

# STARTER ADVENTURES



BY TIM SHORTS



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Written by **Tim Shorts**

Cover Art by **Jason Sholtis**

Interior Art by **Jason Sholtis &  
John Larrey**

Maps by **Robert S Conley**

Layout by **Tim Shorts**

Edited by **Tim Snider &  
Ivy Shorts**

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# Introduction

Every adventurer needs somewhere to start. After a night of gaming with my wife, I developed these short adventures so she could get used to the dice, learn basic combat and the role-playing aspect where actions have consequences or rewards.

The sixteen scenarios presented are for a fantasy game setting. There are four scenarios for each basic class; cleric, fighter, magic-user and yes, I consider the thief a class. The settings are generic such as the woods, a building or stream. The next section includes Red Bear's Tavern. Every adventure needs a tavern, and this can be used as an outside location for the players to meet, buy, sell or possibly hire a few extra bodies. The third section is a short, but complete adventure for a party of adventurers. At the end, the Game Master (GM) will find details on the new magic items and monsters.

I've used the Swords & Wizardry Core Ruleset to develop these scenarios, but any GM worth his salt can adapt these to the system he prefers. Since I've used an old school approach to the scenarios, the GM must use his imagination to set up the scene and judge how successful the players are through dice rolls and the description of their actions.

Though these scenarios were created for beginning players I've also used them as roadside encounters or random events during a journey. Because of their small scope, they can fit into any session without disrupting the flow of the adventure. If the players have to journey a few hours into the forest, the GM can easily slip in The Woodman's Axe. If the players need to stay the night at a sleepy village, throw them into the Restless Dead scenario.

The last thing I'll add is if someone hasn't played an RPG before, they may have trouble understanding that it's not a 'them vs. you' game. That there is no winner. New players will have a lot of questions, so take the time to answer them. Show them how the rules work within the framework of the game. Use a few props to visually engage them. The goal is to have fun, cheer and boo, laugh and roll a natural 20 when your back is against the wall. Show these newbies why it's the best game ever played.

Tim Shorts

## NOTE ABOUT SKILL CHALLENGES (SC)

The one nuance to game mechanics that I've included is the Skill Challenge. They are assigned to tasks that require a successful roll. It could be picking a lock or bashing down a door. Each SC is assigned a number, and the player is successful if the roll is equal to or higher than the target number. The basic formula for a SC is: **Character Level + Attribute Bonus + d20 Roll = Result**. A GM will assign the attribute being used. In the examples above, dexterity would be used for picking a lock or strength for bashing down a door. These skill challenges are not essential and can be ignored.



# Cleric

## MISSING

**Setting:** A stream and woods

**Situation:**

Tanner, a young boy, is missing. His parents, Evelyn and Matthew, have come to the temple pleading for assistance. The last time they saw Tanner, he was fishing by the creek, a short walk from their home. Evelyn is sobbing, but manages, *"He goes there most days and knows to come home for lunch"* but can't continue. Matthew picks up the story, *"Today she went to the creek and he wasn't there. She called for him, but there was no answer. She searched around our home and couldn't find him. That's when she ran and got me from the field."*

They are a well-liked family in the village. Brother Owen dismisses any notion that the parents had anything to do with the boy's disappearance. Matthew takes the player to the stream where Tanner fishes. An observation roll (SC 8) allows the player to spot the footprints on the muddy bank of the creek. The player tracks the muddy footprints down the side of the bank for a ways, where more footprints are seen in the mud. Another successful observation roll (SC 10) allows the player to differentiate between three sets of footprints.

The muddy footprints can be followed to a nearby grove of trees. The boy's fishing pole is tangled in the branches. There are a lot of chicken feathers strewn on the ground. Matthew mentions, that the past two nights, chickens have gone missing. He thought it might have been a wolf or dog.



Broken branches mix with trampled grass; two grooves in the loose dirt and leaves make the trail easy to follow. After a few minutes of following the trail, the player hears a scream, but it does not sound human. Within the ravine are two goblins trying to build a fire. One is hopping around shaking his hand as smoke drifts off its fingers. The other goblin is laughing. Tanner is tied to a tree and struggles to free himself. The goblins are distracted, but will be alerted to loud noises. The father agrees with any plan the player devises as long as his boy is saved. If Tanner sees his father, he will yell for him.

**2 Goblins** HD: d6hp, HP: 2 each, AC: 6[13], Atk: weapon (1d3), Move: 9, Save: 18, CL/XP: B/10, Special: -1 to hit in sunlight. The goblins are armed with branches. Both have taken 1hp of damage from their scuffle with the boy. Each goblin carries 2cp.

### Conclusion:

Matthew and Evelyn, though their resources are few, can possibly assist the player in future adventures. Evelyn would make a great herbalist who can assist the player with poisons, diseases and light wounds. Matthew knows the local area and lore, and may be able to help clarify where things are located. And Tanner, he would be the player's first fan. When Tanner gets a few years older, he may want to learn the skills of an adventurer. If nothing else, when the player returns to the village, he will always have a place to get a warm meal.

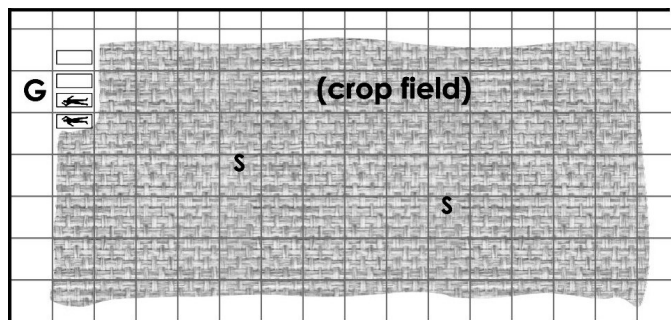
## RESTLESS DEAD

**Setting:** Village

### Situation:

Brother Owen has an assignment for you. *"In Aquin, the villagers have spotted two skeletons. Get rid of them. If you discover where they came from, sanctify the ground."* He hands you two vials of holy water. *"Blessings upon you, and don't forget your holy symbol."*

It takes the better part of the day to reach Aquin. The villagers are in a panic. The reeve, Callister, shoos all the other villagers away before addressing the player. *"Those things are in the north field. Showed up a day*



*and half ago. No one can work. Any time anyone gets close, they charge, but stop at the edge of the field. They just keep wandering around the field."* Callister doesn't know much about the situation. He knows nothing of graves or where the skeletons came from.

The two skeletons (**S**) act just as Callister described. The only way to rid the skeletons is to destroy them with brute force. Turning them will make them flee the field, but they will return as soon as the time has expired. If the player rolls a 10 or greater on 2d10, the skeletons will flee for 3d6 rounds. It won't take the player long to see where the skeletons came from. At the edge of the field are two empty shallow graves (**G**); two are still occupied. If the player sanctifies the ground with the holy water, the skeletons drop to 1 hp each and move slower, reducing their AC to 9[10].

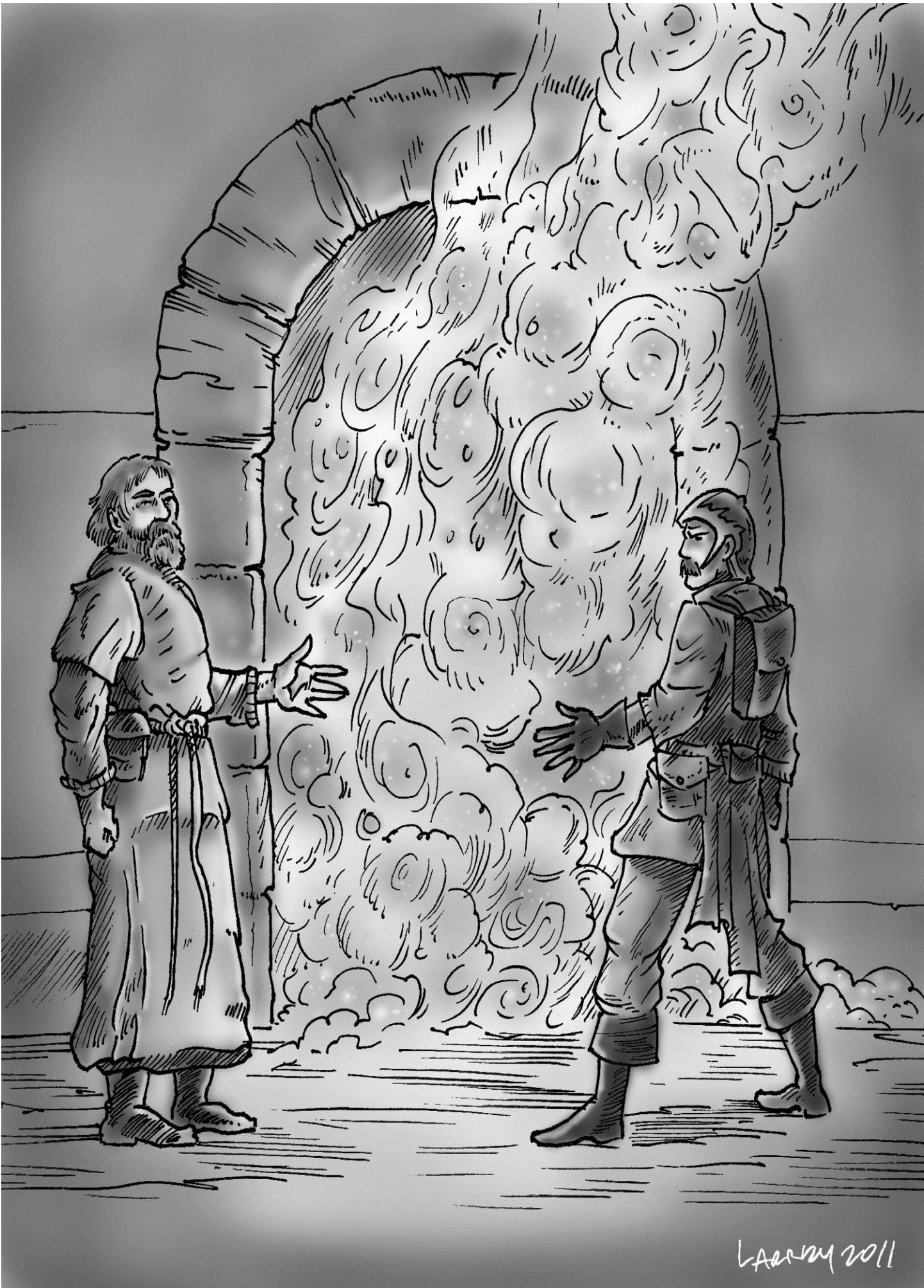
**2 Skeletons** HD: 1, HP: 4 each, AC: 8[11], Atk: strike (1d6), Move: 12, Save: 17, CL/XP: 1/15, Special: none. The skeletons are unarmed and wear no armor. They will remain in the field unless turned.

### Conclusion:

The villagers are grateful and give several simple gifts including two chickens and a little piglet named Charlie. And of course the mystery of the unopened graves and why these skeletons rose from the ground can lead to another adventure.

This scenario should help the player learn how his turn undead ability works.





Laermy 2011

# TEST OF FAITH

**Setting:** Burning Hut, Angry Crowd, Dark Cave, or Family Dinner

## Situation:

As many things are in life, especially for a cleric, outcomes are predetermined by greater powers. But choices are given to change the fates, and it is the cleric's duty to provide the best counsel and direct his people to the best choice. Brother Owen stands before you, and behind him is an archway filled with a swirling mist. *"You are permitted to prepare yourself, to consider what is through the door. Pray and choose a single spell to assist you in the trial to come. When you have chosen your spell, enter the gate."*

The GM and the player should both roll d4s. If the numbers match, the GM can read the description of what the player will encounter and allow the player to decide which spell they wish to take. If the numbers are off by one, the GM can give minor hints on what to expect, such as a feeling or a quick glimpse of the situation. If the numbers are two or more off, the player gets no hints and must guess on what spell to take. The number rolled by the GM will be the situation the player will encounter.

1. People run from burning homes. To the left is a small hut ablaze, and from inside a shrill scream from a small girl can be heard. If the player enters the hut, he will take 1d3 points of damage and see a small girl in need of immediate attention. If the girl is not healed, she will die. **Correct Spell: Cure Light Wounds.** If the player heals the girl, she will gift him with a dirty cloth, a piece of a sacrament vest. While the cloth is in the player's possession, all healing dice rolled are +1. A normal Cure Light Wounds spell heals 1d6+1, with the cloth, it heals 1d6+2.
2. Four men stand before an angry crowd. One of them killed a young girl. The player stands before the crowd and they demand judgment to know which one killed the girl. The player may try to calm the crowd, but will realize the people are

bloodthirsty, and if no choice is made, the crowd will kill all four men. **Correct Spell: Detect Evil.** If the player detects evil, it will be obvious which man killed the girl. He still has the girl's necklace in his pocket. If the player chooses correctly, he will possess the necklace when the trial ends. The necklace is a simple silver chain that provides the enchantment of a bless spell on the wearer (+1 to all save rolls).

3. The player is submerged into darkness. He hears a girl crying. The player must navigate the small cavern to find the girl. The girl is on the edge of a very deep sinkhole. If she moves, she will fall. **Correct Spell: Light.** When the light spell is cast, the player is able to see the obstacles and lead the girl safely from the cavern. Once they emerge, the girl will give the player a piece of paper she found when she fell. It is a scroll that allows the cleric to cast any 1<sup>st</sup> level spell. The scroll vanishes after it is used.
4. A family sits around a dinner table of rotten meat, insect-infested fruit and dirty water. The family members are gaunt and suffering. They plead to the player to help them. The player can attempt to leave the home and buy or hunt for food, but once he brings the food into the cabin, it will spoil. **Correct Spell: Purify Food and Drink.** After the family eats, the small girl will approach the player and give him a gem. The gem has a Protection from Evil enchantment that can be used once/day.

## Conclusion:

If the player returns with a reward, Brother Owen will know of the player's success. *"You have taken another significant step toward becoming a priest."* If the player fails, Brother Owen will provide words of consolation, *"It is not easy to gain the favor of a god. All who serve go through times where we must contend with divine silence. It is during these times we must depend on our faith."* The player should learn that his choice as a cleric will have an effect on the people he is choosing to serve. And that he is not just a fighting holy man, but a representative of his god.





## THE WOODSMAN'S AXE

**Setting:** In the woods and a cabin

### Situation:

Brother Owen gives the player a healing potion to deliver to a friend, Timmons, a woodsman who has been ill. The cabin is located an hour away through the woods. As the player makes his way through the woods, he sees several black arrows, too small for any bow he'd even seen, stuck into the trees. As the player approaches the clearing, he will hear arguing. Two skrivs are fighting over an axe beside a large tree trunk. Both have a hold on the handle and are tugging back-and-forth; neither will notice the approaching player. It is Timmons' axe. In combat, the skrivs will run to the trees and shoot the player from the safety of a tree limb.

