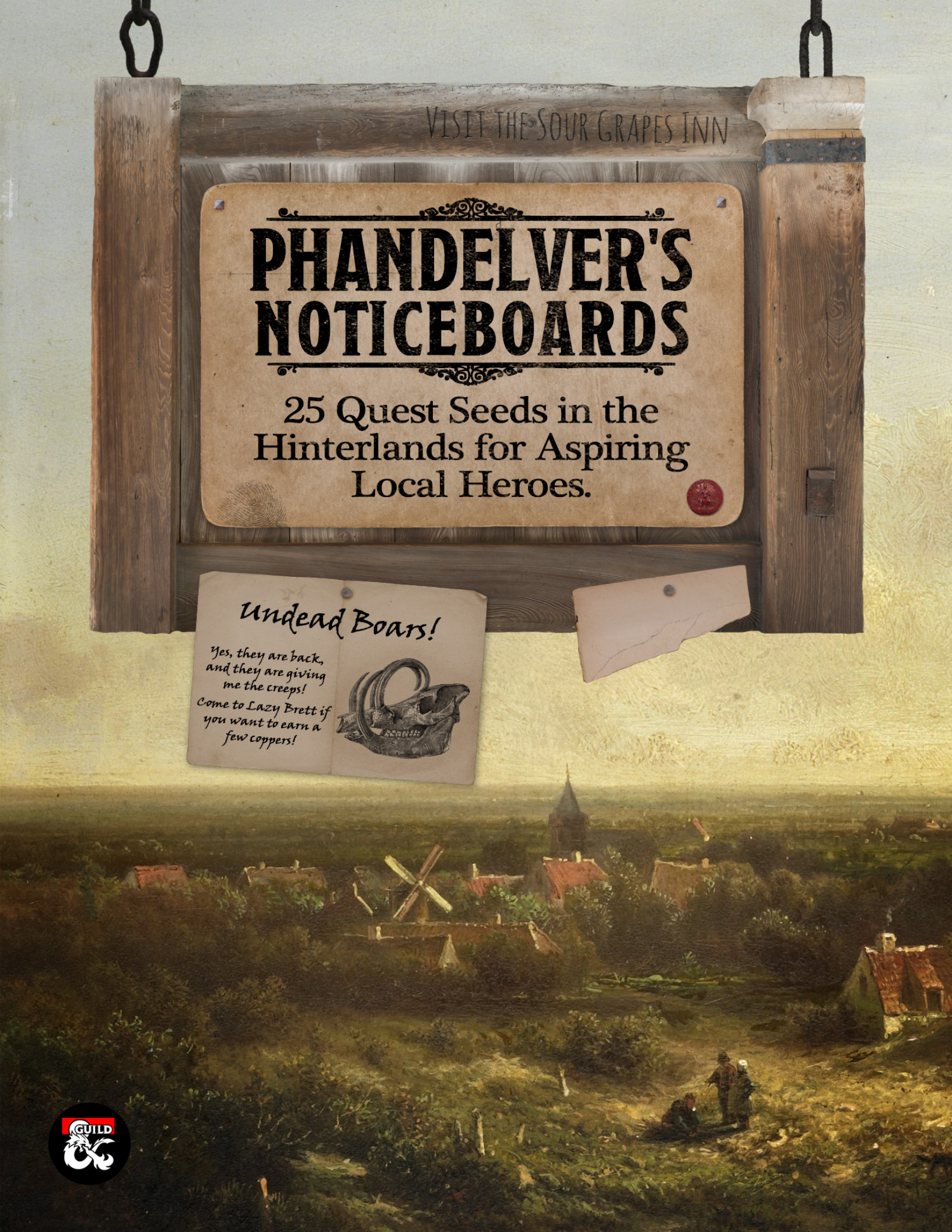

Visit the Sour Grapes Inn
PHANDELVER'S NOTICEBOARDS
25 Quest Seeds in the Hinterlands for Aspiring Local Heroes.
Undead Boars!
Yes, they are back, and they are giving me the creeps!
Come to Lazy Brett if you want to earn a few coppers!
GUILD

CONTENTS

A Fallen Star! 4
A New Cult! 5
A Strange Statue! 6
A Terrible Curse! 7
Abduction! 8
Barrow Trouble! 9
  Map of the Long Barrow 10
Build Palisades! 11
Clear Out the Quarry! 12
Constant Earthquakes! 13
Corn Demons! 14
Cyclops Trouble! 16
Dead Monsters! 17
  Map of the Ankheg Lair 18
Eradicate the Undead! 19
Horrible Wailing! 20
Hunting an Ettin! 21
Lost Cat! 22
Protection Service! 23
Rescue Our Hot Springs! 24
Retrieve Our Relic! 25
  Map of the Bandit Cave 26
  Map of the Dam 26
Rising Waters! 27
Searching for Linguists! 28
Taxman in Need! 29
The Axe of the Ancients! 30
  Map of the Fungi Temple 31
  Map of the Snail Cave 31
Treasure Cave! 32
Walking Corpses! 33
Appendix 34
  Noticeboard No. 1 35
  Noticeboard No. 2 36
  Noticeboard No. 3 37
  Noticeboard No. 4 38
  Noticeboard No. 5 39
  Noticeboard No. 6 40
  Phandalin's Noticeboard 41



@squirrelgolem

Author & Layout: Christian Eichhorn | **Editor:** John Parker | **Version:** 1.1

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PHANDELVER'S NOTICEBOARDS

24 QUEST SEEDS IN THE HINTERLANDS FOR ASPIRING LOCAL HEROES

The quest seeds you find in this collection are intended for villages or small towns in the hinterlands, where strange monsters roam and the wilds are still untamed. The noticeboards numbered one and two are intended for characters of level 1 or 2; the noticeboards numbered three through six for characters of level 3 or 4. One noticeboard covers the quests available in Phandalin, the village described in the Lost Mine of Phandelver campaign. The description of each respective quest is included in the campaign book, however.

You may use these quest seeds to liven up villages along the characters' way, to bridge sessions where some players are missing from the table, or to offer more variety during a Lost Mine of Phandelver campaign.

Some quests may need you to balance encounters on the fly, or better yet, prepare all possible fights in advance before handing a print out to the players. This product also includes the individual notes, enabling you to curate your own set of quests. You might prefer a wide variety of themes, whereas the prepared boards usually fit one or two themes.

To run these quests, you ideally need a copy of the *Player's Handbook* (PH), the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (DMG), the *Monster Manual* (MM), and *Volo's Guide to Monsters* (VGtM). Feel free to alter the quests any way you see fit, however. With a bit of elbow grease, it would be easy to make all quests work with monsters and NPCs covered in the System Reference Document.



Das Herz der Anden by Frederic Edwin Church



A FALLEN STAR!

> Yesterday, I saw a star crash into the foothills west of the village. I promise the finder a sizeable reward upon delivery in my smithy! If you want to head out before checking in, search for a crater that a fireball might leave in the ground. In the center, you will find the remains I seek.
>
> — Blacksmith Tanna Qin

When the characters arrive at Tanna's smithy, either before or after finding the meteorite, Tanna offers them some clear water from a barrel. If the characters come for further information, Tanna can only advise the characters to handle the fallen star with care.

> "I have heard of star remains that are hot to the touch, so be careful! The chunk should be quite heavy and might pull on your armor and weapons."

Unless time is of consequence for any other reason, the characters find the impact site after 8 hours of wandering in the foothills. A goatherd they meet along the way points them in the right direction. As they approach, the characters notice movement in the crater. A character who succeeds on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check spots several insects and rodents of unusual size in the vicinity. The crater has a diameter of 60 feet and a depth of 10 feet.

Inside, three **giant centipedes** (MM 323), three **giant rats** (MM 327), two **giant toads** (MM 329), and three **giant badgers** (MM 323) form a circle around the meteorite and gaze upon it. Taking turns, the creatures walk to the meteorite, touch or rub against it, and return to their place in the circle.

All the creatures have fallen under the otherworldly spell of the fallen star. Their eyes shine and their blood has turned green. Additionally, they can communicate telepathically in a range of up to 60 feet with creatures they can see. When the characters approach, the creatures warn them not to approach if they have evil intentions:

> "This is our holy stone. If you want to hurt us, go to whence you came. If you want to join us, approach."

The creatures won't allow the characters to take the stone, and attack if they attempt to. Additionally, they defend themselves against attacks.

If the characters return with the meteorite to Tanna, she pays the characters 450 gp for their trouble and the material. Whatever item Tanna forges from the metal will sooner or later influence and subjugate its carrier. Use this as a future plot point.

If the characters leave the creatures to their own devices, they multiply, adding others to their number. Eventually, they will build a city around the stone and revere it peacefully.

A NEW CULT!

> Looking for people who are not afraid of getting on the bad side of a possibly evil cult. Come visit me in the Beetroot Inn.
>
> — Lindal Peppermill

Lindal is the owner of the Beetroot Inn and treats the characters to some hearty nut-spirits when they arrive. The trouble started several weeks ago, when a pair of gray-robed humans came into the village. They started proselytizing the villagers, and to Lindal's surprise, they were extremely successful. Not long after, construction started on a temple around half a day's travel from the village. Several villagers packed up their things and moved to the site of their new center of worship. Many former inhabitants still loiter around to convert other villagers and travelers who come through. Aside from costing Lindal much of her business, she thinks there's something evil afoot. As a reward, Lindal promises the characters 100 gp.

Indeed, the two original travelers were **drow** (MM 128) in disguise. They can innately cast *charm person* 3 times per day and *disguise self* at will. They came to the surface to further Lolth's influence by gaining new followers and sacrifices. The drow serve their proselytes a special brew that makes them malleable and addicted to the substance.

The construction site buzzes with activity. Former villagers and random travelers build the unsuspected temple by day and night. Nothing hints at it being dedicated to Lolth. The two drow, who assumed the names Brent and Ryan after they came to the surface, live in one of the many huts surrounding the temple. Characters searching their hut find a distillery and alchemical supplies, which the drow use to create their special drink. Characters who succeed on a DC 16 Intelligence (Nature) check can determine that potions brewed with these substances will be highly addictive and hallucinogenic. On a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, the characters also find a secret compartment in the hut's floor. Inside, they find several statues of Lolth and other religious implements.

The people at the construction site all show signs of mental deterioration. They speak slowly, quickly forget questions the characters asked, and just wander off during conversations. Brent and Ryan are wary of the characters. They argue that everybody is free to choose their own path in life and that religion is a business the characters should keep their noses out of. When the drow get the feeling that combat is unavoidable, with a whistle, they summon two **giant spiders** (MM 328) who hide in the woods 180 feet away.



A STRANGE STATUE!

> Dear academics and adventurers, directly behind you, on the village center, stands a grotesque statue that appeared out of thin air a week ago. If you have any information about this statue, or know someone who might, please visit me in the villagers' hall. Ask for Chieftess Trude.

As mentioned in the note, the 15-foot-tall statue stands in the middle of the village center. The statute is made of wood and covered in thick, black oil. It depicts Yeenoghu, the Prince of Gnolls. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognizes it as the demon prince who is worshipped by all gnolls. A character who can read Abyssal can decipher the engravings at the base of the statue, which run across the statue's foundation in a circle: "Butcher and consume!" A paladin who uses their divine sense feature or a character who uses the *detect evil and good* spell notice a fiendish aura emanating from the statue.

A character who casts *identify* on the statue learns its properties: It is a beacon guiding a horde of gnolls to the village. The characters can attempt a DC 18 Intelligence (History or Religion) check to gain similar insights. The characters make the check with advantage if they recognized the statue as Yeenoghu.

When the characters visit Chieftess Trude to inquire about the details, she offers them freshly roasted boar meat, glazed with honey. The Chieftess explains that the statue appeared after a strange occurrence. What appeared like a diseased dog limped into the village, collapsed in the center, and completely decayed in mere minutes.

