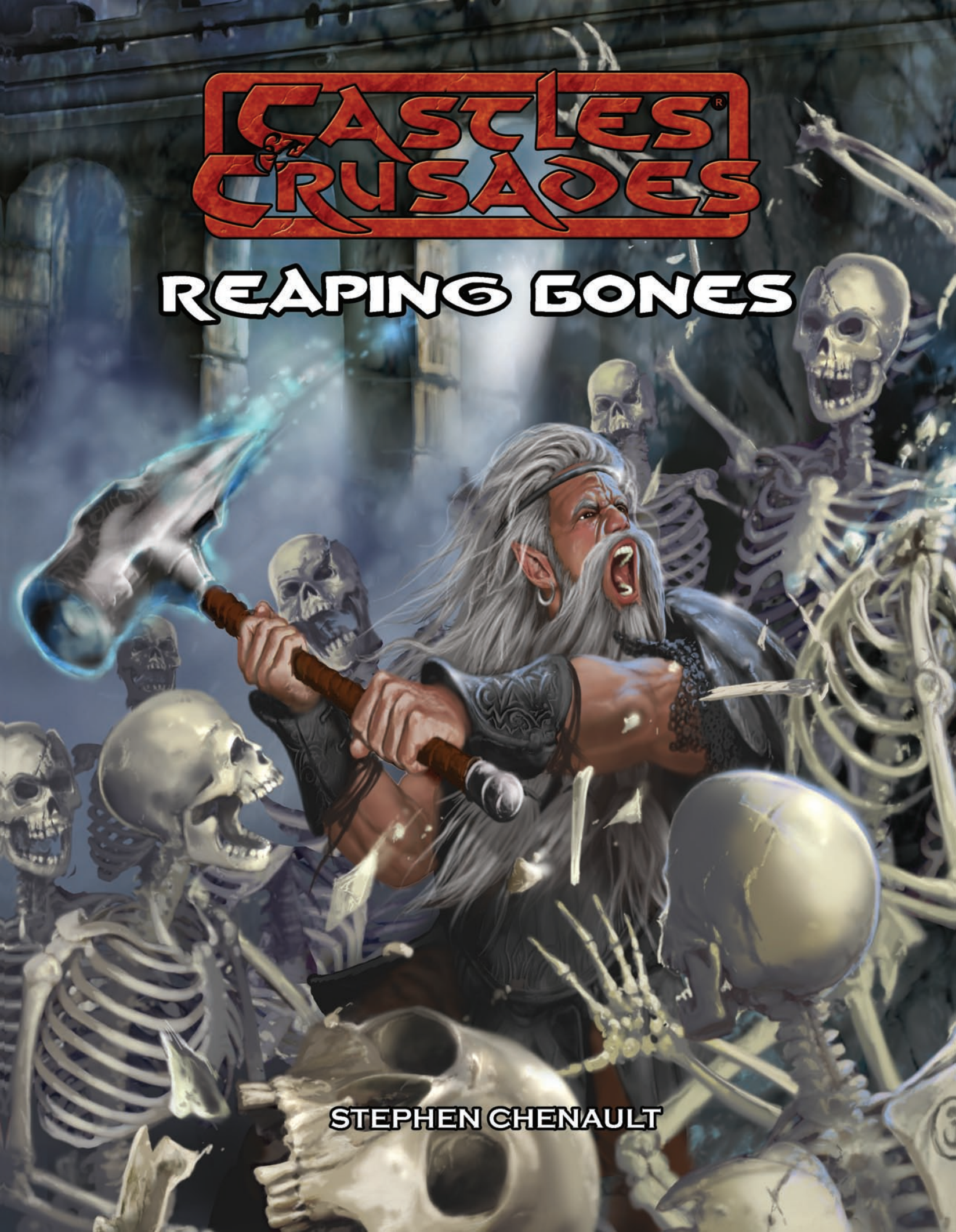


# CASTLES CRUSADES

## REAPING BONES



STEPHEN CHENAULT

# REAPING BONES

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for 3-5 characters at 4<sup>th</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup>  
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## REAPING BONES

Reaping Bones is an adventure designed for 3-5 characters of 4th-6th level characters. Players may find a ranger, elf or druid helpful, though their inclusion in the party is not necessary. The adventure is set in the world of Aihrde, but can be ported to almost any other setting, published or home-brew. If you are playing a campaign, do not feel compelled to consign the adventure to the Tar Kiln if your campaign is off world (in your own world) or in another part of the Lands of Ursal. The ruins of the temple port anywhere and the names of the players are universal, even Nunt.

Reaping Bones plunges the characters into the Tar Kiln, a wild region of broken forest, deep gulches, tar pits and felled beasts. Here the ancient world of the Ethvold once stood, where gods walked with men, but now, all that is past, and only echoes of those long-gone days remain. But they are echoes that haunt the living and such it is with Brian, Lord of Helliwell, for his young son has been stolen from him, taken by mercenaries of his errant King and hauled into the wilds. And as he turns south with his host to confront his lord, he sends men of his own, experienced adventurers after his boy. So the characters find themselves entering the Tar Kiln and the wilds whose echoes carry a terror that only the bold can face. For in them lurk monsters from the edge of nightmare.

### INTRODUCTION

Brian, Lord of Helliwell, rules his people with benevolent neglect. He asks no more of them than their oaths require, nor does he give them any more than his oaths demand. However, he is very careful with those rights, never taking them away, nor even threatening to, for he takes oaths seriously. So when the young King Eadore called upon him to send all men of serviceable age to attend him in battle, including Lord Brian and his knights. Brian refused, for his people were not bound to the King in such a manner. He promised him only himself and the requisite knights and men at arms.

Protecting his people brought the wrath of the King upon Brian, and that young monarch played a heavy hand. Sending mercenaries to the north, he attacked Brian's castle while that Lord was on the hunt. They slew many of his guards and though ordered to slay the boy, they failed to do so, kidnapping him instead. They took him to the north where they knew orcs would pay a hefty sum for him.

But even as Brian was rallying men to his banner and planning his next move, the mercenaries met their own end.

In the wilds lay an ancient temple, built to Nunt, the god of death, fish and all things with scales. Here one of his servants, a 5-headed hydra, dwelt for countless years, lying in the ruins, feeding on the unwary. Of the five heads, one possesses a wicked intelligence, able to wield minor magics and sorcery.

Though Nunt's worship lay deep in the world's past, some still call to him, seeking the power that only one who crawls upon



the Arc of Time can offer. So it was that, when Ribald found the hydra in the temple, for him to turn his worship to the god of death. Other came to him and they sacrificed wild beasts and wilder men to the hydra, feeding it, empowering it. So it has been for many years, these mendicant priests hunting the wilds for their master.

Through divination they learned of Brian's son and his kidnapping and when they informed the hydra of it, it struck a cord within him and he thought that if he could control a noble born boy, then that boy, once raised and corrupted in the temple, could lead him and his followers into the wider world and to greater power. So he instructed the clerics to meet the mercenaries at a crossroad, slay them and take the boy.

This they did. And now the boy lies at the feet of the hydra in the temple of bones in the Tar Kiln, far from aid.

Brian of course does not know this; he knows the boy is headed to the slave pits of the orcs on the far side of the Tar Kiln. He would pursue the boy himself but must first face the King. To do so has rallied all his available men and is heading south to press his case before the Lords and Ladies of the realm. For he knows if he does not go himself, the King will consider him having broken his oath. He will lose his lands, his people their lands, and everyone their rights.

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Whether he knows them or knows of them, he summons the characters to his aid. It is up to the enterprising characters to find the boy, rescue him and return him to his father. This will allow Brian time to deflect the King's wrath and save the people.

## REWARDS

Brian cares little for worldly wealth, but rather about the rights granted to him through oaths and tradition. As such, he offers the characters similar rewards. But he is not blind to the machinations of the world and understands coin often speaks louder than land. So the following rewards are offered to the characters should they bring the boy back alive:

**LAND:** Each member of the party who returns, or their designated heir should they not return, shall be granted 20 hides of land and the rank and title of Knight. They shall owe 30 days of service each year to Brian and his heirs for this land; however, the land shall be owned by the character and his/her descendants and cannot be taken away unless the oaths are broken.

**COIN:** Furthermore, each character will be given 1,000gp worth of coin or equipment.

**MOVABLE GOODS:** And lastly, each shall be given a riding horse with full tack and harness, a satchel with 15 days of food, sleeping gear, tinder box and two water flasks for the journey.

