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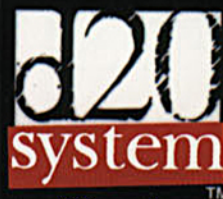
The Crucible of Freya

by Clark Peterson and Bill Webb

A challenging introductory adventure for four to
six characters of 1st or 2nd level.



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The Crucible of Freya™

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Introduction

A challenging introductory adventure for four to six characters of 1st or 2nd level, *The Crucible of Freya* is an excellent beginning to any new fantasy campaign. The adventure begins with the players' arrival in the village of Fairhill, but quickly involves them in a quest to recover a stolen holy item recently taken in an orc raid. In hot pursuit of the thieving orc band, the characters discover the orcs have taken up residence in a ruined keep nearby. Once there, the party learns that even more sinister forces are at work: the keep's original owner may still wield some influence over his now-ruined abode.

Adventure Background

The village of Fairhill has long been a peaceful town, located off the tradeway between two major cities—the merchant town of Bard's Gate to the east and the Grand Duchy's port city of Reme to the west. Fairhill's fields are fertile and its populace happy, due in large part to the blessings of Freya—the goddess of love and fertility—who is the patron deity of Fairhill. The temple to Freya is the focal point for the citizens of the village, and Shandril, the village priestess, is a devoted follower of her fair goddess. Under Shandril's inspired guidance, the village fields yield great quantities of grain, the cattle produce milk and calves in abundance and married couples live in joyous harmony with numerous children. As a result of its location, Fairhill has become a favorite layover on the tradeway between Reme and Bard's Gate.

In recent weeks, trouble has come to Fairhill. A small band of marauding orcs began raiding the outskirts of the village and the surrounding farmland at night. There is a darker force at work behind the orc raids. Tavik, an evil priest of the demon-lord Orcus, has been commanded to desecrate the temple of Freya in Fairhill. Tavik's plan (and the central motivating plot point for this adventure) hinges on his orc minions stealing the *Crucible of Freya*. The crucible is necessary to one of the most important rituals in the village—the blessing of the new wheat harvest, which is only a few days away. By stealing the crucible and interfering with the ritual, Tavik intends to blight the normally bountiful harvest.

However, Tavik and his evil creatures are not the only minions of Orcus near Fairhill. There is a presence that is darker still, if of less immediate threat. The keep in which Tavik and his orcs have taken up residence was once the retreat of Eralion, a reclusive mage of some local repute. Years ago, as the shadow of his death grew long and he began to sense his own mortality, Eralion's heart darkened. He turned his attention to lengthening his fading life. He heard the rumor of the fabled Mushroom of Youth in the dungeon of Rappan Athuk, the legendary Dungeon of Graves, but he lacked the courage to enter those deadly halls. He researched *wish* spells, but lacked the power to master such mighty sorceries, being only a wizard of modest power.

Finally, in his darkest hour, Eralion turned to Orcus, the demon-lord of the undead, and implored the dread demon for the secret of unlife—the secret of becoming a lich. Orcus knew that Eralion lacked the power to complete the necessary ritual to become a lich, as Eralion had barely managed the use of a *scroll* to contact him in the depths of the Abyss in his Palace of Bones. Orcus smiled cruelly as he promised the secret of lichdom to Eralion. But there was a price. Orcus required Eralion to surrender his shadow. "A trifling," Orcus whispered to Eralion from the Abyss. "Something you will not need after performing the ritual which I shall give to you. For the darkness will be your home as you live for untold ages."

In his desperation, Eralion believed the demon-lord. He learned the ritual Orcus provided to him. But as he uttered false words of power and consumed the transforming potion, he realized too late the demon's treachery. He felt his life essence slip away—transferring in part to his own shadow, which he had sold to the demon-lord. Eralion found himself Orcus' unwitting servant. Now, trapped in the prison built by his own pride, his mind long shattered by an all-consuming hate, Eralion hides from the light and curses his unlife.

Soon after the characters arrive at Fairhill, Tavik executes his plan. His orcs raid the village and steal the *Crucible of Freya*, killing several town guards in the process and setting fire to the temple. Shandril realizes that the characters are the only means of recovering the crucible, and she implores them to assist her and her deity. Their quest inevitably leads them to the ruined keep and to a showdown with the marauding orcs. The characters should be able to cleanse the keep of its infestation and, hopefully, uncover the evil designs of Tavik, who can be an ongoing antagonist for the characters. The characters may unearth Eralion's lair and encounter him in the foul form he now wears. At the conclusion of this adventure, the characters should have increased in level, made several friends as well as a powerful enemy in Tavik, liberated some gold, acquired a +1 *sword* and possibly even recovered Eralion's *staff* and spell books.

Module Overview

Though *The Crucible of Freya* can be used on its own, the plot in Part Two is a direct continuation of the story of Corian the Sorcerer, as told in *The Wizard's Amulet*, available as a free downloadable adventure from the *Necromancer Games* website (www.necromancergames.com). We strongly recommend you download that free adventure and use it as a lead-in to this adventure.

This module is presented in several parts. **Part One**, entitled "**Areas of Adventure**," details each relevant area in and around Fairhill—the village of Fairhill itself, the wilderness surrounding Fairhill, several monster lairs and the ruined keep, including the chambers beneath it

where Eralion waits, imprisoned. **Part Two**, entitled "**The Crucible of Freya**," presents a specific story line: the theft of the *Crucible of Freya* by the orcs and the players' quest to retrieve it—leading them to the ruined keep. This story is presented in Act and Scene format, similar to that of a play to make it easier for less-experienced Dungeon Masters (DMs) to run the adventure. **Part Three**, entitled "**Supplemental Information**," includes additional story ideas, tips on how to continue the adventure and links to other *Necromancer Games* modules and supplements. At the end of the module is a **Monster Appendix**, which lists creatures that can be encountered as wandering monsters or added to the adventure by the DM. This appendix does not include monsters that are keyed to specific encounter locations.

Notes for the Dungeon Master

This module is designed for beginning players and DMs, and it requires the use of the *Dungeons and Dragons® Player's Handbook, Third Edition*, and the *Dungeons and Dragons® DUNGEON MASTER's Guide, Third Edition*, published by Wizards of the Coast®. Prior to play, you should familiarize yourself with the entirety of this module, in particular **Part One**, which details all of the areas of adventure. Spend some time getting to know Shandril, Arlen, Baran, Lauriel, and most of all Tavik—the evil priest of Orcus. The more familiarity you have with the main characters, the richer the adventure experience will be for both you and your players. If you are a new DM, study the chapters of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* concerning running adventures for some useful advice.

This adventure is very difficult and may result in the death of a player character (PC) unless they are clever and play well. Due to this, a number of non-player characters (NPCs) are provided along the way to allow for PC replacement. The level of difficulty is reduced if you focus on running the primary adventure in Part Two and leave the optional material, such as the other monster lairs, for future adventuring. At *Necromancer Games*, we believe that the most fulfilling game experiences come from difficult adventures. They provide bragging rights and long-winded stories for years to come. Recovering the *crucible*, defeating Tavik and his minions and encountering Eralion should provide your players with just such opportunities.

Modifying the Adventure

As with all *Necromancer Games* products, this adventure is designed to be easily adapted to any campaign setting. Reme and Bard's Gate can be replaced with any two major cities in your campaign world that are joined by a road that travels through the wilderness. Fairhill can be placed as a village along this road, as long as there is a small forest nearby where the ruined keep can be located. You should also feel free to substitute the deities used in this adventure. Freya can be replaced with

any good-aligned deity. However, the replacement deity should be a deity of lesser importance in your pantheon and should not be a deity to which any of the player characters are devoted. Orcus can be replaced with any evil god—but the evil god you choose should be related to the undead to keep the feel of the adventure intact. You may modify encounters, but we encourage you not to reduce the difficulty of the encounters without much forethought. They are difficult on purpose. Some of these areas and encounters are places to which your players can return when they achieve higher levels.

How to Begin

If you have used *The Wizard's Amulet*, then this adventure begins as your brave heroes travel to the village of Fairhill to rest and lick their wounds following their fight with Vortigern. At the conclusion of *The Wizard's Amulet*, there were three possible outcomes, each of which affects this adventure:

If Vortigern was slain and the party still has Corian's amulet, you may ignore any reference to Vortigern in this module.

If Vortigern escaped but the party still has Corian's amulet, then Vortigern and his familiar, Talon, are in Fairhill, staying at the *Cask and Flagon* under the name "Feriblan." Vortigern's two henchmen, if alive, are also with him, staying in the room at the inn, keeping out of sight.

If Vortigern escaped with Corian's amulet, he and his cohorts head directly to the ruined keep, where they befriend Tavik and the orcs. Vortigern and Tavik have not yet learned the use of the amulet since they have not yet discovered the hidden trap door in the floor of the southwest tower.

If you have not used *The Wizard's Amulet* as a lead-in to this adventure, you will need to invent a reason why your players' characters are headed to Fairhill. Maybe the characters are headed to the famous dungeon of Rappan Athuk to test their mettle and stopped at Fairhill along the way. They may be here because a cleric in the party wants to pay her respects at the temple of Freya. They may have a message to deliver to Arlen the magistrate from someone in Bard's Gate. They may have had a previous encounter with Lannet during which he stole something of value from them, and they have trailed him to Fairhill. Or, most likely, they heard the tale of Eralion and his now-ruined keep, and they wanted to seek it out. In particular, spellcasters in the party might view the keep as a possible treasure trove of spell books. If you use this last hook, you should allow the party to start with two of the rumors about Eralion's keep from the rumor section below. Also, you must provide one of the characters with a *scroll of knock* to enable them to open the portal to the lower portions of the keep. Without such a *scroll*, the party will have no way to bypass the *arcane locked door* leading to Eralion's sanctum. Of course, if you have not used *The Wizard's Amulet*, you should ignore any reference to Vortigern, Talon, Vortigern's henchmen Grenag and Slaaroc, Corian and Corian's amulet contained in this module.

Areas of Adventure

Wilderness Areas around Fairhill

Fairhill lies some 10 miles north of the tradeway, about 8 days' march east from the port city of Reme, approximately halfway between Reme and Bard's Gate. North of the tradeway and parallel to it range the Stoneheart Mountains. South of the tradeway is the river Graywash. The tradeway follows the northern bank of the river as it winds its course from Reme, past Bard's Gate to the forest kingdoms beyond. The Graywash River serves as a political boundary, as it has few fordable sections. South of the river, most settlements are simple farming and fishing communities. It is feared these plains will one day be the battleground between the Grand Duchy and the warlike, expansionist nations to the south.

The vale between the river and the mountains through which the tradeway runs is verdant green and dotted with pine forests and lesser woodlands, though the forests have been cleared back from the road. Hawks and falcons are a common sight, as are larger eagles. The vale contain plentiful game. Several small towns and villages dot the countryside. Lake Crimmormere and Crimmor village lie on the northern path further east of Fairhill between Reme and Bard's Gate. Small farms are common sights as you draw near to any of the villages.

The tradeway is well patrolled by both bandits and the Grand Duke's sheriffs who hunt them. It is also well traveled by merchants and adventurers in search of fortune and glory. It has also recently seen a number of orc raiding parties, causing much concern to merchants and villagers alike. Never before have orcs been present in such number, nor have they been bold enough to dare a daytime raid on the main road. The road itself is raised and made of hard-packed dirt. In some stretches it is even paved with smooth stones. Occasionally there are way stations to the side of the tradeway—large stockades made of logs with large gates in which merchants can corral their wagons and rest for the night with some security.

The half-day's march from the tradeway to the village of Fairhill runs along a small but well-traveled dirt road through lightly rolling hills and fertile grasslands, sloping gently upward toward the foothills of the Stoneheart Mountains.

Player's Wilderness Map: You can download a map of the wilderness area around Fairhill from the **Necromancer Games** web site. Print this out and give it to your players. It does not contain any DM information.

Also north of the river is the Stoneheart Forest, a dense forest barely penetrated by the tradeway. The forest itself is dark and oppressive. It is unusually wet, the ground damp. Large spider webs can be seen from the tradeway, glistening with dew. Those making a Wilderness Lore check (DC 10) notice that the forest is strangely

devoid of the noise of birds or small game. The forest is called Stirge Wood by some because of its large population of these foul creatures. It is believed that somewhere in the forest there is a vast cave where the creatures breed. Local legends insist that an evil wizard has made his lair there and has somehow brought the creatures under his sway. If a party is in the forest at night, they automatically have an encounter with **2d6 stirges**, in addition to any other random encounters rolled for the night. See the Monster Appendix for stirge statistics. Because of the large stirge population, there are few bandits in the forest, though there are other humanoids such as bugbears and ogres. There are also a large number of monstrous spiders that feed on the stirges. Any party traveling for more than one hour in the forest will encounter **2d4 medium-size monstrous spiders**. See the Monster Appendix for spider statistics.

Shown on the Wilderness Map are four additional areas of interest. These encounter areas are monster lairs, detailed as areas A through D, below. They can be used as additional sub-adventures for the party based on adventure hooks gained from roleplaying in the village itself or they can be used to add a little "roll playing" to your role-playing session as you see fit. The other towns and villages depicted on the map, as well as Crimmormere, are not detailed here and may be expanded upon by you.

Wandering Monsters

Check for encounters as provided in the **DUNGEON MASTER's Guide**. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d6 on the table below. The following noncumulative modifiers apply: more than one mile off the main merchant road: +2; in the forest: +4; in the foothills: +6. Plus, add a cumulative +2 if the encounter occurs at night. Statistics for the various wandering monsters can be found in the Monster Appendix at the end of this module. Special groups and their various reactions are detailed below.

1. Merchant Caravan.
2. 2d6 Villagers, heading to/from Fairhill.
3. 2d4 Common Orcs and 1 Orc Leader.
4. Sheriff's Patrol.
5. 2d4 Brigands and 1 Brigand Leader.
6. Small Cavalry Patrol.
7. 1d10 Gnolls.
8. 1d6 (+2 if at night) Stirges.
9. 1 Owlbear. This is not the Owlbear from area C, below.
10. 1 Ogre with 2d4 Goblins.
11. 1 Troll. This is not Karigror the troll from area A, below.
12. 1d3 Worgs with 1d8 Wolves.
13. Girbolg the Ettin, from area B below.
14. The Male Manticore, from area D below.

Merchant Caravan: The caravan comprises 1d8 wagons or carts and pack animals as well as 1d4 guards (War1, hp 5) per cart or wagon. There are 1d3 merchants (Exp2; hp 4; Cha 12; Appraise +3, Diplomacy +1, Profession (merchant) +4) per cart as well. Though the merchants are on guard and want little to do with adventurers, a successful Gather Information check (DC 15) encourages the merchants to tell the characters of the recent orc raids in the area and to offer information about Fairhill in general. They do not otherwise offer any aid to the party.

Villagers: If encountered in the morning, the villagers (Com1; hp 3) are leaving Fairhill; if encountered in the evening, they are returning to Fairhill. Normally a friendly lot, these villagers are cautious around adventurers because of the recent problems. A successful Diplomacy check (DC 12) allows the villagers to tell the party of the recent orc trouble and of the family that was raped and mutilated on the road leading from the village to the tradeway just days ago. Further questioning reveals that the villagers believe that a vampire in an old ruined keep is the cause of the mutilations. They invoke the protection of Freya and encourage the party to seek shelter indoors and the safety of a fire when night falls. The villagers can be convinced to offer aid to the party if the need is dire, including taking the party to a farmhouse or house in the village.

Orcs: These orcs are familiar with Tavik's orcs, though they are not part of his band. They do not know the location of the ruined keep, nor can they give details about it. They attack any party of lesser numbers.

Sheriff's Patrol: The Grand Duke's well-trained sheriffs patrol the tradeway and the lands in the vale between the river and the mountains. A normal patrol consists of eight Waymarch Footmen, two Waymarch Knights and a Waymarch Sheriff who leads the patrol. See the Monster Appendix for statistics. Sheriffs are wary of travelers unless openly aligned with a good deity. With a successful Diplomacy check (DC 15), the patrol can be convinced to escort a party in need. Otherwise they warn characters to be wary of orcs and brigands and be on their way.

Brigands: Brigands size up the party, and if the party appears weak or if the brigands outnumber the party by two-to-one or more, they attack. Normally, brigands ambush travelers using missile weapons.

Cavalry Patrol: A cavalry patrol consists of six mounted Waymarch Cavalrymen and one Waymarch Cavalry Leader. See the Monster Appendix for statistics. Unlike the Sheriff's Patrol, which patrols the tradeway, these small cavalry units ride across the countryside because of an increased hostile military presence to the south. They only travel through the forest if speed is needed; otherwise they stay strictly to the tradeway. They consider their military duty above the needs of helping adventurers, only offering aid in an

extreme case (Diplomacy check at DC 20 or person in life-threatening peril). They will not escort the party under any circumstances, stating that their duty lies elsewhere.

Monster Lairs

These descriptions detail the lairs marked on the wilderness map. Care should be exercised in using these encounters, as many are very difficult. They should be used as follow-ups to wandering monster encounters, as part of the story line based on interactions with the folk of Fairhill or after the main adventure has been completed. However, if the characters are foolish enough to blunder around in the wilderness and run into these lairs, their gruesome deaths become cautionary tales for the local children.

Area A: The Lair of Karigror the Troll (EL 6)

You come upon a small grove of trees with a bubbling brook along its side. A few yards away, you see a small pool of water with fish jumping at insects skimming along the pool's surface. As you stop to drink, you notice a large number of human bones in the stream. As you look around some more, you see a cave entrance on the hillside about 20 feet up. Two men in chainmail hang upside down from a pole braced against a tree limb, their throats cut. It is obvious to you that someone (or something) is aging meat for dinner.

This cave is the lair of **Karigror the Troll**. A few rounds after the party sees the bodies or if it investigates the cave, Karigror appears at the cave mouth and jumps down the slope landing a few feet from his pool. He stands there and looks menacingly at the party, holding his axe in one hand and a human femur in the other. Karigror will likely slaughter an entire low-level party without breaking a sweat. If your party is foolish enough to explore where it shouldn't be exploring, it meets guys like Karigror.

Karigror the Troll: CR 6; SZ Large giant; HD 6d8+36; hp 76; Init +6 (Improved Initiative, Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 18 (+7 natural, Dex, -1 size); Atk +9/+9 melee (1d6+6 [x2], claws) and +4 melee (1d6+3, bite)

or +9 melee (1d12+9, greataxe, crit x3); Reach 10 ft.; SA rend; SQ regeneration (5 hp/round), darkvision (90 ft.), scent (detects living creatures within 30 ft.); AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 23, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills: Jump +8, Listen +5, Spot +5. **Feats:** Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack.

SA—Rend (Ex): If Karigror hits with both claw attacks, he latches onto his foe's body and tears the flesh, automatically dealing an additional 2d6+9 points of damage.

SQ—Regeneration (Ex): Fire and acid deal normal damage to Karigror. Other damage is treated as subdual damage and regenerates at a rate of 5 hit points per round. If he loses a limb or body part, the lost portion is regrown in 3d6 minutes. Karigror can reattach a severed member instantly by holding it to the stump.

SQ—Scent (Ex): Karigror can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponents are upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it decreases to 15 feet.

If the group does not immediately attack or flee, Karigror demands tribute in broken Common for "Stealin' me water." You should play up Karigror's personality and make the party think he is big, mean, green and scary—which he should be to them. Have him crunch on the femur and suck some marrow out of the bone while they are talking with him, then have him discard the bone and begin to finger the edge of his axe. If the party flees, Karigror gives a roar and chases them, but he is only doing this to keep up appearances. He has no intention of chasing down the party—though with his speed, he could.

Tactics: Karigror is quite happy to let the party go free if they pay him a ransom of at least 100 gp, as his pantry is already full and he is rather tired from his last fight. If the party attacks him, keep in mind that Karigror is old and wise and makes good use of the pool of water should the party try to burn him. If he is seriously wounded in battle (less than 10 hp left), he jumps up and hides in his cave, pushing into place a large boulder to block the entrance, requiring a Strength check (DC 26) to dislodge. Up to three characters can add their Strength bonus to the roll.

Lair and Treasure: If the party actually defeats Karigror, his lair consists of three small caves. The first contains bones and rotten armor left over from previous meals. The second is his sleeping quarters and has piles of leaves as bedding. Beneath the leaves are 320 gp, 560 sp and 652 cp. The third chamber is his larder. This room holds the two-week-old bodies of four men. Two have intact armor (chain and leather), and two polearms are also usable. Beneath one particularly well-aged morsel is a metal kite shield, apparently used as a serving tray. On a disembodied hand is a gold and sapphire ring worth 500 gp.

Area B: The Lair of Girbolg the Ettin (EL 5)

You find a stony path leading from the woods up a hill. On top of the hill, you see a large round tower in a state of disrepair, with several fallen stone blocks. As you approach the tower, you hear a beautiful female voice singing a love song accompanied by a harp being played rather badly.

This is the home of Girbolg the Ettin. The party automatically surprises Girbolg in the act of playing the aforementioned harp. Girbolg was a normal, run-of-the-mill chaotic-evil ettin until he put on a magical helmet that he took off of a dead adventurer. This helmet—a *helm of opposite alignment*—turned Girbolg's right head lawful-good, leaving Girbolg's left head chaotic-evil and leaving Girbolg in toto one very confused ettin. On one of his previous raids, he'd captured a small group of humans, including Arialle, the daughter of the village blacksmith, who is in fact a young bard. Girbolg has eaten all of the captives except Arialle, sparing her because of her beautiful voice. She is currently chained to a large rock, singing while Girbolg plays the harp (badly).

