



FEAR AND LOATHING IN BULASVEN



A HackMaster adventure
for second to third level characters

by John Gorkowski





FEAR AND LOATHING IN BULASVEN

Fear and Loathing in Bulasven is an adventure designed for second to third level HackMaster characters and features an array of gaming opportunities, from combat to social interaction, permitting different classes to make use of their inherent strengths in achieving the mission's objective. The story occurs in and around Bulasven, a town just downriver from the capital of the city-state of P'Bapar, a realm within the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* campaign setting.

The adventure is non-linear allowing players to explore the town as they see fit while seeking to piece together the identity and motives of the antagonists. It is essential that you thoroughly read and understand the material, as you will be called upon to employ your improvisational skills to interject drama as necessary and react to player actions as this is not a simple "dungeon crawl". As a failsafe, a 'fixer' NPC is included that may be used as a sock puppet to advance the storyline.

The final objective involves raiding a disguised goblin lair. Though these creatures are not particularly formidable – even less so than usual – they may be encountered in numbers thereby presenting a significant challenge for groups that are either tactically inept or deficient in capable warriors. All encounters that you need to pay particular heed to are marked as such. You the GameMaster are the best arbiter of your players' capabilities and should customize the material presented if you feel it would likely result in a T.P.K. (i.e. total party kill).

This adventure should ideally be completed in two or three sessions. Again, your players' unique style of play may delay final resolution of events.

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*Education is dangerous -
every educated person
is a future enemy.*

Subjugation, Article 9, verse 45

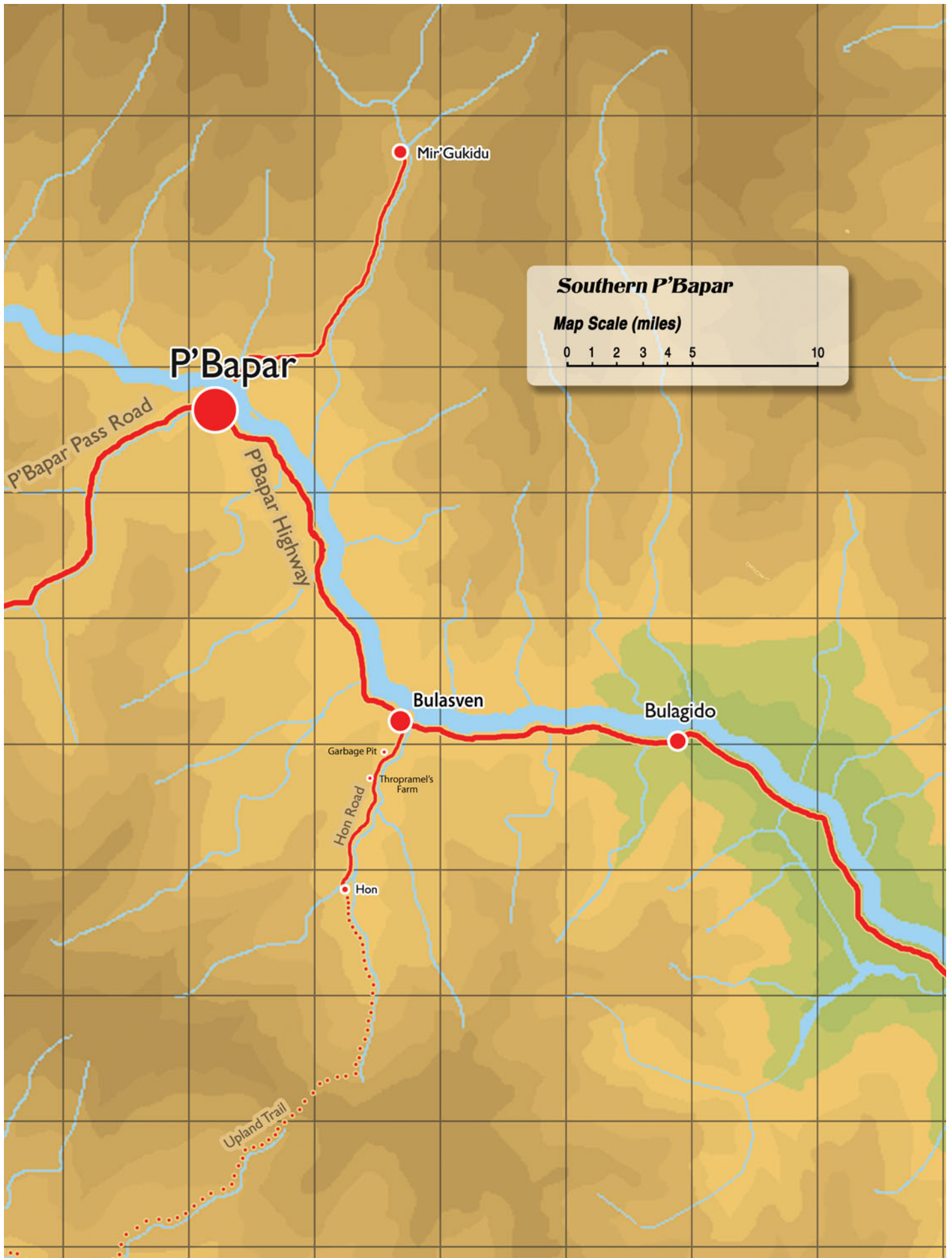
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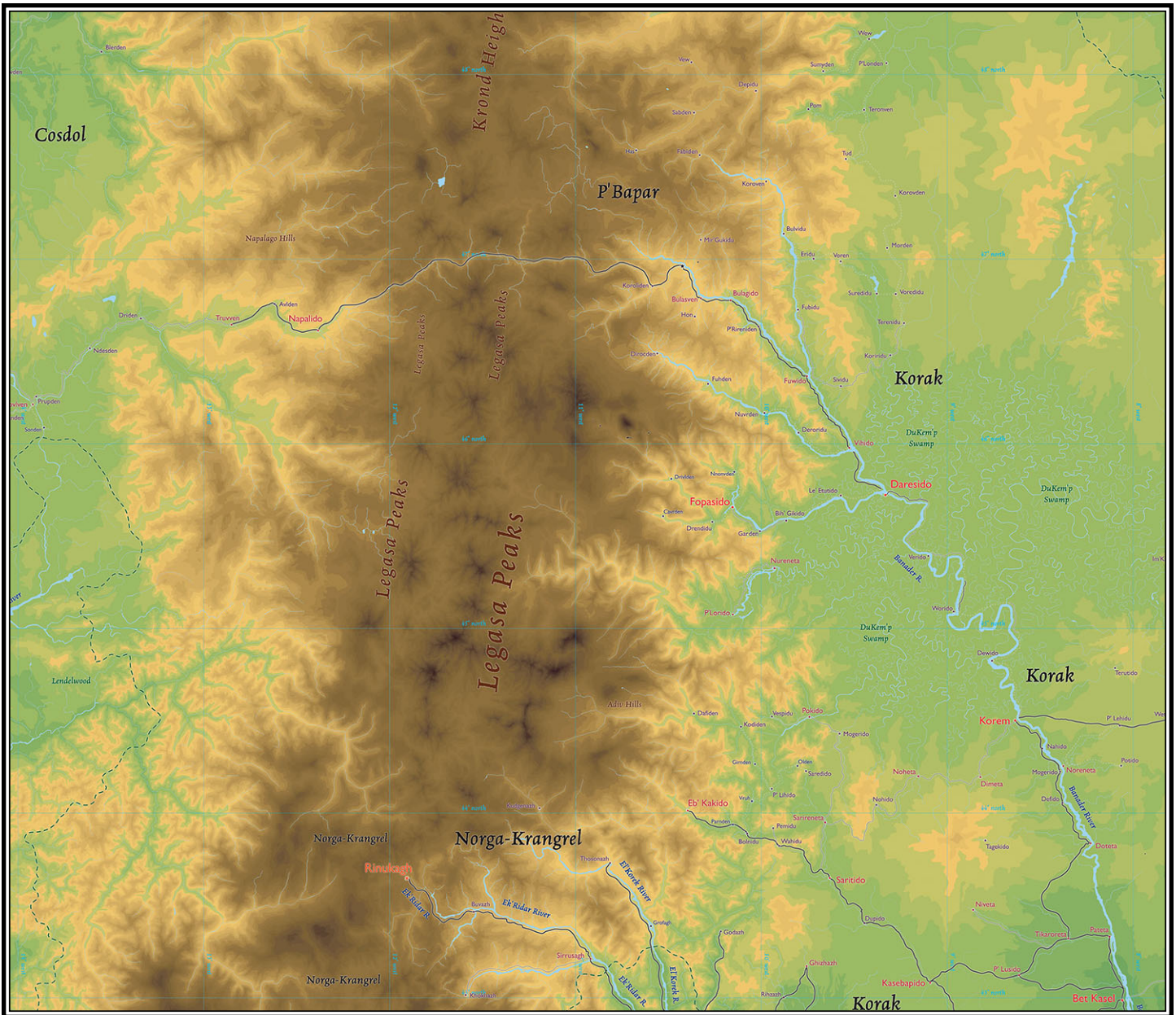
GM's Background

The Bringers of the New Order (members of the church of the lawful evil deity known as The Overlord) are bent on world domination. To this end, they are actively engaged throughout Tellene, assiduously working to achieve their master plan. No organization, however, is possessed of infinite resources. Areas where an immediate gain is deemed likely receive priority of support.

Places inimical to the Bringers' message are relegated to "shaping operations" that set the groundwork for larger schemes. Here, operatives conduct psychological warfare with the aim of altering public opinion and making the populace more amenable to their religion of oppression and slavery. The Bringers' stratagem of race baiting, bigotry and intolerance is most effective on the uneducated and close-minded, thus an educated populace is a danger to their message.

One such populace can be found in Bulasven, a Baparan town that is host to a well respected college and private libraries that encourage scholarship in its residents, as well as attracting similarly inclined people





Setting Note: The City-State of P'Bapar

Ever since it became the first nation to successfully declare independence from the Kalamaran Empire, P'Bapar has been seen as something of a leader among the Young Kingdoms (a group of free states formerly under the empire's yoke). P'Bapar's status as the largest independent city-state on Tellene is a source of great pride for the citizenry.

Archduke E'Dos does not readily meddle in the affairs of his vassals, which implies that every lord shoulders a great deal of authority and responsibility.

P'Bapar is a rich country and economically strong, with the great variety of wealth provided by the dwarf clans in the Legasa Peaks more than compensating for the scarcity of rich farmlands near the eastern slopes

of the Elenon Mountains. The Elenons also hold a great supply of gold, emeralds, topaz, amethyst and tourmaline. The farmlands and ranches east of the Banader River produce wool and vellum.

Most of this wealth flows down river to sell at Daresido, Korem, Bet Kasel, and Baneta, or back up the Renador to Kalaleta and the many small villages near the river.

Besides its tremendous exports, P'Bapar is the sole route for trade between the two sides of the Legasa Peaks via Coniper Gap. Goods travel overland through the gap and into Cosdol, bound mostly for Cosolen and the villages along the Voldor Bay.

Note: In the Kalamaran tongue, an apostrophe between consonant pairs indicates a delay when spoken.

Getting There...

The most direct way for a GameMaster to introduce this adventure is simply to transport the player characters from their current locale and use the Quick-Start Introduction to drop them right down in the town of Bulasven. This is particularly easy for new-ish characters who aren't already established in some other location. If you'd like to start in Bulasven, simply familiarize yourself with the background information, then use one of the adventure introductions.

On the other hand, many published HackMaster adventures take place in the city-state of P'Bapar, so it is likely that the player characters are already based in this region. Since Bulasven lies roughly 12 miles southeast of the capital city of P'Bapar (or 95 miles south of Frandor's Keep), getting there doesn't require too much travel.

If backstory is required, the easiest explanation is for the characters to take on the roles of caravan guards, protecting a merchant shipment travelling by road to the capital. Once there, rumors of wrecked caravans, slaughtered travelers and savage dwarves will lead them to Bulasven itself.

from nearby regions. This has fostered a climate of erudition and open discussion in which the message of the Overlord has little chance of thriving.

Sulikar Vled, a cleric of the Overlord working in the capital city of P'Bapar, is well regarded by his fellows for his talents and ability to manage multiple schemes from a distance and through intermediaries. It is Sulikar who devised the plan to simultaneously discredit the largest private library in Bulasven and stoke animosity between the townsfolk and the dwarves. He knows that if he can slowly infect the populace with his ideas, the collegiate culture will eventually crumble. When free thinking and the open exchange of ideas ceases, and the city-state's economic health (that relies heavily on dwarven mining operations) fails, the belief is that his church's false promises of renewed strength and prosperity will be welcomed with open arms.

As an initial step, the cleric first tasked Takor, a mage and devout worshipper of the Overlord, to seed new

books into Pobel's Library for public reading. Some of these books were obvious works of erotica, with perversions of all kinds described or illustrated in lurid detail. Others seek to inspire hatred and fear of foreigners, casting them as beggars, thieves and brigands. More erudite volumes employ the guise of [revisionist] historical works with numerous anecdotes highlighting the dangers of 'unfettered freedom' and promoting the benefits of firm authority as being both vital to safety and economically beneficial to a docile populace.

Takor tried to sell one of these titles to Pobel, but the antiquarian politely declined after perusal. Even when subsequently offered as a complimentary donation, the librarian refused citing its 'intellectual dishonesty'.

Undeterred, Takor rented a room in a nearby inn, the Sage's Wages, and undertook formulating a scheme to insert these books into Pobel's library. That said books were available from the respected bibliognost was essential as this would either provide a de facto stamp of approval to the controversial subject matter or, alternatively, disgrace the bibliosph and repudiate his open library.

In this enterprise he was assisted by an imp nominally tasked to facilitate covert communication between Takor and a band of allied goblins covertly inhabiting a series of tunnels exiting to the surface through a sink-hole used as a refuse pit by the inhabitants of Bulasven.

The imp was tasked (much to its annoyance) to employ its powers of flight and deception to ferry books to Pobel's building and innocuously insert them into his vast collection. Takor rightly judged that the absent-minded bookseller would not discover the subterfuge before his clientele did so. This would either discredit Pobel and raise the ire of the reading public

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They who can give up essential liberty to obtain temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety.

quote from Liberation

”

against him and his library or, alternatively, put said books in the hands of readers with Pobel's tacit approval of their contents. Either outcome was a win.