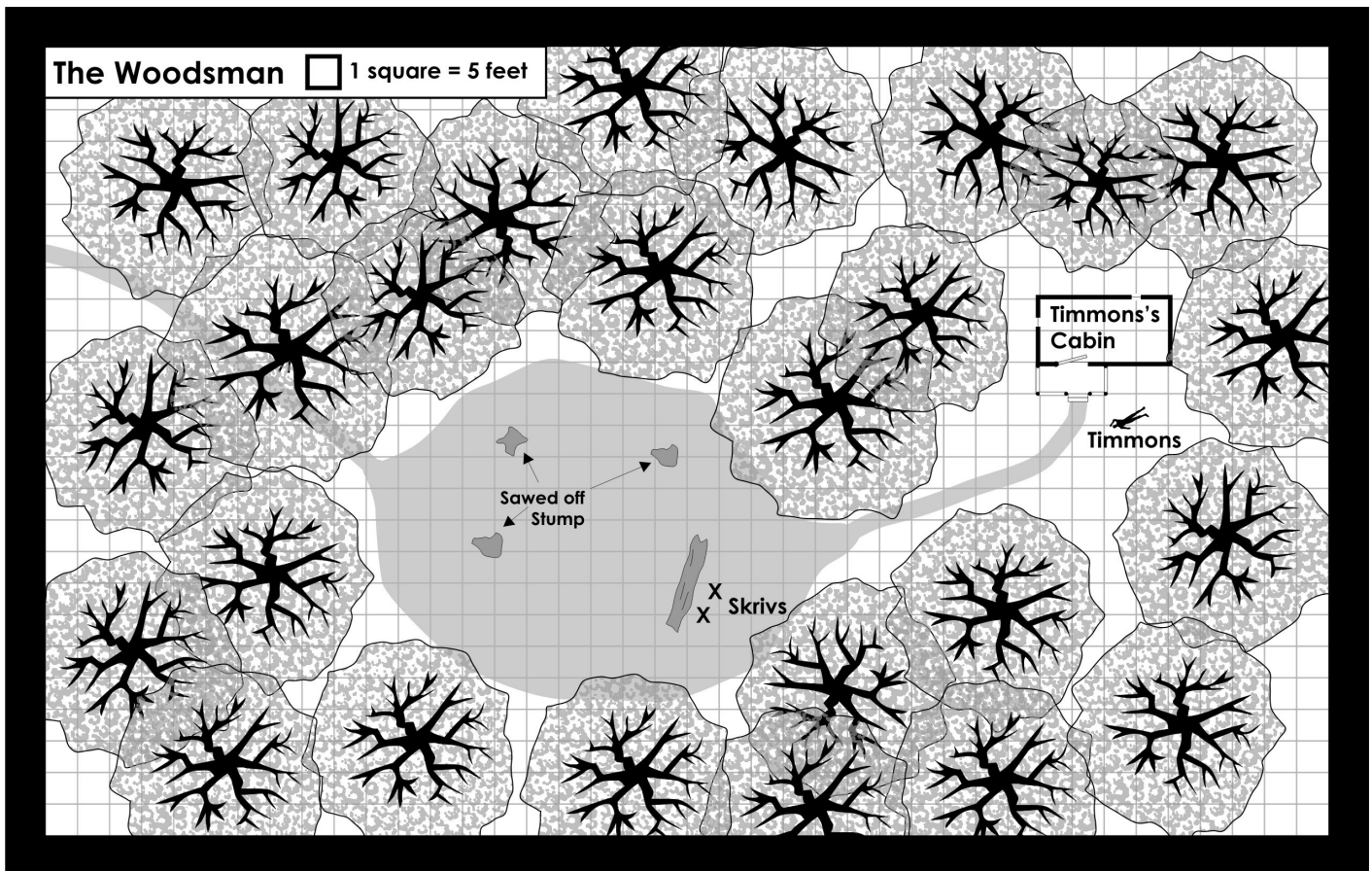
**2 Skrivs** HD: 1d4, HP: 2 each, AC: 6[13], Atk: bow (1d2), Move: 6, Save: 18, CL/XP: A/5, Special: no move penalty for climbing. The skrivs are armed with bows and 5 arrows. Each skriv carries 3cp and wears bone fetish made from the bones of small game animals.

Timmons' cabin is a short walk from the large tree trunk. The player hears crashing noises coming from inside the cabin. Timmons is on the ground outside the door of his cabin. He is breathing and has a gash on his head.

If the player gives Timmons the healing potion, he will help the player, more so if his axe is returned. Timmons tells the player the skrivs bonked him on the head as he left his cabin. He doesn't know how many skrivs ambushed him.

**Timmons** 1<sup>st</sup> lvl Fighter, HP: \*, AC: 9[11], Atk: axe (1d6), Move: 12, Save: 14, CL/XP: 1/15, Special: none. \*Timmons will have as many hit points as the player and or the potion give him. Up to 7hp maximum.

The skriv warrior is tearing apart the cabin looking for a bracelet that Timmons found near the large tree trunk. The skriv warrior wears armor and wields a small mace. The bracelet is a magical bone fetish given to him by the shaman of his tribe. If he returns to the tribe without his bracelet, he will be stripped of his weapon.



If the player asks Timmons what the skriv was looking for, he will give the player the bracelet. It is a series of small hollowed-out animal bones held together by a piece of leather. It provides the wearer +1 to AC.

The player may want to speak with the skriv warrior and return the bracelet. If the player returns the bracelet, increase the skriv's armor class to 5[14]. After which the skriv will attack. Timmons will gladly take part in the fight.

**Skriv Warrior** HD: 1, HP: 6, AC: 6[13], Atk: Light Mace (1d6-1), Move: 6, Save: 17, Special: 17, CL/XP: 1/15, Special: none. The skriv warrior is dressed in leather armor and wields a light mace. He also had a light crossbow with three bolts remaining. It wears crude jewelry that has no value. Inside a small pouch are 2sp and 5cp.

### Conclusion:

Timmons can track the skrivs back to the tree trunk where he found the bracelet. Within the trunk is a small passageway burrowed into the wood. He will suggest the player return to the village and tell Brother Owen what they discovered.

This scenario introduces magical items to the player. In this case, the item may be unusable by human-sized characters unless they are a halfling or one of the smaller races. The player can choose to follow up on the discovery.



# Fighter

## INTO THE ARENA

**Setting:** An arena

**Situation:**

Every fighter needs to prove his mettle, and here in the pits is where many learn if they are true fighting men. The rules are simple. One-on-one combat until one man surrenders, is unable to continue, or dies. It's not complicated. If someone surrenders or falls unconscious, the combat stops. If the fighter continues to attack a helpless opponent, he is banned from the pit and any earnings he may have won are forfeit. When a fighter signs up for the arena he fights until he loses. The most a person will fight in one night is three opponents. The fighters are healed between fights.

To join the competition, the player must pay 25gp. This will cover the healing between rounds and the purse money given to each winner. Each competition consists of eight fighters. The winners of the first round get 25gp. Second round winners get 50gp. And the winner of the competition earns 100gp.

The fights are surrounded by a rowdy crowd. The announcer, Barker, is your typical flamboyant caller who will give the player a random nickname. If the player does well or even wins the competition, the nickname will stick with the player whether he likes it or not. And the player will become a minor celebrity for a short time.



**Fighter 1 – Rooster** 1<sup>st</sup> lvl Fighter, HP: 7, AC: 7[12], Atk: short sword (1d6), Move: 12, Save: 14, CL/XP: 1/15, Special: none. Rooster is a small, but quick fighter.

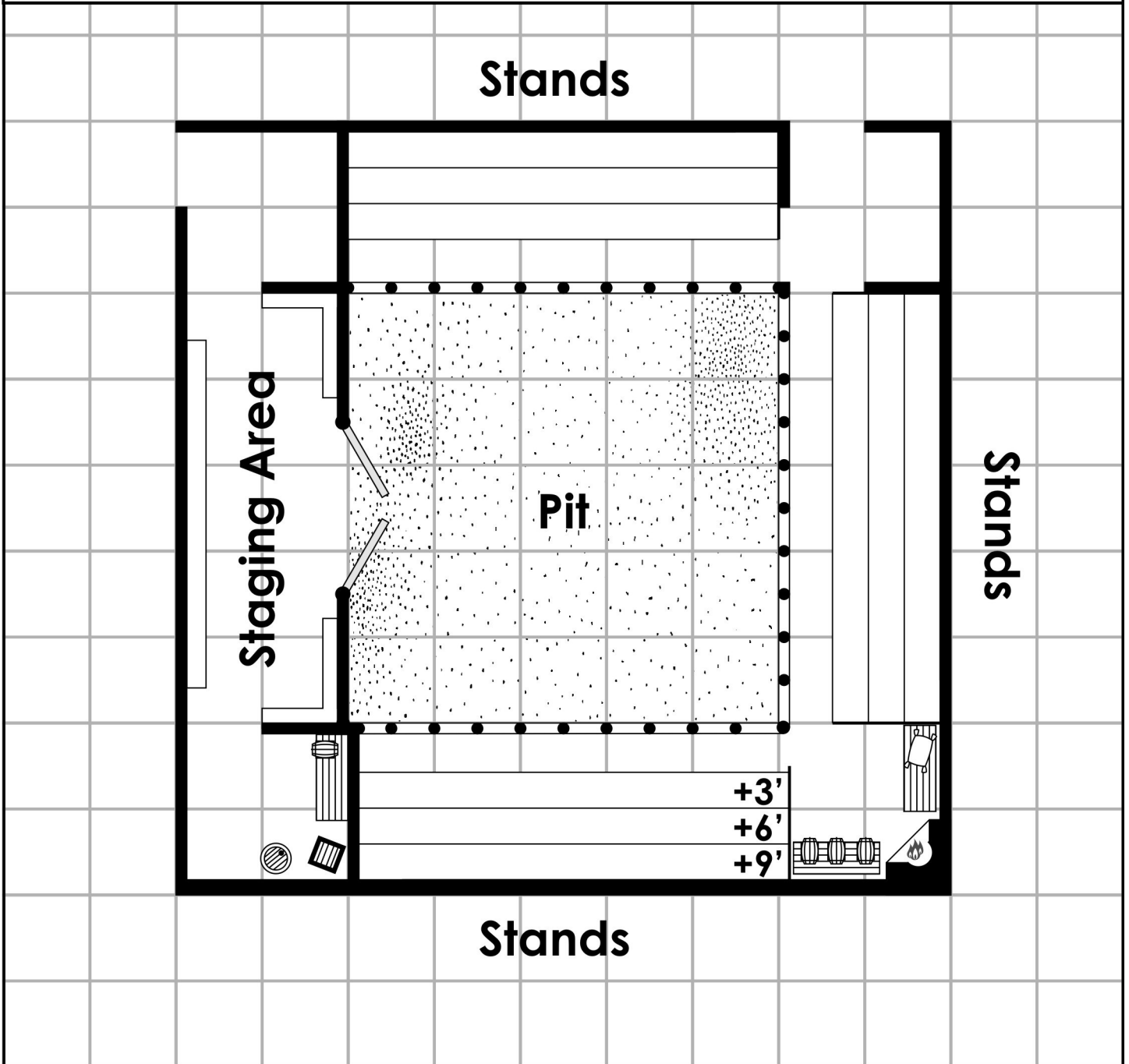
**Fighter 2 – Red Fred** 1<sup>st</sup> lvl Fighter, HP: 10, AC: 5[14], Atk: heavy mace (1d6+1), Move: 12, Save: 14, CL/XP: 1/15, Special: none. Red Fred is a large brute of a man named after his flaming red hair and beard.

**Fighter 3 – Fang** 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl Fighter, HP: 14, AC: 4[15], Atk: longsword (1d8+1), Move: 12, Save: 13, CL/XP 2/30, Special: high strength. Fang is a local favorite. He's won in the pits three times before. He likes going in for the kill if he can. He gets +1 to damage and 'to hit' because of his strength.

# THE ARENA



1 square = 5 feet



## Conclusion:

A demonstration that might be appropriate is to have a competitor attack an unconscious opponent and have the crowd turn on the fighter. The player may see that fighter get turned away from a tavern later on. The general population will see him as a cheat.

If the player wins, strangers will praise him and buy him drinks. His fame will last a week until the next winner

of the arena is crowned. The player should learn their actions affect how others treat them. Some actions will earn them temporary reactions while another action may forever follow the player.



## BOAR HUNT

**Setting:** Forest

**Situation:**

Lord Kellington has gathered his students for something different this morning. He announces there is a wild boar in the forest with a red ribbon tied around its neck. *"Whoever returns with the ribbon will get a 50gp prize. If that were not enough, the master hunter may select one of his classmates to serve as his squire for one month."*

The wild boar was released in the forest before sunrise. The instructor provides everyone with a healing potion and warns that the boar is powerful enough to kill each and all of them if it has the chance. If a student needs to use the potion then he is out of the competition and is to return to the school. *"To win, present the ribbon and your potion."*

There are no rules against a player joining forces with another student, but only one can win in the end. The other students should have roughly the same abilities as the player. There should be one student who dislikes the player and makes it difficult for him to find the boar.

Tracking the boar (SC 12) is fairly difficult because you have a group of excited students trampling through the forest. The GM should roll for the others. If the player succeeds his tracking rolls three times, he will find the boar or a natural 20 will find the boar immediately. The boar makes a lot of noise once it is found, alerting all the students to its general direction.

**Wild Boar, small** HD: 2, HP: 9, AC: 8[11], Atk: gore (2d4), Move: 15, Save: 15, CL/XP: 2/30, Special: continue to fight for two rounds after they are dead.

**Conclusion:**

The player can solidify friendships and/or earn a rival. These can serve as allies and enemies down the road. Some of the others may decide that the player is a worthy man to follow.

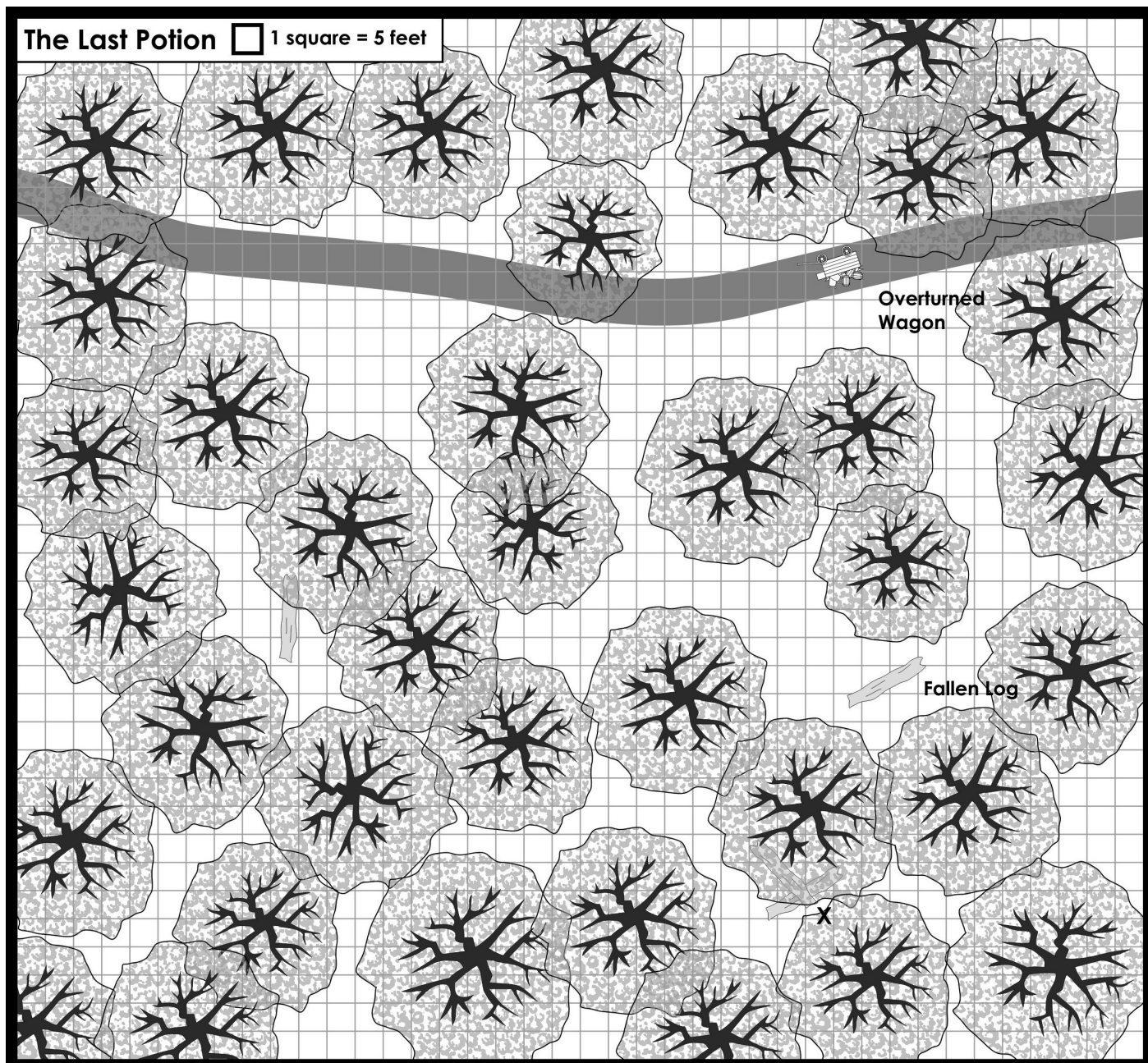
## THE LAST POTION

**Setting:** Forest

**Situation:**

The player was hired on as a merchant guard to protect Hester, an alchemist, who is bringing in a new batch of his latest concoctions to the city market. The wagons were ambushed by a large group of orcs. As the chaos rages, Hester grabs the player. *"To the forest."* He gives the player a potion, *"Drink this while I hide."* Hester drops behind a fallen log (X) as the player hears the orcs getting closer.





