

for **STORMBRINGER**

# BLACK SWORD



by **Ken Rolston**

**Pursuit  
of the  
White Wolf**

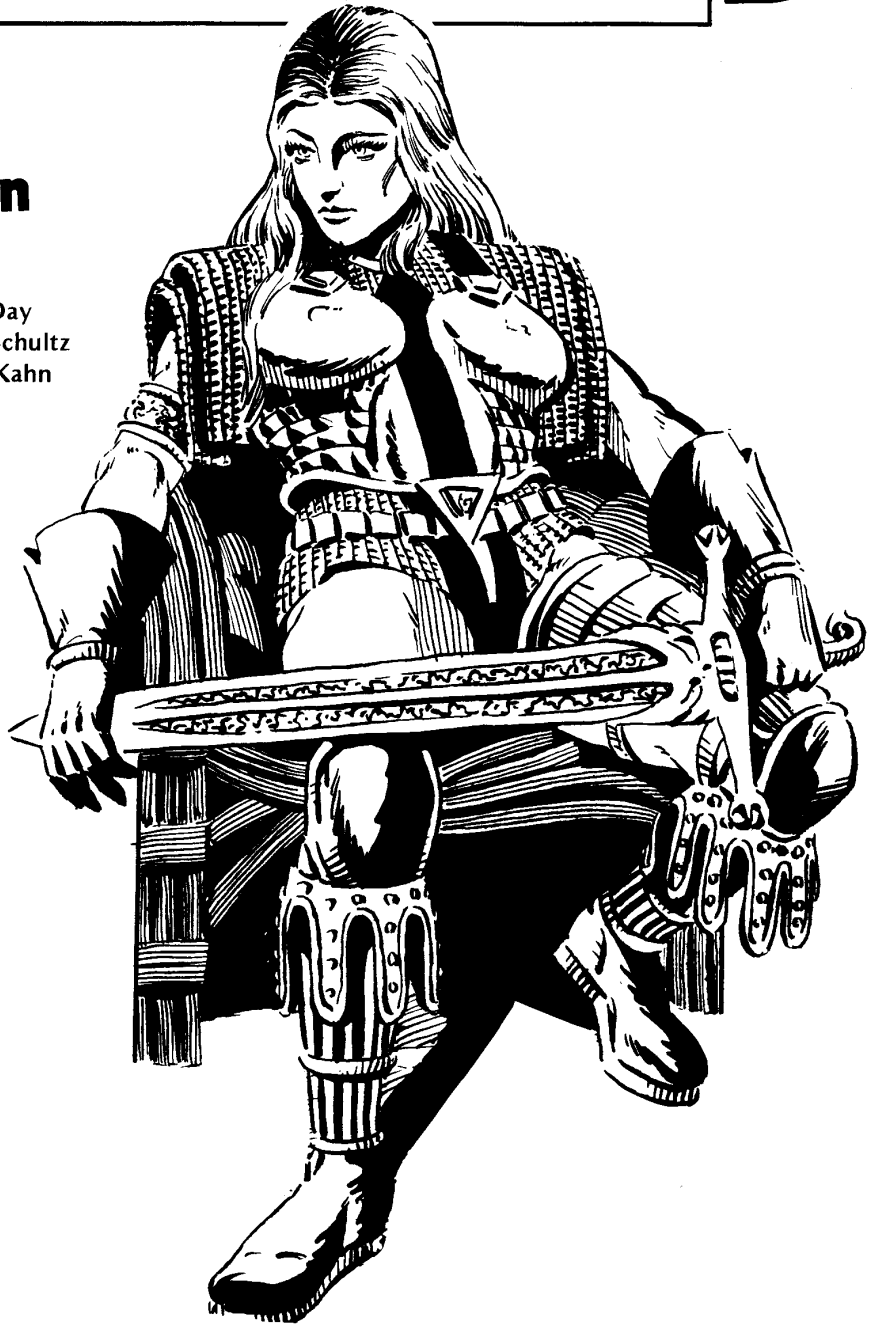


for **STORMBRINGER**<sup>®</sup>

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by **Ken Rolston**

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# Introduction

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*The Black Sword* is a book of adventures drawn from Michael Moorcock's tales in the book called *The Bane of the Black Sword*. It is also a companion volume to the Chaosium book called *Stealer of Souls*. The two Chaosium scenario books can be used together or separately and do not have to be played in any particular order, though it is suggested that *Stealer of Souls* be played first.

At the the start of Moorcock's *The Bane of the Black Sword*, Elric takes a commission from four merchants of the city of Bakshaan to slay a rival merchant called Nikorn. At first Elric had every intention of cheating the four cowards, but then he learned that Nikorn had hired Elric's arch-enemy, the Pan-Tangian sorcerer Theleb K'aarna. Elric only killed Nikorn because Nikorn refused to back off from a fight after Elric had stormed the merchant's stronghold.

In the Chaosium book *Stealer of Souls*, Nikorn's daughter, a serious young woman of nineteen, vows vengeance against her father's killers. Freyda gathers a group of friends and adventurers (the player-characters) and sets out to exact her vengeance. In *Stealer of Souls*, Freyda and her companions come to terms with the four merchants who contracted with Elric to slay Nikorn, and who are now plotting to steal Nikorn's money from Freyda as well. In this book, Freyda goes in search of Elric himself to avenge her father's death.

After storming the keep of Nikorn Elric left Bakshaan and headed to Nadsokor, the City of Beggars. The second tale in Moorcock's *The Bane of the Black Sword*, "Kings in Darkness," opens with Elric and Moonglum fleeing an army of beggars from Nadsokor. Neither the circumstances of Elric's arrival in Nadsokor nor the reasons for his flight are suggested in this story. Elric and Moonglum continue through the kingdom of Org in the forest of Troos, where they rescue Zarozinia, Elric's love and wife-to-be, from the savage half-men of the forest. Thereafter a too-clever plan designed to trick the Orgens into accepting Elric and his companions as gods fails to fool the king of the decayed and malignant court of Org, and Elric and his companions are imprisoned. In his escape from captivity, Elric indirectly lets loose a long-dead monarch, precipitating the destruction of the Great Hall of Org in fulfillment of an ancient prophesy.

In the next story, "The Flamebringers," Elric forswears the use of Stormbringer for the love of his gentle wife, Zarozinia, and settles in the town of Karlaak. Inevitably he is forced to take up Stormbringer again in defense of Karlaak from a barbarian horde led by Terrarn Gashtek, the Flamebringer.

In *Black Sword*, the player-characters follow just behind Elric as he makes the trek from Nadsokor to Karlaak. They witness the destruction which always appears behind Elric, and they finally catch up with the White Wolf in Karlaak, soon after he has renounced Stormbringer. Freyda and the player-characters then must confront Elric to exact vengeance for the death of Nikorn.

If the player-characters have been through *Stealer of Souls*, start the adventure from the bandit camp with the short trek from there to Nadsokor. If *Black Sword* is being played first, start the adventure in Bakshaan and assume that nothing untoward happens until the player-characters reach the shores of the Varkaalk river and begin the Nadsokor section of this book.

## Campaign Overview

Nikorn's daughter, Freyda, was sent away to stay with Nikorn's brother, Remen, when Nikorn heard that Elric had agreed to help the merchants of Bakshaan in their scheme to eliminate Nikorn as a competitor. Nikorn tried to set Freyda's mind at ease with assurances that the powerful sorcerer Theleb K'aarna, the loyal and fierce barbarian guards, and the mighty stronghold would be more than equal to the task of protecting her father from any mortal. Freyda saw no doubt in her father's hearty reassurances, so she agreed to a short visit to her uncle's estate until the threat had been erased.

Freyda receives the news and circumstances of her father's death impassively; her relatives stand helplessly as she swears vengeance on the men responsible for her father's death. She gathers around her a group of loyal, and/or well-paid companions and embarks on her mission of revenge. She exacts vengeance on each of the four merchants who had conspired against her father (see *Stealer of Souls*

for details), then seeks Elric, hearing that he has headed east.

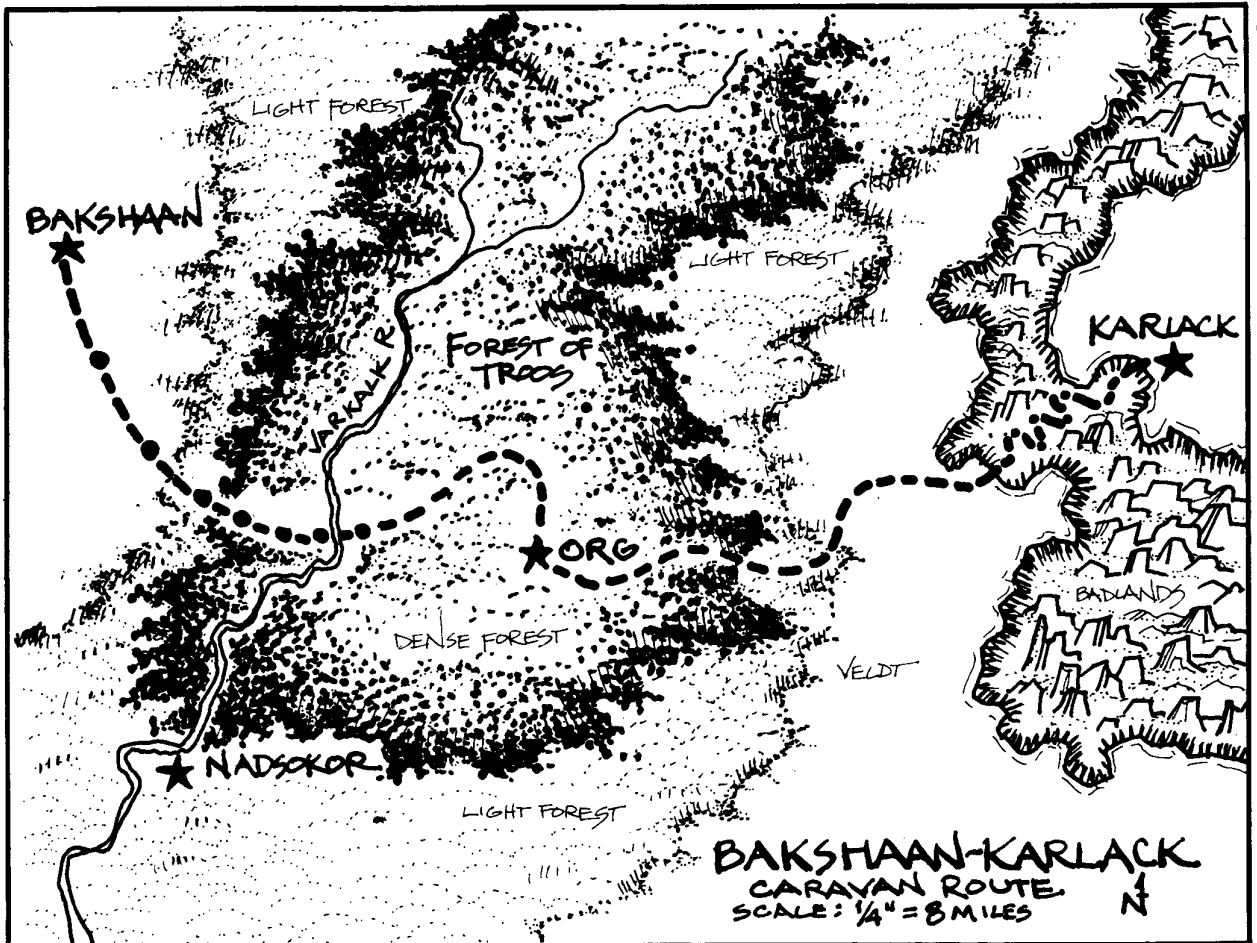
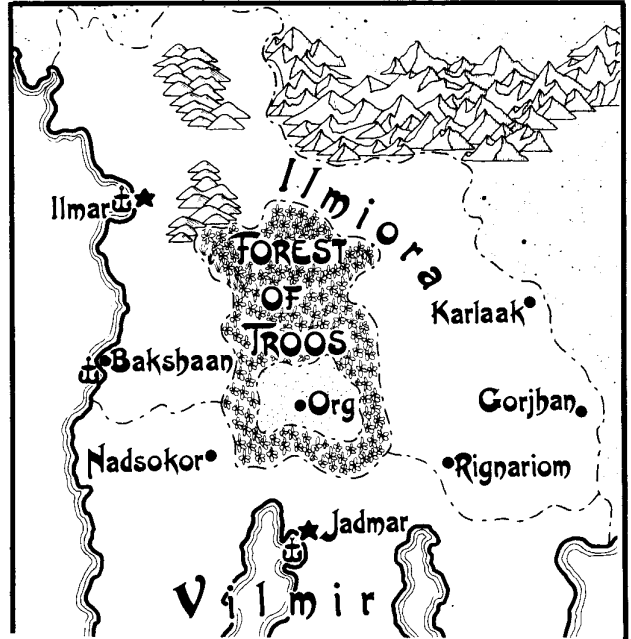
Freyda and her companions follow Elric to the City of Beggars, Nadsokor, from there she tracks him along the Varkaalk River into the forest of Troos. Through the unnatural and mysterious forest she follows the rumor of Elric's passage to the fall of the citadel of Org; she arrives at the city to discover the turmoil of a civilization in collapse, with famine and pestilence ravaging the hapless peasants and a struggle raging among the wealthy and powerful to grasp the reins of power.

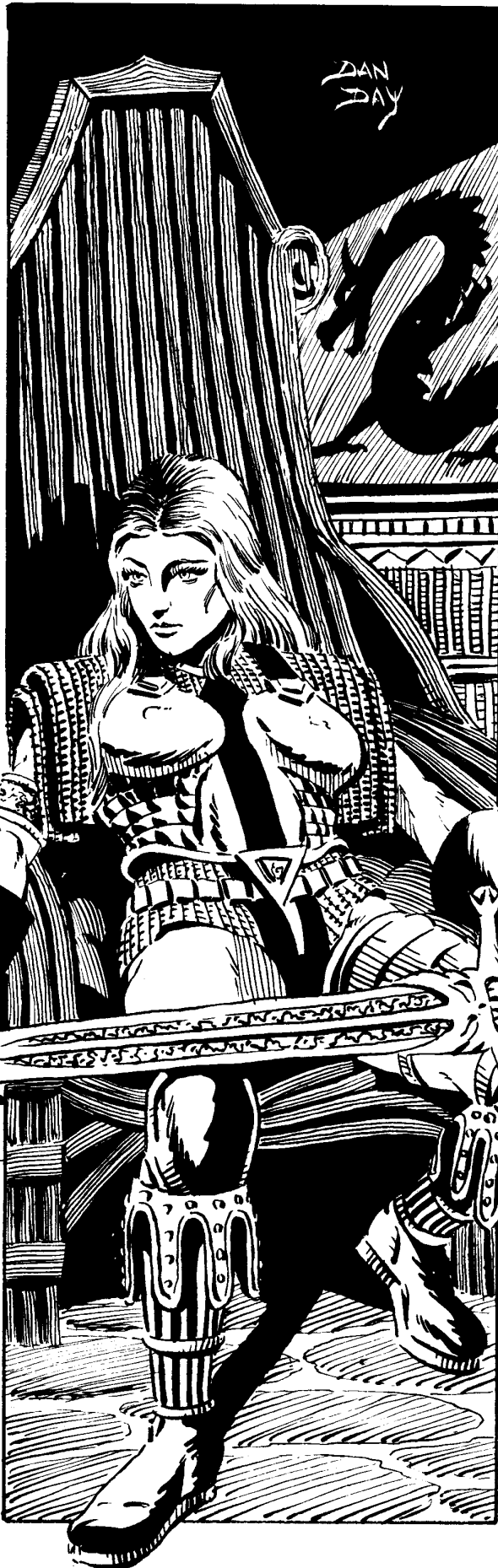
After escaping from this landscape of doom, Freyda picks up Elric's trail again as it leads toward Karlaak. She follows the albino through wild forests that abruptly change into broad grasslands. There she confronts the bold nomad horsemen of the plains. In the badlands on the eastern edge of the plains, Freyda is abducted by intelligent beasts and brought before an impossibly ancient survivor of the Dharzi Bright Empire. Though she never manages to comprehend the motives of the aged sorcerer, Freyda manages to escape and resume her journey.

Finally Freyda reaches Karlaak, where she seeks Elric, only to find him temporarily absent. She finds Moonglum and Zorozinia, who try to dissuade her from her bloody reprisal, explaining that Elric has sworn to abandon Stormbringer and his ways of violence, but Freyda will not be moved from her sworn purpose. She waits for Elric to return, and she confronts him at last as her oath binds her

to. The rest is history or legend, depending on who tells the tale. 5

This adventure emphasizes character development and roleplaying, but includes plenty of action in struggles with both mundane and mysterious antagonists.





Let one of the players portray Freyda, or play her as a non-player-character. If one of the players is playing Freyda, photocopy this page and give it to him or her.

## Freyda Nikorn

Freyda is the daughter of Haver Nikorn, a merchant who was slain by Elric. She has sworn to avenge her father's death if she has to follow Elric to the ends of the earth to do it. She is a staunch believer in the principle of justice, and she believes that she will triumph in the end, despite the odds, because she seeks justice. This conviction is what keeps Freyda from thinking that her expedition is doomed to failure and disaster. She is a fierce and intense young woman, but much of that is the result of the burden she has so suddenly assumed in her youth. She is at heart a generous and trusting soul, though she has renounced her tender aspect until she has taken her revenge. She bears a demon blade that is a family heirloom, and she is constantly on the lookout to acquire anything that will improve her chance to defeat her father's killers.

Freyda is a fiery readhead of not-overwhelming but noticeable physical beauty; the source of her charisma is her intensity. She prefers dark, traditionally-cut clothing. Freyda is proud of her skill with weapons; women with warrior training are rare in Ilmiora. She is in excellent physical condition, and a passable dancer, but she lacks the bulk to carry large weapons or to lift great weights. She qualified for sorcerous training at the academy but she chose not to take the courses. Her father was a practicing member of the Kakatal cult, and Freyda was brought up in that church, but she chose Donblas when she reached maturity. Her worship of Donblas had been mostly formal until the death of her father; now she is fanatically dedicated to the laws of Donblas.

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### FREYDA NIKORN

STR 10 CON 16 SIZ 9 INT 16 POW 17  
DEX 12 CHA 18 HP 16 Armor: half plate

weapon	attack	parry	damage
Demon Sword	57%	45%	1D8+1+4D6

AGILITY SKILLS (+5 bonus): Climb 15%, Dodge 59%, Jump 15%, Ride 33%, Swim 34%, Tumble 9%.

MANIPULATION SKILLS (+9 bonus): Pick Lock 10%, Sleight of Hand 13%, Set Trap 9%, Tie Knot 25%.

PERCEPTION SKILLS (+9 bonus): Balance 39%, Listen 19%, Scent 12%, Search 14%, See 62%, Taste 12%, Track 9%.

STEALTH SKILLS (+4 Bonus): Ambush 4%, Conceal 4%, Hide 14%, Move Quietly 23%.

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS (+8 Bonus): Evaluate Treasure 61%, First Aid 56%, Make Map 8%, Memorize 22%, Music 36%, Navigate 8%, Plant Lore 8%, Poison Lore 8%, Speak Common 82%.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS (+15 bonus): Credit 81%, Orate 21%, Persuade 75%, Sing 72%.

### RABNAR, BOUND DEMON SWORD

STR 40 CON 16 SIZ 2 INT 0 POW 14  
DEX 32 CHA 0

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# Nadsokor

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Nadsokor was an important Vilmirian city in the heyday of its prosperity, but a combination of severe economic depression, a peasant revolt, and a siege by the armies of the Kingdom of Org brought the city to its knees. The Orgens burned the city and slaughtered and enslaved those who failed to escape. For many years thereafter the ruins of Nadsokor were left to crumble in isolation as Vilmir's borders contracted under an increasingly conservative regime and Org withdrew further from contact with the rest of the Young Kingdoms.

In the recent past, approximately 60 years ago, it was discovered that the ruins of Nadsokor were inhabited again, this time by a desperate group of beggars and refugees from Vilmir. Their leader, known only as The King, had made some arrangement with the Lords of Chaos; in return for devoted worship of the Lords, the beggars were given enough to fulfil their basic needs — wormy, rickety shelter and tattered clothing. The beggars were not required to work at all, which pleased them greatly. Over the years the population of Nadsokor grew steadily with the influx of the desperate and the slothful who traveled to Nadsokor, which was fabled to have fountains of champagne

and trees laden with sweet rolls — where no one ever has to work, where money was worthless, and where every man was equal in status and in wealth. The prospect of free food and shelter drew thousands of individuals from every continent; they came on foot or in the holds of stinking, rat-infested merchant vessels. The verminous tide of beggars swept across many cities and through the countryside, and many of the beggars perished at the hands of indignant and terrified landholders and citizens.

Now above the ruins of old Nadsokor rise thousands of tiny shacks and hovels, built up to many stories high. Occasionally one of the irregular stacks topples, some beggars are killed and the rest just move into another of the multitude of tiny shacks. The walls of all the buildings in Nadsokor are a dull mud brown, seeming from a distance to be moist, rough, and irregular. Close to the structures it seems as if a fluid earth had flowed and then been frozen to build the horrible city. The buildings have sharp edges and spines that can cut the flesh when touched. Spread throughout Nadsokor are steep stairways leading into mazes of corridors deep under the earth. The corridors are lined with tiny 10 foot by 10 foot cubicles in which live



**8** most of the beggars of Nadsokor. Also underground is the food service area set up by the Lords of Chaos for their servants in Nadsokor. The beggars who live on the surface must either descend into the pits to eat or forage for their food in the forest surrounding the city; most descend.

The stench of Nadsokor is overpowering. Elric and Moonglum used drugs to dull their senses of smell when they entered the city. Player-characters are unlikely to have such drugs, so each must succeed with a CON x5 roll once per hour while in the city or succumb to the stench, becoming incapacitated with revulsion for the next hour.

Many beggars still make their way to Nadsokor, seeking the bounty promised to them by legend and folk song, and once at Nadsokor, the beggar hordes discover what the promises mean. Narjhan, Lord of Chaos gives each beggar his own cubicle in the great underground complex or shack in the surrounding squalor on the surface, and promises each as much food as he or she can eat for the rest of his or her life. Most are well-satisfied; few reject Narjhan's generous offer, but the conditions of the beggars' heaven on earth are not without certain shortcomings. The accommodations themselves are worse than modest; each person receives a ten-foot-square room with four walls and a door opening. No window looks out on sunlight or on fresh air. The tunnels and corridors that connect the cubicles are dark and dirty; no servants tidy up for the aristocracy of pauperdom. Food is plentiful but lacks flavor or character; though it is available at any hour of the day. It is served at any hour of the day underground refectories where everyone gathers to eat and gossip while seated on crude benches around cruder trestle tables. The only occasions of note in these dull refectories are the odd times when a powerful intoxicating beverage is available; its appearance is infrequent and in limited quantities, so that it always seems to be gone before the rumor of its arrival reaches the more remote cubicles or the surface.

The principal social gathering places in Nadsokor are the dining halls, and the open plazas, empty of furniture and plantlife (except algae, which is abundant), where the beggars gather to pass the empty hours. Many beggars sit in the dark corridors just outside their cubicles; perhaps these tunnels remind them of the narrow streets where they used to sit and beg for their meals.

The entire underground complex is half-lit by a dull orange glow that sheds false warmth from the ceilings of cubicles, corridors and gathering places. The corridors form convoluted mazes; frequently newcomers become lost, many never find their way back to their own cubicles or to the surface and settle each night wherever they happen to be. The feeble-minded and the insane wander aimlessly through the underground corridors and the narrow surface streets, filling the air with a hooting and whimpering that occasionally rises above the constant babble of the city's saner citizens — arguing, screaming, chattering, pleading, crying, shouting, moaning. To a country farmer or a prosperous townsman, Nadsokor must surely seem like hell itself, but to the beggars it is little different than what they might expect anywhere else, except that here there is no struggle required for food or shelter, and that the smell is slightly worse.

What did the beggars lose? Little enough, but still a great deal. To live in Nadoskor, a beggar must surrender

his independence, and his self-reliance. The Beggars of Nadsokor are the docile pets of Lord Narjhan of Chaos. He requires less of them than a man might require of his dog, yet he thinks the hordes of beggars less capable than dogs. From time to time the current King of the Beggars, Urish, makes his way through the corridors of the underground complex with Narjhan, who fondles and pampers his subjects as an old woman might indulge a lap dog. Some cannot endure the humiliation, and choose to leave and return to beg in the streets of the indifferent and unsympathetic cities of the Young Kingdoms. Most stay; the practical comforts of Nadsokor are far too important to surrender for intangible things like pride and self-esteem.

## The City

Nadsokor is roughly a mile square and the surface buildings sometimes rise to ten or eleven rickety stories high. The underground complex has ten levels, the lowest is 250 feet deep. Stairways are everywhere; each goes to a different level and none are marked. The city looks like a jumble of thousands of great boxes that have been stacked carelessly in a clearing next to a river. The material of the interior walls is a dull mud-brown color just like the outside of the buildings. Though the material is very hard it crumbles constantly; grainy dirt and dust covers everything inside the surface buildings.

The number of citizens of Nadsokor is unknown; a fair estimate is between ten and fifteen thousand. Though there are crowds of beggars everywhere there are still many unoccupied shacks and cubicles. The size and complexity of Nadsokor should be as bewildering and alien to the player-characters as a bee hive; there is nothing else in the Young Kingdoms remotely like it.

The player-characters will be at a loss to navigate through the maze of underground corridors. To dramatize the problem to them, have them make a Memorization roll every time a corridor twists, turns, or branches in the maze. It is impossible for player-characters to memorize their routes in Nadsokor unless the players carefully map the route on paper, or the characters come up with an ingenious method of marking their route. When they enter for the first time the player-characters invariably become lost. They might request assistance from beggar citizens but each beggar only knows the corridors in his own immediate area. He might have some idea of where he is on his own level, but he will be completely lost anywhere else. The player-characters may try to make marks on the walls, but heavy traffic in the corridors quickly erases any normal tokens or markings. The players should only be required to make their characters' way through the maze with map and pencil if the player-characters are trying to escape or explore; under all other circumstances, assume that Narjhan has arranged for beggars to guide the player-characters.

## Shacks and Cubicles

Each beggar is invited to take his or her own shack on the surface or cubicle in the underground tunnels (closer to the food), but many move from place to place impulsively; some don't even bother to seek the privacy of shacks or cubicles, sleeping in the corridors, dining areas, or plazas — wherever they are when they get tired.

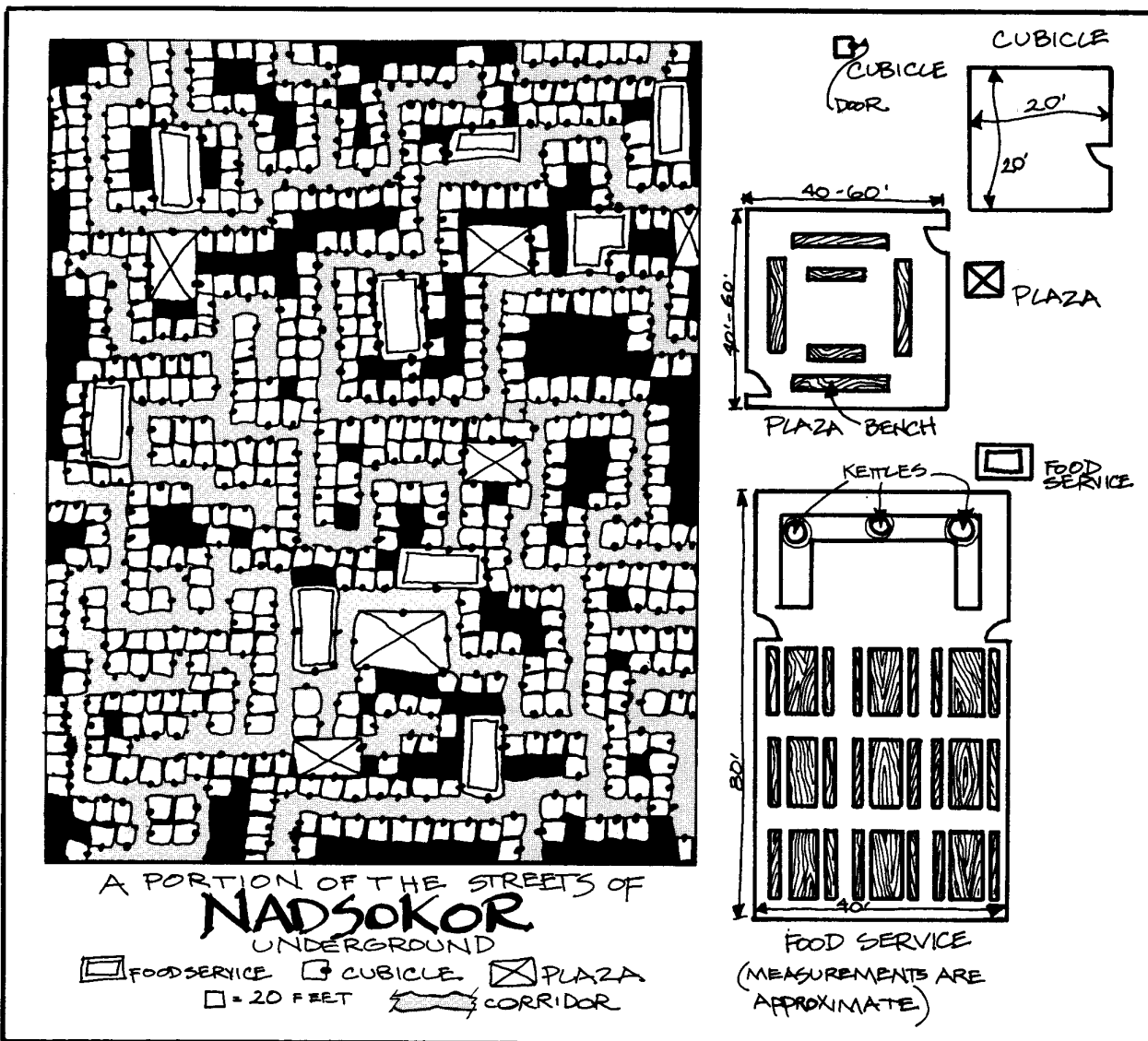
Each cubicle has a wide bench running around its walls for sitting or sleeping. Otherwise the cubicles are identical and bereft of character. Each shack sags and bows differently, but otherwise all the shacks are identical. Neither shacks nor cubicles have doors or any concept of privacy incorporated into their design. Some transform the unpleasant accommodations by improvising door coverings from rags and timber scavenged from the ruins of old Nadsokor. Most beggars simply adapt to the environment, sleeping, engaging in sex, and relieving themselves in public. The sight of all this animal activity is likely to shock and appall visitors from the Young Kingdoms.

What few personal possessions a beggar has are found on his person; anything left unguarded for long disappears. The beggars have and need little; the temperature of the city is always within tolerable limits of comfort; many beggars have given up clothing and wander about the city naked. Those who have clothes must make do with the rags they brought with them, since there is no source of cloth or clothing within many days walk, and the beggars have no money to buy clothes with. Many have blankets

and nondescript rags used for pillows and padding to make sleeping on the hard surfaces less uncomfortable; many have learned to do without, and are capable of sleeping anywhere and on any surface. Everyone has some kind of bowl and spoon for the mess hall; this is the last bastion of free enterprise in Nadsokor. A small group of baggars scavenge in the ruins of Old Nadsokor for eating utensils, which they sell or trade for various kinds of favors; otherwise when a man loses or breaks his dining gear, he must eat with his hands directly from the great urns and vats of the dining halls.

### The Dining Halls

There are two important features in the dining halls. First there are the tables and benches which seem to be formed of the same dusty, frozen, mud-like substance that makes up the walls and floors of the flimsy shacks on the surface. These are immovable and quite uncomfortable. The second important feature is the service areas. On large platforms, giant vats and urns magically produce various foods at various unpredictable hours. The staple food is a kind



10 of gruel with chunks of unrecognizable meats and vegetables in it. It is nourishing and filling, though noisome in flavor. Some vats produce water; the water in the Varkaalk River, just outside the city, is too badly tainted to drink. Occasionally a strong, vile-tasting, alcoholic beverage appears. It is the only pure pleasure provided by Narjhan, but it seems to be enough for many. Some have taken up residence in the dining areas so they will be near when the drink appears; thus it is that there are plenty of drunks in Nadsokor.

The dining halls are important social gathering places. Many spend hours here, eating occasionally, chattering inanely all the while. There is remarkably little current gossip in Nadsokor; little of interest happens and, if anything does happen few of the beggars are interested.

### The Plazas

These are large open spaces of indeterminate purpose in the underground mazes, and the open areas left by collapsed buildings on the surface. The inhabitants call these areas plazas for the lack of a better word. The real function of the underground plazas is to channel the worship of the citizens to Lord Narjhan; the plazas on the surface have no purpose. Each beggar is to come to an underground plaza at least once a day and give praise and thanks for to Lord Narjhan for his gifts. Those who fail to observe this obligation grow suddenly sick; if they persist in omitting this duty, they die within a few days. Leaving the city cures the illness, though it returns immediately if the city is re-entered. The player-characters begin to notice this sickness if they stay for more than a day in the city; the citizens can explain the sickness and the conditions for curing it. Whether the player-characters choose to remain ill (no game effects for two days, then STR, CON, POW, and DEX drop by a point a day until one reaches zero, at which point the player-character dies) is up to them; all ill effects immediately disappear when the player-characters leave the city. If a character dies, bringing him out of the city will not revive him.

Some apathetic souls take up residence in the plazas. These areas are particularly attractive to the insane and the dull-witted; nobody knows why or gives it much thought.

### The Corridors

There is no real distinction in most of the citizen-beggars' minds between the privacy of shacks or cubicles and lack of privacy of the streets and corridors. Many beggars live in the underground corridors, curling up whenever they feel drowsy. The corridors are casual social gathering places where people kill time between meals. The frequent outbreak of violence in the corridors — quarrels, fist-fights, free-for-alls — provides a welcome diversion and entertainment for bored citizens.

### Social Structure

Nadsokor has little social structure. At the very top are the favorites of Narjhan: Urish, the King of Beggars, and Urish's toadies. They are in complete control of the city, which is roughly like controlling a tub of water — push and it swallows you up impassively; beat it and it feels nothing; give it orders and it ignores you placidly. Occasionally Urish and his thugs engage in a little aimless bully-

ing to satisfy sadistic impulses, but Urish is not particularly ambitious. He is already king and wants to keep it that way. If anyone seems rebellious, Urish has him exterminated; this is the whole of his public policy.

There is a kind of tribal identity in the different sections of the city; each dining hall has its own wise men and leaders. The surface dwellers consider themselves to be superior to their subterranean fellows. The group leaders have no official status; they have earned their positions by showing themselves to be particularly able to survive in the odd environment of Nadsokor. Disputes and requests for advice are naturally referred to them by the beggars in their vicinity. Other than that there is nothing to do, and no one does it.

## Characters

### Dhandi

Dhandi is a cute ten-year-old boy with very dark skin and hair; he is extremely thin and sad-eyed. Dhandi is not yet afflicted. He is the adopted child of an illtempered couple who took him as an all-purpose servant and laborer when they found him wandering through the streets of Jadmar. He looks like he might have come from Pikarayd stock, but poor nourishment in youth has stunted his growth. Dhandi is adorable compared to the rough and churlish ways of most of the beggars of Nadsokor. He is shy and quiet, always beaming his big, brown eyes at strangers. He takes a shine to Freyda; perhaps she reminds him of his absent mother. The visitors, with their armor and their dignified bearing, appeal to Dhandi; he longs to run away from Nadsokor and join the player-characters, where ever they are going. If the party is looking for a sympathetic guide, Dhandi fits the bill; the catch is that he might be hard to get rid of when the player-characters are ready to leave Nadsokor. Dhandi would make an interesting addition to the party — someone vulnerable and valuable to protect. Dhandi is brave and fearless when inspired, and is likely to risk his life whenever a friend or benefactor is threatened.

---

### Dhandi

STR 10	CON 8	SIZ 7	INT 14	POW 10
DEX 12	CHA 13	HP 6	Armor: none	

*no weapons*

SKILLS: Balance 15%, Climb 34%, Conceal 27%, Cut Purse 28%, Dodge 37%, Jump 39%, Listen 36%, Move Quietly 29%, Search 12%, See 47%, Speak Common 57%.

