

Forgotten Realms Adventures

Volume IV

Two fantasy adventures for GURPS

by J.C Connors

In the Claws of the Rats

East of Beregost, the adventurers visit a hidden temple twice attacked by evil... an evil clever enough to befriend them.

Yoke of the Fire Giants

The wrath of the Spider Queen has come to the peaceful Dwarven settlement of Stonehaven.

Version 1.0

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The Claws of the Rats

"Is not much of a temple," giggled the man, one hand stuck gleefully in his mouth. He spit out some chewed-on nails.

"Not much, not much now," agreed Eetchik, plucking whiskers from his small moustache. He examined one, then popped it in his mouth.

"We should start looking for this mace, because they cannot!" laughed the man, pointing to the bloody body of a dead acolyte.

"Why not? Gather the rest."

Summary

This adventure is suited for 4-6 150-point **GURPS Fantasy** characters, though the difficulty can easily be toned down for 100-point characters by reducing the number and skill of the opposition.

The adventure takes place near the town of Beregost, located about 120 miles south of Baldur's Gate. About 30 miles from town is a temple dedicated to Azuth, god of mages and spellcraft. The main areas of the temple, known as the Sheltered Tome, were completed a year ago under the guidance of a young mage-priest named Argot.

Beregost and the priests enjoyed a good relationship. The temple would provide healing and other magical services to the town, and the town in

turn gave the priests food, supplies, and paper for the priest's extensive library.

Recently, however, the temple has grown quiet. Beregost has not seen a single priest for many months. Now that planting season has come, the townspeople are afraid their harvest will suffer without the blessing of the priests.

Gamemaster's Introduction

There is, indeed, trouble at the Sheltered Tome. Three months ago, the temple was infiltrated and invaded by six powerful priests of Bane, the returned Lord of Darkness, patron of strife and fear. The evil priest slaughtered the good clerics of Azuth, and pillaged the place, looking for a sacred mace of Bane that the Azuth clerics held in their vaults.

The dark priests, however, had little time to find the weapon. In an attempt to expand their library, the priests of Azuth had accidentally tunneled into a network occupied by wererats. Delighted that a temple had opened in their territory, the rats streamed forth. A great battle resulted in the death of the clerics (mostly, one acolyte still lives) and many wererats. Ten of them now hunt through the remains for the same mace.



Beregost

Concerned for the priests' welfare, the town leaders gather a group to journey to the temple and return with the priests so the planting may commence.

The PCs, obviously, are ideal for the job. The town offers to give the PCs mounts (up to six riding horses) and food supplies for the journey, but no more. Excessive bargaining will insult the town elders, who expect any resident to help their city in its time of need.

Beregost is a large town of about 3,000 people. It has no one leader, per se, but is run by the yellow-clad priests of Lathander, the Morninglord. While these priests could cast the appropriate blessings on the farmlands themselves, they require the additional help of the Azuth priests to cover all the lands.

The Lost Shepherds

A PC trying to find out information about the journey (and succeeds at a Streetwise roll) will discover a strange thing: three shepherds were attacked by foul panther-beasts just two days ago along the same road. Only one of them returned, and he is huddled in his house, afraid to leave.

This man, Gino Ree, is terrified, and describes the beast as "evil things with glowing green eyes." He says they attacked from the woods at night, dragging one friend at a time into the brush, then returning with bloody mouths.

Gino's elder brother, Hugo, is upset that his brother is so affected. He wants to hunt these creatures, but is wise enough not to try it alone. If the PCs approach him, he will offer to join them in the hopes they can kill the creatures and display their carcasses in town.

The Journey

At 30 miles through some gentle hills, the trip to Sheltered Tome is expected take about 12 hours. The PCs may start early in the morning, or wait until evening to start their journey.

Vazul

About halfway through the journey, the PCs will spot a lone traveler limping down the road. He

Hugo Ree

ST	12	Move/Dodge:	6/6
DX	12	PD/DR:	2/2
IQ	10		
HT	12		

Advantages: Toughness

Disadvantages: Sense of Duty (family and friends);

Skills: Agronomy-11; Area Knowledge (Beregost)-11; Axe/Mace-12; Brawling-12; Climbing-11; Knife-11; Riding-10; Survival (Woodlands)-10; Two-handed Axe/Mace-12

Equipment: Mace (2d+1 cr, Parry 6, one turn to ready), boiled leather armor (PD 2, DR 2), 75 silvers

wears a black cloak (nice once, now torn and spattered with blood) and holds a staff. He waits by the side of the road for the PCs to pass.

This is Vazul, the one surviving member of the Bane priests. He escaped the attack of the wererats and is heading to Beregost for aid. Since he is a priest himself, most of his grave injuries are healed already.

Vazul will only talk to the PCs if they talk with him. He explains that he is a traveler, attacked by a small band of orcs who now lie dead in the woods. He hopes to make it to Beregost to warn the town, he lies.

Vazul will join the PCs if asked, though will hesitate giving any information about the wererats to the PCs unless he knows it will help him. At best, he plans to use the PCs to kill the remaining wererats so he can claim the mace himself.

The Displacer Beasts

As darkness nears (whether early in the journey, or late in the journey), the PCs will be stalked by the same three displacer beasts that attacked Hugo's brother.

The displacer beasts are nasty and clever. They will wait for the PCs to fall into an ambush, before sending one of theirs out to attack (usually the smallest). When the other PCs go to aid their friend, the other two leap from the bushes to attack from behind.

After the attack, a Smell roll will detect the odor of decay and death. A Tracking-2 roll will find

Displacer Beasts

ST: 40 **Move/Dodge:** 10/7 **Size:** 2
DX: 14 **PD/DR:** 1/1 **Weight:** 550 lbs
IQ: 5 **Damage:** 2d cut* **Habitat:** M, F
HT: 15/25 **Reach:** C, 1-2

Evil creatures who delight in killing, causing pain, and terrifying all other living beings, displacer beasts are banes to the unlucky villages that live near their habitats.

Displacer beasts are cat-like creatures, approximately the size of a tiger. Unlike tigers, they are black in hue, have six legs, and two tentacles padded with razor-sharp spikes. They share a tiger's ability to be stealthy (Night Vision, Stealth-14, Hearing and Vision 18).

Displacer beasts have the innate magical ability of Blur; they are at -5 to be hit at all times.

These foul creatures usually hunt in packs of 3-5. They often send one of their own out to terrorize their prey with its tentacles (reach 1-2, 2d cut) while the others silently circle around, ready to leap on to victims, grapple them, and bite into their throats (2d cut), or Neck Snap (skill 36). On a successful grapple, then contest of ST or HT (plus Toughness), it does 7d-1 damage (x1.5 for the neck); victim must make HT roll to avoid crippling damage to the neck.

the half-devoured remains of Gino Kee's two friends, along with the bones and rotted meat of other kills, human or otherwise.