In parallel with Takor's shenanigans, the aforementioned goblins are conducting a false flag operation to stir antipathy towards the dwarves of Hon.

Knowing that a fearful citizenry is oft preoccupied with safety and willing to submit to harsh authority as long as it seems to provide protection from real or imagined threats, Sulikar instructed the goblins to attack outlying farms and travelers at night while wearing dwarven beards and outfits. Their intent is not to slaughter those they encounter, rather they wish to be *seen* engaged in this raiding and ensure those they threaten escape thus inspiring and escalating mistrust and race-hatred of dwarves and, tangentially, other demi-humans.

Sulikar's plans have begun to bear fruit, for some townsfolk are starting to clamor for stricter law and order, and racism is starting to take root in shady corners. Unless something is done soon, the Overlord's message may take root here and slowly wind its noxious tendrils throughout the entire region...

Abbreviated Adventure Introduction

GameMasters wishing to jump right into the adventure should read or paraphrase the following text to the players:

🕒 Entering the town of Bulasven, you note a distinct lack of hospitality from the people you meet. As you pass, people mutter under their breath, suspicious eyes staring at you.

If the group includes any demi-humans (particularly dwarves), continue reading.

🕒 The words muttered are mostly indecipherable, but you do manage to catch two phrases: "...not even **human**..." and "...can't believe **it** has the nerve to come..."

To get your party involved in the adventure immediately, read or paraphrase the following boxed text aloud.

🕒 A dirty but eager youth bustles up to you with a bit of parchment and presses it into your unsuspecting hand.

The scrap of paper bears neat Kalamaran handwriting and details a request from someone named Pilamas Pobel asking that you meet him at his library as soon as possible. The full text of the note can be found in Player Handout 1.

Questioning the youth (Pilamas' nephew and local errand boy named Oli) reveals that his uncle Pilamas owns a large bookstore. While books are of little interest to the little scamp, he knows that the formerly boring shop is now the center of activity with a crowd of angry protestors raising a ruckus outside. His adult guardians have kept the boy in the dark as to the exact circumstances that led to the commotion.

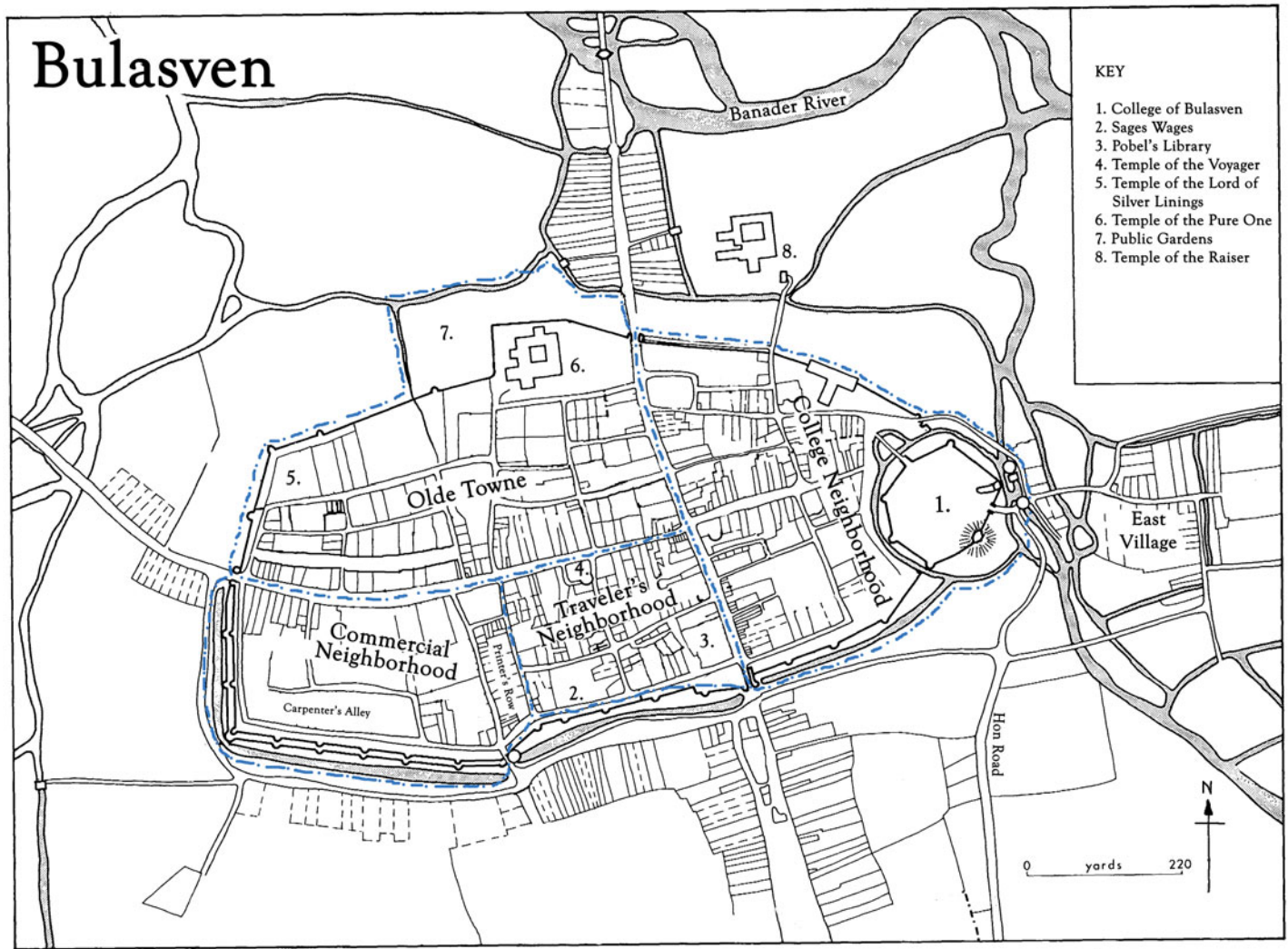
Oli will escort the PCs to the shop if asked (see p. 12).

Should the players wish to confirm Oli's story, they may attempt a Glean Information check elsewhere in town.

- ▶ Succeeding at a Trivial check confirms that Pilamas Pobel owns a dusty, but large and, until recently, well respected library of obscure leather-bound volumes.
- ▶ Succeeding at an Average check provides the following additional information: local clergy, town officials, scribes and probably some mages pay for access to his collection of over 1,500 volumes on all topics.
- ▶ Finally, a Difficult check reveals that from time to time, he acquires a new work offered by a traveling minstrel or treasure hunter for its weight in silver (or sells one for its weight in gold).

Bulasven: An Explorer's Guide

Alternately, you can give the players some time to explore Bulasven. The town is large, with a population of 1,407, and thus contains various shops and businesses where the PCs can rest, relax and restock their basic supplies. Because of its scholarly nature it even has readily available some items not easily found in P'Bapar. GM's wishing to do so should allow the PC's to familiarize themselves with the town, and then introduce the scenario that follows this section.



Although detailing Bulasven in all its intimacies is beyond the scope of this adventure, some general information can be given about the inhabitants, sights, sounds and smells of its major neighborhoods.

Of course, no one can pass through Bulasven without noticing its grand college. The College of Bulasven is held in high esteem in the Young Kingdoms as one of the oldest and most venerable institutions of learning. It is still circled by sturdy stone walls, remnants of a time when there was no city surrounding it. Bulasven has grown out organically from its collegiate origins, with many of its teachers and alumni settling nearby, preferring the somewhat removed and scholarly atmosphere to the crowded bustle of nearby P'Bapar. It has also come to be seen as an attractive location for wealthy nobles who need to be near the city for business but want to escape its more unsavory aspects. Because of this, Bulasven has little crime, and is home to craft and industry unusual for a town its size.

There are four major neighborhoods in Bulasven, each with its own unique flavor: the Traveler's Neighborhood, the College Neighborhood, Olde Towne and the Commercial Neighborhood. They are described below.

A. The Traveler's Neighborhood

The Traveler's Neighborhood (so named for the Nimble Navigator) is a bohemian, mainly residential neighborhood home to Bulasven's more culturally unfettered citizens. It is known as a source of fine art, diverse music, and latitudinous conversation. Much of the adventure takes place here, as Sulikar has rightly figured that if this free-thinking neighborhood can be influenced, the rest of Bulasven will be swayed much more easily.

The neighborhood is home to many tea shops and coffee houses (most notably the Sages Wages) and walking the dusty but tree lined streets, a passerby will often hear strange fragments of exotic song, or a heated discussion of politics. The neighborhood is home to

several notably good bakeries, and the smell of fresh pastries is often in the air. In addition, Pobel's library is here, a popular meeting and study place for the residents of the neighborhood, and even for some of the more adventurous students of the nearby college.

After dark the neighborhood is much the same as it is in the daylight hours. Lanterns line the streets and cafes stay open until all hours. The political debates get a bit sloppier and more boisterous, the snatches of song one hears get a bit more incessant and rhythmic, and the odor of wine is heavy in the air.

There are many other small book sellers and oddity shops selling political pamphlets and knick-knacks, most of which, it must be admitted, are quite worthless. There are even some small galleries where paintings may be admired and purchased. There are several inns and eateries selling mostly cheap and fried food, although they are quite satisfying. There is also an old and beautiful temple of the Traveler (whom most residents worship as they are proud of their cultured and worldly outlook). Adventurers should feel at home in this easy-going neighborhood, provided they keep their hands to themselves. Despite all of Takor's machinations, racial tension and unease is not present here. Conversations participated in or overheard by the PCs will reveal the residents of this neighborhood as distinctly egalitarian in mindset and having no patience for bigotry of any form.

B. The College Neighborhood

This bastion of academia (such as it is in the 1040's I.R.) contains many smaller college and school buildings as well as houses and dormitories where professors and students dwell, and, of course, the imposing College of Bulasven itself. The sound of bells is common, as some hour of study or other is being constantly marked. The residents of the College Neighborhood tend to take themselves very seriously. There is certainly a pervasive influence of religion and puritanicalism, and there is nary a bar nor tavern to be found here. Tea cafes are beneath most senior lecturers as well, although one or two small shops cater to more worldly young students.

The streets are often quiet after dark, but candles and lanterns can be seen burning in most windows, as residents bury their noses into some ancient tome or other. The streets are broad and tree-lined and crowds ebb and flow with the tolling of the bells. One minute

an alley will be all but deserted and the next full to bursting with eager young pupils running to their next class. There are always the smells of old paper, wax and chamomile in the air.

The college itself sits behind a small stream that can almost be described as a moat. It is a large stone castle with beautiful stained glass windows. At its south east corner there is a lavish temple to the Enlightener, perhaps the oldest building in all of Bulasven. Entrance to the college is permitted only to students and teachers and is strictly enforced, although citizens who prove their worth have occasionally been granted the right to audit some particularly applicable class.

C. Olde Towne

Founded mostly by alumni of the College, Olde Towne has since come to encompass both smaller (but still rather grand) houses and more sprawling and palatial villas and mansions. It is a posh neighborhood of extremely wealthy merchants and gentry from P'Bapar who desire to live slightly removed from the bustling big city.



Security is a concern for the rich inhabitants, and the neighborhood is walled off on its south side from the commercial neighborhood and the Traveler's Neighborhood. It would not be too much to say that residents of the Traveler's Neighborhood and Olde Towne do not exactly see eye to eye on most issues. The inhabitants of Olde Towne are constantly calling the city guard to complain of something or other that those in the Traveler's Neighborhood are up to, although the guardsmen tend to patiently listen to their whining and then move on.

Walking the elegantly cobbled and flower lined streets of Olde Towne one is struck by the tranquility and peace of the neighborhood. There is the smell of flowers and fresh fruit in the air and the gentle laughter of well fed and well bred men and women. The neighborhood is almost entirely residential but does include a wine seller and a spice merchant, as well as one or two bakeries, butchers, barbers and tailors. Potential customers should be warned, however, that prices in Olde Towne are extremely steep (about three times whatever is listed in the *Players' Handbook*). Some of this is due to the inarguably excellent quality of the goods, although the prices are high partly because the market will bear it in this wealthy part of town.

There are two beautiful temples in Olde Town, the larger of which is dedicated to Lelani the Pure One. It is a pale stone building with intricate stained glass windows. Just north of it, outside the city walls sits a beautiful public park, one of the few of its kind in Tellene. It's gardens and trees are well tended and luxurious, and couples can often be seen strolling its meandering paths.

The second temple is that of The Lord of Silver Linings on the west end of town. Its clerics are always happy to see a new face and dispense aid to those in need. Savvy travelers know that the first of any month at the temple is the best chance to receive medical treatment.

D. The Commercial Neighborhood

The commercial neighborhood of Bulasven is home to the usual cobblers, blacksmiths, coopers, furriers, saddlers and butchers - but it also has two thriving and rather unique neighborhoods within it. The first is Printer's Row which houses all manner of shops related to the book making industry. Printers, binderies, ink makers and even a paperworks thrive here thanks to

the College's scholarship and the residents' voracious appetite for the written word. The second is Carpenter's Alley, home to many competing artisans of woodworking. Olde Towne in particular brings to bear a large demand for specialty cabinetry and furniture, and so Bulasven boasts some of the finest carpenters in the Young Kingdoms.

Walking down the streets of the Commercial Neighborhood, one is struck by how busy and bustling the streets are for a town of its size. Smaller vendors hawk their goods in the open air market on the North side, while the south hosts smaller specialty shops, especially carpenters, and the east side houses printer's row. The residents of Bulasven demand intriguing and exotic items, so the marketplace is awash with strange and unfamiliar smells, surprising for a small northern town such as this.

There is most anything one could want to buy if one looks for it in the Commercial Neighborhood: beer, curios, scabbards, armor and weapons, jewelry, saddles and much else. There is also a large stable that houses most of the town's horses and pack animals. There used to be a few small shops that dealt almost entirely in finely wrought Dwarven goods, but the tenor of the times is such that observers will find them shuttered.

