

for **STORMBRINGER**

# STEALER OF SOULS

A Quest for Vengeance in Ilmiora



DAN + DAVID DAY 85

by Ken Rolston

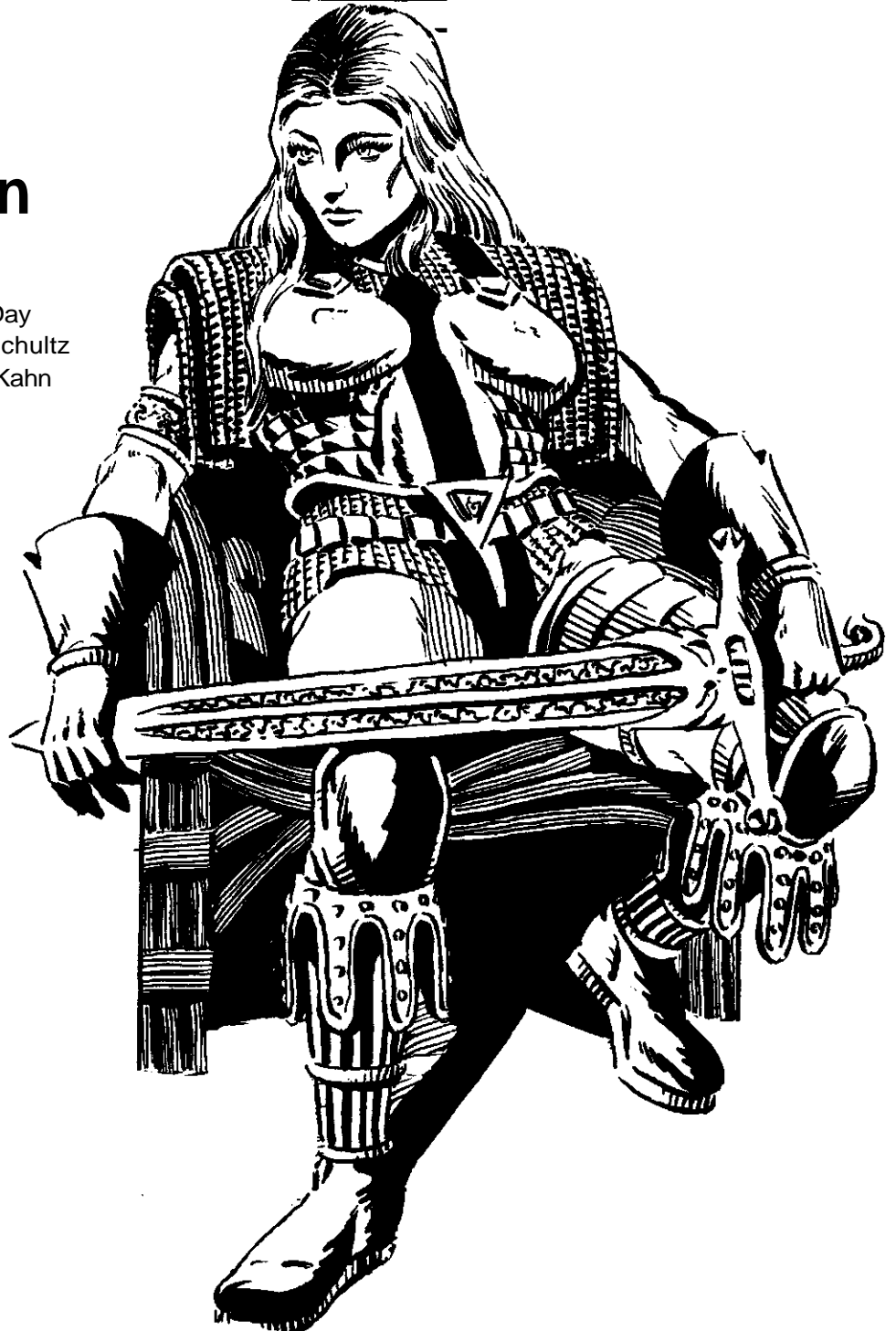


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by **Ken Rolston**

Illustrations by Dan and David Day  
Maps and diagrams by Carolyn Schultz  
Layout and design by Sherman Kahn



**Note** from the editor of this electronic rip:  
I have corrected several spelling mistakes in the original. Some occasional  
US spellings may also have been changed to a UK spelling.

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\* the player handouts are numbered separately from 1 to 4 at the center of the book, and should be carefully removed from the book and given to the players.

# Introduction

The adventures contained in this book are drawn from a series of stories published in a volume entitled *The Bane of the Black Sword* (Michael Moorcock, DAW Books, 1977; part of the volume also appeared as *Stealer of Souls*, Lancer Books, 1967). The stories in these books recount Elric's travels across Ilmiora from Bakshaan to Karlaak.

The first story "The Stealer of Souls" tells of the assault of the stronghold of a powerful merchant, Nikorn, who had earned the enmity of a conspiracy of other Bakshaan merchant princes because he was bold and clever enough that his success threatened to drive the others out of business. Elric was approached to undertake the assault of the stronghold and a promise of an unspecified but generous reward was made by the four merchants. Elric would normally scorn such a mission at the behest of such cowardly men as the merchants of Bakshaan, but Elric heard that Nikorn had hired Theleb K'aarna, a sorcerer of Pan Tang and Elric's arch-enemy of old, to assist in the defense of the stronghold. Elric had sworn vengeance many times on Theleb K'aarna for past abuses, and Elric accepted the suggested venture just for the chance to engage his enemy. By a fortunate coincidence, a group of Elric's countrymen, Imrryian freebooters left homeless by the fall of Imrryr and led by Dyvim Tvar, were camped in the forest to the south of Bakshaan. Elric went to them and engaged their assistance in the siege of the castle, promising them ample plunder from and glory in the undertaking.

Theleb K'aarna, however, had a number of powerful tricks up his sleeve; he sent the demon Quaolnargn to attack Elric and, while Elric was still weak from defeating this creature, K'aarna snatched Elric away and parted him from Stormbringer, his demon sword and source of strength. Thereafter Nikorn, as lord of the keep, nobly permitted Elric to leave with his life, on Elric's oath that he would not plague Nikorn again. Nikorn also kept Stormbringer as insurance against possible treachery.

However, Moonglum, master thief and Elric's friend, sneaked back into the castle and persuaded Yishana, a former lover of Elric's and now K'aarna's occasional bedfellow, to betray K'aarna and to deliver the blade Stormbringer to Moonglum, who immediately returned it to Elric.

Elric then led a successful assault of the stronghold, slaying many of the barbarian guards and slashing his way to the chambers of Theleb K'aarna, whom Elric slew instantly. It is worth noting that Stormbringer refused to drink Theleb K'aarna's soul, presumably because it was so foul.

As Elric tried to leave the castle, he encountered Nikorn. Though Elric did not want to kill this brave man who had spared him when he had been entirely at the other's mercy, Nikorn was so enraged by Elric's breaking his oath that he forced Elric to defend himself. Stormbringer, as always, thirsty for souls, forced Elric against his will to slay Nikorn. The merchant shrieked and begged in hell-wrought agony for Elric to stop the gluttonous blade as it sucked greedily at his soul, but Elric was helpless against the demon sword's undeniable will. Once again Elric's tragic curse was to slay those he loved or respected.

# Murder in Bakshaan

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 the 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 companions (the player-characters) and embarks on her mission of revenge. She first sets after the four merchants who con-

spired to have Elric kill her father, and later sets after Elric himself.

This book concerns itself with Freyda's vengeance against the four merchants, Tormiel, Dienstaff, Pilarmo, and Kelos. After the merchants are dead, Freyda sets out after Elric, the subject of a second scenario book called *Black Sword*.

## Scenario Summary

Freyda's party organizes and ponders how to obtain justice and revenge for the slaying of Freyda's father and how to insure Freyda's security. The player-characters are invited for a parlay with the suspected conspirators; after the talk, they are ambushed by assassins. The party must either flee Bakshaan, leaving Nikorn's death unavenged, or they must deal with their attackers themselves, through assassination, duels, or detective work sufficient to insure that the conspirators face justice for their crimes.

## 6 About Bakshaan

### The Duel: the Justice of Single Combat

One way the player-characters can obtain justice within an established and honorable tradition is through a duel or trial by combat. This is considered a just and honorable way to obtain justice from the conspirators in Ilmiora as well as in many other parts of the Young Kingdoms.

The rules of the duel in Ilmiora vary from place to place, but they share a few common principles.

**One:** The duel is to be a fair fight. Notions of a fair fight vary from culture to culture, but each participant has the right to insist on agreement beforehand about what the conditions of the fair fight are. Usually a duel is considered to be between equally armed and armored opponents. It should be single combat; no one ought interfere in the fight unless there is evidence of cheating. The participants must abide by any rules they establish before the fight begins; trickery, while not completely honorable, is often admired if it is done with style.

**Two:** the challenged party has the right to choice of weapons and armor.

**Three:** Each party should name a second party who is responsible for determining the fight is fair; a participant is within his rights in insisting that no more than the participants and the seconds be present, though this is often waived when the honor of the participants is not in question.

**Four:** The single combat takes place within an area designated and circumscribed by agreement beforehand. Leaving this area voluntarily signifies yielding. If the duel is to the death, there is no issue of yielding.

**Five:** It is honorable, but in poor taste, to kill a helpless opponent.

**Six:** The use of sorcery or the fruits of sorcery, if not openly acknowledged beforehand, is generally considered very dishonorable, and just short of cheating. However, if a participant is foolish enough not to stipulate that sorcery may not be used, he deserves what he gets. Misrepresentation (lying about magical items or powers, concealed weapons, use of poison) is cheating and is condemned by all.

**Seven:** those who cheat in a duel forfeit all honor and rights; they may be honorably slain by any means or under any circumstances.

### Bakshaan's Official Justice

The Duke's guard is the rough equivalent of a police force. Several regular guard stations are spread throughout Bakshaan; the main station is in the duke's castle. The guard enjoys a general commission to maintain the peace in Bakshaan; members are permitted to interpret this charge as narrowly or as broadly as they wish. Since the Guard acts under the direct authority of the Duke, there are theoretically no limits on its powers other than those set by the duke. In practice, the Guard has an excellent reputation for protecting the privacy of the privileged and the wealthy classes, with correspondingly lesser degrees of restraint as one descends the social ladder. The guard is distinctly unpopular in the poorer sections of town, and the patrols there are larger and more aggressive. The streets of Bakshaan are aggressively patrolled, particularly the upper- and the

middle-class sections. Night patrols are numerous and vigilant for any signs of disturbance.

A typical patrol is comprised of one watchmaster (good warrior) and five guards (average warriors). They are armed with long spears and shortswords, wearing half-plate. A watch patrol can arrive at any point within Bakshaan within five minutes, with reinforcements arriving within another five minutes.

The Guard also serves the needs of the duke and the council courts whenever necessary, and serves as the trained cadre of the Bakshaan militia, a clubbish group of nobles and middle-class citizens who make martial readiness a pretext for parading around in uniforms on holidays.

The Duke's House Guard is an elite unit charged specifically with the Duke's protection. They are good and superior warriors, armed with sabre and lance, and mounted on good horses. They are seldom seen in the city while on duty, but off duty they cut a wide swath with the ladies, and occasionally get involved in boisterous play in local taverns.

The Duke's Law is the traditional foundation of the Bakshaan legal system. This law is similar to British Common Law as it pertains to criminal offenses, grave and petty, against public order (riot and treason), the physical person (homicide and rape), and property (burglary and theft). A person's status (marriage, indenture, etc.) is also a matter of Ducal decree.

The Duke's council establishes law concerning property and wealth, contracts, and commerce. This council is comprised of a large number of merchants and nobles (usually with mercantile interests) who formally guide the Duke in these matters; however, in effect, what the council says is law. For simplicity, it is assumed that these laws parallel British Common Law also.

The major difference between modern law in our world and law in Bakshaan is in its administration, and in the relatively harsh sentences. Criminal offenses of a petty nature are handled by constables without a trial; sentences for up to a month can be handed out (always at hard labor), and fines of 100 LB or less. Grave offenses come before the Duke's Bailiffs, appointed by the Duke and residing in the Duke's castle. (In the countryside, governors have similar authority.) Any particularly important trial or trial of a noble comes before the Duke himself. Long terms of imprisonment and hard labor are not uncommon, and death is the appropriate penalty for many serious crimes of violence.

A special office of the Duke's Court called the Investigators' Chamber is the closet thing to detectives that can be found in Bakshaan. They are only assigned on direct order of the Duke; generally they are limited to investigating crimes against the wealthy and the well-connected, though the Duke's Council often asks for their help in difficult commercial cases.

### Murder and Assassination in Bakshaan

The strong tradition of personal honor in Bakshaan interprets self-defense and provocation broadly. It is difficult to prosecute murder if there is some element of offended honor and a fair fight involved. For this reason, assassination is a relatively healthy trade in Bakshaan. Though cold-blooded murder is prosecuted swiftly and harshly, a man who can make a case that he was obliged to fight for his honor is likely to avoid punishment from the Duke or his

bailiffs. Even the common folk are treated as honorable gentlemen in these matters; a man who stabs his wife's lover to death in a knife fight is likely to be released without any sentence or fine.

Exploiting this anachronistic romanticism, assassins can be hired who will go out, goad a desired victim into a duel, and kill him in an 'honorable fight'. There are quite a few highly-skilled professional duelists who make substantial livings as assassins.

Also available are assassinations of a more direct nature. There are two secret organizations of criminals in Bakshaan: one is a traditional thieves' guild; the other is a more modern crime syndicate modeled on a trade guild. The former group is a ready source of goons and thugs for any nefarious activity. The latter group is more sophisticated and restrained, with members placed in the Duke's council and in some of the more influential trade guilds, churches, and other institutions of Bakshaan. This group generally seeks out the finest professional duelists when an assassin is needed.

### Churches and Academies

In Bakshaan, there are main temples for each of the four Elemental Rulers and for the three Lords of Law. Besides these monumental edifices, numerous smaller chapels of all these faiths flourish within the city's walls and in the countryside surrounding Bakshaan. At each of the main temples are the temple schools — the academies — where priests and lay-priests are trained. The wealthy and aristocratic school their children in these academies, whether or not the youths are destined for the priesthood. For the poor and the merchant class, the great temples and the local chapels all have small religious schools where the young may go, free of charge, to learn to read, to write, and to honor the deities. Relatively few take advantage of this charity, and only one man in four in Bakshaan can read and write his own name, and only one in ten is: at all literate.

### Practicing Sorcery in City Limits

The use of sorcery in cities is frowned upon throughout the Young Kingdoms, and is often construed as a breach of the peace. In cult rituals, sorcery hardly attracts notice, but summoning or displaying elementals or demons in town causes great disturbance; people make a fuss, run away, call the guard, and generally raise a ruckus. If the offender is a priest, an initiate, or a member of a local church, he is usually turned over to the church hierarchy for chastisement. If the offender is a foreigner, a member of a chaotic cult, or an independent sorcerer, he is likely to be summarily imprisoned, to sooner-or-later be brought before a bailiff for an unsympathetic hearing and a stiff sentence.

### Slavery

Slavery is absolutely forbidden in Bakshaan, though two mild forms, apprenticeship and indenture, are perfectly legal. Any slave-owner who visits Bakshaan will have his slaves taken from him and freed. Pan Tang visitors have adapted to this by creating a formally indentured status for their slaves.

Bakshaan is rabidly abolitionist, and Pan Tang is universally condemned there as cruel and brutish. Bakshaan would cheerfully declare war on Pan Tang if they had any





- 8 hope of winning such a conflict; in the meantime, they must content themselves with muttering accusations and hostile treatment of visiting Pan Tangians.

### **The Party's Lodgings**

Once the adventure has begun in Bakshaan, and Freyda has held her dinner meeting at the Tower Tavern, it is assumed that Freyda is paying for lodgings for all the player-characters at the Tower Inn for the duration of their stay in Bakshaan. At any time the players can move to another tavern, but if they move they must renegotiate payment. Note that the conspirators Kelos, Tormiel, Pilarmo, and Deinstaf meet often at the Tower Tavern; they are unaware that the player-characters are staying there, and there should be ample opportunity for observation and for eavesdropping.

### **The City Hospital: Bakshaan**

Hospitals in the larger population centers in the Young Kingdoms are similar to our modern hospitals, though the healers are not doctors but Plant Lore specialists (apothecaries) skilled in preparing plant potions of levels five through seven. Medicine in Bakshaan resembles that of China today. Unfortunately, the cost of the exotic plants used in healing potions is high, owing to the plants' scarcity and resistance to cultivation, so the poor must generally do without health care. Plant potions cost 10LB times the skill level of the potion.

The hospitals also have more modern scientific practitioners (late medieval and renaissance) of the healing arts who employ their skills on those of the proper social classes. Their treatment is of varying efficacy, and often as injurious as the original complaint; nonetheless, these gentlemen are as effective in treating diseases as are the Plant Lore specialists.

### **Customs and Manners of Bakshaan**

People of Bakshaan are particularly touchy on matters of personal honor, so polite manners are extremely important there, even in the more vigorous and vulgar expressions of the lower classes. Each citizen of Bakshaan is entitled to privacy of person and speech; it is customary to apologize if inadvertent physical contact of any kind is made, and one who accidentally overhears a conversation which is clearly intended to be private should excuse himself to the speakers and retreat to a distance where he can no longer hear the conversation. Failure to observe these customs often results in fierce looks, or actions from the offended parties. Casual name-calling is not a feature of common discourse; even a mild deprecatory comment like, "That was a stupid thing to do," or a sarcastic statement, "My, what a clever idea!" could bring an indignant and aggressive response.

In certain sections of the city (the Caravansarai for example) some allowance is made for foreigners unfamiliar with local manners, but the lower classes are least likely to overlook a slight; their pride is often their only prized possession, and responses are likely to be emotional and exaggerated, particularly if the offender is of a higher social station. The humble like nothing better than to have an excuse for taking a poke at a lord or a merchant (especially a foreigner), and Bakshaan's peculiar reverence for honor is unusually blind to social station in judging cases of assault.

## **Foreigners**

There are three sections of Bakshaan where foreigners draw little attention. The first is the older area near the sea called Port Bakshaan; here is based the sea-going trade of Ilmiora, and here may be found the mariners and merchants of many lands. This is a cosmopolitan area, but rather rough, and hardly a comfortable place for noble or middle-class travelers.

The second section where foreigners are commonly found is the market district. Here are many immigrants who seek prosperity through small-scale capitalism; frequently they are refugees from other less well-developed regions. They arrive with a little capital, begin small market-stall businesses, and cluster in ghettos with others of their own nationalities. There is a certain amount of prejudice against these foreigners, but the market section is the most inexpensive place to shop in Bakshaan, and the values are considerable, so local attitudes towards these foreigners range from tolerance to pleasant acceptance.

The third area where foreigners are likely to be found is in the caravansarai outside of Eastgate. In addition to being the place where caravans carry exotic and valuable goods, this is the starting place for those bound for the frontier. Many travelers are merchant class or well-to-do, and there are several establishments here that cater to this trade, providing food and lodgings in comfortable settings for somewhat inflated prices.

In the rest of Bakshaan, foreigners are not a common sight, and attract unwanted attention. Overt prejudice is most likely to be encountered in the poorer sections, and dark-skinned peoples like the inhabitants of Pan Tang are treated roughly. Any country that keeps slaves is a bad country to be from; there is righteous indignation throughout Bakshaan at such barbaric practices. A foreigner should be particularly careful to be polite and knowledgeable of local customs when traveling outside Port Bakshaan, the Market section, or the Caravansarai, where folk are more tolerant of the stranger's ignorance of local ways.

### **The Poor Districts**

The poor live in two types of dwellings; the tenement and the single-family shack. Tenements are two or three stories high, with four families per floor. Each family has a single room, usually furnished with no more than a chest, a couple of stools, and varying types of beds and pallets. Cooking and heating is done on braziers which burn charcoal; windows are usually open to prevent poisoning the inside air. The diet of the poor consists of thick gruel made from cereals and animal fat, supplemented by fresh vegetables and eggs in season. The urban poor suffer more than their country counterparts in terms of diet, but access to cash and the luxuries they can buy makes up for the dreary foods of the cities.

The truly indigent are fed by charities, the most notable of which are the churches of Law, Arkyn, and Goldar. It is through charities that these churches spread their influence through the lower classes.

The most fortunate lower-class families own their own shacks, one-room affairs with interiors much like those of the tenements; they might also have some cash and relatively-valuable personal possessions that would be the

envy of their country cousins — mirrors, iron cooking-pots, sweets and fruits regularly, good ale and wine. There are enough of these poor but dignified citizens in Bakshaan to encourage those hopeful of a better way of life.

Wealthy visitors to the poor districts encounter some hostility, but in general the poor know their place, are hopeful of bettering it, and careful not to give offense.

### The Merchant Districts

Maintaining separate business and residential dwellings is a recent fashion; the merchant districts are growing up around the older market sections of town. Surrounding this growing mixture of the traditional bazaar and the more-modern shops is the industrial district. Here young textile and furniture industries are developing alongside traditional small-scale manufacturers of candles, shoes, and rope. These areas are almost deserted at night, and are becoming problems for the Duke's guard; despite numerous patrols and vigorous enforcement, theft and burglary are on the increase.

Anyone in a manufacturing district after sundown is very conspicuous, and the guard routinely stops and questions anyone found there at night.

### The Upper Class Districts

Residences vary from traditional fortress-like stone houses to modern multiple-story frame houses. Where oiled parchment and shutters are standard even in merchant-class homes, many rich citizens have glass windows. The interiors of Tormiel's and Kelos' homes may be taken as representative of floor plans and interiors of the homes of the rich in Bakshaan. Furnishings are luxurious; plush and exotic rugs, comfortable over-stuffed chairs and high tables, desks, tapestries, ornate woodcarvings on varnished and painted wooden furniture. Most nobles and well-to-do merchants have numerous servants, own at least a horse and a carriage, and dine regularly on meat, fresh vegetables and fruits, and fine local wines. The most extravagant have several kinds of meat at a single meal, and many have gourmet cooks as their most valued servants. Guests are frequently invited to dinner to permit the host an opportunity to show off his wealth and good taste.

Men's clothing is still simple and drab, but women's clothing is colorful and imaginative, made from fine silks and imported fabrics, designed and fabricated by men praised as artists and geniuses.

Children are all educated at church schools or temple academies, and a youth studying for the priesthood is a cherished status symbol.

Even among the older aristocracy, business and commerce is the only topic of conversation; the upper-class in Bakshaan conceives of itself as an advance guard in a mercantile revolution that will change the face of Ilmiora, transforming it into a modern society of the future, with prosperity and freedom for all.

Servants and citizens are quick to notice strangers in the wealthier districts; they call the guard immediately if someone acts suspiciously, a term which in these neighborhoods includes even innocent activities like sightseeing. Folks are haughty and unfriendly in these districts, particularly if a stranger is not dressed to their standards and if his manners are anything but perfect. The unofficial policy of the guard is to arrest any stranger who is found

at night in this district; they are taken to the castle for identification and questioning. Almost everyone travels by carriage here, and servants generally wear distinctive livery. Pedestrians in plain clothing are very conspicuous; there is an excellent chance that any stranger will be recognized and identified later by witnesses who see him here.

## Scenario Setup

The initial episode in any fantasy campaign is most critical in capturing the imagination of the players and in establishing suspense and the atmosphere of the adventure. The following procedures are suggested as an effective way to set the scene and draw the characters into the action from the outset.

### 1: Distribute the Player Briefing Sheets

These sheets should be given to the players at the beginning of the first session. The players can read the background material, make notes about any questions they have, and confer with the gamemaster. Sheet number 1 covers the events leading up to Nikorn's death at Elric's hands and Freyda's vow of revenge. Sheet number 2 gives common knowledge any local inhabitant or informed visitor would have about Bakshaan and Ilmiora.

### 2: Design the Player-Characters

The players should create new characters or employ their own established *Stormbringer* characters for this adventure. If this adventure is to be run following the suggested story line, either one player should play Freyda or the gamemaster should play her as a non-player-character party member.

The player-characters should have compelling reasons to remain loyal and reliable to Freyda; otherwise when the party finds itself in extreme danger, it is likely that it will split up, with Freyda unswerving in her resolve for revenge, and with the other player-characters looking for a safer path to glory. If Freyda's character is not used, the gamemaster is responsible for establishing the motivations of the party for visiting the regions described in this supplement.

### 4: The Assembling of the Party

There are two possible ways to initiate the campaign. First, the assembly may be played out as a character interaction. Alternatively, the details of the first meeting of the party may be assumed and delivered in abstract by the gamemaster to the players. The latter method has the virtue of setting the players immediately into action; the former method gives the players a chance to introduce and to establish their characters. The information and actions in each case will be substantially the same; in the first case, the information is delivered in dialog, while in the second, the information to start the campaign is summarized to the players in a few paragraphs. If the players prefer dialog, the first method is preferable; if the players prefer action, the second method is more appropriate.

Freyda gathers the party together at the tower tavern for the first meeting of the group. Everyone is told to meet in the booth reserved by the innkeeper for private conversations. How Freyda summons each future party member and the reasons why each answers should be de-

10 terminated by the gamemaster; some possibilities are listed in an accompanying box.

### Why Freyda Called Upon the Player-Characters

- 1: A character in the party is known to have a bone to pick with Elric, or with one of the merchants.
- 2: The characters are well known about town as reliable mercenaries.
- 3: A party member or members have helped Freyda Before.
- 4: A party member might be related to Freyda and Nikorn.

When the company is assembled, Freyda states plainly her resolve to revenge the death of her father and the attacks on her family. She names her targets as Kelos, Tormiel, Pilarmo, and Deinstaff, the four men who conspired in the assault on Nikorn and his family, and Elric, the man who actually slew her father.

She then tells the group members that she values their judgement, and that she needs their council in obtaining her revenge. She outlines the problems that she faces, and asks the player characters to discuss possible approaches to her problem's solution. If Freyda is a player character, the Gamemaster should explain to her player Freyda's role in describing the problem and opening the discussion; the player should receive a copy of the lists which represent Freyda's objectives and the information she has discovered through her own inquiries around Bakshaan. Otherwise the gamemaster should conduct the outlining and discussion of the problems through Freyda as an NPC.

### Freyda's Objectives

*One: to avenge her father's death and the assault on her uncle* - Freyda is intellectually uncertain about what form her revenge should take, but emotionally she is eager and absolutely resolved to kill each of the five conspirators.

*Two: to insure the safety of the Nikorn family (herself included)* - Freyda fears that the four merchants will make further attempts on the lives of her family members. For this reason she is even more resolved to kill the four merchants than she is to kill Elric, who has left town and who she feels is not likely to try to attack any more of her family members.

*Three: to protect the wealth and property of the Nikorn family* - Freyda rightfully suspects that the four merchants are involved in legal and illegal maneuvering to snatch at Nikorn's wealth while the family is badly weakened and unable to defend itself. Intimidation or elimination of the four merchants is the most likely solution to this problem.

