

# Fight on!

a fanzine for the old-school renaissance



for Fantasy Role Playing Campaigns played with Pencil, Paper, and Your Imagination

Issue #3

Fall 2008

dedicated to Robert E. "Bob" Bledsaw I,  
who opened a thousand portals to adventure,  
and who pioneered city and wilderness for the rest of us to follow

*Requiescat In Pace*  
1942-2008



"The pace of action and quality of description are important to anyone wishing to maintain an active campaign. The best rules are intuitive and easy to memorize...I never viewed myself as a storyteller to guide the gamers through a preconceived adventure. I tried to maintain the suspension of disbelief by permitting the gamers complete freedom of action."

- Bob Bledsaw, Necromancer Games Message Boards, July 3, 2002

These ancient halls are strangely familiar. These smoking torches; these dark stones; these ancient cobwebs: you have seen them somewhere before, an echo of ancient fable. You turn left into a small room with a single table and a stair going up into the sunlight.

On the table is a coat of mail, a broadsword, and a map inscribed with eldritch runes. Its exact portent is unclear, but it seems to indicate unimaginable wealth back in the mazy deeps behind you.

*If you take up arms and the map, turn to page 3.*

*If you go up the stair, put down this magazine and go back to your ordinary life.*

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Words can hardly describe the gratitude, amazement, and exhilaration we feel at publishing this issue. Once again we have a stellar list of contributors, some already famed, others soon to join them. This time we have also been given the wonderful gift, for this issue only, to use and refer to material published by the Judges Guild. The staff of *Fight On!* wishes to thank Bob Bledsaw II for this tremendous opportunity and honor. We have delivered a new section of the *Wilderlands*, a new Circle of *Inferno*, and the long-awaited truth about Huberic of Haghill, as well as numerous tributes and tidbits concerning the history and influence of one of gaming's greatest companies. Guildsmen, we hoist a tankard in your honor! We also wish to thank M.A.R. Barker for his ongoing permission to publish material compatible with the original *Empire of the Petal Throne* game, and Daniel Proctor for permission to publish material compatible with *Mutant Future*. Copyrights and trademarks on these properties belong to the gentlemen in question (along, in the case of *MF*, with Ryan Denison). See the *MF* Trademark License 1.0 at [goblinoidgames.com](http://goblinoidgames.com) for more details on that. In general *Fight On!* asserts no rights at all to any games or other intellectual property that get mentioned in its pages. We're just having fun talking about the games and fantasy worlds we love.

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*Fight On!* is a journal of shared fantasy. We who read and write for this magazine are a community of role-playing enthusiasts unified by our love of the freewheeling, do-it-yourself approach that birthed this hobby back in the 1970's. We game. And you're welcome to join us.

-Ignatius Ümlaut, Publisher and Editor

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**Index of Illustrations & Cartography:** front cover by Sean "Len Cain" Elliott; back cover by Victor Raymond, James Mishler, and Len Cain. *Fight On!* and TARGA logos by Jeff Rients. Bob Bledsaw photo by Mark Holmer. Interior art, logos, and cartography by Steve Zieser (3,6,9, 13,43,48,50,56,141), Otherworld Miniatures (5,28), Robert S. Conley (11,57,146,147,148,149), Vincent Baker (16), Keshner (24), Lee Barber (27,63), Jason Morningstar (28, 29), Walter Heubach (31), Jeff Rients (32), Patrick Farley (33,70), James Mishler (35,38), Douglas Cox (44), John Miskimen (45,72,76), Tim Shorts (45), Judges Guild (46), Age of Fable (48), David Bowman (53), Peter Seckler (54), Bob Bledsaw II and I (67), Daniel Proctor (69), Anthony Stiller (69), Gabor Lux (80,81,85,90,91), Gustav Dore (93, 96,107,108,112,113,124), Geoffrey O. Dale (94,95,99,105, 107), Jeff Wilcox (97), Kevin Mayle (103,116), Olivier Legrand (128), S. John Ross (130), and Matthew Hoover (150). We also used public domain art from [karenswhimsy.com](http://karenswhimsy.com) (4,21,58,64,92,121), [wikimedia commons](http://wikimedia.commons) (14, 18,136), and [wpcupart.com](http://wpcupart.com) (19,39,118,127,131).



## Bogbears!

new monsters by David Bowman – happy Halloween!

**Bogbears:** DC 5, Speed 9, WD 3+1. Bogbears are giant Goblins with large round pumpkin or jack-o-lantern heads which emit a faint fiery glow from their eyes, nose and mouth when provoked or enraged. These massive creatures range from eight to nine feet in height, and are covered in thick, shaggy grey-brown fur. Bogbears are deceptively nimble, and possess a strong awareness of their surroundings. As such not only are they able to surprise foes half of the time (3 in 6), they themselves are surprised half as often as normal monsters (1 in 6). Bogbears are crafty but not particularly bright. These fearsome monsters are immune to sleep and mind control magic. They have been known to use both armor and weapons, but often hunt prey without such to take advantage of stealth: the rake of a Bogbear's sharply taloned claw is just as lethal as

most normal weapons. Bogbears excel at instilling fear and legends of their horrific appearance are often told to keep children away from places not meant for them to wander; they are 'bogeymen' of a sort. While engaged in melee, the target of the Bogbear's attacks must Save vs. Paralyze at the beginning of each round or become *Frozen with Fear* and unable to move or act in any way during that round. Bogbears receive +2 To Hit against foes who are *Frozen with Fear*. Bogbears delight in torturing their victims before boiling them alive in iron cauldrons or slowly roasting them over a hot fire. Due to their lack of teeth, Bogbears have learned more than a few gruesome recipes for nightmarish stews, soups and puddings. The speech of a Bogbear is like the whispering of a chill breeze, and their howls are like the thundering clouds. Bogbears despise the light of day, and will never be found outdoors while the sun is shining. Particularly bright light will cause Bogbears to lose 1 round of action until they adjust to it, and they have been known to target light bearers first when facing

surface dwellers. Like ordinary Goblins, Bogbears are created from the very essence of Chaos. Spawning Bogbears requires specific rituals and, most importantly, seeds from the pumpkin head of a Bogbear. These Bogbear seeds are highly prized by evil spell casters, but lose their potency within a half dozen days. 5-8 such seeds can be harvested from one pumpkin head, and if planted in a large vessel containing properly enchanted soil and watered with the blood of a slain man, there is a 2 in 6 chance per seed that a vine will successfully grow forth in 7-10 days. These vines, if left undisturbed, will yield a single pumpkin which will grow to a ripe stage in another 7-10 days. At this point, the vines wither away and die, and the pumpkins containing the Bogbear essence will await the crafting process that can release its chaotic energy. Bogbear Pumpkins will 'live' dormant in this state for decades before losing the essence within. If the Bogbear Pumpkin is carved with two eyes, a nose and a mouth while the proper incantations are invoked, the essence within will be released and the rest of the monster will grow forth from the underside of the pumpkin in a matter of minutes! Bogbears are spawned at full size and do not age. Only chaotic mages of level 8 or higher and certain powerful evil beings can learn the involved process required to create these Bogbears.

**Great Bogbears:** DC 4, Speed 6, WD 5+1. Certain rare Bogbear Pumpkin seeds are known to spawn Great Bogbears. Ranging from ten to twelve feet in height, Great Bogbears are twice the mass of their standard kin, with huge leathery pumpkin heads. These Bogbear leaders are of higher intellect than their smaller relatives, and it is believed that some Great Bogbears have actually been able to master the spawning method used to grow Bogbear Pumpkins. The lair of a Great Bogbear is always enveloped in an *Eerie Presence* with a radius of 90-180 feet or more, determined by the age of the Great Bogbear and the depth of its lair within the underworld. Surface dwellers and mortals who enter the *Eerie Presence* detect its tell-tale signs immediately, and the intensity of the magical aura increases as its center is approached. The area within the presence is downright spooky, filled with cold drafts, constant whisperings of dark omen, shadows moving at the edge of vision, and an ominous feeling of dread. The *Eerie Presence* creates an otherworldly unease, which causes all characters to suffer a penalty of 1 on attack rolls and saves. Great Bogbears are only hit by silver or magic weapons, and share the same immunities to sleep and mind control magic that Bogbears possess. Attacks from these fearsome magical creatures causes 1d6+2 damage. In addition to the Bogbear *Frozen with Fear* power, the mere sight of a Great Bogbear will *Cause Panic*. Anyone seeing the huge shambling monstrosity will experience an overwhelming desire for self-preservation, normally expressed by dropping everything, screaming, and running away as fast as possible. Saves against Paralyze are rolled as follows: 1 WD or lower: No Save, flee in panic; 2-4 WD: Save or flee in

panic; 5-7 WD: Save at +2 or flee in panic; 8+ WD: Immune. If the save is made, that character is immune to *Cause Panic* for the rest of that encounter. Those fleeing in panic will run nonstop at full speed for 5-10 rounds, normally in the direction from which they came. Great Bogbears are formidable opponents; ferocious, tenacious, bloodthirsty, cunning and diabolical, they are evil incarnate. Woe to the unprepared mage who spawns one of these twisted forces of chaos! Ω

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## Special Maneuvers in Combat

rules variant by Calithena

A character should be able to try just about anything in combat: imagination and good tactics should save the day at least as often as main force. How variant attacks work is up to the individual Judge to adjudicate, and is often highly dependent on local circumstances, but guidelines can be useful. Here are some approaches I use in my home game.

**Disarm:** To knock a weapon out of someone's hands, make a normal roll to hit. If you succeed, they drop that weapon instead of taking damage. If it is very difficult to disarm that foe for some reason (skilled swordsman, two-handed blade, very strong, PC, etc.) the Judge may allow the foe a save vs. paralysis to hold on after the hit.

**Help!** The halfling kneels behind the ogre to make a stumbling block so the warrior can knock it prone; the thief distracts the dragon for a moment so the mage can fire a



*Leslie's priestess finds an alternate blunt weapon*

lightning bolt into its soft underbelly. Such tactics require situational adjudication, but I try to give a bonus if remotely plausible (usually +1 to +4). You can also Help yourself by studying a foe for a round or setting up before acting.

**Impairing Attack:** Sometimes a character wants to hobble her foe, cut him above the eyes to dim his sight, leave a permanent scar as a memento of battle, or similar. Such attacks are at -4. They do normal damage plus effects as appropriate: permanent mark, temporarily halved movement, a -2 short-term penalty on all attack rolls, etc.

**Mighty Blow/Precise Strike:** If an attacker accepts a -4 before the roll, he may double damage on a successful hit.

**Push/Trip/Unhorse:** A versatile technique, pushing can be used to get past foes or to send them over the cliffside or onto the flagstones. It requires a d6 roll: on a 1-2 you are successful, with bonuses/penalties for strength, size, situation, etc. If you are just trying to push past someone you may finish your movement/action after the roll, but if you push them down or over a ledge you end your round with the push. If your roll fails you stop where you were when you pushed. -1 to get someone off their horse.

**Sap:** I allow this if the target is not at all aware of the attacker and the target's physiology has a weak point that

allows this which is known and accessible to the attacker. A standard hit roll is made, without any bonus for attacks from behind. If it hits, the target makes a save vs. paralysis. No effect if made, but if missed, the target is knocked out.

**Targeted Attack:** Chopping off octopus' tentacles or hydra's heads or shooting at the weak spot you noticed on the dragon's underbelly needs special coverage. Roll such attacks at -4. They do normal damage, but may wind up being more effective despite the penalty, either because the area targeted has a much lower DC or because you do enough damage to destroy it outright (if this is possible).

**Use Terrain:** Like Helping this is very situational, but the great adventurers are separated from the good ones by their ability to use the features of their environment. Let your players be creative and be open to their ideas!

**Ward Off:** Sometimes you want to stop someone from moving with your body or perhaps with the tip of your pole arm. This is again essentially a Push, except it must be declared on one's own turn in anticipation of one's opponent's. To compensate for this, characters trying to ward off foes get a +1 on their roll. If they succeed though their opponent's move is aborted at the point at which they encountered the warding character. Ω

Kick down the door,  
roll for initiative

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# A Magician's Miscellany

by Jeff Rients

The rules below are not meant to outline a complete and coherent magic system. Rather, a series of modular game mechanics are offered, with the intent being that individual Judges may adopt whatever proposal(s) best fit their own vision for magic in their campaign world.

**Quick & Dirty Spell Components:** This mechanic abstracts things like 'eye of newt' into strictly economic and encumbrance concerns. These rules assume the campaign world includes magic shops where arcane supplies may be readily purchased. Each time a spell is thrown the caster expends 1d6 gold coins worth of components per level of the spell. A standard spell component pouch can hold up to 100gc worth of components and encumbers at 50 coins. Practicality and ease of access prevents more than two component pouches being worn on a belt at one time. Up to 15 gold coins worth of additional components may be concealed in the folds of one's robe, up one's sleeve, etc.



Should a mage attempt a casting but come up short on components the spell will almost certainly fail, but kindly judges may allow a die throw for success if the shortage is 5 gc or less. In such a case roll 1d6. If the roll is higher than the shortage the spell succeeds but at half effect, with a lower result indicating the spell is lost from memory but fails to activate. A roll of exactly '1' on the die indicates some sort of horrible fumbling of the spell rather than simple failure. If this 'roll for half effect' option is adopted then I suggest shortages of more than 5 gold coins should have a 2 in 6 chance of fumbling instead of just failing.

**Overcasting:** Here are rules for casting spells beyond those memorized. Starting at 2nd level a mage may attempt to cast known spells not memorized that day or re-cast spells already spent., up to once per day for each even-numbered level the character has attained. (Thus an 8<sup>th</sup> level mage could make 4 overcast attempts.) The mage should declare which spell is being used and roll 2d6:

## Overcast Attempt Table

Spell Level	Fumble	Fail	Delayed	Success
-2 or below*	2	3	4	5+
-1*	2	3	4-5	6+
0*	2	3-4	5-6	7+
1	2	3-5	6-7	8+
2	2	3-6	7-8	9+
3	2-3	4-7	8-9	10+
4	2-3	4-8	9-10	11+
5	2-4	5-9	10-11	12
6	2-4	5-10	11-12	-
7 or higher†	2-5	6-11	12	-

† If applicable to campaign.

\* Starting at level 4, mages may subtract from the overcast spell's actual level to determine which line of the overcast attempt table to roll on. The progression is as follows: level 4-6 -1, 7-9 -2, 10-12 -3, and so on.

Fumbles are left to the individual Judge's imagination. Failed spells expend an overcast attempt, but nothing else happens. Delayed results activate 1d6 rounds after casting is completed. A spellcaster may wish to cancel a delayed spell if circumstances change. Subtract spell level from caster level and roll that number or less on d20 to cancel the casting. The overcasting attempt is still expended.

Only spells in a magician's spellbook may be overcast, but now wizards have an even greater incentive to seek out higher level spells. And high ranking wizards can squeeze out a few extra low level spells with fairly low risk, simulating the 'spontaneous magic' that many wizards in fantasy fiction appear to possess.

**A "Chance to Know Spell" Compromise:** In my world the sorcerers of the city of Hkaag have a large body of magical lore taught to all members, consisting of standard-

ized lists of spells for each spell level. A newly-initiated 1st level guildmember receives a book containing all first level spells known to the guild. Under this variant one spell is selected as the specialty of the novice mage. That spell is automatically known; all others are checked against a percent chance to understand. Each time a level is gained thereafter a new spell is considered to be automatically understood by the wizard and all others are checked again to see if additional study and insight have revealed the secrets of these spells. When a new level of spells is gained the wizard is issued a new spellbook from the guild. The character again picks a single automatically known spell (which can be from the new book or some other already possessed) and then rolls for other unknown spells. Thus minimum/maximum spells known rules are not used.

**Be Good to Your Mentor:** The Judge may find it useful to dice up a grumpy old warlock to serve as the mentor for each new PC mage. When it comes time to advance a level, the PC will naturally seek out the mentor as a source for new spells (as well as to satisfy whatever training rules you like to inflict upon your poor players). Each time the PC mage petitions the mentor for assistance, roll on the following chart:

#### Suffer Fools Gladly Table

##### Roll Mentor Behavior

2	Charm/Geas on PC, sent on mission
3-5	Eject PC from premises, no help for d6 months
6-8	Will help in exchange for gold/magic/mission
9-11	Provides minimal assistance (e.g. 1 new spell)
12	Provides abundant assistance (e.g. d4 new spells)

Charisma/Magnetism scores may modify this die roll, as can past relations between the PC and their mentor. Regular flattery, small tokens of esteem, reports on unusual phenomena, etc., might yield an additional +1.

**An Alternative to Daily Memorization:** I don't recall ever reading about Gandalf or Merlin lugging huge tomes in their backpacks when they went adventuring, so here's a way wizards can leave their spellbooks behind and not see them ruined by inclement weather, dragon's breath, etc. Consider allowing memorized spells to automatically return after a good night's sleep. With this option consulting a spellbook only becomes necessary when a wizard wishes to change his spell payload. Some mages will love the security of leaving spellbooks in their stronghold, while others will not want to be caught on level 15 of the Dungeon of Unrelenting Doom with the one spell they desperately need sitting on their desk 300 miles away. Either way, it's an interesting strategic decision to force upon the pointy hat types. And you can always have thieves attempt to make off with the spellbooks while the wizard is off adventuring. Ω

## The Wild North

Map 19 for the *Wilderlands Campaign* by Robert S. Conley

*If used in the Wilderlands, this map should be placed to the North of Map 5 (Valon) and to the West of Blackmoor (if applicable).*

Two thousand years ago the ice retreated from the Wild North. Nomads following herds of elk settled throughout the land. The Avalonians of Valon named them *Sorobes* (So-robés), the people of the elk. Two hundred years ago Rurasin the Bold led the longships of the Skandian Vikings up the mighty Belaya River and conquered the Sorobes. He died in the conquest, but his sons Vladimir and Vadim completed his work. Vadim turned to evil and was banished by Vladimir. Before he left, Vadim cursed his brother: "Never shall a son be born to you".

Vladimir consolidated his rule, but his wives only bore him girls. A decade later Vadim led the nomads of the eastern steppes against his brother's kingdom. Vadim lost the war, but Vladimir was slain. The surviving Skandian lords bickered among themselves and civil war broke out. The daughters of Vladimir were divided among the lords. Over time the Skandians and Sorobes became thoroughly intermingled, producing a new people, the Rurasin. Today the land is divided into dozens of petty kingdoms ruled by the descendents of Vladimir. Yet these "Sons of Vladimir" are hated by the Sons of Vadim, who worship dark gods and desire no less than the total conquest of the Wild North.

The towns of Tver, Orenburg, Tyumen, and Suzdal are the leading centers of the Wild North. Their position along the Belaya River and its major tributaries give them a stranglehold over the fur and amber trade. Trappers and harvesters throughout the Wild North congregate at these towns to sell their goods. From them, barges are floated down to the Avalonian port of Serinal where merchants from Valon and elsewhere come to barter.

The City-State of Valon controls Serinal and everything south of the Northguard Mountains. They also patrol the pilgrimage route to the temple of Aram-Kor. This route runs through the Wilderland mountains and continues in the next map westward. In the east the northern reaches of the dwarves extends into the Shielding Mountains. The Golden Pass is guarded by warriors from the City-State of Tarsh. They keep a watch for any incursions by the nomads. To the east the steppes are dominated by the Ten, a mighty nation ruled by ten Sons of Vadim. Only their constant infighting keeps them from being a threat to the rest of the Wild North.

To the north lies the Taiga, a great, dark evergreen forest extending indefinitely northwards. To the west is the Great Glacier, last remnant of an ice sheet that once covered the Wild North. Icemelt has made the western portion of the



Wild North a tangle of bog, swamp, and forest. Here the last remnants of the Sorobes live, hidden in small scattered villages in the deep forest and bogs. The region is known for its short hot summers and long winters. Without the moderating influence of the sea it is truly a wretched place to live. Only abundant game and treasures of fur and amber permit its denizens to scratch out sustenance.

Different religions compete for the hearts and minds of the northerners. The Sorobes were greatly influenced by the Avalonians and appropriated their gods. Aram Kor was known as Perun the sky father, and Vala Tar as Mokosh the mother of life. The remaining elk hunters took up the worship of Amala, calling her Zimtra the huntress. Ever looking for a way against the Avalonians, priests of the dark god Armadad Bog came into the Wild North. Meeting worshippers in secret groves, their god became known as Veles the Ironmaster. When the Sons of Vladimir conquered much of Wild North they adopted the native gods as their own. The Sons of Vadim, like their namesake, turned to Veles for aid and power.

**Adaptation Notes:** The Wild North is written to be part of the *Wildlands of High Fantasy*. However, it is isolated enough to fit easily into the extreme north or south of many other settings as well. The Avalonians can be replaced with any high magic culture in your campaign; the Skandians can be replaced with any Viking or Scandinavian style culture; the Ten can be the same nomads that exist in the southwest of *Blackmoor* or a different tribe entirely.

In the entries below, population refers to able bodied men. This is the number of people that may be levied for troops or labor. Multiply by 4 to find the actual population. The clear hexes are not prairies or plains but woodlands with tree coverage ranging from 30% to 49%. The forests have as much denser concentration of trees from 50% to 100%. When you see a plains area named (i.e. Windswept Plains 5012) consider any hex touching the name to be open.

The term *Les* is a latinized version of the Russian word for forest. Any forest south of XX08/XX09 is mixed evergreen and deciduous trees. North is nearly all evergreen. There is little or no brush in the interior of a evergreen forest although the forest edge can be quite tangled. The biggest impediments are the frequent shallow bogs in the taiga. Most are seasonal. They form in the spring and disappear over summer. The ones that persist are frozen in the unbelievably harsh winters, which start in late October and don't end until late April. The referee is strongly recommended to come up with some guidelines to give the players a sense of the harshness of the climate. I recommend that any group which does not take adequate precautions make a save vs. death every 4 hours or take 1d6 damage. Adequate clothing over their armor will likely leave them encumbered. Wet clothing will make the save vs. death occur every hour.

## Locale Descriptions by Hex Number

**0104** Under this ridge above the Severnyj Belyj river live 25 wererats (WD 3) and 36 of giant rats (WD 1). They hunt along the river valley, preying on beasts and men alike.

**0109** A cave in a ravine is home to 5 ogres (WD 4+1). They venture down to the shores Kristall Lake, where they hunt giant eels. In their lair are 1,000 gc and 3,000 cc.

**0122** A Giant Ice Worm (WD 15) makes its lair here amid the crevasses and ice falls. At the bottom of its icy cleft there are 5,000 gc, 5 gems worth 100 gc each, and 8 jewels (gc 700, 1000, 2x2000, 2x4000, 8000, 9000).

**0133** A pack of 6 giant weasels (WD 4) are eating the carcass of an Elk. Their pelts are worth 200 gc each.

**0201** In a cave underneath a giant pile of rocks 3 Brown Bears (WD 4) make their lair with 3 cubs (WD 1). Adult pelts are worth 100 gc each, cubs' 50 gc each.

**0205 Orinsk.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 200, Civ 3, Outlook: N, Fishing. **Ruler:** Mayor Mireko, N Rurasin War4. This agrarian village makes its livelihood fishing on Kristall Lake. Recently Mireko's son was killed by wererats (**0104**) and he is organizing an expedition to wipe them out.

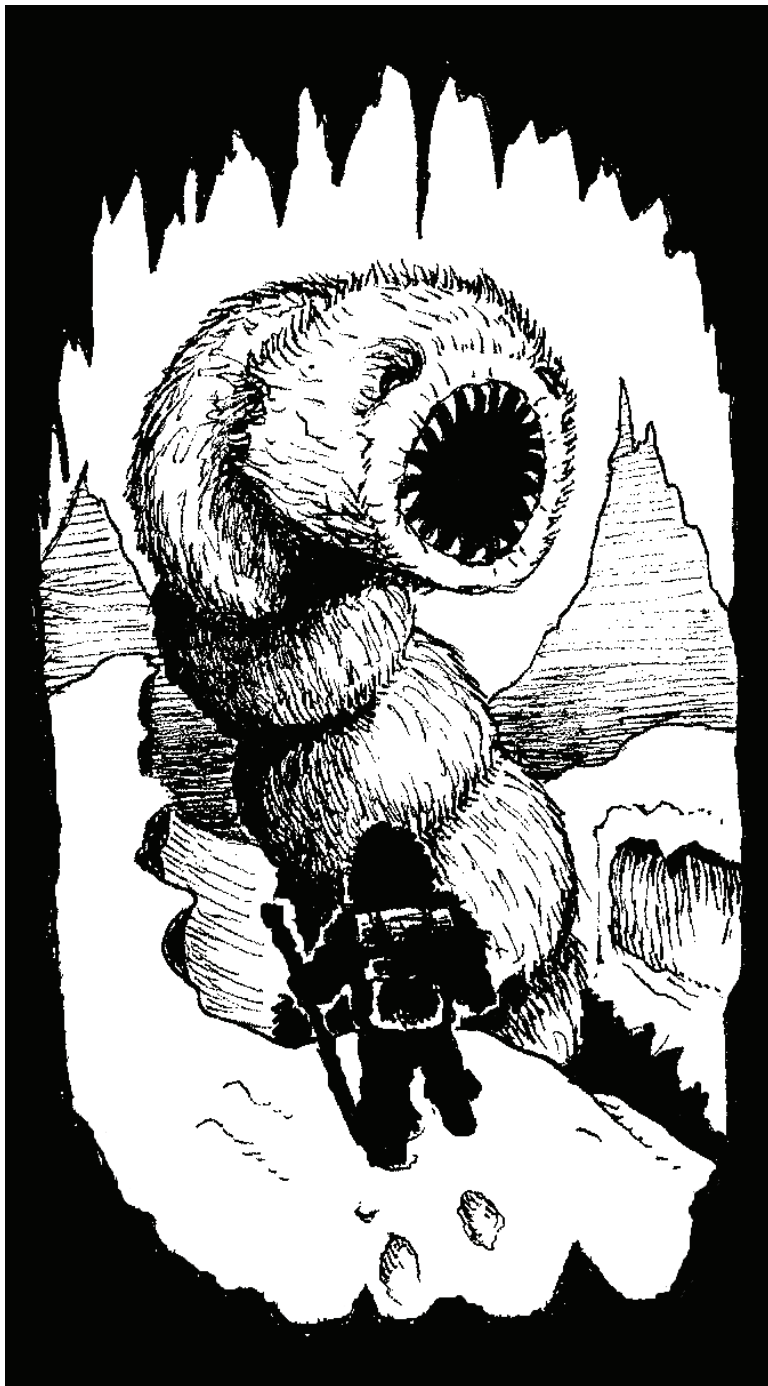
**0209** The top of an entire hill has been blasted away here, leaving a crater. At the bottom is a fully charged and intact Rod of Rulership.

**0215** A cave in a nunatak is the lair of Rekokardek, a newly adult white dragon (WD 7). She has been flying over the north planning her raids. Her lair contains 40 jewels (gc 700, 800, 5x1,000, 1,100, 1,200, 1,500, 5x2,000, 8x3,000, 5x4,000, 3x5,000, 5x6,000, 7,000, 8,000, 2x10,000).

**0221** At the bottom of this crevasse lie the mummified remains of a Avalonian wizard, grasping a wand of lightning. The body is guarded by three Ice Golems (wp 60).

**0229** A cave halfway up the mountain is the lair of Selfor, an old silver dragon (WD 10, Lawful). He guards an ancient air raft of the Avalonians. Treat the air raft as a flying carpet with a 12 person capacity. Along with the air raft, his lair has 24,000 sc; 10,000 gc; a flaming lawful sword +1, +2 vs Trolls; another lawful sword of incredible sharpness; a map to 60 gems (gc 5x10, 6x50, 36x100, 13x500) and 3 jewels (gc 1,000, 1,200, 5,000); a scroll which protects against elementals; a potion of ice giant strength; and a scroll cursed with a fatal disease (30 min.).

**0308 Shrouded Island.** This island is guarded by 40 pixies (WD 1). Their magic causes the island to be continually shrouded in mist. At the center of the island is a portal to



the Unseelie Court. If the pixies are killed the Unseelie will emerge at the next full moon and unleash the Wild Hunt.

**0323 Icecrag Castle.** Jareko, N Rurasin War4; 90 men. This castle is built around a rocky outcrop about a mile from the front of the Glacier. It is the home of Jareko and his companion, Lady Natava (N Rurasin Mag6). Jareko is a Son of Vladimir. They are in the midst of studying artifacts uncovered by the retreating glacier.

**0333 Shrine of Aland-Dar.** Selidon, L Avalonian Pr8; 80 men. This shrine to Aram Kor marks the beginning of the pilgrimage trail to the Great Temple to the northwest.

Pilgrims are escorted for one day's travel (20 miles) by a patrol led by one of four temple guardians (L Pal4).

**0407** In the depths of Kristall Lake lies the lair of the hag Latana (C Mag8). It is a maze built of sunken logs and the bones of the fishermen she preys on. Giant Crayfish (WD 3) and Pikes (WD 4) await those who try to rob her treasure: 60 jewels (gc 500, 600, 900, 10x1,000, 1,100, 1,200, 1,700, 12x2,000, 5x3,000, 8x4,000, 9x5,000, 6x6,000, 4 x 7,000), stone map to a wand of paralysis.

**0412 Temple of the Sky.** Lavelav, L Rurasin Pr9; 60 men. This temple is dedicated to the worship of Perun the Sky Father and his wife Mokosh the Mother of Life. It is built on top of a cliff overlooking Kristall Lake. The only way up to the temple is a wagon path carved into the cliffside.

**0414** This mountain valley contains the eroded remains of a village of stone huts. These ruins are inhabited by 160 kobolds (WD 1) of the Barbed Thorn tribe. Proudly displayed behind their chief's throne are magic wings which can be mounted on one's back, allowing flight.

**0421** A castle built on a nunatak is the lair of a family of 6 ice giants (WD 11). They have had several battles with Lord Jareko of Icecrag Castle (**0323**). Their treasure room contains 7,000 gc; a potion of mind control (humans); a lawful flaming sword +1, +3 vs treemen; a potion of diminution; and a cursed scroll (transforms into an insect).

**0424** Half buried in the bog are the broken remains of one of Koschei the Undying's (**4516**) huge mechanical constructs. There are 8 wights (WD 3) inhabiting the remains.

**0426 Shadowmere Tower,** Vomilav, C Rurasin War8; 130 men. Vomilav is a son of Vadim who uses Shadowmere as base to terrorize villages around the Led'anove Marshes. Every new moon Vomilov leads his Shadow Guard (War5) and his men on a raiding expedition. Several years ago Koschei the Undying (**4516**) kidnapped one of his women. Vomilav was able to rescue her and also destroyed the giant mechanical construct that was sent to destroy his tower. (**0424**). The two evil lords are now bitter enemies.

**0428** A large cave at the head of a mountain valley is the lair of Starat and his family of Rock Giants (WD 9). In their lair they have a dozen pelts worth 500 gc each.

**0504** The taiga disappears here, forming a huge glade five miles in diameter. Even at midsummer the ground here is covered in snow. At the center of this huge snowfield is a large peasant hut, intricately carved and colorfully decorated in the Rurasin style. This is the home of a powerful demigod: Ded Moroz, Grandfather Frost. He is concerned over the glacier's retreat and works every winter to make the ice and snow last as long as possible. While his purpose seems cruel from a human point of view, he looks

favorably on personal appeals for aid. Guarding the glade are the three hundred ice pixies (WD 1) of his court.

**0510 Sangla.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 500, Civ 4, Outlook: L, Fishing. **Ruler:** Honored Ladimar, L Rurasin Pr5. Sangla supplies the Temple of Perun (**0412**) with their food.

**0519** This small stading of 40 gnomes (WD 1) are in the midst of raising dozens of mink, foxes, and rabbits and harvesting them for their fur. Each year at the beginning of spring they head down to the town of Suzdal (**1720**) to trade their fur for supplies. They have a great deal of difficulty with raids from the goblins of Gunramael (**0818**).

**0533** The hills of this area host 12 nested griffons (WD 7). If searched they have 1,000 gc scattered among them.

**0534** The crystal clarity of the ice on these mountains peaks is breathtaking in their beauty. If the party lingers they will see a pair of cloud giants (WD 12) fly down in a cloud chariot and begin carving ornate spires from the ice. After carving a dozen they will load up their chariots and fly back to their cloud castle.

**0616 Tower of the Three.** Davahu, Jarka, Velka, C Hag Mag12; 140 goblins. Davahu, Jarka, and Valka are three ancient hags that rule this valley. The sides of the valley are riddled with caves holding the warrens of their goblin minions. They also control the village of Gunramael (**0818**). They fear the rise of the Sons of Vladimir and work with the Sons of Vadim and the priests of Veles the Ironmaster in intricate plots to bring about their downfall.

**0702** In a secluded glade in the taiga is a slime-covered statue of Artimov, an ancient hero of the Sorobes. His sword arm is broken off. If the arm is reunited (**0710**) the statue will be become animated (as per Stone Golem) and defend the nearest Sorobe village (Edgeburg, **0905**). If the party is recognizably Rurasin he will immediately attack.

**0709 Isle of Fric.** This is home to 100 Gnolls of the Fric tribe. They continually war with the Gnolls of Frac.

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**0710** In the sunken remains of a ship (10% chance per turn of collapse) is the broken sword arm of a statue. The arm goes to the Statue of Artimov (**0702**).

**0714** In a secluded ravine is the camp of Master Merchant Preko (C Rurasin) and 30 men of his merchant caravan. With the caravan are 10 guards (War2). Preko has become quite wealthy by secretly trading with the Three Hags (**0616**) and is an important courier for the Sons of Vadim.

**0722** A hill rises from the surrounding marshes to form a warren for 20 Wererats. They live by catching frogs and any unlucky passerby. In their warren is their ill-gotten loot of 2 Jewels (gc 3,000, 4,000) and a Wand of Detecting Hidden Things Such As Secret Doors & Traps. Their leader, Jaradis, wields a Neutral Dragon Slaying Sword +2 that can Detect Metal, Detect Traps, Detect Shifting Walls & Rooms, communicates by Empathy, and has Egoism 3.

**0723** Half buried in the muck and mire of the swamp is a sunken barge. The wererats ambushed and sunk it but fled that night when the crew rose as angry wights (WD 3). Now 6 of them haunt the ruins of the bar, guarding their remains and their treasure of 3,000 sc and 3,000 cc.

**0727** A pack of 12 ghouls roams the southern half of Led'anove Marsh. During the day they sleep in a copse tangled with vines and fallen branches. 5,000 cc and 16 magic arrows (+1) can be found there among the maggotty remains of their victims.

**0732 Shagrat.** Orc, Pop. 221, Civ: 2, Outlook: C; Hides. **Ruler:** Morig the Brash, WD 4 Orc. This village of crude thatch huts lies in the foothills of the Wilderland Mountains. Morig the Brash leads his tribe on wild raids through the Les Gigantov forest to the north.

**0811 Trava Castle.** Dribomil, N Rurasin Mag10; 12 mages, 100 men. Perched on the shores of Kristall Lake, Trava Castle is home to a conclave of 12 wizards lead by Dribomil the Mysterious. In addition to the men, a pack of 4 Chimerae (WD 9) guard the castle.

**0817** In a hollow between two low hills Green Slime (WD 2) covers the rusted grill of a sewer opening. Examination of the shaft leading down will reveal the walls to be well-preserved despite their age.

**0818 Gunramael.** Goblin, Pop. 120, Civ: 2, Outlook: C, Iron. **Ruler:** Lakiz the Crooked, WD 3 Goblin. Lakiz rules over the mines of Gunramael with an iron fist. The goblins do a brisk business in trading iron ingots to the Sons of Vadim and other chaotic forces

**0828** Beneath an overhang on the side of a ravine is the opening to a underground cistern, currently dry. It is the meeting place of the Werebear clans of Les Gigantov.

**0830** The jumbled stones of this rocky crag form a lair for 18 Gargoyles (WD 4) and hold their treasure: 8,000 cc, 3,000 sc, and 2 Gems worth 100 and 500 gc.

**0902 Caer Elkhorn.** Husleko, L Sorobes Mag10; 40 men. Caer Elkhorn is the last remaining stronghold of the Mystics of the Wild, an ancient order of Sorobe Wizards. Here Husleko labors at training Remilav (N Mag5), his last

Map Key  
 △ = Rain   ◇ = Lair   ○ = Citadel   □ = Castle   ☆ = Settlement  
 ▨ = Swamp   ~~~~~ = Ice Field Edge   ■ = Grassland   ▲ = Foothills   ▲ = Mountains

# Wild North Campaign Map Nineteen

Judges Cartography to the Area of the Wild North  
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THE GREAT GLACIER  
 VALLEY OF THE HAGS  
 WOODRIDGE MOUNTAINS  
 WILDERLAND MOUNTAINS  
 NORTHGUARD MOUNTAINS

THE BELAGNA RIVER  
 SERAPNA RIVER  
 NIVERNY RIVER  
 LESTARLET RIVER  
 THE STEPPES OF THE TEN  
 THE GOLDEN PASS  
 SHIELDING MOUNTAINS

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*(The map on page 11 is printed on four pages at the end of the issue. Printed and printable versions are also available in pdf, jpg, and larger print formats at [http://stores.lulu.com/FightOn - Ignatius](http://stores.lulu.com/FightOn-Ignatius))*

apprentice. Remilav has grown bored and longs to leave for the warm south. 40 men drawn from the remaining tribes of the Sorobes guard the castle, together with 2 Manticores (WD 6+1).

**0905 Edgeburg.** Human (Sorobe), Pop. 450, Civ: 2, Outlook: N, Timber. **Ruler:** Bretana, L Sorobe Pr5. Edgeburg is the home of one of the remaining free tribes of the Sorobes. It lies secluded in the West Taiga, well hidden from the Rurasin and the Sons of Vladimir. A temple to Mokosh, Mother of Life, is the largest building and is a busy pilgrimage site for the Sorobes.

**0910** The lake floor here covered with piles of rocks and a extensive bed of tall seaweed. Here a tribe of 80 nixies (WD 1) live protected by a school of 50 gar (WD 1). Scattered around the seaweed bed are two dozen humans that the nixies have kidnapped and charmed. They work at tending the seaweed until released a year later. Those with too strong of a will are subdued and sold to Latana for her larder (**0407**). Lodged in a rock pile is a Chaotic Sword +1, +2 vs. Mages & Enchanted Creatures.

**0928** Wailing and sobbing echo through the woods as two Hill Giants (WD 8) mourn the recently discovered skeleton of their father.

**1013** In the center of an acre of ruins is a collapsed circular tower with only the first floor intact. Inside, chipped mosaics and faded paint reveals this as a shrine to Perun the sky father. In the center is an altar supporting a crystal ball that allows ESP. The shrine is also the lair of three hydras, one with seven heads and two with five. There are 3,000 cc, 2,000 sc, 1,100 gc, 3 Gems (gc 100, 2 x 500), and 2 Jewels (gc 1,000, 1,600) scattered on the floor.

**1024 Kexholm.** Human(Rurasin), Pop. 560, Civ: 5; Outlook: N, Amber. **Ruler:** Governor Anonov, L Rurasin War5. Kexholm is under the control of the Merchant Adventurers of Suzdal (**1720**). Governor Anonov has the peasants go out into the surrounding countryside to dig pits for blue earth. The blue earth is then carted back to the village and washed, whereupon nodules of amber are extracted (1d6x100 gc each). The nodules are crated up in barrels and sent to Suzdal for polishing. There are surface deposits in the dangerous Led'anoye Marshes that are a favorite target of poachers. The dangers of pit mining led to a revolt two years ago that was brutally crushed.

**1111 Deepwater Hollow.** Halfling, Pop. 632, Civ: 3; Outlook: L, Fish. **Ruler:** Sheriff Pierson Dodds, L Halfling War3. It is unusual to find a Halfling village this far north. A century ago series of calamitous events wiped out their

village in the Elphand Lands. Sheriff Dodds' grandfather led the survivors on a harrowing journey into the Wild North. They finally settled where the Belaya River emerges from Kristall Lake. Today they harvest the lake for fish and profitably trade with the Rurasin towns downriver.

**1117** This secluded cave is a small shrine to Veles Ironmaster. The Evil High Priest Borzelav (C Pr9) and his six acolytes (C Pr3, 3x2, 2x1) maintain a hostel and supply depot for the Sons of Vadim. In the temple strong room are 1,000 sc, 6,000 gc, +2 armor and armor of vulnerability (same type), and a Chaotic Sword +1 w/ locate objects.

**1122** Four Rock Giants (WD 9) are camped in the woods of Les Gigantov. They are guarding their chief (currently 0 HP) who is gravely injured and lying on a litter. They plan to stop at Starat House to recuperate (**0428**).

**1123 Aldico Castle.** Vlavencek, N Rurasin Mag14; 100 men. Vlavencek is one of the Rurasin's greatest wizards. His castle is perched on a rocky point jutting out into Lake Gloom. A trained Wyvern (WD 7) helps guard.

**1125** A minstrel troupe has been killed by a swarm of 12 giant wasps (WD 3). There are 1,000 sc and 12 Jewels(gc 2x1,000, 4x300, 1,400, 3x1,600, 2x2,000).

**1126 Temple of the Ironmaster.** Lubozel, C Rurasin Pr16; 110 men. This is the main temple of Veles in the Wild North. It is perched on a bluff overlooking Rassveta Stream. The Merchant Adventurers of Suzdal (**1720**) pay Lubozel an annual tribute to ignore their operation at Kexholm (**1024**). In addition his men, Lubozel has over 30 Priests of Veles in residence. His right hand man in managing the temple is Banepom (C Pr9), a Son of Vadim.

**1126** Camped across the river from the Temple of the Ironmaster is a caravan. Master Seko (C Pr7) is organizing wagons and teams to supply the various outposts of Veles Ironmaster and the Sons of Vadim.

**1209 Sky Island.** This island is ringed by high cliffs. If scaled, a camp of 20 Gnomes (WD 1) and 10 Giant Eagles (WD 4) will be found, well-stocked with supplies and assorted riding gear. The Eagle Riders of the Gnome King uses this island as waystation on their journeys.

**1210** A large chunk at the top of the bluff has been blasted away. Supine in the crater is a very old copper-scaled dragon, breathing its last breaths. Hidden under its wings is a Breastplate of Law (+2 plate which absorbs/neutralizes death rays from evil priests). Commotion has a 50% chance of collapsing the bluff, burying all.

**1214** At the head of a narrow ravine an ornate marble fountain can be found. Its waters will act as one healing potion per day. It is guarded by an unseen stalker (WD 8).

**1218 Beratan Keep.** Svedo, L Rurasin War8; 80 men. Svedo, a Son of Vladimir, was granted this domain five years ago by Suzdal (1720) to protect its western approaches. The Keep is almost finished and land is being cleared for a village and crop fields. Svedo's best friend, Father Zela (L Pr 6), has finished the first building, a small church dedicated to Mokosh, Mother of Life. On a nearby hill is a wooden stockade where Svedo has 4 trained Small Rocs (WD 6), stablehands, and a team of 8 riders (L War4).

**1220 Tidma.** Human(Rurasin), Pop. 482, Civ: 5, Outlook: N, Iron. **Ruler:** Governor Jaromil, L Rurasin War4. Tidma is the hub of several mines in the eastern Vasily Hills. Most of the ore goes to Suzdal (1720) as tribute. Tidma continually skirmishes with the Goblins of Gunrammael (0818).

**1221** A pack of 8 Werewolves roam between the edge of Les Gigantov and the south shore of Lake Tyusin. Their cave in the forest has 6,000 cc scattered about.

**1228** 6 Griffons (WD 7) lair in the woods of Les Gigantov.

**1232** A caravan of 30 guards, 20 drovers, 10 wagons, and 16 merchants are heading the Temple of Aram-Kor on the Great Glacier to the west of the Wild North. They are hauling supplies and equipment.

**1303** In the midst of the West Taiga 12 Rock Giants (WD 9) dwell in the caves of a massive rock outcropping. The chief and several of his best warriors have left on a raid (1122). In the caves are 1,000 sc and 1,000 gc.

**1305** A camp of 20 Sorobe Elk Hunters led by Jaros (N Sorobe War7), a hunter famed throughout the Wild North.



**1308 Tugrau.** Human(Sorobe), Pop. 152, Civ: 2, Outlook: N, Pitch. **Ruler:** Governor Mireko, N Sorobe War5. Tugrau manufactures and sells pitch to the fishing villages surrounding Kristall Lake.

**1313 Orenburg.** Human(Rurasin), Pop. 1521, Civ 6, Outlook: N, Market Town. **Ruler:** Prince Zdaleko the Profound, L Rurasin War11. Orenberg dominates the upper Belaya River. Prince Zdaleko is a Son of Vladimir. He spends much of each day adjudicating disputes between the six powerful merchant families that make up Orenburg's High Council.

**1327** A small clan of 110 elves (WD 1+1) live here in the woods of Les Gigantov. They came north from Irminsul in the Elphand Lands shortly after the ice retreated, several centuries ago. They are responsible for much of the growth of the surrounding forest and act as its wardens.

**1328** Strung between two sides of a steep ravine is a massive rope bridge. Talgog, a Hill Giant (WD 8) is carefully crossing the bridge.

**1329 Wolf Spire.** Dreko, C Rurasin/Werewolf Mag10; 140 werewolves. Wolf Spire is the home of the dread werewolf wizard Dreko. He is undisputed king of the werewolves, leader of all the packs roaming Les Gigantov. Nearly all of his men are werewolves (WD 4) and he is protected by an elite guard of 9 giant lycanthropes (WD 8). In a locked chest on the upper floor are 10,000 gc.

**1410** Roaming the Slate Hills are a pair of rust beasts.

**1418** North of of Tyusin Lake is a pack of 8 werewolves (WD 4). Once Sorobe rebels, they accepted Dreko's offer of power only to find the curse of lycanthropy has driven them permanently into the wild. In the muddy cave that is their lair are 2,000 sc and 2 Gems (gc 10, 100).

**1423** Covered with vines and brambles is an ancient tower of the Avalonians. Abandoned for centuries after the glacier retreated, it is still guarded by 6 Clay Golems (wp 50). In the dungeon level below the tower are 5,000 gc, 19 Gems(gc 5x10, 4x50, 7x100, 3x500, Armor +5, Shield +5, Ring of 3 Wishes, and a Potion of Resist Fire. The dungeon is well trapped and has other guardians.

**1427** In a natural sinkhole are over a dozen decomposed bodies and skeletons. A will-o-wisp (WD 9) delights in luring travelers to their doom. Among the bodies is a +2 Axe covered in mud.

**1505** This is a camp of 20 Elves from Les Gigantov (1327) exploring the West Taiga for seedlings and cuttings to bring back to their forest home. They are currently camped in a ruined Sorobe village that was burned by the Rurasin.



**1517 Nivenisk.** Human(Rurasin), Pop. 527, Civ 5, Outlook: N, Market Town. **Ruler:** Lord Vojta Zdalnov, L Rurasin War7. Nivenisk is a well-fortified wood-walled village. Every decade or so Orenburg and Suzdal will fight a war and the village changes masters. Currently it is under the control of Orenburg (1313) and ruled by Vojta, son of Orenburg's prince. Nivenisk is the site of the annual Niveny Fair where merchants from both Orenburg and Suzdal meet and trade.

**1525 Durbe.** Human(Rurasin), Pop. 521, Civ 2, Outlook: L, Timber. **Ruler:** Chief Bradoslav, L Rurasin War4. Chief Bradoslav is a boyar (noble) in the service of Suzdal. While the Merchant Adventurers of Suzdal demand a heavy tribute in timber, Bradoslav has won the love and respect of Durbe for his fair rule and frequent feasts.

**1530 Zluse** (N Rurasin Pr7), a priestess of Zimtra the Huntress, and a dozen warriors are on the hunt for a werewolf pack (1531).

**1531** In a ruined Avalonian villa the eight surviving members of a werewolf (WD 4) pack rest and recuperate.

**1534 Roversport Stronghold:** Retamder Harklaz, L Half-Orc War3; 60 men. See Valon Hex 1501.

**1603 Novy Tver.** Human(Rurasin), Pop. 744, Civ 3, Outlook: L, Furs. **Ruler:** Princess Nankava, L Rurasin Pr5. Two decades ago Princess Nankava's father lost a civil war in Tver (2718). He and his followers fled into the Taiga where they conquered a Sorobe village and renamed it Novy Tver. After his death Princess Nankava took control. Under her wise rule the village has prospered and both the Rurasin and Sorobes peasants love her. However, there are older Boyars that grumble that they should be focusing on building an army to retake Tver. The Princess is a priestess of Zimtra and has sworn to remain a maiden in the service of her goddess.

**1610** A glade in the woodlands is ringed by 12 fountains carved in the Avalonian style. 8 of the fountains continually flow with water. Once per day, a single random potion may be harvested from each of the working fountains. Any who try to despoil them will have to contend with the Guardian of the Fountains, an Earth Elemental (WD 16).

**1613 Tvrin.** Human(Rurasin), Pop. 392, Civ 5, Outlook: N, Furs. **Ruler:** Lord Zdana, L Rurasin War5. Tvrin is home to a small community of trappers who catch otters along this stretch of the Belaya River. Tvrin pays tribute to Orenburg. Smugglers from Orenburg use the village as a transfer point, hiding their illicit transactions in the daily fur market. Lord Zdana has been sent to clean Tvrin up.

**1617** In the ruins of a Avalonian Villa is a Mirror of Soul Trapping still hanging on a partially crumbled wall.

**1621** In a cavern at the base of a hill a small shrine to Perun has been carved. In the center of the main chamber Bells of Opening hang from the ceiling. A 10'x10' concealed pit is directly below the chime. It is 20 feet deep and is lined with feces-covered spikes (roll 1d6 for the number hitting, dmg 1d6 + save vs. disease).

**1625** Underneath an overhang in a ravine is the hideout of 40 bandits (WD 1). They prey on woodsmen and travelers in the woods of Les Gigantov. In a moldy chest underneath the overhang are 5,000 gc.

**1627 Vetskaia.** Human(Rurasin), Pop. 353, Civ 2, Outlook: N, Fish. **Ruler:** Chief Lavetan, N Rurasin War3. This independent village supplies the timberwrights of Durbe (1525) with fish and other foodstuffs. They have been hit hard in recent years by werewolf attacks and are considering becoming a tributary of Suzdal for protection.

**1709** In a thicket between several hills is the lair of 5 Shift Spiders (WD 5). The remains of their victims lie scattered in the brambles of the thicket, along with 7,000 sc, 3,000 gc, a Rod of Cancellation, a Ring of Defense +1, a Beetle of Protection from Evil Patriarchs, and a Scroll of Protection from Lycanthropes.

**1720 Suzdal.** Human(Rurasin), Pop. 3782, Civ 6, Outlook: N, Market Town. **Ruler:** Lord Councilor Remilov, L Rurasin War5. Suzdal is one of the largest towns in the Wild North and one of the few not controlled by the Sons of Vladimir. It considers itself strictly neutral in the conflict between Vladimir and Vadim. As long as the interests of the Merchant Adventurers remain unthreatened they will not take sides. Temples to all of the deities of the Wild North are present, including a handful of shrines dedicated to foreign gods. Suzdal dominates much of the southwest of the Wild North. It has attempted several times to build a paved road south to Valon through the woods of Les Gigantov, but the elves of the forest (1327) have foiled all such attempts. Suzdal is ruled by a Council of Merchant Adventurers, the exact number of which depends on the fortunes of the leading families. A Lord Councilor is appointed yearly to handle the day-to-day business of the town.

**1725** Only a small crevice betrays the lair of the Lich Hringiril (C Mag20). He arrived 5 years ago and is in the midst of constructing a three level dungeon as a base for conquering the Wild North.

**1733** A very young silver-scaled dragon named Varnas (WD 9) delights in scattering herds of mountain goats.

**1803** A party of 30 elves is busy gathering herbs for a ritual to awaken a treant to guard this area of the Taiga.

**1810 Pugrow.** Human(Rurasin), Pop. 212, Civ 1, Outlook: L, Hides. **Ruler:** Milava, L Rurasin Pr4. Pugrow is a center of goat herding. Once a year the herds are culled and a drive is organized to Orenburg. The herdsmen take their disputes to Milava, a priestess of Mokosh, for adjudication.

**1814** This was once a Rurasin village on the banks of the Belaya River. Koschei the Undying was foiled in his attempts to kidnap one of the village maidens. In retribution he caused the earth to swallow the village whole. The restless remains of the 200+ villagers (zombies, WD 1) have carved an extensive network of catacombs.

**1829** Every day at sunset a wyvern (WD 7) will fly in and land on the broken remains of a column. He will screech a dozen times and then take off.

**1901** A rust beast (WD 5) roams the peat bogs of the taiga digging up iron nodules to feast on.

**1907 Temple of the Spear.** Vatusa (L Sorobe Pr9), 130 men. The Temple of Spear is the head temple of Zimtra the Huntress in the Wild North. Vatusa is the High Priestess. Along with serving Zimtra, she aids the remaining free Sorobes against the Rurasin. The temple's holiest artifact is the Spear of Wisdom, a Lawful +3 Spear that can Detect Magic, Detect Evil, allow its bearer to Fly, and speaks 3 languages and has Egoism 10. Along with the men, eleven White Apes (WD 2) guard the temple.

**1920** This is the lair of Veko (Thf9) and his band of 34 bandits. It is a cave nestled in a ravine snaking northwards from the Ledtayet River. He preys on the caravans travelling to and from Suzdal. The Merchant Adventurers have a 1,000 gc price on his head. In his cave he has 8,000 gc.

**1923** Along the northern edge of Les Gigantov is the range of a sounder of Wereboars (WD 4+1).

**1932 Regalon.** Human(Avalonian), Pop. 632, Civ 3, Outlook: L, Tin. **Ruler:** Captain Wisymus, L Avalonian War7. Tin mines dot the hills surrounding Regalon. The tin is mined from surface deposits and smelted into ingots in the villages. The ingots are then shipped to Valon. When Skandian raiders seized control of Aldebaren (Valon, Hex 2001), Valon sent Captain Wisymus to take charge of the village defenses. Supplies are being stocked as more troops arrive in preparation for an assault on Aldebaren.

**2012** A pack of 12 phase dogs (WD 4) roam the moors overlooking the Belaya River valley.

**2017 Kovono.** Human(Rurasin), Pop. 489, Civ 2, Outlook: N; Hides. **Ruler:** Lord Lavojev, N Rurasin War3.



This isolated village of Rurasin is noted for its vast herds of goats. Currently it pays tribute to Suzdal. Lavojev is one of the few Sons of Vladimir to hold any power in Suzdal.

**2020 Berez.** Human(Rurasin), Pop. 250, Civ 5, Outlook L, Market Town. **Ruler:** Governor Luborom, L Rurasin Pr5. A market village for the surrounding farms, this is one of the main sources of food for Suzdal. It is currently administered by Luborom, a rising star in the Church of Perun.

**2024 Barnaul.** Human(Rurasin), Pop. 134, Civ 2, Outlook N, Fish. **Ruler:** Lady Rahusa, L Rurasin Pr4. This is a small fishing village on the northeast end of Tamar Lake. Rahusa took over after her husband's death and has impressed the villagers with her firm rule. However, various legal actions are underway in Suzdal to strip her of her authority as several of the Merchant Adventurers believe there are amber deposits nearby in the Vishera Marshes.

**2026** A 200 yard circular diameter clear of vegetation marks this as an unusual location in the Vishera marches. In the exact center, 10 feet below the surface, is the entrance to a submerged tunnel angling downwards towards the northeast. After 200 yards the tunnel dead ends. There is a large chunk of meteoric iron that can be used to make 20 +1 weapons or ten times that number of +1 missiles.

**2033** This hill is the warren of 100 Giant Ants (WD 2). In the queen's chamber there are 2,000 gc, potions of clairvoyance and great heroism, a Lawful Sword +1 with Egoism 7 which detects sloping passages and traps and communicates by empathy, and a scroll of Stonewall.



**2109** Cries of help are heard from the bottom of a steep ravine in the West Taiga as two Sorobe hunters (War2) try fend off the attack of 5 angry Werebears (WD 6). Three of their companions are already dead.

**2119** 4 werewolves ((WD 4) dwell here in a half ruined watermill. Underneath a floorboard are 3000 sc belonging to a previous occupant.

**2202 Gaganova Keep.** Ctickeo, L Sorobe War9; 80 men. Ctickeo is the last surviving son of the old Sorobe Kings. The keep is deteriorating due to the lack of resources. Amid the crumbling glory Ctickeo and the 8 members of his High Council (War7) plot the reconquest of the Wild North and the restoration of the Elk King

**2214 Arim.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 823, Civ 6, Outlook: L, Market Town. **Ruler:** Lord Kvetiko, N Rurasin War10. Arim is ruled by Lord Kvetiko, a son of Vladimir. They are a large market village for this fertile stretch of the Belaya River. Currently they are allied to Tver (2718)

**2222 Wellinsk.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 316, Civ 5, Outlook: N, Market Town. **Ruler:** Governor Stanekov, L Rurasin War5. Wellinsk is a market village for the farms along the Olmysk River. Governor Stanekov makes sure that all tributes are properly collected and sent to Suzdal.

**2225** This is the haunt of 8 weretigers (WD 5). They live in a secluded copse on an island in the midst of the Vishera Marshes. When transformed their fur is white with black stripes instead of orange. There are 3 Gems (gc 50, 2x100).

**2227** A tribe of 20 bugbears (WD 3+1) live in a cave network in the hills overlooking the Vishera Marshes. Amid the debris and remains of past kills there is a single piece of jewelry worth 1,200 gc.

**2310** Lord Jarmirad (L War 9), a Son of Vladimir, is in the midst of surveying this location in preparation to build his new steading. He has 50 men and 20 laborers currently camped in tents. He will stop at first snow, pack, go back to Tver, and return in the spring. In his tent there is a chest containing most of his wealth. It has 35,000 gc, 20 gems (2x10, 50, 12x100, 5x500) a potion of gaseous form, and scrolls to create food and protect from elementals. His friend Ivanar, a Priest (7) of Perun helps maintain the men's bodies and morale for this difficult work.

**2330 Avonsar Fortress.** Solodon, L Avalonian Pal11; 110 men. Solodon's family was granted this castle by the Blue Overlord of Valon to patrol the approaches from the Northguard Mountains. His family has faithfully discharged this duty for over a thousand years. Along with his men, Solodon has a Pegasus (WD 2+2) stabled and a Vicar of Aram-Kor, Crandar (L Pr4) staying at the fortress.

**2405** Two Cockatrices (WD 5) make the southern edge of the Taiga a deadly place to travel. 6,000 sc, 5,000 gc, and a Gem worth 50 gc can be found among the petrified remains of their victims.

**2416** Five trolls (WD 6+3) haunt the southern bluffs overlooking the Belaya River. In a dank pit that is their lair, 1,000 cc, 3,000 gc, 8 Gems(gc 6x100, 2x500) and a single Jewel worth 2,000 gc can be found.

**2421** A tribe of 120 hobgoblins (WD 1+1) prey on the herds and farms near Wellinsk (**2222**) and Ladoga (**2623**). Their lair is a collection of crude huts inside a circle of dense brush. 5,000 gc is buried under the chief's hut.

**2424** A small camp of 30 dwarves from Steelholm (**2630**) are currently illegally excavating amber nodules from the Vishera Marshes. During their excavation they found a chest with three treasure maps. The first leads to 20 Gems (gc 3x10, 2x50, 19x100, 6x500), 9 Jewels(gc 1,000, 1,300, 2,000, 5,000, 4x6,000, 7,000), scrolls which protect from elementals and lycanthropes, and Armor +1; the second leads to Armor of Vulnerability, a Scroll which Protects from Magic, and 6 Arrows +2; and the third leads to 2 Rings of Obstreporousness, a Scroll which Protects from Magic, a Cursed Scroll which Summons an Angry Monster, and a Potion of Speed.

**2527 Thury Tower.** Maranov, C Rurasin War8; 60 men. Maranov, a Son of Vadim, stages periodic raids on the villages surrounding the Vishera Marshes. He and three trusted companions (War4) will ride small Rocs (WD 6), providing support and reconnaissance for his men.

**2534 Finmaer Tower.** Daylene, N Human (Bardik) War4; 40 men. See Valon Hex 1501.

**2603** In a glade, a group of 80 Sorobe Rebels live in crude hides within the West Taiga. Every fortnight they venture south and raid caravans and farms between Nalchan and Waldzini. Buried chests in camp contain 6,000 cc, 2,000 sc, 10,000 gc, 29 Gems (gc 2x10, 7x50, 17x100, 5 x 500), and 8 Jewels (gc 700, 800, 2x1,000, 2x3,000, 4,000, 7,000).

**2610 Nalchan.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 144, Civ 2, Outlook: N, Timber. **Ruler:** Chief Steko, N Rurasin War3. During the spring flood this village builds enormous rafts of seasoned timber and floats them down to Tver.

**2613 Waldzini.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 216, Civ 3, Outlook: L, Amber. **Ruler:** Lord Radanov, L Rurasin War7. Waldzini supplies Tver with both grain and amber. Teams of peasants will be sent into the marshes to the south to dig for nodules to bring back to the village to be cleaned and polished. Lord Radanov, a Son of Vladimir, drives his peasants unmercifully and has become quite wealthy from the amber trade.

**2615** This seemingly crude hut is the home of Dyfed (N Mag9), who is researching the mystical properties of amber. The hut is but a temporary home, as he plans to leave in five years to report his findings to Langwellyn the Blue in the City-State of the Invincible Overlord.

**2618 Guard Citadel.** Bahove, L Rurasin War9; 130 men. Guard Citadel is an important lynchpin in the southern defenses of Tver. Lady Bahove is an unusual figure in the Wild North, having risen to high rank in positions normally reserved for the Sons of Vladimir. The last heir of her family, she is determined to prove that Daughters of Vladimir also have a place in the Wild North. She rides with husband Boris (L Pr4(Perun)) and her four companions (4 female War4) on griffonback in support of her troops.

**2623** Underneath the surface of the Lake of Dreams are air bubbles trapped in webs woven between sunken fishing boats. Eight giant sea spiders (WD 4) make their lair here. Strands of their webbing float on the lake. If brushed by a passing boat the spiders will quickly rise and attack.

**2630 Steelholm.** Dwarf, Pop. 375, Civ 7, Outlook: L, Iron. **Ruler:** Lord Aghazan, L Dwarf War9. A colony of dwarves from the Elphand Lands, Steelholm was granted a charter by Valon to settle here in exchange for a small yearly tribute of iron. They have recently become aware of the amber trade and have been sending small expeditions to find the source of these rare gems (**2424**).

**2708** This was once a Sorobe temple to Perun the Sky Father. A century ago it was looted and burned by the Rurasin. Before they left, they deliberately weakened the pillars in the cellars so that there is a 1 in 6 chance per turn of a 10 foot section of floor collapsing. The fall to the cellar floor is 10 feet but does 3d6 due to brutal debris below.

**2718 Tver.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 2239, Civ 7, Outlook: L, Market Town. **Ruler:** Prince Stimenov, L Rurasin War 10. Tver is the largest town of the Rurasin. It is ruled with an iron hand by Prince Stimenov, a Son of Vladimir. He is descended from Vladimir's eldest daughter and considers himself to be the rightful Overlord of the Rurasin. The loss of Orinsk during his father's reign is a source of shame and he has vowed to reconquer it. Tver's main rivals are the Merchant Adventurers of Suzdal. Much of Tver's wealth comes from tolls collected on the river trade.

**2723 Ladoga.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 523, Civ 4, Outlook: C, Fish. **Ruler:** Prince Craganov, C Rurasin Thf9. Ladoga lies on the frontier between Suzdal (**1719**) and Orinsk (**3326**). Originally a fishing village, it became a haven for smugglers two decades ago when Orinsk broke away from Tver. Craganov is a self-styled "Prince of Thieves" and controls the village and various smuggler gangs.

**2726** A human body can be seen on top of a hill in the midst of the swamp. It is the remains of Pomomir, a Rurasin Wizard. The body has broken feathered wings strapped to it. He fell several hundred feet when the enchantment on his newly made Wings of Flying failed. Most of his magical appurtenances are smashed, but 200 gc, a scrolls with magic dart and charm, and a potion of healing in a steel flask can be salvaged.

**2733 Watch Hill.** Human (Avalonian), Pop. 523, Civ 3, Outlook: L, Lead. **Ruler:** Baron Thurniss, L Avalonian War9. This village has a tall tower where Baron Thurniss resides. In addition to managing the lead mines for the Blue Overlord he sends out regular patrols to watch for any unauthorized visitors from the north.

**2908** A pack of 8 Phase Dogs (WD 4) roams the woodlands between Zolotaj Les and the West Taiga.

**2917** In the side of a hill is a warren of 20 wererats (WD 3) armed with captured shortswords. They prey on the traffic in and out of Tver. In addition to the wererats there are over 100 giant rats. In a chamber near the center of the warren is their ill-gotten loot: 10,000 sc, 7,000 gc, 7 Jewels (gc 400, 900, 1,000, 2,000, 3x6,000), a Dagger +2/ +3 vs. Goblins & Kobolds, a cursed scroll which transforms the reader into an insect, a scroll w/Fireball, Teleport, and Charm, and a scroll protecting from lycanthropes.

**2918** This was once a castle of the Rurasin. A century ago, the lord's son looted the lair of a very old red-scaled dragon. The dragon, Urnanoth (WD 11), tracked down the interloper, slew him and his father, and took the castle for his own. Satiated, Urnanoth fell into a deep slumber that continues to this day. For a while adventurers from Tver attempted to kill the dragon, but after the first dozen failures Urnanoth flew forth and torched a quarter of the city. Since then he has been left alone. Today the castle is almost totally covered with vines in the middle of a small forest., its exact location all but forgotten. In the central hall Urnanoth sleeps upon his hoard. It contains 13,000 cc, 72,000 sc, 20,000 gc, 81 Gems (6 x10, 14x50, 46x100, 15x 500, 5,000), 5 Jewels (gc 1,200, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 6,000), a Wand of Detecting Hidden Things Such as Secret Doors & Traps, a Map To 20,000 sc, a Neutral Sword +1 (Egoism 10) with empathy and metal detection, a Lawful Flaming Sword +1/+3 vs. Undead, a Potion of Shrinking, and a Scroll which Protects from Elementals.

**2925** A group of smugglers left their shipment here several years ago. It was abandoned when the smugglers met their demise elsewhere. Several bear traps have been left in a circle around the boxes; two are sprung and holds the remains of a wolf and a human. The rest remain hidden and will do 2d6 and immobilize the target. It will require a combined strength of 50 or a bear trap key (a common item in a town or fur trapping village) to open a trap.



**2932** 8 werewolves (WD 4) hide in an old rural graveyard. They have stashed 6,000 cp in a broken sepulcher.

**3014** Here 4 chimerae (WD 9) prey on the herds of Perem.

**3015 Perem.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 255, Civ 2, Outlook: N, Hides. **Ruler:** Chief Velousek, L Rurasin War4. This village is noted for its vast herds of goats. It has traditionally paid tribute to Tver, but their pleas for aid against the chimerae preying on their herds have not been answered. They have thus sent a group of emissaries to Prince Bososek to seek aid from Tyumen (3517).

**3019 Rasamov Keep.** Stimecesl, N Rurasin War8; 90 men. Lord Stimecesl is obsessed with tracking down the wererat bandits preying on travelers in the region (2917). In addition to his men he has the aid of Milbor (Pr6), a Bishop of Perun, and the Thaumaturgist Boradim (Mag5).

**3023 Varin.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 532, Civ 3, Outlook: N, Market Town. **Ruler:** Lord Miradek, L Rurasin War8. This is a market village for the local farms. Every harvest, Lord Miradek sends tribute to Orinsk. Miradek despises the smugglers of Ladoga (2723) and has ordered that Ladogans must be out of the village before sundown. Any caught after sunset will be summarily executed.

**3030 Caer Jongalar.** Mallasair, L Avalonian Mag14; 130 Men. Mallasair is a powerful wizard of the Avalonian race. In gratitude for his service, the Blue Overlord of Valon has granted him this castle. In addition to his men he has the service of 2 Ice Giants (WD 10+1).

**3108** Three Werewolves (WD 4) are frantically digging around old Sorobe barrows in search of a legendary amulet rumored to be able to cure their lycanthropy.

**3122 Zartyi.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 487, Civ 5, Outlook: L, Fish. **Ruler:** Governor Brankov, L Rurasin War5. This village is under the control of Tver. Governor Brankov ensures that the Prince's fifth is properly collected from each day's catch. The village has doubled in size this past

year as Prince Stimenov has sent laborers to erect a wall around the village in defense against Orinsk.

**3209** A spectre (WD 6) haunts the ravines and hills of this area seeking vengeance for its unjust death.

**3223** Eight Boring Beetles (WD 5) make their lair in the bluffs overlooking the Belaya River. In their tunnels can be found 7,000 sc and 2 Jewels (gc 4,000, 6,000).

**3226** A hunting party consisting of 6 nobles (War3) and 8 retainers (War2) are tracking a herd of elk.

**3230** A herd of 60 wild horses roam the hills above the valley of the Winding River.

**3307 Tower of the Eldritch.** Lankava, C Rurasin Mag10; 60 men. This is a conclave of wizards dedicated to black magic and Veles Ironmaster. They are allied with the Sons of Vadim. In addition to her men, Lankava has 6 wizards in residence (Mag5, 2x4, 2x2, 1), her apprentice Zlavena (C Mag6), and 11 Werewolves (WD 4) as her personal guard.

**3325 Orinsk.** Human(Rurasin), Pop. 1092, Civ 6; Outlook N, Market Town. **Ruler:** Prince Rada, L Rurasin War12. Two decades ago Lord Rada tired of seeing the fruit of his people's hard work taken by the rapacious Princes of Tver. Taking advantage of a war between Tver and Suzdal, Lord Rada declared Orinsk free and took the title of Prince. With the aid of Suzdal he was able to force Tver to recognize Orinsk's independence. However, Rada knows that Prince Stimenov of Tver desires to avenge his father's defeat. Now old, he despairs whether any of his five sons can handle the duties of rule. He worries that regardless of his choice, Orinsk will be torn apart in civil war.

**3325 Orinsk Keep.** Lord Retiko Radanov, L Rurasin War8; 80 men. Retiko is the third son of Prince Rada and thought to be the most likely heir to the principality. However, Retiko knows that his older brothers will likely fight him for the throne. He is ably advised by Doslav (Pr5), a Curate of Perun. Stretching across the Belaya River is a great chain that can be raised by 2 enslaved ogres (WD 4+1) in the keep. It is used to block river traffic and to ensure that proper tolls are paid to Orinsk.

**3328 Krayal.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 105, Civ 2, Outlook: L, Iron. **Ruler:** Lord Svatava, L Rurasin War5. Krayal was established by Orinsk to mine iron from underneath the Helavan Hills. It also has a custom house where the few land caravans from Valon are properly assessed before proceeding to Orinsk.

**3332 Palansk.** Human (Sorobe), Pop. 1092, Civ 3, Outlook: L, Fish. **Ruler:** High Priestess Kvena, L Sorobe Pr9. This village was established by a group of Sorobe refugees two centuries with the permission of the Blue Overlord.

By tradition, the High Priestess of Mokosh adjudicates all disputes. The village is an important waypoint for Sorobe rebels going to Valon to seek supplies and weapons. Kvena tries to discourage this.

**3333 Isle of the Enchanted Folk.** Here the Blue Overlords of Valon have made a treaty with the Fae, setting a boundary between the realms. A dozen Clay Golems (wp 50) deal with intruders. The agreement was sealed by seven caches of 10,000 ancient golden coins each, buried around the island. If any are removed, the Fae are freed to unleash the Wild Hunt upon the mainland.



**3403** An exploratory party of 20 dwarves from Fardeep (3706) is surveying the Knifeedge Tors for metal deposits.

**3405** A basilisk (WD 6+1) prowls along the river bank.

**3411** Three Wyverns (WD 7) make their nest on top of a rocky knoll. Scattered in the nest are 11,000 sc.

**3415** A Bishop of Veles Ironmaster (Pr6) leads 20 believers in a secret rite. It is located in a secluded grove several miles outside of Tyumen. Several of the believers are young nobles and wealthy sons of Tyumen.

**3419** Sadila (N Thf5) is the leader of 30 bandits preying on traffic out of Tyumen. Her father was a noted merchant until his ruination by Prince Bososek (3517). Their lair is a collection of crude huts in a copse of trees. In a chest there are 1,000 cc, 6,000 sc, 17 Gems(gc 10, 2x50, 1100, 3x500), a Potion of Controlling Animals, a Lawful Sword +1, and a Map to 10,000 sc.

**3427** Destitute and with little more than his armor and weapons, Zborov (N War5) scratches out a living hunting the Helevan Hills. His family were Orinskian nobles, loyal to Tver. When Prince Rada (3325) declared independence, his family was driven from Orinsk. Zborov has vowed to restore his family fortune and get revenge.

**3431** A pack of 20 wolves (WD 1) roam the shores here.

**3508** An old Treeman (WD 8) named Greenrime is venturing to the East Taiga to explore the newly grown forest.

**3510** Three Rock Giants (WD 9) are attempting to repair the broken shaft of their hand cart. They have just traded with the Sorobes of Frostmorn (**3710**) and have nearly a ton of preserved meat in the cart.

**3517 Tyumen.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 1092, Civ 6, Outlook: N, Market Town. **Ruler:** Prince Bososek, N Rurasin War10. Tyumen is noted for its annual fur fair where trappers venture south from the Taiga to trade their furs for gold and supplies. Prince Bososek is an extremely obese man in his middle 50s. He cares little for the business of ruling, only that the gold flows uninterrupted. Corruption flourishes in Tyumen, along with secret cabals dedicated to the worship of Veles Ironmaster. The Sons of Vadim intend to destroy the town when the time is right.

**3522 Petomov Castle.** Vepomov, L Rurasin War6; 110 Men. Lord Vepomov is Prince Bososek's youngest son, who spoke out about the corruption caused by his father's rule and was exiled to Petomov as a result. Perched on the frontier between the steppes and Orinsk, it is considered a hardship post. Following him into exile are his best friends Danov (War6) and Zatomu (War5) and his elderly uncle Dalavov, a noted magician (Mag6). The priests of Veles have sent a spy, Davani (Pr3): she is currently posing as a serving girl and having an affair with Zatomu.

**3530** A network of caves is the home of the Iron Claws, a select group of assassins in the employ of the church of Veles Ironmaster. Their Chief Assassin is Boradel (Asn12). In the caves they have 5,000 gc, 27 Gems (gc 10, 3x50, 18x 100, 5x500), a Potion of Shrinking, a Lawful Flaming Sword +1/+2 vs Trolls, and 10 +1 Arrows.

**3534** A Morkoth (WD 8) here lures sailors to their death. Its lair contains 48,000 sc, 10,000 gc, 17 Gems (gc 2x50, 14x100, 500), and 10 Jewels (gc 700, 1,000, 1,400, 2,000, 2x 3,000, 2x4,000, 6,000, 9,000).

**3619 Hestron.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 237, Civ 3, Outlook N, Hides. **Ruler:** Chief Bikar, N Rurasin War3. This village is the center of a goatherding region. Bikar lost nearly all of last shipment of hides due to extortion by city officials in Tyumen. He is angry and considering rebellion.

**3620** A torrential rainstorm recently washed out this ravine, exposing a locked trap door. The cover and lock are made from a material as tough as mithiril. The shaft leads downward to an ancient complex of the Founders...

**3627 Jurisk.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 422, Civ 4, Outlook: L, Market Town. **Ruler:** Lord Stavo, L Rurasin War10.

Lord Stavo is an aging hero of the Sons of Vladimir. He is noted for the frequent feasts at his hall, where passing adventurers are invited to tell their tale. Particularly good tales will earn a substantial reward. Jurisk profits handsomely from selling supplies to barges and ships going up river.

**3703** 5 Griffons make their lair at the edge of the taiga.

**3706 Fardeep.** Dwarf, Pop. 845, Civ 6, Outlook: L, Gems. **Ruler:** Lord Gamilor, L Dwarf War8. When the ice uncovered the Wild North, dwarves from the Elphand lands began to send expeditions. Here they discovered a rich deposit of gems which they have mined for over a century. They are in constant conflict with the goblins of the Black Rune Tribe (**4105**).

**3710 Frostmorn.** Human (Sorobe), Pop. 82, Civ 1, Outlook: N, Hides. **Ruler:** Chief Kane, N Sorobe War7. This is the main camp of one of the last remaining nomadic tribes of Sorobe Elk Hunters.

**3713** Under some brush is an injured young silver-scaled dragon (WD 9, wp 1). Crestaltop is a child of Selfor (**0229**) who only recently left the nest.

**3716** A wyvern (WD 7) has made its lair here in part of an ancient ruined aqueduct. Scattered about are 10,000 sc and 6 Gems (gc 50, 5x100).

**3723 Kalzaluth.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 282, Civ 3, Outlook: L, Iron. **Ruler:** Lord Jaradek, L Rurasin War8. Lord Jaradek controls several iron mines in the Siniye Hills. Once a month he sends a shipment to Tyumen. 3 years ago he won an exemption from the customs fees when he killed several officials who attempted to extort him.

**3728** In a backwater cove along the Belaya lives a family of 8 Giant Beavers (WD 2) Visible in the wall of their nest is a pair of spectacles that act as Charm Lenses.

**3732** Clutching the remains of a chest is a child floating in the sea. He is being pushed towards shore by three selkies (wereseals, treat as wererats, WD 3).

**3814 Torzhok.** Human(Rurasin), Pop. 152, Civ 1, Outlook N, Furs. **Ruler:** Hetman Laha, N Rurasin War5. This is the main camp of the Kozars, a riding group of fur trappers. By late spring the village population plummets to 40 able-bodied men, rising back to full population in the fall when everyone returns for the great fur fair. The Kozar provide much of the light cavalry for the Princes of Tyumen.

**3821** A swarm of 20 mosquito-bats (WD 1) are drinking from a dozen dead elk.

**3824 Skyborn Temple.** Stislav, L Rurasin Pr8; 130 men. Perched on the highest hilltop of the Siniye Hills is a

magnificent temple to Perun the Sky Father. Fourteen elite temple guards protect the inner sanctum (War4).

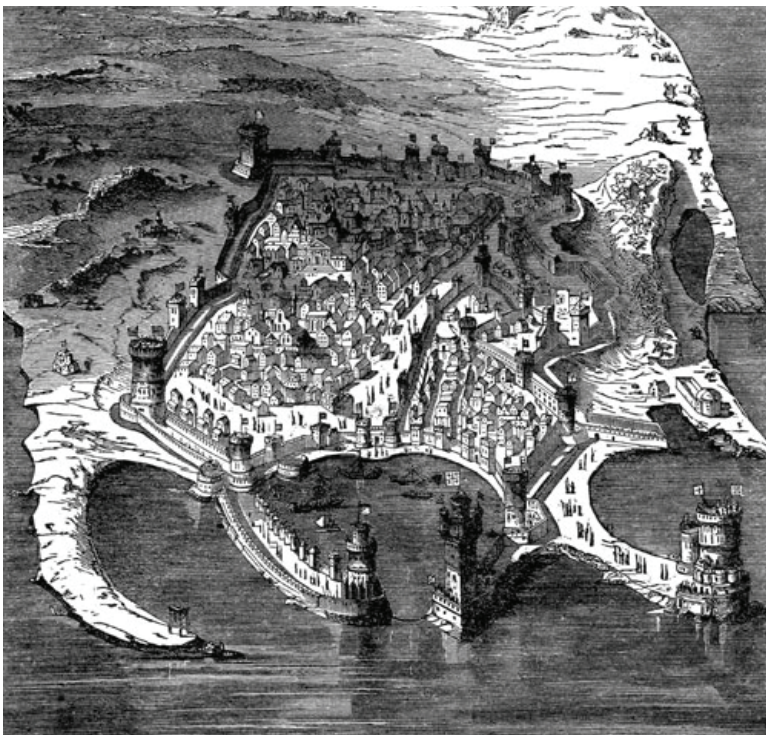
**3907 Grigornov Castle:** Gamilor, C Rurasin War13; 150 Men. Lord Gamilor is one of the most powerful Sons of Vadim. He is assisted by Rance (Pr4), a Vicar of Veles and a guard of 4 Ogre brothers (WD 4+1). They are planning a strike against Tyumen next summer.

**3909** In a shallow cave nestled between two hills is the hiding-place of Pytor (L Pr3), Priest of Perun. He is spying on Gigronov Castle.