If a PC makes a HT roll to stomach the mess, 200 silvers of treasure can be found, along with a pair of *Dwarven Workboots*. These magical, sturdy leather boots (which can fit most human males as well; a person under 6' tall has a 50% chance of them fitting. A Leatherworking roll or Professional Skill: Shoemaker will work as well) have PD 2, DR 3 and weigh 3 lbs. They protect the wearer from any sprains and normal injuries, and give the bearer Extra Fatigue +1 while worn.

Also found near the pile of trash (Vision -5 to spot) is a small, brass ring. It is not magical, but it has a 7-carot opal in it, making it ideal for powerstone enchantment.

If Hugo is with the party, he insists that they spend an hour or two burying the dead. He will cut

off a claw of the fallen beasts to bring back to his brother as proof of their demise.

Afira, the Wandering Alchemist

If the players are walking along the road during the day, they may also encounter Afira, a middle-aged woman driving her cart down the road. She is an alchemist, on the way to Beregost to sell her wares. Traveling with her is her husband, Dorvod, who keeps a wary look on any strangers.

If asked about the temple, Afira will say that she drove her cart about a mile north of the road towards Sheltered Tome, but did not see any monks or priests nearby, though she did encounter the body of a giant rat outside near the bridge that leads to the temple. She assumed the priests were praying or otherwise busy, and left.

Afira will sell some of her wares to the PCs. Chiron healing potions sell for 125 silvers; she also has three Atalanta speed potions for 550 silvers, and five Morpheus sleeping potions for 120 apiece.

Leaving the Road

Towards the end of the trip, the PCs notice the sky darkens and rain starts to spatter down on them. A Weather Sense roll will reveal that a storm is coming quickly.

Almost exactly 30 miles into the journey, a fallen signpost carved with the glowing-finger symbol of Azuth marks the foot path that cuts through the shrubbed hills towards Sheltered Tome.

An examination of the area (and another Vision-5 roll) will find another holy symbol. On a gold chain, half buried in the mud, is the icon of a black hand grasping energy. This is the symbol of Bane (which a Theology+2 roll will reveal). It was



Dazul, Priest of Bane

ST 12 [20] **Move/Dodge:** 5/5

DX 11 [10] **PD/DR:** 0/0

IQ 14 [45]

HT 12 [20]

Advantages: Clerical Investment [5]; Charisma +1 [5]; Fit [5]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Power Investiture 2 [20]

Disadvantages: Intolerance [-10]; Overconfidence [-10].

Skills: Acting-14 [2]; Area Knowledge (Baldurs Gate)-14 [1]; Fast-Draw (Knife)-11 [1]; Knife-12 [2]; Shadowing-11 [2]; Spell Throwing (Ball)-12 [2]; Staff-12 [8]; Stealth-12 [4].

Spells: Create Acid-14; Create Earth-14; Earth to Stone-14; Seek Earth-14; Shape Earth-14; Lend Health-14; Lend Strength-14; Continual Light-14; Darkness-15 [2]; Light-14; Death Vision-15 [2]; Summon Spirit-14; Zombie-14; Create Water-14; Purify Water-14; Seek Water-14; Desecrate-14.

dropped by the evil priest who toppled the sign post, shortly before their attack three months ago.

The footpath winds through the hills and crosses a rocky cleft in the ground. The 10-yard covered bridge is magical (enchanted with Shatter-

proof and Continual Light!) and well-made out of stone and wood. The chasm is 7 yards deep.

Anyone investigating the chasm will find the crumpled body of a skinny man. A Diagnosis roll will reveal he was killed by a sharp blow to the back of the head by a mace or hammer... and died several days ago. To the untrained eye, it looks like he fell fairly recently.

This is the corpse of one of the wererats. The surviving wererats disposed of most of their dead and wounded, but this body was overlooked.

There is no sign of the giant rat that Afira mentioned. In fact, this body is him, reverted back to his normal form. Only the most observant and intelligent of PCs will make this association (and if they do, an Occultism-1 roll reveals that wererats are nasty, insidious creatures with vulnerability to silver).

The Temple Entrance

The temple is a columned structure embedded into a hill. It is two stories, though that's not immediately obvious from looking at it, since one story is below ground.

Beyond the columns lies a great oak door, carved with the glowing finger of Azuth. It shows



no damage, and is solidly locked.

The door is enchanted with Shatterproof, and is locked with an expensive gnomish lock. Opening it requires a spell or an expert locksmith (Lockpicking-4). The door will push open silently, revealing an empty prayer chamber.

A - Prayer Chamber. This chamber is beautifully made, with a polished marble floor, pictograms of mages and various magical spells carved into the walls, and a mosaic of Azuth's symbol inlaid into the ceiling. Magical lamps illuminate this prayer center brightly. There is no sign of anybody around.

B - Acolytes Living Quarters. This area holds four bedrooms. All look neat and orderly, as if monks had just tidied their rooms. The bedroom furthest from the prayer chamber has a pile of maces and hammers on the bed. These eleven weapons are ordinary and not magical. An Armoury roll, however, will reveal that one of them is *very fine*. The priests of Bane were gathering all of the weapons in the temple, Detecting Magic on them, and throwing them here if they were not magical. Each chamber also has a single silver candlestick worth 50 silvers, if the PCs are looting as they go.

C - Stair Chamber. This room contains a rough stone spiral staircase that leads down into darkness. An Architecture or Professional Skill: Masonry roll will reveal that the stone staircase is not finished, as the stairs are clumsy and pitted.

D - Chapel. Several wooden benches, once ornately carved, lie broken and shattered in this room. An IQ roll will reveal that some of them bear weapon marks. There is no sign of blood. This is where the priests of Bane slaughtered the good clerics of Azuth, using blunt instruments and magic to kill them. The wererats have taken the

