

# Horse Play

A One-Round D&D 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Living Greyhawk  
Adventure

by Nicholas Perch

Orcs are threatening the peace in the area near Carern, and heroes are needed to put things right. It's a good thing you happened to be in town. This is a Gran March regional tournament and is intended for heroic characters of levels 1-6.

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This is a RPGA Network adventure game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing the game (or this round of the game), but the actual playing time will be about three hours.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

**Scoring the game for RPGA points:** The RPGA has three ways to score this game. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use:

1. *No-vote scoring:* The players write their names and numbers on the scoring packet grid, you fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. *Partial scoring:* The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and adventure information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the convention coordinator wants information as to how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. *Voting:* Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the best amongst them, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes. Multi-round adventures usually required advancing a smaller number of players than played the first round, so voting is required for multi-round adventures.

When using Voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in **bold italics**. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

## LIVING GREYHAWK Tier Structure

To determine the tier, add the character levels of all the characters. In addition, add the levels of any henchmen or animals according to the values on their certificates. Compare the total to the chart below to find the tier.

	<u>4 players</u>	<u>5 players</u>	<u>6 players</u>	<u>7 players</u>	<u>Lvl Cap</u>
T1:	4-12	5-13	6-14	7-15	4 <sup>nd</sup>
T2:	13-22	14-24	15-26	16-28	6 <sup>th</sup>
T3:	23-32	25-35	27-38	29-41	8 <sup>th</sup>

The level cap indicated the highest level of character allowed to play this adventure. Characters of levels higher than the highest level shown for the highest tier cannot be played.

## Lifestyle

At the beginning of every scenario, each PC is required to pay upkeep costs matching the level of lifestyle they wish to maintain. The cost of each lifestyle will be indicated at the beginning of the **scenario**. The lifestyles, and the effects that each has on play, are:

<b>Destitute</b>	You have no living space, and must carry all your gear everywhere. You eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, your only change of clothes.
<b>Poor</b>	You sleep in poor accommodations, and eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, and have two sets of clothing.
<b>Common</b>	You have common lodgings, and eat common quality food. You have normal clothing for your profession (adventuring); nothing fancy. You probably have two or three sets of clothing.
<b>High</b>	You stay in good quality lodgings, and eat good quality food. You wear anything in value up to courtier's outfits, and generally buy a new set of clothing every two weeks.
<b>Luxury</b>	You have luxurious accommodations (twice the cost of good accommodations), and you eat excellent foods. You can throw a banquet for your friends every day, and frequently do. You wear clothing up to the value of noble's outfit, and buy a new set of clothes every week.

Lifestyles come with bonuses or penalties to Diplomacy, Intimidate, Disguise, and Bluff skill checks. These penalties, shown below, should be applied at the DM's discretion, and can sometimes backfire—for example, a PC with a poor lifestyle would not have a penalty when talking to a beggar, but would when talking to a city official. A PC with a high lifestyle should have a penalty when dealing with a group of street thugs, where a PC with a destitute lifestyle might not.

DMs are encouraged to role-play these reactions whenever possible.

<b>Lifestyle</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Skill Modifier</b>
Destitute	14 sp	-2
Poor	43 sp	-1
Common	12 gp	0
High	250 gp	+1

## Adventure Summary and Background

In the time leading up to this adventure, the PCs have traveled to a place called Carern, in Barony Malthinius. A band of orcs led by a cleric of Gruumsh has moved near the edge of the Dim Forest and begun staging raids further and further out from the forest's edge. The orcs have been supplied with high quality (though not masterwork) arrows by some motivating force. They are also following some unusual set of instructions, and behaving somewhat unlike typical orcs.

The morning this adventure starts, in the predawn hours, the orcs will made their most significant raid, badly damaging a horse ranch and killing two ranch hands. They are being watched, at times, by a hermit druid and a band of elves, who may be able to help the PCs during the adventure. In response to the rumors of increased orc activity, the local Elector, Timmor Ellthorn, sent his file on a sweep north along the edges of the Dim Forest. They are out of contact and unavailable to meet the current situation. That's where the PCs come in.

This adventure takes place in southern Barony Malthinius, near the edge of the Dim Forest, and into the Dim Forest. The action starts in the trade village of Carern. There are many activities that might have brought the PCs to Carern, it is up to them to decide why they are here. It is encouraged that multiple copies of the Player Handout be available, so each player can read and decide at the same time why their character has come to Carern.

The scenario takes place in CY 591. It begins in the village of Carern, where the PCs witness a fire. They can help save some stable boys and animals from the blaze. Their heroics earn them a round of drinks, and the attention of Mallus Trevridian, a boy from one of the local horse farms.

Mallus needs help, since his farm has been raided by orcs, and everyone else there is injured. The PCs are expected to help. They are encouraged to speak to Lord Ellthorn, the local elector, first. He'll help equip them, and send his remaining soldier with them to help. They may also enlist the aid of a local healer.

They travel to the farm and help the farmers, and investigate the scene. It's obvious what way the orcs went. Several clues can be had here. In addition, the farmer, Mallus the Elder, points them toward Old Narril, who lives in the Dim Forest and knows everything that goes on around there.

The PCs can follow the orcs, and will encounter them holed up in a ruined tower, waiting for the sun to go down. They could also go talk to Old Narril, who knows where the main orc camp is, if they can gain his help.

The PCs can go to the main orc camp either having interrogated or followed the raiding party, or by gaining Old Narril's help. They can confront the main band, or not, at their discretion. If they failed to gain Narril's help,

however, they'll have an encounter with a shadow mastiff along the way. If they did gain his help, they have the chance to chat with some elves, and trade information.

Having completed their adventure, the PCs can return to Carern, perhaps to make a report on their activities. They stand to gain influence for their deeds.

## Encounter 1

**Whatever might have brought you to the village of Carern, you're about on the streets on a quiet Starday morning. The smells of fresh produce and the products of the local ranching industries fill the air, and the steady clang of the local smith can be heard clearly over the hubbub of the farmers selling their wares.**

**Most of the crowd looks like locals—farmers, ranchers, and craftsmen—but a few travelers round out the mix. You don't see many soldiers here, but most of the older men have the familiar look of veterans.**

Give the PCs an opportunity to move around the main part of town, going about whatever business they might wish. Use the description of the village of Carern in Appendix 1. If the players seem bored with this activity, or after about 10 minutes have passed, proceed with the rest of the action.

**Suddenly, thoughts and conversations are interrupted, as carrying over the normal village sounds comes the dreadful cry, "FIRE!!" Looking about, it's easy to see where the problem is. The stable opposite the produce market is ablaze. You see several locals begin rapidly gathering buckets, and organizing a bucket brigade from the stream outside of town.**

Get the PCs initial reactions. Whatever they elect to do, ask for Spot (DC 12) checks from anybody who's looking toward or moving toward the stable. If they succeed, they'll notice two young stable boys on in the loft. They're trapped by the fire, and panicking. A Listen (DC 15) check will let the PCs hear the braying of frightened horses on the ground floor of the stable.

The boys are in a loft window, about 15-ft. off the ground. If they jump, they'll probably suffer serious injury or death from the fall. They'll suffer 1d6 points of subdual damage and 1d6 points of real damage. The PCs are the only ones who notice the boys in time to do anything about it. Most other people are working on setting up the bucket brigade. (The locals do know about the horses, but are much more concerned about stopping the spread of the fire than they are about animals.)

The fire started accidentally. An ember from the smithy traveled unusually far on a stray breeze and landed in the loft. The blaze caught quickly, and the boys were trapped. No foul play was involved.

The local residents are organized and efficient in setting up the bucket brigade. If the PCs ask, they'll be handed a bucket and pointed to a point to stand, but they aren't really needed on the bucket line. They are needed to rescue the boys and possibly the animals.

