

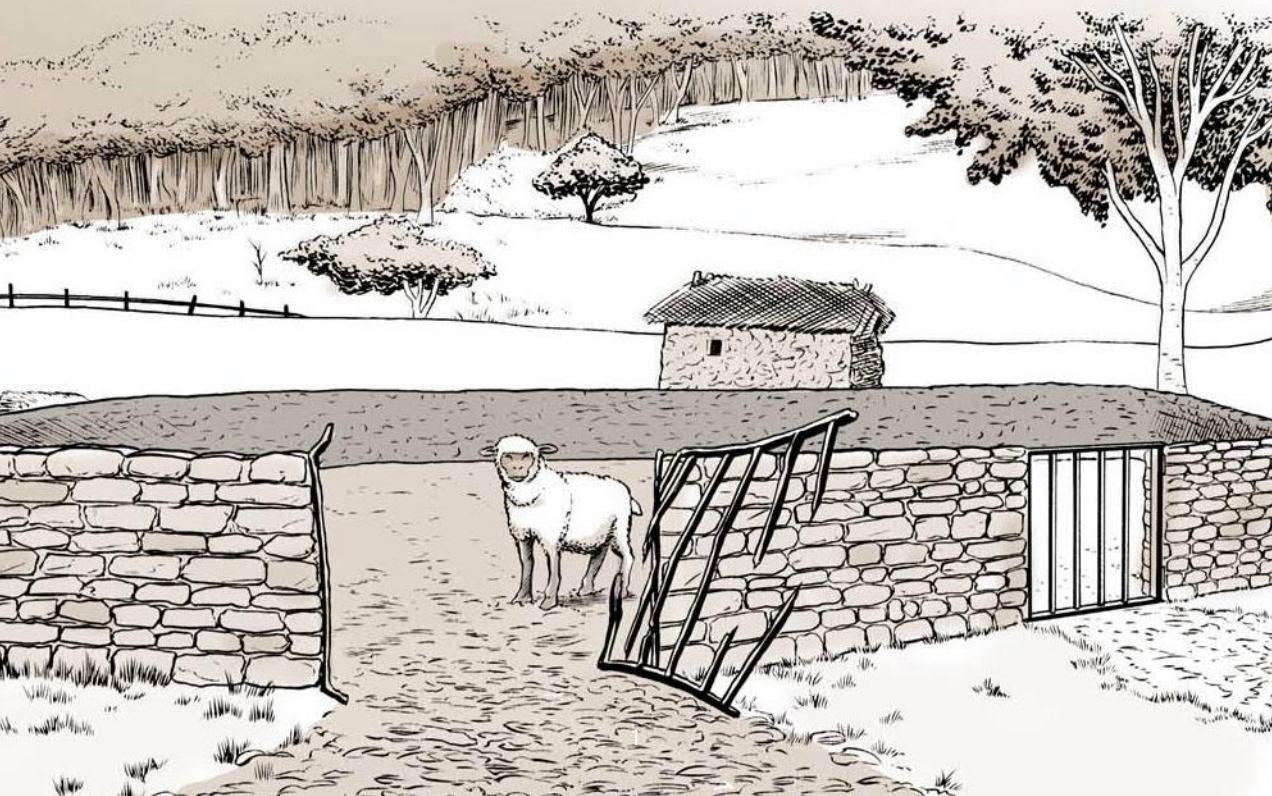


SHEEP THIEF

A HackMaster Adventure for Six 7th to 8th Level Characters.

By Steve Lawrence

For several weeks now, someone (or something) has been stealing sheep from the farmers of Dogbed Creek. Winter is fast approaching and the villagers are worried about having enough to eat but what can be done? The situation has now taken a turn for the worse. Yesterday one of the villagers disappeared and fears of starvation have been replaced by a much more immediate threat to their survival. A group of traveling mercenaries arrived at the Inn. Maybe they can help. Hopefully they work cheap...



GM'S BACKGROUND

The characters are traveling in the vicinity of Dorndern when they take up a nights lodging in Dogbed Creek, a small hamlet of farmers that scratch a living out of the northern frontier. While they are enjoying their meal, they are approached by a local farmer named Anitol Orni and his wife Elrenn. For the past few week someone or something has been stealing sheep and other livestock from the local farms to the point that many locals are worried about having enough to eat during the coming winter. Their young son Culran, having more confidence that brains, took off to find the thief with an old sword he had found in a field. He has now been gone for two days and Anitol and Elrenn are worried that something terrible has happened.

The sheep thief is an Eöten named RekRuz that has taken up residence in an old cave a short distance from the village. Finding the pickings easy, he has decided to stay for the winter and it is just a matter of time before he runs out of livestock and starts taking villagers. In fact, Culran has been captured by RekRuz and will be eaten in 2 days if not rescued.

THE VILLAGE

Dogbed Creek is a hamlet located to the west of Dorndern in the northern reaches of Cosdol. The inhabitants of this small village are free farmers whose crops supply the markets of Dorndern. Although they are of Brandobian Human stock, for the most part they are, as is usual for this region, very

tolerant of outsiders, half-breeds, and the like. They are lucky enough to have a blacksmith but no other services are available locally except for a small inn/tavern called the 'Wolf at the Door' or usually just 'The Wolf'.



The **Wolf at the Door** is a small Inn and watering hole that is run by Myno. It is a very poor inn, consisting of 3 small rooms with straw mats on the floors to sleep on in addition to a few thrown in front of the hearth in the common room. It has a stable (that can be locked) and a low fence surrounding the entire place that provides a little protection from nocturnal predators (i.e. wolves).

Myno has lived in this area his entire life and turned his home into an Inn, slowly expanding over the years. He is a fine cook

☞ The tavern is small, not even a hole in the wall, but what can you expect in a little hamlet like Dogbed Creek. If it weren't for the old road out to Shade there wouldn't be even be this broken down shack. It's better than sleeping on the ground, the locals are friendly, and you can get a hot meal so there's that. As you settle in with a bowl of stew and a full tankard, an old man and woman approach you, cautiously but determined. When he sees that you have noticed him, the old man steps forward and begins to speak quickly, as if he wants to get everything out before you send him away, "That damn fool boy went after whoever, or whatever, has been takin all the sheep these past weeks. Now he an't been seen for two days. I know he's run afoul of somethin' bad. We an't got much in the way of payment but my wife an I would sure be thankful if you could go lookin for the boy."

and locals from some of the nearby thorps come here to eat, drink, and buy bread since Myno has one of the only 'real' ovens in the area.

Myno Olfe: NG Brandobian human commoner; HP 19; Init +5; Spd 5; Rch 2'; Atk +0; Dmg d6p with knife; Def -2; DR 0; ToP 6/5 Notable Skills: Administration 15, Agriculture 35, Cooking/Baking 53, Glean Information 17, language (Brandobian 65); Q/F: Gullible, Close Talker; Equipment: Baking Apron, Chef's knife

The locals will talk with the characters if they don't feel threatened, listening to news from Dorndern and telling stories of the local folklore.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

In addition to the hook described in the Introduction above, there are other options to get the players interested in investigating the caves where the Eöten lives.

