

BAREBONES FANTASY™

Role-playing Game

A BIGGER PROBLEM

BY QUINN
CONKLIN

AN ADVENTURE IN THE
KERANAK KINGDOMS™



LICENSING

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Let's start this off by saying that one of the few things the author hates to right is short little bios about himself. To that end he has tried pawning the job off on his cat, who told him sure just as soon as I grow thumbs and figure out the can opener. The author pointed out the cans have pull tabs now and the cat decided to go to sleep. So here we are most of the way through the paragraph and so far you know the author has a cat that is unwilling to be helpful, does not like writing this sort of thing and hopefully you have come to appreciate his sense of humor. What else do you need to know? The author started with the original red box basic d and d and has dice older then some of the people he games with. He also writes Toys for the Sandbox, a weekly system free fantasy setting and a blog about being a better person, with the occasional digression into other areas of life. You can find the author on [G+](#) at, his blog at [Themighty.us](#) and his [Toys](#) over on DriveThruRPG.

ABOUT BAREBONES FANTASY™

This game takes advantage of the d00Lite™ system, a fast and simple set of game mechanics created by DWD Studios. To find out more visit <http://dwdstudios.com/barebones>

ABOUT KERANAK KINGDOMS™

The Keranak Kingdoms is a fantasy setting designed for but usable without the BareBones Fantasy roleplaying game. It is a broad brush-stroke fantasy game world designed for you – the GM – to tell a story that involves the player's characters. It gives you tools to build your tale, not frames to box in your imagination. Check out the Keranak Kingdoms setting book for sale where you purchased this product, or read the brief summary of the setting within the pages of the BareBones Fantasy game book.

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ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The players are passing through or perhaps taking a rest in a small mountain town called Shield Home. Nestled in the shadow of the Shielding Wall, this predominately human town is part of the Keranak Kingdoms. The valley near the town is known for the many flowers and herbs that grow there including the *giant's fist orchid* which looks like it is made of stone but which is soft and velvety to the touch. The orange and red fields of *flame's kiss grass* grow there as well, and, of course, the healing herb known as *angel's tongue*.

The party is approached by a leading merchant, Vincent Whitelock. A caravan bringing supplies for his healing elixir business is due in town soon, but the road they will be traveling has been the sight of several robberies lately. Whitelock request the party meet the caravan to warn them and provide them any extra protection they can. The attacks have been committed by a small band of ogres living in a nearby cave. However, the town's people do not know that as there have been no survivors of the attacks.

Whitelock is the real power in town. His money makes everyone prosper. He is known publicly for the healing potions he makes but he also sells a strength potion to select clientele. He is seen as a kind and generous man but he has his secrets. These secrets will be explored more in this adventure's sequel *The Children of the Giant's Fist*. For now know that both the *giant's fist orchid* and the mutant child are tied into this secret.

PLAYERS

This adventure is for a group of 3 to 5 rank 1 characters. If the adventurers are higher rank adjust accordingly by adding additional creatures or giving them armor.

WHITELOCK & SONS

GAMEMASTER TIPS

Although headquartered in Shield Home, Whitelock & Sons is a large merchant company. There are offices at several large cities in the kingdoms. They don't tend to use the seas for their distribution (something about the brine-laced air and how it affects the potions).

Unlike others, this is a merchant company which specializes in only a few products: potions which it produces cheaper than any competition. They don't sell products created by others, they create their own.

Nefarious characters might be motivated by a chance to peek at some of the ingredients in the shipment to be protected; rival enchanter's might pay a fair price to learn of Whitelock's secrets.

TROUBLESHOOTERS FOR WHITELOCK & SONS

GAMEMASTER TIPS

Due to the sensitive nature of the products created by Whitelock & Sons, GMs might wish to wrap an entire campaign around the players being full-time employees of the company. They could be skilled troubleshooters for the merchant house, protecting and investigating whatever Whitelock requires. The players would wear uniforms indicating their affiliation, and would enjoy use of sleeping quarters located at all the company's offices in all major cities throughout the kingdoms.

Of course, not all adventures would be like this one; missions might center around Whitelock's more wealthy clients as well as interests relating to acquisition of the rare and unusual ingredients the company requires. It would be a lucrative career and a great way to provide missions to the players. It might simplify how to get players involved in this or any future adventures.

Of course, after playing through Children of the Giant's Fist, you might need to arrange a new patron for the players.