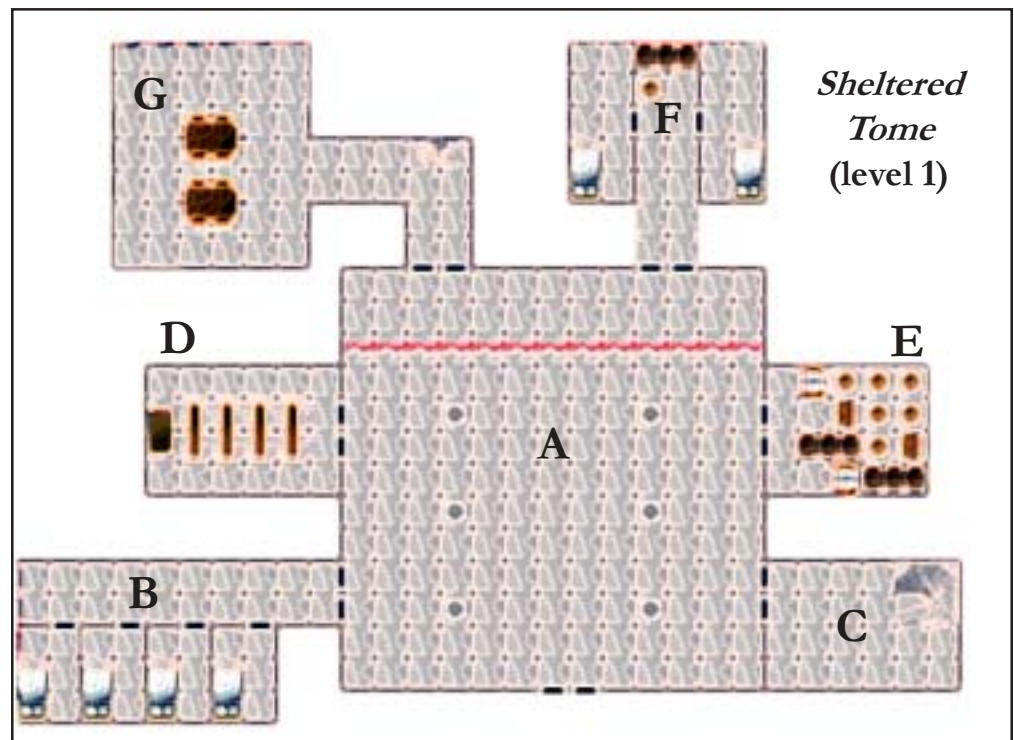
bodies that fell here down below to devour.

E - Storage Chamber. This chamber holds food-stuffs, barrels of fresh water, spare candles, some mining tools, and swaths of fabric used to make spare robes. Very little of it is valuable. If anyone detects magic on the pile, they will discover a white robe folded in a box that emanates magic. This is a Robe of Law, and provides the wearer DR +1 but confers the Honesty disadvantage on him while worn. It also always remain clean, no matter how much dirt or mud the wearer wades through. It weighs 6 lbs.

The boxes in this room have been quickly opened and rumaged through. Some of them are empty. Both the wererats and the priests of Bane searched this area.

F - Priests' Living Quarters. These rooms were the quarters of the high priest and high mage of Azuth. The door to the priest's quarters is smashed open, and the inside is ransacked. The door to the mage's quarters is scuffed, but otherwise intact. It is locked and protected with both a Magelock (skill 16) and Shatterproof (skill 16) spell.

Inside the mage's quarters are several scrolls (Lightning, Shape Air, Earth to Air). It also contains two



jars of Magic Polish (gives any non-magical blade +1 Accuracy and +1 Puissance for 5d hours; 2 doses per jar), and a wand enchanted with Staff-16 and Explosive Lightning Bolt-16 with 1 point of power.

The Distraction

Unless the PCs are extremely quiet, they will be noticed by the wererats down below. The rats will send up a scout (Stealth-16) to spy upon them for a few minutes.

After the spy reports in, Eetchik, the leader of the rats, will decide on a plan. While the PCs are still exploring the first level, he will transform into a human, don the robes of a fallen Azuth priest (which will be a bit torn and bloody) and run screaming up the stairs.

Following Azuth in the shadows is one of his cohorts, who will stealthily chain the main doors shut, preventing the PC's escape without the key. A Lockpicking roll will open it, or a ST-10 roll will break the chains, but the rats do not plan on keeping the PCs alive long enough to let them escape.

Eetchik wants to question the PCs to see if they know the whereabouts of the artifact mace that the Bane priests spoke of. If they do not, he will try to lure them into the basement and ambush them with his friends.

If Vazul is with the party, he clearly sees Eetchik for what he is. He will attempt to get the PCs to turn against Eetchik, while not giving away his own identity. He will try anything -- fake "memory reading" spells, baseless accusations, and lies to get the PCs to kill or capture Eetchik. Eetchik, of course, plays the role of a good priest, though his knowledge of Azuth and his rituals is sorely lacking.

The Lower Temple

The rough-hewn spiral stairs lead down into the lower basement of the temple. This area is recently excavated; the Azuth priests were creating a large library chamber when they accidentally broke into caverns that acted as a hideout for the band of wererats. Eetchik and his band spied on the clerics for many days (and watched the attack of the Bane priests and discovering the existence of the artifact

Wererat Template 135 points

Wererats have ST+1 [10], DX+2 [20], HT+2 [20], they have the advantages of DR 5 (non-silver and non-magic weapons; -10%) [14], Acute Taste/Smell +4 [8], Alertness +2 [10], Cast Iron Stomach [15], Pestilence [5], Darkvision [15] and Manual Dexterity +2 [6]. They have the disadvantages of Odious Personal Habit (Eats sentients) [-15], Unattractive [-10], and Kleptomania [-15].

They may turn into two forms: Rat Man and Giant Rat. Transformation takes 3 seconds.

Rat Men [+26 points]

Ratmen have DX+1 [10], Sharp Teeth [5], and Claws [15], and Social Stigma (Barbarian) [-15]

Giant Rat [+26 points]

Giant Rats have ST+1 [10], HT+2 [20], Claws [15], Peripheral Vision [15], Sharp Teeth [5], and the disadvantages Color Blindness [-10], Horizontal [-10], Reduced Dodge [-15], and Mute [-25].

Wererats often carry a bevy of infectious diseases. Anyone bit by a wererat must make a HT-2 roll or get sick. This reduces DX, ST, and HT by 1 and does 2 points of damage each day, until a HT-2 roll is succeeded. If Eetchik, a natural were-creature, bites a PC, he must make a HT roll to avoid becoming cursed with lycanthropy!

Sample Wererat Cutthroat

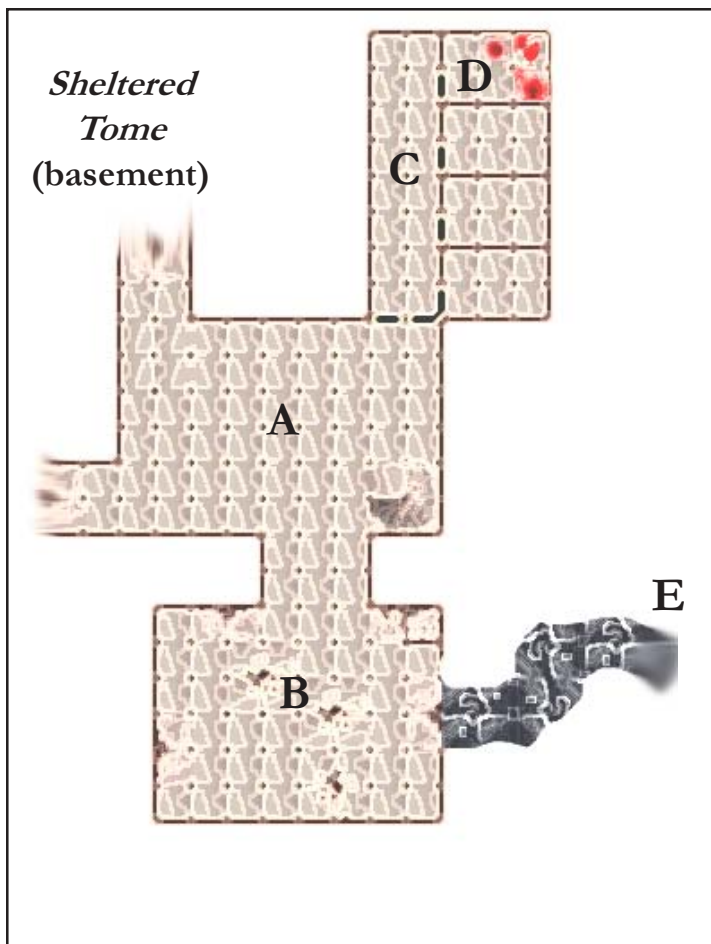
ST	13	Move/Dodge:	6/7
DX	14	PD/DR:	2/7
IQ	10		
HT	13		