## INVOLVING THE PLAYERS

- 1) If Reaping Bones is played at a convention, it is easiest to start the adventure after the journey has begun. Do not give the characters a choice to say no to Lord Brian. Begin the adventure on the road as the characters move north into the Tar Kiln, and then explain why they are there.
- 2) If the characters are part of an on going group, yet do not have any affiliation with Brian or any other lord, it is easy to place them in the town near Brian's castle at the time of the attack. Allow that the characters are traveling in one direction or the other, finding themselves in the Two Tall tavern and inn, eating and resting. The talk in the tavern is about the raid and the Brian's dilemma, how the Lord seeks someone brave and strong enough to retrieve his son so that he can save the county.
- 3) The CK may be running a party with no inclination to become involved in any adventure of search and rescue. Place the first encounter, the Crossroads, in the party's path and then position the temple itself in their path as well so that they cannot help but encounter the adventure as it is laid out. Once the baby is found, it is up to them to do something with him. Though all the lands about are abuzz with talk of the kidnapped child.
- 4) Rescuing the child may be too complicated a plot twist for a fast paced game. In that case, discard all the back-story and place the encounter areas on the path in front of the characters. Discard all mention of the child in the encounters or after them, distributing treasure as normal.

## ENTERING THE TAR KILN

The temple lies about a week's travel north of the Lord Helliwell's land. It lies in the trackless wilderness of the Tar Kiln. The characters must travel up into the wilds, following the very clear trail of the kidnappers. The Castle Keeper should roll normal random encounters, or if they desire, a table is written below for quick use.

The Tar Kiln is a wilderness area. It once served as the crown of an ancient forest called the Ethvold, though that forest is gone, and only a few vestiges remain. The Kiln is a dangerous region, for no civilized forces have conquered it in living memory.

The lands roll with gentle and wooded hills and are cut by many clear flowing streams and creeks. Small ponds and lakes are fed by deep clear springs. But these pleasant vistas belie the region's real dangers. The Tar Kiln earns its name, for it is littered with tar pits, constantly bubbling, oozing the ichor of the world's birth upon the green grasses. These pits are deadly dangerous for once snared, few escape them. They are the favored hunting ground of bull headed men and the Jolmuen, boar men with four arms (see Monsters & Treasure of Aihrde).

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

This chart details encounters that occur while traveling in the Tar Kiln. Roll a d10 for random encounters; a roll of one indicates an encounter occurs. Check for encounters twice during the day and twice at night. If an encounter occurs, roll a d20 to determine the type. Two of the encounters are weather or terrain related.

1. **ASSASSIN VINE** (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 29, AC 15. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 8 vines doing 1d4 damage each, with a failed strength save by the victim indicating constriction. Constriction means the victim blacks out in 3 rounds and will be strangled to death in 3 more if not freed. Its special abilities are constrict, improved grab, camouflage and resistance to cold and fire.)
2. **BANDITS** (These are neutral, 2nd level fighters whose vital stats are HP 13 and AC 15. Their primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. Their significant attributes are strength 14. They wear scale mail and shields, and carry battle-axes and have 10-20gp worth of jewelry and coin upon them.)
3. **BONERAKER** (This evil creature's vital stats are HD 6d8, AC 16, HP 48. Its primary attributes are mental. It attacks with a bite attack for 1-10 points of damage. The boneraker is able to regenerate hits points at the rate of 1-8 hit points per round for 8 rounds of combat.)
4. **GIANT, FIRE, 1** (This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 12d8, AC 23, HP 61. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 2 fists for 2d8 points of damage or by weapon for 5d6 points of damage. It can throw rocks 450 feet for 2d10 points of damage. It has full immunity to fire, but suffers double damage from all cold-based attacks. He carries a satchel with 300gp in assorted coin, a healing potion and a spell book with 5 1st level spells in it.)

- 5. GNOLL, 8** (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 16, AC 15. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a club or whip for 1d6 points of damage or a slam for 2d4 points of damage. They possess chain hauberk, shield, whip, club, and a pouch with 18gp and 32sp.)
- 6. JOLMUEN 2** (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 9d8, AC 13, HP 62, 59. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with 2 hooves for 1d4 points of damage, gore for 1d8 points of damage, or by weapon x4. They have an acute sense of smell that allows them to sense danger, affording them a +2 to all surprise rolls. They can trample an opponent if desired; the target must make a successful dexterity save or the Jolmuen attack with two hoof attacks for +5 on each attack roll. They each have 150gp in assorted coin and one carries a potion of flying he stole from one of his victims.)
- 7. MINOTAUR** (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 7d8, AC 14, HP 42. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a head butt for 2d4 points of damage, a bite for 1d4 points of damage or by weapon gaining a +4 on all damage attacks. It has a powerful charge that allows for a single gore attack at +9 to hit and for 4d6+6 damage. It is immune to maze spells and are uncanny trackers. They often travels with saber tooth tigers. It carries 200gp worth of jewelry that is worn.)
- 8. ROGUES X 3** (These chaotic evil 3rd level rogues vital stats are HP 11 and AC 13. Their primary attributes are dexterity, wisdom, and intelligence. Their significant attributes are dexterity 14 and intelligence 13. They wear leather armor, and carry short swords and 10-60gp worth of jewelry and coin.)
- 9. OGRES X 5** (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 4, AC 16, HP 13, 17, 22, 22, 28. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a weapon for 1d10+3 points of damage or their powerful fists for 1d10 points of damage (one attack, one damage). They have dark and twilight vision. They each have 10-60gp in coin.)
- 10. ORCS, 6-24** (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 12, HP variable. Their primary attributes are physical. They carry leather armor, short swords, clubs and 1-6gp in jewelry.)
- 11. PIXIES** (These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 7, leader HP 4, AC 16. Their primary attributes are mental. Their special abilities are polymorph self, permanent illusion (1/day), know alignment, confusion (permanent duration unless removed with remove curse), dispel magic (8th level effect) (1/day), dancing lights (1/day), detect thoughts, and sleep (10% chance) (1/day). They attack with 3 types of special arrows: Type I does 2-5 damage, Type II requires a constitution save or sleep for 1-6 turns and Type III which requires a initiative save or lose all memories and skills/levels. Each pixie has 4 arrows of each type and gains a +4 BTH to hit with them. Their spell resistance is 6.)
- 12. SABER TOOTH TIGER, 2** (These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 8d8, AC 17, HP 56, 48. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two claws for 1d4 points of damage each, or a bite for 2d8 points of damage. If a saber tooth successfully bites, it can take two rake attacks with its hind legs. These attacks have an additional +4 bonus to hit, and inflict 1d4+2 points of damage. The saber tooth has twilight vision and scent and can leap up to 20 feet.)
- 13. SHADOW MASTIFF, 2** (This neutral evil creatures' vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 23, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a single bite for 2d4 points of damage. They are able to blend with darkness, have a bay attack that can cause fear for those who fail their save. On a successful bite, the victim must make a successful dexterity check or be tripped. They have darkvision 60 feet.)
- 14. SPIDER, LARGE, WOLF, 1-4** (These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 19, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a bite, for 1d3 points of damage. Their special abilities are jump 30 feet and their bite delivers poison. A constitution save must be made or the person bitten is paralyzed for 48 hours.)
- 15. STORM:** (A violent storms whips up, dumping 4-6 inches of rain on the party. Shelter is hard to find and unless magical protection is sought or a cave or house entered, the party is soaked through to the bone. Any camp or journey in a small gulch or narrow defile is flooded and the characters risk losing equipment. Creeks and rivers flood. Crossing them requires necessary attribute checks (CK's choice) with an additional +5 CL added to whatever the base CL is (depending on the body of water crossed).
- 16. TAR PIT:** The characters enter a tar pit that is largely invisible, covered in weeds and moss. To see the pit they must make a successful wisdom spot check (CL 6). Failing that, they enter the pit. The CK must roll on a d20 how many feet they enter before they become stuck, 1-20 feet. Once they are stuck the character begins to sink, very slowly. They must make a successful dexterity check (CL 4) to stop sinking. After that they must make a successful strength check to pull themselves out (CL 6) for every five feet of tar they must cross through before they escape. For instance, if they moved 10 feet into the pit, they must make two successful strength checks to get out. Regardless of the outcome of the strength check, each round a person is in the tar adds 1 to the CL of the strength check and they sink a further 6 inches. Once they sink beneath the tar, they die. Also each round one is in the tar pit, they suffer 1d4 points of burn damage.
- 17. TROLL, 1-4** (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 6d8, HP 40, AC 16. Their primary attributes are physical. Their special abilities are darkvision, twilight vision and regeneration for 2 hit points per round. They attack with 2 claws that do 1d4 damage each and a bite that does 21d4+1 damage.)
- 18. UNKLAR'S BREATH, 4** (These creatures vital stats are HD 1d10, AC 17, HP 7. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with a paralysis attack. Anyone who inhales the breath of Unklar, must make a successful constitution save or be paralyzed for 2d4 rounds. For each round paralyzed the

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victim takes 1d4 points of damage as the breath eats away the lungs. A remove curse, remove paralysis, dispel magic, neutralize poison, remove disease or similar spell, or any healing potion or magic item cures the victim of the paralysis, though not the damage taken.)