---

### Old Blind Byob

A loud, abrasively humorous old coot with two empty eye sockets and a graveyard sense of humor. Byob is durable. Many have tried to kill him simply because of his obnoxious and abrasive cackling. Byob believes he knows everything, and he's not far from the truth. He uses his hands as his main sense organs; and he steals from persistent instinct. If Byob touches you, he can get to your underwear before you know it, and unless you hold him off with a pole, he inexorably moves toward you as he chatters. Byob is willing to help the player-characters because he

hasn't any real idea what he's doing at any given moment, though his memory is fine and he always manages to do whatever he really wants to do. Byob can guide the party around and tell the player-characters about the special culture of Nadsokor, if the player-characters don't beat him to death first to be rid of him. Byob has a gift for latching onto those who find him most repulsive, particularly noblemen and priests.

---

### Old Blind Byob

STR 9      CON 9      SIZ 11      INT 13      POW 8  
DEX 17      APP 4      HP 9      Armor: none

*no weapons*

SKILLS: Balance 22%, Cut Purse 84%, Dodge 15%, Listen 84%, Pick Pocket 89%, Speak Common 78%.

---

### Wino

Wino still retains his old nickname despite the absence of wine in the vicinity of Nadsokor. He has taken up residence in one of the dining halls in order to be handy when the intoxicating beverages appear. Wino vaguely recognizes one of the player-characters and follows the party everywhere, saying, "Son of an Olab, you look familiar. . . Didn't I meet you in Vilmir or something?" Wino is persistent, he is obsessed and he will not rest until his feeble recollection is confirmed. Thereafter he will treat the character as his long lost buddy -- "Let me show you the sights, buddy-boy" -- and generally make himself obnoxious. He suffices as a guide, but he is a poor one, and supplies the player-characters with a wealth of misinformation if they listen to him.

---

### Wino

STR 11      CON 11      SIZ 14      INT 8      POW 7  
DEX 9      APP 8      HP 13      Armor: none

*no weapons*

SKILLS: Balance 4%, Climb 7%, Dodge 12%, Listen 10%, Speak Common 84%.

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### Monkey Face

- This is Urish's chief goon. Narjhan rejoices in his pure loutishness and his animal energy; he treats him indulgently, as a doting pet-owner might treat a wayward great dane or doberman. Monkey Face became a beggar out of sheer laziness and gratitude in finding a class of people so convenient for bullying. He has a lot of character, all of it bad; Monkey Face's only redeeming feature is that he will die eventually. His most distinctive trait is his tendency to spray his listeners with saliva and bits of partially-chewed food as he talks; Monkey Face is always eating something, perhaps even as he sleeps. Even other beggars watch him in fascination; he is a truly remarkable example of grossness. His rude and vulgar comments to the player-characters will not endear him to them. Monkey Face is in charge of the guard which watches the player-characters; if he survives their escape attempt, it will evidence a remarkable restraint on the player-characters' part.

---

### Monkey Face

STR 10      CON 14      SIZ 14      INT 9      POW 8  
DEX 12      APP 9      HP 16      Armor: leather

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
sword	47%	43%	1D8+1

SKILLS: Ambush 22%, Balance 27%, Climb 23%, Dodge 45%, Hide 19%, Listen 34%, Search 9%, See 28%, Speak Common 45%.

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### Domein

An obese woman, extremely tall and powerful, Domein cannot speak, but understands what is said. She is one of the party's guards. Domein is slow-moving but has a remarkably high DEX, STR and SIZ. If the player-characters are to escape safely, they must subdue Domein.

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### Domein

STR 20      CON 15      SIZ 25      INT 10      POW 12  
DEX 15      APP 9      HP: 31      Armor: leather

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
sword	87%	89%	1D8+1+2D6

SKILLS: Ambush 24%, Balance 45%, Climb 30%, Dodge 84%, Hide 32%, Listen 85%, Search 21%, See 59%, Understand Common 84%.

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### Urish, King of the Beggars

Urish's title was conferred by appointment from the dying previous monarch. Urish is swelled with self-importance and pride. There are no affairs of state for him to attend to (presuming that he had the wit or the ambition), so he spends the days wandering around, posturing and making decrees. Since there is no way to transmit Urish's decrees, and since he changes them daily, no one is very knowledgeable about them. This is a constant source of distress for Urish, and he deals harshly with those who display ignorance of the King's word. Harshly means that he sends his raffish crowd of knights out to annoy offenders. Luckily the complexity of the layout of Nadsokor and the chaotic throngs of beggars in the corridors and plazas make it a relatively simple task to hide out until the king and his enforcers forget about the offense. Since the duration of any thought in the minds of Nadsokor nobility can be measured in minutes, Urish's reign is not a particularly onerous one.

Urish himself is a caricature of a worldly monarch; considering the scant likelihood that he has ever seen a real king, the accuracy of Urish's mimicry of royalty must be ascribed to divine inspiration. He is always on his way to a council with his advisors (whoever is handy) or pondering the state of the kingdom. If the player-characters are polite and diplomatic (and can restrain their scorn), they will get along fine with King Urish. Urish is a little man, built something like a mammoth rat, with a long nose, a pear-shaped body, and a sparse beard and moustache comprised of about 25 long and kinky whiskers. He is dressed in the finest rags of all Nadsokor, and crowned with a diadem made from some unrecognizable fragment of metal from the old ruins.

**King Urish of Nadsokor**

STR 10 CON 11 SIZ 8 INT 11 POW 13  
DEX 14 CHA 10 HP 10 Armor: demon armor

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
sword	54%	58%	1D8+1

SKILLS: Ambush 21%, Balance 36%, Climb 24%, Conceal 74%, Credit 4%, Cut Purse 67%, Dodge 39%, Jump 20%, Move Quietly 12%, Orate 23%, Persuade 25%, Search 45%, See 60%, Speak Common 85%, Speak Orgjenn 26%.

**TISTA, DEMON ARMOR**

CON 21 SIZ 8 INT 3 POW 12 CHA 1

Tista is the ugliest, most dented set of demon armor extant in the Young Kingdoms.

**Narjhan**

Urbane and sophisticated, Narjhan seems quite out of place in Nadsokor. He is so pleasant the the player-characters might have trouble deciding if he is a good guy or a bad guy. For a Lord of Chaos, Narjhan is positively charming. It is only much later that he takes his army of beggars and drives them across an entire continent to attack the peaceful city of Tanelorn. Narjhan warms to the company of the player-characters, the first intelligent conversationalists he has encountered in a long time (except of course for Elric, who just recently passed through). Narjhan makes offers to any player-characters whom he would like to number among his followers.

**Narjhan, Lord of Chaos**

STR 130 CON 165 SIZ 16 INT 140 POW 200  
DEX 140\* CHA 150 HP 169 Armor: demon armor

\* Narjhan, like all Chaos Lords allows his opponent to strike first.

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
demon sword	97%	97%	1D8+1+7D6

SKILLS: Ambush 97%, Balance 97%, Climb 97%, Conceal 97%, Credit 97%, Cut Purse 97%, Dodge 97%, Evaluate Treasure 97%, First Aid 97%, Hide 97%, Juggle 97%, Jump 97%, Listen 97%, Make Map 97%, Memorize 97%, Move Quietly 97%, Music Lore 97%, Navigate 97%, Orate 97%, Persuade 97%, Pick Lock 97%, Plant Lore 97%, Poison Lore 97%, Read/Write all Languages 97%, Ride 97%, Scent 97%, Search 97%, See 97%, Set Trap 97%, Sing 97%, Sleight of Hand 97%, Speak all Languages 97%, Swim 97%, Taste 97%, Tie Knot 97%, Track 97%, Tumble 97%.

**T'T'TRO, DEMON ARMOR**

CON 100 SIZ 16 INT 21 POW 21 CHA 21

**KATTRAB, DEMON SWORD**

STR 40 SIZ 3 CON 55 INT 18 POW 22  
DEX 20 CHA 21 Special Abilities: Shape Change, regeneration, Strength Drain.

SUMMONINGS: All Elementals 97%, All Types of Demons except Lords of Law and other Lords of Chaos 97%. Note: Narjhan needs no symbol of invulnerability to summon any demon or elemental and he controls them automatically. From the time he summons a demon it takes only one round to appear.

Note: Narjhan can use any demon special ability if he so desires, and he can change his characteristics to suit any situation. For example, Narjhan can grow to a huge size if he wishes. Lords of Chaos cannot be killed, so if a player-character somehow manages to damage Narjhan sufficiently that he would be dead were he mortal, Narjhan is merely banished to another plane for a short time.

**Above-Average Beggar**

STR 13 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 13 POW 13  
DEX 12 CHA 7 HP 14 Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
butt	10%	10%	1D4+1D6
cudgel	10%	10%	2D6
rock toss	10%	—	2D4

SKILLS: Balance 12%, Climb 12%, Conceal 40%, Cut Purse 54%, Dodge 48%, Hide 47%, Jump 12%, Listen 48%, Move Quietly 48%, Pick Lock 54%, Search 27%, See 62%, Speak Common 70%.

**Above-Average Beggar 1**

DEX 17 HP 12

**Above-Average Beggar 4**

DEX 15 HP 16

**Above-Average Beggar 2**

DEX 16 HP 15

**Above-Average Beggar 5**

DEX 14 HP 13

**Above-Average Beggar 3**

DEX 16 HP 13

**Above-Average Beggar 6**

DEX 14 HP 18

**Average Beggar**

STR 10 CON 11 SIZ 9 INT 10 POW 9  
DEX 10 CHA 7 HP 11 Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
butt	8%	8%	1D4
cudgel	8%	8%	1D6
rock toss	8%	8%	1D4

SKILLS: Balance 10%, Climb 10%, Conceal 39%, Cut Purse 50%, Dodge 46%, Hide 46%, Jump 10%, Listen 46%, Move Quietly 22%, Pick Lock 50%, Search 25%, See 60%, Speak Common 70%.

**Average Beggar 1**

DEX 13 HP 12

**Average Beggar 6**

DEX 10 HP 9

**Average Beggar 2**

DEX 12 HP 11

**Average Beggar 4**

DEX 11 HP 10

**Average Beggar 7**

DEX 10 HP 12

**Average Beggar 3**

DEX 12 HP 13

**Average Beggar 5**

DEX 10 HP 11

**Average Beggar 8**

DEX 8 HP 13

**Harmless Beggars**

STR 7 CON 6 SIZ 9 INT 7 POW 7  
DEX 6 CHA 7 HP 6 Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
butt	5%	5%	1D4-1D6
cudgel	5%	5%	1D4-1D6
rock toss	5%	5%	1D4-1D4

SKILLS: Balance 6%, Climb 6%, Conceal 5%, Cut Purse 12%, Dodge 42%, Hide 44%, Jump 6%, Listen 21%, Move Quietly 5%, Pick Lock 12%, Search 21%, See 50%, Speak Common 50%.

**Names and Accompanying Disabilities for Minor Beggar Non-Player-Characters**

Teska — cataracts

Morra — no nose; cartilage disintegrating; frozen joints

Leptus — bone rot; shapeless face

Gorbaduc — one leg

Doc — living skeleton

Brilleson — paralyzed from the waist down; rides in a cart

Toptor — leprous

Apar Tek — tongue cut out



Gresham — deformed arms  
 One Eye — one eye  
 Chuckles — babbles constant nonsense  
 Trishie — nympho with degenerative syphilis  
 Maboena — epileptic  
 Danmor — missing left hand  
 Slaterin — severely retarded and violent  
 Taphy — fat and bald  
 Elenne — deaf and dumb  
 Davit — drooling idiot  
 Meku — psychotic and hostile  
 Limi — non-violently crazy  
 Pillbox — hypochondriac  
 Fatty — hugely obese  
 Hairbag — covered with dense, dark, wirey hair

## Getting to Nadsokor

The player-characters approach Nadsokor along the Varkaalk river valley. The path along the western bank of the river is distinct and well-trodden; if the player-characters crossed the river, they see that the trail on the eastern bank is very old and has had little recent traffic.

South of the caravan road there are no convenient river fords; if the player-characters cross the Varkaalk below the road, they should rig ropes for poor swimmers. Some method must be arranged to safely move the gear across the river. At its narrowest the Varkaalk is over one quarter mile wide, and it is swift and deep. There are a number of small islands in mid river that permit the crossing to be made in stages. To the east and west of the broad Varkaalk valley an escarpment rises steeply from the valley floor; at the top of the bluffs a dense forest bristles, with long fingers of brush reaching down into the valley.

Nadsokor is about twenty miles south of the ford where the caravan road crosses the Varkaalk. The terrain is wooded. Depending on whether the player-characters are mounted or on foot, they should reach Nadsokor in one and a half to two days.

As the player-characters near Nadsokor, they sight the city of beggars as a distinctive, squalid-looking, squarish hill in the distance. The path on the western bank turns to the river at a relatively good crossing spot, filled with little islands and sand bars; the river continues to the south. As the player-characters draw nearer to the city, they begin to get an idea of the size of the place. All around the ruins of old Nadsokor jut out from brush and scrub forest. There is a remarkable lack of activity on the outskirts of the city, only an occasional beggar is seen foraging around in the ruins. As the player-characters get closer they begin to see small crowds of misshapen creatures squinting curiously from the ramshackle buildings, and from the tops of various staircases leading underground. As the party crosses the river and begins to enter the city they catch furtive glances of watchers hiding amongst the rubble-strewn streets and plazas of the ancient city. Now also the player-characters begin to be overwhelmed by the stench and must succeed with a CON x 5 roll once per hour or be incapacitated with revulsion for the next hour.

When the player-characters approach the buildings, they are greeted energetically by the rabble clustered at the doorways and badgered for tidings of the outside world. A building (5 stories of shacks stacked upon one another crumbles as the player-characters arrive. The beggars turn to see what caused the great noise but quickly

lose interest and begin to fight and squabble about which dining room the visitors should attend first to share their fresh gossip and news. If the player-characters inquire about Elric, everyone answers at once, each with a different rumor. "He was just here, but I think he's left." "He's meeting with Lord Narjhan." "Was he supposed to be here?" "He's come to live with us." The player-characters are unable to get any straight answers from the beggars, but word quickly reaches Narjhan that someone has been inquiring after Elric.

The welcoming committee includes Dhandi, Old Blind Byob, and Wino, all of whom instantly attach themselves to the group. Also present is a woman so old that decay has been too impatient to wait until she is dead. As she slowly makes her way through the crowd towards the player-characters, the beggars politely make way for her and offer her greetings of acknowledgement. This is Granny, a local community leader by virtue of her venerable age and in admiration of her refusal to rot in the grave like all her contemporaries. She quietly inspects the player-characters, hobbling all around them and squinting at them with her toothless mouth hanging casually agape. She ignores any player-character attempts to speak to her, and finally pauses and mumbles something unintelligible. She then turns away and makes her slow and painful way back inside. This might give the party the mistaken impression that Granny is knowledgeable or in a position of power; in truth her brain is as loose and as poorly articulated as is the gruel served in the dining halls. Her mumbling has the rhythm and tone of garbled speech, but nothing coherent ever passes her lips. The player-characters might be deluded into supposing that she speaks an unknown foreign language, or that the beggars can understand her.

Once Granny has made her cryptic pronouncement, the crowd gathers around and excitedly welcomes the player-characters to Nadsokor. The player-characters need an abacus to record the number of hands they find in their pockets. Old Blind Byob and Wino latch onto their victims (see their descriptions). At this point the rabble lead the player-characters down one of the many staircases, unless the player-characters have second thoughts and retreat into the nearby ruins or woods. The crowd tries to follow them wherever they go, but if the player-characters get nasty, the beggars slink away and leave the player-characters alone, except a few beggars who sneak about and attempt to spy on them.

## Summons

The player-characters should be permitted to wander around investigating the city and questioning the inhabitants for tidings of Elric for about a half hour. During this time they can discover most of the important physical features of the city and get some idea of the workings of Nadsokor's society. They continue to get ambiguous and contradictory responses to their queries about Elric's whereabouts, but everyone seems pretty sure he was here a while ago.

Rumors of the party's arrival reach Narjhan within a half hour. Suddenly a little, comparatively healthy-looking beggar appears with a small escort of a hundred or so average beggars, clearly armed and vaguely threatening. If the player-characters are underground, such a crowd blocks

14 the corridor completely and precipitates a minor mob scene with pushing, shoving, cursing, and a few half-hearted punches, but the escort remarkably retains their discipline, and the other locals melt away from the area, eager to be somewhere else in case some official nuisance is in the offing.

The neat little beggar politely inquires after the leader of the party, and then delivers a formal verbal invitation to an audience with Narjhan, Lord of Chaos, and King Urish, Emperor of Vilmir (a polite fiction overlooked by Nadsokor's loyal subjects). Monkeyface is in the background. The player-characters recognize him if they see him again, though he takes no distinctive part in this encounter.

"Pardon me, ladies and gentlemen, but Lord Narjhan and His Majesty King Urish, King of the Beggars, Sovereign of Nadsokor, Protector of the Weak and Benefactor of the Homeless, request your attendance upon them in their royal chambers at your earliest convenience. It has been said that you seek Elric of Melnibone and his whereabouts; the Lords of Nadsokor might have items of interest to say on this matter. May I direct you to their august presences?"

The little beggar clearly implies that the party is expected to follow him, and that the rabble honor guard is meant to ensure their compliance. If the player-characters accept the invitation gracefully, they are conducted to the audience chamber.

If the party resists, the mob starts to get ugly. The player-characters notice nets and weapons being readied. There is no time for socratic summonings, but bound beings can be immediately released; at the first sign of such beings or at the first drawing of player-character weapons, the mob swarms all over the party.

The tactical situation should be determined by the gamemaster according to the activity that the messenger's appearance interrupted. The little beggar is not a general, and hasn't carefully selected a site for its strategic value. The best circumstances for the players are if they are in a corridor close to a stairway to the surface or on the surface itself, though the less confined the space, the more readily the beggars can use their numerical superiority, and the farther from the outdoors, the more likely it is that reinforcements can be summoned to support the original rabble escort.

The gamemaster might choose to abstract the results of any melee between the party members and over a hundred beggars; despite the numerical superiority of Narjhan's followers, the armor of the characters permits them to withstand most of the rabble attacks, and the player-characters are likely to incapacitate a beggar every time they land a blow. With the support of sorcery, the players should be able to avoid capture for a long time. However, the beggars can throw rocks, and in quantity, and sooner or later they will wear the player-characters down. The followers of Narjhan are not personally fanatically or fearless, but they are completely under his power (this is the service they unwittingly pledge when they come to Nadsokor and which they renew and reinforce every time they worship in the plazas); they die like robots to do Narjhan's will. If the player-characters are not close to an exit, the beggars can forstall their escape, and within the city it is only a matter of time before the player-characters are subdued.

If the players wish to fight out the melee it is best to set out a battleboard or use a diagram to enable the players to visualize their characters' predicament. It will quickly become obvious that for each beggar who falls, another steps forward to take his place; the player-characters can make little headway. On the other hand, the beggars are able to set five opponents on each party member if the player-characters are in open order. If two or more beggars can grapple with a player-character in a single round without being parried, attacked, or dodged they can bear the player character to the floor. Give the player-character a STR x1 chance to toss all grapplers off, but inevitably strength of numbers should prevail.

If the player-characters make a back-to-back, turtle-like defensive formation, the beggars attempt to snare them with nets. Every third round the rabble makes a successful cast of the net; in order to avoid being entangled, each player-character must either make a successful Dodge roll (permitting no other action that round) or make a successful slash attack with an edged weapon (this only prevents the individual player-character from becoming entangled; it doesn't affect the chances of entanglement for the player-characters). Once a player-character is entangled, he can only free himself with a successful slash attack; during that round, or course, he can take no other action, and if two opponents are close enough to grapple with him, he can be subdued and disarmed before he can slash his way out.

If the player-characters resist and escape they find themselves pursued by a small army of several hundred beggars. The beggars might be outdistanced, particularly if the player-characters have horses hidden outside. Remember, if the players depart now they do not know anything of Elric's current whereabouts.

If the player-characters fight, escape, and outdistance the beggars (after a few hours the beggars give up) they may try to look for Elric's tracks; of course they have no way of distinguishing Elric's tracks from anyone else's, but Elric and Moonglum escaped on horseback, pursued by an army of beggars. The party can follow this obvious stampede trail to the Varkaalk, where Elric and Moonglum road their mounts into the river and swam with them towards Troos; it is here that the beggars gave up the chase. If the player-characters are persistent, they can follow the Varkaalk north again, looking for the spot where Elric and Moonglum emerged from the river and proceeded, mounted once again, toward Troos. Here the party may once again pick up the thread of the narrative; the gamemaster should proceed to the Org scenario.

## Interrogation

If they go with the representative or are captured, the player-characters are conducted down an endless series of corridors and passageways far too numerous to memorize. They are taken up and down long staircases several times and at last reach the largest open space in underground Nadsokor, a giant cubicle, 100 feet by 100 feet in area. In the center of the room is a dirty, mud-colored throne. Upon the throne sits a little man clad in gaudy rags and wearing a crown-like piece of metal (Urish). Next to him stands a figure clad in black plate armor (Narjhan); his visor is down.



Urish greets the player-characters "Welcome to Nadsokor, gentlemen. . . and ladies. I trust you've been treated hospitably?"

The irony of this greeting depends on whether the player-characters came peacefully or whether they are wounded and exhausted from fighting the beggars; the gamemaster should adapt the tone accordingly. Further, Urish seems to be speaking oddly. (Narjhan is in fact speaking through Urish's lips; Urish pauses as Narjhan telepathically tells him what to say, then he repeats the words automatically, like a puppet.)

Urish speaks again: "Lord Narjhan would have a word with you." Then, as Narjhan releases control of Urish, the little king jerks forward and blinks, as though he has been straining unconsciously against something and was startled when the resistance disappeared. He then peers around in a daze during the rest of the interview. If directly addressed, Urish stammers briefly, then Narjhan smoothly takes over control, saying through the king whatever seems appropriate.

When Narjhan speaks, his voice seems to be coming from a great distance. He is cool, sophisticated, and aristocratic. He is pleasant to his visitors, though secretive and enigmatic, offering nothing about himself, constantly but

gently interrogating the player-characters about their mission and motives. He is obviously employing Urish as a puppet, though for some reason the beggars don't seem to notice; they appear to believe that Urish is king here, and that Narjhan is nothing but a pleasant, but very important visitor.

Narjhan is paternal to but condescendingly contemptuous of his subjects; the most loyal and fawning of Narjhan's toadies are too stupid to interpret his patronising tone for what it is, though the player-characters should be able to tell that Narjhan has little sympathy or feeling for them. Nonetheless, Narjhan is sincere in his belief that he is a great humanitarian, and he frequently (but modestly) turns the conversation toward admiration for his generosity in befriending the impoverished and the afflicted. Narjhan is constantly surrounded by his beggar army; he need only say the word and they will tear the party up. Narjhan subtly but persistently keeps the player-characters aware of this fact.

After pleasantries and greeting are set aside, Narjhan asks why the player-characters have come to Nadsokor. He is casually capable of telling when humans lie, and he politely insists on the truth whenever the player-characters stray from it. (Narjhan cannot read minds, so he must

**16** question the characters, but he cannot be lied to successfully by the party.) Once he has heard Freyda's story about pursuing Elric for revenge, Narjhan becomes pensive and withdrawn.

"Hmm. Seeking after Elric. To challenge him. Hmm. I'd like to give this some thought. Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you accept our hospitality during your stay in Nad-sokor?"

Narjhan turns to Urish, as if to acknowledge Urish's status as host. Urish jerks a bit as Narjhan takes over, blurt-ing out, "Yes, please accept our hospitality." After this brief speech, as Narjhan lets go of him, Urish jerks forward again out of the mind control and back into the per-plexed daze.

Narjhan says, "Certainly you will dine with me later this evening? Until then, Hummus, the major-domo will find you comfortable accommodations. Please make your-selves at home. Until later then?"

It is likely that the player-characters have some urgent questions to ask, and they may be very insistent, but Nar-jhan ignores the player-characters' questions as though he didn't hear them. If the player-characters don't answer one of Narjhan's questions, he quietly waits for them to change their minds, then asks the question again. No mat-ter how uncooperative or abrasive the player-characters are, Narjhan does not lose his patience; he simply wants know what the player-characters are up to and why they seek Elric. Once he knows, he sends the player-characters off to detention while he considers what to do. He is in-trigued by the prospect of sending a group of mortals af-ter Elric, and it occurs to Narjhan that through such a-gents he might catch Elric off-guard.

## Detention in the Plaza

The player-characters are ushered out under careful guard by a mob of beggars armed with clubs. Oddly enough, however, there has been no move to separate the player-characters from their weapons, armor, or other gear. The characters are once again conducted through the subter-ranean maze, but up or down no stairs; after a few min-utes, the player-characters are brought to a stop in a plaza a little smaller than Narjhan's throne room. Here the player-characters are surrounded by an army of beggars and told to relax until Narjhan should summon them again.

This is an opportunity for the player-characters to check the beggars for possible assistants if they should attempt to escape. Most of the beggars are firmly loyal to Narjhan, because they are well-fed and they are too dull-witted to resent Narjhan's contempt. However, about 5% of the beggars still have some vestiges of pride and dignity, and some appeal might be made to them. The beggars cannot be intimidated with threats; they trust in Narjhan's protection. They cannot be bribed; Narjhan provides all their needs. An appeal to honor and self-respect could be effective. If one of the player-characters attempts such a tactic, his or her player should be told that there are a few sympathetic faces in the crowd. Freyda in particular is effective in persuading the beggars to help her; the rumor of her pursuit of Elric has made her seem quite heroic, and her bearing and beauty will appeal to whatever remains

of their nobler natures. There are at least three sympathet-ic listeners who will be noticed in the crowd: Old Blind Byob, Dhandi, and Wino, whom the party met upon their arrival at Nadoskor, and who have followed the player-characters around ever since.

If the party is successful in attracting allies, the players may ask questions about the city, solicit assistance, and devise a plan for escape. The essential key to any escape is a beggar guide; Blind Byob, Dhandi, and Wino are prime prospects. The player-characters might also have questions about specific escape routes; these questions can be an-swered. If the player-characters are looking for troops to assist them, a number may offer assistance, but none will come through when needed.

All of this conspiracy must go on without attracting the notice of the loyal Narjhan supporters. The player-characters have to exercise their ingenuity in communicat-ing secretly with the sympathetic beggars. A little speech by a player-characters about the dishonor of giving up one's freedom might do wonders in stirring the guilt and shame of the beggars. If a player devises and delivers such a speech, the gamemaster should then either arbitrarily determine the speech's effect upon the mob, or make a Persuasion roll for the speechmaker; since the player-characters are competing against Narjhan's powerful charisma, the roll should be modified by subtracting 60 percentiles. If the roll is successful, the number of persuaded beggars equals the difference between the player-character's chance of success and the number the player rolls. For example, Freyda has a 75% skill in Persuasion: with the 60 percentile adjustment for Narjhan's charisma, Freyda has only a 15% chance to succeed. If she rolls an 04, she convinces 11 beggars of the errors of their ways and may thereafter count on them as allies in an escape attempt. Remember, however, that no matter how sympathetic the beggars are, they will not act as shock troops for the party.

The player-characters might try to fight their way out; such an attempt should be handled as a repeat of the first capture. Note that the player-characters are several levels away from any exits, and Narjhan has unlimited reserves to send after the player-characters, trying to escape with-out a guide is almost certainly futile.

## Narjhan's Offer

After several hours the player-characters are summoned again from the plaza and conveyed back to the throne room, which is now set up as a great dining hall. There is a large table right at Narjhan's feet which has been set up for the player characters; they are taken to it, seated, and served a dull meal of the same foul gruel that the other beggars are given. Urish sits peacefully eating next to Nar-jhan; the player-characters can see that Urish is eating rich meats and fancy vegetables.

After the player-characters have eaten (Narjhan doesn't eat), Narjhan gestures for silence and delivers the follow-ing speech:

"Little Freyda, I'm impressed with your courage and resolve. To seek after a demon like Elric, and to challenge him in revenge for your father's foul murder is a deed that many will sing of hereafter." (long pause. Silence.)

"Yes, a bold gesture. . . . A futile one, I suspect."

“Freyda, I too will make a bold gesture. I offer to help you in this deed you would do. If you will honor me, I will honor you with my aid against Elric.” (Pause for effect. Murmuring of rabble.)

“Call on me and I will be there. I will be your invisible shield against his demonic powers. Elric has the help of the gods; why should not Freyda also? How do you plan to face his powerful sorcery? Do you expect to go up against the likes of Elric with this puny worm’s assistance?” (He gestures at a player-character sorcerer and chuckles.) “I wish you good luck. . . .”

“Your vengeance is righteous and just; I believe I know something about such emotions. Elric has slain lovers, kin, and friends; his contempt for decency and justice is inspiring in its arrogance.”

(Musing Dreamily), “I only ask to be honored with the respect and worship of such a worthy mortal as you, Freyda — one who would challenge a demi-god fearlessly, never reckoning the odds, seeking vengeance as is your due. Will you honor me with your loyalty? If so, I assure you, I will honor you with mine.”

Narjhan gives Freyda a few minutes to think over his proposal. The players may consult with one another.

If Freyda agrees, Narjhan pledges himself to assist her when she calls on him in her combat with Elric. If she tries to get specific about the kind of help Narjhan will provide, he speaks soothingly to her and suggests that he will know what to do when the time comes, have no fear. He lets the player-characters leave whenever they wish, and he offers them a beggar-mob escort as far as the Forest of Troos, if Freyda wishes it. Narjhan tells the player-characters about where Elric went when he left the city and wishes Freyda good luck in trailing him. The party then proceeds to the section of this book entitled “The Kingdom of Org”.

If Freyda declines, hesitates, or asks for more time to consider the offer, Narjhan sends the player-characters away to spend the evening in a vacant cubicle far from the throne chamber.

Narjhan intends to help Freyda, whether she wants the help or not, or whether Freyda consents to worship him or not. He would prefer to have her cooperation and obedience, but he is quite content to take nothing more than a back-handed swipe at Elric. Narjhan has a couple of tricks in mind with which to help Freyda; he intends to neutralize Strombringer if he can, or to offer her some sorcerous assistance. When Freyda finally reaches her showdown with Elric, Narjhan can be used as a gamemaster intervention to make the battle between Elric and Freyda seem a little more even. The gamemaster may let Narjhan’s assistance come in the form of a free swing at Elric, or a fumble of Stormbringer, permitting Freyda to grab the sword, or whatever seems appropriate at the time. Narjhan will not fight for Freyda, but there is little he would not do to humiliate Elric. (Of course Arioeh might help Elric if Narjhan is too pushy.)

## Escape

If Freyda does not agree to the terms of Narjhan’s offer, the player-characters are escorted to a nearby cubicle where they are expected to spend the night. The cubicle

is exactly like the rest of the accommodations in the underground portion of the city — four blank walls. The party still has their camping gear presumably, so they can bed down for the night.

The player-characters are guarded by Monkey Face, Domein, and ten above-average beggars. Monkey Face, Domein, and four beggars are inside the cubicle; the other six beggars are outside the opening. The guards take turns resting while the others watch the party. As far as the player-characters can tell, there is no one else awake outside in the corridor. However, Dhandi, Blind Byob, Wino, and any other beggars who earlier offered help the player-characters occasionally walk past the open door of the cubicle, keeping themselves close at hand in case they are needed.

Narjhan has purposely left the guard too weak to handle the player-characters. There are twelve guards armed with clubs, but the armor and fighting skills of the player-characters are clearly sufficient to overcome unarmored and inept guards. A greater problem in escape is finding a way out of the maze. There are several ways of approaching this problem. First, the player-characters can engage the assistance of a willing beggar; Narjhan has planted several such willing citizens in the guard assigned to watch the party, in addition to the beggars already contacted by the player-characters. Alternatively the player-characters might use a trial-and-error method of solving the maze. If the player-characters made any preparations to memorize the route as they came in, allow them Memorization rolls each time they reach a junction. A successful roll provides the way, a failed roll brings indecision. A roll of 96-00 causes the player-characters to go the wrong way.

If the party attempts to escape without a guide, they will have to map the maze as they travel. The gamemaster should have his map example before him, and he should have the players map out each corridor as they wander. Each time the player-characters reach a dead end they must fight their way back through the guard to escape. If the player-characters take too many wounds they probably have to surrender to the guards again; alternatively a beggar guide might fortuitously arrive at this point and speed the player-characters’ escape. If at any time the gamemaster feels that the player-characters have wandered aimlessly for long enough, a beggar, probably Dhandi should appear and guide the party to an exit.

If the player-characters manage to overpower the guards and begin the escape, they are pursued by any remaining guards. These guards do not know that they are supposed to fail; they are convincing in their attempts to recapture the prisoners. In addition, an ever-swelling mob of beggars accumulates as the player-characters escape. The guards have been given orders not to kill the prisoners if it can be avoided. This mob of beggars threatens to fight, waving clubs and fists, and an occasional rock is tossed at the escapees, but the mob panics and disperses when confronted with swords and other weapons of the player-characters. The beggars are particularly easy to terrify with the use of summonings and sorcery; they are superstitious and frightened by powerful magic.

When the party gets a guide, they can proceed directly to the surface. They will be harried from the rear by pursuing guards, but a little swordplay and blood keeps the beggars at bay. The gamemaster can set up a few



**18** corridors for these minor melees, or they can be played out in the abstract with a couple of die rolls. The party should feel that there is danger, but they should be confident that they can defeat the beggars, as long as they keep moving and don't get separated or surrounded.

Playing through all ten levels of mazes is certainly too much, unless the players are enjoying themselves. The gamemaster can speed the escape by permitting memory rolls as described above, or by compressing travel down through several levels of the underground complex, telling the players that their characters recognize the area and are able to find their way. The melees along the way should be strictly for dramatic effect; no pitched battles are necessary unless the players insist. For example, as the player-characters make their way across a plaza, a beggar might jump out from behind some rubble and take a swipe at a player-character; another player-character makes a return slash and the beggars scurries out of range of further attack. The better fighters in the party may turn and face the pursuing beggar guard; after a few beggars go down, the guard should lose heart and hang back in confusion, giving the player-characters a chance to outdistance them. The beggar guards fight as a mob; they make fierce disorganized charges, then panicked retreats when several beggars are wounded. Their morale is usually poor, and without Narjhan, their leader, they are particularly cowardly. If the player-characters look for the leader of the guard and eliminate him, the guard disintegrates into confused indecision. They follow the player-characters, but at a distance, screaming for help from bystanders, who of course, have better sense. Emphasize the noise and confusion that attends the escape; the player-characters should be constantly followed and preceded by mobs of spectators. At times corridors may be choked with beggars; the player-characters will be forced to drive them away before they can make progress.

The players may wonder at the contrast between the dedicated armies of beggars encountered earlier and the disorganized and terrified mobs encountered in this escape attempt. The gamemaster knows that this can be explained by Narjhan's neglecting to compel the beggars to obedience as he has in earlier conflicts, but it must remain a mystery to the players.

Narjhan is counting on his pathetic subjects to be unable to injure or recapture the player-characters. He is content to let them go on their way after Elric, and if the player-characters believe they have retained their independence and integrity, so much the better. However, as the player-characters flee Nadsokor, the beggar rabble pursues them as far as the Varkaalk River. Here as the player-characters catch their breath, the gamemaster should hand a note to Freyda's player containing a mental message sent to Freyda from Narjhan.

"Good! I respect your pride and independence. So I hereby amend my offer. You may have my help with no payment required in worship or kind; all you need do is call upon me. I require from you no honor or worship; I am content for my part in aiding a romantic and fearless mortal in her heroic challenge of forces far beyond her powers. It may be a foolish gesture, but it is certainly a brave and admirable one.

"Incidentally, my agents tell me that Elric and his friend headed along the Varkaalk river towards Troos

when they lost sight of him. Later, several of my men followed his trail to the caravan road which leads toward Org. I wish you luck in your pursuit."

If the player-characters decline or fail to escape that night, they are brought before Narjhan in the morning, where he says:

"I'm sorry you do not wish to accept my offer of assistance. Nonetheless I have no desire to constrain you; you are free to come or go as you wish. If you still wish to pursue Elric, my agents tell me that he and his friend headed along the Varkaalk River towards Troos when we lost sight of them. Later several of my men followed Elric's trail to the caravan road which leads east towards Org. I do not know what Elric plans, but Org is a dangerous place even for Elric to travel. If you insist on following him, take great care and beware of the twisted wild men of the forest."

Narjhan answers any questions the player-characters have concerning Org or the circumstances of Elric's visit to Nadsokor. Narjhan explains that Elric was simply on a social visit; though he left on less than cordial terms, Narjhan doesn't believe Elric was injured at all by the escort that Narjhan sent with him as far as the forest of Troos. About Org, Narjhan says nothing beyond what is written in sections 1.2.4.19 and 2.2.21 in the *Stormbringer* rulesbook. Narjhan says that he has never visited Org, and knows no one else who has. If the player-characters ask, Narjhan pretends to look for someone in the city who knows more, but he finds no one with useful information.