Girbolg has a 50% chance of having either his left or right head in charge at any given moment. When the party arrives, make a roll to see if good-Girbolg or bad-Girbolg is in charge. If good-Girbolg is in charge, he is friendly unless he or Arialle is attacked. He asks the party to join the music (he is playing the harp) and is especially impressed if a bard is present. If bad-Girbolg is in charge, he attacks. If the party runs, he will not pursue, instead making sure that Arialle remains with him. He kills (and later eats) anyone he catches.

Arialle is very frightened, and she desperately wants to go home. If the party finds Girbolg in a "good" mood, they can talk him into releasing Arialle with some degree of difficulty (promises to come by and play music, etc.). If the party forces the issue or does not bargain properly, there is a 90% chance that bad-Girbolg takes over and attacks. Otherwise, good-Girbolg cries and pleads for Arialle not to leave. If he is in a "bad" mood, the party will have to kill him (not likely) or distract him long enough to make an escape. He will not pursue the party more than 200 yards from his tower, but don't let them know that. If the party rescues Arialle, award the party 200 XP in addition to the XP for defeating Girbolg. Arialle's father makes the party a suit of full plate mail as a reward once they return to Fairhill.

CRUCIBLE OF FREYA

Girbolg the Ettin: CR 5; SZ Huge giant (13 ft. tall); HD 12d8+20; hp 86; Init +5 (Improved Initiative, Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 19 (-2 size, +3 hide, +7 natural, Dex); Atk +12/+10 melee (2d6+6 [x2], large spiked club) or +6/+5 ranged (1d8+6 [x2], large spear); Face/Reach 10 ft. x 10 ft./10 ft.; SQ darkvision (90 ft.); two-headed; AL CE/LG; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 23, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills: Listen +9, Perform (harp) -3, Search +7, Spot +9. Ettins have a +2 racial bonus to listen, spot and search checks. **Feats:** Alertness, Improved Initiative.

SQ—Two-headed (Ex): Because each of his heads controls an arm, Girbolg does not suffer an attack or damage penalty for attacking with two weapons. Girbolg cannot be flanked unless one of his heads is blinded or incapacitated.

Languages: Ettins normally have no language of their own and speak a pidgin of orc, goblin and giant. Creatures who speak any of these languages must make an Intelligence check (DC 15 if they speak one, 10 if two or DC 5 if the creature speaks all three of the above languages) to understand or communicate with Girbolg. Thanks to Arialle, Girbolg has learned a limited number of words in Common. Speaking to Girbolg in Common requires an Intelligence check (DC 10).

Possessions: Filthy hide armor, 2 large spiked clubs (one in each hand), 3 large spears, Arialle's masterwork harp, 3d12 gp in a small sack with several large rocks and a leather thong threaded through 13 human vertebrae.

Tactics: Though ettins have a low intelligence, they are cunning fighters, ambushing their victims rather than charging into combat. Once the battle is joined, ettins fight furiously until all enemies are dead or the battle turns against them. Ettins do not retreat easily, doing so only if victory is impossible.

Arialle's Locked Chain: 1 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 5; Break (DC 26); Open Lock (DC 20).

Arialle, Female Human Brd2: SZ Medium humanoid; HD 2d6; hp 10; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (Dex); Atk +0 melee (1d3-1 subdual damage, unarmed); SQ bardic music, spells; AL CG; SV Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Skills: Bluff +3, Diplomacy +3, Gather Information +6, Listen +3, Perform +8, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +5. **Feats:** Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perform).

SQ—Bardic Music (Su): Arialle can perform up to two of the following songs once per day: *inspire courage*, *countersong*, *fascinate*, *inspire competence*.

Spells (3): 0—dancing lights, daze, ghost sound.

Possessions: Arialle is currently unarmed and wearing only simple peasant clothes. Her sole possession is the masterwork harp described above, which Girbolg is currently de-tuning.

Treasure: In addition to the masterwork harp (crafted by the legendary Fathilir of Bard's Gate and bearing his runic signature) worth 1000 gp to any

connoisseur, Girbolg has amassed a hoard of 1100 gp, 14,600 sp and 8400 cp. Lost in the rubble of the tower interior—in an area about 20 yards from where Girbolg makes his lair—is a *ring of wizardry* (doubles 1st level spells), which can only be found if a large amount of rubble is moved and a *detect magic* spell is cast.

Area C: The Lair of the Owlbear (EL 4)

As you walk through the forest, the terrain gets rocky and dry. You move to the side of the path, and a horrible smell burns in your nostrils. You hear a thrashing, crunching sound a few feet away. A tree falls, and as the dust settles, you are confronted by a huge bearlike creature with red-glowing eyes and a beak like a bird's, only filled with dozens of sharp teeth, each as long as a human finger. Blood soaks the chest of the beast, and you see the remains of its previous victim, a deer. You set your weapons as the monster charges you.

This creature is the owlbear that has been raiding some local farms. So far, it has killed only cattle and sheep, but it is just a matter of time until it gets a taste for humans. The farmers who have asked the party for help have had a number of livestock bitten in half and would be very happy to have the culprit killed. If the owlbear is killed after the group is asked to help, then award a 200 XP story award. The farmers try to marry off their daughters or throw a party to reward the characters.

Owlbear: CR 4; SZ Large beast (8 ft. tall); HD 5d10+20; hp 52; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (-1 size, Dex, +5 natural); Atk +8/+8 melee (1d6+5 [x2], claws) and +2 melee (1d8+2, bite); Face 5 ft. x 10 ft.; SA improved grab; SQ scent; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Listen +8, Spot +7. **Feats:** Multiattack, Weapon Focus (claw).

SA—Improved Grab (Ex): If an owlbear hits with a claw attack, it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. No touch attack is required to use

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this ability, and tiny and small-size creatures suffer no size penalty. This ability works only against creatures at least one size category smaller than the owlbear.

SQ—Scent: Owlbears can detect an opponent within 30 feet by smell. If it is downwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if upwind, it decreases to 15 feet.

Lair and Treasure: The lair of the owlbear is about 500 feet through the woods from where this encounter occurs. It is very easy to track back to its lair due to the swath of destruction it leaves in its wake (Track check of DC 9 may be attempted by untrained characters). The lair is an abandoned house in the woods. The occupants are long dead or moved away, and no readily apparent treasure can be found. Just a few feet away are a cluster of old graves. If they are dug up, a necklace worth 500 gp can be found within a coffin. Each good-aligned PC doing so should lose 200 XP.

Area D: The Manticore Lair (EL4or7)

There are three ways your party can encounter the manticores. First, if they are exploring the foothills to the north of the village at night, they may encounter the manticore as a wandering monster. If so, read the boxed text below, omitting the italicized portions. Second, if they enter the area of the wilderness map marked "D," whether day or night, there is a 20% chance (1 or 2 on 1d10) that they encounter the male manticore as described below. If this occurs, read the full boxed text. Third, they may make it to the manticore lair directly. If so, proceed to the second set of boxed text below and read that to your group, omitting the bolded text.



You crest a hilltop and look out over the surrounding countryside. You can see all the way west to the ocean from here, and you imagine you can smell the crisp air of an ocean breeze. The way is rocky, but it is vastly better than moving through the underbrush of the forest below. Suddenly, you hear a whooshing of wings, and as if materializing from thin air, a great beast is upon you! It looks like a giant flying lion, but has a man's head and a spiked tail!

This is the male manticore, fetching a PC for its children to use for hunting practice. Its intent is not to kill anyone, but instead to capture one PC and return to its nest.

Male Manticore: CR 4; SZ Huge magical beast; HD 6d10+26; hp 62; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (clumsy); AC 16 (-2 size, +6 natural, Dex); Atk +9/+9 melee (2d4+5 [x2], claws) and +4 melee (1d8+2, bite) or +6 ranged (1d8+2 [x1-6], spikes); Face 10 ft. x 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA spikes; SQ scent; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills: Listen +9, Spot +9. Manticores get a +4 to Spot checks in daylight (not reflected in the numbers listed above). **Feats:** Multiattack.

SA—Spikes (Ex): A manticore can loose a volley of up to 6 spikes as a standard action. This attack has a range of 180 feet and has no range adjustment. The creature can launch only 24 spikes in any one day.

SQ—Scent (Ex): Manticores can detect an opponent within 30 feet by smell. If it is downwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if upwind, it decreases to 15 feet.

Tactics: The manticore swoops in instead of shooting tail spikes. In combat, it strikes for subdual damage. PCs knocked unconscious are carried away, only to wake up an hour later in the manticore's lair at half of their starting hit points. If the male manticore takes over half of its hit points, it flies up and shoots four volleys of tail spikes before leaving in search of easier game. If the male can lower the party to less than two PCs with tail spikes, it resumes its attack/capture attempt. It will be able to grab an unconscious opponent and fly off (two rounds of missile fire from the PCs can stop it) unless it takes over 10 points of damage, in which case it drops the PC carried (4d6 damage from the fall to the PC, Fortitude save DC 18 for half) and continues as above.

If the manticore manages to fly away with a PC, the party can easily see it fly to a hilltop lair about 2 miles away. The group can travel to the lair in about 1 hour. When they arrive, the cave entrance is unguarded. Read the following text to them:

You finally come to the location where you believe the monster carried your lost comrade. You reach a strange cave entrance that sits some 20 feet up a steep hillside. There is a small ledge in front of the cave mouth. Even from this distance, the cave smells of great cat urine and human blood. Dozens of bones of all shapes and sizes litter the stones in front of the cave and the ground beneath—a grisly warning to all who approach.

If any player was captured and returned by the male manticore to the lair, read the following text:

You awaken in a dark cave, and as your eyes adjust, you can see daylight a few dozen yards away. You see another of the large creatures and two smaller versions. The large one has a distinctly female face, beautiful in a way, but made ugly by its protruding fangs and horrid scowl. The two smaller beasts move toward you, and you reach for your weapon, only to find it missing.

This is the manticore lair. The male is only present if he was reduced to less than half his hit points during the initial fight. If he was not, he is off in search of another victim (not the PC group). The captive has had all of his weapons removed (though the manticores are 90% likely to miss a dagger). Inventive PC captives can pick up a bone (treat as club) or tail spike (treat as dagger) to defend themselves. Only the baby manticores attack, unless they are both killed in which case the mother retaliates (at +2 to hit and damage). Unless the male is present, the rescue party surprises the mother from behind as she blocks the captive's escape and watches the kids have fun. If the male is present, it is watching the entrance.

The captive is about 80 feet from the cave entrance, and the female manticore sits 50 feet away, about 30 feet from the entrance. In the back of the cave (to the left of the captive) are all of the captured PCs' weapons, as well as the treasure hoard of the monsters.

Female Manticore: CR 3; SZ Huge magical beast; HD 5d10+15; hp 45; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (clumsy); AC 16 (-2 size, +6 natural, Dex); Atk +7/+7 melee (2d4+5 [x2], claws) and +3 melee (1d8+2, bite) or +5 ranged (1d8+2 [x1-6], spikes); Face 10 ft. x 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA spikes; SQ scent; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills: Listen +8, Spot +8. Manticores get a +4 to Spot checks in daylight (not reflected in the numbers listed above). **Feats:** Multiattack.

SA—Spikes (Ex): As above.

SQ—Scent (Ex): As above.

Manticore Cubs (2): CR 3; SZ Medium magical beast; HD 2d10+6; hp 18; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (clumsy); AC 16 (+5 natural, Dex); Atk +3/+3 melee (2d4+3 [x2], claws) and +2 melee (1d6+3, bite) or +1 ranged (1d6+1 [x1-6], spikes); SA spikes; SQ scent; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills: Listen +3, Spot +4. Manticores get a +4 to Spot checks in daylight (not reflected in the numbers listed above). **Feats:** Multiattack.

SA—Spikes (Ex): As above, with a range of 60 feet.

SQ—Scent (Ex): As above.

Treasure: One suit of human-sized half-plate mail armor and a matching suit of chain barding for a medium war-horse, pierced in numerous places from manticore spikes, requiring at least one week of work by an armorer to repair at a cost of 200 gp. Piles of torn and stripped human clothing. *Detect magic* (DC 14) reveals a *cloak of protection* +2. Assorted coins and gems in a pile total 123 gp, 245 sp and 111 cp. There are four 50 gp garnets and one 1000 gp ruby among the coins. It requires a careful search (DC 15 Search check) to find the gems. A battered but still usable traveling spell book containing the spells *fly*, *blink*, *detect invisibility*, and *Leomund's trap*. A locked iron box, nicked with scratches and bite marks, with a fine-quality lock contains a *manual of quickness of action* and two nonmagical masterwork daggers of fine quality.

Locked Iron Box: 1/2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 15; Break (DC 26); Open Lock (DC 22).

If the mother and babies are slain while the male is away, the male returns with a victim (from one of the local farms) in about 2 hours. The male is no more wounded than whatever damage the PCs caused, drops the farmer and flies into a berserk rage when he sees his dead family. The male attacks at +2 on all dice rolls at that time. Rescue of the farmer nets the party a 200 XP story award in addition to any combat award for the manticore and a great deal of fame for the party!

The Village of Fairhill

The Village of Fairhill rests on the largest of several gently sloping hills about 10 miles from the tradeway. Four hundred twenty souls inhabit the village and surrounding farmland. The village is governed by Arlen, the village magistrate. The town has a general alignment of neutral good, though individuals of all ethos live here under the protection and goodwill provided by the temple of Freya. Though numerous other shrines are present, Freya is the patron deity of Fairhill and her temple is the most prominent. Thus, the true "leader" of Fairhill is Shandril, the priestess of Freya. She disdains that role, however, and openly supports Arlen as magistrate. There is little political strife in Fairhill, as Arlen, Shandril, Captain Baran and the tavern owners all work together. Fairhill is a peaceful town and has not had any real troubles with bandits or monsters. That is, until recently...

For the past several weeks, orcs have appeared of the outer farms and roads of Fairhill. A village family was raped and mutilated on the road leading from the village to the tradeway just days before the players arrive. Rumors of a vampire in an old ruined keep are running rampant, and the peace that the villagers once enjoyed is seemingly at an end.

Fairhill (Village): Non-standard; AL NG; 200 gp limit; Assets 10,000 gp; Population 420; Mixed (human 79%, elf 8%, dwarf 5%, half-elf 5%, halfling 2%, gnome 1%).

Authority Figures: Arlen, human male, Ftr3 (magistrate); Baran, human male, Ftr5 (captain of the guard); Shandril, elf female, Ftr1/Cle5 (priestess of Freya).

Important Characters: Lauriel, elf female, Ftr2 (Baran's lieutenant); Tarnen, human male, Com5 (proprietor of the *Cask and Flagon*); Glarian, half-elf female, Com2 (proprietor of the *Drunken Cockatrice*); Voril, human male, Exp6 (blacksmith).

Notes: local militia, War2 (x25); Exp1 (x11); Brd1 (x2); Ftr1 (x3); Wiz1; Rog1 (x6); Com1 (x365).

The village militia is composed of 25 well-trained guards, led by Baran, the captain of the guard, and Lauriel, his lieutenant. Arlen, himself a grizzled old veteran of many dungeon crawls, is the nominal leader of the militia, though Captain Baran, is its true leader. During the day, there is always at least one group of four guards making a circuit around the perimeter of the village and another similar group stationed in the central market (area 8). At night the guards light a number of fires that ring the village perimeter. Through the course of the night, there are always a minimum of two patrols of five guards each that carry torches and travel a circuit from fire to fire making sure they stay lit and keeping watch for orcs or other evil creatures. In addition, there are always at least three guards stationed at each of the two guardhouses (area 7), as well as three guards stationed at the top of the Tower of

the Guard (area 1). Arlen and Baran have proposed building a wall around the village, but Shandrill is reluctant to do so, trusting instead in Freya's protection.

Player's Map of Fairhill: You can download a free PDF map of the village of Fairhill from the **Necromancer Games** web site. It does not contain any of the DM markings.

Rumors in Fairhill

While in Fairhill, the party may hear any number of local tales and legends either through the Gather Information skill or through roleplaying. The sample rumors below are listed by the DC for the Gather Information check. A successful check provides one rumor at the closest DC at or below the check roll. Rumors marked "General" can be learned without specific questioning. The rumors about particular NPCs can only be obtained by specifically asking about those persons. Certain locations in town provide modifiers to a character's Gather Information check. There is a reason why inns and taverns full of adventurers are good places to hear local legends. When a character stumbles upon a rumor, don't just read it; use it as an opportunity for roleplaying.

DC 8 (General): "These orc raids have been growing more and more frequent. Bah! It's as if we live next to Rappan Athuk or some other den of evil!"

DC 8 (General): "It's horrible! I hear they found the whole family by the road, mutilated. And the women and children...they were...I can't speak of it!"

DC 8: "Eralion? Wasn't he the wizard who built that old keep off in the forest? They say it's ruined now. I wouldn't go near it. 'Happy is the village whose wizards are all ashes,' I say."

DC 10 (General): "Eralion's Keep? Everyone knows that a vampire lives within those ruined walls. What else can explain the shadowy figure people see at night. I would advise you to stay away from that accursed place!"

DC 10 (General): "Shandrill has been here for a long time—as long as I can remember. Without her, this village would have disappeared long ago. Praise be to Freya."

DC 12: "The wizard Eralion? He's been dead these last 20 years or so. His keep is in ruins now. Someone said he used to worship St. Cuthbert, but how can that be when his keep was built by demons and held together by magic? You won't catch me going near some ruined wizard's castle."

DC 12 (General): "So, you fancy yourselves adventurers, do you? You're probably friends of that halfling, Lannet. You tell him he owes me for those beers."

DC 14: "I heard tell that Baran lost his hand to swamp trolls years ago and that even Shandrill couldn't heal him."

DC 14: "Have you heard the story of Fendrin? He lost his wife and children to some evil beast. A manticores I heard it called, though I've never seen it. He's probably over at the *Cockatrice* now, drowning his sorrows."

DC 16 (General): "Adventurers are you? Huh! Some villagers went missing recently. They fancied themselves adventurers. Never saw them again, did we? One of them was the blacksmith's girl, Aerialle."

DC 18: "You know, they say that Arlen used to be a great adventurer and that he even served in the Lyreguard [an elite military unit] at Bard's Gate."

DC 20: "Some say Shandrill is more than she seems. I think she might have used some strange magic on Arlen. He always seems to do what she wants. I don't trust her."

DC 22: "A wizard and a bird? You know, now that you mention it, I did see someone matching that description. I remember that bird. There was something not right about it. My dog barked at it and then hid behind my legs. I think I saw them at the *Cask and Flagon*."

Locations in Fairhill

1. Tower of the Guard

This stone building is the watchtower where the garrison monitors folks approaching the town. During the day, **Baran**, **Lauriel** and **12 town guards** are stationed here. The tower has three upper levels. The first floor contains the barracks/mess hall. The second floor contains Baran's chambers, where he lives in Spartan simplicity. The third floor contains a storage room, holding extra spears, arrows, longbows, shields, swords and shirts of mail sufficient to outfit 12 men. All the doors in this tower are **iron-reinforced doors** that can be barred and locked (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25 (+2 if barred); Open Lock DC 22). Baran, Lauriel and the sergeant of the watch (the most senior guard on duty in the tower) all have keys to the doors. The roof has a signal fire and is crenelated. There are always a minimum of three town guards on the roof at any time. An old spear-firing **ballista** (3d6, crit 19-20/x3, range 200 ft., 2 rounds to reload) is mounted on the roof and 36 spears are stored in a barrel next to it. Next to the ballista is a large **bell** that those on watch can use as an alarm for the town. Beneath the first level, accessible by a hidden stair, is the dungeon, which has four individual cells and a watch station for a jailer. Gather Information checks at the tower are made at -4.

2. Magistrate's House

Arlen lives in this enclosed dwelling with a small garden. It is one of the few stone buildings in the village. His house, though opulent by Fairhill standards, is far from luxurious. It offers all the amenities one might find in an average house in a city such as Bard's Gate or Reme—which is uncommon in a village of this size. Inside the house, Arlen has well-crafted furniture brought by him from Bard's Gate. Arlen is a very gracious host, frequently inviting visiting persons to dine with him. His wife, **Ginia**

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(human female Com4; hp 20), and his daughter, **Sirya** (human female, Com1; hp 8; Dex 15, Cha 14; Hide +2, Move Silently +2), share Arlen's gracious demeanor. Sirya fancies herself a rogue and is intrigued by any adventurers. Arlen is less-than-enthusiastic about her recent obsession. In his inner room, he has a **locked chest** (1 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 1; Break DC 17; Open Lock DC 20) containing 4 *potions of cure serious wounds* and 3000 gp in gems, as well as 529 gp and 303 sp.

3. Noble's House

Similar in design to Arlen's house, this house is slightly smaller. Normally used by the relatives of the magistrate, passing nobles or characters of importance, this building is currently empty. Arlen has the key to the **front door** (1 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 18; Open Lock DC 20). Unbeknownst to anyone, the last traveling dignitary to stay here had recently pilfered a valuable gem (1000 gp) from his home city. Fearful that someone knew of his theft, he decided to abandon the gem and hid it in a nook in the top desk drawer in the house (Search DC 25). If the characters complete the adventure detailed in Part Two of this module, Arlen may allow them to stay in this house whenever they visit Fairhill, so long as he is magistrate.

4. Temple of Freya

Normally, **Shandril** is here. This wooden building with its peaked roof is an open one-room shrine with a stone altar at the north wall. The altar is decorated with a carving of the head of a stag. A silver crucible, the *Crucible of Freya*, rests upon the altar. It is used to sacrifice wine or wheat from the harvest or to bless a person or creature with fertility. When Shandril is not present, the *crucible* rests here unguarded—no one in town would dare touch it.