E. The East Village

In addition to the four major neighborhoods of Bulasven, a settlement has sprung up across the Banader River from the college. A small and decidedly eccentric community, "the village" is home to tinkerers, experimenters, natural philosophers and those drawn to nature's more arcane studies. The college certainly does not specialize in the Arcane arts but like any institution of its kind, it produces a certain number of students with a fascination for the boundaries of knowledge. Graduates and current students who are proto-scientifically inclined have settled here around a tea shop and tavern known as the Mages Wages.

A traveler to the East Village will be struck by the crooked alleyways, crowded buildings and strange sights and sounds they are sure to encounter after spending time in the cosmopolitan and relatively luxurious walls of Bulasven. Those with the right eye for such things should have no problem at all finding spell components, curios and strange vials and trinkets in this neighborhood.

Takor is an agent of The House of Shackles charged with conducting “shaping operations” within Bulasven. Given the community’s perceived animosity towards the Bringers message, few resources were initially expended on this venture. Takor is a junior operative and was embedded alone.

Despite these handicaps, he has made remarkable progress. He has developed three distinct cover personalities through which he operates. Initially he posed as “Napilo”, an itinerant carpenter. Having some skill at the trade, he was easily able to find work within the commercial neighborhood. He took on menial positions never staying too long with any particular employer so that he could meet as many of Bulasven’s laborers as possible. He befriended those whom he deemed vulnerable to persuasion and over several months has established a network of closet bigots. Stoking their animosity towards dwarves was not overly difficult as their clannish nature is often misinterpreted as disparaging aloofness. This, coupled with the fact that their goods are considered by many of Bulasven’s wealthier residents to be of better quality and more prestigious to own than human fabricated equivalents, soon led to a small but vocal minority of dwarf-haters making their opinions known.

This success impressed his superiors and a small tribe of allied goblins was tasked to support Takor’s mission. They would foster panic, outrage and additional anti-dwarven sentiment by engaging in “false flag” banditry against remote farmsteads. Wholesale slaughter of yeomen was judged to be too preposterous to have any propaganda value as it surely would be discredited and determined efforts might be made to uncover the true raiders. The goblins are thus under strict orders to restrain themselves and not murder any farmers or engage in excessive vandalism.

In dwarven guise they would attack isolated farms at dusk and slaughter a few sheep or goats. Far more important than any economic harm was being seen committing this banditry – hopefully by an observer too timid to pursue the “dwarves”.

In order to coordinate actions, an imp was summoned and detached to Takor. This minor devil would act as a messenger, flying betwixt Bulasven and the goblin lair in nondescript raven form. Not only could it communicate with both parties, it could also serve as an aerial scout and guide for the goblins – and, ironically, a brake on things getting out of control.

With the plans in place to frighten the outlying farmers, Takor sought to stir up fresh trouble. The educated classes were skeptical of inflammatory lies, so this approach stood little chance of success. They would never trust the verbal propaganda he was disseminating.

ADDITIONAL NOTES: Most of Takor’s possessions are kept in his room at the Sage’s Wages.

Typical Spells: A: fire finger, J: perimeter alarm, 1st: wall walk, 2nd: disguise

Kingdoms of Kalamar

Denizens of Tellene



Takor (aka Napilo)

Race: Human Class: Mage Level: 2 Size: Medium Movement: 10 Alignment: LE Hit Points: 24 STR 10/60 INT 14/12 WIS 13/05 DEX 12/08 CON 11/44 LKS 12/13 CHA: 12/02	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>SPEED</td> <td>INIT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>+3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ATTACK</td> <td>DMG REDUCTION</td> </tr> <tr> <td>+3</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DEFENSE</td> <td>DAMAGE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>-2</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>REACH</td> <td>THRESHOLD</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 ft</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>TOP SAVE</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>▼</td> </tr> </table>	SPEED	INIT	6	+3	ATTACK	DMG REDUCTION	+3	0	DEFENSE	DAMAGE	-2	8	REACH	THRESHOLD	1 ft	5		TOP SAVE		▼										
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Possessions: various changes of clothes, silvered knife +1 (hidden)	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Skills</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Acting</td><td>52</td></tr> <tr><td>Arcane Lore</td><td>27</td></tr> <tr><td>Artistry (painting)</td><td>28</td></tr> <tr><td>Carpentry</td><td>42</td></tr> <tr><td>Current Affairs</td><td>54</td></tr> <tr><td>Disguise</td><td>58</td></tr> <tr><td>Distraction</td><td>36</td></tr> <tr><td>Escape Artist</td><td>29</td></tr> <tr><td>First Aid</td><td>27</td></tr> <tr><td>Gambling</td><td>27</td></tr> <tr><td>Glean Information</td><td>34</td></tr> <tr><td>Literacy (Kalamaran)</td><td>31</td></tr> <tr><td>Observation</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>Persuasion</td><td>52</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Skills		Acting	52	Arcane Lore	27	Artistry (painting)	28	Carpentry	42	Current Affairs	54	Disguise	58	Distraction	36	Escape Artist	29	First Aid	27	Gambling	27	Glean Information	34	Literacy (Kalamaran)	31	Observation	13	Persuasion	52
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Proficiencies: knife (melee), club, magical transcription, Baparan 82																															
Talents: none																															
Quirks/Flaws: Racist, Limp (slight)																															
<i>Stats represent One-handed Weapon only fighting style using knife</i>																															

Lengthier Adventure Introduction

The Lynch Mob

Sometime after the players have entered the town (left to the discretion of the GM for best timing dependent on PC actions), a flash mob forms on the border of Olde Towne and the Commercial Neighborhood with the express purpose of lynching a dwarf. This mob is loud and boisterous (fueled in part by alcohol) and their antics can be heard from blocks away. The noise will draw in people curious as to the commotion, increasing its reach throughout the town.

The mob consists of a score or so of burly workmen intent on hanging a groggy dwarf. The men are belligerent and completely willing to engage in a fist-fight with anyone daring to interrupt their fun but not so bold or stupid to engage with armed opponents. They will disperse if an armed group (being it town militia or an independent group of mercenaries) presses them (though not without garrulous insults to their manhood, honor, family and sexual preference) leaving the dwarf a bit battered and confused, but mostly all right.

If the player characters take no assertive action to dissuade the lynch mob, they will fumble for a while trying to string up the dwarf. Their sheer incompetence at the task permits time for the city constables to gather in strength and halt the proceedings. In so doing they disperse the gathered crowd – with force if necessary (though using only clubs and only on particularly obnoxious people). Their intent is to restore order as their number are insufficient to conduct mass arrests.

The core lynch mob are bullies at heart and readily succumb to this forceful application of authority. They are amongst the first to flee the scene.

Rabble-rousers (8): LE Baparan human laborer; HP 26; Init +8; Spd 11; Rch 1'; Atk -3; Dmg (d4p-2) + (d4p-2)+2; Def -4; DR 1; ToP 8/ 7; Tenacity: Steady

Quirks: Boor, Racist

Stats reflect that they are intoxicated (sloshed)

Takor (as 'Napilo'): LE Baparan human mage 2; HP 24; Init +3; Spd 10; Rch 1'; Atk +3; Dmg (d4p-2)+ (d4p-2); Def -3; DR 1; ToP 8/ 6; Hon 16; SP 190

Typical Spells: A: fire finger, J: perimeter alarm, 1st: wall walk, 2nd: disguise

Notable Skills: see page 9

Equipment: workman's clothing, silvered knife +1, 32 cp, room key

Note: Takor is leading the mob and is disguised as a carpenter. He will not break character (thus spellcasting is highly unlikely).

The police will announce they are taking the dwarf into custody in part to placate the mob and blunt their anger at this usurpation of their vigilante justice. In truth, they are taking him into protective custody for his own safety. The city guard of Bulasven is an honorable organization and strictly adheres to the rule of law (though this may not be immediately obvious to foreigners observing their actions).

If the PCs are instrumental in dispersing the lynch mob, they will have the opportunity to speak with the dwarf.

► Klim Ironhead recently arrived in town from Hon, where there is a dwarven clan. The dwarves are master craftsmen and are used to selling their wares in the commercial neighborhood here. They rely on the discerning taste of Bulasven's wealthy patrons, who used to love their fine work. Recently however, racial tensions have been high, and unpleasant rumors have spread. Many affluent people have stopped buying dwarven made products. This loss of coin has made the dwarves grumpy and surly, and the situation has begun to spiral out of control.

If remnants of the mob are questioned, anecdotes of dwarven atrocities are common. None are first-hand accounts...

► Should one of the core rabble-rousers be detained, he must be successfully interrogated to compel revealing information. This should not prove overly difficult, as his effective Resist Persuasion is -05 owing to being drunk. Interspersed with vulgar insinuations of his questioner engaging in interspecies copulation he will admit that 'Napilo' is the ringleader (*and a really intelligent man that sees the truth!*) He does not know where Napilo lives.

► Should the characters follow the rabble-rousers' leader (Napilo/Takor) after the crowd disperses, have them attempt an opposed Sneaking check (d100+Sneaking mastery vs. d100+Takor's Observation mastery (13)). Assess a 20% penalty for every follower beyond the first as the mage is progressively more likely to notice a crowd tailing him than a lone individual.

If successful, the stalker will observe Takor amble through the streets ending up near the Sage's Wages (see p. 16). Before entering, he ducks into an alley and magically transforms into an entirely different looking person dressed as a scribe, scholar, or some sort of academic. In this guise he then enters the tearoom.

Book Burning

A day or two later (this is up to the GM to decide based on player actions – spring this when things start to calm down after the attempted lynching), Takor instigates another public disturbance. This time it's a book burning.

He again utilizes his core group of rabble-rousers but now has co-opted an outraged group of women horrified at the perverse content apparently freely available for anyone to peruse. The well dressed women circle the front of the store whilst the men are preparing to set alight a small pile of books with a torch wielding man directing their actions.

Bulasven is not overly large thus word of this commotion is likely to quickly circulate. Alternatively, this may be an opportune time to introduce Oli (see "Abbreviated Adventure Introduction" on p. 5).

Should the PCs investigate, they see that an angry mob has assembled outside Pobel's library. The building is guarded by two city constables that are keeping the crowd away from the shop.

- ▶ If a PC has at least Novice mastery of the Kalamaran tongue, he sees that the sign above the building reads "Library" and "Pilamas Pobel, owner."

Questioning anyone nearby reveals the source of the complaints. If a PC asks one of the protestors what's going on, read or paraphrase the following text aloud.

🌀 The woman tells you that the trouble all started a couple of days ago, when some adolescents told their parents about what they learned in the library... It seems that the owner, Pilamas Pobel, keeps graphic books that describe and illustrate a wide range of sexual behaviors, and these are available to anyone who visits the library.

(If the men preparing to set the books on fire are questioned, they will relate the same story. It will, how-

ever, be riddled with vulgarity. Any demi-humans that question them will not receive an answer. Instead, they will be jeered and mocked. *Note: The protesting women are not racists like these men and will not be rude.*)

- ▶ An easy Scrutiny check will reveal that the men are quite intoxicated. Succeeding at an average check reveals that these are the same men involved in the attempted lynching. If a difficult check is made, the mustachioed man holding the torch can be seen to exhibit a slight limp.

If the PCs attempt to enter the shop, the guards allow them to do so provided they make it clear they are unaffiliated with the mob and do not wish Pobel harm.

- ▶ If Oli accompanies the PCs, the guards permit entry sans questioning.

The mob, on the other hand, yells at the PCs for choosing to patronize the library. The women shout insolent, though erudite, condemnations while the men simply curse.

Constables (2): LG Baparan human men-at-arms; HP 28; Init +4; Spd 12 (8) (spear); Rch 10'; Atk +1; Dmg 2d6p+1; Def -2; DR 3; ToP 9/ 7; language (Baparan 68)

Equipment: spear, studded leather armor, 1d3 sp, 2d4 cp

Outraged Protestors (20): LN Baparan sedentary humans; HP 20; Init +3; Atk *non-combatants*; Def -2; DR 0; ToP 6/ 4; Tenacity: Cowardly

Rabble-rousers (8): LE Baparan human laborer; HP 26; Init +8; Spd 11; Rch 1'; Atk -3; Dmg (d4p-2) +(d4p-2)+2; Def -4; DR 1; ToP 8/ 7; Tenacity: Steady

Quirks: Boor, Racist

Stats reflect that they are intoxicated (sloshed)

Takor (as 'Napilo'): LE Baparan human mage 2; HP 24; Init +3; Spd 10; Rch 1'; Atk +3; Dmg (d4p-2)+(d4p-2); Def -3; DR 1; ToP 8/ 6; Hon 16; SP 190

Typical Spells: A: fire finger, J: perimeter alarm, 1st: wall walk, 2nd: disguise

Notable Skills: see page 9

Equipment: workman's clothing, silvered knife +1, 32 cp, room key

Note: Takor is leading the mob and is disguised as a carpenter. He will not break character (thus spellcasting is highly unlikely).

The crowd will disperse after an hour or so once they've vented their outrage. No violence will occur.

▶ PCs may opt to follow the rabble-rousers after they disperse. For the ordinary laborers, have them attempt an opposed Sneaking check (d100+Sneaking mastery vs. d100+the drunk laborer's Observation mastery (-05)). Assess a 20% penalty for every follower beyond the first as the ruffian is progressively more likely to notice a crowd tailing him than a lone individual.

If he notices a tail, he will confront them, instigating violence if he succeeds at a morale check. Otherwise he will stumble home to his schlubby workman's cottage. If observed, there is a 25% chance of a domestic disturbance occurring during the next 30 minutes.

▶ If the leader is tailed, see p. 10 for details. Note that if he previously observed someone following him, the pursuer must succeed at two skill checks since Takor will be more vigilant.

The Library

Encounter: Pobel, Topa

Potential Yield: employment as night watchmen (35 tc/day)

Pobel's library/bookshop has two levels, a chimney, a single entrance at the front and several shuttered windows. On the ground floor are a dozen six-foot tall shelves, crammed with warped volumes, arranged like spokes around a wooden table serving as a hub.

In his youth, Pobel was a bookbinder and thus well versed in all manner of book-making materials and methods. He has varying interest in the contents but is well read and can make broad judgments about the quality of a textbook.

