

**PER1-02**

# **Chasing the Ox**

**A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK®**

**Perrenland Regional Adventure**

Version 1

**by Patrick Williamson**

Rustlers have been raiding the farms around the village of Skillet. Now they have gone too far, stealing the prize colt of the mayor, the last colt from Old Regret. Can the party chase them down and reap the reward for its recovery. An adventure for player characters of level 1-6.

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This is an RPGA® Network scenario for the Dungeons & Dragons® game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for each round of this scenario, but the actual playing time will be closer to three hours. The rest of the time is spent in preparation before game play, and scoring after the game. The following guidelines are here to help you with both the preparation and voting segment of the game. Read this page carefully so that you know and can communicate to your players the special aspects of playing an RPGA scenario.

## **Preparation**

First you should print this scenario. This scenario was created to support double-sided printing, but printing it single sided will work as well. There is enough room along the inside margin to bind the adventure, if you desire.

Read this entire adventure at least once before you run your game. Be sure to familiarize yourself with any special rules, spells, or equipment presented in the adventure. It may help to highlight particularly important passages.

When you run an RPGA D&D adventure we assume that you have access to the following books: the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. We also assume that you have a set of dice (at least one d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20), some scrap paper, a pencil, an RPGA scoring packet, and your sense of fun. It is also a good idea to have a way to track movement during combat. This can be as simple as a pad of graph paper and a pencil, as handy as a vinyl grid map and chits, or as elaborate as resin dungeon walls and miniatures.

Instruct the players either to prepare their characters now, or wait until you read the introduction, depending on the requirements of the scenario as described in the introduction.

Keep in mind that you must have at least four players (not counting the DM), for the game session to be a sanctioned RPGA event. As well, you cannot have more than seven players participating in the game.

Once you are ready to play, it is handy to instruct each player to place a nametag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players (and the DM) to keep track of who is playing which character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core rule books during certain times of play. For example, the players are not free to consult the *Dungeon Master's Guide* when confronted with a trap or hazard, or the *Monster Manual* when confronted with a monster.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the

players will be in gray boxes. It's strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text instead of reading it aloud. Some of this text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

## **Scoring**

After the players have completed the scenario or the time allotted to run the scenario has run out, the players and DM score the game. The RPGA has three ways to score its games. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use for this scenario:

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

When using voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities. It's a good idea to have the players vote while you determine treasure and experience awards for the scenario.

After voting, give the Scoring Packet to your event coordinator.

This is a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure. As a Living™ adventure, it is expected that players will bring their own characters with them. If players do not have a LIVING GREYHAWK character generated, get a copy of the current LIVING GREYHAWK character generation guidelines, a character sheet, and a LIVING GREYHAWK log sheet from your convention coordinator or the RPGA Web site, and then have any players without a character create one. Once all players have a LIVING GREYHAWK character, play can begin.

Along with the other materials that you are assumed to have in order to run a D&D game, it is also recommended that you have a copy of the LIVING GREYHAWK Gazetteer.

## **LIVING GREYHAWK Tier Structure**

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK campaigns, this adventure is tiered. Basically, the challenges in this adventure are proportioned to the average character level of the characters participating in the adventure. To determine the tier that you will use to run this adventure, add the character levels of all the characters. In addition, add the levels of any cohorts or animals according to the values on their certificates. Cross-reference the total and the number of players participating in the game using the chart below to determine the tier used for this adventure.

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

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

## **Is it a Full Moon?**

Since the hazards of lycanthropy are a current part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign, it may be necessary to determine if this adventure takes place during a full moon. For game purposes, the full moon lasts three days of each month. For a given scenario that does not state the phase of the moon, roll 1d10 before play begins. On a result of 1, the first day of the scenario is a night of the full moon (roll 1d3 to determine where in the sequence of three nights it falls).

## **Lifestyle**

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

**Wild:** You are living in the wild, either as a nomad, or perhaps in a cave. You hunt and gather your own food and your clothes consist of furs and/or hand-woven items. At times, food is scarce and you go hungry. But you survive. You suffer -2 on Charisma-related skill tests in urban areas and -1 on Charisma-related skill tests in rural areas. You must have Wilderness Lore of 6 or higher to avoid being Destitute.

**Rough:** You live in the wilderness, roaming a specific territory or living in a rude shack or tent. Your meals come from hunting and foraging, though you may cultivate a few small crops or herd some animals. You get by well enough to barter for equipment or to gather coins to pay for necessary repairs. You suffer -1 on Charisma-related skill checks in urban areas. You must have Wilderness Lore of 4, otherwise you are Poor.

**Destitute:** You have no living space, and must carry all your gear everywhere. You eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, your only change of clothes.

**Poor:** You sleep in poor accommodations, and eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, and have two sets of clothing.

**Common:** You have common lodgings, and eat common quality food. You have normal clothing for your profession (adventuring); nothing fancy. You probably have two or three sets of clothing.

**High:** You stay in good quality lodgings, and eat good quality food. You wear anything in value up to courtier's outfits, and generally buy a new set of clothing every two weeks.

**Luxury:** You have luxurious accommodations (twice the cost of good accommodations), and you eat excellent foods. You can throw a banquet for your friends every day, and frequently do. You wear clothing up to the value of noble's outfit, and buy a new set of clothes every week.

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

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

|           |      | Urban   | Rural   |
|-----------|------|---------|---------|
| Lifestyle | Cost | CHA mod | CHA mod |
| Destitute | 0    | -3      | -3      |
| Wild*     | 0    | -2      | -1      |

|         |      |    |    |
|---------|------|----|----|
| Poor    | 1    | -1 | -1 |
| Rough** | 1    | -1 | 0  |
| Low     | 3    | -1 | +1 |
| Medium  | 10   | 0  | +2 |
| High    | 100  | +1 | -1 |
| Luxury  | 1000 | +2 | -2 |

\* – requires Wilderness Lore skill of 6+

\*\* – requires Wilderness Lore skill of 4+

## Adventure Summary and Background

### The Village of Skillet

Skillet is a small village of some thirty buildings that supplies the local area with facilities such as an inn, a temple, the constable's goal, market place, blacksmiths, general merchants and several other specialist crafts. Most farmers from the surrounding 10miles use Skillet as a weekly spot to exchange goods, news, and a pot or two of the excellent local ale. Skillet lies on the junction of two highways. The first runs from Krestible to Swartzenbruin the second from Skillet to Exag across the dangerous Mounds of Dawn. Skillet is the first interchange point for horses on the highway from Krestible or the last interchange in the opposite direction. A good number of horses, bullocks, carts and wagons are kept and maintained here by various merchants Houses in the village's corral. Skilled tradesmen are available to repair broken wagons and carts. The level of traffic through the town is fairly constant especially over summer and the locals are kept busy servicing the various needs of the many travelers who stop for a day before moving on. This makes Skillet, despite its small size, a bustling and diverse community. To the passing traveler Skillet presents itself as a bustling small community that takes good care of its guests. Skillet is run by several personalities each trying to keep the peace and maintain the air of hospitality that attracts the passer through.

#### **Skillet (small village)**

Conventional; AL LN; 1,000gp limit; Assets 50,000gp; Population 441; Mixed ((human Flan/Oerdian 410 (Rosrijders 74, Hüssen 240, Weisspeer 34, Others 62); halfling 9, elf 2, halfelves 1, dwarf 3, gnome 15, half-orc 1)).

Authority figures: Mayor Ritter Ust VanDerbergsen (Weisspeer) Ari7, Deputy Mayor Arnald Kleistad (Weisspeer) Ari3, Constable Deter Haugrammer (Hüssen) War3; Holy Sister Jana Roodhand of the old church (Vosser) Clr5.

Important Characters: Merchant Giles Tilmouth Exp7, Talgospa Girtaxe (Dwarven Master blacksmith) Fgt1/Exp5, Helga Prith the boarding house proprietor (Hüssen) Exp3, Bartrand Pimm VanDerbergsen's Steward (Weisspeer) Rog1/Exp3; Dom Perinong the Tavern owner (Hüssen) Com3.

Others: Town Guards War2 (8) War1 (16); Exp2 (10); Rog3 (2); Rgr2 (2); Clr2 (5); Com1 (389).

### Clan PCs

For Perrenland Clan PCs the Skillet area is predominantly populated by the Rosrijder clan, all related to each other under one large sub-clan called the Swerins. This clan has, in the past, been associated with cattle and horse rustling, banditry and other crimes but has settled down in the last few generations. They mostly live in scattered farms around Skillet. They find long term employment in the village due to their ability with horses and breed a lot of the horses that they sell to merchant houses. The Swerins have a chip on their shoulder as they feel other clans in the area look down upon them. The village itself, and its nearby farms, is dominated by Hüssen clan members from mixed sub-clans. Tensions have been approaching feud level at times between various Hüssen families and the Rosrijder Swerin clan. The peace is kept by a small, yet affluent, population of Weisspeer clan members including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor (both of whom are absent during the unfolding events).

