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The Golden Familiar

ISBN 1-931275-63-7
9 781931 275637 51995
$19.95 U.S. TLG 8012 EAN

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Little Rock, AR 72225

Four Panel Screen
Bonus Adventure
Module "The Golden Familiar" Levels 2-3

The Golden Familiar

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This module is designed for characters of 2nd to 4th level with a challange rating of 1-2.

Printed in the United States of America.

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The Golden Familiar

The battle raged mercilessly for hours along the ramparts and amidst the ruins of the 14th gate. The brave band of stalwarts had fought their way up the winding road against grievous odds, overwhelming the guards and driving them back, gate after gate. Sometimes they fought with guile, at other times brute force. Two of their comrades lay behind them, coiled in death, wrapped in the horror of their own blood stained last moments amidst the dirt and stone of ruined Castle Aucherwitch. But Ielda and his band plunged on, determined to deliver the golden familiar to the ancient temple. Thirteen gates lay behind, only one stood before them.

At last their efforts availed them and they came with cold steel, iron shields and sorceries to batter down the last gate of Ottokar Vanek's castle. They fought over the dry moat and forced their way into the guardhouse. With blood born grit and determination they drove back the orcs and broke into the courtyard beyond. Their goal in sight the tide turned and the enemy fell upon them with a lust born of certain death. Archers on the walls fired into the hapless warriors and magi, a wall of iron shields rushed from the yard and a huge monstrous ogre leapt from the wave of orc tyranny. In desperation the party fought on but Ortu the mage fell, the barbed shaft of an orc arrow buried deep in his shoulder, even so that it punctured his lung. Blood foamed from his mouth as his great love, Elisa, warrior of renown, pulled his body from the fray and back across the dry moat.

The others held on, but the orcs proved too many and the ogre too powerful. They were driven back into the guard house there to fight out their last desperate moments. In the end Ielda and his servant, Laura, fled with the Cup back across the moat where they saw the punctured bodies of Ortu and Elisa wrapped in each others arms. A virtual carpet of arrows, shot from on high, told the tale of their horrible demise. In grief, Ielda and Laura fled back down the path, but the day's horror was not yet finished. The path snaked down the mountain through the various gates, so that the defenders could see and fire upon any upon the path. And the path was long.

An arrow took Ielda in the leg and he fell, tumbling across the stony path. Laura turned to aid her friend only to be struck herself. The first arrow struck her and she threw her arm back, staggering from the impact so that the second caught her off guard and she fell back, her head cracking on the rocky wall. Two more arrows pierced her still form. Ielda staggered to his feet, saw that Laura too was dead but swore that Vanek would not have the Cup. He began to run, dragging his limp leg behind him. The orcs on high shouted derisively, catcalls an insults. He struggled on.

One orc on the heights watched him in silence. A minion and confidant of Ottokar Vanek, an old hlobane, seasoned from many campaigns knew what he bore. Indeed, he knew the Cup in his pack bore a magic so potent it could destroy Ottokar instantly. He raised his great crossbow, setting his staggering form in his sights. A slight breath, pushed gingerly from his lungs, rolled down the shaft as his whole body settled into the familiar motion. With a clack and thud the bolt sliced the air to drive deep through the warrior's back. As flesh parted and bone cracked, he fell and the orcs shouted and called into the deepening night.

Introduction

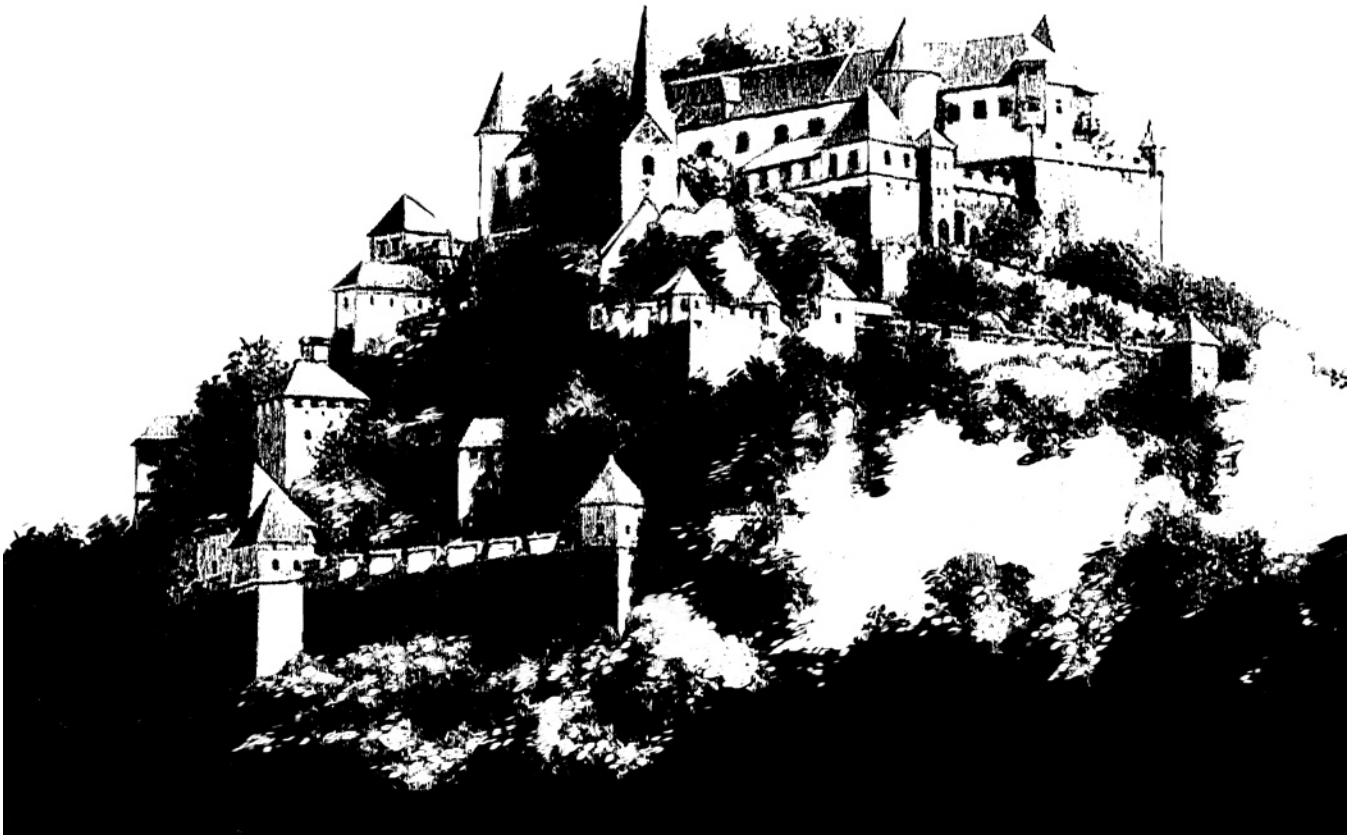
Ottokar Vanek is an ancient creature. Whether beast or man none may say, but his origins lie buried in the deeps of Aufstrag. For there he served the great horned god in some minor capacity, beating the helpless or driving them before him as slaves and thralls. It is known that many considered him a weak creature and he lived only at the sufferance of the great beast himself. When the horned god fell to the Council, driven from the plane of Aihrde, the halls of Aufstrag fell to violence and civil war from which the mighty Coburg the Undying rose in power. Ottokar tried to flee but Coburg caught him up in his net and with great purpose hurled him from the heights. Though the fall shattered his earthly form it did not destroy Ottokar, for he bore the blessing of the horned god.

Ottokar Vanek wandered the Tottenfields for a great while, lost and alone. He hid during the long days for he had never seen the blue sky and it terrified him. As the sun set he crawled forth and wandered the road of the hapless. At long last he came to the northern forests of the Kellerwald and there came to a small army of orcs, ogres and even a few trolls led by a young hlobane soldier, Isung. These had lately quit the fields of the north in despair of their fallen lord, set on traveling south to the Red Hills where rumor had it the hlobane were already gathering in strength. The orcs welcomed Ottokar as their master for he bore the imprint of their dread master. He gathered them up into a small army and shrugging off the Red Hills led them into the deeps of the forest, in hopes of finding refuge for himself and the orc tribe.

After many adventures the troop of orcs arrived at the foot of a great hill capped by a mighty fortress. Built by the hands of men in the days of the late Winter Dark Wars Castle Aucherwitch stood as a beacon to the orcs. Nestled in the forest, atop the hill, with a winding road and multiple gates they saw the fortress as a place of refuge where none but the strongest could overthrow them. They begged Ottokar to lead them and seize the fortress. He hesitated for it seemed well defended and he did not wish to lose his army nor his own life. At last Isung convinced him to assault the castle and they gathered themselves in strength to do so.