To rescue the boys, they have several options:

- They can attempt to catch the boys when they jump. This requires an attack roll against an AC of 5 (the boys are trying to get hit, so apply the a -5 Dexterity modifier to their normal AC of 10), and a Str (DC 10) check. If both checks succeed, the damage is reduced to 1d6 points of subdual damage.
- They can attempt to climb up and get the boys down. If they look for a ladder, call for a Spot (DC 16) check. There is a ladder in a back yard just down the street. With the ladder, the boys are easily rescued with no damage done. Without a ladder, apply the normal climbing rules. A character can only carry a boy down the wall if they can carry 100 pounds of excess weight.
- They can use magic. Adjudicate this according to the normal rules.
- They can attempt to form a net (perhaps from canvas stalls in the produce market). This gives a +1 bonus to the attack roll per character holding the net and a +1 bonus to the Str check for each character holding the net. The strongest character may make the check. With a sufficiently large net, this becomes a relatively trivial task.
- They can attempt to fight through the fire and reach the boys from the inside of the stable. This will inflict 1d6 points of damage on the character each way (and the boys will suffer 1d6 points of damage on the way out). The fire is not widespread, but the smoke and heat is already somewhat dangerous.
- Adjudicate other attempts fairly. This should be a pretty simple rescue, but not a total walk through.

Throwing a rope to the boys, and expecting them to lower themselves down will not work. The boys are too scared to tie a secure knot and climb down.

The heroes also have the opportunity to rescue the horses. In order to do so, they will have to split up. They do not have time to rescue both the horses and the boys unless they do both at the same time.

There are eleven horses in the stables. They are screaming and very frightened. Leading a horse out of the stable will require any of several checks. A Handle Animal (DC 15) check will work, as will a Ride (DC 20) check, however mounting the animal in the first place will require a Ride (DC 15) check of its own. Brute force will also work, and a Str (DC 20) check will allow a PC to manhandle a horse out of the stables. Magic works normally. Animal Empathy skill will not work, since it requires at least one minute per attempt—the PCs just don't have that much time. Each PC may make one attempt per round, for 5 rounds. After 5 rounds, the PCs may continue to attempt to rescue the horses, but smoke and fire will inflict 1d6 points of subdual damage each round (Fort save DC 12 for half).

**Heavy horses** (11): CR 1; Large-size animal (5 ft. tall at the shoulder); HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 50 ft.; AC 13 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural); Atks 2 hooves +3 melee (1d6+2, hoof); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 10 ft. / 5 ft.; SQ scent; AL neutral; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2.

Str 15, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.  
Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6.

There are a number of NPCs about:

- The stable boys are named Havar and Ylldren. They are each 11 years old, and have less than 4 hp for that reason.
- Havar and Ylldren (male human Com1; hp 2 each; Handle Animal +2)
- The stablemaster is named Jarreth (male human War3; Handle Animal +6). He is a member of the Herdmasters' Guild.
- The smith is named Hendle (male human Exp2; Craft – blacksmith +7). He is a member of the Fellowship of Ironmongers.
- Most of the menfolk (and a handful of the women) around are veterans: Veterans (male human War1; hp 8 each; hand weapons, no armor)
- Most of the women are commoners: Commoners (female human Com1)

The crowd will bring the fire under control without major damage to anything except the stable. This will take about 15 minutes. If the PCs did not rescue the horses, the horses die in the blaze.

It's expected that the PCs will participate in fighting the fire and rescuing the victims. If any or all of them refuse, some gentle hints are in order. If they still refuse to participate, there will be another chance to get them hooked into the adventure, but some of the reward is lost.

When this encounter is done, proceed to Encounter 2.

## Encounter 2

If the PCs were at all involved in helping rescue the boys (and possibly the horses), they will be invited back to the Old Stable Inn for a celebration. They'll be similarly thanked if they helped in the bucket line, though not with the same level of enthusiasm. Some of the locals (Merrik and Polton, if names are needed – stats as veterans, above) want to buy them some drinks and maybe lunch, by way of thanks. If none of the PCs participated, the party goes on without them. They get some unfriendly looks from the locals.

At the Inn, the PCs will be greeted, thanked, and congratulated by a steady stream of locals. About a half-hour of game time passes that way before something significant occurs. Another young boy, Mallus Tevridian (human male Com1; Handle Animal +1) enters.

**You're still enjoying the hospitality of the people of Carern when you notice someone out of place approach your table. A boy of about 13 years - dirty, tired, and worried looking -**

*walks over to your group. He wrings his hands and introduces himself, "Excuse me please. My name is Mallus Tevridian, and I need help. The stablemaster said you were the heroes who rescued his hands, so I thought maybe..."*

He trails off. When prompted, he'll continue. (If none of the PCs say anything, one of the locals will ask him to go on.)

His story proceeds with stops and starts, he's tired, and more than a little rattled from his ordeal. The story is as follows:

- His family operates a horse farm a few hours to the southwest of Carern.
- In the wee hours of the morning, the farm was raided by a bunch of ugly creatures. His older brother says they were orcs, but Mallus hasn't seen any orcs before, so he's not sure.
- He was the only one not gravely hurt or killed, so he ran all the way to Lord Ellthorn's manor for help.
- Lord Ellthorn's soldiers are away on other business. He sent Mallus back to the village to round up some veterans.
- When Mallus heard there were some heroic strangers in town, he thought to ask them instead.
- Lord Ellthorn wants him to bring the veterans up to the manor for instruction. He also said he wanted to send the one soldier he has available with them.
- If they'll help, he'll take them up to the manor, and then out to the horse farm.
- If the PCs don't want to go up the manor, Mallus (and the other NPCs will suggest they do so) but if they insist Mallus will lead them out to the farm without going up to the manor first.

If the PCs are utterly uninterested in helping, there are some options for continuing the adventure. If any of the PCs are veterans or active duty soldiers, the Elector comes down from the manor and activates them. Hopefully the rest will take the hint and help out.

If the PCs didn't help out fighting the fire, one of the locals will point them out to Mallus and loudly and bitterly remark,

***"Maybe you can convince that bunch to help. But good luck, they don't seem much interested in doing a good turn."***

The PCs can then step up to defend their honor.

If the PCs really don't want to adventure, you can continue to role-play around the rather mundane village of Carern, or end the adventure.

If the PCs want to take a healer to the farm with them, some of the locals suggest they talk to Dith Yrrgorn (human male War2, Heal +5) who was trained as a medic in the army. A complete stat block for Dith is given in Appendix 2.

When this encounter is done, proceed to Encounter 3 (the meeting with Lord Ellthorn) or Encounter 4 (the trip to Mallus' farm) as appropriate. Use Encounter 3a if the PCs wish to take a healer to the farm with them.

## Encounter 3

The trip up to the fortified manor of Lord Ellthorn is quick and uneventful. As you approach you can see that this is a small structure, perhaps designed to house two dozen or so. An iron-banded wooden gate, wide enough to pass a wagon, stands open to a courtyard. As you pass through the gate and into the courtyard, you see no soldiers on duty, but a middle-aged woman wearing sturdy work clothes and the badge of a master in the Herdmaster's Guild waves as she approaches from the stable.

Lord Ellthorn's manor is small. The walls of the courtyard are about 10 ft. high, with light battlements. The manor house itself forms the back wall of the courtyard, and has no windows on the first floor. It is a two-story structure with a round tower making a third story at the northeast corner. The main gate faces west. The whole of the structure is about 80x60 feet, and the courtyard takes up about half of it (40x60 feet). The only structures in the courtyard are a stable and a kennel. The staff, garrison, and the Elector's family all live within the main house. The place has a definite country feel to it. It's tasteful and reflects the personality of a hard-working family.

The woman approaching from the stables is Glenna Sterner (human female Com4; Handle Animal +8, Ride +6). She is a master in the Herdmaster's Guild, and handles Lord Ellthorn's stables. She's in charge of both the Elector's personal horses and the garrison's mounts. She's also the only staff member on duty in the courtyard, so she came to greet the visitors. Glenna is friendly, and will chat for a bit, but if the conversation drags on too long she'll inquire about the PCs business (she has work to get back to). If the PCs inform her of their reason for coming to the manor, she'll show them inside, scraping the muck off her boots just outside the door.

She leads them into a sitting room.

You're led into a comfortable sitting room, and Glenna asks you to make yourselves at home while she goes to find the Elector. The furniture is well made and is serviceable, and the decorations are tasteful if not sophisticated. A fireplace occupies most of the north wall, but the room is dim, since the fire is not lit and the only light comes from small, slanted windows set high in the walls. Before Glenna takes two steps toward the door, it opens and she steps quickly out of the way of an elderly man in riding leathers.

The man is Lord Ellthorn, of course. His stat block is in Appendix 2. He'll greet the PCs warmly, shaking their hands and commenting on how glad he is to meet them. He apologizes for his appearance, explaining that he was just about to ride down to the village and see if there was anything he could do about the fire damage. If the PCs participated in fighting the fire or rescuing the boys or horses he'll express gratitude both personally and on behalf of the people of Carern.

