

The Wrong Place at the Wrong Time

A One-Round D&D 3rd Edition Living Greyhawk
Adventure

by Andrew VanHooreweghe

Part I of the Gnarley Adventures Series. The Rangers of the Gnarley Forest have closed the Great Forest Road south of Dyvers, and the city is in an uproar. With such potential loss in trade to the city, merchants are hiring investigators to see what can be done. You have been summoned to the Jolly Ogre Tavern for just such an opportunity. An adventure for characters levels 1-6.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LIVING GREYHAWK Tier Structure

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

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

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

Lifestyle

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

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 Naimural 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.

Lifestyle	Cost	Skill Modifier
Destitute	14 sp	-2
Poor	43 sp	-1
Common	12 gp	0
High	250 gp	+1
Luxury	500 gp	+2

Adventure Summary and Background

Since the great wars many nations have been rebuilding that which was destroyed. Still others were unscathed by the violence, and remain wary of their neighbors, lest they show any sign of weakness that might be exploited.

The Free Lands of Dyvers remained primarily neutral throughout the conflict and served as a haven for those who sought refuge from battles they had nothing to do with. The city's population grew rapidly from the arrival of hundreds of refugees every month. Soon the city and surrounding countryside were saturated with those who had nowhere else to go. Dyvers' resources were stretched in every direction and civil unrest soon outmatched the control the Dyvers peacekeepers had enjoyed for many years.

As a matter of course, tighter control was established within the city and along the major roads leading to Dyvers, as well as the mouth of the Velverdyva and the Nyr Dyv. Trade was monitored much more closely along these routes, lest those with evil intent find their way into the comparatively unprotected city proper.

This included the Gnarley Road (also called Great Forest Road), the main road immediately south of Dyvers, a route that led through the nearby Gnarley Forest. A critical trade route to the Wild Coast and ports along the Wooly Bay, this road ran through the heart of the Forest, much to the disdain of the residents of the Gnarley. Until recently, that is. This road has been plagued by attacks from unknown monsters.

In response to the recent violence, the Rangers of the Gnarley Forest have decreed that the Gnarley Road is closed to tradesman and traveler alike. No one shall be allowed entrance into the Forest until control over the road can be re-established. Since Dyvers lays claim to a portion of the Forest, you can imagine the reaction in the City.

Dyvers' relations with the residents of the Gnarley have always been shaky at best. This is not due to any threat of conflict—the Gnarley folk simply choose to keep matters to themselves. Closing the road with no real explanation has the Dyvers residents—especially the Dyvers Merchants' Guild—incensed that approximately one-fifth of their trade will now be days behind schedule and cost significantly more to transport (due to the length of time caravans must now spend circumventing the Forest).

In addition, Dyvers' shipyards must now find some other source of wood for their shipbuilding endeavors. This problem, if not solved relatively soon, could seriously affect Dyvers' ability to defend itself in the case of renewed conflict.

Because of these and other problems, a solution must be found, and found soon. Some city residents have responded to the extreme—by beginning to pack up their belongings and move out, while others have called for a

military force to be sent to establish control of the Wood. This is where our adventure begins.

Adventure Summary

Part I: The Jolly Ogre

Encounter 1, "So You're in This Bar:" The adventurers are in the Jolly Ogre, a tavern frequented by adventurers. They begin in the middle of a bar fight, something quite common in this establishment. When the fight is over (one way or another), the introduction will be inserted as a flashback sequence.

Encounter 2, Introductions and Aftermath: The party learns that the brawl has frightened off their potential employers (private merchants) from the tavern. Soon after they arrived, a traveler entered the bar and was attacked by the patrons. Seeing the traveler as an innocent victim, the party defended her and the fight began.

After the fight, the party learns that the traveler is in fact a messenger from the Gnarley Forest, sent to the Old Palace in Dyvers to explain the reasons for the closing of the Gnarley Road. When the bar patrons learned that she was from the Gnarley, they attacked. Annika Silverwood, the messenger, asks for the party's aid in escorting her to the palace.

Encounter 3, "Watch Your Mouth:" The party leads the messenger up the street to the palace, only to be cursed at and taunted by passers-by. If a fight ensues, they will be quickly arrested by the Watch and taken to the guardhouse. If they are able to stay peaceful, they are allowed entrance into the palace with the messenger. Annika invites them to join her in the Great Hall.

Part II: Your Mission, Whether or Not You Choose to Accept It

Encounter IV, "Arrested!" occurs only if PCs were arrested for fighting in the streets or drawing weapons in the bar. PCs are led to the Palace Hall to answer to the Magister for their actions. As punishment for their crime, they will be required to spend some time in jail (which means removal from play), or escort the messenger back to the Gnarley in lieu of jail time.

Encounter V, "Assignment" occurs if PCs are not arrested but are instead allowed entrance to the Old Palace. PCs observe the delivery of the message (verbally) and are asked to escort the messenger back to the Gnarley for the City. If pressed, the City will offer to pay expenses (travel costs, horses, etc.).

Encounter VI, Merchant Caravan: The PCs encounter a merchant caravan along the road. The merchant states that he has just come from the Gnarley and was able to complete his trek through the forest, much to Annika's surprise, since no one is allowed entrance. This merchant

is actually a thieves' guild member, and is looking for any party member who is going to the Forest to leak some information.

Encounter VII, The Gnarley Forest: The PCs travel as escorts to the Gnarley and are instructed in the ways of the Gnarley. They are eventually led to the High Druid.

Encounter VIII, The High Druid: The PCs are introduced to the High Druid of the Forest. They are asked to explain the response by the Magister to their situation, and he looks to the PCs to negotiate a settlement for travel through the Forest for trade. A compromise will be the result. During the negotiations, the PCs and the Gnarley Folk are attacked by undead orcs from the Forest. The PCs will be left to defend themselves, but will discover the undead humanoid threat.

Encounter IX, Return: After the hunt, the PCs explain what they have found to the High Druid. They are then thanked and are sent back to Dyvers to make their report. They are rewarded by both the Gnarley folk and the Magister.

Part I: The Jolly Ogre

Encounter I: "You're in This Bar"

The PCs begin the adventure at The Jolly Ogre, a popular adventurers' bar just inside the south gate of town. The introduction will be following the obligatory bar fight. The purpose of this encounter is to immediately familiarize the players with the 3E combat system, and to begin life in Dyvers on the right foot!

The PCs are in the middle of a bar fight. They each have full hit points and their entire complement of spells, but they have no weapons other than those that are concealed (they were checked at the door).

This combat will be primarily brawling, save for one rogue who will draw a dagger as soon as he is hit the first time. PCs from Dyvers can make an INT check (DC 15) to realize that drawing a weapon (or casting a harmful spell) will get them thrown in jail. Brawls in this establishment are common and charges will not be pressed against the participants unless weapons are drawn (in which case the charge is "attempted murder").

Each of you faces down a bar patron who is attacking with fists, mugs of ale, and even the occasional piece of furniture. You are thinking perhaps this may not have been the best fight to choose.

Of *course* the PCs did not "choose" this fight, but they are in it nevertheless. Each PC has an opponent assigned to

them, depending upon their profession and level. Try to match up the PCs with an appropriate attacker, but do not "gang up" on any one PC (except the orc barbarian with the 20 STR, against whom you may feel free to use as many opponents as you see fit).