They assailed the castle at night and overwhelmed the lower gate. The defenders, soldiers of the Duke of Oatia, fled before them, for they were poorly equipped and poorly led. The orcs stormed gate after gate, their loses were light until at last they came to the final and fourteenth gate where stood the great guard house and moat beneath the walls of the keep. They stormed this gate as well, but lost many warriors from the arrows shot from on high, and from the sheer desperation of the defenders. At last, the moat filled with the bodies of the fallen and the great troop of them came across to the house and overtook the guard.

The orcs plunged into the courtyard beyond destroying everything and killing everyone until at last none stood before them. But the ravaging force set fire to the keep so that a great portion of it was burned and ruined. Ottokar came then, berating the orcs for their foolishness. Isung too cursed his lesser brethren. He looked over the castle and gates and saw that much was in ruin and he saw too



that the greater part of the army had fallen. Their bodies lay along the road, at various gates and in heaps in the moat. Ottokar cursed and railed in that dark tower. The echoes of his rage were heard in the forest deeps many miles away so that people who heard it fled in fear and terror, visions of the dark tower in their minds.

At last, Ottokar recovered and ordered the place restored as best as the orcs could manage. He settled himself in the remains of the great tower. From this seat he ruled his small kingdom for many years, lording over the forested valleys and hills for many miles around the castle.

In time, Ottokar's rule became well known to those who lived within the reaches of the Kellerwald. Rumors traveled down the river and east into the Duchies. Few knew of his origins but the stories told of a creature of Aufstrag who had settled in the castle with his minions. Stories of fabulous wealth floated around the brew filled bars and taverns of the region. Many tried and many died attempting to take the treasures, some by guile, others by force. But one stood out amongst all the others. A young lord, a crusading knight from the fabled kingdom of Kayomar. He and his small troop lay siege to the castle for many days. They fought long and hard, orc and man, knight and soldier. Iron and steel ruled the day as they fought for the high places, so that many lay in wrecked ruin and the gates and walls were torn down. But in the end Ottokar himself came forth and attacked the noble lord and threw him down from the high walls.

He tumbled down the cliffs, broken in body but not in spirit. With his last gasp he charged his minions with slaying Ottokar and bid them to return to Kayomar, there to fetch the Cup of Blue and bring it back to this dread castle. With that water and that water alone could they slay Ottokar and bring the foul creature low. So the knight charged young Ielda, an elven warrior of great skill. He died soon thereafter. But his soul remained bound to the castle, and to Ottokar and the forest as well, where it lingered ever after.

Ielda swore to avenge his young lord and took up the quest. He rode south and took a ship from ancient Ascalon, sailing into the far west. Even as he left the story of his quest spread across the lands of Outremere firing the imagination of many a young lord and noble lady. The adventures of Ielda, how his ship sank off the Gelderland, his long trek across those wild places and his encounters with the Lord of Dreams are not for these pages, but suffice it to say that after several years he brought the fabled Cup of Blue and its golden familiar back to the very gates of the dread place of his master's fall. The castle withstood her though and in the end she too fell to the might of Ottokar and the Cup was lost to the world.

Castle Aucherwitch stands even now beneath the eves of the Kellerwald, north of the Iegarland. Its gates, towers and walls are all in ruins from many years of war and wastage. The orcs numbers are greatly reduced and only one old troll defends Ottokar now. And the beast himself is greatly reduced in power, for in his fear of death he has devoured the might witch Unklar gave him. The Cup of Blue with its golden familiar lies in the castle still, awaiting

rescue even as the spirits of the fallen linger in the haunted forest, calling for a peace which may only come through the sword of revenge.

The Golden Familiar is an easy to adapt adventure designed for use with the Castles & Crusades Role Playing Game. In Aihrde the Golden Familar takes place in the lands north of New Aenoch (Outremere). It takes place beneath the eves of the Kellerwald, not far from the Barren Wood and involves a ferocious combat to take a ruined castle. Any players who intend to play in this module should stop reading here. It is designed for 4-8 characters of 1st-3rd level.

For the Castle Keeper

The Castle Aucherwitch sits on top of a small mountainous hill upon the north-eastern edge of the Kellerwald. The single path which leads to the castle snakes around the hill and is punctuated by 14 separate gates. Some of the gates are guarded, some are not. Some are linked to other gates, and some stand alone with little protection from above or behind. The party must use whatever means necessary to take each gate. Through craft, skill, guile or brute strength they are tasked with forcing the gates to seize the inner keep where Ottokar dwells and the Golden Familiar lies.

There is a secret entrance to the Castle, found in a creek bed not far from the hill upon which the Castle stands. This secret entrance opens up to a crude tunnel that leads beneath the hill, to a narrow, winding stair case that leads up to the chapel.

Some attempts can be made at scaling the cliffs behind or around the Castle, but the rock is generally lose and such a climb a very dangerous prospect. There is no way heavy armor and equipment could be hauled up without a complicated rope and pulley system, use of which would no doubt warn the defenders. Also, climbing will expose the climbers to shots fired from above and rocks thrown from above.

For their part the defenders are very active. They know the layout of the Castle, the gates and the country around. They keep constant watch, as they live I fear, of the growing might of the Crusader states to the south and their own numbers have not been replenished. Vanek has little to do with the defense of his castle, leaving it in the trusted hands of his lieutenant, Isung, an orc of the hlobane peoples. Isung has guards posted and send out scouts from time to time. He also uses his goblins to speak to the crows that live up and down the hill's flanks and uses them as an early alarm system.

Isung, has the Cup in his possession for he took it from the elf after he slew him. He keeps it with him for safekeeping, planning to use it on Ottokar if ever the need should arise. The characters must wrest the Cup from Isung, or convince him to join them, and attack Ottokar in his chambers. If Ottokar is made to drink from the Cup, or is struck with weapons dipped in the Cup he is destroyed. When Ottokar falls his minions flee into the woods, scattering and running as fast as they can. Only the troll remains (if he is still alive), but once the power of the beast leaves the castle, the troll's feet root to the ground and he becomes more like a tree than a troll, posing no threat to anyone.

The Cup of Blue

The Cup is a masterpiece of Blue was carved from a single piece of blue sapphire by the dwarves of Norgorad-Kam. Prized beyond any gold the Cup was given to the King's of Kayomar as a reward for the hard battles fought in the Winter Dark. The Cup was consecrated in the holy grove by the Elemental Lord Daladon and by St. Luther. Its water turned to gold and a magical water elemental was bound within it. The Cup is always full and never spills, unless the elemental lets the water come out. It can only be destroyed with *dispel magic* (CL 36).

The elemental is lawful good and possessed of the singular mission to destroy the remnants of the evil of the Winter Dark. For a creature such as Ottakar Vanek to drink from the Cup is certain doom, for the holy water would dispel the magic that keeps the creature alive. It has no affect on normal lawful evil creatures such as ungern or orcs, only passing off as a foul taste. Weapons coated in the elixir are given a +1 bonus to hit and damage for the first three rounds they are used after being coated.

The Band of Ottokar Vanek

Vanek's troop is greatly reduced from its original size. The original siege and the later battles for the castle have left it with a scant 2 score troops. Isung the hlobane commands the bulk of the forces. The troll is his own agent and the ungern serve Vanek himself.

The Castle Keeper should keep track of the forces the party has killed, captured or scattered as well as any that may have ran away or escaped. The battle up the road through each gate is a very difficult one and the party should benefit from each battle as Vanek's troops are reduced. The Castle Keeper should keep a running tally behind the screens. Also, adjust the creature's tactics as the game plays out. And lastly the party should not be encouraged to make one giant sally as the wastage in hit points and spells will certainly lead to their demise. Many of the gatehouses can be fortified and the party take refuge for a night's rest. Of course doing so may incur an attack from the orcs above.