### DM's note

Party members can add flavour to their character background if they wish by choosing one of the various traditional clans of Perrenland to belong to. It will be up to the individual DM's to determine how best to role-play this aspect of Perrenland.

## Adventure Synopsis

The party has been approached by a Merchant they know in Krestible who shows them a contract calling for regulators to put a stop to a cattle-rustling operation in the area of the Village of Skillet. He offers to put in a good word for the party and if they get the job will transport them to the village in exchange for them agreeing to guard one of his Caravans on the way.

The party ends up being picked from those who have applied by the factor (lawyer) of the local noble and mayor of Skillet Ritter Ust VanDerbergsen who mostly resides in Krestible further to the south. This hiring of the PCs has been arranged to deliberately disassociate the village hierarchy from the cattle rustling investigation by the shrewd Deputy Mayor and local clan power broker Arnald Kleistad who has also decided to take a holiday until the affair is sorted out.

The local Hüssen land owners whose cattle has been exclusively picked for recent theft are about to launch a feud against the local Rosrijder clan whom they blame for the recent rustling. Arnald Kleistad wants outsiders to resolve the

problem for if the local authorities were to act overtly they could damage the delicate nature of Clan politics around the village of Skillet. He and the local constable both know that members of the local Rosrijder clan are behind the rustling and don't want any repercussions from this volatile and unforgiving clan when they are brought to justice or killed.

The party is unaware that they are getting involved in the middle of local Clan tensions. They have been transported to the village of Skillet as part of the guard for a Merchant caravan. The parties purpose is well know in the village and members of both factions know the score and many have travelled from out of town to see the heroes first hand so to speak. The tavern is exceptionally full the first time the PCs go there.

The party has been instructed to go to the manor of their employer to receive detailed instructions from his steward Bertrand Pimm. The Manor is run in the absence of Ritter VanDerbergesen by a totally disgusted, ex-city, newly hired Steward called Bertrand Pimm. He will be completely drunk when the player meet him. He informs the party that his Lord is most upset with the theft of his prize colt "Might and Power" a month ago. He does not know that it was the deputy mayor who arranged for Might and Powers disappearance in order to get VanDerbergesen to hire the party. The colt itself has been the source of much local tension as its mother "Old Regret" is the last of a special bloodline bred by the local Rosrijder clan the Swerins. The Swerins claim that Old Regret was lost in an unfair business arrangement (a horse race) between VanDerbergesen and themselves. Many Swerins feel that the colt belongs to them. Arnald will arrange for the missing colt to be found and returned by his friend the local Constable Deter Haugrammer so that they can share any reward the day after the PCs head out of town to track down the rustlers. Pimm the Steward will offer the party a bonus 200gp for the colt's safe return (actually it was 500 but Pimm will keep 300 as a commission for himself). A monetary bill (30gp) will be issued to the PCs to purchase supplies from the local village. The PCs will be offered free board and lodging at Helga Priths boarding house during their stay. At the over-crowded tavern a warm reception will be put on by the local Hüssen patrons who will buy the PCs a great deal of the local brew called "Skilleted" and tell them a number of rumors if the PCs drink with them.

At the Merchants, Giles Tilmouth, the mastermind of the Rustling operation, will warmly welcome them. They will be offered discounts on whatever they purchase because of the good turn they are doing the village. Here characters can use the bill-of-writ provided by Bertrand Pimm to purchase supplies. If they do buy food or drink it will have been poisoned by Giles with a mild non-lethal poison. The poison

will induce a food poisoning like effect and slow the party down. This poisoning will be impossible to trace back to Giles

Meanwhile, the rustlers have moved camp in expectation of the arrival of the hired regulators to a more secure position and are laying low for a time. A human called Farran the Ox, a huge obese man with some old Orc ancestry, is their leader and has made this decision. Farran has been hired by Giles Tilmouth to lead the rustling operation. He has not yet informed Giles of the fact that they have moved camp (a nice dry cave complex) but has sent Desmond, the only other reliable member of the gang, to tell him. Giles is the brains, Farran is the muscle, and Desmond is the pair of legs that connects them. The other six rustlers are members of a particularly gullible Swerin family and will be left to cop the blame if things go wrong. They do not know that Giles Tilmouth is the mastermind of the operation. Giles arranges for all stolen cattle and horses to be shipped and fenced through reliable contacts in Krestible to the South. He rewards Farran very well for his ability to intimidate the heck out of most commoners in the area including the rustlers. The rustlers think Desmond is part of Farrans old gang back in Krestible and that he owes Farran a few favors. Desmond is well paid for his task as message and supply boy by Giles. When the PCs arrive in town Giles, in a rare show of panic, will dispatch Desmond to warn the rustlers. Desmond, not knowing the new location of the rustlers will take two days to finally locate them, leaving a trail for the PCs to follow.

Once the PCs find the rustlers they will find themselves seemingly out-classed by a very aggressive Farran and his gang and they will either surrender or fight.

If they fight they find that the gang is completely unreliable. They run for it as soon as they take their first casualty. Farran, finding things are now going against, him will escape into the cave complex that is his new hide out. Leaping dramatically down a well into some water to escape he will yell, "You'll never catch me alive!" and disappears from sight. He knows that there are further caverns below but is unsure if there is a way out. He will not leap in without taking some rope and a grapple hook lying next to the well beforehand. The party will have to chase Farran down the well so they will hear him grumbling and groaning as he pulls himself out of the water to tempt them down.

If the party surrenders they will be disarmed and thrown down the well with great amusement. Either way the party goes subterranean.

The subterranean complex the party now finds themselves in is part of a much larger complex. The cavern they have landed in will provide them with two club-like weapons (old stout branches) if they have no weapons. They will have an encounter with a Gelatinous cube and find an ancient masterwork short sword, and

possibly the remains of Farran's corpse. They will travel through more empty rooms discovering a door with an inscription that with defy all methods of entry other than that stated in the inscription, providing a future adventure hook. After vainly trying to get the door open the PCs will have an encounter with some Formian workers (part of a larger colony) and find that the Formians have created a tunnel to the surface through which the party will be able to escape.

Once back on top they can try to hunt down the rustlers, this quickly become an impossible task as their respective families shelter them. The party will find no cattle gaining no reward. The missing colt will be returned to its home by the constable, and the reward collected by him. They will be unable to prove that Giles gave them food poisoning. The party should leave with more experience and some moderate rewards for their efforts. The possibility for more adventure through the door that they could not open should be their greatest reward.

## Players' introduction

*You have been hired by the wealthy noble Ritter VanDerbergesen to track down and bring to justice a small band of cattle and horse rustlers operating around the village of Skillet where he has his manor. This was arranged by a merchant you all know through the noble's lawyer in Krestible. It is spring 591CY and the adventuring season is just beginning. In return for getting you the job you have agreed to guard the merchants caravan on the way to the village Skillet. You are to report to the VanDerbergesen manor when you arrive to receive further instructions.*

*You know that part of the job involves the recovery of a prize colt "the last colt from old regret". This valuable colt belongs to your employer as is called "Might and Power". He is offering an undisclosed bonus to the party if the colt is returned in good health. The incidentals money offered is a modest 2 silver pieces a day per character, but full salvage rights will be given on all unbranded cattle recovered, fetching at average market prices of about 10gp each. All branded cattle will attract a 1gp reward from the local farmer's cooperative. The local Constable will pay a 100gp bounty for each rustler accounted for, dead or alive. If the party is successful they will also gain the gratitude and possible future assistance of Ritter VanDerbergesen.*

Give the players handout No 1.

### Opening scene

*The merchant's caravan has just arrived at your destination, the village of Skillet. It is mid*

*afternoon. Road weary and sick of rations, you have each eaten three days of your own supplies, you bid farewell to the merchant. You pocket the single silver piece he has paid each of you for your services in guarding the caravan on the short, uneventful 3 day trip from Krestible. He tells you that the manor of Ritter VanDerbergesen is about a mile down the road north of the town and to get your instructions from the steward before settling in. Wishing you well he departs. Before you is the Village of Skillet.*

## Players' Description of the Village

*Skillet is a small village of some thirty buildings that supplies the local area with facilities such as an inn, a temple, the constables gaol, market place, blacksmiths, general merchants and several other specialist crafts. Most farmers from the surrounding romiles use Skillet as a weekly spot to exchange goods, news, and a pot or two of the excellent local ale. Skillet lies on the junction of two highways. The first runs from Krestible to Swartzenbruin the second from Skillet to Exag across the dangerous Mounds of Dawn. Skillet is the first interchange point for horses on the highway from Krestible or the last interchange in the opposite direction. A good number of horses, bullocks, carts and wagons are kept and maintained here by various merchants houses in the village's corral. Skilled tradesmen are available to repair broken wagons and carts. The level of traffic through the town is fairly constant, especially over summer, and the locals are kept busy servicing the various needs of the many travelers who stop for a day before moving on. This makes Skillet, despite its small size, a bustling and diverse community. The village is renowned for its hospitality.*

## DM notes

If the players go straight to the manor then go to **Encounter 1**. If they go to the local tavern go to **Encounter 2**. If they approach the Helga Prith's boarding house go to **Encounter 3**. If they go to the merchants play **Encounter 4**. If they decide to look around have a servant from the manor approach them and ask them if they are the regulators that have been hired to recover Ritter VanDerbergesen's property, for he has instructions to escort them to the manor to meet the steward immediately.

