

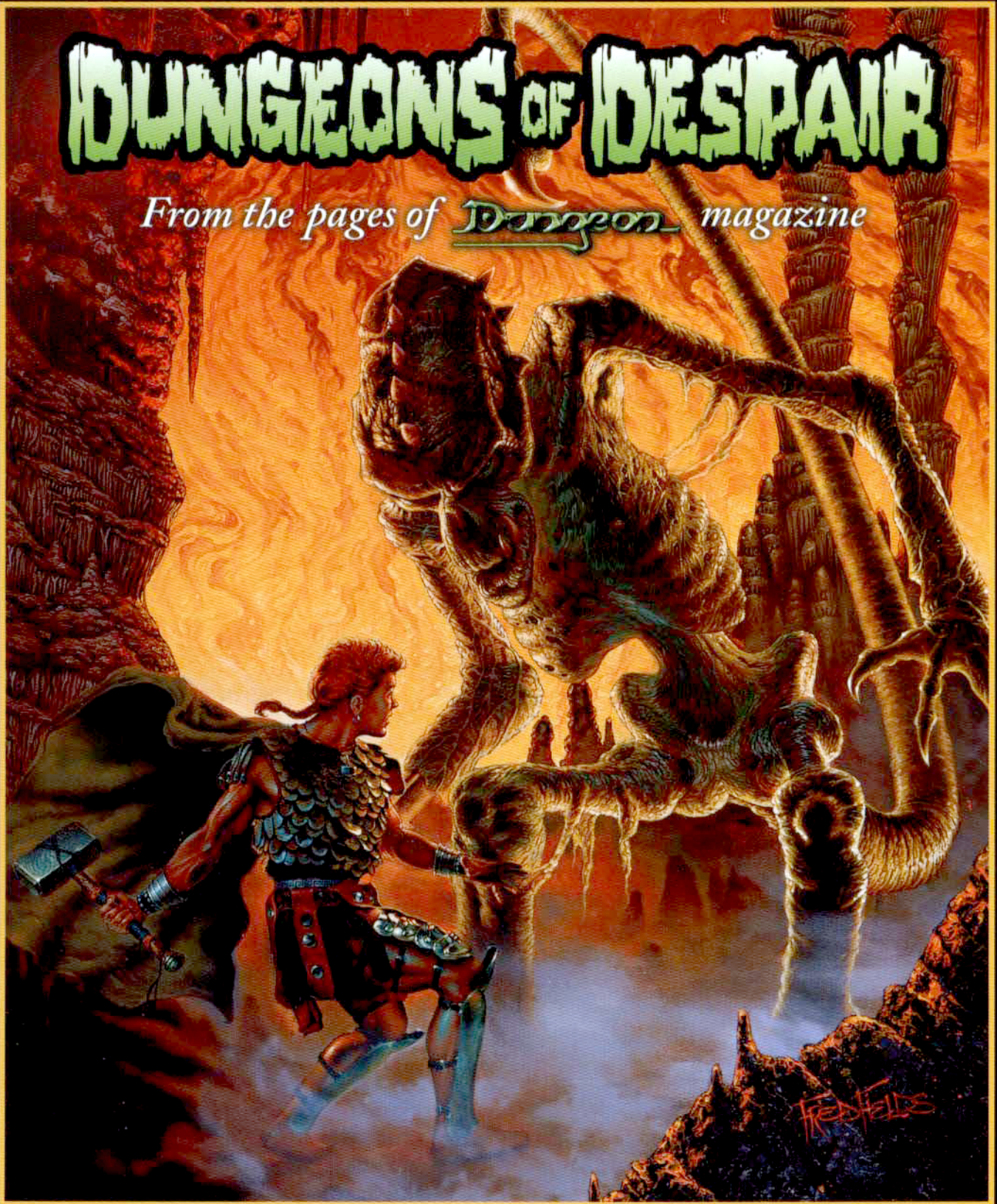


Advanced  
**Dungeons & Dragons**<sup>®</sup>  
Adventures

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# DUNGEONS OF DESPAIR

From the pages of *Dungeon* magazine



*Edited by Christopher Perkins*



# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

## Dungeons of Despair

From the pages of *DUNGEON® Adventures Magazine*

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## Caermor

"Caermor" is an AD&D® adventure for 4-8 characters of levels 2-4 (about 16 total levels). The fewer characters available, the higher their levels should be. Characters should be well-equipped, and players should be experienced in the role-playing aspects of the game.

### Adventure Background

To the north of the land where the characters live is a windswept and barren demense known as the Wizard's Claw. In this desolate locale lies Caermor, a small village (population 100 at most) several days' ride from the nearest large city. Unlike the other settlements in the area, Caermor is a farming village, intent on the cultivation of hardy grain and a local strain of small, tough sheep.

The terrain is very similar to the highlands of Scotland: rough and rocky, with stunted growths of heather and scrub, cold and whipped by incessant sea winds. The local inhabitants are small, stocky, dour farming folk—red-faced, tending toward strong drink (to stave off the chill wind, of course), and rather belligerent when drunk. They are taciturn among themselves and cold almost to the point of hostility with outsiders. Dress for men and women is typically rough, drab homespun, and women and children tend to be quiet and uncommunicative. In general, the alignment of the people could be classed as neutral with slight lawful tendencies: loyalty to their own, but none to outsiders, coupled with a surly self-sufficiency.

There is talk that the inhabitants of Caermor and the nearby fishing villages have a lot of dwarven blood in their veins, and just outside of town are several tumbled stones bearing dwarven runes that seem to support this idea (even though the storm-whipped land might seem to be one of the last places sea-hating villagers would dwell). Unlike dwarves, however, the dwarves generally are not avaricious and have no great love of gold. Their love—or, more accurately, hatred tempered with great respect—is for the land.

Such is the nature of the people of Caermor that, even though hell itself seems to have turned its attention upon them, they have told no one from the nearest city, Sta Fira, of their plight, let alone asked for help. The word has gotten out, however, through a traveling merchant who managed to drink himself into the confidence of at least one local. Several adventurers have come to town, either to save Caermor or to make a name for themselves, but none has returned to the city. In true Caermor style, the villagers have looked upon these would-be saviors as unwelcome visitors at best—invaders at worst.

A final note should be made concerning religion. The villagers are strongly religious, albeit unorthodox. They worship an almost forgotten storm god, Taranis Firehand (chaotic neutral, worshipped by those whose livelihood can be affected by bad weather; the holy symbol is a mailed fist clutching three thunderbolts), but they believe that religion is a personal matter. They have no temple or chapel as such; each home has a small shrine in a place never seen by strangers. Any

mention or question concerning religion is taken as a severe breach of etiquette; exactly *how* severe often depends on the state of inebriation of the hearer.

### For the Dungeon Master

In fact, the Nine Hells (more properly known as Baator) have turned their attention in a small way on the village of Caermor, but only by direct request. A local coven of lawful evil fiend worshippers in the town, led by a man named Trevus, has summoned, for its own various purposes, a baatezu that has been terrorizing the town for the past seven weeks. The most recent exploit has been the kidnapping of a local maiden, who is being held for later use as a slave or sacrifice.

However, both the baatezu and the coven that summoned it are pawns in a greater game. (See Mother Gloam's background in "Caermor Personalities" for the coven's current plans, and see Belle Fagor's background for her plans as well.) In time, nearby cities, and eventually the rest of the country, will feel the scourge of Baator. Any adventurers ridding the area of the baatezu are saving much more than Caermor.

The following information is known to all of the villagers. However, getting it out of them is easier said than done. The trouble started about seven weeks ago in a simple enough manner. One of the shepherd boys came back near nightfall with one less sheep than he took out to graze that morning. A storm had come up, and he had been too concerned about getting home to count heads; by the time his father noticed, it was too dark to go out after the stray. The next morning the boy went out to get the stray and found it easily enough—dead and torn as if by huge claws. In other areas, this wouldn't be mysterious; on the heaths surrounding Caermor, however, there are no large predators.

Similar things happened on subsequent nights with other herds: strays were found dead, but not devoured—just rent, as if for the sheer pleasure of it. Less than a week later, the first sheep was slain during daylight while the shepherd slept in the sun nearby. Armed older brothers or fathers began to accompany the shepherd boys with their herds. Shortly thereafter, sheep were no longer the only victims. A cow in a farmyard was killed one night, and the wooden scarecrows common in the fields were destroyed or disfigured.

Four weeks ago, the first human fell prey. A farmer and his wife awoke to the terrified bellowing of their milk cow. The farmer rushed out into the farmyard with a pitchfork to do battle. It wasn't until morning that his wife could summon up the courage to go outside and find his body.

In the farms that surround the village proper, all doors are locked at sundown and all windows are shuttered. Animals are shut in barns (if there are barns) or left to take their chances in the night. The large, black sheepdogs that normally spend the night outside now sleep in the house, whimpering piteously from time to time.

In the village itself, shops remain open to nightfall—the pub still does fair business—but people don't wander the streets after dark. Any farmer who stays with his whiskey past twilight is more than likely to spend the night on the pub floor. Children are never seen on the streets at night—not after the events of two weeks past.



Before then, Gwendolyn, the town's fairest flower, had been seeing a lot of Albee, a young artist (read "ne'er-do-well," "vagrant," and so forth, according to the villagers) who had come to town to "absorb the ambience." It had been an open secret that Gwendolyn had eyes for the handsome young man and vice versa. Gwendolyn disappeared one night two weeks ago, and that was the last straw for the terrorized folk. A posse formed in the morning and descended upon Albee's cottage to see if she had taken refuge there. Instead, a search of the empty premises found one of Albee's robes stained with blood. Albee is now cursed as the killer who has plagued the land, and he is assumed to be hiding somewhere near town.

Although some locals suspect that Albee is not responsible for the tribulations visited upon them, no one admits this aloud. It is much easier to accept and think about a human killer than it is to face the fact that the supernatural—a topic tolerated by the hard-headed villagers only in the form of their local seers—has raised its ugly head.

Several other strangers have come to town since then, for one reason or another, but nearly all have left. One group is still around, camping out of town because the local inn is really no more than a pub and has no rooms to rent. The group is made up of Lane the Archer and three henchmen: the twin brothers Tremayne and Verlayne, and Martha.

That is where the situation stands (at least, as the villagers know it) when the characters arrive in town.

## Caermor Personalities

Since personal interactions make up much of this adventure, the major local personalities are detailed below. All NPCs speak the common tongue of the land.

**Mother Gloam** (human dual-classed 3rd-level wizard/2nd-level cleric): AC 8; MV 9; W3/C2; hp 13; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 7, D 9, C 10, I 16, W 13, Ch 15; SZ M; ML 13; AL LE; XP 270; *dagger of venom* +1 (three doses), *ring of protection* +2, *ring of polymorph self* (only to another human form, no system shock roll required; five charges), vial containing a special potion of *narcolepsy* (see below), *wand of fear* (three charges left), pack of non-magical tarot cards, unholy symbol of Horns of Molikroth (hidden), spell components, lantern, tinderbox, three flasks of oil, 5 gp, 30 sp.

Wizard spells (2/1): 1st—*burning hands*, *sleep*; 2nd—*shatter*.

Priest spells (3): 1st—*cause light wounds*, *cure light wounds*, *light*.

Mother Gloam is a vibrant 65-year-old woman with coal-black eyes and a crow's nest of black hair. She dresses in voluminous, silk, gypsy-like dresses in clashing colors. Smooth-tongued and intelligent, she is quick to tell fortunes using her tarot cards, with which she has a natural skill (treat as the clerical *augury* spell). Note, however, that what she sees in the cards and what she tells often differ, as she is as devious as she is intelligent.

Mother Gloam is, like her son Trevis, one of the leaders of the cult that summoned the baatezu to Caermor. Having no spells capable of causing this act, she and her fellow conspirators relied upon sacrifice and prayer and discovered, to their

surprise, that is worked. Mother Gloam tries hard to mislead anyone trying to get information about recent troubles, usually putting the blame on Albee. If she meets the PCs and talks with them, she can gauge accurately whether they are a powerful and effective group (DM's judgment, taking into account the group unit/cooperation and balance, as well as levels). Note that any time Mother Gloam visits the baatezu (now housed in a deserted chapel), she uses her *ring of polymorph self* to conceal her true appearance, usually taking the form of an elderly man.

Mother Gloam does not publicly acknowledge Trevis to be her son, as it gives them both more freedom to work their wiles. She suspects Belle of being more than she appears, fearing even that Belle has some influence over Trevis. Nonetheless, she actively supports the coven and is as enthusiastic about their current plans as any. In fact, she has laid out most of the coven's plans herself. After the baatezu has driven the villagers into submission with murders and kidnappings—with the kidnapped victims becoming slaves or sacrifices—the coven will expand its influence toward Sta Fira and other nearby cities. The kidnapping of Gwendolyn is a major step in this direction, as it has spread terror and distrust throughout the countryside. Mother Gloam desires power—lots of it—and the baatezu is her ticket to success.

Mother Gloam has some skill as an alchemist and can create a magical sleep-type potion, the effects of which are similar to narcolepsy. Each round that the imbiber of the potion is under any kind of stress (e.g., combat, fear, exertion, etc.), he or she must save vs. poison or fall asleep for 2–20







rounds. This makes the effect of the potion very insidious; the victim might seem totally unaffected for a number of turns, then suddenly fall asleep at the first onset of danger. Note that this effect can occur an unlimited number of times during the potion's duration, which is 1d6+10 turns.

Probably Mother Gloam's most dangerous weapon is her influence over the villagers themselves, particularly Derion. If she and her co-conspirators fail in any action against the PCs, the next day Mother Gloam "does the rounds" of the villagers, subtly turning them against the travelers and creating an atmosphere of more paranoia, distrust, and coldness. She is sure to spend time with Derion, suggesting through the cards that the strangers might be in league with Albee.

**Trevus** (0-level human): AC 10; MV 9; 0-level; hp 2; THAC0 21; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 6, D 9, C 4, I 13, W 7, Ch 8; SZ M; ML 11; AL LE; XP 15; two daggers, unholy symbol of Horns of Molikroth (hidden), 5 gp, 10 sp.

Trevus, Mother Gloam's 25-year-old son, is badly deformed, with a club foot and a twisted, ugly face. Though he is almost as intelligent and sly as his mother, his intellect is blighted and unstable. This state was aided by the fact that the townsfolk reviled him from birth, forcing him to live in a hovel on the outskirts of Caermor. It was his desire to take revenge against the locals who led him to pledge his soul to the dark forces of Baator in return for a minion to chastise the town.

Trevus' incipient madness shows itself as paranoia: everyone hates him and is out to get him, or so he believes. Even genuine friendship is perceived as a façade for this imagined hatred. If Trevus is encountered by the characters, he tries to evade them if possible (and if he is not surprised). In any situation in which Belle is threatened, however, Trevus fights to the death to protect her. Being completely under Belle's influence, he would not be surprised to learn of her true identity— but then, neither would he care.

Like his mother, Trevus doesn't like to admit that he and Mother Gloam are related. However, he is less dedicated to hiding this fact than she is.

**Belle Fagor** (A.K.A. Baalphegor): AC -2; MV 19, fly 29 (C); HD 18; hp 82; THAC0 3; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12; S 19, D 15, C 19, I 20, W 18, Ch 21; SA spell-like abilities (see below); SD *aura alteration* (see below); regenerates 1 hp every four rounds; immune to fire, poison, and nonmagical weapons; harmed only by silver or +1 or better weapons; suffers half or no damage from cold and gas attacks; MR 80%; SZ M (5' tall in natural form); ML 17; AL LE; XP 32,000.

Baalphegor can use the following spell-like abilities, one at a time and once/round, as an 18th-level wizard: *advanced illusion*, *animate dead*, *charm person*, *detect invisibility*, *dispel magic*, *enchant an item*, *infravision*, *know alignment* (always active), (fulfill another's) *limited wish*, *permanency*, *produce flame*, *pyrotechnics*, *suggestion*, *teleport without error*. Once per day, she can employ a *finger of death*, unleash *chain lightning*, and *heal* herself. She causes *fear* (20' range) by pointing at the victim (save vs. spells at -2). She can *gate* 1d4 abishai baatezu or one osyluth baatezu with a 75% chance of success.

Belle appears as a human female child, age 10, of neutral alignment. Her unique *aura alteration* power enables her to mask her alignment, hiding the fact that this blonde child is actually Baalphegor, Princess of Baator and consort to the ruler of the plane's eighth layer, Molikroth. (Note that her hair color makes her stand out from the locals who are dark- or red-haired.)

To enliven a short stretch of eternity, she visited Caermor in the form of an orphaned child (her parents, she claims, were slain by brigands on the road) to stir up trouble after Trevus' request for a baatezu became known in Baator. At the present time, she lives with MacHeath, the pub owner.

Belle found Trevus tailor-made for her plans. Working her way into his sympathies and playing on his madness, she became the only person he likes and trusts and uses him to control the operations of the coven. For now, she plans to let the coven think that it is in charge of things; the cruel truth will be delivered later. Desiring a break from the infernal politics of Baator, Baalphegor is enjoying herself and regards her interplanar tinkering as a sort of game, with its own rules.

The purpose of this "game" is to test the mettle of the coven, seeing whether it is determined and wicked enough to be of further use in the future. As part of this test, Belle has ensured that the summoned baatezu is properly limited in its power (see description of the baatezu below) and understands that Belle, not the coven, is the real ruler in the area. Though she uses her influence over Trevus to protect the baatezu in the abandoned chapel and to keep the "fun" going, she does nothing directly, since that would be against the "rules" by which she plays her game. If the baatezu is killed and the coven is still relatively intact, she reveals herself to the coven and orders the conspirators into conflict with the party. If the coven and the baatezu are both defeated, she abandons the project and visits the characters in her childlike form, thanking them for the entertainment they have provided her. Then she transforms into her true fiendish shape and vanishes, but not before darkly promising that she intends to have more fun in the future.

Whenever Belle is encountered, she is standing off to the side, possibly in a shadowed doorway, watching the characters with an intense gaze. As soon as some character notices her, she leaves. In conversation, Belle is quiet but gives the feeling of wisdom beyond her age.

Belle's game is to watch people combatting the baatezu and the coven, not to obliterate them. If any character attempts to physically attack Belle, she teleports away instantly or uses her powers to prevent injury to herself without inflicting damage on her attackers. If the attack is continued with any degree of determination and chance of success, however, she reveals her true nature and returns the attack with all her might.

In her true form, Baalphegor is a cinnamon-brown female, apparently human but for her red eyes, forked tail, and slender, leathery wings. One of Baator's most artful and beautiful she-fiends, Baalphegor is an honored diplomat, counting many powerful pit fiends as her allies. Although extremely powerful, Baalphegor was not included to crush the player characters. She should be played with care and cleverness, befitting her extreme intelligence.



**Derion** (4th-level human fighter): AC 10; MV 12; F4; hp 25; THAC0 17 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 12, C 16, I 10, W 9, Ch 12; SZ M; ML 14; AL N; XP 120; pitchfork (if encountered outside town; treat as trident), short sword, dagger, crude drawing of Gwendolyn (showing her beauty), 15 gp, 20 sp, 25 cp, skin of whiskey.

Derion, Gwendolyn's father, is the quintessential Caermor man: stocky, strong, red hair and beard, and fierce when provoked or drunk. Since Gwendolyn's disappearance, he has become more sullen and has been "taking to his whiskey" quite seriously. He usually stays drunk every waking hour so as not to feel the pain over the loss of his daughter; when encountered, there is a 90% chance that he is drunk, but only to the point of severe surliness. He never attacks anyone without provocation; however, if Mother Gloam has had a chance to influence him, he will be looking for such provocation. Derion is not stupid and won't take on a large, armed group. Rather, he tries to call out a single member for personal combat.

Since Gwendolyn's disappearance, Derion, normally a conscientious farmer, has let his farm chores slip, and his lands show his preoccupation. From time to time he makes a cursory attempt to get things back to normal, but most of his time is spent in the pub or walking. Derion is a widower and has no other children.

**MacHeath** (3rd-level human fighter): AC 10; MV 12; F3; hp 14; THAC0 18 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 13, D 12, C 13, I 12, W 11, Ch 15; SZ M; ML 12; AL LE; XP 65; two daggers, club (kept under bar), unholy symbol of Horns of Molikroth (hidden), 35 gp, 40 sp, 62 cp.

MacHeath is the 40-year-old owner of The Standing Stones, the village's only pub. He is usually more closed-mouth than Derion because it suits his purposes—or, more correctly, Belle's purposes—to listen more than talk. (A bartender is rarely noticed listening to a conversation and often confided in by drunk customers.) He acts friendly toward strangers to gain their confidence or to get information. Few know more about the residents and the happenings of the village than MacHeath.

MacHeath is a member of the conspiracy led by Trevus that conjured the baatezu now plaguing the village. The reasons for his involvement would seem a little obscure to his neighbors if they knew; he appears to have nothing to gain by the travail. Not so, in MacHeath's eyes. He has been working the pub, which was his father's before him, but even though he is an integral part of the community, his status in the eyes of the farmers is fairly low because he does not work the land. MacHeath could bare this faint scorn if he were rich—unlike most other villagers, he has a dwarf's acquisitive nature—but he makes precious little from the pub. Mother Gloam has convinced him that the fiend's presence will right the wrongs he perceives. Not only will the baatezu lay right those who hold him in ill repute, but he will also share in all the booty that is collected as a result of the fiend's rampages.

Even though he is a member of the conspiracy and acts as Belle's foster father, MacHeath is unaware of the child's true identity. He is not capable of examining this issue rationally since Belle has charmed him.

## Encounter Tables

**Village Encounters:** Roll 1d6 every turn; on a roll of 6, an encounter occurs. Then roll on the table below.

Children react with fear to any strangers and run away 75% of the time. Male villagers are 1st-level fighters and are typically armed with a single knife or dagger. Female villagers are 0-level, and 50% are armed with a single knife or dagger; others are unarmed.

The abilities and personalities of the named NPCs are explained in the section "Caermor Personalities."

Roll 1d10	Day	Night
1	1-3 villagers (children)	No encounter
2	1-3 villagers (women)	No encounter
3	1-2 villagers (men)	1-2 villagers (men)
4	Lara	No encounter
5	Dougal	Dougal
6	Mother Gloam	Mother Gloam
7	Derion	Derion
8	Belle	Trevus
9	Belle	No encounter
0	Norn	No encounter

**Pub Encounters:** The local pub is always occupied by 3-6 local men. MacHeath and Lara are always there unless encountered somewhere else. Each time the characters enter the pub, and every two turns thereafter, the DM should roll on the following table to determine who (in addition to the regular population) is in the pub or who enters. Roll 1d6; a roll of 6 indicates a new encounter.

Roll 1d4	Day	Night
1	Dougal	Dougal
2	Mother Gloam	Derion
3	Mother Gloam	Derion
4	Lane and company	Dougal

**Countryside Encounters:** Roll 1d6 every three turns; on a roll of 6, the PCs have an encounter, determined by rolling on the table below.

Roll 1d6	Day	Night
1	Sheep (2-20)	No encounter
2	Sheep (2-20)	No encounter
3	Trevus	Large bats (1-3)
4	Mother Gloam	Mother Gloam
5	Albee	Large bats (1-3)
6	Derion	Scarecrow (1)

**Sheep:** AC 7; MV 12; HD 2; hp 8 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ M; INT animal (1); ML 3; AL N; XP 35; MM. The sheep avoid humans (except their regular shepherds) and bite only in final defense.

**Large bats:** AC 8; MV 3, fly 18 (C); HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA disease; SD -3 AC bonus when attacked by an opponent with missile weapon and Dexterity 13 or less; SZ M; INT animal (1); ML 6; AL N; MM. Anyone bitten by a large bat has a 1% chance per point of damage inflicted of contracting rabies.

**Scarecrow:** AC 6; MV 6; HD 5; hp 27; THAC0 15; #AT 1 + gaze; Dmg 1-6; SA charm; SW susceptible to fire; SZ M; INT non (0); ML 20; AL N; MM. This creature has been wandering the domain aimlessly since its creator, an evil patriarch, was slain many miles to the south.





**Lara** (0-level human): AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 10, D 11, C 10, I 13, W 13, Ch 13; SZ M; ML 10; AL LN; 2 gp and 5 sp.

MacHeath's wife, Lara, works as assistant bartender and waitress at the pub. Worn down by long hours and subjugated by her husband, she is quiet and meek and seems considerably older than her 30 years.

Even though MacHeath makes the mistake of assuming she is stupid, Lara is not and knows more about the true state of affairs in the village than most. She is well aware that the city-boy Albee is not guilty of the recent atrocities and is convinced that the guilty parties are actually closer to home, although she does not know exactly who they are. She is sure, however, that her husband is among them—when drunk, he often tells her how grand their lives will be “after it's all done”—and the certainty brings her great pain. She suspects nothing of Belle, but only because the child has *charmed* her.

Lara knows that she must do something but knows that trying to take steps on her own only brings a beating from her husband. She sees in the adventurers an opportunity to do something positive. At any time she meets the characters, she sizes them up. If they seem trustworthy, she confides in them what she knows and suspects (everything except her husband's involvement), but only if MacHeath cannot observe her doing so. If MacHeath is around, she attempts to arrange a clandestine meeting with the characters, but in no way does she risk herself.

**Norn** (2nd-level human fighter): AC 10; MV 12; F2; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 11, D 10, C 11, I 13, W 13, Ch 10; SZ M; ML 12; AL N; dagger, club, 20 gp and 18 sp.

Norn is the village's tradesman; he collects the wool and other goods the village sells, strikes the deals with traveling merchants, then divides the revenue. In keeping with this responsibility, Norn is very hard-nosed, particularly with strangers. When it comes to money, he is extremely tight.

Because of his hard ways, strangers might assume that Norn is disliked by the villagers. Nothing could be further from the truth. Norn is liked and respected by all in Caermor, and in return, he is exceedingly fair with all local people. With strangers, however, he is still honest in his dealings but will take them for all they are worth in a trading situation.

**Dougal** (3rd-level human bard): AC 10; MV 12; B3; hp 18; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 9, D 12, C 16, I 13, W 9, Ch 15; SZ M; ML 11; AL LE; XP 175; two daggers (one in each boot), shortsword, unholy symbol of Horns of Molikroth (hidden), small Celtic-style harp (usually slung on a shoulder), small flute, 15 gp and 27 sp.

Rogue abilities: CW 55%, DN 35%, PP 35%, RL 10%.

As local minstrel, what Dougal lacks in size (he is barely 5'6") he more than makes up for in arrogance and swagger. He dresses in finer garb than most, favoring garish green kilts and cloaks.

Dougal's main character trait is conceit. Flattery is always met with sweeping good humor; anything that could be taken as a personal slight is met with anger and, if severe enough, drawn steel. Speaking with Dougal is one of life's more aggravating pursuits. The only thing that has kept the locals

from putting an abrupt end to his career is his talent: he can sing, play, and tell tales extremely well.

Dougal is the final member of the conspiracy, and even though he will never admit it outright, his conversation is often sprinkled with comments that show he expects great things out of life in the very near future—starting with Gwendolyn as his personal slave.

**Lane the Archer** (3rd-level human fighter): AC 6; MV 12; F3; hp 23; THAC0 18 (base); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg by weapon type; SA specialized with long bow (+2 to hit at point-blank range); S 14, D 15, C 14, I 13, W 10, Ch 14; SZ M; ML 12; AL LG; scale mail, long sword, hand (throwing axe), long bow, 24 sheaf arrows, three *sheaf arrows* +3, 75 gp, 18 sp, three gems (25 gp each).

Lane and his small band are among those who have come to try to rid Caermor of its tribulations. They heard of the strange occurrences while in Sta Fira, from a merchant who had stopped in at the village to trade for wool. Because of Lane's noble nature, he decided that his party should do what they could to save the village. He and his friends arrived in the village three days before the characters and immediately discovered that the village did not *want* to be saved. Finding themselves unwelcome in the village, they set up camp south of the village and began their investigations from there.

So far, they have discovered nothing. Lane does not know of the existence of Belle and has not yet met Lara, and thus knows nothing of her suspicions. He has come to the conclusion that Albee is not guilty—merely on evidence of the dead sheep he has found—but can put forward no other theory. If asked, Lane refuses to join forces with the characters on the grounds that two groups working independently have a better chance of succeeding than one large group. He does suggest exchanging information; anything one group learns should be communicated to the other group. The DM can arrange for Lara to meet Lane if the characters fail to meet her first.

Lane is not stupid, but he is sometimes naive in his belief that people are basically honest until proven otherwise. His open trust sometimes gets him into trouble. For himself, he holds chivalry and proper action above all else. He is 25 years old.

Lane and his followers may be guided about the adventure as the DM desires. They will rarely interfere with the characters' plans, but they might turn up in some unexpected places.

**Tremayne and Verlayne** (0-level humans): AC 7; MV 12; 0-level; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 13, D 13, C 12, I 11, W 11, Ch 11; SZ M; ML 12; AL LG; leather armor, shield, broad sword, hand (throwing) axe, six darts, gold ring (15 gp).

Tremayne and Verlayne are identical 19-year-old twin brothers, friends and henchmen of Lane. A year ago, he saved them and Martha from a run-in with some orcs, and from that day forward, they threw in their lot with him. He equipped them and is in the process of training them, but they are hardly fighters yet. When trouble arises, they tend to be rather slow to respond. Both are similar to Lane—open and friendly—though maybe a little less naive, despite their fewer years.



Their loyalty to Lane is outweighed only by their protectiveness of Martha. Nothing brings them closer to being warlike than seeing someone bothering Martha.

**Martha** (1st-level human fighter): AC 7; MV 12; F1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 13, C 14, I 11, W 11, Ch 15; SZ M; ML 13; AL LG; leather armor (always concealed under light cloak), *ring of protection +1*, shortsword, three daggers, sling, 10 sling bullets, 5 gp, jade pendant on a gold chain (worth 30 gp).

Martha, close friend (and no more) to Tremayne and Verlayne and henchman of Lane, appears to be a fragile maiden. In fact, this 19 year-old woman is considerably more fierce and skilled than either brother. While the twins feel they have to protect her, it often falls to Martha to protect them. She is intelligent enough to recognize the advantage in not having this known; however, she tends to fake a "whatever-will-become-of-me?" helplessness, and her armor and weapons are always concealed. Her loyalty to Lane is strong (he saved her life, after all), but it is not as unquestioning as that of the brothers.

**Albee** (1st-level human wizard): AC 10; MV 12; W1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 10, D 10, C 16, I 13, W 9, Ch 12; SZ M; ML 10; AL NG; two daggers, three darts, spell book (contains the spells *audible glamor*, *cantrip*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *erase*, *grease*, *light*, *phantasmal force*, *read magic*, and *ventriloquism*), sketch pad filled with drawings of Gwendolyn.

Spell memorized (1): 1st—*cantrip*.

Albee is the outsider blamed by most villagers for the tribulations visited upon Caermor. He is an artist from Sta Fira, formerly a wizard's apprentice, and came to Caermor two months ago to sketch, paint, and experience the windswept heaths. Viewed as a ne'er-do-well by the villagers, he decided to avoid them, so he rented an old shack outside the village. He met Gwendolyn on a trip to the pub one day, and it was love at first sight for both. At first, their meetings were circumspect, but they became more open as the relationship deepened.

Albee is innocent of any slayings. As the atrocities escalated, he belatedly realized that the town was starting to look on him as the possible culprit, but he did not want to leave because of Gwendolyn. One fateful night, Gwendolyn came over to Albee's house unexpectedly; unwilling to let her leave with the monster about, Albee had her stay almost until dawn. Almost as soon as Gwendolyn had left, Mother Gloam pounded on his door and warned him that a posse was coming to get him for his dallying with the girl. Without questioning her, he fled.

Albee now hides in a small cave under the very hill that gives the village its name, living on roots and berries and an occasional rabbit. Affected by his solitary lifestyle and the strange noises at night, Albee's sanity has slipped; he is now quite paranoid and has a tendency to talk to his pictures of Gwendolyn. If Albee is encountered outside his cave, he is seen in the distance as a wild-looking young man (he is 24







years old) with ragged clothes and unruly hair, staring at the characters. Because of his familiarity with the terrain and his obsessive fear of others, he has a 75% chance of successfully evading the characters. Characters with the tracking proficiency can follow him by making a successful proficiency check. In rainy weather, due to low-lying fog and poor visibility, all tracking checks suffer a -6 penalty.

**Gwendolyn** (0-level human): AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 10, D 12, C 11, I 12, W 10, Ch 13; SZ M; ML 10; AL NG; locket containing a small painting of Albee (given to her by Albee).

Gwendolyn, the 18-year-old daughter of Derion, is the girl whose disappearance prompted the hunting of Albee. Captured by Mother Gloam's *sleep* spell only moments after leaving Albee's rented cottage, she is now the prisoner of the summoned baatezu in a deserted chapel. She is slated to be given to a coven member as a slave or else sacrificed to Molikroth, lord of the eighth layer of Baator, if she becomes too difficult to control.

Though few of the townsfolk admit it (with the exception of Lara), Gwendolyn is a headstrong girl with a very good idea of what she wants. The locals see this as lack of respect, shaming her father Derion. Anyone pushing Gwendolyn in a direction she doesn't want to go is in for a fight. When (or if) she is rescued, she sets off at once to find Albee.

While imprisoned by the baatezu, Gwendolyn has not been mistreated at all—Dougal would like her as part of his spoils and does not want damaged merchandise—but she has been kept bound and blindfolded. She cannot identify her captors by sight, but she has a 60% chance of identifying them by voice if she hears them speak once she has been freed; the chance of identifying Mother Gloam as one of her captors is 90%. Gwendolyn has also been kept under the influence of Mother Gloam's narcolepsy potion. (See Mother Gloam's character description for details.) The most recent dose of the potion is effective for 1d6+6 turns after the characters find Gwendolyn. While imprisoned, Gwendolyn has been visited by Trevus, Mother Gloam, and Dougal. She has not been visited by MacHeath. If questioned by the characters, she mentions that the "fiend" (i.e., the baatezu) often taunted her and that it mentioned something about its presence being at the will of "My Lady," "Her Majesty," or "The Princess."

**The Monster** (black abishai baatezu): AC 5; MV 9, fly 12 (C); HD 4+1; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 3 (claw/claw/tail); Dmg 1-4/1-4/2-5; SA poison tail (Type F), dive (+2 to attack, claws inflict double damage), spell-like abilities; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; *regenerates* 1 hp/round (unless damage is inflicted by holy water or a holy magical weapon); spell-like abilities; MR 30%; SZ M (6' tall); INT average (9); ML 9; AL LE; XP 7,000; *PLANESCAPE*® MC Appendix.

Spell-like abilities (usable one at a time, once/round, at will): *command*, *infravision*, *know alignment* (always active), *produce flame*, *pyrotechnics*, *scare*, *teleport without error*.

Because of the rules under which Baalphegor is playing her game, she has forbidden the abishai to *gate* other baatezu or use its other spell-like abilities, including its *change self* ability. (She wants her opponents to know what they are up against.) It uses its remaining abilities to best effect. The

abishai escapes to harry the characters later (if possible), fights to the death if cornered and unable to *teleport* away, and never surrenders. Being as wicked as any abishai can be, it has no redeeming qualities.

## Event Chronology

The chronology of events at the time of Gwendolyn's capture (two weeks prior to the party's arrival) is as follows:

Time	Event
8:00 P.M.	Derion arrives at the pub, intending to stay the night.
8:30 P.M.	Sunset.
8:35 P.M.	Mother Gloam sees Gwendolyn arrive at Albee's house and decides to kidnap her.
10:00 P.M.	The conspirators meet at Trevus' house and discuss Mother Gloam's plans.
10:30 P.M.	The meeting breaks up; MacHeath and Dougal keep a watch on Albee's house; Mother Gloam goes to the old chapel to consult with the abishai.
3:30 A.M.	Mother Gloam joins MacHeath and Dougal near Albee's house, waiting for Gwendolyn to leave.
4:30 A.M.	Gwendolyn leaves Albee's house; using her <i>sleep</i> spell, Mother Gloam captures Gwendolyn, and Dougal takes her to the old chapel and ties her up.
4:45 A.M.	MacHeath wakes the village, saying Gwendolyn is missing; he stirs up the posse.
5:00 A.M.	The posse heads for Albee's house and is spotted by Mother Gloam, who wakes Albee and warns him to flee; Albee escapes; Mother Gloam plants the blood-stained robe (using blood from dead sheep) and hides, noting the success of her plan to confuse and terrorize the villagers.

This information should become available to the characters only through much research.

A number of special events occur after the party arrives in Caermor. The members of the coven have sense enough to realize that strangers, particularly adventuring ones, pose a threat to their plans. Any new group of strangers must be evaluated in terms of risk.

The night after the characters come to the village, the coven meets at Trevus' shack to evaluate the party. (Lane's group underwent this evaluation and, rightly or wrongly, were decided to be no risk.) The conspirators meet at sunset (8:30 P.M.), taking the shortest route that won't lead them through the characters' or Lane's campsites. During the meeting, the conspirators decide the danger posed by the characters and what is to be done about them. This decision must be made by the DM, allowing for what the conspirators might have heard or seen of the characters. It should take into account such things as armor and weapons, group unity, and the apparent intelligence behind the characters' actions. If the DM decides that the conspirators see no threat posed by the characters, then nothing comes from the meeting. On the other hand, if they view the characters as a threat, then the coven takes the next step. Either way, the meeting adjourns at 9:00 P.M. with Dougal returning home, retracing his earlier route.



If the party is seen as no threat, MacHeath returns home and Mother Gloam spends the night where she is; if the party is seen as dangerous, Mother Gloam returns to the pub with MacHeath, carrying with her as many doses of her potion of *narcolepsy* as there are characters in the party. At the pub, she and MacHeath spike a barrel of ale, which MacHeath then takes to the PCs' campsite, arriving at 9:30 P.M. He offers the ale to the characters. He uses his charisma to the utmost to persuade the PCs to drink and, if necessary to assuage any fears, he drinks with them. When all (or as many as possible) have drunk the ale, he leaves, wishing them a good night. Of course, MacHeath avoids all danger until the effects of Mother Gloam's potion wear off.

When he is gone, Mother Gloam approaches the campsite and, using whatever means seems most appropriate (possibly by using her *ring of polymorph self* to appear as Gwendolyn), tries to lead the party after her. If possible, she leads them into the marsh (with which she is very familiar), hoping that the combination of treacherous terrain, potion of *narcolepsy*, and marsh inhabitants put an end to them.

If she cannot entice the party away from their campsite, she gives up and vanishes into the night, heading for the old chapel as fast as she can run. There, she instructs the baatezu to attack the party, hoping that the potion gives it all the advantage it needs to finish them. Note that the baatezu does not fight to the death in this situation. If it finds itself over-matched, it withdraws. If the baatezu is slain, Belle puts her own plans into action. (See her description for details.)

