

Quests of Doom 4

The Missing Pin

By Alex Kammer



Swords
& Wizardry



FROG GOD
GAMES

Quests of Doom 4

The Missing Pin

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The Missing Pin

The Missing Pin is an adventure designed for 4 to 5 characters of 2nd to 4th level. In the **Lost Lands** setting it takes place in the Unclaimed Lands north of the Borderland Provinces at the point where the Great Amrin River meets the Glimmroll Run. There stands the small town of Gumspur. If you are not using the **Lost Lands** setting, then Gumspur can be placed in a semi-remote area along any major river that sees significant barge traffic.

Adventure Background

At the confluence of the Great Amrin and Glimmroll Run rivers sits the small town of Gumspur, so named for the abundance of blackgum trees on the banks of the Unclaimed Lands that became the town. Despite the many blackgum trees, Gumspur does not have much else in the way of other natural resources, as the soil is thin and heavy with clay. Despite the poor prospects for farming, the town has slowly grown over the years due to its location, which sees a fair amount of barge traffic. Barges pass the town headed south and west toward the population centers, many bound for Eastgate or Bard's Gate, and river merchants make it a regular stop.

The only real industry Gumspur enjoys is the two locally made potteries. While the thick clay soil is not great for agriculture, it makes excellent material for pottery. Over the last century, two major kilns have risen in town. The Reed family owns one, while the Larch family owns the other. Though competitors, their rivalry is mostly friendly in nature. They often work together on projects for the betterment of the town such as keeping the docks in good repair, which has benefited the entire community.

Adventure Summary

The characters will be heading east on the Great Amrin River, serving as barge guards, but a mishap strikes as their barge approaches Gumspur, and they find themselves unemployed in town and without any prospects. After securing lodging at one of the town's inns, the characters are approached by Reginald Reed, the eldest scion of the Reed family. He has been instructed by his elderly mother, Belladonna Reed, to find some likely adventurers to undertake a mission on behalf of the Reed family. Apparently, a very valuable piece of jewelry has been stolen: a hatpin adorned with a very large ruby. Bella Reed is willing to pay capable adventurers to track it down and return it.

It will not be that simple, of course. What looks like a heist perpetrated by a rival family in fact turns out to be an inside job. Reginald Reed, the very person who initially contacts the party, stole the valuable pin himself because he has fallen madly in love with a nixie who lives in a backwater marsh a few miles upriver from Gumspur. He will do anything to impress this faerie and stole his family's most prized heirloom in an effort to win her over.

Starting the Adventure

The characters can hail from anywhere and can have any conceivable backgrounds. What they all have in common is that they are traveling on a river barge south on the Great Amrin River after taking jobs as guards for **Greel Splitrod**. The barge they have been traveling on — nicknamed "the scow" by the crew — has been gradually working its way east for the past several weeks with the eventual goal of reaching the city of Eastgate. The barge is a simple craft. It is a relatively flat boat built from undressed planking, with a 10ft-by-10ft roofed structure in the aft middle that acts as Greel's cabin. The rest of the decking is designed for cargo. A 4ft-high

rail runs around the edge of the craft. The crew consists of **Lant**, **Allyn** and **Travis**, who, along with the characters, sleep on the deck when they are otherwise not on watch or idle. After giving whatever background you deem appropriate, read or paraphrase the following:

A trip down the river as barge guards sounded like easy money. Instead, it's been endless monotony: the same scenery, bad smells and trying company. Sure, the pay is decent, but the thought of debarking in Eastgate and getting off this oversized raft for good sounds better.

Each day has followed the same pattern: After an uneventful night of watches, the crew pushes off at dawn from whatever marginally dry piece of riverbank served as that night's campsite. Between napping, eating and a little dicing, the watches are interminable as the marshy shoreline slowly rolls by.

But unexpectedly, a startling crunch occurs as the barge suddenly jerks to port, accompanied by the cries of the crew.

The barge has run into a very large submerged log. Apparently, the boredom reached the lookout, who missed the massive obstacle lurking just beneath the surface of the water. Everyone must roll below their dexterity on 3d6 or be thrown overboard. There is no consequence to getting dunked in the river, other than being embarrassed and wet.

As the crew fishes people out of the water, Greel curses his way across the deck. "Well, at least we're close to Gumspur. We can put in there, see how bad the damage is, and get this old girl fixed." The damage to the barge is obvious: The front bears a large dent where it struck something, and timbers have been knocked out of place. Beyond that, the boat feels different. The whole craft shimmies and shakes underfoot now, and the crew struggles to keep the vessel going straight and not pulling toward shore. While still apparently seaworthy, it is obvious that the scow has been damaged.

After an hour or so of much swearing and corrective steering by the crew, Gumspur is finally sighted. Gumspur straddles the line between a village and a small town.

GUMSPUR

Lawful small town

Population 363 (345 humans, 18 other)

Important NPCs

Reginald Reed: Scion and eldest son of the Reed family.

Belladonna Reed: Matriarch of the Reed family.

Jed Larch: Current head of the Larch family and rival of Reginald Reed.

Strom Levy Constable of Gumspur. Strom has 2 deputies and can call up another 10 reliable fighters if needed.

Reaching Gumspur

As the barge approaches Gumspur, read or paraphrase the following:

After a trying hour attempting to steer the now-damaged barge, a break appears in the seemingly unending stands of river trees and backwater, allowing the town of Gumspur to come into view. Two sets of well-made and broad docks protrude 30 feet or so from the northern shore into the river. Beyond the docks is the town itself, with a few small warehouses and what may be a toll booth. The rest of the town rises gradually away from the shore to the north. A handful of people bustle about near the docks. Two young men are picking up ropes, obviously preparing to help the barge dock. The otherwise clear day is punctuated by an odd smell — a faint acrid, burnt odor from the town's pottery kilns.

After docking, Greel encourages the party to head into town to find lodging. The town has only one inn, so characters likely end up at The Winking Owl. The Owl is a wooden, two-story inn built on a stone foundation. It has a small attached stable. The common room, bar and kitchen are downstairs, and the guest rooms are upstairs. All in all, it is an unremarkable inn. The proprietor is **Tam Padish**, whose family has owned the Owl going on 20 years. He is middle age, friendly and straightforward. He is happy to provide any information about Gumspur that the party wishes to learn.