*Four: to pursue and confront Elric with his misdeeds* — this must be done before Elric's trail gets cold, further necessitating a speedy removal of the four merchants. Freyda is intimidated by the legend of Elric, and is discomfited by her ignorance of his nature or his range of abilities, though she submerges her fear in passion for revenge.

### Freyda's Assessment of Her Options

*One: Freyda can declare a vendetta* — a pledge to attack, destroy, or kill a person who has done you a great wrong.

This has no force in law; in fact, it is illegal, but it is an old custom in Bakshaan and an honorable one. Though legal authorities do what they can to interfere, most common citizens acknowledge the right of vendetta, letting the parties involved resolve the issue between themselves.

*Two: Freyda can hire assassins, or perform the assassinations herself* — A capital crime, murder, but not dishonorable. If caught and tried for the offense, Freyda would receive a light sentence from an understanding court of High Justice if she is brave enough to perform the assassinations herself, unless money or power greater than hers can influence justice against her.

*Three: she can challenge the men to formal duels* - also illegal, but a respected tradition throughout Ilmiora. Often the law looks the other way; at the very least a duel can be arranged in a private and secluded location where the law cannot interfere; in this case, there is a strong code of honor prohibiting a loser from turning the winner in as a murderer.

*Four: Freyda can appeal to the Duke's Justice* — This is the legal way to handle the problem, but rumor on the streets leads Freyda to correctly suspect that money has silenced the Duke's justice on this matter.

*Five: she can appeal to the Church Law* — money controls some church courts in Bakshaan more effectively than the civil courts, and in any event a pretext would have to be found that would qualify the crime as blasphemous or unrighteous sorcery; even then, each church can only effectively punish its own members.

*Six: she can solicit help from other merchant families and aristocrats* — unlikely, they're either too timid or too firmly in the grasp of the wealthy oligarchy, represented by the city council. If any help was given it would be in the form of a player-character.

### Rumors and Information

From the Immyrians who helped Elric assault Nikorn's castle, and who are now camped in the woods (illegally) near the ruined stronghold. *Elric headed East with Moonglum. Nad-sokor is mentioned as Elric's immediate destination.*

From a clerk at the town council. *No prosecution is planned for the four merchant princes. They maintain that there is no evidence of a criminal conspiracy, and that everything possible is being done to bring the real perpetrators (Elric and the Immyrians) to justice.* This is a polite fiction: nobody wants to take on Elric or the Immyrians.

A street rumor. *The four merchants have hired assassins to kill Freyda and her companions because they fear her revenge.*

A street rumor. *The four merchant princes are trying to seize Nikorn's estate and wealth by legal trickery and by tampering with the court and council.* The pretense is that Nikorn hired a godless and chaotic sorcerer (Theleb K'aarna). Technically this is a crime against church law, but the church might recommend it to the Duke's justice if they feel the crime affects the security of Bakshaan. Nikorn was not a citizen of Bakshaan, and as a foreigner he is not entitled to full rights of citizenship, ownership, or justice. There is also some suggestion of unpaid taxes (true, but a routine matter for most greedy merchant princes). Since the court refuses to acknowledge any evidence that the merchant princes hired Elric (no record of payment, no witnesses), the four merchants are not only avoiding prosecution, they have petitioned the court to act as stewards of Nikorn's property, which is to be held until the city decides on its disposition.

## The Party Discusses the Options

Freyda asks each character for his or her council on her problems, but she refuses to discuss her own opinion; she has not yet decided what to do, and does not intend to make a decision until she has heard everyone's suggestions. She then intends to think about her options overnight and to make her decision in the morning. If the gamemaster is abstracting this section of the scenario, he can give a copy of Freyda's lists to the players for their reading and consideration. If Freyda is a player-character, let her player guide her decision.

The players should be given some time to consider their options, but when player dialog begins to falter or to wind down, the gamemaster should interrupt with the following message which comes to Freyda by way of the inn-keeper.

**Come to the Purple Dove at the start of the third watch tonight. We wish to discuss a mutual accommodation of our current dispute.**

**Kelos**

Though the message is almost certainly some kind of a trick, Freyda feels that she must attend this proposed meeting, if only to show the merchants that she is not afraid. She asks the party to accompany her, however, to ensure her safety.

If the player-characters don't go to the proposed meeting, the assassins hired by the four merchants (see the sections entitled Parlay and Ambush) seek out the party members and set up an ambush. This could occur as the party inquires about the caravan.

## The Merchant Conspirators

### Pilarmo

Pilarmo is tall and scrawny. His face and hands are blotched red and white; he suffers from a skin disorder characterized by the scaling and peeling of patches of skin. He picks at these features compulsively when he is nervous, which is most of the time. Pilarmo is self-conscious about his appearance; he tries to compensate for his skin condition by wearing the most stylish and expensive clothes that money can buy. His outfits are so splendid that anyone from the lower or middle-classes is impressed; characters from wealthy or aristocratic backgrounds recognize Pilarmo's sartorial resplendence as garish and excessive.

Pilarmo is over his head in the world of commerce and finance; he was born the only son of a wealthy merchant, and he inherited great wealth and a smoothly-run organization that continues to earn him more wealth. He thinks of himself as a shrewd businessman; in truth, his wisest decisions are to leave decisions to others better informed.

He has fallen under the influence of Kelos, who cleverly feeds Pilarmo's need for praise and acceptance. Pilarmo is easily bent to Kelos's purposes; Pilarmo's involvement in the hiring of Elric was all Kelos's idea, though Pilarmo was encouraged to believe that it was his own inspiration. Now that things have not gone smoothly, Pilarmo's nerve is beginning to crack. The other three merchants know this, and they are keeping Pilarmo close at hand to prevent him from being intimidated by Freyda; they will try to keep him from talking and constantly reassure him that everything is all right. Pilarmo is visibly weakening; when he is confronted with Freyda or one of her agents, he breaks into trembling and cold sweats. He has been told to say nothing, but if badgered, he begins to lie ineptly, giving all sorts of implausible alibis. If separated from the others, and persistently persuaded, he eventually breaks down and admits everything. It is likely that when things get too hot, Pilarmo will make a run for it; he has relatives in Karlaak who he thinks will protect him.

### Pilarmo

STR 9	CON 7	SIZ 10	INT 10	POW 12
DEX 15	CHA 6	HP 7	Armor: none	

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
Sword	32%	45%	1D8+1
Hunting Bow	25%	—	1D8+1

SKILLS: Balance 12%, Climb 40%, Conceal 25%, Credit 85%, Dodge 36%, Evaluate Treasure 54%, Hide 65%, Jump 25%, Listen 12%, Persuade 3%, Read/Write Common 76%, Ride 36%, See 55%, Speak Common 85%.

### Tormiel

Tormiel is plump and pleasant; he is not grossly fat, but he is soft and kind of effeminate. Where Pilarmo is too ostentatious in his dress, Tormiel has excellent if delicate tastes; he constantly receives compliments from the ladies on his garments and jewelry. Men are put off by his womanish behavior, but he is well-respected as a clever businessman. He has an excellent mind for figures; he can recall the details of even the slightest transactions and can do complex arithmetic in his head. He is the analyst of the four; he delights in puzzles and logic. Despite appearances, Tormiel is rumored to be a tough and capable fighter; he is quite skillful with a sword and surprisingly strong.

Conversing with Tormiel can be a frustrating experience. He listens carefully to what is said, then he sits silently and thinks about it before he responds. These silences can stretch out over several minutes; he cannot be shaken from his methodical approach to dialog. For this reason, he often says nothing in a conversation; then suddenly makes a comment (usually insightful) on something that was discussed five minutes before. Tormiel is compulsively honest; he will not lie. However, neither will he tell something he wants no one to know. He either answers a leading question in such a way that he avoids telling what he doesn't want to tell, or he flatly states that he has no intention of answering the question.

Tormiel is a Lay-priest of Lassa with sorcerous training, he is quite capable of summoning air elementals, and he has a number of friends in the temple hierarchy who owe him favors.



### Tormiel

STR 14    CON 16    SIZ 15    INT 17    POW 19  
 DEX 11    CHA 11    HP 19    Armor: Demon Cloak

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
Demon Sword	95%	86%	1D8+1+2D6+1 D6

SKILLS: Balance 34%, Climb 46%, Credit 94%, Dodge 55%, Evaluate Treasure 85%, Jump 24%, Memorize 79%, Music Lore 44%, Orate 33%, Persuade 54%, Read/Write Common 89%, Ride 54%, See 37%, Speak Common 96%.

### HARLON, BOUND DEMON SWORD

STR 20    CON 23    SIZ 2    INT 2    POW 12  
 DEX 13    CHA 6

### DGGO, BOUND DEMON CLOAK

CON 25    SIZ 15    POW 13

SUMMONINGS: Sylphs 65%.

### Kelos

Kelos is the spokesman for the group. He speaks well, and incessantly. He loves the sound of his own voice, and he is a master of polite social formulas. He can talk for hours without saying anything. He is a polished and compulsive liar; he often tells a lie where the truth would fit better. He is supremely self-confident and well-insulated from reproach; he dismisses anyone who criticises or disagrees with him as either ignorant or momentarily confused. In the former case, he simply ignores the criticism; in the lat-

ter case, he earnestly and generously tries to demonstrate to the critic the errors in his thinking. In his favor, Kelos is charming in a superficial way, and he is a generous and thoughtful friend to any who will listen to him.

The real brains behind Kelos's commercial success is his wife Trevinka, a middle-class social climber with smashing looks who latched onto this empty vessel and gave it direction and purpose. Kelos imagines himself a happily married man; his wife wouldn't have it any other way. She is a strong-willed and clever woman who conceals her mettle in the absent blather of the wealthy socialite. Trevinka is tough; she will fight to protect her little empire and heaven help anyone who turns his back on her.

### Kelos

STR 10    CON 14    SIZ 11    INT 15    POW 12  
 DEX 13    CHA 13    HP 14    Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
shortsword	44%	44%	1D6+1

SKILLS: Balance 23%, Climb 37%, Conceal 55%, Credit 89%, Dodge 27%, Evaluate Treasure 65%, Listen 44%, Memorize 36%, Orate 75%, Persuade 63%, Read/Write Common 76%, Ride 33%, See 36%, Speak Common 92%, Swim 55%.

### Deinstaf

Deinstaf is dying of consumption, and has been for eighteen years he despises Pilarmo and Kelos; he only tolerates

them because Tormiel does. Kelos does not exactly like Tormiel, but he respects him more than any other man in Bakshaan, now that Nikorn is gone. Deinstaf is afraid of nothing; having endured the threat of imminent death for many years has hardened him to the anxieties of mortality that plague other men his age.

Deinstaf suffers from attacks of rage that border on psychosis. He thinks of this fault as a symptom of his bitterness toward the world and his lingering death, but in truth it is the result of a tumor in his brain. Deinstaf cannot stand to be crossed or insulted; he is likely to act impulsively or violently. Only his wealth has prevented him from being prosecuted and imprisoned for assaults on servants, peasants, and even citizens who have crossed his will. Deinstaf once tried to stuff a whole loaf of bread down the throat of an impertinent dinner guest. The three other merchants are somewhat afraid of Deinstaf's rages, but they have learned from experience to restrain him before he gets out of hand.

Deinstaf is intelligent, ruthless, and devious in his business dealings. He has the charismatic force of a natural leader, enhanced by the frightening intensity of his anger. He is a capable and dangerous man, but finally a brave and honorable one. While the others are aware that the conspiracy against Nikorn and his daughter is dishonorable and criminal, Deinstaf is insensitive to such guilt. He believes that Nikorn had every chance to defend himself, and that Nikorn's fault was in hiring the inferior sorcerer. Deinstaf feels no remorse for Nikorn's death, and would have no compunction about slaying Nikorn's daughter either; this gives him a strength of will that none of the other conspirators possess. The players should be made to realize that they cannot avoid killing Deinstaf; no other solution will be sufficient to prevent him from insuring his own security by killing Freyda.

#### Deinstaf

STR 9	CON 6	SIZ 10	INT 14	POW 13
DEX 14	CHA 8	HP 6	Armor: none	

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
Sword	76%	67%	1D8+1

SKILLS: Credit 94%, Dodge 34%, Evaluate Treasure 66%, Listen 53%, Navigate 32%, Orate 55%, Persuade 39%, Read/Write/Speak Common 88%, Ride 44%, See 27%, Swim 87%.

## At the Tavern of the Purple Dove

The player-characters meet the four merchant princes (Kelos, Pilarmo, Tormiel, Deinstaf) in the Purple Dove, discuss an end to the feud and find themselves treacherously ambushed by assassins.

### The Caravansarai

A map of the immediate surroundings of the Tavern of the Purple Dove is provided. Located along the major

eastern road out of Bakshaan, this district is the terminus for the caravan traffic from the rest of Ilmiora, and here are found the warehouses, shops, and merchant offices that deal in the storage, shipping, and sale of various trade-goods for Bakshaan and for more distant ports. During the day this area is busy with the bustle of commerce — carts and porters carry goods to and fro; buyers and sellers haggle vociferously over the price and quality of goods; citizens come in search of bargains and exotic merchandise. The shops are spare and utilitarian, the warehouses grim and dilapidated; no resources are wasted on appearances. At night the area is almost deserted, except for the Purple Dove, which caters to caravaners and to travelers. All doors are closed and locked. The few residences in the area are the shacks of the district's labor force; these people all seek market goods and the fellowship of a lively tavern in other more-cheerful sections of town.

Since the party members anticipate trouble, they are to be encouraged to search the area for signs of an ambush. The ambushers will not position themselves until after the player-characters are inside the tavern, so there is no hint of the ambush as they approach. Nonetheless it is to the party's advantage if they know the layout of the surroundings before the ambush is sprung. If the party specifies that they survey the area, a copy of the map should be placed before them; otherwise, when the action starts, the players should only be told what can be seen by their characters.

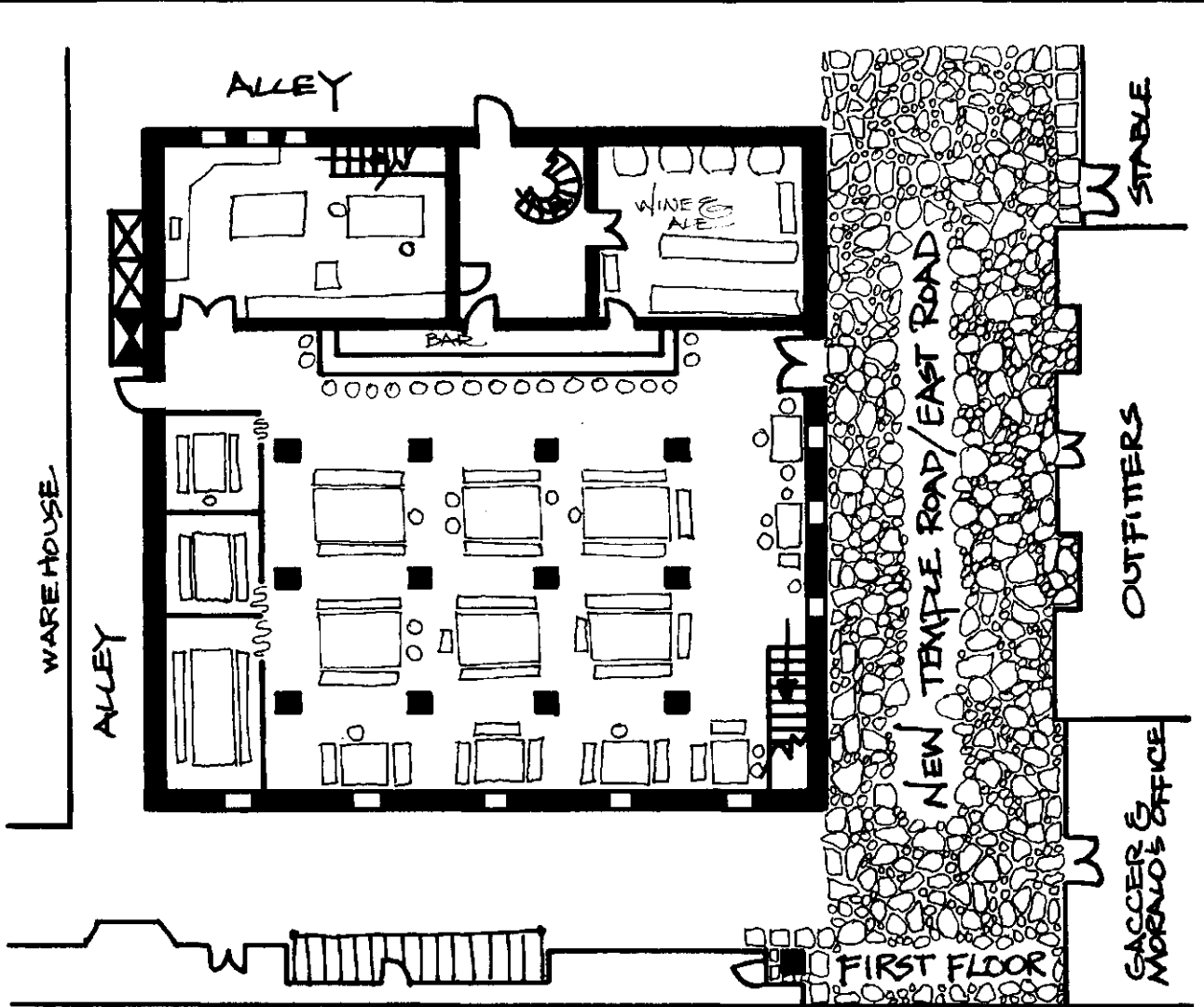
### Inside the Tavern of the Purple Dove

Review the descriptions of the four merchants, Kelos, Pilarmo, Tormiel, and Deinstaf. With them are three bodyguards. They are seated at the large table in the southeast corner of the downstairs tavern area. When the party arrives, the three bodyguards rise from the table to permit the player-characters to sit. The guards hover over the conversation, standing with their backs to the wall, with their hands ready on weapons concealed under their garments. They have their See chance to notice any motion to a weapon and to interpose and block a surprise attack.

The merchants have lured the party here for an ambush, but they have conciliatory offers prepared to discuss with Freyda, both to cover their intent to trap her and to try to gauge the strength of her resolve for revenge. They actually know very little about her, and they need to meet her face-to-face to assess the danger she might represent to them.

Kelos does all the talking; he is the poised, smooth-talker. The four merchants sit across the table from the party. Tormiel and Pilarmo fidget apprehensively, seated as far from the party as possible, with their backs to the wall. They don't take their eyes off the party or the bodyguards for a second. If the player-characters specifically address questions to Tormiel or Pilarmo, they nervously look to Kelos to see if they should answer. In general, Kelos will intercept all questions. If the party persists in speaking directly with Tormiel or Pilarmo, they will stammer badly, blurting out obvious falsehoods, even if there is no need to lie. If Tormiel or Pilarmo begins to babble, Kelos quickly and directly orders the babbler to shut up, and again turns to speak with the party members.

No matter what the player-characters say, Kelos opens with a sincere apology and with expression of regrets for



SECOND FLOOR

**KEY:**

- CURTAIN
- SUPPORT PILLAR
- ⊠ PRIVY
- ⊠ PRIVY CHUTE
- ⊞ PAVED ROAD
- ⊞ ROAD
- ⊞ SPIRAL STAIRCASE



THE TAVERN  
OF THE  
**PURPLE  
DOVE**  
IN THE CARAVANSERA  
1" = 15'

the unfortunate death of Nikorn. He assures Freyda that Elric acted strictly on his own when attacking Nikorn's stronghold. The only part he sorrowfully admits to playing in the unfortunate business is accidentally drawing Elric's attention to Nikorn's wealth; Elric seemed to be innocently interested in knowing who was the most successful merchant in town, and of course Nikorn's name had come up. He apologises again for his unwitting part in Nikorn's demise, and acknowledges that Freyda's wrath towards the four merchants, though misplaced, is certainly understandable.

"Freyda, let me first express my sympathy for your bereavement. I will not pretend that Nikorn's death was not fortunate from a business standpoint, but let me assure you, I will not stoop to murder or assassination as tools of commerce. It is true that we bear some of the blame for Elric's choice of Nikorn as a target, but such was never our intention. Our meeting with Elric had seemed to be by chance — perhaps Elric sought us out, I'm not sure — and in the course of the conversation Elric inquired as to who was the most successful, prosperous merchant in Bakshaan. Of course, truthfulness, not modesty dictated that Nikorn should be named; if only I had known that I was drawing the White Wolf's attention on an unsuspecting victim. At any rate, I gave no further thought to the matter until I heard that Elric and the Immyrian freebooters were camped outside Nikorn's walls. The whole town was thrown into a panic; we feared Elric would come here next. I admit with shame that my only thought was for my own health and well-being; perhaps I should have raised a mercenary troop to relieve the siege on Nikorn's keep (pause) I truly didn't think I had a chance against Elric, as I suppose I did not. Only at the cost of my honor have I saved my life. (reflective pause)

"But I have heard rumors that you hold us to blame for Nikorn's death. I asked you here to beg you to be reasonable and fair; we indeed must share the responsibility for his death, but the part we played was neither intentional nor malicious. You must forgive us our indiscretion (He pauses and casts his eyes down in shame) and our cowardice in not coming to his aid. (He looks directly at Freyda.) Do you not see how we poor merchants tremble at your unjust wrath? (Kelos points to Pilarmo and Tormiel sweating and trembling convincingly.) Please, Freyda, forbear your unrighteous revenge; let us live our lives in peace as we would have your father live in peace, if only we could turn back time." (Kelos is suddenly overwhelmed with remorse and regret.).

If Freyda does not buy this line, Kelos takes another tack.

"Freyda, you are speaking nonsense, my dear. We are not responsible. We are eager to do anything we can to help, but we do not hold ourselves responsible for Nikorn's death, nor does the court or the Duke's council hold us responsible. Your anger is understandable, but your blindly striking out at innocent men is not understandable, nor is it lawful. If you do not stop threatening and menacing us, we will be forced to ask for the Duke's intercession in this matter."

If Freyda is not impressed with this threat, Kelos tries the following line.

"All right, I'm beginning to see, Freyda. You're just looking for money. I'm ashamed of you; you are a shadow on your father's honor, to try to extort money from us

through threat and intimidation. I don't know about the rest of my fellows, but I'm not going to pay a copper coin for such blackmail."

Here Pilarmo has been coached to say, "No Kelos, forget your pride. Think of your wife and children. Think of my family, at least. Let's be reasonable. If the cost of security is pride and money, I say we have plenty of both to spend for such a commodity."

Hereafter Kelos tries to dicker with Freyda, offering her money, a piece of the merchant's businesses, influence in the Council, rebuilding of Nikorn's keep, damages for the injury and death of Freyda's relatives — anything. It is of course all talk. The four merchants discuss any offer, but they insist on considering the offers overnight; they suggest a meeting at the same time and place the next evening to discuss final terms.

If the party is still not responsive, Deinstaf interrupts and takes over. He is the heavy; he makes threats to hire every thug in town to silence Freyda's accusations. He makes only one offer; if Freyda leaves town and doesn't come back, he will send no one after her, but if she ever sets foot in town again he will personally gut her like a sturgeon. Deinstaf is a violent and choleric man; he begins to lose control of himself, spraying the party with spittle in his rage, hurling curses and threats, until the merchants and bodyguards have to restrain him. Then Kelos suggests that no more discussion tonight could possibly be of any profit; he suggests that the player-characters and the merchants meet here again tomorrow night and attempt to discuss the issue more rationally. The merchants then take Deinstaf upstairs to his room (Deinstaf is currently living at the Purple Dove) under the pretense of calming the old man down.

They stay upstairs in Deinstaf's room until the tavern servant boy, who has been well-paid for his cooperation, comes to the room to tell them that the player-characters have left. The boy then leads the merchants down the servants' stairway to the first floor hall and thence to the alley on the west side of the tavern. From there, the four merchants and their bodyguards rush to the warehouse behind the tavern. Inside are concealed eight horses, held by Kelos's stable boy. The eight men then mount and ride south over open fields to the Molboarn river, which they follow to the Vilmir road and the south gate. From there, all but Deinstaf go to their homes and prepare for any counterattack. Pilarmo goes home, but his courage fails him, and he decides to make a run for it along the East road, hoping some relatives he has in Karlaak will protect him. Kelos and Tormiel remain at home. Deinstaf returns to the Tavern of the Purple Dove and proceeds to get drunk. Finally, about midnight, he decides to go looking for Freyda to challenge her to a duel.

## Purple Dove Characters

### Kendrek

Kendrek is the innkeeper and part owner of the tavern of the Purple Dove. He has several silent partners, among whom is Moralo the caravan master. The Purple Dove is the finest tavern in the caravanserai because it is the only



16 one; Kendrek's monopoly has been arranged by his silent partners, all of whom have commercial interests in the caravan sector. This tavern is visited mostly by foreigners; the prices are outrageous and the food service and rooms are of indifferent quality. Kendrek has a facility with languages and dialects; he is also prepared to deal with the peculiar diets and customs of foreign customers. Currently a large number of his guests are foreigners and city folk embarking on expeditions into the frontier wildernesses. Frequently the colorful frontier characters — rangers, far traders, trappers, prospectors — who occasionally visit Bakshaan for business or pleasure stay at the Purple Dove.

Kendrek employs several heavy duty bouncers, and he is quick to act at the first hint of a disturbance. Kendrek himself is a capable brawler and doesn't hesitate to wade into a fracas. Low-life rowdies are immediately ejected. Wealthy and influential troublemakers are handled with kid-gloves under Kendrek's personal supervision; he insists on being personally summoned before his bouncers take any irrevocable action.

Kendrek is a bull of a man, with the voice of an opera tenor. He is dark haired, with a full beard. He always dresses in humble garments when at work. He leaves the day-to-day work to his employees, but he frequently visits the common room to greet his guests and to make small talk with visitors. Kendrek is very proud of his tavern and cherishes the respect of his fellows in the caravan sector. He is also proud to have made the acquaintance of many well-known merchants, travelers, scholars, and adventurers; he cheerfully bends guests ears with his secondhand accounts of their exploits. He is a little careless with money; it is his wife who manages the tavern and who is responsible for the high prices and indifferent service (she pays a poor wage). Kendrek is quick to accommodate any guest's complaint or request; if a diner complains about the food, Kendrek immediately orders another finer meal to be served on the house.

Kendrek is a reliable source of information about happenings in the caravanserai — caravan schedules, cargoes, merchant and caravaner reputations, reasonable costs for caravan travel and services — and his information is free for the asking.

### Kendrek

STR 17    CON 16    SIZ 17    INT 11    POW 13  
DEX 13    CHA 11    HP 21    Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
Sword	54%	58%	1D8+1+1D6
Club	67%	79%	1D6+2+1D6

SKILLS: Balance 43%, Climb 24%, Conceal 36%, Credit 25%, Dodge 56%, Evaluate Treasure 12%, First Aid 64%, Jump 39%, Listen 27%, Memorize 60%, Orate 34%, Read/Write Common 45%, Ride 67%, See 84%, Speak Common 85%, Speak Low Melnibonean 65%, Speak Pande 64%, Speak Mabden 45%, Speak Orgjenn 74%, Swim 53%, Track 22%.