Thereafter he permits the player-characters to leave Nadsokor, offering a guide to the surface if the party wishes. He appears genuinely disappointed that the player-characters don't want his help; Narjhan offers any material assistance the player-characters might need, and he wishes them the best of luck in their mission.

Once the player-characters are out of the city and on their way to Troos, Narjhan gives Freyda a private mental message to the effect that he leaves the offer of help open, and that he requires nothing of her in return.

## Adventuring in Nadsokor

In the *Stormbringer* rulesbook the reference on Nadsokor reads: "Nadsokor would be a suitable place for adventuring. Plenty of treasure has accumulated there over the years, but in order to get it one would have to come disguised as a beggar or come with a well-armed party ready to cut down anything that got in the way." That is the rumor about Nadsokor; as usual, there is some truth and some misinformation in the rumor.

The quantity of treasure in the Nadsokor area is significant, but it is dispersed over a large area. Most of the treasure still lies buried in the ruins of Old Nadsokor and its ancient suburbs. The wilderness around Nadsokor contains the ruins of manor houses, strongholds and temples, abandoned since the invasion and conquest by Org several hundred years ago. These ruins are largely undisturbed; few adventurers venture into this area because of the bad reputation of the City of Beggars. The dangers to be faced

are considerable; Urish has not always been the docile puppet that he is under the dominion of Narjhan. Normally, Urish maintains a network of beggars spread throughout the area surrounding Nadsokor, instructed to bring news of any visitors. If anyone manages to locate treasure near Nadsokor, it is likely that Urish will hear of it and send a beggar army to unburden the successful treasure hunters. There are also wild beasts aplenty near Nadsokor and at night there are the savage forest people of Org to reckon with. Finally, the ruins themselves are often protected with ancient sorcerous guardians from the demonic planes.

In Nadsokor itself, the treasure of the King of Beggars is said to be fabulous. All things are relative; for Nadsokor the treasure is fabulous; for Bakshaan, the wealth would compare poorly with the assets of a moderately successful merchant. Most of King Urish's treasure consists of severely deteriorated artifacts from ancient Nadsokor. The Org-en conquerers looted all of the precious metals they could locate, there is almost no recognizable gold or silver. There are a few magnificent pieces of jewelry and sacramental art rescued from temple sites, but all in all the hoard is somewhat disappointing. However, players would have no way of knowing this, and they might be tempted by rumor to assault the beggar king's defenses.

Stealth is the only credible approach to Nadsokor. The entire city of Tanelorn only barely withstood the assault of the beggar army of Nadsokor through the intervention of magical support sought by Elric's companion Rackhir, a native of Tanelorn. If the player-characters have greater resources at their disposal than those of an entire city, they can probably find better things to do than to attack Nadsokor. On the other hand, sneaking into Nadsokor in disguise might be an interesting adventure. The player-characters would probably have to enlist the aid of beggar citizens of Nadsokor to discover where Urish's quarters are located and where the treasure is concealed. Urish has protected his hoard with elementals and demons as well as beggar guards. Nonetheless robbing Urish is a good project for a group of skilled thieves with a little sorcerous support.

Finally, Nadsokor could provide a noble quest for an agent or priest of the Lords of Law. The poor beggars of Nadsokor do not realize the value of the freedom they sacrifice as their price for the dubious material comfort of Nadsokor; an adherant of lawful principles might desire to free these slaves of the lords of Chaos. Taking on the whole city might be a bit too challenging for most parties, but releasing a few hundred men from the yokes of Chaos is a feasible objective for a mighty force of crusaders.

# The Kingdom of Org

The kingdom of Org is a greatly reduced remnant of the Dharzi Empire. The Dharzi are the only culture in history to have presented a true challenge to the Bright Empire of the Melniboneans. A thousand years ago the two races engaged in a protracted and destructive war. In the end, the Melniboneans prevailed and the Dharzi empire was completely destroyed. From that war began the decline of the Bright Empire, for the Melniboneans' victory was at an appalling cost.

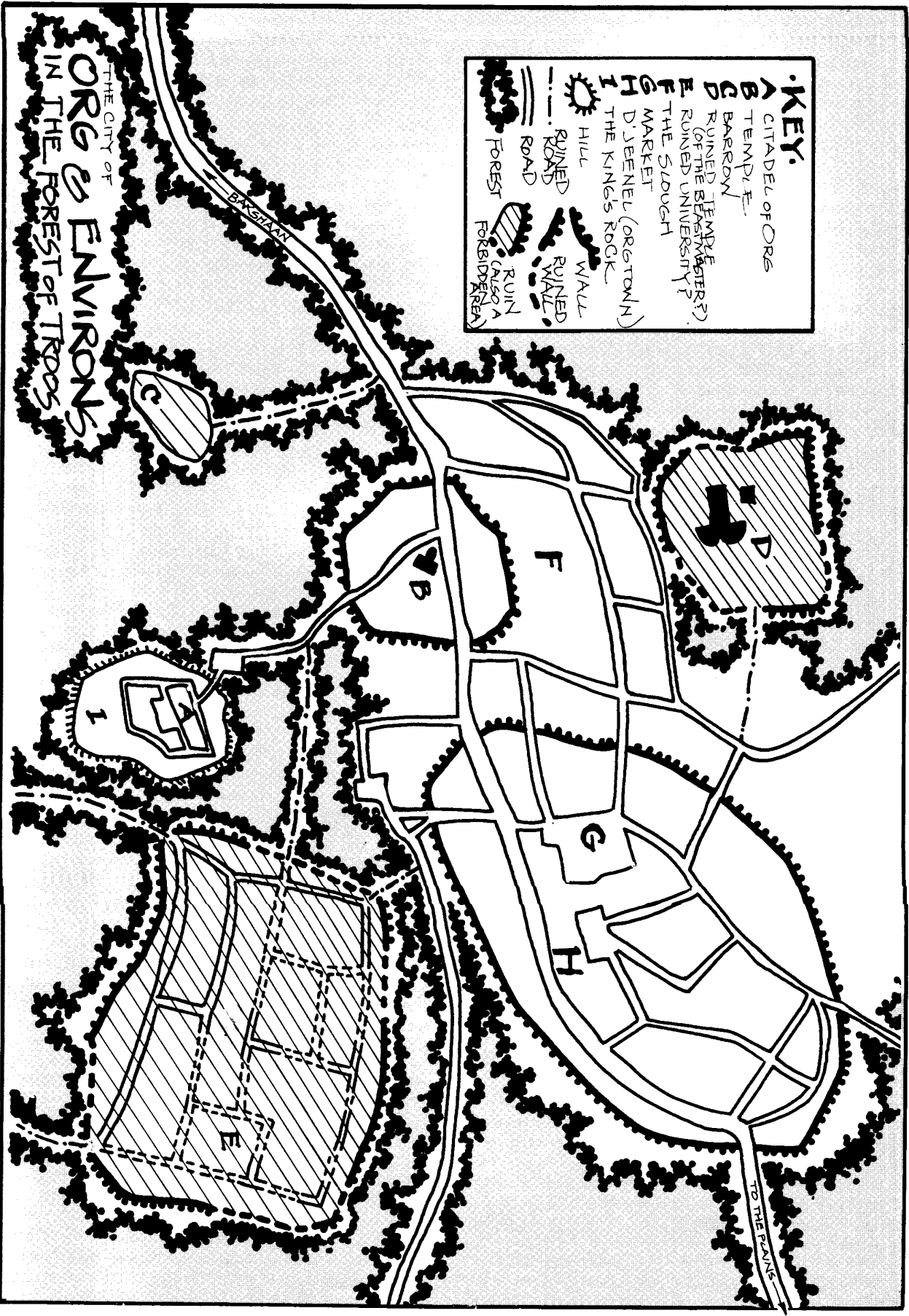
In the Young Kingdoms the recent history of the Melniboneans is well-known; in the 600 years after the war

with the Dharzi, the Melnibonean grip on the enslaved peoples of the continental provinces began to fail. Under Aubec of Malador the domination of the Bright Empire finally ended, opening the era of the Young Kingdoms. Years of previous domination by Melniboneans and occasional contact with Melnibonean raiders and refugees in the following years have kept the Young Kingdoms well-informed about the Dragon Isle and Immryr, the Dreaming City. On the other hand, the destruction of the Dharzi empire seems to be absolute, and almost nothing is known of the fate of its descendants. In the one thousand years since their defeat at the hands of the Melniboneans, the

# KEY:

- A CITADEL OF ORG
- B TEMPLE
- C BARROW
- D RUINED TEMPLE (OF THE EASTWASTER?)
- E RUINED UNIVERSITY?
- F THE SLOUGH
- G MARKET
- H D'JENEL (ORGTOWN)
- I THE KING'S ROCK
- HILL
- RUINED ROAD
- ROAD
- FOREST
- WALL
- RUINED WALL
- RUIN (ALSO A FORESIDEREN)

THE CITY OF  
**ORG & ENVIRONS**  
 IN THE FOREST OF TRODS



only traces of the once-powerful race are found in isolated ruins concealed in remote wilderness regions like the Silent Lands (though to have been the original homeland of the Dharzi).

The Kingdom of Org was a relatively insignificant colony of the Dharzi Empire, but it managed to avoid the greater ravages of the war as a result of its great distance from the coast and because of the barrier of the inhospitable wilderness that surrounded it. Here the collapse might have been delayed, though it was nonetheless inevitable. However, the current rulers of Org assert their descent in a direct line from the ancient lords of the Dharzi. Scholars are of mixed opinions about the authenticity of this assertion; no written records exist from the period of the collapse, and the evidence of legend and oral tradition is of dubious reliability. As a practical matter, Orgen ancestry is of little interest; it's just ancient history, and currently the Kingdom of Org is wretched and unimpressive.

In fact, the Orgen nobles' claim of direct descent from the lords of the Dharzi is close to the truth. The Orgen aristocracy is descended from a privileged class of slaves, half-breeds produced as the issue of unions between full-blooded Dharzi and their human slaves. The Dharzi Empire closely paralleled the Bright Empire in the use of human slaves; in the Young Kingdoms the humans managed to throw off the yoke of their servitude to the Melniboneans in Aubec's revolt of 400 years ago. In Org the humans never achieved their independence.

The Dharzi masters themselves are currently represented on this plane only by a handful of incredibly-ancient sorcerers and refugees scattered around the continents of the Young Kingdoms. As far as human culture is concerned, they have vanished from the face of the earth (which, incidentally is also partially true — most of the original race of the Dharzi traveled to other planes of existence to flee the collapse of their empire at the end of their war with Melnibone). The half-breed slaves of the ruling Dharzi masters in the Kingdom of Org seized this opportunity to establish themselves as absolute rulers in Org in the place of the ancient race. This accelerated rather than forestalled the collapse of Dharzi culture in Org; during an interregnum of several centuries the region collapsed into absolute barbarism.

It may be supposed that Org was in almost complete isolation from the affairs of the Young Kingdoms and the Melnibonean provinces that were their predecessors. The ruling class apparently managed to retain their hold on the former slaves of the Dharzi, evolving a highly stratified and conservative feudal society.

Some 350 years ago in a period of expansion, the nation of Vilmir rediscovered the Kingdom of Org and almost immediately found themselves involved in a bloody war in which they were overwhelmed by the Orgens. Vilmir abandoned the frontier (of which Nadsokor was the major city) and since has had no contact with Org except for a few minor border conflicts and a major dispute between Org and Vilmir, Bakshaan, and Rignariom (which ended indecisively, but won free passage across Org for the others) there has been little interaction with any other societies in the intervening years.

Org is a closed and static culture. A small ruling class has power of life and death over a wretched and apathetic

lower class. Org remains untouched by the agricultural, technological, and social revolutions of the surrounding city-states of Ilmiora. No middle-class of merchants or craftsmen exists. Royal warrant controls all trade. All aspects of commerce are fixed by ordinance for the pleasure and profit of favored members of the aristocracy. Innovation is discouraged. Science does not exist.

The isolation of this kingdom, a result of the grim reputation it has earned and its geographical inaccessibility, has insulated Org from the developments of civilization in the other countries of the Young Kingdoms. Though it is a society rotting from within for centuries, Org has managed to endure — a decadent survival of a less-enlightened age. The final precipitous stages of collapse, however, are already in motion.

As Elric precedes the party through Org, he initiates the chain of events that result in the final collapse of the Kingdom of Org. In fulfillment of an ancient prophesy, Elric indirectly causes the death of the last of the Dharzi-descended rulers of Org. This sets in action other forces which have been building for centuries. The player-characters appear on the scene in Org just in time to witness at first hand the collapse of a kingdom.

### The Seeds of Destruction

First: drugs — the kingdom of Org is located in the ancient and mysterious Forest of Troos. One commonly-known feature of Troos is the abundance of plants with magical properties. These plants are the sources of numerous drugs used consciously by the ruling classes of Org, both to provide pleasant diversions for themselves and to ensure the docility and compliance of the lower classes. What is not known, either by outsiders or by natives, is that all the plant life in Troos partakes of this mysterious magical essence, and everyone receives subtle and insidious doses of various substances whenever they eat anything grown in the Forest. The result is to greatly augment the drugs taken consciously, a general erosion of will, a deadening of emotions and a tendency to withdraw from reality into a fantasy world. This has its most pronounced effect in the lower classes who receive strong intentional doses from their priests and their masters; the player-characters probably find the citizens of Org unresponsive and apathetic. The members of the aristocracy consciously subject themselves to massive doses of euphoric drugs, and are scarcely more animated.

Second: the Beastlord cult — the Beastlords no longer serve the descendants of the Dharzi, but the cult has persisted as a means of controlling the Orgen masses. First, the cult promises reincarnation into the noble class for those of humility who faithfully serve their masters. Second, the primary sacrament of the cult is a powerful drug which produces a state of absolute bliss; this drug is highly addictive, and can only be obtained from the priesthood who have carefully guarded the secret of the drug's manufacture even from the ruling nobles. This produces an easily-controlled peasantry, though the control lies in the hands of the priesthood. The priests have always been loyal to the ruling nobles, but provide a destabilizing force in the struggle for control of the state that follows the death of the last of the Dharzi-descended rulers.

Third: the Cult of Leeth — this is a cult exclusively for the ruling class. It is the surviving vestige of a sorcerous

**22** ritual that produced a kind of immortality for the lords of the Dharzi. Now in its degenerate form, the ritual produces monsters and horrors as the priests seek desperately for the key to lost knowledge.

Fourth: the ruling class — this corrupt and decadent aristocracy is addicted to its vices and privileges; it offers nothing to the governance of Org other than that which fills its pockets or sates its lusts. The rulers are indifferent to the condition of the lower classes, believing them racially inferior, but the truth of the matter is that there isn't an ounce of Dharzi blood in any of them, now that Elric has caused the death of the last King of Org. The aristocrats are greedy, ignorant, snobbish, insular, resistant to change and innovation, and content to live in the shadow of past glories of the Dharzi empire, to which they have made no contribution and of which they are not worthy. The nobles' complete control over trade, limiting it to whatever satisfies the appetites of the ruling class, and their insistence on absurd, self-serving regulations that discourage the growth of commerce, has stalled the growth of towns and industry in Org.

Fifth: famine — the unreliable climate of Org has produced several years of extremely wet weather, causing blights and poor harvests. The nobles, who control the graneries and storehouses, have maintained them inside the walled towns and manor houses where they reside, intending to insure an ample supply of food for themselves, whether or not the peasants starve to death as a result of this hoarding. This has caused even the normally apathetic Orgen citizens to complain of cruel injustice.

Sixth: plague — a typical companion of famine, plague has ravaged the outlying regions of Org. Ample food and adequate medical treatment has kept the disease from gaining a foothold in the few towns, but in order to keep the disease out, the cities have been forced to close their gates and to prohibit almost all contact between the towns and the countryside. This causes problems with the food and labor supply for the towns, and adds further to the resentment held by the lower classes.

Seven: cannibalism — circumstantial evidence for this abomination has been available to visitors for years, and rumors have circulated hinting at this practice. There is little wildlife in the strange Forest of Troos, and attempts to introduce domestic meat-animals to Org have been hampered by rigid cult laws and intolerance of innovation. The lower classes of Org are vegetarians, primarily as a practical consequence of the absence of available meat, but also as a feature of cult doctrine. The noble classes are also apparently vegetarian, or at least so it would seem to travelers, since meat is never served when outsiders are present. However, the aristocracy has retained the ancient custom of the hunt. The hunt seeks the primitive savages of the deep forest; this aristocratic privilege is followed by a feast of the carcasses of the butchered quarry. It has become common practice in recent years to avoid the danger and effort of the hunt, but the feast remains customary, and instead of eating the savage beast-men, the aristocracy dines on the meat of the Orgen serf. The lower classes know of the tradition of the hunt, but they believe it to be an ancient custom that is no longer frequently practiced if it is practiced at all. They know nothing about the new customs of meat feasting. If confronted, aristocrats instantly deny any accusation of cannibalism, but subtle

evidence, like an occasional human bone found in dining refuse and kitchen areas, might give player-characters a hint of this depravity.

Eighth: decline of martial skills in the aristocracy — one of the most important forces maintaining control over the lower classes in Org was the martial prowess of the nobility. In recent years this tradition has declined into a preoccupation with gaudy arms and armor; combat training and drill has been neglected. The conflict with Bakshaan and Rignariom (that won the right of unmolested passage through Org for all caravans and travelers) could have easily been a complete military defeat for Org if it had not been for the natural obstacle presented by the Forest of Troos and the poor generalship of the forces of the united city-states. Some of the serfs who were forced to serve as cannon fodder in that war have observed the decadent aristocratic knighthood in action and may doubt their ability to quell a peasant revolt.

### The Beast Men

In the Forest of Troos exists a primitive human culture, variously referred to as the Old Race, the Forest People, or the Beast Men, as they are called in Org itself. Outside of Org the origin of this race is commonly explained as a descent into savagery of the original Dharzi race, a theory supported by the fact that the beast men speak what appears to be a simplified version of Old Orgienn, the ancestor of the modern Orgienn language, presumably related to the language of the ancient Dharzi. In more learned circles this theory has fallen into disfavor; scholars are sceptical that the Dharzis could have fallen from a high culture to a stone-age culture in just a thousand years. Further, the claim by the nobles of Org to an unbroken line of ancestry back to the Dharzi masters is a more plausible account of the descendants of the Dharzi Empire. For this reason it is supposed that this stone-age culture has survived in the isolation of the Forest of Troos for millenia — a living example of man's primitive beginnings. The Orgens take the beast men for granted, indicating that the savages have always inhabited Troos.

In fact, the beast men were created by the Lords of the Dharzi. They are descended directly from apes; through the agency of the beastmasters and powerful sorcery, the Dharzi sought to create an army of ideal warriors. This experiment came very late in the war with Melnibone and was never completed. The abomination of the beast men was one of the reasons why the Beastmasters abandoned the Dharzi and made pacts with Matik and other great Melnibonean sorcerers. In a desperate gesture the beast men were released near the end of the war. It was hoped that they might temporarily forstall the invasion of Troos that never came. The Melniboneans were so badly weakened by costly victory that the final mop-up campaigns were quietly abandoned. The half men were taught a simplified language so they could understand their masters; in fact, this language is probably the most sophisticated artifact of their culture. Many features of the beast men's culture reflect their original design as warriors. There is a strict hierarchy of authority; all members of the tribe learn fighting skills at a very early age, and at the core of the culture's traditions are rituals of combat and interspecies warfare. On the other hand many aspects of the beast men's culture must have developed in response to



their environment — for example, the hunting of other beast men as meat sources (there are no other large animals in Troos to provide meat), and the crude agriculture that supplements the gathering of wild fruits, nuts and grains.

Travelers in the Forest of Troos are always in danger of attacks from these fierce savages who raid campsites by night just as they raid other encampments of beast men, in order to obtain human flesh, or an even more prized delicacy, horse flesh. The beast men also cherish metal artifacts (particularly weapons) and flashy items decorated with gold, silver, or gems; the possession of such items confers great status within a beast men tribe.

The beast men are a remarkably hardy race; they do not use fire for warmth or cooking, though they use it for hardening wooden spear points and for other similar purposes. Their camps consist of crude lean-tos made from extremely broad-leafed plants and lashed wooden frameworks that can easily be disassembled and carried to new locations. The camps must be moved frequently because the soil near camps wears out quickly and the gathering becomes unproductive. One distinctive feature of the camps are the pens where the captive beast men are kept until they are eaten.

Raiding is perhaps the most important activity for a beast man. Aside from providing much-needed protein, the ritual of the raid can give high status to a good hunter. Children are never taken; this is a clear indication that the raids are not simply for food, because the young are vulnerable targets. Stealth and cleverness are greatly respected, but the most important virtue of all to the beast men is bravery. The raiders purposely challenge not the most weak but the most powerful enemy; there is no status gained by capturing ones' inferior. The beast men take captives rather than trying to slay their victims, since live meat lasts longer than dead meat, which spoils quickly. Ironically, this frequently permits counter-raids to free captured tribe members; the beast men often wait two or three weeks before they eat a captive. It almost seems as if they intend to invite counter-attacks, providing additional opportunities for combat.

There are two important authority figures in each tribe. One is the war leader, usually the best raider or tactician in the tribe; the other is the shaman, the source of magic, wisdom, and lore for the tribe. The shaman is sacred, and may not be attacked or taken captive in raiding; for this reason, shamens are the only individuals who can communicate freely with the other tribes. It is through the shaman that mates are selected from other tribes and through whom all the news of the beast men and the Forest of Troos must pass. The shaman is also the priest intermediary in the worship of the ghost-spirits that haunt the Forest of Troos. The visions caused by these hauntings are interpreted by the shaman, and he propitiates these spirits through the ritual sacrifice of the souls of the victims of raids on other beast men tribes.

In the past, the nobles of Org hunted the beast men much as the gentry in England goes on fox hunts nowadays, though the procuring of the meat from the victims of the hunt was once a far more important and serious matter. This was an extremely perilous sport, made doubly so by the aristocratic tradition's insistence of individual combat. The beast men are a dangerous quarry, and many a careless nobleman died horribly. The hunt has fallen

into disfavor, entailing as it does great personal courage and force of arms, two features in scarce supply among the current Orgen aristocratic stock.

### The Peasant Serf

The lower classes of Org are descended from the same original human stock that produced the peoples of the Young Kingdoms. Through centuries of poor nutrition and disease, the physical type of the Orgen peasant has come to resemble extremely feeble beast men. Careful inspection however, quickly indicates that the beast men have much coarser, more ape-like features, while the better-fed house-slaves of the aristocracy may be indistinguishable from any other Ilmioran.

The conditions enjoyed by the slave class of Org vary considerably, from the privileged servants of the rich, who suffer very little, to the overwhelming majority of agricultural and general-labor slaves who lead lives of grinding poverty, hunger, misery, and humiliation. Centuries of domination have made the slaves docile and despairing; the use of drugs to pacify the people has produced a race of near-zombies. Only the privileged slaves and the relatively small population of slave craftsmen, specialists, and townspeople are persons of any character or ambition, and usually the ambition is devoted to acquiring a steadily increasing share of the luxuries and comforts of the noble class. Still, there are a few men of the lower classes genuinely interested in relieving the plight of the Orgen slave; usually these men are those entrusted with tasks that require literacy and other specialized knowledge, particularly those that come in contact with visitors from outside — primarily traders. It is this group of men who join with the priestly class to finally overthrow the decadent nobility of the Kingdom of Org.

### The Nobility

Once the aristocracy of Org was racially distinct from the masses, in that all aristocrats were half-breed Dharzi humans, born of the relatively frequent couplings between Dharzi lords and their human slaves. In the original society of the Dharzi, these half-breeds were a privileged class of slaves, but after the disappearance of the Dharzi, these slaves aped the ways of their former masters and slipped comfortably into the power vacuum. The new aristocracy nurtured the courtly traditions of the Lords of the Dharzi, and many of these admirable and elaborate virtues are still recognizable in the corrupt and decadent practices of the ruling class or modern Org, though now only the form is observed without the substance. For example, might-of-arms was once a requirement for a proper knight; now it is sufficient to have expensive metal armor and weapons, numerous slave guards, and to be able to speak knowledgeably about the great past warriors of Org. The Orgen nobles fit every caricature and stereotype of the court fop and dandy, of the odious exploiter of the working class, of the cruel slave owner, and of the greedy and treacherous court schemer. They are drug-abusers, necromantic sorcerors, and cannibals; they are indifferent to the suffering of the masses and gladly watch the peasants starve as the nobles feast in the security of their strongholds. The nobles are vain and self-important; they treat all others as contemptible inferiors. They have no redeeming virtues whatsoever.

**24** The only exception to this rule is the priesthood of the Beastmaster Cult. Priests are drawn from the nobility of the lowest status; to be a priest is considered a demeaning job, since it requires contact with the wretched peasantry. Mostly the priesthood is cynical and corrupt – not surprising considering that the cult is a degenerate parody of the original Beasmaster Cult. However there is a small minority of priests who are troubled by the suffering of the peasants, particularly in this time of famine and plague, and though they could hardly be characterised as students of the class struggle. These priests play an important part in the coming peasant revolt.

### The Beastmaster Cult

By the end of the great war with Melnibone, the Beastmasters had forsaken the Dharzi and entered into an alliance with Matik and the master sorcerors of the Dragon Isles. The form of the Beastmaster Cult has survived the years of barbarism and the rise of the Kingdom of Org, a crude parody of the original model, the Dharzi Empire. Only the form remains.

When the Beasmasters abandoned the Dharzi, they did not abandon them absolutely; they simply refused to aid them in the summoning of monstrous beasts for the purposes of war. Those few Dharzi who still remain on the plane of the Young Kingdoms maintain sorcerous pacts with the Beastmasters, and those who have traveled to other planes left with the assistance of the Beastmasters. After the collapse of the Dharzi Empire, the Beastmaster Cult maintained some of its power, presumably through half-breed priests or full Dharzi-blood priests who remained among the refugees of the fallen civilization, though no records survive from the period to confirm this speculation.

Whatever the status of the cult in Org's distant past, it has been an empty shell for centuries. There are no priests with the skill or the will to contact the Beastmasters; the rituals are observed, but most of the sorcerous knowledge of the ancient Dharzi is forever lost. Further, there are no priestly novitates with the talent or ability necessary to summon such powerful agents as the Beastmasters, even if the academies of sorcery were still maintained. The art of sorcery is practically dead in Org, except for the sorcery practiced by the Cult of Leeth.

In place of the original religion of the Beastmasters, the priesthood has created a fraudulent institution designed to control the lower classes. The priesthood maintains the fiction that the Beastmasters will return to the Kingdom of Org after it has suffered enough for the sins of the ancient Dharzi Empire. When the Beastmasters return, the priests say, once again the Dharzi Empire will rise from the ashes of earlier civilization and return to dominate the lands of the Young Kingdoms as it once did a thousand years before.

Before the Beastmasters return, the church promises the long-suffering peasant a reincarnation as one of the exalted Dharzi line of the nobility if the peasant endures his suffering in this life with good grace and he faithfully follows the orders of his masters. An additional promised benefit of the cult is a day every week without labor; a day given over to the ritual of the cult. In this ritual, the main sacrament is a mind-numbing, ecstatic drug of great potency and duration; for one day a week the miserable

peasant can drown his suffering in the pleasant haze of a euphoric drug. The drug is extremely habit-forming and is an excellent method of maintaining control over the peasant. Crimes against the teachings of the Beasmasters or the Dharzi Lords result in imprisonment without the drug and a severe withdrawal syndrome that could easily be mistaken by the victim for the divine wrath of a god.

The priesthood itself is made up of low-status nobles who are bound to the priesthood by royal decree in their early adolescence. Assignment to the priesthood is a kind of exile, often imposed on troublesome youths or upon the offspring of nobles who fall from favor with the rulers of Org. Beastmaster priests are objects of contempt to the nobility proper; they do not take part in the life of the aristocracy, and are condemned to an existence in the company of the lower classes. The majority of the priests are bitter, cynical men, galled by their low station and the hypocrisy of their priesthood. A few priests are strong and sensitive men who have benefited from their ironic perspective of Orgen society. These men have seen the suffering of the peasants and found it repulsive; they have compared the supposedly-exalted aristocratic stock and the supposedly-inferior common stock and have found little to commend the nobles – most have discovered that the nobles are the more contemptible. In this small nucleus of priests, with a group of educated, privileged slaves of the aristocracy, lie the seeds of revolt.

### The Cult of Leeth

One remarkable feature of the ancient Dharzi culture was a sorcerous art which entailed the ritual killing of a king, bestowing on him a type of immortality that permitted him to join with the other Kings of the Dharzi in a communal consciousness that was in constant contact with the living King. Thus was the living King known as the Prince of Many Faces. This sorcery once promised the eternal guidance and protection of the rulers of the Dharzi Empire. The rituals have been lost or corrupted in the devastation which followed the Melnibonean victory a thousand years earlier. The Cult of Leeth is the surviving remnant of these sorcerous arts.

Unfortunately, none of the priests of the cult can perform the necessary Divine Intervention, having actually forgotten the names of the gods that must be invoked and most of the sorcerous rituals and chants. Further, none of the priesthood of this strictly aristocratic cult have the power or the intelligence to contact the gods and renew the pacts, even if the names, rituals, and chants were known. Finally, the original pact of Leeth (presumably a Beastmaster) was made with the Dharzi, not with the slaves of the Dharzi who have arrogated for themselves the status of the inheritor of the Dharzi civilization; it is unlikely that Leeth would honor the ancient pact, for this reason.

However, something of the ancient lore of the Cult of Leeth is retained and practiced. Most of this lore depends on the deployment of the sorcerous plants and herbs to be found in the Forest of Troos, particularly the plants used to prepare the Potion of Immortality (plants similar to those Elric used to mix his Potion of Invulnerability).

Unhappily, though the potion has undoubted efficacy, it is clear that some important aspect of the process has been lost. The ritual killings of the Kings of Org have con-

tinued, but with disappointing results, producing only insane ghosts, inert zombies with vestigial consciousnesses, and mindless ghouls. Now the rituals are performed only on the deathbed of a ruler, since the results are usually so dire, though the practice continues in the hope that it may hold the key to regaining contact with the Prince of Many Faces, the Living King of Dharzi legend.

The ghosts trouble the dreams of those who sleep in the Forest of Troos with fantastic and horrifying visions. These ghosts bring prophesies concealed in obscure symbols and verse; it is one of these verses that foretells the final fall of Org and the death of the last of the line of the Kings of Org.

The zombies are the living corpses of the royal barrow. The only sign that these are affected by the ritual is the fact that their bodies do not rot; they only dry out in a leathery caricature of the living body. There is also a disturbing sense that the things' eyes are seeing despite the fact that they do not see or respond to light. It is supposed that souls are trapped incommunicado in these corpses, and one can only imagine the horror of an eternal life condemned to observe helplessly as time passes.

The most horrible result of the ritual are the gibbering ghouls that inhabit the barrow. These ironically perhaps represent the greatest successes of the sorcerers; they are apparently immortal souls still in possession of minds and bodies. Sadly though, the minds are hopelessly insane, beyond communication with any of the living. The ghouls linger in the barrow, perhaps searching for the eternal rest that has been denied to them through the misguided sorcery of the priests of Leeth.

When these creatures are encountered in the barrow, they single-mindedly attempt to overwhelm and devour anything living. In a desperate and hopeless gesture to appease these ancient spirits, the priests of Leeth periodically offer human sacrifices by forcing victims into the barrow — this practice does no good, but it maintains the appearance that the priests know what they are doing. This ritual of human sacrifice is accepted by the Orgens as a powerful sacrament to the ancestors of Org, the Dharzi Masters, and is jointly practiced by the Beastmaster Cult and the cult of Leeth at the direction of the Kings of Org, who appreciate the value of spectacle and horror in maintaining control over the populace. It is to this ritual that the player-characters become the unwitting victims after the outbreak of the peasant rebellion. The priests of the Beastmaster cult, afraid of losing control of the populace and hopeful of ending up in power if the people can be awed by the power of the cults, attempt to put on a show by feeding the souls of the evil foreigners to the Ancient Kings. They say this is in atonement for the crimes of the nobles in conspiring with the outsiders to betray the heritage of the Dharzi and the Beastmasters by ruthlessly assassinating the priesthood of the Cult of the Beastmasters.

### The Forest of Troos

The origin of the Forest of Troos is open to speculation, but it is likely that the Dharzi brought from another plane the magical plants that thrive in the forest. Another possibility is that the entire forest is from another plane, transported here by awesome magical power. Attempts to transplant and cultivate the magical plants of the Forest

have been futile. It is suggested that there is some magic in the earth itself rather than in the plants, or a powerful enchantment that works on the entire area.

In any case, the plants of Troos are invaluable to sorcerers throughout the Young Kingdoms, and many adventurers come to the Forest of Troos to bear away the precious plants to be sold at tremendous prices in the civilized capitals of the world. This is a dangerous business, since it is unlawful for an outsider to cut or to gather the plants of Troos; if caught the penalty is death. (This is a convenient pretext for the nobility of Org to eliminate undesirable visitors.) It is also against the law for peasants to cut down trees or to clear land in the Forest; this accounts for the terrible scarcity of agricultural lands in Org. Peasants are only permitted to gather nuts, berries, roots, and other foodstuffs.

One unusual feature of the Forest of Troos is that there are no beasts there, save the beast men of the Forest. This is thought to be a scourge visited upon the Dharzi by the Beastmasters from the period of the Dharzi-Melnibone wars; there are no records or memories of wild animals of any kind having ever been in Troos, and it may be that there were never any creatures there. There seems to be no reason why domestic animals could not be introduced, save that it is against the doctrine of the Cult of the Beastmasters. Horses and oxen apparently take no harm from grazing along the caravan roads on the passage through Troos, but the fact that animals have not moved to Troos from the surrounding forestland suggests that there is something preventing them.

As discussed in the section describing the Cult of Leeth, the insane ghosts of the former Kings of Org haunt the Forest of Troos. These spirits account for a great deal of the supernatural nature of Troos. At night, travelers often experience horrifying dreams and visions; these visions are strongest and most persistent when the moon is full. Occasionally these experiences extend into daydreams, particularly if native foods are eaten. (Native foods contain subtle amounts of substances that make men sensitive to these ghostly manifestations.) The natives of Org are also plagued by these experiences, and both commoners and nobles chew roots with soporific effects to induce a deep, dreamless sleep.

## Player Information

The caravan road through Troos is ancient but durable; the Lords of the Dharzi who inhabited this region were redoubtable sorcerers and engineers.

The present day inhabitants of Org are thought to be related to the ancient Dharzi race. These people worshiped the Beast Lords and are thought to have had great sorcerous powers, particularly over various creatures either created or summoned by magic. A thousand years ago, the power of the Dharzi was broken by the Melniboneans; the war apparently greatly-weakened the Melniboneans, ultimately enabling the forces of Law under the hero, Aubek of Malador, to cast off the domination of the Melnibonean slave-masters, so the Dharzi must have been powerful indeed.

No human knows exactly what happened to the Dharzi race. Some believe the current inhabitants of the Forest

**26** of Troos are degenerate descendents of the Dharzi; others suggest that the Dharzi traveled to another universe, leaving this one to the death throes of the Melniboneans. Some suggest that the Dharzi still lurk in dark corners of the Young Kingdoms, secretly growing in knowledge and power, waiting for their chance for revenge upon the Melniboneans. Some say the Dharzi have joined the gods of Chaos; others say the gods of Law.

The Forest of Troos is thought to be the work of the Dharzi or of their descendants. The vegetation is surely enchanted; many herbs of sorcerous use are found in the Forest, and intrepid adventurers often come seeking these plants, knowing that they can find an eager and remunerative market for the plants when they return to civilization. There are many strange tales about the Forest. Many say that at night the lush vegetation moves about and acts like wild beasts, ambushing and devouring careless travelers. Others say that the air itself in Troos is poisonous, that strange drugs are inhaled with every breath causing horrible nightmares. Sometimes travelers are affected with hallucinations even during the day. Many suggest that it is foolish to eat anything found in the Forest of Troos; it is considered a wise practice to eat only from preserved food stores. The very careful don't even drink the water in the forest. Alchemists and herbalists often study the strange, reddish waters of Troos; though they all agree that strange substances can be found in the water, they all admit to having no idea what effects those substances might have on humans.