For this combat, you must be familiar with the rules for unarmed combat. The fighters have the Improved Unarmed Combat feat; most PCs will not. This is designed to show Dyvers PCs that bar brawling is something with which they should be familiar. In addition, there is no better way to introduce and demonstrate the D&D 3rd Edition combat mechanics than with a bar brawl.

The GM should have the bar scene laid out on a battle mat or grid map (with figures or other representative markers) beforehand to make this simpler, since the Third Edition combat rules rely on visualization more than other editions have. The bar itself is not set – feel free to make up your own custom bar scene for this encounter.

As soon as the first rogue is hit in combat, he will draw a dagger and attempt to stab the opposing PC (only one rogue will do this). When this happens, the PC should be allowed the above INT check (if he/she had not already figured this out) to determine that this will get one thrown in jail regardless of the outcome. If the rogue downs his PC, the bar's bouncer will step in and take care of him —easily.

Tier I (EL 2)

Fighter Types and Monks:

Drunken Bar Rowdy, male human Warri: CR 1/2, Medium-size humanoid; HD 1d8+4; hp 12; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 16 (chain +5, Dex +1); Atks: +4 melee (1d6+3 bar stool or 1d3+3 fists); AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1

Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Chr 8

Skills: Jump +6, Climb +6, Intimidate +3; **Feats:** Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack

Warrior NPC class may be found in the DMG

Rogues and Cleric Types, Bards:

Drunken Barfly, male human Rogr: CR 1; Medium-size humanoid; HD 1d6+1; hp 7; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd. 30; AC 15 (16) (leather +2, Dex +3, Dodge +1 vs. chosen opponent); Atks +2 melee (1d3+2 fists, 1d4+2 [crit 19-20 x2], dagger; AL CN; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +0

Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Chr 10

Skills: Hide +8, Listen +3, Spot +3, Bluff +3, Tumble +7, Jump +5; **Feats:** Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike

Wizards and Sorcerers:

Drunken Old Bar Patron, Com1: CR 1/2; Medium size-humanoid; HD 1d4+2; hp 6; Init +1 (Dex); Spd. 30; AC 13 (leather +2, Dex +1); Atks +0 melee (1d3, mug of ale) or (1d3, fists); SA: blinding attack; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1

Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12

Skills: Climb +4, Jump +4, Listen +5, Spot +5, Use Rope +5; Feats: Blind-Fight, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (mug)

The drunken old men will toss ale into the eyes of their opponent on the first round with a +2 circumstance bonus. If they hit, the PC must make a successful Reflex save (DC 15) in order to avoid being blinded for 1d2 rounds.

The commoner NPC class may be found in the DMG

Tier 2 (EL 4)

Fighter Types and Monks:

Drunken Bar Rowdy, male human War3: CR 2, Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d8+6; hp 24; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 16 (chain +5, Dex +1); Atks +6 melee (1d6+3 bar stool) or (1d3+3, fists); AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0

Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Chr 8

Skills: Jump +8, Climb +8, Intimidate +5; Feats: Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Endurance
Warrior NPC class may be found in the DMG

Rogues and Cleric Types, Bards:

Drunken Barfly, male human Rog3: CR 3; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d6+3; hp 19; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30; AC 15 (16) (leather +2, Dex +3, Dodge +1 vs. chosen opponent); Atks +4 melee (1d3+2 fists) or 1d4+2 [crit 19-20], dagger); AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1

Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Chr 10

Skills: Hide +9, Listen +4, Spot +4, Bluff +5, Tumble +8, Jump +6; Feats: Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Dodge

Wizards and Sorcerers:

Drunken Old Bar Patron, male human Com3: CR 2; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d4+6; hp 16; Init +1 (Dex); Spd. 30; AC 13 (leather +2, Dex +1); Atks +1 melee (1d2, mug of ale) or (1d3, fists); SA: blinding attack; SD: nil; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2

Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12

Skills: Climb +6, Jump +6, Listen +7, Spot +7, Use Rope +7; Feats: Blind-Fighting, Improved Unarmed Strike, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (mug)

The drunken old men will toss ale into the eyes of their opponent on the first round with a +2 circumstance bonus. If they hit, the PC must make a successful Reflex save (DC 15) in order to avoid being blinded for 1d2 rounds.

Commoner NPC class may be found in the DMG

Tier 3 (EL 9)

Fighter Types and Monks:

Drunken Bar Rowdy, male human War6: CR 5; Medium-size humanoid; HD 6d8+12; hp 45; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 16 (chain +5, Dex +1); Atks +9/+4 melee (1d6+3, bar stool) or (1d3+3, fists); AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +1

Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Chr 8

Skills: Jump +11, Climb +11, Intimidate +8; Feats: Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Endurance
Warrior NPC class may be found in the DMG

Rogues and Cleric Types, Bards:

Drunken Barfly, male human Rog 5: CR 5; Medium-size humanoid; HD 5d6+5; hp 29; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30; AC 15 (16) (leather +2, Dex +3, Dodge +1 vs. chosen opponent); Atks +6 melee (1d3+2 fists CRIT x2, 1d4+2 [crit 19-20] dagger); SA: sneak attack +3d6; SD: uncanny dodge (cannot be flanked and DEX to AC), evasion; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +2

Str 15, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Chr 10

Skills: Hide +11, Listen +8, Spot +8, Bluff +8, Tumble +11, Jump +8; Feats: Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Dodge

Wizards and Sorcerers:

Drunken Old Bar Patron, male human Com5: CR 4; Medium-size humanoid; HD 5d4+10; hp 26; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 13 (+2 leather, +1 Dex); Atks +2 melee (1d2, mug of ale), or (1-3, fists); SA: blinding attack; SD: nil; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2

Str 10, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12

Skills: Climb +8, Jump +8, Listen +9, Spot +9, Use Rope +9; Feats: Blind-Fighting, Improved Unarmed Strike, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (mug)

The drunken old men will toss ale into the eyes of their opponent on the first round with a +2 bonus. If they hit, the PC must make a successful Reflex save (DC 15) in order to avoid being blinded for 1d2 rounds.

Commoner NPC class may be found in the DMG

Smudge, bouncer at the Jolly Ogre, male half orc Brb8: CR 8; Medium-size humanoid; HD 8d12+24; hp 79; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft.; AC 19 (+5 hide +2, +2 ring of protection +2, +2 Dex); Atks +12/+7 melee (1d8+4 table) or (1d3+4 fists); SA: Rage; SD: uncanny dodge; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +1

Str 18 (22), Dex 14, Con 16 (20), Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8

Skills: Climb +8, Handle Animal +2, Heal +2, Hide +5, Intimidate +5, Jump +8, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Spot +3, Swim +6, Wilderness Lore +3; Feats: Improved Unarmed Strike, Improved Initiative, Power Attack

Please assign opponents to PCs by their ability. If a PC soundly beats their opponent on the first round, feel free to throw others at them. Do not do so to defeat them.

If anyone attacks Smudge, he will rage, beat that person senseless, and throw him or her onto the street. If the PCs use weapons in the fight they will be thrown in jail (with Annika) by the Watch (who would normally be nowhere near the bar, but strangely appear if weapons are used). If this happens, the introductions in Encounter 2 will take place in the jailhouse at the Old Palace, and you should proceed to Encounter IV. The GM should modify the boxed text to reflect this.

The PCs should be able to win this fight. However, if they do not, it makes no difference as to whether or not they are able to complete the adventure. After the combat, they will be able to ascertain just who is in league with whom. Whether they win or lose, proceed to Encounter II.

