The MIDLANDS

Low Magic Sandbox Setting

LOW FANTASY GAMING

Stephen J. Grodzicki

CREDITS

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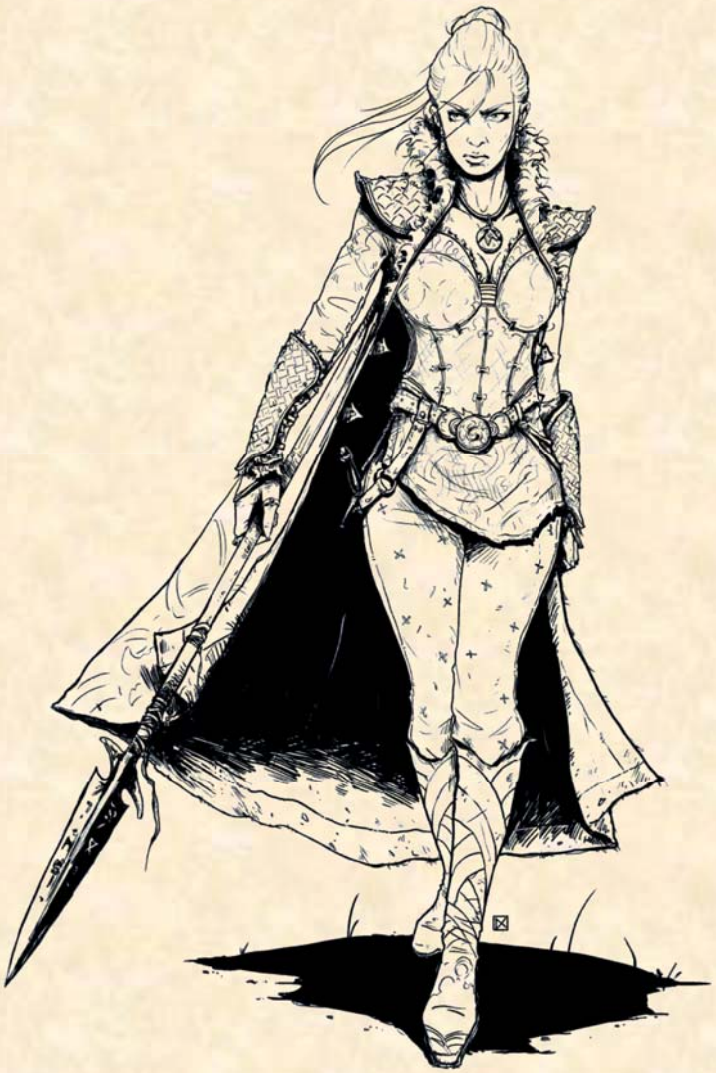
Website: https://lowfantasygaming.com/

The official LFG site is updated regularly with LFG and Midlands material, including free downloads such as high definition maps, illustrated character sheets, pregens, and the LFG PDF. Stop by sometime and let me know what you think.



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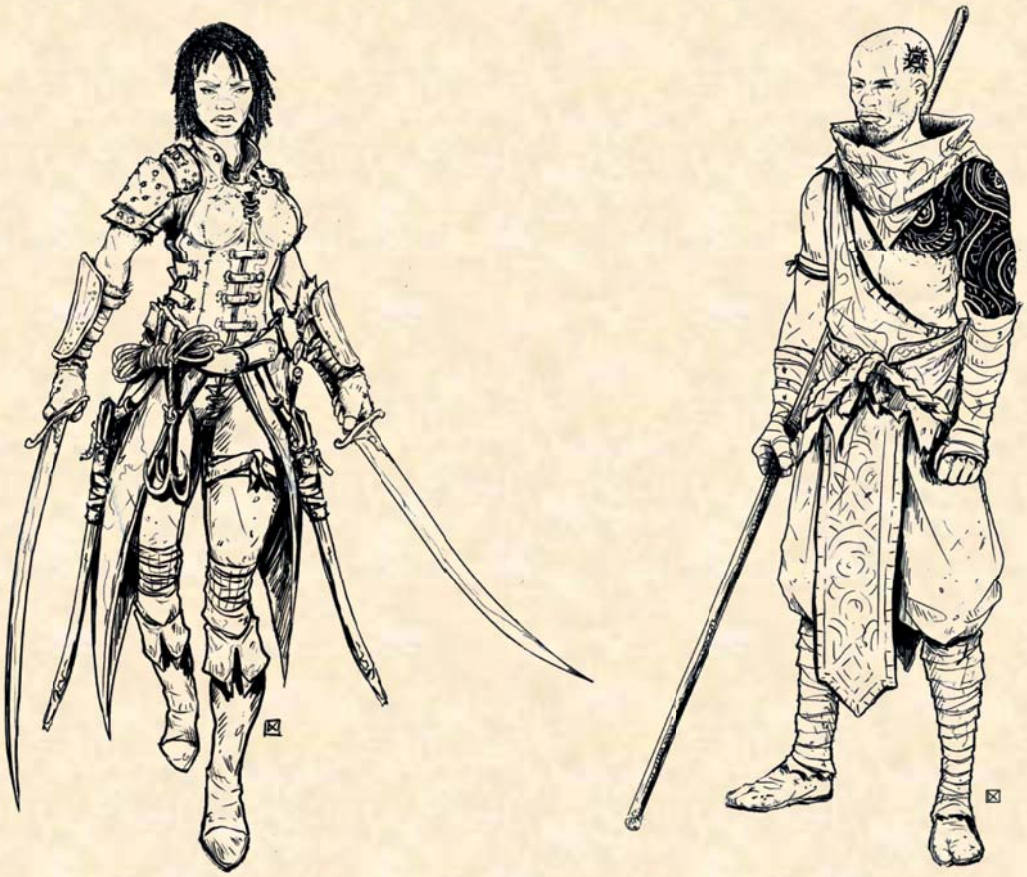


OVERVIEW

The Midlands is a low magic, points of light, medieval fantasy setting, supported by GM tools to enable low prep, improvised play. An outline of the main themes is set out below.

Medieval Fantasy

Also known as Argosa, the Midlands is a medieval fantasy realm with a mix of cultures and technology similar to the Dark Ages, Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Antiquity.

Humans of five cultures contest the region; the *Midlanders* of *Lake Argos* (officially *Argosans,* most akin to medieval westerners), *Nydissians* of the southern Empire, northern raiders known as *Varnori*, the albino *Karoks* holed up in their mountain fortress, and the *Thuels*, barbarian nomads of the *Great Plains* and *Argos Plateau*.

Deadly Outlands

The setting is intended as a "points of light" environment; beyond the fortified walls of civilization, the wilds are dominated by man eating *skorn*, ferocious beasts and xenophobic barbarians. The vast majority of the land is uncharted; there are no roads to guide explorers and no villages to provide respite.

Travel between the isolated cities is via armed watercraft or heavily guarded caravans only. No-one travels the borderlands alone, and to venture beyond the ranger patrols is to court disaster, even for the well prepared.

Grim Cities

Whilst it is true that the walled bastions of man are safer than the hinterlands, the cities are fraught with dangers of their own. On the streets, life is cheap, and corruption, brutality and exploitation widespread. So called justice is harsh and unforgiving, for sale to the highest bidder or exacted through vengeful blades in back alleys.

In the corridors of power, highborn, priests and the wealthy squabble for control, heedless to the struggle of the common man. From this melting pot of ambition, new contenders rise each day, grasping for opportunity.

Ancient Mysteries

In the Third Age, the prevailing cultures are merely the latest survivors of the region. In past eras, darker societies ruled, including the skorn, cyclopes, serpentmen, urgot and others long forgotten. Elder human civilizations too rose to prominence, including the mummy entombing *Ramorans* and blood sacrificing *Suun*. From the fetid bogs of the *Trackless Moors* to the frozen peaks of the *Ironhull Mountains*, the ruins of lost kingdoms linger, waiting to be rediscovered.

Silent Gods

The inhabitants of the Midlands are religious folk, worshiping gods and deities, strengthening their spirits with litany and prayer. Sacred customs and ceremonies are well established, and the clergy accorded due respect.

If the immortals hear the prayers of their faithful however, they deign no response. The gods of Argosa are ineffably distant and whisper silent; granting no miracles to their followers, nor intervening in the world in any obvious way.

Dangerous Magic

In Argosa, magic is not only rare, it is dark and inherently dangerous. Sorcery was not meant for mortals, and this fundamental mismatch taints every casting with uncertainty. From beyond the Veil, magic draws the attention of dark and inscrutable forces, some of which find ways to impose their will on the material world.

In the present day, nine hundred years after *Mount Rokan* blackened the sky, true sorcerers are almost unknown. At most, the walled cities conceal but a few, and the majority of folk will be glad not to witness spellcasting during their lifetime. Yet all have heard the tales, and accept that magic is real in one form or another.

Unnatural monsters exist, but tend to be unique individuals or geographically isolated tribes. Enchanted objects are custom pieces and almost always herald from a past age; once forged they are remarkably difficult to destroy.

Custom Made

Most importantly of all, the Midlands is incomplete. Some cities, cultures and threats have been provided, but many details are for the GM to determine, and in so doing make the setting their own.

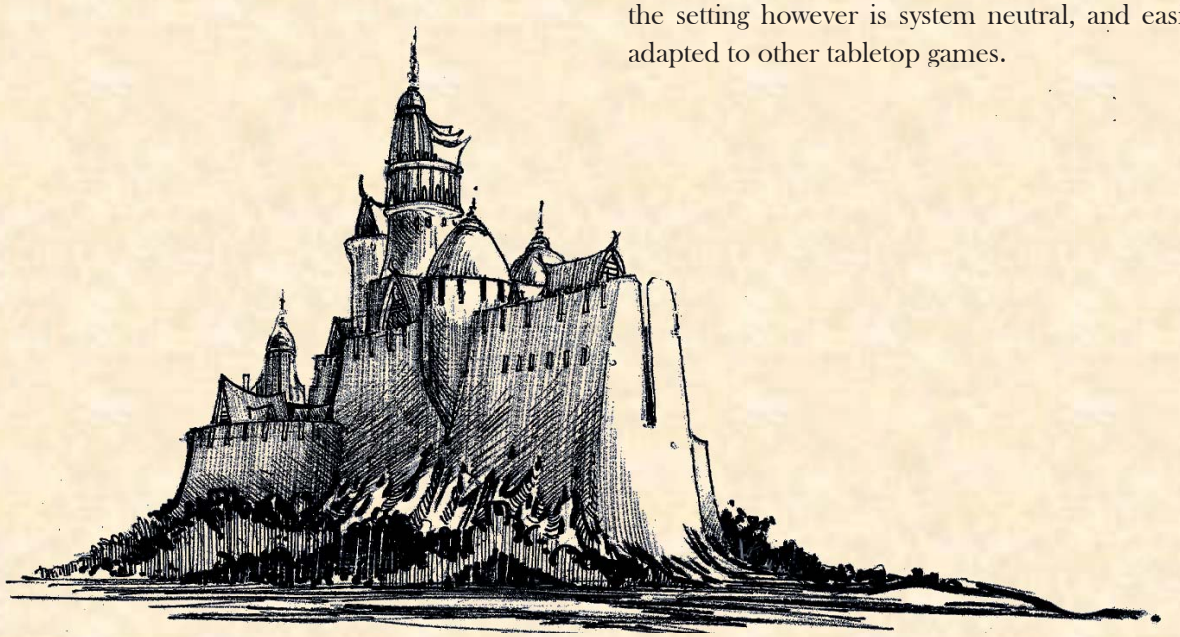
If the referee wants feral elves lurking in the outlands instead of skorn, or Dol-Karok's humans enslaved by dwarves rather than the other way around - by all means make it so.

The Midlands map and six city maps are available for free download via the *Low Fantasy Gaming* website, including versions with and without labels. Altering the maps with free editing software such as *MS Paint* or *GIMP ver 2.8* is easy; GMs are encouraged to add/substitute their own names and sites to suit their campaign.

The primary purpose of this book is to provide a low magic, customisable setting, and equip the GM with the tools necessary for improvised, sandbox style play.

Rules Flexible

The Midlands is written for the *Low Fantasy Gaming* RPG system (free download or print on demand; see the LFG site). The vast majority of the setting however is system neutral, and easily adapted to other tabletop games.



The MIDLANDS
Argosa
SUNSTONE RANGES
IRONHULL MOUNTAINS
WHITE DRIFTS
Voengard
Dol'Karok
Saltwater
HIGH PLAINS
WISTWOOD
ARGOS PLATEAU
Northgate
LOW PLAINS
Port Brax
LAKE ARGOS
Crow's Keep
FOREST OF DRELNOR
SPINE OF ULGOTH
MOUNT ROKAN
TRACKLESS MOORS
Fennorn River
Melek
SUURAT JUNGLE

SANDBOX TRAITS

What is a sandbox campaign? There's a lot of debate about that on the internet, but for the purposes of this book, a sandbox campaign tends to have the following traits:

Mystery

A sandbox setting is ripe for exploration and discovery, daring players to explore the unknown and unearth lost secrets. In the Midlands, most of the region is unmapped and unknown; full of locations no human has set foot in for centuries, if not millennia.

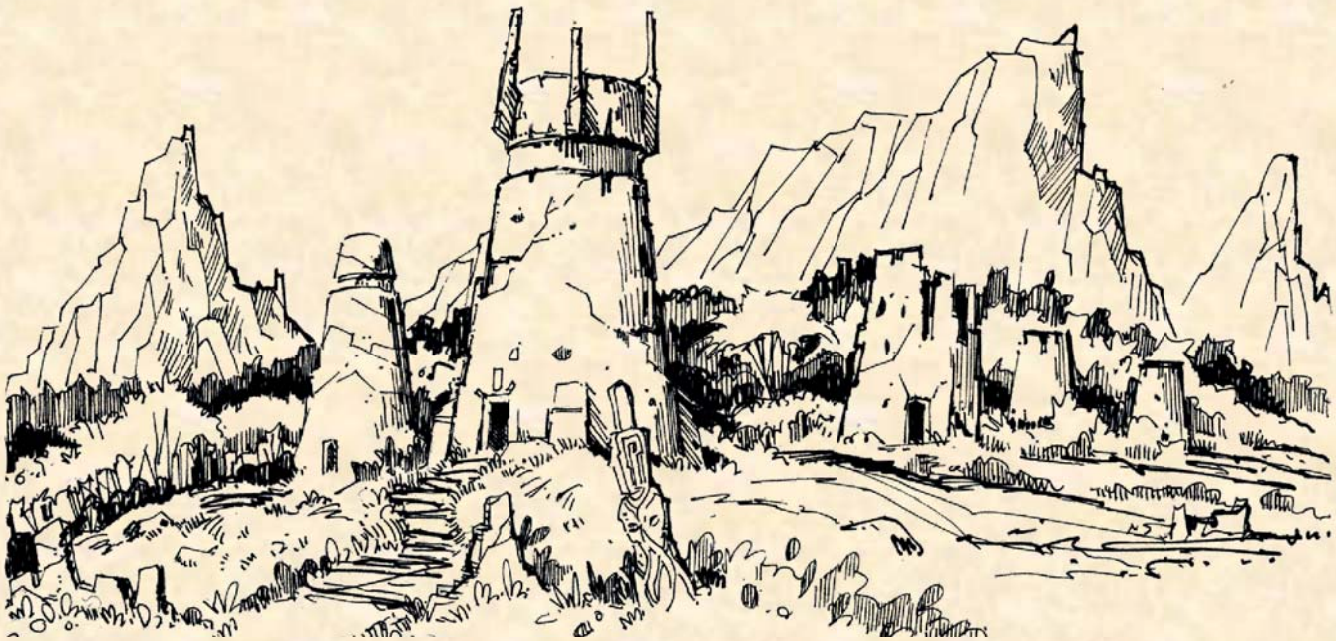
The Midlands is presented as a broad sketch, with many blank spaces to be filled in by the GM. A careful perusal of the region map reveals many hidden gems: secret ruins, towers, and settlements marked but unexplained. What are these places? Do they exist, or are they the embellishments of a long dead cartographer?

Open World

A sandbox campaign gives the players the freedom to explore in any direction they choose. The players might engage with some of the adventure hooks the GM sprinkles around the game world, or they might not. Either way, the GM needs to be ready to improvise if (when!) the PCs take an unexpected turn.

In this book are a host of tools to provide inspiration and guidance to the GM when PCs go "off script". Name lists, chance city encounters, taverns, random NPCs, weather, region events, terrain based encounter tables, rumour tables and more are at the GM's fingertips.

Combined with the tables in the *Low Fantasy Gaming* rulebook (eg: treasure tables, chase tables, etc), the GM has everything they need to build encounters on the fly, and adjudicate surprise situations with aplomb.



And if you're using the *Low Fantasy Gaming* rules (and why wouldn't you be ☺), the PCs might wander very far indeed. With the formal party retreat rule, and improvised chase table, the GM needn't worry about "balanced encounters" or quarantining areas that are "too dangerous" for the party. The PCs may range anywhere, confident in the knowledge that if they get in over their heads, they can probably escape if need be (albeit at a cost).

Episodic Adventures

In a sandbox campaign, there is typically no independent, overarching plot for the PCs to engage with. Instead, the primary story is directed by the players and the adventures their PCs instigate or choose to become embroiled in.

Because the party might roam far afield, a sandbox benefits from a wide range of adventure hooks to pique the party's interest or occupy them during less structured exploration. In the back half of this book are more than fifty *Adventure Frameworks*; mini adventures spread across different geographic locations with enough meat to kickstart a scenario, but enough flexibility to improvise and expand. Armed with these frameworks, the referee is well equipped to run exciting sessions on the fly.

Of course many GMs will also want to run more substantial adventures of their own creation, and/or other structured published modules. And so they should. Sandboxes work best with a healthy mix of improvised and structured material for all to enjoy.

Meaningful Choices

Action, and sometimes inaction, have consequences in a sandbox campaign. The Argos basin is a living, breathing environment, inexorably grinding forward in time whether the adventurers want it to or not. NPCs are in action behind the scenes, with goals and agendas to pursue. While the party are adventuring elsewhere, those plots might advance, stagnate, or come to fruition. On the other hand, where the PCs choose to involve themselves, the players have every opportunity to influence the outcome.

Rotating GMs

Short, episodic adventures, the lack of an overarching plot, and the mysterious nature of the sandbox, makes it easy to rotate GMs between adventures if desired. This can have a number of advantages over a more traditional, single GM campaign, including: everyone mostly plays as a PC, more surprises for all, a wider range of adventure ideas, more collaborative world building and campaign investment, and less GM burnout.

LEXICON

Argona Midlander deity of health, wealth, happiness & hope. The Starmaiden.

Argosa Formal name of the Midlands region.

Baal Midlander deity of decay, suffering, disease & death.

Beastmen See Skorn.

Borderlands The patrolled region, generally not more than a day's trek outside city walls.

Cavar Dol-Karok commoners.

Circle of Five Ruling merchant houses of Dol-Karok.

Crow's Keep Midlander capital.

Deep One Varnori tyrant deity.

Dol-Karok Mountain fortress of the albino Karoks.

Dominus Nydissian noble.

Drar Varnori ship captain.

Fenrir Midlander deity of skill, luck & fate. The Silver Wolf.

F*ck Same as now (historically used from about 15th century).

Graxus Midlander deity of war, courage, struggle and glory. The Iron God.

Highborn Midlander noble.

Imperator Nydissian city ruler.

Inquisitor Nydissian magic hunter.

Ipsgrave Highlord of Port Brax.

Iron God See Graxus.

Jarl Varnori ruler or noble.

Jarlsmen Vorngard city watch.

Justicar Midlander judge.

Karg Skorn tribe Chief.

Karok Albino humans living in the mountain fortress Dol-Karok.

Lady/Lord Midlander highborn/noble title.

Lucentum Nydissian secular order.

Magister Midlander advisor/counsellor.

Melek Nydissia's northernmost city.

Midlanders Olive skinned humans centred around Lake Argos, aka *Argosans*.

Mithri Karok noble.

Northgate Northernmost Midlander city.

Nydissians Dark skinned humans of the Southern Empire of Nydissia, aka southerners.

Ordo Malefactos Nydissian order of magic hunters and/or inquisitors.

Osgerd Ruling Jarl of Vorngard.

Outlander One who works or lives outside the walled cities, usually in the borderlands.

Overseer Leader of a fortified outpost.

Port Brax Westernmost Midlander city.
Ramorans Lost human culture from antiquity that mummified and entombed their dead.
Scaled Ones Serpentmen, aka scaled folk.
Scob Idiot, dimwit.
Servitors Dwarven slaves of the Karoks.
Setirus Imperator of Melek.
Shennog Midlander deity of night, mystery, deceit & madness.
Silver Wolf See Fenrir.
Skorn Primitive, cannibalistic halfmen, aka beastmen, that plague the wilds.
Slud Curse word similar to sh*t.
Soliri Midlander deity of the sun, weather, nature & creation. The World Tree.
Stargazer Nocratha, Sorcerer of Northgate.
Starmaiden See Argona.
Suun Lost human culture from antiquity that built ziggurats and engaged in blood magic.
Thuels Olive skinned human barbarians (mostly nomads) of the Great Plains and Argos Plateau.
Urgot Human mutants with cursed bloodlines born of ancient pacts with infernal or alien powers.
Uldred Midlander/Argosan King.
Varnori Pale skinned humans of the northern kingdom of *Varnor*, aka northerners.
Vorngard Southernmost Varnori city.
Wodon Midlander deity of knowledge, art, wisdom & justice.
World Tree See Soliri.

Greetings & Farewells

Some example greetings and farewells used widely across the region appear below, along with their originating culture. Naturally many other phrases and variants are also used.

GREETING	MEANING	CULTURE
Well met	Informal hello	All
Olo de Menok (often with a flourish)	Salutations of the Elder Mountain	Karok
Greetings goodman	Formal hello	Midlander
Glad meeting	Informal hello	Midlander
Master/Mistress (with nod or bow)	Informal greeting	Midlander
Pacem quo fexis	Peace between us	Nydissian
Vox Emperor (often with fist on chest)	Emperor's tidings	Nydissian
Norg shezzek cor gakk!	Man flesh is for feasting!	Skorn
Hoth ulnorta	Greetings outsider	Thuel
Harken (often with forearm shake)	Hello/Hail	Varnori

GOODBYE	MEANING	CULTURE
Farewell	Informal goodbye	Any
Safe Journey	Informal goodbye	Any
Como terra ferte (often with flourish)	As stone endures	Karok
Till next we meet	Formal goodbye	Midlander
Fair morrow	Informal goodbye	Midlander
Loc Imperium ardo	The Empire protects	Nydissian
Sordak wor duuka (often with guttural snort)	Today you live	Skorn
Krue drakar	Good hunting	Thuel
Sen somir	I/We go	Varnori

HISTORY

The history of the Midlands may be divided up into three broad ages. GMs are encouraged to add or modify details to suit their purposes.

The First Age

Almost nothing is known of the First Age, also known as the Age of Immortals, which predates the current era by at least 10,000 years. With no written records known to exist, legend and myth abound, offering precious little insight into primordial antiquity.

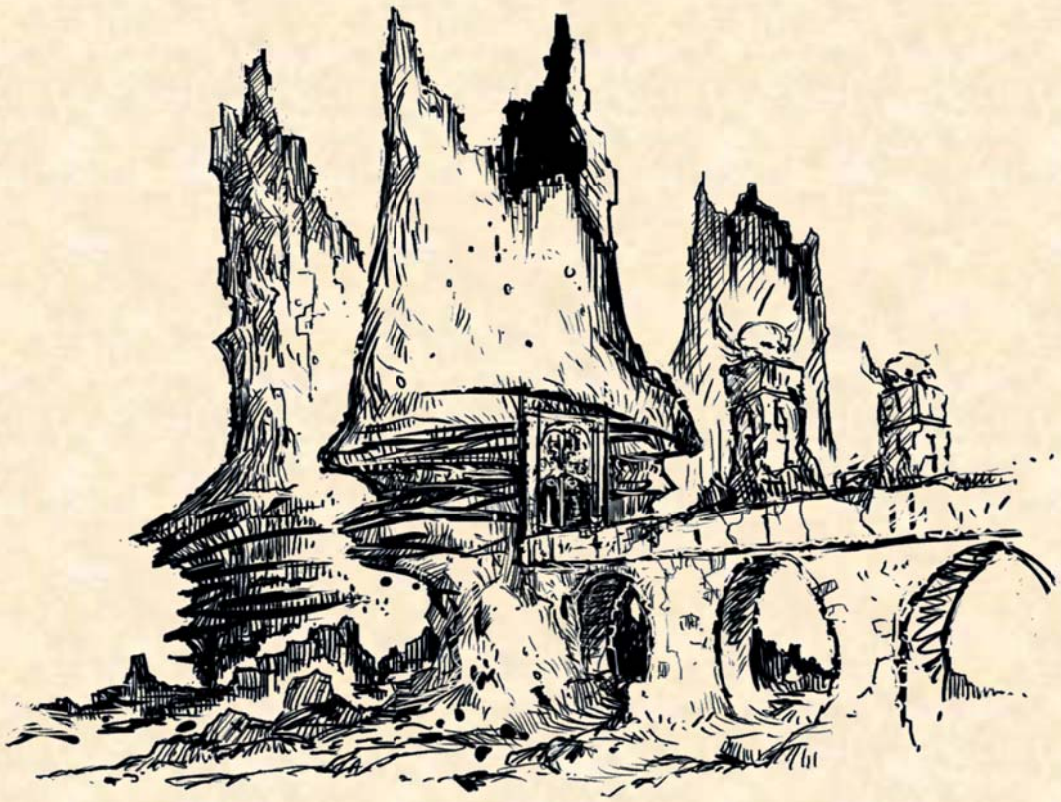
Theologically speaking, the Midland cultures believe the gods fashioned the world during this time, imbued men with free will, and fought over their souls. Second Age scriptures suggest the wars that followed were cataclysmic, and that the gods agreed to withdraw and observe from beyond the Veil, rather than risk the complete destruction of their creation.

The Second Age

The Second Age, also known as the Age of Mortals, spans approximately 9,100 years, ruled by humans and non-humans in turn. Records are patchy at best; only the tip of the iceberg has been rediscovered and most centuries remain a mystery. Nevertheless, those few who study the remaining evidence have gleaned some insight into the distant past.

At least two ancient human societies are known to have persisted for several hundred years; *Ramoran* slavers who buried their mummified dead in ornate underground tombs, and the *Suun,* a jungle kingdom abundant in gold, blood rituals and stepped pyramids.

In other periods, monstrous dynasties prevailed. Cruel serpentmen enslaved the warmbloods until the world suddenly cooled, forcing a southern retreat to more humid climates. Warring



cyclopes almost wiped men out entirely before a virulent plague drove them to the highest peaks to escape illness. Even the dwarves once ruled, using tempered iron against more primitive human societies, until men too unlocked the secret of steel.

In the last centuries of the Second Age, skorn dominated, mercilessly razing rival settlements and feasting on nomads. At their peak, the skorn numbered more than all the other humanoids combined. Then Mount Rokan exploded.

The Third Age

Some 900 years ago, Mount Rokan erupted in earth shattering fashion; searing the earth with fire and fume, blackening the sky with thick ash, and blasting the Midlands into the Third Age. Rokan was an unparalleled natural disaster, wiping out most life in the region.

Weeks later, when the skies finally cleared, desperate skorn and thuels fought for survival across the scorched plains, forests and mountains. Humans clinging to the inland sea took the opportunity to fortify and consolidate their defences, founding what would eventually become the enduring bastions of *Northgate*, *Port Brax* and *Crow's Keep*.

Approximately sixty years ago, the first Nydissian forces invaded from the south, establishing Melek as their northernmost city. Thirty years later, their second settlement of *Kadimos*, deep in the *Trackless Moors*, ended in ruin; sacked by waves of skorn, barbarian and Midlander forces. For the last twenty years, an informal truce with the Midlanders has prevailed, permitting trade and limited migration.

The last score of years also consolidated the first Varnori city of the region; *Vorngard*, a wooden settlement expanding with more northerners every year. Heralding from *Varnor,* across the *Boreal Sea,* the raiders navigate the treacherous Siltwater to reach *Lake Argos* and the interior proper.

CULTURES

This chapter briefly describes the five default human cultures of the Midlands. Further material fleshing out the societies may be found in the Cities chapter, but GMs are encouraged to customise and make the inhabitants their own.

Players and GMs should not feel constrained by what appears below. The following information is intended as a starting point only; no more than suggestions to be added to, modified and/or substituted to best suit the kind of game your table wants to play. If the GM prefers wyvern riding halfers from the frozen north in lieu of human seafaring Varnori, so be it.

Midlanders (Argosans)

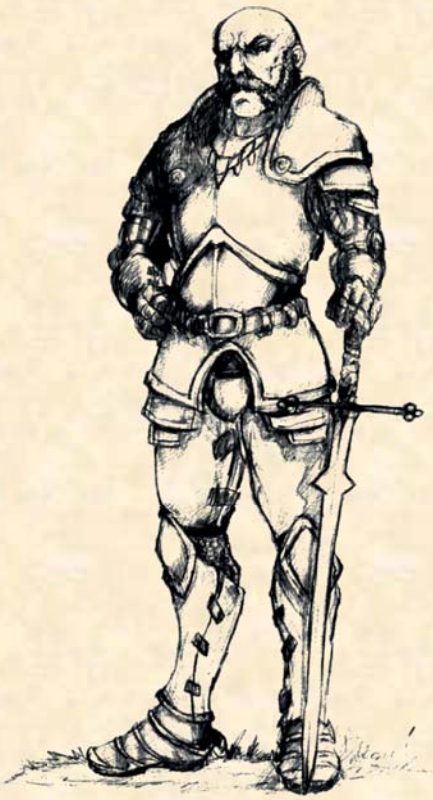
The olive skinned Midlanders, more formally known as *Argosans*, have a culture similar to medieval England, ruled by a king and court of hereditary highborn, vastly outnumbered by a growing underclass of commoners.

The Midlanders are not a numerous people, but control *Lake Argos* via the walled cities of *Crow's Keep, Northgate* and *Port Brax,* making up the central basin referred to as the Midlands (Argosa). The Argosans are leaders in scientific advancement in the region, for example they are the sole producers of full plate mail and secret concoctions such as alchemist's fire.

Midlanders venerate seven deities, an amalgam of some of mankind's enduring divinities since the Second Age. High and low born alike partake in private prayer and public worship; celebrating at temples, guided by ordained clergy. The *Seven Ancients* are as follows:

- *Argona* (health, protection, healing, happiness, hope),
- *Baal* (decay, disease, suffering, death),
- *Fenrir* (skill, luck, fate),
- *Graxus* (war, courage, struggle, glory),
- *Shennog* (night, darkness, mystery, deceit, madness),
- *Soliri* (sun, weather, nature, creation), and
- *Wodon* (knowledge, art, wisdom and justice).

Common Midlander apparel includes tunics, doublets, dresses and tabards, complemented with sturdy trousers and boots. Prosperous citizens tend to wear more linen than wool, with greater finery. In times of war, only Midlanders field armies with heavy cavalry. Their main force consists of mail clad men-at-arms, pikemen and regimented archers.



MIDLANDER NAMES		
20 Roll	Male	Female
1	Aldred	Odessa
2	Hammond	Cassey
3	Gregor	Isolde
4	Willem	Lucia
5	Harding	Marcella
6	Emory	Kendra
7	Shand	Felicia
8	Bennett	Edith
9	Warner	Annorah
10	Fenton	Janess
11	Morris	Talia
12	Lothar	Celene
13	Dirk	Sara
14	Justen	Maegen
15	Ogden	Dawn
16	Yorric	Estelle
17	Ethan	Nyssa
18	Horett	Magda
19	Grindle	Isabelle
20	Theobald	Lorna

Karoks

The albino Karoks are the elder and most striking of the Midland races, with milk white skin and ghost grey hair. Of all humans dwelling in the region, they are ostensibly the most secure; protected by the mountain fortress of *Dol-Karok*, the *Ironhull Mountains* and *White Drifts* beyond.

The *Circle of Five*, an elite merchant council of Dol-Karok's most powerful trading houses, rule the mountain. Karoks have access to the best metals and mineral resources in the land, which has made them exceptionally wealthy and affirmed their importance as trade partners.

Karok clothing varies greatly according to caste and taste. Amongst the noble *Mithri*, intricate gowns and exquisite coats are common. The most powerful houses utilise rare and exotic materials, including highly exclusive rare silks from far eastern *Shenzu*. Ornate masks are customary on formal occasions, worn by the influential as expressions of power, style and house affiliation. Less prosperous commoners, known as *Cavar*, dress more practically but with similar ostentation, substituting valuable gems for faux stones and expert embroidery.

Karoks believe that the spirits of their entombed forebears linger within the stone of their primordial home, revering their ancestor halls as holy gestalts of earth and soul. Traditionally, the more wealth one amasses, the stronger one's soul connects with the stone, perhaps partly explaining the Karok's preoccupation with commerce.

The last of the dwarves, known as *servitors*, languish in Dol-Karok; shackled and enslaved by the Circle and their own racial goldlust. Numbering in the hundreds, they spend their days endlessly toiling in the mines, eager to exploit new veins.

Karoks do not have a large standing army, but all citizens are required to undertake a period of compulsory military training, and expected to take up arms in defence of their home if required. On the rare occasion they need to assert their interests in the field, the Circle prefer to send mercenaries to do their bidding. Dol-Karok's resident *Stoneguard* are few in number but expertly trained, equipped with intimidating armour, crossbows and hammers.

KAROK NAMES		
d20 Roll	Male	Female
1	Mateo	Cataline
2	Baltasar	Mari
3	Lucon	Oalla
4	Escobar	Juana
5	Cristoval	Crusina
6	Gavriel	Francia
7	Pascal	Teresa
8	Ramiro	Serena
9	Monferriz	Elvira
10	Inigo	Aldona
11	Tomon	Innes
12	Salazar	Ysabel
13	Gascon	Felipa
14	Vasquez	Blanca
15	Avaro	Antonia
16	Vicente	Mercia
17	Anselmo	Madele
18	Eltor	Elena
19	Rachiro	Marcietta
20	Gomez	Luzia

Nydissians

The dark skinned people of equatorial Nydissia are expansionists, with the largest and most experienced forces in the region. They have dark eyes and hair, often cropped short or woven into tight braids.

Nydissians are governed by the philosophical order known as the *Lucentum*, who value logic and reason above all other human qualities, including empathy. They worship no gods but recognize that magic is real and dangerous. Sorcerers are hunted by the *Ordo Malefactos* and those ousted burnt alive.

Slavery is fundamental to the growing Empire, which increasingly relies on the conquered to provide conscripts and supplies. Integration is slow to non-existent; although the Empire offers trade and protection, forced occupation and the Lucentum's credo makes genuine conversion difficult.

Nydissians are partial to airy togas and light tunics to accommodate the warmer southern weather. *Melek* is their northernmost city, founded approximately sixty years ago.

The southern armies are led by generals, broken down into *cohorts* and spear headed by small elite warrior cadres known as *centurions*. They wear breastplates and greaves, armed with spears and large shields, and fight with disciplined co-ordination.

NYDISSIAN NAMES		
d20 Roll	Male	Female
1	Decimus	Lucidia
2	Mithrides	Soosi
3	Trovex	Septana
4	Norcil	Tibori
5	Lucius	Rox
6	Sercanis	Galera
7	Ortuvo	Antine
8	Titus	Sevira
9	Prytanis	Cerix
10	Gaius	Theodora
11	Varro	Quinte
12	Serjax	Marcella
13	Nicandes	Avius
14	Mallius	Maesaris
15	Barbulo	Kali
16	Crassus	Octavia

17	Kapula	Dorni
18	Terro	Vexonae
19	Carnifex	Balba
20	Anticus	Drusia

Varnori

Tall, pale skinned northerners, the Varnori are ocean raiders from across the *Boreal Sea*, with a powerful navy and veteran sailors. Vorngard is their southernmost settlement and first permanent encroachment into the Midlands. They are new residents, erecting their first buildings twenty years ago, a curious mix of reavers, warriors and emerging farmers.

The northerners are governed by the *Council of Varnor* (on the *Isle of Varnor*), some of whom are advised by Rune Seers said to be gifted with the power of prophecy.

Varnori know but one deity; the *Deep One*, a vengeful and unforgiving god buried in the darkest depths of the sea, its primordial form slumbering until the end of days, when the world will be unmade.

Varnori clothing usually consists of heavy furs, cloaks and waterproof leathers, consistent with the cooler northern climate. Northerners often braid their hair and beards, which are commonly shades of blonde, red or light brown. In combat the Varnori favour wooden shields, light armour amenable to swimming, and sharp blades of all kinds.

VARNORI NAMES		
d20 Roll	**Male**	**Female**
1	Gunthar	Freya
2	Arnjin	Salieff
3	Njord	Ulfina
4	Holgrim	Ingie
5	Eldrik	Dyra
6	Seigmar	Halasti
7	Brunjur	Sighilda
8	Ulfric	Gutha
9	Vorn	Kelbi
10	Svannor	Frithora
11	Finnvar	Kolli
12	Borgov	Farrjor
13	Karlviir	Holatha
14	Steiner	Yiris

15	Vignaal	Ogarra
16	Ragnar	Dyrri
17	Noordac	Bayora
18	Magnus	Vissu
19	Eldavaar	Gulthena
20	Farviir	Arna

Thuels

Thuels are the Argos basin barbarians, olive skinned, heavy set and deeply tanned as a consequence of their long exposure to the sun. They tend towards dark hair and features, but lighter variants are not unknown.

Exact thuel numbers are difficult to assess, but it is clear that the tribes are dwindling compared to the fast breeding skorn. A unified barbarian horde would be a potent force, but has yet to be achieved in recorded history.

By and large the clans are ruled by warrior chieftains, whose titles are inherited by blood or won through contests of strength. Thuels are highly superstitious and true magic universally feared. Mundane shamans and druids may or may not be shunned, varying from tribe to tribe, with some taking up useful roles as medicinal healers or spirit guides. Thuels have no written language, instead recording their history by way of song, story and dance. The keepers of these oral histories, the skalds, enjoy special status.

The largest thuel societies are found in the Great Plains and Argos Plateau, spread across the east and west of the Midlands, competing with the skorn plague. All demonstrate unmatched survival and wilderness skills.

Barbarian garb varies between factions and climates, but tattoos and skin painting are considered high art, and scars indicative of courage and virility. Maximising such visual cues often means sparse clothing, especially in the warmer territories.

The valley and hill tribes rear the finest horses in the region, and enjoy a fierce rivalry between their greatest riders. Spiritually speaking, clan beliefs tend towards elemental animism or totemic animal guides. In contrast to the beastmen however, lycanthropy is reviled.

When the thuel go to war, they utilise light armour, short bow cavalry, axes and reckless ferocity. Their high mobility and mastery of the terrain makes them experts in guerrilla warfare.

THUEL NAMES		
d20 Roll	Male	Female
1	Ulnuk	Silni
2	Shaggog	Gotha
3	Grinbak	Impi
4	Torg	Pashma
5	Dragur	Findi
6	Cromot	Osha
7	Dolgor	Annash
8	Ogrot	Shel
9	Maddrok	Burzu
10	Vornog	Susha
11	Ruttog	Rarza
12	Ushug	Kalini
13	Shabboc	Losra
14	Thragur	Mori
15	Hothruk	Gulfi
16	Rorhug	Zul
17	Malgur	Sharnesh
18	Drazzok	Ulfimi
19	Wemmog	Glasha
20	Torhoc	Surri

LAWS & CURRENCY

Laws

Corruption is rife throughout Midlander, Nydissian and Dol-Karok societies, including the law courts and city guard. Bribery and intimidation are commonplace, with the wealthy and influential able to buy or cajole their way out of most problems. For minor infringements on the street, a discrete handful of coins goes a long way to convincing the watch to mind their own business.

In Varnori culture, might makes right, and their few enshrined laws are subject to the Jarl's interpretation on any particular day. In most cases, disputes are resolved by way of bloody duel, weregild, labour debt or coin restitution.

Thuels are subject to tribal customary law, settled over many generations and kept according to the oral histories of the skalds. Honour and respect are of the central importance to the clans, with offenders commonly subject to adverse branding, maiming, flogging or exile.

In the walled cities, investigations and arrests are generally carried out by the guard. In situations of imminent danger, the watch are empowered to kill offenders on the spot, acting as judge, jury and executioner (and for most part no one bats an eyelid if the victim isn't highborn). Alternatively an accused might be fined, thrown in the watch house, dumped outside city walls, or dragged before a justicar or other authority.

Punishment

Very serious offences such as maiming or murder are generally punished on an eye for an eye basis (self defence, if made out, is a valid rebuttal to such charges). Property damage, fraud and theft may incur a range of penalties, depending on the quantum involved. In the Midland cities, executions, maimings and floggings are traditionally carried out by cultists of Baal, while brandings are performed by the justicar. A period of indentured servitude is overseen by the master appointed. Terms of imprisonment are served in the dungeon of the resident keep, or possibly the cells beneath the watch house.

Crime	Punishment
Murder, Treason	Hanging, beheading.
Maiming	Eye for an eye, prison.
Fraud, Theft	Recompense, branding, fine, maiming, servitude, flogging, stocks.
Sexual Assault	Castration, prison, branding, flogging.
Arson	Maiming, branding, flogging, prison, hanging, beheading.
Brawling, Disorder	Fine, servitude, prison, flogging, stocks.
Property Damage	Recompense, fine, servitude, flogging.
Slander	Fine, servitude, flogging.

Arms & Armour

There are generally no laws with respect to carrying weapons or wearing armour, except in court or the presence of the king or similar, when leave is required. Some cities might impose a tax on foreigners carrying weapons or armour.

Sorcery

In Nydissia, sorcery means death, typically by burning. Practitioners amongst the thuel fare little better, although some tribes will tolerate mundane shamans and druids as customary spirit guides, healers, and the like. Varnori too routinely burn, behead or exile magicians, but for the Rune Seers, their traditional soothsayers,

which may be accepted in certain clans, depending on the views of the presiding jarl.

In the Midlands, the study and the practice of magic is illegal and rightly feared. Offences committed with magic, or that result from using it (for example, rampaging monstrosities) are invariably punished by maiming, exile or death. There is a single exception: the King may sanction individual sorcerers that serve the crown. In the present day, there is but one sanctioned wizard: *Nocratha the Stargazer* of Northgate.

In Dol-Karok, the arcane arts are officially shunned and punished with exile or death. Some whisper however that the Karoks were not always albinos, and did not ever favour masks, nor cloak themselves in long gowns and expansive coats. The Houses have endured longer than any other human culture, are fantastically wealthy, and the Lost Roads date back to before the Second Age. In quiet corners, some suggest there is more to the Karok's success than meets the eye.

Exile

In rare and exceptional circumstances, an authority may choose to exercise mercy, and commute a sentence of death to permanent and immediate exile instead. Such a person is not only physically exiled, but also "outside" of the law itself (ie without rights and unprotected by the law, may be killed with impunity, etc).

Currency

Trade is generally conducted by barter or through coins, ingots and precious stones. In the default setting, the dangers inherent in wilderness travel have curbed regional trade, and no central banking authority exists (the closest would be House Menok of Dol-Karok). Private promissory notes are very rare; few merchants are willing to place their trust in anything other than hard coin.

As a result, significant shipments of currency and goods periodically occur to enable the largest trade deals. Business of this magnitude involves well planned and provisioned ships or caravans, with heavily armed guards.

For simplicity, all of the human cultures default to similar currency regimes, namely gold and silver coins, with one gold equivalent to ten silver. Generally speaking the various currencies are interchangeable, but private money changers also exist to facilitate formal currency exchange. The various cultures have different names for their coins as outlined below.

Culture	Gold coins	Silver coins
Karok	Orot	Rica
Midlands	Crowns	Florins
Nydissian	Aurums	Deniri
Thuels	Kron	Kroota
Varnori	Gulders	Sild
Skorn	Yor	Unyor

GODS

In the default setting, the deities of the Midlands are silent; they do not grant spells, manifest avatars or communicate in any obvious or direct way with their faithful. Whether the gods exist, are indifferent, or ineffably distant to their people, is a matter for the GM to determine.

Midlander Pantheon

Midlanders venerate the *Seven Ancients*, a closed pantheon of deities, most with established clerics and temples. Belief in the gods is well established and a fundamental part of Midlander life, incorporating common sayings, feast days, etc.

Argona

Argona is the goddess of health, wealth, happiness and hope. In addition, she is venerated as a fierce protector of families, especially children, elderly and other vulnerable. She is usually depicted as a beautiful, raven haired woman with a trail of stars in lieu of legs.

Related Activities: Weddings, births, carousing, trade deals, healing and illness recovery, defending kith and kin. Her feast day is *Thanksgiving*.

Common Phrases: Argona protects. Starmaiden keep you. Health, wealth and happiness.

Common Icons: A star or stars. Shield with a star motif.

Organisation: Argona's temples and priestesses are the most common, found in all cities and most fortified outposts.

Baal

Baal is the god of decay, suffering, disease and death. His name is commonly uttered to ward off his unwanted attention. Baal is usually portrayed as a floating skull, a murder of crows or an animate ooze.

Related Activities: Funerals, executions, palliative care, ancestor worship, spreading or resisting disease, torture, managing or ending suffering. Baal's feast day is the *Day of Dust*.

Common Phrases: No life without death. Bones and dust, blood and rust. All are equal before Baal. Baal's Balls!

Common Icons: Skull chalice. Crow(s). Ooze.

Organisation: Baal's cultists are few in number, often middle aged or elderly, and found in most settlements. Their shrines are small but respected (and/or feared, not wanting to draw his attention).

Fenrir

Fenrir is the god of skill, luck and fate. His name is invoked in times of contest, danger and blind fortune. He is most often depicted as a quicksilver wolf, a pair of dice with sixes on all sides, or a celestial comet.

Related Activities: Gambling, competitions and contests, risk taking, dangerous tomfoolery, turns of weal or woe, well wishing, curses of ill fortune. Fenrir has no feast day.

Common Phrases: Fenrir's luck! The silver wolf is with ye. Fangs of fate!

Common Icons: Silver wolf. Animal Fang. Pair of dice. Comet.

Organisation: Fenrir has no organised clergy; the mercurial wolf comes and goes as he pleases. Shrines courting his favour appear in gambling dens and places of professional skill, such as barracks and guild halls.

Graxus

Graxus is the god of war, courage, struggle and glory. He is called upon in times of conflict and strife, either to rally strength or deflect his wrath. He is frequently depicted as a juggernaut of destruction; a towering half man, half iron fusing of steel and flesh.

Related Activities: Warfare, combat, fisticuffs, arm wrestling, exhortations of grit, bestowing of accolades. His feast day is *Ironvow.*

Common Phrases: By blood or blade! Victory and death! The Iron God cometh!

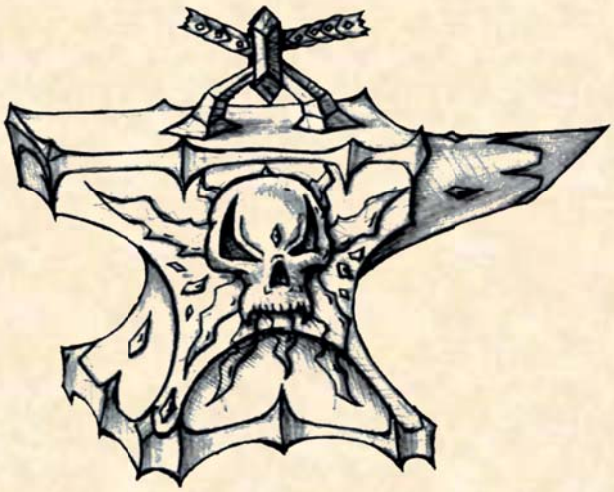
Common Icons: Anvil and skull. Iron fist. Crossed swords with a central eye.

Organisation: Graxus' shrines and monuments are found in all cities and outposts, especially watch houses. True devotees however are very rare and commonly employed as soldiers, city guard, mercenaries, pit fighters, and so on.

Shennog

Shennog is the goddess of night, darkness, mystery, deceit and madness. She is whispered to in times of treachery, despair and clandestine activity. Most descriptions of Shennog suggest a formless shadow, a broken mirror or a giant spider.

Related Activities: Tending the mentally ill, false dealings, double crosses, stealth and infiltration, nocturnal affairs, subterranean exploration. Shennog has no known feast day (if there is one, it's kept secret).



Common Phrases: The darkest corners conceal the greatest secrets. Reject the mundane and embrace revelation. Mystery is the font of wonder.

Common Icons: Slender crescent moon forming a circle. Giant spider or webs. Cracked mirror.

Organisation: Shennog's temples and asylums are rare in outposts but present in cities. Her clergy are few in number and tend towards eccentricity and seclusion.

Soliri

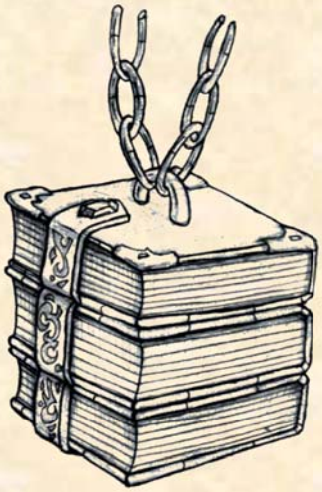
Soliri is the goddess of the sun, weather, nature and creation. She is implored to bless harvests, encourage fertility, and to repel darkness or ferocious beasts. She is commonly depicted as a female faced sun, a swarm of leaves, or a giant world tree.

Related Activities: Planting, harvesting, breeding, weather ceremonies, hunting, camping, raising bonfires. Her feast day is *Long Harvest.*

Common Phrases: The World Tree provides. Man too is a force of nature. Burn back the shadow!

Common Icons: Flaring sun. Stylized leaf. Colossal tree with great roots.

Organisation: Genuine druids are not as common as one might expect, given most humans live behind city walls. They are likely to reside on fortified outskirts, making rare sojourns to nearby natural wonders such as ancient trees, ponds or clifftops (which serve as their "shrines").



Wodon

Wodon is the god of knowledge, art, wisdom and justice, beseeched when seeking insight, inspiration or truth. He or she (sex uncertain and used interchangeably) is portrayed as a giant owl, or a wizened human with two heads, one male and one female, leaning on a runed staff or stack of tomes.

Related Activities: Seeking or giving advice, study, investigation, meditation, artistic endeavours, justice. Wodon's feast day is *Reverie.*

Common Phrases: Wodon guide you. Knowledge is power. One cannot hide from one's self. Vengeance is a pit, justice a door.

Common Icons: Stack of tomes. Dual headed bust. Giant owl with a set of scales.

Organisation: Disciples of Wodon typically serve in cities as magisters, librarians or justicars, or fill the role of sages, artists and hermits. Libraries, workshops and court houses double as their temples and shrines.

The Deep One

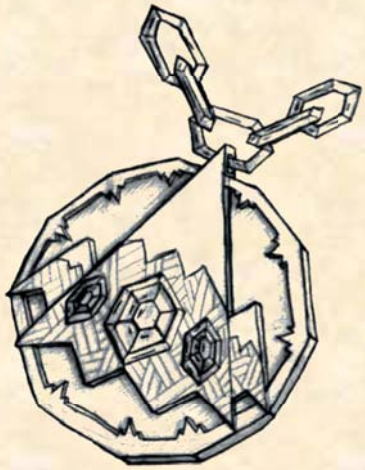
Like many aspects of Varnori culture, religion centres on the cold and the sea, with a mixed bag of river and lake spirits lorded over by the *Deep One*; an all powerful tyrant god, said to have butchered its sibling deities before the dawn of time.

The Deep One is known by other, secret names, none of which may be uttered on pain of death. Sexless and colossal, the tyrant god slumbers in the inky depths, its great gills responsible for the rise and fall of the tides.

The Mountain

Karoks venerate the spirit of the Mountain, a symbol of the prosperity and indomitability of the Ironhull people. If there is another force truly worshipped by the mountain folk, it is the power of commerce. In Karok society, amassing one's fortune enriches both coffers and soul.

Karoks believe that their ancestor spirits merge with the Mountain when they pass, imbuing the fortress city with their protection. When Karoks travel, they often take a piece of the Mountain with them (usually a precious stone) to ward off evil. Ornate tombs, mausoleums and burial chambers are common as enduring symbols of ancestral respect. Needless to say, tomb robbing is considered a particularly grave crime in Karok society.



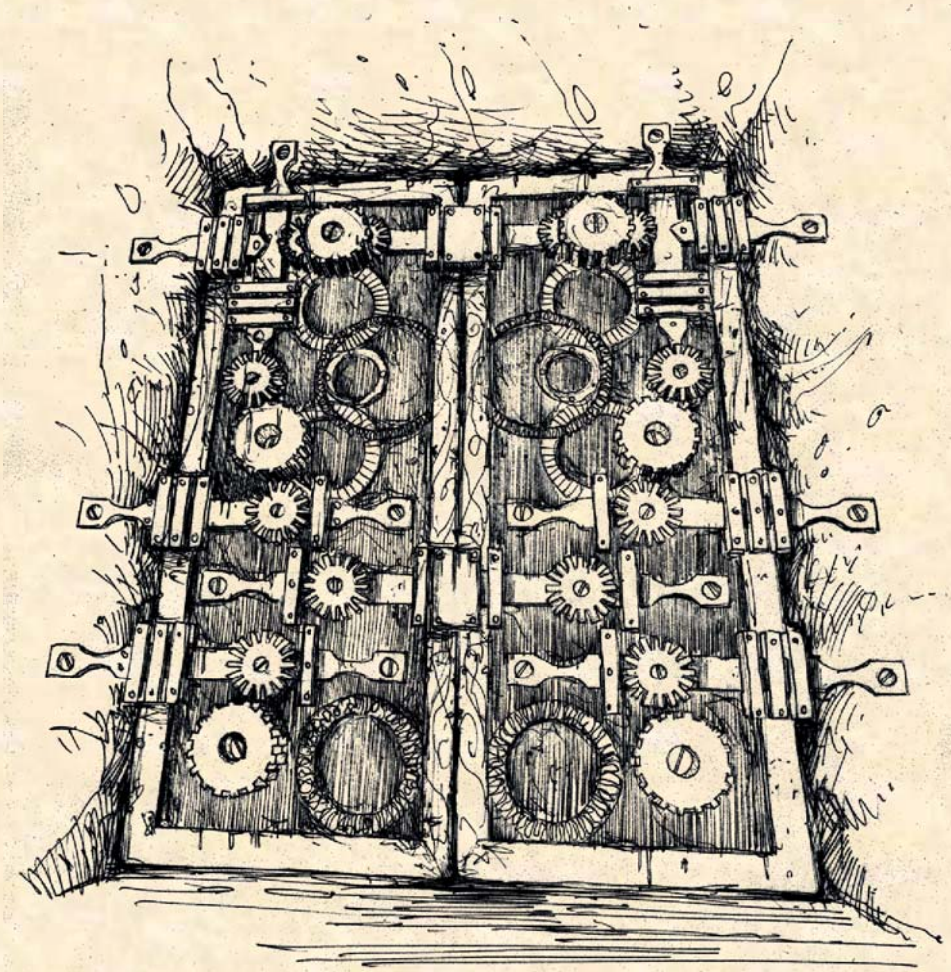
Thuel Animism

Theologically speaking, barbarian tribe beliefs are as varied as their number and homeland, but most tend towards animism, finding spirits in every rock, plant and living thing. Some adopt one or more totemic animals or elemental forces as their favoured patron.

The Lucentum

Nydissia's Lucentum is a secular order dedicated to reason, logic and the "greater good" of the southern empire. Disciples are atheist or agnostic, with the most fervent eschewing "frailties" such as compassion, empathy and even kindness. The worship of deities is forbidden; such paganism is considered the hallmark of less advanced societies.

The lucents view sorcery as a very real and dangerous threat that must be expunged, or at the very least controlled. Inquisitors of the *Ordo Malefactos* are burdened with this heavy responsibility, hunting and slaying magicians, or dragging them before the Grand Inquisitor to learn their fate. Magical items are similarly sought and ultimately conveyed to the *Vault Eternal* in *Osk* (the equatorial capital) for "safekeeping".



MAGIC

Rare & Enigmatic

In the Midlands, magic is genuinely rare and its workings obscure. There are no sorcerer schools nor apprenticeships; would be wizards must brave the perils of the void alone, or with the "aid" of forbidden tomes. Practitioners are unheard of in small outposts, and the number hiding in a city counted on one hand. Charlatans and pretenders are not uncommon, but most people will never know real magic, and are thankful for it.

Dark & Dangerous

Sorcery is not only rare, it is dark and inherently dangerous. Magic was not meant for mortals, and this fundamental mismatch taints every casting with uncertainty. From beyond the Veil, magic draws the attention of dark and inscrutable forces, some of whom find ways to impose their will upon the material world.

Whatever facet of magic a character invokes, the danger remains the same. Every time a spell is cast, roll 1d20 to test for a *Dark & Dangerous Magic* ("DDM") effect. Invoking magic item effects may also require a DDM check at the GM's discretion.

If the roll is a natural 1, the spell is cast as usual, but with an additional magical effect from the DDM table. If a DDM effect does not occur, the chance increases by 1 for each spell cast (or magic item invoked) until a DDM effect triggers or the adventure ends (at which time the chance resets to 1 in 20).

When a *Dark & Dangerous Magic* effect occurs:

(i) The character's *Luck* attribute is reduced by 1 point,

(ii) Reset the *Dark & Dangerous Magic* chance back to 1 in 20, and

(iii) Roll on the *Dark & Dangerous Magic* table below:

1d100	DARK & DANGEROUS MAGIC
01-02	Nothing happens (50%) or you are secretly possessed by a cunning alien entity for 1d10 hours (50%). The GM will tell you which covertly. Have fun.
03-04	*Foul Beard*: You grow a beard of short rubbery tentacles that you can't control. They shrivel up and drop off after 1d3 days.
05-06	Your fingers turn into tentacles, serpents, leeches or something similarly creepy for 1d6 minutes. You cannot cast spells during this time. You count as fighting with two weapons and cause 2d6 acid or poison based damage on a hit.
07	*Strange potency*: Your next single target spell affects two targets instead of one (within 24 hours).

08	*Tusks*: You sprout 2 inch, blackened tusks from your jaw, making eating and speech awkward. They recede after 1d6 days.
09	*Tenuous Connection*: Your spell lasts half as long as usual (or your next spell with a duration other than instant within 24 hours).
10	*Heartless*: You have no discernible heartbeat, and do not bleed. The effect lasts 1d12 months.
11-12	An enraged, random[1] *Aberrant Terror*, *Demon* or *Undead* monster controlled by the GM appears within close range (1d4 x 5 ft). It vanishes after 1d4 minutes.
13-14	All plant life within 60 ft withers and dies.
15-16	You gain a random minor madness trait. If you are already suffering madness, it increases in severity instead.
17	*Spirit Rend*: You have advantage on your spell damage roll (if this spell does not cause damage, then your next damaging spell within 24 hours).
18	*Tentacled:* A random arm transforms into a branching, flesh coloured tentacle (Str 15). The tentacle can hold items but is incapable of spell casting. It returns to normal after 1d6 days.
19	*Dazed*: You have disadvantage on your spell damage roll (if this spell does not cause damage, then your next damaging spell within 24 hours).
20	*Breathless*: You do not breathe and cannot mimic breathing. If subject to drowning or asphyxiation, you enter a dormant state rather than die. The effect lasts 1d12 months.
21-22	An enraged, random[1] *Aberrant Terror*, *Demon* or *Undead* monster controlled by the GM appears within close range (1d4 x 5 ft). It vanishes after 1d4 minutes.
23-24	*Mucus*: Your skin oozes a foul smelling mucus for 1d3 days.
25-26	You cast a random[2] spell. There is a 50% chance the spell targets you or is centred on you. If the spell affects you it lasts a minimum of 1 minute.
27	*Time is Mutable*: You automatically go first in initiative next round.
28	*Whisperer:* You speak only in a sibilant whisper for 1d12 months.
29	*Time Slip*: Your spell takes 2 actions to cast instead of 1.
30	*Called from Below:* Whenever you linger on earthen soil, worms, beetles or other insects squirm to the surface. The effect lasts for 1d12 months.
31-32	An enraged, random[1] *Aberrant Terror*, *Demon* or *Undead* monster controlled by the GM appears within close range (1d4 x 5 ft). It vanishes after 1d4 minutes.
33-34	All liquids within 30 ft turn to salt, ash, dust or slime (GM discretion). A large body of liquid such as a pool or lake is only affected up to a depth of 2 feet.
35-36	A random creature within sight or hearing gains a random minor madness trait. If the target is already suffering madness, it increases in severity instead.
37	*Inscrutable Boon*: Your spell does not expend a spell use/slot.
38	*Mute:* Your mouth fuses shut, preventing speech and spellcasting. It returns to normal in 2d12 hours.
39	*Eldritch Interference*: Your spell expends two spell uses/slots instead of one.
40	*Shadowless*: You cast no shadow. The effect lasts 1d12 months.
41-42	An enraged, random[1] *Aberrant Terror*, *Demon* or *Undead* monster controlled by the GM appears within close range (1d4 x 5 ft). It vanishes after 1d4 minutes.

[1] **Roll 1d12**; (1) *Maelheim*; (2) *Shade*; (3) *Lemure*; (4) *Doppelganger*; (5) *Infernal Minotaur*; (6) *Gibbering Terror*; (7) *Chull*; (8) *Grey Ooze;* (9) *Invisible Stalker*; (10) *Tentacle Spawn*; (11) *Manipede*; (12) *Spectre*.

[2] **Roll 1d8**; (1) *Darkness 15 ft radius*; (2) *Fear*; (3) *Contact Other Plane*; (4) *Confusion*; (5) *Blindness*; (6) *Hideous Laughter*; (7) *Feeblemind*; (8) *Flesh to Stone*.

43-44	*Third Eye*: You grow a fishlike eye in one palm, in the centre of your forehead or at the end of your tongue (GM discretion). If the eye is uncovered, it grants *Darkvision* up to 60 feet. The eye rots away after 1d10 days leaving behind a runic scar.
45-46	You cast a random[2] spell. There is a 50% chance the spell targets you or is centred on you. If the spell affects you it lasts a minimum of 1 minute.
47	*Forbidden Lore*: You regain one expended spell use/slot.
48	*Shedding:* Over the next hour, all of your head and body hair falls out. It grows back as normal.
49	*Forgotten*: You unlearn a random spell for 1d6 days.
50	*Devil Eyes*: Your eyes turn white, black or another colour for 1d12 months.
51-52	An enraged, random[1] *Aberrant Terror*, *Demon* or *Undead* monster controlled by the GM appears within close range (1d4 x 5 ft). It vanishes after 1d4 minutes.
53-54	*The Claw*: One of your hands transforms into a chitinous claw. You may use an action to make a melee attack (1d10+2 damage). The claw flakes away and returns to normal after 2d12 hours.
55-56	You gain a random moderate madness trait. If you are already suffering madness, it increases in severity instead.
57	*Favour of the Ancients*: Your spells ignore magic resistance for 24 hours.
58	*Soulless:* You feel no emotions for 1d4 months; no fear, no love. Nothing.
59	*Life Aegis*: Living targets are immune to your magic for 24 hours.
60	*Darkening*: Small open flames such as candles and torches are automatically extinguished within 30 feet of you. The effect lasts 1d12 months.
61-62	An enraged, random[1] *Aberrant Terror*, *Demon* or *Undead* monster controlled by the GM appears within close range (1d4 x 5 ft). It vanishes after 1d4 minutes.
63-64	*Speaker of the Void*: You speak only in a disturbing alien chittering that no-one understands. You may still cast spells. The effect ends in 1d4 months.
65-66	You cast a random[2] spell. There is a 50% chance the spell targets you or is centred on you. If the spell affects you it lasts a minimum of 1 minute.
67	*Bend Reality*: You may change the damage type of any spell you cast to any other damage type for 24 hours.
68	*Rotting:* Your surface flesh begin to rot, starting with your extremities and spreading inwards. The effect is painful but otherwise cosmetic. It fades away after 1d6 months.
69	A wave of dissonance resonates outwards from you. All creatures in a 20 foot radius (inc you) must make a *Luck* (Con) save or be knocked prone.
70	*Bestial Fear*: For 1d12 months, small and medium sized animals (eg cats and dogs) within 30 feet instinctively fear you, entering fight or flight mode.
71-72	An enraged, random[1] *Aberrant Terror*, *Demon* or *Undead* monster controlled by the GM appears within close range (1d4 x 5 ft). It vanishes after 1d4 minutes.
73-74	*Winged*: You sprout large membranous wings from your back, elbows, neck or ears (GM discretion). You can fly at your normal speed. The wings wither and slough off after 2d12 hours.
75-76	A random creature within sight or hearing gains a random moderate madness trait. If the target is already suffering madness, it increases in severity instead.
77	*Harness the Void*: Your spell causes 50% extra damage (if this spell does not cause damage, then your next damaging spell within 24 hours).
78	*Gender Shift:* You slowly change sex over the next 24 hours, including build, voice, facial features, etc. The effect lasts 1d12 months.
79	*Weakened*: Your spell causes 50% less damage (if this spell does not cause damage, then your next damaging spell within 24 hours).

80	*Hollow*: You are never hungry or thirsty, and cannot abide food or drink. Even the smell makes you nauseous. The effect lasts 1d12 months.
81-82	An enraged, random[1] *Aberrant Terror*, *Demon* or *Undead* monster controlled by the GM appears within close range (1d4 x 5 ft). It vanishes after 1d4 minutes.
83-84	*Jaws*: You grow to 8 feet tall, your jaws and limbs distending to grotesque proportions. You gain a powerful urge to devour your enemies. If possible you must use your move action to close with an enemy. If in melee you must use your action to make a bite attack causing 2d6+3 damage. On a natural 19-20 attack roll you sever a target's limb or head (GM discretion). After 1 minute, you return to normal.
85-86	You cast a random[2] spell. There is a 50% chance the spell targets you or is centred on you. If the spell affects you it lasts a minimum of 1 minute.
87	*Insidious Call*: Your next spell with a *Luck* save (within 24 hours) causes the target to roll with disadvantage.
88	*Regurgitator:* You develop a wet, hacking cough, imposing disadvantage on Athletics related checks. From time to time you cough up grubs, worms, etc. The cough subsides after 1d6 days.
89	*Wyrd Fading*: For 24 hours, targets making *Luck* saves against your spells roll with advantage.
90	A random limb turns black, rots and drops off over the next 1d20 hours (roll 1d4: (i) foot, (ii) lower leg, (iii) hand, (iv) forearm). The rot cannot be stopped once it starts, but a *Regenerate* spell restores the lost appendage.
91-92	An enraged, random[1] *Aberrant Terror*, *Demon* or *Undead* monster controlled by the GM appears within close range (1d4 x 5 ft). It vanishes after 1d4 minutes.
93-94	You transform into a *Gibbering Terror* for 1d4 minutes. Your personality is suppressed and substituted with the sentience of a *Gibbering Terror* until the effect ends.
95-96	You and all creatures within 60 ft gain a random serious madness trait. If a target is already suffering madness, it increases in severity instead.
97-98	*The Stars Align*: Your next spell (within 24 hours) causes maximum damage and/or affects the maximum number of targets.
99	*Marked:* Gain the following table effect *permanently*; Roll 1d10: (i) Heartless, (ii) Breathless (iii) Called From Below (iv) Shadowless (v) Regurgitator, (vi) Darkening (vii) Bestial Fear, (viii) Hollow (ix) Whisperer, (x) Devil Eyes. No magic known to mankind can remove this effect.
100	*Claimed*: Gain the following table effect *permanently*; Roll 1d8: (i) Foul Beard, (ii) Mucus (iii) Third Eye (iv) The Claw (v) Winged, (vi) Jaws, (vii) Tentacled, (viii) Rotting. No magic known to mankind can remove this effect.

The above are merely examples. GMs are encouraged to modify and expand the table.

The Veil

In the default setting, aside from the physical world there is only one other confirmed plane of existence; the Veil. Also known as the Void, the Unending Chaos, and the Crucible of the Gods, most consider the Veil a dimension or plane about which mankind is, by and large, blissfully unaware. Whether it is magical in nature, an apparition of spacetime, or something else entirely is a matter ultimately for the GM. Few commoners know the Veil by name, and no mortal comprehends it. In practice perhaps it doesn't really matter.

What is understood is that the Veil is the window through which passage is possible between this world and other dimensions, planets, and temporal existences. Aliens harness it facilitate travel between the stars, demons tear through it to reach the succulent manflesh they so crave, and aberrant terrors lurk within, hiding in the folds between worlds.

Nothing crosses the Veil by accident. Temporary ruptures are always instigated by one side or the other, even if one party does not fully appreciate the consequences of their actions.

The Veil cannot sustain mortal life. Utterly lightless and cold, the atmosphere is thick with roiling ether, surfaces slick and disturbingly malleable. The sensation of smell is absent, but sounds are sharpened, often painfully so. Most unsettling of all is that time itself is mutable, flickering between past, present and future.

On the rare occasion that a human crosses the Veil, their passage is short or instantaneous; a fleeting transposition from one existence to the next. There are no records of a mortal lingering in the beyond.

Just what planes, planets or dimensions are capable of being reached via the void is uncertain. Religious texts often refer to supernatural heavens, hells and similar abodes of gods and devils. Whether these places exist, and how they might be reached (if at all), is left to the GM to determine.

Magical Items

Permanent magic items are genuinely rare and each object is a unique piece. On the one hand, whilst such items are infrequently made, once created, they are incredibly difficult to destroy, and often endure for thousands of years.

An adventurer stumbling across a magical sword is likely to find one fashioned in the style of the Second Age rather than the present. Similarly, an amulet of mystical power is more likely a druidic token from an extinct tribe rather than recent invention. A permanent magical item cannot be destroyed by ordinary means (although they may be damaged, albeit not easily). The GM determines how a particular item might be destroyed or disenchanted.

Although all magic items are rare, single use items such as potions and scrolls are more common than permanent objects. The process to create such devices varies from creator to creator, but is less debilitating than a permanent enchantment. Nevertheless, almost all single use items herald from the distant past.

It goes without saying that there are no magic item shops in the Midlands. Many consider enchanted objects to be cursed, and (rightfully) dangerous to carry about and use. Outside of adventurers, professional mercenaries and soldiers, few have any practical use for mystical artefacts. Like the present day, there are many demands on a person's time and gold, and wasting either on sorcerous relics is not something a "right minded" person does.

Supernatural Creatures

Magical creatures such as undead, demons and elementals exist in the Midlands, but are highly infrequent compared to high fantasy settings.

Animated guardians such as skeletons, zombies, gargoyles and golems are probably the least uncommon of the magical creatures, enduring for long centuries in dusty tombs, temples and ruins.

Ghouls, shadows, ghosts, demons, aberrant terrors, hags, basilisks and similar monsters with spell like effects are much rarer. Most commoners will never meet such a creature, and will almost certainly succumb to it if they do.

Liches, wights, balors, dragons, doppelgangers, razkarrt, major elementals, ogre mages and so on are unique individuals, almost never encountered by folk other than adventurers. Player characters make a habit of delving into remote and dangerous places, tending to uncover such foes in the search for lost treasure. Nevertheless, facing more than one lich or dragon in the course of an adventuring career would be truly remarkable.

Alternative Spell Names

Some alternative spells names are provided below, in an attempt to infuse the LFG spell list with a flavour more consistent with the Dark & Dangerous magic theme. A document incorporating the full spell descriptions with substituted names is available for free download from the LFG site.

LEVEL 1

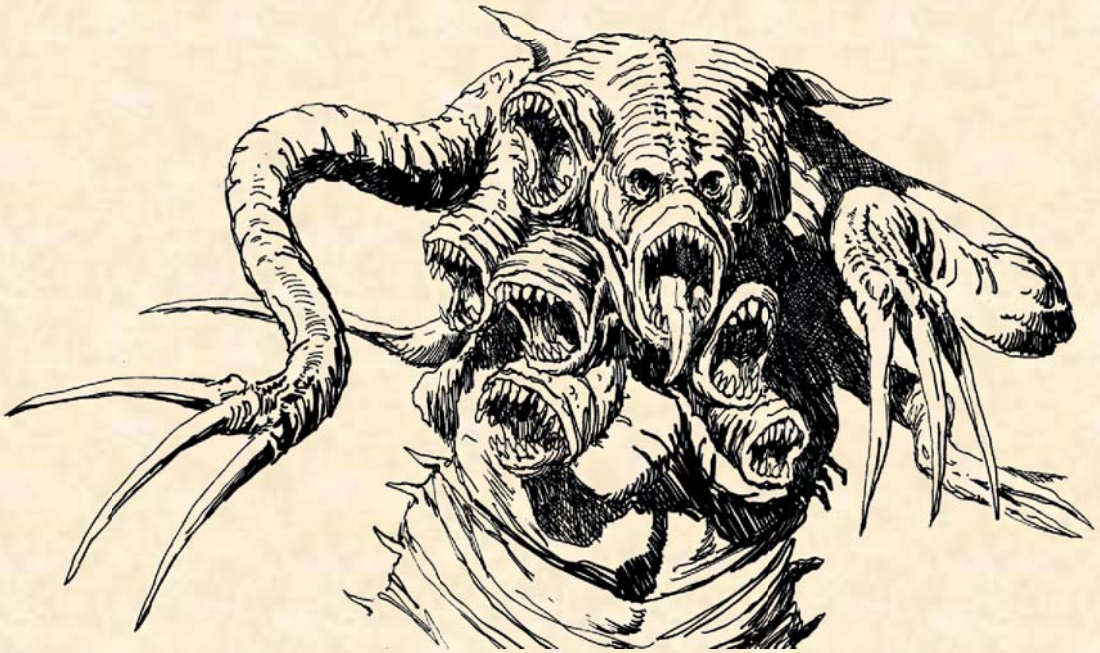
ORIGINAL NAME	MIDLANDS NAME	*ALPHABETICAL*
1. Charm Person	Chant of Beguilement	*Arcane Aegis*
2. Circle of Protection	Ward of Lost Souls	*Chant of Beguilement*
3. Comprehend Languages	Speaker of Many Tongues	*Feywalker's Drifting*
4. Cure Light Wounds	Fusing of Flesh	*Fusing of Flesh*
5. Detect Magic	Pierce the Veil	*Glimpse the True Gods*
6. Disguise Self	Mantle of Many Faces	*Hand of the Void*
7. Featherfall	Feywalker's Drifting	*Haze of Obscurity*
8. Fog Cloud	Haze of Obscurity	*Insidious Slumber*

9. Frighten	Glimpse the True Gods	*Invocation of Thunder*
10. Hideous Laughter	Shennog's Blessing	*Lash of Unerring Pain*
11. Light	Lucent Emanation	*Lucent Emanation*
12. Magic Missile	Lash of Unerring Pain	*Mantle of Many Faces*
13. Magic Mouth	Timeless Envoy	*None Shall Pass*
14. Shield	Arcane Aegis	*Pierce the Veil*
15. Silent Image	Shadows & Dust	*Shadows & Dust*
16. Sleep	Insidious Slumber	*Shennog's Blessing*
17. Telepathy	Strange Joining	*Speaker of Many Tongues*
18. Thunderwave	Invocation of Thunder	*Strange Joining*
19. Unseen Hand	Hand of the Void	*Timeless Envoy*
20. Wizard Lock	None Shall Pass	*Ward of Lost Souls*

LEVEL 2

ORIGINAL NAME	MIDLANDS NAME	*ALPHABETICAL*
1. Blindness	Affliction of the Eyeless Host	*Affliction of the Eyeless Host*
2. Bolster Attribute	Thaumaturgical Vesting	*Bestial Communion*
3. Continual Light	Enduring Radiance	*Binding of the Black Spiral*
4. Cure Minor Injury	Solace of Argona	*Cloak of the Unseen*
5. Darkness, 15 ft Radius	Place of Perfect Night	*Conjuror of Dreams*
6. Detect Hidden	Inescapable Unmasking	*Curse of Searing Steel*
7. Detect Thoughts	Divine the Unspoken	*Divine the Unspoken*

8. Heat Metal	Curse of Searing Steel	*Enduring Radiance*
9. Hold Person	Binding of the Black Spiral	*Fetid Fog of the Rotting Horde*
10. Invisibility	Cloak of the Unseen	*Globe of Silent Contemplation*
11. Knock	Word of Sundering	*Inescapable Unmasking*
12. Levitate	Wings of the Starless Abyss	*Place of Perfect Night*
13. Locate	Whispers of the Watchers	*Shroud of Ensnarement*
14. Mirror Image	Sorcerous Misdirection	*Solace of Argona*
15. Phantasmal Force	Conjuror of Dreams	*Sorcerous Misdirection*
16. Silence, 15 ft Radius	Globe of Silent Contemplation	*Strength of the Tainted*
17. Speak with Animals	Bestial Communion	*Thaumaturgical Vesting*
18. Stinking Cloud	Fetid Fog of the Rotting Horde	*Whispers of the Watchers*
19. Strength	Strength of the Tainted	*Wings of the Starless Abyss*
20. Web	Shroud of Ensnarement	*Word of Sundering*



LEVEL 3

ORIGINAL NAME	MIDLANDS NAME	*ALPHABETICAL*
1. Circle of Protection 10 ft Radius	Abjure the Unnatural	*Abjure the Unnatural*
2. Clairvoyance	Sight Beyond Sight	*Breaking of the Weave*
3. Cure Malady	Purge the Accursed	*One with the Deep*
4. Darkvision	Eyes of the Nightcrawler	*Circle of the Unseen*
5. Dispel Magic	Breaking of the Weave	*Cradle of Formlessness*
6. Fireball	Gift of the Fiery Furnace	*Edict of Iron*
7. Fly	Flight of the Black Sun	*Eyes of the Nightcrawler*
8. Gaseous Form	Cradle of Formlessness	*Flight of the Black Sun*
9. Haste	Hunger for Blood	*Gift of the Fiery Furnace*
10. Hypnotic Pattern	Spectral Transfixion	*Hunger for Blood*
11. Invisibility, 10 ft Radius	Circle of the Unseen	*Incantation of Exhaustion*
12. Lightning Bolt	Strike of the Storm Gazer	*Purge the Accursed*
13. Monster Summoning I	Call Forth Simulacra I	*Call Forth Simulacra I*
14. Protection from Energy	Shield of the Nine Furies	*Riddle of Bones*
15. Protection from Normal Missiles	Turn Back the Buzzing Flies	*Runic Rite of Wonderment*
16. Ritual Magic	Runic Rite of Wonderment	*Shield of the Nine Furies*
17. Slow	Incantation of Exhaustion	*Sight Beyond Sight*
18. Speak with Dead	Riddle of Bones	*Spectral Transfixion*
19. Suggestion	Edict of Iron	*Strike of the Storm Gazer*
20. Water Breathing	One with the Deep	*Turn Back the Buzzing Flies*

LEVEL 4

ORIGINAL NAME	MIDLANDS NAME	*ALPHABETICAL*
1. Charm Monster	Monstrous Subjugation	*Armour of Demonkind*
2. Confusion	Malediction of Lunacy	*Behold the Secret Truth*
3. Cure Serious Wounds	Nostrum of the Dying	*Bending the Stone*
4. Dimension Door	Dimension Door	*Call Forth Simulacra II*
5. Fear	Behold the Secret Truth	*Cleansing Charm*
6. Freedom of Movement	Unshackled Celerity	*Dimension Door*
7. Greater Invisibility	Fading of the Unseelie	*Echo of Days*
8. Hallucinatory Terrain	Mask of the Wilderlands	*Fading of the Unseelie*
9. Monster Summoning II	Call Forth Simulacra II	*Grave of Falling Stone*
10. Neutralize Poison	Cleansing Charm	*Heed the Silent Forest*
11. Object Reading	Echo of Days	*Malediction of Lunacy*
12. Plant Growth	Unchecked Growth of Soliri	*Mask of the Wilderlands*
13. Polymorph	Sudden Transmogrification	*Miracle of Argona*
14. Regenerate	Miracle of Argona	*Monstrous Subjugation*
15. Rock Storm	Grave of Falling Stone	*Nostrum of the Dying*
16. Speak with Plants	Heed the Silent Forest	*Scorching Veil of the Balor*
17. Stone Shape	Bending the Stone	*Sudden Transmogrification*
18. Stoneskin	Armour of Demonkind	*Unchecked Growth of Soliri*
19. Wall of Fire	Scorching Veil of the Balor	*Unshackled Celerity*
20. Wall of Ice	Wall of the White Wastes	*Wall of the White Wastes*

LEVEL 5

ORIGINAL NAME	MIDLANDS NAME	*ALPHABETICAL*
1. Animate Dead	Infernal Calling of Baal	*Bane of Mortals*
2. Anti-Life Field	Bane of Mortals	*Beseech the Ancient Ones*
3. Cloudkill	Cloud of Choking Torment	*Blast of Frozen Ruin*
4. Cone of Cold	Blast of Frozen Ruin	*Call Forth Simulacra III*
5. Conjure Elemental	Summon Primordial Guardian	*Cloud of Choking Torment*
6. Contact Other Plane	Beseech the Ancient Ones	*Creeping Doom*
7. Creeping Doom	Creeping Doom	*Crush of the Warp*
8. Feeblemind	Feeblemind	*Delusions of Dark Recall*
9. Finger of Death	Finger of Death	*Feeblemind*
10. Hold Monster	Crush of the Warp	*Finger of Death*
11. Magic Jar	Imperious Soul of the Magus	*Force of the Occult*
12. Magic Resistance	Mystic Ward	*Hedge of Twisting Thorns*
13. Modify Memory	Delusions of Dark Recall	*Imperious Soul of the Magus*
14. Monster Summoning III	Call Forth Simulacra III	*Infernal Calling of Baal*
15. Passwall	Phasement of Nowhere	*Melting of Crag & Ridge*
16. Restoration	Rejuvenating Succor	*Mystic Ward*
17. Telekinesis	Force of the Occult	*Phasement of Nowhere*
18. Transmute Rock to Mud	Melting of Crag & Ridge	*Rejuvenating Succor*
19. Wall of Iron	Tide of Iron	*Summon Primordial Guardian*
20. Wall of Thorns	Hedge of Twisting Thorns	*Tide of Iron*

LEVEL 6

ORIGINAL NAME	MIDLANDS NAME	*ALPHABETICAL*
1. Animate Object	Channel Animus	*Betwixt Time & Space*
2. Banishment	Voyager of the Star Door	*Bloody Blades of Graxus*
3. Blade Barrier	Bloody Blades of Graxus	*Call Forth Simulacra IV*
4. Chain Lightning	Fury of the Three Storms	*Channel Animus*
5. Control Weather	Conclave of Wind & Sky	*Clarity of Wodon*
6. Death Spell	Word of Ending	*Compel Obedience*
7. Disintegrate	Viridian Ray of Unmaking	*Conclave of Wind & Sky*
8. Earthquake	Unchain the World Eater	*Eldritch Ward*
9. Etherealness	Betwixt Time & Space	*Fell Cavorting of Menethorii*
10. Flesh to Stone	Flesh to Stone	*Flesh to Stone*
11. Forbidden Wish	Forbidden Wish	*Forbidden Wish*
12. Geas	Chains of Fate	*Fury of the Three Storms*
13. Invisible Stalker	Reaper of Hidden Shadow	*Chains of Fate*
14. Irresistible Dance	Fell Cavorting of Menethorii	*Master of Earth & Stone*
15. Legend Lore	Rite of Dark Revelation	*Reaper of Hidden Shadow*
16. Mass Suggestion	Compel Obedience	*Rite of Dark Revelation*
17. Monster Summoning IV	Call Forth Simulacra IV	*Unchain the World Eater*
18. Move Earth	Master of Earth & Stone	*Viridian Ray of Unmaking*
19. Reflection	Eldritch Ward	*Voyager of the Star Door*
20. True Seeing	Clarity of Wodon	*Word of Ending*

CITIES

Life in the Midlands varies according to which walled city one lives in (or which nomadic tribe, if a thuel). There are very few smaller outposts that last for any length of time. Defendable forts might spring up for short periods to exploit a natural resource, but such locations are swiftly abandoned once the resource is exhausted, or overrun by skorn or other dangers.

Outposts

Outposts are self sufficient and large enough to fend off minor incursions from local hostiles. They generally house a few hundred people, in a defensible position (such as adjacent to a small river or on high ground), with a majority of able bodied men and women capable of raising arms. All have dedicated patrols along their boundaries to discourage opportunistic attacks. They often employ defensive structures such as ditches, palisades, earthen ramparts, wooden walls and/or watchtowers.

Outposts are led by an Overseer (appointed by the local authority, patron or residents), who also doubles as the judiciary. Outpost life is primarily about harvesting whatever natural resource the settlement is founded upon. The most important buildings besides housing tend to be the barracks, blacksmith (for horseshoes, tools and weapons), general store and meeting hall.

Cities

All cities of the Midlands are by necessity self sufficient. Patrolled fields generally allow for some crops and livestock, supplemented by fishing, hunting and (limited) trade to make up any unforeseen shortages.

The walled cities are large, with well established markets offering a wide range of goods and services, legal and illegal. Foodstuffs, animals, textiles and day to day items (including weapons and armour) are commonplace. Specialist and illegal items, such as poison, alchemist's fire or veteran bodyguards, are rare, but usually obtainable with enough time and determination.

Gear Availability

At the GM's option, buying uncommon or rare equipment might call for a Charisma check by the interested PC, requiring a great success for rare items. Modifiers may apply depending on the circumstances, for example the particular city, supplier, legality, etc. Items from outposts are generally one rarity category higher than normal.

Suggested quantities, and possible wait times (if the GM decides the items are not immediately available, or if the PC wishes to try again after a failed attempt) appear below. Fantastic items such as magic swords, dragon eggs, and so on are unique and generally not for sale. As always, GM discretion applies.

Gear Rarity	Quantity	Wait Time
Common	Available	Available
Uncommon	2d4	1d6 days
Rare	1d3	1d6 weeks
Very Rare	1	1d6 months

Crow's Keep

Themes:	Political, Pious, Melek Conflict
Culture:	Midlander
Languages:	Argosan, Common
Population:	11,000
Ruler:	King Uldred
Exports:	Soldiers, Food, Fashion
Climate:	Moderate climate
Holiday:	King's March

Overview

Crow's Keep is the capital of Midlander society, situated on a high plinth of rock overlooking the Great Lake, Forest of Drelnor and the Trackless Moors. Within these fortified walls, the elderly King Uldred holds court, thwarting the schemes of rivals whilst struggling to fend off incursions from imperial Melek.

The city is built in familiar western medieval style, architecture reminiscent of the Middle Ages, with a moderate to warm climate. As might be expected, the most powerful noble families are here in great numbers, manoeuvring for position before Uldred passes. The gods, and their mortal representatives, also wield great influence, with throngs of faithful attending the great temples, bolstered by the current tensions with Melek.

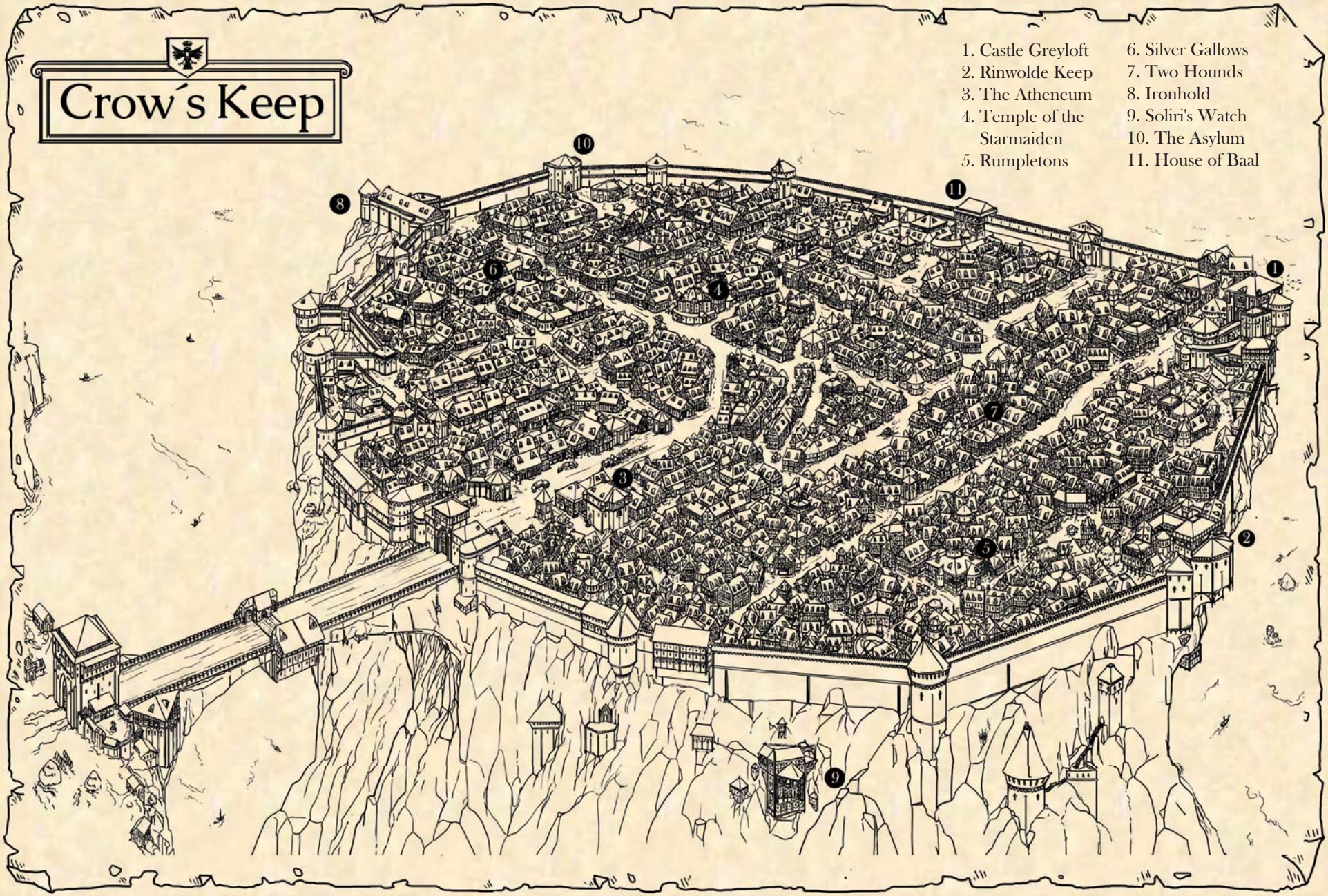
Soldiers are prevalent, a necessity brought about by increased conflict with the Nydissian Empire to the south. Contrary to the twenty year truce, escalating border skirmishes and trade sanctions are a cause of great concern; many of the Royal Court consider Crow's Keep on the brink of war.

Factions & NPCs

- *King Uldred* (Fighter 5)
  King Uldred, Shield of Argos, the Southern Doom, Last of His Line, was one of the great generals of his generation. Now in his 70s, Uldred's fighting days are long past, but the people recall his victories fondly. Most famously, he was the general responsible for the sacking of *Kadimos* thirty years earlier, curbing Nydissia's northern expansion at the time.