> "The statue must have appeared during the following night. Because, you see, when we arose the next morning, it stood there in all its grisly glory!"

The villagers attempted to destroy the statue but neither force nor fire were effective. There is nothing more Trude can tell the characters.

If nothing is done, the horde arrives in two days and eats the village's inhabitants. The characters can save the village in the following ways:

- **By destroying the statue.** It has an AC of 10, 25 hit points, and is immune to non-magical damage. When the statue breaks, the oil pools together, and five **gnoll witherlings** (VGtM 155) as well as a **gnoll fang of Yeenoghu** (MM 163) rise from the sludge. They attack the characters.

- **By digging up the statue and carrying it away from the village.** While performing this duty, the characters are attacked by a gnoll vanguard consisting of two **gnoll pack lords** (MM 163) and two **gnolls** (MM 163).

- **By evacuating the entire village.** The gnolls care only for flesh and mostly ignore the houses and other inorganic material. The characters can guide the villagers to a nearby cave, where they must wait for several days for the horde to pass. The gnolls remove the statue from the village. Meanwhile, two **ogres** (MM 237) arrive at the cave and attack the interlopers.

As a reward for saving the village, the characters receive assorted gems worth 150 gp.



A TERRIBLE CURSE!

> An unthinkable misfortune has befallen our village. An entire wedding-party fell victim to a curse that none of our priests could lift. If you have any experience with curses, or know how to break them, visit the Dundee Farm north of the village!
>
> — Carol Dundee

Due to a failed experiment and untimely theft, two dozen wedding guests were turned into farm animals. To prevent any further misfortunes, the victims were brought to a secure farm, where there is no risk of them being slaughtered by accident. Arriving at the farm in question, the characters are greeted by a speaking horse. Since a horse's mouth isn't made for human language, it is exceedingly hard to communicate properly. To the best of its abilities, the horse tells the characters to search for Carol.

When the characters find her in the house, Carol treats them to some ripened cottage cheese. She explains that all wedding guests suddenly turned into different animals after drinking from the supposedly exquisite wine. The priests who visited her already attempted spells like *remove curse* and *minor restoration*, with no success. Her last hope is to track down the wine press house that supplied the suspicious wine.

"This is one of the bottles. I am sure there is something fishy about it!"

A character who attempts to analyze the liquid must succeed on a DC 16 Intelligence check using alchemist's supplies. They discover that the wine contains an unknown substance, ruling out a simple curse. Giving the wine to any other creature turns it into a random farm animal.

Finding the press house is no challenge for the characters. When the operator, Hurn, hears about the trouble, he is inconsolable and promises full cooperation. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check notices he is lying. He even offers the characters access to the books, while Hurn talks to his helpers. A character who examines the books and succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) notices that the books do not add up. Meanwhile, Hurn attempts to escape. If the characters catch him, he spills the beans: the grapes were stolen from a strange vineyard not far away. Who could have known they were cursed?

Arriving at the location, the characters find an extensive vineyard and in its midst a mage's tower. The door is unlocked, and the characters can enter the reception room without resistance. While they have a look around, a wine elemental rises out of a pitcher. Use the statistics of a **water elemental** (MM 125). The wine elemental, which speaks Common, says that only those who drink may proceed, and presents the characters a cup that the elemental fills from its belly. The wine is harmless, and the whole presentation a mere sales pitch. If the characters attack the wine elemental, it defends itself.

After 4 rounds of combat, or after the characters drink, Aldaron (chaotic neutral human **mage** MM 347) casts *dimension door* to enter the chamber and asks the characters their opinion: either regarding the taste, or the prowess of his elemental.

After explaining to Aldaron what happened, he laughs heartily, and says:

"What a fine prank! Fret not. The spell will wear off in a year or so. Or you can buy a counteragent right here and now! For only ninety-nine measly gold pieces, I might add!"

Aldaron speaks the truth, and he is very pleased that his experimental, untested party grapes worked like a charm.

ABDUCTION!

> Three of our friends and family were taken by these aggressive elves who pestered our village for years! We have had enough, and we want our people back. If you can help, visit Hani Pommeran in the council chamber. If enough strong people come her way, she maybe—finally—can set a plan in motion.

Hani Pommeran does not know a note was posted directing adventurers her way. When the characters arrive, she is initially confused but quickly catches on that their visit relates to the abduction. To welcome the characters, she offers them a hot brew of roasted wheat. After taking a sip, Hani explains that the local wood elves abducted three foragers and let one escape with a note: *"Cease despoiling our woods or more of yours will vanish!"*

The villagers depend on the resources they find in the woods, like wood for construction and heating as well as foodstuffs. Hani is at a loss what to do. Obviously, the villagers have no prospect of winning an all-out war against the elves. She also cannot afford to send emissaries to the elves since she fears that they will simply kill or imprison them. If the characters agree to help the village, Hani promises them several spell scrolls she found on a dead wanderer years ago. The reward consists of two 2nd level cure wounds spell scrolls, one speak with dead spell scroll, and one remove curse spell scroll.

Hani asks the characters to protect her while they search for the elven village, act as her bodyguards while she negotiates with the elves, and bring her (and hopefully the released villagers) back home. Unfortunately, Hani only has a general idea where to find the elves: somewhere to the east.

After entering the forest and heading east, six elven **scouts** (MM 349) intercept the characters. Upon hearing their story, the elves act friendly, and happily lead the characters and their charge to the elven village.

Adventurers are always dangerous, the elves argue, and if they come to the lion's den on their own accord, it's the safest outcome. The more prisoners the better! Characters who succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check recognize that the displayed kindness is an act.

After arriving in the village, 50 **elven scouts** (MM 349) surround the characters and demand they hand over their armor, weapons, and foci. If the characters succeed on a DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) check, they are allowed to speak to the elven leader immediately. Otherwise the elves imprison them for two days before hearing them out to teach the characters a lesson. In the prison located high in the trees, the characters meet the other prisoners who are alive and well.

The elves welcome negotiations but feel the need to show strength. When the elves bring the characters and Hani before their leader, the entire village is present; armed and ready. Hani only pleads to release the villagers and allow them to use a portion of the woods for their needs. This is unacceptable to the elves. The characters should spend time roleplaying and arguing. The problem could be resolved in one of the following ways:

- ❖ The characters pretend to agree to the elves' demands and return at a later date to slaughter the elves.

- ❖ The wood elves allow a designated emissary to acquire supplies from the elven village. This isn't nearly enough to meet the village's demand.

- ❖ The wood elves establish a permanent trade station in the village where they offer properly harvested goods. This doesn't suffice in the beginning but slowly trade increases. Trade is also supported by an influx of outside traders who are interested in elven goods.

- ❖ The villagers send their children to the elves for several months during the year, where they learn to respect nature and harvest supplies properly.

BARROW TROUBLE!

> The smell of death and decay that plagues our small village might have already tipped you off. A long barrow, not far from here, displays disturbing signs of activity. We are talking about trees made of bone and other oddities. Visit me—Zevra Din—at your earliest convenience if you can help. You will find me tending to the small village shrine.

Zevra Din, a priestess of Chauntea, offers the characters refreshing turnip cider when they arrive.

> "You don't look like much, but times are hard, and I can't be picky. Here is the deal: take a look at the long barrow, do your adventurer thing, and come back when you sorted everything out. Please."

Zevra explains to the characters that people in the village noticed the strange smell but didn't immediately examine the remote long barrow. Since the villagers avoid the supposedly haunted place normally, it took many days for someone to notice the changes. At first, small buds of bone broke through the earth, which later grew to the size of trees. Some villagers claim that during the night they can hear chants and screaming from the long barrow's direction.

If the characters visit the long barrow during the day, they find nothing unusual except the trees of bone. However, during the night, three **will-o'-wisps** (MM 301) dance between the morbid bone branches. The undead wisps attack the characters if they come closer than 60 feet. Additionally, the characters can hear wailing from inside the long barrow.

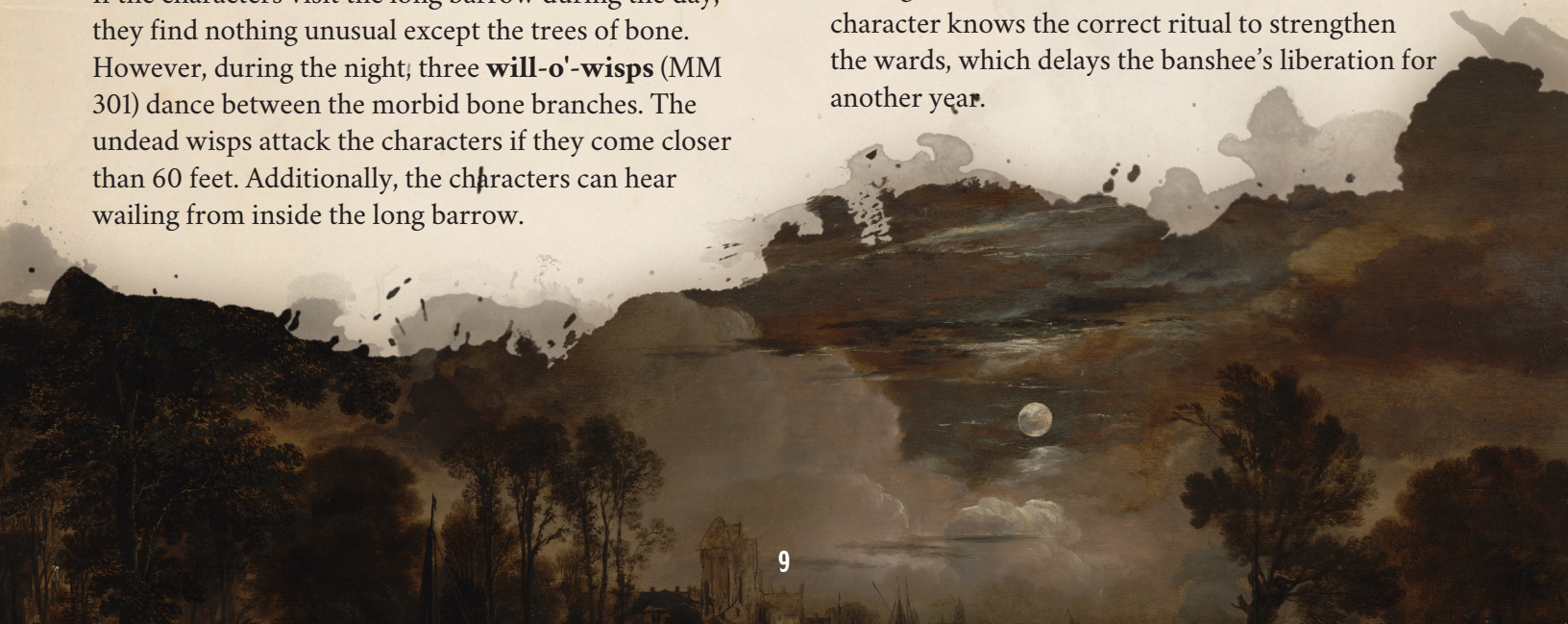
The entrance to the long barrow is a thick stone slab. Using digging implements like pickaxes, the characters need 1 hour to break through the stone or the long barrow's soil. After creating an entrance, four swarms of undead bats attack the characters. Use the statistics of a **swarm of bats** (MM 337) that heals 1d6 hit points if it hits a creature with its bite attack. The bite attack deals necrotic instead of piercing damage.

In the center of long barrow, the characters find another circular stone slab, which is embedded into the ground. It is covered in glowing runes, enchanted to keep a powerful undead creature imprisoned. Below, a **banshee** (MM 23) that has been carving away at the seals for centuries, is nearing her impending release. When the banshee detects the characters standing nearby, she uses her wail action.