A commonly-acknowledged danger of Troos is the culture of half-wild humans called the beast men. These primitive peoples have crude and animal-like features; they are known to be savage and are reputed to be cannibals. They are said to practice human sacrifice and to worship their dead ancestors, whom they believe are not strictly dead. These creatures are frequently thought to be responsible for most of the raids on small caravans in the Forest of Troos, but they don't seem to bother larger caravans. The beast men are fierce and brutal in their dealings with other humans; no one has ever managed to get close enough to them to study their language. There appears to be some relationship between this language and the language of the people that currently inhabit the Kingdom of Org.

The people of the Kingdom of Org proper bear a striking resemblance to the description given by those who claim to have encountered the beast men. There has been speculation that the ruling class of Org is of a different racial stock than are the peasants, being taller, more robust, and comparatively light-complexioned. The Kingdom is said to be harsh and repressive in its administration, and few visit the citadel of Org unless accompanied by an ample bodyguard. In fact, it is hard to imagine how the population of Org manages to provide for itself; there is apparently no hunting in the Forest of Troos, and there is little evidence of agriculture along the caravan route.

## Gamemaster Notes

Elric's recent visit through the Forest of Troos and his visit to the citadel of Org is recounted in "Kings in Dark-

ness," from the book *The Bane of the Black Sword* by Michael Moorcock. It is told how Elric met Zarozinia, his Bride-to-be, in the Forest of Troos. After an ineffective ambush by the primitive forest folk, Elric concocts an elixir of invulnerability and attempts to masquerade as a god when he visits the King of Org. The King sees through Elric's trick and takes Elric, Moonglum, and Zarozinia prisoner. Elric is chained atop a great burial barrow, where he is attacked by leprous white ghouls. These are ancestors of the ruling class of Org rendered immortal, though insane, by the rituals of the Cult of Leeth. Elric defeats the ghouls with help from Arioch, and goes to free Zarozinia and Moonglum. In the process the blood of one of the last surviving members of the ruling class is spilled in the barrow tomb of the King from the Hill. In fulfillment of an ancient prophesy, the King of the Hill rises from the dead to bring about an end to the line of the rulers of Org. After making a clean sweep of his descendants, the undead king attacks Elric, who manages to push the creature into a fire and escape. The great hall of Org burns.

So what is left for Freyda's party to find? First, the primitive forest folk are hardly affected by the turmoil in the kingdom of Org, though rumors of its destruction and the part Elric played have come through the oral news service of the beast men's shamans. The beast men raid and ambush travelers as they always have, searching for precious metal artifacts and delicious human flesh, their only source of meat. Perhaps many tribes of the savages come closer to the borders of civilization once they learn of the booty to be claimed in the ruins as order begins to fail in the Kingdom. Scattered beastmen raids become increasingly frequent day by day after the fall of Org.

The party can follow Elric's trail to the ruined citadel of Org, where the player-characters may inquire about Elric's passage. If the player-characters do not voluntarily go to the citadel, they are captured and brought there by the Orgen citadel guard under the pretext of illegally gathering the plants of Troos. The party falls afoul of a struggle between the nobles and the priests for control of the kingdom of Org; the King attempts to use the player-characters as his agents to assassinate the important head priests of the Beastmaster Cult. The player-characters are not told of this plot, but the priest get wind of it and lead the lower classes in a bloody revolt that slaughters every representative of the noble class that can be found. Then, after the nobles have been executed, the priest decide to make a human sacrifice of the party to the ancestral Kings of Org — the ghouls faced by Elric at the barrow. The party must find someone who knows where Elric has gone.

The gamemaster may prepare additional adventures for the player-characters in the Kingdom of Org. The greedy might be drawn in search of treasure in the barrows and tombs of a kingdom where the people honor their dead by burying them with their most prized possessions. The ruins of Org itself might also yield treasure, particularly the collapsed Great Hall where the King and his guests perished in the great fire caused by Elric in his recent passage. The party may also encounter other scavengers — primitive forest folk looking for valuable objects and not-yet-spoiled meat, or famine-crazed peasants seeking stores of food hidden by the ruling class. The people of Org, bewildered with the loss of their rulers, and swept into a

mighty rebellion by their priests, might also offer scenario opportunities.

## Night Ambush

When the player-characters leave Nadsokor and follow Elric's escape route from the City of Beggars, they find the spot where Elric and Moonglum emerged from the Varkaalk river on horseback. The two riders made immediately for the caravan road and headed east in the direction of the city of Org. The trail is clear, the hoofprints are distinct in the soft, thick grass that grows atop the road, and two solitary travelers headed for the Forest of Troos are unusual enough to be distinctive. Since Elric has no reason to suspect that he is being followed, he has taken no precautions to cover his trail, and the player-characters are no more than a few days behind him.

If the player-characters obtained appropriate maps in anticipation of the need to pursue Elric beyond Nadsokor, they can estimate that the Forest of Troos is about sixty miles across by the caravan route and that the citadel of Org is a little more than half that distance. The player-characters can travel about fifteen miles per day through the forest; at that rate there must be at least two overnight camps in the forest. The player-characters should be familiar with the common rumors about Org and about the Forest of Troos; if they have sought further information before setting out on the journey, they might have more detailed and reliable information.

Daytime travel is peaceful and without incident along the ancient road. As the player-characters travel, Plant and Poison Lore specialists notice that a rare profusion of useful plants grow wild in the Forest of Troos. Plants appropriate to all skill levels (1-10) of Plant Lore are available

here. If the player-characters are willing to delay long enough, almost any plant is available. It is up to the game-master to decide what plants are available and how much time must be spent looking for them. The players ought to be able to find enough plants to make some useful healing poultices and potions (skill level 5 & 6) in a reasonable amount of time; more extraordinary effort should be required to find attribute-affecting drug components found in skill level 9. 2D6 poultices (level 5) and 1D6 potions (level 6) can be made from the plants gathered. Be sure characters use the Plant Lore skill successfully.

The player-characters should organize a watch schedule and a camp layout for their evening bivouac. An ambush by a raiding band of beast men should take place on the second night (the number of attackers should be adjusted to balance the number of player-characters). The tactics of the ambushers are simple; surround the camp and sneak forward until an alarm is raised, then charge to the attack. First the gamemaster should make Move Quietly rolls for the attacking savages. If any fail the roll, player-characters on watch hear a suspicious sound. If an attacker misses his Move Quietly by 50 percentiles or more, the noise is so loud that it might wake sleeping player-characters. Roll the Listen skill for each sleeping party member; if the roll is a success, the character wakes up.

Next, if the watch hears a sound, they must make See rolls at minus 40 percentiles for darkness and forest cover. Just-awakened characters cannot try this roll. If the See roll is successful, roll the Hide skill of each of the attackers; each one who fails the roll is visible to player-characters who were successful with the See skill. Roll a D3; this is the number of turns that the attackers hesitate before rushing into combat. If the watch neither hears nor sees the attackers, or if no watch is set and everyone is asleep, roll D4-1 for each player-character to see how many turns he





**28** is surprised and unable to respond. Any character who insists on spending the night in his armor must roll below his CON x3 or he stays up all night receiving no credit for rest or sleep. The gamemaster should apply appropriate penalties to all skills in such a case; a penalty of 25% per skill is suggested per day without sleep. Anyone who owns metal armor is presumed to be sleeping in his leather or cloth padding, worth 1D6-1 points of protection. It takes each character 5 turns to don his armor, during which time he cannot dodge. Each player-character needs one turn to gather weapon and shield after he wakes up; during that period he may Dodge or look for his attackers. Any character awakened by an alarm from the watch or by a noise from the wood must succeed with the See skill to find an opponent in the dark or he is attacked by surprise for the first melee turn. These conditions should be adjusted by the gamemaster as circumstances require.

The player-characters are outnumbered, and they might not be adequately armed or armored when they are attacked. On the other hand, the attack is not desperate or insane; if more than one or two ambushers are seriously wounded or killed, check the morale of each attacker by rolling his INT x5 or less on percentile dice to avoid panicked flight into the woods. Add 10 percentiles to each beastman's chance to run away if sorcery has been employed. If the party is careful setting watches, and their camp is arranged to make attack difficult, the player-characters should escape serious injury.

The gamemaster should arrange that at least one attacker is badly enough wounded that he collapses unconscious and is taken prisoner by the party. However, the creature speaks only a degenerate form of ancient Orgjenn, and the player-characters will have difficulty communicating with him. Several approaches are possible.

One: a sorcerer can summon a Demon of Desire and request translation.

Two: the players and the gamemaster can try using sign language and gesture to communicate.

Three: the gamemaster can decide that Ancient Orgjenn is close enough to its modern equivalent that a player-character who speaks modern Orgjenn can understand the beastman.

If the player-characters manage to communicate with the creature, it explains that it was hunting the party as meat, as do all beast men; humans are the only creatures in the forest and the only sources of meat. The creature does not recognize the name Elric, but if the albino is described to him, the beast man recognizes Elric as the God Who Doesn't Bleed. Rumors have flashed through the tribes of a man-shaped god who was struck by axes, yet left unhurt. He was said to be visiting the King of Org with good news, yet Org itself has burned to the ground and the invulnerable god has disappeared. Shamen say that the gods were offended and that they destroyed the citadel in their great rage at man's blasphemy. He says that many forest people tribes have gone to the ruins of the Eternal City to learn the work of the god, but that the chief of his tribe was afraid of the evil spirits and angered gods. The player-characters may attempt to impersonate gods to get cooperation from the savage beast men; these primitive creatures are certainly superstitious enough to fall for such a trick. Using sorcery would make such an imposture convincing to the beast men.

It is possible that the beast men will succeed in taking a captive and dashing off into the forest. In this case it is necessary for the player-characters to follow the raiding band back to the tribe's camp and rescue the captive from the beast men's table. In a small beast man camp there are from six to ten family groups, each with a male family head, several mates, and unmated females and children. Young, unmated males sleep in a single bachelors quarters that is near the wooden cage used to imprison captives. A daytime raid will be nearly unopposed; the men of Troos are practically nocturnal, and it is taboo to make attacks during the day. Though the beast men do not ordinarily negotiate for the release of prisoners, the creatures are intelligent and can comprehend displays of force intended to convince the forest folk to surrender the captive to prevent serious bloodshed; a good tribal leader is aware that it is foolish to weaken the tribe in a lopsided conflict.

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#### Beast Men Chief

STR 16	CON 18	SIZ 11	INT 11	POW 11
DEX 12	CHA 13	HP 18	Armor: none	

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
hatchet	45%	45%	2D6+1
spear	40%	40%	2D6+1
spear (thrown)	45%	—	1D8+2+1D4
punch	14%	—	1D3+1D6

SKILLS: Ambush 70%, Balance 15%, Climb 45%, Conceal 20%, Dodge 40%, Hide 50%, Jump 20%, Listen 40%, Move Quietly 50%, Plant Lore 35%, Scent 60%, Search 20%, See 50%, Set Trap 60%, Speak Old Orgjenn 70%, Swim 10%, Tumble 10%.

#### Average Beast Men

STR 14	CON 15	SIZ 11	INT 10	POW 11
DEX 9	CHA 9	HP 15	Armor: none	

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
hatchet	40%	41%	1D6+1
spear	35%	35%	1D6+1
spear (thrown)	30%	—	1D8+2
punch	12%	—	1D3

SKILLS: Ambush 30%, Balance 15%, Climb 40%, Conceal 20%, Dodge 29%, Hide 44%, Jump 20%, Listen 38%, Move Quietly 45%, Plant Lore 20%, Scent 60%, Search 14%, See 39%, Set Trap 51%, Speak Old Orgjenn 70%, Swim 10%, Tumble 10%.

Beast Man 1	Beast Man 5	Beast Man 9
DEX 12 HP 18	DEX 11 HP 16	DEX 9 HP 16
Beast Man 2	Beast Man 6	Beast Man 10
DEX 12 HP 15	DEX 9 HP 14	DEX 8 HP 15
Beast Man 3	Beast Man 7	Beast Man 11
DEX 11 HP 16	DEX 9 HP 15	DEX 8 HP 18
Beast Man 4	Beast Man 8	Beast Man 12
DEX 11 HP 13	DEX 9 HP 14	DEX 6 HP 10

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## The City of Org

The day after the night ambush a heavy rain begins to fall in the forest. The rain continues all day and throughout

the rest of the party's stay in the Kingdom of Org, and in a matter of hours it becomes more and more difficult to follow Elric's trail. The caravan road leads clearly ahead, however, and by the end of the day a player-character with a map could estimate that the party is only an hour or so from the City of Org, where it might be possible to learn Elric's whereabouts. Elric had to travel through the city and it seems unlikely that his passage would have gone unmarked, particularly if the player-characters are aware of the rumors of Elric's part in the death of the last King of Org.

The player-characters can push and reach the citadel after dark or they can set up camp in the rain and set off again in the morning. If the party decides to push on to Org, they find when they arrive that no one will let them into the citadel, the temple, or the walled city. If they try to climb the walls, the player-characters are attacked and probably taken prisoner by guards or pursued until they are captured or have escaped into the forest. If they are captured, the player-characters are placed in the dungeon of the citadel until the next morning when they are brought before the King of Org.

If the player-characters seek hospitality from peasants, they find suspicion and distrust; however, if the party pays its way with food they are eagerly welcomed. If the player-characters choose, they can camp in the nearby forest and wait for morning. The rain continues throughout the night.

As the player-characters traveled along the caravan road, they noticed an absence of small towns and villages near the city of Org. The only evidences of human habitation are small hovels that are barely visible, set far off the road and deep in the forest. Occasionally a peasant or two is seen; the peasants physically resemble the wild forest folk, but are marginally more civilized in appearance, wearing clothing (horribly worn out and filthy) and sometimes carrying baskets or backpacks for gathering the strange vegetables and fruits which grow in the forest. From time to time the player-characters notice peasants moving about furtively in the gloomy darkness of the woods as though they are observing the party in its travels.

The peasants seem insensitive to the rain and do not respond at all to player-character attempts to hail or greet them. They retreat from contact, melting away into the woods like deer; if a player-character approaches a hut, the inhabitants tumble out and run for the woods. Even as the player-characters approach the citadel, there seem to be no villages or clusters of houses nearby, and no one else is met traveling on the road all day.

There are numerous dirt tracks leading off from the caravan road that are not listed on any map. These are roads to the manors and strongholds of the Orgen aristocracy. Usually the upper classes do not live on their holdings; instead they live in the city of Org itself, the center of aristocratic culture in the Kingdom, and leave the maintenance and administration of their estates to favored slaves. Such slaves are amply rewarded with luxuries and privileges if they successfully manage the holdings to turn a profit for the noble lords. In fact, the most oppressive slave-drivers in Org are not among the upper classes but among the ambitious privileged slave class. These men are often the most harsh and brutal in their

treatment of the slaves to please their masters and to improve their own wealth and status. The few peasants that the player-characters see along the caravan route are all under the domination of one lord or another; these wretches gather roots, fruits, nuts, and edible plants from the Forest of Troos and deliver them to their masters' storehouses. Actually these are the most fortunate of the servile classes in Org; they at least usually have enough to eat, unlike their cousins in the more densely populated regions immediately surrounding the City of Org.

As the player-characters draw closer to Djeenel (as the Orgens call the City of Org), population density quickly increases. Larger sections of cleared land under agriculture and occasionally a noble's manor are visible from the road. Nobles' manors are imposing structures built of stone on sites carefully selected for their strategic command of the surrounding terrain. However, routine practices like maintaining a cleared zone around the outside walls have been neglected, and there is no evidence of martial preparedness. No patrols and no guards restrict the entrances to these strongholds; there is no sign of guards on the ramparts. It seems as though, in Org, security is taken for granted.

## The City

As the player-characters approach the city, the effects of famine and disease become obvious. Gaunt men wander the streets begging for food, collapsing along the roadside; there is a foul smell of death in the air. Victims of the plague approach the player-characters, mumbling deliriously, beseeching party members to do some favor that is garbled unintelligibly on swollen lips and tongues. Starving children sit listlessly on the road, oblivious of events around them. Among the clustered huts of small peasant villages there are piles of ashes and bones from the burning of plague victims. The air is filled with a nauseating odor. Here the manor and stronghold gates are carefully guarded, the entrances are resolutely sealed.

When the party reaches the city of Org, they see the first large-scale construction they have seen since Nadso-kor. Only a relatively small area is free of the Forest of Troos; the citadel itself is located in the Forest on a rise that overlooks the whole town; it is a forbidding fortress designed to withstand the most dedicated assault. Also visible from the caravan road is the walled city called Orgtown (Djeenel in Orgjenn), a fortified temple, and a ruined temple site. Not visible from the caravan road, but clear on maps, is the ancient and abandoned site of a city that was probably Org's precursor. Throughout the rest of the clear terrain may be viewed hundreds of peasant huts jammed close together. Open land is so scarce in Org that the agricultural slaves live in compact squalor to free up land for cultivation.

The player-characters have several choices of where to go at this point. They can attempt to gain entry to the temple, the walled city, or to the citadel, they can try to talk to the peasants, or they can investigate the ruined temple or city sites.

## Ruins of the Ancient City and the Beastmaster Temple

Visiting the ruins is forbidden. There are no guards at the sites, since no native would think to disobey a royal de-

**30** cree, but if the player-characters attempt to approach the sites, agitated peasants anxiously warn the party that the areas are forbidden and dangerous; if the player-characters ignore the peasants, several of their number run to tell the guards at Djeneel and the citadel. There is nothing obvious to be found among the ruins in the brief time the player-characters have to search before the guards show up and take them into custody for disobeying the orders of the king.

The ruins of the ancient Dharzi city and the original Beastmasters temple are a thousand years old; anything of value has long since been scavenged. The only exception is the library of a university in the old city; it has been exhaustively searched for metals and artifacts, and in the process the contents of the library have been repeatedly ransacked and devastated, but the scavengers were not seeking knowledge, and fragments of many scrolls and books lie about the library in poor to terrible condition. Most of the parchment leaves and scrolls are hopelessly ruined by exposure to the elements, but a surprising number of fragments have been protected under vast piles of manuscripts and scroll sheaths. Further, in several collapsed sections of the library, excavations have revealed almost untouched shelves and cabinets of ancient writings; these items have been somewhat protected from the elements by the remaining walls and timbers. Since the crews that excavated these sites had no interest in manuscripts, they have been rather carelessly shoved aside in search for more traditionally valuable materials, but are quite convenient to the inspection of the player-characters. The writings are all in Old Orgjenn, and probably unreadable by the player-characters, but would be of great interest to scholars outside of Org. The gamemaster should determine the contents of the library for the players if they can speak Old Orgjenn; most of the material is as useless to adventurers as a randomly-examined shelf in a public library. Without a knowledge of the social context of the writings, even if the language were translated, most of the contents would have little significance to the player-characters. However, if the gamemaster wishes, he may use the library as a vehicle for filling in the players on the background history of Org. This city survived the immediate collapse of the Dharzi Empire for about a century, as the rest of Org slipped into barbarism, and the player-characters might be able to figure out certain details such as the identity of the modern Org nobility as the descendants of the Dharzi slaves, or the original nature of the Cult of Leeth and the Prince of a Thousand Faces.

### The Beastmaster Temple

The player-characters are pointedly and resolutely refused entrance to the Temple of the Beastmasters, which is well-guarded, particularly now with the threat of infection from plague. The player-characters are directed to the citadel to speak with the royal clerks; if the player-characters persist, the priests order the guards to open fire on the player-characters with their bows. The temple is only open on SevenDay; during the rest of the week, the priests supposedly busy themselves with scribes tasks for the nobility or in the study of ancient texts. Many priests while away the hours with slave women and drugs; only a few are naive enough to believe that the Beastmasters ever heed the prayers of the Orgen. A very few priests busy them-

selves in the relief of the wretched peasantry, attempting to heal the diseased and afflicted, or to soften the effects of the famine. The life expectancy of these few virtuous souls is short; most succumb to plague and other diseases contracted from the peasants or from despair at the hopelessness of the fate of Org and its people. There is no chance that the player-characters will meet such good men at the temple; the head priests are careful to prevent contact with foreigners, particularly for the impressionable do-gooders. However, there is a small chance that one of these men is encountered if the party spends time among the peasants.

### The Walled City of Djeneel

This walled town is unlike any that the player-characters have visited before, unless one is of Orgen ancestry. Towns generally develop with the growth of commerce and a free citizenry, factors absent from Orgen society. Here a privileged class of slaves who directly serve the aristocracy replaces the freemen and merchants of a typical town, and the source of wealth and the reason for centralization is the social life of the aristocracy. In effect, this is a great noble city, divided into the different holdings of the aristocratic families of Org. Each city block is a manorial holding; the few communal institutions, like the market square and the parks, are crude imitations of city features elsewhere, maintained and administered by slaves who cooperate under rigidly-defined royal orders. For example, what appears to be a typical market is oddly devoid of bargaining; there are no crowds of peasants purchasing things for themselves. In fact, it is clear that no money changes hands. A merchant records each transaction, and a slave bears the merchandise back to his master's hall.

The manors are designed like tiny fortresses, though it is clear that the defenses are more fashionable than practical. In fact, the King regulates the construction of defenses within Djeneel, preventing nobles from building truly effective fortifications, thus forcing different noble families to acknowledge their vulnerability to each other. The balances of power among the nobles and between the nobles and the King are delicate and subtle, but the intensely conservative psychology of the Orgen society has prevented the tipping of the scales for several centuries. Nonetheless, a shrewd observer in Org might recognize how fragile and vulnerable the society is to relatively gentle pressure exerted in the right places.

The player-characters are not admitted into or let out of the city before dawn or after sunset; further, if they do not have merchant's credentials personally confirmed in writing from the King or his chancellor, they may not enter the city at all. If the player-characters can produce such documents, they are taken to the market's Administrator of the Day; a post occupied by a servant from a different noble house each day. The Administrator of the Day examines the merchants' wares and dismisses them to an inn which is maintained strictly for visitors to Djeneel. The visitors are warned not to leave the inn without an escort; there are servants at the inn who act as tour guides to conduct visitors on a brief walking tour of Djeneel. Otherwise no one is allowed to leave the inn until the following day, when the merchants are summoned before the market administrator, who tells them what they will be

paid for the goods. The merchants have little option in the matter; they must take what is offered, no matter how unreasonable. It is not permitted to withdraw goods from consideration because the price is too low; such is considered poor bargaining etiquette, and the merchant finds his license to trade revoked. If the administrator wishes, he can impound a merchant's goods on a number of legal pretexts if he believes that the nobility he represents will be eager to get their hands on the merchandise.

With such unfair trade practices, it is a wonder that merchants bother trading in Org. However, the rewards are potentially great. Since magical plants are abundant in the Forest of Troos, the Orgens have little notion of their value. Indeed the level of sophistication in the sorcerous uses of these plants is remarkably low in this region; few have any idea of the value of any given species of plant or to what uses a plant may be put. A merchant may make his order (a request for certain goods) to the market administrator. The merchant then goes back to the inn to await a summons. When the order is filled, the merchant is once again summoned to the market, given his goods, and told what he must pay for them. The price is invariably far less than the real value of the plants in the outside world, though to the Orgens it seems extravagant. The only danger a merchant must avoid is that of having insufficient credit or gold to cover the purchase; if a merchant's order is valued in cost to be more than the merchant can pay, it is considered an extreme breach of etiquette. The goods are withdrawn from consideration, the merchant is expelled from Org in disgrace, and his license to trade in Org is immediately revoked. Since it is almost impossible to anticipate the value an administrator will place on any given item in an order, it is wisest to make modest orders and to make sure that ample reserves of gold and silver are available for payment.

To add to the risks of trade in Org, there is a capricious element of the nobles' whim. Not infrequently, nobles visit the market and the inn if there are merchants in town. Nobles hold merchants in low esteem in Org, since such entrepreneurs are willing to give up their possessions under the regulations established by the king; such a thing is unthinkable for a noble in Org. On the other hand, the nobles resent the freedom and wealth of these low-status individuals, and they seek to humiliate merchants whenever possible. In one respect merchants are extremely vulnerable; since a merchant is willing to sell some things, it is presumed that he is willing to sell anything — any of his own possessions. On typical ploy is for a noble to admire a merchant's clothing, then demand that the clothes be sold to him — delivery immediately. Shrewd and well-established merchants have so managed to talk themselves out of enough uncomfortable situations that they enjoy a certain respect and immunity from such abuse. New merchants can expect the full treatment, and it is considered foolish to take anything to Org that you are unwilling to lose.

Unfortunately, anyone in a merchant's party is subject to the same abuse; if a player-character refuses to sell an item, he or she can expect either to be ejected from Org or to be imprisoned for disrespect to a Lord of Org, and the merchant whom the player-character accompanies loses his license to trade. For example, suppose a noble takes a fancy to the ring worn by a sorcerer — the binding token of a demon of combat. Though it is extremely unlikely

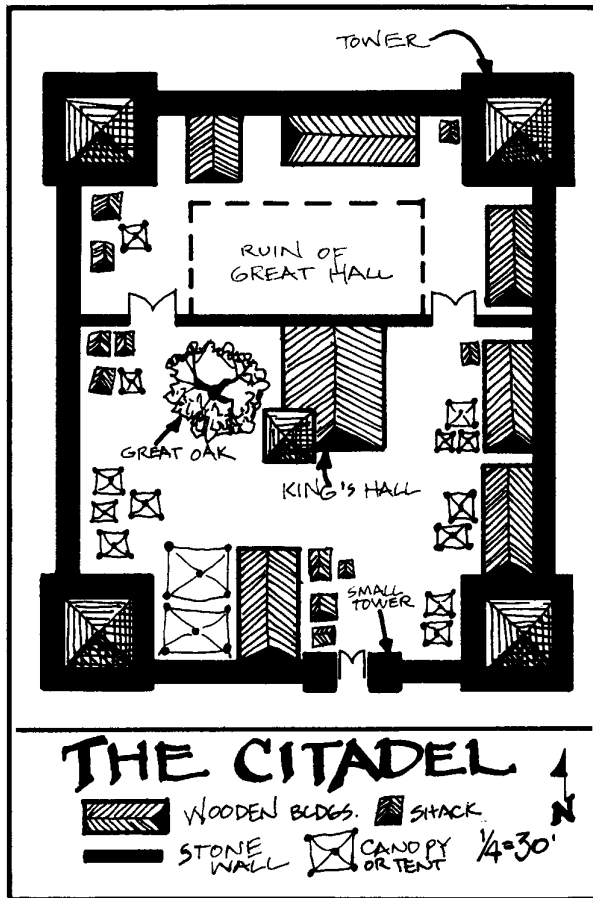
that the noble would recognize the significance of the token (Orgen nobles are marvelously ignorant), he still might be able to compel the sorcerer to surrender the ring on threat of imprisonment. In return, the noble might offer several bushels of corn — a fair price in Org, but unlikely to satisfy the sorcerer.

There are over forty noble families maintaining manors in Djeneel; each manor is presumably full of valuable treasures — relics of the Dharzi Empire, gems, coins, jewelry, all the trappings of an exploitative luxury class. Each manor has many slave guards similar in skills and equipment to the citadel guards, along with noble knights well-provided with armor and weapons, though somewhat remiss in the honoring of their martial tradition (only of average fighting ability). It is not anticipated that the player-characters will assault or burglarize these manors — access to the city is limited and irrelevant to the player-characters' objectives — but the gamemaster may develop his own adventures to accommodate enthusiastic players. A gamemaster needs a low wall and defenses, a force of guards (the stats for the citadel guards are appropriate), a floor plan of the manor (draw one or use a floor plan borrowed from a historical text from your local library), a cast of nobles (use noble stats from the citadel and provide brief non-player-character sketches), and a roster of treasures. Alternatively, the gamemaster could call out the guards from neighboring manors and arrange for the capture of the burglars or attackers, who should be sent immediately to the citadel for imprisonment or sentencing; this requires somewhat less preparation from the gamemaster, and more fairly reflects the dubious prospects of brigandry in Org.

### The Peasant Quarter

The entire area west of Djeneel is the peasant quarter; the Forest of Troos is unusually dense here and few peasants live among the trees and dense undergrowth. The peasant quarter is comprised of a large number of mud and sod huts of great antiquity. Only the large thoroughfares shown on the map are open to sizable traffic; the rest of the quarter is a chaotic maze of huts and narrow passages. Here famine and plague are rampant in their effects upon the population; a full quarter of the people are disabled in some way by disease or starvation. Corpses litter the streets; starving children linger listlessly near doorways, following any motion with vacant, uncomprehending eyes. Incessant rain has turned the entire quarter into a deep, clinging quagmire; a dying man leans against the walls of a hut, covered with brown mud, staring blankly, gap-jawed as the rain churns the dark pools that surround him. Those who are able are driven into the fields by the overseers during the day; they return late at night and collapse in their damp, cold huts. The pitiful food allotments arrive in the evening, just after the workers return; the amount is paltry, the quality and condition is appalling. Those with the strength to eat, feed the weak and sick; the doomed are left to starve as their rations are apportioned to those less hopelessly-ill.

Into this horror come a few priests of the Beastmaster; they do what they can with potions and Healing Lore to restore and maintain the strength of the survivors; they attempt to comfort the condemned and sanctify the dead. Most of their gestures are futile — their resources are incommensurate with the need of the peasants — but



people look upon these men as saints and cling desperately to any hope that they offer for salvation or survival.

The peasants know nothing about Elric's adventures at the citadel; they only know of an immortal god who visited the citadel and struck down with fire and destruction the sinful King. They have little energy to wonder at this, in the midst of their misery, and never in the past have the affairs of the citadel had any prospect of lessening their suffering. There has, however, been some whispered talk among the priest and the more spirited peasants about a return of the Beastmasters, the chastening of the unrighteous, and the exaltation of the meek.

The peasants trust no outsider; they have been strictly forbidden to speak with visitors. They shrink away from the player-characters to the extent of their vitality, and they remain silent when spoken to. However, if the player-characters are truly persistent and the name of the Beastmaster is invoked, or a deliverance from the devastation of famine and disease is promised, sooner or later a brave soul steps forward and speaks with the party. Once this contact is made, the peasants remain extremely cautious; they draw the player-characters into a hut for privacy and they answer questions with guarded and suspicious replies. Sooner or later they bring up the subject of the saintly Beastmaster priests who have been so generous; they insist that the player-characters speak with them, the better to judge the importance of what the player-characters say, and to get help in answering any questions that the peasants cannot answer. A meeting is arranged to take place in the peasant quarter the next day.

The peasants have no concept of hospitality; they do not offer to shelter the player-characters overnight, nor do they understand any such request made. In puzzlement, they direct the player-characters to a hut left empty by the deaths of all the occupants, but they express wonder that the player-characters are freely surrendering their freedom and becoming slaves — the only conclusion that the peasants can draw from the player-characters' intent to stay in the peasant quarter.

The party members have a number of motivations to make contact in the peasant quarter; they might be looking for a place to hide; they might be seeking information; they might be planning a peasant revolt to overthrow the ruling classes of Org. Whatever their motivation, the initial response of any peasant to player-character approaches is fear and distrust. Remember also that the Orgen peasants speak only Orgjenn. Offers of food and clothing go a long way to establish the conditions for a dialog, but above all, the player-characters must be persistent; the peasants' main resistance to conversation and cooperation with the player-characters is inertia. It simply is not done; that contact is forbidden is not insignificant, but that the peasants don't have any notion of why they might want to talk to a foreigner — that is the most serious blockage of communication. If the players give up easily, they never get through to a peasant. One thing that helps open contact is behavior that the peasants can interpret as fitting into their notion of the saintly Beastmaster priests; food, healing, comforting words of Beastmaster dogma — these details permit the peasants to respond more or less openly to the player-characters as they respond to their priests.

## The Citadel

Upon approaching the citadel itself, the player-characters notice that it is incredibly old; amid the lush growth of vines and undergrowth that drapes the citadel, the edges of the exposed, hard crystalline stone of the citadel are worn by the elements, a sign of incredible age. The design and style is alien, but superbly executed; the layers of moss, lichen, and vines covering the walls give the building an abandoned, ruined appearance, though the gates are sturdy and in good repair. There is no one visible as the player-characters approach the wall. The rain continues to pour down; the road and open area before the walls are seas of thick, viscous mud, and the day is almost as dark as winter dusk.

When the player-characters knock at the gate there is a long delay, then a face appears from the battlements above the gate.

"What do you want?" it asks.

The guard rudely questions the player-characters as they stand in the rain outside the gate. He refuses to acknowledge or answer any questions. Finally, the guard says he'll be right back and disappears from view. About fifteen minutes later he returns and tells the player-characters they can enter, but only if they surrender their weapons and armor. Unless the player-characters agree to surrender their weapons and armor they cannot gain entrance to the citadel; they have to sneak in if they wish to enter. Sooner or later, there is a great likelihood that anyone attempting to sneak into the citadel will be captured by the guard and held captive to be brought before the king.

Once the player-characters have surrendered their weapons and armor, they are admitted into the citadel. Here, they can smell the pungent odors of burned wood soaked by rainfall, and they can see the ruins of a great hall that stood in the center of the inner wall of the citadel. The main wall towers and most of the other inner buildings remain undamaged, though they are all in poor repair, despite their superior design and construction. The courtyard is filled with crude shacks and improvised tents, and dull eyed peasants stand around apathetically in clumps. The people are obviously weak; several idlers are drafted to carry off the weapons and armor confiscated from the player-characters; it takes three of them to carry what each character has carried on his back for many days. The guards look much more alert. They amble toward the player-characters from a door in a nearby tower and form an escort for the player-characters.

**Orgen Guards (Citadel, Djeneel, Temple, Manor)**

STR 12    CON 13    SIZ 11    INT 12    POW 10  
DEX 14    CHA 8    HP 13    Armor: half plate

weapon	attack	parry	damage
long spear*	60%	60%	1D10+1
short sword	52%	52%	1D6+1
target shield	—	30%	—
dagger	40%	45%	1D4+2
bow*	60%	—	1D8+1

\*archers — bow only; guards — spear and shield

SKILLS: Ambush 10%, Balance 14%, Climb 37%, Conceal 14%, Dodge 45%, First Aid 10%, Hide 26%, Jump 37%, Ride 33%, Speak Orgjenn 70%, Swim 15%, Tumble 10%.

<b>Orgen Guard 1</b> DEX 17    HP 12	<b>Orgen Guard 5</b> DEX 16    HP 15	<b>Orgen Guard 9</b> DEX 14    HP 16
<b>Orgen Guard 2</b> DEX 17    HP 14	<b>Orgen Guard 6</b> DEX 14    HP 13	<b>Orgen Guard 10</b> DEX 12    HP 13
<b>Orgen Guard 3</b> DEX 16    HP 13	<b>Orgen Guard 7</b> DEX 14    HP 15	<b>Orgen Guard 11</b> DEX 11    HP 17
<b>Orgen Guard 4</b> DEX 16    HP 12	<b>Orgen Guard 8</b> DEX 14    HP 11	<b>Orgen Guard 12</b> DEX 9    HP 9

The player-characters are taken to a small building next to the ruined Great Hall. The smell of burned wood is strong here, and people can be seen digging without enthusiasm in the ruins of the hall. The characters are taken to a hastily-improvised throne chamber; the room was obviously recently used as a dining hall. Now a large, unadorned chair sits on a rudely constructed dias at the far end of the hall. Small groups of better dressed men and women sit around the room. They show little interest in the party. The atmosphere is gloomy and depressing; the damp and cold make the room uncomfortable and discouraging.

The player-characters are brought before the throne and told to kneel and pay their respects to the King. The King seems barely aware of their presence. He asks what the player-characters want and listens impassively as they make their statements or requests. When the player-characters have finished, the King says that he will give some thought to what they have said, and he directs a man to

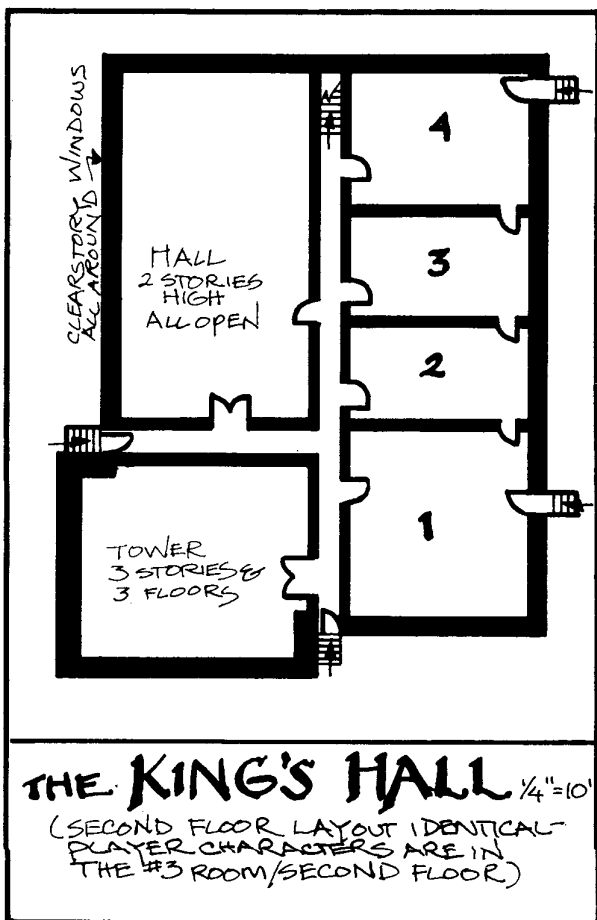
show the player-characters to a room where they can await His Majesty's response.