  Uldred's wife and children died in a horrific fire five years ago, leaving the throne vacant when he passes. The winter warrior now spends most of his time at *Castle Greyloft,* treating with highborn, fending off rivals and ferreting out usurpers who refuse to wait until his natural death. Uldred's primary concern is Melek, with whom border skirmishes and trade sanctions are escalating. The king wants peace with Melek to be his legacy; but he can't find a way to achieve it.

- *Lady Rinwolde*
  Lady Rinwolde is the young matriarch of an old, wealthy and respected noble line with extensive alliances. Superficially subservient to her husband, she in fact controls the family and is a *Razkarrt* masquerading as human (Serpentwoman noble, Magic User 7, LFG p.123).


Crow's Keep
1. Castle Greyloft
2. Rinwolde Keep
3. The Atheneum
4. Temple of the Starmaiden
5. Rumpletons
6. Silver Gallows
7. Two Hounds
8. Ironhold
9. Soliri's Watch
10. The Asylum
11. House of Baal

The charismatic Rinwolde has spent the last decade positioning the family to seize the throne, and has earned the support of many nobles. As a razkarrt, she has special knowledge of serpentmen ruins, and might hire the adventurers to obtain treasures for her. Rinwolde has access to a widespread spy network and relays messages back to her kin hidden in the *Suurat Jungle*.

- *The Royal Court*
  The King's Court is filled with scheming nobles, powerful merchants, revered clergy, foreign ambassadors and other notable personages most days of the week. On occasion, commoners might also gain an audience if the issue is especially great. Presided over by King Uldred and/or his magisters (advisors), court politics are fluid at the best of times. Spies abound, and more than one poisoner and assassin stalk the corridors, waiting for the opportune moment.

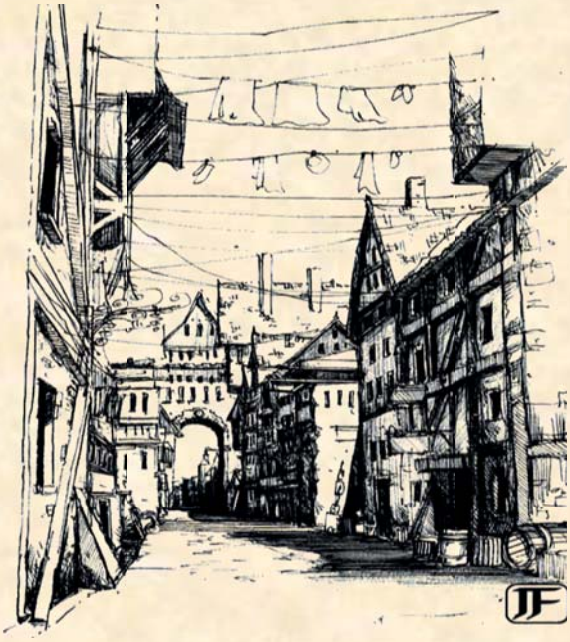
- *Order of the Iron God*
  Recognised by their black and white tabards, the Knights of Graxus swear fealty to the Iron God first and King Uldred second. Lead by *Sir Garrett* (Fighter 8) from *Ironhold* (the Temple of Graxus), these sacred warriors sally forth into the wilds, thundering across the borderlands like death itself. The only heavy cavalry in the region, they are a force both terrifying and magnificent to behold. As the blessed scriptures profess, a knight of Iron God knows victory in every battle but the last, and in that one, he dies.

- *The Priestesses of Argona*
  In the domed *Temple of the Starmaiden*, the priestesses of Argona tend to the spiritual needs of the faithful. Renowned apothecaries, they treat the ill and physically stricken, mitigating suffering where they can. *High Priestess Racea* (50s, long silver hair, plump, joyful eyes) manages the church and clergy. In recent times, the support of the priestesses is more important than ever; many families having lost loved ones to Melek incursions.

Taverns & Inns

- *Rumpletons*
  Double storey, stone. Standard rooms with expensive food and cheap ale. The expansive common room is lined with shelves containing books, maps and curios from across the region. Most of the items are of little value. The owner is *Rumpleton*, a tall and dextrous barkeep with a flair for pouring drinks. Rumples (as the locals call him) loves a chat, especially about the wider world, and will invite travellers to donate a curio for a discount or free meal.

- *Silver Gallows*
  Single storey, wooden. Small rooms with cheap food and quality ale. Steps lead down to an excavated ground floor, above which hangs an oversized, silver painted noose. The ceiling beams are inscribed with names, purportedly those executed by the king during his reign. Despite the sombre accoutrements, the staff are friendly, seats comfortable, and the bards pleasant. *Jurric*, the manager, is an ex-guard (Fighter 2), slim with a lazy eye. He often complains that his woeful profits bear a physical toll and have already turned one of his eyes bad.



- *Two Hounds*
  Two storey, stone. Large rooms, standard food, excellent ale and spirits at good prices. The Hounds' staff tend towards the attractive side (male and female), the common room always crowded. Twin statues of 4 ft armoured war hounds flank the entry. A favourite of the city guard, the proprietor *Mendelson* (40's, stocky, quick to swear and curse) never worries about drunkards getting out of hand.

Chance Encounters

1d20	CROW'S KEEP ENCOUNTERS
1	Two farmers, *Mort* and *Jeraal*, are brawling over livestock, foodstuffs or cotton.
2	A gaggle of ducks, chickens or other fowl scatter across the street, causing havoc. There is a 50% chance a pick pocket, *Riva "Homeslice"* takes advantage of the diversion.
3	A merchant, *Egbert "Sell me own mother" Cruthers*, is selling an assortment of weapons on a gilded table in the street, watched over by his muscle, *Juke* (Fighter 4). For the discreet inquirer, he might also have access to more specialized gear, such as hidden sheaths, spring-blade pommels, caltrops, lockpicks and knife boots.
4	4d6 guards patrol the street, eyes wary for thieves. If it's a slow day, they might accost any foreign or dangerous looking adventurers, inquiring as to their business, the duration of their stay, boarding house and whether they have any information they wish to share with the authorities. Impolite or cheeky responses are unlikely to be well received.
5	2d4 Knights of Graxus are trotting down the street in full battle armour. Bystanders quickly clear a path, fearful of being knocked aside by their 17 hand destriers.
6	A funeral procession winds slowly down the street, bearing the standards of the noble *Cildorn* family, including pall bearers, cultists of Baal, and sorrowful relatives.
7	3d6 thugs of rival gangs (*Alley Smiths* and the *Hatchetmen*) clash over turf lines, stabbing at each other with knives and axes. Lingering witnesses, or anyone who attempts to intervene, is also set upon. Whatever the outcome, the surviving leader, *Ratnak "Lockjaw"* (Varnori), does not forget.

8	2d6 overzealous followers of Argona accost the travellers, berating them for their wicked ways of violence and greed. They threaten natural disasters and eternity trapped in the void if the party does not make amends.
9	A 3d6 member performing troupe has gathered a small crowd here. The troupe has knowledge of the local region. There is a 30% chance of pick pockets working the crowd.
10	A pigeon pie seller, *Ghirk Galak*, is on the corner. Ghirk is a little known street informant.
11	A justicar is presiding over an execution in the square. Three middle aged criminals are to be hanged. A small crowd has gathered. 3d6 guards are in attendance, along with the burly, hooded executioner. There is a 50% chance of a rescue attempt by 4d6 ne'er do wells.
12	A whipcord teenager with red hair (*Bjernvin*, Varnori) sprints towards the travellers with a pouch clutched in one hand. 200 ft behind, a portly stall keeper struggles to keep up, yelling "Thief! Thief!"
13	A small crowd has gathered around two nobles (*Lord Armont* and *Lord Brand*) arguing in the street, when Armont draws his sword and demands a duel. Lord Brand, elderly, appears shocked at first, but quickly casts his gaze about the crowd. "I seek a champion. You know my name. Who will fight for me?"
14	A procession of 3d6 druids of Soliri are making their way down the road, offering blessings of the World Tree to passers-by.
15	A trio of axemen are selling firewood and kindling. They haven't noticed that one of the split logs is hiding a tiny fey behind a hinged knot.
16	3d6 off duty soldiers are halfway through a pub crawl and quite drunk. They are very angry about a recent Melek skirmish, and will take it out on the next Nydissian they see.
17	A man in hooded black robes bearing the crescent moon symbol (a priest of Shennog), approaches the party. He whispers something ("the darkest corners conceal the greatest secrets") before handing one of the adventurers a broken hand mirror. He then scuttles swiftly away.
18	A beggar, *Sivros*, is begging for alms when a chamber pot is emptied from an upper storey and splashes onto him. He curses and splutters "Skin the silver wolf!", before redoubling his call for alms. Sivros has a good ear for the street, and has connections with certain thieves' guilds.
19	A stray hound, dark muzzled and thin, with one cloudy eye, approaches the party. If they treat her well, the hound becomes a fearless companion, willing to give her life for her new packmates. At the GM's discretion, the hound may automatically succeed in a single rescue of a PC (LFG p.48), dying in the process.
20	A town crier is ringing his bell and declaring "The King is dead! The King is dead!"

Dol-Karok

Themes:	Decadent, Mercantile, Ancestral
Culture:	Karok
Languages:	Karok, Common
Population:	6,000
Ruler:	The Circle of Five
Exports:	Metals, Gems, Money lending
Climate:	Cool, stable temperature year round. Stale, perfumed air.
Holiday:	*Luca Consora* (Guild Contest)

Overview

Dol-Karok is the mountain fortress of the albino Karoks, the oldest, wealthiest and most decadent people of the Midlands. Karoks are the region's elder culture, persisting since the Second Age, and their underground caverns much earlier.

Dol-Karok is subterranean, built within a central gigantic cavern, connected to many smaller chambers, tunnels and grottos. The entire city is lit by lanterns and a cultivated, faintly glowing fungi known as *gloomspoor*. The streets are generally straight and expertly carved, with perfectly fashioned tiles and breathtaking reliefs depicting far away scenes or Karok accomplishments. Pyramids and ziggurats of the great houses and other landmarks rise above the smaller flat roofed buildings of the lower caste *cavar*, made of limestone, basalt and granite, reinforced with iron or steel. The temperature is generally pleasantly cool and constant year round, if somewhat breezeless and stale (perfumed air is not uncommon).

Trade occupies every waking moment, including visitors from the lake cities and elsewhere bargaining for precious metals, gems and other goods or services. The last of the dwarves (known as *servitors*) languish here, toiling endlessly in the mines beneath the whips of their albino masters. Beyond the fortified edge of the mines and mushroom plantations lie the *Lost Roads*; a maze of winding and unpatrolled passages that some say lead to the northern side of the ranges.

Dol-Karok is prized for her abundance of rare ores and alloys, skilled smiths, jewellers and engravers. The Circle of Five are recognised as the most powerful money lenders in the region, maintaining their interests through envoys and informants scattered throughout.

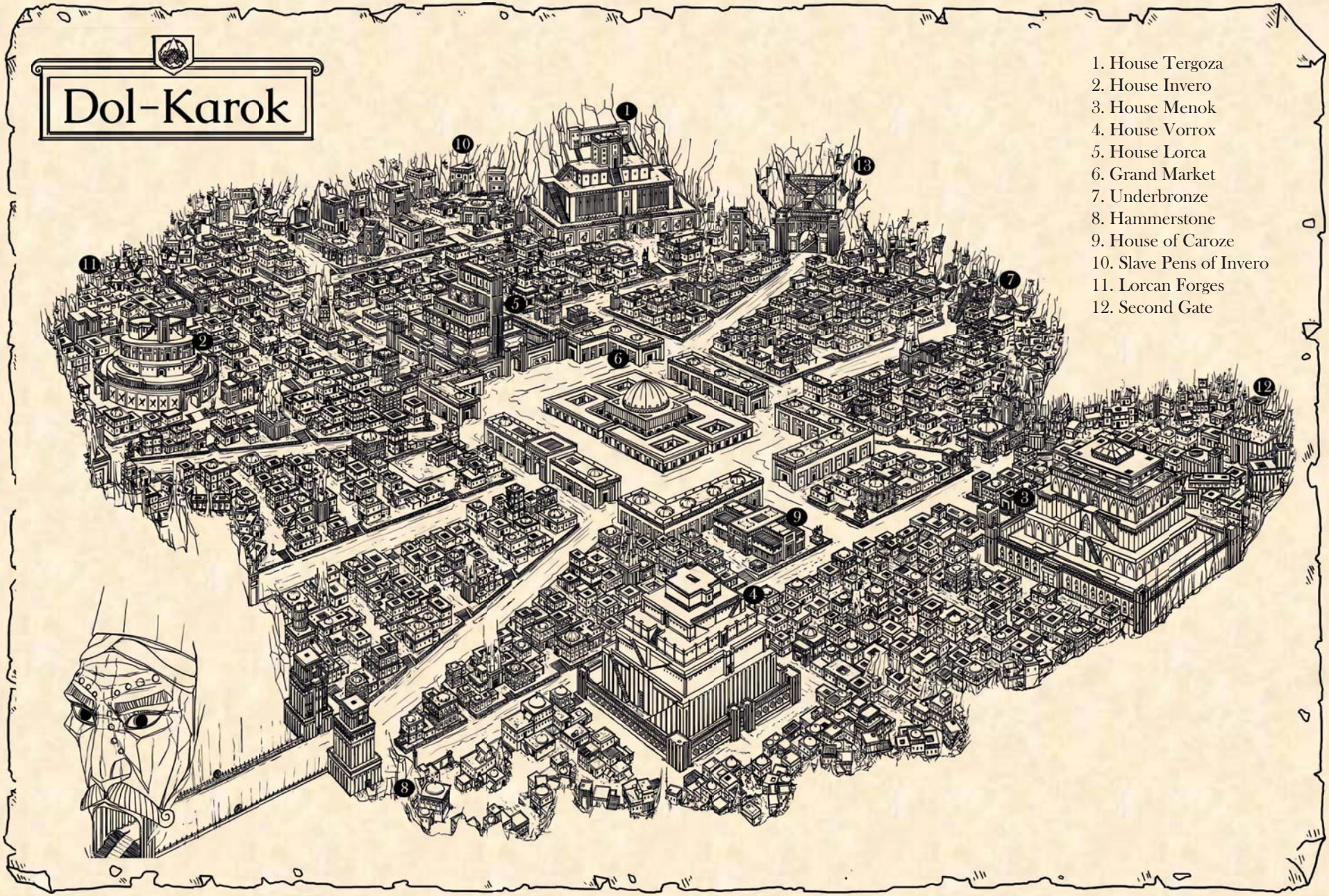
Factions & NPCs

- *The Circle of Five*
  The five most powerful trading houses of the Mountain (*Tergoza, Invero, Lorca, Vorrox* and *Menok*) rule Dol-Karok, with contested matters decided by secret ballot. Beneath the Five are scores of lesser houses, all of whom constantly vie for opportunity and station.

  The Circle have been in power for more than two centuries, excepting Invero, a relative newcomer at forty four years. Ascension to the Circle is only possible via the removal of a current ruling house (the last being *Zargor*, which was obliterated during the *Invero Gambit*, still whispered of to this day).

- *House Tergoza*
  Like all of the Circle houses, Tergoza has widely diversified interests across many profitable industries, but is most famous for its unique adamantine mine, fine jewellery and gemstones. Its sigil is a crown. *Mithri Tergoza* is in her late twenties, tall and striking with blonde dyed hair and golden fingernails, calculated and imperious. She is intent on converting the Circle to a single *Corpus*, with herself at the helm.

- *House Invero*
  Invero's sigil is a shackle, demonstrative of their speciality in servants, slaves and mercenaries. The newest Circle member, *Mithri Invero* (elderly, silver hair,


Dol-Karok
1. House Tergoza
2. House Invero
3. House Menok
4. House Vorrox
5. House Lorca
6. Grand Market
7. Underbronze
8. Hammerstone
9. House of Caroze
10. Slave Pens of Invero
11. Lorcan Forges
12. Second Gate

hunched back with walking cane) is in the throes of fending off a hostile takeover from a trio of smaller houses. Assassins and spies are rife, and Invero's cadre of elite bodyguards ever present.

- *House Lorca*
  Mithri Lorca is in his 40's, medium build, balding with pock marked skin. He drinks far too much wine and is mostly interested in adding to his harem of pleasure maidens. House Lorca is renowned for their peerless weapons and armour. Lorca's sigil is a gauntlet.

- *House Vorrox*
  House Vorrox is infamous for its trade in information, knowledge and secrets of all kinds. Their spy and ambassador network is unrivalled across the Midlands and beyond. *Mithri Vorrox* (Rogue 8) is a lithe, charming woman in her late thirties, fond of fashion and the latest hair styles. Vorrox believes the secrets she holds protects the house from most quarters, and is primarily concerned with threats to the Mountain, in particular Varnori raids on Lake Argos and plague worms in the *Lost Roads*. She exerts her influence behind the scenes, relaying commands through her many emissaries. The house sigil is a mechanical cog.

- *House Menok*
  In Dol-Karok, money lenders come in all shapes and sizes, but none approach the colossal power and influence of House Menok. The first and eldest house, Menok is the richest and most opulent of all, able to exert its influence in unlikely corners. Also known as the *First Mithri* (a symbolic title only), *Mithri Menok* is in her 40's, beautiful with burgundy dyed locks, always bedecked in jewels and the finest apparel. The First Mithri is in clandestine conflict with Mithri Tergoza, whom she has been feuding with for years, and now seeks to frustrate at every turn out of sheer spite. Dol-Menok's sigil is a bag of coins.

- *Servitors*
  The last of the dwarves, numbering in their hundreds, are slaves to the Karoks, especially the ruling houses. Overcome by a combination of racial gold lust and indoctrinated despair, the ragged, branded dwarves of today bear no resemblance to the grand longbeards of the old. Servitors primarily work the mines, sniffing out and excavating new veins of precious metals, but some also double as untiring hand servants. Servitors are the property of Karoks alone and cannot be sold to others. They are devoid of rights and vulnerable to abuse and even murder by their masters without reprisal. Servitors employed as

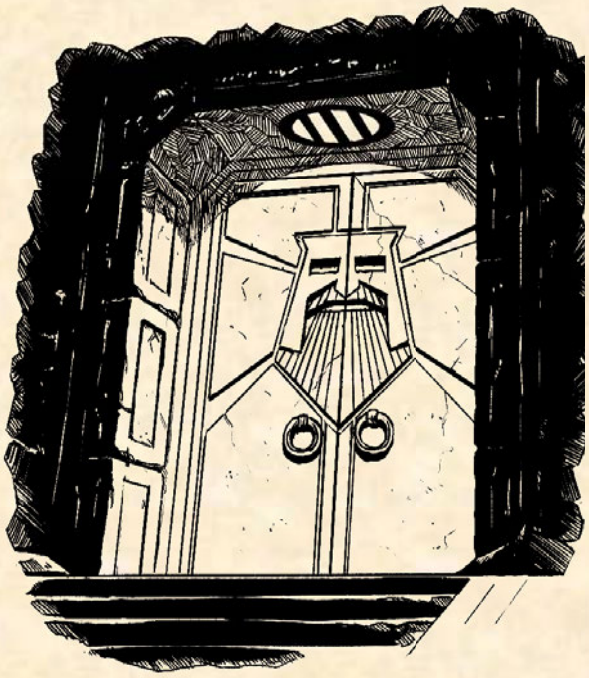
hand servants often act as porters, fan bearers, messengers, and living stools or bridges (to be walked upon to cross muddy paths, etc).

- *The Lost Roads*
  The Lost Roads are a winding complex of tangled, unpatrolled and ancient tunnels that extend beyond the edges of Dol-Karok's garrisoned borders. Few explorers brave these shafts, as most do not return, but those that do report veins of valuable ore ripe for the taking. Unfortunately, they also report plague worms, acidic oozes, choking spore fungi and worse besides. Legend suggests the Lost Roads eventually make their way to the northern side of the ranges, and the White Drifts beyond.

Taverns & Inns

- *Underbronze*
  Stone, three levels. Large rooms with expensive food and expensive ale. Entry to the Underbronze is via a large bronze trapdoor that slides aside to reveal lantern lit steps. The staff all wear whisper quiet slippers so as not to disturb guests. The common room is massive, with high ceilings, curtained booths and amazing wall carvings. The proprietor is *Elanzo* (tall, silky silver hair pulled back in a tight ponytail, purple sash), a very chatty and agreeable host, who is enthralled with foreign politics.

- *House of Carozê*
  Stone, two storey, part of an enclosed plaza. Small rooms, expensive food and wine. One of few wooden appointed buildings in Dol-Karok, *House of Carozê* is decorated in exquisite mahogany, with fine joinery and an ornate slate roof. Bards, dancers and other entertainers are common, performing for a predominately wealthy crowd. Carozen red is deservedly held as the finest red in the region. The owner, *Leonora* (50's, plump, flirty and prone to gift giving) is a devoted traveller and often absent, preferring to tour her vineyards in Port Brax or other settled regions.



- *Hammerstone*
  Stone, two storeys, built into the mountain with entry from a side tunnel. Small rooms, standard prices and cheap ale. Hammerstone is Dol-Karok's oldest inn, an ancient complex of perfectly carved rooms and antechambers, with many nooks and crannies. The common room is hung with hammers, pick axes, chisels and other mining tools, some dating back centuries. The bar staff are immaculately dressed in black and white, attentive and expert in their field. Empties are collected by a handful of mute servitors (tongues removed) who scuttle between and under tables, which are slightly higher than usual. The proprietor, *Salvor* (Fighter 6, 40's, hair more grey than white, one eyebrow

heavily scarred), is a retired treasure hunter who made his fortune with the southern Empire before buying the most famous inn in Dol-Karok. Salvor is calm, confident, and loves a good drinking contest.

Chance Encounters

1d20	DOL-KAROK ENCOUNTERS
1	A noble of House Invero, *Mithri Barza*, passes by in a gilded litter (shackle sigil) carried by eight servitors. Barza is terribly arrogant and his guards jostle aside anyone who doesn't immediately get out of their way. He is always accompanied by 2d4 veteran bodyguards (Fighter 3).
2	A shrill scream issues from a nearby tunnel or alley. Glancing inside, three thugs can be seen beating on an overdressed merchant by the name of *Fentez*. Fentez is in debt to a local gang, and they mean to make an example of him.
3	A riot has broken out in this square and adjoining tunnels. 2d100 furious miners or other labourers have taken up arms against House Tergoza (their employer). The riot is reaching a crescendo such that the 5d6 Stoneguard will shortly lose control.
4	Two elderly men sit opposite each other playing draughts outside an inn. Their glasses are empty and they do not speak, but they smile as they study the board.
5	An elderly Nydissian merchant, *Calix*, has a single glass orb on his table stall. A number of potential customers inquire about the item, but are quickly turned away. If the adventurers inquire, the merchant says "The orb is not for sale, but it is time for me to part with it. The real question is, are you the one the orb waits for?"
6	A band of 5d4 servitors, ragged and exhausted, are being driven down this tunnel to the whip cracks of 1d2+1 taskmasters.
7	Two merchants in brightly coloured robes are brawling over jewellery, silks, books or slaves.
8	2d6 Devotees of the Mountain (dressed in dark grey robes, with a mountain icon pendant) are in procession here, offering blessings and words of fortitude and endeavour to all and sundry. They hand out silver coins to the needy.
9	4d6 *Stoneguard* (ornate heavy armour, regal cloaks, quality swords, masked helms) patrol this tunnel or square, on the lookout for trouble. Adventurers of obvious means are likely to get a friendly nod, but others will be stopped and questioned (reason for visit, place of abode, are they carrying any contraband, etc). Un-cooperative responses might draw fines, expulsion from the current district, or a night in the watch house.

10	*Arkoza*, a potion maker of some renown and very rarely seen outside his laboratory, is speaking with a female mithri on the street. Arkoza is very choosey about his clients. Perhaps this is an opportunity for an introduction.
11	A well groomed albino female in a fine blouse and skirt, *Naverette*, sidles up beside the adventurers. She is a black market fence, eager for new customers.
12	*Ovando*, a rough and ready street kid and beggar, is on the corner here. Ovando is an informant for House Vorrox, but certainly isn't above making a few extra rica for discrete clients.
13	A Midlander trader, *Tobin*, is herding scores of pigs down this tunnel, assisted by 1d4+1 shepherds.
14	Slaves and gladiators from Nydissia and elsewhere are on display on a stage or deep pit. A large crowd of interested buyers have gathered to bid on the merchandise.
15	4d6 thieves (as *Bandit*, LFG p.114) emerge from nearby alleys, buildings, sewers or rooftops, ambushing the party to steal their gold.
16	Cave in! A bulette, nest of plague worms or rock eating ooze has weakened the ceiling of this chamber or tunnel, causing it to collapse! A *Luck* (Dex) save avoids 6d6 damage.
17	A young servitor, bearing the brand of House Invero, is crouched in a dim side tunnel. Something glitters in his hand. After a moment, he swiftly disappears down the shadowy passage.
18	2d6 bounty hunters (Fighters, Barbarians and/or Rogues 2-3) have tracked down the party for some prior misdeed. They intend to arrest or kill the adventurers and claim their bounty.
19	A sword swallower is plying her art here, drawing a small crowd. There is a 50% chance of 1d4 pickpockets working the audience.
20	*Mithri Lorca* is carousing down the street, accompanied by 2d4 beautiful females and an equal number of elite bodyguards (Fighter 3-4), en route to his next engagement.

Melek

Themes:	Slavery, Secular, Empire, Magic hunters
Culture:	Nydissian
Languages:	Nydissian, Common
Population:	13,000
Ruler:	Imperator Setirus
Exports:	Slaves, gladiators, pottery
Climate:	Hot, humid, verdant
Holiday:	*Carnifexum* (Bloodsport)

Overview

Melek is the northernmost city of Nydissia, the Equatorial Empire of the south. The *City of Shackles* is ruled over by Imperator Setirus, newly appointed after his predecessor's unexpected death twelve months ago.

The streets of Melek are stone paved, marked with drains, and often accompanied by footpaths. Buildings are predominately stone or brick, decorated with arches, pillars, statues and obelisks. The larger villas display icons of the golden eye, the formal sigil of the *Lucentum*. Temperatures are hot and humid, with cooling breezes blowing in at night from the northern fens. Sanitation is relatively good, and even the lowliest citizens have access to the public baths.

Melek has served as the Empire's northernmost city for sixty years, positioned on a high escarpment overlooking the Trackless Moors. The Lucentum's attempt to establish the frontier town of *Kadimos* further north ended in ruin, razed by waves of skorn, barbarian and Argosan forces from Crow's Keep. Over the last twenty years, an informal truce with the Midlanders has allowed both cities to trade, but recent skirmishes have everyone on edge.

Melek is famous for her vast slave pens, the Lucentum's secular ways, and the magic hunting Ordo Malefactos. The Ogorien fighting pits, and the gladiators they produce, are also well known throughout the region.

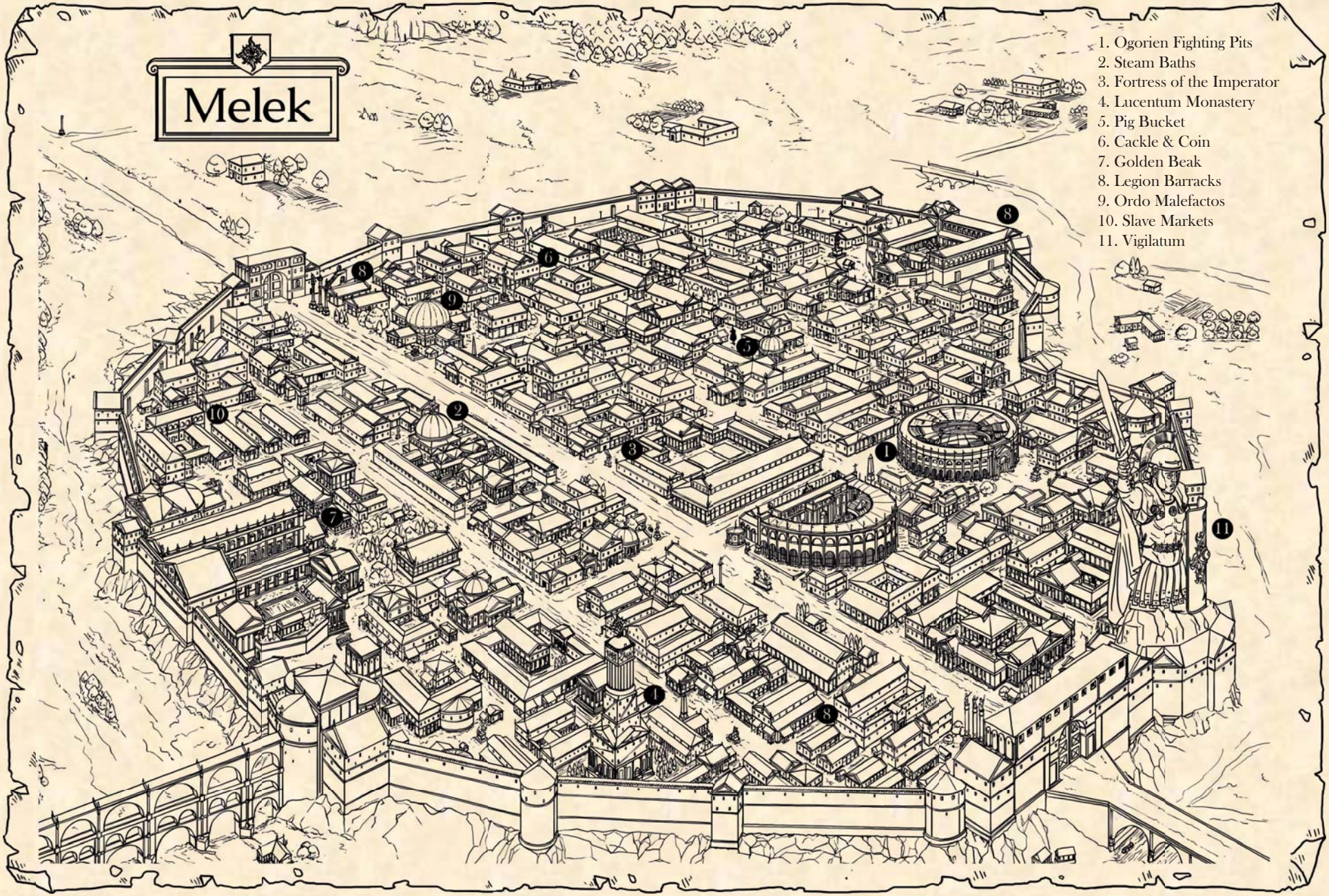
Factions & NPCs

- *Imperator Setirus (Fighter 9)*
  Melek's ruler is in his 50's, heavy set with a trimmed goatee and brooding hazel eyes. Setirus took up the ruler's mantle after arranging his rival's death the year before. He is determined to leave his mark on history, and ardently believes conquering the Midlands for the Empire will be his legacy. Melek barracks far more legionaries than are necessary to secure her borders, and Setirus requisitions more with every season.

- *The Lucentum*
  The Lucentum are the ruling power behind the Nydissian Empire; a philosophical sect dedicated to logic and reason, eschewing "fragile" emotions such as compassion and empathy. They rule with an iron will, focusing above all on the "greater good" of the imperium, which often means trampling the rights of the individual.

  Disciples of the Lucentum are agnostic or atheist, and worship no gods. Magic is considered a clear and present danger that cannot be ignored. In Melek, *Lucent Caudex* (60's, bald, wiry, ornate toga with the golden eye sigil), acts as the sect's ambassador and First Counsel to the Imperator.

- *Ordo Malefactos*
  This small but important order are charged with promoting the Lucentum's creed, discouraging paganism, and hunting down spell casters of all kinds. Magicians are generally killed on sight, or taken in chains to Melek to await the Lucentum's judgment. Enchanted objects are confiscated on behalf the Empire and "safely secured". Melek's Ordo is led by *Inquisitor Gaius* (Monk 7), strong and lean, with silver flecked hair and a


Melek
1. Ogorien Fighting Pits
2. Steam Baths
3. Fortress of the Imperator
4. Lucentum Monastery
5. Pig Bucket
6. Cackle & Coin
7. Golden Beak
8. Legion Barracks
9. Ordo Malefactos
10. Slave Markets
11. Vigilatum

broken nose. Gaius understands the dangers of sorcery more than most, yet has begun to develop an unhealthy interest in dark forces (so far unbeknownst to his fellows).

- *Silent Gods*
  Not all Nydissians adhere to the Lucentum's dogma, clinging instead to older, more traditional gods and deities, the names of which have not been uttered in the public galleries for generations. Believers meet behind closed doors, practicing the Old Rites in secret, far from the persecutory gaze of the city. In recent times, painted symbols of the Silent Gods have begun appearing in public places, much to the chagrin of *Lucent Caudex*.

- *Nydissian Legion*
  Melek has an abundance of legionaries guarding her walls and patrolling outlying areas. The legion double as the city watch, overseen by prefects (sergeants) or (rarely) an inquisitor. *Prefect Agrippa* (Fighter 4, beady eyes, carries an iron rod) is one of the more enthusiastic peacekeepers. He is particularly diligent about foreigners obtaining licences to carry weapons in the city (2 gp per weapon), and punishing insurgents, rabble-rousers and slaves.

- *Slave Rebels*
  Melek's economy thrives on slaves, the bulk of whom toil in the mines and labour camps. The slave market, and related gladiatorial games, are well established and profitable affairs. Slaves are treated as property, and owners may exploit or abuse their charges without legal repercussion. An undercurrent of resentment and rebellion has been building for years, and some suggest Melek's standing cohort may not be enough to quell a full uprising, should one occur.

Taverns & Inns

- *The Pig Bucket*
  Double storey, stone. Standard rooms with cheap food and cheap wine. The wait staff are all slaves, dressed in light, revealing tunics. The owner's pig (named "Sita"/Bucket) is always snorting about for food in the common room, making a proper nuisance of himself. The proprietor is *Corvus*, tall with long dreadlocks, always ready with a lewd tale or bawdy joke, coupled with an overfamiliar demeanour.

- *Cackle & Coin*
  Triple storey, brick. Small rooms with standard food and expensive wine. The common room has a vaulted ceiling and

discreet booths, attended to by serving boys and girls. Gambling is prolific, with card and dice games being played in every corner. Wine flows freely and spirits are generally high, none higher in fact than the proprietor *Marcus* (a silver haired inebriate who loves life and despises the *Lucentum*, a fact that will probably one day get him killed). Harlots are common, helping the newly rich part with their winnings.

- *Golden Beak*
  Single storey, stone. Large rooms with expensive food and standard ale. This pillared inn has a large, benched common room, as well as steaming bath houses out the back. An enormous, gold painted roc beak is hung from ceiling beams. The female proprietor *Nefiros* (wiry with only one eye, yellowed smile) is a Lucentum initiate and enjoys puzzles, philosophical discourse, and fulsome women.

Chance Encounters

1d20	MELEK ENCOUNTERS
1	2d4 legionaries throwing dice down a side alley. One has a particularly large grin and declares "*Hah! The fates are with me brothers*!"
2	A funeral procession winds slowly down the street, including pall bearers, lucents, and sorrowful relatives. A pipe musician is playing a sad dirge.
3	*Lusicrix*, an elderly female with wispy hair, is selling ornate togas at a side stall. She is an expert seamstress, and thief, happy to sell her "special range" to the right buyer (garments with secret compartments, silent foot coverings, etc).
4	The streets are empty; oppressive heat and humidity has forced everyone indoors.
5	6d10 slaves are in open revolt against their masters, aided by 1d6 masked men who are distributing knives and clubs. Some of the 4d6 guards have dropped their whips, and are readying spears and swords.
6	A middle aged merchant named *Astartes* is selling books and maps from a covered stall. He is also an excellent forger and produces false party invitations, letters of introduction, identity documents and so on for discreet clientele.
7	A skilled hypnotist, *Arrix the Mysterious*, is performing a show for an appreciative crowd. In addition to his mundane skills, Arrix has recently learnt to cast *Charm Person* once per day. Nearby, a member of the *Ordo Malefactos* watches with a suspicious stare.
8	A small monkey has escaped her enclosure and springs from behind a barrel, wriggling into an adventurer's backpack to hide. A handsome but furious travelling performer appears moments later at the end of the street with a small net, obviously searching for something.
9	Two horses, carriages or chariots are racing down the street, young nobles from rival families (*Dusertes* and *Prifex*) at the reins.
10	A religious zealot is preaching from atop a wooden stool, inviting passers-by to prepare for the end of days, repent, and embrace the Old Ways. A grim faced legionary brandishes a stout club and stalks toward the zealot.
11	A diminutive tax collector, *Dominus Cruxus*, bearing the Imperator's seal, makes a bee line for the travellers and asks to

	see their weapons & armour licences.
12	A large, white tabby cat meows at one of the travellers, moving close to brush against his or her legs if given the chance. Both of the cat's ears have been cropped. If befriended, the cat becomes extremely loyal and has excellent hearing, eyesight and instincts for danger. He is happy to nap during the day and stay up at night, keeping watch over his human.
13	1d4 teenagers are painting symbols of a twin headed serpent (a symbol of the Old Gods) on a building wall. Down a side ally, the travellers can see a squad of armed legionaries approaching. Both parties are unaware of the other.
14	An elderly farrier, *Ugalos*, is mending horse shoes in a half barn. His wife has passed, he has no children, and he wishes to pass on his lucky shoe to a deserving stranger. If the travellers impress him, he gifts it to them. The shoe is indeed fortuitous, and restores 1 *Luck* at a time of the owners choosing once per adventure.
15	A blood moon (lunar eclipse) occurs, with many folks invoking superstitious rites to ward off evil, such as driving away any cats, lining their doorways with salt, marking the forehead with blood, carrying obvious silver, and so on. There is a 50% chance a genuine lycanthrope stalks the streets tonight.
16	*Dominus Carrex* (young noble, goatee, fine clothing) staggers in a cluttered ally and collapses. A pool of blood quickly forms.
17	A plague of mimes descends on the street. Their performances are poor to painful.
18	Alchemist *Octavius Scaevola* ("*Scaev*") is hawking fire pots stacked up by the half dozen. Mid way through his sales pitch, a legion patrol appears at the end of the street. Scaev quickly scoops his pots into a sack and replaces them with undergarments instead, giving any potential customers a knowing nod.
19	A long haired Midlander bard with a handlebar moustache, *Ander Excelsior*, offers to make a ballad about the party's exploits (for a reasonable fee).
20	*Inquisitor Gaius* is striding down the street in a sleeveless toga, flanked by 3d4 veteran legionaries (Fighter 3-4). Any obvious "adventurer" types may draw his attention, particularly if he suspects they might possess any magical items.

Northgate

Themes:	Beautiful, Advanced, Rebellious
Culture:	Midlander
Languages:	Argosan, Common
Population:	9,000
Ruler:	Nocratha the Stargazer, Steward of Northgate
Exports:	Technology, Lore, Textiles
Climate:	Moderate to cool climate
Holiday:	Sabbat (anointing ritual)

Overview

Set amid graceful monuments of the last elven kingdom, with views of Wistwood, the Ironhull Mountains, and Lake Argos, many consider Northgate the most beautiful Midlander city. Boasting the finest colleges, libraries and rare experts, she is also rightly regarded as the most scientifically advanced society of the region.

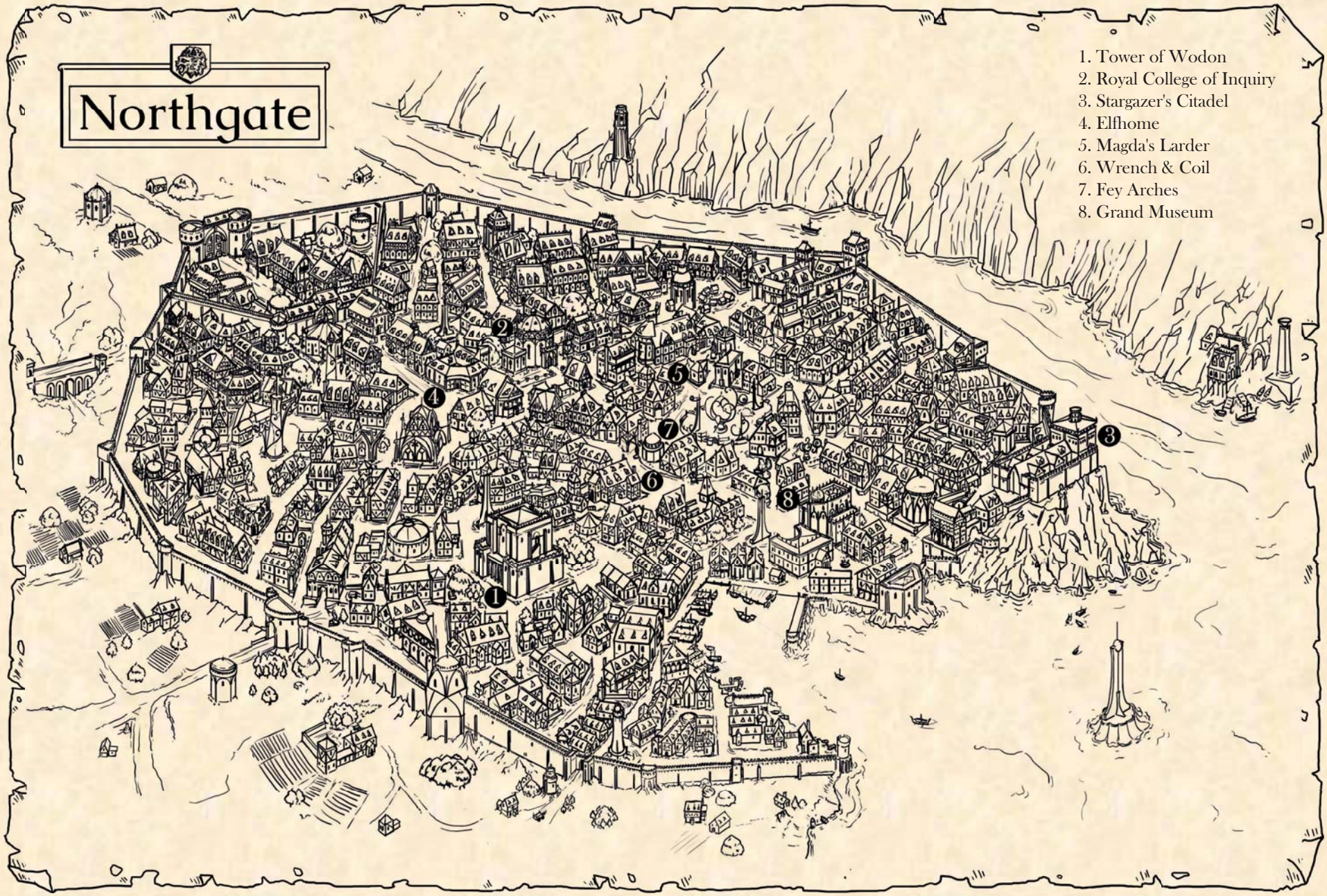
But all is not well with the Jewel of Argosa. Whilst technically under the auspices of *King Uldred*, Northgate is in practice ruled by *Nocratha*, an elderly sorcerer and the King's sole sanctioned wizard. Increasingly bizarre edicts, missing citizens, and the rise of the *Anointed* (Nocratha's hand picked devotees) have stirred up considerable tension, fear and resentment amongst a growing proportion of the population.

Nocratha has ruled Northgate for sixty years, since before most residents were born, and some say he will rule for sixty more. An uprising eight years ago was mercilessly crushed by the Steward, via a terrible (and secretly arcane) plague that primarily targeted rebellious highborn, wiping out half the noble families.

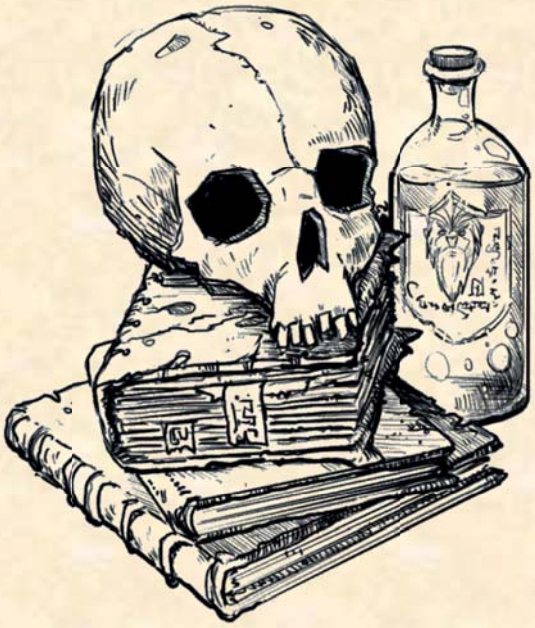
The Stargazer was a unique ally to the King during his youth, and Uldred cannot afford to make an enemy of him now, not with Melek prowling the southern borders. On the face of it, Nocratha remains a loyal vassal of the crown, and the King officially supports his position, if not his methods. In recent years, the two have reached an understanding not to interfere with each other as much as possible. For the commoners, it makes no difference whether it's the King, nobles, or Nocratha that taxes them. Indeed, many citizens felt the old lords had it coming and were glad to see them gone. But the growing number of disappearing commoners, outlandish edicts, and rise of the Anointed, are entirely different matters. A genuine resentment of the Stargazer and his cronies has set in, cultivating an undercurrent of rebellion.

Factions & NPCs

- *Nocratha (Magic User 11)*
  The Stargazer, as he is also known, is 94 years old, 5' 5", emaciated, frail of body and unstable of mind. A decade ago, on his deathbed, the sorcerer merged with an alien entity from beyond the Veil to save his life. The assimilation was a success, but the person Nocratha was exists no longer. His new reality is akin to a bad dream; a spiralling descent into delusion and nightmare. What Nocratha desires is for the GM to determine, but the longer he lives, the worse things will be for Northgate.


Northgate
1. Tower of Wodon
2. Royal College of Inquiry
3. Stargazer's Citadel
4. Elfhome
5. Magda's Larder
6. Wrench & Coil
7. Fey Arches
8. Grand Museum

- *The Quartermasters*
  The Quartermasters are the civil administrators that run the city on a day to day basis. Appointed (and removed) by Nocratha himself, these senior bureaucrats have complete authority over their district (roads, sanitation, food, taxes, guards, etc), subject only to the Stargazer's veto (since his merging, however, Nocratha shows scant interest in governance). The politics of the quartermasters is complex; shifting from general stability to factional warring for resources, recognition and/or the Stargazer's favour.



- *The Anointed*
  The Anointed (see *Bestiary*) are the Stargazer's hand picked disciples, a sect of dedicated warriors and scholars committed to *Sulênocratha* (as they call him), purportedly in furtherance of Northgate's best interests. Recognized by their red cloaks and cowls, the Anointed carry out the Stargazer's personal wishes, empowered with a wide range of authorities and powers (including arrest, search, confiscation, interrogation, requisition, and in most cases immunity to prosecution). When Nocratha issues a special edict, it is the Anointed who enforce it.

- *Royal College of Inquiry*
  The Royal College is the most famous of the few colleges of the Midlands, with an extensive library, fine teachers, and many of the brightest students. The college was founded by the First Queen but is now independently wealthy and well funded. *Chancellor Caldwell* is a long time political opponent of Nocratha, particularly in response to his increasingly strange edicts. The chancellor's position is backed by most of the college, including the *School of Artificing*, responsible for secret advances in steam power, magnetism, alchemy and canned lightning.

- *Ruins of Yûln Varsune*
  The last elven kingdom of *Yûln Varsune* fell early in the Second Age, brought low by indulgent apathy and the serpentmen empire at the height of its power. Faded monuments alluding to fey gods, celestial entities and star doors might still be found in some corners of Northgate, preserved by magic long faded. Beneath the city, the sunken remnants Yûln Varsune await, ripe for rediscovery. What lingers in these ancient halls, and what marvels might be exhumed, are for the GM to determine.

- *Grand Librarian*
  In the *Tower of Wodon*, a fortified library housing many rare and precious tomes, preparations are underway to remove Nocratha from power when the time is right. *Grand Librarian Bridonna* (50's, silver haired, stern, insightful, Bard 3) is chief among the conspirators, on the

lookout to recruit support, and careful to avoid scrutiny from the Anointed.

Taverns & Inns

- *Elfhome*
  Triple storey, stone. Large rooms with expensive food and wine. Elfhome is one of the few remaining elven dwellings, converted into an inn and tavern. Its curved lines and intricate fretwork are a mysterious delight to behold. Glow bug lamps and lilting music provide an ethereal atmosphere. The staff here are exceptional and pride themselves on their silver service. The proprietor is *Trisene*, a sharp brunette with a disarming smile and keen hearing. Her son, *Ruduc* recently became an Anointed warrior.

- *Magda's Larder*
  Single storey, wooden. Large rooms with quality food and cheap ale. Renowned for its terrific meats and cheap ale, the Larder is often crowded and a favourite haunt of mercenaries, guardsmen and college students. Wooden meat "hooks" dangle by the walls for patrons to hang their cloaks on. *Magda*, the portly Varnori bartender, sports numerous tattoos of the Deep One, and is an ex-cleric. She is openly disdainful of the gods, but will make up for any offence with free drinks.

- *The Wrench & Coil*
  Triple storey, wooden. Large rooms with standard food and ale. This drinking house is known for the gigantic metal wrench hanging over the bar, and a trick seat (with a spring loaded coil) that the regulars will invite outlanders to "rest up" on. The owner *Stacius* (broad shouldered, Nydissian, constantly furrowed brow while muttering to himself) is an amateur inventor. He likes to try his latest gadgets out on the patrons (eg: self righting flagon, clockwork crawling peanut bowl, steam whistle, etc).

Chance Encounters

1d20	NORTHGATE ENCOUNTERS
1	A miserable, driving rain falls, making the road slippery and riddled with deep puddles.
2	A beautiful man (Aron) or woman (Odea) walks by, drawing the eye of local admirers. He or she is a skilled actor and impersonator.
3	A deafening explosion rocks the surrounding area, causing tables to shudder and clothes lines to snap. A thick plume of smoke billows from a nearby tower.
4	A relic of the last elven kingdom stands on the corner. It depicts an intricately carved doorway made of branches and vines, with a flaring sun at the centre.
5	A town crier is ringing his bell and declaring "Hear ye, hear ye! The Steward decrees a sundown curfew – let no man be outdoors after dark!"

6	A trio of tinkers (*Ronson, Garia* and *Nodwick*) are guiding a wagon, slowly grinding forward under the power of a small, steam powered device. Despite laughing and slapping each other on the back, the three look decidedly nervous.
7	A young teenager, *Lela* is sitting on a crate begging for alms. Her mother was taken by the Anointed a fortnight ago and Lela is now homeless.
8	A wealthy, middle aged couple have been stopped in the street by 2d6 Anointed warriors and 1d2 disciples. The wife is alleged to have broken an edict against wearing silver jewellery during the day, and the Anointed are confiscating them. The husband is protesting and growing increasingly irate.
9	An injured dog is sitting in a nearby alleyway, licking at a sizeable wound on its hind leg. It gives the party a suspicious look, but wags its tail slowly if they approach.
10	*Meldrin*, a disciple of Wodon (in blue robes with a giant owl & scales icon), is walking the streets, partly for exercise, partly hoping to meet someone new.
11	On the wall here is a hand painted message in bright green paint: *Death to Nocratha!*
12	A small crowd has gathered here to listen to the sermonising of an Anointed disciple, preaching the virtues of Nocratha's continued reign and stability. 3d6 guards are keeping an eye on the gathered listeners.
13	*Quartermaster Hadric*, the district administrator, is on horseback with a retinue of 2d4 knights. He is touring the nearby streets looking for a particular messenger girl, *Scylla* (beautiful 5½ ft Nydissian) whom he has developed a crush on.
14	A man and woman are playing chess on a table outside the *Leery Eye Tavern*, with some young onlookers gathered round. The woman is young (*Winnie*, a student), the other in his 50's (*Chancellor Rogarox*, Nydissian, head of the College's School of Artificing).
15	Etched into the floor of this tiled courtyard is an awe inspiring landscape (a preserved elven relic); a clifftop overlooking the Great Lake, with a pterodactyl rider fending off a pair of giant dragonflies.
16	A trio of wealthy ladies (*Andie, Clorinda, Elsbeth*) are sauntering down the street, perusing shop fronts, wares and/or people. Or perhaps they are lost and would appreciate some assistance.
17	A tall porter woman's basket breaks (*Sighi*, Varnori, long blonde braided hair), dropping fruit on the ground. She is fearful her master will whip her for bringing home bruised produce.
18	3d6 guardsmen (70%) or anointed (30%) are patrolling the streets, searching for a pick pocket believed to have run this way. There is a 50% chance the pick pocket is hiding here.
19	Tucked into a small alcove here is a preserved statue of an elven maiden. She has one hand on her heart, the other on her hip. If the statute is kissed, the character hears an illusory tinkling and restores 1 *Luck* (works once only).
20	*Nocratha* is lurking somewhere nearby, using a *Disguise Self* spell to blend in. He is looking for someone, or something, but the adventurers might rouse his interest (especially if they display any magical ability, or are carrying any enchanted objects).

Port Brax

Themes:	Crowded, Corrupt, Gang Ridden
Culture:	Midlander
Languages:	Argosan, Common
Population:	12,000
Ruler:	Highlord Ipsgrave
Exports:	Food, Black Market Goods
Climate:	Moderate climate, winds blowing across the lake.
Holiday:	Festival of Faces

Overview

Port Brax is the largest, most crowded and some would say most successful of the Midlander cities. There are more folk in Port Brax than any other Argosan city, with a cosmopolitan range of inhabitants from across the region. Trade is good (relative to most cities), and the fields of the Low Plains produce the most food in the basin. But beneath the veneer of accomplishment, Port Brax is a hotbed of conflict and corruption, secretly dominated by gangs of powerful criminals whose quarrels often spill into the streets.

The port city is generally cool to moderate in climate, with winds blowing in from Lake Argos. Made of stone, plaster and wood, the architecture mimics traditional Middle Ages style. Houses and shops crowd into every available space, and where no more buildings will fit, there are people. The city boasts an extensive sewer system, built atop long forgotten ruins from the First Age.

Port Brax is known for its bustling, diverse markets, pressing crowds, and lively street vendors. Rickety tables and temporary shelters are raised at dawn and packed away at dusk, when vendors retreat to their corner of the city to catch some well deserved shut eye. Tall stone walls technically divide the city up into various quarters (merchant, temple, administrative, etc), but the street vendors somehow pervade all of them.

Factions & NPCs

- *Highlord Ipsgrave (Bard 4)*
  Hugh Ipsgrave is a veteran orator and politician, a man that sways crowds and woos minds. Intelligent, charming, and just a touch whimsical, Hugh has amassed great wealth during his time in office, but limited power. Ostensibly, the elected Highlord rules the city, but in truth Ipsgrave dances to the jig of the gang bosses. Incredibly rich, and incredibly indolent, Ipsgrave is perfectly satisfied with this arrangement - just so long as the commoners keep in line.

- *The Red Hooks*
  Of the "big three" gangs, the Red Hooks are the most wealthy, most highly skilled gang in the city. *Guildmaster Marakett* (Rogue 8, Nydissian, 5' 11", portly, shameless rake, swindler and killer) controls his thieves through a combination of cunning, ruthlessness and unending opportunities for profit. In his estimation, the Hooks are the true power

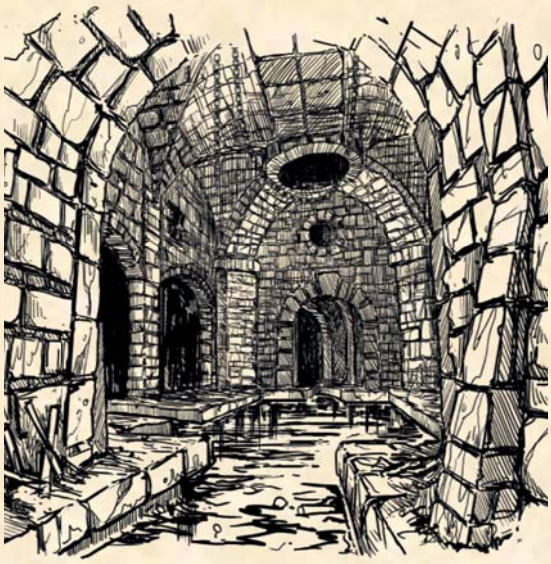
Port Brax
1. Ipsgrave Manor
2. Red Hooks' Safehouse
3. Sumptown Rats' Sewer Entry
4. Dockside Valkyries' Hangout
5. Keltons
6. Morrigan's Den
7. Rack & Spindle
8. Temple of Shennog
9. Unbroken Chapterhouse

on the streets, with enough muscle and talent to take full control if they had to. Like all of the "big three" gangs, the Hooks have a hand in most crime types, but are most successful with break & enters, robberies, and prostitution.

- *Dockside Valkyries*
  The smallest, but perhaps most intimidating of the big three, the Valkyries accept only females as full members. Primarily Varnori, many demonstrate their loyalty with facial tattoos, war paint and by carrying whips. *Aunty Uma* (Rogue 7, Varnori, 6 ft, late 20s, athletic, never without her signature lash) rules her crew with an iron fist, and no gang is more loyal. Uma's current priority is to consolidate their power base and expand membership. The Valkyries are specialists in debt recovery, stand overs, protection rackets and murder.

- *Sumptown Rats*
  The Sumptown Rats are the largest gang in town, pervading all quarters of the city, from the lowliest slums to the Highlord's personal abode; an informant on every corner and a knife in every alley, so they say. No-one knows more about goings on in the city than *Udan the Slip* (Rogue 6, 5'8", 40's, slim, inhumanly agile with Dex 19), and for the right price, he might just share that information with you. Like all the big three, the Rats have a diversified crime portfolio, but are best known for brokering information, blackmail, fencing, smuggling, and black market goods.

- *The Sunless*
  A guild on the rise, the Sunless are a small and secretive enclave of religious cutters that worship the Midlander deity Shennog. Part guild and part cult, the workings of the sunless are overseen by *Father Moon* (Monk 6, Midlander, hairless with enchanted, runic markings on his skin that allow him to invoke *Darkness 15 ft radius* once/week). Members tend towards fanaticism, and are experts in infiltration, impersonation, forgeries and poison.



- *Sewer Complex*
  The sewers of Port Brax are not for the faint hearted, but not because the smell is enough to turn one's stomach. Many gangs have safe houses in the dank tunnels, a few even excavating space enough for guild halls far from prying eyes. Lower still, far beneath the aqueducts and storm drains, lie the ruins of a forgotten urgot civilization. What happened to the urgot can only be guessed at, but no human has yet managed to open the *Red Gate*, nor set foot in the passages beyond.

- *Company of the Unbroken*
  The Unbroken were a founding pillar of Port Brax 750 years ago, a mercenary company that became upstanding guardsmen and military protectors of the region. Now a sad shadow of their former selves, most of the company are on the gangs' payroll. Indeed, some say the crime bosses only allow the Unbroken to persist to buoy the spirits of the naive. Yet there are some warriors that still take their oaths of service seriously, including *Captain Rainier* (Fighter 6, 30's, Midlander, short hair, piercing hazel eyes). In a city overrun with duplicity and greed, Rainier is a defiant voice that will not be silenced as long as she draws breath.

Taverns & Inns

- *Morrigan's Den*
  Double storey, stone. Open plan with standard food and cheap ale. The Den is one of the oldest buildings of the district, with deep cellars and a secret tunnel to the sewers. Unlike most alehouses in Port Brax, Morrigan's place is strictly neutral ground for the gangs; a place where rivals can meet to discuss business. The owner *Morrigan* (female, Bard 6, breathtaking beauty) loves a chat and is an exceptional story teller. Much loved by her patrons, anyone crossing Morrigan will have the whole tavern to contend with.

- *Keltons*
  Wooden, triple storey. Large rooms, expensive food and cheap ale. Located on the corner of Kelton Square, this spacious tavern operates under the auspices of the Red Hooks, and is often frequented by members and hopefuls. The top level is wall to wall illegal card and dice tables. *Rennard* (Fighter 7, 40's, gruff, missing two fingers on his left hand) is proprietor, bar tender and bouncer in one. Backed up by the Hooks, the only guards that visit Kelton's are on Marakett's payroll.

- *The Rack & Spindle*
  Double storey, stone. Small rooms, expensive food and wine. This drinking hole has a multitude of small, sound proofed rooms in a sprawling, haphazard layout. In a corner of the common room is an antique rack.

  Owned and operated by the Sumptown Rats (the wait staff are a mix of gangers, hopefuls, and their relatives), the Rack is one of the guild's smuggling hubs, with tunnels connecting to the other hubs or beyond the city walls. The manager, *Lars "String 'em up" Gunndor,* (Rogue 4, Varnori, 20's, has a silent step which he uses to creep up on people) loves his job and his guild, but hates Karoks. A "No Karoks" sign hangs above the entry door.

Chance Encounters

1d20	PORT BRAX ENCOUNTERS
1	A body crashes to the ground in front of the travellers with a horrendous thud! Looking up, 1d3 humanoid shadows can be seen making a quick getaway across the rooftops.
2	6d10 gangers (a mix of Hooks, Rats and Valkyries) have broken into a massive fisticuff, turning the street to chaos. No-one has drawn steel yet, but things are escalating quickly.
3	A blustering wind is blowing today, swaying the elderly and tipping objects off tables. Leaves and dust whirl across the ground.
4	Raised voices, followed by ringing steel, can be heard from around the corner of a narrow side alley.
5	A motley assortment of 2d6 pirates are swaying down the street, rum bottles in hand. They are all crew of the *Dreadnought*, an infamous and feared raiding galleon.
6	Muffled voices can be heard from a very dark, sheltered alleyway. Shining a torch inside reveals two men lowering the body of a third into a sewer manhole. They look to be in a hurry. Any onlookers receive a curt "Get outta here, scob" along with an angry gaze.
7	Eddie "Two Shanks", a ganger with the Red Hooks, sidles up to one of the party. He introduces himself, hands the character a white fishing hook, and says "Message from the boss. He wants a word. Don't go leavin' town without droppin' by", and departs.
8	Storm clouds are rolling in fast. The wind has picked up dramatically, and great peals of thunder begin to echo off Lake Argos.
9	3d6 Dockside Valkyries are lounging about outside the *Moontide Inn*, "No room at the inn today" one remarks, giving the party a wink and a "move along" thumb motion.
10	1d6 priests of Shennog are moving slowly down the road, followed by 4d10 members of the Sunless with a coffin on a small wagon. They are humming a sombre dirge.
11	2d4 Warriors of the Unbroken are on patrol, slowly moving down the road. Passers by either nod at them with a smile, or shrink away down side alleys.
12	A desperate fight between 5d6 Rats and Hooks has broken out at this cross road. Knives are flashing and iron cudgels smashing. Locals are running for cover!
13	A large number of temporary market stalls have been erected along this street. Along with clothing and spices, some vendors also offer a range of illegal goods (hidden blade sheathes, poisons, etc).
14	Two commoners, *Rabby and Wilcott*, are arguing over a cage of chickens. Rabby says the chickens are his and were stolen from him. Wilcott says he bought them fair and square.
15	While walking the street, the sound of laughing voices can be heard from a sewer grill nearby.
16	5d6 Sumptown Rats make a beeline for the party. *Guska* (Rogue 3), the leader, has decided the party should pay a "weapons tax" for crossing their turf (5 gp per weapon).
17	This street is a bottleneck for two major roads and is especially crowded, with travellers having to squeeze past each other. There is a 50% chance of pickpockets.
18	3d6 *Grey Skulls* (minor thieves' guild) are running a high stakes dice table in a sheltered alcove. The leader, *Addar* (Rogue 4, patchy bleached blonde hair) welcomes anyone with gold.
19	A street urchin, *Narfex* (Nydissian, 8 yrs old, Dex 15) approaches the party and asks them to lean in close. If they do, he whispers that a man in beggar's clothes is following them. He then looks at them expectantly (hoping for a coin).

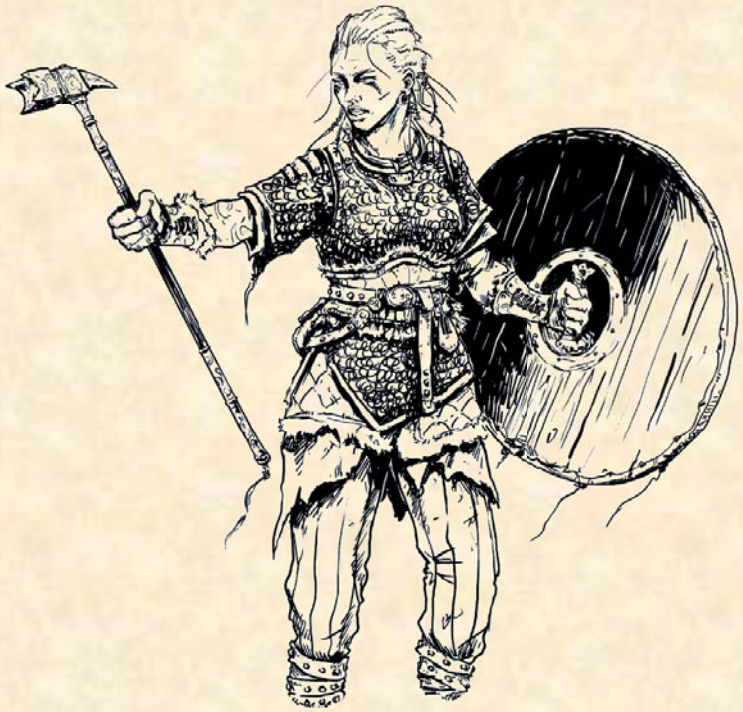
20	Highlord Ipsgrave is in this square with 4d10 city watch (Fighter 1-2) and 2d4 Unbroken (Fighter 3-4). A small crowd has gathered. Ipsgrave is opening a new gallows, building goodwill with plenty of amicable chit chat, hand shaking and baby kissing.

Vorngard

Themes:	Lawless, Frontier, Raiders
Culture:	Varnori
Languages:	Varnori, Common
Population:	7,000
Ruler:	Jarl Osgerd
Exports:	Ships, crew, mercenaries
Climate:	Cool, rainy, windy
Holiday:	*Drannu Sigard* (Yule Night)

Overview

Vorngard is only twenty years old, the newest city of the region and the southernmost stronghold of Varnor. The "city" is really more of a fortified frontier town, wild and lawless but for the decrees of Jarl Osgerd and the whims his enforcers, the *Jarlsmen*.



The streets are winding, muddy paths rutted by carts and hooves, flanked by wooden buildings with pitched roofs. Architectural motifs of dragons, the sea and shield heraldry dominate. There is a distinct lack of stone or brick dwellings. The temperature in Vorngard is cool, often with a crisp wind blowing from the north. Sanitation is poor and an unpleasant stench tends to permeate anytime the wind stops blowing (rarely). The city is primarily a staging point for Varnori raiders heading south, but with each passing year, greater numbers of northerners turn to trade and farming as a way of life.

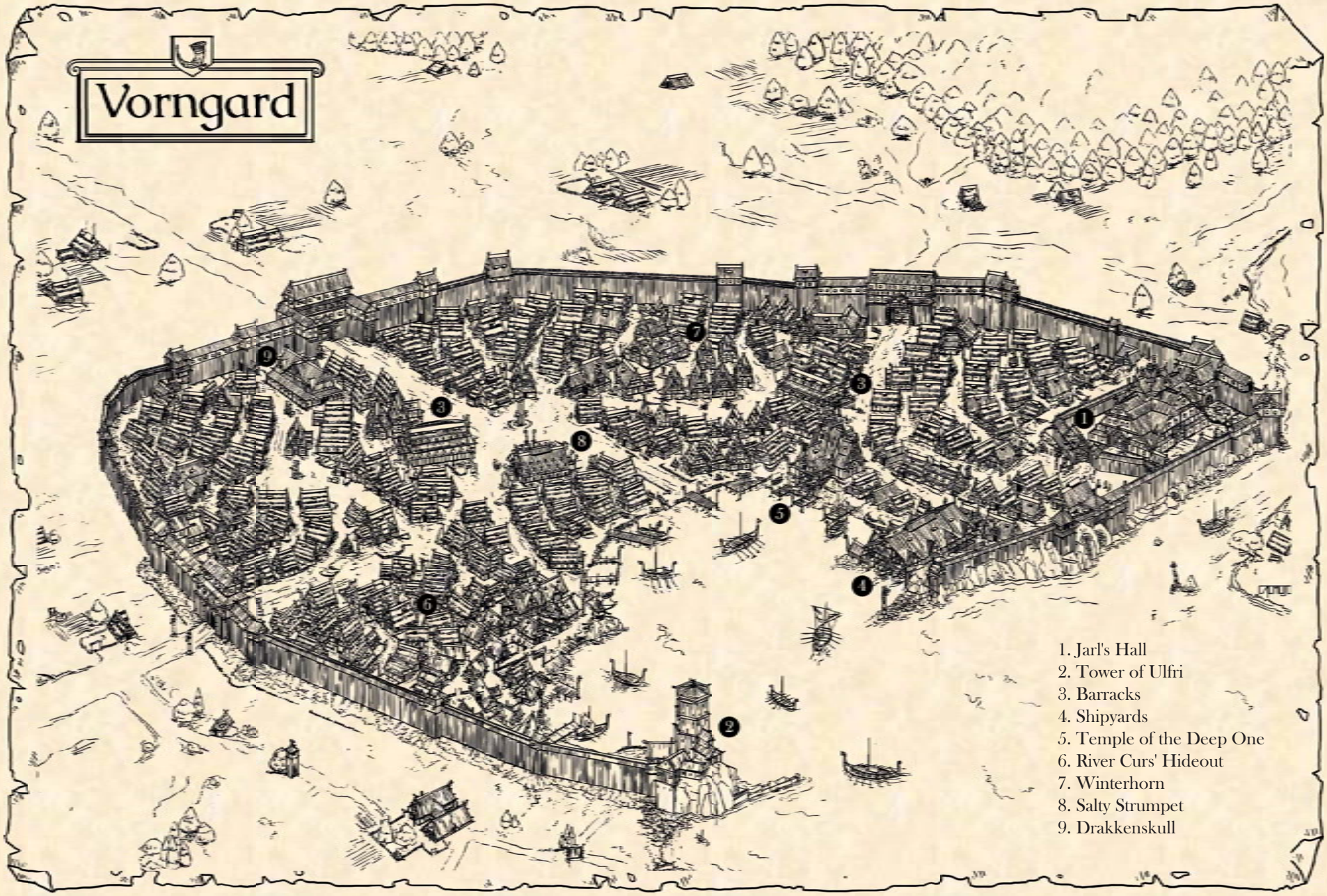
Vorngard has a reputation for producing fine ships, skilled crew and fearless, 6½ ft mercenaries. Whilst the city boasts shrines to minor river and lake spirits, there is but one Temple, tended to by priests of the Deep One.

Factions & NPCs

- *Jarl Osgerd (Barb 8)*
  Vorngard's appointed leader is a 7 foot, blonde headed behemoth whose word is law. Any challenge to Osgerd's authority is always by way of deadly duel, with no real contenders in recent years. Osgerd's main motivation is enriching himself, by trade, raid or any other means, to impress the reigning Council of Varnor. The Jarl encourages citizens to sort out their own troubles, promoting a brutal "might makes right" culture.

- *Rune Seer Ulfri (Magic User 6)*
  The only known magic user in Vorngard, the elderly Rune Seer has long silver hair and speaks in whispers. Ulfri believes the *Deep One* communicates its wishes through the runes, and that Northgate must be destroyed to placate it. If Osgerd will not take steps to carry out the Deep One's wishes, Ulfri will act to install a more congruent leader.

- *Jarlsmen*
  The jarlsmen are the town "guard", commonly armed with mail, sturdy oak batons and black cloaks with the Jarl's boar icon. Handpicked by Osgerd to keep the "peace", their primary duty is to curtail openly rampant bloodshed and


Vorngard
1. Jarl's Hall
2. Tower of Ulfri
3. Barracks
4. Shipyards
5. Temple of the Deep One
6. River Curs' Hideout
7. Winterhorn
8. Salty Strumpet
9. Drakkenskull

crime. The jarlsmen have a high degree of autonomy, acting as judge, jury and executioner as it pleases them.

Extremely grave crimes, or those involving highborn, must be brought before Osgerd for his judgment. *Yjordak*, (Ranger 5, bald, booming voice) is the captain, widely feared and loathed, taking great delight in dishing out punishments.

- *Vorngard Raiders*
  Numerous Varnori raiders prowl the *Siltwater*, *Lake Argos* and their many inlets, each with their own Drar (captain) and agenda. *Magnar Skorncleaver (Fighter 7,* blonde braided beard, missing his left ear) and his longship *Gragas* are the most feared and successful raiders of the current age. They launch from a hidden cove on the eastern shores of the Great Lake, docking in Vorngard from time to time to replace lost crew.

- *Herders & Growers Common*
  Over the last decade, increasing numbers of Varnori have embraced animal and crop farming, copying successful Midlander techniques. *Rogarov* (older looking than his years, scarred nose), head of the *Herders & Growers Common*, wants more stability and less lawlessness in the region, to foster closer trade relations with the lake cities.

- *River Curs*
  Many thieves operate in Vorngard, but the best known guild are the *River Curs*, operating from safehouses and nearby inlets. The curs are tight knit, fearless, and quick to react to threats or opportunities. Perhaps surprisingly, the Guildmaster is a Midlander: *Becca* (Rogue 5, slim, brunette ponytail, boot blades, poisoner's ring).

Taverns & Inns

- *Winterhorn*
  Triple storey, wooden. Small rooms with cheap food and ale. The bar wenches are invariably red haired, buxom, and excellent pick pockets, which the patrons *almost* consider tips. Raucous sea shanties at some point in the night are a certainty. A gigantic, bronze sentry horn hangs by the door. The proprietor is *Svandos*, broad with a long, light brown moustache, a hatchet ever by his side.

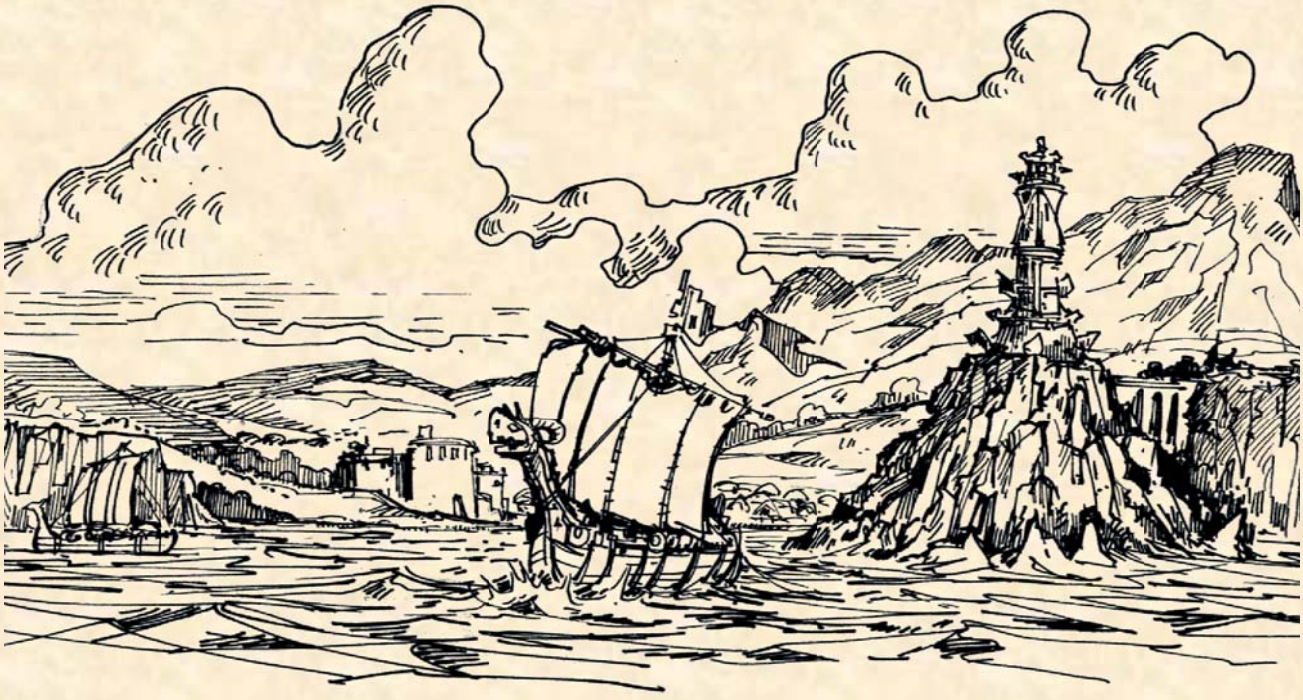
- *The Salty Strumpet*
  Triple storey, wooden. Large rooms with standard food and expensive ale. The chairs here are luxuriously padded. On the bar is a long deceased, *probably* female Varnori head preserved in salty brine. The proprietor is *Yinvild*; female, athletic, blonde with intricate tattoos down both arms, and a toothy grin.

- *Drakkenskull*
  Double storey, wooden. Standard rooms with expensive food and expensive wine. Quality locks on the doors and barred windows. A yellowed, wooden effigy of a dragon's skull stands in one corner. The proprietor is *Bjern*, medium build, 50's with silver flecked hair, missing one hand (hooked) and one leg (peg leg). Loves to talk about how he lost his limbs (the story changes every time).

Chance Encounters

1d20	VORNGARD ENCOUNTERS
1	2d4 raiders brawling over a wooden chest of stolen booty.
2	A con woman by the name of *Doska* is inviting marks to gamble on a cups and balls game. She is highly skilled in sleight of hand.
3	A gaggle of ducks, chickens or other fowl scatter across the street, causing havoc. There is a 50% chance a pick pocket takes advantage of the diversion.
4	*The Screaming Goat* tavern is well known for its exciting bar fights, and today is no exception. 5d6 drunken brawlers have spilled out onto the street, spreading fists, feet and headbutts like wildfire.
5	At a very inopportune moment, a chamber pot is emptied from the second story of a boarding house. One PC must make a Dex check or be doused in human excreta.
6	A herd of cows gets spooked by a terrific thunderclap and is about to stampede.
7	A young woman yells "Fire!", pointing frantically at a nearby building. Billowing smoke is beginning to issue from the ground floor and cries are heard from the upper window. The nearest well has been drained for repair (next is several blocks distant).
8	3d6 *Jarlsmen* (black cloaks marked with boar sigils) are "patrolling" here. They are disinterested in actual crime, but will attempt to levy a "visitor's tax" on any wealthy looking foreigners.
9	3d6 starving rats skitter from a dark alley, attempting to bite chunks out of a busking street kid by the name of *Yarri*, just 30 ft distant from the PCs. Yarri has a great knowledge of Vorngard's back alleys and safe houses.
10	A lone bard (*Rymek*) is being accosted by a 3d6 ruffians, who are branding him with cabbage, mud or similar.
11	2d6 priests of the *Deep One* are moving slowly and purposefully down the street, their dark green robes dragging in the mud. They invite donations to the temple from everyone they pass. Not a soul refuses, Varnori or foreigner alike.
12	3d6 *River Curs* attempt to rob the party, attacking from the rooftops. Any jarlsmen present either don't care, or have been bought off and look the other way.
13	*Stenn*, a hopeless drunkard, is stumbling down the street towards the party, waving them over to him in an urgent manner.

14	An old crone, *Madame Eshorri*, is reading runes. She is a genuine soothsayer and channels the fates. A reading has an even chance of either increasing or decreasing the PC's current *Luck* by 1 point.
15	A pile of dead, plague ridden bodies are stacked in a side alley, covered in sheets. One body has rolled off the pile, an ornate bracer (1d4 x 50 gp) still clasped to its arm.
16	A young street mutt with a scarred snout and one eye takes a liking to one of the travellers, and begins following him or her around. The dog is actually a canny and ferocious fighter. If befriended, the dog will fight fearlessly to protect his bipedal pack mates (advantage on morale checks).
17	A fog (50% light, 50% heavy) rolls in off the *Siltwater* docks or *Wistwood*. There is a 70% chance of a lone *Will o' Wisp* accompanying it.
18	2d6 *Jarlsmen* are standing over a prone middle aged merchant, *Frith*, in an alley, her bodyguard dead. Upon seeing the party, she calls out for help.
19	A falconer, *Tjerka*, is selling an assortment of hunting birds.
20	*Rune Seer Ulfri* and 3d6+10 of the most capable *Jarlsmen* (Fighter/Barb 2-4) are slowly making their way down the street. Onlookers either withdraw immediately or are thrust aside by Ulfri's burly retinue.



GEOGRAPHY

The Midlands map, such as it is, must be taken with a grain of salt. It reflects what most consider a rough lay of the land, patched together from the compiled works of long dead cartographers. The map is not to scale and representative only (for example, the city icons and mountain heights are greatly exaggerated).

Furthermore, the map is largely incomplete. Some cities and major terrain features are marked, but lesser topography (small hills, woods, rivers, inlets, etc) are often absent. Similarly, the location of fortified outposts, skorn encampments, barbarian villages, lost ruins, and anything else the GM thinks might be interesting are at the referee's convenience. GMs are encouraged, and expected, to add to the map and customise it. Every Midlands setting will be different, because every GM will make their own changes and additions.

Lastly, it should be noted that whilst the region has similarities to Earth, there are important environmental differences. The planet and its sun are much smaller, with narrower and more intense climate zones, forming bands of distinctive meteorology despite (comparatively) close proximity. By way of example, the humidity of the equator creeps up into Melek and the Suurat Jungle, yet the Argos basin enjoys moderate climes, and to the north, beyond the far reaches of the Ironhulls, the White Drifts are scattered with snow.

Fauna

With respect to animal life across the realm, deer, boar and wolves are common, as are a wide variety of birds and insects. Small game such as a rabbits and hares are plentiful. Naturally, some regions have signature wildlife particular to their conditions, eg: wild horses and bison roam the Great Plains, giant crocodiles lurk in the Trackless Moors, and sabre tooth tigers stalk the shadows of the Suurat Jungle.

Argos Plateau

This towering plateau overlooks Lake Argos from the east, and is dominated by several large thuel clans; chief among them the *Ravenborn, Three Storms*, *Moon Elk* and *Yellow Tusks*. The clans fight incessantly over rich grasslands and primordial oak forests, with the defeated exiled to windswept tracts of rocky badlands. Not unexpectedly, the prevailing tribes change from time to time, as alliances shift and great war chiefs die. Unlike their brethren in the great plains, the plateau barbarians do not possess horses, instead fighting on foot with axe, spear and bow.

Reaching the higher plateaus is no easy climb, the mountainside terrain rugged, winding and treacherous. Giant eagles hunt from high eyries, preying on the foolish, and skorn raiders from the Ulgoth foothills prowl the lowlands.

Forest of Drelnor

Drelnor Forest is the elder woodland of the Midlands, a prodigious mix of gigantic oak, yew and willow trees, its enormous canopy thick and lustrous with age. The occasional beam of sunlight stretches to the overgrown floor, but for the most part, the trees and nettled undergrowth are dim and shrouded in half-light. The air here is cool, loud with insect calls and strong with the scent of mouldering leaves.

The first forest is no place for the unarmed or ill prepared. Even in the outermost fringes, hostile skorn and thuels are common, not to mention beasts such as dire wolves, owlbears and giant spiders. Deeper within, where the trees grow wider than houses, the relics of dead civilizations might be found: imposing statues, puzzling obelisks and crumbling cities.

Great Plains

West of Port Brax and the Wistwood are the Great Plains, divided into High and Low by the *Rock of Gorzat*.

The plains are dominated by verdant grasses that grow up to four feet high. The borderlands of Port Brax are farmed and the outskirts patrolled, but beyond this rudimentary taming, the rolling expanse runs unchecked. Trees are uncommon and sparsely spaced, with occasional groves of oaks and willows. In some regions, thorny shrubs have taken hold, overwhelming other plant life.

Xenophobic thuel clans such as the *Skull Drinkers*, *Burnt Ones* and *Half Crows* ride the plains, taking advantage of their mobility to avoid the skorn horde that controls the region. Animal life is abundant, including horses, bison and the vicious western panther. Many birds of prey, including giant variants, are also plentiful. A wide variety of small game live and hide here.

Unfortunate travellers might encounter more monstrous foes, including the last of the territorial centaurs, burrowing bulettes and belligerent ogre tribes. Outsiders are not welcome here, and civilized men keep to the eastern fringes under heavy escort.

Ironhull Mountains

The *Ironhull Mountains* mark the northern border of the Midlands; a majestic band of immense, steep walled peaks surrounded by fog ridden foothills. To the northeast are the snow covered fields of the *White Drifts*, and northwest the scattered supply posts of the Varnori, stretching all the way to the *Frozen Coast*.

The mountains are made of basalt and granite, risen from primeval volcanoes that have since lain dormant for millennia. At lower altitudes, conifers such as juniper, cedar and redwoods dominate, gradually thinning until one reaches the tree line. Past this point only brush and shrubs remain, until the highest ranges covered in naught but snow.

In the mountains proper, there is only one human settlement of note; the mountain fortress of *Dol-Karok*. Nestled in the mid ranges, its adamantine gates bar entry to those her decadent rulers deem undesirable.

Crossing the mountains proper is a hazardous and often deadly task even for the well prepared. The lower ranges are skorn hunting grounds, the higher peaks oxygen poor and magnets for foul weather, lorded over by feuding giant kin. Perhaps the "safest" means of crossing the Ironhulls is via the foothills of Vorngard (whilst not known for their hospitality, at least the raiders won't eat you). Tales also suggest the Lost Roads offer underground passage to the White Drifts, but if that be so, no human has made the journey in millennia.

Lake Argos

At 220 miles east to west, and 100 miles north to south, Lake Argos is for all practical purposes an inland sea, with depths greater than 1,000 ft. Formed by tectonic rifts, the freshwater basin is fed by hundreds of inlets from the Ironhulls, Ulgoth Foothills and Great Plains, as well as the mighty Fennorn and Siltwater rivers. Fish such as sturgeon, perch and pike are in large supply and form an important part of the Midlanders' diets.

Facing west, the waters are largely indistinguishable from a coastal ocean; waves stretch to the horizon, strong winds gust at shifting headings, and sea birds wheel overhead. Facing north or east, the Ironhull ranges or Ulgoth foothills loom large. The lack of salt is noticeable to those familiar with true oceans; the air smells fresher and swimming is easier on the eyes.

Morning fog is common, obscuring the cities until cleared by morning sun or breeze. When the weather turns dangerous, blustery squalls and

large waves threaten to capsize small vessels or thrust larger ships onto treacherous reefs. Once every decade, a great storm blows through with hurricane winds and fifteen metre waves, forcing vessels to harbour or risk sunken graves.

The Great Lake serves as the main trading hub for the Midlands, but voyages are not without peril. Maze like reefs are dangerous to even veteran crew in morning mist or heavy rain, and Argosan Stranglers (see *Bestiary*) are a plague on all sailors. Pirates from the eastern coves and Varnori raiders are also common, picking off lone boats or making co-ordinated attacks on larger convoys. No sensible captain travels unarmed or unescorted; the risk of attack is simply too great.

The north eastern coast allows access to the foothills of the Ironhulls, and the gruelling trek to Dol-Karok. Whether the lake is closed on its eastern coast or extends into a river, valley or other passage is for the GM to determine. By default, the eastern coast divides up into snaking inlets, perfect for hidden pirate coves, before becoming land locked.

Siltwater

The Siltwater is approximately 20 miles by 15 miles of freshwater catchment, fed by underground springs, northern inlets and run off from the Sunstone and Ironhull ranges. With depths up to 650 ft, the southern Siltwater feeds excess water into Lake Argos. The lake's name comes from its slight mineral tang, and the fine sediment that deposits on its shores.

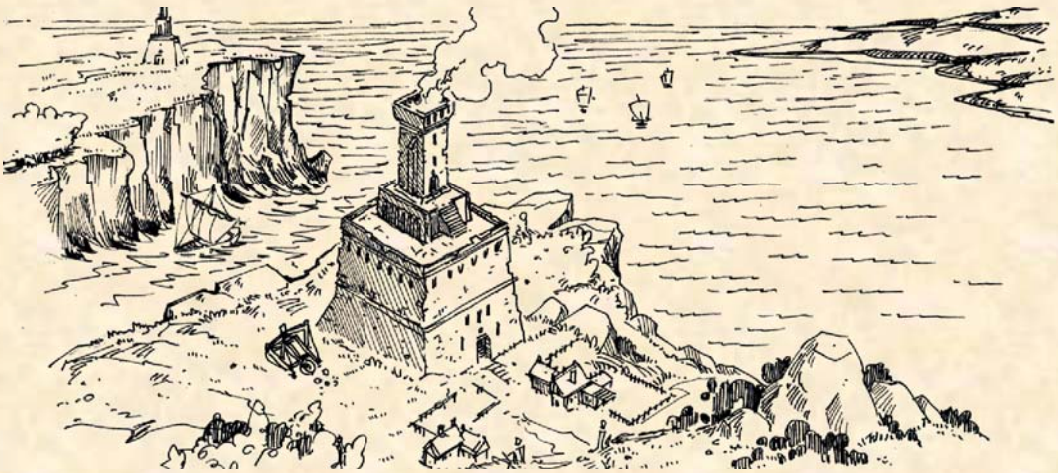
Vorngard controls the Siltwater and all trade that occurs along her banks. The northerner's longboats are crafted here before sailing Lake Argos, the Fennorn River, and other inlets at the GM's discretion.

In addition to the raiders themselves, marine hazards similar to Lake Argos threaten vessels, including stranglers, sea serpents and poisonous spine fish. Most terrifying of all however is the tentacled colossus known as *Jarl's Bane* (see *Bestiary*): a 70 ft giant squid that rises to wreak havoc from time to time. Legend suggests the monster is the last guardian of a sunken city, drowned before the dawn of men.

Spine Of Ulgoth

Rising tall against the backdrop of the Suurat Jungle is the striking mountain formation known as the Spine of Ulgoth. Made of basalt and obsidian, the severe peaks stab at the sky like the spines on the back of some vast behemoth.

No men live upon the Spine or within its immediate surrounds; the area is infested with skorn and their catacombs riddle the mountains



from east to west. Just how many halfmen dwell in the interior cannot be known, but no human that descends ever returns.

Myth suggests the Spine formed when the first volcanoes erupted, shaping the Argos basin and imprisoning a primordial god in cataclysmic lava flows. The skorn believe that their murderous deity, Ulgoth, slumbers in the depths of the under mountain, waiting for the prophesised *Tor Vahkrut* (Last Feasting).

Sunstone Ranges

The north western mountains known as the Sunstone Ranges are a genuine mystery. Some say a human city was lost there early in the current age, but if so, no surviving records reveal its location or even name. Indeed, some scholars believe that skorn, thuel and giant-kin also abandoned the area at this time, spreading instead to the Wistwood, Ironhulls and Great Plains. Whatever the truth, no civilized men have ventured into the Sunstones for generations.