HAGGLING WITH WHITELOCK

GAMEMASTER TIPS

Characters who try to haggle with Whitelock for a better wage will earn the merchant's respect. He'll go as high as 35gp apiece, and an extra 75gp if they must defend the shipment.

GETTING PLAYERS INVOLVED

The party is either already in Shield Home or are just passing through when they are approached by Whitelock. He explains that recently the main road into town has been plagued by a murderous group of bandits. He requests that the party head out to meet a caravan of goods being delivered. He also requests that if the caravan is attacked that they try to protect a chest of coins that he needs to pay his workers.

PLAYER BACKGROUND

The town of Shield Home is known for the medicines produced there by Whitelock & Sons. The business is the life blood of the town and exports remedies across the kingdom. Whitelock & Sons is the major employer in town, paying farmers and foresters for the herbs they grow and collect.

While in town the party is approached by Vincent Whitelock who has recently inherited the company from his father. Vincent is worried because of several recent attacks along the road into town. He wishes to hire the party to meet a shipment of goods and payments that he is expecting.

MISSION PAYMENT

Whitelock is offering the party 25gp each to meet the caravan and accompany them back.

In addition, if they are required to defend or recover the shipment, he will pay them an extra 50gp each.

SECTION 1: GOING FOR THE BIG MONEY

The party follows a road full of switchbacks and sharp descents. The journey is uneventful save for several strange whooping cries a long way off. A few hours into their travels the party comes to a section of road that overlooks a small wooded valley.

ENCOUNTER 1: THOSE ARE NOT BANDITS

As they round a switchback along the side of the hill, the party can see off in the distance a caravan being attacked by a group of large humanoids. Following the switchback will take the party at least another hour to reach the caravan, however it is only about 30 feet down the mountainside if they wish to climb down. This requires a scout check to make it down the steep rock face. Failure indicates a fall from half way down and taking 1D damage (bypass DR). If a player fails by more than double his scout skill, he falls from the top taking 2D damage. For instance if your scout skill is 35% and you rolled 86, that is more than double and you suffer 2D damage.

If the party climbs down, the ogres will make a break for it, dragging away the coach, passengers and Whitelock's payments. **Two of the younger ogres** will stay behind and slow the party down. They will fall back after 5 turns but will circle the caravan making the party choose between following the survivors or them. They will keep the party busy in this way as long as they can before running into the valley and losing themselves in the forest. Neither ogre has loot.

If the party does not climb down they find no survivors. The coach is missing and there is a clear path through the grass of a gradual slope that leads down into a sheltered mountain valley.

DRAMATIC LICENSE

GAMEMASTER TIPS

Depending on the makeup of the adventuring party, two ogres might present only a small challenge. The purpose of the ogres is to delay the characters. If the ogres are nothing but a speed bump to their pursuit, then the larger group of ogres they're chasing would be too easily caught.

Therefore, as GM... cheat. The ogres can use guerrilla tactics and harass the characters, conceal tracks, double back and attack from behind, etc. Keep adding up damage but ignore it. These ogres are a plot device and taking some dramatic license is okay.

If some player gets a critical success and rolls a boat-load of damage, it will be hard to cheat; have another ogre drop back to help deter the player's pursuit.

Delay the characters to give a head start to the ogres.

Ogre (Rank 2)

STR: 85	BP: 40
DEX: 55	INIT: 1
LOG: 25	DR: 2
WIL: 40	MOV: 12



- » Greatspear 60%, damage 3D+6, range 15
- » Furs (reason for DR2)

SECTION 2: FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

The trail left by the ogres is easy to follow through the tall grass. The coach has flipped on its side and is being dragged along. The *flame kissed grass* gives way to a field of *giant's fist orchids*. From there it leads into a forest and eventually into a cave. See map on page 8.

ENCOUNTER 1: THE UPSET WARREN

The passing of the ogres has destroyed a dire rat warren. **1D dire rats** are milling about angry and scared. The party does not have to fight them but will lose time going around. If the party takes too long thinking about what to do, the dire rats will attack them out of anger and spite. They have no treasure.

Dire Rat (Rank 1)

STR: 25	BP: 3
DEX: 55	INIT: 1
LOG: 25	DR: 0
WIL: 25	MOV: 6



- » **Bite** - 45%, damage 1D, effect on a crit. success target contracts rabies; after 1 day target dazed until cured.

ENCOUNTER 2: THE BOTTOM OF THE HILL

As the red and yellow hillside gives way to level ground, the hard packed earth no longer supports the *flame kissed grass*. The ogres have lifted the coach and the trail becomes harder to follow. A scout check is needed if the party is to keep following them (if successful go to Encounter 5). The path leads through a field of wild flowers.