**3923** Scurrying about a half-hidden trail marker of the Ten are 6 Glow Beetles (WD 1-1).

**3927 Kremdan.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 163, Civ 2, Outlook: L, Iron. **Ruler:** Lord Palov, C Rurasin War6. Kremdan is an important source of iron for Orinsk (3325). Lord Palov intrigues with Prince Stimenov of Tver to overthrow Prince Rada of Orinsk. Palov is secretly allied with the Sons of Vadim and plays Tver and Orinsk against each other to sew discord and weakness among their foes.

**3930 Serinal.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 945, Civ 8, Outlook: N, Port Town. **Ruler:** Lord Mishal, L Avalonian War6. Serinal is the great port of the Wild North. Ships from all over the Winedark Sea come here to trade for the furs and amber shipped down the Belaya. Serinal has a distinctly chaotic feel compared to most Avalonian settlements, though Lord Mishal has wisely kept the wharf district outside the town walls. The number of nationalities present often causes district-wide riots to break out.



**3933 Face Isle.** This island is the peak of an undersea mountain. Its sheer slope on all sides offers no good places to land. Strangely, a face has been carved out the topmost portion of the spire. The carving is so ancient and worn that all that can be seen is that it is generally humanoid.

**4002** A troll (WD 6+3) inhabits the bogs of this region of the East Taiga. It preys on any Sorobe hunters it can get in its grasp. In a rude hut on top of an island in a bog is its treasure: 5,000 gc and 6 Gems (gc 2x10, 2x100, 2x500).

**4011 Ryasa.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 263, Civ 1, Outlook: N, Furs. **Ruler:** Hetman Antonov, N Rurasin War8. This is a Kozak camp. Hetman Antonov plan to challenge Hetman Laha (3814) for overall leadership of the Kozaks at the next fall fur fair.

**4018** This hovel is the home of Sadila (C Rurasin Mag5). She aids Koschei the Undying (4516) by making various potions in exchange for scraps of magic knowledge.

**4024** A large cave off to one side of a ravine is the lair of a family of bronze-scaled dragons (WD 9). There are two adults and two children, young and younger, along with one old uncle and the very old Matriarch Assira. The Orcs of Toggrim (4222) have learned to leave them alone. Their hoard is within: 10,000 gc, 12 Gems (gc 3x10, 50, 8x100, 9x500), and 20 Jewels (gc 600, 800, 3x1,000, 1,400, 2,000, 3x3,000, 2x4,000, 2x5,000, 3x6,000, 8,000, 9,000, 10,000).

**4030 Isle of the Guardian.** This large island is lightly wooded, with a ruined castled perched on the highest hill. An iron golem (wp 80) stands guard over the ruins.

**4105** Two hundred goblins of the Black Rune Tribe make their lair in these caverns on the northern slope of the Woodsedge Mountains. They have little treasure except for the small amount of gold each carry (4 gc). They have continual fights with the Dwarves of Fardeep (3706).

**4108** A broad cleft in the Woodsedge contains a forgotten fane. Inside, the walls are frescoed with disturbing images of souls in hell being tortured. If the party lingers for more than 30 minutes, thousands of insects will start pouring out of holes in the walls. They attack as a WD 2 monster but need 100 points of damage to totally eradicate.

**4114** Once a Kozak camp, this place is now a stinking abattoir of dead men and horses. Two Wyverns (WD 7) are picking over the remains. Four bundles of fur worth 1,000 gc each can be salvaged from the carnage.

**4131** A giant sea turtle (WD 8) lies here, basking in the sun. If the turtle is caught it can be sold for 500 GP.

**4204** A circle of standing stones dedicated to Zimtra the Huntress has been despoiled. Rurasin curses and insults are carved into many of the remaining standing stones.

**4211** In the distance sounds can be heard of a running battle between a pack of 8 werewolves (WD 4) and 12 Kozars on horseback (War2). The Kozars have 1-3 silver arrows each, but no silver weapons.

**4215** A path through the Ormal Hills is dangerously unstable. There is a 25% chance of collapse, causing a fall of 30 feet to the ravine floor.

**4222 Toggrim.** Orc, Pop. 733, Civ 1, Outlook: C, Hides. **Ruler:** King Nograt the Vicous, C Orc with WD 2. Only their fast breeding rate allows the Toggrims to hold out against the Nomads of the Ten. The nomads use the Toggrim lands as a proving ground for their young warriors.

**4230 Sonden.** Human (Skandik), Pop. 513, Civ 4, Outlook: N, Market Town. **Ruler:** King Skarlif, N Skandik War10. Sonden is used as a port by Skandik traders to dock before heading to Ild's Hold (**4428**). King Skarlif's personal huscarls (War6) guard the ships while the traders are away.

**4232 Baldurheim.** Human(Skandik), Pop. 243, Civ 3, Outlook: N, Fishing. **Ruler:** King Hredir, N Skandik War8. Baldurheim is a typical Skandik fishing village with little of note other than a shrine to the god Baldur. The shrine is a popular destination for pilgrims.

**4303 Cragenmore.** Human (Sorobe), Pop. 333, Civ 3, Outlook: L, Furs. **Ruler:** High Priest Boseko, L Sorobe Pr13. This is the last high temple of Perun controlled by the Sorobes. High Priest Boseko tries to aid the remaining free Sorobe villages but the trade of furs to the Kozaks brings in little in gold or supplies.

**4308** This mountain cave is the home of a mother Cave Bear (WD 6) and her 3 cubs. The mother's pelt is worth nearly 1,000 gc while the cubs will fetch 100 gc each.

**4320 Reyn Tower.** Lavelud, C Rurasin Mag10; 120 men. Lavelud is the leader of a coven of wizards and a Son of Vadim. He provides the Ten with much of the magic they require and defends them against the machinations of Koschei the Undying (**4516**). In addition to his coven and men the tower is guarded by 4 Chimeras (WD 9).

**4326** A freed Air Elemental (WD 16) wanders the Steppe.

**4329** A pack of 50 Mosquito-Bats (WD 1) make travel to Ild's Hold painful.

**4333 Novast-Kazar.** Dwarf, Pop. 421, Civ 5; Outlook: L, Lead. **Ruler:** Lord Isingab, L Dwarf War8. The mines

around Novast-Kazar supply Uriah-Kazar (Valley of the Ancients, 4402) with the lead they need for smelting iron.

**4411 Citadel of the Magan:** Zivany, N Rurasin Mag11; 110 men. Zivany is the current Magan or high wizard of the Kozar. The Hetmen of the Kozar tribes gather here to resolve any disputes over trapping grounds and herd rights. Zivasl (C Mag6) is his apprentice and is being groomed to be the next Magan. He worships Veles Ironmaster and plans to use his position to bring the Kozar over to the Sons of Vadim.

**4417** Bodies of zombies, skeletons, and nomads litter a recent battlefield, alongside many burnt wagons. Crates and barrels lie scattered all over the field. Most are smashed but a few are intact. Underneath an overturned wagon the muffled sounds of a person kicking can be heard. When the wagon is lifted the sound is traced to a locked crate. The lock is poisoned (save or 4d6 dmg). If opened a young lady will be discovered bound and gagged within. She is Susanov, daughter of a boyar of Orinsk, and was kidnapped by Koschei the Undying.

**4428 Ild's Hold.** Ild Ivarson, C Skandik War9; 130 men. Ild Ivarson operates a trading ground between the Skandiks and the Nomads of Ten. He is an avid worshipper of Veles Ironmaster but ignores the harsher demands of Ziv (C Rurasin Pr4) in favor of keeping the trading ground open to everyone. His 7 huscarls (War6) ensure that all trading sessions are peaceful.

**4516 Tower of the Undying:** Koschei the Undying, C Lich Mag20; 90 men. Koschei the Undying is one of the most feared figures in the Wild North. Luckily for both the Sons of Vladimir and the Sons of Vadim, he is not interested in conquest. His overriding obsession is seeking the reincarnation of his lost love, Natali. He mounts periodic expeditions to kidnap and examine young women to see if they possess Natali's soul. If he fails to kidnap his desired target he will expend all available resources to capture her. He recently recovered from an attempt to take one of Vomilav of Shadowmere's wives (**0426**). The tower lies on the top of a rocky outcropping jutting out from the Ormal Hills. The surrounding hills are home to nearly 1,000 zombies (WD 1), the vast majority corpses of the young women he kidnapped in his mad quest. In addition to his men, he allows 4 vampires (WD 1) to reside in his tower. His treasuries hold 66,000 sc, 10,000 gc, 39 Gems (5x10, 50, 25x100, 6x500, 2x5,000), 9 Jewels (500, 1,000, 2,000, 3x3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 6,000, 7,000).

**4520** This is the temporary encampment of a Kozar Chief (War9) and 20 of his men (War2). They just returned from a profitable trading expedition to Ander's Rest (**4820**) and have 5,000 gc divided among them.

**4528** The giant skull of a very old silver dragon lies atop the bluff overlooking the river. It has been carefully covered with canvas and a stone golem (wp 50) guards it. Milenko the Magician (N Mag6) has gone back to Ild's Hold (**4428**) to hire some porters to bear it away.

**4532** A well-built cottage lies in a mountain dale. This is the home of Thirulf the Magnificent (Thf9), a noted thief. He roams throughout the Wild North and the Valley of the Ancients finding interesting and valuable items to steal.

**4626 Castle of the Ten.** Seneschal Milados, C Rurasin Mag11; 90 men. This castle is where the Ten High Chiefs of the Sons of Vadim meet in council. The castle is neutral ground. It is maintained by Milados as a place where any Son of Vadim may rest and receive aid. In addition to the men there are 3 Wyverns (WD 7). The Ten's treasury of 75,000 gc is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> dungeon level beneath the castle.

**4704 Temple Alarnov.** Valusa, L Sorobe Pr10; 30 men. Temple Alarnov provides aid to the Sorobes tribes of the East Taiga. Valusa is a firm supporter of the Sorobes Rebels, supplying them with weapons and supplies. There are 6 Manticores (WD 6+1) with the temple guards.

**4713** A pack of 24 wolves (WD 1) roam these woodlands.

**4724** An adult blue-scaled dragon (WD 9) mourns her child, lying dead on the riverbank. Nearby is a blasted crater with the fried bodies of 12 nomads.

**4725** This is the lair of a large pack of 20 Steppe Wolves (WD 2). Their pelts are worth 50 gc each.

**4734 Tharkal Waykeep.** Kinkaris, L Dwarf War6; 50 men. This fortified tower is used as a rest for dwarven caravans travelling between Novast-Kazar, Malgast-Kazar, and Urlah Kazar.

**4810** This crumbling wooden observation tower was constructed by Koschei the Undying (**4516**) to help him spot a wandering Kozak tribe that had a woman he wanted. He placed a clay golem (wp 50) as a guard and then forgot about it after successfully kidnapping the woman.

**4820 Ander's Rest.** Human (Rurasin), Pop. 333, Civ 3, Outlook: C, Market Town. **Ruler:** Master Anders, N Ordinary (WD 1) Rurasin. This is an open market where anyone can come to trade. The actual warehouse, store, and houses are behind a wooden palisade, but outside the gates several well-watered encampments have been marked out. Master Anders had to flee the City-State; he won't talk about what caused him to leave.

**4826** This was an encampment of young Rurasin Boyars from Orinsk on an expedition to punish the nomads. They met an untimely end. Their bodies and possessions have

been picked over, but the nomads missed 500 gc and a map to Ander's Rest.

**4908 Northhaven.** Human (Sorobe), Pop. 498, Civ 2, Outlook: N, Furs. **Ruler:** Chief Bradalov, L Sorobe War6. Northhaven was established as a sanctuary for Sorobes fleeing the conquest. Two centuries later it has become a permanent home. This is a major recruiting ground for Sorobe rebels, who trade furs to Kozak bands for supplies.

**4918** These old Sorobe barrows are home to two dozen restless Skeletons (WD 1/2) who defend the barrows from any who would despoil them. If dug up the barrows yield 2,000 gc, 7 Gems (gc 50, 4x100, 2x500), a +1 Double Crossbow (2 bolts per round), and Potions of Animal Control and Triple Healing.

**4933 Malgast-Kazar.** Dwarf, Pop. 153, Civ 5, Outlook: L, Iron. **Ruler:** Kaniur, L Dwarf War4. Malgast-Kazar is a newly opened dwarven mine. While Iron is expected to be the primary ore, there are indications that veins of mithril may be accessible if the mine is dug deep enough.

**5010** Another child of Selfor (**0229**), Rashanor (nearing adulthood, WD 8) has spent the past several decades feasting on herds of elk in the region. His lair is a cave found in a rocky outcropping in the wood. His hoard is very small and only contains 3,000 sc, 1,000 gc, and 2 Gems (gc 200, 300).

**5013 Castle of the Wind.** Ordan, N Avalonian Mag10; 110 men. Ordan leads a conclave of air mages living in a cloud castle perched above the Windswept Plains. He and the eight other wizards of the conclave are interested in the unique flow of magic through the plains. The cloud castle is guarded by 5 Manticores (WD 6+1) and tended by a old Cloud Giant (WD 12+2) named Dariak, as well as the soldiers. The wizards plan to study the plains for another decade before moving the castle to distant lands.

**5026** This is the encampment of a caravan making its way westward to the Castle of the Ten (**4629**). There are over three dozen wagons and one hundred merchants and drovers. The caravan is under the personal protection of the Ten and is guarded by 50 nomads.

**5028 Gold Keep.** Mavern the Bold, L Human (Gishmesh) War8; 120 men. This castle guards the entrance to the Golden Pass. Captain Mavern has been charged by the City-State of Tarsh (Valley of the Ancients, 0206) to patrol this pass to prevent nomads from threatening Tarsh.

**5031** Two hill giants (WD 8) are searching the rocky slopes for their chief's lost cloak.

**5102** A sounder of 8 wereboars (WD 4+1) roam this part of the Taiga. Their leader carries a single 1,000 gc gem.



**5106** This is the home of Jeko (L Sorobe Pr3), a priest of Zimtra the Huntress. He was the only survivor of a group of rebels who attacked a Rurasin Caravan. He feels guilty to have survived and lives alone in the Taiga.

**5108** These huts are home to a clan of werebears (WD 6) who protect this region of the East Taiga.

**5116** This glade formerly served as an open-air temple to Perun. It is a 100' by 100' paved area with pillars running along the north and south boundary. The pillars are now all bound with barbed iron wire and the old stone altar on the east (sunrise) side has been shattered and replaced with a iron table dedicated to Veles Ironmaster.

**5212** A vine-covered pillar stands alone in a small clearing. At the top is a stone egg with a vile rune carved into it.

**5123** A herd of 200 wild horses (WD 2) roam this region.

**5232** A lone wizard named Antares (L Avalonian Mag9) wanders the Golden Hills cataloguing the varieties of wheat and plants growing there (see Valon, Golden Hills).

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## The Devil's in the Details

third & perhaps last in a series by Keshner

Welcome to the third installment of a series designed to help you add a touch of individuality to campaign characters. This issue's column focuses on the Halflings of Otherness, who differ a bit from some of their multiversal cousins. Therefore, if any results seem too strange or don't fit the flavor of your campaign, simply re-roll or make up something more fitting.

*Their hands are thick with earth. They laugh in the fading light, singing for the harvest, smoke spiraling to the sky.*

**MANY HALFLINGS** (Roll 1d20 three times, or just pick three details from this table):

1. Know numerous songs and sing them at the slightest provocation.
2. Swim, climb and wrestle every bit as well as they breathe or walk.
3. Have hair the color of wheat or ripe apples.
4. Can accurately predict the coming week's weather.
5. Are masterful farmers.
6. Are intimately familiar with their family's genealogy.
7. Only use writing for notes or bookkeeping.
8. Abhor a cheat.
9. Play a simple flute, or perhaps a mouth-harp.
10. Love competition, and laugh in the aftermath.
11. Are fond of theater, often memorizing favorite parts.
12. Are shorter even than dwarves, but just as durable and resilient.

13. Hunt small game for sport, though never wastefully.
14. Have secret family recipes for potent beer or wine.
15. Are conversant with rules for hundreds of games.
16. Are practical, skeptical and generous, sometimes to a fault.
17. Find rapture in pipeweed.
18. Think dwarves are fine, once you get 'em smoking.
19. Are uncertain of elves, and so treat them with abashed formality.
20. View humans as clumsy cousins, sometimes too serious, but still part of the family.



**SOME HALFLINGS** (Roll d16 (1d8 and a high/low die) to determine one detail from this table):

1. Study law and take up causes.
2. Become fearsome poets.
3. Are fervently pious, seeing evidence of their chosen god in all things.
4. Have hair the color of rich, black earth.
5. Husband giant animals, training them for domestic tasks.
6. Practice pugilism as a dubious hobby.
7. Live in the meadows, talking mostly to the wind.
8. Build their dwellings high in the trees.
9. Raise giant bees, carefully producing strange honeys.
10. Wander the forest, reveling with satyrs.
11. Become enamored of bloodshed.
12. Know the secret of speaking to ants.
13. Build houses of stone, and hide their secrets.
14. Despise their fellows as hopelessly rustic bumpkins.
15. Come to desire most the possessions of others.
16. Breed strange new flowers with startling scents.

**YOUR HALFLING:** Choose, roll, or create one additional desired trait, subject to GM approval.

Equipment is another good way to personalize characters. In *Otherness*, players of halfling characters roll on the following table 1d3 times before buying equipment with starting gold, thus ensuring their gear has the right texture:

**SOME COMMON TRAVELING GEAR (d16):**

1. A chainmail shirt inherited from a distant ancestor.
2. A simple musical instrument.
3. A jug of granna's berrywine.
4. A carefully maintained short sword or hand axe.
5. A rucksack with numerous pockets.
6. A coil of handmade rope, thin and strong.
7. A pack of cards, or perhaps some dice.
8. A leather sling and pouch of lead shot.
9. A small commonplace book.
10. A plug of premium pipeweed.
11. A thick glass jar of rich honey.
12. A rugged coat with the seams double-sewn.
13. A shortbow and quiver of finely fletched arrows.
14. An oilskin pouch protecting a lock of hair.
15. A collection of favorite play scripts.
16. A set of useful tools.

Any vagaries, ambiguities or lacunae observed in the tables above are imaginary and simply await explication by a competent, creative player or GM.

Q: Are there indeed halfling barbarians?

A: Experts disagree, though some reliable witnesses claim to have narrowly escaped nomadic bands of halfling berserker pilgrims, worshipping a frenzied, blood-soaked god.

Q: What's so special about halfling pipeweed?

A: There's only one way to find out.



Dear friends and fellow game enthusiasts,

Consider for a moment the high level of discourse at discussion forums like *Original D&D Discussion*, *Knights & Knaves Alehouse*, and *Dragonsfoot*; the emergence of several blogs devoted to old school gaming; the rise of the retro-clone games like *Labyrinth Lord* and *OSCRIC*; and the

success of this very magazine. Some have suggested that change is in the air, that we are at the beginning of a renaissance, a renewed interest in the kind of gaming that gave birth to the roleplaying hobby. We of the Traditional Adventure Roleplaying Game Association, or TARGA, believe that this old school rebirth can only be sustained and grown if we all work on it together.

TARGA is a band of gamers around the world organizing themselves as a not-for-profit corporation devoted to the simple idea that our school of gaming still has merit today and should be preserved, promoted, and, most importantly, played! Thus TARGA's primary objective is to do everything we can to assist in promoting traditional gaming, recruiting new players into the fold, and providing organizational support for judges. We want to help everyone find a game that needs one or organize a new campaign if none can be found. A dungeon in every city and two new players at every table, as it were!

Let's take a moment to explain what TARGA is not about. We are not about splitting hairs as to which games are or are not 'old school'. We trust our fellow fans to be able to figure that out themselves. We are not here to talk trash about other games or styles of play. They can do their thing and we can do ours. Some of us even like those new-fangled games! And we are not reactionary neo-luddites hell-bent on snatching pre-painted plastic miniatures out of children's hands and forcing the kids to get lead poisoning like we did in the good ol' days. TARGA plans to stay positive and to stay focused on what we can get done.

And what can we get done? TARGA's first initiative is **International Traditional Adventure Roleplaying Week, January 10<sup>th</sup> through 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009**. We are challenging *you*, ourselves, and old school referees everywhere to find a game store, contact the owner or manager, and arrange a demo of your favorite old school game or retro-clone. Or invite some friends to your home for a one-shot adventure. We need to get people playing!

Organizing discussion for International Traditional Adventure Roleplaying Week is underway at [games.groups.yahoo.com/group/TARGATalk/](http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/TARGATalk/), with additional support available as soon as our website, [TraditionalGaming.org](http://TraditionalGaming.org), goes live. We hope you'll join us in this exciting new endeavor!

- John Adams (Brave Halfling Publishing)
- Joseph Bloch (Editor, Pied Piper Games)
- James Maliszewski (Grogardnia)
- Dan Proctor (Goblinoid Games)
- James Edward Raggi IV (Lord of the Flame Princess)
- Victor Raymond (Limits of Sagacity)
- Jeff Rients (Jeff's Gameblog)
- Matthew James Stanham (Silver Blade Adventures)
- Ignatius Umlaut (*Fight On!*)

# Knights & Knaves: Landed Wizards of Legend

by Lee Barber

In the snowy cordillera of a northern realm, a great sorceress has become the first Marcher Lord among the barbarians. On the other side of the continent, a veteran war mage has become a pitiless leader of jungle warriors, plotting from his dark ziggurat. Are these fearful wizards good or evil? Decide for yourself, and incorporate their strongholds and items in your own campaign!

**Backgrounds:** Sovonisa Szomerlak has the odd distinction of being the only widely known graduate from Fulmag Graystormer's Academy of Meteorology. Her studies focused on elemental powers, which she found very effective against humanoid threats. As her spellbook grew, she began to leave a trail of ice-choked dungeons full of frozen corpses. One popular bard, recounting his greatest fright, often speaks of dead ogres glaring through Sovonisa's translucent Wall of Ice. Eventually, her adventures became less frequent, and she accepted the title of Marcher Lord, ruling a small realm still populated with monstrous lairs.

Bailiff Iguro was part of a complement of pirates aboard a ship called the Death Hound. Always seeking rare treasure, his crew sailed south to the smoldering jungles, where humans rarely ventured past the exposed coastline. While on a dragon hunt, Iguro was entreated by a trading post to combat the reptilian horrors massing at a nearby ziggurat. A gruesome war lasting half a year erupted, which survivors say the pirate mage relished. When the bloodied troops could finally rest their swords, Iguro made his desire to be the autonomous ruler of the settlement known...his compensation for vanquishing all the Snake-Men. Once the plundering began, Iguro was surprised to find artifacts and numerous secret records. Now, the self-styled Bailiff is rebuilding ships and hiring worthies to investigate the lore once hidden in his refurbished ziggurat.

**Tactics:** Lady Szomerlak lives at the end of an old mining road, where a small keep had been built in safer times. Unfortunately, she is the only high-level hero around, which means she often faces rampaging monsters alone. Her defences are quite overwhelming as a result; she wears a lynx cloak of shelter, a protective ring +2, and carries the Peryton Horn of Yecha Cliff. Further enhanced by spells, Sovonisa can shrug off even a maul strike from a malicious Frost Giant. In combat, she favors her Ice spells, which receive a bonus from her Necklace of Ice Evocation. After trapping enemies with an expertly positioned ice wall, she begins the barrage of lethal chills with a spell of her own, given below. Completing her ensemble is a wand of dispelling and a dagger +1/+3 vs. enchanted creatures.

## Sovonisa's Imbruing Ice

Level 3, Range 30' + 10'/level, Duration 3 rounds

Effect: One target is struck with a vortex of icy, dark gray slush and must save vs. magic or take 1d12 damage. These clumps of ice melt rapidly on the victim, releasing volatile alkalines after 2 rounds. Unless washed off before this reaction occurs, the compounds inflict 2d8 acid damage.

Generally, Bailiff Iguro allows his guards and deadly hirelings to dispose of threats. He would not even put on his shoes and hat if adventurers were trying to sneak into his trapped base. Waiting for such foolhardy dogs are the worst things Iguro has created: crawling claws with lead-dipped nails, blistering poison gas, glyphs that spit fire shuriken, and deadly sandstorm pits that flay a body until only dry bone remains. Also barring the way would be his web-casting apprentices and personal bodyguard, Lazare (5th level Warrior with a Pennoncel of Speed on his silver halberd). However, the jaundiced overlord does take some offences personally. For instance, if someone decided to throw a rotten egg at one of his nicer boats, the Bailiff just might let the Pygmy Triceratops from his Beast Totem Staff have a snack. Iguro appreciates excessive use of force and enjoys the inventive way Lazare chops up paralyzed, scorched, poisoned, and crushed enemies. In addition to the magic items taken from the snake shamans, Iguro has gauntlets of inner armor +3, spider venom darts, a ring of invisibility, and a bag full of potions.

## Sepia Snake Coil

Level 2, Range 60', Duration 1 round

Effect: Upon successful casting, the target of this spell must save vs. paralysis or be constricted by an immense ghostly serpent. The coil inflicts crushing damage totalling 2d4 points plus 2/level of caster. Also, shock from the attack reduces the victim's next action roll by 2.

**Adventures:** If not encountered within a local dungeon, Sovonisa might be found racing about in a small sleigh pulled by a beast resembling a giant alpaca. This driving is not something she does gingerly, and the outings often end in a wreck. Friendly PCs she meets in the outdoors will be invited to her Keep for a meal and talk of rumors. Sovonisa is very interested in items once belonging to Elven brides, which often bear exquisite images of birds and flowers she never sees in the high latitudes.

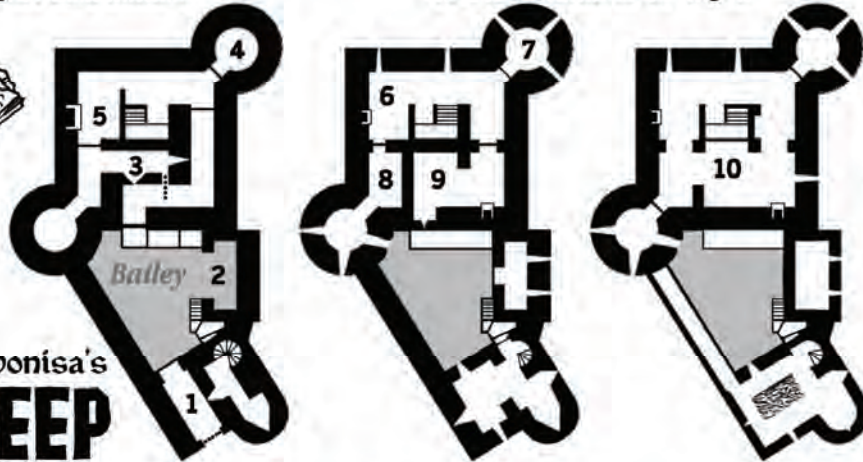
Bailiff Iguro has a long list of suicide missions he needs recruits to send on. There are other serpent shrines and pyramids deep in the jungle that he knows the rough location of, and a reef full of sea scraggs that harass trade ships venturing into his lagoon port. Iguro also has many agents in civilized kingdoms looking for relics and reporting on conflicts. If the PCs become his agents, Iguro will meet with them in his trophy room, to provide a few signature potions and an unforgiving deadline.



**Necklace of Ice Evocation:** With this attractive necklace of clear crystals, the wearer has the power to cast Ice/Cold evocation spells at one level higher than normal.

**Peryton Horn of Yecha Cliff:** Taken from an insane barbarian cult, this broken antler can grant protection from normal weapons or a few rounds of 48" flight.

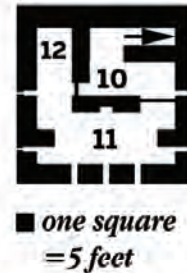
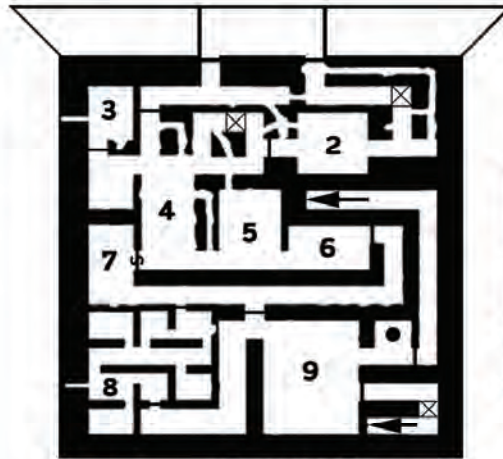
**Sovonisa's  
KEEP**



- 1) 3-story Gatehouse
- 2) Stable & Servant Quarters
- 3) Inner Gate Guards
- 4) Cistern
- 5) Kitchen
- 6) Dining Hall
- 7) Guest Room
- 8) Captain's Room
- 9) Lady's Chambers
- 10) Spell Lab with Garden Solar and warded Armory

**Map Keys**

- 1) Dark Grotto Shrine
- 2) Trapped Entry
- 3) Larder and Kitchen
- 4) Dining Hall
- 5) Illusionary Library
- 6) Defence Post
- 7) Apprentice Room
- 8) Specimen Cells
- 9) Arcane Research Lab
- 10) Trophy Chamber
- 11) Observatory
- 12) Private Quarters



■ one square = 5 feet

**Bailiff Iguro's  
Ziggurat**

**Chief Sitikantha's Amulet:** Iguro keeps this powerful charm on him at all times. Styled like a two-headed serpent, the neck cleft holds a magical amethyst. The item grants the wearer a +2 bonus to Dexterity, and, if a Wizard, the ability to cast Sepia Snake Coil\* once per day at 8th level.

**Pennocel of Speed:** When attached to a pole-arm, this rune-stitched, tapered flag increases the attack speed of the character wielding the weapon. One extra attack is granted per round.

**The Beast Totem Staff:** Snake-Men shamans created this staff to help them in battle. Three were made, each with the power to summon a powerful totem creature. Iguro's prized staff can release a Pygmy Triceratops, a monster that used to roam the ancient jungle. The Triceratops ( HD 8+20, AC 16, ATT: 1 / Gore 2d6+4) follows simple mental commands and returns to the staff if mortally wounded. The Totem Staff will function once per week if the user is at the Ziggurat. Taking the staff further away renders it a one use item.



**FO  
Extras!**



## Khas Fara: Village of Fear

contest winning adventure by Jason Morningstar

**Introduction:** Khas Fara is a dusty village situated in a little-visited dry valley. Once a gateway to the mountain passes and lucrative trade with the east, other caravan routes have overtaken it. Now fewer than one hundred souls call Khas Fara home. And they are afraid, because an evil witch has taken over their town.

**Overview:** This adventure is suitable for any fantasy setting and rules, although guidelines for use with CRN Games' *The Shadow of Yesterday* ([crngames.com/the\\_shadow\\_of\\_yesterday/](http://crngames.com/the_shadow_of_yesterday/)) and generic fantasy systems have been provided. Magic is implied but not present. The adventure is intended for lower-powered (even 1<sup>st</sup> level) characters. There's a good chance that the situation can be resolved entirely without violence, but if violence occurs, it will come from many directions at once.

**Getting Them to Khas Fara:** Situated on a long-neglected caravan route, Khas Fara is a great mid-point between two more "interesting" locations. It's the sort of place weary travelers might be compelled to stop for an evening. As a destination, other story hooks present themselves. Perhaps the player characters are hired as agents of the Parceler's Guild, to bring gifts to the wedding of the local water parceler's son. Maybe they are hired on as guards for a low-rent caravan, whose master is desperate or stupid enough to attempt the dangerous old crossing with a budget crew. Perhaps one of them is a relative of Danel, who sent a cryptic message begging for help in "lifting a curse". And there's always a tattered map noting caches of hidden gold in the crags above Khas Fara...

This past summer, an adventure contest was sponsored by



# OTHERWORLD MINIATURES

and your friends here at

# FIGHT ON!

Our judges included gaming legends Frank Menzer, James M. Ward, and S. John Ross, as well as Richard Scott of Otherworld Miniatures and Ignatius. Competition was fierce, and we had many great submissions competing for the fabulous Orc Tribe Boxed Set and other prizes generously provided by Otherworld. Eventually the dust settled, leaving the following ten entries standing as our winners:

*Honorable Mention:*

**Arcane Vault of the Magic Goddess**, by Matthew Riedel  
**The Haunted Chateau**, by James Maliszewski  
**Badlands of the Bandit Kingdoms**, by Robert Lionheart  
**Beware the Lord of Eyes**, by Allan Grohe  
**A Giant Dilemma**, by Frank Farris

*First Honorable Mention*

**The Hobgoblin God's Crown**, by James Quigley  
**Khas Fara**, by Jason Morningstar

*3rd Prize*

**The Blocks of Quox**, by Tony Rosten

*2nd Prize*

**The Tomb of Ixtandraz**, by Lee Barber

*1st Prize*

**Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men**,  
top scoring entry overall by David "Sham" Bowman

*Khas Fara* and *Spawning Grounds* are found herein; the other eight winners will be found in upcoming issues of *Fight On!* Congratulations to all of our winners!

### Around the Village

**The Old Gates:** There's only one road – the caravan road – and it is impossible to lose. It rises from the lush lowlands into the arid, wind-swept upper valley. Half a league outside of Khas Fara, the first signs of habitation present themselves – a crumbled stone gate marking the furthest extent of what was once a great trading post, a boom town in its day. Sheltered under an arch is a well-used fire pit,

still warm, as well as stacks of greasy goat bones and, nearby, a neatly demarcated pile of gnoll excrement.

**The Cemetery:** Further up the caravan road, beside an orchard of stunted pistachio trees, is a very old cemetery. Six of the graves have been recently disturbed and re-filled, their contents tamped down with shovel-blades. Scattered in the orchard (if characters look) are a few scattered human bones with desiccated bits of flesh clinging to them.

**The Crop Tiers:** Closer still, with the village in sight, travelers can see that the slopes surrounding the village have been laboriously tiered over generations to grow crops. Millet and spinach grow in profusion. Above the tiered fields, some villagers tend herds of goats.

**The Parcel-House:** At the furthest point up-valley stands the most elaborate and well-maintained structure in Khas Fara, the Parcel-House. It is into this imposing white-washed edifice that the village's qanat empties. The qanat is a hand-dug underground stream that channels meltwater from the mountains into a large, sheltered cistern. This is the village's only source of water, and by tradition the Parceler is the most respected person in the village.

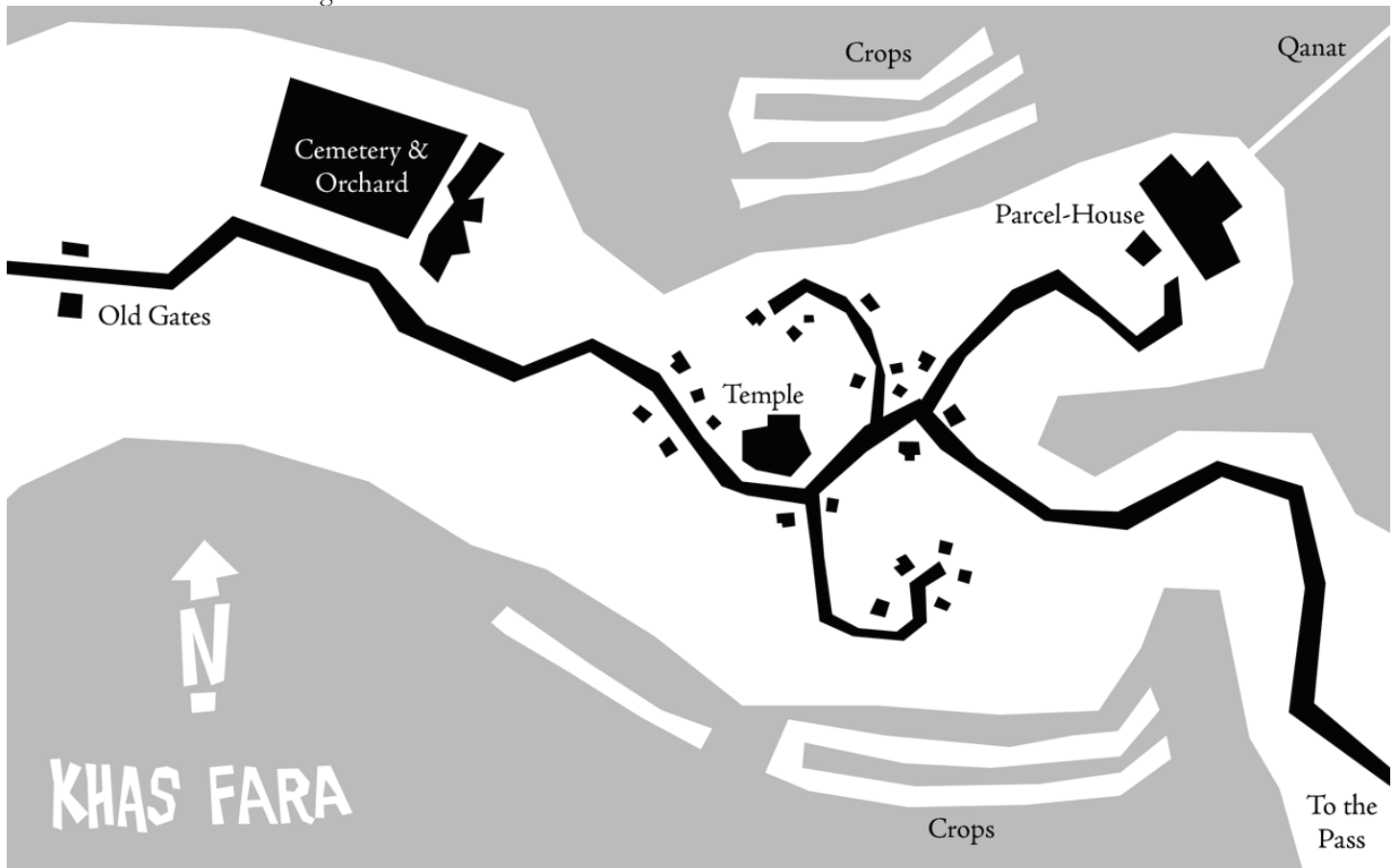
**The Temple:** At the center of the village is a simple but well maintained temple to the mountain Gods. It is tended by Danel, the village redsmith. He lives in an adjoining mud brick hut with his daughter Arbella. Danel does his

smithing in an covered courtyard, and has a variety of copper tools and ornaments for sale or barter.

**Everywhere Else:** The rest of Khas Fara consists of practical mud brick huts with straw roofs, each housing a family. Communal kitchens meet the needs of every five or so families, and extended families tend to group together. Staying in Khas Fara There are no public accommodations in Khas Fara. However, her people are bound by the laws of mountain hospitality and will graciously take in travelers, asking nothing in return. They will do this with some anxiety, since they are assuming responsibility for the health and safety of their guests, but they will do their best to keep these concerns to themselves. Villagers will not permit travelers to sleep out of doors, or to go hungry, even though they have little to spare. The players can choose any group they wish – even Simta – and won't be turned away. The Parcel-House is the only place in town large enough to shelter three or more guests, so they may be split up among various families, which is definitely encouraged.

### Part One: The Witch

**What's Going On:** A few months ago a witch arrived in Khas Fara. Her name is Simta. With flame-red hair, an owl on her shoulder and a trio of evil-looking hyenas trailing her, everyone could tell in an instant that she was a powerful witch. Simta announced that she was going to live in Khas Fara and would assume the duties of Parceler. When



Shirat, the Parceler of record, opposed her, Simta bewitched Shirat's son Ram, enslaving him with magic. That was enough to cast a pall of fear over the village. Soon, Simta had made herself comfortable in the Parcel-House with her son, a no-account thug named Asor, and her bodyguard, a competent professional soldier named Nardeen. Together with her hyenas, who she claims are her stillborn daughters returned to protect her, and a dirty white owl, she rules Khas Fara now. She controls the water, and she controls the people. Simta likes the village and plans a long-term stay. Asor has expressed an interest in Arbella, and the witch has announced their engagement. Danel doesn't dare object, even though the girl is promised to the now-bewitched Ram. Arbella is despondent.

**Witchcraft and Misery:** In the traditions of the mountain people, witches are cannibals who eat human flesh to acquire power, and soon after Simta's arrival several graves – including that of Danel's widow – had been disturbed, their contents uprooted and desecrated. Everyone knows that a witch can trick you into eating a piece of human flesh, and thereby grab hold of your spirit, which is what she's done to poor Ram. Ram does her bidding in silent, humiliated misery. Witches also scrape the anal glands of their hyena familiars and use the foul paste to fuel torches that light their way during night-time rides. They grind up the bones and teeth of the dead to make evil potions. Their owls see everything and report back to their mistress. They have a secret cabal, the Union of Ten, who will fly to assist one another in the event of a challenge. Once a witch has taken roost, no power on earth can dislodge her.

**Behind the Terror:** Simta is no witch – she's an actress. Whatever power she has is suggestion alone, backed up by Nardeen's muscle, her hyena pack's nose for grave-robbing, and her own larcenous nature. She is a truly malicious and unpleasant person, but she has no magical gifts at all. She's also made a mistake that may prove fatal to her and her little band of thugs.

**Simta and the Player Characters:** Any outcome is perfectly fine. Perhaps they want to send her packing – they can do so after a fight, and Simta will make sure that prominent townspeople, appropriately “bewitched”, will fight on her side. Perhaps they want to cut a deal with her – also fine. If the player characters overstay their welcome, Simta will have no reservations about poisoning them, slitting their throats, or turning her hyenas loose on them. There's no fixed outcome necessary, but there should be some dramatic interaction with Simta, her crew, and the residents of Khas Fara. She is completely capable of using the innocent villagers against the player characters. Once things are at a steady boil or perhaps resolved with Simta, bring on the Dog People.

## **Part Two: The Dog People**

**What's Going On:** High in the passes and scattered across the upland desert are the Dog People, known among themselves as Gnolls, violent nomads who are generally hated and feared by caravan-master and valley farmer alike. The gnoll packs vary widely in temperament. Some have developed a strong taste for forged steel and spices acquired by force, and others for human flesh and the flames of burning buildings.

**Rachagh, the Brindled One:** A few packs are more moderate, and until recently, the pack of Rachagh, the Brindled One, could be counted among this number. A matriarch of small means, Rachagh can muster exactly six warrior-mates. She contents herself with the slim pickings among the high peaks, leaving the passes and plains to her more violent and intelligent sisters. Rachagh knows Danel and has even traded with him on one occasion – traded a human baby for a large sack of copper jewelry, true, but by gnoll standards it was remarkably liberal.

**Grandmother of Gnolls:** On a goat-stealing foray into Khas Fara, one of Rachagh's warrior-mates saw Simta beating a hyena. He dutifully reported this sacrilege to his matriarch. Hyenas are the “grandmother of Gnolls” and are held in high esteem. By ancestral code they cannot be domesticated or owned by meat-skins, and they certainly cannot be whipped. Rachagh and her warrior-mates will descend on Khas Fara to right this wrong in one way or another. While they are not eager for a fight, they are warriors – if one comes, they will use every resource at their disposal to make it a memorable one.

**Rachagh and the Player Characters:** A thundering pack of Gnolls descending in fury on Khas Faras may look like a set-piece battle. That's fine, if that's how your players want to roll. If it ends up being a big fight, DM5a-d from Otherworld Miniatures are good choices to represent Rachagh and her six warrior-mates. Have Rachagh and four of them storm into the village as a group, with two warrior-mates flanking the meat-skins from another direction. If it becomes plain that this is a punitive raid, they will start setting fire to huts with the stinking, smoldering gourds filled with hyena butter that they carry. In the event of a throw-down, Simta and her crew will do nothing to help. It's equally likely that the players may choose to parley, and that's a great option. Rachagh is insulted and furious, her pride injured, and unable to back down before her mates – she will require the hyenas and some measure of reparations. If any of the hyenas have been injured or killed, she will demand blood for blood from the meat-skins. It will be challenging to negotiate with the Gnolls, who are eye-wateringly foul in stench and have trouble pronouncing vowels.

## Cast of Characters

In general, human NPCs (even important ones) will be DC 7 in their dry-country leathers and WD 1. Nardeen is a 2<sup>nd</sup> level Warrior with WD 2, wp 11, chainmail for DC 5, a +1 two-handed sword, and a pouch with 3d6 gc. Simta's 3 big, brutish hyenas have WD 3, DC 5, Speed 90, and attack for 1d8 with their savage jaws. Rachag's warrior-mates are WD 2, DC 5, Speed 90, carry 3d6 gc each, and have attack rolls and morale +1 when within 60' of their mistress. Rachag herself fights as an ogre (WD 4+1, +2 damage, otherwise as above), so watch out! *Shadow of Yesterday* attributes are provided with character descriptions below.

**SIMTA, *evil witch*:** Simta is in her fifties, a fat woman covered in crude tattoos with a shock of henna-dyed red hair. Her skills lie in performance, and her ability to impersonate a dreadful sorceress has served her well. Simta also has a natural gift for training animals. Her three hyenas were raised from cubs as vicious guards and affectionate companions, and her old owl flies to her wrist on command. (*TSOY*: As an expert charlatan, Simta is a Master at Sway and Animal Ken and Adept at a variety of interpersonal and manipulative skills. She has two points in each of her pools. Simta has the Secret of Specialty (Witchery) – she gains a bonus die in any Sway contest with a person who believes she is a witch.)

**ASOR, *Simta's son, bully and drunkard*:** Asor is a swaggering lout in his early thirties, fond of showing off too much muscle gone to fat, more often than not drunk and spoiling for a fight he knows he can win. He likes to push people around and he's quick to call for Nardeen if he gets into trouble. Nardeen is, sadly, never far. (*TSOY*: As a repellent villain, Asor is Adept at Sense Danger and Competent at Deceit, Streetwise, and Scrapping. He has no points in his pools. Asor should receive a penalty die when he is drunk, which is often.)

**NARDEEN, *laconic bodyguard*:** Nardeen stands a head taller than the tallest villager and carries a menacing executioner's sword across his back. He comes from a distant land, and he works for coin, but he is deeply enmeshed in Simta's schemes and can't easily escape. Nardeen's primary task is to keep Asor in check, to prevent the fool from harming himself or others. He takes his duties seriously but has absolutely no love for his employer or her misbegotten man-child. Nardeen likes Shirat and will go out of his way to keep her from harm – to a point. (*TSOY*: As a professional soldier and bodyguard, Nardeen should be Adept at related skills and Competent at anything related to life on the road. He has two points each in his Vigor and Instinct pools. Nardeen has the Secret of the Signature Weapon for his executioner's sword.)

**THE HYENAS, *well-trained beasts*:** Simta's three trained hyenas are deadly, man-eating brutes when unleashed. If physically threatened, Simta will absolutely

order them to attack. If she decides that someone has overstayed their welcome and she can get them alone, she will likewise set the hyenas on them. (*TSOY*: Treat them as a collective pack that is Adept at Power and Competent at Prowess, Senses and Brain. The pack has Vigor and Instinct pools of two each. A single hyena would have no pools and Power, Prowess and Senses all lowered by one. They are far more effective as a group. Secret of Bone Crushing Jaws: Their bite inflicts +1 harm in combat.)



**SHIRAT, *midwife and former Parceler*:** Shirat is the soul of Khas Fara, an elderly midwife who has held the important title of Parceler for thirty years. Once a resident of the Parcel-House, she now lives in a hastily-built addition to some extended relative's hut. Despite the current troubles, Shirat remains a counselor and advocate for the villagers as best she can. Like everyone else, she is terrified of Simta, who has cast an evil spell on her son, Ram. (*TSOY*: As a village elder, Shirat is Adept at Orate, and Competent at all interpersonal skills, as well as First Aid. She has one point each in her Instinct and Reason pools.)

**DANEL, *priest and redsmith*:** Danel's a cave-chested old wreck, a hollow-eyed man with a rumbling cough from breathing vaporized copper for years at the smithy. He loves his village and his daughter and will do anything in his power to save them from the witch. In this he is a bit of a romantic, and his ill health only emboldens him. He has dealt with Rachag in the past and knows her ways. Though he is not a priest, he has a periapt that allows him to cast a blessing once per day. (*TSOY*: As the village holy man, Danel is Adept at Pray and Counsel and Competent at abilities related to being a fine craftsman. He has one point each in his Vigor and Reason pools. Danel wears his badge of office, a copper holy symbol that carries the Secret of Imbuement, granting him +1 to his success level using the Counsel ability.)

**RAM, *Shirat's son, village hero and zombie*:** Ram is eighteen, good looking, and a competent goat herder. Before Simta's arrival, he was betrothed to Arbella. Now he is Simta's slave, because she tricked him into eating his own father's long-dead flesh. Ram considers himself



entirely helpless and trapped in the witch's power, although this condition is entirely self-inflicted. He will do whatever she asks, although if he finds it distressing he will probably do it ineptly. Widely revered as the village's best man, some small part of Ram likes being ordered around. (TSOY: Ram is Adept at Woodcraft and Competent at abilities related to village life, including Scrapping.)

**ARBELLA, *Danel's daughter and village beauty.***

Arbella is a beautiful girl of sixteen who helps her father around the temple and tends a tulip garden. Until recently she was betrothed to her true love, Ram, but is now to marry the witches horrible son Asor instead. (TSOY: As a kind-hearted and attractive maiden, Arbella is Adept at Savoir-Faire and has the Secret of Specialty for it, granting her a bonus die when dealing with male strangers.)

**RACHAGH, *the Brindled One, gnoll pack matriarch.***

Rachagh is imposing and dangerous by human standards, but something of a dullard by gnoll standards. She has a small pack and controls an unproductive territory. Despite her diminished circumstances, Rachagh is proud of her pack and her heritage, and doesn't suffer fools (at least fools more foolish than herself ) gladly. In a fight she should be genuinely terrifying. (TSOY: As the matriarch of a semi-ferocious war-band, Rachagh is a Master at individual combat and Adept at related military disciplines, like tracking and tactics. She is Competent at abilities related to communicating, negotiating, and intimidating. Rachagh has three points in her Vigor pool and one point each in Instinct and Reason. Rachagh has the Secret of the Mighty Blow and a vicious, weathered sword that does +1 harm in combat. In addition, she wears tough hide armor that offers +1 protection from harm in battle.)

**Rachagh's WARRIOR-MATES, *warriors and mates.***

The male Gnolls who follow Rachagh are not as fearsome as their pack leader individually, which is why they stick together and fight in groups of two or three. (TSOY: An attack group is Adept at combat-related abilities and has one Vigor pool point. Like their leader, the Gnolls use weapons that offer +1 harm and wear armor that provides +1 protection. An isolated male gnoll is Competent across the board and has no pool points.) Ω



## County of Haghill and Environs

by James Mishler (james@adventuregamespubs.com)

*Initial Guidelines Booklet K* introduced the hamlet of Haghill and its master, Huberic the Stout, in 1977. From that time, through all the published incarnations of the *Wilderlands of High Fantasy*, the area has been little developed beyond a map of the hamlet and a short page of NPCs. This article expands upon that to include details for the entire hex in which Haghill stands (Hex 05: 2321).

Haghill stands upon the Rorystone Road, the ancient stone highway that connects the City State of the Invincible Overlord and Thunderhold. South of Haghill is the Darkfield Vale, source of much of the grain consumed by the City State. North of Haghill, from the bank of the Styrling Stream to the environs of Byrny, is savage wilderness. Hag's Point (Haghill's namesake) and the hills around it are the southeastern-most extension of the Howling Hills, home to worgs, trolls, and werewolves. The Troll Fens, lair of trolls, giant frogs, and crocodiles, are to the north and east. These are both on Haghill's doorstep, and further to the north, beyond the River Eorlbane, are the rolling moors of the Moonrakers. Thus Haghill stands on an important crossroads of the borderlands, made more important still due to the absence of a good ford on Styrling Stream, over which Haghill commands the only bridge.

This important location is ruled by **COUNT HUBERIC "THE STOUT"** (Male Skandik human; CLS: Barbarian; ALN: NNE; LVL: 7; HTK: 36; ARM: Plate Mail, 080; SPD: 6; PSL: Noble 12 (Count); STR 141; INT 103; WIS 086; CON 171; DEX 150; CHA 127; END 125; AGL 134; LED 178; LCK 125; PSY 083; WPN: magical speedy crossbow; 11 CP, 18 SP, 18 GP; ring of rebounding spells). Huberic was already an infamous Skandik buccaneer in the when the young Overlord first took to the seas as a pirate. Kindred spirits with regard to reaving and adventure, both also had a great hatred of Set, and together they slew many evil priests and serpents and plundered many temples. Eventually they parted ways, Huberic returning to the sea, the young Cadarna to his destiny in the East. When the Overlord returned home to take the throne 21 years ago, Huberic followed him and served in his personal guard. When the former ruler of the Haghill region, Count Styrling, was found guilty of supporting rebels, his villa was razed and he was hung from his own storied gibbet, and loyal Huberic was made master of the region in his stead, answering directly and only to the Overlord.

Rather than rebuilding the villa, Huberic enlarged the small castle on the bluff overlooking the bridge and shocked the villagers by occupying the long-deserted Tower of Torpid Terror. This large tower is the most ancient structure in the surrounding area and legend says that a terrible creature of the Elder Days sleeps beneath it. While Huberic



publicly laughs off such superstition, he has sealed off all entrances to the dungeons beneath the tower. Huberic is especially fond of banquets, and since his “retirement” uses every opportunity to increase his girth. His retainers are very loyal; Huberic is famed for giving gold rings to his favorites. He entertains them by frightening animals (and an occasional peasant) with his 20 foot whip.

**DURGAN’S FORGE:** Three miles north of Haghill along the Rorystone Road stands a series of buildings surrounded by a tall wooden palisade with iron-bound gates. This small holding is run by a hill dwarf of Gae Hill, **DURGAN FLINTSTONE** (Male Hill dwarf; ALN: LNG; CLS: Armorer; LVL: 4; HTK: 25; ARM: Leather apron; SPD: 6; PSL: Craftsman 6 (Master); STR 164; INT 147; WIS 094; CON 156; DEX 093; CHA 150; END 138; AGL 159; LED 113; LCK 163; PSY 129; WPN: +1 war hammer, light crossbow; LNG: Dwarven, Common (Alyan), Goblin; 6 CP, 6 SP, 14 GP, light iron chain on necklace with three iron keys). Distantly descended from the old ruling dwarven line of Gae Hill, he lives here in effective exile due to his dislike of Governor Baldacan (nothing personal against him, mind, just can’t stand that a human rules dwarven lands). He has a loathing of mountain dwarves, as he believes it is these “traitors” who help keep his people ruled by the human lords. He won’t attack a mountain dwarf without provocation, but he certainly won’t lift his hammer to help one, either. To others he is taciturn at best, and generally lets his underlings deal with customers and passers-by.

**Hex 05: 2321 Haghill Environs Random Encounters:** While in this hex and not in a hamlet or thorp there is a 2 in 6 chance of an encounter during the day (3 in 6 in the Troll Fens) and a 1 in 6 chance of an encounter at night (3 in 6 in the Troll Fens). Roll 1d12 to determine which hour of the day or night the encounter occurs. Roll 1d8+1d12 to determine the nature of the encounter:

Roll	Rorystone Road	Forest Hills†	Troll Fens
2	Roll Twice*	Roll Twice*	Roll Twice*
3	Moonrakers**	Rangers**	Will-o’-Wisps
4	Wild Horses	Giant Beetles	Green Hag
5	Bandits	Werewolves	Carnivore Plant
6	Mtn. Dwarves	Moonrakers	Trolls
7	Rangers	Bandits	Giant Frogs
8	Pilgrims	Deer	Giant Crawfish
9	Merchants	Owls	Crocodiles
10	Haghill Patrol	Boars†	Boars
11	Merchants	Turkeys†	Beavers
12	City Patrol	Goblins†	Giant Centipedes
13	Merchants State	Black Bears	Crocodiles
14	Adventurers	Orcs	Trolls
15	Hill Dwarves	Goats	Giant Beavers
16	Deer or Turkeys	Trolls	Quicksand
17	Worgs	Worgs	Fengate Prisoner
18	Trolls	Giant Toad	Apatosaurus
19	Worgs	Giant Troll	T-Rex
20	Red Dragon***	Red Dragon***	Red Dragon***

† On the trail to Gae Hill encounters vary: 50% of the time hill dwarves are encountered instead of boars and merchants instead of turkeys, and 15% of the time halflings are encountered instead of goblins.

\* Roll twice, re-rolling further twos. GM determines how the groups are interacting, as appropriate.

\*\* On nights of the new moon (Luna), this encounter is with undead from the Old Cemetery instead. Roll d12: 1-3 skeleton, 4-6 zombie, 7-8 wight, 9-10 wraith, 11 ghost, 12 roll 2-5 times for a mixed group (including further 12’s!)

\*\*\* The red dragon encountered is Rhysztyx the Bold, the fledgling dragon now resident in the caverns of Hag’s Point. If encountered on the Rorystone Road he is polymorphed, in disguise as “Rheese Underhill,” a friendly and curious halfling; otherwise he is hunting, and considers adventurers fair game if they seem weak enough...

Note that with the exception of the strongbox hidden in the metal shed, everyone in the thorp carries all their treasure with them; being beyond the borders means being ready to run! The guards do not have much cash on them as they are paid in kind and in credit at the store, with their remaining cash wages paid when they leave Durgan's service. The storekeeper gets a percentage of sales, and keeps most of his money deposited with Durgan's in the strongbox, as there is no place safer in the settlement. The cook works for his upkeep alone (which is expensive enough as it is). The apprentices and slaves, of course, do not have any wages, merely tips, and so carry what little they own.

There are no trees within 200 feet of the palisade, and even small shrubs are cut down regularly, to provide a full field of fire for defenders. The palisade is 15 feet tall, made from a double line of stout oak trunks. The tops of the trunks are sharpened to a point and reinforced with parallel and perpendicular lines of iron stakes at the top. Along the inside of the wall, about 12 feet above the ground, stands a five-foot-wide walkway; stairs are found next to the west gate and on the northeast wall. Crossbow slits are found every 10 feet along the wall, at just the right height for dwarves to loose bolts. The gates themselves are stout oak banded in iron, with a thin sheet of iron upon the whole face as proof against fire; the paired cross bars are also heavily-banded with iron, while the brace (set against the bars at an angle from the ground, proof against all but troll-wielded rams) is solid iron. The eastern gate, facing the Rorystone Road, has a large iron-wrought dwarven rune for "Man" upon it; the western gate, facing toward Gae Hill, has a similar rune for "Dwarf" upon it.

In addition to the locals, there is a 3 in 6 chance of another party of travelers being at the Forge; if such are present, there is a 2 in 6 chance of a second party; if a second party, a 1 in 6 chance of a third, and so on with a 1 in 6 chance for a fourth, fifth, sixth, or more, until the roll is missed. Roll 2d6+3 on the Haghill Environs Encounter Table: Rorystone Road for each party encountered.

**Along the eastern wall** is the eastern gate, open and guarded during the day by two dwarves: **MULDIN** (ALN: LNX; CLS: Fighter; LVL: 3; HTK: 18; ARM: Chain shirt + shield; SPD: 6; STR 146; WPN: War hammer, light crossbow; LNG: Dwarven, Common (Alryan); 7 CP, 2 SP, 5 GP; Rumor: *A murder of crows lays dead in the middle of Rorystone Road two miles north, not a mark upon a one of them!*) and **SKULDIN** (ALN: LNX; CLS: Fighter; LVL: 2; HTK: 9; ARM: Chain shirt + shield; SPD: 6; STR 108; WPN: Battle axe, light crossbow; LNG: Dwarven, Common (Alryan), Tharbriana; 9 CP, 8 SP, 1 GP; Rumor: *The Moonrakers bury coins around the altar within the standing stones atop the hill to the east; they say the ground is littered with a king's ransom in gold and silver!*) The night shift guards are **FURGAN** (ALN: LNG; CLS: Fighter; LVL: 3; HTK: 21; ARM: Chain shirt + shield; SPD: 6; STR 165; WPN: War

hammer, light crossbow; LNG: Dwarven, Common (Alryan); 15 CP, 5 SP, 4 GP; Rumor: *Codger Fiilsick is actually a brother of the Overlord, hiding from the Black Lotus.*) and **HURGIN MAKBAIN** (ALN: NNC; CLS: Fighter; LVL: 2; HTK: 12; ARM: Chain shirt + shield; SPD: 6; STR 121; WPN: Broad sword, light crossbow; LNG: Dwarven, Common (Alryan), Tharbrian; 9 CP, 3 GP; Hurgin is a Tharbrian Blood-Brother of Clan MakBain, and can ride a horse as well as a nomad; Rumor: *I saw Burker Bliss, the bard of Haghill, walking through the woods south of here with a tall, beautiful woman; they seemed to be looking for an easy path up to the Hag's Point.*)

The gate is barred and never opened during the night, regardless of threats, pleas, or bribes. The guards ask cursory questions when the nature and needs of those seeking to enter are not obvious; there is no fee to enter, but no one remains overnight within the palisade without payment. If asked for assistance on the road, they refer questioners to Durgan, but warn that, "Durgan ain't the law hereabouts. There ain't none, nowheres, till you get south of the Gallows or up to Stillring Vale. You want his help, it's sure to cost you." And unless the wanderer presents information about an immediate and overwhelming danger to the small settlement, assistance isn't likely at any price.

To either side of the gate are wooden shacks where travelers can room for the night. There are four shacks total, each with 10 cots, a fireplace/cook pit, and a chamber pot; 3 gp per night per person. If the shacks are full (a very rare occasion), those wishing to stay within the palisade must pay 1 gp, but are provided with neither blanket nor tent. Stabling costs 1 gp per horse per night, 5 sp for other animals to remain within the paddock.

**At the center of the palisade grounds** stands the forge; here usually can be found Durgan and his four apprentices (all hill dwarves) working on horseshoes, tools, armor, or weapons. North and west of the forge stands a wooden L-shaped stable, to the south a wood-and-stone supply hut filled with pig and scrap metal, and before the forge to the east stands a well. The dirt trail to Gae Hill passes this central complex on both sides. Durgan's apprentices are **VILI** (ALN: LNG; CLS: Armorer; LVL: 2; HTK: 14; ARM: Leather apron; SPD: 6; STR 177; WPN: War hammer, light crossbow; LNG: Dwarven, Common (Alryan); 5 CP, 12 SP, 1 GP; Rumor: *Trolls were seen within bowshot of the walls of Haghill last week.*), **VODAK THE DRUNKARD** (ALN: LNX; CLS: Armorer; LVL: 2; HTK: 14; ARM: Leather apron; SPD: 6; STR 162; WPN: War hammer, light crossbow; LNG: Dwarven; 6 CP, 10 SP, 3 GP, a silver 1/2 pint flask worth 50 gp filled with dwarven whisky; Rumor: *A young noble of the City State passed through here last week on his way to Gae Hill, said he was searching for the Lost Horn of Plenty in the Howling Hills.*), **GREAT VALDOR** (ALN: NGC; CLS: Armorer; LVL: 1; HTK: 10; ARM: Leather apron; SPD: 6; STR 128; WPN: War hammer,



light crossbow; LNG: Dwarven, Common (Alryan); 8 CP, 11 SP, 1 GP); Valdor is “Great” as in being as fat around as he is tall; Rumor: *The quality of iron out of Byrny has declined in recent years; they say the mines will play out soon.*), and **SLY SAM** (ALN: LNE; CLS: Armorer; LVL: 1; HTK: 6; ARM: Leather apron; SPD: 6; STR 110; IND 168; WPN: War hammer, light crossbow; LNG: Dwarven, Common (Alryan), Goblin, Troll, Common Viridian; 3 CP, 8 SP, 4 GP, a 10 gp gem); Rumor: *The Old Hag used to keep a princess in a magical bottle in her lair up on Hag’s Point. The bottle was never found after the Hag was killed.*) Three human slave boys, **FITCH, VARGH, and DHULT** (ALN: NNN; HIT: 1, HTK: 6, 5, 2; WPN: Knives; LNG: Common (Alryan); all fairly mindless and docile, which is why they were bought cheap), assist with the horses. The slaves live in the hayloft of the stable, where there is room for 40 horses.

The metal storage hut contains all manner of pieces of iron, brass, steel, bronze, and other materials for the forge. It is also the “spare” armory, containing two war hammers, two battle axes, two maces, a broad sword, three light crossbows, seven daggers, and 200 crossbow bolts. It is locked at night, but kept open during the day; Durgan has the only key. Under a large spare anvil (requires total STR 32 to lift) is a double-locked strongbox (again, Durgan has both keys); if it is touched by anyone other than a dwarf, a magic mouth appears and screams out “Burglars” 25 times, audible throughout the settlement. The strongbox contains 41 CP, 406 SP, 443 GP, 26 PP, five gems (3x10, 50, and 100 gp), and a gold brooch (500 gp, but actually a brooch of shielding against mystic bolts). The anvil is never lifted in the presence of anyone other than the apprentices and the guards.

The well has a wooden bucket on a rope with a ladle for drinking, and troughs nearby for watering horses. Drinking and watering horses within in the walls is free, but it costs 1 cp each to fill barrels with water from the well.

Along the **northern wall** are the dwarves’ living quarters, a long low hall of stone and wood where Durgan and all the prentices and guards sleep. Durgan has his own room at the eastern end, little more than a bare cell with a rope bed and feather mattress. The apprentices share a room next to his, and the eight guards all share the largest room, between the apprentices and the kitchen and dining area on the western end. Each has a simple cot with a chest at the foot; the chests of the guards and apprentices contain only clothing and minor keepsakes, though Miner Mitch’s chest contains a collection of colorful sparkling stones that might look like gems to the uninitiated, and Vodak’s chest hides two bottles of fine dwarven whisky. The kitchen is continuously occupied by the halfling cook, **HURPEK SKELLUM** (ALN: CNG; HIT: 1, HTK: 5; WPN: Knife and cleaver; LNG: Halfling, Common (Alryan); 4 CP; Rumor: *I was out weedin’ my garden I was, you see, when I saw a hawk dive to take a hare. That hare done jumped up and smacked*

*the hawk upside the head, it did, knocked it down dead. Strange stuff out there toward Hag’s Point, strange stuff I says.*) Hurpek was a torch boy for adventurers when he was younger, but a close encounter with some orcs on the Moonraker Moors put him off adventuring. He fled back to Durgan’s Forge, and hasn’t left since. He’s served Durgan for 12 years; unlike Codger Fiilsick he’s not afraid to leave the palisade, he just goes no further than his small vegetable and herb garden near the southern forest line. Food for the dwarves (potatoes, hams, vegetables, bags of grain and crates of sausages, all of a much finer quality than that available in the store) is kept in a root cellar accessible via stairs in the kitchen; the beer cellar is accessible through the root cellar, and contains more than two score barrels of fine, cool dwarven beer (much depleted when the monthly supply wagon gets here from the City State).

**Along the south wall** stands a long wooden hall, a general store of sorts, with locked storerooms on the east and west sides and the store in the center. Fresh and preserved foodstuffs (150% base cost) and most normal metal and wooden tools (110% base cost) are usually in stock and many other, more unusual items a traveler or adventurer might require can be bought (60% chance per item, -1% per GP to a minimum of 5% chance, halve chances and round down for each subsequent item of the same type sought. 200% base cost). Current stock of armor and weapons: a leather coat (human), two suits of ring mail (dwarven), two mail shirts (human), two mail shirts (dwarven), a breastplate (human), a chain hauberk (human), a suit of plate mail (dwarven), and a suit of full plate (human, obviously of knightly quality, with a large repaired rent right above the heart); a buckler, two small wooden shields, a large wooden shield, two small steel shields, and a medium steel shield; a mail coif, two pot helms, three Skandik helms, and a great helm; 76 arrows, three battle axes, two hand axes, 123 crossbow bolts, a short bow, 7 daggers, 8 darts, two dirks, a halberd, three war hammers, two javelins, 12 knives, a heavy lance, three maces, two picks, a poniard, a rapier, a scimitar, seven spears, a staff, two broad swords, a long sword (unbeknownst to Codger it is a magical +1 long sword), and three short swords. Armor and weapons retail at 200% base cost.

The store is run by a retired merchant of the City State who lost his fortune (and his welcome) in a dodgy deal several years ago, **CODGER FIILSICK** (ALN: LNE; HIT: 1, HTK: 3; WPN: Short sword; LNG: Common (Alryan), Troll; 4 CP, 6 SP, 18 GP; Rumor: *The Overlord’s Black Lotus is looking for a party of adventurers looking much like yourselves...*) with the assistance of two human slave boys: **VYV and RIK** (ALN: NNE; HIT: 1, HTK: 7, 2; WPN: Knives; LNG: Common (Alryan); smarter than the stable boys, they lord their more important positions over them every chance they can get, even though they also sleep in the stable loft; though of evil bent, they never steal, as Codger sold the last slave boy who stole from him to a

passing High Viridian merchant...). Codger is more likely to complain about his aching knees than offer any good information about the lands hereabout, as he really doesn't know or care much for anything beyond the palisade (which he has not left in four years, five moons, and three days, as he'll remind folk). He haggles, but never below 75% of the listed percentages (i.e., never below 75% of 200%, or 150% base for weapons and armor). He's willing to barter, but prefers cold, hard cash as he gets a better percentage. In addition to a pouch filled with his personal coins, Codger always carries a leather shoulder bag with the store's till (turned over to Durgan every night): 1d4x1d20 CP, 1d8x1d20 SP, 1d4x1d10 GP, 5% chance of 1d4 gems worth 1d6x10 gp. Codger sleeps in a small, unadorned apartment on the western end of the building.

**Along the eastern wall**, to either side of the gate, stand two lean-tos within fenced paddocks, with room for oxen, sheep, and other such animals, as well as for wagons. The day guards for the eastern gate are **MOULDIN** (ALN: LNX; CLS: Fighter; LVL: 2; HTK: 10; ARM: Chain shirt + shield; SPD: 6; STR 135; WPN: War hammer, light crossbow; LNG: Dwarven, Common (Alryan), Elven; 5 CP, 7 SP, 7 GP; Muldin is an Elf-Friend of Alfheim; *Rumor: A large band of Moonrakers has taken to raiding caravans passing north along the Rorystone Road deep in the moorlands. The Overlord is said to be building a force to attack the band, hiring mercenaries left and right...*) and **SKOALDIN** (ALN: NNN; CLS: Fighter; LVL: 2; HTK: 9; ARM: Chain shirt + shield; SPD: 6; STR 108; WPN: Long sword, light crossbow; LNG: Dwarven, Common (Alryan); 9 CP, 8 SP, 1 GP; *Rumor: A passing merchant claims to have seen fires glittering in the caves of Hag's Point three nights ago.*) The night shift guards are **MURGIN** (ALN: NGX; CLS: Fighter; LVL: 2; HTK: 11; ARM: Chain shirt + shield; SPD: 6; STR 154; WPN: War hammer, light crossbow; LNG: Dwarven, Common (Alryan); 7 CP, 20 SP, 1 GP; *Rumor: Those fabulous rings Huberic of Haghill gives his followers? They are all fake, merely gold-washed brass!*) and **MINER MITCH** (ALN: NNN; CLS: Fighter; LVL: 2; HTK: 8; ARM: Chain shirt + shield; SPD: 6; STR 144; DEX: 174; WPN: magical +1 pick, light crossbow; LNG: Dwarven, Common (Alryan), Goblin; 19 CP, 2 SP, 5 GP; *Rumor: I hear the miners dug into an ancient burial chamber down in the Glory Hole mine down by the City State, awoke a mummy or some other undead creature.*)

**GOBLIN LAIR:** This large, dry cave is temporarily the home to a small tribe of goblins. **94 GOBLIN WARRIORS** (ALN: LEC; HIT: 1; HTK: 18x6, 15x5, 13x4, 16x3, 16x2, 16x1; ARM: Furs; SPD: 6; ATK: Spears (1d6); Javelins (1d4); 2d4 CP, 1d4 SP, 50% 1d4 GP) are led by **NINE GOBLIN WORG RIDERS** (ALN: LEX; HIT: 2; HTK: 2x10, 9, 3x8, 7, 3, 2; ARM: Chain shirt; SPD: 6; ATK: Spears (1d6); Scimitars (1d6); 3d4 CP, 2d4 SP, 1d4 GP) and their **GOBLIN KING, KREE-YARB THE BILIOUS** (ALN: LEX; HIT: 4; HTK: 17; ARM: Chain hauberk + shield; SPD: 6; ATK: magical +1 scimitar

(1d6+1); 29 CP, 23 SP, 41 GP, silver neck chain worth 200 gp). They have **10 WORGs** (ALN: NNE; HIT: 4; HTK: 25, 24, 21, 20, 19, 2x16, 13, 12, 4; ARM: Thick fur; SPD: 15; ATK: Bite (2d4)), **63 GOBLIN WENCHES** (HIT: 1; HTK: 1d6; nearly all with whelp, or soon to be), **92 GOBLIN WHELPS** (HIT: 1; HTK: 1d4), and **SEVEN WORG PUPS** (HIT: 1; HTK: 6, 3x5, 2x3, 2; ARM: Thin fur; SPD: 9; ATK: Bite (1d3)). The lair is makeshift, even for goblins, as they only recently settled here after being kicked out of their prior lair further northwest in the Howling Hills. A wide shelf in the back of the cavern is stacked with common supplies, especially dried meats and barrels of water, as well as cured animal hides and piles of bones for whelps and worg pups to gnaw on. They have no additional treasure, having used it to bribe the adventuring party that slaughtered half their tribe to let them leave and settle elsewhere. They are busy rebuilding both their numbers and their wealth. They've learned not to hunt to the south and east, where they lost several warriors to the trolls. They sometimes attack small parties of adventurers and lone merchants on the Rorystone Road, always with at least 20 goblin warriors and 4 worg riders. So far they have not encountered Moonrakers in this area, but they have bad memories of them from their days in the Howling Hills, and know that eventually some will arrive to worship at the shrine, which they recently desecrated. They do not yet know of the Old Cemetery and the undead there. A few of their number have scouted south and are investigating the digs at the Singing Caverns; a similar party that went to the cavern at Hag's Point never returned.

**HAG'S POINT:** Centuries ago this tall hill was the lair of a female red dragon, known simply as the Old Hag; thus the names Hag's Point and Haghill. Slain more than a century ago, treasure is still found from time to time in the nooks and crannies of an extensive cavern network that is accessible (as far as is known for certain) only from the western-facing cave entrance at the peak of the hill. There are, in fact, other connections to the large cavern, including several on the hill itself as well as a long tunnel that connects to the Singing Caverns to the south. In addition to the dragon lair, there are five main levels and three sub-levels of the caverns, which include a former bandit lair, an ancient mines dug by dwarves, and tunnels carved by an inhuman race. Today these levels are occupied by rats, slimes, undead, and other lesser creatures, save for the great cavern lair of the dragon itself, which once again houses (from time to time) a fire-breathing monstrosity. **RHYSZTYX THE BOLD** (ALN: NEC; HIT: 10; HTK: 54; ARM: Full plate; SPD: 15, 60 fly; ATK: 2 Claws (1d8); Bite (4d8); or Spell; LNG: Dragon, Common (Alryan), Moonraker, Tharbriana, Dwarven, Goblin, Orc; SPELLS: detect magic auras, read magic writings, ventriloquism, become invisible, see invisible, read minds, breathe water, flight, far seer. He is able to polymorph to halfling form at will). Son of Analegorn, King of the Majestic Fastness, Rhysztyx was sent south to keep tabs on the doings of

Men in this region, as any movements north would be of great interest to his sire. Being wise for his years as well as intelligent, Rhyszyx takes his duties seriously, and uses his spells to spy on local doings (especially become invisible and flight, which enable him to fly silently and unseen). He has dwelt in the cavern on Hag's Point for a little more than two years and the presence of a red dragon is still only rumored in the area, as he is careful not to be seen leaving or entering the cave and does not raid domesticated animals. He actually spends much of his time in halfling form, a seeming wastrel downing ales at the Seven Symbols Pub in Haghill. He sends monthly reports to his sire upon scrolls written in an ancient code. The scrolls are sent via messenger at the stagecoach stop in Haghill, where "Rheese Underhill" is a regular customer, claiming to send letters to his "dear auntie" who lives in Byrny.

He has a small burrow in Hob's End (see below), where locals believe him to be an exile, the dishonored scion of a wealthy halfling clan of the City-State, now living on remittance. He's been residing at Hob's End for four years; he only claimed the cavern at Hag's Point when he felt the need to "get his dragon on." He keeps a small hoard of treasure here that he sleeps upon from time to time: 3,235



CP, 2,611 SP, 1,222 GP, 13 gems (4x10, 2x50, 5x100, 2x500 GP), a suit of black-enameled full plate (scorched and with jagged claw rents, but still reparable, with some bones still in it but the head missing), a magical +1 heavy lance, three goblin spears, six goblin javelins, a goblin scimitar, and a magical +1 medium steel shield. He considers his mission more important than this treasure, so readily flees if truly threatened, but will avenge himself upon his attackers when opportunity permits.

**HAMLET OF HAGHILL:** For details on the hamlet of Haghill itself, refer to *Initial Guidelines Booklet K*, the original *Wilderness of High Fantasy* booklet, or the *Wilderness of High Fantasy* Boxed Set. The complete *Wilderness of High Adventure* version of this article, including the fully-developed Hamlet of Haghill, Tower of Torpid Terror, Singing Caverns, Hag's Point Caverns, and all other sites in complete detail, will be available soon in print and PDF format from Adventure Games Publications, designed and approved for use with *Castles & Crusades*.

**HANGMAN'S HEIGHT:** Also known as "Gallows Gap," a tall black gallows stands in this saddle between two hillocks, erected here on the southeastern side of the bend in the road decades ago by the last Count Styrling's grandfather. The wood is some unidentifiable black hardwood; elves might suspect it was from the Demon Lands far to the south, and they wouldn't be far from the truth. It is hard as steel when aged, and Huberic's men dulled several axes trying to take it down without leaving a single dent. Though he dislikes the gallows (having had his head in a noose himself more than once), in the end Huberic simply left it up, keeping it as the warning for which it was intended: "The Law starts here!" For Old Count Styrling was a devout follower of Rash'l, the God of Law and Tyranny, and he wanted to make sure that miscreants from the wild lands knew what awaited them were they to cause trouble in his lands. Though no ropes hang from it today, it is still an impressive sight, with room to hang up to seven at a time, dropped through a scaffold. Rusting poles to either side of the gallows mark where bodies of the hanged were impaled and left to rot, while a series of dusty spots in the grass on the other side of Rorystone Road show where lesser criminals were exposed to the elements in cages, until they died or their sentence in the cages were completed. Along the hillside to either side of the gallows are the graves of the criminals hung here; hundreds of small circles of stone mark the piles of dirt under which the bones were buried, with the skull left on top of each mound facing the gallows. Those who pass through the Gallows Gap often feel the eyes of dead villains upon them, staring out from empty sockets.

One villain, at least, was able to take his ill-gotten goods with him. A murderer was hanged ere he could reveal that he had swallowed several gems he stole from his victim, and so needful were they of the impaling spikes that day

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that they buried him before he rotted, the gems still in his stomach. If found (perhaps through potion or wand, or dug up by chance), the gems found are worth 3x50, 2x100, and 500 gp. Hangman's Height is avoided on All Hallows' Eve, as the ghosts of those who were innocent (and many were) are said to haunt the gap that night (100% chance of encounter with 1d4 ghosts).

**HOB'S END THORP:** This thorp of 76 souls (19 able-bodied) is named for the first halfling to settle the site; here he slew a hobgoblin, and so it was "Hob's End." The thorp is still mostly halflings, though the master of the settlement and his servants are human. **OCHCALL CAT-EYE** (Male Alryan human; ALN: CEX; CLS: Fighter; LVL: 5; HTK: 28; ARM: Plate mail; SPD: 6; PSL: Gentry 6 (Gentleman); STR 162; INT 126; WIS 104; CON 096; DEX 072; CHA 101; END 104; AGL 075; LED 124; LCK 129; PSY 057; WPN: Morning star; 8 CP, 10 SP, 10 GP, gold ring worth 50 gp) is Count Huberic's favorite retainer; he is also his least trustworthy man, so he is kept close by – thus the post at Hob's End. He has a maniacal grin, wild eyes always dodging about, and a high-pitched laugh that switches to a macabre giggle when in combat. He doesn't care for his halfling charges, but as Huberic gets mad when he wastes resources, he leaves them alone and spends most of his time in Haghill, drinking and feasting in Huberic's hall. The halflings are all farmers, gardeners, or shepherds save for Flynn the Tailor and Rheese Underhill, a gentleman-of-means-sans-labors said to be a black-sheep scion of the City State, or perhaps Byrny (see Hag's Point, above for more on Rheese). All live in small, comfortable burrows, save for Ochcall, who has a large, half-finished manor built on a Gothic style after an ancient ruin he once looted. The manor on the eastern end of the thorp; the burrows are arranged on either side of the trail, which ends just inside the forest where can be found the burrow of Mr. Underhill.