Encounter 2: Introduction/Aftermath

As you dust yourselves off after the melee, you wonder if the merchant you were supposed to meet fled in the wake of the combat. You recall rumors of an expedition that was to begin here at the Jolly Ogre, in order to investigate the closing of the Gnarley Road south of Dyvers.

The closing of the Great Forest Road has the City in an uproar. Dyvers residents have responded in many ways—from packing up their meager belongings and preparing to leave, to calling for a military solution in the establishment of an outpost on the Gnarley Forest edge, manned by Dyvers militia.

Since Dyvers lays claim to a large portion of the Gnarley, a military solution seems all too probable at this point.

The City's relations with the residents of the Gnarley have always been unstable, not due to threats of conflict, but more so because the Gnarley folk have always been rather reclusive. Since approximately one-fifth of the City's trade comes from this route, any information that might lead to a solution would be worth quite a bit to local merchants.

Now, however, you have been sidetracked because some traveler came into the place and got attacked by the patrons—and you are not even sure why.

It seems that the patrons did not appreciate something this traveler said or did, for they attacked her almost immediately upon her entry. Watching five or six patrons attack her at once, you reluctantly became a part of the brawl in order to, perhaps, save her life. You have never seen such malicious intent from tavern-goers.

Looking around, you see the mysterious traveler standing over her opponent, a burly sot at least twice her size. The raven-haired woman nods at the ogre at the door, shrugs her cloak back to its rightful place on her shoulders, and moves in your direction.

"Thank you for protecting me," she gasps. "I was afraid that I might have been left for dead with the way this town feels about our residents lately. It would seem that I am not as safe here as I thought."

Now that she is in front of you, you notice the clasp of her cloak much more plainly. It is a gold chain with a charm in the shape of twin gold oak leaves with a golden acorn in the center—the symbol of a Senior Ranger of the Gnarley Forest.

"My name is Annika Silverwood. I have been sent with a message to your Magister, Larissa Hunter. To whom do I owe my respect and thanks?"

This is the proper time for the PCs to introduce and describe themselves. Annika will immediately regard those wearing the colors of the city (the Dyvers crest), as well as holy symbols of Ehlonna, as the leaders of the group. Barring this, she will address herself to a Ranger,

Druid, or Fighter-type in non-metal armor (and the highest Charisma if there is a tie). If none of those are present she will choose a Cleric wearing the holy symbol of a good-aligned deity (or a monk if there are no clerics). If the party is made up of all wizards, sorcerers, and rogues, she will reluctantly accept the help but speak to the party member with the highest CHA who seems to show concern for her well being.

Annika has been chosen for this mission as her final task in becoming a Ranger Knight of the Gnarley. She does not truly need the party's help, as she is quite capable of protecting herself. She has been ordered to find some Dyvers residents who are willing to investigate first and judge later, unlike the rest of the city. She chose the first tavern inside the City's southern gate in order to find these people and happened to meet the PCs. It also helps her to be seen with Dyversians when in public.

Roleplay Annika as a very confident warrior who is putting on a show of humility and innocence in order to inspire those she meets to not see her as a threat to Dyvers. She will really try to make the PC's comfortable by convincing them that she could be lynched if left to the streets by herself. Her goal here is to convince the PCs to accompany her to the Old Palace in order to have them serve as a buffer between her and the somewhat hostile Dyvers populace. She will ask the PC "leader" if his/her party would be willing to escort her to the Old Palace in return for heal any wounds they suffered in the brawl.

Annika Silverwood, female human Rgr8: CR 8; Medium-size human; AC 20 (masterwork +4 studded leather, +2 cloak of resistance, +3 Dex); HD 8d10+8; hp 58; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 (40 outdoors); Atks +10/+5 with fists or melee, +9/+9/+6/+6 with scimitar/short sword combo (1d6+3, [crit 19-20], masterwork short sword and [crit 18-20] masterwork scimitar), or +10/+10/+5 (1d8+1 [crit x3], mighty longbow); SV Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +8

Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 14

Skills: Animal Empathy +5, Climb +5, Craft (Woodworking) +2, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +5, Handle Animal +5, Heal +5, Hide +10, Intuit Direction +5, Jump +5, Knowledge (Nature) +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +10, Ride +5, Search +3, Sense Motive +3, Speak Language (Sylvan), Spot +5, Swim +5, Wilderness Lore +5; **Feats:** Ambidexterity*, 2-Weapon Fighting*, Track*, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Precise Shot, Improved 2-Weapon Fighting (* = bonus)

Equipment: masterwork scimitar, masterwork short sword, mighty longbow, masterwork studded leather armor, cloak of resistance +2, six potions of cure light wounds (in the form of a healing salve).

Spells prepared (3): 1st lvl—alarm, resist elements, speak with animal

For any PC wounded in the brawl, she will offer up to 6 applications (total—not per PC) of a healing salve that has been created in the forest. This salve acts as a potion of cure light wounds with the power of a 3rd level cleric, i.e., 1d8+3 hp cured when applied to wounds). PCs cannot

take the salve as an item it is offered to cure immediate wounds.

Here is the information she will offer the PCs:

- She has been sent as a messenger to the Magister in order to explain the actions of the Gnarley Folk. She has been ordered to seek an audience at the Old Palace for this purpose.
- The Gnarley Road has been closed because there have been many attacks lately, and the only way to maintain safety within the area is to keep outsiders away from the area until the Rangers can find and eliminate the threat. She sees this (as do the rest of the Rangers) as an internal affair, and Dyvers is not welcome to form a military presence with the forest.
- The attacks have been made by an unknown menace. Brigands are not the reason (if it was brigands, the Rangers would have handled it long ago). Remains of the attacks remind them of humanoid (orc and goblin) attacks, but no orc or goblin bodies have been found, only the occasional scrap of clothing, and broken spear or sword. In addition, no blood other than that of the victims has been found—if it were humanoids, surely there would be some evidence of their injury.
- The attacks have been made both on and off the traveled paths—it seems they are able to find travelers wherever they happen to be. The attackers never retreat, nor has anyone defeated them. There have been no living witnesses of the attacks.
- No caravan guarded by the Rangers has been attacked.
- One of the primary goals of the Gnarley Rangers is to remain autonomous—to allow outsiders (who do not know how to care for the wood) a military presence in the Forest would be completely unacceptable.
- She has been threatened several times since entering the city, and the violence shown in the Jolly Ogre tells her that it might be wise to have some locals with her when she is seen in public.

“Given the circumstances, I would be better off traveling through the street with an escort of city residents. Would you volunteer to escort me to the Old Palace?”

She will wait for the PCs to accept. If they do, she will finish healing those who need it and lead them out the door. If they do not, she will leave and the adventure is over, for the merchant they were here to meet in the first place left at the first signs of conflict and will not return. Attempts to find him will be fruitless since they do not even have a name, only a rumor that he would be hiring adventurers on this day in this bar.

Once the PCs accept, they will be led out the door. The last one out the door is accosted by one of the locals who just got picked up off the floor (i.e. one of the losers in the brawl). He is a greasy, scrawny, roguish-looking individual wearing breeches, a shirt, and leather vest.

The man wipes a trickle of blood from his chin and spits some more blood on the floor.