Suurat Jungle

South of the Spine of Ulgoth, and north of equatorial Nydissia, lies the tangled wilds of the Suurat Jungle.

This gigantic region of dense vegetation includes towering kapok and ficus trees, strangler figs, flowery aroids and thick, choking liana vines, all competing atop a tangled jungle floor. In fact, there are more species of plants and animals in the primeval jungle than any other location in the Midlands.

In the absence of recent animal or humanoid trails, pathfinding is taxing and requires a cutting blade to make reasonable progress. The jungle is humid but generally well lit, the tree tops only partially shielding against sun and frequent rain.

The further south a traveller ventures, the more humid the air becomes, passing through the subtropics to northern Nydissia. Parasites such as mosquitoes, leeches and vampire bats are common, many of which carry *Yellow Drool, Foam Fever, Monkey Rot* and other debilitating diseases.

In the north eastern corner looms Mount Rokan, a dormant but not yet extinct volcano. She last erupted 900 years earlier, ushering the Midlands into the current Age. Every now and then the great mountain still shudders, as if stirring in deep sleep.

Animal life is a cornucopia, with many species of birds, small mammals, man eating monkeys, apes and reptiles, including giant serpents and scorpions. Jaguars, tigers and their sabre tooth cousins prowl here, but even these are not the apex predators of this prehistoric wilderness.

Rumours speak of half human, half serpent folk hiding in the deepest jungle, the last of the cold blooded Scaled Ones. Born of a steamier, more tropical age, some say the serpentmen were forced into exile by the cooling of the planet and the “warmblood plague”.

Trackless Moors

South of Crow’s Keep and north of Nydissia’s Melek lie the Trackless Moors. This immense region of fog addled wetlands is fed by run off from the Ulgoth Foothills, the Spine and groundwater flows from Lake Argos. Heather, bracken and crowberry cover most of the territory, interspersed with pockets of forested willow, birch, bald cypress and mangrove trees. Over the centuries, a thick layer of peat has built up, enabling bogs and fens to form. Fungi of a wide range of toxicity can be found throughout.

With respect to fauna, deer, otters and hare are common, as are wolves in the drier regions. Serpents and crocodiles are numerous, including terrifying man eaters up to 20 ft long. Skorn and thuels tend to prefer the dry tracts, but small

nomadic clans (particularly outcasts) are not unheard of in the watery byways.

Parasites such as mosquitoes and leeches infest the swamplands, and hapless explorers might face their giant sized cousins. Of all the fen's denizens however, none are more terrifying than the moor trolls. Hideous 10 ft humanoids with elongated arms and crusty, noduled skin, these cruel carnivores sometimes hibernate in the dark pools until soft fleshed humanoids rouse them.

White Drifts

Beyond the northernmost foothills of the Ironhulls is the edge of the White Drifts. The climate here is wintry and unforgiving; the further north one travels the more persistent the snow and ice become, until frosty climes stretch as far as the eye can see.

Veering northwest leads to the *Frozen Coast* and the *Boreal Sea,* casting off point to Varnor, the homeland of the Jarls. Small supply outposts dot the landscape, which the northerners use to navigate south. To the northeast the altitude rises, cruel winds bend the trees and ghostly lights illuminate the night sky. Little survives in this blasted environment, certainly no men reside here.

The few records that provide an inkling into the artic wastes suggest miles of elevated, featureless plateaus, pockmarked with deadly crevasses and icebound ruins. The Frost Giants once ruled the drifts, evidenced by their ruins, and perhaps some small clans still linger. But beyond this, precious little is known. Some suggest the first men of Argosa descended from the high ice, but if that be so, where did the they come from, and what did they leave behind?

Wistwood

Wistwood is one of the colder and more austere forests of the continent, a mix of grand pine, fir and cedar trees. Morning mist is common, usually lifting with the rising sun and lakeside breezes. Within the trees, sunlight is prevalent, providing good visibility once the haze disperses.

Such amiable surrounds however are dangerously misleading. Any trails to be found are not the work of civilized men, but that of hostile thuels and warring, bloodthirsty skorn. In the outer trees, dire wolves, bears and territorial boars are common, whilst the deeper woods conceal ettins, giant slugs and the cursed grotesques known as urgot. Like all outlands, lost ruins might be found here, untouched by the half men and barbarian tribes that shun them as forbidden.

PLAYER OPTIONS

Outlined below are some new options for player character creation, including class gear packs, Midlands party bonds, and the Monk, Ranger and Artificer classes for LFG. Players should check with their GM whether these options are permitted; the artificer in particular well and truly tests the boundaries of verisimilitude and may not suit every campaign.

Gear Packs

For convenience, class based gear packs are provided below to speed character creation. Each PC also receives (i) one melee weapon, (ii) one armour, (iii) one shield (if available to that class), and (iv) 1d6 gp left over.

Note that gear packs are more generous than standard starting gold. Gear packs might also be useful for improvised NPC Adventurers or loot (choose the appropriate class pack, or roll 1d8).

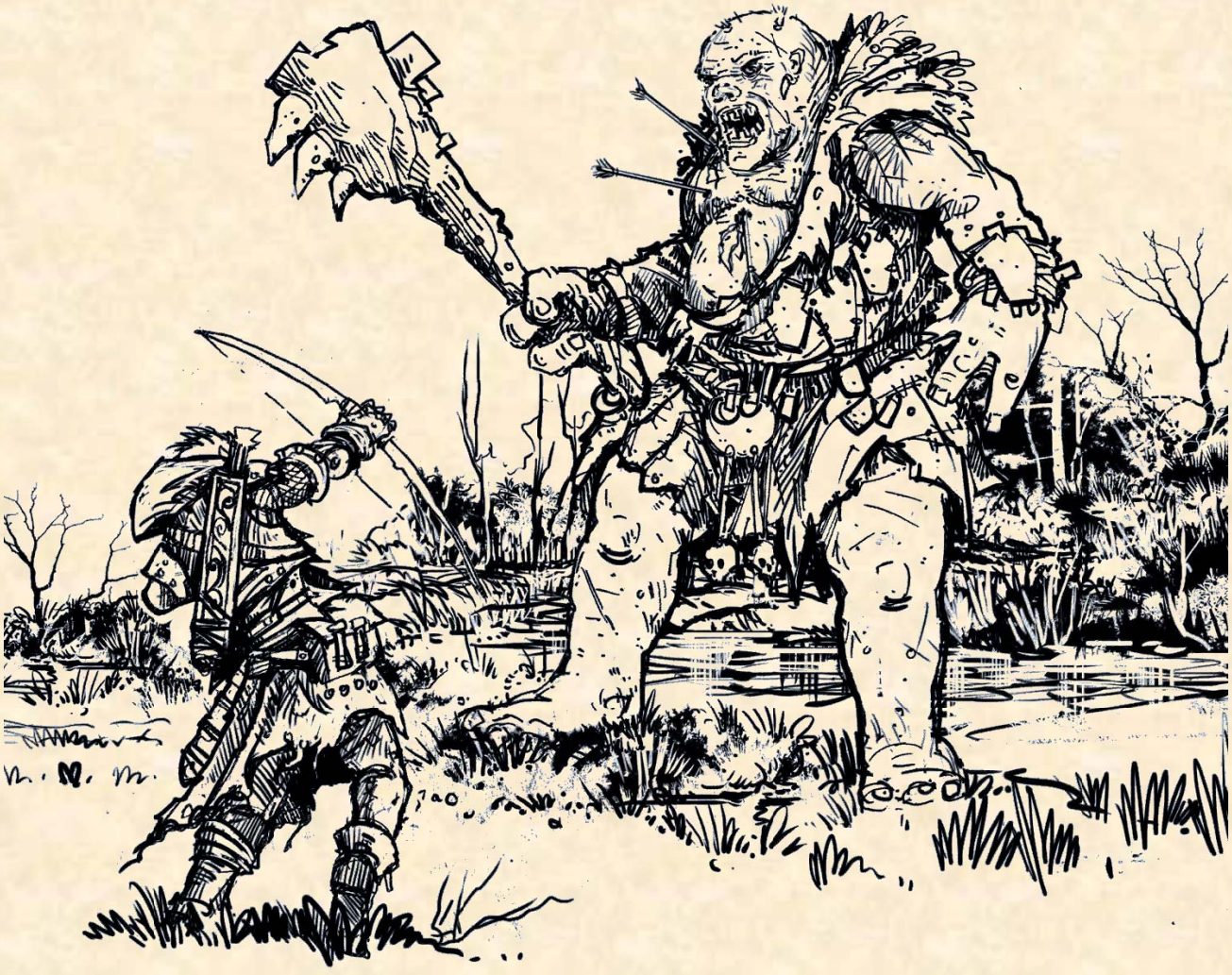
Gear Packs	
(1) Artificer	Backpack, coin pouch, bedroll, rations (1 week), waterskin, tinderbox, lantern & 1d4 oil flasks, 1d2 fire pots, 10 ft chain, 10 ft pole (in three sections, slots together), spare tinker parts.
(2) Barbarian	Backpack, coin pouch, bedroll, rations (1d6 days), waterskin, tinderbox, 1d6 torches, totem object, anti-toxin herbs (1d2 doses), spear or short bow & 10 arrows.
(3) Bard	Backpack, coin pouch, bedroll, rations (1 week), waterskin, 1d6 torches, tinderbox, instrument (if desired), a few pages of parchment, quill & ink, jewellery (50 gp), *Ghoulsheen* poison (1 dose).
(4) Fighter	Backpack, coin pouch, bedroll, rations (1 week), waterskin, 1d6 torches, tinderbox, climbing gear, 1d6 iron spikes, 50 ft hemp rope, whetstone, secondary weapon.
(5) Magic User	Backpack, coin pouch, bedroll, rations (1 week), waterskin, lantern with 1d4 oil flasks, tinderbox, scrolls of secret lore, acid (1 dose), 1d2 fire pots.
(6) Monk	Backpack, coin pouch, bedroll, rations (1d6 days), waterskin, 1d6 torches, tinderbox, healer's kit, 100 ft silk rope, book of teachings (or other record, eg carved sticks, tattoos, etc), sacred icon (if desired).
(7) Ranger	Backpack, coin pouch, bedroll, rations (1 week), waterskin, 1d6 torches, tinderbox, small tent, fishing gear, 50 ft hemp rope, 1d2 hunting traps, 1d2 trip wires, long/short bow and 20 arrows.
(8) Rogue	Backpack, coin pouch, bedroll, rations (1 week), waterskin, shuttered lantern & 1d3 oil flasks, tinderbox, *Fireblood* poison (1 dose), bag of caltrops, 100 ft silk rope, grappling hook, thieves' tools.

Party Bonds

For those who prefer to establish party bonds prior to commencing play (or when a new PC joins the party), a bonds table customised for the Midlands setting appears below. Roll 1d20 or select an appropriate entry. The examples provided may be used as is or leveraged for inspiration; players and GMs are encouraged to add their own options.

1d20	BOND WITH PARTY MEMBER
1	Raiders, slaves or captives aboard the notorious Varnori longship *Barator,* under the command of *Drar Sigvir*, plying the waters of *Lake Argos*.
2	Sailors, guides or guards for *Master Garcilo*, a Karok merchant who toured the lake cities.
3	Students or employees of the *Royal College of Inquiry* in *Northgate*, perhaps under the same tutor or boss.
4	Indentured/free gladiators or pit sweepers of *Melek's* dreaded *Ogorien Fighting Pits*.
5	Translators, etiquette aides or slaves for nomadic thuels of the *Great Plains,* travelling to a remote outpost to trade.
6	Lone survivors of the *Blackbrand Mercenary Company*, destroyed in a recent engagement with their bitter rivals, the *Wolfcrag Riders*.
7	Conmen, muscle or other agents working closely with *Torvir "the Vice"*, best thief in all of *Vorngard* (even if he does say so himself).
8	Ex-prisoners of *Dol-Karok*, working the mines under the whips of *House Tergoza*, or failed prospectors of the *Lost Roads*.
9	Bodyguards or other aides to *Lady Hamil* of *Crow's Keep*, a prominent widow and noble of the city, of good standing in the Royal Court.
10	Sentries, scouts or herbalists of *Melek's* borderlands in the *Trackless Moors*.
11	Mercenaries, survivors or looters of the *Argos Plateau Massacre*, when three rival barbarian tribes decimated each other over a long standing blood feud.
12	Siblings or cousins (adopted or otherwise). With a (roll 1d6): (1) evil, (ii) bankrupt, (iii) sick, (iv) missing, (5) interfering, or (6) filthy rich parent or other close relative.
13	Drinking buddies from way back, frequenting *Vorngard's* popular *Salty Strumpet* tavern. Well known by the proprietor *Yinvild*.
14	Current or ex-members of *House Vorrox's* extensive spy network (see *Dol-Karok*).
15	Previously worked for, or indebted to, the same crime boss: *Guildmaster Marakett* (of the *Red Hooks* gang, in *Port Brax*).
16	Vermin exterminators in *Melek's* or *Port Brax's* extensive sewer systems.
17	Prisoners of the *Skull Drinkers* thuel clan of the *High Plains*, before escaping together.
18	Monster hunters who dispatched the much maligned ogre twins, *Sorg & Grunkor,* who had been terrorizing a city's borderlands, remote outpost or thuel hunting grounds.

19	Partners in *Rotgut's Brewbarrel*, a failed (or otherwise disappointing) ale and spirits business. Smuggling unrelated contraband may or may not have been part of the business model.
20	Explorers, herbalists or surveyors of the *Wistwood, Drelnor Forest* or *Suurat Jungle*.



Artificer

You are an artificer, an expert alchemist and forge master, cultist of gears and black powder savant. You might be a reclusive tinker, a burly gadgeteer, a fume addled apothecary or an arrogant steamsmith.

Hammer in hand and hellfire at your belt, you travel abroad in search of inspiration, putting your unique devices to the test. Most folk brand you a menace; a heretic meddling in secret and unstable forces, destined for an early grave. And perhaps they're right. Yet no man lives forever, and all kingdoms fade; what matters is whether your next discovery will change the world.

Key Attribute: Intelligence (Min 15).

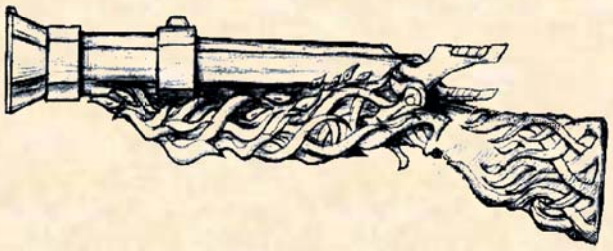
Hit Points: (1d3+3) per level (gains 1 hp/level after 9th).

Armor and Shields: Light, Medium armour.

Weapons: One handed weapons, light crossbow, sling.

Skills: Apothecary, General Lore plus 4 of the following: Acrobatics, Animal Lore, Athletics, Deception, Detection, Gather Information, Insight, Persuasion, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, Traps & Locks.

ARTIFICER ADVANCEMENT		
Level	Hit Points 1d3+3	Attack Bonus
1	1	0
2	2	1
3	3	2
4	4	2
5	5	3
6	6	4
7	7	5
8	8	5
9	9	6
10	+1 HP	7
11	+1 HP	8
12	+1 HP	8



Alchemy & Mechanica (1st level)

As an artificer, you are privy to secret lore governing the fundamental forces of the natural world, enabling you to invent unique devices and mixtures. By 1st level, you have crafted a number of inventions equal to your Int modifier. Each level thereafter you create one additional invention, and if desired, may substitute one known invention for another.

You begin an adventure with one use of this ability per level. You may regain expended uses by taking short or long rests (LFG p.56). Each time you use this ability, choose one of your inventions to apply. If an invention requires a Int check, you may use your *Reroll Pool*.

- *Black Powder Weapon:* You have created one (and only one) prototype black powder weapon: Two handed, Range 120 ft, 4d4 damage, reload as crossbow. Damage dice that roll 4 are rolled again and accumulate. On a natural 19 attack roll, a random body part is injured (roll 1d6 and consult the *Injuries & Setbacks* table). The weapon is loud, preventing stealth. On a fumbled attack, the weapon malfunctions, rendering it a club until repaired (per shield rules). Once created, you may wield the weapon like any other (does not require expending uses of *Alchemy & Mechanica).* If the weapon is lost or destroyed, you may create a replacement during downtime.

- *Breathing Mask*: You may activate an independent air supply as part of your action or in response to a gas attack. You are immune to gas attacks and may breathe underwater for 1d6 x 10 mins. In certain situations you might be able to share your air supply with others, dividing the duration by the number of users (GM discretion).

- *Chaintooth Weapon:* You have created one (and only one) prototype chainsaw melee weapon (or other mechanized melee device, eg: piston hammer, torch mace): Two handed, 2d4+1 damage, damage dice that roll 4 are rolled again and accumulate. On a natural 19 attack roll, a random body part is injured (roll 1d6 and consult the *Injuries & Setbacks* table). The weapon is loud, preventing stealth. On a fumbled attack, the weapon malfunctions, rendering it a club until repaired (per shield rules). Once created, you may wield the weapon like any other (does not require expending uses of *Alchemy & Mechanica).* If the weapon is lost or destroyed, you may create a replacement during downtime.

- *Corroding Spray*: As part of your action you may cause a single metallic object within 5 ft (eg: weapon, armour) to rust, crack or otherwise be destroyed. If the target object is carried, a *Luck* (Dex) save resists. Enchanted objects or special metals (eg silvered) are immune.

- *Flash Rig*: When hit by a melee attack from a sight based opponent, you may activate a blinding flash from a modified bracer or other worn item, imposing a 66% miss chance on the attack.

- *Fume Flask*: You may spend an action to hurl a gas device up to 90 ft, causing one of the following non-magical but spell like effects in a 10 ft radius (your choice): *Sleep, Stinking Cloud* or *Fog Cloud.* The cloud duration is 1d6 x 10 mins.

- *Hellfire Glass*: You may spend an action to hurl an explosive device up to 90 ft, blasting a 10 ft radius for 2d4 damage plus 1d4 every odd level beyond 1st (no save). Damage dice that roll 4 are rolled again and accumulate. Hellfire glass may

not be used if the artificer is within an enemy's melee reach. The device may also be set as a trap using a fuse, timer, tripwire or similar. If multiple devices are combined into a single trap, each additional glass alternates between adding 1d4 damage or increasing the blast radius by 5 ft (maximum 20 ft).

- *Ironward:* When hit by a metal based attack (sword, arrow, trap blade), you may make an Int check to activate a magnetic pulse, deflecting the attack at the last moment.

- *Thunder Gauntlet:* You may spend an action to channel a shockwave at a single target within 5 ft, hurling it 2d4 x 5 ft. A creature gains a *Luck* (Con) save to resist. Larger than man sized targets, or fixed objects, are generally immune (GM discretion). You cannot launch yourself using this ability.

- *Mutagen:* You may use one of these highly unstable and taxing concoctions as part of your action, granting a random benefit for 2d6 rounds. Only one mutagen may be active at a time. When a mutagen expires, there is a 50% chance the artificer suffers 1 point of attribute loss (determine randomly, excluding Int). Roll 1d8 to determine the effect:

    1. Str increases to 17.
    2. Dex increases to 17.
    3. Str & Dex increase to 17.
    4. Spend an action to *spit poison* at a single target up to 15 ft (*Luck* (Con) save or paralysed for 1d4 hours). Unused spit turns inert when the mutagen expires.
    5. You exude eye watering fumes, causing all creatures within 5 ft to make a *Luck* (Con) save on their turn or suffer blindness until the start of their next turn.
    6. As the *Haste* spell (self only).
    7. As the *Stoneskin* spell.
    8. Restore 1d10 hp each round on your turn (ends if reduced to zero hp).

- *Truth Serum*: If injected or ingested, this serum causes the target to blurt out honest answers to questions posed for 2d6 rounds (*Luck* (Will) save resists).

- *Xray Goggles*: For one round, you gain xray like vision in a 30 ft cone with a 10 ft base, able to penetrate 1 ft of metal, stone, earth or wood. A thin sheet of lead blocks the effect.

Generally speaking, other classes do not have the expertise (including making on the fly calibrations and dosing adjustments) or acquired tolerances to make effective use of your inventions.

Troubleshooter (2nd level)

Once per point of Int modifier per adventure, you may attempt to improvise a jury rigged device or ad hoc mixture to bypass a current obstacle, or assist the party in some other way. A successful Int check is required (*Reroll Pool* available), modified at the GM's discretion. The device is fashioned from spare parts and chemicals, scavenged or adapted from nearby materials, or borrowed from companions. The GM determines whether a proposed item is possible in the circumstances, and how long it takes to create. Some examples might include:

- A primitive but serviceable parachute,
- Tailored acid that melts through a lock in a few moments before turning inert,
- One shot flare gun or magnetic grapple,
- Fusing agent to bind two inanimate objects together, or
- Sticky gloves to climb a sheer surface.

The devices and mixtures are temporary and makeshift, lasting up to 1d4 hours at best. At the GM's option, highly improbable or complex items might also cost 1 point of *Luck*.

Unique Feature (3rd, 6th, 9th and 12th level)

Every 3rd level, devise one new ability, trait or theme for your artificer. Feel free to borrow feats, class abilities, perks and so on from other RPGs, modified to suit LFG. The advancement need not be limited to traditional artificer themes, allowing for a degree of multi-classing.

The open nature of these unique features requires some table discussion to keep things balanced and consistent with the genre of your game. Consider these advancements under constant playtesting and subject to tweaking. Tables that prefer simplicity (or feel uncomfortable creating their own abilities) might ignore this advancement altogether, or increase a single attribute by 1 point (maximum 18) instead.

New Skill (4th and 8th level)

At 4th and 8th level, you gain one new skill (the skill need not be on your class list).

Major Breakthrough (5th level)

At 5th level, you make a major breakthrough or new discovery, enabling the following benefits:

- *New Alchemy & Mechanica:* During downtime, you create a new *Alchemy & Mechanica* invention, adding it to your known abilities. Work with your GM to determine the details, subject to playtesting, etc, like a *Unique Feature*.

- *Field Repair*: Once per adventure, you may spend 1d6 x 10 mins to repair a broken or damaged item (eg shield, weapon) in the field, using your carry tools, spare parts, etc.

- *Replacement Limb:* During downtime, at a cost of at least 1,000 gp (GM determines), you may permanently replace a lost limb with a clockwork, steam and/or canned lightning powered facsimile, eliminating injury penalties. The subject permanently loses 1 Con but gains +1 AC. Secret compartments, tool and/or weapon attachments might also be possible at the GM's option. Maximum one limb per subject.

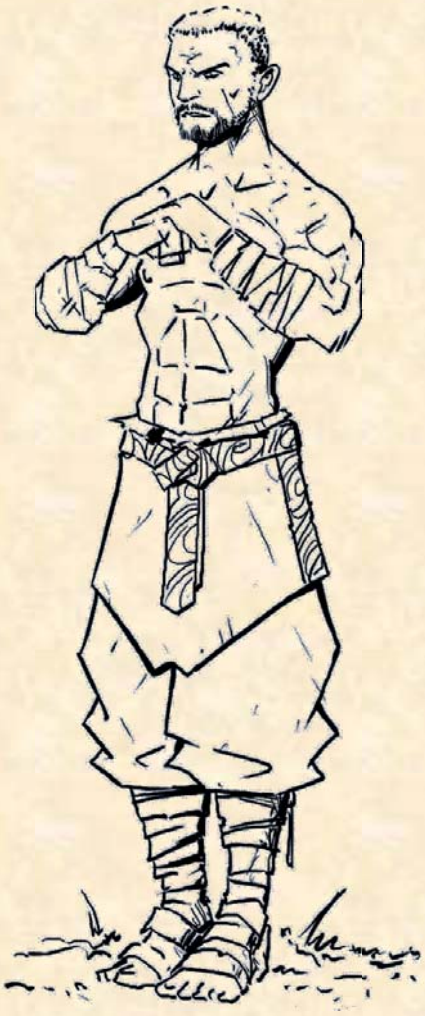
Supercharged (7th level)

At 7th level, you may reroll any or all *Alchemy & Mechanica* related damage dice, or your initial *Mutagen* roll. Each individual die to be rerolled costs one *Reroll* die.

House of Gears (10th level)

At 10th level, you may establish an artificing facility, complete with a mine, forge, workshop, laboratory and apprentices. As Master Mechanica, you set the facility's goals and objectives.

Monk



You are a monk, a pilgrim adventurer and martial artist, travelling the wilds in search of enlightenment. You might be a peacekeeping vagabond, a reclusive mystic or a vigilante drifter. Raised by your order, you lack family attachment and eschew material things, focusing instead on the perfect alignment of mind, body and spirit.

Unarmed and unarmoured, only a fool mistakes you for easy prey. A lifetime of training has forged you into a fearsome weapon; strong as the mountain and supple as the wind, you perform deeds others hold impossible. The embodiment of discipline, your warrior spirit burns brighter than the sun; ageless and unyielding.

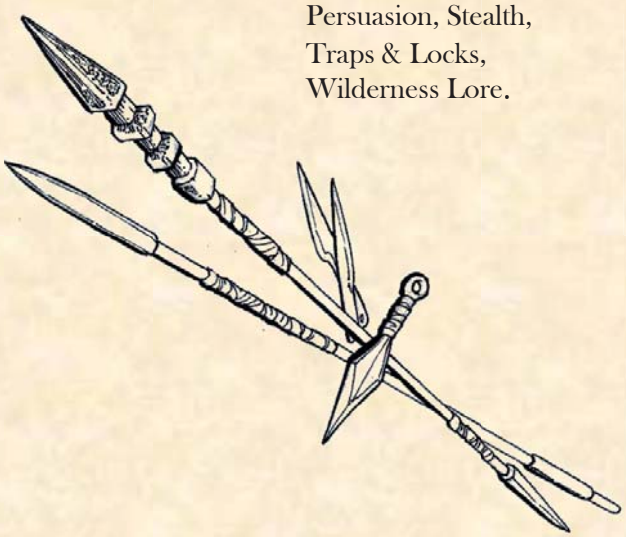
Key Attribute: Willpower

Hit Points: (1d4+4) per level (gains 2 hp/level after 9th).

Armor and Shields: None

Weapons: Spear, shortsword, dagger, staff and sling.

Skills: Acrobatics, Apothecary, Athletics, plus 4 of the following: Arcane Lore, Deception, Detection, General Lore, Insight, Persuasion, Stealth, Traps & Locks, Wilderness Lore.



MONK ADVANCEMENT		
Level	Hit Points 1d4+4	Attack Bonus
1	1	0
2	2	1
3	3	2
4	4	2
5	5	3
6	6	4
7	7	5
8	8	5
9	9	6
10	+2 HP	7
11	+2 HP	8
12	+2 HP	8

Martial Arts (1st level)

Monks are masters of unarmed combat, causing 1d6 damage (plus Str modifier) with their hands, feet and other body parts. They may make an extra attack each turn with a punch, kick, headbutt etc as if armed with two weapons (LFG p.50). This extra attack does not suffer disadvantage, unless the monk is also using a weapon two handed (LFG p.50).

Monk Techniques (1st level)

Monks employ secret and highly effective fighting techniques, passed down from master to pupil over the centuries. At 1st level, the monk knows a number of techniques equal to his Will modifier. Each level thereafter the monk learns one additional technique, and if desired, may substitute one known technique for another.

You begin an adventure with one use of this ability per level. You may regain expended uses by taking short or long rests (LFG p.56). Each time you use this ability, choose one of your known techniques to apply. You may use this ability as part of your normal action. If a technique requires a Will check, you may use your *Reroll Pool*.

- *Acrobatics (Formless Water)*: Until the start of his next turn, the monk gains a bonus equal to twice his Will modifier to AC, *Luck* (Dex) saves and defensive Dex checks. This ability may be triggered after being hit or otherwise targeted by an opponent (potentially turning a hit into a miss, etc).

- *Channel Spirit (Unchain the Dragon)*: The monk channels her spirit into her unarmed strikes, causing critical hits on natural 19-20 attack rolls, and bypassing immunity or suppressing regeneration the target has vs non-magical weapons. This effect lasts a number of rounds equal to the monk's Will modifier.

- *Deflect Projectile (Moon shields Sun):* When damaged by a non-magical ranged attack (dagger, arrow, boulder, etc), this ability may be triggered to negate it.

- *Impossible Leap (Heaven's Leap)*: The monk may jump up to 30 ft in any direction. Some GM's might require a staff, creature or terrain to launch from.

- *Mind over Matter:* The monk may delay the effect of a bodily injury (see *Injuries & Setbacks* table; LFG p.54) until the next long rest. Only one injury may be delayed at a time.

- *Moment of Clarity*: Until the start of his next turn, the monk ignores penalties due to poor visibility, and pinpoints invisible or hidden foes within 30 ft.

- *Perfection of Will* : When subject to an effect that requires a *Luck* (Will) save, the monk may make a Will check instead.

- *Purity of Self*: When subject to a disease or poison effect (magical or otherwise), the monk may make a Will check to negate it.

- *Redirect Attack (Fork the River):* When damaged by a melee attack, the monk may make a Will check to transfer the damage to another enemy instead (within reach of the monk or original attacker).

- *Stunning Strike (Iron Fist)*: On a failed *Luck* (Will) save, one target within reach loses its next action. Truly colossal creatures may be immune to this effect, at the GM's discretion.

Open Hand Versatility (2nd level)

Monks are experts in controlling and subduing their opponents. On a natural 19 unarmed attack roll, the monk may grab, trip, disarm or push the target up to 10 ft.

Unique Feature (3rd, 6th, 9th and 12th level)

Every 3rd level, devise one new ability, trait or theme for your monk. Feel free to borrow feats, class abilities, perks and so on from other RPGs, modified to suit LFG. The advancement need not be limited to traditional monk themes, allowing for a degree of multi-classing.

The open nature of these unique features requires some table discussion to keep things balanced and consistent with the genre of your game. Consider these advancements under constant playtesting and subject to tweaking. Tables that prefer simplicity (or feel uncomfortable creating their own abilities) might ignore this advancement altogether, or increase a single attribute by 1 point (maximum 18) instead.

New Skill (4th and 8th level)

At 4th and 8th level, you gain one new skill (the skill need not be on your class list).

Enlightened Warrior (5th level)

At 5th level, you unlock glimmers of enlightenment, invigorating your physical, mental and spiritual being. You gain the following benefits:

- Open Hand Versatility applies on a natural 19-20 attack roll,
- Once per adventure, after a period of meditation and contemplation, you may spend a *Reroll* die to gain a useful insight. Bearing in mind your party goals, the GM will remind you of an important piece of information, spotlight an overlooked clue or connection, or provide some other inspiration, and
- Once per adventure, during your turn you may spend a *Reroll* die to end a magical effect you are subject to (if others are subject to the same effect, it does not end for them).

Counter Attack (7th level)

At 7th level, after being damaged by an enemy, you may spend a *Reroll* die to make a single unarmed attack against that foe. This ability may not be used more than once per round.

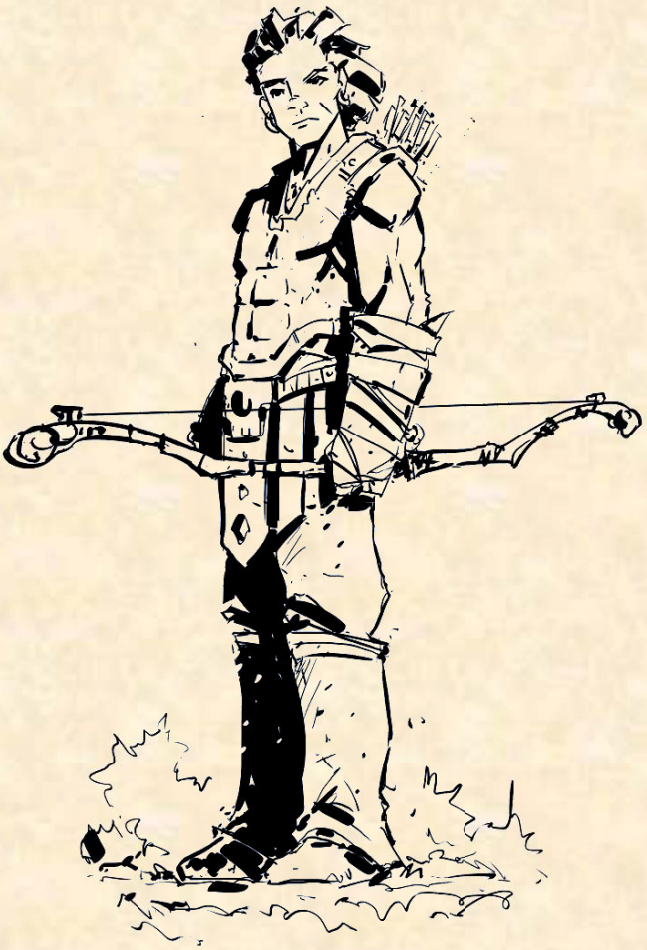
Monastery (10th level)

At 10th level, a monk may establish a monastery, complete with dedicated novices and a handful of older monks to guide them. As Grandmaster, you set your order's philosophy and objectives (which need not align with your original order).

Ranger

You are a ranger, a hunter of monsters and men; scout of the borderlands and sentinel of civilization. You might be a faultless tracker, a brave woodsmen, a grizzled beastmaster or a veteran explorer.

Bold and self reliant, your skill with the bow is rightly feared and your herbalist lore respected. Some consider you a lone wolf, but your party allies and beast friend provide all the fellowship you need. Beholden to no master, you alone decide your fate; free as a bird and boundless as the sky.



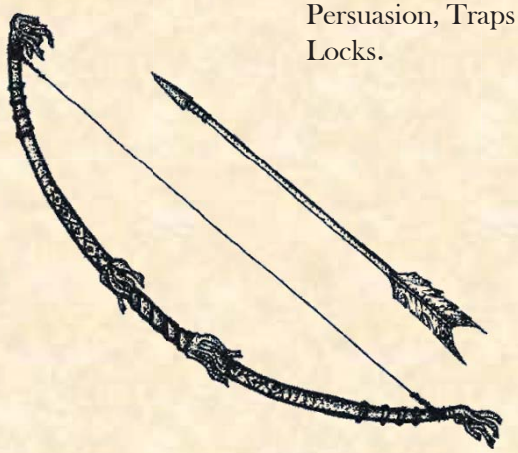
Key Attribute: Perception

Hit Points: (1d4+4) per level (gains 2 hp/level after 9th).

Armor and Shields: Light, Medium armour.

Weapons: One handed weapons, any ranged weapons except heavy crossbow

Skills: Animal Lore, Wilderness Lore, Stealth, plus 3 of the following: Acrobatics, Athletics, Apothecary Arcane Lore, Deception, Detection, General Lore, Insight, Persuasion, Traps & Locks.



RANGER ADVANCEMENT		
Level	Hit Points 1d4+4	Attack Bonus
1	1	1
2	2	1
3	3	2
4	4	2
5	5	3
6	6	4
7	7	5
8	8	5
9	9	6
10	+2 HP	7
11	+2 HP	8
12	+2 HP	9

Beast Companion (1st Level)

During downtime between adventures, you may gain a beast companion. Your companion is an especially smart, brave and loyal animal of small to moderate size (three examples are provided below). The two of you share a special bond and communicate using sounds, touch, hand gestures, body language and the like.

Your beast companion gains the following benefits:

- Maximum hit points, plus 2 hp per ranger level.
- To hit bonus, and critical hit damage, based on the ranger's level (per the Advancement Table).
- One skill that is reasonably applicable to an animal (Stealth, Athletics, etc).
- *Luck* attribute equal to the ranger's current *Luck*. The ranger's *Luck* is not reduced on a successful *Luck* save by the companion.
- Treated as a PC for the purposes of (i) morale, (ii) death, (iii) injuries, and (iv) healing.
- Shares the ranger's *Reroll Pool*.

Beast companions are the epitome of their species. Their natural aptitude, combined with the ranger's guidance, produces an animal uniquely suited to the rigours of adventuring.

Wolf, AC 11 + ranger's Perc modifier, HD 1+2, Bite 1d6+1, 19: target is knocked prone or grabbed, S15 D13 C16 I5 P14 W13 Ch7, L special, Mv 60 ft. The wolf gains advantage when tracking and on attack rolls when flanking an opponent.

Viper, AC 12 + ranger's Perc modifier, HD 1, Bite 1d3 + poison, 19: extra strong venom dose causing 2d6 damage, S10 D17 C14 I5 P13 W14 Ch6, L special, Mv 30 ft.

The viper is approximately 6 - 8 ft long, able to climb trees and squeeze into locations other beast companions cannot. It also detects body heat up to 10 ft distant (ignores visibility penalties against living targets). The viper's poison causes 1d6 damage (*Luck* (Con) save negates).

Owl, AC 12 + ranger's Perc modifier, HD 1d6 hp, Rake 1d4+1, 19: eyes bloodied; target blind until end of their next turn, S7 D16 C12 I5 P16 W15 Ch8, L special, Mv 90 ft. The owl can fly, and sees as well in darkness as in light (provided there is some light to amplify, for example moonlight). It gains the usual aerial combatant advantages (LFG p.82).

Rangercraft (1st level)

Travelling the outlands is dangerous for large, well armed caravans, let alone solitary hunters, requiring rangers to hone a variety of survival talents. At 1st level, the ranger knows a number of talents equal to his Perc modifier. Each level thereafter the ranger learns one additional talent, and if desired, may substitute one known talent for another.

You begin an adventure with one use of this ability per level. You may regain expended uses by taking short or long rests (LFG p.56). Each time you use this ability, choose one of your known talents to apply. You may use this ability as part of your normal action. If a talent requires a Perc check, you may use your *Reroll Pool*.

- *Animal Ken:* The ranger and his beast companion may briefly exchange detailed information, including matters which might not normally be imparted by an animal (GM discretion). The GM might require a Perc check for especially complex information.

- *Anti-toxin Draught*: One target within reach may apply the effects of Anti-toxin (LFG p.32). In addition, 1d4 attribute points lost due to poison are restored over 1d6 hours.

- *Instinctive Rescue:* The beast companion may perform a rescue that targets the ranger (LFG p.49). If the GM agrees a rescue is possible, the companion must make a Dex check and the ranger a Perc check. If successful the rescue occurs. No *Luck* check is required. This ability is not available if the beast companion is incapacitated.

- *Nature's Venom*: After you hit with a weapon attack, you may impose a 75% chance that the target's next turn occurs last in the initiative order. This is a poison effect.

- *Off Hand Adept*: If two weapon fighting (LFG p.50), before rolling to hit with an extra attack this turn, you may choose to negate the usual disadvantage penalty for that attack roll.

- *Cover Fire*: If the ranger or an ally is hit by a ranged attack, you may force the attacker to reroll that attack and use the lowest result. The ranger must be armed with a ranged or throwing weapon and be within range of the attacker to activate this ability.

- *Ranger's Ointment*: For 1d6+6 hours, one target within reach gains advantage on rolls to resist adverse effects inflicted by cold, heat/fire and lightning (magical or otherwise).

- *Seasoned Explorer*: The ranger gains advantage on all checks related to Wilderness Lore. Once known, this talent is always active, and does not require expending a rangercraft use.

- *Sharpshooter*: After rolling for damage with a ranged attack, the ranger may make a Perc check. If successful, the attack causes critical hit damage instead. This ability may not be used more than once per round.

- *Veteran Scout:* For 1d6 x 10 minutes, the ranger and beast companion leave no tracks, ignore armour penalties and move stealthily without slowing their normal move rate (if the GM normally requires such).

- *Slip Away*: The ranger gains the Rogue's *Skirmisher* ability until the end of her next turn.

Steady Shot (2nd level)

From 2nd level, when making ranged attacks, targets lose up to 2 points of AC bonus due to cover. Additionally, if you miss your target, you never reroll the attack against an ally in the same melee (LFG p.50).

Unique Feature (3rd, 6th, 9th and 12th level)

Every 3rd level, devise one new ability, trait or theme for your ranger. Feel free to borrow feats, class abilities, perks and so on from other RPGs, modified to suit LFG. The advancement need not be limited to traditional ranger themes, allowing for a degree of multi-classing.

The open nature of these unique features requires some table discussion to keep things balanced and consistent with the genre of your game. Consider these advancements under constant playtesting and subject to tweaking. Tables that prefer simplicity (or feel uncomfortable creating their own abilities) might ignore this advancement altogether, or increase a single attribute by 1 point (maximum 18) instead.

New Skill (4th and 8th level)

At 4th and 8th level, you gain one new skill (the skill need not be on your class list).

Master Hunter (5th level)

At 5th level, your ranged attacks cause critical hits on a natural 1d20 roll of 19-20.

In addition, your beast companion gains the following benefits:

- Hit points increase by 3 hp per ranger level (instead of 2),
- Gains the Rogue *Skirmisher* ability (using ranger level). If your companion already has the *Skirmisher* ability, it gains +1 AC instead.

Second Attack (7th level)

At 7th level, you may spend a *Reroll* die to make a second attack that turn (if two weapon fighting, you do not gain a second extra attack).

Outpost (10th level)

At 10th level, a ranger may secure an outpost as a base of operations in the wilds. Your outpost is patrolled and maintained by a rotating band of independent trackers, hunters and allied beasts. As High Ranger, you guide your band's activities, and develop an intimate knowledge of the area (including enemy settlements, threats, secret trails, etc).

BESTIARY

This chapter includes new monsters specific to the Midlands, referred to in the random encounter tables and adventure frameworks.

Custom Monsters

For GMs who wish to make their own monsters, approximate *Luck* attributes (based on hit dice) appear below. For AC and damage, simply compare with similar monsters and extrapolate. Referees are encouraged to be creatively devious with Nat 19 effects and other special abilities.

Hit Dice	Luck Attribute
Less than 1	3
1	4
2	5
3	6
4	7
5 - 6	8
7 - 8	9
9 – 10	10
11	11
12	12
13	13
14	14
15	15
16 or more	16

Aberrant Terror, Maelheim

No. Appearing: 1
Armor Class: 13
Hit Dice: 5
Attacks: Tentacle (special) and Bite (2d4)
Nat 19: special
S:18 D:12 C:16 I:4 P:15 W:15 Ch:3
Luck: 8
Move: 30 ft flying

Maelheim are *Aberrant Terrors* with the usual benefits (LFG p.98). They appear as 8 ft, floating, fleshy sacks of tentacles with a single bulging eye, enormous fanged maw, and a prehensile, three pronged tongue. On a natural 19, the terror plants its tongue on the target, draining 1 point of Con, and forcing a Will check to resist a minor madness. Their tentacle attack drains 1 level until the adventure ends (*Luck* (Will) save resists).

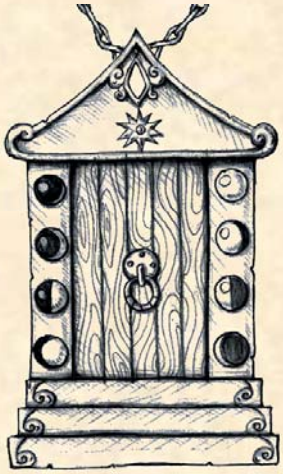
Maelheim are hunger incarnate, manifesting to gorge for a few hours before unravelling, dragged back through the Veil to their alien spawning ground. They have only animal intelligence, but instinctively discern between friend and foe, and will generally do their best to resist eating any allied cultists.

Anointed Disciple

No. Appearing: 1d3
Armor Class: 12
Hit Dice: 2
Attacks: Spiked Mace (1d8). 50% chance of 1d2 slime pots (see *Slime* entries).
Nat 19: as weapon
S:9 D:13 C:13 I:12 P:10 W:10 Ch:9
Luck: 5
Move: 30 ft

This sect of dedicated researchers, astronomers, archaeologists and holy men are Sulênocratha's (as they call him) closest advisors and trusted lieutenants on the streets of Northgate. Recognised by their cowled red robes and silver door signet rings, disciples often lead or accompany Anointed warriors in their duties, ensuring the Stargazer's edicts are carried out.

The secret rites binding a disciple to the master involve a glimpse beyond the Veil and ingesting some of Nocratha's slime (p.102). Disciples gain an unnatural hardiness plus 1 Int as a result, but also develop an incurable minor madness. These effects produce obvious changes in the disciple's personality; some for better, most for worse. As a special reward (and incentive), Nocratha has taught a handful of disciples to cast one or two 1st level spells. Over time, all disciples develop an unnatural allegiance to the Stargazer, not dissimilar to the faithfulness of a family pet.



Anointed Warrior

No. Appearing: 2d4
Armor Class: 16 (heavy chain, shield)
Hit Dice: 3+1
Attacks: Mace (1d8+1), Short Bow (1d6). 10% chance of a 1d2 slime pots (see *Slime* entries).
Nat 19: as weapon
S:14 D:10 C:14 I:10 P:10 W:10 Ch:10
Luck: 6
Move: 30 ft

Anointed warriors are the martial arm of Sulênocratha's sect, easily recognised by their red cloaks, black tunics, heavy chainmail and shoulder pauldrons with the silver door sigil. The warrior's rites of commitment involve ingesting some of the Stargazer's blood and slime, granting them unnatural hardiness and resistance to fear (advantage on fear and morale related checks), but also imposing an incurable minor madness. Like the disciples, this produces changes in the Anointed's personality; most for the worse. Over time, warriors develop the same slow and inscrutable dedication to their master as their disciple counterparts.

Argosan Strangler

No. Appearing: 2d6
Armor Class: 13
Hit Dice: 4+1
Attacks: Bite (2d6)
Nat 19: special
S:19 D:13 C:13 I:4 P:10 W:9 Ch:5
Luck: 7
Move: 30 ft or 60 ft swimming

Argosan stranglers are 9 ft, rubbery amphibians that frequent Lake Argos, the Siltwater and the northern seas. They have a humanoid upper body, with tentacle arms and an eel's tail. Their bodies are coated in mucus that turns sticky when exposed to air, allowing them to swiftly scale the sides of ships or sheer rocks for a short time.

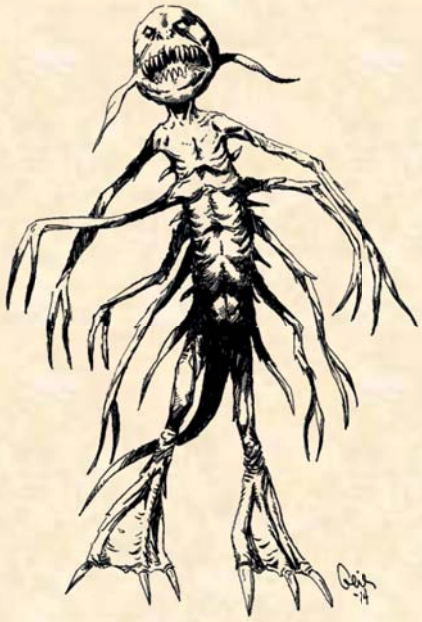
Strict carnivores, stranglers exist on a diet of marine animals, but prefer human flesh. Over the centuries they have learnt that sailing vessels carry their favourite meal and ambush them whenever possible, lurking along trade routes.

On a natural 19, the target is strangled, automatically suffering 2d6 damage each round on the monster's turn. The target may spend an action to spray sticky acid from its tentacle arms up to 30 ft (single target). A *Luck* (Dex) save is required to avoid 1d6 damage per round for 1d6 rounds. The acid is potent enough to eat through wooden hulls if given enough time and not washed away by water.

Demon, Manipede

No. Appearing: 1
Armor Class: 14
Hit Dice: 9+2
Attacks: 2d4 Paralysing Caress (1d4 + special) and Bite (1d8+1)
Nat 19: a random limb is paralysed for 1d6 months (*Luck* (Con) save resists).
S:14 D:17 C:10 I:7 P:13 W:15 Ch:6
Luck: 10
Move: 30 ft

Manipedes are 7 ft, gaunt and gangly humanoid demons with eight arms. Like all demons, they are corruption incarnate, despising all that lives, eager to slay and devour souls to prolong their manifestation in the physical world. On a hit, the target must make a *Luck* (Con) save or be paralysed for 2d6 rounds. Manipedes have the usual demon benefits (LFG p.94), and are protected by 50% Magic Resistance.



Demon, Spine

No. Appearing: 1
Armor Class: 14
Hit Dice: 7
Attacks: Claw (1d8+1) and Spine (special)
Nat 19: the target is spiked (see below).
S:19 D:12 C:15 I:10 P:12 W:13 Ch:6
Luck: 9
Move: 30 ft

Spine demons are 6 ft bundles of muscle and sinew, with flat faces and tooth like spines jutting from their limbs, skull and back. They are cruelty manifest and seek only to skewer and devour all intelligent beings they encounter. The demon's spines inflict *Unholy Rot*, causing a random limb (below the elbow or knee) to turn black and drop off over 1d6 hours (*Luck* (Con) save resists). Spine demons have the usual demon benefits (LFG p.94), and are protected by 60% *Magic Resistance.*

Eel, Giant

No. Appearing: 2d6
Armor Class: 12
Hit Dice: 3
Attacks: Bite
Nat 19: special
S:10 D:13 C:10 I:2 P:8 W:8 Ch:4
Luck: 6
Move: 30 ft swimming

These 8 ft rubbery eels have enormous teeth and hunt in schools when possible. On a 19-20 attack roll, the eel zaps the target with electricity, draining 1 point of Con.

Feathered Maw

No. Appearing: 3d6
Armor Class: 15
Hit Dice: 3+1
Attacks: Poison Limb (special) and Bite (1d8+1)
Nat 19: special
S:14 D:14 C:12 I:3 P:14 W:12 Ch:4
Luck: 6
Move: 120 ft flying

Feathered Maws are 6 ft carnivores with 14 ft wing spans, tentacle limbs, elongated necks and gaping, toothy maws. Rarely spotted, they prefer cooler climes and tend towards high mountains and snow fields.

A maw's limbs carry a sticky poison (*Luck* (Con) save or paralysed for 1d4 hours), which allows them to feed on a living victim at their leisure. On a natural 19, the maw's poison has penetrated the victim's brain, inflicting a moderate madness (*Luck* (Will) save resists).

Fey Creeper

No. Appearing: 2d4
Armor Class: 14
Hit Dice: 5
Attacks: Foul Bite (1d10 + disease)
Nat 19: special
S:19 D:10 C:14 I:7 P:10 W:15 Ch:4
Luck: 8
Move: 30 ft

Fey Creepers are 8 ft humanoid simulacrums of branch and thorn, bound together with hate and infused with the spirit of a sadistic fey. They are temporary constructs, fusing for a specific purpose before melting back into a mound of sap, twig and soil.

On a natural 19, the target is partially drawn into the creeper; crushed, choked and raked for an extra 2d4 damage each round. A trapped target may break free by winning a contested Str check on their next turn (no action).

The creeper's bite is diseased, requiring a *Luck* (Con) save to avoid *Flesh Blight* (causing black, weeping sores within 1d4 hours), halving all healing effects on the victim (magical, short rest, or otherwise). The effect lasts 1d6 months (an apothecary might be able to halve the recovery period).

Flesh Eating Vines

No. Appearing: 5d6
Armor Class: 12
Hit Dice: 1
Attacks: Crush 1d6+1 and grabbed (opposed Str check to break free).
Nat 19: the vine releases a potent paralytic spore cloud, causing 1d6 Dex loss (*Luck* (Con) save negates).
S:14 D:14 C:7 I:2 P:10 W:8 Ch:1
Luck: 4
Move: NA

Flesh eating vines are quasi sentient, spiked vines that crush and absorb animals or humanoids foolish enough to wander into their patch. The vines grow up to 20 ft, have a 15 ft reach and come in a wide array of colours and forms, multiplying by way of seed pods. The vines automatically sense moving creatures within 60 ft and will wait until their prey is within choking range before striking. The plants are instinctively fearful of fire and may recoil from anyone brandishing an open flame (Will check to resist).

Fungoid

No. Appearing: 2d4
Armor Class: 10
Hit Dice: 7
Attacks: Bite (2d6+2)
Nat 19: special
S:19 D:5 C:16 I:1 P:10 W:8 Ch:4
Luck: 9
Move 20 ft and may climb walls, ceilings etc

Fungoids are 15 ft, giant sentient toadstools with teeth and jaws, that prefer flesh to absorbing nutrients via the soil. They are able to uproot and move across the ground, walls and ceiling with sticky appendages. Fungoids grow underground or in dark, wet places, out of direct sunlight. They are slow moving, and attempt to trap or catch prey unawares. As an action, they may spew sticky strands over a single target within 10 ft, preventing them from moving away (target may spend an action to make an opposed Str check to break free). On a natural 19, the toadstool blasts

the target with toxic spores, causing 1 HD loss every 24 hours for 1d3 days. An apothecary with the right healing herbs may be able to neutralise the poison.

Jarl's Bane

No. Appearing: Unique
Armor Class: 20
Hit Dice: 20 (244 hp)
Attacks: 2d4 Tentacles (2d10+2) and Bite (4d6)
Nat 19: special
S:22 D:10 C:21 I:5 P:10 W:18 Ch:4
Luck: 16
Move: 240 ft swimming

Jarl's Bane is the colossal, 70 ft giant squid that lives in the depths of the Siltwater, south of Vorngard. Some say the behemoth guards a sunken city of the First Age; but if that be so, none have seen it, nor any of its relics.

The cephalopod emerges very rarely, less than once a year, but when it does, no ship survives the encounter. After eating its fill, the juggernaut returns to the silent depths as swiftly as it appeared.

Jarl's Bane is a *Boss Monster* with the usual benefits. On a natural 19, part of a ship is torn off/sundered, or a creature is crushed to death (*Luck* (Con) save resists, requiring a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table instead).

Golem, Bronze

No. Appearing: 1
Armor Class: 17
Hit Dice: 13
Attacks: 2 Fists (2d10)
Nat 19: the golem blasts blinding light into the target's face (*Luck* (Perc) save or blind for 2d4 rounds).
S:21 D:8 C:23 I:- P:10 W:- Ch:-
Luck: 13
Move: 30 ft

Bronze golems are 14 ft automatons that were favoured by serpentmen in the Second Age. They have 70% *Magic Resistance*, except against the *Heat Metal* spell which causes 7d8 damage (once only). If both Fist attacks hit, the target is crushed (*Luck* (Con) save to avoid rolling on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table). Bronze golems have a 10 ft reach.

When staggered, the golem flashes brilliant light in a 20 ft radius, blinding targets for 2d4 rounds (*Luck* (Perc) save resists). When reduced to zero hp, a bronze golem explodes in a rain of shrapnel, causing 5d6 damage in a 20 ft radius (*Luck* (Dex) save for half).

Hammer Snail

No. Appearing: 1d4
Armor Class: 16
Hit Dice: 5
Attacks: 5 Hammerstalks (1d4+2)
Nat 19: special
S:12 D:7 C:15 I:3 P:8 W:17 Ch:1
Luck: 6
Move: 30 ft and may climb walls, ceiling, etc

Hammer Snails are 5 ft, carnivorous gastropods with hard shells and resilient, rubbery hides. They attack foes by hammering them with their five mace like stalks, or crushing them against the floor or walls with their body. On a natural 19, the target is crushed by the creature's bulk, losing their next action (*Luck* (Con) save resists).

Hammer Snails attack the same target with all five hammer stalks until unconscious or dead before selecting another target (or tenderising the victim into a pulpy mass which the snail consumes). If struck by three or more hammer stalks in one round, the target must roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table. Truly monstrous variants up to 16 ft in length are not unknown (HD 14, damage 1d8+2).

Ooze, Speckled

No. Appearing: 1
Armor Class: 13
Hit Dice: 7
Attacks: Pseudopod (4d4 + special, may be flung up to 60 ft)
Nat 19: special
S:13 D:14 C:17 I:2 P:14 W:15 Ch:1
Luck: 9
Move: Burrow 5 ft or 30 ft (inc climb walls, ceiling, etc)

Speckled Ooze is a semi intelligent, predatory sludge, usually black or grey with white or yellow patches (the speckled effect). They are burrowing hunters that abhor sunlight, which destroys them after exposure for a few minutes. On a hit, victims suffer 1d8 damage due to painful flesh melting for the next 1d4 rounds (alcohol negates). On a natural 19, the ooze puffs out a toxic white or yellow cloud in a 15 ft radius, causing 1d3 Int or Will loss (even chance, *Luck* (Con) save resists). In times of scarcity, speckled ooze enter a dormant state, awakening when they detect the body heat of a potential meal within 60 ft. Large quantities of alcohol might force the ooze into dormancy (Will check resists).

Panther, Western

No. Appearing: 1
Armor Class: 14
Hit Dice: 6
Attacks: Bite (2d6) + 2 x Claws (1d6)
Nat 19: the victim has a random limb torn off (*Luck* (Con) save resists).
S:19 D:16 C:16 I:3 P:15 W:13 Ch:6
Luck: 8
Move: 60 ft

These enormous dark grey or black panthers are 4½ ft at the shoulder, 12 ft long, and weigh more than a Siberian tiger. They are solitary hunters except during mating season when they might be found in pairs. Infamous for their vicious nature, the man eaters employ a unique dismembering technique to toy with and disable their prey. Western panthers prefer to hunt at night, and are common in the Great Plains, where they eat horses, bison, skorn and thuels. They can climb trees strong enough to hold their weight.

Rock Grinder

No. Appearing: 2d4
Armor Class: 15
Hit Dice: 6
Attacks: 4 Claws (1d4+3)
Nat 19: special
S:19 D:10 C:16 I:3 P:11 W:12 Ch:4
Luck: 8
Move: 30 ft or 5 ft burrowing

Rock grinders are 8 ft bipeds with eye stalks, mandibles, four claws and a sturdy carapace. They have animal like intelligence, and eat rocks and minerals, especially valuable metals such as gold which they find delectable. Rock grinders burrow through earth at 5 ft per round, and through stone at 5 ft per minute. They eat as they work, their tunnels usually collapsing behind them. On a natural 19, the target's limb is broken or fractured, crushed in a claw or mandible (per *Injuries & Setbacks* table, entry 2 or 3).

Snake, Winged

No. Appearing: 3d4
Armor Class: 14
Hit Dice: 3
Attacks: Bite 1d6 + Poison
Nat 19: disarmed, and the snake flies away with the weapon.
S:10 D:17 C:10 I:3 P:13 W:9 Ch:4
Luck: 6
Move: 50 ft flying

Winged Snakes are typically 6 ft long, dark green or brown, with hard scales and leathery bat like wings that propel them through the air in a lurching motion (somewhat akin to a sinuous bat). Bad tempered and ferocious, winged snakes are quick to strike but also quick to retreat if battle fares poorly, relying on their wings to flee. Their poison causes 1 Con loss (*Luck* (Con) save resists). A winged snake may spend an action to spit concentrated venom 60 ft at a single target, causing 2d4 damage and 1d2 Con loss (*Luck* (Dex) save resists). The spit has a 30% chance of recharging at the start of the snake's turn.

Slime, Blue

No. Appearing: Special
Armor Class: 12
Hit Dice: 4+1
Attacks: Crush (2d6)
Nat 19: special
S:16 D:10 C:16 I:3 P:10 W:15 Ch:1
Luck: 7
Move: 40 ft and may climb walls, ceiling, etc

A cobalt blue variant of Nocrathta's sentient sludge (see *Purple Slime*). On a Nat 19, the target is engulfed by the slime and begins asphyxiating (see drowning rules LFG p.159), automatically suffering 2d4 damage each round on the slime's turn. The victim may spend their action to make an opposed Str check to escape. When damaged, there is a 50% chance blue slime disarms the attacker, absorbing its weapon (retrievable after the slime dies).

Slime, Purple

No. Appearing: Special
Armor Class: 11
Hit Dice: 3+1
Attacks: Pseudopod (1d6+1, may be flung up to 60 ft)
Nat 19: special
S:12 D:12 C:15 I:3 P:8 W:17 Ch:1
Luck: 6
Move: 40 ft and may climb walls, ceiling, etc

Every dawn, Nocratha (Steward of Northgate) vomits up a foul, burbling mucus of varying coloration: the secret ingredient of his unique slime pots. After some alchemical tempering, the semi-sentient slime is bottled and distributed to disciples as a weapon/tool. When released to air, the slime balloons into a 4 ft glob of corrosive sludge that will follow basic instructions from the Anointed (who have also, as part of their initiation rituals, ingested Nocratha's slime).

On a Nat 19, the target's armour (50%) or held item (50%) is corroded (per the *Injuries & Setbacks* table, entry 9 or 10). When damaged, a purple slime has a 50% chance of splitting into two slimes of half hp (no further splitting). The

slime turns inert after 3d4 rounds, crumbling into flakes. Slime pots have a maximum shelf life of 1d2 months.

Slime, Red

No. Appearing: Special
Armor Class: 13
Hit Dice: 2+1
Attacks: 2 Pseudopods (1d4+1, may be flung up to 60 ft)
Nat 19: special
S:10 D:14 C:7 I:3 P:14 W:14 Ch:1
Luck: 5
Move: 40 ft and may climb walls, ceiling, etc

A blood red variant of Nocratha's sentient sludge. On a Nat 19, the target is struck in the face and slime enters the body via the mouth, nose, ears or eyes. The victim must make a *Luck* (Con) save or suffer *Confusion* (as the spell). When staggered, there is a 50% chance red slime explodes in a 5 ft radius, causing 2d4 acid damage.

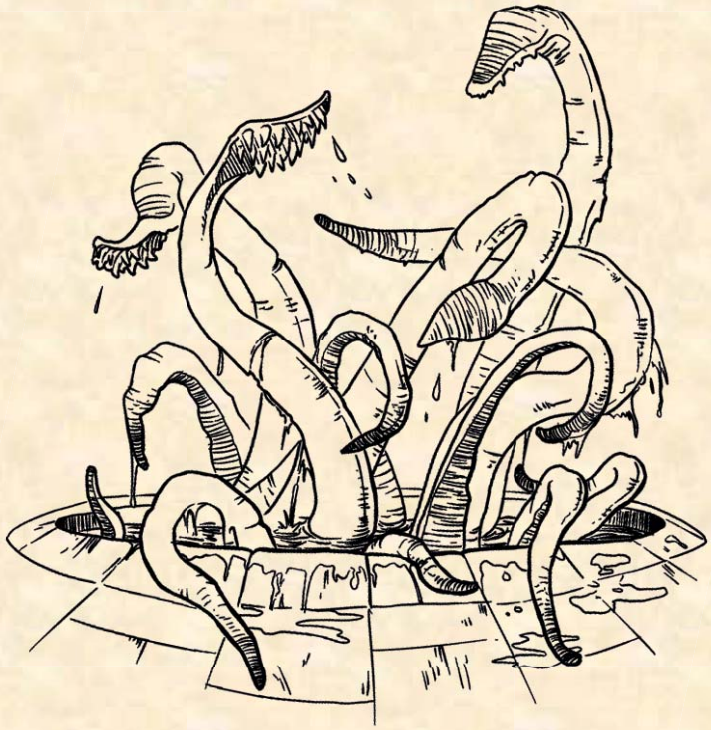
Slime, Silver

No. Appearing: Special
Armor Class: 14
Hit Dice: 6+1
Attacks: Pseudopod (2d8, may be flung up to 60 ft)
Nat 19: special
S:18 D:8 C:17 I:3 P:8 W:14 Ch:1
Luck: 8
Move: 40 ft and may climb walls, ceiling, etc

A silver sheened and highly rare variant of Nocrathta's sentient sludge. On a Nat 19, the slime merges with the target through skin and orifices, seizing control of the target's actions for 1d4 rounds (at which point the victim vomits the slime up). While the merged state persists, the slime cannot be attacked in conventional ways without also injuring the victim (slime takes half of any damage the victim suffers). If the slime attempts to maim or kill the PC (eg: by slitting its "own" throat, etc), a *Luck* (Will) save resists.

Slop Gorger

No. Appearing: 1
Armor Class: 13
Hit Dice: 9+2
Attacks: 3 Tentacles (1d8+1) and Bite (3d4)
Nat 19: a random limb is crushed, breaking bones (per *Injuries & Setbacks* table entry 2 or 3).
S:19 D:8 C:17 I:3 P:10 W:9 Ch:3
Luck: 10
Move: 40 ft or 60 ft swimming.



Slop Gorgers are 8 ft, fleshy slug like monsters, with grinding maws and a tangle of 10 ft spiked tentacles (10 ft reach). They are amphibious in nature, strong swimmers and disturbingly quick overland. Gorgers prefer feeding on refuse and carrion (which doesn't fight back), but are also partial to warm blooded creatures, especially when spawning. Gorgers are asexual and lay slimy egg sacks that release multiple baby gorgers. There is a 50% chance a gorger carries infectious disease. Elder Gorgers, of up to 16 HD, are not unknown.

Skorn

No. Appearing: 4d6 (raiding party) or 5d100 (tribe)
Armor Class: 11
Hit Dice: 2
Attacks: Club (1d6+1)
Nat 19: the target is clubbed in the head, losing its next action (*Luck* (Will) save resists).
S:15 D:10 C:13 I:7 P: 12 W:8 Ch:8
Luck: 5
Move: 30 ft

Skorn, also known as halfmen or beastmen, are heavy set, pink skinned proto-humans, often scarred and heavily sunburnt. They would be 7 ft tall but for their stooping stature, with small eyes, flat faces and rudimentary ear holes. Skorn are dull witted cannibals, more beast than man, raiding outposts and caravans from nearby wildlands. They live to eat, breed and fight, inevitably bringing them into conflict with their neighbours.

Skorn females typically birth twins or triplets, and their children grow swiftly, developing into dangerous warriors by their twelfth or thirteenth year. Devoid of empathy, the halfmen prefer to eat humans before their own elderly or young, and will hunt animals if they must. Skorn revere lycanthropes, and some tribes cultivate infection as a special reward for favoured champions. Such lycanthropy is a unique strain that infects their own kind only.

Beastmen possess primitive dark vision, able to make out rough shapes and outlines in complete darkness (disadvantage on vision checks, instead of blind). Unless infiltrating however they employ fire for light, warmth and occasional cooking. Skorn have an excellent sense of smell and instincts for danger, gaining advantage on related Perc checks. Skorn chiefs, known as *Kargs*, are the strongest and most brutal of their kind, with 5 HD. In tribes with lycanthropy, the karg is always infected.

Toad, Claw

No. Appearing: 1d8
Armor Class: 14
Hit Dice: 4+2
Attacks: Bite (1d12) and Claw (1d6)
Nat 19: special
S:19 D:12 C:17 I:3 P:10 W:14 Ch:2
Luck: 7
Move: 30 ft including up walls, ceiling, etc

Claw toads are 8 ft behemoths, fat and bulging amphibians with lumpy skin, an enormous fanged maw, and sharp claws. Their colouration runs the gamut and their croaking calls become deafening in large numbers. Claw toads may make a special tongue attack up to 15 ft, dragging the target into melee range and preventing them from moving away (Str contest resists).

On a 19+ attack roll, a claw toad swallows a humanoid target whole (against a larger opponent, it might swallow a weapon or shield instead). A swallowed target may attack the monster's guts with a small weapon such as a dagger, but suffers 3d6 crushing and acidic damage on the monster's turn. Claw toads may spend their move action to jump up to 30 ft.

Toadmen

No. Appearing: 2d4+1 (hunting party) or 8d10 (spawning cave)
Armor Class: 13
Hit Dice: 2+4
Attacks: Bite (1d8+1)
Nat 19: the toad's tongue snatches the target's weapon or shield from its grasp.
S:17 D:16 C:13 I:5 P:10 W:9 Ch:6
Luck: 5
Move: 30 ft inc up walls, ceiling, etc

Toadmen are 5 ft humanoid anurans of low intellect, often bulbous with dark green, noduled skin. Their back legs are particularly strong and muscular, allowing them to jump up to 30 ft. Toadmen have sticky, prehensile tongues that reach up to 15 ft, helping them climb or grapple foes (gaining advantage). Some variants are known to have slow acting chameleonic abilities (gaining advantage on hide checks after 1d6 minutes of matching their skin colour to the environment). Toadmen see better than humans in darkness, but are still blind in the absence of light. They keep their underwater dens lit with luminous moss, plants and algae.

Wasp, Giant

No. Appearing: 2d4
Armor Class: 14
Hit Dice: 5
Attacks: Sting (2d6)
Nat 19: the target receives a strong dose of poison, imposing disadvantage on the save, and paralysing one random limb for 1d4 days if failed.
S:14 D:14 C:9 I:2 P:13 W:13 Ch:6
Luck: 8
Move: 60 ft flying

Giant Wasps have 18 ft wingspans and tough, carapace hides not dissimilar to heavy armour. Their buzzing can be heard from afar, warning of their approach. Giant Wasps are aggressive hunters and seek to incapacitate their prey with poison before eating or implanting them with eggs. A successful Sting attack requires a *Luck* (Con) save or the target is paralysed with pain for 1d4 rounds.

Worm, Frost

No. Appearing: 2d4
Armor Class: 15
Hit Dice: 7
Attacks: Bite (2d8)
Nat 19: special
S:19 D:10 C:15 I:3 P:8 W:14 Ch:4
Luck: 9
Move: 40 ft or 5 ft burrowing

Frost Worms are armour plated, 15 ft predators with segmented jaws, found in freezing climes of ice and snow (typically the Ironhull peaks or the White Drifts). They hunt for flesh in small groups, detecting their prey through a combination of smell, tremor sense and

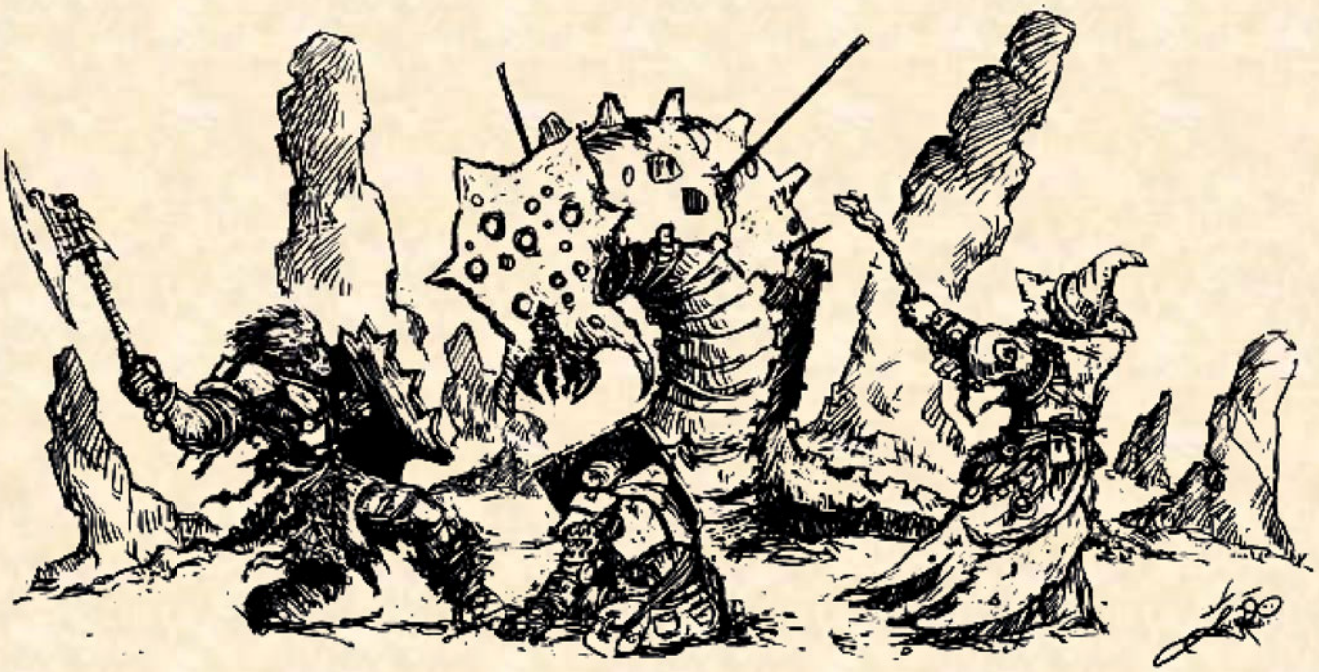
echolocation. On a natural 19-20 attack roll, the worm exhales a blood freezing fog (10 ft diameter) causing a *Slow* effect (as the spell, *Luck* (Con) save resists). In times of great scarcity, frost worms revert to a stasis like hibernation until a warm blooded creature approaches within 120 ft. Frost worms are immune to cold damage of all kinds.

Worm, Plague

No. Appearing: 1d6
Armor Class: 17
Hit Dice: 3
Attacks: Batter (2d4+1)
Nat 19: special
S:17 D:10 C:13 I:3 P:10 W:10 Ch:5
Luck: 6
Move: 30 ft or 5 ft burrowing

Plague worms are slick, 8 ft chitinous worms that burrow through rock and soil. Their diet primarily consists of smaller annelids and other creatures they happen upon. In times of scarcity, the worms fall into a dormant state, subsisting on small organisms in the earth. Plague worms are nomadic but will sometimes linger near places of food, such as the Lost Roads of Dol-Karok.

On a natural 19, the worm smears contaminated mucus on the target, infecting it with *Worm Fungus* (skin hardens and cracks painfully, causing one random limb to become unusable for 1d4 weeks (per *Injuries & Setbacks* table, entry 2 or 3). An apothecary with the right healing herbs might reduce this time by half.



GM TOOLS

The last two chapters include materials designed to assist the GM to run a "sandbox" style campaign; primarily tools to make it easier to improvise encounters and adventures.

Tables are provided for random NPCs, outpost generation, random encounters by location, region events, rival adventurers, taverns, weather, wilderness navigation, rumours and more. Fifty adventure frameworks by terrain, and some variant Initiative rules, are also provided.

Initiative Variants

For those GMs interested in trying some variant initiative rules, three further options are provided below.

#1: Turn Cards

In this initiative variant, instead of rolling dice to determine turn order, cards are drawn from a deck. Each PC has one card in the deck. Monsters are generally represented by a single card, although Boss monsters get their own. The GM might also give spell casters or other special NPCs their own cards.

Initiative is determined by drawing cards from the deck. A single card is drawn and that character (or group of monsters) acts. Once that turn is complete, a second card is drawn, revealing the next character (or group of monsters) to act, and so on, until all combatants have taken a turn. At the end of the round, the cards of all surviving combatants are reshuffled, ready to begin the next round. The effect of this variant is that no-one knows who will act next until the current turn ends and the next card is revealed.

At the GM's discretion, PCs or monsters with an initiative bonus (eg when using a shortsword granting +2 initiative) gain a second card in the deck (increasing their chances of acting earlier). The character acts when the first card is drawn (ignore the second card).

#2: Only Players Roll

In this initiative variant, each PC makes a Dex check. If the PC fails, they act after the monsters. If they succeed, they act before the monsters. On a great success, they also act before any *Boss* monsters. If two (or more) PCs fail or succeed, players work out the order between themselves, or alternatively the character with the best margin goes first. The effect of this variant is generally quicker and more predictable initiative, but Dex also becomes a more important/desirable stat.

#3 Five Finger Rule

In this variant, when the GM says it's a player's turn, that player has to the count of five to declare their PC's action & move, or they automatically take the dodge action and forfeit their movement. Delay Action is not available under this variant. The GM indicates the count by extending the fingers on one hand. The effect of this variant is faster, more spontaneous, and more dangerous combat, but may frustrate inexperienced players or those that prefer more tactical co-ordination.

Non-Player Characters

The following table presents fifty non-player characters that the GM might use on the fly, tailored to the five cultures of the Midlands.

Each NPC comes with a name, short physical description and motive for being on the street, in a tavern or shop, etc. Separate tables for improvised speech and personality quirks follow after.

d100 Roll	NPCs
1-2	*Thorzug*, male Thuel, silver nose ring, bald with heavily scarred forearms and tribal tattoos (including bear and crow icons). He's hoping to buy something.
3-4	*Lecidies*, female Nydissian, striking skin tight leathers. She wears a small bronze amulet in the shape of a skull chalice (Baal icon). Wants to sell something.
5-6	*Taris*, male Midlander, stooped with a sheepish demeanour. Is on the lookout for an opportunity to pick pockets or steal something.
7-8	*Gonzale*, male Karok, dark blue silk robes with a wide cowl protecting his albino skin. On the hunt for some information.
9-10	*Ulbrecht*, male Varnori, almost completely blind (lost his eyes to disease long ago), slow but steady with his walking staff. Rich baritone voice that he busks with for coin. Loves swapping stories with others.
11-12	*Kawri*, female Thuel, 6 ft 5 inches with a glowering stare and spiked gauntlets. Very angry about something, and wants to vent her frustration by hitting someone.
13-14	*Thaddeus*, male Nydissian, completely hairless (no eyebrows, nothing), wearing a rucksack. Wants to discuss philosophical enlightenment.
15-16	*Mercer*, male Midlander, sumo like proportions with an enormous smile. Wants to socialise and meet new people.
17-18	*Barros*, male Karok, elderly with a staff and wearing long, intricate auburn robes. Is curious about the party and would like to learn more about where they are from.
19-20	*Tyra*, female Varnori, tall and athletic with blazing red hair. Has no understanding of the concept of "personal space". Tyra is saddened by a recent loss.
21-22	*Jawmok*, male Thuel, impossibly luscious blonde hair, broken nose. Really hungry and wants to eat something. Now.
23-24	*Ismene*, female Nydissian, heavy leathers and wilderness garb with a well used sword. Is searching for something, but time is running out.
25-26	*Anjelise*, female Midlander, piercing brown eyes with a mesmerizing sashay. Bored with her usual companions, she is seeking more exciting and exotic company.
27-28	*Ursula*, female Karok, in heavy chain armour and bearing a wicked looking mace. She is a bounty hunter, and one of the adventurers resembles her mark.
29-30	*Torvald*, male Varnori, slow of wit but quick of reflexes, he is a playful wrestler and prankster. Torvald is trying to remember the quickest route to his favourite drinking haunt.

31-32	*Dromog*, male Thuel, teenager, wiry and svelte with a cheeky grin. Hoping to earn some coin running odd jobs for rich adventurers, explorers and other scobs.
33-34	*Cicero*, male Nydissian, dressed in practical garb, with a whimsical look, followed by three servants who trail at a respectable distance. Cicero is enjoying wandering new surrounds.
35-36	*Kirkwood*, male Midlander, unkempt with wild, raven coloured hair and a beard that reaches past his shoulders. Kirkwood suffers from infrequent delusions but also catches glimpses of true prophecy. He has something interesting to share with the party, if they'll listen to him.
37-38	*Sanco*, male Karok, brawny with a large hooked nose, emphasized with a copper nose ring. Sanco has heard of the party's exploits and wishes to meet one or more of them in person.
39-40	*Astrid*, female Varnori, beautiful with long blonde hair, high quality leathers and expensive boots. Astrid is a former Nydissian slave, and goes out of her way to cause trouble for southerners (especially those who think highly of themselves).
41-42	*Milesh*, female Thuel, pockmarked with a half shaven head. Milesh carries a sharp axe and a sturdy shield with a wolf head motif. She's looking for help with a problem bigger than she cares to tackle alone.
43-44	*Laurentia*, female Nydissian, wears a breastplate and carries a short spear. Laurentia's mercenary company recently disbanded after most of them perished in a skorn ambush. She is feeling down and out, and is running low on gold.
45-46	*Lyndal*, female Midlander, short and dumpy with curly locks. The party (or someone associated with the party) has caused Lyndal trouble or loss in the past. She's tracked them down to seek recompense by coin or favour, or she will take her complaint to the justicar.
47-48	*Arias*, female Karok, piercing eyes under a willowy hat laced with flowers. Arias likes the look of one of the party, and wants to find out who they are. She is from a wealthy House, and could open doors to certain noble circles if befriended.
49-50	*Igvaar*, male Varnori, weathered oil skins and worn boots, accompanied by a huge white wolf hound. Igvaar is a loner at heart, preferring the company of animals to people. He is hoping to trade some goods.
51-52	*Kraggor*, male Thuel, 6 ft 8 inches, impressive musculature, once knocked out a horse with his fist. Wears a chainmail shoulder/arm guard and not much else. Kraggor is looking for a fence to sell some items he recently "found".
53-54	*Antigonus*, male Nydissian, ex-soldier, alcoholic and genuine vigilante fed up with bureaucratic corruption. Known in some alleyways for dispensing quick and deadly justice. Unfortunately there's precious little coin in righteousness; he's looking for work.
55-56	*Welton*, male Midlander, heavily tanned farmer with calloused hands and weather beaten cap. Weaton sold some pigs earlier today and is eager to enjoy tonight, before he heads back to the farm tomorrow.
57-58	*Veniz*, male Karok, wears a brown tabard bearing the world tree icon of Soliri (he is a long time convert and devotee). Veniz works with a local druid and is familiar with nearby outlands. He is hoping to buy something.
59-60	*Helle*, female Varnori, older teen, light brown hair in a ponytail, 4 ft 8 inches, solid build, unblinking gaze. Helle suffered a head injury years ago and pauses before answering questions. Fearless, back made of stone, vice like grip. Helle's last employer recently died (by her hand, in self defence), and she might make an excellent porter or trainee warrior.
61-62	*Rifni*, female Thuel, heavily pregnant with eight rambunctious kids in tow, wrangled by her booming voice. Rifni and the family are thieves and messengers, hoping to either pick

	pockets or run dispatches.
63-64	*Xanthe*, female Nydissian, slim, very short cropped hair, has a whip wrapped around her waist like a belt. She is a professional dancer and whip expert. Xanthe is looking to buy something.
65-66	*Kara*, female Midlander, dressed in merchant garb with a feathered necklace from the Suurat Jungle. Her left arm is wrapped in a sling. Kara is a secret cultist of fell powers, and her hand has been transformed into a horrible tentacle. She is intending to drug someone for later sacrifice.
67-68	*Antyra*, female Karok, in her late 30's, wears a shiny black carapace breastplate (from a giant beetle), and has a tattoo of a twin tailed scorpion on her left bicep. Antyra is a monster hunter and looking for some help (fodder) for her next job.
69-70	*Tyr*, male Varnori, 6 ft 2 inches with a long blonde moustache, armed with twin hatchets and a circular shield slung across his back. His black cloak has a horned helm emblem on it. Tyr is the captain of the Bronze Reavers, a mercenary company of some infamy. He is looking to recruit and/or drum up work.
71-72	*Dethuk*, male Thuel, slim, ugly scar marring his face, woodsman garb. An outlander, Dethuk is in town for the annual log splitting contest. He wants to buy something.
73-74	*Callix*, male Nydissian, sleeveless tunic with a stern gaze, lucentum brand, and cold iron staff. Callix is an inquisitor of the Ordo Malefactos, always on watch for sorcerers to bind or (preferably) burn.
75-76	*Bromley*, male Midlander, peasant tunic and pants with sturdy boots. Smells like horse and dog. Bromley is a stable hand and horse expert. He's hoping to sell something.
77-78	*Mergildo*, male Karok, burly, clean shaven with flowing white hair. Mergildo is a veteran blacksmith and is looking to buy something.
79-80	*Ylva*, female Varnori, elderly with silver hair in three large braids, light cloak with fur edging. Ylva is a genuine rune stone soothsayer. She feels inexplicably drawn to one of the PCs.
81-82	*Yethna*, female Thuel, wears minimal furs, light brown locks and a lazy eye. Yethna speaks little common, but believes opening her eyes wide and repeating the same phrase over and over will help people understand. She's trying to find someone.
83-84	*Septima*, female Nydissian, large mole on her chin, dressed in a fine toga and cowl. Septima has a pair of twin slave boys with her, their eyes always downcast or averted unless Septima speaks directly to them. She is seeking information and is thirsty for wine.
85-86	*Scarlet*, female Midlander, dressed in a low quality smock and worn boots, one blue eye and one brown. Scarlet is a spy and street informant for the local guard, thieves' guilds, and frankly anyone else willing to pay. She is hoping to buy or sell information.
87-88	*Crisante*, female Karok, in her sixties, fine scarlet robes, severe arthritis keeps her hands clenched. She is a herbalist, accompanied by a Midlander girl who acts as her hands (and apprentice). She is hoping to buy something.
89-90	*Asger*, male Varnori, heavily freckled with strawberry blonde hair, with a pleasant sandalwood scent. Asger is a candle and incense maker, he is looking for new ingredients.
91-92	*Belrog*, male Thuel, missing most of his teeth and two fingers on his left hand (maiming for theft). Belrog is addicted to the yellow lotus plant, and will do just about anything for coin. He's hoping to pick up an odd job or two.
93-94	*Marcus*, male Nydissian, in his fifties, fine blue robes, clearly enunciates every word. Marcus

	is a cultural historian and retired explorer. He is hoping to trade some stories.
95-96	*Gwendoline*, female Midlander, sturdy apron and bandolier, sporting various pouches, vials and strange clockwork devices of mysterious purpose. Gwendoline is a reclusive inventor, constantly mumbling technobabble to herself. She's hunting for something.
97-98	*Karlos*, male Karok, white hair parted down the middle. A giant Midlander servant accompanies him with a parasol to keep his skin from burning. Karlos is a gemstone expert, and is looking to buy, sell or trade something.
99-100	*Fenton*, male Midlander, latest fashion tunic, long fringe that he regularly flips clear of his eyes. Fenton is a famous socialite, interested in gossip and politics of all kinds. If treated well, he can conjure introductions with hard to reach people. He's looking for a good time.

Personality Quirks

1d20	Quirk A	Quirk B
1	Ridiculously greedy	Down in the dumps
2	Shrewd and calculating	Likes to joke and laugh
3	Highly curious and inquisitive	Honest and decent
4	Kind and compassionate	Vengeful and holds grudges
5	Easily offended	Calm and self assured
6	Incorrigible flirt	Open hearted and joyful
7	Arrogant and bullying	Meek or indecisive
8	Determined with eyes on the prize	Cheeky and impulsive
9	Racist or quick to generalise	Standoffish or withdrawn
10	Uncompromising or judgmental	Quiet or secretive
11	Easy going and carefree	Utterly ruthless
12	Sexist or Homophobic	Irrepressible optimist
13	Grumpy and rude	Highly enthusiastic and excitable
14	Practical and no nonsense	Helpful and well mannered
15	Overly Pessimistic	Brave and outspoken
16	Devoutly religious	Charitable or self effacing
17	Reckless but means well	Indifferent or apathetic
18	Honourable and protective	Simple and a little slow
19	Awkward or bumbling	Genteel or chivalrous
20	Forgetful or easily distracted	Naïve or trusting

Speech Quirks

1d20	Quirk	1d20	Quirk
1	Wheezes, coughs, sniffs	11	Scratches
2	Uses hands	12	Mumbling
3	Repeats words	13	Quiet/Loud
4	Rambling	14	Puffs on pipe
5	Pulls at ear	15	Touchy feely
6	Chewing, spits	16	Slow/Fast talker
7	Low/High tone	17	Flips hair
8	Talks to self	18	Long winded
9	Ums & ahs	19	Squinty
10	Curt, direct	20	Close talker

Outpost Generator

The material below is intended to assist the GM creating or improvising frontier outposts for the PCs to interact with. Two example outposts also appear in the Adventure Frameworks section (see *Battle for Rivertop* (p.270) and *Betrayal at Siradorn* (p.327)).

Size & Age

Outposts are temporary in nature, enduring only as long as the natural resource founding them lasts, and any surrounding threats can be held at bay. An outpost typically has 2d100 + 150 residents within its walls. This number includes 20% full time guards, although all occupants are expected to fight on the walls if necessary.

An outpost is generally 1d8 years old. On a natural 8, roll again and accumulate, increasing the population by another 1d100 + 100. There are very few outposts that last more than a decade (usually because the natural resource founding them is exhausted, or the settlement is overcome by skorn, thuel, disease, or other dangers).

Overseer

All outposts have a dominant authority responsible for day to day governance and ensuring the outpost's primary objective is being achieved. Roll 1d10 twice and consult the following table for example overseers:

1d10	Overseer	Trait
1	Ranger	Veteran
2	Caravan master	Jaded
3	Soldier	Respected
4	Priest/Priestess	Greedy
5	Merchant	Pious
6	Justicar or other city official	Officious
7	Relevant specialist (miner, etc)	Practical
8	Highborn	Ambitious
9	Other (explorer, researcher, etc)	Ruthless
10	Small council (50% similar backgrounds, 50% mixed)	Idealistic

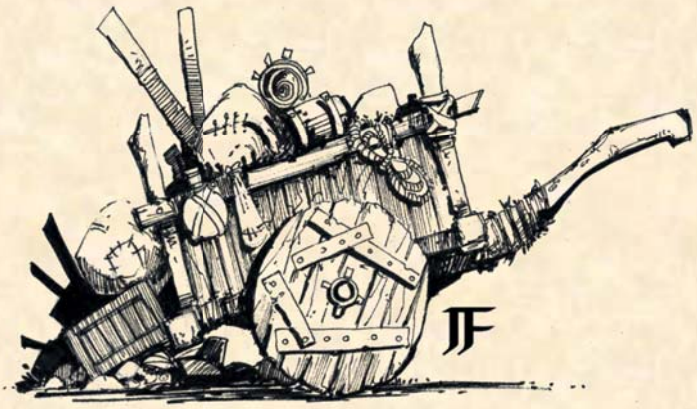
Primary Objective

Whilst the inhabitants will have a range of personal reasons for being at the outpost, the settlement itself will have a primary purpose that brought it into being.

Some examples might include (roll 1d6): (i) mining stone, iron, silver, gold, etc, (ii) logging, (iii) harvesting rare herbalism ingredients, (iv) a temporary "neutral ground" trading opportunity with otherwise hostile thuel, (v) staging point for expeditions into new lands or a recently discovered ruin, or (vi) military post to reinforce borderlands against encroaching skorn, thuel, etc.

Goods & Services

Outposts will generally have a meeting hall, general store, barracks, blacksmith, rations store, hunters & growers market (many residents will hunt or grow food), domiciles and buildings/workers related to the outpost objective. Note also the Gear Availability rules on p. 42.



At the GM's discretion, up to 2d6 other goods and services might also be available (roll 1d20):

1d20	Services	1d20	Services
1	Furrier	11	Inn
2	Potter	12	Brewer, Tavern
3	Weaponsmith	13	Brothel
4	Leatherworker	14	Guide, Porters
5	Armourer	15	Mercenaries
6	Weaver, Textiles	16	Herbalist
7	Alchemist	17	Shrine
8	Falconer	18	Cartographer
9	Carpenter, Woodcarver	19	Apothecary, Herbalist
10	Stables	20	Other (bard, slaver, etc)

Patron

Each outpost will tend to have a founding patron who paid for the initial outpost setup, continuing maintenance, guards, etc. The overseer is generally regarded as the agent of the patron, and accountable to them. Patrons might visit the site on occasion, but almost always reside in the walled cities with the rest of "civilized" humanity.

Some example patrons might include (roll 1d8): (i) related guild or powerful merchant, (ii) noble family, (iii) city authority, (iv) religious leader, (v) wealthy private researcher, (vi) money lender investor (particularly the Circle of Five in Dol-Karok), (vii) an alliance of the above (same background or a mix), or (viii) other (eg: a band of escaped gladiators, a cultist stronghold, etc).