When the attack begins the orcs and troops are displaced thus:

Ottokar Vanek (Great Hall)
Isung the hlobane (14th Gate)
1 troll (12th Gate)
3 hlobane (1 at 4th Gate, 1 at 5th Gate, 1at 11th Gate)
3 ungern (1 at 4th Gate, 2 in the Great Hall)
23 orcs (10 at 4th Gate, 2 at 10th, 5 at 11th Gate, 6 in the stables)
15 goblins (2 at 2nd Gate, 3 at 4th Gate, 4 at 11th Gate, 6 in the stables)
2 wolves (1 at 4th Gate, 1 at 11th Gate)
1 half-orc (6th Gate)

Of Caravans and Camp Fire Tales

The player characters have recently left the small border town of Ediath which sits astride the border of the Duchy of Oatia, the Iegarland and the wilds of the Kellerwald forest. The small walled town is the northern most holding of the Duke and is the only civilized town in the whole region. The characters have been traveling through the wilds for some few days when they come across a small encampment small of dervish nomads and traders. These are Munskirchen, or traders, and they are guarded by Vengatti horsemen. These latter are short, stocky dark haired folk who live in horse-tribes in the east.

Beneath you, in a small vale, lies seven wagons and their accompanying beasts of burden. The wagons are drawn up in a semi-circle, the open end of the circle set against a small creek which tumbles through the vale. Several dozen men are gathered around two camp fires, a few large dogs move about as well. The whole vale is watched over by two horsemen, mounted on stocky ponies, sitting astride the small ridge opposite you. They do not seem to have seen you as yet, but you know these men for easterners, fierce steppe warriors and often employed by the Dukes of Outremere.

The player characters are soon spotted and the two riders cross the vale to learn whether they are friend or foe. After a brief exchange, and assuming they do not seem to be evil or plan on attacking the caravan, they are invited to join the encampment, as one of the men explains "the lands are dangerous and it is best for the free peoples of the world to stand together."

If the characters should attempt to sneak up on the caravan they are likely discovered as the dogs are guarding the caravan. There are a number of them, 11 in all, and though a few are seen, most lie in the shadows beneath the wagons. When they spot the intruders they bark and howl until their masters come.

You find the traders and their guards a friendly people. They offer you food and drink and the security of the wagons, asking for nothing in return. You are immediately caught up in the tale one of them is relating over the larger camp fire. It is the story of the Beast of Aucherwitch and the Golden Familiar. The story fires your imagination. Shadows of evil creatures, lost spirits and ruined towers dance in your mind's eye and the hint of glory and gold and great renown as well.

CAUTION: To preserve the mystery of the adventure the Castle Keeper should relate the information given in the background about the castle, Ottokar Vanek, the hlobane orc and the Golden Familiar. What should not be revealed is the nature of the Familiar or the Cup of Blue. These snippets of the tale have been lost or bound together so that the stories relate that the Golden Familiar is in fact a creature that has been imprisoned by Vanek and is need of rescuing. Also, that it alone can slay Ottokar Vanek. The Cup is a wondrous item of worth a mountain of gold. They should be told too that an old troll still stands alongside Vanak and threatens any with the Doom of the Gottland if they should fall to his cudgel. Also, Vanak is thought to be a werewolf.

The rough outlines of the castle should be related to the player characters as well so that they know what they are up against.

Wagon Tracks and Blood Trails

Before dawn the caravan masters rise and set their train in motion. They wish you luck in your endeavors and invite you to join them again if ever your paths should cross. Heading north you come to the country of the Soph

River which marks the border of the Iegarland with the northern wilds. It is a slow moving, shallow stream affording you easy access to the far side. Before you lies the wilderness and the dark Kellerwald. Only a few settlements are within this country and the people here pay homage to no overlords.

The characters should travel for the better part of the morning before they come across a small ruined homestead that sits on the river itself. The barn is burned down and the house plundered. The doors and windows have been shattered. Lying in the fields, not far from the house is a man, a woman and teenage boy, obviously a family. All are dead but the woman.

If she is given aid of any kind she thanks the player characters profusely. Her wounds are too great for her to be moved, nor will any healing spells bring her back to life. But she relates the following:

"The orcs came, masters, they came upon us last night. We fought them as best we could but they were strong. One of them was tall and smart for he spoke to us in the Vulgate. Ahh, the horror of it. They carted off our livestock and burned the barn. Only this morning when we came from the house, thinking that they had gone, did they attack us. There were too many and we are past hope now. Avenge us against the dread Ottokar!"

With that she dies. The party may feel obligated to bury the three victims. They are worshipers of Demeter and as is customary in that religion they should be buried in 4 ½ feet of clean earth. If the player characters do bury them they should be awarded 250 experience points and a *bless* spell is cast upon them from Demeter himself. The spell is activated during the most pressing fight for the castle. Presumably this occurs at the 14th and final gate of Castle Aucherwitch but the Castle Keeper will have to be the judge.

Note: When the Castle Keeper chooses to bring this particular gift to bear the player characters should be told that they feel a warm presence and the memory of these fallen innocents comes to them.

Across the river lies the Kellerwald. A small wagon track leads north-east following the river bank. The track leads to the village of Oxonia. This town is the only settlement in the area. The raiders' trail, which goes almost due north, can be followed with ease.

Looking about the ruined farmstead you find the tracks of the raiders with ease. They moved along the river bank for several hundred yards and crossed the river at a low point. The slow moving waters afford easy access to the far side of the river and the wilderness. The water tumbles by slowly, the gentle noise of its passage belies the danger beyond. A wide swath of open country separates the river and the dark eves of the forest. You see very little beyond that for the forest is a dark stain against the clear blue sky and sunny morning.

If the party crosses the river, following the trail they move into the forest by early afternoon. Skip the next section and go to **First Blood**. If they follow the wagon track along the river bank, they come to the small town of Oxonia by late afternoon. In either case the characters should be made aware of Oxonia. This village, though not large, may be used as a source of supplies and a place to recuperate.

Oxonia

Oxonia is small farming village of about 30 houses. The houses are clustered on top of a small hill and surrounded by an old wooden fence. There are about 200 people in the village. They are a friendly if cautious people. They know almost nothing about the outside world. They trade with the gypsy caravans or halflings and deal mostly with the farmsteads in the area. They do not pay homage to any lord in particular but are vaguely aware that they are under the suzerainty of the Duke of Oatia.

There is one inn in Oxonia, the Public House. This large, one-story building is a simple place with dirt floors and serves only beer to most patrons. For a nice gold coin a small cup of wine can be bought. The inn keep is a female who goes by the name of Lilly. She is young and inherited the inn from her father who himself was killed by the orcs some years ago. Lilly is full of information and gladly helps the players if she learns of their mission. She offers them free room on the floor of the inn which closes by ten o'clock every night.

Lilly constantly refers to the goddess Wenefar and calls on her blessings and aid. Most paying homage to Wenafar in the village. Lilly is their priestess, delivering to them various potions and salves. She knows of a place in the forest where an old troll rooted and died, here she gathers the Delepherium flowers and makes healing potions out of them. She will sell them to the party, or if they are inclined to directly help the villagers through labor or spell craft, she gives them the potions. The cost is 100 gold per potion. She has only three.

Lilly can give exact instructions on how to get to the castle.

Lilly is young, probably about 30 years old. She has long wheat-colored hair, which she normally keeps in a tail clasped by a broach fashioned as a symbol of the god Daladon. She is 5' 7" tall and a strong, though not very large woman.

Lilly is the only authority in the village. There is a small militia commanded by an old crippled soldier (he lost his leg in the last civil war) but they are ill armed and have no real military training. If for some reason the village is assailed the whole militia is called out. They number about 40 men and boys.

The party can re-supply with basic goods in Oxonia. Rope, food, beer, water, knives and the like are available here. There is no armory or weapons shop, though arrows can be purchased for double their normal rate. There is a smith who can affect minor repairs on the equipment and weapons.

In any case the best place to cross the river is south near the dead farmer's homestead. The party should be directed back in that direction to pick up the trail where the orcs crossed the river.

First Blood

The river is forded with relative ease. The water never rises above your ears. It moves slow and is cool, refreshing your tired muscles. Shaking off the water you cross a low, flat, grassy plain before you come to the forest edge. Here the trail passes beneath the old beech and birch trees. The forest breaks the heat of the day and once within its columns it does not seem to brood so much. Wide vistas lie between ancient trees whose roots break from the moist ground. Moss covered boulders dot the landscape and flowers grow where the sun spills through the towering canopy. Morning glories are everywhere in abundance, their thin flowered vines climbing what stalks they can. What promised to be a hazardous trek through a misbegotten wood proves to be a walk through a forest of wonder and beauty. This must certainly be a land blessed by the Faerie Queen.

A full days travel brings the party alongside a small creek. It chuckles as it winds its way, with great energy, through the forest. The trail leads them up along the creek's wandering path for several hours until nightfall.

