

Grey Wade Crossing

THE JOURNEY THROUGH the murky halls, over the corruption sick soil of Davokar forest is associated with great risks to life and limb. Travelers, explorers and fortune hunters are wise to seek out well-established and safe routes to wherever they are headed, preferably ones that offer opportunities for rest and shelter from both the elements and predatory beasts. One such place can be found on the road between Thistle Hold and Karvosti: the Gray Wade Crossing.

Text & map: Johan Nohr **Editing & translation:** Mattias Johnsson **Proofreading:** John Marron

IF TRAVELING ALONG the busiest route from Thistle Hold to Karvosti, one usually crosses the Eanor River east of the Skull Rapids, where the waters are calm and not more than waist deep on a full-grown man. But many would rather avoid getting wet or are too restless to wait in the long queues that sometimes build up when large caravans are traversing the river. These can choose to wander a bit upstream to a small rafting camp and pay a few thaler for swift transport across the currents, or they can move a bit further in the opposite direction, towards the warmth of Gray Wade Crossing.

HISTORY

Eighteen years have passed since the treasure hunter Buldo found the ruined tower that today houses the inn called Gray Wade Crossing. The tower was quickly harvested for treasures, but not without some blood being spilled because of the group of rage trolls who called it home. Most members of Buldo's expedition were killed, but the finds and relics which could be salvaged and brought back to Yndaros more than made up for their sacrifice – at least according to the words of Buldo himself.

The money earned from the expedition was used to finance the restoration of the tower ruin. Today, Gray Wade Crossing is run by Buldo and his two daughters; it is a welcome and often scheduled stop for most expeditions traveling between Ambria and the cliff of the High Chieftain.

LOCATION

Gray Wade Crossing lies about two day's walk north of Thistle Hold. The road runs through the brighter parts of Davokar, to the waters of Eanor that slowly flow west toward Lake Volgoma. This is one of the busiest routes in the forest; it is relatively safe from predators and trolls, but instead more trafficked by both the Queen's Rangers and human robbers.

To avoid unwanted attention, travelers do best to set up camp some distance from the road, but without straying so far into the woods as to risk getting lost. There are a handful of often used night shelters between the Hold and the river – for instance Reganna's Pillars, The Ogre Stairs and The Clapping Pine – where one can find cover from weather and winds, but these are also hunting grounds for local robber bands and other rogues.

THE INN

Upon reaching the river and the ford by the Skull Rapids, you have to turn west and follow the water downstream. After about an hour you will arrive at Gray Wade Crossing. When approaching you will first see a huge cliff rising from the southern bank, and shortly after you will notice the ruin on its top and the piers by its foot. Ancient steps carved in the rock lead up towards the ruin, steps that in later years have had wooden railings added and are lit up by lanterns after dark.

The ruin itself is a quadratic, fort-like structure. There is no telling how high it once was, but nowadays it is two stories high, roughly the height of four men combined. The ground floor is one big room, heated thanks to a centrally placed fire pit by which the proprietors serve simple foods and more or less strong beverages in exchange for thaler or labor. On the upper floor is a simple dormitory, but also the private chambers and offices of Buldo and his daughters.

Most often there are few guests at the inn, but sometimes the Great Hall is filled by the members of visiting expeditions. The most frequent guests are river roamers – for instance merchants from Kastor, fortune hunters from Melima or a troop of Queen's Rangers headed for Lake Volgoma. Such patrons will sometimes offer other travelers to come along for the journey down the stream, in exchange for fair payment of course.

If your only interest is crossing the river, Buldo's two daughters Ana and Tya can take you over on one of the rafts. However, the cost of this service is as high as one thaler per person, so it may be a better idea to get some other guest to drop you off on the northern shore as they resume their journey.

VISITORS AND GUESTS

All kinds of forest travelers can be encountered at the Gray Wade Inn: pilgrims on their way to Karvosti, adventurous nobles with followers, black cloaks on holy missions, soldiers on more or less secret errands and not least all conceivable types of fortune hunters – from the most desperate paupers to famous scholars of Ordo Magica.

Incidents

EVEN IF GRAY Wade lies in the outskirts of Davokar it is not spared from the many dangers of the forest. Below are some suggestions on situations that may occur while the player characters are visiting – situations where the characters accidentally get mixed up in conflicts not of their own making. How they react is of course up to them.