Should the party choose to engage any of the locals in conversation, they find everyone helpful and friendly. They also meet several people with the last names of Larch or Reed. If asked about that, they are told that the Larches and the Reeds are the largest families in Gumspur, and that their families have been in the area for generations.

After a couple of hours, Greel comes looking for the party bearing bad news. "My craft has taken some serious damage, and the repairs may take as long as a week. I am sorry about this as I know that you all wanted to get to Eastgate. If you are still around when the repairs are done, I'll be happy to give you a float down the river free of charge. In the meantime, I'll pay you your full wages." Greel pays each party the agreed upon 10gp and departs to see to the work on his craft.

Out of Work

Now that the party is out of work, they need to figure out what to do. They can wait for the next craft to come downriver and purchase passage south, but the next suitable vessel will not arrive for two full days.

Otherwise, the party quickly learns that Gumspur is not exactly an adventuring hotbed. In fact, it is not really a hotbed of anything except for the manufacture of pottery. They can learn about the pottery business *ad nauseam* should they wish.

After kicking around town that evening and some the next morning, Reginald Reed approaches the characters while they are taking a meal at The Winking Owl, or at any other convenient spot.

With zero prospects and apparently marooned in Gumspur, the midday meal is the highlight of the day. Options in the small town are limited. As the meal ends, however, a well-dressed young man in his mid-20s approaches the table, his chin held high in a somewhat odd pose. Despite this obvious snobbishness, he clutches his hands in front of him nervously and says, "Excuse the intrusion, but I am Reginald Reed. You may have heard of my family, as we are the leading producer of fine porcelain in the area. That, however, is not the reason for my intrusion. My family has been the recent victim of a theft, and we are very interested in hiring capable agents to find the culprit, bring them to justice, and return our valuables. Are you interested?"

Roleplaying Reginald

Reginald is a classic country dandy. He thinks he is quite fancy and is high-handed with everyone around him. Despite his haughtiness, Reginald seems a bit unsettled or anxious. It is not obvious though, and only becomes noticeable if the party spends extended time conversing with him.

Should the party prove interested, Reginald asks them to come to the Reed household for tea this afternoon to meet Belladonna Reed, the family's matriarch. He offers them directions but has little further information. He repeatedly states that they should hold their questions for his mother. If pressed, he admits that the item stolen was a valuable piece of jewelry.

Of course, the party is free to go anywhere they want in town, but should they visit the Reed household after sundown, the doorman politely turns them away, instructing them that Madame Reed has already turned in for the night and that they should return the next day.

Following Reginald's instructions, the party can find the Reed family home on the north side of Gumspur. They find a large two-story home flanked by elaborate gardens. Immediately noticeable are the bright white steps that lead to a broad porch and an ornate wooden front door. If Gumspur were not so small, this residence could properly be considered an estate. In any event, this is clearly one of the larger homes in town.

After knocking on the door and presenting themselves, the party is ushered through a well-appointed home into a sitting room. After waiting a few minutes, a well-dressed, elderly but vigorous woman strides into the room. A servant bearing a platter laden with a steaming pot and a number of ceramic mugs follows. Read or paraphrase the following:

After calmly allowing her servant to serve tea, Belladonna Reed gives each visitor a measured and penetrating look. "I am Belladonna Reed. Thank you for accepting my invitation. We have been the victims of a theft. And while we do have a town constable and a volunteer militia, given the nature of the theft and whom we suspect may be involved, we would prefer to hire professional help with this. Are you interested?"

Roleplaying Belladonna Reed

Bella Reed is a refined, iron-willed, rigid woman. She is the head of the family and clearly the one in charge. She is curt to the point of almost being abrupt and is extremely no-nonsense. She is a ruthless negotiator and brooks no frivolity. She says things such as "And your point is what?" and "I have heard enough." Her sternness aside, she is fair and honest and has built her family's business on that reputation.

If the characters accept her offer, she nods and the meeting then shifts to small talk laced with details about the theft. Work in the following information as the characters talk with Bella about the crime: The Reed family was one of the original founding families of Gumspur. They have been in the region approaching 200 years.

- The Reed family was the first family in the area to start manufacturing pottery in Gumspur.
- They have been a major producer of fine pottery and porcelain for the last 100 years.
- Reed family pottery bears the symbol of the swamp oak, which is also the family's sigil.
- The Larch family runs the other major pottery kiln/house in Gumspur.
- The Larch family's symbol is the lily pad.

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- While they are competitors, the rivalry has historically been friendly in nature.
- In fact, over the years, the Reed family and the Larch family have worked together on several public works to the benefit Gumspur.
- Gumspur is a quiet place with little crime or trouble.
- The Reed family was the victim of a shocking break-in one week ago.
- An ornate hatpin set with a large ruby was stolen.
- The hatpin is a family heirloom and is quite valuable.
- The thief forced open a window and accessed the office, then found and forced open a hidden safe where the pin and other valuables were housed.
- The pin was the only thing stolen despite other valuables in the safe, including coins, letters of credit, and other jewelry.
- The crime was perpetrated when no one was home, which is a rare event given the size of the family.
- The constable has not been notified because they believe a member of the Larch family may be involved based on the obvious clues left at the scene.
- Since they suspect the Larches, Belladonna would rather have outside professionals investigate the matter than involve the constable.
- Given the longstanding nature of the two families' relationship, Bella Reed wants to make sure the evidence is solid before they confront the Larches.

If Belladonna gets the impression during the conversation that the characters are Chaotic (or if they have been committing evil acts around Gumspur), she abruptly states that the interview is over and asks the party to leave her home immediately.

However, if Bella Reed is convinced that the party is decent and honest, she offers to pay the party the sum of 100gp to track down and return her pin and bring the thief to justice. Belladonna is also happy to show the party where the crime took place.

If a deal is struck and the party asks Bella to show them where the theft happened, read or paraphrase the following:

The well-appointed house's hallways seem never-ending, winding this way and that before arriving at a stout-looking interior door. Without preamble, Belladonna produces a key, unlocks the door and steps inside a large office or study. An ornate wooden desk with a fine-looking armchair sitting behind it dominates the room. Two more comfortable chairs are positioned in front of the desk. Shelves laden with books, ledgers and pieces of fine pottery and porcelain line the walls. Bella Reed walks behind the desk and points at a 3-foot-square section of shelving pivoted open on hidden hinges. "This is our primary safe. This is where I kept the pin. I found the hidden door open as you see it now. Nothing has been disturbed here since I made the discovery a week ago."