The Crucible of Freya: This silver crucible appears far too decorative and fragile to be used to melt or burn anything placed inside of it. It is finely worked and traced with the same strange runes that appear on Shandril's sword, *Valkyria*. Despite its fine appearance, the bowl itself is enchanted so that the user, when invoking Freya, is protected as if under a *protection from fire* spell (up to three times per day). Once per week, the *crucible* may be filled with fresh rainwater and, if *blessed* by a priestess of Freya, the water becomes holy water. In addition, once per week, when a female consumes the above detailed holy water from the *crucible* and is simultaneously *blessed* by a priestess of Freya, she is blessed with fertility and can successfully conceive offspring regardless of age.

5. Shandril's House

Though Shandril has been given a house indicative of her status in the village, she lives here grudgingly. She much prefers to stay in the temple. The house is furnished with only the most essential wooden furniture, though

she has a very large wood-framed bed covered with numerous animal furs (worth 50 gp each). A chest (unlocked) at the foot of the bed holds articles of clothing.

6. Shrines to Other Gods

Each is a small covered shrine with small statues of the other good-aligned gods, such as Pelor, St. Cuthbert, Heironeous, Kord and Yondalla. There is also a slightly larger shrine to Fharlanghan, as Fairhill is a common merchant stopover. At any time, **2d6 worshippers** (Com1, hp 2) can be found here in various phases of worship. In addition, there may be **1d4 priests** (Cle1-3) of any of the above deities paying respects to their respective gods. Only **Kath**, a cleric of Kord, lives in Fairhill on a permanent basis. The other priests are traveling clerics. Interestingly, there are no druidic shrines in the village, nor is there a shrine to Ehlonna, Corellon Larethian, Garl or Moradin. If questioned about this, Shandril replies simply: "It is the will of Freya."

7. Guardhouses

Three guards are stationed in each of these stone buildings. The guardhouses have **stout wooden doors** (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23) and contain a rack of halbspears, shields and short swords as well as several barrels of arrows. Gather Information checks are made here at a -2.

8. Central Market

Here, farmers and merchants gather at the great tables under their tents in the sun and sell all manner of goods. Anything in the *Player's Handbook* costing 200 gp or less is available here. The loose assemblage of merchants and farmers is overseen by the town guard (4 guards are here at any time) and by Arlen himself—the merchant life of the village being a primary concern of his. Breach of the peace in the central market is not tolerated and will win the violator a week in one of the dungeon cells in the tower of the guard until the matter can be decided by Arlen and Shandril.

9. The Drunken Cockatrice Inn

Run by **Glarian**, a female half-elf (Com2; hp 6; Profession (innkeeper) +5). The bar is clean, the ale fresh, the hearth-fire roaring, the food well-cooked and the rooms reasonably priced. The inn has three stories, reached by beautifully crafted wooden-railed stairs, and a total of 12 rooms to rent. Rooms cost 2 gp per night, meals 2 sp—a bargain considering Glarian's cooking is famous as far away as Bard's Gate. **Fendrin** can usually be found here, drunk. He will tell his sad tale to anyone who will listen. See his description in the NPC section below. Gather Information checks here are made at +2.

10. The Cask and Flagon

Cheaper and less clean than the *Cockatrice*, this inn is run by **Tarnen** (human male, Com5; hp 18; Profession (innkeeper) +1), an elderly human who used

to adventure long ago but who no longer possesses any of his prior skills. The inn itself is poorly maintained and consists of a large common room with a fireplace, a large kitchen and a storage room in the rear. The food is substantially worse than the *Cockatrice*. The common room has four booths along one wall with curtains that can be drawn for privacy. Tarnen's four dogs normally sleep on the floor of the common room and beg at customers' feet for table scraps at meal times. To the side of the room, a set of railed stairs allows access to the upper level where the eight individual rooms are located. Each room is locked and only the lodger has the key—even Tarnen does not keep a spare. Three of the rooms are currently rented. Tarnen charges 1 gp per night for a room and 1 sp per meal.

Lannet the thief currently boards here because it's cheap, but he eats at the *Cockatrice*. If Vortigern is in Fairhill, he is staying here under the assumed name of "Feriblan." Gather Information checks are made here at a +3. If questioned, Tarnen may recall Vortigern and Talon (DC 15) and tell the party that such a person is staying here in one of the upstairs rooms.

11. The Tavern of the Three Kegs

This tavern also stables horses for travelers at 1 gp per horse per day, plus 2 sp per day for feeding. The ale here is local product and is outstanding, though expensive (1 sp per pint). A surly, fat halfling named **Perik** (Com3; hp 8; Profession (barkeep) +2, Craft (beer) +10) runs the tavern. Perik wants nothing to do with his patrons, simply taking their money and dispensing their ale. The tavern does not have any rooms for rent since Perik prefers horses to people. Luckily his main waitress, **Dalia** (halfling female, Com1; hp 3; Cha 17; Profession (waitress) +5) more than makes up for Perik's lack of charm. Gather Information checks here are at +2.

12. Smithy

This smithy is run by **Voril** (human male, Exp6; hp 21; Profession (blacksmith) +6, Craft (metal) +5, Craft (weapon) +5, Craft (armor) +4). Voril desperately misses his daughter, ARIALLE, who has not returned from a recent adventuring expedition. She is currently the captive of the confused ettin, Girbolg. (See wilderness area B, above.) He is a competent smith and with enough time can craft or repair simple armor. Heavy armor is beyond his ability, though he will craft a suit of full plate mail for anyone who rescues his daughter. Voril is suffering greatly from her absence, and he has not made anything in his forge for weeks. His depression causes him to take four times as long to make any requested item.

13. Fendrin's Farm

This simple dwelling is Fendrin's farm. He is currently at the *Drunken Cockatrice*, mourning the death of his wife and son. See his description, below. The house

is unlocked; the door stands open. There is little of value inside, though hidden in a drawer of a small chest near the unmade bed are several pieces of jewelry (a necklace, ring and broach, 25 gp each) belonging to Fendrin's now-dead wife. Next to the bed stands Fendrin's poor-quality short sword with no scabbard. The fields behind Fendrin's house remain unplowed.

Major NPCs in Fairhill

There are a number of important non-player characters in Fairhill that are central to any story set in the village. Become familiar with them.

Arlen: Arlen is a stern but fair man. He is 45 years old, and his hair and beard are dark, with a hint of gray above the temples and a small streak of gray in his short beard. Arlen has a proud and confident demeanor. He carries a three-foot rod of hard, dark wood covered by bands of iron with him at all times, and it functions as a +1 mace. He carries it as a badge of his office as magistrate. In combat he girds himself with his trusty short sword, which, though nonmagical, has been with him since his days in the Lyreguard in Bard's Gate. His dark eyes seem to pierce whomever he holds in his gaze, making it difficult to lie directly to him. Arlen's preference for robes, his dark hair, close-cropped dark beard, steely gaze and ever-present rod convey to those who don't know him the impression that he must be a mage. He is not. He has had many occupations. He was once a captain of the Lyreguard of Bard's Gate. He was an adventurer and explored the Stoneheart Mountain dungeon. Rumors say he has been to the famous dungeon of Rappan Athuk, but if the place is ever mentioned in his presence he goes pale and refuses to speak of it. He was once a 7th level fighter, but he lost four levels due to undead attacks in Rappan Athuk, which led him to give up adventuring and settle down in Fairhill. For more details on these locations, see the *Necromancer Games Supplement Bard's Gate* and the dungeon modules *The Tomb of Abysthor* (which details the Stoneheart Mountain dungeon) and *Rappan Athuk—The Dungeon of Graves*.

Arlen, Magistrate of Fairhill, Male Human, Ftr3: SZ Medium humanoid (6 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 3d10+3; hp 27; Init 0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12/19 (+1 ring, Dex/with +5 armor, +2 shield); Atk +7 melee (1d6+3, +1 mace) melee +5 (1d6+2, short sword); AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills: Climb +3, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +3, Jump +3, Listen +5, Sense Motive +7, Spot +6, Wilderness Lore +3. **Feats:** Alertness, Expertise, Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Weapon Focus (mace).

Possessions: Robes, chainmail, shield, short sword, +1 ring of deflection, +1 mace.

Shandril: Shandril is unique in many ways. Aside from her captivating beauty, she is one of very few elves

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who are clerics of a non-elven deity. Shandril is tall for an elven female. She wears her long hair in braids, also unusual for an elf, in the style of a Valkyrie—a warrior-maiden of Freya. Though she prefers a simple tunic and, in colder weather, her cape of winter-wolf fur, when the situation dictates, she will don her shining scale mail, shield and silver helm. When so arrayed, she is an imposing figure. She is kind and gentle, yet firm in her opinions and her devotion to her goddess. She has no desire for political power, though she has a considerable amount of it as a result of her standing in the village. She is a friend of Arlen. The two of them consult on important issues.

As with many people who are now in Fairhill, Shandril was once an adventurer. As a young elven warrior, she found the sword, "Valkyria," which she liberated from a spider's hoard. Upon drawing the sword, she was visited by a vision of the goddess herself. Filled with the ecstasy of that visitation, Shandril pledged herself from that day forward to be Freya's devoted priestess. Abandoning her homeland, Shandril ventured north, through many lands, doing Freya's will until she came to the rolling hills south of the Stoneheart Mountains. There she found the small merchant village of Fairhill. At Freya's direction, she founded the temple in the goddess' honor in her new home. That was some 90 years ago. Under Shandril's guidance and with the blessing of Freya, Fairhill has become a fertile, prosperous and peaceful village. Shandril also has been blessed by her goddess with an item of great significance—the *Crucible of Freya*. With the *crucible*, Shandril makes burnt offerings of new shoots of wheat and newly picked grapes to invoke the blessing of Freya for the fertility of the land. She also uses the *crucible* to make holy water and to bless the residents with fertility and love.

Shandril, Warrior Maiden and Cleric of Freya, Female Elf, Ftr1/Clr5: SZ Medium humanoid (5 ft. 8 in. tall); HD 1d10+1 plus 5d8+5; hp 46; Init +7 (Improved Initiative, Dex); Spd 20 ft. (30 ft. base); AC 15/19 (+2 leather, Dex/+4 scale, +2 shield, Dex); Atk +7 melee (1d8+2, +1 longsword "Valkyria") or +7 ranged (1d8+1, masterwork composite longbow, additional +1 to hit and damage if using +1 arrows); SQ elf racial abilities, turn undead; AL NG; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 17.

Skills: Climb +5, Concentration +2, Diplomacy +4, Handle Animal +7, Heal +7, Jump +4, Knowledge (Religion) +6, Listen +10, Move Silently +4, Ride +6, Search +7, Sense Motive +4, Spot +10, Swim +1. Shandril gets a +2 racial bonus to Listen, Search and Spot checks (already calculated). **Feats:** Alertness, Expertise, Improved Initiative, Leadership.

Spells (5/4/3/2): 0—detect poison, guidance, light, purify food and drink, resistance; 1st—bless (x2), divine favor, shield of faith; 2nd—augury, consecrate, zone of truth; 3rd—prayer, searing light.

Deity:	Freya, Goddess of Love and Fertility
Alignment:	Neutral Good
Domains:	Good, Healing, War, Animal
Typical Worshipers:	Human females
Favored Weapons:	Longsword, longbow

Freya is a lesser goddess of love and fertility. Freya is also the leader of a great band of women warriors—known as Valkyries on some planes of existence. Freya represents fertility in all its forms. On this plane, Freya represents the cycle of death and rebirth. She is a goddess of the coming harvest, as well as of sexuality and procreation. Her beast is the falcon, though she is fond of the winter wolf and the stag. She appears most frequently to her worshipers as a beautiful human woman dressed in robes and a cloak of winter-wolf fur, though she occasionally appears as a hunter in leather armor with sword and bow or as a warrior in shining mail with a glowing sword. She can take the form of a falcon—or any other bird—at will, as well as that of a huge winter wolf.

Domain Spells (Healing/War): 1st—magic weapon; 2nd—spiritual weapon; 3rd—magic vestment.

Languages: Elven, Common, Sylvan, Celestial.

Possessions: Leather tunic, cape of winter-wolf fur, scale mail, large steel shield, silver helm, +1 longsword "Valkyria," longspear, masterwork composite longbow with 20 arrows and 5 +1 arrows, holy water (x8), potions of healing (x6), scroll of five spells (cure serious wounds (x3), heal, raise dead), the *Crucible of Freya*, ceremonial garb, 25 gp, 102 sp.

"Valkyria," Shandril's +1 Longsword: This sword appears to be little more than a ceremonial sword or possibly a druidic weapon of some type. Its handle of horn makes it appear unsuitable for true combat, and it is encased in a rustic, unadorned reinforced leather scabbard. However, once the blade is drawn, it is clear that this sword is of exquisite workmanship. The length of the blade is traced with finely etched runes of an unknown design. There is an ethereal quality to the sword that those looking at it cannot comprehend. Once gripped, the horn handle fits the wielder's hand better than any weapon ever held, and the blade glows with a warm, low light in the presence of any priestess of Freya or in any area holy to Freya. The horn handle was crafted from a stag sacred to the goddess and

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sacrificed to her. This sword was, in fact, crafted on another plane and used at one time by one of Freya's Valkyries. When taken to any of the outer planes, the sword becomes a +3 sword. Any good-aligned character holding the weapon will see a vision of the goddess Freya, differing in intensity based on her Wisdom and Charisma scores. If the wielder has both a Wisdom and a Charisma score of 14 or above, the vision of the goddess will be incredibly strong, and the goddess will greet the wielder and invite her to worship her as one of her clerics. If the wielder is good-aligned but does not have sufficient scores, she will simply feel the goddess' presence. If the wielder does in fact become a priestess of Freya, the sword grants additional power. Once per week, the wielder can contact the Valkyrie who was the previous owner of this sword. This contact is treated as a *commune* spell, but allows the wielder to ask only one question.

Baran: Baran, the captain of the guard, is a stern man. He keeps his reddish-brown hair pulled back from his face. His full moustache hides a scar above his mouth. Baran's most immediately noticeable feature, aside from his demeanor, is the fact that he has no right hand. His right arm ends in a grisly stump of scar tissue. He lost his hand fighting swamp trolls in the fens to the far south, and the pain of the wound has never left him. After years of mercenary service, he found himself in Fairhill. There he found a place of peace and safety—respite from his years of pain. He befriended Shandril who was unable to heal his arm—too much time having passed since the injury. He won the trust of Shandril and Arlen and 10 years ago was appointed the captain of the guard. The safety and security of the town are his primary concerns. He will sacrifice anything to keep Fairhill safe. The recent troubles have caused him great anguish. He feels personally responsible for the safety of the village, and every villager who is harmed affects him as if he himself had been stricken.

Baran the One-Handed, Captain of the Town Guard, Male Human, Ftr5: SZ Medium humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 5d10+10; hp 48; Init +6 (Improved Initiative, Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+4 armor, Dex); Atk +11 melee (1d10+7, +2 *bastard sword*, crit 19-20) or +7 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit 19-20, range 80 ft.); AL NG; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +4, Gather Information +2, Intuit Direction +1, Jump +5, Listen +1, Ride +3, Search +1, Sense Motive +2, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +1. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (*bastard sword*), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (*bastard sword*), Weapon Specialization (*bastard sword*).

Languages: Common.

Possessions: +1 *Studded leather*, +2 *bastard sword*, dark green cloak, light crossbow with 20 bolts.

Lauriel: Lauriel, Baran's lieutenant, is slight of build, though she is made of stern stuff. She is fiercely

loyal to Baran because he saved her from certain death at the hands of an ogre several years ago. She is grim and determined, unafraid to express her opinion when not in the presence of her superiors. Her piercing eyes shine with an inner strength. She is also dedicated to Shandril, whom she views as a role model. She is considering becoming a paladin of Freya (which she will, in fact, do when she gains her next level of experience). If she sees Shandril give her magic sword to any member of the party, she will protect the sword and its wielder at all costs as if they were Shandril herself. She will harbor a secret jealousy—feeling that she should have been given the honor of wielding Shandril's sword.

Lauriel, Baran's Lieutenant, Female Elf, Ftr2: SZ Medium humanoid (5 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 2d10+2; hp 21; Init +7 (Improved Initiative, Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+4 armor, +1 shield, Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d8+1, longsword, crit 19-20) or +3 melee (1d6+1, halfspear, crit x3) or +5 ranged (1d8, longbow, crit x3, range 110 ft.); SQ elf racial abilities; AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills: Heal +2, Hide +4, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Ride +4, Search +4, Spot +4. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Languages: Common, Elf, Orc.

Possessions: Chain shirt, small steel shield, halfspear, longsword, longbow with 40 arrows, adventurer's pack, 50 ft. silk rope, small sack with 12 gp and 29 sp.

Town Guards: For a rural village, the guards of Fairhill are of exceptional quality and organization. Baran has trained them well. The guards are of any race, though most often human and half-elven. They can be either male or female. They wear a green surcoat with a small silver bowl device worked on the left breast over their chain shirts, and they carry wooden shields that bear no device. They are to the last person loyal to Baran and Arlen.

Town Guards, Male or Female Human or Half-elf, War2: SZ Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+4 armor, +2 shield, Dex); Atk +4 melee/ranged (1d6+1, halfspear, crit x3, range 20 ft.), +3 melee (1d6+1, short sword, crit 19-20) or +3 ranged (1d6, shortbow, crit x3, range 60 ft.); AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +3, Jump +1, Listen +3, Ride +2, Search +1, Spot +4. **Feats:** Alertness, Weapon Focus (halfspear).

Languages: Common.

Possessions: Chain shirt, large wooden shield, halfspear, short sword, shortbow, green surcoat with crucible device, small sack with 2d4 gp.

Kath, Cleric of Kord: Kath is a large man, great of girth, with a booming voice and a friendly demeanor. He has extremely large hands and has a habit of wearing his spiked gauntlets at all times, even during prayer and at meals. Kord is exuberant and greets friends with great

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enthusiasm. Unfortunately, because of his spiked gauntlets, characters not making a Reflex save (DC 8) take 1d2 damage when Kath locks them in one of his affectionate bear-hug greetings and slaps their backs. Kath, of course, does not realize the damage he causes and cocks his head in confusion when his friends on occasion avoid his hugs. Kath means well, but he is rather dimwitted. Though dim, he is an incredibly lucky person. He has bumbled his way into any success he has ever had. Shandril has befriended Kath and is very patient with his meager understanding of his own deity. Kath does whatever Shandril asks and is always the first to volunteer to face any peril. He may volunteer to aid the party if they are in need, though he will not remain as a permanent member.

Kath, Male Human, Cle2 (Kord): SZ Medium humanoid (6 ft. 4 in. tall); HD 2d8+2; hp 16; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (30 ft. w/o armor); AC 16 (+6 armor); Atk +4 melee (2d6+3, greatsword, crit 19-20) or +4 melee (1d4+3, spiked gauntlets); SQ turn undead, strength, luck; AL CG; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Concentration +2, Diplomacy +1, Heal +2, Knowledge (Religion) -1, Spellcraft -1. **Feats:** Improved Unarmed Strike, Martial Weapon Proficiency (Greatsword).

SQ—Strength (Su): Once per day, Kath can add +2 to his Strength for one round.

SQ—Luck (Su): Once per day, Kath can re-roll a roll he just made.

Divine Spells (4/3): 0—cure minor wounds, guidance, light, resistance; 1st—bless, command, divine favor, magic weapon.

Domain Spells (Strength/Luck): 1st—endure elements.
Languages: Common.

Possessions: Scale armor, greatsword, holy symbol of Kord, 2 gp.

Lannet: Lannet is your stereotypical halfling thief: nosy and unable to resist his larcenous impulses, particularly as they relate to shiny objects and gems. His pickpocketing is innocent, and Lannet will, if confronted, return any item to its owner with a smile and a wink. Like more traditional halflings, Lannet is slightly chubby with a ruddy complexion. His face has an ever-present smile beneath his green eyes and curly brown hair. He wears leather armor and a gray cloak of obviously fine quality, which is in fact a *cloak of elvenkind*. What sets Lannet apart is his inquisitiveness and his *cloak*. Though most halflings have rather short attention spans, if Lannet finds something that interests him, a person or an item, he obsessively tries to learn everything about that person or thing. If Vortigern and Talon are in town, Lannet becomes interested in Talon and uses his *cloak* to spy on the two as much as possible. Lannet also takes an interest in the party when they arrive in Fairhill. He uses his *cloak* and follows them

when they set off on adventure, which can be a blessing if you as DM need an unlooked-for dagger throw to get the characters out of a jam.

Lannet, the Much-Too-Inquisitive Thief, Male Halfling Rog3: SZ Small humanoid (2 ft. 10 in.); HD 3d6+3; hp 18; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (size, Dex, +2 armor); Atk +4 melee/+7 ranged (1d4, masterwork dagger, crit 19-20, range 10 ft.), +7 ranged (1d4, masterwork hand crossbow, crit 19-20, range 30 ft.), +7 ranged (1d6, masterwork shortbow, crit x3, range 60 ft.); SA sneak attack (+2d6); SQ evasion, uncanny dodge, traps; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 15.

Skills: Appraise +5, Balance +4, Bluff +4, Climb +3, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +2, Disable Device +5, Disguise +2, Escape Artist +6, Gather Information +2, Hide +11 (+20 with *cloak*), Listen +4, Move Silently +10, Open Locks +7, Pick Pocket +7, Search +4, Spot +3, Tumble +7, Use Magic Device +2, Use Rope +4. **Feats:** Dodge, Mobility.