**HULGRA'S HUT:** This hut sits in a small glade at the center of a hollow in the lee of Hag's Point. The hut is the lair of **HULGRA, HUBERIC'S HALF-SISTER** (Female Skandik/Altanian human; ALN: NEX; CLS: Black Witch; LVL: 7; HTK: 26; ARM: Robes; SPD: 12; PSL: General 4 (Freeman); STR 092; INT 152; WIS 174; CON 123; DEX 142; CHA 163; END 127; AGL 133; LED 072; LCK 153; PSY 147; WPN: +1 magical dagger; SPELLS: detect magic auras, read magical writings, heal minor wounds, detection for evil, conjure fire, find object, become invisible, fire shield, shape shift, flight, lightning strike, major shape shift; She also has the ability to shape shift into large black hare, a raven, or a shrew, all slightly larger than normal size; 6 CP, 6 SP, 6 GP). Huberic abandoned his widowed mother and her young daughter when he was 16, and Hulgra has hated him ever since. She has haunted him for years, following him from port to port, learning the darkest arts from the strange civilizations she visited in his wake. Huberic has no idea that most of



the "bad luck" he experienced during his pirating days was from her machinations. She was otherwise occupied when he left the sea to join Cadarna on his quest to gain his throne, and only caught up with her brother three years ago. She continues to plot against him, but now, with him being in such good graces with a powerful lord, she seeks to use him to her own ends rather than simply punish him.

**MOONRAKER BARROW:** At some distant time, after the Rorystone Road was first built but before current histories (at least, those not available only to sages), a great battle was fought here against the Moonrakers. All the dead Moonrakers were piled here in a great heap and earth and stones were piled upon the bodies. Over long centuries the barrow became covered with a growth of sharp ivy-like thorny growth that bears a rose-like flower that blooms at night under the light of the moon (Luna); it has ebon-black outer petals and blood-red inner petals. Moonrakers and some assassins have learned that the petals of the flower, when gathered while blooming, can be rendered into a potent poison, either insinuated or ingested. Either type causes paralysis for 1d10 hours and deals 1d10 points of damage per hour; if the save is made (at a -3 penalty), the victim suffers only one hour of paralysis and 1d10 points of damage. A single dose of this poison costs 1,000 gp. A single dose requires 100 blossoms



gathered by moonlight; only 1d10 flowers bloom per night, during spring, summer, and autumn. Handling a blossom or walking upon the hill subjects the target to being scratched by the thorns, which inject a milder poison (as above, but only 1d10 minutes and 1 point of damage per minute). Proper armor and protection can ameliorate the danger of gathering the blooms. As Moonrakers consider the barrow one of their “holy places,” anyone found there by them will be slain, or captured and tortured to death.

**MOONRAKER SHRINE:** Upon the crest of this hill once stood a dozen red granite standing stones surrounding a black basalt altar, a location holy to the Moonrakers. Within the last few weeks the standing stones were pulled down and shattered, the earth all around dug up with shovels and overturned, and the altar attacked with hammers and defiled with goblin-filth. The Moonrakers have not yet discovered the desecration of their shrine; it is a site used only in winter, and thus, unless a band wanders near and stops in by happenstance, it will go yet undiscovered for several months. When they discover the shrine has been defiled, the band will send messengers out to other Moonraker bands, seeking an alliance to punish those who defiled it. In the end the Moonrakers will gather 20 to 50 bands, a veritable Moonraker war-host, to gain vengeance (it was a very important site for winter rituals). Their first thoughts will turn to the dwarves of Durgan’s Forge, as it looks as though someone sought treasure here (of which there is none, rumors to the contrary). When they discover the dwarves were not the perpetrators (probably too late to save the dwarves), they will turn toward the south and Haghill...it will only be by happenstance and late in the war that they will discover that the true culprits were a newly-arrived tribe of goblins.

**MOONRAKER TRAIL:** This trail runs northeast, across the easternmost spur of the Howling Hills, to a secret ford over the River Eorlbane (Hex 05: 2520). A large band of 24 Moonraker warriors always guards the ford, slaying all non-Moonrakers who find it in order to keep the secret.

**OLD CEMETERY:** Old as the Rorystone Road, this cemetery pit was first used when the road was first built, a burial site for hundreds of slaves who died building the road during the Founders Empire; at the end of their labors the survivors were sacrificed to terrible gods, and their bodies buried here, too. In the millennia since it has been used again and again for the same purpose, by kings, emperors, and even overlords. Countless thousands of bodies are buried here, most of them long turned to dust. But the power of the horror and terror of the slaves who died here gives unnatural life to many of the most recent burials, including animals that wander in to die within its environs. By day it appears to be nothing more than a sinkhole upon the side of the hill, a crater or pockmark upon the earth in the middle of forest a thousand feet across and 300 feet deep at the center, wherein grows only

shrubs and unhealthy bracken. A 50-foot diameter pool of brackish water sits at the center. Along the edge of the crater can be seen the rusted and often collapsed ruins of an 8-foot tall cold-wrought iron fence, of 1” bars spaced 6” apart, constructed ages ago as a warning to passers-by to avoid this place; the fence posts still have small iron skulls carved atop them which seem to be covered in blood due to rust. Here and there amidst the sickly greenery can be seen a skull, a few scattered bones, or even a whole body or skeleton. There are often fresh bodies here as well, even when there are no slave-gangs repairing the road, as an eldritch power causes villains to seek to bury their murder victims here, and many within 20 miles are so compelled. Also visible from outside the crater are many obelisks and statues, erected here by goodly folk trying to cleanse the evil power from this site; none of these well-meaning attempts to appease dark spirits have met with aught but temporary success. At night a sickly blue glow shimmers in the air above the crater. Skeletons, zombies, ghosts, and phantoms lurch, dance, and cavort within the rusting iron fence; the closer to the new moon, the faster they dance, and upon the night of the new moon, some dance right up and over the edge of the crater.

Living creatures that walk into the cemetery during the day must make a saving throw against despair or be overcome with feelings of sorrow and loss (halve speed, -2/10% penalty to all actions, refuse all actions including searching for treasure, save to defend oneself; lasts until the victim leaves the crater plus 1d8 hours thereafter). The save must be made every 10 minutes. Living creatures who enter the crater during the night when the undead dance face almost certain death, as they will immediately be accosted by 1d4 each of skeletons, zombies, wights, wraiths, and ghosts, all of which can follow the foolish adventurer even if he flees beyond the fence! However, as long as they remain outside the fence, the undead will not bother viewers or even so much as acknowledge their existence, even if attacked.

Over the millennia, from time to time, the site has been a location for pilgrimage of a sort (currently not, the cemetery’s very existence being all but unknown save to locals). During one of these eras it became traditional to throw in coins and small treasures to appease the dead; thus, every 10 minutes digging a character has a 10% chance of finding something of minor value, roll 2d6: 2 = 1d10 CP, 3 = 1d10 SP, 4 = 1d10 EP, 5 = 1d10 GP, 6 = 5 gp gem, 7 = roll again 1d6 times using a d6, 8 = gem or jewel worth 10 GP, 9 = gem or jewel worth 20 GP, 10 = gem or jewel worth 50 GP, 11 = gem or jewel worth 100 GP, 12 = gem or jewel worth 500 GP.

The lake at the center of the crater is 20 feet deep, though the waters are so dark that the bottom cannot be seen, even at high noon. At the bottom in the very center, buried under six inches of muck, is the fabled Helm of the Heartstones, an ancient relic that grants the wearer the

ability to read minds, speak telepathically at any distance (including across the planes), and speak with the dead, as well as some form of mind control ability. It is a shining silver skullcap with a golden crown around the edge; upon the crown are seven heart-shaped diamonds. The helm is of incalculable value, especially to the Amazons, as it once belonged to a great queen of their ancient homeland.

**OLD VILLA:** This is the site of the old villa of the Styrling Counts. It was razed by the Overlord when the last Count Styrling succored rebels from the Temple of Rash'l in his lands and home; his son, and thus his line, died during the Rebellion of the Temple, and he hated the Overlord with a great passion. Today few stones stand atop one another on the foundation, and the ruins are overgrown with ivy and flowers. The only standing remnants are in the gardens, where statues of a dozen gods stand upon plinths and amidst small ponds; the Overlord let these be, as he did not wish to anger the gods. The hill atop which the ruin stands is covered in grape vines, from which the fine Styrling Wine is made in Styrlinghill. The secrets within the hill, however, are far more interesting, for though the Overlord discovered the cellars and the donjon beneath the villa, he missed the three levels below those, including the hidden shrine of Rash'l. The uppermost dungeon is still used by cultists and rebels from Styrlinghill, and the lower level has been taken over by creatures from the Fens, who discovered a hidden exit several years ago. The middle level is abandoned by both sides, and is home to giant rats and other vermin. The ruins are usually quiet during the day, home only to buzzing bees and hummingbirds, especially in the gardens. At night, though, strange encounters may be had; 2 in 6 chance per night, if an encounter is indicated roll 2d6: 2 = a party of adventurers who have heard rumors of the dungeons, 3 = 1d4 trolls from the fens, 4 = a troll from the Fens, 5 = 1d6 giant rats, 6 = 1d8 drunks from Styrlinghill, 7 = 1d4 children from Styrlinghill on a dare, 8 = star-crossed lovers from Styrlinghill, 9 = 1d12 rebels, 10 = 1d8 cultists, 11 = 1d6+6 cultists, 12 = the Ghost of the Last Count Styrling.

**ROOK'S ROOST:** This ancient bandit citadel, now little more than a circle of tumbled stones atop a small 300-foot tall sheer mesa, is accessible only by worn handholds carved in the bare rock. When it was operative, it had a basket and winch setup, but that is long rotted away. Today the silent ruins usually are home only to ravens and other birds. The Roost has an excellent view of the road to the north and south, with sighting possible all the way north to the Bridge of Sorrows at the River Eorlbane and south to Durgan's Forge (Hag's Point spoiling sighting further south). There is a 1 in 6 chance that the dragon Rhysztyx (see Hag's Pint above) is here during the day, watching for travelers along the Rorystone Road; if here, he is invisible. He is especially studying the Moonrakers and their movements; his father told him that they have an

abiding love for the old Dragon Empire, and that this might be turned to their use. He's gotten a bit too confident in his hidden roost of late, and has left a bit of a mess piled amidst the ruins; there are recent remains of sheep, goats, and even the odd humanoid, all disarticulated from being eaten by a large creature, odd indeed atop this tall, abandoned mesa. One of the bodies belonged to a warrior of Byrny; though his mail hauberk has been torn in pieces, his fine kite shield, long sword, and helm (all of Byrny steel and expert quality) are in good shape. His belt pouch and backpack were apparently lost during his trip to the Roost.

**RORYSTONE ROAD:** This road is ancient, originally built during the early days of the Founders Empire (and even then, built atop an older network of roads). In the millennia since it was first built it has fallen into ruin and been rebuilt a dozen times, most lately by the combined efforts of the City State, Byrny, and Thunderhold. The road is made of large flagstones over a layer of fine concrete, itself over a layer of rough concrete upon a bed of gravel; the lower layers are laid in a deep ditch, with the flagstones generally slightly above ground level. The road itself is eight feet wide, with a foot-wide line of slightly elevated curbstones on each side. The road's center is slightly higher than the edges, and thus it drains easily between the curbstones. To either side of the road are areas graded and flattened, as the road itself is for wagons, not foot traffic; this allows ample space for giving berth and marching abreast. These flat shoulders are each 10 to 40 feet wide, depending on local geography. In more civilized times the land for 100 to 300 feet to either side was cleared of trees and shrubs, but this only obtains today in a few areas, notably the section from the City State to the Bridge of Sorrows, a few areas in Stillring Vale, and near Thunderhold. The road is regularly patrolled by Thunderhold, Byrny, and the City State, though again, only in force near the heart of those realms' domains. In the area around Haghill patrols sent by Huberic and the Overlord overlap, both ranging as far north as the Eorlbane though Huberic's patrols end at the south end of his domain, where the Howling Hills descend into Darkfield Vale. Rangers of the Dearthwood can also be found along the road as far north as Byrny, they being the only irregular patrols that cover the stretch between the Eorlbane and Stillring Vale. The Rangers have patrolled the road since the Orc Wars; while they are there primarily to keep the road free from orcs and bandits, they also offer other aid to distressed travelers, whereas the regular patrols must be bribed for help against any but bandits.

**SINGING CAVERNS:** The Singing Caverns is a series of natural caves in the high northern banks of the Styrling Stream, north and west of Haghill. In olden times, during the age of chaos between the fall of the Dragon Empire and the founding of the City State, the caverns were home to cavemen, goblins, Moonrakers, trolls, dwarves, elves, Altanian tribesmen, bandits, and others, all living in the

shadow of the ancient Tower of Torpid Terror, all of whom left their stamp upon the three levels of tunnels and caverns. The name of the caverns comes from the legend of their most famous occupants, three sister sirens that tempted travelers upon the bridge to dive into the stream and drown; the sirens were said to have been defeated by a paladin of Mitra during the early days of the City State. Today the caverns are empty, or so it is believed, save for animals and vermin. However, the caverns are occupied, by a mixed and conflicting company of goblins, bandits, kobolds, undead, and stranger monsters, as well as animals and vermin. As there are other entrances distant from the hamlet and preferred by the cavern's residents, few in Haghill realize the dangerous population of creatures that reside under their very nose...

**STYRLING STREAM:** This fast-moving deep stream is the unofficial demarcation for the City State between the borderlands and the wilds, though most songs speak of the River Eorlbane seven miles to the north, as there have been more tragic battles upon its banks. Thanks to its swift waters the giant frogs, crocodiles, and alligator gar of the Troll Fens generally do not make it this far west, though some are sighted once in a blue moon. The stream provides some sustenance to the people of Haghill, as there are good numbers of trout in its waters.

**STYRLINGHILL HAMLET:** Styrlinghill was once a bustling, thriving hamlet, for during the rule of the Styrling Counts this was their primary holding, and Haghill a mere thorp in the shadow of the Tower of Torpid Terror. But when Huberic took over he preferred not to live amongst the peoples of Styrlinghill, as many still revered the memory of the deceased Count Styrling and his line, and some were even vocal in their dislike of their new lord. Still, when Huberic moved into the abandoned Tower, spent his wealth building a castle around it, and spent still more of his wealth to bring new settlers to Haghill, the Styrlingfolk were surprised and further angered. They hold a grudge to this day; most of Huberic's loyalists passing through the hamlet to or from the City State do so without a sideward glance, lest they meet the burning eyes of hatred. Whenever the 228 residents (57 able-bodied) get riled up or refuse to pay their taxes, Huberic and his retainers stride in, beat up a few of the peasants – especially any ringleaders – and simply take their tax money and perhaps some punitive fines. Ochcall especially loves to tussle with the Styrlingfolk, so much so that Huberic makes him hand his morning star to a servant and have at the peasants only with a club or cestus, lest he inadvertently kill one of the fools (Huberic generally doesn't want to kill any of the rabble, as it causes even more trouble and is bad for the treasury). As a way to ameliorate the anger of the Styrlingfolk, Huberic has let them appoint their own speaker, a governor of sorts, to deliver the taxes and any requests his people have of their Count (few indeed, at least as could be said to his face). As long as the

taxes come in on time and to the copper, he doesn't care who delivers the cash. **SPEAKER ARLINGON** (Male Alryan human; ALN: LNE; CLS: Bard; LVL: 2; HTK: 10; ARM: Robes; SPD: 12; PSL: General 6 (Bureaucrat); STR 073; INT 163; WIS 134; CON 110; DEX 120; CHA 169; END 106; AGL 063; LED 153; LCK 139; PSY 120; WPN: Dagger; 8 CP, 12 SP, 5 GP) is actually one of the leaders of the local rebel faction, a cultist of Rash'l, and the son of the bastard daughter of the Last Count of Styrling, which by his lights makes him the true ruler of the area. However, he is also wise enough to know that his forces are not remotely powerful enough to overthrow Huberic on their own, especially as the forces of the Overlord would come down on them like a tree trunk in the hands of a giant. Thus he bides his time and works his contacts in the City State, seeking to join his cause with that of the White Lotus, the rebel organization supporting the suppressed Temple of Rash'l and, supposedly, led by the Overlord's brother, the Evil High Priest of Rash'l.

17 of the 47 buildings in the hamlet stand unoccupied; there are another 20 buildings that were burnt to the ground during the rebellion and never rebuilt. Of the surviving population after the battle almost half were sold into slavery as punishment, and of the remainder many left over the years to build a better life elsewhere. Those who remain are mostly freemen, peasants or ruined merchants who have nowhere to go, or who stay in hope of ousting Huberic and rebuilding their lives. All are now farmers; the only business is the tavern, run out of the largest building, a former warehouse. It is simply called **The Warehouse**, and serves a poor local ale and mutton. Travelers are not welcome even there, unless they show dislike of Huberic or the Overlord, in which case their drinks and meals are free as they are surreptitiously pumped for information and proof of their disloyalty. Those who truly hate Huberic or at least the Overlord and seem amenable to the Styrling cause will eventually be approached by the rebels, who seek allies against the Dread Count (as they call Huberic).

**TRAIL TO GAEHILL:** This trail, little more than a wagon rut, wends its way through the Howling Hills to Gaehill. It is unusually well-travelled for a trail in the Wilderlands as it is the most direct route from points west to the City State, via Bulwark. The Overlords of the City State have resisted all mercantile and military pleas to build a Western Road, as any such development would as readily be used against the City State as by it! Thus, all trade to and from the West must be through Gaehill, the much more difficult Twinhorn Pass and the Traitor Barons, or over the Winedark Sea; most Western trade actually occurs on the City State docks. Most travelers on the trail are merchants, hill dwarves, or more rarely, halflings. Most of the merchants are from the City State or Thunderhold, more rarely Byrny, and on very rare occasion from the West, even the Falling Empire of Viridistan! The trail passes through glens and hollows, over hills and through

forests, some so thick the branches of the trees meet overhead like a dungeon corridor. Two-wheeled mule carts get the best speed on the trail, but even the large wagons of the great merchant trains can pass through most of the trail. In areas where there are many trees fallen branches sometimes cause trouble; most are natural, but some are set as traps by bandits and goblins. The trail wends its way across the southern edge of Hex 05: 2220, through a long valley along the vertices of Hexes 05: 2121 and 05:2221, over and between the hills along the southern and southwestern edges of Hex 05: 2121 near the headwaters of the River Eorlbane (there is no bridge or ford at Gaehill), and then parallel along the north bank of the Eorlbane to Gaehill. Every five miles or so is a small settlement, about the same size as that of Durgan's Forge, to provide succor to and to fleece travelers of all stripes.

**TROLL FENS:** This freshwater swamplands is characterized by wide open areas of shallow waters filled with reeds, rushes, sedges, and tall grasses punctuated by stands of willow, cypress, and giant willow, and spotted with deeper pools of water and pits of quicksand. It is a terrible place, thoroughly wild, and home to crocodiles, giant frogs, trolls, giant trolls, and even more monstrous and terrible beasts. Everything eats everything else in the Fens. The only settlement in the Fens is the Village of Woe (Hex 05: 2622), where reside only tough-as-nails fur trappers (beaver and giant beaver) and the guards and prisoners of Fengate. Fengate is a prison reserved for convicts who greatly displeased the Overlord but avoided execution. "Release" from Fengate is itself a death sentence, as the only way a prisoner is allowed to leave Fengate is north or west, alone across the Fens wearing nothing more than a loincloth. Only the meanest, toughest, and stealthiest sorts survive the journey, perhaps one per year. These "Fenmen," when they arrive in Haghill, are usually feted by Huberic, provided they are polite and have an interesting tale to tell. If they please him he gives them a fine set of clothing and 3d6 GP to start their new life; if they do not they are beaten, shackled, tied to a raft, and sent downstream on the Styrling Stream back into the Fens.

**TROLL LAIR A:** This stinking cave is the home of **THREE BACHELOR TROLLS: LLUR, GGRT, and FRRT** (ALN: CEX; HIT: 6; HTK: 34, 31, 30; ARM: Thick rubbery skin; SPD: 12; ATK: 2 Claws (1d6 each); Bite (2d6); Trolls regenerate 3 HTK per combat round; LNG: Troll). These young bachelor trolls were kicked out of their family caves for being messy even by troll standards. Their cave contains three pallets made of uncured beaver and giant beaver skins, gobbets of rotting flesh, seven goblin heads hanging by their knotted hair from stalactites, and the half-rotted corpse of an allosaur that they brought in one day to eat and forgot about when they heard goblins on the "front porch." On rainy days they like to sleep and relax on the wide shelf before their

cave, facing the sky and drinking raindrops; on sunny days they hide deep in their cave. They have no treasure.

**TROLL LAIR B:** This series of seven caverns connected by winding tunnels is home to **THREE TROLLS: GAAR, DRRG, and ZAAAN** (ALN: CEX; HIT: 6; HTK: 32, 31, 23; ARM: Thick rubbery skin; SPD: 12; ATK: 2 Claws (1d6 each); Bite (2d6); Trolls regenerate 3 HTK per combat round; LNG: Troll), their **THREE TROLLWIVES: GRIKKA, LOKKA, and BRIKKA** (ALN: CEX; HIT: 6; HTK: 37, 27, 22; ARM: Thick rubbery skin; SPD: 12; ATK: 2 Claws (1d6 each); Bite (2d6); Trolls regenerate 3 HTK per combat round; Each troll wife can cast one spell, each once per day: Grikka can cast enchant person, Lokka can cast fire protection, and Brikka can cast conjure storm; LNG: Troll, while Lokka alone also speaks Common (Alryan)), and **THREE TROLL WHELPS: ZAKK, NOKKA, and THUDD** (ALN: CEX; HIT: 3; HTK: 21, 19, 14; ARM: Thick rubbery skin; SPD: 12; ATK: 2 Claws (1d3 each); Bite (1d6); Trolls regenerate 3 HTK per combat round; LNG: Troll). [Note that while troll men are hideous to look upon, trollwives are actually quite beautiful and very voluptuous, appearing quite human save for being extremely tall (7'+), green skinned, muscular, clawed and fanged, and given to warts; they also have a three-foot long prehensile tail. All also have some sort of magical ability usable once per day.] The front cavern is an entryway,



where the menfolk sit and talk while eating. Two tunnels branch off of the entryway; one leads to the common cavern, where the whelps run and play on sunny days and the wives chatter, the other leads down to the "larder," a cool cavern with many stalactites and stalagmites, the latter upon which "food" is impaled to keep as needed. Here are found from time to time beavers, giant beavers, crocodiles, goblins, and even a human or three. The useless "shells" are discarded here, and so here can be found dented bits of plate mail, shattered lengths of chain mail, a rusty mail shirt, three pot helms, two daggers, a magical short sword +1, a medium wooden shield, a dented lantern, and lost among a series of stalagmites, a bone scroll case with a scroll of three spells: fire bolt, lightning strike, and flight. Four tunnels lead off from the common chamber; three go to the bedchambers of the couples (Garr and Grikka, Drrg and Lokka, and Zaan and Brikka), while the fourth goes off to the trollwives' witching chamber. Each of the bed chambers contains a large bed of beaver and giant beaver furs and little else. The witching chamber contains a large, dented black cauldron in which the three trollwives mix various fluids trying (unsuccessfully) to see the future. Skulls of past dinners, humanoid and otherwise, line niches in the walls. The floor is littered with coins, as the trollwives like the shiny things underfoot; a total of 2,132 CP, 4,541 SP, and 962 GP line the floor. 15 gems can be found at the bottom of the cauldron, though they can certainly not be seen through the stinking, molding fluids within (7x5, 5x10, 2x50, 100 GP). Crushed crystal on the floor gives evidence to at least three potions that went into the concoction in the cauldron; if the liquid therein is drunk, it acts as a poison (save at +3 or sicken and die in 1d4 days; if the save is made, sickened for 1d4 hours).

**TROLL LAIR C:** This circle of giant willows on the edge of the Fens is home to **THREE TROLLWIVES: BOKKA, TUKKA, AND LOTTA** (ALN: CEX; HIT: 6; HTK: 34, 29, 25; ARM: Thick rubbery skin; SPD: 12; ATK: 2 Claws (1d6 each); Bite (2d6); Trolls regenerate 3 HTK per combat round; Each troll wife can cast one spell, each once per day: Bokka can bestow curse, Tukka can transform others, and Lotta can cast become invisible; LNG: Troll, while Lotta alone also speaks Common (Alryan)) and their **GIANT TROLL MATE, KRAALBAAN** (ALN: CEX; HIT: 12; HTK: 69; ARM: Very thick rubbery skin; SPD: 18; ATK: 2 Claws (2d4 each); Bite (3d6), Stomp (4d4); Giant trolls regenerate 5 HTK per combat round; LNG: Troll and Giant). A great nest at the center of the ring is built from fallen branches and bones; here Kraalbaan sleeps most of the time when he is not out hunting. The inside wall of trees is decorated with his trophies of choice: six bucklers, three small wooden shields, two medium wooden shields, one large wooden shield, four small steel shields (one a +1 magical shield), six medium steel shields (one a +2 magical shield), and two large steel shields. Everything else on his victim's bodies he generally throws into the Fens. Lotta uses her spell to

spy on the hamlet of Styrlinghill and hang out at the gardens in the Old Villa; she likes the smell of Styrlingfolk children, and is considering kidnapping one for a meal sometime soon. She is Kraalbaan's favorite, as the ring of golden lilies she wears as a crown indicates, so woe shall fall to any who harm her! The trolls from Lair B might also get involved, as Lotta is Lokka's beloved sister. Ω

# E<sup>du</sup>cation of a Magic-User:

Part the second: Spell Deployment



# Eldorado

Gaily bedight,  
A gallant knight,  
In sunshine and in shadow,  
Had journeyed long,  
Singing a song,  
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old —  
This knight so bold —  
And o'er his heart a shadow  
Fell, as he found  
No spot of ground  
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength  
Failed him at length,  
He met a pilgrim shadow —  
'Shadow,' said he,  
'Where can it be —  
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains  
Of the Moon,  
Down the Valley of the Shadow,  
Ride, boldly ride,'  
The shade replied, —  
'If you seek for Eldorado!'

- Edgar A. Poe



**"DAGNABBIT, WOMAN!  
HOW MANY TIMES I GOTTA TELL YA?!  
THEY ALREADY GOT A GNOLL  
IN THE MONSTER MANUAL!"**

# Not so Smart Adventurers

by Tim Shorts



# READY REF SHEETS

## Death's Door (1d6)

Roll when a PC or major NPC is reduced to 0 or fewer wound points. Optional +1 for firsties. – Jeff Rients

Roll	Result
1	<b>Dead as a doornail.</b> Roll 3d6 six times...
2	<b>Mostly dead</b> (as per <i>Princess Bride</i> ). Character unconscious until roused by magical healing, after which -4 to all to-hits and saves for d12 days.
3	<b>Major Wound.</b> Unconscious d6 turns. Total debilitation for d6 months unless Major Healing magic applied. Lose 1 point from random attribute.
4	<b>Heavy Bleeding.</b> Roll to Survive Adversity each round until given first aid or dead. If actions more strenuous than whispering are taken roll twice. 01-05 on the Survive Roll indicates bleeding has stopped on its own, but 96-00 always indicates death.
5	<b>Knocked Out.</b> Awaken d6 turns later at 1 wound point. All attacks and saves at -2 until d6 turns rest.
6	<b>Close Call.</b> Your life flashes before your eyes, but you are still at 1 wound point.

## Random Reincarnation/Polymorph (d100)

Consult subtables as appropriate – Max Davenport

Natural	Arcane	Creature Type
01-03		Centaur
04		Elemental (roll d4 or d100 for type)
05-06		Dryad, Naiad, or Oread (d3)
07-08		Satyr
09		Sprite (d6: Brownie, Leprechaun, Pixie, Nixie, Sylph, or Sprite)
10		Treeman
11-13		Badger
14-16	01-03	Bat
17-19		Bear

20-22		Boar
	04-06	Cat
23-25	07-09	Crow or Raven
26-28		Deer
	10-12	Dog
29-31		Fox
	13-15	Goat
32-34		Hawk or Eagle (d2)
35-37	16-18	Mouse
38-40	19-21	Owl
41-43	22-24	Rat
44-46	25-27	Snake, Lizard or Turtle (d3)
47-49		Songbird
50-52		Squirrel
53-55	28-30	Stoat
56-58	31-33	Toad or Frog
59-61		Wildcat (d6: Bobcat, Jaguar, Lynx, Lion, Panther, Tiger)
62-64		Wolf
65-69	34-38	Dwarf
70-74	39-43	Elf
	44-45	Giant (d100: 01-15 Two-Headed 16-45 Runt 46-65 Rock 66-85 Ice 86-00 Fire)
	46-49	Gnole
75-79	50-54	Gnome
80-82	55-58	Goblin
	59-61	Goblin, Pumpkin-Headed
83-87	62-66	Halfling

	67-70	Hobgoblin
88-92	71-75	Human
	76-79	Kobold
93-95	80-83	Lizard man
	84-86	Ogre (mage if character was)
96-98	87-90	Orc
	91-94	Troglodyte
	95-97	Troll
99	98-99	Beast subtable
00	00	Fluke subtable

92-95	Sphinx
96-00	Unicorn

### Fluke Subtable (d100)

01-10	Abomination (d100: 01-20 Giant Insect/Worm 21-40 Ooze, Slime or Jelly 41-60 Shadow 61-80 Fungus Creature 81-100 Swarm of Vermin)
11-24	Alternate Self (Past, future or alternate self reborn in same body. Memory of pre-death character lost; assign or roll background, personality and alignment.)
25-38	Doppelganger (roll again for apparent form)
39-52	Lycanthrope (Roll again on main table to determine both humanoid and animal forms)
53-62	Magic Jar (Reborn in body of person who cast the reincarnation/polymorph! The spellcaster's soul is forced into his or her familiar, spellbook, staff, or similar unless a save v. spells is made. If the save is made the reincarnation fails entirely.)
63-76	Mongrel (roll 2-5 times on main table and combine, ignoring further rolls of 00)
77-90	Mutant (roll randomly, ideally using charts from a post-apocalyptic RPG)
91-99	Possession (Roll again on main table for new body. Spell succeeds but reincarnated body is possessed by demon, djinn, ghost, or similar. If exorcised the character's personality returns.)
00	Vile Spawn (character comes back as Fiend of the Pit, Balrukh, or similar creature of great evil.)

### Beast Subtable (d100)

01-05	Basilisk
06-09	Chimera
10-14	Cockatrice
15-19	Cyclops
20-22	Dragon (roll type)
23-28	Gargoyle
29-34	Griffon
35-39	Harpy
40-45	Hippogriff
46-49	Hydra (5-12 heads)
50-51	Quilin
52-55	Lamia
56-61	Leucrotta
62-67	Manticore
68-73	Minotaur
74-79	Owlbear
80-85	Pegasus
86-91	Peryton

Especially for *Empire of the Petal Throne*, FO! presents:

**The Table of Despair** (roll a ten-sided polyhedron and weep, mortal.) – Aaron Somerville  
*Lachrymose Catalogue of Results:*

1-4	Thy flesh is consumed by underworld denizens!
5	Thou art lost to time and space.
6-8	Naked and bereft dost thou escape the nightmare below.
9-10	Thou emergest unscathed!





### NPC Parties Met in a Dungeon (1d6)

1	They're trying to get out, having found the dungeon too dangerous. They have already lost d4-1 party members. For each missing member, roll d6: 1-3 killed, 4-5 captured, 6 missing. Roll 1d6 for their mission: 1-2 entered by mistake, 3-4 looking for an item, 5-6 questing against monsters. Roll 1d6 a third time to see if they're being pursued currently: on a 1-2 they are.
2	They live in the dungeon. d6: 1-2 bandits, 3-4 refugees, 5-6 they live with the dungeon creatures.
3	Bait - they're working with monsters to lure heroes into a trap or ambush. d6: 1-2 working willingly with the creatures, 3-4 forced into it unwillingly, 5-6 their will has been altered (e.g. by magic).
4	Escaped prisoners - roll on 'Prisoners of Evil' below.
5	They're looking for a friend who has been captured by creatures in the dungeon. Roll on 'Prisoners of Evil' to determine who their friend is (they may not be truthful about this with the heroes).
6	They're doing exactly what the heroes are doing, or as close to it as possible.

### Prisoners of Evil (1d12)

1	Taken for ransom. d6: 1-2 merchant, 3-4 noble, 5-6 priest or shaman.
2	Came here to study their craft but fell afoul of the inhabitants. d6: 1-3 assassin, 4-6 necromancer.
3	A sick and weakened warrior, the only survivor of an assault on the place.

4	A thief who sought to make his or her reputation by stealing from this well-known den of evil.
5	A berserker of the same people as the owners of the prison. He or she is kept captive and only let out for battle, and begs the PCs to help with escape.
6	A farmer, captured in a raid and worked half to death as a slave.
7	Someone in their dotage, who has been kept captive so long they can't remember who they were or how they were captured.
8	An illusionist, who has stayed alive by using his or her art to entertain the jailers (d6: 1-3 uses magical illusions 4-6 uses tricks like real world 'magicians').
9	A priest of a benign deity. His or her captors have already ritually prepared him or her for sacrifice.
10	A good member of the evil community/jailing race who rebelled against its rulers.
11	Roll again, ignoring this result or the one below, but the prisoner is dead. Then roll d6: 1 they have written their story on paper which is on their corpse, 2 as 1 but paper is hidden in the cell, 3-6 no record or clue can be found.
12	Roll again, ignoring this result or the one above. The prisoner pretends to be whatever result is rolled. Then roll d6: 1-3 they're actually working for the rulers of the place, 4-6 they really are a prisoner, but lie about how they got here for some reason.



# Dungeon Detritus

By David "Greyharp" Macauley

The monsters are slain! It's time to search the bodies and the room. "What do we find?" Here are some fleshed-out ideas for the GM to sprinkle about his dungeon. Items useful and useless, magical and mundane, but mostly, items that may just get the players thinking, one way or another. Read through the list and pick out whatever takes your fancy, or randomly roll d100 and let luck decide.

**1-2.** A goblin skull with the name "Grrsh-uk Krr" engraved on its forehead. It is a magical amulet, which if held forth while speaking the name will cause all creatures with Intelligence 2+ viewing the skull to be momentarily frozen to the spot in sheer terror. The power of the amulet may be invoked only once every lunar month.

**3-4.** A piece of animal hide, on which the following message is written in orcish: "will trade 3 human prisoners for that traitorous dog Ooguk the Maimed."

**5-6.** A plain dagger. Close examination will reveal that the pommel unscrews. Contained within the handle are 175 gc worth of gems, wrapped in a piece of cloth.

**7-8.** A single knee-high boot with a cleverly concealed pocket, concealing 3 gc and a small iron key.

**9-10.** A hollow, wooden, capped tube containing a knife, a spoon and a 2-pronged fork.

**11-12.** A long bone that has been carved into a shoe horn at one end and a back-scratcher the other. It has the word "Terren" engraved on its length.

**13-14.** A small sack containing a dozen nauseatingly foul and stained loin cloths, obviously some humanoid's dirty laundry. On one is drawn a crude map of the surrounding area (dungeon or wilderness, DM's discretion).

**15-16.** A pair of bone dice. The first has a skull on five faces and a single dot on the sixth; the second is similar, but with crowns instead of skulls.

**17-18.** A quiver containing 17 arrows. Close and careful examination will reveal all the arrows are slightly warped, giving a -4 penalty "to hit" when used.

**19-20.** A small ivory box, on the lid of which is engraved a scene showing a Magic-user battling some small humanoids. The box contains three small, buff-colored books, written in some indecipherable tongue. Its purpose can only be guessed at.

**21-22.** A wide-brimmed hat, several sizes too big for any of the party to wear.

**23-24.** A cleverly constructed stone jar with a screw-top stone lid. It contains a small piece of wood, a needle and a small lodestone. If water is added to the jar, the needle placed on the piece of wood and floated on the water, the sharp end of the needle will point north. With the lid on, the jar looks very much like a rock.

**25-26.** Rattling around the inside of a human skull is a small red tear drop-shaped gem worth 20 gc. If touched by a human, it immediately flies straight up their nose. The victim will scream "it's drilling into my brain" while thrashing around on the floor, shortly thereafter losing consciousness and half their current wound points. Some time after awakening they will discover they now have permanent infravision.

**27-28.** A garnet-studded platinum toothpick worth 40 gc.

**29-30.** A cleverly constructed, folding wooden stool, which stands 1 foot high when open.

**31-32.** A bone musical whistle, covered with exquisite carvings of twining ivy. Sadly, it plays out of tune.

**33-34.** The upper half of an orc corpse, still clutching its sword and shield, with a leather bag containing 200 gc around its neck. Written on a piece of hide included with the money is a message written in orcish using what looks like blood for ink. It says: "You have until moonset tomorrow or your chief will lose what little blood he has left".

**35-36.** A copper 4-pint pot with bronze decoration. It has two handles, each in the shape of a rearing dragon. It leaks.

**37-38.** A waterproof canvas roll holding 6 parchment sheets and pockets holding writing implements and glass vials of red and black ink. It is inscribed "Belfur Grensby".

**39-40.** A necklace of human, demi-human, and humanoid teeth. Engraved on each tooth is a single letter. The whole thing spells out the words "the God's healing" in the language of bugbears. It has no powers.

**41-42.** A small wooden two-note whistle, carved in the shape of a small bird.

**43-44.** A cloak made of raven's feathers that will show a magical aura if detected for but has no actual powers.

**45-46.** A pouch of dried aromatic herbs, which will induce sleep if burnt and the fumes inhaled. There is enough in the pouch to easily fill a 20' x 20' x 10' room with smoke.

**47-48.** The 2 foot stub of what appears to be a Mage's crystal-tipped staff, burnt on one end. A read magic spell will enable a Mage to know the trigger word engraved on the shaft. Each time an attempt is made to use the "staff", the DM must roll a d6. On a roll of 1, all creatures looking towards the staff are blinded by a flash of light for 2 rounds. Nothing happens on a roll of 2 – 5 except for a few sparks, but on a roll of 6, a cloud of choking smoke bursts forth, causing all within 10 feet (including the wielder), to become helpless due to violent coughing.

**49-50.** A small bark container holding 27 dried lizard's tails and a green glass marble.

**51-52.** A tiny cage made of twigs and leather thongs, containing a large beetle. If the cage is handled, the beetle will spray that person with a hideously foul smelling liquid. The smell will repulse most creatures (and fellow adventurers) for around 3 days, resisting all efforts to wash it off.

**53-54.** An alabaster egg, hinged in the middle, which opens to reveal a finely painted miniature portrait on the right side and an inscription on the left. The portrait is of a round-faced, balding old gent with a goatee and dark eyebrows, who has the hint of a smile and a mischievous twinkle in his eyes. The inscription reads "Remembered always. With heartfelt gratitude".

**55-56.** A small leather pouch containing 26 small, round, black pellets. Crudely embroidered on the front of the pouch is the following phrase in goblin "all-heal berries". Anyone who comes from a rural background will recognize the berries for what they are – goat droppings!

**57-58.** A collection of rusty, handle-less, blunt knife blades tied together with a leather thong, one of which has a symbol representing lightning engraved on its length.



**59-60.** A small coffer holding 12 tiny wood-carved hands.

**61-62.** A map of a nearby location (DM's choice) indicates a secret door, behind which, according to the map, is a treasure room. Neither door nor treasure room exist.

**63-64.** A large wooden wheelbarrow with a squeaky wheel.

**65-66.** A wooden walking stick with a removable handle, concealing a stiletto. Poorly made, every time it is used there is a 4 in 6 chance that the blade will snap.

**67-68.** A small book of everyday phrases translated into Bugbear. Unfortunately the translations are incorrect and the bugbear phrases are actually unforgivable insults.

**69-70.** A jar of what appears to be nine eyeballs in water. They are, in fact, semi-precious gems worth 10 gold pieces each, but together worth 150 gp to a collector.

**71-72.** A plain looking dagger encased in a solid cube of one foot square, amber-colored glass. There is nothing special about either the dagger or the glass.

**73-74.** A pair of bulky leather mittens lined with lamb's wool. They give the wearer a +4 saving throw vs. cold and cold-based attacks, reduce cold damage by 2 points of damage per die, and are so bulky that using missile weapons is impossible.

**75-76.** A plain iron ring, which when worn will cause any knife or sword held in the same hand to become a +1 magical weapon. Unfortunately, any such weapon will be impossible to release until the curse is removed, after which the weapon can be released (and loses its magic).

**77-78.** A heart-shaped, red, polished stone of no monetary value, which absorbs up to 20 points of damage taken by the bearer, growing progressively darker as it does so. Once it has absorbed 20 points of damage, the stone becomes black and lifeless, having lost its magic.

**79-80.** The recently deceased body of a well-dressed man, next to which is an open and empty lead-encased coffer. In the man's pocket is a note reading "I shall bring the object three nights hence in exchange for 10,000 gold coins. I have enclosed it in a lead coffer, as per your instructions, to hide its powerful magic." The object is gone.

**81-82.** A hollowed-out book inside which is a piece of parchment, folded into a small envelope. Written on the outside of the envelope in Dwarven runes, is the following: "For health and vitality take one measure three times daily with food". If unfolded without care, the contents – a turquoise-colored powder - will be spilt. The powder is both useless and harmless.

**83-84.** A jar containing a three-inch high figure of a terrified elf, suspended in a viscous amber fluid. The fluid is honey and the figure is intricate and finely painted.

**85-86.** A small bronze pig with a slot in its back and a small hatch on its belly. Engraved on the side is:

If you feed me copper then  
In the morn there will be 10  
In a year no more than 4  
Lest I stop and work no more

If between one and nine copper coins are placed into the pig, by the following sunrise there will be 10 cc inside. This will work only four times a calendar year. If a fifth time is attempted, the pig will never again work.

**87-88.** A small silver amulet of a bee. On the bee's stomach is a tiny dial marked from zero to ten. If the dial is turned to a number, it will slowly rotate back to its starting position of zero, vibrating briefly and inaudibly as it passes each number – once every minute. This was used by a Mage to keep track of the length of his spells.

**89-90.** A bundle of (18) sticks, carved with unreadable runes and polished to a bright finish. They are wrapped in a square of red silk, which in turn is wrapped in a roll of canvas. They have no powers.

**91-92.** A small wooden case containing ten crudely carved dwarves and a wooden ball.

**93-94.** A stone with a hole in it, threaded onto a leather thong. Looking through the hole will enable the bearer to see anything invisible under a moonlit sky.

**95-96.** A small metal box, 8 inches square, containing charred pieces of wood that can't be removed. If the wood is set alight, it will soon become apparent that it doesn't burn, even though a flame is given off. Shutting the lid extinguishes the fire. The box itself does not get hot.

**97-98.** A black, scarf-like piece of material, with what looks like two eye-holes cut into it. If worn like a mask, the wearer will be able to detect traps and snares, which to him will appear to glow red. The mask does not grant the wearer automatic knowledge of how to disable said traps. Each time the mask is used, there is a 2% cumulative chance the mask will fail to correctly show a trap.

**99-00.** A small silver flask, engraved with an ode to the moon in elvish script. It contains a fine quality spirit and is worth 85 gc. Ω

## The Darkness Beneath, Level 3: Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men

contest-winning adventure by David Bowman

*The Darkness Beneath is Fight On!'s community megadungeon. Level 1 appeared in issue #2; Level 2 will appear in issue #4. David submitted this some time back and was encouraged to enter it in our adventure contest (p. 28); it got two 2<sup>nd</sup> place votes, one 3<sup>rd</sup> place vote, and one 4<sup>th</sup> place vote from the judges, of whom only I knew about the context. As the best overall showing by any submission, this won 1<sup>st</sup> prize. Congratulations, David! - Ignatius*

**Introduction:** Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men is an adventure module designed for a party of 3<sup>rd</sup> level characters. It was written as the third level of *The Darkness Beneath*, but it can also be used as a standalone adventure, or incorporated into a GM's own dungeons. Statistics for the new monsters herein are found at the end.

**Background:** The particular region of the mystical underworld detailed within this adventure has a past shrouded in mystery and uncertainty. It is left to the referee, should he so desire, to fill in the historical gaps presented in this module. What is known is that at some time a dungeon complex was constructed in the very stone which surrounds the river and caves of this area. Currently, the dungeon is inhabited by a savage cult of demon-worshipping Cavemen, The Tribe of the Claw. Chaotic and violent, these Cavemen follow simple rules which have allowed them to survive in the deadly environment which they call home. Worship of the Crab Demon Garaskis has brought them protection and longevity, and a life of blood and pain. While the actual family units of the tribe are not within this dungeon, enterprising referees might take it upon themselves to detail methods by which players could venture beyond the confines of this adventure to seek out these Cavemen. Here, in *The Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men*, the player characters will encounter those Cavemen charged with protecting the sacred caves and their crab inhabitants. The tribe is aware that, from time to time, Men of Light and enemies of Garaskis will intrude upon their sacred caves. The Tribe of the Claw has been battling the insidious Troglydites from distant caves here in *The Darkness Beneath* for generations.

These Cavemen have perfected the use of the materials at their disposal; stone, discarded crab shell, and occasional animal pelts from various underworld predators. The Tribe of the Claw makes frequent, dangerous journeys to the Molting Cave to gather the discarded carapaces of the Large and Mature Crabs. Lengths of carefully splintered shell are sharpened into rudimentary daggers and swords, choice pincer claws are fashioned into heavy clubs, and

considers the tools and weapons of their enemies taboo. Such devices are normally simply left where they fall, or removed and deposited in some out-of-the-way location. The tribe subsists on the various fish within the underworld, specifically the Glow Scales.

Such is their devotion to Garaskis that they truly believe he and his crab children will provide for all of their needs. These Cavemen consider crabs of all kinds to be sacred. It is an honorable death to be devoured by the Children of Garaskis, whether through accident or sacrifice. The term Crab-Men is used to describe the various incarnations of those members of The Tribe of the Claw who are following a ritualistic path of black magic fueled by their worship of Garaskis, the Crab Demon. Through ceremonial sacrifice, the Tribe gathers together and channels their collective conviction into this rite. Using crude incantations and shamanistic magic, the Tribe of the Claw can cause one of their Chosen members to undergo a 2-3 year long metamorphosis of dark, unholy proportions. Once the foul process has been successfully performed, the Chosen member of the tribe enters the earliest stage of the metamorphosis. There are three distinct stages of this transformation, but the entire process is marked by gradual change. These three stages are, specifically; Transformed, Mature and Elder. In game terms, the Crab-Men are those foul denizens at the Transformed stage. Soldier Crabs and Giant Crabs are those monsters at the Mature stage. Great Crabs are at the final, Elder stage of the process. Seskiima is the sole Great Crab within the Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men. The Great Crab spawns the Scavenging Crab and Large Crab Children of Garaskis. While the Tribe of the Claw and the Crab-Men encountered here are not the only inhabitants of the dungeon, they are the defining theme of Spawning Grounds of the Crab-Men.

**Features:** Ceilings in this level vary wildly in height. The natural limestone caves and tunnels typically have a ceiling height equal to their width. The block and brick dungeon areas normally have a ceiling height of 10'. This dungeon level is roughly divided into six regions. These are the **Winding River**, the **Shrine of the Claw**, the **Crab-Men Tunnels**, **Seskiima's Den**, **Quimlin's Manse**, and the **Forgotten Rooms**. Some minor details for these regions are included for the referee at the beginning of each section. All of the natural caves upon this level are substantially covered with lichen, mold and fungi. Of particular note are the unique Dim Shrooms which grow in clusters upon the walls, ceilings and floors in various parts of the caves, even under the waters of the Winding River, giving the entire place an eerie glow of faint blue luminescence. Both the Tribe of the Claw and Quimlin value this fungus and harvest it in order to make crude, but functional lighting within their halls. These Dim Shrooms range from 3" to 18" in size, and grow in clusters of 3d6. Each will glow for 4 or 5 days after being harvested. The light they emit is no more than the faintest glow, but it is

enough to see moving objects from a distance of 30' when enough of the mushrooms are collected together.

**Named Monsters** and where to find their descriptions: **Old Bae** (area 2), **Crazy Clonk** (area 11), **Grand High Shaman of the Claw** (area 7), **Seskiima** (area 24), **Metheled** (area 41), **Quimlin's Eyes** (area 44), **The Thing From Beyond!** (area 48), **Quimlin** (area 49).

**Wandering Monsters and Random Events:** Every twenty minutes in the dungeon, the referee should check for Wandering Monsters on 1d6. A roll of 6 indicates an encounter, and the referee may roll or choose from the list. *Quimlin's forces (Speci-Men and Metheled) have orders to subdue and abduct Humans. They will attempt to slay other targets first and then knock out or overpower Humans and return them to room 47, in order that Quimlin might add to his Speci-Men army.*

**Wandering Monsters (d10):**

1. **Troglodytes:** 1d4+2.
2. **Tribe of the Claw:** 3 Cavemen and 2 Crab-Men.
3. **Soldier Crabs:** 1d3.
4. **Scavenging Crabs:** Pack of 1d6+4.
5. **Large Crabs:** 1d3.
7. **Lab Rats:** 1d6+8.
8. **Speci-Men:** 2d4.
- 9-10. **Special,** roll below

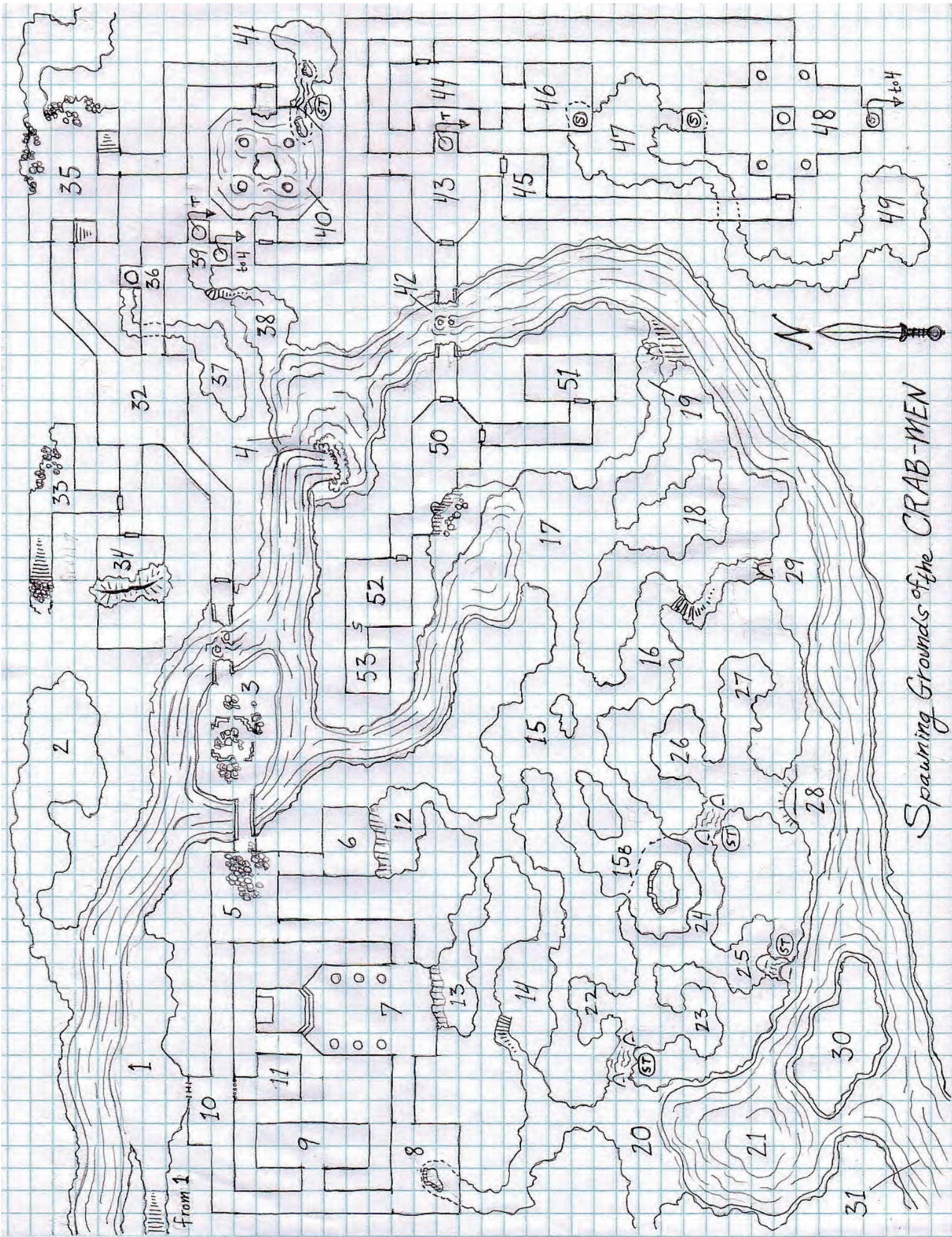
**Special (d6):**

1. **Adventurers:** Other delvers have been encountered. Whether they are cooperative or hostile is up to the GM.
2. **Metheled:** The gargoyle is watching or hunting the PCs.
3. **Quimlin's Eyes:** This spirit has found the party, and is watching them while sending mental images to Quimlin.
4. **The Thing From Beyond!:** This somewhat benign being will attempt to communicate his plight.
5. **Quimlin:** This alien parasite posing as a boy will pretend to be lost or helpless if encountered roaming the halls.
6. **Event,** roll below.

**Events (d6):**

1. **Melee:** The party happens across a battle in progress.
2. **Ritual:** The Tribe of the Claw has gathered to conduct a ritual in area 7.
3. **Experiment:** Quimlin is conducting research in area 47, normally with a handful of Speci-Men guinea pigs.
4. **Hatching:** Children of Garaskis are hatching from their eggs in areas 26 and 27, and Seskiima is overseeing, along with the three proud Seskiima-Mate Giant Crabs.
- 5-6. **Troglodyte Raid:** A large force of Troglodytes from the caves above has assembled in order to deal a decisive blow to their long time enemies: 12 Troglodytes, 4 Iguana-Mounted Troglo-Knights, and 10 Leaping Lizards.

**The Winding River (areas 1-4)** flows calmly from the northwest, winding its way across the level until it exits through the southwest. The stretches of the river between



*Spawning Grounds of the CRAB-MEN*

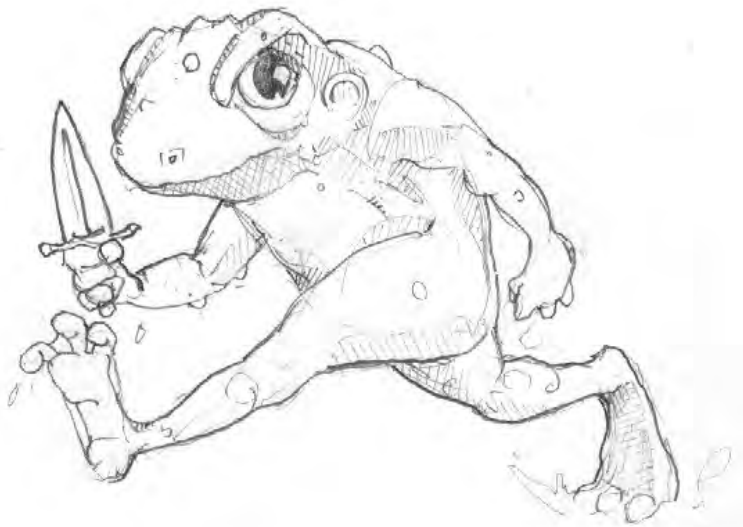
areas 3 and 4 and between areas 30 and 31 are the only parts with a strong current. For the most part, the river ranges in depth from 10' to 15', and is deepest (30') at the pool in area 21. The entire river is illuminated by an eerie blue glow. Shell canoes are the standard vessels on these subterranean waters. In general these are easy to pilot except in the areas of strong current mentioned above.

**1. Entrance.** Entering from the west, adventurers will see an eerie dim blue luminescence and hear the faint sound of the Winding River in the tunnels ahead. The north side of this cave allows access to the river. Hidden in the dark recesses of the south wall is a pair of window slits, 12' up. These slits are but 1' wide and 3' high. They are used by lookouts from **10**. There is a 2 in 6 chance of being spotted by the not-so-vigilant lookouts, adjusted by time spent in this area, size of the party, and noise created before moving on, as judged by the referee. If spotted, the lookouts will make sure that the guards posted in **5** are prepared. Along the north side of this area, on the ground near the river, are six huge upturned crab shells, about 8' long from tip to tip. Each of these crude shell canoes has been whittled by stone and can seat up to three men. Within each shell canoe is a pair of paddles made of worked crab shell, tethered to the tip of the shell by a long strip of plaited trog hide. The north bank of the river opens up as well, and a tunnel can be seen beyond.

**2. Old Bae's Cave.** Piles of empty crab shells, broken claws, and splintered remains from crabs of all sizes are piled high at the narrowest point of the tunnel. The stench from the fetid remains is strong, and flies buzz about the mass of crustacean scraps. Old Bae has placed this here as a means to warn of approaching intruders. Old Bae has only a 1 in 12 chance of being surprised due to this precaution. After passing the pile of refuse, the strong scent of butter is almost palpable in the air. Unless surprised, Old Bae will bellow out a roaring greeting to the intruders before they can enter his lair in the easternmost section of this cave. Old Bae is an elderly, haggard Hill Giant who has retreated to these caves in his waning years in order to satisfy his ceaseless cravings for hot buttered crab meat. 12' tall and menacing despite his advanced years, Old Bae sees all who enter his cave as potential crabbers, but will not hesitate to bring down his fury upon the foolhardy who might challenge his might. Old Bae's lair contains three giant bear skins, two large cooking pots suspended over firing pits, a massive stack of fire wood, four casks of sweet butter, two barrels of foul smelling mead, and various giant-sized utensils. Boulders are arranged around his lair for sitting and entertaining. Hidden behind the southernmost boulder is a pair of large wooden chests holding 4,200 silver coins and 3,200 gold coins. Old Bae carries *Shellcracker*, a large *War Hammer*, +1 which he uses to open stubborn shells. While *Shellcracker* is relatively small for his stature, Old Bae can still wield it to great effect, knowing full well its power. If parleyed with, Old

Bae seeks to buy fresh crabmeat. He will pay 2 gold each for Scavenging Crabs and 8 gold each for Large Crabs, but the rest he claims to be too tough. If an enterprising party manages to earn 50 or more gold by delivering such delights to the Giant, he will offer some information about this level of the dungeon, including basic information about both Seskiima and Quimlin. **Old Bae (Hill Giant):** wp 28, +1 to hit and damage from *Shellcracker*.

**3. Sentinel Isle.** This area is a large stone island which divides the Winding River into two separate channels. Just past this island the sound of rushing water can be heard echoing in the tunnels, and the current begins to increase in strength. Any shell canoe continuing past this area to within 50' of the waterfall to the east will likely be swept along in the current and drawn directly into **4**. This area has a pair of arched stone spans, one to the east and one to the west, which lead up over the river and into tunnels cut into the stone overhead. The west span is intact, while the east span is shattered and in ruin. Quimlin ordered the bridge dismantled as a defensive precaution when he first wrested control of the eastern portion of the dungeon. At the center of the island lie huge stone blocks, the ruins of some sort of defensive structure, long since toppled. Along the north bank of the island are three shell canoes. There is a chance (see Quimlin's Manse section) that the Gargoyle Metheled or Quimlin's Eyes are nearby. The island is currently being used by a group of crabbing Troglodytes. They have set up a camp along the eastern shore of the island. A burlap sack holds nine dead Scavenging Crabs. **Troglodytes:** wp 7, 5, 3, 7, 2, 2.



**4. Waterfall.** The Winding River drops 20' here down to a large 15' deep pool. Adventurers riding in a shell canoe will likely be thrown from their craft, and those in armor may drown. All items in hand have a chance to fall in the pool. Empty shell canoes have a 5 in 6 chance of slowly drifting to the edge of **38**, others will end up drifting farther downstream to the south. To the northeast of the pool is a cave opening. (Also see **19, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 38 and 42**.)

**The Shrine of the Claw (areas 5-11)** is that portion of the ancient brick and block dungeon which is now inhabited by the Tribe of the Claw. It is the location from which they protect their sanctum sanctorum, the Shrine of Garaskis. The flooring here is normally slippery and dank, constructed of well-worn slate, cracked, broken and upturned in areas. It is treacherous footing, like most of the areas in this dungeon. Anyone taking flight will run the risk of losing balance (GM adjudication). The cavemen have placed vessels housing collected and crushed Dim Shrooms to provide lighting at regular intervals.

**5. Blockade.** This room serves as the Tribe of the Claw's guard post. The entire area immediately around the door to the east is choked with collected stones, allowing a narrow passage through the blockade. If the guards posted here were alerted to the possibility of intruders, they will not be surprised, and will be prepared to push stones into the passage and leap down onto the adventurers, gaining the advantage of surprise. Otherwise, no such defense will be employed and surprise will be rolled as normal. The guards posted here are five cavemen, wielding long sharp shell daggers and crab shields. **Cavemen:** wp 8, 8, 6, 5, 3.

**6. Glow Scale Gutting Room.** The cavemen clean and prepare caught Glow Scales here, creating quite a reek. Refuse is tossed over the ledge to **12**. There is a pair of cavemen here, with long shell daggers and shields nearby. **Cavemen:** wp 5, 5.

**7. Shrine of Garaskis.** A sickly green glow floods this room and emanates out into the adjacent halls. Indecipherable chanting can normally be heard when approaching this area. The floor and walls of this chamber depict massive, menacing crabs conquering the civilized world. The Tribe of the Claw has found that mixing crushed Dim Shrooms and Glow Scale bile produces a thick, luminescent paint-like concoction which will glow sickly green for up to a full week. When not performing rituals to honor the Crab Demon Garaskis, the cavemen here are normally mixing this paint or else painting the walls in a ceremonial nature while uttering prayers to Garaskis in a low chant. The raised north end of the Shrine has an ancient, unrecognizable defaced altar of some forgotten deity. Set upon this low stone block is an enormous crab shell, painted in glowing intricate designs. On the floor before this massive shell is a pair of great crab claws, likewise painted and glowing green. These unholy devices are used by the Tribe of the Claw for their most revered ritual which begins the transformation of their chosen members into giant crabs, which requires a sacrifice to initiate. The Tribe of the Claw views all intruders as potential sacrificial victims. Of the 12 cavemen within this room, 7 are occupied with mixing and painting, 4 are steadfastly guarding the altar, and one, the Grand High Shaman, is crouched before the altar, deep in prayer. If the massive shell is lifted, it reveals a large pile of treasure piled upon the stone block: 1,200 sc, 900 gc, 8

gems (gc 2x10, 2x50, 4x100), an ornate gold necklace and pendant (gc 1,000), a quiver of two dozen *Magic Arrows*, and a *Scroll which Protects from Undead*. The guards are armed with long dagger and shield, while the chanters have weapons nearby. The Grand High Shaman requires a full round to stop praying and defend the Shrine with his claw arm. The referee should play up the bizarre lighting and shadows within the Shrine, as well as the menacing, glowing giant shell and low chanting. The Shaman himself has no spells other than his demonic rituals (which have no effect in melee), but this caveman leader is a violent combatant. None of the cavemen defending the Shrine need ever check morale, and will fight to the death to protect their holy of holies. **Cavemen:** wp 11, 10, 8, 6, 8, 8, 9, 10, 6, 5, 7. **Grand High Shaman of the Claw:** DC 6, Speed 9, WD 4, wp 14, crude ceremonial shell armor, sharpened crafted crab claw fitted onto his right arm.

**8. Scavenged Shells.** This room is littered with splintered shells and crab carapaces of all sizes. Stone tools are lying about, used to fashion the various arms used by the Tribe. A pair of cavemen is here working on breaking and sharpening the shells. A hole in the floor leads to a 15' deep shaft down to the **Crab-Men Tunnels**. Crude handholds have been carved into the wall of the shaft. **Cavemen:** wp 6, 8.

**9. Skinning Room.** This room is the area where slain troglodytes are brought so that their hides may be stripped and made into crude leather, and it is also where captured men of light are held prior to sacrifice in **7**. The floor of this room is coated in dried blood of a particularly dark, almost black, color. The air reeks of blood and decay. Currently, there are six flayed troglodyte corpses dangling from pegs set into the east wall. These will be taken to **6** and pitched down into the Crab-Men Tunnels eventually. Various skinning tools crafted from crabshell are on the floor, including a pair of very sharp dagger-like weapons which have been so hardened in troglodyte blood that they are both effectively standard daggers. These weigh ½ lb. each and will fetch 20 gold from an outfitter.

**10: Lookout Post:** A pair of not so vigilant Cavemen is posted here at all times (see **1**). It is their duty to watch for intruders through the windows which look out over **1**, and to release Crazy Clonk, the Malformed Chosen One, from **11** if under serious threat, or whenever Methled threatens their region of the dungeon. **Cavemen:** HP: 6, 6.

**11: Crazy Clonk, the Malformed Chosen One:** A heavy iron gate blocks entry to this cell. An old iron lever, set into the western wall, operates this barely functional mechanism. The guards in **10** will open the cell to free its inhabitant only if seriously threatened, for getting Crazy Clonk back into his cell is a difficult undertaking. Crazy Clonk is a horribly misshapen Crab-Man, formerly one of the Tribe's most promising Chosen members. Over a year



ago, Clonk broke taboo and picked up a glowing sword from some slain men of light. The sword caused Clonk to become a raving lunatic. Perhaps as punishment, Clonk has had his form ravaged in an unexpected manner during the course of his crab-metamorphosis. As soon as the gate is opened, Clonk will rush out and attack anything that moves. Clonk is severely stooped, with a spiny, lopsided shell, an oddly curved massive claw which drags on the floor, great bulbous eyes red with rage on bent stalks of uneven length, and a haphazard, crooked, sideways-lumbering gait. The only remnant of Clonk's former self is a long, sinewy arm, clutching a dimly glowing bronze sword. **Crazy Clonk (Crab-Man)** DC 4, Speed 6, WD 4, wp 17. +1 to hit from *Grog the Gladius*. *Grog the Gladius* is a finely crafted short bronze stabbing sword. *Grog* glows a dim violet when held by a living being. *Grog* is a *Lawful Sword* +1, +3 vs. *Dragons*. *Intellect* 7, *Egoism* 12, with the power to *See Invisible*. *Grog* will communicate the presence of such things via *Empathy*. Clonk was able to survive the initial blast of damage from grasping *Grog*, but has since been overpowered by the egotistical sword.



**The Crab-Men Tunnels (areas 12-19)** are the uppermost caverns, inhabited by the transformed Crab-Men and their Tribe of the Claw attendants. The flooring here is well-worn and flat for the most part, but constantly wet. It is treacherous footing, like most of this dungeon. Anyone taking flight will run the risk of losing balance, as determined by the referee. At regular intervals, the cavemen have placed vessels housing crushed Dim Shrooms to provide lighting. It is within this region that the Crab-Men prepare to hear the call of Seskiima, when they lose their link to mankind and move lower into Seskiima's Den to serve the Great Crab directly. The role of Caveman attendant is thus rather dangerous, as when this call is heard, the Crab-Men sometimes turn on their own kind.

**12-13: Crab Young.** Both of these areas house the youngest Children of Garaskis, packs of Scavenging Crabs. Both areas hold two packs of these ravenous crustaceans. In **12** there are 15 **Scavenging Crabs**, wp 1 each, and in **13** there are 17 **Scavenging Crabs**, wp 1 each.

**14. Steps Down.** Three Crab-Men and their attendant cavemen are hunkered down in this room. The cavemen retrieved a Troglydite corpse from **13** and brought it here for their masters to devour. To the west is a narrow set of rough-hewn steps which lead down to Seskiima's Den. **Crab-Men:** wp 6, 9, 9; **Cavemen:** wp 5, 4, 6.

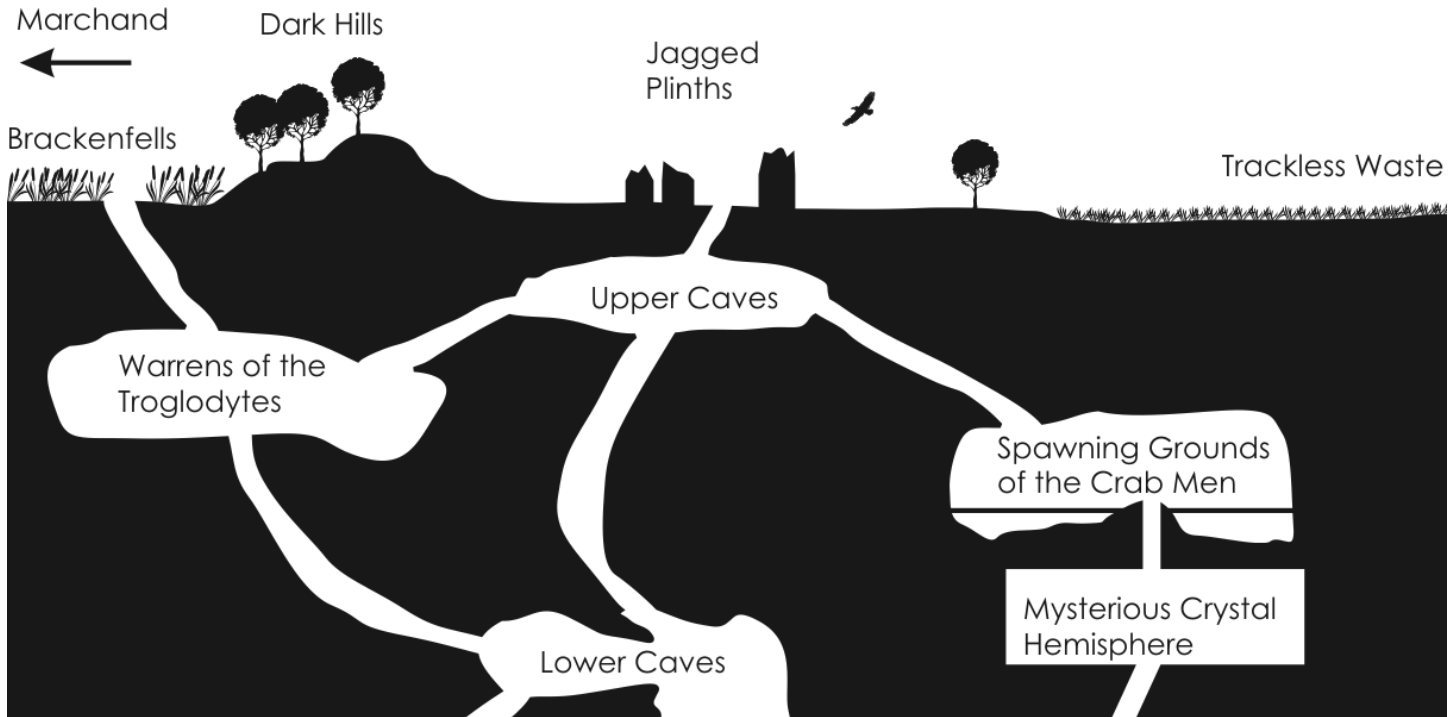
**15. Central Cave.** The Crab-Men congregate in this cave to listen for Seskiima's call. The Crab-Men here are some of the older members of the Transformed, who might at any time hear the call and move into Seskiima's Den to directly serve the Great Crab. The Crab-Men here will move to defend **15B**. **Crab-Men:** wp 12, 9, 11, 7, 8; **Cavemen:** wp 8, 7, 9, 3, 8.

**15B. Drop to Seskiima's Pit.** At the southwest end of the Central Cave is a massive plunge downward which opens atop Seskiima's Pit (**24**) 20' below.

**16. The Call.** One of the Transformed recently heard the call of Seskiima, and a Crab-Man and two cavemen are attempting to help him down the steps without being attacked in order that he might make his way to the Molting Cave (**28**). **Crab-Men:** wp 11, 8; **Cavemen:** wp 10, 8.

**17. Calm Pool.** One of the channels of The Winding River ends calmly here in this shallow 8' deep pool. Currently, there are a half dozen Crab-Men gathering fish in these waters as their cavemen attendants look on from the beach to the south. To the northeast is another beach, littered with rubble and a few hewn blocks, sunk halfway into the sand. High in the darkness of the ceiling above this northeast beach is a well hidden rift, 12' up and only 3' high x 10' wide. If noticed, adventurers might be able to devise a method for attaining and entering this unknown

This schematic shows the uppermost five levels of the full **Darkness Beneath** megadungeon. A full map was printed in issue #2. — Ignatius Marchand



entrance to The Forgotten Rooms (50-53). **Crab-Men:** HP 8, 9, 8, 12, 8, 10; **Cavemen:** HP 7, 7, 5, 6, 8, 5.

**18. The Wet Stone.** At the center of this cave is a large round stone, 4' high and 9' across, onto which water steadily drips from above. The stone is constantly wet and the water has smoothed it out over the years. All of the Crab-Men come to this cave nearly every day to spend time scraping their claws or rubbing their shells upon the wet stone's smooth sides. Currently there are four Crab-Men here doing just that, being watched over by their cavemen attendants. In the southeast niche of this damp cave is another large stone, not worn by the ravages of time. Behind this stone is a recessed area concealing a long dead adventurer (an elf), now a skeleton, wearing a helmet inset with a pair of small rubies, a moldy, musty old leather hauberk, a crumbling backpack, and a rusty, broken sword. Inside the pack is found a bone scroll tube and two filth-coated bottles of liquid. The helmet is a *Helm of Chaos*, the bottles hold a *Potion of Invulnerability* and a *Potion of Healing*. The tube holds a *Scroll with the spells Sleep, Knock and ESP*. **Crab-Men:** HP 10, 11, 6, 7; **Cavemen:** HP 6, 4, 6, 12.

**19. Dumping Cave.** To this location the Crab-Men bring the taboo items of the men of light and the Troglodytes. Such items are tossed out of the cave mouth, and down to the river, 15' below. If this area is approached from The Winding River, masses of broken, rusty discarded gear will be found, including bone Troglodyte Macanas, and all manner of now useless equipment. If a character can somehow search the 10' depths of the river here, there is a small chance that one particularly valuable piece of equipment might be found buried amidst the junk. A long-ago

discarded *Spear +1* is just waiting for a new owner. There is a chance that a Giant Crab will be in the river here (see random location table just below).

**Seskiima's Den (areas 20-31)** is the region beneath the Crab-Men Tunnels which Seskiima calls her own. This region is abundant with crabs of all sorts, as it is home to the Mature Crab-Men, Soldier Crabs, the three Giant Crab Seskiima-Mates, and various Children of Garaskis. The flooring here is the most treacherous, lacking any amount of hand work or wear, and constantly awash in water and debris. Movement for all is at 1/2 normal. As noted on the map, there are three keys with the ST designation. These are submerged tunnels, short shafts in the very rock which are filled with water. Each is no more than 10' deep, but it is impossible to see what is in them, or to tell where they lead to unless they are entered. Packs of Scavenging Crabs frequently rest in these dark shafts, and anytime a PC enters said area, there is a 3 in 6 chance of encountering a pack of these aggressive, hungry crustaceans. The four largest inhabitants of this region move about quite frequently, and the referee should determine what activity each is performing when the PC's enter this region.

**Mates** (roll d8 for each of the three):

- 1: Resting in Lair **22**, **23** or **25**.
- 2: Fishing for Glow Scales in **21**
- 3: Having Shell cleaned on **30**
- 4: Eating a snack at **29**
- 5: Swimming near **19**
- 6: Swimming near **28**
- 7: Sharing a meal in **24\***
- 8: Mating in **26** or **27\***

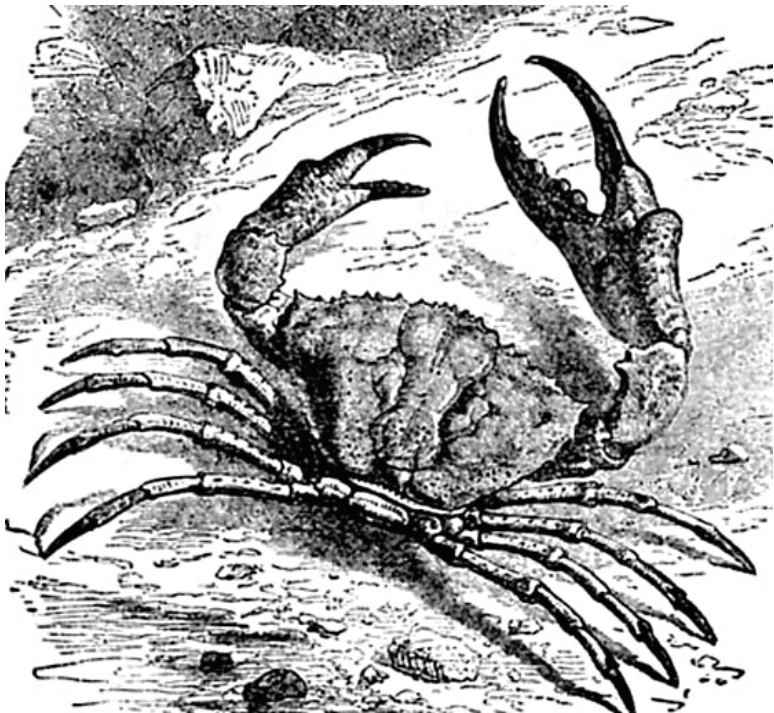
### Seskiima (d8):

1-6: In Lair, resting, eating or having shell cleaned.

7: Mating in **26** or **27\***

8: Speaking to Garaskis on **30**.

\*Seskiima and a Mate are sharing this activity. If one of these is rolled adjust other rolls accordingly.



**20. Fishing Beach.** The cave floor becomes somewhat sandy here, as it terminates in a beach on the north side of **21**. From this area, the cavemen brave the voracious crabs to collect Glow Scales. There are seven shell canoes here, and scattered about on the beach and in the canoes are two dozen shell javelins, some attached to lengths of plaited trog hide, 10-15' in length. A tunnel to the west leads off into depths uncharted, and might be a dead end, or a passage to further adventure, as determined by the referee. To the east of this cave is a shallow pool and half-flooded tunnel mouth, an opening into a submerged tunnel (ST). There is a chance that one of the Seskiima-Mate Giant Crabs is currently fishing for Glow Scales in **21** (see the random location tables), and there are always at least two Large Crabs doing so. Anyone in this area has a 2 in 6 chance per round of attracting a crab from **21**.

**21. Glow Scale Pool.** This large, deep pool of water is alight with bluish-green hues from the large clusters of Dim Shrooms and the numerous, slow swimming Glow Scales who eat the fungi growing here. These Glow Scales are the primary food source for both the cavemen and crabs in this dungeon. They range from 1' to 2' long, and their appetite for Dim Shrooms causes them to give off a faint green glow. At all times there are two or more Large Crabs fishing here, and there is a chance for one or more Giant Crabs as well. **Large Crabs:** wp 7, 5.

**22-23: Seskiima-Mate Lairs.** These two caves both serve as lair for one of the three Giant Crab Seskiima-Mates in this region. They aren't often found here, but there is a chance as determined on the random location tables. Both caves are littered with bones and crawling with tiny hermit crabs. **Giant Crabs:** wp 15, 13.

**24. Seskiima's Pit.** This vast cave has two tunnel entrances and a submerged entry (ST) to the east. At the center of the cave is a huge 5' high by 15' wide pile of splintered bones, directly below a gaping opening in the ceiling 15' above. There is a good chance (see random location table) that Seskiima is here, resting, eating or having her shell cleaned by the masses of tiny, crawling hermit like crabs which cover the walls and floor of this lair. At all times, a trio of Soldier Crabs guards this cave. There is also a chance that a Giant Crab will be found here (see random location table). If Seskiima is in her lair, she will be along one of the walls, laying low and entirely covered in hermit crabs and her entourage of Scavenging Crabs. When Seskiima rises to greet her intruders, she is a terrifying sight to behold. *Fully 12' across, 8' wide and 8' tall, with massive claws that reach 6', great glowing blue eyes and an almost grinning fang-filled maw.* Seskiima has lived long and ruled well in no small part due to her intellect, craftiness and guile. If severely outnumbered, Seskiima will attempt to escape through one of the exits here, preferably the submerged tunnel. If she can make it to the river, she will be impossible to catch, and will take that opportunity to double back and pick off intruders who aren't as adept at dealing with the waters. Seskiima has two powers granted from the Crab Demon Garaskis, the first is a 30' wide, 60' long cone shaped **Wave of Terror** which she can use three times per day. Any missing their Save vs. Spells will enter a state of shock and fear, fleeing in a random direction for 2d6 rounds. The second is a targeted empathetic **Cry of Despair**, which can be used once per turn. The victim hears a woman's soul-searching cry of misery, and must Save vs. Spells or be overcome with despair, unable to act or move for 1d6 rounds. Seskiima commands a large pack of 24 **Scavenging Crabs:** wp 1 each, which cling to her when she moves. Lastly, Seskiima can attack with her massive claws for 1d6+2 damage. On a natural RTH of 18+, the victim is seized in Seskiima's mighty claw and will sustain 1d6+2 damage per round thereafter. Seskiima will often snatch a target and dive into deep water in order to drown and devour the hapless victim. Hidden within the massive pile of bones Seskiima has stowed away a massive sea chest holding 2,400 silver, 3,100 gold, a suit of *Plate Mail +1*, and a collapsible, telescoping *Staff of Healing*. **Seskiima:** DC 2, Speed 6, WD 4+1, wp 22. (Wave of Terror, Cry of Despair, Control Crabs, Seize Target). **Soldier Crabs:** wp 11, 9, 8.