Unbeknownst to the party several raiding ungern picked up their trail. The ungern are three of Ottokar's must trusted lieutenants. They have been out hunting for several days and spied the party's tracks during the night. They followed them and have sized up the group and are hoping to capture or kill them and cart them back to their dark master at Aucherwitch. The ungern will not fight to the death. If the party proves too tough or even if one of them is killed the others flee. They first attempt to capture the body of their fallen comrades. They plan to attack just before dawn.

The following morning the forest is unusually quiet. No birds are singing and even the trees seem to be quiet and still. There is a thin, patchy fog moving slowly through the wood. The watchman, must make a successful wisdom check (CL 2) to see the ungern bowman moving with great stealth through the wood toward the party.

> Ungern, 3 *(These lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16 and HP 13, 12, 12. Their primary attributes are physical. They can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1-2 or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage. They each carry a +1 chain coat, bardiche, dagger and 4-40gp worth of jewelry and coin.)*

Once the ungern are killed or driven off the party can continue following the path of the raiding orcs. If they do so skip below to **Breaching the Walls**. Or if they chose to track the ungern they might find the secret entrance to the castle.

The ungern trail winds through the forest to the edge of a large plain (see description below) and it abruptly ends at the bole of a very large tree. A small creek finds its source at the base of the tree, the cool water bubbling up and tumbling off on its hurried way into the forest beyond. The trail ends here, where a large overhang of rock juts out over the roots of the tree and covers the very mouth of the creek.

A detailed search reveals scuff marks on the underside of the boulder and a dark crevice as well. If one of the party members crawls up under the rock, after 23 feet of crawling a small opening which drops down into a tunnel is found. The Castle Keeper should check every few feet to make certain the player is willing to go the full 23 feet. If the party member drops into the tunnel read the following:

The tunnel is narrow, carved in the dirt and heads off under the plain in the general direction of the hill and castle beyond. It can accommodate any normal sized creature.

If the party chooses to investigate the tunnel they soon learn that it is long with no branches or connecting tunnels. After many hours it brings them to a wider cavern about 40 x 40 ft. in size. This cavern is stone and is empty but for a single stone staircase carved from the very rock itself.

Stirge, 6 (*These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 16, HP 6, 4, 4, 3, 3, 3. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a beak attack for 1d3 points of damage and a further blood drain 1d4 points of damage. It has the ability to attach to its victim and tremendous agility. Scattered about the floor of the room are 47 gold pieces worth of coin and a +1 ring of protection*.)

The stair is closed, narrow and steep. Following it brings the party into the small chapel beyond the gates and in the inner walls of castle Aucherwitch. The stair itself is unguarded as few know of its existence and it is so well hidden. If the party finds and takes advantage of this secret entrance skip the next several sections to The **Chapel Courtyard** below.

Siege

If they follow the orc trail:

Another days worth of travel brings the party into more broken country. The trees are a little smaller and the sun more plentiful. At last their journey brings them to a wide open plain centered at the foot of a tall steep hillock of stone. The plain is dotted with small forests and copses of trees. These afford excellent cover for any approach to the hill, on top of which stands the stark, white walls of Castle Aucherwitch.

The hill itself is steep and almost utterly unassailable by any but the most skilled climbers. Where steep cliffs give way to ledges, gnarled trees and thorn bushes have grown blocking what could be egress to the great castle which sits atop the hill. The burg's walls are stark white, constructed of stone found locally no doubt. The walls pick up where the cliffs leave off, giving no obvious purchase for the careful climber. The one way to breech the castle seems to be the road which has been carved into the tower of stone. The road begins on the far side of the castle, and though it does not completely circumvent the hill, it comes close and probably would have had it not doubled back on itself to reach the castle. Even from this great distance the road's gates are easy to discern. A good dozen or more dot the road, armed and girded for a siege that few armies could conduct. Above it all one great tower stands, brooding as it looks out over the lazy, haze covered valley below.

Due to the many small copses between the forest and the hill and castle can be approached with ease. The watch is located in one of the ruined towers. They keep a pretty vigilant watch on the valley below and can spy the party on a successful wisdom check (CL 2). If the party is using the cover of the copses and moving with caution the orcs check at CL 10.

Also, the hill itself is almost impossible to climb. The cliffs are broken and the ledges many, so that the skilled climber could attempt to climb it. Also, the climber would have many places to hide from those shooting from above and many places to rest. However, no equipment of any real weight or size could be brought up on such a journey, no armor, or metal shields or weapons over a few feet in length. Any attempt to climb is made at a dexterity check (CL 5). Certain areas are impassable and these are makred on the map. Refer to map for details.

The castle itself, the road and all the gates are in a tremendous state of disrepair. The party notices this the closer they get to the castle. And many of the lower gates are not held by the enemy but have long been abandoned. The road winds up from gate to gate, sometimes narrowing to little more than a pathway. The outer flanks of the pathway are walled, except where the stairs rise to the 4th Gate and the 5th Gate. The walls are 15-20 feet high and made of stone with canonical roofs on them. In many places the roofs have fallen away allowing the enterprising rogue better access. Each gate is at least wide enough to accommodate a horse.

At any time there is a 5 in 20 chance that 2-5 orcs are out hunting in the forest.

If the party is spied the enemy horns sound from on high, carrying out across the valley. The horns call back any orcs who might be out hunting, gathering wood or what have you. In any case the orcs send 1/3 of their number down to re-inforce Angels Gate (Gate 4) and to hold it against the attackers. These numbers should be carefully tracked as the party may dramatically improve their chances of success if they bleed off many of their foes.

All towers can be accessed by doors placed on either side of the tunnel or gate. These doors lead to the ground floor, where ladders and manholes allow access to the upper floors. Every tower has

been occupied by the orcs at one time or another and the chances of finding useful implements are 1 in 4. Most of these items will be common items such as shovels, rope, hooks, pulleys, etc.

The Lower Gates

1st Gate: Cadets Gate

At the base of the hill stands the first gate. This large, two story stone, building straddles the road. The bottom floor is bisected by a simple arched tunnel that traverses the entire 40 feet of the building. The gate doors are long gone and the tunnel wide open. Small sparrows hop and bounce around the roof and flutter in and out of the arrow slits that line the second floor. Several of the red shingles from the roof have slipped off and shattered on the road below.

Cadets Gate consists of two small rooms flanking the tunnel on the first floor, both empty, and one large guard room on the second. The room on the left (hillside) has a ladder hole in it to get to the second floor but no ladder. The right side of the gate overlooks the valley and is flanked by a gentle slop of rock and bramble. Traversing this slope is possible for almost anyone. A successful dexterity check (CL 1) results in putting the climber behind the building/gate. The gate's left side is built into the hill where bramble and scrub grow. The cliff here is extremely steep, though there is a hidden path that leads up from the second floor, into the scrub. It traverses the hill, about 40 feet above and parallel to the road. It goes to Angels Gate (Gate 4). The wall and roof on the second floor have partially collapsed allowing the inhabitants to take advantage of the trail.

There are two goblin watchers on the second floor of the gate. They are lightly armed with bows and axes. They are very relaxed, eating, sleeping and lounging about the room, so much so that the birds have come to ignore them entirely. They check outside occasionally. If they spy the party, both head up the trail to Angels Gate. They can be easily surprised. If they are caught flat footed they try to flee rather than be killed.

Goblins, 2 *(Their vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 3 each, AC 14. They are lawful evil. Their primary attributes are physical. Their have darkvision 60. They attack with claw for 1d4 points of damage or by weapon for 2–5 points of damage.)*

2nd Gate: Guards Gate

You can see the narrow road cling to the hill before it ends several hundred feet up the slope. There you are greeted by a broad, steep staircase, at the top of which is a square tower 40 feet high with crenellated battlements. The remnants of a shingle roof, and an old pole cap the whole thing. The plaster has fallen from the brick face in many places and the entrance at the top of the stairs has no door. There is no sign of life.

Here the road ends and all wagon traffic stops for the gate is perched upon a rise of steps and a wide aperture through which only horse or men could pass. There is a broad landing in front of the gate.

The tower had two floors at one time, but the upper has long since fallen down and lay in heaps of stone and old timbers on the first floor. The orcs put up a crude ladder and propped it up allowing egress to the roof. There are several small perches where the floors used to be with piles of rocks of them. These were placed here by the orcs long ago.

This tower gate is empty.

3rd Gate: Nau-gate

Huge blocks of stone lie scattered about the road, many more have fallen off the lip and lay as so much flotsam down the face of the hill. Red shingles, many of them shattered, lie amidst the ruin. In the midst of all this wreckage the remnants of a door frame still stands, though the wood is much scored with vulgar graffiti

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This gate is in complete ruins. There is nothing of value here, though the enterprising party may use the blocks to build a temporary wall.