**19. WILL O' WISP** (This neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 9d8, HP 55, AC 29. Its primary attributes are mental. It attacks with a shocking touch that does 2d8 damage. Its special abilities are dark vision to 60 ft., immunity to magic and natural invisibility.)

**20. WOLVES** (These neutral creature's vital stats HD 2d8, HP 8, 10, 12, 12, 14, 15, AC 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a bite for 2-8 points of damage.)

## FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

Though there are no roads in the Tar Kiln, or none worth speaking of, but there are many game trails. The ground here is damp, littered with bogs and tar pits as noted above and travelers, unless they take precautions, are likely to leave a trail. Such is the case with the mercenaries. They are 8 in number, mounted and riding fast.

A ranger can track them with a successful track check (CL 2), determine how many there are in the group and that they are lightly equipped in armor and weapons. Signs along the road indicate the baby is still alive, small human excrement at several points along the trail (CL 4).

Non-rangers can follow the trail in the mud, but they cannot determine how many they are or any other information about them.

## THE WILD MAN

Two days after leaving Lord Helliwell's land, the party finds themselves camped upon a flat, upland plateau. In the north, about a mile's distance is a long rocky bluff, roughly a dozen feet high. Several clefts cut the bluff where water runs off in the wet season and is running off now if it is Spring and raining.

To the east and west the country opens up, broken only by the occasional rocky outcrop or copse of trees.

*In the early evening, after the sun has set, but before the moon or stars have come out to blanket the world in their silver light, you begin to settle in for the night. But before your bedrolls are warmed, a light flares up to the north, clearly perched upon the top of the bluff you noted earlier. It seems a bonfire at first, but the flames flicker, calm down and then seem to roll across the ground. A figure, small, and unclear at this distance walks between you and the flame, a staff or spear in his hand.*

There is no way the party can tell what the figure is or what he is doing unless they have some sorcery that allows them to see in the dark at great distances. To find out what he is doing, they must cover the ground between them and the fire.

The figure is one of the wild men of the Tar Kiln. They often travel with saber tooth tigers with which they have a symbiotic relationship. This wild man is no exception; he is in

fact traveling with two. Presently he is unaware of the party, spending the early evening making a sacrifice to one of his many gods, by setting a tar pit, slick with oils, on fire. He walks around the tar pit with his staff, breaking the surface of the liquid, allowing more gases to range up and catch fire. This is causing the moving fire effect.

One of the saber tooth tigers lies near the tar pit, watching the human. The other is east of him several hundred yards, hunting for small game.

## IGNORING THE WILD MAN

If the characters do not investigate the wild man, the hunting saber tooth tiger discovers their camp about midnight. It moves off into the dark and roars once, the sound of which carries for miles in every direction, no doubt alerting the watch. The roar's real purpose is to summon his hunting companion, and both attack the camp, attempting to drag out the weakest.

## APPROACHING THE WILD MAN

Any number of routes of approach is available to the characters.

Approaching from the south, when they get within 500 feet or so, they can see the man clearly up on the bluff, moving about. They cannot see the saber tooth tiger.

The characters can approach from several different directions. They can attempt to sneak up on him from the the east. If they do this they run into the hunting saber tooth. If they come at him from the south, because he is still on the edge of the bluff, they will be beneath him, though hidden in shadow (all hide checks are CL8) But they will still have to climb the bluff.

If they approach from the west or the north, the road is open and the party has the chance of seeing the one saber tooth tiger laying down with a successful wisdom check (CL 5). If they do spot the tiger, it is unlikely they will know what it is, as it's laying in the shadows. Unless the roll is extremely high, remark that some "large beast lies upon the far side of the fire. Its head is huge, and its eye catches the light of the fire."

If they move to the east, the tiger is likely to hear them, unless they make a successful hide and move silently check. All such checks are made against the saber's hit dice (CL 8). If the saber tooth hears them it begins stalking them, angling for the smallest and the one it perceives to be the weakest. It waits until it is within pouncing distance and then leaps.

If the wild man is alerted to the presence of the party, he turns to run. If cornered, he turns to fight. The saber joins him in either situation. However, if the saber is hit at any time, it turns to attack its tormentors. The man will fight by the saber's side unless it looks like he might get killed. In that case he runs, calling to the saber tooth to follow with a series of whistles. It is up to the CK if the saber breaks off combat. If the first saber is engaged, the second one joins the fray.

**WILD MEN AND SABERS:** The relationship between the two species is not master to pet, but rather two creatures that find it advantageous to hunt and migrate together. They

communicate via growls and whistles and body gestures. The man cannot command the tigers to do one thing or the other, but the beasts always defer to the wild men where other people are concerned. So for instance, he can whistle and the cat will leave off the attack. It will not, of course, ever stop defending itself.

**HARLU, WILD MAN** (This 5th level, neutral ranger's vital stats are AC 16, HP 42. His primary attributes are strength, wisdom and dexterity. His extraordinary attributes are strength 18, dexterity 16 and constitution 15. In battle he carries a quarterstaff that does 1d8 points of damage. On a successful hit of 19 or 20 (unaltered) he has the chance of disarming his foe. Anyone thus struck must make a successful dexterity check (CL 5) or be disarmed. He carries nothing of value but a magical jade necklace that imparts +2 to the AC. It is worth 500gp. The wild man has tattoos that give him a +2 on his AC.)

**SABER TOOTH TIGER, 2** (These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 8d8, AC 17, HP 56, 48. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with two claws for 1d4 points of damage each, or a bite for 2d8 points of damage. If a saber tooth successfully bites, it can take two rake attacks with its hind legs. These attacks have an additional +4 bonus to hit, and inflict 1d4+2 points of damage. The saber tooth has twilight vision and scent and can leap up to 20 feet.)

#### COMMUNICATING WITH THE WILD MAN

If approached, cornered, captured or in some way engaged, the wild man freely passes along the information that he has to the party.

He gives his name, as noted, explaining that he was making sacrifices to Amenut of the Wild, a god as ancient as Nunt. He tells the party that the men they are hunting passed this way a little more than a day or so ago, but that an ambush waited them on the road. And by the signs of the buzzards he witnessed late the previous day they fell to it. If so, anything of value they had was carted north to the Temple of Nunt where the spirit of that god remains.

*It is an evil place and houses the spirits of the dead, all the dead who have fallen upon the roofless house. I have never been, nor, gods willing, will I go for there is a beast there who knows the minds of men and can read what shall come to pass. It is evil and conniving and recently men have come to it and made sacrifice to it of flesh, both living and dead. It is those men that ambushed your horsemen and those who took whatever you are seeking back to the dark master.*

He has no idea about the baby of course, but assumes they are after some treasure or the other. If asked kindly he'll join the party and guide them as far as the bluff that houses the temple. He will not under any circumstances climb the bluff, or enter the temple grounds.

#### GENTLEMAN TRAVELER INN AND TAVERN

About a day north of the bluff, following the trail of the mercenaries lays the Gentleman Traveler Inn and Tavern. It's a squalid hole built inside a low hill and flanked by a large sinkhole that contains a trash filled tar pit.

*The land breaks up into a series of broad shallow gulches but the path of the mercenaries winds clearly in front of you. As evening falls you spy a column of smoke north of you. It's constant, with few billows or upsets and drifts lazily off in the wind. Topping a rise you spy the source, a small sod and thatched building set on the path. A second building, long and narrow sits behind it and a large sinkhole appears next to it, a mist of steam rising from its depths. A sign hangs out front, gently creaking in the wind.*

The inn consists of 3 buildings, the main inn, a long, narrow building that looks like a stall but in fact houses 8 rooms for travelers, and a small barn/slaughter house. A pigpen behind the inn houses a dozen or so grunting pigs and a few cows, all living in abject misery.

The sign is too washed out and old to reveal what it once ,if anything, said.

The proprietor, Flint Long in the Tooth, greets any and all customers with a warm welcome of "Greetings my Gentleman (and Gentlewoman if necessary) Travelers! Welcome to my inn and tavern. Make yourselves at home."