ENCOUNTER 3: A BODY IN THE FOREST

If the party loses the trail and heads west they will come to the edge of a pine forest. A little over 20 feet inside it becomes clear that the forest here is too thick for the carriage to have been brought this way. As they are preparing to turn around the party notices a limp figure lying in the underbrush.

Investigating, they find it is the body of a man dressed in plain but serviceable clothes with odd injuries. The man's face has been reduced to a wet, meaty surface. There are many small cuts along his neck and his head is turned too far around for his spine to be intact. The contents of his carry bag are strewn about the ground: 14gp and a package of 5 darts with their tips coated in a glittering red substance. The man is one of the guards who were hunting the mutant child. The child used its snout tentacles to break his neck and mutilate his face. The darts are coated with a sleeping toxin (resist STR-10, effect fall unconscious for 2D turns).

BUILDING SUSPENSE

GAMEMASTER TIPS

Customize the story to fit the actions and play style of the players. The dead body is a great way to build suspense about the mutant child and its deadly tentacle attack, and can be a great way to inform the players that there is something more going on in this adventure than an ogre attack. Consider putting the body anywhere you wish, before the players reach Encounter 6.

ENCOUNTER 4: NOTHING HERE

Losing the trail and going to the east will reveal a camp of **2D ratmen** sitting around several camp fires. They are arguing and playing dice. The party can easily avoid them and it is obvious the ogres did not come this way from their casual attitude. Their gambling dice game includes 2D gold pieces scattered in loose piles on the rocks.

Ratmen (Rank 1)

STR: 40	BP: 8
DEX: 70	INIT: 1
LOG: 45	DR: 0
WIL: 55	MOV: 10



- » Spear 60%, damage 2D+5
- » Long knife 65%, damage 1D+1

ENCOUNTER 5: FIELD OF FLOWERS

The trail leads through a field of wild flowers. Any one asking about the flowers may make a scholar or scout check to notice that some of the flowers are *giant's fist orchids*. A player who identifies the flowers will know their pollen can cause men to become enraged, violent and possess super strength.

About halfway across the field the party will be surprised/surprise a group of spear-carrying ratmen returning from a hunt. One of the ratmen will charge the party. The first action of the other ratmen will be to snort the pollen from several of the orchids. **There is one less ratmen than there are party members.** The pollen gives the ratmen DR5 and gives them a +5 damage bonus with melee weapons. They will fight to the death. They have little of value on them except their long knives and 1D gold.

Any members of the party who want to inhale the pollen will receive the same bonuses. There are 1D/2 doses available for picking. At the end of the fight have them make a WIL check, failure and the character will turn on the other members! This effect will last for 1D/2 hours and a new WIL check should be made after every fight until the pollen's effects wear off.

ENCOUNTER 6: INTO THE WOODS

After crossing the field of wild flowers and fighting the ratmen, the party finds a trail through the forest. As they approach the trail they hear men shouting and then suddenly falling silent. Moments later a strange looking creature bursts from the underbrush. It runs hunched over using its overlong arms almost like extra legs. It has tattered rags wrapped around its furry body. Most disturbing is the face. There is a fine fur covering a mostly human head that extends out into a long snout that breaks apart into several waving furry tentacles.

The creature moves quickly to attack the nearest party member or the most hostile. The party must make a WIL-20 check or lose their first action in the first round.

This **beast is a mutant child** and is a result of overexposure to the pollen of the *giant's fist orchid*, (more about this in the next adventure). If the party tries to find where the mutant child

MELODRAMA!

GAMEMASTER TIPS

What seemed like a simple body-guard mission suddenly results in a survival horror story... the mutant child should be scary! Have the players hear screams in the distance, then odd noises in the nearby woods. Have them edge closer to the edge of the forest to investigate. Speak softly. Build suspense. Then have the mutant child BURST out of the forest and be a frightful sight. If the players get lucky and take it out too quickly, it won't be very scary; do what you must to make the players respect the mutant child!

came from, all they are able to locate is more mutilated bodies with wounds similar to the one in Encounter 3.

One corpse wears a collar that has a faint magical aura (easily detectable by a spellcaster). Figuring out what it does will take some time (it will be difficult but not impossible). The collar allows someone to control the creature, but the magic in this collar is faded by now. There also seems to be a secondary effect, but that magic is too used up to identify without prolonged study (several days).