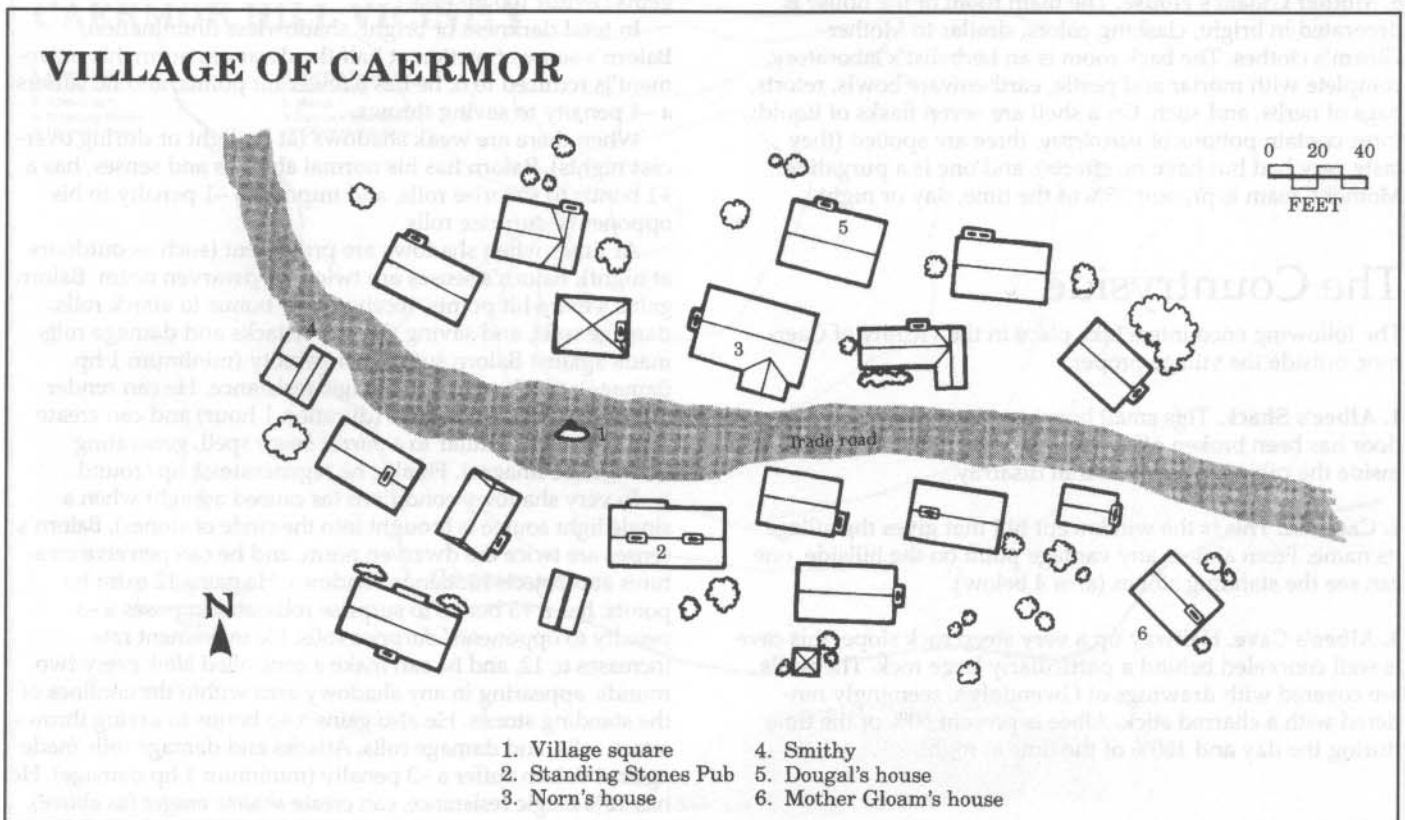
## Caermor

The following are encounter areas in the town of Caermor:

**1. Village Square.** In the middle of this muddy road stands a weathered stone standing about 5' high, with a rusted pump emerging from it. The pump is low (three feet off the ground) and still works, although the water is rusty. Close inspection of the stone shows almost obliterated runes in an ancient form of the Common tongue. An Intelligence score of 16 or higher, a successful read languages ability check, or a *comprehend languages* spell is required to decipher them. The only legible section of the scribbling reads: "... and did Aelfred Foehammer here, by the grace of Taranis Firehand, slay the dwarven chieftain, in the year 3014 O.D. ..." Aelfred Foehammer is further detailed below.

**2. The Standing Stones Pub.** The village pub is the only two-story building in town and is identified by a wooden sign showing a set of standing stones. Downstairs is a dilapidated barroom with a wooden bar at one end and a stone fireplace at the other. Behind the bar are tuns of ale and, concealed under the bar, three earthenware flasks of a fiery distilled liquor. In the corner of the bar is a ladder to a trap door in the ceiling that leads to MacHeath's and Lara's room. MacHeath carries most of the bar's profits with him.

**3. Norn's House and Warehouse.** Norn's house is unremarkable. Most of the interior is devoted to warehouse storage and is half-full of bales of raw wool. In a locked chest are







record books and 110 gp, 95 sp, and 56 cp. Norn is present 80% of the time, night and day. When he is not around, the building is securely locked. A trap is also set on the main door: if not disarmed with a special key, a heavy crossbow fires a bolt into the first person to pass through the door (THAC0 15).

**4. Smithy and Forge.** The village blacksmith, Duncan MacEwen, is a pensive and reserved man who hasn't many friends in Caermor. He runs a fair business and takes a great deal of pride in his work. He is neither an armorer nor a weaponsmith, but he casts fine horseshoes. His prices are 25% higher than what PCs are accustomed to in the larger cities.

Duncan keeps a draft horse named Wallace tethered outside the forge. During rainy weather, the horse stands under a makeshift awning inside the forge, but not too close to the anvil or the fire.

**Duncan MacEwen** (0-level human): AC 9 (leather apron); MV 12; 0-level; hp 6; THAC0 20 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/32, D 9, C 13, I 12, W 11, Ch 9; SZ M; ML 13; AL N; warhammer, club, heavy crossbow, 10 heavy quarrels, 65 gp, 45 sp, 112 cp.

**5. Dougal's House.** Unlike the other buildings in town, Dougal's house is brightly decorated with paint and with cloth hanging in the windows. Dougal is present 25% of the time. Concealed under Dougal's bed is another Horns of Molikroth unholy symbol and five gems (worth 25 gp each).

**6. Mother Gloam's House.** The main room of the house is decorated in bright, clashing colors, similar to Mother Gloam's clothes. The back room is an herbalist's laboratory, complete with mortar and pestle, earthenware bowls, retorts, bags of herbs, and such. On a shelf are seven flasks of liquid; three contain potions of *narcolepsy*, three are spoiled (they taste very bad but have no effects), and one is a purgative. Mother Gloam is present 25% of the time, day or night.

## The Countryside

The following encounters take place in the vicinity of Caermor, outside the village proper.

**1. Albee's Shack.** This small hovel is now deserted. The front door has been broken off its hinges. The few furnishings inside the cabin are damp and in disarray.

**2. Caermor.** This is the windswept hill that gives the village its name. From almost any vantage point on the hillside, one can see the standing stones (area 4 below).

**3. Albee's Cave.** Halfway up a very steep rock slope, this cave is well concealed behind a particularly large rock. The walls are covered with drawings of Gwendolyn, seemingly rendered with a charred stick. Albee is present 50% of the time during the day and 100% of the time at night.

**4. Standing Stones.** Atop the hill stands an ancient henge. The stones are aged and weathered, and the cross-pieces across the tops of the stones have been cast down. Half-eroded dwarven runes remain on some of the stones; anyone who speaks Dwarvish can recognize their nature, but they are weathered to illegibility.

Many generations ago, a human general named Aelfred Foehammer descended upon the area with a mighty army of humans and elves, intending to wipe out the evil dwarves who dwelled in the area. The final battle took place on this hill—since named Caermor (meaning "hill of death")—among these stones. The dwarven leader, Balorn, saw his force disintegrating and knew his own end was near. His final act was a prayer to the dwarven god of revenge, Cadon, for the power to take undying vengeance. His prayer was granted. As the final blow fell, Balorn was no longer there to receive it. He had become a shade, with vengeance against the humans and elves his only goal.

Balorn is encountered only between sunset and sunrise, and only within the compass of the standing stones. There, he uses the most effective means available to wreak vengeance on any human or elf who enters his ken. As befits any dwarf who swears fealty to the evil Cadon (whether the dwarf is alive or undead), Balorn is clean shaven—an abomination in the eyes of any other dwarf.

**Balorn** (dwarven shade): AC 3; MV 9; F4; hp 25; THAC0 17 (base); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; SA specialized with battle axe (+1 to hit, +2 damage); SA/SD see below; S 15, D 13, C 15, I 10, W 9, Ch 8; SZ S; ML 14; XP 6,000; *MC Annual* 4; chain mail, *shield* +1, battle axe, hand (throwing axe), two gems (worth 100 gp each).

In total darkness or bright, shadowless illumination, Balorn's senses function at half the dwarven norm, his movement is reduced to 6, he has 8 fewer hit points, and he suffers a -4 penalty to saving throws.

When there are weak shadows (at twilight or during overcast nights), Balorn has his normal abilities and senses, has a +1 bonus to surprise rolls, and imposes a -1 penalty to his opponents' surprise rolls.

At times when shadows are prominent (such as outdoors at night), Balorn's senses are twice the dwarven norm. Balorn gains 4 extra hit points, receives a +1 bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws. Attacks and damage rolls made against Balorn suffer a -1 penalty (minimum 1 hp damage), and he gains 8% magic resistance. He can render himself *invisible* once/turn (duration 1 hour) and can create *shadow images* (similar to a *mirror image* spell, generating 1d4+3 false images). Finally, he regenerates 1 hp/round.

In very shadowy conditions (as caused at night when a single light source is brought into the circle of stones), Balorn's senses are twice the dwarven norm, and he can perceive creatures and objects hidden in shadows. He gains 12 extra hit points, has a +3 bonus to surprise rolls, and imposes a -3 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls. He movement rate increases to 12, and he can make a controlled *blink* every two rounds, appearing in any shadowy area within the confines of the standing stones. He also gains a +3 bonus to saving throws, attack rolls, and damage rolls. Attacks and damage rolls made against Balorn suffer a -3 penalty (minimum 1 hp damage). He has 12% magic resistance, can create *shadow images* (as above),



and regenerates 3 hp/round. He can also cast *demi-shadow monsters* (as a 4th-level caster), creating 1-4 shadowy duplicates over which Balorn has complete mental control.

**5. Deserted Chapel.** This old stone building, blocky and rather ugly in design, with a squat bell tower, is fully detailed in "The Old Chapel" below. The summoned abishai baatezu now lives here.

**6. Trevus' House.** Trevus resides in this squalid cottage. He is present 50% of the time by day and 90% of the time at night.

**7. Lane's Campsite.** The site occupied by Lane and his henchmen consists of a firepit and four bedrolls, and four riding horses are always tethered nearby. By day, there is a 50% chance that each of Lane, Tremayne, Verlayne, and Martha is present (determine for each individually); by night, the chance is 90% each.

**8. Marsh.** The ground here is so treacherous that anyone who does not know the few safe trails has a 30% chance of becoming trapped. A character with the tracking proficiency must make a successful proficiency check to navigate a safe path through the marsh. (Druid characters can make a successful Intelligence check instead.) At night, the check is made at -6 to the roll. Becoming trapped (sinking in the mud, often up to the knees) immobilizes the victim, eliminating Dexterity bonus to armor class. To break free, a victim must do nothing else that

round except try to extricate himself, requiring a successful Strength check on 1d20. Others can assist, adding half their Strength to the victim's figure for purposes of this roll, but their own chance of becoming trapped rises to 75% for that round.

The marsh is home to nine muckdwellers who attack anyone trapped in the mire. There is a 50% chance that the muckdwellers are accompanied by a cowardly giant vulture that only attacks victims who are immobile.

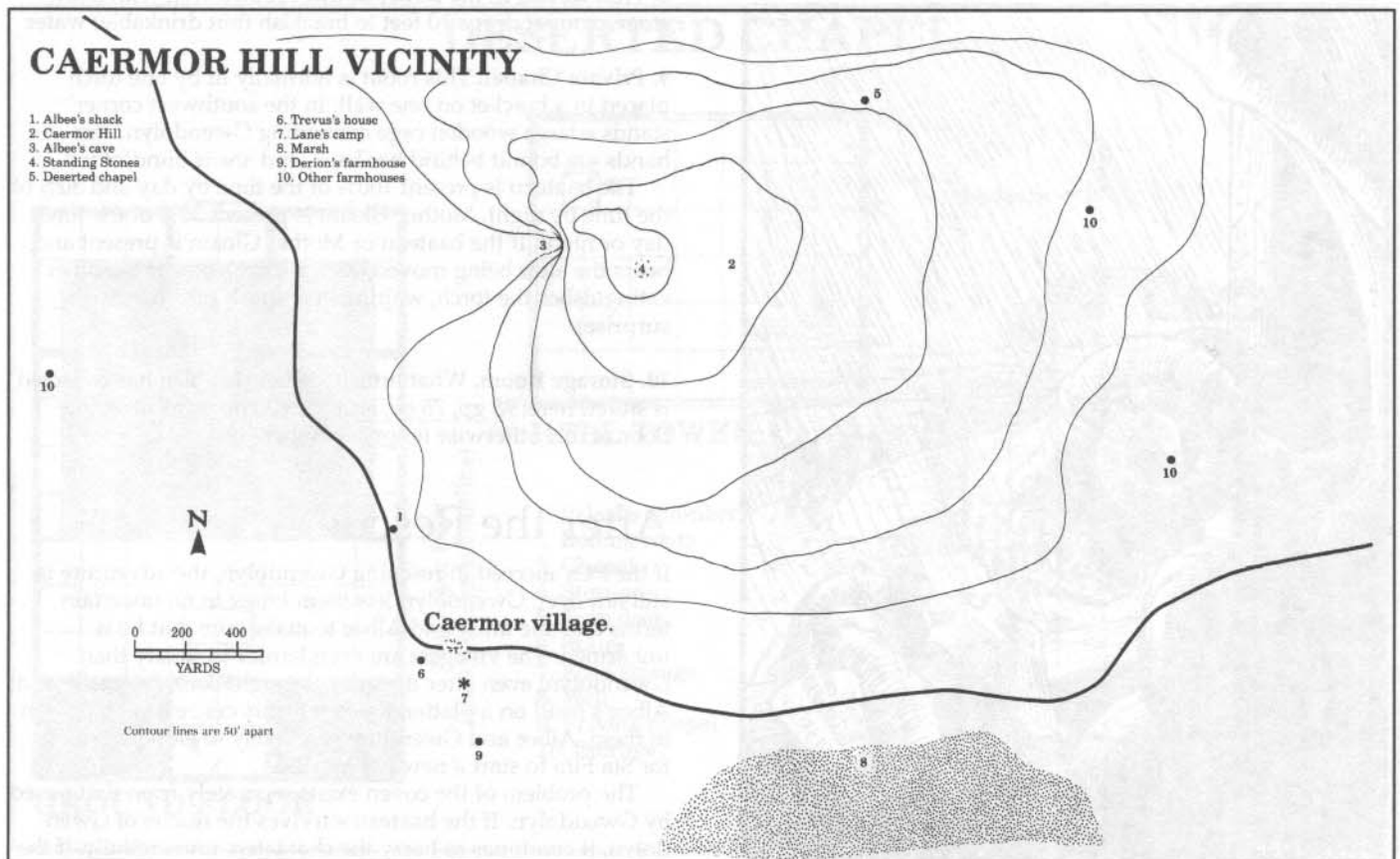
Hidden among the swampgrass in the center of the marsh is the muckdwellers' treasure: 250 gp, 200 sp, two nonmagical long swords, a *dagger +1*, and a nonmagical helmet with a 1,500-gp emerald set in the brow. Characters searching the mire for the muckdweller's hoard have a cumulative 5% chance of finding it.

**Muckdwellers (9):** AC 6; MV 3, swim 12; HD 1/2; hp 4, 4, 4, 4, 3, 3, 3, 2, 1; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SA water jet; SZ T; ML 10; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 15; MM.

**Giant vulture (8):** AC 7; MV 3, fly 24 (D); HD 2+2; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ M; ML 8; INT semi (4); AL NE; XP 65; MM.

**9. Derion's Farmhouse.** Derion is here 25% of the time, day or night. His abode is sparsely furnished, and he keeps his treasure on his person.

**10. Other Farmhouses.** These buildings and their inhabitants may be fleshed out by the DM as required.







## The Old Chapel

The chapel is a weather-worn stone structure. The ceiling height in the chapel and cellar is nine feet unless otherwise noted.

**1. Priest's Chamber.** A decayed cot and table have been left behind. The room is occupied by two giant rats that flee when injured. The rats have no treasure stored here.

**Giant rats (2):** AC 7; MV 12, swim 6; HD ½; hp 4, 2; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA bite has 5% chance of causing disease; SZ T; ML 6; INT semi (3); AL NE; XP 15; MM.

**2. Robing Room.** Hooks around the walls identify this as a robing room. A ladder leads up to a closed trap door in the ceiling. Close observation shows that the dust on the floor has been recently disturbed.

**3. Chapel.** This room has no windows, but empty torch brackets along the walls indicate how it is lit. The altar at the south end of the room appears to be a solid block of rough-hewn stone with no markings or inscriptions. Observation of the floor shows that the dust has been recently disturbed, particularly around the altar. Examination of the altar shows fresh scratches (possibly from claws) at the southwest and southeast bottom corners of the altar.

The altar is actually hollow and opens from south to north, like a very thick trap door. The chance of opening it each

round equals a character's Open Doors roll, with each additional character adding a +1 bonus to the roll. Below the altar is a steep stairway leading down into darkness.

**4. Storage.** Behind a secret door is a storage room for altar fittings. Only a few remain: a green silk altar cloth (worth 50 gp), two gold candlesticks (worth 125 gp each), and a gold goblet studded with opals (worth 300 gp).

**5. Bell Tower.** The ceiling here is 15' high. The trap door from the robing room opens directly into the bell tower. The single bell remains, although it is very corroded. The clapper is missing. The tower has four arched openings, four feet off the floor, 8' high, and 10' wide, one centered in each wall.

By day, the tower is always vacant. At night, there is a 25% chance that the abishai baatezu is present. If it hears any noise from down below, it certainly investigates and fights to the death.

**6. Stairs.** These stone steps descend 30 feet below the altar. The stairs are damp but safe to traverse.

**7. Food Storage Room.** Some supplies were obviously left behind by the last occupants of the chapel: spoiled, salted beef, barrels of soured wine, and moldy sacks of grain. A closer look shows that there is some fresher food, though, not more than a week or two old.

**8. Well Room.** In the center of this room, a well with a low stone parapet drops 10 feet to brackish (but drinkable) water.

**9. Private Chapel.** This room is normally lit by one torch placed in a bracket on one wall. In the southwest corner stands a large wooden cage containing Gwendolyn. Her hands are bound behind her back, and she is blindfolded.

The baatezu is present 100% of the time by day and 30% of the time by night. Mother Gloam is present 30% of the time, day or night. If the baatezu or Mother Gloam is present and hears the altar being moved (75% chance), one or the other extinguishes the torch, waiting in ambush (no chance of surprise).

**10. Storage Room.** What little booty the baatezu has collected is stored here: 95 gp, 75 sp, and 80 cp. The coins litter the floor of this otherwise empty chamber.



## After the Rescue

If the PCs succeed in rescuing Gwendolyn, the adventure is still not over. Gwendolyn lets them know in no uncertain terms that she must find Albee to make sure that he is unharmed. The villagers are even harder to satisfy than Gwendolyn; even after the girl is brought back, they still want Albee's head on a platter, unless his innocence can be proven to them. Albee and Gwendolyn are likely to elope, heading for Sta Fira to start a new life together.

The problem of the coven exists separately from that posed by Gwendolyn. If the baatezu survives the rescue of Gwendolyn, it continues to harry the characters unmercifully. If the



coven still exists but the abishai is killed in the rescue, Belle reveals her true self to the coven and orders them to attack the characters as soon as possible, using all their wiles.

Note that merely killing the members of the coven or telling the villagers about their involvement won't do the trick. The villagers would take the side of any local (except for Trevus) over an outsider. Particularly for Mother Gloam and MacHeath, any evidence of guilt must be strong.

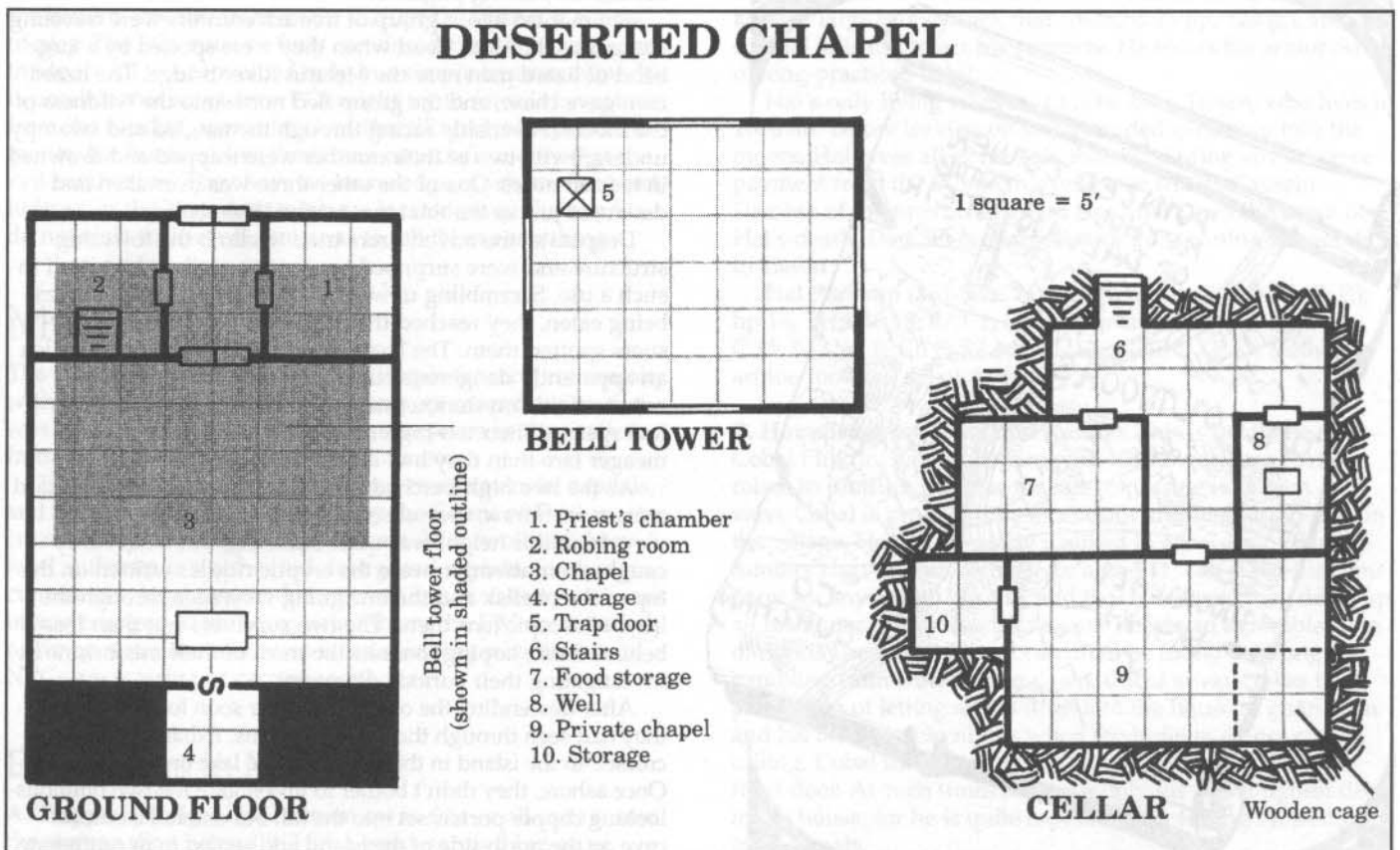
Even after the coven has been completely defeated, the PCs won't be totally free of the legacy of Caermor. Eternity is long, and Baalphegor almost certainly welcomes future opportunities for entertainment. These could be as simple as watching the PCs combat the occasional infernal creature dispatched to hound them or as elaborate as hiring them to retrieve some item stolen by someone (or something) she does not want to confront directly. Perhaps she could even require the PCs to aid her in some political machination she has planned in Baator. Other opportunities for future adventures quickly suggest themselves to imaginative DMs.  $\Omega$

## The Moor-Tomb Map

"The Moor-Tomb Map" is an AD&D® adventure designed for a balanced party of 4-6 characters of levels 2-4 (about 15 total levels). This adventure can be used by a DM who wishes to give his PCs a mysterious treasure map. Rather than simply handing the players a hastily sketched map that leads to some unguarded (and undetermined) treasure, the DM can use this module to provide a dangerous and intriguing quest. The furl'd players' map can be photocopied or drawn out for the players. The DM's area map is sufficiently vague to lend itself to any campaign, but both treasure map and DM's map can be modified to suit the DM's own campaign.

The players' map should be found by the PCs during some quest prior to the start of this adventure. If possible, rumors and legends of Dalvan Meir should be planted in the campaign prior to the discovery of the map, or else the PCs should be able to learn a bit more about Dalvan Meir from sages or libraries. Dalvan is said to have been of less than arch-mage status but powerful nonetheless, and he was rumored to have been obsessed with immortality (all true enough). The location of his tomb and treasures is a perennial topic of interest among sages, though adventurers have largely lost interest in finding it.

## DESERTED CHAPEL





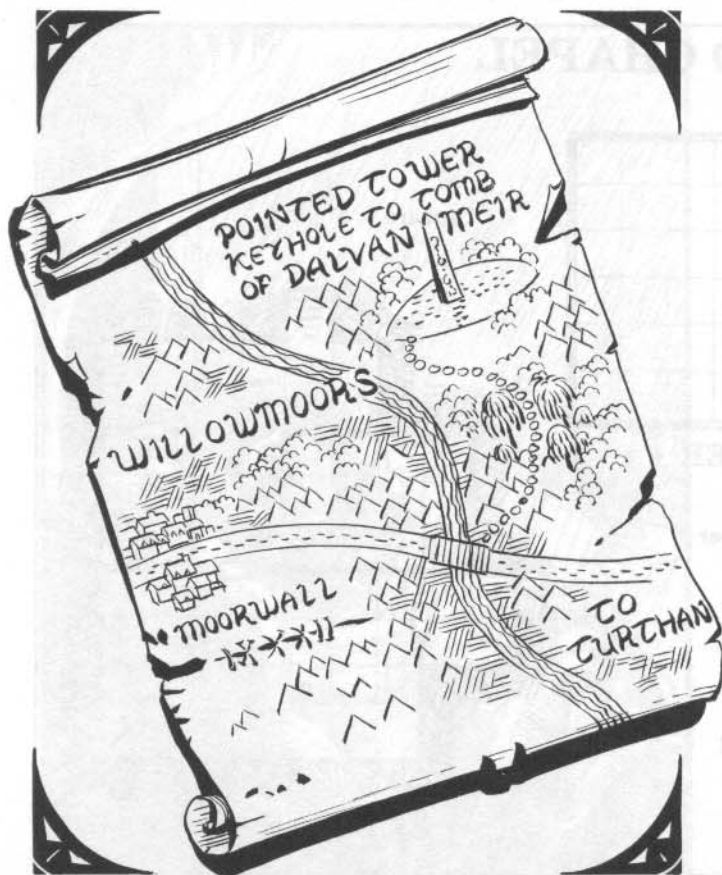


## For the Players

You have traveled far to reach the sleepy little hamlet of Moorwall that lies before you. The only populated area indicated on your tattered old map, Moorwall offers a place to rest and gather the supplies you will need for your journey into the reportedly dangerous wilderness known as the Willowmoors. You come seeking the famous lost tomb of the mage Dalvan Meir, but your quest is not a simple one. The tomb itself does not appear on your well-worn parchment. Perhaps the marks indicating its location were worn away, or maybe they were not meant to be openly displayed. Some of the local folk might provide you with information to help interpret your cryptic map.

## For the Dungeon Master

Long ago, a powerful mage named Dalvan Meir lived in an isolated stronghold in the Willowmoors. He had enjoyed an extremely long life (some thought him immortal or half-elven) through frequently imbibing potions of *longevity*. After drinking 11 such potions (thereby adding 70 years to his already considerable lifespan), he refused to imbibe another. He calculated that if he limited himself to this number, he would still have a slightly better than 50% overall chance to avoid experiencing the reversal of their effects.



Dalvan then sought a safer means of insuring his continued existence. After completing lengthy research that left him bedridden with old age, Dalvan found a solution by successfully creating a previously unknown spell—a more powerful and longer-lasting version of the one now commonly referred to as the *magic jar* spell. Unfortunately (for Dalvan, that is), he could not think of any nearby individuals who were capable or worthy enough to have their bodies taken over by him. Since he was not healthy enough to travel, the mage developed a scheme to draw likely prospects to him.

Known for his wealth and power, Dalvan assumed that after his death gifted adventurers would come from many faraway lands to search for his hidden treasure hoard. He set intellectual and physical barriers in the way of these would-be grave-robbers so that only the most gifted would reach his burial chamber. Here the wizard's bodily remains and some of his wealth were placed, along with a magical crystal housing Dalvan's spirit. With the aid of a specially-crafted magical item (called *Dalvan's circlet*, described later in the adventure), Dalvan felt confident that he could easily gain possession of some young and strong adventurer's body.

Over 200 years have passed since Dalvan Meir went to his final rest. Until recently, no one had succeeded in finding the hidden tomb, let alone the supposed treasure hoard, and the tomb has faded into local memory as a dubious legend. The only guide to the tomb's location, an obelisk in the swamp, has itself been all but lost. Thought to be a menhir of an old druidic shrine, it was sometimes sought (but rarely found) by occasional passing pilgrims.

Ten months ago, a group of five adventurers were traveling along the Old Moor Road when they were spotted by a large band of lizard men near the Melarin River bridge. The lizard men gave chase, and the group fled north into the wildness of the moors. Feverishly racing through the tangled and swampy undergrowth, two of their number were trapped and drowned in hidden mires. One of the other three was overtaken and devoured just as the final two reached the obelisk.

Desperate, the adventurers tried to climb the towering structure and were surprised to see how easily it lent itself to such a use. Scrambling upward as their fallen comrade was being eaten, they reached the top before their unsated pursuers spotted them. The lizard men, too fearful to make such an apparently dangerous climb and apprehensive of the nature of this mysterious structure, half-heartedly lofted a few spears at their too-high targets and settled for more meager fare than they had anticipated.

As the two high-perched adventurers waited for the lizard men to withdraw, they observed their surroundings. The view from this height was quite stunning, but what really caught their attention were the cryptic riddles written on the top of the obelisk and the intriguing vista seen through the inset telescopic lens there. The two survivors put their losses behind them, hoping to make the most of their misfortune by investigating their curious discovery.

After descending the obelisk, the pair soon located the lake they had seen through the structure's lens. Exhausted, they crossed to the island in the middle of the lake on a floating log. Once ashore, they didn't bother to investigate the two ominous-looking copper portals set into the hill but entered a natural cave on the north side of the island and settled in to recuperate.



Even though the adventurers guessed that great treasures could be found behind the copper doors, they were wary of making any rash moves without assistance. They decided, therefore, to enlist the aid of comrades living in the south. They drew a map (the same one that the PCs now possess) and took it to Moorwall to find someone there who could carry it to their friends. They hired a courier, but unbeknownst to these unfortunate fellows, he was killed enroute and the map was lost. How it came to be found by the PCs is a problem the DM should resolve as best fits his campaign.

Before returning to the island, the two adventurers decided that a celebration was in order, so they stopped at the local inn (the Much Moor Ale Inn, described below) and began quaffing down flagons of ale. They were a bit too liberal that night with their drunken tale-telling, and their story was overheard by members of a bandit ring. When they returned the next day to the tomb, the adventurers were tailed by these evil men. As the two waited on the island for their comrades, the bandits gathered their fellows and returned.

After surprising and brutally murdering the unsuspecting adventurers, the group of bandits, led by a notorious chief named Dougal, decided to use the island as their permanent hideout. The wicked band has prospered ever since. Unless they are slain or driven away by the PCs, the bandits continue to harass and beleaguer the surrounding lands for a long time to come.

None of the above information should be discovered by the PCs until late in the adventure, if at all, for knowledge of the bandits' involvement might disrupt the intended course of play. The PCs must be fully convinced that they have come to Moorwall to be involved only in a simple treasure hunt. It is possible that suspicious PCs might try to force information from the bandits' agents (such as the village innkeeper or his guests, the hunters), but these men can confirm only that the evil band exists. They have no knowledge of where the secret hideout or the legendary tomb are located, since the bandits do not trust their agents so far as to tell them everything.

## Moorwall

The small hamlet of Moorwall is a simple farming community with less than 200 residents. It sprang up around an inn that was built here to provide shelter for travelers as they exited from or prepared to enter the Willowmoors.

The village rests midway between two provincial capitals, and though it is nominally ruled by the Count of Turthan, its citizens do pretty much as they please. Moorwall's highest local authority is a rather indolent guard captain. In most circumstances, local people do not wear armor or carry weapons unless engaged in work requiring them; the DM should apply common sense to encounters when deciding what items NPCs are wearing or carrying with them.

## Encounters in Moorwall

**A. Trapper's Lodge.** Hal Pensson owns this small cottage and the storage shed behind it. Hal, a good-natured but quiet

fellow, can be seen every morning wandering around the fringe of the moors, placing and examining his steel traps. He does not set these anywhere near the Old Moor Road, but anyone who wanders off the road might very well blunder into one of these large and damaging devices. (See the Random Encounter Tables for details.)

Hal avoids talking to strangers unless they are in the market to purchase his beaver pelts or lizard skins. At any given time, he has 2–12 pelts (25% chance that 1–4 are from giant beavers) and 2–8 skins (from giant lizards and lizard men). He sells normal beaver pelts for 3–18 gp, giant-sized beaver pelts for 100–400 gp, giant lizard skins for 6–60 gp, and lizard man skins for 10–100 gp.

Although Hal is a capable combatant, he is not anxious to do any adventuring; he feels that he is making a good living selling his pelts and skins. He knows the swamp well enough to serve as a guide, but he is not easily convinced to help. No less than 500 gp are required to entice him to accompany PCs on a trek into the moors unless there is a ranger among the group of would-be employers. In this case, he settles for 100 gp instead (for the opportunity to learn how to track more accurately). He expects half his pay in advance and half upon completion of the job.

Hal's only possessions are the pelts and skins mentioned above and 2–8 bear-size traps that he stores in the shed behind his house. The wooden shed is quite sturdy, and its tough oaken door is secured by a large padlock that contains a poisoned needle trap (save at –4 or lapse into a coma for one week). Hidden beneath the floorboards of his house, Hal keeps a large money sack that contains 25 pp, 124 gp, and 57 ep. Hal kills to protect his property. He wears his armor out of long-practiced habit.

Hal's only living relative is his brother, Tiesen, who lives in Turthan. Before leaving on any extended excursion into the moors, Hal gives all of his valuables (including any advance payment from the PCs) to his only true friend, Captain Damber of the provincial guard (see area C). In the event of Hal's death, Damber is charged with transporting the goods to Tiesen.

**Hal Pensson** (3rd-level human fighter): AC 6; MV 12; F3; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 16, C 15, I 13, W 9, Ch 8; SZ M; ML 12; AL LN; XP 65; leather armor, footman's flail, staff.

**B. Houndsman's House and Kennel.** This is the home of Cobal Pinkrin, who lives here with his 12 war dogs that he raises to produce puppies for sale to passing merchant caravans. Cobal is probably the most dour and ill-natured man in the village. He is universally disliked in Moorwall. Only the hunters Harvey and Wynne (see area E11) can stand his company for any length of time, and that is because they drink up all his liquor to put themselves and him in an agreeable state of mind. The three of them can often be found drinking and gambling from sundown to dawn. Cobal always takes the precaution of letting all his dogs into the house to guard him and his buddies. On nights when the hunters do not come calling, Cobal usually practices knife throwing against the front door. At such times he keeps only his two toughest dogs in the house, for he is quite capable of protecting himself from most threats.





In the detachable pommel of Cobal's sword is hidden a gold ring set with an amethyst (worth 750 gp). Cobal purchased it 25 years ago as an engagement present for his fiancée, but she sickened and died of plague before they could be married. When drunk, Cobal often fingers the pommel and bitterly dreams of what might have been. In his belt pouch he carries the only coins he possesses: 9 gp and 17 sp. Cobal wears his armor constantly as protection from dog bites and imagined attackers.

**Cobal Pinkrin** (3rd-level human fighter): AC 5; MV 9; F3; hp 19; THAC0 18 (base); #AT 1 or 3 (throwing daggers); Dmg by weapon type; SA specialized with throwing dagger (+1 to hit, +2 damage); S 14, D 16, C 13, I 9, W 8, Ch 6; SZ M; ML 14; AL CN; XP 120; studded leather armor, shortsword, six throwing daggers in belt.

**War dogs** (12): AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 17, 16, 15, 14 (x2), 13, 12 (x3), 11 (x2), 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ M; INT animal (1); ML 10; XP 65; MM.

**C. Guard House.** This large stone structure is garrisoned by the soldiers of the Count of Turthan. The unit is commanded by Captain Damber, an able fighter but not much of a leader—nor does he care to be. Damber is the son of a wealthy merchant of Turthan, and his commission was purchased for him.

Damber has heard rumors about banditry in the area, but he chooses to ignore the matter until provided with solid evidence. If the PCs give him proof by utterly destroying the bandit ring, he presents them to the Count of Turthan, claiming partial credit for himself. If, however, the PCs simply provide evidence that they have encountered the bandits, Damber takes matters in hand by summarily deputizing the PCs and ordering them to return and finish the job!

The captain is assisted by 12 hearty but ill-disciplined soldiers who can be found drinking in the inn not only during their off-hours but also while they are on duty. They have been stationed in this village for a long time and have not only grown very experienced (as a result of long-ago battles against local lizard men) but lately quite arrogant and lazy. They boast that their fighting skills allow them the luxury of foregoing the maintenance of a vigilant watch.

**Captain Louis Damber** (4th-level human fighter): AC 4; MV 9; F4; hp 28; THAC0 17 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 13, C 11, I 11, W 10, Ch 12; SZ M; ML 10; AL N; XP 120; chain mail, shield, *broad sword* +1, *potion of gaseous form*.

**Soldiers** (12 2nd-level human fighters): AC 4; MV 9; F2; hp 18, 16, 15 (x2), 14 (x3), 13, 12 (x3), 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d6+4 for ability scores; SZ M; ML 11; AL variable; XP 65; chain mail, shield, long sword, long bow, 12 sheaf arrows.

**D. Farmhouses.** Each of these small dwellings belongs to a farm family with 2-9 members. Many of the farmers have secondary training in some trade such as weaving, carpentry, masonry, and so forth, but there is not enough business in Moorwall to warrant specialization in such work. The farmers have little property worth stealing.

**Farmers and family members** (0-level humans): AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 1-6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+4 for ability scores; SZ M; ML variable;

AL variable; weapons include pitchforks (treat as military forks), daggers, clubs, knives, hand axes, and slings. No armor or shields are owned.