1) The players are travelling through a small hamlet, such as Dogbed Creek, and are asked to investigate who, or what, has been steal-

ing sheep and livestock. The village will pay whatever they can in food, lodging, or something similar. If the players are truly mercenary, the villagers can scrape together small valuable items such as family heirloom type jewelry, religious pieces, etc. worth a total of about 150 sp.

2) The players are travelling and an unexpected storm blows up. They need to find shelter quickly and luckily stumble across a relatively warm and dry cave to shelter in that happens to be occupied by RekRuz.

3) The characters are searching for some other cave for an unrelated adventure and enter this cave by mistake. *Note that certain story awards may not be available if this option is used.*

PC PREPARATIONS & PRE-ENCOUNTER NOTES

► The players may investigate the farms that recently have had livestock taken. The large tracks of the Eöten are easily found by anyone with a tracking skill (easy Tracking skill check). Those with average mastery can identify them as Giant or Ogre tracks. Something big anyway... *Should the tracker possess advanced or better mastery, he still*

TABLE 1: Villagers' Knowledge of Events

NUMBER OF SUCCESSES *	INFORMATION CONVEYED
1	"The animals started to disappear about 3 weeks ago. They just disappear without any trace. If you wanna look just go out to the Orni place, they got hit just 2 days ago before their boy ran off."
2	"There are unfamiliar wolf tracks around the barns when the animals disappear but how would they get inside??"
3	"Old man Ster did say he saw something big but it was dark and when he tried to look closer some wolves, big ones too, approached him and he had to lock himself in his house."
4	"Well, the ground is pretty torn up sometimes but with all the rain lately it's hard to tell what it is."
5 (only if they talk to old man Ster)	"I don't know what it is, but it's big, and it sounds like a couple of them by the way they was talkin'. I ain't never heard a language like that but I infer they were tellin' them wolves what to do that's all I know."

*These are easy Glean Information skill checks. Each sequential favorable outcome reveals the next tier's information. Failure necessitates starting from the beginning.

cannot assuredly distinguish the exact species of the footprints (since they are those of a new monster he's never encountered).

▶ If the characters question the villagers, they will need to roll a series of Glean Information skill checks and consult Table 1 to determine the results of their inquiry. Note that given the fact that the PCs are gathering background information vis-à-vis a matter of vital importance to the hamlet's survival, all villagers are considered to be allies thus making this an easy skill check.

▶ If the characters ask about Culran they will get the same story from everyone. He was a headstrong but basically good kid. He always talked about leaving someday but, of course, everyone figured he would just be a farmer like his father. They aren't too surprised that he ran off on this little adventure.

THE EÖTEN'S CAVE

The characters can locate the cave without too much difficulty once they are on the trail of the Eöten. He has not bothered to disguise his tracks and would actually like some of the villagers to come looking for his prisoner.

The cave itself has been the lair of many bandits, humanoids raiders, and marauding monsters over the years. It was originally a holy site of a long forgotten sect of mage-priests of an ancient Dejy tribe that dominated this region in past millennia.

Footing: The ground within the cave can be treacherous and, unless otherwise noted, the terrain should be considered "Noticeably uneven ground" (see GMG p. 24) which imposes a -1 penalty to Attack and Defense and limits movement to running speed.

Area 1: Cave Entrance

The tracks the PCs have been following lead directly to a seemingly unremarkable cave mouth. Due to the gravel strewn about the ground and the heavy rains of late, it is impossible to ascertain what type or number of creatures have entered the cave.

If the characters search carefully they will find, hidden beneath overgrown vegetation, some very old symbols carved into the stone around the edge of the cave entrance.

▶ This necessitates a successful average difficulty Scrutiny check.



These are ancient Dejy symbols, long since forgotten by any Dejy living today. They mark this place as a 'place of power', a holy site used by ancient mages to cast powerful ritual spells.

▶ Deciphering this meaning requires a successful [Very Difficult] Ancient History skill check. Failing this, their significance is imponderable.

Area 2: Stone Face Cavern

☞ There is a large stone in this cavern that has been carved into the likeness of a solemn face with bas-relief emulating face paint patterns and a headband. A small hollow is chiseled into it over the forehead.

▶ An easy Scrutiny skill check reveals that within hollow in the forehead is emplaced a small stone 'pedestal' that looks as if it should be holding an object of some kind but is currently bare. Success at a difficult skill check discloses that the effigy is at least hundreds of years old – if not more ancient.

The hollow in the stone face held the *Crystal of Zoan* (see this issue's *All Things Magic*) when these caves were originally occupied by the ancient Dejy. Placing the Crystal here has no actual effect other than showcasing its unique beauty.

If the characters aren't taking extreme measures to cloak their presence (GM's discretion), the Orkin Wardawgs in Area 4 will hear them and come to investigate any intruders after a minute's delay.

Alternatively, they must succeed at an opposed check against the noisiest character (🎲 🎲 + Sneaking vs. the wardawgs' 🎲 +80 Listening mastery) in order to notice interlopers in the cave. Should they hear a scout, immediately roll initiative for both parties (the scout may end up having a few seconds to take evasive action before the wardawgs react and scamper the 35 feet from their den to the stone face).

If a battle ensues with the wardawgs, RekRuz (Area 7) will come to check out the commotion provided he makes a successful Listening skill check (🎲 🎲 -80 [easy] vs. 05 mastery). Check each 30 seconds of combat. It will take the Eöten 60 seconds to arrive once he hears fighting.

Area 3: Fungi Filled Cave

🌀 Water drips from stalagmites into a large pool in this cavern. The most striking feature, however, is the fungi present all about the place. It grows in various shades of yellow and brown along the edges of the pool and up the sides of the cavern walls. Within the pool large white fish swim lazily.

There are actually several different species of fungi growing in this room. Half are edible while the others have a Pharmacological effect. If a character retrieves a sample, roll on Table II to determine its properties.

- ▶ Specific effects are uniformly considered a VF 14 toxin. This saving throw must be attempted before the special effect is applied – whether beneficial or deadly. Only those failing the save may be affected.
- ▶ A successful average Botany skill check will reveal the particular fungi's qualitative properties (data in column "fungi found") but not its specific effects. Should the character fail this check by 20 or less, he has misidentified the mushroom (roll a d4 to determine what he 'thinks' its properties are.