Languages: Common, Halfling, Elf.

Possessions: Masterwork leather armor, masterwork daggers [x4], masterwork hand crossbow, masterwork shortbow, *cloak of elvenkind*, 36 gp, 12 sp, 50 gp gems [x5], *potion of cure serious wounds*, any items Lannet has filched from others.

Dwarves of the Shattered Axe: This band of novice adventurers is heading from Reme to Bard's Gate, or so it claims. The dwarves got sidetracked in Fairhill. They are staying at the *Cask and Flagon* where they imbibe large amounts of ale until all hours of the morning. They get the name of their adventuring band from the device on Durgis' shield—an axe with a broken haft. At first glance, they do not appear to be seasoned warriors.

Durgis: Durgis is a pompous, self-important dwarf who acts as if he is a 15th level fighter. He refers to his axe as "Grodek" and says he recovered it from the hoard of a troll some years back. He claims it is a magical and intelligent weapon. Anyone can see (DC 10 Appraise check) that it is in fact a weapon of common craftsmanship at best. He claims to have been to the dungeon of Rappan Athuk and to have found piles of gold there. When asked why he doesn't retire given his claimed wealth, he responds brusquely, "Adventurin' is in me blood, boy. But then a wee whelp such as yourself wouldn't understand an adventurer's life." He hitches up his belt and refuses to speak any further. For more information on Rappan Athuk, see the **Necromancer Games** dungeon module *Rappan Athuk—The Dungeon of Graves*.

Unless offended as previously described or his veracity challenged in some other way, he will tell his false tales all night long (particularly if someone else is buying the ale), each tale getting more grandiose and unbelievable. Many of his tales will be factually impos-

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sible, such as his tale of how he allegedly turned a gorgon's gaze against itself, thus turning it to stone (which, of course, is not how a gorgon's petrification power works). He claims to have traveled with numerous characters of legend. A bard or mage can make an opposed Knowledge (History) or Knowledge (Lore) check against Durgis' Bluff check to notice that Durgis' stories are based on well-known tales (though none of which mention his involvement) but that he has gotten several of the facts wrong. Despite his boasting, Durgis is a coward at heart. At the first sign of trouble, he will feign a hangover or claim that "such a task is beneath a man of my skills."

Durgis, Dwarf Male, Ftr1: SZ Medium humanoid (4 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 1d10+2; hp 10; Init +0; Spd 15 ft. (20 ft. base); AC 16 (+4 armor, +2 shield); Atk +3 melee (1d10+1, dwarven waraxe, crit x3); SQ dwarf racial abilities; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +4. **Feats:** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe); Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe).

Languages: Common, Dwarf.

Possessions: Poor-quality dwarven waraxe, scale mail, large wooden shield, 24 gp, 41 sp, 10 gp gems [x2].

Trel, Burl and Gar: Durgis' companions, Trel, Burl and Gar, have been browbeaten by Durgis into submitting to his pretend authority. They generally restrict themselves to saying "Yes, Durgis," or "Right you are, Durgis." They travel with Durgis because they actually believe Durgis is as experienced an adventurer as he claims to be. When Durgis tells his tall tales, the three stare at him in awe of his fictional prowess. They have more courage than Durgis, if less intelligence, and if Durgis is insulted they will stand and draw their weapons against whomever would be bold enough to insult such a "great and legendary adventurer." As long as Durgis is around, they would never consider leaving his company to join up with the player characters.

Trel, Burl and Gar, Durgis' Dwarf Companions, Dwarf Male, Ftr1 (3): SZ Medium humanoid (4 ft. 2 in.); HD 1d10+4; hp 14; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 15 ft. (20 ft. base); AC 18 (+3 armor, +2 shield, Dex); Atk +5 melee (1d8+3, battleaxe, crit x3) or +4 ranged (1d10, heavy crossbow, crit 19-20, range 120 ft.); SQ dwarf racial abilities; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will -3; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 5, Wis 5, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +2, Jump +2, Listen +1, Spot +1. **Feats:** Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe).

Languages: Common, Dwarf.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, large wooden shield, battleaxe, heavy crossbow with 20 bolts, 8 gp, 29 sp.

Lasha: Lasha set out some four months ago from the Monastery of the Standing Stone to wander the world and grow in wisdom. She has befriended Shandril and is discussing with her the distinctions between the monk and the priest. She admires Shandril's devotion

and her wisdom. Lasha, believing there is something to learn from the teachings of all deities, desires to spend a month or more in Fairhill, discussing religious matters with Shandril and spending time in quiet meditation. If asked to join the party, she meditates on the topic before giving her response. She sits for two days in undisturbed thought and then agrees if the party is friendly to Shandril. She fights with a unique two-weapon style in addition to her unarmed tactics. Lasha has shaved her head bald, wears no jewelry and keeps no possessions other than her staff, her two kama, her robe and a small pouch. She is polite and always measures her response before she answers any question. She has a habit of bowing slowly and low to anyone at greeting and departure.

Lasha, Human Female, Mon2: SZ Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 11 in.); HD 2d8+4; hp 20; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 (Dex, Wis); Atk +2/+2 melee (1d6+1, kama [x2]) or +2/+2 melee (1d6+1, quarterstaff) or +2 melee (1d6+1, unarmed); SA unarmed strike, stunning attack, flurry of blows; SQ evasion, deflect arrows, fast move, AC bonus for Wisdom; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 13.

Skills: Balance +4, Climb +2, Escape Artist +3, Heal +4, Hide +3, Jump +2, Knowledge (Religion) +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +5, Search +2, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4, Tumble +6, Use Rope +3, Wilderness Lore +4. **Feats:** Ambidexterity, Two-weapon Fighting.

Languages: Common, Draconic.

Possessions: Robe, quarterstaff, 2 kama hanging from her rope belt, small pouch with a 10 gp gem.

Fendrin: Fendrin (Human Male Com1; hp 3; -2 melee (1d6-1, short sword)) is a local farmer whose property has fallen into disrepair. His fields lie fallow and unplowed—the plow rusting in the rows. He drowns his sorrows in ale at the *Drunken Cockatrice*. Fendrin came to this sad state some six months ago when his wife and son were captured by the male mantichore (see Monster Lair, area D, above). Fendrin shot at the beast with his shortbow as it flew off with his family. He managed to hit his wife with one arrow, killing her. The mantichore then dropped his son, who fell to his death. At the time Fendrin figured death was preferable to whatever fate awaited them at the mantichore's lair. Now, however, he laments his decision, believing he should have tried to rescue them. He is reluctant to tell his tale, but if talk of the party venturing to kill the mantichore is raised, a grim fire ignites in his eyes, and he insists on accompanying the party to take vengeance on the monster. If he ever sights the beast, he charges it with maniacal frenzy without thought to his own safety or the safety of the party. Fendrin has a poor-quality short sword that he is not skilled at using. He has a shortbow and 20 arrows. He is similarly unskilled with his bow, and it was a miracle he was able to hit his wife in the grasp of the flying mantichore.

The Ruined Keep

The now-ruined keep sits on a low mound within a small forest near Fairhill, the dark trees encroaching on its broken walls. The keep was constructed by the mage Eralion some 90 years ago (about the time Shandril arrived in Fairhill) using scrolls and elementals, not demons as mentioned in local rumors. Though Eralion did later turn to darkness, he was not originally an evil mage. In fact, when the keep was built, he erected a chapel to his patron deity, St. Cuthbert. As the darkness grew within him, Eralion abandoned his god. The chapel remained undesecrated until Tavik arrived.

With Eralion's death, the magics holding the keep together weakened, and it deteriorated. Some years ago, the keep was a haven for bandits. They never learned of the evil that dwelled beneath them. A small unit of Waymarch forces rooted out the bandits and did much damage to the already decrepit structure. The keep lay abandoned until several months ago, when Tavik arrived with his cadre of orcs. At Tavik's direction, the orcs set about fortifying the keep. They filled some of the major cracks in the otherwise intact towers. They installed a "back door" in one of these cracks, using an iron door from the destroyed gate in the internal wall. They raised a dirt palisade in the exposed portions of the exterior curtain wall, sharpening large logs and setting them at intervals along the palisade. They repaired the scorpion and moved it to the top of the chapel tower.

Player's Map of the Ruined Keep: You can download a player's map of the ruined keep from the *Necromancer Games* web site. It does not contain any of the DM information.

Above Ground

The walls of the keep are crenelated to a height of 18 feet. The top of the wall behind the crenelations is 12 feet high. The towers are three stories high, and their roofs are crenelated as well. The gatehouse is two stories tall with a crenelated roof. Unless otherwise noted, all doors in the keep are **iron-reinforced oak doors** (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 30; Break DC 25) that can be barred from the inside. The floors between levels are made of thick wooden planks and beams. Many are rotted.

In total, the keep is home to **Tavik** (area 8), **Nagroth the orc chieftain** (area 9), **Grosh the ogre** (area 9, second level), **2 orc sentries** (area 8, bell tower) and **18 orc warriors** (4 at area 8, 6 on guard duty around the palisade and 8 off duty in area 9), as well as **Kren** and his **6 orcs**.

1. The Main Path and the Gatehouse

Eralion never had much contact with the neighboring village of Fairhill, going so far as to clear a road giving him access to the forded river east of Fairhill and the road south to the tradeway. That road, however, has now been almost fully overgrown. Neither the current occupants nor the prior bandits made any use of the

road. In fact, they considered the direct approach it provided a defensive liability and were happy for the hindrance of the overgrowth.

The keep's gatehouse is intact, but the inner and outer portcullises have permanently rusted shut, making them effectively impassible. The orcs, therefore, do not guard the gatehouse. They have gone into the gatehouse through the door on the second floor, which opens out onto the north curtain wall, and removed any items of value to store them elsewhere.

Ground Floor: This level consists of the main passage through the gatehouse, closed on either end with the **rusty portcullises** (2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 30; Lift DC 35). The chambers to either side of the main passage have arrow slits allowing hidden soldiers to fire arrows at any intruders. These rooms are abandoned. They are accessed either by a trap door from the second floor or by large doors on the south wall leading into the main courtyard of the keep.

Second Floor: This level consists of one large room. Unlike other buildings, the floor of the gatehouse is stone. In the center of this room above the main passage are "murder holes," allowing defenders to pour hot oil or other liquids on intruders below. Also in this large room are two winches—one for both the front and rear portcullises blocking the first-floor passageway. Both are stuck and unusable. In fact, as an added measure of security, the orcs disabled the winches and broke the chains. Access to this level can be had through two **barred trap doors in the floor** (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 25; can be opened without a Break check by persons on the second floor) that lead down to the first level. Also, this large room has two doors, each opening onto the curtain wall on either side of the gatehouse.

2. The Secret Forest Path

This is the path used by the orc raiding parties. It ends at the "back door" of the keep. The path itself is even more heavily overgrown than the main path. Following the secret path to the keep requires three successful Wilderness Lore checks (DC 12), with each check constituting one hour of time. The total time to reach the keep depends on how well the party can follow the path.

Characters exiting the secret path can make a Spot check (DC 15) to notice the orc sentry in the bell tower. See Act III, below.

3. The Northwest Tower and the "Back Door"

Ground Level: The northwest tower, which is missing a portion of its roof and second floor, is known as the "back door." The orcs filled the crack in the tower with stones from the destroyed walls and installed a large external iron door that they took from another part of the keep. It is locked with a large iron padlock. The key to the lock is given to the leader of whatever raiding party has set out from the keep.



It can be picked, but the lock is of surprisingly high quality. If the party has encountered and defeated Kren and his raiding party, they should have the key to the door in their possession and can easily use it to unlock the door. The orcs keep the lock and the hinges surprisingly well-oiled.

The "Back Door," Locked, Iron-reinforced Oak Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 6; hp 25; Break DC 25; Open Lock DC 26.

Inside the tower, in the very center, is a colony of **green slime**. There is a well-defined path around the outside of the room that avoids the slime, which is obvious to anyone who looks (DC 10 Spot check). The orcs also sometimes "mine" the green slime, filling small ceramic pots with the stuff to use as wicked projectiles. The orcs also use torches to burn a path around the slime and to keep it away from the iron door. The duty of mining or clearing the slime is given to any orcs who displease Tavik. More than one orc has lost a hand doing this. A set of stone stairs leads to the second floor. The wooden floor on the level above is rotted and has a large hole in it, as does the roof.

Green Slime (CR4): A patch of green slime deals 1d6 points of temporary Con damage per round while it devours flesh. On the first round of contact, the slime can be scraped off a creature, but after that it must be frozen, burned or cut away (applying damage to the victim as well). Against wood or metal, green slime deals 2d6 points of damage per round, ignoring metal's hardness but not that of wood. It does not harm stone. Extreme cold or heat, sunlight or a *cure disease* spell destroys a patch of

green slime. Slime kept in a ceramic pot only lives for 1 week once separated from the main patch.

Second Level: The second level has a rotted floor with a large opening to the first level below. The roof above is also destroyed. The floor collapses under almost any pressure. Anyone walking on the floor must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or fall to the floor below, suffering 2d6 damage and falling into the green slime. A person can safely stay against the wall and move along it to either of the two doors that open onto the curtain wall of the keep.

4. Watch Fires

Normally, there are no watch fires around the keep. However, if the orcs fear attack, they build watch fires at the locations indicated on the map. See Act III for more details about the orcs' levels of alertness. These fires make it very difficult for the party to sneak into the keep at night. Hide checks (at -2, orc Spot checks at +2) must be made for all players attempting to cross the watch-fire area. If the party is wise, they wait for the fires to die down (about 4 hours). The lazy orcs do not go out to stoke the fires, and if the party does wait, the orc sentries are unlikely to notice anyone crossing the watch-fire area (+2 to character Hide checks, -2 to orc Spot checks under these circumstances).

5. Palisade

The palisade is made of dirt and rocks and is sloped on the inner side. It drops sharply on the outer side, which is also set at intervals with sharpened logs to repel charg-

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ing attacks and to provide cover for defending orcs. A total of **six orc palisade guards** stand watch at the palisade at any given time. Unlike the other orcs, these orcs use longspear and bows to take advantage of the cover provided by the palisade and spikes. Climbing the external wall of the palisade requires a Climb check (DC 8).

Orc, Palisade Guards (6): CR 3; SZ Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (30 ft. base); AC 15 (+3 armor, Dex) plus possible cover provided by palisade and sharpened logs; Atk +3 melee (1d8+2, longspear, crit x3, reach weapon) or +2 melee (1d6+2, short sword, crit 19-20), or +1 ranged (1d6, shortbows, range 60 ft.); SQ darkvision (60 ft.), light sensitivity; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; AL CE; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3. *Feats:* Weapon Focus (longspear).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, longspear, short sword, shortbow with 20 arrows, 1d6 gp, 2d8 sp.

6. The Outer Courtyard

The outer courtyard sees the most orc activity, since it is adjacent to the southwest tower where Nagrod the chieftain resides and where the off-duty orcs sleep. At night, however, it is abandoned and dark by Tavik's order to better allow watching orcs to spot possible intruders. Six of the above-described orcs stand watch at the palisade in the outer courtyard.

7. The Inner Courtyard

The inner courtyard is much quieter, as it connects to Tavik's abode. The inner courtyard has only two of the above-described orcs standing watch at the palisade on the west wall of the keep. Inside the inner courtyard are the remains of several wooden structures. These buildings were burnt to the ground when the Waymarch forces drove out the brigands. There is also a well here that remains serviceable.

8. The Chapel

Ground Level: This building was once a chapel to St. Cuthbert, god of vengeance. **Four orc warriors** sleep among the ruined pews of the *desecrated* chapel, as does one of the **orc sentries** who keep lookout in the bell tower above. The chapel itself consists of one main room with an altar, behind which is a small sanctum, divided from the main room by a curtain. The sanctum was once the chamber of the resident priest. It is now the home of **Tavik, the evil priest of Orcus**. The walls of the chapel are covered with evil runes and orc feces. The angelic statue of a celestial servant of St. Cuthbert remains unmarred, but only because Tavik wants St. Cuthbert, through the statue, to witness the desecration of his temple. The altar itself has been smeared with blood, and Tavik has placed a *candle of defiling* upon it, which acts as a *desecration* and *bane* spell for all of Tavik's enemies as

long as the candle burns. The tapestries and pews, which were once of fine quality, have been destroyed and are currently used as soiled bedding by the orcs who sleep here.

If any person invokes St. Cuthbert while in this defiled shrine and calls for vengeance, St. Cuthbert places the equivalent of a *prayer* spell on that person and his or her allies for the duration of the combat.

Orc, Warrior (4): CR 2; SZ Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (30 ft. base); AC 15 (+4 armor, Dex); Atk +3 melee (1d12+2, greataxe, crit x3) or +1 ranged (1d6, shortbows, range 60 ft.); SQ darkvision (60 ft.), light sensitivity (-1 attack rolls); SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; AL CE; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3. *Feats:* Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Possessions: Scale mail, greataxe, shortbow with 20 arrows, spent torches, 2 flasks of oil, tinder box, 1d6 gp, 2d8 sp.

Orc, Sentry: CR 1/2; SZ Medium humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 5; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+3 armor, Dex); Atk +2 melee (1d6+2, short sword); SQ: light sensitivity (-1 attack rolls); SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1; AL CE; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3. *Feats:* Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Scorpion).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, short sword, 8 sp, 21 cp.

Tavik resides in the priest quarters, where he keeps his prayer book and evil items dedicated to Orcus. If the party played through *The Wizard's Amulet* and Vortigern and Talon stole the amulet from Corian, then Vortigern and Talon are present here as well. (See *The Wizard's Amulet* for their statistics.) Vortigern and Talon sleep in this room during the night and are active and awake during the day. Tavik sleeps here during a majority of the day and is active at night. The two evil spellcasters have developed an unholy alliance in an attempt to gain power from the mage's keep. They continually argue about the relative worth of Law and Chaos. They have not yet determined how to use the amulet.

Tavik, Evil Priest of Orcus, Male Half-Orc, Cle4 (Orcus): CR 5; SZ Medium humanoid (6 ft. 10 in.); HD 4d8+4; hp 31; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft. (30 ft. base); AC 18 (+5 armor, +2 shield, Dex); Atk +8 melee (1d8+4, +1 *evil skull-tipped spiked heavy mace*, +9 melee/1d8+5 damage vs. good aligned, +11 melee/1d8+7 damage vs. paladins) or +4 melee (death touch, target's armor is ignored); SA death touch, smite; SQ control undead; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +6; AL CE; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +4, Diplomacy +2, Heal +4, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (Religion) +6, Search +2, Sense Motive +3, Spot +3. *Feats:* Power Attack, Weapon Focus (heavy mace).



SQ—Death Touch (Sp): Once per day, Tavik can make a melee touch attack against a living opponent. If successful, Tavik rolls 4d6. If the total equals or exceeds his opponent's current hit points, his opponent dies. No save.

SQ—Smite (Su): Tavik may make one melee attack at +4 to hit and +4 (his level) in damage once per day.

Spells (5/4/3): 0—guidance, inflict minor wounds (x3), resistance; 1st—bane, bless, doom, protection from good; 2nd—bull's strength, hold person (x2).

Domain Spells (Death/Destruction): 1st—cause fear, 2nd—death knell.

Possessions: Blackened masterwork chainmail, large masterwork metal shield bearing the device of Orcus, +1 evil skull-tipped spiked heavy mace (+2 vs. good-aligned creatures, +4 vs. paladins), prayer beads (word of recall, one use remaining, recalling Tavik to temple of Orcus in the Stoneheart Mountain dungeon), potion of cure serious

wounds (x2), potion of neutralize poison, unholy water (x6) (2d4 damage to lawful good clerics and good outsiders, 1d6 to any good-aligned cleric), key to the "back door." Of course, the party will not recover any of these items if Tavik is slain because the contingency spell transports his corpse and these items to the temple of Orcus.

Tactics: Tavik is anxiously awaiting news from his raiding party. If he hears a commotion outside, such as an attack, he calls up to the sentries to determine the nature of the attack. He is overconfident about the strength of his force. He has seen nothing from Fairhill that causes him to fear that his keep will be assaulted. He believes his orcs and his ogre are more than a match for any invaders. Thus, if he hears combat, he enters into any melee, believing he can bring even greater glory to his evil demon god. If encountered in the chapel, he immediately invokes Orcus, lighting the candle of defiling as he wades into combat.

AREAS OF ADVENTURE

Deity:	Orcus, Demon-Lord of the Undead.
Alignment:	Chaotic Evil.
Domains:	Chaos, Evil, Death, Destruction.
Typical Worshipers:	Monsters, Undead, Evil humans.
Favored Weapons:	Ornamental heavy mace

Though a demon prince, Orcus is worshiped as a deity. He is the lord of all the undead and resides in the Abyss in his Palace of Bones. Evil and wanton destruction are his only goals. He is most often depicted as a bloated boar-headed, bat-winged monstrosity with cloven-hooved goat legs. He wields a skull-tipped wand that reportedly slays any living thing it touches.

If battle turns against him, he flees to the northeast tower (area 10) and hides with the spiders. If he appears to be in mortal danger or if he is brought to 5 or fewer hit points, he uses his *prayer beads* to return himself to the temple of Orcus in the Stoneheart Mountain dungeon, detailed in the **Necromancer Games** module *The Tomb of Abysthor*. If he is slain, a *contingency* spell is triggered, transporting his corpse to the same temple to be *raised from the dead* (after sufficient torment by Orcus in his Palace of Bones in the Abyss). If slain by the party, Tavik will (after being *raised*) attempt to hunt down and kill the party.

Treasure: Tavik has an unlocked small chest containing 831 sp and 51 gp, as well as a 50 gp broach. He carries most of his important treasure on him.

