

The Halfling

A One-Round Dungeons & Dragons® Living Greyhawk™ Bandit Kingdoms Regional Adventure

Version .9

by Keith Symcox

Circle Reviewer: Britt Frey

Triad Reviewer: Theo Judd

Assistant Reviewer: Patrick Walsh

Playtesters: Carl Symcox, Conor Ledgerwood, Matt O'Connor, Bert Campbell, Chris White, David Wyatt

A notorious traitor thought dead has reappeared in a very dangerous place. Are you brave enough to go get him? A one-round Bandit Kingdoms Regional adventure set in Johrase and the Rift Canyon for APLs 2-6.

Resources for this adventure include material first appearing in IUZ6-02 *Red Scales, Blue Secrets* by Casey Brown.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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For questions specific to this document, please e-mail your Triad at bdkpoc@gmail.com; for LIVING GREYHAWK campaign questions email rpgahq@wizards.com.

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

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PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

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

PREPARING FOR PLAY

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

Throughout this adventure, text in *bold italics* provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Refer to Appendix 1 for full information on NPCs and monsters. For your convenience, Appendix 1 is split by APL.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as

part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure Record (AR). You need one copy of this for each participating player.

LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

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

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.
2. Sum the results of step 1 and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.
3. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

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

APL also affects the amount of experience and gold a PC can gain at the end of the adventure. If a player character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL at which this adventure is being played, that character receives only one-half of the experience points and gold for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either the PC was not challenged as much as normal or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Furthermore, a PC who is four or more levels higher than the highest APL supported by the adventure may not play the adventure.

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

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

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round Regional adventure, set in the Bandit Kingdoms. Characters native to the Bandit Kingdoms pay 1 Time Units per round; all other characters pay 2 Time Units per round.

More information about Lifestyle and Upkeep can be found in the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

A halfling known as Teddy Bear (TB) Gonagin, a black sheep of the family, seems to have been instrumental in the selling out of the Rookroost Thieves' Guild to Lord Mortoth at the Millennium Ball in 594 CY. When Mortoth was assassinated at the ball, TB realized that his days were numbered if he stayed in Rookroost, as Mortoth's successor, Graf Tadorinal, and the Guild both wanted to "talk" to him. He parlayed his vast information of the Rookroost area and the inner workings of the old bureaucracy in exchange for safety with Boneheart Cranzer's lieutenant, Hulian Braineater. Within months, TB had managed to worm himself quite close to Braineater as an advisor on political and economic matters.

Upon Cranzer's return in 595 CY, there was a major shakeup in the power structure at Riftcrag and Braineater scapegoated TB over the silver caravan attacks that had become prevalent in the years Cranzer was gone. TB was removed from his position and given to the torturers. It was assumed that TB eventually died and his soul was eaten by something horrifying.

As it transpired, TB escaped captivity and is not dead. Boneheart Cranzer has placed a large bounty upon his head, which has attracted the notice of some of the more experienced bounty hunters in the Bandit Kingdoms. A particularly notorious hunter named Ruvash Bloodarrow (detailed in *BDK5-02 Trouble at Dragon Rift*) recently found him living with the Men of the Rift. However, it was not worth Bloodarrow's time and effort to recover him, so he sold the information to an insidious slaver known as Nevin Ringblade. Ringblade runs an extensive slaving racket and has many contacts throughout the Bandit Kingdoms. He is not well known because he works through discreet agents and has close ties to the Church of Iuz. After learning about TB, he sent word to an associate in Kinemeet named Arlen to see if the Johrase might be willing to pay for the capture of a person who might know a back way into Riftcrag. He also sent a query to the Rookroost Thieves' Guild, but the agent charged with the task was assassinated before he could complete it.

As the adventure starts, the PCs find out that TB is alive and has recently joined the Men of the Rift. Those on the outside reason that if TB escaped Riftcrag, then he might have found some secret way out of the city that might be usable by the Johrase at some later date to gain information about their imprisoned king.

Lord Hind of the Johrase Council of Nobles has been using his contacts to search out information concerning his monarch. The Johrase have no formal contacts with the Men of the Rift, and were actually responsible for killing several of them defending silver caravans while under contract to Cranzer. Additionally, the Johrase are stretched pretty thin with the rebuilding of their land and are unable to take advantage of this information once they learn of it. Lord Hind would love to talk to this halfling if the PCs can extract him.

As a complicating factor, the Rookroost Thieves' Guild has a long memory and remembers TB's betrayal. Once they find out he is alive (shortly after the beginning of the adventure), they start working to get him back to Rookroost for "re-education". The PCs have to determine where their loyalties lie at the end of the adventure.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Encounter 1: The PCs are sent an offer to help find a notorious slaver named Ruvash Bloodarrow and save the sister of the recruiter. This turns out to be a ruse and the PCs are captured by slavers working for Nevin Ringblade.

Encounter 2: The PCs awaken in a barn, where they have been taken after capture by slavers. In the process of escaping, they come upon the slavers fighting amongst themselves. The PCs may learn information about a renegade halfling who is of interest to several factions in the Bandit Kingdoms.

Encounter 3: The PCs may meet with a representative of the Kingdom of Johrase. He expresses an interest in talking with this halfling if they extract him from the Men of the Rift. Or the PCs may meet with the Rookroost Thieves' Guild, who expresses a deep interest in the halfling as well.

Additionally, the PCs have an opportunity to research feasible ways into the Rift Canyon. They might talk to a Red Planks information broker, a Rift Barrens nomad, or a member of Moskol's Legion. Depending upon who they talk to, the PCs can learn up to three methods of getting into the Rift Canyon relatively safely.

Encounter 4: The PCs must negotiate the path to the bottom of the Rift Canyon. Depending upon the route they take and the method, this may be relatively easy or brutally hard.

Encounter 5: The PCs may have an opportunity to interact with Tikla, an ogre sympathetic to the goals of Xuv and Friga (introduced in *BDK3-03 Trouble at Baco Canyon* and *BDK5-02 Trouble at Dragon Rift*). They can learn the location of the Men of the Rift from him.

Encounter 6: The PCs are brought before the Plar of the Rift and interrogated by one of his lieutenants, Etroll. They can see the influence that TB Gonagin has with Etroll. They are then told to prove themselves in the arena.

Encounter 7: The PCs must fight in the arena for the amusement of the Men of the Rift. **Encounter 8:** The PCs are honored at a Feast of the Slaughter. During the feast, Nevin Ringblade appears and begins negotiations with the Plar for the halfling.

Encounter 9: TB attempts to bribe the PCs into helping him escape. He offers information about his experiences

in the mine and his suspicions that he has seen Duke Gellor of the Duchy of the Artonsamay.

PREPARATION FOR PLAY

Before play begins, find out whether any of the characters has any of the following plot points:

- Rescuer of the Veth (BDK6-02 Trouble at Gul Bortha)—Natasha gives more information to the PCs (Encounter 3).
- Enmity of the Red Planks (BDK5-07 Ebongleam)—Natasha does not talk to the PCs (Encounter 3).
- Outlawed by the Rift Barrens Nomads (BDK3-03 Trouble at Baco Canyon)—Hvirta Brighteagle does not talk to them (Encounter 3).
- Hunted by Ruvash Bloodarrow (BDK5-02 Trouble at Dragon Rift)—it is easier to convince Hvirta to talk to them (Encounter 3).
- Sitting at the Feet of the Master or access to the bridle of resistance (BDK4-03 Trouble at Centaur Mesa)—it is easier to convince Hvirta to talk to them (Encounter 3).
- Enmity of the Men of the Rift (BDK5-02 Trouble at Dragon Rift)—the PCs face more challenges with the Men of the Rift (Encounter 6 and 7).

REGIONAL WARNING

If your players are unfamiliar with the Bandit Kingdoms region, read the following aloud before running this event:

It is important to realize at all times that the Bandit Kingdoms are under the control of Iuz, the Old One, a chaotic, evil deity who revels in torture, depravity and trickery. Government officials tend to imitate many of the attributes of their dread lord. Things that you might take for granted in other lands, such as freedom of worship and the rule of law, are not valued by the rulers of the Combination of Free Lords. You may be able to strike at Iuz, but seldom can you strike at him overtly without paying the final price. Be warned, life is short for those who openly defy Old Wicked.

INTRODUCTION

You have been staying at the Morningstar Inn in the Johrase capital of Kinemeet for the last several days, basking in the sense of freedom that comes from being in a city with a government that cares about the well being of its citizens. Down every street come the sounds of sawing and hammering, as shops and houses are rebuilt to handle the influx of Johrase returning home after 15 years of exile. Prices are high, labor is scarce, and food is short, but everyone you meet has a look of determination to defend their freedom, even at the cost of personal hardship. The one unifying theme of conversation in

town is the sense of outrage at the foul sorcery done to the King.

You received a note asking you to meet at the Alley Cat Tavern at sunset to “talk about taking care of a notorious evildoer.” The note ended with the instructions, “Tell the bartender you are with Arlen. Come ready to leave at once.”

Verify that the PCs decide to take up the offer, and then continue.

As you walk through the town, you can see that most of the foreigners in town are workers or tradesmen, hoping to get in on the ground floor if the Johrase nation can prosper. A Rhenee circus has even come to town to entertain the commoners, while merchants from Stoink and Rookroost, hoping to profit from food shortages and the lack of skilled artisans in town, ply their wares from makeshift stalls in the Old Plaza. Obviously, the consensus is that there are fortunes to be made in Kinemeet, if only the situation will last.