The following persons are examples of who may be staying at the inn when the characters arrive, but the game master is of course welcome to decide for him- or herself who are awaiting them at the Gray Wade Crossing.

- ♦ **The failed witch hunter Argolai** has enraged a local, barbarian hunter by falsely accusing her of witchcraft. He is now the sought-after prey of the hunter and hides at the Gray Wade Inn. He claims to be headed for Thistle Hold and seems tense, bordering on paranoid.
- ♦ **The ogre Bellow** came wandering upstream two days ago, without knowing who she is and where she is from. She has stayed at the inn to help the owner with various heavy tasks. Buldo is considering to keep her around but both Ana and Tya are opposed to the idea, seeing that Bellow exhibits violent tendencies and appears to be brutally strong.
- ♦ **Tealia, a novice of Ordo Magica**, is on her way to Melima, escorted by a group of rugged sellswords (stats as Robbers in the *Core Rulebook*, as many as the PCs). She keeps her shoulder bag close and will not say many words about her errand: "I'm off to meet an important person who is to examine an important item at an important meeting". The sellswords are paid to deter anyone from posing nosy questions.
- ♦ **The templar Leogai** is traveling towards Karvosti alone, to help his master solve a tricky diplomatic situation. He has a sad face and is never seen without his full plate armor, often sipping red wine and studying passages in *The Lightbringer*, the holy book of Prios.
- ♦ **The drug-mongler Ulde** has been lured out into Davokar after having been told about a virgin grove full of Blue Mist Bells. If the information turns out to be true he will become a rich man, so he has hired five bodyguards (stats as Queen's Ranger in the *Core Rulebook*) and a guide for the trip. He is often seen in the hall, ogling a sketchy map full of scribbles, arrows and signs.

1. A PARTY GONE SOUR

The goblin Iold is the unlikely leader of a large treasure hunting expedition that recently struck the motherlode in the depths of Davokar. The twenty expedition members have just returned to Gray Wade from a sunken wizard's tower two days walk to the east, and their carts are overflowing

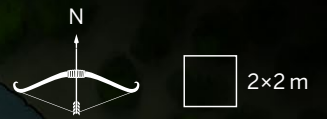
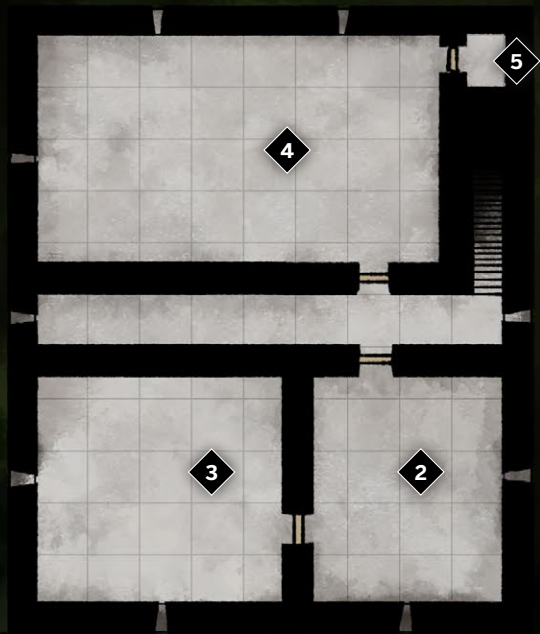
The Queen's Rangers

Gray Wade Crossing is a common resting place for the Queen's Rangers, so visitors better be sure to have their Explorer's Licenses in order. Each time the characters visit the inn, have them roll [1D20 -10] to determine how many rangers are there.