Candle of Defiling: This black tallow candle is designed to be placed on altars of good deities by evil priests, thus defiling the altars. The candle burns with a wicked, flickering light, dripping a viscous, red ichor that stains any substance as if with blood. While the candle burns, it acts as if both *desecrate* and *bane* spells have been cast. The candle burns for 12 hours. It may be snuffed out and re-lit. The candle lights at the will of its owner by speaking the name of his or her evil deity. The speaker must be no more than 60 feet away to light the candle in this manner. One hour of burning the candle on a good-aligned altar is sufficient to require that the altar be re-sanctified. *Caster Level:* 5th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *desecrate*, *bane*; *Market Price:* 2500 gp; *Weight:* 1/2 pound.

Bell Tower: The chapel also has a wrought-iron circular staircase in the back of the main room next to the altar that leads up to a trap door and beyond it to the bell tower, which provides an excellent vantage point over most of the keep and the surrounding forest. **One orc sentry** is permanently stationed here, and another sleeps below. The sentry has a horn that he can blow in case of trouble, and he mans a scorpion—a large, mounted siege crossbow that is trained in the direction of the main courtyard to the south. The orcs have removed the bell from the tower so that they can use the scorpion. There are 12 steel spears specially made to be fired from the scorpion, which can be brought to bear and fired in 2 combat rounds once an enemy is sighted. The orcs cannot bring the scorpion into a firing line on persons approaching the “back door” of the keep or the gatehouse. They can target anyone in the outer courtyard or the field to the south of the keep. The spear ends are coated in a pitch that can be ignited by the sentries if they have a lit torch, which they usually do not. After the sentries light a torch, it takes an additional round to ignite the spears prior to firing them. It takes two rounds to reload the scorpion.

Orc, Sentry: CR 1/2; SZ Medium humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 5; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+3 armor, Dex); Atk +1 ranged (3d6, scorpion, crit x3, range 200 ft., additional 1d6 damage if flaming) or +2 melee (1d6+2, short sword, crit 19-20); SQ: light sensitivity (-1 attack rolls); SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1; AL CE; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3. *Feats:* Exotic Weapon Proficiency (scorpion).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, short sword, 8 sp, 21 cp. This sentry also has a +1 *dagger*.

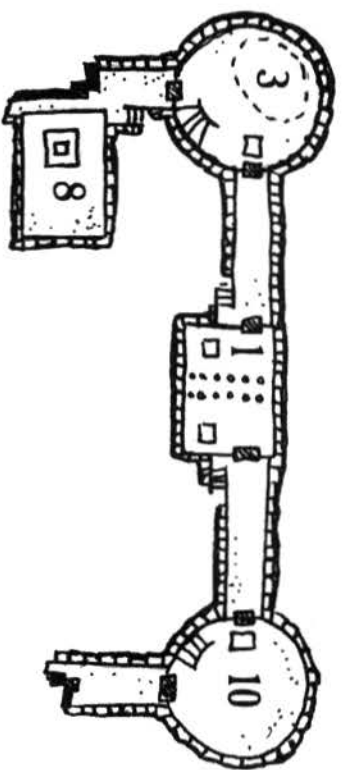
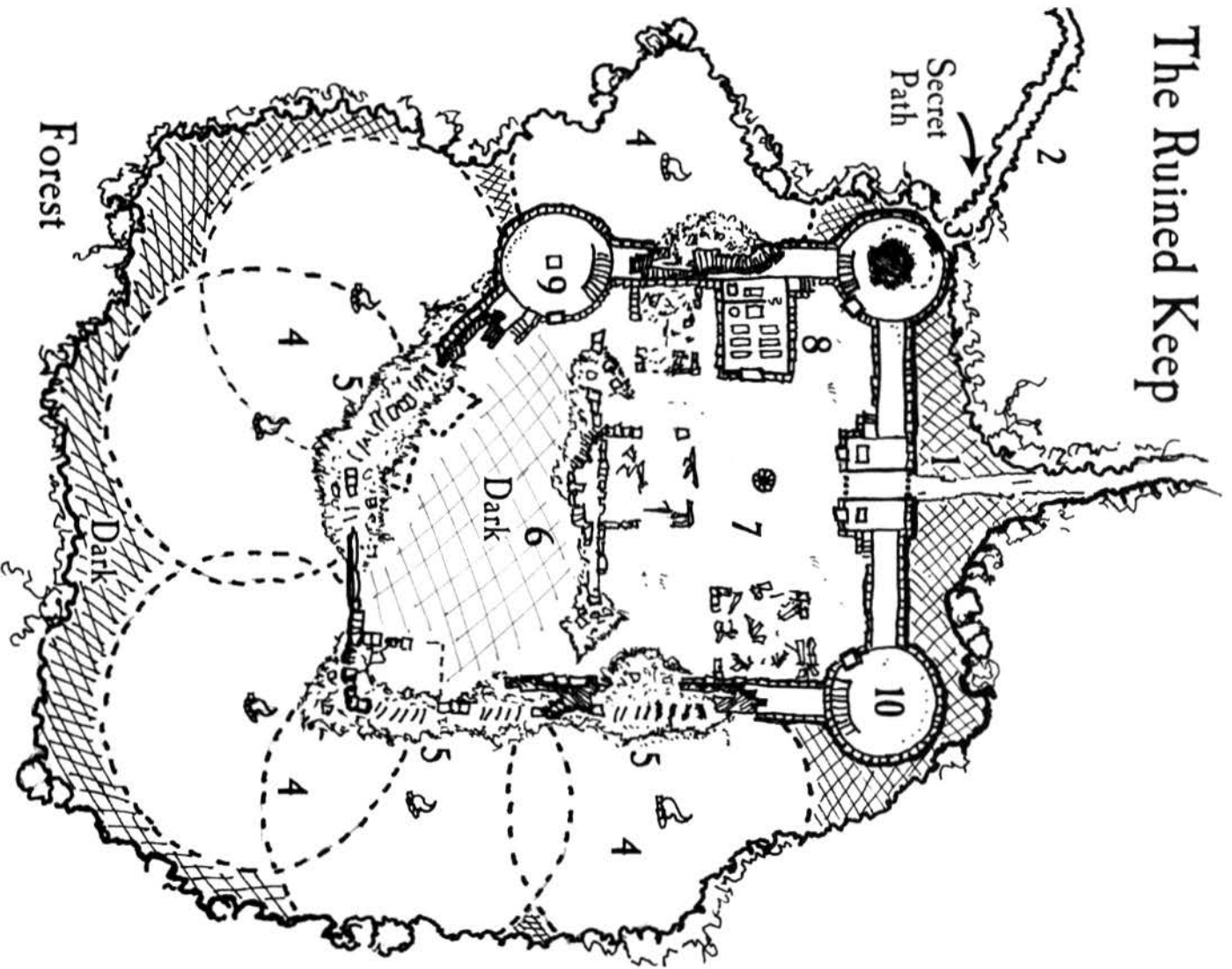
9. The Southwest Tower

Ground Level: The first floor of this tower houses Nagrod, the orc chieftain, and eight more orcs warriors. Grenag and Slaaroc, Vortigern's evil henchmen, are also here if Vortigern is here and if they survived *The Wizard's Amulet*. (See *The Wizard's Amulet* for their statistics.) The floor of this level of the tower is strewn with once-fine rugs stolen from a caravan headed to Fairhill. They are now soiled, having been used as sleeping blankets by the orcs.

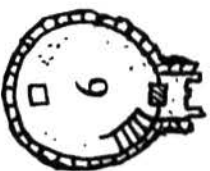
Nagrod, Orc Chieftain, Bbn1: CR 2; SZ Medium humanoid (7 ft.); HD 1d8+3 plus 1d12+3; hp 21; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft. (40 ft. base); AC 18 (+5 armor, Dex); Atk +4/+0 melee (1d8+4/1d8+4, orc double axe, crit x3, when enraged Nagrod is +6/+2 to hit and 1d8+6/1d8+6 damage); SA rage; SQ light sensitivity (-1 attack rolls), darkvision (60 ft.), fast movement; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +3, Intimidate +5, Listen +1, Spot +2, Wilderness Lore +4. *Feats:* Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Orc Double Axe), Two-Weapon Fighting.

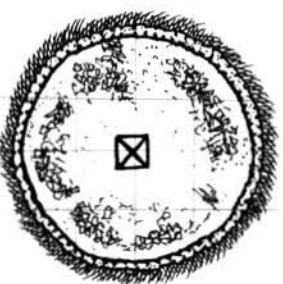
The Ruined Keep



The Ruined Keep
2nd Floor



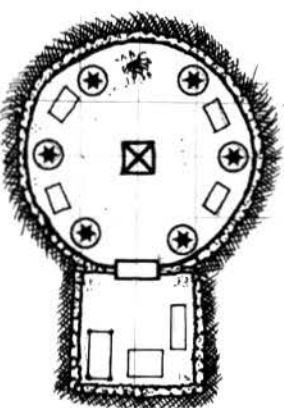
Beneath the Keep



First Level



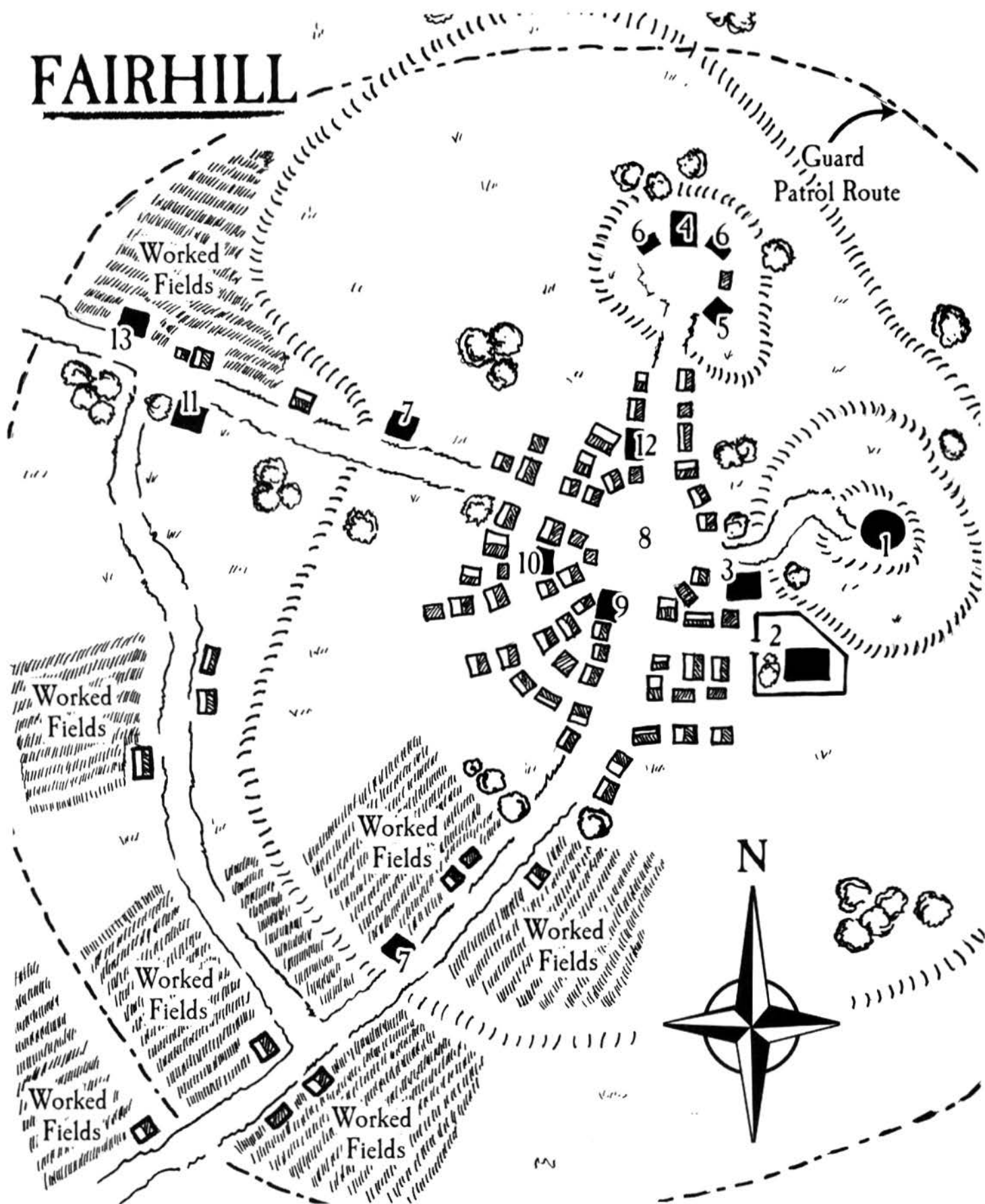
Third Level

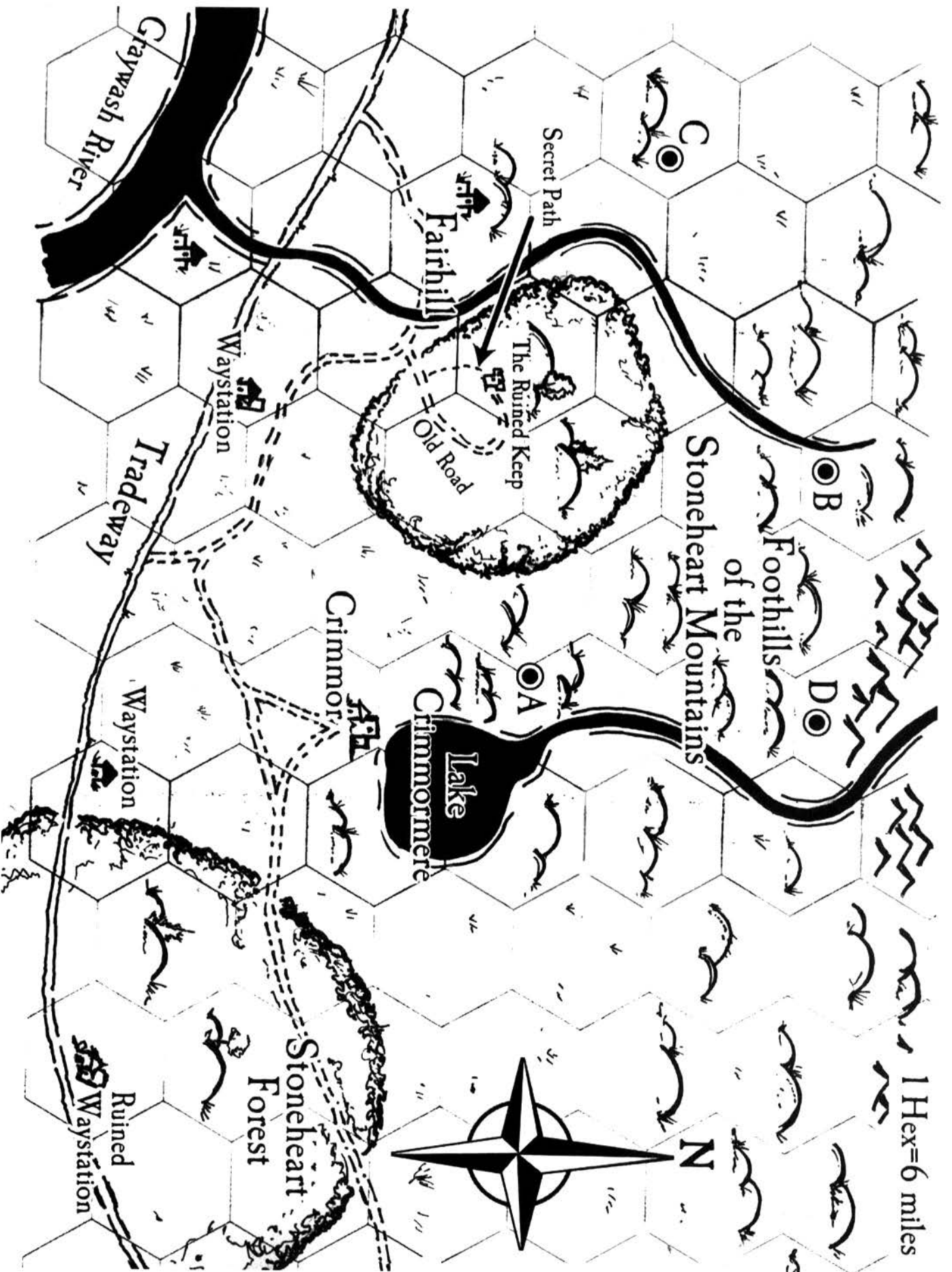


Second Level



FAIRHILL





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SA—Rage (Su): Once per day, Nagrod can fly into a berserk rage. He receives +4 Strength and Constitution, +2 Will saves and -2 AC. This rage lasts 8 rounds.

Possessions: Breastplate, orc double axe, 347 sp and two 25 gp amethysts, key to the "back door."

Orc, Warrior (8): CR 3; SZ Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (30 ft. base); AC 15 (+4 armor, Dex); Atk +3 melee (1d12+2, greataxe, crit x3) or +1 ranged (1d6, shortbows, range 60 ft.); SQ darkvision (60 ft.), light sensitivity; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; AL CE; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3. **Feats:** Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Possessions: Scale mail, greataxe, shortbow with 20 arrows, spent torches, 2 flasks of oil, tinder box, 1d6 gp, 2d8 sp.

Beneath the center of the soiled rugs and under a large board that the orcs have placed covering it, there is a **secret trap door** in the floor that leads to the rooms below. It is crafted into the flagstone floor. Unless the rugs are moved, it is impossible to find the door. If the rugs are moved, the door can be found (DC 20 Spot check). The trap door is not locked and, once found, can be freely opened. However, because the rugs are so soiled with orc urine, moving them requires a Fortitude save (DC 15), or the character must rush from the room and vomit.

Treasure: Though most of the rugs (22) are so soiled as to be beyond recovery, three can be saved and (after much cleaning) are worth 300 gp each. Again, Fortitude saves are required for each rug cleaned.

The Upper Level: The second floor of the tower is the home of **Grosh the Ogre**. He keeps no treasure of his own other than a leather thong on which hang 12 human skulls. He comes downstairs immediately if he hears any sign of melee in the area. His two-handed spiked club is a fearsome weapon.

Grosh the Ogre: CR 2; SZ Large giant; HD 4d8+8; hp 28; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (-1 size, Dex, +5 natural, +3 hide); Atk +9 melee (2d6+8, huge spiked greatclub); Reach 10 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 22, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +5, Listen +3, Spot +3. **Feats:** Weapon Focus (greatclub).

Possessions: Huge spiked greatclub, hide armor.

10. The Northeast Tower

The door to the northeast tower is locked from the outside (2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 30; Break DC 25, Open Lock DC 18). It contains **two medium-sized intelligent monstrous spiders**. The ground floor is filled with debris—broken furniture and torn tapestries. Stone stairs lead to the second level. The floor of the second level is completely rotted. Anyone walking on the floor above falls through the floor to the level below, suffering 2d6 damage. A Reflex save (DC 30) is allowed for the

character to grab the edge of the floor rather than fall. The orcs have thrown all the broken wooden items from the keep into this room. The orcs are deathly afraid of the spiders. They have killed three, but two still remain. Their plan was to set the wooden items on fire, but Tavik forbade it because he does not want a large fire to reveal their presence. Characters who enter this room may think of the same idea. All they need do is throw a lit torch into the room and shut the door. The spiders quickly die. Of course, the entire tower goes up in flames as all the upper floors catch fire.

Medium-size Intelligent Monstrous Spiders (2): CR 2; SZ Medium vermin (4 ft. long); HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14 (+1 natural, Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d6 bite, plus poison); SA poison, web; SQ vermin; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +12, Hide +10, Spot +7. **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite).

SA—Poison (Ex): If a spider deals damage with its bite, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 12) after one minute or take 2d4 points temporary Strength damage, with an additional similar save required one minute later.

SA—Web (Ex): These spiders often lower themselves silently on silk strands and leap onto prey passing beneath. A single strand is strong enough to support the spider and one creature of the same size. Monstrous spiders using this trick gain a +8 competence bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks.

Web-spinning spiders can cast a web eight times a day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against targets up to one size smaller than the spider. The web anchors the target in place, allowing no movement. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Strength check (DC 26). The entangling web has 6 hit points.

SQ—Vermin: The spiders are immune to all mind-influencing effects.

Treasure: Two *potions of cure moderate wounds* can be found in the webs of the spiders and among the debris (Search DC 18).

Notes: If Tavik is hiding here, he remains hidden until the spiders attack the party, after which he joins the attack. The spiders do not attack Tavik, their wicked intelligence recognizing him as a fellow creature of evil.

Beneath the Keep

The following rooms can be reached only by finding the trap door in the southwest tower. All rooms are 40 feet in diameter. Each, except the last, has a trap door set in the center of the floor. There are no stairs between the levels. (Eralion used *feather fall*, *jump*, *rope trick*, *fly*, *dimension door* or other magic to move up and down between levels.)

CRUCIBLE OF FREYA

DM Tip: Right about now, your characters should be getting a little scared about what could be down below. Here is a way to **increase the tension**: Roll dice when you don't need to as if you are checking for something. Couple this with questions directed at specific characters, such as, "What is your Fortitude save?" or "What is your Spot skill?" Then roll a d20 in secret and make a face of concern.

Lower Tower Level 1—The Battered Room

You enter the dark, musty chamber beneath the orcs' den and see a swath of destruction. Everything smells like orc, or maybe ogre, you can't be sure. Broken pieces of once-fine furniture lay strewn about, and shredded tapestries lay scattered as if by the winds. A single trap door is set in the center of the floor, and the area around it is strangely free of debris, as if someone cleared all the trash away from it purposely.