4th Gate: Angel gate.

Beyond the ruins of the 3rd gate the road rises dramatically. It climbs several hundred feet, narrowing into little more than a path, until only two can move abreast. The cliff to your right is steep and plunges down several hundreds of feet. The path ends in steep stairs which coil around the steep, rocky escarpment of the hill until they come to an iron door, set in a squat two-story tower. The door is shut. To that tower's right (from the approach angle), the cliff juts out over the valley below and a taller, second tower sits there. It overlooks the narrow road below and much of the staircase. The whole is very defensible and you instinctively know that any approach to the door exposes you to a dreadful enemy attack from the second tower.

This gate consists of two towers and a connecting courtyard (4b). Both towers show signs of aging, chunks of plaster and even bricks in some cases are missing. Though, all in all the towers are in good shape. The courtyard (4b) is empty but for a weathered tree and some grass. It can only be entered safely from the Main Tower.

4a Main Tower

Entry is gained to the lower floor by two doors. One from Gate 3 lies at the top of the steps. A second entry opens into the courtyard. Both doors are intact. The first floor of this tower is empty, though the defenders will take up position here to keep intruders from coming through the main door. The second floor of the first tower has four arrow slits angled to rain fire down on any approaching up the steps. The arrow slits do not provide enough angle to see those directly in front of the door, though burning liquids can be poured down on those below. On the second floor is a door that opens up on the stairs that lead to the 5th Gate. If the orcs retreat up these steps they bar the gate behind them, assuming they have time and flee. Breaking down the door takes time and effort, but eventually the mortar on the walls gives way and collapses.

4c Guard Tower
The second tower, is positioned to fire arrows on those moving up the road or on the steps, though the door of the first tower is safe as the angle is too sharp. The back side of the second tower is in ruins and the remaining stairs allow for someone to perch themselves only at one arrow slit. This is where the orcs are camped. An enterprising antagonist might note that locking the courtyard door blocks the orcs in the guard tower.

The tower is held by 1 hlobane orc, one sergeant orc, 9 soldier orcs, 3 goblins, a wolf, and one ungern. Most of these orcs are encamped in the second tower, lounging about. They do keep watch and it is unlikely that they will be unaware of the party's approach. In that case the crossbowman takes position in the second tower and shoots at anyone coming up the steps. The other bowmen take position behind the wall of the courtyard or in the second tower of the main courtyard. It is not the hlobane's desire to call for aid, wishing to garner all the glory of repelling the attack by himself. But if there party is very large he will send for aid. He will sacrifice all his men to hold the gate, going so far as to locking them in the Main Tower while he withdraws to the 5th Gate.

Orc, hlobane *(This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16 and HP 12. His primary attributes are physical. He wears an iron breast plate, uses an iron shield. In battle he wields a 9-ring broad sword for 2-7 points of damage. He possesses a ring worth 25gp which he uses as a nose ring and has 7gp in coin on his body.)*

Ungern *(This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16 and HP 13. His primary attributes are physical. He can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1-2 or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage. He carries a large iron shield, a military pick, longbow,14 arrows, dagger and 12gp.)*

Orc, Sergeant *(This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 15 and HP 7. His primary attributes are physical. He wears a ragged chain shirt and uses a large wooden shield. He has a short bow with 11 arrows. In battle he wields a spiked club that does 2d4 points of damage. Tucked beneath his shirt is a bag with 4gp, 15sp and orc 'bug' juice, one drink of which heals 1d4 points of damage.)*

Orc, 9 *(These lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 12 and HP 6, 5, 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3, 2. Their primary attributes are physical. They wear hide armor, have shields and wield axes and swords in battle. Two of them have light crossbows with 8 bolts apiece. Each has 2-5gps on them.)*

Goblin, 3*(Their vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 3 each, AC 14. They are lawful evil. Their primary attributes are physical. Their have darkvision 60 feet. They attack with claw for 1d4 points of damage or by weapon for 2–5 points of damage. They are wearing ragged shirts and vests and using knives and axes to fight.)*

Wolf *(This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 13, HP 11. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a bite for 1d8 points of damage. He has twilight vision and a keen sense of smell.)*

The Middle Gates

5th Gate: Lion gate
A great gap lies in the road between the main tower of the fourth gate and of the fifth. Some one hundred feet of narrow steps rise to the next gate tower.

The door opens to a narrow flight of stairs that hug the rocky wall on the left, but give way to a 150 foot drop on the right. The ravine below is filled rock and bramble. The tower itself is short and squat with no door. The steps snake some 100 feet up the cliff face to the next gate, a simple 20 foot wide, 60 foot high tower roofed in red shingles.

The tower here is 20 feet by 20 inside and has one door on either side leading up the pathway. The tower has three floors, all relatively in good condition, though the ladder to reach the upper floors is missing and Merhz hasn't the wherewithal to look for another one, preferring hand to hand combat to use of missile weapons.

This gate is held by the gatekeeper, Merhz, a huge hlobane orc. Merhz is a veteran of countless campaigns as his many scars attest. He is missing most of his left hand, a handicap he hides with his round, iron shield. He hates fighting from behind walls and can be enticed to open the gate for one on one combat if so challenged. If such a challenge is made Merhz must make an intelligence check (CL 4) or he is convinced to open the door and come out.

Any orcs who survive the fourth gate fall back to the Lion's Gate and make a stand. They can hold the door with ease as only one party member can come through at a time. If they are in danger of being defeated or driven out, Merhz holds the door against the party as the rest of the orcs escape up the road to the sixth gate and beyond.

Hlobane, Merhz *(This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 17 and HP14. His primary attributes are physical. He wears chain mail, uses an iron shield. In battle he uses a battle axe for 1d8 points of damage and a magical +1 shield. He possesses no other wealth.)*

The road beyond this gate rises uninterrupted for several hundred yards.

6th Gate: Mans gate.

The rugged rock face flanks your left as you approach around the hill heading up to the next gate. Here a tall, narrow tower stands overlooking the whole country. The tower is dotted with small windows and stands roughly 80 feet high and is built into the cliff. A small wall juts out over the valley below following the natural contours of the land and defending the tower's left flank.

The tower has four floors with narrow steps leading up to each. There is rubbish and other junk in here. One can see across the whole valley from this height. The wall overlooks a sheer cliff on the gate side. The tower doors are gone and open to the first floor.

There is a half-orc sniper, Granek in here. He has two heavy crossbows. He attacks the party as they cross up the path. He tries to keep them from the tower, if it looks like they are going to make the arched gateway he climbs out a side window and attempts to flee up the hillside to the 11th Gate. It's a steep climb and Granek can only escape on a successful dexterity check (CL 5). If Granek fails his check he tumbles back to the tower. He will not fight to the death. If he is captured he gives away the positions of the defenders if someone of good alignment promises to spare his life.

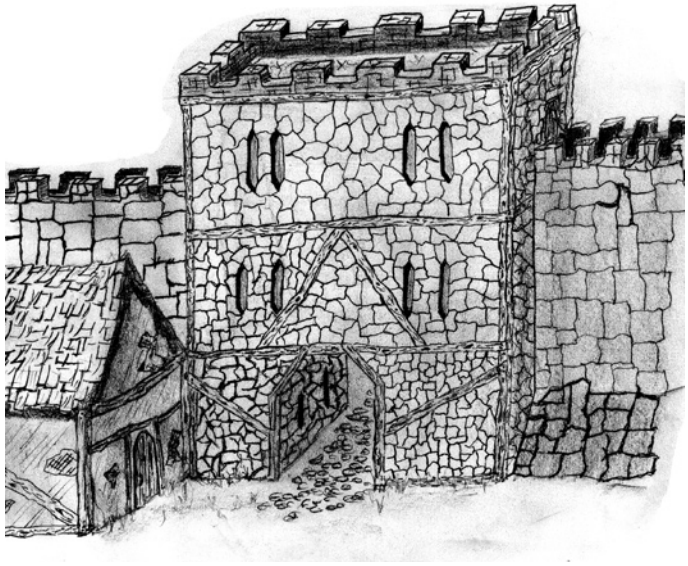
Granek (*He is a 2nd level chaotic neutral, half orc fighter whose vital stats are HD 2d10, AC 14, HP 11. His primary attributes are strength and dexterity. He has no exceptional abilities. He wears scale mail and carries a mace in combat and does 1d6+1 points of damage. He also uses a heavy crossbow for 1d4+1 points of damage. He has scale, small shield, two heavy crossbows, 24 bolts, dagger, normal clothes, 3gp and 12sp.*)

7th Gate: Khevenhuller gate.