Characters who are reduced to 0 hit points by the banshee's attack experience a vision where they find themselves in a boat on the river Styx. In the distance, they see a gigantic fortress, engulfed in flames. The skeletal ferryman turns to the character, laughs, and proclaims: *"Not today; but soon!"*

The characters can deal with the situation in the following ways:

- By breaking the runes, releasing the banshee, and killing her.
- By reinforcing the sealing spells. A warlock, bard, sorcerer, or wizard can attempt a DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a success, the character knows the correct ritual to strengthen the wards, which delays the banshee's liberation for another year.

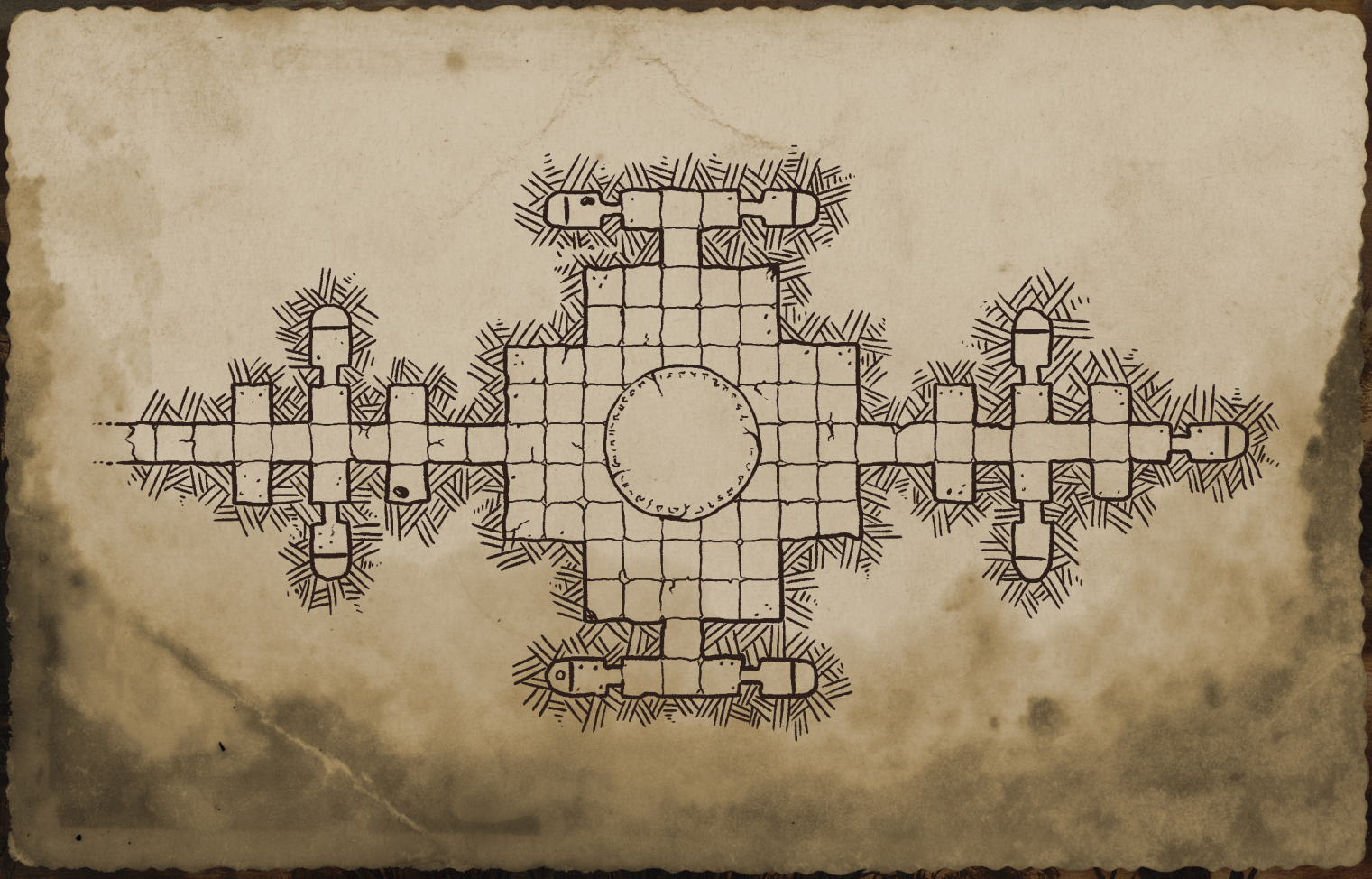


Moonlit Landscape by Aert van der Neer

"You don't look like much, but times are hard, and I can't be picky. Here is the deal: take a look at the long barrow, do your adventurer thing, and come back when you sorted everything out. Please."

Moonlit Landscape by Aert van der Neer

Map of the Long Barrow



BUILD PALISADES!

> To all able-bodied readers: We need every man and woman available to help us build a palisade around the village. This is our last chance to save the settlement. If the hobgoblins take off with another harvest, there's only starvation or flight left for us. We meet tomorrow at sunrise at the edge of the woods.
>
> — Samdorf Gumby

Samdorf is a passionate halfling who makes a last-ditch effort to save the village he grew up in. Unfortunately, the other villagers are too afraid or desperate to do something about their lot. When the characters arrive at the woods, they find only Samdorf, his wife Rosebud, and his closest friend Pipper. As the first order of business, the characters are treated to a breakfast of tasty roasted potatoes. Afterward, Samdorf asks the characters if one or more of them could go back into the village to rouse the villagers and bring them to the woods. The responsible characters must make a Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check to determine how many villagers rise to the task. The result equals the number of people the characters convince to help in the construction. Also, record the result of the check for a later calculation.

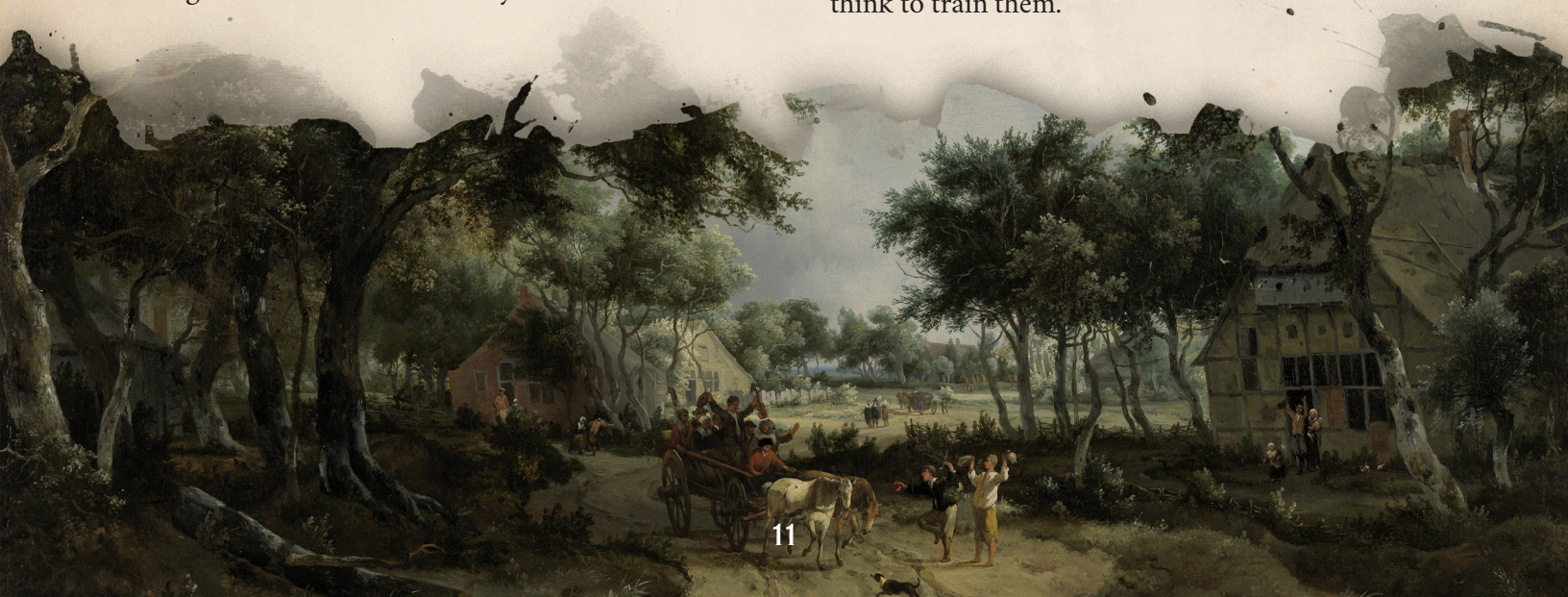
By Samdorf's estimation, the builders have one week before a band of pillaging hobgoblins arrive to liberate the villagers of their hard-earned rye.

The characters must make a Strength (Athletics) group check to determine how impactful their help is. A character proficient with carpenter's tools, or a character who helps in imaginative ways—for example with useful magic spells, makes the check with advantage.

Consider allowing the characters to repeat the Charisma check to rouse additional villagers over the course of the week and alter the result pro rata—depending on how many days have passed before the new attempt. Add the results of the Charisma check and the Strength check to determine if the palisade is ready in time.

If the total is 19 or lower, the construction work is incomplete. If the total is between 20 and 29, the palisade is finished. On a total of 30 or higher, the palisade is finished and also reinforced.

The encounter defending the village against the hobgoblins varies depending on the condition of the defenses. If the palisade is reinforced, only five **hobgoblins** (MM 186) scale the walls and attack. If the completed palisade is not reinforced, ten hobgoblins enter the village. If the construction was not completed, twenty hobgoblins storm into the village. However, they are funneled through a small, 10-foot-wide passage the characters can exploit for defensive purposes. Samdorf, who has the statistics of a **guard** (MM 347), helps the characters in the defense. Consider adding 1d6 **commoners** (MM 345) armed with clubs as a makeshift militia. The commoners may also be armed with simple weapons if the characters think to train them.



View of the Villa Chigi Park by Abraham Teerlink

CLEAR OUT THE QUARRY!

> The old quarry shall be re-opened soon to produce stone for the Lord's new castle. There have been reports of an infestation in the quarry that needs taking care of before the workers arrive. Adventurers who know how to wield a sword or throw a fiery ball have the chance to earn a sizable sum! Visit me, Proctor Killian, in my temporary office for further details.

When the characters arrive, they are treated to a glass of water with a spritz of lemon. Proctor Killian explains the simple enough mission: travel to the quarry which is located a day's travel east of the village, eradicate whatever lives in the quarry, and return with proof. The reward is 2,500 gp.

A small tribe of about fifty halflings, who have the statistics of **scouts** (MM 349), made their home in the quarry. They built their dwellings directly into the quarry's walls, well beneath the surface. For hunting and gathering, the halflings rely upon their mounts, fifteen trained **giant bats** (MM 323). The halflings developed special saddles for their unusual mounts and conquered the sky. The bats live at the bottom of the quarry, in several artificial caves.

Accessing the quarry can be a challenge in of itself. Characters who can fly have an easy time reaching the halfling settlement, but other characters must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution (Athletics) check to overcome the steep walls and many collapses. Characters who use a climber's kit make the check with advantage. Characters who fail must rest for 4 hours before making a final, successful push to reach their target.

The leader of the halflings is called Old Goatface. He rescued his people from a roving orc horde, bringing them to the quarry. Most of the inhabitants grew up in this quarry village they call Whitewall and consider it their home, worth losing their life for.

The characters can solve the problem in the following ways:

- ❖ Killing the population.
- ❖ Killing the bats, which forces the halflings to leave.
- ❖ Negotiating a contract of joint usage between the parties. This involves getting Proctor Killian and Old Goatface in one room and succeeding on three DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) checks before failing four attempts. Each check encompasses an entire day's worth of negotiations. Allow for some roleplay between the characters and the involved parties during the several days of fierce talks.