Arriving at the Alley Cat just as the sun is setting, the bartender ushers you into a back room that seems to be used mostly for storage.

The bartender only knows that the back room was rented by an Oeridian man who paid 20 gp in cash for the uninterrupted use of the room for an hour. When the introductions are over, begin *Encounter 1*.

I: ARLEN'S PROPOSITION

The door out of the room into the stable yard opens and you see a cloaked man enter, looking over his shoulders as if worried about being followed. When the door is closed, he throws back his hood, revealing his face and a jagged scar along his left cheek. He looks you over for a moment, then smiles. “Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Arlen. I have asked you here because we have an opportunity to take a notorious slaver out of circulation: Ruvash Bloodarrow. This will strike a blow against such foul predators and make life safer for the undefended in the Combination of Free Lords. Are you interested?”

Arlen is lying; the whole meeting is a setup. He is involved in a racket of highly specialized human trade involving the capture of very skilled slaves. As a consequence, his operation is sophisticated and well-funded. He has scouted the PCs out ahead of time and decided they would make excellent wares. He takes 10 on his Bluff check. His check is 58 after he uses his scroll of glibness. He has already used a scroll of undetectable alignment so he is immune to attempts to magically discern his alignment. He has also used a scroll of delay poison to protect him from the fumes of his trap (see below). He waits for acceptance of the mission before continuing.

Arlen will start by offering 100 gp to each PC as payment for the mission. If the PCs use Diplomacy to improve his starting attitude of Indifferent to Friendly, he is willing to pay up to 150 gp each; to Helpful, 200 gp each. In any case, he is still bluffing.

When the matter of payment is concluded, continue:

Arlen checks the doors to make sure no one is listening, and then motions you to come closer. He pulls out of his cloak a gem-encrusted silver ball. "This item is an orb of the crossroads, which allows the wielder to teleport instantly to anyplace within 50 miles without error once per week. Bloodarrow captured my sister last week, and I have tracked him to Kinemeet. The orb of the crossroads can get you close to where my sister is being held. We want Bloodarrow alive, so be sure and use weapons that won't kill."

A PC who makes a DC 20 Knowledge (local – Iuz's Border States) or Bardic Knowledge check knows the orb of the crossroads is a relatively recent source of rumors. It is rumored to be an artifact of the faith of Fharlanghn with many powers and was lost during the Greyhawk Wars. Detect magic reveals a strong magic aura (Arlen placed a Nystul's magic aura spell on it). If necessary, Arlen can provide the following information:

- He is borrowing the orb of the crossroads from his superiors (false, this "artifact" is just a gas bomb made up to look like the artifact).
- His superiors do not know that he has the orb of the crossroads (true, since no such artifact is in his possession).
- He cannot tell them who these superiors are (true).
- He is working to rid the Bandit Kingdoms of slavers (partially true, he wants to get rid of all his competition; his Bluff check concerning this lie receives a +5 bonus).
- Ruvash Bloodarrow is a notorious slaver who operates from the area around Trallant (true).
- Ruvash was rumored to have been killed in the Barrens several years ago, but he believes those rumors are untrue (true).
- He plans to turn Ruvash over to the Johrase (false).
- He is searching for Ruvash because Ruvash captured his sister last week and Arlen wants her back (false).
- Arlen's sister's name is Deniska (false).

When the PCs are ready, Arlen will gather them around the ball.

Arlen stands up. "I thank you for doing this, as I fear to think of what my sister is going through." He looks to you with tears in his eyes. "I will be here waiting for you, please hurry."

Allow the PCs to make any assurance of help they wish, then continue.

Arlen carefully removes the ball from its holder and pushes a stud in the center of the ball. A cloud of gas erupts from the ball!

As the choking fumes surround you, Arlen looks at you with undisguised pity. "You adventurers are so gullible! As if I would hire a band such as you for anything other than latrine duty."

Roll initiative.

Tactics: Consult [DM Map 1](#). The PCs are in the back room of the inn. Arlen has activated a trap that releases a 15-foot radius cloud of distilled carrion crawler brain juice (DC 17 Fortitude save resists, paralysis) and drow poison (DC 17 Fortitude save resists, unconsciousness). Due to delay poison, Arlen is not affected by the gas cloud.

On the first round, Arlen calls his associates to enter and then leaves. On their turn, monsters storm into the room armed with nets and saps (instead of their MM armaments) to subdue anyone who is not unconscious or paralyzed. Three of the bugbears throw additional vials of the distilled carrion crawler juice at conscious targets (+3 to hit, treat as grenade-like weapons with DC 17 for the target and DC 13 for those in the splash area). Any characters still standing have to fight the monsters.

The door back into the inn was rigged by Arlen to lock and bar once the PCs were back inside. It requires a DC 30 Open Lock check to open. Use the door statistics if the PCs try to break it down or destroy it. Successfully opening the door only makes the inn patrons flee in panic.

Reinforced Strong Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; AC 5; Break DC 30.

After the PCs are unconscious, the monsters hustle them out the back door and put them in a wagon. They then drive them out of town to an old barn south of Kinemeet.

All APLs (EL 11)

Arlen: male human rogue 7; hp 37; see [Appendix 1](#).

Bugbear Warriors (4): hp 16 each; Melee Atk +5 sap (1d6+2); Ranged Atk +3 net (entangle); Exotic Weapon Proficiency (net), Weapon Focus (sap); [Monster Manual](#) 29.

Minotaurs (4): hp 39 each; Melee Atk +9 sap (1d8+4); [Monster Manual](#) 189.

Development: To make this encounter work, you need to sell Arlen as a believable good guy. This makes it all the more surprising when he turns on them.

Should the PCs somehow see through Arlen, go to initiative. On his turn, he desperately attempts to activate the gas bomb before they get to him.

If by some chance the PCs are able to defeat this encounter and take Arlen (dead or alive), then they can recover [Player Handout 1](#) from him. In such an event, skip [Encounter 2](#) and go to [Encounter 3](#). The PCs only get XP for this encounter if they get the letters from Arlen.

If one or more PCs manage to get away, the monsters load up captured PCs and haul them to the barn outside of Kinemeet. Depending upon the actions of the free PCs, you can probably run *Encounter 2* normally, perhaps with the free PCs rushing in to save the others just as the monsters turn on Arlen. As long as the PCs manage to capture Arlen through some means and recover the letters, the adventure can continue.

2: SLAVERS IN THE BARN

The PCs have been taken to a barn outside of Kinemeet, where they are being held in a shed attached to the barn until they can be shipped out. As the PCs wake up, Arlen has returned and is angry about the condition of the slaves. The PCs overhear the falling out between the slavers while they recover and reequip themselves. See [DM Map 2](#) for the barn layout. Note that there is no door directly between the slave pen and the barn.

The acrid smell of gas still lingers in the air as you come to your senses. You can hear people moving around and, from the creak of wood, you must be inside some sort of building. You can feel the sensation slowly returning to your limbs but seem to be unable to move. There is a crack along one wall that lets in a little light, so it must be daytime, although the last thing you remember was happening just after sunset.

As you struggle to regain the use of your limbs, you hear the sound of an argument outside. You hear a man say in a loud voice "You idiots! I told you one bulb, and you threw in three. That poison is valuable, some of the product is dead, and the rest won't be able to move for hours!"

A harsh, guttural voice responds "You not talk Grak like that. We bring you meat for mines, you pay us."

The first voice responds "Only a quarter what we agreed. You stupid idiots can't do anything right." With that, there is a roar of anger and the sound of combat beginning.

The PCs' gear was stripped from them and is piled in the tack room behind the door to the shed they are currently lying in. All nonlethal damage has been recovered and all PCs are at full hit points unless they took lethal damage. If so, they have been stabilized and their wounds bound. Feel free to describe them as feeling sick or nauseous, but they are under no game mechanic effect.

The PCs are being held in a shed attached to a large barn outside of Kinemeet. In the shed are not only the PCs, but also several dead NPCs who succumbed to the poison gas attack (no equipment). Everyone has been stripped of all possessions except for just enough clothing to maintain decency and have been thrown in the shed like cordwood. They are also tied up with hemp rope (DC 22 Escape Artist check to escape or DC 23 Strength check to break).

Characters opening the door to the shed see that it opens into a tack room in the barn that contains all their equipment piled in a corner. The fighting seems to be coming from the main part of the barn itself. There is a shut door between the tack room and the fighting. The combat only lasts for three rounds – then there is a sudden silence, followed by the sound of looting in the barn. The monsters spend about 10 minutes looting the corpses of their foes before looking in on the PCs, so the PCs have plenty of time to escape the ropes and reequip themselves if they do not simply rush into the barn.

Grak and company probably will not notice the PCs until someone opens the door from the tack room. When the PCs open the door, read or paraphrase the following.

The floor of the barn is littered with bodies. There are at several dead monsters on the floor, as well as the body of Arlen, the man who betrayed you. A monstrous figure is squatting over Arlen's chest, carving something into his forehead with a dagger.

APL 2 (EL 4)

Bugbear Warriors (2): hp 16 each; Melee Atk +5 sap (1d6+2); Ranged Atk +3 net (entangle); Exotic Weapon Proficiency (net), Weapon Focus (sap); *Monster Manual* 29.

APL 4 (EL 6)

Minotaurs (2): hp 39 each; Melee Atk +9 sap (1d8+4); *Monster Manual* 189.

APL 6 (EL 8)

Minotaurs (4): hp 39 each; Melee Atk +9 sap (1d8+4); *Monster Manual* 189.