Before you, stands a wall with a crenellated battlement, with a two story building in its center. Dark arrow slits adorn the second floor and a wide open archway and tunnel dissect the guardhouse's first floor. The wall on the right flank is anchored in the hill's rocks. The wall's left flank is supported by lower extension wall following the natural contours of the land and built on the rocky precipice. Several hundred feet beyond the wall you see another tower, much like the 2nd Gate, but with an open roof.

The walls are 14 feet high and have catwalks. However, where the wall connects with the hill on the party's left it is in horrible shape. Climbing is easy. The same goes for the right side where the extended walls go down the cliff. The ruins afford easy purchase to flank the wall.

The gate house has two floors. The bottom floor is dissected by the gate and is only accessible from above. Accessing the room above is done via the catwalks and the doors located on either side of the gatehouse. Ladders lead down small shoots to the lower floor before, allowing occupants to flank the actual gate from the first floor. Arrow slits look out from the second floor, down toward the 6th gate.



Unless the orcs are feeling very strong they do not make a stand here.

On a successful wisdom check (CL 3) the party notices that the cliff rising on the tower's right rises gently up the slope and has many small ledges and bramble. Climbing here is difficult but possible (dexterity check CL 5) and falling would not mean instant death as the fall would be gentle and end up on the road. All fall damage is 1/4 normal here.

8th Gate: Landscape gate.

This last of the lower gates sits at the end of a long, broad grass covered stretch of road. The flat ground affords no cover and is easily seen from the upper gates above. This simple wall and door gate stands defiantly before you. The gate is shut, but the walls seem to have no occupants.

The wall is 15 feet high and the gate is locked and barred from the other side. The bar cannot be lifted from the lower side.

While the party remains in the open, the defenders assuming they have been alerted of the party (and they should have by now), commence a steady stream of fire on the party below. They shoot bolts, arrows and throw rocks.

The gate, once opened, leads to a pit traversed by a long plank. The pit is 20 feet deep and filled with all manner of garbage. The plank is stout and obviously used to cross the room. If the orcs have had time they withdraw the plank, leaving the party exposed on the lower side of the pit. There is another door and wall on the other side of the pit, though the door is gone.

Beyond the gatehouse is a wide open courtyard of small trees and brush. Two small towers bisect the wall that stretches all the way around the enclosure. The towers are unmanned and though they are accessible they afford little vantage in assaulting the hill fortress above.

The Upper Gates

9th Gate: Reisers gate.

Just above the wall of the eighth gate stands a small squat gate house tower, 20 feet high. It is much like several of the other lower gates. It overlooks the enclosure and the 8th gate. The path immediately doubles back on itself rising steeply up the hill to the upper gates of Aucherwitch.

This simple tower has one floor for firing down upon the enemy, reached by ladder from the inside. The walls of the chapel courtyard look down upon the path and gate. This gate is relatively easy to flank and moving around it on the outside is done without penalty.

The orcs do not hold this tower, unless they know the party is greatly weakened. The doors are closed though no bars exist to lock them.

10th Gate: Arms gate.

The path moves steeply uphill to the tenth gate. The gate house here is a squat two floor structure with a high conical roof with the typical red shingles. The door to the gatehouse is shut. A walled embrasure juts out from the gatehouse overlooking the road and gate houses below.

The embrasure overlooks the path between gates 7 and 8. From here the orc archers were shooting arrows down on the party. The second floor is accessible by a small ladder that leads up to a hatch in the floor. There is nothing of value here.

There are two orcs with short bows here unless the party is making an obvious attack on the tower. If that is the case the two orcs flee up the road to the Eleventh gate.

Orc, 2 *(These lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 12 and HP 6, 5. Their primary attributes are physical. They wear hide armor, and wield axes and swords in battle. They have short bows and 20 arrows apiece. Each has 2-5gps on them.)*

11th Gate: Walls gate.

The path leads to yet another two story structure with conical roof. The wall of the road leads directly up to the outer corner of the building. Arrow slits face the pathway. The door is shut.

The second floor has 3 arrow slits built in each face so that defenders can shoot in any one of the three directions. Though shots fired down to gates 6 and 7 are at long range. The doors are barred and it will take some effort to break them down.

This gate is the exact replica of Arms Gate. Here more archers can rain arrows or throw stones down on the party as they pass between gates 7 and 8. As before the orcs are not attempting to hold Walls Gate, but they are planning a sortie. As the party charges Walls Gate, a group of orcs, goblins and wolves, led by a hlobane, launch a sortie against them. They attack them from the high ground on the path between gates 10 and 11. They get the appropriate advantages for doing so. They try to drive the party off, but if half their numbers are slain or the party retreats back to Arms Gate they turn and flee, stopping for nothing until they are safe behind the moat of Bridges Gate.

Orc, hlobane *(This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16 and HP 11. His primary attributes are physical. He wears chain mail, uses a small round, iron shield. In battle he wields a broad sword for 2-7 points of damage. He possesses 4 5gp gems and a necklace with a small curio portrait in it. The portrait in it is Baroness of Ludensheim's mother.)*

Orc, 5 *(These lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 12 and HP 6, 5, 5, 5, 4. Their primary attributes are physical. They wear hide armor, have shields and wield axes and swords in battle. Two of them have light crossbows with 8 bolts apiece. Each has 2-5gps on them.)*

Goblin, 4 *(Their vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 3 each, AC 14. They are lawful evil. Their primary attributes are physical. Their have darkvision 60 feet. They attack with claw for 1d4 points of damage or by weapon for 2–5 points of damage. They are wearing ragged shirts and vests and using knives and axes to fight.)*

Wolf *(This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 13, HP 11. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a bite for 1d8 points of damage. He has twilight vision and a keen sense of smell.)*

12th Gate: Bridges Gate

The cobbled path widens to accommodate four abreast. Along your right flank is a sheer wall of brick and mortar which rises to the castle above. There are few if any handholds. The path leads to a squat gate house with drawbridge. This gate house is only about 12 feet wide and 20 feet tall. Its conical roof is covered in red shingles and a small banner of black and red flies above it. Before the gatehouse is a 20 foot break in the road which tumbles down to the rocks and the 5th Gate below. A small draw-bridge spans the break. The chains are long gone and there seems no way that the bridge can be lifted. There is a small, solid doorway that opens in a courtyard beyond.

The gatehouse consists of nothing more than a small gate and the bridge. Crossing the bridge puts the party into the courtyard beyond. The courtyard is wide and spacious and covered in a small forest of trees. It has a well and a small tower that looks down on the gates 2 and 3. The tower is largely ruined and little used by the orcs. A secret path does zigzag down to Gate 2.

If Vanek is aware of the assault he makes a strong defense here at Bridges Gate. If he is not aware of the assault and the characters have managed to approach without detection they will find only the troll here manning the drawbridge. He is easy to surprise, all checks made at a bonus 4.

In the event that Vanek is aware of the assault, he sends Isung to secure Bridges Gate. Isung gathers all the troops, assuming that there are any, that have fled from below, and sends down a force of troops from the main fortress to join the troll. He himself takes up residence in Kulmer's Gate. Isung's orcs allow the party to cross the bridge. As soon as half of them have done so they attack those who

have crossed with a furious charge, led by the remaining hlobane. The troll attacks as well. The orcs try to destroy the party or at the very least drive them back across the bridge. If they do so they do not pursue them but harry them with arrows as they flee back down the twisting road.

The Castle Keeper must keep track of all the remaining orc forces. Vanek keeps the ungern (if any still live) near him at all times and he is in the tower beyond the fourteenth gate. There should have been significant wastage on the orc numbers.

The force at the Gate consists of all those who have fled from below plus:

Troll *(This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 6d8, AC 12, HP 15. His primary attributes are physical. He has only a thick hair shirt on and wields a large axe in battle for 1d8 points of damage. He can attack with 2 claws for 1d4 and a bite for 1d6 points of damage. This troll is very old and weighed down by his own evil. He is partially rooted to the ground and moves at 1/4 move for 5 feet. He heals only one hit point every 4 rounds. Beneath his shirt, in a pouch are his treasures. Amongst other various and sundry debris is a +1 dagger, scroll with 3 magic spells on it and a periapt of wound closure.)*

Orc, 6 *(These lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 12. Their primary attributes are physical. They wear hide armor, have shields and wield axes and swords in battle for 1d6 points of damage. Two of them have light crossbows with 8 bolts apiece. Each has 2-5gps on them.)*

Goblin, 6 *(Their vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 3 each, AC 14. They are lawful evil. Their primary attributes are physical. Their have darkvision 60 feet. They attack with claw for 1d4 points of damage or by weapon for 2–5 points of damage. They are wearing ragged shirts and vests and using knives and axes to fight.)*

If half of Isung's forces are killed they retreat to Churches Gate, beyond the chapel or Kulmers gate, whichever is closest to each orc. The troll cannot retreat and fights to the death. If he dies he does not fall to the earth, nor require being burned for he slowly stiffens and his feet root to the ground. Thus, the fate of all trolls in the world of Aihrde.