Once someone in the party descends into the room and examines the trap door, read the following text. Do not read the italicized text unless you used *The Wizard's Amulet* as a lead-in to this adventure:

The trap door is nailed shut with silvery nails, and a number of what appear to be silver pieces are wedged into the cracks, forming a nearly complete silver square around the perimeter of the door itself. Several runes appear on the door. One inscription seems all too familiar.

This room contains broken furniture, shredded tapestries and broken items of unknown use. There is nothing of value here. The trap door to the next level has been nailed shut by silver nails. The orcs (or someone) have driven what appear to be wedges of silver—made out of coins or other objects—into the trap door to try to keep it shut **from this side**! Any character can notice this if they make a successful Spot roll (DC 8). Any cleric should know that silver is a traditional ward against the undead. Now would be an

appropriate time to remind the party of the rumor that there is a vampire in the keep. If you are running this adventure as an extension of *The Wizard's Amulet*, you might point out that though rumor has it that Eralion failed to become a lich, that doesn't mean he simply died. This should add to the scare factor and give some credence to the "vampire in the keep" rumor. The inscription on the trap door is identical to that etched on the amulet Corian found accompanying the letter from Eralion.

The trap door is *arcane locked*, cast at 9th level. It detects as magical. It requires either a *knock* spell to open, or if this adventure is being run as an extension of *The Wizard's Amulet*, anyone possessing Corian's amulet, which accompanied Eralion's letter, can open this door by producing the amulet and waiving it above the door.

Lower Tower Level 2

—The Wizard's Workroom (EL 2)

A faint gust of stale air rushes out as the door seal is broken. Dry, stale air fills your nostrils with the smell of a charnel house as you peer down into the darkness. The room below appears to be some sort of laboratory, with candles, tubes and various pieces of glassware strewn about on a series of tables. Statues ring the room.

Once any member of the party has descended into the room, read the following text:

Your torchlight seems somehow dimmer here and creates dancing shadows against the walls. You notice that the room is ringed with a series of man-sized statues of knights in mail and full helms.

Around the wall, sitting as stationary statues, are six **zombies in chainmail**. The zombies are dressed in chainmail and wear full helms, giving no indication while stationary (other than the horrible stench) that they are undead, unless evil is detected. The zombies animate and attack two rounds after the party enters the room. Have a few worms jump from the eyeslots of the zombies' helms onto the PCs. The worms are harmless, but increase the terror factor.



Zombies in Chainmail (6): CR 2; Medium undead (6 ft. tall); HD 2d12; hp 12; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+2 natural, +5 armor); Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, buffet); SQ partial actions only, undead immunities; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 10, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Feats: Toughness.

There is a trap door in the center of the room. The trap door leads to level 3, below. There is a door on the east side of this room (1 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 20; Open Lock DC 20) that leads to a small chamber that has not been disturbed. It contains a bed, a brazier with incense and other creature comforts of a mage.

Treasure: On a bedside table in this side chamber are several *magical books* with spells in them. One prominent volume holds nine first-level mage spells and five second-level mage spells. There is also a volume on zombie creation, which includes a copy of the third-level mage spell *animate dead*.

Lower Tower Level 3—The Crypt (EL 5)

The trap door opens with an eerie creak. You peer into the darkness and see some kind of crypt. Six small stone sarcophagi line the walls at regular intervals, and on a raised dais of blackest stone, in the very center of the room, rests an ornately carved stone coffin with hieroglyphs and symbols all over it. A skeletal corpse lies on the stone coffin, one arm drooped over the edge grasping a staff. Shards of a once-ornate flask lie on the ground in front of the coffin, and several loose papers sit beside it.

This room contains seven stone sarcophagi: six around the perimeter of the room and one on a raised dais in the center of the room. The six crypts contain the remains of six humans used by Eralion in his final ritual. All were entombed alive, and if the crypts are opened (DC 35 Strength check to open, up to four characters can add their Strength bonuses) scratch marks can be seen where the poor victims tried to claw their way out.

If someone examines the corpse and the runes on the dais, read the following:

As your torchlight flickers against the runes, you can tell that the writings are of a most ancient script, yet appear to be freshly carved. The corpse is dressed in the fine robes of a mage. He holds his staff in a death-grip. A cold wind seems to blow here, and [name a random character] feels a chill run down his spine. You all feel weary from the long fight with the zombies above.

On the dais in front of the main crypt there is a broken flask of fine make that contained what Orcus told Eralion was the potion that would transform him into a lich. The potion was instead a very lethal poison. There appears to be some residual sticky substance inside the flask. The papers detect as evil, if checked, and contain writing in Draconic that is indecipherable. The residual substance on the flagon is poison (DC 20 Fortitude save or 2d6 temporary Constitution damage, with an additional similar save after one minute). On the main sarcophagus rests the corpse of Eralion, dressed in ornamental robes, covered in blood-smeared runes and wearing a false phylactery. In his right hand, which drapes over the side of the stone bed, Eralion's corpse grasps his staff (DC 12 Strength check to pry it from his grasp). This room is the home of Eralion, who, transformed by Orcus' treachery, is now a **shadow**. He has never previously had visitors to his lair. His shattered mind believes the characters may be his old friend, Feriblan, finally come to visit him. The characters can make a Listen check (DC 15). If successful, they hear what they believe to be the whispered question "Feriblan?" Once Eralion realizes the intruders are not his old friend, Eralion attacks.

Eralion was, long ago, the mage of this keep. His failed attempt at lichdom, as a result of treachery by Orcus, turned him into a vile shadow. He was, at his peak, a 9th level mage. He retains some small bit of his

prior arcane knowledge, though it has been twisted by his evil fate. Though there is no reasoning with Eralion initially, if a character makes a successful Bluff check (DC18) and convinces Eralion that he is in fact Feriblan, then Eralion will materialize, opening himself up for attack. If he is not attacked, he will attempt to speak with the characters, but his broken mind prevents intelligent communication. At this point, if the characters ask Eralion if they can help him, a portion of Eralion's consciousness returns. He says, simply, "Chapel." If the characters restore the chapel above by having the altar re-consecrated and if they open all the trap doors so that Eralion may leave his resting place, he will travel to the chapel and ask forgiveness of St. Cuthbert. His deity, however, is the god of vengeance. With a holy flash, Eralion is judged and destroyed; his soul sent to the Abyss for eternal torment, with the players left to wonder which is worse, unlife as an undead or eternal torment in Orcus' Palace of Bones. What did you expect, a happy ending?

Eralion the Shadow-Mage, Wiz3; CR 5; SZ M (undead/incorporeal); HD 3d12 plus 3d4; hp 33; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 40 ft.; AC 15 (+1 natural, +2 bracers, Dex, plus incorporeal); Atk +2 melee (1d6 temporary Strength damage, touch attack); SQ incorporeal, undead immunities, spawn, darkvision (60 ft.), turn resistance (+4); AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str —, Dex 14, Con —, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills: Hide +8, Intuit Direction +5, Listen +7, Spot +7.

SQ—Incorporeal (Ex): Shadows are incorporeal, having no physicality. They can't be touched by nonmagical matter or energy. They are immune to all nonmagical attack forms, including normal fire, cold and acid. They cannot manipulate objects or exert physical force on objects, though they do have a tangible presence allowing touch attacks. Incorporeal creatures can only be harmed by other incorporeal creatures, by +1 or better weapons, or by spells, spell-like or supernatural effects. Even when struck by magic or magic weapons, incorporeal creatures have a 50% chance to ignore such damage (unless from a force effect, such as *magic missile*). The touch attack of an incorporeal creature ignores all armor, including magic armor, unless that armor is made of force (such as *mage armor* or *bracers of defense*). Incorporeal creatures can move in any direction and can move through solid objects. They are inaudible unless they desire to make noise. A shadow is 90% undetectable in indirect light.

SQ—Undead Immunities (Ex): Shadows are immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects and necromantic effects; they ignore mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects). They are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain or energy drain. They have no Constitution scores and are therefore immune to anything requiring



a Fortitude save (unless it affects objects). Undead spellcasters use their Charisma modifier when making Concentration checks. Undead creatures are not at risk of death from massive damage, but when reduced to 0 hit points or less, they are immediately destroyed.

SQ—Spawn (Ex): Any human or demi-human character reduced to 0 Strength by a shadow will rise as

a shadow in 1d4 rounds, compelled to join its killer in an unlife of evil.

SQ—Turn Resistance (Ex): When resolving a turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempt, add the listed bonus (+4) to Eralion's Hit Dice total. A normal shadow has turn resistance +2 and 3 HD. Eralion is more difficult to turn due to the special circumstances

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of his creation, his Wizard level and the fact that he is trapped here in his lair. Thus, Eralion turns as a 10th level undead creature (3HD as shadow, 3HD as Wizard, +4 turn resistance).

Spells (4/3/2): 0—ghost sound (x2), mage hand (x2); 1st—true strike, chill touch (x2); 2nd—darkness, spectral hand.

Possessions: *Bracers of armor* +2.

Tactics: Eralion hates light and seeks to extinguish it, attacking anyone holding a light source. He enjoys sneaking up behind his victim from the shadows and draining their strength by touching but not damaging them, so that his touch goes unnoticed—with only the victim's growing weariness as an indication of his attack. Tell any person struck in this fashion that they are feeling weary, ready for sleep, and the weariness is getting worse. Remember that in indirect light, such as torchlight, Eralion is 90% undetectable. The only way to locate Eralion is to either be attacked directly by him or to count the shadows on the floor (Intelligence check DC 20). Once he is discovered, Eralion begins to use his

touch spells to damage his victims in addition to draining Strength. Once he is attacked, he cannot be reasoned with. The only way to distract him into speaking with the party is by Bluffing him, as described above, and then trying to reason with him.

Treasure: In the hands of Eralion's corpse is the best weapon to defeat his shadow: *Eralion's staff* casts *daylight* upon uttering the name "Eralion." In addition, once per day it allows the wielder to cast *feather fall* upon uttering the name "Gethrame." Both spells are cast as if by a 9th level caster. It takes multiple castings of *identify* to discover these command words. The origin of this last command word is unknown. Also in his sarcophagus are 276 gp, 2007 sp, 1567 cp, eight gems of 25 gp value and six pieces of jewelry valued at 150 gp total. Also present on Eralion's corpse is the masterwork ceremonial dagger used by Eralion in the failed ritual for lichdom. There is also a *potion of longevity* and a *scroll of invisibility sphere* inside the sarcophagus (same chance to open as others above). Additionally, if Eralion is slain, his *bracers of armor* +2 materialize.

The Crucible of Freya

This part details the adventure, starting with the characters' arrival in Fairhill and ending with their assault on the ruined keep. It makes use of the material detailed in Part One. The following section is presented in Act and Scene format to make it run smoothly and dramatically. Of course, this is just one of many stories that could be told using the information provided in Part One.

Prologue

DM Tip: It is always a good idea to start a game session with a little action. In this case, the early excitement is an encounter with an orc raiding band—introducing the party to what will become their main foe throughout this module, though they don't know it yet. Before you get to the action, you should do a few things. First, make sure the characters have reviewed their character sheets. If they have any questions, resolve them now. Ask any spell users which spells they memorized during the previous night's rest. Resolve any other miscellaneous issues such as healing and equipment. Finally, have your characters indicate a general marching order. Once you have accomplished these housekeeping matters, proceed to "A Little Excitement." Your players will certainly have more than a little excitement.

A Little Excitement

There are two slightly different introductions depending on whether or not your players have played through *The Wizard's Amulet*. If they have, read all of the following text. If they have not, do not read the bolded text:

Have all of the characters make a Spot check (DC 20). If any of the characters succeed, read the following text:

As you travel the road to Fairhill, your natural instincts—heightened by your recent adventures—cause you to scan the hills for possible areas of ambush. Your instincts prove to be good ones. You spot three humanoids with bows hiding slightly behind the crest of a nearby hill, their backs to the afternoon sun, making it hard to discern their exact nature. You find just enough time to shout a warning and dive to the ground as the volley of arrows hisses towards you.

It has been two nights since the encounter with Vortigern and his devilish familiar, Talon. You still bear the wounds of that battle. Many of your group nurse lingering injuries, both physical and mental, not the least of which are the nightmarish images that plague Corian in his dreams. You recall vividly the bodies of the innocent farmers, the clawed hands of the skeletons as they rose from the earth, summoned by Vortigern, and the hellish shriek as Talon revealed his true form. Weary from your long journey and many experiences, your party makes its way along the path toward the village of Fairhill, searching for a warm fire and a safe bed—a place to brush the dirt of the road from its boots. The road you travel gradually slopes upward as you leave the tradeway behind, heading toward the foothills of the Stoneheart Mountains. The rolling hills are covered with green grass and spring flowers, lifting your spirits. You believe that you should arrive at Fairhill within two hours.

If the characters all fail the Spot check, read the following text. Again, do not read the bolded text if your players did not play through *The Wizard's Amulet*:

The all-too-familiar hiss of an arrow cutting through the air pulls you from your daze. You count one...two...three of them as you dive to the ground. You hardly have time to wonder how you could have let your instincts be dulled by the thought of a soft bed as you assess your current situation and look around to see which of your companions have been injured. You curse yourself for not learning your lesson from the encounter with Vortigern's thugs.

The attackers are **three orcs**, sent by Tavik to harass villagers and merchants. This group of orcs recently stole food from a nearby farmhouse and, following their feast, took up a position on this hill. As taught by Tavik, they try to ambush with the sun behind them so they are hard to see.

Orc, Common (3): CR 1; SZ Medium humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 5; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14 (+3 armor, +1 shield); Atk +3 melee (1d8+2, battle axe, crit x3) or +0 ranged (1d6, shortbow, range 60); SQ: light sensitivity (-1 attack rolls), darkvision (60 ft.); 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:** Weapon Focus (battle axe).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, small wooden shield, battle axe, shortbow with 20 arrows, 2d6 sp, 3d10 cp.

Tactics: These orcs are new recruits and are not yet coordinated enough to know to train their fire on one target. Pick their targets within the party randomly. As long as the party stays prone the orcs continue to fire at them for six rounds. Seeing that they are outnumbered by the party, once six rounds have passed or if the party charges the hill where the orcs are hiding, the orcs run for some nearby woods, having had enough target practice for one day.

If they try, the party can easily track the orcs into the nearby woods (DC 10). Because the party cannot catch the orcs before they get into the woods, they must make a new tracking roll once in the woods (DC 12).

The orcs figure they are safe once they make it to the woods, so they slow down. If the party makes a Tracking check (DC 10), they can overtake the orcs. The orcs make a desperate stand using their axes. If caught, they can be interrogated and quickly reveal that their base is the ruined keep nearby and that their leader is a half-orc named Tavik.

Arrival in Fairhill

When the characters arrive they most likely pass one of the guard stations at areas 7. When they do, read the following text:

As you approach the village proper, passing the outlying farmhouses, you are stopped by an imposing man with a grim expression. He is arrayed in well-used studded leather armor, his reddish-brown hair pulled back away from his face and his heavy green cloak swept back. A female elf in mail and two town guards holding spears and shields, wearing green surcoats with a small silver bowl emblazoned on the left breast, accompany him. The man lifts his left hand, motioning you to stop. You notice that his right arm ends in a cruel scar and that he has no right hand, certainly lost in some horrible manner. In a well-worn scabbard, a bastard sword, its elongated pommel sticking out prominently, rests against his hip. He calls to the party in a commanding voice, "Announce yourselves and state your purpose."

The man is **Baran**, described in Part One above, and with him is his lieutenant, **Lauriel**, and **two town guards**. Baran questions the party about their purpose and generally is suspicious of them. He only relents in his questioning if he notes a cleric of a known good deity among the party. He is brusque and short, acting as if the party was the sole source of his irritation. He curtly directs them to the *Three Kegs* where it can stable their horses if it has any. He also orders them to the Temple of Freya, where all visitors are expected to pay homage.

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Lauriel stands by silently. She would never challenge Baran's authority, even though she disagrees with his treatment of the adventurers. If the characters cause problems, she is the first to draw steel and call for the guard. If such a problem arises, four additional guards with spears and shields arrive in four rounds.

The Temple of Freya

At some point, the characters will surely make their way to the Temple of Freya. If they explore the town first, proceed to "Around Town," below. But once at the temple, read the following text:

You approach what must surely be the Temple of Freya. It is a simple wooden structure, with a peaked roof. Its front has no door and it is open to the outside. Inside the one-room shrine is a stone altar in which is carved the head of a stag. A female elf of stunning beauty stands before the altar, wearing a tunic and a long cloak of winter-wolf fur. In her hands she holds a shining silver bowl, worked with strange runes. Before you can stop her, she plunges her entire arm and the bowl into the flaming brazier next to the altar. She begins to intone words in a strange language.

The party enters as Shandril is finishing a small sacrifice of grain to Freya. Anyone foolish enough to interrupt her gains her disfavor. If they wait patiently, she finishes the small ritual and greets the party. If asked, she explains what the *crucible* is and how it is used to bring fertility and prosperity to the village. She gladly discusses her faith with any other clerics. After a short time, she tells the party that she must continue with her devotionals and returns to her prayers.

If the players request healing, Shandril gladly casts one *cure light wounds* on any injured individual, up to her spell limit. If the characters wish a companion *raised from the dead*, Shandril only agrees under the most serious of circumstances, especially if the person's help is essential to successfully recover the *crucible* once it is stolen.

Around Town

This scene is rather freeform. Let your characters explore Fairhill. They can visit the central market and the various inns. They may want to secure a room before

they do anything else. A Gather Information check (DC 8) lets them discover the basics about Fairhill: Arlen is the magistrate, Baran is the captain of the guard, the *Drunken Cockatrice* has the best food, the *Cask and Flagon* is cheaper and more boisterous and the *Three Kegs* doesn't have rooms but serves the best ale.

You may wish to have them meet Lannet, Fendrin or possibly Durgis and his dwarves. Perhaps Arlen takes an interest in them. Maybe they meet Lasha in meditation. If you want to get the action going, you can proceed to Act I the very first night the characters arrive at Fairhill. However, there is no rush. This scene can be as long or as short as you want it to be—from a few hours to a few days. This is where you expand on the roleplaying possibilities offered by Fairhill. If Vortigern and Talon are in Fairhill, you may wish to have them make an attempt on the characters' lives. Or you could spend a whole session having the characters locate and finally deal with Vortigern and Talon. The only thing that should happen is that the characters be given the chance to learn a few rumors.

Act I: The Crucible Stolen

At the Inn

The party has probably checked into the *Drunken Cockatrice* or the *Cask and Flagon*. After their meal, read the following text:

As the meal draws to a close, all seems in order. Your prior adventures behind you, you and your companions sit in the common room enjoying the warm fire and the cold ale. Talk begins to turn, as it always does, to legends of past exploits and to tales of wonder from distant lands, with each of you thinking that one day, folks may well be telling your story in a place such as this.

If they have not already met Lannet, you should introduce him to the characters. Have some fun roleplaying him. He becomes curious about the party. Let the party members tell tales if they wish. Repeat the rumor about the town recently being subjected to raids by marauding orcs and that several of the town guard have been killed. Make sure to repeat the vampire rumor as well. Then, just as they are comfortable, spring the next scene on them.



Alarm!

The loud peal of the town bell cuts through the din of the inn's common room. You hear sounds of battle from outside, and you see the flickering of strange lights through the window. As you grab your weapons and run outside, you immediately notice that the Temple of Freya is ablaze and that there is a skirmish between a cadre of town guards and a group of humanoids. You can see that several town guards lie dead or injured. From the periphery, you notice Shandril and Arlen rushing toward you. The flames engulf the temple fully and light the village with a hellish glow. With a shout, the humanoids lob what appear to be flaming torches at the guards and flee to the east, shrieking in their foul tongue.

There is no way to cover the ground between the characters' current location and the temple in time to catch the humanoids. And even if the characters are so inclined, Shandril and Arlen call to them, asking for their aid. Shandril announces that the Temple of Freya has just been looted by orcs and that three town guardsmen were killed in the skirmish. Arlen and Shandril take control of the situation and try in vain to put out the fire.

Seeing the party as Fairhill's only dependable allies, now that the town guard is absorbed in the tasks of restoring order and fortifying the town from future attacks, Shandril implores the party to help recover one of the stolen items—the magical *crucible* sacred to Freya, necessary for the blessing of the harvest. Baran reluctantly agrees with Shandril's plan, looking the characters up and down disapprovingly.

If the characters volunteer to help, read the following text:

Shandril smiles. "Freya bless you for your courage," she says. She removes from her waist a sword in a very plain, unadorned leather scabbard. The handle is made of horn. It does not look like it would make a good combat weapon. Shandril presents the sword to [the most able-looking fighter]. "Take this, if you will carry it," she says. "Promise to recover the crucible and bring to justice those who have defiled the temple of my goddess."

What Shandril offers is her sword, Valkyria. The recipient and all the party members must pledge to recover and return the *crucible* and to bring the orcs to justice. If the sword is refused (because of its meager appearance), she smiles and replaces it on her hip. In any event, she *blesses* the party and provides them with 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*. If the sword is accepted, she also asks the recipient to swear that he or she will return the sword.

Baran tells the party that the raiding creatures were orcs and that he believes the orcs have occupied a ruined keep to the northeast. Baran is reluctant to send his forces after the orcs because he believes this foray may be a ruse to draw the guards away and thus leave the town exposed and unguarded. Arlen thanks the party and tells them that they are free to keep anything they recover from the orcs, aside from the *crucible*. Arlen orders several guards to bring horses for the party.