Complications

Every outpost has at least one complication, something that is causing problems or otherwise making life interesting for the outlanders (besides the usual external threats). Some examples appear below.

1d20	Outpost Complication
1	The overseer has recently died, by means fair or foul. Who thinks they're in charge? Who really is?
2	An insidious cult bound to ruinous powers has infiltrated the outpost. They might be small and secretive, or have converted the entire population. Either way, the secret must be kept, no matter the cost.
3	A new ruin has been discovered a few days travel from the outpost. Rival explorers might arrive at the outpost the same day as the PCs, or have just set off for the site the previous night.
4	Two or more NPCs or factions openly despise each other after years of bad blood. They are on the brink of ending their dispute "for good" via mutual violence.

5	One or more brazen thieves are stealing other inhabitants' gold and/or goods. Paranoia has set in, and anger is mounting.
6	Messenger ravens from the outpost ceased months ago, and no-one seems to know what's been happening inside the settlement since the last caravan.
7	The bulk of the outlanders are fed up with the overseer. Perhaps she is corrupt, domineering, officious or simply inept. Whatever the reason, mutiny is imminent, but the overseer and her lackeys will not go quietly.
8	The guard captain detests foreigners, and promotes a similar attitude in his men. The overseer is powerless to remove the captain because he is the patron's blood relative.
9	The outpost is contaminated with an infectious disease such as *Puss Mouth, Weeping Hives* or the *Green Sweats.* The source is unknown, and the number of infected growing despite precautions.
10	Two political factions dominate the outpost, with different but not necessarily opposing views. The two camps enjoy competing with one another, with bragging rights the greatest prize.
11	Disciples of different faiths, and/or the *Lucentum*, are in conflict, fighting over the faithful, space for a shrine, etc. The constant unrest is sapping outpost morale.
12	A handful of recent, unsolved murders have the outpost spooked, particularly as the last victim was the guard captain. It might be a lone psychopath, a hidden cult, a lycanthrope, or something stranger.
13	A saboteur is living in the outpost, an agent for a rival faction, secretly undermining the settlement's primary objective. "Bad luck" is rampant, and many outlanders are suspicious. The agent will soon escalate to blatant (and perhaps bloody) sabotage.
14	The overseer or other important NPC has made a secret alliance with skorn, urgot, or some other monstrous entity. The arrangement requires a terrible price, but the NPC will pay it in order to get what they want (or need).
15	A genuine sorcerer lives in the outpost, perhaps a hedge wizard, exiled shaman or eccentric warlock. Her political clout is strong, but unpredictable. Most of the outlanders fear the spell caster, but she has the imprimatur of the overseer and/or founding patron. The magician might be here for gold or favours, but more likely some secret and nefarious purpose.
16	The overseer mercifully agreed to house remnants of a local thuel clan, the *Stone Jaws*, after they were recently massacred by hostiles (other thuel, skorn, etc). The survivors, mostly women and children, are living in a tent encampment in one corner. The whole outpost is distrustful, on edge, and uncertain as to what will happen next.
17	Shortly after the party arrives, the outpost is suddenly attacked by hundreds of bloodthirsty skorn, thuel, an alliance of monstrous foes, etc.
18	The last two caravans headed for the outpost were lost, resulting in severe equipment shortages (50% chance any particular item is unavailable until the settlement is restocked).
19	The outpost has a beloved monstrous protector/mascot, which is friendly to inhabitants but often hostile to outsiders (eg a *Griffon*, *Dire Wolf*, *Giant Eagle*, etc).
20	A small number of dwarves, escaped slaves of *Dol-Karok,* are hiding out somewhere in the outpost. They are being secretly harboured by a resident (perhaps even the overseer). Karok agents searching for the servitors are also present (or will arrive imminently).

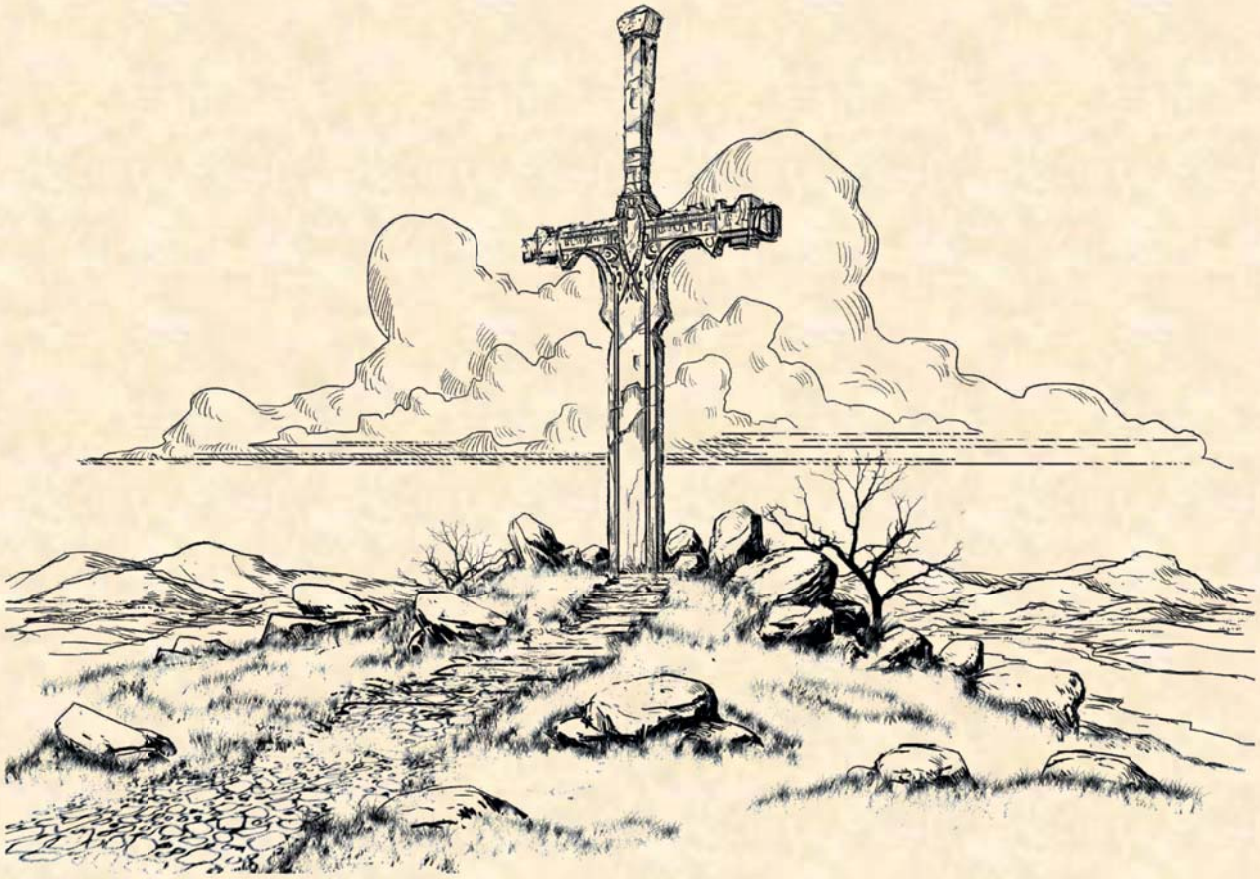
Random Encounters by Region

Consistent with the *Low Fantasy Gaming RPG* system, the following location based random encounter tables are not divided into "level appropriate" entries. Instead, the GM rolls twice and chooses the most appropriate scenario (which may moderate extreme results). Needless to say GMs may simply choose a specific encounter or improvise their own. The entries provided are merely examples. GMs are encouraged to customise and/or create their own location encounter tables over time.

Argos Plateau

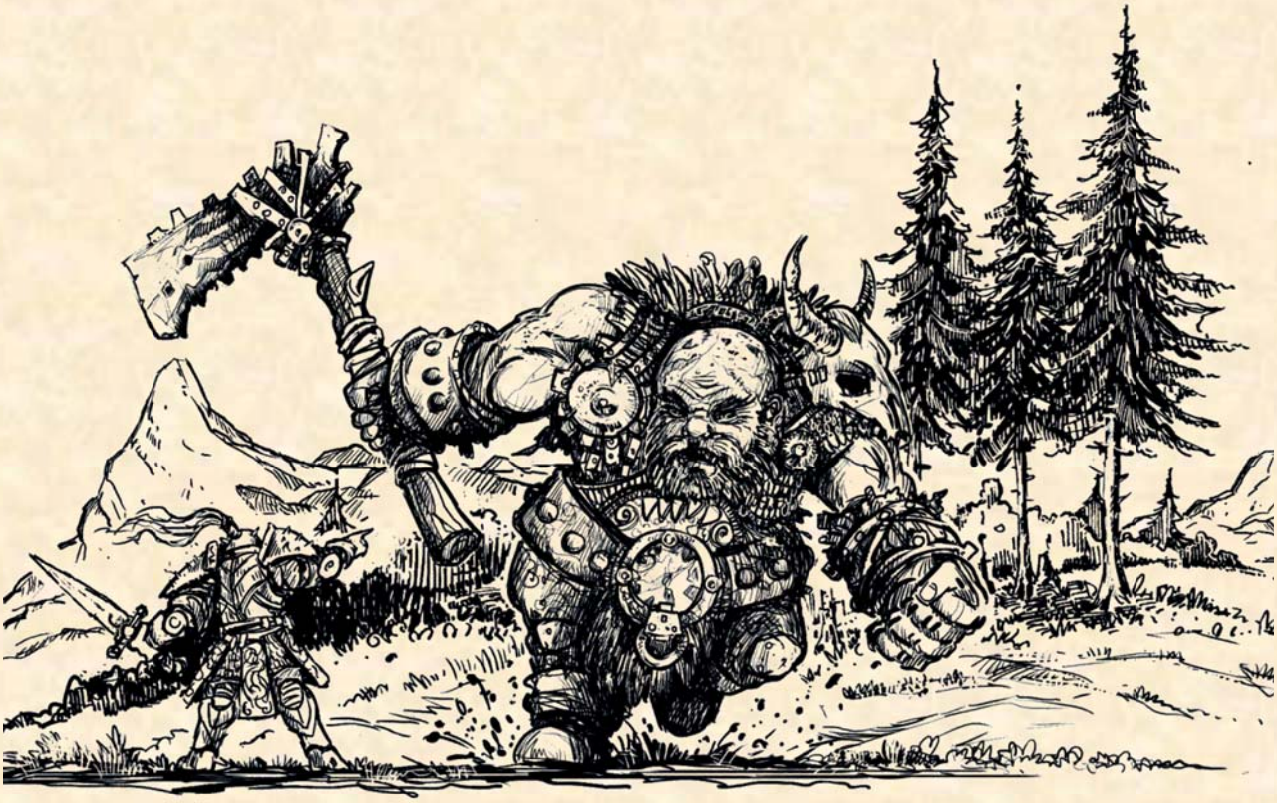
1d20	ARGOS PLATEAU
1	A copse of trees conceals a net trap beneath earth and leaves, activated by a trip wire (suspends 1d3 PCs in the air, *Luck* (Dex) save negates). The net is intended for elk, wolf or boar, and jangles with a series of clanking bells. There is a 50% chance 2d4 thuel hunters come to investigate.
2	Light rain begins to fall and a fog drifts in just as the party stumbles across a 20 ft statue of a one eyed humanoid. The face is similar to a cyclops but much fairer; handsome and cleanshaven, curling lochs decorated with ornate rings. The face seems to gaze into the distance, lost in studied contemplation.
3	The smell of rotting flesh forewarns of an owlbear corpse decomposing nearby, most of the body still intact but for the maggots. On closer inspection, it appears larger carrion feeders and carnivores have avoided eating it. Anyone within 5 ft of the body risks contracting *Devil's Lung* disease (1d4 Con loss each day until death, *Luck* (Con) save resists, carriers remain contagious until 1d3 days after death). Treatment by an apothecary with the right healing herbs permits a second save.
4	3d6 thuels of the *Ravenborn* tribe are camped in nearby trees, keeping watch for enemies. They have a very large encampment of 10d10 warriors about half a mile away, which they are fortifying, expanding their territory.
5	A raiding party of 5d6 *Three Storms* barbarians charge out of trees or grassland, intent on claiming the party's skulls for their chieftain's skull pit.
6	From nearby forest, a chorus of human voices can be heard, rising and falling in song. 3d6 *Moon Elk* thuels are engaged in a centuries old weather, fertility or protection ritual.
7	In distant grasslands, 3d6 *Yellow Tusks* barbarians are squaring off against 3d6 *Skorn* raiders, clashing blades against their shields, shaking spears and shouting war cries. There is a 50% chance the parties haven't noticed the PCs yet.
8	A lone drum beat begins to sound nearby (out of sight, from long grass, behind trees, rocky badlands, etc). The drum follows the party and after a short time, more drums join in from other directions. Occasionally the party glimpses *Skorn* raiders tracking them from cover. Eventually the tempo quickens, and 2d6 *Skorn* attack from the north, south, east and west (8d6 total).
9	A single barbarian comes running out of nearby forest/grasslands/badlands, racing for his life. 3d4 *Wolves* (70%) or 2d4 *Dire Wolves* appear shortly after, loping after their prey at a measured pace.
10	Loud screeches from nearby skies alert the party to 2d4 *Giant Eagles* drifting down from the high peaks. They have 2d3 chicks (1 HD) in tow. The parents hang back, waiting to see what their new brood do (and whether they have learnt anything from their last hunt).
11	A lone *Urgot* (actually an *Urgozer*) wearing a skull mask with antlers is following the party at a distance, observing them from trees, rocky badlands or other hiding places. He tracks the party for 1d4 days, intent on collecting some of their blood, urine or other excreta in a clay flask.
12	4d6 *Shenzu* scouts, in dark silks and lacquered armour from the east, are silently picking their way through nearby terrain, attempting to keep out of sight. The leader speaks a smattering of common.
13	1d6 *Giant Serpents* with natural chameleon like abilities are hiding/resting in the rocky badlands/ long grasses/forest (advantage on checks to hide). There is a nest nearby containing 2d6 unhatched eggs (60%, worth up to 200 gp each) or a single, massive 10 HD nest mother (40%).

14	A *Bulette* has been tracking the PCs for some time and is about to attack, bursting up from the earth to devour the last PC (or other isolated large creature, such as a horse). The round before the monster attacks, observant characters might notice a faint earth tremor (Perc check).
15	2d4 *Giant Wasps* (see *Bestiary*) are hunting at low altitude, their loud buzzing warning of their approach. They attempt to paralyze a PC to carry away to their enormous hive (another 6d4 wasps), which is strung between three massive trees in nearby woodlands.
16	2d4 *Fire Beetles* (grasslands/forest) or 2d12 *Giant Centipedes* (badlands) are sleeping in this area, tucked up under shelter or curled into balls. Careful PCs might be able to avoid waking them.
17	3d4 *Dire Rats* are searching about this area, sniffing for food. There is a 50% chance the vermin are actually a family of *Wererats* instead (in which case they are targeting the party for their gear and weapons, in addition to their tasty flesh).
18	A towering 40 ft stone monument, in the shape of a gargantuan sword thrust into the ground, stands here. Ancient runes are inscribed along the hilt, the centre of which is set with a hazy yellow crystal about the size of a man's skull.
19	A mysterious bronze chest is lying on its side, partially hidden behind some rocks, tree roots or tufts of grass. Apart from being locked, the chest is unguarded (no obvious tracks nearby, no monsters lying in wait, no traps). It contains 1 x 5 HD Lair Treasure and 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.140, 141).
20	A massive, crater like hole, a thousand yards wide, lies in the grasslands ahead. The descent is steep and cliff like, dropping away several hundred feet. The terrain below is especially green and lush, the dappled canopy of hundreds of trees concealing whatever lies beneath.



1d20	DRELNOR FOREST or WISTWOOD
1	Poisonous trees, vines, undergrowth or noxious spores, causing all travellers 1d6 damage and 1 Con loss (50%) or a serious madness for 1d6 days (50%). A *Luck* (Con) save resists.
2	A branch of deadwood falls from a great oak (*Drelnor*) or fir tree (*Wistwood*), causing 1d6 damage to a single traveller. A Dex check resists.
3	A female thuel (*Iriti*) is struggling against a tree snare that is suspending her 10 ft in the air, setting off some wooden chimes. In 2d4 rounds the 2d6 *Ogres* that set the trap arrive to investigate.
4	5d4 *Giant Rats* (70%) or 3d4 *Dire Rats* (30%) are scavenging here, snuffling about. If the party are being noisy, they hide in the shadows. The giant rats try to snatch any food in the party's backpacks, or take a bite out of their arm or leg, then flee. Dire rats try to drag one of the party away.
5	4d6 *Skorn* (60%) or 2d6 *Urgot* with an *Urgozer* (40%) are camped here at a small pond. They are in a foul mood, having failed to catch any food today. Perhaps their luck is about to change.
6	A flock of 3d6 *Vampire Bats* are hanging high in the trees, making the occasional flutter with their wings. They watch the party warily, but do not attack unless the travellers are sporting obvious, bloody wounds.
7	Wolf howls fill the air an hour before a pack of 3d4 *Wolves* (70%) or 2d4 *Dire Wolves* (30%) appear through the trees, surrounding the party. The alphas know the weakest of the pack are near starvation and won't leave without something. They might be appeased by throwing food, or horses, at them.
8	Thick, sticky webbing covers the ground and lower trees of this heavily wooded area. In the shadows of the higher branches, 2d4 *Giant Spiders* are lurking.
9	A giant ant nest is beneath the earth nearby. 2d6 scouting *Giant Worker Ants* (70%), possibly with 1d4 *Soldier* escorts (30%) can be heard chittering beyond some nearby trees. Starting a battle here will draw more ants from the colony.
10	2d4 *Fire Beetles* are laying eggs here in the undergrowth. They do not wish to be disturbed and will drive off any curious interlopers.
11	1d6 *Giant Serpents* are slithering through the undergrowth or winding through branches in the trees. There is a 50% chance they have spotted the party and try to ambush them. Otherwise, their hissing can be heard before they are seen (Perc (Detection) check).
12	A curious creaking and rubbing noise can be heard in the next swath of trees. A towering *Owlbear* (50%) or mated pair (50%) are scratching their backs on massive tree trunks.
13	Small black and white mushrooms foreshadow an enormous, two ft mushroom with red spots growing in this darkened corner of the forest. There is a 50% chance the giant mushroom puffs out a cloud of spores, requiring a *Luck* (Con) save to avoid suffering a serious madness for 1d6 days.
14	During the night, 2d6 pitch black *Shades* silently emerge from between the trees, swiftly gliding towards the party sentry, eager to drain their lifeforce.
15	A grove of 1d4 *Bloodroot Treants*, appearing as large willow (*Drelnor*) or pine trees (*Wistwood*). An astute observer might notice their subtle leaf or branch signalling.
16	A very old, stone arch bridge stretches across a long, dry riverbed. In centuries past, druids used the bridge to commune with distant spirits. Attempting to cross the bridge has a 50% chance of summoning 2d4 *Fey Creepers* (see *Bestiary*).
17	A lone tree, gnarled and white, spotted with age, stands in a clearing. Something is carved in the tree, but it's hard to tell what from afar. A fey might reside within or nearby, willing to swap information for stories of the outside world. Or perhaps the tree is cursed, or good fortune, imparting such to any who touch it.

18	A sinkhole has opened beside an arrangement of man sized stones. Scraping away some moss reveals runes from a forgotten fey race. At the bottom of the hole, earth covered steps lead down into ancient darkness.
19	A trio of dilapidated thatched huts sit in a small clearing beside a bubbling brook. Five burial mounds can be seen beside the house.
20	Wisps of light circle high out of reach in the tree branches above, following the party. They seem to resonate an ethereal hum, a sorrowful dirge that rises and falls with the breeze.



Great Plains

1d20	GREAT PLAINS
1	*Wild fire* erupts in nearby grassland, sweeping through neighbouring plains, filling the sky with smoke and embers. There is a 50% chance the winds blow the fire towards the party. If so, a group *Luck* check is required to avoid being caught in the flames and suffocating smoke, causing 4d6 damage and requiring a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table. Taking appropriate precautions grants advantage on the check (wearing a facemask, taking shelter in a trench, rock formation or pool, etc).
2	A band of 5d10 xenophobic thuel riders appear in the distance. The travellers might be able to hide from them, negotiate passage, or neutralize the encounter in some other way.
3	1d6 *Giant Serpents*, or a single massive 16 ft specimen (10 HD), is slithering through the long grass, eager to locate their next meal.
4	5d4 *Giant Rats* (70%) or 3d4 *Dire Rats* (30%) are scavenging from a dead bison skeleton. They might take their chances against a PC however, particularly if they can isolate a small or obviously wounded target.

5	3d10 *Skorn* hunters are loping through the grasses here, on the trail for fresh meat. There is a 50% chance they are upwind of the party and hiding in ambush.
6	Two rival packs of 3d4 *Wolves* (70%) or 2d4 *Dire Wolves* (30%) are fighting over hunting grounds, growling and snapping at each other.
7	2d4 *Centaurs* are on sentry duty in this region, which they have recently claimed as part of their ancestral territory. They are extremely hostile towards outsiders and will seek to drive them away, using their war horns to summon more of their kin if necessary.
8	Clouds roll in and a thick fog settles over the grasslands, reducing visibility to 60 ft. There is a 50% chance of 3d6 mounted *thuels*, *skorn* or *centaurs* in the fog.
9	2d4 *Giant Eagles* are wheeling overhead, descending from the thermals of the Rock of Gorzat as they survey the grasslands for food. Their chicks are hungry.
10	A *Western Panther* (see *Bestiary*, 70%) or mated pair (30%, possibly with cubs) are hunting in the long grass, stealthily stalking the rear member of the party.
11	2d4 boisterous *Ogres*, taunting a trussed up, captive thuel (*Bok*), on the way back to their clan campsite to eat him.
12	A large pack of 3d4 *Wolves*, led by 1d4+2 *Dire Wolves*, are on the hunt, signalling to each other via howls. The *Dire Wolves* have developed a taste for human flesh and will not be distracted by horses, etc.
13	2d4 *Giant Wasps* (see *Bestiary*) are buzzing low across the grasslands, searching for some humanoid sized prey. If they manage to incapacitate a target, they will withdraw, carrying the unfortunate with them (for later eating and/or egg implantation).
14	A hungry *Bulette* is hunting here, evidenced by 6 ft wide holes scattered across the region (the tunnels have collapsed in on themselves).
15	A single *Bloodroot Treant*, masquerading as a large willow tree, hoping to lure a meal. Careful scrutiny of the tree reveals a number of bloodstained branches.
16	A warband of 4d8 *Ogres* are clashing with 5d10 mounted *Thuels* (50%) or *Skorn* (50%). If either side notices the party, they attack them too.
17	A wooden palisade 50 ft on a side has been erected here with a large tent inside. A solitary *Clay Golem* stands outside the entry gates.
18	A clear pond is located here. Wet humanoid footprints can be found nearby, circling the area. If the pond is explored, a dark underwater tunnel is discovered.
19	In the distance a single thuel wearing an bird skull mask can be seen, raising her arms and voice to the sky. Moments later, a peal of thunder echoes overhead.
20	A 50 ft crater blackens the earth, at the centre of which lies a man sized meteorite of blue veined crystal. Serpent like tracks lead away from the mysterious rock.

Ironhull Mountains or Sunstone Ranges

1d20	IRONHULL MOUNTAINS or SUNSTONE RANGES
1	*Rockslide!* All travellers must make a *Luck* (Dex) save or suffer 2d6 damage. If damage of 10+ is rolled, a Con check is also required to avoid rolling on the *Injuries & Setbacks* Table.
2	Set into the mountain side is a dim, 10 ft tall tunnel. Guttering torchlight can be seen within. The entryway is ringed with bronze verdigris capstones, warded against intruders. Any non-cyclops who attempts to enter must make a *Luck* (Will) save or suffer 2d6 cold damage.
3	A steep slope or cliff like ridge must be climbed, requiring a Str (Athletics) check. If failed, the traveller is exhausted by the time they reach the top, suffering 1 Str loss.

4	Flickering torchlight can be seen from a large cave mouth. 4d6 *Skorn* (60%) or 2d6 *Urgot* with an *Urgozer* (40%) are inside, taking a brief respite. There is a 50% chance of a sentry keeping watch.
5	2d4 diminutive *Xornlings* are blending into the rock face here, hiding behind loose scree. They can smell any precious metals or gems carried by the party, and will try to sneak into their packs or pouches to eat them.
6	From around a long bend, quarrelling in broken, guttural common can be heard. 2d6 *Ogres* are fighting over whether they should continue in the same direction or change heading. There is a 50% chance the ogres are upwind and smell the party coming, in which case they suddenly go quiet.
7	A flock of 2d6 *Griffons* (50%) or 2d6 *Harpies* (50%) begin circling high above the party, riding the currents. They observe them for a time, assessing their prospects of a successful raid.
8	1d8 *Minotaurs* are hunting in the area, keenly sniffing the air for the scent of man flesh. They live in a nearby ravine containing the bones and gear of prior meals.
9	1d3 *Grey Ooze* lurk in shallow depressions, mimicking small, polluted pools.
10	1d6 *Giant Scorpions* are feasting on a dead skorn, which they are pulling apart with their massive pincers. Another meal of juicy humanoid flesh would not be unwelcome.
11	3d6 *Cyclopes* are roaming here, following orders to scout the area. Looks like their soothsayer was right after all; there are humans present to feast upon.
12	1d4 *Skorn* come rushing around the bend in the trail, breathing hard, moving straight past the PCs if permitted. 1d12 *Hill Giants*, also short on breath, come hurtling around the bend a few moments later.
13	Snuffling, cracking and grinding sounds can be heard up ahead. On a high ledge further along are 1d4 *Manticores*, devouring the remains of an unlucky thuel. Depending on the number of manticores, they might welcome more food.
14	A hungry *Bulette* bursts from the earth, showering the adventurers with rocks as it tries to bite one in half.
15	1d6 *Hill Giants* are waiting in ambush on this mountain path. There is a 50% chance of hearing them complaining how hungry they are, tipping off any would be prey.
16	1d4 *Wyverns* use these mountain tops as their hunting grounds. They are particularly fond of snatching up metallic humanoids and dropping them from a great height to crack open their hard shells.
17	On a stony escarpment, a 100 ft latticework of small trees and boulders forms a gigantic nest. Dark grey feathers, 12 ft long, litter the ground. If the centre of the nest is explored, three 4 ft eggs can be found hidden beneath a bedding of leafy shrubs.
18	Dozens of campfire smoke columns can be seen wafting over a high ridge to the north.
19	A tall obelisk with ancient silver markings rises from the depths of a shallow crater. The floor of the crater is mirrored, reflecting the stars and moon overhead.
20	A small, low lying cloud seems to be following the party, matching their speed and direction. As each hour passes, it slowly descends, drawing nearer.

Lake Argos or Siltwater

1d20	LAKE ARGOS or SILTWATER
1	A powerful storm with heavy rain and high winds blows in. Watercraft might become damaged, and unsound craft threaten to break apart. Visibility is reduced and checks to retain steady footing are made at disadvantage while the storm rages.

2	The region of water is becalmed, stranding sailing vessels without oars. The travellers must make a group *Luck* save each day to determine whether the winds return.
3	Varnori raiders in a longship (3d20+40 crew, including rowers) appear on the horizon, changing course to intercept the travellers.
4	2d6 dolphins, seals, otters or other inquisitive but harmless marine life takes an interest in the travellers.
5	A damaged merchant caravel from one of the lake cities, or another water craft, bobs in the current, half submerged. There is a 50% chance of 1d4 survivors with a ghastly tale to tell.
6	5d4 *Nixies* (water sprites) take an interest in the travellers, swimming alongside or climbing aboard the PCs craft to cause mischief.
7	If sailing the *Siltwater*, *Jarl's Bane* (see Bestiary) surfaces on the nearby horizon, slowly turning to its gaze to fix upon the party's ship. If the PCs seek to flee, a successful Party Retreat check means the winds are with them, or the behemoth is distracted by some other prey. If sailing *Lake Argos*, a *Kronosaurus* (see *Giant Crocodile* variant) appears instead (to similar effect).
8	2d6 *Argosan Stranglers* (see Bestiary) intercept the vessel and cling to the hull beneath the water. In the dead of night, they scale the ship and attempt to eat everyone on board.
9	A thick fog rolls in, reducing visibility to 90 ft. There is a 50% chance 2d4 *Will o' Wisps* emerge from the fog, keen to torment the crew or distract them long enough to ground them on a nearby reef.
10	A *Pirate Ship* (carrack, crew 2d10+40 pirates) appears on the horizon and gives chase. There is a 50% chance they are slavers, otherwise they leave no survivors.
11	A *Sea Hag* (as *Hag*, but amphibious and may spend an action to generate the following spell like effects once per day: *Charm Person*, *Fog Cloud* (but affects a 1 mile diameter), *Web (made of seaweed), Suggestion, Wall of Thorns (Coral), Cone of Cold*) follows the ship for a time, hoping for the opportunity to snatch one of the crew and eat them.
12	An *Ochre Jelly* is swimming on top of the water, slowly undulating towards its next meal. It can slurp its way up the side of the ship without difficulty.
13	*Mutiny!* If the PCs have other crew aboard, 80% of them seek to seize control of the ship and change course for elsewhere. The losing side is killed or made to walk the plank!
14	1d6 *Wyverns* are hunting in the skies and decide the party are a potential meal worth investigating. They begin to slowly circle down towards them.
15	A saboteur has planted a slow acting poison in the ship's water supply and ration stores, spoiling them (an enemy of the PCs, the captain or other crew member). Everyone who has partaken of the ship's stores must make a *Luck* (Con) save each day or lose 1d2 Con (on a save, the poison subsides). An apothecary with the right healing herbs might be able to craft an antidote.
16	One of the crew has *Lake Pox*, a highly contagious skin disease that causes painful boils under the armpits, crotch and jaw (causing 1d3 Dex loss). The infected are contagious by airborne and touch vectors for 1d4 days, and the boils disappear after 1d4 months. A *Luck* (Con) check resists. An apothecary with the right healing herbs might halve the duration.
17	A huge Karok merchant galley (up to 300 crew), apparently in good condition, sits idle and seemingly abandoned. The flag displays the shackle icon of *House Tergoza*.
18	The water surrounding the travellers turns jet black in all directions. Birds diving for fish do not resurface from the inky water.
19	On the horizon, two random lake city or Karok cogs (approx 20 crew) are in the midst of a pitched battle with 1d3 pirate caravels (approx 30 crew).
20	A one of a kind, hot air balloon ship flies overhead. The captain and his crew might be spying on the travellers, coincidentally passing through, or harvesting lightning from the clouds.

1d20	SPINE OF ULGOTH
1	A series of 15 ft deep *spiked pit traps* are scattered about this area, causing 1d6 damage and requiring a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table (*Luck* (Dex) save resists). *Skorn* come to check on their traps after 2d6 hours.
2	The temperature drops rapidly as a heavy fog descends on the mountain. There is a 50% chance 2d6 *Shades* glide out of the clinging haze, eager to turn more of the living into undead.
3	An ominous tremor drops large chunks of stone from high ledges, requiring a *Luck* (Dex) save to avoid 3d6 damage. If triples are rolled, victims must also roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table.
4	A *Skorn* self exile, and genuine warlock (Magic User 4), is marking the ground here with entrails and coloured dust. He wears a black spider mask with tree branch legs.
5	6d6 *Skorn* (60%) from two different tribes are gathered nearby, putting to rest a long running blood feud. Celebrating with some human flesh would be most auspicious.
6	Whilst the party is navigating a perilous ledge, 2d4 *Rock Grinders* burst from the mountainside, attracted to the PC with the most precious metals.
7	A single *Griffon* begins circling above the party, making loud screeches to attract more of its kind. Sometime later, 2d6 griffons silently dive bomb out of the clouds from behind the party, hoping to strike with surprise and make a meal of them.
8	4d4 *Serpentmen* (half *Hraarsk*, half *Ssurlocs,* plus a single *Razkarrt*) are visiting the Spine as emissaries of the *Hidden City*, gauging prospects of an alliance with the strongest skorn tribes.
9	3d4 *Dire Wolves* appear on elevated crags, silently watching the party navigate the mountain. When the alpha howls, the whole pack charges to attack.
10	2d6 *Ogres* have captured 1d4+1 thuels or skorn (even chance), who are bound with ropes and badly beaten. The giant kin are arguing whether to eat them all now, or just one of them.
11	1d6 *Ettins*, in league with one or more local skorn tribes (or at the least in a truce), are travelling through the region, calling out for their pet dire wolf, *Shizek.*
12	3d6 *Cyclopes* are hunting for food to return to their tribe's cave complex nearby. They consider all smaller races fair game and will eat men just as readily as skorn. The local halfmen make offerings to the cyclopes to appease them.
13	3d6 *Skorn children* and 1d6 (pet) *wolves* come running around a corner, some laughing uproariously while others are scuffling and shouting at each other. They freeze when they see the party, some with looks of fear, others with hate. The wolves immediately raise their hackles and snarl, moving in front of their young masters.
14	6d4 small, 1 ft *Giant Scorpion Hatchlings* (1 hp, tail sting causes 1d2 venom damage) escaped from their nearby burrow and skitter over the next rise. Their 1d6 full grown *Giant Scorpion* mothers appear 2d6 rounds later, claws raised and tails twitching in agitation.
15	From the high peaks, a flock of 3d6 *Feathered Maws* (see *Bestiary*) begin to surveil the party, hungry for food. They are drawn to the sun reflecting off the party's weapons and armour.
16	Scattered about this area are a series of jagged rock formations and the remains of a half digested skorn (the corpse appears wilted and strangely mushy). An *Ochre Jelly* is hiding nearby, hoping for another meal.
17	With a thunderous screech, 1d4 *Wyverns* (50%) or a *Roc* (50%) dive out of the cloud cover or from behind nearby peaks, eager to devour the PCs!
18	A crumbling, ancient tower rises nearby. Closer inspection reveals piles of yellowed bones (human, skorn and animal) carefully spread around the perimeter. Disturbing the skulls, or venturing beyond them, releases an *Aberrant Terror* from its prison.

19	In a narrow but steep ravine is an pale stone obelisk, marked with primitive scrawl and discoloured runes. As one descends, the air turns unnaturally cool, causing breath to fog. Perhaps the obelisk marks a ley line junction, serves as a cursed altar, or conceals a stairwell spiralling deep into the earth.
20	On a rise in the distance, a colossal cave mouth is decorated with scores of skull poles, lit by a handful of flaming torches. The sound of drums echoes from within.

Subterranean

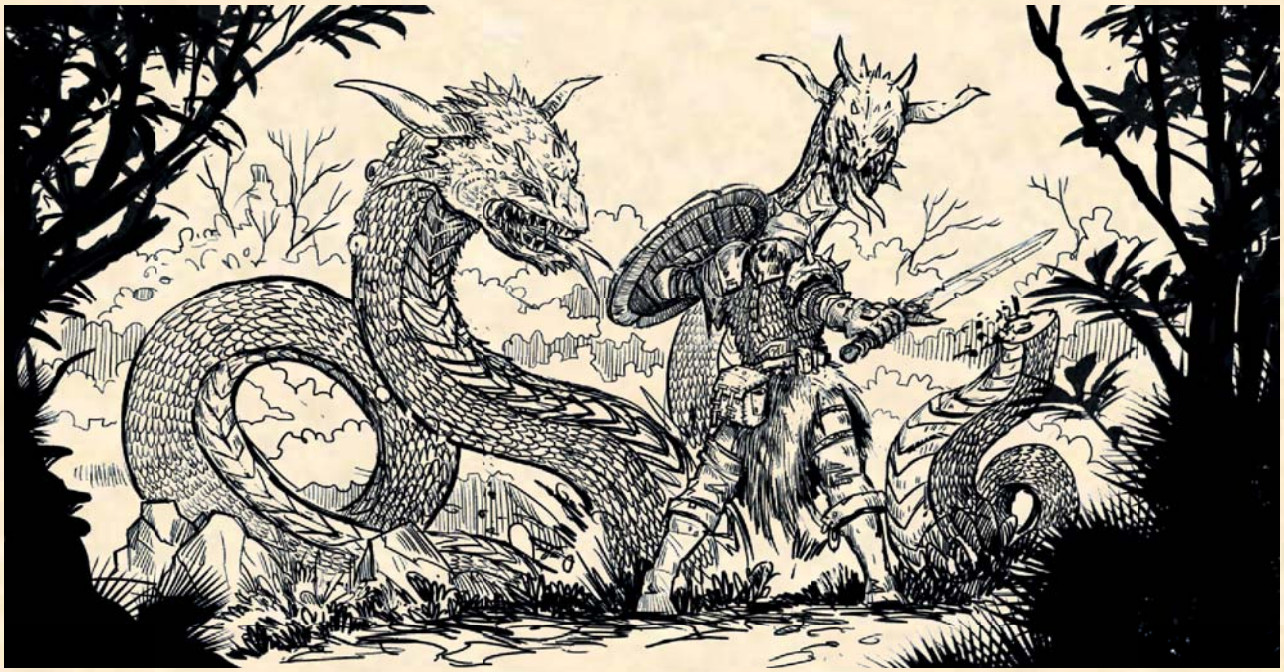
1d20	SUBTERRANEAN
1	*Rockfall!* The adventurers must make a group *Luck* (Dex) save or suffer 2d4 damage and roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table.
2	Tremors have opened a large *crevasse* here, blocking the way. The crevasse is 1d4 x 10 ft wide and 1d10 x 10 ft deep. There is a 50% chance something awful climbs out of it.
3	A rare underdark wind rips through the passage, automatically extinguishing all non-magical lights. There is a 30% chance a G*reen Slime* coincidentally drops from the ceiling to attack.
4	4d6 *Skorn* (40%) or 2d6 *Urgot* with an *Urgozer* (60%) are either exploring these tunnels, or their skeletons lie dead on the floor, killed by some unknown beast (1 x Carry Loot, LFG p.136).
5	Webs are strung across much of this area, on the walls, floor and ceiling. 2d4 *Giant Spiders* are either lurking in webs (50%) or hidden behind trapdoors concealed in the wall or floor (50%, a Perc (Detection) check notices the outlines of the burrow doors).
6	2d12 *Giant Centipedes* are crawling across the ceiling, antennae twitching for food. They might be driven off if branded with open flames such as torches.
7	2d4 patches of *Yellow Mould* are growing in dark corners (or are in stasis like dormancy, if no food sources are available).
8	A *Grey Ooze* is silently stalking the passages here. It uses its Emotion Burst ability to try and confuse or isolate a member of the party before it attacks.
9	A tremor releases a pocket of flammable gas in the party's vicinity. The gas is clear but may be detected by scent with a *Perc* (Detection) test. If any flame based light sources are not extinguished in 1d4 rounds, the gas explodes for 2d4 damage (the light source is destroyed).
10	2d4 *Fungoids* (see *Bestiary*) are hibernating in this chamber, surrounded by many smaller varieties of fungus and mould. If the party lingers here, they awaken within 1d4 rounds.
11	An *Ochre Jelly* (60%) or *Black Pudding* (40%) is searching for flesh to consume, undulating along a corridor wall or rooftop.
12	1d6 *Plague Worms* (see *Bestiary*) are moving through these tunnels, tasting the air for the scent of succulent flesh.
13	A *Speckled Ooze* (see *Bestiary*) has made its home in the ceiling here, burrowing itself a small cavity to sleep in. It will attempt to drop onto a target that is not carrying a light source.
14	A mould known as *Miner's Woe* is growing nearby. Its airborne spores require a *Luck* (Con) save to avoid suffering a wheezing, hacking cough developing over the next 1d6 x 10 mins. The condition imposes disadvantage on endurance related tests and the sufferer speaks in whispers only, lasting for 1d4 days. An apothecary with the right healing herbs might reduce the duration by half.
15	A *Tentacle Spawn* (70% single or 30% 1d4) is exploring this area, expanding its knowledge of near surface tunnels. If it thinks it can prevail, it will gladly take the opportunity to devour some surface dwellers' brains.
16	2d4 *Rock Grinders* (see *Bestiary*), burst from the walls, ceiling or floor, homing in on the resonance of the party's precious metals.

17	A pile of earth and rock the size of a large wagon is lumped against a wall. The 10 HD *Earth Elemental* is replenishing its strength from nearby stone, which slides across the walls and floor to merge with it. It is in a quasi sleeping state and will be very surly if disturbed.
18	An empty well or narrow vertical chute sits in the middle of a small chamber. If travellers listen carefully, they might hear clanking and grinding noises echoing from deep below.
19	A 6 ft ceramic red devil face, with a wide open mouth, is set into the wall. The mouth is large enough to crawl into. The interior of the mouth is unnaturally black, as if somehow absorbing nearby torchlight.
20	A naturally formed side tunnel opens up into a gigantic cavern filled with a still, dark lake, in the centre of which is a small forest of giant fungi. Within the fungi rises a 40 ft, golden monolith with a crenelated top.

Suurat Jungle

1d20	SUURAT JUNGLE
1	Poisonous vines or mind altering fungi spores, causing all travellers 1d6 damage and inflicting a moderate madness for 2d4 days. A *Luck* (Con) save resists.
2	A cloud of biting insects carries a rare disease. The adventurers must make a *Luck* (Con) save or suffer *Weeping Limbs* disease, causing nails to emit yellow puss and flake off (1d4 Dex loss over 1d3 days). An apothecary with the right healing herbs might be able to cure or delay the disease.
3	Pit traps with spikes, set by cannibals or territorial skorn, causing 1d8 damage or alternatively tree snares suspending travellers 6 ft in the air. A *Luck* (Dex) save resists.
4	5d4 *Projectile Leeches* lurking in the trees waiting to pounce (50%), or 3d6 *Urgot* (50%) with an *Urgozer* (30%) concealed behind a thicket of trees and vines.
5	5d6 *Skorn* are making a loud racket, crashing their way through the plants. There is a 50% chance the skorn are upwind and have caught the party's scent.
6	5d6 *Man Eating Monkeys* are in the trees, stalking the travellers and hoping to drop upon them unawares (ideally when they sleep).
7	2d12 *Giant Centipedes* are crawling through the undergrowth, looking for a warm body to implant their eggs into.
8	2d6 exploring *Giant Worker Ants* (70%), possibly with 1d4 *Soldier* escorts (30%), suddenly emerge from behind a cluster of 8 ft, broad leafed aroids.
9	A wild boar comes crashing through the undergrowth, thundering past the party at high speed. A few moments later, 2d4 *Tigers* (50% chance of 1d3 cubs) suddenly emerge in full stride. There is a 50% chance they abandon the boar and decide to eat the PCs instead.
10	5d6 *Flesh Eating Vines* (see *Bestiary*) are growing here. They keep perfectly still until the party are among them before surging to life, desperate to strangle them and absorb their nutrients.
11	A nest of 1d6 *Giant Serpents* is located in the roots of some huge strangler fig trees. Their *Serpentman (Ssurloc)* handler might also be nearby (30%).
12	A band of *Serpentmen* (3d4 *Hraarsk* and 2d4 *Ssurlocs,* 10% chance of a *Noble (Razkarrt)*) are navigating through this area, on the way to a ley line junction.
13	One or more *Sabretooth Tigers* have been tracking the party for the last two hours, and are about to spring their attack (70% solitary hunter or 2d4 pack, including some cubs).
14	2d6 *Giant Apes* (see LFG p.120 *Owlbear* variant) are lounging beneath some towering kapok trees. They are fiercely protective of their territory.
15	A ravenous 40 ft *Tyrannosaurus Rex* is rampaging through the area. It makes a lot of noise before it arrives, and smaller creatures such as boar and monitor lizards flee before it.

16	A *Hydra* lairs here in a subterranean cave or pool with a clutch of recent hatchlings. They are very hungry.
17	From the east comes the sound of hundreds of tribal drums (50% human cannibals, 50% *skorn*).
18	A 15 ft stone statute, carved in the likeness of a hybrid serpentman, stares imperiously, its fanged jaws agape. The base of the statue is wrapped in vines, but the plants appear carefully tended rather than overgrown.
19	A wooden hut is set into the branches of an enormous kapok tree high above. Vines twisted into knotted ropes hang down to 9 ft above the jungle floor.
20	The crack and crash of great trees being broken and hitting the ground echoes from the west. From here, distant treetops can be seen bending or buckling as something truly colossal makes its way through the jungle. A humanoid scream begins and is quickly cut off.



Trackless Moors

1d20	TRACKLESS MOORS
1	*Quicksand* pool. The leading traveller must make a *Luck* (Dex) save or be sucked underwater, suffering 1 Con loss in the scramble to escape.
2	*Stinging insect swarm.* Each traveller must make a *Luck* (Con) save or contract *Febrile Rot*, a feverish wasting disease, suffering 1d4 Str loss each day. An apothecary might be able to cure the disease with the right healing herbs.
3	*Poisonous bog fumes.* Each traveller must make a *Luck* (Con) save or suffer 1d6 damage and a mild madness (LFG p.91) that persists for 1d4 months.
4	3d10 ravenous *Stirges* descend on the party in a buzzing swarm.
5	3d6 *Skorn* (60%) or 2d6 *Thuels* (as *Berserker*) are hunting in the area, using drums or horns to signal to each other. If combat begins, the other half of the war party (similar numbers) appears as

	reinforcements in 2d6 rounds.
6	5d4 *Projectile Leeches* lurking beneath shallow pools (50%), or 2d12 *Giant Centipedes* are concealed in ferns and bracken (50%).
7	A curious fog descends on the moorlands that persists for 1d4 hours. There is a 50% chance 2d4 *Will o' Wisps* appear from the gloom, hoping to lure travellers into sink holes or quicksand.
8	4d4 *Serpentmen* (Hraarsk), possibly with 1d4 *Ssurlocs* (40%), are ranging far from the Suurat Jungle, scouting the area for signs of ley lines.
9	2d4 *Giant Crocodiles* lie in ambush, fully submerged in the filthy swamp water but for their nostrils.
10	A nest of 1d6 *Giant Serpents* can be found nearby, including 1d4 baby serpents and 1d4 unhatched eggs the size of a man's hand (worth 1d4 x 100 gp each to the right buyer). The serpents will defend their brood at all costs.
11	*Hags* live nearby in a ramshackle hut made of mud bricks; either 1 (70%) or a Coven of 3 (30%). There is a 50% chance the hags foresaw the party's arrival, and are waiting for them with a prophetic message, threat or offer of mutual gain.
12	1d12 *Moor Trolls* wander these fens, searching for sentient flesh to feast upon. When pickings are scarce, they go into a state of dormancy and sink beneath the watery mud, waiting for prey to rouse them.
13	1d4 *Hammer Snails* (see *Bestiary*) come surging out of a wide thicket of bracken, crowberry or scattered birch trees, gliding towards the party with a sickening slurping noise.
14	2d6 amphibious *Giant Eels* (see *Bestiary*) emerge from dank, clouded pools, hoping to take a bite out of the adventurers before fleeing back into the muck.
15	A grove of 1d4 *Bloodroot Treants* are masquerading as bald cypress trees. They attempt to drown passers-by in shallow pools. Their red stained roots might tip off the wary.
16	1d8 *Claw Toads* (See Bestiary) are croaking loudly in the area, signalling to each other to gather for spawning, or alternatively to feast on the adventurers (or both).
17	A gigantic, half submerged dragon skeleton lies in the water. Although ancient and highly decomposed, a handful of scales remain intact, and could be worked into a shield, breastplate or helmet (any special properties at the GM's discretion).
18	A 10 ft wide pile of green brown refuse sits in the middle of a dark pool. Careful examination of the pile reveals a number of shiny objects within. Anyone approaching might notice ripples in the water, or tremors from the pile itself (a concealed *Slop Gorger*, see *Bestiary*).
19	An ancient mangrove tree has carvings of capering, demonic frogmen lording over humans. A number of roots have merged with an oaken chest (1 x Valuables, LFG p.147), sealing it shut more securely than any lock. There is a 50% chance 2d4+1 *Toadmen* (see *Bestiary*) are nearby the sacred ground, preparing to enact loathsome rituals.
20	A wooden hut stands elevated on stilts within a bog cluttered moor. Smoke rises from a small chimney, and light flickers behind a set of shutters. The insects here are eerily silent.

White Drifts

1d20	WHITE DRIFTS
1	A terrible *blizzard* lasting many hours erupts. Unless the party can find or build adequate shelter, each PC must make a *Luck* (Con) save or suffer 1d3 Con loss.
2	*Avalanche*! Each traveller suffers 4d6 damage (*Luck* (Dex) save for half).

3	A *crevasse* breaks open beneath the lead traveller, who must make a *Luck* (Dex) save or fall to the bottom (1d10 x 10 feet deep).
4	3d10 Varnori raiders (as *Human Guardsmen*) are travelling south on the way to Vorngard, pulling their gear on sleds.
5	A pack of 3d4 *Wolves* (70%) or 2d4 *Winter Wolves* (30%; as *Dire Wolves*) are tracking the party through the wastes, hoping the humans will suffer exhaustion before targeting the weakest member.
6	The smoke from a single campfire wafts into the air beyond the next rise. A mysterious explorer sits by the flames, a thick fur cowl pulled over their head.
7	2d4 *Ice Beetles* (as *Fire Beetles*, but deep blue and without any luminescence) are hibernating in frost covered shells. From a distance they look like 3 ft long snow mounds.
8	An encampment of 5d10 *Urgot*, led by an *Urgozer*, live nearby in a permanent hide skin encampment. In the desolate wastes, they practice dark and dangerous rituals, hidden away from the rest of the world.
9	2d4 *Frost Worms* (see *Bestiary*) are burrowing their way through the surface ice or snow, attracted to the party's foot tremors, hoping for a meal of warm flesh.
10	3d6 *Cyclopes* are scavenging here. They are outcasts from a large tribe in the Ironhull Mountains, and are looking to resettle. They are in a ferociously foul mood.
11	Lurking beneath the snow or ice is a *Black Pudding* that burrowed up from the earth before falling into a dormant state. Travelers approaching within 20 ft have a 50% chance of awakening the starving monstrosity.
12	An *Ice Bulette* (as *Bulette*, but amphibious and immune to cold damage) hunts in this region. If burrowing up through ice, the travellers feel the tremors and cracks at least one round before it arrives (if burrowing up through clear ice, they will see it).
13	A lumbering, shaggy, vicious 14 ft *Yeti* prowls here, hoping for warm flesh to feast upon (as *Owlbear*, but double hit points, *Off Turn Attacks* and immune to cold damage).
14	A *Roc* flies far overhead, scouring the white wastes for a suitably sized meal (it usually hunts frost giants, polar bears or mammoths). Humans however make for good entrees.
15	1d10 *Frost Giants* are traversing the snow or ice fields, on their way to an important meeting with other giant kin. It's been a long time since humans were on the menu.
16	A 15 HD *Water Elemental* (quasi ice) is gathering strength here. Unlike most of its kind, it has developed a degree of intelligence (Int 4), and will attempt to communicate with the adventurers. It is interested to learn about what lies beyond the white wastes.
17	A *Purple Worm* lies dormant beneath the ice, waiting for travellers of sufficient size or noise to awaken it.
18	A serpent like cave mouth is set into a rise, ridge or escarpment. Flickering torchlight can be seen within.
19	A ring of humanoid statues, seemingly made of ice, encircle a black, altar like rock. A yellowed, bone drinking horn sits atop the altar, covered in frost.
20	A breaking glacier has unearthed a metallic, 40 ft cylindrical object, mostly (or entirely) encased in a shelf of deep ice.

Region Events

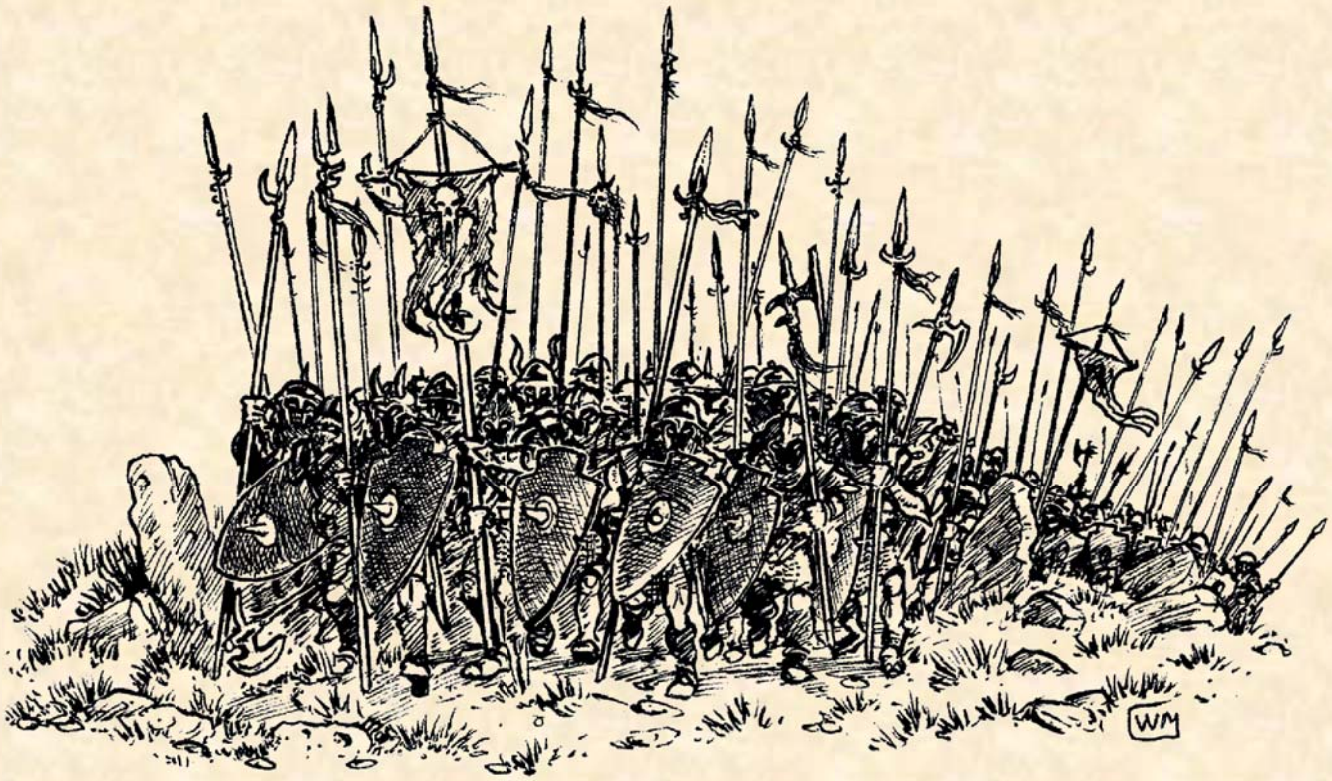
From time to time, in order to help convey that a sandbox setting is a living world, or to prompt action from NPCs or the party, the GM may announce a Region Event. These events are large scale and/or particularly important changes in the region, often with permanent and wide reaching effects.

The GM may roll on (or choose from) the table below at any time. Alternatively, there is a 30% chance of a Region Event every 3d4+6 months. Some events are tied to specific cities or locations, others the GM may place anywhere (or randomly determine which city, etc). The entries are examples only and GMs are encouraged to customise the table to suit their purposes.

1d20	Region Event
1	*The King is Dead.* Uldred of Crow's Keep dies suddenly from what appears to be heart failure, but talk of poison and Melek assassins are spreading like wildfire. The noble court is in uproar; Uldred was the last of his line, with no obvious successor; who will replace him? At least three families have staked their claim to the throne, and are already marshalling their forces. Civil war appears inevitable, but can the Midlanders afford to be killing each other with Nydissia prowling their border?
2	*Retching Fever.* A nightmarish plague is sweeping a random city, causing people to vomit blood and break out in agonizing welts. The source of the disease is unknown, but most infected die within the fortnight, feverishly weak and bedridden. The dead are burnt, the sick quarantined and forced to wear bells to warn of their approach. Despite this, more people are falling ill every day. Panic is setting in.
3	*Rebellion in Northgate.* The commoners of Northgate are in open revolt, rioting in the streets and seizing control of large sections of the city under the direction of Grand Librarian Bridonna. The people want the sorcerer and his Anointed dead or exiled, and believe the king has abandoned them. Most of the guard still take orders from the Anointed, but some are beginning to defect. The Stargazer has yet to make an appearance, and is holed up in his citadel.
4	*Boom Town.* A random city has unearthed a slew of new mines, including rare mithril. The influx of wealth tempts migrants to make the dangerous journey, greatly expanding the settlement's range of goods and services. As the favoured city grows in power, nearby neighbours suffer shortages that are unlikely to improve until a new political equilibrium can be found.
5	*Guild Showdown.* One of Port Brax's big three gangs (Red Hooks, Dockside Valkyries or Sumptown Rats) is destroyed by a series of unfortunate events and determined enemies. In the fall out, the two remaining guilds go to war in the streets, seizing the rare opportunity to destroy their biggest rival and seize full control of the city.
6	*Famine Crisis.* Fish disease and crop blight across the Argos basin leads to widespread famine. Over the next 24 months, one in four city folk die of starvation, malnutrition or infectious disease. Gangs, crime and desperation sky rocket, leading to heavily armed patrols, dusk curfews and grave sentences.
7	*Nydissian Invaders.* Imperator Setirus deploys thousands of soldiers from Melek, via the Trackless Moors, to lay siege to Crow's Keep. Catapults, trebuchets and similar war machines hammer the city day and night, as well as any ships within range. King Uldred

	bides his time, hoping for reinforcements from other Midlander cities before retaliating. In the meantime, residents are effectively trapped in a war zone.
8	*Empress' Games.* To celebrate the newly ascended *Empress Narcene*, Melek holds weeks of celebratory games in the Ogorien Fighting Pits. The spectacle includes gladiator battles, athletic contests, horse races, mock sea battles, sorcerer burnings and theatrical performances. Trade, migration and Lucentum membership swell, strengthening national pride, and redoubling Imperator Setirus' will to carve his mark on the region.
9	*Broken Circle.* One of the five ruling Houses of Dol-Karok (determine randomly) has been usurped; infiltrated and betrayed by House Fortuzo (previously a second tier house, specialising in medicine, herbalism, alchemy and poison). The fallen house is in ruins, its bloodline decimated, retainers scattered and assets seized to pay outstanding debts; there will be winners and losers in the fallout, affecting traders across the region. House Fortuzo wastes no time exploiting its new found power, extending envoys to all corners, seeking new alliances and opportunities.
10	*Karok's Doom.* The Mother Wyrm, a 120 ft colossus and progenitor of the plague worms, has awoken from hibernation since the First Age. All consuming hunger drives it to attack Dol-Karok, eating most of the residents and reducing the city to rubble. Karok refugees flood the lake cities, blindly fleeing what is later dubbed *Karok's Doom.*
11	*Varnori Invaders.* Jarl Osgerd sends a fleet of longships to attack Northgate, sinking Midlander vessels, pillaging half the city and blockading the northern lake. Thousands of Varnor's fearless warriors now occupy the western districts, fighting ongoing skirmishes with the remaining guard and Anointed. Even if the Varnori can be repelled, the losses are catastrophic. The Stargazer has called for reinforcements from Port Brax and Crow's Keep, but is otherwise yet to show his hand.
12	*Return of the Scaled Ones.* From the Hidden City in the Surrat Jungle, the serpentmen are re-emerging, revealing themselves for the first time in centuries. At long last, they have perfected their weather magic, lifting temperatures and humidity across the basin, shifting the climate back in their favour. In the Second Age when the Scaled Ones ruled, they enslaved the warmbloods for a thousand years. They mean to do so again.
13	*March of the Giants.* Hill giants and cyclopes from the high peaks of the Ironhull Mountains join forces and occupy the lower ranges, blocking mountain passes. They quickly lay siege to Dol-Karok, cutting off trade but unable to breach her great adamantine gates. The giants appear to be organised and act with purpose, but at whose direction, and to what end?
14	*Worse than Death. Gorgarsa*, the Witch of Drelnor, has been devoured by *Ulh-Rgaoon,* an alien entity that broke through the Veil (p.181). The aberration's continuing presence is bending reality, warping flesh and intensifying instincts to feast, mate and destroy. Waves of skorn, thuels and beasts are on the rampage, spearheading pockets of mindless carnage. The number of trade caravans that make it to Port Brax, Crow's Keep and Melek are halved, and those that arrive suffer heavy losses.
15	*Shenzu Outpost. Shenzu* warriors of the *Undying Sovereign* arrive suddenly from the east, invading the Argos Plateau and enslaving the local thuels. The fortified town of *Yin Dao* is swiftly erected, drawing increasing numbers of easterners, trade goods and services.
16	*Divine Prophet.* A mysterious woman appears in a random Midlander city, claiming to be the Prophet of Argona. Eye witnesses claim the prophet is able to work miracles: curing the sick, steadying the mind of the mentally ill, and even raising the dead. The church of Argona

	swiftly embraces the prophet, swelling their ranks, tithe coffers and political power.
17	*Pirate Fleet.* Pirates hidden in the eastern coves and inlets form an alliance to take control of Lake Argos, patrolling the western coast and blockading the cities. The freebooters demand outrageous tributes to allow traders' passage, and scuttle or commandeer all armed vessels they come into contact with. Lake based trade is halved, causing goods shortages and inflated prices as long as the pirates' accord remains intact.
18	*Skorn Horde.* Thousands of skorn emerge from the Spine of Ulgoth, gathering with those of the plains and moors to form an overwhelming horde. They target competing barbarian tribes first, wiping them out or driving them from the map. Once the horse lords of the plains are dealt with, they settle at the Rock of Gorzat, sizing up Port Brax.
19	*The Dragon.* An ancient, 100 ft dragon awakens from its artic slumber and razes Vorngard to the ground, burning and devouring everyone in sight. Those few that survive flee to the southern cities, never to return. The monster settles in the ruins, marking the north as its new domain while it gauges the rest of the region.
20	*Year of the Comet.* A fiery comet crash lands somewhere in the region with a boom that echoes across the basin. The meteor might be a prophetic sign, hostile aliens from a distant star, flesh melting ooze, robotic wizardry, magical metal, or anything else the GM wishes to introduce to the campaign world.

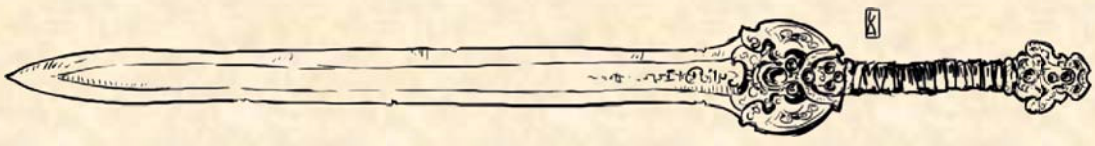


Rival Adventurers

Below are tables for making quick, simplified NPC adventurers. Each combat, a rival adventurer may use their class abilities a number of times as indicated in the relevant column (choose one ability to use each time). To Hit bonus is equal to HD, like any monster. Naturally the GM is free to tweak details or create NPC adventurers more consistent with the PC creation rules (note: NPC *Luck* usually relates to HD; see p.94 for guidance).

Class & Stats	Level	AC	HP	*Luck*	Class Abilities (Uses)	Main Weapon Armour
ARTIFICER Int 15 Dex 13 Other 10	1-3	14	4, 8, 12	4, 5, 6	*Hellfire glass* *Flash rig (2)*	Spear 1d6+1 Chain shirt
	4-6	14	16, 20, 24	7, 8, 8	*+ Fume flask* *Mutagen (3)*	Hammer 1d8+1 Scale shirt
	7-9	14	28, 32, 36	9, 9, 10	*+ Corroding spray* *Thunder gauntlet (4)*	Black powder weapon 4d4 Breastplate
	10-12	14	37, 38, 39	10, 11, 12	*+ Ironward* *Xray goggles (5)*	Chaintooth 2d4+1 Chain shirt
BARBARIAN Con 15 Str 15 Other 10	1-3	14	9, 18, 27	4, 5, 6	*Ferocious rage (2)*	Battle axe 1d8+2 Heavy hide, shield
	4-6	13	36, 45, 54	7, 8, 8	*Ferocious rage (3)*	Great axe 1d12+2 Monstrous chitin
	7-9	14	63, 72, 81	9, 9, 10	*Ferocious rage* *Second attack (4)*	Spear 1d6+3 Chain shirt, shield
	10-12	13	84, 87, 90	10, 11, 12	*Ferocious rage* *Second attack (5)*	Flail 1d8+2 Breastplate
BARD Cha 15 Str 13 Other 10	1-3	11	5, 10, 15	4, 5, 6	*Inspire greatness (2)*	Spear 1d6+2 Leather
	4-6	13	20, 25, 30	7, 8, 8	*Inspire greatness (3)*	Longsword 1d8+1 Chain shirt
	7-9	14	35, 40, 45	9, 9, 10	*Inspire greatness* *Rallying shout (4)*	Long bow 1d8 Scale shirt, shield
	10-12	13	47, 49, 51	10, 11, 12	*Inspire greatness* *Rallying shout (5)*	Great sword 1d12+1 Chain shirt
FIGHTER Str 15 Con 13 Other 10	1-3	15	7, 14, 21	4, 5, 6	*Deadly strikes* *Charger* *Two hander (2)*	Great Hammer 1d12+2 Chainmail
	4-6	16	28, 35, 42	7, 8, 8	*+ Single weapon style* *Ranged (3)*	Bastard sword 1d8+2 Splint armour, shield
	7-9	16	49, 56, 63	9, 9, 10	*+ Opportunist* *Protector* *Second attack (4)*	Heavy mace 1d8+2 Ringmail, shield
	10-12	15	66, 69, 72	4, 5, 6	*+ Dual weapons* *Rearguard (5)*	Sword & axe 1d8+2 Platemail

Class & Stats	Level	AC	HP	*Luck*	Class Abilities (Uses)	Primary Weapon Armour
MAGIC USER Int 15 Dex 13 Other 10	1-3	12	4, 8, 12	4, 5, 6	*Shield, Disguise self* *Hold person (3)*	Spear 1d6+1 Leather
	4-6	12	16, 20, 24	7, 8, 8	*+ Lightning bolt* *Ritual magic* *Suggestion (4)*	Longsword 1d8 Leather
	7-9	12	28, 32, 36	9, 9, 10	*+ Slow* *Cone of cold* *Wall of thorns (5)*	Shortsword 1d6 Studded leather
	10-12	11	37, 38, 39	10, 11, 12	*+ Conjure elemental* *Etherealness* *Control weather (6)*	Dagger No armour
MONK Will 15 Dex 15 Str 13 Other 10	1-3	12	5, 10, 15	4, 5, 6	*Acrobatics* *Mind over matter (2)*	2 x Unarmed 1d6+1 No armour
	4-6	12	20, 25, 30	7, 8, 8	*+ Redirect attack* *Moment of clarity (3)*	2 x Unarmed 1d6+1 No armour
	7-9	12	35, 40, 45	9, 9, 10	*+ Deflect projectile* *Stunning fist (4)*	2 x Unarmed 1d6+1 No armour
	10-12	12	47, 49, 51	10, 11, 12	*+ Channel spirit* *Perfection of will (5)*	2 x Unarmed 1d6+1 No armour
RANGER Perc 15 Dex 13 Str 13 Other 10	1-3	12	6, 12, 18	4, 5, 6	*Nature's venom* *Seasoned explorer (2)*	Throwing axe 1d6+1 Hide
	4-6	14	24, 30, 36	7, 8, 8	*+ Sharpshooter* *Veteran scout (3)*	Short bow 1d6+1 Reinforced leather
	7-9	14	42, 48, 54	9, 9, 10	*+ Cover fire* *Ranger's ointment (4)*	Long bow 1d8+1 Chain shirt
	10-12	14	56, 58, 60	10, 11, 12	*+ Off hand adept* *Slip away (5)*	2 x Axes 1d8+1 Chain shirt
ROGUE Dex 15 Str 13 Other 10	1-3	13	5, 10, 15	4, 5, 6	*Backstab, Finisher* *Quick reflexes* *Hidden blade (2)*	2 x Daggers 1d4+1 Leather
	4-6	13	20, 25, 30	7, 8, 8	*+ Cat's grace* *Unseen whip (3)*	Short bow 1d6+2 Leather
	7-9	13	35, 40, 45	9, 9, 10	*+ Rapid dose* *Smoke Bomb (4)*	Rapier 1d8+1 & Dagger 1d4+1 Studded Leather
	10-12	13	47, 49, 51	10, 11, 12	*+ Blind sense* *Glue pot (5)*	2 x Shortswords 1d6+1 Studded leather



Special Abilities

At the GM's option, an NPC adventurer might exhibit one or more of the following special abilities (GM's choice or roll 1d20):

1. *Scrapper*: Suffers half damage while staggered.

2. *Bloodletter*: Rolls double the normal number of melee damage dice (eg 2d8 for longsword).

3. *Warlord*: Advantage on Cha and Will related checks, including *Luck* saves. Allies within 60 ft gain advantage on morale checks.

4. *Eldritch Blood*: Advantage on all tests to resist magic, and/or the character's spells impose disadvantage on targets' saves.

5. *Ruinous Corruption*: Roll on the *Dark & Dangerous Magic* table, entry 99 or 100 (even chance).

6. *True Prodigy*: Contrary to the usual rules, this NPC may attempt one *Major Exploit* per combat. A targeted PC may make an appropriate *Luck* save to resist.

7. *Triple Threat*: May use any weapon or armour. Also annoyingly good looking.

8. *Shield Master*: May use a shield, and can negate up to two attacks before the shield requires repair.

9. *Void Conduit*: May cast one spell per combat (as Scroll, but only 1 spell).

10. *Warden*: Contrary to the usual rules, this NPC may attempt one *Rescue* per combat.

11. *Infamous*: Beheads or otherwise ensures defeated foes are definitely dead. If a PC is reduced to zero hp, the body must be recovered in one round or the adventurer dies.

12. *Mercurial*: Never grants enemies a free attack due to movement, and may turn an opponent's hit into a miss once per combat.

13. *Auspicious*: Once per combat, after the character attempts an action, may reroll any single die (eg attack or damage roll, save, Str check to grapple, etc).

14. *Back in Black*: If reduced to zero hp, unless the party ensures the NPC is definitely dead (eg beheading), she miraculously survives to fight another day.

15. *Treacherous Dog*: Advantage when attempting sneaky tactics or minor exploits such as tripping, throwing sand in eyes, using poison, etc.

16. *Lightning Reflexes*: The GM chooses when the NPC takes their turn instead of rolling initiative for them.

17. *Monstrous Ally*: The NPC has a loyal dire wolf, giant eagle, giant serpent or other monstrous ally that serves and protects them.

18. *Arcana Equipped*: The NPC has a random magical item (60% one shot, 40% permanent).

19. *Call for Backup*: When staggered, 2d6 allies break from nearby cover to assist the NPC (mercenary *Guard* LFG p.114).

20. *Doom Pact*: When reduced to zero hp, a horrifying monstrosity bursts forth from the corpse! (Roll on the *Dark & Dangerous Magic* table, entry 11).

Street Names

For those GMs that like to add street names to their city location descriptions, roll 1d12 three times, and consult the tables below (divided by culture):

Varnori Streets

1d12	NAME PART A	NAME PART B	SUFFIX
1	Blood	Hammer	Bend
2	Night	Spear	Road
3	Winter	Knife	Pass
4	Red	Run	Alley
5	Grim	Crest	Trail
6	Rum	Saw	Drung
7	Long	Axe	Hill
8	Grey	Helm	Square
9	Shadow	Moon	Row
10	Black	Wolf	Flat
11	Silver	Horn	Walk
12	Last	Fern	Way

Midlander Streets

1d12	NAME PART A	OPTIONAL PART B	SUFFIX
1	Willem	-ton	Street
2	Morgan	-berry	Road
3	War	-bran	Lane
4	Evers	-by	Alley
5	Loden	-son	Court
6	Rickers	-stern	Bridge

7	Butter	-wood	Way
8	Lorne	-gart	Square
9	Croft	-burne	Row
10	Dunn	-stein	Crescent
11	Foss	-mon	Point
12	Gibbs	-worth	Run

Dol-Karok Streets

1d12	PREFIX OR SUFFIX	NAME PART A	NAME PART B
1	Junction	Ancient	Stone
2	Passage	Grand	Jewel(s)
3	Tunnel	Shining	Gem(s)
4	Pass	Glittering	Iron
5	Chamber	Elder	Vein
6	Cavern	Silver	Barrow
7	Square	Brilliant	Ore
8	Hall	Gilded	Steel
9	Underpass	Golden	Anvil
10	Road	Venerable	Tomb
11	Corridor	Gleaming	Hand
12	Vault	Resplendent	Hammer

Nydissian Streets

1d12	PREFIX OR SUFFIX	NAME PART A	NAME PART B
1	Plaza	Noble	Clarity
2	Street	Imperial	Sun
3	Parade	Burning	Torch
4	Terrace	Glittering	Light
5	Boulevarde	August	Soldier
6	Court	Revered	Tome
7	Road	Iron	Thought
8	Arcade	Eternal	Imperator
9	Alley	High	Centurion
10	Avenue	Sovereign	Sword
11	Lane	Mighty	Shield
12	Row	Illuminating	Heart

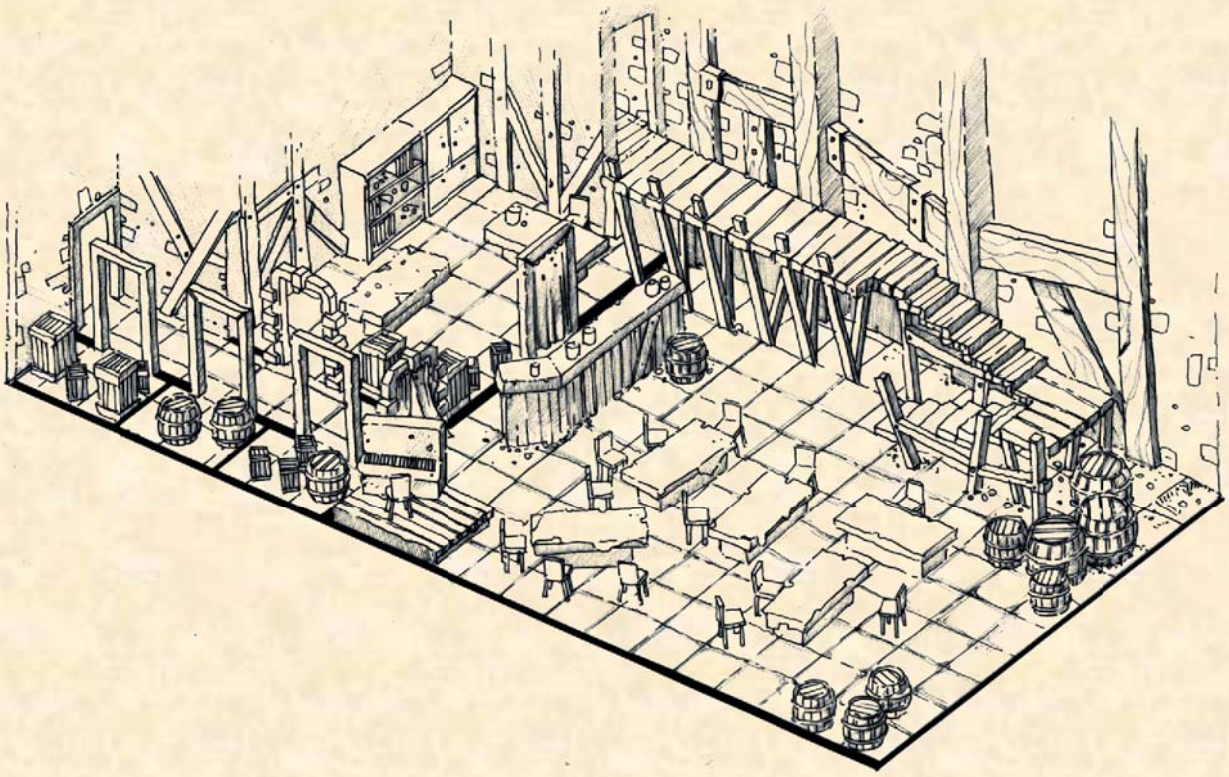
Taverns

TAVERNS		
1d20	Name	Details
1	The Red Flagon	Single storey, wooden. Small rooms with cheap food and ale. Eye catching bar wenches, some of whom double as informants. *Feature*: Seats are really hard and uncomfortable. No cushions. *Proprietor:* Lorne, Midlander, raven haired. Audacious jewellery, especially large earrings and clattering bangles.
2	The Naked Nymph	Two storey, stone. Large rooms, good food, cheap mead. Barkeep likes to sing to the patrons (regardless of the audience's wishes). *Feature*: Large mural of a Naked Nymph. *Proprietor*: Harper, Midlander, bald. Sings and smiles at everyone a lot, especially as he pockets their coin.
3	The Bloody Crow	Single storey, brick. Medium sized rooms, excellent food and wine. Card games with high stakes in the back room, overseen by Master Brick (barbarian behemoth, speaks limited common). *Feature*: Master Brick is ever present. *Proprietor*: Marcellus, Nydissian, ex-soldier. Always wears leather vambraces and carries a cleaver. Not overly talkative.
4	The Howling Moon	Two storey, wooden. Small rooms, some of which have bed mites. Standard food and ale. Proprietor keeps hounds (mostly friendly) in the common room. *Feature*: Hounds sit beside the best fire spots, under tables, or steal food from tables, but no-one seems to mind. *Proprietor:* Guntarr, Varnori, ex-sailor. Booming, infectious laugh.
5	The Yellow Lotus	Single storey, stone. Large rooms, high quality beds and linen. Expensive food, fine spirits. Wood carvings and other decorations have an exotic/eastern motif. *Feature*: Yellow Lotus tree growing in the corner by the window. *Proprietor:* Lu Shen, portly Easterner from distant lands, wears a silk vest with blossom theme, long moustache. Drinks herbal tea with a "secret ingredient" (alcohol). Curses in the *Shenzu* tongue (Wo Mai! Chen lo pa! Sing mun chu na!).
6	The Knife & Cudgel	Three storey, brick. Large rooms with quality locks. Standard food, cheap ale. The attic rooms have excellent views over town, and easy access to the rooftops. Hang out of local thieves. *Feature*: One of the back tables always seems to be occupied by a rotating crew of hard eyed, rough nut miscreants. *Proprietor:* Garrett "Stone Eyes", Midlander, a compulsive gambler, constantly complains about his family of twelve to provide for. Close ties with the local thieves' guild, who support him with loans and "jobs" to pass onto interested patrons.

7	The Laughing Weasel	Single storey, wooden. Small rooms with compact furniture. Good food and spirits, cheap prices, always draws a crowd. The proprietor maintains a second common room for women only. *Feature*: Heraldry shield with the star icon of Argona proudly hung above the fireplace. *Proprietor:* Krista, Midlander, ex-priestess of Argona. Believes in spreading good will as much as she is able.
8	The Hapless Hare	Two storey, stone. Standard rooms and fare, good mead. Regular trivia contest is widely regarded, with a new "champion table" appointed each month. *Feature*: Bar staff are exceptional, amiable and always at your table at just the right moment. *Proprietor:* Morgane, Midlander, highly flirtatious with both men and women. Always gesturing, touching and pointing.
9	The Bell & Bone	Single storey, brick. Standard rooms. Poor food, excellent ale. Cheap prices. The proprietor is also the resident apothecary and surgeon. He sometimes performs discreet patch ups in his back room after midnight. *Feature*: An enormous bronze bell on the bar counter, rung to indicate last drinks. *Proprietor:* Willett, Midlander, grey-haired and balding, slim, with spectacles. Sharp wit and a sharp tongue for fools. Soft spot for the young and old. Detests thuels.
10	The Half Cask	Two storey, wooden. Small rooms with threadbare blankets. Standard food, good ale cheaply priced. Arm wrestling is the favourite past time of the locals who are keen to test outsiders. *Feature*: The tables are worse for wear with all the arm wrestling; they creak incessantly. *Proprietor:* Samuel, Midlander, 4 ft 8 inches, wears high iron shod boots. Brand on his left arm for thievery.
11	The Broken Bottle	Single storey, stone. Standard rooms with barred windows and doors. Good food and ale at very reasonable prices. The proprietor has had run ins with the local crime boss, which has scared patrons away. *Feature*: This establishment is always quiet with few patrons. *Proprietor:* Susha, middle aged, silver hair, ex-adventurer and missing her left calf (peg leg). Tough as nails, likes a crude joke.
12	The Squat & Scorned	Two storey, brick. Standard rooms, standard food, cheap ale, finest whiskey in the region (expensive). Operates a charity food stall out back once a week. *Feature*: Pair of skorn skulls set into the front bar panel. *Proprietor:* Torzug, Thuel, roguishly handsome despite scarring on cheek. Loves a chat, broken common.
13	The Fiery Witch	Three storey, wooden. Large rooms, good food and ale at reasonable prices. The establishment is renowned for its drinking competitions, which the proprietor often wins.

		Feature: An enormous cold iron cauldron hangs over the fireplace. *Proprietor:* Peratese, Nydissian of advanced years, carefully trimmed grey goatee which he strokes while thinking. Mutters to the furniture from time to time.
14	The Bronze Monkey	Single storey, stone. Large rooms, good food and wine. Moderate prices. The proprietor is a prodigious smoker of pipe weed and instantly befriends those of similar inclination. *Feature*: The air is always filled with smoke, courtesy of Rorston. Large bronze monkey idol on the bar. *Proprietor:* Rorston, Midlander, has a nickname for everyone. Proud of his ability to blow smoke rings (gladly demonstrates).
15	The Affable Imp	Two storey, brick. Large rooms, standard food, cheap wine. Darts are very popular here; there is usually a game going day or night, often with wagers on the side. *Feature*: Bedroll in one corner that Vizanius sometimes takes advantage of (or is laid upon by patrons). *Proprietor:* Vizanius, Nydissian, middle aged with grey stubble, always in comfortable clothes and his apron. Suffers from narcolepsy, yawns, falls asleep over the bar, dozes off standing up, etc. Patrons and staff ensure he doesn't injure himself, especially with all the darts flying about.
16	The Hunting Harlot	Single storey, wooden. Standard size rooms but with quality bedding, poor food, excellent spirits at moderate prices. Congruent with the name, courtesans are often present. *Feature*: Bows, javelins and spears are fixed to the walls. An open but inoperative bear trap hangs above the fireplace. *Proprietor:* Ramsey, Midlander, late thirties, strong with broad shoulders. Previously a bounty hunter. Constantly complains that his sludding marks were easier to deal with than his patrons.
17	The Fat Hog	Two storey, stone. Large well appointed rooms, great food and ale, expensive prices. The Fat Hog's clientele are predominately of high social standing or wealth. There is a dress code most commoners cannot afford. *Feature*: Massive boar head above the bar. *Proprietor:* Master Wallace, an elderly gentlemen always impeccably dressed, always carrying his walking cane. Warm and sociable but cluelessly patronising towards commoners.
18	The Bull & Bear	Three storey, brick. Small rooms, standard food and drink at cheap prices. Rough and tumble establishment, with boxing and wrestling matches in the basement (coupled with enthusiastic gambling). *Feature*: Rows of long tables and benches only, no small tables or single chairs (harder to wield in bar fights). *Proprietor:* Rasturr, Varnori, blonde beard, 7 ft giant, clumsy. Always seems to be eating something.

19	The Old Barrow	Single storey, wooden. Standard rooms, food and drink, at standard prices. Always a few hard drinkers in here, on the way to passing out. *Feature*: An ancient, wooden wheelbarrow in the corner, which is used to carry out drunken scobs at closing time. *Proprietor:* Ms Elsbeth, Midlander, hates her life and complains to one and all about it. Hates her sludding patrons most of all, but they like her ales, and she likes their coin, so they put up with each other.
20	The Gilded Goat	Two storey, stone. Large rooms, standard food and ale at cheap prices. Very comfortable chairs and booths. The watch (on duty or off) are often found drinking and socialising here. *Feature*: Stuffed Goat hanging from the ceiling with a fancy waistcoat on. *Proprietor*: Bhernov, Varnori, outrageous red hair and platted beard. He thinks the goat, "Herg" is hilarious, and regularly dresses it in different clothes. Likes to slap others on the back to emphasize his point, or when he laughs.



Menus & Drinks

Tavern drinks include water (often not purified), cider (apple, alcoholic), beer (ale, lager, stout, porter, malt), wine (red, white, spiced), spirits (brandy, whiskey) or mead (honey, spiced). Tavern menus usually include one or more of the following: (i) heavy bread rolls (ii) cheese, (iii) salty broth, (iv) tart or pudding, (v) eggs, (vi) local seasonal fruit (apples, pears, plums, berries), plus:

1d20	TAVERN MENU
1	Bison Marrow Pie Eel in Spicy Broth Pork Sausage with Thuel Salad Best Brew: *Lost Roads Lager (pale & bitter)*
2	Mutton Shoulder with Spicy Radish Beef Meatballs in Red Wine Liver Pie with Onion Experiment Best Brew: *Kerzog's Maltmilk (dark with hints of caramel, dangerously potent)*
3	Roast Bream with Potatoes Frolicsome Pastries Venison with Mystery Gravy Best Bottle: *Huffnaggle's Own (white wine, sharp & fruity)*
4	Lucky Cuts of Boiled Bison Sturgeon in Onion Sauce Chicken Stew with Mash Best Brew: *Balls Out Stout (dark, bitter, potent)*
5	Rabbit Strips with Foreign Beans Beef Ribs with Onion & Spinach Sheep Tongue with Crispy Taters Best Brew: *Wolfpack Porter (dark, fruity & dry)*
6	Perch with Lemon Bacon Soup with Carrots Grilled Crayfish with Butter Best Brew: *Huge Ox Ale (reddish amber & full bodied)*
7	Boiled Pox Pigeon Cheese & Spinach Pastries Honeyed Hare with Orange Rind Best Brew: *Icematron Ale (very pale, dry & unforgiving)*
8	Rat on a Stick Snail & Slug Stew Ox Tail & Ledergrass Soup Best Brew: *'Shroom Water (bitey & strangely potent)*
9	Roast Pig in Napple* Sauce Venison with Shredded Carrot Crispy Potatoes in Garlic Sauce Best Bottle: *Boffknocker Red (soft, supple plum flavour)* **Not Apple*
10	Spicy Beef with Curiously Shaped Vegetables Duck with Orange Sauce Bison & Spinach Pie Best Bottle: *Silverfern White (crisp, clean & fruity)*
11	Chicken with Spiced Potatoes Ham on the Bone with Gravy Green Salad with Taste Best Brew: *Magnar's Fist (pale ale, crisp & highly potent)*
12	Beef, Onion & Cabbage Rolls Special Mushrooms with Good Time Garlic & Basil Bison Best Brew: *Old Renny (honey mead, heavy & sweet)*
13	Mutton Ale Stew Spinach Pie with Interesting Gravy Pork Sausage with Pickled Cabbage Best Bottle: *Son o' Gantrix* (spiced red wine, smooth with tones of nutmeg & cinnamon)
14	Roast Boar with String Beans Barley Porridge with Goat's Cheese Vegetable Stew with Wonder Chunks Best Spirit: *Morrigan's Delight (potent, smokey whiskey)*

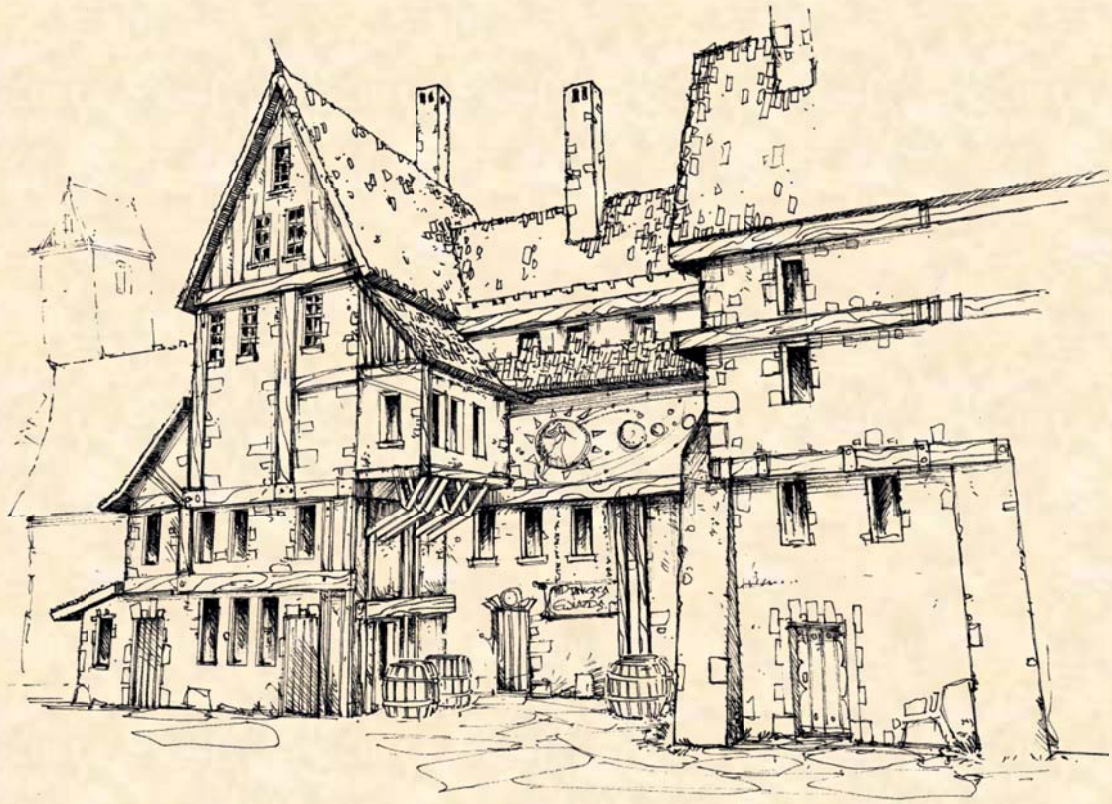
15	Braised Hare with Spiced Cabbage Blood Sausage in Rousing Broth Left Over Goose with Roasted Almonds Best Wine: *Northgate's Finest (red, pungent and spicy)*
16	Probably Chicken with Pinenuts Pork Tenders with Pear Sauce Fresh Cod & Artichokes Best Spirit: *Thulgor's Nectar (brandy; smooth, rich and fruity)*
17	Seared Trout with Lemon Ginger Venison in Suspicious Grit Braised Duck with Green Peas Best Brew: *Port Brax Draft (spiced mead, dark and heavy with a cinnamon zest)*
18	Boiled Lettuce and Cheese Curd Beef Shanks with A Spicy Something Roasted Pheasant with Garlic Butterball Best Brew: *Slackjaw Scrumpy (highly potent apple cider)*
19	Fresh Turnip Stew sans Stew Buttered Crayfish with Shredded Parsnips Husky Sausage Puree Best Brew: *Crawjack's Libation (cloudy ale, refreshingly zesty)*
20	Boar Skewers with Roasted Hazelnuts Cuttlefish Soup with Extra Tentacles Chicken & Saffron Gruel Best Brew: *Westrun Remedy (blonde ale, light and crisp)*

Tavern Brawls

If (when) the party becomes involved in a tavern brawl, the GM might like to use the following table to spice things up. Have a different player roll at the start of their turn each round.