The Bridges Gatehouse gives way to an open courtyard that is flanked by the tower that is Churches Gate.

13th Gate: Churches Gate

A tall, narrow bell tower looms over the inner courtyard. Arrow slits look down upon Bridges Gate courtyard and a small passageway cuts through the tower to the inner yard beyond.

The bell tower is about 40 feet high and consists of several rooms. Stairs lead up to the 2nd and 3rd floors, but there is nothing here of value. The gatehouse is defensible from both sides.

The orcs make little attempt at holding this gate, anxious only to flee to the Chapel or the keep itself. If overtaken in the bell tower courtyard they turn and fight, but always with withdrawing in mind. Any regular orcs or goblins who make it into Kulmer's Gate, cross the plank bridge, slam the door and bar it even to the detriment of their comrades.

The tower has two floors for firing down upon the enemy, reached by ladder from the inside.

NOTE: The castle's inner keep overlooks gates 12, 13, 14, the bell tower courtyard and the chapel. Rocks or other debris can be hurled down from the inner keep onto those below.

13b The Chapel Courtyard

The courtyard you occupy is high up the hill's flanks and nestled between the towers of the Inner Keep and the thirteenth gate. To your right you see the dome shaped roof of an ancient chapel. A wall, with a small wrought iron gate in it, gives access to stone steps that lead down to the building. Beyond all this you see the valley spill out before you. On your left the sheer walls of the Castle rise up without break some 60 feet. Before you lies another gatehouse. This one about 30 feet wide with an open entrance that leads to what appears to be a wooden plank bridge.

This wide open bell tower courtyard is cobbled. The cobbles are old with much grass growing through the mortar. A low wall lines the east face of the hill, beyond which one can see the valley. Another wall, on the south face has a small gate in it. The gate leads to a stone stair that in turn winds down to the Chapel and graveyard.

13c The Chapel and Graveyard

The steps lead down the hill some 40 feet where the chapel sits on a broad ledge. A low wall was long ago built around the ledge, though in places it has fallen away to tumble down the hill below. The doors of the building are set away from the castle itself, facing the valley. A small cemetery fills much of the open space between the chapel and the wall. The doors are shut.

The doors are shut and locked.

Within, the party finds a long abandoned chapel. The iconography of the old gods lines the walls, and an alter stone for sacrifices of wealth set upon the far wall. A great statue of the god Tefnut, long abused and stripped of much of its wealth looms over the whole room, she does hold in her hands a small bowl, within which is a small amount of clear, fragrant water.

A small door behind the alter leads to a vestment chamber, a bell room and a small drawing room. The secret entrance which leads up from the valley below (see above) comes out in the small bell room. Noticing the secret door requires a successful wisdom check (CL 3). The stairs of the secret exit/entrance lead down into the winding dark.

The bowl in Tefnut's hands is a font of magical holy water. Any who pray at the alter are healed by drinking the water (1d8 hit points).

14th Gate: Kulmer's gate.

Yet another gate to the castle stands before you. The gatehouse looms over the courtyard, standing some 40 feet high and 40 feet wide. The roof is shingled and with a small chimney, from which a tiny gray column of smoke rises. The doorway leads to a bridge over a deep pit. Wide mouthed gargoyles heads with wicked peaks and sharp snouts angle out over the pit and wooden bridge. Beyond the bridge stands another door of thick hued wood. The whole affair is aged but solidly built and though the bridge is wooden, it too seems stout enough to hold you.

Bridge Room
The bridge is covered from above by the gargoyles, for on the second floor is a large metal covered pit out from which six channels flow, each to the edge of the room and to a pipe that leads down to the gargoyle heads below. Through here burning oil or pitch can be poured. To the left of the bridge is a wide ledge, also protected by the gargoyles. The upper floors are well stocked with fire wood, pitch, kettles and the like.

Burning Pitch/Pit Trap *(The pitch pours through the channels and out the gargoyle beaks onto anyone below for 1d10 points of damage. Those below are can attempt to dodge but doing so risks them falling into the pit. They dodge with a successful dexterity check (CL 2), avoiding the pitch reduces the damage by 1/2. Any such dodge must be followed by a dexterity check to stay on the bridge (CL 3). The pit is covered in sharp, jagged rocks and broken iron bars. Falling into the pit may result in possible broken bones and 1d6 points of damage. Save for broken bones on a successful constitution save (CL 0). An unmodified roll of 1 or 2 results in a broken leg, anything else is a broken arm or wrist.)*

Access to the upper floor can only be attained through the Tunnel (see below).

Second Floor
Hegleck the goblin lays in wait here. He is the only goblin that was left from the original garrison who did not attack at any point. He is Isung's last defense. He mans the kettle of burning pitch. He watches out of one of the windows, looking for anyone crossing over the pit. Once someone tries to cross the bridge he dumps the pitch on them.
There is little of value in the room, though it is cluttered with all manner of junk, garbage and refuse. Hegleck has lived here for some time and collects odds and ends from around the castle.

NOTE: Hegleck stole the **Cup of Blue**. Unbeknownst to Isung Hegleck stole it the night that Isung led the attack against the farmstead. Hegleck wrapped the cup up in a dirty towel and took off running. He dropped it the grass between the Inner Keep and the Outer Wall (see map where for the X that marks where the Cup is lying in the grass.)

Hegleck the Goblin *(His vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 1, AC 14. He is lawful evil. His primary attributes are physical. He has darkvision 60 feet. He attacks with two claws for1d4 points of damage apiece or by weapon for 2–5 points of damage. He is wearing a ragged pair of shorts)*

Guardroom
Beyond the door is a broad open pathway flanked by tall walls. It ends in another doorway, without any door, that leads to the guardroom. All manner of weaponry, travel gear, food, beer, water (there is a small well) and the like are piled everywhere about. There is a great deal of valuable equipment here, from normal weapons and armor to adventuring, mountaineering and construction equipment. The party can find a wheelbarrow, axes, hammers, chains, picks, wedges, rope, hooks, pulleys, scale and ring armor, shields, 100 bolts, 80 arrows, 12 spears and a dozen mixed pole-arms.

Isung will not stand and fight. If he sees the characters breeching this final line of defense he gathers what orcs there may be remaining and flees back up the tunnel and into the fortress. He will attempt to hide to escape, not wishing to die here. If necessary he will move all the way around the inner keep and flee out the gates. He will abandon any of his fellows to save his own hide. If he is captured or cornered he will tell the party that he has the Cup of Blue and guide them to the ruined tower where he had it hidden in exchange for his and his comrades (if there are any) freedom. He of course does not know the goblin stole it and will be genuinely surprised when he discovers it missing. He should not be treated as a sniveling orc, being a member of the hlobane tribe he is a fierce and prideful warrior. He will die well if he has to die at all. If he must fight he will rally what troops he has left at the Great Hall (see below).

Isung *(This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8+1, AC 17 and HP17. His primary attributes are physical. He wears +2 mail hauberk. In battle he wields two chains and ball. The balls are spiked and do 2-5 points of damage apiece. He does not suffer a penalty for two handed combat. He carries a small shield , +1 short sword and 21gp in a pouch.)*

In the guard room there is one door that leads on to the tunnel that in turn leads to the inner keep.

15 Tunnel
The door gives way to a long tunnel that rises steeply before doubling back on itself and rising in another steep incline. Exiting the tunnel brings one into a walled courtyard just above, or equal to the 2nd floor of the 14th Gate. There is a small iron door that leads to the second floor of that gate here. The tunnel has the typical rafters and red shingle roof of the gatehouses.

The Castle

Leaving the dark tunnel you come to high walls on your left and right and an open grassy yard between them. The left, or Outer wall, runs the length of the rocky escarpment and stands about 30 feet high. The right wall is built upon the top of a the last rock outcropping, itself 30 feet high, of this large hill and stands a further 40 feet in height and is capped by red shingled roofs. These are no doubt the walls of the Inner Keep. The yard extends in front of you, vanishing around the building's corner. A small set of narrow steps is built into the wall of the Inner Keep directly to your right.