The halflings cannot be persuaded to leave. Proctor Killian orders the construction of siege equipment to destroy the village if the characters fail in their quest.



Mountain Landscape by Jean-Charles-Joseph Rémond



CONSTANT EARTHQUAKES!

> You might have already noticed the earth shaking on your way into the village. The reason for this nuisance is a pair of hill giants engaged in some kind of stone-tossing match. Some of the stones even reached the village and destroyed the roof of old Robar's hut! Visit me in my office for further details.
>
> — Protector Jill

When the characters arrive, Jill treats them to some jugs of pumpkin-spice-ale, a new creation of hers. According to Jill's account, the giants started throwing around enormous boulders six days ago. They are located on a small plateau overlooking the village. For now, the damage is bearable, but who knows what these brutes come up with next! The characters' task is simple. Either drive the giants off or kill them. As a reward, Jill promises them 250 gp.

The two **hill giants** (MM 155) are engaged in a competition to determine who is most fit to mate with a female giant they both have set their eyes on. Instead of killing each other over the potential partner, they decided to let their skills decide. For now, they see who can fling boulders the farthest, constantly surpassing themselves.

The giants built themselves makeshift huts on the plateau to which they usually withdraw for the night. Next to each hut stands a gigantic water barrel and several slaughtered animals hang out to dry. Inside each hut, large stacks of hay serve as a comfortable bed.

The characters can remedy the situation in the following ways:

- Convince the giants that the only sensible way to pick a winner is indeed a duel to the death, which the giants wanted to avoid. This requires a successful DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check.
- Propose a new, final challenge, where a character serves as arbitrator. This requires a successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check.
- Kill either one of the giants, or both

Mountain Landscape by Jean-Charles-Joseph Rémond

CORN DEMONS!

> We need urgent help during the harvest! Last year, we lost two of our dear friends, Karl and Iomer, to some vile creature hiding in the fields. It must be the fabled corn demon. Come visit me in my house opposite the small temple.
>
> — Ellis Dewey

Ellis Dewey is a middle-aged woman who offers the characters delicious stew when they visit. She explains to the characters that during last year's harvest, two of the villagers abruptly felt sick while out on the field and died a painful death four days later. To prevent another tragedy, Ellis offers the characters 23 gp, her life's savings, and four *potions of healing* (DMG 188). The characters receive their reward only after completion, however.

What Ellis doesn't tell the characters upfront is that the other villagers think she is foolish and that Karl and Iomer died from simple snakebites. Ellis bases her assumption about the corn demon on an old story her late grandmother told her. She reveals this if the characters ask about why anybody would rip the note off the board.

As Ellis predicted, the **corn demon** prowls the fields during the harvest, appearing as an ethereal wolf. Compare a Wisdom (Perception) check the characters make with a Dexterity (Stealth) check made by the corn demon to determine if the characters spot the corn demon. If spotted, the corn demon attacks a character. Otherwise it attacks a villager if it remains unseen. In the case of the latter, the characters spot the corn demon immediately after the attack.

The corn demon fights the characters once spotted. When it loses half its hit points, the corn demon snarls, turns into glistening smoke, and is blown away by a gust of wind.

Ellis is certain that this wasn't enough to rid the village of the threat. During the following night, the corn demon reappears and eats the previous day's harvest.

The characters can solve the problem the following ways:

- The characters can kill the corn demon. It appears the next day during the harvest and fights to the death.

- A character who saw the corn demon and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (History) check knows that this type of barley wolf expects its share of the harvest. By leaving a small part of the fields untouched, the corn demon can be appeased.

- A character who saw the corn demon and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) realizes that these creatures are not demons but creatures of the Feywild. If approached with respect, the creature can be reasoned with. Indeed, the barley wolf explains to the characters that it needs parts of the harvest to feed, and will remain peaceful if the villagers adhere.

- If the characters ask Ellis what else she might remember about her grandmother's story, she thinks hard to remember. In the story, the villagers took parts of the harvest and planted a fresh field outside their village to offer the corn demon a better home. This approach will be successful.



The Road in the Rye by Grigoriy Myasoyedov

Corn Demon

Large fey, neutral

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 90 (20d8)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +4
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Sylvan
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

~

Contagious Touch. Assuming an ethereal form, the corn demon can pass through a creature's space as part of its movement. The creature must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 4 (1d8) necrotic damage immediately and 11 (2d10) necrotic damage after finishing a long rest. After attempting the saving throw, a creature is immune to the corn demon's Contagious Touch for the next 24 hours.

Magic Resistance. The corn demon has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The corn demon makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. , one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. , one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Landscape with Oaks by Alexandre Calame

CYCLOPS TROUBLE!

> Enough is enough! Our new cyclops overlord does nothing more than pillage our supplies and scare the livestock. Somebody must drive that brute out. There is a sizable reward waiting for the brave soul who succeeds in this task. Just get rid of the doggone freeloader!
>
> — Kordin Rinnow

Three weeks ago, a **cyclops** (MM 45) came into the village, declared it to be his new demesne—using grunts and signs—and set up a crude cottage. Obviously, the village folk resigned themselves to their fate and welcomed their new ruler with an offering in mutton-form. Due to his nature, the cyclops, Jurn, is as unhappy about his new home as the villagers. Jurn only came into the village since a crafty adventurer tricked him with a thrilling display of magic. The mage ordered the cyclops to travel west until he found a village to protect.

What began as a joke of sorts, turned out to be a blessing in disguise. The cyclops prevented a band of raiders from sacking the village by his mere menacing presence. The person who posted the note is unwittingly helping the raiders. A few raiders in disguise chatted him up in the local tavern and convinced him to find outside help. After the cyclops is dealt with, the nearby raiders plan to swoop in and have their way with the village.

When the characters visit Kordin for additional information, he treats them to some flatbread and sausages. He can only tell the characters that the nuisance appeared three weeks ago and since then the villagers felt forced to make sure he is well fed.

Annoyingly, the cyclops kicks their sheep when he's bored and, instead of helping in the fields, he just loiters around. Kordin promises the characters 100 gp as a reward if they shoo the cyclops away, but there's no need to kill him.

Jurn lives in a humble hut which the villagers keep clean. If the characters manage to establish a dialog, Jurn tells them a small god with terrifying powers sent him on a holy quest to protect this village. He would love to return to his real home, but is afraid to anger the gods. A character who succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check knows that the common cyclops is a loner who loves solitude. Additionally, cyclopes are extremely superstitious and easily fooled by magic tricks.

> "The small god brought flames and ice from the sky! I dropped a big lump and hid in my hut."

The characters can solve the problem in the following ways:

- Dazzle Jurn with a frightening display of magic and give him a new order that leads him out of the village.
- Explain that the supposed god he encountered is a fraud while displaying some magic to prove it. Jurn immediately sets off to punish the accursed fraudster.
- Succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check after Jurn falls below 50 hit points to drive him away.
- Kill Jurn.

After Jurn leaves the village, ten **bandits** (MM 343) storm the village to plunder its questionable riches.



Swiss Landscape by Alexandre Calame



DEAD MONSTERS!

> Yesterday, I found a dozen dead monsters on one of my outlying fields and a gigantic hole to boot. I am searching for a handful of daring adventurers who descend into that hole and have a look around. Visit me on the Roden farm!
>
> — Marius Roden

The carnage witnessed by Marius was caused by a band of adventurers, who happened to pass by when a swarm of ankhegs broke through the surface. They immediately attacked the beasts and made their way underground. Unfortunately for them, the ankhegs encircled them and all but one were killed by the monstrosities. The survivor remains underground, severely wounded and desperate.

When the characters arrive at the farm, Marius treats them to some freshly made mustard and boiled eggs. Afterwards, he guides them directly to the field in question since he has nothing to add to the information on the note.

Arriving at the location, the characters see almost a dozen large carcasses lying about. Crows and other scavengers indulge themselves on the feast. A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check recognizes the fallen creatures as **ankhegs** (MM 21).

Characters who attempt and succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check, notice several pairs of footprints leading into the hole.

A character who examines the footprints and succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check deduces that some were heavily armored, others less so. A character who examines the corpses and succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds signs of slashing weapons, magic attacks, as well as several broken arrows.

Descending into the hole, the characters find a path of destruction. Many more ankheg corpses line the length of the meandering corridors. After following the path for 10 minutes, the characters hear a quiet "Help!" originating from a dark corner. They find the dying cleric of Lathander, Emmana Gin (neutral good human **war priest** VGtM 218), with broken bones, 1 hit point, and no spell slots left. Unless the characters use healing magic or potions, Emmana is unable to move. The cleric tells the characters that their companions' corpses lie in a cavern up ahead. The characters must defeat the remaining ankhegs and retrieve the bodies, so that Emmana can revive them.

> "We bit off more than we could chew. Only a few remain, I know you can take them! I beg you."

In the cavern up ahead, the characters must face two **ankhegs** (MM 21). After they win the day, the characters can easily retrieve the mangled corpses of Jain (neutral gnome **master thief** VGtM 216) and Har'darin (neutral half-elf **conjurer** VGtM 212); or loot their remains.

If the characters choose the former, Emmana rewards them with 50 pp and the promise to repay the favor in kind. The cleric revives her comrades after a day of rest in the nearby village and together, they continue their adventures. You may use the Band of the Iron Rose as a future plot point.

Swiss Landscape by Alexandre Calame

Map of the Ankheg Lair



"We bit off more than we could chew. Only a few remain, I know you can take them! I beg you."

Cornfield at sunset by John William Inchbold

ERADICATE THE UNDEAD!

> A vile infestation threatens our village, but most seem to value their coin and riches more than what is good and righteous! If an undying fire of hatred of the undead burns in your heart, please visit me in my humble house of prayer.
>
> — Krawin

When the characters arrive at Krawin's house of prayer, he treats them to some barely palatable altar wine. The priest of Lathander explains the situation as follows. Several months ago, a new family moved into the abandoned castle on a small hill near the village. Shortly after, skeletons with sizable amounts of gold appeared in the village. They carried lists of items the vendors were supposed to place in the skeleton's backpacks in exchange for the money. After the transaction, the skeletons wandered back to whence they came. Naturally, a few villagers followed the undead and found that they return to the nearby castle.

Later, Krawin investigate the castle himself. He probed the vicinity and sensed many undead inside the premises.

Although they are peaceful, Krawin thinks it is only a question of when, and not if, the undead attack. Should the characters agree to investigate further, Krawin promises them 200 gp.

> "I am old and not trained in the art of war. Please, in Lathander's name, go to the castle and end this threat!"

When the characters arrive at the castle, they find the doors and windows unlocked and unguarded. Inside, they find skeletons and zombies occupied with different tasks involving housekeeping. After searching the castle, they find an old man in a wheelchair who has the statistics of a **necromancer** (VGtM 217). Lord Hitherworth is the sole survivor of his household, and all the skeletons and zombies are his former employees. He just wants to live his final days in peace, after which his servants fall to dust.

The characters can solve the problem in the following ways:

- ❖ Arranging for one of the villagers to make trips to the castle, supplying Lord Hitherworth with whatever he needs.
- ❖ Killing Lord Hitherworth which destroys his servants.
- ❖ Destroying the undead.



Bentheim Castle by Jacob van Ruisdael



HORRIBLE WAILING!

> About two weeks ago, we heard the wailing for the first time. Day and night, the screams hang over our village like a dark omen! We are sure that the source lies somewhere in the mountains to the south, but no soul is brave enough to search the area. Whoever puts a stop to this can be sure to receive a sizable reward! Visit Soren for the details.

During their stay in the village the characters witness the screaming themselves, at the latest on their way to Soren's house. When the characters visit Soren, he serves them fresh blood pudding and steamed vegetables. Soren does not have much additional information to share with the characters. The villagers are frightened and have collected 150 gp as a reward for a successful quest. Soren points out the mountain from which the sounds come and wishes the characters good luck.