He has the following information to pass on:

- There have been reports of orc activity near the edges of the Dim Forest, and his file is off investigating that, which is why they aren't available right now.
- If any of the PCs are active duty military, he temporarily assigns them to the duty of investigating this latest raid. Veteran and non-veteran PCs are given his official sanction to undertake this investigation.
- He would like to assign his remaining soldier, Garven Bladdel to accompany the PCs. Garven was recovering from injury when the file left, so is available now.
- He will loan the PCs horses, if they do not have their own mounts. He has no ponies or riding dogs available, however.
- He will supply the party with arrows, bolts, or other reasonable items of equipment, should they ask.
- He requests that the party attempt to deliver justice to the beasts, if it really was an orc raid. If they find themselves overmatched, however, they can just return with a report.
- In addition to finding the orcs, he would like the party to bring back any information they can find on what the orcs are up to, where they came from, and why.
- If the party requests a payment, he looks a bit surprised, then saddened. With a great sigh, he'll offer 2 sp per day per person to non-soldiers (or veterans). Soldiers and veterans will be paid their standard 5 sp per week. He will not offer any more.

Lord Ellthorn's remaining soldier is a four-year veteran named Garven Bladdel (human male War2). A full stat block for Garven is given in Appendix 2.

Lord Ellthorn and Mallus will both encourage the PCs to set off at once for the farm. There were wounded there who need attention, and clues are fading as they speak. If the party was severely injured, Lord Ellthorn will allow them to stay one night here and return with Mallus in the morning.

If the party wishes to take a healer to the farm with them, Lord Ellthorn recommends they track down Dith Yrrgorn. He can be found in the village, and is a veteran trained as a medic.

When this encounter is done, proceed to Encounter 4. If the party wants to take a healer, use Encounter 3a.

## Encounter 3a

You follow the directions you were given to Dith Yrrgorn's house. It seems to be a simple one or two-room dwelling, and there appears to be a carpentry shop around back. You see a man of around 30 years putting the finishing touches on a bed frame as you approach.

The man is Dith, a carpenter by trade. He lives alone. If the PCs explain the situation, he'll be glad to help out. He's ready to leave as soon as he puts some of his tools

away. If the PCs are in a real hurry, he'll ask them for some help. He'll then fetch his healer's bag and shortsword from inside the cottage and be ready to go. He rides if the PCs brought horses from Lord Ellthorn's manor. Dith is described fully in Appendix 2.

Proceed to Encounter 4.

## Encounter 4

Your trip out to the horse ranch is short and uneventful. It's taken only a few hours, making the time (insert appropriate time) bells. The sky is starting to cloud up and turn gray as you come into sight of the farm. It's obvious that there was a raid of some sort. A large section of the fence is destroyed, and the buildings have all sustained visible damage. The only figure you see is a person sitting on the front porch of the main house. It looks like he's holding a loaded crossbow.

The PCs can approach in any manner they like. Ride up boldly, sneak around first, and so forth. There are four main buildings on the farm, the house, a large barn, a small barn, and a tool shed. A high fence surrounds the corral where horses are trained, and a split-rail fence stretches around a huge plot of land where the horses normally roam.

The house is two stories high, with an attic, and a garden behind. It would house about a dozen adults. An outhouse and small well stand on opposite sides of the house. The big barn is 100 ft. long and 40 ft. wide, 30 ft tall at the crown. The small barn is half that size. The tool shed is 8 ft. by 10 ft. All of the buildings contain normal farm stuff. There are no horses in view, except those the party brings with them.

The wounded have all been taken into the big house, where they are resting. There are 4 men and 5 women resting inside. The figure on the porch is Mallus Sr. (human male War1, Handle Animal +4, Profession – Herdmaster +3). He's a member of the Herdmasters' Guild. He's suffered a broken leg but decided to sit up with his crossbow until help arrived. He's extremely grateful to see the party. He extends whatever hospitality he can, though he's openly hostile toward half-orcs.

The party can gain a great deal of information just by talking to Mallus the Older. Make certain that you mention Old Narril somewhere in the conversation. He has the following information:

- The orcs probably came from the Dim Forest, and if that's true, Old Narril is the man to talk to. "He knows everything that goes on in this part of the forest." Old Narril is described in Encounter 5 and Appendix 2. Mallus the Older can provide directions to Old Narril's hut in the woods.
- He's owned this farm since he inherited it from his uncle, 14 years ago. In that time it's suffered many raids, though the only time it was this bad was during the Greyhawk Wars. Usually they send the raiders scrambling for cover.

- He had about 150 horses on his ranch. About 30 were slaughtered, the rest were taken by the orcs.
- The raiders struck in the predawn hours, just about the time the ranchers were starting their morning chores.
- The raiders were definitely orcs. Mallus the Older and his oldest son Tendrom both definitely know orcs when they see them.
- The orcs were organized and smart. They sneaked up and attacked surprised us.
- They tore up a section of the horse corral and herded most of the horses out. Those horses they couldn't catch, they shot full of arrows.
- Everybody on the farm is pretty severely banged up, except for young Mallus. Hellnir and Lawton were killed, and their bodies are in the garden around back.
- The orcs seemed more intent on killing horses than people. A couple of orcs stood over him conversing in their guttural language while their fellows shot horses. They knew he was alive, but neglected to kill him. Several of his hands reported similarly being disabled and left alone.
- The orcs wore a symbol of a clawed hand holding a broken leg bone.

The PCs can gain more information by looking around with their own two eyes. The following bits can be found:

- The bodies of the horses are riddled with arrows (not javelins or bolts). The arrows are somewhat crude, but if a PC examines them closely, a Craft (weaponsmith or bowyer/fletcher) (DC 10) check will reveal that the arrowheads are high-quality steel.
- It's painfully obvious which way the orcs and horses went. The DC for following the track away from the farm is roughly 0. It gets more difficult as the orcs get rid of some of the 120 or so horses that they start with.
- Most of the damage to the building is cosmetic, there is no significant structural damage to the them, except for a 30-foot wide stretch of the split rail fence, on the north side of the ranch.
- The wounded need long-term care from a healer. The PCs can provide care as long as they care to stay at the ranch. Dith, if he is with the party, will stay as long as he is needed. He will not travel on with them.
- Characters with the Track feat can make a successful Wilderness Lore (DC 20) check that will reveal that there were between 6 and 12 orcs. Mallus the Older can agree that that number sounds about right, though he didn't get an exact count.

The party is welcome to stay overnight at the farm, especially if any of them are skilled healers. If they intend to dally, the NPCs (Mallus the Older., Garven, or Dith) will encourage them to set out to bring the orcs to justice.

If the PCs intend to go visit Old Narril, go to Encounter 5. If the PCs intend to follow the trail of the orcs, go to Encounter 6. If the PCs would rather just go

wandering around the forest looking for trouble, go to Encounter 7.

## Encounter 5

*You make your way to the Dim Forest, and make your way within, heading for Old Narril's hut. Beyond the edge of the forest, the canopy obscures the sun, and shadows render the forest floor dark as twilight. The air is still and humid, and your footsteps seem muted. After a time you spy a small hut through the trees. It rests at the base of one of the huge oaks. A wisp of smoke rises from a fire pit in front of the hut, and an old dog raises his head and sniffs the air just as you catch sight of him.*

This is Old Narril's hut. It sits here in the forest, with nothing much to recommend the site. There's no clearing, it's as dim here as elsewhere in the forest. There's no obvious source of water or other natural resource (there's a stream about 100 yards to the north).

If the PCs make their presence known the dog will let out a single bark then go back to sleep. An older man will then emerge from the hut, wearing a homespun brown outfit and a large knife.

Narril will greet the PCs cautiously, but not unkindly. He's in no particular hurry to get to their business. They've obviously got some reason for coming to visit, but Narril isn't really curious. He'll chat for as long as they please.

When the PCs finally get around to telling him their business, he has several pieces of information he will part with, but he won't do so until he has some assurances that the party isn't going to be tearing up the forest, and has some idea of its hazards.

He'll say as much. He's not the sort to beat around the bush. He won't tell them they're being tested he'll just start firing off questions. He'll be satisfied if the party can provide evidence that they're competent woodsmen. His questions:

Narril will speak a sentence in a strange language. It is, "Do you speak this language?" in Druidic. If anybody answers in the affirmative (in Druidic) Narril will nod and mutter, "Well, that's a good sign."