**25. Seskiima-Mate Lair.** This cave serves as lair for one of the three Giant Crab Seskiima-Mates in this region. It isn't often found here, but there is a chance as per the

random location tables. The cave is littered with bones and crawling with tiny hermit crabs. In the east wall of this lair is a niche which is far too narrow for Giant Crabs to reach which can serve as a safe spot for up to three adventurers to squeeze into. At its end is a long-dead human warrior, crouched down behind a *Shield +1*. **Giant Crab:** wp 12.

**26-27: Spawning Caves.** Each of these two wet caves has a shallow pool of water at its center, normally filled with small clusters of eggs laid by Seskiima. Each Spawning Cave is guarded at all times by a trio of Soldier Crabs. There is a chance that the adventurers might stumble upon Seskiima mating here. In **26, Soldier Crabs:** wp 13, 6, 8. In **27, Soldier Crabs:** wp 10, 11, 12.

**28. Molting Cave:** This area consists of a long stretch of beach along The Winding River and a large, low cave mouth to the north. This area is where all of the crabs of this region come to molt. Scattered about are crab shells of various sizes. There is a chance a Giant Crab will be nearby (see random location table). 4 Large Crabs are here taking a rest from fishing. **Large Crabs:** wp 3,4,4,3.

**29. Bone Beach.** This gruesome stretch along The Winding River is a bleach-white beach of splintered bones, littered with the skeletal remains of victims dragged here by the Crab-Men for their cousins below to feast on. There are currently nine Large Crabs here feasting, and there is a chance that one of the Seskiima-Mate Giant Crabs will likewise be found. There are two shell canoes along the beach, one of which has a leather sack at its bottom. The sack contains a *Potion of Healing*, a *Potion of Resisting Fire*, and two scroll cases: *Scroll with the spells Cure Mild Wounds, Detect Traps and Hold!*, and a *Scroll with the spells Detect Magic, Charm and Levitate*. **Large Crabs:** wp 7, 2, 3, 7, 5, 4, 5, 4, 2.

**30. Lonely Isle.** This sandy, rocky chunk of land bisects The Winding River into two channels. The current is much stronger to the south. Shell canoes passing this island while on the southern channel will be swept along at an ever-quicken pace until they are plunged toward the waterfall to the west at **31**. Characters will have an opportunity to throw themselves to 'safety' upon this island before they are taken away by the river. In addition to the masses of tiny hermit crabs ever-present here, there are two packs of Scavenging Crabs and three Large Crabs (and possibly Seskiima or a Giant Crab, as per the tables). If Seskiima is here, she will be at the island's center beneath the massed crabs, deep in meditation communing with Garaskis. At the center of this rocky island is a low flat stone, worn with age. Upon it are carved many strange symbols. This is the Communing Stone used by Seskiima and is a crude altar to the Crab Demon Garaskis. While here, Seskiima may regenerate wounds at a rate of 6 per turn. Five Speci-Men corpses are here, rotting and decaying, as even the crabs refuse to eat their tainted flesh. 16 **Scavenging Crabs:** wp 1 each. **Large Crabs:** wp 3, 3, 6.

**31. Waterfall.** This treacherous waterfall is located just off the map. In the full dungeon it leads down to level 4, The Mysterious Crystal Hemisphere; if using this as a stand-alone it may lead to wherever the referee desires.

**Quimlin's Manse (areas 32-49)** constitutes the eastern portion of the ancient brick and block dungeon on this level. Quimlin took up residence here years ago, as he found it the perfect base camp for his experiments and ultimate goal of discovering the secret of the Crystal Hemisphere below. If this adventure is being used as a stand alone module, the referee may just assume that Quimlin is here to conduct his experiments and assemble a force capable of assaulting some deeper darkness. The flooring here is normally slippery and dank, constructed of well-worn slate, cracked, broken and upturned in areas. It is treacherous footing, like most of the areas in this dungeon. Anyone taking flight will run the risk of losing balance, as determined by the referee. At regular intervals, Quimlin and his Speci-Men have placed vessels housing crushed Dim Shrooms to provide lighting. *A note about Quimlin's forces (Speci-Men and Metheled): they have instructions to subdue and abduct any Humans they encounter. They will attempt to slay other targets first, and then knock out or overpower Humans and return them to 47 in order that Quimlin might add to his Speci-Men army.* The four major inhabitants of this region move about quite frequently, and the referee should determine what activity each is performing when the PC's enter this region.

**Metheled (d8):**

- 1-2: In Lair **41**
- 3-4: On guard, perched in **40**
- 5: Speaking to the Face in the Rift in **34**
- 6: Perched high above the river between **3-4**
- 7: Taunting Cavemen from a perch at **3**
- 8: Getting the goods in **47**

**Quimlin's Eyes (d8):**

- 1: In Lair **44**
- 2-3: Watching in **43**
- 4-5: Watching in **32**      6: Watching in **35**
- 7: Roaming area between **3-4**
- 8: Roaming area between **28-30**

**The Thing From Beyond! (d8):**

- 1-4: In Lair **48**
- 5-6: In Laboratory **47**
- 7: In Speci-Men Chamber **46**
- 8: Relaxing in **38**

**Quimlin (d8):**

- 1: In Lair **49**
- 2-3: In Laboratory **47**
- 4: In Shrine **48**
- 5-6: In Speci-Men Chamber **46**
- 7: In Chamber of The Eyes **44**
- 8: Roaming his Manse.

**32. Intersection.** A group of eight Speci-Men are here waiting for Metheled to lead them on a raid of the Cave-men. Having grown impatient, they are in the midst of rough-housing: wrestling, kicking, punching, biting, bashing each other's heads into the floor, etc. The ruckus they are creating can be heard from 60' away before this chamber is even entered. These Speci-Men will be surprised on a 5 in 6. **Speci-Men:** wp 7, 9, 11, 5, 5, 10, 3, 6.

**33. Lab Rat Nest.** This room has a collapsed ceiling and is littered with stone and blocks. To the west is a totally collapsed stairwell. Clearing this passage would require 80 man-hours of labor, and there is a 1 in 6 chance of collapse every 10 hours. What lies beyond is left to the referee. Hidden amidst the rubble here is a network of small crawl holes and tunnels; the nest of mutated, escaped Lab Rats from Quimlin's earliest experiments. When gathered in such a large pack, these Lab Rats form a hive mind, and ruminate together on such lofty questions as how to trap Quimlin and demand more Liquid Joy. They will scurry into their holes when the door to the south is opened, thinking that the Speci-Men are on their way to catch a few of their number. The Lab Rats might take this opportunity to communicate with the party, or they might view them as a tasty meal. **21 Lab Rats:** wp 1, 1, 5, 1, 1, 2, 4, 3, 2, 1, 3, 1, 3, 2, 5, 5, 4, 1, 5, 4, 3.

**34. The Face in the Rift.** This chamber has a huge crack in its floor, roughly 35'x12' in size. Currently, there is a large pack of Lab Rats here attempting to converse with the mysterious Face in the Rift. The Face is currently biding his time in silence, as he finds speaking to the Lab Rats a total bore. This particular pack of rats is suffering severely from Liquid Joy withdrawal at this time, and although they might converse with adventurers stumbling into this room, they will likely assume they have some of the concoction on their persons and act accordingly. Once the Face in the Rift watches what transpires between the rats and the adventurers, it will materialize and ask them some questions. The Face is friendly with Metheled, but despises Quimlin, and cannot understand The Thing From Beyond! There is a chance that Metheled is here when the room is entered; if so the Gargoyle will be conversing with the Face in the Rift while the Lab Rats wait their turn, as they are fearful and respectful of the terrible Gargoyle. The Face in the Rift appears as a ghostly visage of a huge semi-human face. It speaks hundreds of languages and can read just as many. The mysterious immaterial spirit seeks knowledge of his own environs, and what little it knows it has learned from Metheled and Quimlin. It suspects, rightfully, that nearly everything Quimlin has told it is a lie. The Face has been consoling Metheled in his plight, and might tell the adventurers that they should intervene and aid the Gargoyle in his bout with addiction in order to exact some revenge upon Quimlin. None of this information will be revealed until the adventurers answer a long series of questions. If the adventurers slay Metheled, the Face will

still speak to them, but will warn them to beware Quimlin, and tell them that they will be rewarded if they bring him Quimlin's lifeless body. The Face has little to offer as far as exactly how the group might intervene with Metheled. If the adventurers do in fact return here with the slain Quimlin, the Face in the Rift will tell them about the secret treasure (53) in the Forgotten Rooms. **14 Lab Rats:** wp 2, 3, 1, 1, 1, 3, 3, 3, 2, 1, 3, 1, 3, 2.

**35. The Statuary.** A pair of small balconies and a short flight of steps overlook this large room. The domed ceiling is 30' up. The room below has a score of granite statues depicting humanoids in different poses, some toppled and some erect as they have been for centuries. The east tunnel leads off into the unexplored reaches of the caverns beyond, or at GM discretion to a dead end. The caves serve as lair for a family of 7 **Notalisks:** wp 9, 7, 7, 12, 9, 13, 9.

**36. Shaft Down.** A shaft lined with crude hand-holds drops straight down 25' to a tunnel below. Anyone using this shaft will alert the inhabitants of 37, who have posted a sentry to watch for any of Quimlin's forces.

**37. Lost Patrol.** Holed up in this cave is a group of adventuring Kobolds. Having realized they are in over their heads in this part of the dungeon, the Kobolds have taken shelter until they can decide how to extricate themselves from this mess. There are 13 of the little codgers here, each armed with Javelin, Dagger and wicker Shield. Their leader, one Scrondo, is willing to bargain with adventurers provided he thinks they might make good his escape. The Kobolds have a few sacks with foul-smelling food and skins of the bitterest wine. Each Kobold has a purse with 1d6 gold, and Scrondo has 18. **Kobolds:** wp 1, 1, 3, 2, 1, 2, 2, 1, 3, 1, 3, 2, Scrondo: 4.

**38. Steps Up.** This cave overlooks the pool in 4. At its east end is a narrow set of steps hewn from the very rock, leading up. At all times a group of four Speci-Men is posted here to watch for intruders. These Speci-Men prefer to spend their time splashing about and dunking one another in the waters of the pool in 4, though. They have a 5 in 6 chance to be surprised. There is a chance that The Thing From Beyond! will be found here (see random location tables). **Speci-Men:** wp 13, 9, 5, 8.

**39. Two Shafts Down.** This three-way intersection has a narrow set of hewn steps leading down to 38 to the west, and a pair of shafts, lined with crude hand-holds, which drop straight down. The shaft to the south leads straight down, and a stiff breeze can be felt blowing up occasionally through the vertical hole, which terminates 60' lower in the ceiling of an area in Level 4, The Mysterious Crystal Hemisphere. If this adventure is being used as a standalone module, its destination is left to the referee. The shaft to the east appears to be identical, but there is a chance that the faint odor of carrion might be sensed

when the shaft is entered. The shaft descends 50' to a floor lined with two dozen long iron spikes. Anyone descending 20' has a 2 in 6 chance of triggering a trap (it can also be triggered when climbing back up). Once triggered, all of the hand holds sink into the wall and a scything blade cuts across the shaft at a depth of 10'. At the bottom of the shaft is a pair of rotting human corpses, dead adventurers, amidst some skeletal remains. Each corpse has a pack with basic delving supplies (torches, tinderbox, hatchet, iron spikes, rations), 42 and 58 gold, pierced and ruined Chain Mail, shields, a mace and a *War Hammer +1*.

**40. The Flooded Shrine.** The floor of this one-time temple is collapsed and flooded with murky brown water. The water lies 5' below the broken entryway floors to the east and west. From the water rises a large central ruined altar, 15' high. It is surrounded by 4 large stone pillars, also rising above the water to 18'. Methled is often in this chamber, perched upon the altar watching for intruders. Beneath the water in the southeast corner, 8' deep is a submerged tunnel (ST). It leads to Methled's Lair, **41**.

**41. Methled's Lair.** Through the submerged tunnel is a cold, damp cave. This is Methled's Lair. Methled serves Quimlin rather grudgingly, but does so in order to satisfy his hungry addiction to Liquid Joy. The Gargoyle wishes to leave this place eventually, and has made plans to do so, but cannot seem to overcome his magical addiction. If the adventurers are somehow able to parley with the Gargoyle and convince him that he doesn't need the alchemical concoction, Methled might agree to help the adventurers hunt down and slay Quimlin. How this actually plays out is left entirely to the referee. **Methled (Gargoyle)** DC 5, Speed 9/15, WD 4, wp 17; only affected by magical weapons/attacks. *Ring of Regeneration* on left hand. Methled will reward the adventurers with his treasure if they do in fact aid him and help to slay Quimlin. Beneath a boulder buried in the floor of this cave is the Gargoyle's secret treasure trove: *Potion of ESP*, *Potion of Healing*, *Potion of Invisibility*, *Scroll with Evil Protection and Hold Portal*, *Wand of Magic Detection*, and 7 Gems (gc 2x50, 4x100, 1x500).

**42. Shattered Span.** The cold waters of the river wend their way through the tunnel; 20' below. At one time, a large stone bridge spanned the Winding River here. Quimlin ordered the bridge dismantled as a defensive precaution when he first wrested control of the eastern portion of the dungeon. Currently, there is a group of 8 Speci-Men here, horsing around instead of guarding the hall north of **43** and **44** as Quimlin ordered. With their superior, genetically enhanced agility, these Speci-Men find great sport in taking running leaps and jumping across the shattered span. These 'guards' have a 5 in 6 chance of being surprised. When encountered here, roll to see how many are on either side of the bridge. **Speci-Men:** wp 3, 7, 8, 6, 12, 7, 10, 7.

**43. Shaft Down.** At the east end of this chamber is a shaft leading down 50', the last 10' of which is filled with foul, rank water. Set into the side of this shaft are crude hand-holds. There are three iron spikes driven into the floor at the edge of the shaft, around which is knotted a 50' long rope, coiled in a pile next to the opening. Inspection of the rope might reveal the fact that it is coated in dried blood in the middle. Anyone climbing down the shaft has a 2 in 6 chance of triggering a trap once they descend 20' (it can also be triggered when climbing back up). Once triggered, all of the hand holds fire out with great impact, revealing that they are in fact long stout lengths of iron, before resetting in 1 round. While this trap will not sever ropes, it will cause 2d6 damage, and victims have a good chance of falling down into the water. At the bottom of the water, along with a handful of smashed skeletons, is a recently deceased, bloated and rotting Dwarf corpse. The corpse has a suit of Chain Mail, a round wooden shield, an axe, and a pouch with a *Draught of Heroism* and 72 gold.

**44. Chamber of The Eyes.** At one time this was a chamber of worship of some sort. Alcoves in the northwest and southwest corners of the room hold all that remains, two shattered and dismantled altars to some unknown power. The walls of the room are totally defaced now, making the murals which once adorned the chamber unrecognizable. In the center of the room is a large roundish contraption of wood, decorated with long feathers and baubles. It is fully 6' around and roughly circular. This *Dream Catcher* floats magically in place. Quimlin erected it in order to summon forth Quimlin's Eyes. If it is destroyed, that roaming magical spirit will be dispelled, and sent back to its extraplanar home. **Quimlin's Eyes:** DC special WD special. Quimlin's Eyes is a roaming intelligent otherworldly servant of Quimlin, attracted by the promise of rewards plundered from below. Immaterial and impervious to attacks, the telltale sign of this being's presence is its habit of watching from the dark periphery. Its only visible manifestation is a collection of yellow and red glowing eyes, 5-10 pairs at a time, which gaze at intruders from the shadows. If approached or if light is brought to bear, they fall back or shut as Quimlin's Eyes moves away. It prefers darkness and will never allow itself to be lit up. Whenever it spots intruders, it will send a mental image of them to Quimlin, who will then devise a plan to abduct Humans in the party and slay the rest.

**45. Trap.** Quimlin has set up a trap in this room. A hidden tripwire will release a large weighted net suspended in the dark recesses of the ceiling. Anyone in the room must save vs. poison or be trapped for 2d4 rounds. Anyone not so trapped can aid in removing their mates from the net, which cuts the time to get out by half. However, suspended above the net, and falling when the trap is sprung, are a handful of vials holding Quimlin's *Flash Boom Stuff*. The bottles will burst, causing a loud boom and a cloud of smoke. These clouds will obscure vision in the

room for 1 turn, reducing sight to 5'. The noise created will alert nearby monsters (referee determines).

**46. Speci-Men Flop House.** Speci-Men who have recently received their daily dose of Liquid Joy retire to this chamber to enjoy and sleep off the drug. The sound of snoring fills the area. Currently there are eleven Speci-Men here sprawled about the floor. They require 3 rounds to gain their senses if roused. Otherwise, they will sleep through a crashing tree. In the southwest corner there is a secret hatch on the floor which hides a ladder down to **47. Speci-Men:** wp 11, 8, 8, 8, 6, 8, 9, 9, 6, 7, 10.

**47. Quimlin's Laboratory.** This cave serves as Quimlin's arcano-tech lab. Entrance to the room from above is achieved via a pair of secret hatches in the ceiling. The cave contains a pair of long wooden work benches, each littered with Quimlin's tools and devices. Vials, beakers, bottles, tubes, dishes, tongs, gloves, magnifying glasses, bowls, knives, mortar and pestle, large and small liquid filled vessels, distillation devices, corks, and a rubber mallet may be found here, most of which are strangely alien in construction. Most notably, on one of the benches rests *Hog Hug's BB Gun*. This odd device is a small, partially smashed air gun with the words 'Hog Hug' carved into its old wooden stock, which Quimlin has been trying to retrofit into a weapon for his personal use. Currently, the device has not been perfected, and it has loose wires and cables of copper tied to it and strung through its crooked barrel. It's only moving part is a small pumping lever, which builds up the air in the BB gun until it hums, crackles, and a dim light emits from the barrel. In exactly one round, the device will fire a small whirling ball of electricity in whatever direction the barrel is pointed, to a range of 60', hitting unerringly and causing 3d6 damage. There is a 1 in 10 chance that, with each activation, the device will malfunction and instead shock its user for 2d6 damage. *Hog Hug's BB Gun* has a battery which will allow 60 discharges, and is essentially a wand, usable only by Mages and Elves. At the center of this cave are three large wooden and metal contraptions of alien origin. Each contraption consists of a leather chair, straps, wires, cables, liquid filled vats, dials, knobs, bells, and meters. These contraptions are used by Quimlin to turn captured humans into Speci-Men, and are *The Mind Erase Machine* (used to turn the victim into a brain-washed imbecile), *The Thought Amplifier Machine* (used to ingrain Quimlin's basic orders into the freshly brain-washed minds) and the *Muscle Expander Machine* (used to mutate the soon to be Speci-Men into genetically altered super ape-like servants). When used in conjunction with Quimlin's Concoctions, hapless victims are slowly turned into the mindless raging Liquid Joy addicted Speci-Men, loyal to the devious Quimlin to the end. None of these machines is of any use to the adventurers, and it is suggested that the referee award the players with an experience bonus if all of the above (except *Hog Hug's BB Gun*) are destroyed. A large cubical iron safe

is set on the floor near the east wall. It requires a key to open (carried by Quimlin) and weighs over 500 lbs. Within are several glass bottles filled with Quimlin's Concoctions. Eight are filled with a reddish liquid (*Dread Pull*), seven with a yellowish mixture (*That Extra Oomph*), and nine with a thick pink concoction (*Liquid Joy*). These are set on the shelves amidst various empty, corked glass bottles. *Dread Pull* is an instant energy potion. It provides +1 to hit and +1 on saving throws for 6 turns, and then -2 to hit and -2 on saving throws for another 6 turns. *That Extra Oomph* provides a Strength boost for 6 turns, conferring +1 to damage in melee when a hit is scored, with a period of weakness afterwards of 6 turns, reducing all melee damage by -2. *Liquid Joy* (6 doses per bottle) is a potion that provides an instant wave of euphoric bliss. Imbibers are essentially incapacitated for 6 turns, and unable to function properly for another 6 turns thereafter. After these two hours of pure mind numbing exhilaration, the drinker must save vs. poison at -1 or become hopelessly addicted. Addicts will do basically anything in order to again experience Liquid Joy's effects.

**48 Forgotten Shrine of The Thing From Beyond!** This massive chamber was, at one time, a shrine dedicated to some now long-forgotten deity. It currently serves as the lair of **The Thing From Beyond!** DC 8, Speed 9, WD 5. The Thing From Beyond! is an 8' long amorphous translucent blue, semi-gelatinous blob. This oddly formed monstrosity has three 6' long appendages and five great 5' long eye stalks. Its bulbous pink eyes emit dim white light in a cone 30' long and it communicates with whale-like mewls and songs as it slithers about, moving on thousands of tiny cilia on its underside and leaving a trail of gooey blue slug-like slime. TTFB! is a reluctant, apathetic, and bored servant of immense power. TTFB! attacks as a 10 WD Monster and can deal 2d6+2 damage per round, but only in self defense. TTFB! will only attack if Quimlin is present and he directly orders the alien to do so. Even then, TTFB! will subdue and toy with foes rather than devour them. When attempting to subdue, any hit upon a target results in that victim being coiled in TTFB!'s massively strong tentacle, at which time the target is removed from melee while TTFB! tickles him or her and encourages the captive to obtain the Multi-Levered Device to set it free. Only the possessor of the Multi-Levered Device can actually understand what TTFB! says, alas. Quimlin uses this device to communicate with TTFB!, but the regular communication has slowly driven Quimlin insane. TTFB! will happily devour Quimlin if the device used to control it is somehow taken. TTFB! knows that eventually it will get its wish, and in the meantime it bides its time dreaming of home, wherever that might be. TTFB! normally rests on the large stone dais at the room's center, next to which is its toy chest. This wood chest, 3'x4'x3' is painted in a colorful, whimsical pattern. Within this chest are the Thing's toys; an inflated plastic purple bouncy ball 2' across, a dozen miniature TTFB! figures, 6" tall and

made of plastic, depicting similar aliens carrying various bizarre weaponry, an enormous brightly painted heavy plastic rattle (fully 3' long) which can be used as a noisy, non-magic *Mace +1*, a very messy slime-caked blanket fully 8'x8' in size and covered in strange yellow designs, a large coil of lightweight metal, 1' tall when collapsed (TTFB!'s 'slinky'), and lastly a 2' cubical box with a hand crank on its side and a sealed lid on its top. This *Pod In A Box* will play bizarre music when the crank is turned, and then suddenly its lid will spring open and a 6' long tentacle will spill forth. The tentacle will seek to grab and constrict anything in its path; potential targets in front of the opening lid will have to make a saving throw vs. paralysis or be grabbed by the tentacle and constricted for 1d6 damage per round. The tentacle can sustain 8 wp before it recoils into the box, and when so damaged will require a full day to regenerate. Once the tentacle has been sprung, winding the crank in the opposite direction will cause the tentacle to recoil and close the lid. The *Pod In A Box* only weighs 5 lbs, and could possibly be a useful item in the hands of a Mage. TTFB! has outgrown these toys, and will leave them behind if it is able to return home.

**49. Quimlin's Refuge.** This cave is Quimlin's Inner Sanctum and lair. Quimlin never sleeps, and is normally making plans here or conducting experiments in **47**. In the center of this room are three upright 8' tall brass vessels, each filled with a foul-smelling liquid. At the top of each cylinder is a tightly screwed-on hatch and a small 8"x4" vent. Floating in each vessel is a preserved human corpse, ready and waiting to act as a future host for Quimlin should he require one. Quimlin, unbeknownst to all of his minions, is actually a diabolical parasite, a Bloated Alien Brain Mite. Quimlin devours his victim's brain, lodges himself in their skull, and assumes control over the host's body. If Quimlin dislodges himself from his host they will die on the spot. If 'slain', Quimlin will wait for an opportune time to dislodge and scuttle back to this room in order to select a new host. Along the south wall of the cave is a solid and locked iron chest. The locking mechanism is trapped, and if the chest is opened without using the key, a jet of green gas will spew out, quickly forming a 10'x10' cloud of deadly poisonous fumes. Within the chest Quimlin has stashed 2,800 sc, 3,100 gc, a *Potion of Healing*, a *Scroll with the spells Slow, Fiery Ball and Hold!*, and 9 Gems (gc 2x50, 4x100, 3x500). **Quimlin (Bloated Alien Brain Mite)** DC 9(7), Speed 9, WD 4, wp 19. Quimlin's Host, regardless of actual WD, is able to withstand 4 WD in damage before being slain. *Currently Quimlin is housed in the brain basket of an 11 year-old human boy.* Quimlin has the following items on himself at all times: *The Multi-Levered Device\**, a neck-lace with a pair of keys (one for the safe in **47**, and one for the chest in **49**), a strange metallic *Dodge-o-Matic Belt* (acts as a *Displacing Cloak*), a *Mesh Field Pack* (acts as a Holding Bag), an odd metallic device, the *Immobilizer* (essentially an arcano-tech pistol that acts as a *Wand of Paralyzation* with 30 charges), and a supply of three bottles each of *Flash Boom*

*Stuff and Liquid Joy. Flash Boom Stuff*, when agitated, bursts in an ear-deafening bang, and creates a thick cloud of smoke which reduces vision to 5' in an area 20'x20', dissipating in 1 turn. *\*The Multi-Levered Device* is a complex tool, and will require significant research to understand and use properly. TTFB! will simply demand the device once it is wrested from Quimlin, create a shadowy magic portal, and exit this world forever, returning home to be with its own family. **Note to the referee: If the alien nature of the arcano-tech devices in 47-49 upsets your campaign, feel free to replace them with fantasy equivalents.**



**The Forgotten Rooms (areas 50-53)** are just that, an area of the ancient brick and block dungeon separated from the rest of this level by a forgotten access point from **17** and the Shattered Span at **42**. The slate flooring in this region is in surprisingly good shape. Aside from some brief descriptions, the four rooms here are intended to be used as available creative space for the referee. As provided here, this region also makes a fine base camp for a party of adventurers. Quimlin's Eyes is the only Wandering Monster which might be encountered in this area, and the referee should make such a chance slim as the probing Eyes seldom checks here any longer. Quimlin will seek to abduct any men that his Eyes locate, and if the Eyes are encountered here, the referee should devise some scheme by which Quimlin will attempt to achieve this goal.

**50. Entry Hall.** This chamber is dark and dusty.

**51. Hall of Arms.** The walls of this chamber are adorned with various weapons and shields.

**52. Bedroom.** A long-abandoned bedchamber, dusty and full of crumbling furniture.

**53. Secret Chamber.** Beyond the secret door from **52** is a disused treasure vault. What lies herein is for the referee to determine.



**End Notes:** *Spanning Grounds of the Crab-Men* provides ample creative opportunity for a referee to expand beyond what is presented here. Certain plot details can be fleshed out to provide future connected adventures. For example, the Tribe of the Claw is only represented here by their members charged with protecting the Shrine of the Claw. Their kin will return at some point. Garaskis might want to seek some sort of revenge upon those who defile his Shrine, or worse yet, slay his favorite daughter, *Seskiima*. Quimlin's arcano-tech devices and concoctions aren't explained in full; perhaps this aspect of the plot could lead to further adventures. The two tunnels that lead into uncharted reaches of the underworld could also be used to develop this area. The western tunnel could lead to the Tribe's Domain, while perhaps Quimlin brought his Laboratory here from the eastern tunnel. How you utilize this dungeon level is limited only by your imagination: nothing presented here is essential or vital, and referees are encouraged to alter to taste or make things up as they go.

## Monster Details and Statistics:

**Caveman (Claw Tribe):** Chaotic, DC 8, Speed 12, WD 2.

### Crab-Men of The Darkness Beneath:

**Transformed (Crab-Men):** This is the stage wherein the Chosen has undergone the transformation, and begins walking sideways. Immediately the Transformed begins to take on crab-like manifestations. First and foremost is the development of a large pincer-claw on one arm and the slow growth of a hardened exoskeleton shell. Through this developmental stage, which takes years, the Crab-Man must visit the Molting Cave to shed his old carapace and begin growing a newer, more crab-like version. Crab-Men can still communicate with their cavemen brethren. Crab-Men are true abominations of nature and should be described as vile, foul, unholy half caveman-half crustacean...things. DC 5, Speed 9, WD 2+1.

**Mature (Soldier Crab or Giant Crab):** After years of molting, the Transformed slowly begin to lose their link to their human origin and become almost completely crab-like, unable to communicate with or understand their own tribesmen. Now they heed the call of *Seskiima*, and leave their former brothers behind, venturing forth to serve the Great Crab. The Mature begin as Soldier Crabs, and years later, provided that *Seskiima* selects them, molt into Giant Crabs, becoming one of *Seskiima's* mates. **Soldier Crab:** DC 4, Speed 9, WD 2+1, damage 1d6+1. **Giant Crab:** DC 3, Speed 6, WD 3, seize target on 18+, damage 1d6+1.

**Elder (Great Crab):** There is but a single Great Crab, *Seskiima*. *Seskiima* possesses a unique link to the demon *Garaskis*. It is through her that the demon is able to empower the dark rituals of the Tribe of the Claw. *Seskiima's* purpose is to foster the growth of the Children of

*Garaskis* in this dungeon. **Great Crab:** DC 2, Speed 6, WD 4+1, seize target 18+, damage 1d6+2, control crabs.

### Children of Garaskis:

**Scavenging Crabs:** DC 8, Speed 6, wp 1, damage 1. Travel in packs of 1d6+4.

**Large Crabs:** DC 6, Speed 6, WD 1+1. 4' to 5' wide.

**Lab Rats:** DC 7, Speed 9, WD 1-1, damage 1d3. Giant rabid albino rats with pink eyes. Their bite has an insidious, cumulative effect. Save vs. Poison or begin itching. After two such missed saves, victims must discard armor and scratch in non-combat situations. After four such missed saves, victim is incapacitated, and writhing about trying to scratch even during combat for 10 minutes. When Lab-Rats are in a pack of 12, they can form a hive mind intellect equal to INT 5, capable of very rudimentary, high pitched speech. They will single out and eat Quimlin if he doesn't offer them Liquid Joy whenever they see him.

**Speci-Men:** DC 5, Speed 12, WD 2+1, so drugged out that they fight one round after slain. These horrific beings are genetically mutated men with chemically enhanced reflexes. Muscular, twitching, crazed, drooling, and wild-eyed, they are addicted to Liquid Joy. After being abducted, human victims are subjected to Quimlin's devious arcano-tech, erasing their minds and turning them into hulking, muscular, ape-like men, bristling with savage strength and catlike agility. These abominations possess long talon-like nails and preternaturally strong jaws with massive fang-like teeth. Semi-intelligent, but given basic commands by Quimlin via Brain Implants.

**Notalisk:** DC 6, Spd 6, WD 3. 7' long, brown skinned, yellow-bellied lizards with eight legs and piercing green eyes. Slow and menacing, the Notalisk has a habit of staring down prey while its mates circle around to ambush. They prefer the company of old stone statues.

**Troglodytes of The Darkness Beneath:** These will be described in more detail in *FO! #4*. Standard Trogs are DC 7 Speed 9, WD 1+1. They can Screech, which causes all henchmen with 60' to make an immediate Morale check or take flight away from the vile flesh eating reptiles. Troglodytes craft weapons from bone and obsidian, wielding the Macana and the Dart-Thrower. The Macana is a short sword of carved bone with jagged obsidian shards embedded into its edges. Dart-Throwers are 3' long hollow bone tubes into which a heavy bone obsidian-tipped dart is placed for flinging to a range of 60'. **Trogl-Knights** are DC 6, Speed 9 (6 on Iguana-Mounts), WD 2. They can Screech as regular Trogs and wield Macanas as well as carefully crafted giant tortoise shields and heavy barbed lances of carved dinosaur bone. Barbed lances are heavy and cumbersome, but deal 3d6 damage to large foes who move to attack a stationary Trogl-Knight atop an Iguana-Mount. If employed against

smaller foes, the lance is at -1 to hit and deals but 1d6 damage. Their **Iguana-Mounts** are DC 6, Speed 6 (can go up walls), WD 2+1. Their only attack is a Tongue Lash with a range of 15'. If hit, the target must save vs. poison or be entangled. Targets will be drawn to the Iguana-Mount's mouth, and sustain 1d6 biting damage per round thereafter (Open doors to break free). Victims slain by these massive bites are swallowed whole and digested in 6 hours. Iguana-Mounts will only attack when urged by their riders, and even then there is a 2 in 6 chance they will not fight. **Leaping Lizards** are DC 8, Speed 12 (run or leap), wp 1, damage 1. These are 2' monitor lizard types, extremely quick of foot. Up to four such reptiles are able to attack a single target at once. Leaping Lizards have a 4 in 6 chance to immediately begin feeding on any fallen prey, even in combat. Ω

## Tribute to The Invincible Overlord

by Bill Webb, Necromancer Games

*Nothing brings me more satisfaction than to hear that individual Judges' copies of these products have become dog-eared or filled with notes necessitating new copies. It is like a grand symphony. To inspire others to create is my fervent hope. Your players will respond to your delight in seeing your creation take on life and enthusiasm will increase the fun. All within is merely inspiration for the active and pontifical judge of the guild. Please alter, illuminate, expand, modify, extrapolate, interpolate, shrink and further manipulate all contained to suit the tenor of your campaign.* - Bob Bledsaw, 2005.

This summer made me think of a summer long ago. It was only recently that we lost the two greatest giants of role-playing legend, Gary Gygax and Bob Bledsaw. Never before and never again can our hobby lose so much in so little time. Millions of people over three or more generations were influenced by these men, and I for one shall greatly miss them. I had the privilege of getting to know and work with both Gary and Bob. While I am writing this to speak about my friend Bob, they were also friends, and I find it nearly impossible to talk of one without the other.

In the summer of 1977, I was 11 years old and had just learned about this new storytelling game with dice and weird little lead soldiers. I had taken a trip with several of my friends across the state in a motor home, and between sneak peaks at my friend's dad's hidden stash of Playboy magazines (we had to be careful not to get caught, mind you), we needed something to fill our time. One of the older kids, Richard (he was 15 at the time), asked if we wanted to learn how to play this game he had. Being as bored as a cooped up pack of 11-15 year olds could be, we agreed and he started to explain how to play.

An hour later, my cleric (whatever the heck that was) was running in terror from a skeleton that had attacked me when I pulled an arm-lever on a statue. I had no idea what to do, and the thought of a Harryhausen-like skeleton chasing my poor guy through dark halls of a haunted house terrified me. I was too new to understand turning the dead away, and first level clerics had no spells in the early days. All the rest of the guys had been killed by various monsters, pulled down by manacles and chains that had a life of their own or impaled on spikes in a pit. We had even watched one guy turn to dust as a ghostly image withered and aged him. I managed to evade the shrieking pile of bones by running through and barring the door with my 10-foot pole (I did not know why I bought a 10-foot pole, but was thanking my lucky stars I had), when the bed sheet came to life and started trying to wrap me up. I don't remember what happened next, only that I escaped and ran back outside, and then ran to the town we had started the story in.

### Judges Guild on the Internet

compiled by Jeff Rients

#### **The Official Website:**

[www.judgesguild.net](http://www.judgesguild.net)

#### **Judges Guild Café Press Store:**

[www.cafepress.com/judgesguild](http://www.cafepress.com/judgesguild)

*Buy cool maps and other JG swag!*

#### **The joint JG/Necromancer Games website:**

[www.judgesguild.com](http://www.judgesguild.com)

*Devoted to the d20 version of the Wilderlands, but the fan stuff and download sections are worth a visit.*

#### **Judges Guild forum at Necromancer Games:**

[necromancergames.yuku.com/#dir-6](http://necromancergames.yuku.com/#dir-6)

*Good discussion with little sign of Edition War shenanigans.*

#### **Judges Guild at The Acaem:**

[www.acaem.com/jg/index.html](http://www.acaem.com/jg/index.html)

*A guide for collectors, with a nice discussion forum.*

#### **RPGNow JG store:**

[www.rpgnow.com/index.php?manufacturers\\_id=31](http://www.rpgnow.com/index.php?manufacturers_id=31)

*Selling PDF versions of many classic JG titles.*

#### **Adventure Games Publishing:**

[www.adventuregamespubs.com/](http://www.adventuregamespubs.com/)

*Specializing in the Wilderlands of High Adventure, a modern updating and expansion of the classic JG setting. Great stuff!*

#### **Majestic Wilderlands:**

[home.earthlink.net/~wilderlands/](http://home.earthlink.net/~wilderlands/)

*Personal campaign notes of Fight On! contributor and all-around cool guy Rob Conley.*

#### **Bill Owen's Ebay Stuff:**

[search.ebay.com/\\_W0QQsassZgamedesign4u](http://search.ebay.com/_W0QQsassZgamedesign4u)

*Original Guildmaster Owen sometimes sells unique JG items.*

The town was Tegel Village, and the scary Poe-like mansion we were exploring was *Tegel Manor*. I have been a gamer since that long-ago afternoon, and owe many of the best times of my life to my two dear friends who left us this year. When Clark Peterson and I began Necromancer Games in 1999, we had no idea that we would soon become friends with Gary Gygax and Bob Bledsaw, two of the heroes of our youth. As teens, we never dreamed that we would actually publish their works and collaborate on new books with both of them. It was a dream fulfilled that dated back to that 11-year old kid running from a skeleton.

While Gary is hailed by most as the creator of the hobby, the early releases from TSR were few, far between, and relatively devoid of detail. No game can survive without enough material to establish a market presence. While the game espoused creating your own worlds, dungeons and adventures, in the early days few really knew how. Sure, we had read Burroughs, Tolkien, Ashton-Smith and Howard, but truly new or unique ideas were sparse, and short of parroting Hyperborea, few of us (at least publicly) really had much besides one-shot adventures to link to the very schematic *Greyhawk*. Bob Bledsaw and Judges Guild changed all that. I believe that we owe TSR and Gary a debt for creating our hobby, but that we owe Bob Bledsaw and Judges Guild an equal debt for putting enough on the table for everyone to eat. Judges Guild made the game playable.

Judges Guild was the first company to publish a Fantasy Role Playing city and campaign products. Judges Guild was the first company to publish a FRP magazine, predating *Dragon*. Judges Guild was the first company to provide outdoor encounter tables, urban encounter tables, any number of innovative rules, a GMs screen, and the classic *Ready Ref Sheets*, which to this day include some of the most inspired and useful tables for GMs to use in play. Judges Guild also produced the official tournament adventure modules for every early GenCon.

Bob provided many industry firsts. He published the first cohesive campaign, the “world” outside the dungeon. The release of the *City State of the Invincible Overlord* in 1977 and the subsequent release of *Wilderlands of High Fantasy* added dimensions yet unheard of in role-playing games. By the early 1980s, TSR had released a couple of dozen seemingly unconnected adventures (the exception being the GDQ series) and a short stat-filled booklet supporting the World of Greyhawk. Judges Guild had over 80 adventures, mapped settings, three detailed cities, and even several areas that were filled with local politics and small-scale details (down to 1 mile hexes!). I would encourage anyone who has not read *Witches Court Marshes* or *Shield Maidens of Sea Rune* to do so, and marvel at what you find there. It is the writer’s belief that such a cohesive setting has never been duplicated...and no one has ever duplicated those totally cool parchment maps.

All of this led me to select the Wilderlands as my campaign setting in 1978, and I have never looked back. I have spent literally thousands of hours with over 100 players mapping our way through the world. The City States have probably represented every City adventure, regardless of location, in all my gaming experience. The most important work of my writing career was (with about 20 other writers (including Fight On! #3’s Rob Conley, Gabor Lux, and Calithena – Ig)) the renovation of the original world itself. Taking Bob’s one-line descriptions, getting his vision on the details, and fleshing out the Wilderlands was an amazing effort, but it resulted in an amazing work. I have said before and I say again now that if a gamer only had one book to play from for the rest of his life, he could use the Wilderlands and never run out of material.

Bob designed the Wilderlands as a “First Edition” style campaign. This style of play can best be described as a “hex-crawl”. Travel and exploration are the name of the game. It does not direct what you do and where you go. You as players select that. The GM simply reacts to your wishes. It is full of plot hooks, but does not direct your movements or actions – this is not *Dragonlance*. It is also important to note that the world is what it is – there is no “level of the world”. It’s possible for a first level party to stumble onto an ancient red dragon, or a 10<sup>th</sup> level group to encounter a single kobold. Knowing when to run is important. Dungeons are usually very nasty places, so take great care when exploring them. They are also the best places to find treasure and earn experience.

I have never met anyone besides Bob who had the imagination to set in place such a vast volume of material. He shocked me once by explaining the politics of the Holy Cities in the desert lands and describing in detail the leadership’s disagreements with one another. Keep in mind that these represent 5 relatively obscure cities out of the 2000 or so present in the Wilderlands! The crazy part is that in reviewing the manuscript (about 400,000 words at one point), Bob had comments on hundreds of locations and how he saw them being ever so slightly different than we had described them. I consider myself a pretty creative guy, and have a vivid imagination for all things game related...but even after 30 years of playing in the Wilderlands, I have trouble keeping all the local areas straight. Bob never did.

I worked later with Bob and with a very talented writer named Pat Lawinger to pull together a highly detailed reworking of the City State. The level of detail and creative genius poured into this by Bob and Pat is remarkable. Just reading certain parts of the underworld brought me back to my first time gaming, and that irrational fear and rapid heartbeat caused by the vision of that skeleton chasing me.

Bob was a wonderful guy. He was kind, always took time to talk to everyone, and would sit for hours discussing the

finer points of life in the City State with anyone who wanted to. He was a joy to work with, and so down to earth you almost forgot that you were actually sitting down with one of the founders of the industry. I for one will sorely miss him. I still recall his last email to me, when we discussed Gary's death even as his own was impending. His closing words are for all to hear:

"Frodo Lives!"

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## The Origin of the "Flying Turkey"

by Bob Bledsaw II

I was a lad of thirteen when the first boxes of printed Judges Guild product got stacked in my bedroom. I had aspirations of being an artist, with some talent in cartooning. My father came to me and said that he needed a logo for the company, perhaps a man riding a dragon instead of a horse, "waving a cutlass like one of Teddy Roosevelt's Roughriders." A dragon felt a bit too TSR-ish, so I offered a Pegasus, as it was horse-like enough, and he agreed. I drew the "flying turkey" in 30 minutes, and off he went to have it printed. It was in pencil with intricate shading and detail, but the printer informed him that it would work better in multipurpose application if it was inked. Dad took out an engineering .00 pen from his pocket (a leftover



from his work at General Electric) and inked it quickly on the counter while the printer looked on. Because of his rush, he failed to ink the fingers of the raised right hand and accidentally faced it back. That is why the 'flying turkey', as he called it, has, if you look closely, a left hand on his right arm.

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## My Time with Bob & the Guild

by Bill Owen, co-founder of the Judges Guild

Bob and I started Judges Guild to make play aids for *D&D* that we would have wanted in our fantasy campaigns. We had no publishing experience. I had just a bit of graphic design knowledge (from a travel agency promotions job) and awareness of hobby industry issues (my father had a chain of toy stores when I was growing up). Bob was a designer at GE and had drafting experience. With at least partly an engineer's temperament, he was also a sort of gamer-poet, incredibly widely read in fantasy and sci-fi. Our age difference of 11 years made us somewhat the odd couple. But we were similarly obsessive about games and tinkering with them. I came from Avalon Hill games and miniatures (World War II Tractics and home grown Civil War rules). Bob also had played Avalon Hill games and made up his own miniature rules.

When we went to TSR in July of 1976 we wanted their permission to produce play aids for *D&D*. They gave it, but thought it would be as popular as lead balloons. They asked, "Why would you buy something that your players could also buy and see everything?!" I guess there were enough people who didn't want to spend the money or ruin the suspense and fun! But we really had no idea it would be so successful. I researched printing options and made rudimentary business plans. Bob worked like the dickens to finish the City State map and flesh out the occupants. I did several break-even studies to see how many we had to sell to get back our \$200 investments. It took longer to do those studies than it did to exceed that break-even level at our first sale at GenCon '76! People's eyes would pop when they came around the corner and saw our giant City State map.

32 years later, I wonder whether we actually gave too much value in those early offerings. The City State was larger than it needed to be to be impressive. And yet it made it hard to match or top. As time went on, others criticized us for our physical quality being kind of cheap. Okay, but there was another reason for this besides making our products very accessible (important in itself!). How comfortable would you have been writing in the margins of a coffee-table sort of art book? Wargaming was transitioning from being a labor of love to big business and we were more interested in substance than style. Perhaps Bob carried out this mission of minimizing prices

too stubbornly. Once he had more than three full-time employees things had to change.

I'll admit I was less comfortable with the artwork that was used after I was gone (spring 1978...so just two years). Mostly I felt that the covers should be a combination of nice fantasy art and snippets of the maps therein. We were map fanatics and had been big on barony clearance. But art within the book was a toothache. We didn't really have an art budget and Bob was overworked as it was. His drawings were just right. But I think he was too modest to do it more. The bigger issue is how even nice art could have the effect of distracting from the judges' visions. It had slowly dawned on me how every person in our games had unique and completely different visions of what individual monsters looked like. When I realize how "stupid" their monster descriptions sounded, it occurred to me that my vision might turn their stomachs too! Better that our play aids left out art and much was left unseen – like the original horror movie, *The Haunting*. The best money the film producers spent was on the writing.

Increasingly, we brought in outside contributors. The writing may have lacked consistency but if you didn't like one item much, you might find some other useful bits, and there was a lot of other inexpensive material that we churned out. Bob and I were like King Midas, everything we touched turned to gold. As long as we could keep the quality up, our products would break even about 20% of the way into the initial press run! We had stores, distributors and loyal fans that would buy thousands the moment an item came out. This was a heady brew to drink!

Of all our products, my favorite was *Tegel Manor*. It was a great product but I loved it for all the fun we had at Bob's dining room table long before the Guild. Between dizzying battles and anxious chaos there were the lighter moments of all Bob's puns and goofy tombstone rhymes. Though I shouldn't imply that only Bob made puns, alliterations and weird prose – I am guilty as charged! Oddly enough, the City State didn't hold much appeal to me just because I never "went" there! More on my game playing a bit later.

You might think all this success was all wonderful. Mostly it was exhilarating, exciting, and possibly caused our self-perceptions to get inflated. Or at least mine. I can't speak for Bob; he was very humble for being such a prolific author. I was more the publisher. We had our troubles too. I goofed on how I set up some things, like the grid on the Campaign Maps and the short-sighted lettering of the Installments from letter "I". Then there was the arguing about what the latest cryptic threats from TSR meant. Bob and I would argue but felt we couldn't afford lawyers. Maybe we should have; I don't think TSR's copyright has ever been tested properly. So we'd argue some more. Marc Summerlott told us, "You're just like you're married but you can't kiss and make up!" Finally, we negotiated a royal-

ty deal that was better than we ever dreamed: we got to reproduce copyrighted material and to put a banner on each cover that said "Approved For Use With *Dungeons & Dragons*"! Great for us but I think great for *D&D* as well.

TSR's position as "Hobby Ogre" extended to some of their products' tone and seemed overly serious or dark to my taste. Bob also wanted to balance our products with a lighter touch. I've seen commentary that berated our puns and comic-book styling. Oddly enough, Bob might not have taken the comic-book comment as criticism. Different strokes for different folks.

Another unsettling development is that as I worked non-stop on wargame publishing, I lost my interest in playing games! I didn't know how to pace myself like a normal forty-hour job. It wasn't just getting lots of money, although I was making much more than I had at my father's travel agency. I think what pushed me forward at a breakneck pace was a combination of the kudos from the Guildmembers and hobby stores and keeping up my end for my buddy, Bob. But I was burning out. Bob had both the stabilizing influence of a family and the need to support them. Plus 11 years of life experience points. I was an unmarried 23-year-old guy with not enough perspective. I probably should have talked to someone about it. But King Midas didn't, did he?

After I sold my half of Judges Guild, I returned to travel and got back into playing games and spending more time with Bob as gamers again. I could count on Bob to play almost anything. He was an omnivore, gaming-wise! We had lots of fun together and really the best part of Judges Guild for me was Bob. Bob wasn't a quitter, he'd play until he won or was down to one guy with a pistol but no more bullets. The real issue is that he wanted everyone to have fun; quitting when things looked bad for him would have meant robbing his opponent of the chance to roll hot dice. Either he was a gentleman or that was his nature – he would stubbornly fight on!

After the heady Judges Guild experience, I had to be humbly brought down to earth. I reversed my personal mission statement of "bringing fantasy to life" to return to my tour group planning and "bringing life to fantasy." And while I miss Bob now, he also inspired me with his gentle faith that promises 'we shall see each other again!' This fall I will be releasing a much more detailed history of our founding of Judges Guild and my friendship with Bob Bledsaw. Along with 3-18 times as much purple prose as this brief article, there will be lots of photos and anecdotes. The full-color booklet will be available through my site: [www.g-design.us/jg](http://www.g-design.us/jg) or via eBay, moniker 'gamedesign 4u'. In the meantime, you can find me at [www.acaeum.com/forum/viewforum.php?f=13](http://www.acaeum.com/forum/viewforum.php?f=13) under my name, Bill Owen. I want to thank all the JG fans for their support and for being part of my short but life-changing time there. Ω

# MUTANT FUTURE

Monsters by Max Davenport

## Bug Burr

*No. Enc.* usually 1

*Move:* As host creature

*Armor Class:* As host creature, but at least AC 6

*Hit Dice:* As host creature + 2 hp per die

*Attacks:* 1 (Bite/caustic pulp) + attacks of host creature

*Damage:* 2-12 or 1-6, plus other attacks as host creature

*Save:* as Level 7 monster

*Morale:* 8

*Loot:* Usually none



*Description:* Bug burrs are invasive symbionts, carnivorous mutant gourds that hunt and reproduce by taking root in the bodies of other creatures. The body of a creature that is overgrown by a bug burr is encased in tough greenish fibers and may sprout leafy tendrils. Its nervous and circulatory systems are completely entwined by innumerable tiny roots, and a brightly colored pumpkin or squash-like fruit with a toothy maw and sunken optical pits replaces the host creature's head. Bug burrs are skilled, intelligent predators but not sentient. They attack with a vicious bite in addition to whatever other natural weapons their host possesses. Up to three times per day they can spit a gout of caustic pulp and seeds in a 20" cone. All creatures within range take 1-6 damage and must save versus poison or be implanted with bug burr seeds. Those affected will not feel any immediate ill effects, but after 2-12 hours they will suffer severe pains as the seeds begin to sprout. This does not inflict any damage, but is so agonizing that victims take a cumulative -1 per day penalty to all attack and melee damage rolls, and a 10' per day penalty to their movement rates. After 5-8 days they will be hardly able to move at all, and will seek a secluded place to finish their transform-

ation into a new bug burr. Bug burrs do not use technology, weapons or tools, nor do they value treasure. On occasion a humanoid victim may still carry goods or coins if its gear and clothing have not yet rotted away. They are solitary and aggressive, but can be tamed if a way can be found to control their seed growth.

*Physical Mutations:* As host creature plus energy resistance, natural armor (fibrous hide)

*Mental Mutations:* Nil (any mental mutations of the host creature are lost in the transformation)

## Example: Cave Bear Bug Burr

*No. Enc.* 1

*Move:* 120' (40')

*Armor Class:* 5

*Hit Dice:* 7 + 14 hp

*Attacks:* 3 (2 claws, bite or caustic pulp)

*Damage:* 1-4/1-4/2-12 or 1-6

*Save:* Level 7

*Morale:* 8

*Loot:* None

*Special Attack:* Bear hug for 2-16 damage if both claws hit

## Broken Men

*No. Enc.* 1-4 (3-12)

*Move:* 90' (30') but see below

*Armor Class:* 8

*Hit Dice:* 7

*Attacks:* varies, see below

*Damage:* 1-4 per attack

*Save:* Level 7

*Morale:* 10

*Loot:* chance of techno-gadgets or drugs, chemicals and medical devices

*Description:* When gene sequencing programs go haywire or nanoviruses infect the spawning vats, clone factories sometimes produce the strange mutants called Broken Men. They vary wildly in form, their blandly human appearance twisted by misshapen limbs and multiple legs, arms and heads. Arms grow into spikes, claws or whips. They hop, limp and crawl on backwards feet or serpentine legs. Some have two or three heads and some have no heads at all, eyes and mouths gaping from their chests or elsewhere. The tables below can be used to determine the forms of individuals or groups encountered. Broken men are semi-intelligent at best. They mumble and titter amongst themselves but have no semblance of language or culture. They are motivated chiefly by hunger for decaying flesh, and have no compunction about devouring their own dead. Some venture from the clone factories to rob graves and even to hunt live prey, traveling only at night since 90% suffer from albinism. A broken man attacks with whatever natural weapons it possesses, up to 6 attacks per round based on its number of functional arms. It may also attack with its mental mutations.

*Physical Mutations:* albinism.

*Mental Mutations:* One mental mutation, plus one per head, determined randomly.

*Heads:* Roll d4-1 for quantity.

*Senses:* Roll 1d8: 1-3 Normal, 4 Echolocation, 5 Thermal Vision, 6 Ultraviolet Vision, 7 Unusual Senses (e.g. 360 vision, motion sensitivity, heightened scent), 8 Unusual Sense (precognitive sight: +1 to hit and saving throws, never surprised).

*Arms:* Roll d6 for quantity and d8 for type (roll type once per individual or once per arm – attack damage is always 1-4 per arm): 1-3 Normal, 4 Claw, 5 Spike or blade, 6 Stump (arm useless for attacking), 7 Telescoping (up to 10' reach), 8 Whip.

*Legs:* Roll d4 for quantity and d8 for type (roll type once per individual or once per leg): 1-3 Normal, 4 Back-wards, 5 Serpentine or tentacled, 6 Springing (leaps of up to 20' once per round), 7 Stilt-like (Movement 120' [90']), 8 Stump (GM's choice whether this affects movement).



### **Cobrilla**

*No. Enc:* 1 male or mated pair & 1-3 young of ½ strength

*Move:* 150' (50'); flying 90' (30')

*Armor Class:* 8

*Hit Dice:* 10

*Attacks:* 4 (2 fists, bite, sting)

*Damage:* 2-5/2-5/1-8/1-4 + poison

*Save:* Level 10

*Morale:* 8 (with young 10)

*Loot:* Chance of small quantities of coinage and shiny metal objects.

*Description:* Also called sky-apes, cobrillas dwell on cliff-sides, forested mountains or ruined comm towers and skyscrapers. A cobrilla has the powerful arms and head of a gorilla, a serpentine lower body, and batlike wings. It is covered in iridescent scales save for a thick ruff of black or red hair. Heavy fangs jut from its lower jaw, and its tail is tipped with a wicked double-pronged stinger. Most cobril-

las have animal intelligence, but occasionally a group is encountered with limited linguistic ability, even a few words of the common tongue. Though not carnivorous, they are territorial in the extreme, swooping down to threaten any who approach their aeries. They attack with fists, teeth and tail. Their venom causes an additional 3-18 damage per sting (save for half).

*Physical Mutations:* wings, poison, quick healing.

*Mental Mutations:* mental reflection.

### **Bone Eater**

*No. Enc:* 2-8 or more

*Move:* 90' (30')

*Armor Class:* 4

*Hit Dice:* 3

*Attacks:* 2 (snout)

*Damage:* 1-4/1-4 and see below

*Save:* Level 2

*Morale:* 7

*Loot:* See below

*Description:* Evolved from pangolins, bone eaters resemble large armadillos with heavy scales and long tails flattening at the end in a bony fluke. They have two long, flexible snouts with which they attack their prey. On a successful strike, a hollow tongue punctures the victim's flesh and begins to siphon osseous tissue. Thereafter the bone eater will automatically do 1-4 damage +1 per round of bone drain (2nd round 1-4+1, 3rd round 1-4+2, etc.) until it or its victim is killed. Any creature that loses more than half of its hit points to a bone eater is immobilized, and will be unable to move until they have recovered to 75% of full HP. Humanoids reduced to 0 HP by bone eaters must save or rise in 2-12 minutes as jellymen (q.v.). Since their heavy carapaces make them slow, bone eaters favor ambush attacks. Favored tactics include rolling up into tight balls and hiding among stones or lurking near the gear of previous victims. Most spectacularly they have been known to roll into balls and tumble from heights of up to 20 feet onto their victims.

*Physical Mutations:* natural armor (heavy carapace)

### **Jellyman**

*No. Enc:* 4-16

*Move:* 60' (20')

*Armor Class:* 8

*Hit Dice:* 2

*Attacks:* 1 (slap)

*Damage:* 1-8

*Save:* Level 1

*Morale:* 12

*Loot:* Nil

*Description:* Bone eaters carry a bacterium which causes their humanoid victims to undergo a horrible transformation. A jellyman is a mindless humanoid puddle of flesh with only the barest semblance of its former self and a constant hunger for any and all organic matter it can

devour. It can move along walls, ceilings, and floors, dropping on living prey from above or rising from the ground in a quivering parody of its former body. It attacks with a groping acidic pseudopod. On a natural 20 it engulfs its foe, doing double damage initially and an automatic 1-8 additional each succeeding round. Jelly-men are immune to poison and mind effects but take double damage from fire.

*Physical Mutations:* Boneless, Toxic

*Mental Mutations:* Mindless

### **Slink (Stink Lion)**

*No. Enc:* 1-4

*Move:* 180' (60')

*Armor Class:* 6

*Hit Dice:* 6

*Attacks:* 3 (2 claws, 1 bite)

*Damage:* 1-4/1-4/2-16

*Save:* Level 6

*Morale:* 9

*Loot:* Nil

*Description:* These mutant skunks have the bold black and white coloration of their original stock but the lean, powerful shape and vicious fangs of a saber-toothed cat. Though they are stealthy hunters their striped pelts make poor camouflage. To compensate, slinks exude clouds of a sweet-smelling, stupefying odor to lull and weaken their prey. This odor affects all within 120' of a slink, causing mild euphoria and slowed reflexes. Creatures failing to save vs. poison will automatically be surprised and will suffer -2 to initiative, armor class and attack rolls. If more than one slink is encountered it will be a mother and young (half strength). The mother's morale is 12 while her young live; if any are slain she will attempt to flee with any surviving kits. A lone slink will be male, with a 25% chance of being in rut. In this aggressive state the male slink produces an acrid musk instead of euphoric gas. Though it has no effects in combat this odor is all but impossible to remove from cloth and leather and will cause a -1 to all reaction rolls till afflicted creatures bathe and replace gear. Stink lions in rut are enraged by the colors black and white.

*Physical Mutations:* Enlarged canines, Gas generation

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## The Least Demons

non-canonical *Empire of the Petal Throne* by Baz Blatt

It is well known to all sorcerers and priests in Tsolyánu that Tékumel is merely one world among many and that beyond this plane lie the many worlds of the sharétkoi, the demons. Some of these demons are paltry creatures, the animals and insects of their world; others are of equal stature to man, while still others are far greater. Some heretical thinkers say that there is no great divide between the greatest of the known demons and the Gods themselves. Of more practical use is the fact that priests of

a God on one plane can call on the assistance of fellow worshippers from another plane.

**Rules:** The 7<sup>th</sup> skill of the Sorcerers and Priests skill lists should have an option, Demonology, open to those who know at least one Ancient Language. This is not a prerequisite to summoning demons, but enables a spell caster to negotiate with them for services over and above brief assistance in combat once they have been summoned, and to make informed guesses as to the nature and origin of any demonic creature encountered. The Group I spell 'Creatures' should be replaced by the spell 'Summoning of Brethren from Beyond', enabling a magician to call on 1d3 1 hit dice demons allied to his own deity. These can then perform various tasks as detailed in the descriptions below, but all will at the very least fight for the summoner for 3 turns if asked. (The Group II and III versions of the spell 'Creatures' will likewise be replaced, once descriptions of the 3 and 5 dice demons have published. The Group II version has the option of summoning 2d3 1-dice demons, the Group III version the option of summoning 4d3 1-dice demons.) A summoner may make a deal with one or more creatures before an adventure by using one of the special ritual summoning chambers of their temples, though some payment may be required for those not part of the scholarly hierarchy. A successful negotiation will mean that a later use of the summoning spell will bring the previously contacted demon, who will perform the services agreed. Some summoners build up relationships with certain individual demons, getting to know their particular foibles and scales of payment.

### **Hnálla: The Radiant Ones**

NA: Special, HD: 1, AC 4, T: nil, M -/24", L: 0.

The radiant ones are levitating glowing ovoids some 50 cm tall, devoid of any surface feature. They talk in a melodious unemotional version of the native language of the summoner and can manipulate objects using telekin-esis, punching their foes with invisible bolts of raw force which are very hard to parry, ignoring any bonus to AC due to a shield. They defend themselves with electricity in a similar manner to Ru'ún, and anyone striking them with a steel weapon takes 1 die damage from electric shock. They will serve for longer periods in return for clear crystals, especially diamonds, and will be very keen to acquire any ancient technological items or power cells. They have considerable knowledge of such devices, and can aid a summoner in researching the use of such devices and even help repair them if suitable materials are available. They can also use their fine telekinetic manipulation to open modern locks and disable traps, usually commenting on the crudity of such devices and the ease of the task, disparaging the current fallen state of Tékumeli humanity. (*Any resemblance to the Drone class robots from Iain Banks' Culture novels is purely intentional.*)



### **Drá: The Flautists of the Mighty Orchestra**

NA: Special, HD: 1, AC 6, T: nil, M -/18", L: 0

These creatures are only partly corporeal on Tékumel's plane, and consist of a levitating vaguely spherical body made up of gelatinous tubes and peculiarly formed orifices. They continually emit melodious chords vaguely reminiscent of a clarinet, flute or organ, backed by angelic singing or chanting. They cannot be attacked physically except by steel or enchanted weapons or by magic, and they cannot physically assault any solid creature. They can however use their eerie song to hypnotise and immobilise a foe who fails to save vs Eyes; the person can fight back if attacked. They can also use the Group I spell Fear to cause an enemy to flee in panic. In any case their stirring music will give +1 to attack rolls of any worshippers of the gods of stability within 30 feet, and -1 to the attacks of any change worshippers. They cannot talk as such, only communicating by parroting anything said to them in the form of a musical phrase, but can be persuaded to take spoken messages to a named person anywhere on Tékumel, or sometimes even on a plane beyond, in return for being sung or played to on an instrument. Being incorporeal they can move through any solid object and are unhindered by the majority of foes, and though slow for a flying creature they will always get through eventually. (*With thanks to HP Lovecraft, Cthulhu and Azathoth.*)



### **Thúmis and Keténgku: The Dwellers in the Mist**

NA: Special, HD: 1, AC 6, T: nil, M 9", L: 0d

These tall, thin humanoid beings appear wreathed in a garment of mist and are only visible as dark patches with the impression of large sorrowful eyes looking through a veil. When they fight this mist expands, confusing friend and foe alike – any attack made within the mist has a 15% chance of fumbling and being accidentally directed at an ally, in addition to the base chance of fumbling for those with low Dex, and any bonus to hit or damage gained

from Intelligence is nullified as people flail about randomly at fleeting shapes. The Dwellers themselves are perfectly able to see, and reach out languidly with long clawed hands to tap their foes. Each tap leaves a wound of 1d-1 damage. The Dwellers never speak: they merely nod and point towards things they want with gaunt hands, and hold their palms up in admonition when they are presented with an unfair deal. In return for magic scrolls the Dwellers can assist in a number of other ways. They can become partly immaterial and merge with a summoner, surrounding him in a pearly grey nimbus of cloud which gives +2 AC, +2 on all saves, and +4 vs Illusions or magic directed at his mind. Any hits against the summoner do damage to the Dweller first however, and when the Dweller reaches 0 HP the mist fades and the bonuses are lost. The Dwellers can also cast Cure Minor Wounds on 1d6 people at once, Cure Serious Wounds on one person, and Cure Disease and Neutralise Poison, but will only do so in return for scrolls of spells of equivalent power.

### **Avánthe: The Gnomes of Dedé**

NA: Special, HD: 1, AC 4, T: nil, M 12"/tunnel 6", L: 0

Servitors of Dedé the Lord of Earth, these brown-skinned creatures are a mere meter tall, with four thickly muscled arms, huge hands, four legs, a pot bellied body and a round bald head with one wide yellow eye, no nose and a wide mouth. They are immensely strong and they punch, kick and headbutt foes into submission with a +1 attack for 1d+1 damage. They are always hungry, and in return for large amounts of food – which must always be strictly vegetarian and accompanied by copious quantities of hékka beer – they will help the summoner dig tunnels and demolish doors or buildings, or hold back foes by building earthworks or walls if stone is available.

### **Dilinála: Daughters of the Sea**

NA: Special, HD: 1-1, AC 2, T: nil, M 12"/swim 12", L:0

The Daughters appear as Aridáni warriors with delicately scaled pale green skin dressed in highly decorated blue armour made of giant sea shells, wielding elegantly designed polearms with speed and grace. They can walk on water or swim beneath it as easily as they can run, and fight at +2 to hit and +2 damage. In return for blue gems and blue tinted glass coral they will lend one item of their equipment for a short time. Their helmets confer the ability to breathe under water, their sandals enable water walking and they will lend their polearms for one formal combat against a male only. These do +2 damage and can be used by any female character as if she was skilled in the weapon and with the same potential for multi-dice damage as a Warrior of the same level.

### **Belkhánu and Qón: The Áspisai**

NA: Special, HD: 1-1, AC 4, T: nil, M 3"/30", L: 0

Gold and iridescent green dragonflies with a 1.3 meter wingspan, these beautiful and delicate creatures strike at blinding speed with the razor-sharp edges of their wings.

In addition to doing ½ die of damage, each attack also drains one use of any spell or magical ability known by the target, starting with professional skills and ending with Group III enchantments. If the target is an apparition or a summoned creature it is immediately dispelled or dismissed, though creatures of 3 dice or more get a save vs magic. Undead attacked by Áspisai must also save vs magic or be immediately de-animated. In return for gold leaf to burnish their carapaces the Áspisai will guide the summoner to safety from wherever he may be in the multiverse via a series of nexus points. Some these transits across different planes may be fairly hazardous, but there is never any danger of accidentally walking into a plane devoid of breathable air or with an unsurvivable temperature or pressure. One's sanity might be at risk when traversing two or four dimensional planes (five dimensions are a no-no for humans and most other sentient species, though Pé Chói can just about cope; six plus are too weird for all but the Mihállí), but you will probably arrive at your home plane and time physically intact. Áspisai will also act as magical body-guards, hanging around the summoner in an invisible and incorporeal state. They will then appear to intercept any hostile spell directed at him, taking it through the nearest nexus point for disposal. Only one spell can be disposed of in this fashion per Áspisai guardian.

#### **Karakán: Lightning Bugs**

NA: Special, HD: 1+1, AC 2, T: nil, M 9", L: 0

These are giant stag-beetle-like insects with shiny silver carapaces and glowing lamps for eyes. Between the tips of their metallic mandibles is a constant electric arc which gives foes a nasty 1d+1 shock. Against foes with metal armour this is doubled, and anyone using a metal weapon against them who misses has a 50% chance of being parried by the spark and receiving a 2 dice shock in the arm. A fumble against a Lightning Bug automatically hits the spark. Two bugs can create a bigger spark between them, stretching up to 3 meters and doing 1d+3 damage to anyone who touches it. It is only about 60cm off the floor so brave souls can jump over it if they make a Dexterity roll. In return for spools of silver wire wound around amber rods the lightning bugs will also permanently magnetise any metal object, giving it anti-magic properties, or they will 'spot-weld' any two metal objects together. The usual bug is a meter long and 40 cm high, but larger versions have been encountered with correspondingly larger sparks. The very biggest are five or more meters long and comparable to a Lightning Bringer siege engine in their damage.

#### **Chegárra: Legion of the Red Axe of Contingent Justice**

NA: Special, HD: 1+1, AC 4, T: nil, M 9", L: 0

These are handsome, bearded warriors dressed in red-lacquered antique Salarvyáni-style armour and wielding red two-handed battle axes at +1 to hit and +3 damage. Legend has it that they were a crack unit in the service of the Fisherman Kings, dedicated to wiping out corruption among the nobility, who fell afoul of the Black Priesthood

of Ksárul. This is nonsense according to the Ksárulites, as Chegárra was not contacted by Pavár until several millennia after the Fisherman Kings were no more, but it is a fact that the Legion speak an ultra-archaic dialect of Bednálljan and wear armour of that period. They are not very reliable servants however, and will inevitably involve any summoner in a debate (in Bednálljan) about the honour and justice of his actions in bringing them to this plane and requiring them to slay his foes. If they decide they are not following a just cause they may turn on the summoner. If however the summoner is eloquent enough in his pleas and can make sufficient citations of legal precedent they will serve without further payment, and may provide assistance over and above that asked for. Any law code will do, but that of the Fisherman Kings (unfortunately only known in fragmentary form) has greatest weight, and summoners must be aware that the Legion's enthusiastic pursuit of their own version of justice may lead to a mini-crusade that violates the Concordat or breaks Imperial law. Their usual help other than fighting is to advise the summoner when someone is telling a lie in his presence (and offering to decapitate him on the spot), leading a military unit in a forced march at double speed (though any slackers will be decapitated), dispelling illusions and enabling anyone near them save vs Illusion at +2 (and insisting on hunting down and decapitating the lying illusionist who cast the spell). They are also prone to sexism, a vice of their apparent historical age, and any female summoners will have even greater trouble controlling them. Further, they will fight at -2 to hit against female foes for fear of hurting the dear ladies. This does not apply to their hereditary enemies, the followers of Ksárul and The Daughters of the Sea (above).

#### **Hrü'ü and Wurú: Notules**

NA: Special, HD: 1+1, AC 6, T: nil, M 3"/10"+2" per hit point, L: 0

The Notules are fluttering scraps of unreflective darkness, like a piece of the night sky given animation and a desire to kill. They are extremely hard to hit in the dark, gaining +2AC in twilight or in shadowy areas, +6AC in darkness. If slain with a slashing weapon they rise again as two Notules, each with (original HP-1)/2 hit points. They are immune to damage from blunt weapons (though they will take damage from any magical bonuses such a weapon may have) and take half damage from piercing weapons. A Notule which starts with 1 HP is slain permanently on any hit and fades away to nothing. Their attack is to drain heat energy. They do 1 damage per hp they have, gaining 1HP per 5 damage they inflict. A save vs magic halves this damage. In addition they drain 2x damage inflicted from the targets Strength, which can only be regained by magical healing. On a critical hit they plaster themselves across the target's face, blinding him and suffocating him in 3 rounds, in addition to any damage they may do by draining his body heat. Any attacks against the Notule will also harm their victim at half damage. They dislike bright light and attack at -2 within the confines of a Light spell or in open

sunlight. They will try to attack the source of any Light spell in the hopes of dousing it. They have no other functions and do not bargain or negotiate. Some more powerful sorcerers do have spells to keep them trapped in little metal boxes as surprises for their enemies, and others can direct them to seek out and assassinate named victims. (*Stolen from The Book of the New Sun by Gene Wolfe.*)

### **Ksáruł: Those Who Stand Aside**

NA: Special, HD: 1, AC 4, T: nil, M 15", L: 0

These creatures are never actually seen, their presence being announced by their thin whispery voices and the hair-raising feeling that one is not so much being watched as quietly appraised for nutritional potential. At best they are seen as a flickering indistinct shadow cast from behind the observer that tells nothing of their shape or size. They do reveal themselves fully to those they attack, but those who survive remember nothing clearly and describe fur, feathers, slime, claws, tentacles, eel-like bodies and avian demeanours, each victim saying something different. They do not attack physically, but deploy magical terror and shifting shadows. Each round they can terrify a victim, as per the Fear spell. They roll to attack as per AC9, their mere touch being enough to create the effect. Anyone who fails a save vs Magic must lose 1d20 Intelligence as well as flee in abject terror, and those reaching 0 intelligence have gone permanently insane. Those who fail must then make second save vs Eyes must be made or the person takes 2d6 damage from an immediate heart seizure, losing another 1d20 Intelligence, and if they survive that they must make a third save or lose yet another 1d20 Intelligence and be paralysed with fear, making an additional save per round to be merely terrified and run away. They do not ask for payment, they just quietly steal what they like from a summoners' goods and depart, usually taking magic scrolls, talismans and amulets, but sometimes they will take the summoners' child or spouse. They can be called upon to help translate difficult writing. They do not know Thu'úsa or the Tongue of the Lord of Worms, but do know Sunúz and Mihállí, as well as the alphabets of other non-humans. They can also guide a party to their nearest nexus point, but there is no guarantee that the point will be safe to use; it may lead to an airless void or the heart of a sun, or a plane infested with vicious inimical demons. They cannot tell. Finally they can also follow the summoner in incorporeal form and materialise to push him aside when he is about to take a blow that will take him to 0 HP or less. They will do this once only for any given payment.

### **Grugánu: The People of the Monolith**

NA: Special, HD: 1, AC 4, T: nil, M 0"/special, L: 0

These really are monoliths, 2.5 meters tall, 1 meter wide and 25cm thick, made of some very dark and almost opaque glassy substance. They do not move as such but can teleport themselves into position near their targets (usually surprising them) or wherever the summoner would like them to deploy. They are masters of density and

substance, and have a number of peculiar forms of assault. They can make themselves as hard as diamond and heavier than lead, giving themselves AC 0, but are unable to attack while in this state. They can also make a target semi-solid, making it impossible for them to attack physically as their weapons just pass through solid objects without causing harm. A target can only be harmed by steel weapons or magic while in such a state, and is in danger of being carried away by any psychic winds that may be blowing into or out of nearby nexus points. They may also make a person and their weapons very heavy and dense, slowing their movement and rate of attack by half, but increasing their AC by 2. All of these attacks are automatic, requiring no throw to hit and allowing no saving throw with a range of 20 feet. They also increase the chances of spellcasting success by any worshippers of Grugánu or Ksáruł within 20 feet by 15%, and reduce the saving throw against their magic by 2. They communicate by producing pale blue writing on their dark glassy surfaces, and know Sunúz, Ai Chè, Duruób, N'lüssá and Llyáni. They demand human sacrifices in return for their services. These are made in a particularly unpleasant manner; the sacrifice is bound and placed in a magical square ten feet in front of the Monolith. A tiny spot of light appears on the monolith which then sucks up the victim, stretching his physical being out like a strand of screaming spaghetti. A typical use of such a demon is to temporarily block a corridor or hold up a collapsing tunnel, though canny magicians have summoned them while they are falling into very deep chasms and had the monolith make them temporarily incorporeal, or had them make heavy golden treasures lighter and this more portable. These demons can also act as a kind of transplanar webchat panel. A summoner may ask one of a pair of demons to teleport to a friend's location and then speak to the one that remains. It translates his message and telepathically sends it to its mate, who then projects the message in the form of writing on its surface, sending back any reply made by the summoner's colleague in the same fashion. The only drawback is the comparative obscurity of the languages known by the Monoliths.

### **Sárku: Mrúr**

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The priests of Sárku summon the relatively prosaic Mrúr as other priests summon demons. These Mrúr arrive equipped with armour and weapons from all periods of Tékumel's history (including some yet to happen), though in a dilapidated state. The Mrúr cannot do anything other than fight and eat brains.

### **Durritlámish: The Voices of the Unwilling Dead**

NA: Special, HD: 1, AC 6, T: nil, M 0", L: 0

These peculiar demons manifest as maces made of spinal columns with attached skulls. They cannot move of themselves and teleport into the hands of the summoner and his allies, causing them to drop their currently held weapons. Despite having no vocal chords and lungs these

maces keep up a very lively screaming and gibbering, reducing enemy morale and their chances to hit by -1. The Voices give +1 to hit and do +1 damage. Each hit there is a 20% chance that the skull will manage to sink its teeth into an enemy, causing an extra 1d3 damage and inflicting a terrible wasting disease. This disease immediately reduces Constitution by 1d20 and then by another 1d10 per week until it is cured. Starting with the fingers and toes the person begins to rot, losing the use of their hands and feet after a week, then their arms, knees, shoulders and so on, until nothing is left working except the torso, and even that goes mostly putrid. All that is left in the end is a screaming skull and a spinal chord. The disease can be cured by the Temple of Durrítlámish, but only in its early stages and the price they charge is steep. *Gratis*, however, they will offer to care for the victim and ease their pain, on the understanding that they will be required to serve as an undead weapon from time to time. The Voice can be deliberately targeted by an enemy, blows being directed at the weapon during combat rather than the wielder, but this requires some expertise in combat and can only be done on a successful % roll under Dex +10% per level, and only by a Warrior using a weapon he has some skill in. In return for being allowed to infect a human sacrifice with their awful curse Voices will serve as guards in the tombs of the faithful of Sárku and Durrítlámish, usually sitting in a niche near a sarcophagus and raising a blood curdling scream to summon Mrúr and Shédra should it be opened.

#### **Dlamélísh: The Everbabies**

NA: Special, HD: 1+1, AC 4, T: nil, M 9", L: 0

The Everbabies look like pale skinned toddlers of 2-3 years old, with chubby cheeks, wide blue eyes and fine curly blond hair, but expanded to about seven feet tall and wearing body suits of chainmail with pot-shaped metal helms adorned with pom-poms. They are armed with great bronze maces with little silver bells attached, and shields painted with brightly coloured designs depicting demonic beasts unfamiliar to people on Tékumel (teddy bears and fluffy ducklings). They find great pleasure in violence, and once unleashed on an enemy they giggle and gurgle at the sight of blood and find screams of pain utterly hilarious, dancing happily in pools of gore as real babies do in rain puddles and stomping their enemies to meat paste. Their weapons do +2 damage on the first round, and if they hit they gain a further +1 to hit and +1 damage as the Everbaby works itself into a killing frenzy. They must save vs Eyes at the end of a combat or they will fail to disappear back to their own gruesome playpen of a plane and continue attacking any living thing in sight. A sorcerer or priest can attempt to dismiss any Everbabies he himself summoned, but needs a successful spell casting roll to make it work. They speak a simple lisped form of Tsolyáni, as well as their own gurgling tongue. They will offer to stay and 'play' with the summoner in return for all kinds of random and sometimes outrageous demands; flowers, a glass of milk, a crate of strong beer, the skull of a Sró, a

pet Chnéhl, a moon on a stick, ten thousand káitars cash, all have been recorded in the annals of the Temple. The summoner should have the words of dismissal handy though, if the Everbabies are angered in the course of their bargaining they will throw a homicidal tantrum. Their usual use by the temple is as assassins. Spells known to the highest circle sorcerers of the Temple will temporarily shrink the demons down to normal toddler size, and with a bit of hair dye and make up they will pass for a normal Tsolyáni child. Once smuggled into their enemy's home in this innocuous guise, the spells are dispelled and the great infant thug gets to work. They have a special animus towards Sárku and his more worm-like followers, taking great delight in throttling them with their bare hands and eating them. They are immune to all the poisons used by such creatures. (*With thanks to my nieces.*)

#### **Vimúhla: The Bruverhoud of the Dyslexicon**

NA: Special, HD: 1+1, AC 4, T: nil, M 9", L: 0

The Brothers are short humans about five feet tall clad in heavy red and orange sackcloth robes that cover their entire bodies. They wear rubber masks with glass eyepieces and strange cylindrical attachments on the front (gas-masks) and thick rubber gloves and boots. They wield shortwords for 1 die damage and also have an unusual missile weapon, a three foot long tube with a flexible attachment that connects to a backpack made up of two glyph covered red and yellow cylinders (a flamethrower). This tube has various handles and attachments, and spews a gout of burning oil out to a distance of 30 feet. This does 1 die damage, plus 1 further die per turn from burning until the target saves vs Eyes or has the fire extinguished by a friend. This is not so easy, mere water does not douse the oil and the flame must be smothered. They can also create pools of burning oil as a barrier. The Brothers hate the written word, magic and intelligent non-humans, which their avatar of Vimúhla regards as evil. They will accept that the God has sent them to aid a fellow worshipper by dint of a holy prayer, but if they witness any other magic of any kind being practised they will become angry and hostile. If they see any written words, or any hieroglyphs that look as though they might be words they will immediately try and seize and destroy the offending material. If they see a non-human organism behaving in a sentient fashion such as talking, using a tool, wearing clothes etc. they will attack them without mercy. They sometimes carry books with large brightly coloured pictures (never any words) of things that they say their deity has commanded them to burn, which they will consult if in doubt. Their robes are fireproof and they take no damage from flame-based attacks, though explosions such as Doomkill will still do concussion damage. Their masks make them immune to gas attacks as well. They do not speak any language known to the scholars of the Five Empires and can only be communicated with via telepathy – which of course involves use of magic and immediately raises their suspicions. They can be persuaded to aid

worshippers of Vimúhla in missions to destroy libraries, non-humans and spell casters, and with a sufficiently glib negotiator can be convinced that the use of magic by Vimúhla's loyal priests and sorcerers can be tolerated if it is done in a holy cause. They can never accept non-humans as anything other than fuel for the holy fire however. If sufficiently impressed by the fervour and fighting ability of their Tékumeli allies they may also ask if the summoner can find a way to come to their aid in their endless crusade in their own universe. Those that have found the appropriate nexus points have not returned to tell any tales of the Brothers' fiery war. Their weapons are much coveted by the warriors of Vimúhla, but unfortunately they disappear when the demonic owner returns to his own plane or is slain. *(Any resemblance to the Temple Avesti from the Fading Suns RPG is again intentional.)*

## DICHOTOMANE



### Hriháyal and Chiténg: The Dichotomanes

NA: Special, HD: 1+1, AC 9, T: nil, M 9"/18", L: 0

These are more or less humanoid, but with some major differences from the standard human body plan. First, they have decidedly confused sexual identities, sporting both large breasts and a penis; they have hands equipped with sharp claws; their feet have talons; and they have bat-like wings. They have no body hair and are a pale grey colour. They wear no clothes, but do have needles stuck into their flesh at approximately 1 inch intervals, all over their bodies, and have heavy brass rings piercing their nipples, lips, noses, ears and sexual organs. They make two attacks per round, one using a long whip studded with bits of broken

glass which does 1d-1 damage, and anyone hit must save vs Eyes at +4 or lose a turn writhing in agony, the second using a barbed rod which injects a drug into the victim causing hallucinations and extreme ecstasy unless they save vs poison. This makes them lose one turn, and they must save vs poison at +2 per turn there after to return to the fray, unless rudely awoken by a blow from the whip. Pain and pleasure are all one to the Dichotomanes, and will demand to be tortured or allowed to take part in one or more of the 32 Unspeakable Acts as part of their payment. They have an uncanny ability to locate lost objects, as long as they are on the same plane as the Dichotomane, and will direct the summoner to the nearest hoard of emeralds, rubies or silver, though they cannot say how much the hoard is worth or what is guarding it.