The characters can easily follow the wailing sounds, which become louder the further the characters travel southward.

After around 3 hours on foot, they reach a cliff face dotted with cave entrances. The rock wall of the cliff is covered in a beautiful, yet unfinished mural. At first glance, the mural appears abstract in nature. A character who succeeds on a DC 17 Intelligence (Nature) check, or is proficient with painter's supplies, recognizes the underlying principle and what the image depicts. It represents a journey through the world that is missing several chapters.

A **stone giant** (MM 156) is responsible for the constant wailing. Stone giants think of the overworld as a dream, a strange realm you can get lost in but also a source of great inspiration. After walking the surface for too long, the giant succumbed to near insanity. It now lies in one of the small caves, unable to move. Due to a lack of enough paint, the stone giant couldn't finish its mural and is now unable to leave, tortured by its failure. The characters can remedy the situation in the following ways:

- Killing the giant.
- Casting spells like *lesser restoration* on the giant, enabling it to finish its mural and move on.
- Characters who succeeded on the skill check to understand the painting can finish it themselves after appropriating enough paint. Showing the finished painting to the giant allows it to continue its journey.

Mountain view by Joos de Momper

HUNTING AN ETTIN!

> I need reliable help in hunting down an ettin. It lives in the extensive cave system east of the village, and I alone am no match for it. Visit me at home if you are interested in helping. You can find me there in the evening hours.
>
> — Jena Lih'din

When the characters arrive, Jena (neutral good female half-elf **scout** MM 349) offers them elven pie, baked according to her grandmother's recipe. Jena is prepared to head out immediately and hopes the characters are available on such short notice. As a reward, she offers them 50 gp and first pick of whatever the ettin has hoarded.

Jena guides the characters to one of the entrances to the cave system, where they enter the dark, moist underbelly of the foothills. As a competent scout, Jena demands of the characters to approach silently. The characters and Jena must make a Dexterity (Stealth) group check.

If the result is lower than 17, three **giant bats** (MM 323) attack the group on their way through the caves.

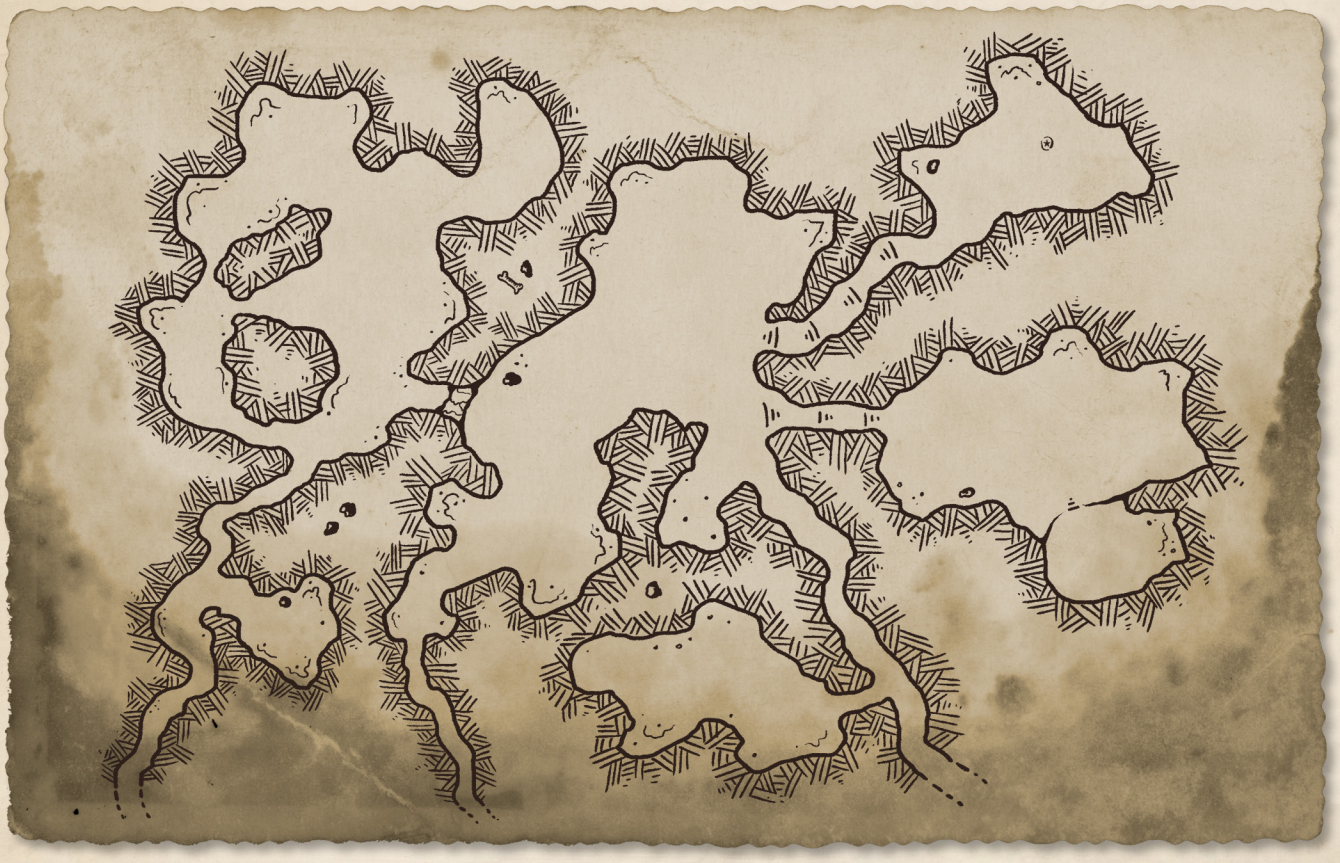
Finally, they find the **ettin** (MM 132) feeding in one of the caves. After the characters and Jena defeat the giant, they find the following in its stash:

- 175 cp, 44 sp, and 12 gp
- A *potion of heroism* (DMG 188)
- A signet ring of the local Lord's family who live in a small moat-and-bailey castle near the village.

Jena is surprised by finding the signet ring and asks the characters to return it to the Unasiin family.

> "Who knows, maybe you score an additional finder's reward. I don't want to deal with them, bad blood."

The ring belongs to Sigvald Unasiin, the Lord's son, who gave it to a friend of his, as a token of his love. After their arrival, assuming the characters tell the guards the purpose of their visit, Sigvald approaches the characters. He gladly accepts his ring, dying inside, and pays the characters 250 gp for their deed and their silence about the matter.



LOST CAT!

Peasants, my sweet kitty Imperator ran off while my useless guards were slacking off. This is your chance to escape your dreadful, ordinary life: Find my little baby and I will remunerate you with a princely sum! You can find me in the local cesspool you disturbingly call an inn.

When the characters arrive, they find Marquise Vivienne and her entourage occupying the entire inn. The lofty Marquise treats the character to a cold stare. Should the characters address Vivienne first, an angry bodyguard—with a sizeable, throbbing vein on his bald head—shouts them down. Never address the Marquise without being allowed to do so, after which Vivienne graciously allows the characters to speak—a game the Marquise and her bodyguard like to play.

Vivienne tells the characters the location where her pet ran off, and promises them 1,000 gp if they manage to return it.

"My little Imperator must have smelled some game in the woods and simply ran off. The thankless thing!"

Additionally, the bodyguard hands the characters a 30-foot hempen rope, with the words: "Its leash." As the characters have hopefully realized by now, the cat in question is formidable, a giant leopard with the statistics of a **dire wolf** (MM 321).

Following Imperator's path of destruction through the woods is no problem for the characters.

When the characters finally reach the cat, they find it gnawing on several human corpses. The cat rests under a large tree and purrs in blissful content. Above the cat, in the trees, sits a cursing man who screams at the characters: *"Run! Or better yet, kill the beast and safe my life!"* The man in the tree, whose name is Myron, is the local tax collector, and the cat food were his helpers.

Imperator is satisfied for now, and the characters have no problem putting on the leash, which the cat recognizes. If the characters attack, the cat fights to the death.

The following may occur:

❖ **The characters kill Imperator.** In this case, Myron is extremely thankful, and writes them a check for 200 gp to be cashed somewhere in the nearest town or city.

❖ **The characters kill Myron.** Ubi non accusator, ibi non iudex—where there's no plaintiff, there's no judge! Killing Myron prevents any further problems, if the characters want to take Imperator alive. On Myron's body the characters also find 500 gp in tax money.

❖ **The characters take Imperator home.** Seeing that the characters obviously know the cat, Myron is enraged, comes down from his tree, and confronts them. He demands compensation for his dead helpers and for his psychological trauma. The sum of 10,000 gp should cover most of his troubles. Should the characters take Myron back to the Marquise, she takes care of Myron. Roll a die to determine if Myron is paid on an even number or disposed of on an odd number. Either way, the characters receive their due.





PROTECTION SERVICE!

> Hello there! I have to stock up on herbs very soon, and at my age the woods become more and more dangerous. If you are interested in an easy task, ask for Lilly Koin, and visit me in my abode. I can only offer a small sum, but my potions are known far and wide for their potency!

When the characters arrive, Lilly treats them to some delicious cider. Her house looks like that of a typical alchemist; dried herbs hang from the ceiling, several kettles bubble happily, completely unattended, and the smell is a strange mixture of healing salves, glue, steamed cabbage, and brandy. Lilly (N human **commoner** MM 345) looks like a proper hag with long gray hair, a crooked nose, and a cackling laugh.

If the characters are willing, Lilly wants to set out immediately. As a reward, she promises them four potions of healing. After handing a large basket to each of the characters to carry, the old woman leads the characters straight into the woods. Lilly indiscriminately throws everything she sees into the baskets, be it herbs, clearly poisonous mushrooms, or dead animals and insects.

Depending on whether the characters are on the lookout for trouble, they can attempt a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, they spot a giant **constrictor snake** (MM 324) among the trees. The characters can elect to avoid the snake or engage it. On a failure, the snake attacks.

After several hours of wandering, the characters and Lilly reach a moldered house in the woods. It is overgrown, the door is missing, and the wind howls through the broken windows. Lilly proceeds to lay a small bouquet of flowers on the front porch, after which she simply leaves. If the characters inquire about the house, Lilly explains her past. She had a younger sister, who turned into a hag on her 16th birthday. It was a shock to the family, and they never mentioned her sister since. After many decades, Lilly heard of a band of adventurers who dealt with a hag in the woods, and she knew that her sister finally found rest. Since then, she routinely places flowers at the house in remembrance of her sister.

If the characters explore the house, they find a **green hag** (MM 177) imprisoned in a cage in the basement. It is Lilly's sister, who wasn't killed, but merely imprisoned. Since then, the hag consumes rats and bats that come too near to her cage. If the characters slay the hag, they find a *cloak of protection* (DMG 159) on her.

RESCUE OUR HOT SPRINGS!

It has been a month now since a bunch of red, aggressive newts occupied our local hot springs. The hot springs are the only real source of revenue our village has! Or rather, had. If you are into the exterminating business and want to earn some gold, pay Ungden Forn a visit! By day, he can be found in his stall on the market.

Ungden Forn operates a small information stall and offers visitors steamed vegetables.

> "Hello friends, you look like weary travelers who could use some rest and relaxation! Why not visit our local hot springs? Unfortunately, they are closed because of minor technical difficulties. Why not come back tomorrow to see if the cleansing waters are available again?"

He tries his best to pretend everything is in order, but when the characters explain they mean business, he drops the act.