TABLE II: Fungi Varieties

d10 ROLL	FUNGI FOUND	SPECIFIC EFFECTS
1-5	Edible	This fungi is edible and nutritious. A sufficient quantity can be gathered to serve as three day's standard rations.
6-7	Helpful	Ingesting this mushroom renders a person resistant to fear due to a mild narcotic effect. They're granted a +4 bonus vs. any fear related saving throws or moral checks. Of course, this will also make them more prone to taking unreasonable risks. It is suggested that you maximize the "General Role-Playing" portion of post-adventure honor awards if the character puts him/herself into real danger to role play this effect.
8-9	Harmful	This mushroom causes neurological symptoms including loss of coordination, nausea, and hallucinations 1 hour after ingestion. This results in a decreased movement rate as they stumble along (see HoB p. 13 and penalize PC by one category), -3 on all Attack and Defense rolls, +4 to weapon speed, and +2 to the number of seconds required to perform any other action. Symptoms persist 3d4p hours.
10	Deadly	This fungi yields symptoms identical to 'Harmful' but instead of recovering at the effect's conclusion, the poisoned individual enters cataleptic shock and promptly dies.

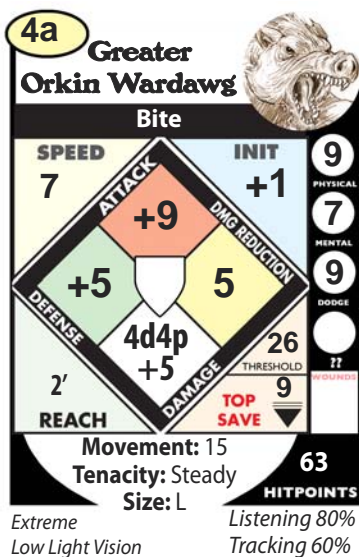
Greater failures simply leave him stumped.

Area 4: Wardawg Den

🌀 This area of the cave is strewn with bones, some with bits of meat still on them, small pieces of fur and other remains of what appears to be several meals taken by a large carnivore.

Any character with an appropriate skill (Animal Herding, Dog Training, Hunting, Tracking, etc.) will have no difficulty identifying

4a Greater Orkin Wardawg



Bite

SPEED 7 **INIT** +1

ATTACK +9 **DMG REDUCTION** 5

DEFENSE +5 **DAMAGE** 4d4p +5

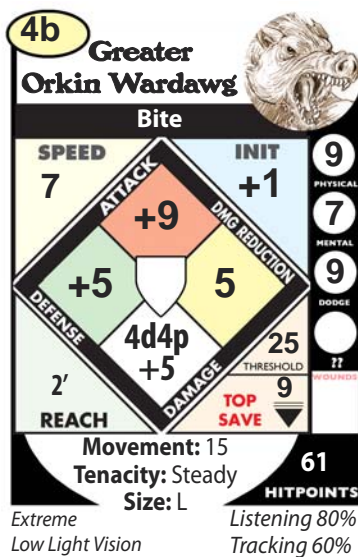
REACH 2'

THRESHOLD 26 **TOP SAVE** 9

Movement: 15 **Tenacity:** Steady **Size:** L **HITPOINTS** 63

Extreme Low Light Vision *Listening 80%* *Tracking 60%*

4b Greater Orkin Wardawg



Bite

SPEED 7 **INIT** +1

ATTACK +9 **DMG REDUCTION** 5

DEFENSE +5 **DAMAGE** 4d4p +5

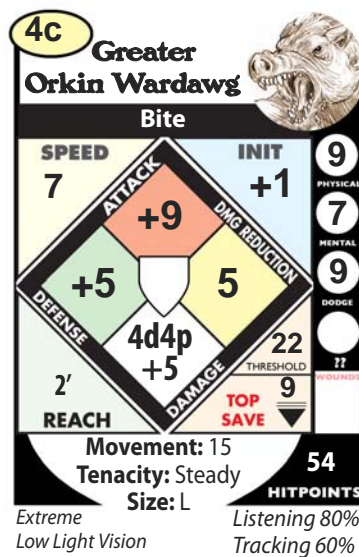
REACH 2'

THRESHOLD 25 **TOP SAVE** 9

Movement: 15 **Tenacity:** Steady **Size:** L **HITPOINTS** 61

Extreme Low Light Vision *Listening 80%* *Tracking 60%*

4c Greater Orkin Wardawg



Bite

SPEED 7 **INIT** +1

ATTACK +9 **DMG REDUCTION** 5

DEFENSE +5 **DAMAGE** 4d4p +5

REACH 2'

THRESHOLD 22 **TOP SAVE** 9

Movement: 15 **Tenacity:** Steady **Size:** L **HITPOINTS** 54

Extreme Low Light Vision *Listening 80%* *Tracking 60%*

this cave as the lair of several immense wild dogs or wolves. An average check with an appropriate skill will be required to glean that they are size L and weigh in the neighborhood of 450 pounds.

During the day there will be 3 Greater Orkin Wardawgs in this area. At night there is only a 50% chance they will be here. If they aren't, they are out hunting but could return at any time (25% chance every 10 minutes).

Area 5: Sheep Pen

A crude pen has been built in this small recess in the cavern passage from what appear to be small trees that have been ripped up from their roots. Inside the pen are 8 large adult sheep.

When the characters approach, they will bleat frantically as if they can sense that the characters are 'friendly' and will return them to their farms. Unfortunately this creates quite a bit of noise which will attract the orkin wardawgs from Area 4 if they are present (and still alive...)

Area 6: Crystal Cave

Passage through this area is impeded by dozens of crystalline stalagmites and stalactites that have grown to several feet in size. Although not luminescent, they do refract and reflect light to create erratic rainbow patterns throughout the area.

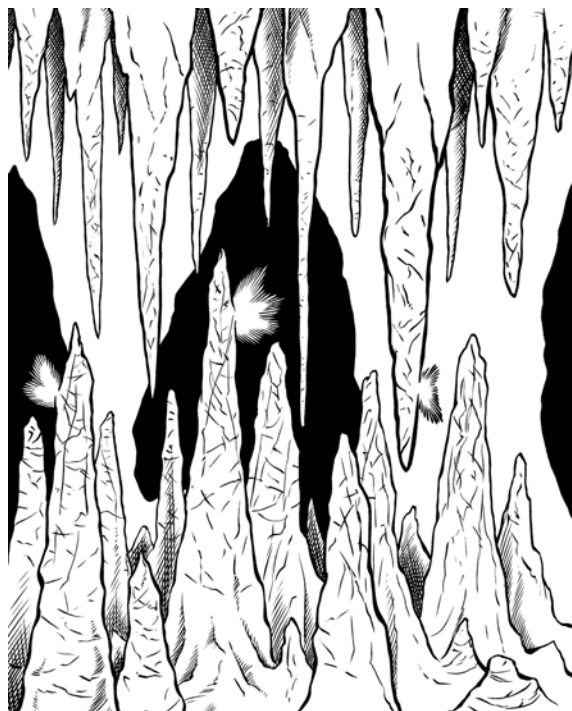
Size M creatures may only pass through this area at crawling speed while size S creatures may progress at walking speed.