Advantages: Combat Reflexes, High Pain Threshold

Disadvantages: Bad Temper; Wealth: Poor

Skills: Acting-11; Area Knowledge (Sewers)-12; Brawling-15; Climbing-14; Disguise-10; Fast-Draw-14; Pickpocket-14; Shadowing-13; Shortsword-15; Stealth-15.

Typical Equipment: Shortsword (2d-1 cut, 1d imp, Parry 8), boiled leather armor (PD 2, DR 2), 3d6 silvers.



mace) before attacking themselves.

Nine rats have been living in this lower area for several days, searching the temple and looking for a hidden vault where the mace is located. They were near to giving up when the PCs arrived.

A - Library. This room was intended to be the library of the priests of Azuth. A few books lie tossed in corners, their pages ripped out. Incomplete shelves line the wall, and several heavy standing bookcases make ideal hiding spots for the nine wererats that have made their home here. The whole place smells like dung.

This is the area where the rats will ambush the PCs, if Eetchik's plan works. If the PCs pretend to know the location of the mace, he will signal his allies to hide in the shadows and wait for them to recover the weapon before attacking.

B - Construction Area. This place is strewn with rocks, boulders, and other construction tools. Buried under a pile of boulders is the body of a Bane priest

(he was crushed by some well-placed Earth spells). He wears scale mail (enchanted with the Color spell to appear dark purple) and a morningstar enchanted with Puissance +1. The morningstar also acts as a 3-point reliquary for priests of Bane.

C - Living Quarters. This second set of living quarters is finished, though not furnished. It was intended to act as living space for new acolytes and mages.

D - Corpse Room. This room is piled with bodies. Anyone stumbling upon this room must make a Fright Check. The bodies (many of them skinned and ready to be eaten) belong to priests of both sects, as well as fallen wererats (now in human form).

Adventurers who enter this room feel a strange "evil" emanating from it. The death of so many priests, good and bad, have caused it to become desecrated.

Ironically, buried under this pile of bodies, is a stone grate that leads into the temple's vault. The vault contains a 20-point reliquary for priests of Azuth(used largely to help construct the temple) as well as the Mace of Azuth, which belonged to

Argot's Azuth

This weapon is a very fine flanged mace. It is a holy weapon, enchanted via the Consecrate spell. It has the enchantments Loyal Sword-15, Puissance (+1, +3 against undead or demonic creatures)-15, and Accuracy (+1)-15. It is also an electric weapon against undead or demonic creatures. Being a weapon of Azuth, it also has a built-in 10-point powerstone in the hilt, which can be used by a mage normally.



Argot, the temple's founder. It is ornately carved with the words "Argot's Azuth" in the handle. If the mace and reliquary are removed from the sanctified resting place, a strange effect occurs. Since these objects were the holy foundation on which the temple was built, the desecration of the temple commences at an astonishing rate. The marbled floors blacken and crack, and a heavy mist falls from the ceiling. The place is cursed by the gods.

E - Rat Tunnels. These tunnels lead into the mazes of the wererats. This clan of rats has been using the caves here as a base of operations. If anyone figures out the caverns (which could be an entire adventure in itself), it will reveal that they connect to several sewer and well systems of several small villages and towns in the area.

The Finale

As the smartest of the wererats (and the only true lycanthrope... his comrades were infected villagers, incapable of passing on the curse), Eetchik will fight only if forced to. He will participate in the ambush only once his forces are winning. Otherwise, he will continue his ruse, even to the point of letting the PCs escape with the mace, so he can return to the tunnels in peace.

Character Points

PCs should receive 2-3 character points each for good roleplaying and successfully discovering what happened to the clerics of Azuth. They should receive a bonus character point for unmasking and dealing justice to Vazul.

Tailoring the Adventure

Facing nine wererats is a difficult venture. For less powerful parties, reduce the number of wererats; perhaps they returned back to their sewer system after not initially discovering the mace.

Both Eetchik and Vazul make idea villains for continuing campaigns. Both of them want the mace, but both are smart enough to realize that attacking a group is not the way to get it. The two are clever enough to offer their services to the party and wait for an opportunity to reclaim the magical weapon, and any other gear the players may have.

Eetchik, Wererat Leader

ST	14	Move/Dodge:	7/8
DX	15	PD/DR:	2/7
IQ	13		
HT	13		

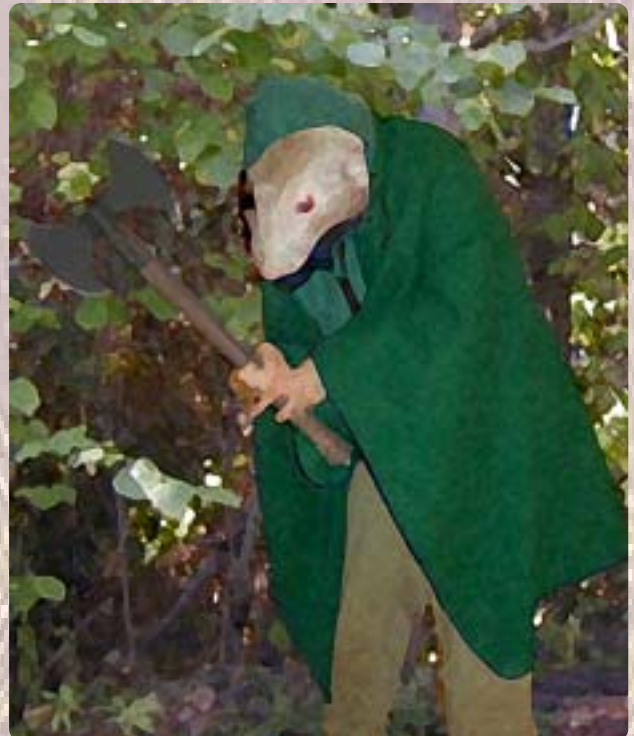
Advantages: Combat Reflexes; High Pain Threshold; Luck; Wererat (with Infectious Attack)

Disadvantages: Overconfident; Odious Personal Habit (Plucks and eats his own whiskers)

Quirks: Plays with his moustache a lot; Doesn't like cheese; Thinks he would make a great priest.