**6 Orcs** HD: 1, HP: 4 each, AC: 6[13], Atk: spear (d6), Move: 9, Save: 17, CL/XP: 1/15, Special: -1' to hit' in sunlight.

**Orc Chief** HD: 1+1, HP: 6, AC: 6[13], Atk: spear (d6+1), Special: -1 'to hit' in sunlight. The orc chief gets +1 to hit and damage due to strength.

The potion grants the player Giant Strength, gaining +4 'to hit' on top of the player's normal bonuses and an additional 1d8 damage. This potion will last 3d6 rounds. Seven orcs are searching the area the round after the potion is drunk. Two of the orcs will attack the player, as the chief orc orders the other four to search the area for Hester. If the player manages to defeat the two orcs, the

chief orc will challenge the player to single combat. If the player defeats the chief, the remaining orcs will flee.

### Conclusion:

The player should learn how valuable a potion or magic item is in the right situation. The player should also learn that, when leaders are killed, the followers will often flee. Hester will be grateful to be alive, but angry that his potions were stolen and splashed across the forest floor. He will give the player a discount at his potion shop.



# TAVERN FIGHT

**Setting:** A tavern (one has been provided for you later in the book, The Red Bear Tavern)

**Situation:**

The classic. A player walks into a tavern, orders a drink and a half-drunk mercenary pushes him in the back and calls the player a one-eye orc whore followed by a roundhouse punch. Encourage the player not to use weapons; the law in the town frowns on murder. There are a lot of makeshift items or just a good punch in the face will do the job.

The GM should use whatever brawling system he prefers, but here is a simplified version. Punches do 1 point of damage plus strength bonus. Add 1 to the damage if gauntlets are worn or a tankard (good for one hit) is used. A stool can be used as a club for 1d3 points of damage plus any strength bonus. Kicks do 1-2 points of damage, but if the player misses, he must roll under his DEX or land on his butt.

If weapons are drawn, the barkeep, Max, will break out a thunder stick. A simple device, when snapped, it causes a loud thunder clap. Everyone in the immediate

area becomes deaf, and it alerts the town guard.

If the player puts up a good fight without resorting to weapons and gets in a few good punches, the mercenary and his friends will break out in laughter and offer to buy the player a drink. The mercenary's name is Chard, and he is a member of the Bludder Gutters mercenary crew.

**Chard** 1st lvl Fighter, HP: 6, AC: 7[12], Atk: \*, Move: 12, Save: 14, CL/XP: 1/15, Special: none. Chard is unarmed and will use the brawling rules for damage. He will fight until he reaches 2 hit points.

**Conclusion:**

This combat should demonstrate that not all fights have to end in blood or death. And if a fight does conclude with a death, serious consequences could follow. If the player draws a weapon, fine them, take away their weapon (leave them their dagger at least), and throw them in the pit for a night. Demonstrate that some places will not tolerate a free-wielding adventure.

If the fighter shows some guts, a willingness to take a joke, and who can down a tankard of ale, the Bludder Gutters offer the player a chance at membership. This

gives the player access to a group ally and henchmen for the future.



# Magic-User



## OH, RATS

**Setting:** Mage tower and underground passage

### Situation:

The player has not seen his instructor in a week. Terintar went on a trip to gather some components to add to the current batch of potions bubbling in the main room. The player was told not to touch it, but now the red frothy liquid is boiling over and smells like a thousand troll feet. This clichéd mage tower is two days from any other village, and people are never excited about helping out a mage. If the player does nothing, the potion will explode (d6 damage to anyone in the room), ruining the batch of potions. If the player removes the bubbling liquid from the flame, the potion can be saved. The player can attempt to stabilize the potion (SC 11) otherwise it will lose its potency. It is a batch of fire resistance potions, enough for ten vials.

If the player makes a successful observation roll (SC 10), he will notice the red liquid is draining beneath one of the flagstones. It will take a successful strength check to remove the stone. If the player uses a lever, the player gains a +5 to his strength roll. Removing the stone

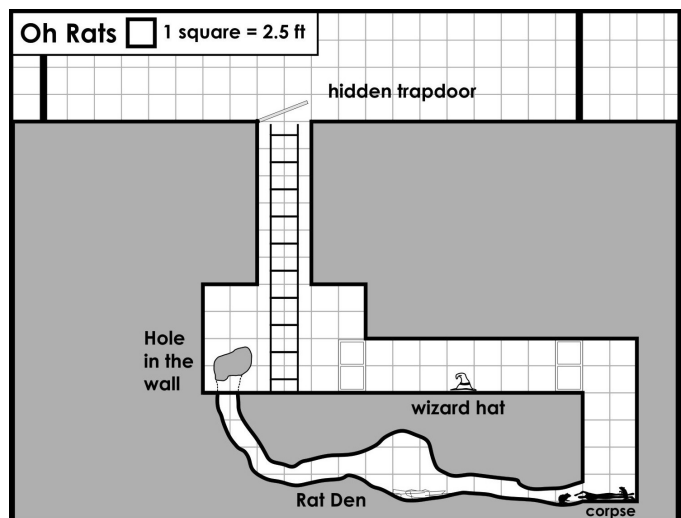
will reveal a hidden passageway. If the player decided to go down, he will need a light source.

The ladder goes down 15' into a small room with a door. Once the player gets into the room, a giant rat will appear out of a hole in the wall. It will attack the player unless it is given food. If the player investigates the hole, he will find four baby rats in a nest. Also in the nest are scraps of a red robe with gold trim, similar to the robe that Terintar wore before leaving a week ago.

The door opens to a small dark passage. The player hears squeaking of more rats nearby. Ten feet down the passage is the red hat Terintar wore before he left. The light reveals another door another 10' down the corridor. A large rat is sniffing around the area outside the door.

**Giant Rats** HD: 1d4hp, HP: 2 each, AC: 7[12], Atk: 1 bite (1d3), Move: 12, Save: 18, CL/XP: A/5, Special: 5% are diseased. The rat can be distracted by food.

There is a 15' deep pit on the other side of the door. At the bottom of the pit is what looks to be the remains of the Terintar. Two giant rats gnaw on the juicy bits. The player can strike at the rats with missile weapons without worry of retaliation. If the player damages the rats or makes a loud noise, they will scurry into a hole at the bottom of the pit. A successful observation roll (SC 10) and the player will see small handholds in the wall to climb down.





## Conclusion:

Once the player inspects the body, he will find it stuffed with straw with a few hocks of meat that the rats were eating. From above, the player will hear a chuckling and see Terintar leaning over the edge of the pit. He will congratulate his apprentice on his ability to find the clues and having the bravery to follow them. *"A mage is not long for this world if he does not observe and have the courage to act on what is observed."* If the player used his spell effectively, Terintar will be pleased. If the player was able to get to this point without casting a spell, Terintar will be very pleased. *"Our ability to solve problems is our greatest ability, not casting spells. Spells may provide quick solutions, but not always the best results."* If the player succeeded in saving the potions, Terintar will offer them as a gift to his apprentice for his good work. He will also allow the mage to learn an additional 1<sup>st</sup> level spell from his library.

This adventure is to help a player realize that spells are only a part of a mage's assets. That their ability to solve problems without resorting to spells is something they must adapt to in the early levels when spell selection is slim.

## ON THE ROAD

**Setting:** On a country road and a pond

### Situation:

The player heard rumors of an Arbiter Bush growing a short distance out of the village. The berries from the Arbiter Bush are components that increase the effectiveness of spells and potions. The bush is located near a pond a few miles outside of town.

To become a journeyman mage, the player must discover an item, spell or creature that will further the study of magic. These berries are highly valued and would help the player take the next step in his career. He also knows to keep this knowledge secret or the other apprentices will swarm the area.

After an hour of travel, the player reaches the field where the pond is supposedly hidden within a grove of

trees on the opposite side. The area reeks of burnt flesh. A little ways off the road, the player finds a burned corpse. If the player inspects the body (SC 12), he will find a tattered map hidden in the corpse's sleeve. The map is undamaged. The map depicts the field, the grove and the pond. At the bottom of the map is an 'x' symbol with hollow dots in each section of the x. A successful history check (SC 15) will alert the player that this message is from a notorious necromantic group called the Bone Soldiers. Their practices have been banned in every civilized kingdom, and have not been heard from in several years.



A Balan sits in the treetops. It is a guardian of sacred places of nature. It uses its ability to detect motives to evaluate the player. If the player is of good character, it will climb down and communicate with telepathy. It will request the player assist in defending the trees from the Bone Soldiers. The Balan has used its magic and does not have enough to defend the grove if more Bone Soldiers return. If the player refuses or is unsure, the Balan tells the player it knows the location of the Arbiter Bush and will gather ten berries if the player cooperates. The Bone Soldiers will kill the bush if they find it.

If the player agrees, the Balan will lead the player to the grove. It warns the player that the Bone Soldiers travel in pairs and it only killed the one.

The other Bone Soldier will attack at dusk accompanied by a skeleton. The Bone Soldier makes no attempt to hide his approach. The Balan will attack the skeleton as soon as it enters the grove. If the player and

**Balan** HD: 2, HP: 10, AC: 4[15], Atk: strike (1d6), Move: 12, Save: 16, CL/XP: 3/60, Special: magic burst 1d6/HD.

A Balan is a guardian of sacred places in nature. Balans usually look like gorillas or other simians and come in different sizes and strengths. They speak by using telepathy. They can detect a person's motive and defend its place from those who would damage it.

The Balan has the ability to release raw magic once/day. The damage is a d6/HD of the Balan. Random effects occur when this raw energy is released.

**Choorl** 2<sup>nd</sup> level magic-user, HP: 6, AC: 5[14], Atk: dagger (1d4) or per spell, Move: 12, Save: 14, CL/XP: 4/120, Special: summon skeleton.

Choorl is a Bone Soldier, a group of necromancers who practice in secret because the practice has been banned in almost every kingdom. Choorl, like the rest of his ilk, believes mages are the rightful rulers of the world, and never to harm one of their own.

**2 Skeletons** HD: 1, HP: 4 each, AC: 8[11], Atk: strike (1d6), Move: 12, Save: 17, CL/XP: 1/15, Special: none.

Balan are able to defeat the skeleton, the Bone Soldier will Magic Missile the Balan and run if it doesn't die.

## Conclusion:

If the Balan is killed, the Bone Soldier will offer a truce and introduce himself as Choorl. He does not wish to harm another mage. He offers to split the berries and has no intention of killing the bush. The reason he killed the Balan was it killed his friend. All came to make a bargain with the Balan, but the guardian attacked without provocation. Like the player, he was here to get a few of the berries to enhance his magic. His group believes mages are too valuable to be wasted in petty squabbles.

If the player and Balan succeed in driving off the Bone Soldier, the Balan will reveal where the bush grows.

It will harvest ten berries for the player and inform him that he may return once a year to gather the Arbiter Berries.

The player may come away with an ally outside the law. Choorl could make an interesting person for future adventures and a possible new direction for the player. And with the discovery of the Arbiter Bush, the player will have a resource for his magic or to sell for other items.

## SQUISHY SQUAB HUNT

**Setting:** The woods

### Situation:

Master Terintar has run out of his special scroll ink. Of course this won't be an easy stroll into town to buy another bottle of ink. Nope. *"I'll need the fresh brain of a squishy squab. Hmm, make that at least two fresh brains. They may be the dumbest creature you'll ever meet. But this extreme dimness does have an advantage. Because of their near non-intelligence, they are invulnerable to mind magic. Sleep spells don't work on them. The best way to attract them is build a fire at night. They're attracted to the light. I'm sure you can figure out the rest."*

The squishy squab is a large flightless bird. They can jump ten feet and use their wings to glide. They also have large, powerful beaks used to break through the wood of a tree to eat the bugs and occasional squirrel.

If the player hunts the squishy squabs in the day time, there is only a 5% chance of finding them. If the

**Squishy Squab** HD: 1d4, HP: 2, AC: 9[10], Dam: 1 peck (1d2), Move: 12 (3 fly), Save: 18, CL/XP: A/15, Special: Immune to mind magic. Squishy squabs will only attack when attacked. Even when one is being attacked, the others will only make a loud noise and flutter their wings, but are not smart enough to run away.

player succeeds, he will find a group of 3d4 squishy squabs in the low branches of a tree sleeping. If a fire is built at night, the light will attract 3d4 squishy squabs. Even as the player hacks away, the squishy squabs will make a horrible racket, but will not attack until attacked.



## Conclusion:

The squishy squab is a comical encounter, but offers a valuable lesson, that some creatures are immune to the effects of a spell. Knowing your opponent's abilities will increase the player's chance of success.

## LITTLE GREEN BOOK

**Setting:** Guild house library

### Situation:

You and the other apprentice, Armon, were left behind as Master Terintar left to go adventure somewhere called White Plume Mountain. Another experiment must be tended to, but since Armon is older, you are sent to clean as he takes care of magic-user business. And to pay you back for slipping rat poop into his spell components.

As you place the books back onto the shelf, you notice a book you have never seen before. There is no title. The greenish leather has a faded gold circle on the front. If the player opens the book, his name will appear on the cover. Writing will begin to appear on the first page. It describes what he did and said recently. With a successful magic roll (SC 10), the player will identify it as a memory book, a simple magic item that can capture short time spans and can even draw pictures. It helps you remember what you've forgotten. As you look at the book, you see a lock laying in front of a cage. Under the picture, *Remember to lock the stirges' cage after cleaning.* Armon runs into the room, "They're loose!" The player hears a loud buzzing as two stirges swoop into the room.

For this encounter, Armon has no spells memorized. The player will have his. Armon will use a broom handle as a weapon.

**2 Stirges** HD: 1d+1, HP: 5 each, AC: 7[12], Atk: sting (1d4), Move: 7[12], Save: 17, CL/XP: 1/15, Special: blood drain (1d4).

## Conclusion:

This encounter will give the player some practical experience with interacting with a magic item. Armon can be fleshed out to give the player an ally or someone who competes for Terintar's attention. Armon would be the same level as the player with a bit more knowledge.



# Thief

## TO STEAL A PURSE

**Setting:** A busy town market and a tavern

**Situation:**

Sardwin the Sharp decides the player has had enough picking the pockets of dummies. *"It's market day. Return with a purse full of coins."* Sardwin will provide a mark (he will pat the mark on the back with chalky hands, marking him). After stealing the purse, the player is to go to Red Bear's Tavern. Sardwin warns of getting into a fight with the guards. *"We are men of shadow and stealth, not steel and brawn. We live longer and live better."*

The market is busy. The player will need to make an observation roll (SC 10) to keep track of Sardwin and another to keep track of the mark. When the player attempts to cut the purse, he must make two rolls. One to successfully cut the purse without the mark knowing (SC 12) and another to make sure no others witness the crime (SC 10).

The mark is a member of the thieves' guild. If the player returns with a different purse, Sardwin will know. If the player is caught while cutting the purse, the guildmate will cut the top of the player's hand doing 1hp of damage and instruct the player to return to Red Bear's. The wound will inform Sardwin that the player has failed.

If the crime is witnessed, customers in the market will alert the guard. There are five guards in the market. It will be difficult for the player to escape (SC 15). If the player wants to fight his way out of the situation, inform him that his opponents outnumber him, and are better skilled, better

armored, and better armed. Should the player still want to fight, one of the guards will subdue the player, then throw him into the pit (a locked grate covers the top). In the middle of the night, the grate is unlocked and the guard will order the player to go.



**Conclusion:**

If successful, the player will be rewarded with his own set of lockpicks and keeps the 25gp in the purse. If the player fails, Sardwin will provide more advice to the player, lowering the SC rolls by 2 and having the player return to the market the next day. If the player is thrown into the pit, Sardwin isn't bothered by it. *"It happens to the best of us. We all get caught. Remember to keep quiet about guild business. We'll get you out of the pits...eventually."*

The challenge demonstrates the benefits of belonging to a guild. If the player fails and is having a hard time of it, Sardwin will show the three scars on the back of his hand then order a round of drinks.