Bella Reed allows the party to inspect the entire area. Listed below are the locations of clues and what the characters find: **Directly in front of the safe:** The party finds a scattering of reddish-brown powder on the floor immediately in front of the opening, as well as on the immediate inside ledge of the safe. Bundled notes of credit, pouches of coins, and pieces of other jewelry are still in the safe. Bella Reed identifies the powder. It is iron oxide, a common coloring agent in pottery glazing. It is a coloring agent that the Larch family is known to use, while the Reeds instead using talc as their main coloring agent. Finally, obvious marks indicate where the safe's door was forced open.

On the floor directly under the safe door: A small piece of paper that is twisted, crumpled, and stained brown. If the party smells it, it smells strongly of tobacco.

In the corner of the room closest to the safe: A careful search of the room reveals a small crumpled piece of paper. If unraveled, it is a small piece of stationary with a stylized lily pad on the top.

Bella Reed is already aware of the powder. It was why she suspected



someone associated with the Larch family committed the crime and why she did not contact the authorities. She can confirm that Jed Larch is well known for his constant tobacco chewing and that the lily pad on the sheet of paper is the trademark and symbol of the Larch family.

While Bella is suspicious of the Larches, she is no fool. The clues left seem extremely obvious and particularly specific, so she wants to make sure before any formal accusations are leveled given the status of the Larch family in Gumspur and the relationship between the two families. Nor does she wish her family to look like fools over baseless accusations.

The party very well may suspect a frame job. If pushed, Bella Reed does not have much to offer. Bella Reed is telling the truth and she is legitimately angry about the theft. If asked about the rest of her family and their relationship with the Larch family, she offers that her oldest son, Reginald, has had a public rivalry with the eldest Larch son, Jed, which has been a source of embarrassment to both families.

If the party decides to speak to Reginald, they can find him easily enough. He claims ignorance but freely admits to not liking Jed Larch. He refers to him as a cad and a buffoon, and says that he is hardly surprised that Jed was involved in the theft. He implores the party to go immediately to the constable and have Jed Larch arrested. He tells the party that his mother has forbidden him from doing so himself. If pushed, Reginald shuts down and leaves with an abrupt, "Good day."

If the party seeks out Jed Larch, anyone in town informs the characters that the most likely place to find him is the Larch family kiln located about a half mile west of town.

A short walk out of town down the well-maintained road takes the party close to the Larch Kiln. However, before characters see the facility, they

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smell it. As they get closer, they notice an acrid smell in the air. As they get closer still, they smell wood smoke, along with a stronger sulfuric odor that is a byproduct of the pottery firing process.

Read or paraphrase the following to the party:

Harsh voices ahead reveal an unexpected scene. A small outbuilding on the Larch property is engulfed in flames. Several orcs holding torches stand around the burning building. At the same time, a dozen orcs ride off to the west and into the wild. A larger orc standing near the main building barks orders to a handful of torch-bearing orcs, obviously urging them to set another building on fire.

Whether the party approaches stealthily or not, they have the drop on the marauders. A bound human male is tied to the back of a horse amid the departing group.

The marauders are intent on burning down the entire facility. The band consists of **7 orcs** led by an **orc chief**.

Orc Chief: HD 4; HP 25; AC 6[13]; **Atk** battle axe (1d8); **Move** 9; **Save** 13; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 1/15; **Special:** none.
Equipment: battle axe, 1d6gp.

Orcs (7): HD 1; HP 7x3, 6x2, 5, 4; AC 6[13]; **Atk** short sword (1d6); **Move** 9; **Save** 17; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 1/15; **Special:** none.
Equipment: short sword, 1d6sp.

Upon seeing the characters, the orc chief points his wicked battle axe and screams, “Kill them! Kill them all and then we finish our fun!”

If any of the orcs is captured, they freely admit that they work for Johnna Steel, the self-proclaimed “Bandit King.” They further state that the Bandit King’s stronghold is miles to the west. Finally, they give up that Steel ordered them to burn down the factory after he captured the “head human” because the humans “broke a deal” with the Bandit King.

Unfortunately, the small outbuilding — a storage shed — is too far gone to save. However, the rest of the facility remains intact.

The main building is littered with the bodies of slain Larch employees. Three large kilns are surrounded by tables, and shelves contain pots of different powders and salts, as well as finished pottery and porcelain, vats of moist clay, and bins of coal and wood — obviously fuel for the kilns.

The main building also contains an interior office, which has been thoroughly tossed. Most of the furniture is broken, and paper ledgers and invoices are scattered everywhere. A broken and now-empty strongbox lies under a shattered chair. Nothing else of interest is in the office.

If the party searches the remaining two buildings — both of them warehouses — they find a surviving employee hiding behind some crates. The young man’s name is Brill, and he lives in town. He is understandably terrified, but is grateful for the rescue and tells the party everything he saw.

Dozens of orcs and armed humans burst into the kiln, killing indiscriminately. A human in a bright blue cloak led them and demanded that “Master Larch” present himself. Brill hid behind some bins and overheard the brigands dragging Jed Larch out of the office. The leader stated, “Now you will pay for your treachery. Kill them all and burn it down,” before striding back outside with a bound Jed Larch in tow. Brill ran and hid.

Pursuit

The trail to follow the orcs is easy enough to pick up. Rangers can automatically follow the 10–12 mounts the orcs are riding. Other characters have a 20% chance of wandering off the path and possibly into a random encounter (of the Referee’s choosing). The trail heads northwest into the wilderness.

The party must decide whether they want to pursue on foot or go back to town to get mounts. In any event, the bandits followed a game trail heading back to their wilderness stronghold. When the party follows, they find that the terrain gradually rises as they follow the bandits’ trail. What starts as prairie scrub turns into bushes and small trees, and finally into stands of timber.

Ambush

As the party follows the bandits’ trail, a monster lurking nearby bursts forth looking for a meal. Attracted by the scent of the bandits’ passing horses, a **manticore** now hides in a stand of trees. As the party approaches, it takes flight and attacks. It fires several volleys of tail spikes before closing to melee range. If near death, the **manticore** attempts to flee.

Manticore: HD 6+4; HP 45; AC 4[15]; **Atk** 2 claws (1d3), bite (1d8), 6 tail spikes (1d6); **Move** 12 (fly 18); **Save** 11; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 8/800; **Special:** tail spikes (6/round, 180ft).