Flint is a foul-mouthed, dirty little man about 5 and a half feet tall and weighing about 130 pounds. His skin is far too small for his frame, and his bones protrude everywhere, especially in his skull, where his eye sockets are sunk deep and his eyes shadowed by the brow of his skull. He wears filthy clothes, has never bathed (a fact he mentions frequently), and wears no shoes, exposing his yellowed, thick, toenails for all to admire. Over all this is a bloody apron, in such a state of disrepair and covered in such filth (animal tissue and other) that it too looks as if it were never washed. He wears a battered horn over his chest, tied off with strips of stained leather.

He is mean to boot, with a streak of cruelty in him that has set him in good company with almost anyone that comes to his tavern, be they humans, orcs or other creatures. He enjoys watching someone suffer, but only inflicts such pain if he knows it won't come back to haunt him.

He is fearful as well, watching his words carefully, complimenting strangers constantly, overmuch in some cases. If forced into battle he summons his demon with the horn at his side (see below).

His only company in the wilds, aside from the occasional traveler, is a young woman, Edguth by name, whom he bought from a caravan some few years ago. She cleans and cooks most of the food and serves any who come there. He beats her mercilessly whenever she makes a mistake, which at times may be simply looking at a patron. He will not part with her for anything less than 500gp.

## 6 CASTLES & CRUSADES

He only serves a type of honey mead, buttermilk and a variety of foods. All drinks are served in drinking horns and food served up on old plates with two-pronged forks.

### Menu

|                              |             |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Honey mead per horn          | 2sp         |
| Buttermilk per horn          | 1sp         |
| Bread, loaf                  | 2sp         |
| Meat*                        | 3sp         |
| Butter                       | 1cp         |
| Fruits                       | 1sp/serving |
| Meal of all the above w/mead | 6sp         |

\* This is generally some type of wild game he has captured or bought from hunters. It consists of one of the following: deer, elk, beaver, rodent (weasel, rat, etc), rabbit, squirrel, turkey or duck. The CK should chose or roll.

### What Flint Knows:

On the previous day Flint served the mercenaries and if the characters talk about it at all, he quickly discerns what they are doing. He'll part with information for gold. For every piece of information he offers, he haggles them out of more money.

For a gold piece he tells them that there were 8 riders that passed through the day before, that they were lightly armed and not very talkative. He saw the baby they were carrying and it seemed in good health.

For an additional gold piece he explains that they were headed north along the Gully Trail.

If pressed he hints he knows more, so for additional gold he explains about the ambush.

For an additional gold piece he explains that it was probably the priests of Nunt that dwell in the Temple of Nunt to the north.

Another gold and he tells them that the priests worship some ancient snake god, and that god has taken form in the Temple.

**NOTE:** Any learned character may know who Nunt is; allow them to make an intelligence check, or class check in the case of legend lore (CL 4). If they are successful they know that Nunt is the god of death.

**FLINT LONG IN THE TOOTH** (*This neutral evil 3rd level, male, human rogue's vital stats are HP 18, AC 15. His primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence and charisma. His significant attributes are dexterity 18 and intelligence 15. He uses a meat cleaver in combat. The cleaver is enchanted, so that wounds caused by the blade bleed profusely. Every wound continues to bleed for 2 points of damage per round until healed, bandaged etc. He wears a +2 ring of protection in his left ear. He carries nothing but a little coin, about 10gp, on his person. The greater part of his treasure is kept in a cask in the tar pit, in the sinkhole. He wears his horn of summoning at all times.*)

If he blows the demon horn, it summons a creature from within the horn. It appears the round after the horn is sounded.

**DEMON** (*This chaotic evil demon's vital stats are HD 4, AC 18, HP 30. Its primary attributes are physical. Its attacks with two claws for 1d4 points of damage or a bite for 1d2 points of damage. It has a 2 SR and regenerates 1 hp per round. Its voice is deep and it sings in measured tones that captivate any one target for 1d4 rounds if they fail to make their charisma save.*)

**EDGUTH** (*This chaotic good 2nd level, female, half elf ranger's vital stats are HP 14, AC 12. Her primary attributes are strength and dexterity. Her significant attributes are dexterity 16. She has no weapons or gear.*)

Edguth is a half-elf. Her father was human, and her mother an elf. Both served Brian of Helliwell long ago; her father, Edgar was a close friend of the paladin. Both parents were slain by raiders and she was captured when she was very young by an orc chief, who placed the rune of command upon her neck. She was later sold and used as an interpreter by a human merchant, but this only brought the wrath of elves she was speaking with. He escaped (though the rest of his caravan did not) with the slave and in frustration, sold her to Flint to be rid of her. Flint has kept her as a house slave, forcing all menial tasks upon her.

Edguth is bound to servitude by a rune of command placed upon her neck by the orc who captured her. It is this rune that keeps her from turning on her master. It can be removed with a dispel magic, remove curse, heal or any similar spell.

**FREEING EDGUTH:** Anyone who frees or attempts to free Edguth gains the wrath of Flint. If freed she offers to aid the party in any way. She is a good hunter and tracker and knows the country well. She has never been, but has seen the Temple of Nunt. If she is returned to Brian's domain at the end of the adventure, the Paladin doubles the monetary award for all involved.

**KILLING FLINT:** If threatened or attacked, Flint sounds his horn and summons the demon, ordering it to attack immediately. He avoids battle hoping that the demon can do the necessary business. If forced to fight he does so, but if pressed and it looks like all is lost, he falls to his knees weeping and blubbing, begging for his life. He gives up the location of his treasure only as a last resort.

**TAVERN:** The tavern consists of two rooms, a large common room with a fireplace on the north wall. It has 10 long tables in it and a low bar propped up on four barrels. The room has only a few narrow windows, usually shuttered and is dark and musty. The heavy smell of soot and body odor dominates the room. It is lit by a series of candelabra set on the bar, in wall sconces and on the tables.

**INN:** This poorly constructed building consists of 8 rooms joined by a common roof and a covered walkway. Each room is 10 x 10 feet and has 2 cots. The walls are made of rough planks, split and joined. Gaps between them are filled with mud, though in many places the mud has fallen away leaving innumerable peepholes in each of the rooms.

The outside is dirty and run down and the inside not much better.

Rooms rent for 5sp a night.

**BARN:** The barn is a small structure near the sinkhole with two entrances, one facing the courtyard and the other overlooking the sinkhole.

It serves as a slaughterhouse. The main room contains hooks hanging from the ceiling. The floor is covered in dried grasses. The whole place stinks of death and blood. There is almost always a fresh animal carcass or two hanging from the ceiling.

**SINKHOLE:** The sinkhole is large, about 50 feet in diameter and about 20 feet deep. The floor of the hole is covered in thick, black tar, mingled with the loose dirt and water that caused the sinkhole in the first place. Steam rises from the tar pit.

The hole reeks for Flint tosses the dead carcasses of whatever he kills into the sinkhole. Some if it vanishes in the tar, some of it lays on the surface, so the whole area shows bones protruding here and there.

Falling into the sinkhole is very dangerous as the victim suffers from both the burning, clinging tar, and also from the quicksand of the sinkhole itself. Anyone who falls into the pit, for whatever reason, must make a successful dexterity save (CL 4) to keep themselves above the tar. After that they must make a successful strength check to pull themselves out (CL 6) for every five feet of tar they must cross through before they get to the wall. For instance, if they fell 10 feet into the pit, they must make two successful strength checks to get out. Regardless of the outcome of the strength check, each round a person is in the tar adds 1 to the CL. Also each round someone is in the tar pit, they suffer 1d4 points of burn damage.

### **FLINT'S TREASURE**

Flint has amassed quite a treasure over the years, mostly from murdering and robbing his patrons whenever the opportunity presented itself. It is his hope to take the treasure to the south, buy a house on the sea, retire there and murder passersby.

He has hidden his wealth in a trunk that he has sunk into the tar pit, tied off on some old rope and hidden in the rim of the pit. Any close investigation of the pit reveals the hidden rope as it hangs down the side of the pit on a successful wisdom check (CL 8).

The trunk contains the following: 450gp, 600sp, 3 75gp gems, a +2 dagger with Edguth's coat of arms on it, a horned bow (that Flint is too weak to pull) and 12 arrows and a set of +1 dwarven chain mail. There are also two potions of healing and a wand of magic missiles with 2 charges on it.

### **THE CROSSROADS**

Several days further travel into the Tar Kiln brings the party near the Crossroads. From several miles off, they spy buzzards flying in broad circles. There is a great concourse of them, about 30.

The country is lightly wooded, the trail cutting up over a low ridge to a wide plateau covered with copses of trees, scrub brush and boulders jutting out of the ground. Just on top of the plateau is where the ambush took place.