He'll wander over to a patch of plants. He turns to the party, "Well, now. When you get lost in my forest, and the orcs steal your food, whatcha gonna eat, huh? Any of this good to eat?" He gestures at the plants. Any character may make a Wilderness Lore or Profession (herbalist) or Knowledge (Nature – Plants and Animals) (DC 10) check to determine that none of those plants are good to eat. They are medicinal herbs. A Heal (DC 15) check will reveal that they are medicinal herbs, but gives no direct indication of their food value. If the party answers correctly Narril will nod and mutter, "Good, good." If they answer incorrectly he sighs deeply and says, "Well, if the slow shadows don't get you, your own cooking will."

He'll wander around the base of the oak and mutter, "Now supposing you go chasing off through the forest after beasties and whatnot, and you end up lost. No sun or

stars to guide you, so quick, which way's north?" An Intuit Direction (DC 15) or Wilderness Lore (DC 25) check will reveal the answer. If the PCs have been taking precautions to keep track of north during their trip, add a +5 situation bonus to the check. If they're right, Narril will smile and nod. If they're wrong, he'll point north and say "Look, that's north, and you'd do well to remember it. And that way's out of the forest, if you know what's good for you." He points east when he says the last.

He'll look at them and say, "And when you all get split up, and you will, you know. How are you planning to find each other, when that happens?" He'll listen to any good plan. If it sounds feasible he'll nod. If the plan sounds far fetch or if it would involve a lot of noise he'll scoff. "What, you think that's going to work? Bah." If the plan was noisy he continues, "You make that much noise and every hungry critter within an hour's walk is going to come looking for dinner."

If the PCs were able to successfully complete at least two of the four tests, he'll agree to help them. If they failed three or four tests, he'll recommend they just turn around and go home, they obviously don't know their way around the forest, and he doesn't want to be responsible for them getting hurt.

Old Narril has lots of information. He's been keeping track of this particular orc band for several days now. He can tell the party the following, if they won his help:

- There's a few dozen of them who have been in this part of the forest for a few days. They've been sending groups of two or three to the edge of the forest every night.
- They make their camp in a cramped cave, not far from here. He can provide directions.
- He knows that orcs detest sunlight, and suspects that if any are outside of the forest during the day, they are probably hiding in an old abandoned tower. He can provide directions. The tower is outside the forest, by about an hour. It's a few hours northwest of Mallus' ranch.

There's a stand of roanwoods about an hour's trek to the south-southwest. Some shadow mastiffs have been spotted around those parts, and the party should steer clear.

If the party failed to win his help, he'll point them toward the edge of the forest and urge them to leave immediately. They don't have to follow his advice, of course, but they may wish to.

If the party wishes to leave the forest to go to the tower outside the forest (or to track the orcs from Mallus' farm) go to Encounter 6. If they wish to return to civilization and make a report go to Encounter 10. If they gained Narril's help and wish to go after the main orc encampment go Encounter 8. If they failed to gain Narril's help and still want to blunder about in the forest, go to Encounter 7.

## Encounter 6

There are two ways for the party to reach this encounter, either from Narril's directions, or by following the trail left by the orcs from Mallus' farm.

If they came directly from the farm, run the encounter normally. If they came from the Dim Forest (with or without speaking to Narril), they find the empty tower, with obvious signs of recent orc inhabitation (including a half-eaten horse). A trail, growing colder, leads toward the forest. The PCs will be unable to follow the trail as easily in the forest. The DC for the Track check becomes 19, since the orcs are now hiding their trail. Only a character with the Track feat can follow this trail. If they succeed (requiring 5 successful checks at one hour per check, retries allowed) they will reach the main orc camp without passing through the slow shadow grove. Go to Encounter 8.

Trailing the orcs is easy. The start off trying to herd about 120 horses, The base DC is 15 for firm ground, but apply a -43 modifier for number and size of creatures being tracked. Anybody at all, no matter how incompetent, can follow the track for the first mile or so. The orcs are losing horses the whole way, and by the time they're down to the last mile or so of the trail they have only 12 horses left. Combined with 6 orcs that's a total of -6 for number of creatures in the group, and -1 since most of them are large (horses). The final Track DC is 8. That's low enough to follow without needing the Track feat. The PCs can take note that most of the horses were abandoned along the way, and could probably be rounded up.

The orcs have taken cover during the day in an old abandoned watchtower. It's about 25 ft. on each side, and the first floor is 10 ft. high. Only half the second floor remains, and brings the total height of the structure to 20 ft on the eastern side. There is a doorway (the door long gone) in the eastern wall of the first floor. There are five arrow slits in each wall on the first floor, and five arrow slits on the eastern wall on the second floor. The eastern portion of the north and south walls each contain a pair of arrow slits on the second floor. Only piercing weapons can be used through the arrow slits.

The horses are staked outside the tower, and a perceptive party might be able to spot them before they are themselves spotted. Make Spot checks for the two orcs on watch at DC 20 (orcs have a Spot of +3). The PCs may make Spot checks at DC 19 to spot the horses. If they spot DC 17 they have seen the tower, but not the horses. If both sides fail all checks, the PCs continue to follow the trail, and may check again. Reduce DCs on each side by 2 and reroll. Once the orcs spot the PCs (if they do) they rouse their companions and sit quietly in the tower, hoping for no trouble. If the PCs spot the horses, they get to decide what to do. If they haven't been seen by the orcs to that point, they'll have a chance to sneak up on them, if they so choose.

The first floor of the tower is divided into four rooms. Just inside the door is a narrow 5x10 foot room, with two arrow slits on either side. It ends in a good (break DC 15).. Through that doorway is a large room, 15x25. It contains lots of debris, a fireplace, and a stairway up. Two doors in the eastern wall of this large room lead to small (10x10 ft.) rooms just beside the entry chamber. They have arrow slits that command that room.

The second floor was one large chamber, but half of it is missing. Only the eastern half of the chamber remains. The staircase leads back down to the main room. A ladder on the western side ascends about six feet to nowhere.

The tower is the temporary camp of the band of orc raiders. How many depends on the tier. The PCs are free to deal with the orcs in any way they care to, though sneaking up on them isn't an option if the PCs have been spotted already.

If the orcs have spotted the PCs approaching, they are all awake and waiting by the arrow slits. They have barred the interior door making the break DC 20. If they have not seen the PCs approaching, they are almost all asleep, with only the two on watch on the second floor awake. The interior door is not barred in this case. The orcs intend to fight to the death. They will not surrender, and attempt to escape if captured. They know they face swift and lethal justice in Gran March for their acts. They will use their bows through the arrow slits as much as is practical.

### **Tier 1:**

**Orcs (6):** Medium-size humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (scale mail) base 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atks +2 melee (1d12+2 [crit x3], greataxe), +0 ranged (1d6 [crit x3], short bow); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity (-1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within a *daylight* spell; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref 0, Will -1.

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3; Feats: Alertness.

Possessions: scale mail, shortbow and 12 arrows each, 1 empty quiver each, greataxe, 6sp each.

### **Tier 2:**

**Orcs (12):** Medium-size humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (scale mail) base 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atks +2 melee (1d12+2 [crit x3], greataxe), +0 ranged (1d6 [crit x3], short bow); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity (-1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within a *daylight* spell; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref 0, Will -1.

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3; Feats: Alertness.

Possessions: scale mail, shortbow and 12 arrows each, 1 empty quiver each, greataxe, 3sp each.

### **Tier 3:**

**Orcs (8):** Medium-size humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (scale mail) base 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atks +2 melee (1d12+2 [crit x3], greataxe), +0 ranged (1d6 [crit x3], short bow); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity (-1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within a *daylight* spell; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref 0, Will -1.

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3; Feats: Alertness.

Possessions: scale mail, shortbow and 12 arrows each, 1 empty quiver each, greataxe, 3sp each.

**Grunch, male orc Bbn5:** CR 5; Medium-sized humanoid (6' tall); HD 5d12 + 12; hp 51; Init +0; Spd 30 ft (scale mail), 40 ft base; AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atks +9/+4 melee (1d12+6 [crit x3], greataxe), +5 ranged (1d6 [crit x3], shortbow); SA Bbn Rage; SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity, Bbn Uncanny Dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref 1, Will 0.