The King's Palace

If the party has mounts, they reach the bandits' stronghold in about 4 hours. If they are on foot, it takes the entire day, and they arrive as the sun is setting.

The stronghold is located on top of a small hill that affords a good view of the surrounding terrain in all directions. As the party approaches, read or paraphrase the following:

The bandits' trail winds toward a larger hill. On its crown, a crude palisade made of sharpened logs juts mostly straight into the air encircling the top of the hill. The roofs of at least two one-story structures can be seen behind the fence. One of the structures is much larger than the others. An open gate is on the right, on the northwestern side of the hill. A guard stands on each side of the open gate. Finally, several plumes of smoke rise into the air from within the palisade, along with the distant sounds of many voices.

Camp Details

The party has multiple options for recovering Jed Larch. They can use stealth to get him out; they can try to talk their way in and talk Jed out of the bandits' clutches; or, they can simply assault the place and rescue him. The camp is laid out on this roughly circular piece of flattened hilltop with a diameter of approximately 70ft. It is approximately 50ft from the base of the hill to any side of the encircling palisade. Very little cover exists on the hillside as the bandits have made sure to remove all small trees and bushes.

The palisade itself is reasonably well constructed of stout logs. The wall is approximately 6ft tall all the way around the hill. However, due to water runoff, a shallow trench exists on the west side of the wall that the bandits are unaware of. If the party makes a determined effort to listen at the wall, they hear a number of human voices, as well as an odd hooting and growling from the **owlbear** inside.

The camp contains two buildings. One is little more than a storage shed that doubles as a holding cell. The other is the main hall, which is 40ft long and 20ft wide, with a single, windowless room. The room contains a central hearth, with double doors on one end of the building and a single door on the other. The men, including the "Bandit King" himself, sleep around the central fire at night.

The camp has 13 total inhabitants. These are the **Bandit King Johnna Steel**, **10 bandits**, Johnna's chief advisor **Niles Grint**, and Johnna's "pet" **owlbear**, which is in a cage outside the main hall.

Bandit King Johnna Steel, Male Human Bandit Captain (Ftr4): **HP** 25; **AC** 5[14]; **Atk** +1 *longsword* (1d8+2) or *light crossbow* (1d4+1); **Move** 12; **Save** 11; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 4/120; **Special:** multiple attacks (4) vs. creatures with 1 or fewer HD, +1 to hit and damage strength bonus.

Equipment: blue cloak, chainmail, +1 *longsword*, *light crossbow*, 20 bolts, 2d6gp.

Bandits (10): **HD** 1; **HP** 7x2, 6x3, 5x3, 3x2; **AC** 7[12]; **Atk** *short sword* (1d6) or *spear* (1d6); **Move** 12; **Save** 17; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 1/15; **Special:** none.

Equipment: leather armor, *short sword*, 2 *spears*, 1d4sp.

Niles Grint, Male Human Acolyte (MU3): **HP** 9; **AC** 9[10] or 2[17] (*missile*) and 4[15] (*melee*) from *shield* spell; **Atk** *staff* (1d6); **Move** 12; **Save** 13; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 4/120; **Special:** spells (3/1).

Spells: 1st—*charm person*, *magic missile*, *shield*;
2nd—*invisibility*.

Equipment: robes, staff, 1d6sp, leather pouch containing herbs.



Owlbear: **HD** 5+1; **HP** 37; **AC** 5[14]; **Atk** 2 claws (1d6), bite (2d6); **Move** 12; **Save** 12; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 5/240; **Special:** hug (to-hit roll 18+, additional 2d8 damage).

Where characters encounter these inhabitants in camp depends on the party's actions. For example, if the party simply walks up to the gate and asks to be taken to the camp's leader, the guards escort them to see Johnna. If the party takes this route, read or paraphrase the following when they are escorted to the bandit king in his hall:

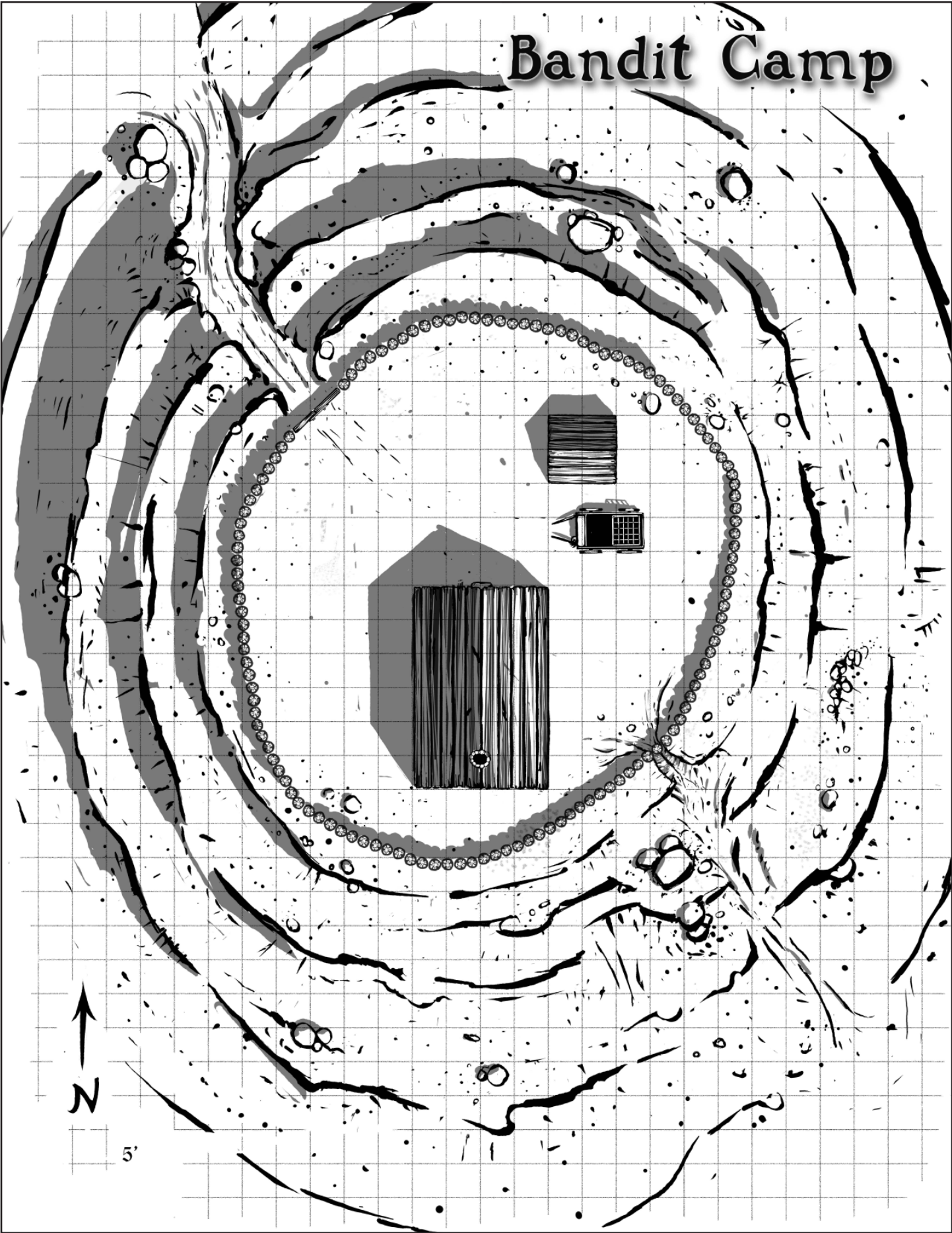
One of the guards turns and jogs into the camp toward a large one-story timber structure. The other guard gestures to follow him, but at a slower pace. A 10-foot-by-10-foot building sits to the left of the larger structure. Two guards stand in front of it. A 10-foot-by-6-foot metal cage is mounted on top of a wagon. It is approximately halfway between the smaller guarded structure and the larger timber one. A bedraggled owlbear paces in its narrow enclosure. Finally, a picket of horses and other wagons are behind the main hall on the far side of camp.