“I’d be careful if I was you. Them woodland folk are pretty secretive. They gots some type of rituals goin’ on in that forest and that’s why they closed it—don’t want anyone to find out that they’re in league with those Scarlet Brotherhood monks. You can trust her if you like, but I’d watch my back.”

The man answers no questions and heads out the same door, but in the opposite direction of the PCs. If pressed, he acts like he does not know any of them and will even call for the Watch if detained.

Encounter 3: Watch Your Mouth

You proceed up Lighthouse Street to the Royal District, trying to forget the unfortunate turn events have taken today. Your hopes of making a few coins have been dashed.

As you move farther up the street, you notice that the street has gotten a bit more crowded, and it’s not the type of crowd you want to be in. It would seem that a mob has formed, and they are upset. They are following you.

You see approximately twenty or thirty townspeople, brandishing makeshift clubs and carrying multiple items that could be thrown to cause you no small discomfort. The Watch is nowhere to be seen.

The crowd has formed because they have heard about Annika’s presence, and that she still breathes.

If the party hurries away, they will be pelted with rocks, vegetables, and garbage, but will not be injured. If they hesitate or stop to explain, they will be hurriedly surrounded. Cries of “We lost our business because of her!” and “Let’s show them tree huggers we can’t be pushed around!” and the like permeate the already hostile air.

The crowd wants the PCs to step away and let them have Annika to themselves, lest they share her fate. It will take some weaseling to get them out of this. The residents of this part of town depend heavily on their business from the Gnarley trade route, they are both angered and frightened that they may lose their jobs, homes, and businesses.

The WRONG response is to stride boldly forward and challenge the crowd saying something to the effect of “To get her you have to go through US,” or some other paladin-like statement. That response will get the PCs beaten down (overborne) by the crowd until the Watch shows up. If this happens, it is not necessary to run the combat—the party will lose (if the players INSIST, you can quadruple or quintuple Encounter 1 for statistical purposes). Once the PCs have been slapped around a bit, the Watch will arrest them and you may proceed to Encounter 4. Note that the PCs will not be robbed, nor will Annika—just pounded on for a while.

There are several ways to avoid the fight, and none of them involve challenging the crowd. Options include: convincing the crowd that, “We found her first,” or

explaining that they are escorting Annika to the Old Palace to see that “justice is done.” As well they can attempt to convince the crowd that they are investigating the Gnarley situation and that they have authority until the Watch takes her into custody. As long as they in no way imply that they are “on her (Annika’s) side,” they will be able to stall the crowd until the Watch shows up (ten rounds after the crowd surrounds them). DM note: Remember that a round is now six seconds, not a full minute.

When the Watch arrives, they will break up the crowd and inquire as to what the PCs did to cause the commotion. The PCs will once again have to do some convincing. The Watch will suggest that they take Annika to the guardhouse “for safe keeping.” But once the PCs convince them that they are on the way to the Palace the guards will warn them not to incite anyone who may wish to see Annika harm—it could get them seriously hurt or even killed.

If the Watch is attacked, they will fight to subdue. After three rounds, a Dyvers Armed Intervention Patrol will be sent to assist. They will consist of 20 men in the patrol, one captain (6th level), one lieutenant (5th level), two sergeants (4th level), two priests (3rd level each), two mages (3rd each) and twelve veteran guards (1st). They will finish breaking up the fight and arrest those involved.

Dyversian Guards, male human Ftr1 (4): Medium-size humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 1d10+2; hp 12; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 18 (chain +5, shield +1, Dex +2); Atks +4 (+5) melee (1d8+4 [crit 19-20], longsword); SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1

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

Skills: Gather Information +1, Innuendo +1, Jump +4, Knowledge (Law) +1, Search +1, Sense Motive +1 **Feats:** Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Quick Draw

Equipment: chainmail, large wooden shield, longsword

Dyversian Patrol Sergeant, Smythe, male human Ftr4: Medium-size humanoid (6 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 4d10+8; hp 36; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 18 (banded +6, shield +1, Dex +1); Atks +9 melee (1d8+5 [crit 19-20], longsword); SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +0

Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10

Skills: Gather Information +3, Innuendo +2, Jump +6, Knowledge (Law) +3, Search +2, Sense Motive +3; **Feats:** Weapon Focus (longsword), Power Attack, Expertise, Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Equipment: chain mail, shield (large wooden), longsword (masterwork)

Proceed to Encounter IV if the PCs were arrested. If not, proceed to Encounter V.

Part II: Your Mission, Whether or Not You Choose to Accept It

Encounter 4: Arrested

You are dragged up the street to the local guardhouse, which also happens to be right next to the Old Palace. Annika tries to plead your case, but to no avail. Your party is separated from her when you are placed in separate cells.

Approximately one hour after your incarceration, the guards arrive and remove Annika from her cell. You are left alone to ponder your mistakes of the day.

Another two hours later, the guards return to your cell, open the door, and beckon you forward. You are led across the street to the Palace, up the marble steps, and into the Great Reception Hall.

Arriving in what formerly was a reception hall for the King of Furryondy, you see a grand raised platform on which sit over one dozen large, plush chairs. Seated here are some of the most finely dressed individuals you have seen. This august group is the Gentry of Dyvers—the ruling council that represents every part of the City.

Annika stands before them, and everyone in the room watches her, as she in turn watches your entrance. She has changed from her drab traveling attire to an exquisite brown leather outfit and green cloak. She has a completely different air about her, as she seems to command the attention of everyone in the room.

Turning to your group, she says “I would like to introduce you to the Magister of The Free Lands of Dyvers—Her Excellency, Larissa Hunter.” Gesturing to an imposing blonde woman dressed in plate armor, Annika steps aside.

“Greetings,” Hunter addresses you. “I must apologize for the way you have been treated so far. You must understand that our guards were just being careful, after all. Please, introduce yourselves.”

Allow the PCs to introduce themselves to Hunter. They also may take this time to explain their actions. Hunter and the Gentry will listen to their explanations and descriptions as long as they remain cordial and show her and the Council the respect that is their due. If some PCs become exceedingly obstinate, they will be thrown back in jail for the duration of the adventure.

The PCs may take this time to ask questions, as well. Hunter and Annika will summarize the events that occurred prior to their arrival.

- Annika approached the Council and explained that the Gnarley Road has been closed because there have been many attacks lately, and the only way to maintain safety within the area is to keep outsiders away from the area until the Rangers can find and eliminate the threat. She sees this (as do the rest of the Rangers) as an internal affair, and Dyvers is not welcome to form a military presence there.

- The reason the Gnarley Council does not want outsiders in the Forest is that the visitors do not care for the area and end up harming the balance of the Forest.
- Loggers and adventurers that have “tried to help” have only damaged the Forest. The Rangers are also tired of logging live trees for shipping
- The attacks have been made by an unknown menace. Brigands are not the reason (if it was brigands, the Rangers would have handled it long ago). Remains of the attacks remind them of humanoid (orc and goblin) attacks, but no orc or goblin bodies have been found, only the occasional scrap of clothing, and the occasional broken spear or sword. In addition, no blood other than that of the victims has been found—if it were humanoids, surely there would be some evidence of their injury.
- The Council replied that their first response to the closing is to establish an armed outpost either inside the Gnarley border or just outside the Forest. The Dyvers Militia will clear the road by force.
- Annika’s explanation has not been satisfactory to the Gentry, and the Council is still making plans to establish this outpost unless some other agreement can be reached. Negotiators will be sent to the Gnarley to come to a mutually satisfactory arrangement.