Tactics: The monster fight out of a sense of self-preservation, but a fast Diplomacy check (-10 penalty as a full-round action) that improves their Hostile attitude to Indifferent or better persuades them to back down. They love Arlen no more than the PCs. As long as the PCs let them take Arlen's money and magical items, they agree to let the PCs live. If their attitude is improved to Friendly or better, they leave the PCs Arlen's *potion of gaseous form* and *scroll of expeditious retreat*. If Helpful, they agree to split the loot 50/50 with the PCs (and PCs gain access to all Arlen's items). Either way, the monsters leave the letter behind as it serves them no purpose.

If the PCs defeat the monsters, then they can loot the bodies. A search of Arlen's body reveals a pair of letters. Give them *Player Handout 1*.

Should the PCs lose this encounter, then they are taken as slaves to the silver mines and lose 12 TUs before escaping. They gain the *Whip Scars* plot point and the adventure is over.

When the players have read the letters, they might know some additional information. Members of the Rookroost Thieves' Guild recognize the name TB Gonagin as a "person of interest" who is wanted for betraying the Guild to Lord Mortoth at the Millennium Ball in 594 CY. PCs who played *BDK5-02 Trouble at Dragon*

Rift recognize the name Ruvash Bloodarrow as that of a bounty hunter who was looking for them in that adventure.

There are several NPCs mentioned in the letter about whom the PCs can make a Knowledge (local: Iuz's Border States) check.

- **Governor Cranzer (DC 10):** The nominal ruler of the Bandit Lands of Iuz's Empire. He has had difficulty reigning in rebellious states like Rookroost, Stoink, and Redhand, but his rule continues through sheer terror which he spreads throughout the land by his heinous acts of treachery and foul play. **(DC 20):** He is a Greater Boneheart.
- **Lord Hind (DC 10):** The leader of the Johrase council of nobles who rules in the absence of King Ramiki (who was captured by Cranzer in 596 CY).
- **Ruvash Bloodarrow (DC 10):** A notorious bounty hunter. Rumors state that he died a couple of years ago in the barrens. His mention implies they may be false.
- **Duke Gellor (DC 15):** The one-time ruler of the now-fallen Duchy of the Artonsomay. He is said to have ties to the former ruling family of the County of Urnst. Common wisdom has it he died defending the Bandit Lands against Iuz's armies during the Greyhawk Wars.
- **Durand Grossman (DC 15):** The Plar of the Rift. He leads the ragtag band of brigands and scoundrels known as the Men of the Rift. He is not to be trifled with however. It is said even Cranzer is wary to enter the Rift for fear of encountering him.
- **Halga (DC 20):** A high priestess of Iuz. She is feared throughout the entire empire. **(DC 30):** She is a Greater Boneheart.
- **TB Gonagin (DC 25):** A traitor to the Rookroost Thieves' Guild for ratting them out at Mortoth's Ball in 594 CY. The halfling was last heard to be working for one of Cranzer's lieutenants a couple of years ago.

If the PCs Gather Information on TB Gonagin:

- **DC 15:** Somebody in Rookroost had offered a lot of money for the return of TB Gonagin a couple of years ago. You have not heard anything about it recently. It is rumored that the Rookroost Thieves' Guild wanted him for something.
- **DC 20:** It is rumored that TB sold out the Guild to Lord Mortoth.

Rumors about the Duke run like wildfire. Many are wildly false, but some may hold a hint of truth. Should the PCs wish, they may make a Gather Information check about Duke Gellor. If they succeed on a DC 10 roll 1d4 to generate a random rumor from the table below. Add 3 to the result if the check beats DC 20.

- **1:** Duke Gellor is 40 feet tall and wears purple armor. He likes to kill orcs.
- **2:** Duke Gellor killed Cranzer and replaced him. He is impersonating the old wizard so that he can get close to Old Wicked and kill him.

- **3:** Duke Gellor was the ruler of the Duchy of Artonsamay. He was killed when his land was overrun in the Greyhawk wars.
- **4:** Duke Gellor has been elevated to godhood by Hieroneous and shoots lightning bolts out of his eyes at evildoers who threaten farmers.
- **5:** Duke Gellor did not really die, but is hiding out in a monastery to Fortubo in Radigast City.
- **6:** The Duke has a famous nephew named Ramirez who was a demon slayer. Ramirez helped reclaim Stonehill Fortress, but he has not been seen for a couple of years.
- **7:** There is a magical book called the Codex Artonsamay that can identify the true heir to the Duchy of Artonsamay.

It is now up to the PCs to decide what to do. They might decide to find out if the Johrase want this information; they might search out Kinemeet or even go to Rookroost to look for a Rookroost Thieves' Guild contact to see if the Guild is interested in the location of TB Gonagin, their most famous traitor; or they might contact other organizations. All these options are covered in *Encounter 3*. Assume that organizations not listed in *Encounter 3* are either not interested or ask the PCs to broker this information to one of the organizations listed (just use your best judgment which one). Should they decide to go to the Rift Canyon on their own, go to *Encounter 4*.

3: CONTACT!

Several organizations have contacts in town and can help the PCs if approached correctly. Some of these contacts must be located with a Gather Information check. If so the required DC or influence needed is listed in the appropriate sections. These are the mechanics of the contact, but feel free to roleplay the encounters.

The PCs have two tasks to accomplish in town. One is finding a reason to retrieve the halfling. Several groups want him, but only two really want him enough to offer the PCs anything: the Rookroost Thieves' Guild and the Johrase. The second thing the PCs must accomplish is finding a safe way into the Rift. The PCs may not realize it, but if they attempt to enter the Rift without knowing a safe route, they encounter a very deadly natural trap. Members of the Men of the Rift meta-org know of *Route 1* automatically (they know it to be a bit hazardous, but reliable). Otherwise, the PCs can learn of a relatively safe route through the Red Planks, Moskol's Legion, or Hvirta Brighteagle, a nomad trader.

CONTACTING THE JOHRASE

Anyone can direct the PCs to the manor of Lord Hind, but his regular staff does not abide them unless the group contains a Blooded Member or Knight Protector in the Johrase Mercenaries meta-org. Such important individuals are briefly questioned and then discreetly escorted to speak with "the Gardener." This is the code name of Talbon Halfspear, a member of Hind's staff and an espionage specialist. Otherwise, if the PCs mention

something about a way into Riftcrag or succeed on a DC 25 Diplomacy check, they are likewise taken to Talbon.

They are shown into Talbon's office in the old gardener's quarters of Lord Hind's manor. Read or paraphrase the following.

A Flanna man in his late 30s sits at a desk piled high with papers. A single everburning lantern illuminates the desk. As you enter, the man finishes reading another parchment, sighs, and then looks up at you. You can see that his face is creased as if from constant worry. He looks you over for a moment as if evaluating you, then smiles and offers you each a seat. "If you've been brought here you obviously have something of importance to share. My name is Talbon Halfspear. Who do I have the pleasure of addressing?"

Allow the PCs to explain why they are here. Assuming that they mention TB or a possible escape route from Riftcrag, Talbon becomes very interested.

Talbon studies you for a minute and then seems to come to some conclusion. "You may be aware that our King was foully stolen from us last year? It may be possible that this halfling knows something to help us devise a plan for our King's recovery. But I tell you that this is a long shot, and I cannot spare the resources to go after him just now. We have other pressing issues here at home and cannot risk drawing the attention of the master of Riftcrag. What I can promise, is that should you be able to quietly bring this halfling to me, I will find a way to reward you. If you wish to try to get him, I know of some contacts that might be able to help you."

Things Talbon knows and is willing to share:

- The Rift Canyon is a dangerous place. It would be best to find a safe route to the canyon floor.
- He is aware that there is a Rhenee information broker working with the circus in town. She may know of a safe way into the Rift. Ask for Natasha.
- He has reports that there is a Rift Barrens Nomad at the marketplace selling horses. Perhaps he knows a way into the Rift.
- There may be other groups who dislike the Old One who can help the group.
- He wants the halfling brought straight to him quietly so that his people can interrogate him without alerting Cranzer that the Johrase have his information.

Talbon Halfspear: Male human (Flan) rogue 7; AL LN; Will +5; Sense Motive +13.

CONTACTING THE RED PLANKS

A DC 15 Gather Information check or a DC 15 Bluff check to pass the word that the PCs are in the market for information provides the Red Planks contact. The contact at the circus is a red-headed trapeze artist named Natasha.

PCs who played BDK5-07 *Ebongleam* might recognize her as same woman who was sitting with Malthos if they make a successful Spot check opposed by her Disguise check (DC 29).

"Natasha" is a cover identity for Dmitri the Black, a spy for the Red Planks, The persona of Dmitri the Black has changed over the years. The current Dmitri happens to be a woman, but that does not stop her from taking a man's alias. As a spymaster, she is a trained professional in her art and always behaves as such. She can answer any trapeze-related questions and maintains her cover persona flawlessly.

She does not talk to any group that contains a character with the *Enmity of the Red Planks*. If the PCs notice that she is the same person as "Serina" from BDK5-07 *Ebongleam*, she asks them politely to be quiet about it, as she is trying to straighten out her life and leave the life of a courtesan. This is a lie, of course (Bluff +32).

She can inform the PCs of a safe way into the Rift Canyon for 600 gp. If anyone has the plot point *Rescuer of the Veth*, the favor can be traded instead of payment. Each influence point spent with the Red Planks will reduce the cost of the information by 200 gp. If any of the PCs are members of the Red Planks, she gives them the "family rate" and knocks 20% off the final amount due. Natasha knows *Route 2* into the canyon. If she sees any PCs in medium or heavy armor, she warns them not to take it with them, as she has heard the path down is incredibly treacherous for those so heavily encumbered.