### Luther

Luther is the upstairs domestic servant at the Tavern of the Purple Dove. He is suave, well-spoken and insincere. He is slender, good-looking and charming. With a successful INT x3 roll a player-character recognizes Luther's

charm as phony; others are sucked in by his apparently polished manners and by his careful consideration of a guest's requirements. Luther is not above petty theft, but he is clever enough to avoid detection. He promotes large tips by ingratiating himself with guests and offering to do them special favors. The four merchants have used Luther as a spy and gofer before; they know him to be tight lipped for the right price.

### Luther

STR 9    CON 11    SIZ 10    INT 14    POW 10  
DEX 16    CHA 14    HP 11    Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
knife	43%	-	1D4+2

SKILLS: Conceal 85%, Cut Purse 12%, Dodge 37%, Hide 44%, Listen 61%, Move Quietly 23%, Pick Lock 40%, See 22%, Speak Common 86%.

### Dominik and Pandro

Dominik and Pandro are the two common room servants at the Tavern of the Purple Dove. Dominik is a small tired old man as nimble as a glacier. He is absent-minded and forgetful. No matter how much he is cajoled or abused, he will not vary his pace a bit. Questioning Dominik is discouraging; he has only a 10% chance to remember any specific detail, and a 50% chance to misremember anything that someone presses him to recall.

Pandro is a young and energetic fellow of medium height and frame with straw-colored hair. He is pleasant and competent in his duties; he will not be here for long. As soon as he can get a job for better wages, he will leave. Pandro is a romantic and imaginative lad, and is a sucker for a bit of intrigue; he is happy to answer questions if he thinks he's involved in something extraordinary, and an appeal to Pandro's sense of adventure might be effective.

### Dominik

STR 7    CON 8    SIZ 11    INT 11    POW 13  
DEX 13    CHA 8    HP 8    Armor: none

*no weapons*

SKILLS: Conceal 14%, Hide 43%, Serve Beer 82%.

### Pandro

STR 13    CON 13    SIZ 11    INT 12    POW 14  
DEX 12    CHA 15    HP 13    Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
beer mug	65%	50%	1D4

SKILLS: Balance 44%, Climb 36%, Conceal 12%, Dodge 38%, Hide 29%, Memorize 39%, Move Quietly 72%, Orate 12%, Persuade 26%, Read/Write Common 44%, Ride 23%, Search 34%, See 47%, Speak Common 89%, Track 44%.

### Paddy, Geirlane, and Morrow

The kitchen staff at the Tavern of the Purple Dove, Paddy, Geirlane, and Morrow are not often seen by the guests. Paddy is an experienced cook with delusions of grandeur;

he is only competent, but he believes himself a gourmet master. He avoids trouble whenever it appears. Geirlane is the cook's assistant, dull-witted but good-natured. She is slow to respond to any stimulus; she was once run over by a cart. Morrow is a rather dark-spirited youth who assists in the kitchen, washing dishes and doing the dirty-work. He has a vicious temper which he usually keeps in check, but he acts unpredictably when presented with a crisis. Morrow's first impulse is to self-preservation, but he is attracted to violence, and might get involved in a fight or a chase simply for the fun of a good row. He is a gifted and ingenious brawler; his choice of sides in a conflict is often arbitrary, but he always takes the side of an attractive woman.

### Paddy

STR 11    CON 13    SIZ 14    INT 9    POW 9  
DEX 13    CHA 8    HP 15    Armor: Leather Apron  
1 point

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
meat cleaver	67%	71%	1D6+2+1D6

SKILLS: Cook 55%, Plant Lore 24%, Speak Common 76%.

### Geirlane

STR 10    CON 12    SIZ 11    INT 7    POW 9  
DEX 9    CHA 11    HP 12    Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
Rolling Pin	36%	26%	1D4+2

SKILLS: Cook 27%, Hide 27%, See 18%, Speak Common 45%.

### Morrow

STR 15    CON 13    SIZ 13    INT 13    POW 14  
DEX 13    CHA 12    HP 14    Armor: Leather Apron  
1 point

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
Frying Pan	87%	84%	1D6+2+1D6

SKILLS: Balance 39%, Climb 54%, Conceal 57%, Dodge 37%, Hide 63%, Jump 54%, Listen 54%, Orate 27%, Ride 63%, Search 15%, See 65%, Speak Common 89%, Swim 54%.

## Spender and Lonie

Spender and Lonie are the two bouncers. Spender is a big brute, a retired logger in his late middle-age. He is crafty and inclined to fight dirty. He is conscious that he is slowing down and doesn't hesitate to even out a battle by striking from behind or by using weapons on an unarmed man. He is partially bald with wisps of grey hair in his ears and great grey sideburns. He has a tendency to talk soothingly to a victim as he is sizing the victim up for an attack.

Lonie is young and intelligent, a displaced farmer. He is not yet familiar with the ways of the city and tends to be straight and moral in his thoughts and judgements. He is quick to take sides with a seemingly innocent party (often truly the guilty party, since Lonie is not a good judge of character). He is instinctively honest and polite, but he follows his employer's orders explicitly. Lonie instinctively expects people to fight fair and, though he is learning about the city, he is often caught off guard by a dishonorable ploy.

### Spender

STR 16    CON 14    SIZ 17    INT 13    POW 11  
DEX 9    CHA 11    HP 19    Armor: Leather

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
Sword	68%	69%	1D8+1+1D6
Grapple	95%	—	no damage

SKILLS: Dodge 16%, Jump 14%, Persuade 45%, Speak Common 79%, Track 37%.

### Lonie

STR 16    CON 13    SIZ 15    INT 14    POW 8  
DEX 13    CHA 11    HP 16    Armor: Leather

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
Sword	73%	70%	1D8+2+1D6
Grapple	77%	—	no damage

SKILLS: Balance 36%, Climb 25%, Dodge 78%, Hide 42%, Move Quietly 54%, Ride 34%, See 67%, Speak Common 68%.

### Kirnan

Kirnan is the stablehand at Jackrabbit Stables, just across from the Tavern of the Purple Dove. Kirnan is red-headed and freckled; he has the kind of saucy good-humor that some people find refreshing and others find irritating. He doesn't jump to accommodate customers, not out of laziness but out of an impulsive desire to needle them, and he is not properly respectful of those higher in station. Jackrabbit Stables charges a handsome fee for looking after a horse for even a few hours. There are no public arrangements for horses or carriages in Bakshaan, and if you don't have a servant to watch your horse for you, you have to find someplace to put him while you conduct your business. Some establishments have valets who look after their client's transportation, but not the Purple Dove.

Kirnan is a gullible young man, a sucker for a fast talker, and he has been persuaded by one of the assassins in disguise to keep their horses ready for them to facilitate quick getaway. Kirnan has been warned not to speak to others about this little favor, but he is a lousy liar; if the party makes any pointed inquiries about strange people wandering around the caravanserai, or about anything unusual happening at the stables, Persuasion rolls should be made to see if Kirnan is suspected of lying. Thereafter the Gamemaster must roleplay Kirnan; the player-characters must convince Kirnan that there is a possible crime planned, and the crime must be sufficiently appalling to Kirnan that he will not think it adventurous or appealing. For example Kirnan will not inform on the assassins if he thinks that they are just involved in a con game, but he would never willingly be an accessory to an assassin's attack on a woman.

### Kirnan

STR 11    CON 10    SIZ 13    INT 12    POW 8  
DEX 12    CHA 14    HP 11    Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
knife	30%	34%	1D4+2

SKILLS: Dodge 23%, Listen 44%. Read/Write Common 47%, Ride 82%, See 20%, Speak Common 78%.

# Ambush in the Caravansarai

The player-characters, lured to the Tavern of the Purple Dove under the pretext of a parlay with the merchant conspirators, are attacked by a group of assassins hired by the merchants to intimidate or kill Freyda.

## The Ambush

This is the assassins' plan. A lookout is stationed on the roof of the warehouse behind the Tavern of the Purple Dove. He signals the arrive of the player-characters, and keeps an eye on the back door of the tavern, in case the player-characters decide to sneak out that way. The four assassins have broken into a small shop where they intend to hide until it is time to spring the ambush. From the shop, the assassins can see the roof of the warehouse and the signals the lookout sends them. At the same time they can keep an eye on the streets around them. There is almost no sign of their break-in; a character would have to be specifically checking the locks on the shop doors to notice the assassins' entry. Inside the shop the assassins don't make any sound or movement that would give them away.

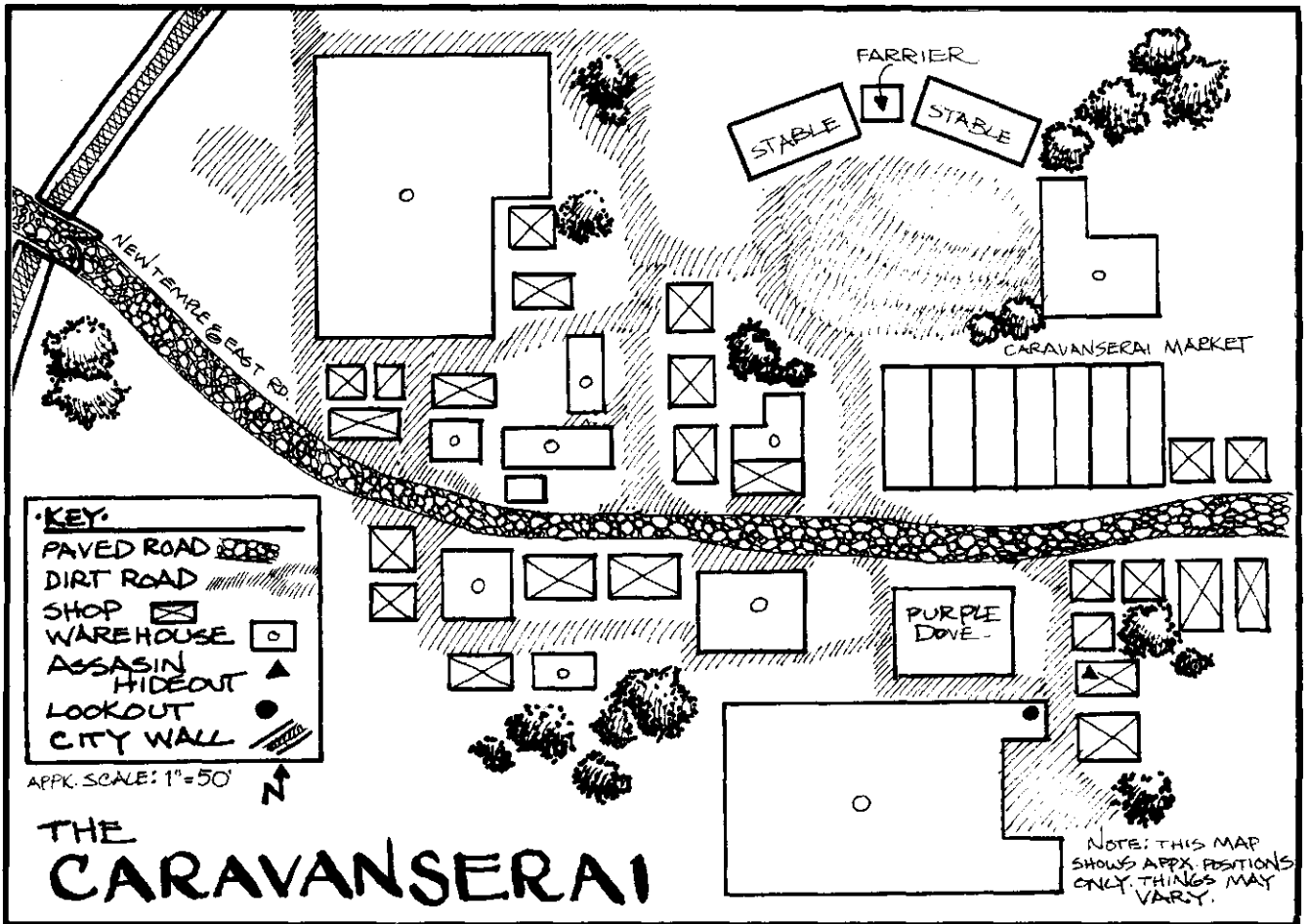
The only way the player-characters might detect the ambush would be if they searched the roof of the ware-

house and found the lookout. However, the lookout has directions to run if anyone seems to be interested in his roof, and his intimate knowledge of the district will permit him to escape easily on foot. This could alert the party to a possible ambush and will force the assassins to change their plans slightly to make up for the loss of the lookout.

The assassins arranged to have horses saddled and waiting at the stable. They tipped the stablehand handsomely, explaining that they were planning a little sting on a dumb tourist over at the Purple Dove and they wanted to be able to get out of town fast. The stablehand, an incurable romantic, thinks this is exciting and adventurous; he has no idea what the assassins are really doing, and will not be able to tell the player-characters anything afterwards except that the guy he talked to had nice clothes, a dark cape, a handsome face with a moustache (phony), and a slight limp (also phony).

The gamemaster should tell the players that their characters have a choice of walking or riding from the Tower Tavern to the Purple Dove. It is just far enough that most people prefer to ride, but it is only a half-hour walk. If the party rides, they will have to take their horses to the stable, and the ambush is sprung on them as they return to the stable for their horses. If they walk, the assassins fall upon the player-characters as they walk back toward Bakshaan proper after meeting with the merchants.

The assassins' ambush is automatically successful as described in section 3.4.2.1. of the rules. For each player, roll separately for the duration of the surprise and the



chance that a See roll modifies the effect of the ambush. The assassins have little armor and no shields, but they have excellent attack and parry skills. They try to make the best of a few rounds of surprise and flee immediately if swift resistance is met. They are not fanatic, and are absolutely unwilling to risk their lives any more than is necessary. They are loyal to one another and, if one assassin gets in trouble, the others immediately come to his aid, forsaking all other objectives, and thereafter flee as soon as they can disengage. Each assassin is dressed in nondescript leather laborer clothing, but each has a cape and a change of clothes on his horse. As soon as they outdistance their pursuit they ditch the horses (stolen anyway) and disperse themselves to avoid being recognized. If the whole mission goes sour for some reason, the assassins try to escape on foot, each going in a different direction. They definitely elude anyone encumbered in armor, and their knowledge of the district should earn them an escape, subject to the player's ingenuity and tenacity and the gamemaster's judgement.

## The Assassins

### Rodale

The lookout, Rodale, is a street punk. He is young, short, tough, has dark skin with the beginnings of an adolescent moustache and a few angry blemishes. Rodale is a specialist in burglary. His task in this operation is to alert the assassins if the party leaves the Purple Dove by the rear or by the side exits; if they do, he attempts to shadow them and reports their route and whereabouts to the assassins. Rodale is not an experienced or skilled assassin, and he is not expected by the others to involve himself in a melee. However, if he discovers an isolated party member, Rodale might decide to take him on. He knows that such a move could jeopardize the whole operation, so he will not do it unless he has a good chance of success. If discovered, Rodale runs south across the warehouse roof, jumps down and attempts to escape across the fields.

### Rodale

STR 13	CON 15	SIZ 9	INT 11	POW 13
DEX 16	CHA 10	HP 15	Armor: Leather	

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
short-sword	55%	55%	1D6+1
Bow	67%	-	1D8+1

SKILLS: Ambush 24%, Balance 44%, Climb 67%, Conceal 73%, Cut Purse 39%, Dodge 78%, Hide 86%, Listen 64%, Move Quietly 85%, Pick Lock 65%, Poison Lore 23%, Read/Write Common 12%, Search 34%, See 38%, Sleight of Hand 43%, Tumble 55%.

### Marick

Marick, a beginner, is a nondescript fellow of average height and weight, in good physical condition. He is the type of character who doesn't attract attention; he has a perpetually blank and bored expression, and he often sits still for hours without moving a muscle. An apprentice at his trade, Marick was formerly a guard, then a bodyguard for a poor merchant. He has a taste for expensive things, so he decided to graduate to violent crime. Marick is quiet and unimaginative, and he follows orders to the letter.

### Marick

STR 13	CON 11	SIZ 11	INT 9	POW 11
DEX 13	CHA 9	HP 11	Armor: leather	

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
knife	65%	63%	1D4+2
Bow	53%	-	1D8+1

SKILLS: Ambush 25%, Balance 54%, Climb 37%, Conceal 25%, Hide 67%, Jump 55%, Listen 34%, Move Quietly 27%, Pick Lock 07%, Poison Lore 06%, Ride 34%, Search 28%, See 47%, Speak Common 67%, Tumble 21%.

### Ewers

Ewers is a weapons specialist. He is a big man who wears the scars of battle and the self-assurance of an experienced soldier. This veteran mercenary decided that his skills would be more in demand among criminals. He is a master swordsman and is generally given the job of fighting bodyguards. Ewers' major flaw as an assassin is overconfidence; he never takes a cheap shot, and he won't kill a brave man or a skilled opponent unless he has to. Ewers would be ashamed to have his victims die thinking of him as a sneak or a coward. He unconsciously talks to himself in the midst of combat — "Ahh, good parry. . . . Damn, missed his guard. . . . Oops, don't get cocky now. . . sweep, sweep, block - Nicely done."

### Ewers

STR 15	CON 14	SIZ 15	INT 11	POW 13
DEX 14	CHA 13	HP 17	Armor: leather	

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
Demon Sword	87%	91%	1D8+1+1 D6+1 D6
Bow	76%	-	1D6+1
Knife	94%	87%	1D6+2

SKILLS: Ambush 06%, Balance 32%, Climb 34%, Conceal 35%, Dodge 67%, First Aid 45%, Hide 22%, Listen 65%, Move Quietly 63%, Orate 37%, Read/Write Common 54%, Ride 67%, See 83%, Speak Common 86%, Track 36%.

### ORS, DEMON SWORD

STR 10	CON 26	SIZ 2	INT 0	POW 18
DEX 22	CHA 12			

### Remm-Din

A master assassin, Remm-Din is dark skinned, an obvious foreigner to Bakshaan. He never says a word more than he has to, and he resents being told anything he doesn't think he needs to know. He is definitely patient, and can sit for hours without blinking an eye. Remm-Din looks to be in his late forties, but he is really only 32. Once a Pan Tang slave, he formulated a ruthless plan that sacrificed many innocent lives to provide his escape aboard a trading vessel. A skilled and hardened professional killer, Remm-Din learned his morals in the slave pens of Pan Tang — get him before he gets you — he believes there is no room for luxuries like honor and mercy. He kills whomever he is paid to kill, and he fulfills his contracts to the letter. Normally Remm-Din works alone, but the money that was offered for this job was too attractive to resist. Remm-Din always takes a final shot at a downed victim to ensure against a botched job.

**Remm-Din**

STR 14    CON 13    SIZ 10    INT 15    POW 17  
DEX 17    CHA 7    HP 13    Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
Demon Dagger	94%	94%	1D6+2+3D6
Bow*	89%	-	1D8+1

\*all Remm-Din's arrows are poisoned (class 3 poison).

SKILLS: Ambush 87%, Balance 76%, Climb 93%, Cut Purse 65%, Dodge 96%, Evaluate Treasure 79%, Hide 88%, Jump 67%, Listen 88%, Memorize 73%, Move Quietly 99%, Poison Lore 76%, Read/Write Common 77%, Read/Write High and Low Melibonean 68%, Ride 45%, Search 74%, See 92%, Set Trap 77%, Speak Common 98%, Speak High and Low Melibonean 75%, Track 73%, Tumble 94%.

**RILL, DEMON DAGGER**

STR 32    CON 24    SIZ 3    INT 12\*    POW 15  
DEX 24    CHA 15    Special Ability: Strength Drain

\*Rill can change shape at will. Remm-Din uses it as a dagger when he has the benefits of surprise. If Remm-Din is caught in a melee he orders Rill to change into a larger weapon. Rill is so evil that followers of the Lords of Law cannot carry it, with or without a successful POW vs. POW roll.

SUMMONINGS: Salamanders 72%.

**Cook**

Cook, the assassins' leader looks more like a young scholar or a priest than like an assassin. He is boyish, charming, and seemingly absent-minded and dreamy, Cook has in fact killed many men for money. He is the contract holder for this job. His broad criminal background and methodical mind make cook a capable leader and strategist. Rodale, Ewers, and Marick have worked with Cook before; Remm-Din was hired especially for this assault. Cook wants Remm-Din around in case something goes wrong and the assassin group is forced to improvise a plan; Remm-Din can be relied upon to work independently, while the other three are little good without explicit directions. Cook is good with disguises and accents. He is careful; he will not risk the lives of his men, not to mention his own. He calls off the ambush at the first sign of failure. Cook also assumes personal responsibility for Ewers and Marick, and does everything within reason to make sure that the amateurs escape. Remm-Din on the other hand is assumed to be able to take care of himself.

**Cook**

STR 12    CON 11    SIZ 13    INT 13    POW 13  
DEX 16    CHA 15    HP 12    Armor: Demon Armor

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
Demon Sword	95%	95%	1D8+1+1D6
Dagger	89%	88%	1D6+2
Bow	77%	-	1D8+1

SKILLS: Ambush 77%, Balance 25%, Climb 63%, Conceal 85%, Cut Purse 56%, Dodge 23%, Hide 88%, Jump 74%, Memorize 56%, Move Quietly 94%, Pick Lock 76%, Poison Lore 20%, Ride 47%, Search 39%, See 73%, Set Trap 84%, Speak Common 84%, Track 74%, Tumble 39%.

**DUBRO, DEMON SWORD**

STR 12    CON 15    SIZ 2    INT 0    POW 17  
DEX 24    CHA 12

If an assassin is captured he will try to buy his freedom by betraying his employers (the merchants). None of the assassins will betray the other assassins.

If anyone in the party goes back to the stable for his horse, the assassins attack. If Freyda is among them, they go directly for her. If Freyda is not among the party members on their way to the stable, the assassins split up — one group to handle those near the stable, the other group to go after Freyda. The assassins dash silently from the shadows behind the store where they have been hiding. After five quick rounds of attack, they disengage and head for their horses, mounting quickly and riding east over the open field next to the stable.

If the whole party is on foot and doesn't have to go by way of the stable, the assassins attack right on the main road. Here three innocent bystanders walking down the street from the west may become involved in the battle at the gamemaster's discretion, depending on the circumstances. The bystanders are armed only with daggers, and hesitate to interfere but, if the party appeals for help, a successful Persuasion roll causes each to dash into the fray. If Freyda makes the appeal, or any other woman, add twenty percentiles to the Persuasion roll's chance of success; chivalric ideals are still powerful in Bakshaan. The assassins split into two groups, one that comes around the west side of the house first and attacks the player-characters from the front, then a second pair tries to hit the party from the rear from around the eastern side of the house. These two groups roll separately for duration of surprise due to their successful ambush.

**Innocent Bystander 1**

STR 11    CON 11    SIZ 12    INT 8    POW 13  
DEX 9    CHA 12    HP 11    Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
knife	42%	39%	1D4+2

SKILLS: Dodge 32%, See 65%, Speak Common 85%.

**Innocent Bystander 2**

STR 15    CON 13    SIZ 17    INT 10    POW 9  
DEX 7    CHA 9    HP 18    Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
knife	65%	65%	1D4+2

SKILLS: Dodge 21%, See 27%, Speak Common 76%.

**Innocent Bystander 3**

STR 9    CON 12    SIZ 6    INT 14    POW 11  
DEX 11    CHA 9    HP 6    Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
knife	34%	37%	1D4+2

SKILLS: Dodge 63%, See 43%, Speak Common 98%.

**The Player-characters' Reaction**

After the assassins flee, the player-characters have a number of options. If there are any seriously wounded characters, they might decide to go to the hospital for treatment. If any of the assassins are captured and interrogated, they cannot be easily broken by Persuasion or torture (-50% to Persuasion), but any substantial offer of money gets them

to talk about their employers (none will betray their fellow assassins). For a fee they willingly divulge the conditions of their hire and they might even offer their services in taking care of the four merchants if the price is right. An offer of 1000LB or more apiece buys their services; an offer of 500LB or more interests them but for that price they expect the player-characters to assist them. For less than 500LB they agree to help, but they take the money and run. They, of course, ask for half their fee in advance.

If all the assassins escape, they will attack again at the gamemaster's option until they successfully kill or capture Freyda. If the assassins capture Freyda alive they take her to Tormiel's house.

Once these matters are taken care of, the player-characters must decide what they are going to do about the now obviously treacherous four merchants. The characters may decide to go directly after them. In that case they just miss Pilarmo in his headlong flight down the East Road. Kelos and Tormiel stay in their homes. Deinstaf comes looking for Freyda to challenge her to a duel; he finds her where ever she is staying, if she returns to her lodgings for the night. If she is busy all night, chasing the other merchants, Deinstaf searches for Freyda in vain, goes home at dawn, sleeps for several hours, then wakes up and starts looking for her again. The gamemaster must decide when Deinstaf finally catches up with Freyda.

## Kelos's House

Kelos returns to his home after the parlay and ambush at the Tavern of the Purple Dove; if the party has any further business with Kelos, whether to talk, attack, or to challenge him to a duel, they must seek him here.

### The House

This is where the player-characters find Kelos; he does not leave home until he hears that Freyda and her company are safely out of the way or out of town. Kelos has a family — a wife and two children — and a permanent staff of a housekeeper, a stableboy, a guard, and a governess. The housekeeper and the guard live downstairs near the kitchen, the stableboy lives in the loft of the stablehouse, and the governess normally has a room to herself next to the children's room. Currently, Kelos has engaged three bodyguards, who now occupy the governess's room; the governess is sleeping with the children. There is always one special guard with Kelos wherever he goes. Another is always upstairs on the lookout in the guest room, and another is off duty (usually asleep) in the governess's quarters. The other servants all go about their daily routine as best they can, with the permanent bodyguard generally free to supervise the security arrangements. The family also has two attack dogs in the rear garden, and the family dog, a powerful beast himself, routinely sleeps in his master's bedroom. The stableboy has been instructed to keep the stable securely closed and to call for help if there is any sign of an unwanted visitor. The doors to the house are kept securely locked and bolted, and no one is admitted without careful search and identification.

The house has real glass windows, but the inside shutters are kept closed at the moment as a security measure. The family is trying to exist as if everything were normal,

but the children are nervous and upset, while Kelos's wife is calmly trying to use her influence to keep Kelos safe inside, rather than to let him go and attend to his business as he would dearly love to do. Kelos himself is not worried; he has great faith in his bodyguards and in the weakness of Freyda and her friends.

### Key to Kelos's House (Outside)

A. The house: High peaked roof, circular tiles, stone walls with plaster, wooden trim, shutters closed, heavy oaken doors.

B. The carriage house: high peaked roof, tiles, stone, plaster, etc. Large doors are oak reinforced with iron.

C. Wooden ornamental fence: four feet high.

D. The wall: ten feet high, peaked top, three feet wide, brick coated with plaster.

E. Garden: herbs and low ornamental shrubs. Attack dogs wander at large here.

### Key to Kelos's House (Inside)

1. Carriage house: two horses, carriage, gear, oats, straw, hay downstairs. Also downstairs is gardening equipment; Seth, the stableboy doubles as the gardener. Upstairs (really up a ladder) is the loft where Seth sleeps. The gate to the covered passage leading to the garden is wrought iron, well-locked and reinforced, though stylish and artistic.