Players determined to fill their pockets with the belongings of dead men will be able to round up no more than 1D gold per body. There are 8 total bodies.

Mutant Child (Rank 3)

STR: 65 **BP:** 30

DEX: 60 **INIT:** 3

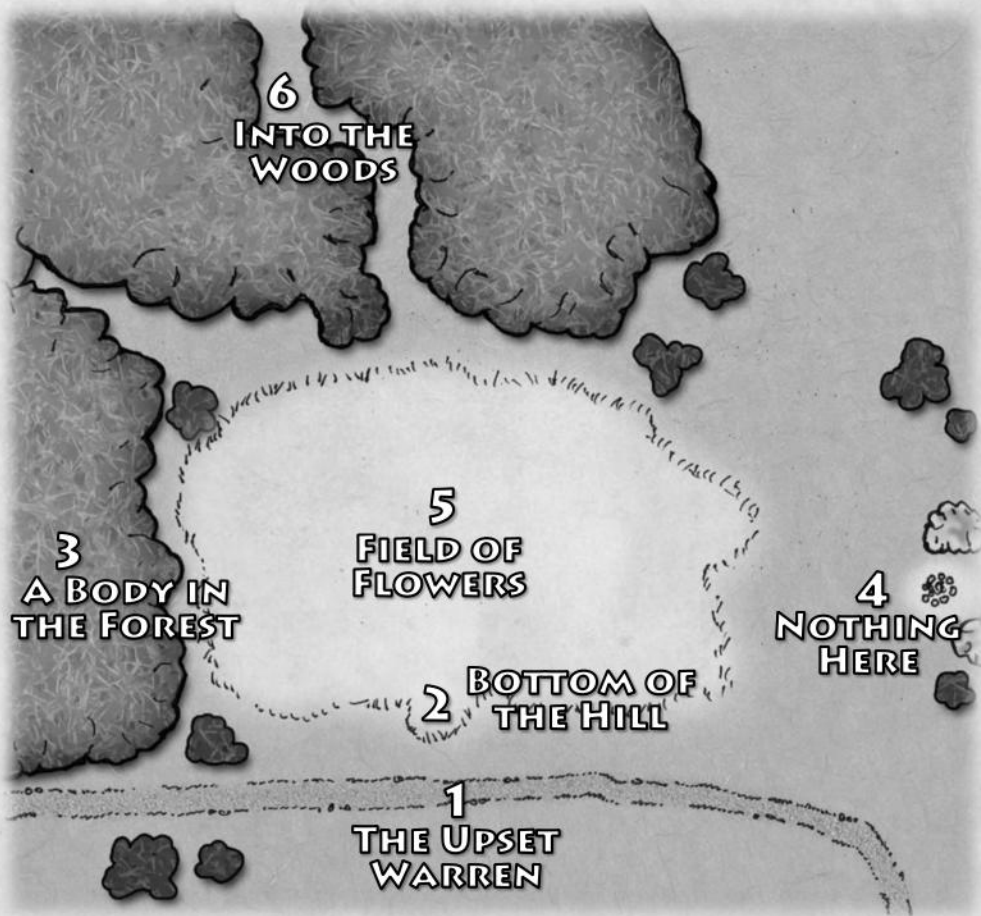
LOG: 65 **DR:** 2

WIL: 65 **MOV:** 12



- » **Razor Fur Tentacles** - 85%, range 1, effect 2D+3. Each turn thereafter target takes 1D damage (bypass DR) as long as the tentacle-suctions are attached.
- » **Claws** - 70%, damage 3D
- » **Unsettling Appearance** - usage 1/encounter, duration continuous, resist WIL-20, effect lose first action.

MAP OF THE TRAIL



SECTION 3: THE OGRES' CAMP

After their encounter with the mutant child, the party follows the trail a few hundred yards farther. Soon they come to the top of a low rise that overlooks the entrance to the cave where the ogres make their home. Outside two uninjured young ogres are poking around the wreckage of the carriage. Screams can be heard coming from inside the cave. See Map of the Ogre's Camp on page 10.

ENCOUNTER 1: GATE KEEPERS

The party first has to get past the **two ogres** at the front of the cave. This can be done with a thief check or by fighting them. If the party sneaks past, they will have to sneak past them again to escape after they rescue the survivors.

If they fight them, 3 turns into the fight they will be **joined by any survivors from Section 1** who were able to get away into the forest. After the fight the party will find Bret Mullings (Human Teamster 50%) who has been left for dead in the carriage wreckage. The ogres have no treasure.