Pobel once lived in P'Bapar, but found the rent and taxes too high, so he moved out of the city to Bulasven. Until this recent trouble started, his library was quite popular with the locals, for he allows residents to use its facilities for free. Non-residents (including the PCs) must pay two copper pieces to browse the books. Pobel lives above the library with his well-groomed dog, Topa.





As soon as the PCs enter, Pilamas sheepishly greets them. He is both embarrassed and frightened by the commotion outside. Whether or not his nephew Oli accompanies them, he immediately recognizes that these are atypical customers. He has been hoping to enlist someone – anyone – to solve this disaster and sheer desperation compels him to immediately proposition the PCs without a thought as to their interest, capabilities or trustworthiness. Have Pilamas say the following, or something like it:

☞ *"Please, forgive me for apparently initiating the disturbance outside. I truly don't know how those erotic books came to be in my collection. At first, as an aging antiquarian, I faulted my memory.*

Perhaps I had been slack in perusing the volumes I purchased, and forgotten how and when the book was acquired. Then I noticed two more books of political discourse and couldn't place them either. Finally, I found one that I had refused to buy from a passing stranger only a few weeks before as it was not worthy of space on my shelves."

☞ *"I simply don't understand why or how these books came into my shop. Could this stranger have done it? I said as much to the crowd, but of course they didn't believe me."*

Give the players an opportunity to take this in. If they are inclined to offer assistance, continue:

☞ *"Thank you, thank you so much. Perhaps you could examine the new books, scour the shop for others and watch over it until this matter is resolved? This must be done discreetly, so as not to tip off the stealthy contributor.*

I believe I could afford to compensate you for your time at the going rate for night watchmen."

Short term (e.g. day to day) employment of a night watchman runs 35 trade coins per day. Pobel is aware of this as he's considered the option in the past. Hiring a crew of watchmen (i.e. the PCs) is a significant financial burden but he's willing to do it to resolve this matter and restore his reputation. Should characters attempt to negotiate for better terms, he will plead poverty, politely thank them for their time and thereafter hire a lone NPC watchman.

Note that he *will* agree to permit the PCs to encamp in the shop while pursuing their investigation. He is not accustomed to hosting guests and has no spare beds (or bedding). Characters not provisioned with sleeping mats must make two fatigue checks per night spent sleeping on the ground or in a chair (see GameMaster's Guide p. 69-70).

► If the PCs balk at his offer, you'll have to play the rest of the city portion of the adventure by ear. There are sufficient opportunities for the PCs to discover the goblin lair without confronting Takor and the Imp. If the goblins are defeated and their duplicitous 'false flag' operations revealed, Takor will leave the town of his own accord.

Pilamas Pobel: LN sedentary human; HP 19; Init +3 ;
Atk non-combatant; Def -2; DR 0; ToP 6/ 4

Notable Skills: appraisal (books, maps & documents)
67, cartography 53, language (Baparan 87,
Brandobian 24), leatherworking 42, literacy
(Kalamaran) 52, resist persuasion 28, salesmanship 53;
Profs: none; *Quirk:* Absent-Minded

Searching the Library. Pobel's collection is organized into oddly defined sections that describe the book's main topics: animal, vegetable, mineral or spiritual. Maps, for example, appear in the mineral section as they describe the land. History books appear in the animal section as they describe human behavior.

The vegetable section has numerous books on herbal remedies. Tales of gods fill the spiritual section.

Several flyers extolling the virtues of an establishment called "The Sage's Wages" can be found by the register. (Pobel receives occasional free meals by directing customers to this establishment.)

If asked, Pobel shows the PCs seven new books that vary in size from small tablets to thick tomes. Close inspection of the books by literate characters reveals the following:

Mineral Section (Books 1 and 2). Both of these are sturdy and well bound, one containing local maps from decades past and the other nautical charts of the Brandobian coastline.

Unknown to Pobel (or the PCs), these are in fact books that he already owned but just lost track of. There is nothing special here.

Animal Section (Books 3 to 5). These include a collection of obscene illustrations featuring all manner of races and creatures, a novel in which a magic ring is employed to get men's and women's sexual organs to talk about their intimate sexual histories, along with a book of illustrated erotic verse focusing on sadomasochism.

Spiritual Section (Books 6 to 7). One of these tomes is an obvious literary work on the bestial nature of demi-humans, while the other is a seemingly inspiring story of a heroic knight.

- ▶ A character literate in Kalamaran who spends at least two hours reading the story of the knight may

discover that the tale carries subtle racist undertones, as the human knight's heroic efforts are constantly stymied by a host of bumbling, jealous demi-human allies. This is automatic for those with Advanced Mastery. Average Mastery requires a Wisdom check (d20p+WIS vs. d20+11) to pick up on this while Novices require a more difficult check (d20p+WIS vs. d20+15) to read into the subtext.

- ▶ At least one minute of searching and a successful Observation check (Easy) allows a character to spot a shelf where three adjacent volumes don't touch the shelf bottom. Further examination reveals that this is due to squeezing too many books onto one shelf. Examining each of the dozen books on this shelf finds another book that Pobel doesn't recognize. This one seems to be a novel about a Kalamaran lady written in the third person.

- ▶ A character literate in Kalamaran who spends at least two hours reading the novel of the Kalamaran lady finds that it is an allegorical seduction tale that warns against opening one's heart to chaotic freedom and instead counsels peace of mind through submission to order. Like the previous book, this may not be readily apparent to a basic reader.

Those with Advanced Mastery will certainly be aware of the writer's agenda. Average Mastery requires a Wisdom check (d20p+WIS vs. d20+11) to pick up on it while Novices require a more difficult check (d20p+WIS vs. d20+15) to realize that there's more to the tale than a simple love story.

Imprints. Once every 1d4 days, the imp travels from Takor's room at the Sage's Wages. It flies east out of Takor's window to the rooftops across the street. It walks across those rooftops until it must fly again across another street to reach the next row that contains Pobel's shop. It walks to Pobel's chimney, takes off the rain guard, ties his rope around the bricks and lowers himself into the library. After touching bottom, it places his book and goes back to the Sage's Wages the way it came.

However, the imp has left sooty tracks from his travels up and down the chimney.

- ▶ Any PC examining the area around where the books were found is entitled an Observation check (Easy) to notice sooty smears on the floor. (*Pilamas is a confirmed bachelor and completely oblivious to household grime...*)



▶ A successful Tracking check (Average) finds the sooty smears and also leads the PC to the chimney. (Only creatures of Small size can actually climb up the chimney.)

▶ Anyone looking in the chimney receives an Observation check (Average) to see if they notice hoof-like prints on the vertical walls in the soot caking the inside of the chute. (No check is necessary if the prints were tracked to the fireplace.) The chute itself is roughly 1 foot square; it is big enough to allow passage of all the new books and the imp.

The Roof. Dry black soot discolors the red brick of the rarely cleaned smoke stack on this gabled roof.

- ▶ Scaling the walls outside requires a ladder or Climbing/Rappelling check (Average).
- ▶ A successful Observation check (Average) spots some hemp shavings (threads from a rope) and a loose chimney cap.
- ▶ Three successful Tracking checks (each Average) allows a PC to follow the trail all the way to Takor's

room. The sooty prints can be tracked west along the rooftops of connecting shops until it ends at the end of the last shop in the row, then resumes across the street along the rooftop of the next row in the same manner, ending across from the Sage's Wages where the PC sees small sooty prints next to a fourth story window (Takor's room). Negotiating roof access is recommended as building owners may not take kindly to strangers casually scaling their buildings.

Topa. The last time the imp was confronted by Pobel's dog, it stung the hound into submission.

- ▶ Anyone who examines Pobel's dog and succeeds at a Monster Lore check (Very Difficult) identifies the dog's recent bug bite as an imp sting.
- ▶ A successful (Easy) First Aid skill check reveals that the dog suffered a stinging wound. The exact cause of the injury (i.e. a sting from an Imp) will not be apparent.

Topa (working dog): HP 16 (normally 17), Init -2, Spd 10, Rch short, Atk +2, Dmg 1d4p+1, Def +4, DR 2, ToP 7/7, Size M, Move 20 ft/sec, EPV 22

Bookshop Second Story. Pobel's bedroom contains a bed, desk, some plates, cutlery and a wardrobe full of clothes and shoes. Behind some boots is a small locked chest that can be opened with a Lock Picking check (Difficult). It holds 470 trade coins, 119 copper pieces and 98 silver pieces. The key to the chest is hidden under a squeaky stair step leading up to the second floor.

Lying in Wait

Encounter: Imp (242 EPs)

The PCs have several options to take, if they accept Pobel's offer and decide to lie in wait for the intruder.

Open Guards (outside): If PCs openly stand guard outside of the shop, they learn nothing, as the imp turns away when it sees them. If the imp flees for any reason, he returns in 1d4+1 days.

Hidden Guards (outside): If at least one PC hides somewhere outside the shop and observes at night, he might catch sight of the imp's arrival or departure.

- ▶ The imp may attempt an opposed check of his Observation (d100+13) vs. the PC's Hiding check to see if the imp detects the PC (in which case he flees undetected). If the imp fails, he wanders into the PC's view and can thereafter be followed back to Takor's room at the Sage's Wages by means of two successful opposed Hiding checks (vs. the imp's d100+13 Observation check) simulating the Imp passively detecting the tailing party.

Open/Hidden Guards (inside): If the PCs stand guard inside the bookstore at night, they can face the imp when he enters.

If confronted by three or more foes or reduced to 6 or fewer Hit Points, the imp flees if possible. If flight is not an option, it will attempt to bargain rather than fight to the death.

The imp has the following information it may barter: It knows Takor's location at the Sage's Wages; it knows that the mage places a magical alarm on the room; it also knows that there is a tribe of goblins allied to Takor living in tunnels that can be accessed from a sinkhole being used as a refuse pit outside town. It offers as little information as possible to secure its freedom.

If Takor is killed or captured, the imp leaves Bulasven. Its purpose is to be a courier, not to reinforce the goblins.

It will not name Sulikar Vled for it fears this cleric's wrath more than death.

Imp (242 EP): HP 12; Init -4; Spd 2; Rch 1'; Atk +5; Dmg d4p (bite), 2d3p-3 (2 claw rakes), 1+poison (tail); Def +6, DR 13 (4 vs. silver), ToP n/a, Size T, Move fly 20 ft/sec, ground 5 ft/sec

Special Ability: Tail sting is poisonous, May take the form of a rook

The Sage's Wages

Encounter: Takor (133 EPs), Imp (242 EPs)

Potential Yield: silvered dagger, 2 books of erotica (24 sp), treatise (9 sp), spell book, bottle of wine, worn backpack, bone scroll case (15 cp), 56 sp, and 32 cp

The Sage's Wages is a four-story brick building. The upper three floors are partitioned into guest rooms of varying size and quality from a barracks-like bunk room to private suites. The better rooms are higher up and benefit from lessened noise infiltration from the serving room and the street.

The ground floor public room is more tearoom than tavern, and its patrons consist primarily of academics, scholars and researchers. The establishment caters to this unique clientele with a wide selection of black, green and herbal teas. While they have a small selection of wine, the Sage's Wages does not serve beer or spirits. The waitress and hosts will ask boisterous patrons to be quiet and respect others – going so far as to suggest other nearby establishments that might better cater to their desire for a raucous night of revelry.

Prices are higher than average though the customers don't seem to mind given the enviable (i.e. quiet and stodgy) atmosphere. Cups of tea cost from 10 to 40 trade coins depending on quality while food is one and half times higher than standard. Daily room rates vary from 6 trade coins per person for the bunk room to 4 silver for a private suite (or 6 cp to 40 sp monthly).

As the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following text.

🌀 As you enter the Sage's Wages, the smell of baked goods, wine and tea intermingle in a surprising aroma unlike any common tavern. The main room is dominated by a handful of elderly, stooped men and plain-faced women with puckered foreheads and peering expressions, all of whom appear to be studying parchments, writing or debating with their peers.

A serving girl drifts idly about the room with metal jugs in hand, occasionally stopping to speak with a customer or refill a cup. The heavy-set woman at the bar eyes you questioningly.

There are usually 1d6p patrons, a serving girl and one of the proprietors (Aladila or her sister Voral) on the ground floor at any given time.

Aladila or Voral: N Baparan human; HP 24; Init +3; Def +2; DR 0; ToP 7/ 5; administration 20, cooking/baking 62, observation 24, resist persuasion 40; Flaw myopic

Serving Girl: N Baparan human; HP 21, Init +1, Def +0, DR 0, ToP 6/ 4; observation 14, resist persuasion 32, salesmanship 22

The Sage's Wages Rumors and Information (Roll 1d10)

1. "Pobel is getting on in his years. I think this whole mess is because his memory is fading, and he can't keep track of his books anymore." [False]

2. "I saw Pobel's dog limping around the library. I bet one of those protestors kicked him." [False. The dog was stung by the imp.]

3. "The servants claim there's a ghost in the wine cellar here." [False. The strange noises the servants heard came from the imp stealing wine.]

4. "I heard that garbage man has been secretly dumping bodies into the sinkhole the city uses for a dump. Seems mighty disrespectful to be laid to rest with the refuse others throw out. [Old man has tuberculous coughing spasm.] Even heard some say there are gigantic bugs that live in that hole and they eat the dead! That just isn't right. You young whippersnappers ought to look into that I say!" [Partially true: Grandel the garbage hauler certainly isn't hauling corpses to the dump. However, there are gigantic bugs dwelling there.]

5. "I heard that Takor, the scribe upstairs, still owes the landlord for yesterday's rent. If this keeps up 'til tomorrow, he'll be out on his rump. He ought to just move into Pobel's library. He's there most of the time, anyway, probably reading those filthy books." [False and True. Takor has actually paid a month in advance, which is unusual. He does spend a good deal of time in the library, however, he will cease if guards are present.]

6. "I'm all for knowledge and learning, but Pobel's going too far. Some books just shouldn't be allowed."

Typical Patron: N Baparan human; HP 19; Init +3; Def +1; DR 0; ToP 6/ 4; history: ancient (27), language (Baparan 88, Brandobian 48, Merchant's Tongue 69), listening 27, literacy (Brandobian 76, Kalamaran 90), mathematics 42, resist persuasion 23; Flaw myopic

▶ PCs who succeed at a Glean Information check (Average) as the result of a conversation learn one rumor per patron. If the d10 calls for a rumor the PCs have already heard, then apparently said rumor is trending...