## GET WHAT'S IN THE BOX

**Setting:** Two buildings in a city at night

**Situation:**

The player is given a training task. Sardwin wants a package that is stored in a guarded building. The building is locked as is the chest that holds the package. Sardwin will not tell the player what is in the chest, only the number written on the outside. *"What fun would it be to spoil the surprise? That is the glory of being a thief, finding those surprises in the dark of the night."* Sardwin tells the player to absolutely not fight the guards. *"We can get you out of the pit, not out of the grave. If caught, surrender and play dumb which shouldn't be much of a stretch."*



There are two guards standing at the front door and one guard at the back door. Both doors are locked (SC 12). The guards do not have the key. There are two unlocked windows on the second floor. The guards are bored. If the player creates a distraction, the two guarding the front door will investigate leaving the door unguarded. This will give the player 2d8 rounds to act. This tactic will not work on the guard in the back. He is more experienced and will not leave his post. Any noise will put him on alert.

Once the player is inside, he must remain silent (SC 10) as not to alert the guards outside. If the player fails, he can attempt to hide in shadows (SC 10) to avoid detection. If this fails, the player will be cornered by the guards and thrown into the pit for the night. If the player attacks the guards, it will probably end the thief's young career.

The chest is on the second floor. It is locked with a simple padlock (SC 10). If the player fails three times, his lockpicks break. The player can try to bash the chest open, but that will alert the three guards. Inside the chest is a small pouch of uncut gems. There is also a hidden compartment at the bottom of the container (SC of 12). Within the hidden compartment is a parchment wrapped around a masterwork dagger (+1 non-magical dagger). The parchment reads: *"Well done footpad, return home so we can celebrate the conclusion of your training. And don't forget the gems, they are a present from the best instructor in the world...me."*

The player has the option of using the window as an escape route, but will need to figure out how to climb down 20 feet. If the player uses a rope, he automatically succeeds. If the player tries to scale down the wall (SC 12) and fails, he will fall and suffer 1d6-1 damage. To leave by the front door, the player will need to make another distraction.



**2 Front Guards** 1<sup>st</sup> lvl fighters, HP: 7 each, AC: 5 [14], Atk: weapon (1d6), Move: 12, Save: 14, CL/XP: 1/15, Special: none. They wear ringmail and have shields. Both are armed with short swords.

**Rear Guard** 3<sup>rd</sup> lvl fighter, HP: 14, AC:1[18] Atk: weapon (8+2), Move: 12, Save: 12, CL/XP: 3/60, Special: +1 to hit due to level. He wears +1 chain mail and has a +1 shield. He wields a +1 long sword.

### Conclusion:

There are several ways for this to end. First, the player is killed in a fight with the guards. Second, the player is captured and will remain a guest in the pits until the next morning. In which case, the player will remain a footpad and continue his training. Third, the player succeeds in getting the gems, but does not discover the secret compartment. The trainer instructs the footpad to observe the smallest details. They tell the truth where the larger details conceal the truth. And fourth, the player succeeds in bringing home the gems, dagger and note. Sardwin will praise his apprentice and hold a small party in a guild-friendly tavern where he is introduced to others in the guild. The uncut gems (10gp each) and master crafted dagger are a gift from Sardwin.

## THE CLEANER

**Setting:** A tomb

### Situation:

After a grueling evening of scaling walls, picking pockets, and being quiet, Sardwin the Sharp announces, "*Time to get dirty, rogue.*" He takes you to the edge of town that overlooks the ancient barrows of the Northmen.

*"A band of adventurers have broken into one of the barrows. They took out their share of loot, but they always miss something. None of us was with them. I want you to go into the barrow and find what they left behind. Sometimes they stash items for later."* Sardwin pulls a dagger from his boot and offers it to you. "*This **torch knife** will let you see in the dark (treat as torch). Be smart. Creatures that make their homes in tombs are never to be taken lightly. Stick to the rooms they've cleared and look for the secrets they missed.*"

Beneath the barrow is a simple three-room tomb with one secret room. The walls and floor are made of hard-packed earth with stone inset for reinforcement.



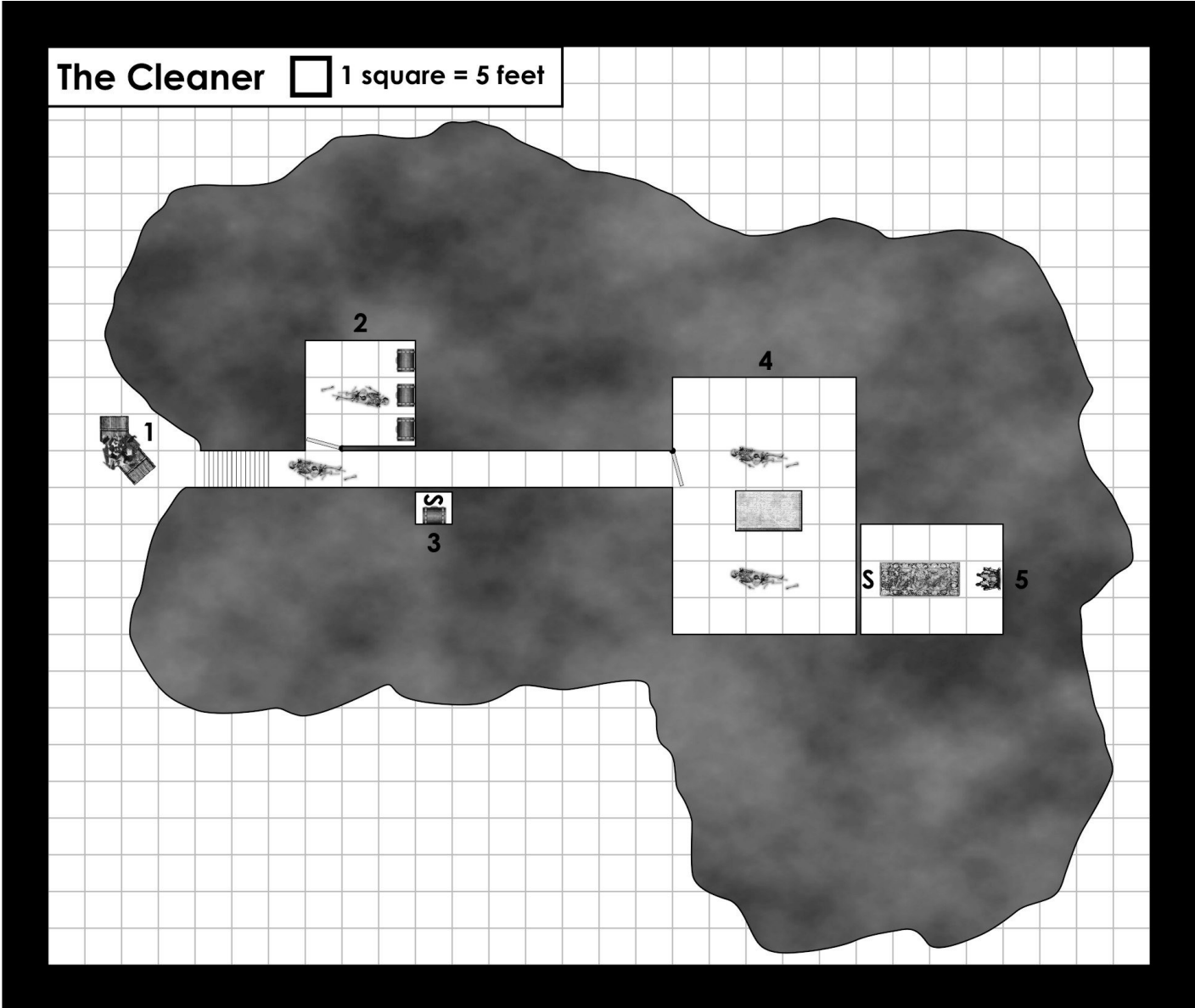
1. The stone that sealed the tomb is broken, and the smell of rot is strong. A skeleton dressed in ragged leathers is sprawled across the floor of the opening. Its skull is split and ribs crushed. It still clutches a rusty battle axe.

2. Another shattered skeleton lies on the floor. Seven copper coins are hidden in the corner. There are three chests against the east wall. All have been pried open. Two are completely empty and one has clothes tossed around it. None of the clothes look to be in good condition.

3. The adventurers missed this secret door. One of the reinforced stones is a trigger; it opens a small three-foot opening in the wall. A chest is inside. It

is locked (SC 10) and trapped with a vial of sleeping gas that will break when the lid is opened (SC 10). When the vial breaks, the player must make a save or sleep for 8 hours. Inside is a small pouch with two gems (10gp each) and 25gps with two short swords of good quality.

4. This large room has been ransacked. Two more skeletal bodies lie on the ground flanking a stone table. Nothing of value remains in this room. If the player investigates, he will notice two round areas that are discolored, probably where urns or statues once stood. The door to the east looks like someone was unsuccessful in their attempt to hack it open. A large lock (SC 12) secures the door.



5. A second secret room the adventurers failed to notice. A tattered rug runs the length of the room and ends at a desiccated body wearing rusted armor with a mummified bird on its shoulder. It sits on a wooden throne, and in its hand is a golden rod (25gp), the symbol of his chieftain status. When the player enters, the zombie raven will attack.

**Raven, Zombie** HD: 1d4, HP: 2, AC: 6[13], Atk: 1 peck (1d2 + disease), Move: 9, Save 17, CL/XP: B/10, Special: Disease.

## Conclusion:

This encounter requires the player to make use of most of his skills. In here, a failure can have severe consequences. If the player fails to return by the morning, Sardwin will fetch him. When Sardwin revives the novice, he will walk through the tomb and point out things to watch for. If the player returns with the golden rod, Sardwin will be pleased and allow the player to keep the torch knife. (See New Magic Items for more details.)

## Details

**Setting:** A cabin

### Situation:

Sardwin the Sharp walks into the room and chuckles when he sees you. *"Test time."* He will not provide any information as he takes you through the backstreets. He stops at the edge of an alley that ends at a small opening where a small cabin sits off a side street. *"Study the cabin, its inhabitants and surroundings. Figure out what you're going to need to be successful. There is something I want in there."* When you ask what it is he shakes his head. *"That's for you to figure out. A thief needs to know what's valuable and needs to make quick appraisals. The knowledge of what's*

*worth taking and what's not is the difference between a successful thief and a petty criminal. There is an art in each choice, from deciding which entry to use, opening the lock, searching the home, appraising the valuables and getting out before anyone knows you are there. Know this, your choice could decide the fate of a guild brother. See me in two days time."* Sardwin leaves the player to begin his study.

The GM will need to play out the day for the player. When it comes time for the heist, play up the tension by having the player hear noises, guards passing by and the like. The important details are as follows. The man who lives in the cabin is Hendrid. He lives in his cabin with a large dog named Blue. The cabin is not on a busy street, but a guard patrol frequently passes by and they all know Hendrid and will stop and chat. In the morning, Hendrid and Blue take a short walk outside the wall so Blue can do his dog business then visit the grave of Navinia, Hendrid's wife who passed. He then returns home and leaves again without Blue. He goes to the city magistrate's office and spends most of his day there, returning home in the afternoon. (If the player is inquisitive about why Hendrid is there, he is the advisor to the magistrate.) He and Blue go for a walk in the evening, then both visit Red Bear's Tavern. Some nights he just stays to eat, and other nights he will sit into the morning talking to friends.

The cabin is a one-story structure. There is one door and one window in the front facing the street and another window around the back. The windows are shuttered closed at night. During the day, they are cracked open. The door is locked (SC 12). Guard patrols pass by every 20 minutes. At night, traffic is light, a 10% chance of travelers. During the day, there is a 30% chance.

Blue is a loud barker. If the player enters and



takes no precautions, Blue will bark and alert the guards, who will arrive in 2d4 rounds. Blue will not attack unless the player attacks Hendrid. Hendrid has no ability to defend himself other than to hide behind things.

**Blue** dog, HD: 1, HP: 3, AC: 8[11], Atk: 1 bite (1d4), Move: 8, Save 16, CL/XP: 1/15, Special: none.

If the player can get into the cabin without alerting anyone, they will find the cabin simple in layout. The main room; heavy oak table, two chairs, fireplace and a small rug made of what looks like old shirts and pants. A small hearth has cookware hanging on pegs nailed into the stonework. In the back part of the room are a bed and a rug where Hendrid and Blue sleep. Next to the bed is a small stool used as a night stand. On the stool is a half-burned candle in a silver candle holder (5gp). Hanging over the bed is a crude painting of Hendrid, Navinia and Blue as a pup. Under the bed is a small flat chest, locked (SC 10). Inside are extra clothes, a money pouch with 45sp and a silver ring (10sp), Nirvinia's wedding ring. In small closet is extra food and a broom.

What Sardwin wants is the painting. Though it is worthless to anyone else it is the most valuable item to Hendrid. Sardwin wants it to blackmail Hendrid into advising the magistrate about an upcoming trial in favor of one of the guild brothers. Though the other items have some monetary value, the real prize is the painting.

### **Conclusion:**

Sardwin hopes the player will make the connection. He will not chastise the player if the wrong items were taken. *"Because we live outside the rules that the world has set down, we must always consider our actions carefully. What may*

*be of no worth to you may be worth everything to another. A thief needs to recognize this and act accordingly."*

If the player returns with the painting, Sardwin will be very pleased and reward the player with a set of quality lockpicks (giving the player +1 to lock picking rolls).

# Red Bear's Tavern

There is always that place where after a long day's work you can go to relax, feel welcome and be among friends. Red Bear's Tavern is such a place. It is monument to friendship as much as it is a tavern. Its scarred walls and furniture is a small honor for those who've spent their nights talking and laughing here. The fire is warm, and the tankards are big. Join your friends at Red Bear's and share a story. A sign over the bar lets everyone know the two laws of Red Bear's, no weapons in a fight and have a good time.

Red Bear's is a simple two-story building constructed with the beautiful Valendor Wood. The sign is a red-furred bear lounging against a tree with a tankard on its belly. The soldiers consider this place sacred ground. The names of killed soldiers are carved into the walls, beams, ceiling and furniture. Buzzard welcomes anyone to honor a friend or family member by carving their name on any open space.

Once a week, Buzzard has a story night. Soldiers and visitors are encouraged to tell their latest tale. The stories don't need to be true, just not boring. The storyteller who receives the loudest cheer is the winner, and has the honor of using the Tall Tale Tankard for the night. Buzzard makes sure the winner never sees the bottom of the oversized tankard.

But even Red Bear's has a seedy side. The thieves' guild was entrenched long before Buzzard took over. He tried to remove them, but many of the soldiers took advantage of the guild's services and Buzzard was getting a nice pile of coin to turn a blind eye. Buzzard has become friends with a

few of the guild members and decided as long as the soldiers have no problems with the guild, he would allow them to continue.

Buzzard keeps the atmosphere alive and active. As much as they honor the people who have died, Red Bear's is more about appreciating your friends in the present.

## THE STAFF

**Buzzard** (Owner: human, male, 6'1", 185lbs, balding long red hair, beard, brown eyes, scar on his left arm)

Buzzard's real name is Eric of Donavon, the third son of a mercenary, Red Bear. He traveled extensively with his father, learning a variety of skills. Eric grew fast and always seemed to be eating. His father gave him a nickname, Buzzard, a mercenary tradition.

Buzzard is an accomplished adventurer having gone on several expeditions over the years and survived, relatively intact. He earned the scar on his left arm after a battle with a warband of ogres. He was unable to use it for a year. After this, he traveled with a minstrel group. He gained some minor fame and even played for the king once.

Buzzard grew tired of the travel. He used his money to buy an old tavern and expanded it. He named the tavern after his father. It has become a shrine dedicated to family and friends. In a short time, Red Bear's Tavern became one of the most popular taverns in the city.

**Chola** (Lead Barmaid: human, female, 5'10', 170lbs, long blond hair, blue eyes)

Chola is popular among the soldiers. She is a tall, heavyset woman with lots of attitude who has no trouble putting the garrison soldiers, mercenaries and travelers in their place if they get confrontational or rude. She has a beautiful singing voice, and after much encouragement and tips, she will sing songs as she serves.

She is the one who takes care of Eric (Buzzard) and the only one allowed to call him Eric. Chola loves Eric, but he has shown no interest in her. She would force the issue, but is afraid she may scare him off.

Chola is in charge of the other barmaids. She is often at odds with Regina. Her relationship with Yurol, the head cook, is one argument after another. If Buzzard hears them, he ends it quickly. Chola knows Regina is working on the side for the thieves' guild, but its unsure what she does.