The kaleidoscopic lightshow will alert RekRuz that there are intruders and prompt him to investigate. Although these formations are too close for the Eöten to pass through, if he sees the characters he will use his clubs to smash a path for himself. He can advance 10 feet every 7 seconds (with this action substituting for his attack).

Such 'cleared paths' are strewn with debris that makes footing a very serious concern for creatures smaller than huge sized. This crystalline rubble should be considered comparable to "Large broken rocks, fallen logs, abatis" (see GMG p. 24) which imposes a -1 penalty to Attack, -3 to Defense, increases Speed by +1 and limits movement to walking speed. [RekRuz need only adhere to the standard footing penalty for anyone in the cave as specified on p. 37]. Additionally, anytime a combatant is knocked prone (including RekRuz), they must roll a Feat of Agility vs. d20 +6 or fall on a sharp shard of crystalline rock causing 2d4p damage.

The crystal formations are actually Cobolt Arcanite, a mineral often used in magical research and alchemy. Only the purest crystals are of value for this purpose. These will be perfectly clear and a darker blue than the surrounding crystals.

▶ Anyone thinking to use his Arcane Lore with respect to the crystal formation will know of this mineral's unique properties and utility should they succeed at an easy skill check.



Once aware of the potential value of the crystals, characters may attempt to harvest the best ones. For every 15 minutes spent searching, investigators are permitted an average Arcane Lore check with success indicating they have located a crystal worth 50 sp. Only 10 such crystals exist in the formation – further searching will be fruitless after all have been located.

If they crystals haven't been smashed due to combat, the characters will need to make significant noise to get the crystal shards from larger formations.

There is a powerful artifact hidden among the crystals, left here long ago when the ancients abandoned this place for reasons known only to them. The *Crystal of Zoan* is wrapped in coarse wool and locked in an iron box lying in a small niche in the cavern wall. The box itself is easy to find if the area is searched but its key has been lost to the ages and the lock has long rusted shut.

▶ Anyone with the Maintenance/Upkeep proficiency can unfreeze the lock tumbler. This will not open the lock but does permit someone profi-

cient in lockpicking to attempt to do so. Without this maintenance, the lock cannot be opened or picked. The lock isn't very complicated and requires only an average skill check to circumvent.

Area 7: Eöten Lair

🗨️ This large cavern is completely pitch black.

The characters will only be able to see to the edge of whatever light source in use. The floor is littered with empty kegs, broken crates, and other accumulated debris from the many former occupants of this cave.

If the characters are able to enter this cave without RekRuz becoming alert to their presence, they will hear two deep bass voices conversing.

▶ The Eöten's heads are talking in a dialect of Orcish. Should a stealthy character understand this language, he may opt to eavesdrop.

Rek seems to want to eat the little human they have captured but Ruz is trying to talk Rek into saving him for a while longer in the hopes that other villagers will come looking for him (Ruz is the smart one and the dominant personality).

Ruz will finally win the argument by getting Rek to agree that they will wait another day and then eat him. Having agreed to this they will then argue about whether to go hunting later in the night or open another keg of ale and eat a sheep.

7		RekRuz			
		Eöten			
		Club/Claws/Bite			
SPEED	7	ATTACK	+12	INIT	-1
		DEFENSE	+4	DMG REDUCTION	9
		REACH	3 3/4'	DAMAGE	4d4p* (x2)
		TOP SAVE	10	THRESHOLD	31
		Movement:	15	Tenacity:	Brave
		Size:	H	HITPOINTS	77**
				PHYSICAL	14
				MENTAL	8
				DODGE	10
				??	??

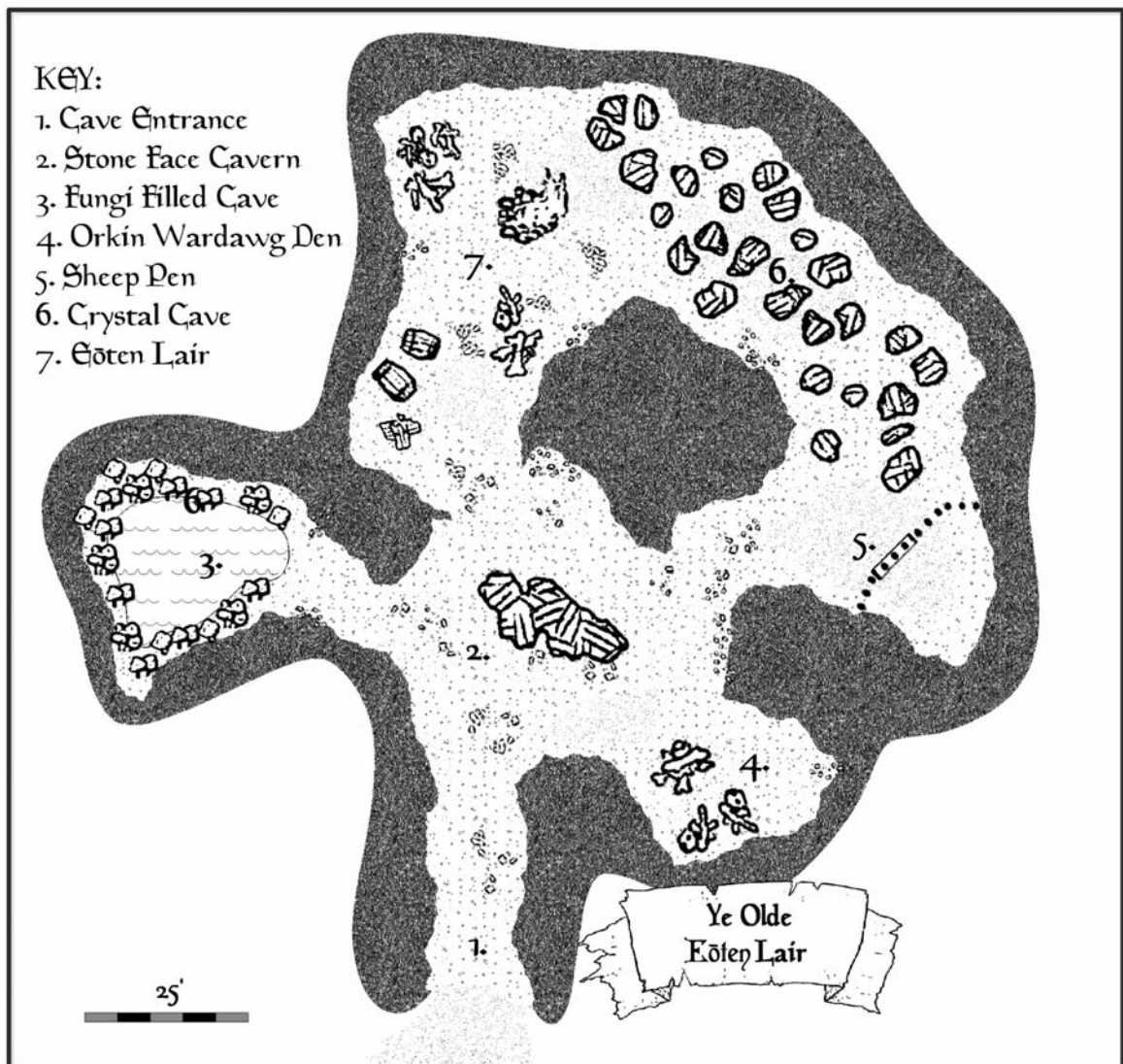
Low Light Vision

* Normally attacks by grabbing adversaries and then biting for 4d4p once they are immobilized and cannot escape. Alternatively, they can wield two clubs striking for 2d10p+6 with each. Both attacks are simultaneous on the creature's count. See creature writeup on p. 46-48