## **8 CASTLES & CRUSADES**

### **INTERPRETING THE BIRDS**

The buzzards are circling in such large numbers because they have not yet been able to fully engorge themselves on the feast below. This is because a cleric remains there, hidden in a cleft of rocks, watching the road. Allow a druid or ranger a wisdom check (CL 5) to determine if the birds circling are natural or not. Upon a successful check they realize that it is too many birds for a day old battle, the birds should have been finished with the bodies within a few hours. The only reason this can be is that the bodies are too close to something living.

Approaching the battlefield with or without caution reveals the same thing.

*Just over the rise, the country levels out. Trees cluster in small copses in the midst of the deep grass and broken rocks that jut from the earth like giant fingers. The birds glide in lazy circles overhead, peering down at the trail that ends in the bodies of horses and men, all scattered haphazardly about, clearly having died fighting. A stench hangs over the area and the bloated corpses pushing up in their ruined armor are the obvious reasons. The men died violently, and quickly.*

There is little of value on the battlefield, the clerics looted the bodies, taking coin, magic items and weapons and the few horses that survived. They took the baby as well. There are several sets of horse harnesses, saddles, etc. still intact and the men's leather armor that was left on them. The armor is decent but shows signs of wear and tear.

A survey of the battlefield indicates that the victors turned north and east, heading up into the Tar Kiln. A successful track check (CL 4) shows that three horses and nine men moved north, one of the horses was carrying a burden, a man either living or dead; it can not be determined. If the tracking check exceeds a CL 6, the ranger can determine that several of the men were wounded, one favoring one of his legs.

### **THE PRIEST LEFT BEHIND**

There is a cleric here, hiding in a cleft of rocks not far from the crossroads. The hydra, using his powers of divination, has seen that someone is coming for the child and he seeks to waylay them on the road. The cleric only attacks if the party goes north and east, following the direction of the child. He does so by casting raise dead on the fallen mercenaries, summoning them to his aid. As they attack he leaps from the cleft and attacks.

If the characters do a thorough search of the whole area they have a small chance of finding the cleric, who himself is well hidden (wisdom CL 9). If a ranger searches the area he has a better chance (CL 5) on his track check.

Regardless, if anyone gets near his hiding place he begins casting animate dead on the fallen mercenaries. He also attacks if he in any way suspects that the party is going to pursue the baby.

He begins his attack by animating six of the corpses. He lets the dead attack, but looks for an opening to attack as well. He fights to the death.

**CLERIC** (*This chaotic evil, 6th level cleric's vital stats are HP 21 and AC 15. His primary attributes are strength, wisdom, and charisma. His significant attribute is constitution 15. He wears a chain shirt, and carries a +1 mace, a potion of healing, a scroll of fear, and 130gp in coin and jewelry.*)

*His level 0 spells are light, first aid, detect magic, detect chaos, create water.*

*His level 1 spells are command, cause light wounds, shield of faith.*

*His level 2 spells are aid, darkness, and hold person.*

*His level 3 spells are animate dead, cause blindness.)*

**ZOMBIES X 6** (*These neutral evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 8, 9, 11, AC 11. They have no primary attributes. They attack with one claw that does 1d8 damage plus possible rot grub infestation.*)

### THROUGH THE GOD'S EYE

After the ambush, one of the clerics cast *through the god's eye*. It has remained for 2 days and will do so for 2 more. The spell allows the caster to look up through a puddle on the ground. In this case the puddle lies astride the track leading northeast and anyone that passes over, following the track, alerts the caster back in the Temple of Nunt. They cannot help but know for certain that someone is following. For particulars on the spell, refer to **New Spells** below.

To this end they send the Mendicant Priest south to intercept the party. He moves quickly and intercepts the party one day south of the Temple of Nunt.

### DISCOVERING THE SPELL

It is possible that the players discover the spell when they pass over it. Anyone detecting magic, detects the spell. Any cleric or druid that passes within a few feet of it must make a successful wisdom check (CL 3) in order to discover the magic on the ground. Though they may not recognize the spell, they do recognize it as a magic portal. A ranger may notice the odd nature of the puddle by glancing at it (strength check, CL 8) or if carefully looking at it (track check, CL 4).

### THE MENDICANT PRIEST

By now the hydra knows that someone is pursuing the boy, though he does not know who that is. In order to keep more careful tabs on the party, he sends his second in command to place a *mirrored sending* spell upon them.

The mendicant priest participated in the ambush; the blood of one of the mercenaries remains on his hammer and spattered on his dark cloak. He moves rapidly to watch the road and discourage any pursuit. He has a mirrored sending upon him, cast by one of his brethren. His secondary purpose, if he cannot discourage pursuit, is to allow the mirrored sending to attach itself to one of the travelers, their horses or gear.

The mirrored sending is coiled around his left wrist, hidden in his palm. For more on the spell, see **New Spells** below.

On the second day after encountering the wild man, the characters spy the mendicant priest coming down the path that the mercenaries followed.

*You spy a bedraggled man coming back, down the pathway. He wears a heavy, wool, light-black cloak that reaches to the ground. Underneath the cloak he wears gunmetal gray chain mail. He is stout though possessed of a hungered look, lips drawn back, hair greasy and unkempt. He bears a war hammer in hand, decorated in dark red and black stains. Similar stains are splattered on his cloak. He smiles in greeting.*

The mendicant shouts a greeting and proffers his right hand, dropping the hammer to hang by a noose on his wrist. To anyone who extends a hand, he takes it and shakes it, reaching over with his left hand where the mirrored sending lies coiled. With his left hand, he grasps the characters forearm, pats his horse or the man's back — in short, where ever he can reach forward to grab and allow the mirrored sending to move from his arm to the person of the character.

Anyone watching the exchange has a chance to detect the movement of the mirrored sending. Ask each character in turn to roll a wisdom check (CL 10). If successful, they notice one of two things, CK's choice:

- 1) The character notices a slight movement of mist around the man's wrist and palm. They see it clinging to the man, and seemingly move to the other player.
- 2) The character does not notice the movement, but does see a pool of mist stubbornly clinging to the other player. It does not slide down or break free, but rather crawls through the folds of clothing.

Note that if battle breaks out for any reason, and it is likely to break out, the priest's only concern is allowing the mirrored sending to go from his wrist to one of the players. With that in mind he will grapple with the nearest character, hoping to allow the mist time to transfer.

**MENDICANT PRIEST** (*He is a chaotic evil 4th level cleric whose vital stats are: HP 20 and AC 14. His primary attributes are wisdom, intelligence, and dexterity. His significant attribute is dexterity 16. He wears chain armor and a +2 cloak of protection, and carries a +2 war hammer, scroll of curse, potion of healing, and 120gp worth of jewelry and coin.*)

*His level 0 spells are create water x2, detect magic x2.*

*His level 1 spells are bless, cause light wounds, shield of faith.*

*His level 2 spells are aid, hold person, silence spiritual weapon.)*

He fights to the death.

### USING THE SENDING

If the mirrored sending is successful and is attached to a character, then the high priest is able to see all that the party

does so long as they are with the afflicted party member. He learns of their movements and what they are doing, who is their strongest and what weapons they carry. They cannot be surprised by secret movements.

### DISCOVERING THE MIRRORED SENDING

The mirrored sending appears as a tendril of mist with the tiny face of a man. It clings to its mount with tenacity, looking around occasionally as its master dictates. It is not particularly noticeable but is extremely strange.

Allow every character a wisdom check (CL 7) twice a day for the chance of noticing the peculiar mist creature.

### AMBUSH

It is a full day's travel from the encounter with the Mendicant Priest to the foot of a broad, tall, tree lined bluff, upon which sits the Temple of Nunt. A creek runs the length of it, shaded during most of the day by the jumbled rocks. The water is cool and shallow and crossing it is relatively easy.

A single trail leads up through the bluff; it is narrow, allowing people to move in single file only. The characters have but to lead their horses up it and mount the bluff. Going around the bluff in either direction adds a day's travel to the journey.

*The trail enters the bluff, cutting up it in a gently rising, but very narrow gulch. The gulch itself consists of jumbled rocks, sagebrush and other detritus, but has a clear path moving up it. A large pile of rocks on the right-hand side show testament to someone attempting at one point to build a wall here.*

If the priests know the party is coming, then the priests have set up an ambush here. It is their intent to keep the characters from mounting the bluff and attacking the hydra, their god.

If the Mendicant Priest was successful in attaching the mirrored sending to the party, then the hydra and his clerics know where the party is and what they are doing, at least they know where the party member who has the mirrored sending attached to him is. They plan the ambush accordingly, *mirrored sending* summoning all 6 priests to the gulch. Four lie in wait at the top of the bluff, looking down on the trail, the other two are on the right side of the trail prepared to topple an avalanche of rocks down on the party.

If the mirrored sending failed or was discovered, then there are only two priests here, both of them at the wall of rocks, prepared to topple them down.