If the PCs ask about TB, she can sell the PCs the information contained in *Player Handout 2* for 100 gp or one IP with the Red Planks.

"Natasha" (Dmitri the Black): Female human (Rhenee); 13 HD; AL N; Will +5; Bluff +22, Diplomacy +18, Disguise +19, Listen +8, Spot +16.

CONTACTING THE ROOKROOST THIEVES' GUILD

While normally, the Rookroost Thieves' Guild does not operate in other cities in the Combination, a member of the organization has recently moved to Kinemeet to try to set up a new Guild based upon the Rookroost model. This venture is probably destined to fail, but that does not keep hard-working thieves from trying. This individual still has relatives who work in the Rookroost Guild and is well aware of the duplicity of TB. He does not actually work for the Guild anymore, but he does not tell the PCs that. He can be contacted with a DC 25 Gather Information check.

Alternatively, the PCs might simply decide to travel to Rookroost. Members of the Rookroost Thieves' Guild meta-org can automatically make contact and set up a meet. Parties without such a character must make a DC 25 Gather Information check or expend 1 IP with the Guild (or associated influence e.g. Rhadrick Avenfear) to set up the meet. In either case, have them meet the contact at the Drunken Dragon Inn in Rookroost.

Whether they meet a contact in Kinemeet or Rookroost, the PCs meet with Volner One-Eye. Volner informs the PCs that the Guild is *very* interested in making sure TB is “safely returned home.” Volner vows to reward them handsomely if they bring TB directly to him.

If the party includes a member of the Rookroost Thieves' Guild or two IPs with the Guild, Volner will also give them the information contained in *Player Handout 3*. Otherwise, he will broker it for the princely sum of 500 gp. One IP spent with the Guild reduces the cost to 250 gp.

Volner One-Eye: Male human (Oeridian) rogue 7; AL CN; Will +4; Bluff +14, Disguise +10, Hide +13, Listen +8, Move Silent +13, Spot +16.

CONTACTING THE RIFT BARRENS NOMADS

A PC who makes a DC 20 Gather Information check is directed to a Rift Barrens nomad selling horses in Kinemeet (the PCs can learn about him through the Johrase or just by looking around town for someone who is native to the Rift Canyon area). This nomad is Hvirta Brighteagle (from *BDK3-03 Trouble at Baco Canyon*). Hvirta is tight-lipped and only talks to about the nomad's secret way into the Rift Canyon if the characters make a DC 40 Diplomacy check. (The DC has been modified to account for the tribal stricture that no one is to be shown the secrets of the nomads without dire necessity.) Note this check is supposed to be challenging. You are not to assume the PCs should be capable of making it. The PCs should have to work for the nomad's information because it can provide them with the easiest path down. Acquiring this information should be as challenging as navigating one of the more difficult paths into the canyon from the perspective of resource expenditure. This check can be modified by the following plot points or circumstances:

- *Outlawed by the Rift Barrens Nomads* (from *BDK3-03 Trouble at Baco Canyon*) causes Diplomacy checks to automatically fail. If instead one or more PCs played *BDK3-03 Trouble at Baco Canyon* without incurring the plot point, the DC is reduced by 10.
- *Sitting at the Feet of the Master* or access to the *bridle of resistance* (from *BDK4-02 Trouble at Centaur Mesa*) reduces the DC by 5.
- *Hunted by Ruvash Bloodarrow* (from *BDK5-02 Trouble at Dragon Rift*) reduces the DC by 5.
- A PC with 5 or more ranks in either Ride or Handle Animal receives a +2 circumstance bonus.
- A PC with the Mounted Combat feat receives a +2 circumstance bonus.
- A PC who speaks Flan receives a +2 circumstance bonus.
- If the PCs are working for the Johrase (assuming they inform him), this reduces the DC by 5, as the nomads consider the Johrase to be honorable Flan warriors.

- A PC who lets slip that the party is working for a guild of thieves raises the DC by 5.

Allow other PCs to aid this check. Hvirta has no contacts with the Men of the Rift, but knows of *Route 3* into the canyon.

Hvirta Brighteagle: Male human (Flan) ranger 6/wild plains outrider 2; AL NG; Will +5; Sense Motive +7.

CONTACTING MOSKOL'S LEGION

PCs who wish to contact Moskol's Legion must make a DC 20 Gather Information check or else expend 1 IP with the organization to gain a meeting with Raynard Oakheart. Raynard is a refugee from the Tangles who is currently living in Kinemeet. If the PCs found Raynard via Gather Information, then he is reluctant to talk to them unless his reaction can be adjusted from Indifferent to Friendly or better.

Some PCs might remember that Moskol's Legion seems to have a contact in Riftcrag (detailed in *BDK6-05 Grass Roots*). Raynard assures the PCs that the Riftcrag road into the canyon is too dangerous for them as it is heavily patrolled by Cranzer's forces and is far enough from the reputed location of the Men of the Rift that they would probably not survive the journey down the canyon.

The best Raynard can provide the PCs with is rumors of a way into the canyon marked by red dragon fire (*Route 1*). From his rather vague description, the PCs must still make a DC 20 Survival check to find the route.

Raynard Oakheart: Male human ranger 3/fighter 3; AL LN; Will +3; Sense Motive +5.

CONTACTING THE FELLREEV FACTION

If the PCs have influence with any member of the Fellreev Faction (Dazark Orcs, Defenders of Greenkeep, Fanlareshan Elves, or Fort Hendricks), they can spend 1 IP to gain the information in *Player Handout 2*. This requires a brief detour to the Fellreev Forest.

4: INTO THE RIFT

There are three viable ways of going into the Rift Canyon. One of them was detailed in *IUZ6-02 Red Scales, Blue Secrets* and the other two in *BDK5-02 Trouble at Dragon Rift*. These are listed below as *Route 1*, *2*, and *3*. Use whichever is appropriate.

If the PCs approach the canyon with no information about a path down, then stress just how dangerous it looks to go down the canyon. Allow them to make a DC 10 Intelligence or Knowledge (geography) check to realize that descending into the Rift Canyon without knowing a viable route is virtually suicide. Should they continue anyway, the PCs encounter the following on their way down.

All APLs (EL 10)

Collapsing Rock-wall: CR 7; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; Atk +19 melee (10d6, stone blocks); multiple targets (all targets in a 15-ft.-by-15-ft. area); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 15.

Falling Over the Edge: CR 7; DC 16 Reflex save avoids; 80 ft. fall (8d6, fall).

Falling to the Rift Floor: CR 7; DC 6 Reflex save avoids; 500 ft. fall (20d6, fall).

ROUTE 1

The PCs may learn this route by either having a member of the Men of the Rift meta-org in their party or by speaking with Raynard Oakheart of Moskol's Legion.

The beginning of this trail is marked by an ominous burned spot containing several half-melted rocks. The path is ten feet wide, barely wide enough to allow a horse or other large creature to navigate, and contains many switchbacks.

A PC who makes a DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check recognizes the burn mark as consistent with dragon fire. A PC who makes a DC 15 Knowledge (local: Iuz's Border States) check knows there is reputed to be a red dragon in the Rift named Morginstaler. Members of the Men of the Rift meta-org automatically know this.

At roughly a 10 to 15 degree down angle, the path takes 6 miles to reach the canyon floor, but is relatively free of hazards and monsters. Be sure to have the players set a marching order before springing the trap.

A PC who makes a DC 15 Survival or Knowledge (geography) check realizes that rock falls are a real threat while traveling down the path.

Trap: One of the dangers of the Rift is its bizarre weather. Highly localized, swirling, gale-force winds can sweep men away from rock faces in the blink of an eye. Drifting mists can make rock moist and as hazardous as ice and frost. Rock falls are common, and cave-ins are hardly uncommon. This is dangerous terrain, to be sure.

Roughly halfway down the trail, the first creature weighing more than 200 pounds triggers the trap, as the vibration of their steps sends loose rocks tumbling down onto their heads. If a PC successfully locates and disables the trap, the rocks fall harmlessly over the trail and down into the canyon. A PC who fails the Disable Device check by 5 or more triggers a rock fall onto his or her head. The rock fall affects an area within 20 feet of the triggering character.

Remember dwarves can use their Search skill to locate difficult stonework traps just like rogues can. The PCs do not have time to take 20 searching for this trap, as they are moving down miles of mountainous terrain. To do so would mean that they are taking over a week to travel the six miles of trail to the bottom of the canyon, and there is really no place to sleep safely on these trails without very special gear (which the PCs probably do not have).

A PC who is struck by the rocks might be knocked over the edge of the path, but is allowed a Reflex save to avoid falling. A PC who falls must attempt another Reflex save to stop falling at the next switchback before they fall all the way to the Rift Canyon floor.

APL 2 (EL 4)

Rocks from Above: CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; Atk +12 melee (4d6, rocks); Search DC 23; Disable Device DC 16.

Falling Over the Edge: CR 1; DC 12 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. fall (2d6, fall).

Falling to the Rift Floor: CR 1; DC 3 Reflex save avoids; 500 ft. fall (20d6, fall).

APL 4 (EL 6)

Rocks from Above: CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; Atk +14 melee (6d6, rocks); Search DC 23; Disable Device DC 16.

Falling Over the Edge: CR 3; DC 14 Reflex save avoids; 40 ft. fall (4d6, fall).