**E. Much Moor Ale Inn.** Moorwall's inn is run by a sinister, scheming fellow named Solemn. He runs a surprisingly successful business, for the inn is situated along a major trade route one day's walk from the next closest stopping place. This two-story building—the entertainment center of Moorwall—is the sole place where strangers can find lodging. More importantly, it contains the village's only bar. Not only do the inn's guests patronize the bar each evening, but 2-12 villagers and as many guardsmen show up as well.

The inn also attracts traveling merchants and wayfarers, so the make-up of the clientele varies considerably from night to night. In addition to villagers and guards, there can be:

- ♦ 2-8 merchants with 3-18 pack handlers and drovers (25% chance);
- ♦ 1-4 nobles with 1-4 servants and 2-8 guards each (10% chance);
- ♦ 2-12 wandering rogues (75% chance);
- ♦ 2-12 tradesmen (60% chance);
- ♦ 3-18 guard patrolmen (50% chance);
- ♦ 2-8 adventurers (25% chance).

Statistics for these NPCs should be invented by the DM as required. The inn itself is staffed by an eccentric collection of people, from Solemn the innkeeper to the four multi-talented serving girls.

**Solemn the innkeeper** (dual-classed human 1st-level fighter/4th-level thief): AC 7 (3 with armor); MV 12; F1/T4; hp 28; THAC0 19 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA/SD rogue abilities; S 16, D 16, C 17, I 14, W 12, Ch 8; SZ M; ML 12; AL CN; XP 175; *leather armor* +1, *ring of protection* +1, shortsword, three throwing daggers.

Rogue abilities: PP 45%, OL 45%, FRT 25%, MS 30%, HS 35%, DN 15%, CW 65%, RL 15%.

Solemn is an ambitious man, a former mercenary and thief who turned to an easier life. Now 45 years old, he wants to be very rich before he retires. Therefore, he always behaves in a sycophantic manner toward wealthy or noble guests, hoping to gain some favor. However, he never fails to overplay the part, generally encouraging his guests to revile him.

Discouraged because of his frustrated ambitions, Solemn was recently moved to join the local bandit troupe (after recognizing one of his guests as a member of the gang) to gain by force what the rich would not give him willingly. As soon as a small merchant, noble, or adventuring band (like the PC party) arrives at the inn, he warns the travelers of the great danger of wandering through the vast moor. He then subtly encourages them to hire guides such as Harvey and Wynne (his cohorts who reside in area E11 upstairs).

When the inn is open for business, Solemn can be found in areas E3 or E5. When it is closed, he is in area E15.

**Malachi the steward** (0-level human): AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 9, D 12, C 11, I 10, W 9, Ch 12; SZ M; ML 7; AL LN; XP 15.

A shrewd manager, Malachi oversees most of the inn's workings, for his boss is neither disciplined nor trained enough to handle all the details involved in running the business. While Solemn hosts (and insidiously schemes), Malachi



performs all of the real managerial work. Malachi is too involved with his own great workload to take any notice of his master's unsavory doings.

When the inn is open, Malachi can be found in area E1 or E5; when closed, he is in area E4 or E14.

**Alonso the cook** (4th-level human thief): AC 8; MV 12; T4; hp 22; THAC0 19 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA/SD rogue abilities; S 17, D 16, C 15, I 13, W 10, Ch 13; SZ M; ML 11; AL NE; XP 120; *dagger of venom*, potion of poison (Type I; two doses), six *darts* +2.

Rogue abilities: PP 50%, OL 45%, FRT 25%, MS 45%, HS 45%, DN 15%, CW 75%, RL 5%.

Previously an adventuring partner of the innkeeper, Alonso accepted a temporary position as one of Solemn's hirelings after he fell deeply into debt. During his study of and experimentation with ingested poisons, he also learned a great deal about the culinary arts, so he became the inn's chief cook. Although he has gained a deserved reputation for being an expert chef, Alonso has become increasingly dissatisfied with the unchallenging kitchen work. Realizing this, Solemn intends to speak with Dougal, the bandit leader, to convince him to enlist Alonso's services.

When the inn is open, Alonso is in area E6. After hours, he is in area E4 or E14.

**Laric the bartender** (5th-level human fighter): AC 6 (2 with armor); MV 12; F5; hp 31; THAC0 16 (base); #AT 1 or 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; SA specialized with club (+1 to hit, +2 damage); S 18/38, D 18, C 13, I 12, W 14, Ch 15; SZ M; ML 15; AL LN; XP 175; chain mail, iron-shod club (Dmg 1d6+1/1d8), sap.

Laric is probably the most likeable fellow in town. He entertains customers for hours with his amazing bartending skill. Travelers love to watch him as he spins bottles, catches mugs behind his back, or transports a huge number of flagons in his moderately sized hands. He is well paid and well tipped. Although he has fighting experience (gained in countless barroom brawls and combat with marauding lizard men), he has no interest in leaving this lucrative occupation. Ignorant of Solemn's private dealings, he remains quite loyal to his employer, for the innkeeper has promised that he'll help Laric open his own place after a few years.

Laric respectfully requests that visitors remove their headwear upon entering the inn. Then, if a disturbance arises, he feels he can easily quell it with a few well-placed blows of his sap. (Each time Laric rolls 4 higher than his minimum needed to hit, his target must save vs. paralysis or fall unconscious for 2-12 rounds.)

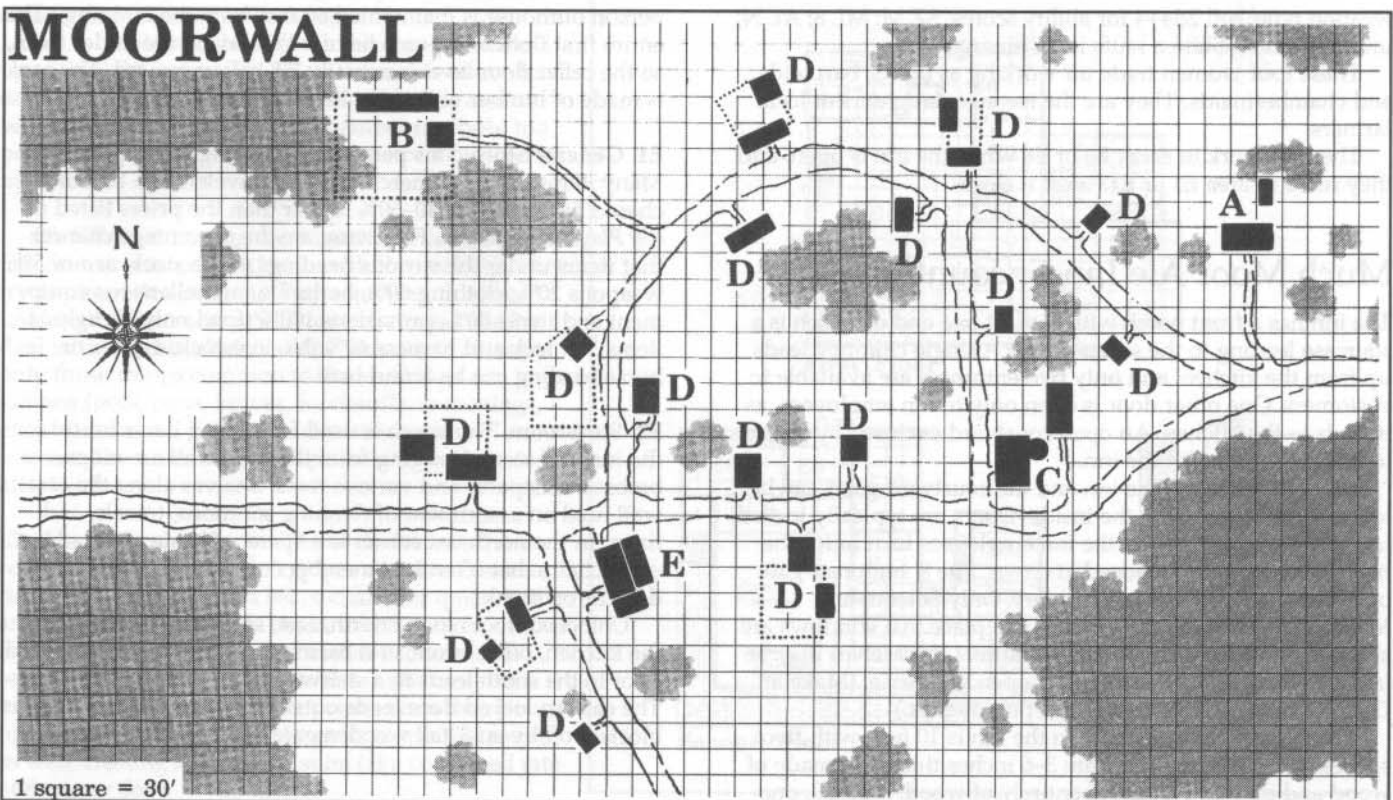
If the inn is open, Laric can be found in area E5. When the bar closes, he retires to area E4 or E14.

**Chaflee the shopkeeper** (0-level human): AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 11, D 9, C 9, I 12, W 8, Ch 11; SZ M; ML 9; AL NG; *dagger* (hidden under clothing).

Chaflee is 63 years old, plump, and balding. Always cheerful with customers, he enjoys bartering, but Solemn does not allow him to lower his rates by more than 20%.

Chaflee is in area E1 while the inn is open for business; after hours, he can be found in area E4 or E14.

**Lita, Mari, Alena, and Claire** (0-level serving girls): AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 4, 3, 3, 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by







## Wilderness Encounter Tables

Check for random encounters twice during the day and twice each night. Encounters occur on a roll of 1 on 1d6. Each encounter type occurs only once.

### West of Melarin River (Roll 1d20)

- 1-3. **Grippli** (5): AC 9; MV 9, leap 15; HD 1+1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (weapon); SA -3 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls; SZ S; INT very (12); ML 9; AL N; XP 65; MM.
- 4-6. **Lizard men** (2): AC 5; MV 6, swim 12; HD 2+1; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-6; SZ M; INT low (7); ML 14; AL N; XP 65; MM.
- 7-11. **Giant lizards** (2): AC 5; MV 15; HD 3+1; hp 18, 15; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA bite inflicts double damage on natural roll of 20; SZ H; INT non (0); ML 10; AL N; XP 175; MM.
- 12-16. **Bear trap**. Random victim suffers 2-12 hp damage and is trapped unless he makes a successful Dexterity check to avoid the trap. A trapped victim suffers 1-6 hp more damage if freed with help or 2-12 hp damage if freeing himself.
- 17-20. **Mire** (only when off road). Each PC in the party must make a successful Dexterity check or be caught in a mire, slowly sinking and requiring help to get out unless not wearing any armor (in which case he can float and "swim" to shore).

### East of Melarin River (Roll 1d20)

- 1-3. **Poisonous snake**: AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poisonous bite (onset time 1-4 rounds; inflicts an additional 3-12 hp damage, or no damage if a save is successful); SZ S; INT animal (1); ML 12; AL N; XP 175; MM.
- 4-5. **Crocodile**: AC 5; MV 6, swim 12; HD 3; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/1-12; SA -2 to opponents' surprise rolls; SZ L; INT animal (1); ML 9; AL N; XP 65; MM.
- 6-10. **Lizard men** (4): AC 5; MV 6, swim 12; HD 2+1; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-6; SZ M; INT low (7); ML 14; AL N; XP 65; MM.
- 11-13. **Troglodytes** (3): AC 5; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1-2/1-2/2-5 or 2-8 (weapon); SA -4 to opponents' surprise rolls when camouflaged and hurling javelins from a distance; SD stench (save vs. poison or lose 1d6 points of Strength for 10 rounds); SZ M; INT low (6); ML 11; AL CE; XP 120; MM.
- 14-16. **Ghouls** (2): AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 11 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; MR immune to *sleep* and *charm* spells; SZ M; INT low (5); ML 12; AL CE; XP 175; MM.
- 17-20. **Mire** (only when off road). Each PC in the party must make a successful Dexterity check or be caught in a mire, slowly sinking and requiring help to get out unless not wearing any armor (in which case he can float and "swim" to shore).

weapon type; roll 2d4+4 for ability scores; SZ M; ML 8; AL N; unarmed (can obtain a knife in an emergency).

These four women trade off working as cooks, barmaids, and chambermaids. They are the teenage daughters of local farmers.

The four work in areas E5 or E6 when the inn is open, and they retire to area E1 or E13 after it closes.

## Much Moor Ale Inn Encounter Key

The inn has a front porch with roof, at one end of which is a staircase leading to the second floor. A single chimney leads up from the kitchen, and only two entrances are available to customers. One other door is open only to inn employees, as it leads to the kitchen. An open courtyard enclosed by gates is located at the back of the inn.

All of the doors to the inn and the courtyard gates can be locked and barred from the inside. Doors are typically locked late in the evening before the inn employees turn in for the night, and they are reopened at dawn. The 8' high rear gate opens only when there is a delivery. Only Solemn and Malachi have keys to the locks in this place. All windows are shuttered and have no glass; the shutters themselves may be latched shut but may be knocked open with ease. (Make an Open Doors roll with a +2 bonus per attempt.)

The floor-to-floor distance in the inn is 10 feet, with floor spaces being 1' thick. Walls are 3-6 inches thick and made of wood and plaster. Floors are entirely of wood. A small, one-

person outhouse is maintained 60 feet from the building. The entire first floor and porch have a 2' crawlspace under them, so the cellar floor level is actually 7' below ground. The roof is made of lumber with thin sheets of slate.

**E1. General Store.** This part of the building is a supply store. Many items of use to merchants and travelers can be purchased here at a rate 40-60% higher than the prices listed in the *Player's Handbook*. Following are the percentage chances that items under the various headings are in stock: armor 5%, weapons 20%, clothing 60%, herbs 5%, miscellaneous equipment and items 80%, provisions 100% (food only), religious items 5%, tack and harness 60%. No livestock, drinks, or horse barding can be found here.

**E2. Storeroom.** This room is used for storing items useful to the inn and store. Hanging from the west wall are mops, brooms, dustpans, and various tools. Shelves along the east wall hold an assortment of cleaning solutions, towels, and linen. In the northeast corner is a spare table surrounded by extra chairs that often seat members of the staff when off-duty or on break.

Unlocked doors to the north, east, south, and west lead to the kitchen, office, store, and barroom respectively. The locked door to the south leads to a stairway descending to the cellar. The eastern locked door leads outside to a delivery area that is blocked off by an 8' tall wooden gate that also has a lock.



**E3. Office.** This small, 10' × 10' room is Solemn's private office. A large desk along the east wall dominates the room. Its locked drawers hold various employment, sales, and purchasing records. A large metal chest that is bolted to the floor in the northeast corner serves as a strongbox. Only Solemn carries the key to this chest that holds the weekly revenues, which are used mainly to purchase wholesale goods and to cover the payroll. On any given day, the chest holds 20–120 gp worth of assorted coins. The entrance to this room is always locked, even when Solemn is within.

**E4. Cellar.** There are two entrances to this room, both of which are always kept locked except when taking deliveries and when Solemn deems it necessary to restock the store or bar.

Several crates stacked about the room contain food and other inventory items. Extra cots, tables, and chairs are strewn about randomly. A number of barrels are stacked on racks along the south wall; four of them contain green-colored ale, three contain beer, two contain cheap wine, one contains mead, one rum, and one a watered-down brandy. Shelves lining the east wall usually hold 30–40 bottled wines and 2–8 bottles of fine brandy (worth 20–200 sp each).

**E5. Barroom.** Barmaids wait on the 10 tables during meal-times (11:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M. and 5:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.), and the barkeep handles the whole room at other times. Prices run about 50% higher than the norm, but the house specialty, "Moor Ale" (actually just a normal brew with green coloring added), runs for 1 gp per quart flagon.

Stairs lead up to a 5'-wide gallery from which the second floor rooms can be reached.

All valuables (such as unsold alcohol) are locked up each night in area E2. All of the rooms above have easy access to the barroom. Oftentimes this area serves as a common sleeping chamber for those too poor (or too late) to secure one of the private rooms upstairs.

**E6. Kitchen.** During mealtimes, one or two of the female servants assist Alonso with the cooking. They try to dissuade customers from entering this area unbidden. If necessary, Solemn or Laric is called to deal with any hostile intruders. This area contains only those things common to the workings of a large kitchen (pots, pans, knives, foodstuffs, seasonings, etc.), and there is little to retain an adventurer's interest. The outer door is kept locked and barred after dark.

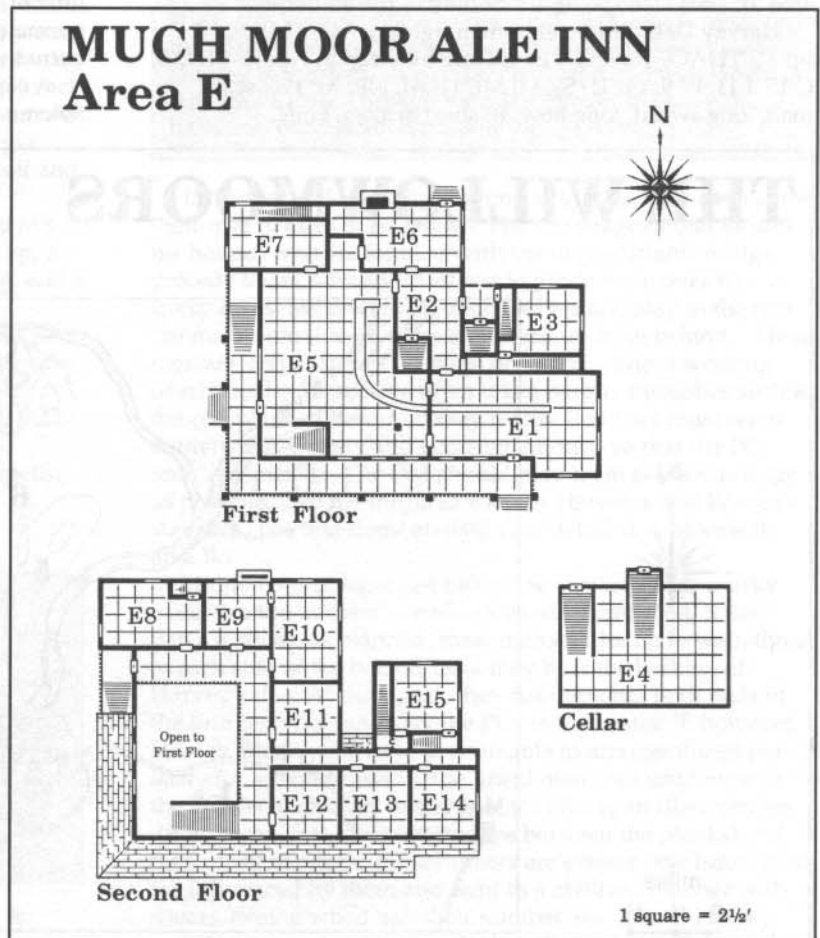
**E7. Private Dining Room.** This well-decorated room rents for 1 ep per hour or 5 gp per day. It contains a finely crafted table and a set of chairs for quiet dining and a pair of comfortable chairs and a divan for relaxation. Stairs lead to a door (normally locked and barred) that provides access to the inn's finest bedroom above. If some wealthy patron rents the room upstairs (area E8), he can pay extra to use this room as well, creating a luxurious suite (at a combined rate of 8 gp per day).

**E8. Luxurious Private Room.** This well-appointed bedroom is rented to anyone who is willing to pay the rather expensive fee (5 gp per night). Solemn's policy is to try to rent it to someone early in the day. Even if he rents it to someone, he'll not always abide by the agreement. If some more influential or noble customer arrives after the room has already been let, Solemn does not hesitate to demand that lowlier guests defer to their betters by evacuating the room.

The room contains a large dresser with a mirror and a large feather bed. (Comfortable cots can also be furnished upon request.) There are cushioned chairs and a love seat in the eastern part of the room. Attractive paintings adorn the walls.

**E9. Private Room.** Two single beds nearly fill this cozy room, which rents for 4 gp per night (per person). Other furnishings include a table and two small footlockers provided with individual keys. (Solemn keeps a master key to the footlockers hidden on his person.) In addition to the main entrance, there is a second door that leads to area E10. Only Solemn has the key to this door, and he'll unlock it at the request of a party wishing to rent both rooms. The door can be barred from this side.

Of all the rooms in the inn, this is the only heated one, as it sits next to the chimney in the kitchen. This results in the room's higher-than-usual price.







**E10. Private Room.** This room, which costs 2 gp per night per person, is rather cramped, for it contains little more than sleeping space. There are three sets of bunk beds and a small table surrounded by three squeaky chairs. An iron bar is provided for use in securing the door to area E9.

**E11. Private Room.** There are two single beds and a small table with two chairs in this room, which costs 2 gp per night per person to rent. It is currently home to Harvey and Wynne, two men posing as hunters and wilderness guides. Both are residing here for free, and both are members of the bandit ring. Their job is to guide unsuspecting (and wealthy) employers to the bridge on the moors, where they are ambushed by the rest of the gang.

These two men always behave in a friendly and jovial manner. They rarely hunt, spending their free time drinking and gambling either in the barroom or at the home of the houndsman, Cobal Pinkrin (area B). The men claim to be down on their luck and therefore agree to hire on for a very reasonable price—25 gp each—to be paid upon completion of the job. They politely insist, however, that they be allowed to take along two of Cobal's hounds for protection and for their superior tracking ability. As shall be seen later, the dogs are wanted to supplement the hunters' combat strength during the ambush planned for the PCs (see Willowmoors encounter area 3). These men wear armor only in the wilderness.

**Harvey Dell** (3rd-level human fighter): AC 6; MV 9; F3; hp 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 8, C 15, I 11, W 9, Ch 11; SZ M; ML 11; AL NE; XP 120; scale mail, long sword, long bow, 10 sheaf arrows, knife.

**Wynne Barris** (2nd-level human fighter): AC 5; MV 9; F2; hp 17; THAC0 19; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 15, C 13, I 9, W 7, Ch 9; SZ M; ML 11; AL NE; XP 65; scale mail, long sword, long bow, 10 sheaf arrows, knife.

**E12. Private Room.** There are two sets of bunk beds in this room, which costs 2 gp per person per night to rent. The chamber also contains a table flanked by two chairs.

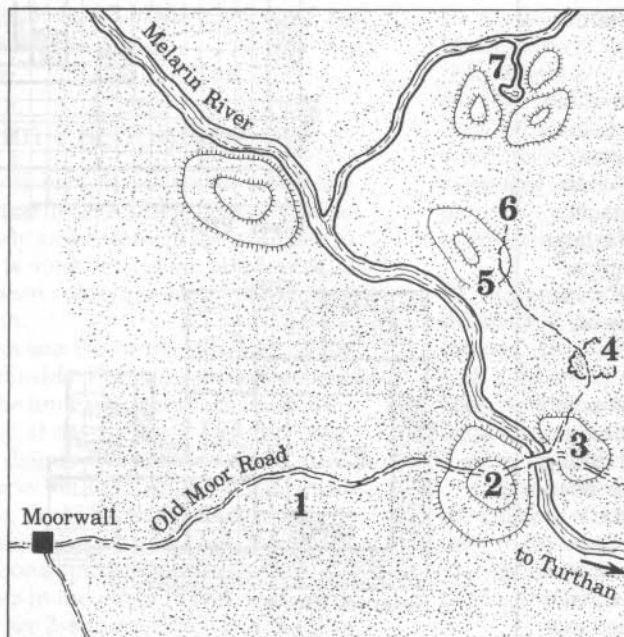
**E13. Female Servants' Room.** This room is set aside for the female servants of the inn, but because their boss is a greedy fellow, the women must sometimes sleep in the general store (area E1) to provide extra space for paying guests (2 gp per person per night). The room contains two bunk beds and four small, unlocked chests (containing only clothing).

**E14. Male Servants' Room.** This room is identical to area E13 except that it is used by the male servants when not rented out to paying guests at 2 gp per person per night. If necessary, the men sleep in the cellar (area E4).

**E15. Master Bedroom.** This chamber is never rented to customers, for it is the proprietor's sleeping quarters. Solemn's room is well decorated and contains a large feather bed, a dresser, a small writing table, and a wardrobe. Solemn keeps little of value in this room. The door leading to the stairwell is normally kept locked, and it, as well as the windows, are barred when Solemn sleeps.

A concealed door set in the side of the wardrobe provides Solemn with a means to exit the building unnoticed. If the clothes are pushed aside, the door can easily be spotted, for a stout iron bar secures it. Solemn uses this portal when necessary to rendezvous with the bandits from the moors.

## THE WILLOWMOORS



## The Willowmoors

The Willowmoors is a wild land of reptilian creatures and dangerous bogs. Everywhere, great drooping willow trees protrude like grassy mounds from the expanse of tangled undergrowth. A trek across its vastness is a tiresome affair, even if one moves along the one well-traveled road.

The Old Moor Road is a rutted and winding path, not really a road at all. It is perhaps less dangerous than the wastelands on either side of it, but to traverse its length from Moorwall to distant Turthan is still quite a brave endeavor. Unless escorted by a hearty band of soldiers, the traveler runs a great risk of encountering some danger along the way.



Straying from the road or entering the moors without a guide is especially perilous. The uninitiated often find that their greatest threat is posed not by some fell beast, but rather by the thousands of unseen mires that are scattered throughout the desolate land as nature's trap for the incautious.

For random encounters in this area, see the "Wilderness Encounter Tables." Particular set encounters on the Willowmoors map are given below.

### 1. The Broken Cart.

A short distance down the path you see someone attempting to repair a damaged cart. He is trying to raise the heavy vehicle while at the same time exchanging a makeshift axle for his broken one. The poor fellow seems to be having little success, though, for the cart is too cumbersome. A pair of draft horses are tethered a few feet away. They seem agitated, as if distraught by the unexpected delay.

As the teamster spots you, he shouts, "Hey, fellas! Lookit, can you come over here and lend me a couple strong arms? I'm having trouble gettin' this rickety old cart movin'."

The man is actually a werewolf. He killed the owner of the cart a short while ago with the assistance of his friends, four wolves. If the PCs assist him, they are in for an unhappy surprise. As they lift the cart, setting shields and weapons aside, the werewolf pushes the crate underneath, presumably to act as a brace. Before the PCs can lower the cart, he tips the crate over, releasing the wolves who hide within. As PCs begin rearming themselves, the werewolf turns into a half-wolf and attacks, singing all the while.

A sack inside the crate holds the unfortunate merchant's wealth: 148 gp, 359 sp, seven gems (worth 200 gp, 150 gp, 2 × 100 gp, 50 gp, 10 gp, and 1 gp), a potion of *extra-healing*, and a potion of *vitality*.

**Werewolf:** AC 3; MV 15; HD 5+1; hp 23; THAC0 15; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 2-12 plus possible weapon; SA singing acts as *slow* spell for 5-8 rounds; SD iron or magical weapons to hit; MR 10%; SZ M; INT high (14); ML 14; AL CE; XP 1,400; MM.

**Wolves (4):** AC 7; MV 18; HD 3; hp 19, 18, 13, 12; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SD +1 to saves vs. *charm* spells; SZ S; INT low (5); ML 10; AL N; XP 120; MM.

### 2. Vultures' Feast.

After climbing gradually upward for the last three-quarters of a mile, the Old Moor Road finally levels out. Although you are some 200 feet above the level of the surrounding moors, you are unable to get a clear view of the landscape, for trees and tall bushes obscure your sight. Before you, the road slopes down toward a bridge nearly half a mile away. As you begin to walk in the direction of the bridge, you suddenly hear the sound of a scuffle coming from beyond a thicket a few feet to your right.

If the PCs move into the thicket to investigate what is taking place, read or paraphrase the following:

A horrible scene lies before you. Almost a dozen huge birds are fighting for space around a mound of slain bodies. Blood seeps into the earth as the ravenous creatures peck and tear at the lifeless forms.

The 10 large birds feeding on the bodies are giant vultures. The eight dead humans were pilgrims traveling to Turthan. These gentle men were waylaid, robbed, and beaten to death by Dougal's bandit gang, now no longer in the area. Their bodies were spotted by the vultures a few hours ago. Neither the pilgrims nor the vultures have any treasure.

The DM should award 100 XP to any good-aligned PCs who fight off the vultures and give the dead men a decent burial. If in so doing the PCs do not manage to destroy all of the vultures, the vile creatures keep a close watch on the PCs from this point on. If the PCs later find themselves incapacitated, the birds do not hesitate to swoop down and make a meal of them.

**Giant vultures (10):** AC 7; MV 3, fly 24 (D); HD 2+2; hp 15, 14 (×2), 13, 12 (×2), 11, 10, 9 (×2); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SZ M; ML 8; INT semi (4); AL NE; XP 65; MM.

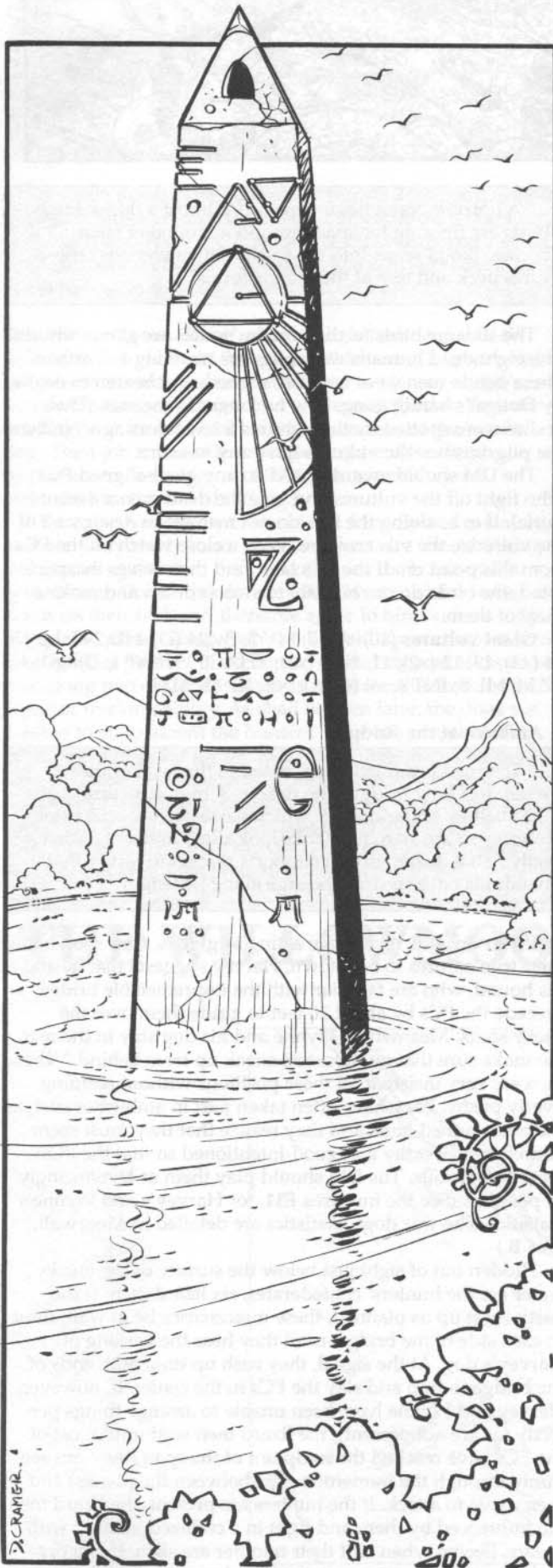
### 3. Ambush at the Bridge.

The road has finally descended to the level of the 8' wide, 100' long bridge. The rickety, 3' high structure spans the shallow Melarin River which passes below on its slow journey to Turthan. Its planks look slimy and wet. Worse, only half a dozen broken supports remain to testify that handrails once secured passage along its length.

If Harvey and Wynne are acting as guides, they soon allow their true natures to be known. Harvey suggests that he and his hound, who are familiar with the unpredictable bridge, precede the PCs by about 20 feet to guide them over the tricky spots. Meanwhile, Wynne and his dog stay in the rear "to make sure that no monsters sneak up from behind." These men are very insistent on these positions without seeming overly pushy. They have often taken part in ambushes such as the one planned here, and they realize that they must seem entirely trustworthy and good-intentioned so that the PCs aren't suspicious. The DM should play them as convincingly as possible. (See the inn, area E11, for Harvey's and Wynne's statistics. The war dogs' statistics are detailed in Moorwall, area B.)

Hidden out of sight just below the surface of the murky water are the hunters' confederates, six lizard men. If the party is set up as planned, these mercenaries lie in wait, three to each side of the bridge, until they hear the barking of Harvey's dog. At the signal, they rush up onto both ends of the bridge to trap and slay the PCs in the center. If, however, Harvey and Wynne have been unable to arrange things perfectly (or are not present), the lizard men wait until most of the PCs have reached the midpoint of the span (they can see dimly through the numerous gaps between the planks) and then move to attack. If the hunters are present, the lizard men are influenced by them and fight in a civilized manner with spears, fleeing when half their number are slain. If Harvey and Wynne are not present, the lizard men have higher





expectations for rewards and therefore fight ferociously with their natural claw/claw/bite attacks until they are all dead. The hounds attack only as long as there is at least one hunter still fighting.

The river is merely 3' deep at its center, so an armored human has little chance of drowning. (PCs smaller than 3½' tall might not have it so easy, however.) The riverbed is soft clay. When walking or standing in the water, movement and attack rates are cut to half normal, as it's difficult to keep one's balance with one's feet encased in clay.

Although the bridge has a decidedly unsafe appearance, PCs actually have no chance of inadvertently slipping off its edge into the water. If the lizard men had not recently wet its normally dry surface to make it seem dangerous, the bridge would actually appear quite safe. It is possible, however, that in the midst of a fray one or more PCs or their opponents might be knocked into the water. This occurs when a "to hit" roll is four points higher than the attacker needs to score a successful hit, and the individual struck then fails a Dexterity check at -4. (Assume the lizard men have 12 Dexterity and the war dogs have 15 Dexterity.) Damage from the blow accrues normally in any case.

The hunters fight until things look really dim, for they have not anticipated failure. If captured, they beg for mercy. Since they don't know where the bandit lair is located, they are unable to betray their allies. They might, however, invent a story that sounds believable.

The road continues far beyond the bridge, but the way to the obelisk lies down a barely discernible overgrown path just a few hundred feet away.

**Lizard men** (6): AC 5; MV 6, swim 12; HD 2+1; hp 15, 14, 13, 11, 11, 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1 (spear) or 3 (claw/claw/bite); Dmg by weapon type or 1-2/1-2/1-6; SZ M; INT low (7); ML 14; AL N; XP 65; MM; spear.

#### 4. Willow Wood.

The path you are following seems to lead into a dense area of willow growth—an uncharacteristically large gathering of huge, sad-looking trees. As you approach the small grove, you judge the trees to be as large as 50' tall. The path clears ahead where the dark shade of the clustered willows shields the sunlight from the grounds below, allowing little undergrowth to survive.

If the PCs proceed to the grove, the trail leads them 200 yards to a log cabin secluded in a small glade. The following description should then be read or paraphrased:

Pushing through the thick, drooping branches and leaves of yet another dark willow, you find another small clearing. Less than 10 yards away stands a weatherworn and apparently abandoned log cabin surrounded by an untamed growth of weeds and thorn bushes.

This house could be a useful haven for the rest and recuperation of a weary and injured party. After three rounds of hacking through the weeds and brambles, the open doorway to this place can be reached, and the PCs can peer into the disused room beyond. The only pieces of furniture within are a bed, a table, one chair, and a wood-burning stove. On the table are a few empty clay jars. A thick layer of grime covers the two unshuttered windows. Although the cabin seems somewhat strange and ominous, it holds no dangers (but the DM should certainly allow the PCs to believe otherwise).



## 5. Mantraps.

As you scale a gently sloping hill, you notice that the generally dank, stifling air of the moors has begun to smell fresh and fragrant as though you are approaching a pleasant spring glade. The sweet scent becomes stronger up the path to the top of the great mound.

Any PC who continues up the slope quickly learns the source of the odor, although the DM might decide to tell the player in secret what the character sees, if only to pique everyone else's curiosity.

As you reach the peak, you see a moss-covered clearing where you discover two large, leafy plants each spread over a 15'-diameter area on either side of the trail. Gentle wafts of yellowish spores drift delicately in the calm air. The intoxicating pollen aroma calms your senses, and you are stricken with the notion that this lovely glade would be an ideal place to a peaceful repose from the rigors of your perilous adventure.

As the PCs come upon the plants—actually two deadly mantraps—they notice the pleasant aromatic effect described above. Some are so affected by the pollen in the air (if they fail a save vs. poison at +2) that they move immediately to lie down upon the comfortable leaves. Those who save are merely happy to stand and admire the area for 6–36 turns before leaving with a smile.

Each plant has four "good spots" where PCs may wish to rest (i.e., there are four pods per plant). After their victims lie down, the plants enclose them in the manner of a Venus' fly-trap. If there are not enough pods for everyone who has been affected, extra PCs simply recline on the ground alongside the plant until room can be made for them (when a PC inside one pod is dissolved).

PCs who make their saving throws do not feel an overwhelming urge to lie in the pods, but they find that their intoxicated fellows fight viciously (the DM should play them) to keep from being robbed of their "much deserved relaxation." The only way to save their comrades from destruction is for the free-willed PCs to quickly hack the plants before everyone is digested. The lethargy-inducing effects of the pollen remain with any rescued PCs for 24 hours after they are freed from the deadly plants' clutches.

Hidden on the ground beneath the plants, expectorated and indigestible, is the following treasure: 17 pp, 38 gp, 42 ep, 71 sp, 52 cp, two gems (worth 200 gp and 100 gp respectively), and a *long sword* +1, +3 vs. reptiles (including monstrous reptiles, like dragons).

**Mantraps** (2): AC 6; MV 0; HD 5; hp 25, 23; THAC0 nil; #AT nil; Dmg nil; SA pollen, digestion (acidic secretions inflict damage per round equal to the victim's AC, discounting Dexterity bonuses; minimum 1 hp); SZ H; INT non (0); ML 12; AL N; XP 975; MM (plant, dangerous).

## 6. Obelisk.

Before you is a large pool of clear, shallow water 200

feet in diameter. In the center of this pond stands a 50'-tall stone obelisk that tapers from a 5'-square base to a 2' square top. The surface of the monolith has been entirely carved with strange letters and symbols.

The players' map calls the obelisk the "keyhole to [the] Tomb of Dalvan Meir." It is, in fact, a device for locating the tomb. The obelisk is surrounded by a pool of water about 3' deep, which would be relatively safe to cross if not for two poisonous snakes that swim its surface. The serpents quickly approach and attack the PCs in the second round after one or more of them enters the water. The snakes are aggressive and place themselves between the obelisk and the PCs so that their prey cannot climb away to safety. They attack until slain.

**Poisonous snakes** (2): AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 12, 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poisonous bite (onset time 1–4 rounds; inflicts an additional 3–12 hp damage, or no damage if a save is successful); SZ S; INT animal (1); ML 12; AL N; XP 175; MM.