If the party asks about the owlbear, they are told that it is Johnna's "pet."

After being escorted through the double doors and into the main hall, the characters find the bandits on their feet. Johnna remains seated in a large wooden chair. Behind him is a large, blazing hearth. To his right, a robed figure immediately announces the visitors in an educated and cultured tone incongruous with the surroundings. "Welcome to the hall of Johnna Steel, the Bandit King. Tremble in his presence. Speak plainly and with respect if you value your lives."

Johnna is a businessman first and foremost. He would not hesitate to order the party slain if he had any reason to do so, but he is not a homicidal maniac. If asked about Jed, he asks in return, "What is your business with him?" He does not care about the party's answer, one way or the other. If the party accuses Jed of theft, he says something such as "Hardly surprising, but not my problem." He then becomes suspicious

Bandit Camp



Roleplaying Johnna Steel

Johnna is a vain braggart who has gotten to his modest station by deceit, violence and betrayal. When meeting with the party, he takes on an exaggeratedly indifferent and flippant tone, as if everyone and everything is beneath his concern. While concerned about the party's appearance in his camp, he does his best to disguise that concern with an air of nonchalance and disinterest.

that the party is some sort of law enforcement unless convinced otherwise. He tells the party that Jed owes him money and that he is going to hold him until his family pays. He demands 200gp to release Jed. However, some good roleplaying gets that amount reduced to 100gp. If a deal is not reached, he allows the party to leave as long as he is convinced they are not law enforcement.

Should the party try to abscond with Jed by stealth, he is being kept in the smaller building watched by **2 guards**. Beyond the two bandits guarding this door, there is a 50% chance that one or more of the other bandits is walking around outside somewhere in the camp. Characters trying to sneak into the small building must roll below their dexterity on 3d6. If any character fails the check, he makes some small noise that allows a bandit a 2-in-6 chance to hear them. Finally, the door to the shed is locked. Johnna has the key on a ring of keys chained to his belt.

Finally, should a fight break out, Johnna first tries to reach the owlbear cage to release his pet. His owlbear is trained to attack anyone other than Johnna and his men. If released, the owlbear ferociously attacks any non-bandit.

Jed Larch

Poor Jed Larch. He is in pretty rough shape when the party finds him, however they go about accomplishing that feat. As the party opens the shed door, read or paraphrase the following:

Opening the door to the makeshift holding pen reveals a sorry sight. A young man sits on the dirt floor, his arms bound behind him. He lifts his head, his eyes widening with fear. He has one very black eye, a badly cut lip, and a number of smaller abrasions. His once-fine clothing is torn and soiled. After smothering his initial fear, he stares silently, his gaze sullen.

Jed has learned from his brief time with the bandits to mind his tongue. He will not speak unless spoken to. Depending on how the party came to be here, this encounter can go many different directions. If they negotiated his release, the party simply has to march Jed out of camp.

If characters snuck in, they still have to escape undetected. To escape, the characters must again roll below their dexterity on 3d6, but failure this time means the bandits have a 4-in-6 chance of hearing them (because they are having to assist Jed in the escape). If the party decided the answer to this problem was steel, they will have to deal with the bandits before they can rescue Jed.

Treasure

Johnna keeps a chest containing his loot in the main hall. The chest is underneath a trapdoor concealed by a tattered rug located immediately in front of the hearth. It is not well hidden because it is **trapped**. Johnna has made certain that all of his men know of this danger. He has vastly overstated the deadliness of the trap, however, so if any of the bandits are captured and interrogated, they give varying answers about poison gas, live deadly snakes, and poisoned blades.

While the 2ft-by-3ft oak-and-iron coffer is trapped, the trap is none of the things the bandits fear. The first trap is actually contact poison smeared on the lid's handle. An odd notch is also located on the right side of the lid. Johnna made this notch from routinely opening the coffer's lid using his dagger. The poison is detectable by its slightly milky color. Any

creature coming in contact with the poison must make a saving throw or be paralyzed for 1d3 hours.

That is not the final trap though. The coffer is locked, and Johnna has the key on his key ring. However the characters open the lid of the coffer, the character sees leather pouches bulging with coins. There are four such bags of coins. What is not detectable by any non-magical means is that the bottom of the coffer is rigged with a thin wooden pressure plate that looks like the bottom of the coffer. Removing more than two of the coin bags releases the spring-loaded plate. When the plate releases — noticeable by the audible “*click*” it makes — it triggers a *lightning bolt* spell Johnna paid for at great expense. Once triggered, everyone within 20ft of the coffer takes 3d6 points of electrical damage (saving throw for half). The electrical discharge does not harm the bags of coins.