ENCOUNTER 2: OUT OF THE SUNLIGHT INTO THE DINING ROOM

This large open room has a large cauldron bubbling over an open fire. One of the survivors is being butchered by the ogres. Have the PC's make a WIL check or be surprised on their first turn. The **four older ogres** will grab their greatspear and attack the party on sight (one is the **ogre chief** with +10BP and a great flail). If the party tried to sneak in they may have more ogres to deal with if the ones they fought in Section 1 survived. Every ogre has 2D gold in leather pouches, the ogre chief has 5D.

There are three survivors from the coach here. One is wounded and will need medical attention. The sight of a wounded individual imposes a -10% penalty to any WIL checks to stop fighting if a

Ogre (Rank 2)

STR: 85	BP: 40
DEX: 55	INIT: 1
LOG: 25	DR: 2
WIL: 40	MOV: 12

- » Greatspear 60%, damage 3D+6, range 15
- » Furs (reason for DR2)



SCALING THE OGRE CAMP

GAMEMASTER TIPS

In many fantasy games, ogres are mighty foes inappropriate for low-level adventures. In this game, players are a bit more capable than that. This adventure was balanced for a typical rank 1 party consisting of spellcasters and warriors alike. During all playtesting, the number of ogres encountered in this adventure seemed fairly well balanced. If encountering so many ogres in one place is too dangerous for your players, scale it back to 1 ogre per player.

Ogre Chief (Rank 2)

STR: 85	BP: 50
DEX: 55	INIT: 1
LOG: 25	DR: 3
WIL: 40	MOV: 12

- » Greatspear 60%, damage 3D+6, range 15
- » Great Flail 60%, damage 3D+6
- » Heavy Furs (reason for DR3)



character is still effected by the *giant's fist orchid*.

After the fight the party will need to hurry if the survivors are to recover from their wounds. The fastest path is back to the main road. Hopefully the party remembers to grab the chest and glass bottles from the coach. Unfortunately the glass bottles that made up most of Whitelock's order have been smashed by the ogres and are unusable.

Players insisting on exploring the rest of the ogre's camp will find the north-west corner of the dining room contains a sleeping chamber where a pile of maggot-infested meat lies discarded on the floor, around which is a ring of fur and cloth piled into beds. The southeast corner contains a storage room with various foods (1D rations can be gathered) share shelf space with random items acquired from raids on merchant wagons worth a total of 10D gold pieces if brought to market in Shield Home.

MAP OF THE OGRE'S CAMP



FINAL NOTES

When the party returns to Shield Home they will find that Whitelock has been called away unexpectedly and they will have to wait a day or two to receive payment and make their report. What happens while they wait will be detailed in this adventure's sequel: *The Children of the Giant's Fist*.

APPENDIX

NPCS & CREATURES

VINCENT WHITELOCK

Human Merchant NPC

STR: 58 **BP:** 29
DEX: 60 **INIT:** 2
LOG: 69 **DR:** 3
WIL: 60 **MOV:** 8

Rank: 2
Primary: Enchanter
Secondary: Scholar

Skills:

- » Enchanter (2) 75%
- » Scout (0) 35%
- » Thief (2) 50%
- » Warrior (0)
- melee 29%
- ranged 30%
- » Scholar (3) 75%

Equipment:

- » purse with 75gp
- » set of keys
- » nice clothes
- » pouch with small stones inscribed with runes.
- » studded leather armor

Weapons:

- » Dagger - 29%, damage 1D
- » Unarmed - 29%, damage 1D/2

MUTANT CHILD

Vicious furred humanoids with long tails and sharp claws.

STR: 65 **BP:** 30
DEX: 60 **INIT:** 3
LOG: 65 **DR:** 2
WIL: 65 **MOV:** 12

Rank: 3
Nature: Evil

Travel: 10 leagues

- » **Razor Fur Tentacles** - 85%, range 1, effect 2D+3. Each turn thereafter target takes 1D damage (bypass DR) as long as the tentacle-suctions are attached.
- » **Claws** - 70%, damage 3D
- » **Unsettling Appearance** - usage 1/encounter, duration continuous, resist WIL-20, effect opponents loose first action



OGRES OF THE SHIELD HOME REGION

Ogres are rank 2 creatures detailed in the BareBones Fantasy™ core rulebook. There are 4 adult ogres in the lair (two male and two female) and four adult sons patrolling. This clan makes use of greatspears and wears scraps of heavy furs taken from kills as armor (DR2). The leader has +10BP, heavier furs (DR3), and carries a great flail which is used after he hurls his greatspear at the nearest "puny magic man" – a tactic that has been surprisingly successful in his life.