**Max** (Bouncer: human, male, 6'2", 240lbs, shaved head, black muttonchops, discolored eyes)

Max is quiet and intimidating. He stands in the corner, ever vigilant. If a fight breaks out, he will not get involved unless someone draws a weapon, at that point he will dispatch the rule breaker. The patrons tell a story when Max took on three armed mercenaries. After he was stabbed and slashed a dozen times, only Max stood at the end of the fight.

Max is a long-time friend of Buzzard. They grew up in the mercenaries together, but Max was caught within a magical backlash created by the Requiem, a band of necromancers the mercenaries were hired to kill. While the others in Max's group were killed, the necromancers took him prisoner. Max will not speak of it. He's not sure

why they freed him. Buzzard sees to it that Max is taken care of. Brothers for life.

**Yurol** (Cook: human, male, 5'6", 200lbs, short blond hair, brown eyes)

Yurol is a short, portly cook with a talent for good food. He has worked at Red Bear's for three months, but is already making his mark on how he wants his kitchen run. He does not tolerate Chola coming in and making demands. And because his food is exceptional, Buzzard has told Chola to back off. Despite their hostile relationship, Yurol has taken a liking to Chola and enjoys their arguments.

Yurol is a member of the thieves, guild. Bertram (see Axe Room) believed the guild needed another member present. Buzzard has no idea Yurol is a guild member. Yurol is the one who accepts deliveries throughout the day, making it much easier to smuggle in fenced goods. Part of the agreement with the guild is he has access to good ingredients.

Compliments about his food will always receive a positive reaction from Yurol. He knows his primary job is getting the stolen merchandise in and out, but he's passionate about his food. He dreams of opening his own tavern.

## OTHER STAFF

**Regina** (serving girl, human, female, 5'2", 115lbs, short blond hair, brown eyes, CHA 11)

Regina worked here when it belonged to the former owners. With the help of the soldiers she supplies, Regina was able to keep her position when Buzzard tried to push her and Bertram out. Regina is the person the soldiers contact when they want a woman for the evening or something to drink that may not be on the menu. She is paid



well by the thieves' guild and she charges higher prices to skim a few coins off the top.

Gretchen and Holly work for her. Regina is protective of her girls, but if either try to get out of work, she will verbally and physically assault them. If they don't work, less money is coming in and that is unacceptable. Her main contact within the guild is Bertram, but she has contacts outside the tavern to other illegal items. Bertram dislikes it when she brings in items he did not authorize.

**Holly** (serving girl, human, female, 5'7", 110lbs, red hair, blue eyes, scars on neck and hands, CHA 13)

Holly is an attractive young girl. She is intelligent, but guarded. When she was younger, she tried to run a scam on a few of the thieves' guild members and ended up with her scars. She now works for Regina who recruited her after finding Holly in one of the guild member's slave pens. Regina does not let her forget who saved her.

Holly likes working at Red Bear's and doesn't mind entertaining the soldiers. She plays a balancing act keeping Chola and Regina happy. Occasionally she reports the secret activities to Chola. Holly would like to work at Red Bear's without being on Regina's leash.

**Mina** (serving girl, half-elf, female, 5'3", 100lbs, long dark hair, gray eyes, CHA 17)

Mina is an attractive girl who is incredibly clumsy. She never knew her parents. The village she lived in was burned down by outland barbarians. Chola has adopted her, but has very little patience for the girl's clumsiness. Mina has a crush on one of the young soldiers, Hubert, but keeps this to herself.

**Gretchen** (serving girl, human, female, 4'10", 140lbs, long blond hair, CHA 11)

"Little, but mighty" is Gretchen's motto. She has no problem voicing her opinion if she happens upon a conversation at a table. She also lets a person know when she likes him. This 'liking' comes and goes. If her attention is returned, she quickly moves on to the next guy. She is a good server who can handle herself. Gretchen is a fledgling member of the thieves' guild and listens to the soldiers' conversations for any patrol information and to the conquests of adventurers.

**Ivana** (serving girl, human, female, 5'4", 120lbs, short blond hair, CHA 12)

Ivana is the daughter of a deceased soldier. Her mother pleaded with Buzzard to take Ivana. She is an odd girl and something about her makes Buzzard uncomfortable. Ivana has an expressionless face, does not laugh and her smile always seems forced. She is a member of a blood cult.

Only when she meets with the cult does she feel alive. She recently killed her first person and discovered she liked it.

**Derrick** (human, male, 5'7", 120lbs, short dark hair, pock-marked face, scars on his forearms and back)

Derrick is a good helper in the kitchen whose energy seems to be boundless. Despite his slight frame, Derrick can manage to move objects heavier than himself (STR 15). A member of the thieves' guild, he dislikes Yurol, but likes Buzzard a lot. He finds himself working his tavern job that he sometimes forgets he is there for another purpose. He'd prefer to just work for Buzzard. Derrick's father was supposedly a rat and informed on members of

the guild. Derrick suffered the punishment. Though he despises the guild, he will do nothing against them. He has two younger brothers apprenticing to become guild members.

## MAIN FLOOR

### A. Main Room

This is the main serving area. The walls, tables and chairs have small carvings, some crude, some elaborate and most bear the names of fallen soldiers and friends. There is a small stage along the west wall for the performers and storytellers. He has entertainers at least once a week, sometimes more if there is a holiday or an occasion to celebrate. There are a dozen tables of various sizes and a standing bar. The large fireplaces on the west and south walls light and heat the room.

### B. Standing Bar

This is where Buzzard works. He keeps his money in a bucket under the bar. When the bucket is full, he takes it to his room to be put in his strongbox later. There is also a knight killer crossbow hidden beneath the bar. The bolt has a blunt end and a tiny hollow tip that explodes out a choking dust that incapacitates anyone in a 10' radius. He only uses this if things get dangerous. Above the bar are the two rules carved into a fancy sign of Valendor Wood.

### C. Kitchen

Yurol's kitchen is clean and orderly. Everything has a place. If you enter his kitchen, either help or get out. There is an oversized door in the north wall where he receives deliveries. It is barred from the inside during the daytime, and Buzzard locks it at night. Yurol smuggles in various stolen goods mixed

in with the legitimate deliveries. During working hours, Yurol and Derrick are cooking. During this time, neither has time to talk or a sense of humor.

### D. Pantry

Yurol keeps a well-stocked pantry. Extra casks of wine and ale are stored here for busy nights. One of the floorboards is removable and is where Yurol hides certain illegal items from Bertram to buy expensive ingredients. Also hidden is a list of dates and what items were delivered. If Bertram discovers the existence of this list, he would have Yurol's hands broken. Yurol is compulsive about keeping things in order. No names are mentioned on the list, and he only keeps the exchanges for two weeks.

### E. Locked Door to the Cellar

This door is always kept locked (SC 10). Buzzard and Yurol have the key. The stairs go to the basement (N). With access to the basement, hiding the comings and goings of other guild members has been easier.

### F. Locked Door to the Private Rooms

Buzzard, Max and Chorl have the key to this door (SC 10). It allows access to their private rooms upstairs.

## PRIVATE ROOMS

### **Dagger Room** (3sp/night)

This is a standard room with a simple cot and chest (no lock). It is difficult to sleep in this room during a busy night because of its location next to the tavern. There are several names scrawled on the wall here. The faint odor of vomit lingers in the room. The Dagger Room is often given to a drunk soldier.

### **Sword Room** (8sp/night)

Also known as the gray room because of the color of the north wall. It was the outside wall to the tavern before it was expanded. Inside are two cots, each with a foot chest and a table with two stools. There is also a rope hanging by the table to summon a tavern worker.

One of the table legs is hollow and hides a map to where a chest is buried containing a stolen payroll. Several months ago, Herbert Greenpants stole the payroll of his old mercenary company, the Gold Falcons. He hid here for three days. When none of the Gold Falcons showed, he thought he was in the clear. Twenty feet outside the Red Bear's Tavern a member of the Gold Falcons

severed Herbert's spine. Herbert died before he could say where the money was hidden. The map is easy to follow, but Herbert was lousy at counting. If the players take the time to investigate and decipher the landmarks (SC 20), they should be able to find the small metal chest containing 350sp.

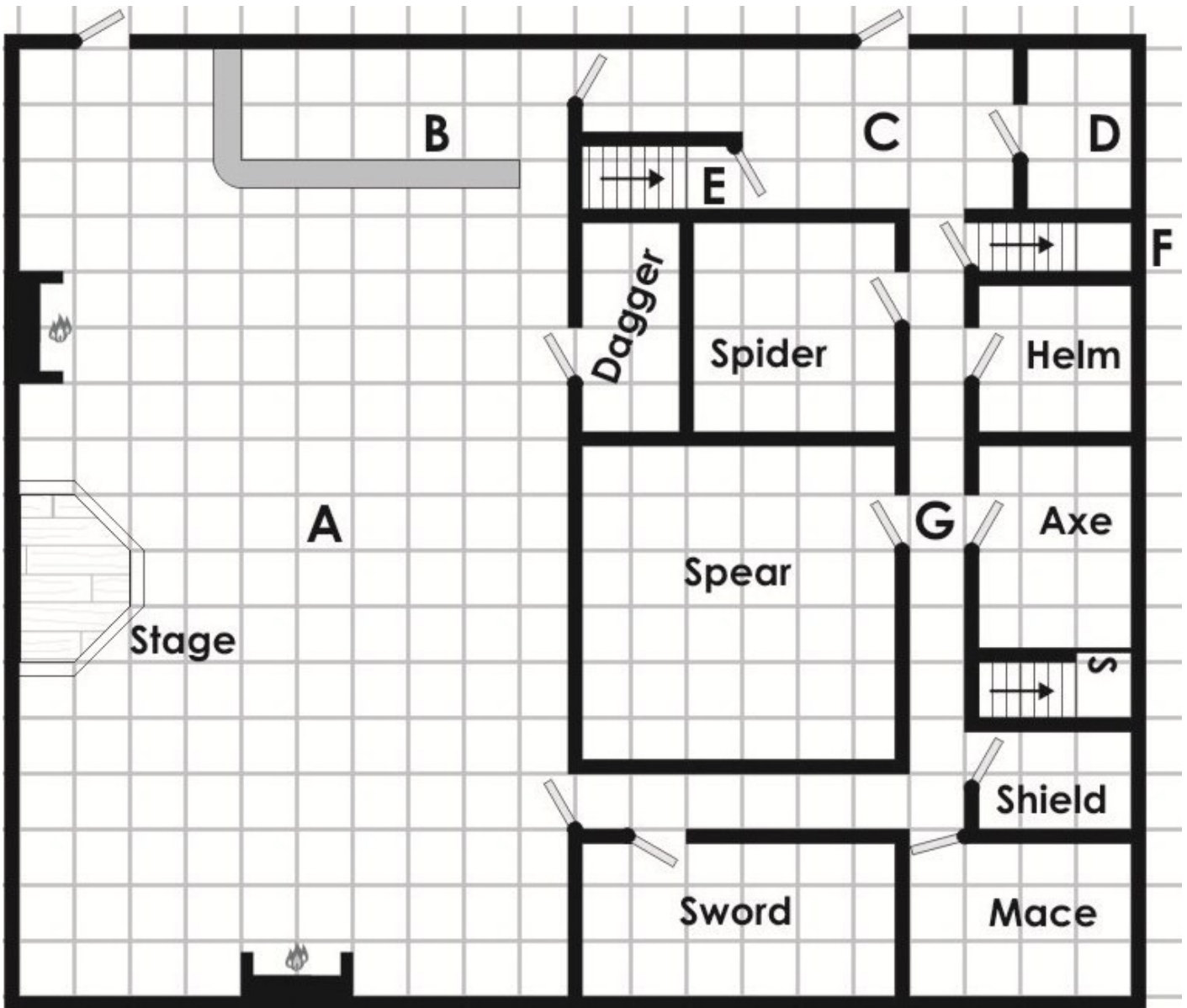
### **Ofgar's Room**, formerly the Mace Room (6sp/night)

The Mace Room has the same accommodations as the Dagger Room, a simple cot and chest, but it's quieter and doesn't stink of vomit. The Mace Room was the semi-permanent room of Ofgar for three years. He was a mercenary, professional gambler and drunkard. Less than a year ago, Buzzard found Ofgar dead on the floor.

Ofgar hid a ledger in the ceiling above his cot. There are notes about many of the soldiers, their personal lives and gambling habits. He goes into great detail and a running tally of how much he won or lost from each soldier. Some of the details are private, like mistresses, sleeping on duty, things said about a superior, and many other embarrassing or potential harmful notes.







### Shield Room (5sp/night)

This is the smallest of the rentable rooms, but the most private. Because of its location, it tends to be quiet. The furnishings are simple, but good quality. It has a real bed with a feather mattress, rag quilt, a heavy wooden chest (no lock) and shelves and pegs on the north wall.

Tavern patrons say the Shield Room is haunted, phantom footsteps and disembodied voices can be heard in the room when no one else is there. People have been awakened by loud sounds in the middle of the night. And others say they have found things on the floor that were hung

up the night before even though the room remained locked.

There is a hidden passage behind the north wall. The thieves' guild uses the secret passage to access the sewers (see The Axe Room). Bertram gets angry when members are not careful when using the stairs.

### Room of the Spear (15sp/night)

This is Buzzard's fancy room, it's has a real bed, fancy table and chairs, layered rugs and a rope that summons Regina. If a patron wishes to pay an additional 5sp, he can have one of the other

serving girls assigned to him for the evening. Buzzard only rents this room out to people he knows or those who spend a lot of money in the tavern. He takes special pride in the condition and quality of this room and doesn't want someone destroying it.

Regina is assigned to this room and offers anyone staying here to taste the pleasures of a woman and illegal drinks from afar. Her prices are high, but she is very good at her job. She has many friends within the soldiers that frequent the tavern. She has done business with many of them.

### **Spider Room** (*special*)

This room is used for private meetings, parties or as a gambling room. Once a week, a group of soldiers reserve the room to play dice and cards. A large table dominates the middle of the room, but cots can be put around it for long games. Buzzard charges 10sp/ head and he will supply the room with food and drinks for the night. A rope summons a tavern worker to deliver food and drinks.

### **Axe Room** (*rented already*)

The Axe Room is the permanent residence Bertram Blackbutter. He has lived here for over five years. He is a mid-level thieves' guild member. He allows the access to the sewers from a secret door in his room. He's very particular who comes and goes. He is in charge of the thieves' guild action within Red Bear's Tavern. When in the tavern common room, he is accompanied by at least one other guild member. He has Regina and Yoral do all the face-to-face business. He is in charge of arranging the exchanges and setting the prices.

He keeps his money stashed within a steel cabinet. He has the key is in two parts. One part is hidden in the heel of his boot. The other part is

hidden in plain sight; it is part of the handle of the lantern he keeps on his table. He sends the thieves' guild 100sp/week and kicks 25sp to Buzzard. What he makes above that he keeps. Part of his money is stashed in the cabinet, 200sp and another 200sp is hidden in another section of the city.