Avoiding the trap requires Johnna telling the party about it (most unlikely), or if the characters remove and inspect the bottom of the coffer without opening it. Inspecting the bottom reveals a cleverly hidden, 2in-by-2in sliding door. If opened, the spring falls harmlessly out, neutralizing the trap until it is reset.

The bags contain 74pp, 823gp, 1213sp and a small set of finely polished tourmaline gemstones (transparent pale green) worth 1000gp.

Roleplaying Jed Larch

Despite the condition the party finds him in, Jed Larch is a refined and even-keeled country gentleman. He has a mild disposition and is earnest in his attempts to be fair and to make sure that people like him. He should come off as a “good guy,” even if a little bland.

If the party gets Jed Larch out of camp, they undoubtedly have questions for him. Jed is forthcoming. The characters learn:

- At the first opportunity, he asks the party for chewing tobacco, as the bandits took his pouch and he is in need of a fix.
- He is the oldest son of the Larch family and now runs all of the family's pottery business interests.
- He has a gambling problem (cards, table games and any games of chance), and this has led him to being occasionally short of funds.
- He borrowed some money from “the wrong people” (a trader named Illuz apparently sold this debt to Johnna).
- He has not allowed his gambling debts to affect the family business.
- He has never stolen from his family or anyone.
- If confronted about his involvement with the Reed's hatpin, he is genuinely confused, offering things such as “Bella Reed's famous pin? Why would I steal that? As if I could! I would never!” and so on.
- He believes that his family and the Reeds enjoy a good working relationship and that their rivalry is more friendly than anything else.
- He describes that their products are quite different than the Reeds. Their pottery is more complementary than truly competitive. (The Reeds specialize in high-end and ornamental display porcelain, while the Larches produce high-quality but utilitarian household pottery.)
- If pressed about the Reeds, Jed admits that he has never gotten along with or liked Reginald Reed.
- About Reginald, he says things such as “That puffed up dandy thinks he is the most important man in town!” or “No one loves Reginald Reed more than Reginald Reed.”

Beyond proclaiming his innocence in the most strident of tones, describing his family's business, and taking shots at Reginald Reed, he may give the party some truly useful information. If the party asks anything about anyone in the Reed family acting strangely, Jed offers the following:

“I have made no secret of not liking Reginald. I really don't like him. But leaving that aside, it seems that he has picked up a sudden love of the outdoors. In anyone else, this would not be that remarkable. However, there is simply no greater opposite to an outdoorsman or an adventurer

THE MISSING PIN

than Reginald Reed. He has always hated nature and being outside. Now I hear that he has recently taken to leaving town on his own for days at a time. He tells people that he has taken up camping. It is really strange. But anything that gets him out of town and away from the rest of us is a good thing”

Jed also volunteers that Reginald seems to always strike out to the north when he leaves town. Beyond that, Jed has nothing else to offer the characters. He is anxious to get back to town and see to his business. On the trip back, he talks about hiring better security and how he is now “reformed” and is quitting gambling. The trip back to Gumpur is otherwise uneventful.

As the party approaches the town and the Larch kiln, Constable Levy and members of the militia meet them. Constable Levy is understandably agitated about the orc attack, as this sort of thing never happens in Gumpur. An explanation from the party and/or Jed Larch allows the party to be on their way.

Once back in town, the party may very well seek out Reginald Reed. Inquiries at the Reed household, the Reed kiln or anywhere else in town reveals that Reginald Reed left town yesterday on one of his now-frequent camping trips. All accounts say Reginald was heading north when he was last seen.

A well-worn track heads out of town to the north, leading first to some of the surrounding farmsteads along the river and then inland. After a few hours on foot (less on mounts), the well-established wagon track fades as the party reaches the outer ambit of civilized terrain surrounding Gumpur. After 5 hours or so, the track becomes nothing more than a game trail roughly paralleling the river. As the party proceeds north, views of the river appear and vanish.

Fresh tracks reveal that a single humanoid passed this way less than 24 hours ago.

Non-ranger characters have a 40% chance each hour to follow Reginald’s tracks (rangers have a 90% chance). After dark, characters have a 20% chance (70% for rangers).



As the party continues north along the river, they encounter terrain that includes rolling hills, patches of forest, and patches of marsh created by the river. As the track winds through one of the many stretches of forest, characters have a 1-in-6 chance to spot a large nest about 50ft to the west of the trail. They spot the nest automatically if they are actively watching the sides of the trail. Crunching sounds come from this 10ft-diameter nest.

This nest contains a **peryton** parent and **3 hatchlings**. The hatchlings are just big enough to start leaving the nest. Their mother is about to give them a lesson on using their dive attack and, fortunately for them, the party came along just in time.

Peryton: HD 4; HP 30; AC 6[13]; **Atk** antler gore (2d8); **Move** 9 (fly 24); **Save** 13; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 6/400; **Special:** +1 or better magic weapons to hit. (**Monstrosities** 372)

Peryton Hatchlings (3): HD 2; HP 13, 11, 9; AC 6[13]; **Atk** antler gore (1d8); **Move** 9 (fly 18); **Save** 16; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 3/60; **Special:** +1 or better magic weapons to hit. (**Monstrosities** 372)

If spotted, the perytons repeatedly dive to attack the party (gaining a +1 to-hit bonus). If a hatchling is reduced to fewer than 50% of its hit points, it retreats to the nest. If all the hatchlings retreat, the mother **peryton** joins them. However, if the party kills a hatchling, the mother fights to the death.

The party is now fully into the wild. Unless they push on through the night, the party has to camp. There is a 50% chance of an encounter while they camp. That chance rises to 75% if the party lights a fire. If an encounter takes place, roll 1d4 on the following table or simply choose an encounter:

Random Encounters

1d4	Encounter
1	The party’s fire or their scent lures in a wandering ogre . If reduced to fewer than 50% of its hit points, it flees.
2	The party unwittingly camped near an ankheg nest. The activity attracts it to the camp, and it bursts out of the ground in the midst of the camp and attacks.
3	A group of 4 centaurs from farther north is out for a hunt. They stay just outside the party’s camp and watch the party, speaking quietly among themselves. They will not attack unless the characters attack first. If approached, they ride off into the night.
4	The yips of a doombat foretell its arrival. It swoops in and attacks. If reduced to fewer than 50% of its hit points, it flees and searches for easier prey.