The player-characters sit for most of the day in a cold, drafty room with hard benches and little light from the single torch. Finally the King summons the player-characters back to his chambers.

"You want to know where Elric went. My men know. I will tell you where to look for him if you will do a favor for me."

If the player-characters agree to the deal, the King described the task he wants done. If the party stalls or refuses the King directs his guards to take Freyda hostage, and explains that if the player-characters don't help him he will kill Freyda. All of this is done without any sense of humor or enthusiasm; there seems to be no life in anyone in Org.

Once the King has either obtained the player-characters' willing or unwilling cooperation, he tells the player-characters that he will explain the task in the morning, and that in the meantime he prefers to keep them under guard to avoid any trouble. He shows no interest in anything the player-characters have to say. They are taken to a room and locked in. Several guards are left inside the room; the player-characters have none of their gear or weapons. If Freyda has been taken as a hostage, she is kept separately from the rest of the player-characters.



A map of the building where the player-characters are held is provided in case they try to attempt an escape. The



34 guards are very suspicious and alert, and the king has not made the mistake of underestimating the abilities of the player-characters. An escape will be extremely difficult; the player-characters are unfamiliar with the building, they do not know where their gear is kept, they are poorly armed, and they are clearly outnumbered by the guards. Even if they escape, they have not found out where Elric has gone.

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### Orgen Nobles

STR 11    CON 11    SIZ 12    INT 11    POW 12  
 DEX 10    CHA 10    HP 11    Armor: plate and helm

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
broadsword	50%	50%	1D8+1
dagger	40%	30%	1D4+2
target shield	—	30%	—

SKILLS: Ambush 10%, Balance 23%, Climb 21%, Dodge 32%, Dodge 30%, Evaluate Treasure 20%, Hide 7%, Jump 21%, Listen 18%, Move Quietly 24%, Orate 25%, Persuade 39%, Read/Write Orgjenn 56%, Ride 35%, Search 21%, See 54%, Speak Orgjenn 70%, Swim 21%, Tumble 5%.

Most nobles speak Common at 25%, but usually have slaves with interpreting skills when in the presence of foreigners. The higher a noble is in the offices of the King, the more likely he is to be fluent in Common.

The King: HALTZ NUGO — recently established as the king by a coalition of the nobles after the death of the last king (the final king with any blood claim on the throne). Nugo's hold on the kingdom is tenuous, and any number of conspiracies and plots are afoot among the other noble families.

The Chancellor: VELGIA MOREN — a clever little man, but he bears too many of the physical traits of the common blood in him to ascend to the throne.

Advisors: HAI NAIGEN, HAFNIN MURR — old men, incapable of original or perceptive thought. Their only virtue is their ability to forestall foolish action (indeed any action) through their caution and deliberation.

Toady: MOLVA NEE — This little reptile is deliberately trying to curry favor with the king, all the while acting as an agent for a conspiracy of other nobles who plan to allow Nugo to take all the blame for the confusion and instability of the transition period, then step in, assassinate Nugo, and claim to be the saviors of Org.

Other noble names — Stirgz, Gemmen, Furni, Hundur, Griken, Packri, Hugg, Egurnek, Mellow, Penzt.

House servant names — Lela, Renrod, Myken, Doblí, Sprek, Lotthur, Milligen, Genten.

#### Orgen Noble 1

DEX 12    HP 10

#### Orgen Noble 2

DEX 11    HP 11

#### Orgen Noble 3

DEX 10    HP 10

#### Orgen Noble 4

DEX 9    HP 11

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### Good Priests

There are seven priests of the Beastmaster cult who have become sympathetic with the plight of the peasants of Org. For years there has been a counterculture within the cult, small but persistent, that has concerned itself with the wretched condition of the slaves. Over the last few years there has been more and more willingness to consider open rebellion. The horrible effects of famine and plague only emphasize the need for some change to earn the peasant at least a modest improvement of his living con-

ditions. Further, the influence of a free-thinker among the house servants, a man with responsibilities in the administration of the market and with access to outsiders, has been felt among the good priests. This man speaks of the importance of freedom and the happy lot of the men who live in the other kingdoms of Ilmiora. Talk has turned more and more to revolution, and the rebellious priests and house servants have secretly discussed their plans with trusted friends and contacts among the peasants.

After the death of the last King of Org, the conspiracy frantically debated whether it was time to act. By the time they decided to move, the kingdom was already back in the control of a member of the aristocracy. The conspiracy regrets its failure to seize such an important opportunity; it is unlikely to miss the next one that presents itself.

If the player-characters manage to speak with any member of the conspiracy, whether by accident or design, the plotters are cautious and distrustful, suspecting spies and infiltrators. However, the conspirators are anxious to find additional allies, and it is likely that they will try to recruit the player-characters if they show any sign of a social conscience.

The conspirators are inspired and virtuous. Cynicism and pessimism make them scornful. They are truly saintly men, willing to martyr themselves for their cause. If the player-characters make some arrangement to assist the conspiracy, and then later find themselves in need of help, the conspirators faithfully offer whatever assistance they can, as long as that assistance does not risk the failure of their planned revolution.

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### Orgen Beastmaster Priests

STR 10    CON 12    SIZ 10    INT 15    POW 18  
 DEX 13    CHA 13

*no weapons*

SKILLS: Balance 27%, Climb 46%, Dodge 29%, First Aid 96%, Hide 35%, Jump 37%, Listen 21%, Make Map 24%, Memorize 65%, Orate 70%, Persuade 65%, Plant Lore 85%, Poison Lore 43%, Read/Write Orgjenn 97%, Read/Write Common 43%, Search 32%, See 45%, Speak Common 55%, Speak Orgjenn 95%.

Good priests and bad priests are identical except in attitude.

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## Slave Rebellion

During the night the player-characters awake to the sound of conflict and confusion. There are sudden screams, running footsteps, and thuds and crashes outside of their room. In minutes the hallway is silent again except for a low moaning. Suddenly the door to the room in which the player-characters are staying crashes open. A mob of Orgens, shouting and waving crude weapons, pours into the room and grabs the player-characters, pushing, dragging, and carrying the characters from the room.

There is a smell of smoke and fire. As the party is borne along the halls they catch glimpses through windows of mobs of people outlined in the glare from burning buildings. The player-characters are finally brought together in a large open courtyard. The rain has stopped, though the ground is still a sea of mud. The moon hangs high over-

head. All around buildings are aflame and crowds of short, coarse-featured Orgens toss torches and shout insanely, full of anger and menace. In the center of the courtyard is a giant oak tree, and from its branches swing the bodies of several-score victims of the mob. Near the tree, on the roof of a small building, several men in long robes (Beastmaster cult priests, if the party has encountered them before) are the center of attention. One of the robed figures is shouting loudly to the crowd, and the crowd roars in response to his frenzied tirades.

The task that King Haltz wished the player-characters to perform was the assassination of the chief priest of the Beastmaster cult. The King accurately estimated that the high priest was ambitious enough to conspire against him with the other nobles of Org. Haltz's only claim to the title of King was his ability to seize and maintain control of the guard when the true King of Org was slain in the destruction of the great hall. The other nobles that moved to support him were only interested in establishing some kind of order. It is likely that they are now regretting their acceptance of Haltz, an unimaginative and indecisive thinker and a weak and dreamy personality — hardly the man to follow Gutheran, the Last King of Org, a strong and brutal ruler. Haltz was accurate in his estimate of the High Priest's ambition, but didn't act decisively-enough in his judgement. The priest caught wind of the King's plan to assassinate him through spies in the citadel (the player-characters), and he moved quickly to stir the peasants into a riot against the crimes of the blasphemous ruler. The high priest was aided by nobles within the citadel who arranged for the gates to be open to the mob of peasants.

Ironically, the saintly minority of the Beastmaster priests and members of the rebellious privileged class of house-slaves have been planning a rebellion along these lines for some time; the careful groundwork preparing the peasant leaders for such a revolutionary act had already been done, and the house-slaves turned quickly on their masters and either slew them as they slept or took them captive to be hung from the old oak in the citadel courtyard.

The king and his supporters now swing from the tree, and the player-characters have been implicated in the assassination plot. The high priest has saved a special fate for the blasphemous foreigners. He plans to sacrifice the player-characters to the spirits of the barrow; he still fears the gods enough to believe that the wrath of the ancestors was stirred up by the outsiders/gods (Elric, Moonglum, and Zarozinia) who apparently slew Gutheran and awakened the King of the Mountain (the undead king who attacked the spirits of the ancestors, and who better than more foreigners to be sacrificed? The High Priest intends to sacrifice the player-characters to the ghouls of the barrow.

If the player-characters can understand the priests' harangue (spoken entirely in Orgjenn), they can figure out what is to happen to them. It is possible that they can think of some way to sweet-talk their way out of this, perhaps by explaining that they are seeking Elric to have revenge upon him, and that the ancestors would be most pleased if Elric were brought to justice. If the player-characters allied themselves with the good priests they might try to invoke their names to the peasants. The gamemaster should permit the players to roleplay the plea; depending on the quality and the cleverness of the oratory, and on

the speakers' Persuasion rolls, the characters might be able to regain their possessions and walk out of this fix without a fight. At least they should have some chance of convincing the crowd that if they descend into the barrow and return, they should be given their possessions and permitted to continue on their way.

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#### Orgen Peasants

STR 10    CON 11    SIZ 9    INT 11    POW 10  
DEX 10    CHA 8    HP 11    Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
cudgel	10%	10%	1D6
torch	10%	10%	1D6+1D4
stone (thrown)	20%	—	1D6
fist	20%	—	1D3
kick	10%	—	1D6

**SKILLS:** Dodge 30%, Grapple 10% per participant involved in each attempt. Each successful grappler subtracts 20% from the victim's attack, parry, and agility rolls. Five men making successful grapples on one turn immobilizes the victim completely.

**Peasant Names** — Gurt, Naz, Mol, Rifa, Juk, Gul, Gonda, Inri, Grafo, Kelea, Flagan, Mikin.

**APPEARANCE:** squat, gnarled, covered with thin black hair, many suffering from malnutrition and plague, clothed in rags, many half-naked. Before the rebellion, peasants are silent and retiring in the presence of outsiders. After the rebellion, flushed with the hysteria or revolution, they are berzerk with killer energy.

Orgen Peasant 1	Orgen Peasant 4	Orgen Peasant 7
DEX 13    HP 14	DEX 12    HP 9	DEX 10    HP 11
Orgen Peasant 2	Orgen Peasant 5	Orgen Peasant 8
DEX 12    HP 9	DEX 11    HP 11	DEX 10    HP 13
Orgen Peasant 3	Orgen Peasant 6	Orgen Peasant 9
DEX 12    HP 11	DEX 10    HP 12	DEX 9    HP 8

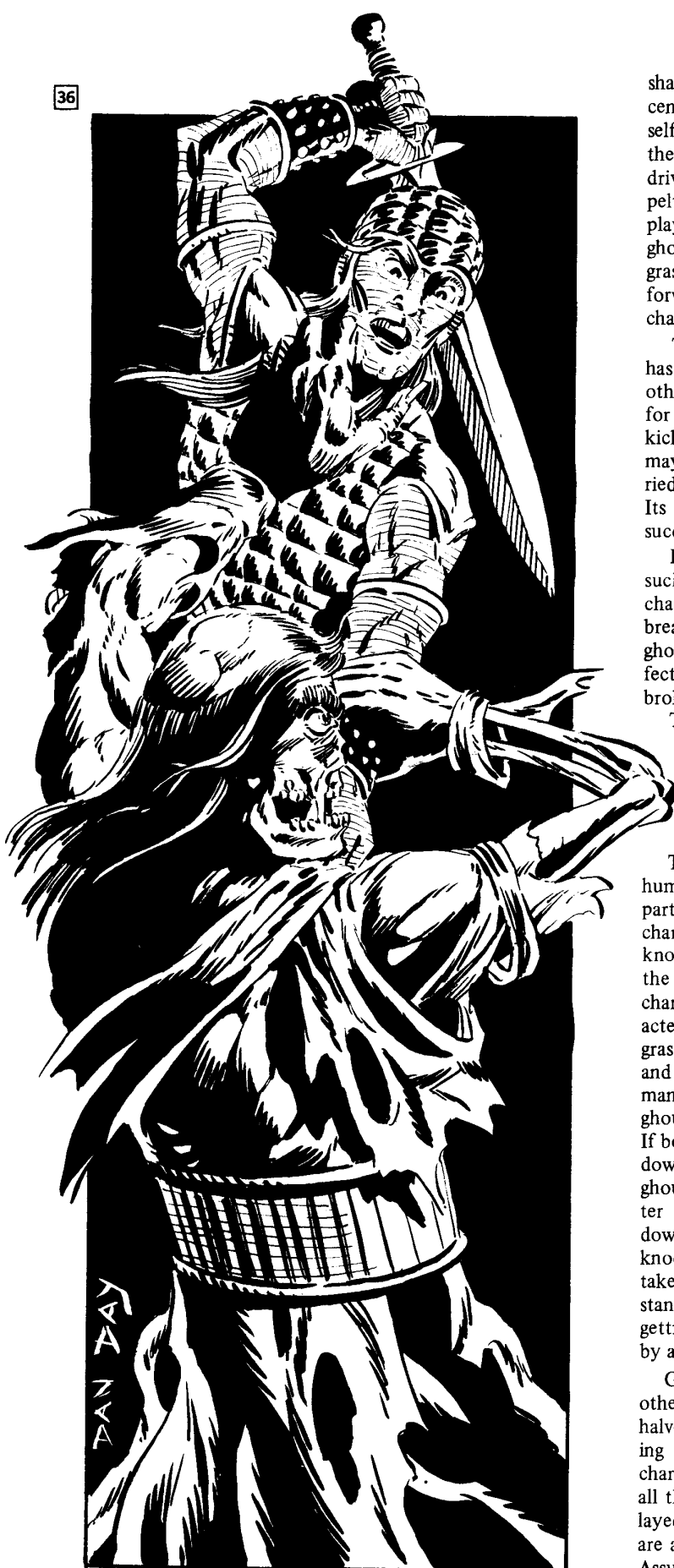
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## The Barrow

If the player-characters do not contrive some way to understand the priest's demagoguery, they eventually find themselves being borne aloft by the crowd and carried from the citadel to the barrow, surrounded by the exuberant mob, led by the white-robed priests. Once the crowd reaches the barrow, the party members are thrust forward to stand with the priests in front of the opening at the front of the barrow. The priest starts exhorting the crowd again, gesturing dramatically at the player-characters and at the barrow opening, and then he turns to the player-characters and points sternly to the opening. If the player-characters don't get the hint, they are pushed forward by the crowd, then pelted with stones and clods of mud until they enter the dark opening.

It is unlikely but possible that a clever plan and the use of sorcery will give the party a chance to escape the mob before they are forced into the barrow. If they do escape, the player-characters may go after their gear as if they had escaped through the secret exit from the barrow.

The walls of the passage into the barrow are large monolithic stones that glow with a dim phosphorescence. There is no slope to the floor; it runs directly into the barrow. The player-characters encounter the first ghoul



shambling toward them halfway along the passage into the central chamber. The ghoul makes gibbering noises to itself as it slowly shuffles toward the player-characters. If the player-characters try to retreat they eventually are driven out of the corridor into the open, where they are pelted with rocks and mud again by the crowd. If the player-characters stand their ground in the corridor, each ghoul slowly makes its way toward a victim and tries to grasp the character and pull him to it, and tries to reach forward with its head and mouth and suck at the player-character's skin.

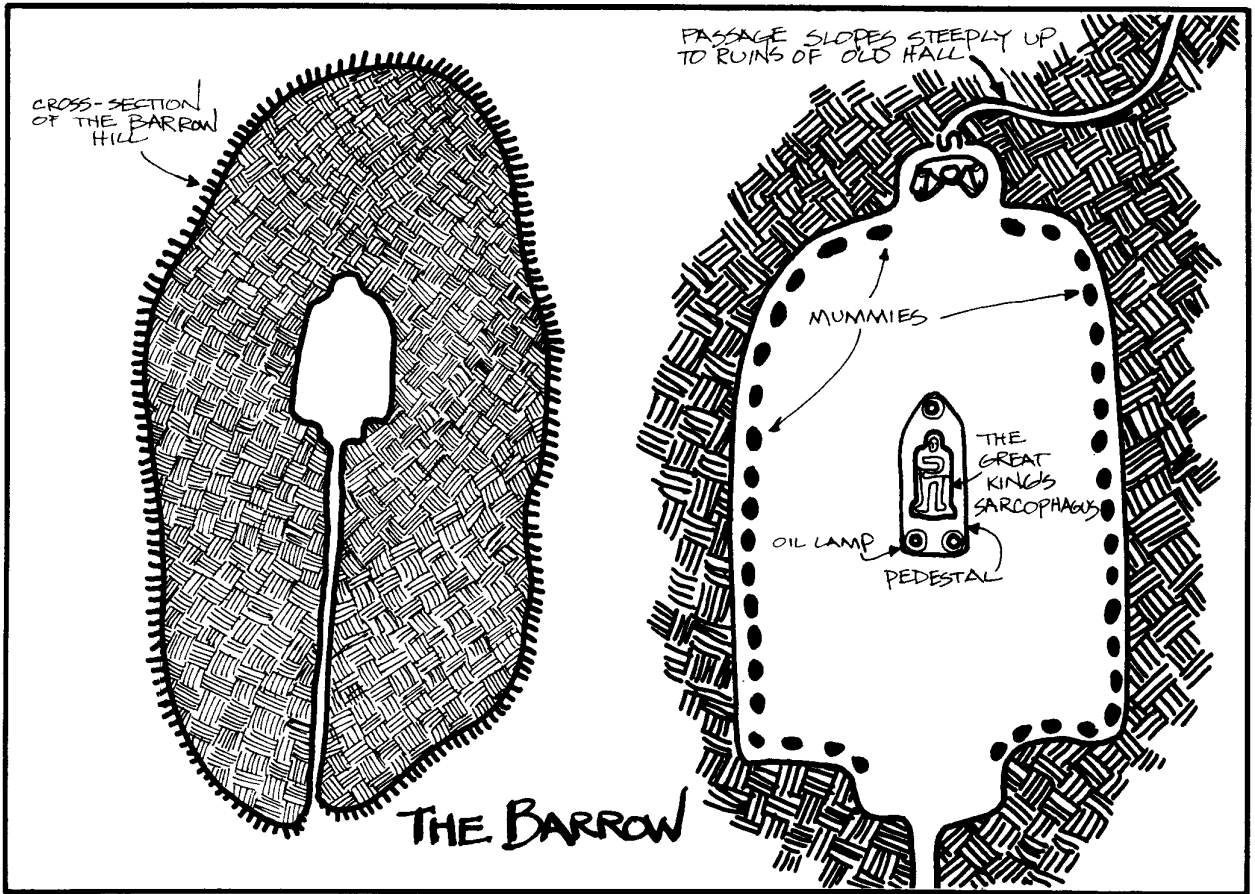
The grasp of ghoul is not very strong; each character has his STR x3 chance of parrying this grasp. As with other parry action, this percentage drops by 20 percentiles for each successive attempt in a single turn. A successful kick attack is also as effective as a parry of a grasp, but may only be tried once per turn. If the creature is not parried, it is automatically successful in grasping its victim. Its grasp may still be broken in any following turn with a successful parry.

If the ghoul succeeds in grasping its victim, it tries to suck at the living flesh of its victim. Each ghoul has a 20% chance to succeed. The victim may prevent this by either breaking the ghoul's grip with a parry, or by parrying the ghoul's sucking attack. A successful punch attack also effectively parries a sucking attack. Once a ghoul's grasp is broken, it must grasp again before it can suck at its victim.

The sucking attack causes only two points of damage per turn, but continues each turn after the ghoul has succeeded in its sucking attack. It is possible to parry a single ghoul's grasp and sucking attack in the same turn, subject to the limitations of the 20 percentile decrease per parry per turn.

The ghouls are somewhat slower and less agile than humans. If there were sufficient room to maneuver, the party could avoid the ghouls without difficulty. The player-characters might attempt to rush through the ghouls or to knock them over. If a character attempts to rush through the ghouls, each ghoul within five feet of the path of the character gets a chance to grasp the character. The character may not parry and rush at the same time. If the grasp succeeds, the character has failed to rush through and must break loose from the ghoul before trying to maneuver again. If a character attempts to knock over a ghoul, both the ghoul and the character make balance rolls. If both fail the player-character and the ghoul are knocked down. If the ghoul succeeds and the character fails, the ghoul has successfully grasped the character. If the character succeeds and the ghoul fails, the ghoul is knocked down. If both make their balance rolls, each character is knocked back five feet and no further actions can be taken by either that round. A ghoul takes five turns to stand up; a human takes only one turn. While a human is getting up, he cannot parry and is automatically grasped by any ghoul who can reach him.

Ghouls are extremely resistant to punches, kicks, or other attacks with blunt weapons; all such damage is halved. However, ghouls take double damage from slashing weapons such as swords and axes. Once the player-characters reach the central chamber, they discover that all the former rulers of Org who were entombed here were layed to rest with their favorite weapons and armor; they are able to find whatever they need to defend themselves. Assume that any type of weapon, shield, or armor can be



found here. It takes one turn to grab a sword and shield, and five additional turns to don any kind of armor.

Once the party enters the central chamber, they might discover the secret exit concealed behind the massive statue of a Beastmaster. The door is eventually found by anyone who looks behind the statue; anyone making a Search or a See roll immediately suspects that the wall behind the statue is different than the other blocks of stone around the chamber. The secret door is massive; it takes the concerted effort of three men and at least five minutes to push it open enough to permit someone to exit. This leisure is unlikely to be available to the characters until they have dealt with the ghouls, but once the player-characters have armed themselves the ghouls should be easily dispatched.

Once the secret door has been pushed open, the party is warned that a demon door ward blocks this exit to all save the priests of the Cult of Leeth or the Kings of Org. The demon has a POW of 20, and INT of 10, and a CON of 80. The party members might be unable to destroy the demon door. However, the none-too-intelligent door can be fooled if the player-characters don garments from the dead kings of Org that inhabit the heart of the barrow. Anyone who tries to pass through the door wearing or carrying some token from a former Orgen king is not attacked by the demon.

There is a small fortune in gems and precious metals to be found in the Central Chamber. The value of the easily portable treasures is about 10,000LB. Each pound of gems, jewels, and coins carried from the chamber is worth

about 100LB. Also in the tomb are two fresh corpses entwined in the final embrace of a fatal hand-to-hand combat. They are Hurd, a prince of Org, and Veerkaad, a blind insane minstrel. They slew one another in the tomb the same night that Elric escaped from the ghouls. It was Hurd's blood that awoke the King in the Hill, the undead ruler of Org that tokened the end of the line of the Kings of Org.

There are several items of magic in the chamber. One of the elaborately decorated daggers is a demon weapon. The second piece of demon magic is a non-descript cloak worn by one of the mummies — the cloak is really demon armor with the special ability of invisibility. There is no way to discover the special property of this cloak unless someone happens to attack it with a weapon for some

**Demon Magic**

ZARAB, DEMON DAGGER  
 STR 10    CON 30    SIZ 3    INT 12    POW 13  
 DEX 20    CHA 30    Special Ability: Shapechanger

PUGRUS, DEMON CLOAK  
 CON 60    SIZ 14    POW 11  
 Special Ability: Invisibility

MIGRAFECE, BOUND DEMON OF KNOWLEDGE  
 CON 10    INT 74    POW 16  
 Migrafece is bound into a golden crown ornamented with jewels, the central gem in front is the binding object.

**38** reason. The final item of magic is a demon of knowledge bound into a crown on the head of one of the mummies.

Only a sorcerer who has had experience with demon summoning has any chance to recognize the demon magic bound into the items, and even a sorcerer has 40 percentiles subtracted from his Evaluate Treasure skill. If the roll is successful, the sorcerer recognizes the sigil of Chaos worked as a decorative motif into the items. Such a sorcerer also knows that such items must be rebound to new masters, requiring a successful POW vs. POW roll or the demon is freed, and knows that there is danger if the demon is freed that it will attack the person who tried to rebound it. Whether the items are recognized as magical or not, there is a chance that they will be taken away simply for the intrinsic value of their craftsmanship. For each pound of treasure carried from the tomb, there is a cumulative 01% chance that each magical item is taken.

There are two ways out of the barrow — the main corridor and the secret passage. If the player-characters attempt to leave via the main passage, they find the mob still waiting there, and they are driven back into the barrow with thrown stones and crude weapons. The crowd is fanatical and does not panic and run from the party, even if they have obtained weapons and armor or employ sorcerous resources. If the player-characters do try to fight their way out of the barrow, the gamemaster will have to manage a pitched battle between the player-characters and a mob of two hundred plus Orgen citizens armed with cudgels and rocks. At least fifty of the mob's members must be killed before the rest break and run. The priest exerts the mob on from a safe distance, warning the peasants of the wrath of their ancestors and the fall of the kingdom if the blasphemers escape. Though this seems to be a very difficult and bloody operation, it is conceivable that the player-characters could escape this way. They must make their way back to the citadel and locate and recover their equipment; the process is similar to that required if the player-characters use the secret passage, described below. The player-characters could just abandon their gear and flee, but still no one has yet given them any information on Elric's current whereabouts.

If the player-characters follow the secret passage, they find that it brings them to the cellars of the now burnt-down great hall. Scavengers have exposed a set of stairs that lead up through the burnt and shattered rubble, and the player-characters find themselves in the Citadel near the building where they were imprisoned. Several of the other buildings inside the walls of the citadel are burning, and in their flickering light only an occasional figure can be seen scurrying about, clutching some personal treasure or burden. There is no sign of guards or mobs, and there is little sound except for the crackle and roar of the burning buildings.

The player-characters may return to the building in which they were imprisoned. In their search they encounter no guards. They encounter an occasional house servant or slave in the process of looting, but everyone runs away when the player-characters appear. Their gear is in a locked room next to the room in which they were held. To get their equipment, the player-characters must pick the lock or break down the door. No one interferes.

Finally the player-characters must find someone who can tell them where Elric went. The following table de-

scribes the responses given by any citizen or house servant whom the player-characters catch and question.

#### Orgen Citizen Elric Knowledge Table (roll D100)

01-40	No idea; wild panic at being caught and questioned; obviously expect to be killed whether they know it or not; too dumb to lie.
41-60	No idea; lucid and reasonable, though dim-witted; don't seem to be afraid of the player-characters.
61-70	Misinformed, but confident of the accuracy of the information; Elric hasn't gone anywhere. He is out in the forest summoning a demon army, and he will return immediately to complete the destruction of Org (a rumor spread by the priests).
71-90	Correctly informed, but terrified of the player-characters; expect to be killed no matter what they say; believe Elric to have headed east on the caravan road.
91-00	Correctly informed, frightened but shrewd enough to ask for some guarantee that they won't be hurt if they tell what they know. If convinced that the player-characters won't hurt them, they say Elric was seen heading east on the caravan road with two companions.

#### Ghouls

STR 10	CON 30	SIZ 10	INT 6	POW 15
DEX 8	CHA 0	HP 30	Armor: 2 point skin	
<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>	
grasp	50%	—	hold	
suck	75	—	1 point STR per round	

SKILLS: Balance 20% (Easily toppled; takes five rounds to stand up.)

Ghouls take half damage from blunt weapons and double damage from slashing weapons.

Appearance: Leprous white, with peeling layers of decayed skin, naked humanoids. Blank stare, they don't apparently use their eyes to locate prey. Ambulatory cadavers, like sleepwalkers.

<b>Ghoul 1</b>		<b>Ghoul 5</b>		<b>Ghoul 9</b>	
DEX 11	HP 28	DEX 9	HP 27	DEX 8	HP 29
<b>Ghoul 2</b>		<b>Ghoul 6</b>		<b>Ghoul 10</b>	
DEX 10	HP 31	DEX 9	HP 30	DEX 7	HP 30
<b>Ghoul 3</b>		<b>Ghoul 7</b>		<b>Ghoul 11</b>	
DEX 10	HP 30	DEX 8	HP 30	DEX 7	HP 31
<b>Ghoul 4</b>		<b>Ghoul 8</b>		<b>Ghoul 12</b>	
DEX 10	HP 34	DEX 8	HP 26	DEX 5	HP 30

## Other Adventures in Org

Following are several alternative scenario ideas to be used in the setting of the kingdom of Org.

One: The peasant revolt — The player-characters make accidental or purposeful contact with the saintly priests of the Beastmaster cult or with the rebellious privileged slaves of the nobility. A peasant rebellion is discovered to be in the making, and the player-characters are petitioned to join the cause. The scenario could be organized in three stages:

1) contact with the rebel sympathizers, 2) a commando/reconnaissance raid on the citadel, and 3) a final frontal assault on the citadel with an army of slaves.

Two: Counterinsurgency — hired as assassins, agents, or investigators for the nobility, the player-characters are paid to suppress the anticipated rebellion. In this case the nobility may be portrayed as the lesser of two evils, with the privileged slaves characterized as even more greedy and ruthless than their masters. Alternatively, the player-characters might be hired to suppress the rebellion, but find their sympathies with the rebels, causing the player-characters to renounce their pay to fight on the side of the underprivileged.

Three: harrowing the barrow — The player-characters are contacted by rebellious priests who wish to dispel the mythic aura around the barrow and undermine the Cult of Leeth by cleaning the barrow of its ghouls. The player-

characters are told that they can keep any treasure they find as long as the ghouls are removed. Various complications can be added to this basic plotline; the Cult of Leeth catches wind of the plot; a mob of peasants surrounds the barrow and threatens to kill the blasphemers; the player-characters are pursued by citadel or temple guards who wish to recover the treasure.

Four: covert activity — the city-states of Ilmiora and/or the nation of Vilmir decides to get rid of the Kingdom of Org once and for all, but wish to avoid going to war or appearing as the aggressors; therefore they hire a group of mercenaries to wreak whatever havoc they can, preferably finding some way to topple the Orgen leadership. The player-characters may act directly as raiding brigands, or they may attempt to infiltrate from within as merchant visitors. This can be integrated into the peasant rebellion scenario.

# The Plains

Beyond Org, the caravan road continues for another thirty miles through the Forest of Troos. There are no more encounters with the wild men of Troos, but the party may pause to search for valuable plants (as described previously). The forest ends abruptly, though there is a zone of withered vegetation and gray skeletal tree trunks to suggest that the boundaries of the forest are slowly shrinking; throughout this brief transition the plants seem dry and diseased, while the trees have fewer and fewer leaves as the party rides east. Plants gathered in this transition zone have only half normal poison or magical effectiveness.

Once clear of the forest, the party views a seemingly endless expanse of grassland, unbroken by any major relief or significant forests. The stems of grass are dry and brittle, and the soil is loose and sandy. In the extreme distance a large herd of grazing animals can be seen making their way across the horizon. The sun is strong and hot, and armor becomes extremely uncomfortable. The change in climate is so abrupt that it seems unnatural; the natural nature of the Forest of Troos' sustenance has been suggested before.

The caravan road stretches out before the party straight to the horizon. There is no indication of any convenient source of water, though one or two minor rivers are said to cross the arid plains.

Any character of barbarian background can tell the rest of the party what to expect on the plains. This eastern

half of Ilmiora is a vast, flat grassland, broken in places by bizarrely-eroded badlands and occasional clumps of hardy trees that grow wherever there is a source of year-round water. The plains are inhabited by fauna similar to that of East Africa — great herds of various grazing herbivores, packs of scavengers like hyenas, and a few fierce predators such as lions. There are also some large and unusual creatures, like elephants and giant lizards. Primates of all sizes exist, and occasional packs of desert wolves prey on the grazers.

There are few large settlements on the plains; most cluster near the system of rivers that run between the plains and the Weeping Wastes region. Between these large cities (like Karlaak and Gorijhan) and the Forest of Troos, the largest population centers are at caravan stops and oases, each of which house up to several hundred people. The bulk of the plains population is nomadic, following the herds that supply their basic needs. The barbarian nomads live simply but with great style; their culture is conservative and traditional. Each nomad group is a single tribe or alliance of tribes. The tribal leaders are hereditary chiefs, guided and advised by a Council of Elders. Little is done without ample precedent in legend or tradition.

The behavior of the nomads is unpredictable to outsiders. A tribe may seem at one time to be friendly and hospitable to travelers and caravans; at another time they attack and massacre outlanders for what seem to be trivial offenses. The taboos and traditions of each tribe are dif-



**40** ferent; it is difficult to generalize from one tribe's customs to another tribe's customs. Any party member of barbarian background states two principles which should always be observed, and which are part of the training given to each nomad in his youth — always be polite when you talk with strangers, and always speak from a distance from the back of a fast pony.

The plains offer natural hazards to travelers — shortages of food (unless a proficient hunter is available) and water, and sudden violent storms — but in general the most serious problem is avoiding giving offense to a tribe of nomads. It is useful, on the other hand, to have good relations with the tribes encountered. Nomads are loyal friends and implacable enemies. They never forget a kindness or a slight.

## Nomad Horsemen

From the Forest of Troos to Karlaak is nearly forty leagues, but the road is good and it is possible to travel seven leagues a day. In under a week the party can expect to arrive in Karlaak. The party cannot find firewood easily; camping spots must be carefully chosen, and often it is wiser to halt the march early than to continue on the chance of finding a site with adequate firewood. A fire is necessary at night, both for warmth and for protection from wild animals. Most animals avoid fire; if the party keeps a fire going all night at each camp, they have no problems with overnight encounters. If they do not maintain a fire, they are attacked at night by a pack of six desert wolves. If one wolf is killed or seriously injured, the whole pack runs away, but they are skilled hunters and have a 50% chance of surprising the party.

If the party still has horses, a pack of hyenas attacks on the very first night, devoting all its efforts to killing the horses. Even if the player-characters fight bravely, they should not be able to save their mounts from crippling or death. Thus, they will be left on foot for the next part of the adventure across the plains.

The second day on the plains, the party notices a group of horsemen riding in their direction. They are seen at a distance of about a mile, so the party has plenty of time to prepare. There is no cover anywhere nearby; the party is as safe on the road as they would be off it. The riders approach the party at full gallop; they shear off when they are at extreme bow range and begin to circle the group. The riders are shouting and whooping and brandishing their lances above their heads. The nomads are clad in rough leather garments and colorfully-decorated wooden armor, enameled and lacquered with complex geometric designs. Each rider has a desert bow slung across his back and a short, curved blade hanging from his belt. The nomads ride in a wide circle around the party, yelling and making threatening gestures. At the first hostile move by the player-characters, the riders attack the party. A “hostile move” is interpreted loosely by the nomad leader: drawing weapons, use of sorcery, stepping toward the nomads, making threatening gestures at the barbarians. The attack is sudden, if it comes; a warning hail of arrows falls among the party, and the riders stop circling, and begin to ready their spears for a charge into the player-characters. If the player-characters do not immediately stop all aggressive moves, the horsemen charge the party.

In an attack, one side of the encircling ring of horsemen charges through the party (who are presumably not mounted), trying to use their lances and their mounts to cripple or knock down characters. Then the other side of the circle charges across the party; this repeats until all the party members are down or have surrendered. If the party members drop to the ground, the nomads do not strike at them, nor do the nomad ponies step on them.

If the party makes no aggressive moves, or after the party has surrendered or been subdued, the nomad leader separates from the circle, rides up to the party, jumps down from his horse in a single agile movement, and assertively addresses the company:

“This is the land of the Annashi Surra. What sort of men are you that cannot ride? What sort of mothers did you have that taught you to beg in this shameless manner” (To the Surra, a man who walks into the land of another tribe is begging for a horse; only a desperate craven or an outcast would do such a thing — and here is a whole band of beggars!)

If any player-character can speak Mong, he can understand the nomad's harangue. The plains nomads speak a dialect of Mong, but it is somewhat different from that of the tribes of the Weeping Waste. The leader speaks a little Common (20%) and any plains nomad has a 5% chance of knowing at least some Common. The leader, whose name is Hwesta Lome, waits for a response to his jibes. Despite his apparent indignation and self-assurance, Hwesta realizes that he is in a tricky position. If he has managed to injure or offend members of a powerful group, he could possibly get himself into serious trouble. At the least, his over-enthusiastic greeting/attack (which he is already regretting) may be a serious breach of hospitality, for which he may receive a reprimand or worse from the tribal chieftain, Anor Surra.