## Encounter 1: Receiving Instructions

*Once at the manor, a large fortified house, a stable hand escorts you past several lounging guards to a smaller side cottage. Here you are led into the presence of a short middle aged man seated behind a desk. He is clearly drunk – a wine*

*pitcher and half-filled mug bearing testimony to this. The desk he sits behind is very messy and several important looking documents have been used to wipe up a spillage of wine. He makes only a half-hearted attempt to rise whilst greeting you and succeeds in only spilling more wine. Apologising vaguely, he proceeds to wipe it up with another handful of important looking documents.*

This is Bertrand Pimm, the Steward of the manor. He is ignorant of local politics and is not really interested. He is unhappy with his post away from the city lifestyle offered in Krestible seeing it as a demotion by this master VanDerbergesen. He has taken to drowning his sorrows with a great deal of wine and is drunk, seedy or comatose most of the time. If the characters question the steward they can learn the following

- There are 4 rustlers in the band and one is said to be Orcish looking.
- They have been raiding farms close to the village fleeing into the countryside to the south where the terrain becomes hilly and wooded and is sparsely populated.
- The band have not attacked or hurt anyone and seem to time their raids so as to minimize the chance of conflict occurring.

The PCs will probably ask other questions, Pimm will know nothing of real significance and he will quickly resort to a monologue of instructions.

*"You are to hunt these damned rustler chaps down and bring them, hic, to justice, dead or alive I don't care, preferably dead that make a better message to others with a like mind. If you require accommodation rooms at Helga Priths boarding house will be charged to the estate. Mrs. Prith knows of these arrangements, hic."*

*Pimm begins to search the table for a document eventually finding it is one of the ones he has used to wipe up the spilled wine. Straightening it out and after rubbing it down his tunic to clean it he offers this to you.*

*"Here is a bill of writ to the sum of 30 gold to purchase any necessary supplies at Giles Tilmouths the local merchant. Now I would suggest that you best start tomorrow as the day is getting too old now. Oh and don't forget the colt, that's most important to his lordship. He is offering a reward of 200gp for its safe return. Return the colt to me in good condition and I will pay you the sum."*

If the characters have more questions he will give vague non-specific answers. If they have none

*He bids you good day and rings the bell for the servant to escort you out of his office.*

If the PCs question any of the guards or stable hands they inform them that the colt was stolen

from the top paddock during the night. They also tell in hushed whispers that the Steward sacked the Swerins groomsmen the day after. They know little else.

The PCs will now have several reasons to return to the village.

**Bertrand Pimm human Rog1/Exp3:** CR 2; Medium Humanoid (5ft 8in. tall); HD 4d6; hp 12; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 11; Atks +2 melee (1d4-1 [crit 19-20], Masterwork Dagger); Al N; SV Fort +2, Reflex +3, Will +3.

Str 9, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12

Skills: Appraise +11, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +5, Innuendo +3, Knowledge (Commerce) +6, Knowledge (Household management) +6; Sense Motive +4; Ride +4; Hide +2; Listen +2; Move Silently +4; Open Locks +4. Feats: Dodge, Alertness

Equipment: Masterwork dagger, livery.

## Encounter 2: At the Local

*Entering the local tavern "The Longtables", you find a common room crammed with many loud-talking patrons. The noise dies suddenly as you enter and all turn to look at you for a moment before heading back to their half empty ales. The conversation is more subdued this time. As you approach the bar four men sitting around a table stand up momentarily blocking your path. For a second you feel as if they are sizing you up, but before an incident can happen they head for the door. The room is now full of tension...*

### For the DM:

The four men are members of the Rosrijder clan, the Swerins, and know that the PCs have been hired to hunt down their Kinsmen. They will not pick a fight with the PCs but will help to add an air of tension to the game. They quickly leave town on four well-groomed and impressive horses if the PCs follow them they lose them quickly. The other patrons in the bar are from other clans, some of them are from the Hüssen clan, and will give the characters a warmer welcome.

If the players sit at a table or approach the bar read the following:

*A thin gaunt looking fellow moves over to serve you. He introduces himself as Dom Perinong the tavern owner and asks how many ales you'll be wanting. He fetches your drinks but refuse payment saying that as you are doing the town, so to speak, a good turn the first drinks are on him. Several more locals then take the opportunity to speak out all offering to pay for successive shouts. The air of tension dissipates at this warm reception.*

### **For the DM:**

If the players accept the free drinks from the local patrons they will have to make a Fort save at DC10 for each drink to remain sober. If they fail they are happily drunk and will continue to drink until they drop or reach the sixth ale. Each round of drinks will produce one rumor off the list. After the second round the DC increases by +2 for each additional drink consumed. If the players stop drinking the locals call them a bunch of city slickers and the talking dries up. If the characters reach their fourth round a failed save will result in them passing out. They will wake up the next morning in Helga Priths boarding house, vomit and be at -1 on all actions for the next eight hours. Any PC who makes it to the sixth round, the record, will become a recognised celebrity in the village, be made an honorary citizen by a very drunk crowd, and have their name immortalised above the bar for all time. Each drink incidentally comes in a large tankard that is about one and a half pints in volume, The Longtables serves nothing but the local ale.

### **Rumours in Skillet**

*(take from top to bottom)*

- It is those lawless Swerins who are behind the whole rustling thing. That's why none of their cattle have been stolen. (True)
- The rustlers are led by a huge half Ogre they call the Ox. (Almost True)
- The four men who left under a dark cloud earlier are the rustlers (False)
- The whole Swerin clan is behind the rustling as Old Regret the mother of the missing colt was once theirs and they have always wanted her back. (Almost true)
- The Constable is too scared to go up against the rustlers. (Almost True)
- A rustler was seen riding the Lordship's prize colt "Might and Power" just two days ago by a merchant caravan just south of the town where the Elmwood starts. (False)

They can also learn the information in the Swerin history section (see appendix 1) after the third drink as local gossip/history or as part of a gather information check DC10.

**Dom Perinong (human male Com2 (innkeeper):**  
Profession (innkeeping) +7)

**The four Swerins (human male Com1 (farmers):**  
Profession (Farming) +8)

**The Locals (human male Com1 (farmers/traders):**  
Profession (varies) +5)

## **Encounter 3: Helga Prith's Boarding House**

*As you enter this large building a tall overweight, middle aged woman comes bustling towards you. She has her arms wide open and bear hugs the nearest of you in warm greetings. She smells of rose water and whiskey. She says, "Well here you all are the young hero's come at last to save us. You'll cure those Swerins of their thieving ways, why the whole lot of them should be locked up".*

*She introduces herself as Helga Prith, the proprietor, and welcomes you all warmly asking everyone's name with some excitement. Finally, after sniffing the air for a few moments, she enthusiastically offers you all baths. She explains that your rooms have already been made up and if you just give her five minutes she will have hot baths drawn and ready for you in the common bathing area, ladies first of course. Dinner will be ready after you clean up. She summons one of her maids to show you your rooms, which are ample with a good firm bed and a chest to store belongings in. Each room has its own key. Your overnight stay and meals are being charged to the steward.*

### **DM's Note**

Helga Pimm is an uncontrollable gossip but very good-natured, she tends to have a few whiskeys with her ample lunch, which makes her predisposition to chat even worse. If questioned she blames the Swerins for everything, which she does for a good hour before the PCs can tactfully escape, imparting the information contained in Appendix1 if the PCs don't already have it. She tells the party that the rustlers are hiding out in an area the locals call Swerinland located to the southwest of the village. Helga serves the best food in Skillet in her small dining room. Her two maids are shy and demure to the characters but respond politely to simple questions. They will excuse themselves if asked anything to complicated. Other guests are polite but know nothing of value if approached.