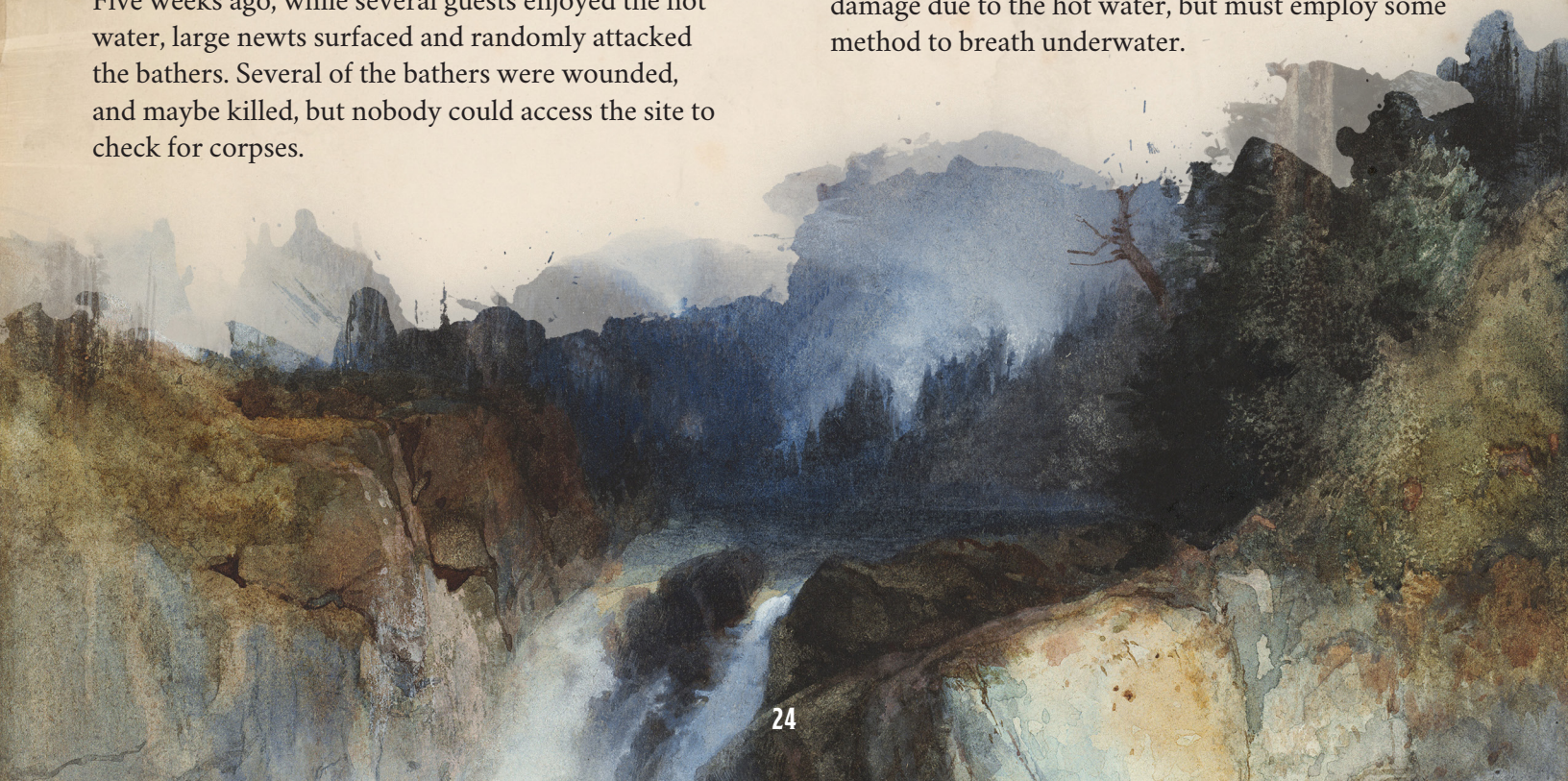
Ungden gives the characters the following account: Five weeks ago, while several guests enjoyed the hot water, large newts surfaced and randomly attacked the bathers. Several of the bathers were wounded, and maybe killed, but nobody could access the site to check for corpses.

The newts occupied the premises and began the construction of a fortress. The job is a simple one: go in, kill the newts, and get paid. Ungden offers the characters 500 gp for the deed.

The perpetrators are ten **firenewt warriors** (VGtM 142) who were exiled and forced to conquer new territory. They are constructing four walls surrounding the hot springs from clay they bring to the surface. The walls are 160 feet long and are already 15 feet tall, including battlements. During the day, four firenewts watch the premises from the battlements, while the rest reinforce the walls. The fortress has no doors or openings.

If the characters establish a dialogue with the firenewts—who only speak Draconic and Ignan—the firenewts attempt to lure the characters inside with the promise of a diplomatic solution. They allow the characters to throw a rope over the wall, but cut it after half the characters reach the battlements.

The firenewts are seasoned warriors and quickly realize when the time arrives to withdraw. After the characters kill three firenewts, the rest withdraw into the water of the hot springs, where they swim to a cavern half a mile in. Assuming the characters can't follow, they rest there for 3 days, after which they return. Should the characters follow, they take no damage due to the hot water, but must employ some method to breath underwater.



Mountain of the Holy Cross by Thomas Moran



RETRIEVE OUR RELIC!

A cruel fate befell our beloved priest Stovor who carried the village's relic in the annual Round. A band of brigands abducted Stovor, stole the relic, and sent us a brash ransom note. We don't have enough gold between us to pay the ransom, but there is enough for a sizeable reward. If you think you can challenge an entire band of robbers, visit me for more details!

— Elder Olivar Button

When the characters arrive at Elder Olivar's house, they are treated to a formidable sour roast with dumplings. Olivar explains that during the so-called Round, the priest Stovor visits other villages in the region to show them the relic and bless their crops and children. The ransom note, delivered to the elder's door via an arrow, states where the exchange is supposed to take place and the conditions: 1,000 gp for priest and relic. The village can only afford to offer 300 gp as a reward to the characters, not one copper more.

"If you want your priest and relic back, come to the lightning-struck tree at midnight during the upcoming new moon. Bring 1,000 gp, else we make short work with the prisoner."

The characters have 4 days before the time for the exchange arrives. If they decide to search for the bandits beforehand, they must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check to find clues while scouring the surrounding land for suspicious tracks. Everything points towards the hills, where the bandits hide in a cave.

Should the characters decide to wait for the bandits at the specified tree, one messenger arrives on horseback to lead the characters to the real exchange location after they show him the gold. If the characters have the gold, they are brought to a clearing where ten bandits wait with Stovor and the relic. The exchange is a success if the characters comply. If they can't produce the full amount, the **bandit** (MM 343) attempts to flee on his **riding horse** (MM 336). By succeeding on a DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check, the characters manage to follow the horse's tracks to the hideout. Since the bandit arrived on the horse, this works even if the characters kill the bandit during the flight.

Should the characters raid the bandit hideout, they find it in the following condition:

- If the characters arrive before the exchange, or after killing the messenger, they must face twenty **bandits** (MM 343) to free Stovor.

- If the characters arrive after the messenger escaped, they must face thirty **bandits** (MM 343).

In the hideout, the characters also find several cages with additional prisoners. You can use this as a future plot point for a possible slave-trading operation.

Map of the Bandit Cave



Map of the Dam



RISING WATERS!

Searching for mighty warriors to take out a goblin clan downriver. The dirty beasts started constructing a dam several months ago and the river now threatens to flood the village! We already lost a good portion of our land to the water. We don't want to lose our homes! Please visit me in my humble house if you can help.

— Elder Fama Brin

Elder Brin welcomes the characters into his house and offers them old cookies and bitter iron-herb tea, as any good host would. With a breaking voice, the elder starts the conversation by retelling the village's history, spanning several hundred years. Until the characters interrupt the elder, he doesn't get to the point: a clan of goblins began construction of a dam in a gorge downstream for an unknown purpose.

"Our hunters took a look at the dastardly thing from afar. They saw dozens of goblins felling trees, propping up the dam, and throwing rocks from above into the water."

Unless the characters act soon, the villagers must abandon their homes and are forced to become nomads. As a reward, the elder promises the characters 89 gp, and all the jewelry available, amounting to 323 gp.

The dam itself isn't finished yet and grows along with the rising waters. A crane transports persons and material from the top of the gorge to the dam's top. Another crane on top of the dam transports persons and material to the foot of the dam. A large forge at the dam's foot is running, powered by a gigantic water wheel fed by water over the dam. Many more foundations for additional forges are laid. A growing goblinoid host nearby needs the produced weapons and armor to outfit the troops.

One **bugbear** (MM 33) and forty **goblins** (MM 166) are stationed at various locations around the dam site:

- Ten goblins are occupied with getting fresh lumber from the nearby woods. For this purpose, they constructed a flume that leads directly to the dam's construction site.
- Five goblins work in the forge at the bottom of the dam.
- The bugbear and fifteen goblins work on top of the dam, their weapons at hand.
- During the day, ten goblins sleep in tents located at the foot of the dam. They are the guards on the night shift. At night, the bugbear and the rest of the goblins occupy the tents.

The bugbear Strompf motivates the goblins to work faster, but Strompf listens to a more intelligent goblin engineer when it comes to the actual construction.

"I am Strompf! This dam is my domain. I will crush your puny bodies and drink from your hollow skulls. Tonight, we feast on your flesh!"

The dam can be destroyed by several means, including the following:

- Destroying the support beams at the dam's foot. The thick, iron-reinforced wooden beams have an AC of 8, 25 hit points, and immunity to piercing damage. Destroying four of the eight beams collapses the dam.
- Killing all the workers. The goblins can barely keep up with the rising water, so killing all the goblins will cause the dam to eventually overflow and destroy itself. This happens four days after the builders lie dead.
- Blowing a hole into the dam. The dam is crude and ugly, but sturdy. It has an AC of 10, 300 hit points, and immunity to piercing damage.

SEARCHING FOR LINGUISTS!

> Greetings! A lost lamb found her way into our village, and we did our best to nurse her back to health. Unfortunately, we have no idea where she came from and what kind of language she speaks. If you speak exotic languages, or know about someone who misses a little girl, visit Lila Eintof. I live in a small house next to the baker and look forward to your visit.

When the characters arrive, Lila treats them to some cucumber sandwiches. She explains that the little girl in her care sleeps next door, and that she's still confused.

The little girl in question once lived in the very same village she is located now. She got lost over 50 years ago at the age of 3, when she stumbled through a fairy ring into the Feywild. Her human name is Emma, but the eladrin who adopted her call her Mi'kahar. She speaks only Sylvan and cannot communicate with the villagers. Emma is now 9 years old, and her older sister Karen, who is now 61, still lives in the village.

By accident, Emma stumbled through the same portal back onto the Prime Material plane. Due to the nature of portals out of the Feywild, she has lost her memory of the past 6 years she spent in the Feywild, but slowly recovers it.

If the characters can speak Sylvan, or have access to magic that enables communication, Emma tells them the following. The first thing she remembers is standing in the forest. Not knowing what to do, she walked in a random direction. Luckily, after several hours, she found a foraging villager in the woods. This was Lila, who brought her back to the village and cared for her. A character who speaks Sylvan and knows about the Feywild can at this point deduce that the little girl must have come from the Feywild. Other characters must succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check to connect the dots.

A character with a passive Intelligence (Investigation) of 14 or higher realizes that the girl's clothing, appearance, mannerisms, and language don't add up. The character might theorize that this might be due to a switch up or abduction.

The following developments are possible:

- ❖ The characters search for the location of the girl's first memory. Lila can bring the characters to the place where she encountered the girl. From there, the characters must first succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check to find the girl's tracks, and on a subsequent DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check, follow the tracks. The checks can be repeated after 24 hours, but the DC increases by 2 for each day that passes.

- ❖ Should the characters suspect that something doesn't add up and ask around the village about missing children, the villagers quickly point out that at least one child gets lost every other year, and most never return.

- ❖ If the characters parade the girl around the village, Karen recognizes her as her sister, and knows exactly where Emma vanished 56 years ago. Karen can lead the characters to the location of the fairy circle.