### What the Nomad Leader, Hwesta Lome, Wants to Learn

1. What is the party's business here?
2. By what right do they claim the privilege of crossing Surra territory?
3. Why are they on foot?
4. Do they belong to a big tribe, or are they allied to any big tribe that could take offense at the treatment the visitors have received so far?

### What Hwesta Lome Wants to Hear in Reply

1. An apology for trespassing on Surra land.
2. A proper explanation for the party's presence that fits in with tribal traditions of war or hospitality.
3. That the party is very rich and will cheerfully pay a fabulous tribute to pass through Surra land.
4. Some excuse for handing this problem on to someone higher up in the chain of authority. There are no appropriate customs to handle the treatment of horseless visitors with uncertain status.

By now, the hot-headed Hwesta is looking for an excuse to slaughter the party, thereby eliminating the possibility of anyone else finding out about his potential blunder. If the party is sufficiently inflammatory, or if they attempt any further aggressive actions, he may find this an attractive solution. However, there are too many

tribal witnesses present for him to simply kill them out of hand.

Hwesta questions the party and listens carefully to the party's responses. After a while it becomes clear that he is no longer paying careful attention to what they say. He has made his decision; he takes the visitors back to the main camp and lets the chief, Anor Surra, handle the problem. In the middle of one of the party members statements or requests, he turns to another of the nomads and directs the riders to form up as a herd guard around the party. He then turns to the party and tells them to take their gear and follow him. He gets on his horse and rides off of the road to the south at a brisk pace. The party has to move swiftly to keep up. If they do not act immediately, they begin to fall behind, and the other nomads riding in formation around them poke playfully at them with their lance-butts, suggesting humorously to one another that these must be well-fed cattle indeed to be so casual and leisurely in their gait. There is no intent to harm, but the riders have no patience with the slow pace of the hikers; as the characters become tired, the riders pull up disgustedly and wait for the party to catch its breath.

If the party members are persuasive enough, they may be able to demand more hospitable treatment from the nomads. For instance, they may challenge Hwesta to a one-on-one combat to establish the party's right to equal respect and treatment; Hwesta will not agree to such a fight, but it will raise the player-characters in his estimation, and he will owe them a polite favor, since he turned their offer down. The party may assert that one of their number is the leader for their tribe, and is therefore entitled to special privileges and respect; they may demand that one of the riders give up his pony for the comfort of the party's leader. They may plead hardship with a story that accounts for their lack of horses. The nomads are unimpressed with most of the party's exploits, since they have never heard of Org or Nadsokor. A party member of desert barbarian background may convince the nomads that this lack of hospitality is shameful; the nomads may then offer to walk, leading their ponies, in respect and apology to the party. The gamemaster must decide on the

responses of the nomads based on a combination of the party's Persuasion rolls and the quality of the role-playing and persuasion that the players offer. No matter what happens, however, the nomads insist that the party come with them to the main camp; the characters have to defeat the nomads in combat to avoid this, and with the nomad advantage of fast mounts and excellent bowmanship, such a defeat is unlikely.

## Nomads

The Plains Nomads are short, dark-complexioned, with hair and skin similar to Plains Indians of America — they

### AVERAGE PLAINS NOMADS

STR 14	CON 14	SIZ 12	INT 12	POW 12
DEX 14	CHA 12	HP 14	Armor: Barbarian	
<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>	
Lance	40%	20%	1D8+1D6+1	
Desert Bow	50%	—	1D10+1D4+2	
Dagger	20%	20%	1D4+1D6+1	
Buckler	—	40%	—	

SKILLS: Ambush 20%, Balance 50%, Climb 20%, Dodge 30%, First Aid 10%, Hide 40%, Jump 30%, Listen 50%, Memorize 40%, Move Quietly 50%, Persuade 30%, Ride 60%, Scent 50%, Search 20%, See 50%, Set Trap 30%, Sing 40%, Taste 40%, Tie Knot 20%, Track 50%, Tumble 15%

LANGUAGES: Speak Mong (plains dialect) 60%

#### Average Nomad 1

DEX 17 HP 14

#### Average Nomad 2

DEX 16 HP 15

#### Average Nomad 3

DEX 16 HP 17

#### Average Nomad 4

DEX 14 HP 14

#### Average Nomad 5

DEX 14 HP 12

#### Average Nomad 6

DEX 12 HP 13

#### Average Nomad 7

DEX 12 HP 14

#### Average Nomad 8

DEX 10 HP 15

### SUPERIOR PLAINS NOMADS: includes Anor Surra, Hwesta Lome, and about a fourth of each nomad group.

STR 16	CON 18	SIZ 14	INT 12	POW 12
DEX 16	CHA 12	HP 20	Armor: barbarian wood	
<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>	
Lance	60%	30%	1D8+1D6+1	
Desert Bow	70%	—	1D10+1D4+2	
Dagger	40%	40%	1D4+1D6+1	
Buckler	—	60%	—	

SKILLS: Ambush 30%, Balance 60%, Conceal 10%, Climb 30%, Dodge 40%, First Aid 30%, Hide 50%, Jump 40%, Listen 70%, Make Maps 10%, Memorize 60%, Move Quietly 70%, Persuade 50%, Plant Lore 20%, Ride 80%, Scent 70%, Search 30%, See 70%, Set Traps 40%, Sing 70%, Swim 10%, Taste 50%, Tie Knot 30%, Track 70%, Tumble 20%

LANGUAGES: Speak Mong (plains dialect) 60%

#### Superior Nomad 1

DEX 18 HP 19

#### Superior Nomad 2

DEX 17 HP 20

#### Superior Nomad 3

DEX 16 HP 21

#### Superior Nomad 4

DEX 15 HP 19

### INFERIOR PLAINS NOMADS, makes up about a fourth of each nomad group

STR 12	CON 12	SIZ 10	INT 12	POW 12
DEX 12	CHA 12	HP 12	Armor: Barbarian	
<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>	
Lance	25%	15%	1D8+1	
Desert Bow	35%	—	1D10+2	
Dagger	20%	20%	1D4+1	
Buckler	—	25%	—	

SKILLS: Ambush 10%, Balance 40%, Climb 10%, Dodge 20%, First Aid 10%, Hide 30%, Jump 20%, Listen 40%, Memorize 40%, Move Quietly 40%, Persuade 20%, Ride 50%, Scent 40%, Search 10%, See 40%, Set Trap 10%, Sing 30%, Taste 30%, Tie Knot 10%, Track 40%, Tumble 10%

LANGUAGES: Speak Mong (plains dialect) 60%

#### Inferior Nomad 1

DEX 13 HP 13

#### Inferior Nomad 2

DEX 12 HP 12

#### Inferior Nomad 3

DEX 12 HP 11

#### Inferior Nomad 4

DEX 11 HP 11

42 use animal hides for clothing and always carry bow and lance when on horseback.

NAMES: Chieftain Anor Surra; Horse Leader Hwesta Lome; Nomads Elen Lote, Isil Nen, Nen Lote, Elan Na, Mali Nan, Mene Ril, Tin Sar, Stor Sar, Linta Mor, Cor Lome, Narfas Se, Vilya Mist, Rama Nil, Orna Mait, Fir Tin, Un Dome, Orne Lasse, Macar Lesse, Luva Lesse, Ne No, Nar Sar, etc. Use these names as needed.

## The Nomad Camp

The nomad camp is about a mile and a half south of the caravan road along a tiny stream. The tents are designed much like indian tepees — frames of long poles tied together at the top and covered with sewn together hides. A large number of ponies graze nearby. They are either hobbled or tethered.

to keep them from wandering off. A variety of small livestock (goats, small cows, pigs) are tethered in various locations around the camp. A number of women work at different tasks around the camp: drying hides, sewing garments, tending children, preparing food. Youngsters run through the camp showing little restraint, playing games, laughing, yelling, and poking at each other. Few men are visible; one man is making lances, a pair of men are in an animated discussion concerning a large black hawk tethered to a perch.

As the party and its escort approaches, there is confusion in the camp; pretty soon the children are running out to meet the riders. By time the party reaches the camp, everyone is standing around solemnly looking at the player-characters as they walk through the tepees. Hwesta Lome heads directly for the largest tent in the camp; when he reaches it, he dismounts and gives his reins to a young boy to hold. He enters the tent and shortly re-emerges with an old but robust nomad. He wears no



special ornamentation, but he carries himself with a clear air of authority. Hwesta is obviously deferential as he tells his version of the encounter — substantially in accordance with the facts, but exaggerating the potential menace of the party and deemphasizing the degree of aggressiveness he displayed in meeting the party. If there was any combat, he explains that the party made the first threatening move, and that he stopped the combat as quickly as possible. (The party can only understand this, of course, if someone in the party can speak Mong.)

The tribal chief, Anor Surra, makes no comment, but snaps his fingers, dismissing Hwesta. He then pauses thoughtfully for a few minutes. During this time, he is trying to guess which character is the leader of the party. If no one steps forward to initiate introductions or greetings, he picks the most likely candidate. The gamemaster must roleplay this judgment depending on the demeanor and actions of the characters. If any character has performed as though he was the leader, the chief speaks directly to him. He apologizes for any inconvenience, but insists that Hwesta, the rider leader, had been doing his duty as he saw it. He then suggests that the travelers must be tired after their journey, and suggests that they might like to rest before talking business. He is quite firm; though he won't say so, he doesn't want to talk until he has consulted with his Council of Elders. He also won't let the party leave before talking. He sends the party with an escort to a large empty tent in the center of the camp where food and water is brought and the party members are encouraged to rest and clean themselves for the evening meal. No one answers any of the party's questions; they keep saying that there will be plenty of time to talk later. The guard consists of only two young nomads, and the tent itself is not very sturdy; escape is difficult, however, since there are many people around, and most of them are armed.

At dusk a group of nomad women enter the tent and begin to set up for a meal. Food is brought in and a number of cushions are laid in a circle around the serving area in the center of the tent. The chief, a few other young nomads, and a group of older nomads enter the tent and seat themselves, leaving alternating open spaces for the party members to disperse themselves. The meal is served in silence broken only by appreciative grunts and sighs; the nomads do not talk or listen during it.

Finally, the meal ends and the chief begins by offering to answer any of the party's questions. He answers any queries about the tribe and their customs truthfully and directly; he avoids the issue of what is to be done with the party and when they will be free to go, claiming that that subject will be discussed later. Finally, after the players have asked all the questions they wish, the chief explains that there are only two conditions under which the party may cross the tribe's territory. The first condition would be fulfilled if the party members belonged to the Surra tribe. The second condition could be fulfilled if the party members belonged to a brother tribe of the Surra. No others may receive permission to cross Surra land.

If the party asks how the caravans have obtained permission to cross Surra territory, the chief replies uneasily that the caravaners all travel as members of the Surra. (He won't admit it to the player-characters, but the caravaners have bought membership in the Surra with gifts of metal weapons and similar civilized goods.) If the party members inquire how the caravaners came to

belong to the Surra, the chief says that they all obtained membership by performing a great service for the tribe.

If the party members offer to pay for membership in the tribe, the chief becomes very insulted, replying that the party must have little respect for the Surra to imagine that one might buy membership in the tribe. The chief may be open to an offer, but it must be framed in terms which do not offend his sense of pride in his people. For example, the party might suggest that they would like to attempt to perform a great service to the Surra, but they need some time to consider what a truly appropriate deed might be. A public discussion of appropriate deeds would be unseemly; it seems a bit much like bargaining for a price of admission. On the other hand, Anor Surra would be perfectly willing to discuss the matter in private in his tent. It all depends on how tactful and clever the party members are in making their bid; if they are too obvious or too careless with the chief's honor, he storms out of the tent in a huff with rest of the elders, and the party has to start all over again. If the party is politic and polite, they can get some time to discuss the offer among themselves in private, and to consult with the chief later in private to find out what an appropriate offer might be.

The second condition, that the party members belong to a brother tribe, is the solution that the chief has come to propose. He personally doubts that the party has anything sufficiently valuable to "purchase" admission into the Surra. Thus, he suggests that the party may undertake the Brother Tribe Rituals, and thereby earn status that permits the tribe to treat with them as equals. There are six contests in the Brother Tribe Rituals; traditionally, if the party manages to win at least three of them, they can qualify as a Brother Tribe.

## The Six Contests

1. A dagger duel to first touch — best three out of five points.
2. A riding skill demonstration — pick three hats from the ground while riding past them at a gallop.
3. A bow skill demonstration — drive an arrow through a shield at 50 paces.
4. A hunting test — track and slay a plains lion single-handedly.
5. A story-telling contest — judged by the entire tribe; an exchange of stories.
6. Freestyle — impress the tribe with any feat of your own choice; anything goes, but good taste and judgment is considered as important as flashiness and ability.

If the party wishes to attempt the Brother Tribe Rituals, they are given two days to prepare. A general holiday is called for the ritual day, two days from now. The party is cordially invited to ask for anything it needs, and may practice along with the tribe's champions if they wish. If the party seeks advice about how to handle the contests or about the prospective opponents, they may find cooperative tribe members if they avoid such discussions or requests in public. The gamemaster should make CHA or Persuade rolls as appropriate. When a player makes an impolite or dishonorable suggestion or inquiry, the tribe member should clearly display his displeasure and con-

**44** tempt, and will be negatively disposed to the character thereafter. If enough tribe members are offended, it hurts the party's chances of achieving Brother Tribe status, regardless of the outcome of the contests. If the chief or elders are offended, the chances of acceptance are slim.

Only one player-character may attempt each contest, but a different person (if possible) should attempt each.

### The Dagger Duel

Style is important in this duel; though the scoring is technically based on the touch, the judges are very partisan, and they always rule in favor of the stylish fighter on a judgment call. Good dagger combat style is considered by the nomads to be a minimum reliance on parrying and a maximum use of Dodging.

Throwing the dagger is considered a very dangerous and difficult move. First, if the throw misses, the dagger is lost for three rounds, during which the fighter may only Dodge while retrieving it. Second, it is very poor form to seriously injure your opponent. When the dagger is handheld, the wielder may, if he wishes, choose not to use his damage bonus, if any, and may even choose to decrease the damage done by cutting the total in half, representing "pulling the blow." When a dagger is thrown, however, the damage cannot so be reduced.

Gallant gestures earn the crowd's approval. Every time a fighter declines to attack an opponent who has fumbled or lost his weapon, he is cheered heartily, and is likely to be chosen the victor even if he is wounded first.

### Special Rules for the Dagger Contest

1. If a dagger is broken in combat, the contest is halted until the fighter is rearmed. If a dagger is lost in a fumble, or if a throw is missed, the contest continues, with the character only able to Dodge until he regains his weapon.
2. If any fighter is judged to have purposely injured an opponent (for more than 5-6 points of damage), the contest is stopped, and the victim declared the winner.
3. Any tactic ruled dishonorable by the judges disqualifies a fighter. Use of sorcery or magical weapons or abilities is always considered dishonorable.

### The Riding Contest

The key to success in this contest is preparation. First a horse must be selected. The chief offers any of his private selection of ten ponies. The player-contester should tell the gamemaster what features he is looking for in his horse. The gamemaster should secretly award a 5% Riding bonus in the contest if the player specifically looks for one of the two important characteristics described here. He should award the player a 15% Riding bonus if he looks for both relevant characteristics. The characteristics are: first, the shorter the pony, the easier it is to reach the ground to grab the hat, and second, the pony must have a long, full mane to grip as the rider leans over to snatch at the hat. Otherwise, the chief's ponies are all of equal quality, well-trained, cooperative, and healthy.

The rider must have practiced this trick before he tries it, or there is a -50 percentile penalty for being unfamiliar with the trick. For each hour the character spends in practice before the event, he regains 5 percentiles of his maximum riding skill. If he is coached by a native (role-playing

and Persuade rolls may be needed), he gains 10 percentiles per hour instead.

The contest itself is straightforward; the rider is permitted to place three hats on the ground; each hat must be no more than two paces from another hat. Then the rider must take his horse to a point a hundred paces away, turn, and gallop toward the hats. All three hats must be picked up in a single pass. The rider must succeed in four Riding rolls: one for the galloping approach (if the rider is careless, he might spoil the approach), and one for grabbing each hat. Among experienced riders like the nomads, ties are common, so the contestants try this trick again and again until one of them fails while the other one succeeds.

### Target Shooting

The bow contest offers little opportunity for strategy or preparation. Only a strong man with a desert bow is likely to have any success. The contestants are given ten shots each at a shield painted with a target at the center. The idea is to drive as many arrows directly through the shield as possible; an arrow penetrates the shield when it does 13 or more points of damage, or on any critical hit. The secondary objective is to be as accurate with your shots as possible. The accuracy of a shot that hits the target is the difference between the number rolled on the percentile dice and the percentage bow skill of the shooter. The total accuracy rating of a shooter is the sum of the accuracies of his shots that hit the shield. If neither bowman penetrated the shield, or if both bowmen penetrate the shield the same number of times, the accuracy of the ten shots is used as a tie-breaker.

### The Hunt

This is not strictly a contest; it is more like a pass-fail exam. The character has two days to locate and kill a lion. He may not use any missile weapon except for throwing spears (or daggers, if he is desperate). He is given a pony for overland travel, but it is common knowledge that horses are useless for hunting lions because of their instinctive fear of the big cats.

Several strategies may be employed by the hunter. He may wait by a water hole for lions to arrive. There is a 5% chance per daylight hour that a pride of lions visits that water hole. Or the hunter may follow a large herd of grazers, hoping to catch sight of a lion. Finding a herd requires a Hunting skill check, which may be attempted once per hour. Thereafter, there is a 5% chance per hour that a lion pride appears. Finally, a hunter may simply look for lion spoor. He has a 10% chance per hour of coming across a lion's trail; and must roll his Hunting skill to discover it. Once he has found the trail, he must track it down, taking 1D10 hours to do so. For each hour the hunter must track the lions, he must succeed on his Hunting skill roll or lose the trail. If he loses it, he has a 50% chance per hour of picking up the trail again.

Though the hunter has 48 hours to complete his task, he cannot proceed without sleep for more than 18 hours before his skills begin to decline due to fatigue. For every hour over 18 that he fails to rest, he loses 5% off all his skills. These reductions persist until he has slept for at least six hours.

Once the hunter finds the lions, the gamemaster should roll 1D6 for the number of lions in the pride. The hunter

# Judgement

may either attack all the lions at once, or try to separate one lion from the others. Or he could give up and go looking for another group of lions. The gamemaster must rule on a case-by-case basis how effective a hunter is in isolating a single lion out of a group.

The hunter must kill the lion and bring it back to camp. He may use traps or ambush to attack the lion; the tactics used have to be assessed by the gamemaster on the merit of the plan. Once it is killed, if the hunter has not lost his horse, he can rig a travois and drag the carcass back with the horse. If he has lost his horse through lion attack or failure to tether him when lions are around, he has to drag proof of his kill back by himself. Roll 1D6 for the number of hours ride the hunter is from the camp. Double this if he is on foot.

## Story Telling

This must be roleplayed if possible; the relevant skills are Orate, Sing, and Persuade, but it is a rather undramatic contest if the gamemaster does nothing but roll dice.

The Surra have a taste for stories of individual heroism, particularly against overwhelming odds. They also are fond of shaggy-dog stories and tall tales; the more absurd and fantastic the lies, the better they like them. They also like jokes of all kinds.

To roleplay this story-telling, try to invent a story that fits the context of the scenario as closely as possible. The important feature of the contest is not to win; it is simply getting up and sharing verbally with the rest of the tribe. It is an act of community, and no offering, no matter how lame, is scorned as long as it is given in the proper spirit. The tribal audience is so polite, in fact, that they almost always vote in favor of the visitors, simply to avoid hurting their feelings.

## Impress the Chief

This is the free-style event. It is an opportunity for the visitors to emphasize their own specialty, whatever it may be. The format is as an entertainment; it may be conceived of as a variety show or as a one-shot act. Such contests are eagerly anticipated by the tribe. The players should be encouraged to come up with whatever they like. The obvious show-stopper would be a sorcerer with a flashy performance, but such stunts as tumbling, juggling, martial displays, exotic dancing, and feats of strength and skill are acceptable. The gamemaster should interpret the use of ability rolls with the greatest latitude in order to encourage the imagination and variety of the performance. As in the story-telling competition, the tribal audience is so polite that they will express enthusiasm for any kind of entertainment the party offers, so long as it is not in poor taste or insulting to the Surra sense of pride and dignity.

## Advice

For all these tests, the characters may seek the advice of the chief, elders, or any tribe members. Everyone is more than eager to be polite and helpful; it is not sporting to withhold any information or assistance from a contestant. The only thing the party must be careful about is to avoid offending or insulting any of their counselors; too many incidents of poor judgment or ruffled feathers may prejudice the chief and elders against the party.

After the days of contests and entertainments, the chief and elders retire with a group of other prominent tribe members to consider the acceptance of the party as a brother tribe. If the party has succeeded in three of the six contests, the conference is merely a formality, as the chief gladly tells the player-characters in private if they inquire. However, if the party has not been successful in three of the contests, there should be a certain degree of tension in the relations between the party and the Surra. The conference should last for about six hours, with the party kept waiting in suspense in their tent.

If the gamemaster feels that the party has been dramatically incompetent in the rituals, so much so that they have humiliated themselves, or if the party members have committed numerous grave breaches of custom and courtesy, the gamemaster may decide that they should be denied Brother Tribe status. This is a great insult to the party, and there follows a sudden and complete distant formality in all the tribe's dealings with them. The party is told that the council has generously decided to permit the party to cross Surra land, on the condition that they never do so again. The party is unceremoniously conducted to the edge of the camp and pointed in the direction of the caravan road; thereafter, the tribe pretends that the player-characters don't even exist. Any false move by the party is instantly met with hostility.

However, unless the party made a mess of things, the council eventually emerges from the meeting tent and cheerfully greets the party as a new Brother Tribe. There follows jubilation and friendly congratulations. In a few minutes, the crowd quiets down and elders organize the tribe for a brief ceremony. The tribesmen take their seats in a circle around the chief and the player-characters. The chief approaches each character and speaks briefly in praise of the fine personal qualities and traits the party member has displayed during his visit with the Surra. Then the character is expected to express his love and devotion to the tribe and to make a brief informal oath asserting his everlasting loyalty. Then the chief slaps the new Brother Tribesmember on the cheek as hard as he can, while the whole tribe guffaws. The ritual is performed with each individual player-character. The players should be aware that they are making a solemn social commitment and that the tribe members are making a commitment to them.

After the ritual, the chief tells the party members that they are free to go as they will. He gives them tokens of their Brother Tribe status, so that other nomad tribes they meet in the plains will know that these people are Brothers to the Surra, and under their protection and hospitality.

When the characters finally leave, they may request material from the tribe; the Surra are willing to part with a riding pony for each player-character. In turn, they expect generosity from their brothers, also; the party should make presents of gratitude before they leave.

When the hour of leaving arrives, the chief personally comes to bid the player-characters farewell as the representative of the tribe. He wishes for the party's success in their objectives and for a swift return to visit with their brothers. As the player-characters ride from the camp, the nomads wave with dignity.



# The River Crossing

As the player-characters resume their journey to the east, the clouds begin to threaten bad weather. If the player-characters are now mounted, they have increased their pace by 50%, but on the second night after the player-characters leave the Surra, a tremendous storm sweeps across the prairie. The rain is preceded by a brief but violent thunderstorm; thunder and lightning frighten the horses so badly that the players must make Riding rolls to see if their characters must dismount and lead their horses. As the storm reaches its peak, the horses panic, and if not well tethered, they break loose and run in a random direction if the Riders fail their Riding skill. If a rider is on a bolting horse, he should make a Riding check each minute, during which time the horse runs a quarter mile. The first Riding roll is made at a 50% penalty; for each roll thereafter the penalty decreases by 10 percentiles until the skill reaches normal. For each minute that the horse runs in panic, there is a 10% cumulative chance that the rider becomes lost in the driving rain. Once the player succeeds with a riding roll for his character, the horse is calmed, and the rider must then find his way to the road; for each quarter mile he has traveled he must succeed with the Tracking skill once to find his way back. If the rider becomes lost, further tracking rolls are made with a 50 percentile penalty. For each failed tracking roll, the character wanders another quarter mile away from the other player-characters. The others may search for him, using their own tracking abilities once for every quarter mile the runaway has traveled; However if they fail their skills, they too could become lost (10% chance). A horse that panics and runs away without a rider runs for 1D10 minutes, covering a quarter-mile per minute. After the rain abates, the player-characters may search for lost horses by the same method as they search for lost player-characters.

The storm slackens from a violent thunderstorm to a steady downpour after about ten minutes. The rain is so hard it turns the road into a quagmire and makes travel impossible. The player-characters must either stand helplessly waiting for the rain to abate, or seek out a place to take shelter until the rain stops. The only nearby shelter is a clump of trees a half-mile ahead along the road. The party may also put up their tents and wait out the storm if they wish.

The steady downpour continues for the rest of the day and into the night. The player-characters are unable to build a fire unless a sorcerer can provide one. With no fire, each soaked and chilled player-character must receive a

successful CON x5 roll to avoid catching a chill. If a player-character catches a chill, all his abilities drop by 20 percentiles temporarily until he throws off the chill. The character has a CON x5 chance every day of throwing off the chill. The gamemaster may take other conditions into account to increase or decrease the likelihood of a player-character catching a chill. For example, if a rider is lost for ten minutes at the height of the storm, he might have a greater chance of catching a chill, while a Plant Lore expert might be able to brew a tea that will protect against a chill.

When morning comes, the rain is still falling hard, but the player-characters can see well enough to continue if they want to. Otherwise, they remain in whatever shelter they have selected. If the gamemaster judges the player-characters' protections against hypothermia to have been inadequate, the character must succeed with a second CON x5 roll to avoid catching a chill. If a character already has a chill, his abilities drop another 20 percentiles and has a chance of only CON x 3 per day to shake the illness.

The third day (and the fourth) see the continuation of the heavy rainfall, though the rain is more intermittent and quiet. The player-characters can continue with their journey, though their pace is cut again to about 20 miles per day. In the middle of the day, about six miles from where the player-characters were first threatened by the thunderstorm, the travelers come upon a broad, open valley that runs north-south. In the valley is a raging river swollen with flood waters; the normally-easily forded river now seems impassible. The river itself is about sixty feet across, and the banks on either side are steep and undercut by the swift flood waters. The party can either sit on the bank and wait for the waters to subside, or attempt to cross the river at full flood.

If the player-characters choose to wait, it is three days before the river is low enough to cross safely. The player-characters must make CON rolls against the chills if the gamemaster feels that the characters have not been careful to keep dry and they do not keep a fire going for drying wet garments and keeping damp people warm.

The player-characters may attempt to cross the river where the road crosses it or they may scout up and down stream looking for another place to cross. If the player-characters cross at the road, they have to swim. Ropes may be strung from bank to bank to guide the swimmers and prevent their being washed away, but there are no trees or large shrubs along the bank and the ropes either have to be hand-held or staked down by some other method. The horses might easily become lost or drowned in the crossing. They can swim, but the flooded river is running swiftly and turbulently, and may trap the strongest swimmer. All the ponies have a 60% Swim ability. Check each 20 feet they must swim, and they take 1D6 drowning damage from a failed roll. The horses are carried 100 feet downstream for each turn they are in the water.

Player-characters are carried 100 feet downstream for each 20 feet they swim unless there is a safety line. If a character fails his Swimming roll, whether he is swimming free or protected by a rope, he takes 1D6 damage. Humans can swim or pull themselves 20 feet across the river for each turn in the water. Once a character has failed his Swimming roll, he cannot move on his own across the river unless he succeed with Swimming again. He can be pulled or assisted by another character who is nearby and has succeeded with swimming that turn.

If the players use some risky method of moving the equipment across the river (floating it across the river, towing it by a rope, or pushing or dragging by a swimmer), the gamemaster should determine an appropriate chance that something will be swept away, and then he should randomly determine what items are lost.

If a player-character or a horse is carried more than 400 feet downstream, he finds himself confronted by a pack of seven wolves on the far bank of the river. The wolves attack anything that crawls out on their side of the river beyond 400 feet downstream of the ford. A character or a horse must make a See roll to notice the wolves; otherwise the wolves get surprise. A simple solution is to swim back to the near bank, though the horses might not think of this. The wolves have been preying lazily on half-drowned refugees from the river. If a prospective meal puts up too much of a fight, the wolves abandon it. If any wolf receives more than six points of damage, it withdraws, and there is a 50% chance that the other wolves withdraw every time a wolf retreats due to injuries.

If the player-characters scout up and down the banks of the river, they find a place north of the ford where the river is only 40 feet wide, and where there are a number of trees along the bank where safety ropes may be secured. Here the horses and men need not swim so far. It is pos-

sible that the player-characters can rig a rope-bridge from the trees on each shore to permit the humans to avoid swimming at all. The basic chance for designing and constructing a safe bridge is the best Tie Knots skill among the group. The gamemaster may award substantial bonuses to the chance if the players describe a plausible way to make the bridge. The roll should be made secretly by the gamemaster; the bridge might fall as a player-character is crossing.

Once the player-characters have crossed the river, they continue east along the caravan road. Karlaak is still another two days ride to the east as they camp for the night.

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**Wolves**

STR 13      CON 11      SIZ 10      POW 11      DEX 17  
 HP 11      Armor: 2-point fur

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
bite	35%	—	1D8

SKILLS: Dodge 34%, Scent 85%, Track 83%.

<b>Wolf 1</b>		<b>Wolf 5</b>	
DEX 19	HP 11	DEX 17	HP 13
<b>Wolf 2</b>		<b>Wolf 6</b>	
DEX 18	HP 12	DEX 16	HP 9
<b>Wolf 3</b>		<b>Wolf 7</b>	
DEX 17	HP 10	DEX 15	HP 11
<b>Wolf 4</b>			
DEX 17	HP 11		

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# The Badlands

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On the morning after the river is crossed, the party discovers a vast badlands area opening out to the south of the caravan road. It is invisible until the player-characters are almost on top of it. It looks as though great scoops of the prairie had been shoveled out by some god, and then bizarre sandcastles of purple, orange, and grey hues had been dripped from a giant child's hand. The grassland continues right up to the edge of the badlands, then drops away in a cliff that varies from 50 to 200 feet in height. In the badlands below there is no vegetation at all except for an occasional clump of weeds around an alkaline pool.

48 The rock is cut into weird spires and knife edged ridges that run in all directions. The badlands stretch as far as the eye can see to the south, and to the east the player-characters can see that the road swings north to run around the badlands that apparently reach farther to the north as the road continues east. After a half-hour's travel, however, it is clear that the road goes across, not around the badlands.

The player-characters finally reach the place where the road descends the cliff into the badlands. The slope is steep, but there are marks where wagons have traveled down into the lowlands. The area below looks like it is filled with mud, but the surface of the ground, though indistinct and blurred like mud, is hard as rock, or occasionally crumbly like clay. As soon as the party descends from the cliff, they are in a chaotic series of ravines and washes. They cannot see farther than a few hundred yards in any direction without climbing one of the fantastically-sculptured ridges, and ever then the player-characters can only see more of the same all around. The best thing the player-characters can do is to follow the road, which is at least clearly marked. From time to time they pass caves eroded back into the strange stone. In the caves there are usually traces of fires or other evidence of overnight habitation. Sound carries strangely in the narrow clefts between hard

stone ridges: sometimes it is muffled, sometimes it echoes over great distances.

Finally dusk approaches and the player-characters must select a camp for the night. If they choose, they discover a convenient cave where they can shelter themselves and the horses. Only if they have carried firewood can the player-characters make a fire; there is no wood to be found in the badlands.

The player-characters should arrange their camp and select their watches. In the early evening, on the first watch, the ponies suddenly go wild with fear, attempting to escape or to break their tethers. The player-characters have to make Riding rolls to calm and secure the ponies, but the ponies do not relax even if the roll is successful. If the roll fails, the ponies thrash about until they break free or collapse from exhaustion. The characters also smell a distinct scent in the air — the smell of rotting carrion, mixed with the foul stench of burning sulphur. Nothing can be found if the characters investigate, except for some odd footprints that might have been made by a very large dog. Later in the night, the watch hears something approaching in the darkness. Into the fire or moonlight steps a single Dharzi hunting dog. The creature looks like a large black canine with the head and neck of an eagle. Its eyes are bright and intelligent. Behind this creature can be seen



the eyes of a number of other animals, perhaps more of the same creatures. The beasts appear to be stalking carefully towards the player-characters' camp, but they have made no move to attack.

Here the players should state their characters' intentions. If the player-characters attack the dogs, the dogs return the attack for two turns, then withdraw suddenly into the darkness. If no aggressive moves are made, the dogs move slowly into the sight of the whole party. There are twenty dogs, the largest of which is standing closest to the player-characters, with the rest arranged in a semicircle behind. At this point the smell of the creatures is overpowering, and the ponies are in a panic. The ponies roll their STR as a percentage or less to break any ropes or tethers and run off into the darkness.

After a few minutes of silent confrontation the dogs suddenly disappear as swiftly and as silently as they appeared.

Later in the evening the player-characters are suddenly overrun by an army of giant baboons. They have abnormally large heads and they carry crude shields and spears. They do not attack to kill, they attempt to grab the player-characters and drag them away. Only a successful parry can prevent a baboon from grabbing a character. Even after being grabbed by a baboon, a player-character can parry to break the creature's grip. Alternatively, as long as a character is gripped by only one baboon, he can continue to attack. Killing a baboon breaks his grip instantly.

The baboons achieve surprise unless the watch guards successfully roll their See ability at a 50 percentile penalty for darkness. Other precautionary measures may be taken into account by the gamemaster in adjusting the duration and the effect of the surprise. The baboons continue to try to seize the player-characters and drag them off until all the baboons are killed or have left with a player-character in tow. It is possible that only part of the party will be captured. If so, the rest of the player-characters may elect to pursue and free the captured characters immediately, though they suffer a 50 percentile Tracking penalty due to darkness and unfamiliar ground. If the baboons have more than a two-turn head start, they cannot be caught (though the gamemaster should not tell the players that). If the creatures do not have a head start, roll a D6 to determine the number of turns required to catch the escaping baboons. The player-characters must each be successful with Tracking for each turn of pursuit. If any of the player-characters miss any of their Tracking rolls during that period, they cannot catch the baboons (though, again the gamemaster need not reveal this.)

If all the player-characters are captured and carried off, proceed to the section entitled The Baboon Abduction, which describes the Dharzi's sanctuary.

It is possible that the player-characters kill all of the baboons without permitting any of the party to be captured. In that case, the player-characters are visited again by the Dharzi dogs later that night. The dogs appear as before, only this time the lead dog steps forward and drops a scroll onto the ground near the party's cave. The dog then retreats to the edge of visibility and watches the player-characters' actions.

The note says in High Melnibonean, "Follow the dogs. This is an invitation you would be ill-advised to decline." The dogs wait for about a half-hour for the player-charac-

ters; if they make no sign that they wish to follow the dogs, the dogs return and report to their master. The dogs' master then sends another squad of giant baboons — this time 35 of them. This repeats with ever increasing numbers of baboons, until the baboons succeed in bringing a captive back to the Dharzi for questioning.

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### Giant Baboons

STR 20    CON 11    SIZ 14    INT 6    POW 9  
DEX 11    CHA 5    HP 13    Armor: 1 pt. skin

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
bite	35%	—	1D8+2+1D6
grab	75%	—	victim held
claw	40%	—	1D6+2+1D6
spear	40%	37%	1D6+2+1D6
shield	—	25%	—

SKILLS: Ambush 39%, Climb 57%, Move Quietly 35%, Hide 20%, Listen 34%, Track 80%, Scent 35%.

Baboon 1	Baboon 5	Baboon 9
DEX 14    HP 13	DEX 12    HP 13	DEX 10    HP 14
Baboon 2	Baboon 6	Baboon 10
DEX 13    HP 15	DEX 12    HP 14	DEX 10    HP 13
Baboon 3	Baboon 7	Baboon 11
DEX 13    HP 12	DEX 12    HP 11	DEX 9    HP 15
Baboon 4	Baboon 8	Baboon 12
DEX 13    HP 11	DEX 12    HP 12	DEX 8    HP 13

### Dharzi Dogs

STR 20    CON 16    SIZ 9    INT 8    POW 16  
DEX 16    HP 16    Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
claw (2)	45%	5%	1D8+1D6+1
Beak	69%	—	1D6+1+1D6

SKILLS: Climb 30%, Dodge 50%, Search 25%, Track 90%.