**Helga Pimm (human (Hüssen) Exp3**  
**(housekeeper):** Profession (Household management +10, Cooking +10).

**Maids (human Com1 (housekeeper):** Profession (Housework) +4).

## **Encounter 4: Giles Tilmouth's General Merchants**

*You enter a large shop; shelves line the walls and floor, barrels, sacks and implements are stacked chaotically about the place. You all notice a broad*



*range of items to cater for a great many expectations. A well-dressed middle aged man of slight build comes towards you. He introduces himself as Giles Tilmouth and asks if he can be of assistance whilst looking you up and down with keen interest.*

If the party uses their bill of writ to purchase anything in the shop Giles will very cooperative. All normal and mundane items can be found here at regular book prices. Simple weapons and light armor are also available although only 1 item of each. Giles will offer the PCs better than normal discounts to buy mundane items and food (Max 25%) under the guise that they are doing the locals a good turn. If the PCs need supplies then any purchased foodstuffs will begin to perish after two days because it is poisoned (Fort save DC 20 on-set time 4 hours) Once consumed the poison will activate causing strong belly pains, vomiting, and diarrhea for 24 hours. Each character will suffer 1d6 points of temporary damage to Str, Dex and Con abilities. Giles is not trying to kill the party but simply to discourage them and hinder their progress whilst his son goes to warn the rustlers.

If the party try to challenge Giles for poisoning them he will deny everything very convincingly. Giles Doopleganger and Class skills make him so talented at deception that the DM can use any method needed to convince characters of his innocence.

If a hotheaded party member attacks him he will use a once only ability "Word of Recall" to transport himself out of danger to a safe haven (A temple to Olidimarra were he purchased it) in Krestible.

If the party search his premises at any stage because they suspect him they will find the following

*Searching the shop and its upstairs residence you find no trace of anyone and all valuables are missing apart from 10gp and 10sp in a leather bag. You do find several documents in the fireplace that have failed to burn that implicate him in the rustling affair. You also find a contract of sale signed and ratified by the church of Zilchus. This document clearly states that the shop and all its contents have recently been sold to a merchant called Kenas Hüssen from Krestible who will be taking over as owner at the end of the month.*

With the documents the PCs will be able to convince the villagers of Giles guilt.

In any event if the going get rough Giles and his family will be found to have vanished. Kenas Hüssen will move into the shop with his family much to the delight of the local Hüssen clan members and the affair will be forgotten. Kenas Hüssen is of course Giles Tilmouth in a new guise.

The character concept of Giles Tilmouth is one that will haunt the party until he gets his

revenge for their intrusion into his profitable business concerns.

**Giles Tilmouth, male doppelganger** Exp7; Medium humanoid (5ft. 8in. tall); HD 4d8+7d6+11; hp 50; Int +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30; AC15 (+4 natural, +1 Dex), Atks +9 melee (1d6+1[crit 19-20/x2] Fist Slam); SA Detect Thoughts; SQ Alter Self, Immunities; Al N; SV Fort +7, Reflex +7, Will +11;

Str12, Dex13, Con12, Int16, Wis14, Cha13.

**Skills:** Bluff +12/16, Disguise +12/22/26, Listen +11, Sense Motive +6, Spot +8, Alchemy +13, Knowledge(Commerce)+13, Diplomacy +10, Appraise +13, Forgery +12, Gather Info +10, Hide +10, Perform (Feign Death)+11, Innunendo +11, Ride +10. **Feats:** Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Stunning Fist, Combat Reflexes.

**Equipment:** Livery (fine); Belt Pouch (10gp, 10sp).

## Encounter 5: The Chase

Once the characters start the chase for the rustlers they will have to travel through first the Hüssen clan lands and then into Swerinland. The trail heads to the south.

### In Hüssen clan lands

*The land around Skillet is well tended and scattered with many small farms linked with overused trails. Many farmers come out to greet you some of them with jugs of cool watered down wine, fruit, and fresh baked bread. They openly speak of concerns for their cattle, and their suspicions about the Swerin clan. Many of the farmers claim to have lost cattle, showing you depleted herds and the direction they saw the rustlers heading away in, southwards. Some refer to the leader as being the "Biggest son of a swine your ever likely to see, so large he dwarves the Draft horse he sits upon".*

The PCs can learn any rumors they missed at this point. From the Hüssen Farmers they learn that the rustlers have been spotted to the south on more than one occasion.

### In Swerinland

*The trail you are on crests a low rise. Just over this is a tall cairn of carefully placed boulders. A crude wooden sign has been propped halfway up. In a bold hand in red paint is written "Swerinland". Past the cairn the trails fade and the land begins to flatten out. The fields are intersected with many small streams that act as natural borders. Small herds of horses can often been seen from a distance tended by a mounted rider or two. The farm houses here are low and long and quite heavily fortified. People run from*

*your approach, fleeing indoors at your approach, you clearly hear doors being bolted shut. You feel unwelcome in these lands.*

This is Swerinland, a broad tract of country roughly 40 square miles in extent. Information on the Swerin clan is contained in Appendix 1. The PCs are not welcome out here and everyone refuses to speak to them. If the PCs use coercion (or magic) to get information they will learn that the Rustlers are hiding in the Elmwood and are led by a dangerous man called the Ox who came from Krestible two months ago. The rustlers come from various Swerin families. They will however find a new set of wagon tracks heading to the south just before days end which will take them to the Elmwood.

During the first night outside of Skillet the PCs will consume any of the poisoned food they have purchased. This could slow them down for another couple of days.

*Having eaten a good meal you choose watches and settle in for the night.*

Get those on watch to roll their saves vs poison first (Fort DC 15). If they fail their saves read the following.

*You are on duty scanning the dark; suddenly a strong pain grips your stomach doubling you over in pain. With a groan you slump to the ground, and within moments you are beginning to retch and ... OOPS! ... you have soiled your pants as well!*

Have the other members of the party also make saves at this stage. Describe the pain, vomiting and diarrhoea in the most visual way you can, they are very ill but not dying. Anyone who is capable with Healing proficiency can diagnose food poisoning with a successful roll vs. DC 12. They can successfully tend the PCs on a DC 13 but only powerful healing magic like Neutralize Poison or Cure Disease will cancel the symptoms. A successful healing check will reduce the temporary damage to abilities by 1 per ability. Otherwise each poisoned PC takes 1 point of temporary damage to each physical attribute (Str, Dex, Con). In the morning poisoned PCs will revive enough to move on with the adventure. If the PCs cast a Detect Poison they will detect that the ill characters have been poisoned, but that none of the foodstuffs radiate poison. Perhaps they were poisoned by some of the food gifts from the farmers, perhaps from the merchant or possibly at the TAVERN or Helga Prith's. This should dilute suspicion, making blame difficult to allocate.

## Encounter 5: The Hideout

Once the PCs enter the Elm Wood, following either information gained or the wagon trail, in search of the rustlers they will find the following after a successful Wilderness check DC 12 made after the first hour and each hour until succeeded

*You have been searching the wood for some time now when all of a sudden one of you crests a low rise in the land and through the trees a clearing can be seen.*

This was the rustlers previous camp. PCs will see the remains of some shelters that have been stripped. Read the following:

*The camp has been abandoned some days ago. The shelters have been stripped and the coals scattered, from the tracks you estimate that more than six people have occupied this site for some months, to the east of the camp a faint trail can be made out heading further into the woods.*

The PCs can follow this trail with a successful wilderness check of DC 10. Read the following:

*After an hour of following the trail and occasionally loosing it the land begins to move uphill. Moving forwards you spot a low outcropping of rock ahead. The air is very still here and you can all smell a faint trace of smoke.*

This is the hideout of the rustlers a narrow cave entrance is cunningly cut into the face of the rock at an angle that hides it from view until within 5 feet. See map 2 for the DM and show the PCs map 2 for the players.

Waiting in ambush are the six rustlers and Farran the Ox. They are going to surprise the party and demand they surrender. Farran is at location 1 hiding in the cave entrance. This combined with his tower shield will give him 90% cover when he steps out. Three rustlers are lying flat atop the rock at location 2 and will be at medium range when they react. The rock provides them with 50% cover at all times. The other three are at location 3 in a natural vegetation covered depression that gives them a perfect view of the clearing whilst providing them with 90% cover. They will be at short range when they react.

Let the party move closer before springing the trap. The party will undoubtedly try and sneak up on the clearing; they can but the rustlers know they are there. If they try and flank the position have them run into thick bramble

**Brambles:** +0 melee (1/x2 crit).

If they have some other means of getting around this natural obstacle then they will not see any rustlers until said villains start shooting at them from atop the rock. This is a situation where many different party reactions could occur – it

will be up to the DM to improvise. Letting players have their version of the map should help. If PCs attempt to climb the rock it is wet and slippery on the clearing side (Climb DC20), but is easy to scale on the other (Climb DC10).

***As you move in cautiously a massive figure steps out of the shadows of the rock. He is fully armored and is carrying a tower shield and a battle-ax, which he is casually swinging in a low, deadly arc before him. His features are Orcish. Other figures suddenly appear some behind him, others atop the outcropping. All have crossbows leveled at you. The Huge figure booms out "I am the Ox, Surrender or die".***

The characters now have the choice of talking, fleeing, surrendering or attacking.