Falling to the Rift Floor: CR 3; DC 4 Reflex save avoids; 500 ft. fall (20d6, fall).

APL 6 (EL 8)

Falling Boulder: CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; Atk +19 melee (8d6, boulder); multiple targets (can strike all characters in two adjacent specified squares); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 15.

Falling Over the Edge: CR 5; DC 15 Reflex save avoids; 50 ft. fall (6d6, fall).

Falling to the Rift Floor: CR 5; DC 5 Reflex save avoids; 500 ft. fall (20d6, fall).

When the PCs have navigated the path down, read *The Bottom of the Rift*.

ROUTE 2

This route is provided by Natasha of the Red Planks. This route is more difficult than *Route 1*, requiring several places where Climb and Jump checks are necessary. However, unlike *Route 1*, the PCs can avoid encountering any traps at all by succeeding on all the checks. Characters have to make two DC 10 Climb checks and two DC 5 Jump checks. A PC who fails these checks causes more rockslides and triggers a trap (see *Route 1*) at the appropriate APL. (They receive experience for successfully navigating this route regardless of whether they trigger any traps or not.) A PC making a DC 15 Survival or Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check recognizes that these dangers make travel difficult if not suicidal and can communicate them to PCs wearing armor (since it interferes with both checks). Hopefully, this convinces the PCs to remove their armor before entering if Natasha did not. Animals unable to make Climb checks are going to trigger the traps unless provision is somehow made for this. There is a wilderness trade shop nearby with lockers for just such an occasion that the PCs can rent to store their armor for the small

sum of 25 gp (it will be safe). Animals can be safely stabled there as well. If the PCs have magical means to circumvent the Climb and Jump checks, be certain to allow it as long as it is reasonable.

The trail marked on the map given to you by Natasha was apparently made by a mountain goat, as you cannot imagine how anyone else could manage it. It soon becomes blindingly obvious that no horse could possibly survive the journey down this trail, and having a good supply of rope would not hurt too badly.

If the PCs insist on taking mounts or animal companions, then the animal must either know the Come trick or the PCs must push the animals with a DC 20 Handle Animal check. Animal companions are exempt from the Handle Animal check, but the PC should be well-informed that taking the path risks the animal's life unless it is an animal with a Climb speed or otherwise accustomed to mountainous terrain (for this purpose, consult the Environment heading under the animal's description).

When the PCs have navigated the path down, read *The Bottom of the Rift*.

ROUTE 3

The only way for the PCs to learn of this route is through Hvirta Brighteagle, the nomad.

The directions given to you by Hvirta lead you to a cleft in the canyon wall. The way looks bad, but after the first little bit it opens up and is good even for horses. It certainly looks better than that path you found earlier this morning with the burned spot at the head of the trail!

It is a relatively easy descent to the bottom of the Rift Canyon on this trail. Since in this case, they were able to use their skills and resources (Diplomacy and influence most likely) to obtain the safe way around the known hazards of the Rift, the PCs who discover this method down still get the same experience award as navigating *Route 1* and *Route 2* would have given them.

When the PCs have navigated the path down, read *The Bottom of the Rift*.

THE BOTTOM OF THE RIFT CANYON

No matter which trail they take, read or paraphrase the following when the PCs get to the bottom of the Rift Canyon.

The towering walls of the sides of the Rift Canyon cast the floor of the canyon into perpetual gloom. Strange outcroppings of rock in fantastic shapes protrude from the walls of the sheer cliffs on either side of you. Caves dot the walls like eyes watching to capture the unwary. It looks as though it is about a mile to the other side of the Rift at this point. Far above you, a faint patch of blue indicates the

location of the world. To someone not born in the depths of the Oerth, the feeling of claustrophobia is hard to avoid.

If the PCs include a member of the Men of the Rift meta-org in their ranks or have documented evidence (on an AR) of knowing where the Men of Rift have their hideout, skip *Encounter 5* and go to *Encounter 6*. Otherwise, go to *Encounter 5*.

5: THE HERMIT

You may skip this encounter if the PCs have already determined where the Men of the Rift have their lair in the Rift Canyon.

After a nerve wracking half day spent creeping from boulder to boulder, hiding from things that you may never quit having nightmares about, you come to a cave that looks as though it once was home to some large humanoids. From the burned remains scattered around, it looks as though it has not been used in several years.

PCs searching the cave find many remains of large humanoids. A PC who makes a DC 14 Knowledge (nature) check recognizes the remains as ogre bones. A PC who makes a DC 20 Heal check knows that they all died of violent wounds about 2 years ago. A PC who makes a DC 15 Search check finds a small shrine in the back of the cave wreathed with moss flowers that looks to be still tended. A PC who makes a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check recognizes the shrine as one to Iallanis, the neutral good goddess of good giants, mercy, and beauty. PCs who played *BDK5-02 Trouble at Dragon Rift* recognize this cave as the cave in which Xuv's people lived.

As the PCs are looking around, an elderly ogre is returning from a crevice in the back of the cave. He is returning from harvesting some mushrooms that grow in the deep parts of the cave complex.

As you are searching about, you hear a quavering voice coming from out of a large crevice in the back wall.

Those who speak Giant understand it as a song, but others hear only nonsense. Allow the PCs whatever preparation they wish in the 5 rounds that it takes for Tikla the ogre to get to the fissure entrance.

Tikla is a deformed ogre, with a hunched back and a gimp leg. He looks shocked to see the PCs and immediately assumes that they are Men of the Rift come to kill him and destroy the shrine to Iallanis that he has been tending for the last couple of years. Nevertheless he is unarmed, and it should be considered an evil act to kill him without provocation. PCs who participated in *BDK5-02 Trouble at Dragon Rift* may recognize Tikla as the ogre who showed them the back way out of the ogre cavern. Unless Tikla recognizes one of the PCs (he recognizes

any PC who participated in BDK5-02 *Trouble at Dragon Rift*), his initial attitude is Unfriendly. If the PCs can convince him that they are not Men of the Rift or Erythnul worshippers, (for example by having the holy symbol of a good aligned deity or showing reverence to Iallanis at the shrine) then his reaction shifts to Indifferent. If they can shift his reaction to Helpful, then he provides the following information. Tikla only speaks a few words of Common, so unless the PCs speak Giant, he relies on crude sign language and pantomime.

- He is able to give directions to the main lair of the Men of the Rift, a place he refuses to go anywhere near.
- He sometimes gets a visit from a strange dragon-like person who brings him food. The dragon-like man's name is Blegor.
- He tends this shrine because it reminds him of the most beautiful ogre he ever knew, named Friga. She escaped from some evil ogres with whom he used to live several years ago. He does not know where she lives, so he stays here waiting for her.

Tikla: Male ogre, hp 16, AL CG; *Monster Manual* 198.

Proceed to *Encounter 6* once the PCs have learned the location of the Men of the Rift from Tikla.

6: THE MEN OF THE RIFT

Read the following once the PCs know the location of the Men of the Rift's lair.

After being intercepted by a band of scoundrels and ruffians and explaining your situation, you are led into a large cave appointed in barbarous splendor. Around the room are dozens of warriors watching your every move. At the far end of the cavern are three large chairs. The chair to the left is plain and unadorned, and looks to be of fine dwarven make. The chair on the right is carved with a skull motif and decorated with the polished skulls of some type of monstrous humanoid. The chair in the center is larger than the others and is draped in lion skins.

Only the left-hand chair is presently occupied. In it sits a half-orc dressed in ghastly clerical vestments, his unholy in the shape of a blood drop at his chest. He is sharpening a wicked looking sacrificial dagger as you approach. Behind him, almost obscured by the chair, is a halfling who is whispering in his ear.

As you get closer, the half-orc gestures for you to stop and then says, "So, what has the great god of slaughter brought for us to feast upon today?!" He stands and strolls around your group as if looking at a cow at market. "It must be something important to bring such city dwellers to the lands of the Plar. Speak, before I lose patience!"

It is pointless to provide a script for the conversation that is sure to ensue at this point, but here are the points that

are known or are willing to be discussed. The half-orc is Etroll, the cleric of Erythnul, CE god of slaughter, and Durrand Grossman's second-in-command. Members of the Men of the Rift meta-org automatically recognize him. Others must succeed at a DC 20 Knowledge (local: Iuz's Border States) check to recognize him. He has no problem with ignorant PCs assuming he is Plar Durrand, since he knows the Plar is more terrifying than he is (though he is loathe to admit it). The halfling is TB Gonagin.