Access to the Sage's Wages' rented rooms on the second through fourth floors of the building is restricted to paying occupants and their guests. Dining area patrons are not permitted to wander freely into this area and will be politely told so if observed by the staff.

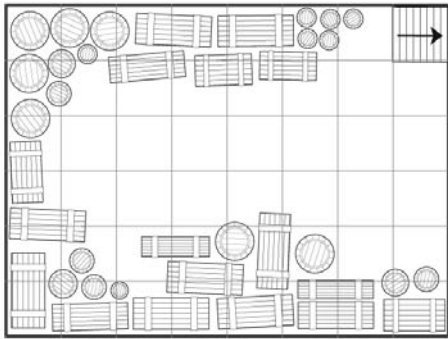
▶ A PC may try to sneak into this area (via a contested Sneaking skill check vs. the staff member's Observation skill). If the remainder of the players are clever enough to stage a commotion to distract the staff, award a +50% situational bonus to the sneaker.

7. "Heard about the trouble at the library? I wish the military would come in and restore some order. Then I could study my books in peace."

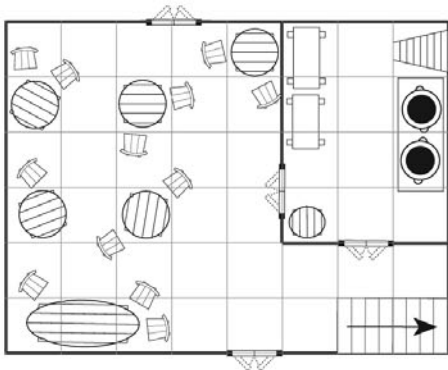
8. "I hear a gang of dwarves have been attacking farms outside the city. The soldiers haven't been able to find them, though." [Partially true. The "dwarves" are disguised goblins.]

9. [related by itinerant drover who obviously walked into the wrong bar] "Never woulda believed it weren't fer the fact I saw it with my own eyes. Dwarven bandits ambushed our caravan late at night on the way back from Hon. Sure was a mess 'o them though couldn't right tell ya exactly seeing as it was dark. Now them little guys drive a hard bargain but I never figur'd 'em fer thieves. Killed both the mules and we had to run fer it else we woulda been next on the choppin' block if'n ya get my drift (mimics ax strike). Good thing them little beared guys gots such stubby little legs or they sure 'nuf would got us. Funny thing is that never even tried to shake us down. Been held up before an' usually them bandits try an' see what yer willing ta give up ta avoid a fight." [story is true, but the perpetrators were goblins masquerading as dwarves]

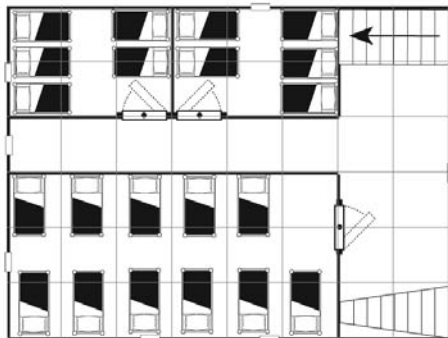
10. "I swear those gargoyles on the building across from my tenement are real and not statuary like the "so called" experts claims. Every night they come sneaking around trying to get me because only I know their little secret. Good thing I lock my shutters tight 'cause I hear them tap, tap, tapping trying to get in." [False: The gargoyles on the building across from this paranoid old man's apartment block are mere statuary. What he hears is a branch from an overhanging tree tapping his shutter when the wind blows.]



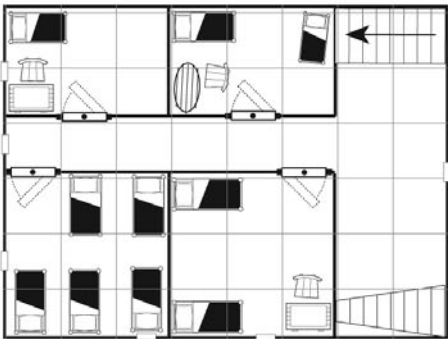
Cellar



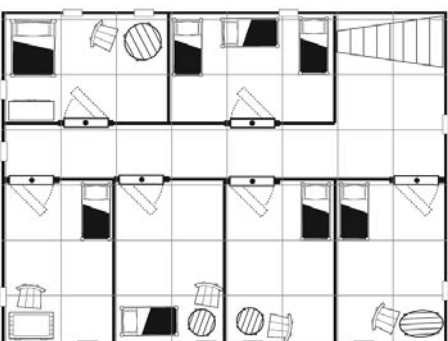
Ground Floor



2nd Floor



3rd Floor



4th Floor

Confronting Takor at the Sage's Wages

If the PCs tracked or followed the imp after confronting it at Pobel's library, they will have noted that it left sooty prints outside or flew through a window at the northwest corner of the fourth floor. Alternatively, or perhaps in addition to this observation, any successful tailing of Takor/Napilo will observe him entering the Sage's Wages and not exiting until the next day.

Takor's Room: The mage is renting the large room in the northwest corner of the Sage's Wages' fourth floor. The door to this room is always locked; Takor has the key.

- ▶ Characters might use a Climbing/Rappelling check (Average) to reach the shuttered window. The shutter is latched shut but the latch can be bypassed via a Lock Picking skill check (d100p+Lock Picking mastery vs. d100p-20). Alternatively, it may be smashed open with a Feat of Strength check (vs. d20p).

Attempting this during daylight hours will draw a great deal of attention and eventually city constables. It is suggested that you have a crowd gather to watch the 'daredevil' scale the wall as a hint to the PCs that they're in a city and a modicum of subtlety is warranted.

Confronting Takor. Assuming he is still alive and free (based on other encounters the PCs may have had with him), roll a d100 to see if Takor is present. During the day there is a 20% chance he is present, while at night there is an 90% chance. In either case, an absent Takor returns in 1d4+1 hours.

If caught here, the *Perimeter Alarm* prevents Takor from being surprised (he should be permitted a d4 Initiative die while intruders roll a d12 due to being startled by the loud, warbling alarm). If at all possible, he will attempt to immediately escape (using *Wall Walk*) and if successful cast *Disguise* afterwards to appear to be a middle-aged woman and act as if she (Lalare) was on her way home from her job as a cook at the Copper Hammer.

- ▶ Note, this establishment exists but following up on his lie will reveal that no such person is employed there.



Caution is warranted here if your players are too dense to realize that tactics suitable when raiding an orc lair are CRIMES when employed in a law abiding urban setting. Breaking and Entering, Grand Larceny, Assault with a Deadly Weapon, Attempted Murder and Murder are the escalating series of crimes that PCs could very easily commit should they force their way into Takor's room, attack him and take his stuff.

The point here isn't to make resolution of the conflict inordinately difficult for the players. Rather, one would hope that they utilize their creativity when confronted with this situation. Ironically, the fighter's greatest asset – his ability to bash down doors and kill people – is counter-productive. This is an opportunity for thieves and rogues to shine and the party ruffians to play the supporting role.

Clues, evidence and witnesses are placed making it possible for characters to exonerate themselves of minor criminal acts. However, should they go in "guns blazing" heedless of consequences, you are encouraged to make them pay.

If escape is impossible, he will attempt an overamped (70 SP) *Fire Finger* before defending himself with his knife. Though dedicated to the cause, he is unwilling to die for it. Once he sustains a wound, he will surrender.

Takor (133 EP): LE Baparan human mage 2; HP 24; Init +3; Spd 6; Rch 1'; Atk +3; Dmg d6p+1; Def -2; DR 0; ToP 8/ 6; Hon 16; Spell Points 190

Typical Spells: A: fire finger, J: perimeter alarm, 1st: wall walk, 2nd: disguise

Notable Skills: see page 9

Equipment: clothing, silvered knife +1, 56 sp, 32 cp, room key

The mage (when in his 'scholar' role) wears a knee-length burgundy tunic with a rope belt and shiny dagger hidden at the waist. His coins are in a purse also at his waist.

Under the bed is a satchel containing three books (*The Way Matters Ought to Be*, *A Convenient Truth*, *We are Brothers – They are Not*), an empty bone scroll case

and a worn leather backpack holding Takor's spell book and spare clothing. Writing materials and a scroll (bearing some Kalamaran text) lie on the table.

Takor's spellbook includes the following spells. Apprentice: *Fire Finger*, *Repair*, Journeyman: *Perimeter Alarm*; 1st: *Wall Walk*; 2nd: *Disguise*.

The other three books are similar to the mysterious ones found in Pobel's shop and include two more books of unabashed propaganda along with a Brolenese book regarding the natural rule of stronger beings over weaker ones. A detailed examination of the latter reveals a right gauntlet with fist clenched poorly sketched on the inside back cover, as if by an amateur artist.


▶ A successful Divine Lore check (Trivial) or Religion check (Very Difficult) indicates that this sketch is the symbol of The Overlord, deity of oppression and slavery. Clerics of The Overlord or The Pure One recognize this symbol automatically and no check is necessary.

▶ If examined by a PC literate in Kalamaran, writing on the scroll case is addressed to "Fist, the Apothecary, Herb Street, Daresido - to be left until called for." The writing on the scroll itself states "The readings have started. Allies spread the need for law and order among isolated farms."

The wardrobe holds the imp's bedding and a bottle of ordinary wine (that the imp purloined from the stores below).

Capturing Takor.

▶ If Takor is captured, a successful opposed skill check (Interrogation, Intimidation or Seduction vs. Takor's Resist Persuasion) entices him to reveal his motives. In that case, read or paraphrase the following.

 The man has spoken quite normally so far, but when you question him about his plans, he speaks in a strange monotone, as if his mind was set on clockwork gears to only speak as much as his owner would him up.

"He Who Knows convinced me to plant the books that patrons might read them and thereby gradually shun knowledge and freedom in favor of order and control."

Continuing Disturbances

You may wish to keep using Takor's gang as a plot device to stir up trouble in Bulasven if necessary, as a plot device to goad the PCs into action. Alternatively, now that they've encountered the PCs a couple of times, they will be on the lookout for these meddlers. This is particularly important should the PCs begin to hunt Takor's alternate persona (i.e. his real one).

Takor may feel compelled to scare off the PCs if he feels threatened. To accomplish this, his gang will attempt to ambush them late one night. They will take this seriously, so they'll be sober and armed with clubs.

Their intent will be to chase the PCs out of town – not to ambush and kill them. As such, *you mustn't treat this as an encounter with a bunch of orcs*. They likely will emerge from various dark alleyways and surround the PCs but refrain from immediately attacking. They want to intimidate the PCs and will say things like, "Youse guys are messin' wit' t'ings dat's none 'o yer bizniz. Why don' youse just make like a tree and scam."

Any deference to them will be favorably met and **only an attack mounted by the PCs** will be countered with force. They will not *instigate* any physical violence.

Rabble-rousers (8) (25 EP ea): LE Baparan human laborer; HP 26; Init +5; Spd 10; Rch 2½'; Atk +0; Dmg d4p+d6p+2 (club); Def -1; DR 1; ToP 8/ 7; Tenacity: Steady

Quirks: Boor, Racist

Takor (as 'Napilo') (133 EP): LE Baparan human mage 2; HP 24; Init +3; Spd 10; Rch 2½'; Atk +3; Dmg d4p+d6p (club); Def -3; DR 1; ToP 8/ 6; Hon 16; SP 190

Typical Spells: A: fire finger, J: perimeter alarm, 1st: wall walk, 2nd: disguise

Notable Skills: see page 9

Equipment: workman's clothing, silvered knife +1, club, 32 cp, room key

Note: Takor is disguised as a carpenter. He will not break character (thus spellcasting is highly unlikely).

Note: DO NOT deploy this force until after the PCs have had an opportunity to ransack Takor's room. Doing so may wreck the plot. If worse comes to worst, you can employ Vanis (p. 22) to get things back on track.

Takor does not know the true name of the Bringer in Daresido, only his code name "Fist."

If the PCs have not yet read the scroll and connected what it says with the rumors of a gang of "dwarves" attacking local farms, then Takor can mumble a few words such as "in the pit" to set the PCs on the right scent.

If the PCs turn in Takor to the town authorities, along with any evidence they've gathered, new books stop appearing in the library but Pobel's reputation takes months to recover.

The Imp. If the imp has yet to be captured, freed or killed then there is a 20% chance he is here at night or an 80% chance during the day. If he is still alive but not here, he may be sleeping off a meal somewhere, or delivering a message to/from P'Bapar or the goblin lair.

If the Bad Guy Wins. Any sort of violence and the resulting attention from legal authorities threatens Takor's mission. Therefore, if he manages to defeat the PCs, he will not kill any whom he can incapacitate. Instead, he gathers his belongings along with the imp and flees as soon as possible.

In this case, the players should not be rewarded any experience for their encounter with him and miss the benefit of interrogating him and reading his scroll. However, when they recover, they can carry on with the adventure to the best of their ability.

Thopramel's Farm

If players have been asking after rumors around town, or if one or more of their party are dwarves, they will have certainly heard about the "dwarf" attacks that are becoming increasingly more common. Most have been perpetrated upon travelers leaving and coming into town. There is a 10% chance that a victim of such an attack will be at the Sage's Wages at any given time. Such victims are bound to be traveling merchants but remember little due to the attacks occurring in the dark, the speed with which they occurred, being struck on the head or the general confusion of the situation.

There has also been an attack on one of the outlying farmsteads, and should PCs ask they will be provided with directions to Thopramel's farm. The attack occurred 1d4 days before the PCs came to Bulasven.



Thopramel is an old Baparan farmer known for his temper and foul mouth. He is currently bed-ridden with a bad concussion, and being cared after by his two daughters, Sardi and Loni.

The farm is located around two miles south of town, down the old Hon Road. Note that the sinkhole used as a rubbish pit by the town is located halfway to the farm. It is unmistakable and should be described to the players as they pass. This description can be found on p. 23-24.

Upon reaching the farm the PC's should see that some of the crops have been recently burned. There is a small farmhouse in front of them and several acres of wheat fields and a small enclosure that holds a few goats. Should the PCs search the fields or goat enclosure, they have a chance of discovering goblin boot prints, or a discarded dwarf beard.