** Can regenerate wounds at a rate of 1 HP every 10 seconds

KEY:

1. Cave Entrance
2. Stone Face Cavern
3. Fungi Filled Cave
4. Orkin Wardawg Den
5. Sheep Pen
6. Crystal Cave
7. Eöten Lair



Cartography by Steve Lawrence with Campaign Cartographer 3

Although RekRuz argues with itself a lot, it is actually quite alert and will react quickly and violently to intruders in its lair. RekRuz is notably fond of fresh meat (having many times in the past become violently ill by eating a spoiled carcass) so any characters that get TOP'd in combat will be spared the coup de grâce so they can be captured and eaten later.

Culran is still alive although just barely. He is bound and tied in a sack near the back of the cave. He is unconscious and will not be able to help his rescuers in any way. If he is revived (requiring an average difficulty First Aid skill check), he will still be weak from his ordeal but will at least be able to walk with the characters to escape (he cannot move faster than a walk or ride a horse without support).

Note that if the characters have taken more than two days to find and rescue Culran, he will be dead. The 48 hour countdown begins from the time they walk into the Wolf at the Door and meet Myno.

The Eöten has only been in the area for a short period of time and thus is still stockpiling supplies. He has amassed a 'hoard' that is scattered around the area in small piles (see Rekruz's Loot above).

AFTERMATH

► The villagers have little to offer the party in material reward but will feed them and provide lodging for as long as the characters want it.

REKRUZ'S LOOT

- 10 feet of heavy iron chain (40 sp)
- A small crate containing about 60 bars of soap (like for bathing...) still sealed. (6 sp)
- 6 old miner's lanterns and 17 flasks of lamp oil. (60 sp)
- A brass signal mirror (1 sp)
- 4 somewhat rusted crowbars (2 sp)
- Various shovels, picks, and other broken miners tools. (30 sp)
- 3 wooden wheelbarrows (rotten beyond use)
- 2 sacks of coarse sugar (10 sp)
- 3 barrels of salted fish (5 sp)
- 1 keg of dwarven mead (300 sp)
- A bag of blood sausages (about 12 lbs. worth) (1 sp)
- A religious amulet of what appears to be some sort of obscure spider cult (5 sp to a collector)
- About a dozen empty broken barrels, kegs, and crates that once held provisions (no value)
- A blank journal with the symbol of The Traveler on the cover and a silver clasp (50 sp)
- A merchant's scale (2 sp)
- An old flute (7 sp)
- A small metal canister containing pure nutmeg (85 sp)
- 3 small kegs of rum (100 sp)
- 7 kegs of beer (10 sp)

▶ Unless the characters demand a payment to rescue young Culran, or overdo it taking advantage of the free room and board, the villages will speak highly of them to all travelers that come to Dogbed Creek. Stories of their good deed will spread to surrounding villages. The GM should grant the characters a campaign appropriate Fame bonus and the characters will be treated well by all commoners in the area for a period of 1 year, unless they continue to perform heroic deeds to maintain their fame.

▶ Scholars at the Library in Dorndern would be very interested in studying the cave if they are told of it. While there would be no specific reward it would be a useful bargaining chip for any mage or scholar trying to gain access to the 'private stacks' at the library.

▶ Culran Orni still wants to get out of Dogbed Creek. He will offer to be a squire, scroll caddy, crossbow loader, torch bearer, etc. for any character that is willing to take him along. His parents will grudgingly grant their blessing since they [perhaps foolishly] trust the characters to keep him safe.

STORY EXPERIENCE POINT AWARDS

Rescuing Culran alive

- 700 ep

Identifying the historic/magical significance of the caverns

- 250 ep

Returning the sheep to the farmers in Dogbed Creek

- 300 ep

Defeating RekrRuz without destroying the Crystal Cavern

- 300 ep

Defeating RekrRuz

- 300 ep

Kingdoms of
Kalamar
Fantasy Campaign Setting

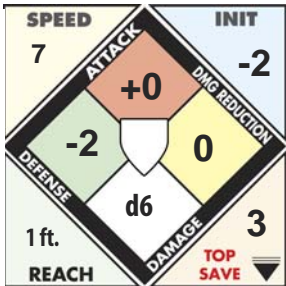
*Denizens
of Tellene*



Myno Olfe

Race: Human
Occupation: innkeeper
Size: M
Movement: 5 ft
Alignment: NG
Reared: Dogbed Creek
Hit Points: 19

STR 11/08 INT 12/65 WIS 11/03
 DEX 10/57 CON 7/48 LKS 9/01
 CHA: 11/01



Possessions: Baking Apron, Chef's knife

Proficiencies: knife

Talents: none

Quirks and Flaws: Gullible, Close Talker

Skills

Administration	15
Agriculture	35
Cooking/Baking	53
Glean Information	17
Language (Brnd)	65

Myno Olfe, usually just called Myno since few know his surname, is a simple man who enjoys simple pleasures. Born in the northern reaches of Cosdol in the small hamlet of Dogbed Creek Myno always dreamed of traveling to far lands to find adventure and riches. His family was poor and his prospects limited but they had a small farm that supported him his brothers and his parents. On the day he came of age he was ready to leave and find his way in the world when tragedy struck. His father, who had always been the 'rock' of the family, suddenly died. Obviously he delayed his journey to bury his father and make sure his mother and siblings were settled, still intending on taking his journey. It soon became clear, however, that his family could not get along without him and he stayed, taking over the family farm and filling the hole left by his deceased father.

Myno had not given up his hopes of leaving Dogbed Creek however. He waited until his younger brother was old enough to take over the family farm so that he could leave. His younger brother began to demonstrate a gift for the arcane arts and mage craft and one day a traveling wizard offered to take him as an apprentice. Myno desperately wanted to leave but he loved his brother and saw that this was a great opportunity. So he stayed and his brother left.

Thus it went each time he planned on leaving Dogbed Creek. Just as he would preparing for his departure, some unexpected calamity or opportunity would arise that would make him delay his departure. Over the years Myno became a leader in the village, he was a talented man after all, and he now runs a small tavern and Inn called 'The Wolf at the Gate'. He has never truly given up his wander lust and will often spend many hours talking with travelers, especially adventurers, who are staying at his Inn and will pass along stories that he has heard as he listens to add to his own repertoire.