Ground Floor



Second Floor



GRAY WADE INN

- 1. The Great Hall
- 2. Buldo's Chambers
- 3. Buldo's Office
- 4. Dormitory
- 5. Privy
- 6. Stable

TWO-HEADED HUNTING DAEMON	
Manners	Screaming and gurgling
Race	Abomination
Traits	<i>Acidic Attack</i> (II), <i>Acidic Blood</i> (II), <i>Armored</i> (II), <i>Many-Headed</i> (I), <i>Natural Weapon</i> (II), <i>Robust</i> (I)
Accurate 15 (-5), Cunning 10 (0), Discreet 9 (+1), Persuasive 5 (+5), Quick 10 (0), Resolute 7 (+3), Strong 13 (-3), Vigilant 11 (-1)	
Abilities	None
Weapons	Claws 6 Acidic spit 4 damage for 4 turns.
Armor	Leathery daemon skin 5
Defense	+2
Toughness	13 Pain Threshold 7
Equipment	A map of an overgrown temple city, located somewhere in the shadow of the Ravens.
Shadow	Like boiling, fuming tar (thoroughly corrupt)

Tactics: The daemon initially attacks Iold and his companions with the aim of killing them as quickly as possible. If confronted by others it will focus on whichever enemy poses the greatest challenge.

with jewelry, antique ornaments and to top it off, the most prized possession of the Symbarian demonologist – a man-high marble statue in the shape of a two-headed daemon holding a map of what looks like a temple city.

The atmosphere is festive and Iold and his friends are treating all patrons to free drinks. The stut and blackbrew are flowing, and a wild boar is roasting over the fire pit for everyone to eat their bellies full. Then the statue starts screaming. And bleeding! The fire-pit and all lanterns are extinguished; all is dark except a pair of glowing, hungering daemon eyes.

MANY-HEADED, MONSTROUS TRAIT

The creature has multiple heads or limbs governed by separate brains/minds, and can use them independently of each other. Damage is suffered separately by each part, so they have to be taken out one by one. Only once all are eliminated the creature dies.

A drawback is that the traits *Armored* and *Robust* are weakened at the higher levels of Many-headed: such a massive, simultaneously limber body cannot fully use all its strength in all directions at once.

I Action: Passive. The creature has two limbs or heads and may act with them separately; the creature has two combat actions per turn.

II Action: Passive. The creature has four limbs or heads and may act with them separately; the creature has four combat actions per turn. The traits *Armored* and *Robust* work as if one level lower for the creature.

III Action: Passive. The creature has eight limbs or heads and may act with them separately; the creature has eight combat actions per turn. The traits *Armored* and *Robust* work as if two levels lower for the creature.

2. VISITING ELVES

The door swings up and in the opening stands a pale, serious-looking woman with elven features. Next to her and behind her are other elves, with their bows at a ready, the arrows dripping from poison, aimed at the center of the Great Hall.

She raises one hand and explains (in Ambrian) that she wishes to avoid bloodshed; she has come to collect someone. Her name is Léa-Kin and she is tracking the sorcerer Jerea who has violated the sanctuary of a forbidden crypt and also (if in self-defense) killed three elves during her escape. Jerea is in the dormitory on the second floor and has no intention of letting herself be caught by any self-appointed forest wardens. She will fight for her life, even flee through the hole in the privy if needs be.

For the stats, use Early Summer Elves led by a Late Summer Elf, as described in the *Core Rulebook*.

3. A WARMING BEVERAGE

The explorer and alchemist Vilga is ecstatic and comes rushing into the inn with her fists full of mushroom. Her two lackeys (the ogre Korf and the goblin Prosk) are also highly enthusiastic and soon it becomes clear that the trio has found a very rare form of Blushing Fungi, a mushroom said to possess mystical properties.

Vilga brags wildly that she can use the juices of the fungi to brew an elixir which makes her immune to fire. She is willing to immediately test the concoction, hoping to sell a handful of bottles to the patrons at the inn (5 thaler per dose). In fact, the elixir works perfectly, but only for a short while and only once per day. It is up to the game master to decide who will learn this painful lesson – a player character who buys the elixir or Vilga herself, after valiantly having jumped right down into the fire pit.

A successful test against *Cunning* with the ability *Alchemy* is enough to realize the limitations of the elixir. As a rule, drinking the miraculous potion makes the drinker totally immune to fire damage for one turn, after which further doses are totally ineffective until a full twenty four hours have passed.

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Goods and services

Raft-ride:
1 thaler/person

Dormitory, one night:
1 shilling/person

Fish soup & bark bread:
5 ortegs

Deer steak with berries and elf root:
1 shilling

Tankard stut (The Heir of Argona):
4 ortegs

Bottle of wine (The Red Mare):
2 thaler