### **The Battered Helmet Room** (*6sp/night*)

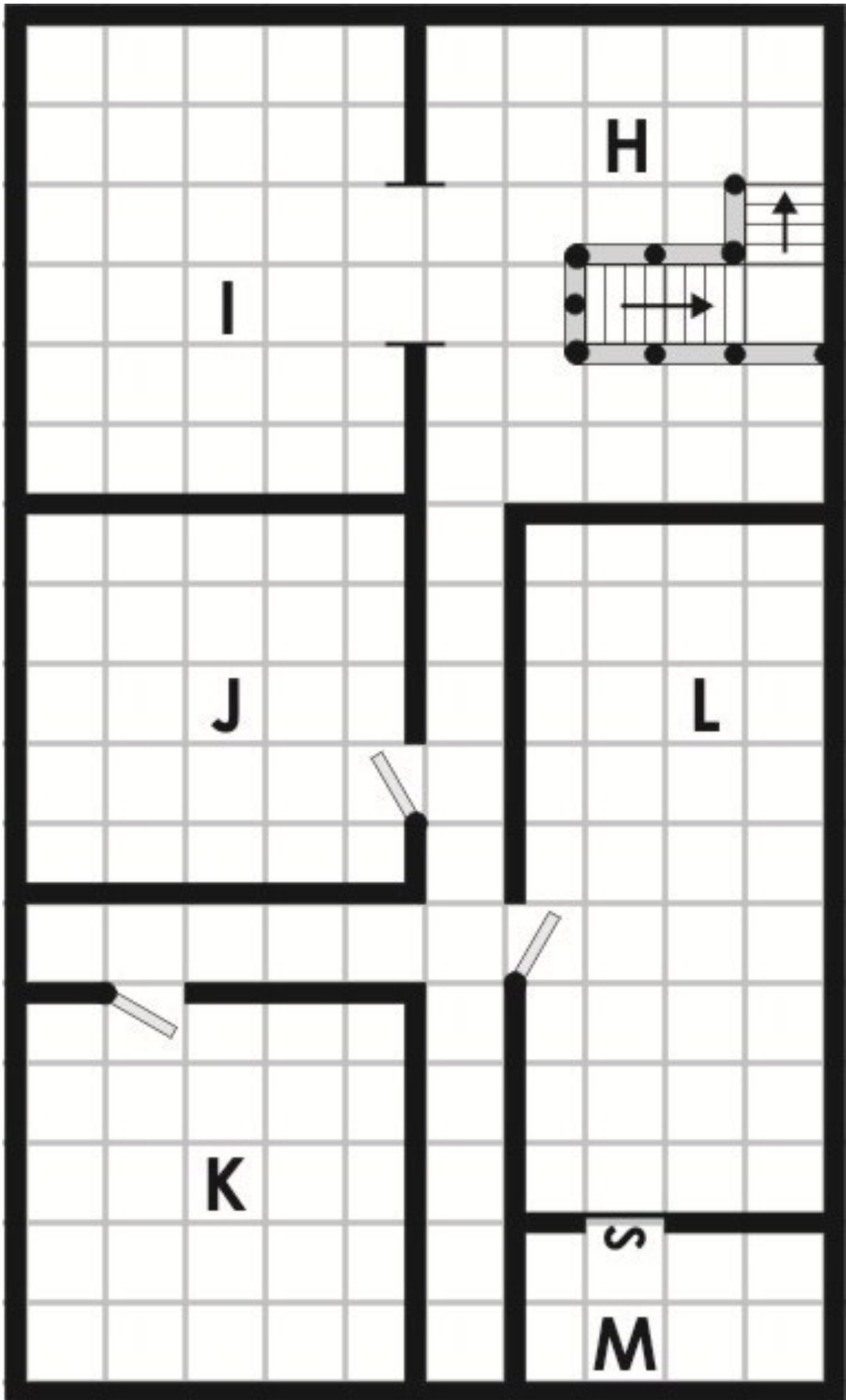
The Battered Helmet Room contains a comfortable bed, a lockable chest, a small table and stool. On the wall are several pegs for clothes and weapons. This room has a rope to summon Regina. She offers exotic drinks and tempts the occupant with a woman. Regina is uncomfortable in this room. She was attacked in this room six months ago by a drunken mercenary. She was severely beaten before Max kicked the door down.

This room has always been a favorite of travelers who wish for quiet. There is a hidden compartment in the floor beneath the bed. Portis, a merchant, stays in this room when in town. He made the secret compartment to hide his most valuable possessions. Currently it is empty.

## **SECOND FLOOR**

### **H. Trophy Room**

At the top of the stairs is a room where Buzzard displays some of the trophies he collected in his travels. One wall is dedicated to all the exotic weapons used by other cultures he's encountered and pieces of armor worn by leaders who were captured or killed. His favorite section is his collection of musical instruments. There are over twenty different types of instruments, and Buzzard can play them all. His favorite is a mandolin given to him by the beautiful minstrel Eloria.



## **I. Sitting Room**

When Buzzard has friends over, they stay here and enjoy every comfort available. There are large cushioned chairs, tables and shelves. Once a month, he has some of his mercenary friends get together and play a variety of gambling games. Once in a great while if Buzzard takes a liking to someone, he will invite them to join the game.

## **J. Max's Room**

It is a simple room with a cot, footlocker (SC 10) and the only decoration on the wall is his old battered shield. Max has extra clothes and a good quality broadsword (+1 non-magical) and 120sp. Max doesn't spend much of his money since he likes Yurol's food and he stays here for free. The one thing he will spend money on is good boots. In one of the corners is a pile of three pairs of boots he always means to get repaired, but never does.

## **K. Chola's Room**

Chola's room is decorated with small tasteful paintings, silk drapes and furnished with good quality furniture. She has a small collection of books she values above all else. Two were gifted to her from when her father passed, and one was a tip from a customer. The books her father gave her are records of the Justicars, one of the oldest mercenary companies in the land. These records detail the members and battles during a five-year period. The book given by the patron is a collection of bawdy poetry.

## **L. Buzzard's Bedroom**

This room is Buzzard's private quarters. Only the southern section of the room has any furnishings. Buzzard feels more comfortable sleeping in smaller quarters. It's not uncommon for him to sleep in one

of the guest rooms on the first floor. The furnishings are simple. He has a couple of chests that are open and heaped with clothes. Chola has the young servant girls take care of his washing, but he tends to wear the same clothes each day. He doesn't see the point of all the fancy clothes unless someone is going to meet the king, high priest or the gods themselves. A section of the wall can be pushed in and moved to the side to allow access to his secret room (M).

## **M. Secret Room**

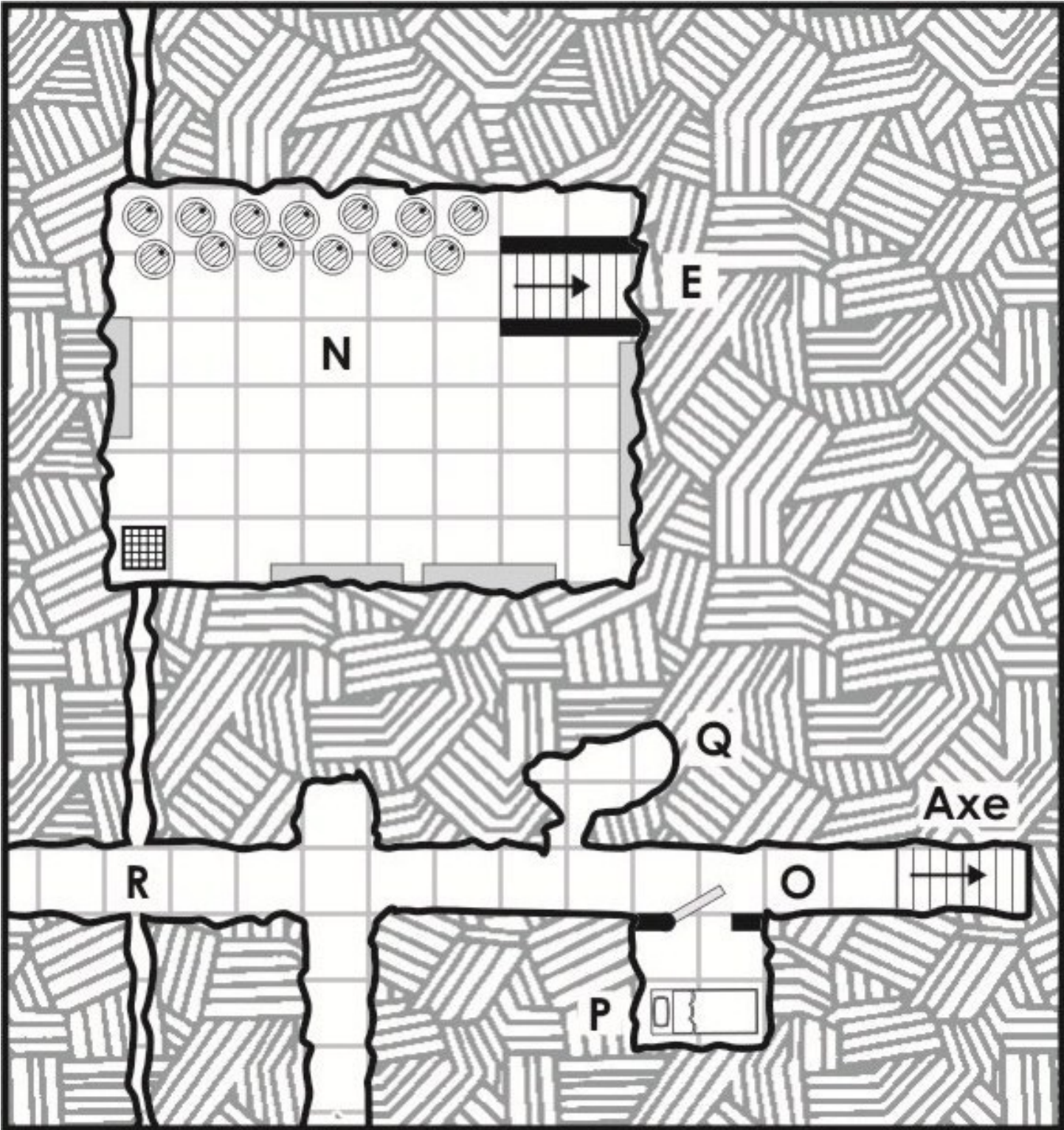
This is where Buzzard keeps his money. Chola and Max know about the room. Chola is in here often to pay for supplies or errands. Buzzard doesn't know how much he has. Coins are heaped in buckets and litter the floor where a bucket has been overturned. There is one medium sized chest by a desk that contains most of the coins. At any one time there can be 100 to 800cp (d8) and 10 to 100sp (d10). Once a month, he and Max take the coins to the money changer. In a small coffer on the desk are a small stack of promissory notes worth 100 to 400sp at any one time. If someone needs to borrow money, Buzzard has no problem giving them money. He never loans, just gives. But if someone steals a single copper from him, he will ban the person from the tavern.

# **TAVERN CELLAR**

## **N. CELLAR**

This is where the extra casks of wine, ale and beer are kept. Cheese wheels are wrapped in cloth and sit on a table, meat carcasses are kept in the southeast corner hung over a sewer grate. At any one time there is 200sp to 500sp worth of booze and food stored.





Some of the barrels store illegal goods that Bertrum has ordered. This includes various poisons and alcohol, including the Dark Seed brewed by a clan of dwarves who are considered insane even by their own kind. Hallucinations and high emotions come with drinking a small amount. Soldiers like it recreationally. Yorul and Regina have access to the secret stash.

The grate is locked (SC 10) into place, but Yurol has a copy of the key. It drops a few feet to the sewers (R). It is used to smuggle people that are desperate to get out of town. Yurol will hide them in a barrel then put it on a wagon that will take them outside of town. This is a giant pain for Yurol. He gets agitated and distracted during the whole smuggling-out-people process.

## O. SECRET PASSAGE

Bertrum has this passage guarded by Obannon, a member of the guild who contracted lycanthropy. He is a wererat who controls a small army of rats. He knows the sewers as well as anyone. If someone comes into the area without giving him the thief hand signal (right index finger placed on the side of his nose) he will bar their entry. He uses his stealth and knowledge of the sewers to keep the unwelcome visitors out. He can get the assistance of the rats from Q and if given time can gather 3d6 additional giant rats.

## P. OBANNON'S ROOM

This small room is where Obannon sleeps. He keeps his place free of clutter. There is a small cot and on the walls are hundreds of pictures of rats and sewers and other odd pictures and strange creatures. If the players take the time to study the bizarre mural they may deduct it a pictorial

map of the sewers and the dangers that it holds. A picture of note is of a chest sunk into muck with a large tentacle wrapped around it. Under the bed is a flat chest with items he's collected in the sewers: a pouch that has 2gp, 7sp and 12cp, a petrified sensory stalk of an otyugh and crescent-shaped knife.

**Obannon, Wererat:** HD 3; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 bite (1d3), 1 weapon (1d6); Move 12; Save 14; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Lycanthropy, control rats, surprise. Can use his thief skills and can attack for double damage on a backstab.

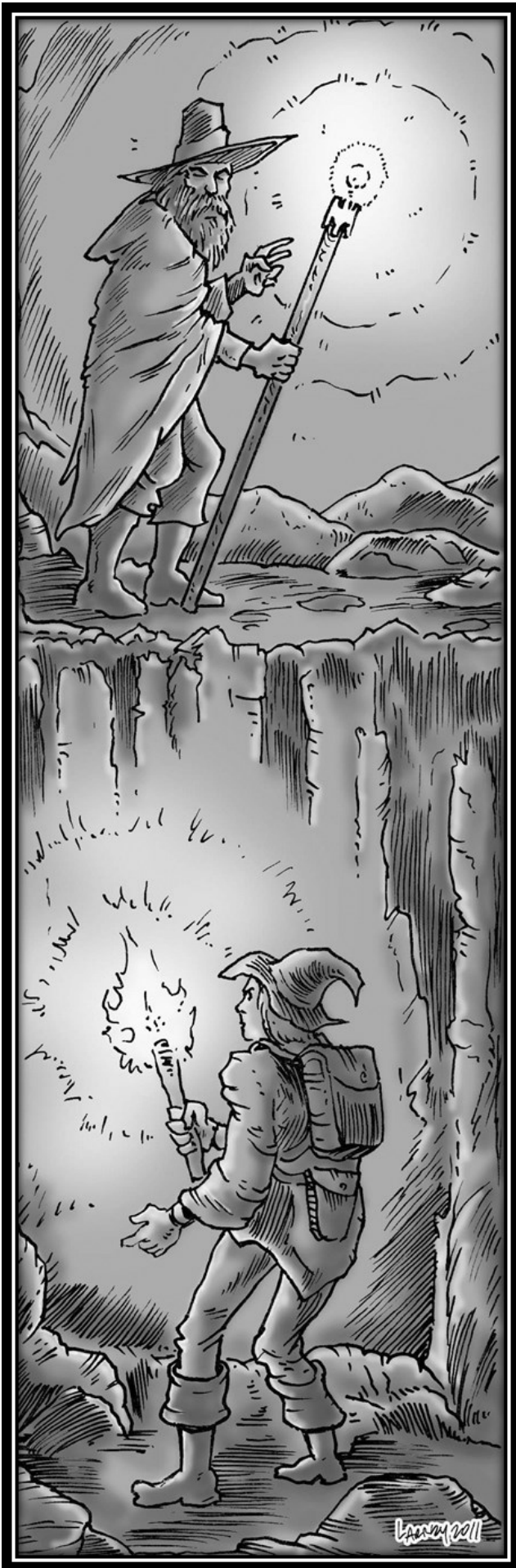
## Q. GIANT RAT NEST

This is the home of fourteen giant rats along with a hundred normal rats. They are controlled by Obannon and obey without question. There is nothing of value within the nest.

**14 Giant Rats:** HD 1d4hp; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 bite (1d3); Move 12; Save 18; CL/XP A/5; Special: 5% are diseased.

## R. SEWERS

The sewers run through with passages shooting off in nearly every direction. There are drainage ditches that take the sewage out to the riverside. It's easy to get lost in the sewers with all the winding passages, many of which double back on themselves and the unchecked horrors that rule below the town.



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# Betrayal at Bender's End

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## GM NOTES

This adventure is built for 1st level characters to kill whatever they want, destroy whatever they want and take whatever they want. There are points where talking might have a better result, but talking is overrated. GMs should use this adventure to teach the newbs the basic mechanics of the game. There is enough in here for each class to do. I should also add, if you haven't guessed already, this adventure is snarky in writing tone. Oh, one more thing. Make sure they have backup characters. Just say'n.

So let's run down the premise of the adventure. The main protagonist is Borton, a human mercenary who struck a deal with a bunch of goblins. For some easy money, he came up with the scheme to hire Kothor, because Borton knew it was Brother Owens' favorite acolyte, and captured him under the guise of clearing out a goblin den and collecting a ransom. Borton hired a group of inept adventurers to travel with them. Then the plan was to kill everyone except for Kothor and have the goblins ransom off the snot-nosed acolyte.

It was a simple plan that was nearly derailed when Manny the Magic-User whipped out a Wand of Fireballs in a fit of rage and nearly killed everyone. Borton believes with the ransom and having a small force of goblins to do his dirty work, he's got it all figured out.

## CURRENT SITUATION

First off, the players shouldn't need much of reason to go on an adventure. This is the reason they are sitting around a table with weird dice and risk being ostracized by society. But should the players need a reason tell them this...