- If the PCs ask, Etroll claims that Durrand Grossman, the Plar of the Rift, is unavailable to talk to the PCs. (He is not telling the truth. He is simply lazy and self-important. Etroll's Bluff modifier is only +3, but it might be wiser for the PCs not to call him on this lie.) If the PCs insist upon talking to the Plar, this makes Etroll angry and triggers a more challenging combat in *Encounter 7*.
- Etroll is short with the PCs. Play him as a short-tempered person prone to violence. He will not descend to violence against the PCs directly, but you should convey the impression of violence barely restrained. Any open disrespect triggers their arrest, and Etroll has them thrown into the arena.
- There is overwhelming force available to Etroll in the cavern. Make it clear to the PCs that they cannot possibly defeat the many hardened looking warriors in the room. Should the PCs foolishly decide to attack, have them overwhelmed by a dozen or so warriors (use the statistics from the 5th-level hobgoblin fighter from the DMG, page 117). Proceed immediately to the arena using the more challenging combat.
- If the PCs attempt to convince Etroll to give up TB, they adjust Etroll's attitude to Hostile. Etroll attacks indirectly, not by using force, but by actively undermining their arguments. If they cannot subsequently adjust his reaction back to Friendly, they face a more challenging combat in *Encounter 7*.
- The PCs notice that TB seems to be whispering in Etroll's ear just before Etroll makes any telling points. If any of the PCs have the *Enmity of the Men of the Rift*, TB and Etroll make Spot checks to see if they see through any Disguise checks. If either recognizes such a PC, TB gestures across the cavern to a person who accuses the party of helping out the ogres and getting many of the men killed. This immediately ends the audience and Etroll calls for a trial by combat in the arena using the more challenging combat in *Encounter 7*.
- TB wants to know who wants him and why. He suspects they were sent by the Rookroost Thieves' Guild, and if the PCs admit as much, then he is adamantly against being turned over. Therefore, such an admission triggers the more challenging combat in *Encounter 7*.
- Play TB like Wormtongue in *The Lord of the Rings*. As such, TB is always whispering in the ears of Etroll, and backing him up sycophantically with "yes, Master" and

“of course, Master”. Etroll the firebrand does most of the arguing. Make it clear to the PCs that every time they seem to be making headway that it is TB who is foiling their diplomacy.

Durrand Grossman, who has been standing unobtrusively with the warriors in the cavern and observing the exchange (arms crossed), is not fond of the influence that TB seems to be gaining over Etroll, and is therefore quite willing to give up the halfling (he has out-lived his usefulness anyway). At a climactic point, he signals to Etroll to conclude the audience. At this point he steps out of the throng of warriors to take the center seat while the crowd murmurs amongst themselves. At this point, the PCs may make a DC 15 Knowledge (local: Iuz's Border States) check to realize this is Durrand Grossman, Plar of the Rift. He declares that his judgment is to have the PCs fight in the arena, figuring to use Etroll's love of the bloody sport to influence him to give up the halfling.

After the Plar takes his place on the center chair, he speaks. Read or paraphrase the following:

“We are not in the habit of handing over to strangers those who have escaped their shackles. We will see if the God of Slaughter favors you. If you survive, then we may talk of this again.” With that, he claps his hands and many eager warriors surround you. Etroll gives you a smile, one of those chilling smiles that does not make it to the eyes, the smile of a very dangerous man. The man in the center chair turns to a group of warriors.

“These gentlemen will take you to your test,” he says.

Behind Etroll, you see the halfling grinning, quite pleased with himself.

The PCs are then led off to the arena. The Plar hears no plea or argument from the PCs until the arena bout is over.

All APLs

Guards (12): male human and half-orc fighter 5; hp 47 each; *Dungeon Master's Guide* 117 (use hobgoblin fighter 5 statistics).

Etroll Nurg: Male half-orc cleric 11 of Erythnul; AL CN; Spot +8.

Durrand Grossman, Plar of the Rift: Male human (mixed); 15 HD; AL NE, Will +9; Sense Motive +18.

TB Gonagin: Male halfling rogue 5; hp 22; see *Appendix 1*.

7: THE ARENA

The PCs are hustled into a small room and the door is locked and guarded. At the other end of the room is a large stone door. A voice tells them to prepare themselves for combat, as they will shortly be the guests of the God of Slaughter. The PCs have about fifteen minutes to prepare themselves before the stone door in the back of the room opens. A voice from the front of the room then

calls to them to go out the stone door. If they do not leave the room after the stone door into the arena opens, then murder holes open up in the back wall and a voice tells them to leave the room or die. If they still refuse, then guards start peppering them with arrows (+8 to hit, 1d8+3 piercing damage) through the murder holes until they leave the room or die. Once they are in the arena, the stone door closes. Read or paraphrase the following.

The arena is a 40-foot by 60-foot oval cave surrounded by 20-foot walls. Above these walls are carved seating. The floor is sandy, without a speck of vegetation. There are ominous-looking stains, probably the blood of previous combatants. At the other end of the oval is a stone door identical to the one through which you just entered.

The seats are full of humans and humanoids either cheering or booing your appearance. You can see people exchanging money in the stands while gesticulating in your direction. On a raised seat in the stands at the midpoint of the oval sits Etroll in the full ceremonial clerical garb of a priest of Erythnul, surrounded by his ever-present bodyguards. Next to Etroll is the man who pronounced your judgment [Durrand Grossman if the PCs recognized him], looking slightly bored.

Etroll stands and addresses the crowd. “We are here to witness who the great God of Slaughter wishes to feast upon today. These outlanders say they are worthy, we will see.” With that he raises his staff and the doors on the other side of the arena open.

APL 2 (EL 4)

Hyenas (4): hp 13; *Monster Manual* 274.

APL 4 (EL 6)*

Raging Panthers (3): hp 25; see *Appendix 1*.

APL 6 (EL 8)*

Raging Lions (4): hp 42; see *Appendix 1*.

*The EL of this encounter has been adjusted by +1 to reflect the raging statistics.

Should any character in the party have the plot point *Enmity of the Men of the Rift* from BDK5-02 *Trouble at Dragon Rift*, admitted to working for the Rookroost Thieves' Guild, or were perceived as disrespectful to Etroll, then use the monsters listed below, as some extra animals are “accidentally” loosed upon the PCs.

APL 2 (EL 5)

Hyenas (6): hp 13; *Monster Manual* 274.

APL 4 (EL 7)*

Raging Panthers (4): hp 25; see *Appendix 1*.

APL 6 (EL 9)*

Raging Lions (6): hp 42; see *Appendix 1*.

*The EL of this encounter has been adjusted by +1 to reflect the raging statistics.

Tactics: The animals have been starved by their handlers, so they rush out upon the PCs immediately, pouncing if possible.

Development: Should the PCs win this combat, their wounds are bound by healers, they are bathed, and then they are given ceremonial crowns of bone with a cloak made from the skin of one of the slain beasts to wear to the Feast of the Slaughterer. The PCs gain the plot point *Arena Champion*.

8: THE FEAST OF THE SLAUGHTER

Your return to the audience cavern finds the room in a distinctly different mood. Men and women are carousing as if there was to be no tomorrow. The noise is simply amazing, and several fights have broken out around the room. As the people notice your arrival, they either cheer or boo, probably depending upon the way that they bet earlier.

Your guide leads you towards the table of honor, where he introduces you as the champions to Durand Grossman, Plar of the Rift, the man who sentenced you to blood sport. Etroll is seated next to him. On Etroll's left is the halfling. The Plar then motions for a serving kobold to lead you to seats at a different table, far enough away that it is clear that he does not wish to engage in further conversation.

You have been at the table for no more than a couple of minutes when a commotion rises from the end of the cavern. You soon see what is causing it, as a dark, cowed figure strides into the cavern and walks towards the head table. Murmurs and whispers rush throughout the crowd.

"Who is that?"

"Is it really him?"

"That's Nevin Ringblade alright, the infamous slaver!"

As he passes you, he snarls under his breath "You'll pay for Arlen's death, scum." He then approaches the Plar and bows low.

"Your Excellency, I have an important matter to discuss in private. May we speak?"

The Plar nods his head and motions for Etroll and his bodyguard to follow. As they exit the cavern, they leave behind a stunned looking halfling who seems to have recognized the nefarious Nevin.

Nevin is the author of the letter the PCs found in Arlen's pocket, as well as the architect of Arlen's scheme to enslave them. The PCs may realize the initial of the letter's author ('N') and Nevin's mention of Arlen is no

coincidence. They may be very vengeful towards him as a result, but should the PCs think about attacking Nevin, remind them that they would be attacking a guest of the Plar during his feast, which would be quite rude. They are surrounded by the followers of the Plar and would surely be overwhelmed. Should they do it anyway in a manner that is detectable and traceable to themselves, they are captured and thrown to the lions in the arena...this time with lots of lions and no armor or weapons.

9: A CHANGE OF HEART

As Durand and Etroll leave the chamber, you see TB scurrying towards you. As he gets closer he says to you anxiously and with a false heartiness, "Ah friends, how about bygones being bygones and all that, eh? Sorry about that little misunderstanding with the arena, but hey, it worked out OK didn't it?" He looks around to see if anyone else is paying attention to your group. Satisfied no one is, he continues, "I understand that you might have taken my little joke about the arena the wrong way. Fortunately, you are the forgiving sort and don't want to see a poor little guy like me eaten by demons, right?"

TB is absolutely desperate to get away, as he figures that Nevin is here to take him back to Cranzer, and that is NOT going to be pleasant.

If there is even token resistance from anyone in the party to bringing him along, TB is not above begging and pleading to get the PCs to agree. He resorts to bribes if necessary and flashes a signet ring that he claims is valuable; it is theirs if only they get him out of the Rift Canyon. He also tells them that Nevin is negotiating for the PCs' heads as well as his own (he is not certain of this, but it is very likely, so he gets +10 to his Bluff check). He also knows the guard at the south cave entrance (a free pass). If they absolutely refuse, then the adventure is over. Go to *Conclusion A*.

Assuming they agree, he quickly gathers his things and leads them outside. TB can get them out pretty safely. He knows the guard captain on duty. If they leave immediately, they escape if they take any kind of precaution to cover their trail. If they do not, then have TB suggest it. If they cannot, then roleplay some close encounters with the Men of the Rift, but let them get away. After they have been on the trail a while and TB is certain they are in the clear, he tells them his tale:

"It's like this. I'm in the Gintask'a mine, working my way to the surface, when I run across a guard who is putting on a disguise. Now I asks myself, what is a guard doing that for, so I hides out and waits for him to return. And what do I see when he takes off the makeup? It was old Duke Gellor, as sure as I live and breathe. How do I know that? 'Cause when I was growing up, my dad gave me a lucky coin with his picture on it. I wouldn't be here now if I hadn't lost that coin during Lord Mortoth's ball. Then the most

surprising thing happened. That ring I showed you just fell off and rolled under a bed. I was afraid it would be lost forever, so I have it here for safekeeping."