2. Entry hall: cloak closet under the stairs.

3. Dining hall: formal entertainment room, one long table with chairs for dining, several comfortable chairs for lounging.

4. Sitting room: library, desk, cupboards filled with knick-knacks, divans and comfortable chairs, paintings and tapestries of superior quality. Kelos spends most of the day here, but he often wanders the house restlessly when he can't go out and do what he usually does during the day.

5. Kitchen: lots of utensils, a large wood stove for cooking.

6. Mimbina's room: pleasant and tidy.

7. Mike's room: contains a collection of bows and arrows of all descriptions.

8. Servants' hall: cloaks and household gear.

9. Upper hall: paintings, cupboards, ostentatious storage.

10. Guest room: currently used as the guard room for the extra bodyguards. One guard is here at all times.

11. Childrens' room: the governess and the children spend most of their time either here or in the garden during the current state of alert.

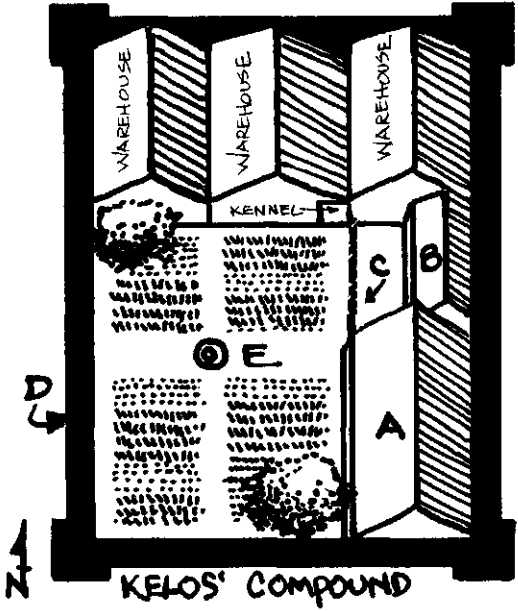
12. Governess's room: Currently used as the sleeping quarters of the hired bodyguards. One off-duty man is asleep here at all times. Roll Listen skill to see if the guard wakes instantly at the first alarm; otherwise it takes 1D3 rounds before the sleeping guard responds. The guard sleeps in leather armor with a sword nearby.

14. Master bedroom: Trevinka and Maria spend time here during the day, knitting, sewing, and gossiping. At night Kelos and Trevinka sleep here. Rover sleeps at the foot of the bed.

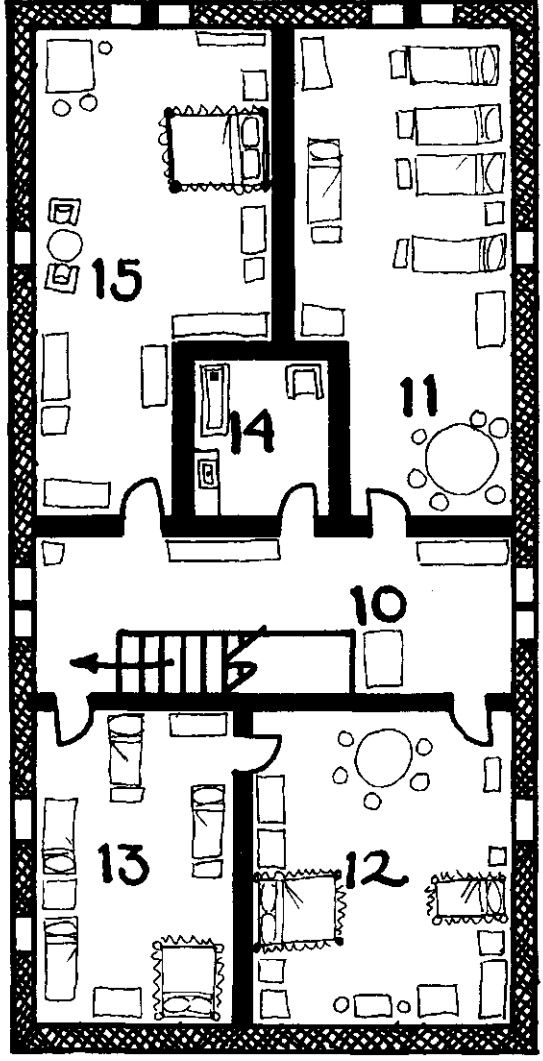
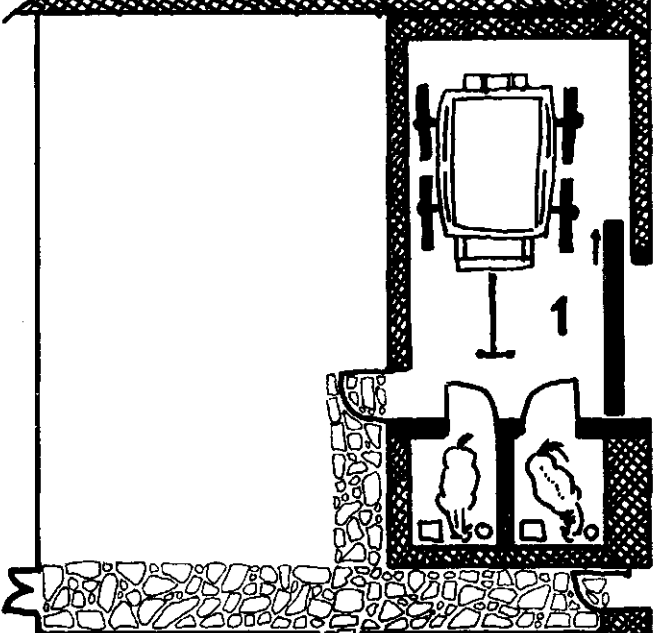
Mike and one of the hired guards wander throughout the house with no set pattern. Roll a 20 sided die for lo-

# KELOS' HOUSE

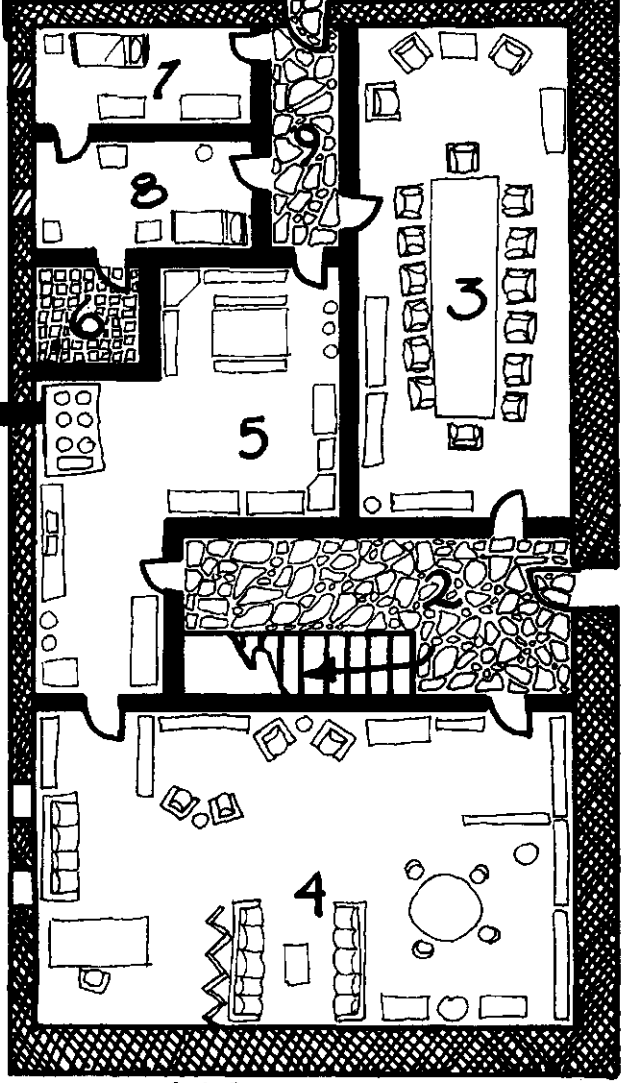
SCALE: 1" = 15'



KELOS' COMPOUND



SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

# Player Handouts

This is what most natives and informed visitors know about the city of Bakshaan and the country of Ilmiora.

## Bakshaan

Bakshaan is one of the most wealth and powerful city-states of Ilmiora. It owes its prominence to an excellent harbor (unique along the rugged coast of western Ilmiora), a broad and fertile inland plain that permits efficient modern agriculture, and rich forest and mineral resources close to convenient navigable river systems. The older buildings in Bakshaan are several hundreds of years old, but much of the city is relatively new; the region is currently enjoying an economic boom. Bakshaan has never known a major war, protected as it is by natural barriers — the ocean on the west and the mountainous wilderness regions to the north and south. The land along the coast north and south of Bakshaan is a narrow, flat coastal plain, populous and agriculturally productive; serviced by a fine road system, but lacking good harbors and large towns. The eastern interior plain is drained by two major rivers, the Molboarn and the Green rivers, both navigable for much of their length. The interior plain produces much of Bakshaan's foodstuffs and lumber. The region is famous for its wines and for its hops, and for the superb building stone that is quarried far to the southeast near the Vilmir border.

Bakshaan is a city-state ruled by a hereditary duke and a more recently established Duke's Council, a symbol of the growing wealth and influence of the merchant class. The city itself is bound by treaty and long-standing tradition to the league of Ilmiora, a loose confederation of city-states that controls most of the continent north of Vilmir and south and east of the Great Desert. The remainder is wilderness and wastelands under the nominal control of various city-states; in practice these wild-lands and their inhabitants are ignored by the formal governments of Ilmiora.

The Duke is the traditional figurehead of an authoritarian but rational law and justice. Many of the old traditions and values are variously honored or regarded as quaint, depending on whether one is a conservative or a modern. The new wealth represented by the powerful merchant and trade guilds has established through the Duke's council another important source of legislative law. The Duke's law and justice has precedence in all matters, but it doesn't cover most of the modern issues of commerce; most civil matters are handled by the Council court, while criminal actions are handled by the Duke's Court and by his constables and bailiffs.

Citizens of the city have important privileges and obligations under the law. Those living along the coastal and interior plains are under the protection and control of the Duke through his representatives, the local governors and the hereditary noble landholders, but more and more the ownership of these lands has come into the hands of the new nobility of wealth. They may take on the name and appearance of the traditional aristocracy, but they no

longer acknowledge an obligation to the peasants who work the land; modern agriculture calls for larger and longer fields and fewer laborers. The peasants set adrift from their traditional social moorings are fortunate to find themselves in a developing cash economy. Some take their saved wages and their freedom and head for the frontier. Others head for the cities to find work in the growing industries there.

## Practical Matters of Law and Custom

**One:** it is not customary for people to wear armor in town, though it is not technically illegal.

**Two:** The right to bear arms is limited to the aristocracy, though bodyguards and soldiers on duty may carry weapons. Anyone may carry a dagger (for eating). Possession of missile weapons is strictly illegal for private citizens and is taken as a presumption of criminal intent; however, nobles and wealthy merchants can buy licenses to hunt in the Duke's forests, and are permitted to own and transport hunting bows and crossbows, though they may not be fired within the city walls and may not be transported in strung or loaded condition within the city.

**Three:** The constables and the Duke's Guard are supplemented by a drafted militia in their responsibility to keep the peace. The Duke may call up the militia at his discretion and set at its head whatever commander he wishes (usually the commander of guards).

**Four:** most private businessmen and aristocrats have guards and guard dogs with them when they travel in uncertain neighborhoods. The very wealthy always have a bodyguard. All citizens keep legal and illegal weapons for personal security; almost everyone owns watchdogs for their homes, even the poorest slum tenants.

**Five:** Guard patrols can arrive within a few minutes when a breach of the peace is reported.

**Six:** Locals often interfere with any crime or disturbance in their own neighborhood. Shop-owners and their personal guards often get involved if a disturbance is perceived as threatening to their community.

**Seven:** If a woman is attacked, there is a much higher chance that a citizen will get involved; chivalry is still strong in Bakshaan.

## Principle Products of Bakshaan

The Bakshaan region produces wine, beer, building stone, timber, livestock and dairy products. Much of the area near Bakshaan is either deforested or protected by law (the Duke's preserves). The coasts north and south of Bakshaan are also deforested. In many cases timber is expensive and difficult to obtain. A side effect of the deforestation is serious erosion and destruction of watersheds. In an effort to reverse this trend, the Duke has established the forest agency, whose responsibility it is to watch over the country's forest resources. The agents are called rangers; they are known for their incorruptibility. They have become folk heroes, often protecting the rights of the local



inhabitants of a forest region against the rapacious wood merchants eager to make a fortune supplying the lucrative lumber and charcoal markets.

### Ilmiora

Ilmiora is divided into four major geographic regions: the arid mountainous north, the coastal plain and piedmont, the interior forested plateau, and the eastern steppes.

The northern region is remote and sparsely populated by hardy nomadic tribes. The climate is harsh — hot, dry summers and dry, cold winters. These tribes are dependent on sheep and goats for all their needs; they are an ignorant and unfriendly people hardened by their difficult existence. Little is known of the northern region by the inhabitants of the more civilized city-states of Ilmiora, and there is little incentive to accumulate further information about this area. Nonetheless, the hint of possible mineral wealth in this region has from time to time prompted adventurous prospectors to brave the region's hardships. It is a matter of common knowledge that these expeditions have met with no success to date.

The west coast is the most populous and prosperous section of Ilmiora. The nominal capital, Ilmar, is located in this region, and along with Bakshaan is one of the richest and fastest growing city-states of Ilmiora. This region is in the midst of an agricultural and social revolution, with new, more efficient methods of farming releasing a large peasant class to either work in the infant industries of the cities or to seek their fortunes as pioneers in the development of the frontiers. Despite the dislocations from established cultural traditions and the conflicts between an older aristocracy of birth and a new aristocracy of wealth, the transition is smoothed by a general sense of prosperity and opportunity. Commerce and science are characterized by a persistent optimism, even in the face of short-term uncertainties and disturbances caused by the rapid changes Ilmioran society has been forced to undergo.

The central forested plateau is the home of an ancient and rigidly conservative culture that traces its ancestry from the Dharzi Empire, once sufficiently powerful to challenge the Melniboneans for the domination of the lands now known as the Young Kingdoms. The conflict that developed between these two great cultures resulted in the destruction of the Dharzi empire and the mortal wounding of Melnibonean culture which has been in decline ever since.

Org is the dominant city-state on the central plateau; it is a severe and autocratic society with little in common with other Ilmioran city-states. Org acknowledges the sovereignty of no other city-state in the central region, referring to the others as subject kingdoms of the Dharzi empire. Relations between Org, and other city-states are strained to say the least.

The dominant forces in Orgen society are the Beastmaster cult and the Orgen king and his court. There is no merchant class to speak of in Org; trade is the exclusive right of the favorites of the king and, in general, commerce is neither prosperous nor energetically pursued by the nobles. Since Org requires several commodities available only outside the region (particularly metals and manufactured items), trade persists in spite of the mismanagement of the court-licensed merchants. Precious herbs, spices, and other natural products unique to the Forest of Troos provide an incentive to the outside trader willing to tolerate the out-

rageous state-regulated commerce sanctioned by the King of Org.

The Orgen peasant class is wretched and without rights or protection; they are slaves of the noble class and of their dogmatic and dictatorial religion. The men of this region are often marked by a physical degeneracy, which is usually ascribed to cross-breeding with the primitive forest Orgens, who are said to be savage and brutal half-humans.

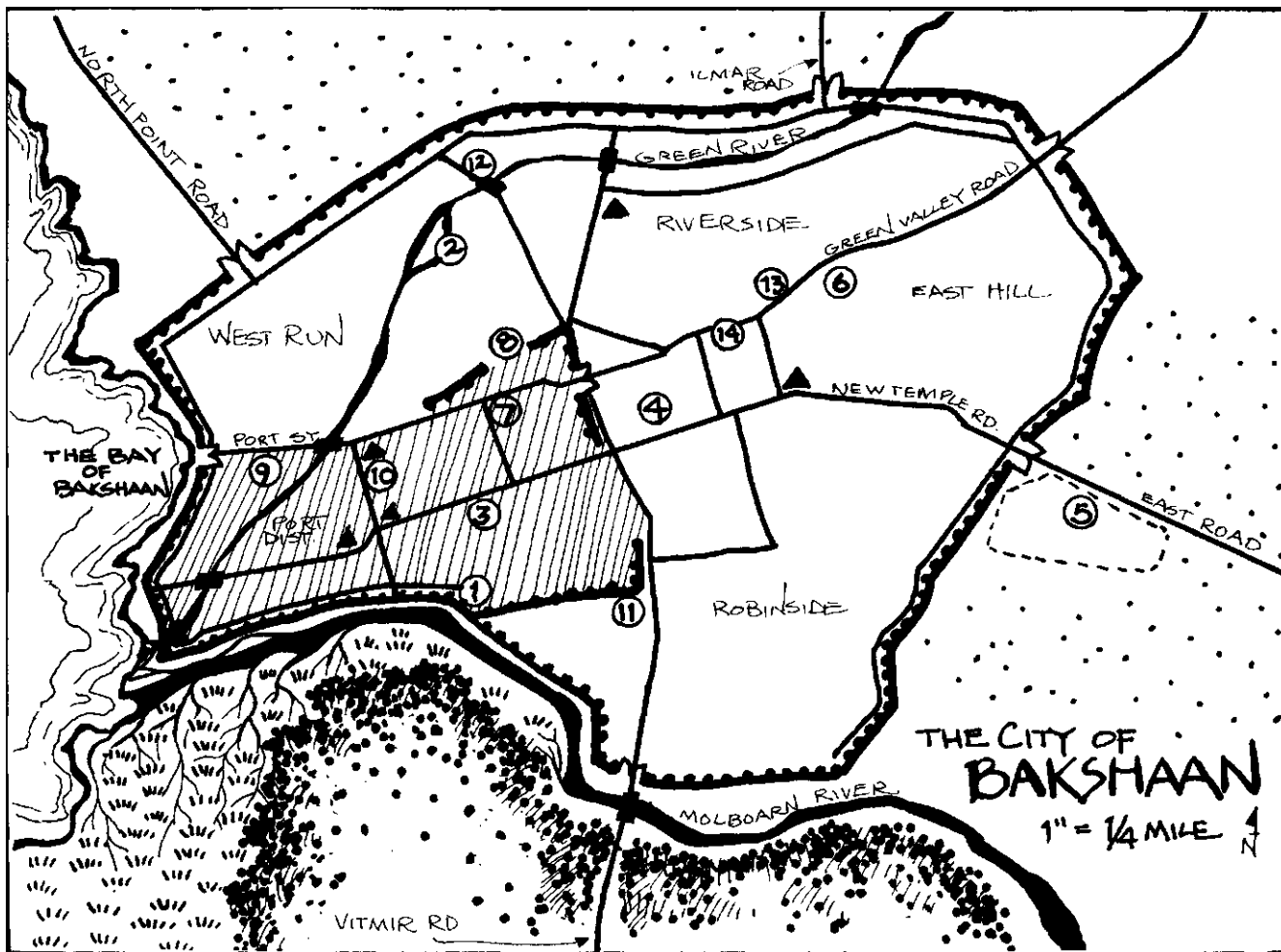
Travel in civilized Org is said to be dangerous because of the arbitrary powers and unpredictable character of the Orgen nobility; travel in the uncivilized sections of Org, particularly the legendary Forest of Troos, is unheard of and presumably extremely dangerous.

The eastern region is a semi-arid steppe, populated by nomadic stock-herders with a well-developed and sophisticated culture. Along the major rivers here are situated the other great city-states of Ilmiora: Karlaak, Gorjhan, and Rignariom. The river basins are fertile and productive; the cities populated by the descendants of nomads who settled in these valleys and learned a more sedentary and urbanized way of life. With the discover of great mineral wealth in the Weeping wastes, a desert region east of Ilmiora, the cities have become suddenly more prosperous; the wealth, however, tends to remain in the hands of the great families and the descendants of traditional tribal leaders who have charted the destinies of the cities for centuries. The eastern city-states are far older than the western coastal city-states and are more important centers of learning and scholarship, famous for their ancient libraries and academies.

The western coastal region and, to a lesser extent, the eastern region of Ilmiora are on the brink of a scientific and industrial revolution; a strong scholastic tradition (a reliance on the wisdom of the ancients rather than experiment and theory) in science and education and the established practices of religion and sorcery are the forces that prevent this revolution.

There is a persistent belief in Ilmiora that the discovery of old knowledge, rather than the creation of new knowledge, is the key to progress. This philosophy derives from the cultural inferiority complex burdening this young civilization growing up in the shadows of the Dharzi and the Melnibonean Empires. There is ample reason to believe that the people of the Young Kingdoms are living in an Age of Bronze, looking back on the past glories of an Age of Gold; most of the efforts of science and scholarship are devoted to recapturing the glory of those decadent cultures. The Melnibonean and the Dharzi Empires are romanticized throughout Ilmiora; few realize the cruelty and brutality of these cultures, or the dependence of these cultures on slavery and exploitation. Though sorcery is potentially a more powerful source of wealth and power than is science and technology, the moral cost of sorcery is great. Many of the rituals of sorcery require blood sacrifice, and trafficking with demons often causes side effects not anticipated by the sorcerer. Certain of the elemental summonings are more benign, but the requirements made upon a sorcerer who summons elementals are not trivial, and the time and energy spent in preparation for summoning and binding are considerable.

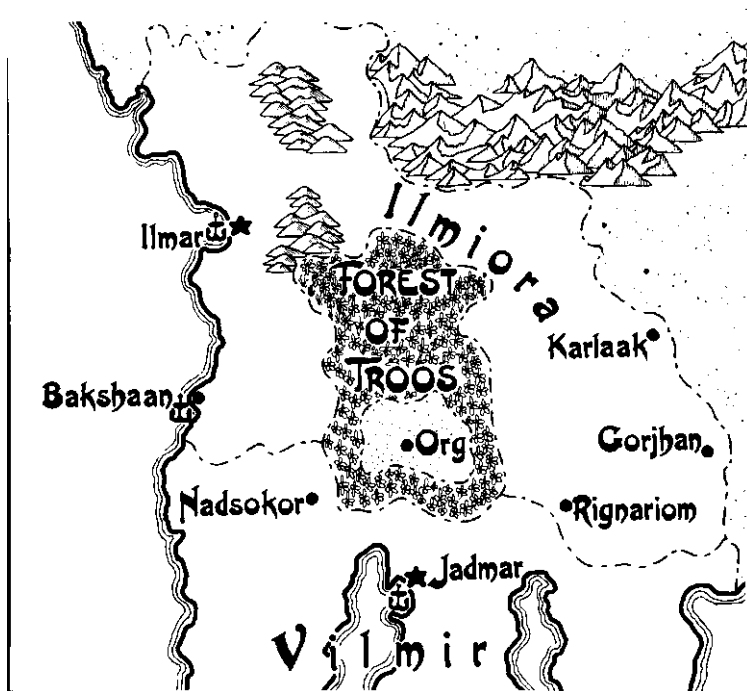
Most sorcerers in the modern regions of Ilmiora are either romantics yearning for a golden age or power hungry fools who hope to get something for nothing. The end



**KEY FOR THE CITY OF BAKSHAAN**

- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| ① THE CASTLE        | ⑤ HOUSE OF TORMIEL  |
| ② THE MILL          | ⑨ HOUSE OF KELOS    |
| ③ GUARDHOUSE & JAIL | ⑩ HOUSE OF DEINSTAF |
| ④ MARKET SQUARE     | ⑪ TOWER TAVERN      |
| ⑤ PURPLE DOVE INN   | ⑫ LEFT INN          |
| ⑥ BAKSHAAN COLLEGE  | ⑬ MERCY HOSPITAL    |
| ⑦ HOUSE OF PILARNO  | ⑭ FREE SCHOOL       |

	RIVER		SWAMP
	TEMPLE		OLDTOWN
	WALL		GATE
	BRIDGE		FOREST
	CARAVANSERAI		FARMLAND



of the age of magic is visible on the horizon; the age of science and technology is just dawning. The only setting for the practical employment of sorcery is the remote frontier, where labor and energy are scarce resources and where magic helps keep the adventurer secure from exotic perils.

The mountain wilderness of the western coast provides a frontier for the ambitious and adventurous Imioran. There are two types who choose the frontier; the settler and the adventurer. The settler seeks a piece of land he can call his own, and the opportunity to become wealthy by developing it. The adventurer is an explorer; he searches for more profitable sources of wealth than land — furs and minerals, for example. Many expeditions have been financed and outfitted by wealthy speculators, hoping to discover new sources of wealth or profitable land.

## The Situation

Haver Nikorn was one of the wealthiest men of Bakshaan, despite the fact that he was a foreigner and not well-liked. His first fortune was made trading wine and beer. Later he invested shrewdly in building stone; his cleverness in arranging for an efficient method of shipping the stone by river barge made him rich. He also amassed a considerable income from the import/export trade and from real estate. Four competitors, also wealthy merchant princes, decided to eliminate their competition. They approached Elric of Melnibone, the infamous White Wolf of legend and history and, shortly thereafter, Elric gathered a mercenary company of his own countrymen-in-exile, the Immyrians, well-known soldiers-of-fortune and freebooters. They laid siege to and reduced the stronghold of Nikorn, killing Nikorn and the sorcerer Theleb K'aarna in the process.

The only child of Haver Nikorn, a serious young woman of nineteen, was in residence at her uncle Remen's manor during the siege. Assassins struck the house at night and escaped without leaving any clues as to their identity or employer. Freyda was only slightly wounded, but her uncle Remen was blinded.

Freyda swore to avenge the murder of her father and the assault on herself and her uncle. She knew from the news about town that Elric had slain her father with the demon blade Stormbringer; she was at least partially aware of Elric's reputation, but she denied her fear to herself and others and resolved that she would avenge her father against Elric or die trying. She also heard a more-than-persistent rumor that four merchants named Kelos, Tormiel, Pilarmo, and Dienstaff had been seen with Elric immediately previous to his siege of Nikorn's stronghold. She knows that these four merchants have been trying to thwart Nikorn's business through legal manipulation for years. Other more explicit rumors suggest that Elric took the job without specifying a price; further it is said that the four merchants contributed a small fortune that was offered to Elric by the council of Bakshaan to persuade Elric to leave Bakshaan itself alone. Whether the merchants offered this tribute willingly or not is open to speculation. Freyda has satisfied herself that the four merchants hired Elric to kill her father, though she has insufficient evidence to prove it. She also suspects that the assassins that attacked her and her uncle were also hired by these same four merchants. She has resolved that they will pay for their crimes, even if they are shrewd enough to avoid the Duke's justice.