Str 18, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +12, Spot +11, Handle Animal +7, Intuit Direction +7; Feats: Alertness, Quick Draw, Run.

Special Attacks: *Rage*—twice per day, can invoke barbarian rage. Adds +4 Str, +4 Con and +2 Will saves, but -2 AC. Lasts 7 rounds. While raging he attacks at +11/+6 for 1d12+9/x3. His AC becomes 12;

Special Qualities: *Light sensitivity*— suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within a *daylight* spell; *Uncanny Dodge*—grunch cannot be outflanked except by rogues of at least 9<sup>th</sup> level, and is never caught without his Dex bonus to AC.

Possessions: scale mail, shortbow and 12 arrows, 1 empty quiver, greataxe, 12sp.

If the PCs manage to capture any of the orcs, they can be interrogated by anybody who speaks Orcish. None of them understand Common or any other language than Orcish.

The arrows carried by the orcs are high quality, and the majority of the coinage is Geoffite.

If they are interrogated, they will answer only direct questions, and they can provide the following information:

- The location of their main camp.
- That they were sent to steal, scatter, or slaughter as many horses as they could. They were supposed to test, but not slaughter the humans they found.
- Horse makes a tasty meal, even raw.
- Their boss, Horg, sent them. They don't know why he gave these strange orders.
- Horg gave them the good weapons. They don't know where he got them.

If the PCs decide to turn around and head back to civilization, go to Encounter 10. If they head for the main camp, go to Encounter 7. If they head for Old Narril's, go to Encounter 5. If they came from Old Narril's and follow

the trail successfully or just head for the orc camp, go to Encounter 8.

## Encounter 7

You make your way through the forest, darker and more menacing here than near the edge. The gray-flecked red bark of a stand of huge trees is the only color under the canopy. You move between the boles and feel your hair stand on end. Something's not right...

As the PCs move through the forest, they encounter shadow mastiffs. If they were warned by Narril, they won't run into this encounter, but will have encounter 8 instead.

### Tier 1:

**Shadow Mastiff** (1): Medium-size outsider (evil) (4 ft. long); HD 4d8+12; hp 30; Init 5 (+4 Improved Initiative, +1 Dex); Spd 50 ft; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 natural); Atks +7 melee (1d6+4, bite); SA bay, trip; SQ shadowblend, scent; AL Neutral Evil; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +5.

Str 17, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 13.

*Skills:* Listen +7, Spot +7; *Feats:* Dodge, Improved Initiative.

*Special Attacks:* Bay (Su)—when it howls or barks, all within 300 ft. must make a Will (DC 13) save or panic for 2d4 rounds. Follows rules for spread. Trip (Ex)—may make free trip attack if it hits with bite.

*Special Qualities:* Shadow Blend (Su)—can get 90% concealment in any conditions except full daylight. Scent—+4 to Wilderness Lore to track by scent.

### Tier 2:

**Shadow Mastiff** (2): Medium-Size Outsider (evil) (4 ft. long); HD 4d8+12; hp 30; Init 5 (+4 Improved Initiative, +1 Dex); Spd 50 ft; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 natural); Atks +7 melee (1d6+4, bite); SA bay, trip; SQ shadowblend, scent; AL Neutral Evil; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +5.

Str 17, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 13.

*Skills:* Listen +7, Spot +7; *Feats:* Dodge, Improved Initiative.

*Special Attacks:* Bay (Su)—when it howls or barks, all within 300 ft. must make a Will (DC 13) save or panic for 2d4 rounds. Follows rules for spread. Trip (Ex)—may make free trip attack if it hits with bite.

*Special Qualities:* Shadow Blend (Su)—can get 90% concealment in any conditions except full daylight. Scent—+4 to Wilderness Lore to track by scent.

### Tier 3:

**Shadow Mastiff** (4): Medium-size outsider (Evil); HD 4d8+12; hp 30; Init 5 (+4 Improved Initiative, +1 Dex); Spd 50 ft; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 natural); Atks +7 melee (1d6+4, bite); SA Bay, trip; SQ shadowblend, scent; AL Neutral Evil; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +5.

Str 17, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 13.

*Skills:* Listen +7, Spot +7; *Feats:* Dodge, Improved Initiative.

*Special Attacks:* Bay (Su)—when it howls or barks, all within 300 ft. must make a Will (DC 13) save or panic for 2d4 rounds. Follows rules for spread. Trip (Ex)—may make free trip attack if it hits with bite.

*Special Qualities:* Shadow Blend (Su)—can get 90% concealment in any conditions except full daylight. Scent—+4 to Wilderness Lore to track by scent.

If the party wishes to continue to the main orc camp (and know where it is), go to Encounter 9. If they wish to go find Old Narril (and haven't already done so) go to Encounter 5. If they leave the forest, go to Encounter 10. If they decide to go back and follow the trail the orcs left from the farm, go to Encounter 6.

## Encounter 8

If the PCs demonstrated their competence to Narril, they will avoid the shadow mastiff encounter. Use this encounter as they move toward the main orc camp. They are approached by a group of elven foresters who wish to share information about the orcs.

Have the PCs roll Spot (DC 13) checks. If they succeed they notice a trio of elves approaching through the forest. If they don't notice, they'll be startled, but the elves won't harm them. The elves noted with approval that the PCs were able to avoid the slow shadows and other dangers of the forest, and have come to discuss the strange behavior of orcs and other humanoids. They are initially respectful of the PCs, who seem to know their way around the woods at least somewhat competently, for humans.

The leader of the elves is Telladar, and his companions are Illuvier and Shintisa. They would like to know what the PCs are doing in the forest. They appear to be after orcs. The elves are curious as to why, and how the orcs have been behaving. They can provide the following information in return:

- The elves of the Dim Forest have been having their own problems with the humanoids. Skirmishes are getting more frequent.
- The humanoids seem to be travelling in unusually strong numbers.
- Some of the humanoids they've encountered have had weapons better than would be expected. While some appeared to be captured, others seemed new, and quite uniform.

Having spoken to the PCs and either traded information or not, the elves will take their leave. As they go Telladar warns the PCs that if they intend to go after the orcs, they should be wary of ambushes.

**Telladar, Illuvier and Shintisa** (male, male, and female elves, respectively, War1; Hide +3, Wilderness Lore +3).

Go on to Encounter 9, assuming the PCs still want to go to the main orc camp.

## Encounter 9:

This encounter has two parts. The orcs have set up an ambush on their backtrail. That's the first part. The second part is the main band, camped in the cave the PCs have heard about. The PCs can come to this encounter from several positions. If they got directions from the orcs in Encounter 6, they will go through the ambush first. Likewise if they are following the trail left by the orcs in Encounter 6. If they spoke to the elves in Encounter 8, and heeded the warning, they can sneak by or reverse the ambush.

If the PCs did not encounter the orcs in Encounter 6, that part of the band has returned here, and will make this encounter considerably more difficult. That's not a punishment for bad PC choices, it's simply a reflection of the way things are. Things happen in the world even when the PCs aren't involved. In this case, those things include the orc raiding band returning to the main camp. Smart PCs will still have the option of retreat, so this shouldn't be a problem.

As the PCs approach the camp, they will first come to the ambush site. The ambush is well constructed, and manned by three orcs. The orcs are hidden in makeshift blinds, and watching their traps. PCs approaching stealthily have normal chances to avoid trouble through skill use.

The orcs are well hidden, having taken 20 on their Hide checks. Since they have no ranks or bonuses to hide, the Spot DC is 20. The orcs are taking 10 on their Spot and Listen checks, for results of 13 and 14 respectively, if the PCs try to approach undetected. If the PCs hit the net trap, and more PCs are following, the orcs will immediately begin firing to draw attention to themselves, hoping to draw the remaining PCs into a charge across the pit.

The ambush consists of several traps and the three orcs. The traps and orcs are both tiered. The PCs are travelling north as they approach the cave. The net trap covers a 10 x 10-ft. section of the trail. The blind with the orcs is 30 ft. to the west of that. The pit trap is 10-ft. west and 10-ft. south of the net (it is intended to catch those who are behind the net, and begin to run toward the orcs). The deadfall at Tier 3 is 10 ft. behind the net, and is intended to sweep its victims into the pit (in addition to inflicting damage).

### Tier 1:

**Net:** (CR 1) +5 melee (see Note); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 25). Note: Characters in a 10 ft. square are grappled by the net (Str 18) if they fail a Reflex save (DC 14).