Any dwarf, gnome, ranger or experienced warrior has a chance of noting the odd nature of the rocky wall. On a successful attribute check, rolled against the classes prime, they notice the rocks are precariously balanced (CL 4).

The bluff is easy to climb by both rangers and rogues without an attribute check.

The priests attack by toppling the wall down on the characters. Anyone in the path must make a successful dexterity save (CL 5) or suffer 2d8 points of damage. If mounted the save is at CL 7.

## 10 CASTLES & CRUSADES

The battle is on.

**ACOLYTES X 5** (These are chaotic evil 1st level clerics whose vital stats are HP 5 and AC 12. Their primary attributes are strength, wisdom, and intelligence. Their significant attributes are wisdom 14. They wear leather armor and carry maces. Each of the five should have one of the two different spells listed for 1st level.

His level 0 spells are *create water* x2, *detect magic*.

His level 1 spells are *shield of faith* or *sound burst*.

**THE PRIEST** (This chaotic evil 8th level human cleric's vital stats are HD 8d8, HP 40, AC 22. His primary attributes are wisdom, constitution, and dexterity. His significant attributes are intelligence 14 and wisdom 20. He wields a mace in combat and wears magic armor. He possesses +3 cloak of resistance, +1 plate mail of spell resistance (SR 3), wand of cure light wounds with 50 charges (1st level caster), wand of Cure serious wounds with 23 charges (5th level caster), 50 pp.

His level 0 spells are *create water* x2, *detect magic* x2, *detect poison*, *purify food and drink*

His level 1 spells are *bles*, *command*, *cause light wounds*, *shield of faith*, *sound burst*.

His level 2 spells are *aid*, *hold person*, *silence spiritual weapon*.

His level 3 spells are *animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *prayer*, *curse*.

His level 4 spells are *air walk*, *divination*.)

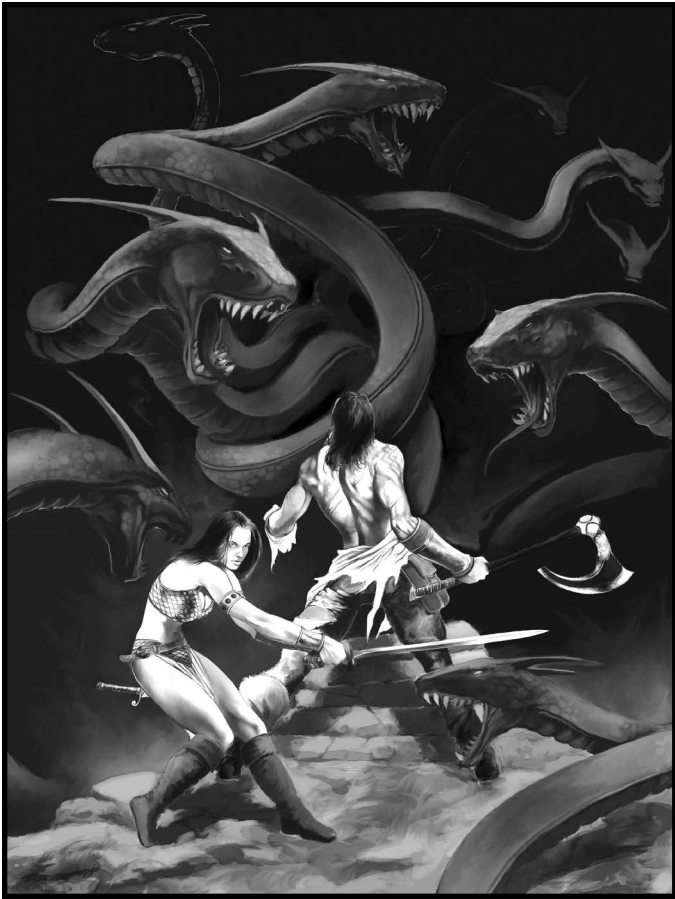
If forced to retreat the Priest flees back to the temple to confer with the hydra.

## THE TEMPLE OF NUNT

Years ago, when the world was younger, a great forest spread its boughs from the seas far to the south and to the rolling plains of the Gottland in the north. This forest was full and deep and called by the Ethvold by man. The forest was home to many creatures, great and small. The greatest of all was Tefnut, a goddess of the Val Eahrakun who came to the world from beyond the Wall of Worlds. Many of her people followed her, and they settled in her shadow within the forest, and there they thrived for years.

Some were good, others were evil, but most concerned only with their own happenstance, or perhaps, the forest in their immediate vicinity. Like all creatures they had concourse with one another and like all creatures, they loved and hated, fought or lived in peace as was their want.

Of all these, one possessed a peculiar knowledge of the paths of the dead. A disciple of Toth, the All Father's reflection, this god saw the River of Time and understood the idea behind the arc of it, how all things living must follow the Arc to the Endless Pools where all things lie waiting for the Gonfod, the end of days and the war between the Red God and the Maker of Justice. His name bore no reflection of sound that men could hear, but rather carried the echo of a darkness that signaled the end of things. But later, when dwarves and men walked the world, they called him Nunt, for no sound of theirs could match the horror of his stature.



When the Ethrum, a tribe of men, came to the Ethvold they settled and built towns and villages far and wide. They called upon the gods as men are wont to do, and they turned to them for their needs and desires, and for their fears. They did not discern between good and evil, and paid homage to those gods who best cast a web of power to aid them.

Nunt was no exception. Men called upon him before they passed from the world and wandered the Arc of Time, seeking the Endless Pools. And he heeded their calls and gave them aid, removing their fear and replacing it with hope. And those who didn't call on him, he punished, afflicted them with the terror of oblivion. So men clung to his hope as they crossed over and they built temples to him throughout the Ethvold.

The temples reflected the god to which they paid devotions, for they were large, with many columns, and a roof of stone. They carved friezes of Nunt and all those he gave aid to on all the stonework and he thrived on their adoration. But many temples were built with a great dungeon beneath and wide stairs set in the temple floor leading down to the dungeon. They channeled water through the dungeon as a symbol of the River of Time and Nunt loved it and blessed his priests and those who paid him homage and respect.

Here the priests dwelt and the dead were laid to rest before being anointed in the holy water. And Nunt came to gather their souls and guide them beyond to the Endless Pools, the Stone Fields or wherever he thought best.

But in time, the tribes of men grew large — the Aenochians most of all — and they warred upon the Ethrum for many centuries. Eventually they defeated the Ethrum, and the Ethvold became a wasteland so that the Aenochians started despoiling it. The gods of the Ethvold could do little for the Ethrum for the Aenochians worshipped no god but their Emperors, or so they claimed. For it was little known in those days that the God Emperors were bound to the Red God .

So the Ethvold decayed and fell away and the power of Nunt and all his kindred waned, passing into legend. The temples were abandoned and the Val Earhrakun of that realms vanished into the dust and dirt of the world. And the temples fell, ground slowly into memories of wasted stone and lost dreams.

### **COMES THE HYDRA**

In that high place in the Tar Kiln stood one such temple. It was large and stood the test of time better than most. But in its depths lay its true magic, for there, left by Nunt centuries ago, was an egg. It sat in the sand of an underground river for all those years, until at last it hatched and the hydra came forth.

Dark blue, stained with crimson all along its underside, the hydra lived in quiet solitude on the banks of the river in the dark dungeon, feeding on fish and other sundry animals that passed down the river. It grew and grew, slowly reaching out into the wilds to hunt bigger game.

The temple proved the perfect lair of this minion of Nunt, and here he dwelt for long years, hunting the wilds. Of five heads, one proved wiser than the others and he commanded them all, and the other heads, in their ignorance, obeyed him. Filled with a wisdom unbecoming to his kind, he learned many things as he grew and in time came to speak the common tongue of men.

So it was that followers of Nunt came to him. Whether drawn to him by the power of their god, or by fate, none could say, but they came and they worshiped him as the son of Nunt. They made sacrifices to him, dwelling in his shadow. They ranged out, hunting for food and brought it back to feed the hydra. They gathered worldly treasures and heaped them at the hydra's feet. They called upon Nunt to serve them with the power of the hydra and for them all was good and they were properly served by their god.

For his part the hydra did not care for the priests, nor for Nunt, of whom his knowledge was little and distant. But he allowed the priests their dreams of power for they fed him fresh meat, taken from beast, man, elf or dwarf.

In time, the hydra's wiser head learned their craft and mastered the speech of prayer and he too commanded the powers given priests by their Nunt. And it came to him that the world was larger than he thought and that men were weak and fearful. He thought that they must bow to a many-headed Son of Nunt. And he cast about for a way to command them and learned of the boy stolen and carried into the wild.