Hunter continues “Ranger Silverwood has informed me that you were very helpful to her in her endeavor to reach us. For this you have our thanks. However, we must not forget the crimes that you have committed against our fair City, and for those you must be punished.”

Hunter hands you a scroll tube. Annika explains, “You are to accompany me to the Gnarley Forest where you will present your City’s position to the Gnarley Council.”

Hunter adds, “Once you have completed the negotiations, return here. As payment for your services, all charges against you will be dropped.”

Give the players **Handout #1**.

The Magister will then dismiss Annika and the council so she may speak to the PCs privately. Once the room has been cleared, she will present her terms of negotiation to the PCs. This is to be done verbally, and not to be written down lest others find the document.

Hunter is to be portrayed as a very commanding individual (she is a military leader, after all) who needs strict order and procedure in order to feel comfortable in her relations to others. She is also, however, deeply concerned for the well being of the City’s residents.

Larissa Hunter, Magister of Dyvers, female human
FR10: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 8 in. tall); HD 10d10+20; hp 84; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 20 (+ 9 masterwork full plate, Dex +1); Atks +16/+11 melee (1d8+7+1d6 frost damage [18-20], longsword +3, frost); SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +4

Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12

Skills: Bluff +7, Climb +8, Diplomacy +7, Heal +3, Intimidate +5, Jump +7, Knowledge (etiquette) +5, Knowledge (military tactics) +5, Knowledge (law) +5, Listen +3, Profession (military) +5, Ride +7, Search +3, Sense Motive +5, Spot +3, Swim +5; **Feats:** Weapon Focus (longsword), Power Attack, Expertise, Weapon Specialization (longsword), Improved Critical (longsword), Leadership, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge

Equipment: Masterwork full plate, longsword +3, frost

These are the “bottom line” requirements for completion of this mission:

- It is acceptable to have the road temporarily closed to solve their little problem, but the road must be opened within one week’s time, or the City will suffer great financial hardship.
- If the road is not opened within a week, she will send 100 soldiers to open it.
- Dyvers will have an increased presence in the Gnarley, whether this is a manned outpost within the Forest itself, or daily patrols along the road. Whatever the outcome, Dyvers’ mercantile system will never be enslaved to such circumstances again.
- It would be acceptable for the Rangers to control this outpost and the area along the road, but she wishes Dyvers soldiers to be included/trained at this outpost so that the City has a presence there at all times, if nothing else but as an advisory contact. This may solve the problem of “upsetting the balance.”
- While in the area, the party should look for clues that this may have been caused by orcs from the Pomarj, Greyhawk, Celene, or Verbobonc. Information about any outside influence needs to be reported, so that influence may be eliminated.
- She will agree to limit logging to that which is left to the direction of the Rangers (i.e. dead wood only). Dyvers forces will enforce this.
- PCs are to share information with no one outside the Gentry or the Gnarley Council.

She will make it clear that there are only two major goals: first, to open the road, and second, to have some sort of a presence by Dyvers closer to the forest, even if this is only one that allows greater communication from the area.

Since the PCs have been arrested, there will be no payment—this is in lieu of jail time. The gentry will allow them to purchase items from the Palace Armory at PHB values (within reason).

Once she has made these points clear, she will dismiss the PCs. Proceed to Encounter 6.

Encounter 5: Assignment

Having narrowly avoided a conflict with the hostile crowd, you now find yourselves at the marble steps of the Old Palace in the Royal District. Formerly the Furryondian Palace, this grand structure now serves as the offices for government and city officials in Dyvers.

Annika approaches the gate at the top of the steps and hands a scroll to the Watch officer on duty. The Watchman scans the scroll quickly and calls over another officer who appears to be the sergeant on duty. He opens the gate without a word, and escorts you inside. Annika beckons for you to follow her.

You pass under a large stone archway and through a foyer, up to a very large set of double doors. There an attendant greets you.

"Welcome to the Dyvers Palace, home to the Gentry and the Magister of our fair City. If you would be so kind as to wait over there," he says, gesturing to a set of stone benches in the wing of the foyer, "I will inform the Magister that you are here."

The PCs will wait for approximately 30 minutes. Annika will inform the PCs that she should be the one allowed to address the Council initially. Also, she will remind them that she is there as a representative of the Gnarley Council, and what she offers to the Gentry is the official voice of that Council. After she presents her information, the Gentry will most likely ask the PCs to introduce themselves. She wishes to make sure that this protocol is followed in the interests of diplomacy.

She will include that each PC should introduce themselves by offering their name, profession, and where they live/are from. The Magister is to be addressed as "Your Excellency," or "Madam Magister." Gentry members are not to be addressed individually, as they are not allowed to speak unless the Magister introduces them. This process will go more smoothly if these stipulations are followed.

If any PC inquires as to why they are being included, Annika will answer that it is important for her to show amiable relations with the populace of the City, as well as show that she hides nothing from them.

After 30 minutes, the attendant reappears and shows you through the double doors into a huge reception hall. You are somewhat taken aback by the sheer size of the room, as well as the height of the ceiling. The hall must be at least 200 feet long and 50 feet high.

The dome in the ceiling brightens the room through several glass skylights and illuminates the ornate artwork along the walls. At the end of the room stands a large raised platform on which are over a dozen plush chairs and a large throne.

The attendant leads you through the room to the far end. When you arrive there he proclaims loudly "I now present to the Gentry Annika Silverwood, Ranger of the Gnarley Forest, and her entourage."

Annika speaks, "Greetings, Your Excellency. I bring salutations and news from the Gnarley Council. As their designated representative, I have been sent to explain the actions my people have taken of late."

Hunter inquires, "And who are these others I see before me, and why are they here?" Annika nods to you.

Allow each PC to introduce himself or herself in turn. Hunter will expect each PC to give their name, profession, and place of residence. If they do not do so

initially, she will reprimand them on not addressing the Gentry or herself in the proper manner, as well as instruct them on the proper method.

Once the PCs have explained about protecting Silverwood:

"I see. Our residents have been very restless due to the trade problems. Do you wish to continue in this endeavor, then?" (pause for reply)

Hunter smiles and hands you a scroll tube. "You are to accompany Ranger Silverwood to an audience with the Gnarley Council to present our position on this crisis. This scroll is to be delivered to the High Druid of the Gnarley Forest."

Give the players Handout #1.

The Magister will then dismiss Annika and the council so she may speak to the PCs privately. Once the room has been cleared, she will present her terms of negotiation to the PCs. This is to be done verbally, and not to be written down lest others find the document.

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Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12

Skills: Bluff +7, Climb +8, Diplomacy +7, Heal +3, Intimidate +5, Jump +7, Knowledge (etiquette) +5, Knowledge (military tactics) +5, Knowledge (law) +5, Listen +3, Profession (military) +5, Ride +7, Search +3, Sense Motive +5, Spot +3, Swim +5; **Feats:** Weapon Focus (longsword), Power Attack, Expertise, Weapon Specialization (longsword), Improved Critical (longsword), Leadership, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge

Equipment: Masterwork full plate, longsword +3, frost

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- She will agree to limit logging to that which is left to the direction of the Rangers (i.e. dead wood only). Dyverse forces will enforce this.
- PCs are to share this information with no one outside the Gentry and the Gnarley Council.

She will make it clear that there are only two major goals: first, to open the road, and second, to have some sort of a presence by Dyvers closer to the forest, even if this is only one that allows greater communication from the area.