Skills: Acting-14; Area Knowledge (Sewers)-14; Brawling-14; Climbing-15; Fast-Draw-15; Filch-15; Hideout-15; Knife-16; Knife Throwing-16; Leadership-14; Occultism-12; Pickpocket-15; Shadowing-14; Shortsword-16; Starglazing-14; Stealth-15.

Equipment: Shortsword (hidden under robes; 2d cut, 1d imp, Parry 9), boiled leather armor (also under robes; PD 2, DR 2), good luck charm made from seven rabbits feet (worth about 10 silvers, otherwise useless). He also has several shiny glass marbles in his pocket that he likes to play with. They're worth about 50 silvers, though only a Merchant roll will reveal this.



YOKE OF THE FIRE GIANTS

Kettle Borandar rose in his bed and coughed hard. He wiped his mouth and grimaced at the viscous black fluid that seeped from his mouth.

"How many dead?" he asked his aide, who was raising a jug of warm water to his lips.

"There are too many of them," said the dwarf's aide. "The warriors have retreated to these tunnels. The giants wait for us outside. They're demanding our surrender and our labor."

Kettle laughed out loud, more tar-like fluid spewing from his lips.

"Never," he gasped.

Adventure Summary

This adventure is suitable to 4-6 150 point characters. It is set in the Forgotten Realms in the Far Hills, 500 miles east of Baldur's Gate (and 480 miles northeast of Beregost, the location of the previous adventure), though it will work equally well in any mountainous fantasy setting.

The small dwarven settlement of Stonehaven has come under assault by eleven fire giants.

Half of Stonehaven is located above ground, where the dwarves sell their wares in a great pillared market with local humans and gnomes. About half of the workshops and homes are also above the hills; the other half are below ground.

The fire giants' first assault killed a great many

gnomish traders, dwarven merchants and craftsmen. What was once a bustling community of 120 dwarves was halved in less than ten minutes.

The fire giants have turned the pillared market into a small fortress, and are now sieging the underground caverns. The dwarven lord, Kettle Borandar, sick from a drider bite, is desperately trying to figure a way to defeat the giants without abandoning the settlement.

Gamemaster Introduction

The fire giant attack was arranged by a clever drider, Atholthi. His hatred for Kettle Borandar spans a century, when the dwarven lord killed Atholthi's drow sister. Atholthi



snuck into Stonehaven and wounded Kettle dearly. When the dwarf refused to die in a timely fashion (partly due to his healers and priests, partly due to his dwarven stubbornness), Atholthi tempted a clan of eleven fire giants to siege the dwarven settlement.

Atholthi waits in a cavern a mile away from Stonehaven, guiding and helping the fire giants and their shaman leader. At any given point, half of the fire giants reside with Atholthi, as the other half work on the front lines from the market.

The Letter

This adventure works best if the PCs have a personal stake in the dwarven settlement. Four letters have been provided in the handouts section asking one of the PCs to make a trip to see the dying dwarven leader. Some were even sent before the fire giant arrival, so the PCs will have no indication that the village they are about to visit is under attack by the most ruthless of giant-kind!

The Far Hills

The Far Hills aren't especially treacherous outside of the winter months. If this adventure takes place in the winter, the passes will be frozen and dangerous. Dire wolves and winter wolves hunt the passes in the winter, and many careless adventurers have met their ends this way.

Beeyda the Gnome

Few merchants survived the fire giant assault. One of those was Beeyda, a gnomish leatherworker who threw himself down a rocky ledge to escape the cruel giants. His leg was broken in the fall, and he has crawled down the Wolf Tuft Path, the main trail that leads to and from the dwarven settlement.

When Beeyda hears the PCs approaching, he will do his best to hide himself in the nearby rocks.

If Beeyda is discovered (or he deems the PCs to be friendly travelers, not robbers or bandits, and reveals himself), he will beg the PCs to take him from this place.

Beeyda does not completely recall the events which led up to the fire giant attack. He remembers setting up his table of wares in the great pillared market. Suddenly, boulders came flying in, smashing tables and skulls alike. He fled, remembers hearing deep laughter, saw a single black-skinned giant, and then leaped off the cliff.

The Passes

There are two passes that lead to Stonehaven. The main trail is the Wolf Tuft Path, which most of the merchants use. It is clearly marked with signs (mostly in Dwarvish)

and the dwarves keep it clean and trimmed. In fact, most of the path is made up of carved stone steps, bevelled to ease the inclement effects of icy weather.

The second path, the Winter Bear Path, is less known. An Area Knowledge (Far Hills) roll is necessary to find its location, or even to know of its existence.

The Winter Bear Path

This path leads directly to Stonehaven. It is very treacherous, however, and has several obstacles to overcome:

The Broken Suspension Bridge

A wooden bridge once spanned this 30-yard chasm (50 yards deep). The rains have snapped one side of the bridge, making it extremely precarious. A lone dwarf, Gorin Greyhammer, has been camped out

Gorin Greyhammer

128 points



ST	13 [30]
DX	11 [10]
IQ	11 [10]
HT	13 [30]

Speed/Move: 6/5
Dodge: 5
Parry: 7

Racial Template: Shield Dwarf [36]; ST+2; DR 1; Extra Fatigue +2; Hard to Kill +1;

Longevity; Greed; Intolerance (Orcs); Miserliness; Reduced Move -1; Axe Mace DX+1; Merchant IQ; +3 Craft Bonus.

Advantages: Charisma +1 [5]; High Pain Threshold [10].

Disadvantages: Honesty [-10]; Pacifism (Self-Defense Only) [-15]

Quirks: Talks with a thick accent; Likes walking alone

Skills: Area Knowledge (Far Hills)-12 [2]; Axe/Mace-14 [12]; Carpentry-15 [2]; Engineer-12 [6]; Merchant-11 [0]; Singing-13 [1]; Stealth-10 [1].

Equipment: Fine mace (2d+2 cr, 1 turn to ready), small shield (PD 2), heavy leather (PD 2, DR 2), handful of small gems (worth 300 silvers).



Icicle, the Ice Elemental

ST	35	Speed/Move:	6/6
DX	13	Dodge:	7
IQ	6	Parry:	10
HT	13/30	Damage:	3d impale

Advantages: Combat Reflexes; PD 2; DR 3; High Pain Threshold

Disadvantages: Curious; Intolerance (except dwarves and gnomes); Vulnerability (fire, 2d)

Skills: Brawling-14

The Wolf Tuft Pass

Atholthi has blocked this main caravan route with five phase spiders. Near the phase spiders is a dead dwarf, killed by Atholthi. His body is disgusting and bloated (this may call for a Fright Check), and a pack containing several drow items:

Wand of Nightmares: This wand summons a Nightmare, a dark horse who can take its master at twice normal horse speed

here (on the far side) for several days drawing up plans to fix the bridge.