As the party finishes their equipment shopping, they decide to hit Red Bear's Tavern because that is the tavern that is included. Brother Owen enters the tavern and approaches the party before they can put tankard to lips. *"You there. Adventurers."* The side of his mouth twitches involuntarily as he speaks the word. *"I am in need of your assistance. I am Brother Owen, master of the temple. My temple is the only place to be healed, cured or restored in a week's walk. You will need to earn the right for those services. One of my idiot acolytes, Kothor, has provided such an opportunity."* Even if the party has a cleric, the GM should explain being banned from the only healing temple in a seven-days walk is not good adventuring business.

*"Kothor, my afore mentioned acolyte, has gotten himself kidnapped."* Brother Owen sighs and adjusts the robe near his neck. *"I'm guessing they are goblins or dwarves from their spelling, and they want a 100sp ransom. I have no intensions of paying one silver. Instead, I purpose to give you brave adventurers 100sp if you succeed. And you will have earned the right to be healed, cured and restored at my temple. Oh, and I'll need to add this, Kothor can be abrasive and annoying, but he must be breathing when returned. Dead does not count. But being conscious is not a requirement."*

Once the party agrees, Brother Owen will tell them Kothor left with another adventuring party to explore a lair of some kind located outside of town. He provides the location which is a three-hour journey to the west and gives them a crude map of the area. He makes an X at the edge of the forest and says the locals call this Bender's End.



## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

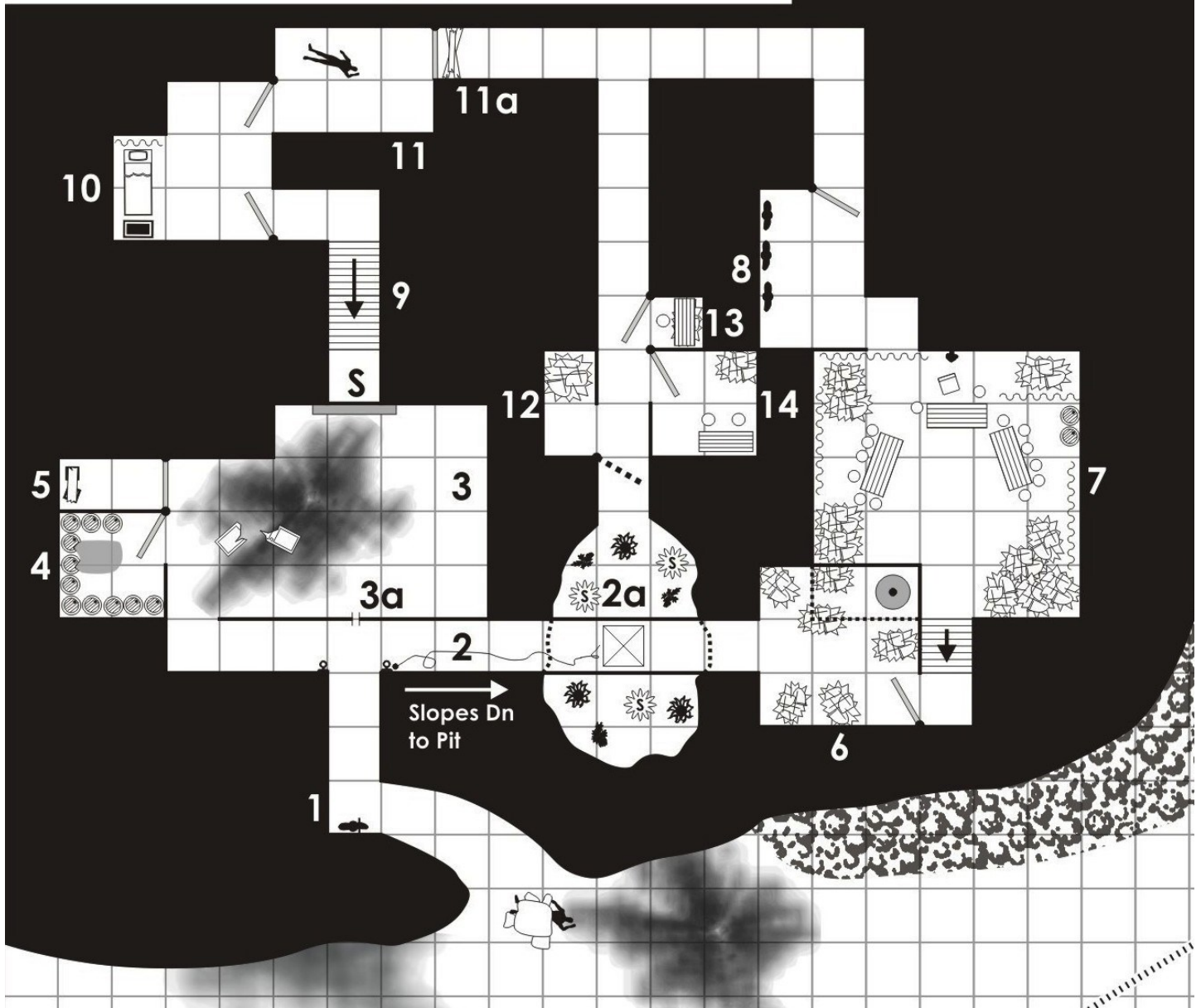
The GM can chose to check for wandering encounters. There is a 1 in 6 chance one will occur every three turns. Most of these are unique encounters so if the GM has a duplicate result he may want to reroll. Or the GM may mess with the players and have them encounter several dead gophers.

It will take the party four hours to reach Bender's End. It is a common road so there should be generic traffic, a peddler, a knight or a one-eared half-orc wearing a tattoo of a player's face as a tramp stamp. I've added *common* traffic to add flavor. These were not given stats. If the players want to kill common folk, well, there isn't much those commoners can do. That's what they get for not becoming heroes of the land.

Roll	Encounter
1-2	A <b>skeleton</b> . It stumbles around the edge of the road as if it's looking for something. It will be surprised (as much as a skeleton can be surprised) when it sees (as much as a skeleton can see without eyeballs) the party. The surprise will last one round before it attacks. ( <i>HD: 1, HP: 4, AC: 8 [11], Atk: strike (1d6), Move: 12, Save: 17, CL/XP: 1/15, Special: none.</i> )
3	A singing <b>goblin</b> . He's drunk off his ass and is singing at the top of his little lungs. When he spots the party, he will calmly turn around drop his pants and pat his goblin butt and make kissing noises. He won't fight. He'll just keep making obscene gestures. ( <i>HD: 1d6, HP: 3, AC: 6 [13], Atk: none, Move: 9 (but not in a straight line), Save: 18, Special: he knows a lot of obscene gestures.</i> )
4	A small <b>black bear</b> is sitting against a tree, scratching his back. It makes growling noises, but makes no aggressive moves toward the party. Should one of the party members open food, the bear will charge at the food and the person with it. ( <i>HD: 2+1, HP: 10, AC: 7[12], Atk: 2 claws (1d2), 1 bite (1d), Move: 9, Save: 13, Special: Pelt is worth 20sp if carefully skinned.</i> )
5	Dead <b>gopher</b> . A gopher is half-way out of its hole, and the back of its head is crushed in. This is all part of a game the locals play called gopher stomping. The gopher will not attack because it is dead. ( <i>HD: 0,HP: -10; AC: none, Atk: none, Move: 0, Save: none, Special: smells like hell.</i> )
6	A <b>smelly woman</b> . She is very smelly, but very nice. She carries a basket of garlic and will offer the players a few. She is taking them into market to sell.
7	<b>Two fat guys</b> and <b>one fat kid</b> . They are strolling down the road arguing over which beer tastes better. The little kid is a chronic nose-picker and has nothing to say. The two fat guys try to convince the party members to side with them.
8-9	A large pile of wild animal <b>poo</b> . There is a 1 in 6 chance there is a piece of corn embedded in the poo.
10	<b>Stirges</b> (1d4) fly overhead. They attack the party. They have no treasure. Sometimes it sucks to be a random encounter. ( <i>HD: 1+1, HP: 4 each, AC: 7[12], Atk: strike (1d3), Move: 3 (18 fly), Save: 17, Special: blood drain (1d4) after first hit.</i> )
11	An <b>adult blue dragon</b> flies overhead. It has no interest in the players, but if the players are stupid enough to attract its attention, then the players deserve to be electrocuted and eaten. ( <i>HD: 8, HP: 32, AC: 2[17], Atk: 2 claws (1d6), 1 bite (3d8), Move: 9 (fly 24), Save: 8, Special: spits lightning for 32 damage.</i> )
12	A humanoid <b>corpse</b> is off to the side of the road. It is so decomposed it is difficult to tell who or what it was. The corpse is Erwin, a traveling mercenary who died suddenly. He argued with his GM about the grappling rule and was blue-bolted.

13	A man is asleep in a tree near the road. He is snoring loudly and dropped his crossbow to the ground. Another man is sitting against a tree trunk a few feet into the woods snoring just as loud. The party has just met the worst <b>bandits</b> ever. ( <i>Lvl 0 Bandits, HP: 3 each, AC: 8 (11), Atk: none, both are unarmed and don't want to fight, Move: 12, Save: 17, Special: the ability to sleep through nearly anything.</i> )
14	Something <b>sticky</b> . No one is sure what it is or where it came from, but all the players' boots are sticky. They are at -1 to all rolls because being sticky sucks.
15	A band of <b>entertainers</b> are making their way to town. There is a juggler and a minstrel and few maskers (actors) and a group of three gorgeous dancing girls. The entertainers will offer a taste of what they do for a small fee. The girls will flirt and smooch on the players all the while trying to lift any coins they may have on them. If caught, they will apologize and promise to make it up to the players (wink, wink, nudge, nudge) and try to steal from them again.
16-17	<b>Shocker Lizards</b> (1d3) are scurrying across the ground toward the party. They are 2' long and spark and crackle with electrical energy. If a party member is struck twice in the same round by a shock lizard, it could result in a dirt nap. If this occurs, tell the player to suck it up and roll up a new character. This one is iguana dung. ( <i>HD 1d6hp; AC 6 [13]; Atk 1 bite (1d3); Move 6; Save 18; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Electric shock</i> )
18	A <b>ratling</b> ninja/wizard/teamster is driving a speeding one-pony cart. It is going surprisingly fast, and if the party does not take evasive action, they will take 1d6 damage from the collision. A collision will wreck the cart and toss the ratling into the air where it will do a flip and land on its feet all the while continuing his waaaaa noise. Then it will release a magic missile that will do 1hp of damage to whoever it strikes, then attack with clawed precision attacks. Besides being a ninja/wizard/teamster, this ratling is as normal as any other ratling the party may meet. ( <i>HD 1; AC 9[10]; Atk 1 bite (1d6+poison) or weapon; Save 17; Move 12; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Diseased bite, but it will not bite. It's a vegetarian.</i> )
19	<b>Severe Weather</b> sweeps into the area. A gushing rain storm, a tornado or maybe a freakish snow storm. I beg of you GMs to only use weather as a last resort. It is a powerful force of nature that could not bore your players more. If you feel the players are being too cocky or sassy, then let the game gods empty their bowels upon them in the form of weather. The party suffers -1 to all rolls.
20	The <b>GM</b> appears in front of the players. For a small gift (must be given in real life), the GM will grant that player one Mulligan (for you newbs, that means one do over or one dice reroll). If no gift is given, the GM can chose to punish the players by having them roll one die type lower than they are supposed to for one combat. When attacking, the player will use a d12 instead of a d20, weapon damage that might have been a d10 is now a d8.

# BENDER'S END   1 square = 5 feet



## APPROACHING BENDER'S END

After a four-hour march, give or take a few random encounters, the party will see where the road forks and dips into a shallow ravine. If the players are searching for the path, they'll find it; the goblins are not all that great at hiding their trail.

When the party reaches the small creek at the lowest section of the ravine, the trees are decorated with crude symbols made with twine and sticks. Various colors of cloth are tied to the tree branches, and at the base of the trees are

small animal carcasses. The goblins are a superstitious bunch who worship the wood spirits. The Verge (the goblin leader) refuses to have the goblins patrol the area because he believes the forest spirits favor him and protect him.

# THE DUNGEON

## 1. Not a Good Beginning

There is an opening in the hillside with burn marks blackening the stone. There is an insect-ridden body trapped under a stone slab in front of the opening. Another corpse is just inside the entrance pinned to the wall by large arrow.

The corpse beneath the stone slab is Gerald the Unfortunate, a thief of questionable talent. A victim of his own carelessness as the tripwire in which he succeeded in detecting, but failed to disarm. Ten **rot grubs** infest his corpse. If the body is disturbed, the rot grubs attack. Hidden within the squirming mass is a pair of throwing knives given to Gerald by the thieves' guild after his first burglary, a simple set of thieves tools, and 14sp in coins.

**10 Rot Grubs** HD: 1hp, HP: 1, AC 9[10], Atk: 1 burrow, Move: 1, Save: 18, CL/XP: 1/15, Special: Burrows to heart 1d3 turns.

The man pinned to the wall is Shannon. He was a man with a woman's name and a chip on his shoulder. Shannon the Emasculated discovered the entrance after the stone slab squished Gerald. He torched the vegetation covering the hole and motioned his comrades to follow. He took three steps in when the trap in 3a let fly an arrow that found his small, black heart. While his body was still warm, Kothor the Sanctimonious pronounced Shannon no longer of this world and commenced stripping his body of valuables.

## 2. Sloping Hall

There are two burnt torch stubs in brackets at the top of a sloping hallway. There is an iron spike driven into the floor with a rope tied around it. Both the spike and rope look new.

At the bottom of the slope is a 10' pit trap (1d6 -2 damage) that drops into area 2a. After Manny



blew the crap out of room 3 and Borton couldn't chop through the door, the party came this way. Manny found the trap and went around it.



## 2a. Shriekers Cave

This natural cave is home to a **shrieker** and other plants. Anyone or anything that drops into the room will cause the shrieker to shriek for 1d3 rounds, alerting everyone in the lower level. The exit is blocked by a locked iron grate door. The goblins from 14 are armed with spears and will look through the grates to see what set off the shrieker. If needed, they will unleash the dogs in room 12.

The shrieker was raised by Avery the Red Eared (room 13). Most of the plants grown in the cave are used in his cooking. Avery is the smartest of the goblins, having some knowledge of plants, cooking and herbal medicine, but should another goblin or player harm his shrieker, he will attack with a fury that no creature has ever seen from a goblin. In this case, Avery attacks as a 2HD creature. Avery has a key to the iron grate door.

<b>Shrieker</b> HD: 3, HP: 9, AC: 7[12], Atk: none, Move: 1, Save: 14, CL/XP: 3/60, Special: shriek does 1hp of damage/round.
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## 3. Overkill Much?

The wooden door to the room was knocked off its hinges and blackened by the fireball Manny let loose. The walls are scorched black, and five little skeletons lay in the northeast of the room. To the east, there are two doors, and one is open. The closed door has several hack marks in it as Borton tried to chop his way in, but failed.

The fireball obliterated the goblins in this room. Manny was furious after his friend Shannon was killed by the arbalest in this room. Anything that would have been of value was destroyed. Under the skeletons are two globs of copper made from 10cp each. The secret door in the north wall hides behind a scorched set of shelves. It will take a successful strength roll to open the door.

## 3a. The Shannon Killer

A goblin is melted to the remaining structure of the arbalest. When the goblin pinned Shannon against the wall, he shouted in celebration and ran to tell the other goblins. He failed to see the other party members enter.

## 4. Enough Rancid Wine to Kill a Cow

Inside the open door is a room stacked with casks. Twenty-two casks are stacked along the walls. The floor is sticky and reeks of rancid wine. Borton broke open two casks before the heat and stench of the burning goblins became unbearable.

Of the twenty remaining casks, two are still good and could be sold for 50gp each. All others have turned sour. Hidden under a cask is a compartment in the floor. The panel slides to the side and is trapped with a spring loaded dart. The dart was poisoned, but the poison has worn off. In the compartment is a small pouch with 14sp and the key to the door to room 5. The goblins hid the key because they were afraid to enter the room.

## 5. Altar of the Creepy Glowing Knife

This door is reinforced by steel bands and Borton's axe hacking is apparent and looks to have done little to the door. That, and Gerald the Unfortunate got whacked before he ever entered the dungeon. The key hidden in room 4 will open the lock. If the players manage to open the door, they are greeted by the pungent smell of old incense. Inside the room is a small altar made of two crates with a board across them and a tattered piece of silk over the board. The walls in the room are covered with small symbolic etchings. If a player knows how to read goblin, he will see they are not so much prayers, but pleadings to some evil god not to kill them. There are also a few crude pictures of smaller creatures slaying larger

creatures. On the altar is a large crud-covered knife.