1d20	BAR BRAWL
1	*Break it up.* 3d6 guards enter the tavern, putting an end to the brawl.
2	*KO!* The PC is knocked out by a lucky haymaker for 2d6 rounds (*Luck* (Con) save resists).
3	*Wear the Chair.* A brawler breaks a chair on the PC (roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table, ignore permanent results, *Luck* (Con) save resists)
4	*Pile on!* 2d4 brawlers pile onto the PC, pinning them down (helpless, Str contest vs Str 16 to resist).
5	*Grunnit*, a skinny thief skirting the edges of the brawl, yells out 3 to 1 odds on the PC being the last to be knocked out. 1d6 brawlers take up the wager and converge on the PC.
6	*Bloody ruffians!* One of the bar staff whacks a PC on the head with a skillet, stunning them (lose next action).
7	*Where'd you come from?* A small dark haired child, *Rani*, suddenly scuttles out from under a table, about to be crushed by a toppling brawler! (Dex check to intervene).
8	*Fire!* A shattered lantern flares in some spilt alcohol, setting part of the tavern on fire!
9	*Looters.* The PC glimpses the tavern owner unconscious on the floor, being looted by an opportunistic brawler.
10	*Cat Projectile!* A flying feline rockets across the tavern, claws outstretched, latching onto the PC's head (blind, spend an action to make a Str check to remove).
11	*Duck!* A shower of mugs, bottles and plates hurtle across the tavern. All PCs

	must make a Dex check or suffer 1d8 damage.
12	*Who is that?* A mysterious patron in a deep hood sits unperturbed in the midst of the fight, eating stew as the brawl rages around them.
13	A bard, *Devin*, begins beating his drum, breaking into song as the brawl unfolds. All brawlers gain advantage on their next attack.
14	*Cutpurse!* An opportunistic pick pocket tries to steal something from the PC (Perc (Detection) contest vs Dex 15).
15	*Hard Steel.* One of the PC's opponents turns serious, pulling a knife.
16	The biggest, meanest looking warrior in the tavern (Fighter 3+) cracks the head of his current foe before pointing at the PC and nodding enthusiastically.
17	*Bitey.* An old woman with crazy eyes suddenly bites at the PC from under a nearby table, causing 1d4 damage and tripping them (Dex check resists).
18	*Bar Slide!* The PC is grabbed by three brawlers and thrown across the bar, knocking off mugs and plates (1d6 damage and lose 1 Dex, *Luck* (Con) save resists).
19	*Window exit!* The PC is hurled out the nearest window into the street (Str contest vs Str 15 resists). 50% chance of being knocked out for 1d6 rounds.
20	*Surprise Refreshment.* In the rafters, a mischievous child pours a pitcher of ale on the PC, along with a cheeky grin. The PC restores 1d6 hp (regains consciousness if at zero hp, or if otherwise knocked out/incapacitated).



Weather

For starting weather, roll 1d8 with a -1/-2 modifier in especially hot climates, or a +1/+2 modifier in very cold climate. GMs might also consider a 1 point modifier to reflect the season.

STARTING WEATHER	
1d8	Weather
-1	Extreme Heat/Wildfire
0	Severe Heat/Humid
1	Hot and Sunny
2	Clear and Sunny
3	Warm, partly cloudy
4	Warm and Cloudy
5	Cool and Cloudy
6	Cold, Cloudy and Windy
7	Rain (and/or Fog 50%)
8	Thunderstorm
9	Snow
10	Heavy Snow/Blizzard

Shifting Weather

After determining starting weather, roll 1d12 on the following table at the end of each day, week or other interval (GM discretion) to determine if/how the weather shifts.

SHIFTING WEATHER	
1d12	Weather Change
1	Much Hotter
2	Warmer
3	Similar but Drier
4	Similar but More Humid
5	Similar but Less Windy
6	Similar
7	Similar or reroll on Starting Weather Table (50%)
8	Similar but Windier
9	Similar but Less Humid
10	Similar but Wetter
11	Cooler
12	Much Colder

Micro Climates

As noted in the region descriptions, some geographic locations have entrenched weather conditions (for example, the *Surrat Jungle* is predominately hot, humid and wet all year round). In such instances the GM might skip the Starting Weather table.

Catastrophic Weather

Truly catastrophic weather such as cyclones, tsunamis, etc are left to GM discretion/reserved as plot devices.

Wilderness Exploration

For GMs seeking further guidance on wilderness navigation, some abstract rules appear below. Note these are supplementary to LFG p.160.

Each day the party are in the wilds, the following process (or similar) applies:

(i) Roll on the *Weather* table to determine starting or changing weather, which may impact on choice of objective, random encounters, ease of navigation, etc,

(ii) PCs choose a specific site or area at large that they wish to reach/investigate,

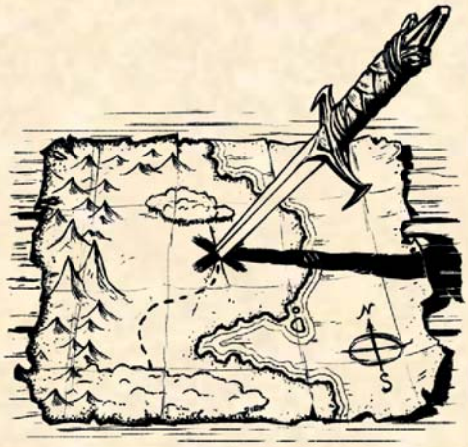
(iii) PCs pick a route for the day, often requiring choices between terrain, travel speed, distances, and likely dangers. An Int (Wilderness Lore) check might be required to stay on course and avoid becoming lost. If the party becomes lost, they lose 1 day of travel doubling back to regain their bearings, and roll on the *While You Were Lost* table below. Whether lost horses, hirelings, etc are able to be recovered etc is left to GM discretion.

(iv) Check for *Random Encounters* by terrain. The simplest approach is to roll twice, once for day and night. If an encounter occurs and the particular hour is important, roll 1d12.

(v) PCs make camp to rest. If a random encounter occurs while some PCs are asleep, randomly determine which PC is on sentry duty at the time.

Whilst travelling, the PCs might get up to a number of things including scouting, sneaking, foraging, talking to NPCs, and so on. At the GM's discretion, the party's travel speed (slow & careful, normal, fast & reckless, etc) might impose modifiers on such activities.

WHILE YOU WERE LOST	
1d12	**Event**
1	Roll for Shifting Weather.
2	The party loses another day whilst lost. Roll again.
3	A random encounter occurs.
4	1d4 horses or other animals are lost, injured or fall ill (equal chance, not including ranger pets).
5	1d2 hirelings or NPCs are lost, injured or fall ill (equal chance, not including important NPCs).
6	A random encounter occurs.
7	One PC loses/uses up a random mundane item or bundle of items (climbing gear, rope, torches, etc).
8	One PC suffers exhaustion, losing 1 point of Str, Dex or Con (equal chance).
9	A random encounter occurs.
10	1d4 PCs' rations/water supplies are lost or used up (parasites, etc).
11	One player regales the group with a travel montage, a tale about their background, or other worldbuilding.
12	A random encounter occurs, then roll again.



ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

The final chapter contains fifty "adventure frameworks"; stand alone, episodic adventure sites or situations for the GM to sprinkle around the Midlands to assist in running a sandbox style campaign.

The mini adventures are arranged by geography type (mountains, forests, cities, etc), and most have a suggested location, but are easily moved to similar sites (eg a Drelnor Forest adventure could be switched to the Wistwood or other woodland, etc).

All of the scenarios come with suggested "hooks" (rumours etc) to get the PCs involved, and provide enough information for the GM to run the adventure with minimal prep. In combination with the other tools in this book, the GM has everything they need to play these scenarios "off the cuff", improvising and expanding as desired.

Note that, consistent with the *Low Fantasy Gaming RPG* rules, the adventures are not divided up according to level (although some are clearly harder than others). If the party gets in over their heads, they may simply have to flee or otherwise abandon their intended course (likely with some fallout or opportunity cost). In a sandbox campaign, there are always other options that the party might pursue, including published modules, the GM's custom adventures, and player instigated side treks or quests.

Note that the frameworks do not include boxed text. This is by design and intended to encourage GMs to paraphrase and use natural speech, blurring the line between pre-planned and impromptu material. Further, where maps are provided, there are no grids simply because it is easier to add a grid (via free software such as GIMP 2.8, Roll20, etc) than it is to remove one.

Starting a New Campaign

For those interested in tips about starting a new campaign, and/or sandbox games in particular, I commend to you the many excellent RPG blogs and forums of the internet! In this limited space, I offer three suggestions.

Firstly, holding a "Session zero" before kicking off an adventure can work wonders. The opportunity to have an open discussion about the upcoming campaign, and what everyone would like out of it, helps align expectations.

A Q&A about genre, campaign style, GM style (including the possibility of rotating GMs), deadliness, approach to rulings on specific topics (eg how does the GM adjudicate stealth, noticing secret doors, social interactions), dice rolling protocols (in secret, in the open, or in between?), character creation, house rules, and so on will help ensure everyone is on the same page.

Secondly, for a new sandbox campaign, try not to overprepare. Offering the party three hooks relating to nearby adventures should be plenty to get a game underway. Familiarise yourself with the random encounter tables, just in case the players don't bite, and have an adventure in your back pocket that "comes to them" if the players are indecisive. *Hunt for Lord Hargraves* (p.163) might be a good back up; it has some inherent urgency, low physical danger, and can be run in the PC's starting city (assuming they start in one).

Most important of all, remember we do this for fun with friends. Have a few drinks, roll some dice, and try not to smile too much when your next troll eats one of the hirelings. Enjoy.

Rumour Table

If the GM wishes to generate random rumours, simply roll on the table below and refer to the relevant adventure framework later in this chapter. Depending on the party's present location, certain adventures may not be suitable, or require tweaking. GMs are encouraged to add further rumours relating to custom-made and published adventures, as well as the occasional false entry, to keep players guessing.

RUMOUR TABLE		
1d8	**Adventure Location**	**Rumour Page Number**
1	Cities	Roll 1d6: 1. It Came from the Sewers (p.149) 2. Delecarte's Carnival of Wonders (p.154) 3. Door of Varg-Sharsûni (p.161) 4. Hunt for Lord Hargraves (p.163) 5. Red Hooks' Tourney (p.166) 6. Warehouse Heist (p.177)
2	Forests & Woods	Roll 1d8: 1. The Witch of Drelnor (p.181) 2. Missing Merchant (p.182) 3. Shrine of the Horned Beast (p.184) 4. Riverstone Village (p.191) 5. Forest Runes (p.194) 6. Morgak's Monolith (p.195) 7. Wizard's Portal (p.197) 8. River Run (p.199)
3	Ice & Snow	Roll 1d3: 1. The Key to Creation (p.202) 2. Varn Karagoss (p.205) 3. Mammoth Hunt (p.211)
4	Jungles	Roll 1d6: 1. Spire of the Void Caller (p.213) 2. Into the Furnace (p.223) 3. Drums in the Jungle (p.231) 4. A Fallen Star (p.232) 5. Mark of the Ancients (p.235) 6. Keeper of Skulls (p.240)
5	Lakes & Rivers	Roll 1d8: 1. Silverfane Cove (p.243) 2. The Lake Below (p.249) 3. Eventide Isle (p.255) 4. Haunted Mine (p.263) 5. Shipwreck (p.266) 6. Babe on the Water (p.268) 7. Battle for Rivertop p.270) 8. Reroll or GM special

6	Mountains & Hills	Roll 1d8: 1. Prison of Yol-Uzarc-Drem (p.277) 2. Gap of Garrios (p.281) 3. The Black Lake (p.284) 4. Cloudcrag (p.287) 5. Dornhold (p.294) 6. Twin Horns Plateau (p.296) 7. Caverns of Melusiah (p.299) 8. Pillar Pass (p.305)
7	Plains	Roll 1d8: 1. The Ruddy Rooster (p.309) 2. Yashnarg's Gambit (p.312) 3. Chamber of Eight (p.314) 4. Old Bengart's Mill (p.320) 5. Green Crystal Tower (p.323) 6. Wayfarers (p.324) 7. Betrayal at Siradorn (p.327) 8. Reroll or GM special
8	Swamps & Moors	Roll 1d6: 1. Izranorae's Tree (p.336) 2. Dead Tree Grove (p.341) 3. Vault of Graxus (p.342) 4. Gift of the Silent God (p.349) 5. Pond of the Moon Pixies (p.354) 6. Ruin of the Nine Skulls (p.357)

CITIES

(1) IT CAME FROM THE SEWERS

Rumours & Hooks:
A number of sailors have gone missing recently, spooking the dock locals. Some say the "lost" abandoned ship and stowed away to fairer climes, but others say something took them. Something from the sewers.

The *Shanks*, a thieves' guild specialising in smuggling and fencing stolen goods, is said to have a secret warehouse in the sewers. Might be worth a quiet visit.

Dock workers report a stray dog was found dead in an alley near the harbour, with a trio of giant, one ft leeches attached to its husk.

Dwellers Below

The extensive sewer complex of *Port Brax* is not generally a place for people; it's dark, filthy, smelly and foul - literally doused in refuse. But for some, these underground tunnels provide a shunned and secret sanctuary.

The Shanks gang, for instance, have excavated a hidden strongroom beneath the city. Close to large drains emptying into the harbour, and a short hop onto smugglers' ships (or vice versa), the sewers play a valuable role in their bootlegging operations.

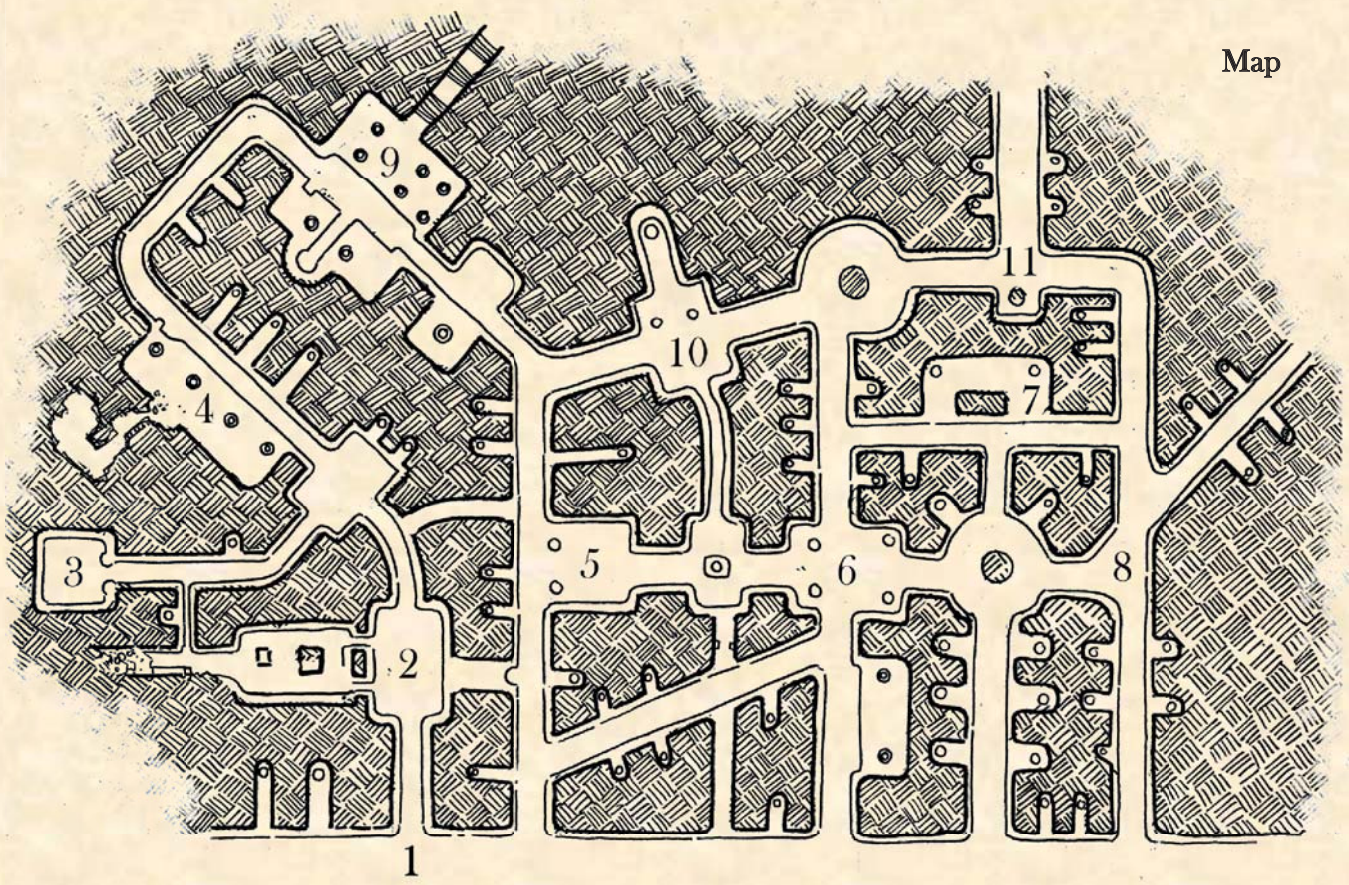
But worse than thieves lurk in the wretched undercity, and sometimes they emerge, hungry for a warm meal.

In recent weeks, a number of sailors, dock workers and street walkers have gone missing, care of a newly arrived *Slop Gorger*. The monstrosity swam into the sewer complex via *Lake Argos*. With refuse, offal and humans readily available for eating, the thing has made itself a den, and begun preparations to spawn more of its kind. The shanks know that something awful lives in the eastern tunnels, but so far it hasn't braved the flickering of their torch flames. Still, the smugglers steer well clear, and have trapped Area 10 to dissuade it wandering their way. With easier meals to be found elsewhere, the gorger has mostly left them alone (for now).

The adventurers might become involved in this adventure by (i) hearing about the shank's secret warehouse (and want to break into it, or hire smuggling services), (ii) investigate rumours of giant leeches killing a favourite family pet, or (iii) being hired by guardsmen (who have zero interest in searching the sewers) to rule out "wild claims" that "something down there" is behind a spate of missing locals.

Sewer Access & Conditions

Entry to the sewers is easiest via the large outlets opening into the harbour, but barred drains and 2 ft diameter manholes are also scattered about the city streets. At the GM's discretion, manholes and drains might grant access to anywhere on the map marked with small circles.



During the day, the sewers are poorly lit via filtered sunlight from overhead drains, imposing disadvantage on sight based checks. At night the tunnels are completely dark. The passages echo with the sounds of dripping, bugs skittering, and unseen things slurping through the muck. As might be expected, the stench is awful and overpowering at the best of times.

The sewer is constructed of cut stone, carefully laid hundreds of years before, when the city was first raised. The ceilings are roughly 8 ft high. Most of the sewer has narrow 1 ft walkways running alongside the walls, albeit these are often slippery with filth, especially after a powerful storm. Those wanting to wade through the channels of muck will generally find them a few feet deep. The pool chambers are the "slushiest".

Random Encounters

While the party explores the sewers, there is a 30% chance of a random encounter every 20 minutes. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

1. A single *Dire Rat* (LFG p.121) quietly sniffing out smaller rodents for eating.

2. 1d4 *Shanks* ferrying goods to/from the strongroom in Area 9.

3. A *Giant Spider* (LFG p. 125) has set up home here, spinning webs across the corridor, hoping to ensnare something juicy.

4. A shrill scream echoes throughout the whole of the sewer complex, abruptly cut off.

5. A *Ssurloc Hatchling* (*Serpentman*) is wandering the sewers as if lost (as Serpentman, LFG p.123, but 2 ft tall, 1 HD, 1d4 + poison damage, S8, I5).

6. 2d4 *Green Slimes* (LFG p.112) are stuck to the ceiling, hoping to drop onto living

creatures moving underneath (or fling foul slime up to 30 ft).

7. 2d12 *Giant Centipedes* (LFG p.102) are swimming in the refuse, engaging in mating rituals. They respond poorly to being interrupted.

8. 3d6 *Vampire Bats* (LFG p.100) come screeching down the tunnels, drawn to the party's warm bodies.

Area 1 – Main Entry

Several 5 ft wide, 8 ft tall tunnels are used for easy maintenance access, crisscrossing beneath the city. Some light filters into these entryways, but further in the sewers are more dimly lit The sound of ships and dock workers resonates in these entry tunnels, but soon quietens.

Area 2 – Leech Pool

This 10 ft by 20 ft chamber is the home of 3d4 *Projectile Leeches*. They are hiding in the sewer water (automatic surprise, unless the PCs take steps to test the refuse pool with a long pole or similar). The leeches will attempt to feed on the party if given the chance.

Projectile Leech, AC 10, HD 1, Bite 1d3 + blood drain, 19: the leech latches onto the target's face, causing an eye injury; (*Luck* (Con) save resists, with advantage if wearing a helm), S10 D10 C16 I2 P14 W8 Ch3 L3, Mv 20 ft inc walls, ceiling, etc. May launch up to 10 feet to attack. Immune to bludgeoning damage. On a hit, latches on automatically causing 1d4 damage and 1 Con loss each turn. A Str contest (Str 16) at disadvantage removes the parasite. Alternatively, salt, fire or acid automatically kills the leech.

Area 3 – Roach Nest

A swarm of 6 inch cockroaches are nesting here. The insects hide in the walls or under refuse until disturbed, at which point they come swarming out from everywhere – under detritus, cracks in the walls, out of the water, etc. The chittering mass scuttle past the party in a panicked attempt to find a new hiding place. The swarm is harmless, but noisy, and might alert other nearby creatures.

Area 4 – Giant Rat Den

3d6 *Giant Rats* have made their home in the small dug out cave to the west. The bones of smaller mammals are scattered about the vicinity.

Giant Rat, AC 11, HD 1d4 hp, Bite 1d3, 19: another Giant Rat (60%) or Dire Rat (40%) comes to aid this one, S3 D14 C8 I2 P14 W6 Ch4 L3, Mv 40 ft. A giant rat bite has a 50% chance of carrying *Flaking Rot* disease, causing 1d4 Str loss each day until bedridden at zero Str. A *Luck* (Con) save resists. An apothecary may be able to cure the disease with the right healing herbs.

Area 5 – Jelly in Waiting

This approximately 20 ft by 15 ft chamber is particularly foul smelling, burning the hairs on the inside of one's nostrils.

An *Ochre Jelly* is hibernating at the bottom of this pool area. Warm blooded humanoids will rouse it from slumber, hungry for a meal.

Ochre Jelly, AC 11, HD 8, Pseudopod 2d8, 19: the jelly splits in two, S18 D10 C16 I2 P13 W16 Ch1 L9, Mv 30 ft inc walls, ceiling, etc. Jellies absorb any adventurer reduced to zero hit points in one round, making recovery of the body

impossible. They are immune to fire and split in two via cold damage (divide hit points in half).

Area 6 – Noxious Fumes

This 15 ft by 20 ft pool of wretchedness is releasing bubbles of noxious gas (caused by an unfortunate mix of refuse and alchemical ingredients). Passing through this chamber has a 50% chance of releasing headache inducing fumes, requiring a *Luck* (Con) check to avoid nausea (-1 penalty on all checks) for 1d6 hours.

Area 7 – Wererat

A solitary wererat has made her home here, lined with straw, flee ridden blankets and the clothes of dead victims. *Narci* was once a beggar on the city streets, but was bitten by a nomadic lycanthrope before the beast moved on. She has until the next full moon before the change is permanent. In the meantime, Narci struggles between her human and bestial urges, slowly turning mad in the bowels of the city.

Narci, Wererat, AC 12, HD 3, Bite 2d3 and Knife 1d4, 19: a giant rat comes to Narci's aid, S14 D18 C10 I13 P14 W10 Ch8 (Hybrid), L6, Mv 30 ft. Narci is a lycanthrope with the usual benefits (LFG p.95). By spending an action, she may exert control over and issue orders to ordinary rats, giant rats and dire rats, which are compelled to obey. Wererats are extremely sneaky and gain advantage on Stealth checks. Narci carries 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.141).

Area 8 – Floating Corpse

A bloated corpse is floating here in the channel. It is still clothed but lacks any pouches or weapons. An Int (General Lore) check recognises the body as that of *Iaine*; an old farmer that went missing three days ago. The widow would surely like to know the fate of her husband. Inspection of the body reveals deep cutting wounds around the neck and kidneys (Int (Apothecary) check confirms the wounds were made by knives or similar weapons).

Area 9 – Shank's Strongroom

Shank novices or members serving punishment for some transgression are often "sentenced" to guarding this area by the guildmaster. Today there are 1d3 young rogues doing their time. If just one thief is present, there is a 50% chance he/she is in an intoxicated sleep.

Shank, AC 12, HD 1, Shortsword 1d6 19: disarm, S10 D13 C10 I11 P13 W9 Ch10 L4, Mv 30 ft. Shanks have a 40% chance of carrying 1d3 doses of giant centipede poison (LFG p.102).

Since the gorger appeared, the thieves keep burning torches on hand, the flickering of which is easily spotted from afar. The north eastern steps are trapped by way of tripwires (dimly lit, imposing disadvantage on Perc checks). The wires connect to bells in the hall, forewarning other shanks of approaching danger.

The steps end in a barred wooden door. Breaking down the door is difficult (Str check at disadvantage, requires 3 successful checks, or 2 with an axe). Alternatively the party might extract the secret knock from the rogue sentries, and fool their way in.

Inside is an excavated 30 ft by 50 ft hall, lined with crates, baskets and shelves of trade goods.

There are 2d4 shanks working here (cataloguing items, appraising, deciding what to smuggle out next, etc). One of these is the shift manager *Norsen* (Midlander, lithe, quick left hander, as shank but 5 HD, Off Turn Attacks, 1d6 doses of giant centipede Poison. May choose from the following Rogue tricks three times per combat: *Choking Dust, Hidden Blade, Quick Reflexes, Rapid Dose, Unseen Whip).*

The strongroom contains 1 x Valuables and 1 x 4 HD Lair Treasure (LFG p.147, 140).

Area 10 – Fire Trap

This 10 ft by 15 ft chamber has been trapped by the shanks, in the hopes of keeping the gorger in Area 11 away. The western, eastern and southern arches are rigged with tripwires, running up the walls to a cache of fire pots on the ceiling (corners and centre).

The pots and/or wires running up the walls can be spotted with a Perc check at disadvantage if an adventurer is moving cautiously. If triggered, the fire pots drop and explode, causing 5d6 damage to anyone in the chamber or within 5 ft of an entry (*Luck* (Dex) save for half). The alchemical fire mixes with the refuse to burn for another 1d4 rounds before extinguishing itself. Needless to say, the explosion echoes throughout the whole complex, and the street above. There is a 40% chance guards or other curious bystanders investigate (via the northern manhole).

Area 11 – Slop Gorger Den

This junction is relatively clean of waste, on account of the resident slop gorger eating it. The monster is either asleep in the northern tunnel, or if it has heard the party approach, is waiting to ambush them at the junction.

Slop Gorger, AC 13, HD 9+2, 3 Tentacles 1d8+1 and Bite 3d4, 19: Random limb is crushed, breaking bones (per *Injuries & Setbacks* table entry 2 or 3), S19 D8 C17 I3 P10 W9 Ch3 L10, Mv 30 ft or 40 ft swim. On a hit, the target

must make a *Luck* (Con) save or catch *Bulging Veins* disease (after 1d6 hours, the target suffers 1 Cha loss, 1 Int loss, and a serious madness. These effects persist for 1d4 months). An apothecary might halve the disease duration with the right healing herbs. See the *Bestiary* for more details.

If the tunnel is investigated, the half eaten bodies of some of the recent missing can be found beneath the water (1 x Carry Loot, LFG p.136). 2d4 gorger egg sacks are also present (due to hatch in a few months, worth 100 gp each to the right buyer).

Aftermath

If the party steal from the shanks, the guildmaster will attempt to track down the culprits and make an example of them (by cutting one of their hands off, for instance). Whether the adventurers can be identified will depend on a number of circumstances, including whether they left any survivors, where and how they fence the stolen loot, etc.

If the slop gorger is not dealt with, its baby gorgers hatch in a few months, which leads to a Bulging Veins outbreak, and further missing persons in the docks area. Eventually the gorgers spread to other parts of the city, ultimately forcing the guard to investigate and deal with the problem.

(2) DELECARTE'S CARNIVAL OF WONDERS

Rumours & Hooks
Lady Ignis, an influential noble and powerful money lender, has offered a sizable bounty for the capture of *Mathias the Viper*, a fugitive criminal.

A town crier bellows *"Hear ye, hear ye! Delecarte's Carnival of Wonders is leaving soon! Goggle at the Giant Gators! Puzzle at the Moustached Lady! Behold the Giant Egg of Corvex! Delight at Grumpleton's Magic! More Marvels than the Gods Know What to Do With! Just three days left! Three days only! Two Silvers Entry, or Three with the Grand Event! Tickets Here! Get your Tickets Here!"*

Mathias the Viper

Lady Ignis, a wealthy money lender in *Crow's Keep*, has an urgent task for the adventurers. She wishes to hire them to hunt down the fugitive known as *Mathias the Viper,* accused of murdering Ignis' husband *Gustarn* three nights earlier (in her experience the city watch are blithering, incompetent fools). The lady has procured word that Mathias is masquerading as a member of *Delecarte's Carnival of Wonders*, hoping to slip out of the city when the show departs in three days time.

The viper is an exemplary actor, skilled impersonator, and master of prosthetics and disguise. To carry out his assignments, he often adopts multiple identities, bypassing guards and other security measures before eliminating his target. At his core he is cunning, ruthless, and sorely lacking in common decency or compassion.

As might be expected, few people know what the viper actually looks like, but Ignis has unearthed the following genuine facts:

1. Mathias has a deep scar on the back of his left hand, care of an old sword wound with a knight.

2. He is almost entirely bald.

3. He has a natural medium build, and is approximately 5' 9" to 6' tall.

Mathias has indeed infiltrated the circus as *Nimbin "Squirrelboots";* a harmless alcoholic who lost his family to plague, with a strong back and a penchant for sleeping late. His clown persona, "Squirrelboots", is a jovial fellow in bright patchwork garb, white face paint, a green wig and brown furry boots.

The viper signed on with the company a week earlier (a few days before he assassinated Gustarn), along with several others throughout the week (two female acrobats; *Urta* and *Flamel*, three labourers; *Bok*, *Rudgur* and *Mikhail*, and a new 5 man clown act: *Artur*, *Rinbo*, *Morgus*, *Telefed* and *Nimbin* – aka Mathias).

Of the new recruits, 1d3+2 of the men roughly match Mathias' height and build descriptions (including Mathias). Only one of them is bald (not Mathias, who is wearing a wig). None of them display scarred hands (Mathias covers his hand scar with paste and makeup, or wears gloves).

The Circus

Delecarte's travelling circus consists of 15 wagons, 33 horses, and approximately 85 crew, performers and guards. Stalls, animal enclosures, tents and rest grounds are spread out over some 500 yards, between to fortified towers.

Entry to the grounds is 2 silvers, or 3 silvers with the Grand Event. Two carnie's stand at the entry, and another ten walk the wire fence perimeter. Crowds filter through the grounds between noon and sundown, with the Grand Event running approximately 2 hours from 7–9 pm.

Clues & Legwork

If the party make small talk with the crew/performers about newcomers to the circus who might be (i) bald, (ii) have scars on their hands, or (iii) seem like murderous killer types, they might learn the following (Charisma checks and/or modifiers at GM's discretion). If the party manages to extract some information, roll 1d4:

1. A few nights earlier, a tent nearly blew away in high winds. Nimbin grabbed a rope and wrestled it back to earth, but cut his hands up in the process. The back of one hand in particular had a nasty gash in it.

2. Some kids in the crowd were throwing eggs, one of which hit Nimbin on the head. Shocked, he pulled off his spoiled clown wig and threw it at the kids in mock anger. He was bald underneath.

3. One afternoon three roughnecks were giving the ringmaster a hard time outside his wagon until Nimbin intervened. He pulled the three aside and whispered

something to them. The group left immediately and never returned.

4. Yesterday, one of the crew accidentally locked herself in the gator enclosure. Nimbin somehow popped the lock open in a flash.

Random Encounters

While wandering the grounds looking for clues to Mathias' whereabouts, there is a 50% chance of a random encounter every hour. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

1. A half drunk band of 2d6 young ne'er do wells (*Bandit*, LFG p.139) accost the party, wanting to brawl with the most fearsome looking adventurer.

2. *Celuria*, a wealthy noblewoman, takes a liking to one of the party and strikes up a conversation. If befriended, she might be able to open doors to the party in the future.

3. A *Sabretooth Tiger* (LFG p.127) escapes its enclosure (breaks loose, or is set free by a business rival or reckless drunkard), and pounces on a nearby onlooker.

4. A band of 3d6 *monkeys* (Dex 17) scampers by, swinging from tent ropes and leaping from the shoulders of onlookers. They entertain the crowd with playful winks, touches and calls, and are harmless. Their handler however, *Zookie* (a young teenager with buzz cut hair) is a pickpocket, and will attempt to steal something while the party is distracted (Perc (Detection) vs Dex 16 contest).

5. 2d4 mimes wearing faceless masks appear in the crowd. At first they interact with others, but quickly surround and mimic the party alone. The mimes are utterly silent, copying the PCs perfectly. This goes on for a minute or two, until a sudden screech rises above the hubbub of the crowd, causing the mimes to scatter like rats.

6. An elderly, thuel soothsayer by the name of *Argyle the Decrepit* waves one of the party members over to her stall. She gestures for the adventurer to lean in close to her, whispers something unintelligible, then casts some bone runes on the table between them. She studies the runes, and...

    a. (50% chance) shakes her head sadly, draws back into her booth, and pulls the curtains shut behind her (PC suffers disadvantage on their next *Luck* check).

    b. (50% chance) smiles a toothless grin, pats the stranger on the hand, and whispers "you earned it". (PC may turn one failed *Luck* save or check into a success in the next 12 months).

7. *Corvex*, the falconer, is clearing a path and directing 4 labourers who are rolling an enormous, 6 ft speckled egg through the gawking public at speed. The falconer is angry and obviously wants the egg back under cover quickly.

8. *Dao Mai*, a towering, sumo-like warrior (Barbarian 5) from the far east, is walking the grounds, enjoying mixing with the crowd, crouching down to shake hands with small children. He has a range of garish tattoos covering his bulbous frame. He speaks broken common. Anyone he finds annoying is dubbed "Shen Gwa!"

Investigative Encounters

Seven circus performer encounters are provided below as examples for the PCs to interact with. Encounters 1–6 might reveal a clue that guides the party towards Mathias (or contain some other point of interest). The last encounter deals with the viper himself.

(1) The Moustached Lady

The moustached lady, *Roberta*, is a tanned behemoth of tremendous strength and heart. She is a talented yodeller, and as part of her act crushes melons between her thighs and ample bosom.

Far stronger than most men (Str 18), she is also a skilled combatant (Fighter 2), and does not hesitate to intervene if she becomes aware of matters of domestic violence, especially against children. Many a fool has underestimated her speed and met their fate at the end of her mighty fist. Roberta doesn't know anything special about Mathias/Nimbin, but might make a valuable henchmen, ally or mobile contact for the PCs.

(2) Falconer's Loft

Corvex the Falconer (dark skinned, braided, receding hair, wheezing laugh), puts on an amazing hunting bird demonstration, showcasing a wide range of hawks, falcons, eagles and owls. In the last week, Corvex happened upon an extraordinary opportunity: a genuine *Roc* egg. The egg is speckled, 6 ft tall, heavy, and warm to the touch. Anyone placing their ear against it can hear the heartbeat of the baby roc within. Unfortunately for everyone at the carnival, the mother roc has been tracking her egg for days, and might just find it. At the GM's discretion, there is a 50% chance the egg hatches while the party is near, freeing a goop laden, 5 ft featherless chick! The chick immediately begins a loud, repetitive squawking.

Every minute thereafter, there is a 50% chance the mother roc homes in on her newborn, diving out the clouds with a blood curdling screech! Untold chaos follows, the roc tearing apart anything and anyone to reach her chick. If the roc retrieves her baby, she is likely to grab a human or two as lunch, then depart. If the chick is anything other than intact, however, she will go on a bloody rampage.

Roc, AC 13, HD 14, 2 Claws 2d6 and Bite 2d10+2, 19: special, S23 D13 C20 I2 P14 W16 Ch10, L14, Mv 240 ft flying. 15 ft reach. On a Claw 19-20 attack roll, the target is grabbed and flown away with (target may spend an action to make an opposed Str or Dex check to slip free).

With respect to Nimbin clues, Corvex can say that he has noticed Nimbin watching the birds for extended periods, as if transfixed by their predatory nature. Or perhaps he likes their sleek feathers. Who can tell.

(3) Zookeeper

Guntharrg (5½ ft, blonde ponytail, broad shouldered) is the carnival zookeeper, maintaining multiple fenced and caged areas for dangerous beasts such as a giant crocodile, sabre

tooth tiger, dire wolf, and terrifying owlbear. Two guards stand watch at every steel cage, ensuring no-one meddles with the enclosures or the monsters within. The zoo also includes an assortment of very cute and cuddly animals such as rabbits, deer, squirrels and so on for attendees to pet.

Guntharrg is a bitter soul, angry at society, and prefers to keep the company of his beasts. What series of unfortunate events led him to this point is left for the GM to determine, but there are camp rumours that his wife left him for another when his mining business ruined them years earlier.

Guntharrg knows little of Nimbin, but has noticed a calmness about the man that he likes. Most folk are nervous around his beasts, but Nimbin has an unexpected ease about him, and Guntharrg enjoys their "companionable silence".

(4) Grumpleton of the Seven Suns

The elderly *Grumpleton* (70's, thinning grey hair, jet black robe embraided with seven golden suns) is the resident "wizard" of the travelling show. He employs a mix of flash powder, rudimentary fireworks and other parlour tricks to achieve most of his magical effects. He does however possess a genuine enchanted object; the *Staff of T'Serossk.*

T'Serossk was a serpentman of the Second Age, a scheming warlock dedicated to the rites of the Scaled Ones. Many a crying babe was sacrificed to the *Nest Beyond the Stars* to fashion his staff. A person attuned to the weapon may invoke a *Phantasmal Force* effect once every 1d4 days. If the wielder unlocks the second attunement, the staff may also transform into a 10 HD *Giant Serpent* once per month (LFG p.122). If the serpent is killed, the staff reverts to normal but does not function for 1d6 months.

Over the years, Grumpleton has unlocked both attunements. Whilst no sorcerer, he is acutely aware of the dangers of true magic (anyone who carefully observes Grumpleton over a long period might notice that he does not breathe; see *Breathless* DDM effect). The charlatan almost never invokes the staff's power, but from time to time, when his arthritic fingers fail him and the crowd turns angry, he will call on the staff to wow spectators.

Grumpleton is a friendly but increasingly confused and dangerous old man, who has so far managed to avoid the true terrors his staff might unleash. He enjoys entertaining the crowds, is proud of his fame, and treats the circus as his home. He does not know anything special about Nimbin, and even if he did, would not rat on a fellow "carny".

(5) Doctor Ruben's Miracle Tonics

"Doctor" Ruben (40s, female, genuine beauty, amazingly shiny hair, Dex 15, Cha 17, Bard 2, especially skilled in deception) has travelled "all over the land", explored every "nook and cranny", from the "highest peaks of the Ironhull Ranges" to the "deepest interior of the Suurat Wilds", to gather together, distil and perfect the most powerful, most potent, most effective and most delicious medicinal elixirs known to woman or man!

The doctor offers a wide range of strange elixirs, including:

- *Dr Ruben's Effervescent Restorative* (increases stamina for intimate late night antics),
- *Dr Ruben's Affliction Effluxion* (causes the imbiber to quickly throw up whatever they last ate, might be helpful for certain poisons, etc),
- *Dr Ruben's Incogitable Cure All* (the most expensive of Dr Ruben's mixtures, this cloudy tincture smells of chlorine and causes skin to redden. If ingested however, the drinker gains one final save to resist any non-magical disease or poison they are suffering).
- *Dr Ruben's Salts of Exuberant Rhapsody* (taken with water, the salts greatly elevate serotonin levels, making the imbiber feel "happier" for 1d6 days, at the end of which they lose 1 Con).
- *Dr Ruben's Hairful Helper* (rubbed onto skin, this ointment causes hair to quickly sprout from the affected area within 1d6 minutes, before dropping out in a further 1d6 hours. Could be handy for disguise purposes).

Ruben has as many doses of her mixtures available as the GM decides (alternatively 1d6+1). They are generally 2 gp each, or 50 gp for the *Incogitable Cure All*.

The doctor had a one night stand with Nimbin a few nights ago (part of his alibi – Mathias slipped away later that same night to kill Gustarn). With some persuasion, she might reveal that Nimbin wears a wig (for reasons she can't fathom; Ruben finds him perfectly handsome as is).

(6) Ringmaster Delecarte

The circus owner and ringmaster lives in a modest wagon with a three crown flag. Delecarte is in his 50's, tall & gangly, with expressive eyes and curly black hair, born and raised in a travelling show.

Contrary to appearances, Delecarte is extremely wealthy, holding significant investments with a number of prestigious businesses. Despite his material success, Delecarte continues as ringmaster because he loves the crowd: the adoration, the applause, the wonder, and sometimes even the anger. For the ringmaster, his life is a perfect cavalcade of unending pleasures, dangers and surprises – with himself at the centre of it all.

Delecarte presides over the Grand Event, introducing acts, calling on volunteers and generally ensuring the crowd has a wonderful time. The main show runs about 2 hours, including acrobats, contortionists, jugglers, fire eaters, Shenzu "sword saints", dancers, wild beasts and freak show exhibits, not to mention Roberta, Grumpleton, etc.

(7) Clown Town

The clown tent, aka Clown Town, is where *Artur*, *Rinbo*, *Morgus*, *Telefed* and *Nimbin/Mathias* can generally be found, entertaining the people with foolish antics and bawdy songs. Brightly painted suns, moons and clouds adorn the tent, accompanied by wooden cut outs of bears, griffons and dragons. Rickety chairs, low tree branches and the grass serve as seating for onlookers.

The five men have their gear and sleeping rolls stashed out the back, in five curtained off sections. 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136) might be scavenged after a thorough search (note the clowns come in from time to time during performances for a quick change, or cup of water/ale).

Nimbin/Mathias' area contains a locked suitcase (with curious straps that allow the case to be slung over one's back) with a large variety of realistic and show wigs, make up and artificial prosthetics (noses, ears, etc), as well as a sharp, finely made knife (perfectly clean). Mathias keeps the key on him at all times (the lock may be picked with a Dex (Traps & Locks) check at a -1 penalty).

Three clown costumes hang from pegs, inspection of which reveals hidden straps and pockets, large enough to hold small alchemical satchels or blades (currently empty).

Concealed at the very bottom of the bedroll is a long, thin tube about half an inch in diameter. A small incision on one corner has been stitched up. Inside the tube are 2 x doses of flash powder (LFG p.24) and 1 x dose of wyvern poison (LFG p.130).

If Mathias suspects he is being hunted by anyone competent, he will keep an eye on them, but take no immediate action. If he suspects he has been found out, he departs at the first opportunity, hoping to disappear into the city. He will attempt to retrieve his suitcase and bedroll first, if possible.

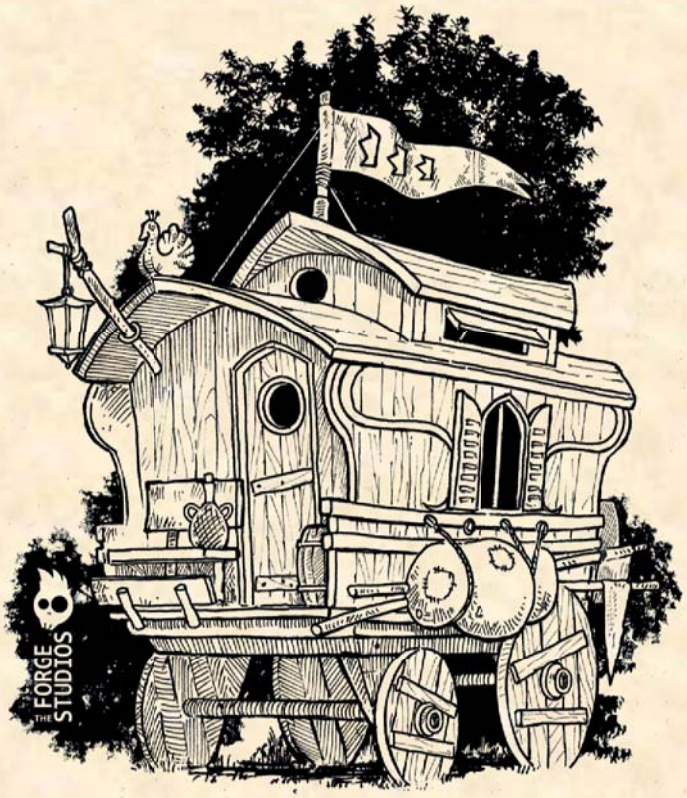
If cornered, Mathias will not hesitate to take hostages, set the wagons on fire, or loose monsters from the zoo to facilitate his escape.

Optional Twist

At the GM's discretion, the following twist might apply. Mathias killed Gustarn, true enough, but his main objective was not to slay Gustarn, but to rescue *Sunni*, a 2 year old toddler, from her grandfather's cruel clutches. Sunni's mother, *Kristen*, has been trying to retrieve her daughter for months (after being exiled from the family for an extramarital affair).

In this twist, Sunni is also inside the suitcase, in a drug induced coma (no long terms ill effects, but she appears non-responsive and her breathing is shallow). An adventurer skilled in apothecary might wake the child with an Int check and the right herbs. If woken, Sunni will be incredibly scared, but believes that Mathias is helping her return to her mother in a nearby city.

If the party kill or capture Mathias, the fate of Sunni will be in their hands. In this instance, if the party seeks the bounty for dealing with the assassin, Lady Ignis will inquire about the girl, and demand her return.



Mathias the Viper, Boss Monster; AC 15, HD 8 (90 hp), 2 x Dagger 1d4+4, 19: as dagger, S15 D18 C10 I15 P16 W14 Ch16, L14, Mv 30 ft. Mathias is a *Boss Monster* with all the usual benefits (LFG p.95). He has Backstab, Skirmisher and Finisher abilities like a 8th level rogue, and may choose from the following tricks four times per combat: *Choking Dust, Hidden Blade, Quick Reflexes, Smoke Bomb, Cat's Grace, Flash Powder, Unseen Whip, Glue Pot.*

Mathias carries an enchanted set of 2d4, two inch tin warriors. Once per month, if thrown on the ground (as an action), they enlarge to life size and follow his orders for 2d6 rounds (no action, as *Skeleton* LFG p.124, but AC 17, 2 HD). If defeated, Mathias is carrying 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables (LFG p.136, 147).

Aftermath

If Mathias is slain or captured, Lady Ignis is pleased and promptly pays the agreed bounty, keeping the party in mind for future endeavours.

If the party doublecrosses Ignis (including to sort out Sunni, if that variant is used), the lady holds a long grudge, and will take steps to punish the PCs if the opportunity arises down the track.

Returning Sunni to her mother earns the party the family's eternal gratitude, as well as some honourable fame within the city as word spreads.

If Grumpleton is left with his staff, in a further 1d12 months, the party hears the sad news that the carnival was disbanded after a hideous monster slew scores of spectators in the midst of Grumpleton's act.

(3) DOOR OF VARG-SHARSÛNI

Rumours & Hooks:
The derelict, boarded up home of a long dead artist is said to be haunted. Some say his most precious works were never found, and might be hidden within.

A wealthy grandmother, dying of old age, wants someone to explore the derelict home of the dead artist, *Salic Reynard*. She is convinced that there is something in the house that will help her (a book, a potion? She can't be sure, but refers to it as the "great gift").

In an abandoned block, slums district, or other widely avoided area, stands a derelict old home. Boarded up and decrepit, the building appears to be on the brink of collapse, and is generally avoided by local squatters who fear it might bury them if they reside there. Inside however, within the darkness of the stone cellar, is a strange and diabolical looking door.

Entry

Entering the building is not particularly difficult. The front and back doors are locked tight with masterwork locks (disadvantage on Dex (Traps & Locks) checks), and the windows mostly boarded up (there are one or two where some of the boards have been pulled off). The old mahogany doors are worse for wear, and can be forced upon with a Str check (albeit loudly). Pulling boards off the windows, or tiles off the roof, is easily done with sufficient time or a crowbar.

Layout & Clues

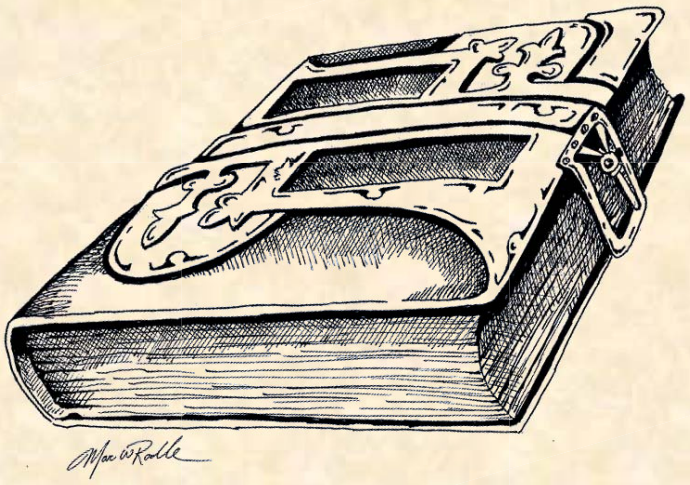
The precise floor plan is left for the GM to determine, but includes some bedrooms, living room, bathroom, a kitchen and loft. There are no perishables remaining, but antique furniture decorates most spaces (some of it badly weather stained where the roof has leaked). Most of the valuables of the home were stolen long ago, but a thorough search of the upper level will locate 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p. 136, 141) hidden away someplace.

In a back room are stony steps that lead to an iron door. The door is locked, sturdy and well

preserved. Breaking it down would take many hours and the right tools. The lock may be opened with a Dex (Traps & Locks) check. At the GM's discretion, the key might be with the guardian (see below). The door leads to the cellar.

40 years ago, the house was residence of *Salic Reynard*, an eccentric, successful writer and artist. After his death, the house passed to his daughter, a terrible drunkard who now suffers dementia and is tended to by cultists of Shennog in one of their asylums. The house has been boarded up for decades (subject to the occasional looter, before being boarded up again).

The only pieces of Reynard's art left in the house are hidden; unframed paintings rolled up in a scroll tube which has been inserted into a bed mattress. Careful inspection of the corner of the mattress reveals where an incision has been restitched (Perc (Detection) check at -1 penalty if the mattress is inspected, or automatically found if the corners are specifically examined).



The artworks are quality paintings of portraits, landscapes and lewd sketches. One sketch in particular is quite disturbing: a woman in chains kneeling before a diabolical looking door (the door of Varg-Sharsûni).

In addition to the paintings, one of Reynard's journals can be found behind a bookcase in one of the bedrooms. The journal is penned in very deliberate, very clearly formed handwriting. At first the journal simply records the mundanity of day to day life, but occasional snippets of philosophy are also noted. Later the author records his wife's passing, his lament that the couple had but one daughter; a wretch of a child, and growing feelings of despair. Towards the end, the author appears more upbeat, indicating he has found a new muse (a follower of Shennog), and that his feckless daughter has gone.

Random Encounters

The house is not entirely devoid of others. Roll 1d6 three times to determine what else occupies these decrepit walls.

1. 1d4+1 *Giant Spiders* (LFG p.125) have taken up residence in one of the rooms, spinning their webs between the walls.

2. A gang of 2d6 ruffians (LFG p. 114) hooked on the rare, and highly addictive, psychotropic *Ulgoth Mushrooms* are squatting here. They react poorly to any intruders, becoming highly aggressive and paranoid about the watch storming in.

3. 2d6 *Giant Centipedes* (LFG p.102) have made a burrow beneath the floorboards of one room. They will be startled by any loud noises, and will defend their nest if required.

4. A solitary *Hammer Snail* (see *Bestiary*) occupies one of the rooms, hanging upside down from the ceiling beside a large hole. It is covered in dust; apparently hibernating for a very long time. Or perhaps it's dead.

5. A patch of 2d4 *Yellow Mould* (LFG p.131) have sprouted here in one corner of the ceiling. The mould has been

dormant for some time, but will awaken to loud noise or warmbloods approaching within 60 ft.

6. A *Ghost* (LFG p.109) of one of Reynard's sacrificial victims lingers here, her translucent head severed from her neck. Consumed by feelings of loneliness, *Tesha* seeks only have others join in her suffering, hoping to trap them in the house with her. Tesha's bones are buried elsewhere in the city; if exhumed, her spirit is released.

Cellar & Door

The 40 ft cellar contains a number of racks of aged wine, liquor and spirits. Some have turned, but if transported out the collection is worth 1d6 x 100 gp to the right buyer.

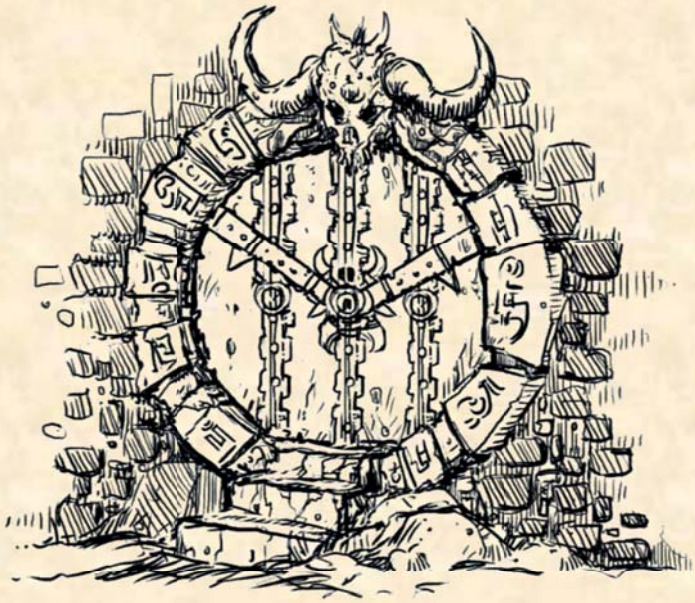
On one wall is a large, moth eaten black curtain, which if pulled aside reveals a menacing door. Made of hardened steel, the 6 ft round doorway is edged with arcane glyphs and topped with what appears to be a genuine demon skull. Twin cold iron bands secure the central lock.

Careful examination of the door reveals narrow gouges on the steps (as if struck by a sword or similar; Reynard would execute victims here, cutting their head off with an axe).

The door is enchanted and cannot be opened without dealing with the ward first. Killing an intelligent humanoid on the steps suspends the ward for several minutes, or it might be removed via *Dispel Magic*, *Knock*, or similar. The physical door has a dual lock, requiring two Dex (Traps & Locks) checks at disadvantage to open.

If opened, where exactly the door leads to is left to the GM to determine. Alternatively, the door channels the power of entities from beyond the *Veil*, requiring a roll on the Dark & Dangerous Magic Table, and granting the user a single *Forbidden Wish* (as the spell).

If the wish is taken up, the user suffers a permanent serious madness (incurable, by magic or otherwise). Invoking the door a second or third time escalates the user's madness to pervasive and finally incapacitating (LFG p.93).



(4) HUNT FOR LORD HARGRAVES

Rumours & Hooks:
Lady Hargraves, a prestigious noblewoman and infamous socialite, has a desperate mission for the party: her husband *Lord Hargraves* is on a drinking binge once again, and she wants him returned home, in one piece, ASAP.

The Hargraves name is well known throughout the circles of the social elite of the city. They made their fortune in textiles, food, and not a small amount of illegal smuggling, a stressful business that often put the whole family's nerves on edge.

Lord Jaykin Hargraves (Fighter 3, 60's, towering 6 ft 6", heavy set with dark eyes and an impressive silver beard) came from a poor background. He built his wealth year by year, daring the wilds to lead trade caravans between the Argosan cities and beyond.

Trading was lucrative but hard; Hargraves lost many friends in his travels and quickly found solace in the bottom of a bottle. Despite Lady Hargraves' best endeavours, the old trader was never able to shake the habit, and is now an entrenched alcoholic. The lady manages to keep him occupied and out of trouble most nights, but from time to time Jaykin decides the time is right to slip away for a big night on the town. Which would be perfectly fine, except that Lord Hargrave's prior outings have involved punching out other lords, setting stables on fire, emptying his gold purse in some of the less reputable "dancing" houses, and so on. Conduct that is heavily frowned upon in certain circles, in particular, Lady Hargraves' circles.

The lady wants her husband returned home tonight, ASAP. She can provide the party with his portrait and physical description to aid them in tracking him down. She is willing to pay a significant "finder's fee" of 100 gp, on the condition that the party acts discretely and attempts to minimise embarrassment. If successful, Lady Hargraves will consider she owes the party a big favour, which they can call on at some future time.

To be perfectly frank, Lady Hargraves has no real idea where Jaykin is, but previously he's visited pretty much every tavern in town. She suggests starting with some of the local drinking holes.

Pub Crawl

As the party searches the city, making inquiries throughout the various inns and taverns, roll 1d12 (or choose from the list below) to determine which drinking hole they come across next.

The *Tavern Tables* in the GM section, and *Chance Encounter Tables* in the Cities chapter, might assist to flesh out details:

1. **The Rat Trap** is a squalid den of mostly cheerful inebriates. The tavern is not crowded and a few of the patrons recall seeing Hargraves earlier in the evening. The barkeep *Rundell* heard Hargraves whinging about "the old ball and chain" wanting him to eat more broccoli. He felt sorry for the guy.

2. **Bunderstone's** is a large, airy inn with an enormous and very crowded common room. The clientele here are a mix of wealthy and less affluent folk, sprinkled with a handful of guards. There is a 50% chance a pickpocket (*Nigri*) attempts to steal from the party (opposed check Perc (Detection) vs Dex 15). Hargraves hasn't been in here tonight.

3. **The Fox & Raven**; hang out of the local *Gilderfunk Girls*, an all female gang, specialists in smuggling and fencing. They've not seen Hargraves tonight, but they probably know someone who has... "What's it worth to ya?"

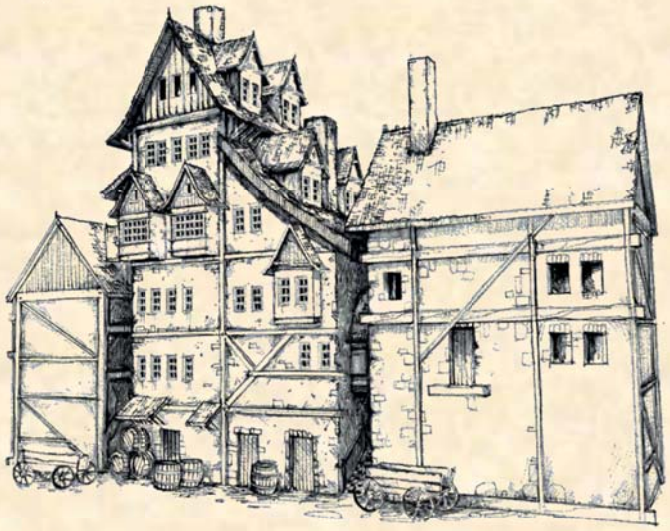
4. **The Farmer's Lament** is a raucous, bellicose bar of yelling, laughing and back slapping. *Hergmarr*, a 7 ft Varnori,

says he saw Hargraves earlier – but he won't say where unless the party bests him in a friendly arm wrestle! (Str contest vs Str 16, best of 3 rounds). Whether he wins or loses, if treated honourably, *Hergmarr* reveals their quarry was at the *Rat Trap* earlier.

5. **The Horny Toad** is well known for its regular fisticuffs between drunk and disorderly patrons, and tonight is no exception. One minute after the party enters, a massive brawl breaks out, engulfing 5d6 patrons in a flurry of fists, knees, elbows and headbutts. If the party can stop the fighting before it gets too out of hand, there's a 75% chance *Menicus* (Nydissian, good boxer) saw Hargraves earlier at the *Farmer's Lament.*

6. **Nobby's Alehouse** caters to the well to do professionals and merchants of the city, including some of Hargraves' contemporaries. Getting in requires a dress code of sorts (entrants need to "look rich") enforced by the 6 ft 8" doorman, *Master Grumold* (Thuel, Barb 4). One of Hargraves' mates, *Boris*, intentionally steers the party in the wrong direction, directing them to *Bunderstone's.* An Int/Perc (Insight) check might detect something is up. If Boris is pressured, he reveals Hargraves is likely in the back rooms at the *Black Flagon* (wagering).

7. **Corner of Lowbrook** is a charming, older pub decked out in quality woodwork and comfortable seating. A hand painted sign by the door declares "No Foreigners". The proprietor has limited tolerance for non-locals, but might be inclined to talk for a few gold. He can reveal that Hargraves got into a fight with another patron, *Norvert*, and left soon after with a shining black eye for his trouble. Norvert is still in the corner, nursing bruised knuckles. Norvert can indicate that the fight was over money. Hargraves "owes gold to some people", and Norvert was just "reminding the old scob that his debt is due."



8. **The Gravy Barrel** is known for its hard liquor and harder clientele. Favourite haunt of the *Bloodnut Bandits*, up to 3d6 thieves (as *Bandit* LFG p.114) will attempt to intimidate the party and extort money from them. Hargraves hasn't been seen here.

9. **Forkenspoon's** is famous for its food first and entertainers second (primarily bards but prostitutes are not uncommon). Dice games are a feature, and if the party throws a few rounds, one of the other players might reveal that Hargraves was at the *Black Tankard* just an hour earlier.

10. At **The Pickled Boar**, one thing is first and foremost: boozing. *Bruun*, a swarthy, watery eyed thuel, has information about Hargraves, but will only reveal it if the party wins a drinking contest with him (they're paying; opposed Con (Athletics) checks, best of 3). Bruun heard

Hargraves was going to *Forkenspoon's* earlier for dinner (then likely passes out).

11. **The Violent Vagrant** has a decent sized common room surrounded by lots of intimate booths. While the party is here, 2d6 guards enter, declaring a "Routine weapons check", inquiring after "licences" to bear arms in the city. Anyone without a licence will have to pay an on the spot fine of 20 gp, and have their weapons confiscated until a "licence" is obtained from the watch sergeant. Hargraves has not been here.

12. **The Black Tankard** is famous for two things; its cheap ale, and illegal card room out the back. Hargraves is here (see below).

The Black Tankard

Hargraves is at the Black Tankard, outrageously drunk and playing cards like a madman in the back room. The proprietor, *Skerric* (Rogue 5, Midlander, skinny, missing his left eye) doesn't let just anyone out the back, but might be persuaded to grant entry to the party if they flash some gold around to grease the way.

Out back are a handful of tables and 3d6 people playing cards and wagering coin. Hargraves is at one table, losing badly, but seemingly enjoying himself none the less (he has found himself a doting lady "friend" during the course of the night, keeping him in good spirits).

Persuading Hargraves to depart with the adventurers will be no easy task. He has no intention of going home "early", and means to see out the night with more drinking, more dancing, and more "lady friends". He doesn't give a hoot what his wife wants, and indeed – he offers to pay the party 20 gp just to leave him alone!

At the GM's discretion, Hargraves might be talked around by reminding him of the family's reputation, his wife's endless concern, his marital vows, and/or some other clever device the PCs come up with. Alternatively, they can hasten his passing out by drinking him into a stupor. Once unconscious, he can be carried back to his manor (or pushed on a small cart, etc).

2d4 thieves of the *Roof Monkeys* gang (as Bandit, LFG p.114) are present to ensure no violence in the back room (well, no violence that they don't start). Causing trouble here would have an undesirable knock on effect with the gang, who are sure to seek reparation/vengeance).

(5) RED HOOKS' TOURNEY

Rumours & Hooks:
Once every four years, the *Red Hooks Thieves' guild* organises a contest of wits, agility and grit, open to all brave brethren of the underworld, known as the *Red Hooks' Tourney*. Word on the street suggests the next tourney is imminent, and preparations are already underway. The location is said to be an abandoned manor in the old quarter.

Once every four or five years, the Red Hooks Thieves' guild of Port Brax organises a contest infamous throughout the shady back alleys of all nearby cities: the Red Hooks' Tourney.

The challenge is open to any cutpurse, thief, scoundrel, smuggler or ne'er do well that has crossed blades with the law. Occasionally the guild also allows like minded adventurers to participate (for a fee).

Overseen by *Guildmaster Marakett*, an abandoned building (colloquially known as "the deathtrap") is rigged with traps, hazards and other dangers. Contenders, known as "hunters", compete to retrieve a single prize: a silver wolf amulet in veneration of Fenrir, the god of luck.

To the victor go the spoils: a purse of uncut diamonds worth 1,000 gp, and rare fame amongst the criminal milieu as the "deathtrap champion" for years to come. As might be expected, outrageous gambling stakes rise and fall on the event, from which Marakett profits, in addition to consolidating the Hooks' reputation as the pre-eminent guild.

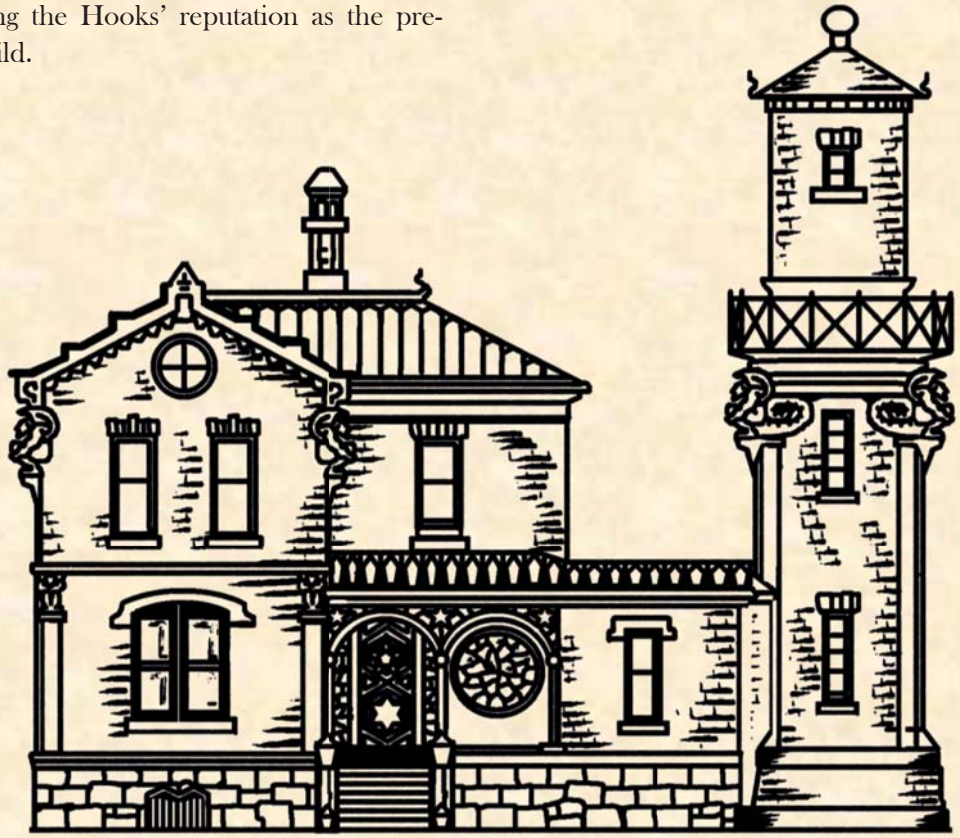
The Rules

For the hunters there are no rules bar one: whoever exits the deathtrap with the amulet clearly hung around their neck wins. Exiting with the amulet in hand, or in a pocket for example, doesn't count. Indeed, in a prior tourney, the wily victor *Ropek* ambushed the near winner from a rooftop, cut the amulet from her grip, and hung it around his own neck to claim victory.

Entering the Manor

On this occasion, the deathtrap is an abandoned manor in the old quarter, far from prying eyes and watch patrols.

The manor is constructed of wood and stone, with the windows and rear door boarded up from the inside. The most obvious entry is via the front landing, but PCs might also gain access by pulling up roof tiles, breaking through boarded areas (requiring a Strength check and 1d3 minutes) or making their own hole in a wall with enough time and the right tools.



The ground is solid earth and rock. Tunnelling beneath the manor to gain access would take longer than the tourney duration. There is however a hidden trapdoor on the western side that leads to Area 16 (checking for secret doors allows a Perc (Detection) check to find it).

Adventurers might also gain access via the eastern tower roof or balcony. The tourney begins at midnight and concludes when someone emerges victorious, or at dawn, whichever occurs first.

At the commencement, 4d6 hunters gather around the outside of the manor, considering the best means of entry. Once Marakett gives the signal to begin (a flaming arrow fired overhead from an adjacent building), the various thieves either make their approaches or fade into the shadows to observe how others fare first.

Features of the Interior

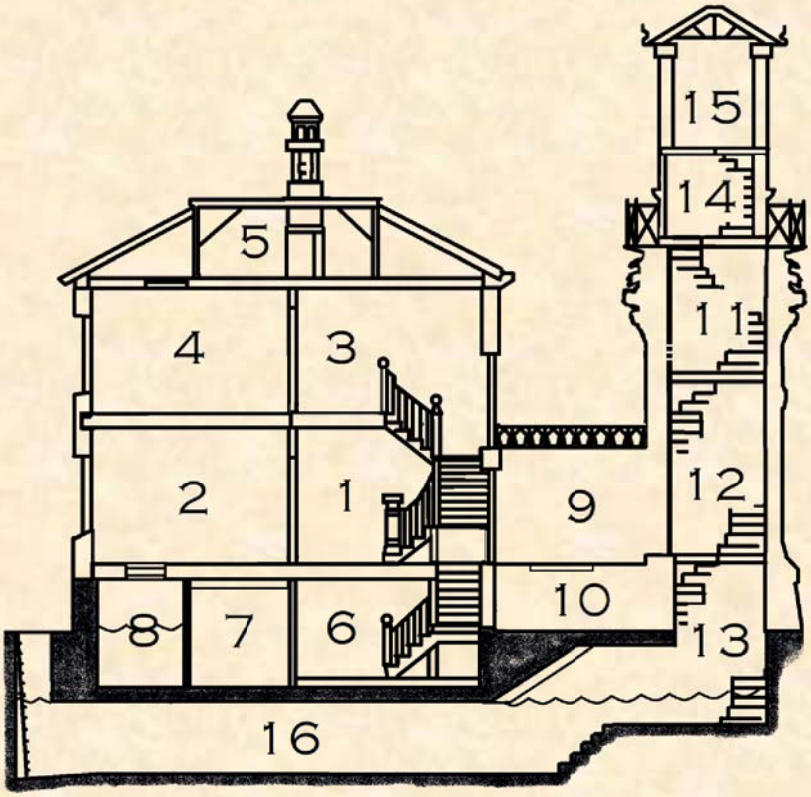
The inside of the manor is generally one of elegant decay; 10 ft ceilings, smelling of mould, with threadbare cushions, drapery and paintings, cracked or broken knickknacks (decorative bowls, statuettes, etc) and rotting furniture. The interior is dark but not completely so; lantern light filters in from the street via cracks in boarded up windows. Sight based Perception checks will generally be at disadvantage without a proper light source.

Random Encounters

While the party are exploring the manor, there is a 75% chance of a random encounter every 15 minutes. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d10:

1. 1d4 *Thieves* (as *Bandit* LFG p.114), but 3 HD, D15, L6, with shortswords and throwing knives. They have Backstab, Skirmisher and Finisher abilities like 3rd level rogues, and may choose from the following tricks twice per combat: *Smoke Bomb, Hidden Blade* or *Choking Dust*.
2. If the party are on the roof, or possibly in a large room with multiple doors, a sniper with a light crossbow takes a pot shot at one of them. Roll 1d20+3 vs AC, 2d4+2 damage. Whether the shot is successful or not, the sniper then retreats (as *Bandit* but with 3 HD).
3. A horrible, gurgling death cry echoes from upstairs, downstairs, or some other place the PCs aren't. What caused the poor scob's death, and whether his body remains in situ, is up to the GM.
4. There is a dart trap nearby that the party is at risk of setting off. Perhaps a pressure plate, an anchored object yet to be disturbed, or a timed mechanism. If activated, the trap requires a *Luck* (Dex) save to avoid 1d6 damage plus 1d4+1 Dex loss due to poison.
5. Bronze cage bars on a mechanical timer horizontally slide into place after the party enters the next doorway (the false doorframe can be detected with a Perc (Traps & Locks) check, if inspected). Without the right cutting tools, breaking a hole through the bars takes 1d4 hours. The wall itself has been reinforced in a similar fashion (the other walls are normal).
6. *Toska*, a street tough and new Red Hooks recruit (as *Bandit*), is sitting here, blood oozing from a serious leg wound given to him by a blade trap in the wall. He is semi conscious from blood loss. If patched up, he might have valuable info for the party about a room they haven't seen yet. Or he might stab them in the back, or pick their pockets. That's thieves for you.
7. Twins *Zamir* and *Saman* ambush the party, hoping to steal their loot. They

Map



have no genuine interest in retrieving the Fenrir amulet, unless the party happen to have it on them already.

Zamir & Saman, AC 14, HD 6, 2 Shortswords 1d6+2, 19: Disarm, S14 D17 C12 I14 P14 W15 Ch14 L8, Mv 30 ft. They have Backstab, Skirmisher and Finisher abilities like 6th level rogues, and may choose from the following tricks three times per combat: *Cat's Grace, Hidden Blade, Quick Reflexes, Glue Pot, Rapid Dose, Unseen Whip.* 1d4 doses of *Fireblood* poison (LFG p.33), caltrops (5 ft area, Dex check or half movement rate until short rest), short bows, knives and climbing gear.

8. 1d4+1 *Thieves* burst into the room or hallway, in the middle of a fight with another 1d4+1 thieves. They might ignore the party, turn on them, or seek their aid, depending on the circumstances.

9. A *Giant Spider* (LFG p.125), released into the manor by the Red Hooks, is hiding nearby or stalking the party. This particular spider has 5 HD and a deadly bite: *Luck* (Con) save or suffer damage equal to half the target's maximum hit points.

10. The *Mimic* is here, unless the party has already encountered it in Area 4.

Area 1 – Entry, Dining Room, Sitting Room

The stone steps and tiled landing appear to be in good repair, as does the heavy wooden entry door. The door is not trapped but is locked, requiring a Dex (Traps & Locks) check to open. If closed, the lock automatically resets.

The steps are slick with oil which makes footing difficult if fighting or running (and is susceptible to being lit) but is otherwise a nuisance only.

The tiled landing is trapped. Several tiles beside the window are only a shell, and will break if

stood upon. Beneath them are sharp spikes, requiring a *Luck* (Dex) save to avoid a foot injury (see the *Injuries & Setbacks* table entry 3, LFG p.54).

Once inside, Area 1 contains a small entry hall decorated with decrepit sideboards, a fireplace, stairs to Area 3 above and Area 6 below, and doorways to Area 2 and the rear of Area 1 (see below). The stairs are trapped in both directions, with fishing line trip wires (a Perc (Detection) check notices them, if the steps are examined). If triggered, blades spring out from the step above, causing 2d6 damage and a leg injury (per the *Injuries & Setbacks* table) unless avoided via a *Luck* (Dex) save.

The back half of Area 1 is a dusty sitting room with mildewed cushions, and a large dining room with fragile looking, austere furniture, cracked mirrors and broken candlesticks. There is a 50% chance of 1d4+1 thieves in either of these rooms, waiting to ambush the party (or be ambushed, as they poke around seeking the amulet).

Area 2 – Music Room, Kitchen, Servants' Quarters

The western wing of the ground floor consists of a music room at the front (sporting a cittern, harp, rebec, drums, various flutes and bells, and perhaps even a piano, at the GM's discretion), and a small kitchen (empty pantry, but many knives) and servants' quarters at the back (small bunks with rotting blankets and discarded clothes).

All three rooms are trapped. The various mouth pieces of the wind instruments in the music room are laced with a fine powder that causes insanity if ingested (*Luck* (Con) save or effect like a *Confusion* spell). An adventurer with the Traps & Locks or Wilderness Lore skill, or a poisoners background, might be able to extract one dose of poison from the instruments if detected.

The kitchen has a 5 ft square double trapdoor that opens when the pantry door is opened. A *Luck* (Perc) save will notice an odd mechanical tension on the pantry door as it begins to open, allowing an adventurer to stop before the trap is sprung. Otherwise, any character above the trapdoor must make a *Luck* (Dex) save or plummet 8 ft into Area 8 below. The trapdoors are spring loaded and lock back into place immediately after opening. A Dex or Int (Traps & Locks) check picks the lock or disarms the mechanism by jamming the coil or similar.

The servants' quarters contains piles of discarded, mouldy, moth eaten clothes, blankets and cribs. 3d4 gp can be found stashed within a rotting mattress. Marakett has placed 2d4 giant rats in the room, which are hiding beneath clothing. They are starving and will attack when the opportunity presents itself.

Giant Rat, AC 11, HD 1d4 hp, Bite 1d3, 19: If appropriate, another Giant Rat comes to aid this one, S3 D14 C8 I2 P13 W6 Ch4, L3, Mv 40 ft. 50% chance of exposing a bitten target to *Baal's Boils* (disease, incubation time 1d4 hours, *Luck* (Con) save or lose 1d3 Cha permanently. A *Regenerate* spell restores lost Cha).

Area 3 – Library, Bedrooms, Terrace

The decorative ball toppers on the bannisters of Area 3 are delicately balanced and fall off if touched, activating a salvo of poisoned darts from the ceiling above (*Luck* (Dex) save or suffer 3d6 damage and 1d3 Str loss).

Area 3 consists of a landing off the stairs, fireplace, a library at the front, and two bedrooms at the back. If the boarded up doors to the east are broken down, the party can gain access to the raised terrace outside.

Juro Venosteri, a master thief and assassin, is lurking in one of the three rooms. He intends to take over the Red Hooks, and winning the tourney is another step in his grand plan, earning

him the fame he needs. He wears an eyepatch, having lost an eye to a Nydissian warrior years ago. He has cultivated an unhealthy hatred for all southerners since, and will target them first.

The GM determines which room Venosteri is in (alternatively there is a 50% chance he is hiding in any given room when the party enters it. He is a particularly gifted at stealth, gaining advantage when attempting to hide or move silently).

Venosteri, Boss Monster, AC 14, HD 10, 2 Daggers 1d4+3 + poison, 19: Disarm, S15 D17 C10 I14 P16 W15 Ch14 L10, Mv 30 ft. Venosteri is a *Boss Monster* with all the usual benefits (LFG p.95). He has Backstab, Skirmisher and Finisher abilities like a 10th level rogue, and may choose from the following tricks five times per combat: *Choking Dust, Hidden Blade, Quick Reflexes, Smoke Bomb, Cat's Grace, Flash Powder, Rapid Dose, Unseen Whip, Blind Sense, Glue Pot.* He has 2 doses of *Choking Spore* and 1d4+1 doses of *Fireblood* poison by the time he encounters the party (LFG p.33). He also has a scroll of *Stinking Cloud*. If defeated, he is carrying 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables (LFG p.136, 147).

The bedrooms contain double wardrobes, large iron frame beds with mouldy mattresses and linen, threadbare throw rugs and discarded clothes. In the back of one wardrobe is a secret panel that allows access to the wardrobe in the other bedroom (Perc (Detection) check to locate, or automatically found if the back of the wardrobe is examined). Venosteri is aware of the secret door and may use it to surprise or escape the party (if escaping, he drops Choking Spore in the wardrobe as he flees).

A cursory search of the bedrooms reveals three dead bodies under one bed, and two dead bodies under the other (Venosteri's recent victims). A Perc (Detection) check notices drops of blood around the beds (any larger blood stains have been covered with discarded clothes)

Choking Spore dust has been sprinkled under one bedcover by Venosteri; pulling back the covers releases the toxin into the air. Any other original traps in the two bedrooms have been disarmed by Venosteri or others.

In the library, the walls are lined with books, and adjacent bookshelves divide the room into three short corridors. A reading desk can be found at both ends of the large room.

The books cover a vast range of mundane and exotic topics, including travel journals to distant locations. A complete search reveals a secret compartment at the top of one of the bookshelves (spring loaded corbel that pops open), concealing a bundle of 1d3 random magic scrolls (LFG p.152).

The library is trapped. The ceiling conceals five caches of fire pots, situated above the three rows of bookshelves and two reading desks. The

bookshelves and desks have been coated with a very fine, grey-brown powder accelerant (detectable by touching the furniture with a bare hand, or very careful observation).

One set of floorboards in each aisle is rigged to depress if stood upon (50% chance if an aisle is traversed), dropping the fire pots into the bone dry library. Anyone sitting at a reading desk, or on top of a bookshelf, suffers 3d6 fire damage (*Luck* (Dex) save for half). More importantly, the library immediately catches fire, and becomes an uncontrolled conflagration within 1d3 rounds. After this time, the fire is not containable, and it only a matter of time before the manor burns to the ground. Exact times are left to the GM to determine, but generally the conflagration will spread to another adjacent room every 1d3 minutes.

The rigged floorboards or ceiling caches may be identified with careful scrutiny and/or a Perc (Detection) check at a -2 penalty.

Characters fighting in a burning room are subject to the rules on suffocation (LFG p.159) due to the thick smoke, and suffer a 33% miss chance.

The terrace outside is approximately 15 ft high. It is not trapped per se, but there is a 50% chance of 1d4 malicious onlookers shooting at the party with heavy crossbows from adjacent buildings (1d20+2 attack roll, 2d8+1 damage).

Area 4 – Master Bedroom, Bathroom, Lavatory, Chapel

The western wing of the second storey has the master bedroom at the front, and a bathroom, lavatory, and small chapel at the back. A manhole in the hallway leads to the attic (there is no ladder to easily reach it).

The main bedroom consists of a large bed, double wardrobe, side table with broken mirror and a trunk. It was once opulently decorated, but has since been stripped of valuables or left to rot (picture frames are missing off walls, ornate urns shattered, moth eaten fine gowns, etc). There is a 50% chance of 1d4 thieves hiding in this room (as Random Encounter 1).

A faded mural decorates one wall (countryside with an apple tree). Pressing one the apples ejects it from the wall, revealing a secret nook containing a black velvet bag (1 x Valuables, LFG p.147).

The bathroom contains a large wooden tub draped with mouldy linen (to prevent splinters), and a ceramic basin.

The lavatory is a stone alcove with a large wooden box and a hole. In fact, the wooden repository is a *Mimic*, a unique shapeshifting guardian creature Marakett recently procured.

"Quato" the Mimic, AC 14, HD 5, Bite 1d10+1, 19: Quarto glues one of the target's limbs to its own body (Str contest to break free), S18 D10 C16 I8 P13 W15 Ch4 L8, Mv 30 ft. Quarto is a sorcerous oddity of shapeshifting sentience, a living trap, brought to life by a foreign warlock at Marakett's request. The mimic's body is covered in super adhesive tendrils, causing weapons that touch it to become stuck if Quato wishes (Str contest to break free, or alcohol automatically dissolves the bond). Quato may change forms to impersonate an object from as small as a shoe to as large as a bed by using an action. It is generally indistinguishable from a mundane object unless touched or threatened with fire. Quato has *Off Turn Attacks* and is protected by 50% magic resistance. If reduced to zero hit points, Quato does not die but enters a dormant state for 1d4 days, unless set on fire (in which case it dies).

Marakett is particularly fond of Quato and is likely to seek vengeance against anyone killing his unique pet, regardless of the circumstances.

The small chapel contains a number of rotting benches and a marble altar. A heavy tome with a skull on top sits above the altar, contrasting the benevolent sun and star motifs decorating the faded walls. The skull appears to be a candle of sorts, releasing wisps of incense.

Naturally, the chapel is trapped. The incense wafting from the skull is poisonous and causes anyone lingering in the room for more than a minute to make a *Luck* (Will) save or suffer a serious madness (LFG p. 91): *"My so called friends have brought me here to die; fodder for the pit traps and hidden blades! Steel is my lone ally. Together we will cut through their treachery, and seize the prize."*

The book is a rare religious text on the teachings of *Shennog*, imploring the importance of mystery and wonderment (worth 200 gp to the right buyer). A search of the room reveals a curtained compartment behind the altar, containing a golden chalice (400 gp).

Area 5 - Attic

The 5 ft high attic is accessible via the manhole in Area 4, or by removing tiles from the roof. It is filled with thick dust and rat droppings. A sealed chimney stack occupies the centre, and numerous heavy beams support the roof structure. Weapons in this confined space suffer a -2 penalty on attack rolls except for daggers or the like. The area counts as cramped conditions for great swords and similar.

Marakett has set a giant serpent loose in here, and it is very hungry.

Giant Serpent, AC 13, HD 5, Bite 1d8 + poison, 19: special, S19 D16 C13 I3 P10 W12 Ch5 L8, Mv 30 ft. Poison causes 1d6 damage and 1d4 Dex loss (a *Luck* (Con) save resists). On a natural 19-20 attack roll, the target is constricted, rendering it helpless. A trapped victim may spend their action to make an opposed Str check to break free.

Area 6 - Basement

This stone basement is completely dark. Entry is via the wooden stairs or a heavy oak door leading to Area 7.

In the centre of this room are a pile of decapitated heads; the grisly remains of Marakett's enemies. Stuffed into the mouth of one of the heads is a piece of parchment with the numbers 3518 scrawled on it. This is the combination code to open the strongbox containing the Fenrir amulet.

The heads are diseased. Anyone touching them must make a *Luck* (Con) save or suffer *Poorman's Palsy*, causing 1d4 Str loss each day until permanent paralysis in one limb (determine randomly) at Str zero. An apothecary with the right healing herbs grants a second *Luck* (Con) save to fight off the disease.

Area 7 - Cellar

There is only one entryway into the cellar, a heavy oak door from the basement in Area 6. The interior is completely dark. Inside are

numerous barrels containing whiskey and other spirits, as well as shelved bottles of wine.

The chamber is trapped. Moving any of the barrels sets off a weight sensitive trigger (Perc (Detection) test to notice the floor tile shift slightly if the barrel is nudged), causing a false roof to collapse. The roof is lined with fire pots, which explode when they hit the floor, immediately igniting the alcohol from the (now broken) bottles and barrels! Everyone in the room suffers 5d6 damage (falling debris and fire), and a deafening explosion rattles the manor (to the cheers of onlookers outside). The blast imposes disadvantage on hearing checks for 1 hour. The structure here is stone, so the fire burns itself out relatively quickly.

Area 8 – Acid Pool

This 8 ft stone basement is empty and the old doorway sealed up with recent brickwork. The chamber is filled with 4 ft of clear, potent smelling acid. Anyone dropping into this death pool suffers 2d6 acid damage at the end of each round.

Area 9 – Display Hall

This relatively narrow 8 ft wide hall is decorated with mildewed paintings and cracked sculptures, urns and statuettes.

Predictably the hall is trapped. A spring loaded sliding trapdoor will trigger if stepped upon (50% chance, *Luck* (Dex) save to avoid), dropping an adventurer into Area 10 below. Once activated, the trapdoor locks back into place on a 5 minute clockwork timer, and cannot be reopened without a Dex (Traps & Locks) check at a -2 penalty. The sliding door is reinforced steel and very difficult to break through without the proper tools.

The eastern wall appears to be a bricked up dead end. There is a narrow, 20 ft high vertical crawlspace that may be scaled with a Str (Athletics) or Dex (Acrobatics) check. Approximately 13 ft up is a false wall made of soft plaster that is easily broken through, creating a crawl way into Area 11.

Area 10 – Old Storage Room

This 5 ft high storage room is made of granite and the original doorway has been bricked up. Entry is via the sliding trapdoor in Area 9, which locks back into place for 5 minutes on a mechanical timer after activation. A Traps & Locks check at a -2 penalty will open the door.

Anyone dropped into this room falls directly into the *Gelatinous Cube* that occupies the middle of the room. Breaking open the sliding door releases the cube into the manor proper.

Gelatinous Cube, AC 11, HD 4+4, Bite 2d4 + poison, 19: the target is sucked into the Cube (*Luck* (Dex) save resists), S18 D10 C16 I2 P14 W16 Ch1 L7, Mv 30 ft inc up walls, ceiling, etc. A creature that touches the cube must make a *Luck* (Con) save or be paralysed for 1d6 hours, during which time the victim is completely dissolved. A creature caught inside a cube automatically suffers 2d4 damage every round, but may spend an action to make an opposed Str check to escape (if not paralysed).

The remains of two earlier thieves are inside the cube, already reduced to skeletal matter. Two daggers, a shortsword and a steel flask float inside (random potion, LFG p.150).

Area 11 - Study

This study has a central desk and ring of tall bookshelves concealing most of the circular staircase (up to Area 14, which display some webbing, and down to Area 12). Like much of the manor, the woodwork is in poor repair, rotting and sagging. In the lower west corner, between two bookshelves, is a false section of wall that is easily broken through, creating a crawl way (and 13 ft drop) into Area 9.

There is a 50% chance of 1d4+1 thieves (as Random Encounter 1) being here, discussing what to do next while they study the room.

In plain view on the desk is a diamond shaped brooch with an obsidian gemstone in the centre (400 gp). A number of tomes are also spread around the desk (on topics of scouting, cookery, cartography and life after death).

Carefully placed beneath the books are four inch *Ridgeback Scorpions*, a particularly aggressive and venomous breed with a hardened carapace. The books pin them in place (and make them furious), but otherwise cause them no harm. Anyone moving the books is stung for 1d6 damage and 1d4 Con loss (*Luck* (Con) save resists, with advantage if wearing gauntlets). Once revealed, the small scorpions are easily crushed underfoot or otherwise dealt with.

Area 12 – Display Room

This display room is adorned with faded murals, tapestries and empty picture frames that were stripped long ago. The room was originally connected to Area 9, but a freshly built brick wall now separates the two spaces.

On long chains (allowing them access to the whole of Area 12) are 2d4 vicious pit fighting dogs. They bark furiously (heard throughout the house from time to time, as the adventurers explore elsewhere) and attack anyone who enters the room. Characters skilled with animals might be able to appease them with food, or trick them into attacking each other. The chains are pinned in place but not locked.

Pit Fighting Dogs, AC 12, HD 1+2, Bite 1d4+1, 19: the target is knocked prone, S13 D14 C15 I2 P12 W10 Ch6 L4, Mv 60 ft. Advantage when flanking instead of +1 bonus.