If the PCs defeat the snakes and examine the obelisk at close range, they notice that on each of the obelisk's four faces there is a vertical strip roughly 1' wide where the hieroglyphics are cut 4" deep, while along the outer edges (which narrow on either side from 2' wide at the base to only 6" wide at the top), the symbols are cut merely ½" deep. The purpose of this strange feature will hopefully become obvious to perceptive PCs, but the DM might need to drop a hint. The indentations are designed to act as handholds and footholds for scaling the structure. The inscriptions are nonmagical symbols of wizardry that have no real translation.

If the PCs attempt a climb, the DM should use the climbing rules in Chapter 14 of the *Player's Handbook*, treating the obelisk as non-slippery and having "abundant handholds." Only one climbing check is required to reach the top of the obelisk, and another to safely descend it. Thieves may use their climb walls ability.

Because there is a soft clay surface under the water to act as a cushion, falling PCs suffer only 1–4 hp damage per 10 feet fallen and only half that damage if they make a successful Dexterity check.

The apex of the obelisk is a pyramid that has small holes in the center of each face. The east and west holes are merely 1"-deep depressions, but the north and south holes actually connect through the "body" of the obelisk. Covered with dirty glass lenses, they operate together as a sort of telescope.

If the PCs reach the top of the obelisk and peer through the lens in the south face, read or paraphrase the following:

When you look into the hole, you notice something strange. There is a little window of glass about one inch from your eye. Looking through it, you see an island in the middle of a previously unseen lake. The small island appears to be directly in front of you, though you know that is impossible! When you look up from the eye hole, you can barely detect a patch of blue water, half-hidden between the hills, about a mile due north of your location.





Obviously, nothing can be found by looking through the holes in the east and west faces. Anyone looking through the hole in the north face sees only a blur. The PCs cannot remove the obelisk's lenses in any way (short of high-powered magic) without thoroughly shattering them.

Writing has been chiseled beneath each of the four holes. Unlike the other inscriptions on the obelisk, these lines were written in the Common tongue. They seem to be mere moralizations but are actually riddles left here by Dalvan Meir to challenge and test the ability of treasure-seekers to find his final resting place. Each face has a different two-line rhyme:

- North face: "The gold you give repays in kind,  
Give well when asked, and safety find."
- South face: "Desire for gold may secrets show,  
But giving stills the fatal blow."
- East face: "Those crossing deeps to gain the ground,  
May fall as biting fear is found."
- West face: "One's days can ne'er be forged anew,  
But magic may give great their due."

The north face riddle refers to the sacrificial bowl at the Island of the Tomb, area 1; the south face riddle refers to the masks of greed and generosity at the Island of the Tomb, area 4; the east face riddle hints at the danger found in the lake at Wil-lowmoors, described below; and the west face riddle alludes to Dalvan's plans (see Island of the Tomb, area 7 for details).

### 7. The Lake.

After traveling for over a mile and passing between two low hills, you reach a horseshoe-shaped valley with a small lake just beyond; its water looks clear and placid, with scores of little white fish moving slowly between submerged clumps of reeds and weeds. A tree-covered island rests in the center of the lake about 30 yards away.

Crossing this lake can be dangerous. It varies from two feet to 20 feet in depth, and at its narrowest (and most shallow) it is 100 feet across. PCs wading through the shallows can walk 75% of their normal movement rates, rounded down.

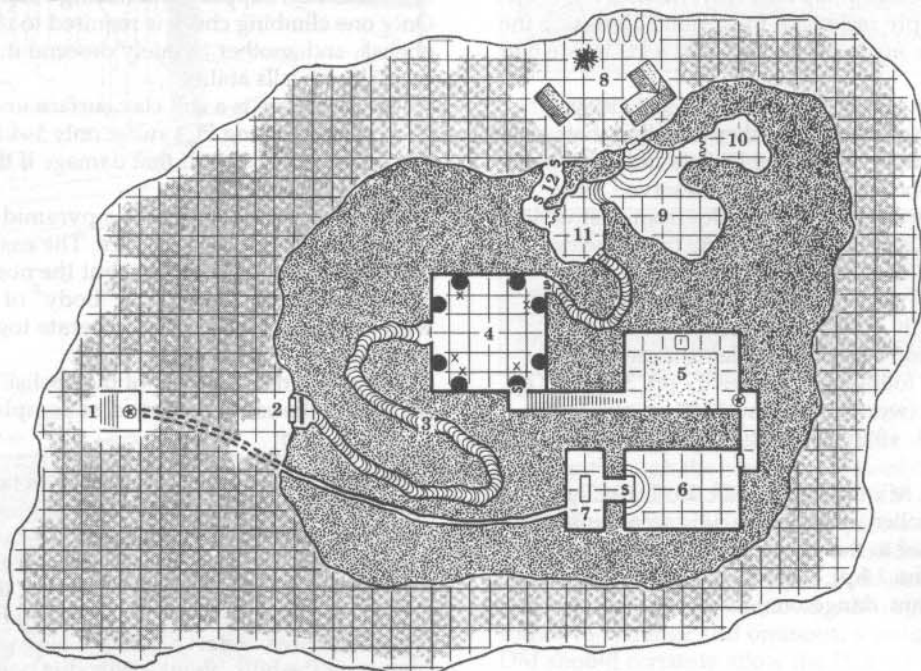
These physical characteristics are not what makes crossing so perilous, however. This lake is a spawning ground for vicious albino piranha, the "white fish" mentioned in the description above. These fish immediately go into a frenzy and swarm to attack anyone who enters the water. There are 250 of the savage little fish in this particular lake. Up to 20 piranha can attack a single, man-sized individual simultaneously.

**Piranha** (250): AC 8; MV swim 9; HD ½; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SZ T; INT animal (1); ML 6; AL N; XP 7; MM.

## The Island of the Tomb

The island is actually not much more than a hill jutting up from the floor of the lake. The island harbors almost no living creatures (except the bandits), for rarely have any successfully

# THE MOOR TOMB



1 square = 5'



crossed the lake. There are no wandering monsters here; the only creatures that are encountered are those later detailed in areas 1–12.

This island is the base for the marauding bandits. They often travel to and from this island as they go on their despicable missions. The bandits know about the carnivorous fish, but they are undaunted since they travel the lake in canoes. The piranha actually work to their benefit, helping to guard against surprise encounters with wanderers. If the PCs make much noise crossing the lake (e.g., running full-speed through the water or screaming in pain), they cannot surprise the bandits, as noise carries well in the area.

### 1. Sacrificial Bowl and Statue.

Up a short flight of five large steps stands a stone platform supporting the giant stone statue of a robed man. His right arm is raised, palm upward, and his left arm is lowered, palm downward. A 5' diameter stone bowl rests on a short pillar of stone in front of the mysterious sculpture. Carved into the rock floor below the bowl are the following words:

*"Respect this tomb, so firmly sealed,  
Most giving earns admittance.  
A noble gift will gain fair yield,  
A shocking due for pittance."*

If the PCs examine the statue and bowl, they see that the latter has a 4"-diameter hole cut into its bottom. Any coins, gems, or jewels deposited within the bowl fall down through the hole into the hollow base, then along an angled shaft to drop onto the floor of the treasure room (area 7). As these treasures pass through the bowl, it magically tabulates their worth to give a bonus to a PC's chance of successfully opening the copper vault doors without taking any electrical damage (see area 2).

### 2. Copper Vault Doors.

Forty feet east of the raised statue, set into the side of a steep hill, are two copper-colored doors. They are of very stout construction and appear to open inward. The doors' surfaces seem, strangely, to be completely untarnished.

There is a permanent magical trap set upon these copper portals. Any person who touches them is struck by an electrical shock for 1–8 hp damage per round. This occurrence is 100% likely, minus 1% for each 10 gp worth of treasure that person deposited into the sacrificial bowl in area 1.

Since the doors are particularly heavy, a PC attempting to open them has a chance equal to his Bend Bars/Lift Gates percentage. If several PCs try simultaneously, they add their percentages together for a single roll, but each one risks electrical damage. A PC is allowed a saving throw vs. spell for half damage, but if he attempts this save he cannot make an effective attempt to open the doors (i.e., he jerks his hands away). The PCs may make as many attempts to open the doors as they like, but the chances for shock remain the same.

Anyone who says he is carefully examining the wall immediately behind the doors has a chance to detect the presence of a huge iron door, set to descend from the ceiling and covered with dust to resemble the stonework around its lower edge. This chance may be rolled as a dwarf's or thief's chance of finding traps.

**3. Descending Corridor.** This corridor is cut from raw stone. While the vertical distance between its upper and lower ends is only about 50 feet, the corridor itself is 150' long.

If any of the PCs trigger the stone pressure-plate trap at the far end of the corridor (25% noncumulative chance per PC crossing the plate), a large iron barrier slides quietly down into place just inside the copper doors (area 2), and poisonous gas begins pouring into the Chamber of Masks (area 4) through small holes in the floor. The gas eventually fills up the tunnel as well. On the fifth round after the pressure plate is triggered, there is enough gas in the room and corridor that PCs begin taking damage at the rate of 1 hp per round (no saving throw).

If not magically reopened by someone using *Dalvan's circlet* (see end of module), the iron barrier will not retract as long as anything living remains in the tomb (areas 1–7). The iron door cannot be lifted by any other means available to the party.

### 4. Chamber of Masks.

You've entered a 30' square chamber lined with stone columns. On five of these pillars, strange wooden masks are hung. At the base of the other three pillars lie three more masks, cast to the floor as if discarded.

If the PCs examine the columns, they see that all of them have iron spikes driven into them, but only five of the spikes support masks. If they look carefully at the various masks, the PCs notice that each is different, displaying distinct expressions as though they represent definite emotions. A single word is carved into the forehead of each, noting the expression the mask wears (e.g., "Happiness," "Sadness," etc.).

All of the masks radiate magic, and each has a different effect on any PC who puts one to his face and fails a saving throw vs. spell (even if the mask is later removed).

Three masks lie on the floor:

- ◆ *Mask of Happiness:* The wearer experiences uncontrollable laughter for five minutes.

- ◆ *Mask of Sadness:* The wearer sobs and weeps for five minutes, after which he experiences a mild headache.

- ◆ *Mask of Serenity:* The wearer immediately falls into a comatose slumber that last for one week. The effect cannot be negated except by a *remove curse*, *limited wish*, *alter reality*, or *wish* spell. When the wearer finally awakens, he feels well-rested, gaining back 1–6 hp damage per day of rest.

If worn, the first two masks merely cause the wearer to have a –1 on saving throws and attacks made during the time each mask's effect occurs.

Five masks are located on the pillars, each marked with an "X" on the map. Except for the *Mask of Generosity*, each may be placed in the room as the DM desires.

- ◆ *Mask of Disturbance:* The wearer experiences a painful churning of his stomach that penalizes him with –2 to hit for





2–8 days. A *remove curse*, *limited wish*, *alter reality*, or *wish* spell negates this penalty.

❖ *Mask of Courage*: During the next battle in which the PC engages, he flies into an uncontrollable berserk rage, gaining +2 to hit but fighting until either he or the enemy is slain.

❖ *Mask of Fear*: The next time the PC's party is attacked by numerically superior forces, he attempts to flee in the second round of combat as if stricken by the fourth-level wizard's spell *fear* (no saving throw).

❖ *Mask of Greed*: The wearer's eyes are suddenly able to see the outline of a secret doorway through the easternmost column on the south wall (the one that holds the *Mask of Generosity*). This large pillar actually swings inward (upon the mere touch of a PC wearing the mask) to allow entrance into a hidden passage. No saving throw is required for this mask's effect to work.

❖ *Mask of Generosity*: This mask negates the effect of the gas pouring into the room (see area 3). It does not, however, lessen the effects of any other sorts of poisonous gases. No saving throw is required for this mask's effect to work. Its effects last for six hours; more than one PC may use the mask, each wearing it for one round to gain its benefits before passing it along to another PC.

In the northernmost section of the east wall is a more mundane secret door. It is always kept barred from the opposite side. A *knock* spell or 200 hp of physical damage are necessary to open it. Through a small spy hole cut into this secret door, the bandits observe the room but do not confront the party unless all the PCs are unconscious (in which case the bandits capture and attempt to ransom them), or if the PCs are returning with treasure acquired from the crypt (area 6). The spy hole is covered by a thin piece of glass to protect an onlooker from poison gas effects. The sound of the gas entering the room is audible to anyone on the other side of this spy hole.

**5. Acid Pool.** Beyond the secret door lies a flight of stone steps leading down toward the east. If the PCs follow the steps to the room below, read or paraphrase the following:

At the bottom of the steps, you enter the southwest corner of a 20' × 30' room. A 5'-wide walkway runs around the west, north, and east sides of the room, half circling a dark pool of liquid about 6 feet below. In the far wall, just opposite your entrance, is the only apparent exit to the room, but this archway is almost entirely blocked by a human-size stone statue.

The liquid in the pool is a mild acid, 4' deep, that inflicts 1–6 hp damage per round to anyone unfortunate enough to find himself immersed in it. There is a trap midway along the northern walkway; it swings downward as soon as weight of at least 100 lbs. reaches the very center of its 5' length. If a PC at this position immediately attempts to jump for safe footing, his percentage chance to succeed (and therefore avoid an acid bath) is equal to three times his Dexterity score. If this attempt fails, the unfortunate individual falls into the acid, suffering 1–6 hp damage per round until extricated. (Individuals under 5 feet in height require assistance to climb out of the acid and onto the walkway.) If not thoroughly doused in water after

## New Magical Item

*Dalvan's Circlet*

XP Value: —

GP Value: 1,000

This magical, ring-shaped head ornament radiates dweomers of both alteration and enchantment/charm. After it is placed on the head, the user is immediately affected as if by a *feblemind* spell had been cast (no saving throw), but this condition lasts for only five rounds. Furthermore, the circlet magically binds itself to the wearer's head. It remains attached for 10 rounds, during which time it can be removed only by a wizard of at least 16th level or by a *wish* spell.

The wizard Dalvan Meir created this device to insure his ability to enter a wearer's mind from his *magic jar* crystal. He also wanted to allow himself an easy means of egress from his desolate tomb, so he gave the circlet the additional powers to force back iron barriers, granting the wearer a +25% bonus to Bend Bars/Lift Gates rolls.

escaping the pool, an acid-covered PC continues to suffer 1 hp damage for each of the next 2–8 rounds. PCs who fall into the acid must save for all their equipment to discover if anything has been destroyed by the acid. All items receive a +2 bonus to save. This trap immediately resets itself, but everyone in the party can thereafter easily determine its location. A *hold portal* spell prevents the trap from triggering, enabling PCs to cross safely for the duration of the spell.

The statue standing in the southeastern archway is a stone guardian. This guardian's normal form of attack is to grab a PC and throw him into the acid pool. It makes this attack with a –4 penalty to hit. Although only one successful hit is required to make the toss, the guardian does not attack more than one PC per round. Anyone lofted toward the acid must make a Dexterity check to avoid a poor landing that inflicts 1–4 hp damage in addition to damage done by the acid. (Calculate acid damage in the same manner as above.)

PCs trying to throw or push the stone guardian into the pool must successfully hit (at a –4 penalty) and then combine their Bend Bars/Lift Gates percentages to determine their cumulative chance to overpower him. Although the guardian sustains 1–6 hp damage from the fall, he is impervious to the acid and can easily climb out of the pool in one round (during which time he cannot attack).

If the stone guardian is still active after five rounds and has been unable to throw a single PC into the pool, he resorts to his normal two-punch attack, inflicting 2–9 hp damage with each hit. He attacks until destroyed or until the entire party retreats. The stone guardian does not move out of this room.

**Stone guardian:** AC 2; MV 10; HD 4+4; hp 20; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2–9/2–9; SD *detect invisibility*; immune to normal missiles, poison, and mind-based attacks; suffers one-quarter damage from edged weapons; one-half damage from cold, fire, and electrical-based spells; SZ M; INT non (0); ML 20; AL N; XP 420; MM.



**6. Crypt of the Ghast.** The door to this room is barricaded with two stout iron bars that are easily lifted from this side. When the bars are removed and the PCs open the door, read or paraphrase the following:

As you open the door, you are nearly overwhelmed by the foul stench of putrid flesh. The room, however, seems to contain nothing more than an old, sealed sarcophagus resting against the far wall on a semicircular, 3'-tall stone dais.

The sarcophagus was meant to be the home of a ghoul, a last (if minor) challenge for treasure-seekers, but Dalvan Meir made a rare and fatal mistake. On his deathbed, he hired a mercenary adventurer to find and return with a ghoul guardian but neglected to ask about the sensitivity of his hireling's sense of smell. Unfortunately, the fellow's olfactory receptors had been burned out long ago during an encounter with a giant skunk, and he inadvertently returned with the wrong undead. Instead of a ghoul, he had found a much more intelligent ghast.

The ghast did what the mage had not even imagined possible. Enraged by its captivity, it searched the entire chamber for months before it found the secret door leading to the inner treasure chamber (area 7) wherein lay Dalvan Meir's remains.

With an ornamental sword, the ghast chipped away on the mage's sarcophagus until it finally pried open the lid. Then, spurred by the rage that stems from hopeless imprisonment, it hopped into the coffin and pounded its contents into splinters, destroying not only the mage's decayed flesh and bones but also the great crystal "soul gem" for Dalvan's improved *magic jar* spell. The desperate mage attempted to transfer his spirit into the ghast's body, being unaware of the exact nature of the victim he attacked, but only a portion of Dalvan Meir's consciousness survived the transfer into the undead creature. The ghast now believes that it is Dalvan Meir, but it has none of the mage's former powers and has only shreds of the mage's memory (and no sanity at all).

The ghast's sarcophagus is empty, but since the lid is closed this is not apparent. The secret door in the wall behind the sarcophagus is open a barely noticeable crack. As they approach the sarcophagus, PCs have a slight chance to detect the opening (10% chance for elves and dwarves, 5% for half-elves and gnomes, and 1% for others). Otherwise, the secret door can be detected normally.

The ghast waits alertly and expectantly behind the secret door, peering through the crack at the PCs beyond. Using a few magical items that once belonged to Dalvan Meir, it is unusually powerful.

"Dalvan" is extremely bored, quite clever, and unsurprisingly vile. The ghast expects that when the party finds the sarcophagus to be empty, at least one or two of the PCs will set down their weapons and shields to search the inside of it. If the ghast is correct, or if the PCs turn their backs on it, "Dalvan" abruptly throws open the secret door (-3 to opponents' surprise rolls) and pounces on the closest PC. It hopes to paralyze the lot of them, gaining some tasty treats and a bit of cruel satisfaction thereby. The ghast talks freely during melee, identifying itself as Dalvan Meir and describing all of



the horrible spells it will cast at the PCs. It never makes an attempt to cast a spell, however, as it has none.

"Dalvan" fights until destroyed, for it prefers to end it all in a thrilling battle rather than continue its monotonous existence here. If the ghast manages to paralyze all the PCs, it laughs hysterically, snatches up one of the party, and retreats through the secret door. It then casually snacks on the hapless captive while waiting for the rest of the party to join it for another fun-filled melee.

"Dalvan Meir" (ghast): AC 2; MV 15; HD 4; hp 31; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-8; SA touch causes paralysis (even for elves; duration 5-10 rounds), horrible stench (10' radius; save vs. poison or suffer -2 to hit); SD magical items; turned as vampire (while inside tomb); MR immune to sleep and charm spells; SZ M; INT very (12); ML 16; AL CE; XP 975; MM; *cloak of protection* +2, *ring of clear thought* (see *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA*™ tome, page 953, for details).

### 7. Inner Treasure Chamber.

Beyond the secret door you see a smallish room. In its center, lying on a marble table, is another sarcophagus similar to the one in the outer crypt. The lid, which rests on the floor, has been chipped and scarred as if someone or something had spent great effort prying it loose from its position atop the stone coffin.





Spread about the floor around the table are glistening piles of treasure. Most of the riches lie heaped around four large amphorae and three overflowing coffers. Another pile of loot—mostly coins and gems—is scattered on the floor near the west wall under a small hole.

This is the treasure room and crypt of Dalvan Meir. It was intended to serve as a temporary place of rest until a desirable adventurer (one capable of making it this far) came close enough for the mage to possess his body. The PCs can soon confirm that Dalvan Meir is no longer a threat, for if they peer into the sarcophagus they see the shattered remains of the mage:

As you look into the opened sarcophagus, you find that, surprisingly, nothing dangerous lurks within. You see only splintered, cracked, and broken human bones mixed with the worthless shards of what must have been a very large and valuable crystal with odd runes inscribed upon it.

Even a *mending* spell cannot reconstitute the broken crystal shards of Dalvan's *magic jar* receptacle.

On the floor around the sarcophagus is a sizable cache: four amphorae containing (separately) five gallons of holy water, wine, oil, and blood (pottery valued at 100 gp each); a gold-trimmed, silver-plated long sword with a diamond in the pommel (badly dented and scratched from use as a prying device by the ghost—worth only 850 gp); a gold ring set with six tiger's eyes (worth 750 gp); a gold tooth with an inset diamond chip (worth 450 gp); a gold necklace bearing a heart-shaped medallion (200 gp apparent value; this is a *medallion of wound closure*, as per the periapt of the same name); a gold headband (1,000 gp apparent value; this is a special magical item, *Dalvan's circlet*, which is detailed at the end of the adventure); four silver-colored potions (*longevity* (×2), *extra-healing*, and *gaseous form*); a silver-bladed *dagger +1*; 1,200 gp; 120 assorted gems (10 gp base value each); and 20 assorted pieces of jewelry (worth 100–400 gp each).

Piled under the hole in the west wall is the following treasure: two gems (worth 150 gp and 50 gp respectively), a broken silver bracelet (worth 85 gp), 7 pp, 42 gp, 89 ep, 151 sp, 356 cp, and any treasure the party may have dropped into the sacrificial bowl at area 1. The hole in the wall is only 4" wide. It leads to a slick, sloping tunnel about 120' long that begins at the bottom of the sacrificial bowl.

## 8. Fishermen's Huts.

In a small clearing at the base of the hill stand two crude wooden huts. Between these buildings and the shoreline, two men are warming their hands over the remaining embers of a dying bonfire. At the edge of the water, five canoes lie inverted in a neat row.

The men are posing as friendly fishermen, but in fact they are two evil bandits. If asked why they have so many canoes, they reply that they need them to carry their catches downriver to Turthan. If questioned about the tomb, they speak in low tones, saying that they fear the "curse" laid upon it,

warning that anyone who touches the vault doors (area 2) dies. They provide no hints about the presence of others on the island, claiming instead that no other humans have been here since their arrival over 10 years ago.

Once the PCs have initiated contact, these two bandits casually follow them wherever they go on the island (except within the tomb) to keep an eye on them. Although they pretend to be collecting firewood, watching birds, and so forth, the men are obviously spying on the party. If confronted, they excuse their actions by saying, "You know, in the wilderness you just can't tell who you can trust, and them that're wary stay amongst the living." They always avoid a fight unless the PCs seem to be snooping around the area where they might discover the door, concealed behind a thicket of bushes, that leads to the bandits' cave hideout (area 9).

Until the PCs leave the island, all activities by the bandit group are brought to a halt, and those bandits hidden inside the caves remain there (even if their fellows outside are attacked). They do not want to jeopardize the concealment of their hideout. If the party leaves the island, the bandit group eventually renews its operations but under the cover of darkness.

**Alderic and Fallon** (bandits): AC 6; MV 12; F1; hp 10, 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; SZ M; ML 11; AL NE; XP 15; studded leather armor, shield, long sword, pouch holding 2d10 gp and 2d12 sp.

## 9. Bandits' Mess Hall.

After descending 10 feet down a natural flight of rock stairs, you enter a rough chamber about 30' long and 20' wide. Lit by a pair of lanterns hung from the side walls, this room appears to be used for dining, for two large tables with flanking benches are cluttered with plates, mugs, and partially eaten food.

If the party has surprised the occupants of the room, the PCs see six men laughing and eating. Otherwise, the bandits have readied themselves for attack and close with the party at the base of the stairs while yelling words of warning to their comrades in the two adjoining rooms. All of the bandits wear studded leather armor at all times and, depending on the conditions of the encounter, either have shields and long swords resting near at hand or are already holding and preparing to use them.

These bandits are not really an impressive lot, being the least capable of their ilk. They fight only until half of them have fallen before attempting to flee or surrender.

**Dermot, Hendgar, Jax, Nerem, and Tarlok** (bandits): AC 6; MV 12; 0-level; hp 6, 6, 5, 4, 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; SZ M; ML 10; AL NE; XP 15; studded leather armor, shield, long sword.

## 10. Sleeping Chamber.

Pushing aside the curtain that conceals the area, you see a darkened room with three sets of bunk beds against the walls. On a table in the room's center, a shuttered lantern provides dim illumination.



There are five bandits here. They are either sleeping (if the PCs have managed to enter quietly) or donning armor to assist their fellows in areas 9 and 11. The DM should determine their degree of preparedness based on the amount of time since the alarm was raised. The bandits use one full round waking up and getting to their feet. As they put on their armor, they require one round for each point their armor class is lowered (until fully armored at AC 6). The morale of these men is only slightly more stable than those in area 9. They consider surrender or escape only after three of their number are slain.

Under each of the three lower bunks are five small locked chests. The key to each chest is worn around one bandit's neck. Twelve of these wooden boxes contain 2d10 gp, and the other three contain 5d10 gp. There is nothing else of interest or value in the room.

**Briscoll, Kellen, Lenneth, Radrig, and Vunthar** (bandits): AC 6 (at best); MV 12; 0-level; hp 6, 5, 5, 5, 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; SZ M; ML 11; AL NE; XP 15; studded leather armor, shield, long sword.

#### 11. Leader's Room.

In the center of this room is a table and four chairs. Cards, drinks, and coins litter the table. There is a heavy barred door in the southeast wall of the room, and a thick curtain closes off an opening in the west wall. Against the east wall stand four large kegs and a rack containing over a dozen bottles of wine. Two glowing lanterns are hung on each of the near and far walls.

This is the council and recreation room of the bandit leader, Dougal, and his loyal henchmen, Radcliffe. These men are usually found relaxing with four of their bandit underlings. The conditions of the encounter vary depending on the circumstances. If the bandits have been alerted by the gas trap in area 3, one of their number is spying on area 4 while the others ready themselves. If the PCs return from the crypt area laden with treasure, the watchman calls for his comrades to join him in an ambush.

If the bandits are taken unawares, all but perhaps one of these men are playing cards at the table. There is a 60% chance that either Dougal or Radcliffe is sleeping on the lower bunk in the alcove behind the curtain (without armor or weapons).

If alerted to the party's intrusion, the bandits have readied themselves, forming a semicircle in front of the entryway so that each can have no more than a single opponent. Also, after waking (or in advance of joining a melee), one of the two leaders opens the secret door to the room beyond their sleeping alcove (area 12). All of the bandits fight viciously, taking extra time to behead a fallen PC (requiring 1-3 rounds) before moving onto another!

If the fight is not going their way, Dougal and Radcliffe implement their escape plan, leaving their underlings to fend for themselves. Dougal dashes into the secret room (area 12), closing and barring the door behind him. Radcliffe, meanwhile, drinks his potion of *gaseous form*, then floats outside and across the lake to safety.

After barring the secret door, Dougal grabs one of the dead bodies stored in the small room, shoulders it, and exits

through the outside secret door. He then runs north to the water's edge, pushes the floating body out into the water to be devoured by the piranha, and voices a bloodcurdling scream as he climbs a nearby tree. As the PCs approach, he quaffs his potion of *extra-healing*.

If the party is fooled by Dougal's ploy (the DM should not give out any hints), the bandit leader remains hidden in the tree until nightfall, at which time he makes a run for it through the shallow water by the southeastern shore of the island. If the PCs spot Dougal perched in the tree, he drinks his potion of *levitation* and kicks off from the tree to drift over the lake and out of missile range. (The DM should check for potion compatibility by rolling on Table 111 in the DMG.) Dougal attempts to rise at a rate of 20 feet per round to an altitude out of reach of arrows and sling bullets if such are used against him. His speed horizontally is about 60' per round, assuming little or no wind at the DM's discretion.

The ale in the council chamber is all of rather poor quality. Three of the kegs are full, but the fourth is almost empty. Each keg holds 25 gallons and can be sold for a mere 5 gp. The wine, on the other hand, is of very high quality, having been made by (and stolen from) the finest vintner in Turthan. There are 13 bottles, worth 25 gp each.

If the PCs attempt to sell the familiar wine in Turthan, they will likely be arrested for banditry, an offense carrying a one-year term of imprisonment and a 500-gp fine. If, on the other hand, they can prove their innocence (by producing the bandits' bodies or some tomb treasure, for example), the PCs are hailed as heroes, gaining a 100-gp reward as well as public commendations (as soon as their claims can be verified).

The only items of value found in this room are 138 sp and 16 gp spread out on the table as well as a locked, poison-needle-trapped chest in the alcove. The poison needle can be disarmed by a thief making a successful remove traps roll, but a failed roll indicates 1 hp damage and injects the victim with Type D poison. The chest contains 653 gp, 892 ep, and 1,216 sp.

**Dougal** (5th-level human fighter): AC 1; MV 12; F5; hp 47; THAC0 16 (base); #AT 1 or 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; SA specialized with bastard sword (+1 to hit, +2 damage); S 18/24, D 15, C 18, I 12, W 15, Ch 16; SZ M; ML 12; AL CE; XP 420; *chain mail* +1, *shield* +1, *bastard sword* +2, *potion of extra-healing*, *potion of levitation*.

**Radcliffe** (3rd-level human fighter): AC 3; MV 9; F3; hp 25; THAC0 18 (base); #AT 1 or 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; SA specialized with spear (+1 to hit, +2 damage); S 16, D 10, C 16, I 13, W 12, Ch 15; SZ M; ML 12; AL CE; XP 120; *chain mail*, *shield*, *spear* +1, *ring of protection* +1, *potion of gaseous form*.

#### 12. Storage of the Dead.

The smell of death lingers in this chamber. Two large, bulky bags lie jumbled on the floor.

There are two bodies in this room (minus one which Dougal might have taken). These corpses, saved from the bandits' most recent raid, will be used either to sweeten deals with lizard man mercenaries or to feed the island's aquatic guardians. The bandits try to replace the oldest stored corpses whenever possible to maintain some degree of "freshness."





Two iron bars lean against the west wall. These can be set in place on either or both of the inward-opening secret doors in times of emergency.

## Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs destroy the bandit ring, the citizens of both Moorwall and Turthan are very appreciative. If the adventurers return to Moorwall and announce their triumph, they are greeted with a hearty welcome by one and all. The locals are anxious for the PCs to remain in their community, but the PCs will undoubtedly experience too much harassment for their tastes. Laric, the inn bartender, tries to procure a low-interest loan from them so that he can build his own inn. Alonso, the cook, begs, borrows, or steals from the party to get out from under his debts. Solemn, the innkeeper (if alive and not exposed as a bandit), is obsequious in the extreme, hoping to finagle as much favor and coinage from the PCs as possible. Damber, the guard captain, insists that the PCs accompany him to Turthan so that he can parade them (or, more precisely, himself) about the capital.

If the PCs managed to extract riches from the tomb without slaying all the bandits (particularly if the ringleaders, Dougal and Radcliffe, are still alive), the party might wish to quickly leave the area. When the banditry continues, the local folk will not only be suspicious of the origins of the party's loot, but they might even accuse the PCs of being part of the gang.

No matter how successful the adventure, the Moorwall area might not hold the PCs' interest for long. Eventually, some new map or mysterious legend will turn up, leading the group elsewhere to seek out greater treasure hoards and even greater dangers. Ω

## The Cauldron of Plenty

"The Cauldron of Plenty" is an AD&D® adventure for a party of 4-6 characters of levels 2-4 (about 15 total levels). A druid PC would provide an advantage. It would also be helpful for the Dungeon Master to read through the "Celtic Mythos" section in *Legends & Lore, The Celts* historical reference supplement (HR3), or any book about the Celts and their legends. Though it possesses a quasi-Celtic style, this scenario may be easily played in another cultural setting or adapted as part of a larger campaign.

## For the Dungeon Master

This adventure is set in the small Celtic kingdom of Tiglas, ruled by a king called the Rí Luachra. Tiglas is part of a loose confederacy of states that make up the country called Áit Eile, ruled over by a High King or Ard Rí. The High King in theory (if not always in practice) holds sway over the whole confederacy of lesser kings.

## Pronunciation Guide

In this module, certain words and phrases are presented in the Irish language to preserve the Celtic feel of the adventure. (If experts on the language find obvious mistakes in the structure of phrases, perhaps Tiglas has evolved a Celtic tongue of its own.) The following rough guide to pronunciation is given to allow the DM to pronounce the words as the author intended. If the pronunciations cause any problems, feel free to use others.

Name	Pronunciation
Áit Eile	Oit Ella
Ard Rí	Ord Ree
Bolg Mór	Bul-ug More
Dunluachra	Doon-loo-kra
Déan Caoireoil	Dane Keer-ole
Déan Mairteoil	Dane Mart-ole
Déan Muiceoil	Dane Mick-ole
Poll Dubh Doracha	Powel Dove Dur-ack-ah
Rí	Ree
Rí Luachra	Ree Loo-kra
Ruairi	Roo-ree
Tiglas	Tig-lass

Tiglas is a green and fertile land, and it prospers after its own fashion and customs. The gold piece has only recently been accepted as a unit of currency. Prior to this, one's wealth and prestige were measured by how much cattle one owned. This custom still stands, making the acquisition of cattle and important motivation for the king.

Throughout the confederacy there is a strict honor code, called "honor-price." Instead of the hierarchy prevalent in the Middle Ages, where a king could rule by force alone and all classes remained fixed, the social structure in Tiglas and its neighbors works quite differently. In some ways, it seems reversed to the medieval model. The only people outside this social order are the druids and bards, who may come and go as they please because of their reputed powers over magic and the spoken or sung word.

A man may rise through the social ranks by improving his honor-price, which is determined by how many people are dependent on and well cared for by him. The king must have the best honor-price, and he may be deposed if he fails to live up to his obligation to care for his warriors (who care for their vassals, who care for the crops and cattle, which feed the warriors, the vassals, and the king). The whole society is interdependent and so takes special care that each person knows where he stands in the social order, even if that person's position is in a state of constant flux.

Competition to attain high honor-price is an everyday part of life in Tiglas, so a king's position is not guaranteed, nor is it certain that a son or a daughter of the current king will have the right to rule later. Moreover, it is the law in Tiglas that if the ruler (who is elected by the nobility) fails in his responsibilities to the land or its people, the people may demand that a new king be put in his place.



The current state of affairs in Tiglas bodes ill for the Rí Luachra, who through inaction has allowed raids by neighboring kingdoms to deplete the cattle herds of the local farmers. Although the kingdom has sufficient stores of grains and other foodstuffs to survive the coming winter, the tradition of measuring one's prestige in cattle is strong, and the raids have caused unrest among the populace. The people feel that the king's warband, which is charged with protecting the kingdom, should make its own raids to win back replacement cattle for Tiglas. But neither the warband nor the Rí Luachra have acted, and inaction lessens the esteem of the king.

The Rí has other problems as well. One of his many responsibilities is to provide a nightly feast for his warband at his palace in Dunluachra, but there are not enough cattle to feed the warriors, so they refuse to take part in any military operations—including raids to capture cattle (which is their right, as they aren't being provided for properly by their leader).

To get out of this desperate situation before he is forced to abdicate, the Rí Luachra has taken the advice of a druid, Dertol, who has decided that if the king possessed the legendary *cauldron of plenty*, he could fulfill his duty to his warband, and the warband would then obey his orders.

Dertol's motives in recovering this item are plain. The magical cauldron is capable of producing, once per night, a fully cooked feast of either beef, mutton, or pork. The cauldron was created by druids of Dertol's order, and its return would be as great a boost to their prestige as it would be for the king's.



Unfortunately, the cauldron is owned by a verbeeg giant, the Bolg Mór, who has a nasty reputation for inhospitality. The monster lives in a group of caverns called Poll Dubh Doracha, in the westernmost part of Tiglas. There he lives quietly, relying on the cauldron for food and forcing merchants to pay a toll to travel through his land. Occasionally, he also waylays travelers for money or recreation.

The Bolg Mór was a member of a typical bandit group that met with a sticky end in the lair of a hydra. Fleeing from that misadventure, he found the entrance to the Poll Dubh Doracha and squeezed in.

In his less-than-perfect condition after the fight with the hydra, the giant fell quickly to the influence of a *charm* spell cast on him by a mage who had recently taken up residence in the caverns. The mage suggested that the Poll Dubh Doracha could become quite a comfortable home with the Bolg Mór's help. So, much of the heavy work such as clearing a larger entrance fell to the giant. The mage also employed workmen to construct doors, walls, and cells, and to smooth out the rough walls of the caverns. Soon he began moving in equipment and conducting experiments. The *cauldron of plenty*, which the mage had stolen from its previous owner, served functional as well as research needs.

Perhaps it was the sight of the cauldron, which the giant soon coveted, that helped him shake free of the mage's *charm* spell. Gradually, the spell's strength waned, but the mage was too wrapped up in his studies and experiments to notice until it was too late. The Bolg Mór drove out the remaining workmen after slaying the mage, then took the caves as his new home.

Eventually, the giant grew restless and began exploring the area around the Poll Dobh Doracha. He came into contact with merchant caravans and soon realized the importance of trade as well as ambush and extortion. He attained a certain affluence as a result and became undisputed master of the hills. In spite of this, he never became vain or stupid, though he has been a powerful enemy of anyone who displeased him.

Naturally, the king's warband refuses to act until the warriors feel they are being properly provided for. They won't accept coinage (it isn't traditional), so the Rí must find another way to win the cauldron from the unwilling giant. He has authorized Dertol to offer terms of employment to a party of likely adventurers to recover the device. Through the power of his deity, Dertol knows that the PCs are passing through the kingdom, and he can find them anywhere in the land.

The DM may have the PCs pass through Tiglas on some longer journey and so encounter Dertol. If the module is being played as an individual adventure, Dertol may summon the PCs to the kingdom on a matter of high adventure and mutual profit.