Freyda realized that the task she set for herself was too difficult for one person to achieve alone; she immediately set about gathering all the loyal friends and supporters that she could convince to help her. She also realized that she might have to buy certain skills; using her dwindling

personal fortune, she engaged certain reliable and dauntless adventurers to assist her. She asked all of these adventurers to meet her for dinner at the Tower tavern, where she would explain her objectives and discuss how to achieve them. After an expensive meal and a polite period of small talk and thoughtful silences, she signals for the table to be cleared, then addresses the assembled party.

## 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 redhead 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 justice and to the laws of Donblas.

### FREYDA NIKORN

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

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
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			

cation; a roll of 16-20 means they are outside in the garden, or on an errand away from the house, or with Kelos on a business-related excursion.

### Trevinka

Kelos's wife is attractive, strong-willed and subtle in her control of Kelos. Trevinka is currently playing the distraught housewife to keep Kelos home, but in fact she is more intelligently concerned about a possible attack than Kelos is. She personally supervises the bodyguards and calls their attention to details like access over the roof and sorcerous attacks. If confronted by threats or violence, she bravely protects her investment in Kelos, but if left with no other choice she will bargain for the safety of herself and her children. She appeals to the chivalric code of Bakshaan when she can, shaming any who would attack a defenseless woman, a reproachless mother of two fine children. Though she might resolve herself to the loss of her husband, she fights like a tiger if her children are threatened.

### Trevinka

STR 11    CON 14    SIZ 9    INT 15    POW 13  
DEX 12    CHA 13    HP 11    Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
knife	37%	35%	1D4+1

SKILLS: Credit 95%, Evaluate Treasure 84%, First Aid 27%, Hide 32%, Listen 65%, Memorize 75%, Music Lore 27%, Orate 85%, Persuade 74%, Read/Write Common 67%, Ride 58%, See 39%, Speak Common 89%.

### Kelos the Younger

Kelos's son is eleven years old and takes after his mother. He is clever and fearless; he has carefully considered the ways the house might be attacked, and he will not be caught by surprise. His main thought is an attack occurs would be to save his mother and sister by getting them out of the house.

### Kelos the Younger

STR 8    CON 9    SIZ 6    INT 13    POW 14  
DEX 13    CHA 12    HP 6    Armor: none

*no weapons*

SKILLS: Climb 37%, Dodge 27%, Hide 56%, Listen 25%, See 38%.

### Maria

Kelos's daughter is a beautiful child, but an airhead like her father. She is rather badly spoiled by her dad, and is unlikely to handle herself well in difficult circumstances.

### Maria

STR 6    CON 8    SIZ 5    INT 9    POW 12  
DEX 12    CHA 16    HP 4    Armor: none

*no weapons*

SKILLS: Climb 21%, Dodge 18%, Hide 38%, Listen 14%, See 39%.

### Mike

The permanent bodyguard, Mike, has been with the family for years. His hair is grey and the bounce is long gone from his step. Nonetheless, he is an excellent shot with a bow and a brave man, though his melee skills are limited. Mike knows every sound the house makes and immediately notices anything amiss. He is fanatic in his loyalty to the family and will fight to the death to protect it from the least breach of its security.

### Mike

STR 14    CON 13    SIZ 14    INT 8    POW 13  
DEX 12    CHA 9    HP 15    Armor: leather

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
Bow	98%	-	1D8+1
Sword	42%	38%	1D8+1+1D6

SKILLS: Balance 43%, Climb 23%, Dodge 75%, Jump 27%, Listen 85%, Search 63%, See 85%.

### Pappo

This hired guard is an idiot, but oddly suited for his trade. He follows orders to the letter, as best he can understand them, and he has lightning fast reflexes. He instinctively goes for the sucker punch, and he is usually successful, because he never gives any hint that he is about to strike (basically because he doesn't think about it). Pappo looks like a gentle and perpetually perplexed bear. He is a master of the dumb question, and it is a relatively simple task to dupe him. Intruders, however, he has been told to strike first and ask questions of later.

### Pappo

STR 14    CON 14    SIZ 13    INT 6    POW 9  
DEX 10    CHA 10    HP 15    Armor: leather

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
Sword	69%	71%	1D8+1+1D6
Knife	54%	54%	1D4+2+1D6

SKILLS: Dodge 53%, Listen 75%, See 64%.

### Marigold

Another hired guard, Marigold is terribly proud of his nickname. He has a sunny disposition and an appealing personality; nonetheless he learned his trade in the Duke's guard and he can kill. Marigold was quietly expelled from guard for killing a fellow guard in a dispute over a woman. Marigold is a borderline psychotic, and is likely to attack suddenly in a blind rage.

### Marigold

STR 12    CON 15    SIZ 14    INT 12    POW 9  
DEX 13    CHA 14    HP 17    Armor: leather

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
Sword	79%	76%	1D8+1+1D6
Knife	74%	73%	1D4+1+1D6

SKILLS: Balance 25%, Climb 34%, Dodge 63%, Listen 61%, See 73%, Speak Common 78%.

Barrow, the man in charge of the extra guards, is aware of the peculiarities of his men and is thankful to have such skilled guards, despite their quirks. He is an experienced bodyguard, having formerly worked for a number of employers before he organized and began hiring out teams of permanent and temporary guards. He is a good judge of character and he avoids violence where ever it is possible to bluff or escape from a threat. He remorselessly uses his men as decoys if he feels he can get his clients to safety that way. He relies on the unexpected response when things get desperate. "Do something, even if it's wrong," is his motto. Barrow is also a master of stalling. He pretends to negotiate for the safety of his guards, wife, children, offer a bribe or a challenge to a formal duel — anything that might buy him a new opportunity to attack.

**Barrow**

STR 13    CON 15    SIZ 12    INT 14    POW 9  
DEX 14    CHA 12    HP 15    Armor: leather

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
Sword	89%	89%	1D8+1+1D6
Knife	63%	65%	1D4+1+1D4

SKILLS: Ambush 27%, Balance 47%, Climb 53%, Dodge 63%, First Aid 25%, Listen 85%, Orate 63%, Persuade 32%, Ride 75%, See 27%.

**Laana**

Laana, the governess, is a poor widowed noblewoman's only daughter; she has taken employment with Kelos to feed her aging mother. She is plain, short, and a little overweight, but the children love her and she is a good teacher. If anyone harms the children Laana will probably attack him with whatever is at hand (15% chance to hit). Otherwise she will try to keep the children calm and lead them out of the house to safety. If anyone is crass enough to attack Laana or one of the children, give Laana 12 hit points.

**Seth**

Seth, the stablehand, is a simple peasant boy who left his failing family farm to seek his fortune in the city. He is as happy as can be here, earning good wages and given little more than the minimal stable chores and occasional errands to do. He is very loyal to Kelos and proud of his position, though he is not a fighter and will not show any resistance to attackers of the house.

**Minbinia**

Minbinia, the housekeeper, is a solid, unimaginative girl, the daughter of another housekeeper, and competent by means of experience rather than cleverness or energy. She is slow to react to any surprise, and to an attack her reaction is always panic and flight.

**Attack Dogs**

Attack dogs are trained to go for the throat. They respond to commands like "Hold" (hang on to the victim), "Down" (stop attacking), "Heel" (return to the master). These

dogs respond only to Mike and Kelos; the other family members and servants stay well clear of them.

**Attack Dogs** (use the same stats, for both dogs)

STR 13    CON 11    SIZ 9    POW 10  
DEX 17    HP 9    Armor: 1 point fur.

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
bite	45%	-	1D8

SKILLS: Dodge 35%, Track 83%.

**Rover, Family Dog**

The Kelos family pet is a collie with an almost psychic awareness of trouble. When she senses danger she goes through elaborate pantomimes to warn her owners of danger. She usually gives up on Kelos, who doesn't recognize her cleverness, but the rest of the family and Mike act as though they understand everything the collie tells them. Whenever the player-characters try to enter the house, Rover arrives there in a matter of minutes, snuffling and whining an alarm.

**Rover**

STR 10    CON 11    SIZ 7    POW 16  
DEX 16    HP 7    Armor: none

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
bite	25%	-	1D6

SKILLS: Dodge 35%, Listen 85%, Track 65%.

## Tormiel's House

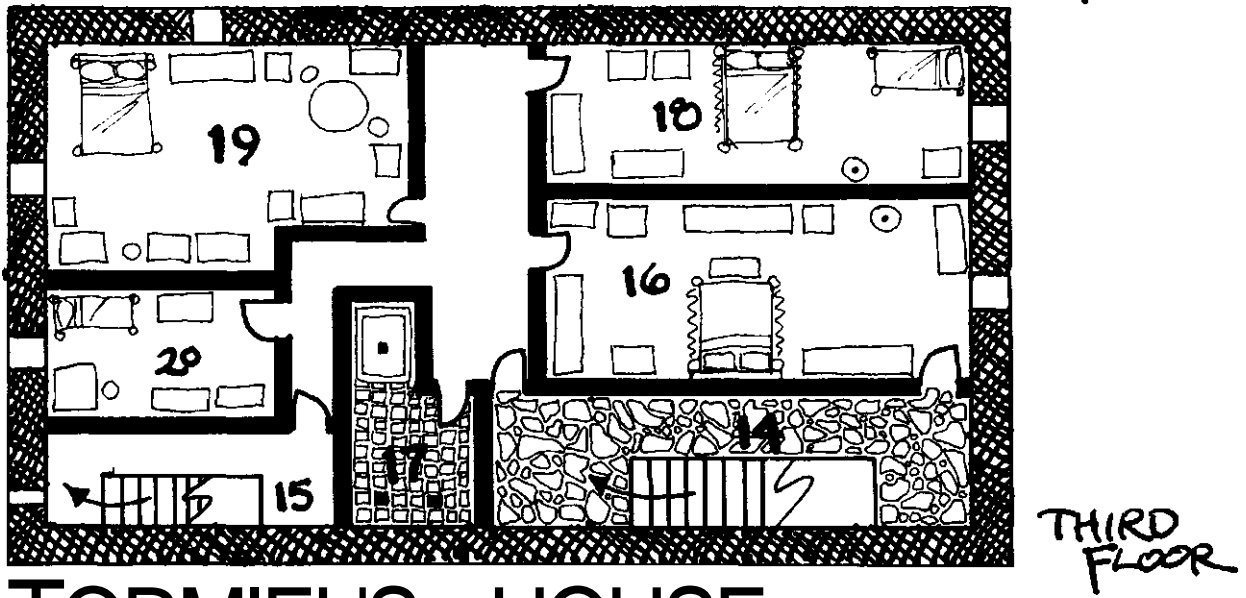
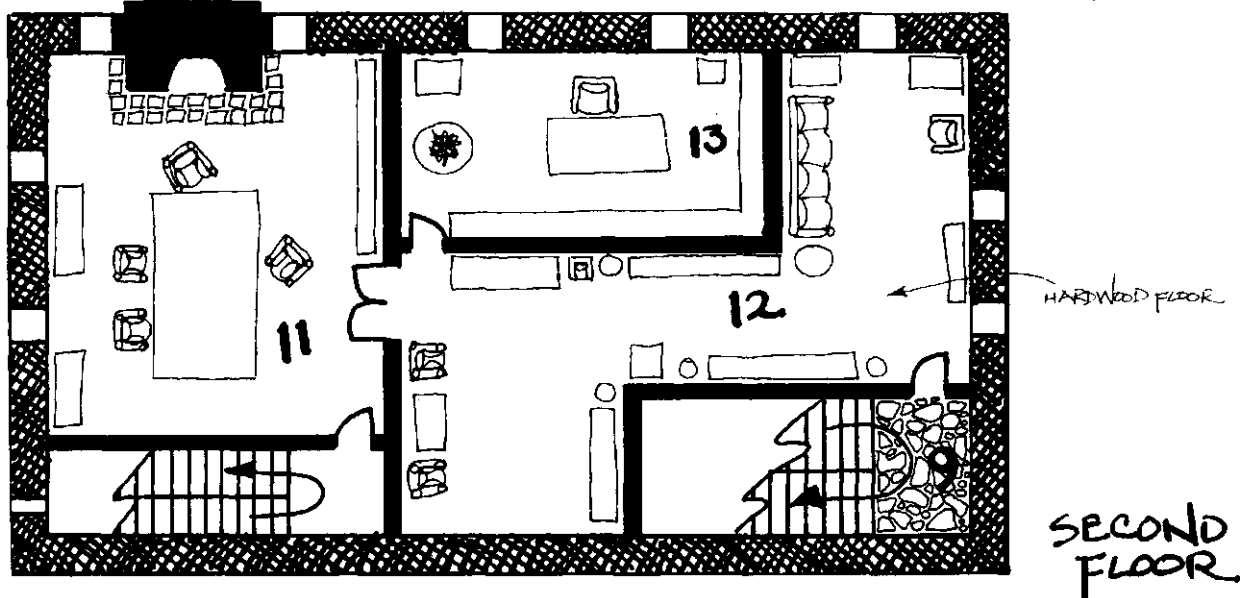
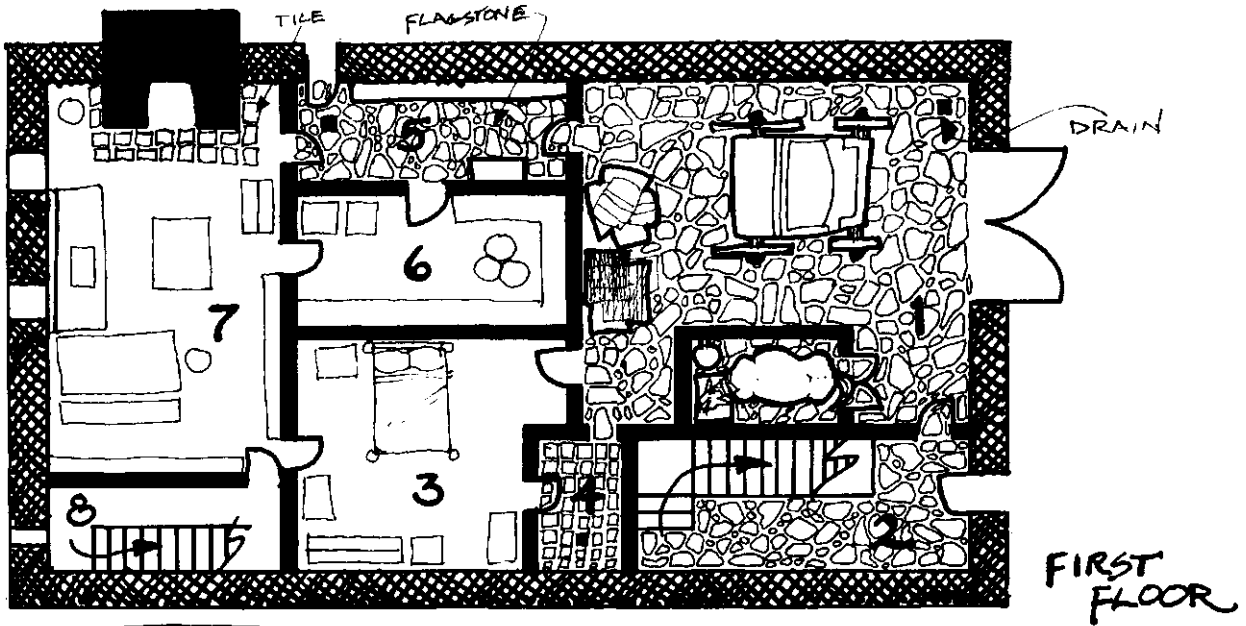
Tormiel returns to his well-defended home, where the player-characters must seek him if they wish to confront him.

**The House**

Tormiel has not hired bodyguards; instead he has obtained from one of his temple priest-sorcerers three bound demons to defend his person. Such private favors for church members are strictly forbidden, but Tormiel is a well-liked lay-priest, and many in the temple discover themselves owing him favors. One Demon of Protection with shape-shifting ability has been bound into one of the many rings that Tormiel wears. Two other demons with invisibility protect his upstairs halls while he is asleep. Additionally, Tormiel has endeared himself to the City Guard captains with numerous gifts; the guardsmen themselves keep a sharp eye on Tormiel's house and can be summoned in less than five minutes.

Access to the house is limited. The only entrances and shuttered windows are on Ratter Street. The only way in through the roof is to cut through the tiles and planks, which attracts undesirable attention. The player-characters must either be invited in or must force entry; the former is actually most feasible, since Tormiel's self-confidence might permit him to underestimate the danger from a single individual.

Tormiel's servant staff consists of a cook and a coachman (husband and wife) and an upstairs maid.



TORMIEL'S HOUSE 1" = 10'

Rabbick, the cook is an officious matron of advanced age. She has a grey halo of unruly hair and an ample bosom. Her temper is short, her sermons long, and her cooking divine. Tormiel values this woman more than all the gold of the Weeping Waste; she thinks Tormiel is a fat old fool without the common sense of a rock. She insists on Tormiel's getting married immediately and raising a proper family. It is likely that Rabbick reminds Tormiel of his mother, who died of apoplexy many years ago. The characters will be sorry if they tangle with her.

### Antiden

Antiden, the coachman, is a horribly hen-pecked old man. His spirit was broken many years ago, and his current idea of heaven is a few hours away from his wife's constant nagging. He is feeble and unexcited by the prospect of life. The player-characters might be disconcerted by his seeming indifference to their threats.

### Comica

Comica, the upstairs maid, is a clever young girl who appreciates Tormiel's analytical mind and his lack of lust. She has been pawed in the last two positions she had, and she is happy in her current employment. Tormiel treats her like his daughter, spoiling her with little secret gifts. Despite her undeniable fondness for Tormiel, Comica might betray him if the price were right or to save her own skin.

Statistics are not given for any of Cormiers servants because none of them will put up a fight. None of the servants know about the Demons of Protection, but the abrupt and colorful demise of two burglars who once gained entry to the house has caused the two older servants to surmise that some magical protection has been lavished on the house. (Incidentally, if the player-characters ask around among thieves about Tormiel's house, they are regaled with a gruesome and gory tale of the two thieves who were found torn to tiny bits on the street outside Tormiel's house. Further, it is said that the whole hallway had to be redecorated to conceal the gouts of blood that were sprayed along the walls and stairs. Another disconcerting rumor that the player-characters may come across is that the house is haunted.

### Tormiel's House (Room Key)

Room 1: Carriage house: the large double-doors have a sturdy lock and can be barred. The lock is usually deemed sufficient, but Tormiel has the door barred whenever he is home since the trouble with Nikorn. A horse, a small carriage, and appropriate livery, hay, and grain are stored here for Tormiel's use. The doors to the interior rooms are not locked, though they are provided with locks. Antiden keeps a set of keys for the whole house on his person; another set hangs in the kitchen next to the door to the storage closet.

Room 2: Ground floor hallway and stairs: always lit by an oil lamp. A small cloak closet is under the stairway.

Room 3: Servants' quarters: a busy room full of bric-a-brac and odd items. The dressers and bed are expensively-made. There are no weapons or valuables here; Rabbick has invested every cent of the couple's wages. Antiden

may occasionally be found here, but most often, he is puttering somewhere in the house as far as possible from Rabbick.

Room 4: privy: wastes are dumped into a sewer system in the street outside.

Room 5: Servant's hall. Cloaks and other assorted gear are neatly stored here.

Room 6: Storage closet: Combination pantry and toolshed. Common tools for household maintenance are found here.

Room 7: Kitchen: spotless, organized, and richly supplied and equipped. Rabick spends most of her waking hours here fussing with food and doing needlework.

Room 8: Back hall: the servants always use this access to the other floors.

Room 9: First floor hall: empty except for an invisible Demon of Protection. The demon assumes any intruder is a burglar unless otherwise directed. Seven persons are permitted free access; Tormiel, the three servants, and Tormiel's three closest friends, Kelos, Pilarmo, and Dein-staf. If anyone else enters the hall, the demon is obliged to give two warnings, then attack to kill. Tormiel has enough of a sense of humor to leave the form of the warnings to the demon's discretion. If the demon had more opportunity to exercise his wit he might even enjoy this service. Warnings take the form of dry, ironic understatement or biting sarcasm. "Gee, this is an unhealthy place to visit without an invitation," or "Here's a hint. Do you know where your blood comes from?" or "Are you about to lose something?" If there is more than one intruder, the demon attacks a new victim at random each round, if possible creating the impression that there are dozens of demons. The rumors about the blood spattered on the walls after the last attempted theft are true; once his victims are lifeless, the demon casually tries to tear them into as many small pieces as possible just to kill time.

### T'TALO, DEMON OF PROTECTION

STR 24	CON 19	SIZ 14	INT 9	POW 16
DEX 15	CHA 4	HP 21	Special Ability: invisibility	

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
claws	83%	—	1 D6+1 D6
bite	95%	—	1D10+1D6

ARMOR: 8 point thick hide.

Room 10: Servant's hall: the door to the dining hall swings so it can be opened when a servant's hands are full. Rabbick serves the food herself, assisted occasionally by the two other servants.

Room 11: Dining hall: a very comfortable and well-used room. There are only four chairs; Tormiel seldom entertains. Tormiel's own chair is plush and comfortable, and he spends much of his time at home at the table with a meal or a snack; he often reads and works here also. The gold, silver, and crystal wares here are worth about 200LB per pound, for a total of 20,000 LB. This is the only source of easily-convertible wealth in the house, and would be worth only a twentieth of its real value to a thief, depending on his market and connections. Much of this wealth is obviously fragile; rough treatment reduces the

value of the material by 1D100% percent, with gamemaster modifications depending on the degree of abuse. (Tossing the loot in a sack might ruin some pieces, while stumbling with a carefully-packed parcel only partially lowers the value, and dropping a sack full of dishes from a rooftop results in almost complete destruction of the booty.)

Room 12: Sitting room: rarely used except for visitors; Tormiel prefers the dining room or the study. Decorated to impress, but the furnishings are too distinctive and bulky to be easily converted to cash. Only about 200LB worth of loot is here.

Room 13: Study and library: here Tormiel keeps his private financial records and his books. The only evidence of a conspiracy to be found here is a diary/notebook where Tormiel keeps track of day-to-day schedules and events; here are recorded the meeting with Elric and numerous meetings with the other three merchants. The only indication of the business is in the form of "Discussed Nikorn problem and possible use of Elric." Evidence is only circumstantial and general. In the room there is also evidence that Tormiel studies the sorcerous arts, though only at the level of summoning Lassa's elemental servants. (Tormiel contracted his demons from a master sorcerer.) If given enough time in here, Tormiel may be able to summon an air elemental to send for help from the other merchants or from his cult priests if the player-characters attack.

Room 14: Second floor hall: a demon similar to the one in the first floor hall is stationed here, but this demon patrols the entire second floor. This necessitates his opening doors, but he pretends he is a ghost, attempting to scare intruders to death. Unfortunately he has not confined the activity to intruders, several times he has tried this trick on the servants. Comica has a strong skeptical strain in her which prevents her from believing in ghosts, but Antiden and Babbick are superstitious and hesitant to visit the top floor at night; they won't mention the ghost to Tormiel for fear of seeming like country bumpkins.

Room 15: Servants' hall

Room 16: Tormiel's bedroom: the walls of this room are lined with large wardrobes and stand-alone closets full of expensive and well-tailored clothing. There are several floor-to-ceiling mirrors. The bed is modest by comparison with the rest of the room, and from the side table it is evident that Tormiel reads and snacks in bed.

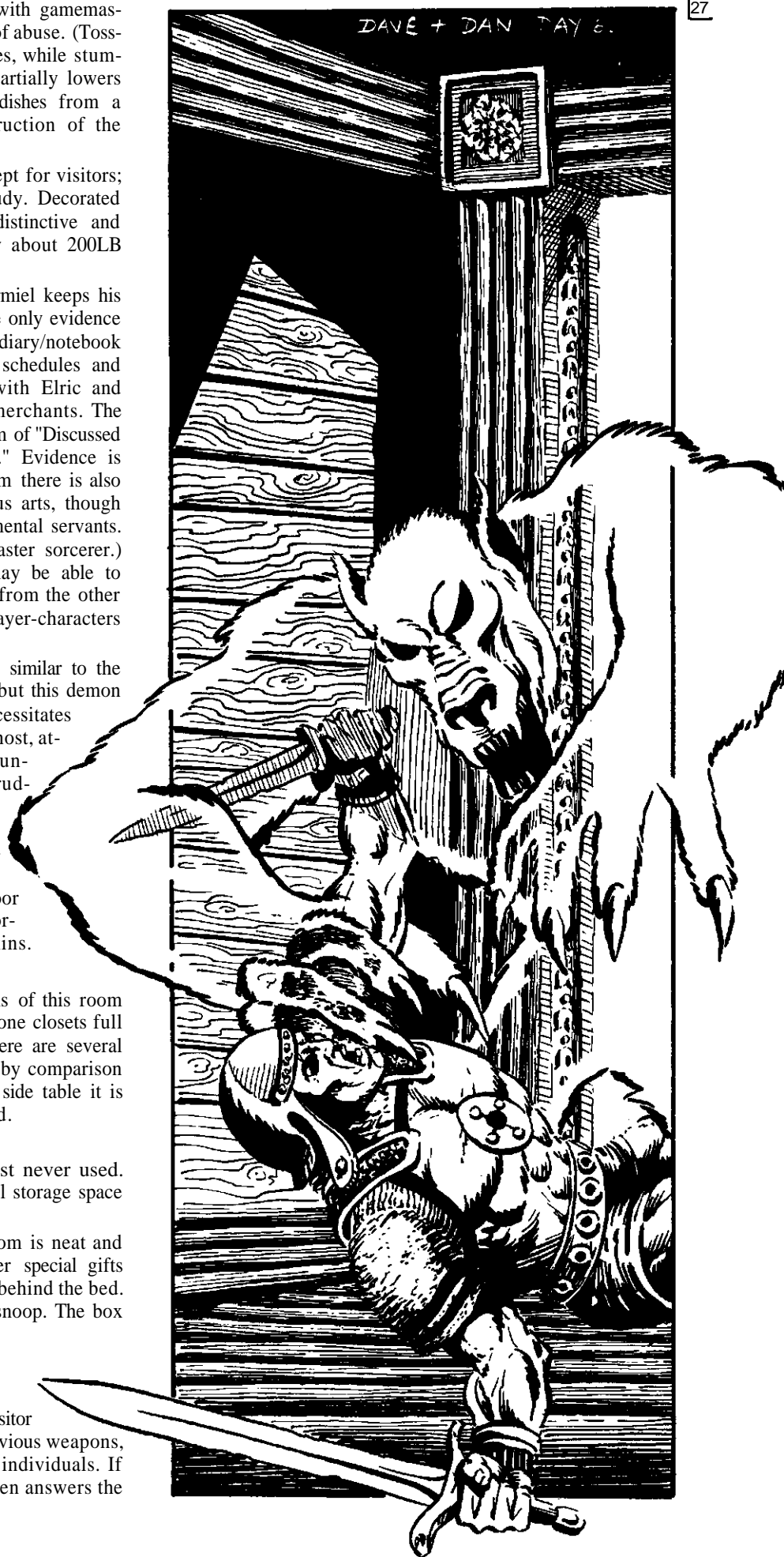
Room 17: Storage.