- If they talk they will have one volley fired at them and the Ox will reiterate his demand once more. If they still stall he will order the crossbowmen to kill them and the PCs will have to make a quick decision.
- If they flee they all suffer attacks of opportunity from the rustlers, and Farran will laugh at them.

If the PCs surrender read the following:

***You drop your weapons to the ground and three of the rustlers armed with short swords close in collecting them whilst the Ox and the crossbowmen keep a careful eye on you. Soon you are led inside a cavern in the rock that the rustlers have been using as a hideout. With much jeering and taunting from the rustlers they force you to strip out of your armor leaving you in only your under cloths. They bind your hands behind your backs. The Ox steps forward and, grabbing you one by one, throws you down a natural hole in the cavern floor. You all land with a splash in chilling water and are certain you are going to drown. A narrow ledge saves you and, gasping for air, you find yourselves lined up on this narrow ledge. The faint light from luminous lichens shows you that if you can get free of your restraints you can climb onto a cavern floor just above you and out of the water.***

Let the characters get free easily and make it into area 1 (encounter 6) of the cave complex.

If they fight the rustlers will commence firing at them. The Rustlers, however, seeing that the PCs are dangerous will flee if any of them get into melee range. They, knowing the area, run into the woods never to be seen again. Farran finding things are now going against him will escape into the cave using it as a natural circumstance feat. Farran will at all times defend the opening of the cave giving him 90% cover. If the PCs kill him so be it. They will need to have some need to go down the natural well; perhaps some moaning

sounds can be heard below. If Farran does escape into the back of the cave read the following:

***The Ox, seeing that his companions have fled, spits a curse and disappears – seemingly into the rock.***

The party will easily find the entrance to the cave and will see Farran about to jump into the natural well. Read the following:

***Finding that the rock has a natural yet cunning entrance you cautiously enter; ahead you see the Ox readying himself to jump down a hole in the floor of the cavern. He turns momentarily to you and shouts. "You'll never catch me alive!" Then he is gone.***

The characters can now investigate the cave; see location 1 of the caverns map.

***This natural cavern has seven straw pallets strewn about for sleeping the rustlers. Pots and pans sit near a low burning fire towards the centre of the room. A natural hole in the ground to the rear of the cavern has a bucket attached to a rope and appears some form of natural well.***

The PCs can search but find nothing of value here except some food and a half-full keg of "Skilled" the local ale. Upon Investigating the hole in the ground read the following.

***The hole the Ox jumped down is obviously quite deep at is about 10ft wide at the top.***

***(If Farran escaped) Coming from the hole you hear some splashing sounds, a vile curse, and the sound of the Ox exerting himself.***

This is Farran, if he escaped, pulling himself out of the water. Farran will go no further than the next room where he has a fatal encounter with the Gelatinous Cube that lairs there. The PCs will have to go down the well themselves. They will hopefully come up with a method to determine its depth, which is around 80ft. They could also possibly determine that it opens up into a natural cavern. Any Climb rolls should be fairly easy if rope is used (DC 12), otherwise DC 20 should insure that most of them get wet.

**Farran the Ox, male human Ftr/Rog 4/1: CR 5; Medium Humanoid (6ft. 6in.); HD 4d10+1d6-10; hp 30; init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 20; AC13 (+3 Studded Leather); Atks +11 melee (1d8+7 (crit20) x3 battle ax masterwork+1); SA Sneak+1d6; Al NE; SV Fort +2, Reflex +3, Will +1.**

Str 21, Dex 11, Con 7, Int 13, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Intimidate +10, Bluff +4, Ride +2, Handle Animal +2, Listen +4, Search +4, Spot +3, Sense Motive +5, Hide 2. **Feats:** Improved Bulls Rush, Power Attack, Weapon Focus, Alertness, Improved Initiative, Weapon Specialization.

Equipment: Studded Leather, Battle Axe, Tower Shield, Belt Pouch (20gp, 20sp), Signet Ring 20gp, and Gold Earrings 20gp.

In combat Farran suffers a -1 fatigue penalty due to his poor constitution and unfit state per melee round after the first, once at -6 he will collapse on the ground and surrender.

**Swerin Rustlers (6), male humans, War 1:** CR 3; Medium Humanoids; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 Leather); Atks +1 melee (1d6+1 [crit 19-20/x2] shortsword); +1 ranged (1d8 [crit 19-20/x3] Light Crossbow); SV Fort +3, Reflex +1, Will 0;

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

**Skills:** Handle Animal +4; Ride +5. **Feats:** Alertness, Run

**Equipment:** Leather Armour, Short Sword, Light Crossbow, Belt Pouch (5gp, 5sp, 5cp).

## Encounter 6: The caverns (see map 3)

### Cavern number 2

*Lighting is poor in this natural water cavern but you can see shapes and large objects due to the soft glow of much lichen. Scattered about on the floor are many pieces of refuse.*

The PCs are now in low light conditions, humans will have great difficulty in this situation. If the characters make a successful search roll amongst the refuse they will find two branches that can act like clubs, and a very rusted but still serviceable dagger. Several large stones could be used as weapons of last resort.

*Surveying the cavern you can see that a natural passageway leads off the western corner.*

### Cavern number 3

*This natural cavern has been caused by eons of water cutting into the rock. The floor has a downward slope to the north where it narrows into a smaller opening only 2 feet high.*

If Farran fled down here read out the following:

*Suspended in the middle of this passage is the limp form of the Ox. He hangs unmoving in mid air. On the ground before you are his battle axe and tower shield. You can see that most of his skin has been flayed from his hide in great strips and that his armour has been torn to shreds.*

This is the effect of the cube's acid slowly eating away all organic material.

If Farran did not flee down here read out this instead:

*As you move forward there seems to be a faint shimmering in the air towards the middle of the cavern.*

Either way this is the effect of the Gelatinous cube that lives down here on donations from the Formian's who use this as a refuse pit and the cube as a guard at their back door. It will only be spotted on a DC roll of 20. The cube will wait for the PCs to get within 10ft before it attempts to engulf them. Anyone reaching for Farran's discarded weapons (if he fled down here) will automatically be engulfed. If Farran did flee down here when the characters get within 20ft of him read the following.

The cube will attack the PCs until it is killed, likely catching any unwary PCs flat footed and getting its automatic engulf attack.

### Tier 1 (EL 3)

**Gelatinous Cube (juvenile):** CR 3; Huge Ooze (10ft. cube); HD 3d10+26; hp 41; Init -5 (Dex); Spd 15; AC 3 (-2 size, -5 Dex); Atks +1 melee (slam) 1d6+4 + 1d6 acid; SA Engulf, Paralysis, Acid; SQ Blindsight, Transparent, Electricity Immunity, Ooze; SV Fort +5, Reflex -4, Will -4.

Str 10, Dex 1, Con 19, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

### Tier 2 (EL 4)

**Gelatinous Cube (normal):** CR 4; Huge Ooze (10ft. cube); HD 4d10+36; hp 56; Init -5 (Dex); Spd 15; AC 3 (-2 size, -5 Dex); Atks +1 melee (slam) 1d6+4 + 1d6 acid; SA Engulf, Paralysis, Acid; SQ Blindsight, Transparent, Electricity Immunity, Ooze; SV Fort +5, Reflex -4, Will -4.

Str 10, Dex 1, Con 19, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

### Tier 3 (EL 5)

**Gelatinous Cube (huge):** CR 5; Huge Ooze (10ft. cube); HD 5d10+36; hp 61; Init -5 (Dex); Spd 15; AC 3 (-2 size, -5 Dex); Atks +1 melee (slam) 1d6+4 + 1d6 acid; SA Engulf, Paralysis, Acid; SQ Blindsight, Transparent, Electricity Immunity, Ooze; SV Fort +5, Reflex -4, Will -4.

Str 10, Dex 1, Con 19, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

### Cavern number 4

This small natural cavern is entered by the smaller opening in cavern number 3 and drops down three feet from this, it is used by the Formian workers to push refuse into the cavern that houses the Gelatinous cube. It leads to cavern number 4 and contains no encounters only a treasure item.

*This is a small natural cavern that curves around into a natural opening in its far end.*

A Search (DC 15) will reveal

***Partly buried in the mud is the hilt of a weapon.***

This is a Masterwork Shortsword (value 500gp, weight 3lbs). However it is dirty and stained.

*Once cleaned this well crafted shortsword has a distinctly archaic appearance, as if from an ancient time. Its pommel is shaped in the form of a closed fist, and the blade is stained to give it a false serrated look. Its antiquity will likely make it of keen interest to collectors.*

This expertly wrought, non-magical blade adds +1 to attack rolls. It radiates no magic. Its origin is Ur-Flannae.