**Unallied demons:** Not all demons worship the Pavárian deities; some worship the greater demons, some follow a Livyáni Shadow God, and certain documents hint at the awful servants of the Pariah Deities. Others worship no known deity at all, and act as trans-planar mercenaries, serving anyone who can call them and meet their price.

### Ürghk

NA: Special, HD: 1+1, AC 4, T: nil, M 9", L: 0

The summoning spell for the Ürghk is contained in the epic poem 'The War of the One Eyed God', copies of which are found in several temple libraries. The priesthoods vigorously discourage the summoning of these demons, as they are far from easy to control, and summoning as few as two of them carries a risk of eventual invasion of the entire planet (see below). The Priesthood of Dlamélish have tried to convert them, since their behaviour suggest they are kindred spirits to the Green Lady's followers, but thus far have only been eaten for their trouble. They appear as humans with horrible snouted and tusked heads, slightly larger and stronger than the average man. They have thick hides, wear crude leather armour and wield stone axes and wooden shields. They stink and express themselves in the crudest and most guttural version of Tsolyáni imaginable. They appear in twice the usual numbers for minor demons (ie a Type I creatures spell will call 2d3), 80% of them being male and 20% female, and they will demand human captives to torture to death and eat before they will even consider fighting. They sometimes settle for sexually abusing their captives, leaving them severely battered and often mutilated but alive (and unfortunately pregnant, see below). They fight well enough once placated, but are very unwilling to return to their home planes and will flee from their summoner given half a chance. The males will attempt to mate with anything that moves out in the Tékumeli wilds, usually leading to their deaths, while the females will have litters of Ürghkings that will run wild and die trying to fend for themselves. Any creature, male or female, that has mated with an Ürghk become pregnant, the foetus being parasitic on the intestine of any male victim and killing him

by eventually eating his liver and bursting from the abdomen. The offspring of these unions are half-Ürghk, bizarre looking and often semi-intelligent beasts, but with the same insatiable sexual urge and the ability to produce viable offspring, no matter how different their parents were. The products of mating with half Ürghk are of course quarter Ürghk, and so the Ürghk character becomes diluted – but eventually two organisms carrying Urghk genes will mate, producing an Ürghk with sufficient native characteristics to survive in Tékumel's unforgiving environment. Interplanar explorers have claimed to have found worlds where Ürghk have become endemic, breeding out in the wilds in such numbers as to be unextinguishable by the most determined attempts at genocide, and yet others where the Ürghk have managed to take over completely, savage planes full of interminable tribal warfare, rape and cannibalism. The Ürghk are capable of gaining levels in professions as humans are, and it may prove very difficult to eliminate a high level Ürghk Warrior before they lead their demonic band to colonise the wild. Ürghk Priests are the most dangerous of all, as they may be able to summon yet more of their brethren to this plane.

### **The Nebísh, aka The Screaming Pink Midgets, aka The Blemmyae**

NA: Special, HD: 1 hp each, AC 7, T: nil, M 12", L: 0

There are demons greater than humans, and there are some, like the Nebísh, who are definitely lesser. The summoning spell is said to have been discovered by accident by the wizard Metállja, who ended up being captured by these creatures. They are 6-9 inch high naked humanoids with no head, having faces on their torsos. They use tiny bronze spears and polearms doing 1HP damage each, attacking at -2. One Type I summoning spell will bring 3d6, for what it is worth. They will do whatever their caster asks of them to the best of their very limited abilities, but are utter cowards and will run away and hide if too many of them are getting killed. They will ask that the caster or one of his servants accompany them back to their home plane to assist them in their wars; this is not usually possible as the spell to create a nexus point to this world is not now known. Sometimes a Nebísh priest will be among the horde summoned and he will know how to open such a gate. If the summoner disagrees he will find himself being kidnapped and dragged through against his will. Those who have ended up in this peculiar situation (like Metállja), will be worshipped as a manifestation of the Nebísh wargod, and will be required to sit in a throne while his worshippers caper round him doing wardances, banging tiny cymbals and sacrificing endless processions of screaming victims to him. Every now and again he will be asked to smite enemy tribes of Nebísh, a gruesome and pathetic task involving much blood and suffering. Ω

## Oceanian Legends: Holiday Bargains in the Reavers' Sea!

by Del L. Beaudry and Orgatto Snook, Esq.<sup>1</sup>

Attention fellow sportsmen! Greetings carefree skylarkers and shrewd wagerers! Hail! carousers, rakehellens, playboys and punters of distinction; Hoy! adventurers of every stripe! To all you red-bloods who still relish the manly pleasures of whorehouse and gambling hall – the zest of cockpit and arena – now comes remarkable news!

All too well we know the problems that beset us. From Nalison to Kustenstaan, favorite spots are overrun by disagreeable crowds and shady purveyors. Everywhere we go we find drinks watered, dogfights rigged and strumpets lacking in vigor. Who among us does not abhor the confiscatory rates now current in Echro, Ylminoor, and even Tyre?

Yet hope remains! There still exists a destination which offers the simple pleasures and honest wares that once were commonplace: I speak of energetic whores, ample provisions, and gaming of unlimited scope. Doubtless you have already read this missive's title; so let to get to the point straightaway, the better to dispose of your misgivings. You have not misapprehended: My subject is indeed that reach of islands to our northwest popularly named the Reavers' Sea.

The Reavers' Sea? Already I can hear your catcalls and guffaws: That den of piracy? That haven for scoundrels, brigands, cutthroats and sea-wolves of foulest description? You joke, Orgatto; it is a farce!

Not so, my friends! I speak with utmost sincerity! Every summer, when the wind is fresh out of the east, a cabal of fashionable aristocrats and monied thrill-seekers take their yachts to Reaver isles like Krout and Monsuella. Here they squander their coin at leisure amidst vibrant gambling halls and inexpensive brothels before they debark to villas and hideaways across the Outer Keys.

Perhaps, you will say, but if such is the case, why has no word reached my ear? I am no mooncalf! Right enough, my friends, but here is the rub: These wellborn rotters and crapulous weasel-hearts collude and in nefarious confederacy; they strive to maintain the Reavers' Sea as their exclusive preserve. And their agents are rife. In taverns and saloons across the Inner Sea sit paid scandalmongers, each employed to tell tales that propound danger and omit opportunities for profit. Such are the prevarications of the upper crust. Such is their contempt for honest folk.

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from the winter issue of *Notes on the Sporting Life*, reprinted by kind permission of Snook-Acme Enterprises.

My brethren, the sad fact is we have been hoodwinked – hoodwinked by a program of innuendo and patent falsehood. But now, at long last, Orgatto Snook publishes the truth! He says this: 'The Reavers' Sea is a punter's delight, and a bargain to boot. Its towns, villages and camps overflow with tempting bargains and unforeseen charms not yet evolved beyond a thrifty sportsman's reach.

Now is the time to discard your shopworn conceptions which, in any case, should amount to no more than mortal peril and lawless squalor. Be assured: henceforth such notions can be safely judged outmoded impediments to pleasure and profit. Granted, the Reavers' Sea is no place for prigs or milksops, but broad-minded tourists will discover an extraordinary union of fine goods and imaginative entertainments, all at economical, even trivial, expense.

Consider Old Monsuella: Once a sinkhole of villainy, today this bustling town marks the hub around which turns the great wheel of Gelidian commerce. Along its busy waterfront runs the main thoroughfare, Murderers' Row. Here the more successful pirate crews have set up trading houses that proffer a bounty of goods both common and rare as they vie against their neighbors for excellence and value. Concerned about safety? Each house absolutely guarantees the security of patrons upon its premises. Across the way, stalls and vendors purvey food, keepsakes and miscellaneous merchandise – licit and otherwise – from the farthest reaches of Oceania. Quality is, admittedly, varied, but given the negligible prices most will find this point inconsequential.

Well enough, you say, but shopping is a woman's recreation! What of gaming? For a fact, that is Monsuella's chief appeal. From every street corner a dozen barkers call the odds for tilt, wrestling, draughts and bowling-at-pins. Look inside the lowliest tavern or common house and you will find a cockpit. Nicer establishments boast larger holes, suitable for dogfights and monomachy. Stroll along the riverfront commons any night of the week and you will discover the noble arts of bull-baiting, grackle-bore and trog-stomp in full swing.

Weasel-snipe is a local favorite, and played anywhere a large hole can be dug. It works as follows: A weasel or weasels are released into the pit, which has been stocked with dozens of hens. Patrons wager on the number of poultry killed during a given interval. Greenhorns often tip their hand by betting low. In fact, particularly skillful or rapacious weasels are capable of running up impressive tallies. For this reason newcomers are advised to observe several go-rounds before risking their coin.

But it is mortal combat which attracts the largest crowds and steepest wagering. Lesser venues – of which there are several – operate year-round but reserve their best sport

for summer. Thus in-season visitors must be prepared to rub shoulders with a throng of exuberant local punters.

The best of these establishments, or at least the busiest, is the Kennel Club in Grizzlestaad, which the doughty sportsman should be sure to include on his itinerary. Its fame rests on pit-fighting, which one encounters in sundry forms. The action is always spirited, if perhaps somewhat crude. Yet connoisseurs will recognize the truth: within the pits unfolds colorful drama, rich in pathos. On a given night one can see welshers and oathbreakers beset by hyena packs that slaver and rend, or watch a bitch hyracki wrestle tuskmen and minotaurs amid a field of iron spikes. Not infrequently, shylocks thrash in lamprey pools and embezzlers are fed to hounds. Weekends feature still more exotic treats: trog-sows in pitched battle with a bull groon; an Araki brave set barehanded against a young vrin. Always, of course, wagering abounds.

Those seeking more contemplative pleasures should wander a few blocks upwind where, in a crooked row-house of four stories, sits Monsuella's sole museum, Qhaul's Mock Vivarium. Within the eponymous Qhaul, an elderly vivisectionist who hails from fabled Iltheon itself, displays a modest but piquant collection of mummified figures, each transmembered in imaginative style. Sophisticates and aesthetes will consider a visit to Qhaul's essential, but be sure to arrive early! Owing to the neighborhood, Qhaul closes his doors well before dusk.

But surely the brightest of all Monsuella's jewels is the great arena of Larboard House, a converted stockade at the confluence of Wharfside and Busker Narrows. Herein resides gladiatorial excellence to rival anything in the Commonwealth. (Indeed, under Prince Jereni's reforms much of its activity is now illegal in the Archipelago!)

Open daily during high season, Larboard House hosts two sessions, afternoon and evening. It adds a third for the three-week Comstock festival, when matches can run until dawn. The bill of fare is both varied and expansive, but follows a general pattern. Afternoons showcase such amusements as are favored by the locals: slave-rapes, bear-mauls, jackal-punts, and executions in diverse styles. The evening session approximates the classical mode: a dozen individual bouts representing a range of weaponry, followed by a so-called league match between two fighting teams. It is league play that dominates local interest, as the visiting sportsman soon learns. Short of actual rapine, Reaverfolk relish nothing better than cheering on their favorite of several dozen squads.

Even the dodgiest crew is expected to sponsor a team – called a gang – which will include both thralls and freemen (slaves *per se* are prohibited under Pirate Law). Competition is ferocious: a champion gang means fame, gold and – most importantly – bragging rights. Perennial losers risk

seeing their Crew Charter voided at the biannual Pirates' Board. In such cases a crew's ship and shares are sold at auction, while the disgraced seamen are left to seek fresh employment. This accounts for why one occasionally spots a gnarled old master chief scrubbing decks alongside the Zynic thralls, or a former sergeant hefting slops. Such are the turns of fortune among the Reavers.

Given the stakes, then, it is no surprise that crews often hire 'ringers' to work the fighting season. Most are itinerant sell-swords or duelists at loose ends, but it has lately become fashionable to import top gladiators from the Commonwealth. Just last summer, Julien of Dragonsport fought for the Right Cutters, while Boric Agonsson worked his axe for the Deckstompers. (Indeed, I have it from well-placed sources that the upcoming season will feature names more notable still! Alas, I am proscribed against disclosing their identities, for fear of stoking immoderate demand.)

But I must beg your pardon! Other matters surely demand your attention and already I have pre-empted more time than some of you will judge courteous. I therefore omit the small particulars which attend next summer's Reaver Sea Tours (offered by Snook-Acme Reservations in conjunction with Whelpers). Likewise, I will refrain from expounding in proper detail on its rare merits and bewildering affordability. To interested parties, I will say this: At present, a bare handful of seats do in fact remain available, though you must act quickly; this broadsheet is certain to excite demand.

For further information, inquire at the offices of Qusitern Gill, exporter, or anywhere along the docks. A surety of 30 silver florins is mandatory.

Your Friend and Benefactor,

*Orgatto Snook, Esq.*







A dim and waning star 25 light years from Sol, Fomalhaut is orbited by six planets of variable sizes. Four of the six are dead slabs of rock and ice, and Fomalhaut-II is a world of eternal winter where only a fraction of the former population labours under the yoke of a technocratic dictatorship. Therefore, only Fomalhaut-I remains of the ambitious planet-engineering projects of the old Terrans, a medium-sized sphere where great engines sunken under the surface, once known as stabiliser cities, have created Mediterranean and sub-tropical environments in a thin and ever-shrinking belt around the equator.

The colonisation of Fomalhaut occurred by executive order of Archon Solon some 4000 years in the past. The process of terraformation, which involved the will of the great powers of Earth and the resources of multiple worlds over a period of 300 years, separated climate zones, pushed back the boundless ice massifs and drained them into seas, creating an appropriate terrene environment, including the comfortable conventions of a 24-hour day and a 365-day year. After the environment came vast cities of iron towers, subterranean production facilities, communication arrays and numerous pleasure resorts – seaside villas, natural reserves for exotic flora and fauna, stratospheric cities and the like. Later interplanetary wars had almost completely demolished these structures, or altered them beyond recognition. Some of the stabiliser cities fell to weapons of immense power, others to the failure of automated systems after millennia of neglect. This has introduced curious climatic anomalies on the surface and the spread of ice wastes and arid deserts.

4000 years following the fall of technological civilisation have redrawn the face of the world. United culture was superseded by local multiplicity; comprehensive and accessible information by fragmentary knowledge and casual disinterest in the wider world. In absence of centralised administration emerged the carefully and sometimes maniacally guarded independence of city-states and petty states. The only universal is the Terran language, spoken in a number of disparate dialects, but recognised in all locales worthy of a civilised man's attention. In such a millieu, attempts at establishing larger, long-lasting empires have, without exception, resulted in complete failures.

- The empire of Mung was founded by island-dwelling savants adept at both magic and technology 3000 years ago. Mung's doctrines were based on helping the

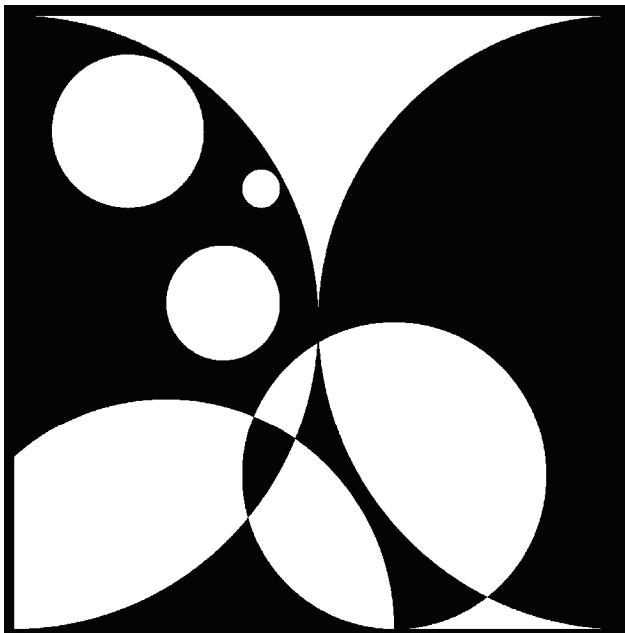
downtrodden, educating the poor and the universal spread of advanced civilisation. The grand experiment, which had shortly turned into nightmarish repression, was overthrown by the open rebellion of subject cities; although there was a time when the entire west coast of the Sea of Emerald Idols was under the government of advisors from Mungor City, the men of Mung were subsequently forced to retreat to their isle-fortress, where their harmful intrigues had henceforth little effect.

- Of similar antiquity was the empire of the Gynarch Daoi. This lush land spread over a chain of islands to the southeast, and was exclusively ruled by females until a cataclysm swept it off the planet 1800 years ago. The amazons of the present age are descendants of the empire's distant outposts.
- Propyla is an empire which had emerged along the abundant waters of the Aiotis; over 200 years, the powers of its overlords have waxed to encompass far lands and waned to the very walls of the ancient metropolis. Rivalry among the trade and military factions, along with several independent variables, have kept expansionist ambitions in check. After a recent series of weak overlords with brief tenures, supremacy has unexpectedly fallen into the hands of the Etunian nomad Radon Tharg, previously a low-ranking adherent of the military faction.
- The ill-fated empire of the demigod Alvan Vorodan had a brief and ignominious history, as it was broken by a coalition of jealous gods after a flowering and expansion of only 60 years. Since that time 1200 years gone, the once proud cities have fallen under the patient sands. In the Desert of Regulator, broken towers and shapeless piles of stone are still to be seen, but aside from jackals and accursed spirits, the land is desolate and forlorn. As for Alvan Vorodan, he was stripped of cognition by the gods and consigned to a deep stone pit. Those who approach now may hear the confused cry and braying of animals, laughter and guttural lamentation. Alvan Vorodan's empire is a dream that was and – as some claim – a promise that will be, but this is well understood to be common fancy, of no great interest.
- The most recent attempt to forge a large state is also the work of a demigod. Ishab-Lambar, an ambitious cleric, had become the head of a maniacally expanding empire 30 years ago when he slew his own patron, now only known as the Red God. Encompassing a good part of Thasan, and wastelands to its south, Ishab-Lambar's conquest is ruled by austerity and a warrior faith. Nevertheless, the violence and moralistic righteousness of the faith's representatives has aroused a distaste in many, and the solemn oath of the nomad hosts to take the City of Vultures has so far remained an empty promise.



Absent strong empires, the main spaces of civilisation are city-states, primarily on seacoasts, islands and along navigable rivers. The most populous lie in an area demarcated by the lands of Propyla, the three-pronged bay of the Tridentos and the sea-coasts of barren Thasan. As for the rest, the noted geographer Ninax remarks: "it is clear to anyone with the ability to reason that the northern regions are not suited for the formation of civilised states; among the wild and ignorant tribes of the pale barbarians, only a few fortified colonies can claim to represent the light of human progress. It may be conjectured on the basis of nameless ruins in jungles to the south that climates of extreme heat are not so adverse to development, as little material proof as there is of it. However, it is proposed by many that hostile natural factors had to be moderated through the methods of the ancients, now no longer clear. In any event, the absence of civilised life does not equal the absence of habitation: degenerate, primitive and ultimately unhappy tribes are basically found in almost all environments conceivable."

Ninax would be well surprised if he would only set aside his prejudices and venture from his comfortable residence: in truth, lone islands of civilisation are to be found even in the least hospitable climes, although it should be mentioned that they do not always prove to offer much in the way of hospitality. And even so, we have not yet mentioned enclaves which have miraculously preserved the knowledge or at least comforts of the Terrans: beneath ice massifs, in the depths of marine rifts, on floating cities and geostationary structures, man survives and possesses power unimaginable to the noted savant. Of course, encounters with the overmen are not always happy occasions: an existence of long isolation may have introduced caprices and odd phobias, but also heightened the basic human attitudes of suspicion and vindictiveness, from which none are exempt.



**Gods and Demons:** Due to its great distance, the gods of our world are generally unknown on Fomalhaut, or are of such weak power that their presence is all but unnoticed. In its later cycles, shortly before the planet's long decline and return into the ice from where it was lifted by the sages of older eras, several new or long-slumbering gods declared their powers and assumed the leadership of newfound followers. Some came from the deep chasms of the underearth; others from the dim reaches of space between the stars. Yet others were mortals who had acquired divine powers, and drunken with it, started testing the extent of their might. So it was in the last years before the coming of the glaciers.

On Fomalhaut, relations between gods and mortals differ from the conduct of other worlds. Indeed, very few consider them a reliable moral compass, and those who do are usually dangerous fanatics. Common men, and even most priests, assume a considerably more pragmatic, even cynical perspective; the basis of all dealings is common self-interest. On the other hand, approaching gods, even directly, is a less involved process: it may be accomplished with little trouble if the reasons are good and compensation attractive.

### **Bythos**

*Alignment:* Chaotic Neutral

*Symbol:* grimacing, bearded human face

*Weapons:* tridents

Bythos is as insane as his followers. His appearance is unkempt and ragged, with disorderly robes and filthy beard. His cultists breathe in poisonous gasses and vapours to prophesise and divine. Among them are found clerics, magic-users and illusionists in equal measure.

### **Derceto, dark mother**

*Alignment:* Chaotic Evil

*Symbol:* night-black disc surrounded with swirling tentacular protrusions

*Weapons:* nets, crooked knives and swords

Derceto dwells in the lightless hollows of the Underworld, but also appears on the plane of Fomalhaut in person or through progeny when summoned forth. This occasion is not always a pleasant one, as Derceto has been known to devour her callers after her bizarre fertility rites. There are no female followers, and both goddess and cult are characterised by definite mysogynic tendencies.

### **Dornak, god of peace**

*Alignment:* Chaotic Good

*Symbol:* olive branch

*Weapons:* two-handed flails

Dornak is a giant, 30 m man with tanned brown skin. He wears a leather tunic and employs a huge flail for combat. Dornak likes peace so much that he is prepared to mash a whole army into pulp to achieve it. His clerics are of the same temperament.

## Ellinger

*Alignment:* Chaotic Neutral

*Symbol:* golden pentacle in a field of blue

*Weapons:* mage only

Ellinger rose among the gods through wizardly might and unrestrained powermongering. This is a habit he has kept, along with his super-mundane charisma and fondness for debauchery. Ellinger has no priesthood or church. His believers – more precisely, allies – are overambitious mages and illusionists desiring the bounty of his knowledge. This is something he has in abundance, and isn't opposed to sharing with someone who proves worthy of attention.

## Fedafuce

*Alignment:* Neutral

*Symbol:* merchant's scales

*Weapons:* all priestly

Although the majority of religions are inherently inclined to simony, Fedafuce's clerics have perfected it into an art. In his temples, spells, divinations and divine powers are all available for the appropriate compensation, regardless of adherence to moral tenets or even the declaration of religious devotion. Prices somewhat exceed the usual level, but various instalment plans, loans and other financial constructions balance out the inconvenience. Fedafuce's temples are also involved in usury, money-changing, and all manner of speculative investments.

## Glyuathk'th

*Alignment:* Neutral Evil

*Symbol:* light-blue garments

*Weapons:* of any type

Glyuathk'th is a giant, tentacled patch of light-blue fungus which predates humanity by millions of years. Its first worshippers found it in the underground fissure where it grows. To those who supply human sacrifices to Glyuathk'th, it grants hallucinatory visions of weird landscapes and forbidden magical treasures. Glyuathk'th doesn't care for conversion, and is unlikely to have clerical adherents.

## Ishab-Lambar

*Alignment:* Lawful Neutral

*Symbol:* cobra

*Weapons:* poisonous daggers

Ishab-Lambar was formerly an ambitious priest who gained power and immortality by disposing of his own god (now only known as the Red God). He is popular in Thasan and the barren lands to its east, spreading through wars of expansion; but significantly less known in the west. A desperate sect of the Red God still exists (although its members have no clerical magic of any sort), fighting with bitter devotion to bring about Ishab-Lambar's downfall.

**Ishtar**, goddess of love and war

*Alignment:* Neutral

*Symbol:* bow and arrow

*Weapons:* any type, especially bows and one-handed swords

Ishtar, like her religion, is both gentle and merciless, always possessing a hidden edge when the former and a strange gentleness and attractiveness when the latter. The number of her followers is countless (and include women especially), being much, much more powerful on Fomalhaut than she ever was on Earth. Priests are of either sex, but men may only advance to 5th level in its hierarchy.

**Kang, the Thousand-Eyed**, god of adventurers

*Alignment:* Chaotic Neutral

*Symbol:* circle, and several smaller circles within it

*Weapons:* of any type, but especially flails

Kang the Thousand-Eyed's cult excels above all in brazen greed and unrestrained powermongering. His doctrine is characterised by belligerence, but also the complete lack of principles, making it both widespread and popular. Kang is a 3m behemoth in chainmail armour. He uses a great flail and wears a horned helmet, from which several small, slimy, round eyes peer. He is irritable and often capricious.

## Karttekeza

*Alignment:* Chaotic Good

*Symbol:* peacock

*Weapons:* swords with wavy blades

Karttekeza is a six metre tall giant. He has six heads and twelve hands, holding swords with wavy blades in all but two of them. He fights mercilessly against demons. His worshippers are fighter-priests dedicated to combat, and wear extravagant, rich garments (they especially prefer gem-studded weapons and clothing). Karttekeza is an idealist, caring little for material goods above what is needed, but enjoys music, poetry and female companions. His steed is a great peacock, intelligent but mute. Often, only the peacock appears before priests, which is nevertheless interpreted as a favourable sign. Karttekeza is a young god, having only gained power two hundred years ago. His religion is an informal network with few followers.

## Mereskan

*Alignment:* Chaotic Neutral

*Symbol:* bat

*Weapons:* short swords

Mereskan, the intelligent giant bat-god, is well known for strange and often tiresome humour, as well as paternalistic tendencies. Followers feed him with their own blood; in exchange, Mereskan provides them with wise guidance and advice. The implements of the sacrifice are idols with pointed teeth, found in all his temples. Mereskan is followed by grave robbers and thieves, who are attracted by his nightly aspect.

## Monks of Mung

*Alignment:* Lawful Evil

*Symbol:* golden sun in purple field

*Weapon:* of any type

Although Mung is no deity, but rather the state ideology of Mungor City, and adherents are not priests in the strictest

sense, it is nevertheless discussed under religions, since it possesses both of their typical distinguishing features, namely excess greed and an unhealthy desire for power; furthermore, it has adopted some religious trappings. Mung's diligent monks have taken root nigh everywhere, and are usually involved in plots to overthrow lawful authority. Where the faith has triumphed (as is the case in the city of Famful), all decisions are made in the name of puppet rulers by advisors straight from Mungor City. Therefore, resentment against monks is rather significant, although few risk their open expulsion due to Mung's magical, military and technological might.

#### **Ozolba**, zombie god

*Alignment:* Neutral Evil

*Symbol:* rotting head

*Weapons:* bludgeoning only

Ozolba is a huge decomposing corpse. He has minimal intellect, and only concerns himself with destruction and murder, which he relishes. Ozolba's secretive clergy often includes priests who are themselves zombified corpses. They may only progress to the fifth level. Zombies under the domain of Ozolba have a crude intelligence.

#### **Shakkur**, god of beggars

*Alignment:* Chaotic Evil

*Symbol:* rag-wrapped hand

*Weapons:* crutches, knives, etc.

In physical appearance, Shakkur resembles an old, emaciated man with improbably large eyes and vampire teeth. He has no clerics, and only half-animalistic beggars, the most despicable class of mendicants care to call on him. He preaches cannibalism and murder, and his faithful servants can employ debilitating and dangerous curses.

#### **Shodoggua**

*Alignment:* Chaotic Evil

*Symbol:* dark gray waves

*Weapons:* tridents

This bizarre monster-god reposes in forgotten basalt deeps, and his once-thriving temples have stayed abandoned since the horrific collective suicide of his faithful. Abandoned – but not always empty!

#### **Snolog**

*Alignment:* Neutral

*Symbol:* slug surrounded by golden halo

*Weapons:* priestly; all edged weapons, as well as the use of salt, are strictly restricted!

Snolog is a deity belonging to the class of gastropoda, a bulky, well-fed slug. His body is always surrounded by a golden aura; he can also shoot deadly beams from his eyes. Fat, shaved priests and wicked priestesses (also shaved where appropriate) are at his disposal, primarily demonstrating their faith in various orgies and other types of debauchery. Snolog's philosophy is enlightened hedonism, making him one of the less dangerous gods of Fomalhaut.

#### **Targ**

*Alignment:* Lawful Evil

*Symbol:* imperial eagle in inverted purple triangle

*Weapons:* unknown [metal lances and technological]

Targ is non-magical, and according to many he is no god but merely a very powerful mortal. This is a purely theoretical distinction, since Targ is very dangerous in either case! His body is a pudding-like deep purple mass with two glowing red eyes. He always appears encased in armour made of super-metal, with a glass helmet on his head. Targ travels overland in a floating metal fortress, leaving destruction and slavery wherever he goes. His exact goals or the nature and extent of followers (if any), are so far unknown.

#### **Tsathoggus**, frog-god

*Alignment:* Chaotic Evils

*Symbol:* frog

*Weapons:* of any type as long as it hurts

Tsathoggus is a rather malevolent god, and his worship isn't too attractive to most people. His devotees wear greenish robes and perform certain repulsive facial alterations to please their harsh master. Nevertheless, his shrines are found in almost all larger city states, and despite their bad reputation attract enough visitors to ensure their maintenance. As it is well known, several harmful materials and magical implements are available at the right price; and it must also be mentioned that the priests of Tsathoggus are not tight-fisted with those who perform certain secret, but hazardous undertakings at their behest!

#### **Uthummaos**

*Alignment:* Lawful Evil

*Symbol:* faintly glowing chasm in a dark field

*Weapons:* priestly and short swords

Uthummaos is the cold breath speaking from dark chasms, and his voice is vaporous and gloomy. His mystery-religion is made up of a web of rituals, superstition and obscure, seemingly self-contradictory commandments, which believers must carry out exactly as ordered. Priests of the religion are strict, joyless men who dress in sombre tones. They make human sacrifices in complete secrecy and according to precise guidelines.

#### **Xoé**, goddess of beauty

*Alignment:* Lawful Good

*Symbol:* light-gem

*Weapons:* golden dagger

All of Xoé's priestesses are radiantly beautiful, often taking their own lives if they feel they are threatened with its loss. They abstain from violence, are rarely attracted to traveling life, and may employ *charm* as a 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell. Although this isn't immediately apparent, Xoé's faith is rather insignificant and has declined greatly in recent centuries.

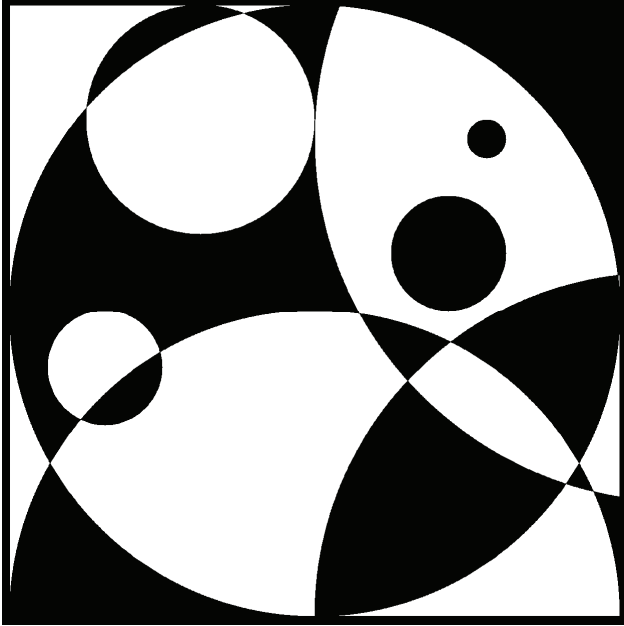
#### **Yol**

*Alignment:* Neutral Evil

*Symbol:* whirling pattern

*Weapons:* of any type

Yol is a vast protoplasmic mass made up of millions of large cells resembling frogs' eggs. The essence of Yol's teachings is the personal experiencing of divinity; that is, his followers always carry a smaller cell colony within themselves, thus spreading it all over the world! The religion is expansionistic, achieving its goals through the usual method of armed coercion.



### **The Regions of Fomalhaut:**

**The Batrakasz:** The Batrakasz is largely trackless waste, a barren region spreading from its coastal city-states to KROAX, barrier mountains between the aegis of human settlement and the lifeless glass deserts. The only major river of the Batrakasz is languid Xemartes, but its environs are unpopulated: the ancient inhabitants, the half-man Talaiotes who renounce all civilisation, guard their rock eyries against all encroachment. They recognise but one god, strict and austere Tarsis – but the will of Tarsis is unknown even to the priests residing in the grey concrete city of Metagnor, although their studies and rites leave them wizened and impotent after a matter of a few years. The Talaiotes trust their customary weapons, deadly slings and short spears, attacking coastal cities with unmatched ferocity even if their raids promise certain failure.

The city-states of the Batrakasz are therefore mostly coastal. Foremost among them is prosperous **Pentastadion** (pop. 3200). Its oligarchs, the Syndic Lords, are known for greed and materialism: it is said that they would take the foam off the sea if it enriched their coffers. Beslandar, the Head Syndic is the greatest scoundrel of them all. It is said that there are no better sailors in the world than in Pentastadion: only the pirates plying the waters of the Tridentos come near, and then only on coastal waters.

Doom-laden **Glourm** (pop. 2500) is a place remarkably different. The inhabitants are driven by strange passions and eccentric motives; the narrow streets and small markets are thriving at night (for the life of this city-state is largely nocturnal), offering philtres bringing exclusive dreams and knowledge often better unlearned. Glourm is ruled by a triumvirate: the Lord Raputo, Lady Azamlarg and the elusive Lady Kantedoramis. The military is rag-tag and the walls are in a state of disrepair. A sinister prophecy, predicting that the doom of the city-state will be brought by an accursed sword sealed within a flying tower in a nearby canyon and guarded by all manner of monsters and enigmas, has instilled the populace with a sense of fatalism – but also pride and carelessness.

Pentastadion and Glourm are separated from the southern cities by wilderlands. The coasts are avoided by most travellers with even more zeal than the lands of the Talaiotes, for here stands the pyramidal villa of the venerable master mage Szindérac among gardens of amaranth and anthropophagous vegetation. Tradition suggests that Szindérac is older than the millennia and more powerful than some gods, having been the original mind behind the development of the memorisation system, tutor to Lankwiler the Great as well as other noted mages, and a famous figure of ancient history. In his cosmic boredom, he is rumoured to have gone capricious and cruel towards visitors. On some occasions he sends missives to the proud oligarchs and tyrants, who become pale and obey when his often unfathomable demands are made known.

So much for Szindérac. Of the southern cities, **Famful** (pop. 2800) is of little note. The young ruler, King Meranes is follower and obedient slave to Mung, which rules life in this city-state. The ambitious experiment directed from Mungor City has initiated a thorough transformation in a town formerly ruled by tradesmen and landholding patricians. Due to the attraction of the generous welfare programmes, Famful has become a city of religious pilgrims, beggars, prostitutes, social parasites and dreamy idealists; every alley is teeming with the ragged but self-conscious children of Mung. Houses are dilapidated and crumbling, and it is not safe to venture the streets at night.

To a distance of three days from Famful stands **Khosura**, city of the four mysteries (pop. 3600). Khosura is sacred to the cults of Ishtar, Uthummaos and Derceto; a fourth mystery is concerned with matters outside religion and is less known. The master of Khosura has long been the priest-king Panthozar, who is also the supreme high priest of Uthummaos on the world of Fomalhaut (11<sup>th</sup> level EHP). The main product of the barren city-state is salt. Salty waters emerging from springs beneath Khosura have flooded the ancient lower city once populated by the less prosperous classes (the place is now interdicted, for the former inhabitants are restless under the deceiving calm),

but enriched the merchants: in addition to common salt, more valuable encrustations are collected and exported.

From Khosura, an ageless road of cracked concrete slabs travels eastwards into the Desert of Regulator and the faraway cities of the uttermost west. South of the road lie formerly fecund and prosperous lands: the empire of Alvan Vorodan, now dust and dreams. The northern desert is no better. In jagged towers of black metal brood sixth type demons and the metallic horrors that are in their service. Likewise, one could find the legendary land Ookant, fabled domain of the Ishtar-worshipping amazons; or, venturing west along a road ever less trodden, a pass ruled by the eccentric merchant and slaver, Dhazi Kathari – it is said, a man merciless to bandit and beggar, but munificent to honest travellers who pay his fees.

Seas east of the Batrakasz (encompassing the Sea of Mistakes and the Sea of Lost Days) are relatively safe, although the same cannot be said of all islands, almost all small worlds in their own right. There are two cities of note. First is tiny **Dusal Dagodli** (pop. 1200), a pleasure resort for comfort-loving and overall mild-mannered gods (e.g. beautiful Xoé and not so beautiful Snolog). The idyllic, sedate and consequentially often unexciting environment is also home to prominent schools of philosophy; examples include the Greater Syncretistic Rabbinate, the Heterodox Theocrats, and Pragmatic Incrementalism, a school of thought that has become the favourite self-validating humbug of ruling circles all over Fomalhaut, and therefore exceedingly prosperous.

**Mungor City** (pop. 6000 for the entire island), as old as the terraforming projects, is a similarly static millieu. Bold skyscrapers in pastel hues, wide and clean boulevards, public parks and silently gliding or hovering conveyances suggest comfort and refinement. Mungor city and its bucolic surroundings are the ideals Mung strives for worldwide, worth a few sacrifices to achieve. Naturally, not even such a progressive society is exempt from internal disagreements and frictions: the optimal way of achieving the ideal is always under vigorous debate among Mung's archdeacons and lay ideologues. Mungor City, as a controlled experimental environment for creating the perfect society, may not be visited by outsiders under most circumstances, and has very, very advanced defense systems.

**Propyla:** Propyla has remained a prosperous and populous region in spite of barbarian incursions and endogenous strife. Great holdings along the Aiotis employ thousands of slaves to supply the cities and export markets with grain; a thick network of sentry towers, garrisons and patrols ensures their safety.

**Propyla** (pop. 20,000) is the largest city on Fomalhaut. It would take weeks just to see all of its markets, blackened houses, slums and by-ways; to genuinely know them, more

than a lifetime. With the exception of the district surrounding Overlord Radon Tharg's palace and a few boulevards, streets are narrow, dim and twisted, with dead ends, abandoned neighbourhoods, unexpected little courts and a few very nasty surprises. Propyla is a city of thieves, who form an ancient and extensive hierarchy from almsmen to thief-lords. Many say they are the true masters of the city; the thieves, haughty and proud though they are, are not convinced.

As for the cities around Propyla, **Delion** (pop. 2500), **Thiops** (pop. 1400) and **Thamoras** (pop. 2100) are market towns built around military outposts with no interesting character. **Akrasia** (pop. 1600) is otherwise, possessed of a gentle melancholy that many find charming. Its inhabitants like decorative gardens, orchards and the pleasant feeling of a gentle decline. The autumn mysteries attract a throng of pilgrims. During the festivities, youths and maidens raised for this specific purpose enter an enchanted gateway leading to a blissful land without trouble or toil, and are seen no more. The warrior sect in charge of guarding the gate are careful to warn off unlawful attempts at entry, but in spite of warnings, prowling beasts and vigilant guardsmen, there are always brave trespassers who are usually apprehended and summarily cut down before attaining their purpose.

At the mouth of the Aiotis, the archipelago Marmoreia is a sea-maze of a thousand islets, and is guarded by **Fortress Antiarchon** (pop. 800). Commander Eixennes, risen to his post from a slave chained to a galley's bench, is known as a merciless foe of the pirates lying in wait among the islands. His generous bounties have not been useless in bringing to justice some of the seaborne scum, although they have also created business opportunities for various groups, manifesting in an unexpectedly bountiful supply of captured pirates and a steady, if modest demand for their corpses.

Territories south of the Marmoreia are sparsely inhabited, if at all. The exception is the tiny island empire of **Marathesion** (pop. 1400), a favoured haunt of scheming Propyla exiles and the site of a well-stocked little market known for its most advantageous prices.

Skhonia is almost entirely empty by reason of Talaiote incursions and monster encounters. An attempt, financed by the overlords of Propyla, to construct a formidable line of defence in the form of a great wall turned out to be an embarrassing mistake. Built over multiple decades and at outrageous expenses, the line fell before the first serious attack and has remained in (admittedly impressive) ruins ever since. The sight of rocky foothills and the clinging mists that envelop them are unpleasant in any case; in polite company, Skhonia is a by-word for gauche banality, and therefore not to be mentioned.

If Skhonia is empty of human habitation, the unfriendly, lifeless peaks of the immense Mountains of Powerage are doubly so. Among the silent pinnacles may be found multiple sites of the ancient Terran civilisation, among them a great city, but they are avoided even by the half-men. One time, colonies were built by the upper reaches of the Perirapidon, including the fortress of Yennarg. They are uninhabited now, at least by the living. The men of **Sumbara** (pop. 1100), a small town not too distant from the mountains, are convinced that the man-eating frogs and other amphibious horrors of the Yennarg swamps are no products of natural evolution.

Lands south of the Aiotis may be divided into two parts. The grass-covered plains and occasional hills of the Etunian Reaches make up the eastern-southeastern border of Grand Ethunia (Etunia is a region of a similar size to Propyla, extending to impassable mountain ranges to the west and great glacier valleys – subman habitation – to the north). Etunians are horse-nomads known for a belligerent disposition and fractiousness, making impressive careers in the armies and robber bands of the civilised world. The Reaches are dotted with ruined forts, razed and rebuilt over a never-ending succession of bloody civil wars. There are countless skirmishes among the nomads, but also with the men of Propyla; in fact, the differences between the two sides have become so tenuous that an outsider would find it hard to tell which is which.

The wilderlands of Doros are ruined badlands; only the city of **Basilopolis** (pop. 1700) sustains a significant population. Basilopolis is an unfriendly, shabby-looking fortress city built atop an ancient Terran spaceport. Its philosopher-king, Virisanios, is an austere and strict person; dissidents, suspicious individuals and criminals are cast into a bottomless void that surrounds the walls. The small inner city is a closed world: without permit, entry and exit are both impossible.

#### **The Sea of Biram Othar and the Northern Wilderness:**

These sizable but sparsely populated regions deserve little attention. Civilisation is represented by a handful of fortified colonies (**Olendar** – pop. 900; **Arbon** – pop. 800; **Meros** – pop. 900), mostly known for their supply of wood, resin and sometimes other valuables. The defences are strong and people are in a state of constant readiness, for the Northmen are known to raid from the woods and the sea, while occasionally howling hordes of cave-dwelling submen descend from the northern glaciers, killing settlers and Northmen alike. The settlements of Northmen (big villages and timber forts) are mostly along the river Skol and on the Isles of Rik. These locales are barely known, and regions further east are a complete mystery.

**Tridentos:** This large three-pronged bay enjoys a poor reputation among Fomalhaut's seamen for the treacherous storms and the coastal pirates. The weather is one of

extremes; changes are unnaturally swift and there are gravitational anomalies at some locales.

Only the northeastern parts of Tridentos, close to the lands of Thasan, can be called civilised. The not too reassuringly named **Yol** (pop. 1200) is a small, sheltered port; despite the hearsay, there are no visible signs of the eponymous deity or his adherents. On the other hand, one can find a teeming slave market and a small arena.

**Avendar** (pop. 1500) has lost much of its former splendour. Bloody showdowns between the followers of Pragmatic Incrementalism and Optimised Progressive Objectivism have left considerable destruction in their wake. The conflict ended with the defeat and flight of the Objectivist faction, who subsequently established New Avendar on an isle in the eastern seas. Power is in the hands of the Universal Synod of Incrementators, an assembly where every taxpayer may vote with a weight proportional to his taxes. Votes are subject to purchase by the highest bidder, although they tend to go low for lack of competition. There are several smallish grottoes around Avendar; a place of ascetic loons, genuine prophets, charlatans and worse scoundrels in wait for hapless travellers.

The western coasts of Tridentos are barren wastes adjunct to the Desert of Regulator. The Mountains of Monoculus are so named for a roving war machine of truly impressive dimensions and destructive capacity; fortunately, the six-legged, one-eyed, spherical hulk has been seen but rarely as of the last decades. We can say little better about the Land of the People of the Worm. The wormlike representatives of this inhuman race originated on a distant star, and do not venture from their crater nor confer with men at all except to accept the customary annual tribute of 40 slaves from Khosura. In any case, they possess highly advanced technology.

The Jungles of Khusala – extending to a basin area surpassing the entire scope of Tridentos – is a place of dead temples, ruined cities, howls in the sweltering, humid heat and paranoid, reclusive civilisations human or otherwise. **Yukum** and **Betari** are the best known ruins, by virtue of their coastal location. Both are temporary harbours for pirates and sometimes places where the pirate lords hold conclave. Yukum is the larger of the two. It is said that an intelligent race lurks in the passageways underneath the ruined pile that was the palace, but the only proof is mysterious disappearances and the odd rediscovery of a corpse-husk tapped of all precious bodily fluids.

The land northeast of the jungles is grassy savannah, with a few lonesome stone fingers jutting from the flat plains. Once, this was a domain of amazons; now, only the ruined palace-city, Amaskanti, with its desolate halls and carved galleries remain as its memories. Beasts lair here. Legends of a beautiful woman in the company of great felines, the



Lady of the Lions, are well known, but it is hard to reconcile them with the historical facticity of the last queen of the amazons, now 700 years gone.

The Plateau of Ong is an isolated highland wedged between Thasan and Tridentos. Closed off in all directions, it is ruled by conniving, cruel monks who receive their instructions from a central island citadel. Foreigners may not expect anything good if they fall in the monks' clutches, and swift death is preferable to what awaits beyond the citadel gates.

**Thasan:** Thasan's terrain is a mixture of desolate wasteland and desolate desert, home to old and sinful cities – among them the City of Vultures, whose first name is forgotten to all, even to the ancient slaves who keep Mirvander Khan's library. Open and proud sins have aroused anger and contempt among the more orthodox nomads of the southern coast. These fighting men have gone to war under the banners of their new god, Ishab-Lambar, to conquer crumbling wall and gilt spire and push the faithless into the sea. There is open war in Thasan, although not an intensive one: distance and terrain conspire to keep the foes apart, so larger clashes are not common.

The centre of Thasan is the **City of the Vultures** (pop. 9000). This venerable metropolis shows signs of rot and decay. Even the rich palaces are crumbling, stuccoes fall and statues are as worn stumps. The streets, redolent with sweat musk, rot and filth are populated by an ill folk, evil of visage and wretched. In contrast, the people of the palaces are marked with calculating indolence and the world-weariness of inherited status. The dwellers worship a lot of demigods native and specific to the city; all are either unambiguously evil, or indifferent to human suffering. The city is ruled by a grand master of mirages and lies, Mirvander Khan. The khan is an evil man befitting his domain, and in his throne room, his safety is protected by a golden cage and trained tigers.

South of the city, within distance of a day's walk, broods **Arfel** (pop. 1700), holy site of pilgrimage to the accursed cadaver-god, Ozolba. The degenerate, bloodthirsty zombie cult is based in a rectangular temple devoid of ornamentation. The gates are ever open, and the veiled priests may take whom they will within the limits of the walls, or any others whom they can outside. To refuse is a sin above all sins, with punishment too horrific to adumbrate.

Next to Arfel rises a proud palace-fortress. The **Citadel of the She-Sultan** (pop. 700) was built by an ancient ruler of the City of Vultures, and has fallen into the hands of the god Karttekeza by lucky coincidence. The well-stocked fastness is not only the centre of the faith and an occasional resting place for the god, but a place of succour from Ozolba's power – therefore, its mere existence is sacrilege to the zombie-worshippers.

**Kalmezdin** (pop. 700) is a far less pleasant place as the last coastal fortress. Being posted here is considered exile by the garrison, as the place is dusty, hot and extremely boring. Even the slaves toiling away in the nearby copper mines are only required to work after sunfall. **Birtham** (pop. 800) is a similarly unpleasant locale, regularly raided by the fanatical dervishes gathering in the Wasteland of the Apostates nearby. The viscous sap of the thorny bushes cultivated here are, nevertheless, valuable enough to pay for a garrison, slaves, overseers and accountants.

The shallow valley of the Great Salt River, bisecting Thasan, is uninhabited. Water and ground are heavy with bitter and useless salts, and the cliffs are known haunts for needlebeaks, intelligent and ruthless birds of prey sheathed by magic-reflecting auras of golden radiance. Not far to the southeast stood Amron; once prosperous, now home to demons and ghouls. From Amron, an ancient road leads to the seacoast, and underneath uncaring waters.

Ishab-Lambar's empire extends to the southern coast and the wastes beyond. The homes of the faith are **Nuri** (pop. 2100) and **Ubashka** (pop. 2400). Both are ruled by families, or more correctly, family patriarchs, all at least nominally faithful adherents of the new teachings: all dissenters have been exiled or thrown to the dogs. The latter is an unpleasant method of execution and public spectacle in Ubashka. Delinquents are lowered into a maze of empty cisterns whose vaulted ceilings have long ago collapsed, and must find their way from one end of the complex to the other, with only a short sword for defence against the multitudes of hunger-maddened dogs sent in their pursuit. There can be a maximum of one survivor; the grisly fete is a popular form of entertainment, the excitement heightened by bets and the plight of sightseers who accidentally fall through unstable bricks or slip on the uneven edges.

The last relevant city-state is **Korol** (pop. 1100), and it is the smallest of the three. It is populated by a poor and conservative folk, who were disposed towards neither the Red God nor Ishab-Lambar; their imagination is only concerned with building and decorating elaborate family cenotaphs. Only by threatening the destruction of these beehive-like structures could they be spurred to join the cause of the new faith, and then with no small reluctance.

**The Seas of Fomalhaut:** The three seas described below are the boundaries of the known world. Their cities are indistinct and often legendary for the peoples of the mainland. Island-dwelling civilisations are more isolated from great events, and therefore more prone to idiosyncrasies and arbitrary whims. There is a greater variety of the unexplained; weird, darkling enchantment and ancient technology.

The first region of note is the **Sea of the Gynarch Daoi**, an infinite and almost unbroken expanse of water to the east of Thasan. The empire of the amazons that lie here was swallowed without a trace by the waves, and only a few fuming cones remain to tell of the cataclysm. It is written by green-stained plates of brass in the library of Mirvander Khan that the amazons had gone to another world before the catastrophe would reach them. Whether this puzzling fragment is an euphemism or memory of an otherwise undocumented migration, may not be verified.

Second is the **Sea of Emerald Idols**; easily navigable and shallow, so named for the strikingly monumental stone idols emerging from it like so many towers. The curious mementos (more olivine than emerald) depict monstrous gods, writhing worms, snakes and unpromising, more abstract entities watching the waters without recognition or sentiment. The idols predate men. Solon's settlers found them frozen into ice wastes that had once been seas; old, worn but intact. Some were demolished in subsequent wars, and one was transported to the Grand Planetological Museum on Fomalhaut-II at great cost and effort. Therefore, we can now speak of speak standing idols, and the remains of another five.

The most important islands include first and foremost the Isle of **Khonon**, with a town by the same name (pop. 900) and a citadel called **Soteiras** (pop. 500). Cats are sacred animals in Khonon, and the otherwise jovial citizens will become a merciless lynch mob out for blood at a mere hint of doing one harm. Every feline is the precursor to a yet unborn person accurately identified by complex divinations, and it is believed that as the lot of the cat goes, so will the lot of the man. Obviously, guidebooks for the rearing and pampering of cats, accessories and savory foodstuffs are in great demand, and the most sought after catologists are celebrated as stars.

According to unsubstantiated legends, the Azure and Golden Garden, a lush island covered by tropical forests, is the private paradise of a notable but reclusive goddess who has no worshippers, nor desire for any. Among the low mountains, one may glimpse bold edges of pastel glass and other evidence of avant-garde architecture. Some propose the garden is an experiment to create the ideal living habitat, while others – as it is customary – suggest more sinister purposes. These are just guesses: polite but well armed guards patrolling on swift antigrav sleds warn away all who would approach the coasts.

The Isle of Crypts is a more sinister place. According to great geographers, beneath the rocky islet lay monsters of immense power in a state of stasis. The full list is not known, but names such as “The Beast of 1000 Eyes” or “Fiend of 9 Worlds” suggest little good, even on an individual basis.

Even further east are the Isles of Living Colour. These islands and the city of Ollantai suffered the detonations of highly destructive colour bombs. The deadly radiation has expunged all life and seared the bedrock with scintillating brilliance. The land is bizarre, a shift of kaleidoscopic images, and entirely dead.

The largest island in the Sea of Emerald Idols is Dainskar. There are two cities, Terce Pfanderle and Frorung. **Terce Pfanderle** (pop. 1600) is a pleasant port surrounded by rolling hills; its long, curving esplanade and the view of the terraced little town rising on the hills lend it a quaint charm. The inhabitants live by elaborate conventions; demands of decorum and proper comport are rigid to exaction. The benevolent tolerance and slight pity the citizens practice towards foreigners generates pathological hatred in some, while others are inspired to schemes of cunning. These types are in for an unpleasant surprise when the polite and helpful, even congenial demeanour turns into the “closing banquet”, a method of execution carried out in the politest of manners but not at all pleasant to experience.

Society in **Frorung** (pop. 1500) is elaborately layered, and by vertical division. Places in the hierarchy for a person or polyad (for the people of this city organise themselves into these arbitrary units on the principles of free association instead of familial links) are determined by the height of the towers they presently occupy. From a distance, Frorung seems a forest of needle-shaped pinnacles; there is a constant bustle of construction projects underway, as well as of careful intrigue to sabotage them.

The **Sea of the Lost** is the last region to be discussed here. The Isle of Dainskare extends here, linked by a grandiose viaduct to Wormsmarsh, an island unworthy of visit or attention. It is unknown what the ancient Terrans sought to accomplish by connecting two unremarkable points of land in this manner, but whatever their reason, it was to their distant descendant's benefit. On the middle pillar, an exclusive tourist resort and casino named **Ottrog Bridgewatch** (pop. 300; ca. 2/3 staff) has been constructed, a magnet for the discerning and prosperous customer.

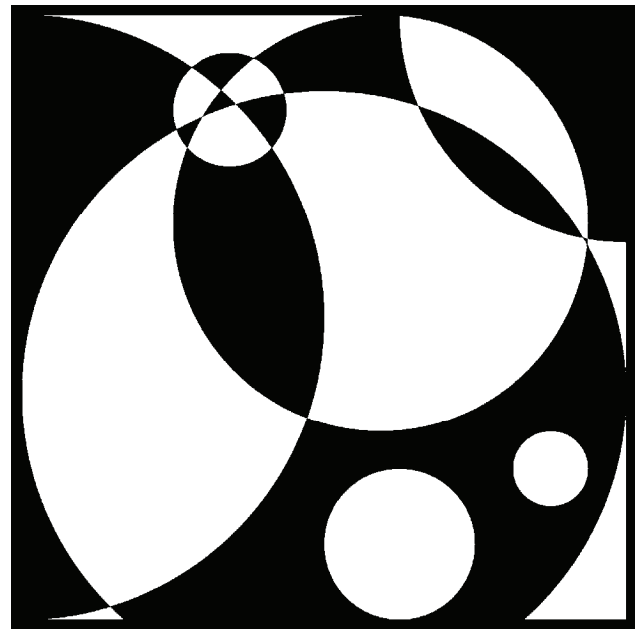
ULTIMA, the Floating Continent is the most impressive monument of Terran civilisation still in existence. The terraformers raised the middle portion of a large island from its place, and secured it 6000 metres above sea level with precision force beams. ULTIMA, if hypotheses are correct, is a perfectly organised technological utopia with an unbroken history of 4000 years and, by modern standards, prosperity beyond conceivable limits. However, all attempts at establishing contact with the inhabitants of the continent were met with perfectly executed annihilatory strikes; therefore, such efforts are no longer in vogue. In the jumbled and broken basin under the giant shadow of ULTIMA, small and mobile squads are in search of

leftover artifacts and oddments; an exercise profitable but outstandingly dangerous by virtue of electrodemons, hunter-killers in a nigh invulnerable brass casing that seek for interlopers. The profitability of salvage has resulted in the emergence of **Sfeng Okrian** (pop. 1300), a squalid shantytown below the “Gate”, the most convenient pass leading into the desolation. This lawless place is the primary node for exporting salvaged artifacts, as well as expeditions of treasure hunters caring to try their luck for easy money. Overseer Gosso Gorgner is the master of the city, and he upholds the only law – the acquisition of his lawful cut.

The Isles of Miran represent the eastern borders of Fomalhaut civilisation: further beyond are only open seas and nameless islands. The main island is unnaturally beautiful, with fragile flowers, mountain-scapes and lakes offering splendid views and the illusion of great distances. Miran’s protector is the god Ellinger, who maintains residence in this area.

Of the cities, **Polymerton Blue** (pop. 3100) is the larger. Polymertonites, who are fond of their eponymous colour, curious hats resembling snail shells, and the quiet joys of life, are determined although restrained hedonists. This world view does not always seem logical for foreigners, especially because of the restraint, but, fortunately, the aesthetic pleasures of consuming scented jellies served in glass tubes of variable diameter, or inhaling complex aromas, may be learned to a suitable degree with long practice if one is so disposed. Since the inhabitants of the city are stone rich, and have all manner of conveniences from hovering cars to swift and silent glideways at their disposal, they do not seek – although neither do they abhor – the company of strangers.

**Yu Croulsc** (pop. 2800) enjoys similar standards of living, and, although it does not offer port facilities, it may be comfortably reached from Polymerton Blue by an underground train at a cost of glass coins equivalent to 500 gp for a return ticket. The passions of Yu Croulsc are more abstract, and harder to interpret correctly than the motivations guiding the people of Polymerton. The philosophy of Yu postulates the projection of imaginary concepts on the canvas of reality as the supreme form of self-expression; although a shadowy ambience is usually the best result, the ego is satisfied and elevated by creating it. Therefore, the inhabitants live in simple, although not austere circumstances, and may seem more dour on first sight than they really are. This image, of course, is a bit of a vulgarisation. The considerable hidden complexities (such as Yu’s deeper interpretative levels, which offer counterparts of a darker and more violent nature to the less turbulent surface) render the picture more ambiguous, but the present work may not assume the burden of their correct and thorough exploration. Ω



## The Fomalhaut Oracle

by Gabor Lux, excerpted from the role-playing game *Kard és Mágia* - in memoriam Bob Bledsaw

### Settlements

%	environment (1d3)
01-04	base/fortress (20% hidden)
05-11	cultivated (25% active)
12-16	dangerous environment
17-22	dangerous fauna
23-27	dangerous flora
28-29	destroyed/dead
30-31	dimension transfer
32-33	enchanted
34-35	extra-natural phenomena
36-45	monsters
46-47	petrified
48-50	polluted/dangerous
51-55	provisions (25% dangerous)
56-70	reefs/cliffs/shoals
71-75	relics
76-90	ruins
91-95	structures
96-00	volcanism

%	inhabitants (50%, 1d2)
01-05	anthropophagi
06-10	castaway
11-30	<b>civilisation</b>
31-34	deserters
35-38	fishermen
39-43	garrison
44-49	hedonists (30% perverted)
50-55	hermit (30% insane, 30% exiled)

56-60	<b>lost civilisation</b>
61-66	mage/illusionist
67-70	mad scientist
71-75	megalomaniacal tyrant (50% in exile)
76-79	Merchants
80-82	Mysteries
83-88	pariahs (25% diseased)
89-95	Priest
96-98	prison colony
99-00	Therianthropes

%	<b>civilisation type (1d3)</b>
01-08	Agrarian
09-12	brigands/pirates
13-17	Craftsmen
18-22	cult/theocracy
23-26	Democratic
27-34	Dictatorial
35-38	Enlightened
39-43	Mercantile
44-49	Militaristic
50-53	Pariahs
54-58	Primitive
59-62	primordial/subhuman
63-72	slave-keeping
73-87	<b>special characteristics</b>
88-92	<b>Subjugated</b>
93-00	<b>Utopia</b>

%	<b>Subjugated</b>
01-05	Demon
06-15	God
16-20	Imaginary
21-30	Marauders
31-35	mental shackle
36-40	Monster
41-50	other civilisation
51-55	Parasites
56-60	Secret
61-70	social class
71-75	Symbolic
76-85	Traditions
86-00	Tyrant

%	<b>special characteristics (1d2)</b>
01-05	Ascetic
06-15	civil war/power struggle
16-25	Collapsed
26-35	Decadent
36-45	dogmatic/eccentric
46-50	enchantment/curse
51-55	Gynarchy
56-60	Hidden
44-49	Militaristic

66-70	illusion/dream
71-75	non-human/extra-planet
76-80	pacifistic
81-85	philosophic
86-90	quasi-human
91-95	under extinction
96-00	xenophobic

%	<b>utopia*</b>
01-10	absolutist
11-15	altruistic
16-20	anarchy
21-25	bucolic
26-30	communism
31-35	Eco-
36-40	eugenic
41-50	hedonistic
51-55	libertarianism/objectivism
56-60	modern
61-65	multiculturalism
66-70	mystical
71-75	philosophic
76-80	post-modern
81-90	religious
91-95	scientific/rational/reform-
96-00	social-darwinist

\* 01-40 with drawbacks, 41-80 under collapse



### Relics and Curios

%	<b>relics and finds</b>
01-05	Ash/coal/slag
06-11	bones
	<i>01-05 abnormal</i>
	<i>06-35 animal</i>
	<i>36-40 geometric</i>
	<i>41-70 human</i>
	<i>71-80 machine wrecks</i>
	<i>81-00 monster</i>
12-17	building/rubble
18-25	ceramics/shards
26-31	corpses/remains
32-35	high tech devices
36-37	living/active
38-43	magical
44-48	metal
49-54	misc. refuse/pollution
55-58	poisonous/infectious materials
59-66	provisions (50% usable, 25% dangerous)
	<i>01-25 common</i>
	<i>26-50 food/drink</i>
	<i>51-65 fuel</i>
	<i>66-85 raw materials</i>

	<i>86-00 tools</i>
67-72	Statues
73-80	Stones
81-86	Treasure
87-92	Vehicle
	<i>01-15 air</i>
	<i>16-55 aquatic</i>
	<i>56-95 land</i>
	<i>96-00 subterranean</i>
93-96	weapon/armour
97-00	writings/glyphs

%	<b>mystical objects</b>
01-05	Altar
06	Apparatus
07-08	bell/chime
09	Block
10-13	bones/skull
14-15	box/chest
16-18	Brazier
19	Cage
20-22	Candelabrum
23-25	candle/lantern
26-27	Carving
28-29	Clothing
30	Cylinder
31-32	depression/niche
33-35	Diagram
36-37	Drape
38-39	Furnace
40-41	Globe
42-44	glyph/ornament
45	Gong
46	grid/grille
47-50	idol/figurine
51-52	Incense
53	Mask
54-55	Mirror
56-57	Mosaic
58-61	mummies/remains
62-65	Mural
66	Net/network
67	Optical
68	Pedestal
69	plaque/disk
70	Pyramid
71-73	Relief
74	Screen
75	Sheet
76-79	Symbol
80-81	Tank
82	Tube
83-85	reservoir/dish
86-87	Vat

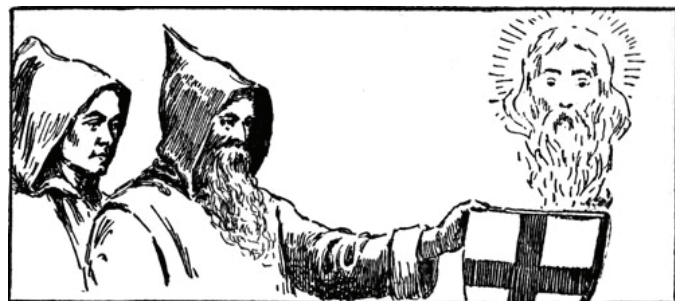
88	weights/scale
89-90	well/spring
91-92	weapons
93-94	anti-deluvian*
95-96	Bizarre*
97-98	composite*
99-00	high-tech*

\* and reroll



### Functions of magical structures, idols, etc.

%	<b>magical functions</b>
01-05	barrier
06-10	comes to life
11-15	conjunction formula, god/demon
16-20	curse
21-25	gate
26-30	guardians
31-35	hiding place
36-40	illusion/dream
41-45	impart spec. abilities (20% permanent)
46-50	legend
51-55	minor harmless
56-60	mystical methods
61-70	oracle
	<i>01-10 benevolent</i>
	<i>11-20 false</i>
	<i>21-30 ignorant</i>
	<i>31-40 inaccurate (50% malignant)</i>
	<i>41-60 normal</i>
	<i>61-00 vague</i>
71-75	prison
76-80	proclamation/prophecy
81-90	spell effect
	<i>01-10 transformation</i>
	<i>11-30 curative</i>
	<i>31-55 dangerous</i>
	<i>56-80 enchantment/control</i>
	<i>81-90 immobilisation</i>
	<i>91-00 other benevolent</i>
91-95	spells (may be copied)
96-00	trap



%	random teleport/gate destinations
01-03	afterlife (get out of <i>here!</i> )
04-06	any (players' choice)
07-11	City
12-15	dream/illusion/hallucination
16-19	Dungeon
20-21	geostationary installation
22-26	hostile territory
27-31	ice wastes
32-36	Island
37-39	lethal area
40-42	other dimension
43-45	other planet
46-50	Prison/trap
51-55	proximate location
56-57	realm of demon/god
58-67	same, but...
	<i>01-05 changed</i>
	<i>06-10 extra equipment</i>
	<i>11-25 a few small details are wrong</i>
	<i>26-30 a few major details are wrong</i>
	<i>31-40 guests have arrived</i>
	<i>41-50 hostile territory/bunt</i>
	<i>51-55 incorporeal/incapacitated</i>
	<i>56-65 no/less equipment</i>
	<i>66-80 other time (+/- 1d100 hours)</i>
	<i>81-90 other time (+/- 1d100 days)</i>
	<i>91-95 other time (+/- 1d10000 years)</i>
	<i>96-00 temporary (1d8 dest. changes, 1d6 hours each)</i>
68-72	Secure shelter
73-74	similar, but different dimension
5-78	underworld realm/demesne
79-80	unstable inter-dimensional medium
81-85	Village
86-90	wasteland/desert
91-00	wilderness (random terrain type)



## Inferno – The Fifth Circle

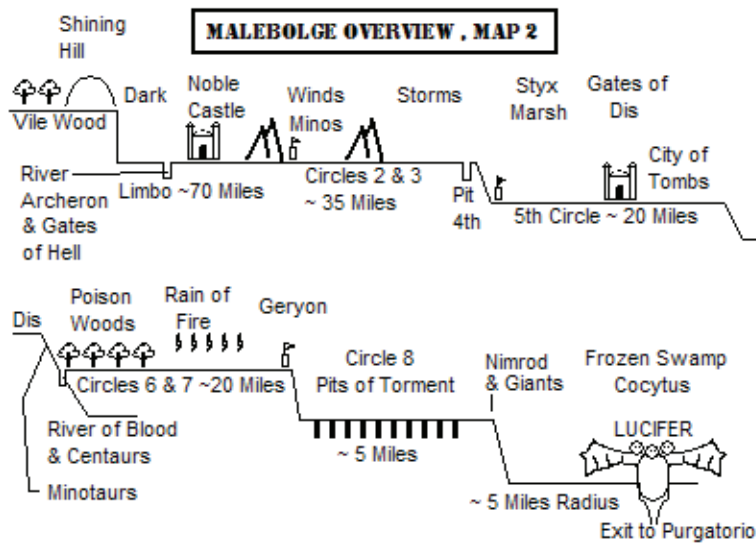
by Geoffrey O. Dale

*Judges Guild's legendary Inferno, by Geoffrey O. Dale, detailed the first four circles of Hell. This is the fifth. Geoffrey has the rest worked out; with luck a publisher for the whole will someday be found. I personally got more use out of Inferno than any other Judges Guild module save perhaps Dark Tower, and it is a tremendous honor to be presenting this material in Fight On! - Ignatius*

**Fifth Circle, Styx and the City of Dis:** The Fifth Circle is a circular band 20 miles across with an outer circumference of 410 miles and inner circumference of 290 miles. It is separated from the Fourth Circle (outward and above) by an 800 foot vertical cliff with access by way of 10 paths running through narrow crevices parallel to the cliff face, spaced about 40 miles apart around the outer ring. It is separated from the Sixth Circle (inward and below) by a 425 foot vertical drop connected by twelve straight narrow gullies spaced about every 24 miles around the inner perimeter. Characters exit the Fourth Circle into the Fifth Circle via narrow crevices filled with bone-chilling cold black water (system shock/CON roll or lose d4 effective Dexterity for d8 hours due to numbing) which cascades onto a 200 foot wide strip of dark, heavy packed earth before flowing into the Styx. The flowing water from the crevice does not carry any diseases but has a biting, bitter taste, and carries a mineral that causes temporary blindness in Halflings (blind 1d10 minutes after drinking lasting 1d100\*1d100 minutes, save vs. poison -4). The marsh Styx is about 11 miles across, with water generally between 4 and 8 feet deep. A 150 foot wide strip of hard red-orange clay lies between Styx and the Walls of Dis on the inward side, and beyond that the Walls the City of Burning Tombs stretches for 8½ miles to the inner border of the Circle.

Mortals must have the permission of Prince Paimon (Prince of the Fifth Circle) or one of the Fifth Circle Earls (Abalam, Ahriman, Astaroth, Batinin, Bebal, Belphegor, or Mephisotoles) to freely travel about the Circle, otherwise they must be escorted by an number of Etvaras (DC 5, WD 10, Spd 6/Fly 9, see monster index at end of article for attacks and special abilities) at least double the number of mortals. Mortals given permission to travel wear a badge shaped like a yellow shield bearing the profile of a grey castle.

Four to five foot tall mushrooms grow along the outer shore of the Styx in a band 30 feet across, in a multitude of shades of brown, grey, and white; growing so thickly characters must chop their way through to the swamp (2 feet per minute with machete). Characters approaching within 20' of the mushrooms experience an overpowering, ravenous, thoughtless desire, craving, and compulsion to eat mushrooms (save vs. spells to resist, bonuses for high Wisdom). Check the table on the next page:



temperature of 93°F, and a musty odor which makes breathing difficult and unpleasant – characters must make a system shock roll every few hours and during the second round of every combat to avoid a debilitating coughing fit lasting 2d20 rounds (no spells and -2 on all actions while coughing). Sudden, heavy, violent, downpours of black, sour-tasting rain come every d8 hours and last for d4 hours at a time (on a 4 keep adding d4-1 to the total until a number other than 4 is rolled). Heat lightning and distant peals of thunder are near-constant.

**The Styx and Phlegyas:** The souls of the Wrathful and Violent are confined in Styx. They are naked, with long talons for fingernails, and completely consumed with a mad hatred of everything around them, so that each soul attacks and rips and tears at every other and anything else it can reach. The marsh Styx is filled with dirty black water slowly circulating in the counterclockwise (south) direction, with numerous thick flat red double-heart-shaped leaves floating in it. Except for the cold black streamlets that eddy within it the water is a uniform 80°F. It has an oily feel, an acidic taste, and smells like rotten eggs. A character drinking swamp water contracts one of (roll d3) diphtheria, whooping cough, or malaria unless a save is made.

**Styx Encounters:** When an encounter is indicated in/on the Styx, determine a result on d36 (2d6 or d12+d3) from the encounter table below. If characters are in a small boat or canoe when the encounter occurs, the opponent initially attempts to capsize the boat before directly attacking them.

**Mushroom Effects Table:**

2d8 Roll	Effect
2	Heal 1d8 wound points
3	Cure all diseases in person ingesting
4	Neutralize all poisons in person ingesting
5-7	None
8	Grow to 12' tall for 1 day
9	Shrink to 1' tall for 1 day
10	Nerve poison: die in d20 rounds
11	Stomach poison: in excruciating pain for a full day, -2 on all actions & must roll to cast spells
12	Paralyzed for 1d8 hours
13	Confused for 1 day
14	Recurrent hallucinations for 1 day
15	Suffer 1d8 wound points damage
16	Suffer 2d8 wound points damage

Characters receiving results 10-14 receive an appropriate saving throw at -4. Other results receive no save.

Spaced at intervals of 5 miles along the outer shore of Styx are black stone obelisks, each 8' tall with 10 inch square sides, sitting on a black stone pedestal 2' square. The west (outer) side of each obelisk is engraved with arrows pointing to the north (clockwise) and south (counterclockwise); the north arrow is labeled "Astraroth," and the south arrow is labeled "Ahriman, Bebal." The palace of Astraroth (Earl of Hell) is located on an island 25 miles clockwise of the west-east axis of the Circle, 2 miles into Styx; the palace of Ahriman (Earl of Hell) is located on an island about 75 miles counterclockwise of the west-east axis, 5 miles into Styx; the palace of Bebal (Earl of Hell) is located on an island 150 miles counterclockwise of the west-east axis, about 8 miles into Styx. If characters do not enter the Circle along the western edge or west-east axis of the Circle, these labels and distances require adjustment.

The sky over Styx is hazy with light winds of variable direction, very high and unpleasant humidity, an air

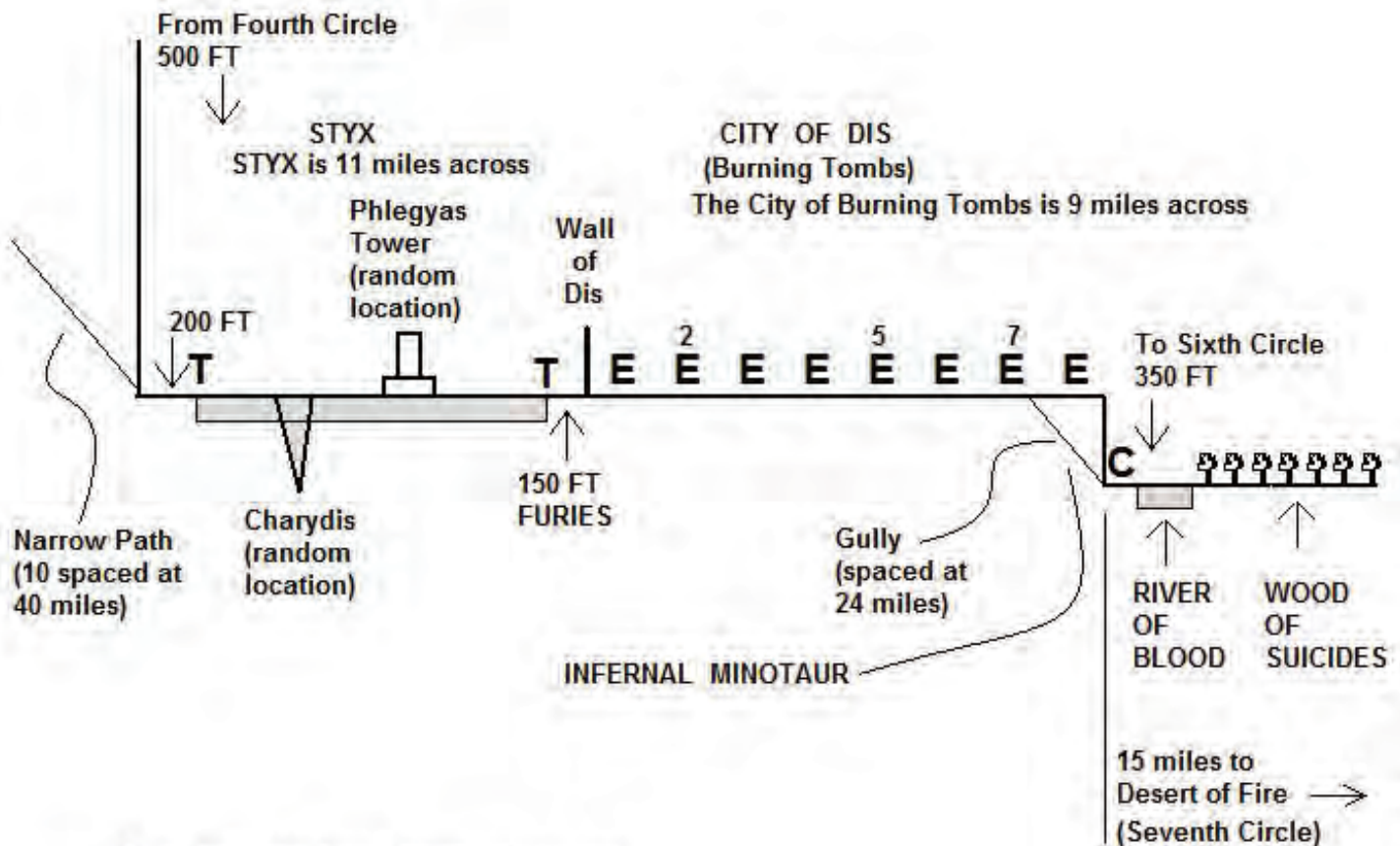
d36	Encounter
1	d100 giant centipedes
2	d8 carnivorous plants
3	d12 giant crocodiles
4	d8 giant dragonflies
5	2d20 mosquito-bats
6	d8 scorpion fish (see monster index)
7	d12 rotting sharks (see monster index)
8	d12 flame fish
9	d4 cockatrices
10	d4 hydras, d3+4 heads each
11	dark pudding
12	grayish ooze
13-16	d8 manes (see monster index)
17-19	d8 lesser common devils (see monster index)
20-22	d8 greater common devils (see monster index)
23-24	d12 etvaras (see monster index)
25	d4 zoybim (see monster index)
26	d4 type 4B devils (see original <i>Inferno</i> , or barbed)
27	d4 type 4C devils (see original <i>Inferno</i> , or barbed)
28-30	d6 type 5A devils (see monster index)
31-32	d6 type 5B devils (see monster index)
33	d4 horned devils, or type 6A in full setting
34-35	assura with 10 etvaras (see monster index)
36	nimidoryas with 10 assura and 100 etvaras (smi)

When characters encounter devils on the Fifth Circle, they are challenged about what they are doing unless wearing an appropriate badge. A credible or coherent story will leave the characters unmolested on a positive persuasion or reaction roll, although devils may question each character separately (out of each other's hearing) to establish how coherent or truthful their story is. Failure means the devil(s) will want to escort characters to an appropriate locale to verify their story. Devils can call for 1d10 similar reinforcements if they are losing a combat (2 or more devils killed). Devils that retreat from combat report to higher authorities in 3d8 hours; any resulting hunt for the characters is confined to the Fifth Circle.