Area 13 – Stairwell Base

The base of the tower's wooden staircase leads up to Area 12. The bottom foot or so is submerged in dark water, which fills the entire room. The ceiling at the western end slopes down until it touches the water approximately 50 ft distant. Careful prodding around will find the submerged steps beneath Area 10. See Area 16 for more details.

Area 14 – Tea Room and Balcony

This tower chamber was originally a tea room and still retains a number of rotting, petite chairs and circular tables. The entire chamber is covered in thick webs. Wooden stairs in poor condition wind around the tower walls, up to Area 15 and down to Area 11. The balcony outside is in reasonable condition, its metal railing still strong enough to support a rope for climbing, for example. The balcony door into Area 14 has been boarded up.

Prying the boards away reveals thick, grey, sticky webs of unusual strength and adhesiveness. Inside are 1d4 *Giant Spiders*, courtesy of Marakett. Any prodding around with the webs alerts the spiders, which take action to investigate.

If there is sufficient space, the spiders will surge out onto the terrace to attack potential meals.

Giant Spider, AC 13, HD 2+2, Bite 1d6+1 + poison, 19: special, S14 D16 C12 I2 P12 W10 Ch4 L5, Mv 40 ft inc up walls etc. On a natural 19-20 attack roll, a giant spider wraps its victim in webs, rendering them helpless (a *Luck* (Str) save resists). On its turn, a trapped victim may spend its action to attempt to break free (an opposed Str check vs Str 17). A giant spider's poisonous bite causes 1d6 damage and 1 Dex loss (a *Luck* (Con) save resists). An adventurer has a 25% chance of harvesting 1d3 doses of poison from a dead spider.

An adventurer reduced to zero Dex is wrapped in webs and strung up in Area 14 to hang for a few days, before being eaten and/or implanted with spider eggs.

Area 15 - Observatory

Access to the observatory is via the stairs in Area 14 (which display some webbing), by opening the boarded up windows, or prying tiles off the roof.

This chamber houses a large telescope on a heavy stand, tarnished and with a marred lens. Yellowed star charts hang on the walls, and there are shelves bearing brittle books (astronomy, religion, philosophy and celestial observation records).

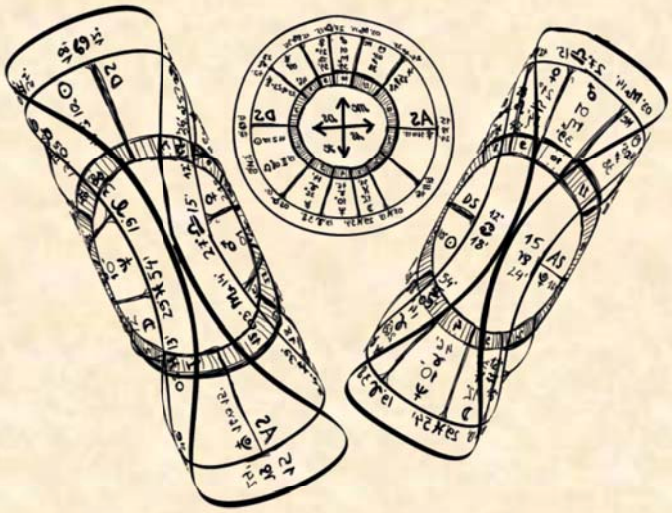
The telescope tube is rigged with poison gas. Dismantling the tube in any way releases a blue gas with a loud hissing sound and pungent chemical odour. The gas affects humans only, and is heavier than air, filling the room then sinking down through the tower stairs (or out the windows if they are unboarded) once released. The gas causes blindness (50% chance only one eye is affected) for 2d6 hours (*Luck* (Con) save resists).

If the books are carefully studied, it becomes clear that the author was painstakingly researching *Ksoth-Nul'Saan*, an entity theorized to have originated from the far reaches of space, now dormant and sleeping somewhere beneath the earth or sea. The journals become increasingly discursive over time and include references to disturbing lore and cult activity. Anyone studying the journals for an extended period (some months) may gain the ability to cast one 1st level spell per adventure (determine randomly), at the cost of a permanent moderate madness (only curable by magic, but the spell casting ability is lost).

Area 16 – Secret Passage

A 5 ft high secret passage runs east to west beneath the manor (about 120 ft). Entry from the west is via a secret trapdoor (Perc (Detection) check to locate) that is locked (Dex (Traps & Locks check to open), or Area 13.

The entire tunnel is filled with 5 ft of jet black water, leaving no room for a torch, lantern, etc. An adventurer must swim underwater to make their way through (LFG p.159).



The water is filled with 1d20+50 ravenous flesh eating fish. Anyone entering is attacked by a school of 3d6 fish, causing 1 point of damage per fish each round. An adventurer may stab, crush or otherwise fend off the fish by spending an

action and making a *Luck* save (negating the damage). The carnivores might also be distracted with corpses or other food offerings at the GM's discretion.

The stone steps directly beneath Area 10 are trapped. There is a 50% chance of standing on a pressurised step, causing a large block of masonry to fall from above. The block causes 4d6 damage to anyone below (*Luck* (Dex) save for half), with a 10% chance of knocking the target unconscious (and floating in the fish pool). A target with a helmet is immune to this effect, other characters may make a *Luck* save to resist.

Amulet Location

The Fenrir amulet is inside a 3 inch adamantine box with an exquisite combination lock. The box is all but indestructible to mundane forces. The combination code is in Area 6, or it may be picked with a Dex (Traps & Locks) check at disadvantage with a -4 penalty. The amulet is located wherever the GM wants it to be, or alternatively it is at the bottom of the acid pool in Area 8 (30%), inside the Gelatinous Cube in Area 10 (30%), on a high bookshelf in the library (30%) or Venosteri acquires it just moments before the party encounters him in Area 3 (10%).

Aftermath

If the adventurers successfully obtain the Fenrir amulet, and one of them is wearing it when he/she exits the manor, that person is declared the champion. He/she receives the purse of gems and enjoys genuine infamy and respect within the criminal community for years to come.

If the party killed Quato, Marakett will seek vengeance (or at least compensation, perhaps by way of a favour) in the fullness of time. He is the patient, calculating type, and will wait for the right opportunity.

If Venosteri emerges victorious, it is not long before Marakett is assassinated and he takes over the Red Hooks. What this means for city politics is left for the GM to decide, but there will be a wide range of stakeholders (both legitimate and otherwise) vying to improve their lot.

The reality or otherwise of the ancient star entity known as Ksoth-Nul'Saan, and any related cult activity, are left for the GM to determine.

(6) WAREHOUSE HEIST

Rumours & Hooks:
Master Gallagos, a Karok book merchant, wants someone to steal an antique tome for him for a handsome fee.

Lord Tenson recently doubled the guards at his fortified warehouse in the merchant quarter. There must be something extra valuable being there stored there. Might be worth a midnight visit.

Setup

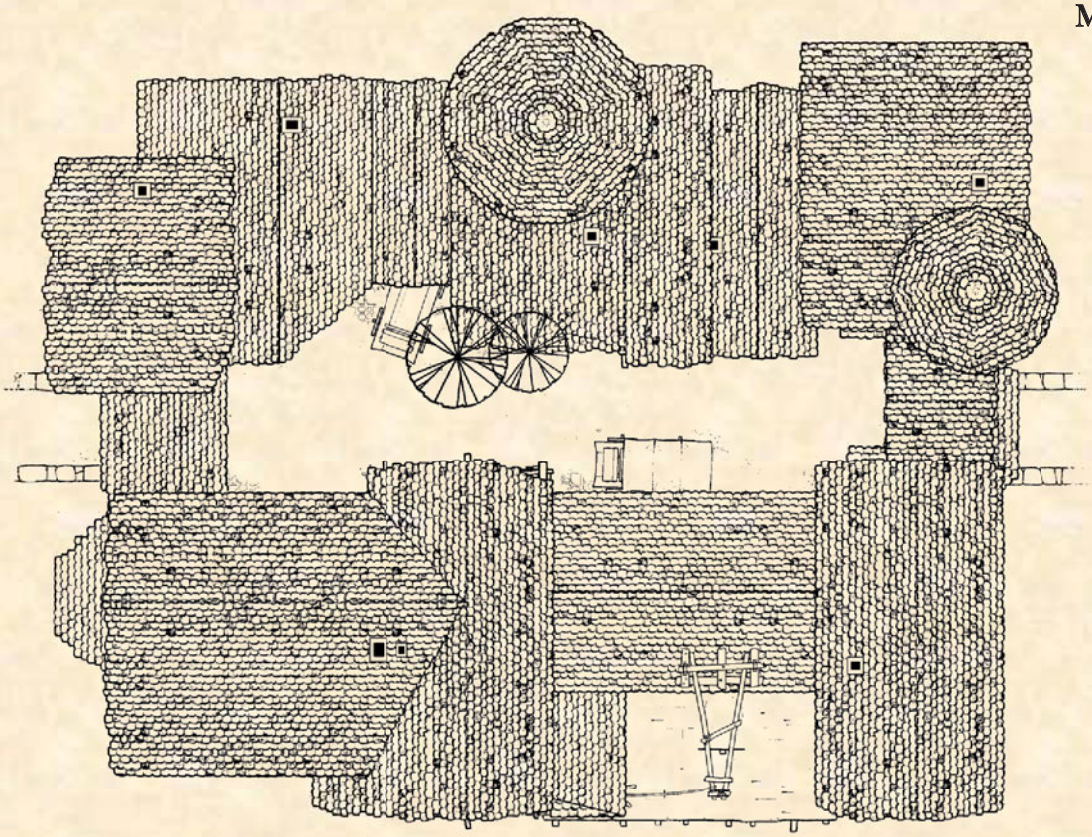
Gallagos of *House Sortini* (a minor Karok enclave, specialising in rare books), is after an antique that he was outbid on at a recent, secret auction: the *Tome of Two Blades*.

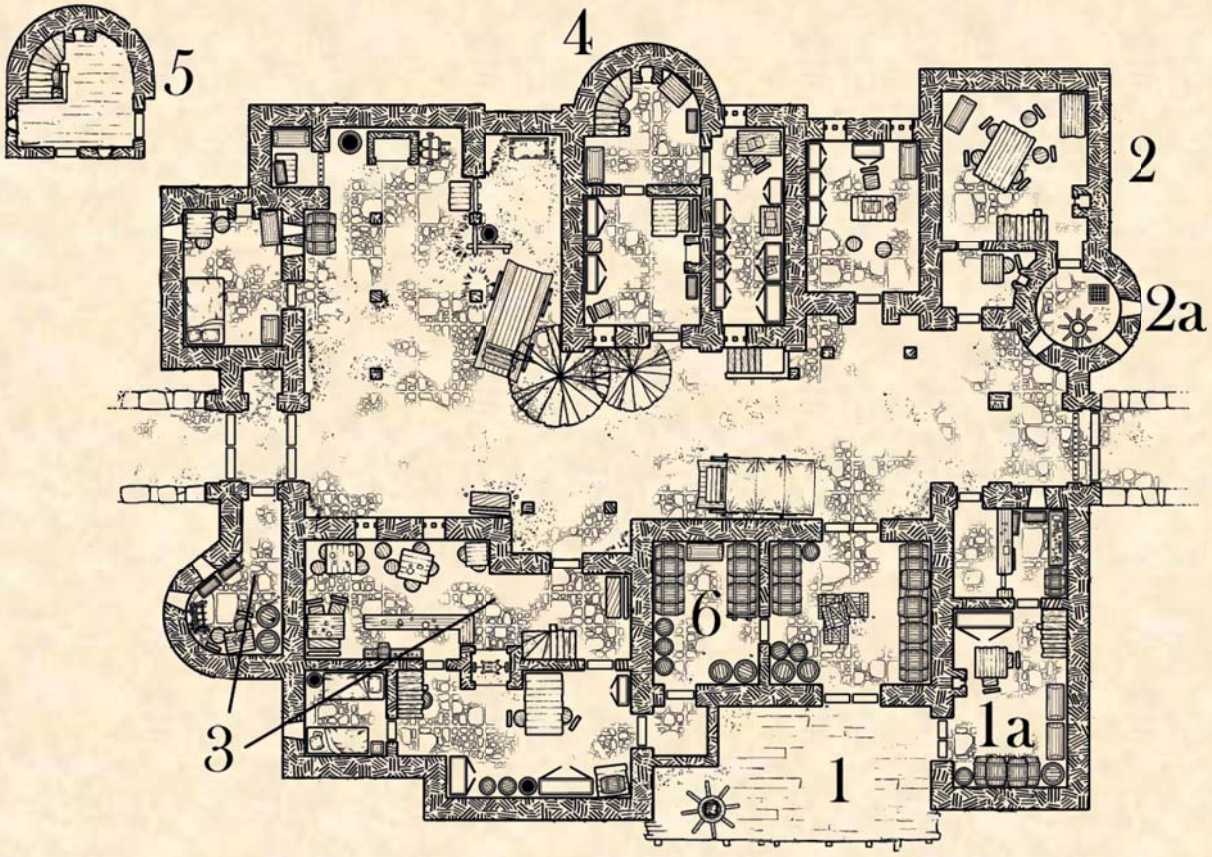
The tome is being held in a fortified warehouse, protected by thick walls, barred gates and a small retinue of capable guards.

Gallagos is uncertain as to where exactly in the warehouse the book is stored, but he is certain it is there. The party's job is to break in and steal it, for the generous fee of 400 gp (the book is worth about 600 gp, but Gallagos is doing it more out of spite than anything).

Legwork

If the party makes discrete inquiries, they might be able to learn (i) the general layout of the warehouse, (ii) that Gallagos is known for "taking matters into his own hands" when outbid at auction, and that the owner, *Lord Tenson*, is half expecting a raid on the warehouse and has increased security, or (iii) the Tome of Two

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Blades is relic of the early worshippers of Wodon, said to contain the wisdom of the *Twin Oracles*. A Cha (Gather Information) check might be required at the GM's discretion.

Fortified Warehouse

The warehouse consists of enclosed stone and brickwork buildings, with a second storey tower to the north. Entry is generally via the east or western doors, or the loading dock to the south. The storage areas are unlit, and guard areas illuminated with lanterns.

The western entry has a set of two doors, each locked. A Dex (Traps & Locks) check at a -1 penalty opens them. The eastern door has a similar lock, but also has a (relatively) lightweight portcullis. Two extremely strong characters (at least Str 16) might be able to work together to prop the portcullis up for a short time (Str checks at disadvantage and a -3 penalty, both characters must succeed). The winch for the portcullis is in the small room south of Area 2.

Access is also possible via shuttered and barred windows (although difficult to force without proper leverage), or via the roof by removing tiles, or dropping into the central courtyard.

Guards

The warehouse is protected by a number of security measures. A patrol of 1d4+3 guards walk the grounds with 1d4+1 war mastiffs, and a sentry falcon keeps watch from the northern tower (Area 5). The falcon is trained to alert the guards to any rooftop intruders with loud screeches. Spotting the falcon on top of the tower is difficult at night (opposed Dex (Stealth) vs Perc (Detection) check with disadvantage for the observer). There is a 40% chance of encountering the roaming patrol every 10 minutes.

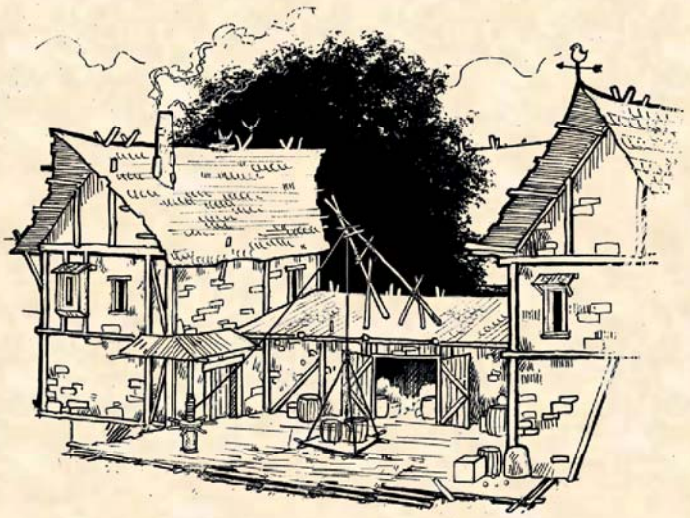
Area 1 – Loading Dock

1d3+1 guards are stationed in the 35 ft by 20 ft loading dock area. The southern and eastern doors are locked (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens them. The winch here controls the loading crane which can be scaled to reach the roof.

Area 1a – Southern Guard Room

This guard area has a table, some chairs, ale barrels and shelves with spare weapons (blades mostly, but also two heavy crossbows). 1d4+1 guards occupy the room playing cards. Any noise outside will draw their attention. One of the guards will seek reinforcements from Areas 2, 3 or 4.

Guard, AC 14 (chain & shield), HD 1, Sword 1d8, 19: disarm, S14 D10 C12 I10 P12 W10 Ch10 L4, Mv 30 ft. The guard's shield may be used to negate one attack (LFG p.40).



Area 2 – Northern Guard Room

2d4+1 guards occupy this 25 ft room, along with *Sergeant Arnem* (as Guard, but 3+1 HD, S16, 1d8+2 damage). They have access to three heavy crossbows. If the guards are defeated, they have 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.136, 141).

Area 2a – Squat Watchtower

One guard typically occupies this squat watchtower, keeping watch outside via the arrow slits. Two heavy crossbows and three fire pots are stored here. If required, up to three guards may

launch ranged attacks through the narrow openings.

Area 3 – Western Guard Room

3d4 guards occupy these rooms (total), along with 1d4 mastiffs. They have access to three heavy crossbows. If the guards are defeated, they have 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136, 141).

Mastiff, AC 13 (barding), HD 1+2, Bite 1d4+1, 19: knocked prone, S13 D14 C15 I2 P12 W10 Ch6, L4, Mv 60 ft.

Area 4 – Main Barracks

These three rooms include a small barracks, gear lockers and the ground level of the watchtower. 2d4 guards are present, including *Captain Ronson* (as Guard but AC 16 (heavy chain and shield), 5 HD, Sword 1d8+2, *Off Turn Attacks*). *Ronson* has the keys to Area 6 and commands the men; they will not flee while he is present. The guards have access to three heavy crossbows and three fire pots. The stairs in the northwest corner lead to Area 5. If defeated, the guards have 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables (LFG p.136, 147).

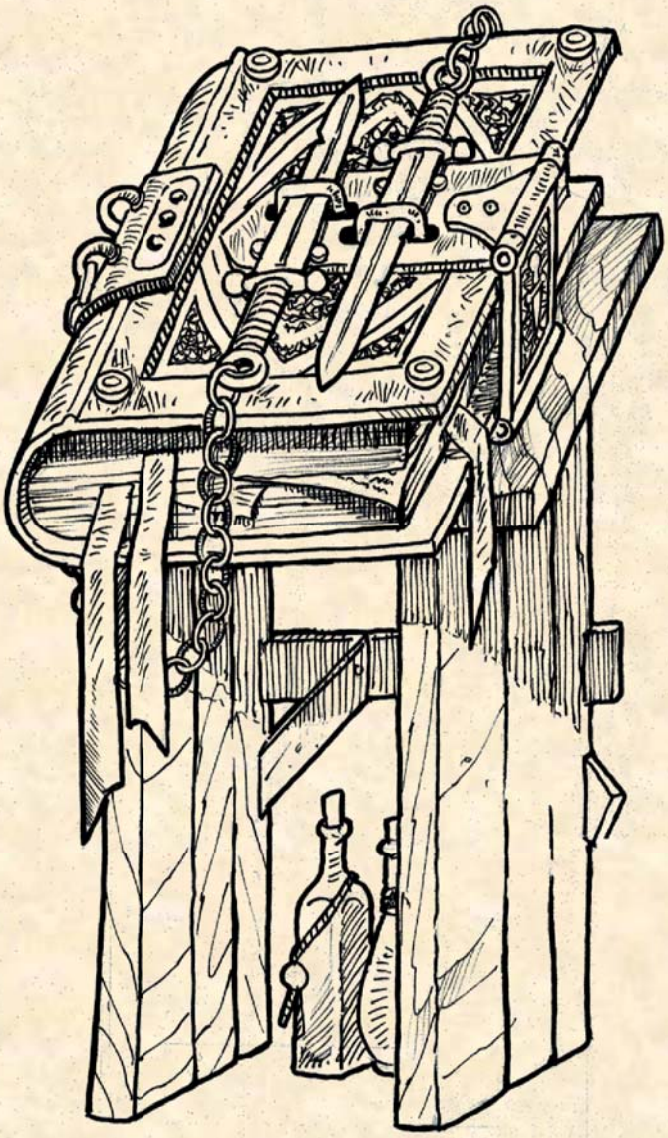
Area 5 – Central Watchtower

This elevated tower has good views over the warehouse rooftops and central courtyard. The locked doors to the east and south have sliding latches that double as firing ports. Two heavy crossbows hang from the walls, ready for use. Guards may fire from here into the southern courtyard, or across most of the roof. The guards may reposition onto the roof itself for better firing angles, or for rooftop melee. The tower roof is approximately 25 ft high (most of the roofing here is approximately 12 ft high).

Area 6 – Main Storage

This 15 ft by 20 ft storage room is secured with expert quality locks, imposing disadvantage and a -2 penalty on checks to pick them. The keys are with *Captain Ronson* in Area 4. Valuable silks and wines are kept here (800 gp). The *Tome of Two Blades* sits on a wooden stand, covered with a sheet. The two bottles stored underneath the book (see picture) are one random potion (LFG p.150) and two doses of fireblood poison (LFG p.33).

The tome itself is not magical in any way but is sacred to Wodon Disciples. They are not aware of the book's whereabouts (alternatively they do know and hire the party to retrieve it, as opposed to Master Gallagos). Returning it to them would earn the party their enduring gratitude.



FORESTS & WOODS

(1) THE WITCH OF DRELNOR

Rumours & Hooks:
For years, an elderly witch has walked the elder forest, beguiling those she encounters. Those that displease her are sacrificed to dark and terrible powers for her own amusement.

A seamstress' child by the name of *Emilia* has gone missing. Locals say the forest witch *Gorgarsa* was seen in the same area the day before. The family is desperate for someone to investigate.

Gorgarsa, the Witch of Drelnor, has been lurking in the old forest for over a decade. She believes, perhaps correctly, that *Uln-Rgaoon,* a blasphemous entity of terrible power, is seeking her above all others, and wishes to consume her.

As it happens, the best place for the demon to cross the Veil into the Midlands is through the potent ley lines that crisscross the forest.

Gorgarsa knows this, and has been working hard to prevent such. She maintains a large number of invisible abjurations warding against *Uln-Rgaoon's* crossing, preventing it from building sufficient energy to break through. Unfortunately for all concerned, the magical rituals required to maintain these abjurations require regular human sacrifice.

Initially, Gorgarsa used the blood of barbarians, bandits and other ne'er do wells, but over time, and with the expansion of her powers and knowledge of the forbidden, she has become indifferent to her choice of victim. Gorgarsa will end a child just as soon a serial murderer, so long as the warding ritual is maintained.

Like most practitioners of magic, the witch suffers from a degree of madness. She thinks the arrival of Uln-Rgaoon is ultimately inevitable, and that it is her sole responsibility to delay this awful doom as long as possible. In her own twisted view, she considers the human sacrifices a kindness, sparing those souls the horror of what is to come.

A party that happens upon the witch is likely to find her mid travels, patrolling the ley lines, or in the midst of a warding ritual (in which case, human sacrifice, or some form of tainted blood magic, will be involved).

Gorgarsa will not necessarily be hostile to the party. At any time there is a 30% chance that she requires an imminent human sacrifice, which is likely to lead to bloodshed. But otherwise, she may be happy to trade information or herbal remedies with the adventurers.

Gorgarsa often has troubles with one or more thuel or skorn tribes, who abhor and fear her, and may offer the party spell casting services in return for their assistance.

Gorgarsa, Boss Monster, AC 12 (heavy robes), HD 7 (51 hp), Crooked Staff 1d8, 19: as weapon, S9 D13 C14 I17 P14 W15 Ch13, L9, Mv 30 ft. Gorgarsa is a *Boss Monster* (LFG p.95) with all the usual benefits, but she does not *Cause Injuries*. May choose from the following spells five times per combat (7th level): *Shield, Sleep, Charm Person, Cure Wounds, Hold Person, Invisibility, Cure Malady, Phantasmal Force, Speak with Dead, Fly, Speak with Dead, Dispel Magic, Ritual Magic, Hypnotic Pattern, Suggestion, Dimension Door, Plant Growth, Polymorph.* The witch has advantage when resisting adverse mind effects such as sleep, charm, fear and madness.

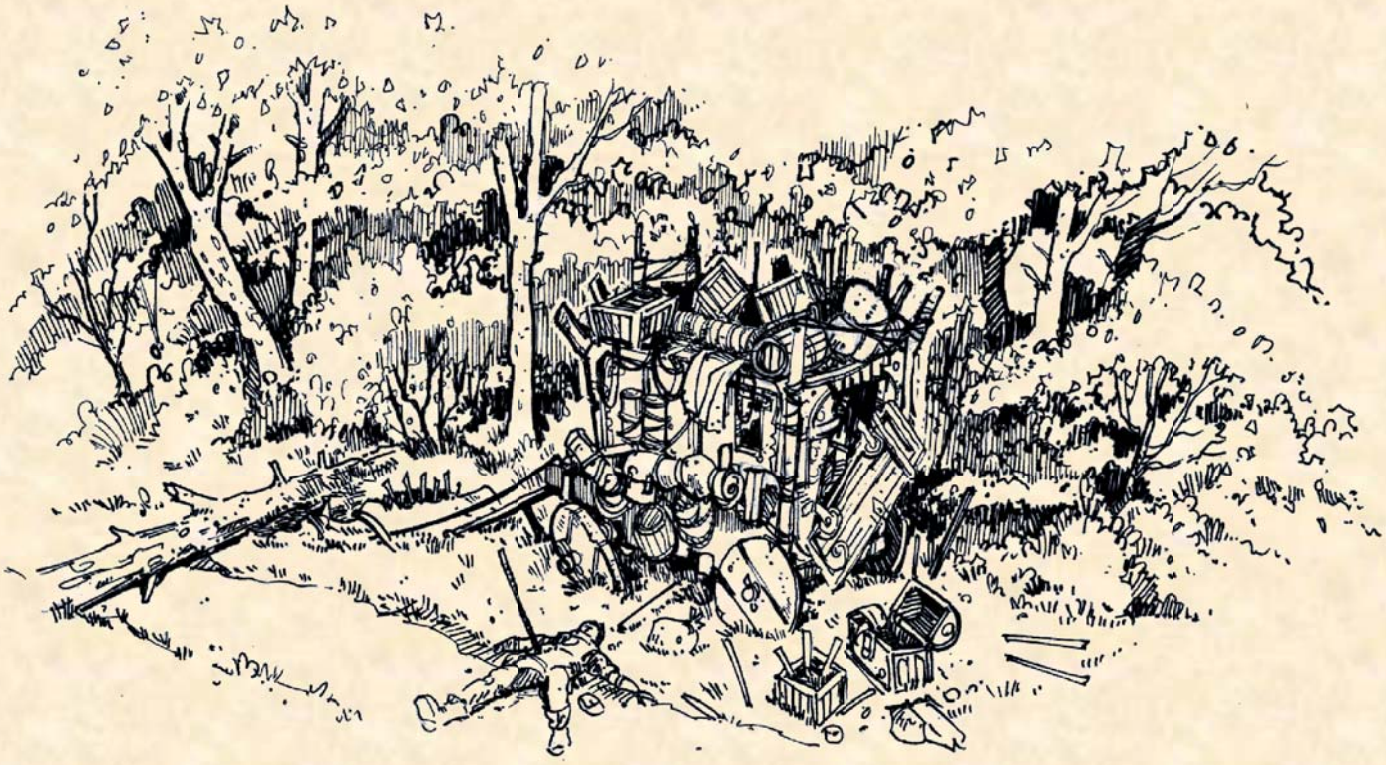
Gorgarsa has limited use for material wealth, but carries a magical item: the crooked staff, fashioned by a sorcerer of the Second Age, which allows the user to invoke a *Lightning Bolt* once every 1d4 days.

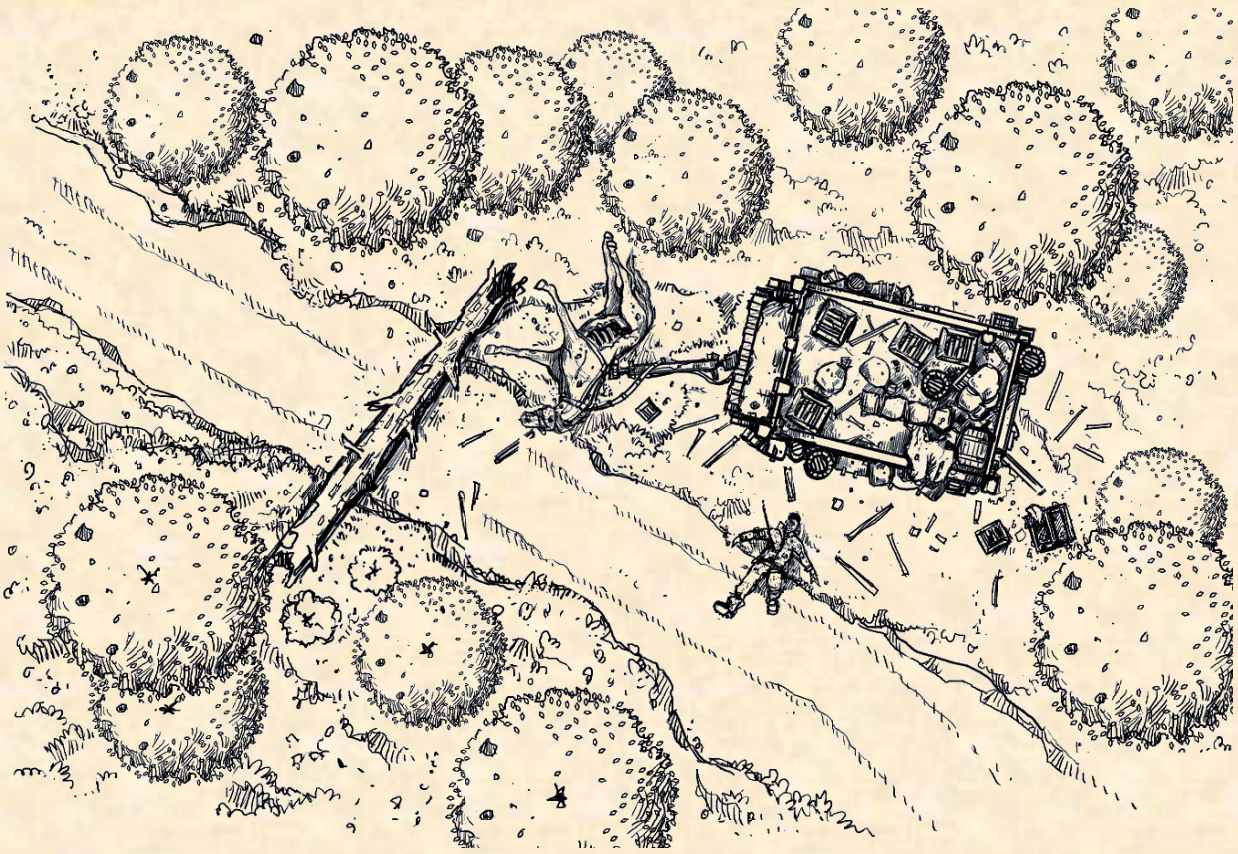
(2) MISSING MERCHANT

Rumours & Hooks:
A herbalist named *Rinehold* has gone missing on a trade expedition into the Wistwood, where he was to meet with thuels of the *Ghost Serpent* tribe. *Mistress Suffria*, Rinehold's business partner and trader in *Crow's Keep*, is offering a sizable reward to determine Rinehold's fate, and to recover any goods.

Aarek Rinehold, a herbalist and trader, has fallen upon disaster on the outskirts of the Wistwood. Hoping to trade with a (relatively) co-operative thuel tribe with access to rare plants, he and a small but veteran retinue of guards were overwhelmed during a skorn ambush.

The halfmen ransacked the wagon, taking the foodstuff and metal trade items, and draining most of the ale barrels. Those humans that survived the attack were taken for later eating. Most of the bodies were dragged away, but Aarek's corpse remains on display, along with that of his dead horse.





The forest floor reveals obvious tracks of a large number of humanoid creatures. A Perc or Int (Wilderness Lore) check reveals approximately ten guards were set upon by more than two score skorn, and the bodies/survivors dragged away.

Whether any of those taken are still alive, and might be rescued, is up to the GM to determine. It is common knowledge however that skorn prisoners do not stay prisoners for long, and are usually shortly devoured.

More immediately, not all of the skorn have departed. 2d12 skorn remain here waiting in ambush, concealed amongst the trees. An adventurer surveying the trees may make a Perc (Detection) vs Dex (Stealth) contest to notice one or more of the ambushers, negating any chance of surprise.

Either way the skorn launch their attack. Skorn loathe magic users, and will target any obvious spell casters first.

The warband is lead by *Karg Gugnut*, a bloodthirsty and revered werewolf, accompanied by a pet dire wolf, *Ruknuk* (50%).

Skorn, AC 11, HD 2, Club 1d6+1, 19: the target is clubbed in the head, losing its next action (*Luck* (Will) save resists), S15 D10 C13 I7 P12 W8 Ch8, L5, Mv 30 ft. Rudimentary dark vision, advantage when detecting danger or scents.

Karg Gugnut, Werewolf, AC 13, HD 6+4, Bite 2d6, 19: *a wolf (60%) or dire wolf (40%) comes to the lycanthrope's aid*, S18 D14 C14 I10 P15 W13 Ch8, L8, Mv 30 ft. Gugnut is a Lycanthrope with all the usual benefits (LFG p.95). By spending an action, he may exert control and issue orders to wolves and dire wolves, which are compelled to obey. Rudimentary dark vision, advantage when detecting danger or scents. Skorn lycanthropy cannot be spread to non-skorn.

Ruknuk, Dire Wolf, AC 13, HD 3+4, Bite 2d4+1, 19: *a wolf (60%) or dire wolf (40%) comes*

to aid the dire wolf, S18 D15 C17 I2 P13 W14 Ch6, L6, 60 ft. Advantage when tracking and on attack rolls when flanking.

If defeated, the skorn and their karg relinquish 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136). There is a 50% chance one of the skorn stole a metal flask from a dead guard containing a random potion. The remains of the wagon might be salvageable with some repairs. Otherwise, there is approximately 5d10+150 gp worth of residual clothing and tools.

(3A) SHRINE OF THE HORNED BEAST

Rumours & Hooks:
Hidden in the Forest of Drelnor, situated atop a tall plateau, stands the *Shrine of the Horned Beast*. Records suggest this colossal statue is an ageless sentry to a bygone tomb.

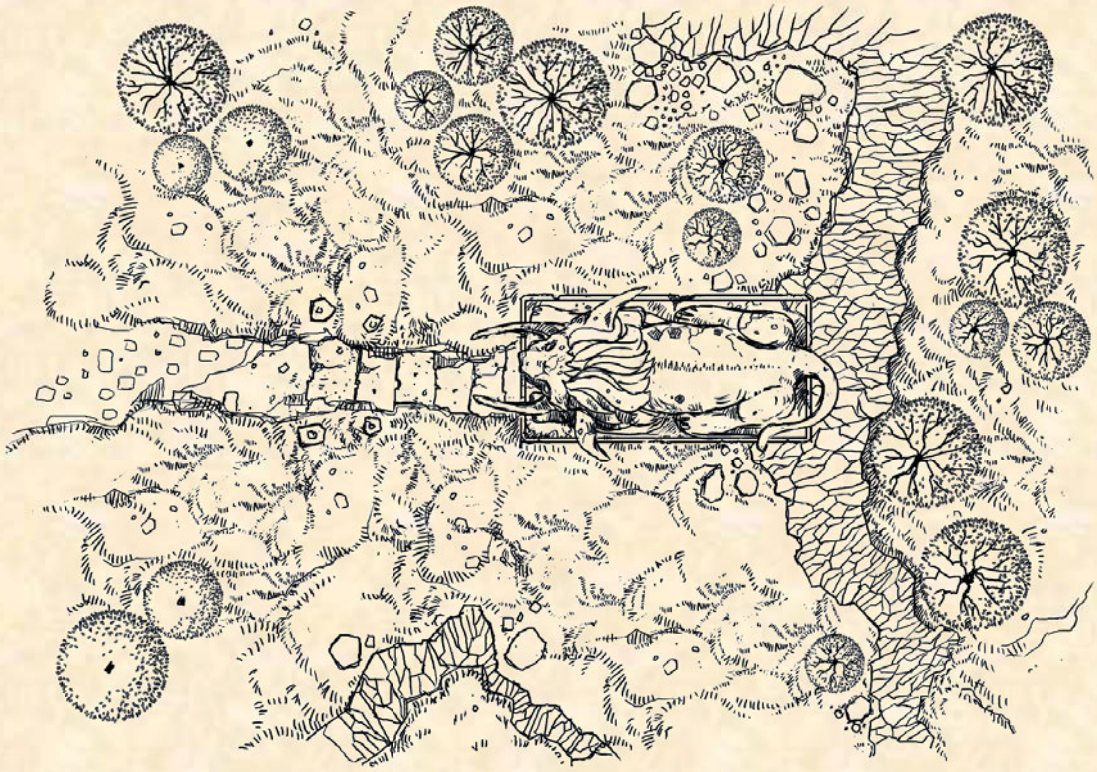
The *Horned Beast* marks the resting place of *Horutep*, an ill favoured prince from the *Ramoran* empire of the Second Age.

Beneath the statue is a trapped tunnel that leads to the underground crypt proper. In addition, a skorn tribe, the *Korrug*, has claimed the site, and venerate the statute as a physical manifestation of their bestial deity. At any time of the day or night, 4d12 skorn bear witness to the Horned One, ready to repel any who might despoil their sacred ground. Of these sentries, one quarter will be "blessed" with wereboar lycanthropy (the most favoured sons of the tribe).

Generally speaking, about half of the skorn will be stationed on the high cliff to the east, armed with throwing spears and slings. The other half, including the wereboars, will be hiding in the northern trees. None dare enter the entry tunnel, on pain of death.

Korrug, Wereboar, AC 13, HD 5+4, Tusk 2d4+1 and 2 x Claws 1d4+1, 19: target is severely gored, roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table, S19 D10 C15 I8 P13 W16 Ch7, L8, 60 ft. Korrug is a Lycanthrope with all the usual benefits (LFG p.95). By spending an action, he may exert control and issue orders to boars and dire boars, which are compelled to obey. Rudimentary dark vision, advantage when detecting danger or scents. Skorn lycanthropy cannot be spread to non-skorn.

Skorn, AC 11, HD 2, Club 1d6+1, 19: the target is clubbed in the head, losing its next action (*Luck* (Will) save resists), S15 D10 C13 I7 P12 W8 Ch8, L5, Mv 30 ft. Rudimentary dark vision, advantage when detecting danger or scents.



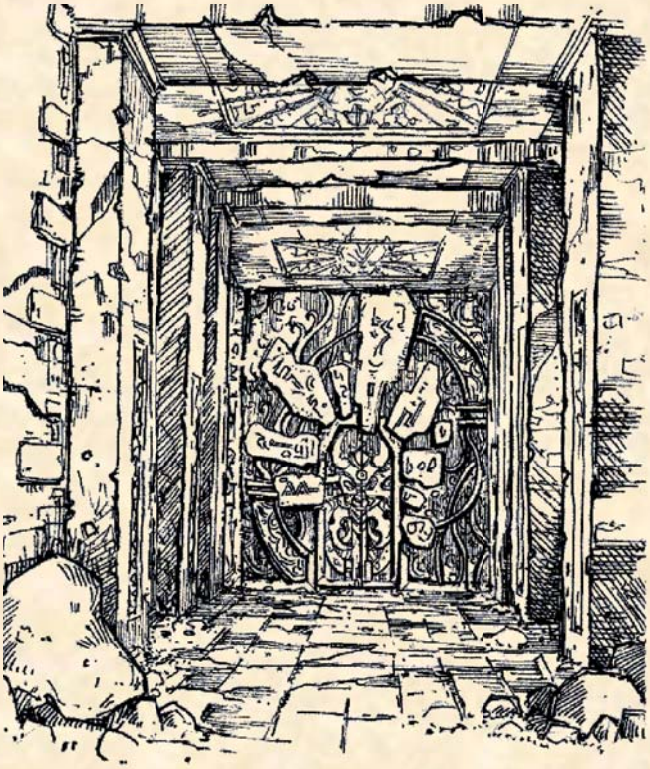
On this sacred site, the Korrug are utterly fearless and do not make morale checks. They will not retreat or surrender. If defeated, 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136) may be scavenged. There is a 50% chance one of the skorn is in the contagious stage of *Night Tremors*, a wasting disease, requiring looters to make a *Luck* (Con) save or contract the virus (1d4 Str loss over 24 hours).

The Tunnel

The tunnel beneath the idol is 5 ft wide and 25 ft long, ending in a stone door. The corridor includes two trapped flagstones at the 10 ft and 20 ft mark, which require a Perc (Detection) test at disadvantage to spot.

If either of the traps are triggered, 10 ft blocks of ceiling stone drop down, crushing those below. A *Luck* (Dex) save is required to avoid being reduced to zero hit points. The large blocks are connected to vast chains controlled by a water timer that slowly hauls the ceiling back into place after 15 minutes.

The doorway to the tomb depicts a humanoid, horned head, surrounded by plaques of tarnished bronze inscribed with mysterious runes.



The door is protected by a *Wizard Lock* spell cast at 8th level. If the party cannot dispel or otherwise overcome the magic warding, the door may be broken down with the right tools and sufficient time (albeit making lots of noise in the process). After bypassing the door, the party may enter the *Tomb of Horutep*.

(3B) TOMB OF HORUTEP

Unless otherwise indicated, the tomb has masonry walls, 8 ft ceilings, and expertly cut flagstone floors. The air is still and musty, with dust covering all surfaces. The tomb is eerily silent and completely dark. Adventurers will require their own light source.

The tomb has been sealed for millennia and there are no wandering monsters inside, unless the GM desires otherwise (something might have crawled out of the chasm in Area 4, for example).

Area 1 – Entry Hall

After bypassing the door in *(3A) Shrine of the Horned Beast,* the party may enter the tomb.

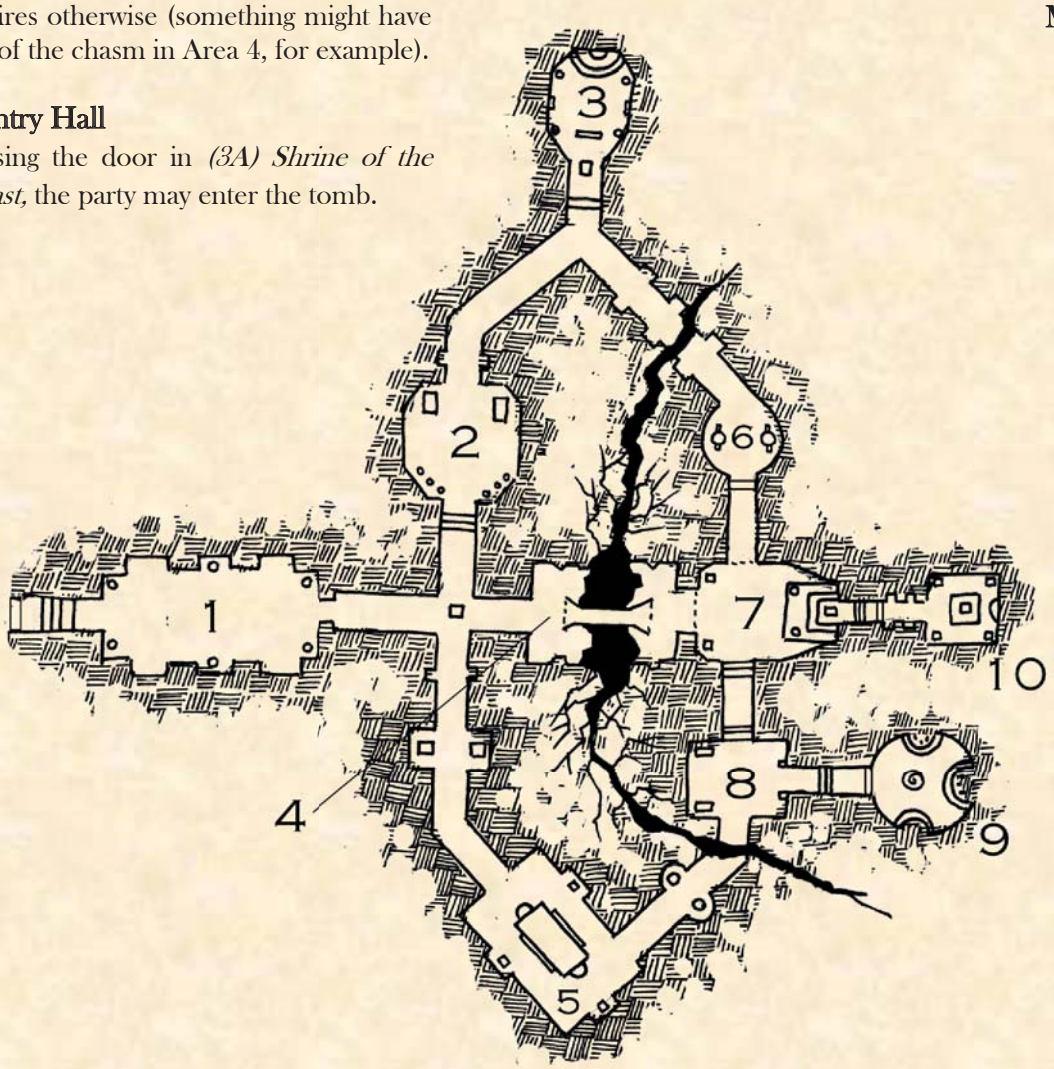
A short corridor and steps descend into the large entry hall beyond, approximately 15 ft wide and 40 ft long. The walls are decorated with faded murals depicting pale skinned humans worshipping a god-like giant holding twin moons overhead with four arms. Six ceramic urns, of faded red colouration, are placed along the walls. They contain pairs of skeletal hands preserved in embalming fluid.

Area 2 – Offering Chamber

This oddly shaped room is approximately 30 ft on each side. Along the southern wall are six open verdigris copper urns. Inside the urns is dust of various shades.

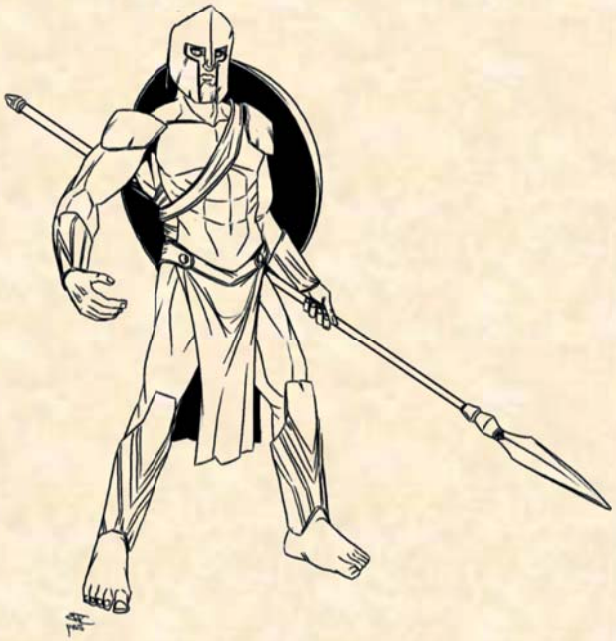
On the northern wall are two life sized bronze statues of warriors with moulded breastplates, tall

Map



helms and long spears. The statues are enchanted guardians and will animate and attack anyone who attempts to pass them, seeking to drive intruders back to the entry tunnel before returning to their starting location. The guardians are fearless, cannot be bargained with, and are immune to all mind affecting magic.

If an offering is left in one or more of the bronze urns, the guardians do not animate (or cease attacking and return to their starting location, if an offering is made mid-combat).



Bronze Guardian, AC 15, HD 9, Spear 2d8, 19: the target's weapon is snatched away by the guardian and crushed *(Luck* (Dex) save resists), S21 D11 C23 I- P13 W- Ch-, L10, Mv 30 ft.

Area 3 – Altar Room

This small chamber is about 20 ft on each side, with a bronze door (unlocked). Inside is a man sized alabaster statue of the four armed god (from Area 1), glaring imperiously. Further into the room is a low stone bench, and four sealed ceramic urns (containing hearts preserved in embalming fluid) on the eastern and western walls. The ceiling here is adorned with bas-relief of the moon and familiar stars. On the northern wall is a raised altar of black basalt, carved with runic scrawl. Anyone who glances at the runes feels uneasy. An adventurer studying the runes is immediately struck with a severe madness: "*The Moon speaks to me, and through me, to all mankind. She alone protects us from the sun devils*" (a *Luck* (Will) save resists).

Area 4 – The Chasm

This 30 ft long, 15 ft wide chamber is split down the middle by a deep chasm. The chasm is 10 ft wide at its narrowest point and drops down 300 ft. The chasm walls are covered in red, yellow, orange and brown coloured mould.

Most of the mould is harmless, but 1d6 dangerous *Yellow Mould* are also present. The mould has been in and out of stasis like dormancy for centuries. A living creature or open flame within 60 ft of the mould will awaken it after 2d4 rounds. Applying fire directly to the mould causes double damage, but it awakens in one round.

The mould is ravenous and will immediately attack, seeking to incapacitate, merge with and finally incubate inside the adventurers' corpses.

Yellow Mould, AC 10 (automatic hit in melee), HD 3, Projectile Spore (see below), 19: the spore is extra strong, bursting in a 10 ft radius, S6 D-C16 I2 P14 W- Ch-, L6, Mv immobile. Yellow mould is immobile but attacks by way of projectile spores up to 60 ft that burst in a 10 ft diameter. Failing a *Luck* (Con) save against the spores means that the adventurer dies a horrible choking death in 1d6 rounds. An adventurer protecting their nose and mouth with a mask has advantage on the check.

A narrow, 2 ft wide stone arch bridge spans the dark chasm. A Perc (Detection) check notices that various moulds are also on the underside of the bridge. An adventurer struck by a projectile spore whilst on the bridge risks being knocked off (Dex (Acrobatics) check resists).

There is no treasure in this chamber. An adventurer with the apothecary skill has a 25% chance of harvesting a single dose of yellow mould, for use as a choking dust poison (assuming the mould was not destroyed by fire).

Area 5 – Servant's Crypt

In the centre of this 30 ft long, 15 ft wide chamber is a large stone crypt, 20 ft long, 5 ft wide and 7 ft tall.

The crypt is inscribed with moon worship hieroglyphs and benedictions in the *Old Ramoran* tongue. The crypt is completely sealed, but may be broken into with the right tools and sufficient time. Alongside some of the walls are three verdigris bronze urns (sealed, containing dust and 3d20 gp worth of precious metal trinkets; the prized belongings of the servants noted below).

Inside the crypt are the mummified bodies of eight of *Horutep's* slaves. Their ghastly ritual murders transformed 1d8 of the poor souls into *Shades*, bound for eternity to the tomb and their cursed prince. Time has utterly erased all vestiges of their personalities. The shades now exist only as supernatural forces of base hunger, manifesting as humanoid shadows. The shades are only released if the party opens the crypt or urns.

Shade, AC 12, HD 4, Touch 1d6+1 + Str drain 19: the target's weapon or armour (50%) is transformed into shadow (*Luck* save resists), S-D16 C- I10 P13 W10 Ch7, L7, Mv 40 ft inc walls, ceiling, etc. Shades are *Incorporeal Undead* with the usual benefits (LFG p.94, 95). On a hit, the target loses 1 Str. Targets reduced to zero Str are slain and have a 50% chance of rising as a shade.

Area 6 – Twin Guardians

This 15 ft diameter antechamber houses two stone statues carved in the likeness of Ramoran Moon Priests, bare chested and tattooed, with flowing skirts and sandals. The statues hold a crescent moon in each hand.

The idols are golems and activate if anyone attempts to pass them. The golems seek to kill intruders, or drive them into the chasm to the northwest. The golems are slow, and cannot jump. They will not attempt to navigate the chasm. The eyes of both golems are sapphires worth 900 gp each (total 3,600 gp).

Stone Golem, AC 16, HD 11+3, 2 x Crescent Moons 2d8, 19: bear hug, S21 D11 C23 I- P13 W- Ch-, L11, Mv 20 ft. The statues are Golems with the usual benefits (LFG p.112). They have 60% *Magic Resistance*, except against *Stone to Flesh, Transmute Rock to Mud, Stoneshape or Move Earth* spells which cause 6d8 damage (once only). A golem that hits a target with both attacks crushes the target (*Luck* (Con) save to avoid rolling on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table).

Area 7 – Audience Room

This 15 ft wide, 25 ft long audience room has a ceramic tiled floor, covered in dust. Jet black steps are set into the eastern corner, flanked by two marble columns and a 6 ft marble sculpture of a full moon. Behind the moon sculpture is a tarnished copper door bearing the winged serpent sigil of *House Horutep*. In the western corners of the room are two further marble pillars.

The audience chamber is trapped. If three or more humanoid creatures enter at once, the entire floor - except for the raised steps and the marble pillars - drops away, disintegrating in a shower of tiles into a 200 ft chasm.

A *Luck* (Dex) save allows an adventurer to grab hold of a pillar, spring onto the steps, or leap out of the room to save themselves. An adventurer that studies the room gains a Perc (Detection) test to notice one or more nearby tiles are not sitting completely flat. Pulling up a tile reveals the chasm beneath.

The copper door to the sarcophagus chamber is expertly locked. There is no key to unlock it. A Dex (Traps & Locks) check at disadvantage picks the lock.

Area 8 – Sarcophagi Chamber

This 15 ft square chamber has two upright sarcophagi leaning against the eastern corners of the room. The sarcophagi have gold edging but are otherwise relatively plain.

The eastern corridor is flanked by two black ebony urns (sealed, they contain the preserved innards of the two mummies). The corridor ends in a black stone door inscribed with a chart of unfamiliar stars.

Two mummies sleep in the sarcophagi. They awake and attack only if someone disturbs them or the door to the east. They will not stop attacking until the intruders are dead or driven into the entry tunnel.

Mummy, AC 13, HD 7, Fist 1d12 + Mummy Rot, 19: the target is cursed and loses 1 point of *Luck*, S19 D8 C16 I3 P10 W14 Ch3, L9, Mv 30 ft. Mummies are *Undead* with the usual benefits (LFG p.95). They are particularly susceptible to fire which causes double damage. Mummies have no real intelligence and simply follow the orders of their master, even if their master has long since passed. Their touch inflicts *Mummy Rot*, a magical curse that causes 1 Con loss and prevents healing of all kinds until the adventure ends (*Luck* (Will) save resists). A *Cure Malady* spell will lift the mummy's curse.

If the mummies are defeated, in the sarcophagi are 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.136, 141).

Area 9 – Invocation Circle

The door is expertly locked (the key is in Area 10). A Dex (Traps & Locks) check at -1 penalty with disadvantage picks the lock.

This 15 ft circular chamber is constructed entirely of black basalt. In the centre of the room is a white marble spiral about 3 ft wide. Three large stone shelves protrude from the northern, southern and eastern walls.

The shelves hold various metal trinkets (ancient bracelets, necklaces, etc worth 1d10 x 300 gp) and three ceramic urns containing preserved human brains. Two of the brains have bite marks in them.

If *Detect Magic* is used, the white marble spiral radiates divination magic. Standing in the spiral induces a powerful feeling of hunger. An adventurer who stands in the spiral, and eats part of one of the preserved brains, falls into a magical stupor for 1d3 minutes.

During this time, the character communes with an inscrutable entity from beyond the Veil, with unpredictable results. Roll 1d10: (1) Gain 1 Int, (2) Gain 1 Will, (3) Gain 1 Perc, (4) Gain 1 Cha,

(5) Gain the ability to cast *Charm Monster* once per week, (6) Gain the ability to cast *Dimension Door* once per week, (7) Lose 1 Perc, (8) Lose 1 Will, (9) Lose 1 Int, (10) make a *Luck* (Will) save or die of soul destroying horror. These effects are permanent and not subject to mortal magic.

Additionally, the adventurer must roll on the DDM table, and gains a serious madness (LFG p.91). These effects may be removed in the usual way.

Area 10 – Horutep's Crypt

The door to Horutep's chamber is expertly locked (the key is lost). A Dex (Traps & Locks) check at disadvantage with a -3 penalty picks the lock.

The 3 ft wide corridor before the chamber proper is trapped. Four alcoves with frescos depicting ancient battle scenes each conceal a trio of horizontal spear holes. There is a 50% chance of setting off a spear alcove by stepping on a pressure plate. An adventurer who carefully examines the dust covered floor notices a trapped flagstone with a Perc (Detection) test at a -2 penalty. If triggered, the spears cause 3d6+3 damage (*Luck* (Dex) save for half).

The final chamber is an intimate 10 ft square. In the corners are 2 ft gold urns containing the preserved innards of Horutep. In the centre of the chamber is an ornate sarcophagus, lined with gold and studded with gemstones. The mummy Horutep sleeps inside.

If the party had to break down the door, or set off the spear traps, Horutep has already awoken by the time the party enters. Otherwise he awakens after 1d4 rounds, his sarcophagus crumbling to pieces around him as he rises.

Horutep appears as an emaciated, linen wrapped mummy with a golden crown. Three skeleton crows sit on his shoulders, squawking and flapping about him. He does not immediately attack (except to defend himself).

Unlike most mummies, the cursed prince retains fragments of his personality and memory, blended with unnatural arrogance and sense of divine entitlement. The undead prince asks the party in Ramoran "*Ro tan du sular?*" (what time is this?), and "*Tuk'n han zara*" (bow before me). He will wait to see how the party responds before deciding what to do. Now that he has been awakened, Horutep wishes to explore this new world, and will seek guidance from the invocation circle (Area 9). Horutep will not suffer any insult, challenge to his authority or looting of his tomb.

Prince Horutep, Mummy, Boss Monster, AC 13, HD 7 (86 hp), Fist 1d12 + Mummy Rot or Blade of Ramora 1d8+5 and see below, 19: the target is cursed and loses 1 point of *Luck*, S19 D12 C18 I13 P10 W17 Ch8, L9, Mv 30 ft. Prince Horutep is a *Boss Monster* (LFG p.95) and *Undead* (LFG p.95) with all the usual benefits. If Horutep is hit by a single target attack, he may choose to sacrifice one of his crows instead of taking damage. That crow is automatically destroyed if so (the crows cannot attack). Horutep has the usual mummy traits (see Area 8 mummies).

If Horutep is defeated, hidden in the floor beneath the sarcophagus are 1 x 7 HD Lair Treasure (LFG p.140), 2 x Valuables (LFG p.147), 1 x Potion (LFG p.150), 1 x Scroll (LFG p.152), 1 x Permanent Magical Item (LFG p.152) and the key to Area 9.

Alternatively, the permanent item might be the royal *Blade of Ramora*, a mithril bastard sword with a skull motif guard. If this is the case, the prince is armed with the sword when he faces the party. The blade allows the user to cast *Earthquake* once every six months. If this power is invoked, the user automatically rolls on the DDM table. In addition, on a natural 20 attack roll, the sword subjects the target to a *Blindness* spell. Test for a DDM effect each time this occurs. One or both of the these powers might require an extended period of attunement before manifesting (LFG p.154).

Aftermath

If Horutep is slain, the golems and guardians stop functioning, and the shades disappear. The party is free to loot the area and make their way home with the spoils as best they can.

The Altar Room (Area 3) and Invocation Circle (Area 9) continue to function, and over time might draw the attention of cultists or similar. If the entry door in Area 1 was broken down or is left unlocked, other creatures might eventually make the tomb their lair. The yellow mould in Area 4 is likely to spread, and/or something more sinister rise from the depths of the chasm.

If Horutep is not slain, he consults with the invocation circle and makes short forays into the region, attempting to understand this new world. Eventually he attracts cultists, who assist him to learn sorcery and gather more followers. Where this might all end is left for the GM to determine.

(4) RIVERSTONE VILLAGE

Rumours & Hooks:
The *Riverstone* thuels of the old forest are the unmatched masters of herbalism in the region, with a special place of importance amongst the tribes.

Mistress Rhea, a herbalist of *Port Brax*, wants an order of rare herbs and poultices collected from the Riverstone tribe in Drelnor Forest. She offers her expert services for completing this task.

Lord Bergolt of Northgate is dying of the *White Ash Rot*. He believes the legendary healers of the Riverstone tribe have a cure for him, and is willing to pay handsomely to get it.

Few thuels have the luxury of settling in one area, but the small (less than 60 member) *Riverstone* tribe have earned themselves a permanent home by becoming experts in herbalism.

Other larger tribes, and even some local skorn kargs, rely on the herbalists' secret skills for rare treatments. The clan stays out of the blood feuds, politics and turf wars that erupt between the other tribes, maintaining a scrupulous neutrality.

Unfortunately, a plague of giant tree spiders has recently decimated their ranks. When the adventurers arrive, the spiders have eaten most of villagers, and cocooned the remainder in a handful of huts.

100 ft up in the trees, in the shadows of the thick canopy, the spiders wait with nets of silk to catch their next meal. Areas 1–4 on the map indicate the trap sites. There are 2d4 spiders at each site.

Giant Tree Spider, AC 13, HD 3+1, Bite 1d6+1 + poison, 19: special, S14 D16 C12 I2 P12 W10 Ch4 L6, Mv 50 ft inc up walls etc. Giant Tree Spiders are 7 ft long, camouflaged like the leaves and branches they hide within (+2 bonus on hide checks). They possess great cunning and

hunt in packs, stalking their prey from the high branches before dropping 5 ft nets of black silk. A *Luck* (Dex) save is required to prevent becoming entangled and helpless. A trapped victim may spend its action to attempt to break free (opposed Str check vs Str 17). On a natural 19 attack, the victim is subject to a web attack.

The spider's poisonous bite causes 1d2 Con loss (a *Luck* (Con) save resists). An adventurer reduced to zero Con falls into a coma, and is later eaten or used to lay eggs in. An adventurer has a 25% chance of harvesting 1d3 doses of poison from a dead spider.

The spiders have strands connecting all of the trap sites, enabling them to signal each other. Once an ambush is triggered at one site, the spiders at the next closest site will converge on the same area in 1d4+1 rounds, and so on, attacking the party in four waves.

If the ambush spiders are defeated, there remains one other threat to contend with. High in the trees, in the very uppermost canopy, sleeps the female brood mother. This horrific beast is 15 ft long, and takes 3d4 rounds to awaken after the last set of male spiders signals her.

The brood mother is a canny, ancient creature, and will observe the party before deciding what to do. If the party appears badly wounded, or splits up, she will attempt to pick off individuals with her web hooks, hoisting the victim into the canopy to face her alone. If the party appears strong, and stays together, she will attempt to avoid them whilst she sneaks through the branches. If she gets the opportunity, she will seek to retrieve some of her eggs in the huts.

Brood Mother, AC 12, HD 14, Bite 1d10+1 + poison, 19: special, S18 D16 C16 I4 P12 W15 Ch5 L14, Mv 40 ft inc up walls etc. The brood mother is 15 ft long, possessed of unnatural cunning and hunts in packs with her smaller males. She makes web attacks like the male spider, and has *Off Turn Attacks*.

On a natural 19 attack, the brood mother leaps onto the target, crushing it beneath her bulk and

forcing a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table. The brood mother's poisonous bite causes 1d6 Con loss (a *Luck* (Con) save at a -2 penalty resists). An adventurer reduced to zero Con falls into a coma, and is later eaten or used to lay eggs in. An adventurer has a 25% chance of harvesting 1d3 doses of poison from a dead female.

If the party investigates the huts, roll 1d8 to determine what is inside:

(1) 1d4 cocooned tribe members, each with a 50% chance of being a corpse implanted with eggs or 6 inch baby spiders. Otherwise the victim is alive.

(2) A ramshackle hut of broken furniture, shelving and rugs: nothing of value.

(3) Amongst the ruins are 1d4 clay pots of healing poultices. The poultices have a 50% chance of curing any disease or restoring lost Str, Dex or Con, within 1d4 days.

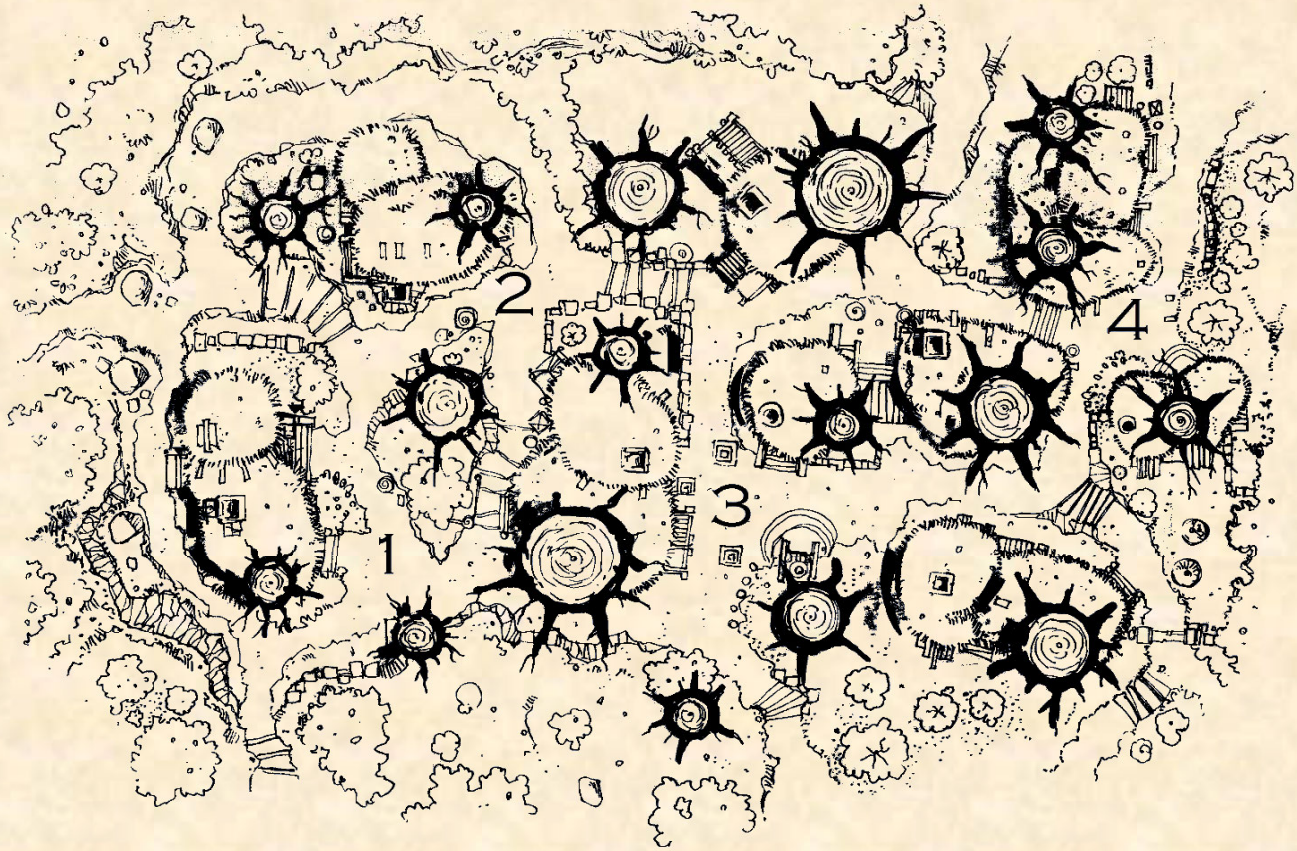
(4) 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136) stashed under a fur rug.

(5) A lone male spider, tending 1d3 cocooned tribe victims. The victims are still alive and awaiting being implanted.

(6) A female child named *Barbula*, who somehow managed to hide from the spiders. She is scared but hopeful at the sight of the party. She is ravenously hungry and thirsty.

(7) 1 x random potion (LFG p.150) in a waterskin marked with cryptic symbols.

(8) A blood stained willow staff carved in the likeness of twisted vines. The staff is magical, a relic from a lost druidic order. Once every 1d4 days the user may cast *Speak with Plants*. In addition, hostile plants will only target the wielder if attacked by them.



(5) FOREST RUNES

Rumours & Hooks:
In the most dangerous parts of the Wistwood, the trees are carved with runic symbols of protection, warding against lurking predators. Some say a cache of gems is buried beneath such trees, but digging them up ends the protection.

Thrangould, a sage in *Northgate*, is interested in the *Wistwood Tree Runes*; ancient symbols carved into the bark of certain trees of the forest, said to provide magical protection. He would like to study them in the comfort of his personal laboratory, and offers a sizable reward for retrieving one.

In centuries long past, a benevolent hedge wizard carved a series of protective runes throughout Wistwood. They have endured long after his death, but not in the way in which he intended.

Three centuries ago a spiteful hag named *Menethorii* subverted the runes with fey sorcery, twisting them into cursed symbols of doom. Instead of shielding travellers, the runes court disaster, drawing monsters and catastrophe.

If *Detect Magic* is used on the runes, they radiate abjuration magic, courtesy of a powerful illusion. Actually touching the runes reveals that the carvings do not match the visual image. An Int (Arcana) check (the character must be proficient) deduces that the real carving is a curse, not a boon. The runes count as magical items for *Dispel Magic* purposes.

Any mortal creature that observes the runes must make a *Luck* (Will) save or is subject to Menethorii's curse, which lasts until the party leaves Wistwood (or removed via a *Cure Malady* spell). The effects of the curse are as follows:

(a) The chance of a random encounters doubles,

(b) Random encounter monsters have maximum hit points, and

(c) Random encounter monsters have advantage on all morale checks.

In addition, within 1d100 minutes of first seeing the runes, there is a 50% chance that *Fey Creepers* coalesce from the undergrowth to attack the party.

Fey Creeper, AC 14, HD 5, Bite 1d10 + disease, 19: special, S19 D10 C14 I7 P10 W15 Ch4 L8, Mv 30 ft. On a natural 19, the target is partially drawn into the creeper; crushed, choked and raked for an extra 2d4 damage each round. A contested Str check breaks free (no action). The Bite is diseased, requiring a *Luck* (Con) save to avoid *Flesh Blight*, halving all healing effects on the victim for 1d6 months (an apothecary might be able to halve the recovery time). See the *Bestiary* for more details.

(6) MORGAK'S MONOLITH

Rumours & Hooks:
Ceremond the alchemist is looking to hire explorers to venture into the Wistwood to retrieve some shards of a magic obelisk. The stone is protected by the *Morgak* skorn tribe.

Ceremond, an elderly alchemist and potion brewer, has been working on a serum to restore his dead wife *Lyssa* to life. Her preserved body has been lying in wait in the bottom of his cellar for three years, and time is running out.

Ceremond has finally perfected his concoction, but for one ingredient: crushed stone flakes from *Morgak's Monolith*. He is willing to pay the party up to 1,000 gp (most of his wealth) to retrieve a handful of monolith shards.

The *Morgak* are typical skorn; dull witted, brutal and aggressive cannibals with a taste for human flesh. By luck or fate, the tribe came upon the magical relic in the deep forest; a towering obelisk of the First Age. The tribe cleared the area and claimed the surrounding land as its own, raising a fortified camp around their idol.

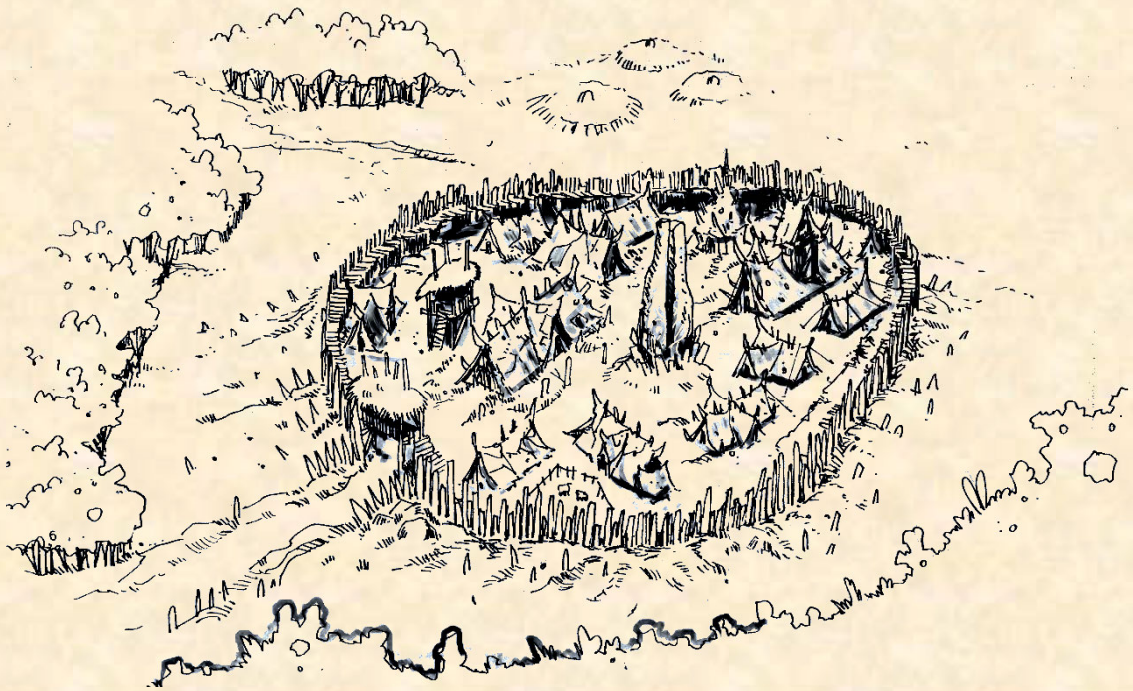
The camp is approximately 150 ft wide, surrounded by an 8 ft high log wall, with a raised platform running the length for sentry patrols. The areas numbered 1–4 on the map indicate where the sentries (1d3) are typically stationed, although they tend to get restless and wander up or down the wall from time to time.

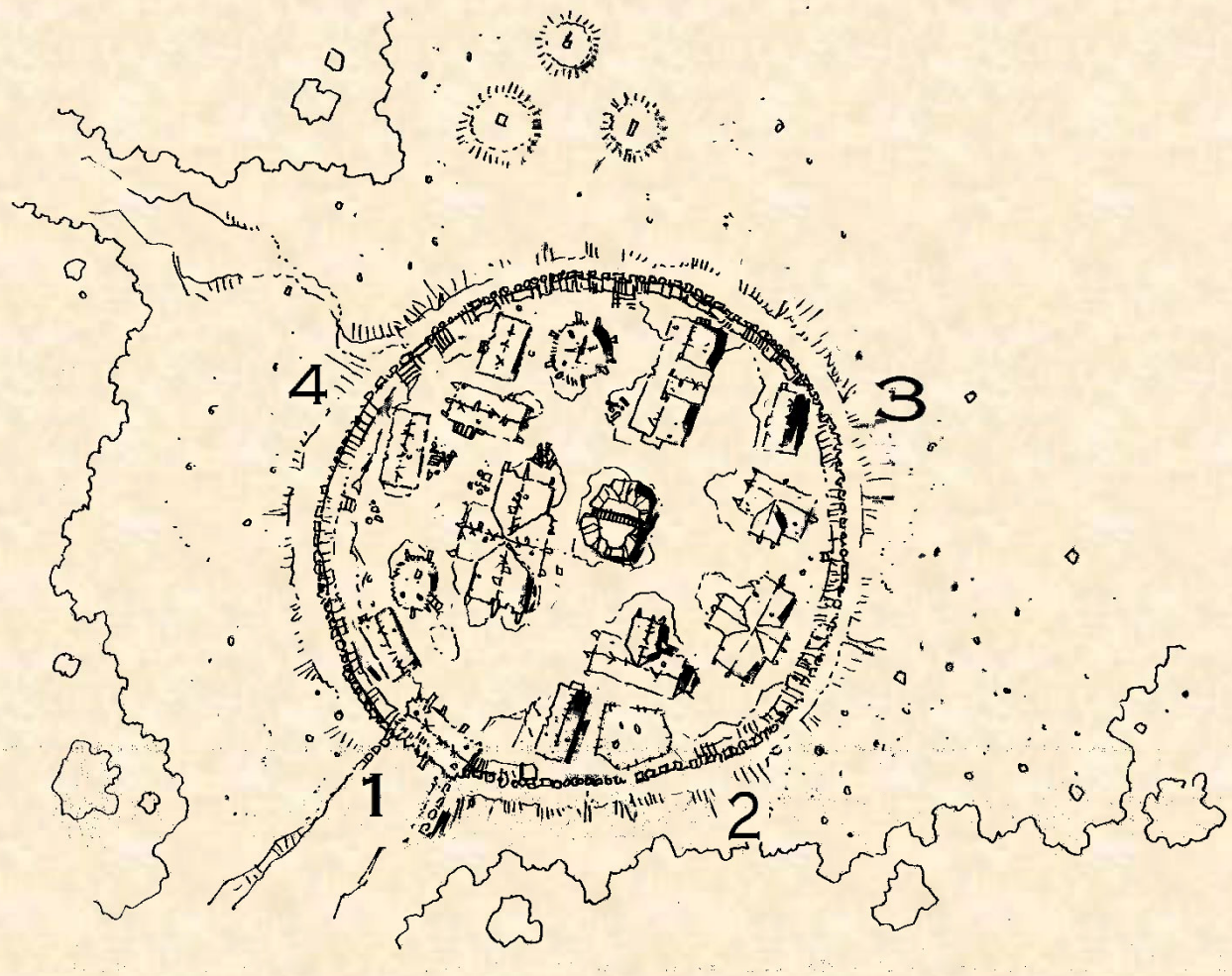
If there is more than one beastman on duty, there is a 50% chance they end up fighting and distracted, imposing disadvantage on any Perc checks.

To the north of the camp are three barrow mounds, containing the skorn's buried dead, and the skulls and bones of their humanoid meals. Scavenging through the mounds locates 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.141) and 1d20 gp.

The distance between the forest edge and the camp wall is approximately 60 ft at the closest point, towards the southern end.

In most cases a frontal assault on the camp is likely to end in disaster. The log wall is poorly maintained in some places, making it possible to widen existing gaps and squeeze through with a few minutes work. A distraction outside the camp might draw many of the skorn away.





The camp houses a total of 4d100+50 skorn, including 20% children. Of these, 3d6 are werebears; the elite, most bloodthirsty and most revered warriors of the tribe, delighting in bending other creatures to their will.

Skorn, AC 11, HD 2, Club 1d6+1, 19: the target is clubbed in the head, losing its next action (*Luck* (Will) save resists), S15 D10 C13 I7 P12 W8 Ch8, L5, Mv 30 ft. Rudimentary dark vision, advantage when detecting danger or scents.

Werebear, AC 12, HD 9, Bite 2d4+1 and 2 Claws 1d6+1, 19: the werebear tears off a random limb below the joint (*Luck* (Dex) save resists, S19 D8 C17 I7 P10 W13 Ch7, L10, Mv 40 ft. Werebears are Lycanthropes with all the usual benefits (LFG p.95). By spending an action, they may exert control and issue orders to bears and owlbears, which are compelled to obey. Rudimentary dark vision, advantage when detecting danger or scents. Skorn lycanthropy cannot be spread to non-skorn.

The karg is *Druntog*, a shaggy 8 ft behemoth with silverback fur. He is a werebear with 64 hp and makes *Off Turn Attacks.*

The monolith is 50 ft tall and made from dark blue-green stone. A human approaching within 20 ft feels strangely at peace. The longer a person lingers at the site, the less coherent they become. After 1d4 hours a human falls into a dreamless sleep. Left to their own devices, the victim would starve, their life slowly siphoned away by the eldritch stone.

At any point in the process, a target may attempt to break away from the monolith with a successful *Luck* (Will) check. The monolith has a different effect on skorn, muting their natural rage and aggression to the point that conversing with them is possibility (assuming any language barriers can be overcome). A negotiated trade for a few shards of the monolith is not impossible, if they can ingratiate themselves with Druntog.

Chipping away a few monolith shards takes 1d4 minutes. The stone is incredibly hard and resistant to being cut. Appropriate tools reduce this time by half.

Apart from the monolith shards, each of the beastman huts has a 10% chance of hiding 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136), and in the karg's hut (the largest one, nearest to the monolith) is a woven basket with 1 x Lair Treasure (LFG p.140) and 1 x Potion (LFG p.150).

(7) WIZARD'S PORTAL

Rumours & Hooks:
Legend tells of a nameless wizard that crafted a magic portal in the trunk of an old *Drelnor* oak. He used the portal to travel to the *Wistwood*, *Dol-Karok* and other places besides. When he died, the wizard's tower was dismantled stone by stone, but there was no sign of his fabulous treasures. Some say that before his passing, the wizard stashed his hoard somewhere only his magic portal could reach.

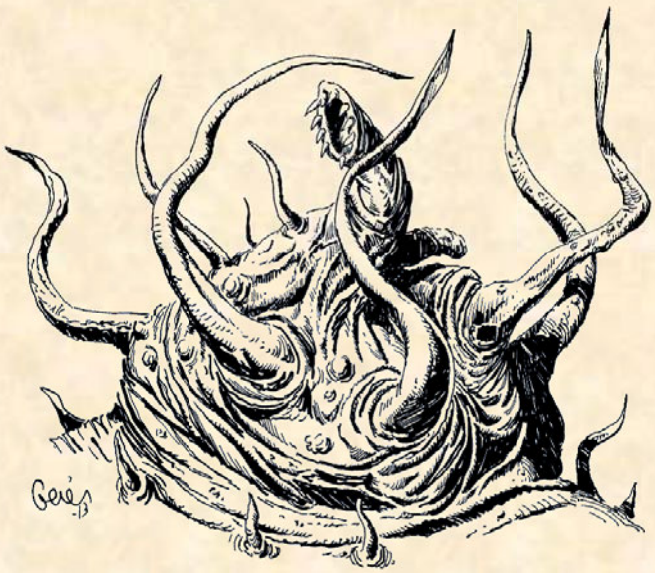
An inquisitor of the Ordo Malefactos has gotten wind of a sorcerous portal hidden in the depths of Drelnor. Officials of *Melek* want it investigated immediately and a full report compiled. They are willing to pay well for such a service.

A lone thuel by the name of *Sheeba* is seeking assistance. She reports her hunting party came across an old tree in Drelnor Forest with a doorway carved into it. Their druid foolishly meddled with it, and tentacled beasts emerged and killed all of them bar her. Now, she seeks vengeance, and offers the reward of her chieftain's thanks (Sheeba is his niece).

Centuries ago a nameless wizard created a portal capable of transporting himself across the Midlands and beyond. The portal is contained in the trunk of a vast oak tree, marked with a copper runeplate. After the wizard died, skorn found the portal and shunned it as a cursed place, marking the opening with skulls as a warning to others.

The interior of the tree trunk is wide enough to accommodate three or possibly four people.

Inside, a series of carved runes can be seen at about head height, beneath which are barely perceivable reddish stains (ancient blood) smeared on all sides. The tree radiates transmutation magic if *Detect Magic* is used.



Spilling one's own blood does not activate the portal, instead it requires freshly drawn blood from another person or an animal. After the blood is applied, a person must chant one of the rune phrases to activate the portal's magic (requiring an Int check by someone skilled in Arcana).

The portal functions only once per year for any individual. Without the wizard to maintain it, the magic is unravelling, and has grown increasingly dangerous over time. Regardless of the rune phrase used, the effect is randomised as noted below, and requires a DDM check. Roll 1d8 to determine the portal's effect:

(1) The inside of the trunk rains gems, gold and other valuables, regurgitating the wizard's hidden treasure trove from some other time or dimension. Roll for 1 x 6 HD Lair Treasure, 1d3 Scrolls and 1d3 Potions (LFG p.140, 152, 150).

(2) One object within the tree becomes permanently enchanted. Roll on the Permanent Magic Item tables (LFG p.152) to determine the nature of the enchantment. This result drains the last of the portal's magic, rendering it a mundane tree evermore.

(3) Anyone in the tree increases their Int, Will, Cha or Perc by 1 point permanently (their choice).

(4) Anything in the tree is teleported to a similar portal (fashioned by the same nameless wizard) in the *Wistwood*. This process occurs over 1 round, with the teleportees growing increasingly faint and insubstantial. Nearby onlookers that react quickly may touch the tree or those inside to be teleported with them.

(5) One object within the tree is affected by an *Animate Object* spell, and attacks nearby targets, pursuing them until the spell ends.

(6) If there are two or more people within the tree, their spirits/personalities swap bodies. The GM determines the mechanics (the *Polymorph* spell might provide some guidance). The enchantment lasts 1d6 months or until a *Cure Malady* or similar spell is applied.

(7) If there are two or more people or creatures within the tree, they are merged into a single, grotesque mutant form (or, if there is only one person in the tree, they merge with the tree itself). The merging is painful and each entity automatically gains a serious madness. Onlookers must succeed in a *Luck* (Will) save or suffer a moderate madness. The exact details of the merged state are left to GM discretion. The enchantment lasts 1d3 months or until a *Cure Malady* or similar is applied.

(8) The tree implodes, compressing in on itself with a terrible splintering sound before winking out of existence, leaving a small crater in the ground. Anyone inside the tree must make a *Luck* (Dex) save to escape. If unsuccessful the victim dies (50%) or is trapped in the Veil (50%), the details of which are left to the GM. Either way, after 1d10 rounds, 2d4 *Squirming Terrors* manifest in the crater, emerging from the void to wreak havoc in the material world.

Squirming Terror, AC 14, HD 5, Oozing Tentacle 1d6+1 + special, 19: an oozing tentacle is thrust down the target's throat, causing them to wretch and lose their next action, S14 D14 C16 I5 P10 W13 Ch4, L8, Mv 30 ft. The wriggling abominations are Aberrant Terrors with all the usual benefits (LFG p.98). A squirming terror that lands an Oozing Tentacle attack forces the target to make a *Luck* (Will) save or suffer a moderate madness.

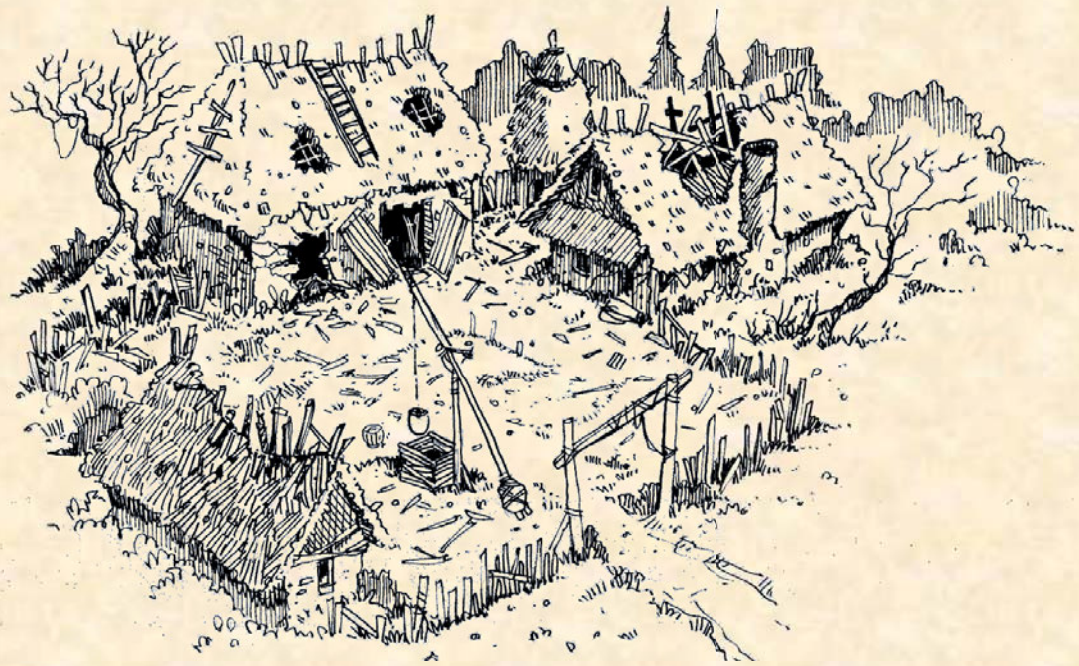
(8) RIVER RUN

Rumours & Hooks:
It has long been said that the *Fennorn River*, in the midst of the *Drelnor Forest*, has healing properties. Anyone brave enough to make their way to its waters, and bathe it in during a full moon, finds their illnesses swept away by its glittering currents.

The *Lute* family, of *Lute's Armoury* in *Crow's Keep*, have a son recently disabled by disease. They believe in the healing waters of the *Fennorn River*, and are willing to pay in arms and armour for an escort.

The Fennorn River has no magical properties and bathing in its waters produces no special curative effects. What it does have is lots of fish, crabs, eels and the occasional lurking river monster.

The *Lute* family however, of *Lute's Armoury* in *Crow's Keep*, believe in the old tales. Their son *Barton*, a 13 yr old apprentice armourer, contracted a blood borne disease eight months ago that attacked his brain and left him seriously



disabled. The Lutes are willing to pay the party in arms and armour to take their son (and his elderly father, *Ralo*) to the river and bathe him in it, praying to Argona for a miracle.

In fact, Barton does not suffer from a disease. He is the unwitting host of an *Ear Slug*, a rare half inch crawling parasite that enters the victim's skull via the ears, and burrows to reach the brain. Once attached, the slug feeds on its host's brain juices. Over time, the victim invariably suffers increasing disability (including for example confusion, paralysis, madness, muteness, deafness, blindness, etc) and eventual death, mimicking a range of natural diseases.

Spells such as *Cure Malady* do not remove the slug. They can be identified using the *Locate* spell, or detected by a skilled apothecary who performs a full body examination and knows what to look for (an Int (Apothecary) check at disadvantage, with a -2 penalty, deduces the truth). Additionally, a little known tell is that when the host sleeps, so does the slug, and sometimes victims show signs of recovery during this time. In Barton's case, for instance, he might sleepwalk without the aid of his crutch, or speak a few words.

Once detected, the brain slug can be removed with surgery (requiring an Int (Apothecary) check from a surgeon with the correct tools, and a Con check from the patient to survive the procedure). Once the slug is removed, the patient fully recovers in 3d4 months.

Barton is a compliant companion but walks only with the aid of a crutch, with a movement rate of 20 ft. He can ride double with someone supporting him from behind, but not alone. He is mute, and cognitively impaired, and generally does not understand what people say to him. Despite all these things, Barton is generally in an amiable frame of mind, and likes to hum tunes to himself. Those observing him at night might notice his condition improves while dreaming.

Like most large water sources, the Fennorn River draws predators and their prey to drink. The banks are heavily thicketed, providing excellent ambush and stalking opportunities, and the loose and slippery sediment makes hasty exits from the waterline fraught with danger.