### **Cavern number 5**

*Rounding the corner (from cavern 4) you enter into a natural gallery of great beauty, light provided by a multitude of lichen illuminates many tall pillars of natural pink crystal (no value). The whole effect is like a giant pillared cathedral. At the northern end of the cavern stands a tall pair of doors. To the western side of the cavern a low opening leads off into darkness. Many strange muddy tracks litter the floor, they are one inch in diameter.*

This is the entryway to more of the complex that will provide a possible future adventure hook for the PCs. This is also a gallery that the Formian workers move through to get to cavern number 3. Let the PCs get distracted with the doors first, if possible, before the Formian workers arrive and attack them. If they explore the low opening first then let the Formian workers attack them straight away.

If the PCs approach the doors read the following.

***You see that the two stone doors are intricately carved with many strange glyphs. A faint glow is discernible about them revealing that they may be magical in nature.***

If the players cannot read Draconic then they can translate the inscription in several other ways. A detect magic will reveal strong alteration and abjuration magic about the doors and the script will become readable. A read magic will also allow the script to be read or decipher script DC12 will also work. Failing this let any spell caster have the ability to read the script for it is important to the sequential nature of this scenario. Once the PCs can translate the script read the following

***Written in bold carved script is the follow sentence... "When the star in the stone stands before these doors the way to the temple will be open."***

The doors will defy all methods of opening other than the recovery of an item called the star stone which is not covered in this adventure.

***You can find no way to open the doors and begin to realise that the script is the key to the unlocking of the doors, scratching sound from the open on the eastern wall alert you the presence of some creature. Emerging from the entrance you see several ant like creatures the size of a medium dog. They rush silently towards you mandibles open for attack.***

These are Formian workers and perceive the PCs as a threat to their hive, attacking immediately and without reprieve.

### **Tier 1 (EL 6)**

Formian Workers (6): CR<sub>1</sub>; Small Outsider (Lawful) (2ft long); HD 1d8+1; hp 4; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40; AC 17 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural); Atks+3 melee (bite) 1d4+1; SA Hive Mind; SQ Immunities, resistance's, make whole, heal. SV Fort +3, Reflex +2, Will +2. Str13, Dex14, Con13, Int6, Wis10, Cha9.

### **Tier 2 (EL 8)**

Formian Workers (8): CR<sub>1</sub>; Small Outsider (Lawful) (2ft long); HD 1d8+1; hp 4; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40; AC 17 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural); Atks+3 melee (bite) 1d4+1; SA Hive Mind; SQ Immunities, resistance's, make whole, heal. SV Fort +3, Reflex +2, Will +2. Str13, Dex14, Con13, Int6, Wis10, Cha9.

### **Tier 3 (EL 12)**

Formian Workers (12): CR<sub>1</sub>; Small Outsider (Lawful) (2ft long); HD 1d8+1; hp 4; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40; AC 17 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural); Atks+3 melee (bite) 1d4+1; SA Hive Mind; SQ Immunities, resistance's, make whole, heal. SV Fort +3, Reflex +2, Will +2. Str13, Dex14, Con13, Int6, Wis10, Cha9.

The Formian workers, though calling frantically for help with their hive mind, receive no aid as the crystals and magic of this natural cavern block this ability.

### **Cavern number 6**

This long tunnel is where the Formian's have entered the complex from their subterranean hive. At a point half way along the tunnel is a small surface fissure.

***Half way along this tunnel daylight streams in through a narrow fissure in the ceiling.***

The characters can easily reach the surface form here. If they continue past the opening and on into the cavern read the following.

*The cavern begins to narrow down until you need to crawl to keep going. After about thirty feet it opens into a massive cavern, the largest you have ever seen. Dominating this is a massive hive and several hundred of the ant-like creature's swarm around it. A score of them are as large as horses and having larger mandibles and claws and a sting in their tail, they also carry several javelins each. They seem not to have noticed you yet!*

This should encourage the PCs to get out of the complex for now. If they don't well then they are probably killed by the hundreds of Formians who swarm to attack them.

Once on the surface the PCs can try and hunt down Farran and the rustlers if they have escaped. They can find Farran escaping alone through the woods a short distance from where they climbed out. He has all his equipment and theirs tied onto the back of a mule. He will fight but not to the death if he can help it. See notes on him in encounter 6. Farran will deny ever taking "Might and Power".

## Conclusion

*Returning to Skillet you feel elated, you have taken care of the Ox and can get your reward.*

If they killed any Rustlers;

*In Skillet, several members of the Swerin clan cast foul murderous looks at you as you collect your reward. You can only assume it is over the death of their kin.*

The Swerins will plot their revenge if the PCs linger in the area.

*You find out that the constable has found "Might and Power" and is celebrating at the Longtables with half the town, he will offers you all drinks. He found the missing colt in the hills to the east of the village. He has collected all the reward and is very happy with himself. He congratulates you on getting the rustler leader and breaking up the rustling operation. He locks up any prisoners, morgues any dead and pays you your reward.*

The PCs may try to accuse Giles in which case play out the Encounter 3 contingency for this.

Bertrand Pimm will reward them with their silver pieces for a job well done.

## The End

## Experience Point Summary

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

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

|                               |        |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Finding the hideout           | 50 xp  |
| Defeating Farran the Ox       | 100 xp |
| Defeating the Gelatinous cube | 100 xp |
| Defeating the Formians        | 50 xp  |
| Defeating the rustlers        | 50 xp  |
| Defeating Giles               | 100 xp |

|                                 |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| Total experience for objectives | 450 xp  |
| Discretionary roleplaying award | 0-50 xp |

**Total possible experience 500 xp**

## Treasure Summary

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

1. The item must be non-magical and specifically listed in the text of the adventure (e.g armor on foes). If it is not listed in the text, the characters cannot keep it. Items of this nature can be sold for 50% of book value, or recorded on a log sheet.
2. Animals, followers, monsters, henchmen, and so forth (any living being, basically) may not be kept from a scenario for any reason unless the treasure summary lists the being specifically. It is okay for the player characters to form relationships with NPCs, but these will not be certified and cannot bring material benefit to the character. Contacts (sources of extra information) must be specifically certified.
3. Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some player characters. Items which are worth more than 250 gp that are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), and all magical items, will be discovered in the possession of the character by one means or another. The character must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives campaign-decided penalties for being known as a thief. For other stolen items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment and the circumstances within the game to determine whether a PC thief gets away with the theft or not.

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

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

#### **Encounter Five**

- Light Crossbow (35gp each) (one for each killed rustler)
- Shortsword (10gp each) (one for each killed rustler)
- 5gp, 5sp, 5cp per dead rustler
- Leather armor per dead rustler
- Farran's gear (see below) if he is killed/captured

#### **Encounter Six**

- Farran's gear (see below) if the Gelatinous Cube has killed him, but his armour has been destroyed.
- Rusty dagger value 1sp
- Masterwork shortsword (value 500gp, weight 3lbs) this finally crafted shortsword has a distinctly archaic appearance as if from an ancient time. Its hilt is shaped in the form of a closed fist, the blade is stained to give it a false serrated look. Its antiquity adds to the value of this weapon to any collector. This expertly wrought, non-magical blade adds +1 to attack rolls.