Ankheg (5HD): HD 5; AC 2[17] underside 4[15]; **Atk** bite (3d6); **Move** 12 (burrow 6); **Save** 12; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 6/400; **Special:** spits acid (1/day, 5d6 damage, save for half). (**Monstrosities** 14)

Centaurs (4): HD 4; AC 5[14]; **Atk** 2 kicks (1d6) and flail (1d8); **Move** 18; **Save** 13; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 4/120; **Special:** none.

Doombat: HD 6; AC 2[17]; **Atk** bite (1d8) and tail (1d6); **Move** 3 (fly 18); **Save** 11; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 8/800; **Special:** shriek (100ft range, –1 to hit and saves). (**The Tome of Horrors Complete** 48)

Ogre: HD 4+1; AC 5[14]; **Atk** club (1d10+1); **Move** 9; **Save** 13; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 4/120; **Special:** none.

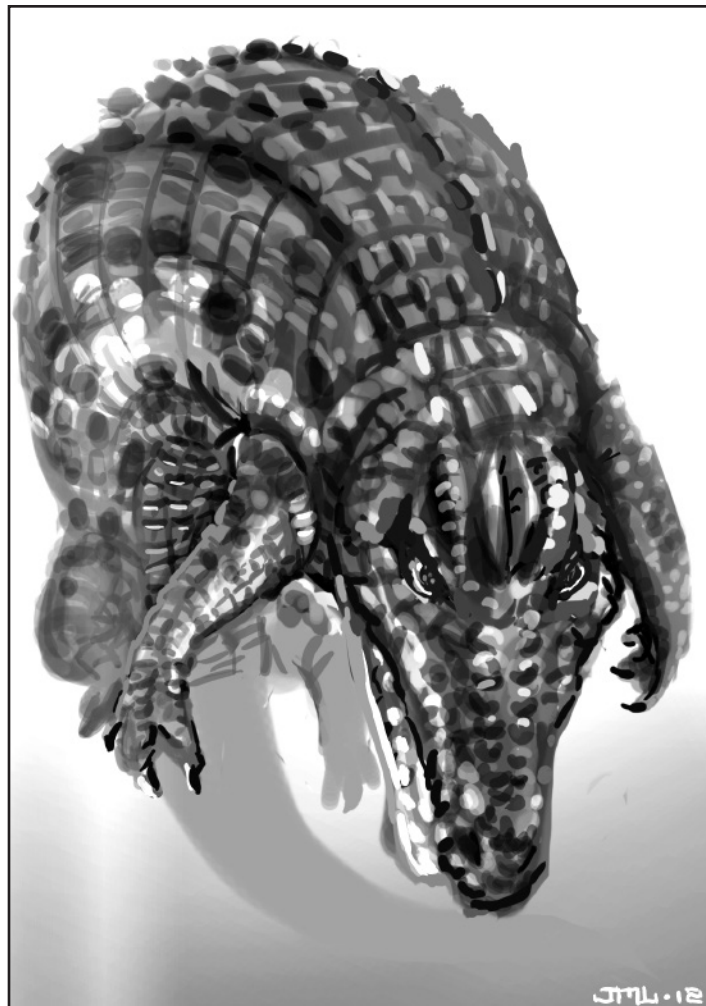
Equipment: club.

As the party moves onward, the terrain flattens, with the hardwood trees changing to those found in lower-lying, marshy areas. These trees include willow, cypress and, of course, blackgum trees. The party smells the marsh before they actually see it, and the trail soon heads directly into a fen. It is bordered on the east by the Glimmriil Run and looks to extend an unknown distance to the west and north.

A Tragic Love

Reginald Reed is currently in the swamp, and this is where he has been spending so much time recently. Several weeks ago while on a short trip upriver, Reginald encountered a late-night visitor. Reginald and his company had pulled into a small inlet for the night to camp. While his traveling companions slept, Reginald sat alone staring into the fire, miserable about having to be outdoors. As he moped, a lovely nixie named Violet visited him, stealing into camp to see who was intruding into her territory. The travelers had unwittingly put themselves directly in the path of this capricious fey.

Reginald was completely enraptured when Violet used her *charm person* ability. Weak-willed in the first place and otherwise dissatisfied with his lot in life, Reginald has been unable — maybe even unwilling — to break the compulsion Violet laid on him. Reginald fell desperately in love with the nixie, and he has barely been able to keep the rest of his life together when apart from Violet. So far, his affections have amused Violet, and she has been egging the ensorcelled Reginald on, teasing him into bringing her small gifts. When she challenged him to bring her an object of great worth and beauty to prove his love for her, Reginald hatched the plan to steal his mother's most prized possession. Being able to frame a disliked rival was a bonus for Reginald.



Into the Marsh

After tracking Reginald Reed for many hours, the fetid smell foretells a most unwelcome site — a trackless swamp that spreads farther than the eye can see both to the west and to the north along the river. The vista includes dense undergrowth, stunted trees and an extensive network of bunched, low-lying islands of dry ground. A cacophony of hoots and calls of exotic birds mix with hum of thousands of insects. The swamp is very much alive.

The trail continues into the marsh. It takes the party 1d4+2 hours on foot to reach Reginald. During the second hour of the trek, the characters run afoul of a giant crocodile that calls the marsh home. You can add other random encounters as you see fit for the journey.

Crocodile attack.

In their second hour of slogging through the marsh, a **giant crocodile** lying in wait for potential prey attacks the party. The crocodile waits underwater and looks like a submerged and otherwise unremarkable log. If its hit points are reduced to fewer than half, it attempts to flee in search of easier prey.

Giant Crocodile: HD 6; HP 40; AC 3[16]; Atk bite (3d6), tail (1d6); Move 9 (swim 12); Save 11; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; Special: none. (*Monstrosities* 78)

Journey's End

After hours of marching, the party finally approaches Violet's home. This is where Reginald comes as often as he can. He is obsessed and quite frankly worships her, much to Violet's amusement and delight.

After hours of stinging insect bites and stagnant air, the swamp's features slowly change. The ground slopes up very slightly — out of the brackish water finally — and into a stand of full-grown trees. Two massive willow trees flank either side of this gentle rise. Beyond these trees is an explosion of color. Flowers of every hue and shape sprout from shrubs and bushes, and hang from vines festooning the esker ahead. Beyond the visual delights, the consonance of bird trills blend into a soothing harmony. This area, whatever it is, seems to be an epitome of marshland nature. It is simply beautiful. A winding path leads underneath the boughs of the willow trees toward the center of this low hillock.