**Pit:** (CR 1) 10 ft. deep (1d6); +10 melee (1d4 spikes for 1d4 points of damage per successful hit); Reflex save to avoid (DC 20); Search (DC 21); Disable Device (DC 20).

**Orcs (3):** Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (scale mail) base 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atks +2 melee (1d12+2 [crit x3], greataxe), +0 ranged (1d6 [crit x3], short bow); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref 0, Will -1.

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills:* Listen +4, Spot +3; *Feats:* Alertness.

*Special Qualities:* *Light sensitivity*—suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within a *daylight* spell.

*Possessions:* scale mail, shortbow and 20 arrows each, greataxe, 5sp each.

### Tier 2:

**Net:** (CR 1) +5 melee (see Note); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 25). Note: Characters in a 10 ft. square are grappled by the net (Str 18) if they fail a Reflex save (DC 14).

**Pit:** (CR 1) 10 ft. deep (1d6); +10 melee (1d4 spikes for 1d4+1 points of damage per successful hit); Reflex save to avoid (DC 20); Search (DC 21); Disable Device (DC 20).

**Veteran Orcs, male orc, War2 (3):** Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 2d8; hp 10; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (scale mail) base 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atks +3 melee (1d12+2 [crit x3], greataxe), +1 ranged (1d6 [crit x3], short bow); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref 0, Will 0.

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills:* Listen +4, Spot +3, Craft - (trapmaking) +3;

*Feats:* Alertness.

*Special Qualities:* *Light sensitivity*—suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within a *daylight* spell.

*Possessions:* scale mail, shortbow and 20 arrows each, greataxe, 5sp each.

### Tier 3: (EL 7)

**Net:** (CR 1) +5 melee (see Note); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 25). Note: Characters in a 10 ft. square are grappled by the net (Str 18) if they fail a Reflex save (DC 14).

**Pit:** (CR 1) 10 ft. deep (1d6); +10 melee (1d4 spikes for 1d4+2 points of damage per successful hit); Reflex save to avoid (DC 20); Search (DC 21); Disable Device (DC 20).

**Deadfall:** (CR 2) +10 melee (4d8); Reflex save (DC 15); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 20). Those struck by the deadfall must make a second Reflex save (DC 20) immediately or be flung into the pit, suffering damage from that trap as well.

**Veteran Orcs, male orcs, War3 (3):** Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 3d8; hp 15; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (scale mail) base 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atks +4 melee (1d12+2 [crit x3], greataxe), +2 ranged (1d6 [crit x3],

short bow); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1.

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills:* Listen +4, Spot +3, Craft (trapmaking) +3; *Feats:* Alertness, Iron Will.

*Special Qualities:* *Light sensitivity*—suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within a *daylight* spell.

*Possessions:* scale mail, shortbow and 20 arrows each, greataxe, 5sp each.

These orcs can be bypassed, if the party sneaks by without alerting them or setting off the traps. If they are not dealt with, they will come as reinforcements if there is commotion at the main camp.

The main orc camp is a simple affair. The cave mouth is covered by brush and guarded by one of the orcs. Standard rules apply if the PCs attempt to approach by stealth. The cave mouth is about 9 ft. wide and low, only about 6 ft. high. It goes about 15 ft. into the side of a small rise, sloping downward then turns left. After another 15 ft. there's a sharp drop off of 3 ft. The cave there opens into a larger chamber, about 30 ft. long and 18 ft. wide. The chamber is about 10 ft. high. This is the cave the orcs have used as their camp. It's filthy, dark, and full of orcs. If the orcs from Encounter 6 were not dealt with, they are here now. If the orcs from the ambush were not dealt with, they will come running (arriving in 6 rounds) if there is any commotion. The number and skills of the orcs are dictated by the tier.

### Tier 1:

**Orcs (9):** Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (scale mail) base 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atks +2 melee (1d12+2 [crit x3], greataxe), +0 ranged (1d6 [crit x3], short bow); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref 0, Will -1.

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills:* Listen +4, Spot +3; *Feats:* Alertness.

*Special Qualities:* *Light sensitivity*—suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within a *daylight* spell.

*Possessions:* scale mail, shortbow and 20 arrows each, greataxe, 5sp each.

**Horg, male orc Clr1 (Gruumsh):** Medium-sized humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 1d8; hp 7; Init -1 (Dex -1); Spd 20 ft. (scale mail), 30 ft. base; AC 15 (+4 scale mail, +2 shield, -1 Dex); Atks +4 melee (1d6+2, halfspear), 0 ranged (1d6+2, halfspear); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity, War and Strength domains; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref -1, Will +4.

Str 15, Dex 8, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Listen +7, Spot +6, Heal +5; *Feats:* Alertness, Weapon Focus (halfspear).

*Special Qualities:* *Light sensitivity*—suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within a *daylight* spell; *Strength domain*—perform a feat of strength giving an enhancement bonus to Strength equal to level (+1). The power lasts for one round and can be used once

per day; *War domain*—gains Weapon Proficiency and Weapon Focus in halfspear.

*Spells (3/3):* 0-lvl—*cure minor wounds, light, resistance*; 1<sup>st</sup>-lvl—*cure light wounds, protection from good, magic weapon*.

*Possessions:* scale mail, large wooden shield, halfspear, 12 gp, 11 sp, unholy symbol of Gruumsh.

### Tier 2:

**Orcs (12):** Medium-size humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (scale mail) base 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atks +2 melee (1d12+2 [crit x3], greataxe), +0 ranged (1d6 [crit x3], short bow); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref 0, Will -1.

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills:* Listen +4, Spot +3; *Feats:* Alertness.

*Special Qualities:* *Light sensitivity*—suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within a *daylight* spell.

*Possessions:* scale mail, shortbow and 20 arrows each, greataxe, 3sp each.

**Horg, male orc Clr3 (Gruumsh):** Medium-sized humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 3d8; hp 20; Init +3 (Dex -1, Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft. (scale mail), 30 ft. base; AC 15 (+4 scale mail, +2 shield, -1 Dex); Atks +7 melee (1d6+3, halfspear), +2 ranged (1d6+3, halfspear); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref 0, Will +5.

Str 16, Dex 8, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Listen +9, Spot +8, Heal +7; *Feats:* Alertness, Weapon Focus (halfspear), Improved Initiative.

*Special Qualities:* *Light sensitivity*—suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within a *daylight* spell; *Strength domain*—perform a feat of strength giving an enhancement bonus to Strength equal to level (+3). The power lasts for one round and can be used once per day; *War domain*—gains Weapon Proficiency and Weapon Focus in halfspear.

*Spells (4/4/3):* 0—*cure minor wounds (x2), light, resistance*; 1<sup>st</sup>—*cure light wounds (x2), protection from good, magic weapon*; 2<sup>nd</sup>—*death knell, remove paralysis, bull's strength*.

*Possessions:* scale mail, large wooden shield, halfspear, 12 gp, 20 sp, unholy symbol of Gruumsh.

### Tier 3:

**Orcs (12):** Medium-size humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (scale mail) base 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atks +2 melee (1d12+2 [crit x3], greataxe), +0 ranged (1d6 [crit x3], short bow); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref 0, Will -1.

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills:* Listen +4, Spot +3; *Feats:* Alertness.

*Special Qualities:* *Light sensitivity*—suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within a *daylight* spell.

*Possessions:* scale mail, shortbow and 20 arrows each, greataxe, 3sp each.

**Horg, male orc Clr7 (Gruumsh):** Medium-sized humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 7d8; hp 40; Init +3 (Dex -1, Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft. (scale mail), 30 ft. base;

AC 15 (+4 scale mail, +2 shield, -1 Dex); Atks +10/+5 melee (1d6+3, halfspear), +5 ranged (1d6+3, halfspear); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +7.

Str 17, Dex 8, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Listen +9, Spot +8, Heal +7, Concentration +10; **Feats:** Alertness, Weapon Focus (halfspear), Improved Initiative, Combat Casting.

**Special Qualities:** *Light sensitivity*—suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within a *daylight* spell; *Strength domain*—perform a feat of strength giving an enhancement bonus to Strength equal to level (+7). The power lasts for one round and can be used once per day; *War domain*—gains Weapon Proficiency and Weapon Focus in halfspear.