**Boating over the Styx:** At the foot of each of the 10 crevices connecting the Fourth and Fifth Circles are red stone towers connected to 100' by 15' stone wharves jutting out into the Styx. The towers are solid piles of stone (no doors, entries or rooms), each 125' tall and 15' square. A worn wooden ladder is attached to the south

side. On top of each tower is an 8 foot wide copper cauldron containing perpetually burning coals. A thick red rope hangs at eye-height on the tower's south side from a carved wooden arm – every pull of the rope produces a 6' wide, 40' tall bright red column of flame from the cauldron on top of the tower that persists for 15 rounds. Five rounds after the rope is pulled, an answering tower of flame is seen flickering on the edge of the horizon directly opposite the tower (a character on the tower top when the column of fire forms suffers 5d12 fire damage). 5d100+200 rounds after initiating the signal fire, Phlegyas the Ferryman appears (alone) at the wharf with his boat (holds 8 characters plus 1000 additional pounds of cargo); he can be seen from the wharf at a range of 1500 feet.

When Phlegyas arrives at the outer wharf, he demands to know who summoned him. He offers passage on his boat in exchange for (1) the right arm of each passenger [removed immediately at the shoulder, without pain and with the wound healed; an arm removed by Phlegyas



- T** = Pier and Stone Tower (Phlegyas)
- E** = Scripted Encounter in Dis
- 2 = Myrodgar & Odozor
- 5 = Banshees
- 7 = Erichtho
- C** = Chiron's Hall

The River of Blood has an outer bank 200 FT wide, an inner bank (by the wood) 100 FT wide, and the river is 1000 FT wide



cannot be regenerated by any power less than a *Limited Wish*, (2) 10 pearls of high quality per passenger (roughly 5000 gc value each, and Phlegyas is an expert assayer), or (3) 25 years from the lifespan of each passenger (any passenger within 25 years of their natural death lives until they reach the other side of Styx then immediately dies upon touching solid land). He transports characters possessing valid [written] orders from any Prince, Duke, or Earl of Hell for no charge. Characters transported by Phlegyas reach the inner side of Styx after about an hour without any encounters or incidents. If the companions have moved more than 1500' from the signal tower when Phlegyas arrives, he immediately sends 1d12 search parties consisting of one Nimidoryas, one Assura, and 10 Etvaras to find the persons who activated the signal tower.



The boat passes within a quarter-mile (1300') of Phlegyas' island (within easy visual range) and characters can request to be dropped off there instead of at the City of Dis. When characters are dropped at his island, a second fee will be required for transport off it – though he will of course refuse to transport any characters that have entered his Tower without his permission.

**Phlegyas, Ferryman of the Styx:** DC 2, WD 20, wp 120, Speed 12/Swim 18. Phlegyas has but one attack, doing 2d8 unarmed (causing horrible oozing wounds through his *Talisman*) or 2d8+5 with *Phlegyas' Pole* (+3 to hit, on natural 20 target must save at -8 or be turned to water, see description for additional abilities of talisman and pole). Phlegyas is immune to all fire, air, and water spells and effects, immune to poison, takes half damage from cold, and can only be physically injured by +3 or better weapons. Priestly spells of level 3 or below do not affect him at all and 90% of other spells will also fail against him. However, he suffers double damage from earth-based magics if they effect him, and receives no saving throw

against chemical-based poisons. He can see in all spectra, including invisible creatures and creatures obscured by magic, and can freely use clairaudience and clairvoyance. He knows when he is being lied to and can project a fearful aura (all about him must save at -3). At will he can bestow powerful curses, summon the Charybdis whirlpool (see below), water elementals, or groups of potent water creatures, call massive fogs covering half a square mile, freeze water for 100 feet around him, and create massive walls of water or waves. He can cast spells as a 10<sup>th</sup> level mage, favoring *Feeble Mind*, *Killing Cloud*, *Fiery Wall*, *Confuse*, *Mage's Eye*, *Dispel Magic*, *Fiery Ball*, *Become Invisible*, *Charm Person*, and *Shield* spells among others. Phlegyas appears to be a horned human male standing 6 ft. 6 inches tall, having thick brown hair, small rounded ears, a high wrinkled forehead with 4 short straight brown horns, thick arched brown eyebrows over glowing blue eyes, a large Roman nose, thin brown moustaches, high cheeks, a wide thin mouth with thick red lips, and a large square chin. He has very wide shoulders, a thick barrel-shaped torso, wide hips, long legs ending in wide feet, a short brown tail ending in a barbed hook, and short but very muscular arms ending in calloused oversized hands. He wears a short-sleeved green tunic (*blending, protection* +2), knee-length black breeches, a thin black belt with gold clasp, black leather shoes, and a wide-brimmed green hat.

**Phlegyas' Pole:** This +3 weapon, +6 vs. water creatures does 2d8 base damage. It acts as if it were silver to undead and lycanthropes and anything hit by it on a natural 20 must save at -8 or be turned into water. It can command up to 30 WD of water creatures at a time (save -2) and the bearer can always communicate with and understand such creatures. It can propel a ship slowly but unerringly through the water, always touching bottom even when it lies far below the pole's tip, and 3 times per day it can summon water elementals or creatures. It looks to be a dark blue metal pole, 1½ inches in diameter by 12 feet long, with a 2-foot length in the middle wrapped in soft black leather; the wielder can adjust the pole to any length between 3 and 15 feet. It was created by the Telchine devils 13,552 years ago and weighs four pounds.

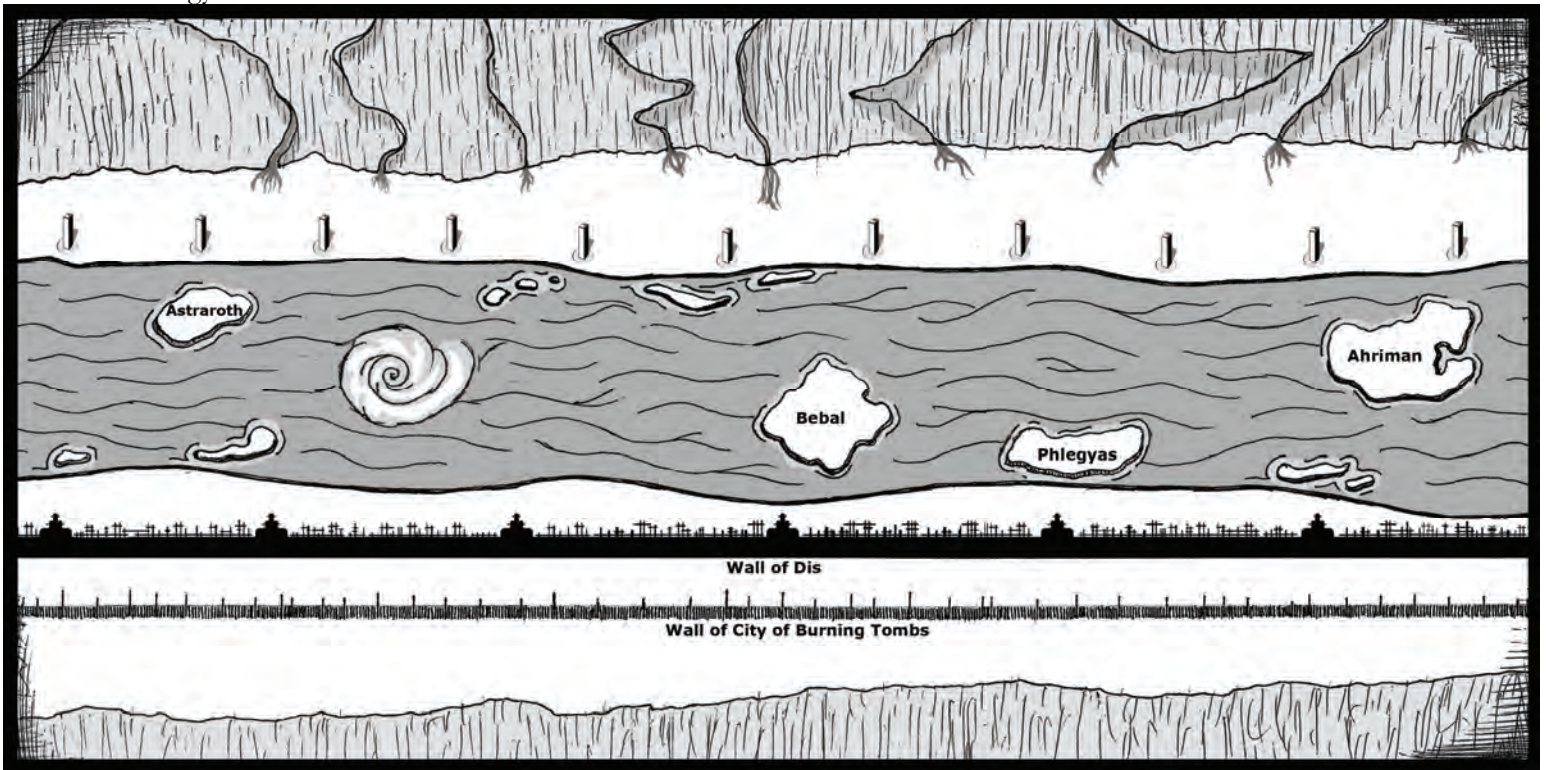
**Phlegyas' Talisman:** This talisman has a very powerful aura of evil, easily detected by holy types who look. Good characters handling or wearing it take 1d10 psychic damage which cannot start healing as long as the talisman is worn. Furthermore, every week the bearer must save or turn evil if he or she is not already. Anyone the bearer strikes physically (bare-handed) will take 1d8 damage and the wound thus caused will ooze pus and blood for d12 rounds, doing 1 additional wp each round. The talisman raises intelligence and wisdom by 3 and gives its wearer a +7 to all saves vs. mind control. No devil below the rank of General will attack the bearer (unless themselves attacked first). The wearer is immune to air and water

spells but suffers +50% damage from fire. The talisman can putrify food and drink, bestow curses, walk on water, create walls of water or ice, and allow its bearer to communicate by telepathy within 150' at will. 1x/day each its wearer can create an aura of awe 100' around him that causes general deference and ends fighting in his favor (save -10), speak a power word that instantly slays the nearest 1d6 devils under 12 WD within 75' (no save in most cases), or create a hurricane blast (capsize a ship, end missile fire, blow people around, plus damage as a 10 die cone of cold to any hit directly). The talisman is a small silver conch shell, about 7 inches long by 3 inches across, in which are mounted 3 pink pearls, the whole attached to a thin mithril neck chain.

**Boating Without Phlegyas:** Tied to each wharf are three wooden canoes, each 26', with curved prows and sterns carved in the image of winged, tusked, and beaked skeletal devils (type 5E), and equipped with 4 wide wooden paddles and a 50 pound iron anchor. Each has a total weight capacity (riders plus cargo) of 1450 pounds. Characters can use the canoes to ferry themselves across the Styx; it takes about 16 paddler-hours to get across the Styx, with a maximum of 4 effective paddlers at any time (for a 4 hour minimum crossing). Checks against Dexterity (made by the passenger with the lowest score) on d20 or d6 may be necessary even for routine paddling every half-mile or so, and must be made if combat is entered or tricky maneuvers are attempted. It is easy to get lost in Styx, as well, so check once per hour for orientation, with substantial penalties in a storm. Characters that successfully ferry themselves across the Styx in canoes always pass within 500' of Phlegyas' Island after 3-8 miles.

GM Note: Characters should clearly describe the placement of objects and equipment in the canoe, and whether they are loose or tied/strapped in. The location of armor and weapons not being worn must be described so that if the canoe is tipped, the DM can determine whether items are lost. Any object dropped into Styx is likely lost, though the shallow water makes it possible to search if one wishes to risk disease and further random encounters.

When characters use canoes, check for encounters once per mile, with a 1 in 6 chance of encounter on the previous table. In addition, every two miles there is a 1 in 4 chance of attracting the wandering whirlpool Charybdis. The whirlpool is 50' across, quickly circulating in the clockwise direction; while the Styx is usually no more than 8 feet deep, around Charybdis the depth is 25' to a radius of 100' from its center. The whirlpool moves randomly about the swamp at about the same speed as the canoes. A boat nearby is pulled into Charybdis unless at least two paddlers make strength checks (out of up to four piloting it) every round in its pull. A boat caught in Charybdis capsizes, and those within may choose between being ejected into Styx or being pulled under, where they will drown in 1d8 rounds if they can't breathe or get to the surface. Characters encountering Charybdis while wading through the swamp (or floundering after their canoe capsizes) are pulled into the whirlpool unless making some kind of saving throw or a check against Strength or Dexterity every round they are within its pull. Charybdis cannot be disrupted or destroyed, but its course can be altered by a *Command*, *Control Water*, or similar magic. Characters pulled



into Charybdis permanently lose 1d10 carried items not strapped to their bodies (randomly determined from the contents of their belt pouches, backpacks, scabbards, pockets, etc.) and items in hand may also be lost unless a roll is made to hold on to them.

**Wading through the Styx:** If characters wade through Styx, they move at about 1 mile per hour, so 9-11 hours will be required to cross the swamp to the dry inner shore assuming a completely straight path. Check for becoming lost every half mile. A character crossing this way contracts one of (determine from 1d3 result), diphtheria, whooping cough, or malaria, with a new saving throw required every six hours or so. Characters in the water have their Dexterity effectively halved due to the very sticky properties of the muddy swamp floor. Further, waders will periodically hit swarms of d20 slugs or leeches in addition to other encounters; these do 1 point of damage each when first attaching and will likely not be noticed right away. They do this same amount of damage anew every hour. Killing a leech while it is attached to a character inflicts an immediate additional 1d3 damage to the character unless it is at the same time peeled off carefully (non-physicians make a roll); leeches can be safely removed by placing a small amount of pure salt on their exposed skin or by lightly touching their body with something hot (such as a smoldering torch). A save vs. disease at -3 is necessary to avoid contracting elephantitis – check this anew with each infestation.

Waders check both for random encounters and for Charybdis as do boaters, and in addition must check every half-hour for packs of wrathful Manes (2-20) swimming in the river. These will attack berserkly (+2 to hit and damage) and never retreat or break off.

**Flying over Styx** If characters fly over Styx, check for encounters every half-mile of travel using this table:

d12 Flying Foes Encountered	
1	2d20 Giant Dragonflies
2	Swarm of Poison Gnats
3	1d10 Harpies
4	1d20 Devil Locusts
5	3d12 Giant Wasps
6	2d12 Roc-Sized Vultures
7	1d6 Cockatrice
8	2d8 Spectral Bats (see monster index)
9	1d8 Type 5A Devils (see monster index)
10	1d8 Type 5B Devils (see monster index)
11	1d6 Type 5C Devils (see monster index)
12	Adult or older green (50%) or black (50%) Dragon

Normally fliers will not get too lost except in the very middle (check once), but if a storm comes they will instantly become completely lost unless magic is used. The

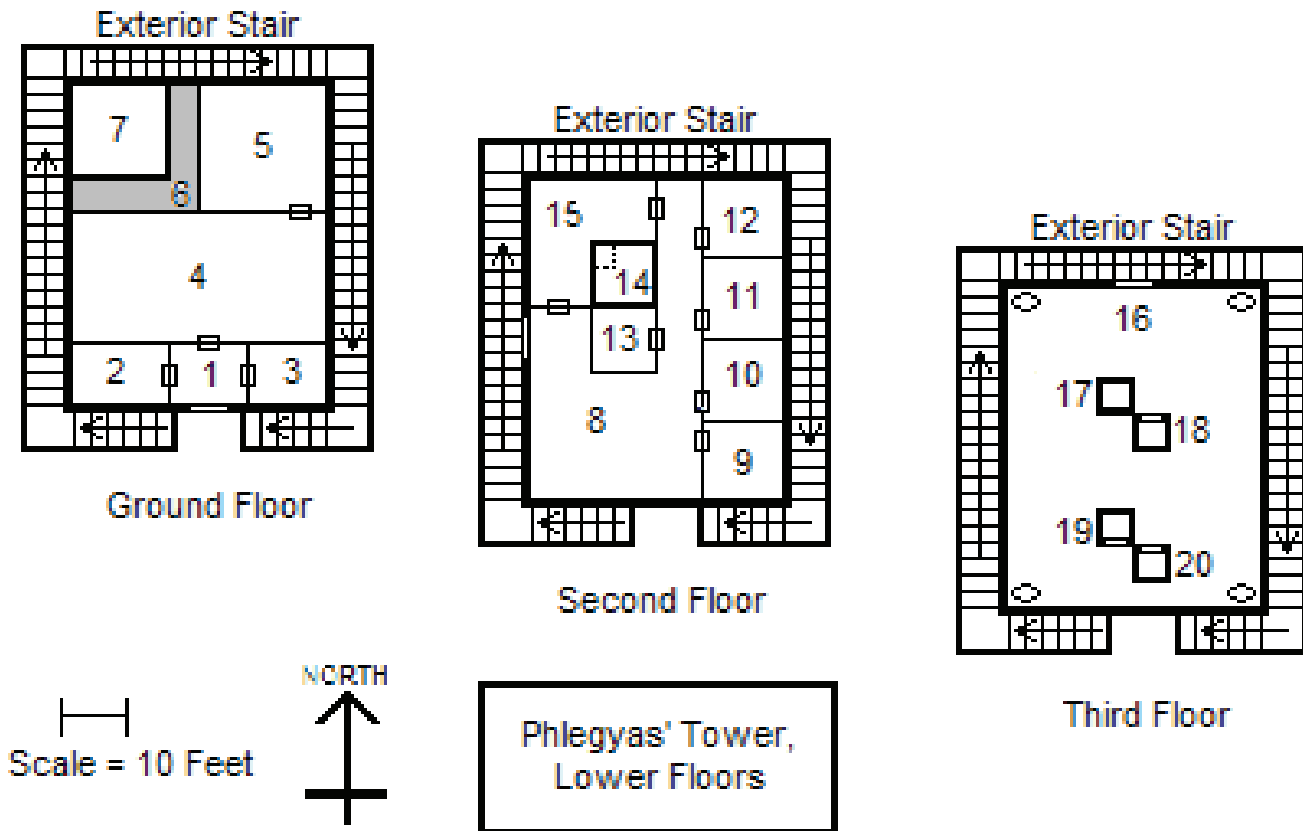
winds of hell do not approve of flying, and after the first mile is passed headwinds will gradually increase in intensity from 25 mph after the first mile to 125 mph by the time the inner border is reached.

**The Island and Tower of Phlegyas:** Regardless of the means used to cross Styx (wading, flying, boating), or the location at which the crossing is attempted, characters always pass within ¼ mile of the Island of Phlegyas. Although it does not float, the island has no fixed location, can move about slowly, and can be summoned by Phlegyas at any time. The island is 400' long and 120' wide, and rises about 4 feet above the Styx waterline. It has an oval shape, extended to points on the long ends. A 30' long by 8' wide white stone wharf is located on each end (no boats are found at either wharf when players arrive). The island is covered in well-maintained green grass and has 7 large Weeping Willow Trees (1 on the north side, 2 on the east side, 2 on the south side, and 2 on the west side next to the wharf) along with numerous colorful bushes that give off a sweet cloying scent. In the island's center is a rectangular 4-story sandstone tower colored in a variety of shades of brown, tan, and beige, about 50'x60'x50' with a crenellated roof. The tower has a single rounded door in the center of the south side of the ground floor. An external stone stair, 6' wide, winds around the outside of the tower, with all access to each floor being from the tower exterior. The second floor has a single door centered on the west side, the third floor a single door centered on the north side, the fourth floor a single door centered on the east side, and the stair continues up and around to give roof access on the south. Every 30 minutes 4 Type 5B devils (see monster index) visit and inspect the second and fourth floor doors; they check the third floor door only if it is open when they pass. The next inspection is in 3d10 minutes.

If characters try to explore this forbidding structure, determine the initial locations of the following inhabitants before they enter (d100):

- Behomond:** 01-20 **8**, 21-46 **12**, 47 -100 **21**
- Ellisiffe** 01-10 **8**, 11-26 **15**, 27-32 **21**, 33-100 **16**
- Thadurros** 01-30 **8**, 31-61 **12**, 62-100 **21**
- Cobreigen** 01-30 **8**, 31-43 **9**, 44-75 **16**, 76-100 **21**
- Gwennelma** 01-15 **8**, 16-30 **10**, 31-41 **21**, 42-100 **16**
- Meurvin** 01-22 **8**, 23-69 **10**, 70-78 **16**, 79-100 **21**
- Laoghaire** 01-50 **8**, 51-76 **9**, 77-83 **16**, 84-100 **21**

1. The ground floor door is made of fine dark teak wood with a carving showing a boat full of hideous winged devils with pitchforks, and a horizontal cutout 24 inches wide by 8 inches high (located to prevent reaching through to access the lock). It has mithril hinges, a doorknob, and a lock plate; the door opens outward. The door has a key-style lock (found locked; -75% to pick; the key is carried by Phlegyas). A person looking through the cutout sees a *Stun Symbol* on a piece of black velvet hanging just behind the



door (unless dispelled or triggered, the door opens to reveal the symbol). The room beyond is square with sturdy wood key-locked doors to the west (-15% pick), north (-50% pick), and east (-15% pick), but no other trappings.

2. A rectangular stone room, having thin shell laminate walls except on the west which is completely taken up by a mural depicting a fleet of ships at sea in a demon-driven storm; the floor is polished red-orange coral, and the ceiling is smooth whitewashed stone. The room is furnished with a large rectangular aqua-colored carpet, a wide desk with a padded/wheeled leather office chair, a thin upright bookcase, an oval teak coffee table with a golden globe of the seas on it, 2 recliner-style stuffed chairs, a rosewood nautical trunk (key lock, found locked, -40% pick), and a copper trash can. Two unlit hurricane oil lanterns are mounted on wooden wall brackets on the south wall, 2 more are mounted on the north wall.

The desk contains 5 sheets of blank parchment, 2 quill pens, a well of dark blue ink, a [fake] treasure map to the wreck of the “*Mighty Albatross*”, a brass 10-power collapsing telescope, a curved dirk, 20 gold doubloons, a Table of Tides for the northern seas, and a piece of uncarved walrus tusk valued at 1d12 gc.

The upright bookcase holds an ivory scale model sailing ship (7900 gc) on the top shelf, a gold dwarven-made captain’s chronometer (22,600 gc), a silver astroblade (5740 gc), a mithril folding 20-power Mariner’s Telescope

(59,200 gc), and a gold dwarven-made nautical compass (12,300 gc). The bookcase holds a Sailor’s Handbook of Weather (16 gc), a Shipwright’s Handbook (93 gc), 2 Manuals of Captain’s Skill (these magical books make the character who reads them an expert ship captain), a Manual of Bodily Health +2, a Geas-Breaking Codicil, a Codex of Spell Storing (limited to casting and holding water magic – currently holds *Freezing Ovoid* (x2), *Control Water* (x2), *Control Weather*, *Create Food and Water* (x8), *Endure Elements* (x4), *Fog Cloud* (x4), *Ice Storm*, *Instant Dry* (x5), *Water Breathing* (x5), *Water Walk* (x3), and *Wall of Ice* (x2)), 3 Codices of Transformation (whale, dolphin, and alba-tross), a Handbook of Gainful Exercise +1, and a copy of Pelk’s Bestiary (Sea Creatures – see next page).

The nautical trunk has an obvious poison needle trap (paralyzes for about 4 hours, save -2, disarm +10%); the trunk also has a hidden poison gas cylinder inside (find -35%, disarm -50%; save vs. poison at -8 or die every round) triggered by lifting the lid. The chest contains a leather sack holding 420 gold doubloons, a silk bag with 48 large pink pearls (each 2d100+50 gc), 2 Potions of Water Breathing, a Polymorph Potion (Giant King Crab), a scroll which will summon any water creature up to 8 WD to serve as steed, an oilskin wrapped around a large piece of raw ivory (9300 gc) and 3 small carving knives, a 20 square foot royal-blue bolt of silk (4500 gc), a silver-bladed naval cutlass +2 (does +10 damage against Sea Dragons and Sea Snakes, and parries well enough to give +2 DC to bearer) in a silver scabbard, a pistol-crossbow of dwarven manu-

**Pelk's Bestiary:** This book identifies the characteristics, attacks, strengths, and vulnerabilities of any named species. This is equivalent to allowing reference to the (true) complete description and statistics of an opponent (applies only to species information, not to specific individuals). *Appearance:* A book 8 inches wide by 12 inches long by 1 inch thick, with a black cloth cover bearing the picture of a chimera in silver, with silver metal plates on the corners and a silver metal spine. One of several informational books created by the wizard Pelk of Loch Scaramond about 900 years ago. Copies of the Bestiary may be limited to (2d8): (2) Extraplanar creatures (3) Devils, (4) Flying Creatures, (5) Sea Creatures, (6) Reptiles, (7) Undead, (8) Mammals, (9), Insects, (10) Underground Creatures, (11) Intelligent Creatures, (12) Arctic Creatures, (13) Temperate Zone Creatures, (14) Tropical Creatures, (15) Desert Creatures, or (16) Demons.

facture with 30 pistol bolts +1, an elven blue-green Cloak of Protection against Storms, and a green Cloak of Water Breathing (sized for a gnome or Halfling; hood must be over the face for water breathing). Hidden underneath the poison gas cylinder in the lid of the trunk (find -35%, pick -10%) is a Ring of Spell Storing (*Lightning Bolt* x30).

3. A rectangular stone room, with plain stone floor, walls, and ceiling. The room is empty of furnishings but is occupied by 2 large Komodo Dragons (DC 4, WD 6, wp28,17).

4. A large rectangular room almost completely filled with large wooden bookcases and carpeted a thick deep blue. A single locked (-25% pick) metal door is found to the north. In the room's center are 4 light-colored wooden tables, each with 6 chairs. A lit green orb is attached every 10' around the room's perimeter; each orb brightens as living creatures approach it and then dims as they move away. To protect the contents the room has a permanent *anti-magic field*, and a second magical field prevents any flames mundane or magical from being kindled here. Phlegyas is dimly aware of this chamber most of the time and after each full 5 minutes in the room there is a 1 in 4 chance he will teleport in with 1d6 each of types 5A, 5B, and 5C Devils at his side. He demands characters immediately vacate his building (replacing any articles taken) and pay appropriate restitution for breaking and entering. (Examples of acceptable restitution include: 50,000 GP/person, 2 enchanted or blessed items per person (no potions or scrolls accepted), service on the Fifth Circle for 25 years/person, or 1d6+4 favors to be repaid to Phlegyas without question at any time for the rest of their lives.) Phlegyas is not limited by the anti-magic field.

Phlegyas houses his collection of (non-enchanted) books about the sea and sea trades in this room. Books along the north wall are about sea trades such as shipbuilding, sail-making, net-making and fishing, salt making, rope making,

etc. Books along the east wall are about sailing skills such as navigation; books along the south wall are fiction with nautical themes; and books along the west wall are about the mythology of the sea. There are books here written in every language of the known and unknown world including many dead languages; some books are up to 2500 years old; hundreds of these volumes are worth 5d8\*100 gc each, and a small few (1 in 100 grasped at random, or about 1 found per 10-20 minutes of searching) are worth 6d6\*1000 gc. The total value of the library is easily in the millions of gold, could it be transported and sold.

5. A square room with a dark blue carpet and a black ceiling replicating the night sky. The perimeter is lined by bookshelves, with a large wooden table and 4 wooden chairs, an oversized wooden reading stand, and several stands of maps or scrolls centered in the room. A lit green orb is attached every 10' around the room's perimeter; each orb brightens as living creatures approach it then dims as they move away. As with 4 strong anti-magic and anti-flame enchantments suffuse the room, and Phlegyas may teleport in with a devil troop in tow every few minutes if he lives. (Phlegyas is not bound by this anti-magic field either.) Mages specializing in water/weather spells and priests of aquatic deities immediately gain 2500 xp (once/lifetime) just for entering the room.

Map folios and ocean/river chart books are located along the west wall, spell books and research material related to all water magics are along the north wall, spell books related to the underwater races are on the east wall (none of these books are intelligible), and on the south wall are maps, spell compendiums, and related material concerning the elemental plane of water (the seas of hell, etc.: whatever supernatural waterways exist in your world). The books are written in every living and dead language (including those of underwater races, some of which are entirely unknown on the surface), with some as old as 6000 years. Spellcasters who actually had a chance to study the books in this room would gain a bonus with water magic, raising their caster level by 1 and subtracting 1 from all saves against their spells. Most of the books here are worth 15-25,000 gc to those who could afford them, while the maps are worth 8-10,000 gc each, with folios containing 2-24 maps worth half the combined total; again the wealth available here is practically limitless.

6. This area has no entrances or exits and the inside of the floor, ceiling, and all walls are lined by one-half inch of lead. The volume is filled with chlorine gas at a sufficient concentration to remain lethal if released into rooms #4, #5, or #7. Chlorine gas suffocates in Constitution/2 rounds and does 1d6 per round due to general toxicity.

7. A square stone room with no doors or openings to the ground floor, the floor is polished red-orange coral worked with the design of a sailing ship in silver in the northwest

corner. (Stepping onto the ship transports a person one-way 8' north, outside the tower.) In the center of each wall is mounted a single torch in a black metal bracket, shaped like a gargoyle (the torches light themselves 10 rounds after the room is entered and cannot be extinguished). Each wall is lined on the inside with one-half inch of lead (lead is also under the floor and in the ceiling). A trapdoor in the southeast corner ceiling allows access to **14** (above). The room contains 3 open rectangular coffers made from large fan-shaped sea shells, 3 large duffel bags, and 4 rectangular sea lockers (key lock, each found locked, -15% pick). When characters enter the room they see 4 Flying Skulls (DC -4, WD 6, wp 27, 22, 19, 11, poison bite or fire 2 magic missiles from eyes, Fly 24) hovering near the ceiling.

The first shell coffer holds 20,000 gold doubloons, the second holds 20,000 pieces-of-eight (silver), and the third has 1200 large white to pink-colored pearls each valued at  $(1d4*1000)+(1d12*100)$  gc. The first duffel bag holds a set of Landlubber's Armor sized for a small human, a set of leather Weighted Armor sized for a Halfling or Dwarf, a steel Helm of Drunkenness (a cursed item which makes its wearer behave drunk), a Sword-Biting Scabbard (say goodbye to that sword, you won't be drawing it again), a pair of cursed black Jig-Dancing Boots, and green leather elven boots. The second duffel bag holds 3 complete sets of +4 leather armor sized respectively for a human, dwarf, and gnome. The third duffel bag holds a mithril morning star, 2 war hammers +2 (triple damage against spiders and insects), 2 normal steel long swords in steel scabbards, a gold-headed spiked mace, a dancing Mace of Armor Shattering (targets in plate mail must save or have their armor destroyed, +1 to save for each plus of armor), 2 darts of giant slaying, and a short bow whose range is only limited by the shooter's sight (no range penalties).

**Landlubber's Armor:** Armor with this enchantment is +3 on land, has no bonus in the air, and is -3 when worn on a ship or when the wearer is in contact with any body of water. Attached somewhere to armor with this enchantment is a half-inch diameter gold disk engraved with water runes. Made 629 years ago by the wizard Althea Larhi for her son, Welglund. Althea was afraid of water and the sea and made this armor to ensure her son never went to sea.

**Weighted Armor:** This cursed armor is -2, but even worse is that its weight increases to 2000 lbs when the wearer is immersed in water. The armor magically neutralizes all flotation spells cast upon it. When immersed the wearer always immediately sinks to the bottom as fast as possible and is then unable to move due to the armor's weight. This armor is detected by spells to be +3 and will seem to function as such (if the player sees hit rolls treat it that way even though it's -2) until the curse is activated by water. The wizard-pirate Lalfayette Galmour, used armor of this type 766 years ago to execute spies among his crew.

The first sea locker contains a set of black spider-silk sails weighing 100 pounds, twice as strong as ordinary canvas, resisting ordinary fire, acid, and missile fire, and giving a 25% increase in ship's speed; when fitted to a ship, the sails allow the ship and all aboard to become invisible once/month (for a full day or night). The second sea locker contains a bubble-shaped Helm of All-Breathing, a Robe of Free Movement Underwater, scale mail Gauntlets of Ogre Strength, and purple skin Gloves of Swimming (Speed 24). The third sea locker contains a lightweight golden-colored cigar-shaped sac (9' long by 3½' diameter) made from the woven fibers of the rare gheruvan plant. Attached to the sac is a mithril regulator with a clutch mechanism and circular dial; when the dial rotates in the clockwise direction the sac inflates itself with a lighter-than-air (non-flammable) gas produced by the regulator; when the dial rotates clockwise the sac deflates. It takes 300 rounds to fully inflate/deflate the sac. A fully-inflated sac can lift 4000 pounds to an altitude of 5000' above sea level. The fourth sea locker contains a corked black clay bottle, a +2 silver rapier (+5 against flying creatures), a wooden Cask of Endless Grog, 2 red and green Lanterns of Endless Burning, a Collar of Unchanging (useful or cursed scholars can debate, but the wearer of this collar may not change form voluntarily or involuntarily, by magical or mundane means), a Charm of Evil (evil wearers gain +2 on saves and attacks against good foes, absorbs 30 levels of spells casts by good priests, and the wearer's alignment detects as neutral – the charm is an abstract polished obsidian horned figure with a strong evil aura until it is put on by an appropriate wearer), Sandals of Great Swimming (Speed 24), a pair of Levitating Boots, and a pair of Houdini's Bracers. When the cork is removed from the black bottle a puff of smoke emerges which coalesces into a wooden raft 10' by 12', capable of holding 4500 pounds (the raft returns to its bottle when the cork is removed again).

**8.** A U-shaped room with many doors, extending to a hallway. The room is furnished with 2 thick oval green rugs and 4 plain square wooden tables, each with 4 upright wooden chairs. A rectangular table on the south wall is a serving area (between meals the table has 3 one-gallon casks and 12 plain pewter tankards). Smokeless long-burning torches are set into iron wall brackets on the west and south walls, and on the common wall with **13**. Cobreigen, Ellisiffe, Behomond, Thadurros, Gwennelma, Meurvin, and Laoghaire may be in the room depending on rolls; they are not usually armed/armored while in the Tower. If characters enter dressed for combat, the residents will try to flee to their rooms to arm themselves.

**9.** A rectangular stone room assigned to Cobreigen, an elderly, bespectacled master alchemist with a wispy beard and oddly perfect teeth, and his Halfling servant Laoghaire, a black-haired (especially on feet), red-nosed thief dressed in green and brown. The room contains 2 bunk

beds on the north wall, 2 wooden chests with key padlocks (found locked, -10% pick), 2 upright armoires on the south wall, a round wooden table with 2 wooden chairs, a metal weapon stand holding a Halfling Short Spear and a small wood-and-leather shield, and 4 iron wall hooks on the east wall. **Cobreigen:** N normal man, DC 9, 4 wp, but Intelligence 18+ and with full mastery of dozens of languages and the alchemical arts; he carries potions of super-healing, cure poison, flying, and speed at all times. **Laoghaire:** N Halfling Thf 4, DC 5, wp 15, attacks with +2 silver shortsword or +2 sling; carries two potions of super-healing, a potion of blurring, a ring which makes him invisible to undead, sandals which leave no trace, an amulet which lets him leap up to 30', and boots which let him walk on walls like a spider.

The armoires contain clothes; Laoghaire's also contains a bearskin vest, a camouflage cloak, and 2 fly-fishing poles. Cobreigen's chest holds 2 books of word puzzles, 2 sealed pewter flasks of fine distilled spirits, 2 first aid kits, 3 sketch books (mostly depicting mountain scenes), a large drawing or art kit, a manual with detailed instructions for creating many common potions (this is a very valuable item, for obvious reasons, especially when combined with the pouch below), a small silver enchanted drying oven for samples, a magical pouch from which any spell or potion component under 1000 gc value may be drawn 2/3 of the time, a rope of tripping and entangling, a Codex of Transformation (Ferret), a stone which vibrates whenever undead are within 200', and an ivory-and-gold cursed locket which compels its wearer to tell the truth (save at -10 to lie, or -3 even just to stay quiet). Laoghaire's chest holds a wrapped bedroll, 3 pieces of three-eighths inch diameter elven rope 25' long, lockpicks, a leather pouch containing several pieces of white chalk plus 10 vials each with a colorful powder, a first-aid kit for animals, a flat rectangular wooden box (holding 50 fishing lures, filleting knife, hand scale, & measuring cord), 3 decks of normal cards and 1 marked deck, a leather pouch holding 35 gc, 49 sc, and 84 cc, a chain mail neck guard, +2 scale mail, 3 throwing knives, and a potion which cures disease.

**10.** A rectangular stone room assigned to the Sorceress Gwannelma and her husband Meurvin. The room contains 2 bunk beds on the north wall, 2 wooden chests with padlocks (found locked, -20% pick), 2 upright armoires against the south wall, and a round wooden table with 2 wooden chairs. Gwannelma's Rod of Earth (moves or parts earthworks, hills, etc. for one charge, or creates earthquakes for 3 - 33 charges) and Meurvin's Staff of Striking (35 charges) are in the southeast corner. **Gwannelma:** LE Human Mag9, DC 3, wp 36, Speed 12. She wears bracers that act as chain & shield and has a +2 dagger. She carries the spells *Detect Magic*, *Charm Person*, *Hold Portal*, *Invisibility*, *Blur*, *Fireball*, *Dispel Magic*, *Haste*, *Wizard Eye*, *Wall of Fire*, and *Conjure Elemental*, among others. She carries two healing potions, a ring of fire brea-

thing (12 dice, 16 charges), 3 vials of unholy water, a scroll with *Dispel Magic* and *Conjure Elemental*, a scroll with *Antimagic Field*, *Chain Lighting*, and *Wall of Fire*, a dark blue cape that lets her blend with her environment, and a magical Pendant of Tongues (3x/day). Gwannelma is from the province of Adalaerd in Tallorlan, and speaks and reads only the Tallak language. **Meurvin:** CE Human Pr12, serves Lushko Kirkik (God of Changes and Chaos). He is DC 9 but extremely hard to hit due to a Ring of Escapes that allows him to teleport up to 20' reactively before he is struck by something (33 charges). 56 wp, Speed 12. He fights with an unholy +3 mace and carries the following spells, among others: *Create Water*, *Detect Magic*, *Bless*, *Cure Wounds*, *Cure Heavy Wounds*, *Strike Blind*, *Hold Person*, *Cure Disease*, *Dispel Good*, *Raise Dead*, *Finger of Death*, *Dispel Magic*, *Area of Protection from Good*. He carries 2 potions of super-healing, 2 potions of speed, 8 vials of unholy water, a ring of immunity to energy drain, and his Ring of Escapes. He is 46 years old, standing 5'3", with short dark red hair cut in a Mohawk-style ridge and a griffin's tattoo on his right palm. He wears a white long-sleeved shirt, a red and brown leather vest, calf-length breeches, and black leather shoes. He is from the province of Hildbandar in Tallorlan, and speaks and reads Tallak, Ulfgor, and Loskutte.

The armoires contain clothes for the most part. Meurvin's also contains a flat silver Unholy Symbol (72 gc) attached to a silver neck chain, and a priest's crozier (476 gc), and has a secret compartment reached from the back (-25% find, -15% lock pick) which contains Romany's Dagger (currently allowing bearer to walk on water), Gloves of Chaining (see next text box for special items), and a Heavy Flail +2 of Serpent Slaying (serpents or reptiles (but dragons) struck must save or die). Gwannelma's chest holds a bedroll, a cloth bag with 6 knitting needles and 8 rolls of yarn, 2 reference books on mining geology, 3 gourmet cookbooks, 2 books of poetry (written in the Tallak language), a firestarting kit, a field cooking kit, a geologist's hammer, 3 chisels, a Wand of Levitation (20 charges), a Dwarven Tunneling Maul, a Sky Hook, a magical backpack that never runs out of food, and Wand of Enlarging (19 charges). Meurvin's chest holds the 3 Sacred Volumes of Lushko Kirkik (a Demon Lord, aura of evil, worth 1200 gc/volume), a folding travel altar of wood, 10 pieces of solid incense (each 1d20+17 gc), a full surgeon's kit with blessed surgeon's needles, a set of 8 travel hand chimes, an open steel helm, +3 plate mail, a wand of light, a Ring of Thief Biting (digs into a thief's hand and bleeds him for 1 hp/round, dispel magic/ remove curse to remove, detects as ring of invisibility), 4 potions of healing, 2 potions of super-healing, 2 balms of stone to flesh, and a magical locket which doubles any priest's level 3 spells.

**11.** A plain rectangular stone room. The room contains 2 bunk beds on the north wall, 2 wooden chests [no locks], 2 upright armoires against the south wall, a round wooden table with 2 wooden chairs, a large red oval rug depicting

**Gloves of Chaining:** When both gloves of a pair are donned they function as unbreakable manacles, keeping the victim's hands exactly 14 inches apart at all times. The gloves release for 4 rounds when the key word "*ghorn-framij*" ("freedom" in Pashtun) is spoken within 8 ft. They are thick black leather gloves with a band of white leather around the wrist and the picture of a white key stamped on the palm. Gloves of this type were routinely used 930 years ago by the Oronian Pirates to shackle prisoners.

**Romany's Dagger:** Sometimes called a "Dagger of Romany", it is +1 to hit and does 1d12 against good-aligned targets. When touched to an enchanted object, one magical ability is permanently drained from the object (determine randomly if more than one ability is present in the initial object) and transferred to the dagger, which retains that ability until another enchanted item is touched (the dagger then loses its former ability and takes another ability from the new item). The dagger's enchantment is destroyed by contact with intelligent weapons or artifact class objects. Romany's dagger is gaudily curved with a gold-steel alloy blade. The hilt is of bone or horn and the dagger has a small hand guard made of gold; the grip is wrapped in a fine silk which may be perfumed. These daggers are named after Romany D'Yarkone, a wizard and thief who worked in Ambanay 817 years ago. Romany is supposed to have found this dagger in a hidden temple dedicated to the Demon Lord, Shahmar.

various kinds of devils, and an oil painting on the south wall depicting Phlegyas in his boat. Red-tinted oil lanterns are attached to the east and west walls. The room is currently unused: the beds are made, the chests and armoires are empty (one armoire has a secret door in the bottom, -20% find). On the wall behind the painting is an enhanced Glyph of Blindness (save -1 and the blinding is permanent if a natural 1 is rolled). Hidden (-20% find) on the back side of the oil painting are two scrolls: *Summon Boat*, *Plague Water*. Under the second chest is found 20 GP.

12. A plain rectangular stone room containing 2 bunk beds on the north wall, 2 wooden chests with padlocks, 2 upright armoires against the south wall, a round wood table with 2 chairs, a large blue circular rug with a design of 3 intertwined yellow pentagrams, and an oil painting of Prince Paimon (aura of evil) hanging on the south wall. Red-tinted oil lanterns hang from the east and west walls. This room is assigned to the male Dwarves, Behomond and Thadurros, working in the Tower as cooks. The dwarves are actually shapechanged type 5D Devils (see monster index), whose story to other occupants of the tower is that they stole something unspeakable from their Clan that was so important they couldn't remain on the Prime Material Plane, and cannot return until their Clan ceases to exist. If faced with obviously weaker opponents Behomond and Thadurros resume their natural shapes and

kill the intruders. If faced with an obviously superior force they try to convince intruders they are dwarves unwillingly enslaved by Phlegyas and ask to be taken along; if successful, they betray the party at first opportunity, reverting to their natural forms and attacking from behind. **Behomond & Thadurros:** LE 10 WD Devils, DC -2, Speed 24/Fly 30/Swim 15; attack 7 times per round each (one horn stab, 2 claws, 2 strikes with +2 golden scimitar that banishes angels, etc. back to their home plane when hit, 2 strikes with +2 silver scimitar that drains a life energy level from its target, cast spells as 8<sup>th</sup> level Mage, numerous special abilities, see monster descriptions).



Each armoire is unlocked, containing a selection of common Dwarven work clothes of no particular value. Each wooden chest is found locked (-15% pick). Behomond's chest contains 208 gc, 42 ec, a quart of lamp oil in a clay flask, a firestarting kit, a scroll of 75 ribald jokes (in Common), a gold unholy symbol of Samael (471 gc), a sealed metal tin containing 4 pounds of nails, a Belt of Chastity, a Harp of Charming, a Black Mushroom of Visions (highly hallucinogenic, and may even work), a Potion of Remove Blindness, a Potion of Resolve (breaks all enchantments when drunk and renders drinker immune to fear for 1 hour), a Potion of Vampirism Reversal, a Potion of Youth, and a Feather Token (Whip). Thadurros'



chest contains 117 gc, 61 ec, an empty 50-pound capacity backpack, an armor repair kit, a treasure map (false map to a troll hoard in Nassonland), 3 vials of unholy water, a rubber mallet, a Cloak of Aging, a Rectangle of Frost Resistance, 2 Healing Potions, a Potion of Disease (Lycanthropy – Were-Rat, save versus poison -5), a pot of Life Restoring Balm (enough for 2 intact bodies or 1 mauled one), a Polymorph Potion (Giant Eagle), and a pair of black ivory Dwarven Dice (enchanted so as to always throw whatever number a dwarven thrower has in mind when tossing).

**13.** A plain square stone room arranged for bathing and toiletries, with 2 metal tanks (150 gallons each) of hot water, 2 metal tanks of cold water, a large claw-footed bath tub, 2 stone sinks, large glass wall mirror, open metal rack containing 10 large towels, a painted wooden screen, and a row of wall hooks for clothing. Two large thick oval woolen rugs are on the floor.

**14.** A plain bare stone room with no doors or openings to the second floor, a close-fitting trapdoor in the southeast corner ceiling accessing **17**, and a trapdoor in the floor northwest corner accessing **7** (-60% find). A thick layer of undisturbed dust is on the floor and an unlit torch sits in a metal bracket on the east wall. The wall interiors are lined with one-half inch of lead. Neither trapdoor is locked or trapped. Characters moving about the room stir up dust, causing coughing fits lasting 1d20 rounds unless they save.

**15.** An L-shaped stone room, with steel doors (mithril tumbler-style locks integral to the door, found locked, 5 tumblers numbered 1 through 12, -60% pick) at each end. The combination of the lock on the south door is 4-9-2-10-6; the combination of the lock on the east door is 1-2-5-8-12. Each door is fitted with a canister of sleeping gas activated by latch on the bottom-left of the door frame (-50% find, -40% disarm); after a 1 round delay the canister releases gas into the room (persists 300 rounds); characters exposed to the gas fall asleep unless they save versus poison -2 (human), -3 (dwarf), -4 (halfling), or -5 (elf or half-elven). The room contains a queen-sized bed with thick pillows and very fine blankets, an upholstered divan, padded recliner chair, 2 armoires against the walls, an upright bookcase, a small square night stand next to the bed, small rectangular table with 2 padded wood chairs, 2 large upright gold candlesticks, a large oval wicker basket with a thick black pillow (dog's bed), and 2 oval gold bowls (both on the floor, one filled with water and the other with a dry material shaped in pellets, each worth 33 gc). Three fine oval rugs (2 brown, 1 green) are on the floor. On the walls hang a silver mirror (750 gc, 10 years bad luck if broken), 2 oil paintings showing hidden cities in large glowing caverns near a waterfall (by Cercopean artists, each worth 500 gc), and a 4' wall shelf. The green floor rug is a Flying Carpet capable of carrying 800 pounds (invoked by saying "*Float, Fly, Flee*," in Cercopean. The room is home to Ellisiffe, a Master Alchemist who has

lived here for the past 68 years. If present, Ellisiffe does not fight but drinks an Invisibility potion she always carries and invokes a scroll (always on her person) to transport her to the palace of Earl Bebal. When Ellisiffe is at the laboratory (**16**), her wolfhound Lekka (WD 3, wp 18, DC 4) is here, otherwise Lekka is with Ellisiffe; if alone, Lekka is cautious and does not attack unless threatened or unless the room is searched or torn apart. Lekka has been inoculated against the sleeping gas. **Ellisiffe:** LE Gnome War3, wp 18, DC 6, fights with long knife and blowgun with paralytic darts (save -4); master alchemist and competent at thief abilities; sees well in dark. Ellisiffe is 2'10", 108 years old, with thick dark brown leathery skin, a curved back giving her a stooped appearance, yellow eyes, light brown lips, long supple fingers and toes, and short dark glossy black hair. She wears a long dress-like leather garment with many pockets held together with a gold cord belt, along with a leather skull cap. Ellisiffe walks with a cane, acts as an imperial grand dame, and is accustomed to giving orders and to having her own way. She is a quintessential scientist, deeply interested in alchemical discovery and in passing on what she knows, without regard for ethics.

The two armoires mostly contain clothes. The second is locked with a silver lock (key carried by Ellisiffe) and holds a cloak of defense +2, a +2 shortsword (double damage against elves), a Cheshire Cloak (defense +1, allows automatic silent movement, masks scent, and 3x/day allows the wearer to turn all but their own mouth invisible), and a Ring of Regenerating. The bookshelf contains 45 books on alchemical subjects, including: Csephaen's "*Blackworth Mushroom Physics*," Eyestinn's "*Essences of Distillation*," Amichal Norbarth's "*The Affinities of Metallic Salts*," Hansel Jazon's "*Methods of Blood Extractions*," Prosdoka's "*Transformative Potions*," Khovra One-Hand's "*Death by Alchemy*," Princess Elzbeta's "*Compounds of the Heart*," Abbaes' "*Sensitivities of the Dwarf*," Master Gulfrido's "*Potions affecting Reptilians*," Hoolokaen's "*Useful Dusts and Powders*," plus another manual for creating common potions like that owned by Cobreigen (**9**) and a random Pelk's Bestiary. Named books are valued at 1500 gc each, except for Prosdoka and Hoolokaen (Gnome authors unknown on the surface) whose books would be valued at roughly 5000 gc each to a wealthy alchemist with a little time to peruse them. Other books are still rare and valuable and might fetch as much as 500 gc each. A book labeled "*Mists and Fogs*," is a false book with a secret compartment (-30% find), holding 2 packets of flash powder and 2 packets of a chemical creating a dense white smoke (persists 1d20 rounds). A drawer in the night stand has 20 blank sheets of parchment, 2 quill pens, 2 charcoal sticks, 2 vials of black ink, a rubber ink eraser, a Potion of Invisibility, a leather pouch with a blowgun and 6 poisoned blowgun darts (paralysis, save -4), and 2 vials of Web Fluid. The wall shelf holds 3 carvings of Gnome soldiers made from the blue ivory tusk of the Dranggen Beast (each 1000 gc), a golden spring-wound clock (500 gc), a 15

minute fine crystal-and-silver sand timer, a relief sculpture of an unknown species of bird carved in jade mounted onto a vertical piece of polished reflecting onyx (650 gc), and a crystal decanter holding one-third gallon of high quality Gnome-made Nissinberry Wine (decanter 225 gc, wine 1200 gc). Hidden (-35 find) in the recliner are 3 vials of a pink Gnomish hallucinogenic powder, highly addictive, each valued at 750 gc.

**16.** The entire Third Floor is an open space with six alchemical work areas, with a grey tile floor and light blue stone walls. Four 10'x 10' columns divide up the space: 3 have closet-sized doors (found locked, -25% pick) that are storage areas for the laboratory, while the fourth (**17**) has no entry from this elevation. In each corner stands a complex cylindrical copper contraption 5' in diameter with many interconnecting copper pipes from which come 2 header pipes, one for butane gas (fuel for burners) and one with distilled water. Permanently glowing light sticks are fastened every 15' along the wall perimeter (one stick is also mounted on each side of the columns). If combat occurs in this room, alchemical equipment is broken on a 1 in 3 every round, determine the result on 1d6: (1) a small local fire of no immediate consequence starts, (2) a small local fire starts that grows after 1d6 rounds to become more serious, (3) the room is filled by a toxic atmosphere after 5d12+20 rounds, (4) the room is filled by an explosive atmosphere after 2d12+15 rounds that then explodes (4d12), (5) an immediately toxic atmosphere forms, or (6) an immediate explosive conflagration occurs delivering 6d12 damage to all persons on the floor. Toxic gasses kill in 1d6 rounds (save each round after threshold is passed). If area-effect magic, oil and fire, or explosives are used in the room, roll automatically at +1.

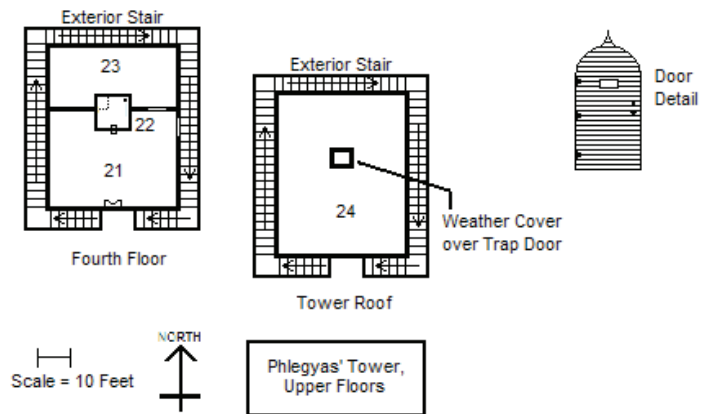
**17.** A square stone chute, 5' to a side, with no door or access to the third floor. Metal rungs are fixed to the east wall at intervals of 18 inches. A trapdoor at the top of the chute accesses **22**, and a trapdoor (-25% find, -18% pick Lock) at the bottom of the chute accesses **14**. The wall interiors are lined with one-half inch of lead.

**18.** A closet filled with wooden shelves for the storage of alchemical material and equipment. The door is metal with a key-style lock (found locked, -30% Lock). The shelves contain empty glass containers of different sizes and shapes, many metal tools and implements, metal jars, 8 natural lodestones of various sizes, 10 pounds of saltpeter, 15 pounds of raw sulphur, a jar of 5 pounds of mercury (1520 gc/pound), 10 gallons of vinegar, 7 pounds of quicklime, 3 pounds of Sal Ammoniac, 4 pounds of Yellow Auri pigment, and 3 gallons of ammonia.

**19.** A closet filled with wooden shelves for the storage of alchemical material and equipment. The door is metal with a key-style lock (found open, when locked -20% pick Lock). The shelves contain empty glass containers of

different sizes and shapes, metal tools and implements, metal jars, 4 square silver mirrors, 8 pounds of raw sulphur, 2 pounds of Tartar, 1 pound of Realgar (mineral form of arsenic; in a separate locked container, -10% pick Lock), a gallon of sulfuric acid, a gallon a citric acid, a gallon of hydrochloric acid, 10 gallons of pure alcohol, one half-pound of Argent Vive (a highly explosive agent, also in a separate locked box, -35% pick Lock), and 2 pounds of Spiritas Fumas (stannic chloride).

**20.** A closet filled with wooden shelves for the storage of alchemical material and equipment. The door is metal with a key-style lock (found locked, -25% pick Lock). The shelves contain empty glass containers, many metal tools and implements, metal jars, and 10 pounds of pure iron, 10 pounds of pure bronze, 4 pounds of gold dust, 2 pounds of antimony, 3 pounds of Philosopher's Wool (zinc oxide), and 2 pounds of Cinnabar.



**21.** A rectangular room entered from the exterior stair on the east wall with a door and three viewing cutouts into cell **22**. A large stone fireplace is centered on the south wall. Three torches each on the west and east walls are held in the hands of metal brackets shaped like gargoyles. The room contains 3 heavy blue woolen rugs, a heavy wooden table against the east side of the south wall (6 loaves of bread sit under a cloth), 5 round tables with 4 wooden chairs each, 2 leather-padded benches, and an upright wooden cabinet located immediately to the west of the fireplace. A metal rack on the south wall holds copper pots, iron skillets, and cooking utensils; a wooden block on the working table holds 8 very sharp knives and cleavers. The wooden cabinet holds 40 clay jars holding wheat flour (x8, an illusion makes the flour appear wormy, save versus illusion -4), corn flour (x2), sugar (x3), brown sugar, dark molasses, honey, oatmeal (x3), raw grits (x3), cinnamon (x2), black pepper (x4), cayenne pepper (x2), parsley, sage, oregano, dill, paprika, salt (x4), and ground garlic, plus 3 quart jugs of vinegar. Thirty gallon barrels of clean water and burgundy red wine (marked "Romanee-Conti") are in the south-western corner of the room. All of this food is wholesome and has been in Inferno less than a fortnight.

**22.** A plain square stone cell with no doors or access to the fourth floor, lined with one-half inch of lead. Viewing slits each 8 inches long by three-quarters inch tall are centered on the west, south, and east walls 4' off the floor (all look into **21**). A two-door pass-through mechanism for food is centered on the south wall with two mechanical doors both controlled from the cell exterior. The doors allow food and other small objects to be sent into the cell while preventing escape. A single worn cot (with blanket) and chamber pot are present and a small drain pipe (3 inch diameter with cover) is located in the northeast corner of the room. The floor is covered by three inches of sawdust. Access to the room is by a square trap door (5' on each side) set into an iron frame centered in the ceiling. A square trapdoor (4' on each side, -80% find, -30% pick Lock) to #17 is under the sawdust in the northwest corner. The room is occupied by a young female human, Siusainn (she cannot reach the trapdoor in the ceiling and does not know about the trapdoor in the floor); she is very upset about being held captive and eager to be freed. Her attributes are as a normal human, although she is very beautiful. A 17 year old girl, with long brunette hair, golden-brown eyes, small pert nose, small chin, slender physique, small shoulders, moderate to large bust, moderate hips, long legs, and dainty hands. She is dressed in a plain short-sleeved, low cut, knee-length, dress with black leather shoes, and a wide blue hat. Siusainn is rather spoiled, demanding, and egotistical, with a strong tendency to whine. She expects to be taken care of without having to do anything significant herself. The current situation has somewhat unnerved her and she could quickly develop a case of hero-worship towards any older man who rescues her. Siusainn is the daughter of Meilyr, a well-to-do money lender and banker in Caer Brithon in the Kingdom of Catwynn, primarily because of the business he does with Phlegyas. She was unexpectedly taken from her family manor by Phlegyas 19 days ago and placed in the cell (she does not know it is because of a wager Meilyr lost). If returned to her family the characters will be given a reward of 1000 gold pieces plus money-lending at significantly reduced interest for the next 10 years. She has been fed wholesome food the entire time she has been on the Fifth Circle and is not bound to Inferno.

**23.** An undressed rectangular stone room (except for the cell cutout), kept at 40 degrees. The room contains 50 gallon barrels of flour (x2), white sugar, corn meal (x2), oatmeal, and clean water (x2), 25-gallon casks of quality beer ("Jolly Pumpkin") (x6), very good white wine (x3), fine mead, and apple cider (x2), 10-gallon kegs of vinegar (x2), cooking sherry (x2), and extra virgin olive oil (x4). There are open 20 gallon tubs containing potatoes, yams, onions, turnips, zucchini, cucumber, tomatoes, apples, oranges, and grapes. Hanging from large ceiling hooks are the carcasses of 4 pheasant, 8 chickens, and 2 quail, along with 10 dressed hams and 8 slabs of ribs. All this food is wholesome and has been in Inferno only a week.

**24.** An open roof with a crenellated wall around the perimeter. One gargoyle-shaped stone waterspout is located in the center of each wall to drain the roof. The exterior stair accesses the roof through a gap in the wall at the southwest corner. A thin copper metal pyramid, 9' to a side and 12' tall, covers a raised iron frame which contains the trapdoor to **22**. The pyramid has 2 wide metal handles on each side and can be lifted by a total Strength of 31+. The trapdoor has a large iron key-style padlock on it. This area is always guarded by 3 Type 5B Devils (DC -1, WD 7, wp 34, 32, 26; see monster index for details). The devils immediately order any characters back to the stair, attacking if the order is not obeyed.

**The Walls of Dis:** Phlegyas transports the characters to a wharf on the inner side of Styx identical in all respects to the wharf where they boarded, located directly in front of the western Gate of Dis. Characters crossing Styx by their own power land on the inner bank as appropriate but may have to travel a distance along the Wall to find the nearest Gate. Between the inner boundary of Styx and the Walls of Dis is a 150' wide strip of bare, hard packed, red-brown clay with no vegetation or structures anywhere. The Walls of Dis are a circle 350 miles in circumference, 35' high and 10' thick, made of ancient red stones crenellated along the top. A torch and bubbling cauldron (boiling oil, damage 2d8/ round) are located every 50'. There are 10 Gates spaced 35 miles apart; each gate has an iron portcullis in front of a set of silver rectangular double doors (these can't be knocked, and are very difficult to force); each door is decorated by a castle surrounded by a circle of 20 devil figures. The walls and gates are bespelled to repel ladders, rams, and other siege equipment, and are impervious to magic. Normally portcullises will be open and the silver doors will be closed but locked.

Wherever characters reach the Walls of Dis, 2d100+100 devils are seen on top of the wall (an even mixture of Ordinary, Common, Assura, Etvaras, Nimidoryas, Type 4, and Type 5 devils in the main, plus a small scattering of other familiar varieties). The devils taunt the characters with threats and obscene suggestions but take no other action as long as the characters remain 75' or more from the wall. Once within 75', characters will be attacked by 2d20+20 missiles per round, most at least +1, plus d12 ranged spells per round (fire, lightning, and cold blasts typically from 6 to 12 dice in force) as the devils laugh and jeer at them. Getting next to the walls will result in pouring of boiling oil and 2d12 dropped rocks per round (damage of 2d8). No teleportation or insubstantiality magic will allow characters to pass the walls, and of course some of the more powerful devils have significant additional means to combat PCs who prove resistant to the more straightforward methods. In all likelihood, even for super-characters, a fight at the Walls of Dis will result in a TPK. To clear the Walls of Dis through direct fighting requires the characters to kill all of the devils initially found on the

wall plus an additional 1d100 devils summoned during the fight, all by missile fire or indirect combat. If a fight develops, there is an 8% chance for each of the General-level Devils Kamdro, Lalullum, or Xuwia to join, and a 5% chance for at least one of the Earls Ahriman, Abulam, or Batinin also join in. You may substitute similar archdevils, pit fiends, etc. if you wish.

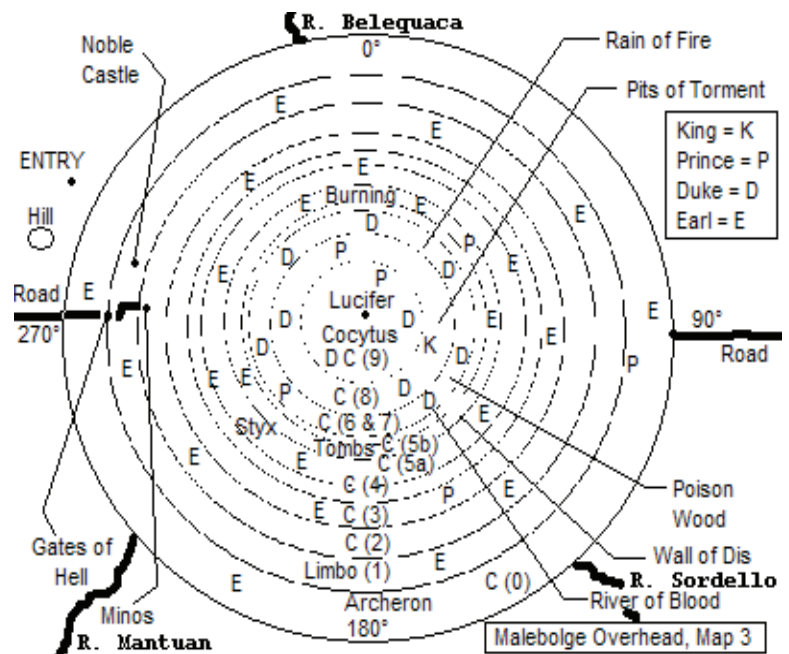
The characters clear the Walls of Dis of devils without fighting by invoking or manifesting the physical presence of a Good Deity, blowing a blast on the Trumpet of the Lord (found on the Fourth Circle), invoking the scroll given them by the Lesser Seraphim at the Shining Hill that summons sufficient Lesser Seraphim to chase the devils from the wall, or invoking the scroll found following the encounter with the Chimera of the Wood that does likewise. Once the walls are cleared, they remain clear for  $(1d12 \times 6) + 20$  rounds and then repopulate at 2d8 devils/round. Once characters are inside the Walls of Dis, devils on the wall ignore them.



If characters simply wait outside the walls, eventually (after 11-20 minutes of inactivity) the Three Furies (known as Alecto, Tisiphone, and Megaera or Enygeus, Ariane, and Praxedes) will fly out from the walls, each holding a Medusa head (all who behold this must save vs. petrification at -6). Fighting the Furies is an extremely bad idea; they are

semi-divine beings whose attributes are detailed in numerous supplements. However, characters who survive the medusa-gaze and conduct themselves with measure may be able to parley with the female spirits, which might allow them to discover the above methods for entry to Dis, or even conceivably others (GM option). The Furies will want payment in commitment to extracting very brutal and disproportionate revenge on the unjust (e.g. slaughtering the family of a king who's grandfather was an usurper down to every last cousin and in-law).

**The City of Burning Tombs:** A 100' wide hard-packed strip of bare red clay earth lies between the inside of the Wall of Dis and the edge of the City of Burning Tombs. Every 10 miles along the outer perimeter, 30' out from the red wall, is a black marble obelisk, 8' tall with a 20 inch square base. Inscribed on the outer face of the obelisk are arrows pointing north (clockwise) and south (counterclockwise). Above the north arrow are written the words, "Abalam, Belphegor, Paimon, Mephistoteles," while above the south arrow are written the words "Batanim, Mephistopheles, Paimon." The palace of Abalam, Earl of Hell, is located in the center of the City of Burning Tombs 50 miles north/clockwise of the west-east axis through the Fifth Circle; the palace of Belphegor, Earl of Hell, is located 2 miles into the City, 100 miles north/clockwise of the west-east axis; the palace of Paimon, Prince of Hell, is located 7 miles into the City, 135 miles north/clockwise of the west-east axis; the palace of Mephistoteles, Earl of Hell, is located near the Wall of Dis, 170 miles either north/clockwise or south/counterclockwise on the east side of the west-east axis; and the palace of Batanim is located 30 miles south/counterclockwise of the west-east axis, 5 miles into the City. *These directions and distances may need adjustments if the companions enter Dis through any gate other than the one aligned with the west-east axis of Inferno.*



The City of Burning Tombs is the inner area between the Walls of Dis and the inward edge of the Fifth Circle, an area approximately 8 miles across. The city is made up of an uncountable number of rectangular marble sepulchers about 12 feet long by 6 feet wide, ornately or grotesquely carved and decorated. Some (35%) are covered by heavy marble lids, some are (45%) missing lids, and some (20%) have lids bashed in and broken in pieces; the name(s) of a tomb's occupant(s) have a 40% chance to be carved on the tomb. Many tombs are decorated by columns, spires, posts, vertical walls, and so forth, making the landscape a confusing jumble of heights, blocking line-of-sight to no more than 200'. All tombs are warm to the touch and many (30%) are hot enough to cause burns if touched by unprotected skin. The tombs are placed about 6' apart at all possible angles, so there are no straight line paths anywhere in the City. The open tombs are lit from within by eerie flickering red lights and there is a 70% chance of visible orange-red tongues of fire in each. Flickers of flame roll and dart about randomly in the spaces surrounding and between tombs, with small jets of flame visible on the ground between every 1d6 tombs. Black smoke roils upward out of every open tomb and a dark haze hangs over the entire City. About half of the tombs are occupied. Heretics are confined in the sarcophagi and mausoleums of the City of Burning Tombs.



Because of the random placement of the tombs and the lack of any straight paths, navigating a “straight” course

requires traveling an additional one-half times the baseline distance (e.g. 1½ mile of actual distance are covered in traveling one mile of “beeline” distance). Keeping a straight course requires that at least one character has skills in wilderness navigation; check to determine if the companions become lost after every half-mile of travel. Heavy black clouds hang low over the City. The air smells smoky, is 92°F, and is very dry. The soot, mist, and vapors from the pervasive fires continually irritate the lungs, causing frequent bouts of coughing that result in a character's Constitution statistic being reduced by 2 points with a -1 attack penalty for 600 rounds (save -6, checked every 300 rounds or 2500 FT of travel).

**Encounters:** In general, each occupied tomb holds a Mane (see monster index), who ignores passing characters whenever possible. Manes usually respond if directly questioned, but there may be language communication problems and the Manes generally have little/no information useful to players. If characters loot a tomb, the resident Manes resist to their full ability and 1d20 additional Manes from nearby tombs join to resist plundering on a 6 or better on 1d8. An empty tomb holds treasure on a 1d12 roll of 1 as determined by 1d6: (1) 1d20 GP, (2) 1d100 SP, (3) a normal weapon or piece of armor in good condition, (4) assorted grave goods valued 3d100+50 GP, (5) a randomly-determined potion, or (6) a scroll with 1d3 spells (level 1d6). An occupied tomb holds treasure on a 1d8 roll of 1 as determined by 1d10: (1) 3d100 SP, (2) 3d20 GP, (3) assorted grave goods valued at 4d100+200 GP, (4) a normal weapon or piece of armor in very good condition, (5) 1d3 randomly-determined potions, (6) an enchanted weapon +1, (7) one piece of enchanted armor DC+1d3, (8) a scroll with 1d6 arcane or divine spells written (level 1d6 or 1d8), (9) an enchanted piece of clothing, or (10) a wondrous magic object.

Roll an encounter check every half-mile along with the orientation check; there is a 50% chance of random encounters for each such interval. Roll d36 on the **City of Dis Encounter Table** to determine what is met. When characters encounter groups of devils on the Fifth Circle, they are challenged unless wearing the appropriate Circle badge. A credible or coherent story is accepted with a normal reaction/persuasion roll (perhaps with a penalty); when successful, the devils do not interfere with the player's progress, although devils may question each character separately (out of each other's hearing) to establish how coherent or truthful their story is. There is a 60% chance that the devil(s) will want to escort the players as appropriate to verify any story, however. The devils call for 1d10 similar reinforcements if they are losing a combat (2 or more devils killed). Devils that retreat from combat report to higher authorities in 3d8 hours; any resulting hunt for the characters is confined to the Fifth Circle.

d36	City of Dis Encounter
1	1d8 Barghests
2	1d20 Hell Hounds
3	1d2 Hell Birds
4	Rotting Dragon
5	2d8 Ghouls
6	1d8 Mummies
7	1d8 Vampires
8	1d4 Wraiths
9	1d4 Specters
10	1d4 Ghosts
11	1d3 Banshee
12	Liche with 4d6 Skeletons
13-17	1d8 Manes (see monster index)
18-20	1d8 Lesser Common Devils
21-23	1d8 Greater Common Devils
24	1d6 Zoybim
25	Devil General with Large Troop (20-120 Devils)
26	Nimidyryas w/ d10 Assura & d100 Etvaras (smi)
27	Nimidyryas with 1 Assura and 10 Etvaras (smi)
28-29	1d12 Etvaras (see monster index)
30	1d6 Type 4B Devils (see <i>Inferno</i> , or use Barbed)
31	1d6 Type 4C Devils (see <i>Inferno</i> , or use Horned)
32	1d8 Type 5C Devils (see monster index)
33	1d6 Type 5D Devils (see monster index)
34	1d6 Type 5E Devils (see monster index)
35	1d4 Ice Devils, hastily departing (or type 6B)
36	1d4 Pit Fiends (or type 6C if attributes known)

In addition to random encounters, there are many sites almost inevitably encountered by mortals crossing through the City of Burning Tombs. Most or all of these will be encountered, about 1 each mile, generally in order.

**A.** The characters approach a white marble sarcophagus carved with abstract geometric designs. Broken pieces of its lid lay all around. As they come near (30'), the sounds of fighting come from inside the tomb. If the characters look in the tomb they find 2 skeletons wrapped in fire, wrestling and punching at one another. They are not actually hurting each other, though they appear to be trying. If they are molested, if the tomb is searched, or if PCs simply hang around too long (20% chance each round), the skeletons resent being interrupted and attack the characters together, with 1d20 Manes joining in every round for 1d4 rounds. **Flaming Skeletons:** DC 0, WD 8, wp 37, 26, Speed 12, flaming aura burns all next to them (e.g. in melee) for 1d6 per round, immune to fire and turning, 1 pt. damage from edged/pointed weapons, each gets 2 attacks with +4 flaming spears). If the characters carefully examine the tomb floor (-30% find), they locate a marble slab which lifts out to reveal a metal box (-25% pick) containing 2 Potions of Super-Healing, 2 Protection from Fire potions, a +2 Short Sword of Frost, and an Ever-Warming Blanket.

**B.** As the characters approach a large red tomb with a red marble top, they are accosted by Myrodgar, a wild-looking male human who jumps out from behind the tomb (about 20' away) waving an iron mace in one hand and a large polished black bone (Odozor's Bone) in the other. He yells gibberish at the characters and gestures with the bone for them to go back the way they came. If the characters advance on him, directly threaten him, or attack, 2d8 Ghouls will emerge from the tomb to bar the way while Myrodgar retreats to use the magical powers of the bone. If all these foes are destroyed, a giant, rotting zombie fire giant will emerge from the tomb, shattering it (2d6 damage to all within 30' who lack cover), grabbing the bone, and laying about brutally. **Myrodgar:** DC 8, wp 30, Speed 12. **Ghouls:** DC 6, WD 2, wp 11 each, paralytic attack, Speed 9. **Odozor's Corpse:** DC 2, WD 40, wp 225, Speed 6, attacks do base 2d6 with or without bone, immune to fire.

**Odozor's Bone:** A +4 Club which demolishes armor on a natural 18+ to hit (magic armor gets a save with bonus equal to plus), the bone mentally unsettles all good or neutral characters within 10' (-2 on all rolls, and such characters cannot shed a sense of anxiety or fall asleep). Such characters also take 1d10 additional damage simply from being touched with it (also acts as bonus damage in combat). The bone's chief powers are magical, however, as it contains the soul of the greatest fire giant wizard ever to live. While in hand the bearer can see invisible and out-of-phase creatures and communicate telepathically all in sight, and can speak, read, and understand all giant tongues; all dwarves and gnomes will feel an implacable hatred towards the bearer, whether they know why or not. The bearer becomes completely immune to fire and cold. The bone can cause fear in single targets (save -4) and create areas of darkness at will. In addition, 2x/day each the bearer can create deep gloom (paralyzes all in a 30' radius with depression, cannot move or act, save -4), throw bolts of black lightning (20 dice damage plus drain one energy level), project fingers of death, and give himself giant strength. The bone will try to possess whoever picks it up, with all the soul force of a 30<sup>th</sup> level mage with 17 Intelligence, 19 Wisdom, and 30 Egoism; even if the possession is resisted, a second save must be made to avoid turning permanently to evil. Odozor was a Fire Giant wizard mortally wounded 675 years ago during a revolt of dwarven slaves in Mestvaheim. His soul was fused into his thigh bone by performing the Rite of Chermnoi and carried away before the victory. Odozor's goal is the complete extinction of dwarves. The bone is a polished black humanoid upper arm bone, 30 inches long by 3 inches in diameter, with large knobby ends.

**C.** The characters approach two open tan sarcophagi standing side-by-side. Four type 5D devils are present, and they are sticking some sort of rod or staff repeatedly into the tombs. Loud wailing and shrieks are heard from

within, along with laughter from the devils. The devils ignore the characters if they are left alone, continuing to torture the souls confined in the tombs. If the devils are threatened, accosted, or attacked, they summon 2 additional type 5D devils as reinforcements. There is no treasure in the sarcophagi. The shaft is a Rod of Soul Torturing (does 2d8+2 to all incorporeal beings on touch/attack, plus excruciating pain which paralyzes for 1 round unless save is made). **Type 5D Devils:** DC -2, WD 10, wp 51, 49, 38, 24; 48, 40, Speed 24/Fly 30/Swim 15, see monster index for attacks and special abilities.

**D.** The characters enter a hexagonal area 25' across, ringed by black marble sarcophagi. The sarcophagus on the left and right have heavy lids in place while the sarcophagi which form the north and south points of the hexagon are open with tongues of flame visible. Once the entire group is in the hexagonal area, what looks like an endless number of Giant Rats jump out of the open tombs and some come from behind and beyond the tombs. A total of 250 Giant Rats quickly surround the party and attack; 1 in 10 rats carries a disease (usually hepatitis or rabies) which will be contracted unless a save is made. Rats have only 2 wp each but up to 20 at a time can swarm each character, covering their bodies and making them harder to kill. If characters look in the 4 open sarcophagi, #1 and #4 are empty, #2 holds 7500 gc and 2200 sc, and #3 holds a Chaotic Spear +2 (double damage to Lawful foes), a cursed chain mail shirt sized for a dwarf (armor of attraction), a +3 Ring of Defense, and a +3 Long Sword (Elf-Bane, elves struck save versus paralysis at -3).

**Armor of Attraction:** Detects as +3, but actually -3 cursed. Even worse, all randomly-directed attacks get aimed at the wearer of the armor, all foes with a choice of who to engage attack the wearer of the armor (save -4 to resist, if they want to), and all damage against the wearer is +3. This armor can only be removed with an appropriate spell from a 12<sup>th</sup> or higher level caster. First created by the Witch, Perisollia, 692 years ago, for traitors at the court of Jared III, King of Ronwy, and given to the King before his final campaign against the Orcs of Blackweb Forest.

**E.** The characters approach 3 dark brown tombs with their lids intact, oriented so that the heads of the tombs come together at a single point. Two misty-silver banshee float up through the stone lids of 2 tombs to attack the companions – if later opened their tombs each hold 3 ghouls as well. The third tomb contains a ferocious skeleton warrior (DC 0, WD 12, wp 59) armed with a +2 hand-and-half sword. Inside tomb #1 are 300 sc in a cloth bag (tied shut), a steel helm with visor, a round bronze shield, a silver-bladed cutlass, an ordinary blue hooded cape with gold clasp (35 gc) shaped like a stallion, a Talisman of Defense +3, a Choking Draught (poison potion), a Liqueur of Heroism, and a pouch of Pipeweed

of Confusion (d12 rounds after smoking, characters become confused for d4 hours, though if they sit peacefully and do nothing besides munch salty snacks they need not roll for actions). Inside tomb #2 are 4 golden bowls with diamond-studded rims (each 400 gc), 2 pewter goblets, a pewter pitcher, a silver hand mirror set on a gold handle (135 gc), 2 gold chalices with rubies and emeralds (each 1000 gc), a golden spiral dirk, a gold Unholy Symbol, and a pewter platter (auras of enchantment/good; food placed on the platter for 50 rounds is made free of diseases/poison). Inside the skeleton's tomb are a human-sized chain mail shirt, a spiked mace, 4 throwing stars, a Short Bow +2, a quiver with 25 arrows, 4 flasks of oil, 2 packages of a powder which creates dense black smoke for 2d10 rounds after being released, a vial of Itching Powder, a Potion of Super-Healing, a cursed potion which turns the drinker into a ghoul, a Remove Disease potion, a pouch with 2 Beanstalk Seeds (50% chance of failure to germinate if planted in Gehenna/Inferno), and a pouch with 6 Spell-Holding Marbles (*Magic Dart (5 darts), Hold Person, Fly, Webs, Chain Lightning, and Firetrap*).

**Beanstalk Seeds:** 6 hours after planting, each seed produces a green beanstalk 5 ft. in diameter which grows 10' / round for 2d100+50 rounds and supports 3500 pounds. The beanstalk lives for 1d8+5 days then falls to the ground. Climbing these stalks is trivial. If a giant is near when they grow, they immediately grapple the giant before rising into the sky. These are dark brown kidney-shaped seeds, 3 inches long by a half-inch thick, with a spongy, slippery texture. Seeds of this type are known to have been traded at the Bazaar at Donnentown 745 years ago; the best known examples were acquired by Jacoras of Heathvillage (known to history as "Jack").

**F.** The characters approach an oversized white marble tomb with rubies (gc 250x25, 600x10, 1000x6) embedded around the lid, with a gold figure of a sitting lion in the center clasping a large diamond (12,500 gc) between its paws. All gems have an aura of evil. Each gem carried gives a cumulative -1 penalty to all attacks and saves and many other rolls, like a reversed blessing of unlimited potential scope. The tomb is empty.