This knoll is Violet's home. It is roughly circular in shape, with a 100ft diameter. It is hardly a hillock, as it is barely above the low elevation of the surrounding marsh. However, the ground is slightly drier here, allowing for the more substantial tree growth. Huge willow trees — 10 total — ring the entire island. Of these, there are **5 awakened trees** that move to protect Violet if the need arises.

The awakened trees are indistinguishable from common trees, but characters examining the trees (even from a distance) have a 1-in-6 chance to realize that there is something odd about the willow trees before they begin to move.

Violet's lair is inside the ring of willows. It is a large pond that is spring fed from below. It is 15ft deep at its deepest with a gradual entry on all sides. The pond has an approximate diameter of 40ft and is partially covered by lily pads, water hyacinth and water poppy flowers. Two small streams run off from the pond to feed the surrounding marsh. The banks of the pond are mostly open ground covered in marsh grass but feature flowering shrubs in shocks here and there.

As the party enters the ring of willow trees and takes in the pond, they see a prostrate Reginald Reed on the far bank. He faces Violet, the **nixie**, who is about 10ft from shore, floating on her back and doing lazy circles



Roleplaying Violet

While lovely and attractive, Violet is very much fey. She is the very height of capriciousness and frivolity. She cares not at all for human feelings or concerns; she is purely a creature of nature and cares only for her home and her desires. While not inherently violent, she is very proud and brooks no disrespect to herself or her home. In conversation, she is frustratingly silly and playful.

claws (both front claws hit, additional 2 attacks with rear claws), surprise (5-in-6 chance). (**Monstrosities** 310)

Awakened Trees (5): HD 4; HP 30, 26, 25x2, 21; AC 4[15]; Atk strike (1d6); Move 6; Save 13; AL N; CL/XP 4/120; **Special:** none.

If the party charges in to fight, they are in for a tough encounter. The awakened trees and Violet's giant lynx fight to the death. Violet stays in her pond, using her sling and casting *invisibility* on herself if necessary. If reduced to fewer than half her hit points, she flees down one of the streams into the wider marsh. She moves much faster through the marsh than any character.

If a fight breaks out, Reginald and any charmed party members try to tackle and restrain any aggressive characters.

Reginald: HD 2; HP 10; AC 7[12]; Atk club (1d4); Move 12; Save 16; AL N; CL/XP 2/30; **Special:** none.
Equipment: leather armor, club.

Should the party try to negotiate with Violet, a most entertaining colloquy ensues. Violet thinks that Reginald is a fool, but then again, she thinks that all civilized folk are fools. Human attention and flattery delight her, however.

She loves the pin Reginald gave her and is loath to give it up. However, she does not know its commercial value. She adores it for its beauty, but possibly could be convinced to give it up for something equally enthralling. This should be an unlikely outcome, however. Only with great reluctance, or if faced with overwhelming force, will she willingly part with it.

As to Reginald, she cares for him not at all. If ordered, he reluctantly leaves with the party in a handdog manner. He would much rather stay with the object of his obsession, but deep down knows that he should face up to what he has done. He is quite aware that he committed the crimes of theft and framing an innocent.

Treasure: Violet has a cache of offerings from previously enraptured suitors. It contains a bejeweled +1 dagger, a string of pearls worth 500gp, a gold and bejeweled brooch shaped like a butterfly set with a large ruby worth 3750gp, and a leather pouch of loose gemstones such as citrine, blue quartz, coral and jasper worth 1500gp total.

Return to Gumspur

Depending how the characters resolve their encounter with Violet, the return trip to Gumspur could be uneventful. If the party killed her, however, the creatures of the marsh seek revenge. The party is harried constantly until they get out of the marsh. Reginald is dour and glum during the entire return trip, knowing what he faces when he returns. The party can either turn him over to Constable Levy or bring him directly to Bella Reed to face her considerable wrath.

While obviously unhappy with the results of the investigation, Belladonna Reed pays the party the promised 100gp.

In the days that follow, several commercial barges arrive in Gumspur on their way south, giving the party many chances to leave town. Should the characters desire to stay, Jed Larch would be most interested in hiring them as security for his kiln. Constable Levy, impressed with the party's efforts, also approaches them about becoming deputies. He is justifiably concerned that the town does not have an effective enough militia given the potential threats it faces.

So ends *The Missing Pin*.

while playing with something that glitters in the light. Further, located about 15ft to the right of Reginald on the shore is a **giant lynx** who was in the process of licking one of its forepaws. It now looks up as the party approaches. Read or paraphrase the following:

A truly remarkable and unexpected sight awaits beyond the cool shade of the willow trees: a still pond partially covered in a riot of water flowers. Reginald Reed lies on the far bank. He looks up, startled and confused, then glances back into the pond. Swimming lazily on her back is a lovely and slender humanoid with greenish skin, webbed fingers and dark hair. She twirls something in her hands that sparkles in the sunlight, much to her obvious delight. A large cat lazes 15 feet to Reginald's right, now watching with feline curiosity. The swimming creature swivels her head and speaks in a childishly melodic voice, "More visitors? How lovely! Have you come to worship me, too?" With a delighted twitter, she rolls in the water, showing off her enchanting form.

Unless the party made any special preparations, everyone who sees Violet must save vs. her *charm person* ability. Violet does not want to fight, but she does expect to be loved and worshipped.

Nixie: HD 1d4 hp; HP 3; AC 7[12]; Atk sling (1d4); Move 6 (swim 12); Save 18; AL N; CL/XP 1/15; **Special:** charm person (-2 save), spell-like ability.

Spell-like ability: 3/day—*invisibility*.

Equipment: sling, 10 sling stones.

Giant Lynx: HD 2; HP 14; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d2), bite (1d4); Move 12; Save 16; AL N; CL/XP 2/30; **Special:** rear

QUESTS OF DOOM 4

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Quests of Doom 4

The Missing Pin

The Missing Pin is an adventure designed for 4 to 5 characters of 2nd to 4th level.

In the Lost Lands setting it takes place in the Unclaimed Lands north of the Borderland Provinces at the point where the Great Amrin River meets the Glimmrill Run. There stands the small town of Gumspur. If you are not using the Lost Lands setting, then Gumspur can be placed in a semi-remote area along any major river that sees significant barge traffic.



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