**Spells (6/6/5/3/2):** 0-cure minor wounds (x4), light, resistance; 1<sup>st</sup>-bless, cure light wounds (x2), divine favor, protection from good, magic weapon; 2<sup>nd</sup>-death knell, endurance, remove paralysis, silence, bull's strength; 3<sup>rd</sup>-blindness, prayer, magic vestment; 4<sup>th</sup>-cure critical wounds, spell immunity.

**Possessions:** scale mail, large wooden shield, halfspear, 12 gp, 10 sp, unholy symbol of Gruumsh.

**Thurg, male half-orc, Rgr3:** Medium-sized humanoid (5 ft. tall); HD 3d10+9; hp 31; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+4 chain shirt, +1 Dex); Atks +6/+6 melee (1d6+4 [crit x3] [x2], hand axe), +4 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); SA favored enemy; SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1.

Str 18, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 6.

**Skills:** Spot +8, Listen +8, Wilderness Lore +6; **Feats:** Track, Alertness, Weapon Focus (hand axe), Ambidexterity, Two-Weapon Fighting.

**Special Attacks:** *Favored Enemy* (elves)—gains +1 to Spot, Listen, Wilderness Lore, and damage rolls involving elves.

**Special Qualities:** *Light sensitivity*—suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within a *daylight* spell.

**Possessions:** chain shirt, 2 hand axes, 4 javelins, 10sp in belt pouch.

If any of the orcs are captured, they can be interrogated. Horg and Thurg are fanatics, and won't talk except under magical compulsion. The rest of the orcs have the same information that the orcs in Encounter 6 had. Horg and Thurg can also tell the PCs that their band was sent by an orc named Blarrgh to do the raiding. Blarrgh paid the band with the superior arrows, and said he'd track them down to get their report. He didn't say when or where. As noted, magical compulsion will be needed to get this information.

The arrows carried by the orcs are high quality, and the majority of the coins are Geoffite.

If the PCs have gotten this far, they've done all they can. They can now return to civilization. Go to Conclusion.

## Conclusion

There are several possible outcomes to this story. The PCs could succeed in all ways. They could also decide that they cannot handle the orcs in the cave, and report that back to the elector. They may even decide that chasing around in the Dim Forest isn't for them at all. All these outcomes are fine (though not all reap the same rewards).

- The only treasure available is that which was taken from the orcs.

### Influence Award:

If the party rescued at least half the horses from the stable, rescued the stable hands (both of them), gave aid to Mallus Sr. and his wounded, and made an effort to recover the horses stolen from the farm, they will be awarded for their heroism **1 Influence Point with the Herdmasters' Guild**. For details, see Appendix 3.

### Commendation:

Active-duty military PCs who were able to defeat all of the orcs present in this scenario (those in Encounter 9 and Encounter 6), asked for no payment (beyond normal military payroll), and made a good report of their activities while keeping Garven alive, qualify for a Commendation if they were respectful and behaved professionally throughout the scenario.

"For valor and independent initiative in combating the plague of orcs upon the good people of Barony Malthinius, <<PC Rank and Name>> is hereby Commended. The army of Gran March and all the people of the land thank you for your service."

## The End

## Experience Point Summary

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the discretionary roleplaying experience award. The roleplaying award should be given for consistent character portrayal and contribution to the fun of the game. You can award different roleplaying amounts to different characters.

Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

### **Encounter One**

If the PCs rescued the stable boys award 100 XP.

### **Encounter Six**

If the PCs defeated the orcs in the tower award 100 XP

### **Encounter Seven**

If the PCs defeated the shadow mastiff  
OR gained Old Narril's help (thus avoiding the shadow mastiffs) award 100 XP

### Encounter Nine

If the PCs defeated the orcs at the main camp (Encounter 9) award 100 XP.

Total experience for objectives 400 xp  
Discretionary roleplaying award 0-40 xp

**Total possible experience 440 xp**

## Treasure Summary

Player characters may keep items from the scenario that are listed on the treasure list below or which meet the following conditions:

1. The item must be non-magical and specifically listed in the text of the adventure (e.g armor on foes). If it is not listed in the text, the characters cannot keep it. Items of this nature can be sold for 50% of book value, or recorded on a log sheet.
2. Animals, followers, monsters, henchmen, and so forth (any living being, basically) may not be kept from a scenario for any reason unless the treasure summary lists the being specifically. It is okay for the player characters to form relationships with NPCs, but these will not be certified and cannot bring material benefit to the character. Contacts (sources of extra information) must be specifically certified.
3. Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some player characters. Items which are worth more than 400 gp that are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), and all magical items, will be discovered in the possession of the character by one means or another. The character must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives campaign-decided penalties for being known as a thief, such as Infamy. For other stolen items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment and the circumstances within the game to determine whether a PC thief gets away with the theft or not.

Any item retained according to these rules, which does not have a certificate, will not ever have a certificate issued for it.

The campaign staff reserves the right to take away any item or gold acquired for things it later finds unreasonable but which were allowed at the time.

### Encounter Six and Nine

The only treasure available is that which was taken from the orcs. The PCs can recover:

- 107 sp
- 12 gp

### Influence Point with Herdmasters' Guild:

If the party rescued at least half the horses from the stable, rescued the stable hands (both of them), gave aid to Mallus Sr. and his wounded, and made an effort to recover the horses stolen from the farm, they will be awarded for their heroism 1 Influence Point with the Herdmasters' Guild. For details, see Appendix

### Commendation:

Active-duty military PCs who were able to defeat all of the orcs present in this scenario (those in Encounter 9 and Encounter 6), asked for no payment (beyond normal military payroll), and made a good report of their activities while keeping Garven alive, qualify for a Commendation if they were respectful and behaved professionally throughout the scenario.

# Appendix or DM Aid

## Appendix 1:

The village of Carern is in the southwestern part of Barony Malthinius. The population is about 200 people. The local ruler is Elector Timmor Ellthorn, a well-liked and respected man. The village is best known as a horse town. It's one of the southernmost villages in the Barony, and ranchers from all over the southern reaches of Barony Malthinius bring their horses to Carern where they pick up the road and head on to the capital.

The main geographical features of note are the Green Stream that runs just north of town and supplies a good bit of the water for the village and the man made hill upon which the Elector's manor sits. A road from the baronial capital runs into Carern and stops in the middle of the village. The land nearby is decent farming land, but most of it is used for ranching of either cattle or - more commonly - horses.

There are a number of features of note in Carern. In the order in which they are presented, these are the produce market, the horse market, the Old Stable Inn, the shrine of St. Cuthbert, and the army hostel.

The **produce market** occupies the eastern side of the main road through town, for the northern half of its length. This area has stalls and tents for the sale of all sorts of produce. Farmers bring their goods to market, where they are bought by both locals and by traders who take it quickly on to the capital for sale there. People buy food here, and both the variety and quality are fairly good, though not so high as in some of the richer farming baronies.

The **horse market** is on the southern edge of town and consists of a large corral and a small shelter. Jervic (human male War1, Appraising +4, Handle Animal +4) runs the place, and takes a small fee for each horse that passes through his market. Most of the quality war-horses produced in the region go to the military, but there are still many mounts and work animals available for sale. The horse market is not connected to the stable used in the adventure *Horse Play*.

The **Old Stable Inn** is the only boarding establishment in Carern. It's a cozy place, but not fancy by any stretch. Well-heeled visitors usually call upon Elector Ellthorn rather than stay at the Inn. The interior is set up to somewhat resemble a stable, though it's cleaner and better smelling than any real stable. Rooms and solid, filling food are available at reasonable rates. This inn is run by Verdana Pallorn (human female Sor4). She always seems to have time to listen to gossip or rumors from visitors, and pass along some of her own.

The **shrine of St. Cuthbert** is a rude and unremarkable structure, as most such places are. It sits next to the Old

Stable Inn at the southern end of the main road. This shrine is attended by Gadel Hallerian (human male Clr1). Gadel is often out wandering from one isolated farmstead to another, and not at the shrine, but the door is never locked, the faithful are always welcome. During the events of the scenario *Horse Play*, Gadel is out of the village.

The **army hostel** is a barracks style building for soldier on missions to the southern part of Barony Malthinius. It's currently empty during the events of *Horse Play*, except for any PC active duty soldiers who might be staying there.