The goblins knew there was something special about the knife. They consider the dagger a holy artifact sent by a dark god. Even the arrogant The Verge fears the knife. The large knife is sentient (Int 10), but cannot communicate with the wielder. Instead it senses the condition of the wielder and can cure light wounds 1/day. It will glow when evil is within a 20' radius. The glowing part is what freaks out the goblins.

### 6. Ever See a Goblin Pole Dance?

Six **goblins** occupy this room. They will throw their spears before drawing their short swords. If half the goblins are down, those that remain will slide down the pole to room 7 to warn the others.

In the room are sleeping mats, but little else. The Verge does not allow them more lest it distract them from their guard duties. Each goblin carries 1d6cp and nothing else in the room is worth taking. The pole in the northeast corner drops 10' into area 7 and the door on the east wall is barred from the other side.

**6 Goblins** HD: d6, HP: 3 each, AC: 3[12], Atk: weapon (1d4), Move: 9, Save: 18, CL/XP: B/10, Special: -1 to hit in sunlight.

### 7. The Verge's Chamber

Players can enter this room by pole or stairs. A total of nine goblins live here including their leader The Verge, Slayer of the monstrous vermin, Hork. This deed is that awarded The Verge his leadership. Hork's head is mounted over his throne against the north wall. The Verge will look at which party member is wearing the best armor and use his Javelin of Lightning against that player. The Verge will then lead his goblins into battle using **Kork**, his **cursed +1 short sword** (see New Magic Item

section). He will fight to the death because he does not believe he will not die. If he does die the rest of the goblins will stop attacking, fall to their knees and weep.

The room is sparsely furnished with sleeping mats, short tables and stools. A good quality chair which is The Verge's throne and a couple of good cookware pots. Each goblin carries 1d6cp. The Verge has a small lockbox hidden under his throne. There is no lock on it. A button on the bottom releases the latch. Inside are 14sp and 32cp, a pair of silver forks (2sp each), a wooden holy symbol (that belonged to Kothor the Sanctimonious), and a **Potion of Sticky Hands** (see New Magic Item section). Two kegs of the rancid wine are against the east wall. One is nearly empty.

The passage to the north is hidden behind the several tribal decorations that hang on the wall. The Verge will use this escape if he feels he cannot win. If the players come through this way he will try to flee up the stairs.

**9 Goblins** HD: d6, HP: 3 each, AC: 7[12], Atk: weapon (1d4), Move: 9, Save: 18, CL/XP: B/10, Special: -1 to hit in sunlight.

**The Verge** HD 1d8+1, HP: 7, AC: 5[14], Atk: +1 short sword (1d6+1), Move: 9, Save: 17, CL/XP: 1/20, Special: -1 to hit in sunlight.

### 8. A Goblin Named Ork, a Man Named Pruitt and Kothor is Here Also.

There are two goblin guards stationed to this room. They may have assisted if there was a battle in 7. If the players come through the storage room, they will be surprised. A goblin named Ork, a human named Pruitt and Kothor are chained to the wall. The goblin is the one who led the party here, Pruitt looks to be in fairly good shape and talks to the players about mundane things like how is the weather outside, is bacon better than ham and the all important subject of which leg to put in

your pants first. "Right leg always I say. Left leg is bad luck. All day long you will start your travels with your left leg and only bad things can happen. Yup. That's what my mother always told me." And he hates goblins and will try to kill any on sight. Kothor has been beaten severely and is having trouble staying conscious. Borton beat the crap out of him, but needed to keep him alive for the ransom. A first aid or healing spell will stabilize Kothor. He is at zero hit points.

Ork, the goblin, will plead with the players to not kill him. He offers to serve them. He and Pruitt have been shouting insults at one another the entire time. If the party does not interfere, Pruitt will attack Ork. If the players take Ork on, he has very good hearing, is good at sneaking around and at detecting secret doors (2 in 6 chance).

## 9. Surprise, Trapped Stairs

Hidden behind the secret door are descending stairs. Three of the steps have several coin-sized holes. When someone steps on one who weights more than 100 pounds, the step depresses and spikes will come out of the holes. If the player fails their save, 1d3 spikes impale into the player's foot and do 1d2 damage each.

The goblins are too light to set off the trap. They can move up and down the stairs without worry. They are aware of the trap and use it to their advantage.

## 10. Borton the Traitor

Both doors into this room are locked. Neither door is especially sturdy. If more than 10 points of damage are done to either door, it will splinter. The doors are barred closed. The doors are ill-fitted for the frame. A dagger sliding along the frame will lift the bar away.

Inside, the room is decorated with worn, but



decorative rugs (2gp), and a tattered banner of a mailed fist holding a lightning bolt hangs over a bed. Beside the bed is a large chest (locked).

This is Borton the Traitor's room, a soldier from the baron's army now turned bandit allying himself with The Verge and his crew. He is the one who led the party into the dungeon and allowed the others to be killed and captured. He did not expect Manny to fireball the room and is still recovering from the burns he suffered. He is using his **Ring of Invisibility** and will wait until he can get into position to backstab one of the players. If he is able to get out of the room, he will head for room 11 to allow his pet, the verm, to attack the players. If the party comes from that way he will remain hidden for as long as he can.

The chest is secured by a simple lock. Inside

are two sets of dirty clothes, a bent dagger, tinder box, whet stone, smoking pipe and a pouch with 23sp inside. Hidden in a pocket sewn into the back of the banner are 2gp. Borton carries the key to room 11.

**Borton** 3rd level Fighter, HP: 18, AC: 3[16], Atk: +1 shortsword (1d8+2), Move: 12, Save: 12, CL/XP: 3/60, Special: +1 'to hit' due to level.

Borton is armed with a +1 short sword and gets +2 to hit bonuses when combined with his strength. He wears +1 banded mail and a Ring of Invisibility that he took from Manny. He is not a brave man and will take advantage through deception and grovel for his life if injured.

### 11. Meet Borton's Pet

This room has the strong odor of ozone. A verm feeds on the body of Manny the magic-user. Borton ran his blade through Manny's ribs after he cast the fireball. The verm is Borton's pet, and it appreciates a good snack, although Manny's stringy frame is not providing much of a meal.

It will attack the players as soon as they enter the room. The goblins don't like having it around. Two of them were killed by the verm before it was contained in this room. The room is unfurnished. Manny has been stripped of his possessions except for a scroll of Wizard Lock. Borton couldn't read and thought it was worthless.

**Verm** HD: 1+1, HP: 6, AC: 5[14], Dam: bite (1d3), shock (1d6), Move: 12, Save: 15, CL/XP: 3/45, Special: A successful bite attack causes 1d6 shock damage, save halves.

### 11a. Barricades Make Better Neighbors

The Verge barricaded the door from the outside. He does not want the verm getting out again. The verm ate two goblins before Borton could get it back into its room. Tearing down the barricade will take 1d4 rounds. If the dogs in area 12 have not been killed, any noise will get them barking and alert the goblins in area 14.

### 12. Big Ass Dogs

Two large war hounds are chained here. If the goblins suspect something is wrong, they will release the dogs. These dogs are well trained. They attack on sight and fight to the death.

**2 Guard Dogs** HD: 2, HP: 8 each, AC: 7[12], Atk: bite (1d6), Move: 14, Save: 16, CL/XP: 2/30, Special: none.

### 13. Avery the Red Eared's Room

Avery lives here. He is the only goblin who gets his own room. He has above average intelligence and knows to stay out of trouble if he can help it. He doesn't like Borton or his pet and doesn't like adventurers tromping around down here. If the party speaks calmly with Avery, he will show them where Kothor is kept. He wants to be done with this whole business and return to his plants in 2a.

Avery's door has a simple lock (SC 10). Avery has the key and the key to the iron grate door to 2a. He has a table with bowls, bottles and scales for his herbalism. He sleeps on a straw mat under the table. He is working on a Strength potion, but his version only raises strength by 1 and that's if they can keep it down long enough to take effect.

Hidden in the straw mat are a 21cp.

**Avery the Red Eared** HD: 1, HP: 4, AC: 6[13], Atk: weapon (1d6), Move: 9, Save: 17, CL/XP: 1/15, Special: -1 to hit in sunlight.

Avery is fairly intelligent who wants nothing to do with The Verge or Borton. He wants to grow his plants in peace. If the players kill his shrieker (2a.) he will go into a goblin rage and attack as a 2HD creature.

### 14. Bad Grob

Four goblin guards are stationed here should anyone fall into the pit, and to guard Avery. The Verge knows a smart goblin when he sees one, so he wants his smart goblin protected. The goblin



guards carry spears and make a lot of noise when they attack. The Verge told them the louder they are during battle, the more they will frighten their opponent. If the goblins are being slaughtered and the players are not intimidated by their high screeching howls, the last one left alive will surrender. The last goblin will have the name Grob. Grob, like all goblins who surrender, promises to serve the party. But unlike other goblins who keep their word, Grob will flee as soon as he gets a chance, furthering the bad name of goblins.

Each goblin has 1d4cp. Grob will carry an extra 1d4 cp and a pair of loaded dice he uses to gamble with the other guards.

<b>4 Goblins</b> HD: d6, HP: 3 each, AC: 7[12], Atk: weapon (1d4), Move: 9, Save: 18, CL/XP: B/10, Special: -1 to hit in sunlight.
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## CONCLUSION

If the party was completely incompetent and had their asses handed to them by goblins, then send them back to adventuring school and go through a few more Starter Adventures to get used to the game. The GM should be strict, but fair, ruthless and kind, and demand at least two slices of pizza as payment for services rendered. If they are real newbs, go for the pop too (soda if you don't know what pop is).

If the players succeed in saving Kothor the Sanctimonious, they will earn the ransom money of 100gp and the church will offer one free healing session. Brother Owen will thank the party. They have now earned the privilege to be healed at the temple for a suitable donation. If the party does not have a cleric, Kothor can be run as a NPC or someone the players can seek out for extra help. Having an extra cleric in your pocket is always helpful. There always seems to be more wounds and undead than clerics.

# New Monsters

## Balan



Hit Dice: 2

Armor Class: 4 [15]

Attack: Strike (1d6)

Move: 12

Saving Throw: 16

CL/XP: 3/60

Special: Use telepathy to communicate, Detect Motive, raw magic burst 1/day (2d6)

A Balan is a guardian of sacred places in nature. Their appearance is that of a gorilla body and the head of an old man. They communicate by using telepathy. They can detect a person's motive and defend its place from those that would damage it.

The Balan has the ability to release raw magic once/day doing 2d6 damage. Random effects occur when this raw energy is released.

Balan fur absorbs magic, and a few tufts can be harvested (2d4) to increase the effectiveness of a spell as if the caster was one level higher. The fur is consumed when used.

## Skriv

Hit Dice: 1d4

Armor Class: 6 [13]

Attack: Weapon (1d2)

Move: 6

Saving Throw: 18

CL/XP: A/5

Special: None.

Skrivs are tiny creatures with nearly no facial features except small dark eyes and slits for mouths. They have two rows of small sharp teeth. An average skriv is only two feet tall on average, but the warriors can grow as large as four feet.

Skrivs form matriarchal tribes of about one hundred. They are led by the eldest female shaman in the tribe who is supported by a group of shamans. Men are raised to be workers and warriors. Females who are not shamans are to produce offspring.

Skrivs are superstitious and worship dark nature spirits. Most of their ceremonies involve sacrifice or blood offerings.

## Squishy Squab

Hit Dice: 1d4

Armor Class: 9 [10]

Attack: Peck (1d3)

Saving Throw: 18

Move: 12 (3 flying)

CL/XP: A/5

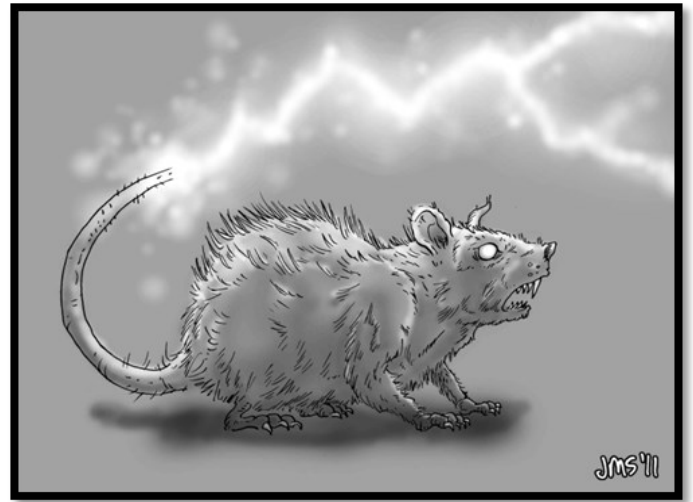
Special: Immune to mind spells.

The squishy squab is a large flightless bird. They can jump ten feet and use their wings to glide. They also have large, powerful beaks used to break through the wood of a tree to eat the bugs and the occasional squirrel. They are known for being extremely dumb, dumb to the point where they are known to drown when it rains because they sleep with their heads pointed at the sky. Because of the complete lack of intelligence, they are immune to mind magic.

They run in groups of 3d4. They make a lot of noise. They are not violent birds, but have just enough sense to defend themselves. When they attack, they use their powerful beaks.

For whatever reason, mages have found if they liquefy the brain of a squishy squab and add it to their ink, they have more success writing magical scrolls.

## Verm



Hit Dice: 1d6+1

Armor Class: 5 [14]

Attack: Bite (1d3), Shock (1d6)

Saving Throw: 15

Move: 12

CL/XP: 3/45

Special: A successful bite attack cause shock damage. Save halves.

A verm is a large rat that somehow survived a lightning strike while in the sewers. Usually these creatures are encountered alone, but on rare occasions, a pack of verm can be encountered. Their tail conducts the static electricity as it moves, and it is discharged through its bite.

The tail of a verm can be used to increase the potency of any electrical spell, adding +2 to the total damage (i.e. Shocking Grasp, Lightning Bolt).

# New Magic Items

## **Fetish Charm**

A Fetish Charm is a primitive form of magic item created by animist shamans. Bones, sticks, feathers and stone are example of the materials used in its construction. The construction is usually crude, and the charm could easily be dismissed, but the fetish is imbued with the maker's powers. Often, the fetishes are given to someone after they have accomplished something significant in their life; an example would be coming of age, first kill in a hunt, first kill of an enemy, or the birth of a son.

The enchantments are low-powered, but are built to aid the wearer. Warriors would be given a fetish that would aid them in battle, hunters would find hunting a bit easier or a shaman may be given a fetish to assist in ceremonies and contacted the spirits. As the experience and power of the wearer grows, so will the power of the fetish. An example would be if a warrior has a fetish that grants +1 to armor class, as he grows in power he may find it adds +1 to saves, resists fire or one of many options.

## **Potion of Sticky Hands**

A potion of sticky hands can increase the chances of someone climbing a wall and reduce the chance of dropping a weapon. But the potion has a dark side. If the player scratches himself, it will adhere to whatever body part needed the attention. The potion lasts 1d6 turns.

## **Torch Knife**

This useful item originated with the thieves guild. The need to keep unencumbered and have a reliable light source when needed is critical to thieves. With the invention of the torch knife, thieves no longer needed to carry around cumbersome torches or tinderboxes. It is a light source they can command to turn on instantly, and more importantly, off. Since then, their popularity has grown among adventurers and young nobles who like to collect roguish weapons.

Torch knives are activated by a simple command sound, 'shhh'. This will activate and deactivate it. Custom command words are available, but this increases the price. A torch knife gives off enough light to see a foot or two in front of the wielder. This illumination is not variable. It's bright enough to read script, pick locks and signal someone in the night.

It acts as a normal knife in combat. It is not considered a magic weapon. For those creatures that require a magic weapon to hit them, the combatant will need to find another weapon.

The average cost at market for a torch knife is around 100gp. This price can be as low as 50gp or up to 200gp. These are not difficult to find. Nearly any adventurer supply shop or magic shop will have these in stock.



## STARTER ADVENTURES

Starter Adventures is where you'll learn to fight, steal, cast spells and heal. You'll have to use your wits to solve puzzles, use your sword to murderize goblins, and crumble the undead beneath the power of your god.

It's time to grab a weapon, memorize a spell and strap on some armor. This is gonna be fun.



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