**G.** The characters come across a green sarcophagus carved with many bird figures, its white marble top off and leaning against one side of the tomb. Erichtho, a ghostly incorporeal robed figure, rises up out of the tomb, with a ghostly raven on her left wrist. She coldly looks the characters over, appraising them without making any obvious threat, then pronounces the following doom (spoken in Common) on 1 character: *"Pray to your god(s) you do not survive to see the Sands of Fire. Should you enter the Oasis of Ezrabab you lose more than your life, your soul is forfeit to the Fire Scepter King, and your tormented spirit will forever toil for the Dark. Thus it is spoken, thus it will come to pass..."*

Erichtho will choose (in order) a Paladin, Priest, Druid, Mage, Ranger, or Warrior to speak this doom to, preferring elves before humans and humans before others in case of ties. The character against whom the doom is pronounced has a -15 save penalty applied against domination by the Mummy King Kemelnesses at the Oasis of Ezrabah in the Seventh Circle. Once Erichtho speaks her doom, she lowers back into her tomb. All characters sense immense power from her; if they nonetheless wish to battle her they will discover that she is a Neutral double strength spectre with the magical ability of a 22<sup>nd</sup> level Mage (choose any spell you like) and the ability to see the future. There is no treasure within.

**H.** The characters approach a black marble tomb carved with relief images of bats and wolves. The lid is still in place and is capped with a life-size statue of a sitting horned wolf with an erect head, its feet folded under its body. Six of the sculpted bats and the wolf statue have glowing blue eyes. When the characters approach within 15', the 6 bats with glowing eyes transform into 4 male and 2 female Vampires and attack the characters; one Vampire initially summons wolves and another summons bats, while the others attempt to charm, dominate, and mesmerize the companions. During the eighth combat round, the wolf transforms into a male Vampire Lord, a double strength vampire with the magical ability of a 10<sup>th</sup> level Mage and immunity to all elements (whether applied in magical or mundane manner) save water. Male Vampire 3 wears a Ring of Spell Storing (*Lightning Bolt* [x3], *Shield*, *Gust of Wind* [x3], *Haste*, *Summon Monster* (Efreet), and *Cause Disease*), which he can use; Male Vampire 4 carries a Wand of Paralysis (21 charges), which he can use; Female Vampire 1 wears a Ring of Defense +1; and Female Vampire 2 wears a Charm versus Fire Magic and has Figurines of Wondrous Power (Opaline Goats), which she can use. The Vampire Lord wears +2 Plate Mail, Boots of Levitation, a Horn of Fog, and a golden +3 Rapier.

If the characters remove the lid from the tomb (total Strength 41+ required) they find a thick pile of grey dust and ash with a wooden stake driven into the bottom of the tomb. If the stake is removed, a Wraith materializes through the floor. Underneath the dust of the tomb floor is a fine wood underfloor. A piece of flooring (-60% find) 5' across by 3' wide lifts out to reveal a hidden marble-lined chamber beneath the tomb. The chamber holds 4 wax-sealed clay pots each holding 1500 gc, 6 carved jade idols each 3 pounds (each 10,500 gc), human-sized Plate Mail of Constricting, dwarf-sized chain mail +2 which nullifies all electricity, and a halving-sized Helm of Flying. The chamber also holds a rusty metal box with a stuck latch (-40% pick); when the lid is lifted it reveals a smaller inner box of gold (unlocked) in excellent condition with a Blindness Glyph inscribed on the top surface (revealed when outer box is opened). The gold box is lined with the finest blue satin and holds a platinum necklace with a silver

talisman shaped like a flame embedded with several small pieces of ruby, the Amulet of Esclamonde.

**Amulet of Esclamonde:** When handled by good/evil persons it heats up, quickly becoming unbearable. When worn by a neutral male the amulet acts as an Amulet of Defense +2. When worn by a neutral female the amulet acts as an Amulet of Defense +4, with numerous special abilities. Such a wearer will become immune to air and fire magics, gain +3 to Charisma and +1 to Wisdom, and her alignment will always detect as the same as the detector's. In addition, 3x/day each the wearer can strike someone blind or deaf, create dancing lights, detect magic, knock open magically closed gates, make herself invisible, levitate, create an aura of silence, or climb walls effortlessly as a spider. The amulet is a silver talisman 6 inches long by 1½ inches wide, embedded with 12 flecks of ruby, with a platinum clasp. It was constructed 970 years ago by the Elven Magus Suliac Voloc for Esclamonde, High Duchess of Nezherza (also Grandmother of the Iris Flower Guild, an all-female organization of thieves and assassins). Esclamonde is said to have worn the Amulet when she stole the Jeweled Sword of State from King Meliador III of Wulfinstand. After her death, the Amulet passed to her daughter Hodierna, then to her granddaughter Rionna. It was stolen from Iris Tower 850 years ago by Imogenna, a descendant of Meliador. After the sacking of Wulfinstand 500 years ago the Amulet disappeared and was reported in both the Province of Martol, and the city of Port Onner. The Amulet reached Hell about 150 years ago as a result of the Schism in the Temple of Cliona at Revocattus, after High Priestess Tarsilla killed the Pretender Dunlathia in combat.

**The Infernal Minotaur:** The inner edge of the Fifth Circle is a ring of rough stones 100' wide, filled with large boulders and rocks, and knife-like cuts into the stone with slippery footing. The inner border looks out over a steep cliff (1500' vertical drop with a 70 degree grade) which flows down to the Sixth Circle. Red smoke and vapors rise out of the pit, thick with the smell of blood and sour, rotting, bodies. The air is still, hot, and humid. Each character is overcome by the stench and fumes, becoming unconscious after 1d20 rounds for 1-3 hours (save vs. poison -6), then after waking experiencing severe nausea for another 2d8 hours (-2 on Strength and all rolls). A character near the edge of the cliff will likely fall off due to the slippery conditions and strong winds unless precautions are taken or Dexterity or other rolls are made.

Wherever the characters reach the inner edge of the Fifth Circle, they see a narrow switchback trail which provides relatively safe passage down the cliff to Lower Inferno (Circle Six, the River of Blood and Wood of Suicides). Guarding the top of the trail is the Infernal Minotaur, who tells the characters to turn back (only a pass from an Earl or Duke of Hell allows the characters to pass without





fighting). If combat is joined the Minotaur instantly summons 1d20 standard Minotaurs (arrive after 1d6 rounds) to support him. He will also summon these creatures if the players somehow get by him, and all will give chase. He uses the Minotaur's Axe. **Infernal Minotaur:** DC -3, WD 22, wp 110, Speed 15, attacks once with horns (d8, or 3d6 if charging) and twice with the Minotaur's Axe (+6 two-handed axe, attacks once for each blade, wounds struck continue to bleed at 2 wp/round until healed). Every second round he can also do a great kick, which does 3d6 if it hits. Only enchanted weapons of +3 or greater enchantment can hurt him, and 75% of magic used against him fails. He is immune to earth magic and poison. He can transform into a truly gigantic bull, and summon minotaurs as noted above 3x/day (only one group at a time).

**Farther Into The Inferno:** The Sixth Circle is a circular band 15 miles across with an outer circumference of 290 miles and an inner circumference of 200 miles, which includes both the River of Blood and the Dismal Wood (also known as the Poison Wood or Wood of Suicides). Characters enter the Sixth Circle by climbing down one of several narrow switchback paths in a steep rocky slope, whose total vertical drop from the Fifth Circle is 1500 feet. At the bottom of the slope is a hard-packed ring of dark orange-red clay 200 feet across, surrounding the outer bank of the River of Blood. Small dark red-green plants with hard sharp leaves and needles grow in isolated clumps along the ring of clay. Beyond the short clay plain is the

River of Blood, a thousand-foot wide River filled with bubbling human blood, and looking inward the vague shape of a thick forest can be seen beyond the River.

Dark roiling clouds hang low over the Sixth Circle, moving in many directions at once and showing flashes of purple and red, along with frequent long strands of heat lightning which stay airborne and never touch the ground. The air is very oppressive and humid, a constant 97°F, with a sticky-sweet smell from the river that turns character's stomachs. A rainstorm of dark blood lasting 11-30 minutes has a 40% chance of breaking out each hour.

Fifty feet from the bottom of the path is a black marble obelisk standing 8 feet high sitting on a black stone pedestal. Arrows pointing north/clockwise and south/counterclockwise are clearly etched on the west side. Above the north-pointing arrow are written the words "Chiron, Abaddon" and above the south-pointing arrow are written "Bifrons, Ippos." The Hall of Chiron, Chief of the Centaurs of Hell, is located on the outer side of the River 5 miles north/clockwise of the west-east axis. The palace of Abaddon, Duke of Hell, is located 75 miles north/clockwise of the west-east axis (due Infernal north), 3 miles into the Wood; the palace of Bifrons, Duke of Hell, is located 15 miles south/counterclockwise from the west-east axis, 10 miles into the Wood; and the palace of Ippos, Duke of Hell, is located 130 miles in the south/counterclockwise direction from the west-east axis, just on the far side of the River of Blood. *Some adjustments to the names and distances recorded on obelisks may be necessary if the characters do not enter the Sixth Circle along the west-east axis.*

Mortals must have the permission of Prince Amayon or one of the Sixth Circle Dukes of Hell (Abaddon, Bifrons, or Ippos) to travel the Circle freely, otherwise they must be escorted by at least an equal number of Ladatajas. Mortals given permission to travel must wear a badge shaped like a green shield bearing 3 red tongues of fire over a black tree.

**The River of Blood:** The river varies from 4 to 15 feet in depth, and permanently immerses the souls of those violent towards others, at different depths according to their degree of guilt. Every 3 miles along the river's perimeter are crossing points or bridges of slippery dark red stepping stones which cross to the other side of the river. The River is filled with sharp-toothed fish which feed on the souls. Characters approaching within 50 feet of the River are sickened by the strong rotting and overpowering smell of blood (another save as detailed under the Infernal Minotaur, with similar effects, is required). Characters crossing the River of Blood on the stepping stones fall into the river because of the slippery blood on the stones (roll). Unarmored characters can swim across if they make a roll, but otherwise are pushed back to the outer shore by the current and must make a second roll

to avoid drowning in blood. Water breathing, walking on water, and water magic generally do not work on the River.

Roaming troops of Centaurs under the overall command of Chiron, their Chief, and Nessus, his Adjutant, are found on the inner and outer sides of the River. A typical troop consists of 30 Centaurs under the command of a Centaur War12. All Centaurs are armed with bows, hunting arrows, and wooden rods; in each troop 10 also carry lances, 10 long swords and round bronze shields, and 10 carry heavy maces. The troop leader wears a black metal whistle (summons 1d6 Type 6A devils/horned devils) on a loop around his neck. Centaur troops are encountered every 1 to 12 miles as they walk the river bank. Centaur troops do not attack unless the characters initiate hostilities; Centaurs do not ask whether the characters have Sixth Circle badges or passes. If treated with respect, the Centaurs are willing to talk (all Centaurs speak Common), and can give information about the Sixth and Seventh Circles as follows:

- All plants and fruit in the woods inward from the River of Blood are poisonous. Many Harpies and Hell Hounds are found there. The Harpies have roosting trees with platforms built in the branches, each ruled by a Harpy Matriarch, containing the tribe's treasure.
- There are 12 oases scattered about the Seventh Circle on which fire does not fall, each ruled by a Mummy King. Fire also does not fall on Devil palaces.
- The cliff between the Seventh and Eight Circles is more than a thousand feet high and undercuts the Seventh Circle so that it cannot be climbed except by persons capable of sticking to rock (e.g. the base is inward from the edge so the cliff wall slopes back away from vertical).
- A spell scroll found in the Oasis of Ezrabah allows Geryon to be commanded to transport characters from the Seventh to the Eighth Circles, then causes him to forget the action.
- If Geryon cannot be commanded or is killed, there are spiral stairs located at each of the cardinal compass points on the Seventh Circle that allow access to the Eighth Circle. These may be hard to find because they are often buried in the sand.

If the characters steal from, or loot, Chiron's Hall, or kill any Centaur in the Hall, every troop of Centaurs they meet thereafter immediately attacks them. If Chiron is killed, all Centaurs attack with a +4.

**The Dismal Wood:** Inward from River of Blood is a flat ring of hardened red-orange clay 150 feet wide growing only a few small isolated clumps of low weeds, hardy grasses, or mushrooms. Inward from the clay ring is a 15 mile wide forest consisting of dark gnarled and twisted trees with contorted main trunks and 4 to 8 major branches each (all are twisted and warped) and dozens of

minor branches. The entire trees typically stand less than 25 feet tall, having long leaves with eight divisions and points, some leaves a light purple in color, some indigo-blue, some brown with stripes of orange, and some a glossy black. The trees are relatively close together, usually with trunks 15 to 20 feet apart. Each tree bears 1d20 light-yellow colored fruits the size and consistency of apples; characters within 30 ft. of a fruit experience a compulsion to devour one (save at -2, checked every 10 minutes); the yellow fruit is fatal when ingested (save at -1 per fruit eaten, with an additional -2 for dwarves and gnomes). A sticky purple sap drips out of numerous holes punched in each trunk. The sap is a contact poison (even when dried) and poisonous to ingest. A character rubs against the sap every 100 rounds unless a roll to avoid it is made; if completely encased in metal armor or protective clothing the character comes into contact with sap when the armor is removed unless a similar roll is made. To avoid dying a save at -1 per incident of contact must be made, with an additional -4 for dwarves and gnomes.



The despondent souls of suicides are permanently housed in the wretched trunks of the trees in the Dismal Wood, where their faces can be dimly seen peering out from the trunks. From every trunk comes a constant warbling pitched wail in different keys and patterns, so the air is filled with discordant sounds that grate on the character's ears and minds, making all who hear them irritable and

decreasing the listener's effective Wisdom by 3 points. The trees are continually tormented and torn apart by Harpies and Hell Hounds and out of their mindless torment the trees reach out and flail at any creatures passing by: each character suffers a tree attack of 1d12 damage (excluding poison effects) every 150 rounds (attack as 10 WD creature). Between the trees are many thick, hardy vines and thickets of long hard thorns which are difficult to push through. There are no paths through the Wood and characters move at half normal speed, except for Druids, Barbarians, and Rangers, who move at their normal rate.

The air in the Wood is calm and stale, with a strong odor of vinegar. Above the woods is a light grey overcast haze just sufficient to cast shadows. Every half hour characters run into pockets of thick fog which reduce visibility to less than 10'. Every 2 to 3 miles throughout the Wood are found fuller, taller maple, ash, or poplar trees in good health, standing up to 80 feet high with a crown spanning at least 50 feet. Each of these trees are home (roost tree) to a tribe of Harpies, supporting 1d20+40 Harpies ruled by a Harpy Matriarch; a Grand Matriarch rules over all Harpies on the Circle. Every 3 to 4 miles throughout the Woods are Hell Hound dens. A den typically consists of a tunnel into the ground with large rocks around the entrance and 1 or 2 secondary exits, being home to a pack of 1d12+25 adult Hounds with 1d12 pups.

**Inferno Monster Index:** When on earth/the material plane, all devils may teleport themselves and up to 3 companions at will. Teleportation in hell is much more erratic for PCs and devils alike, and likely suicidal. Devils don't need to breathe.

**Assura** (Sergeants of Paimon): NA 1d4, often +10 Etvaras each, DC 0, WD 10, Speed 15/Fly 30. Practically unbeatable in grappling or hand-to-hand due to their strength and many natural armaments, in melee they attack twice with +1 two-handed flails that strike their targets mute for d20 days (save at -2) and once with a single bite, horn-gouge, or knee-strike. For ranged combat they carry water cannons that do d10 damage and knock targets flat; these may be fired 5 times per day. They act as 5<sup>th</sup> level mages and carry spells as appropriate. They comprehend all languages, can see in the infrared, have uncanny hearing, detect all lies told to them, move through swamp environments without leaving a trace, and are immune to fire, cold, nonmagical weapons, reptile/snake venom, and all poisons based on same. They can charm animals, detect good, and create areas of silence at will. Spells cast on them fail 75% of the time. They carry d3 potions of advanced healing and d3 other random potions each, as well as d3 flasks of infernal whiskey (worth 120 gc for the flask and another 1700 gc for the contents, which offer some mighty fine sippin'. They also usually have at least one mage scroll and a silver horn that can create fog or

sound up to 3 miles; they sometimes have other magic items as well. Assura are reptilian bipeds about 6½' tall, with a thick torso covered in dark blue scales, 2 short arms ending in clawed 4-finger hands with white palms, 2 short but well-muscled legs, long triangular feet tipped with 3 curved talons, horned knees, and a thick but tapering tail extending 6' behind the body, covered by warts and many small knobs. Assura have thick necks and light blue bald flat heads with 2 large blue eyes set into raised eye sockets at the rear. Their extended rectangular snout is up to 20 inches long with 4 raised breathing holes at the end. Many small fangs extend downward from their upper jaws and 4 small dark blue vertical horns grow from behind their eyes. They typically wear leather armor dyed grey.

**Devil, Greater Common.** NA 1d12, DC 3, WD 6, Speed 15/Fly 24. Attacks twice in melee with a knobbed +2 two-handed mace-staff or once with natural weapons. Sees in infrared, comprehends languages, can summon an obscuring mist or create flames at will, paralytic touch (save -2) 3x/day, regenerates 2 wp/round, 1x/day can create a vibratory displacing aura causing all attacks against it to miss 50% of the time. May carry a potion or miscellaneous magical item in addition to the staff. Greater Common Devils are thin, brown-skinned, one-eyed, winged humanoids standing 7 ft. 2 inches. They have thin oval faces with a high rounded eye socket containing a single large light blue eye centered in its head. They have thin, short, and oily black hair, 2 small curved horns, no ears, a sunken cavity where the nose should be, high cheeks, a thin slit mouth with several visible upper fangs, and a tapered chin covered with scales. They have narrow long necks, thin shoulders, wide hips with a large gut, thin-stick-like legs, and 2 small feathery wings on their shoulders. Their skin is dark brown on the head and shoulders and gradually becomes lighter in shade until it is tan on the feet; the skin is dry and appears to be flaking off. They usually dress in light-colored short-sleeve shirts with darker thigh-length shorts.

**Devil, Lesser Common:** NA 1d6, DC 5, WD 4, Speed 12/Fly 18. Fights with two foot claws plus either a bite or a +1 spiked club (double damage on 19-20). Sees in infrared, comprehends languages, can create small fires at will, immune to all mental affects (fear, mind control, sleep, etc.), regenerates 2 hp/round, can throw magic darts at WD=caster level 3x/day. A short horned and winged humanoid with red-orange skin, standing 4 ft. 4 inches, with a large rectangular shiny bald head, 3 bright red horns on the forehead, a thick round eye socket with grey flecked eyes, flat pug nose, fleshy jowls, and a wide mouth with upper and lower fangs. It has a short but wide neck, wide shoulders with thick upper chest and arm muscles, 4 bat-like wings, a narrow waist with short muscular legs ending in a triangular webbed 5-toed foot, and short arms ending in oversized hands. Its skin is covered with small bumps

and warts and it is typically dressed in a dark-colored kilt and leather belt with a small belt-pouch. Its preferred attack is to hover using its wings and use its foot claws to disembowel an opponent.

**Devil, Type 5A:** NA 1d10, DC 3, WD 6, Speed 15/Fly 24. Not tough but deadly, these enforcer devils get a whopping six attacks per round: two with a cutlass of lightning +2 (does 2d6 additional shock damage per hit), two with a black dragon claw mace +1 (double damage on natural 19-20), and two with the flurrying kicks of their bird-like legs. They can also target a blood-curdling scream at any foe within 75 feet, who must make a save at -2 or be paralyzed. They can see in all visual spectra and have an extraordinary sense of smell, and immediately note all invisible beings in their vicinity. They are immune to fire, poison, nonmagical/blessed weapons, and all water magic (it slips off them like water off a duck's back) and take half damage from cold. Spells in general fail against them 50% of the time. They can create flames or regions of darkness at will and can telekinetically move all objects 25 pounds or lighter in their vicinity. They can alter their own appearance at will to disguise as any sort of humanoid creature. 3x/day each they can freeze up to a 50' radius of water, cast cone of cold (6 dice), shapechange to any stork, crane, or heron, summon water elementals or giant crocodiles, or create a wall of water. They often will possess a potion or two or a misc. magic item as well as the weapons noted above. Type 5A devils are bird-like, horned bipedal creatures standing slightly over 7 feet and resembling an infernal crane or heron. They have small round human heads with pink feather strands instead of hair, small rounded ears, and low foreheads with 2 curved ivory horns mounted on the sides and oriented forward. They have small beady black eyes and triangular horn beaks with pointed tips. Their heads are mounted on flexible necks about 60 inches long and 6 inches thick, which in turn are attached to a cigar-shaped body 4 ft. long by 2 feet across, with wide red-feathered wings. Attached to the underside of the body are 2 dark red stick legs with taloned feet. The neck and body are covered in a thick coat of short pink feathers. Type 5A devils wear a gold medallion around their neck embossed with the image of Prince Paimon. They are found almost exclusively wading in the Styx Marsh.

**Devil, Type 5B:** NA 1d10, DC -1, WD 7, Speed 15/Fly 24. These devils wear +3 adamantite chainmail and fight with natural weapons (1 attack/round, or 2 if disarmed) and swift-striking silver long knives (3 attacks per round, each forcing a save vs. paralysis at -1 – these are shortsword-length for humans). They are also capable archers and can fire their +2 longbows twice per round. They can emit a stunning hoot that works like the type 5A devil's scream. They can see in all visual spectra, can use clairaudience and clairvoyance at will, understand all

languages, and have a preternatural sense for the presence of good beings. They are immune to poison, cold, water and air magic, and nonmagical/nonblessed weapons, but they are vulnerable to fire (-2 save and +1 damage per die). Spells in general fail against them 50% of the time. They can magically create areas of darkness, mist, fog, and/or silence at will, and can cause fear (save resists) in any single target as will. 3 times per day each they can dispel magic, create a wall of water, shapechange into any owl, stork, crane, or heron, summon giant crocodiles or fish (including scorpion fish, below). They may cast spells as 8<sup>th</sup> level mages, usually favoring illusion, mind control, and general attack spells. It is common for them to have 1-2 potions as well as a ring, rod, or misc. magic item. Type 5B devils are bipedal, winged and horned creatures with the general body shape of an owl, a human face, and the legs of a stork. They stand 9½ feet tall. The Type 5B has an elongated and rounded head with upright pointed ears and 2 curved brown horns set on the rear of the skull and curving forward over the top of the head, a small forehead, thick arched eye sockets with thick brown hair, a thin upturned nose, and a thin mouth with 2 upper fangs. It has no neck, stocky cylindrical body covered in long dark brown feathers, and wide feathered wings, each with a mottled brown-and-white pattern. Along with their chainmail they wear tri-corned peaked leather hats and dark brown hooded cloaks that allow them to blend with their environment. Type 5B devils prefer to operate in darkness.

**Devil, Type 5C:** NA 1d8, DC -3, WD 10, Speed 18/Fly 24. 2 natural attacks or 3 attacks with +3 bone blade (drains 1 level/hit in addition to damage) or 2 shots with +2 long bow (range 300', 10 arrows of human slaying and 20 arrows of sleep). Pairs of them may perform a whistling duet that causes weakness (-6 strength) in all who hear it. They explode when they die for 6d10 damage to 15' and 3d10 to 30'; when below 10 wp they may do this voluntarily if they wish. They comprehend all languages, can see in all spectra, have extraordinary hearing, are immune to fire, cold, and nonmagical/nonblessed weapons, and 75% of all spells fail against them. They can create darkness or silence, cause fear, charm (through gaze contact) or bestow curses on single targets at will. They can be turned by Priests as vampires and suffer triple normal damage from holy water. They can also summon d4 vampires. They cast spells as level 8 mages, favoring spells involving weakness, darkness, and mental control. A horned, winged, 2-headed skeletal creature with long thin legs, standing 7'3", having 2 bird skulls, each with a long curved white beak, glowing purple eyes, a single straight ivory horn attached to the forehead, and a flexible neck. Its skeletal body resembles a vulture with bony arms attached under the wing joint and 4' legs ending in a 3-toed foot with large curved talons. All of its bone is a bleached pink-white color. The Type 5C wears open adamantite helmets with pink feathers, silver amulets of defense +3, and rectangular bronze shields.



**Devil, Type 5D:** NA 1d6, DC -2, WD 10, Speed 24/Fly 30/Swim 15. Attacks 7 times per round each (one horn stab, 2 claws, 2 strikes with +2 golden scimitar that banishes angels, etc. back to their home plane when hit, 2 strikes with +2 silver scimitar that drains a life energy level from its target). They comprehend all languages, can see in all spectra (and out of phase creatures), see invisible, have extraordinary hearing, detect good creatures, are immune to fire, cold and nonmagical/nonblessed weapons, take double damage from earth magic, and 50% of spells fail against them. They regenerate 3 wp per round but can be turned by clerics as mummies and save vs. poison at -5. They can cause fear in foes, bestow curses, and create areas of silence and darkness at will; they also can use clairaudience and clairvoyance at will. They can telekinese objects up to 30 lbs within 50' at will. 3x/day they can shapechange into a mummy or giant crow, summon 1d4 mummies, or enhance their attacks with poison. They cast spells as an 8<sup>th</sup> level mage, favoring illusions. A composite skeletal creature with 4 arms, horns, and wings, standing 8'2" tall, having an oversized human skull with glowing orange eyes, 2 straight spiral horns extending from the sides of the skull above the ears, and 2 spiral horns extending forward from the forehead, a long neck, doubled shoulder bones supporting 4 long skeletal arms, and very long leg bones ending in a triangular 7-toed foot. The Type 5D wears a sleeveless knee-length brown robe (blending, defense +2) with leather sandals, and carries a round adamantite shield (+3, reflecting).

**Devil, Type 5E:** NA 1d4, DC -4, WD 11, Speed 24/Fly 24/Swim 12. Attacks with tusks (double damage on charge) and 3 times/round with a +4 vorpal claymore (save vs. disintegrate when hit). At range they can throw 2

javelins of lightning per round (they carry 6). They also can keen mournfully, causing all foes to save vs. fear or fight at -3 and lose 1d4 temporary wisdom. They comprehend all languages and can see in all spectra, including phased and invisible creatures, can discern lies, have extraordinary hearing, can detect good, and can do clairaudience/clairvoyance at will. They are immune to fire and cold and magical weapons below +2. Magic fails against them 90% of the time. They can summon fires, mist, darkness, and silence at will. They can bestow powerful curses or cause fear on large groups at will. 3 times per day they can issue a command which will be obeyed for 1 round, throw a fireball or a cone of cold, create confusion, shapechange into a skeleton, minotaur, or giant bull, summon 1d4 double strength minotaurs, animate hordes of skeletons or zombies (3d12 in combat). They cast spells as 10<sup>th</sup> level mages, focusing on spells which poison and weaken. A winged, bipedal, skeletal creature with 4 thick tusks standing 6'9", having a long narrow skull with glowing pale green eyes, a long pale-orange curved beak like that of a toucan, and 4 short curved brown ivory tusks emerging from the base of the beak curving forward. Two bleached white feathery wings attach to the shoulder bone, all bones being a pale blue color. Each Type 5E wears a silver chain and medallion (defense +1, telepathy) around its neck, a silver helm with visor and blue plume, a silver breastplate, and carries a round silver shield (+2 & blocks arrows).

**Etvaras** (Foot Soldiers of Paimon): NA 1d8, DC 3, WD 10, Speed 6/Fly 9. 2 melee attacks with +2 double-bladed flaming axe and tail strangulation (no damage first round hit but 2d8 each round thereafter unless severed or the Etvara is slain), ranged attack with flaming oil grenades for 2d8 (10' radius). Sees in infrared and comprehends all languages. Immune to fire, electricity, poison, and non-magical/non-blessed weapons; half damage from cold; magic only affects them 50% of the time. Can produce small flames or cause fear (save to resist) in a single target at will. May haste itself, grow itself up to ogre/small giant size, or shrink itself down to pixie size 3 times per day each. These devils often have additional magical items and can use magical scrolls and potions. They appear as red-skinned humanoids standing 6 – 6½ feet tall, with rounded or chubby faces resembling long-eared monkeys with glowing blue eyes, long delicate bat wings, and a long smooth tail with ends in a bone knob or ball. They usually wear a grayish open jacket or jerkin. They are often found in greater numbers, possibly led by stronger devils, for military operations.

**Manes:** NA 1d10, DC 6, WD 3, Speed 12. 1 attack with bite or club, or if they grapple they cause no damage but opponent must save vs. paralysis at -4 or start retching and be unable to act. Corporeal, androgynous humanoid figures standing 5 to 6 ft. tall, having skin in various shades of brown, with pronounced ears and noses and eye sockets,

thin lips, no teeth, with thin and ragged dark black hair on the back of their heads. Manes gradually lose their ability to speak and even to remember their lives at about 1% per year, so that a century after their deaths they are essentially mindless. Manes attack as a mob, overwhelming opponents, automatically massing and attacking whenever there is an opportunity. Manes are very sensitive to pain and will usually retreat if injured, making them fairly easy to control. When killed Manes disappear in a puff of smoke and are recreated at Minos' complex in the Second Circle.

**Nimidoryas** (Officers of Paimon): NA 1, though possibly accompanied by 10 Assura and 100 Etvaras(!), DC -2, WD 20, Speed 12/Fly 24. They fight with +2 black tridents (2 attacks) that do 1d10 damage and paralyze targets for d20 rounds unless a save is made at -2. With a touch they can put an opponent into temporal stasis or simply make them twice as heavy as normal (save -8 for either, the second lowers dexterity and will create penalties on some rolls). They can throw a magical and deadly volley of 5 cold rays spaced out over a 70' arc up to 90 degrees; these do 2d8 damage each. They are completely immune to fire, cold, poison, and weapons less than +2. Magical spells fail against them 90% of the time. They comprehend all languages, detect lies, can see into the infrared and invisible beings, and even can see creatures who are 'phased' or 'displaced' completely normally. They can detect all good beings in their vicinity. They can create areas of darkness and silence at will, and likewise can cause fear in all mortals who behold them at will (save negates). They can telekinetically manipulate all objects up to 50 pounds within 150' of them. 3x/day each they can bestow curses, create an illusionary double of themselves which can move with perception up to 1 mile away from the original, control temperature, produce a ray or cone of cold or a fireball doing 10 dice damage, freeze any body of water up to the size of a small lake, or summon packs of giant boars or water elementals. They also carry spells as 10<sup>th</sup> level mages and usually wear rings of spell storing to supplement their arsenal. Nimidoryas appear as grossly fat, winged humanoids standing about 5½ feet tall. Nimidoryas have thick rounded bodies, small arms ending in child-sized hands, short legs ending in cloven brass hooves, a short bare curled tail, rounded faces with a light cover of short brown hair, triangular sow-like ears, fat hanging jowls, a short rounded nose, a sparse brown brow over bright yellow eyes with drooping eyelids, and a triple-chin. Their pink swallow wings span 4 ft. They dress in dark grey togas (+2 protection) woven with gold threads. Nimidoryas typically command 10 Assura and 100 Etvaras.

**Rotting Shark:** NA 1d3, DC 8, WD 6, Speed (swim) 21. 1 attack, either full speed ram for 2d10 or a rotting bite for d12+3 plus save vs. death or the bitten area rots off in 3d12 hours. Can be turned as wraith; capable of detecting all warm-blooded creatures within half a mile; sandpaper skin does d4+1 damage to anyone scraping by it. The

animated rotting corpse of a Great White Shark. The jaw bone with its many sharp teeth and upper fangs have thick visible tendons not covered by flesh, and the remaining body has a grey color with a rotted appearance and many chunks or divots of flesh missing.

**Scorpion Fish:** NA 1d4/1d20 in cave-nest, DC 2, WD 12, Speed (swim) 24. 4 melee attacks (1 bite, 2 pincers, 1 tail sting for 1d10 plus paralysis (save) and permanent blindness on natural 20 to hit (save at -4)). Extraordinary hearing and vision in all spectra, breathes phosphorescent bubbles. A slender torpedo-shaped fish 7 to 10' long, weighing between 300 and 500 pounds, having a rounded head, two forward facing bony pincers on short stalks, six large paddle-shaped fins and a whip-like 50 inch tail tipped by a 5 inch bone stinger. Its body is colored yellow with a brown underside, a brown and tan mottled tail, and a tan-colored head. It is most active at night. The fish is highly territorial and aggressive. It is generally a warm-water fish.

**Spectral Bat:** NA 1d3/1d20 in nest, DC 5, WD 8, Speed 6/Fly 36. Attacks with two claws and a bite; the bite does 2 dice due to the bat's huge size. It flies silently and can hear essentially everything out to 800 feet (including human heartbeats); like smaller bats it can use echolocation as well. It can shift into the astral at will, and 25% of all spells cast at it fail. Spectral bats appear white or pale yellow furred with a wingspan of 12 to 15 ft.. Their ears have pale yellow fur lining, their bodies have white or yellow striping, and the wings have pale red splotches and red tipped hand fingers.

**Zoybim:** NA 2d6, DC 5, WD 5, Speed 12/Fly 18. Attacks once with a +1 poisoned adamantite dagger, save or die in d4 rounds. They can see in the infrared, detect incorporeal creatures, and use true sight and x-ray vision at will. They can also visually replay their memories as a hologram at will. They can communicate in all languages, are immune to fire, poison, and nonmagical/nonblessed weapons, and take half damage from cold. Spells cast against them fail 50% of the time. They can produce flames, summon fogs and mists to cover their location, perform telekinesis on nearby objects under 25 lb., and once per day can create a wall of hardened fog equivalent to stone. They often have a potion or misc. magic item, or possibly an intriguing mundane item such as a bronze spyglass or first aid kit. They are 6-legged bat-like creatures with feline heads and forked tails. Zoybim have leathery black scalloped wings, rounded heads with short pointed ears, small eye sockets holding glowing gold eyes, and a single vertical gold horn growing from their forehead. Zoybim are mostly orange with darker brown stripes on their backs and faces. They attempt to flee any conflict to deliver a detailed report to their infernal superiors; they often act as clerks and in positions requiring mental abilities but not leadership skills.

– Thus Ends the Expedition to the Fifth Circle –

# The Wilderness Architect, Parts III-IV

continued from *Fight On! #2*, by Victor Raymond

**Wilderness Terrain Example.** The map on the top left corner of the back cover was randomly generated, using the methods presented in FO! #2. The legend is as follows: Yellow – Steppe, Grey – Desert, Brown – Hills, Purple – Mountains, Light Green – Clear, Forest Green – Forest, Blue Green – Swamp, Blue – Water.

*The terrain description is as follows:* in the northwest, hills are bracketed on the north and south by rocky desert, with steppes further south. Just east, there are areas of clear land and steppe, giving way to hills and past that, forest. In the south there is a lake or sound that extends in a chevron off to the east, with mountains on the north and south sides of the water (and a swamp on the southeastern edge). Another lake can be found in the northeast, surrounded by forest, which can also be found in the southeast. The stronghold is on the northern shore of the lake or sound, just east of the mountains and hills on the shoreline.

*Generating our stronghold,* we find that it is a castle, inhabited by a necromancer of neutral alignment. Our necromancer has a 7th level warrior also resident, and a 6th level mage apprentice. There are two chimeras and 100 soldiers. There are eight villages indicated; two combine into a town of 600 by the stronghold, and two others combine into a town of 800 on the western shore of the large body of



water. The other four are located as follows: one is 15 miles north of the stronghold in the middle of forest, another is 5 miles southwest leading up to a pass between mountains. A third is off to the southeast, almost in the land of another hold, and the last is directly across the water to the south, leading up into the mountains. As to the dungeon, the dice indicate it is in the same hex as the village across the water from the stronghold. A bit of consideration places the dungeon in the high hills above the village, probably guarded by troops of the necromancer.

## Part Three: The Detailed Wilderness

The intent of Part III is to demonstrate ways of detailing wilderness settings. As was previous discussed, the “wilderness” is the entire area outside of the dungeon, including both settled and wild areas. By generating your own wilderness and then establishing and detailing strongholds and towns, you can begin to flesh out the campaign beyond the initial dungeon.

**Assumptions About Your Wilderness Setting.** It is assumed that your initial wilderness setting is relatively small – ideally the town nearest to your first dungeon, and surrounding area, including any stronghold for the local lord. Eventually, you may want to add other strongholds and castles, as well as real wilderness – add these as adventuring warrants. The system presented in Part II, and expanded upon here, should provide you with the means to start small and work your way outward. Conversely, you could start with a “top down” approach – establish a kingdom or kingdoms, and detail them to some degree, and then locate your initial setting for adventure, including your dungeon. We’ll begin with the “starting small” model and expand on it below.

**Working From the Inside Outwards.** *Taxation:* Tax revenues are often given an annual base rate of 10 gc per inhabitant. Using this as our standard, with 2-8 villages, each with 100-400 people, that means total annual revenue ranging from a minimum of 2,000 gc to 32,000 gc, with an average of roughly 12,500 gc. This does not take into account investments, including but not limited to:

- Road building – which may lead to tolls being levied
- Canals – similar possibilities for tolls
- Inns – as a business investment or source of taxes
- Hunting and trapping – various normal and enchanted animals may provide valuable resources (think of the “King’s deer” in Robin Hood, or more fantastically, a “game preserve” for wyverns, manticores, etc.)
- Religion – pilgrimages and various necessary services may provide some revenue
- Armories – mines produce ore, which then may be smelted into metal for use in armoring

- Animal breeding – this goes along with the idea of “game preserve” or even farming (see below).
- Farming and fishing – while mundane, such activities are the basis for local economies
- Exploration – surveying and prospecting fall under this as potentially lucrative sources of funding
- Ship building and sea trade – if a stronghold is near a coast, the need for warships and merchant ships will be eventually felt. There was an excellent article in *The Dragon* #7, “Sea Trade in D&D,” which may help.
- Land trade – caravans will require protection, as well as themselves being purveyors of goods.

Why is taxation important? It provides the basis for the construction and maintenance of a stronghold. As mentioned in Part I, there is an observable relationship between castle encounters and the rules for stronghold construction for player-characters. Once you have generated the stronghold and barony in which your dungeon is located, you can then proceed to detail the stronghold, including size, number of troops, etc.

*Fortification:* the first step is to determine how well-established and prosperous the stronghold and area around your dungeon are. The following guidelines are offered as suggestions for the amount of resources available to a local lord/wizard/patriarch for their stronghold:

- Relatively recent or poor – one year’s base taxation for fortifications
- Mature or productive – three year’s base taxation
- Ancient or wealthy – seven year’s base taxation

Once the available funds have been determined, build that fortress! A “Great Keep” is listed at a base price of 72,000 gc, not including moat, gates, barbettes, doors, machicolations, etc. A simple shell keep might be as little as 5,000 to 10,000 gc, and a motte-and-bailey castle would cost roughly the same; ditch, palisade, raised hill, wooden keep on top. (There are some real questions about the viability of non-stone fortifications in a world with fireballs and lightning bolts, but that is an issue for a different article). Fortification and stronghold construction are interesting exercises for the referee, as they involve building *up* instead of *down*. Subsidiary fortifications and border keeps also require funding, and such funds should come from the same pool as for the main stronghold. One may also wish to go through successive phases of stronghold construction, as generations of inhabitants expand on the work of their ancestors. In a similar vein, the funds available for village barracks, town halls, etc. may be assessed in a similar manner as for stronghold construction, e.g. a productive village of 300 people will have 3,000 gc x 3 = 9,000 gc for such features, which could be used for a town palisade (180’ on a side, 6,000 gc), a wooden barracks (500 gc) and a town hall (stone building, 2,500 gc). Funds for such construction should be treated as separate from those

for stronghold construction. In all cases, funding should not be thought of as a single investment during one year, but as the culmination of several years (if not decades!) of capital investment.

*Troops, Specialists, and Other Costs:* the base taxation rate is also useful for determining the funding for troops, specialists, and other costs, such as funds available for investment. Use the price lists from your favorite game manuals.

*Presence of Other Strongholds:* having built the stronghold for the area where your dungeon is located, a referee should determine whether or not there are other holdings (i.e. civilized lands) nearby. Assuming the use of a hex map, one should roll for the presence of other holdings in each of the six directions away from your initial stronghold. Use the following table to determine this, rolling a six-sided die, once for direction a second time for distance:

*Direction (roll for each direction)*

<b>Civilized?</b>	1-5, holding present in that direction
<b>Provincial?</b>	1-4, holding present in that direction
<b>Frontier?</b>	1-3, holding present in that direction
<b>Wilderness?</b>	1-2, holding present in that direction

*Distance (if a holding is indicated)*

<b>1-3</b>	<b>Nearby</b>	2-12 hexes away; this may result in holdings that are closer together than 40 miles apart, which <i>might</i> indicate potential conflicts, shared rulership, or simply closer boundaries.
<b>4-5</b>	<b>Slightly apart</b>	3-18 hexes away; this is likely to result in areas of true wilderness in-between holdings, which may serve as the basis for outdoor adventures and eventually the possible creation of new holdings.
<b>6</b>	<b>Far apart</b>	4-24 hexes; real wilderness exists between the initial holding and the holding in the direction indicated. It may even be in a different province or kingdom.

Once the direction and distance of another holding is determined, use the “Town/Stronghold Type” table from *The Wilderness Architect*, Part II, to determine what kind.

*Relative relationships between different strongholds:* Lastly, it would be worthwhile to determine the attitudes of stronghold lords/wizards/patriarchs towards each other. Use a reaction table for the relative reactions of each lord/wizard/patriarch to one another; roll for both directions, since attitudes are not always symmetrical. It may be worthwhile to add or subtract bonuses for moral outlook, charisma, etc., though this is up to the referee.

**What about dwarves, elves, halflings, and other allies?**  
Good question. Aside from having the potential for



higher-level leaders and sometimes allies, there is not much information about the settlements and society of these races. In fact, there is more information for other non-human races such as orcs, than there is for elves or dwarves, insofar as their social structure is concerned.

To remedy this, some careful interpolation of various rules should be of assistance. To begin with, these races *sometimes* reside in relative proximity to humans, so strongholds in civilized lands may include settlements of these races, depending on the terrain within the holding. This is particularly true of halflings. In the case of dwarves and elves, their availability as soldiers for hire suggests that there might be settlements of these races among humans. So it is not unreasonable to assume that dwarves, elves and halflings may be found *within* lands ruled by humans. But this leaves out independent holdings of these races, which deserve their own consideration.

*Independent holdings:* probably the biggest difference between humans and dwarves and elves is the degree to which the latter races prefer specific types of terrain:

- Dwarves and gnomes reside in hills and mountains
- Elves in deep forests and meadowlands
- Halflings live in conditions similar to that of humans.

Independent dwarvish and elvish holdings or “kingdoms” (and possibly halfling communities) require first the appropriate terrain, and then second a wilderness encounter with that particular race, either placed there by the referee or as indicated by the random encounter tables. If one of these races is encountered in its “lair,” this may be taken as an indication of an independent holding. Determine the placement of the stronghold and any surrounding communities, with the following modifications by race:

- Dwarves and gnomes: their strongholds are almost always built underground in hills or mountains. They also tend to congregate together more than humans. Determine the total population as for a normal holding, but apply a  $-2$  modifier to the roll for distance of villages from the stronghold (combine when in the same hex). Almost all dwarven settlements are underground, even those considered “villages.”
- Elves: their strongholds are sometimes in hills, far in the forest or near alpine meadows, or in deep mountain valleys. Eschewing the overly-constructed edifices of dwarves and humans, elves prefer to take maximum advantage of natural defenses, and build strongholds to suit. Determine the total population as for a normal holding, but the population is considered to live throughout the forest and/or meadowland of the holding, and not concentrated in villages.
- Halflings: their strongholds *are* their communities. Determine the number of villages and population as for a normal holding, but rather than having a single stronghold or castle, divide funds for fortification

equally between the various towns and villages. Keep in mind that halflings often build underground into hillsides, and these *smials* are part of halfling defences.

**The Barony of Morvan.** The example presented here is a detailed elaboration of what was presented in *The Wilderness Architect Part II*. Here we add detail to the original map (*see back cover - Ig*):

*Coastline and Rivers:* I drew in the coastline to reflect the geography of the area, adding a river from the northern lake to the main body of water further south. I also added a small island (a setting for further adventures?).

*Roads:* these were added to connect Morvan to villages further away, as well as leading to other strongholds.

*Villages:* there are four villages and two towns:

- **Illyr:** this is a village of 400, on the road leading north from Morvan into the forested pass heading into the northern wilds.
- **Rovold:** a village of 400, evenly split between men and gnomes, providing miners for mines in the hills just west of Morvan. Rovold is on the road leading to the stronghold of Tyrski, through the western pass.
- **Gordet:** this is a fishing village of 200, providing its catch to Morvan and the town of Poldor.
- **Pem:** a village of 100 fisherfolk and others; there is a road leading south-southwest towards the dungeon of Morvan, and another road leading east to Gordet and south to the stronghold of Eshallin.
- **Hotas:** a town of 800 people, this is a major trading center connecting Tyrski, Morvan and Poldor.
- **Morvan:** this town of 600 sits in the intersection of the northern forest road and the east-west roads between Poldor and Tyrski, acting as a port for water commerce as well as a crossroads.

The population for the Barony is therefore about 2,500. This provides a base annual tax revenue of 25,000 gc.

*Morvan Stronghold:* the stronghold itself is relatively recent. There is a 40' main tower, a 15' side tower, and a gatehouse, connected by 60' sections of curtain wall. It was built by Nelyssa the Necromancer (Mag 10) on a promontory of rock overlooking Morvan and commanding the pass to the west (therefore no need for a moat). The rough cost for the stronghold is 24,500 gc, not including various elaborations (doors, etc. - left for later). In addition to Nelyssa herself, there is her companion, the warrior Kedrik (War 7) and Nelyssa's apprentice Ulpon (Mag 6). Checking for magic items, we find that Nelyssa has a Staff of Command, Kedrik has a +3 shield, and Ulpon has no particular items to speak of. Depending on the prevalence of magic items in the game, this may serve as a basis for acquisition and trade by Nelyssa from any characters rash

enough to enter the dungeon across the water. Nelyssa probably used her Staff of Command to acquire her two chimaeras. There are also 100 castle guards, 50 light footmen with cross-bows, and 50 heavy foot. Their two commanders are 5th level and 6th level warriors (this is inferred by treating them as bandits; determination of possible magic weapons, armor, and items has been left for later). In addition to these, there is also an animal trainer (for the chimaeras), and three armorers and two smiths. Total cost: 13,200 gc annually. Along with all this, Nelyssa maintains a water patrol in the form of an armed warship. This includes 15 crew, 40 marines, and a ship captain (War 6), making for 4,620 gc in annual upkeep. The town of Hotas has a wooden barracks and a garrison of 50 light foot armed with crossbows, a War 5 commander, and an armorer (2,400 gc). Finally, the roads of the barony are patrolled by a company of 40 light horsemen (4,800 gc), usually split into two groups of 20, all commanded by a War 4. Total cost for these troops is 10,820 gc. When taken together with the cost of troops and specialists for the stronghold, this leaves just over 1,000 gc annually for other expenses. It is quite likely that Nelyssa has made other investments and levies other taxes, as this is a rather tight budget, and she is a 10th level mage after all.

*Other Strongholds:* there are three, one to the east, one to the southeast, and one to the west:

- **Tyrski**, ruled by a Patriarch commanding an order of 12 Heroes. Nelyssa is neutrally inclined towards the Patriarch, although she is thought well of in return.
- **Eshallin**, ruled by a Lord, who has 3 Myrmidons acting as sub-commanders. Nelyssa is also neutrally inclined towards this Lord, and that feeling is returned.
- **Poldor**, an independent town of 1,500 people. The town leadership includes a 8th level mage and a 5th level priest. There is also a 5th level thief present. Relations between Nelyssa and the leaders of Poldor are cordial and there is regular trade with Morvan.

A more detailed map would show the relative political boundaries between the various holdings, as well as the conditions to be found out in the wilds beyond civilization (see below). For absolute clarity, the areas to the northeast, northwest, and southwest are considered wilderness (see original sketch map). It is presumably the case that the area to the southwest, at least, is claimed as part of the larger kingdom of which Morvan is a part.

*Adventure Ideas:* Some adventure ideas suggest themselves almost immediately:

- Bandits engage in regular incursions out of the north; go do something about that.
- There is a colony of merfolk wishing to establish themselves in the waters between Hotas and Morvan; persuade them to recognize Nelyssa as their ruler.

- A black dragon has been spied in the swamps to the south of Hotas; go deal with the situation.
- Nomads on the plains to the south of Tyrski have abducted a merchant caravan; make contact and see to the release of their prisoners.
- A pair of manticores have moved into the forest north of Illyr and have begun hunting the common folk living there. There is a fear that they are a mated pair and will spawn more manticores if not hunted down.
- Strange lights have been seen on the island between Pem and Gordet. Investigate and report back.
- ...and so on.



**Out in the Wilderness.** Any area that does not have a town or stronghold as a stabilizing influence should be treated as “wilderness” – the “wild area” in which wilderness encounters take place. Additionally, the “Wilds” should be seen as the areas from which monsters emerge and then move into more civilized areas. One of the strongest incentives that exists for the establishment of new strongholds in the wilderness is the desire to “roll back the frontier” – and make the world safe for civilized folk. It goes almost without saying that powerful player-characters will be encouraged to “do their part” to hold back the tide of chaos.

From a game-play perspective, it is a good idea to not have a sharply delineated boundary between civilized areas and true wilderness. Some powerful lords or wizards may have enough troops to patrol more than 20 miles away from their stronghold, or a mountain chain may present a closer barrier than 20 miles, beyond which there are orcs and goblins aplenty.

Regarding wandering monster checks, these should be rolled for in both civilized and wilderness areas. An encounter in civilized lands should be either with friendly people or creatures, but may occasionally be with monsters, especially if it is away from villages or off the road (more on this later). A potential encounter table for civilized areas might look like what is presented below; roll a six-sided die to determine the result:

d6	<i>Encounters in Civilized Areas: On the Road</i>
1	<b>Common Folk:</b> going about their day-to-day business. May be a good source of rumors.
2	<b>Patrol:</b> foot (1-2) or mounted (3-6). May require toll.
3	<b>Merchants:</b> individual (1-3) or caravan (4-6). May have goods for sale or be willing to travel together (roll reaction!). A good source for news and rumors.
4	<b>Pilgrims:</b> usually traveling in groups, in search of a local or distant shrine. May be a source of news.
5	<b>Adventurers:</b> (you think the PCs are the only ones?) roll randomly for composition/size of party.
6	<b>Important Personage:</b> this may be a local lord (1-2), mage (3-4), or priest (5-6). Such a person will have an entourage, as well as the usual chance for magical items. May require a service or toll of, or have a potential opportunity for, the characters. Roll reaction!

In addition, it should be more difficult (though not impossible!) to get lost in civilized areas; a confirming roll should be made, using the chance as shown on the table, e.g. an initial result of “lost” in the woods should be confirmed with another roll; if the second roll is “1” or “2” then the party truly *is* lost. At the boundaries of civilized lands, you may want to roll for wandering monsters, applying a +1 or -1 to the check for wandering monsters, depending on conditions. Dangerous encounters in otherwise civilized territory should be treated the same as encountering wandering monsters in the dungeon. Remember - truly dangerous encounters should be rare!

- Within five miles of a stronghold *or a village*, wandering monsters should be exceedingly rare.
- 6-10 miles away, roll for the encounter as if it were on the 1st level of the dungeon (use your favorite tables).
- 11-15 miles away, roll as on the 2nd dungeon level.
- 16-20 miles away, roll as on the 3rd dungeon level.
- <20 miles away, roll a normal wilderness encounter.

Beyond civilized lands, rolling for wilderness encounters should be done as normal. It is strongly suggested, however, that you detail these encounters ahead of time, so they make sense within the setting you have already developed. That having been said, if you generate an encounter that does not make immediate sense, this may be an opportunity to introduce a new and unexpected element to your game. It should also be remembered that not all encounters are hostile, even in the wilderness – check for the reactions of people and monsters encountered.

*Hordes of Monsters:* some monsters in the wilderness come in large numbers, and have the potential (in a few cases) for having strongholds as lairs of their own, much like the strongholds found in civilized lands. This is important to note, especially if you want to develop the monster equivalents of “civilized territory”, such as goblin or orcish kingdoms. A list of these types of monsters is as follows:

- Bandits and brigands, dervishes and nomads, buccaneers and pirates: these groups are often large in number and will have higher-level leaders and the potential for magic items of various sorts. It is important to generate these in advance as it is certain that such items will be used aggressively.
- Berserkers, cavemen, and mermen: although less detailed, these groups will have their own lairs and settlements (the exact nature and origin of berserkers as a monster encounter is unclear, however).
- Kobolds, goblins, hobgoblins, and gnolls all have more powerful leaders in their lairs. While the exact nature of those lairs is unclear, it may be assumed that they are often almost always cave complexes or (very rarely) some form of village settlement.
- Orcs actually have the potential for constructed lairs, and also have the potential for very powerful non-orcish leaders and allies. Pay careful attention to these, as their presence suggests a great deal about alliances and the distribution of power in the Wild.
- Giants sometimes occupy castles; whether or not these were built by giants or others is unclear, though they must be big enough to house these hulking brutes.

*Placing monsters and treasure in the wilderness:* This should be pursued initially in a similar fashion to monster placement in the dungeon. Briefly, a referee should thoughtfully locate places of interest and monsters potentially guarding them in the wilderness areas beyond civilized lands. Careful consideration of geography and resulting likely monsters will help in this, so referees should generate or create the wilderness terrain *before* placement of monsters and treasure. Past this initial planning stage, however, it would be tedious to roll for each 5 mile hex to see if there is a monster or treasure present. The relative danger of wilderness encounters also suggests that the number of “placed” monsters should be somewhat less, if only to avoid being overrun by a plethora of dragons, bandits, giants, banshees and other long-legged beasts that go bump in the night. Instead, divide the wilderness areas into 20 mile by 20 mile (or 25 by 25 mile) “squares”, and treat these as “rooms” for the purposes of monster and treasure placement. Roll for these as you would for random monster and treasure placement in the dungeon; determine the specific terrain type and then use the wilderness encounter tables to generate the type of monster. If treasure is indicated as being present, roll to determine which “level” should be used for generating the random amount and type of treasure. Finally, if treasure is present

(with or without a monster being present), it is suggested that the referee generate a *place of interest* to help explain what the treasure is present (see below):

*Rationale for treasure:* Treasure itself ought to have some reason for being located in the wilderness; anything from a ruined shrine to an old watchtower or lost tomb provides some justification for whatever might be found. Given the relative exposure of wilderness areas, treasures in the wilderness need to be more carefully hidden and/or protected, as well as also signifying something more than just gold and silver coins (after all, there must be some object for the *Quests* and *Geases* that player-characters are subjected to by Patriarchs and Evil High Priests).

*Places of interest:* it may prove useful to determine different places of interest as the context for the placement of treasure and monsters in the wilderness. The following table is provided as a suggestion:

d6	<i>Places of Interest</i>
1	<b>Incidental encampment;</b> roll for monster type.
2	<b>Destroyed village or settlement;</b> roll for monster.
3	<b>Ancient shrine;</b> determine identity and alignment of god honored in this place.
4	<b>Abandoned Fortification;</b> this may be completely empty or worked up into a complete mini-dungeon.
5	<b>Ruined town or city;</b> use City encounter tables for monster(s) present.
6	<b>Ancient tomb;</b> may be nothing more than a stone marker or a complete pyramid complex (inhabited?).

Once all of this is done, you will have a richly detailed wilderness area to explore and develop as part of a larger campaign setting. In particular, keeping track of monster lairs will help in develop area-specific encounter tables. Lastly, referees are encouraged to interpret results in light of each other, and use that to develop history and backstory for their campaign.

**The “Top Down” Approach.** This is the complete opposite of working outward from the immediate area around the dungeon. Instead, a referee will need to start with a larger canvas. To help with this, use a smaller size of hexagon, e.g. .125 inches across, which gives an area of roughly 200 by 280 miles on an 8.5” by 11” sheet of paper.

*Develop an outline of physical geography first.* This may be done freeform through one’s own imagination, or by random roll. If using the latter method, divide the sheet into a 4 by 5 grid, two inches on a side of each grid square. Then decide how much of the area represented should be water and how much of it should be land, e.g. mostly land – about 80%, and a little water, roughly 20%. Roll a six-sided die per grid square: 1-5, land; 6, water. Once this has been determined, sketch in coast lines. This gives a relatively

quick result for the purposes of the “top-down” method. (Other methods of random terrain generation may suggest themselves; referees should use whatever system they like.)

*Decide on size of the kingdom or nation.* To do this, first determine the number of holdings in the kingdom or nation:

- Small, 3-12 (3d4)
- Moderate, 3-18 (3d6)
- Large, 6-36 (6d6)
- Huge, 10-60 (10d6)

When rolling the dice for this stage, note the result for *each* die rolled, as well as for the result. The total for each die represents the number of strongholds for each of the higher nobility or leadership, e.g. a moderate sized kingdom gets results of 2, 3, and 6, for a total of 11. That would mean there would be 11 strongholds, with 3 higher leaders. One would have two holdings, another would have three, and the third would have five, and each one of these holdings would be a stronghold or a town or city.

Decide where the first major stronghold will be; this will serve as the capitol of the kingdom or nation. You may either use the highest individual die roll (which would indicate a strong monarchy), or roll randomly to see which individual die roll is used. Then determine where the other major strongholds are located, using the direction and distance tables set forth either. Once you know the relative geographic relationships between each of the major strongholds, then generate the direction and distance of the subsidiary strongholds using the methods outlined earlier. You may need to adjust their positions relative to each other to get a contiguous area of “civilized land” but that may actually be somewhat artificial – medieval kingdoms were rarely unified, and even within the wealthiest and most populous countries there were still areas of wilderness. It is quite possible to determine that some of the holdings are on another map sheet (and thus a legitimate subject for future exploration).

The “top-down” method is the sketchiest and most time-consuming, since it involves a lot of record-keeping on the part of the referee, but it also provides the greatest amount of background detail at the start of the game. It is suggested that rather than working out the details for each and every fiefdom and holding, a referee might want to sketch out the larger picture using this method, and then pick a single holding as the focus for the initial stages of their campaign. Regardless of which method you use, please remember that everything in this system is amenable to modification by the referee. It is designed fairly loosely, and is speculative in nature – if you think there is a different way to do something, make whatever change seems appropriate. I have attempted to explore the framework of the rules for wilderness adventures as

presented in the early sources of fantasy roleplaying, and to show how that framework may be used to create interesting, worthwhile campaign settings outside of dungeons. The rest is up to you – explore and enjoy!



#### Part Four: The Imagined Wilderness

The “wilderness” of a fantasy campaign is part of the larger context for adventure – it provides a world within which adventuring takes place. For that reason, designing a wilderness setting can seem daunting if you are working up from the design of a dungeon – even a mega-dungeon. What makes it worse is that a dungeon is a definable place, and a wilderness extends as far as the referee wishes to extend it; is it any wonder that there is a lot of “terra incognita” on fantasy campaign maps?

A different way of looking at wilderness would be to think of it as an expression of *themes*. Say you want a setting where there are a number of small kingdoms fighting one another, and there is always intrigue and shadowy business going on. Your wilderness can reflect this through lots of unknown and possibly changing terrain, with dark forests, treacherous inland seas, and hidden mines and ruined towers. Or say you have imagined a setting in which a unity of religious faith with imperial might has led to a

sprawling empire. Your wilderness can have well-tended fields and vineyards, rolling hills with legions marching along the crest lines, and broad, placid ocean coastlines. The truly dangerous wilderness lies beyond – dark forests, lofty mountain ranges, and ocean depths as yet unplumbed. It’s a big canvas, so paint with broad strokes – not the detail needed in a dungeon. Let’s look at this comparison more closely.

**Refereeing the wilderness; it's *not* a dungeon.** Dungeons are relatively easy as settings for adventure; while wilderness is often treated as “what’s between *here* and *there*.” This is an unproductive way to think about wilderness – as if there’s an imaginary highway connecting town to dungeon and encounters are at the rest stops along the way. It’s a different mindset than dungeon building. Dungeons are specific and singular places, while your wilderness is a collection of *places* and *conditions* – the setting for adventure. But just as players discover there are memorable locations in a dungeon (whether or not you designed them that way), your wilderness ought to include places of mystery scattered about, which may or may not be places for encounters to happen. A magical pool that is difficult to find, an ancient monument to a forgotten war, a fallen temple to an unknown god, a water-filled crater miles across that resulted from an ancient demon’s demise. And all of this in addition to hidden valleys, misty mountains, cove-riddled seashores, and burning deserts.

**Significant natural terrain features - rift valleys, canyons, mountains, volcanoes, etc.** Terrain features of this type really ought to be used as “anchor points” for the background of your campaign. But that *doesn't* mean you have to identify all of your Mount Everests, Sahara Deserts, and Bays of Fundy immediately. This can be part of the discovery aspect of game-play. Simply having one or two is more than enough to provide a truly sweeping setting for adventure and discovery. It’s important to not have these all over the place, but to keep them singular, which can have a major impact on your game. Consider *The Hobbit* for a moment: there is Bilbo’s home, then Bywater, then the Lone Lands and eventually Rivendell. Past that, the Misty Mountains, Beorn’s home, Mirkwood, the Elven Kingdom, Laketown, and then the Lonely Mountain. Of these, Rivendell is in a distinctive river gorge, while the Misty Mountains act as a barrier to be overcome (and a home for goblins!). The Lonely Mountain itself is the primary destination of Bilbo and his companions, and is known throughout that portion of Middle-Earth.

Once you have identified the truly significant natural features, you can move on to consider the rest of the terrain. But it’s more complex than plunking a forest here and an estuary there – there are several stages in developing your wilderness, and a little thought can go a long way to make it come alive as the background for your campaign.

*Getting Away From “Generic” Terrain:* When you develop a wilderness, either from random generation or from your own design, you will have a variety of terrain features to consider. But instead of labeling some woods as “forest” and leaving it at that, take a moment to really *examine* what’s in front of you. The woods lay between two mountain ranges? Is there a river running through the forest? In other words, really look at what’s there and think about what’s going on.

Forests are rarely just “woods”, coastlines are not for “water”; even deserts are not just stretches of endless sand. Take a moment and describe in a phrase what can be encountered there. “In the Kyrennian Highlands, the hills are mostly bare, with steep sides covered with grass and moss.” And it is probably a good idea to *not* provide too much detail – you want to leave room for further discovery and development. Put another way, did Conan know *that* much about the plains of Hyrkania, or the frozen wastes north of Cimmeria? No – but he knew just enough to have a good idea of what to expect – and so should your players.

“It was not called the Old Forest without reason, for it was indeed ancient, a survivor of vast forgotten woods; and in it there lived yet, ageing no quicker than the hills, the fathers of the fathers of trees, remembering times when they were lords. The countless years had filled them with pride and rooted wisdom, and with malice. But none were more dangerous than the Great Willow: his heart was rotten, but his strength was green; and he was cunning, and a master of winds, and his song and thought ran through the woods on both sides of the river. His grey thirsty spirit drew power out of the earth and spread like fine root-threads in the ground, and invisible twig-fingers in the air, till it had under its dominion nearly all the trees of the Forest from the Hedge to the Downs.”

- J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

*Giving Your Wilderness Some Character:* We use words like “sea” and “forest” and “hills” as if they are the same things from place to place. But no two peninsulas are alike, no two rain forests all that similar to one another – each major element of your wilderness is going to have its own character, a character that comes alive through your descriptions of it. In addition to overarching descriptions, you may wish to ask yourself “are there any distinguishing features or landmarks?” Deserts have oases, rivers have waterfalls and rapids, forests can vary from high mountain pine to deep shadowed rain forest canopy – but even in these, there are clearings, areas of forest fire burn, deep river gorges, and other features. Coastlines have distinctive features – think of the “white cliffs of Dover” or the emerald green of Pacific islands.

In addition to large distinguishing features, it doesn’t hurt to create a number of local “places” that are either already placed on your map or can be randomly encountered (and then put in a specific location). These are just particular locales for natural terrain – not settlements or ruins or anything similar (though these can be added, as well, if you like). But this is still a matter of detailing rather than looking at the larger structure of your wilderness. How did it get the way it is “today”?

I met a traveller from an antique land  
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown  
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed.  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
‘My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!  
Nothing beside remains: round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

- P. Shelley, “*Ozymandias*”

*Who Has Gone Before?* Once you have natural landmarks and features in mind, consider what happened in the past in your wilderness. Was this valley the site of several battles in a cataclysmic war in the past? Does an old seaport (or starport?) exist sunken beneath the waves just offshore, victim to an ancient earthquake? Have recent settlers in these hills followed old dwarven mining tracks? If you have used the random methods described previously, you may have a number of different places already located in your wilderness. What ties them together? An ancient, long-forgotten kingdom? A series of incursions by the foes of civilization? Something else entirely – or nothing at all? One of the virtues of Robert E. Howard’s Hyboria is that it is the *backdrop* for adventure, but there is a discernable structure and set of relationships that Howard used effectively in his stories. Characters in his stories *knew* about “ancient Stygia”, “far-off Khitai”, and the like. So consider carefully if your “wilderness” is truly unknown, or once better settled, or originally the lands of another race, now long gone (a favorite of many sword and sorcery writers).

“The Belt was divided by rough palisades, so that advancing enemies would find lateral movement difficult, and discover themselves committed to emerge at points where they could be awaited. The entire line and its features blended so naturally with the surrounding jungle that a stranger, though he might, here and there, perceive that men had been at work, could form little idea of its full extent.”

- R. Adams, *Shardik*

*Who Controls It Now?* So far, we've discussed wilderness as a set of physical features or terrain, and only incidentally examined the social and historical aspects of wilderness. But it is also important to pay attention to the political dimension. Whether your wilderness is on the edge of a Great Empire, or in the midst of several warring kingdoms, it is worthwhile to think about the political claims and boundaries – especially since these often lead to military action. Knowing that the River Lossan is the boundary of the Kingdom of Argath might be important at some point – and that the Forest of Kaldyr is disputed between Argath and the elven prince of Celeduin might be even more important. Here, as before, it is important to not get too detailed too quickly. You might even draw a boundary and not know exactly what it means until later; let game-play reveal its importance to your group.

All of this comes together when providing information to the player characters. The wilderness around them will be described as a series of notable features, all in a complex-yet-recognizable relationship with one another. If people give directions, it will be far more likely to hinge on easily recognized features and travel times than on set distances: “Once you see the Needle of the Giant begin to appear, it will take two to three days to actually cross the plains to reach it – but be careful; the plains are the province of the Overlord of Ashdai and his horsemen patrol there regularly.” Then later, “after reaching the Needle, travel south about a half-day, and the first foothills of the Kyrennian Highlands will emerge. Look for a cleft between two squared-off hills to the southwest – that leads to the Dwarven holding of Deepharrow.”

**Encounters, traps, and other wilderness hazards.** For player-characters, the wilderness represents the Unknown – everything is unexpected; trails may or may not exist (or not take you where you want to go!), and the very act of stepping outside means encountering the unexpected. So it is important, then, to distinguish between the generalized sense of “wilderness” – simply everything in the world outside the dungeon – and the more specific sense of areas that are wild and unexplored. Settled lands are more predictable, settled, and staid. In the wild, things are uncertain and potentially dangerous. Wilderness hazards can be mundane in character, but you're playing a fantasy game, not *Outdoor Survival* (maps used in play notwithstanding). Measuring out water supplies for a known and relatively short overland trek is tedious, and to be avoided unless it is a critical part of the adventure. Don't be afraid of making players sweat about supplies if circumstances warrant, but take the time to warn them if this is going to be an issue (or simply if you are the sort of GM who *does* keep track of iron rations, etc.). Wilderness hazards include (but are not limited to):

- Lack of preparation: from running out of food to not having ropes, hammers and pitons for mountaineering

- Violent weather: including thunderstorms, tornadoes, windstorms, blizzards, and the like; such weather may cause horses and pack animals to bolt
- Temporary natural catastrophes: flooding, earthquakes, forest fires, tsunamis, and so on
- Hazards triggered by outside action: landslides, quicksand, avalanches – all need appropriate conditions and some action to trigger them

It is really easy to overdo some of these, so hazards of this sort should be deployed sparingly. One potential way to deal with this is to develop an encounter table to go alongside monster encounter tables, and make wilderness hazards another kind of encounter. Something like this appears in GDW's *Traveller* – in fact, several of their adventures center on wilderness exploration and survival (e.g. *Marooned/Marooned Alone*, *Mission on Mithril/Across the Bright Face*). Remember, if you do include hazardous wilderness encounters, it is quite possible for them to be known about and even to become the basis for local lore: “avoid crossing the High Pass in early Spring – blizzards blow up quickly in the mountains and overwhelm the unwary,” or “the tide rushes out in the shallows of Enkalion Bay, and the rocks below can break a ship's keel if you are not careful.” It is worth remembering that encounters during game-play are part of the process of *discovery* and *adversity* for the players and their characters. Several articles in early issues of *The Dragon* and other publications urge referees to do more than simply generate encounters “on the fly” – a little planning goes a long way. This is particularly true when you consider that hostile monsters will take advantage of every bit of terrain to gain an upper hand in an encounter. But in more settled areas, encounters are a chance for gaining new information, resources, or assistance. There may be intrigue and ambush, but this is probably unusual. In frontier areas, encounters are possibly social and/or informational in nature, but also potentially hostile, and in true wilderness they are rarely just social, and more often hostile.

“Os Erigu climbed slowly out of the sea at them, a shadow first on the horizon rim and then a grey finger pointing skyward, with the shoreline behind a lighter grey. It was the castle of Meliboë's picture in a dream: the sea-waves washed round its foot and one could hardly tell which was man-made stone and which the rocky promontory from whence it sprang. At its rear or eastward face piled rocks lay in a waste with water lashing through them, but above against the middle wall sprang joyously a bridge poised on slender arches, and midmost of it was a draw. This was lifted, thrusting a blank outstretched hand toward the land.”

Fletcher Pratt, *The Well of the Unicorn*

Try to keep all of this in mind as you plan encounters. You can and should use this to establish a sense of place: peaceful, well-run holdings should rarely have hostile

encounters – more likely there are merchants looking for news from the next town and well-patrolled roads. Conversely, the lack of roads and constant threat of dangerous monsters should be the hallmark of wilderness.

**Weather and climate, and how to make it more than just a nuisance.** Aside from incidental weather, the important thing to do is to remember the seasons of the year. What do things look like in the spring? Summer? Autumn or Winter? Take the terrain you have and describe how things change. You can even break this out into a table or set of notes for each locale:

#### The Kyrrennian Highlands

*Spring:* frequent short storms, often overcast

*Summer:* sunny but cool

*Fall:* colder, with windstorms that sometime lead to freezing rain

*Winter:* infrequent blizzards, but they last for days, otherwise cold and clear

#### The Forest of Pymgladen

*Spring:* long, steady rainfall much of the time

*Summer:* wet in the mornings, sunny much of the day

*Fall:* cool days with lots of fog

*Winter:* cold, still wet much of the time

#### Farmlands in the Hylleth River Valley

#### Correnden Marshlands

#### The Anvil of the Gods (desert) (...and so on.)

Variations in expected climate and weather may be signs of larger conflicts at work. Similarly, if a natural disaster has taken place, you might take this into account when structuring specific encounters. The proper use of weather and climate takes a deft hand to integrate well into a campaign. Not unlike large terrain features, this is something to plan out carefully before getting into actual game play.



**Fantastical elements.** So far, we've considered mostly "natural" implications of the wilderness. Once you add in the fantastical, things get *far* more interesting. Such feat-

ures do not have to all be Earthlike and "mundane" – they can be (and probably *should* be) truly different and even mind-boggling. At home, I have a set of greeting cards I like to use for creative inspiration. One of them shows a tremendous tree standing on the top of a set of low, rolling hills. The tree is large, with a tall straight trunk and a canopy that spreads far out over the landscape. But it is the *scale* of the tree that makes it different – it is clearly more than a mile in height, and the branches spread out for over a mile in all directions. It is the *Ur-Tree* – either the ultimate temple for druids everywhere, or an Elven Kingdom in its own right – or who knows? What is certain is that people for miles all around will *know* that it exists.

*Magical Abodes and Lairs:* But fantastical elements come in other sizes than completely overwhelming. A recurring idea in many stories is the "castle in the air" – a seeming impossibility: a large stone structure rising up from clouds that act as a kind of "landscape" for the walls and donjon. Usually such a place is the creation of a wizard (sometimes long-dead), and it may move about or stay anchored to a particular point. And if it is in the air, one immediate question is "how do we get there?" – there may be winged creatures for transport, or magic of some variety. Such an edifice need not be in the air, it can be made from seemingly improbable materials, as the following quotation from *The Complete Enchanter* demonstrates:

"Who is this Sir Roger, anyway?" Shea glowered. "I think I had better introduce you to my – uh – your associates," said Chalmers, and stepped around the desk to open the door behind Shea and Polacek. The air held an unmistakable faint odor of olive-oil, and as they stepped across the threshold, their feet gave back a metallic ring from the floor. "Ah, yes," said Chalmers. "Perhaps I omitted to mention the fact that this castle is constructed of iron. That also is attended by certain – uh – inconveniences."

Many of these "constructed" places are the abodes of powerful beings – and adventurers ought to be careful venturing too closely! "Baba Yaga's Hut" was originally a residence: In Russian folklore, the hut of Baba Yaga was surrounded by a fence of human bones and traveled about on giant chicken legs – and Baba Yaga herself was a fearsome and powerful sorceress!

"In those days the Faerie folk still dwelt upon earth, but even then a strangeness hung over their holdings, as if these wavered halfway between the mortal world and another; and place which might at a given time appear to be a simple lonely hill or lake or forest would at another time gleam forth in eldritch splendour. Hence those northern highlands known as the elf-hills were shunned by men."

Poul Anderson, *The Broken Sword*



*Elven Forests and Faerie Hills:* The idea that elves do not necessarily live in the same natural realm as humans and others is a long-standing one. The traditional Irish composition *Sidhe Beag Sidhe Mor* by the great blind harper Turlough O'Carolan brings alive the battle between the "Small Fairy Hill and the Big Fairy Hill." For adventuring purposes it may be the case the Elves inhabit magical places, where the passage of time may vary, and sometimes not be on the same plane of existence as the rest of the world. Nor do they need to be hills. Forests, islands, and entire continents are to be found in mythology: Lothlorien, Hy Breasail, Avalon, the City of Ys. Sometimes these "places outside of time" are less imposing or remote: you may have inns or villages that are different from everything around them, sometimes findable by only a few, or present for only a short period of time, or in some other way only loosely anchored to the ordinary world of the adventurers (and will probably figure in legends and stories, if the players are paying attention).

*Planar boundaries:* Once you have complicated things by adding in otherworldly or otherplanar connections, you may then begin to imagine how they relate to your ordinary, everyday reality with which the players are more familiar! There will be connections or boundaries, and once entered or crossed, will take the player-characters to another plane or world entirely. This may be obvious or subtle; if the latter, make sure you have the other planes mapped out! This can be just as confusing as rotating rooms in dungeons to make adventuring more difficult!

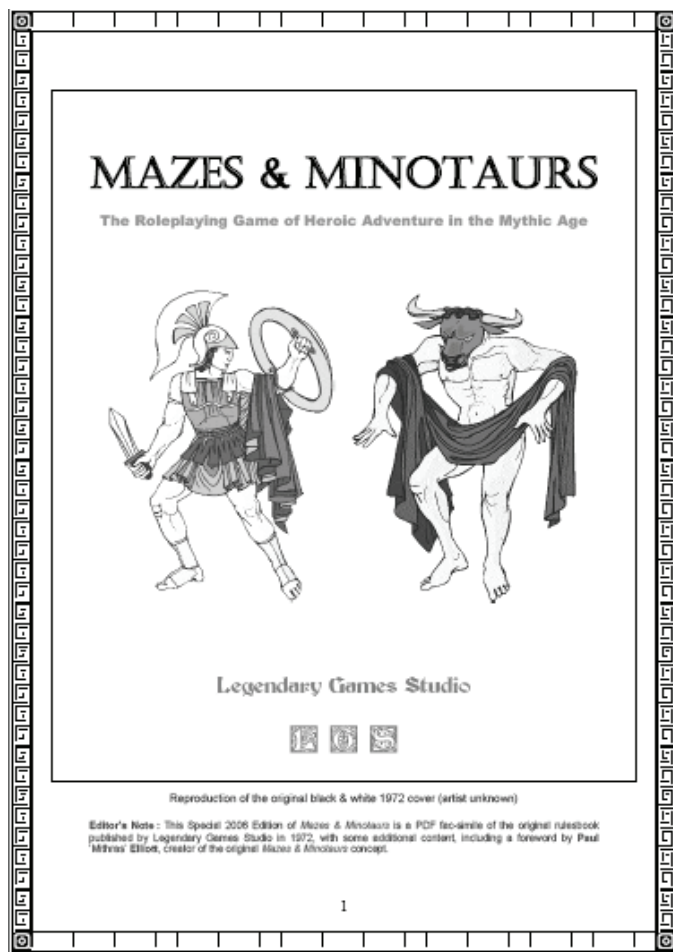
*Adventures in outer space!* Or you may simply want to have other planets to explore. The space in-between may be like the oceans, or have a character all their own, with "luminiferous ether", or more "realistically" with vacuum (which poses its own hazards). While addressed somewhat by the TSR 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition setting, *Spelljammer*, this idea has been developed by others, among them Marcus Rowland. Rowland did an excellent series of articles in *White Dwarf*, entitled "The Dungeon at the End of the Universe" – with everything from different ways to travel in space to the cost of spacesuits, and what magic works in outer space, and what doesn't.

**Ending Note.** To sum up, the "Wilderness" of a D&D campaign is a vast backdrop for the rest of your campaign, and therefore needs development just as much as any dungeon. But because it is *not* a dungeon, care must be taken to not have everything happen all at once. The wilderness is made up of many different elements, and it is *very easy* to overdo it – so *don't*. Take some time to understand the lay of the land, and then bring it into your game only as it becomes relevant and necessary. Your players may not find everything in your dungeons, so don't worry if they don't find everything in your wilderness, either. Ω

## New Games for the Old School

reviews by Jeff Rients

In recent years I have come to the conclusion that Old School gaming isn't about when we first started playing RPGs or what games we choose to play. I find it much more useful to think of the "Old School" as a wildy creative mindset and a can-do attitude. In other words, it's a state of mind. Allow me to introduce to you two games published on this side of the millenium divide that I consider to be direct descendants of the original do-it-yourself approach to role-playing games. First, a bit of fair warning: I am no unbiased informant. I love these games and want you to love them, too. I've written material for both of them, though I have no financial stake in either.



Back in 2002 game author Paul Elliott wrote "The Gygax-Arneson Tapes", a quirky thought experiment where he explored the possibility of a roleplaying hobby where the Homeric epics and films like Jason and the Argonauts served as the primary sources for the original RPG. Olivier Legrand took this idea and built an RPG from it. *Mazes & Minotaurs* is written as the PDF "reprint" of a fictitious 1972 ur-rpg, with Mr. Legrand in the role of modern commenter on the original text. The effect is a charming little game that provides its own faux sense of nostalgia.

What makes *M&M* so special is that Legrand doesn't rely on these old school shenanigans to make his game work. *Mazes & Minotaurs* stands on its own as a mechanically superb system for traditional class-and-level adventuring in a mythological age of bronze. You could yank out the fake 1972 window dressing and the "modern" commentary and you would still have a tight, playable RPG.

For character creation six stats are generated by rolling 4d6 and dropping the lowest die. If you still end up with all numbers below 13 you may raise one to 13. Each of the basic attributes (MIGHT, SKILL, LUCK, WITS, FAITH, and GRACE) offers a bonus or penalty on a -3 to +3 range. Each of these modifiers plugs into one or more secondary stats. For example, your Melee Attack modifier is the total of your Might and Skill mods, while your Danger Evasion (one of your saving throws, the other being Mystic Fortitude) is the sum of your Luck and Wits bonuses. Most of the derived stats end up being used as modifiers to d20 rolls of various sorts, except for Hits Total and Defense Class, which are exactly what you think they are. I find *M&M*'s derived stat system to be more transparent and user-friendly than many other similar arrangements.

Your highest stat determines your character's class. If you have a high MIGHT you play a Barbarian. If your SKILL is your highest stat, your class is Spearman (unless you want to play a female, in which case you can be an Amazon). If you rolled a superior LUCK you end up a Noble. If WITS is your highest stat you play a Sorcerer. High FAITH results in a Priest character and high GRACE results in your PC being a Nymph. Later supplements offer a wide range of other class choices, such as Elementalists, Oracles, Centaurs, and Mariners, but I find this 1:1 correspondence of stats to classes to be a very slick set-up.

