bite +4 (1d6+2), Claw +4 (1d4+2). SA Darkvision 60ft. Challenge 1/2 (100 XP).

## CLOSING THE ADVENTURE

The first decision the Castle Keeper must make when closing this adventure, is whether or not to continue it with the next adventure in the series. If continuing it, the players must be given a reason to go further into the Dampfrat and on to Dzeebagd. The easiest and most convenient method is to have Evanna taken there and the characters find out and then give chase. Other than this, the characters could learn of Dzeebagd through any number of the inhabitants (to include Marianna and Dzeege) and make the decision to go there and kill off the rest of the Magdole Gang.

Should the adventure end here and the characters manage to escape Barrow A with Evanna or immediately vacate the area of the temple, the Gnardj does not give chase. He does not have enough power for a prolonged search and fight at this juncture, and only tries to control events at the temple. Also, he has traveled a long time and over great distances to come here. He will not sacrifice himself senselessly in revenge or to regain some lost prisoner. His mission is far more important than defeating the party.

The trip back to Vakhund is uneventful unless the Castle Keeper chooses otherwise. However, the repercussions of the raid on Jzunad are far reaching. The priest, should he survive, goes to the Zjerd capital and begins to raise the ire of the goblins there and instigates war. He then returns to Jzunad in force and continues the process of summoning the children of Kleejd.

The players, if Evanna is not rescued and they continue their search for her, become embroiled in a war that forever changes the political landscape of the southern Interzae. The adventure continues in Part II of The Death on the Treklant Trilogy, *Dzeebagd: Under Dark and Misty Ground*.

### THE PROTECTION OF KLEEJD (CLERIC 2)

3<sup>rd</sup> level transmutation (ritual)

**Casting Time:** 10 minutes

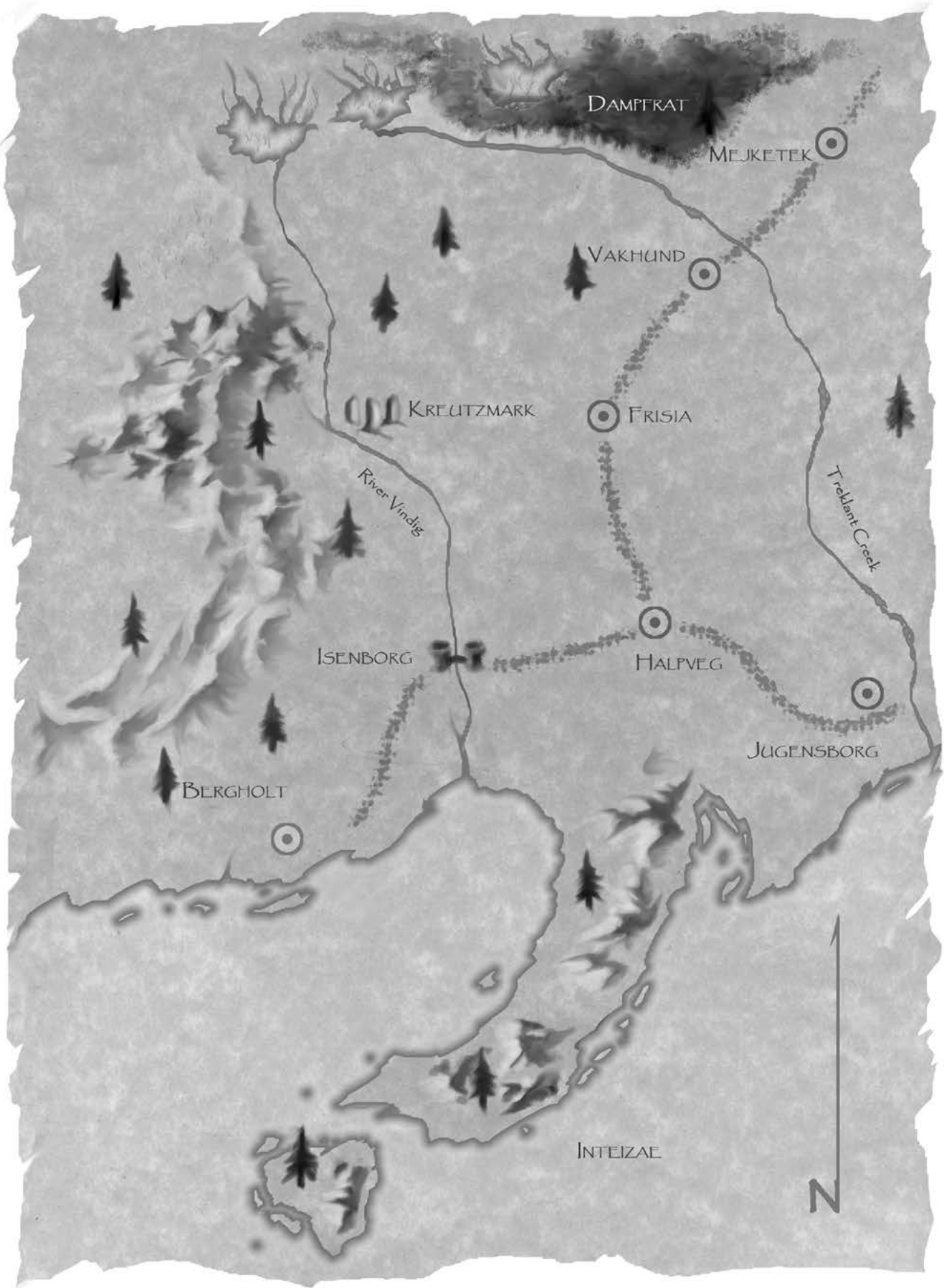
**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (blood of each recipient)

**Duration:** 4 hours

You touch a willing creature that is devoted to worship of Kleejd. Until the spell ends, the recipient’s flesh and muscles harden, giving the creature AC 18 regardless of the armor it wears. The affected creature’s AC does not benefit from a Dexterity bonus. In addition, the affected creature’s speed is reduced by 10 feet and it cannot take the Dash action. You can affect up to 10 creatures at a time with this spell, but each must lose 1d4 hit points to provide their blood as the material component.





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The logo features a golden dragon-like creature with its mouth open, holding a red and white circular emblem with the number '5' and 'TH' on it. To the right of this emblem, the word 'EDITION' is written in large, red, block letters with a yellow outline. Below 'EDITION', the word 'ADVENTURE' is written in smaller, yellow, block letters with a red outline. The background is a dark, atmospheric illustration of a forest with a large tree trunk on the right and a path leading into the distance.


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