TB is lying about the ring just falling off, and admits that maybe it did not quite happen that way if the PCs catch him in it, but he swears the rest of it is true.

If the PCs escort him safely to the Johrase (which he is perfectly happy about), then go to *Conclusion B*.

If TB knows or has good reason to suspect that they are working for the Rookroost Thieves' Guild, then as soon as they are out of the Rift Barrens, he will attempt to escape. If the PCs don't take precautions against this, TB attempts to escape on the first night out of the Barrens during the most unobservant PCs watch. If the PCs catch him or take precautions to prevent him from escaping, go to *Conclusion C*. If he escapes, he flees towards the Artonsamay and eventually Dyvers. Go to *Conclusion D*.

CONCLUSION

All PCs who survived the arena combat in *Encounter 7* gain the *Arena Champion* plot point.

CONCLUSION A

Read this if the PCs allow TB to be given to Nevin.

It is probably better that you didn't antagonize the dreadful Nevin Ringblade any more than you already had. After all, it is not about right or wrong, it is about who you do not want to offend. The (Johrase, or Rookroost Thieves' Guild) did not really expect you to succeed anyway, so it is better to just slip away and stay anonymous. There might be better opportunities to be heroic; this was just not one of them.

TB Gonagin was carried away by Nevin's goons kicking and screaming. Chances are he will not be screaming for long. At least Nevin forgot to pursue his vendetta... this time.

CONCLUSION B

Read this if the PCs return TB to Talbon Halfspeare of the Johrase.

A heavily cloaked figure leads you through the gardens of Lord Hind's mansion to an abandoned hut in the gardens. Inside, you see Talbon Halfspeare waiting for you. "I thank you for bringing this halfling to me. I hope that we can work together amiably?" He looks at TB, who perks up and replies "Yes sir! I can tell you lots about what is going on. Did they tell you about Duke Gellor?" Talbon looks surprised and replies, "We will talk of this later." He then turns to you. "You may have done the nation of Johrase a great service. You have earned the thanks of those greater than I." With that he rings a bell and

you are ushered out of the gardens onto a back street of Kinemeet.

The PCs gain the Favor of Lord Calmert Hind, the Favor of TB Gonagin, and the Enmity of Nevin Ringblade. If the PCs agreed to help the Rookroost Thieves' Guild but turned TB in to the Johrase instead, then the PCs gain the Enmity of the Rookroost Thieves' Guild.

CONCLUSION C

Read this if the PCs returned TB to Volner One-Eye for punishment.

Volnor One-eye looks over the halfling with disdain, and then gives you a satisfied grin. "So, the little rat is finally in the trap. I know some people who are going to be so pleased. I bet he sings like a canary!" He tosses a bag on the table. "Here is something to help you celebrate. You have done us a big favor and we don't forget those who helped us."

With that, he claps his hands twice and two goons come into the room and carry off TB into the dark recesses of the building. Volnor escorts you to the door, thanks you once again, then leaves you on the street. Behind you, you thought for just a moment you heard a scream of pain.

The PCs gain the Favor of Rookroost Thieves' Guild and the Enmity of Nevin Ringblade. If the PCs agreed to help the Johrase, but turned TB in to the Guild instead, then they gain the *Betrayer of the Johrase Nation* plot point.

CONCLUSION D

Read this if TB escapes while taking him to the Volnor One-Eye.

The note you found on TB's pillow said "Friends, I do thank you for helping me out of a tight spot. I just can't see the profit in talking to the Guild just now, so I have decided to ply my trade in another land. I hear Dyvers is nice this time of year. Send my love to the dear old Guild, would you?" Maybe it was not such a grand idea to have told TB that the Guild wanted him back.

Speaking of the Guild, this might be a good time to see what is happening in Alhaster.

The PCs gain the Enmity of the Rookroost Thieves' Guild and the Enmity of Nevin Ringblade.

CONCLUSION E

Read this if the PCs decide to let TB go for one reason or another.

It just did not seem right to let the poor little guy get turned in and squeezed like a sponge. Everybody makes mistakes and you are confident that TB will turn over a new leaf once he is safely away.

The PCs gain the *Favor of TB Gonagin*. If the PCs were working for the Guild, then they gain the *Enmity of the Rookroost Thieves' Guild* and the *Enmity of Nevin Ringblade*. If the PCs were working for the Johrase, then they gain *Betrayer of the Johrase Nation* and the *Enmity of Nevin Ringblade*.

The End

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

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

2: Slavers in the Barn

Defeat the slavers

APL 2	120 XP
APL 4	180 XP
APL 6	240 XP

4: Into the Rift

Survive the dangers of the descent into the Rift Canyon

APL 2	120 XP
APL 4	180 XP
APL 6	240 XP

7: The Arena

Defeat the foes in the arena

APL 2	120 XP
APL 4	180 XP
APL 6	240 XP

OR

APL 2	150 XP
APL 4	210 XP
APL 6	270 XP

Story Award

Retrieving TB Gonagin and obtaining the information that he knows.

APL 2	50 XP
APL 4	70 XP
APL 6	90 XP

Discretionary roleplaying award

APL 2	40 XP
APL 4	65 XP
APL 6	90 XP

Total Possible Experience

APL 2	450 XP
APL 4	675 XP
APL 6	900 XP

TREASURE SUMMARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

2: Slavers in the Barn

APL 2: Coin 100 gp; Loot 42 gp; Magic 200 gp; *scroll of protection from arrows* (13 gp), *wand of cure light wounds* (62 gp), *brooch of shielding* (125 gp); Total 342 gp.

APL 4: Coin 100 gp; Loot 42 gp; Magic 450 gp; *scroll of protection from arrows* (13 gp), *wand of cure light wounds* (62 gp), *potion of darkvision* (25 gp), *brooch of shielding* (125 gp), *stone of alarm* (225 gp); Total 592 gp.

APL 6: Coin 100 gp; Loot 42 gp; Magic 650 gp; *scroll of protection from arrows* (13 gp), *wand of cure light wounds* (62 gp), *brooch of shielding* (125 gp), *Murlynd's spoon* (450 gp); Total 792 gp.

Encounter 9: A change of heart

All APLs: 200 gp

Treasure Cap

APL 2: 450 gp

APL 4: 650 gp

APL 6: 900 gp

Total Possible Treasure

APL 2: 542 gp

APL 4: 792 gp

APL 6: 992 gp

ADVENTURE RECORD ITEMS

Enmity of the Rookroost Thieves Guild: You may not join the Guild while in possession of this enmity and are removed from the organization if are a member. This may be removed by spending 3 IP with the Guild. Lifestyle costs are doubled for adventures set in Rookroost. NPC members of the Guild will start out unfriendly to you.

Betrayer of the Johrase Nation: You may not join any meta-organization based in Johrase. Lifestyle costs are doubled for adventures set in Johrase and you suffer a -4 circumstance penalty to Charisma based checks with Johrase.

Arena Champion: This favor acts as an influence point with the Men of the Rift. Because of their extensive contacts inside the Gintask'a silver mines, this favor can be used once to negate any TU penalty for enslavement in the mines (they break you out).

Favor of Lord Calmert Hind: This favor acts as an influence point with the Johrase nation. It also gains the PC Regional access to the items marked with a * below.

Favor of the Rookroost Thieves Guild: This favor acts as an influence point with the Guild. It also gains the PC regional access to the items marked with a † below.

Favor of TB Gonagin: TB may have burned a lot of bridges, but he still has influence in the Bandit Kingdoms. This favor can be spent once to grant a +10 circumstance bonus to any Sleight of Hand or Perform check made to earn gold after a Bandit Kingdoms adventure. Alternately, it may be spent to receive Bandit Kingdoms Regional access to *sleep arrow* or *universal solvent*.

Enmity of Nevin Ringblade: This disgruntled slaver dislikes you. You receive a +1 Dissenter WCI point. In addition, you suffer a -2 penalty on all Charisma-based checks involving social interaction while in Riftcrag, Balmund, and Wraithkeep as long as Iuz rules the Bandit Lands.

Ring of the Swan: This fairly plain thumb ring has a heraldic device upon it "Two swans rampant upon vert with gules bend sinister."