RATMEN

Vicious furred humanoids with long tails and sharp claws.

STR: 40

BP: 8

Rank: 1

DEX: 70

INIT: 1

Nature: Evil

LOG: 45

DR: 0

WIL: 55

MOV: 10

Travel: 10 leagues

» **Spear** - 60%, damage 2D+2

» **Long Knife** - 65%, damage 1D+1



There are several ratmen encounters in this adventure. The ratmen of this region tend to live in small groups rather than large hordes, and share their living environment with dire rats and other vermin. Many of the ratmen found in this adventure make regular use of *giant's fist orchids*, and have become very violent as a result.

NEW EQUIPMENT

DART, THROWING

A small hand-hurled needle-tipped weapon sometimes coated with toxins. Damage 1D/2, range 10, quantity 5, market cost 2gp.

GREAT FLAIL

A large weapon made of a wooden handle, a massive weight for a business-end, and a chain connecting the two. Damage 3D, minimum STR 72, market cost 50gp.

GREATSPEAR

A shaft of ironwood as thick around as a man's forearm and nearly seven feet in length. Made and used by the ogres of this region. Damage 3D, minimum STR 80, range 15 spaces, market cost 80gp.

LONG KNIFE

An extra-long heavy knife for when that standard dagger just isn't enough. Damage 1D+1, market cost 4gp

SLEEPING TOXIN

A red, naturally occurring substance. Resist STR-10, effect fall unconscious for 2D turns. Not normally found in markets, the secrets of the location of growth patches kept by few lone scholars and scouts in the kingdoms.

HERB LORE

Angel's tongue - healing herb used in the creation of healing potions.

Flame's kiss grass - orange and red grass that grows in large fields. Named for its color, it is a typical inexpensive ingredient sometimes used in the creation of fire-based potions.

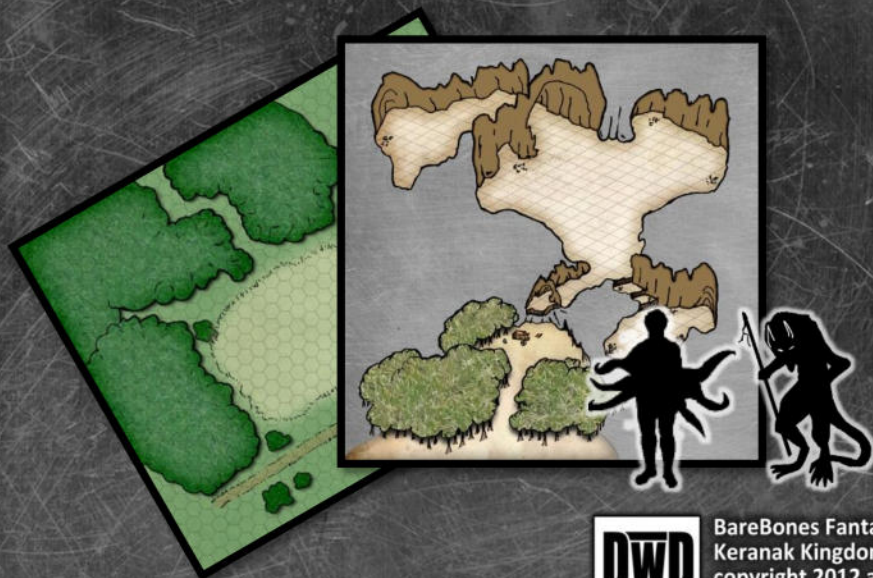
Giant's fist orchid - has the appearance of stone, but is soft and velvety to the touch. When inhaled, the user is granted increased strength and resilience (+5 damage to melee attacks and DR5) for 1D/2 hours, but becomes aggressive and hard to control.

A BIGGER PROBLEM

BY QUINN
CONKLIN

When you and your friends agreed to help protect a merchant's wagon on its way to Shield Home in the Keranak Province, none of you expected what lies ahead.

This is a rank 1 adventure for the BareBones Fantasy™ role-playing game. It is set in the Keranak Kingdoms™, but could be placed anywhere in any setting. Written by Quinn Conklin, this is the first in a three part story arc which is continued in *Children of the Giant's Fist*.



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