Each class has an associated flat number of Basic Hits (e.g. all 1st level Barbarians start with 12 hit points plus their Might modifiers), a level advancement package (e.g. each time a Spearman levels he gets +1 Melee, +1 Missile, +3 Hits, +1 Danger Evasion, and +1 Mystic Fortitude), a starting equipment package, a starting wealth range, and a special class ability. Thanks to the standardized equipment packages, making PCs on the fly is super-quick. For the fighting classes these special abilities are straightforward and easy to use in play. For example, the Barbarian's special ability is to add his Might modifier to his damage on melee attacks. That's a sweet ability in a game where almost all attacks do a flat 1d6 damage.

The magic system for the three spellcasting classes (Sorcerer, Priest, Nymph) is slightly more complicated than the special abilities for warriors. Each spellcaster gets a pool of Power Points based upon their level and the modifier for their prime requisite. A first level character ends up with 10 to 12 PP, while a maxed out 6th level spellcaster will have 32 Power Points. (I chose 6th level for this example

because the game only supports 6 levels of play. That seems limited but it totally works for me. I don't plan on spending the next three decades playing *M&M* nonstop. But a couple of short campaigns where the PCs go from first to sixth? That's doable.) Each spellcaster gets a single new power for each level, but several of them are quite potent. The level 6 Priest power, for example, is the ability to seek direct Divine Intervention. Every spell, no matter what the level, costs 1d6 PP to cast. If you roll higher than your current PP total, all your remaining points are lost and the spell does not work. The risks inherent in this arrangement add a nice level of uncertainty to the business of being a magic-user.

Combat is straightforward. Initiative is rolled at the beginning of the battle only and order of action remains the same for the rest of the encounter. To-hits are d20 throws, modified by Melee or Missile Attack scores and compared against Defense Class, which base 12 modified by the Target's Luck modifier and +2 each for helm, breastplate, and shield (the only armors in the game). Most attacks do 1d6 damage, with some particularly vicious monsters getting two or three dice. Special rules handle the advantages of longer weapons against shorter ones, charging, forming shield walls, disparate attacks, two-weapon fighting, using your Wits in combat, pugilism, and wrestling.

The adventuring section provides rules for sea travel, encumbrance, feats of strength, hiding, swimming, climbing, NPC reactions, and henchmen. The encumbrance rules are particularly harsh. Many players consider that a bug but I see it as a feature: you have to pick equipment wisely. (Or else leverage the nifty hehman rules to get some allies to carry stuff for you.) The advancement rules divide experience points into two categories, Glory and Wisdom. Warrior types advance by gaining Glory through the defeat of fierce monsters or the accomplishment of heroic deeds. Spellcasters are awarded Wisdom by vanquishing supernatural critters and exploring the unknown. Some monsters are rated for both Glory and Wisdom, but rarely are they worth the same amount of both. The monster selection starts with the standards of Greek myth and builds from there. But the gem of the creature chapter is the tight creature building mechanics. GMs can pick monster attributes off of a menu of nifty options and then easily calculate the Glory and Wisdom points the critter is worth. The final chapter, "Maze Master's Lore" provides advice and random tables for building adventures, a selection of Bronze Age magic items, and 'Mythika', a thumbnail campaign setting that basically assumes that the lands known to the Greek myth constitute the whole world.

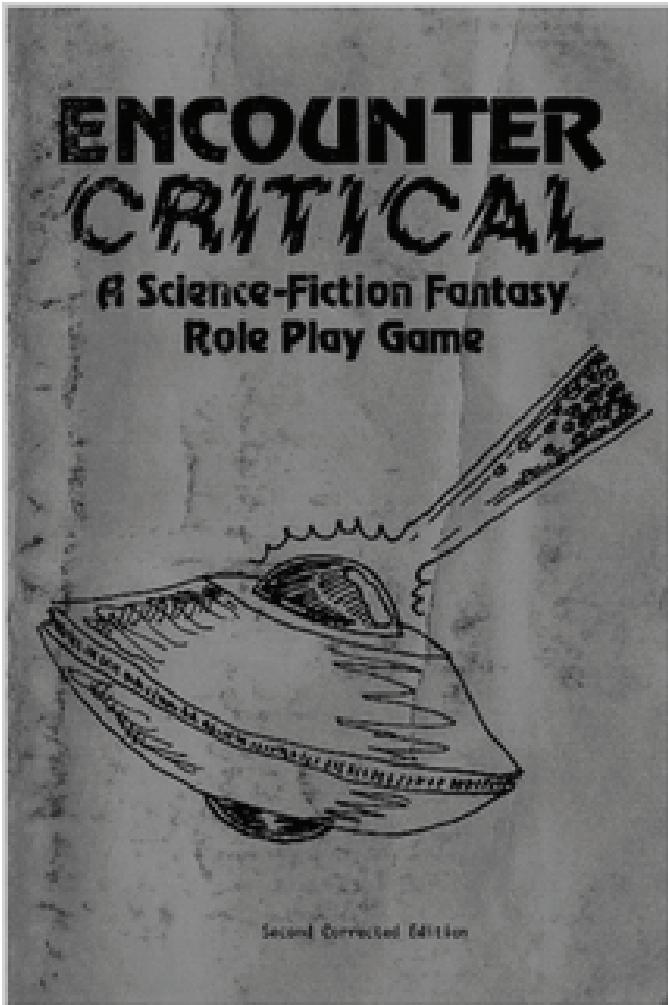
The official *M&M* website (URL below) is chock full of free PDF downloads. You can snag the core rules, numerous supplements, some adventures, and the 'Revised' edition ostensibly from 1987. If you're interested

in a mechanically elegant system for adventures in the vein of the Labors of Hercules or the voyages of the Argonauts, then do yourself a favor and check out *Mazes & Minotaurs*.

**The Gygax-Arneson Tapes:** <http://www.rpg.net/news+reviews/columns/tempus12nov02.html>

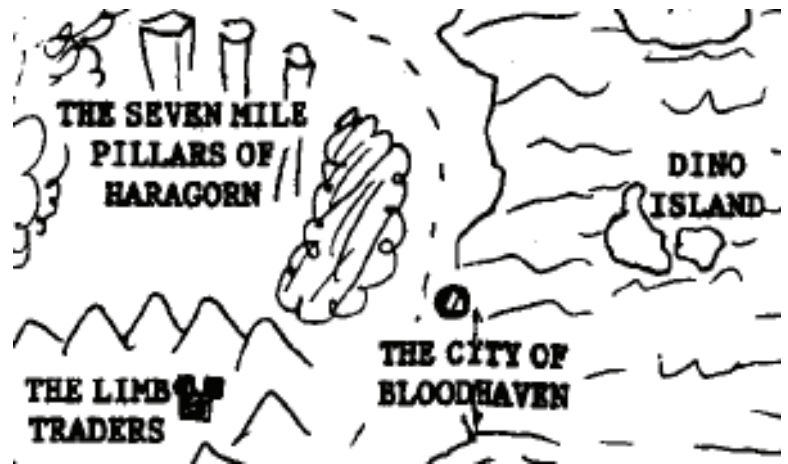
**M&M website:** <http://storygame.free.fr/MAZES.htm>

**Fan Yahoo Group,** with great downloads: <http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/mazesandminotaurs/>



*Encounter Critical* crams more sheer crazy fun into its 32 digest-sized pages than some gonzo games ten times its size. It first appeared on the internet in 2004, offered to the world as a scanned copy of an obscure science fantasy rpg from the late seventies. And everyone who followed the game bought it hook, line and sinker. Only later did game writer S. John Ross reveal *Encounter Critical* to be a hoax. But as Ross puts it, he wrote this hoax as "a love letter, a sappy sonnet to what I regard as the heart of the best RPGs, past and present: raw adolescent daydreaming, soaked with rock music and pizza grease." I think it speaks well for Ross, his writing, and the sincerity of his intentions that all known pre-hoax EC fanatics continue to be enthusiastic about the game.

EC is somewhat reminiscent of Arduin, in that science fiction and fantasy are mashed together with no apologies to the source material that gets mangled in the process. Thus you can play a Vulkin Warlock armed with a blaster pistol and a diabolic grimoire, or a Wookey Cyborg with a shotgun and a forcefield belt. The point of *Encounter Critical*, like all the best early RPGs, is to "have adventures". And EC gives you some nifty little tools to accomplish that end. Take the sample campaign map, for instance. The art is extremely crude (I could draw this map myself) but the "Mighty Land of Vanth" is chock-full of nifty places to go. You ever look at an RPG map and see a place that just begs to be visited? I sometimes find myself pointing at spots on maps and saying out loud "I'd love to visit that place." Maybe it's one of the ruins markers on the Darlene map of Oerth. Or maybe I want to peer behind the Black Curtain on the Traveller: The New Era sector map. The *Encounter Critical* map is rife with these kind of places. What adventurer worth their salt wouldn't want to find out what dangers await in the Holdings of the Zombie Princess or to visit the Ape Sultans?



Another great idea that makes the game all about the adventure is the advancement system. You have experience points and levels just as Gygax and God intended, but to qualify to advance a level your PC must also do something new and interesting. Warriors must defeat a foe of equal level using a new weapon, either one they haven't used before or an entirely new one of their devising. Warlocks must add a new spell to their spellbook. Criminals must come up with and execute a new illegal scheme. Doxies must find and seduce a new and more influential client. Pioneers must discover a new place or a new route between known locations. All this sounds like a great way to put the ball in the players' court. "Hey, I've got enough XP for level 4. Would you guys help me rob a bank?"

The slam dunk for *Encounter Critical's* gonzo system is its wild stat/skill system. Most of the nine attributes are straightforward items like Dexterity and Strength, but there are also oddballs like also Adaptation and Robot Nature. Each of these stats are generated using the classic

3d6 plus racial modifier method. You then consult a series of charts to find out the percentage ratings of your skills. With a few exceptions for class-based specialty skills, all PCs have the exact same list. So pretty much any character with an Adaptation score of 11 will have Camping 50%, Consume Alien Food 7%, Appease 49% and Invisibility 63% while a PC with Robot Nature of 17 will have Unpleasant Order 90%, Logic 22%, Seduce -22% (a modifier to a skill tied to another stat), Invisibility +13% (so a PC with Adapt 11 and Robot 17 will have a net Invisibility of 76%), Guard 80%, Labor 100%, and Machine Friend 51%.

These skills sound crazy and they are, but they are also quite useful. Do the PCs want to activate a robot found within a ruin? Have them roll Logic to figure out how to turn it on and Machine Friend to make sure it isn't immediately hostile. If the party needs to camp out for the night in hostile territory, make someone roll Camping to find a good spot out of the way from enemy patrols. If they blow that, then the person standing watch can make a Guard roll to be able to alert the group before an attack. Some of the skills require wide interpretation based upon the race and/or class of the character. Consume Alien Food doesn't really work for a Robodroid PC, but should they need to recharge their batteries while onboard an alien spacecraft, a successful Consume Alien Food roll could indicate that the PC adapts to the non-standard power supply. Similarly, some skills are actually magic effects when used by certain classes. For example, for most classes the Invisibility skill is simply equivalent to a hiding skill. Unless you happen to be a Warlock, in which case you can pull off true invisibility. Or a Psi Witch could use the skill to cloud men's minds. The magic system is where this dynamic really comes into its own. Most folks use skills like Conjure or Ensorcel to activate magic items, but Warlocks can use the skills associated with the Magic Power stat to achieve nifty on-the-fly effects. Combine this with a limited number of traditional *D&D*-style spells, and EC manages to put together a magic system that seems tailor made for rules-light sword & sorcery.

But the number one reason to play *Encounter Critical* is the sense of creative challenge. The whole text quietly dares an engaged reader, asking "Can you make sense of this wild game?" or "Do you think you can do better than this?" or "Do you think you can get crazier?" The whole text is full of places for creative interpretation and interpolation. Personally, I've found *Encounter Critical* to be the single most inspiring roleplaying game since *Dungeons & Dragons*. But don't take my word for it. Get the free PDF and find out for yourself. If you do check out EC then do yourself a favor and don't skim. Take the time needed to give the text a full readthrough. There's a lot of funny gags slipped in there disguised as authorial ineptitude.

**Encounter Critical homepage:** <http://www222.pair.com/sjohn/encounter-critical.htm>

**Lulu page where you can purchase a print copy:** <http://www.lulu.com/cumberland>

**Fan Yahoo Group, with great downloads:** <http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/encounter-critical/>

**Asteroid 1618, my own EC mini-setting and adventure module:** <http://www.treasuretables.org/files/woadwrimo/Asteroid-1618.pdf>



## Sharks in the Night

from *Seven Gelidian Tales*

by Sean Stidd and Del Lawrence Beaudry

Lanky bone-white men huddled, muttering and pointing to the water starboard of *Destiny's* narrow keel.

There, floating on the waves, lay a woman cinched to the body of a dead shark. Its vast carcass had wedged itself against an oar and, even as the sailors watched, the ship's forward thrust bowed the shaft until it sheared in two with a sound like breaking bone.

"A demoness," whispered one.

"Wrapped in embrace about her dead lover," added another.

"Let the depths take them," urged the first. These words directed as much to the fickle sea goddess as to the mate who stood nearby. The mate, a lean tattooed bravo named Sark, grunted his assent.

"May Neblia feast well upon her carcass," he growled and hefted a boathook, making ready to cast the foul cargo adrift.

But at that instant the heavy footfalls of Karaz, Storm-Captain of the *Destiny*, sounded on the deck. At once men ceased their chatter and lowered their eyes.

Karaz was shorter than his crewmen and thickly built, barrel-wide and muscled. For all that he moved smoothly as a serpent across the swaying boards, and men melted away to clear his path.

For several minutes he stood at the rail, watching the alien woman bob on the waves. With each swell, her head lolled stupidly, her heavy-breasted torso rose and fell, meeting the inverted belly of the dead white hunter with a gentle

slap. Her arms and legs, slashed over in cord, held her hips in place. Karaz was reminded of fair days spent coursing game on the western tundra, his bearers carrying home the kill lashed by its legs to a whalebone spear.

Sark licked his lips and spoke cautiously. "Here's a fell omen indeed, captain."

At once a dozen voices rose up in furious agreement, and a chaos of oaths and imprecations drowned out the sea. But Karaz himself was silent, still gazing at the woman. At last he spoke his command.

"Bring her aboard."

Sark opened his mouth to protest, but his throat knew better; it seized up in spasm, throttling unwise words before they brought ruin. The others shuffled about and glanced darkly at their master, but kept their peace. This was how able seamen preserved life and limb in the service of Karaz.

For a moment there was no sound save the soft lapping of the swells against *Destiny's* tar-caulked beams. Looking overboard, Sark briefly observed a purplish tentacle break the surface not far from the shark, to sink away again, as if it had never been. Though it was but summer, and he a northman, Sark shivered.

Gathering himself, Sark then turned to the crew. "You there,—Gez! Into the water with you, get a line on that thing!"

He was not long in accomplishing the task. Soon the body on deck, and he placed an ear to her chest.

"A heart beats in this creature's breast, captain," said Gez. "It is surely alive."

Karaz squatted above her, trying to conceal his excitement. She was bigger than he had thought, taller than he by a full head, taller than many of his crew. Though clearly ill-fed—Karaz could count her ribs— from the curve of her hip bone he fancied her to be built sturdily enough, and her breasts were still wide and fleshy. Karaz caressed his thin beard as he imagined those pale thighs plumped by regular feeding, rich like seal-flesh.

"Take the creature to my cabin," Karaz commanded. "Bind it well."

Trembling with revulsion, Gez hefted the demon-witch, bearing her belowdecks. Gingerly he laid her upon the Storm-Captain's bed, averting his gaze as he wrapped her unlawful body in fine silken sheets.

Back on deck, Karaz fingered the ring of red jade he wore unfailingly, scowling at as his sullen crew as they fell once more to their tasks. It was not the way of Karaz to make excuses; yet something must be said. To secure this outland woman in his own cabin—alien, demoness, whatever she might be—breached utterly the custom of his folk; she was beautiful, yes, but no Araki lusted after animals.

And though Araki crews are as loyal as they are fierce, mutiny in service of the ancient blood-laws could be perhaps be excused, especially if an unpopular captain were to be witnessed consorting with demons.

After a measured inhalation, Karaz strode to the tiller and roared his case. "Sailors and warriors who serve Karaz, hear your captain speak!"

"Rightly you dread this one, this she-thing, whom the Queen of the Deeps has cast in our course. But know this—she is surely a portent, and Neblia's to boot. What other hand could lash a living woman to that fierce beast and yet guarantee her survival in the open sea?"

The men, who had stopped working to listen, mumbled their reluctant assent. What Karaz claimed they found plausible, though hardly reassuring. At best Neblia was a capricious patron; it was customary to pray for her indifference rather than her attentions.

But Karaz went on. "As master of this vessel, it falls to me to read this omen, and I undertake that duty as one divinely charged. Be certain of this: When the goddess makes known her will, all aboard will serve it."

None among the crew missed the threat in their captain's voice.

"For now, make sail! Needs be, we arrive offshore of Frist by nightfall, and at tomorrow's first light we take our rightful tribute from those fatted island capon."

At this reminder of easy pillage, the crew's mood lightened and by degrees they fell to their duties. For a long while Karaz remained at the tiller, shouting orders and sharing vulgar jests with his men. It was only when the sails caught a fresh easterly after midday that the Arak captain retreated to his cabin to tend to the strange creature he had fished from the sea.

\* \* \* \* \*

Over wind-polished arctic rock trod a curious pair of vagabonds. The first, lean and raw-boned and strikingly tall, carried a seal carcass across his broad shoulders like a lady's fur. Strapped to his back was a great, wide slashing

sword, of the sort favored by headsmen and Straadish bandits. His fine mane of ash-blond hair he wore pulled back from his face by a circlet of ivory.

A few paces behind walked the second. Though shorter by perhaps two span, he matched his companion's long, swinging strides without discernable effort: his gait was the easy lope of a desert cat. He was olive skinned, his hair a dark chestnut. His right hand held an oiled skin, which he used to clean seal's blood from the sleek double-tined harpoon he balanced lightly in his left. He went along singing a hymn he had composed in a queer equatorial tongue, in hopes of coaxing new life from the weak northern suns, who had traveled so far from their tropic homes to overlook this frigid land.

Quarrelsome winds pushed and tugged at them as the pair picked their way down from open rock of the highlands into the dale. There, nestled within a narrow stone gully flanked by strands of silver-blue conifers, lay the village of Frist, the largest hamlet on this desolate isle. Of necessity, the pair had lately made it their headquarters – more specifically, Tusker's, the island's only tavern.

Once inside its iron-shod doors the pair made their way to a table close by the hearth. Here they doffed their cloaks and set gloves and coats to dry. The dozen or so Berog villagers gathered together in small groups pretended not to notice their arrival.

After removing his outsize seal-skin moccasins and wriggling his toes grandly before the fire, the big northman made his way over to the innkeeper, who sat picking at the bits of copper in his meager till. With a flourish, he deposited the seal carcass hard on his table, splattering blood and sea-wrack across the coin and speckling the 'keep's jowly chin.

"There's for the stew. Quahn spotted this fat bull sporting down by Neblia's Teeth. Took him with a single cast. Then I hauled him up and gutted him."

"Without nicking yourself, no less," added Quahn.

The 'keep eyed the dead seal doubtfully. He chewed his lip for a long while, as if working out the solution to some profoundly difficult problem. Finally he spoke.

"Y' can't go down 'low Neblia's Teeth savin' at sunrise and sunset. The path is only open at low tide."

Quahn grinned a little then, the big one more broadly. The northman leaned close to the innkeeper as if to share a secret, though he spoke loudly enough that his voice carried to every corner.

"Who said anything about taking the path? Quahn took the seal from *above* the Teeth, and I hauled him up on the line."

A skeptical murmur stirred the common. The tale was impossible. To make a fatal cast from twenty yards above, let alone to have the strength to pull such a weight up the sheer cliff, even for this giant Straad—well...it was absurd on the face of it, all the villagers knew it. Yet whence the sea-bull? Still, someone ought to say something.

But when the gaze of Ulfgar the Straad swept the room, daring any man present to call him a liar, not one voice rose to the challenge.

Ulfgar sighed, more dispirited by their lack of imagination than he was at missing out on what doubtless would have been a prosaic brawl. Quahn put a hand to his shoulder. "Ulli. Let us sit and take our meat."

The big man nodded, but turned back to the innkeep. "Tonight we feast! Slaughter that damned sheep you keep out back, Gholl: Its bleating keeps us up at night, and we are sick to death of seal stew—a man can survive only so long on seal stew and remain a man."

The crowd again buzzed—folk here ate a great deal of seal stew. But Ulfgar repeated his pledge: "After we've finished that murderous pirate Karaz—may the sharks drink his blood!—you'll be glad enough you fed us decent fare."

The keep heaved a heavy sigh. The ewe was for cheese, not meat, and had served well. Mutton stew for these two layabout seal-hunters? After a ten-day's hosting without a single penny in recompense? Truly, who were the pirates here? Perhaps it would be better to pay the Araki their tribute.

Yet each year the reaver overlords took more villagers to slave in the tin mines; already most of the young men were gone. Gholl knew that these two, rogues though they were, offered the best chance—the only chance—he and his neighbors had to avoid that sorry fate.

So he swallowed his objections and barked for his daughter to bring ale, and lead the ewe to the butcher block. At least they had had the good grace to forego molesting the town's womenfolk, who would not have been willing in any case. Berog women liked their men heavy, and neither of these two had an ounce of fat to his frame. A fat man meant a steady source of meat; he kept you warm through winter's long dark. Men hard-hewn as these were beasts of prey.

When Ulfgar arrived at the table, Quahn had already produced a parchment and was busily sketching the

island's outlines in charcoal. When he was done, the Straad brooded over the map for some time before speaking.

"*Destiny* will sight Theyd day after tomorrow," he said at last in his rich tenor-bass, "coming out of the east. That means she'll follow the coast here,"—he gestured toward a cape—"then swing south towards the port."

Quahn nodded. "Karaz should lay anchor somewhere off Signal Point, in the southward lee. The coracles lie in wait. So all we have to do is row alongside during the night and stow aboard." He paused a moment.

"Oh yes. Then we butcher an entire crew of battle-hardened Araki reavers down to the last man, pilot *Destiny* a hundred leagues or more until we find a navigable port—just the two of us, mind you—and pray that wherever it is we do end up doesn't hole us with trebuchets the moment they catch sight of our colors."

Quahn studied Ulfgar's expression, looking for some reaction as he spoke. His own face remained placid.

The Straad raised his eyes from the map and grinned, showing his teeth. "Do you have a better idea for getting off this rock?"

Quahn shrugged noncommittally.

Still grinning, Ulfgar shook his head. "Nor would you take an easier path if we had one, my friend. You want to taste that whoremonger's blood as badly as I. It is Karaz we hunt. Karaz, who sunk our pretty little *Quarrel*, that you loved so well. Karaz, who left us for chum on the open water—even your thin southern blood must grow hot at such dealing." He leaned back in his chair amiably.

"No, dear Quahn. Not so easily can you wash the taste of the barnacles and kelp from your mouth; you'll forget the privations of our maroon no sooner than I. And when you see that walrus-belly laid open crotch to throat, your delight will be as great as mine, even if you won't have the pleasure of doing the cutting."

At this, Quahn's lips parted with a feral curl and he began to laugh. Ulfgar joined, his laughter loud enough to shake the rafters, and the pair went on like that until the moon-faced woman who served the keep brought out platters of rare mutton blanched in sheep's milk, and wooden bowls of stew.

They feasted well into the night.

When all the villagers had slunk off, and the barbarian snored peacefully on the bench, only Quahn sat awake before the hearth. Unmoving he watched the dying

embers: their red glow flickered across the polished tines of the harpoon cradled in his lap.

\* \* \* \* \*

Karaz brooded over the woman in his bed.

The body beckoned him. Here the creamy expanse of a thigh. There the flood of thick, straight hair, honey-dark, overflowing shoulders and breasts.

What was she?

No milk-cow of Berog had features so narrow and fine, nor any Straad-maiden a mane so dark. Karaz had never seen her like—not once among the thousands of far-flung folk he had butchered or enslaved in four decades of raiding. It was as if she had been swept from the shores of some forgotten continent and cast adrift in its alien oceans until, at last, buffeted by time and distance, her body surfaced here, to be caught beneath *Destiny's* oars. Karaz shivered at the mystery even as he resolved to penetrate its veils.

The Storm-Captain of the *Destiny* was not a superstitious man. Rather was he a devotee of reason, which put him in an impossible position, living as he did among savage and ignorant men. For by ancient custom, the Araki judged other races to be but clever oxen, fit only for labor—or to serve as nourishment if other meat grew scarce.

Long ago Karaz had seen the stupidity of this. As a child, he had observed the wisdom and charity of his mother's milk-slave, at whose breast he had suckled, though he had known better than to grieve openly as he saw her worked to her death. Later, as a young pirate, he had watched the men who died on his blade, trying to distinguish in their eyes something of their final thoughts. What he observed was not the blind terror of the beast but something more ambivalent and terrible: that which comprehends its own destruction.

So, like his countrymen, the Storm Captain became also a creature of contempt. But whereas others of his race despised all outsiders, it was his own kind that Karaz scorned. But the contempt of Karaz was of another order: that loathing all clear-sighted men feel for the stupidity of the mob.

She stirred.

Each eyed the other like a wary predator—his eyes topaz, hers lambent green.

"You are aboard *Destiny*," Karaz told her. "I am her captain, and you are my prisoner. You live now by my grace alone."

The narrow face flexed oddly. She replied in a tongue that was all fluting lisps, punctured here and there by guttural consonants. Karaz's face tightened with repugnance. Her speech was barbarous: perhaps she was an animal after all.

Leisurely, the woman cast aside the sheets, rose, and stood before him. Though still unclothed, she seemed unashamed at her nudity. Indeed, she seemed altogether indifferent to her condition, and also to Karaz. She pointed to a garish robe of red silk—the unwilling gift of a soft Lokadi merchantman—that lay across the back of his chair.

Did she presume to order him?

With the sluggard gait of a sleepwalker, Karaz fetched up the robe and handed it over. She tied the belt high upon her waist, smiled.

Did he just obey her?

Turning away, the woman moved to a narrow cabinet built into the far wall. From this, she produced a silver flask. After an inquisitive sniff, she poured a draught of the blue-black Araki brandy; threw it down quickly. Next, a grimace of pleasure, and an approving nod. Another draught followed, but this she sipped with care and apparent savor. All the while she kept her back to the reaver-captain, as if he were but another oddment of furniture.

Dimly, Karaz recognized the scorn these acts signaled, but he found himself curiously deferential. Instead of cuffing the creature, he stared fixedly at her ample backside, his loins stiffening painfully. Karaz moistened his lips –

— and now a blade was in her hand, pointed at his breast. How had he forgotten that silvered rapier, the splendid arm of some long-dead Echronian grandee, which he kept above the liquor cabinet?

Again the woman spoke, the hard consonants sounding all the more peremptory as she gestured with the sword.

“It is not meet, sorceress, that you should deal thus with your rescuer, and on his own ship.” Karaz strove to make his tone conciliatory, even as he frowned at her obvious comfort with the blade. The sight of flashing steel had cut through his mind's fog; he had no wish to be run through. But neither would he be mastered so easily.

Karaz leaped backward even as his hand went for his cutlass. But the woman had foreseen the maneuver and her lunge was faster still. The sword point drew blood from Karaz's forearm while his own weapon remained sheathed. With a yelp, he gave ground, kicking the chair at her as he desperately strove for space to draw his blade.

When at last the pirate captain gained his stance he had taken a second wound for his trouble. Blood soaked his doublet and trickled down his thigh; there was no way to know how deeply the point had penetrated.

Cursing mightily, Karaz used his heavier blade to beat her sword back and gain some distance; at last he was able to take stock of his opponent.

This survey offered little reassurance. The woman was quick as a bobcat and held her sword in the expert fashion of an Archipelagan fencing master. Not one for cut-and-thrust work though, he observed, lashing out with a hard sweeping parry that drove her point wide and sent her back-stepping.

Encouraged by this small success, Karaz closed behind a flurry of highline feints. With a clever bind, he caught her guard in his and, leveraged by his superior mass, he the woman hard into the bulwark. She screamed then, a keening, fluting wail, and flew at him, fast beyond all reason. Once more it was Karaz who was forced to give ground.

The moments that followed produced in Storm-Captain Alcar Karaz a queer affect entirely new to his experience. The sensation was not fear but rather a kind of fatal dread, awful yet wholly devoid of panic. As the she-demon subjected his blade to one furious bastinado after another, he recognized for the first time that here was a foe whose skills far surpassed his own—one who would, barring some sudden and unlikely turn of fortune, surely slay him.

Already his defense grew slipshod—his fighting arm shook; sweat mingled with blood beneath his jerkin. Against his back, the rough beams of the cabin wall.

Three decades Karaz had captained *Destiny*. In that time, he had plundered scores of vessels. Some he towed back to the narrow fjords of Ilkizer as his sovereign plunder. Others, breached beyond recovery, he sent to the bottom to serve in the navies of the dead. Three hundred men, he reckoned, had he slain in single combat, while many times that number had fallen under his sword in wild, red-handed melee, where the dead go uncounted. And now, in his own cabin, this she-thing would make his end.

For an instant Karaz wavered.

The swordpoint came in under the right knuckle, pinning his hand to the beam; the cutlass slipped loose, clattered to the deck. She stepped into him, pressing her fat breasts to his chest; her free hand clasped his throat. Through the rush of nausea, Karaz could smell her sweet panther's breath, feel its heat on his cheek; the she-demon whispered him his doom.

Then the ring.



It seemed almost to act of its own volition. Perhaps the thing housed within had, by virtue of long acquaintance, grown fond of Karaz. and upon recognizing its master's misfortune loosed itself from its sorcerous cage. Or perhaps the pirate simply rubbed the ring and spoke its grammar by sheer instinct, as skillful adepts are known to do. Whatever the case, the results were explosive.

Glass shattered inward—and through the porthole's remains oozed a purplish monstrosity. Sprouting tentacles and pseudopods, the thing unfolded itself into the cabin with measured but implacable menace; about the woman's calf gelatinous tendrils entwined.

Tearing her blade from the wall, the sorceress hacked her leg free, scampered clear. Karaz, freed from the pinion, slumped to the deck; the monster's rent member gushed forth a plume of hissing pink fluid.

But the thing was undeterred. It simply re-collected its lost parts—the prodigal portions flowing back to join the whole—and advanced more of its vast bulk through the porthole. Breathing raggedly, Karaz crawled behind it, interposing his familiar's bulk between himself and the sorceress. He stroked the ring, whispered to it, and from the thing's central mass two-score tentacles launched themselves at its master's enemy.

As he saw to his wound, Karaz marveled at her tenacity. She fought like a dervish, the captured blade whirling, spouts of ichor meeting each tentacled thrust. But there was nothing for it: the thing's bulk already filled half the cabin, with more still sliding in. Karaz smiled.

Limbs whipped and suffocated the she-demon, bore her down; out of the creature's main mass an eye, ochre and red, extruded itself. .

Stupidly, lovingly, it blinked twice at Karaz.

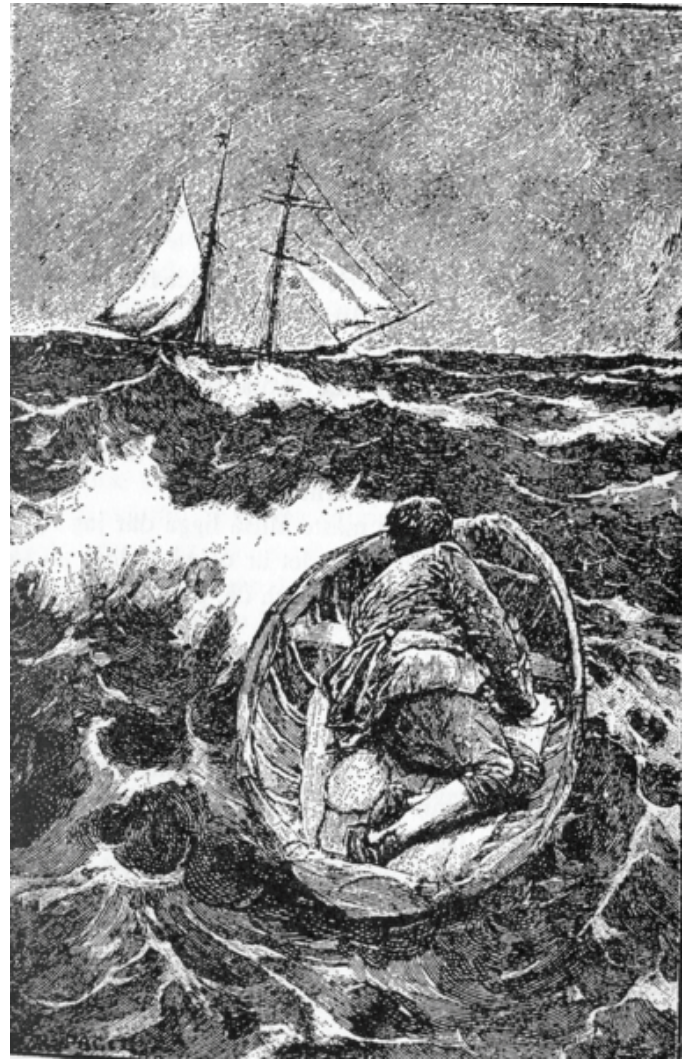
\* \* \* \* \*

“Fog's thick as goat-curds,” muttered Ulfgar, peering across the gray-black sea. “How do you make it?”

The coracle in which he sat bobbed and hawed with every swell. Already, it had begun to drift away from Quahn's; he saw to the oar. These little craft were ill-suited to the prancing northern sea.

“Something north by east,” Quahn answered. “The light is dim, but you can make it out, yellow against the mist.”

“Jude's hammer, but you've got the eyes of a witch!” swore Ulfgar. “Lead the way.”



But his companion's twin-headed oar was already about its business and, with a nimbus of spume, the southlander's makeshift boat disappeared behind a swell. Muttering further oaths, Ulfgar paddled after.

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Sark lay on the deck, heaving. The lurid afterimage of what he had witnessed still burned in his mind; the smell of the thing stank in his nostrils.

Karaz's expression conveyed little sympathy. “What you saw was a creature of the deep—no more. See that you remember that.”

Mouth thick with spew, Sark could hardly answer. Instead he jerked his body in what he hoped was a gesture of assent.

Apparently satisfied, Karaz gave instructions. “When you've cleaned yourself, fetch three strong men, and secure the witch to the mast with shackles of cold iron. Sorcery will not serve her now.”

Without waiting for a response, the pirate captain turned on his heel and strode away. Sark lay in his wake, still twitching.

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The third iron spike drove through her flesh; Karaz nodded approvingly. The boatswain scampered down the ladder, Karaz dismissed him with a gesture.

It would be better if she were awake, he reflected, inspecting his servant's handiwork. Nonetheless, he felt sure the arrangement would prove instructive.

The woman's body hung from the mainmast, a dozen feet above the deck. She had been crucified in the Araki fashion—a spike through each ankle and a third that penetrated either wrist between the bones. Chains about the waist and below the feet guarded against suffocation.

The sensible thing, Karaz knew, would be to cut her tongue out—a mute witch is powerless; so goes the saying. He had deliberated on the matter at some length, but in the end decided against it. The cold iron shackles would cancel any sorcery that remained in her; of this he assured himself. Even as he feared her, his lust remained stronger—Karaz found he could not deny himself the pleasure of her outcries.

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The fog was an advantage, Ulfgar decided. Over the last watch it had thickened almost to opacity and clung now to *Destiny* like a heavy gray brocade. Even if the lookout's eyes were sharp as Quahn's still he could not have discerned the two boats that sidled aftward of the larger vessel, running silent as they did, and carrying no lamps.

Yet Ulfgar scowled as he helped his friend over the side. There were few things the lanky Straad disliked more than losing an argument, so he remained indignant over the 'refinements' Quahn had insisted upon imposing upon his own stratagem.

While sculling toward *Destiny*, Ulfgar had argued the merits of slaying the lookout straightaway—"one dead, sooner instead of later, and no enemy at our back."

But Quahn, practical-minded as always, would have none of it; his rebuttal was clear-cut. A failed attempt risked the Araki raising the alarm before the pair had sneaked below-decks. Better to catch them unawares than to face the entire crew at once, armed and ready.

"Three dozen aboard, Ulli—maybe more. A lot, even for us. We can't throw away our single chance at ambush."

"Bah!" spat Ulfgär. "I've slain more before breakfast—as have you, despite your present mewling."

His true objections (and Quahn knew this as well as he, though neither acknowledged it) were in fact ethical. Tradition decreed a Straadish brave should avoid slaying his foes by stealth whenever possible—such killings were ethically moot and thus brought no reward in the afterlife. But faced with Quahn's unbending military logic, Ulfgar had at last been compelled to yield. To Quahn, at least, he professed himself above superstition, and only too well could he imagine the southlander's taunts were he to openly express the reasons for his reservation.

Mouth crinkled in vexation, Ulfgar ascended the line Quahn had secured to the taffrail, then shimmied down to settle quietly in the bilge. There his companion awkwardly squatted amid the fetid puddles, endeavoring to defend his handsome boots from further soiling. Ulfgar could not resist a smirk at his friend's dandyism. Quahn replied with a grimace of distaste, then gestured, and the two stole fore.

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Sark sat, glum-faced, his back against the forecabin. That which he had seen—slinking out the porthole and over the side to descend, bubbling, into the water—weighed heavily on his mood.

It was one thing for your Captain to relish butchery—piracy was ever red-handed work. But to consort with demons? He shuddered. Karaz raced with ruin and dragged *Destiny* along behind. Sark touched the dirk at his hip, fingered the hilt. A single blow, swift and well struck, would be enough.

He grimaced. If only he were a braver man. Obedience rather than courage Karaz favored in selecting his crewmen and the mate was no different. Still, one could always hope for an opportunity.

Impelled by vague schemes, Sark rose and padded toward the quarterdeck.

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Ulfgar watched Quahn—dagger in hand—descend the ladder amidships. The torpid breeze had come to life, twisting the fog into lazy gray tendrils that swirled and pirouetted, riding invisible currents. The norlander's head felt heavy. Eagerness and anxiety for the coming battle, which but momentarily had filled him, seemed now to have leached away, leaving his mind soggy and dull.

Idly, he set his hands against the mainmast, searching till they met metal. Then he began to tug. The chains' resistance felt good—it was good to strain one's muscles

against something solid. Warm satisfaction filled him; its droplets trickled onto his ears.

Looking up, he beheld the pale silhouette of a woman's body. It rocked and shuddered, spackled with blood and foam like a birthing mare. The eyes were clenched shut but steam poured from an open mouth, winding its vaporous tentacles downward to swaddle the norlander in warm perfume. Joyful, he tugged harder. The chains began to give.

Suddenly the night came alive.

First, a rush of air past his face and the brazen peal of metal on metal. Next, as he sprang away, a howl from the woman on the mast: the chains about her torso had snapped back into place, wracking her crucified body. This cry was followed by another, calling the alarum.

"Awake! Awake! On deck, you dogs! We're boarded!"

Thereupon matters descended into hullabaloo. A tattooed man slashed with a cutlass, but Ulfgar rolled away, legs whipping outward as he went, sending his attacker sprawling. With two massive strides, he secured himself the relative safety of the conning tower's edge and dared a backward glance.

What he saw gave him no pleasure. Two rear hatches were already open and speedily disgorging armed men aft and amidships. Of Quahn he saw no sign. For a moment Ulfgar imagined his friend trapped below decks, a mob of bloodthirsty pirates at his throat. But with a shake he flung that thought from his mind to focus on the problem at hand: This lot were yet unarmored; best to slay them now.

Two-handed, Ulfgar slipped his huge broadsword from its oiled harness and advanced into the fray.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Karaz got the news, he struck the boatswain nearly senseless. Already he guessed the identity of these assailants and that knowledge brought scant comfort. While the boatswain licked blood from his mouth, his captain growled orders. When he had repeated these word for word, he slinked off, and Karaz began his preparations.

To summon a demon more than once each Lune is no easy task, even if you should happen to be that demon's very darling. Once ensconced in its lightless hole of nullity, such a thing prefers to slumber and to dream its turgid dreams. Only the succulent prospect of mortal spirits will bestir it to fresh action. And if you were so bold as to call upon the same demon twice within a single night, well—offering it a soul, or two or three, as recompense would hardly be sufficient.

Karaz would need a new crew.

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Quahn met Ulfgar on the forecastle. Three spearmen, backed by archers, had forced their way up the ladder and onto the deck. Now, with their greater reach, they harried the norlander, driving him back toward the gunnel.

Quahn flipped himself onto the port rail and took the nearest in the back with a dagger-cast. The second he hamstrung, his curved blade severing the thick tendon like twine. Without the others to guard his flank, the third spearman had no chance against the Straad's bull-rush: a two-handed blow snapped his spear haft, and the big norlander drove him over the verge.

"When I heard the alarm, I half-fancied you lost," Ulfgar remarked as the two scrambled below the bowsprit, arrows whisking by. "I suppose you didn't have much time to deal with the oarsmen."

"By no means," Quahn replied. "I merely had to work more quickly."

"Then you cutthroat the lot of them?"

Quahn shot his friend a reproving glance. "Not *all* of them," he said pettishly. "I had to settle for seven or eight."

Ulfgar raised an inquisitive eyebrow.

"Approximately," amended the southerner. "In all the ruckus, I may have lost count."

Ulfgar took this moment to peek from their hiding place. For the nonce the arrows had stopped and, as he watched through the clearing fog, the pirates formed ranks, spearmen and pikemen to the front, archers to the rear. The small tattooed man who had come after him with the knife seemed to be in charge.

It would be a frontal assault then, Ulfgar judged. Crude, but likely effective, given that retreat was impossible. But where was Karaz? It was not like that fat oaf to forego the pleasure of a one-sided battle.

Quahn's voice—chill and sere—broke his reverie.

"Ulli—look."

He followed his friend's gaze starboard. For a moment he detected nothing out of sorts. Just the fog rising from below the afterdeck. Then, amid its tendrils, he caught sight of the tentacle, thick as his thigh, coiling itself about the rail.

Something huge and steaming began leisurely to heft its mass onto the deck, uncoiling as it came.

Whereas Ulfgar and Quahn watched transfixed, it was some time before the Araki awakened to their peril. Big as it was, the thing was nearly silent; it flowed over the quarterdeck like oil. At length one of the archers, reaching back to adjust his quiver, glimpsed something impossible. Then he was aloft, wrapped in purple coils.

The cavity toward which he was drawn could not rightly be called a mouth, for it lacked any of that organ's characteristic features. It was, Ulfgar reflected, more like exposed gut, which the creature wrenched open only long enough to receive its prey.

The archer's fate confirmed the barbarian's hypothesis: Once he was dropped—screaming—into the concavity, it pinched itself closed from the perimeter like an angry sphincter, and nothing more of the man's voice could be heard.

Initially, Ulfgar and Quahn took a certain perverse pleasure in observing the fate of *Destiny's* crew. After all, she had holed their gallant little *Quarrel* and nearly sent them to their doom. Then there was the month that followed, spent as castaways, spearing seaweed with driftwood staves and prying mussels from the rocks. But even with all this to load the scale, still the remorseless hunger of the sea-demon gave them pause: its tentacles pursued even those who took their chances in the freezing waters of the sound.

And soon enough they found that although they had blamed these sailors for their shipwreck—indeed, just moments ago had sought their death—nonetheless they could not stand idle as this horror devoured their fellow men.

Ulfgar charged first, roaring an ancestral battle cry. For an instant, Quahn hesitated: this was madness, suicide. Then, spitting contemptuously, he seized a spear from a fallen Araki and followed his friend down the ladder.

There, beneath the swaying yardarm, the pair faced the demon. Once, twice flashed Ulfgar's blade, and gobs of plasm sprayed a-port; a severed tentacle slithered at his feet.

For his part, Quahn concentrated on the creature's central mass. Spear after spear he cast until the thing bristled with shafts like a porcupine. Yet it seemed indifferent to their blows; presently, the supply of spears from dead men's hands was exhausted.

Quahn scowled. Whatever it was, this monster was clearly immune to mortal weapons. Indeed, the demon hardly seemed to be paying them any special attention. Even

now, its tendrils wandered about the decks seeking further prey. Singly and in pairs, *Destiny's* crew were seized, one man after another drawn to his death in that central maw.

Up the mainmast slid one of the tentacles. Quahn was puzzled; what did it seek? It was then that he noticed the woman. Her mouth was splayed unnaturally wide as if, like a serpent, she had unhinged her jaw in order to swallow disproportionate prey.

The sounds of battle had died with the men. Now Quahn could hear her outcries—warblings and susurrations and feral howls—and, though the language was alien, he knew enough of the Art to recognize its nascent power. When the questing tentacle touched her flesh—recoiled—his decision was made. Dodging past Ulli, he threw a line over the boom and made his way up. The lambent eyes of the woman on the mast watched him as he came.

It didn't take long for Quahn to reach her, but already the tentacle had returned, testing a thigh with what seemed like delicacy, flanged suckers leaving bloody rings in its wake. Out came his dirk, sharp as a flensing knife. Three sweeping cuts, and yards of tentacle fell away, spraying ichor. Once more, the limb retreated.

"Messy work," remarked Quahn, striving to keep his tone light. "Next time I'll make sure to wear a slicker."

Quahn imagined that he saw something like amusement glint in the woman's eyes; but her mouth continued its contortions; the howling grew gleeful.

Quahn tested one of the spikes that pinned her wrists—it had been driven deep into the wood. Without tongs, he doubted he could remove it. One option then. With a glance of apology, he maneuvered himself into position and braced his heels against the yardarm. With both hands, he gripped the woman's arm, one at the wrist, the other just above the elbow.

"This will hurt," he said, and drove thumb and forefinger into the sloped cavity between the radius and the ulna. Then, with a quick shove, he wrenched her forearm upward, ripping tendon while forcing the spike along the groove between the extensor muscles. From there, it was simple: one hard yank and the arm would be free, bloody but with the bones intact.

Quahn heard her growl as he worked, gag when the arm came loose. But the arcane chanting never ceased and, when he made to loose the other arm, she pushed him back.

"*Kallah*," she said, and gestured toward the second spike. For a moment it shivered, then ejected itself with a wet pop.

Already, Quahn saw, her wounds were closing.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ulfgar stepped backward and felt the rail against his calf. Ahead, just beyond his guard, five tentacles swirled like a lazy pinwheel; on the deck were several more, slithering toward his ankles.

Grunting, the Straad slashed down, severing one of these; kicked it away. His chest heaved; lungs burned with fire; breaths came in coughing gasps. Each rang like Fell's dismal gong, which calls warriors to their doom.

He did not have long.

To port lay the forecastle. A line tangled over its side, teasing. If he could make the top—

—feint; sliding on the gore-slick deck. For an instant, Ulfgar teetered...then fell hard, skull-first, into the iron shod rail.

Lightning burst behind his eyes.

—what? He was in shadow. The monster loomed over him, tentacles outspread. Behind, the first rays of Azureflame cut through the dying fog like a beacon, and ringed the thing in warps of ultramarine. Sunrise.

Of what came next, Ulfgar could never be certain. A jumble of bright impressions littered his memory, sharp and jagged as broken glass. Assembled assiduously and correctly these bits should combine to reveal the original picture, as the scholars at Lagon are said to have restored the spangled face of Decedion from myriad strips of lead and ten thousand colored shards. This Ulfgar believed fervently: to remember is the measure of man.

But when he sought, as he often would, to gather together the parts and reconstruct the whole, he found that the design which emerged was always of his own devising.

Here is one version:

Sun rays seemed to bend, congeal, as if they had become abruptly corporeal, part of some emergent nervous system whose veins ran with blue fire. Yet, too, Ulfgar had the impression of a sublime plasticity, of the kind one might witness when a glassblower pulls hot cullet into flutes and locks and bows.

Moreover as the thing grew more animate it took on an insectile quality—like a mantis, perhaps, wrought from blue glass. While Ulfgar watched it settle itself onto the demon's central bulk, that impression deepened. Six appendages, sharp and slim as quills, drove into the

octopoid-demon, perforating it like so many straws. Then, with a hummingbird's grace, its substance was impelled out of its paralyzed body by force of suction.

The barbarian watched, fascinated, as this blue savior literally drank his foe into nothingness.

When it was done he noticed *her* for the first time. She hovered before the mast, cradled in blue mist. Ulfgar's breath caught.

She smiled at him, wickedly.

“Ulli—look out!” Quahn's voice rang in the fading brume.

Instantly, Ulfgar rolled; and although he was too late to evade the blow, still Quahn's call saved his life. Rather than slicing his aorta, the dagger lodged under the triceps; his momentum yanked it from a fleshy hand.

With a furious roar, Karaz drew forth a wide dirk, advanced.

But the Straad was too quick. A backhand blow struck the dirk from the Storm-Captain's hand, and Ulfgar seized him in bear hug. Ribs crunched. By stages the face of Karaz darkened from red to blue to purple. Tongue extended; head lolled.

With a satisfied grunt Ulfgar stepped to the rail and heaved his burden over the side.

Already The blue demon faded, its outline waning into tinted smoke. The woman stood with Quahn amid decks; the two eyed one another immodestly. Ulfgar moved swiftly to join them.

“*Tohjebru*,” she said, touching Ulfgar's back. The dagger slid loose; he felt a fierce warmth, the wound closed. Her other hand traced the contours of his chest, descended.

“*Valulah*,” she said, with evident satisfaction.

Already Quahn had come up behind her, his tongue playing along the back of her neck. Taking him by the hair, the woman pulled him forward. From above she inspected his face: she was taller than the southerner by a span. Her head tilted forward.

When the kiss came it was as a man kisses a favored doxy: she mastered him effortlessly. Ulfgar saw Quahn's body spasm.

The norlander seethed with emotions he could scarcely comprehend. Those fatted breasts, heavy lips, the jut of her mound: that these things should fire him he well understood. But there was more. The ease by which

Quahn had been seduced, indeed, the very quality of command that encompassed this creature—like the aurous mantle of some antediluvian queen—produced in Ulfgar a lust to dominance such as he had never known. *This one* would be his cow; in his mind's eye he saw her inflated, hunkered, spilling over with a dozen of his calves.

Yet this was not quite the end of it. For to see his friend treated in such a manner fired strange passions, in the north so unlawful as to be entirely without name.

No matter now: the sorceress had closed her hand about his jerkin, and pulled him to her, her neck arched backward, her honeyed lips lifted to his. For his part, Quahn went to work farther down.

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Dripping with spume, the lean pirate pulled the whaleboat onto the strand, looked up at the sky. Red dawn was long over; now great Vermilion chased his blue spouse toward her perch at the vault's zenith.

It was overnoon, and Sark was tired. He was lucky, he reflected, simply to have made landfall. As a rule, the whaleboat took three rowers. With only him at the oars, the craft had been balky and truculent; but the seas were mild. It had taken little more than a watch to make the shore of Frist.

Glumly, he inspected the whaleboat. Not much of use. A seal-skin tarp, half-rotted, some fishhooks, two good harpoons, a grapple, line, bits of rusty iron. These were the capital from which he must make his new life—there had been no time for preparation. When he observed his crewmates drawn, by ones and twos, into the sea demon's maw, Sark had reevaluated his loyalties. Like a stowaway, he had sneaked to the whaleboat and hid beneath the tarp. When at last the battle sounds had been replaced by something else—something that, even now, he strove not to remember—it was then that Sark had cut the lines and, with utmost care, steered the boat out into the cold waters of the sound.

Sark sighed. Regarding the opportunities this new home afforded, he was not optimistic. Glancing down the strand, he saw a mother seal with her pups. For an instant Sark considered a cast, but the mother barked sharply and the entire family scrambled into the safety of the surf, the pups barking indignantly.

A shrug. Well, no matter. Doubtless there would be no shortage of seals.

Resigned, Sark trudged towards the nearby ridge that overtopped the strand. He began to climb. Ω



## Running a Great Con Game

guest editorial by Jeff Wilcox

*(The fact is, if we're going to keep these games alive and well, we're going to have to attract new players to them. Games at home, at school, and in public places can all help with this, of course, but going where the gamers are makes sense too. For this issue of Fight On!, I tapped my old friend Jeff, who has been gaming since the 70's, running con games since the 80's, and helping organize whole gaming conventions (most notably KublaCon) since the '90's. Here are some of his tips on making convention gaming fun. These may not be the only techniques that work, but I've seen players give him standing ovations, even players who were just listening from the next table over, so they're probably worth thinking about – Ignatius.)*

A convention game is different from a home game in a number of ways. There is a set time limit, the group is unknown to you and to each other, and the home games the con-goers run in may use variant rules or locations, making their characters relatively incompatible with each other. Your task is to get the players to buy into your world, your adventure, and each other's characters, while

still making them sweat and swear and triumph and work with each other, all in four, six, or eight hours. Pulling off a successful con game requires a different philosophy and approach than a home game. It requires you to organize the game and the gaming environment differently. If you do it correctly, you, and your players, will marvel at the outcome. Let's take a look at some techniques that can help you master the con environment.

**GMing:** A home game can be a wonderful communal story-telling experience, slowly built up over time to moving and meaningful resolution. But at a con game, you are creating a short story, not a novel. There is no "slow build-up"; these characters will rarely create shared histories. So how should you approach the game?

You are the sergeant, they are the privates.

You, as a GM, have a way of doing things. Quickly communicate this to the players. I recommend you make them worry from the start. They focus faster that way.

My opening speech is something like: "Hello everyone. Thank you for choosing this game. I am the GM. My job is to kill you all. I will do that by the end of the game. If you are good enough, you will stop me. Good luck."

Now, I say all that as if I am greeting a group of friends at a party I am throwing. I am smiling. I am speaking lightly but seriously.

And I am ready to kill all their characters. They must know they are in trouble from the start – know their characters can, and probably will, die. Regardless of the encounters in the game, you are their enemy, and their only allies are the other players in the game. It immediately creates the start of the character to character bond that allows for great role-playing and great interactions between characters.

**Story Creation:** While the players' focus is on completing the adventure with their lives intact, your goal is to run a splendid adventure that runs as close to full length as possible. Players will be pissed if the 4-hour game runs only 1.5 hours no matter how l337 your GMing skills.

How do you fill in an adventure running short? Minor encounters, scenery description, letting the players work through things via character-to-character discussion. Get poetic in your descriptions. Not Proustian, but detailed.

An Elven God tapped an uppity paladin on the noggin during a game I ran. The paladin's eyes turned green (and other things happened). The full description of the eye change given to the rest of the party was "His eyes fade to green; green the shade of the first new leaf on the oldest tree in your home town. Its vibrancy of color draws your

eyes and you feel the soft touch of spring and a gentle calm roll over you."

This sort of statement expands the imagination of the players, makes your world deeper, and eats up time. Additionally, the description speaks personally to each character and player; it is the color of a leaf in their own town – wherever that happens to be.

**Player Responsibilities:** There are consequences to every action. During your adventure, players may take actions that should have additional good or bad natural consequences. Remember these actions and at the end of game play outline them for the player(s). Let them all know it is their responsibility to determine if the game is to become "canon" for their character, and if so, they should take the good/bad consequences away with their characters.

In one game, the party slowly went insane. A paladin, slowly pushed over the edge during a four-hour slide into insanity, became a cannibal; actively role-playing his relish at the taste of human flesh. When the character was released from his insanity, and the player realized what his character was eating was but illusion, the player sighed as if to signal "Whew, I can shrug it all off." I immediately turned to him and said, "You, paladin, feel swept away from your God, for you still remember the pleasure you drew from the savory flesh in your mouth, the grind of the organs between your teeth. You still remember the shiver of excitement you felt when biting into the wailing, and screaming, woman's arm. You remember, and you still feel the pull towards it..." I paused as I watched his eye widen in understanding and shock. "It may be you will need to spend much time cleansing these thoughts and tastes from your mind, but while it was only illusion, it has the pull of a drug. You still have the craving."

He nodded and then wrote "Enjoys the taste of human flesh" on his character sheet.

In the end, they, the players, determine if the story is "canon" - and if they accept it as such, they accept the good outcomes with the bad. And make sure there are both if you can!

**Introducing the World/The Pre-Game Talk:** This is your moment to set the tone of the game and the limits of the world. I already spoke of the "I will kill you all" opening bit. And the "here is why 1 silver is a butt-load" explanation of the more restrictive currency of my fantasy world. But there is more you may need to cover. You are, after all, setting expectations.

*Quick world overview:* This overview doubles as setting the scene for the beginning of the game. Stay fairly macro, such as: "This is an agricultural-based world, with little in the way of magic items, but many people can cast spells.

[Insert note about the value of a silver piece here. And then...] Resurrections are common as long as you have the gold to pay. Or in this case platinum. Two platinum (60 years wages) will resurrect any one person, so as long as at least one of you survives, and brings back a finger from everyone, then you are all okay.”

A statement like this sets the tone of the game, lets them know how money works, subtly tells them you will kill them all, and then gives them the “final saving grace” action (in this case “if one person lives then all will live”).

In a perfect game, I **do** kill all but one person... and that person is down to under ¼ hit points at the end of the final battle with sweat caused by fear running in torrents down their faces!!!! Ahem, let us continue...Nothing gets people to support each other better than when the dead characters’ futures are in the hands of the lone survivor fighting to complete a battle.

*How rewards work (XP and Magic Items):* No one likes a surprise. Be clear from the start.

*What we will ignore (system changes, social changes):* If you use spell points for all spell casters, let the group know. If you allow technology (laser carbine, sonic screw driver, any-one?), let them know.

But also let them know they, the players, are to ignore any character trait/element that might cause character-to-character fights or lack of cooperation. “Yes, I realize you are a Drow, and those three are High Elfs, but we are in a con game. For the duration of this game, please use any rationale you can to allow your Drow to join a party with them. We don’t have time to role-play through that mess.”

And you really don’t have time. During a home game that sort of limitation is wonderful. It might be the basis for a whole series of adventures. At a con game, that sort of thing is a waste of time. Ask the players to ignore that sort of thing before the game even begins.

**Story:** There are three main elements that can make a great con game: Sincerity (of NPCs), real (yet mundane) implications, and a clear goal (at least at the beginning).

When I was in junior high, I went into a cave, down a hall, opened a door, and found a 10’ x 10’ x 10’ room filled with more orcs than physics allows. Really.

Anyone can draw some lines to make a map, and then shake a die to add random monsters. Sure, it is an adventure, but it sucks. What brings an adventure to life is the sincerity of the NPCs requesting help. It can be a heartfelt plea of a father requesting help finding his missing daughter, or the sincere worry of a King over the loss of a (mundane) family heirloom.

In a game I played in, a small village (no more than thirty huts) pleaded with us to stop the oncoming army from destroying their village. The army was simply moving from one place to another, but they would ravage the land and probably steal everything from the villagers as they passed through. Maybe even kill the men and abduct or rape the women. The village just happened to be between the army and where they were headed to invade. It was a mundane (meaning non-fantastical/magical) situation filled with real horror and drama. The villagers wept. The mayor had already killed himself in despair before we arrived.

As a group of fourteen 16+ level characters, we were to be paid in bags of grain. We took the job.

**The Start:** There are two traditions in con games: the character description and the role-played “meeting”. Taking a few minutes to allow character descriptions still works. Each player gets to quickly describe what their character looks like and what their character is – though I usually outline what I expect: “Please take a moment to describe your character, and then quickly outline your character. An example might be: ‘Grom stands 7’ 2” and is as broad. He wears what looks to be thick leather armor, but the leather (for those that can discern) isn’t of a known beast. He carries a large stone club and occasionally drools on himself when he forgets to close his mouth. Grom is a 1/2 – giant 7th level fighter. He is slow in intellect, but powerful in hand to hand.”

But the second tradition **must** be ignored: the role-played “meeting” of the characters. Nothing wastes more time than having the characters try to justify why they are hanging out with folks they would never actually hang out with.

You, the GM, need to force the issue – start the game at the point when all the characters are together already. Take a second and let the players know how they can justify it, but then move on rapidly.

When starting a group in a bar, I might open with: “Over the past three weeks, you have all wandered into this small city to discover their harvest festival is about to begin. You have, for your own reasons, decided to stay on for those festivities.” Next I put them all in the same room with: “You discovered others of your ilk, adventurers such as yourself, in the Eye and Gut Spittoon House, and though not all of them are people you enjoy, they are the most interesting folks in town and you discover you are all in the Eye and Gut at the same time this evening when...”

But there are many ways to do this. Two others I have used are dramatic, forced grouping and the humorous, forced grouping.

I was asked to run a game at a friend’s birthday and I used the dramatic, forced grouping. The players quickly made



characters and I began the game: “You all have your hands bound tightly, and your ankles are tied to heavy-looking bags of rocks. The nooses are in place and your crimes, being known to the enraged mob surrounding your platform, have just finished being read. The lever is tossed and you fall downwards...” This got their attention. As it was, each was levitated at the end of the rope so the rope was tight, but they didn’t die. Some caught on and immediately faked dying. The local governor, having set the party up, then saved them at the noose, later gives them the choice – complete task X for him, or he will let the party go... and let the populace know where they characters are...

When I ran for 18 players all running 18+ level *D&D* characters, I used the humorous, forced grouping. “You all feel yourself grabbed and teleported, and in some cases plane shifted, away from where you were and now find yourself stand in front of a small shack next to which there is a massive, intricate summoning ring. Standing between you and the shack and ring is a tall, red-skinned man who finishes reading his scroll of summoning. He glances towards the party, frowns slightly, and then quickly scans over the just-read scroll. He sighs, sets aside the scroll and says, “Well, I expected better from that spell, but since you are all I got, I guess you will have to do. Hopefully you are tougher than you look...” He goes on to explain a large creature with a reality warping nature wandered by at the tail end of the man’s 47-year long ritual, disrupting the ritual and pissing him off. Their task was to kill the creature who accidentally wandered too close.

Regardless of the method used, always quickly get past the “meeting”.

**Game Organization:** The raw time-vs.-game-events calculation is easy: Prepare 3 major events for a 4-hour con game. Prepare 4 major events for a 6-hour con game. Prepare 5 major events for an 8-hour con game. An additional event should be on hand in case you get a fast group. You should be prepared to skip one of the major events with a group is slower than expected.

**The First Event/Encounter:** A long-time friend and convention GM reminded me of the “first encounter” rule – the “shake out” combat scene.

Getting a group to gel, working and planning together, is important but in a con game you have little time to let it grow a casual pace as you do during a home game. There are other things you can do to quickly get that to happen beyond letting the players know you will be killing all their characters. The most effective tool is the “first encounter”, which should be combat.

The rules of the first encounter are these:

- The combat should be straight forward. The enemies are obvious and the goal is clear.
- The combat should leap upon the party with the party having little-to-no planning time.
- It should be real, Not just a gratuitous smackdown, but a real combat that moves the plot. It is, after all, one of the 3 events in a 4-hour game.

This type of combat allows players to show off their characters (which players always enjoy) and shakes out how the mechanics of your world function in a live situation. If you have a good crew, this might be when they start collaborating and relying on each other.

There were 14 mid-level characters sitting in the Eye and Gut Spittoon House at the start of one game, when a man, an obvious servant/butler, walked in and asked the group to come outside – for his master had need of such a stout crew. “And if I might add, his need is great and your help will greatly encourage the fates to allow Master to continue to breathe.” The butler’s manner was impeccable, but there was an undercurrent of dread and fear that came with the words.

The party wandered outside to spot “Master”, a 5-year old child with tears in his eyes. His words, as they came out between cries, were, “Please make them not kill me!!!” “Who?” asked one party member. The child turned left and pointed down main street where, much to the horror of the party, a wild menagerie of creatures, all hell-bent on destruction, came running towards them and the child.

A beefy warrior in the group called the other warriors up to form a wall, while a mage began grouping the spell casters behind. They quickly began casting spells as some others fired bows as they could. I had, by the end of the combat, a leader of the fighters, a leader of the mages, and a leader of the “others” – and a central character as party leader; all without voting or squabbles.

Now they just had to figure out how a 5-year-old could piss off so many creatures all at once...

**NPCs/Encounters/Creatures:** It is easy for a player to jump out of character and argue rules if you use monsters and creatures from the books. If you can, use creatures in new ways, or use variations of creatures from the books. It adds to the uniqueness of the story you are telling and minimizes the rules-lawyering that can, at times, occur.

I ran a 12-hour adventure for 24 players based on Irish mythology. When the group came upon a faerie building it was guarded by two giants. Not the giants of the *Monster Manual*, but two Irish-myth-based giants; 95-foot tall behemoths with 90 foot swords alertly standing over the structure. No one in the group knew what other powers

these massive foes might have, as they were Irish giants, not Storm Giants.

**Suggested Rewards:** Here are some examples of other rewards you might use to make the game interesting, enhance the uniqueness of the characters, and satisfy the treasure lust of some players:

*Permanent Powers:* Nothing makes a character unique faster than a small, sometimes useful natural power. I have had characters walk away with the ability to create flame on the palm of their hand (1/2 light of a torch, can burn wood, but not melt metal, and the flame only forms on the open, palm up right hands.) Or the ability to get water from rock (any rock small enough to be gripped fully, with finger tips touching palm, is slowly transformed into water.) How about the ability to not get wet in rain (rain made of mostly water – rain of acid doesn't count)? Or a permanent 4-point increase in hit points? Or maybe they now look like undead to undead (and so are ignored by them) and look like live people to live people? Small, but fun, abilities. Another thing that makes the players happy is when the powers are natural – they can't be detected, anti-magicked, or dispelled. Maybe they can even be inherited.

*Unique Items:* If you're going to give magic items, take the time to make them unique and special. Also, it's probably better not to make them too powerful relative to party level, so the player at least has a chance to bring them back to his home game if desired.

*The World's Reaction:* At the end of the game, don't forget to let the party know how the world now perceives them. Have they become heroes of legend? Are they worshipped as gods? Are they thanked and wished well? Or are they just another band of mercenaries to be bought and sent on their way?

*Meaningful Bounty:* The way the reward is described in game often contributes much more to a player's sense of its value than its size and value. A poor village elder handing over a clothful of silver in grateful relief can easily be more poignant to your players than a gleaming hoard.

**Thanking the Players:** Take a moment to call out your own favorite moments of the game. Acknowledge the players who made it happen, whether it was great role-playing, a brilliant plan created, or some startling combat moves; let them know you appreciated what they did.

Combine these techniques with your own wonderful storytelling ability, and you too will run awe-inspiring con games. Games of legend! Or at least games that won't leave your players looking for a refund. Ω

## Artifacts, Adjuncts, and Oddments

by Max Davenport, Matthew Hoover, and Jeff Riens

**Bezoar Bag** (Davenport): This ordinary rawhide bag functions at first as one of the lesser bags of holding. However, if goods of more than 500 gc value are placed within they will be compressed into a single pearl or gem-like stone of no more than 1/5 the value of the goods. If goods totalling over 5000 gc value are placed within the bag, the stone produced will function as a periapt of poison immunity. After producing a periapt, the bezoar bag loses all magic.

**Bronze Dog** (Davenport): When commanded to Sit, this bronze statuette animates into an enormous mastiff. The dog is untrained, and gentle as a kitten. Any efforts at training the creature as a mount or war dog will be doomed as it reverts to bronze each evening and forgets all it learned. It can be taught basic tricks like rolling over, begging or shaking hands -- but not fetch.

**Embezzler's Purse** (Davenport): This ordinary pouch produces a fabulous 1-100 gc per day! At the same time, however, the purseholder's companions suffer the loss of an equal amount of coin (or an equivalent loss in the value of any gems, jewelry or trade goods). Should the purseholder be alone or his or her companions be destitute, the purse will fixate on the wealthiest person or creature in a ten mile radius. Unfortunately, once the amount of coin gained this way exceeds 500 gc the accidental benefactor will begin to dream nightly of the purseholder robbing his or her coffers, and will unerringly know the purseholder's whereabouts as well....

**Floating Chair** (Calithena): This very light chair, made from some alien metal (perhaps an ultralight alloy of mithril?), bestows magical protection +2 on anyone sitting in it. If a *Floating Disk* spell is cast, it can be discovered that the chair easily rests atop it and moves with it, along with all the possessions of its occupant. Moreover, the duration of such spells when used to bear chairs is extended tenfold.

**Medium's Hat** (Hoover): This conical star-spangled hat grants its wearer (spell casters only) the ability to memorize one extra first level spell per day. If the *medium's hat* is removed while its power is being used, the wearer will forget one random first level spell they had memorized. If no first level spells were memorized, the wearer must save or else take one die's worth of damage. It is rumored that more powerful versions exist (*conjurer's hat*, etc.) that grant the ability to memorize an extra spell of higher level.

**Nesting-Box of Holding** (Davenport): A simple metal coffer which is entirely filled up by a slightly smaller Box of Holding, which contains a still smaller Box, and so on. On removal of the box within, each box collapses with an



ostentatious but pointless display – loud clanging, flashes of light, clouds of mist, swarms of beetles, etc.

**Strumpet Trumpet** (Davenport): When sounded, this serpentine horn plays a lewd wah-wah ditty, summoning 2-5 ladies of ill repute (or hustlers of unwholesome habit, as tastes dictate) who will loudly proposition all and sundry, insulting those who refuse their advances. They will depart only after plying their trade, but not before robbing their customers if at all possible. They can otherwise be banished only by spells. Repeated soundings of the horn or any assault on the strumpets summons their pander, a fearsome efreet.

**Talking Pit** (Davenport): Formed, perhaps, by the slow leakage of extra-dimensional space from poorly sewn bags

of holding, a talking pit is in most ways identical to an ordinary dungeon pit. It may be open, or concealed with a trap door or similar covering. Its depth can vary from 10-100 feet or more, and it may or may not contain spikes, water or other hazards. A talking pit has two major differences from the standard pit trap. The first is mobility. It typically moves about dungeon corridors at a rate of only a few feet per hour, though it is capable of travelling as fast as the average dungeon party. Because the pit is extra-dimensional it does not intersect lower levels as it moves, and cannot be used to bypass levels or other dungeon features as a passwall or move earth spell might. The second difference, of course, is that it talks. For unknown reasons a talking pit has a degree of sentience and a simple personality. A talking pit is generally defined by a single overriding character trait, which might be baleful or beneficial as the DM chooses. Some pits are devious, seeking to lure one or two party members into their depths with the promise of treasure, and then sealing shut and moving away, reopening in some far away locale - - if they reopen at all. Others delight in mayhem, calling loudly to attract the attention of wandering monsters while their victims attempt to climb out. Still others seem merely lonely, and may follow an adventuring party around with a puppy-like devotion. Many other traits are possible, as the GM desires.

**Tlozcap's Ring of Arcanocogitation** (Rients): Under the scrutiny of magical detection this plain-looking copper band comes to life with dozens of shimmering runes so tiny as to be invisible in normal lighting. On the finger of a magic-user of at least Conjuror ranking Tlozcap's Ring opens new neural pathways in the brain, making spell memorization much easier. Second level magics may be memorized as first level, third as second, fourth as third, and so on. First level spells are unaffected and in no case does the user gain access to spell levels they cannot otherwise cast. Should the ring be removed or destroyed while the user has an overabundance of memorized spells the judge should randomly determine which spells will be considered in excess of the magic-user's normal limit. For each of these extra spells roll 1d6. On a 1-3 the spell is simply lost. On a 4-6 the spells activates in a random direction/at a random target. Also, the caster must save against magic or be feebleminded for d6 hours.

**Ventriloquist's Stone** (Hoover): At will, the voice of the owner of a *ventriloquist's stone* will seem to originate from the stone, and will continue to do so until the owner wills otherwise or until distance becomes too great. The stone will only work if its owner is within 60 feet of it, and if the distance between the stone and its owner becomes greater than that, the link is severed until the stone comes into possession again.

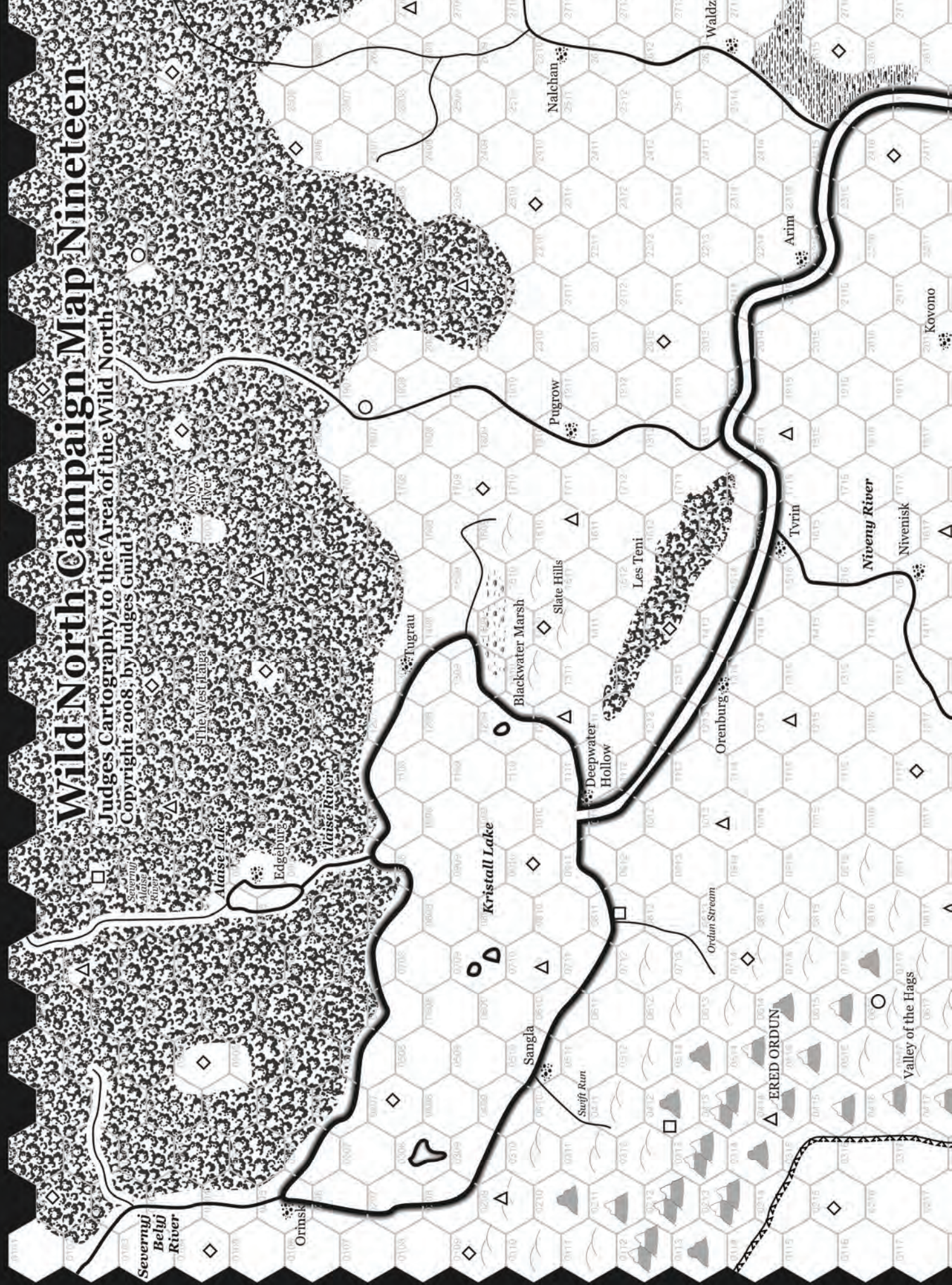
**Xeno's Rope** (Davenport): A coil of sturdy rope capable of extending to just short of whatever length is needed.

# Map Key

- △ = Ruin
- ◇ = Lair
- = Citadel
- = Castle
- ⊛ = Settlement

## Wild North Campaign Map Nineteen

Judges Cartography to the Area of the Wild North  
Copyright 2008, by Judges Guild



Severnyj Behij River

Alaise Lake

Edgeburg

Alaise River

Kristall Lake

Blackwater Marsh

Deepwater Hollow

Ordun Stream

Orenburg

Valley of the Hags

ERED ORDUN

Ormsk

Sangla

Swift Run

Iugrau

Pugrow

Nalchan

Waldzi

Arim

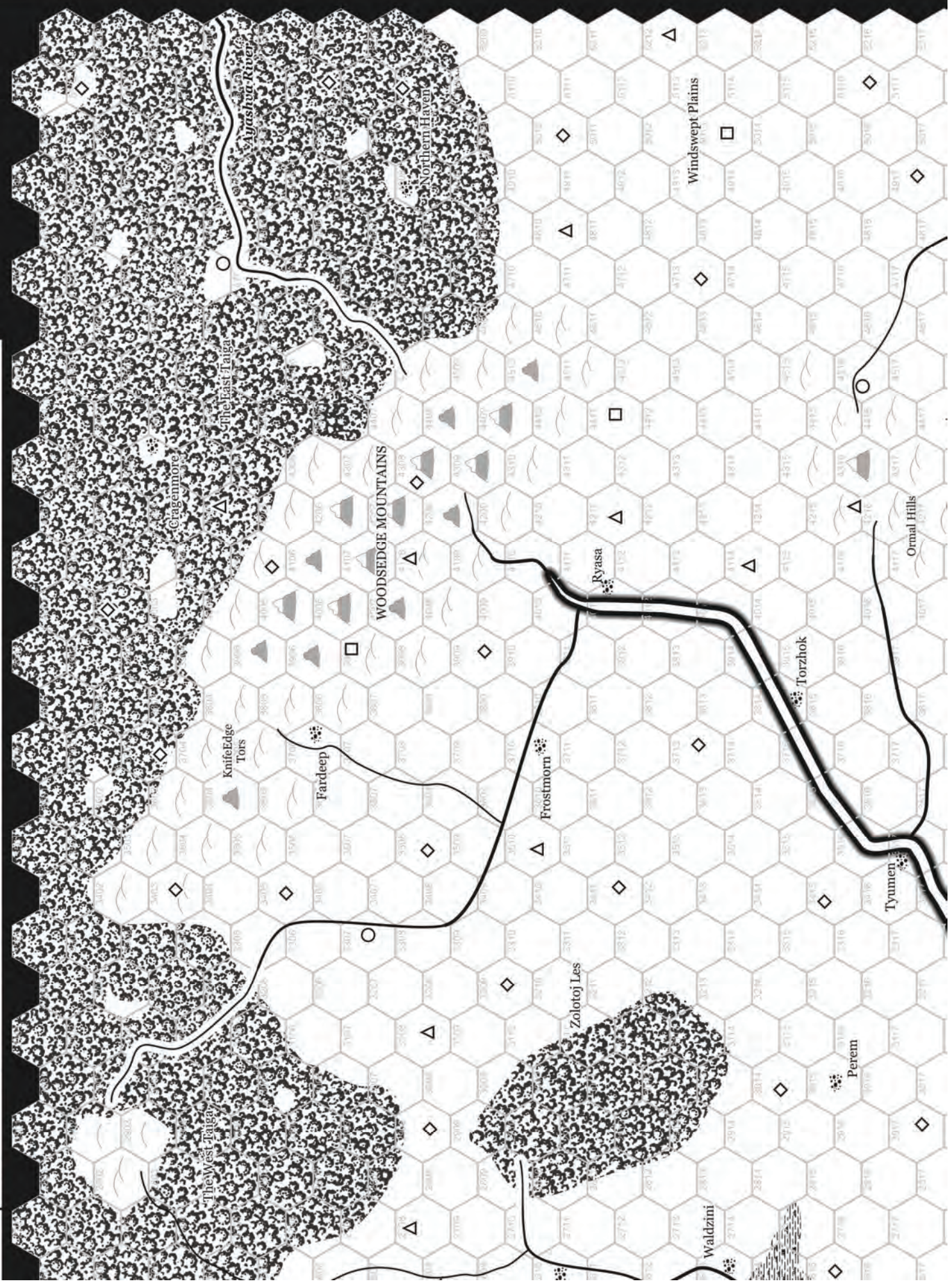
Tvrin

Nivenisk

Kovono



Settlement = Forest = Swamp = Ice Field Edge = Grassland = Hills = Foothills = Mountains = Mountains





Ormal Hills

Seroye Neba Marsh

Seraya River

The Belaya River

The Siniye Hills

The Golden Pass

SHIELDING MOUNTAINS

Tver

Zartyi

Varin

Lake of Dreams

Orsink

Krendan

Jurisk

Krayal

Helavan Hills

Jongalar Thicket

Winding River

Palansk

Iceblue Bay

Baldurheim

Watch Hill

Steelholm

Fall Stream

Grinding Stream

Novast-Kazar

Malgast-Kazar

Golden Hills

Iyumen

Ormal Hills

Ander's Rest

Thoggrim

Steppes of the Ten

Sonden

Sernal

Novast-Kazar

Malgast-Kazar

Golden Hills



Area Mapped

HEX 05: 2321 — HAGHILL AND ENVIRONS