She offers the PCs 50 gp each for their efforts, as well as the thanks of the Gentry. She can be pushed to 100 gp, but PCs who do so will not receive the Influence Point in Gentry at the end of the adventure. The PCs will be allowed any equipment they wish to use for the duration of the adventure, as well as horses, but it will need to be purchased or returned when they return. Since the PCs will most likely not have enough gold to buy anything of a masterwork quality, this should not be a problem.

Some parties may have the enterprising idea of trying to attract an attack by the orcs on their way to the Gnarley, by appearing to be a caravan or other travelers. Inform them that the road is closed, and that they will not be allowed inside the Gnarley anyway, unless as an official delegation.

Encounter 6: Merchant Caravan

Traveling along the southern trade road, you note the Dyvers reaction once again to your association with the Ranger. Many insults are muttered as you pass, but no one challenges you as before.

Leaving the southern gate, you notice that the merchant traffic that usually floods this road is almost nonexistent. The road is strangely quiet as you see for the first time the true effect of closing the trade road.

After a few hours' walk you are nearing your destination. As you approach the border, you notice that someone else is indeed traveling this road. However, they are approaching you from the Forest, meaning that they must have somehow made it through the Forest safely.

You see two wagons approaching, with two guards walking in front of them. A large man dressed in bright red silks waves to you from his seat on the buckboard of the lead wagon.

The PCs should be a bit curious about this caravan coming from the Forest. If they do not immediately move to stop the man for questioning, Annika will mention that it is very strange that he should be coming from this direction, unless he approached the Forest and was turned away.

The man will introduce himself as Azik, a merchant originally from Tusmit. He has fine silks for sale, and he has only recently left Dyvers for the Wild Coast. He is actually an agent from the Dyvers Alliance (the thieves' guild), and is looking for some adventurers to give him some information about the Gnarley situation from the inside.

He will approach any roguish-looking PC (once he has been stopped for questioning) to inquire about their business in the Gnarley. He will offer a “silk discount” to any PC who will bring him a summary of the events that take place in the Forest (this will be done in private). They are to ask about the “price discount for travelers.” Any PC with Innuendo that overhears this may make a check at DC 15 to realize he is looking for information for the Alliance.

He will tell any PCs wishing to buy silk goods to do so at his tent in Dyvers (since he must return anyway). He has a “much better selection” there. Allow PCs the above Innuendo check. He can offer no information about the Gnarley himself, since he was not allowed inside.

If the PCs do not stop to question this NPC, ignore this encounter. If the PCs attempt to detain, arrest, or attack him, he will explain that he is working for the Gentry in secret, and he will show them a badge of the Watch of Dyvers (genuine, but stolen) and thank them for their honesty before leaving.

Encounter 7: The Gnarley Forest

About one hour after your meeting with Azik, you are approaching the tree line. Though you have seen this immense forest before, it seems darker somehow, despite the daylight, and is eerily quiet.

Annika will stop the PCs about fifty feet from the tree line and give them some final instructions prior to entering the Forest. She will insist on these, or the PCs will not be allowed into the Forest.

- No spell casting is permitted without permission from the High Druid. The PCs do not have permission (yet). Even with permission, it is only allowed in self-defense or in work required by the High Druid.
 - The PCs are not to leave the path, or they may be attacked.
 - The PCs are to stay together at all times. If they separate, they may be killed due to the number of attacks recently.
 - Before addressing the High Druid a PC must be introduced by a party “leader” first. This person she

will designate as the ranger or druid with the highest Charisma (the one who has treated her the best if a tie). Then in descending order (if no ranger or druid) a cleric of Ehlonna, Cleric of good deity, monk or unarmored fighter (not a rogue). If there is no one of these criteria, she will introduce them, but will only reluctantly allow them to speak at all.

Allow PCs a Spot check (DC 25) to notice the hidden Rangers just inside the tree line. They are guarding the border.

Once the instructions are complete, Annika will proceed to step inside the shade. Four Gnarley Rangers surround them immediately (only those with successful Spot checks are not surprised).

Allow the PCs to react. Annika will hold up her hand, palm in front of her, and ask to approach. She will then lower her hood and roll up her left sleeve to display a brand on her left arm (an Oak Leaf for successful Spot at DC 15). No words are spoken, and the four lead her inside the Forest. The PCs are allowed to follow.

Once the PCs have entered the wood, four more Rangers appear and seem to be taking the place of the four escorting them. If the PCs dare attack, they will have Annika and 12 Rangers to contend with (un-tiered). Eight will attack with their melee weapons, and four will use long bows. After 5 rounds, four more bowmen will appear, as will four more swordsmen (both can do both with the same stats as they are all identical—stats given this way for ease).

Gnarley Rangers (12), human Rgr3: Medium-size humanoid (5 ft. 8 in. tall); HD 3d10+6; hp 28 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 15 (+3 studded leather, +2 Dex); Atks +3/+3/-2 (1d6+2/1d6+1 [crit 18-20 scimitar, crit 19-20 short sword], two weapons scimitar and short sword) or +5 ranged (1d8 [crit x3], longbow); SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +2

Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Animal Empathy +3, Climb +5, Craft (woodworking) +2, Handle Animal +3, Heal +2, Hide +7, Intuit Direction +2, Jump +3, Knowledge (nature) +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Spot +3, Swim +3, Wilderness Lore +5 **Feats:** Ambidexterity*, 2-Weapon Fighting*, Track*, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Equipment: scimitar, short sword, longbow, 12 arrows

Once the party follows the Rangers, they will be led down the road for approximately one-half hour, when the Rangers (four of the ones at the border) will stop and instruct them to stay close. Horses can be tied here (in the middle of the path, but they will be assured of safety) since they cannot go any further. The party will then be led off the path to a trail they never would have been able to find if not for their guides (this is why they need to stay together).

Encounter 8: The High Druid

You marvel at how the trail beneath you seems to appear with each step. Were it not for your guides, you would most certainly be lost. You are led into the Forest for well over an hour before you reach a clearing.

The clearing is roughly 50 feet by 50 feet and contains several people waiting for you. Four more Rangers stand at the far end of the clearing, along with a short individual in brown robes. When you approach the short one turns and you see that he is a gnome.

"Greetings! I am the High Druid of the Gnarley Forest. You may call me Naimur."

The PCs will once again have to introduce themselves. The "leader" of the party should do this. Once this has been done, anyone may address the High Druid.

The High Druid is quite old; he should be played as someone who takes this situation very seriously. He is, however, still a gnome, and he is very cheerful and has a sense of humor. He will smile and invite the entire party to be seated on the grass. Once everyone is seated, he will sit and explain the closing of the Gnarley Road

"You are obviously here from Dyvers, yes? I knew you would come, heheh. Want to know about your wagons, yes? Why we closed the road? When we will open it again, yes?"

"There have been some attacks here. Road is unsafe, very unsafe. Not even safe for Rangers. Rangers responsible for road safety, so we closed the road until we find the creatures who attack. They have been very sneaky – cannot find them!"

"Smells like orcs and goblins, but none of them are found, not even their blood! No wounds, no bodies. Even their tracks disappear! When we find them, we open the road again, yes?"

Naimur will answer any questions the PCs have, except for ones that might compromise the safety of his Rangers. The information he has is below.