Gorin hails from Stonehaven, but knows nothing of the fire giant attack. He's intrigued that the PCs would want to cross the bridge, and will try to guide them across.

Crossing the bridge requires three DX rolls. If failed, a ST roll is required to hoist oneself back up. Anyone weighing more than 200 lbs. will snap the bridge, and plummet 50 yards down into the rocky gorge.

If Gorin is convinced that something suspicious has befallen Stonehaven, he will accompany the PCs.

The Winter Valley

So named because it is entirely covered in ice and snow. The PCs must make their way down a frozen embankment; this requires a Climbing-3 roll, or the character will tumble and fall into snow drifts (for only 1d-1 damage).

The reason this pass is entirely covered in snow is because it is the home to an ice elemental, granted sentience and permanency by a gnome mage six decades ago. The dwarves affectionately call him Icicle, and the creature enjoys the company of dwarves and gnomes, and will often start snowball fights for fun.

Icicle, however, severely dislikes creatures from other races, and will hiss and clack his icy claws. Only a dwarf or gnome who makes him understand the creatures are friends will appease Icicle.

across the land, or even into the astral or ethereal planes. The wand requires an IQ roll to use, as well as costs 5 fatigue. A critical failure destroys the wand.

Piwafwi: This magical cloak gives the wearer +2 to Stealth and Camouflage skills. Along its trim, it is woven with the saying "Jal Khaless zha waela," or "All trust is foolish" in the dark elf language.

Spider Mask: This horrid looking, semi-living thing gives the wearer -2 to all reaction rolls. It also makes the wearer immune to all kinds of webs and gives HT+5 on rolls to resist spider venom.

Phase Spider

ST	20	Move/Dodge:	7/7
DX	15	PD/DR:	1/1 (carapace)
IQ	2	Damage:	1d+1 impale*
HT	14	Reach:	C

Note: Phase Spiders inject Type C venom doing 2d damage. Victims must make a HT-6 roll or be at DX-4 and listed damage for three days. Success means penalty and damage halved. Critical failure indicates death.

The man-sized Phase Spiders have the ability to go ethereal, after a successful turn concentrating. This costs them 1 fatigue each minute. They use this ability to sneak behind prey and attack them from behind.



The Fire Giant Outpost

Two fire giants are disposing of dwarven bodies, looting them, and then tossing them into a ravine. Atholthi sent the fire giants here to scout for any merchants traveling into the dwarven settlement.

These two fire giant brothers, Ogonon and Mygon were given this duty because they accidentally let several dwarves, including a dwarven mage (the one who slipped the message about the siege to the PCs) escape the market into the tunnels. The shaman leader of the fire giants, Gingrak, expelled them from the main camp until they've disposed of all the dwarven bodies.

As typical fire giants, Ogonon and Mygon are very angry at their leader for embarrassing them in front of the other fire giants. Even as they toss dead dwarves over the cliffside, they speak loudly about bashing Gingrak's head in and embarrassing him in front of the others. Clever PCs may try to take advantage of the fire giants' anger, using a combination of Fast-Talk and Diplomacy skills. While the giants will be very reluctant to attack their brethren, they may let the PCs pass if they swear to kill Gingrak.

If the PCs attack the fire giants, they will fight to the death, hoping to bring the heads of the PCs back to Gingrak to get back in his good favor, and to show the other fire giants that they are capable warriors.

Stonehaven

Smoldering buildings mark the Stonehaven

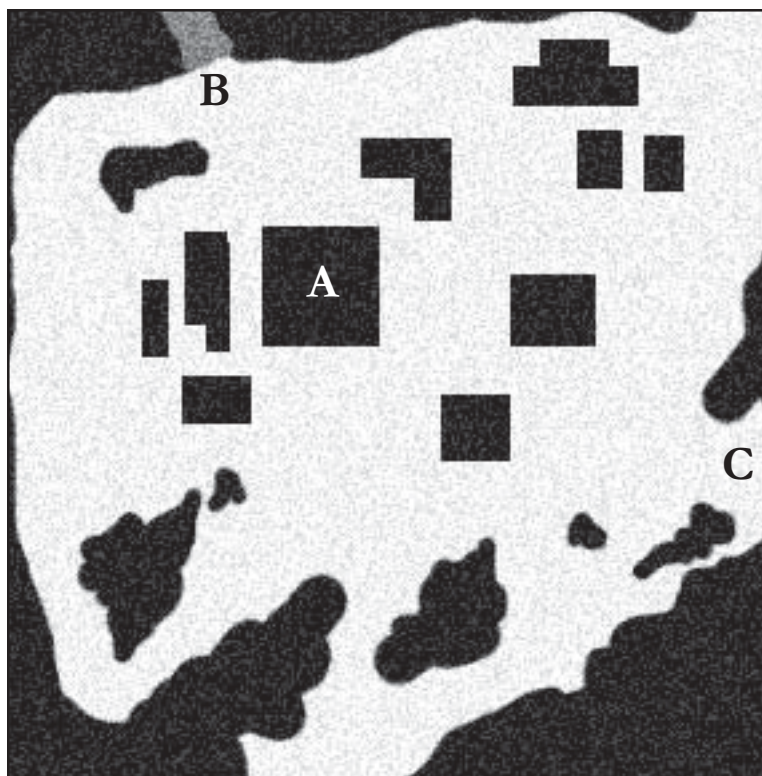
above-ground marketplace. The great pillared marketplace in the center of the square (A) is home to three fire giant warriors. Two fire giants are at the entrance to the tunnels (B), battering at a great iron door with a dead tree. Fortunately, the dwarven gate is strong and well-made, and is holding up well.

If the PCs spy on the camp, they will discover that every day, about noon, several fire giants replace the ones in the market. These reinforcements are coming from Atholthi's cave, via a hidden path

east of the town (C).

The remainder of the buildings in Stonehaven are markets (looted days ago) and workshops (which still contain some tools, such as hammers, anvils, tongs, rope, and wooden slats). All the buildings have had their doors torn off and windows smashed.

The PCs have a few options here. They can try to get into the tunnels of Stonehaven to visit with the dwarves, but this will require some magic (to bypass the gate) or very clever plan to contact the dwarves (who are unlikely to let anyone in unless there's a guarantee the fire giants are nowhere near!) and have them



open the door. The PCs could also opt to ambush and destroy the five fire giants here at Stonehaven, or even to capture one and have them lead them to Atholthi's lair. Finding the lair is simple enough; the PCs need to merely follow the retiring fire giants back to Atholthi's cavern home, making some successful Stealth and Tracking rolls to trail them. The fire giants usually bring a scout with them, who as the added advantage of Alertness +2.