Baran reluctantly sends three of his guards to lead the party to the keep and to guard the horses. Lauriel, a female elf, one of the town guards appointed by Baran to accompany the party, is openly suspicious of the characters. She was, however, the first to volunteer to go with them. The other two guards sent with the party are named Jerinor and Hathol. If you feel that your characters are too underpowered to handle the keep, Lasha and/or Kath might volunteer to accompany the party. Lannet hides and then sneaks out after the party, using his magic *cloak* to follow along unobtrusively.

Jerinor and Hathol, Female and Male Human, War2: SZ Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+4 armor, +2 shield, Dex); Atk +4 melee/ranged (1d6+1, halfspear, crit x3, range 20 ft.), +3 melee (1d6+1, longsword, crit 19-20) or +3

ranged (1d6, shortbow, crit x3, range 60 ft.); ALLG; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +3, Jump +1, Listen +3, Ride +2, Search +1, Spot +4. **Feats:** Alertness, Weapon Focus (halfspear).

Languages: Common, Elf.

Possessions: Chain shirt, large wooden shield, halfspear, longsword, shortbow with 40 arrows, green surcoat with crucible device, small sack with 2d4 gp.

Act II: Hot Pursuit

The Chase

The first step in reaching the keep is to head east to the river where it can be forded. Though there is no real chance of catching the orcs at the ford even on horseback, make it dramatic.

DM Tip: A good way to raise the tension of a scene is to have the characters roll dice, even if it is irrelevant. What you have to do is make the die-rolling *seem* relevant. In this case, let the leader of the party roll a d20. You roll a d20 also. The higher the better. If you want, you can let the characters with tracking or some other relevant skill make skill checks (DC 10) to get a +2 on their d20 roll. Do this five or six times, telling the players that the rolls are to see if the characters are gaining on the orcs. Record the results after each roll on the game board, as if the number of wins has something to do with how far apart the party is from the orcs. Of course it doesn't, but the players don't need to know that. If they rolled well in the meaningless die-rolling above, make it seem as if they must be right on the heels of the orcs. If they rolled poorly, make it seem like they might be losing the trail.

Regardless of the die rolls, the players make it to the ford without catching up to the orcs. Once across the river, the party must make a Tracking check (DC 10). If successful, they pick up the orcs' trail. The trail leads to a fork in the road and past it along the road into the nearby forest.

Decision in the Forest

Once in the forest, have the characters make a Spot check (DC 12). If none of the party members succeeds at the roll, Lauriel does. Either Lauriel or the party member who made the Spot check notices that another path seems to break off from the main road and head off north into the forest. Lauriel says she does not remember seeing this path before. This path is the "secret path" on the wilderness map that leads to the ruined keep.

If the characters make successful Search checks (DC 12), they find a small leather pouch containing several small items taken from the shrine — their prey, it seems, took this secret path. A successful Tracking

check (DC 15) also confirms that the orcs went this way. Have the most skilled tracker make another Tracking check (DC 6). If successful, tell that player the tracks seem very fresh and acting quickly the party may be able to overtake the orcs.

Regardless of this information, Lauriel proposes to lead the party east and to the north entrance of the keep, following the old road. She is forceful in suggesting this route. She argues that the secret path certainly heads to the keep, but that the old road can better accommodate horses and they can thus make better time. Plus, she fears an ambush on the secret path. Don't blurt these reasons out all at once, use them one by one in response to arguments from the characters.

Tell the party that she is correct. It would be difficult to take horses along the secret path. However, if no party member thinks of it, remind the person who accepted the sword that they pledged to recover the *crucible* and that if they do not follow the orcs they may not be able to overtake them before they get to the keep. Then who can say if they will be able to recover the *crucible* or not?

Following the Secret Path: If the party persists, Lauriel reluctantly agrees and suggests that Jerinor lead the horses out of the forest and stay with them at the edge of the forest. Lauriel and Hathol accompany the party onward to make sure it takes actions consistent with the wishes of the village. Unbeknownst to anyone, Lannet, shrouded in his *elven cloak*, is following. He does not make his presence known until later. The party travels along the secret path, through heavy undergrowth. Have them attempt Wilderness Lore checks (DC 12). Each check represents one hour of time spent trying to follow the path. At any point, a successful Tracking check (DC 10) confirms that the characters are gaining on the orcs and that the orcs have slowed their pace. Once they succeed at a Wilderness Lore check, proceed to the next scene: "Encountering the Raiding Party."

Following the Road: If the party relents and agrees with Lauriel, they follow the old road east as it wraps around to the north of the keep. About two miles from where the secret path split from the road, the old road becomes overgrown and difficult to pass. Horses may be ridden, but only single file and only at a slow walk. It takes six hours to travel the old road to the keep. If at this point the characters decide to turn back and take the secret path they can still catch the raiding party. If they push onward, when they come within one mile of the keep on the old road, the forest encroaches on the road even further. Riders must dismount and walk their horses. Needless to say, the raiding party arrives at the keep before the characters do. This, however, is not as bad as it seems since the orcs celebrate the theft of the *crucible* and many get drunk, making an assault on the keep easier. See Act III, "Assault on the Keep."

DM Tip: Players love action, but good adventures always contain roleplaying opportunities. This scene is a chance for you to play up the conflict with Lauriel and get your players to do a little roleplaying. See how the characters react to Lauriel's stubbornness. Who is the leader of the party? How do they treat Lauriel? Do people follow their alignment strictures in their actions and words? Do they follow the teachings of their deities if they are priests?

Encountering the Raiding Party (EL 3)

The sound of orc voices grows louder as you draw nearer to the orc band. You are now only a few dozen yards behind the orcs, and you can clearly hear their wicked songs of celebration. The overgrowth shrouds them from your view. Your lead scout turns and makes the signal for silence. Lauriel circles her hand above her head, signaling everyone to rally to her to plan your attack. You smile, knowing the orcs are unaware that their death is at hand!

The orcs are loud and boisterous from their successful raid, believing in their foolishness that they have not been followed. They are happier than usual because raiding the temple was an important task given to Kren by Tavik. Kren hopes this success may help him unseat Nagrod as the leader of the orc band. Kren carries the *crucible*.

Because of the noise the orcs are making, allow the players to dictate the encounter, including moving ahead of the orcs and setting an ambush. If the characters don't think of an ambush, Lauriel recommends it. The path is five feet wide, and the orcs are traveling in a single-file line, with Kren traveling at its head. He holds the *crucible* aloft, often spitting in it. If the characters stage an ambush, all the characters get a free surprise action before the orcs can act. The orcs do not get to roll to prevent surprise. If any of the characters loudly invoke the name of Freya as they attack, the orcs suffer a -1 moral modifier to their attack rolls for three rounds, stricken with fear.

Kren, Orc Sub-lieutenant: CR 1; SZ Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+6; hp 18; Init +2; Spd 20 ft. (30 ft. base); AC 16 (+4 armor, Dex); Atk +3 melee (1d12+3, greataxe, crit x3); SQ darkvision (60 ft.), light sensitivity (-1 attack rolls); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; AL CE; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Intimidate +3, Listen +4, Spot +3. **Feats:** Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Possessions: Scale mail, greataxe, *Crucible of Freya*, sack tied on his belt containing a 100 gp pearl and a large iron key (which opens the "back door" to the northwest tower of the ruined keep), 18 gp, 33 sp.

Orc, Warrior (6): CR 2; SZ Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (30 ft. base); AC 15 (+4 armor, Dex); Atk +3 melee (1d12+2, greataxe, crit x3) or +1 ranged (1d6, shortbows, range 60 ft.); SQ darkvision (60 ft.), light sensitivity (-1); SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; AL CE; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3. **Feats:** Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Possessions: Scale mail, greataxe, shortbow with 20 arrows, spent torches, 2 flasks of oil, tinder box, 1d6 gp, 2d8 sp.

Lannet: Lannet stays some distance from the party when they launch their attack. He only appears if the party is in dire need, then provides a crucial sneak attack or thrown dagger. If you don't have to reveal his presence, don't.

To Press on or Turn Back...

Once the *crucible* is recovered, the characters have another decision to make. Lauriel wants to return to Fairhill immediately and deliver the *crucible* to Shandril. The party should realize that now may be its best opportunity to attack the keep. Certainly there must be more orcs at the keep than this small raiding party. If the raiding party never comes home the other orcs will know something is wrong. They may increase their defenses. They may even march on Fairhill. Remind the recipient of Shandril's sword that she pledged to bring those responsible to justice. Wouldn't all the orcs truly be responsible for these acts and thus need to be brought to justice? You may prod the characters to think that at the very least they should scout the rest of the trail to see if it leads to the keep and, if so, reconnoiter the keep to gather information on their foes while the orcs are unaware.

Again, bring the conflict to a head. Lauriel feels great loyalty to Shandril and is very insistent about returning the *crucible*. If the recipient of Shandril's sword speaks, Lauriel suggests that she should have been given the sword and that the character is not worthy to bear it. Lauriel insists that she carry the *crucible* back to Fairhill. If pressed on the issue, Lauriel agrees that they can scout the keep but not attack it until the *crucible* is returned.

If the party decides to return to Fairhill: Shandril is pleased by their prompt return of the *crucible*. If the person entrusted with Shandril's sword attempts to return it, Shandril tells her that she feels there is yet work to be done on behalf of the goddess and that the character should keep the sword for the time being.

Both Arlen and Baran, however, question the characters after Lauriel gives her report. Baran is clearly disappointed that the party did not press on to the keep and worries that the orcs will take revenge on the village. Arlen agrees and asks the characters to volunteer to return to the keep once they are healthy at a minimum to determine the size of the orc force. If the characters scouted the keep but returned to Fairhill without attacking, Baran and Arlen both ask the characters to launch an attack quickly—tonight if possible. Shandril and Kath assist in returning the party to full health with healing spells.

Allow the characters to earn experience. See the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. In addition to the experience from the above encounters, the characters earn a 200 XP story award for returning the *crucible* to Shandril. Characters who earn sufficient XP to increase in level may do so at this juncture even if they receive healing by spell and head back to the keep right away. Once the characters set off for the keep, proceed to Act III.

If the party decides to press on: The secret path is heavily overgrown and horses cannot pass. Negotiating the path requires two additional successful Wilderness Lore checks (DC 12) to reach the keep from the spot where the party ambushed Kren and his orcs. If the party did not return to Fairhill, it reaches the keep before the orcs realize the raiding party is missing. Proceed to Act III.

Act III: Assault on the Keep

Running the assault on the keep is by far the most difficult part of this adventure because there are so many variables. This section should assist you. You must first determine the circumstances controlling the orcs' level of alertness so that you will know what plusses or minuses might apply to the guards. Then you must determine the direction from which the party approaches the keep so that you can give it a proper description. You must next assess the manner of the party's entry into the keep. Finally, specific notes are provided for handling the assault. Each of these are dealt with in turn.

The Orcs' Level of Alertness

The level of alertness of the creatures in the keep depends mostly on external events, each of which is described below.

The orc raiding party has not yet gone missing: This situation occurs if the party encounters Kren and the orcs, defeats them and quickly pushes on to the keep without returning to Fairhill. In this situation, the keep is at its lowest level of alertness since it does not yet know that the raiding party has been defeated. All creatures are at their normal locations as indicated in Part One. None of the creatures has any bonuses or minuses to his alertness. They take no special actions. They await the return of Kren and his orcs. This

situation is best for the party, particularly if it waits for Nagrod and his orcs to be dispatched (see below) and it ambushes that group as well, thus thinning the ranks of the orcs significantly.

The orc raiding party does not return: If the raiding party does not return for several hours, Tavik decides the raid has failed, which surprises him. Tavik then commands Nagrod and four orc warriors to follow the secret path back to the village to learn what has happened to the raiding party. Since the "back door" is locked, Nagrod and the orcs exit over the northernmost palisade in the southwestern wall, just below the southwest tower. They travel up the edge of the keep to the "back door" and head away, down the secret path. If the characters have not yet entered the keep (because they have been busy reconnoitering the entire keep), the characters can ambush this group of orcs just as they did Kren's group. However, if they spring their ambush too close to the keep so that the battle can be heard there or if any of the orcs escape, the keep immediately goes on full alert. If Nagrod does not return by morning, Tavik places the keep on full alert.

If the characters have already snuck into the keep through the "back door" when Nagrod and his orcs make their way to the secret path, they will notice that the padlock on the back door is open, because the characters cannot lock it behind them. However, Nagrod attributes it to Kren's sloppiness and simply locks the padlock. Nagrod has his own key to the "back door". This may prevent retreat by the characters, since there is no way to open the padlock on the "back door" from the inside. When Tavik dispatches Nagrod and his four orcs, he does not take any further defensive precautions because the thought has not yet occurred to him that anyone from Fairhill could be bold enough to bring the battle to him.

The orc raiding party returns with the crucible, and the characters attack the keep that night: If the characters followed the old road and were unable to overtake Kren and the raiding party (or were unable to overtake the raiding party for any other reason), then the orcs return to the keep victorious, their prize in hand, to the gleeful shouts of their comrades. Tavik takes custody of the *crucible*. He places it on the desecrated altar and defiles it by placing the *candle of defiling* inside of the *crucible* and lighting it. Until the *crucible* is properly cleansed of the staining filth created by the candle, none of its powers can be used.

The orcs open several kegs of ale and drink themselves into a stupor. In this situation, add Kren and his orcs to those normally present on the first floor of the southwest tower. Tavik is annoyed at his orcs' celebration, but he still believes that there is no real chance of any repercussion for his theft of the *crucible*. If the party attacks the night of the celebration, all the orcs (including the guards) are at -2 Spot and Listen checks. Due to the noise from the keep, all Move Silently checks are at

+2. In addition, there is a 1-3 on 1d10 chance that at any give time a posted guard will be away from his post. This does not apply to the sentries in the bell tower of the chapel. Though this situation provides some strategic advantages, the keep is at its fullest strength with the return of Kren and his orcs.

The orc raiding party returns with the crucible, and the characters attack at dawn the next morning: This may prove to be the most advantageous situation for the characters, though as stated above, the orcs at the keep are at their greatest number. After their celebration, the orcs are severely hungover. There is a 1-5 on 1d10 chance that any guard is asleep at his post. In addition, because it is now daytime, all the orcs are at -1 on their Spot checks and combat rolls. Also, the orcs who are normally "sleeping" and could wake up if the alarm sounds are now treated as "passed out." They must be woken up by another person, and they take an extra 5 rounds to respond to any alarm. This drunkenness does not apply to the sentries in the bell tower of the chapel. Kren and his orcs are passed out in the southwest tower. In the southwest tower, only Nagrod and Grosh the ogre are not passed out. Instead, they are simply "sleeping." Obviously, neither Tavik nor Vortigern (if he is present) are passed out.

The raiding party returns with the crucible, but the characters do not attack the keep for a day or more: In this situation, Tavik has the *crucible* with him in the chapel as above. Kren and his orcs are in the southwest tower. All other orcs are in their normal locations. Because Tavik believes someone may come to scout the keep, he posts two of Kren's orcs on the roof of the gatehouse. This is possibly the worst situation for the characters. The orcs are at full strength, more guards are posted and there are no situational modifiers in favor of the characters. Your players should have their characters make peace with their respective deities if they attempt to assault the keep under these circumstances.

Full alert: If a day or more has passed and the raiding party has not returned or if any of the other conditions causing full alert described above are met, Tavik puts the keep on full alert. The watch fires are lit at night. All guards gain a +1 to their Spot checks as they have been ordered to be attentive or they will be beaten and whipped (and possibly eaten) by Grosh the ogre. Noise is suppressed in the keep, and the ale casks are sealed on pain of death by Tavik. Tavik does not sleep for several days, keeping ever-vigilant. He uses *divination* magic to gain information. If Vortigern and Talon are present, they use Talon's ability to contact Dispat to gain information about the raiding party. Two extra guards patrol the perimeter of the keep's exterior, and a permanent guard is stationed at the top of the gatehouse. Take these extra orcs from the ones normally sleeping in the southwest tower. Nagrod personally patrols the outer courtyard at night. Two extra

guards in addition to those just mentioned are posted at the door from the northwest tower into the inner courtyard. Approaching the keep under these conditions, without having previously thinned out the ranks of orcs, is tantamount to suicide. But what a story if the characters pull it off!

Approaching the Keep

There are three ways to approach the keep: by the secret forest path from the west, by the main path from the north leading to the gatehouse or through the woods from the south or east.

If the party approaches at night when the keep is on full alert, read the following in addition to any text below:

As you near the edge of the forest, you see a hellish glow coming from the area ahead of you. As you reach the clearing containing the keep, you notice that it is ringed with watch fires.

If the party approaches by the secret path, read the following:

Suddenly, the forest opens before you, revealing the crumbled battlements of a ruined keep. Immediately in front of you is one of the large stone towers of the keep. The tower has a partially collapsed roof and a crack runs down its length. The crack has been filled with stones, and a large iron door has been set into the filled crack. An iron padlock seals the door. Above the crumbling curtain wall, you can see the remains of what must have been the steeple of a chapel. It is difficult to see much more from your vantage point, since the forest has grown up to the very walls of the keep.

Remember, characters can make a Spot check (DC 15) to notice the orc sentry in the bell tower. If the characters do not make an excessive amount of noise, the sentry will not look in their direction unless the keep is on full alert. The sentry is used to hearing the

returning orc parties before he sees them so he does not keep a sharp lookout on the secret path.

If the characters approach from the main road, read the following text:

The brambles and branches clear, revealing a mostly intact curtain wall and gatehouse. The large, rusted portcullis of the gatehouse stands closed. The air is still. You see no one. The forest, it seems, has grown right up to the very walls of the keep. It is clear that the path you are on and the gatehouse before you have not been used for some time. The curtain wall and the encircling forest prevent you from seeing more of the keep from where you stand. The courtyard beyond the gatehouse is dark.

If the party approaches from the south or east, read the following text:

You come to the edge of the forest, which opens to the south side of the keep. There is a wide stretch of open ground between the edge of the forest and the keep. Here, the curtain wall of the keep is almost entirely ruined. The denizens of the keep have erected a palisade of dirt with what appears to be sharpened logs set along its length filling the gaps in the ruined wall. You can see that both to the northwest and northeast the trees grow more closely to the walls of the keep. As you turn, a gleam of metal catches your eye. Several paces from you, you notice the corpse of an elf impaled against a tree by a large steel spear driven fully through the corpse's torso. Only a ballista could cause such a grisly death. It disheartens you to think that the orcs might have such a weapon.

CRUCIBLE OF FREYA

The party may decide to do a reconnaissance of the entire keep, having one or more of its number circle around the keep under the cover of the surrounding forest. If so, read each of the above pieces of boxed text as the characters pass the relevant locations. Have characters doing so make a Move Silently and Hide check (both at a +6 due to the cover of the forest) as they pass each of the locations. Given the level of alertness of the keep as determined above, roll an opposed Spot and Listen check for the guards against the rolls made by the scouting characters.

If the raiding party returned with the *crucible*, read the following in addition to any text above:

An overwhelming din comes from within the keep—the shouts and screams of the orcs celebrating their capture of the crucible. A low, evil light comes from the inner courtyard of the keep.

Means of Entry

There are a number of ways to get into the keep, from the sneaky to the suicidal. They are detailed below:

The Back Door: The best way to enter the keep is through the “back door” using Kren’s key. There are never guards posted outside of this door. The only danger is the **green slime** (which is why the orcs don’t post a guard).

Over the Wall: The ruined walls can be climbed (DC 10). Due to the rubble and debris, a Move Silently check must be made (DC 14) or rocks are disturbed, possibly drawing attention to the climber. If there is a guard in the area, that guard can make a Listen check opposed by the failed Move Silently result. If the Move Silently check is successful, the guard does not get to roll a Listen check. Of course, if climbing a wall brings a person in the line of sight of a guard, that guard gets to make a Spot check (DC to be determined by the DM under the circumstances). Once on top of a ruined wall, the character must make a Balance check (DC 10-15 depending on the amount of wall remaining) or fall. Actually, the best wall to climb is the north wall flanking the gatehouse (DC 20) because that wall is normally not watched and it is not ruined, so it does not require a Move Silently check.

The “Umbra”: If the watch fires are lit, observant characters (Wisdom check DC 15) detect several shadowy areas where the firelight does not fully overlap. In these sections, any Hide checks by characters are made at +4.

Sneak Past the Guards: A near suicidal proposition unless the guards are asleep from a hangover, this tactic may nevertheless be attempted. This requires both a Hide check and a Move Silently check, opposed

by the guard’s Listen and Spot skills. The modifiers based on alertness level apply as described above.

Frontal Assault: Characters bent on a heroic but swift death should choose this option. Covering the open ground between the forest and the keep exposes characters to numerous Spot checks by the orcs at the palisades, in addition to subjecting them to bow fire from those same orcs. Also, the sentry in the bell tower can bring the scorpion to bear on anyone crossing the open field or in the outer courtyard, as the elf impaled to the tree clearly demonstrated.

Running the Assault

As long as the characters maintain stealth, they can move about the keep as they wish. The best possible scenario is that an archer in the party kills the sentry in the bell tower or a mage in the party puts him to *sleep*. Once combat breaks out anywhere within the keep, however, the rest of the orcs will most likely be alerted. The only way to avoid this is by sneak attacks that result in silent kills or combat under magical silence.