Although Myno is only an Inn Keeper and village elder he has contacts that most in his position would not have. His brother is a mage of some power in Cosdol who often travels to Dorndern to visit the library. He also knows, and is known by, many groups of adventurers in the north as well as the black rangers that often stay at his Inn as they travel to the west on long patrols into the wilds. He is a good friend to travelers but those that threaten him or cause trouble would quickly find that he has many friends who will come to his aid.

By Steve Lawrence

Kingdoms of
Kalamar
Fantasy Campaign Setting

Denizens of Tellene

In Dogbed Creek everybody knows Culran Orni. Well, in Dogbed Creek everybody knows everybody, but they really know Culran. A big boy, much brighter than most people think due to his stutter, Culran is always doing exactly what he shouldn't be. He desperately wants to be a hero, probably a result of listening to Myno's stories at the local Tavern, so his is constantly looking for some threat from which to save the village. Most of the time the result is that he is wandering off into the countryside after goblins or bandits that he never finds. However, there was the time he found a wild boar that chased him back to town. And there was the time he said he killed a goblin and chased away several more that were stealing chickens from old man Ster's barn. They never found the dead goblin but he had a hell of a gash on his arm that he claimed was from a goblin spear.

Culran is actually a very intelligent and likable young man. He is overconfident to the point of foolishness however and is desperately looking for an excuse to go off adventuring. He really did fight some goblins but instead of chasing them off he fled after badly wounding one of them and taking a wound himself. He spends all of his time, that he isn't off searching for a battle to fight, practicing with his dagger, hunting bow, and a wooden sword that he carved from an old piece of hickory.

Of course this means he is always leaving work undone on his parent's farm so they spend a lot of their time looking for him, hoping that he hasn't gotten himself hurt, or worse. Everybody in Dogbed Creek assume that as soon as Culran comes of age he will be leaving, if he survives that long.

They would never say so to his face, those who made that mistake usually wound up with a broken nose, but most of the villagers think Culran is rather simple and they will make jokes to each other about his stutter and his crazy behavior. His only real friend in the village is Myno, the village elder and owner of the local Tavern and Inn. He also had wanderlust in his youth but was never able to leave. Now he tells tales of travel and adventure to Culran who will listen for hours.

Culran feels that he is old enough to leave and has been talking to travelers more frequently in the hope that an opportunity will present itself. He will use any excuse to leave Dogbed Creek and he keeps a bag packed with his few meager possessions in anticipation of that day.

By Steve Lawrence



Culran Orni

<p>Race: Human Occupation: farmer Size: M Movement: 5 ft Alignment: NG Reared: Dogbed Creek Hit Points: 25</p> <p>STR 14/73 INT 13/23 WIS 8/37 DEX 11/04 CON 13/53 LKS 12/02 CHA: 7/05</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;">7</td> <td style="text-align: center;">+1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">+3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">-3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2d4p+2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> <td style="text-align: center;">TOP SAVE</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">DEFENSE</td> <td style="text-align: center;">DAMAGE</td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1 ft</td> <td style="text-align: center;">REACH</td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> </table>	SPEED	ATTACK	INIT	DMG REDUCTION	7	+1	+3	0	-3	2d4p+2	6	TOP SAVE	DEFENSE	DAMAGE			1 ft	REACH		
SPEED	ATTACK	INIT	DMG REDUCTION																		
7	+1	+3	0																		
-3	2d4p+2	6	TOP SAVE																		
DEFENSE	DAMAGE																				
1 ft	REACH																				
<p>Possessions: dagger, hunting bow (as short-bow but arrows do 1d6p), wooden sword</p>	<p>Skills</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>Agriculture</td><td style="text-align: right;">11</td></tr> <tr><td>Animal Husbandry</td><td style="text-align: right;">12</td></tr> <tr><td>Hunting</td><td style="text-align: right;">19</td></tr> <tr><td>Language (Brnd)</td><td style="text-align: right;">61</td></tr> </table>	Agriculture	11	Animal Husbandry	12	Hunting	19	Language (Brnd)	61												
Agriculture		11																			
Animal Husbandry		12																			
Hunting	19																				
Language (Brnd)	61																				
<p>Proficiencies: dagger, hunting bow</p>																					
<p>Talents: none</p>																					
<p>Quirks and Flaws: Overconfident, Stutterer</p>																					

Eōten

In the summer of my 49th year, I booked passage aboard a Brandobian spice trader bound for Cosolen. I had just completed a second tour of the Svimozhish savannas and was ready to return to cooler climes to rest and focus on turning my jumbled collection of notes into the newest volume of my bestiary, *The Hacklopedia of Beasts*. The captain of our ship, a rather stingy Brandobian by the name of Glandal Stron, had purchased insufficient supplies during our departure from Svimozhia. He insisted that with prices being what they were in that wealthy land, resupplying the ship would be prohibitively expensive. So, in an attempt at frugality, Glandal bought only minimal supplies, insisting that it would be but a small task to resupply our stock of food and fresh water at any of the uninhabited islands which dot Brandobia's broken coastline.

The was, of course, grumbling from the crew, but apparently, this was not the first time Glandal had attempted such a maneuver and we all went about our business without complaint. The time came to resupply came sooner than expected, much of the bread our captain had purchased at a discount had gone to mold and we were soon to be in dire need of food. The captain announced that we would weigh anchor at the first island we saw. The very next day, our lookout spied an island on the horizon. After consulting the sea charts, our captain deemed it to be one of a cluster of small islands known as the Maragas'. The ship was anchored off the coast and I accompanied the foraging party ashore, hoping to perhaps gain some insight into the island's ecology.

The island was almost totally barren. Weeds grew from cracks in the rocky soil and lichen seemed to be the dominant life in the rocky landscape. Here and there I saw plants pulled up, their roots missing. Perhaps the island had some species of wild pig? Before we could become discouraged, however, distant squawking betrayed the presence of a seabird colony. I told my crewmates that such colonies often numbered in the hundreds, if not thousands of birds and would be rich in eggs and hatchlings. The crew seemed pleased at this news, but our captain scowled at my upstart suggestion. We made for a cliff side in the distance where the colony was most likely to be located. The island was rough, hilly country, but with no vegetation to slow us down, we made quick time. As we drew nearer to the cliff, we crested a tall hillock, covered in loose scree and beheld an unexpected sight at its base.