ITEM ACCESS

APL 2:

- *Brooch of shielding* (Adventure; DMG)
- **Silversheen* (Regional; DMG)
- †*Elixir of hiding* (Regional; DMG)
- †*Salve of slipperiness* (Regional; DMG)

APL 4 (all of APL 2 plus the following):

- *Stone of alarm* (Adventure; DMG)
- **Oil of dolorous blow* (Regional; CL 5; 750 GP; SpC)
- †*Wand of spontaneous search* (Regional; CL 1; 750 GP; SpC)

APL 6 (all of APLs 2-4 plus the following):

- *Murlynd's spoon* (Adventure; DMG)
- **Horseshoes of speed* (Regional; DMG)
- †*Scroll of panacea* (Regional; CL 7; 700 GP; SpC)

APPENDIX 1: ALL APLS

TB (TEDDY BEAR) GONAGIN	ARLEN
<p style="text-align: right;">CR 5</p> <p>Male halfling rogue 5 AL NE Small humanoid (halfling) Init +4; Senses Listen +1, Spot -1 Languages Common, Flan, Halfling, Orc</p> <hr/> <p>AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+4 Dex, +2 armor, +1 size) hp 22 (5 HD) Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +1</p> <hr/> <p>Speed 20 ft. in leather (4 squares), base movement 20 ft.; Melee Masterwork dagger +9 (1d3-1 + sneak attack) Ranged Masterwork dagger +9 (1d3-1 + sneak attack) Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. Base Atk +3; Grp -2</p> <hr/> <p>Abilities Str 8, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 12 SQ Evasion, Trapfinding, Trap sense Feats Great Fortitude, Weapon Finesse Skills Bluff +9, Decipher Script +10, Diplomacy +11, Escape Artist +12, Forgery +10, Hide +16, Move Silent +14, Open Lock +12, Search +10, Tumble +12, Possessions combat gear plus a homemade map of the Gintask'a silver mine and signet ring of house Gellor.</p> <hr/> <p>Sneak attack (3d6)</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">CR 7</p> <p>Male human rogue 7 AL NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +8; Senses Listen +0, Spot +10 Languages Common, Halfling, Orc</p> <hr/> <p>AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 20; Uncanny Dodge (+4 Dex, +4 armor, +2 shield) hp 37 (7 HD) Immune poison (delayed) Resist evasion, <i>undetactable alignment</i> Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +2</p> <hr/> <p>Speed 30 ft. (6 squares) Melee mwk short sword +6 (1d6/19-20) Ranged mwk short bow +9 (1d6/x3) Base Atk +5; Grp +5 Atk Options sneak attack +4d6</p> <hr/> <p>Abilities Str 10, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 16 SQ trapfinding, trap sense +2 Feats Improved Initiative, Persuasive, Skill focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Use Magic Device) Skills Bluff +18, Diplomacy +17, Disguise +13, Escape Artist +14, Gather Information +13, Intimidate +17, Search +12, Sense Motive +10, Spot +10, Tumble +14, Use Magic Device +16 Possessions +1 studded leather, +1 buckler, masterwork short sword, masterwork hand crossbow, 10 bolts, Heward's handy haversack, potion of gaseous form, scroll of expeditious retreat (CL 5th), scroll of delay poison, scroll of glibness, scroll of Nystul's magic aura, scroll of undetectable alignment, letters (Player Handout 1A or 1B)</p> <hr/> <p>Active Spells <i>delay poison</i> (CL 3rd), <i>glibness</i> (CL 7th), <i>undetactable alignment</i> (CL 3rd)</p>

7: THE ARENA

RAGING PANTHER

CR 3

Male animal

AL N Medium Animal

Init +4; **Senses** Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages none

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 9
(+4 Dex, +1 natural, -2 rage)

hp 25 (3 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

Speed 40 ft., base movement 40 ft.; climb 20 ft.

Melee Bite +7 (1d6+5), 2 Claws +2 (1d3+2)

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

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +7

Abilities Str 20, Dex 19, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

SA Low light vision, scent

SA Pounce, Improved Grab, Rake (1d3+2)

Feats Alertness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Balance +7, Hide +3*, Listen +5, Move Silently +11, Spot +5

Possessions None

Pounce (Ex): If a panther charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a panther must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +2 melee, damage 1d3+2.

Skills (Ex): Panthers have a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks and a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks. Panthers have a +8 racial bonus on Balance and Climb checks. A panther can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened. *In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the Hide bonus improves to +8.

7: THE ARENA**RAGING LION****CR 4**

Male animal

AL N Large Animal

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +5**Languages** none

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 11

(+3 Dex, +3 natural, -1 size, -2 rage)

hp 42 (5 HD)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

Speed 40 ft., base movement 40 ft.;**Melee** 2 Claws +9 (1d4+7), Bite +4 (1d8++3)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Base Atk** +3; **Grp** +14

Abilities Str 25, Dex 17, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6**SQ** Low light vision, scent**SA** Pounce, Improved Grab, Rake (1d4+3)**Feats** Alertness, Run**Skills** Balance +7, Hide +3*, Listen +5, Move Silently +11, Spot +5**Possessions** None

Pounce (Ex): If a lion charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a lion must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.**Rake (Ex):** Attack bonus +9 melee, damage 1d4+3.**Skills:** Lions have a +4 racial bonus on Balance, Hide, and Move Silently checks. *In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the Hide bonus improves to +12.

Hey Arlen,

Still hanging around Kinemeet? You are going to get yourself killed if you hang out with Grak and his buddies that close to the Johrase. Our friend Ruvash says you need to quit wasting your time looking for Gellor. Says he's dead and you'll never collect that bounty from Halga. But I am not convinced. Keep searching and contact me immediately if you hear anything about him.

Speaking of Ruvash, I got a solid lead on the location of that Gonagin halfling that Cranzer wants so much. Unfortunately, it looks like he has holed up with Durrand and his band in the Rift. Ruvash sold me the tip because it was worth more than his hide to risk going down there. I hear that TB escaped from the Riftcrag prison, so he probably knows a lot about it. I would venture to guess that is why the bounty is so high. You know I never believed it when they said he was dead—you don't get to be as big a weasel as TB Gonagin without covering your escape routes.

Your tale of the Johrase King's capture last year makes me wonder if that Hind would pay well for a way into Riftcrag. Well, see if your contacts with Hind and his crew are willing to pay for the halfling's location. I figure you can pretty much guarantee them that he knows something. I'll start working some other angles to see if someone else wants to pay for the same information. I have it on good authority that Cranzer is willing to pay upwards of 5,000. Be sure to mention that to Hind.

I'll meet you at the slave pens when you get back and we can talk about your new cargo.

Signed,
N

During the Millennium Ball at Lord Mortoth's palace in 594 CY, someone betrayed a large group of adventurers who were attempting to rescue the remains of a freedom fighter named Gaiyle Markhalla. In the ensuing confusion, several adventurers were killed, Lord Mortoth was assassinated by Lady Xavendra and Graf Tadorinal, and the Northern Alliance was formed.

In the days afterwards, the Rookroost Thieves' Guild put a reward on the head of TB Gonagin, a thief known in the city. He was next heard of in Riftcrag, working for Cranzer's lieutenant, Hulian Braineater. Within the year, he seemed to have worked his way into the confidence of several members of the inner circle in Riftcrag.

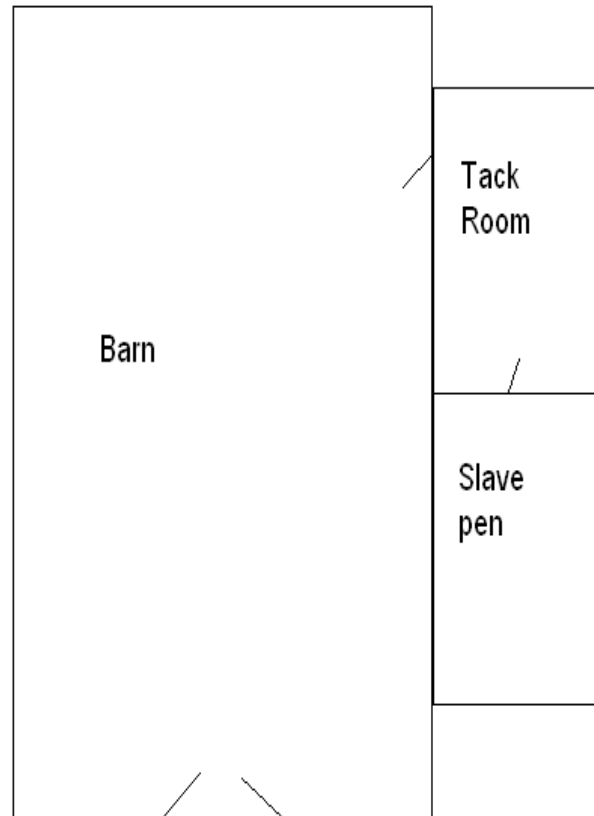
This all ended with Cranzer's return in late 595 CY. There was a short power struggle in Riftcrag and it appears that Hulian scapegoated TB Gonagin over the attacks upon the silver caravans that had happened during Cranzer's absence. He is now assumed dead or worse.

TB Gonagin was a sharper in the Rookroost Thieves' Guild and was tasked with contacting many of the adventurers who were going to help obtain the remains of Gaiyle Markhalla under the cover of the Millennium Ball at Lord Mortoth's palace in 594 CY. Apparently, TB was working as a double agent and betrayed us to Lord Mortoth. Unfortunately for the little brat, Mortoth got assassinated that night. Since part of his information had led to several of Graf Tadorinal's men getting killed, everyone wanted him dead. In the confusion following the assassination, several adventurers were killed and Lady Xavendra and Graf Tadorinal formed the Northern Alliance.

It took us several days to put the pieces together and figure out who had betrayed us. The Eye put a reward on the head of TB Gonagin of 500 gp, but by then he had already fled town. TB was next heard of in Riftcrag, working for Cranzer's lieutenant, Hulian Braineater. Within the year, he seemed to have worked his way into the confidence of several members of the inner circle in Riftcrag.

This all ended with Cranzer's return in late 595 CY. There was a short power struggle in Riftcrag and it appears that Hulian scapegoated TB Gonagin over the attacks upon the silver caravans that had happened during Cranzer's absence. TB has information about the guild that we would prefer no one else obtain. So if he is alive, bring him to us without anyone else getting to question him.

DM MAP 2



A map of the Combination of Freelords in the area of the Rift Barrens