The characters might face the tough decision to either leave Emma in the care of her sister, who is a grandmother by now, or return her to her eladrin parents in the Feywild. The eladrin regarded Emma as a pet at first, but grew to love her after a few months. Either way, the eladrin reward the characters with gems worth 300 gp for finding Mi'kahar.





TAXMAN IN NEED!

> Dear reader, my name is Oilor Quent and I am tasked with collecting taxes in the local area. One stubborn mage, hiding in his bizarre tower, refuses to pay what is due! The owed sum amounts to 832 gold pieces, 8 silver pieces, and 4 copper pieces. I am authorized to appoint capable helpers to enforce the collection, and who receive half the appropriated sum as payment. Visit me in the Raging Black Bull Inn for further information.

When the characters arrive, Oilor invites them to a hearty meal consisting of beans, eggs, and bacon. After washing the food down with a large serving of wine, the tax collector cuts to the case. When he arrived at the wizard's tower to collect the taxes, some terrifying monsters appeared, beat him up, and threw him out. Afraid of these aberrations, Oilor decided to hire helpers. The characters' task is to enter the premises, deal with any opposition, and collect the tax. Oilor cautions them not to steal from the mage any more than is owed since they are now agents of the crown.

Arriving at the tower, a crooked building presents itself to the characters. The tower is ten stories high and has several windows, from half of which wafts colorful smoke. The characters hear small explosions and curses from the inside, which usually intensify the smoke emissions.

After entering the tower through the front door or a window, the characters either enter the entrance chamber or one of the laboratories. All laboratories feature large quantities of alchemist's supplies and equipment like test tubes, gas burners, radiators, kettles, and more. The tower's defenders, **bandits** (MM 343), swarm the characters immediately. The bandits wear costumes of different animals, devils, and aberrations to appear like dangerous guardians of a proper mage's tower. Characters with a passive Intelligence (Investigation) of 12 or higher see through the charade immediately. The bandits use the tower to produce different illicit substances.

During the first engagement, the characters face two **bandits** (MM 343). During the second engagement, the characters face seven **bandits** and a **bandit captain** (MM 344). In the tower's spire, the characters find the corpse of an old mage, a chest with coins worth 1,124 gp in total, and a pearl of power. The corpse is guarded by a **fire elemental** (MM 125) who engages the characters if they attempt to take anything.

THE AXE OF THE ANCIENTS!

The annual axe-lifting competition is tonight! To all those strong and old enough: come to the village center and put your muscles to the test. Last year's champion, Borf the younger, will defend his title!

When the characters arrive, a street vendor offers them pickled cucumbers and onions. The vendor explains what is about to happen. The village youth, and some daring older people, attempt to lift an ancient axe and see who can hold it the longest. It is a rite of passage in the village, where you are only accepted as a proper adult once you have lifted the axe. The competition is held under a special contraption with several pulleys, which a half-dozen villagers use to lift the axe upon an old, buried menhir. When not in use, the axe is stored away in the village elder's house.

One after another, the villagers step up to the axe and attempt to lift it. Most can only pull it a few inches off the stone and quickly place it back down. The competitor's time is measured with a sandglass. One muscle packed villager named Borf can hold it for 10 seconds and even takes a swing with it, before placing it back down.

A character with a Strength of 16 or higher is able to lift the axe, although it weighs entirely too much to be of any use in combat. However, once the axe is lifted, it establishes a telepathic connection with the character:

> "Finally! After all those decades someone with actual fighting abilities. I have a quest for you, I will be yours if you accept."

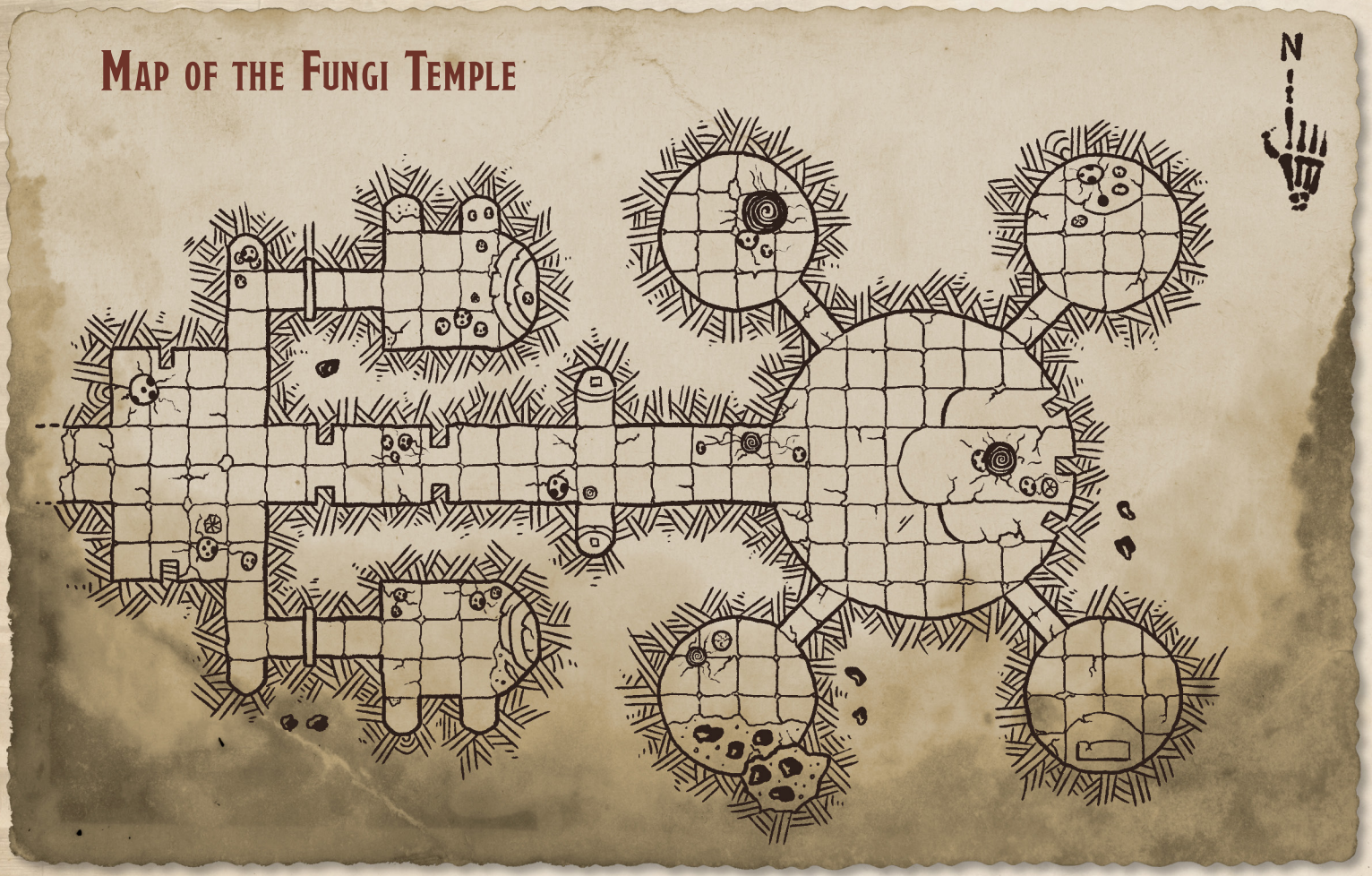
The sentient battleaxe, whose name is Hrondal, tells the character to travel to some ruins about two days' travel from the village. There, the character finds Hrondal's little sister, a sentient handaxe. Once upon a time, a brave adventurer wielded them, but met their end in the ruins. Hrondal was carried off soon after, but his sister Jahna remained in the ruins, or so Hrondal hopes. Additionally, Hrondal warns the characters that diseased mushrooms roaming the ruins took his wielder down with a strange sickness. When the characters leave the village with the axe of the ancients in tow, the villagers stare in disbelief.

The ancient ruins are infested with hundreds of fungi. Corpses of wild animals in different states of decay litter the ruins' floors, and colorful, luminescent mushrooms grow on all surfaces. **Shriekers** (MM 138) sprout in all corridors and chambers. The shriekers alert the other fungi to the characters' presence. First, four **violet fungi** (MM 138) attack the characters. Then, two **gas spores** (MM 138) slowly hover in the characters' general direction. Should the gas spores infect one or more of the characters, a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Medicine) check reveals that the infected are in mortal danger. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence check using a healer's kit or alchemist's supplies, can heal the disease outright and render the character immune to it for 7 days. A priest in the nearby village can cast lesser restoration on an infected character if the characters manage to make it back to the village in time. On a forced march, the characters need 10 hours to reach the village on foot.

The sentient handaxe can be found in a crack in the stone floor where Hrondal remembers his former wielder died. Jahna is overjoyed to be reunited with her brother. The pair gladly serve the characters, as long as they aren't separated. It is acceptable if different characters carry the weapons.

Treat the axe siblings as evolving sentient magic items, whose power grows with that of the characters. Both siblings are gruff and battle hungry. They constantly attempt to outdo each other, and Jahna loves to be thrown.

Map of the Fungi Temple





Map of the Snail Cave

TREASURE CAVE!

Attention glory seekers and adventurers. While drilling a new well on the Undin farm, we broke into a deep cave instead of finding water. This happens from time to time, and usually such holes are quickly sealed. However, during the work, we saw the shimmer of gold and gems at the bottom of the cave! Come to the Undin farm if you are a skilled spelunker as soon as you can. The hole will be sealed in a few days due to safety reasons.

When the characters arrive, the foreman offers them a swig from his hip flask. The beverage burns in the throat like acid, but gives the would-be explorers courage! The foreman has nothing much to add to the information on the note. Something valuable must be down there, a long enough rope for the descent has been prepared, and the characters must pay a tenth of the uncovered riches as royalties for the provided access. If the characters agree, the foreman hollers to assemble his workers. Slowly, they lower the characters down into the cave. Below the 50-foot tall shaft follows the cave with a height of 30 feet. Aside from the small hole in the ceiling, there is no light source. It is pitch black and the area counts as heavily obscured. The cave is quite extensive with a diameter of 1,600 feet and is dotted with countless boulders, stalagmites, and ice-cold puddles.

"Watch your heads friends, and remember: one pull means bring up the loot and repeated, frantic pulls means we leg it!"

A herd of five **flail snails** (VGtM 144) roams the cave—the "gems" the workers spotted from above—accompanied by two **deep gnome** (MM 164) shepherds. The placid flail snails pasture in the cave, while the deep gnomes collect the valuable residue. When the deep gnomes notice the characters, they hide to observe. Make a Dexterity (Stealth) check with advantage for the deep gnomes to determine if the characters notice them.

The ground the characters arrive on is covered in the glassy residue the snails leave behind. A character who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies it.

The following may occur:

❖ If the characters attack the flail snails, the gnomes cast blindness on the characters and attack with their poisoned darts. The gnomes cease their attack and calm the snails if the characters surrender.

❖ The characters may kill the snails to harvest their shells. However, the shaft is too small to transport an intact fail snail shell, which would be worth 5,000 gp. If the characters destroy a shell to bring it to the surface, the remains are worth 300 gp.

❖ If the characters notice the deep gnomes and talk to them, the gnomes are friendly but cautious. The gnomes explain what they are doing, harvesting the residue. They say the characters are welcome to harvest their own, since there's enough for everybody. Over the course of a day, the characters can harvest 750 gp worth of residue. During this time, three wandering **grells** (MM 172) float into the cave. Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 18 or higher notice the threat immediately. Roll a die. On an even number, the grell attack the characters. On an odd number, the deep gnomes are the grells' targets.

WALKING CORPSES!