When the party arrives at the river, 2d4 *Dire Wolves* begin stalking them. They recognise that Barton and the elderly Ralo are weak, and will seek to grab one and drag them into the forest if possible. If the opportunity arises however (for example if a PC wanders off alone) they will pounce on solitary party member.

Dire Wolf, AC 13, HD 3+4, Bite 2d4+1, 19: *a wolf (60%) or dire wolf (40%) comes to aid the dire wolf*, S18 D15 C17 I2 P13 W14 Ch6, L6, 60 ft. Advantage when tracking and on attack rolls while flanking.

If Barton is submerged in the river as planned, it has no curative effect on his brain injury. Ralo, already suffering from long standing chronic depression, falls into acute madness and despair.

He explains to anyone who inquires that this was Barton's last chance, and that his son will not be returning with them to Crow's Keep. Ralo offers one or more party member(s) (either the most sympathetic, or alternatively the most callous or greedy) an additional 500 gp to end Barton's life (Ralo fears his son will overpower him if he attempts to do it himself). Ralo simply cannot cope with his son's suffering, and in his impaired view, this is the only humane solution.

What the party does with this grim request is up to them. If the PCs refuse, Ralo takes matters into his own hands, and drowns Barton that

night, while the rest of the party are sleeping or distracted. He then goes into complete shutdown and will not communicate with anyone. If the party separates Ralo and Barton, Ralo sinks into a fugue like state.

Either way, the first submerging causes the ear slug to give birth to 1d6 ear sluglets, which must find their own hosts to feed upon. At an opportune time, ideally when Barton is sleeping, the sluglets crawl out of his ear and target those nearby.

The slugs crawl slowly and can leap minute distances. If the party is on the move they leave the awful parasites behind. If they are camped however, the sneaky parasites detect body heat up to 120 ft, and can tell which direction a person is facing (similar to a leech).

An opposed Perc (Detection) vs Dex (Stealth) check (the slugs have Dex 13, and make the check with a +2 bonus) detects the parasite. If detected, it is a simple matter to crush a slug underfoot.

If undetected, the creature burrows into the host's brain that night whilst sleeping, and the debilitating cycle begins anew. The exact progression of symptoms, and opportunities to identify the parasite for what it is, are left to GM discretion.

ICE & SNOW

(1) THE KEY TO CREATION

Rumours & Hooks
An enduring legend amongst Varnori and Midlanders alike is that the first men descended from the White Drifts. But if the old tales are true, how did the elder cultures survive such wastes, and what did they leave behind?

In the furthermost reaches of the White Drifts, past the ice floes and far beyond any place man has a right to be, is a perfectly silent field of mirror like ice.

Just reaching this location is a colossal endeavour, crossing ancient glaciers and treacherous crevasses, at altitudes where the oxygen is poor. The GM determines how many days travel is required, but eventually each day of travel requires a Con check to avoid losing 1d3 Con to sheer exhaustion.

There is a 30% chance of a random encounter every 12 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

1. 1d10 *Frost Giants* (LFG p.110) are out journeying across the snow, with an oversized chest to be delivered to a rival chief (contains blood money in coins and gems, 2,000 gp worth). They are startled to find humans this far north, but relish the chance for such scrumptious delicacies!

2. *Crevasse!* A snow covered crevasse suddenly opens beneath the party, requiring a *Luck* (Dex) save to avoid falling 3d4 x 10 ft. The skeleton of an old explorer is down the bottom (1 x Carry Loot, 1 x Trinkets & Curios, LFG p.136, 141).

3. 1d4+2 *Ice Bulettes* (LFG p.102 but amphibious and immune to cold damage) burst from the ice, eager to devour the party. The ice shudders and cracks 1d4 rounds before the pack arrives.

4. The corpse of a stunning 5½ ft female elf in black and green furs is encased in the ice. No fey have been sighted for millennia, the last were slain by the Serpentmen in the Second Age. The body is well preserved, and clearly very ancient (although precisely how old is uncertain). If dug out, 1 x Valuables and 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.147, 141) may be retrieved.

5. 2d4 *Feathered Mouthers* (see *Bestiary*) spy the party from the thermals high above, and begin to circle. They will wait until sunset to attack, and swoop in with the glaring sun behind them.

6. 1d4+1 *Mammoths* (LFG p.117) are walking in a line along a nearby ridge, glacier or snow field. The largest of the herd, a 15 ft fearless brute (13 HD), breaks off to challenge the party, issuing a trumpeting blast that echoes for miles. The male charges anyone that approaches or signals a challenge of their own.

7. A sudden *Blizzard* engulfs the area, dumping blinding snow and dropping temperatures even further. PCs must make Con checks or suffer exhaustion, losing 1d3 Str. There is a 50% chance *Ice Bulettes* take the opportunity to attack (ranged attacks are impossible).

8. The party crests a small rise, revealing a human tucked in furs, carrying a staff. *Vignell* (Varnori, bedraggled and sunburnt) can be heard muttering to

himself (or is he chanting?). It's hard to tell over the howling wind. Vignell might be a monk seeking enlightenment, an artic druid dedicated to keeping the uninitiated at bay, or an exiled Rune Seer who fell out of favour with a vindictive Jarl. Or perhaps he's just a genuine hermit, unfond of visitors.

The Monolith

Upon reaching the field of mirror ice, it is immediately apparent that something is not right. The bizarre locale brooks no wind, no heat, and no sound. The ice itself is somehow pristine and free from snow and debris, reflecting the sky and the adventurers as they walk upon it.

Moving onto the ice is somehow even colder than the wastes in general; a mind numbing, muscle cramping, jaw clenching cold, causing breath to form tiny ice crystals even as one exhales. Silent as the grave, no sounds enter or leave the area; the absolute stillness of the place is inherently disturbing.

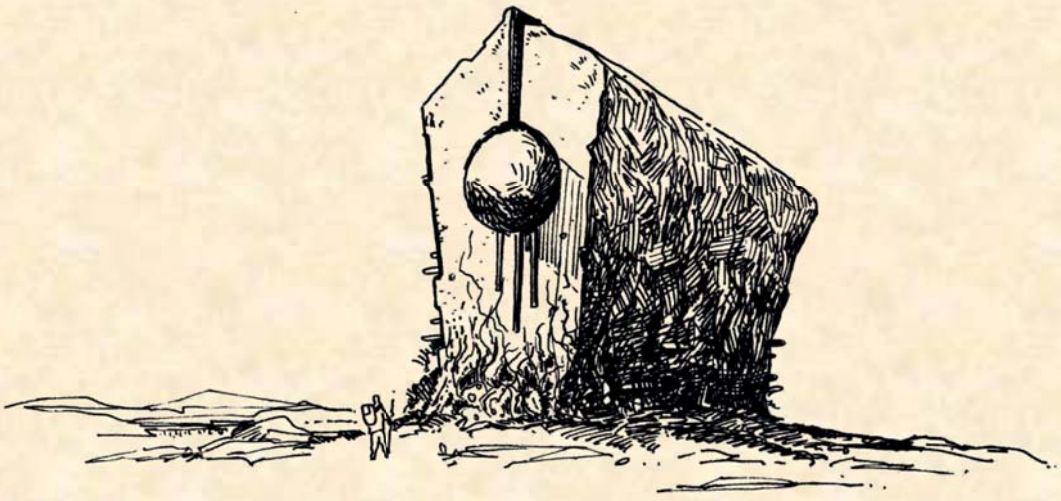
No sentient animals enter this place willingly; those that inadvertently do quickly turn tail and flee. An adventurer seeking to press on must make a *Luck* (Will) check to do so, else they are compelled to withdraw to the *Ironhull Mountains*, and lose all memory of this place (this effect cannot be reversed by mortal magic).

After some hours of trekking across the ice, a shape up ahead phases into sight, hazing into focus like a desert mirage: a towering 40 ft monolith of glistening black stone. The edifice is clearly some manner of construct, wedge like in shape, with a large domed protrusion on one side. The monolith appears to be at least partly buried in the ground; tendrils of ice wrap around it, reaching up to 15ft.

Approaching within 20 ft of the construct summons the guardian, a 25 ft *Elder Elemental*. The guardian attempts to kill or drive off any mortals it is aware of.

Elder Elemental, AC 20, HD 20, Fist 3d10, 19: special, S23 D12 C22 I4 P15 W20 Ch5, L16, Mv 40 ft. The elder elemental is a *Boss Monster* with the usual benefits (LFG p.95), immune to mundane weapons except those of cold iron. 15 ft reach. On a natural 19, the target's armour or weapon (determine randomly) is transmuted into water, air, earth or fire (destroyed). The elder elemental may shift between fire, water, air and earth forms each round (no action), gaining the special abilities of that elemental type.

The monolith is still and silent. Careful observation notes that the black stone is inlaid with barely perceivable geometric hieroglyphs, entirely alien and unlike anything the party has seen before. There are no signs of entry.



Touching the monolith's domed side causes the construct to slowly pulse into life, emanating a deep, rolling force that can be felt but not heard; building until it reverberates through each character's chest.

After this, a person maintaining contact with the edifice may choose to make a *Luck* (Will) save. If successful, the PC feels slightly nauseas and their ears begin to ring, but they instinctively *feel* that the monolith is an oracle of forbidden knowledge, and that it has something important to impart to the PC, if they wish to hear it.

If the adventurer agrees, the monolith's orb bathes them in a column of azure light, rendering the PC blind and rooting them to the spot. All sound is muted but for the timbre of voices, human voices, but not the voices of the party. The speech slowly become audible....

.... and the PC hears the voices of the players at your table!

The player controlling the PC does so as normal, but the character "hears" the voices of your players (but not the GM), discussing what's happening, infallibly doing whatever it is the player says his/her PC does.

After a brief time, the monolith's light fades and the adventurer returns to normal. A trickle of blood oozes from their nostrils, and the PC immediately gains 1 Will permanently.

Now cognizant to the possibility that their every thought and action is directed by some inexplicable entity from beyond the Veil, a *Luck* (Will) save is required to avoid a serious madness (LFG p.93, curable in the usual way).

Aftermath

Once activated by a PC, the monolith no longer responds to their touch, and is impervious to mortal force or magic. On the trek home, the party encounters *Vignell* (if they haven't already), who asks them if they found the monolith, and whether they heard the voices from beyond, just as he did, all those years ago. If questioned, Vignell says that he heard the voice of the demon known as [insert weird variant of GM's name], and that he cannot unhear it, no matter the years that pass.

(2) VARN KARAGOSS

Rumours & Hooks
In an old, wax sealed tube is a map to *Varn Karagoss* (translation in old Varnori: *Place of Ending*). The location is leagues to the distant north, surely encased in ice and snow. Some rare texts suggest the site is an ancient burial ground of the giants.

Legends say that Varn Karagoss, an ancient shrine and graveyard, is maintained by the *Frost Giants* of the *White Drifts*. The dying journey to the temple to offer not only themselves, but great tithes, smoothing their transition to the next life.

Varn Karagoss: Place of Ending.

Long forgotten by men of the present day, every giant knows and dreads the great boneyard of their forebears; the secret place where the giants go to die.

Located far to the distant north, locked within the glaciers and ice floes of the *White Drifts*, the blessed temple awaits, summoning the sick and decrepit to settle their life debt, and honour the old gods.

Since before written history, the *Frost Giants* have been charged with maintaining the ice temple, holding to the first rituals and entombing their brethren. Each decade, the keepers light the great signal fires of Karagoss, summoning their kin from across the mountains to bring forth their dead and dying, as they have done for millennia.

Those that make the final trek do not venture alone; they are accompanied by family, guards, pilgrims, and those of holy office (shamans, priests, etc, depending on race and clan). Perhaps more importantly (from an adventurer's point of view) the giants are also accompanied by valuable gifts, offerings to appease the spirits and coax a favourable reincarnation.

The adventurers might become involved in this adventure by (i) finding an old map referencing the boneyard of the giants, (ii) seeing the signal fires from nearby mountains and travelling to investigate, or (iii) happening upon a dying hill giant shaman, who begs the party to take her heart to Varn Karagoss, and earn her kin's eternal gratitude.

The White Drifts

Crossing the White Drifts is a journey not undertaken lightly. The snow fields run for leagues, followed by glaciers and ice floes, in temperatures low enough to freeze a man's heart. In the unthawed north, nothing grows and few creatures are tenacious enough to survive. For the most part, the artic wastes are a collection of bleak but awe inspiring vistas, overseen by the glimmering aurora borealis.

Each day a character spends on foot trekking through the White Drifts requires a Con check to avoid losing 1 Con due to extreme exhaustion.

This Con loss does not begin to return until the adventurer is back in normal climes (or a place of relative comfort, such as an inn).

First Leg

The first leg of the journey requires navigating icy inlets that cut across the north-eastern drifts. The adventurers will need to charter a ship from a Varnori outpost, or captain their own.

Either way, the voyage takes 1d3+1 days (depending on the weather and thickness of the ice). Each day there is a 30% chance of a random encounter. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8, adding +1 during the last two days:

1. *Bergs forward bow!* During the night the ship becomes embroiled in a maze of giant icebergs. A group *Luck* save is required to avoid a collision, sinking the ship.

2. A *stowaway* makes their presence felt on board. If the ship is large, an 11 yr old orphan thief named *Ruper* is filching purses and food (Dex 17). If the ship is small, the stowaway is a *Sprite* (Nixie LFG p.125 or *Xornling* LFG p.130) instead.

3. A *Varnori Longship* with 20 rowing benches (about 50 crew) is on a training mission in remote waters. There is a 75% chance they take the opportunity to "blood" the crew, and attack (as *Bandit*, with 20% *Berserkers*, LFG p.114).

4. Severe *Thundersnow* (a blizzard with lightning) ravages the region, with howling winds and massive waves. If the ship is small, individual *Luck* saves are required to prevent PCs being swept overboard. If the ship is large, a Group *Luck* check is required to prevent ship damage (30%), being blown off course (40%, adding 1d3 days to the voyage), or being sunk (30%).

5. 2d6 *Argosan Stranglers* (see Bestiary) begin tracking the ship from beneath the ice floes. They wait until the vessel gets stuck in thick ice, or nightfall, to attack.

6. 1d4+2 *Artic Falcons* (as *Giant Eagle* LFG p.106) are hunting in the skies overhead, circling out from gigantic iceberg eyries. Humans make excellent chick food.

7. A thick fog envelops the ship for 4d6 hours, slowing travel and making hazard spotting difficult. A Group *Luck* save is required to avoid any icebergs (see entry 1). 2d4 *Will o' Wisps* (LFG p.129), the souls of lost sailors, attempt to lure a PC into the sea (when they attack). One of the wisps is able to use the *Silent Image* spell (shadows and light only) to assist in the deception.

8. A flotilla of 1d3+3 primitive catamarans round a nearby iceberg, on their way to Varn Karagoss. Each boat carries 1d3+2 *Hill Giants* (LFG p.110, half of whom are elderly/dying, in no condition for combat). Some humans to snack upon would surely make their trip more bearable.

9. A small dark cloud, about 1000 ft across, is moving at low altitude across the sky.

An exceptionally rare contingent of 1d3+1 *Storm Giants* (LFG p.110) are borne aloft by weather magic unknown to man. One of the storm lords is dying, and en route to Karagoss. The cloud seems to match the party's ship for a time, the giants curious to see humans this far north. There is a 50% chance they make contact, querying the business of such childlike beings in the frozen wastes.

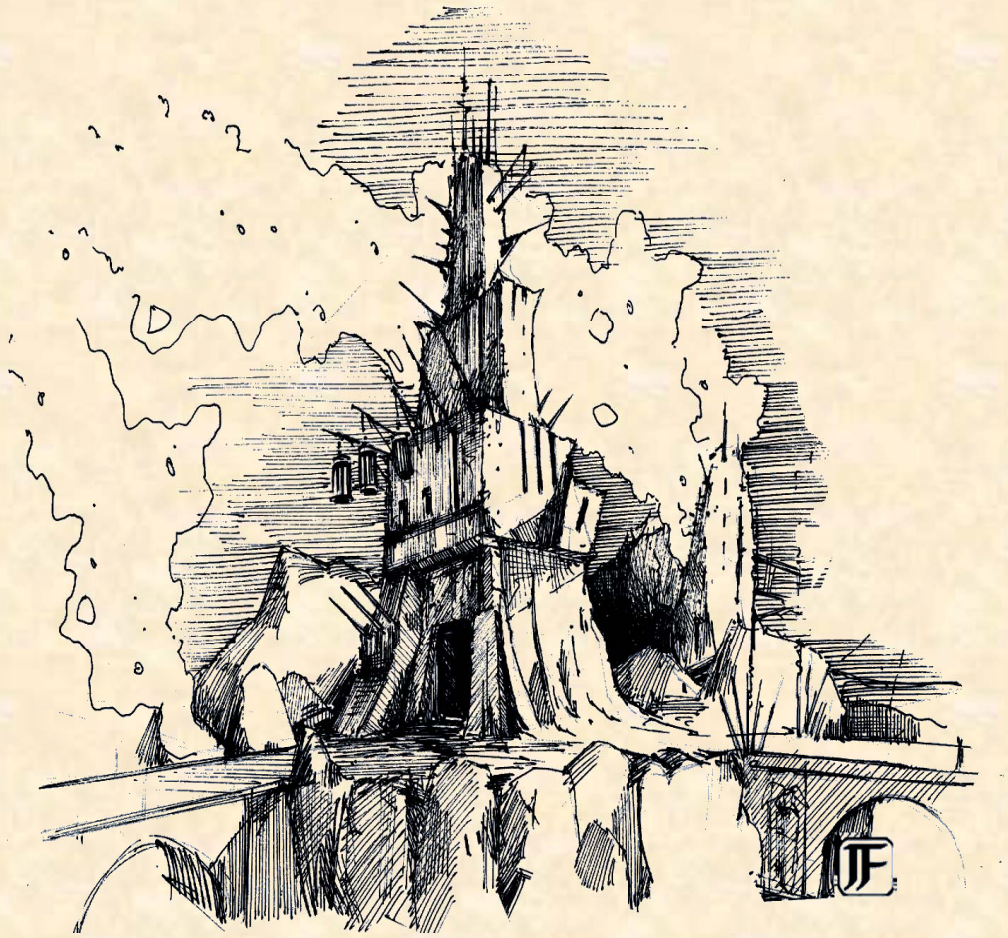
Second Leg

The second leg of the journey to reach the boneyard requires ten days of navigating snow fields, frozen glaciers and treacherous crevasses. Use the random encounter table for the White Drifts, or another table from this section.

Varn Karagoss

The temple of the frost giants is fashioned of hardened snow and ice, erected on a glacier plateau, surrounded by a deep chasm. Everything here is giant sized: the benches, shelves, doors, stairs, etc, making navigation/searching more difficult. Thick plumes of black smoke waft into the sky from signal fires stoked by the temple's keepers, guiding the giants across the drifts.

Two long bridges stretch across the chasm to reach the temple, lit by braziers day and night. At the time the PCs arrive, giant kin are coming and going, entering the temple with their dying and dead. Many wear voluminous, hooded robes of white (escort), sky blue (dying) and yellow (other pilgrim). Nearby are several smaller temporary buildings and/or tents that the pilgrims rest in for a few days as the ceremonies are performed.



When the end comes, the dying throw themselves into the chasm, adding their bodies (and tithes) to their ancestors 200 ft below.

Area 1 – Entry Bridges

The 100 ft by 25 ft entry bridges are made of hardened snow and ice, lined with braziers. Smoke from the signal fires wafts nearby, cloying the air. At the head of each bridge are 1d3 frost giant guards. The guards are here more as a point of ceremony than any sentry concern, and are lax about their duties. There is a 75% chance the guards are distracted (throwing rocks into the distance, casting rune bones, drinking, dozing, etc). The guards are accompanied by 1d3 *Hoarfrost Wolves* (as modified Dire Wolf below).

Frost Giant, AC 15, HD 12+4, Giant Halberds 3d8+2, 19: *Causes Injuries*, S21 D10 C16 I11 P11 W14 Ch11, L12, 50 ft. Throw boulders, humans, barrels etc up to 120 ft for 4d6 damage. Reach 15 ft. Creatures of 2 HD or less must make a *Luck* (Will) save or flee for 2d6 rounds. The giants will not hurl PCs into the chasm (adding humans to the ancestor pile would be desecration).

Hoarfrost Wolf, AC 13, HD 3+4, Bite 2d4+1, 19: a random limb is frozen with ice, paralysing it for 1d4 hours (*Luck* (Con) save resists), S18 D15 C17 I2 P13 W14 Ch6, L6, 60 ft. Advantage when tracking and on attack rolls when flanking. Hoarfrost wolves are immune to cold damage.

Area 2 – Nave of Supplicants

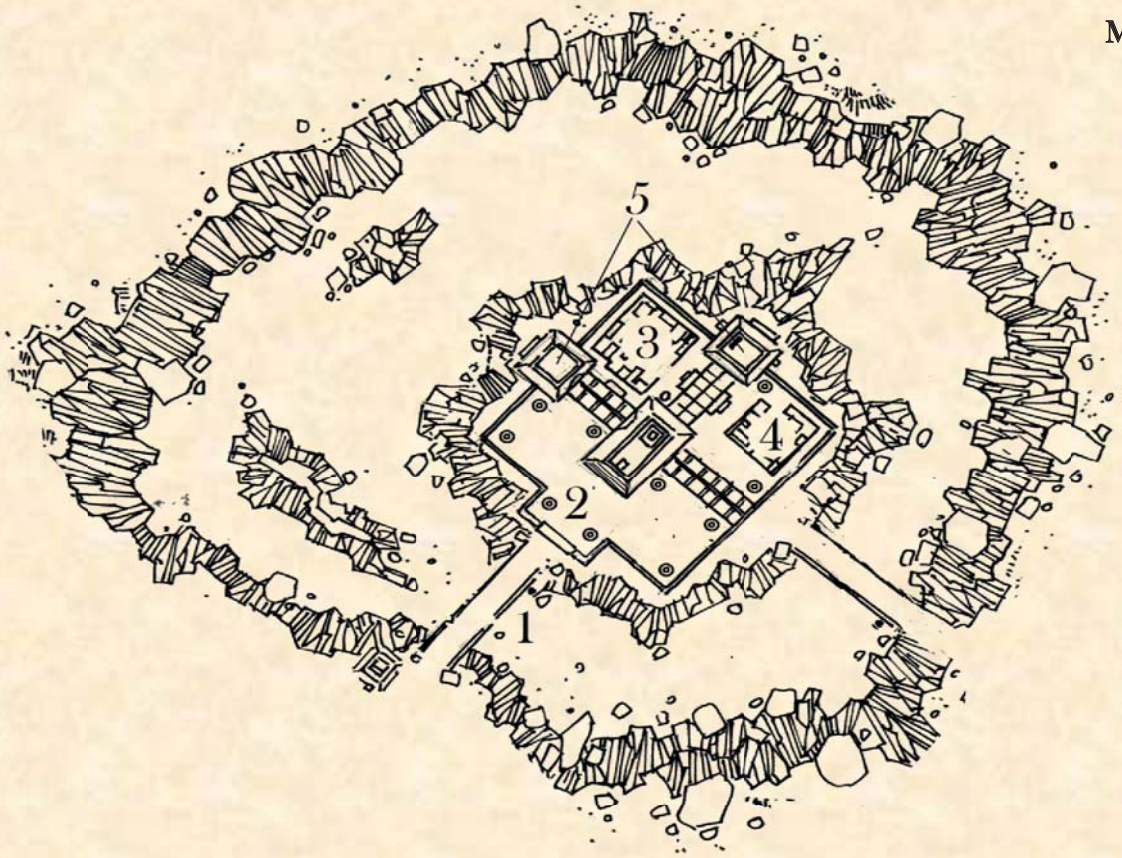
This massive hall is approximately 150 ft by 100 ft on the south eastern side (adjacent to Area 4). The 50 ft drawbridge is in a constantly lowered position while the signal fires burn. The vaulted ceiling is 60 ft high, ice carved in intricate bas reliefs reflecting giant history. Massive 15 ft diameter pillars support the ceiling, decorated with symbols of protection, death and renewal. Tiled paths of black stone contrast the ice hewn walls.

A 35 ft by 60 ft raised dais dominates the centre of the gathering chamber, lit by hanging lanterns. The dying are presented on the 20 ft high platform to *Thraago*, a frost giant priest garbed in scarlet vestments and a deep hood (75 hp, criticals on 18+, Huge Hammer 3d8+3).

4d6 giants (60% *Hill*, 30% *Frost* and 10% *Storm*) gather in the sanctified hall, where all are equal and bloodshed forbidden under elder law. Some stand and some sit on snow hewn benches set about the walls. A non-giant entering the chamber is unheard of, but will be extended the same protections as any other (outside however, is an entirely different matter!).

Hill Giant, AC 12, HD 8+2, Giant Club 2d8+2, 19: *Causes Injuries* S20 D8 C15 I6 P9 W12 Ch8, L9, 40 ft. Throw boulders, humans, barrels etc up to 120 ft for 3d6 damage. Reach 10 ft. Creatures of 2 HD or less must make a *Luck* (Will) save or flee for 2d6 rounds. Advantage on smell related checks.

Map



Storm Giant, AC 18, HD 16+6, Giant Trident 3d10+2, 19: *Causes Injuries* S22 D12 C18 I14 P15 W16 Ch14, L16, 50 ft. Throw boulders, humans, barrels etc up to 120 ft for 5d6 damage. Reach 10 ft. Creatures of 2 HD or less must make a *Luck* (Will) save or flee for 2d6 rounds. May cast *Fog Cloud*, *Lightning Bolt* or *Control Weather* once/day.

If the giants are defeated, or otherwise stolen from, they carry 2 x Carry Loot and 2 x Valuables (LFG p.136, 147).

Area 3 – Disciples' Chambers

1d3+1 frost giant disciples live in this 55 ft bed chamber with 25 ft ceilings, decorated with austere, giant size bunks, tables and scarlet robes. A spiral staircase in the centre of the room leads to the upper level. There are no books, maps or scrolls (the frost giants employ complex oral histories and do not keep written records). A search of this room scrapes together 1 x Carry Loot, 1 x Trinkets & Curios and 1 x Potion (LFG p.136, 141, 150).

Area 4 – Preparation Room

This 40 ft room contains 18 ft shelves of oils, unguents and incense, as well as huge chests of ceremonial clothing (mostly sky blue robes with a thick black line down the centre, which the dying put on before dropping into the chasm). 1d3 frost giant priests are here to prepare the dying for their final descent.

Area 5 – Last Sanctuary

These twin 35 ft sanctuaries are the last chambers the dying see before their end. Entry is via runed archways obscured with heavy scarlet curtains. The chambers within are windowless, lit by phospherant glow bugs in lanterns.

A single frost giant priest waits inside. After proclaiming the final litanies, the priest opens the door to the chasm and uses an iron winch to

wind out a wooden platform painted sky blue. The supplicant stands on the platform until they are suspended above the chasm. Finally, the priest intones the blessed note of ending, at the completion of which the supplicant leaps, steps or topples into the abyss.

Temple - Upper Level

The spiral staircase from Area 3 accesses the upper level of the temple (and continues up to the top level); a 130 ft square chamber, divided in half by heavy black curtains. Windows allow some light during the day, but at night visibility is poor, lit only by glow bugs in oversized lanterns.

Each half belongs to one of the *Sisters* of *Ice and Snow*. The sisters are incredibly old and infirm frost giant twins, alive solely by means of strange magic even they do not fully understand. They came to Karagoss decades earlier to die, but did not perish; somehow sustained by otherworldly forces. They are dark oracles, able to predict the future or see into the past through repugnant blood rituals. They will perform the rites for any that ask, but plucking at the strands of fate imposes 1d4 *Luck* drain and a moderate madness. The offeree may ask the soothsayers one question about the past, present or future, and the GM must answer truthfully (albeit cryptically or in riddles at the GM's discretion).

Soothsayers, AC 12, HD 12+4 (half normal hp), No physical attacks (incapable), 19: NA, S6 D6 C10 I14 P15 W18 Ch7, L16, 10 ft. The soothsayers are too fragile to fight with weapons, but may cast up to three of the following spells once per week (9th level): *Cone of Cold, Fog Cloud, Thunderwave, Magic Missile, Shield*.

If the sisters are slain and the level searched, 1 x Trinkets & Curios and 1 x Valuables (LFG p.141, 147) may be found amongst the enormous sleeping furs.

Temple - Top Level

The spiral staircase from Area 3 and the upper level continues to the top level; a 110 ft wide tower, 50 ft deep with a 200 ft ceiling. Chains of copper and silver descend from hooks on the ceiling to connect with a 10 ft diameter crystal orb in the centre of the room.

The orb collects lightning from occasional bolts attracted to the metal spines sprouting from the top of the temple. The orb is used by those supplicants too fearful to plunge to their doom; it stores deadly electricity that will stop a giant's heart by touching it.

Anyone approaching the orb can feel a distortion in the air, and discerns a slight hum emanating from it. Touching the orb (by hand or conductive metal) sends waves of lightning strobing through the target, causing 10d6 damage each round until dead. A *Luck* (Con) save allows the PC to wrench their hand free of the orb, ending the lightning chain.

The Chasm

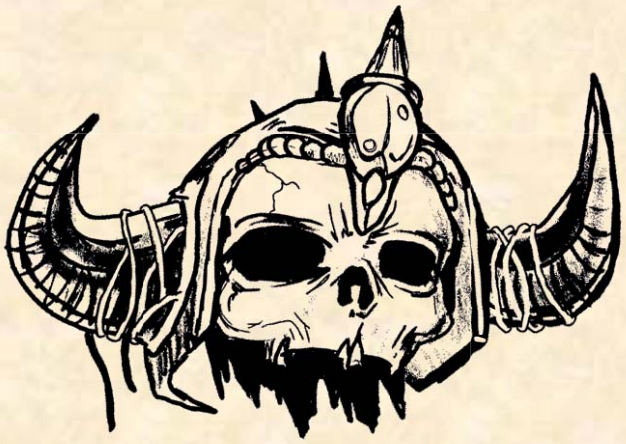
The 200 ft deep chasm is sheer and treacherous, prone to breaking away in great shards when heavy weight is applied. Scaling the slippery cliff requires 1d4 Str (Athletics) checks at disadvantage by each climber (proper climbing gear grants automatic success with enough time, or negates disadvantage if in a hurry). A failed check requires a *Luck* (Dex) save to avoid falling at a random point (if the climber survives, they must roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table), or if tied off to other PCs/an anchor point, slamming into jagged ice for 4d6 damage.

At the bottom of the chasm are hundreds of giant corpses, stacked up over the centuries, the older layers buried beneath rising ice, or swallowed by shifting cracks. Spread amongst the dead is a hoard of treasure. A quick scavenge scrapes together 1 x 7 HD Lair Treasure and 1 x Valuables. A full excavation (taking at least a week) produces 1 x 12 HD Lair Treasure, 3 x Valuable and 3 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.140, 147, 141).

As might be expected, the boneyard of the giants is not unguarded. 3d4 *Frost Worms* are hibernating about 100 ft down the cliffs, in a hidden burrow. They awake if the adventurers approach within 120 ft.

Frost Worm, AC 15, HD 7, Bite 2d8, 19: special, S19 D10 C15 I3 P8 W14 Ch4 L9, Mv 40 ft or 5 ft burrowing. On a natural 19-20 attack roll, the worm exhales a blood freezing fog (10 ft diameter) causing a *Slow* effect (as the spell, *Luck* (Con) save resists). Frost worms are immune to cold damage. See the *Bestiary* for more details.

The frost worms take 1d4 rounds to awaken, at which point they burrow up through the cliffs, bursting out to snap at PCs. At the GM's discretion, the worm attacks might snap climbing lines, dislodge anchor points and so on, requiring Dex checks or *Luck* saves to avoid disaster.



Aftermath

Graverobbing the giants is potentially very lucrative, but also extremely dangerous. If the PCs manage to get away with any treasure but are identified, the giants will take steps to punish them, including sending out tracking parties, hiring bounty hunters and blockading mountain passes until the PCs are turned over to them. If the PCs are not easily identified, the smarter giants make discrete inquiries through human fences and other agents, or perhaps even employ sorcery to facilitate their revenge. The giants never forgive, and they never forget, but careful PCs might just escape their wrath entirely.

(3) MAMMOTH HUNT

Rumours & Hooks

Rumour has it a wealthy karok noble is looking for an armed escort to take him deep into the White Drifts. Apparently he wants to hunt mammoths.

Mithri Aguilar, head of *House Varruz* in Dol-Karok (third tier house, specialising in wines, spirits and brewing), wishes to go on an expedition to hunt woolly mammoths (he wants a pair of huge ivory tusks), and is willing to pay handsomely for an escort to the *White Drifts*.

Mithri Aguilar, AC 12 (leather & heavy firs), HD 1 (7 hp), Axe 1d8+2, 19: as weapon, S15

D10 C11 I10 P13 W15 Ch13, L4, 30 ft. Aguilar is extremely disciplined, gaining advantage on morale checks.

Naturally, it is imperative that the Mithri be kept alive during the expedition. If their employer dies, the adventurer's don't get paid, not to mention the damage to their reputations amongst the Mithri of Dol-Karok.

Foot Trek

The journey across the Ironhull Mountains to reach the drifts takes as long as the GM determines, or alternatively 2d6+10 days. Certain passes are too narrow, or too steep for horses, requiring the adventurers to scale parts of the peaks. Each day there is a 30% chance of a random encounter. If an encounter occurs, use the Ironhull Mountains encounter table.

Upon reaching the *White Drifts*, it takes 1d4+3 days to track down a herd of mammoths (a Perc (Survival) check is required; a great success halves the time). Each day there is a 40% chance of a random encounter (use the White Drifts table or a table from earlier in this section).

Frost Giants

In the last day before the party catches up to their quarry, 1d10 *Frost Giants* happen upon the same trail, also seeking mammoth food. They first appear over a small rise, with a 50% chance of being upwind of the party, automatically detecting them if so. If the giants notice the adventurers, they immediately begin throwing ice boulders at them, eager to feast on man flesh.

Frost Giant, AC 15, HD 12+4, Giant Halberds 3d8+2, 19: *Causes Injuries*, S21 D10 C16 I11 P11 W14 Ch11, L12, 50 ft. Throw boulders, humans, barrels etc up to 120 ft for 4d6 damage. Reach 15 ft. Creatures of 2 HD or less must make a *Luck* (Will) save or flee for 2d6 rounds.

Mammoths

Eventually the party catches up to a herd of 2d4 shaggy mammoths, 12 ft tall elephant like beasts with thick woolly fur, curling ivory tusks and savage tempers.

The largest of the herd will blare warning trumpets at the party for a short time, stomping his feet and swinging his tusks around threateningly. As this unfolds, half of the other mammoths join in, fanning out between the party and smaller herd members.

Mammoth, AC 13, HD 11+3, Gore 3d6+2, 19: target trampled, roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table, S21 D9 C20 I3 P12 W13 Ch8, L11, 60 ft. 10 ft reach, immune to normal cold, advantage against magical cold. If the mammoth moves at least 30 ft, it may trample a foe, causing double damage and requiring a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table.

If the party do not swiftly depart, the threatening mammoths stampede, furiously attacking until at least one of the party are dead or are driven off. The other half of the herd (smaller calves) will also attack after 1d4 rounds.

If the mammoths are defeated, it is a simple matter to remove the tusks (each pair is worth 2d4 x 200 gp). Assuming the Mithri survives, he is very happy with his trophy and directs the party to escort him home immediately. He pays them the agreed fee, and spreads word of their endeavours, bolstering the party's reputation in certain quarters.

JUNGLES

(1) SPIRE OF THE VOID CALLER

Rumours & Hooks:
The *Spire of Abartu*, named after an infamous warlock of the ancient *Suun* people, has resurfaced in the *Suurat Jungle*. Some records suggest his seminal work, the *Book of Bound Flesh*, is buried with him beneath the spire.

Serpentmen have been spotted scouting the western fringes of the Suurat Jungle, putting a nearby outpost on high alert. The overseer wants someone to investigate; preferably self sufficient drifters with steel swords, sturdy shields and an overabundance of self confidence.

The Suun

In the vast *Suurat Jungle* of the Second Age, at least one human society is known to have persisted for hundreds of years: the *Suun,* a ferocious warrior culture rich in gold, blood rituals and stepped pyramids.

Lead by a tyrant Chief of royal descent, the *Suun* respected their warriors first and their civilians second. Beset by enemies, the great tribe battled skorn, serpentmen, trolls and more, but with each defeated foe, another took its place.

In time it became clear that willpower and sinew alone could not win victory. Sorcery, previously shunned by the Suun, was turned to, and quickly became an indispensable tool in the chief's arsenal.

Book of Bound Flesh

During this period, *Abartu the Void Caller*, the greatest and most perilous of the Suun warlocks, constructed a ruinous tome of terrible power; the *Book of Bound Flesh*. Within its papyrus pages the warlock recorded awful truths no mortal ought bear, secrets no man should wield.

During the Suun reign that followed, certain locations within the jungle were identified as eldritch junctions; focal points where the ley lines crossed, weakening the barrier between this world and the next.

The Abartu Spire was constructed atop one such junction, multiplying arcane forces for the warlocks to harness. For generations the spire helped the Suun fend off enemy incursions, and a number of respected priests and warlocks were buried below.

Ultimately however the Suun were defeated and the spire lost, hidden away by powerful abjuration magic. Abartu's remains, and his fell tome, sat silent and forgotten.

In recent months however, the ward concealing the spire has begun to decline, and serpentmen scouts from the *Hidden City* have arrived to investigate. The cold bloods understand the importance of the ley lines, and suspect the spire is more than just a burial site.

The PCs might become involved in this adventure by (i) reading about the *Book of Bound Flesh* in an ancient Suun scroll, (ii) investigating serpentmen scouts spotted along the borders of a fortified jungle outpost, or (iii) by wandering into the area while trekking through the jungle at large.

Jungle Encounters

The spire is located on the north western side of the jungle, about 2 days from the closest edge. This section of the jungle is the least humid and insect ridden, and some rough paths penetrate the first half day into the wilds, making travel easier. Nonetheless, the heat is palpable, and by the second day the party must hack their way through heavy vines and scrub. To top it off, showers often roll in at dusk, turning the earth into rivulets of slick mud.

There is a 40% chance of a random encounter every 8 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

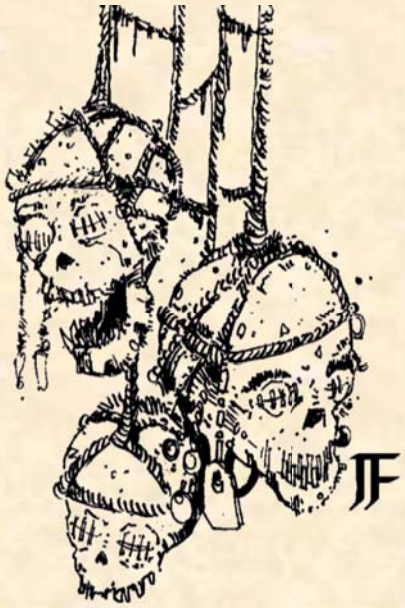
1. An influx of *Skorn* (Bestiary) have taken over this region, hanging skulls from trees to mark their territory. The party crosses paths with 4d6 hooting hunters chasing game (70%), or hear the grunting and barking of the enormous 5d100 member camp (30%).

2. 3d4 *Trapdoor Spiders* (as *Giant Spider* LFG p.125, but 3 HD, 2d4+1 damage, poison causing 2 Con loss) are waiting in ambush beneath the jungle floor. They sense ground based meals within 50 ft, and burst out of their hidden burrows to attack (advantage on hiding checks). A victim reduced to zero Con is paralysed and dragged into the spider's tunnel to be devoured at their leisure.

3. A *Giant Serpent* (LFG p.122) is shedding its skin, peeling off old scales by rubbing between two massive kapok trees. There is a 40% chance the serpent is a fearless 19 ft, 11 HD monster, with *Off Turn Attacks*.

4. A solitary old crone emerges from the jungle, bowed and shuffling. How she made her way through such hostile and trying terrain is a mystery. The stranger does not speak, but wishes to share the party's camp or path for a time. If treated well, the old woman smiles at the party, revealing no teeth. If treated poorly, she slaps at them with her walking stick and "tut tut's" at them disapprovingly. After a few hours, the old woman disappears back into the jungle as quietly as she came.

5. A patch of *Flesh Eating Vines* (see Bestiary) are spread out here, waiting for prey to pass through.



6. A towering karok tree fills the canopy here, black as night, wreathed in vines with exposed roots taller than a man. Strange faces and figures have been carved into the trunk. Anyone approaching feels extra hot, and is

accosted by flies. Touching it drains or restores 1 *Luck* (50/50 chance).

7. In this corner of the jungle, lifelike statues of small mammals litter the undergrowth. A *Medusa* (LFG p.118) lairs within a vine shrouded trunk, eager to add more idols to her permanent "audience". The monster is allied with *Kith'Sirak* (see below), and will attempt to flee to the spire if truly endangered.

8. 1d4+1 *Ssurlocs* (LFG p.123) from Kith'Sirak's retinue (see below) are scouting or on sentry duty, driving off humanoids and other potential threats to the spire.

Serpentmen Scouts

Kith'Sirak, a serpentman *Razkarrt* (LFG p.123), leads the serpentmen scouting party on its mission to secure the lonely spire.

Like all serpentfolk of the noble caste, Kith'Sirak is ruthless, cunning, and domineering, with an entrenched hatred for all warm blooded creatures. The change in climate over millennia has forced her cold blooded kin into humid equatorial climes, and it galls her to see the man monkeys ruling lands once the controlled by the scaled folk.

Kith'Sirak, Razkarrt, AC 18, HD 9+4, Bite 1d6 + Poison (*Luck* (Con) save or 1d6 and 1 Str loss), 19: the Razkarrt unleashes a potent charm effect, *Luck* (Will) save or *Confusion* (as the spell), S12 D19 C14 I18 P16 W18 Ch14, L10, Mv 30 ft. Kith'Sirak may spend an action to shift between human, noble and hybrid forms. May choose from the following spells five times per combat (8th level): *Charm Person, Cure Light Wounds, Detect Magic, Disguise Self, Shield, Wizard Lock, Detect Hidden, Levitate, Phantasmal Force, Speak with Animals, Darkvision, Hypnotic Pattern, Lightning Bolt, Fireball, Speak with Dead, Suggestion, Dimension Door, Wall of Fire, Object Reading.*

Kith'Sirak is accompanied by a vanguard of 3d6 *Ssurlocs* and 3d6 *Hraarsks* (LFG p.123).

Ssurloc, AC 16, HD 6+3, Bite 1d6 + Poison or Spear 1d6+3 + Poison, 19: tail whip 1d8 and knocked prone, S18 D16 C14 I10 P11 W13 Ch10, L8, Mv 40 ft. Ssurloc poison causes 1d6 damage and 1 Dex loss (*Luck* (Con) save resists).

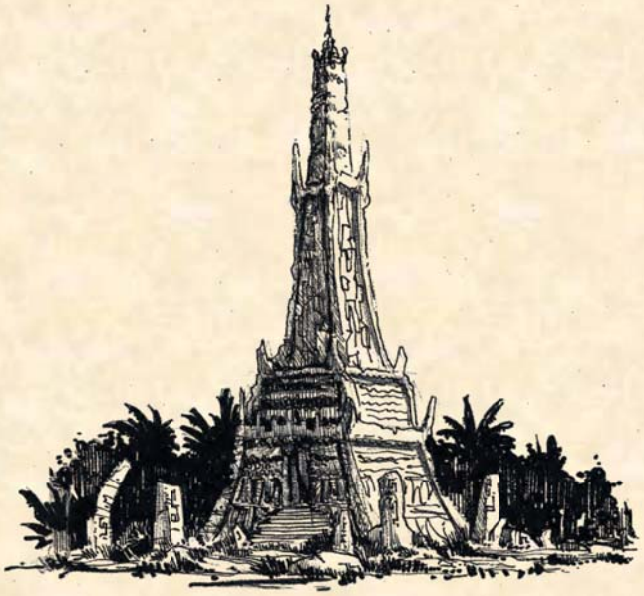
Hraarsk, AC 14, HD 2+2, Bite 1d4 + Poison or Dagger 1d4 + Poison, 19: momentary hypnotic effect causing the target to lose their next action (*Luck* (Will) save negates), S12 D13 C10 I10 P12 W10 Ch9, L5, Mv 30 ft. Hraarsk poison causes 1d4 damage and 1 Will loss (*Luck* (Con) save resists).

More than most razkarrt, Kith'Sirak enjoys masquerading as human to entice and entrap oafish men before gutting them and offering their innards to the *Nest Beyond the Stars*. She has sworn herself to claiming the spire, and would rather die than return to the Hidden City in shameful failure.

The Spire

The spire appears as a towering edifice of igneous rock, expertly carved in the Suun style[3] and surrounded by a handful of man sized rune stones. The last vestiges of the sorcerous warding causes the spire to flicker and bend from time to time, as if viewed through a distorted lens. Once the party is within 500 ft, a group *Luck* save (LFG p.42) is required to avoid being diverted around the spire and all memory of it erased from the adventurers' minds. In the unlikely event the party fails this group save (even with their *Reroll pool*), the adventure ends early[4]. The party can try again when they gain another level, after a period of downtime, or at some other future time as determined by the GM.

1d4+1 ssurlocs are on sentry duty around the spire, standing guard in the shadows of nearby jungle, watching the stairs to the stone entry door. In addition to spears, they carry longbows and arrows coated with their poison spittle. If the ssurlocs fare poorly in battle, at least one heads into the spire to raise reinforcements.



[3] Aztec like.

[4] Sometimes adventurers just fail. There's always another hook or side trek to investigate.

Sunlight filters into the spire interior care of high, narrow windows, or is lit at night with braziers. The inside ground level is a single, massive chamber, the walls etched with fading jungle murals lined in jade and gold leaf. The floor is tiled with a silver circle interspersed with arcane runes and ancient bronze braziers. Statues of lost Suun heroes stand in each corner in eternal vigil. On the northern wall are descending stone stairs (Area 1).

Catacomb Encounters

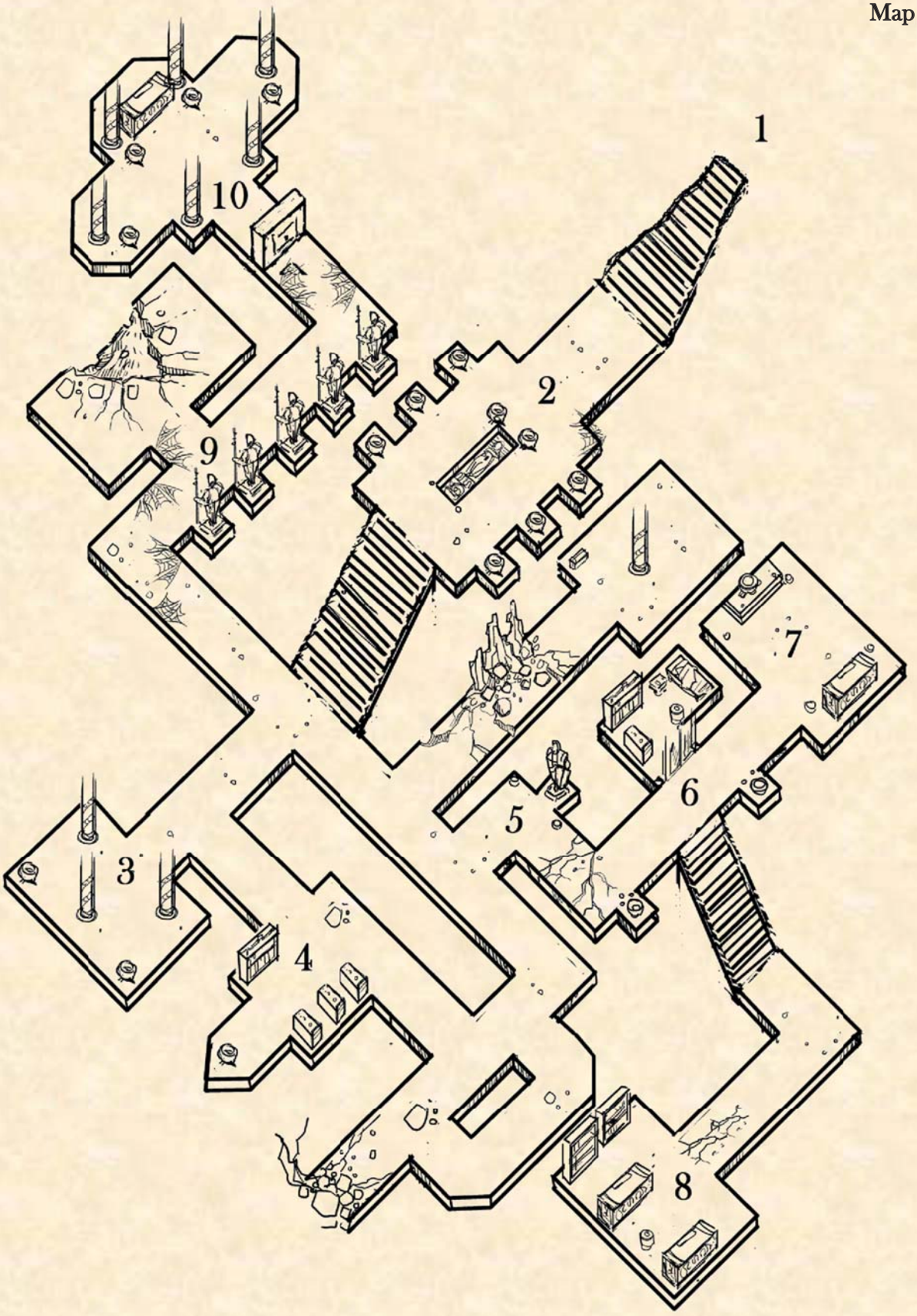
The catacombs are cold, silent and completely dark, except as noted in the individual room descriptions. There is a 35% chance of a catacomb encounter every 30 minutes. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d6:

1. The *Bulette* from Area 11 is hungry and has detected the party's foot falls. It bursts from the floor or wall, or comes charging down the corridor to devour the PCs!

2. A mysterious wind howls down the corridor, extinguishing torches and causing lanterns to stutter violently. In the distance, a faint, flickering light emanates from around the next corner (*Will o' Wisp*, LFG p.129).

3. The spirit of a cursed witchpriest, *Toshuga*, is trapped in the catacombs, aimlessly wandering the folds between worlds in tormented limbo. Toshuga has lost the power of coherent speech and seeks only to end his suffering, or cause others pain (as *Banshee*, LFG p.99). Targets slain by the witchpriest have a 50% chance of rising as obedient zombies in 1d4 hours.

4. *Cave in!* Part of the ceiling here is dangerously fragile, and the movements of the party set off a partial collapse. Everyone in the area must make a *Luck*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(Dex) save or suffer 3d6 damage from falling rock.

5. A *Speckled Ooze* is stuck to the ceiling in a dormant state, waiting for a potential meal to move within 60 ft.

Speckled Ooze, AC 13, HD 7, Pseudopod 4d4 + special, 19: the ooze puffs out a toxic cloud, 15 ft radius, causing 1d6 Int or Will loss (50/50 chance, *Luck* (Con) save resists), S13 D14 C17 I2 P14 W15 Ch1, L9, Mv 5 ft burrow or 30 ft (inc walls, ceiling, etc). On a hit, victims suffer 1d8 damage due to painful flesh melting for the next 1d4 rounds (alcohol negates).

6. The power of the ley line junction surges for a moment, causing an almost imperceptible distortion in the air. All magic users or characters carrying a magical item must make a *Luck* save or roll on the *Dark & Dangerous Magic* table.

Area 1 – Entry Stairs

These 8 ft broad stairs grow wider as the staircase descends 60 ft to the second level, and a 15 ft wide corridor. The air is cooler and mustier, lit by flickering torchlight from Area 2. Hissing can be heard echoing from below.

A single *Hraarsk* stands watch here, with orders to advise the serpentmen in Area 2 of any problems. There is a 30% chance the guard is napping.

Area 2 – History Hall

This 25 ft wide 35 ft long entry hall has a 12 ft vaulted ceiling. Massive bronze braziers stand in the side alcoves, and a tiled mural is set into the floor. The jade and gold mural records the Suun empire's glorious advancements, culminating in blood magic at the time of the spire's construction. The writing is in the dead Suun language, but an Int (General Lore) check at disadvantage and a -3 penalty divines the gist of the record. A great success or Int (Arcane Lore) check identifies prayers to the demon *Dran-Soj'Kruug* and the *Chalice of Tears.*

Kith'Sirak's serpentmen are set up here, coiled nearby the braziers, studying the tiles, ornate murals and runes. The serpentmen have not yet opened the warded double doors to the southwest (studying the doors reveals that an "offering to the Suun gods" must be made to open them. A vial of human blood spilt on the floor mural causes the doors to swing open).

The razkarrt will be inclined to kill the party and use their blood to open the double doors, but she might be inclined to join forces with them to explore the catacombs if such an offer is made. She will not hesitate to double cross the humans however once Area 12 is secured. If battle with the party goes poorly, Kith'Sirak fights to the death; she simply cannot stomach the humiliation of defeat at the hands of man monkeys. If defeated, the serpentmen carry 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables (LFG p.136, 147).

Area 3 – Place of Three Pillars

This 30 ft by 20 ft chamber contains three columns with gold icons of the sun, sky, and earth: the three sacred pillars of original Suun theology. Verdigris bronze urns are set in the south and west corners of the room (filled with grey dust).

Depositing an item related to the sun (eg: a torch, lantern), sky (arrow, telescope) or earth (plants, rocks, gems) invokes a "blessing" from fickle forces that still watch over this sanctified place (once only). Roll 1d8:

1. Gain 1 point to a random attribute permanently.

2. Lose 1 point to a random attribute permanently (*Luck* save to reduce the duration to 1d12 months).

3. Gain *Darkvision* (as spell) until the end of the adventure.

4. Suffer *Blindness* (as spell) until the end of the adventure.

5. Gain the ability to cast a single random 1st level spell once per adventure. Also lose 1 HD permanently. The HD can only be restored by magical means (eg *Cure Malady*), but if so, the spell ability is lost.

6. Roll on the *Dark & Dangerous Magic* table.

7. Immediately gain the effect of one random potion (LFG p.151).

8. Immediately age 3d6 years. A *Cure Malady* spell reverses the curse.

Area 4 – Stone Receptacles

This irregularly shaped 20 ft by 40 ft chamber contains three stone chests and a bookshelf of moulding texts and scrolls. The chests are unlocked. If the heavy lids are removed (Str check required) remnants of preserved organs and the tattooed skin of sacrificial victims are revealed. The bookshelf is lined with ancient philosophical and religious texts of the Suun, in their dead language. Handling any of these books causes them to crumble to dust, but for one random magic scroll (LFG p.152).

Area 5 – Golem

This alcove of faded red, green and yellow tiles holds a statue of black volcanic stone; an imposing Suun warrior with crossed arms, staring imperiously and wearing a golden torc (700 gp). The statue is a *Stone Golem*, charged with protecting the eastern catacombs, and will animate and attack if not provided with the ancient Suun password (long since lost).

Stone Golem, AC 16, HD 11+3, 2 Fists 2d8, 19: bear hug (see below), S21 D11 C23 I- P13 W-Ch-, L11, Mv 30 ft. The golem has the usual benefits (LFG p.112). 60% *Magic Resistance*, except against *Stone to Flesh, Transmute Rock to Mud, Stoneshape or Move Earth* spells which cause 6d8 damage (once only). If both Fist attacks hit, the target is crushed (*Luck* (Con) save to avoid rolling on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table). 10 ft reach.

Area 6 – Bedchamber

The stone door to this 20 ft by 10 ft bedchamber is locked, the key lost (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens the door). The door is also trapped. A number of small sun and moon circles are carved into the door, one of which may be rotated 90 degrees to disarm the trap. Otherwise a heavy stone block drops from the ceiling (*Luck* (Dex) save to avoid) causing 5d6 damage and a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table. A PC that studies the area may make a Perc (Detection) check to notice perpendicular cracks in the ceiling, telegraphing the block, and/or locate the disarming sun/moon dial.

The caretaker's ancient bedchamber contains a fragile bedframe, a stone chest and bookshelf, and some personal affects (1 x Trinkets & Curios,

1 x Carry Loot and 1 x random Potion (LFG p.141, 136, 150). The key to Area 12 is also in the chest.

Area 7 – Chapel

This 30 ft by 20 ft chapel has a 15 ft ceiling and walls covered in faded murals. The tiled scenes depict dark scenes of war, mutilation, blood sacrifice, drowning and worse. Towering black humanoids with horns or antlers lurk in the background of the murals, hands outstretched, as if somehow puppeteering the humans before them. An altar dedicated to strange powers is located to the northwest, and a stone sarcophagus to the southeast.

The chapel is especially cold, causes goose bumps and misty breath upon entering. There are faded red stains on the floor. Centuries of sacrifices here have monumentally weakened the barrier of the Veil. Any magic cast in this room inadvertently summons 1d4 *Gibbering Terrors*. Additionally, each magic item brought into this chamber has a 10% cumulative chance of releasing 1d4 aberrations.

Gibbering Terror, AC 14, HD 8, Bite 2d8, 19: disturbing howl, enemies within 20 ft must make a *Luck* (Will) save or suffer a moderate madness, S16 D7 C16 I3 P10 W14 Ch1, L9, Mv 30 ft. The Terrors have the usual benefits (LFG p.98). These monster's howls are especially potent and impose disadvantage on the relevant *Luck* (Will) save.

The sarcophagus contains the preserved skulls of hundreds of victims, as well as various ornaments and trinket offerings (1 x Valuables, LFG p.147).

Area 8 – Experiment Chamber

The walls of this 20 ft by 30 ft chamber are bronze etched with garbled pseudo scientific formulae and principles. Two bookcases on the northwest wall are lined with clay jars and crumbling tablets. On top of two massive stone benches are two preserved corpses, still and unmoving. Within one of the corpses is a *Grey Ooze*, in a dormant state, but susceptible to waking if a humanoid moves into the room. The Grey Ooze takes 1d4 rounds to rouse before surging to attack, ravenous for brains.

Grey Ooze, AC 12, HD 6, Tunnelling Pseudopod 2d4 + special and Emotion Burst, 19: a psychic lash drains 1d4 Int (*Luck* (Will) save resists), S18 D16 C16 I4 P14 W16 Ch1, L8, Mv 40 ft inc walls, ceiling etc. Emotion Burst 120 ft range, *Luck* (Will) save or suffer a moderate madness, 40% chance recharge each hour. May project basic emotions up to 120 ft at will.

Area 9 – Pillar of Skulls

The corridor to this chamber is unsafe and susceptible to a cave in, care of the *Bulette* in Area 11. Moving through this passage has a 50% chance of setting off a collapse, causing 6d6 damage and requiring a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table (*Luck* (Dex) save for half and no injury roll).

In the chamber beyond is an expertly carved twisting pillar, set with the skulls of ancient warlocks throughout the centuries. The skulls are patterned in jade, with quartz or sunstone gems for eyes. Prying the gems loose will garner 2d6 x 100 gp worth of stones.

Spells cast in this chamber use 1 spell level slot less than normal (minimum 1st level), last twice as long, and automatically cause maximum dice effects. They also however increase the DDM chance by 3 instead of 1.

The small chest in the western corner contains personal trinkets of the dead warlocks (1 x Curios & Trinkets, and 1 x random Scroll, LFG p.152).

Area 10 – March of Sentinels

This 10 ft by 65 ft corridor is lined with 5 guardian skeletons; warlock novices who gave their lives to protect the western catacombs from tomb robbers. The skeletal sentinels wear ornate ceremonial masks. They lurch forward to attack,

shaking off centuries of dust as they creak and clack across the tiled floor, grasping for intruders.

Suun Sentinel, AC 13, HD 2+2, Crushing Grasp 2d4 + curse, 19: a defeated sentinel re-animates to aid this one, S15 D13 C14 I- P14 W-Ch-, L6, Mv 30 ft. Skeletal sentinels are *Undead* with the usual benefits (LFG p.95), automatically sense the living within 60 ft and are immune to piercing weapons such as arrows. On a hit, targets suffer the *Curse of Golden Blood*, losing 1d4 Dex each week as their blood hardens. A victim reduced to zero Dex dies, their blood congealed and turned a golden yellow hue.

The curse may be removed by a *Cure Malady* spell, or by going on a quest to restore a stolen treasure to its rightful resting place or owner (as determined by the GM, but not including any Suun treasures from this adventure. Restoring treasures from this adventure slows the Dex loss to 1d4 per fortnight instead).

Area 11 – Bulette Den

This 20 ft by 35 ft chamber was once a preparation and ritual slaughter room, but a resident *Bulette* has destroyed most of it. A huge hole and collapsed bulette tunnel occupies the northwest wall. Fractured wall murals, a few bronze knives and clay bowls (50 gp) are all that remain of the original contents. If the Bulette has not previously been alerted to the party, it is either asleep (50%) or detects them within 120 ft of this chamber (in which case it comes rampaging out, eager to make a meal of them).

Bulette, AC 18, HD 9+4, Bite 3d6, 19: the target is dragged underground and begins asphyxiating. A Str check at disadvantage is required to dig free, S22 D13 C19 I2 P13 W14 Ch3, L10, Mv 30 ft inc when burrowing. Detects movement tremors within 120 ft, *Causes Injuries* on critical hits. This bulette is particularly ferocious and gains *Off Turn Attacks* when staggered (LFG p.53).

Area 12 – Abartu's Tomb

This cross shaped 50 ft by 30 ft chamber has a 20 ft vaulted ceiling, supported by six pillars of obsidian stone. The pillars are wrapped in the flesh of dead humans (including faces), stretched around and secured with gold chains (total 300 gp). An ornate sarcophagus sits beside the northwest wall, marked with ancient Suun hieroglyphs and golden runes. The ceiling here is painted black like the night sky, sprinkled with familiar stars but two moons instead of one.

The burial chamber was originally a place of quiet reverence and contemplation, enchanted to dampen sounds, quieting all noises to a fraction of their normal volume. Speaking normally sounds like whispering, for instance. Abartu's skeletal remains and the Book of Bound Flesh are inside the sarcophagus. Any attempt to open the coffin causes six *Shades* to manifest (one from each of the six pillars), and a single 10 ft tall *Elder Shade* to slide out from between the sarcophagus and its lid.

Shade, AC 12, HD 4, Touch 1d6+1 + Str drain 19: the target's weapon or armour (50%) is transformed into shadow (*Luck* save resists), S- D16 C- I10 P13 W10 Ch7, L7, Mv 40 ft inc walls, ceiling, etc. Shades are *Incorporeal Undead* with the usual benefits (LFG p.94, 95). On a hit, the target loses 1 Str. Targets reduced to zero Str are slain and have a 50% chance of rising as a shade.

Elder Shade, Boss Monster, AC 14, HD 7 (66 hp), Touch 1d6+1 + Str drain 19: the target's weapon or armour (50%) is transformed into shadow (*Luck* save resists), S- D16 C- I15 P15 W15 Ch9, L7, Mv 40 ft inc walls, ceiling, etc.

The Elder Shade is a *Boss Monster* and *Incorporeal Undead* with the usual benefits (LFG p.94, 95). On a hit, the target loses 1d4 Str. Targets reduced to zero Str are slain and have a 50% chance of rising as a shade. The elder shade may spend an action to invoke the following magical effects up to three times per day (7th level): *Silent Image*, *Darkness 15 ft radius*, *Fog Cloud*, *Dispel Magic* and *Shadowbolt* (as *Lightning Bolt*, but made of life leeching darkness rather than lightning).

Book of Bound Flesh

The Book of Bound Flesh is an enchanted tome that requires attunement to open and read. A human face is stretched across its accursed cover, the sheets constructed from magically preserved reed paper. Within its yellowed pages are terrible secrets of the universe, unhinging the mind of any mortal that seeks to fathom them. Such a character gains a serious madness and the ability to cast two random 1st level spells once per week (or if the character is a Magic User, three random spells of level 1 and/or 2, at the character's option). The madness is curable only by ending the attunement (which also ends the spell casting ability). Over time, a second level of attunement may be unlocked, allowing the character to distil obscure knowledge from the text (as *Contact Other Plane*) once every six months.

Aftermath

If the party retains the sorcerous manuscript, the tome acts as a natural curiosity to aberrations and demons from across the Veil. From time to time, at the GM's discretion, an attuned character and/or those around them might have disturbing dreams of alien observers watching them from another reality. Eventually, on a triggered *Dark & Dangerous Magic* check, the GM may choose to substitute a demon or aberrant terror instead of the usual random result (representing an opportunistic being come to retrieve, eat, merge with or destroy the tome).

The serpentmen do not give up on the spire, sending more and more of their kind to secure it as the months roll on. Unless the structure is destroyed, the Hidden City soon harnesses the resident ley lines to bolster their magical power, unlocking new secrets in weather magic (useful in their ongoing quest to restore the sweltering climate of the Second Age).

(2) INTO THE FURNACE

Rumours & Hooks
Explorers report that a tribe of cannibals in the *Suurat Jungle* have discovered a fist sized ruby, crafted in the shape of a human heart.

Master Bourgermont, a successful prospector and owner of several slave mines, has heard of a new ruby ore discovery somewhere near *Mount Rokan.* Savages claim the area, making surveying difficult. He wants to pay someone to drive them away. Or kill them. He's not fussed either way.

Heart of the Fiery Furnace

Every magic item is unique, but not all magic items are created equal. Some arcane objects are of a calibre not seen more than once an age, items of such potency that no mortal could possibly have fashioned them.

The *Heart of the Fiery Furnace* is such a device. Crafted from a flawless stone of red ruby, the artifact resembles its namesake in both size and shape. Warm to the touch, anyone holding it will feel a rhythmic beating, a sorcerous facsimile of life's tempo.

And in one sense, the Heart is alive. Imbued with a malign sentience, the stone has slept for countless centuries at the bottom of *Mount Rokan,* until a recent tremor delivered it to an unsuspecting jungle.

Strayed upon by cannibals of the *Cromaga* tribe, the Heart quickly made its way into the hands of *Chief Korgu*, who was swiftly controlled by it. Shortly thereafter, the previously nomadic clan took up residence in the ancient worship chambers of the fiery mountain, reinstating blood rituals not seen for millennia.

The nameless entity residing in the Heart has Will 19, and observes everything the bearer experiences. It is malignant and eternal, an emotional infusing more than a dominating intellect, steering its host to greater and greater acts of deviancy.

Anyone within 10 ft of the stone is subject to subtle direction from it (an opposed Will check resists). If attuned, the Heart's influence is much stronger, and may attempt to usurp full control of the host for up to 1d4 hours (an opposed Will check resists), during which time the host experiences an addictive, ecstatic dream state. An attuned host cannot voluntarily relinquish the Heart (unless it wishes to be relinquished), and inexorably morphs into an increasingly cruel, callous and vile version of their former selves.

The Heart has six levels of attunement, granting increasingly potent abilities over time. Activation of any of the powers requires a *Dark & Dangerous Magic* check.

1. The bearer is immune to fire and heat, natural or otherwise.

2. Any weapon the bearer wields may be wreathed in flame (no action), causing an additional 1d6 fire damage on a hit.

3. Once every 1d4 days, the bearer may invoke a *Wall of Fire* (no action).

4. Once every 1d4 days, the bearer may cast *Fireball*.

5. Once per month, the bearer may spend an action to summon a 20 HD *Fire Elemental* that obeys commands without question. The elemental disappears after 1d4 hours.

6. Once every six months, the bearer may conduct a 1d4 hour ritual to cast *Forbidden Wish*.

The party might become involved in this adventure by (i) hearing rumours of the ruby heart stone and its cannibal caretakers in the Suurat Jungle, (ii) finding reference to it in the mouldering pages of the *Codex Amaranthine,* or (iii) hired by a rich prospector to investigate stories of a ruby mine inhabited by barbarians of Mount Rokan.

Jungle Trek

Entry to the sacred tunnels is via a cave in the eastern face of the small volcanic peak known as *Korakuda,* or "Molten Catacombs", adjacent to the towering Mount Rokan.

The trek to reach Korakuda is not short nor easy, requiring a minimum of seven days from the closest edge of the jungle (assuming porters to carry supplies, extra hands to slash a path through vines, and an experienced guide). The air is humid and the heat oppressive, often mixed with a steamy downpour as night approaches. Trees, vines and shrubs are thick and resilient, protected by thorns, poison and other defences. Factor in plague like mosquitoes, savage animals and head hunting cannibals, and it becomes clear why none of the civilized nations have attempted to settle here.

A handful of savage tribes (5d20 people per tribe) survive in this harsh environment by working together and keeping on the move. There is a 60% chance an encountered tribe are cannibals and keen to add the party to their diet. They speak an ancient regional dialect. There is a 20% chance of a single scout speaking fractured common.

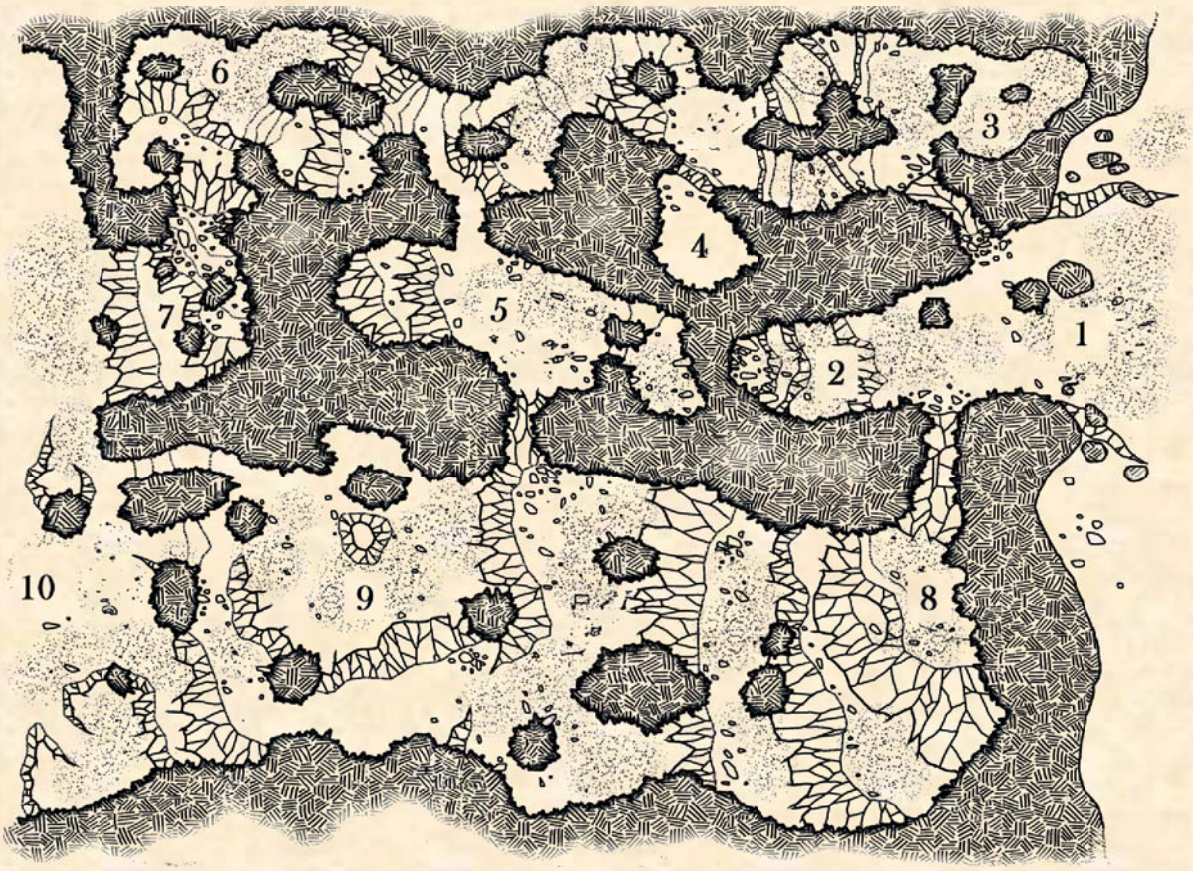
Random Encounters

Generally speaking, there is a 30% chance of a random encounter every 8 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8 and consult the table below:

1. *A Savage Tribe* is in the middle of a secret ceremony, and intruders are considered *very* bad luck (60% chance the tribe are cannibals, in which case intruders are a welcome feast!). The tribesmen (5d20, as *Berserker* LFG p.114) are armed with spears, short bows and daggers. 2d4 hunters each have one dose of *Yellow Suckle* poison (blow dart up to 60 ft, 1 point of damage, *Luck* (Con) save or *Slowed* (as the spell)).

2. *Pit Trap!* A pit trap to catch wild pig or possibly people is concealed on a game trail, beneath a latticework of sticks, earth and vines. Stepping on the trap requires a *Luck* (Dex) save to avoid falling 15 ft into the spikes below (4d6 damage). A hunter concealed in a nearby tree might attempt to slink away and alert her fellows (40%), tracking the PCs with 5d6 tribesmen.

3. A pond of water is located here, surrounded by bushes and low hanging vines. Careful inspection of the area reveals no recent tracks (animal or otherwise). The pond is diseased and local life give it wide berth. If the party camps here, there will be no random encounters. Drinking from the pond, or lingering here more than 1d4 days risks air borne infection (*Luck* (Con) save or



contract *Oozing Eye Pox*, causing 1d4 Con loss and blindness in one (80%) or both eyes (20%) for 1d4 months).

4. A tame monkey, *Fifu* is in the trees above, calling playfully to the party. If they attempt to catch her, she will take them on a merry chase, but eventually jump into their arms if she judges them safe. Fifu is in fact the lost pet of a local shaman, who would be grateful to see her again.

5. 4d6 *Cannibals* (as Berserker, LFG p.114, but armed as Encounter 1 above) are out hunting. It would be a great honour to return to camp with fresh foreigners for the stew pot.

6. 2d4 *Sabretooth Tigers* (LFG p.127) are lying in wait in nearby scrub, hoping to ambush the party as they pass by.

7. 4d4 *Serpentmen* (3d4 *Hraarsk*, 1d4 *Ssurlocs*, LFG p.122) are camping by a deep pool. 1d4+1 sentries have been set to warn them of intruders. They are on their way to treat with Chief Korgu, and learn whether the rumours of the Heart resurfacing are true.

8. The party is set upon by 5d6 *Man Eating Monkeys* (LFG p.117), which drop from the trees to attack. During the battle, a thumping and splintering noise can be heard growing in volume (as if something very large approaches). After 3 rounds, the monkeys immediately scatter. The next round, a hungry *T-Rex* (LFG p.126) bursts out of the trees with a ribcage rattling roar!

Korakuda

The peak known as Korakuda is a relatively small vent on the southern side of Mount Rokan. It

issues forth smoke and pungent fumes some days, but has not erupted for generations. Small lava flows and rock debris are not conducive to most plant life, leaving much of the mountainside bare, soot stained rock. Approaching from the western face reveals a large entry cave.

The catacombs within are igneous rock, naturally formed, winding and uneven in width and height. The temperature inside is generally just as bad as outside due to radiated heat from the subterranean magma flows. Footing is poor and uneven, scattered with tiny rocks (any running requires a Dex check to avoid falling prone part way through the movement).

There is a 50% chance of a random encounter every 20 minutes in the catacombs. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d6:

1. 1d6 *Cannibals* are about to turn the nearest corner. They're talking and laughing about a lewd joke.

2. A tremor shudders throughout the whole of the complex, shaking loose flakes of rock that drop from the ceiling. There is a 1% chance of a volcanic eruption, the extent of which is left to the GM to determine.

3. Two Cannibals can be heard fighting around the next bend. They are yelling and pushing each other, about to break into fisticuffs.

4. 1d4 cannibal kids silently round the corner, playing a game of hide and seek. They stop dead in their tracks when they see the party.

5. A *Giant Spider* (LFG p.125) has been lurking in a high, dark corner of this passage for two days, and is growing hungry. Any shiny or clinking characters will attract its attention.

6. *Chief Korgu* is marching down the passage with 2d6 tribesmen, making his way to Area 9 (to join in the marriage festivities) or Area 4 (to collect *Usha* for sacrifice/wedding feast).

Area 1 – Cave Entry

The entry to the catacombs is approximately 20 ft high and 80 ft wide at its broadest point. The cave extends about 110 ft (to the back wall of Area 2). During the day, enough sunlight filters in to see clearly. At night flickering torches and a small campfire can be seen from a distance.

Area 2 – Sentry Post

2d6 cannibal sentries are always on watch here, spread about Areas 1 & 2. At any sign of trouble, one sentry will head to Area 3 for reinforcements, whilst the rest investigate further. Three 5 ft rises are set into the back of the cave, granting the sentries some cover from fire below. The ceiling here rises to about 30 ft.

Cannibal, AC 11, HD 1+1, Spear 1d6+1 or Short bow 1d6, 19: as weapon, S12 D10 C11 I8 P12 W12 Ch9, L4, Mv 30 ft. 1d4 of the sentries each have one dose of *Yellow Suckle* poison (blow dart up to 60 ft, 1 point of damage, *Luck* (Con) save or *Slowed* (as the spell)).

Area 3 - Barracks

This 30 ft chamber is lit by flickering torches set into holes in the walls. 2d6 "off duty" cannibal warriors eat, socialise and rest here. They will be reluctant to assist their kin in Area 2 unless clear and obvious danger is present and needs to be dealt with.

Area 4 – Larder

This 20 ft wide, 25 ft long chamber is the tribe's larder, filled with root vegetables, hanging smoked meats and clay jars containing spices. Additionally, a rival tribeswoman, *Usha*, is bound to a rock pillar (Barbarian 1, 50% chance Usha is also a cannibal). Usha has been here for three days and is dehydrated and dishevelled, but

suffers only minor injuries. The cannibals intend to sacrifice/eat her as part of the wedding feast (see Area 9). Usha does not speak common, but if released, will be glad to assist her rescuers until an opportunity to escape arises.

Area 5 – Main Sleeping Quarters

This large 90 ft by 20 ft cavern serves as the main sleeping quarters for the tribe. The children and young women generally gather on the eastern side. Beds consist of tanned hides, soft vines, leafy branches and so on. There are 4d6 cannibals resting here at any one time. A thorough search of this area turns up 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136).

Area 6 – Ancient Burial Site

This section of the catacombs is notable for the remnants of three melted sarcophagi that are 90% buried in the earth. The lids have been sealed shut by molten lava.

The sarcophagi are made of a strange, dark purple stone, covered in marred glyphs and pictograms of what appear to be various snakes and snake hybrid creatures. The Cromaga consider the burials cursed and do not touch them. A character with a background in ancient history, or the General Lore skill, may make an Int check to recognise references to *Shasurroc*, a serpentman culture from the prior age (and the makers of Areas 12-13).

If the burials are broken into (the lids are fused shut, a Str check at -3 and disadvantage opens one), 3 x Valuables (LFG p.147) are found. There is a 70% chance one of the sarcophagi is protected by a magic ward (as the *Blindness* spell).

Area 7 – Chief's Chamber

This 40 ft cavern is open to the central vent of the volcano and the magma pool below. Despite the oppressive heat, Chief Korgu has made it his living chamber in order to be as close as possible to Area 13 (he doesn't feel the heat anyway while he has the Heart). Luxurious skins and trinkets from past meals litter the chamber. Korgu's wife and children reside in Area 5. Looting this chamber nets 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables (LFG p.136, 147).

If the party has managed to sneak into this area, there is a 50% chance Korgu is meditating here with the Heart, seeking to establish a higher connection with it (he has yet to unlock the 6th attunement). Otherwise the chief is in Area 13 performing another sacrifice. The artifact is always with him.

Chief Korgu, Boss Monster, AC 12, HD 8 (73 hp), 2 x Spear 1d6+4, 19: special, S17 D16 C14 I9 P11 W12 Ch14 L9, Mv 30 ft. Korgu is a Boss Monster (LFG p.95) with all the usual benefits. He may use Ferocious Rage like an 8th level Barbarian. Korgu would rather die than relinquish the heart, and will invoke all of its powers if necessary.

Area 8 – Gathering Chamber

This enormous underground cavern is 270 ft long and up to 100 ft wide. Entry is via sloping

tunnels from Area 2 or 5, or Area 10. The ceiling ranges from 25 ft to 80 ft high. A tiered floor drops away in increments of 10 ft, except at Area 9, which rises 15 ft.

Sunlight filters in from Area 2 for a short distance, but otherwise intermittent torches provide limited light. Patches of this enormous cavern are dark, which the cannibals prefer.

Area 8 is trapped with a family of 1d4+1 *Cave Impalers*. This particular group of impalers has been trained not to drop on anyone wearing a skull necklace (which is all of the Cromaga tribe).

Cave Impalers, AC 14, HD 2, see below for attack 19: the target must roll on the *Injury & Setbacks* table, S7 D5 C17 I2 P14 W12 Ch4 L5, Mv 10 ft. Cave Impalers are stony skinned, undulating predators that climb walls to hang from ceilings and drop onto prey, skewering them with their spike tail. They have a natural camouflage ability and are easily mistaken for 2-4 ft stalactites (advantage on stealth checks). An impaler's initial drop attack is made at advantage if the target is unaware, causing 3d6 damage. Once on the ground, impalers are slow and cumbersome, but may still attack with an acid spit (up to 60 ft, causing 1d4+1 damage). They see in darkness as well as light.

Aside from the impalers, the space shared by Areas 8 and 9 is used as the main living space for the bulk of the tribe. Up to 7d10 cannibals will be here at any one time; socialising, cooking and so on.

Area 9 – Speaking Mound

This 60 ft plateau rises about 15 ft higher than the floor below, and includes a further 5 ft platform in the centre. At the time the PCs arrive, the tribe's shaman will be on the rock plinth, conducting an energetic marriage ceremony for a very loud, drum beating crowd. Up to 7d10 of the cannibals referred to in Area 8 will be in Area 9, distracted by the festivities. This might provide an opportunity for the party to sneak past or escape without being detected.

If the party is detected, the cannibals waste no time grabbing knives and other hunting implements, hoping to serve them up as part of the wedding feast.

Area 10 – Transition to Area 11

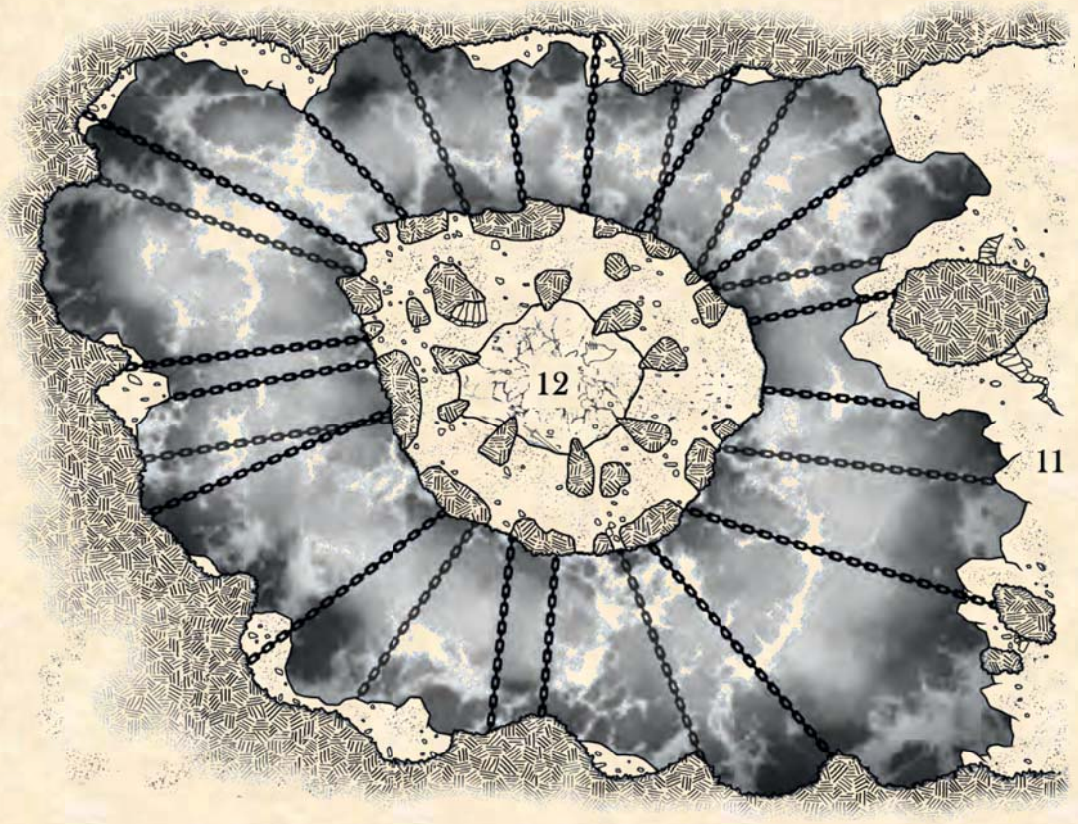
This section of the catacombs opens up into Area 11 of the next map. If the party has not dealt with the occupants of Area 7 or 9, they might have to deal with them now, depending on their actions.

Area 11 – Magma Pool Edge

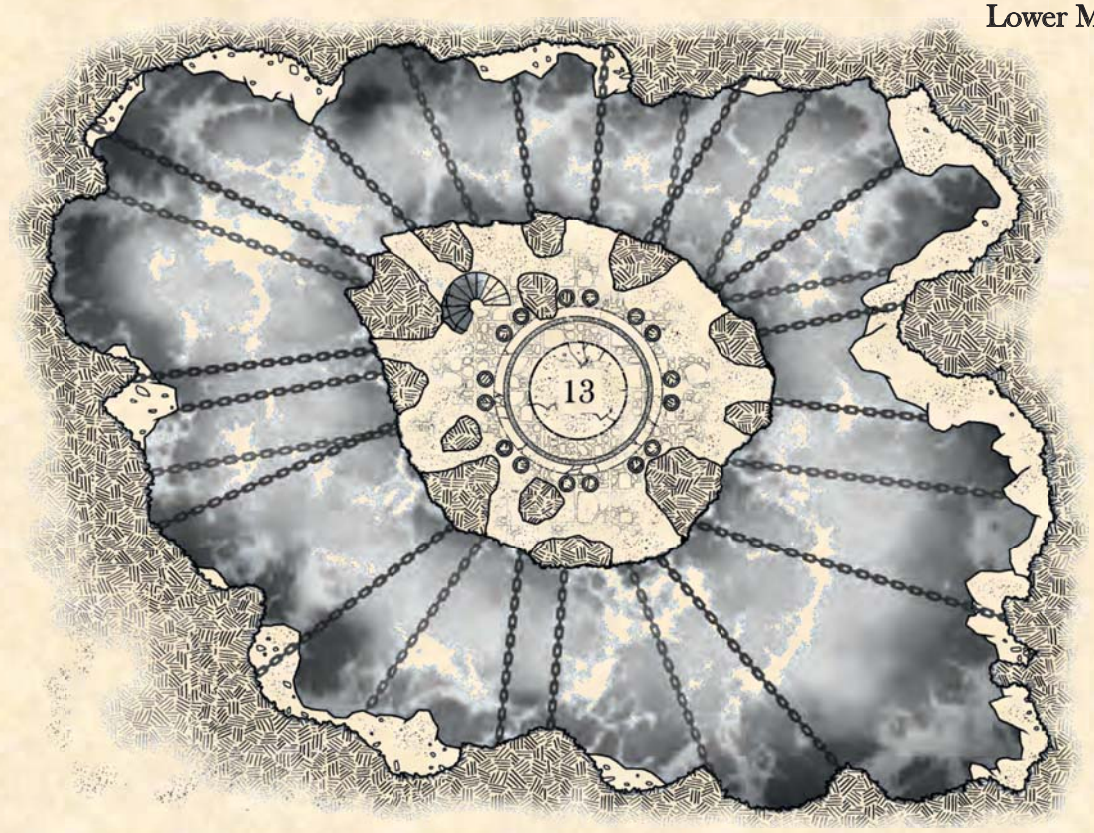
This 220 ft edge is adjacent to a bubbling pool of hot magma 100 ft below. The radiant heat here is palpable, and toxic fumes induce a mild feeling of dizziness (-1 penalty on balance related checks).

In the centre of the volcano vent is a 120 ft wide, 300 ft tall column of dark rock, suspended above the volcano's magma pool by impossibly large chains. The honeycomb like exterior of the "chained citadel" reveals multiple entry holes to a hollow interior.

Upper Map



Lower Map



The air temperature here is searingly hot, yet the chains are perfectly cool (enchanted to resist heat and fire, as is the citadel). The only access to the structure is via the chains which are large enough to walk along. Crossing a chain without falling off requires a Dex check at advantage, or is automatic if a PC slowly slides their way across on their belly. A character that falls into the magma pool dies instantly.

Area 12 – Chained Citadel (Lower Level)

This 120 ft diameter chamber is dotted with winding pillars and massive exterior entry holes alongside gigantic chains. The interior is illuminated by the reflected glow of the magma pool, casting a red hue over everything. In the northwest corner, a set of hand carved steps spirals upwards (to Area 13).

4d4 *Magma Zombies* protect the lower level. Anyone who isn't a member of the Cromaga tribe is attacked. The zombies will attempt to push opponents into the magma pool if possible.

Magma Zombie, AC 11, HD 3+1, Fiery Fist 1d10, 19: special, S15 D7 C18 I- P12 W- Ch- L6, Mv 20 ft. The magma zombies look like normal tribesman zombies, but release a glob of magma anytime they hit something or are struck. The magma causes an extra 1d4 damage and requires a Dex check to avoid catching on fire (causing another 1d4 damage each subsequent turn, until the Dex check is successful). On a Nat 19, a magma zombie explodes in a 10 ft radius, causing 4d6 damage and knocking targets back 10 ft (*Luck* (Dex) save for half and to negate the push).

Area 13 – Chained Citadel (Upper Level)

The upper level is similar in size and appearance to the lower level, except the floor is partially tiled, and the centre includes three concentric rings of different coloured rock. The central circle is 25 ft wide and covered in blood stained sand.

Sixteen stone plinths (about 4 ft high) line the outside of the rings. Each plinth has some kind of charred human organ on it (eyes, heart, lungs, etc).

There is a 50% chance Korgu is here (along with 4 cannibal helpers), carrying out some kind of hideous blood sacrifice within the circle. If he is not present, his wife, *Tosugi*, is performing the ritual in his stead.

A *Fire Demon* guards this level at all times, summoned by Korgu/the Heart via dark magic. The demon can move freely within the citadel, and to the length of the giant chains, but no further. It follows the commands of Korgu, Tosugi, or the shaman in Area 9. If all three are slain, the demon becomes uncontrolled and goes on a rampage for 1d4 hours (including setting fire to the jungle), then vanishes.