#### **Possible Other treasure**

##### **Farran's Gear**

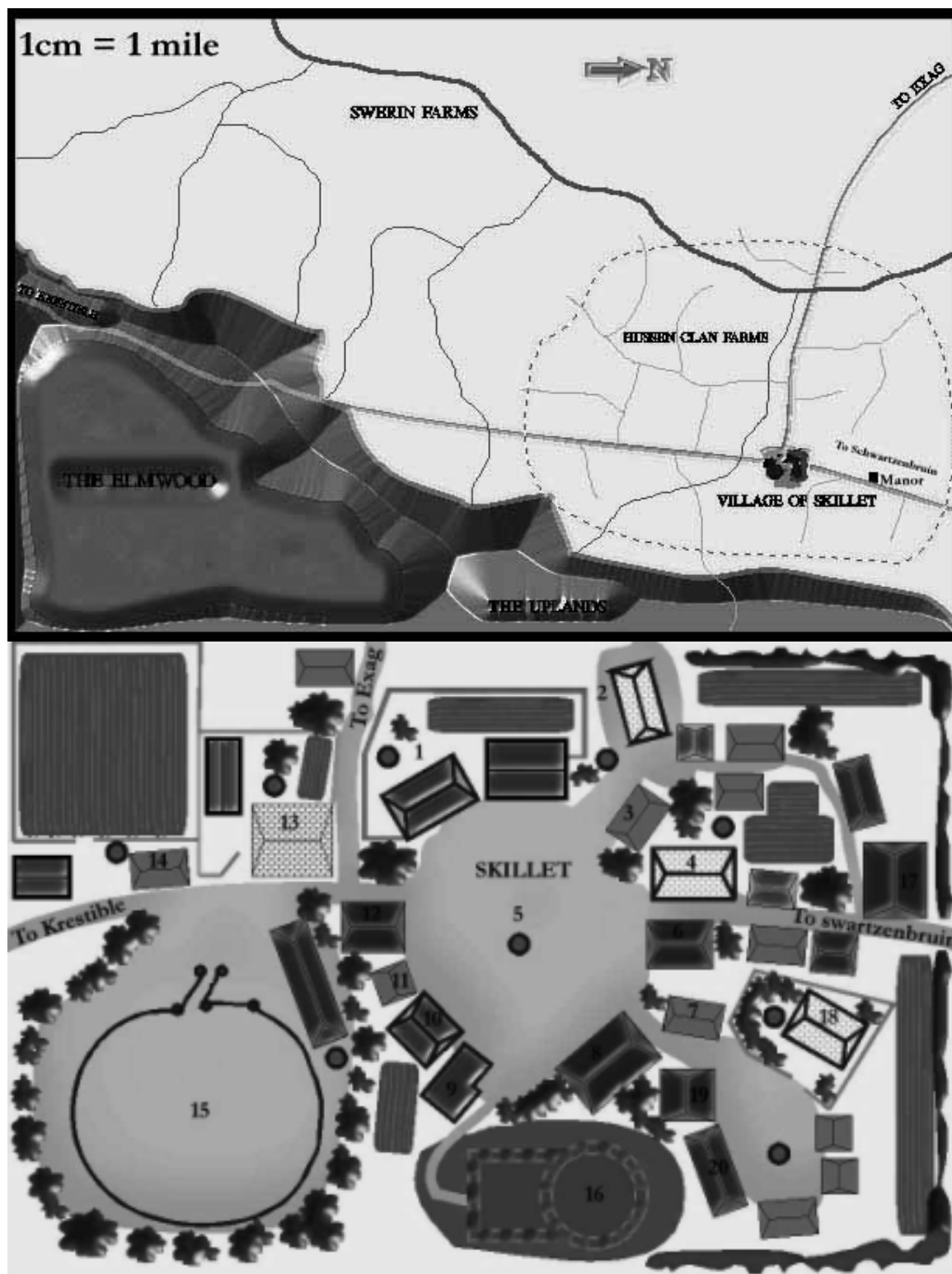
- Masterwork Battleaxe worth 310gp
- Tower Shield worth 15gp
- Grappling hook worth 1gp
- 20gp, 20sp, Signet Ring 20gp, Gold Earrings 20gp, 2 cut rubies worth 50gp each.

##### **Giles Tilmouth**

- 10gp, 10sp

[etc]