Dharzi Dog 1	Dharzi Dog 3
DEX 18    HP 13	DEX 16    HP 12
Dharzi Dog 2	Dharzi Dog 4
DEX 16    HP 14	DEX 15    HP 13

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## Baboon Abduction

If the giant baboons capture at least one player-character, and possibly all of them, they take the prisoners to their master. In the process of the capture and of dragging away the victims, certain possessions might be dropped or lost. Armor, weapons, shields, and magical objects must particularly be accounted for. If a victim becomes unconscious during his capture he drops anything he had in his hands. Additionally he has a 20% chance of losing another item of value. These items are assumed to have fallen near enough to the campsite that they are easy to find if searched for. If a victim does not lose consciousness, he either drops what he has in his hands while still near the campsite (20 - DEX x5%) for each item or he has these things taken away from him by the baboons after the group has trav-



DAVID DAY

eled a short way from camp. Anything that the baboons take from the player characters is carried along with the player characters by the baboons; their orders on this are explicit.

The group of baboons settles down to a steady travel pace when reach a quarter-mile away from the campsite. Each character captured by the baboons is trussed in crude fiber ropes and carried by a single baboon. The baboons continue on the move until just after sunrise when they take a short rest break, then continue. The group seems to be heading in a south-east direction from the position of the sun.

During the day, the baboons make more frequent rest stops. Finally, in the late afternoon, the baboons encounter a stream bed with flowing water. The turn west and follow the stream bed until they approach the cliffs that are the border between the badlands and the grassy steppes.

As the baboons approach the cliffs, the player characters notice that the stream runs out of a small opening in the wall of the cliff. The baboons make directly for this opening. Along the cliff the player characters might notice (with a successful See roll) paths leading along the irregularities in the cliffs to the steppes above. As the player characters get closer to the opening they see two baboon sentries perched on the cliffs above the opening.

The baboons hardly slacken pace as they march into the opening which immediately opens out into a remarkable underground room shaped like a half-sphere approximately 120 feet in diameter. The stream runs along one wall of the sphere, and the area is lit by a strong light source at the top of the luminescent dome. An opening is visible on the opposite side of the dome. Inside the dome wall opposite from the stream is a cluster of about 20 baboons; some are young, some are old, some are obviously female. Various tasks are being performed, as though the group were members of a primitive village. Animals are being skinned and prepared for drying of meat and hides; weapons are being shaped, garments are being fashioned with primitive tools, and hides are being layered over frameworks to produce shields. As the player characters are brought in, there is quite a stir as curious baboons move to observe the newcomers. The guard baboons motion the onlookers away and force a bitter potion down the throats of the captives. In a matter of seconds the victims slip into a drugged deep slumber. They remember no other details of the Dharzi refuge that the baboons carry them through, or the route to the chamber of Pemmnetr where they regain consciousness some hours later.

During the trip to the Dharzi caverns the player-characters can make attempts to escape from their baboon captors. For example, they can call upon elementals or demons to set them free, or try STR rolls to break their bonds. Judge each attempt on its own merits, but remember that the baboons are very strong and very careful in guarding their charges. If all of the player-characters escape, the baboons pursue them until they recapture the escapees. The baboons are faster than humans and more familiar with the terrain of the badlands than the player-characters, so it is unlikely that the player-characters can escape for long. If only a part of the captured player-characters escape, the baboons divide forces, sending the captives ahead to the baboon city with one group while another group pursues the escapees. If someone does manage to escape the baboons for more than a few hours, the baboons give up, and the player-character must make his way out of the badlands using his wilderness survival skills, or follow the baboons to the baboon city.

If any of the player-characters have avoided capture, they can try to follow and rescue the others. At night a tracking roll must be made 8 times per mile. If a roll is failed the tracker must search 1D10 minutes before he can try his Tracking roll again. Clearly, tracking at night is slow and uncertain work. In daylight hours, Tracking rolls are made with an 80 percentile bonus. A platoon of baboons makes a noticeable trail. Nonetheless there is little chance that the baboons will be overtaken. The baboons travel faster than the player-characters, and at night normal travel time is increased by time spent lost and looking for the trail. At best the trackers arrive at the baboon city several hours behind the baboons, just as the sun is setting. At worst, the trackers don't find the city by nightfall and are forced to deal with difficult tracking again.

## Pemmnetr the Dharzi

The Dharzi have not all disappeared from the face of the earth. Some few have taken to hiding on the Young Kingdoms plane from both the Young Races and from their old foes, the Melniboneans. The badlands are a perfect hiding place for this particular individual. He is a master of baboons and canines, and there are many of both species on the grasslands of eastern Ilmiora.

Pemmnetr is a master sorcerer. He knows much about elementals, demons, the Beastmasters, and gods that even the Melniboneans might marvel at. However, the gentleman is well over a thousand years old, and is no longer quite sane. First, he has developed a severe case of agoraphobia (fear of outside spaces); he has an intense fear of leaving his sanctuary. His paranoia convinces him that the him that the moment he leaves his sanctuary a Melnibonean will catch and exterminate him. Even more ironically, Pemmnetr is plagued by a neurotic fear of failure in the area of his greatest ability — sorcery. He has been studying sorcery for over a thousand years, but most of what he knows has become horribly confused, and he can't now solve even the simplest problems without going back through all his old texts and notes to check his work. Pemmnetr is all too aware of the consequences of failure in sorcery. He is terrified of any mistake which might risk

diminishing his powers or which might present a threat to his immortality. Consequently, he has become neurotically unable to begin any project, no matter how simple. Pemmnetr doubts his memory and skill so much that he keeps checking his work over and over. He's really afraid to do any kind of sorcery, but he rationalizes his unreasoning fear of failure as no more than a keen eye for detail, prudent caution, and a confidence that he has all the time in the world to make sure things are perfect.

Pemmnetr has only one friend and confidant — Moedrak, a demon of Knowledge. This demon has been with the Dharzi so long that he never even dreams of leaving. In objective terms Moedrak is a very knowledgeable demon, but he suffers from a desire to avoid making any statement that might be incorrect. He always wants to enumerate all the unknown variables and uncertainties before he pronounces a judgement on any issue, and he is so thorough that he can go on for hours covering the limits and reservations about his statements. This is perfect for the Dharzi, who doesn't want to try anything new anyway, but loves to feel like he is busily engaged in research.

Pemmnetr escaped the wholesale destruction that the Melniboneans wreaked upon the other Dharzi by hiding in this special sanctuary he created over a thousand years ago. It was originally designed as a sort of combination zoo, laboratory, and game-preserve. Each of the more than 50 special domes in the complex was created by powerful elemental forces summoned by Pemmnetr. Then most of the chambers were made into gates into other dimensions through the conjuring and guiding of great demons. Lesser demons were then bound as door wards for each chamber to prevent undesirable travel from one dimension to another. In each chamber Pemmnetr created a gate to some particularly interesting creature's natural habitat. He chose the locations of his gates carefully so that the areas covered by the gates would have a good chance of being inhabited by samples of the appropriate beast populations at any given moment. These windows to other worlds permitted Pemmnetr to carry on his studies of the beasts of the universe in relative comfort. These studies have given the Dharzi valuable insights into the nature of the Beastmasters, the god-like beings who were the chief supporting power of the Dharzi empire.

These portals are now completely neglected by Pemmnetr, who is too afraid to leave the safety of his own chamber. Some of the locations that the portals open upon no longer contain the intended beast populations; some creatures have moved out of range, some have even become extinct. In these portals there might be no creatures at all, or creatures other than those originally desired by Pemmnetr. Travel through the portals is restricted by powerful spirit wards and demon doors. Only someone carrying the sign of the Beastlord may pass through without harm. Pemmnetr himself has not left his chamber for centuries, but his servants are sometimes sent out with the sign on one mission or another.

Pemmnetr has managed to render himself almost immortal by sleeping for 99 of every 100 hours, each time he wakes up he has a bite to eat, chats with his friend the demon of knowledge, asks about interesting news, does a little work on his notes and projects, then goes back to sleep. This ability to lengthen his life by sleeping for long periods preserves his vitality, but the older he gets, the longer he finds he must sleep to hold off the ravages of



**52** old age. Pemmnetr looks to be in his late 40s, but he talks in a very distinctive way. Though his voice is pleasant and full, the rhythm and accent of his speech reflects the onset of senility, full of ummys and errrs, repetition and rambling irrelevancies. He often tunelessly whistles the ancient popular ballads of his youth and slips absently into pleasant reveries. Pemmnetr is almost completely unflappable. He calmly ignores the player-characters' most dire warnings and pleas, so absorbed is he in his own world.

Pemmnetr's characteristics are not included because the ancient sorcerer wouldn't think of fighting.

### **Pemmnetr's Chamber**

When the player-characters awaken they find themselves completely naked at the center of a great dome, surrounded by concentric circles of numerous tiers that rise up to the distant ceiling. The player-characters themselves are rather carelessly tied up inside a series of carefully-interwoven, eight-pointed symbols of Chaos and triangles of Law. Along the markings of these symbols are smoking traces of a plant material; this is extra insurance against the summoning of elementals or demons. Pemmnetr is seated in an odd furry mound (a lower life form) that seems to conform to his body shape, and which shifts with him when he moves. He is examining the possessions that have been taken from the player-characters.

When the player-characters speak to him, Pemmnetr looks up, startled, as though he didn't realize that humans could talk. He cocks his head back and forth and studies the prisoners with interest. He starts off with a few words in Dharzi, then experiments with High and Low Melnibonean. If these languages don't illicit a positive response, he reaches inside his robes for a thin tube, (a magical pen) and speaks to it. The pen is the demon of knowledge, Moedrak. Moedrak provides translations in Common if necessary, or in any other language. If a Melnibonean player-character was captured by the baboons and brought to Pemmnetr, that character is nowhere to be seen. He is being held by the baboons in their city (Pemmnetr will not allow a Melnibonean into his inner sanctum). The dialog is somewhat disappointing for the player-characters. No matter what they say, Pemmnetr picks up another item of the player-characters' clothing or equipment piled before him and asks about its design and function. He is childishly fascinated with the most common items, like boot laces and undergarments. In particular, he shows interest in magical items. After he has run out of items to ask about or after he has given up on asking the player-characters questions, he sighs, checks the time with the demon of knowledge, then stretches, yawns, and ambles off to a stairway that spirals above the player-characters toward the ceiling, providing access to other tiers. If the party is observant (See roll), they notice that Pemmnetr has left his pen (the demon of knowledge) on a table next to his unusual sitting furniture.

Pemmnetr is hardly a competent jailor. The party can free themselves from their bindings long before the 99 hours that it takes Pemmnetr to reawaken are up. The ropes are inexpertly tied. Permit the player-characters to make a DEX x5 or STR x 5 roll every half hour; this might seem ungenerous to the players who don't know that they have 99 hours before the Dharzi reappears. The

symbols inscribed around the player-characters are fire wards against passage, doing 2D6 in fire damage to anyone who passes them. Pemmnetr thinks that this is adequate protection against the player-characters' escape, since he can't imagine someone voluntarily permitting himself to be hurt. If a character crosses the wards and takes damage, he can call upon demons and elementals. The player-characters find all of their gear where Pemmnetr left it.

On the table next to Pemmnetr's organic chair is the pen that holds Pemmnetr's demon of knowledge. A demon of knowledge need only respond to its summoner, but Moedrak is curious enough to talk with the player-characters. Moedrak is a remarkably nice demon, though given to extensive digressions and overly-wordy and carefully-qualified answers to even the most trivial questions. Moedrak is also completely unsuspecting of the party's motives; he is a pleasant reference librarian at heart. Moedrak is an expert on Pemmnetr's chambers and his magical researches, but he doesn't know very much about the outside world. He cannot tell the player-characters anything about where they are except in the most general terms. In particular, though he can describe the principle of the portals and habitats and their original purpose, he can't give clues to help with navigation of the maze, or about the specific occupants of any given habitat, or how the player-characters might find a way out. He knows some useful information that the player-characters will need.

One — everything in this chamber is guarded by its own demon of protection that is specifically keyed to Pemmnetr. Attempting to enter any other room in this chamber would mean a bloody battle.

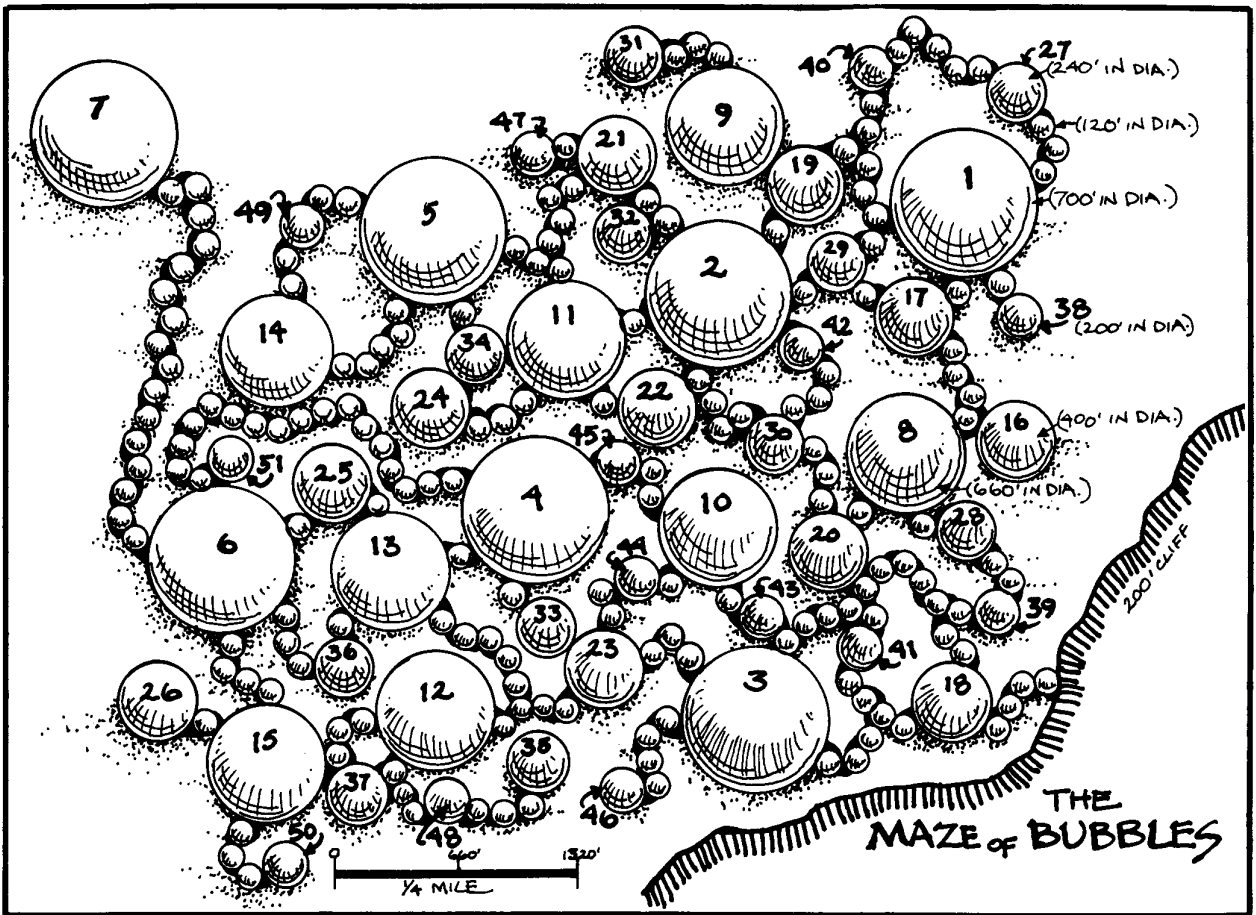
Two — the sign of the Beastmaster is necessary to pass through any of the gates of the habitats. This sign is routinely given to certain baboons who run errands for Pemmnetr. A spare sign is on the table next to the exit from this chamber.

Three— Any Baboon bearing an amulet of the Beastmaster may be commanded by the bearer of the sign. Only a few of the most important baboons have these amulets which are handed down through families as symbols of Beastmaster favor.

Four — The baboons think of Pemmnetr as god. He has raised them above their normal baboon brethren, and is worshiped and obeyed without question.

Five — Moedrak can be safely removed from the chamber. He is not eager to go, and does not bring up the idea, but if the player-characters ask he answers truthfully. He on one hand insists that he has a duty to his master, but on the other hand the prospect of travel and new adventures is appealing to him. If the player-characters are clever, they can persuade Moedrak to come with them voluntarily, and he thereafter cooperates with the player-characters fully. If they take Moedrak without considering his wishes, he cooperates but subtly tries to betray the player-characters and end his servitude.

Certain other matters may be less easy to investigate using Moedrak. For example, the portrait of Pemmnetr as a senile and degenerating personality is not obvious to Moedrak, but careful questioning reveals that Pemmnetr has done almost nothing new in centuries, and that he is uncomfortable about leaving his sanctuary or experimenting with new magical powers. Moedrak is also uncertain



about Pemmnetr's motives in capturing the player-characters; simple curiosity is his best guess. Moedrak is fairly knowledgeable about the Young Kingdoms in general (almost any information in the *Stormbringer* rules) but he is weak on specifics. Whenever the player-characters ask a question which is difficult or inconvenient for the gamemaster, the gamemaster should give excuses through Moedrak's persona, protesting, "There are only so many years in a century, and so much to do around here, and everybody keeps interrupting my important work with trivialities."

Sooner or later the player-characters will decide to leave. If they have Moedrak nearby, and they start to walk through the portal without a sign, Moedrak shrieks "Wait! Aren't you supposed to take a sign? Do you want to end up part of a demon's soul?" If this warning fails, the first player-character through the portal is attacked by a spirit ward (see section 5.7.2.4 in the rules) with a POW of 40. The ward attacks to kill; no illusion attack is attempted. Once the player-characters are past the portal they must negotiate the bubble-maze to the outdoors, while managing to avoid serious injury from the inhabitants of the habitats.

## The Bubble Maze

Once the player-characters have escaped from the Dharzi refuge (chamber number 7 on the map), they must find their way out of the bubble maze. As they travel they

encounter various creatures in the habitats. Certain paths through the maze are safer than others. Characters may back out of any chamber to try to find a safer route.

The gamemaster has great latitude in determining the behaviors of the creatures encountered in the habitats. With over thirty rooms specifically stocked with creatures, and other rooms where the gamemaster can place his own favorite creatures, it could take a great deal of time before the player-characters reach the outside world. Even if they took the optimum route, the player-characters still might have to face several melees. Aside from the amount of time these melees could take, characters are likely to die in such extended combat. In many cases the encountered creatures should be indifferent to the presence of the player-characters, or the player-characters should be able to sneak by the creatures without being noticed. However, if your players love combat, here is a good opportunity for them to try out their characters against a wide assortment of opponents.

The portals are glowing arches around a flat black plane of nothingness. To see in a player-character must poke his head in and look around. From the inside, the room's dimensions are visible as a shimmering transparent dome (or globe, in the case of a water or air environment). The shimmering walls of the dome produce no impediment to travel, but once outside the area of the dome, an observer cannot see any indication at all of the dome's existence. For this reason it is very important that anyone who travels outside a dome must pick a reliable landmark or reference point or risk becoming lost, unable to return

**54** to the plane of the Young Kingdoms. This is particularly dangerous in watery environments.

There are a number of portals that have been left untenanted. The gamemaster may populate them with his own choices or leave them vacant, on the principle that the creatures of a habitat might not be in the portal at any given time. Similarly, it is sensible to eliminate the contents of any room at the gamemaster's discretion, or to repopulate an already-populated room. Leaving vacant chambers is particularly prudent if the gamemaster is in a hurry to get the player-characters out of the maze.

## Key to the Maze and the Habitats

Habitat 1 – vacant

Habitat 2 – mastodons and a sabre-tooth tiger. A group of mastodons stands huddled in a box canyon. The largest of them is trumpeting at an unseen menace on the rocks above the only exit from the canyon. The player-characters have to make their way across the floor of the canyon and close to the source of the mastodons' distress in order to exit through the door on the other side of the room. The mastodons exit the canyon immediately if the tiger is frightened away. A point of damage is sufficient to frighten it off. If the player-characters get close to the clustered pachyderms, they smell an unfamiliar intruder and panic, stampeding for the opening. The tiger leaps on the back of one of the mastodons, whose screaming further panics the other creatures.

Habitat 3 – vacant

Habitat 4 – fauns and satyrs gambol about in a scene right from classical mythology. As soon as the creatures notice the player-characters, they flee out of the habitat area.

Habitat 5 – vacant

Habitat 6 – A primeval forest seemingly uninhabited by any large creatures, but teeming with birds and insects. While the player-characters cross this habitat a brontosaurus sticks its head and long neck through the wall of the habitat for a moment.

Habitat 7 – Pemmnetr's chamber

Habitat 8 – this habitat is filled with salt water, and the player-characters must swim to cross it. As the first player-character looks through the portal, he sees a huge sea serpent swim through the habitat, one coil after another breaks the water indicating that the serpent is of incredible length.

Habitat 9 – vacant

Habitat 10 – This is an underwater environment. Those who enter must swim across. There is no air in this habitat.

Habitat 11 – a grassy plain inhabited by horses. If the player-characters try to catch a horse, the herd runs out of the habitat.

Habitat 12 – another grassy plain, this time inhabited by rhinoceri. If the player-characters are not careful, a rhino will charge (30%, 4D6+4 damage) at a player-character.

Habitat 13 – A steaming jungle. A sluggish stream runs through the habitat which must be crossed to reach the other portal. If a player character steps in the stream with any exposed skin, 1D6 leeches attach themselves to him.

A tiger crosses the habitat stealthily while the player-characters are crossing, but only attacks if the player-characters provoke him.

Habitat 14 – vacant

Habitat 15 – This is an air habitat; the ground is 500 feet below. A hawk flies through as the player-characters look into the habitat. Unless they can fly, the player-characters shouldn't enter here.

Habitat 16 – A chaotic landscape of jumbled rocks. Three oonai hover at the center of the habitat, changing shape about once per second. This is the chaos plane on which the oonai live.

Habitat 17 – vacant

Habitat 18 – baboon city. The giant baboons live here. The city is described in more detail later.

Habitat 19 – A dense jungle of strange trees. There is a 10% chance that an olab enters the habitat as the player-characters are crossing.

Habitat 20 – A flat plane littered with bright blue and green rocks and with no perceptible plantlife. A creature of Matik stands at the center of the habitat. The creature will not attack the player-characters if they cross the habitat, as it has not been commanded to by anyone.

Habitat 21 – hot air and dense forest surround a ruined citadel. In the citadel live a family of clakars. The clakars are out hunting when the player-characters cross the habitat, but if the player-characters stay for long, the creatures return and attack.

Habitat 22 – Green fields. A low stone fence crosses the habitat and must be climbed over to reach the other portal. Cattle graze in the fields.

Habitat 23 – vacant

Habitat 24 – vacant

Habitat 25 – vacant

Habitat 26 – vacant

Habitat 27 – vacant

Habitat 28 – a shallow pond covers this habitat. The pond is on the edge of being completely stagnant, but is still filled with life. Turtles sun themselves on rocks, and insects thrive here. Characters walking through the pond risk being bitten by snapping turtles (70%, 2D6 damage).

Habitat 29 – another jungle scene. In this jungle the only apparent animal life is a wide column of huge ants which crosses from one side of the habitat to the other. The ants eat everything in their path. If one gets on a player-character, it bites doing 1 point of damage.

Habitat 30 – vacant

Habitat 31 – this habitat contains a wide but shallow river (never deeper than 2 feet) teeming with tiny frogs. On both banks of the river grow tall coniferous trees.

Habitat 32 – vacant

Habitat 33 – vacant

Habitat 34 – A flat rock plane. In the center of the habitat stands a monstrosity of teeming, seemingly-melted flesh. The thing has no attacks but each player-character must succeed with CON x1 or retch uncontrollably for 1D6 melee turns upon the sight of it.

Habitat 35 – vacant

Habitat 36 – dimly lit and hanging with cobwebs, this habitat is filled with spiders. The spiders bite causing itch-

ing welts, but doing no damage. After crossing this habitat each player-character has 1D100 spider bites.

- Habitat 37 – vacant
- Habitat 38 – vacant
- Habitat 39 – vacant

Habitat 40 – a pack of wild dogs runs on a rocky plain

Habitat 41 – this habitat is built up with now-abandoned shacks. The shacks are inhabited now by multitudes of large rats.

Habitat 42 – vacant

Habitat 43 – An enclosure in which Pemmnetr keeps his pack of Dharzi dogs. 1D20 dogs are present when the player-characters enter. If the player-characters have taken Pemmnetr's demon of knowledge, the demon provides them with a short chant which quiets the dogs. If Moedrak is not present the player-characters must fight the dogs to cross.

Habitat 44 – vacant

Habitat 45 – a low hillside. In a cave in the hill sleeps a hibernating bear.

Habitat 46 – vacant

Habitat 47 – fish of all descriptions swim in and out of this tropical subaqueous habitat. The player characters must swim and hold their breaths to cross this habitat.

Habitat 48 – vacant

Habitat 49 – various rodents in a grassy field

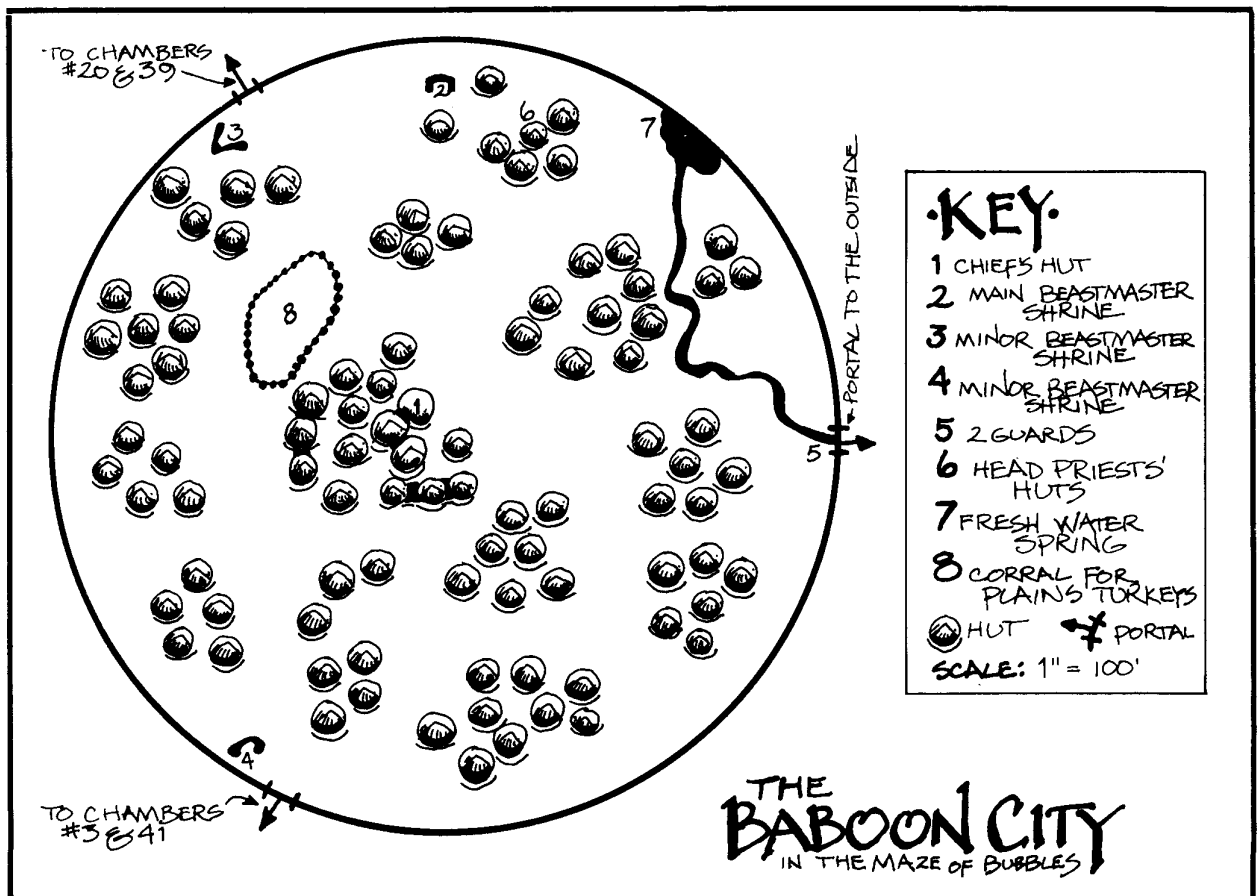
Habitat 50 – vacant

Habitat 51 – vacant

### The Baboon City

The baboon city is the greatest obstacle to the escape of the player-characters. It also is the greatest obstacle to any player-characters attempting to enter the bubble maze to rescue other player-characters.

The baboon city is laid out like a human primitive village, a clue to the almost-human culture of the baboons. Though there is no need for shelter in the underground domes, the creatures have built huts for privacy and for protection of possessions. The huts are scattered almost at random around the 400-foot diameter area of the floor of the dome, with several common work and gathering areas. There is no formal guard on the portals, but a priest sits with several sheaves of dried prairie flowers at the portal that leads from the inner maze. Here a minor priest of the Beastmaster cult awaits a summons from Pemmnetr, who is the Beastmasters' avatar-on-earth as far as the baboons are concerned. When Pemmnetr wants something, he sends his Dharzi dogs as messengers, bearing requests for odd items such as flowers or other tokens of the outside world. The messages are written in the simple pictographic language of the baboons. The priest reacts with great shock at the appearance of the player-characters. He and every other baboon in the tribe have seen the humans carried into the Other World (as the baboons call the bubble-maze) at the command of the avatar of god. The priest immediately shrieks an alarm, and the other baboons respond immediately, though in some confusion. They attempt to block the passage of the humans, though they are hesitant to touch or attack them. The priest tries to question the



**56** player-characters in his own baboon speech, but only the tone of confusion and inquiry is evident. Before the player-characters are halfway across the floor of the dome, the chief of the baboons, who was on the abduction raid, hoots out a loud cry which commands the baboons to prevent the humans from leaving the baboon city. The warriors move to interpose themselves between the player-characters and the portal to the outside, though they do not immediately attack or threaten the player-characters. The priest continues to bark questions at the player-characters. When the player-characters reach within a hundred feet of the exit, the baboon chief calls for the baboons to attack.

The baboon warriors initially attack to grapple, as they did in the initial abduction attempt. After the first five baboons are killed or wounded, the creatures begin to attack to kill the player-characters with their spears, claws, and jaws. There are over 200 baboon warriors in the city, but depending on the player-character's battle stance, only a small fraction of that number can melee with the party at any one moment. When twenty of the baboon warriors have been killed or disabled, only the superior warriors persist in their attacks (40 baboons). All the poor and average baboon warriors withdraw.

If the humans are in danger of being overcome by the baboons, they might choose to surrender. The baboons attempt to hold the humans prisoner until they hear from their god, which will be at the earliest four days after the player-characters escaped from Pemmetr's chambers (he sleeps for 99 hours at a time). During the interval the player-characters can either try to escape or try to convince the baboon warriors to let them go.

The player-characters might be able to get the baboons to let them go without a fight if they can produce a credible masquerade as messengers of the Beastmaster god. The player-characters can use Moedrak as a counselor. Moedrak knows a little about the baboons' worship of Pemmetr, and knows the pictographic writing and the language of the baboons. Even without Moedrak, an imaginative player might be able to pass the player-characters off to the baboons as sent by the gods. The use of any sorcery would definitely increase the credulousness of the baboons. This attempt to trick the baboons into letting the player-characters pass can come before or after melee with the creatures. The baboons are superstitious and are easily impressed by spirits from the otherworld.

If the party is forced to escape from the baboon village, they have the advantage that the baboons have never tried to keep a captive before. The concept is novel to them, they have to improvise methods to restrain the player-characters. The first method that occurs to them is to place the player-characters in the center of a circle of guarding baboons. They take away the party's obvious weapons, but they do not know to take any poisons, or magical items. This gives the party further opportunity to communicate, while permitting sorcerers to summon elementals or demons. The player-characters' possessions are taken to the priest's hut, where the party must attempt to reclaim them if they attempt to escape. If an escape attempt fails, the baboons try keeping the player-characters in one of the huts under constant guard. This still does not restrain the sorcerers, and the substance of the huts is such that a player-character need only succeed with a STR roll to burst through the crude roof of the hut, and even

the walls can be knocked down with the concerted effort of a few characters.

If the player-characters are unable to figure out a way of escape by themselves, it is up to the gamemaster to contrive an escape to permit the player-characters to resume their quest. If this is necessary, the baboon head priest comes to the player-characters one evening with all their gear. He gives the player-characters a sheaf of flowers, a piece of dried mud tablet with a few pictographs in it, and draws a map in the dirt indicating that going to the wall of the dome and working around the edge is the safest way to reach the exit without attracting attention. The tablet says, "Go and do the work of the master." The priest then leaves the hut and calls loudly from the center of the dome for a meeting of the baboons. While the priest is talking to the baboons, the player-characters can easily overcome their guards and sneak around to the exit portal. Here they have to get by only two guards, and from here on out the portals are not guarded by demon wards, and the player-characters need only follow the stream to reach the outside.

Once out of the baboon city the player-characters can either trace back the way they came or attempt wilderness travel along some other route to the other side of the badlands. The baboons are swift travelers but indifferent trackers. The Dharzi dogs led them to the player-characters originally, and without the Dharzi dogs, the baboons quickly lose the player-characters' trail. If the player-characters return to their former campsite, they can recover any gear they left at the site. The horses are there also if they were carefully secured. Once on horseback the player-characters can easily outdistance any pursuit and can proceed to their rendezvous with destiny in Karlaak. Alternatively the player-characters might decide to travel directly to Karlaak via wilderness travel. The conditions of this travel are harsh, but not life-threatening. The gamemaster can move directly to the Karlaak encounters or he can play out the wilderness travel, requiring Map Making, Navigation, Hunting, Plant Lore and other appropriate skill rolls.



If player-characters arrive at the baboon city to rescue the rest of their party, they discover the sentries marked on the map along the entrance passages to the baboon city. Fighting their way in past all the baboons is most likely to result in the player-characters' capture, as was originally planned in the abduction section. If however, the rescuers manage to defeat or race past the baboons, there is the more difficult challenge of the demon wards at the portals of the bubble maze. There are three baboons with signs to permit safe passage through the portals; the chief, the sub-chief, and the head priest of the Beastmaster cult. If the rescuers manage to discover that the signs can be used to provide safe passage through the portals, and if they can get a sign from one of the three baboons, then they can enter the bubble maze. Once inside the bubble maze they are in real trouble. Here the gamemaster has to manipulate events so that player-characters escaping from the Dharzi refuge "accidentally meet with the rescuers, thereby reuniting the party. Otherwise it is possible that the two groups could search for one another forever. For this reason it is best if the gamemaster can orchestrate the adventure so that all the player-characters are taken captive at the campsite, or that the rescuers are taken captive by the baboons

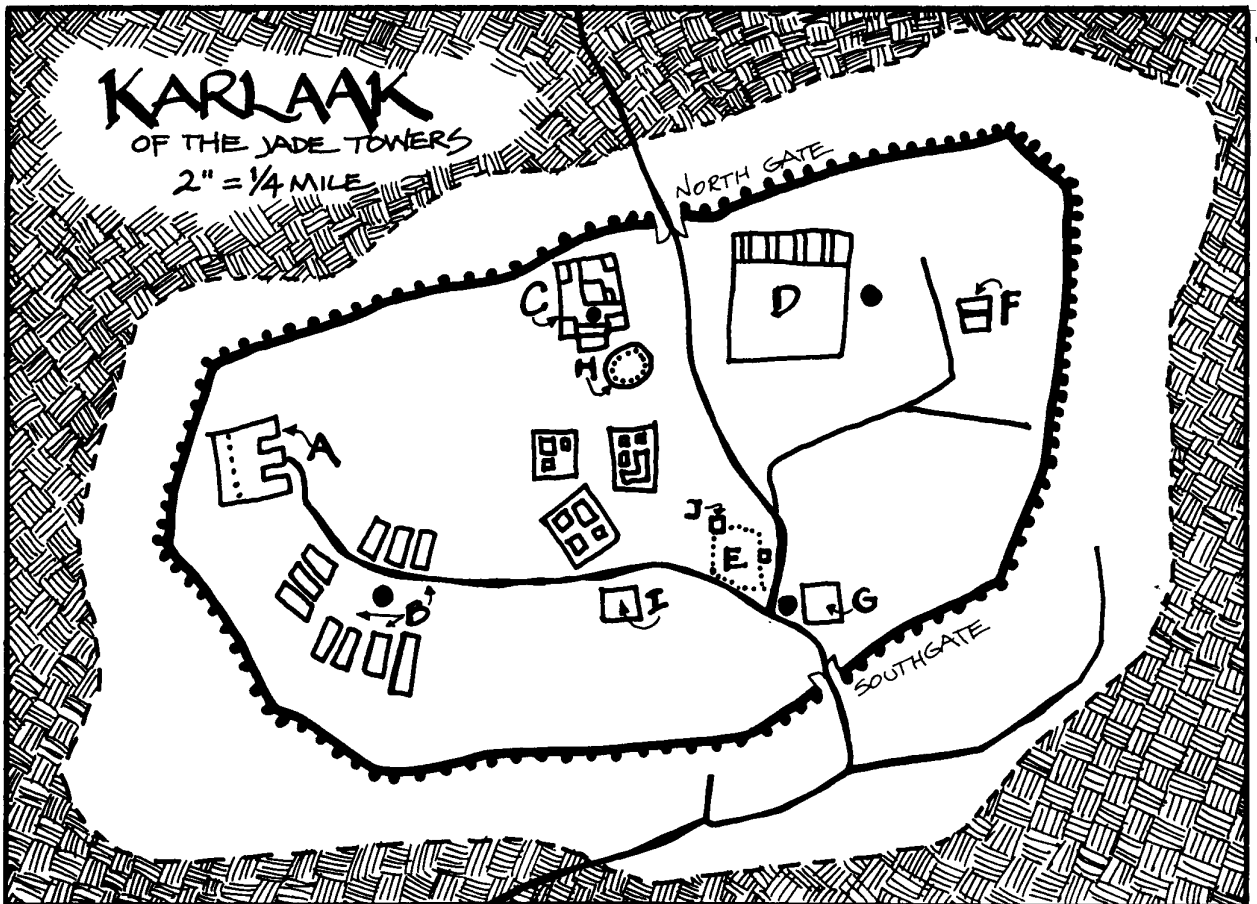
# Karlaak

Karlaak is a city on the border between the vast steppes and badlands of eastern Ilmiora on the west and the vast deserts of the Weeping Waste on the east. Karlaak has always been an important settlement, even long before the growth of the two major caravan routes that cross there. In ancient times the horse nomads of the east and west gathered in Karlaak in great seasonal conclaves to trade horses, settle tribal matters, and celebrate the important holy days. Many great nomad chieftains of old are buried in the high tumuli that dot the plains near Karlaak, and many tribes still gather personally at these tumuli, though now as much in the interests of trade in Karlaak as in the interests of honoring tradition.