Once alerted, the sentry in the bell tower sounds the horn. When that happens, all sleeping orcs wake up in 2 rounds, exit their respective sleeping quarters and head to the sound of battle. Posted guards are told not to leave their posts, but since they are orcs, there is a 50% chance that any posted guard will leave his post and head toward the sound of melee. Nagrod emerges from the tower with his axe, spoiling for a fight. The melee will eventually draw all the orcs in the keep except for those disciplined enough to keep to their post. If the sentry in the bell tower lives, he fires the scorpion at any intruders.

If the sentry is killed so that there is no one to sound the horn, the only orcs alerted by the noise of combat are those close to the battle. The other orcs figure that if the danger is serious, the horn would sound. In this situation, the nearby orcs begin to arrive five rounds after they hear the battle. They are surprised to see intruders, believing that the sound of battle was from the long-anticipated showdown between Nagrod and Kren.

Regardless of whether or not the horn sounds, any sound of battle brings Tavik from the chapel to investigate. It also draws Grosh the ogre. Tavik gleefully enters melee, confident in his own abilities. However, as with most evil characters, Tavik is fond of “leading from the rear,” ordering his orcs to attack the most capable-seeming opponent, while he picks on weaklings or good clerics. See the notes by his statistics above for more details regarding Tavik’s tactics. Grosh wades into combat with no thought of defense, preferring to use charge attacks.

If Tavik is slain or if both Nagrod and Grosh the ogre are slain and the other orcs learn of this (i.e., the orcs witness their deaths or the party brandishes their heads), the orcs suffer a –2 morale modifier to all attack rolls. If all three are slain, the orcs drop their weapons and flee the ruins, never to return.

If Vortigern is present, he and Talon hang back from the melee. Vortigern knows all too well about the characters and believes that they may try to assault the keep. He has not shared this information with Tavik. Vortigern casts protection spells on his person and sends Talon up to the bell tower to see what is happening outside. Vortigern remains in the chapel receiving information from Talon until he sees that the battle has swung clearly in favor of one party or another. If in favor of the orcs, he emerges and casts a token *magic missile* at one of the intruders. If in favor of the party, he tries to make his escape (since he still has the amulet).

The Blessing of St. Cuthbert: St. Cuthbert shows his favor to any who take vengeance against Tavik and the orcs. If his name is invoked during combat, he places all of the party under the equivalent of a *bless* spell. This lasts for the duration of the melee. This is in addition to any benefit of invoking his name in the chapel.

Lannet: Don't forget that Lannet has silently followed the party. He may provide a crucial sneak attack or dagger throw if needed to get the party out of trouble.

Repeated Forays

The characters may attack the keep and be forced to withdraw due to injuries before they have fully cleansed the keep of the orc infestation. Tavik can fortify his position by conscripting up to four more **common orcs** to take the place of any orcs that have fallen in combat. If Nagrod and Grosh are slain and Tavik has lost more than 12 orcs, he withdraws from the keep, reluctantly returning as a failure to the temple of Orcus in the Stoneheart Mountain dungeon. If ever reduced to less than 4 orcs or if the tide of battle turns horribly against him, Tavik flees.

If he has more than 10 orcs, Tavik orders two orcs to walk a patrol around the keep at all times. In addition, he posts two orcs at the end of the secret path. He posts four more orcs inside the outer courtyard as guards at the palisade. The guards are on full alert. If he has fewer than 10 orcs and if Vortigern is present, Tavik and his forces withdraw to the chapel, since he and Vortigern are convinced that the amulet somehow opens a secret chamber in the chapel. If Vortigern is not present, Tavik and his forces withdraw to the southwest tower.

Regardless, after an attack by the players, Tavik orders his orcs to mine some **green slime**. From this point on, all orcs have two ceramic jars containing green slime with them. They use these jars as projectiles. Anyone struck with a jar is affected by the green slime as if they touched it. The orcs also repair any damage to their fortification if they have the time, replacing sharpened logs and rebuilding the palisade.

Beneath the Keep...

Once the orc infestation is removed, the players may wish to explore the rooms beneath the keep. Use

the material detailed in Part One to handle such exploration. Make sure to keep the tension level high. Eralion the shadow awaits!

Act IV: Return to Fairhill

Characters returning with the *crucible* are hailed as champions. Shandril and Arlen are very pleased. Baran even smiles. If they return with the *crucible* and have cleansed the keep, they are treated as heroes of legend. Arlen allows them to stay in the noble's house as if they were visiting dignitaries whenever they are in Fairhill. Glarian offers to hold a feast in their honor. Obviously, Shandril and Kath heal any injured party members, and Shandril uses her scroll to *raise* any one party member killed during the quest. Even Lauriel puts aside her jealousy and joins in praising the characters.

A local bard composes a song about their exploits. It contains a few glaring exaggerations, such as a part where the characters drive the vampire from the keep. If questioned about why he added the part about the vampire, the bard responds that he knows it is not true but he wanted to put to rest an old myth that was scaring the local children.

Concluding the Adventure

Returning the *crucible* earns the party a 200 XP story bonus, as mentioned above. Returning the sword gives a 50 XP bonus to the wielder. Cleansing the above-ground portion of the keep and ridding the area of the orc raiders net an additional 600 XP beyond the XP value of the combat with the denizens of the keep. Delving further and defeating Eralion, thus cleansing the entire keep, net an additional 75 XP. Removing the desecration from the chapel of St. Cuthbert yields another 100 XP for the party and an additional 50 XP for any priest in the party who does so.

Tavik and Vortigern

Tavik (and Vortigern, if he was present) should have survived the adventure. Both travel on to Bard's Gate, where Vortigern hopes to learn additional information about the amulet. Tavik then heads from Bard's Gate to the temple of Orcus in the Stoneheart Mountain dungeon. If slain, Tavik returns to Fairhill once *raised* and uses new minions to learn the whereabouts of the party. Both attempt to take their revenge on the party. They should serve as antagonists for many more adventures.

A Bonus

In appreciation for their faithful service and loyal return of the sword, Shandril bequeaths her sword to the fighter who wielded it during the adventure if he or she has a Charisma of 12 or more, saying, "Take this as a blessing from the bounty of the great goddess, Freya. It has done great service in your hands, and I feel it will do even greater service still."

Supplemental Information

Additional Story Ideas

The following items can be dropped into the main story at the discretion of the GM. Some are side quests, and some involve more extended roleplaying opportunities.

“Vortigern’s Revenge”: If this adventure is being run as a continuation of *The Wizard’s Amulet* and Vortigern escaped without the amulet, he is in Fairhill staying at the *Cask and Flagon*. A number of adventures could be run centered on Vortigern and Talon spying on the party and attempting to take their revenge or steal the amulet. Possibly Talon wanders the town invisibly, spying on the party. He might be shot down by the sharp-eyed Lauriel, who takes the unconscious imp to Shandril who attempts to learn its purpose. The characters are summoned and questioned. Or possibly Talon commits a crime while invisible and frames the party for it. It then needs to prove its innocence.

“Lannet”: Who better than a halfling thief to provide roleplaying opportunities? Have Lannet steal an item from the party. Or have Lannet seek out the party to provide him protection from someone who is after him for stealing a valuable item that he subsequently lost.

“Missing Villagers”: Make sure the characters hear the rumor of the missing “adventurers.” Have them meet Voril and learn that his daughter, Arialie, a fledgling bard, is one of the missing young adventurers. He informs the party of the general direction in which the adventurers were traveling, pointing them toward the area of Girbolg’s lair.

“Fendrin’s Tale”: Surely the characters hear the sad tale of Fendrin. If the players successfully return with the crucible, Fendrin resolves that they will be able to help him take revenge on the manticores. He does not take “no” for an answer. In fact, with all their notoriety, the villagers expect the party to aid Fendrin. After all, they drove the vampire out of the keep.

“Sirya Runs Away”: The town is in an uproar. Sirya, Arlen’s daughter, has disappeared. She shows up

either hidden in the party’s room at the inn, begging to be taken along as an adventurer, or possibly she tags along behind the party when they set off after the crucible. A wicked alternative is that Talon murders her and hides her body in the party’s room at the inn, framing it for her murder.

Continuing the Adventure

There are a number of ways the adventure contained in this module can be continued.

“Eralion’s Request”: This option requires modifying the information in this module. Rather than being reduced to a vile undead with a nearly shattered mind, in this alternative Eralion retains his former personality. If the characters descend into his lair, he asks them to help him restore his mortality. He sends them on an errand to somewhere dangerous to recover an item of your choosing that he requires to undo Orcus’ evil curse. Possibly, he asks them to head to the Stoneheart Mountain dungeon to kill one of the evil priests responsible for providing him with the poisoned potion. See the Necromancer Games dungeon module *The Tomb of Abysthor*, which details that dungeon.

“Arlen’s Letter”: If the characters successfully complete this adventure, they have won the undying friendship of Arlen, the magistrate. He tells the party of his youth as a captain of the Lyreguard in Bard’s Gate and gives the party a letter, addressed to Imril, the current captain of the Lyreguard, recommending the party as trustworthy. This letter has great significance if the party heads on to Bard’s Gate, as detailed in the Necromancer Games supplement, *Bard’s Gate*. Arlen encourages the party to travel there. He says, with nostalgia, that the characters remind him of himself when he was young.

“Tavik’s Revenge”: As mentioned above, Tavik should develop into a campaign-long nemesis. He sets into motion several nefarious agents of Orcus to exact his revenge on the party, including a famous assassin from Bard’s Gate—Noria Verilath.

Appendix One: Monsters

Included in this appendix are the "stat blocks" for the monsters found in and around Fairhill not otherwise described in keyed locations.

Brigand, Male Human War1: CR 1/2; SZ Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+2; hp 7; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15/14 (+2 armor, +1 shield, Dex/without shield); Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, short sword, crit 19-20) or +3 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit 19-20); AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +2, Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +1, Jump +4, Ride +3, Spot +2, Swim +2. *Feats:* Dodge.

Possessions: Leather armor, small wooden shield, light cross bow with 20 bolts, short sword, 2d6 sp, 1d4 gp.

Brigand, Leader, Male Human Ftr2/Rog2: CR 4; SZ Medium humanoid; HD 2d10+2 plus 2d6+2; hp 28; Init +6, Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 armor, +1 shield, Dex); Atk +5 melee (1d8+1, rapier, crit 18-20) +4 melee/+5 ranged (1d4+1, dagger, crit 19-20, range 10 ft.) or +5 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit 19-20); SA sneak attack (+1d6); SQ evasion; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Refl +5, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Appraise +2, Balance +1, Bluff +3, Climb +3, Escape Artist +1, Handle Animal +4, Hide +3, Intimidate +6, Jump +0, Listen +1, Move Silently +2, Open Lock +3, Pick Pocket +4, Search +2, Spot +2, Tumble +1, Use Magic Device +2, Use Rope +3, Wilderness Lore +1. *Feats:* Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (rapier).

Languages: Common, Orc.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, small wooden shield, rapier, 3 daggers, light crossbow with 20 bolts, 54 gp, 69 sp, 5 gems of 100 gp each.

Gnoll, Common: CR 1; SZ Medium humanoid (7 1/2 ft. tall); HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (30 ft. base); AC 17/15 (+1 natural, +4 armor, +2 shield/without shield); Atk +3 melee (1d8+2, morningstar), +3 melee (1d10+2, glaive, crit x3, reach) or +1 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit 19-20); SQ darkvision (60 ft.); AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +3, Spot +3. *Feats:* Power Attack.

Possessions: Scale mail, large wooden shield, glaive, morningstar, light crossbow with 20 bolts, 3d6 sp.

Goblin: CR 1/4; SZ Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+1 size, Dex, +3 armor, +1 shield); Atk +0 melee (1d6-1, light mace) or +2 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); SQ darkvision (60 ft.); AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Spot +3. Goblins receive a +4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks. *Feats:* Alertness.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, small wooden shield, light mace, javelins (3), 1d4 sp, 2d4 cp.

Ogre: CR 2; SZ Large giant; HD 4d8+8; hp 28; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +5 natural, +3 hide); Atk +8 melee (2d6+7, huge greatclub) or +1 ranged (2d6+7, huge long spear); Reach 10 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +5, Listen +3, Spot +3. *Feats:* Weapon Focus (greatclub).

Possessions: Huge greatclub, huge long spear, sack with human skull and hunk of uncooked meat, 31 gp, 28 sp, 10 gp silver ring.

Orc, Common: CR 1/2; SZ Medium humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 5; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (30 ft. base); AC 14 (+3 armor, +1 shield); Atk +3 melee (1d8+2, battle axe, crit x3) or +0 ranged (1d6, shortbow, range 60); SQ: light sensitivity (-1 attack rolls), darkvision (60 ft.); 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:* Weapon Focus (battle axe).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, small wooden shield, battle axe, shortbow with 20 arrows, 2d6 sp, 3d10 cp.

Orc, Leader: CR 1; SZ Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 12; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft. (30 ft. base); AC 15 (+4 armor, Dex); Atk +5 melee (1d12+3, greataxe, crit x3), +4 melee (1d6+3, short sword, crit 19-20); SQ: light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will 0; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3, Intimidate +3. *Feats:* Weapon Focus (battle axe).

Possessions: Scale mail, greataxe, short sword, 8 gp, 12 sp.

Orc, Warrior: CR 1/2; SZ Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (30 ft. base); AC 15 (+4 armor, Dex); Atk +3 melee (1d12+2, greataxe, crit x3) or +1 ranged (1d6, shortbows, range 60 ft.); SQ darkvision (60 ft.), light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3. *Feats:* Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Possessions: Scale mail, greataxe, shortbow with 20 arrows, spent torches, 2 flasks of oil, tinder box, 1d6 gp, 2d8 sp.

CRUCIBLE OF FREYA

Spider, Monstrous (Medium-size): CR 1; SZ Medium vermin (4 ft. long); HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., Climb 20 ft.; AC 14 (+1 natural, Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d6 bite, plus poison); SA poison, web; SQ vermin; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 17, Con 12, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +12, Hide +10, Spot +7. **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite).

SA—Poison (Ex): If a spider deals damage with its bite, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 12) after 1 minute or take 1d2 points temporary Strength damage.

SA—Web (Ex): These spiders often wait in their webs or in trees, then lower themselves silently on silk strands and leap out onto prey passing beneath. A single strand is strong enough to support the spider and one creature of the same size. Monstrous spiders using this trick gain a +8 competence bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks. Web-spinning spiders can cast a web eight times a day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against targets up to one size smaller than the spider. The web anchors the target in place, allowing no movement. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Strength check (DC 26). The entangling web has 6 hit points.

SQ—Vermin: The spiders are immune to all mind-influencing effects.

Stirges: CR 2; SZ Tiny beast; HD 1d10; hp 6,5,5; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 10 ft., Fly 40 ft. (poor); AC 16 (+2 size, +4 Dex; AC 12 if attached); Atk +6 melee (1d3, touch, piercing, plus special attack blood drain on subsequent rounds); Face 2 1/2 ft. x 2 1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SA attach, blood drain, darkvision (200 ft.); AL N; SV Fort +2 Refl +6 Will +1; Str 3, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Spot +8 (acute sense of smell), Hide +14. **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (touch).

SD—Attach (Ex): If a stirge hits with a touch attack (target's armor bonuses ignored), it uses its eight pincers to latch on to its target's body. A stirge attaches itself with incredible strength and cannot be pulled off. You must kill a stirge to remove it. If an attack is made against an attached stirge, that attack is at -4 because the attacker must be careful not to hit the victim. The victim does not suffer this penalty. An attached stirge has AC 12.

SA—Blood Drain (Ex): An attached stirge drains blood, dealing 1d4 temporary Constitution damage each round it remains attached. Once it has drained 4 points of Constitution, it detaches and flies off to digest its meal. Temporary Constitution damage is regained at a rate of 1 point per day.

Troll: CR 6; SZ Large giant; HD 6d8+36; hp 68; Init +6 (Improved Initiative, Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 18

(+7 natural, Dex, -1 size); Atk +9/+9 melee (1d6+6 [x2], claws) and +4 melee (1d6+3, bite); Reach 10 ft.; SA rend; SQ regeneration (5 hp/round), darkvision (90 ft.), scent; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 23, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills: Jump +8, Listen +5, Spot +5. **Feats:** Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack.

SA—Rend (Ex): If a troll hits with both claw attacks, he latches onto his foe's body and tears the flesh, automatically dealing an additional 2d6+9 points of damage.

SQ—Regeneration (Ex): Fire and acid deal normal damage to a troll. Other damage is treated as subdual damage and regenerates at a rate of 5 hit points per round. If a troll loses a limb or body part, the lost portion is regrown in 3d6 minutes. The troll can reattach a severed member instantly by holding it to the stump.

SQ—Scent (Ex): Trolls can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponents are upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it decreases to 15 feet.

Waymarch Cavalryman, Ftr2: SZ Medium humanoid; HD 2d10+2; hp 14; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., Ride 50 ft.; AC 17 (+5 armor, +1 shield, Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d6+2, halfspear, crit x3), +3 melee (1d8+2, longsword, crit 19-20) or +3 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit 19-20, range 80 ft.); AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +1, Jump +1, Ride +6, Spot +2. **Feats:** Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery.

SQ: By race, if any.

Possessions: Chainmail armor, small steel shield, surcoat bearing the insignia of the Grand Duke, halfspear, longsword, light crossbow with 20 bolts, 3 gp, 12 sp. Mounted on light warhorses.

Waymarch Cavalryman Leader, Ftr4: SZ Medium humanoid; HD 4d10+8; hp 34; Init +6 (Improved Initiative, Dex); Spd 20 ft., Ride 40 ft.; AC 19 (+5 armor, +2 shield, Dex); Atk +6 melee (1d6+3, halfspear, crit x3), +6 melee (1d8+3, longsword, crit 19-20); AL NG; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills: Handle Animal +4, Ride +8, Spot +2. **Feats:** Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge.

SQ: By race, if any.

Possessions: Chainmail, large steel shield, surcoat bearing the insignia of the Grand Duke, halfspear, longsword, 10 gp, 46 sp. Mounted on light warhorse.

Waymarch Footman, Ftr2: SZ Medium humanoid; HD 2d10+2; hp 14; Init +5 (Improved Initiative,

APPENDIX ONE: MONSTERS

Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 armor, +1 shield, Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, halfspear, crit x3), +3 melee (1d6+1, short sword, crit 19-20) +3 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit 19-20/x2, range 80); AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +2, Jump +2, Ride +2, Spot +2. **Feats:** Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (halfspear).

SQ: By race, if any.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, small wooden shield, surcoat bearing the insignia of the Grand Duke, longspear, short sword, light crossbow, 20 bolts, 3 gp, 12 sp.

Waymarch Knight, Ftr4: SZ Medium humanoid; HD 4d10+8; hp 34; Init +6 (Improved Initiative, Dex); Spd 20 ft./40 ft. mounted; AC 19 (+5 armor, +2 shield, Dex); Atk +6 melee (1d8+3, heavy lance, crit x3) +6 melee (1d8+3, longsword, crit 19-20); AL NG; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills: Handle Animal +6, Ride +6, Spot +2. **Feats:** Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge.

SQ: By race, if any.

Possessions: Chainmail, large steel shield, full helm, surcoat bearing the insignia of the Grand Duke, heavy lance, longsword, 10 gp, 46 sp. Mounted on heavy warhorses.

Waymarch Sheriff, Ari2/Ftr3: SZ Medium humanoid; HD 2d8+2 plus 3d10+6; hp 36; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 armor, +1 shield, Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d8+1, longsword, crit 19-20/x2); AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills: Diplomacy +3, Gather Information +2, Handle Animal +2, Ride +2, Search +2, Sense Motive +2, Spot +2. **Feats:** Expertise, Mounted Combat.

SQ: By race, if any.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather, masterwork small steel shield, full helm, surcoat bearing the insignia of the Grand Duke, masterwork longsword, *potion of cure serious wounds* (x2 doses), writ of authority, 5-20 gp gems, 22 gp, 12 sp.

Wolf, Common: CR 1/2; SZ Medium animal; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, bite, piercing); SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +4, Spot +4. **Feats:** Weapons Finesse (bite).

SQ—Scent (Ex): Wolves can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponents are upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it decreases to 15 feet. Wolves can also follow a trail with a successful Wisdom check. Fresh trails are DC 10 for this purpose, and checks increase by 2 for every hour the trail ages.

Worg: CR 1 (solitary), 3 (small pack); SZ Medium magical beast; HD 4d10+8; hp 28; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 50 ft.; AC 14 (+2 natural, Dex); Atk +8 melee (1d6+4, bite); SA trip; SQ scent, speech; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Hide +7, Listen +9, Move Silently +7, Spot +9. A worg has a +1 to Listen, Move Silently, and Spot checks and a +2 to Hide checks. **Feats:** Alertness, Weapon Focus (bite).

SA—Trip (Ex): A worg that has made a successful bite attack can automatically attempt to trip the opponent. If the trip attempt fails, the opponent does not get a chance to trip the worg.

SQ—Scent: Worgs can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponents are upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it decreases to 15 feet. Strong scents (smoke) carry twice as far, and overpowering scents (skunk musk) carry three times as far. Worgs can also follow a trail with a successful Wisdom check. Fresh trails are DC 10 for this purpose, and checks increase by 2 for every hour the trail ages.

SQ—Speech (Ex): Worgs speak Common and Goblin.

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The first in a new series of D20 adventures by Necromancer Games, **The Crucible of Freya** is a challenging introductory adventure for any fantasy campaign. Detailing the village of Fairhill, the surrounding wilderness and a nearby ruined keep, as well as the dungeon levels beneath, this adventure module provides all the material a DM needs to start his or her new Third Edition campaign. Will your characters learn what dark forces are behind the orc raids?

Fantasy—Swords and Sorcery
Adventure (Village/Wilderness/Ruins)
Core D20 System



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