▶ Declaring that they are spending at least an hour searching and rolling a successful scrutiny check (average) reveals several sets of boot prints*. A successful scrutiny check (very difficult) will turn up a discarded costume beard in one of the fields which reeks of dung and garbage. Additionally, any PC who specifically states that they are interacting with the goats (i.e. petting, playing with, etc.) is entitled to an observation check (average) to notice a small goat eating a discarded costume beard (of a similarly odiferous nature).

▶ A successful tracking check (average) should reveal that the boot prints are too small and light to have been made by dwarves. Alternatively, any dwarf in the party should notice this immediately.

If the players approach the farm house they will be met by one of Thopramel's daughters (Sardi or Loni). With some convincing (an opposed check vs. their resist persuasion) the party may be let inside to see Thopramel. Dwarves in the party will be subject to glares and hostile remarks from the daughters.

Thopramel isn't much for conversation in general, preferring to "handle his business himself," and the concussion has left him confused and unhelpful. If there are dwarves in the party, he will attempt to get out of bed and fight but will be restrained by his daughters who plead with the PCs to leave immediately. A successfully opposed skill check (Interrogation, Intimidation or Seduction vs. Thopramel's Resist persuasion) persuades Thopramel to reveal what he remembers of the attack. You should then read or paraphrase the following.

Thopramel finally consents to relate what he remembers of the attack to you:

Kingdoms of Kalamar

Denizens of Tellene

The player characters are not the only individuals investigating the disturbing social undercurrents beginning to surface in Bulasven. Rumors of the situation have gained the attention of the regional Emancipator of The Face of the Free. He is understandably concerned that bigotry and racial antagonism are rearing their ugly head in what is considered an enlightened town far removed from the church's usual loci of interest.

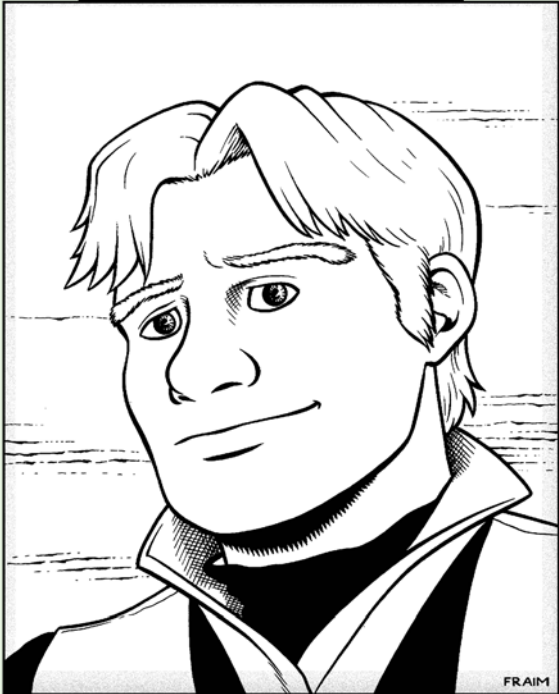
In order to assess the situation, he has dispatched an agent to gather intelligence and report his findings. This man is Vanis and he is currently posing as a bohemian inhabitant of the Traveler's Neighborhood.

During his time in the town, he has ferreted out all of the clues that are presented to the PCs. He has also been observing the player characters' actions and may opt to either team up with or guide their actions such that they become the implement with which he foils Takor and the goblins' schemes.

As GM, you should use this NPC as a *deus ex machina* to advance the storyline if your players are flailing helplessly. Depending of what information they have gathered or interactions they have had with the antagonist (perhaps unwittingly), he can provide guidance permitting them to proceed. For example, he might suggest they focus their attention on the apparent leader of the rabble-rousers. He could also suggest they tail him or search his room. Alternatively, he could suggest they investigate firsthand the rumors of dwarf attacks on outlying farmsteads.

If need be, he can accompany the PCs though this should be a last resort. Ideally, the players will confront and overcome the villains on their own. If circumstances arise such that you feel his addition to the party is warranted, his primary role should be to utilize his skills to lead the players to the goblin caverns. Leaving a rear guard to monitor the egress point once a descent into the sinkhole is made should seem eminently reasonable and this is a role he will gladly seize upon. Vanis should be very reluctant to accompany the PCs into the dungeon proper – especially if called upon to be a primary combatant.

ADDITIONAL NOTES: In his rented quarters, he has a traveler bundle and backpack with a short sword hidden in his spare clothes. With this weapon, he has the following combat stats: Spd 8, Atk +2, Def +7, Dmg 2d6p whilst using the *two one-handed weapons, defending with secondary fighting style*. Vanis is an anointed follower of The Face of the Free.



Vanis

<p>Race: Human Class: Thief Level: 3 Size: Medium Movement: 10 Alignment: CG Hit Points: 30</p> <p>STR 10/26 INT 10/53 WIS 16/56 DEX 15/71 CON 12/71 LKS 12/21 CHA: 12/15</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">SPEED</td> <td style="width: 25%;">ATTACK</td> <td style="width: 25%;">INIT</td> <td style="width: 25%;">DMG REDUCTION</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> <td style="text-align: center;">+3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-2*</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">+2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">d6p+1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">DEFENSE</td> <td style="text-align: center;">DAMAGE</td> <td style="text-align: center;">THRESHOLD</td> <td style="text-align: center;">TOP SAVE</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1 ft</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> </tr> </table>	SPEED	ATTACK	INIT	DMG REDUCTION	6	+3	-2*	0	+2	d6p+1	10	6	DEFENSE	DAMAGE	THRESHOLD	TOP SAVE	1 ft			6										
SPEED	ATTACK	INIT	DMG REDUCTION																												
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DEFENSE	DAMAGE	THRESHOLD	TOP SAVE																												
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<p>Possessions: casual clothes, knife +1 (hidden)</p> <p>Proficiencies: dagger, knife (def +1), short sword (def +1), Baparan 59, Eldorian 73, hiking/roadmarching</p> <p>Talents: none</p> <p>Quirks/Flaws: none</p> <p><small>* one die type lower Stats represent One-handed Weapon only fighting style using knife</small></p>	<p>Skills</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>Climbing</td><td style="text-align: right;">10</td></tr> <tr><td>Disarm Trap</td><td style="text-align: right;">12</td></tr> <tr><td>Disguise</td><td style="text-align: right;">35</td></tr> <tr><td>Distraction</td><td style="text-align: right;">32</td></tr> <tr><td>Glean Information</td><td style="text-align: right;">54</td></tr> <tr><td>Hiding</td><td style="text-align: right;">32</td></tr> <tr><td>Identify Trap</td><td style="text-align: right;">40</td></tr> <tr><td>Listening</td><td style="text-align: right;">32</td></tr> <tr><td>Lock Picking</td><td style="text-align: right;">14</td></tr> <tr><td>Observation</td><td style="text-align: right;">56</td></tr> <tr><td>Pick Pockets</td><td style="text-align: right;">14</td></tr> <tr><td>Reading Lips</td><td style="text-align: right;">46</td></tr> <tr><td>Scrutiny</td><td style="text-align: right;">32</td></tr> <tr><td>Sneaking</td><td style="text-align: right;">50</td></tr> <tr><td>Tracking</td><td style="text-align: right;">40</td></tr> </table>	Climbing	10	Disarm Trap	12	Disguise	35	Distraction	32	Glean Information	54	Hiding	32	Identify Trap	40	Listening	32	Lock Picking	14	Observation	56	Pick Pockets	14	Reading Lips	46	Scrutiny	32	Sneaking	50	Tracking	40
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☞ *"I heard strange noises comin' from the fields, so I went out to investigate. We don't get much trouble seein' as everyone around here is scared of their own shadow when they see it over the top of whatever nonsense book they're reading. So, I come outside and I see these... these DWARVES,"* he shouts, covering the closest PC in spittle, *"and they're burning my crops! I start to run towards them, to give em a piece of my mind and BAM everything goes black. One o' them musta got me from behind. Cowardly, garbage-smellin', cave dwelling..."* (at this point he continues spouting racial slurs and cursing dwarves until the PCs interrupt or leave the room).

Sardi or Loni: NG Baparan human; HP 21; Init +1; Def +0; DR 0; ToP 6/45; cooking/baking 32, resist persuasion 11; Flaw Racist

Thopramel: N Baparan human; HP 24, Init +1, Def +0, DR 0, ToP 7/ 5; resist persuasion 26; Flaws Ornerly, Racist, Foul Mouthed

The Garbage Man

A 50-foot-diameter sinkhole lies about a mile outside of town down the Hon road. The town employs it as a dumping ground for any rubbish their citizenry generates.

A laborer is employed to collect refuse from different parts of town every day and cart it to the pit. The cart driver responsible for making these deliveries of refuse is a portly man by the name of Grandel. He spends most of his free time drinking alone in the many taverns of the Traveler's Neighborhood. He drinks alone not so much because of any social awkwardness, but because his job has left him with an inescapable garbage odor. Anyone willing to buy Grandel a drink or even just sit and talk with him will find the man starved for conversation.

If asked about his work, he initially doesn't have much to report, saying his work wouldn't be "interesting to someone like you who has seen the world." However, he will relate that at least the feral dogs that used to harass him as he unloaded garbage have seemingly disappeared lately. He further relates that he happened across one of their bodies

"practically cut to ribbons" one day while he was at work. If asked about when this happened, he will relay a date that corresponds to the beginnings of the "dwarf attacks."

Grandel doesn't know anything about the true nature of the rubbish pit and assumes the dead dog must have been killed by a transient sifting through the refuse. Either way, he is happy the dogs are dead, as the large man has a powerful phobia of the animals.

Alternatively, if the PCs are wandering about town around dawn (perhaps after a full night of investigating), they will encounter Grandel as he makes his rounds gathering garbage. He rides a wagon pulled by a pair of mules.

If approached, he welcomes the company and will gladly chitchat. Functionally, he reveals the same information he would have if encountered elsewhere in town.

If asked to show them the way to the pit, Grandel will offer to take them along on his next trip (assuming the PCs have been polite to him) or simply tell them the route if they have been rude. Grandel, however, is merely a simple laborer and has no taste for adventure.

Rubbish Pit

Encounter: 3 Giant Beetles (33 EPs)

The rubbish pit lies about a mile outside of town down the Hon road. This sinkhole originally formed when a series of goblin tunnels collapsed. Though they did not know the reason for its appearance, the town council thought it would serve Bulasven well as a dumping ground for any useless rubbish their citizenry generated.

When the PCs near the pit, read or paraphrase the following.

☞ The smell of dung assaults your nose even before the pit comes into view. A natural conical depression in the earth, the pit measures about 50 feet in diameter and about 20 feet deep.

🕸 As you stand at the edge, your eyes swimming with the smell, you see a light covering of useless debris – broken bowls, fragments of rotten wood and other ordure – around the inner rim of the pit, occasionally punctuated with heaping piles of dung and scatterings of entrails not even good enough for the local pie maker. This pit seems to be the repository for the most worthless, unsalvageable items in Bulasven.

As you look about, you hear the caw of crows, the distant barking of dogs and see a single giant beetle scuttle across the large patch of rubbish-free earth in the center of the pit. At least some creatures enjoy it here.

The three giant beetles attack anyone entering their pit, although they will not fight beyond its boundaries.

Giant Beetles (3): HP 17, 15, 14, Init 0, Spd 10, Rch short, Atk +1, Dmg 2d4p, Def -1, DR 3, ToP n/a, Size S, Move 5 ft/sec, EPV 11 ea

PCs can find the hole in the rubbish pit by spending at least five minutes searching the pit for clues.

- ▶ A successful Observation check (Difficult) spots the partially uncovered entrance.
- ▶ Near the rim of the pit are the bodies of several mutilated feral dogs. A Scrutiny check (Easy) reveals that these dogs were killed by small, hacking blades.

Once found, PCs can slip through the hole in 1d4+1 seconds one at a time to enter the tunnels below.

Goblin Tunnels

These tunnels are a combination of natural formations and kobold slave-made effort.

- ▶ Characters with Appraisal: Armor & Weaponry may attempt a skill check (Easy) to learn that any goblin-made weapons and items are poorly constructed and have no resale value. Items of human or other manufacture are noted in the text; items with no listed value are worthless.

Lighting. Beyond 20-30 feet, the party needs a light source to see. The goblins use torches, but douse most of them during the day. A few remain lit and hang in sconces deeper in the complex (see Areas E, F, I and L). At night, torches are lit in almost every room, but will be snuffed if the tunnels are under alert.

A) Entry Passage

Encounter: 2 Very Large Spiders (200 EPs)

🕸 You push through the accumulated muck to feel your face break through into cool, clammy air. However, you can't see anything. You'll have to push your torso through before you can ignite a torch.

There's no other obvious way in, and the hole cannot be made bigger without serious mining. Cleaning the muck away doesn't work either as more of it just oozes into any gaps the PCs make. PCs have to push their torso through to handle anything. One could conceivably push through with a rock or similar object in his hands and drop it to test for a bottom. It falls into the black without a sound. PCs can push through while tied to a rope or held by their comrades.

Anyone who dangles through the hole with a light source sees this.