## For the Players

When you are ready to begin the adventure, read or paraphrase the following to the players:





## Random Wilderness Encounters (Roll 1d8)

- Goblins** (10): AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 6 (x2), 5 (x3), 4, 3 (x4); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (short-sword or sling); SZ S; INT low (7); ML 10; AL LE; XP 15; MM. These goblins are scouting for a good spot to build a lair. They haven't had too much luck, and although their leader won't admit it, they are lost. They ask the party for directions as a ruse to get close enough to attack. The goblins do not have any treasure.
- Giant goat**: AC 7; MV 18; HD 3+1; hp 19; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SA charge for +4 damage; SZ L; INT animal (1); ML 5; AL N; XP 65; MM (mammal, goat—variant). This creature attacks only if it feels threatened. Goats of any kind are rare in these mountains, as the larger predators relish goat kids as a quick snack.
- Wild boar**: AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 12; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; SA fights until reduced to -7 hp; SZ M; INT animal (1); ML 11; AL N; XP 175; MM. This creature attacks anyone foolish enough to come within 30 feet. Otherwise, it ignores the party.
- Huge centipede**: AC 9; MV 12; HD 1 hp; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA poisonous bite (save at +4 or be paralyzed for 1-6 hours); SD save at -2; SZ T; INT non (0); ML 6; XP 35; MM. This creature is hunting in the rocks for likely insect victims and attacks PCs only if annoyed.
- Dwarven prospectors** (6): AC 4; MV 6; HD 1; hp 6 (x2), 5, 4, 3, 2; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD infra-vision, +2 to saves vs. poison and magic; SZ S; INT average (8-10); ML 13; AL LG; MM; chain mail, shield, hand axe. These dwarves are traveling on a path at right angles to that taken by the PCs. The dwarves are searching for
- Ghouls** (4): AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 13, 11, 9, 8; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm* spells; SZ M; INT low (5); ML 12; AL CE; XP 175; MM. These ghouls attack only during the night. They come from a small plot where a number of warriors were buried. The violence of their deaths and the grievance against the lord who left them to their fate have transformed them into ghouls. Now they prey on any travelers who come within range.
- Ogre**: AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 14; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10 or by weapon type (1d8+2 with heavy club); SA +2 to damage; SZ L; INT low (7); ML 12; AL CE; XP 270; MM. Knark, the ogre, likes to take a stroll around the area after dark, trying to corner a goat or fox for the next morning's breakfast. He rarely catches anything any other way, as he's too big and noisy. The PCs might encounter him if they have a campfire lit and he chooses to come visit, or they might hear him thrashing about in the scrub, cursing and muttering. Any encounter with this monster has a 50% chance of passing peaceably.
- Will o' wisp**: AC -8; MV fly 18 (A); HD 9; hp 38; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SA electric discharge; MR immune to most magical attacks save *maze*, *magic missile*, and *protection from evil*; SZ S; INT exceptional (15); ML 17; AL CE; XP 3,000; MM. This creature is highly dangerous, though it is alone and won't attack if the party is at full strength. The monster attempts to lure a single party member into a pool or mire from which it can attack in relative safety. If the will o' wisp is unsuccessful luring away its intended prey, it bides its time until a less intelligent creature happens by.

Passing through Tiglas, a small kingdom with mostly human inhabitants, you are pleased by its green and varied scenery, its western mountains, its small woods and streams, and its friendly people. The peasants are affable and quite approachable once their initial shyness is overcome. They are full of talk about recent raids from neighboring chieftains and how impoverished their lords have become as a result. It appears that cattle are the main targets in these raids, and indeed there are noticeably fewer cattle about than one might expect on such farmlands. The animals that remain are being carefully guarded.

Druids are another matter. The few you encounter pass quietly on business of their own. They offer polite greetings but refuse to be drawn into involved conversations. Following your course one morning through a small, sun-dappled glade, you meet a druid wearing the blue robes and jeweled torc of high office. It would seem that for once you have met a druid who wishes to make conversation, for he raises his hand in salutation, saying, "May the great Dagda, Lord of Gods, preserve you! Whither dost thou go?"

The druid introduces himself as Dertol, advisor to the Rí Luachra. He cryptically mentions that the woods were chosen as a meeting place to avoid "prying eyes and ears at the palace." (He means the warband.) Dertol then says that it is the wish of the Rí that the PCs travel to the caves known as the Poll Dobh Doracha to retrieve the magical *cauldron of plenty*, which is currently in the possession of a giant, the Bolg Mór. For this service, the Rí offers a sum of 3,000 gp, payable on delivery of the cauldron to Dertol.

The druid gives the PCs the following information, which has trickled into the kingdom with the small caravans that cross the Bolg Mór's lands:

- ❖ The giant is much more intelligent than many of his kind and is likely to have set traps, tricks, and other hazards in his caves.

- ❖ The caves are dangerous enough, even if a giant wasn't living in them, as the limestone has been weakened in many places by water seepage.

- ❖ The Bolg Mór is said to have a weakness for stories of other lands. In dire straits, the adventurers may use this against him if they are clever.



❖ The giant charges a 1-gp toll per person to caravans passing through his territory. He doesn't always stop caravans, but he will sometimes attack unwary travelers for the fun of it.

The druid can tell adventurers the following information about the *cauldron of plenty*. The information was gleaned from stories told by workers who were driven out of the Poll Dobh Doracha when the giant took over:

❖ The cauldron once belonged to a magician who had *charmed* the Bolg Mór into his service. Unfortunately, the *charm* wore off and the cauldron, the wizard's head, and his home at the Poll Dubh Doracha became the property of the giant.

❖ Bad luck is said to follow those who obtain the cauldron through force, though Dertol cannot say whether trickery or other nonviolent means of retrieving the cauldron will activate this curse. (See the "New Magical Item" sidebar detailing the *cauldron of plenty*.)

❖ The command words for the cauldron must be hidden somewhere in the giant's caverns. It is the PCs' secondary mission to obtain these command words. (Dertol is aware that he may obtain the command words by research among his fellow druids if need be, so he doesn't stress this mission.)

❖ The cauldron appears to be a normal cooking pot, but a *detect magic* spell reveals the cauldron for what it is.

Aid is available to the party. If there is a druid character in the group, Dertol gives him a scroll with the spells *transmute rock to mud* and *animate rock* to assist in the success of the mission. The DM may allow the PC who receives the scroll to refer briefly to the *Player's Handbook* to reflect Dertol's brief description of the spells' effects, durations, and so forth. If there are no druid characters in the party, Dertol gives the

PCs a vial of *oil of slipperiness* and a potion of *climbing* and explains their uses.

Dertol then gives the PCs a map of the kingdom of Tiglas and directs them to the Poll Dobh Doracha. He suggests that the adventurers travel 10 miles due west of the glade where they had their rendezvous, at which time they should begin to discover signs of the giant. The druid wishes the party luck before he disappears into the trees.

**Dertol** (5th-level human druid): AC 10; MV 12; D5; hp 30; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA spell use; SD +2 to saves vs. fire and lightning; ability to *pass without trace*; S 18, D 12, C 15, I 15, W 12, Ch 15; SZ M; ML 14; AL N; unarmed.

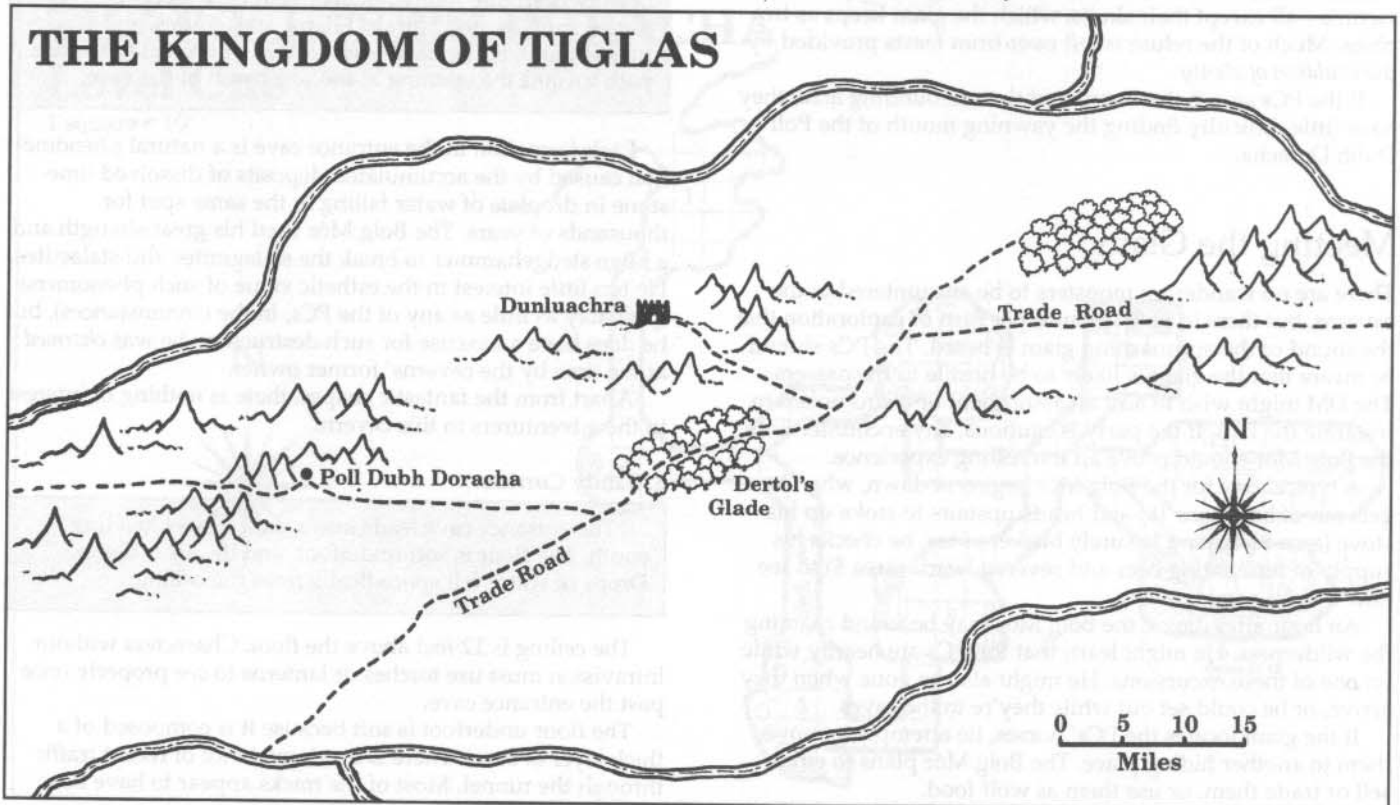
Spells (3/3/1): 1st—*animal friendship*, *invisibility to animals*, *locate animals or plants*; 2nd—*charm person or mammal*, *hold person*, *trip*; 3rd—*tree*.

Dertol is unarmed, as in Tiglas it is a crime punishable by death to harm or hinder a druid. Even if the PCs have never adventured in this land before, they might (at the DM's option) know this is the law here.

## Journey to the Giant's Lair

The Poll Dubh Doracha is a limestone cave network in the mountains west of Tiglas. (See "The Kingdom of Tiglas" map.) Most of the Poll Dubh Doracha was created by nature as water eroded the soft limestone rocks. The various man-made fixtures were commissioned by a mage named Druleen, the one who later *charmed* the Bolg Mór into service.

The "Random Wilderness Encounters" table may be used for encounters on the way to the Poll Dubh Doracha. As the







land becomes wilder to the west, wandering monster rolls should be made at dawn, noon, and dusk. An encounter occurs on a roll of 1 or 2 on 1d6. If a night creature is indicated, wait until the next suitable period of darkness for the PCs to encounter the monster.

It should take two days for mounted adventurers to travel to the caves due to the roughness of the terrain (five days on foot at human walking speed).

## The Poll Dubh Doracha

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs are within a half-day's journey (by horse or foot) from the giant's lair:

The wilderness becomes even more desolate and uninviting as you travel farther from the green land of Tiglas. It's hard to imagine how any creature—especially a giant—could survive in an area so devoid of game. But you remember that the Bolg Mór has magical assistance.

The only noises other than those made by your own movements are the sounds of rushing water. Fast-flowing streams appear from the rocks to flow for a short distance before plummeting into fissures in the rocky ground.

After half a day of searching, you see a great refuse pile ahead. Judging by the mound of discarded bones, it would appear that the Poll Dubh Doracha and its giant occupant are close at hand.

The refuse contains the bones of the Bolg Mór's previous victims—all except their skulls, which the giant keeps as trophies. Much of the refuse is left over from feasts provided by the *cauldron of plenty*.

If the PCs search the dump and the surrounding area, they have little difficulty finding the yawning mouth of the Poll Dubh Doracha.

## Meeting the Giant

There are no wandering monsters to be encountered in the caverns, but there is a 10% chance per turn of exploration that the sound of the approaching giant is heard. The PCs should be aware that the giant is likely to be hostile to trespassers. The DM might wish to add an assortment of weird noises to frustrate the PCs. If the party is cautious, any encounter with the Bolg Mór should prove an interesting experience.

A typical day for the Bolg Mór begins at dawn, when he gets out of bed (area 18) and heads upstairs to stoke up his stove (area 8). After a leisurely bucket of tea, he checks his supply of fermenting beer and severed heads (area 5) to see how they're coming along.

An hour after dawn, the Bolg Mór may be found roaming the wilderness. He might learn that the PCs are nearby while on one of these excursions. He might also be gone when they arrive, or he could set out while they're in the caves.

If the giant locates the PCs' horses, he attempts to move them to another hiding place. The Bolg Mór plans to either sell or trade them, or use them as wolf food.

In the late afternoon, the giant returns to the Poll Dubh Doracha if he hasn't encountered a caravan and conducted negotiations. He enters his main lair (area 18) and uses the command words for the *cauldron of plenty* (equal chances of each set of command words to be used that day). After his feast, he settles down to sleep or heads upstairs for more tea to wash down his meal. PCs hiding in the study (area 17) might use this opportunity to nip in and swipe the cauldron, though they'll have to avoid the giant on the way out.

Should the Bolg Mór get wind of the PCs, he first attempts to discover how many of them there are, how strong they are, and whether they are potentially hostile. If he decides they are "just happening by," he may even make overtures to trade with them, but if he thinks they are hostile, he tries to eliminate them. If he feels the party is strong, the giant uses his knowledge of the Poll Dubh Doracha and his familiar wilderness to ambush the PCs.

**The Bolg Mór** (verbeeg giant): AC 4; MV 18; HD 5+5; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type +6 (18/00 Strength); SA +60 yards to range of thrown spear; SZ L (10' tall); INT very (12); ML 13; AL N(E); XP 270; MM; large spear (Dmg 2d4/2d6).

## Level One

### 1. Entrance.

The tracks that lead here from the refuse pile indicate that this is the area from which the bones and other trash originated. The bare limestone walls of this cavern have been twisted into many fantastic shapes: waterfalls, rivers, miniature hills, and spirals. Pillars, stalagmites, and stalactites abound. Some have been cleared or broken to make a path toward the opening at the south end of the cave.

Each formation in the entrance cave is a natural phenomenon caused by the accumulated deposits of dissolved limestone in droplets of water falling in the same spot for thousands of years. The Bolg Mór used his great strength and a huge sledgehammer to break the stalagmites and stalactites. He has little interest in the esthetic value of such phenomena (probably as little as any of the PCs, in the circumstances), but he does have an excuse for such destruction; he was *charmed* at the time by the caverns' former owner.

Apart from the fantastic shapes, there is nothing of interest to the adventurers in this cavern.

### 2. Sandy Corridor.

The entrance cave leads into a dark tunnel heading south. The floor is soft underfoot, and the air is damp. Drops of water fall sporadically from the ceiling.

The ceiling is 12 feet above the floor. Characters without infravision must use torches or lanterns to see properly once past the entrance cave.

The floor underfoot is soft because it is composed of a thick layer of sand. There is much evidence of recent traffic through the tunnel. Most of the tracks appear to have been



made by someone with size 16 feet. Some older tracks suggest small parties of humans or demihumans (many of whom are now part of the refuse pile outside the Poll Dubh Doracha).

### 3. Waterfall.

The tunnel emerges briefly into a roughly octagonal cave before taking off eastward. A stream of water pours down the western wall from a slit-like hole in the roof. The water disappears into a floor-level crevice near the wall.

This is a part of the series of waterways that wend their way across the surface only to disappear suddenly through a weakness in the rock below. Part of this particular stream reappears at area 11.

### 4. Natural Pit.

The corridor floor is suddenly interrupted by a 10'-wide pit that falls away into darkness.

This natural shaft falls 50 feet to the surface of a mineral-rich pool of icy cold water. The Bolg Mór has no difficulty hopping across it because the ceiling here is 20' high. He also uses the pool below as a handy well if he wants water.

Each PC must make a Dexterity check to jump the gap and avoid falling into the pit below. Characters with the jumping proficiency receive a +2 bonus, while armored characters

suffer a penalty of -2 for light armor (chain mail or lighter) or -5 for heavy armor (plate, banded, or splint). On either side of the pit is a 6" rounded lip. Trying to avoid the pit by walking across the lip is no less treacherous than trying to leap the shaft and requires a successful climbing check at -25%. (There are handholds along the wall, but the footing is slippery.) A failed climbing check indicates that the character has fallen.

A character who falls into the pit suffers 1-4 hp damage from cuts and bruises from the rough walls before hitting the water below. Damage from the cold is 1 hp per round of immersion. If the PC takes a deep breath before hitting the water, he can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to one-third his Constitution score, rounded up. The pool is 20 feet deep.

### 5. Storeroom and Brewery.

The tunnel opens into a cavern with a sandy floor. Ranged along the west wall are eight large barrels, a couple of which are sealed. An alcove in the southeast corner of the room contains a single barrel that looks to be covered with some kind of mold.

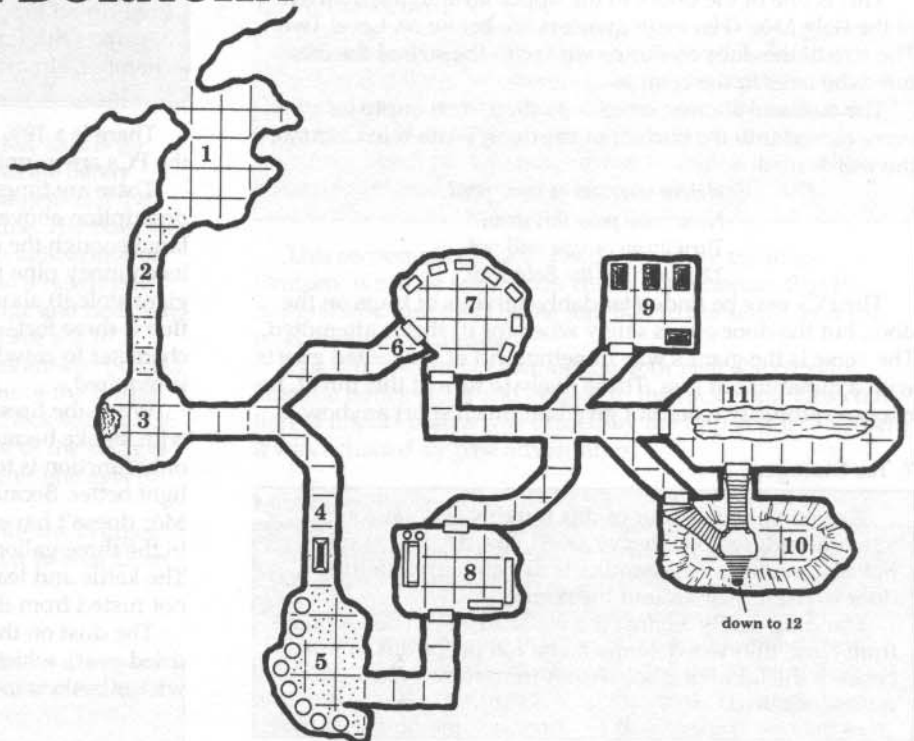
The Bolg Mór is quite fastidious about how he keeps his living quarters (hence the outdoor refuse pile), so the contents of these barrels are kept well away from where they might offend him by noisome smells or inconvenient noises.

Starting at the north entrance, the first three barrels contain: old clothing from past adventurers; an assortment of weaponry including a *long sword* +2 from the same source;

## THE POLL DUBH DORACHA

### Level One

1 square = 10'







and a collection of helmets (some severely dented) of a non-magical nature. None of the three barrels are sealed.

The next two barrels are sealed, as they contain fermenting beer. A small airlock protrudes from the lid of each, allowing a bubble of gas to pop out every few minutes. The PCs might be alarmed by the bubbling noises and audible pops from these barrels and may think that noxious fumes are leaking out. The only real danger is in drinking any of the beer; it has an unappetizing skin across the top, and the liquid portion (which must be strained before it can be safely imbibed) is extremely potent. Any character drinking more than a pint becomes very drunk (-4 to attack rolls, saving throws, and proficiency checks for 6-36 turns).

The next two barrels contain a collection of heads whose flesh is being stripped using a lime mixture, and a collection of skulls that are being preserved using a strong vinegar mixture.

The barrel in the alcove contains a colony of yellow mold. Nothing remains of the breads the barrel once held.

**Yellow mold:** AC 9; MV 0; HD nil; THAC0 nil; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA poison spores; SD affected only by fire; *continual light* renders it dormant for 2-12 turns; MR 20%; SZ M; INT non (0); AL N; XP 65; MM.

## 6. Dungeon Door.

The tunnel wends its way from the fork for 50 feet or so before stopping at a huge, iron-bound oak door. The door is as wide as the 10' tunnel and almost reaches the 15' high ceiling. The oak is marked with cuts and slashes about 5 feet up from the floor.

This is one of the doors to the upper level living quarters of the Bolg Mór. (His main quarters are below on Level Two.) The size of the door conforms well with the size of the creature who lives in the complex.

The cuts and slashes, on examination, turn out to be a verse carved into the surface of the door. Written in Common, the words read:

*Herein trespass at your peril.  
None may pass this door.  
Turn away or you will feel  
The wrath of the Bolg Mór.*

The PCs may be understandably nervous of traps on the door, but the door opens safely when (or if) this is attempted. The verse is the giant's way of getting rid of unwanted guests with a minimum of fuss. Those likely to turn at this threat, he reasons, probably wouldn't give him much sport anyhow.

## 7. Tea Storage.

As you open the door of this roughly circular room, you are engulfed by a heavy smell, like dry leaves on a hot autumn day. The chamber is dry and airy. Another door is visible just around the corner.

Standing neatly against the walls are seven boxes made from light, thin wood. Some metal foil peeps out from beneath the lid of one box. Apart from these boxes, the cave is deserted.

The boxes are tea chests, each nearly filled with good-quality tea. One of the giant's weaknesses is a nice bucket of tea after a hearty meal. He has the tea specially imported, often using monies taken from past victims to pay for the luxury. Coinage, though often scorned throughout Tiglas as a form of trade, is not refused in neighboring parts of Ait Eile and beyond, especially since it comes in handy sizes for melting down into gold and silver ornaments worn by the warrior classes.

The Bolg Mór has gotten over his distrust of currency because tea is not grown in Tiglas and may only be imported for hard cash. Sometimes he'll allow a cash-strapped caravan the option of paying its toll in goods such as leather, cloth, or beads, which he can fashion into useful or decorative items himself.

The metal foil in the boxes is put there by the tea merchants to preserve the freshness of their product. (It wouldn't do their health much good to sell poor quality merchandise to the Bolg Mór.) The foil is made from tin and has no other value.

One of the opened tea chests contains a large scoop for doling out tea. Made from solid silver, it is worth 350 gp. The value of the tea itself outstrips the scoop by a considerable amount. The tea is worth about 70 gp per chest due to its relative rarity in Tiglas. If the PCs can transport it to Dunluachra, they will find a ready market for the product.

**8. The Bolg Mór's Kitchen.** The south door to this cavern is inscribed with the identical inscription as the door at area 6.

The door opens into a cavern whose floor, walls, and ceiling have been worked to make the cave into a regular room. To the west, a large stove rests close to the wall, its fire burned low. To the east, a couple of bare shelves stand covered with fine dust. A second door leads out of the chamber, almost opposite the one just opened.

There is a 10% chance that the giant enters this room while the PCs are examining it.

There are times when this room is a lot smokier than the description above implies. The iron stove to the west looks large enough the cater meals for a whole regiment! However, its chimney pipe is cracked and broken (damaged when the giant stole it) about 12 feet up the wall. The diameter of the flue is three feet—quite large enough for a halfling or gnome character to crawl up if a quick (though smoky) hiding place is required.

When the fires are burning at full whack, the room fills with smoke because the chimney doesn't go anywhere. Its only function is to provide a draft to draw the fire and help it light better. Because he owns the *cauldron of plenty*, the Bolg Mór doesn't have much use for the stove except to boil water in the three-gallon kettle to make tea in his two-gallon teapot. The kettle and teapot are the only items of cookware that are not rusted from disuse.

The dust on the shelves is fine turf ash. The turf (blocks of dried peat), which the giant uses for fuel, is kept in two wicker baskets to the north of the stove.



### 9. Wolf Pen.

The side corridor travels about 20 feet from the turn to a small, curiously shaped door. Instead of being hinges on either the left or right side, the door is hinged across the top, about three feet up from the floor.

The door is designed to allow the Bolg Mór's watchdogs to come and go to their kennels. When the PCs approach the entrance, four wolves rush out to attack, baying loudly. (Assume that the wolves are always here when the PCs arrive.)

Unless the PCs cast magical *silence*, the noise of the combat echoes throughout the dungeon, with a 60% chance of alerting the giant to the presence of the adventurers.

Inside the cavern are four kennels, each usually occupied by a wolf. Bones and a few possessions tell the tale of the fate of past explorers. Scattered about are 40 gp, 32 sp, and 15 cp in coins. Among flea-ridden scraps of cloth in one kennel is a *dagger* +1. At the back of another kennel lies a leather backpack that still holds 322 gp, 35 sp, and 120 cp.

**Wolves** (4): AC 7; MV 18; HD 3; hp 16, 15, 12, 11; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SD +1 to saves vs. *charm* spells; SZ S; INT low (6); ML 10; AL N; XP 120; MM.

### 10. Suspension Bridges.

The door opens onto a narrow ledge over a drop of about 60 feet. Near the center of the cavern, a large stalagmite with a leveled top rises to a height of 25 feet above the floor. A bridge made from solid wooden planks, lashed together with stout ropes, slants down to the pillar from large iron rings set into the walls on each side of the door. Stone steps lead from the column to an opening in the rock in the south wall of the cavern. Another suspension bridge can be seen leading to a second door a short distance away.

The western bridge is the one most often used, as it is no longer safe to walk through area 11. The bridges are barely strong to hold the Bolg Mór and may prove dangerous if the whole party of PCs tries to cross at the same time. The Bolg Mór weighs about 550 lbs., as much as three men in light armor or two men in heavy armor. The DM should make a rough estimate of the weight of the PCs crossing the bridge and note that for every 100 lbs. over 550 lbs. on the bridge, there is a 10% chance that the bridge breaks. (Rough estimates are acceptable.)

This check should be made at the midpoint of the bridge. Any PC on the bridge who fails a Dexterity check suffers 4d6 hp damage from the fall. The angle of descent of the bridges makes the distance to the floor lessen the nearer one gets to the column.

On the column itself, more iron rings anchor the bridges in place. The steps from the stalagmite lead down to area 12 on Level Two of the dungeon.

### 11. Weakened Floor

The rusted hinges on the door to this cavern give the impression that this entrance isn't used too often. The

door opens with some difficulty. The sound of running water can be heard from near the center of the cave. Apart from the large number of rock formations, the room is unoccupied. There seems to be another door, just around the corner.

The stream, already encountered as a waterfall at area 3, flows over a section of tougher rock beneath the thin floor here. It is therefore slightly pressurized and flows very swiftly.

There is a 1-in-6 chance per PC that the thin crust gives way beneath the PC's feet should anyone cross the room. A successful Dexterity check enables the PC to avoid getting swept away by the rushing water under the floor. If a second character is within 10 feet and makes a successful save vs. paralyzation, he may try to grab his companion before the first character is swept away to certain death.

The doorway is disused; the giant has made no use of this cave since the floor became too dangerous to walk over. The door to the south opens into area 10, which in turn leads to the second level of the dungeon.

## Level Two

Except where noted, the doors and rooms on the second level are normal size, about 8 feet from floor to ceiling, with normal dungeon doors. This makes it slightly difficult for the giant to move about here, but he prefers the comfort of the large hall at area 18 and so remains on this level.

### 12. Worked Corridor.

The steps come down into a corridor whose walls, floor, and ceiling have been skillfully worked to give the appearance of regular blocks. Carved into the walls are strange signs and sigils, apparently related to magical writing. Small pentagrams, circles, triangles, and zodiacal signs are etched into the surface of the smooth rock.

This section of corridor was designed by the mage Druleen. It can be seen, upon closer examination, that the designs stop just short of the junction to the south, as if the work was left unfinished.

PCs who carefully examine the floor near the corridor junction notice chips and gouges in the rock floor. This collection of impact marks was caused by the trap at area 13 when it was actuated by past adventurers.

### 13. Avalanche Trap.

Narrow stone steps lead up to a cavern whose only feature appears, from a distance, to be a tall pile of boulders.

The DM must ensure that the PCs have specified their marching order, as this area is a trap for the unwary. The party must walk in single file up the steps. The steps themselves look chipped and worn—a clue to the observant that danger lies ahead.





The middle step is a trigger for a fulcrum device that topples the boulders down the slope. Each of the first two PCs in line must make four successful Dexterity checks to avoid the avalanche of boulders. If a PC fails any of the checks, he suffers 1–4 hits from the rocks, each delivering 1–6 hp damage.

The next two characters in line must make two Dexterity checks each, but the DM must make attack rolls to determine hits (effectively THAC0 19). These characters are struck by 1–3 boulders, with each boulder inflicting 1–4 hp damage.

Remaining characters in formation receive fewer hits, as the front ranks have absorbed most of the rocks' momentum. They take 1–2 hits (rolled as above) for 1–2 hp damage per hit.

This trap was built by the giant while he was *charmed*, so he understands its function perfectly. It must be reset (the rocks piled up) to function again. There is nothing else of interest in the cave.

If this trap is triggered, it is 80% likely that the giant (assuming he is in the caves) hears it and is alerted to the presence of the adventurers. If the alerted giant is later encountered in these caves, he cannot be surprised.

#### 14. Debris-Strewn Library.

The door swings crazily on one hinge into a ruined library. Bits of broken shelves and burned books litter the room. Bones and old rags are scattered about. The whole area has the look of a battlefield about it.

A hapless group of adventurers got this far before the giant caught up with them. Weakened by the trap at area 13, they tried to make a stand in here but failed.

Amid the debris are a few scattered possessions: a broken sword, shattered helmets, ripped backpacks, and the like. Under a shelf, through, is a small gem that escaped the attention of the Bolg Mór. It is worth 30 gp.

#### 15. Old Cell Block.

The door opens into a 30' long corridor lined with six 10'-square cells, three on each side. The cell walls consist of iron bars cemented into the ceiling and floor. The cell doors are cast-iron fixtures held shut with iron chains and padlocks.

These cells once housed prisoners destined for use in experiments conducted by the mage. They are empty and locked; the keys can be found in area 16.

The mage specialized in necromancy toward the end of his short-lived career and bound a shadow within the cellblock. Unfortunately (or fortunately), the particular type of magic used must remain a mystery, as the mage left no notes on this process. Naturally, the shadow is an unwilling prisoner, and its continual imprisonment does not impart it with much good humor. The shadow spends most of its time skulking in the last cell to the north and attacks any adventurers who come within 10 feet.

**Shadow:** AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 21; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–5; SA strength drain; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; immune to cold-based attacks; MR immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells; SZ M; INT low (6); ML special; AL CE; XP 420; MM.

#### 16. Jailer's Quarters.

This room is bare except for a thin coating of dust on the floor. A large ring of rusty keys hangs from a spike in the wall opposite the entrance.

The mage required a jailer because some of his more grisly experiments involved live subjects. The cells were specially built, along with the stairs at area 12, the bridges at area 10, and certain other parts of the dungeon. The jailer escaped with his skin when the Bolg Mór ran amok after breaking the mage's *charm* spell.

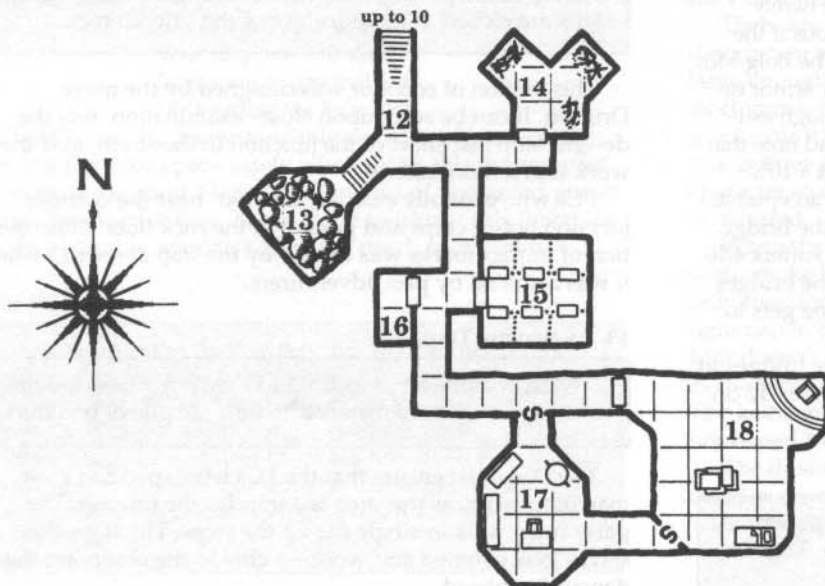
There are seven keys on the ring. Six of them fit the padlocks to the cells in area 15. The seventh key opens the doors to the study (area 17). The Bolg Mór has toyed with the keys, but he lost interest when they fit no lock known to him.

Whatever furniture was here has been commandeered by the Bolg Mór for his own use in area 18.

**17. Study.** These secret doors are opened by one of the keys on the ring found at area 16. The giant has so far not detected the presence of either door. Assuming the PCs find one of these doors and use the key, read or paraphrase the following description:

## THE POLL DUBH DORACHA Level Two

1 square = 10'





The secret door opens into a dust-covered, cobwebby, octagonal room that seems totally undisturbed. Two large work benches stand near the north and northwest walls, each strewn with retorts, glassware, bottles, and vials. In the center of the floor is a small reading table with a chair pushed in neatly beneath. A brass brazier sits behind the table.

To the south and southeast are two large bookcases lined with several dozen volumes. The shape of a dust-shrouded candelabra can just be made out, hanging from the low ceiling above the desk.

This room is a veritable treasure trove for the PCs if they manage to get out of the Poll Dubh Doracha alive. The work benches contain items of glassware used in various chemical and distillation processes, as well as apparatus more commonly used when compounding magical powders, potions, and spell components. The combined value of the glassware is around 10,000 gp. It is also extremely fragile, and there is a base 50% chance per day that some items being carried may break, reducing the overall value by 25%.

The antique reading table and chair are worth a total of 500 gp to a collector of such things. The brass brazier is worth about 400 gp and might be useful to a PC mage who wants to cast a *find familiar* spell.

The candelabra is made from solid silver and worth 3,000 gp. Once again, its bulk makes transportation a problem. Breaking it up or melting it down reduces its value by 50%.

On the shelves are numerous volumes pertaining to magic, its theories and practices, but the books are very bulky. Allow a value of 50–400 gp per book brought out of the dungeon. Some of the titles that can be found here are: *Representative Necromancy: Contacting and Controlling Dead and Undead*; *Comparative Anatomy—Demihumans*; and *Suggestive Application of Symbols and Geomorphs*.

For every week's careful, uninterrupted study that a PC mage spends on each volume, there is a cumulative 5% chance (+5% per point of Intelligence over 14) that he can learn one randomly rolled first-level wizard spell from the *Player's Handbook* or *Wizard's Spell Compendium*. The DM should determine which spell is known. No more than one spell per book may be researched in this way. Likewise, no bonus to experience level is awarded to the PC. If a character has already learned his maximum allotment of first-level spells (based on his Intelligence score), no new spells can be learned.

Also present in the library are wizard scrolls of *clairvoyance* and *water breathing*. A third scroll is *curse*; the reader must make a saving throw vs. spell or contract a skin disease that reduces the victim's Charisma by 1 point every day until the victim's Charisma drops to 1 or until a *remove curse* spell is cast. *Cure disease* has no effect.

A PC may carry three of these books if afoot, or six if on horseback and not too heavily encumbered.

If the PCs realize that this is indeed a mage's study, they'll most likely search for his main spell book. It is not in the dungeon, however, as the giant found it elsewhere and traded it for a shipment of tea.

A tiny peephole in each secret door allows limited surveillance of the areas outside the study. The peephole in the door to the north looks out into the corridor, while the one to the east looks into the lair of the Bolg Mór.

**18. Study.** If the PCs have already encountered the giant elsewhere, the description of this cave should be adjusted to suit the circumstances.

This room is a large cavern that was once the mage's main laboratory. It is now the living and sleeping quarters of the giant. Over the years, he has traded off many valuable items of lab equipment for various luxuries, the foremost among these being his precious store of tea (see area 7).

## New Magical Item

*The Cauldron of Plenty*

XP Value: 1,000

GP Value: 5,000

This magical item was created by druids of the god Dagda in imitation of this deity's own, more powerful, device. In addition, the *cauldron of plenty* is cursed to bring harm to any person who obtains it by violence, as it was created for free use by all who wish to partake of its benefits. The only exception to this *curse* is if the cauldron is obtained by a druidic follower of Dagda, in which case the *curse* is not activated.

The *curse* is suitably vague and slow in effect, but very sure; the DM should take a free hand in designing its consequences. Three to six months after the cauldron is taken by violence from its previous owner, the new owner is attacked by a comparatively powerful enemy in a fight to the death. The enemy could be a single monster or NPC, or else a group of beings; the reasons the beings could attack vary widely, but it always involves retaliation for some perceived offense of the cauldron's new owner. If the first attack fails, the next attack comes in 2–5 months; if that fails, another comes in 1–4 months, then 1–3 months, 1–2 months, one month, three weeks, two weeks, one week, and then day by day from six days to one. Finally, the new owner is attacked on a daily basis by some new and powerful force, until he gives up the cauldron or is slain.

In its normal function as a provider of large quantities of food, the cauldron operates only at the command of beings whose alignment includes a neutral element (i.e., true neutral, neutral good, neutral evil, lawful or chaotic neutral). It will not function for anyone with another alignment.

Once per day, when the proper command words are spoken, the cauldron can produce beef, mutton, or pork in quantities sufficient to feed 5–50 people. It never produces fewer than five portions, nor does it produce more food than is required by the people present. The cauldron produces only one type of meat, once per day. Its command words are given below:

Command	Result
"Déan Mairteoil"	Cooked beef
"Déan Caoireoil"	Cooked mutton
"Déan Muiceoil"	Cooked pork





The northwest door is large enough for the giant should he wish to ramble upstairs or outdoors, which he does often. To the northeast is an alcove in which the giant has installed a huge throne made from doors, tables, and other furniture that he dismantled and reassembled to suit his taste. The seat rests on a dais that is a natural rise in the cave floor, smoothed out and connected to the rest of the cavern by a number of wide, shallow steps.

All around the walls of the room are wooden stakes topped with the severed heads of the Bolg Mór's past victims. Behind his throne is a pile of the heads of people who gave him particular trouble; the cranium of Druleen the mage is given pride of place atop the pile.

A giant bed fills the alcove to the southeast. Unless the PCs have been unusually lucky, there is only a 5% chance that the giant is asleep in his bed when they enter. He will not be asleep if they have encountered him sometime in the previous 24 hours.

Along the west wall are four identical cauldrons, one of which is the magical *cauldron of plenty*. The one the adventurers seek is the third from the left as they face the wall. Only a *detect magic* spell allows the PCs to ascertain which is the magical cauldron. If this spell is not available, the safest thing to do is to take all four cauldrons back to Dertol. The giant keeps all four cauldrons dusted to make them all seemed used. All of them are clean.

The command words for the *cauldron of plenty* are written in a small bone scroll case in a very unoriginal hiding place beneath the giant's pillow. A full description of the *cauldron of plenty* is given in the "New Magical Item" sidebar.