## THE TEMPLE GROUNDS

The temple consists of two main floors. The temple proper, called the House of Nunt, and the dungeon, called the Cave of Nunt. The men dwell in huts built outside the House of Nunt. The hydra dwells in the Cave of Nunt, upon his bed of bones and treasure. The hydra has no fear of the day or night and if he hears commotion above, he comes forth to investigate and attack if threatened.

**NOTE:** The hydra has never been wounded by any creature, and is filled with the idea of its own power, fed to it by the priests. If and when he sees the party, he attacks without any delay or fear.

*As you top the bluff, the country opens before you in a broad, grassy plain that climbs to a low range of hills in the north. A creek tumbles off to your left, vanishing into the ground just before it reaches the bluff. Trees cling to the rocky earth in small copses. But the entire world shrinks before the sprawling ruin before you. Giant columns flank a cobbled floor, many knocked over, some still clawing their way to heaven. But all are weathered, bled white by the sun, ground away by wind and softened by the rain. They stand in stark contrast to the marble blue of the sky. Beyond are a series of small, squalid huts. The ground, too, draws your attention, for there, all across the floor of the ruins, are bones, bones and more bones.*

## THE HOUSE OF NUNT

The temple itself is a large, flat pad of cobbled stones, surrounded by 32 columns of stone. The columns held a roof up long ago, but that has long since fallen. Many of the columns are wasted away, ground down by rain, wind and water. Most are roughly 10-20 feet high, and only a few remain in their original state, 40 feet tall.

If any of the clerics have survived, they have fled to the temple and are presently bowing before the stairs calling upon the Son of Nunt to come forth. Regardless of the clerics however, the hydra knows who is coming by the mirrored sending that hangs upon one of the characters, assuming of course it has not been discovered.

If the cleric survives, he makes a final stand in the temple grounds. The hydra does not come out until the cleric is dead.

Even then the hydra remains in the cool dark. As the characters approach, passing through the field of bones, the hydra casts animate dead from the Cave of Nunt below. Instantly the bones begin to rattle, lifting themselves from the floor, scooping up weapons and shields. The first wave should be 30 skeletons.

**SKELETON X 30** (These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 1d12, AC 13, HP 6 (all). Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a weapon for 1d6 points of damage. Slashing and piercing weapons do 1/2 damage.)

When about half the skeletons are dead, he animates a second wave of 10. When that wave is driven back he animates a third wave of 10. His hope is to batter the characters down.

**NOTE:** The skeletons are mindless and in no way are the able to attack in an organized group, but rather 1 and 2 at a time. If more than that come close to a character, they become entangled with each other, all suffering a -5 to hit and anyone swinging at them gains a +5 to hit.

Now the hydra attacks. He charges out of the cave entrance quickly, all five heads bellowing and growling. They fall upon the nearest character and then turn one by one to fend off other characters as they attack. The intelligent head does not overly expose himself to danger. If he feels they are targeting him, he pulls back, directing the other heads to intervene. If they hydra is hard pressed, it retreats into the cave. At no point does the hydra attempt to harm the child hidden below. Once in the cave it has no wear to go, but uses its twilight vision to effect, attacking the characters in the dark.

If pressed further, it fights to the death, as it has no understanding of its own mortality.

**HYDRA** (This creature's vital stats are HD 8d8, AC 16, HP 60. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with 5 bites for 1d10 points of damage per bite. The heads can be attacked individually. Each head has 8 hit points and if it suffers that much damage, the head dies. Killing the body is important, but the hydra cannot be killed until all heads are killed.)

## THE HUTS

There are four huts clustered on the north side of the temple ruin. They are made of cut sod, timber roofs laced with thatch. Two are very small; these served the acolytes. The two larger ones served the Mendicant Priest and the High Priest.

*The huts are built in a rough square with one entrance to the courtyard. A foul stench rises from the area reeking of human excrement, filth and general uncleanness. There are bones everywhere, mostly animal, and all inexpertly skinned. Clearly the people who lived here were not bred for the wild.*

Entering the huts brings bile to one's mouth and turns the stomach. Anyone who spends more than a few minutes in the huts must make a successful constitution save or vomit for 1-2 rounds.

The larger hut served the High Priest and here he built a makeshift altar to Nunt. The sign of the fish has been carved on a wooden plaque and hung on the wall. A rug of sorts is on the ground before it. Beneath the rug, the Priest has dug out a small space and set a wooden box that holds five golden bands. If anyone of neutral or good alignments wears one of the bands, they gain a +1 AC.

In the courtyard is a large stack of cut firewood, two large barrels of beer and a makeshift table and benches and a dozen or so wooden mugs and platters. The beer was purchased from the Gentleman Traveler and is decent, if a bit warm.

There is else little of value here, the clerics keeping their worldly possessions on themselves.

## 12 CASTLES & CRUSADES

## THE CAVE OF NUNT

The hydra took the baby inside the cave and has kept him there, nestled in a heap of gold and gems. The hydra has been able to cast create food and water for the child and thus has kept him decently fed. The child is old enough to fend for himself, but not old enough to recognize the hydra as a monster, particularly since it has been taking care of him.

The steps go down 30 feet into the cool, damp dark.

The cave is not a cave at all, but rather a chamber built off an underground stream. It is cobbled and walled with a ceiling above.

When the party enters the cave ,they hear a momentary shout of joy, then silence. The baby isn't sure what is going on, for he was expecting the hydra and not these people. He dives back into the treasure that is heaped in a disorganized pile near the stream.

If they explore the cave, they find it is 100 feet by 300 feet, largely empty with only a single chamber in the back where an ancient prayer room to Nunt is located.

**TREASURE:** There is 5000gp in assorted coin in the treasure heap. In addition there are the following magic items: +2 shield, 3 *javelins of lightning*, *potion of giant control*, scroll with 12 wizard spells on it, a *dwarven thrower*, and a *periapt of wisdom* granting a cleric 1 point of wisdom.

## COMPLETING THE ADVENTURE

Once the child is secure, the characters can turn back south and return him to Brian. Upon their arrival at Lord Brian's castle they find the paladin only recently returned. His troops are exhausted and show signs a difficult travel.

When he spies the child, he rejoices immediately offering the characters wine and food and orders the necessary amount of gold brought forth, 1000gp per sack, and given to the characters. He furthermore offers them oaths of service for the land promised right there in the yard.

*I, Brian, Lord of Helliwell, for your service to me and my son, and all the people of this Barony, grant you title and rights to 20 hides each of land. Swear fealty to me and promise to grant my heirs or me 30 days of service for each year or a surrogate and this land passes from me to you, so long as you obey the laws of your people.*

There is much rejoicing. The character should have more than enough coin to build small compounds or keeps upon the northern border and begin their life as property owners and join Brian in the day-to-day battles with the monsters that creep forth from the Tar Kiln.

## CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Later, as all the captains and characters are gathered over the feast, he explains to the interested party that the King has moved against the northern Barons, the Marcher Lords, and even now gathers an army to launch a punitive campaign. It will take him a month or more to raise his army.

For their part, the Barons themselves are meeting in two weeks time in order to prepare, in order that they may make their claims to the King upon the field of battle.

But there is troubling news. Brian has learned that the King has stirred up trouble in the Tar Kiln once more. He has sent rangers into the wilderness with the purpose of rousing the giants for plunder and war. The Barons will be caught between the King in the south and the giants in the north.

If only the Marcher Lords could convince someone to go north, slay the King's agents, and kill or at least disrupt the march of the giants!

## NEW SPELLS

### MIRRORED SENDING, Level 3 Cleric, Level 4 Druid

|                |                    |                   |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| <b>CT 1</b>    | <b>R see below</b> | <b>D perm</b>     |
| <b>SV none</b> | <b>SR no</b>       | <b>Comp DF, V</b> |

With mirrored sending, the cleric or druid uses prayer to pull out a small portion of their subconscious and send it on a mission. The mirrored sending appears as a small tendril of mist. It moves at the same speed as the cleric who cast the spell, but is telepathically linked to the caster. The caster can see, smell and hear through the sending, though they cannot speak or feel any physical sensations through it. They do not need to concentrate on the sending and can leave it 'free' for as long as they desire.

The caster need not concentrate on the mirrored sending to see through it.

Each sending spell represents a physical part of the caster. If the mirrored sending is destroyed, the caster permanently loses 4 hit points. The sending itself has no hit points and an armor class of 10. It cannot actively defend itself, though the priest may direct it to flee. It can be dispelled with a dispel magic or similar spell. It can only be struck with magic weapons of +2 or greater.