About the Attacks:

- They have found orc weapons from the attack site, obviously dropped during the combats. These and the smell tell them that orcs and goblins may be involved.
- Tracks from orcs have been found as well, but when they were followed, they disappeared after several yards.
- They have only attacked "unguarded" caravans and travelers. Any time a Ranger has been present (even in disguise), no attacks have been made.
- Because of this, the High Druid believes that either they are attempting to discredit the Rangers, or that they plan on attacking the Rangers soon.
- There is an attack site near here that he will take the PCs to see after they talk about the terms of the opening of the trade road.

About the Gnarley Road:

- A Dyvers military force is not welcome. The High Druid sees the safety within the Gnarley as his (the

Rangers') responsibility. Outsiders simply do not know how to treat the Forest. The High Druid will defend the borders of the Forest if necessary.

- One week may not be sufficient to discover and eliminate this menace.
- Outsiders will have to be supervised if they are in the Forest due to mistreatment of the trees. This includes any subsequent wood-gathering for shipbuilding, because too many live trees are being lost

If the PCs suggest Dyvers forces for training by the Rangers, the High Druid will nod appreciatively, deliberate with the Rangers for a few minutes, and then insist that any such forces be Rangers or Druids by trade. They can come from Dyvers, but must learn the ways of the Gnarley in order to work here.

If the City is willing to supply Rangers and Druids for the sole purpose of maintaining and defending the Forest, the High Druid will see to their housing and training, as well as to their supervision. The Rangers are in need of more numbers anyway, and this may be the answer to both problems. The High Druid will open the road as soon as this menace is removed.

As soon as an agreement is reached:

Suddenly, another Ranger bursts into the clearing opposite the entrance you came through. He quickly nods to the High Druid and proceeds to whisper several sentences into his ear. The High Druid then waves at your escorts, and says to you, "Wait here—you will be safe until we return."

He then disappears into the Forest, along with all of the Rangers except Annika.

Annika stays to watch over the PCs. About one minute after the Rangers leave, she will turn with a start toward the entrance to the clearing that the PCs used. Allow PCs to make Listen checks (DC 15) to hear something moving in the woods near them.

Annika looks to the PCs as if to ask whether or not they should investigate. She always follows orders, but is also responsible for the PCs' safety. It will not take much convincing to get her to lead them to the source of the sound (she will accompany the PCs if they are the ones to decide).

Once they enter the wood, they will see a few dark shapes moving off in the distance. They are humanoid-shaped. They are moving slowly and seem to take no notice of the noise the PCs make when they approach. They are carrying large bundles of something. They are moving away, and it will take some time for the PCs to catch up to them. The chase leads for approximately one-half mile.

The humanoids will continue to move away until someone approaches within 30 feet. At this point, they will turn and attack. They appear to be orcs, but are actually orc zombies. During the combat, they will be slow and measured in their movements. PCs who are either using missile weapons or casting spells will notice the clumsiness and slow reaction time of these creatures. PCs in melee will need to make a spot check (DC 15) to

notice the same thing (since they are busy). Also, any PC can make a spot check (DC 20) to notice that when they are cut, they do not bleed much, and the blood is very dark (hence no blood at attack scenes).

Annika will be unable to help the PCs due to the fact that she will have several of her own opponents to take care of. She will conveniently kill the last of them on the last round of combat. If the PCs ask, she has at least 4 zombies of her own to contend with.

Tier 1 (EL 3)

Orc Zombies (6): CR 1/2; Medium-size undead (5 ft. tall); HD 2d12+3; hp 12; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 15 (+2 natural, +4 scale mail, -1 Dex); Atks: +2 melee (1d6+1, slam) SQ Undead, partial attacks only; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3

Str 13, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Chr 1

Feats: Toughness

SQ: *Undead immunities* (Ex)—immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage; *Partial actions only* (Ex)—zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only partial actions. Thus they can move or attack, but can not do both if they charge (a partial charge).

Equipment: scale mail (poor quality), short sword (rusty and worthless)

Tier 2 (EL 5)

Orc Zombies (10): CR 1/2; Medium-size undead (5 ft. tall); HD 2d12+3; hp 12; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 15 (+2 natural, +4 scale mail, -1 Dex); Atks: +2 melee (1d6+1, slam) SQ Undead, partial attacks only; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3

Str 13, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Chr 1

Feats: Toughness

SQ: *Undead immunities* (Ex)—immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage; *Partial actions only* (Ex)—zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only partial actions. Thus they can move or attack, but can not do both if they charge (a partial charge).

Equipment: scale mail (poor quality), short sword (rusty and worthless)

Tier 3 (EL 8)

Orc Zombies (12): CR 1/2; Medium-size undead (5 ft. tall); HD 2d12+3; hp 12; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 15 (+2 natural, +4 scale mail, -1 Dex); Atks: +2 melee (1d6+1, slam) SQ Undead, partial attacks only; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3

Str 13, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Chr 1

Feats: Toughness

SQ: *Undead immunities* (Ex)—immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive

damage; *Partial actions only* (Ex)—zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only partial actions. Thus they can move or attack, but can not do both if they charge (a partial charge).

Equipment: scale mail (poor quality), short sword (rusty and worthless)

Ogre Zombies (4): CR 1; Large-size undead (8 ft. tall); HD 4d12+3; hp 29; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 40; AC 14 (+3 natural, +3 hide, -1 Dex, -1 size); Atks +4 melee (1d10+4, greatclub) or +4 melee (1d8+4, slam); SQ Undead, partial attacks only; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +4

Str 17, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Chr 1

Feats: Toughness

SQ: *Undead immunities* (Ex)—immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage; *Partial actions only* (Ex)—zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only partial actions. Thus they can move or attack, but can not do both if they charge (a partial charge).

Equipment: greatclub, hide armor

Following the encounter, they will have to carry bodies of the dead orcs back to the clearing, or they will have disappeared before they return with the Rangers. The other party of Rangers will return with nothing (i.e., no evidence) from their combat with the humanoids, since they will have fled immediately upon discovery. That attack was a diversion to move the Rangers from their location. Fortunately, the PCs remained behind and were able to follow the humanoids and defeat them.

The humanoid zombies were carrying armloads of clothing, foodstuffs, and supplies from a caravan that was raided only yesterday (the same one that the High Druid was to show the PCs later). Their destination was a fire pit only 100 yards away from the battle site. If the PCs search back along the path of the chase, they will come across the remains of the caravan itself. There are no bodies to be found, and no usable equipment or valuables, either (they have all been removed and burned prior to the PCs arrival). The two wagons have even been dismantled and parts of it burned (this and the burning of supplies should give the players a definite clue that there is some intelligence behind the humanoid zombies).

Once the PCs return to the clearing, proceed to Encounter 9.

Encounter 9: The Return

Returning to the clearing, you notice that the other party of Rangers and the High Druid has returned before you. The High Druid looks questioningly at Annika, and seems about to ask why she allowed you to leave the clearing, but instead turns to you and says, "I would assume that you had a good reason for putting yourselves in danger?"

The PCs are expected to explain their actions, and what has transpired. If they thought ahead to bring back bodies

from the combat, proceed. If they did not, go to Encounter 9a.

Naimur will immediately have the Rangers bring the bodies back to their camp for examination. This is exactly the evidence that he needs to begin tracking the humanoids to their lair. He sends four Rangers to search the battle site. In this instance, read the following:

The party will be guests of honor at the dinner this evening and they will be asked to tell the entire tale of their adventure.