Of further interest to the PCs is the large amount of treasure plundered by the giant over the years. Taken from merchants, adventurers, and other monsters, a comfortable amount is held in the chests and boxes piled in the center of the floor.

Like most residents of Tiglas, the Bolg Mór is loathe to use coinage in trade, though cash is necessary to purchase tea from foreign merchants. Recently, the giant has been taking an interest in the jewelry worn by various warriors he's encountered and is stockpiling precious metal to have made into rings, torcs, and bracelets.

Should the PCs have a chance to count it all, they find the giant's hoard comes to 458 pp, 1,345 gp, 3,521 sp, 3,000 cp, and jewelry worth a total of 2,500 gp.

## Negotiating With the Giant

The Bolg Mór is tricky, choosing to talk and observe any weaknesses in potential foes rather than rush headlong into combat. He does not desire to lose the magical cauldron that is his main source of food, but if the PCs can come up with some kind of arrangement whereby the giant is regularly given foodstuffs and material goods (he has a weakness for creature comforts) to compensate for the loss of the cauldron, he might (10% base chance) give up the device. Modify the base chance by the following factors:

- ❖ +20% if the PCs offer a workable solution to the giant's food problem;
- ❖ +10% if the PCs offer jewelry of 500 gp base value;
- ❖ +20% if the giant has 5 or fewer hit points remaining;
- ❖ +50% if the PCs offer the giant a place in the king's own warband with all the benefits thereof.

If the PCs can arrange this latter offer, the Rí Luachra agrees as soon as the cauldron is handed over to him. Having a giant in his warband will certainly improve the king's prestige and honor-price.



The giant does not fight unless the adventurers choose a belligerent course of action. He'll attempt to flee and bide his time instead. He knows the land better than the PCs do, and ambush is an effective weapon when help is a two- or three-day journey away.

Of course, the PCs should remember the curse on those who obtain the cauldron through violence. The curse basically states that violence breeds violence; he who slays the owner of the cauldron and steals the device also falls prey to acts of violence, though not necessarily from those who would steal the cauldron. (See the "New Magical Item" description of the cauldron.) The Bolg Mór has noted of late that the number of adventurers in his lair has increased, though he does not know why. If he successfully defends the cauldron from the current group of adventurers, he will surely fall prey to the next group, or the one after that ...

As the curse is supernatural in origin, it should be very difficult to remove, perhaps requiring a druid of Dagda of at least 11th level to negate its effects.

## Concluding the Adventure

If the adventurers return to Dertol with the cauldron (or all four cauldrons), the Rí Luachra pays them the agreed-upon sum. Exceptionally valiant PCs (or those who tell a good story of their exploits) might be offered a place in the king's warband. Although Dertol also wanted the command words for the cauldron, they are not essential to the success of the adventure. The PCs should receive a group award of 2,000 XP for retrieving the cauldron (+1,500 XP if they do so without slaying the giant), and 500 XP for retrieving the command words.

Whether or not the PCs return with the cauldron, there are opportunities for further adventures. They could be sent back to recover more of the items from the mage's study, or they could become part of the group that delivers foodstuffs and other goodies to the Bolg Mór. They could also learn from Dertol about the luckless adventurers whose remains they found in the caves. Perhaps these unfortunates had some special items yet to be rediscovered.

In any event, the Rí Luachra's problems cannot be solved without the cauldron. If he obtains it, his warband returns to service, and life reverts to normal in Tiglas. Normal, that is, until the king reneges on his agreement with the Bolg Mór. But that's another story ...

Ω

## King Oleg's Dilemma

"King Oleg's Dilemma" is an AD&D® adventure for 4–6 player characters of levels 2–4 (about 15 total levels). A mixed party of neutral- and good-aligned PCs would work best. A PC fluent in the Dwarvish language is advantageous but not essential. The adventure is set in the Kingdom of Borr but is easily adapted to any cold, mountainous region in the DM's own world. The fact that Borr is a far-northern region does affect the length of the days, but this can also be modified to suit the DM.

## For the Player Characters

The PCs begin their adventure in the coastal town of Valar, Borr's small capital. The town itself is almost entirely composed of wooden buildings, many further insulated against the cold with outer walls of turf. The PCs probably arrive in Valar on a merchant vessel, as Borr is generally inaccessible by other means. Once the party arrives, the DM should read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The last three weeks have been hell. Signing on to this merchant vessel with hopes of high adventure has been a terrible mistake. It has been a long, boring, and definitely unprofitable journey. To make matters worse, the days have become far longer and much colder as you sailed farther north.

You have finally reached land—but what a land it is! You can see an active volcano in the hills to the east as your vessel sails into the sheltered cove that contains the town of Valar. To the north, vast icy mountains stretch as far as the eye can see. It's a land of contradictions, yet possessing a strange beauty.

As your vessel docks, townsfolk arrive to offload cargo. Eager to stretch your legs, you disembark and mingle with the local people. However, you become aware that your arrival has caused more excitement than you would have expected. A small crowd quickly gathers around your party, and while they are obviously pleased to see you, you cannot help but feel concerned when you notice a messenger hurrying away toward the town center.

It soon becomes obvious that the townsfolk believe the PCs are mercenaries. The adventurers are asked about their past exploits, creatures they have fought, and so on. The PCs might wish to overemphasize their skills for the crowd's pleasure, each new exploit being met with the appropriate "oohs" and "aahs."

It is not long before the messenger returns and extends an offer of welcome from the ruler of Borr, King Oleg Steadfast. The party is invited to attend the king's court, as the king wishes to discuss a matter with them. Considering their inactivity in the past three weeks, the PCs should be eager to accept the invitation. The party is quickly led through the streets of Valar to the King's Hall, the only stone building they have so far seen.

As you enter the Hall of King Oleg of Borr, you are struck by the rugged simplicity of the furnishings. Above all else, King Oleg must be a practical man, as no pretentious war trophies or vast tapestries adorn the walls—just furs, simple banners, and the lanterns that illuminate the scene before you.

King Oleg is deep in conversation with a number of his advisors when he notices your arrival. He rises, revealing his lair, muscular frame, and advances to welcome you. He does not speak as he shakes your hands, but looks you up and down as if assessing your potential. After a quick nod





to his advisors, he smiles warmly and says, "Welcome lads and lasses, welcome! You look like good and true men and women. If you would share a meal with me and listen to my story, I think that you might be able to help me."

If the PCs accept the offer of a meal, King Oleg dismisses his advisors and relates his story to the party.

King Oleg began the human settlement of Borr with only a few ships filled with settlers. Although the hardships were many at first, King Oleg has begun (through sheer determination and strength of both limb and character) to provide a new life for his people. Now in his forties, King Oleg still cuts an imposing figure, the result of many earlier years of adventuring. Oleg cares for his people greatly and personally suffers with their hardships.

Although he is a strong leader, King Oleg has one weakness. He is too trusting of those around him, a mistake he might soon live to regret (and as the PCs will discover, to their own misfortune).

It has not been a good year for King Oleg. The active volcano to the east of Valar is causing some concern; the year's crops have not provided sufficient yield for export; one of his sons caught an obvious and highly embarrassing skin rash; and the local "deity," a cryohydra called Vermixafelix, apparently needs a change of diet, as he has not touched the kobold sacrifice left for him.

While these are all worrisome problems in themselves, the major concerns for King Oleg are the groll attacks. As Borr is a young kingdom (at least as far as human habitation is concerned), it is composed principally of settlers with limited military experience. Borr is not a rich country and has not had time to build an effective army. Over the past few months, large groups of gnolls have been attacking outlying farms, and King Oleg is concerned that it will be only a matter of time before Valar itself is attacked. King Oleg's only hope is a treaty with the largest nonhuman race in Borr: the dwarves who live in the mountains to the north.

Three parties of emissaries have been sent with an offer of treaty to the dwarves. The first two groups of envoys vanished completely, and the heads of the third party were found at the town's main gate, just two weeks ago. The king is convinced that his emissaries are insufficiently experienced to undertake another mission to the dwarves. Only a well-seasoned group of individuals like the PCs probably stands a chance.

King Oleg asks the party to take an offer of treaty to the dwarves. In return for military support from the dwarves (until Borr is able to develop its own defense), King Oleg offers them the benefit of trading facilities through the use of his wharves, and a regular supply of fresh meat, fish, and grain. In return for completing this mission, King Oleg offers the PCs 250 gp each and promises that they may keep anything they find or are given by the dwarves to seal the treaty.

As well as equipping the party against the cold, the king provides a guide, Gunnar Petersen (see "The Trek Begins" section for statistics) and a translator if no PC can speak Dwarvish. If the PCs appear hesitant, King Oleg makes the additional offer of places of rank in Borr's army, once it is raised, or small land tithes. If the party still doesn't seem too interested, the DM might wish to increase the incentive for

the PCs by advising that it will take a number of days for the vessel to be restocked and some minor repairs made. King Oleg also guarantees that he will not allow the vessel to sail without the adventurers, if they agree to undertake the task. If the PCs still refuse the mission, King Oleg is disappointed but accepts the party's decision.

**King Oleg Steadfast** (6th-level human fighter): AC 4; MV 12; F6; hp 39; THAC0 15 (base); #AT 3/2 or 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA specialized with the bastard sword (+1 to hit, +2 damage); S 15, D 12, C 17, I 14, W 11, Ch 15; SZ M; ML 15; AL CG; *chain mail +1, bastard sword +1, throwing axe.*

## Long Days in Borr

The following information is optional and may be modified or ignored to suit the DM's own world.

Borr is located close to this particular world's Arctic Circle, and as such, during the summer months, the days are exceptionally long, with sunlight sufficient for unhindered movement for up to 20 hours a day. One effect of this extra sunlight has been that many nocturnal races have had to adapt and so do not receive the normal combat penalties for operating in sunlight. Hence, the gnolls in this adventure fight equally well in darkness or full sunlight.

## For the Dungeon Master

There is more to the problem of the gnolls than King Oleg suspects. One of the king's advisors, Sterna Othmassun, is in league with a weaponsmith, Bjorn Harnotha. Together, the two conspirators are making a good deal of money by providing weapons to the gnolls.

In fact, a group of only 50 gnolls is responsible for the current spate of attacks and, armed with information also provided by Sterna, they have successfully intercepted two of the three previous treaty missions. (For the fate of the other group of envoys, see area B.)

It was Bjorn's idea to return the heads of the emissaries, partly to terrorize the community of Valar, but mainly because he is a particularly bloodthirsty individual. Sterna and Bjorn have a lot to lose if the dwarves sign a treaty with King Oleg, and so they make plans to ensure the party's failure.

**Sterna Othmassun** (3rd-level human priest): AC 5; MV 6; P3; hp 14; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 11, D 13, C 14, I 13, W 15, Ch 11; SZ M; ML 15; AL LE; XP 175; scale mail, shield, footman's mace, potion of *extra-healing*, *ring of warmth*.

Spells (4/2): 1st—*cause fear, command, endure cold, sanctuary*; 2nd—*heat metal, produce flame*.

Although greed is a motive for Sterna's disloyalty, it is not his prime motive. A cleric of the "old" world they left behind, Sterna is (wrongly) convinced that King Oleg plans to take up the worship of new gods in this new land. Sterna therefore seeks to bring down King Oleg and take his people back to their birthplace. He is glad to have Bjorn as an ally, as Bjorn is happy to do the dirty work.

**Bjorn Harnotha** (4th-level human fighter): AC 4; MV 9 (24 with *snowshoes of speed*); F4; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 12, C 16, I 12, W 12, Ch 9; SZ M; ML 15;



AL NE; XP 270; chain mail, shield, *spear +1*, dagger, short bow, 12 arrows, *snowshoes of speed*, 20 gp.

Bjorn's snowshoes (value 500 gp) allow him to travel at a movement rate of 24 over flat snow. He uses the snowshoes when he needs to contact his gnoll allies, thereby reducing the chances of discovery by limiting the time he is gone from Valar.

Bjorn's motives are simple: "All for one, and more for me." Bjorn does not enjoy working hard for his comforts and was more than eager to take an easier option. Bjorn tolerates his gnoll allies but thinks of them as expendable. If the gnolls become too successful, however, Bjorn is quite prepared to cut his losses and set up somewhere else. Even so, he will not give up his present venture without a fight. Although a good spearman himself, Bjorn prefers fighting with the advantage of greater numbers.

## The Trek Begins

Assuming the PCs agree to undertake the mission, they can begin their trek into the mountains. It should take the party between three and four days to reach the dwarven stronghold, traveling (on foot, as horses would not be practical) an average distance of 15 miles per day. The PCs might wish to travel farther each day during the extended daylight hours, but this should be discouraged, as the forced march soon brings on the effects of fatigue (as detailed in Chapter 14 of the *Player's Handbook*). Once the party reaches the foothills (see map), movement becomes even more difficult, and the DM should ensure that the PCs suffer further fatigue penalties if sufficient rest periods are not taken.

King Oleg provides the PCs with whatever basic equipment they might require, including sleeping bags, snowshoes, and snow-tents. As he guides the party, Gunnar Petersen provides a good description of the route they will take so that, if anything happens to him, the PCs can complete their journey. If the party does not include a dwarven linguist (or are perhaps a bit weak in numbers), an additional NPC may be included. Use the statistics for Ragnar Bronstedt listed later.

**Gunnar Petersen** (1st-level human fighter): AC 6; MV 9; F1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 13, D 12, C 12, I 11, W 13, Ch 12; SZ M; ML 12; AL LN; hide armor, battle axe, dagger, composite short bow, 12 arrows. Non-weapon proficiencies: navigation, arctic survival, fire-building, tracking.

Gunnar has lived in Valar from the beginning of its settlement and has come to love his new home. He spent much of the first year in Borr exploring the surrounding countryside and journeying into the mountains. Although he knows the location of the dwarven kingdom, he has not had any interaction with the dwarves.

Gunnar is exceptionally loyal to King Oleg and will not abandon the party under any circumstances, preferring to fight and—if necessary—die with the party. Gunnar knows many tales and enjoys telling them over the evening fire. (This could be a good opportunity for the DM to whet the PCs' appetite for further adventures.)

**Ragnar Bronstedt** (1st-level human fighter): AC 6; MV 9; F1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 11, C 14, I 13, W 9, Ch 11; SZ M; ML 11; AL LN; hide armor, spear, two throwing axes.

Ragnar learned to read and speak Dwarvish back in the old country. A relatively somber individual, he has a cynical outlook on life. Even so, he takes great delight in dropping gnolls from a distance with his two throwing axes whenever the opportunity presents itself.

Your party sets out early the next day. King Oleg and a fair-sized crowd of well-wishers are at the northern gate to see you off. Your spirits are high as Gunnar, setting a good pace, leads you along the eastern side of the river that gives Valar its fresh water. You pass outlying farms as you travel the first few miles northward, but by mid-morning even these are left behind. As you walk, Gunnar tells you that the dwarven stronghold lies at the base of a volcano in the mountain range to the northeast, some three days' hard travel away.

There are three set encounters in this adventure. If the DM requires more, an arctic plain/mountain random encounter table may be used. The use of a random encounter table is not recommended, however, as the set encounters should provide sufficient challenge for the PCs without unnecessarily weakening them.

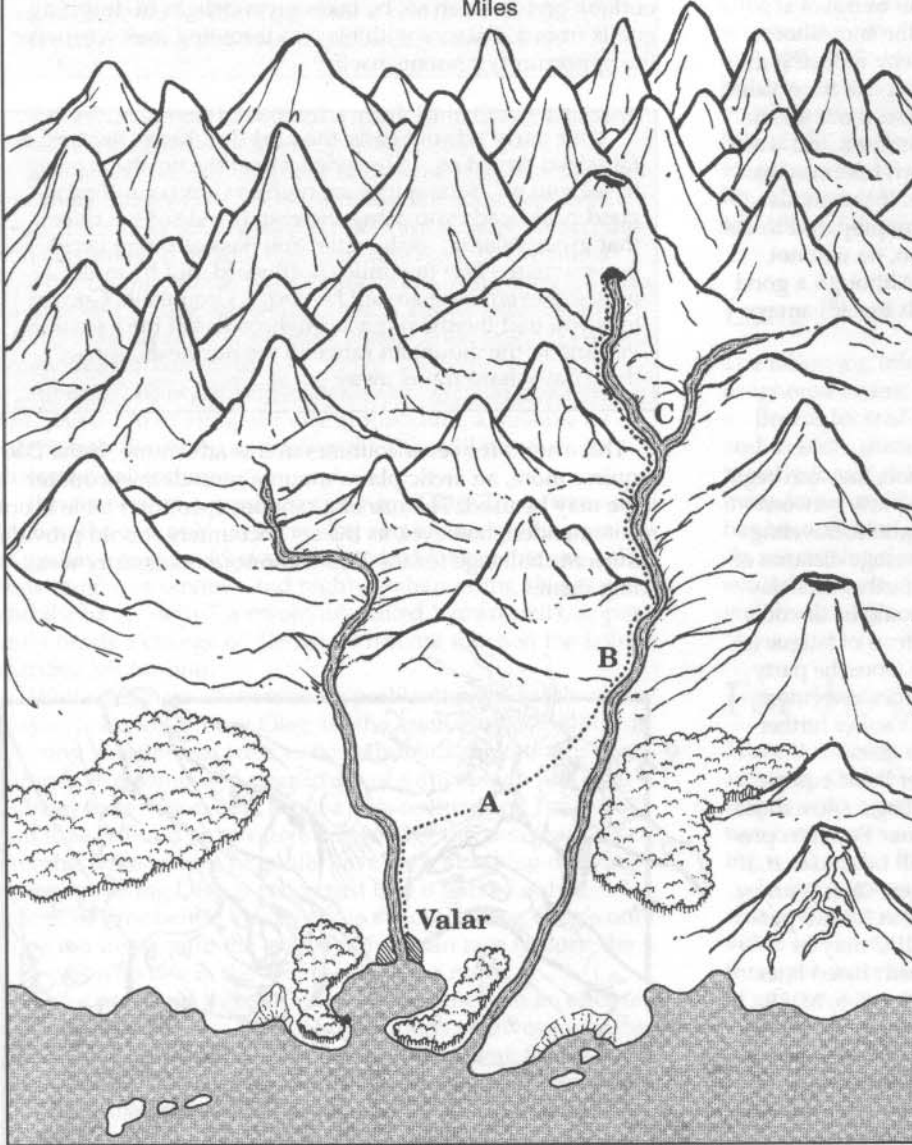






## Borr Area

0 10 20  
Miles



**A. The First Gnoll Attack.** The first encounter occurs seven to eight hours after the PCs leave Valar. Bjorn and Sterna have used a prearranged signal bonfire to summon the gnolls and have told them of the party's mission. Perhaps misunderstanding the strength of the party, only 10 gnolls have been sent to intercept the group.

As the PCs walk toward the northeast (see map), the gnolls rush out of a small copse of trees to the rear of the party and attack. The gnolls carry no missile weapons but are led by a 3-HD sub-leader. The gnolls fight savagely until seven or more of their party are slain, whereupon the survivors attempt to flee. They will not allow themselves to be captured and fight to the death if surrounded or trapped. If the PCs search the bodies, they can find 10 sp on each slain gnoll. The gnoll sub-leader also has a silver armet worth 30 gp.

**Gnoll sub-leader:** AC 5; MV 9; HD 3; hp 19; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ L; INT low (7); ML 12; AL CE; XP 65; MM; scale mail, shield, battle axe.

**Gnolls (9):** AC 5; MV 9; HD 2; hp 16, 15, 14 (x3), 12 (x2), 11 (x2); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ L; INT low (6); ML 12; AL CE; XP 35; MM; scale mail, shield, long sword (four gnolls), battle axe (three gnolls), morning star (two gnolls).

All gnoll weapons are relatively new, well made, and rust free. The weapons were provided by Bjorn Harnotha, but there are no brands or marks on the weapons signifying where they were crafted or by whom.

**B. The Snow Troll.** Assuming the PCs camp for the night, they should reach the foothills by midday on the second day. Following a river valley, the party can see the particular mountain range they are attempting to reach in the distance, an additional 1-2 days' march away.

The second group of emissaries from King Oleg also reached this far but met their end at the hands of a snow troll that lurks in the valley ahead. Having feasted well on the previous party of emissaries, the snow troll looks forward to another meal. It has carved a cave into the side of a hill and covered the entrance with snow. It waits until it detects the party passing the entrance, then bursts through the snow to attack the adventurers.

A surprise roll should be made for the snow troll's attack, with the following modifiers: Each dwarf or elf with the party should be allowed a roll to detect the concealed cave entrance when passing (1-2 on 1d8). Rangers may also roll (1-2 on 1d6). If anyone detects the concealed entrance, the party receives a +2 bonus on the surprise roll when the snow troll attacks, but if the cave entrance is not

detected, the party suffers a -3 penalty to the surprise roll.

If the party defeats the snow troll and examines the cave, they find gruesome evidence of the emissaries' horrible fate. Among the remains, in a corner of the cave, the PCs can find 15 gp and a torn backpack that contains two potions (*clairaudience* and *healing*). The search also reveals some personal items that belonged to the emissaries, and the PCs should be encouraged to return these effects to the families of the slain envoys.

**Snow troll:** AC 4; MV 9; HD 7; hp 31; THAC0 13; #AT 2 (claws); Dmg 3-10/3-10; SA may attack two opponents at once; -3 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls; SD *regenerates* 3 hp damage/round (starting three rounds after first being wounded); suffers half or no damage from cold-based attacks; SW suffers double damage from fire-based attacks (save for



normal damage instead); SZ L (8' tall); INT low (5); ML 14; AL CE; XP 1,400; MM (troll—variant).

**C. Deserted Fort.** Depending on the party's speed, the PCs should be well into the mountains by the third or fourth day. The volcano that houses the entrance to the dwarven kingdom (the dwarves use the volcano to power their forges) dominates the river valley, coming into view and disappearing again as the trail weaves in and around rocky outcrops.

As the PCs emerge from behind one large outcrop and find themselves with a clear view of the valley below, they are alerted by a yell. If the PCs investigate the source of the yell, they notice a sizable force of gnolls moving quickly up the mountain path behind and below them. The gnolls have spotted the party and are increasing their pace to catch up.

The failure of the first gnoll attack has been discovered (either by an escapee from the earlier battle or the failure of the attacking party to return). Infuriated by the survival of the meddling outsiders, Bjorn Harnotha contacted the main force of gnolls and is personally leading the group in pursuit of the PCs. The gnolls are accustomed to the conditions in these mountains and catch up to the PCs within two hours.

If Gunnar Petersen is still with the PCs, he is well aware of how little time remains before they are overrun. He mentions to the PCs that he knows of a ruined dwarven fort just a short distance farther on. Although not perfect, it at least provides the party with a tactical advantage. If Gunnar was killed in an earlier encounter, the DM can suggest that a better defensible position might be found farther on and allow the PCs to notice the ruins in the near distance.

In either case, once the PCs reach the dwarven fort, they have one hour to prepare before the gnolls arrive. The PCs might wish to slow the gnolls' pursuit by creating an avalanche or setting some other form of trap. As there are a number of options the PCs might suggest, it is left to the DM to handle the particulars of each suggestion. However, the DM should remember that the one thing the party does not have is time, and the PCs should be warned that they will be quickly overrun if they attempt traps that require lengthy preparation. Any successful trap delays the gnolls by a maximum of one hour. No trap, no matter how successful, should be allowed to devastate the gnoll force.

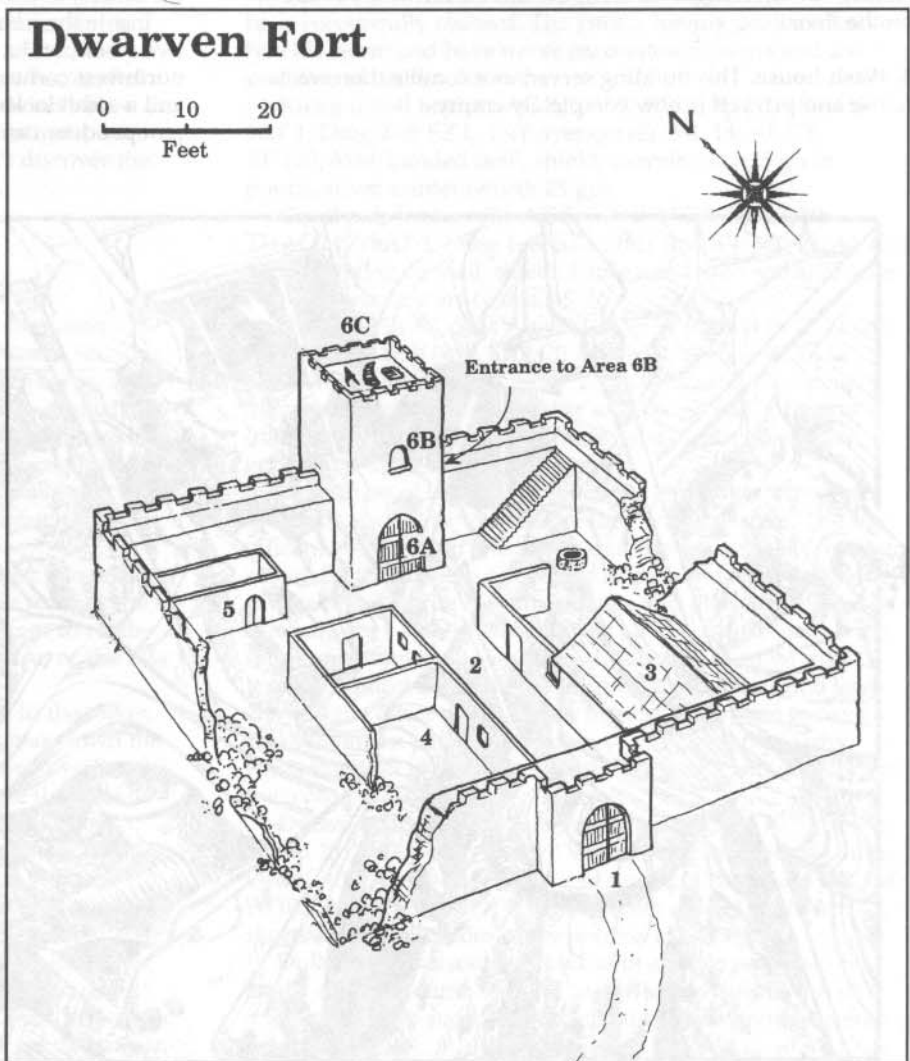
The PCs might choose to ignore the strategic advantage of the fort and attempt to outrun the gnolls, especially if Gunnar is not with them to advise against such a move. If this is the case, the party is overtaken by the gnolls one hour after passing the fort. To improve the party's chances of survival, the DM might wish to allow the party's traps to inflict greater gnoll casualties

(should they plan any) or arrange for a dwarven patrol (see "Gnoll Attack" below) to even out the numbers.

## The Dwarven Fort

The dwarven fort is located just above the junction of two small rivers that combine to form the river that the PCs have been following. Originally designed to overlook the river valley, the fort was built many years ago during an earlier conflict between the dwarves and the gnolls and has been deserted (but not forgotten) for some time.

**1. Entrance and Outer Wall.** The fort is square, with an entrance in the south wall and a tower in the center of the north wall. The walls enclose three buildings and a central courtyard. As these buildings were built by and for dwarves, the doorways are only 5½' high, and tall PCs must stoop to enter the buildings. This helps to explain why the gnolls have not remained to occupy this fort, as the constant headaches would be too much for the slow-witted creatures.







The double doors that seal the main entrance long ago outlived their usefulness, as two large sections of the main walls have been reduced to ruin (see map). The walls that remain standing are well made, though, and stand 20' tall. The battlements atop the walls are 3' high, and the parapet is 5' wide. All of the walls and floors within the fort are made of stone.

**2. Main Courtyard.** This open area leads from the main entrance (area 1) to the ground floor of the tower (area 6). In the northeast corner, a well supplied the dwarven troops stationed here. The water is still drinkable, but there is no bucket with which to draw it up from the well.

**3. Barracks.** These were originally the barracks of the dwarven troops, but they have long since been looted of any useful items. This is the only building that has any of its original clay tile roof remaining.

**4. Storerooms.** Designed to hold the supplies required by the dwarves stationed here, these rooms are now empty. The southernmost section appears to have once doubled as a smithy, as iron filings and some blackened bricks are found on the floor.

**5. Wash-house.** This building served as a combination wash-house and privy. It is now completely empty.

**6A. Tower, Ground Floor.** Large double doors open to reveal a stable and storeroom. The dwarves themselves did not ride horses but on occasions used animals (including lizards) to cart supplies. The stable is big enough for only two animals. Some shelving still remains, and if the PCs search the room, they can find a small cask of lamp oil that has been overlooked by previous looters. There is enough oil to fill four flasks or to spread over a 10' x 10' area.

There is no access to the second floor from this level. Scaling the tower to reach the rooftop or some other access point requires a successful climbing check.

**6B. Tower, Second Floor.** This tower room has only one door, which opens onto the parapet to the east. The door is locked but can be opened by a *knock* spell or a thief who makes a successful open locks roll with a +10% bonus. The door is sturdy and takes nothing short of a battering ram to force open, withstanding 150 hp damage before sundering. The PCs should be discouraged from taking this action, as the tower appears to be the most easily defensible part of the fort. A party member who climbs onto the tower roof can enter this room through a trap door, then open the parapet door for the others, as the key is not required to get out.

Inside the room are two beds, a small dresser, a table with two stools, and a small, wood-burning stove positioned in the northwest corner. A ladder leads upward to the tower roof, and a small lockable window faces the courtyard below. The parapet door can be locked and barred from the inside and,





as previously mentioned, resists being forced for some time. (See "Gnoll Attack" section for specific details.) There is nothing to be found in this room.

**6C. Tower Roof.** Forty feet above the ground, the tower roof gives an excellent view of the entire fort. A trap door swings open easily, disclosing a ladder that leads downward into area **6B**. A small hole in the northwest corner serves to vent smoke from the stove in the chamber below. The remains of a wooden frame and a large metal horn are scattered about the rooftop.

The horn is approximately 6' long, with an 18" opening at one end. It was once held in the wooden frame, but the ropes have rotted away. The horn is decorated, and there are Dwarvish runes near its mouth. If Ragnar is present or a *comprehend languages* spell is cast, the runes translate as "For fear of stranger, in iron am I cast, to warn of danger, with thrice formed blast." The horn is ornate but not magical.

Even without the aid of a translation, a clever group of PCs should be able to guess the purpose of the horn. During the dwarf/gnoll war, the horn was used to alert the main dwarven stronghold of impending attack. If the party translates the runic inscription and blows the horn three times, a unit of dwarves from the volcano stronghold immediately begins a forced march to the fort, arriving three hours after the horn is blown. If the PCs merely guess and don't blow the horn exactly three times, the dwarves still investigate, but they take 6–12 hours to arrive. If the PCs don't discover the significance of the horn, they're on their own.

## Gnoll Attack

The tactics employed by Bjorn Harnotha and the gnolls depends on the number of times the horn is blown. The gnolls are well aware of the significance of three blasts, and realizing the short time available, they launch an immediate all-out attack. There are 25 gnolls with Bjorn, including Klegg (a 4-HD leader) and two 3-HD sub-leaders. The gnolls split into two groups, with one sub-leader and 10 gnolls attacking through the east wall, and the rest entering through the southwest gap.

Klegg is a young but extremely strong leader. He respects Bjorn due to their similarly vicious nature. He realizes the importance of defeating the the humans' attempt to establish a treaty with the dwarves and fights until he or the PCs are killed.

If the adventurers have set up their defense in the tower, the gnolls attacking from the east attempt to break down the doors, while the main force tries to scale the tower walls with grapples. In this scenario, the gnolls do not take the time to construct a battering ram, instead splitting their efforts between hacking down the parapet door with battle axes and trying to reach the tower roof.

Three gnolls with the main group have short bows, and they position themselves in the southwestern section of area 4. Bjorn has everything to lose if the PCs are not killed and fights to the death. The gnolls continue to fight as long as Bjorn and Klegg are alive to lead them, but if Bjorn and Klegg are slain, the DM should make a morale check for the remain-

ing gnolls. If the gnolls fail their morale check, they make their escape before the dwarves arrive. If the gnolls' morale does not break, they continue to fight until defeated.

If the PCs do not sound the horn, or if they sound the wrong number of blasts, Bjorn can afford to be more restrained. He first calls on the party to surrender, although he has no intention of honoring offers of amnesty. If the PCs are sensible and refuse, Bjorn deploys his forces as described in the attack above, but more cautiously.

The gnolls who enter through the east wall require four turns to make a crude battering ram from the barracks' roof timbers. Once the ram is completed, they attack the parapet door to the tower while their companions cover them with missile fire. If this group is successful in breaking down the door (requiring 10 combat rounds), the main force also rushes the door. If the attempt on the door fails, the remaining gnolls and Bjorn attack the tower with grapples, hoping to climb to the roof and enter through the trap door. Bjorn and the gnolls realize they have plenty of time before the dwarves arrive, so they are cautious in their advances.

If Bjorn is somehow captured, heroes can interrogate him. However, Bjorn does not divulge his accomplice Sterna unless he is successfully *charmed*. The gnolls, having dealt exclusively with Bjorn, and have never encountered Sterna and are unaware of his involvement.

**Klegg** (gnoll leader): AC 3; MV 9; HD 4; hp 27; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SZ L; INT average (8); ML 14; AL CE; XP 120; *MM*; banded mail, shield, morning star, 5 gp in pouch, silver armlet (worth 25 gp).

**Gnoll sub-leaders** (2): AC 5; MV 9; HD 3; hp 20, 19; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SZ L; INT low (7); ML 12; AL CE; XP 65; *MM*; scale mail, shield, battle axe, long sword, 25 sp in pouch, silver bracers (worth 10 gp).

**Gnolls** (22): AC 5; MV 9; HD 2; hp 16 (×5), 14 (×4), 12 (×4), 11 (×3), 10 (×3), 9 (×3); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SZ L; INT low (6); ML 11; AL CE; XP 35; *MM*; scale mail, shield, long sword (eight gnolls), battle axe (six gnolls), guisarme (three gnolls), morning star (two gnolls), short bow (three gnolls), pouch containing 10 sp.

Regardless of how many times the party blows the horn, the battle should be over before the dwarves arrive. The significance of the horn blasts is that, if the party makes the right signal, Bjorn must throw caution to the winds and make one savage attack. If the PCs are sensible and plan their defenses carefully, they should stand a very good chance of surviving. If the party appears to be in great difficulty, the DM may want to remind the PCs of the significance of the gnoll leaders, and the effect they have on morale, or arrange to have a small dwarven patrol (maximum of five fighters) nearby when the horn is sounded. Use the following statistics for the dwarven patrol, whenever it arrives.

**Dulanin Sternhelm** (dwarven patrol leader): AC 4; MV 6; F4; hp 23; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD infra-vision, +3 to saves vs. poison and magic; S 15, D 13, C 15, I 10, W 10, Ch 15; SZ S; ML 14; AL LG; *chain mail* +1, *battle axe* +2, shortsword, snowshoes, three potions of *healing*.

Dulanin is a seasoned fighter with an intense hatred for gnolls and their kind. He will be particularly pleased with any party that is successful against the gnolls and is eager to help in any way.





**Dwarves** (4): AC 4; MV 6; F3 (×1), F2 (×3); hp 19, 14, 12 (×2); THAC0 18 (×1), 19 (×3); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD infravision, +2 to saves vs. poison and magic; SZ S; INT average (10); ML 13; AL LG; chain mail, shield, dagger, military pick (one dwarf), battle axe (three dwarves), snowshoes.

## Concluding the Adventure

If the party survives the final encounter with the gnolls, completing the mission should be a simple task. If the PCs blew the horn, dwarven troops eventually arrive at the fort. If the PCs managed without the extra assistance of the dwarven patrol mentioned above, the DM may use those statistics, with the addition of five 1st-level dwarven fighters, to represent the dwarven force sent out from the main stronghold. These dwarves provide assistance to the PCs, bandaging or healing wounds if required. If the party includes a dwarf, or if Ragnar is still alive, the PCs can communicate King Oleg's offer of treaty.

If the PCs did not blow the horn, they must continue their journey and reach the dwarven stronghold before making contact with the dwarves. Although this takes the party another six hours' travel time, the DM should allow the PCs to accomplish this task without further incident.

In either case, the dwarves are happy to accept King Oleg's offer as, like most dwarves, they are not too fond of sea travel and welcome the opportunity to increase their trading horizons. The dwarves have not attempted to contact the human settlers previously, as they have been unsure of the settlers' true nature. They are therefore pleasantly surprised and pleased with King Oleg's peaceful intentions and prove to be valuable allies. If no party member speaks Dwarvish, the DM can have a lot of fun watching the PCs attempt to communicate King Oleg's wishes to the befuddled dwarven lords.

For successfully contacting the dwarves, each party member should be awarded 500 XP on top of any experience points awarded for individual combats. The DM should also reward individual PCs (up to 250 XP) for good roleplaying during the course of the adventure.

To seal the treaty with King Oleg, each member of the party is given one weapon of his choice by the dwarves. The weapons are not magical but are exceptionally well made and are worth 50% more than human-made equivalents on the open market. The party members should not wish to part with the weapons, though, as they are marked with dwarven runes that identify the bearer as a "Dwarf Friend," ensuring a friendly response from any non-evil dwarves encountered.

Once the dwarves are contacted and King Oleg's offer is accepted, the adventure is over. The dwarves offer to provide safe escort through the mountains to the foothills, where the remaining trip to Valar passes without incident. Later adventures could require the PCs to further convince the dwarves of their honesty and bravery (especially if they had trouble translating King Oleg's treaty terms), or help the dwarven troops remove the threat of the gnolls once and for all. It is also highly likely that Sterna Othmassun's role in the plot will remain undiscovered, and he will have revenge on his mind. There are many more secrets within the Kingdom of Borr, but these will have to wait for another time. Ω

## Encounter in the Wildwood

"Encounter in the Wildwood" would make an interesting diversion as part of a larger AD&D® module or campaign. It may also be used as a stand-alone adventure with little modification. The whole adventure takes place in a wilderness setting—a wild but often-traveled wood is best—and it is intended for use with a party of 4–7 characters of levels 2–4 (about 17 total levels).

The adventurers should be returning from a particularly successful adventure in which they achieved their goals, won treasure, gained experience, and are feeling that everything is going well. The following events should impress upon them that not everything goes their way all of the time. The scenario is centered on an ambush by a group of rather unusual collaborators.

## Adventure Background

Chinpot and Tuggut are two cyclopskin who have not had too fine a time of it among their fellows in the hills. When they tired of being the objects of what passes for humor in cyclopskin quarters, they decided to leave their familiar territory for a life of adventure.

Their adventures have been, by and large, not too successful. On one recent raid, Tuggut made such a wild effort with his slingshot that he accidentally shot Chinpot in the back of the head. He claimed he was aiming at a farmer. When they finally got back to their new lair, they were bruised, battered, and burned, whereupon they decided not to attack defended homesteads anymore.

Then, by accident (it couldn't have been by design), Chinpot caught a boggle, and the cyclopskin figured they'd eat him. But when they got a good look at the creature, they saw that he was all "off center," so they couldn't decide how to share him fairly. Besides, he claimed to be an expert adventurer and offered to make life comfortable for the whole lot of them if only Chinpot and Tuggut wouldn't put him in the cooking pot.