The party has at last penetrated the castle proper and stands at the foot of the Inner Keep. The Outer Walls which overlook the gates below run around the entire fortress and have several watch towers built in them. These walls are roughly 30 feet high. The Inner Keep stands on the final outcrop of rock and serves as both walls and the living quarters. The rock cliff is about 30 feet high (making the bottom of the Inner Keep and Walls equal to the top of the Outer Walls) and the walls upon them ranging upwards to 50 feet in height. The characters can move freely all the way around the whole Inner Keep and attempt to climb it at any number of points or enter it through the two doorways.

The towers are 20 feet higher than the walls and have the red shingled roofs typical of all the guard houses. They are unoccupied. And filled with old refuse, bones and the like.

Lying in the grass where Hegleck dropped it is the Cup of Blue. The Golden Familiar inside becomes aware of any lawful good characters passing within 50 feet of it and shines. Anyone in the area notices the light on a successful wisdom save (CL 0). If not any characters or monsters passing by have a chance of seeing the blue cup in the green grass (CL 6). For information on the Cup of Blue, see above.

The stairs lead to the Inner Keep (see below). If the party follows the yard around the Inner Keep they can find the postern gate, that leads to a second yard and another set of steps that also enters the Inner Keep.

The Inner Keep

Though the walls are intact, the buildings of the Inner Keep are largely in ruins. Two main structures running the length of the north and west walls are collapsed with the exception of the area around the great hall. The stables are intact and a small building, a chapel, located on the eastern wall are still in tact. There is refuse all over the main courtyard. Rubble mixed with the debris the marauding orcs have left hither and yon. The only thing of note and value is a push cart the orcs use to haul wood from the debris pile to their lair in the stables.

There are two entrances to the Inner Keep, the stairs and the postern gate. Neither are guarded.

If there are any of Isungs forces left at this point they are scattered and try to avoid combat. Some will join Vanek, the hlobane and goblins will flee. The goblins will attempt to scale down the cliffs to get out of the castle.

Ottokar keeps himself hidden in the great hall, brooding on his own impending doom. The malevolence of his thoughts carries out and over the small keep. Any who enter the area must save versus *fear* (CL 2) or suffer a -2 on all ability checks, saves and attack rolls (Note: those who fail their save will not flee the area).

16 The Courtyard

The stairs gives way to the open skies and a small fenced in courtyard. High walls bound it on the north, a tower and long building on the west and another lower building built against the wall on the east. The tower, overlooking the gates below is in ruins as is much of the long house to which it is attached. The courtyard has a single well in its center. Just beyond this stands a huge stake, to which are strapped the white bones of some half mailed, long dead figure.

There is nothing of value here. The skeleton is that of the elf warrior Ielda. Ottokar had him strapped there many years ago. The bones bare the marks and signs of many abuses. If the characters take care and put the body to rest, they will receive a reward from the Wenafar, the Faerie Queen. This is because the elf lord was one of her devoted followers. The water in the well is good to drink.

17 Ruined Building and Tower

The tower is but a shell of a tower, for all the floors have collapsed. The building is in much the same condition, the roof has utterly fallen in on the second floor. The first floor consists of several rooms, all filled with debris from above. The orcs use this as a rubbish heap.

There is nothing of value in either building. Isung hid the Cup of Blue here, underneath some of the old crates, but it is no longer here (see above).

18 The Stable

The place is a dirty one room sty, filled with grasses for beds. Various blankets lie scattered about and hammocks hang from posts to walls. The roof is intact but partially sagging from lack of repairs. A large cooking fire, still smoldering, sits in one corner, the walls and ceiling blackened from its soot.

This is the garrison room for the orcs and goblins. All 20 of them keep their beds here and whatever treasures they have taken and kept. These orcs are of the Ashcrik Tribe, a smaller tribe from the northern Kellerwald who are often impressed by hlobane from the Red Hills. They keep their treasure in a community chest, buried in the back of the stables. Their treasure consists of 112gp, 14pp, 2 silver cups worth 5gp each, a small bag of 10 5gp gems and a scroll with 3 spells on it (Castle Keeper's choice), Berry's Prestidigitation, a spell book with 6 first level spells in it (Castle Keepers choice).

19 The Chapel

The door to this small building is nestled in the Inner Keep's wall. It is open and a dim light filters through various slits in the walls revealing a room strewn with wreckage. In the shadows, on the far wall, lurks some creature, the light catching red-like eyes. It utters a low, hungry growl.

The creature is a mountain lion captured by the orcs and chained here in the old chapel. The creature is starved and very thirsty. It has been beaten. Attacking the creature will drive it to defend itself, though it is chained to the wall. It will fight if it has to, but if suddenly set free it will try to escape, running about the compound until it finds a hole in the wall or the steps leading down.

Throwing the lion food and giving it water can be the first step in taming the creature. It is injured enough and hungry enough that food and a kind hand from a druid, elf or other woodsmen can earn its trust (charisma CL 4). All this should be done at the Castle Keeper's desecration as a mountain lion can make for a powerful companion.

> Mountain lion *(This neutral creatures vital stats are HD 4d8, AC 15, HP 24. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 2 claws for 1d4 points of damage each and a bite for 1d10 points of damage. It has twilight vision and the ability to rake for an extra 1d4+2 points of damage.)*

There is nothing else of value here. The walls are so mangled and scarred that there is not even a symblance of what deities were worshiped here.

20 The Hall of Ottokar Vanek

The large building that walls the west end of the courtyard looms above you. The windows are boarded up and the door bound and shut. Shadows cling to the crevices, the nooks and ruined places, their darkness a creeping blight that stinks of evil and fear.

If any hlobane orcs survive, and they were not able to make their escape, particularly Isung, they make their stand here in front of the door. They fight well as a unit and always use large iron shields to guard themselves against missile fire. They fight to the death, asking no quarter and giving none.

The doors are locked from the inside, a skilled rogue is needed to circumvent the locks, otherwise there is no other easy entrance to the building. The door or one of the lower windows can be battered down.

Ottokar has long since gutted this building, turning the whole of it into one great hall where he lives, brooding in his own terror. The years have not been kind to him, for he has eaten little but his own evil and this has left him a wasted creature of dark design but little power. The room is kept dark. It is bereft of all furnishings but for a wide alter stone upon which he sits and a tapestry hanging on the wall. The tapestry depicts a scene of the horned gods coming to Aihrde and is of magnificent design.

When at last the doors swing wide a foul stench bellows from the darkness within. It engulfs you, knocking the breath from your lungs. As the wave of decay spills into the courtyard you see into the blackened space. A palatable darkness hovers in the room, bound to the walls and great, ornately carved pillars straining to hold the heavy roof on high. Light spills across the cobbled floor like water, spreading out until it is stretched and thin and laps against the darkness like so much useless foam. The room is devoid of all furnishings but for a large alter stone and behind it a tapestry. Coiled at the foot of the alter is a darker stain . . . one that moves.

Ottokar is broken beyond measure. His wasted form lies curled up before the alter. For years he has lingered here, watching his minions and brooding on he knows not what. His mind is a wash of fear which he nurses upon like so much milk. His lusts and desires have left him dying, a pitiful wretch.

When the party approaches his voice croaks out: ***"Begone and leave me. Bother me not with your paltry war for I have no purpose for it. Aufstrag will rise no more, not for me, not for my own design. Plagues and bothers. Begone and off."*** He groans and sinks further into his own waste.

Hidden in the shadows are any of the ungern who yet live. They attack the party as soon as the group moves toward their master.

> Ungern *(These lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, AC 16. Their primary attributes are physical. They can attack with weapons or with 2 claws for 1-2 or gore for 1-6+2 points of damage. They carry large iron shields, axes, daggers and 12gp.)*

The only way the party may kill Ottokar is to dip their weapons in the waters of the Cup of Blue and striking him. Ottokar offers no resistance, dying on the first blade that runs him through. But as he does so, he grasps the blade and moans, "A bane, a bane upon you and your kind. Fear not for me, for in Scarisbrick I shall come again! REVENGE! The Unicorn's Nightmare comes!" With that he dies, sinking into his own stench. Scarisbrick is a land north of the Kellerwald, many may have heard of it.

Rewards

The castle taken, Ottokar destroyed and the Cup of Blue rescued from its dungeon brings the characters great success. They should be given 500 exp apiece, whatever magic they take and if they so choose, as the castle stands in land claimed by none, they can claim it as their own so long as they swear an oath to the Empress for it. Of course it needs vast sums to repair it . . . and for this there is not else but more adventure.

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feet
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