## Appendix 2:

**Elector Timmor Ellthorn, male human Aris:** Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 8 in. tall); HD 5d8 - 5; hp 25; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 9 (-1 Dex); Atks +6 melee (1d8+2 [19-20/x2], +1 *longsword*), +2 ranged (1d8, longbow); AL Lawful Good; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +6.

Str 12, Dex 8, Con 9, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 15.

**Skills:** Speak Language (Baklunish, Elven, Orcish, Giantish), Knowledge (History) +10, Spot +12, Listen +12, Ride +7, Diplomacy +10, Sense Motive +10, Swim +5; **Feats:** Alertness, Weapon Focus (*longsword*), Mounted Combat.

**Possessions:** *The Ellthorn Blade* (the blade of the Ellthorn Elector for generations, this is a +1 *longsword* with the property of being a Lawful blade doing +2d6 points of damage against chaotic foes), fine riding leathers, small manor house.

Timmor Ellthorn is an older man, 60 years of age. He is still relatively fit, but his years are definitely catching up with him. He rules his lands mildly, and rarely interferes in the day-to-day life of the people around him. He uses his office to help smooth out problems arising in the area, but doesn't aggressively try to improve things. As he sees it, life here is good, and there's no need to go fixing what isn't broken. He's a decent fellow, very quick to lend a hand. He expects those around him to do the same.

Lord Ellthorn is getting on in years, and his wife has already passed, but he has an heir who would make any man proud. Stern Vigil Jarvin Ellthorn (human male Pal5/Knight of the Watch 1) will take over his father's position one day.

**Old Narril, human male Drd6:** Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 6d8+6; hp 54; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 natural); Atks +4 melee (1d6, sickle); SA spells, *wild shape*; SQ nature sense, animal companion, woodland stride, trackless step, resist nature's lure; AL Lawful Neutral; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +8.

Str 11, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Wilderness Lore +12, Heal +12, Spot +12, Listen +12, Knowledge - Nature +11, Intuit Direction +12, Animal Empathy +9. **Feats:** Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Track, Endurance.

**Special Abilities:** Wild Shape: Twice per day may polymorph self into a Small or Medium-size animal and back again. May only adopt one form. Regains hp as if rested for 1 day. Does not risk disorientation.

**Spells:** (5/4/4/3) 0—*create water, cure minor wounds, detect poison, purify food and drink, know direction*; 1<sup>st</sup>—*animal friendship, cure light wounds, entangle, shillelagh*; 2<sup>nd</sup>—*animal messenger, chill metal, hold animal, tree shape*; 3<sup>rd</sup>—*greater magic fang, neutralize poison, remove disease*.

**Possessions:** +2 amulet of natural armor, sickle, old dog, hut, homespun clothing.

Old Narril is a recluse, but that belies his true motivations. He's mainly interested in preserving the

forest, but he intends to do that by helping people get along in it, rather than by keeping them out of it. He wants to help society appreciate the forest, instead of seeing it as something to be defeated. He's not terribly sympathetic to people blundering about in his forest, but he will help those who show proper respect and aptitude. Note that Narril is Lawful Neutral.

**Garven Bladdel, male human War2:** Medium Humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 2d8; hp 12; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 studded leather, +2 large shield); Atks +4 melee (1d6+1, halfspear), +2 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL Lawful Good; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will -1.

Str 12, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 9.

**Skills:** Ride +5, Swim +6, Use Rope +2.5. **Feats:** Weapon Focus (halfspear), Mounted Combat.

**Possessions:** halfspear, shortsword, light crossbow, 12 bolts, studded leather armor, large shield, light warhorse.

Garven is a competent military man, in his 4<sup>th</sup> year of service. He intends to go back to his farm when he's done in the service. He's from this area, and will fill in with little stories if prodded. He respects and likes Lord Ellthorn.

**Dith Yrrgorn, male human War3:** Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 5 in. tall); HD 2d8+2; hp 14; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 studded leather, +2 large shield); Atks +5 melee (1d6+2, halfspear), +2 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL Lawful Neutral; SV Fort +4, Ref 0, Will +3.

Str 15, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Heal +5, Ride +5, Craft - Carpentry +6. **Feats:** Mounted Combat, Trample, Ride By Attack.

**Possessions:** Healer's Kit (+2 to Heal checks, 10 uses), halfspear, shortsword, studded leather armor, light crossbow, 12 bolts, light riding horse.

Dith is a large, somewhat clumsy man with a good heart. He was trained as a medic in the military, and is always willing to apply his skills when somebody is hurt. Once he got out of the service, he took over his father's carpentry business here in Carern. He does a good job as a carpenter, and his services are in high demand. He trains regularly and stands ready for call-up if needed. His arms and armor are in good shape. Overall, he's dependable, but not terribly brave or aggressive. He won't go orc hunting with the PCs.

## Appendix 3:

Influence with the Herdmasters' Guild is typically gained through actions above and beyond the call of duty on behalf of, or in defense of, their members. Anything that significantly aids the guild itself also qualifies. Influence points with the Herdmasters' Guild can be used for many things, primarily discounts on top quality mounts.

Once awarded, the influence may be used only once for a favor, but it remains as the equivalent of a Fame point with the organization.

One influence point will gain the PC in question a 10% discount on the price of any normal mount in the *Player's Handbook*. These favors may be combined to allow a group of five friends to purchase a mount at a 50% discount, for example.

Through cooperation with the Leatherworkers' Fellowship, the guild can arrange a 5% discount on any leather good available in the *Player's Handbook*. This includes armor, backpacks, barding, saddles, and the like. Again, these favors may be combined.

At the cost of 1 favor, a member of the guild will Teach an Animal Unusual Tasks (as per the Handle Animal Skill). They will train only mounts (including riding dogs), and will teach only a single task. Acceptable tasks include those listed in the *Player's Handout*. Other tasks may become available in time.

At the cost of 5 favors, the guild will arrange the purchase of a special mount. These mounts follow the normal advancement rules for monsters and animals, and are 1HD greater than normal. Purchase price of these normally unavailable mounts is double the normal purchase price, and they are available only through the Guilds booth at a sanctioned Gran March interactive. These favors may be combined.

At the cost of 7 favors, the guild will arrange a truly unusual mount to be made available for purchase. Details of this are yet to be determined, and will be based largely on what the Co6 lets us get away with. These favors may not be combined with those of other PCs. One PC must accumulate through play 7 Influence points with this guild (or cooperating guilds as determined in the future) in order to gain the opportunity to purchase an unusual mount.

## **Player Handout 1**

Welcome to Carern. Carern is a little village in Barony Malthinius, near the southern edge of the Barony. It's not far from the Dim Forest. It's noted as the southernmost terminus of the road connecting the region to the Baronial capital.

The local ruler is Elector Timmor Ellthorn, an elderly gentleman. His manor house is just outside of Carern, on an artificial hill.

As the southern terminus of the road, Carern is a gathering point for the products of the region. Farmers bring their produce here, and ranchers bring their livestock. The most important product of the region is horses, and a large horse market dominates the south end of town.

Also of interest to travelers are the Old Stable Inn, the only boarding establishment in town, and the army hostel. The Inn has rooms and decent food at reasonable rates, while the hostel serves as shelter for soldiers passing through the area. They stay free, and cook from the stores. Lord Ellthorn assures that the hostel is well maintained.

There are a number of reasons for travelling to Carern:

- Active-duty military PCs were sent here to await the arrival of a group of horses, to be taken back to Hookhill. The horses are due next week, so you have some time at liberty.
- Carern is a fine place to pick up supplies for travelers. There are craftsmen of several sorts, and farms aplenty.
- Carern is a fine place to find horses. The horse markets are always active.
- Carern is the southern point of the road. (The road hasn't yet been continued south to connect to the Braxton's Crossing – Hochoch road.) It is the ideal stopping place during travel to points in southern Barony Malthinius, or the Dim Forest.
- The Old Stable Inn serves a fine local liquor, made from berries that grow in the Dim Forest. The stuff reportedly doesn't travel well, so this is one of the few places to get a taste. The Inn is also moderately famous for its chef, who reportedly studied his craft in one of the finest taverns in Gradsul, Keoland.
- Rumor has it that orcs have been seen in the area in increasing number and frequency. Perhaps this is something that needs investigating.
- Carern is devoid of much religious involvement. Other than a shrine to St. Cuthbert, there aren't any establishments to see to the religious needs of the populace.

Whatever your PC's reason for being in Carern, you are. It is up to the player to decide what about Carern might have lured his or her PC to the area.