Below us, we saw a small, muddy spring and a crude, but very large lean-to haphazardly cobbled together from tree-sized pieces of driftwood leaning against a boulder. I cautioned that, from my experience, we were best off giving this site a wide berth and circling around to the cliffs, but our captain, in a bid to re-establish his reputation, insisted the lean-to could have valuable supplies and so we went down to search for food. No sooner had we reach the bottom of the hill, a large figure appeared from behind the boulder. It was at least twice as tall as our largest man, and two heads sat on its shoulders, momentarily slack-jawed and staring. The creature was lean, almost emaciated and it was totally nude, with a 6-foot shark slung over its shoulder in one hand and a sharpened driftwood spear in the other. There was only a breath of silence before the two heads let out an ear-splitting bellow and the beast hurtled towards us, dropping the shark onto the dusty ground.

We wasted no time and beat feet as quickly as we could back up the hillside. The large creature stumbled as the scree shifted under his feet and we were able to add precious seconds to our lead. We reached the dinghy and rowed furiously back towards the ship. The creature waded into the water after us, quickly gaining on our little boat. The creature reached a muscled arm into the boat and constricted tightly around Glandran's neck, yanking him towards the surf. We all held tightly to our captain's feet and pulled with all our might, freeing him from the creature's grasp. The deepening water proved too much for the beast and it relented, wading back to shore and we climbed back into the ship. In the days afterward, I spent many days wondering why such a powerful creature lived in isolation on that desolate island, with next to nothing available to furnish it with sustenance. What was it hiding from?



Signs/Tracks



Range on Tellene



Size Comparison



RUSTLERS of the NIGHT



Official Creatures for your HackMaster Campaign

Eōten are huge bipedal creatures vaguely reminiscent of a lean ogre in general build albeit exhibiting dicephaly (two headedness). While such polycephaly might lead the casual observer to immediately categorize the creature as simply one of the rumored varieties of lesser ettin, the monstrous being exhibits sufficient morphological and behavioral differences to warrant a closer examination.

Unlike the porcine, orc-like features of an ettin, eōten have a narrow, elongated proboscis often reaching a foot in length. Their light brown or brownish skin has greenish or yellowish undertones and is frequently covered with warts on the face, neck, hands, wrists and knees. Also notable is that their feet and hands feature five digits.

It is not unreasonable to suggest that the eōten is a progenitor species from which both ettins and trolls developed – each further specializing on the basic form.

Combat/Tactics:

It bear noting at the onset of this section that Eōten, with a fully cognizant head controlling each side of the body, have two independent actions available when their count comes up. Unlike other creatures with multiple actions that are staggered into shorter intervals, these brutes will always strive to act in tandem.

Though capable of wielding oversized clubs much as an ogre (to wit, inflicting 2d10p+6 damage when striking an opponent with these logs), their preference is to immobilize prey

Eōten

HIT POINTS:	35+6d8
SIZE/WEIGHT:	H/ 800 lbs
TENACITY:	Brave
INTELLIGENCE:	Obtuse
FAIGUE FACTOR:	-6

MOVEMENT

CRAWL:	5
WALK:	10
JOG:	15
RUN:	20
SPRINT:	25

SAVES

PHYSICAL:	+14
MENTAL:	+8
DODGE:	+10

SPEED 7	ATTACK +12	INIT -1
DEFENSE +4	see below	DMG REDUCTION 7(9)
REACH 3'		DAMAGE 10
		TOP SAVE ▼

Attack: Eōten normally attack by grabbing adversaries and then biting for 4d4p once they are immobilized and cannot escape. Alternatively, they can wield two clubs striking for 2d10p+6 with each. Both attacks are simultaneous on the creature's count.

Defenses: Regeneration, excellent all-around vision

GENERAL INFO

ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Nocturnal
NO. APPEARING:	1
% CHANCE IN LAIR:	50%
FREQUENCY:	Scarce
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Evil
VISION TYPE:	Low light vision
AWARENESS/SENSES:	360° vision, -1 Init die
HABITAT:	Caves
DIET:	carnivorous
ORGANIZATION:	Singular
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any

YIELD

MEDICINAL:	none
SPELL COMPONENTS:	none
HIDE/TROPHY:	no
TREASURE:	yes
EDIBLE:	no
OTHER:	nil
EXPERIENCE POINT VALUE:	850

with their formidable grip and, once secured, eat them alive! This is likely a behavioral adaptation to prevent their most common prey, quadrupedal mammals, from bolting after sustaining a non-incapacitating initial wound when ambushed.

Functionally, an eōten will initiate combat by making a claw attack against its nearest adversary. If successful, it has firmly grabbed hold of the subject preventing use of the *Give Ground*, *Scamper Back*, *Fighting Withdrawal* and *Flee* special combat moves. Additionally, the restriction on movement subsequently permits only the use of a d12p Defense Die.

Some incidental damage may be inflicted by its talon-like nails (2d4p hp) but the purpose of this strike is to fix its adversary rather than wound him. Once an opponent is held, the eoten will then use its leverage to advantageously bite at the victim – inflicting a 4d4p hp wound should it score a hit.

The creature's two heads permit it to independently focus on two separate opponents utilizing the tactics described above. Additionally, the encompassing 360° field of view negates the use of backstab, rearward strike or any flanking advantage and allows the eōten to use 1 smaller die type for initiative.

If challenged by a solitary foe, an eōten will attempt to grasp its adversary with both hands and completely immobilize it before biting. This requires a second successful claw attack but once this is achieved, the subject cannot attack back and is limited to an unmodified d8p defense die. The eōten cannot attack simultaneously with both heads against a single opponent so will take turns with each head biting alternatively every seven seconds.

Grabbed opponents may, of course, direct their actions at freeing themselves from the eōten's grasp rather than attacking the creature. Those held by a single arm must succeed at a Feat of Strength (vs. d20p+7) while full capture requires a check vs. d20p+14. Attempts may be made every five seconds. Should the eōten be knocked back as the result of a tremendous blow, it involuntarily releases any held prey.

Eōten are clever enough to adapt their tactics to best suit their opponents. Adversaries deemed inedible will simply be battered with twin clubs. Alternatively, a frisky adversary, or one proving difficult to repeatedly smash, may be grabbed by one arm and whilst restrained and battered with the other.

Since they are not native to colder climates, these creatures often wear thick furs, hides or other gear to protect themselves from inclement weather. This provides additional DR boosting their natural value of 7 to 9.

These creatures are remarkably resilient often surviving grievous wounds. They regenerate 1 hp every 10 seconds though they cannot regrow appendages. However, were a shorn limb recovered and held in place with a dressing, it would quickly heal. An eōten's regenerative power – impressive as it may be – does not trump death. If coup-de-graced or reduced to -10 hp, it will die.

Habitat/Society/Ecology:

The eōten are quite rare and limited to niches unexploited by their better-adapted progeny species. This often relegates them to remote locations with undesirable climate and poor hunting prospects.

They are loners, preferring the exclusive company of their brother (or sister)-head to that of others. Most relationships with sapient beings end poorly as one head becomes jealous of the seemingly undue attention paid to his 'sibling'.