The evening is one of celebration. The food is some of the finest you have ever eaten, as you are served delicacies not found even in the richest homes in the City (or so you think). You tell your tale to the Rangers, and they show great interest in your discovery. When you have completed your tale the High Druid speaks:

"Congratulations! It seems though our best efforts were unable to discover the identity of our attackers, some outsiders have done so merely by chance. You must stay this evening and feast with us, for we have new allies in this conflict.

Tell your Magister that we shall open the Gnarley Road when she sends us 40 Rangers for us to train in the ways of the Forest. With Dyvers' help, the Great Forest Road shall be safe once again."

To any Druids or Rangers in the party:

"And YOU of course are welcome to return anytime, and I hope you are among the number that is sent by the city."

Naimur then presents you with a wooden armband featuring the carved symbol of an oak leaf – the symbol of the Gnarley Rangers.

He will also present a masterwork weapon (either a bow, quarterstaff, 24 arrows, club, or blunt weapon, but NOT sword or any bladed weapon). to one (who he considers most deserving) of the druids or rangers in the group.

To all:

The highlight of the evening, however, is a presentation made to Annika by the High Druid. Naimur gestures for her to approach the head of the table, and announces, "Annika Silverwood, your mission was of great importance to our people, and you have met with great success. For this we owe you our thanks."

He reaches out and removes the twin oak leaves from her tunic, and replaces them with another symbol. This one bears the symbol of a Ranger Knight. Applause rings out over those in attendance.

Annika holds up her hand to quiet the crowd. "My success is due in large part to the bravery of the outsiders you see before you. They were instrumental in the effort to discover the menace to our wood. I can only hope you will treat other outsiders with the same respect, so that we may work together in keeping the Forest safe."

After the meal, she approaches your group. "Thank you again for your help. Now you see the importance of your deeds, regardless of how small they may seem to you. You may call on me when you visit the Forest, and I will aid you. For now

please accept these jars of healing salve for thanks. Until we meet again, I bid you safe journeys."

Your return to Dyvers is uneventful. As you present your message to Larissa Hunter, she smiles.

"It is good that we have avoided a military solution. That they were willing to negotiate shows promise. We shall begin recruiting the Rangers to travel to the Forest."

If the PCs were not arrested:

"You may pick up the agreed payment from the clerk. The City thanks you for your work, and we may have need of you in the future. You are dismissed."

Encounter 9a. Return Without Evidence

If the PCs did not bring back any evidence, Naimur will nod appreciatively at their story, and look to Annika for confirmation. When she vouches for the PCs, he will tell them that he is happy that they were willing to defend the Forest and offer their assistance, but now they must go to the battle site and bring back evidence. He will send Rangers with the PCs, but it will all be for naught, as all evidence will have been removed by the time they arrive. In this case, their battle was only a marginal success in his eyes.

"It seems the problem is more complicated than we first thought. Not only must we defeat them, but we must preserve the dead in order to learn their secrets.

You must remain here and tell us everything about your encounter with them. Please stay this evening and relate your tale to us over dinner."

Once the PCs have explained about the humanoids being undead, and that they were dismantling the caravan, along with burning the evidence, the High Druid will become very concerned. He will send the PCs to sleep while he deliberates with Annika and other advisors. In the morning, he will send the PCs back to Dyvers with the following message:

Tell your Magister that we will open the Gnarley Road if they agree to send 40 Rangers for us to train and supervise here in the Forest. We will open the Gnarley Road when they arrive. We must spend a great deal of time attempting to find the one that is controlling these humanoids, and eliminate him. Perhaps we may call upon you in the future. Until then, I thank you for your help."

The road back to Dyvers is still just as quiet, but you take solace in the fact that it will soon be saturated with merchant business once again. Your mission has been a success, if only a partial one.

Upon meeting Larissa Hunter for the second time, you deliver Naimur's message. She nods and says: "It is good that we have avoided a military solution. That they were willing to negotiate shows promise. We shall begin recruiting the Rangers to travel to the Forest."

If the PC's were not arrested:

"You may pick up the agreed payment from the clerk. The City thanks you for your work, and we may have need of you in the future. You are dismissed."

The End

Experience Point Summary

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

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

Encounter One:

Defeating the brawlers—PCs unarmed 60 XP

OR

Defeating the brawlers—PCs armed 25 XP

Encounter Two:

Questioning Annika 15 XP

Encounter Three:

Running from mob 10 XP

OR

Negotiating with mob 50 XP

Encounter Six:

Asking questions about the caravan 25 XP

Encounter Seven:

Following Gnarley protocol 20 XP

Encounter Eight:

Discovering Orcs are undead 10 XP

Defeating them 200 XP

Total experience for objectives 380 xp

Discretionary roleplaying award 0-35 xp

Total possible experience 415 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 worth more than 400 gp that are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), and all magical items, will be discovered in the possession of the character by one means or another. The character must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives campaign-decided penalties for being known as a thief, such as Infamy. For other stolen items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment and the circumstances within the game to determine whether a PC thief gets away with the theft or not.

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

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

Encounter 9

- Healing Salve (Value 50 gp): This salve works as a *potion of cure light wounds*, caster level 1.
- **50 or 100 GP each** from Gentry (max) if not arrested. Expenses are granted in addition to this (these will be monitored and recorded, so no PC may abuse this).
- **Bracelet of Gnarley Friendship** - (to all Rangers and Druids as well as Clerics of Ehlonna in the party). This wooden armband bears an oak leaf, the symbol of the Gnarley Rangers. This identifies the wearer as a friend of the Rangers. Ranger PCs who wear this armband are welcome to join the Gnarley Rangers when they reach sufficient level (specifications are to be made for metagaming purposes and will be done at interactives). Further, anyone wearing the band is considered to have one permanent Influence Point with the Gnarley Rangers. This point is never "expended" when exchanged for a service from the Rangers. Any character or group of characters can benefit from only one such point per adventure.
- **Masterwork quality wooden weapon of choice** – blank (must be bow, quarterstaff, 24 arrows, club, or blunt weapon, but NOT sword or any bladed weapon). MUST be filled out at table as to what weapon.
- **NOTE: Player Handout #1** contains an authentic signature of Larissa Hunter. DO NOT present this to the players, but some players may consider this to be valuable for forgery, etc.

INFLUENCE POINTS

- 1 Gentry of Dyvers, if not arrested and complete successfully—ONLY if they introduced themselves in the proper manner and if the Gentry does not find out that the PCs have given information to the Alliance (if they did this at all). Also, those who "haggled" with Hunter in Encounter V are not given this Influence Point. The gentry will do the PC a favor in the future.
- 1 Alliance Influence Point if a PC provides information to Azik, the merchant in Encounter VI. The Alliance will do the PC a favor in the future.

Player Handout #1

To the High Druid of the Gnarley Council:

We have received your messenger, and discussed the situation with the Gentry. Thank you for the communication. However, we are distraught that such communication came after actions were taken that adversely affected the financial stability of our fair City.

In the interests of amiable relations with your people, the Gentry has allowed the span of one week to clear the Great Forest Road in order to re-establish trade routes to the south. After such time, Dyvers will be sending an armed force sufficient to clear the road so that we may return to business as normal.

We ask that you comply so that we do not have to resort to such unfortunate actions.

Sincerely,

Her Excellency, Larissa Hunter

Magister, Free Lands of Dyvers