The Pillared Marketplace

This once-glorious marble marketplace (see sidebar) is now strewn with ripped gnomish tapestries, broken furniture and storage crates, and pools of blood. The fire giants camp here, and have built a giant fire in the middle of the marketplace out of furniture taken from the other stores and shops of Stonehaven. This makes the marketplace smoky and rank (-2 to all rolls while inside) to all but the fire giants themselves, whose eyes do not burn from the smoke.

The Stonehaven Tunnels

If the PCs manage to get inside the Stonehaven tunnels, they'll find several dozen tired and angry dwarves. A council is being held to discuss a counter-attack, but without the leadership of King Kettle, who is incoherent from the poison of the drider Atholthi. If the PCs can cure him, or at least alleviate his pain, he will explain that a drider brought on this attack.

King Kettle's daughter, nicknamed Petunia, is trying to organize the dwarven counterattack. If the fire giants outside were slain by the PCs, the dwarves will stream out of Stonehaven and start erecting defenses around the marketplace, ready to ambush any returning fire giants. Finding and slaying Atholthi is a secondary priority, but a priority nonetheless.

As a reward for rescuing the dwarves from the fire giants (this may happen before, or after, Atholthi is dealt with), King Kettle awards the PCs a choice from his armory.

Fire Giants

ST 40/14 Move/Dodge: 6/7
DX 10 PD/DR: 2/4 (scale armor)
IQ 9 Damage: 7d+2 cut (greatsword)
HT 14/20 Reach: 1-5 (greatsword)

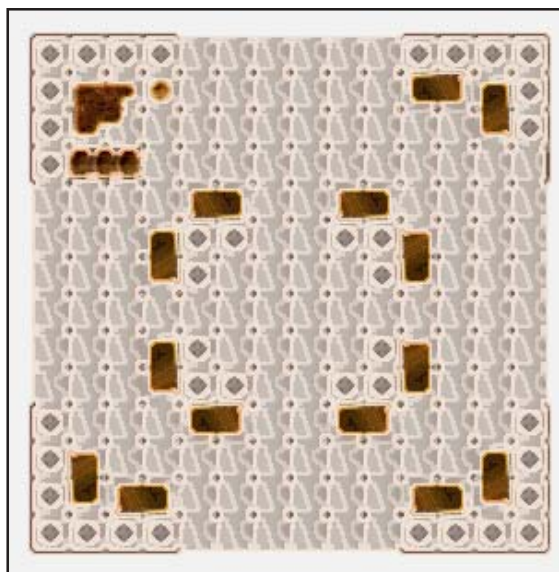
Advantages: Acute Taste and Smell +3, Combat Reflexes, DR 4, Enhanced Move (Running) x2, Extra Reach (2 hexes), High Pain Threshold, Invulnerability to Fire, PD 2, Temperature Tolerance 3 (heat only).

Disadvantages: Bad Temper, Intolerance, Odious Personal Habit (never bathes, smells bad, -2).

Skills: Brawling-11, Rock Throwing-13, Two-handed Sword-12

Equipment: Scale armor (giant-sized; PD 3, DR 4), pot-helm (giant-sized; PD 3, DR 4), greatsword (giant-sized; 15-lbs, reach 1-3 cutting)

Fire giants are 15' tall, brutish creatures who often weigh over 4,000 lbs. They crave battle and respect ruthlessness. They have coal-black skin, stocky shoulders, and bushy orange beards. Fire giants usually carry massive greatswords and enjoy cleaving foes into bloody piles. They also carry sacks with two or three heavy (75 lb.) rocks, which they throw upon foes from a distance (4d+3 cr, ½D 12, Max 24). Rocks may be Blocked (probably shattering the shield) or Dodged, though not Parried.



The Stonehaven Armory



Dwarven Mail (choice of torso, or other body part): This has PD 3, DR 4, but is impenetrable, thus all blows are treated as crushing.

Available only in dwarven, gnome, or halfling sizes.

Dwarven Mithril Axes and Maces: These fine weapons (are also treated with Puissance +1). Available in most common types.

Dwarven Coin: 5,000 silvers worth.

Dwarven Rope: 50' of rope, said to be unbreakable.

Dwarven Smite Enchantment: A secret spell known only to dwarves, Kettle will volunteer the casting of this spell on a weapon. This will take a month per weapon. The Smite spell increases the critical hit range of the wielder by 1. Thus, someone with skill 16+ will critical hit on a 3-7!

The Path to Atholthi

The winding, rocky path that leads to Atholthi's lair is seldom traveled. In the old days, it went to an old dwarven mine, now abandoned. Anyone searching the path (and making a Vision roll) will discover dwarven runes to that effect.

Atholthi isn't stupid, however. He has laid this path with alarms, including the Nightingale spell. As soon as he hears the warning, he will prepare an ambush, hiding two fire giants on the ridge across his cave (B on the map), who will bombard any travelers below with rocks. The ridge is approximately 30 yards above the ground; Atholthi's cave (A on the map) is 45 yards above the ground, accessible only via climbing. The remains of a 50 yard dwarven ladder, once attached to the cave, can be found at the end of the path (C).

Atholthi will keep at least two fire giants with him at all times, along with any phase spiders remaining from the main pass... if he was been alerted to the PCs presence ahead of time.

Atholthi's Lair

Atholthi's lair was once the entrance hall to a dwarven mining facility. Since it was abandoned a century ago, much of it has collapsed, though parts of it wind far into the depths of the Realms, into the Underdark.

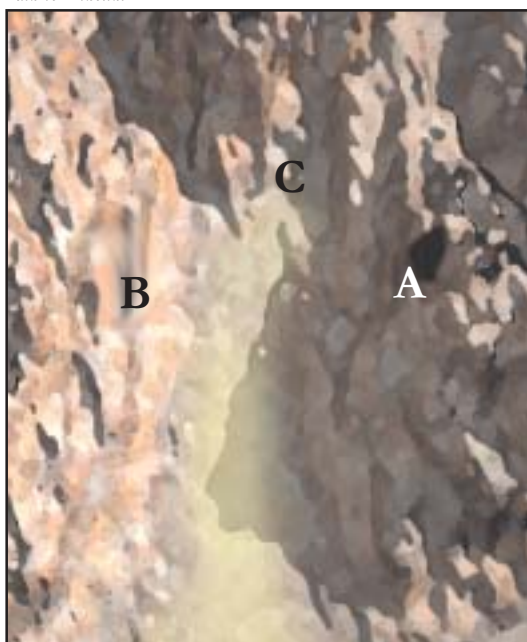
Atholthi has decorated the interior of the cave with dancing lights and glowing baubles. He will ruthlessly attack any invaders to his home, using the fire giants to give him cover as he unleashes his favorite spells on any intruders; he will Sensitize or Frailty any warriors, and Garble any mages.

Ideally, Atholthi would like to capture some of the PCs to discover their motives, and pilfer any interesting equipment. Afterwards, if he deems them worthy, he will sell them to the drow below as slaves.