Rooms 18 and 19: Guest rooms, almost never used. Tormiel uses one of the rooms as additional storage space for his enormous wardrobe.

Room 20: Maid's quarters: Comica's room is neat and attractively decorated. She has hidden her special gifts from Tormiel in a small box along the wall behind the bed. She correctly suspects Rabbick of being a snoop. The box contains trinkets and jewelry worth 200LB.

### Responses to Visitors and Intruders

Tormiel admits any party member or other visitor as long as no one attempts to bring in any obvious weapons, but he balks at admitting more than two individuals. If someone calls at the street entrance, Antiden answers the





28 door and bears a message to Tormiel. If Tormiel permits the visitors to enter, he instructs Antiden of his restrictions; then, as Antiden is admitting the visitors, Tormiel summons both of his invisible demons to the sitting room for further protection. Incidentally, Antiden is hardly strong enough to prevent anyone from forcing entry, conditions or not, once the door is open. In this case, Antiden calls for help unless the player-characters swiftly and decisively silence him.

In this neighborhood any cry for help or alarm - the first reaction of anyone in the house who suspects a break-in or an attack — brings a quick response. Neighbors immediately send for the guard, and men from nearby houses arm themselves and come to the aid of the victim in 2D6 melee rounds. Three men show up immediately; two more arrive every five melee rounds after that, and the city guards arrive three minutes (15 rounds) after the alarm is given. The bystanders are without arms or armor, and they might have to fight with fists or improvised weapons. The guards are fully armed and armored. The neighbors gain entry, breaking in if necessary, and attempt to come to Tormiel's aid; play them as very brave and noble, but careful of their own skins. If they corner the attackers, they may attempt to capture or kill them, but they will not pursue escapees; they are only here to help Tormiel, not to ensue the apprehension of the lawbreakers. The guard patrol (10 average warriors) attempts to clear out the amateurs and come to Tormiel's aid; if Tormiel is already dead, the guard tries to capture the perpetrators.

In his own defense, Tormiel sets loose his two invisible demons on intruders, then retreats to his study, where he calls on his shape-changed demon to protect him while he summons an air elemental. He uses the air elemental to send a request to the priests of the Lassa temple for sorcerous aid. They might send a group of air elementals to help, or even invoke divine intervention (20% chance of success) which could come in the form of a powerful air elemental or in the form of a gentle breeze that suddenly puts everyone in the house to sleep.

If forced to fight, Tormiel demands his right of honorable single combat, where fair-play should be observed. Of course, Tormiel is a practical man, and will cheat (for example, by employing the aid of an invisible demon) to save his life. If the attackers seem preoccupied with the demon in the main halls, Tormiel may run down the servants' stairs and seek escape through the carriage house.

## Pilarmo's House

After the parlay between the merchants and the player-characters, Pilarmo succumbs to his anxieties and decides to make a run for the security of relatives living in Karlaak. If the player-characters act extremely swiftly they might be able to overtake him. In the likely event that they can't, a caravan is leaving the next week for Karlaak, which is incidentally the same direction which Elric traveled when he left town.

### The House

By the time the player-characters arrive here, Pilarmo is already gone. All his servants have departed with him, and the house is solidly locked up. If the player-characters manage to gain entry, the plan of the house is exactly like

Tormiel's, though it is decorated in execrable taste. There are two ways to discover where Pilarmo has gone. First, among the personal effects strewn about the bedroom during Pilarmo's hasty packing, are several groups of letters from a relative in Karlaak. Second, the party can question neighbors. The neighbors know that Pilarmo and his coachman left in a great hurry in his carriage; his servants left soon after on foot in the same direction. Every gossip on the street knows the details within minutes of Pilarmo's exit but, for the party to get this information, they have to be charming, persuasive, and indirect. If Pilarmo's neighbors don't like the looks of a questioner, they will purposely mislead him. The neighborhood gossip's reaction to the player-characters may be determined by Persuasion roll or by game master judgement of the persuasiveness of the players.

### On the Road

Pilarmo left with his most readily convertible assets, a small wardrobe and a coachman. His destination is Karlaak, where his relatives will certainly accept him and offer him their protection. His two servants were sent with notes to retrieve some important papers and hidden cash from his business office and from a fellow merchant who owes Pilarmo money. Thereafter, the servants are to make the best time to catch up with Pilarmo. Both Pilarmo and his servants are justifiably worried about the risk of bandits. Though the local informers do not have enough time to tip off their colleagues to the east, bandits will certainly take notice of a rich man's carriage making fast time into the forest. If the player-characters don't get Pilarmo, bandits probably will.

If the player-characters move immediately after the ambush attempt, and try to catch Pilarmo first, they discover Pilarmo's flight in time to catch his two servants. The fearful servants tell the player-characters of Pilarmo's destination.

To capture Pilarmo, the player-characters should be advised to sign on with a caravan due to leave soon for Karlaak. The caravan is run by two men by the names of Moralo and Gaccer, both of whom can be contacted at the Tavern of the Purple Dove.

## Deinstaf's Challenge

Deinstaf is not content to let the party come to him; he sets in search of Freyda to offer her a challenge duel, thus intending to dispose of Freyda's threat once and for all.

### The Duel

Following the four conspirators' meeting with the player-characters at the Tavern of the Purple Dove, Deinstaf accompanies his friends to the South Gate, then returns to the Tavern of the Purple Dove. Deinstaf drinks at the tavern until midnight, rapidly becoming intoxicated. Finally, he sets out in search of Freyda to challenge her to a duel. He is confident that he can defeat her, and any of her champions in single combat, and he is offended that a little girl would try to oppose his will. Deinstaf insists on a duel to the death.

Deinstaf's discovery of Freyda and the delivery of the challenge may be timed to suit the gamemaster's needs.

Particularly, it can be used to allow Pilarmo time to get out of town, requiring the player-characters to experience the caravan scenario. If the players are indecisive, delaying decisions and actions, Deinstaf's appearance may galvanize the party into action. If the party sets off at once to avenge themselves on the conspirators, Deinstaf is likely to encounter the player-characters after they have dispensed with Kelos and Tormiel. Active characters are hard to find in a city; if the player-characters sit still, it is easier for Deinstaf to locate them.

No matter where Deinstaf finds the party, he insists on a neutral and secluded site for the duel. He also insists on Tormiel for a second; if Tormiel is dead or unavailable, Deinstaf wants no other second. Deinstaf suggests the duel take place along the Molboarn river east of the Vilmir road at an abandoned grain barn about a mile from the highway. Dawn is a nice time for the duel, but high noon or sundown are just as dramatic. If the duel takes place at

dawn on the day immediately following the ambush, 29 Deinstaf is reduced by 20 percentiles in all skills due to his continued drunkenness.

Deinstaf insists on a duel to the death. He is too proud to cheat or surrender; he is confident of victory, but he doesn't know about Freyda's demon sword. If Tormiel is Deinstaf's second, it is likely that he will cheat if he can. Deinstaf permits Freyda the choice of weapons; rules are discussed beforehand. Review with the players the dueling customs outlined at the beginning of the book after Deinstaf delivers his challenge, so that the players may knowledgeably choose whether to cheat or not.

If Deinstaf kills one opponent, he challenges another of the party until they are all dead, they agree to give up on Freyda's vengeance, or until Deinstaf is killed himself. If Deinstaf is killed, Tormiel (as a second) unleashes his bound demon and attempts to escape if he suspects the party will attack him.

# The Caravan

## Player Information

Freyda Nikorn has resolved to avenge her father's murder. One of the four merchants (Pilarmo) who was responsible for hiring Elric to kill Nikorn has fled to Karlaak, so Freyda is taking her small band of followers across Ilmiora to catch the cowardly merchant. Also, rumor says that Elric followed the same road when he fled Bakshaan.

A caravan is due to leave Bakshaan for Karlaak in just a few days. Though Freyda hates to wait for the caravan's departure in fear that Pilarmo's and possibly Elric's trail will grow cold, she realizes that traveling with the caravan will increase her chances of catching her quarry. Travel with the caravan is more secure from attacks from bandits and other perils of the roads and wilderness. Besides, it takes time and money to outfit for a private expedition that could last indefinitely. Additionally, the presence of wagons means that more equipment and provisions can be carried and conserved.

It is necessary to inspect the caravan, meet the organizers, assess their competence and their security measures, determine the conditions of joining the caravan, and to outfit the party as necessary. It would also be prudent to find out who is traveling with the caravan, if possible, since the player-characters could still be in some danger from

assassins. This all must be done in the day remaining before the caravan leaves. The party cannot afford to wait for another caravan, and it is an unnecessary risk to travel in small groups through the hinterlands of Ilmiora. The caravan is said to be already loading and organizing; the player-characters must move in haste.

## Gamemaster Notes

The gamemaster should determine how many days have elapsed since Pilarmo left Bakshaan. The first meeting of the player-characters at the Tower Inn took place two days after Nikorn's murder, Elric left sometime after the killing, probably the morning afterward. Pilarmo left the morning after the player-characters' meeting with the merchants at the Tavern of the Purple Dove.

The players might insist on traveling without the caravan; this could be a healthy precaution from their point of view, and they might believe they can make better time. In this case, the party must outfit for the expedition. They probably want horses or mules for riding and carrying supplies, and they have to purchase expedition gear, replacement weapons, seasonal clothing, and other materials necessary for a frontier journey of indefinite duration.

30 The journey is uneventful until the party reaches Ryon, where informants carry word to the bandit, "Bow" Menen that a ripe crop of pilgrims is ready for the harvest. Advance to the bandit attack section, and scale down the attack slightly to accommodate the smaller party. Assume the quality of Bow's information to be good, though without the information from the spies traveling with the caravan, the bandits are less likely to know Freyda's identity and her value as a hostage. Nonetheless, if the informants in Ryon can discover that Freyda is a merchant, or that any other player-character is a priest or a noble, the bandits will assume that they can get a good ransom for them.

### Travelers and Caravan Guards

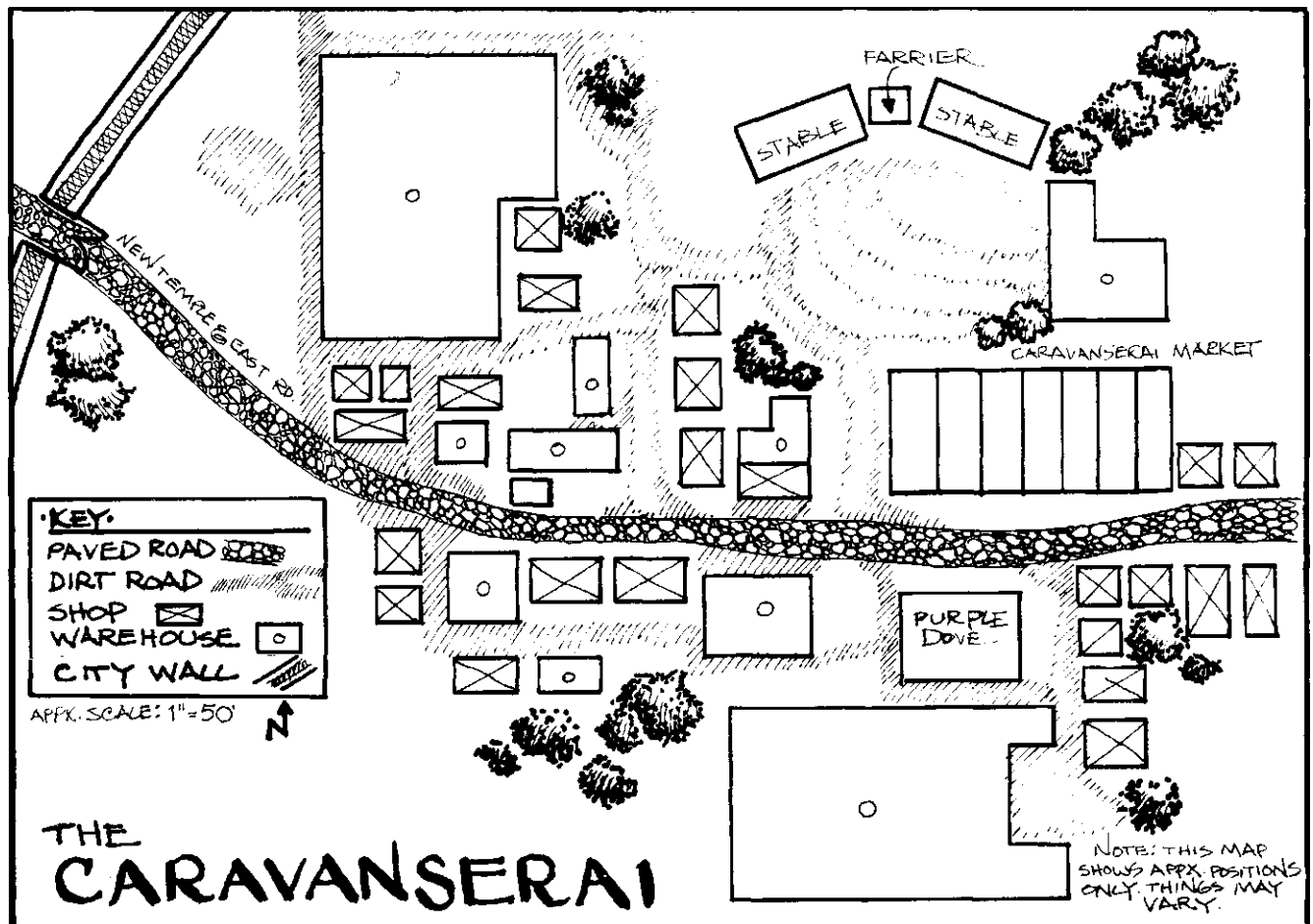
An important function of the non-player-characters on the caravan is to draw the player-characters' attention from the prospect of an external threat — the coming bandit attack. The players should be lured into curiosity about the personalities and motives of the other travelers. Though none of the travelers pose an immediate threat to the characters, many of them have little mysteries about them, and at least one is particularly suspicious looking. The player-characters' experiences in Bakshaan with the assassins probably put the players on their guard so, there should be little difficulty in distracting them with the travelers in the caravan. Aside from the dramatic purpose of misdirecting the attention of the players, the investigation of the other travelers in an excellent opportunity for roleplaying.

### Moralo

Moralo is thin, wiry, middle-aged, quiet, efficient, reasonable, friendly, but reserved. The more solid of the two partners in organizing these caravans, when questioned Moralo is always straightforward; if he doesn't intend to tell a person something, he politely says that it is none of that person's business and that he prefers to keep silent. He handles all the book-keeping and paperwork for the caravan; he seldom interferes with the work of the caravan's handlers and drivers, assuming that they know their own business. Moralo wears leather armor and a short-sword while traveling. His attack/parry is 50/45; he has 10 hit points; his Persuasion is 80%. Moralo is cool and pragmatic under fire; his life is worth far more to him than wealth, and he will not risk his life unduly, or the lives of others to protect the wealth of his caravan. If there is a bandit attack, Moralo hopes that it can be quickly repulsed. If the bandits are numerous and well-armed, Moralo insists on surrendering the valuables in return for safe-passage.

Moralo is an experienced traveler and caravan merchant. He has traveled the length and breadth of Ilmiora and Vilmir, and he can be a valuable source of information. He is a student of human nature; Moralo identifies strongly with the impoverished peasant, having risen from a lower class family in urban Karlaak. He also has a fascination for the spiritual, though he belongs to no cult and considers the gods an unpleasant but undeniable feature of life.

Moralo has a strong bond of friendship with Gaccer. He is not sensitive to Gaccer's faults, though he is aware of



Gaccer's effect on people. He has respect for Gaccer's business sense and relentless energy. Moralo is not a gambler by temperament; Gaccer adds this important merchant's trait to the partnership.

### **Gaccer**

Gaccer is older, paunchy, nervous, hyperactive, bossy, has a short attention span, and always interrupts the last few words of everyone else's sentences. Gaccer is impatient and is convinced that everyone else in the world is either incompetent or lazy. He makes most people a little uncomfortable, but he is a persistent and successful salesman and has inexhaustible energy. He is stingy, and nearly rabid about economising and not wasting resources. He wears leather armor when in dangerous territory but hates it and takes it off at the first opportunity. Gaccer carries a shortsword (50%/45%), has Persuasion at 60% and has 12 hit points.

Gaccer is fascinated by the material aspects of life and is captivated by the paths of power. Because of his humble origins (urban Bakshaan) and his disagreeable personality, Gaccer knows that he will never ascend the social ladder much above his current station, though he dreams of the delicate style of the aristocracy and the quiet chambers of real political power. Gaccer is a secular apostle of science, technology and progress; he has little interest in the gods, thinking them old-fashioned. He has a remarkable grasp of the practical workings of the societies he trades with, and could be a useful source of information about the peoples along the caravan route.

Gaccer is emotionally involved with wealth. He is likely to insanely risk his life to protect his possessions. Moralo will try to prevent Gaccer from doing anything foolish if bandits threaten.

### **Iskimne Otekue**

A mercenary captain of eastern heritage, Kim is contracted to Moralo and Gaccer to provide a guard for the caravan. He has worked with the pair before; he trusts them and they trust him. Kim is not terribly clever, but he is experienced and well-liked by his men. He has the abilities and the equipment of a Superior Guard.

During the day, Kim is strictly cordial with the caravan travelers, but after dark around the campfire, he loosens up and swaps stories with the other guards and warriors in the company.

Here are responses to some of the questions the player-characters might ask Iskimne.

He thinks Moralo and Gaccer run a well-organized and -provisioned caravan. His only complaints are that they have sloppy discipline and are fairly ignorant of military matters, and that they occasionally interfere (usually Gaccer) with Kim's orders.

He has hired and tested the ten men who are guarding the caravan. He rates two as superior, six as experienced and reliable, and two as inexperienced but eager. He pairs the inexperienced men with the veterans, hoping the veterans' wisdom might rub off on the neophytes.

The guards are well-paid.

Kim says the men seem reliable enough to him; he implies some slight insecurity about how good a judge of character he is.

Moralo is quiet and sensible — can be reasoned with.

Gaccer is a talker who loves to give orders; a jerk. He drives Kim crazy, always seems to be in the way. Kim stalls if he doesn't like an order Gaccer gives, hoping he can talk Moralo into countermanding the order. Gaccer seldom follows through on any order; it is giving orders he enjoys. Kim thinks he must be a great salesman.

Kim's contract includes a bonus if the caravan survives the trip undamaged.

### **Dacket**

Dacket is a locksmith off to set up business in Karlaak. He has brought with him several chests of locks and tools which rattle suspiciously if investigated. He is absolutely innocent of any mischief. He wears a leather apron out of habit; it is full of little pockets where he normally keeps small tools. He carries a dagger, but can only attack at 6% and parry at 4%. He has 9 hit points. Dacket is unlikely to voluntarily engage in combat, but he would probably do so if someone told him to.

Dacket is a friendly fellow and cheerfully chatters all day long with anyone. He is naturally candid and unsuspecting. He could be a useful contact in Karlaak if the player-characters ever arrive there.

### **Lubos**

Lubos is a wealthy farmer traveling with his wife to visit a daughter and a new grandchild in Karlaak. The daughter married a merchant prince and the parents have fallen in the way of money. They have not yet gotten used to being wealthy. Their dress and manner are *nouveau riche*, but they tend to fall back on their puritan disapproval of idleness and comfort when speaking with practical folk. Tough gruff and reserved initially, they are open and friendly once they decide to like you. Lubos and his wife take an immediate liking to Freyda. Lubos carries a walking stick (cudgel 40%/40%) and he has 14 hit points.

Lubos and his wife, Meloni, will be glad to share their hospitality with the party if they reach Karlaak (but the daughter and son-in-law will be less enthusiastic).

### **Meloni**

Lubos's wife asks the player-characters to call her Mom. She tends to chatter a bit, and is indirectly nosy about everyone. Meloni is fond of gossip, the more scandalous the better; she is happy to trade bits of dirt about the caravan travelers with the player-characters, and she is likely to notice little things that might escape the player-characters' notice. Meloni has had years of experience in surreptitious snooping. She has 11 hit points and is unlikely to engage in combat unless she is directly attacked.

### **Agropos**

A clod. Agropos is a potter by trade, and a poor one. He went out of business in Bakshaan, and is now traveling to Karlaak to try to start anew. He has brought his potter's wheel and his tools with him, plus a little cash. Agropos is colossally insensitive to his social undesirability; he corners people and talks them to death. His customary topics are the imagined unfair trade practices in Bakshaan that ruined him, the inability of others to see his finer qualities, the wretched luck that crushed his business, and the pleasure he'll get when he is rich and can laugh at all his enemies. Agropos has no weapons or armor, and 14 hit points. He hides under a wagon if trouble arises.

Gim is ostensibly a noble in dress and bearing. He has black long hair, an average build, dark complexion. He is solid and brusque. Gim resembles a Pan Tang noble without the beard or the height. His appearance worries everyone for no apparent reason. Gim is a well-connected member of the criminal underworld. He is traveling to Karlaak to meet another up-and-coming criminal and convince him to join Gim's criminal organization. Gim will kill his contact if he declines to join. Gim has enough class to carry off his cover story of being a young noble traveling for its broadening effect, but he prefers to keep quiet just in case. He keeps to himself, and he discourages any prying into his background or mission. Gim is extremely dangerous if anyone crosses him. He is a poison-user, and a skilled one. Gim has no interest in the player-characters, but they are likely to be interested in him and, if they poke around too much, Gim might move to teach the player-characters a lesson. He wears leather and carries a dagger (75%/68%) and can handle a broadsword (40%/45%). Gim has 15 hit points. Gim should behave in a suspicious manner, though there is no external evidence that he is anything but what he says he is.

### Takormen Tis

Takormen says that he is a noble court functionary on a very important but secret mission to Karlaak. Actually he is a boring little clerk on a messenger's mission concerning a minor trade matter between two dukes. Takormen is puffed up with pride and self-importance. His secret papers are in a small wooden chest carried in one of the wagons. It would be a relatively minor matter to pick the lock and inspect the contents. Tis has 7 hit points.

### Minni

Minni is a dancer and singer around 40 years old, but looks younger. She is experienced, pretty, cautious, more open with women; she dislikes men but conceals it for manipulation purposes. Minni is meeting some friends (an established troupe) in Karlaak. She is well-traveled, and has seen many ports-of-call. Minni has 8 hit points.

Minni is likely to become friendly with Freyda; she admires independent, strong-willed women. Minni can be a valuable contact in Karlaak; her business takes her to the edge of the underworld, and she occasionally makes friends over the borderline.

### Oborik

This miner/engineer designs and constructs engines and tools that are used to pull mineral wealth from the earth. He is going out to the Weeping Wastes to design some mines and support equipment. Oborik has nearly a wagon-load of tools and instruments. He says he knows nothing about gems and minerals, that he is just an engineer. This is untrue. Oborik is really quite clever, and has become quite rich from the previous jobs he has completed. Though he seems a nice fellow, Oborik is rather greedy and would cheerfully make himself richer without considering the means. He wears leather armor and carries a light hammer (1D6+2+1D6: 30%/35%), and is good with his fists (1D6+1D3: 50%/25%). Oborik becomes suspicious if the party starts to sniff around. One of his crates contains valuable

cutting stones worth 6000LB to an engineer; to a thief they appear to be poor gems worth about 200LB.

### Sippan Lecht and Mosgue Redd

Both these men are uneducated louts with too much money. They are unsuccessfully trying to be unobtrusive. Their cover-story (concocted by the bandit chief, Bow-Mennen) is that they are messengers delivering a secret package to nobles in Karlaak. They have adopted another cover story on top of this one, that as "messengers" they are pretending to be servants and laymen of a temple of Grome in Obor, Vilmir (on the west coast of Vilmir at approximately the same latitude as Jadmar. They pretend to be carrying a set of manuscripts and scrolls from the temple library to the Grome temple in Karlaak. They carry two chests filled with books. One chest has a concealed compartment containing several phony gems.

These two are the inside men for the coming ambush. They joined the caravan in Bakshaan to provide information to the bandit leader. They are to check out the caravan routine and to case the caravan's defenses. Bow Mennen dreamed up the double-phony-identity scheme, counting on it to confuse any suspicious types for long enough to permit the thugs to case the caravan. The two louts are

### Superior Caravan Guards (Iskimne Oteque\*, The Veterans)

STR 16    CON 16    SIZ 16    INT 14    POW 14  
DEX 16    CHA 10    HP 20    Armor: half-plate

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
longspear	80%	70%	1D10+1+1D6
broadsword	75%	65%	1D8+1+1D6
heater shield	—	50%	—

SKILLS: Ambush 52%, Balance 24%, Climb 26%, Conceal 61%, Dodge 39%, First Aid 27%, Hide 65%, Jump 41%, Listen 49%, Move Quietly 42%, Ride 70%, Search 23%, See 59%, Speak Common 70%, Swim 36%, Track 23%, Tumble 22%.

\* Iskimne Oteque should have Persuasion skills appropriate to his officer status and in general should have a higher level of knowledge than that listed in the stats. Assume a Knowledge Bonus of 20% for Kim and a Persuasion skill of 40%.