So that was how two cyclopskin and a boggle set up a little business for themselves, waylaying unwary travelers instead of wasting time against fortified dwellings as they had in the past. Chinpot and Tuggut were very impressed with Nik-Nik, the boggle, and his unique way of picking pockets. In fact, it became something of a diversion for them to see Nik-Nik's disembodied hands appearing through crossed branches and sifting through an unsuspecting victim's gear. To use the creature's *dimension door* ability more profitably, they even set up frames of branches and odd pieces of timber in places near the forest track so the boggle (or parts thereof) could appear and disappear to the company's satisfaction.

Time went by, and the threesome flourished. When food was scarce, the boggle made snares by placing a frame outside an animal burrow and passing his hands through to grab anything that came out. Nik-Nik proved invaluable to the cyclopskin, who now regard him as something akin to a ser-



vant, which is probably as high a regard as they could have for anyone they consider weaker than themselves.

As the reputation of that particular area of the forest worsened, interested individuals began arriving to investigate and catch a piece of the action. The result was the growth of the bandit gang to eight with the addition of a quickling named Zazzafizzlezizzle and four rather uncommunicative needlemen.

The quickling improved the original devices used by the boggle and devised contingency plans in case things should go wrong—something the others hadn't considered doing because of their successes.

The needlemen seem to be just along for the ride. They take shares in the treasures gained, but they seem more interested in the elimination of all elven travelers than in the gold or provisions pilfered by the others.

## Into the Wildwood

The PCs should be traveling through the area in which this unusual bandit gang operates. This could be the result of a wrong turn or shortcut. In any event, the PCs should possess a good quantity of treasure or magical items for Nik-Nik to pilfer, as the gradual or sudden loss of these items will give the PCs something to think about as they travel through the woodland. How the boggle operates his special *dimension door* power is explained in detail in the "Boggle Behavior" sidebar.

It is not necessary for open conflict to occur, but if circumstances dictate that it must (if Nik-Nik is caught, for example), the tactics for combat as planned by the quickling Zazzafizzlezizzle are detailed in "The Ambush."

The PCs must spend at least one rest period of several hours (a whole night is better) in the encounter area shown on the map, to add to the fun inherent in this scenario. Prior to the ambush, the PCs meet a fellow traveler named Grikloon. The DM may read or paraphrase the following description to the players at some point before the PCs arrive at the mapped area:

You have been traveling along the forest track for quite a while and have just come upon a strange sight. By the side of the trail is a small figure seated on a hillock, his chin resting in his cupped hands. He seems totally unaware of your approach, as if he is either lost in thought or just oblivious to his surroundings. He stretches his legs and yawns, showing a set of yellow fangs. Understandably, your attention is drawn to the creature's cloven feet and goatlike legs, which are revealed as it stands up. It blinks and scratches an area beside one of the two ivory horns growing from its head and then proceeds to study its fingernails carefully.

If the PCs think this is a satyr, then they must also think they've met the scruffiest-looking satyr ever created. This individual wears a canvas jacket dripping with colored beads, over which he wears some kind of leather waistcoat with a large triangle pattern on its back, made from metal studs. The whole is dirty and smelly and could do with some minor repairs.

The creature is Grikloon, a forlarren. Grikloon is lost in the woods, though he isn't very perturbed about this fact. He reckons, quite rightly, that someone will come along the trail sooner or later. The forks and turn-offs ahead confuse him, so he's been sitting here for three days and is a little bored. If approached, he seems amiable enough, as he wants the PCs to guide him to the edge of the woods. He is, in this case, in one of his good moods. This means that he doesn't attack the PCs on sight, though the adventurers see that he has problems controlling his left hand, which twitches and grasps at nothing and seems to have a will of its own. Grikloon casually slaps it with his right palm each time it starts to drag him toward one of the PCs, and this usually quiets it for a while.

Grikloon is content to amble along with the party and is quite a conversationalist (for a forlarren), being able to name three of the seven days of the week, count up to 10 with a 10% chance of doing so correctly, and find choice nestlings for lunch with 90% accuracy. If combat breaks out between the PCs and the bandits, Grikloon quite happily joins the fray until he receives his first wound. After this, he is equally cheerful about using his power to *heat metal* on the nearest armored PC, claiming that the PCs led him into a trap and that they must pay for their treachery.

Even for a forlarren, whose baatezu/nymph parentage gives him a personality split between good and evil, Grikloon







## Boggle Behavior

A boggle may use his *dimension door* power at will through any complete frame. A frame might be a doorframe, three or more branches tied together or overlapping, or even the legs of a standing character. (The ground completes the third side of this particular frame.) This power may be used only if there is a second frame—a receiving frame—within the 30-yard range, though each frame allows movement in both directions and to other frames in range. The boggle cannot see through a frame by looking through another frame in range, but he remains aware of the location of all suitable frames within his 30-yard radius.

The boggle may pass all or part of his body through a sending frame. His hands, for example, might appear 20 feet away to strike at someone. As the boggle always targets a receiving frame, he is not subject to the risk of arriving in a solid area (as a wizard casting the *dimension door* spell might) or being stranded on the Astral Plane. Recovery from the use of this special *dimension door* power is instantaneous for the boggle.

The boggle may use such a *dimension door* to transport anything he is touching or carrying. A person or object must be in physical contact with the boggle to pass through the portal. Therefore, a boggle may not push a victim through a *dimension door* but could easily drag one through (if the boggle holds on tightly to the victim and the frames are large enough for the victim to pass through).

A boggle is quite strong, being able to carry his own weight (about 90 lbs.) plus an additional 20 lbs. A being weighing 90 lbs. or less may be pulled off balance by a boggle if the victim is surprised and fails a Dexterity check. A sleeping PC of the proper size automatically fails this roll.

If the person grabbed makes a Dexterity check, he may attempt a Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll to break free of the boggle's grasp, but a boggle lets go immediately 80% of the time if he fails to off-balance a victim in one attempt.

Anyone who is partially or wholly dragged through a boggle's *dimension door* and fails a saving throw vs. petrifica-

tion is stunned for three rounds, during which time the boggle may rifle through the victim's pockets, seek a fresh victim, or physically attack. A character so stunned revives the melee round after being struck and injured, so a boggle usually chooses to steal from rather than attack a stunned victim. An exception to this is made if the character has inflicted damage upon the boggle, in which case there is a 50% chance that the vengeful creature bites or otherwise damages his captive. If the victim is outnumbered by boggles while stunned, each boggle receives a free attack in the melee.

A particularly vengeful (or malicious) boggle might place potentially lethal objects through a *dimension door*. Emptying a pot of live scorpions near a sleeping character is a particularly nasty example of a boggle's spite.

A boggle may elect to leave a victim stranded between two *doors* (such as having the victim's legs stick out one frame while his head and upper body stick out another frame yards away)! If this happens, the victim is stuck until someone casts *dispel magic* on him. Casting this spell automatically catapults the trapped character through one door (50% chance for either one), with the normal chance of being stunned if a save vs. petrification is unsuccessful. If one of the frames—either the sending frame or receiving frame—is destroyed while a PC is trapped, the character is ejected through the intact frame, with the possibility of being stunned (as above). If both frames are broken simultaneously, the character is ejected into the Astral Plane.

Unless a character stuck between *doors* completely fills the gaps inside the frame, he is no impediment to a boggle wishing to use those *doors*. A character so trapped must have a weapon in hand to get a swipe at a boggle "just passing through."

A character caught between *doors* has a 10% chance per day of attracting the attention of some monster from the Astral Plane, who is 70% likely to attack those portions of the victim's body showing through on that plane. Boggles pass through the Astral Plane instantly and are never in danger from any Astral creatures.

is exceptionally erratic. Once the PC he attacks is reduced to negative hit points or is slain, the forlarren returns to fighting the bandits. When he is hit again, he attacks the nearest PC, as in the first instance. This sequence continues until Grikloon is either dead or reduced to 6 hp, in which case he flees the scene and disappears into the woods.

Grikloon knows little about the forest or how to get out of it. If he is offered food, he accepts it no matter how bad it is; but if he's offered treasure, he refuses it. He drinks nothing but water, so the PCs shouldn't be able to poison him or test out unknown potions on him. If attacked, he defends himself with his claws.

**Grikloon** (forlarren): AC 2; MV 9; HD 3; hp 12; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4; SA *heat metal* once/day (as the spell); SZ M (4½' tall); INT low (7); ML 9; AL NE; XP 120; FF.

## The Forest Glade

The PCs must stay within the area delineated by the map because of the density of the undergrowth around this partic-

ular clearing. Unless the PCs have some magical means to penetrate or bypass the vegetation (such as *pass plant* or *fly* spells), they must hack their way through, giving the bandits plenty of scope for follow-up attacks.

It's assumed that the PCs enter the glade from the west, which is easy enough if they're actually traveling from that direction—or if they're lost and heading in the wrong direction. If this direction needs to be changed, simply reverse the map and redraw the compass rose to indicate the desired direction.

**1. Forest Trail.** The density of the plant growth on each side of the trail is relieved at last as the path enters a glade where the ground is rockier and only a few spindly trees and bushes grow. Briars and brambles arch over the trail where it comes into the clearing.

Some of this area has been cleared by Chinpot and Tuggut to make it more inviting to travelers wishing to take a rest from the monotony of the woodland. The soil here isn't too good, though, so the trees don't grow as tall.



The boulders occur naturally. (They were carried here by a glacier and left behind when the ice melted.) Dwarves and gnomes can tell the rocks are not native to the area. A few of these boulders have been lightly coated with blackish boggle oil to make them slippery. There's a 35% chance that any PC climbing a boulder encounters a patch of this oil. A successful Dexterity check is required to keep one's footing; a failed roll indicates a fall resulting in 1-3 hp damage.

**2. Briars Across the Gap.** These thorny plants have been encouraged to grow across this gap (and others, as indicated on the map) because they simulate the frames needed by Nik-Nik to produce his *dimension door* entertainments for Chinpot and Tuggut. Zazzafizzlezizzle suggested these improvements on the crude wooden stakes the original threesome used, as the briars are less likely to arouse suspicion. PCs may push aside the briars without harm to themselves.

The boggle may stretch his body to about 6 feet to reach any of the frames made by the quickling, passing his hands or upper torso through via *dimension door* to attempt a theft. (See "Boggle Behavior" sidebar for details.)

**3. Quickling Hideout.** Zazzafizzlezizzle hides in this bush as the PCs pass by. He doesn't show himself unless Nik-Nik gives the alarm to indicate something has gone wrong.

The quickling prefers things to go smoothly, as the deaths of travelers here might alert the authorities to send an armed force to eliminate the bandits. So far, a few minor magical items and some backpacks and money pouches have been lifted, and the group has only had to flee determined resistance once. The loot is stored in the gang's lair, deep in the

woods. The quickling prefers that the magical treasures be kept only for defending the lair, not for setting up the ambush.

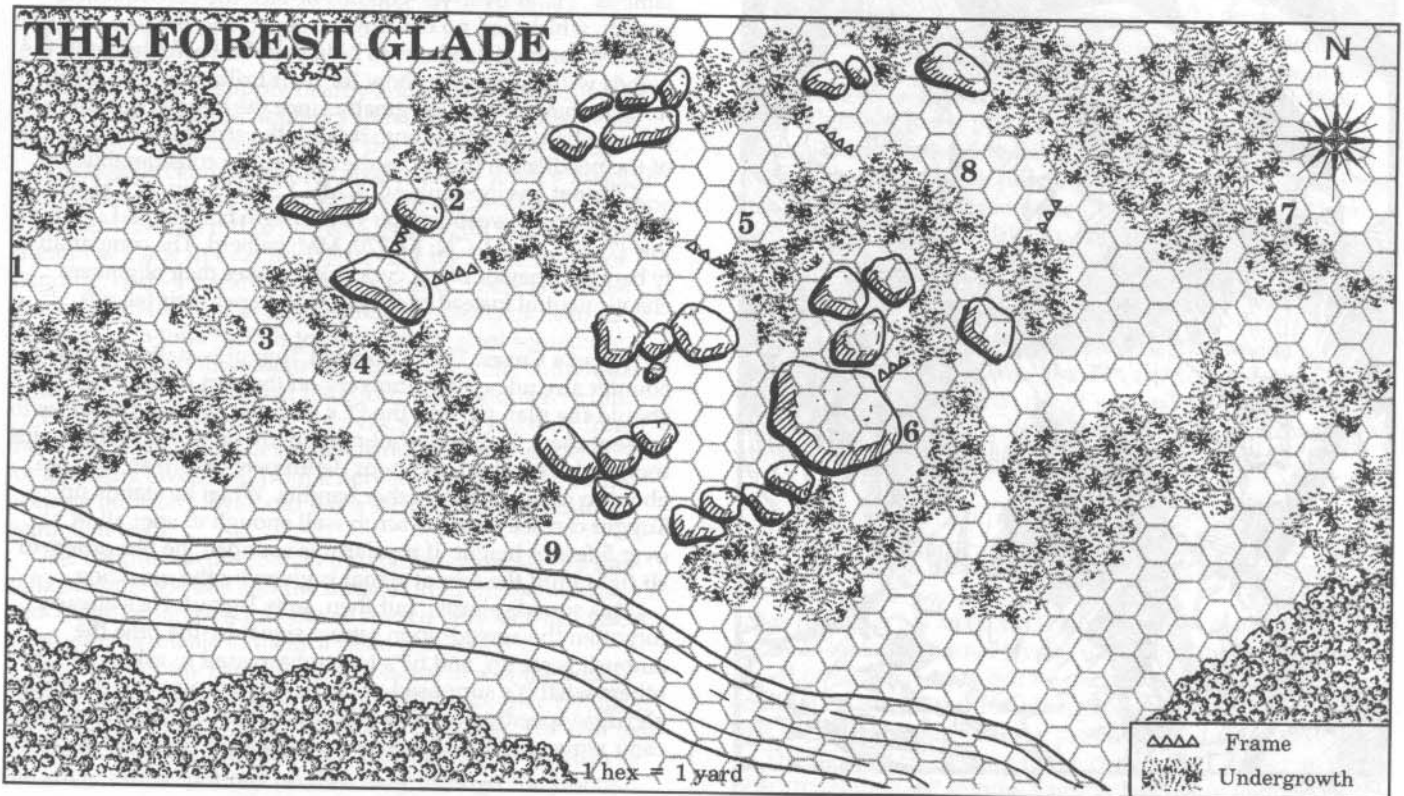
Zazzafizzlezizzle is the brains behind the ambushes. He is wise enough to let Chinpot and Tuggut believe that they are the leaders of the group by dint of their greater size and strength, but he has impressed the boggle and the needlemen with shows of magic, leaving them in no doubt as to who is the real boss.

If the encounter goes badly for the ambushers, the quickling uses his spells to attempt a bloodless defeat of the PCs, or at least a distraction allowing the bandits to escape with minimal losses. The main concern of the quickling is the preservation of the boggle, as without his powers, the group would be reduced to common brigandage, relying on force alone to succeed.

Zazzafizzlezizzle uses his *ventriloquism* power to distract the PCs from Nik-Nik, if the boggle is caught, while his *shatter* spell prevents any PCs from quaffing potions; the spell destroys all potion vials within a 3' radius, spilling the potions on the ground, if the requisite saving throws are failed. The quickling follows up by casting a *dig* spell under the feet of the PC inflicting the most damage in combat.

**Zazzafizzlezizzle** (quickling): AC -3; MV 96; HD 1+4; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-3 (needle-like dagger); SA spell-like abilities, speed; SD saves as 19th-level priest, invisible when motionless, cannot be surprised; SZ T; INT genius (17); ML 13; AL CE; XP 2,000; MC *Annual 2*.

Once per day, at will, Zazzafizzlezizzle may invoke the following spell-like powers: *dig*, *fire charm*, *forget*, *levitate*, *shatter*, *ventriloquism*.







**4. Needleman Under Cover.** Two of the four needlemen are hidden in this thick section of undergrowth to cover Nik-Nik should he find himself in danger. The two other needlemen are hiding at area 8.

The needlemen are a weak point in Zazzafizzlezizzle's plans, though there's not much he can do about them. Regardless of the quickling's orders, there is always a 50% chance that the needlemen attack any elves in the party without provocation. The quickling is resigned to the fact that they despise elves, though he's tried his best to figure out the cause of this enmity. His only progress in this matter is guesswork based on the extremely violent reactions of the needlemen if drow are brought up in conversation. He thinks perhaps the drow enslaved the needlemen race at some point in their history, or the needlemen might have been created by the dark elves and have hated all elves since then. The plant beings remain an enigma to Zazzafizzlezizzle, and he's likely to leave them as sword fodder if things are going badly in combat and there's a chance for the rest of his band to escape.

**Needlemen (2):** AC 6; MV 9; HD 3+4; hp 18, 17; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; SA needle spray (1d6 needles inflicting 1-2 hp damage each; 20' range), -5 to opponents' surprise rolls (-2 to elves and rangers); SD camouflage; SW vulnerable to magic (magical attacks inflict triple damage); SZ M; INT low (6); ML 12; AL N; XP 120; MC *Annual 3*.



**5. Boggle Location.** Nik-Nik hides in this area near a sending frame. He may use any of the frames within his 30-yard radius as a *dimension door* receiver. Nik-Nik is hidden well enough to be invisible unless someone examines his particular bush; then he still has a 65% chance to remain unseen.

An expanded description of the boggle's *dimension door* power is given in the "Boggle Behavior" sidebar. Nik-Nik may use some or all of the tactics mentioned in this description if the DM rules it possible. If he is caught or seen, Nik-Nik sends up a high-pitched wailing to alert the others that he's in danger and needs assistance.

**Nik-Nik (boggle):** AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+3; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 3 (claw/claw/bite); Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-4; SA rear claws for 1-4/1-4; steal one item per round if able to hit AC 5; SD non-flammable oil; elastic body; resistant to fire; *spider climb* at will; special *dimension door* ability; detect invisible creatures by smell; weapon attacks inflict -1 hp per die of damage; SZ S; INT low (7); ML 7; AL CN; XP 270; MC *Annual 2*.

**6. Chinpot's Cover.** Chinpot is placed here in as central a location as possible. His task is to wait here until he hears Nik-Nik's alarm call, then wade in to attack the PCs. Otherwise, he's to wait until Zazzafizzlezizzle gives him the signal to slide down the brook at area 9.

Chinpot went into partnership with Tuggut because of their lack of successes with their own tribe in the hills. Their earlier tactics made them look like comedy villains rather than the fearsome monsters they believed themselves to be. Travelers only laughed at their method of surprising victims by shouting "Boo!" as the cyclopskin tripped over each other and fell out onto the path. Chinpot would then deliver his famous "Hand-over-yer-goodies-or-face-the-consequences" speech, which had no effect whatsoever, and the two would slink off (or be chased off) to hide their embarrassment in the woods with nothing to show for their brilliant plans. Their fortunes have improved greatly since the boggle, quickling, and needlemen came along, though the strange, silent nature of the needlemen unnerves the cyclopskin considerably.

**Chinpot (cyclopskin):** AC 3; MV 12; HD 5; hp 34; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +4 (Strength bonus); SZ L; INT low (7); ML 13; AL CN; XP 270; MM; halberd. The comparatively benign behavior of the cyclopskin makes their alignment chaotic neutral instead of chaotic evil, as per their fellows.

**7. Tuggut's Cover.** The cyclopskin Tuggut is stationed here to counter any unexpected bravery on the part of the PCs, should the plan fail and the PCs discover the bandits. He is to present them with slingshot missile fire (at -2 to hit due to his monocular eyesight and poor depth perception) as they are about to close with the other bandits. When he stands up, Tuggut can see over the scrub well enough to spot all PCs over 5 feet in height. If no alarm is sounded, he has orders to sit tight until the retreat signal is given by the quickling.

This sounds simple, but then, so is Tuggut. He's already forgotten the agreed-upon retreat signal by the time the ambush is set up, and he's too embarrassed to ask any of the others what it's supposed to be. In fact, the signal is Zazzafizzlezizzle speeding over to tell him to hurry up, but Tuggut can't remember that. He keeps popping his head out of cover



(10% chance per hour that one of the PCs spots him) to check that the others haven't sneaked off without him.

**Tuggut** (cyclopskin): AC 3; MV 12; HD 5; hp 14; THAC0 15 (17 with slingshot); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +4 (Strength bonus); SZ L; INT low (7); ML 13; AL CN; XP 270; *MM*; heavy club (Dmg 2–8/2–7), slingshot (inflicts damage as regular sling), 10 sling stones.

**8. More Needlemen.** The last two needlemen are hidden in the undergrowth to guard the path as it loops around this area. They have orders to fire needle sprays on travelers who decide to ignore the clearing and continue on down the path to the east. Like their kin at area 4, they are 50% likely to fire on elves despite changes in plans or orders from the quickling.

**Needlemen** (2): AC 6; MV 9; HD 3+4; hp 19, 16; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 3–12; SA needle spray (1d6 needles inflicting 1–2 hp damage each; 20' range), –5 to opponents' surprise rolls (–2 to elves and rangers); SD camouflage; SW vulnerable to magic (magical attacks inflict triple damage); SZ M; INT low (6); ML 12; AL N; XP 120; *MC Annual* 3.

**9. Escape Route Downstream.** This is the area through which the quickling intends the bandits to escape if everything goes according to plan and the PCs leave the glade without missing any of their stolen gear. If combat goes against the bandits, they try to force their way through to this area, using their various strengths, tactics, and spells to beat a watery retreat downstream.

## The Ambush

As there is a water supply nearby and a clean campsite, the PCs should have little hesitancy in resting here. Meanwhile, the bandits lie in wait all around the unsuspecting group.

The boggle can successfully steal a bag of gold, a magical item, or some similar thing from a sleeping, stunned, or prone character if he can roll to hit AC 5. Add +2 to this roll if the attempt is made in total darkness, –2 if the PC is sitting or standing, and –4 if the PC is on his guard. There is a 1-in-4 chance that Nik-Nik (or his disembodied arms or head) is detected each time he fails to successfully steal something. Nik-Nik takes no more than two items from any individual before moving on to repeat his efforts with another victim.

The danger of failure for the NPCs comes not only from the boggle but also from the needlemen, with their penchant for attacking elves, and from a nervous Tuggut, who keeps peeping out from cover and has a 10% chance per hour of being detected.

The bandits' tactics rely on the confusion caused by Zaz-fazfizzlezizzle's spells and the missile fire from the needlemen and Tuggut's sling. Actual melee is used only as a last resort, if the gang is unable to make a clean getaway.

In the event the bandits are successful in stealing some items without detection, there is a 25% chance they try again if the PCs stay more than six hours in the glade. The DM may also have the gang encounter the PCs in another ambush as the adventurers continue on their way through the woods.

If Grikloon the forlarren is accused of complicity in the thefts, he immediately attacks the accuser. He has no knowledge of the bandits and would neither join the gang nor warn the PCs if he did know about the monsters.

There is one condition under which the bandits stay and fight. If the PCs visibly possess 3,000 gp or more in coin or goods, the gang uses force to win the treasure, fleeing only if half are slain or incapacitated.

## Concluding the Adventure

The PCs may elect to track or pursue the bandits, especially if Nik-Nik stole some valuable items. In this event, they find that pursuit into unfamiliar woods is a dangerous course of action. There is the possibility of encountering wandering monsters (roll 1 on 1d10 per hour spent in the woods). The DM can choose appropriate monsters, create a random monster table, or use an existing table like those found in the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Annual* volumes. Additionally, the bandits have placed pitfalls to cover their escape. A pitfall is encountered on a roll of 1 on 1d6 for the first 2–5 rounds of the chase. Such traps are detectable in the normal ways. A fall into one of these 6'-deep pits inflicts 1–4 hp damage. In addition, the PC is impaled on 2–8 spikes lining the pit's bottom and suffers an additional 1–2 hp damage per spike.

The DM may wish to prepare an exploration of the bandits' lair (located in a place of the DM's choosing), should the PCs survive and find it. PCs who capture Chinpot, Tuggut, or Nik-Nik can persuade their captive to lead them to the lair. The quickling is an unlikely captive given his speed, but he's also stubborn and refuses to divulge the lair's location no matter how hard-pressed. The needlemen do not speak and are unwilling to guide the PCs, although a *speak with plant* spell might allow the PCs to trick them into revealing the lair's location. Regarding the lair, things to consider are the treasures gathered from previous victims; the defenses of the lair; any improvements to these defenses made by the intelligent and resourceful quickling; and the combat effectiveness of the group if the bandits have suffered wounds or casualties. Some parts of the lair might be accessible only by Nik-Nik's *dimension door* talents.

Roleplaying each of the monsters should provide plenty of fun for the DM. If any of the bandits are detected, the DM should describe only what the PCs actually see: disembodied hands and arms groping about in the bushes, branches moving contrary to the wind direction, and so forth. Ω

## Masqueraider

"Masqueraider" is an AD&D® adventure for 4–6 characters of levels 2–4 (about 15 total levels). The party should be composed of varied classes, but no particular class is essential for completing the adventure. Ideally, one character should possess the tracking non-weapon proficiency.

The module takes place in the country of Cormyr, in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS®* setting. Cormyr has many regulations





concerning mages, freeswords, and adventuring parties. DMs placing the adventure in Cormyr should familiarize themselves with the information in the *Cormyr* accessory (TSR 9410). DMs can, of course, set this adventure in any temperate farming area east of a mountain chain.

## Adventure Background

The adventurers are either in the town of Tyrluk or one of the nearby villages (Eveningstar, Espar, Waymoot, etc.) when they hear a crier make the following pronouncements, mixed with many a "Hear ye! Hear ye!" and "O, good citizens!"

❖ "Anyone knowing the whereabouts of a thief named Dullwon should contact Hezom, Lord of Espar. factual information shall be rewarded with 50 silver pieces."

❖ "The Lonesome Tankard Inn of Eveningstar will, in three days' time, hold a feast and celebration in honor of the birthday of Tessaril Winter, Lord of Eveningstar. Come one, come all!"

❖ "Suldag, Lord of Tyrluk, is offering adventurous persons or parties rich bounty and reward for the death, destruction, or capture of the beast or beasts disturbing the tranquillity of Tyrluk. Those interested and unafraid should contact the Sergeant of the Tyrluk Watch for details."

❖ "The Cup and Spoon Inn of Waymoot is offering good wages and working conditions for experienced cooks and scullery help."

❖ "Anyone with debt or claim against the estate of Hist Gree, merchant of Dhedluk, lately deceased, make such information known to Thiombur, Lord of Dhedluk."

❖ "Carpenters, masons, and limners! Laborers, smiths, and teamsters! Help keep the kingdom safe whilst earning good wages. Patriotic work is to be found at Castle Crag."

The DM may include other announcements for the crier, typically locations of public celebrations; rewards and bounties for criminals; and notices of births, marriages, and deaths. The crier knows nothing more about these announcements; he is simply a professional crier, paid to loudly call out messages in the streets of the city.

**Crier** (0-level human): AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; SZ M; ML 7; AL NG; unarmed.

Even inexperienced players should realize that the bounty offer from Tyrluk is the best hope of adventure. If, however, the PCs investigate other announcements, they find that Dullwon has already been located, none of them have any legitimate claim against the estate of the late Mr. Gree (and the local authorities know it), and only back-breaking labor for a small monthly wage awaits those at Castle Crag and the Cup and Spoon Inn. PCs attending the celebration in Eveningstar have a good time but accomplish little.

## For the Dungeon Master

The town of Tyrluk lies on the High Horn Road north of the town of Espar and due west of Eveningstar. The town has a smithy, a carter, and a farmers' market. Besides the neighboring farms, Tyrluk's only industry is a pony-breeding ranch that supplies top-grade mounts to local citizens as well as passing caravans. PCs can find any supplies, armor, and weapons listed in the *Player's Handbook* at normal prices. Of course, for better swords, the PCs will want to go to Espar.

## The Sergeant of the Watch

The PCs can find the Sergeant of the Tyrluk Watch by asking any of the townspeople. They direct the party to the King Azoun, a quiet beer garden located near the center of town.

Josh Jykyr is a middle-aged man, shrewd, astute, and perhaps a bit too fond of ale. When the PCs ask about the bounty and the beast, the amount of information they acquire depends on the amount of ale they buy him. Each piece of information costs a tankard of ale. Josh does not deliberately conceal or hide information, but he always tries to wheedle a tankard of ale for it. Before answering questions or giving information, Josh says such things as, "The answer to that depends on who's buying the next round," "I'd tell you, but my throat's so dry I can barely speak," or else he stares blankly at his empty tankard while rattling it loudly against the table.



If Josh does not know the information the PCs want, he says so and answers another question without complaint. Josh also draws the PCs a map of the local area; the DM should trace a copy of the "Tyrluk and Vicinity" map, omitting the encounter numbers. (Any inconsistencies can be blamed on Josh's inebriation.)

Between swallows of ale, the sergeant tells this story:

"So you want to know about the bounty? Well now, it's been nigh on two months that something's been bothering the ponies. And there's been other attacks on people and farm animals of all sorts, but most of the damage has been done to the pony herds. Well, Lord Suldag has put up 1,200 gold pieces, the local horse and pony breeders have put up another 4,000 gold and 10 choice ponies, and if that ain't enough to whet your appetite, the farmers and merchants have declared they'll match the lord's bounty with 1,200 gold coins of their own. Now that's a tidy sum of money for killing some animal, though mind you, none's collected that bounty yet—and many have tried.

"Most of the ponies simply vanished. We thought at first it was bandits stealing them. Then a pony was found that had got away from whatever attacked it. Clawed up it was, covered with bites and scratches. Others were found with marks on them—marks made by who knows what. One of the herd guards disappeared, and a wagonload of cabbage was found abandoned between here and Espar, both the horse and driver gone. The farmers southwest of here are complaining that something's deadly abroad. There's chickens, shoats, and a milk cow or two missing. There's even a couple of farm lads turned up missing, though with such lads you're never sure if they're missing or if they just don't want to be found. One thing's for sure. Something's hunting fresh meat between the High Horn Road and the Espar Road.

"That's all I know about it. There's hunters gathered at the Crossroads Inn who can tell you what they've seen. Remember when you're out hunting, don't go near the herd guards. They're jittery and liable to loose arrows at anything. Watch out for other hunting parties, too. Bounty money attracts attention; you're not the first to come. There's at least one other group out now, calls themselves the Knaves of Clubs. They're from Arabel; that's all I know about them.

"One last warning, now. If you get into trouble, you get yourselves out of it. Don't come crying to me. The Watch is for guarding Tyrluk, not rescuing the careless."

This is all the information Josh has to offer. If the PCs press him on any particular point, the sergeant only repeats what he has already said. He advises the PCs to visit the Crossroads Inn.

**Sergeant Josh Jykyr** (1st-level human fighter): AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 14, C 13, I 14, W 11, Ch 14; SZ M; ML 11; AL NG; quartermaster. The sergeant keeps his armor and sword at home. For normal duty in town, he doesn't even carry a shield or dagger.

## Random Wilderness Encounters

Roll 1d8 once per day or as otherwise instructed. A roll of 1 indicates an encounter. Roll 1d8 to determine what is encountered; the DM should feel free to increase or decrease the number of creatures encountered, depending on the location of the encounter and the strength of the adventuring party.

- Ponies** (5–20): AC 7; MV 12; HD 1+1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–2; SZ M; INT animal (1); ML 6; AL N; XP 35; MM (horse). These may either be strays or part of a protected herd.
- Giant rats** (10–40): AC 7; MV 12, swim 6; HD ½; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–3; SA disease; SZ T; INT animal (1); ML 6; AL N; XP 15; MM. The bites of these rats have a 5% chance each of inflicting a serious disease.
- Wild cattle** (20–70): AC 7; MV 15; HD 1–4; hp variable (4 hp/die); THAC0 19 (1–2 HD), 17 (3–4 HD); #AT 1; Dmg 1–4; SA stampede; SZ L; INT animal (1); ML 6; AL N; XP 15 (1-HD), 35 (2-HD), 65 (3-HD), 120 (4-HD); MM. The herd has a 25% chance of stampeding toward the party. If the PCs are caught in the stampede without cover (rocks, trees, logs, a wall, etc.), roll 2d4 for each party member to determine the number of cattle trampling that PC. Trampling inflicts 1–4 hp damage per animal.
- Giant bluebottle flies** (1–4): AC 6; MV 9, fly 30 (D); HD 3; hp 12 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SA disease; SZ M; INT non (0); ML 7; AL N; XP 65; MM (insect). There is a 10% non-cumulative chance per bite that the victim is infected with some sort of disease.
- Large spiders** (2–20): AC 8; MV 6, web 15; HD 1+1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (Type A); SZ S; INT non (0); ML 7; AL N; XP 175; MM. The poison of these spiders is relatively weak (save at +2).
- Poisonous snakes** (1–6): AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (see below); SZ S; INT animal (1); ML 8; AL N; XP 175; MM. Saves vs. each snake's venom are made at –2. Failure to save inflicts no additional damage but results in complete incapacitation for 2–12 days.
- Human fighters** (2–8): AC 7; MV 12; F2; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; SZ M; ML 12; AL NG; leather armor, shield, long bow, 20 flight arrows, shortsword, dagger. This patrol from High Horn is on a training exercise.
- Protein polymorph** or roll again. The DM should roll 1d6 on the "Protein Polymorph Table" for this encounter. The PCs should encounter the protein polymorph only when actually in the wilderness. On farms, ranches, or within one hex of a town, roll again.





## The Crossroads Inn

If the PCs visit the Crossroads Inn, they find a small congregation of hunters and adventurers (for the DM to roleplay as needed). If the PCs buy a few rounds, ask a few questions, and listen carefully to conversations and arguments, they learn the following information:

- ❖ A couple of good fighters from Waymoot swore they were attacked by an owlbear just a couple miles south of Tyrluk. One had the claw marks to prove it. The other's horse had a bite on the shoulder.
- ❖ Soldiers traveling from High Horn to Arabel said they'd seen a giant scorpion about 10 miles west of Tyrluk. It was as big as a house and heading for the pony herds. They chased it, but it gave them the slip.
- ❖ Even Lord Suldag went hunting for the creature but couldn't track it down.
- ❖ From the tracks, it must be either an owlbear or a big brown bear that has come down from the mountains.
- ❖ Some say it's a huge bug of some kind—a giant scorpion or a giant spider.
- ❖ It must be a creature from another plane of existence.
- ❖ The tracks all seem to lead toward where the old folks say there's a haunted valley.
- ❖ The Knaves of Clubs are an adventuring company operating out of Arabel. Three of the Knaves came through about 10 days ago. They have been out hunting the creature ever since.

If the PCs wish to talk to someone who has been actively hunting the creature, they are directed to the local inn where they can find Juran Dhansharr. Juran is a professional bounty hunter. He tells the PCs all he knows for 50 gp. Juran is heading home to Suzail and wants to leave Tyrluk with at least enough money to cover his expenses. He cannot be hired as a tracker, as he has a sure 6,000-gp job waiting for him in Suzail. (Exactly what the job entails, he won't say.) The PCs will have to better that offer for Juran to stay around. Juran tells the following story:

"I went on several hunting trips looking for this thing. On most of them, I saw absolutely nothing. Twice, though, I caught sight of something. The first time, there was something big and bulky moving through the underbrush. It was gone by the time I got close enough to see clearly. Might've been an owlbear or a brown bear; might've been one of them lost milk cows the farmers are going on about.

"The second time, I saw a giant spider, plain as plain can be, but it got away. No one's seen it since then or found its web or trail. If a giant spider's been doing the hunting around here, the poor flies it catches are the only ones that know for sure.

"Anyway, I saw the spider and the big bulky thing on an old, abandoned farm southwest of here. What troubles me most is, both times the thing just seemed to vanish. I followed the tracks, then all of a sudden there weren't no more tracks. It may be there's truth in what the old folks say about something from a haunted valley doing all the mischief.

"So I did some tracking out in the hills near the mountains, out where the old codgers say there's a haunted valley. Tracking can be well nigh impossible out there, and I didn't find much. Here and there, you run into an odd track or two. All I know about it is, somewhere in all them valleys and canyons is one that's supposed to be haunted—by what, if anything, the old guys can't seem to remember. Those who go in don't come out. That's what the old folks say. You can ask, just like I did, but no one alive remembers just exactly where that valley is."

If the PCs interview any of the elderly residents of Tyrluk, they have no luck locating the haunted valley or remembering exactly what haunts it. Many of the old folks confuse the valley with the Haunted Halls north of Eveningstar and tell the PCs how to find that place. If the PCs insist on going there, they find it sealed off by soldiers from High Horn on a training exercise.

If the PCs ask the other hunters to show on their map the locations of sightings and encounters, the DM may mark the map anywhere. Juran marks the map near the old farmhouse southeast of area 5, to coincide with his story.

**Juran Dhansharr** (2nd-level human fighter): AC 7; MV 12; F2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 9, C 12, I 10, W 12, Ch 9; SZ M; ML 12; AL CN; leather armor, shield, long bow, 20 sheaf arrows, shortsword, hand axe.

## The Culprit

The creature troubling the pony herds of Tyrluk is a protein polymorph. (The creature is fully described at the end of this adventure.) The creature's natural form has been included in the "Protein Polymorph Table" sidebar. More detailed information on the creature is given here.

The protein polymorph can assume any form it chooses and attacks as the creature it is imitating, using the natural weaponry of the beast or monster (teeth, claws, stingers, and so forth). This is why the number of attacks is considered "variable," for in polymorphed form, the monster has the same number of attacks as the creature being imitated, and those attacks inflict normal damage. For example, a protein polymorph in the shape of an owlbear has three attacks for 1-6/1-6/2-12, just as the normal owlbear. However, the hit dice of the creature being imitated are ignored, and attack rolls are made (in this case) for a 6-HD monster.

In its natural form, the protein polymorph has one attack: enfold and crush for 6-36 hp damage per round. Armor class and movement rate change as the creature polymorphs, but its hit dice and hit points remain the same. For example, when the protein polymorph changes from an owlbear to a giant scorpion, its armor class is raised from 5 to 3, and its movement rate changes from 12 to 15. It is very important to remember that the protein polymorph cannot imitate a creature's special abilities. In the form of a giant spider or scorpion, it can bite and sting for damage but cannot inject poison or create webs, as it cannot duplicate the organs required to perform these functions. Saving throws vs. poison should be rolled to avoid prematurely alerting the party to the nature of



the creature. As the PCs consistently make their saving throws, regardless of the result rolled, suspicions will be aroused soon enough.

To determine the protein polymorph's form at any given time, use the "Protein Polymorph Table" sidebar. The DM may either roll randomly or choose the form that best suits the situation. Random rolls should always be ignored if there is a better choice for the creature to make. The protein polymorph always uses its forms and shapechanging ability to its best advantage.