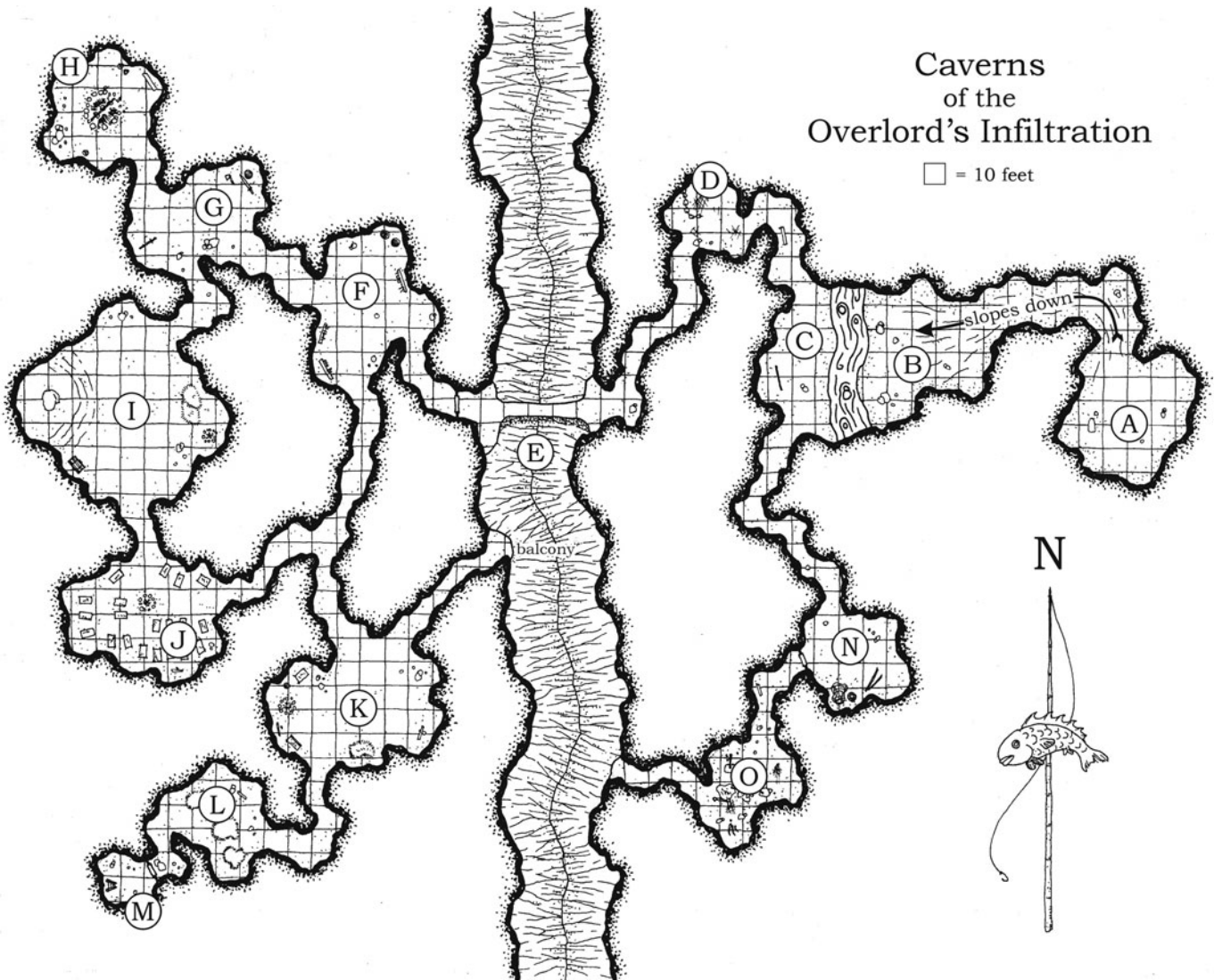
🕸 About 10 feet down, you see a mass of webbing stretching in all directions. There's a fuzzy bundled beetle carcass stuck in there. The cavern floor is beyond that, about 30 feet down and slopes away from you to greater depth.

The webs will not burn quickly. A torch thrown on them burns through in 4d4 seconds without setting the mass aflame and then falls to the cavern floor – still alight. One can descend to the webs by rope and or just drop into them. Either way, they break a PC's fall. As soon as a PC hits the web, 2 very large spiders emerge from the shadows 6d6 feet away to attack! Check only once for the first PC to hit the web. Do not check again for 12 hours.

PCs in the web are stuck and cannot defend themselves (d8p Defense) unless they free themselves. Once freed, they still suffer a -2 penalty to all Attack and Defense rolls as well as a +2 Speed penalty due to unsure footing.

Caverns of the Overlord's Infiltration

□ = 10 feet



With a successful Feat of Strength (*vs. d20p+7*), a PC can break free of the sticky webs in 1d4+1 seconds of doing nothing else and then either confront the attacking spiders or leap to the floor 20 feet below (or continue descending on rope). Given that the PC knows it's coming, a fall only counts as 10 feet for 1d6p-1 points of damage.

2 Very Large Spiders: HP 17 ea, Init -4, Spd 10, Rch 1', Atk +1, Dmg 1d3p plus VF 7 poison, Def +2, DR 2, ToP n/a, Size S, Move 5 ft/sec, EPV 100

► Once on the ground beneath the web, a PC succeeding at an [easy] Observation check will notice a dried out goblin carcass.

B) Dog Leg Cavern

From underneath the spider web, the 20 foot wide passage goes north for about 60 feet while moving down about 30 feet and then turning to the left (west).

If PCs round the corner with a light source, the kobold fishermen in area C flee. Proceed with the following.

🕷️ As you round the corner, you see the rocky slope continue to decline and you hear the babble of a gentle brook ahead in the darkness beyond your light. Eventually you descend about another 60 feet, while traveling some 90 feet west to find yourself adjacent to an underground stream running from north to south.

If a dwarf without a light source rounds the corner, his low-light vision allows him to see the following without scaring away the kobold fishers.

🐕 After you round the corner, about 90 feet down a gradual slope you see three small creatures best described as hairless dog-men fishing in a stream.

By winning an opposed check (d100+Sneaking versus the kobold's Listening check of d100+40), a PC can approach to within 30 feet, at which point he would roll 1d4, and they 1d12, for Initiative.

C) Kobold Fishermen

Encounter: 3 Kobold Slaves (0 EPs)

If the fishing kobolds were scared off, then read this.

👁 Right away, you see wet dog-like prints and an abandoned fishing pole on the other end of the 10-foot wide stream. There's even a blind white fish there still, flopping and twitching on a bone hook. It seems someone or something left as you arrived.

On either side of the opposite wall is a passage leading further into the rock. The stream itself is only 1 foot deep and not navigable, since there is no overhead clearance where it enters and exits this chamber.

If by chance PCs managed to descend the dog leg cavern without a light source they see three kobold fishermen, with lines in the water, at 30 feet.

Kobold Slaves (3): HP 16, 15, 15, Init +3, Spd 6, Rch 0', Atk *none*, Def +9, DR 1, ToP 6/ 4, Size S, Move 5 ft/sec, EPV 0 ea

If confronted, the unarmed kobolds' instinct is to flee. If prevented from doing so, they will defend themselves as best they can (using the Full Parry special combat move coupled with Scamper Back if space is available) but will not attack back. PCs determined to murder them may attack at half their weapon speed against these unarmed non-combatants.

If captured, the kobolds tremble in fear awaiting the gruesome fate awaiting them at the blades of their captors. However, if treated with the slightest measure of kindness or respect, they will gladly cooperate such is their hatred of the goblins.

They speak only remedial Goblin (but fluent Kobold). If PCs can speak one of those languages, the kobolds warn of the stone bridge and archer covering it, in hopes that the PCs will kill the goblins.

▶ If the PCs cannot communicate with the kobolds but think to provide them with a piece of chalk, one of them draws on the wall. It crudely depicts a bow

and arrow and then an arch (the bridge). It then traces a parabolic arc from the bow to the bridge and points to the passage ahead.

Note that the kobolds will attempt to run away at the first available opportunity.

D) Chamber of Shackles

Encounter: 1 Kobold Slave (0 EPs)

👁 You enter to see a terrified, 3-foot tall, hairless, dog-like humanoid – a kobold – drawing away from you but stuck by the shackles pinning him to the wall.

This condemned kobold angered its goblin taskmaster. It will not fight but defends itself by flailing its arms if attacked. It speaks only rudimentary Goblin or fluent Kobold. If set free and not abused, the creature warns the PCs of the archer ahead (in the same manner as the kobolds in Area C).

Kobold Slave: HP 15, Init +3, Spd 6, Rch 0', Atk *none*, Def +3 (*due to compromised mobility*), DR 1, ToP 6/ 4, Size S, Move 5 ft/sec, EPV 0

E) Stone Bridge

Encounter: 1 Goblin Archer (22 EPs)

👁 A torch burns on the wall next to you. In its light, you see a stone arch barely 4 feet in breadth that spans a seemingly bottomless 30-foot wide chasm in front of you. On the other side of the bridge, you see an iron gate barring access to the corridor beyond.

Seventy feet to the southwest from the east side of the stone bridge a single goblin archer on a balcony stands watch. Given his extreme low light vision, he will be alerted as soon as an individual enters the opening on the east side of the chasm. His first action is to ring the bell in Area K by pulling the connecting cord from his balcony.

▶ A successful Listening check (Difficult) detects the ringing sound of the bell, but the sound is so faint that its source or direction cannot be detected.

Lighting and character actions are very important for subsequent actions. From the east side of the bridge, the goblin sniper is too far away to be seen in torchlight

unless a PC has low light vision. He is visible though if a lantern is shined directly at his location.

- ▶ Characters specifically declaring an Observation check will spot the goblin provided that a) they have low light vision and b) they succeed at a difficult check (as it is not moving and still in dim light even for those with low light vision). This is premised on torches being used for illumination. If a lantern is used, **and – crucially – directed southwest**, make this an average check for those with low light vision and very difficult for characters with standard vision.

The sniper is a cruel little bastard and won't shoot until someone begins to cross the bridge. Although it recognizes the value of shields*, it is impatient and will target the first person to advance five feet out over the chasm. At this distance, it suffers a -4 Attack penalty. Note that anyone hit and suffering a knock-back will be swept off the bridge to his likely death.

The goblin is not sufficiently brave to stand his ground in the face of counterfire. If hit by a missile, or if one comes too close (a miss by 2 or less), he will retreat behind cover and discontinue firing arrows.

This goblin is the only individual in the tribe proficient in the use of a shortbow. If killed, it cannot be replaced. If it survives and the PC retreat from the complex, it will build a three foot wall of rocks at the edge of its firing position. This will provide 50% cover during future encounters.

* *Given the orientation of the bridge, right-handed characters are assumed to have passive shield cover by default. Lefties do not gain this benefit.*

After exhausting his 12 arrows or having no more targets, the goblin crawls through the narrow passage from his balcony to the guard chamber (K).

Goblin Archer: HP 21, Init 3, Spd 8, RoF 12, Atk +3, Dmg 2d6p, Def +2, DR 2, ToP 8/ 6, Size S, Move 5 ft/sec, EPV 22


After PCs cross the bridge, they face a slipshod iron gate barring progress into the passageway that leads to F.

- ▶ The gate lock can be picked in 20 seconds. Lock Picking skill checks should be adjudicated as an opposed check (d100p+Lock Picking mastery vs. d100p-30) due to the shoddy craftsmanship of the lock.

- ▶ The same shoddy craftsmanship (*or, more properly, craftsgoblinship*) applies to the door frame. A successful Feat of Strength (vs. d20p+10) will force open the door and disable the locking mechanism. This check can be completed in 1 second. (*Note: should the PCs flee the complex, any surviving goblins will repair the door and lock within 4 hours. The repair work will be subpar and subsequent Feats of Strength need only succeed vs. d20p+6.*)

- ▶ A *Bash Door* spell automatically succeeds in forcing the gate. The sheer force of the spell will tear the doorframe loose necessitating a week of work for the goblins to restore it to functionality.

- ▶ A Pixie-Fairy character is small enough to worm through the bars. Once on the other side, she will discover that the gate has a shroud protecting the lock mechanism from being accessed from the outside but can easily be opened from the inward side.



Caution is warranted here if your players are weak combatants. If this is the case, you may opt to increase the goblin's reaction time (having reinforcements arrive in two distinct waves of 4 goblins each at 60 seconds and 120 seconds into the battle). Alternatively, the guards from area J never hear the alarm and are instead encountered in their barracks.

The chasm is roughly 90 feet deep; any character falling into it suffers 9d12p points of damage.

F) The Armory

Encounter: 4 to 12 Goblins (88 to 264 EPs), 6 Kobold Slaves (0 EPs)

Potential Yield: keys, 27 false beards, 18 torches, 3 coils of 50 foot hemp rope, 2 backpacks, 4 large canvas sacks

If the bell at area K never rang and/or the PCs passed through the gate on the west edge of the chasm within 30 seconds of having first been spotted by that goblin guard, then there are only four goblins here. Given notice, they may be reinforced by an additional 8 (4 each from J and K).

☞ Six shackled kobolds clean weapons in torchlight at the center of this chamber. Hovering over them are four goblins conversing in hushed tones. They carry hand axes and employ shields. Weapons and gear line the walls.

The four goblins start at the center of the chamber and fight until two have dropped to 0 or fewer Hit Points and then run to the temple (Area I). The kobolds do not fight but defend themselves if attacked (gaining a +5 to Defense as if with a Full Parry maneuver).

The goblins are not proficient in *throwing* axes having just recently learned to employ them in melee as part of their dwarf impersonation.

Goblins (4): HP 22, 21, 21, 20, Init 3, Spd 8, Rch 1', Atk +3, Dmg d6p+d4p-1, Def +6 (small shields), DR 2, ToP 8/ 6, Size S, Move 5 ft/sec, EPV 22 ea

Kobold Slaves: HP 15 ea, Init +3, Spd 6, Rch 0', Atk none, Def +3 (due to compromised mobility), DR 1, ToP 6/ 4, Size S, Move 5 ft/sec, EPV 0

.....

Alternatively, if the creatures in the armory are prepared for the PCs' arrival (e.g. having heard the archer ring the alarm bell), they can funnel in four more fighters from Area J and four from Area K to replace any that drop.

☞ As you are about to cross the threshold into this dark chamber, four goblins rush aggressively toward you from inside.

The first pair of goblins to attack surprise the PCs on the first second* with an aggressive attack (+5 Attack bonus but -2 on their next Defense roll).

* *In this situation, they are alerted and expecting an attack thus act on second 1. This is very likely to be a surprise attack, but PCs with superior initiative and a low die roll (e.g. acting on second 1 themselves) may avoid this.*

Note that within the corridor that leads from E to F, the PCs can fight two abreast while the smaller goblins can fight four abreast.

When at least seven goblins have been killed or incapacitated, the remainder flee to the temple (Area I) to warn the others there.

The strongest goblin has keys to the gates for this chamber and Area M.

The wall racks hold worthless goblin-crafted arms and armor: patched together suits of body armor, throwing axes, rusted daggers, notched short swords, morning stars made with dozens of nails, crude javelins, war hammers (little more than bludgeons made from tied together mallets), and small shields. However, PCs can also come away with 18 torches, three coils of 50-foot rope, two backpacks and three large empty canvas sacks.