Despite their ineptitude at interpersonal relationships, they frequently are competent animal handlers. Depending on their current biome, they are capable of taming a variety of local fauna and transforming them into animal companions and hunting assistants. These pet animals incidentally fill the social void a lonely eōten may grapple with.

Eōten are extremely long lived, often reaching half a millennia in age before succumbing to old age. Were this not the case, the species surely would have died off long ago as the eōten are not noted for their fecundity...

On Tellene:

The Eōten have dwindled in number and are usually encountered in the most remote regions of human habitation such as the Cosdol frontier and the windward isles off the northern Brandobian coast. They allegedly inhabit the frigid Dshada and Jorakk Mountains, though confirmation is impossible.

It is theorized that these creatures are native to either Svimohzia or Tarisato – admittedly based on little more than their coloration – but were driven from their homelands many centuries ago.

The Crystal of Zoan



For reasons now lost to history, the Deji civilizations of antiquity fell and their people were scattered into primitive tribes of hunter gatherers. Many scholars believe that they had achieved levels of proficiency in sorcery beyond what modern mages are capable. Of course they are generally laughed at by the 'Wise Men' of the age but one only need look at artifacts like The Crystal of Zoan to understand why such theories abound.

The Crystal was used by mage priests of an ancient Deji city state in the region north of what is now Cosdol to perform ritual casting ceremonies. It appears as a fist sized, egg shaped, crystalline gemstone of striking blue color. There seem to be 'clouds' within the stone, obviously impurities that merely take a familiar, although beautiful, form. Obviously it is impossible to know its full history but it is obvious just by gazing into its cloudy depths that it is more than just a beautiful crystal.

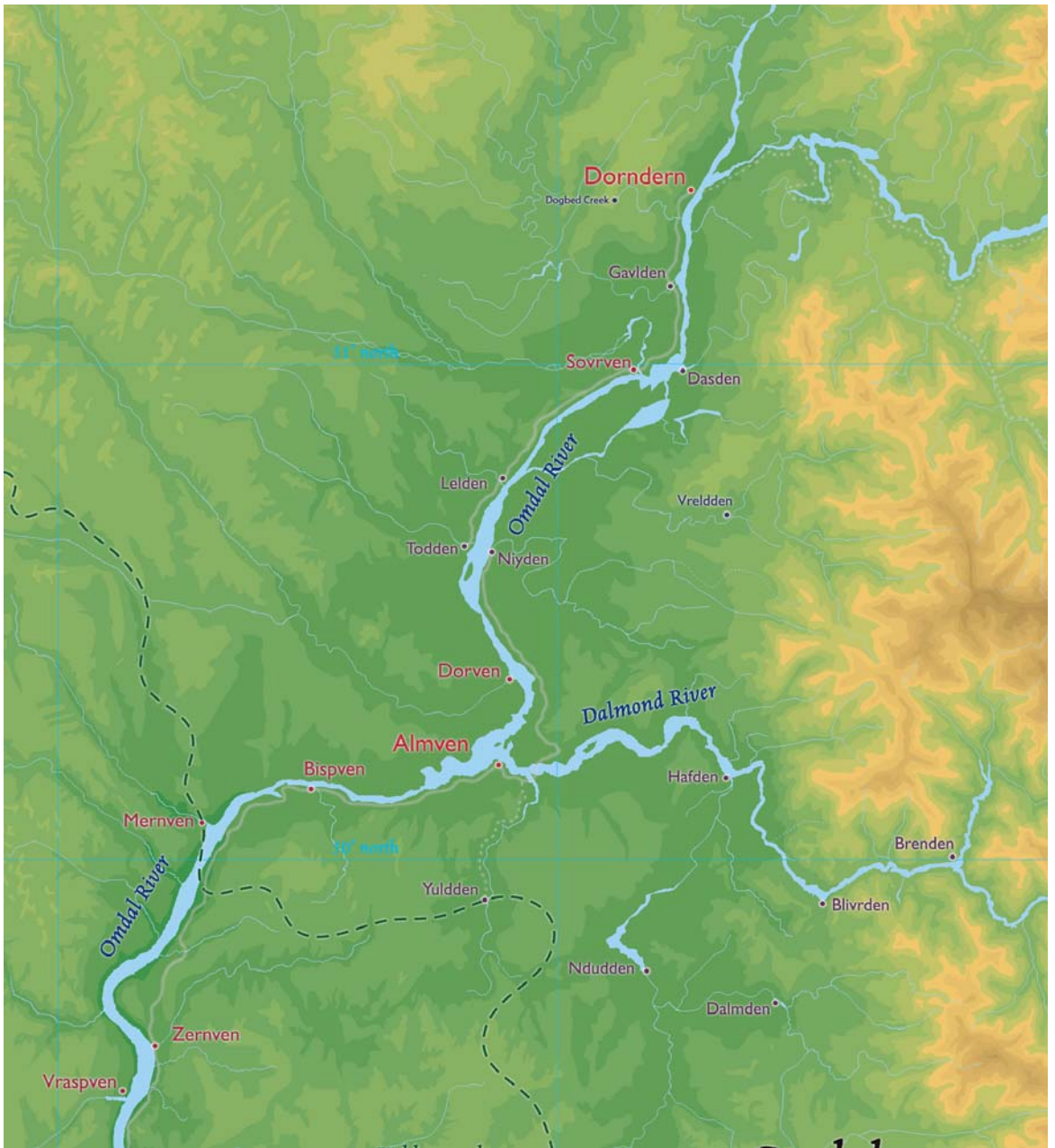
The power of the Crystal is such that its wielder can hold it while casting a spell and other mages can 'contribute' spell points by casting their own spells into the crystal at the same time. These spell points can be used to amplify the spell that the wielder is casting. It will not store any excess spell points. Also, it will allow an increase in the maximum spell point expenditure by 100% for each



mage casting spells into the Crystal of Zoan in addition to the wielder. This is limited only by the level of the Mage wielding the stone. If the number of additional mages exceeds the level of the Wielder, he or she will be unable to control the massive arcane forces which will be released in a burst of energy that causes 8d8p damage to all creatures in a 30 ft radius of the Crystal of Zoan. The wielder will always take full damage but others in the burst radius can attempt a save vs. d20 + 20. Casting spells of such power are very taxing and all mages contributing spell points to the casting, including the wielder, will suffer a full 30 seconds of Spell Fatigue. The Crystal itself will not be damaged by this release of energy but it may (25% chance) be randomly teleported 1d10 X 100 miles away in a random direction.

This is an extremely powerful artifact that doesn't have a user manual. It should be difficult and dangerous for the characters to figure out how to use it. There are no written records of it and it requires a very difficult Arcane Lore check performed by someone with Master skill mastery to even determine that it can be used for group casting. Anything further will need to be learned by trial and error.

Steve Lawrence ☐



Dogbed Creek does not appear on the Kalamar Atlas. It is included in the map above (just south of Dondern) to provide some geographic context for the adventure.