Atholthi will also use his Clinging to maximum advantage, hanging from the ceiling to cast his spells and stay out of the reach of any weapons. If the PCs have missile capability, he will use his Blur spell to help ward off any missiles.

If the fire giants fall, and the battle outcome looks unfavorable, Atholthi will flee into the caverns. He will reserve any phase spiders left over to cover his escape. Atholthi will only physically fight if he thinks he can win.

Path to Atholthi



The Finale

Defeating Atholthi, or even causing him to flee back to the Underdark, will be reason for great celebration for the dwarves. They will spend several days sealing the abandoned mine, as well as recovering any fallen dwarves and putting them to rest.

If the PCs haven't already been rewarded by Kettle (or, if Kettle succumbs to the poison, Petunia), the dwarves will award them a choice from their armory.

Character Points

PCs should receive 2-3 character points each for good roleplaying and successfully ending the siege of the fire giants. They should receive a bonus character point for defeating Atholthi.

Tailoring the Adventure

If the PCs are less than 150 points, reducing the number of fire giants and phase spiders is a good start, but keep in mind they are still extremely powerful foes, and an ill-prepared party is likely to be wiped out in just a few combat turns. A better strategy is to allow the PCs more time to prepare for their battles; the enemies should be a bit clumsier. Perhaps the fire giants are still looting the shops when the PCs come into Stonehaven, or the phase spiders are seen feeding on some dwarven remains before they attack.

As presented, Atholthi is a clever foe. For less experienced PCs (and a different kind of adventure) he could be more prone to making stupid mistakes, perhaps due to his pride, or perhaps due to his blind lust for vengeance. He may forgo using his spells or fire giant allies to "personally" deal with the PCs.



Atholthi the Drider

370 points

ST 15 [20]

Move/Dodge: 7*/8

DX 14 [10]

* *Atholthi climbs at Move 6.*

IQ 14 [45]

PD/DR: 0/2 (see armor)

HT 12/17 [20]

Atholthi was cursed by Lloth after his sister's murder; he was bribed by other drow to let her die at the hands of a dwarven prince. Now, only vengeance and bloodthirst guides him.

Drider Racial Template: ST+3, ST+13 (lower body only) [61]; DX+3 [30]; Hit Points +5 [25]; Ambidexterity [10]; Appearance (Monstrous) [-25]; Clinging [25]; Combat Reflexes [15]; DR 2 [6]; Increased Speed +1 [25]; Knack: Light [2]; Knack: Darkness (7 hexes) [17]; Knack: Sense Foes [4]; Knack: Levitate [16]; Sadism [-15]; Silence [5]; Sharp Teeth [5]; Social Stigma (Outsider) [-15]; Super Climbing +3 [9]; Venom (Slow Poisonous) 3 [45]; Climbing DX +1 [4]; Stealth DX+1 [4].

Advantages: High Pain Threshold [10], Power Investiture 2 [25]; Strong Will +1 [4].

Disadvantages: Bloodthirst [-10]; Fanaticism (Lloth; adds +1 to spells) [-15]; Intolerance [-10]; Megalomania [-15]; Vow (destroy dwarves of Stonehaven) [-10].

Quirks: Licks hands [-1]

Skills: Bow-15 [8]; Climbing-15 [0]; Flail-15 [8]; Gesture-14 [1]; Savoir-Faire-14 [1]; Shortsword-14 [2]; Stealth-15 [0].

Spells [1 point each]: Agonize-15; Alter Body-15; Alter Visage-15; Corpulence-15 [2]; Frailty-15; Sensitize-15; Create Earth-15; Earth to Stone-15; Seek Earth-15; Shape Earth-15; Lend Strength-15; Blur-15; Continual Light-15; Darkness-15; Light-15; Ward-15; Garble-15; Silence-15; Sound-15; Voices-15; Create Water-15; Purify Water-15; Seek Water-15.

Equipment: Dark elven silversilk (PD 3, DR 5 (1/3 vs impaling, weighs 2 lbs - enchanted with Fortify +1 while not in direct sunlight), Dark Maiden Morningstar (3d+2, 6 lbs, 1 turn to ready, Reach 1, fine weapon; twin heads carved to look like medusa, enchanted with Puissance +2, Accuracy +1), shortbow, 12-point reliquary to Lloth; Onyx Ring (enchanted with Fireball and 1 point of Power); 3 scrolls of Nightingale.

Half-arachnid, half-drow, driders are cursed by their Spider Queen and exiled to a lonely life of pain and insanity. They attack with a combination of magic and physical attacks. Driders can bite for 1d-1 cutting damage. This also inflicts their devastating venom, which forces the victim to make a HT-3 roll. Success indicates 3d damage; failure indicates an amazing 9d damage. Effects take one hour to show.

Handouts for "Yoke of the Fire Giants"

Dear friend-

Hopefully you will remember me from our very Bold adventures years ago. I had two hefty axes and was skild.

My father Kettle is gravely sick. Bitten by some foul thing we should have killed. Worse yet we are trapped here because fierce Giants are besieging our abode of Stonehaven, located in the Far Hills. I have fallen one of them myself, but they killed half our people, even though they are not so skild.

I know you were a great warrior. Please bring yourself and any mighty warriors you know, or else Stonehaven will surely fall. We do not have many days, perhaps less.

Your friend,

Petunia

NOTICE

A Great Wizard and Mage, Izarius IV of Baldur's Gate has sent a Most Magical Message to our fair town.

The Dwarven Settlement of Stonehaven, in the Far Hills, has sent out a call of distress. They are under Fierce Siege, and require Brave Heroes to vanquish the Giant Foes who do them harm.

Since our fair town receives much goods and trade from this great dwarven settlement, we shall do our noble duty to Stonehaven and assist in the relieving of the besieged good Dwarves.

Volunteers needed. The Dwarves have offered to pay handsomely for allies. Please meet at the town square at noonday, armed and equiped.

Dear friend-

The exploits of brave King Kettle of Stonehaven Far Hills cannot fit on any monument less than nine dwarves tall.

I am sad to inform you that King Kettle of the dwarves is gravely sick. Though healers and Moradin's priests are at his side, it has been divined that he will perish shortly, unless aid most miraculous occurs.

I invite you to pay last respects to King Kettle, for he tells that you knew his people and sons well. He would appreciate it, as would I.

Yours truly,

Petunia of Stonehaven

To Whomever Reads This Letter,

Stonehaven is under siege. I have dispatched these messengers to attempt to bring us aid, before this small but great Dwarven citadel falls to the might of these evil giants that pound, even now, at our mithril doors.

If you can raise a sword or bow, this King begs you to come to our aid before it is too late. We will die fighting, but would rather see our fair home remain safe for our children in centuries to come, not occupied by the foul giants.

King Kettle of Stonehaven Far Hills