The hill-top fortress of Karlaak has existed in one form or another for many centuries. New walls and buildings

## KEY FOR KARLAAK.

-  FARMLAND
-  END OF RESIDENTIAL AREA
-  MAJOR WELL/CISTERN
- A** TEMPLE OF AIR (JADE TOWERS)
- B** HOUSES OF THE PRINCES & THEIR GUARD
- C** THE PALACE
- D** THE KING'S GUARD
- E** MARKET
- F** ELRIC & ZAROVINA'S HOME
- G** THE TEMPLE OF RAIN
- H** THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN
- I** THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN
- J** THE RED LOCUST



**58** have been erected in layers upon ruins of older constructions. From time to time in digging the foundations for a new building, a subterranean chamber is opened — an ancient tomb or the cellar of some long-forgotten temple. The city has fallen several times to the assaults of the nomad horsemen, and always again it rises from the rubble, taking its conquerors as its new custodians. Karlaak has seen a two hundred year period of peace and prosperity since its last razing, and during that time the city has grown in wealth and influence until it is now accounted the most wonderful city in the west.

Karlaak's wealth and influence has come from its position astride the two great caravan routes of the eastern continent. The east-west route from Bakshaan is now only a shadow of its former importance, but is still the only practical land route from the west. The more important route runs north-south from the great mountains running east-west beneath the Sighing Desert, and caravans from beyond this mountain barrier bring rare and beautiful crafts and designs from far Tanelorn, the fabled city of peace and tranquility. The caravan route passes south through Karlaak toward Gorijhan, where it diverges, one route heading directly south to the sea and access to the Eastern Ocean, the other route heading southeast through Rignariom to Jadmar in Vilmir, from where merchant vessels voyage across the Oldest Ocean to all the civilized ports of the Young Kingdoms. Other minor caravan routes radiate from Karlaak into the surrounding steppes and deserts, drawing valuable mineral and agricultural goods from the herders and miners of the region. Most important are the precious metals and valuable ores taken from the newly-exploited areas in the Weeping Waste. These materials are the lifeblood of the new wealth and technology of the Young Kingdoms.

So Karlaak is a vital and growing town, but at the same time it is an ancient and venerable town with a sense of tradition. Though the markets and commercial sections of town are frantic with the energy of new money, there are other sections of Karlaak that are quietly beautiful. The great temples of the elements, the King's palace, the ancient armory of the King's guard, the Great Library of Rumer, the more remote residential districts of the older families of Karlaak — all suggest a more distant and romantic past. The great jade-encrusted towers of the Temple of the Air are symbols of Karlaak's exotic past, when the King and the noble court held absolute dominion over the affairs of the people, and when the aristocratic culture was heroic and courtly. The older families of Karlaak still retain a veneer of this romantic sophistication in the face of the growing power of the mercantile interests. There is a constant tension between new money and old money in the the court of the now-largely-nominal king and in the higher circles of power in the temples of Karlaak. The player-characters might stir this tension inadvertently in their encounters with the newly-rich merchants and tradition-conscious aristocracy. Player-character status is uncertain in this context, with most of the party of distinctly *nouveau-riche* origins or worse.

The hill fortress itself is only a small portion of Karlaak. It is surrounded by suburbs of growing wealth. Still, anyone who is important lives in the city proper, and all the markets and temples are there. As the player-characters travel through the suburbs, they are able to get at least one specific piece of information. Anyone they talk to

can tell them of the magnificent wedding of Zarozenia and Elric. This match between the legendary hero and a princess of the old aristocratic tradition has been the only topic of discussion in Karlaak for the last week. The almost unseemly haste of the arrangements was originally the subject of scandalous gossip, but the more than regal splendour of the ceremony dazzled the imaginations of the populace, and balladeers sang nothing but instantly-popular accounts of the pageantry and sumptuousness of the nuptials.

The player-characters are recommended to the Red Locust Inn as a good place to stay in the city. Once the player-characters are established, either in the Red Locust or in some other establishment prepared by the gamemaster, the player-characters can begin to search for information about Elric's current whereabouts. Luckily this topic is a current subject of gossip in town, though most of the gossip is misinformed or trivial. The only bit of accurate information that anyone can give the player-characters is the approximate location of Elric and Zarozenia's house. The directions are accurate enough to get the player-characters to the general area, where any person in the streets proudly points out the residence of the local celebrities.

On other matters the populace of Karlaak is usually misinformed. The following list of ten rumors is typical of the kinds of information the player-characters could get by asking around in taverns and markets. Only one bit of information in ten is useful. The gamemaster should prepare similar lists of rumors or extemporize the responses of citizens to the questions of the characters.

### Ten Common Rumors

One — Elric and Zarozenia are still on their wedding retreat in the south of the province (wrong).

Two — Elric has been sent as ambassador to the Kar-teeg nomads (wrong).

Three — Elric and Zarozenia are frequently in attendance at Zarozenia's father's villa at the west of town (wrong).

Four — Elric spends a lot of time with the priests of the temple of Lassa (wrong).

Five — Elric spends a lot of time with the scholars of the King's College (mostly wrong; he spent two days with them, but hasn't visited them since).

Six — Elric spends a lot of time at the great library (right).

Seven — Moonglum, Elric's friend has been seen in many of the taverns in town (wrong, Moonglum is staying close to Elric at the city estate).

Eight — Elric has negotiated assistance to a merchant consortium for protection of a mining project (wrong).

Nine — Elric is on a hunting trip with his father-in-law into the Weeping Wastes (he has already returned from a one-day trip).

Ten — Zarozenia attends the temple of Lassa faithfully on the holy days (not currently true; she has been staying at home with Elric lately).

### Facts

No one really knows where Elric is now. He has slipped out of the city incognito on a search for the plants he



needs to brew the potions that support his strength. The only people who know are Zarozinia, her father, and Moonglum. Even the servants of Elric's new household believe he is still in his room convalescing from a minor attack of Summer Sickness. Elric is due to return two days after the player-characters discover the estate where Elric and Zarozinia live. At this point the player-characters might come into contact with Moonglum or Zarozinia, and might prepare a stakeout or ambush for Elric.

### The Tavern of the Red Locust

This large caravansarai is the appropriate setting for most of the rumor searching and non-player-character contacts made by the player-characters in the final stages of their search for Elric. This is also a place that Moonglum or Zarozinia might suggest for a meeting with the player-characters. Finally, it is a place where an ambush might be set up for Elric.

The tavern is in the Market Center section of Karlaak and therefore very active, particularly during the day. The food is good if expensive, and the upstairs private dining areas are commonly used for private conferences and assignments. Many merchants take their meals here, and almost all the more wealthy travelers to Karlaak lodge here. There is an inexpensive message service here, along with a fairly infomal local news service that serves as a kind of gossip clearinghouse. Only the highest class of criminals is ever encountered here, and they are almost indistinguishable from the merchants. Nonetheless, such

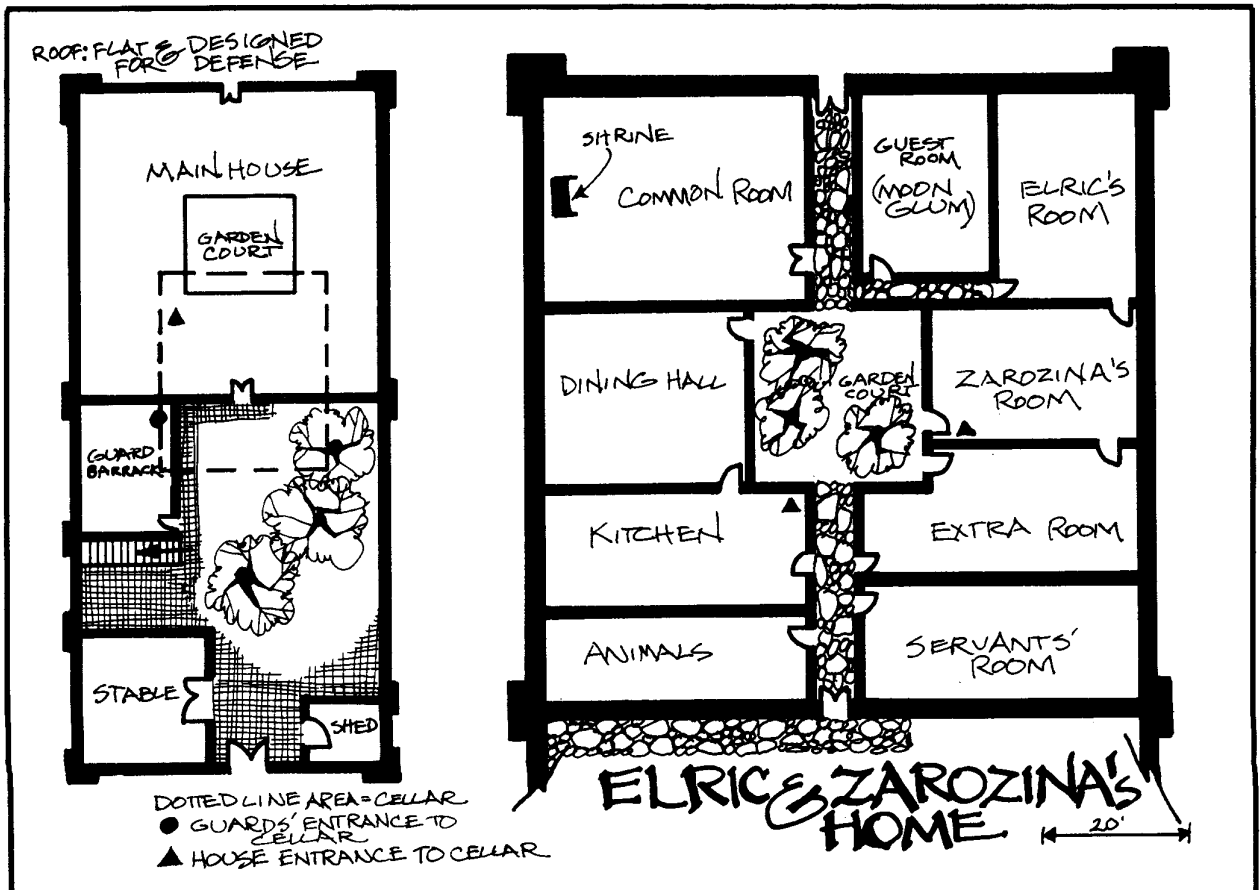
establishments are held in contempt by the aristocracy, who have their own more refined and inaccessible tea houses for social and mercantile affairs.

The rooms and fare at the Red Locust are rather expensive; multiply all costs from the [1.3.5] table by 1.5 to find the appropriately inflated cost. If the player-characters are short of cash, they find that a line of credit can be extended to Freyda through the marketplace moneylenders, or another player-character can establish a line of credit through his or her temple.

In the small shops surrounding the tavern almost any normal item can be purchased. The prices are routinely set 50% above their stated value in the [1.3.5] table, but successful bargaining brings them down to almost their stated levels. Karlaak's expanding commerce is creating major inflation.

## Elric & Zarozinia's House

Elric is living in the older, more traditional section of town. His neighbors are uniformly well-to-do and are extremely cautious about undesirables in the neighborhood. Each household has a substantial private guard in addition to a sizable number of house servants. The streets are quiet and relatively empty. Adventurers stand out like a sore thumb.



The layout of the house itself is dominated by a central court and garden, where most of the inhabitants spend their time. The front and back gates to the house are always locked, though through the open bars the player-characters might catch a glimpse of the inner courtyard. Elric's and Zarozinia's chambers adjoin on a common sitting room; in the sitting room is a hidden trap door to the cellar. The other doors into the cellar are in the kitchen and in the remote guard barracks. There are no windows on the perimeter of the house. Running around the flat roof is a five foot wall. Guards can walk on the roof of the house, having a commanding view of the nearby streets and the back courtyard. From the ground outside the house to the top of the roof wall is a distance of 20 feet. A twenty-foot high wall encloses the back courtyard, and a wooden catwalk runs along the entire length of this wall. There are always five guards on duty — two on the roof of the house, two on the catwalk and one at the rear gate. Elric has summoned and bound two additional demons of protection with the special ability of Invisibility to guard the house. These remain in the garden court area, discreetly out of sight of any of the house's occupants. Only Elric, Zarozinia and Moonglum know that the demons exist. Their commands are to seize any who enter the area with weapons, and they follow any additional order given by Elric, Moonglum, or Zarozinia.

The twenty guards in the barracks are from Zarozinia's father's own household, and they are fanatically loyal to Zarozinia. They are somewhat uncomfortable with Elric, a figure of shadowy reputation, but they are sworn to protect Zarozinia and her loved ones. The guards are uncorruptable and are willing to die in the defense of the house. In addition to the five guards at their posts at any given time, another five are on duty in the barracks. These two groups of five alternate at the posts every two hours, and the two watches of ten guards each change regularly at noon and midnight every day. The ten on duty can be anywhere in the house in five turns, completely armed and armored. Five of the other ten must always be in the barracks, though technically they are not on duty; often all ten of the off-watch guards are there. These can be in armor and armed within ten turns, and in position in another five. The house itself is surrounded by a street on the north and east side and at least 20 feet of open space on the other dimensions. At night these open areas are lit by a number of lanterns suspended from poles along the top of the wall.

## Elric's Guards

### Guard Number One

DEX 15 HP 15 Attack 21% Parry 25%

### Guard Number Two

DEX 17 HP 12 Attack 85% Parry 81%

### Guard Number Three

DEX 14 HP 18 Attack 76% Parry 67%

### Guard Number Four

Dex 16 HP 9 Attack 70% Parry 69%

### Guard Number Five

DEX 15 HP 17 Attack 65% Parry 65%

### Guard Number Six

DEX 12 HP 14 Attack 79% Parry 79%

### Guard Number Seven

DEX 15 HP 13 Attack 69% Parry 64%

### Guard Number Eight

DEX 13 HP 16 Attack 85% Parry 85%

### Guard Number Nine

DEX 17 HP 12 Attack 45% Parry 45%

### Guard Number Ten

DEX 17 HP 14 Attack 70% Parry 70%

### Guard Number Eleven

DEX 12 HP 11 Attack 94% Parry 94%

### Guard Number Twelve

DEX 14 HP 13 Attack 74% Parry 75%

### Guard Number Thirteen

DEX 15 HP 9 Attack 76% Parry 76%

### Guard Number Fourteen

DEX 15 HP 15 Attack 85% Parry 85%

### Guard Number Fifteen

DEX 16 HP 14 Attack 77% Parry 70%

### Guard Number Sixteen

DEX 14 HP 18 Attack 45% Parry 45%

### Guard Number Seventeen

DEX 11 HP 12 Attack 85% Parry 85%

### Guard Number Eighteen

DEX 17 HP 16 Attack 80% Parry 80%

### Guard Number Nineteen

DEX 15 HP 14 Attack 65% Parry 65%

### Guard Number Twenty

DEX 17 HP 19 Attack 89% Parry 89%

Armor: full plate.

*Weapon:* All guards carry broadswords. They also carry daggers with which each guard is 50% proficient in both attack and parry.

*SKILLS:* Balance 45%, Climb 55%, Dodge 55%, Jump 40%, First Aid 25%, Hide 51%, Listen 80%, Move Quietly 40%, Search 75%, See 90%, Speak Common 70%.

## Intercession of Friends

During the course of their investigations the player characters eventually come into contact with either Zarozinia or with Moonglum, or one of the two hears of the player-characters' inquiries and arranges to investigate and contact the party. There are two likely scenes for the characters to meet with these friends of Elric's — the Red Locust or the home of Elric and Zarozinia.

Though it is possible that the player-characters might attempt to capture one of these characters and interrogate them or use them as bait to draw Elric, the gamemaster should arrange it so that Zarozinia and Moonglum hear of

the player-characters' interest in Elric, discover the significance of Freyda's presence from an interrogation of recent travelers from Bakshaan, and contact the party in an attempt to dissuade them from their purpose. Such a plea might be jointly offered by Moonglum and Zarozinia, or made separately by Elric's two friends. The meeting might occur either at the Red Locust or at Elric's home, before he returns from his plant gathering expedition.

### Moonglum of Eshmir

STR 15    CON 16    SIZ 9    INT 13    POW 17  
DEX 18    CHA 12    HP 16    Armor: leather

weapon	attack	parry	damage
RH Scimitar*	90%	90%	1D8+1
RH Scimitar*	9		

weapon	attack	parry	damage
RH Scimitar*	90%	90%	1D8+1
LH Shortsword*	85%	90%	1D6+1
Dagger	90%	90%	1D4+2
thrown dagger	86%	—	1D4

\*uses two swords together in combat.

SKILLS: Ambush 41%, Balance 82%, Climb 91%, Conceal 76%, Credit 72%, Cut Purse 65%, Dodge 38%, Evaluate Treasure 47%, First Aid 50%, Hide 72%, Jump 85%, Listen 23%, Make Map 30%, Memorize 20%, Move Quietly 70%, Music Lore 47%, Navigate 62%, Orate 89%, Persuade 64%, Pick Lock 65%, Plant Lore 78%, Poison Lore 25%, Read/Write Common 75%, Read/Write Low Melnibonean 10%, Read/Write 'pande 75%, Ride 79%, Search 44%, See 35%, Set Trap 97%, Sleight of Hand 86%, Speak Common 80%, Speak Low Melnibonean 40%, Speak 'pande 100%, Speak Mong 60%, Swim 76%, Tie Knot 100%, Track 68%, Tumble 63%.

### Zarozinia

STR 13    CON 11    SIZ 10    INT 12    POW 8  
DEX 16    CHA 22    HP 11    Armor: none

weapon	attack	parry	damage
dagger	43%	34%	1D4+2
self bow	21%	—	2D6+1

SKILLS: Balance 78%, Climb 14%, Conceal 39%, Credit 48%, Dodge 21%, First Aid 68%, Hide 88%, Jump 14%, Listen 51%, Make Map 42%, Memorize 55%, Move Quietly 90%, Music Lore 76%, Orate 85%, Persuade 99%, Plant Lore 18%, Poison Lore 38%, Read/Write Common 100%, Read/Write Low Melnibonean 30%, Ride 45%, Search 84%, See 12%, Speak Common 100%, Speak Low Melnibonean 30%, Speak 'pande 45%, Speak Mong 30%, Swim 34%.

Moonglum takes a casual approach to discouraging the player-characters, mostly out of a sense of responsibility for the death of Freyda's father. His approach is strictly practical. Moonglum informs the player-characters that they haven't a chance of defeating Elric. Moonglum hints at the number of elementals and bound demons Elric has at hand, not to mention the albino's sword, Stormbringer. He also subtly suggests that the player-characters will have to get through him to get to Elric. He says that if the player-characters don't give up their foolish resolve, they had better watch where they sleep. Moonglum, however does not interfere with any matter between Elric and the player-characters.

Zarozinia, on the other hand, approaches the player-characters from a different perspective — her love for Elric. She tells of the Prince of Melnibone's tragic past, the ironic

horror of his being forced to slay his most beloved companions by the ill-fated demon sword. She also tells of Elric's oath never to pick up the sword again, and of his remorse for all the crimes he has unintentionally committed.

These roleplaying contacts between the players and the two major supporting characters in the Elric saga should be played as dramatic preludes to the coming action. This lull in the action should immediately precede the player-characters' first meeting with the legendary figure of Elric himself. Players unfamiliar with the stories containing these characters should read the descriptions that follow, and attempt to breath life into the personalities of these two important characters. Moonglum is a relatively easy character to portray, with the wry wit and charm of the familiar fantasy side-kick. Zarozinia is more difficult to portray. She is a strong and captivating woman, and has a patience and insight into Elric that his other paramours are unable to offer him. Zarozinia is familiar with Elric's tragic past. The gamemaster should review sections [1.1.3], "Synopsis of Elric's Saga" and [1.2.4.1], "Melnibone", in the *Stormbringer* rules since Zarozinia is familiar with the details of Elric's biography. Particularly note the cultural and ethnic traditions that Elric has inherited as a Melnibonean. Zarozinia should be acutely aware that Elric must struggle against his historic heritage to a more human perspective. She explains that Elric is trying to learn to be human, and to accept the ways and values of the men of the Young Kingdoms. Zarozinia believes that Elric's desire to change is at least somewhat prompted by his love for her. Zarozinia does not deny Freyda's right to revenge, but she points out that Freyda also has the right and the privilege to forgive and forget.

If Freyda is a player-character, she is free to decide whether to continue with her plans of revenge against Elric. If she chooses to forego her revenge, there is a risk that the players will feel let-down. In this case, Elric should have some final encounter with the player-characters. In disguise, Elric seeks out the player-characters at the Red Locust Inn and asks to be presented to Freyda. He explains that he understands Freyda's right to vengeance, since his sense of justice has always demanded that he reward those who abuse him. He therefor offers Freyda a fair combat to the first blood with her choice of weapons. He swears to Donblas and Arkyn to use no sorcery, and that the combat is not to be a mortal one. Elric suggests the use of weapons that he and Freyda are both unfamiliar with. The winner of the combat has the right to demand one obligation of the loser. If Elric wins, he intends to demand Freyda's forgiveness, which she is honor-bound to give. If Freyda wins, Elric has every intent of doing whatever she asks. Elric, of course, is not above forswearing an oath, but if Freyda's request involves any reasonable amount of effort or commitment, Elric swears he will fulfill it before Arkyn and Donblas.

If Freyda is intent on continuing her plans for revenge, Elric comes to her in disguise anyway and makes an offer similar to the one above. If Freyda refuses the offer, Elric spares no might in defending himself against her. If she accepts his offer he holds to the terms just as above.

If Freyda is a non-player-character, she calmly acknowledges all that Zarozinia or Moonglum might say, then demands her lawful right to revenge. Elric makes his offer and unless there is considerable player-character resistance, she accepts.



# The Final Conflict

Though it is possible that the players decide not to challenge or ambush Elric, the resolution of this series of adventures is designed to be some form of dramatic confrontation between Elric and the player-characters. The form that this confrontation takes cannot be narrowly anticipated without robbing the players of important tactical and roleplaying decisions. The amount of force Elric chooses to use depends on how the player-characters choose to confront him.

The two most likely possibilities are that the player-characters either challenge Elric openly to a combat or attempt to catch him by surprise in an assault or ambush. The player-characters should know that the latter course is considered highly dishonorable until the former has been tried.

## Elric of Melnibone

STR 12    CON 12    SIZ 15    INT 25    POW 35  
DEX 20    CHA 25    HP 15    Armor: Demon Plate

weapon	attack	parry	damage
Stormbringer	112%	101%	2D8+4D6
Greatsword	92%	81%	2D8+1D6
Sea Axe	84%	73%	2D6+2+1D6
Dagger	94%	94%	1D4+2+1D6

SKILLS: Ambush 41%, Balance 100%, Climb 48%, Conceal 49%, Credit 85%, Cut Purse 72%, Dodge 100%, Evaluate Treasure 100%, First Aid 81%, Hide 63%, Juggle 64%, Jump 100%, Listen 82%, Make Map 54%, Memorize 100%, Move Quietly 96%, Music Lore 49%, Navigate 65%, Orate 82%, Persuade 49%, Pick Lock 100%, Plant Lore 95%, Poison Lore 52%, Read/Write Common 100%, Read/Write Low Melnibonean 100%, Read/Write High Melnibonean 80%, Read/Write Mabden 26%, Ride 94%, Search 100%, See 100%, Set Trap 45%, Sing 54%, Sleight of Hand 55%, Speak Common 100%, Speak Low Melnibonean 100%, Speak High Melnibonean 85%, Speak Pande 26%, Speak Mabden 26%, Speak Orgjenn 26%, Speak Mong 26%, Speak Yuric 26%, Swim 70%, Taste 100%, Tie Knot 54%, Track 65%, Tumble 100%.

ELEMENTAL SUMMONINGS: Air 95%, Fire 91%, Earth 93%, Water 98%.

DEMON SUMMONINGS: Combat 93%, Protection 90%, Knowledge 94%, Travel 91%, Desire 93%, Possession 90%.

OTHER SUMMONINGS: Arioch, Lassa, Strasha, Grome, Haaash-aaastaak, Nnuuurrrr'e'e, Fileet

### KKAAWARR, BOUND DEMON ARMOR

CON 100    SIZ 15    INT 5    POW 25    CHA 20  
Special Ability: Regeneration

### ADELA, BOUND DEMON OF KNOWLEDGE

CON 12    INT 92    POW 28

### FAPA, BOUND DEMON DAGGER

STR 21    CON 40    SIZ 1    INT 4    POW 20  
DEX 5    CHA 15    Special Ability: Life Drain

the bravery and the nobility of the challenge, particularly in honor of his acknowledged guilt in the death of Freyda's father. Elric is conscious that Freyda is in no way a match for him in an unrestrained contest, so he encourages her to insist on terms that make the contest as even as possible. However, Elric is not noble enough to accede to any conditions which would likely result in his own death, and if the contest takes an unexpected turn, he does not hesitate to cheat or break an oath to save his life. As such, he tries to insist that the combat be only to the first blood or first fall, and not to the death.

There are a number of conditions that Elric cheerfully accepts or suggests if the player-characters do not consider them. First, he agrees not to use Stormbringer; this oath he has already made to his wife. Second, he agrees to the stipulation that no sorcery of any kind be used — demon weapons and armor included. He doesn't mention his strength-producing drugs but, if the player-characters know that Elric uses such drugs and try to ban them from the combat, Elric counts on his superior dexterity and intelligence to compensate for his lack of STR without the drugs. Third, Elric insists on no interference by third parties. He asks Moonglum and Zarozinia, and any others the player-characters stipulate he should ask to swear an oath not to interfere, as long as Freyda exacts similar oaths from her companions. Fourth, he agrees to the invocation of no supernatural third parties, gods or otherwise; Elric is content that the combat be man to man. Fifth, Elric strongly argues for an agreement to avoid mortal combat; he discusses any fair plan from formal fencing rules down to an informal agreement not to strike an opponent who is down. Elric is reluctant to fight to the death, because he knows that he will cheat if his life is threatened, but if Freyda insists, he agree to fight to the death. Sixth, Elric agrees to any time or location, as long as he does not suspect a trap.

There are a number of noble gestures open to Elric. He might voluntarily agree to certain restrictions while not requiring that Freyda stick to them. For example, he might agree not to use sorcery, yet not insist that Freyda give up her demon sword. He might voluntarily agree to the use of a weapon that Freyda is skilled with, but he is not. He might agree that Freyda can select a champion to represent her, one of her party or otherwise.

If Freyda and the player-characters seem inclined to a no-holds-barred affair, Elric agrees only after they are aware of the power he is capable of wielding. Thereafter, if the player-characters insist, Elric agrees, but he prepares particularly carefully, afraid that the player-characters have enlisted the aid of some god (which they might have). In a no-holds-barred contest, Elric counts on Moonglum and an army of bound demons and elementals to protect him from most threats. The threat of interference from the gods prompts Elric to try to make some special arrangement with Arioch in case he is confronted with the power of other gods. He attempts to summon Arioch and to bargain with the Chaos Lord for the right to call him for help if help is needed. Finally, Elric probably uses Stormbringer, despite his wife's wishes. For her part, she does not hold him to the bargain, knowing that Elric's life might be threatened. Elric is particularly afraid that the player-characters will threaten Zarozinia as a way to get to him. For that reason he waits for the player-characters' attack at his home, feeling that he can best protect her there.

## Challenge

In the event that the player-characters openly challenge Elric or that Elric openly challenges Freyda and she accepts, he respects their right to ask for such a trial by combat, since he has personally been driven to revenge by his own code of justice in previous adventures. He respects

64 He also summons and arrays his bound demons and elementals around his home to guard against any attack. Elric might agree to a neutral meeting place if he thinks that Zarozinia's safety can be guaranteed. Remember that Elric has no desire to see the citizens of Karlaak suffer from the inevitable destruction that is expected in a full-scale sorcerers duel.

### Ambush

If the player-characters choose to attack or ambush Elric, particularly if he has not been warned of their identity or purpose, he is likely to defend himself without restraint. Though such a combat might be protracted with the aid of Narjhan or other powerful allies the player-characters have enlisted, it seems unlikely that Elric can be overcome. In fact, the gamemaster should not allow Elric to be killed, for if the White Wolf were to die, the campaign would be compromised, as would the inevitable fate of the world. Thus the gamemaster should under no circumstances allow Elric to be killed, and if the player-characters choose an all-out method of attack even after Elric's generous offers, they are likely damning themselves to certain death.

Elric is a formidable foe. Only with powerful good luck could any mortal hope to overcome him, and Elric's fate is far too intertwined with that of the universe for him to be killed. It is likely that all player-characters who participate in an all-out ambush or attack on Elric will be slain, either on the spot, or after a pursuit by Elric. Permit the players to choose the location of the confrontation. Three locations present themselves as logical possibilities; the library which Elric often visits, the streets of Karlaak where Elric walks, or Elric and Zarozinia's home. Additionally the player-characters might lure Elric to some neutral place like the Red Locust Inn. The inn and Elric's home are described in the book and maps are provided since they are the most likely to be the places which the players must visualize. If the player-characters set their ambush in a place not described here, the gamemaster has to provide the details. It is not necessary to be too accommodating in this. If the detail work of preparing a library map is unattractive to the gamemaster, it is suggested that Elric has suddenly terminated his library visits. On the other hand it is a simple matter to prepare a simple sketch of several streets if the player-characters want to set such an ambush.

If Elric is ambushed, he tries to escape and make his way back to his home in the wealthy section of Karlaak where he can get Moonglum's and Zarozinia's help, along with the protection of a well-guarded stronghold. The gamemaster must improvise Elric's tactics dependent on the tactics of the player-characters, since Elric will be fighting a defensive battle, but sooner or later Elric comes out after the attackers if they don't come to him. Elric should summon as many elementals and demons as appropriate, and therefore make relatively short work of the player-characters. For dramatic purposes, Elric probably attempts to take prisoners whenever practical, out of curiosity about his attackers, or from a willingness to turn the group over to the law, in respect for Zarozinia's respect for and reliance on the human machineries of justice. On the other hand, Elric is unlikely to risk his own life, or more particularly Zarozinia's life for some abstract principle requiring him to take opponents alive. However, if the player-characters surrender, Elric is not likely to kill them out of hand.

## Extending the Adventures

If Elric doesn't kill the player-characters, the players might decide that their characters wish to continue adventuring in the Young Kingdoms. Here are a few suggestions.

One: The Flamebringers — this is a short story from *The Bane of the Black Sword*, the inspiration for the adventures in this scenario book. Elric assists in the defense of Karlaak and neighboring lands from the barbarian hordes of Terran Gashtek — the flamebringer. The player-characters might be enlisted by Elric to aid him in this effort. The adventures could closely parallel Elric's exploits in the short story or could focus on peripheral narratives only suggested in the story — for example, the party may be sent to organize the defenses or evacuation of a town in the flamebringer's path.

Two: To Rescue Tanelorn — another story from *The Bane of the Black Sword*. Narjhan, Lord of Chaos, shepherds his army of beggars from Nadsokor halfway across a continent to attack Tanelorn, a peaceful and independent city. The narrative might focus on the long journey to Tanelorn, and the valiant defense of the city's citizens, or the player-characters could move to intercept or scout the beggar army as it sweeps north through the Forest of Troos, across the sparsely populated northern wastes of Ilmiora, through the narrow passes of the top-of-the-world Mountains, and into the deserts that surround the isolated city of Tanelorn. Such a journey would be an epic undertaking indeed, bringing the player-characters in contact with the northern barbarian culture (which might be modeled on Lapland) to help protect the people from the voracious wave of beggars sweeping across the tundra.

Three: return to Bakshaan — The player-characters might be eager to settle scores with those they have met along the road to Karlaak. Though the return road to Bakshaan will hold little in the way of suspense for the players, it is rich in opportunities for the players who have had time to consider the problems they faced on the journey to confront Elric. Now the player-characters might relish a leisurely trip back to tie up loose ends and to exploit resources of treasure — Org and Nadsokor, for example. Of course if the players went through the *Black Sword* portion of these adventures before the *Stealer of Souls* portion, the characters will have unfinished business with the four rich-merchant conspirators in Bakshaan.

Four: the Dharzi refuge — this is a rich source of unexploited possibilities. The bubble maze is full of interesting encounters, and offers access to a variety of new universes. Further, the actual chamber of the Dharzi Master has gone uninvestigated, and the player-characters might wish to learn more about this survivor from a bygone age. The Dharzi Master has several tasks he might offer the player-characters, and he certainly possesses treasures aplenty to reward them for successful completion of such tasks.

Five: tours — The vast and uncharted Weeping Wastes lie to the east, to the south are caravan routes, busy trading cities, ocean ports, and access to sailing vessels which can carry a party to the four corners of the Young Kingdoms. Any player-character who can survive a conflict with Elric, or who can earn the White Wolf's friendship, should have little trouble finding employment or adventure anywhere. The numerous Elric stories provide an abundance of ideas for further exploits in the world of Stormbringer.



# Stormbringer<sup>®</sup> Excitement

**BLACK SWORD** is a scenario book for use with the **STORMBRINGER<sup>®</sup>** game. The scenarios depict a woman's quest for revenge against Elric himself. Elric was hired by three merchants of Bakshaan (rivals of the woman's father, a man named Haver Nikorn) to storm the Nikorn keep and kill her father. That battle is chronicled in the Moorcock story entitled "Stealer of Souls".

Freyda Nikorn, the dead merchant's daughter gathers together a group of adventurers and friends to embark on her mission of vengeance. The adventures in this book tell the tale of Freyda's quest for vengeance against Elric and of Freyda's final battle with the White Wolf. Her success or failure is determined by the players.

Freyda's quest takes her across the land of Ilmiora to observe the breadth of the destruction which always follows in Elric's wake. Elric's adventures during this period are chronicled in the book "The Bane of the Black Sword".

The gamemaster is provided with extensive information on the governments, cultures, and environments of the various lands which Freyda must visit while following Elric's trail, including Nadsokor, Org, and Karlaak of the Jade Towers. Non-player-character descriptions aid the gamemaster in storytelling.

The companion to this volume, called **STEALER OF SOULS** tells of Freyda's revenge against the conspiracy of merchants who slew her father, and of their plots against Freyda herself.

## Pursuit of the White Wolf

Familiarity with the **STORMBRINGER<sup>®</sup>** rules is required to use this book fully.



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