The protein polymorph is an intelligent creature. If it is aware it is being hunted, whether in the wilderness or in its lair, it attempts to conceal itself by polymorphing to look like its surroundings: trees, rocks, cavern walls, and so forth. The PCs have a 10% chance to detect the imposture from a distance of 10 feet; touching the protein polymorph instantly reveals its animate nature. The protein polymorph attempts to avoid outright confrontation with any hunting party, preferring to lay low and pick off stragglers. The monster openly attacks the party only if concealment is no longer effective, or if the party is sufficiently weakened to be easy prey. Its methods of attack include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Polymorphing into the shape of a pony and then ambling up to an unsuspecting herd guard or real pony;
- ◆ Polymorphing into the shape of a hunting creature (owl-bear, giant spider, etc.) and killing a victim in that form;
- ◆ Polymorphing into the shape of a luscious patch of grass or a shady tree. Ponies attempting to eat the grass or herd guards taking advantage of the shade are attacked and devoured.

This particular polymorph does not use the gear or weapons of its victims, so it will not attempt to polymorph into human, demihuman, or other weapon-wielding forms.

## The Hunt

If the party does not include a ranger or a character with the tracking non-weapon proficiency, the party may hire one or more trackers in Tyrluk. Roll 1d6 for the level of each NPC hired. A roll of 1-3 yields a 1st-level tracker, 4-5 yields a 2nd-level tracker, and 6 yields a 3rd-level tracker. Any trackers hired are of the fighter class, but no ranger NPCs are available. The cost of hiring a tracker is one full share of the bounty plus 10 gp per level of the tracker per day. The PCs must also provide the tracker's food, gear, and transportation. Fighting, carrying supplies, guard duty and decision making are left strictly to the PCs; the tracker only tracks. Furthermore, every tracker demands a deposit be left with city officials to ensure the adventuring party doesn't tire of the hunt and leave the tracker alone and unpaid somewhere in the wilderness.

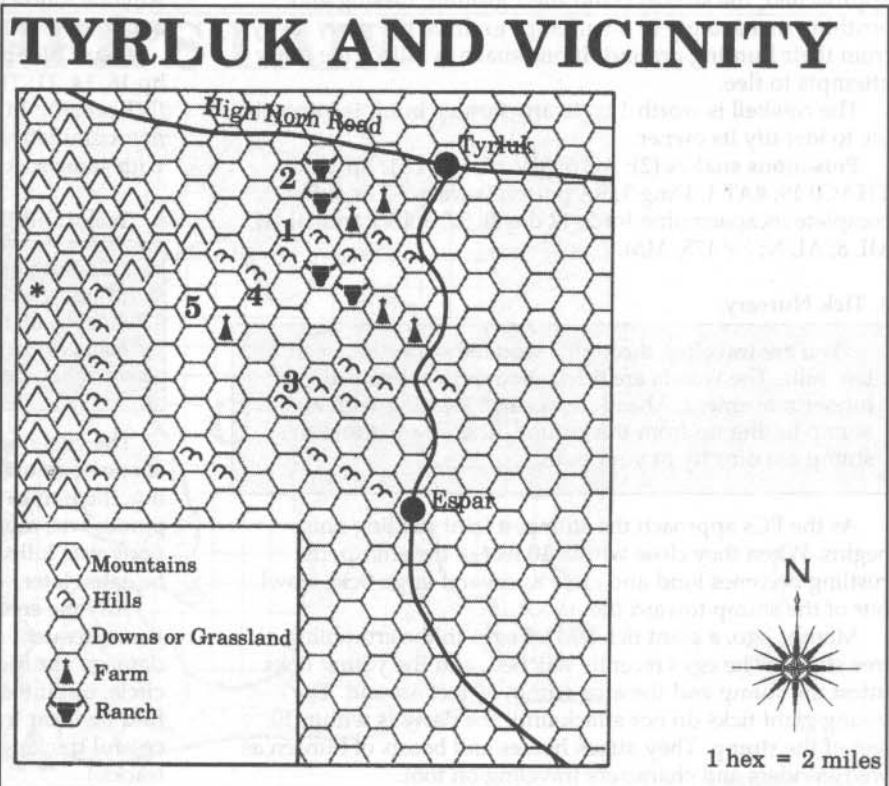
PCs hunting southwest of Tyrluk find many small farmsteads and pony ranches.

The largest of these are marked on the map of Tyrluk and vicinity, and perhaps on the players' map if they have asked the right questions. The PCs may spend the night in relative safety in barns and stables. The farmers and ranchers will not charge a hunting party for such lodging. Indeed, the locals are more than happy to help anyone hunting the creature. PCs asking about other hunting parties are told that the Knaves of Clubs passed through but have not returned.

The farms consist mainly of houses, barns, and chicken coops, although some of the larger farms include barracks-type buildings for hired hands. The farms have large vegetable gardens, but their main crops are oats, hay, and other types of fodder for the ponies. The crop fields are fenced, and the fences are well tended to keep the ponies out.

Ranches consist of houses for the owners and their families, stables for wintering the ponies, and bunkhouses for ranch hands. Each ranch has a fenced vegetable garden, but pastures, meadows, and glades are unfenced so the ponies may graze freely.

The terrain southwest of Tyrluk consists of rolling, grass-covered downs that occasionally give way to high, rocky hills. The hills tumble down into deep valleys filled with trees and bushes that hinder but do not completely block passage. Many of the valleys have small streams running through them. Nearer the mountains, the land becomes much rockier. Unexpected ravines open suddenly before a traveler, and the land slopes sharply upward to meet the mountains. When using the "Random Wilderness Encounters" sidebar, roll once per day until within 10 miles of the mountains, then begin rolling twice per day (once during the day, and again during the night).







## Set Encounters

**1. Herd Guards.** Three herd guards are on top of a low hill, guarding a small herd of about 25 ponies while brewing a pot of tea over a low, smokeless fire. All three are armed with long bows and daggers. The herd guards are unarmored but carry wooden shields with hide stretched over them. Any herd guard the PCs question knows no pertinent information. The watch has been quiet, and nothing unusual has happened. Unless the PCs are rude, they are invited to stay for a while and have some tea.

The herd guards do not attack the PCs unless the PCs attack first. Attacking a herd guard on duty, for any reason, is a criminal offense in Cormyr. If the PCs adopt such an uncouth course of action, they are declared outlaws, and a bounty is placed on their heads.

**Herd guards** (3 0-level humans): AC 9; MV 12; 0-level; hp 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; SZ M; ML 10; AL NG; shield, long bow, 10 flight arrows, 10 sheaf arrows, dagger.

### 2. Snakes.

As you are crossing a large, pleasant meadow, the sun gleams off something shiny to your left. As you approach, you see that it is a brass cowbell.

If the PCs investigate, they hear a soft rustling in the grass behind them. This sound marks the passage of two poisonous snakes hunting rabbits in the meadow. The snakes do not attack the PCs unless the PCs attack first. If approached, the snakes stand their ground, hissing and writhing menacingly in an attempt to drive the party away from their hunting ground. If one snake is killed, the other attempts to flee.

The cowbell is worth 1 cp to any farmer, but it is impossible to identify its owner.

**Poisonous snakes** (2): AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 11, 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (save at -2 or suffer complete incapacitation for 2–12 days); SZ S; INT animal (1); ML 8; AL N; XP 175; MM.

### 3. Tick Nursery.

You are traveling through a wooded valley between two hills. The woods are thick enough to occasionally hinder movement. Ahead lies a small clearing with an old stump jutting up from the ground. The clearing and the stump are directly in your path.

As the PCs approach the stump, a faint rustling noise begins. When they close within 10 feet of the stump, the rustling becomes loud and clear as several large ticks crawl out of the stump toward them.

Months ago, a giant tick laid its eggs in the crumbling old tree stump. The eggs recently hatched, and the young ticks infest the stump and the area within 50 feet around. The young giant ticks do not attack until the party is within 10 feet of the stump. They attack horses and beasts of burden as well as riders and characters traveling on foot.

The area near the stump is wooded heavily enough to slow the party to half movement rate. Twenty ticks arrive and attack every other round until all 40 ticks have attacked or the PCs have moved out of the area. Roll 1d4 for each PC, NPC, horse, and any other warm-blooded creature in the party to determine the number of ticks attacking that individual. A single tick drains 5 hp from its victim before it is sated and leaps away. The ticks otherwise attack until slain.

**Young giant ticks** (40): AC 3; MV 3; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–2; SA drain blood for 1–3 hp per round (maximum 5 hp); SZ T (1' long); INT non (0); ML 14; AL N; XP 15; MM (insect—variant).

### 4. The Dead Pony.

In the pasture before you is a dead pony. Three giant bluebottle flies are hungrily picking at the carcass. As your approach, one fly leaves the pony and buzzes angrily overhead, then returns to feed on the carrion.

If the PCs drive off or kill the bluebottle flies, they see claw marks on the dead pony, but the type of creature that made the claw marks cannot be determined. It is obvious from the trail of blood on the ground that the pony was attacked somewhere else and ran until it collapsed on this spot.

The PCs may easily backtrack along the trail left by the pony. A tracking proficiency check is required, taking into account that the terrain is soft enough to hold impressions, there has been no precipitation for many days, and the tracks are less than 12 hours old. (Apply a +4 bonus to all tracking proficiency checks.) The trail is about three or four miles long. Anyone following it can find where the pony was originally attacked (area 5).

**Giant bluebottle flies** (3): AC 6; MV 9, fly 30 (D); HD 3; hp 16, 14, 11; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SA disease; SZ M; INT non (0); ML 7; AL N; XP 65; MM (insect). There is a 10% non-cumulative chance per bite that the victim is infected with some sort of disease.

### 5. Tracks and Bugs.

Coming out of a small grove of trees, you see a torn and trampled patch of earth forming a rough circle about 20 feet in diameter. There is blood everywhere in the circle. Normal flies and insects, attracted by the blood, swarm in a feeding frenzy.

The circle was made when the protein polymorph, in the shape of an owlbear, attacked two ponies. Rearing and kicking, the ponies tore and churned up the turf. One of the ponies was mortally injured but escaped (area 4). The other pony was killed and carried off by the protein polymorph to be eaten later.

Anyone entering the circle looking for clues is attacked by the equivalent of an *insect plague* spell, sustaining 1 hp damage per round. There are no clues to be found within the circle, but if the PCs study the area around the circle, they find owlbear tracks leading away almost due west. (A successful tracking proficiency check at +4 is needed to spot the tracks.)



The protein polymorph, in the shape of an owlbear, headed due west toward its lair in the haunted valley. When the party is within one hex of the mountains, only the smallest traces of the tracks remain. This change signifies the PCs have emerged from the grassy downs and are now traveling through the watersheds and rocky ravines near the mountains. Another tracking proficiency check is required to follow the trail, this time with no modifiers.

**6. More Tracks** (optional). The DM may use this encounter if the adventuring party is unable to track the creature to its lair. The DM need only describe an owlbear's tracks crossing a meadow, the claw prints of a bear left in the mud of a stream bank, or the faded trail of a giant scorpion cross a high down, and so forth. The PCs can discover these tracks anywhere, miles apart and seemingly unrelated.

It is very important for the DM to keep an accurate record of these directions, for they are clues that the PCs need to discover the whereabouts of the protein polymorph's lair. Starting at the location where the tracks are found, the PCs can draw lines in the directions the tracks are coming from and going to. The lines should intersect at the polymorph's lair. The DM may wish to add a few "ringers"—sets of tracks leading nowhere in particular—at the locations marked by Juran and the other hunters.

## The Lair

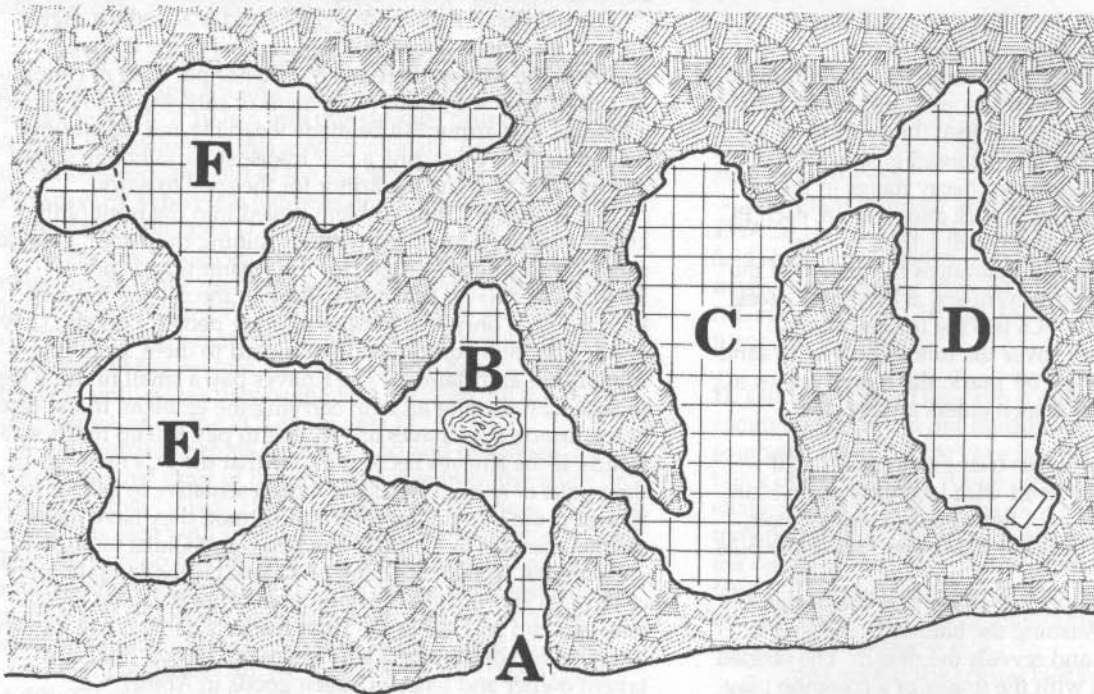
The protein polymorph's lair, shown by a star on the map, is a cave in one of the hundreds of valleys and ravines at the

mountains' feet. Some of these valleys are pleasant places with streams and small stands of trees. Others are nothing but wildernesses of boulders and rocks, little more than dry watercourses. The valley where the protein polymorph lairs is green and pleasant, about one mile long and half a mile wide, with a shallow stream running along its north side. The valley runs east to west, with the northern wall higher than the southern. The southern wall is a gentle slope covered with grass and scattered trees. The northern wall slants sharply upward from the valley floor, forming an almost vertical surface covered with creepers, vines, and ivy. The valley floor is fairly level, with a long, gentle slope at the eastern end and a sudden upthrust to the west. The sand and gravel valley floor is spotted everywhere with large patches of grass and weeds.

This is the rumored haunted valley. It won its reputation over 100 years ago when hunting parties would occasionally disappear while searching for game nearby. What actually haunted the valley no one ever knew or lived to tell. As the pastureland to the east became more settled, and farming and ranching took precedence over hunting, the valley and its location were almost forgotten.

The reason for the valley's sinister reputation can be found in the protein polymorph's cave. Still there, in the silence and the solitude, as evil as ever, is an osyluth baatezu imprisoned in an opaque crystal prison. While in the service to Tiamat, the osyluth was not abject enough in his obeisance one day. Angered by the slight, Tiamat encased the lesser fiend in crystal, opened a *gate*, and hurled the imprisoned baatezu through. The gate opened onto the Prime Material Plane, and the crystal prison landed in the cave.

## THE POLYMORPH'S LAIR







So long as he remains imprisoned, the osyluth is reduced greatly in ability. He still, however, retains the following powers: normal telepathic ability, *cause fear* (5' radius), *charm person*, *suggestion*, and *animate dead*. He cannot use any other powers until freed from his prison, but once freed, the baatezu regains his full abilities immediately (see area D).

The crystal prison is magical, sustaining the osyluth virtually forever. The prison also acts as a scrying device, allowing the fiend to see and hear all that goes on around it for 250 feet in any direction. This effect is added torture from Tiamat, so the baatezu could see life going on around him on his plane of exile but be unable to do anything about it (or so Tiamat thought).

In the early years of his imprisonment, 140 years ago, the osyluth had a worshipper. A hill giant bowed down and prayed to the crystal that had suddenly landed in his cave. The osyluth used his telepathic abilities, first commanding the giant to shatter the prison. When the prison proved impervious to the giant's attacks, the osyluth instructed the hill giant to bring animal skeletons to be animated, and when the hill giant died, he too was animated. The osyluth used the monster zombie and animal skeletons to haunt the valley and the cave, killing all who came near. As the long years passed, fewer and fewer people came to the valley. The osyluth was quite happy to lament in solitude and does not gladly suffer the presence of the protein polymorph.

If the PCs follow the protein polymorph's trail from area 5, it leads them to the valley's eastern entrance, across the valley floor, and to the shallow stream. The trail runs along the south side of the stream to a point about two-thirds of a mile into the valley, where it suddenly crosses the stream and disappears into the ivy-covered southern slope. The PCs need only part the ivy where the tracks enter it to discover the lair's entrance. If the PCs use the intersecting line method of discovering the valley (see area 6 above), they should pick up the trail by the stream.

The cave has rough walls, level floors (except where noted), and 40'-high ceilings except at the entrance.

**A. Cave Entrance.** The 20'-high entrance to the cave complex is covered with hanging ivy. The walls are irregular, narrowing from 25 feet at the entrance to 10 feet, then suddenly widening out again. The walls of the tunnel glisten with moisture, and the smell of death and decay hangs in the air. The sharply sloping tunnel floor is slick and smooth; each PC must make a Dexterity check or slip and fall for 1–2 hp damage. The noise of such a fall announces the arrival of the PCs to the occupants of the cave complex. A Dexterity check must be made every time the PCs use the tunnel, either coming or going, unless they cover the tunnel floor with sand and dirt from the valley. At the 60' mark, the tunnel ceases to slope downward and levels off as it enters a large cave.

**B. Pool Cave.** In this center of this triangular cave is a 20' × 15' pool of stagnant water covered with harmless green scum. On the northern edge of the pool lies a broken banner staff, its pennant floating half in the pool. The other half of the pole is nowhere to be seen.

If the PCs examine the banner, they see that the design is obscured by green scum. Washing the banner in the stream outside removes the scum and reveals the design. The stained silk banner is embroidered with the image of a common play-

ing card: the knave of clubs. It is worthless to anyone but the Knaves of Clubs in Arabel, who will pay 100 gp for the return of the banner and the story of how the finder came by it.

If the PCs search the pool, they find it is 3' deep with a muddy bottom. It contains a leather jerkin so rotted that it falls to pieces if lifted from the water. The jerkin, adorned with six gold buttons worth 10 gp each, is all that remains of a hunter killed over 50 years ago by the animated minions of the osyluth. The pool also contains a potion of *invisibility* in a decorative bottle worth 25 gp. Casting certain spells on the pool also affects this potion. For example, a *purify food and drink* spell purifies both the pool and the potion, thus ruining its effect.

**C. Muddy Secrets.** The tunnel leading here from the pool cave slopes sharply downward, but the floor is rough and gritty, giving good traction. The northern end of this cave is covered with three feet of mud, and the remainder of the floor is muddy and slippery. Movement rates are reduced by half while in this cave.

The PCs can see 10 animal skeletons scattered randomly about the cave, the bones sticking up out of the mud. Examination reveals the skeletons are those of canines—large dogs, wolves, and cooshees.

In the southernmost end of the cave, the PCs can find a putrefying corpse holding a dagger in its right hand. Its left hand grasps the lower half of the broken banner staff from area B. The front of the corpse's leather armor has been specially tooled and dyed in the Knave of Clubs design. This unfortunate fellow was the banner bearer of his group. What happened to the others, no one will ever know. (A *Speak with Dead* spell reveals that the Knaves, numbering six, entered the cave complex and were accosted by its undead guardians. This particular fellow was separated from the others and felled by the zombified hill giant after being trapped in this cave.)

The dagger in the corpse's right hand is actually a *dagger +1*, and the armor is *leather armor +1*. Due to the decayed nature of the corpse, there is a 5% chance per hour of continual contact with the armor (wearing it or carrying it) to contract a disease. The armor can be made wearable and disease-free by boiling it or by casting a *cure disease* spell, although someone must be wearing the armor for the spell to work.

The Knave of Clubs emblem tooled into the front of the armor cannot be removed without ruining the armor. This can cause certain complications for the wearer if he is not a Knave. The Knaves of Clubs believe in the rule of "finders keepers," but only as it applies to other people's goods. They prefer that their equipment be returned to them, even if lawfully found and claimed. The Knaves pay a small finder's fee to anyone returning an item carrying the emblem. In the case of the armor, the Knaves are willing to pay 500 gp for its safe return. If the Knaves become aware that the PCs own one of their suits of armor, they send a representative to ask for its return. If the PCs do not return the armor, they have made serious enemies in Cormyr. The Knaves of Clubs (or as they are called in Arabel, the Club of Knaves) is made up entirely of fighters and thieves. They number around 25 and are all between 2nd and 4th level. Their leader's name is not known, but he is rumored to be a henchman of Lheskar Bhaliiir, a tavern owner and fence of stolen goods in Arabel.



## Protein Polymorph Table

When using this table, the DM is advised to ignore rolls that do not fit a given situation or if there is a better choice for the protein polymorph to make. The polymorph is intelligent and uses its forms to its best advantage. The protein polymorph shifts in and out of these forms at will, taking one round to do so. It assumes the armor class, movement rate, and attack mode of the imitated creature, inflicting damage as the creature, but the hit points and hit dice used are always the polymorph's own. Regardless of form used, the creature attacks as a 6-HD monster (THAC0 15).

The DM is free to add to or change the list of imitated creatures in this table. If, for any reason, the DM does not want the protein polymorph to use one of the listed shapes, he could change it to one of his own. If the DM wishes to lengthen the list, other possible monsters include the giant beetle, giant lizard, and hook horror. The DM need only keep in mind the protein polymorph's size—it cannot imitate a large dinosaur or a tarrasque—and the creature's inability to duplicate special abilities. For example, it cannot imitate a grell because it cannot levitate. The polymorph cannot fly, even though it can imitate a winged creature.

1. **Protein polymorph** (in natural form): AC 2; MV 9; HD 6; hp 37; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 6-36; SA imitation; SZ L (12' tall or wide); INT average (9); ML 14; AL CN; XP 1,400; New monster (see page 64). In its natural form, the protein polymorph looks like a mound of glistening gray clay or a giant gray amoeba. The attack form of the polymorph is to enfold and crush its victim for 6-36 hp damage per round. Protein polymorphs seldom use their natural form, so the DM may wish to roll again for a new shape.
2. **Owlbear**: AC 5; MV 12; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-12; SA hug for 2-16 hp damage; MM. In this form, the

protein polymorph can use the owlbear's hug, as this special attack requires only the owlbear's form, which the polymorph is able to imitate. The owlbear scores a hug whenever one of its claw attacks hits with a roll of 18 or better.

3. **Brown bear**: AC 6; MV 12; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-8; SA hug for 2-12 hp damage; MM. In this form, the protein polymorph can use the bear's hug attack (see owlbear above).
4. **Giant scorpion**: AC 3; MV 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-10/1-10/1-4; MM. In this form, the protein polymorph can sting but not inject poison.
5. **Giant spider**: AC 4; MV 3, web 12; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; MM. In spider form, the protein polymorph can bite for 2-8 hp damage but is unable to inject poison or spin a web.
6. **Ankheg**: AC overall 2, underside 4; MV 12, burrow 6; #AT 1; Dmg 3-18; MM. In this form, the protein polymorph cannot squirt acid.
- 7-8. **Surroundings**. (See protein polymorph in natural form for statistics.) In this form, the protein polymorph imitates its surroundings: trees, grass, bushes, cavern walls, cave floors, etc. The polymorph can imitate virtually any inanimate object and is still able to move at its natural movement rate, though movement is a dead giveaway for a supposedly inanimate object. It can, depending on the form, grasp and hold a pony or a PC while the rest of the creature in polymorphing into another shape. For example, the polymorph, in the shape of a tree, despecializes a branch and respecializes it into a constricting snake. The snake grabs and holds the victim while the rest of the polymorph changes into an owlbear—with one paw in snake form, which loosens its grip long enough to change into a paw and strike at the victim.

In the northeastern part of the cave is another tunnel that slopes roughly upward and has good footing. Anyone moving more than 10 feet into this passage causes the 10 visible animal skeletons in this area to animate. Another 10 animal skeletons rise out of the muck at the far northern end of the cavern. When this happens, the hill giant zombie heads for the party from area D, arriving in area C one round later.

The osyluth has given the undead instructions to prevent anyone in this cave from leaving via the southwestern tunnel. The undead drive the PCs toward area D and stop attacking any PC who enters that cavern. The undead pursue the PCs to the limit of the osyluth's ability to sense them (250 feet), attacking until either they or the PCs are dead, all the PCs are out of range, or all the PCs are in area D.

If the animal skeletons are destroyed and examined, the PCs can see that three of the ones that rose from the muck are wearing leather collars. These skeletons are cooshees, and each collar is studded with six small moonstones, each worth 25 gp. The collars are so muddy that they must be examined closely or removed and handled by the PCs before the stones are discovered. If the monster zombie is destroyed, the PCs who examine it find a silver chain worth 50 gp around its neck.

**Animal skeletons** (20): AC 8; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 6 (x10), 5 (x10); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SD immune to *sleep*,

*charm*, and *hold* spells; impervious to cold, poison, paralysis, and death magic; half damage from edged weapons; SZ S-M; INT non (0); ML special; AL N; XP 65; MM. These are turned as normal skeletons at +1 in the cleric's favor, with 1d6+6 skeletons affected.

**Hill giant monster zombie**: AC 6; MV 9; HD 6; hp 33; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 4-16; SD immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells; impervious to cold, poison, paralysis, and death magic; half damage from blunt weapons; SZ H; INT non (0); ML special; AL N; XP 650; MM. This monster zombie is turned as a mummy.

**D. Osyluth Cave**. This cave is damp and stuffy. The floor is rough and level but not muddy. In a natural alcove in the southeast corner of the cave is what appears to be a large block of dark crystal, rough and irregular by vaguely coffin-shaped. This 10' x 6' x 6' block weighs over one ton and is not transparent, so it is impossible to tell if anything is trapped in the center of the block. In total darkness, the block radiates a faint red glow. Infravision reveals nothing about the block, but detection spells reveal magic and evil. (The block is magical, and its prisoner is evil.)

Trapped within the crystal block is the osyluth baatezu mentioned earlier. Once the PCs enter the cavern, the osyluth





can hear (but not see) them through the block without the necessity of scrying. The baatezu prefers telepathic communication, but he can be heard if he speaks from within the prison. When speaking, the fiend sounds as if he is very far away and down a deep well, but he is quite understandable.

Because the block allows the osyluth to scry in a 250' radius circle, he is aware of the PCs from the time they enter the cave complex. He can only see and hear in that area, not cast spells. Spells and spell-like effects are cast normally by the osyluth from his prison.

PCs entering this cave are immediately attacked with *charm person* and *suggestion* spells. The osyluth is desperate to influence charmed PCs to break the crystal block and telepathically recommends several ways of doing so. The crystal is not valuable, although the osyluth might claim it is. The block does not have to be completely destroyed to release the osyluth, as he regains his *teleport* ability (and other spell-like abilities) the instant the crystal ceases to completely surround him.

The crystal is impervious to nonmagical attacks. Against damaging spells and magically-enchanted weapons, it has AC -2, 80 hp, and saves as crystal with a +4 bonus. Inflicting 80 hp damage against the crystal is enough to make it crack, enabling the osyluth to *teleport* out. Spells and blunt magical weapons inflict full damage, but magical edged weapons inflict only 1 hp per hit regardless of their magical pluses.

If the PCs do not possess magical weapons or damaging spells, the baatezu suggests an alternate method for freeing him: cast a spell like *continual light* or *Nystul's magic aura* upon an iron spike, and drive the spike into the crystal. (The spike is treated as a magically enchanted weapon for purposes of damaging the crystal prison.) After 1d10+10 rounds, when the spike is driven through the crystal wall, the osyluth is no longer surrounded by the crystal and can *teleport* to freedom.

If spells fail to work, the osyluth resorts to telepathic pleading for release. He makes the most outrageous promises and lies through his teeth about himself and what he can do for the PCs. The osyluth claims to be a good spirit trapped in this prison, under a curse to appear evil and doomed to be guarded forever by terrible undead. He promises rich rewards and powerful magical items for his release.

If the PCs crack or otherwise destroy the osyluth's prison, it *teleports* out of the block to an area within 10 feet of the PCs. Released from his prison, the osyluth is difficult to deal with in either negotiation or melee. Before attacking, it seals off the cave exit with a *wall of ice* to prevent the party's escape. If reduced to fewer than 6 hp, the osyluth *teleports* away.

If neither spells nor telepathic persuasion works, the osyluth tries to finish off the adventuring party with his undead minions and spells, using powerful *suggestions* to turn the heroes against one another.

**Osluth:** AC 3; MV 12; HD 5; hp 23; THAC0 15; #AT 4 (claw/claw/bite/tail); Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-8/3-12; SA *cause fear* (5' radius; save vs. rods or flee in panic for 1d6 rounds), *poison tail* (save at -3 or lose 1d4 points of Strength for 1d10 rounds), spell-like abilities; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; immune to fire and poison; suffers half damage from cold and gas attacks; spell-like abilities; MR 30%; SZ L (9' tall); INT very (12); ML 12; AL LE; XP 7,000; MC *PLANESCAPE*<sup>®</sup> Appendix (baatezu, lesser).

Spell-like abilities, useable one at a time, once/round, at will: *advanced illusion*\*, *animate dead*, *charm person*, *fly*\*, *improved phantasmal force*\*, *infravision*\*, *invisibility*\*, *know alignment*\* (always active), *suggestion*, *teleport without error*\*, *wall of ice*\*. Once per day, it can *gate*\* 1-100 nupperibo (50% chance) or 1-2 osyluths (35% chance). Spells marked with an asterisk cannot be used by the osyluth while he is trapped in the crystal prison.



**E. Trash Cave.** The tunnel leading to this cavern slopes upward and offers good footing. The protein polymorph uses this cave as a receptacle for all the inedible belongings of its victims. PCs searching the cavern find a great deal of rubbish and many valueless objects such as a bent scabbard, two unmatched boots (both for the left foot), torn and ruined clothing, an old bridle, a waterskin, and other bits of unidentified trash.

The following valuables can be found, one item per turn of thorough searching; three small purses containing assorted coins worth 32 gp, 41 gp, and 56 gp respectively; a leather belt with a silver buckle (worth 25 gp); an empty, ornate scroll tube made of bone and ivory (worth 75 gp); two full vials of holy water; and five gems worth 200 gp, 100 gp (x2), and 50 gp (x2) respectively.

**F. Protein Polymorph's Cave.** This cave is damp, and a putrid smell rises from areas of old, dried blood on the floor. A dead pony is lying against the north wall of the cavern. If more than 24 hours have passed since the PCs followed the trail from area 5, the pony has been devoured by the protein polymorph, leaving only a pool of blood.

In the western portion of the cave is a small alcove filled by the polymorph. PCs entering the cavern see only a continuous wall. If the PCs detect the polymorph, it changes into a giant scorpion and attempts to flee the caverns (MV 15). If flight is not possible, it attacks but attempts to flee at the first opportunity. The PCs must actively block the exit from the cave to keep the polymorph from escaping. If chased from the caves and unable to escape its pursuers, the polymorph assumes the form of an ankheg and burrows under the ground, not emerging until it's safely out of attack range.

If the polymorph escapes the cavern complex, it seeks to evade pursuers long enough to change its appearance into that of its surroundings. The protein polymorph returns to the cave 2d12+24 hours after it has successfully fled. If the PCs are still in the caverns, it waits until the party runs low on supplies, then attacks anyone attempting to return to Tyrluk for provisions. The polymorph also tries to lure the PCs out of the caves by making quick sorties into the complex and then retreating. PCs falling for this tactic find the polymorph doubles back to attack anyone left at the cave, destroy their supplies and gear.

If the PCs are unable to find the protein polymorph in the cavern and decide to look elsewhere, leaving a lone guard, that person is attacked in 1d6+6 turns. If the PCs camp in the cave, the protein polymorph waits until the majority of the party is asleep, then changes into a fast-moving creature, attacks the guards, and flees. It returns later as above.

If the PCs attack the protein polymorph while it is in the process of changing from one creature to another, they do so at -1 to hit due to the shapechanging ability of the polymorph. A character aiming a blow at the polymorph-owlbear's head might suddenly see the head disappear as the polymorph changes shape, avoiding the intended blow. While changing, the protein polymorph can move at its normal movement rate of 9.

The protein polymorph does not enter areas C or D except in a life-or-death situation. If killed, the polymorph's cells despecialize, and it collapses into its natural form. (See "Protein Polymorph Table" sidebar.)

## Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs kill the polymorph and bring its body (or a portion thereof) back to Tyrluk, the bounty is paid in full.

If the PCs release the osyluth, Tiamat eventually hears of it, and the PCs have an enemy in Baator. Tiamat does not bother the PCs as long as they stay on the Prime Material Plane, but should they venture to the Lower Planes, her servants might be waiting. The PCs have more immediate problems if they release the osyluth but do not defeat him. The baatezu might raise an army of undead from his victims, augmenting them with dozens of gated nupperibo, and use this army to raid and loot the local area. PCs warning the local lords of the osyluth's release are expected to stay and help fight it. The local lords offer them no reward but do not levy any penalty on the PCs for releasing the creature if they stay to help.

If the PCs have not unleashed the osyluth, they may report the crystal block and its prisoner to the local authorities. If the block is reported to Hezom, Lord of Espar, the 9th-level priest hires the PCs at 100 gp each per day to take him to the cave holding the imprisoned baatezu. Hezom then casts *dispel evil* upon the crystal, banishing the fiend back to Baator.

If the PCs fail to find the protein polymorph or osyluth, they suffer no penalties. The group is simply another hunting party that tried and failed.

The DM may wish to expand on the participation of the Knaves of Clubs in his campaign; they can be formidable as low-level opponents. The description of the Knaves has been deliberately left vague for such expansion. Ω



# Protein Polymorph

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate to sub-tropical/Land
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	D
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	2
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	6-8
THAC0:	15 (6 HD), 13 (7-8 HD)
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	6-36
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Imitation (see below)
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (12' tall or wide)
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)
XP VALUE:	6 HD: 1,400 7 HD: 2,000 8 HD: 3,000

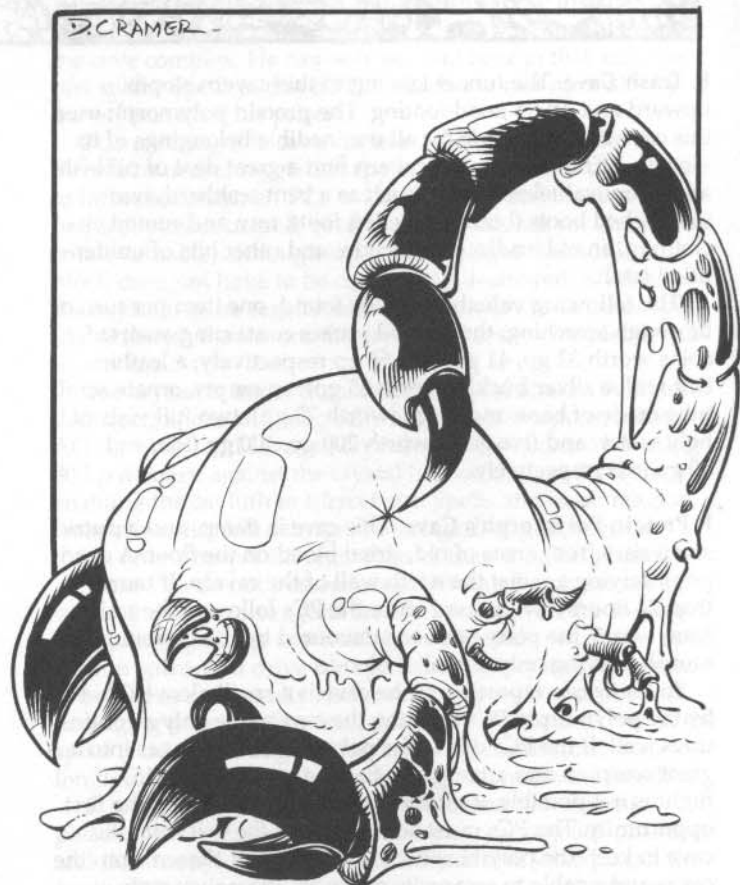
Protein polymorphs are intelligent cellular colonies with the ability to assume almost any form they choose. In their natural state, they appear as large amorphous blobs or columns of glistening, protoplasmic gray matter.

Protein polymorphs have no spoken language and do not converse or interact with other species. They consider most other creatures their prey.

**Combat:** A protein polymorph can assume the form of any inanimate object or animate creature with hit dice equal to or fewer than its own (depending on the size of the protein polymorph—6, 7, or 8 Hit Dice). The form assumed may actually be that of several forms connected by a near-invisible (10% chance of detection) cord or film of protoplasm. The cells of the protein polymorph may specialize or despecialize at will, taking on different textures and colors, changing completely in one round. Protein polymorphs retain their own hit dice, hit points, and THAC0 while adapting the imitated creatures' armor class, number of attacks, and damage per attack. They possess the normal strengths of imitated creatures, but not those creatures' special abilities. Thus, a polymorph assuming the form of a giant bird cannot fly, and one assuming the form of a giant spider cannot inject poison or spin webs.

The polymorph is extremely versatile. It can imitate anything from a pile of treasure to a small-sized room, to a party of half a dozen humans or a dozen kobolds. The polymorph will, in general, assume a form likely to draw prey; it feeds on humans and animals with little regard for type and size. A polymorph might even mix inanimate objects within its structure to add authenticity—a room or a corridor may, for instance, be part-stone and part protein polymorph. Imitated creatures may wear real clothing and wield real weapons (often acquired from previous victims).

The normal attack of a protein polymorph in its natural state is to bludgeon its prey and then enfold and crush it, inflicting 6-36 hp damage per round. When assuming the



form of weapon-wielding creatures, multiple or single, it inflicts damage by weapon type, as appropriate.

**Habitat/Society:** Protein polymorphs are solitary, asexual hermaphrodites. They procreate by fission, dividing into two smaller polymorphs, each with half the parent's hit dice and hit points. These juvenile polymorphs gain 1 HD of growth every month until they are as large as the original parent. Protein polymorphs are territorial hunters, claiming an area of wilderness for themselves and destroying competing predators in that area. The only exception is when two or more protein polymorphs encounter each other; under these rare circumstances, two protein polymorphs might share the same territory, dividing the spoils evenly. More typically, however, one of the polymorphs leaves in search of another hunting ground. Protein polymorphs recognize their own kind regardless of guise and never attack one another.

There are limits to the protein polymorph's degree of cellular control. It cannot accurately copy facial expressions, nor can it effectively duplicate the sound of speech. These limitations may lead to the exposure of the imposture as animate creatures. Similarly, if a protein polymorph disguises itself as an inanimate object, there is a 10% base chance of detecting the imposture from a distance of 10 feet away, but upon touch the animate nature of the cells is instantly revealed.

**Ecology:** Protein polymorphs are voracious hunters and must devour food regularly to provide the necessary nutrients. If a polymorph cannot find food within 24 hours, it must forage elsewhere. Its ichor can be used to create potions of *polymorph self* that have double the usual duration (8 + 2d4 turns).

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