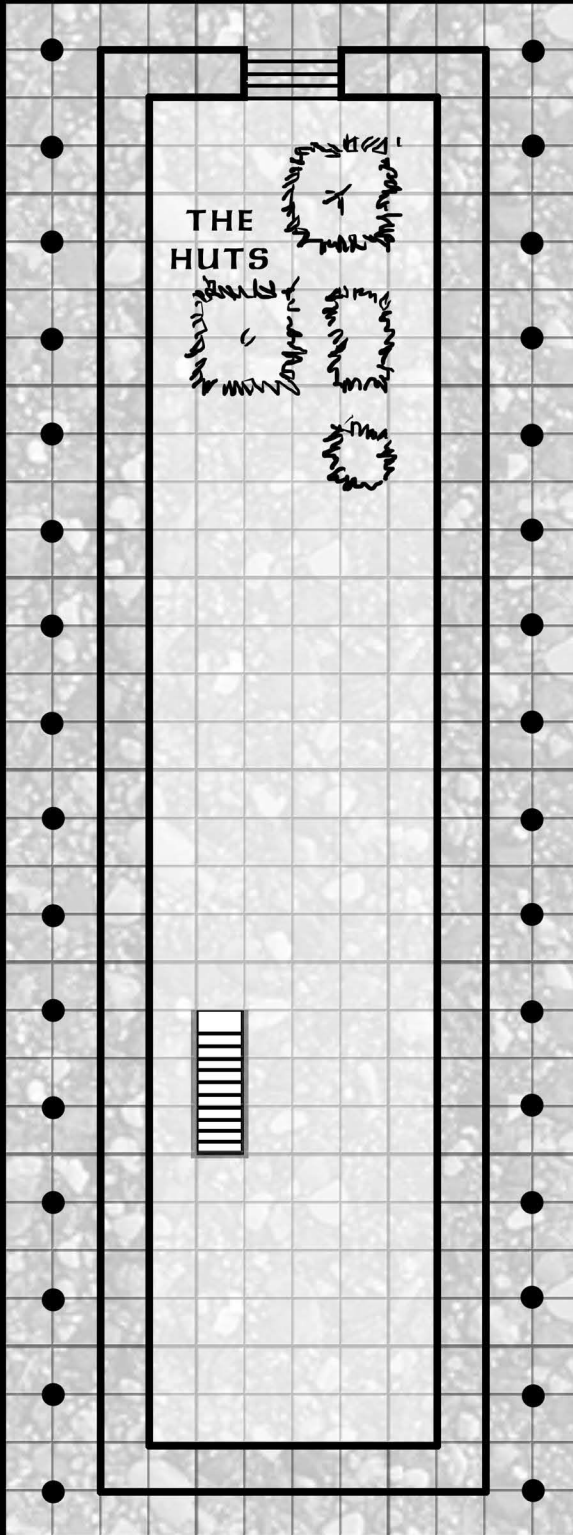
### THROUGH A GOD'S EYE, Level 1 Cleric, Level 1 Druid

|                |                |                      |
|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| <b>CT 5</b>    | <b>R touch</b> | <b>D 1 day/lvl</b>   |
| <b>SV none</b> | <b>SR yes</b>  | <b>Comp DF, M, V</b> |

When casting the spell, the priest must have standing water. By etching the holy symbol into the water and muttering the prayers and incantations, the cleric opens an ocular tunnel between himself and the water. The priest can see anything passing over or near the water. The priest does not need to concentrate on the water, but rather sees what is going on in the back of their mind. A priest may cast this spell multiple times, limited to one per every five levels. For instance, a 10th level priest can have two active *through a god's eye* spells at once..

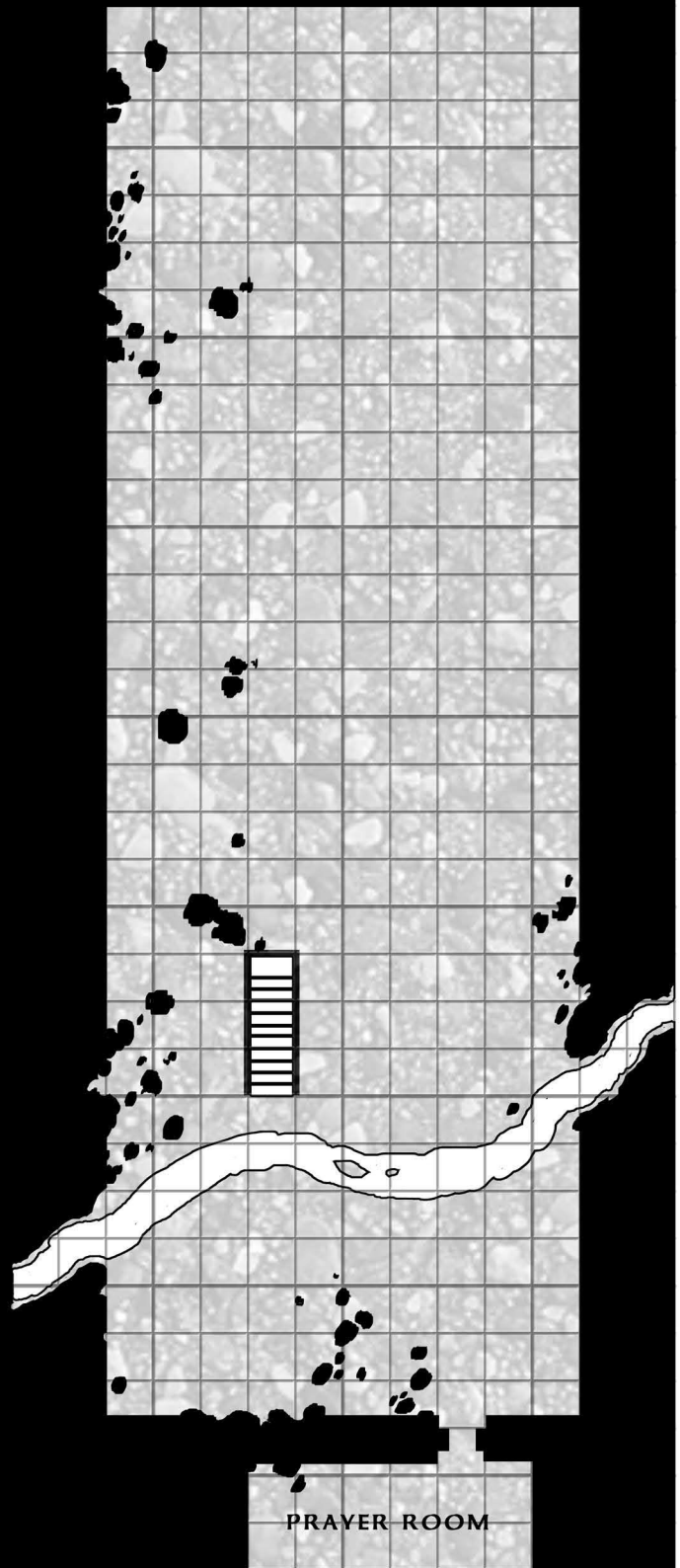
The spell does have severe limitations as the water has no peripheral vision and the area affected is limited to a 36-inch diameter circle. It does not work upon moving water. There is no saving throw against being seen; however, spell resistance negates the effects of the spell.

# THE HOUSE OF NUNT



1 SQUARE = 10'

# THE CAVE OF NUNT



PRAYER ROOM

# CASTLES CRUSADES

## REAPING BONES

The Tar Kiln, a wild region of wooded hills, cut by deep gulches, where giant blocks of gray stone rise from the upland prairie like islands in the sea. Here streams feed lakes or wild rivers and the sky seems to stretch on forever. But the Tar Kiln is not a kindly place; it is littered with tar pits, constantly oozing the ichors of the world's birth upon the green grasses. And it is home to wild beasts, hunting dragons, bull headed men and tigers so large their fangs are like sabers. And in the midst of all this lie the ruins of an ancient god, Nunt, master of dark places. Only the hearty dwell here.

Such is Brian, Lord of Helliwell, who rules his people with benevolent neglect. He asks no more of them than their oaths require, nor does he give them any more than his oaths demand. But herein lies his doom, for to protect his people he's crossed his King, and suffered the loss of his son. Borne into the wilds of the Tar Kiln by mercenaries, the boy is gone. But Brian must head off to the south to confront his monarch, turning to others to aid his child.

So you find yourselves entering the Tar Kiln, and the wilds, whose echoes carry a terror, that only the bold can face. For in them, lurk monsters from the edge of nightmare.

Reaping Bones is a fast paced pursuit adventure that plunges the characters into the wilds to find a boy whose captors are anything but normal mercenaries.

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A CHALLENGE LEVEL OF  
4-6. CHASE OVERLAND  
SMALL DUNGEON.