### Average Caravan Guards

STR 14    CON 14    SIZ 14    INT 12    POW 12  
DEX 14    CHA 10    HP 16    Armor: half-plate

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
self bow	40%	—	1D8+1+1D4
broadsword	60%	60%	1D8+1+1D6
heater shield	—	40%	—

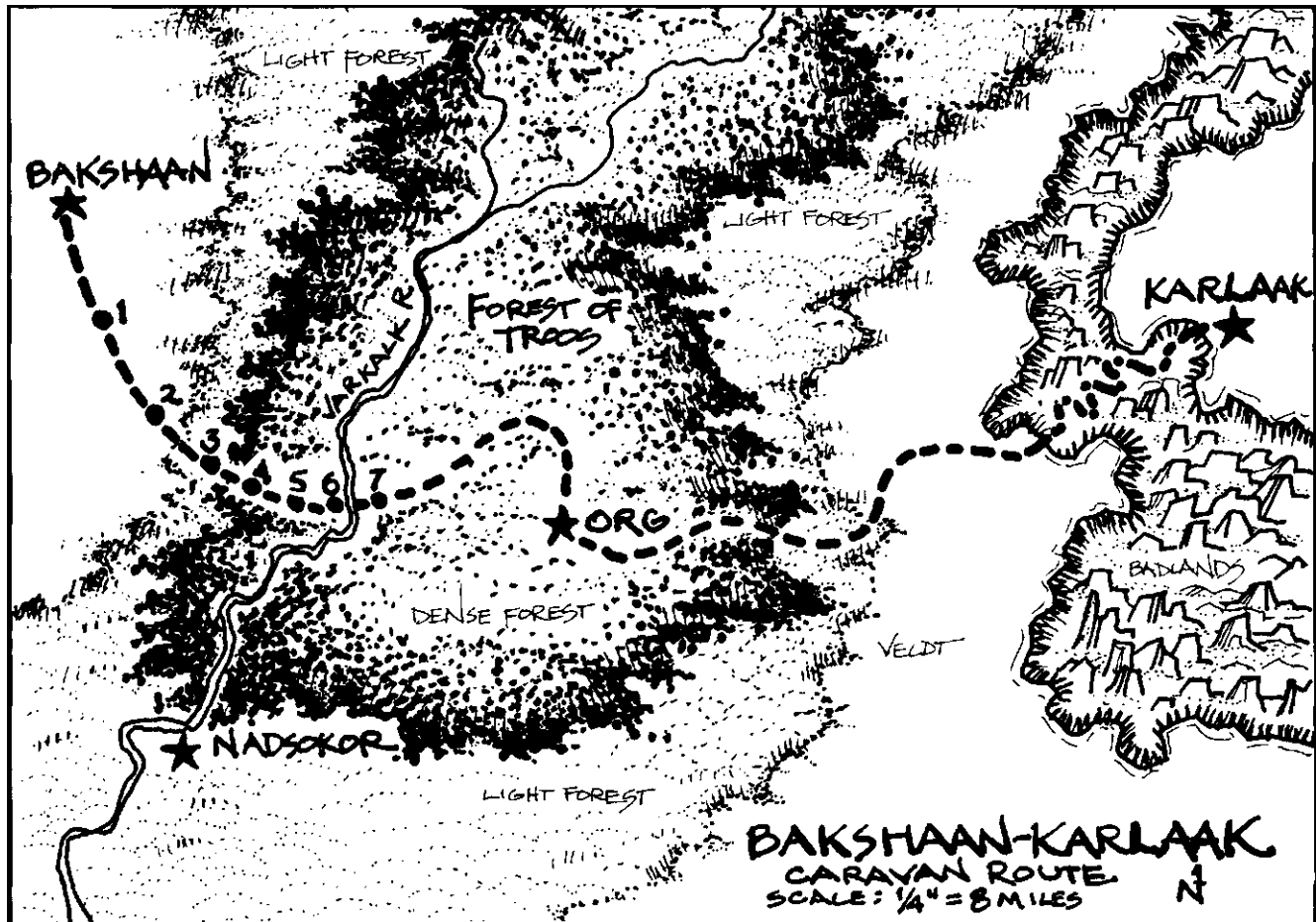
SKILLS: Ambush 22%, Balance 10%, Climb 10%, Conceal 21%, Dodge 15%, First Aid 20%, Hide 49%, Jump 15%, Move Quietly 21%, Ride 45%, Search 10%, See 38%, Speak Common 70%, Swim 26%, Track 10%, Tumble 10%.

### Drivers/Wranglers (Caravan Crew - 8 men)

STR 12    CON 12    SIZ 12    INT 8    POW 8  
DEX 10    CHA 10    HP 12    Armor: leather

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
dagger	25%	28%	1D4+2

SKILLS: Balance 10%, Climb 10%, Conceal 10%, Dodge 15%, Hide 40%, Jump 15%, Listen 40%, Move Quietly 30%, Ride 75%, Search 20%, See 50%, Speak Common 70%, Swim 26%, Tumble 10%, Wagon Driver 50%.



clearly not what they are pretending to be, but it is unlikely that the player-characters will be able to figure out their real mission before they sneak off one night to report to the bandit leader.

The thugs try to get estimates of the wealth and combat ability of the guards and travelers. They are not subtle, and they are poor liars, so they are unlikely to arouse suspicion.

### The Caravan Route

Gaccor or the guard lieutenant can give the party the following detailed description of the caravan's route. Anyone in the caravanserai would be fairly familiar with the caravan route (for example, Kendrek of the Purple Dove) and could give a more general description.

On day one the caravan sets out from Bakshaan at dawn, heading west across the surrounding farmland, into small isolated woodland areas and through small towns. Though there are inevitably some minor delays in the towns, the roads are good and the caravan is likely to make 15 miles before reaching New Temple, a fairly large town in the center of the most agriculturally productive section of the Bakshaan territory. The caravan camps just outside of New Temple for the convenience of fresh food and a secure camp site. Those willing to spend extra money can stay at an inn in New Temple. (Along the way the player-characters can inquire about Pilarmo's recent passage. Rumor confirms the passage of Pilarmo's coach, and the locals also mention that Elric has recently passed, traveling with a single male companion.)

On day two the caravan travels through sleepy farm lands and quaint little villages. After 17 miles, the caravan camps outside of Garret's Mill, which boasts a fine inn serving hard cider, a country favorite.

On day three the road begins to leave settled areas, moving into rolling terrain covered with open woodlands; this territory was probably logged over in the past centuries and is only now beginning to return to its natural state. Few major settlements are seen by midday; thereafter all that can be expected is an occasional small village or hunter's cabins. The caravan stops in Ryon for the night after traveling about 14 miles. The tavern there is dingy, but crowded with locals having their evening ale.

On day four, travel continues through open forestland. Around noon the woodlands grade into virgin forest, becoming denser and wilder; this area has never been logged. The last hour of travel is through broken country that is densely forested, and the road surface begins to deteriorate here. The caravan will go for only 9 miles and camp in Azoth, a small settlement of a few log huts and a recently built tavern.

On day five, the caravan can only travel about eight miles through hills and low ridges. The road at this point is poor, particularly when the weather is wet; then the road turns into a ditch full of deep, black, sticky mud. There are no villages or settlements hereafter; camp is set up wherever convenient and the bill-of-fare is supplemented by whatever fresh game the caravaners can shoot, since the Duke's law doesn't cover these wilderlands.

On day six, the terrain is similar to that on day five. The caravan pushes hard to camp as close to the Varkalk

valley escarpment as possible. On day seven the caravan must descend the escarpment and cross the Varkalk, dangerous and time-consuming work, and reach Surrey's camp before dark. The region is said to be very dangerous, and Surrey's Camp is a fortified settlement where the caravan can camp with security.

On day seven the caravan travels about 1.5 miles to the Varkalk River Valley escarpment, descends the low but steep cliffs, then struggles across the Varkalk at Justin's ford. From there the road leads 2 miles to Surrey's Camp. (On the south bank of the Varkalk can be seen a trail, worn smooth by the bare feet of thousands of beggars, which leads to Nadsokor.

On day eight the caravan enters the Forest of Troos. Within one hour of travel the surrounding trees begin to become thicker, and trees of strange shapes and colorations begin to become common. The plants in the Forest of Troos are valuable for various magical purposes but the caravan doesn't stop to gather any. The Forest of Troos is a very dangerous place, but the caravan must rest within the forest for one night.

On day nine the caravan continues through the oddly twisted forest and near the end of the day begins to approach the citadels of Org. The caravan enters and all the travelers must pay inflated prices for a room at the only inn at which the Orgen nobles allow foreigners to stay.

On day ten the caravan remains in Org where Gaccer and Moralo engage in trade with the odd Orgen nobles.

On day eleven the caravan sets out into the forest and hurries to be out of the forest before nightfall. Camp is set up as soon as the caravan has entered an area with normal Young Kingdoms trees.

Days twelve, thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen are spent crossing a vast plain of high grass. Sometimes the caravan meets the nomadic herder peoples who live there. On the evening of day fifteen the caravan reaches a great rift out of which jut weirdly-shaped and -colored mesas. This area Moralo calls the Badlands. The caravan camps for the night on the edge of the Badlands, and everything is readied for the arduous descent into the Rift.

On day sixteen the caravan descends into the Badlands and hurries as quickly as possible across the region. They must always spend one night in the Rift, and on that night, watches are kept especially vigilant. There have been rumors of roaming packs of Dharzi dogs in the badlands.

Day seventeen is the last day of the caravan if all goes well. By 3:00 pm the caravan begins the ascent out of the Badlands, and by 6:00 it traverses the short distance (less than a mile) between the edge of the Rift and Karlaak.

Moralo's estimates of travel distances and times are based on a typical caravan travel day of eleven hours, with one half hour break at noon and a half hour in the morning and the evening to set up and tear down camp. It is assumed that many travelers will be on foot and that the ox-drawn loaded wagons cannot move much faster than men on foot. This rate is an extremely rapid pace for a caravan, and some player-characters might be exhausted after the long travel days, but speed has always been Gaccer and Moralo's practice, and they hate to meddle with a successful program. Of course the travel rates are subject to change due to weather, bandit attacks and other unknown dangers.

## Inspecting The Caravan

The caravan is being organized in the caravanserai near the Purple Dove inn. As the players arrive on the scene they see the bustle and confusion of last-minute arrangements. Many people are standing around talking; laborers are busily unloading and reloading wagons. A group of citizens are gathered in front of the inn discussing business, politics and the weather.

Among the numerous extraneous figures which can be found here are one of the organizers of the caravan, the mercenary lieutenant who has been contracted to guard the caravan, and a miner/engineer who is supervising the loading of his equipment onto a wagon. All the other caravanners and travelers are elsewhere attending to last-minute business.

The man who appears to be in charge is Gaccer, an impatient, bossy man who scurries from place to place trying to direct every element of the loading and unloading. He pauses frequently to pester the guard lieutenant about unimportant details, telling him how to do his job. He also frequently stops to chatter and complain with the gathered citizens, protesting how much work it is and terribly people mess things up if you do not keep after them every second. Gaccer is only half of the partnership that organizes these caravans; the other half, Moralo is busily attending to the paperwork and final arrangements from his room at the caravanserai.

If the player-characters inquire among the laborers for information about the caravan, they are sent to talk to Gaccer. Gaccer rudely and impatiently gives the party the details, interrupting frequently to harangue a worker.

Gaccer offers this general knowledge about caravans, which most locals could tell the player-characters as well. Caravans are organized for the occasion; there is no regular schedule or pattern to their travel. Most caravans use mercenary guards because it is too expensive to maintain a stable of full-time guards. Caravans are far and few between to Karlaak, and there are no caravans that go to Nadsokor.

The conditions for joining the caravan are tailored to the circumstances, and there is a lot of room for Persuasion and Credit rolls. Gaccer starts out by demanding a greatly inflated fee of 400LB per traveler. This would include tents, cooking, care of mounts, protection, and cartage of any baggage. If the player-characters attend to their own food, carry their own baggage, and provide their own tents, Gaccer settles for 150LB. If the player-characters stress their ability to stiffen the guard, Gaccer may be further talked down to 100LB, but he insists that the party share in the responsibility of keeping watch and that the player-characters follow the orders of the mercenary lieutenant if there is any trouble. Gaccer also insists that everyone understand that he is in charge of the caravan, and that what he says goes.

If questioned about his cargo, Gaccer observes that they've only been able to fill half the wagons for this trip. In truth Gaccer and Moralo are carrying mostly cash and gems with which they can purchase the distinctive treasures of the Weeping Wastes and the Forests of Org. Gaccer tries to conceal this to hide the fact that the caravan carries so much treasure. If requested, Gaccer offers to carry the player-characters' equipment in the wagons at a rate of 1LB per 5 pounds of gear, since he has some extra space in the wagons.

If asked about the other travelers, Gaccer gives a very short and general description of each of the other caravan characters. He introduces the party to the engineer nearby. If pressed Gaccer discusses the other travelers in some detail, but he acts impatient and eager to return to supervising the loading of the wagons.

If asked about the possibility of bandit raids, Gaccer scoffs at the idea, stating that he and Moralo have run many caravans before under the same rugged conditions. He intends to move safely and warns that the travel might be painfully dull.

What Gaccer doesn't say is that, though Gaccer and Moralo have run many successful caravans, they also have had two attacks in the past that forced them to abandon their cargo and flee for their lives. The mercenary captain or Moralo would gladly explain the situation more accurately if the player-characters inquire. There are regularly bandit attacks, at least once every five trips. These smaller attacks are not difficult to repel. Ten bandits is a very large group; usually the guard is too intimidating to encourage raids by such bandits. Occasionally there are fatalities, accidents and ambushes. Twice in Gaccer and Moralo's memory they have been forced to abandon a whole caravan in their flight. Generally bandits are not bloody-minded; they are easily satisfied with minor bits of wealth. Other dangers include the elements, wolves, and disease. It is mentioned that Troos and Org are really tough spots. Beyond Org lies the realm of the barbarian warriors; they are ignorant and hostile, but they can be easily bought off with trinkets, and if not offended they can be very cordial people.

For the full details of the mercenary lieutenant's assessment of the caravan organization, see his section in the caravan character descriptions. Here the guard lieutenant, Iskimne, will express tactfully his reservations about Gaccer's personality. He will give Moralo his highest praise: "He lets me do my work without interference." The lieutenant is busy attending to the caravan preparation, and will have little time to talk with the party, but he might be induced to take a drink with them and discuss the caravan over a meal after duty-hours. Here the player-characters can ask all the questions they want about safety precautions and the quality and ability of the guards hired for the trip. Iskimne is glad to have experienced warriors join the caravan, and encourages any comments or suggestions on security the player-characters have to offer throughout the journey. If a player-character is revealed as a sorcerer, Kim is thoroughly awed, and henceforth he becomes overconfident that no trouble can befall a caravan protected by a sorcerer.

The miner/engineer chatters eagerly about his plan to go out prospecting for valuable ores in the Weeping Wastes. The machinery that is being loaded onto the wagon is heavy and complicated; the engineer tells the party how the machine is designed for mining. For further details of the engineer's personality and background, look in the caravan character section.

### **Travelers at the Inn**

Moralo is in the Purple Dove Tavern going over papers and making last-minute arrangements with merchants and travelers. If the player-characters wish to speak to him, he gives them a few minutes. The party can get a better price

for traveling with the caravan if they talk to Moralo, particularly if they mention that they are willing to share guard duties. If a player-character reveals sorcerous training, he is offered free transport, food, and accommodations; Moralo knows that a sorcerer is worth his weight in gold in the wilderness. Moralo is forthright about the dangers of the trip, but he points out that the dangers are much greater for a small party.

Moralo asks the player-characters to confirm travel arrangements at the inn before the dinner-hour if they are interested in traveling with the caravan. In the meantime he suggests that the characters outfit themselves for the trip; he suggests his own expedition outfitting warehouse across the street.

If the player-characters inquire about the other travelers, Moralo gives out their names and urges the player-characters to get acquainted with them before tomorrow's journey. All of the travelers are staying at the Purple Dove; Lubos, Meloni, Agropos, Gim, and Takormen Tis are currently in the inn's dining area. Lubos and Meloni are having a hearty meal at one table, bubbling with enthusiasm about their trip and their lovely daughter, son-in-law, and their new grandchild. Agropos is seated alone, looking lonely, with a large box of possessions at his feet; if the player characters sit down to chat, they have to pry themselves loose with a crowbar. Gim is seated in a distant corner with a scarcely-touched mug of beer; he openly surveys the player-characters, and is brusque and formal in response to their questions. He tolerates conversation only briefly, then politely asks if he might reclaim his privacy. Takormen Tis has captured one of the waiters and has bored him silly with tales of the splendor and pageantry of the court. If the player-characters wish to listen Takormen Tis is glad to bore them also.

By nightfall all of the travelers return to the inn, and the player-characters can meet each one in turn, or observe each at leisure. Dacket is friendly and talkative; Minni is initially cool, particularly with men, but she quickly warms up to Freyda or to any other free-spirited woman. Oborik eats a quick dinner and goes directly to his room to get a good night's rest. Lecht and Redd are loudly and obtrusively practicing the roles of their cover story for the benefit of the entire tavern; they are speaking in exaggerated stage whispers and using gestures that look as phoney as dragon leather boots. They perform as long as there is an audience, then they finally go to bed.

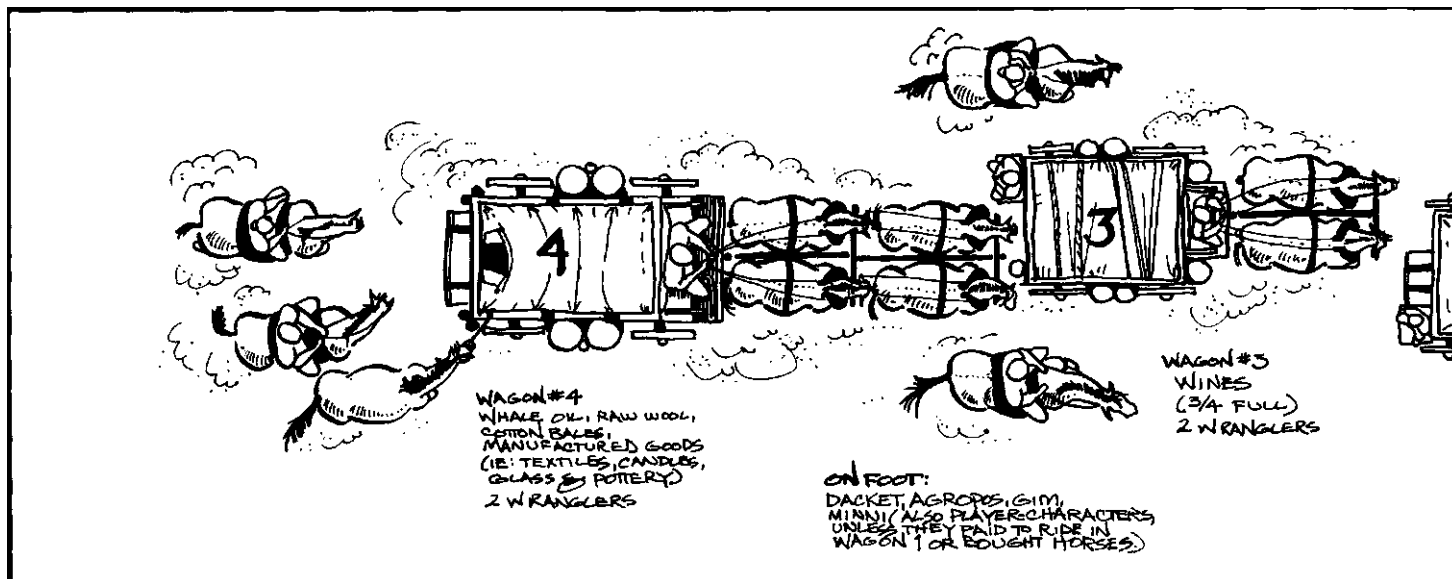
### **Outfitting the Party**

Having discussed the expedition with the caravan organizers, and having considered the route to be followed, the player-characters should equip themselves for the coming days in the wilderness. When buying equipment, the player-characters may try Persuasion and Credit skills. It should be understood that Freyda's credit is particularly good, since she stands to inherit from her wealthy father.

The choice of gear and supplies might play an important part in the adventure. Since the caravan is likely to be attacked and dispersed, the player-characters must be prepared to survive on their own in the wilderness, or they will suffer for lack of preparation.

The party may choose as a whole to ride or walk, or each individual may suit himself. Pack animals can be purchased and loaded with provisions. The party might decide to be relatively independent of the caravan, or to





depend mostly on the caravan's resources of food and shelter. They should also consider the size and weight of their packs. The gamemaster may make suggestions through Alnino, the experienced frontiersman, if the party overlooks something important.

The player-characters should at least consider the purchase of the following items; provisions for the characters (and beasts, if any), warm clothing, tents or similar shelters, riding and/or pack animals, spare weapons, and minor gear, like ropes, torches, flint and steel, etc. The player-characters should also specify how much money they bring in cash for food or lodging in the more civilized areas they visit. Finally this gear should be organized specifically, particularly in the light of the planned ambush of the caravan. The players should be able to tell the gamemaster where all of their characters' gear is and, if they decide to grab it before running from the caravan, they should be able to account for locating and carrying it. For example, if the food is in a wagon that the bandits capture, then the players are going to have to live off the land.

### On the Road

The daily routine for the caravan begins just before dawn. The breakfast watch rouses the cooks and food is ready when the caravaners awake. Those who have stayed in local inns are rounded up. As the travelers eat a light breakfast and stand around drinking hot tea, the caravan drivers break down the tents, hitch up the teams, and prepare to leave. The wagons are on their way a little after dawn.

The caravan travels in a string of four large covered wagons similar to gypsy wagons. The travelers wander along close to the wagons, either on foot or riding. Moralo rides in the first wagon with the driver; the cooks and horse handlers ride in the other wagons with their drivers. Gaccer rides up front with Iskimne. The mounted guards are divided into five pairs. The first pair rides forward and scouts the road, turning occasionally off the road to inspect the countryside for evidence of ambush. The other four pairs ride directly in front and back of the caravan and along the left and right flanks of the caravan.

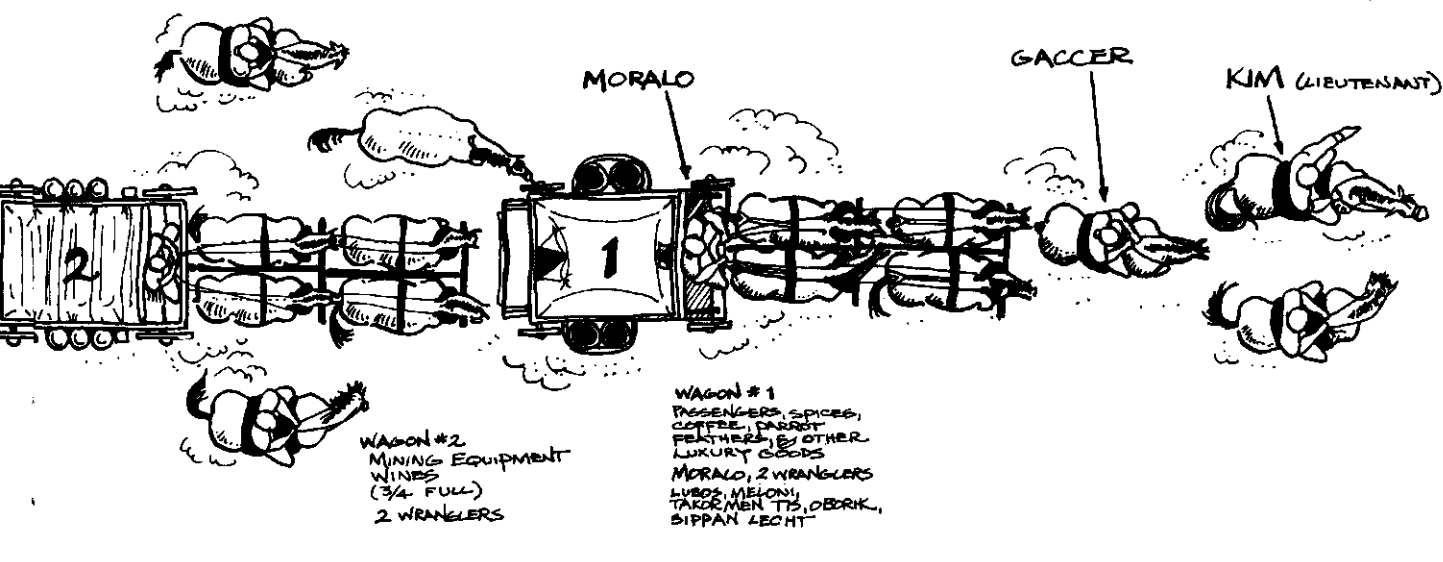
The travelers are free to pick their own place in the caravan. Some ride up front with the lieutenant and Gaccer; others ride or walk along beside the wagons, chatting and watching the countryside. Some walk along beside the last wagon. The guards discourage the travelers from falling too far behind the caravan in uncertain surroundings but, where the way is known to be safe, the caravan strings out for quite a distance,

During the day there are numerous irregular stops for rest and watering of the travelers and horses. At midday there is a regular half-hour break for a cold lunch. The guards change position every hour or so to relieve monotony, and about an hour before the end of the day, the scouts go ahead and look for an appropriate place to camp.

About a half hour before sundown, the caravan halts for the night. The wagons are drawn into a rough circle and the tents are set up by the drivers. The horse-handlers attend to the horses and help the guards gather firewood for the evening fire. The cooks plan dinner to be ready a bit after nightfall. The horses are kept inside a rough circle of wagons when camping in less-secure areas. After dinner the company sits around the fire sharing drink and tales until retiring. Some travelers stay up quite late and keep the first watch company. The horse-handlers and drivers sleep in the wagons. The guards keep a double watch from around ten o'clock until dawn. The watches are two hours each and consist of keeping the fire burning and making periodic circles around the camp. Since there are four watches and five pairs of guards, every fifth night a guard pair gets a full night's sleep.

The towns and villages where the caravan stops become smaller as the caravan moves away from Bakshaan, but each has a fairly decent inn which has developed specifically to serve the caravan trade. New Temple is a small but attractive town with a pleasant tavern and a pair of architecturally striking chapels, a modern one to Donblas, and a more ancient one to Grome.

Garret's Mill is little more than a wide place in the road, but the tavern has good food and entertainment — particularly a sweet-voiced peasant girl. Ryon is a seedy village, with a seedy little inn; the people seem less than prosperous, but everyone manages to find enough money to



make it to the inn for ale at night. The inn is loud and boisterous until late at night, and the drunks may become an annoyance. Azoth is a harsh little logging camp; the proprietor of the new inn is a logger who was crippled in a lumbering accident; he has built a comfortable though modest accommodation and he is prospering through his diligence and quality service.

For the next two nights, the caravan camps far from any village or town, and all have to sleep in the tents or the wagons.

Surrey's camp is a trade post maintained for the hunters and trappers who bring beaver and mink furs and exotic meats from the hills to the west of the Varkalk and from upstream toward the forests of Org. Everything is business here; an atmosphere of tension here reveals a concern for the dangers of the frontier. The people of the small settlement speak of beggar raids from Nadsokor, of tribes of the savage Org men from the forest of Troos, and of fierce lions, packs of wolves, and gigantic bears that prowl the woods at night.

### Character Interaction

The gamemaster should ask the party members to specify where in the caravan they travel and what weapons they carry. They should also be encouraged to speak with the other members of the caravan, particularly at night when everyone gathers around the fire. Moralo and Gacer can tell a great deal about Ilmiora if the players are interested. Gim, Lecht, and Redd act suspiciously throughout the journey, providing food for the player's suspicions. If the players resolutely ignore every opportunity for in-character play compress the travel time, moving directly to the bandit ambush.

## The Bandits

On the third evening, Sippan Lecht and Mosgue Redd sneak off from the camp to report to Bow Mennen, the bandit leader. Unless the players have established a regular surveillance on these two, they are discovered to be missing when the caravan rises on the morning of the follow-

ing day. But, if the player-characters have established their own night watch, or if they have any other system that tells them if someone sneaks out of the camp, the gamemaster should play out the escape.

The spies wait until late in the third watch, then both of the men attempt to sneak out of the camp, making their skill rolls to avoid attracting the attention of the guards on watch. They run for a stream where two horses have been hidden for them, ride the night road for a distance, then hide to check for pursuit. Thereafter the spies hurry up the road toward the bandit chief's established rendezvous, where all the details of the caravan routine and protection are given to the leader.

It is possible that the thugs will be prevented from escaping. The bandits attack in any case; Bow Mennen is extremely confident (given his overwhelming superiority in numbers), and he already knows that ransomable travelers are in the caravan from reports from the tavern in Ryon, where several of his men work and live. Freyda would be worth a pretty penny in ransom all by her self.