One sack is full of dozens of the false dwarven beards that the goblins don when they raid the neighboring farms.

▶ A successful Disguise check (Easy) or Wisdom check reveals that these beards are obviously of good manufacture and not shoddy goblin work. They must have come from somewhere else.

G) Common Room

☞ Hairy dog hides are laid out on the ground in this chamber. Discarded bones are mixed in with strewn heaps of garbage, but the room is otherwise empty.

This is somewhat of an all-purpose room for the goblins—part sleeping chamber, part garbage dump, part latrine. Ah... home.

H) Mess Hall

Encounter: 3 Kobold Slaves (0 EPs)

Potential Yield: 2 jugs of wine, 1 sack of mushrooms, 1 sack of oatmeal, 1 bag of sugar

☞ Heat rolls over you as you enter this chamber. A circular black pit of glowing, red-hot coals dominates the room. Despite the fire, there is no smoke in this chamber; the exhaust rises to some outlet in the cavern's high ceiling. A spit over the pit supports what looks like several badly skinned rabbits. A single, unarmed kobold turns the spit as two more hack away at a headless mule carcass on a table behind the coals.

If confronted, the unarmed kobolds' instinct is to flee. If prevented from doing so, they will defend themselves as best they can (using the Full Parry special combat move coupled with Scamper Back if space is available)

but will not attack back. PCs determined to murder them may attack at half their weapon speed against these unarmed non-combatants.

Along the walls, PCs find three baskets, three large pottery jars filled with water, two jugs of poor quality wine, a 4-lb-sack of edible mushrooms (20 tc), a 30-lb-sack of oatmeal (90 tc) and a small one pound bag of sugar (5 cp). A host of battered pots and pans, along with various crude kitchen implements lie on a plank of wood supported by two small kegs behind the butchering kobold.

Kobold Slaves (3): HP 16, 15, 15, Init +3, Spd 6, Rch 0', Atk *none*, Def +9, DR 1, ToP 6/ 4, Size S, Move 5 ft/sec, EPV 0 ea

I) Temple

Encounter: 10 Goblin breeders and 20 runts (0 EPs), Goblin Shaman (167 EPs), Goblin Champion (55 EPs)

Potential Yield: Short sword +1, Horseman's Flail +1, treasure chest (see detail)

As the PCs enter this chamber, read or paraphrase the following to the players.

🔦 A torch burns bright at the midpoint of each of the four walls in this square chamber. On the western wall, atop a stone dais, stands an erect log perhaps 20 feet high, whose top is carved to resemble a massive clenched gauntlet.

🔦 Behind it is a large tapestry depicting a snow-capped mountain while astride the totem are two goblins in red cloaks with brown sashes. One carries a flail. The other wields a short sword with a blade as black as night.

Between those goblins and you, however, is a massive mob of goblin breeders and runts, perhaps thirty or more. They turn and stare at you menacingly, hissing, growling and spitting. They look ready to attack at your slightest gesture.

The goblin champion is here to fight the PCs to the death; he neither flees nor surrenders. Any goblins that fled here from the armory (F) will also fight to the death. The shaman is more pragmatic and will abandon his followers if need be to raise another flock if it becomes apparent that the cause is lost.

Encounter Note: For maximum effect, it is important to give the **impression** that this is an overwhelming encounter. If using miniatures, be sure to place all of the female non-combatants on the tactical map. This alone should sap the confidence of the players (it certainly did in play testing!)

The crowd of goblins will advance menacingly led by the champion while the priest initially attempts to *Moderate the Emotions* of his foremost opponent followed by *Cursing* three remaining PCs. He will use



his *Innocuousness* spell as a last resort to blend into the crowd and make good an escape.

The breeders and runts do not attack but try to impede and frighten the PCs off. If attacked, they only defend themselves (gaining a +5 to Defense as if with a Full Parry maneuver).

Goblin Champion (Captain): HP 28, Init +2, Spd 8 (jab 7), Rch 1', Atk +6, Dmg 2d6p+2 (short sword +1), Def +7, DR 4, ToP 12/ 6, Size S, Move 5 ft/sec

Possessions: short sword +1, small shield

Goblin Shaman: LE goblin cleric 3, HP 28, Init 4, Spd 8, Rch 1', Atk +4, Dmg d4p+d6p+1 (Horseman's Flail +1), Def +4, DR 4, ToP 10/ 6, Size S, Move 5 ft/sec

Spells: 1st - moderate emotion: cause fear, 2nd - innocuousness, 3rd - cursing

Possessions: key to chest, Horseman's Flail +1

Goblin Breeders (19): HP 18 ea, Init 3, Spd 8, Rch 1', Atk +3, Dmg 0, Def +2, DR 0, ToP 7/ 6, Size S, Move 5 ft/sec

Goblin Runts (11): HP 9, Init 3, Spd 8, Rch 0', Atk -2, Dmg 0, Def +0, DR 0, ToP 3/ 6, Size S, Move 5 ft/sec

▶ Examining the red cloaks finds yet another symbol of an upraised right gauntlet with fist clenched. If the PCs haven't recognized it yet, they can again attempt a successful Divine Lore check (Trivial) or Religion check (Very Difficult) to realize that this is the symbol of The Overlord, deity of oppression and slavery. Clerics of The Overlord or The Pure One recognize this symbol automatically and no check is necessary.


An oak chest is set against the wall behind the mass of breeders and runts and contains the shaman's (and the clan's) wealth. Inside is a small obsidian carving of a mailed right fist (worth 3 sp; or 5 sp to a follower of The Overlord), a ceramic drinking boot decorated with gold foil (12 sp), seven necklaces and four rings of glass and wire (all costume jewelry, 4 sp total), a glass eye with a green iris (2 sp), a set of ivory and onyx chessmen (37 sp), a small bronze medallion shaped like a curling centipede (20 sp), and a copper stamp with a beetle design (9 sp).

▶ The chest lock can be picked (an Average Lock Picking check) or forced open with a Feat of Strength (vs. d20p+15). Alternatively, it can be hacked open with an axe. Doing so cracks the drinking boot and chessmen (rendering them worthless).

▶ The tapestry behind the totem depicts Mt. Vespin (see Frandor's Keep), the 'homeland' of these goblins. Its capture in a raid of a merchant caravan was played up by the shaman as a propitious omen of their deity's favor (whereas in reality it was a completely chance find). Whatever significance it holds for the goblins aside, it is a large (6' x 8') tapestry of quality work that can fetch 80 silver pieces in Bulasven's marketplace.

J) Barracks

Encounter: 4 Unarmed Goblins (0 EPs)

 An acidic, urine smell burns your nostrils as you look out over twenty wood-framed beds padded with leathery animal hides.

If the PCs surprised the armory, they see four goblins sleeping here.

▶ Upon entering this area, each PCs must succeed at an opposed Sneaking check vs. each goblin's Listening check of d100+d20. Each failed check wakes a goblin. Further actions may also require an opposed check.

If awakened, the goblins only defend themselves (gaining a +5 to Defense as if with a Full Parry maneuver) or try to flee.

PCs can rummage through each "mattress" to find in total 7 copper pieces, tin cups, plates, and cutlery, flint and steel, a small sack, and a pair of dirty, halfling-sized trousers.

Goblins (4): HP 22, 21, 20, 20, Init 3, Spd 8, Rch 1', Atk +3, Dmg 0, Def +2, DR 2, ToP 8/ 6, Size S, Move 5 ft/sec

Use stats from K (below) if these goblins are alerted.

K) Guard Room

Encounter: 4 Goblins (132 EPs)

If the armory (F) was forewarned when attacked, then this room is probably empty because its guards joined the fight there. Otherwise, four goblins are on guard in total darkness. They roll 1d4 for initiative against a 1d12 for the players.

Goblins (4): HP 22, 22, 21, 20, Init 3, Spd 8, Rch ½', Atk +3, Dmg d6p+d4-1 (hand axe), Def +6, DR 4 shield, 2 body, ToP 8/ 6, Size S, Move 5 ft/sec, EPV 22 ea

L) Slave Quarters

Encounter: 12 Kobold Slaves (0 EPs)

🔍 A single torch on the wall reveals kobolds frozen with fear hugging the walls.

The dozen kobolds here sit on ragged furs containing nothing more interesting than bone dice, potato skins and tree roots. They only defend themselves if attacked (gaining a +5 to Defense as if with a Full Parry maneuver).

Kobold Slaves (12): HP 16 ea, Init 3, Spd 6, Rch short, Atk +2, Dmg 0 (weaponless), Def +4, DR 2, ToP 6/ 4, Size S, Move 5 ft/sec, EPV 17 ea

M) Hidden Exit

🔍 Before you is a crude, though sturdy-looking, iron gate fitted into the tunnel. A large lock secures it from trespassers. Beyond is a small cavern and a ladder leading up.

▶ The lock can be picked (a Lock Picking check of Average difficulty), bashed with a Bash Door spell or forced open with a Feat of Strength (vs. d20p+10).

If a PC climbs the ladder, he finds a wooden square roughly 3 feet in diameter with two leather loops nailed to the underside. Around the edges, the points of small nails are visible, as if something is nailed to the top.

▶ Pushing the covering up and out requires a Feat of Strength (vs. d20p+6) and brings the PC into a dark copse of trees only a few hundred feet away from the rubbish pit.

Examining the top of the board reveals a layer of dirt with grass growing atop it, with small sticks nailed to the edges and thus keeping too much dirt from spilling off.

N) Fishing Supplies

🔍 Simple reed fishing poles line the south wall along with a wicker basket, coiled line made of animal gut, a string with a dozen bone hooks and a fishing net.

🔍 The west wall hosts an iron gate with a tin sheet on the other end. A wooden sign picturing a skull and crossbones hangs on the door with some goblin script written beneath it.

▶ The lock can be picked (a Lock Picking check of Average difficulty), bashed with a *Bash Door* spell or forced open with a Feat of Strength (vs. d20p+7).

Anyone literate in Goblin knows that the sign reads “Danger! Big Scary Ants!”

O) Giant Ant Trash Pit

Encounter: 4 Giant Ants (160 EPs)

🔍 On the cavern floor, you see rotten burlap bags, tins, bones and other refuse. All over the walls you see small holes, each roughly one foot in diameter.

Suddenly, mandibles emerge from one of those holes to reveal a giant ant moving toward you!

Every 20 seconds, a new giant ant emerges to attack the PCs until the maximum of four giant ants is reached.

Giant Ants (4): HP 19, 18, 16, 15, Init 0, Spd 8, Rch short, Atk +3, Dmg 2d6p, Def 0, DR 3, ToP n/a, Size S, Move 5 ft/sec, EPV 40 ea

Conclusion

Returning to Bulasven, the characters should deliver the news about the goblins and how they were masquerading as dwarves. Once this information becomes common knowledge, affected citizens slowly begin to rethink their bigotry.

Racial tensions begin to ebb throughout Bulasven and soon the lure of dwarven-made goods erases any last vestige of lingering mistrust. The well-to-do will cluck their tongues and remark how they were never part of that “unfortunate business” despite any actual predilections.

If they have not already revealed the solution to the books in the library, they can do so at the same time. Pobel is thankful for the help the characters provided

and welcomes them to freely utilize his library whenever they wish.

If a character wants Takor's racist and pornographic books, Pobel hands them all over free of charge. However, selling these books may be a risk to a character's personal Honor. If a PC attempts to sell the erotic books to a Lawful Good character, they call him a "filthy deviant" (or something similar) and he is assigned -3 points of Honor. Attempting to sell the racist books to anyone other than an Evil character also causes a 1 point Honor loss.

Potential Story Awards:

❑ Solving the mystery of the new library books and demonstrably proving to the residents of Bulasven that Pobel was not responsible (400 EPs). *This entails turning over Takor and/or the imp (or their corpses) and books to the authorities.*

▶ or as above plus proving the book connection to the Bringers of the New Order (+100 EPs)

▶ Alternatively, if both Takor and the imp escaped, and the only evidence found is the contents of Takor's hotel room (200 EPs only)

▶ If both Takor and the imp escaped with the incriminating contents of their room, the mission to clear Pobel is a complete failure. Barring finding a solution to the "dwarf attacks", they will be prosecuted if they broke into Takor's hotel room and assessed a fine for any damages incurred (broken door, etc.) If there were any witnesses to the crime (e.g. Sage's Wages staff), they will be found guilty and incarcerated for 3 months. (0 EPs & -3 Honor if jailed)

❑ Solving the mystery of the "dwarf" attacks and demonstrably proving to the residents of Bulasven that the goblins were actually the true menace (400 EPs). *This mandates leading the authorities to the goblin tunnels and/or showing the goblin corpses along with the false beards.*

▶ or as above plus proving the goblin connection to the Bringers of the New Order (+100 EPs)

▶ or as above but without physical evidence (200 EPs only)

❑ Dispersing the goblins permanently (200 EPs)

Books and Training

Upon encountering such a trove of erudition as Pobel's library, literate player characters may, naturally, wish to spend some time reading books. They may even be under the impression that doing so will somehow automatically increase their skills. "If I read about botany, I should get better at botany!" they may cry. Such PCs should be reminded that there are no free passes in HackMaster. Skill training takes intense effort and focus; simply reading a book won't cut it.

That being said - the library can be an invaluable resource for a PC who wishes to spend some Building Points. Any PC who studies a book on an academic topic (history, botany, monster lore, etc. but not physical skills or weapon specializations) can spend the requisite BP and study hours to increase that skill. There is no need for additional teaching, or role playing - this is the power of the library.

Players that have successfully cleared Pobel's reputation as the result of the adventure are granted free lifetime access to his trove of information. Consider this a fringe benefit of completing the mission.



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To Whom This Missive Reaches,

Friends, I bid salutations to you, one and all. Please pardon the abruptness of this crude communiqué, but time is of the essence. I believe that I am under threat from a sinister force intent on nothing less than my complete and utter ruination. The city constables labor day and night, but I am afraid they are little more than jumped up campus prefects and the current problems facing our fair city have quite exceeded their capabilities.

I beseech you, come to my library east of Printer's Row on Circuit Street so that we may speak as civilized people, face to face.

Yours in Haste,

Pilamas Pobel

P.S. Time is of the essence!