## MAP OF SKILLET AREA AND VILLAGE

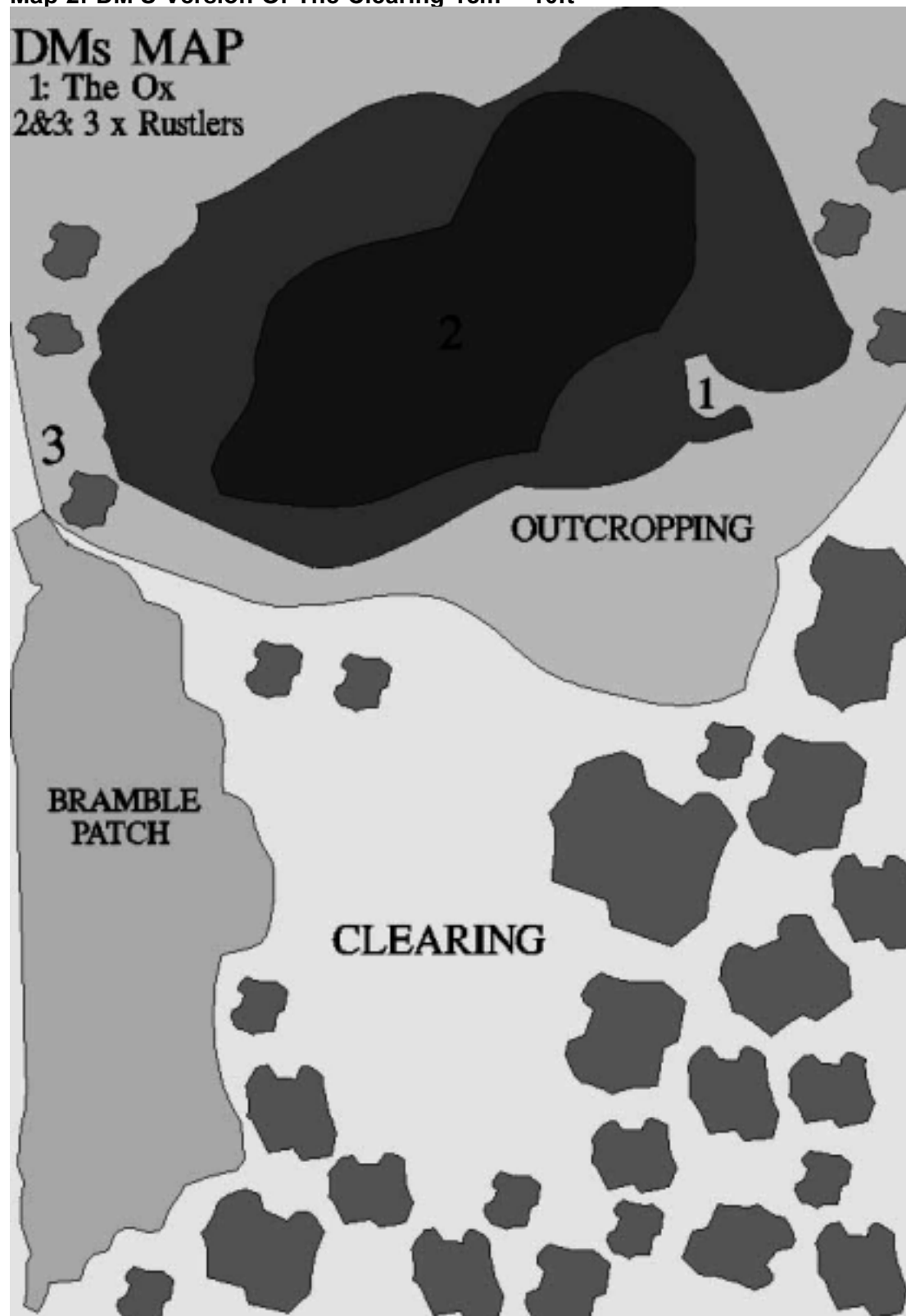




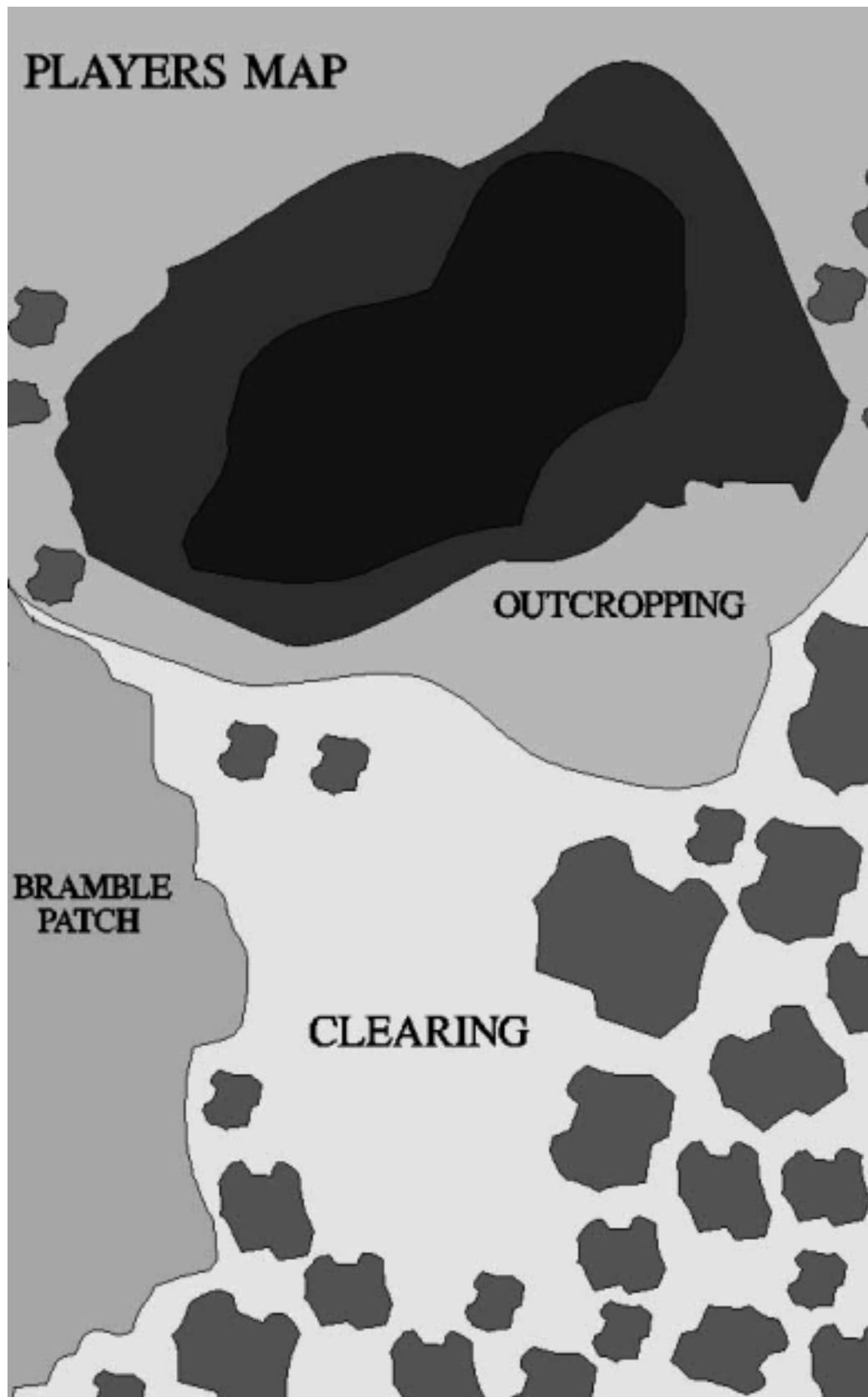
## Key to the Village of Skillet

1. The Longtables Tavern
2. Constable's residence and Gaol
3. Blacksmith
4. Tilmouth and Son's Merchant
5. Town Square/Friday Market
6. Mayor's House
7. Tanner/Leatherworker
8. Helga Prith's Boarding House
9. Village Hall
10. Cooper
11. Carpenters
12. Skilleted Ales
13. Deputy Mayor's House
14. The Hops House
15. The A.C Corral
16. The Temple of the Old Way
17. Hüssen Farmer's Cooperative
18. "Shrouds" The Undertaker
19. Midwife
20. Pottery

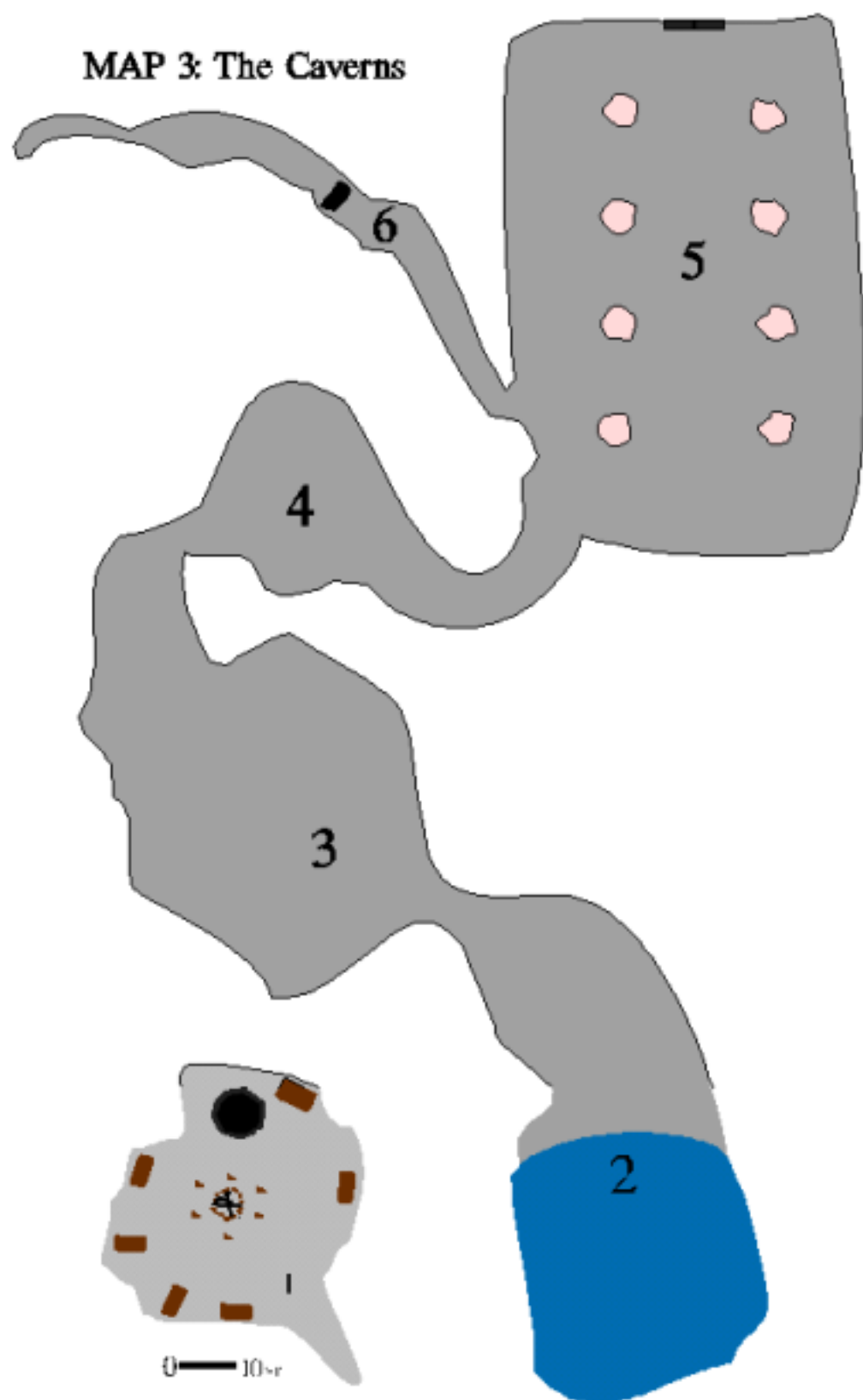
Map 2: DM'S Version Of The Clearing 1cm = 10ft



## MAP2: PLAYERS VERSION OF THE OUTCROPPING



**MAP 3: The Caverns**



## Player Handout 1:

### THE CONTRACT

EMPLOYER: Ritter VanDerbergsen, Mayor of Skillet.

The undersigned have been contracted to track down and bring to justice a small band of cattle and horse rustlers operating around the village of Skillet. In particular this involves the recovery of the prize colt "Might and Power" for which Ritter vanDerbergsen will offer a substantial bonus if said beast is returned in good health. Incidental money is offered at a rate of 2 silver pieces a day per individual. Full salvage rights will be given on all unbranded cattle recovered. All branded cattle will attract a 1gp inclusive reward from the local Hüssen farmer's cooperative. The Constable of Skillet will pay a 100gp bounty for each rustler accounted for, dead or alive. The Ritter takes no responsibility for any permanent injury or death caused to members of the contracted party during the course of their duties.

Witnessed by: Gunthur Altweiger priest of Zilchus (Krestible City)

## Appendix 1: The Swerins

The Swerins are a large family of Rosrijders who have lived in the area of Skillet for over three hundred years. They have, like all Rosrijders, a natural almost animist affiliation with the horse. They are, therefore, well known in the area for their horse bloodlines. The Swerins have a long and bitter history with the local and newer Hüssen farmers who purchased the land the village of Skillet is on from the Swerins over a hundred years ago. This is because the village has thrived making the Hüssen families far wealthier and prosperous than the Swerins. This has seen many Swerins brought off by Hüssen families and the slow migration of the Swerin family to Krestible. The Swerins that are left feel that they have been ripped off and have a chip on their shoulder. This saw a few Swerin hotheads adopt a less than friendly policy of rustling cattle from Hüssen farmers about twenty years ago, on the proviso that the cattle were grazing on traditional Swerin lands. This affair ended with spilled blood on both sides. Since then the Weisspeer official sent to deal with the matter has established a grand holding called VanDerbergsen manor and is now both a knight (ritter) and the mayor. He has imported various other kin to assist him in maintaining the standoff between the two conflicting clans. Things have been calmer over the last 10 years but the Swerins have continued to dwindle. Two years ago Ritter VanDerbergsen won a prize mare from the Swerins, the last of a long line of special horses, in what the Swerins have claimed was a fixed horse race. Since then they have been very bitter towards VanDerbergsen, who in their eyes, is a cheat. Some of the younger members are becoming decidedly irreverent of the law.

Their matriarch "Levinnia Swerin" leads the seventy-four members of the Swerin family left around Skillet. Well into her sixties she is trying to hold the family together. She maintains close contact with clan members in Krestible and can count on about fifty other able bodied Swerins coming to the assistance of the family if they are in great need.