Instead of preventing the spies' escape, the player-characters might attempt to follow the spies openly or surreptitiously. If the player-characters follow openly, the thugs try to ambush them from further down the road. If the party looks too tough, the spies try to make a break into the woods, counting on the player-character's unfamiliarity with the area. If the player-characters successfully tail the spies to the rendezvous, they find a group of horsemen waiting several miles up the road to take the thugs to the bandit chief. In this case it is possible that the player-characters could scout and discover the bandit camp, return to the caravan, and organize a preemptive strike with the guards.

If the player-characters scout the bandit's stockade, they discover none other than Pilarmo himself sitting in a muddy corner, looking thoroughly dejected. Upon finding Pilarmo, the player-characters might change their strategy in dealing with the bandits, and try to bargain with Bow Mennen to have Pilarmo put into their hands. Bow Mennen is surprisingly amenable to this. Nikorn always kept Bow Mennen on a healthy retainer, on the understanding that Mennen would never attack any of Nikorn's caravans. Mennen was almost as angry at the murder of Nikorn as



Freyda, and he lets the player-characters have Pilarmo at no charge on two conditions. That Freyda and Pilarmo fight an immediate duel to the death, and that Bow Mennon gets to watch. After the duel, Mennon lets the player-characters go in peace.

If they don't discover Pilarmo, the party might wish to gather a posse from the nearby town of Ryon. Gathering a posse in town must be handled through the local constable a representative of the local governor and unfortunately a man who is cooperating with Bow Mennen and his band. Any attempt to get help from the locals or the legally constituted authority results in an alarm traveling by messenger to Mennen, giving him plenty of time to evacuate the bandit camp. When the player-characters arrive with the constable or posse they will look rather silly for sending everyone on a wild goose chase. The locals collaborating with the bandits suggest that the site is nothing more than a hunter's camp. It is possible that the bandits might be trailed, but they are familiar with the local terrain and inevitably give the player-characters the slip.

The bandits have a camp along a ridge that overlooks the road. This camp is a temporary one-night camp; their home-base is a day-and-a-half's ride east.

The camp is about three miles west of the point where the caravan stops on the third night.

The bandit chief waits for the report from his spies, then deploys his men according to what he learns. His strategy is explained later, the strategy should be revised if the player-characters have made any significant improvement in the caravan's defenses. Bow Mennen is intelligent and experienced; he leaves nothing poorly planned.

The temporary camp is located on the far side of a ridge so that the bandits cannot be seen or heard from the road. However, a player-character may attempt to find the tracks of horsemen or footmen leaving the road. They have to scout considerably ahead of the ambush site, since the bandits left the road somewhat beyond the intended ambush spot.

The bandit chief wants the wealth in the wagons. He surmises from the half-empty wagons that Moralo and Gaccer have a lot of cash with them, since the wagon loads are too small to insure a profit for the caravan. The chief knows as much about the private possessions of all the travelers as his spies can find out. He wants to be careful

in his attack not to kill anyone who might draw a decent ransom, and the spies can give him good information in that department. Freyda, and any other character with noble blood or rich relatives, are likely candidates for ransom, with most of the rest of the travelers presenting somewhat less but not undeniable potential for ransom.

Bow Mennen (born Dwerry), the bandit chief is a shrewd and well-organized brigand. He has a large army of part-time outlaws from the local area. He keeps them under control by being successful and by generously sharing the spoils with his men. He pulls a couple of raids in close succession, then disbands his group for six months to a year, after which everyone gets back together at an appointed rendezvous. With a few profitable ventures Bow can afford to live in comfort without the everyday anxieties of most illegal vocations. He has gathered many unemployed mercenaries and former soldiers; they form a veteran core for the numerous farmers, loggers, traders, and hunters with militia training and wilderness skills that make up the bulk of his forces. With Bow's leadership and the help of the experienced soldiers, the bandits are remarkably well-organized and disciplined.

#### Bow Mennen (Bandit Leader)

STR 16    CON 16    SIZ 14    POW 15    INT 16  
DEX 16    CHA 10    HP 18    Armor: half plate

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
self bow	80%	—	1D8+1+1D4
broadsword	75%	65%	1D8+1+1D6
heater shield	—	50%	—

SKILLS: Ambush 89%, Balance 24%, Climb 26%, Conceal 61%, Dodge 59%, First Aid 27%, Hide 49%, Jump 41%, Listen 49%, Move Quietly 49%, Orate 50%, Persuade 64%, Read Write Common 47%, Ride 70%, Search 23%, See 59%, Speak Common 70%, Swim 36%, Tumble 22%.

SUMMONINGS: Earth Elementals 94%, Fire Elementals 21% (50% chance to lose control of fire elementals due to imperfect independent sorcerer training.)

#### Average Bandit

STR 14    CON 15    SIZ 12    INT 12    POW 10  
DEX 15    CHA 10    HP 15    Armor: leather

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
self bow	40%	—	1D8+1+1D4
shortsword	60%	60%	1D6+1+1D6

SKILLS: Ambush 61%, Balance 20%, Climb 20%, Conceal 51%, Dodge 25%, First Aid 23%, Hide 45%, Jump 35%, Listen 55%, Move Quietly 40%, Ride 65%, Search 20%, See 51%, Speak Common 70%, Swim 36%, Tumble 20%.

#### Militia Trained Bandit

STR 12    CON 13    SIZ 10    INT 9    POW 8  
DEX 10    CHA 10    HP 13    Armor: leather

<i>weapon</i>	<i>attack</i>	<i>parry</i>	<i>damage</i>
self bow	30%	—	1D8+1
short sword	50%	50%	1D6+1

SKILLS: Ambush 59%, Balance 10%, Climb 10%, Dodge 22%, First Aid 20%, Hide 43%, Jump 15%, Listen 53%, Move Quietly 38%, Ride 30%, Search 10%, See 38%, Speak Common 70%, Swim 26%, Tumble 10%.

The bandits are an unusually decent lot. Several of them are married and living otherwise model lives in local towns and villages; they just tell everyone they have short mercenary contracts, and no one suspects the truth. There are also former soldiers, street hoodlums, barbarians, and first-class thieves among Bow's clan, but they get along well. Bow doesn't expect them to risk their lives without considerable hope of gain, and they generally prefer to take prisoners than to kill. They do not intend to be taken prisoner themselves, since it is a capital crime to engage in organized banditry. They retreat if capture is threatened, or fight to the death if desperately cornered. In general, however, Bow always leaves an avenue for quick retreat.

Bow is an independent sorcerer, having received training from another independent that he used to hire regularly for support. As this fellow became too old for adventuring, Bow arranged to study the sorcerous arts with him during the long layoff periods between bandit campaigns. Bow did it mostly to provide a source of cash for the old man, but he found himself getting involved in his studies, and after the old man's death he continued to study and to practice on his own. He is able to summon earth elementals at 94% and fire elementals at 21%. Bow has fairly good control over the earth elementals, since they are slow and less volatile in behavior than the fire elementals, but he is not completely effective in his control of fire elementals, and he hesitates to call upon them. The old sorcerer died before Bow completed his studies, and Bow learned to summon fire elementals completely independently. If Bow calls a fire elemental successfully, there is a 50% chance that the salamander will slip from his control and start firing goutts of flame at random, setting the woods on fire. After three fire blasts, the elemental is exhausted and disappears.

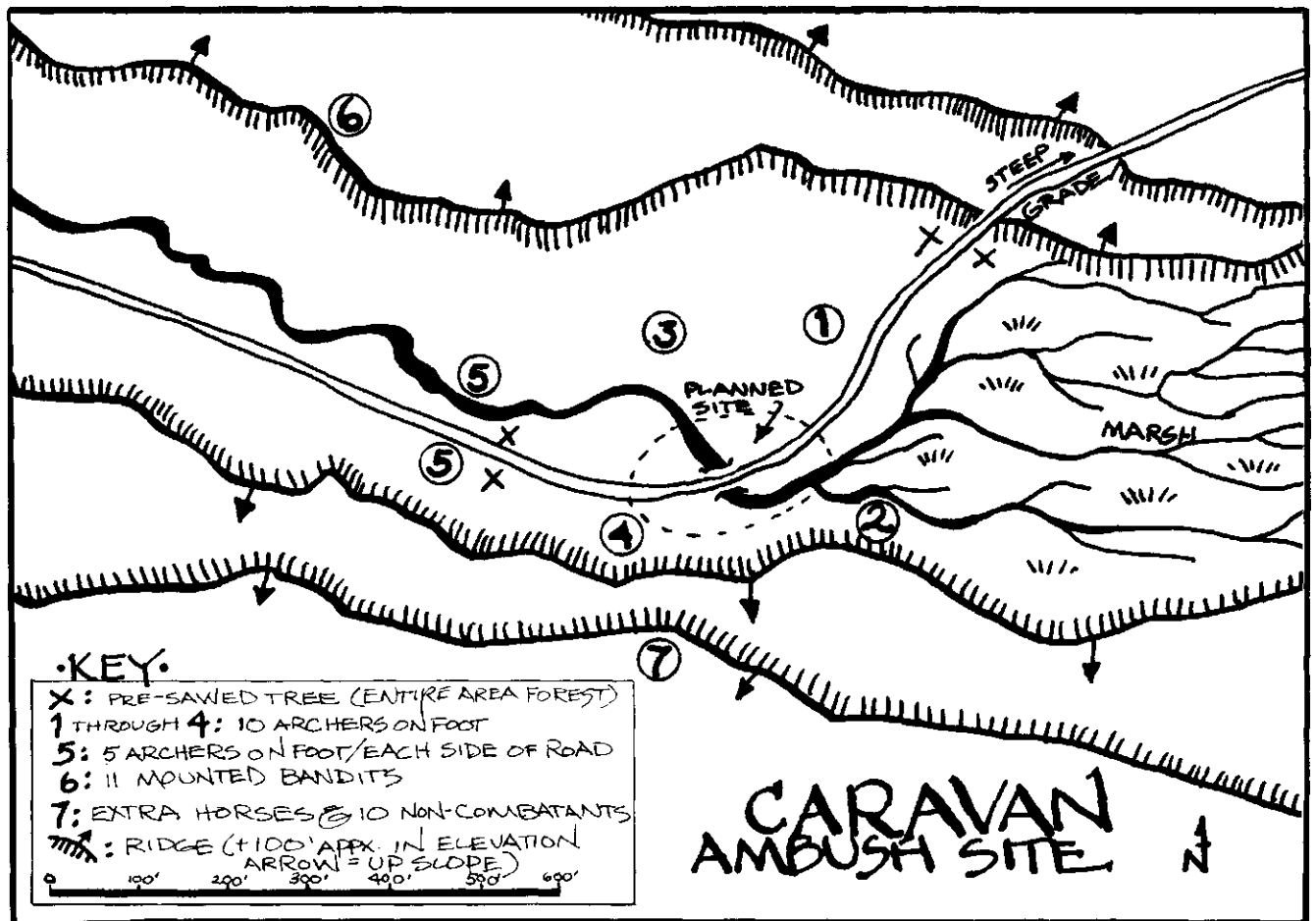
#### The Bandit Strategy

The bandits set up their ambush in a bowl-shaped hollow between two ridges. The road goes directly down the center, and the grade is tough enough to challenge the wagon teams. The bandits' archers have fine vantages for fire, plenty of woods for cover, and an incline that favors them against anyone coming up after them.

Movement is 100 feet per round in the woods, and 200 feet per round along the road. Anyone trying to move while hidden in cover and moving silently can move only 10 feet per round; this subtracts an additional 20 percentiles from a bowman's chance to hit. Visibility is about 80 feet in the forest.

There are six squads of bandits. Groups one through four contain 10 archers each (militia-trained bandits); they are hiding 100 feet from the road, and they step forward within visual range of the road at a prearranged signal. Group one is stationed to the northeast of the ambush site, group two to the southeast side of the ambush, group three is on the northwest side of the road and group four is on the southwest. Thus a box of archers is formed around the spot where the caravan will be stopped. Two men from groups one and two are stationed twenty feet from the road about a hundred yards beyond the ambush site. They are to knock over some presawed trees to block the eastern route of escape.

Group five is comprised of 10 experienced veterans (average bandits); this squad is divided into two groups of



five on each side of the road. Their primary mission is to hide in the woods and quietly take care of any advance scouts that come off the road. They are also to knock down two other presawed trees to the west of the ambush site once the caravan has traveled past them. Here is the greatest chance for the bandits to lose the element of surprise; if any scout or player-character notices the presawed trees or catches sight of the hidden squads, and he manages to raise an alarm before squad five takes care of them, surprise will be lost. If advance scouts enter the area, group five hidden in ambush must decide whether to attack them or to wait and hope the scouts won't find anything. The gamemaster should roll for the bandit's hide skill if they let the scouts pass; then the scouts must succeed with See rolls to spot the hidden men. If the squad five hide rolls are successful, there is a 30 percentile reduction to the scouts' chance to See. If the squad five members decide to silence the scout with an ambush attack, the scouts should get a See roll to modify the effects of surprise; if they can survive the initial period of surprise, the scouts may shout an alarm.

Group six contains ten veterans and the chief, all on horseback. They are well-concealed on the ridge about 4000 feet from the road and 200 feet west of the trees that are to be felled to trap the rear of the caravan. They are at a vantage point where they can watch the road and hear signals from any of the bandit squad leaders. Their task is to ride down to the road after the passing of the caravan and cut off any hope of retreat; they are also held in reserve to assault the caravan and to provide sorcerous support if the caravan doesn't surrender under the hail of

arrow fire. From this high vantage point Bow can also use his veteran group to improvise a response if the plans go awry. If the alarm is sounded, his squad either dismounts and advances with bows to delay an attempted escape; in the confusion of trying to turn the wagons on the narrow road, a few well-timed arrows can wreak sufficient havoc for the rest of the bandits to reorganize for plan B. If the caravan guard is vulnerable, Bow might attempt a skirmish against them with his mounted veterans.

#### Plan A

The signal for the attack is the falling of the two great trees in the path of the caravan. At this signal groups 1-4 are to step twenty feet forward (just to the limit of visibility) and fire two volleys of arrows by surprise. There is a 10 percentile attack penalty for firing through heavy foliage. This will continue until the travelers and guard are under cover or charging into the woods after the bandits. If necessary the bandits kill horses to prevent the caravan from getting away, but horses are valuable; no one wants to kill a horse unless a specific order is given by a group leader.

If the caravan guard has taken cover and there is little evidence of a counterattack, the archers cease fire after a few rounds, and the leader of group five demands the caravan's surrender. He outlines in great detail the caravan's predicament, and promises that no one will be hurt if everyone drops their weapons and comes out in the open. He expresses concern for the wounded who need attention, and threatens a fire-arrow attack if the caravan does not surrender (a bluff — too much risk of destroying valu-

able goods and of starting a forest fire). If the surrender offer is accepted, group five leader calls for Bow and his squad to ride down the road from the rear to supervise the disarming of the guard and the travelers.

If the guards move out into the woods to engage the bandits, the bandits continue to fire from their positions until melee is threatened; then they drop their bows and go to melee weapons at a command from their group leader and charge downhill to meet the counterattack.

If the counterattack is well-organized and resistance is very strong, group five leader directs groups one and four to take cover for one round, change to melee weapons, then charge into hand-to-hand combat. At this signal, Bow's group is to ride up the road and attack the caravan from the rear. If there is time, Bow tries an emergency earth elemental summoning and uses the gnome to assault the caravan. Everyone is to ignore any unarmed or wounded combatants and leave them for the mop-up crew and reserve, group five.

If the attack is not going well, Bow calls a retreat, using groups five and six to cover the escape. The squads are to climb over the southern ridge where there are horses being held by a small group of non-combatants.

If the assault on the caravan is not decided within ten rounds, but Bow has not called a retreat, group five is to approach from the rear and attack. In a retreat the bandits try to gather their wounded and cooperate to cover one another in their run for the ridge. A few might heroically sacrifice themselves to delay pursuit; the men in Bow's squad are particularly tough and dedicated in this effort. Others who gain the ridge use their bow fire to cover the escape.

If the player-characters attempt to escape on foot or on horseback, Bow's men definitely pursue; the player-characters are worth a healthy ransom. If the party is clearly tough however, Bows men settle for only one or two of them and the rest of the caravan, since the caravan represents less risk. Try to have the bandits capture at least one player-character, preferably Freyda. This should encourage the player-characters to go to the bandit camp to rescue their friend and thus find Pilarmo.

Groups one to four do not have to make Hide rolls since they are out of sight of the caravan. Since the chief has had time to personally inspect the ambush, only his ambush roll need be made in order for all the bandit groups to attack by surprise as described in the rules. Group five must make their Ambush, Hide, and Move Quietly rolls in appropriate circumstances if they encounter any advance scouts.

### **Plan B**

If the caravan receives an alarm from its scouts and avoids entering the ambush site, Bow Mennen and group six attempt to delay the caravan's escape with hit-and-run archery tactics, riding within bow range, firing a few volleys, then mounting again and repositioning. In the meantime, groups one through five are to move rapidly in skirmish lines paralleling the road. Groups one through four are to try to reestablish the archery box formation originally planned for the ambush area, while group five joins group six in harrying the caravan from the rear. If the leaders of groups one through four signal Bow that they cannot keep up with the caravan, Bow has to improvise another plan or call off the attack.

### **Resolution of the Ambush**

The player-characters are effectively put in charge of the defense of the caravan when the guard lieutenant, Iskimne, receives mortal arrow wounds in the first moments of the ambush. Moralo and Gaccer turn to a player-character who is known to be an experienced warrior; they ask him to take over the command of the caravan guard and confer with him on the advisability of surrender. Any ideas from the rest of the player-characters are gratefully accepted.

Moralo and Gaccer tell the party that this is the largest and best-organized attack they have ever seen; they express grave doubts about whether the caravan can be defended. Moralo prefers to avoid unnecessary bloodshed in a hopeless defense, while Gaccer is more hysterical about abandoning the caravan's treasure to the bandits. They tell the player-characters that there is a good chance that ransomable hostages (like themselves and several of the player-characters) will probably be taken captive and held by the bandits.

The caravan guard is greatly outnumbered and in a poor tactical situation. Gaccer, Moralo, and Kim quickly surmise that escape might be the best tactic, with surrender and ransom a close second choice. It is possible that the player-characters will provide an unexpectedly powerful addition to the defensive capabilities of the caravan. The player-characters' sorcery skills could be very useful, and players have a way of surprising gamemasters with workable plans against impossible odds; nonetheless, this is expected to be a battle that the players lose. It is up to them whether they lose gracefully or not.

The player-characters might immediately decide it is time to evacuate and take off on foot or on horseback at the beginning of the ambush. In this case they are separated from much of their gear and from the rest of the caravan members who probably surrender, to be released or ransomed after the wagons are ransacked. In this case there could be a spirited pursuit, particularly if the identity of the party members is known and there is reason to hope for a substantial ransom for them. If the party escapes on horseback, only the chief and group six are currently mounted, and it takes them a long time to fight their way up the road past the caravan to pursue someone fleeing to the east along the road. If the player-characters head north, south, or west there is a better chance for pursuit, and if the player-characters are on foot, it is almost certain that they will be overtaken. The gamemaster must decide how many bandits would be sent in pursuit of the player-characters in the light of the success of the ambush to that point and the eagerness with which Bow wishes to capture the group. If the party is overtaken, the gamemaster must improvise the terrain for a short melee; the bandits are not persistent or willing to risk much injury, since they are already confident of the booty of the wagons, but they should capture at least one player-character (allowing the party to find Pilarmo.) If they manage to escape, the party must travel alone to the next settlement where they learn that Pilarmo was captured by bandits and that he is being held for ransom in an unknown location.

It is possible that the player-characters will stand and fight to protect the other travelers and the caravan. Futile though the gesture may seem once the player-characters

42 recognize how outnumbered they are, it is a noble gesture none the less. If this is the case the battle must be played out to its conclusion. The bandits give the caravan numerous opportunities to surrender. They might stand off at bow range and slaughter the horses to underline the hopelessness of resistance. If the caravan manages to break out of the encirclement and elude the pursuit of the bandits, the travelers set out immediately to return to the last outpost of civilization they have passed; further to the east lies no comfort or shelter. The player-characters of course want to continue on Pilarmo's trail, but unknown to them (if they were not captured) Pilarmo's trail leads right to the bandit's camp. If the player-characters manage to elude all contact with the bandits, have them learn of Pilarmo's capture through village rumor. If the caravan is captured entire, the player-characters are taken prisoner and held for ransom. Such business is time consuming and risky, but Freyda has a connection (unknown to her) with Bow Mennen, and there is a good chance that the bandit-leader will set them free.

### Captives of the Bandits

If the player-characters are taken captive, Bow interviews them in an attempt to figure out how much they are worth. Bow is a sucker for brave and honorable men, and for women of the same virtues. Before the interview the player-characters discover that a dejected Pilarmo is moping in Bow Mennen's stockade. The gamemaster, through Bow, should bargain with the player-characters for their freedom.

Bow Mennen had a tribute relationship with Freyda's father, Nikorn. He is wroth when he hears of Pilarmo's

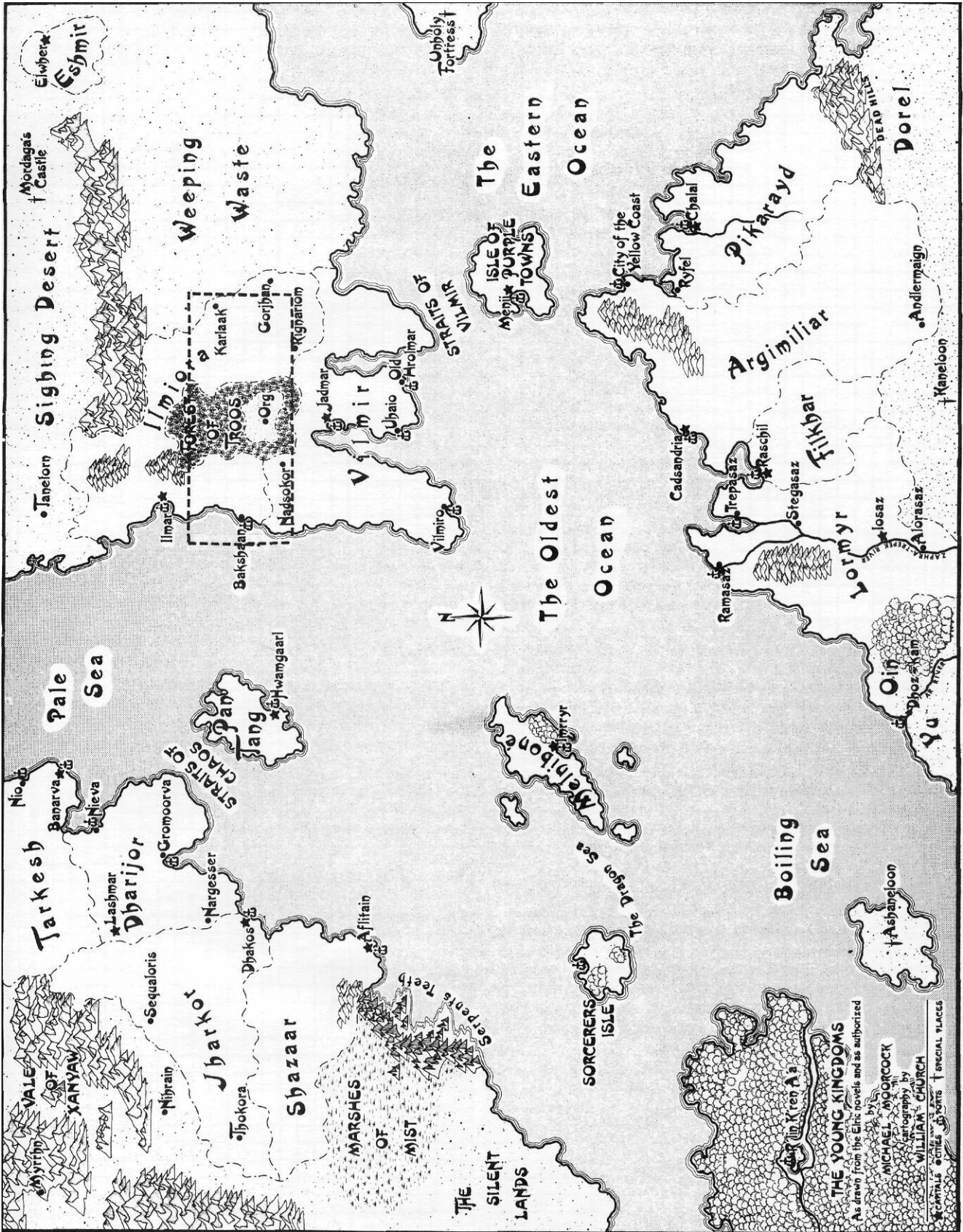
treachery (it loses him his healthy retainer). Bow is interested in reestablishing the relationship he had with Nikorn with Freyda, and gladly turns over Pilarmo as a good-will gesture if Freyda will send him 3000LB per year. The payment ensures that Bow Mennen will never attack a Nikorn caravan, and also that he will let no other bandit do so in his territory. This tribute arrangement and others were part of the reason for Nikorn's phenomenal success. If Freyda agrees to reengage the tribute arrangement Bow takes her on her word and set all the player-character's free. He expresses only one additional desire, and that is to be allowed to watch Freyda duel to the death with Pilarmo.

Pilarmo proves himself to be a miserable coward, continually stopping the duel by dropping to his knees, grabbing Freyda's shins and begging for mercy. He also makes threats to send assassins after Freyda if she kills him (not an easy task for a dead man).

Bow also has news of Elric. Elric stopped and supped with Bow and his band one week before the ambush on the caravan, and indicated to Bow that he would be traveling to Nadsokor, the city of beggars. Nadsokor is not far from Bow's camp, so Freyda and company are in a good position to begin their pursuit of Elric. Bow is surprised that Elric would kill a man such as Nikorn, but admires Freyda for her courage and resolve to exact vengeance from the White Wolf.

For Freyda's adventures in chase of Elric and his legendary black sword, see the companion to this book, *Black Sword*.





# The Young Kingdoms

The area covered in this book is shown within the dotted lines. See the Bakshaan-Karlaak caravan route map on page 33.



# Stormbringer® Excitement

STEALER OF SOULS is a scenario book for use with the STORMBRINGER® game. The scenarios depict a woman's quest for revenge against a deadly conspiracy of merchants in Bakshaan. The four merchants (rivals of the woman's father, a man named Haver Nikorn) hired Elric to storm his keep and kill him. 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 vengeance against the four merchants, and her success or failure is determined by the players.

The gamemaster is provided with extensive information on the government, culture, and environment of Bakshaan. A complete description of a Bakshaan-Karlaak trade caravan is also included. Extensive character descriptions aid the gamemaster in storytelling.

Four pages of player pullouts provide the players with all the information they need to start playing the scenarios. The pullouts include player-character knowledge of Bakshaan, a map of the city, and statistics for Freyda Nikorn.

The companion to this volume, called BLACK SWORD tells of Freyda's quest to find Elric himself, and of their ultimate battle.

## A Quest for Vengeance in Ilmiora

Familiarity with the STORMBRINGER® rules is required to use this book fully.



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