> My mill's cellar is overrun with some bloated corpses for the second time this month. That wouldn't be so bad if they remained dead, then I could take care of the problem myself. If you are an adventurer and have time, please come around and take the trash out.
>
> — Harry Krimbal

Harry's gristmill lies next to a medium-sized river. When the characters arrive, Harry treats them to some freshly baked bread and salted butter. Afterward, the miller leads the characters straight to the cellar door and complains about the nuisance. After opening the hatch, a rotten stink and hordes of fleeing rats greet the characters.

Inside, four **zombies** (MM 316) mill about and attack whoever enters the cellar. The cellar houses much of the watermill's mechanics, and several corpses were brutally squashed by the cogs. If the characters finish off the undead, Harry hands them 25 gp for their trouble. He explains that the floating corpses must come from upriver, get trapped in the machinery, and finally land in the cellar. Who knows how many just pass by unnoticed!

If the characters don't pick up on the opportunity, Harry continues and offers them 100 gp if they travel upriver and have a look around. He would lend them his boat if need be. The miller has no idea what the source might be and cannot help in this regard. If the characters examine the corpses and succeed on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check, they find old arrowheads embedded in some of their bones, and other bones cleanly cut.

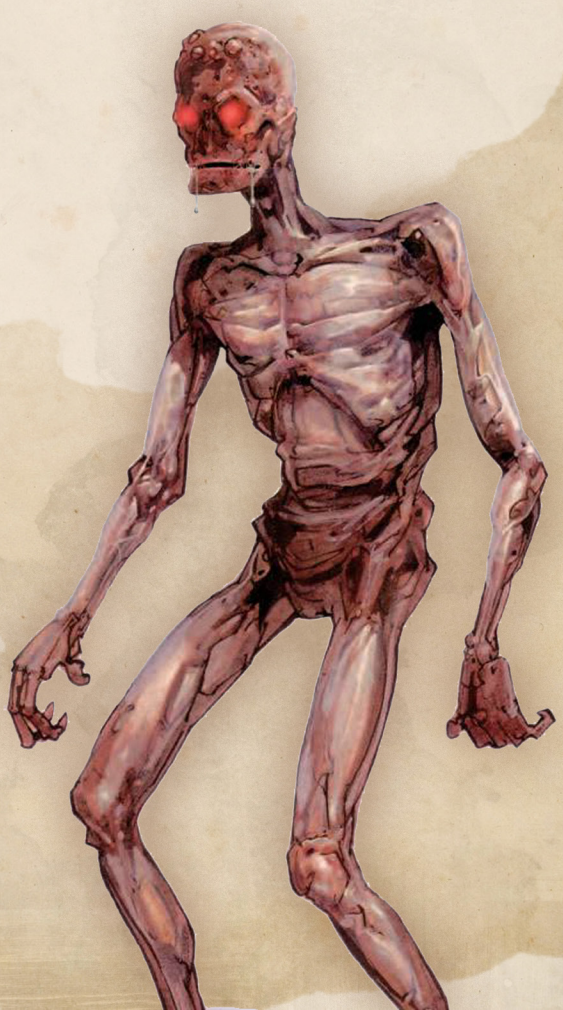
The characters find the source of the trouble if they travel up stream for two days. There they find a large landslide that tumbled into the river. The mud is dotted with wriggling corpses, and from time to time one of the zombies frees itself, falls into the water, and is washed away. Before the landslide, the zombies were buried too deep to escape.

After the river eroded the steep slope for decades, a large chunk broke off and freed the undead. As for the undead, they are the remains of a large-scale battle. A necromantic focus still buried in the mud fuels a spell which raises the dead.

The characters can find the focus in the following ways:

- By searching the battlefield and succeeding on a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check, deducing the presence of something unusual from the activity of the corpses.
- A character proficient in Arcana who succeeds on a DC 16 Wisdom (Arcana) check can pinpoint the source of strong magic and uncover the focus.
- If the characters arrive during the night and succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, they spot a suspicious green glow, marking the position of the focus.

Removing or destroying the focus ends the threat.



APPENDIX

Lost Cat!

Peasants, my sweet kitty Imperator ran off while my useless guards were slacking off. This is your chance to escape your dreadful, ordinary life: Find my little baby and I will remunerate you with a princely sum! You can find me in the local cesspool you disturbingly call an inn.

A New Cult!

Looking for people who are not afraid of getting on the bad side of a possibly evil cult. Come visit me in the Beetroot Inn.

Lindal Peppermill

Protection Service!

Hello there! I have to stock up on herbs very soon, and at my age the woods become more and more dangerous. If you are interested in an easy task, ask for Lilly Koin, and visit me in my abode. I can only offer a small sum, but my potions are known far and wide for their potency!

Hunting an Ettin!

I need reliable help in hunting down an ettin. It lives in the extensive cave system east of the village, and I alone am no match for it. Visit me at home if you are interested in helping. You can find me there in the evening hours.

Jena Zihdin



A Terrible Curse!

An unthinkable misfortune has befallen our village. An entire wedding-party fell victim to a curse that none of our priests could lift. If you have any experience with curses, or know how to break them, visit the Dundee Farm north of the village!

~ Carol Dundee

Walking Corpses!

My mill's cellar is overrun with some bloated corpses for the second time this month. That wouldn't be so bad if they remained dead, then I could take care of the problem myself. If you are an adventurer and have time please, come around and take the trash out!

Harry Krimbal

Build Palisades!

To all able-bodied readers: We need every man and woman available to help us build a palisade around the village. This is our last chance to save the settlement. If the hobgoblins take off with another harvest, there's only starvation or flight left for us. We meet tomorrow at sunrise at the edge of the woods.

- Samdorf Gumby

Cyclops Trouble!

Enough is enough! Our new cyclops overlord does nothing more than pillage our supplies and scare the livestock. Somebody must drive that brute out. There is a sizable reward waiting for the brave soul who succeeds in this task. Just get rid of the doggone freeloader!

Kordin Rinnow

Searching for Linguists!

Greetings! A lost lamb found her way into our village, and we did our best to nurse her back to health. Unfortunately, we have no idea where she came from and what kind of language she speaks. If you speak exotic languages, or know about someone who misses a little girl, visit Lila Eintof. I live in a small house next to the baker and look forward to your visit.

Dead Monsters!

Yesterday, I found a dozen dead monsters on one of my outlying fields and a gigantic hole to boot. I am searching for a handful of daring adventurers who descend into that hole and have a look around. Visit me on the Roden farm!

Marius Roden

A Strange Statue!

Dear academics and adventurers, directly behind you, on the village center, stands a grotesque statue that appeared out of thin air a week ago. If you have any information about this statue, or know someone who might, please visit me in the villagers' hall. Ask for Chieftess Trude.

Treasure Cave!

Attention glory seekers and adventurers. While drilling a new well on the Undin farm, we broke into a deep cave instead of finding water. This happens from time to time, and usually such holes are quickly sealed. However, during the work, we saw the shimmer of gold and gems at the bottom of the cave! Come to the Undin farm if you are a skilled spelunker as soon as you can. The hole will be sealed in a few days due to safety reasons.

Barrow Trouble!

The smell of death and decay that plagues our small village might have already tipped you off. A long barrow, not far from here, displays disturbing signs of activity. We are talking about trees made of bone and other oddities. Visit me—Zevra Din—at your earliest convenience if you can help. You will find me tending to the small village shrine.

A Fallen Star!

Yesterday, I saw a star crash into the foothills west of the village. I promise the finder a sizeable reward upon delivery in my smithy! If you want to head out before checking in, search for a crater that a fireball might leave in the ground. In the center, you will find the remains I seek.

Blacksmith Tanna Qin



Horrible Wailing!

About two weeks ago, we heard the wailing for the first time. Day and night, the screams hang over our village like a dark omen! We are sure that the source lies somewhere in the mountains to the south, but no soul is brave enough to search the area. Whoever puts a stop to this can be sure to receive a sizable reward! Visit Soren for the details.

Rescue Our Hot Springs!

It has been a month now since a bunch of red, aggressive newts occupied our local hot springs. The hot springs are the only real source of revenue our village has! Or rather, had. If you are into the exterminating business and want to earn some gold, pay Ungden Forn a visit! By day, he can be found in his stall on the market.

The Axe of the Ancients!

The annual **axe-lifting competition** is tonight! To all those strong and old enough: come to the village center and put your muscles to the test. Last year's champion, Borf the Younger, will defend his title!

Taxman in Need!

Dear reader, my name is Oilor Quent and I am tasked with collecting taxes in the local area. One stubborn mage, hiding in his bizarre tower, refuses to pay what is due! The owed sum amounts to 532 gold pieces, 8 silver pieces, and 4 copper pieces. I am authorized to appoint capable helpers to enforce the collection, and who receive half the appropriated sum as payment. Visit me in the Raging Black Bull Inn for further information.

Abduction!

Three of our friends and family were taken by these aggressive elves who pestered our village for years! We have had enough, and we want our people back. If you can help, visit Hani Pommeran in the council chamber. If enough strong people come her way, she maybe—finally—can set a plan in motion.

Rising Waters!

Searching for mighty warriors to take out a goblin clan downriver. The dirty beasts started constructing a dam several months ago and the river now threatens to flood the village! We already lost a good portion of our land to the water. We don't want to lose our homes! Please visit me in my humble house if you can help.

— Elder Fama Brin

Clear Out the Quarry!

The old quarry shall be re-opened soon to produce stone for the Lord's new castle. There have been reports of an infestation in the quarry that needs taking care of before the workers arrive. Adventurers who know how to wield a sword or throw a fiery ball have the chance to earn a sizable sum! Visit me, Proctor Killian, in my temporary office for further details.



Eradicate the Undead!

A vile infestation threatens our village, but most seem to value their coin and riches more than what is good and righteous! If an undying fire of hatred of the undead burns in your heart, please visit me in my humble house of prayer.

Krawin

Constant Earthquakes!

You might have already noticed the earth shaking on your way into the village. The reason for this nuisance is a pair of hill giants engaged in some kind of stone-tossing match. Some of the stones even reached the village and destroyed the roof of old Robar's hut! Visit me in my office for further details.

Protector Jill

Corn Demons!

We need urgent help during the harvest! Last year, we lost two of our dear friends, Karl and Iomer, to some vile creature hiding in the fields. It must be the fabled corn demon. Come visit me in my house opposite the small temple. – Ellis Dewey

Please do not rip off this note again!

Retrieve our Relic!

A cruel fate befell our beloved priest Stovor who carried the village©s relic in the annual round. A band of brigands abducted Stovor, stole the relic, and sent us a brash ransom note. We don©t have enough gold between us to pay the ransom, but there is enough for a sizeable reward. If you think you can challenge an entire band of robbers, visit me for more details!

Elder Olivar Button

Marauding Orcs!

Orcs near Wyvern Tor! Those of a mind to face the orc menace should inquire within.

Trouble at Old Owl Well!

There's evil afoot in the ruins of Old Owl Well. I heard rumors about graverobbers, the living dead, and other unpleasant beings. Better to nip that one in the bud if you ask me! Next thing we know, a horde of undead razes Phandalin to the ground. Visit me in my orchard for the details.

—Daran Edermath

Vanished Shipments!

By the gods and the Nine Hells, I have had it! Another Lionshield shipment vanished. There is a sizeable finder's reward for anyone interested in sniffing out the responsible bastards. A telltale sign that you found my bloody wares is a big lion's head on a crate. You can find me in my store, day in day out.

~ Linene Graywind

Delicate Business!

An important quest was endowed upon me, but I find myself unable to complete it. I wish to find someone who could help in this delicate matter, but dare not offer details for fear that some well-meaning but ill-prepared adventurer would surely die. Visit me, Sister Garaele, in my home next to the shrine if you think you are brave and strong enough to help, and I will be the judge of that.

Pest Control!

We have a bunch of rats here in the village that need a bad beating. The Sleeping Giant is just teeming with these filthy rodents. If you are not afraid to get your hands dirty, visit me in the Miner's Exchange.

Halia Thornton