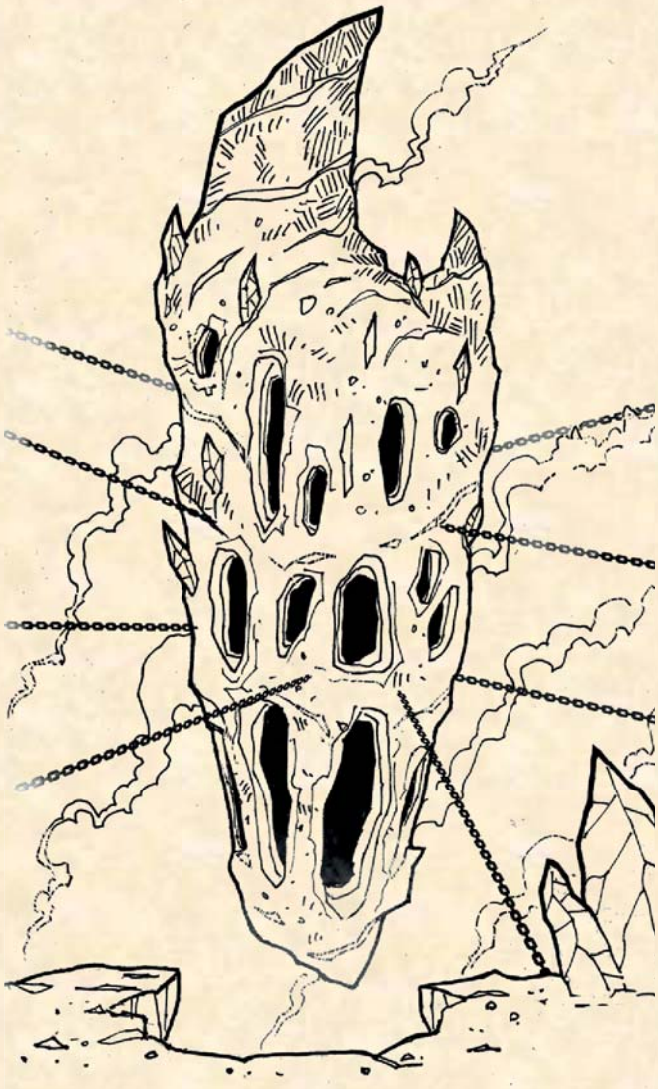
Fire Demon, AC 16, HD 13, Fiery Blast up to 60 ft causing 2d8+2 damage, 19: a circle of flame blasts outward from the demon, causing 2d6 damage to all within 15 ft. S19 D12 C16 I7 P13 W16 Ch3 L13, Mv 120 ft flying. The fire demon

has the usual *Demon* benefits (LFG p.94), as well as *Off Turn Attacks* and 60% Magic Resistance.

Aftermath

If the Heart remains with Korgu, he eventually transforms into a ruthless despot, conquering the whole of the Suurat Jungle with the aid of the Heart.

If the adventurers obtain the Heart, they will need to decide what to do with it. It is immune to natural forces and mortal magic of all kinds. Retaining it for any period will quickly reveal its detrimental influence. If the players refuse to attune to it, the Heart will attempt to direct the PCs to pass it onto a more sympathetic keeper.



(3) DRUMS IN THE JUNGLE

Rumours & Hooks
As the party traverses a difficult stretch of the jungle, the beating of scores of drums can suddenly be heard. The drumming grows louder and is swiftly accompanied by the unmistakable crowing of skorn on the hunt.

An Unfortunate Coincidence

As the party is making its way through the jungle for some reason, their scent is stumbled upon by upwind skorn scouts. Unfortunately for the PCs, the entire *Skurgg* tribe is in the vicinity, at the tail end of a funeral ceremony.

A feast is customary, and while roast pig and other game are available, *Karg Gogrut* simply cannot ignore the fortuitous chance for succulent man flesh.

Within minutes, 5d100 Skorn are crashing through the jungle, hooting and beating their drums, chasing down the party to eat them.

Assuming the adventurers do not have the resources to defeat such a huge number of foes, this scenario is resolved as a chase (LFG p.83).

Run!

The length of the chase may be randomly determined as usual, or an Int (Wilderness Lore) check allows a PC (or guide) to recall that there is a nearby ravine with a rope bridge. If the party can cross the bridge, they could cut the ropes and ensure their escape from the skorn. If this plan is pursued, the chase automatically ends after 8 legs.

When the chase begins, the closest 8d6 scouts are 6d10+60 ft away. Improvised terrain hazards and obstructions might include pit traps, tree strung noose traps, poison vines, a sudden downpour, thick scrub, a scorpion nest, carnivorous plants, etc.

Improvised third parties might include: a pouncing sabretooth tiger, rival skorn tribes, thuel scouts, eccentric hermit, stealthy hunters/rangers, etc.

Skorn, AC 11, HD 2, Club 1d6+1, 19: clubbed in the head, lose next action (*Luck* (Will) save resists), S15 D10 C13 I7 P12 W8 Ch8 L5, Mv 30 ft. Rudimentary dark vision, advantage when detecting danger or scents.

There is a 50% chance that Karg Gogrut is infected with lycanthropy, in this case a werecat.

Werecat, AC 14, HD 4, Bit 2d6, 19: a tiger (60%) or sabretooth (40%) comes to the werecat's aid, S15 D18 C12 I8 P15 W10 Ch8 (Hybrid), L7, Mv 40 ft. The werecat is a lycanthrope with all the usual benefits (LFG p.95). By spending an action, werecats may exert control and issue orders to tigers and sabretooths, which are compelled to obey.

Rope Bridge

If the party make it to the end of leg 8 and reach the rope bridge, they automatically cross before cutting the ropes and ending the chase. Hundreds of skorn soon gather on the other side of the ravine, beating their drums, crying in rage and shaking their spears at the party.

(4) A FALLEN STAR

Rumours & Hooks

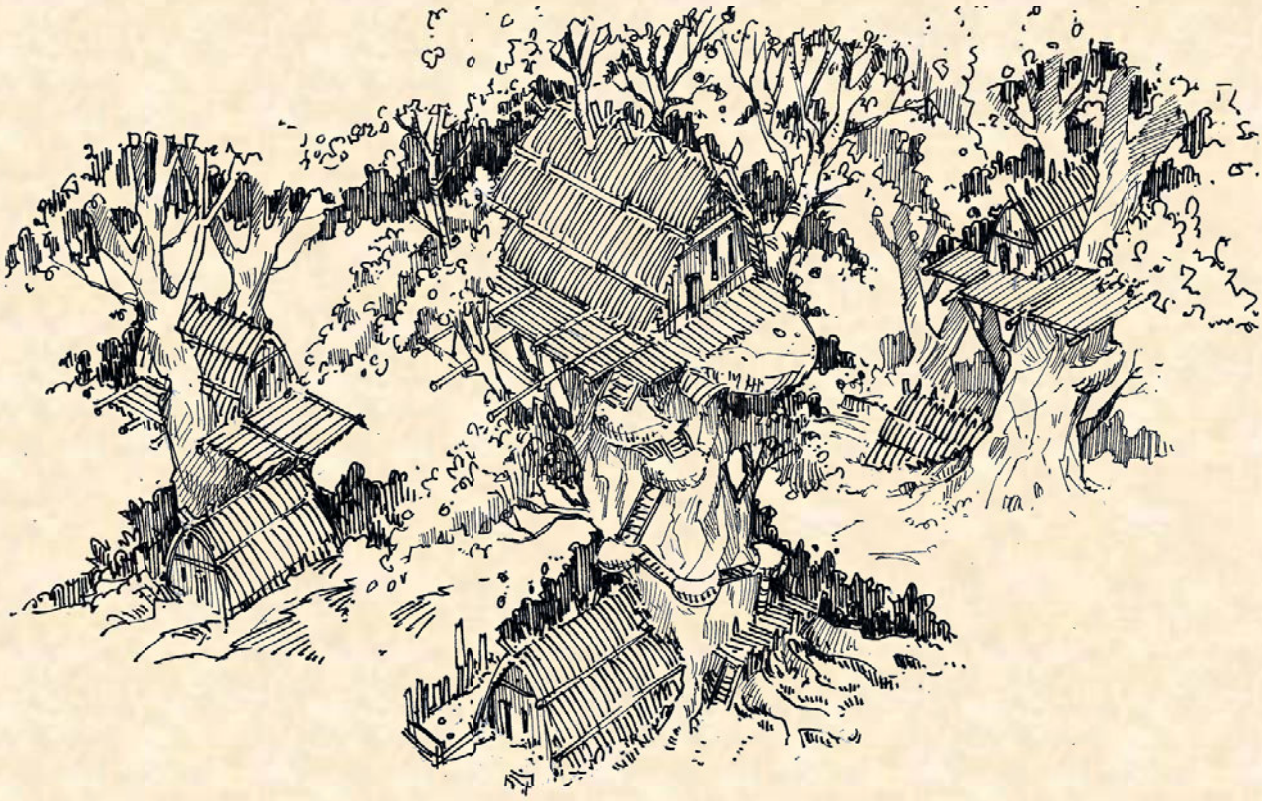
A wealthy astronomer, *Mistress Carrow,* is looking to hire some explorers to retrieve a small asteroid that fell in the Suurat Jungle twelve months ago.

Approximately twelve months ago, a celestial body fell in the deepest reaches of the Surrat Jungle. The few astronomers that observed it assumed the object would burn up on descent; a small asteroid or other piece of space debris, but Mistress Carrow believes otherwise.

A keen student of the ancient *Suun* prophecies, Carrow suspects the object might be the *Uxul*, aka the *Crucible of Dreams*. The astronomer has already sent two search parties to retrieve the device, but both were lost. Most would leave things well enough alone, but Carrow has developed an obsession with the Uxul, and is willing to sacrifice more lives to claim it.

The Uxul is an alien technology from a distant time and galaxy. Fashioned from a mysterious alloy, the four inch cube is marked with strange hieroglyphs not previously known. The precise purpose of the Uxul is uncertain, but Suun legends consider it the herald of great change, a catalyst from one age to the next.

By happenstance, *Giant Apes* were the first to stumble upon the Uxul and claim it. Within months, some of the apes developed the ability to speak, and began fashioning more advanced tools.



Six months later, the apes cleared part of their jungle territory and built a small tree village. Numerous troops of Man Eating Monkeys worship the apes like gods, and all humans encountered are slain and devoured (including Carrow's search parties).

Crash Site

The astronomer provides rough co-ordinates to the crash site location, which is determined by the GM, and may require a number of random encounter checks during the trek to reach it (using the Suurat Jungle table, or adapting other tables from this section).

The crash site itself is a small 60 ft diameter crater, 5 ft deep and overgrown with fresh brush, vines and infant trees. Tracks of the giant apes are clearly apparent in the vicinity, which can be followed back to their village (Int (Wilderness Lore) check confirms a mix of giant ape and man eating monkey tracks). The apes and their loyal monkey servants visit the site regularly, considering it the sacred "birth place" of the Uxul.

There are 2d4 *Man Eating Monkeys* on watch duty at the crater at all times. If they spot the party, all but one attack, hoping to drive the party away. The last monkey heads back to the village to raise the alarm.

Man Eating Monkeys, AC 13, HD 1d4 hp, Bite 1d6, 19: disarmed (*Luck* (Dex) save resists), S10 D17 C10 I4 P13 W8 Ch8 L3, Mv 30 ft inc climbing. Man eating monkeys go into a frenzy when a target becomes *staggered*; all monkeys within 30 ft attack the wounded target, ignoring other targets and risking free attacks to do so. On a critical hit, a monkey climbs the target's back and knocks them prone (Str check resists).

If the monkeys are defeated, the journey to the village is about a day distant.

Treetop Village

If the sentry monkey made it to the village, the party is intercepted by a giant ape war party of 2d6 apes and 5d6 monkeys before they reach the village, which the primates hope to keep secret.

Giant Ape, AC 13, HD 6+3, 2 Fists 1d6+2 and Bite 2d4, 19: bear hug, S19 D14 C16 I5 P10 W15 Ch4 L8, Mv 40 ft inc climbing. May throw small boulders up to 50 ft for 2d6 damage. If an ape hits with both fists, the target is crushed in a bear hug, requiring a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table (*Luck* (Con) save resists).

These apes are much more intelligent than most, but have not yet learnt to talk. They will however act tactically, laying in wait to ambush the party, and throwing boulders from cover before closing for melee. They will flank with their monkey allies. If the sentry monkey was killed, there is no war party.

The village itself consists of wooden lodges, lashed together with tough vines (no doors). The dwellings are clearly newly built, some more ramshackle than others, but a significant feat of construction considering many were built high in the trees.

1d6+1 sentry monkeys keep watch in the trees, and will alert the residents to any humans they detect. Outsiders setting foot in the secret village is expressly forbidden by the talking apes, and a swift death is generally the best outcome a human can hope for.

If it comes to battle, there are 4d6 giant apes within, and another 5d6 man eating monkeys. Of the giant apes, only 1d4+2 are talking apes. They speak fluently in a hooting, barking language, and very haltingly in common, which they learnt from the prior search parties (and some unfortunate barbarians) before eating them. The leader calls himself *Oot-Arn*, a truly gigantic 10 ft silverback, rippling with muscle (Int 7, may have unlocked one or both Uxul powers at the GM's discretion; see below). Oot-Arn wears a primitive tunic with rudimentary pockets (holding food and the Uxul) and carries a heavy steel battle axe (taken from a thuel, which he wields in one hand).

The talking apes are concerned about the pattern of recurring intruders and might speak with the party instead of immediately killing them, if encouraged to do so (particularly if the party offers useful information, or practical skills to learn). Ultimately however, Oot-Arn explains that "*In the village, part of village*"; the humans may remain as teachers, but can never leave. Any attempt to escape is met with immediate and brutal death as a stark deterrent to others.

The huts mostly contain bedding and perishable food such as flowers and root vegetables. One also contains some valuables from the prior search parties and random thuels (1 x Carry Loot, Trinkets & Curios, Valuables, LFG p.136, 141, 147).

The Uxul

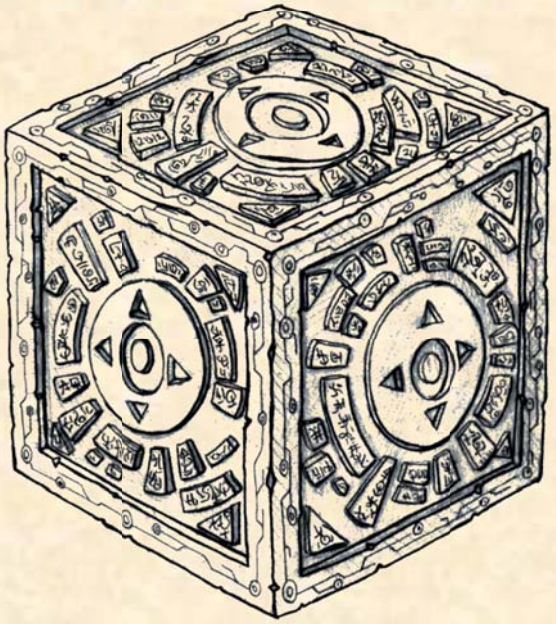
The power source of the alien artefact is uncertain, at the GM's discretion it might be high technology, magic or a mix of the two. Either way, the Crucible of Dreams has the following effects:

(1) All creatures within 120 ft gain +2 Int (max 18) after 1d3 months. The bonus fades if they are away from the cube for more than a month.

(2) A sentient creature attuned to the orb (or that the orb calibrates itself to, if high technology) gains a further 2 Int (max 18).

(3) The second attunement or calibration allows the user to cause effects similar to (a) *Suggestion*, and (b) *Telekinesis*, once per week. Whether these are magical or high tech effects, a distortion of the Veil is involved and requires a DDM check.

(4) Any further attunements or calibrations, and whether the true owners of the cube eventually come looking for it, are left to the GM to determine.



(5) MARK OF THE ANCIENTS

Rumours & Hooks
The serpentmen once ruled the Midlands, enslaving men, herding dwarves and skorn like cattle, and destroying the last of the elves. But when the climate changed, the scaled folk withdrew to humid jungles and other more equatorial climes. Ancient texts suggest at least one serpentfolk pyramid was raised in the Suurat Jungle; a tomb, temple and treasure trove in one.

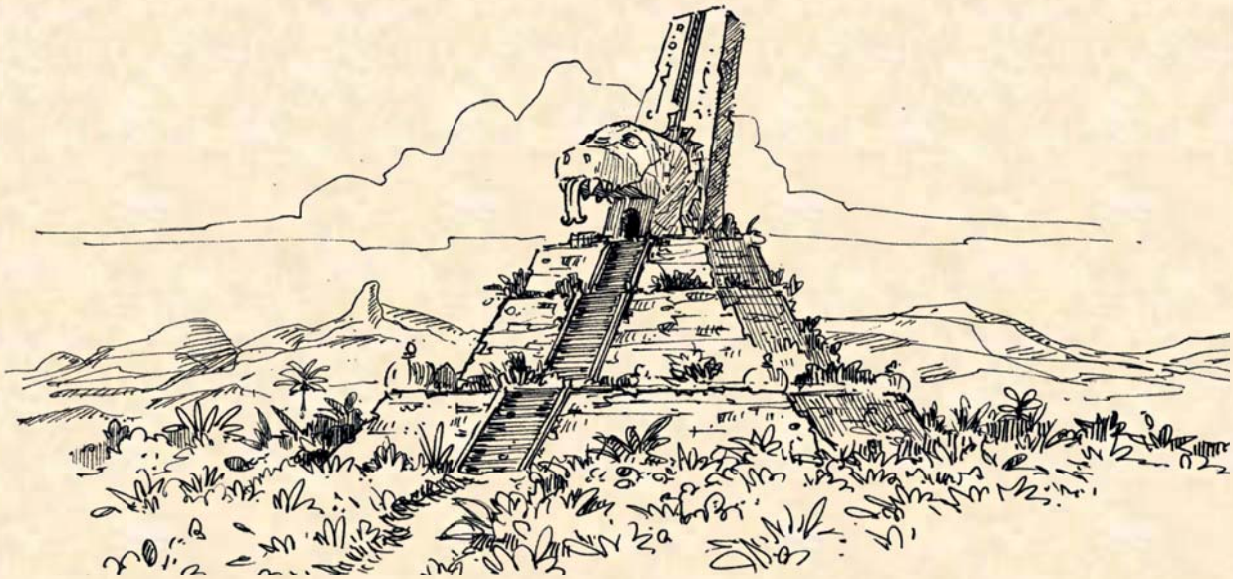
In the southern reaches of the Suurat Jungle, a small pyramid stands in a rough clearing, towering above nearby trees.

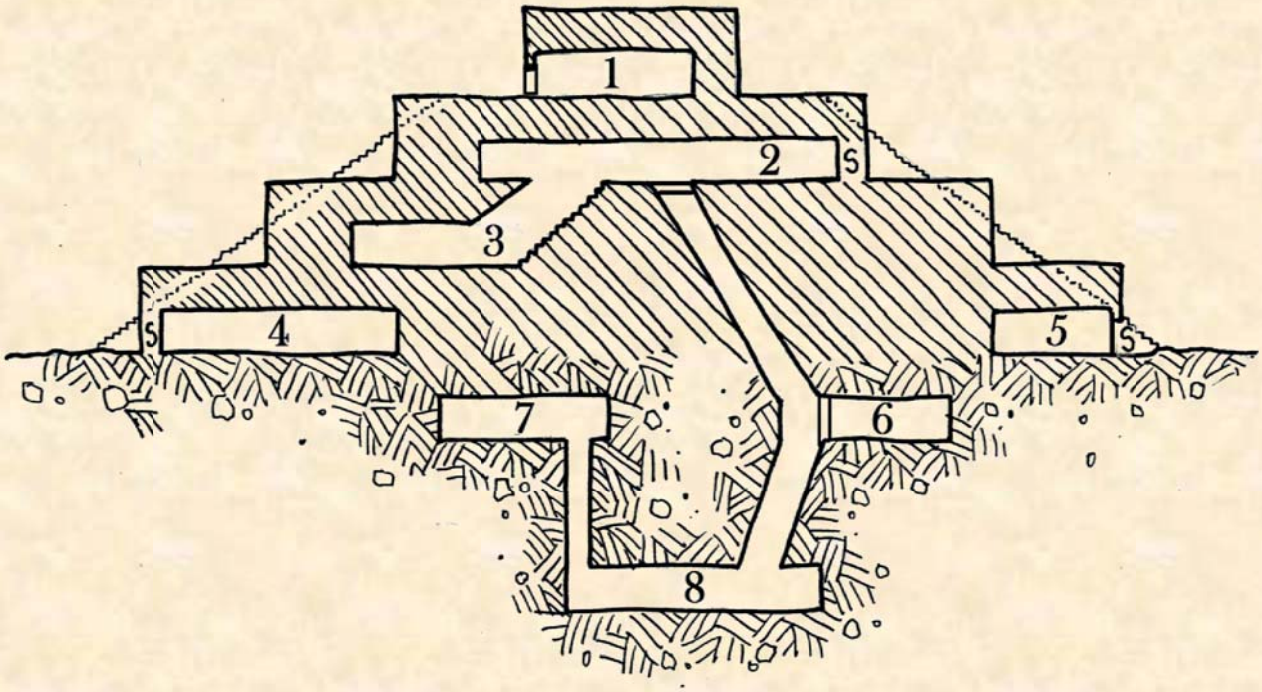
Serpentmen built the edifice in the First Age to align with certain ancient stars, some of which have vanished over the millennia. In recent years, the cold bloods managed to reclaim the monument, using it as a tomb, ritual temple and library in one.

1d4+4 *Ssurlocs* stand watch over the pyramid at any one time, spread about the four faces. Generally they linger under the shade of the trees. Humans approaching the pyramid will be shot at with poison arrows, or intercepted for melee if close enough.

Ssurloc, AC 16, HD 6+3, Bite 1d6 + Poison or Spear 1d6+3 + Poison or Bow 1d8+1 + Poison, 19: tail whip 1d8 and knocked prone, S18 D16 C14 I10 P11 W13 Ch10, L8, Mv 40 ft. Ssurloc poison causes 1d6 damage and 1 Dex loss (*Luck* (Con) save resists).

In addition to the ssurlocs, 3d4 *Winged Snakes* have been trained to defend the pyramid from mammals. They swoop in from nearby treetops to snap at any intruders who step foot on the monument.





Winged Snake, AC 14, HD 3, Bite 1d6 + Poison, 19: disarmed, and the snake flies away with the weapon, S12 D17 C10 I3 P13 W9 Ch4, L6, Mv 50 ft. Bite poison causes 1d2 Con loss (*Luck* (Con) save resists). Once per day, may spit concentrated poison 60 ft at a single target, causing 2d4 damage and 1d2 Con loss (*Luck* (Dex) save resists). See *Bestiary* for more details.

Area 1 – Water Trap

Doors to enter this chamber are set into each side of the pyramid face. Fashioned of black stone, they are decorated with ancient serpentmen glyphs, depicting their illustrious conquering of the *Argosa* territory under the auspices of the *Unflinching Mother* and the *Nest Beyond the Stars*. The doors are locked, the keys long lost. Picking the lock requires a Dex (Traps & Locks) check.

The 60 ft chamber is tiled in black and white hexagons, the walls decorated with bronze and gold frescos. Serpentfolk, the moon and the stars are the predominant theme, sprinkled with legions of human, skorn and dwarven slaves. The fall of the fey is also depicted with a pile of broken elven skulls, leered over by a colossal dragon. In the centre of the room is a 2 ft stepped hexagonal pit. Set in the floor of the pit is a circular, golden trapdoor.

Despite the intricate frescos and glyphs, the purpose of this room is to trap tomb robbers. Pulling on the hand ring of the (false) golden trapdoor causes all of the stone doors to slam closed. Rain gathered via drains atop the pyramid, and stored in a roof reservoir, floods into the chamber from slots that open above. The room takes 1d6+5 rounds to fill, at which time characters being to drown (LFG p.159). An hour after the room is filled, drains open in the floor to allow the water to escape. Every so often, serpentmen enter the chamber to remove any dead.

The trap might be avoided by spotting the concealed slots in the ceiling, or the hidden drains along the edges of the floor tiles (Perc (Detection) check at disadvantage). If the trap is triggered, adventurers nearby an open door might have a chance to leap outside or block the door from closing with a sturdy object (Dex check required). If wedged open, the water escapes outside and does not fill the room (but might draw the attention of other inhabitants of the pyramid). Forcing open a wedged door to allow egress requires two Str checks at disadvantage.

Area 2 – Entry Halls

The outline of this secret door is difficult to spot (Perc (Detection) check with -2 penalty), revealing an arched door. The door is magically sealed (*Wizard Lock* spell at 8th level) or will open if hissed at for a few seconds. Adventurers that surveil the pyramid for a 1d4 hour period might observe serpentfolk opening the doorway in this manner. Alternatively, PCs might extract this secret from a captured serpentman, or a *Detect Magic* spell and Int (Arcana) check may be used to deduce the solution.

Inside, the 120 ft by 60 ft entry hall is lit with bronze lanterns and tiled in glossy black volcanic rock. The walls are decorated with swirling, circular patterns and etched in gold. A large iron cage holds 1d3 human and/or skorn captives, emaciated and bloody.

4d6 *Hraarsk* servants wander in an out of the hall to tend to the captives, religious rites and other housekeeping duties. *Ssurloc* sentries also come and go, dragging in prisoners or setting off on hunting expeditions. Arched wooden doors to the left and right of this room lead to sleeping and eating quarters (50% chance of 1d3 *Ssurlocs*).

A golden trapdoor (similar to Area 1) is unlocked. If pulled open, the 140 ft chute may be accessed via steps and crisscrossing grooves carved into the steep wall. About halfway down is a lever that activates the door to Area 6. The last 60 ft of chute below Area 6 has no steps, grooves or handholds; the tomb's lowest levels are not intended to be accessed or disturbed.

Area 3 – Ritual Chamber

Bronze steps with muraled walls descend 40 ft before opening up into this 60 ft ritual chamber. Lining the walls are statues of black volcanic rock, depicting ssurlocs, hraarsk and a single dominant razkarrt.

In the centre of the room is an altar fashioned of dark green stone (of curious origin, unable to be identified), to which bronze shackles have been attached. Faded blood stains cover the altar and adjacent floor. When the party enter this room there is a 50% chance of a dying, naked thuel (50/50 male/female) shackled to the altar. If the adventurers act quickly, they might be able to save the unfortunate at the GMs discretion. In the absence of a *Cure Minor Injury* spell or more

potent magic, the barbarian is in no state to fight, but can reveal that a razkarrt comes and goes through the golden trapdoor in Area 2.

Area 4 – Diseased Water Trap

The secret door to this trapped 100 ft chamber is easy to spot (advantage on any Perc (Detection) check); thick lines forming a 5 ft rectangle shape. The door is not locked, and can be opened by applying pressure to the door as a whole, which depresses and slides aside behind the pyramid wall.

The chamber inside is similar in decoration to Area 1, including the false golden door set into the floor.

The trap in this case is the same as that in Area 1, except that the water is laced with monkey blood infected with *Sweat Lurcher* disease (the rain water has a very slight reddish tinge). Skin contact with the water requires a *Luck* (Con) save to resist infection. Carriers suffer 1d2 points of attribute loss (Str, Dex or Con; determine randomly) every 12 hours. After 24 hours carriers develop a strange lurching walk and sweat profusely. Infected may make a second (and subsequent) *Luck* save each day. If successful, the disease ends in 1d3 days. If an attribute is reduced to zero, the carrier dies. Infected spread the disease to other mammals by skin contact (*Luck* (Con) save to resist). An apothecary with the right healing herbs might be able to cure or suspend the disease at the GM's option.

Area 5 – Sand Trap

The secret door to this trapped chamber is easy to spot (advantage on any Perc (Detection) check); thick lines forming a 4 ft rectangular shape upon the stone stairs. The door is not locked, but requires two small 1 inch studs to be depressed at the same time to open. With an ominous click, the outlined section of the stairs ratchets down with a clanking noise to allow entry.

The chamber inside is similar in decoration to Area 1, including the false golden door set into the floor, but the ceiling is only 5 ft high. The entire area is covered in a film of fine black silt.

The trap in this case is the same as that in Area 1, but instead of water, fine black dirt/sand fills the room. If the entry door is wedged open, preventing the steps from rising back into the closed position, the sand rises to about 3½ ft high before spilling out (depending on how big the blockage is). When this trap is set off, a bell is triggered in Area 2, summoning 2d6 *Hraarsk* to investigate. The Hraarsk bring 3d6 *Giant Centipedes* with them, which they release into the room if the door is wedged open. With the sand inside, fighting conditions are cramped, imposing disadvantage on attack rolls even with small weapons (very large weapons may not be usable at all, at the GM's discretion).

The hraarsk clean out this chamber once the centipedes finish off anyone inside (leaving behind the fine black powder residue).

Area 6 – Forbidden Library

The stone door to this 50 ft long, 60 ft wide chamber is closed but not locked, and opens by

pulling a lever located on the western wall of the chute. The stone door opens by lowering down like a drawbridge, and clicks into place against the far wall. Within is a dimly lit library, old wooden bookcases stacked with yellowing tomes, maps and scrolls. The air here is thick with a heady grey smoke, courtesy of *Srin'Morec*, the razkarrt keeper of the tomb. Srin'Morec is in a drug induced haze, scrutinizing a bizarre treaty on the twelve phasements of the void when the party intrude. His laconic state is obvious and if battle commences, he suffers disadvantage on initiative checks.

Srin'Morec is conscious of his addled state and will be keen to negotiate a peaceful resolution to the intrusion. Depending on the state of the PCs, he might offer a random magic scroll (LFG p.152) or 1 x valuables (LFG p.147) to persuade the party to leave. His long standing hatred for humans however cannot help but shine through in any conversations, constantly referring to the party as "*Tul Raani*" (man monkeys), "*Mey Rovtah*" (stupid warmbloods) and "*Bor Krasnovar*" (walking pox)

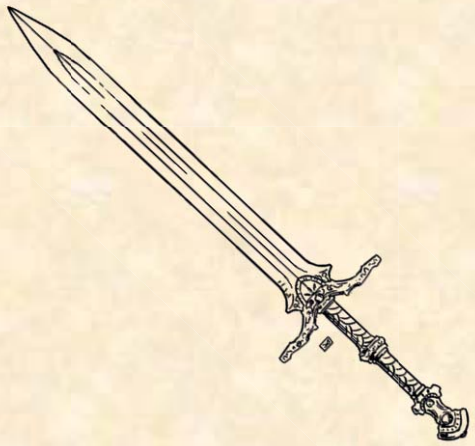
Srin'Morec, AC 18, HD 9+4, Bite 1d6 + Poison (*Luck* (Con) save or 1d6 and 1 Str loss), 19: the razkarrt unleashes a potent charm effect, *Luck* (Will) save or *Confusion* (as the spell), S12 D19 C14 I18 P16 W18 Ch14, L10, Mv 30 ft. Srin'Morec may spend an action to shift between human, noble and hybrid forms. May choose from the following spells five times per combat (9th level): *Sleep, Cure Light Wounds, Detect Magic, Hideous Laughter, Magic Missile, Shield, Heat Metal, Detect Thoughts, Phantasmal Force, Invisibility, Fireball, Haste, Monster Summoning I, Suggestion, Charm Monster, Fear, Stoneskin, Wall of Fire, Anti-Life Field, Creeping Doom.*

Area 7 – Nameless Tomb

This 60 ft chamber contains an oval bronze coffin, with cosmos and reptile motifs studded in precious stones. An elder tomb from the First Age, the interned noble has been dead so long that even the scaled ones no longer remember his name. As befitting a razkarrt magus, the tomb holds great riches and an enchanted treasure.

Between the adventurers and the sarcophagus however is a formidable *Bronze Golem.* Inactive for thousands of years, the forgotten guardian automatically senses living creatures within 60 ft, and will attack any human intruders until they are dead or driven away.

Ancient Bronze Golem, Boss Monster, AC 15, HD 13 (111 hp), 2 Fists 2d10, 19: the bronze golem blasts blinding light into the target's face (*Luck* (Perc) save or blind for 2d4 rounds), S21 D8 C23 I- P10 W- Ch-, L13, Mv 30 ft. *Boss Monster* & Golem with the usual benefits (LFG p.95, 111). 70% *Magic Resistance*, except against the *Heat Metal* spell which causes 7d8 damage (once only). If both Fist attacks hit, the target is crushed (*Luck* (Con) save to avoid rolling on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table). 10 ft reach. When staggered, the golem flashes brilliant light in a 20 ft radius blinding targets for 2d4 rounds (*Luck* (Perc) save resists). When reduced to zero hp, the golem explodes in a blast of shrapnel, causing 6d6 damage in a 20 ft radius (*Luck* (Dex) save for half). See *Bestiary* for more details.



If the golem is defeated, the coffin contains crumbling bones, 1 x 8 HD Lair Treasure (LFG p.140), 1 x random Potion (LFG p150) and the enchanted great sword *Bazrac*; a serpentman blade from antiquity (named after a long extinct clan, one random permanent enchantment, LFG p.152).

Area 8 – Bone Pit

This 100 ft chamber is lined with bones (beastmen, human, animal, even a few serpentmen) and is the prison of a *Manipede Demon* the scaled folk summoned years earlier.

The manipede is magically bound to Area 8 and cannot reach Area 6 or 7. The demon spends most days eating the remains of sacrificial victims thrown down to it from Area 2, and arranging the bones in different shapes and patterns, or grotesque statues. As an ageless, infernal spirit, the manipede understands its confinement here is transient, and revels in its fleshy manifestation, eager to devour the souls of mortals.

Manipede Demon, AC 14, HD 9+2, 2d4 Paralysing Caress 1d4 + special and Bite 1d8+1, 19: a random limb is paralysed for 1d6 months (*Luck* (Con) save resists), S14 D17 C10 I9 P13 W15 Ch6, L10, Mv 30 ft. Manipedes are *Demons* with the usual benefits (LFG p.94). On a hit, the target must make a *Luck* (Con) save or be paralysed for 2d6 rounds. 50% Magic resistance. See the *Bestiary* for more details.

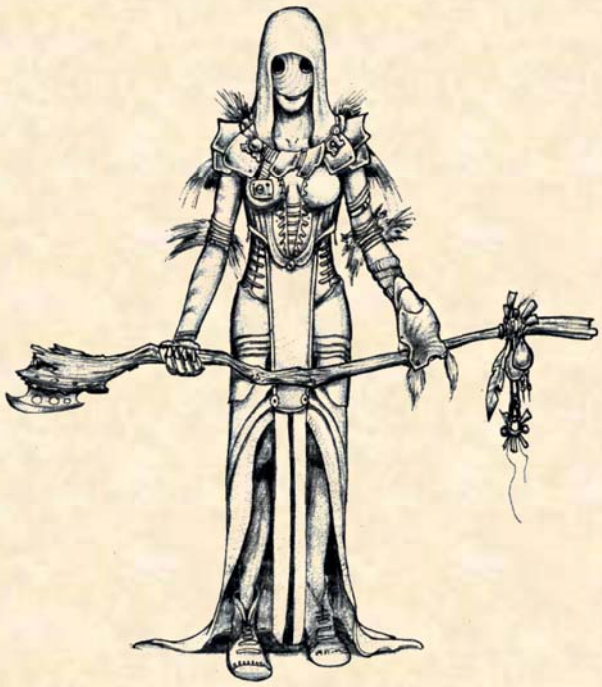
If the demon is defeated, searching the bones reveals 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables (LFG p.136, 147).

(6) KEEPER OF SKULLS

Rumours & Hooks
While trekking through the jungle wilds, the party unexpectedly stumbles across an old hut protected by a wooden palisade. The hut is decaying and weather beaten, but does not appear to be abandoned; a flickering lantern (if night) or movement (if day) can be seen within.

Throughout the jungle wilds, thuel clans and skorn tribes rise and fall, leaving behind razed and abandoned villages. Most of these fall into ruin and are swiftly reclaimed by the jungle, but from time to time, other creatures move in.

In this instance, the *Black Sun* thuels were decimated by disease and fled their home, only to be eradicated by skorn a week later. Most of their abandoned village has fallen into decay, but one domicile was taken over by a creature most strange: a *Doppelganger*.



The origins of this unnamed monster are a mystery even to itself, but it has managed to persist through the centuries, murdering and impersonating hundreds of human victims. In recent years, it has become enamoured with eating small children and babes, and has taken to impersonating parents to steal away and devour their offspring.

Most recently, the doppelganger has taken to impersonating a nearby barbarian village's shaman, luring children into the jungle to be consumed.

Doppelganger, AC 13, HD 4, 2 Claws 1d6, 19: the doppelganger steals a deep secret from the target, S16 D16 C12 I16 P15 W16 Ch16, L7, Mv 30 ft. May spend an action to magically mimic the physical appearance (including clothing and gear)

of any person. Immune to *Detect Magic*, *Sleep* and charm effects, and has 50% *Magic Resistance*. Limited mind reading, able to skim surface thoughts of intelligent beings within 60 ft. This allows them to correctly answer questions the asker already knows the answer to, assisting in impersonations.

The monster's wooden mask is enchanted, stolen from a victim years earlier. The maker of the mask is uncertain, but its relatively simple design suggests it might be skorn made (which would be extremely unusual, given skorn abhor magicians). An attuned wearer gains +1 AC, and may cause a *Fear* effect (as the spell) once per week.

The doppelganger's "standard" form is that of the female shaman who previously dwelt in the hut. In this form, the doppelganger appears as a middle aged female with a wooden face mask, wearing a cowled, sleeveless dress, decorated with feathers and animal trinkets.

Like the shaman before it, the doppelganger has no spellcasting abilities, but is highly skilled in herbalism and the tending of wounds. Nearby thuel tribes allow the "shaman" to reside in the hut for this reason; "she" is considered a highly eccentric, but occasionally very useful, hermit.

Shaman Hut

The majority of the village has fallen into disrepair or been harvested by nearby barbarians for firewood. What remains of the chief's quarters is a massive, two storey thatched hut adjacent to two smaller dwellings.

The ground level of the 90 ft diameter hut is the doppelganger's main living space, adorned with animal skins, flaxen mats, a fire pit and so on. On one side is a small bench for preparing meals. The upper level is reached by climbing knotted ropes, leading to partitioned sleeping quarters.

Both of the smaller 15 ft side hut doors are secured with ropes (easily cut with a sharp blade). Inside the left hut is the stashed loot of prior victims (1 x Valuables, Carry Loot and Trinkets & Curios, LFG p.137, 141, 147). Inside the right hut are a handful of bug ridden sleeping maps, and a wooden trapdoor. Beneath a trapdoor (with a sliding handle) are scores of human and skorn skulls, painstakingly cleaned and painted in ritual patterns of bright yellow, mauve and orange, highlighted in white or black.

Engaging with the Party

The doppelganger's hut is two days trek to the nearest thuel village, meaning that most travellers have been braving the perils of the jungle for at least two nights, and might find a fortified shelter of some interest.

The doppelganger for its part is generally welcoming, provided visitors ("*Mgeni*") are not obviously hostile. Any questions with respect to how the doppelganger survives here alone are met with curious smiles and an assurance that she is protected by "*Kuba uchawi*" (great magic). In practice, the monster is generally able to trick or scare away humanoid enemies with its shapeshifting powers, and can scare off more bestial foes with her magic mask.

The doppelganger is prepared to allow the party to stay with her for a small gift, provided they

leave any large, obvious weapons beside the door. The monster is interested to exchange stories of the outside world, and with hundreds of years of experience, is well versed in telling impressive tales consistent with its shaman form; daring battles with sabretooth tigers, escaping from cannibals, fleeing from beastmen hordes, and so on.

At some point close to dawn, the monster will attempt to quietly isolate, murder and replace one of the PCs. The doppelganger will then tell the other PCs that the shaman left before dawn (searching for flowers that only bloom with dawn light), and is not expected back until the afternoon. When the party depart, the monster will make a judgment call about whether to attempt to kill the rest of them, or to quit while it's ahead and disappear back to the hut.

LAKES & RIVERS

(1) SILVERFANE COVE

Rumours & Hooks:
Master Elsberry, of the *Port Brax Textiles Guild,* is offering a generous bounty to dispose of the pirate ship *Silverfane* and her crew.

Whilst the party are sailing, exploring the eastern shores of *Lake Argos*, they come across a hidden pirate cove...

At 220 miles long, 100 miles wide and 1,000 feet deep, Lake Argos is for all practical purposes an inland sea, with a crucial role in regional trade. Port Brax, its westernmost trading settlement, is having trouble with pirates.

Raiders have long been a problem, striking from the unsettled eastern shores. Protected by difficult reefs and shifting currents, small pirate crews have maintained secret hideouts in the narrow inlets and other challenging waterways for decades. In recent months however, one particular ship has been causing a great deal of damage: the Silverfane.

Controlled by the infamous *Captain Roebuck*, the Silverfane has attacked more than half a dozen trading vessels in the last six months.

The pompous Master Elsberry (of the Port Brax Textiles Guild) has been targeted twice, and is now offering a substantial bounty of 800 gp to have the Silverfane neutralised.

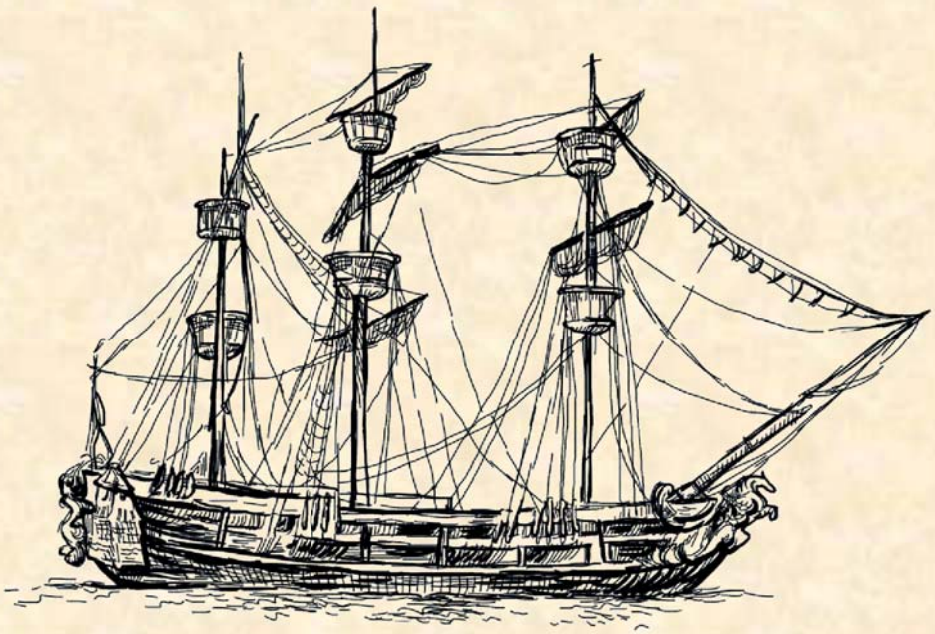
If the party meet with Elsberry, they learn he has acquired rough co-ordinates to Roebuck's hideout on the eastern shore. The adventurers will need to arrange their own ship to the area.

Assuming the pirate hideout is 220 miles distant on the far eastern shore, and a large vessel travels approximately 40 miles every 8 hours (LFG p.160), it might take about 2 days travel to reach the cove.

Random Encounters

While the party is sailing to the pirate hideout, there is a 30% chance of a random encounter every 8 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d20:

(1) *Severe Storm*: Powerful winds, high waves and lashing rain reduce visibility to 1d4 x 100 ft, ship speed is reduced by



1d6 x 10%, and there is a 50% chance the ship is wrecked on a reef, island, or is otherwise severely damaged (a group *Luck* save resists). At the GM's discretion, cargo might be damaged or crew lost overboard (*Luck* saves resist).

(2) Merchants: Up to 1d4 merchant vessels (cogs, caravels or galleys) travelling together for safety. They carry crew up to 20 (cogs), 30 (caravel) or 300 (galley, including 100+ rowers).

(3) *Favourable Winds*: the ship sails 2d4 x 10% faster for 4d6 hours.

(4) A *Roc* (LFG p.121), or flock of 1d4 *Wyverns* (LFG p.130) is hunting in the skies, and decides to swoop the deck for convenient take away meals.

(5) *Unfavourable Winds*: the ship sails 2d4 x 10% slower for 4d6 hours.

(6) *Marine Life*: 2d6 dolphins, lake otters or other harmless marine life take an interest in the ship, and follow along for a time.

(7) *Becalmed*: the ship covers no ground if its only means of propulsion is wind. A ship with oars travels at approximately 3 knots. A group *Luck* save is made at the end of each day to determine if the winds return.

(8) *Skirmish*: On the horizon, three ships are engaged in a pitched battle. One appears to be a *Varnori* longship (up to 100 crew, inc rowers), the other twin *Northgate* caravels (northern traders, up to 30 crew each).

(9) 5d4 *Water Sprites* (LFG p.125) take an interest in the adventurers' vessel, and seek to sabotage it for their own capricious enjoyment (cutting ropes, spoiling rations, eating maps, etc).

(10) *Hidden Reef:* the ship drifts into a little known reef, requiring an Int (Sailing background) check to avoid. If failed, the vessel is shipwrecked until repaired or rescued (there is no significant tidal change on the Great Lake).

(11) 2d6 *Mermaids* seek to lure one or more crew into a watery grave (as *Harpy* LFG p. 113, but swim 120 ft).

(12) *Rolling Fog*: Visibility is reduced to 1d3 x 100 ft.

(13) 1d6 *Giant Sea Serpents* (LFG p.122 but swim 60 ft) launch themselves on board the ship during some high waves, eager to make a meal of some of the crew.

(14) *Ordinary Storm*: Moderate to heavy rain and high winds reduces visibility by a factor of 10. Ship speed is increased or decreased (50% chance) by 25%.

(15) *Perfect weather*: Favourable winds, currents, clear passage and visibility - the ship's speed is increased by 100%.

(16) *Cargo*: Splintered pieces of ship hull and some intact cargo crates bob on the horizon. A short detour will net the adventurers 1 x 3 HD Lair treasure (LFG p. 140) worth of jarred spices, silks, iron ore or other valuable trade commodities. There is a 50% chance of a survivor, clinging to a piece of flotsam.

(17) *Patrol*: An enormous Crow's Keep dromond is patrolling here, on the lookout for pirates, smugglers or other trouble (up to 300 crew, inc rowers). The captain might board the adventurers' ship looking for contraband.

(18) 2d6 *Argosan Stranglers* (see *Bestiary*) intercept and scale the ship, then try to devour everyone on board.

(19) *Gale Force Winds*: Powerful winds increase the ship's sailing speed by 100%, or break one of the masts, reducing speed by 50% until repaired at port (a *Luck* save determines which).

(20) A colossal *Giant Octopus* (LFG p.119) or *Kronosaurus* (LFG p.103, *Giant Croc* variant) surfaces from the depths, intent on destroying the adventurers' ship!

Area 1 - Entry Cove

Approaching the pirate cove in daylight is obvious and automatically spotted by the sentries in Area 2, who alert the remainder of the hideout, and prepare to fire the ballista and onager. At night, the adventurers might be able to infiltrate the base using a small rowboat or similar. At the time the party arrives, the Silverfane is away, moored at an outlaw port for repairs and upgrades.

Area 2 - Lookout

This ruined Varnori longboat serves as the pirates' dock and sentry house. 1d4+1 pirates are on watch here at any one time. The dock includes a single ballista (vs humanoids, *Luck* (Dex) save or be reduced to zero hp) and onager (shoots alchemists fire, target ship must make a group *Luck* save or catch fire).

Area 3 – Crew on Duty

2d6 crew are on duty in this area, repairing ropes, nets, preparing armaments and sorting booty, etc. If the sentries from Area 2 alert them to intruders, they arm themselves with swords, crossbows and fire pots.

Pirate, AC 12, HD 1, Cutlass/Rapier 1d8, 19: Disarm, S12 D13 C11 I10 P10 W10 Ch10 L4, Mv 30 ft. Also armed with light crossbows and fire pots (2).

The houses here obviously started out as shanties, but have been reinforced over the years, and are now permanent structures. They contain sleeping quarters, small pantries and the like, totalling 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136). The current booty pile is worth 1 x Valuables (LFG p. 147) worth of coins and trinkets.

Area 4 – Crew Quarters

This collection of buildings is the main living area, with 8d6 pirates living here. Most are either eating, sleeping, drinking or cavorting at the *Black Barrel*, the finest (and only) drinking hole in the place, owned and operated by *Mickey Pipeweed*, a charismatic young smuggler with a penchant for rich brunettes. He has 4 HD, Backstab, Skirmisher and Finisher abilities like a 4th level Rogue, and may choose from the following tricks three times per combat: *Choking Dust, Hidden Blade, Quick Reflexes.*

Looting this entire area produces 1 x Valuables and Carry Loot (LFG p.136, 147).

Area 5 – Roebuck's Quarters

This house is the most finely decorated of all the pirate dwellings, and is actually quite sturdy, with a locked iron banded door. Captain Roebuck resides here, often with a number of harlots and hangers on. 1d4+2 pirates stand sentry outside his home at all times.

Roebuck's chambers are appointed with a number of fine paintings, silver candlesticks, gold snuff boxes, and so on. Gathering all this loot produces 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables. Hidden in a book with a secret cavity is a map to Roebuck's real treasure – the details of which are left to the GM to determine.

Roebuck, AC 13, HD 6, 2 Cutlass 1d8+2, 19: Disarm, S14 D15 C11 I15 P14 W16 Ch16 L8, Mv 30 ft. He has Backstab, Skirmisher and Finisher abilities like a 6th level Rogue, and may choose from the following tricks three times per combat: *Choking Dust, Hidden Blade, Quick*

Reflexes, Smoke Bomb, Rapid Dose, Blind Sense. Roebuck has 4 doses of the extremely rare *Suurat Nightbloom* poison (applied by injury, *Luck* (Con) save or suffer 2d4 Str loss, at zero Str the subject dies).

Roebuck is 6 ft tall, strong and athletic with a commanding speaking voice. He is greedy and unscrupulous, but holds a genuine respect for his crew. If necessary he will seek to bargain for their lives at the cost of his own. He will give no quarter to the party should the situation be reversed. An assault on the pirate camp is extremely serious, and the crew will expect condign punishment. The party will be kept in the brig (see Area 8) until the Silverfane returns, at which point the prisoners will be keel hauled until dead.

Area 6 – Trapped Passage

This entry passage is trapped at the narrowest point by a 15 ft drop pit filled with sharp stakes (causing 4d6 damage, *Luck* (Dex) save resists). There is a narrow 6 inch lip on the northern side which allows safe passage. A Perc (Detection) check notices the lack of prints across the face of the pit.

Area 7 – New Recruits

2d6 new arrivals and crew wannabes sleep here in bedrolls; they don't graduate to full crew and proper quarters until officially approved by Roebuck. They are the first to respond to any intruders, hoping to prove their mettle to their fellow ruffians. The new arrivals have advantage on morale checks.

Area 8 – The Brig

The brig is a solid looking dwelling with boarded up windows and 1d4+1 pirates on guard duty at all times, unless they're drunk (50% chance).

There is only one prisoner in the brig: *Margrite "Iron Marge" Halister*, Roebuck's double crossing bosun. Iron Marge is pleasing to the eye and walks with obvious confidence. She attempted a mutiny against Roebuck a few days earlier, and is awaiting her perfunctory trial before the crew, and inevitable execution. She is currently shackled in one of the rooms. The bosun in fact commands the respect of about half of the pirates, and will gladly help the party to kill Roebuck, and any who side with him, if given a chance. On the other hand, Iron Marge is a double crossing sociopath, and can't be trusted to keep her word any longer than it suits her.

Iron Marge, AC 13, HD 5, Cutlass 1d8+1 and Hook 1d4+1, 19: Disarm, S13 D15 C13 I14 P15 W17 Ch15 L7, Mv 30 ft. She has Backstab, Skirmisher and Finisher abilities like a 5th level Rogue, and may choose from the following tricks three times per combat: *Choking Dust, Hidden Blade, Quick Reflexes, Smoke Bomb, Cat's Grace.* Iron Marge goes into a murderous rage when staggered, gaining *Off Turn Attacks*. She never tests for morale.

Aftermath

If the entire cove is wiped out, the area is likely to fall into ruin. Given time it might become reinhabited by skorn, other pirates or possibly even used as a staging ground for far eastern *Shenzu* explorers. If Roebuck is killed but Iron Harg lives, he is likely to replace any dead and continue raiding with the Silverfane. If both leaders are dispatched, any remaining crew are likely to disband or kill each other over old slights or whatever baubles remain.

At the GM's discretion, as the party departs the cove, the Silverfane (2d10+50 crew) might appear from a nearby inlet and give chase. Unless the adventurers are in a warship of their own, a pitched battle is unlikely to end well.

If the adventurers are crewing their own ship, the Chase rules (LFG p. 83) might serve to resolve the situation with some modifications:

(1) The ships begin 1000 yards apart. The chase ends if the ships become more than 2000 yards apart (escape), zero yards (boarded) or the legs end.

(2) The two leaders make opposed Int (Sailing background) checks. The winning side opens or closes the gap by 3d10 x 10 yards.

(3) Assaults with ballistae, onagers and other artillery may be made up to 250 yards. Such a battery requires a *Luck* save from the target ship's leader, or the attacker rolls to widen or close the gap. On a terrible failure, the target ship is incapacitated or sunk.

(4) Possible hazards might include storm fronts, torn sails, broken ropes, damaged rudder, adventurer overboard, reefs, fog, unfavourable currents or winds, other ships, *Argosan Stranglers* or even a unique *Water Elemental* (LFG p.107). The "Large Crowd" result might be substituted with a possible mutiny instead.

If the ship is mainly crewed and captained by NPCs, a group *Luck* check might resolve the escape, as normal.

(2) THE LAKE BELOW

Rumours & Hooks
Years ago, a church of Argona was erected on some frontier shores of *Lake Argos*. Unknown forces set upon the building, slaying or stealing away the priestesses within. Abandoned shortly thereafter, some say a great evil lingers over the site.

High Priestess Ulna is offering a handsome reward to investigate and reclaim an abandoned church on the Lake Argos frontier.

Some years ago, the faithful of *Argona* (goddess of hope, health and happiness, female clergy only), erected a frontier church on Lake Argos borderlands.

Unfortunately for the priestesses, a band of toadmen living in underwater caverns nearby took exception to the intrusion, dragged them and their guards beneath the lake, and ate them.

Investigators from Crow's Keep were unable to determine the exact fate of the clergy, and chalked it up to thuels or skorn. When a second set of priestesses and guards also disappeared, the site was declared cursed and abandoned.

The adventurers might discover the ruined church while exploring the Great Lake, or seek it out as agents of High Priestess Ulna (50's, heavily overweight, raven haired with streaks of grey), who offers 500 gp to unravel the mystery and secure the site.

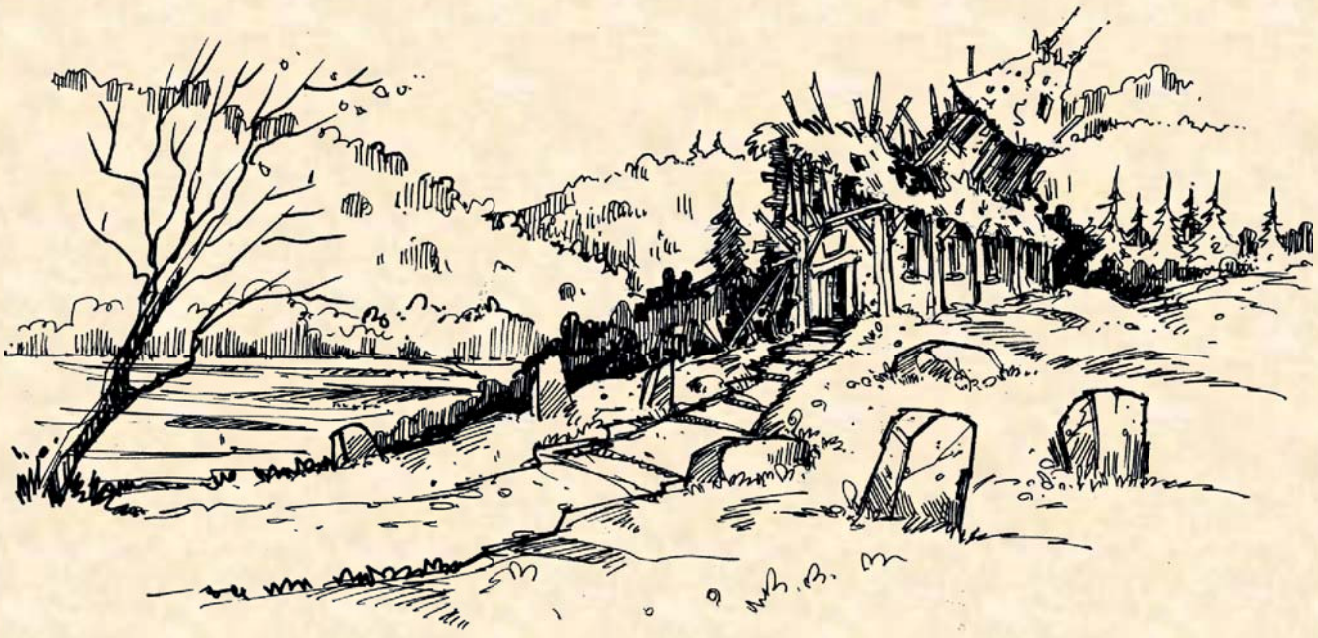
Random Encounters

Depending on whether the adventurers approach by lake or forest, there is a 25% or 40% chance of a random encounter every 8 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d6:

Forest

1. 2d4 *Giant Spiders* (LFG p.125) are hiding in the trees. They drop massive webs (*Luck* (Dex) save to avoid), before pouncing, hoping to devour or cocoon their victims.

2. *Poisonous Scrub.* The adventurers pass through a patch of poisonous, thorny vines. An Int (Wilderness Lore) check avoids swollen and inflamed cuts (causing 1 Dex loss).



3. 10d6 *Skorn* (see *Bestiary*) have made camp nearby; their drums can be heard clearly up to half a mile away. Roaming sentries (2d4) carry primitive horns to summon more of their man eating kin.

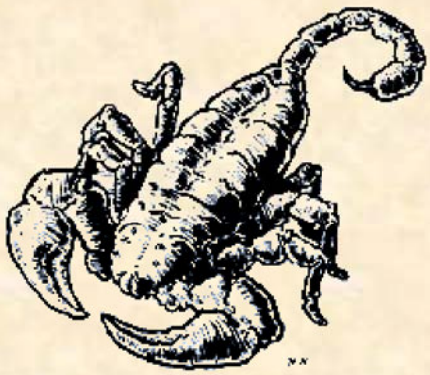
4. A large pack of 5d4 *Wolves* (LFG p.129) are prowling here, hungry for a meal. They will surround and target pack mules or horses before targeting humanoids, if possible. They might be placated with party rations.

5. A single *Giant Scorpion* (LFG p.122) has flattened itself beneath the undergrowth, hoping to take its prey by surprise (Dex (Stealth) v Perc (Detection) contest).

6. Awful, guttural speech can be heard from two voices beyond the next copse of trees (an *Ettin* (LFG p.108) talking to itself).

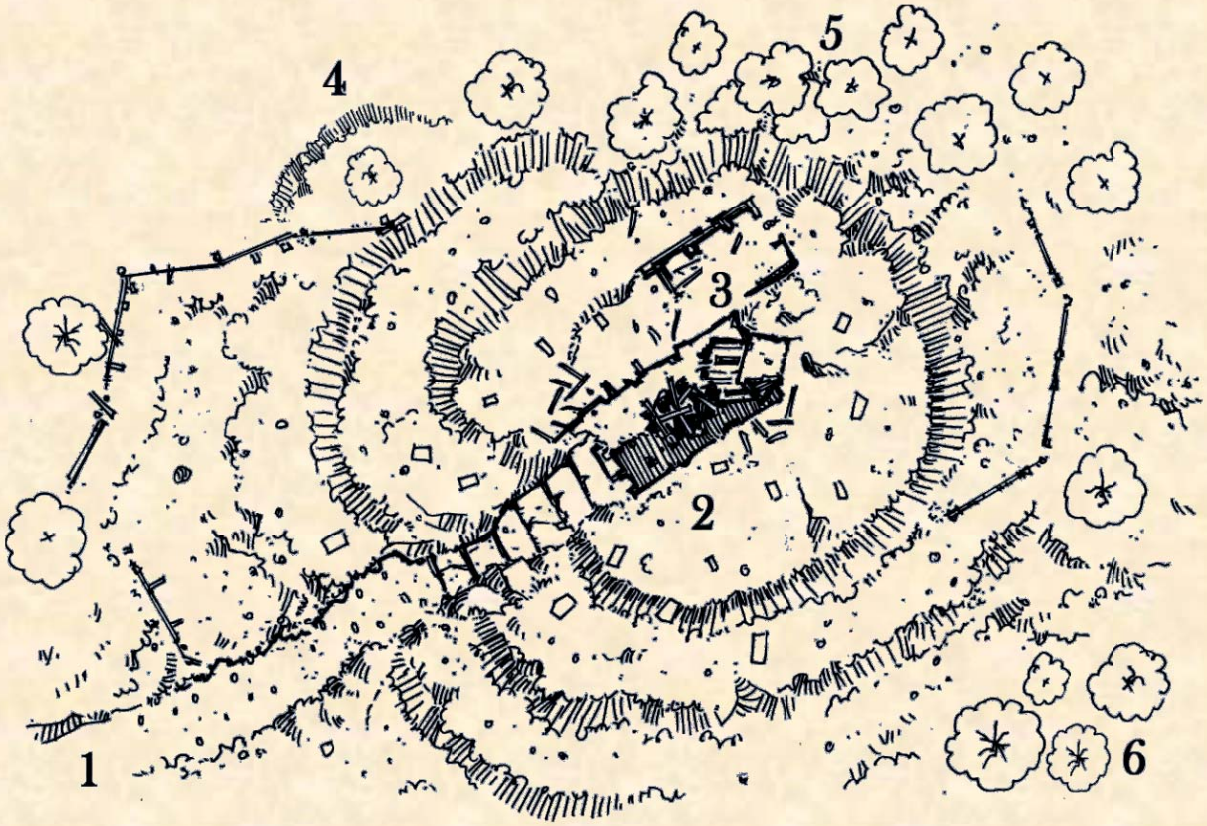
Lake

1. 2d4 six ft *Giant Wasps* (see Bestiary) buzz down from the sky or nearby shore, hoping to paralyze and carry away a meal.



2. 2d4 canoes, each carrying 1d4 *Thuels* (as *Berserker* LFG p.114) armed with bows and spears, appear from a small island or inlet.

Map 1



3. 2d4 *Giant Crocodiles* (LFG p.103) are lurking in the waters nearby. If the adventurers are using a small boat, they might try to overturn or breach it. If the vessel is large, they trail along for a few hours, hoping for an opportunity.

4. A terrible storm and/or thick fog rolls in. There is a 50% chance 2d6 *Argosan Stranglers* (see *Bestiary*) sneak on board to feast on the crew.

5. *Mutiny!* If the PCs have chartered a ship, the crew rebels, engulfing the vessel in chaos as the quartermaster attempts to usurp control!

6. Something truly colossal rises from the deep, sending gigantic tentacles slithering across the deck. A *Luck* (Dex) save is required to avoid being dragged into the water (crushed for 3d10 damage each round, drowning rules apply LFG p.159). A Str Contest (vs Str 23) breaks free.

Area 1 – Entry Path

The approach to the church is on a moderate incline, the dirt path turning to stone steps, with a handful of gravestones spread about the area. The building is on a small rise and in poor condition (despite being a relatively new structure); the door is broken, as are the windows and the tower partially collapsed (leaning precariously to one side).

When the adventurers arrive, there may be one or more toadmen on sentry duty (50% chance at each of Areas 4, 5 and 6), concealed in the trees or lake (the church occasionally attracts humanoids that the toadmen prey upon). If present, they are well hidden, using their chameleonic ability to gain advantage on any Perc (Detection) vs Dex (Stealth) checks. Whether detected or not, at least one sentry makes haste to summon others from their underwater caverns.

Area 2 – Church

The church is wooden framed with plaster walls, the entry door and windows broken. Concerningly, the roof and tower are collapsing.

The interior is in ruins, pews shattered and the altar (which bears Argona's starmaiden icon; a beautiful woman with a trail of stars in lieu of legs) defaced, smeared with blood and a malodorous, translucent slime.

Wooden steps lead to the collapsing tower. Any attempt to navigate the upper level requires a *Luck* (Int) save to avoid inadvertently collapsing the entire roof (causing 6d6 damage to those below, and a Con check to avoid rolling on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table, LFG p.54).

Little of value remains in the church, but a thorough search reveals 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.141). A search also reveals clues to the toadmen menace: slime on the altar, a half eaten female skeleton with a large bite from the ribs (consistent with a giant toad/anuran), and a two ft length of shrivelled flesh (giant toad tongue), stuck beneath a broken pew.

If sentries have gone to fetch their kin, it takes 2d6 minutes for them to form a posse. After this time, 2d6+15 toadmen (from Area 9) assault the church from all directions, hoping the trap the adventurers inside. If more than half are killed, the remainder attempt to flee into the lake.

Toadmen, AC 13, HD 2+4, Bite 1d8+1, 19: the toad's tongue snatches the target's weapon or shield from its grasp, S17 D16 C13 I5 P10 W9 Ch6, L5, Mv 30 ft inc up walls, ceilings, etc. See *Bestiary* for more details.

Area 3 – Vegetable Garden

This fenced off area was once a vegetable garden for the priestesses, now long since overgrown. A small patch of rare wolfsbane is growing here, enough for three doses. A properly brewed wolfsbane mixture (Int (Apothecary) check with proper instructions and 25 gp reagents) splashed on an area or creature will discourage wolves, dogs and lycanthropes (*Luck* (Will) save or flee/delay for 2d6 rounds).

Area 4 – Lake Shore

The lake shore is in this vicinity, dropping away steeply into deep water. Area 7 is about 100 ft to the northeast and 15 ft deep; the curiously luminescent entry tunnel to the toadmen's underwater caverns. There is a 50% chance of 1d2 toadmen sentries in this area, keeping watch on the lake and church. The edge of the shore displays obvious, humanoid sized, webbed tracks leading into the water.

Area 5 – Northern Trees

This large forested area has a 50% chance of concealing 1d2 toadmen sentries. Scouting here reveals strange, webbed tracks leading to the lake (Int (Wilderness Lore) or Perc check).

Area 6 – Southern Trees

This small forested area has a 50% chance of concealing 1d2 toadmen sentries. Scouting here reveals strange, webbed tracks leading to Area 5 (Int (Wilderness Lore) or Perc check).

Beneath the Lake

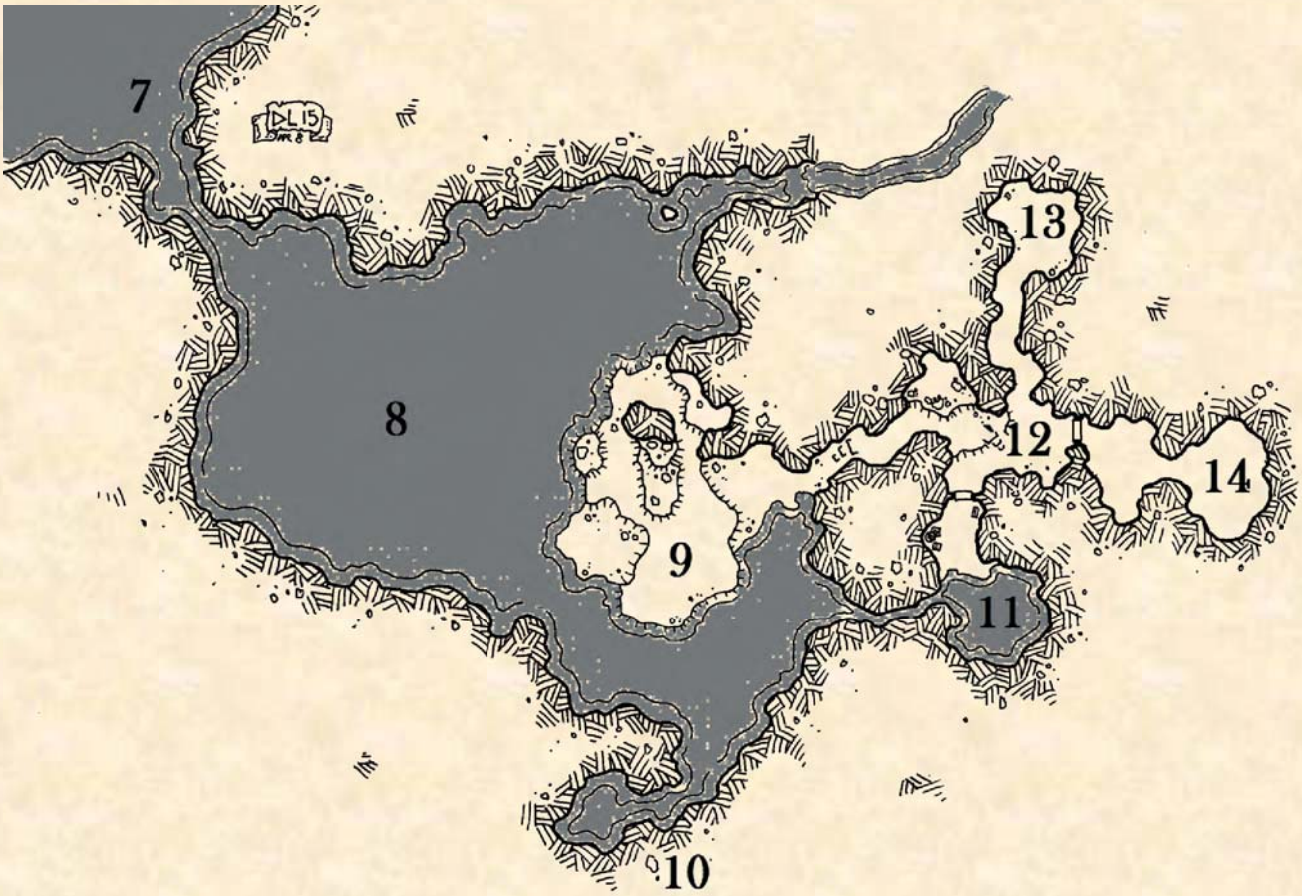
The lake water is murky and freezing cold. Vision is poor, up to about 20 feet at best (reducing the further a swimmer descends).

Unless the party follow some toadmen to their lair, finding the 10 ft diameter entry tunnel requires searching and a Perc (Detection) check at a depth below 10 ft. Fighting underwater is difficult and risks drowning (LFG p.159).

Area 7 – Underwater Entrance

This 10 ft diameter tunnel is illuminated by faintly glowing lichen (as is all of the complex), cultivated by the toadmen to help guide them through the passages. The effect is eerie but provides 15 ft of cloudy vision (disadvantage on Perc checks). After descending southeast about 20 ft, the tunnel opens up into Area 8.

Map 2



Area 8 – Main Cavern

This massive underwater cavern is approximately 130 ft x 110 ft, with a height of 15 ft. The entire area is completely submerged until a swimmer nears Area 9, when the ceiling rises a few feet, allowing space to regain one's breath.

The north eastern tunnel flows deeper under the earth, to a destination of the GM's choosing. The toadmen tend to use it as a convenient trash chute (when they can be bothered with such things). Unless the party has a way to breathe underwater, any exploration of this tunnel will likely be limited.

There is a 70% chance of 1d8 *Claw Toads* residing here (100% if the toadmen have been alerted to the party). The claw toads are allies of the toadmen (well, they try to resist eating them) and attack intruders. Fighting underwater is particularly dangerous and GMs might wish to remind players of the Party Retreat rule (LFG p.45). One large, spotted claw toad is missing part of its tongue (see Area 2).

Claw Toad, AC 14, HD 4+2, Bite 1d12 and Claw 1d6, 19: special, S19 D12 C17 I3 P10 W14 Ch2, L7, Mv 30 ft inc up walls, ceilings, etc. Tongue attack up to 15 ft, drag target into melee range, and cannot move away without winning a Str contest. On a 19+ attack roll, swallows target. A swallowed target may attack the monster's guts with a small weapon such as a dagger, suffering 3d6 crushing and acidic damage on the monster's turn. Claw toads may spend their move action to jump up to 30 ft. See *Bestiary* for more details.

Area 9 – Dry Land

This 90 ft x 70 ft area rises out of the water with an average 10 ft ceiling. The ground is gritty and irregular, with patches of slick lichen and moss, making for slippery footing.

2d6+20 toadmen live here, mostly eating, sleeping and fighting. Carcasses and bones are spread about, including recent meals of lost barbarians and drowned beastmen. They attack any intruders with savage ferocity. The toadmen know what fire is, and are highly fearful of it, which the party might exploit to their advantage. A thorough search locates the discarded remains of past victims (1 x Carry Loot, LFG p.136).

Area 10 – Left Overs

This isolated corner is where the claw toads "bury" the indigestible remains of their meals; metals, gemstones, particularly hardy bones, etc. The giant toads are not dissimilar to cats, scratching the lake floor over any remains in a half hearted attempt to bury them before departing. Large numbers of sizable bones, weapons and other metallic objects protrude from the silty floor. 2d4 random weapons and armour (50% chance rusted through), and 1 x Carry Loot, may be scavenged with sufficient time.

Area 11 – Spawning Pool

A "door" of woven kelp and bark blocks the entry to this chamber (wedged in place, automatically moved by someone with Str 14+, or else a Str check at advantage).

This 30 ft x 20 ft cavern is the toadmen's spawning pool. It has a 12 ft ceiling and is filled with 6 ft of lake water that is thick with white egg foam. There is a 75% chance *Vt'Sut, Boss of Brt'Mok* (toadmen), is here cavorting with 1d6 female toad(wo)men. None dare disturb Vt'Sut when he is in the spawning pool, and the croaking festivities within are loud; the adventurers might take him by surprise.

Either way, Vt'Sut is highly intelligent for his species, and speaks broken common (learnt from the prisoners in Area 14). His preference is to kill and eat the party, but he might attempt parley first; he did not become Boss of Brt'Mok by charging into every fight, especially when faced with obviously capable warriors.

If questioned about the missing priestesses, Vt'Sut admits they ate them ("*Vt'Sut eat loghairs, juicine, yerp*") because they invaded their lands ("*Vaders Vt'Sut placen, so Brt'Mok eat, yerp*"). Vt'Sut cares nought for any toadmen slain by the party, but is protective of his harem and himself. If on the losing end of combat, he will attempt to bargain for merciful exile, offering his "*beautimus*" knife, and promising to move the

toadmen to a rugged and remote section of the lake. Whether he keeps such a promise is up to the GM.

Vt'Sut is a 6 ft toadman *Boss Monster* with all the usual benefits (LFG p.95), Int 5 and 4 HD (45 hp). He wears a girdle with a glass bladed knife, stolen from *Tulrok* in Area 14 (permanent magical object: LFG p.152)

Area 12 – Main Junction

This oddly shaped intersection is about 40 ft x 40 ft at its widest points. There is a 50% chance of 2d4 toadmen moving through here at any one time. The northern nook includes a raised section with a crude bed of bones covered with luminescent moss (Vt'Sut's bed). A search of the bedding reveals 1 x Valuables (LFG p.147) entangled within it.

Area 13 – Croc Nest

This 30 ft x 20 ft chamber is home to an elderly 18 ft *Giant Crocodile*, the original inhabitant of the complex. When the toadmen arrived, they sought to oust her, but she killed so many of them they stopped trying. These days she mostly hibernates, occasionally venturing out into the lake when the toadmen forget to feed her. Vt'Sut has a spiteful respect for the giant reptile, and she appreciates his food offerings (including recalcitrant toadmen), so they tolerate one another. There is a 50% chance she is hibernating when the party arrives. Unless they disturb her, she will not bother them.

Giant Crocodile, AC 14, HD 6, Bite 2d6+2, 19: the target loses a limb (*Luck* (Dex) save resists), S20 D10 C19 I3 P10 W12 Ch5, L8, Mv 30 or swim 50 ft. On a 19+, the target is caught in the croc's jaws and rolled/drowned if water present (lose action each turn until successful *Luck* (Dex) save). The veteran reptile has *Off Turn Attacks*.

Area 14 – Prison

This 70 ft x 40 ft chamber has a heavy stone "door" that plugs the entry. A Str check at disadvantage is required to shift it enough to squeeze through.

Inside are two starving human prisoners in poor shape; (i) *Edori*, one of the original priestesses of Argona (40's, tattered rags, missing one arm, half crazed with despair) and (ii) *Tulrok* (thuel, diseased bite wounds, thin yet wiry with muscle, and a defiant gaze).

Edori's single wish is to be free of this nightmare. If she survives, she can confirm the toadmen attacks on the church, that she taught Vt'Sut to speak, and other harrowing tales.

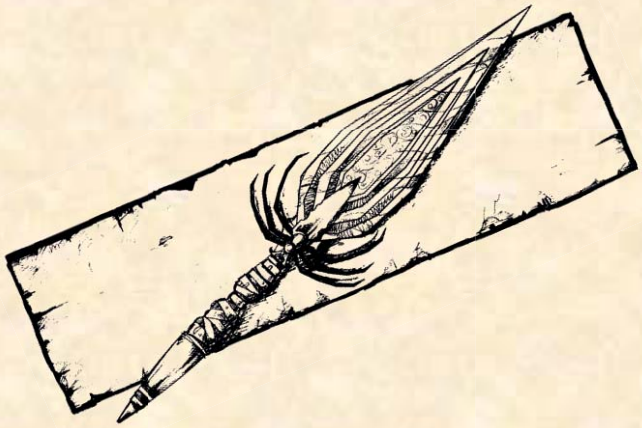
Tulrok wants nothing more than a chance for vengeance, and will gladly attack any toadmen he finds (Barbarian 3, hp: 7). Tulrok has been imprisoned for only four weeks, and does not speak common (only a rare tribal dialect). He insists the party keep his knife (see Area 11) out of gratitude for freeing him.

Aftermath

At the GM's option, there is a 50% chance 3d6 toadmen are returning from an unsuccessful hunt just as the adventurers leave the site, requiring one final showdown.

If the toadmen are not discovered, any further parties sent to the church are eventually eaten, much to the despair of High Priestess Ulna.

If Vt'Sut and his kin are killed and/or driven off, the church site might develop into a new outpost on the borderlands, with a 10 ft palisade and permanent retinue of holy warriors, held out as a beacon of progress to worshippers back in Crow's Keep. High Priestess Ulna will be very pleased and consider that she owes the party a favour.



(3) EVENTIDE ISLE

Rumours & Hooks
For those seeking information about ancient cultures and legends, all agree that none are more learned than the esteemed *Master Dravond;* the curious recluse of *Eventide Isle.*

Master Dravond, the elderly recluse and savant of ancient legends and cultures, has sent a messenger into town. If custom is anything to go by, the envoy is here to extend one of Dravond's rare invitations to dine with him on *Eventide Isle* (a great honour).

On a small island, located in one of the larger inlets of *Lake Argos*, stands *Eventide Manor*, stronghold and residence of *Dravond* the sage.

A longstanding recluse and eccentric, Dravond is nonetheless respected for his rare knowledge in the obscure fields of astronomy, dead languages, ancient cultures and story tale legends. Gaining an audience with the hermit is difficult, but from time to time he will receive visitors with a question worthy of research, or invites those he has heard tale of to dine with him in person to exchange stories.

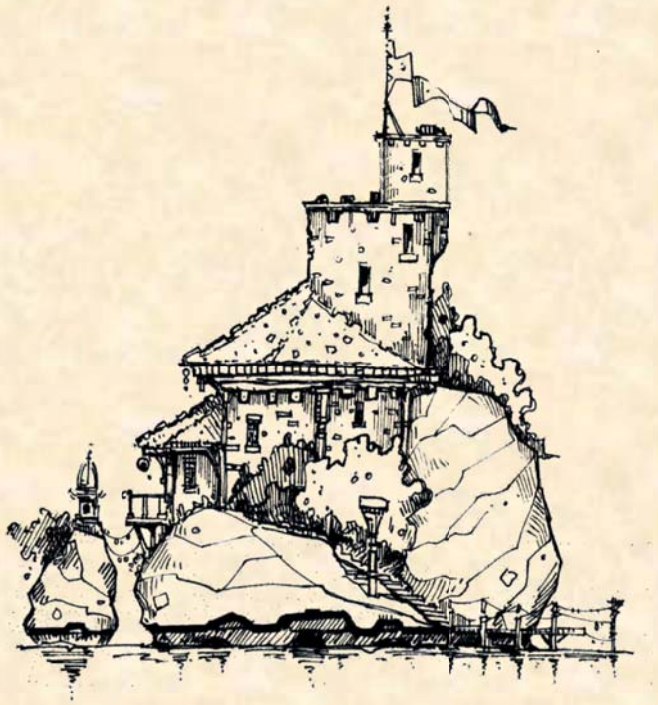
Regrettably, not everyone invited to eat with the sage appreciates the menu; Master Dravond is secretly a vampire lord of elder lineage, and occasionally feeds on his guests. Indeed, no-one dwelling on Eventide Isle is alive in the usual sense; not Dravond, not his servant thralls, and certainly not the creatures lurking in the catacombs below.

The party might become involved in this adventure by (i) seeking an audience to obtain rare information from the sage, (ii) be invited to dine with the sage one evening to exchange tales, or (iii) stumble across the island by chance while exploring the Great Lake's inlets.

Random Encounters

Whatever the reason, travel to the isle is at least a few days sailing (depending on weather), with a 20% chance of a random encounter every 8 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

1. 2d6 *Argosan Stranglers* (see *Bestiary*) intercept the ship. They will wait till night fall if possible before boarding and killing everyone on board.



2. A blustery storm suddenly blows through, shipwrecking the adventurer's vessel on a shallow reef. A Group *Luck* save resists.

3. 2d4 *Giant Wasps* (see *Bestiary*) buzz in from a nearby shoreline, attracted by the swiftly moving ship. They dive bomb the deck hoping to paralyse a meal and fly away with it.

4. The shattered debris of a canoe floats past, a thuel corpse somehow entangled in the flotsam. If the body is fished out, 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.141) is

found. There is a 50% chance the body carries some manner of infectious disease.

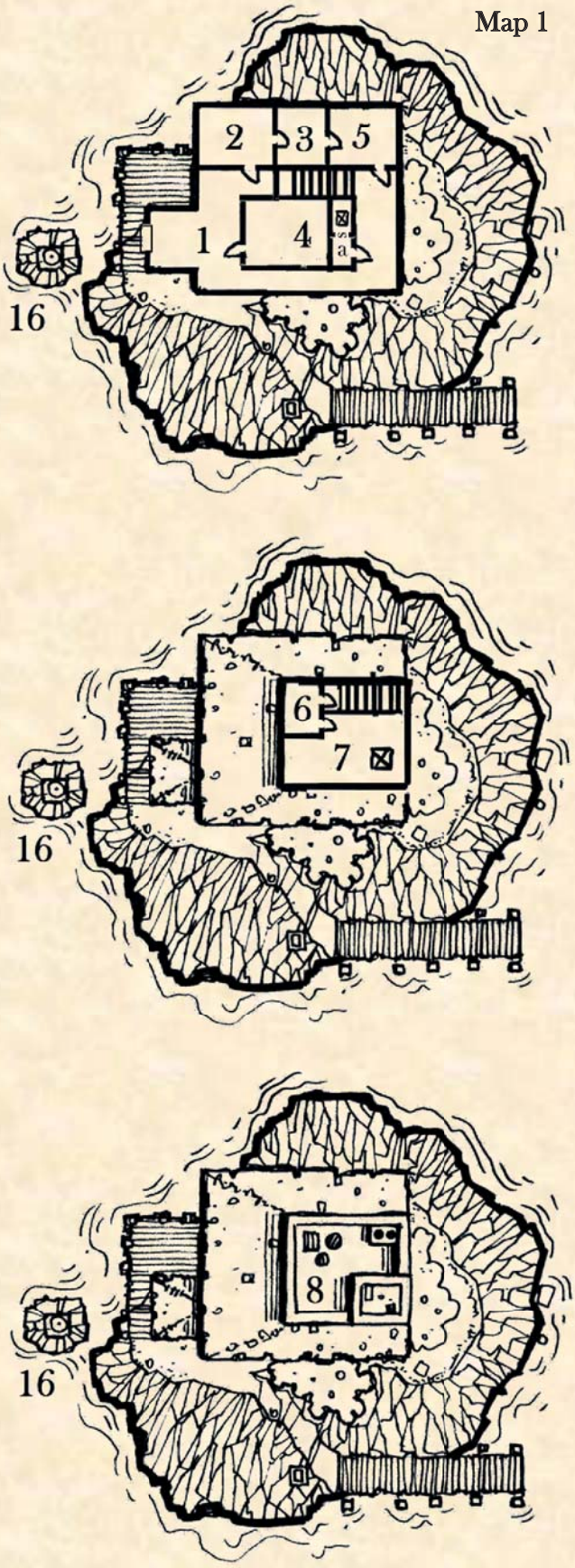
5. A colossal 20 ft *Giant Serpent* (LFG p.122, 12 HD, *Luck* 12, *Off Turn Attacks*) attempts to snatch someone off the deck and drown/eat them.

6. A cloudy mist rolls in, obscuring sight beyond 50 ft. In the distance comes the sound of almighty thrashing in the water, followed by a deafening dolphin like staccato. After a few moments a bestial death moan is heard. Then nothing but the ripples of large waves.

7. 2d4 *Will o' Wisps* (LFG p.124) float into view, hovering around the ship in a menacing manner. After some hours, they select a single sailor and converge, attempting to zap him/her to death. If they succeed, a baby wisp rises from the corpse, then the entire group flees.

8. A *Dire Bat* (LFG p.100, actually Dravond in bat form) flies overhead (out of bow range), silently observing the ship for a time before emitting a loud screech and flapping away.

Map 1



Eventide Manor

The manor is fashioned of white stone, with a dark tiled roof, set upon a tiny rock island that barely holds it. A handful of bushes and greenery have somehow found purchase on the otherwise barren isle. It is dusk when the party arrive, a warning lantern burning on the western outcropping. The short wharf is vacant.

Area 1 – Entry Hall

Double doors lead to a richly appointed hall that winds around in a "u" shape, 100 ft long from east to west. Paintings of distant lands and times

decorate the walls, many old and faded, seemingly of such fragility that just touching them might mar them. Comfortable couches are spread about. A single statue bust stands on a plinth, depicting a stern male with a neatly trimmed beard.

When the party approaches the entrance, the doors are opened wide by the beautiful *Anora*, a dark haired Midlander female in fine dress. Anora smiles warmly and welcomes the new visitors. She explains that the sage is expecting them, and invites the adventurers to follow her. If questioned as to her role, Anora says that she is the sage's handmaiden, one of two resident servants, the other being the fisherman *Norris*. If queried about the sage, Anora says only that the sage is well and looking forward to meeting them.

In fact, Anora is a *Thrall*, a half vampire servant of Dravond, himself a vampire lord many centuries old. Anora is utterly subservient to her master and cannot directly act against him. She has been his slave for just over seven years, and is resigned to her current role, but secretly hopes to be freed by Dravond or by the fortitude of a great champion. She is under no illusions however as to her master's strength, and will not raise such a dangerous plan except under the most exceptional circumstances.

Thrall, AC 13, HD 3, Bite 1d8 + level drain, 19: special, S17 D15 C14 I12 P13 W14 Ch14, L6, Mv 30 ft. A thrall is only half living, mid transition to becoming a true vampire, utterly subservient to the one that turned them. They eat and sleep like humans but do not breathe (but may feign breathing), and primarily exist as food or day walkers for their master. A bite drains 1 level until the end of the adventure (*Luck* (Will) save resists). On a 19+ attack roll, the thrall emits a supernatural hiss cowing their foe (target loses next action, no save). Thralls are immune to non-magical weapons, except those of cold iron, which affect them normally. Thralls see as well in darkness as in light.

Unless Anora is waylaid, she opens the door to Area 4 and guides the party inside. She politely requests that any obvious weapons are stored in a large cupboard (unlocked) in the entry hall.

Area 2 – Guest Quarters

This 25 ft by 30 ft luxurious guest bedroom contains two large double beds with feathery downs, quality cotton and silk sheets. If more than four adventurers stay overnight, Anora produces further mattresses to lay on the floor, apologising that they don't usually have this many guests at once. The door (which can be locked from either side) to the east leads to a shared bathroom. Pictures of Dravond's apparent ancestors hang on the walls, giving the place a feeling of being watched. Several valuable ornaments stand on narrow side tables (1d4 x 50 gp).

Area 3 – Bathroom

This 20 ft by 25 ft chamber has lockable doors to the east and west and serves as a shared bathroom. Marble and intricate mahogany abound. The towels and linen are spotless white.

Area 4 – Dining Room

This 40 ft by 30 ft room contains an intricate wooden dining table and chairs, set with fine ceramic and gold candlesticks. A delicious smelling meal of roast venison, carrot and potato awaits, along with flagons of delightful wine and biting ale.

Anora invites the party to make themselves at home, and indicates the sage will join them presently. The food and drink is perfectly agreeable and not poisoned or otherwise. The wine and ale are quite potent, an Int (General Lore) check recognises expensive *Highseed Red* and polarising *Skornback Dark Ale* (on account of its "secret ingredient", rumoured to be skorn blood).

After a few minutes Dravond joins the party. He appears as an elderly, 5½ ft broad shouldered Midlander with a bulbous nose. Despite his glasses, he still squints to see, and as he enters the room, is half reading a scroll as Anora guides him by the elbow to his chair.

Dravond feigns distraction for a moment before greeting the party, inviting them to eat if they haven't already, and begins eating himself. He is keen to hear tales from them, and in turn will spin stories about famous battles and betrayals of the last few centuries. As the stories unfold, it is clear the sage is (perhaps oddly) emotional about some of them (the ones in which he had a part, generations ago). Those who carefully study the sage might notice that he seems to take little enjoyment in his meal, or perhaps more accurately, he appears to be feigning enjoyment (Perc (Insight) vs Int (Deception) contest).

During dinner, Dravond decides which of the party will be his next victim. Once everyone is finished, Anora re-enters the room to clear the table, and the sage apologises that he needs more time to research the question the adventurers have for him, and/or that he has one more very special tale for the party. He insists that they accept his hospitality and stay as their guests overnight. He assures them he will have their answer in the morning. Anora will show them to their rooms in Area 2.

If the party decline to stay the night, at the GM's discretion, Dravond might accelerate his plan and pounce on the party as they leave, or wait until they are on the lake before attempting to snatch his target in Dire Bat form. Optionally, Norris might have sabotaged the adventurer's ship while they were at dinner, making it more difficult for them to leave before morning (see p.10).

During the course of the evening, Dravond instructs his thralls what to do should he be bested by the party, prepares the poison for the confrontation the next morning, and gathers his strength (possibly summoning a flock of bats, if he thinks he might need them). The lull might be used by the PCs to secretly explore the manor/isle, and/or question Anora (or possibly Norris).

Area 4a – Kitchen and Secret Door

This 10 ft by 15 ft room is a large kitchen/pantry stocked with foodstuffs and meats. It also hides a secret door on the northern wall. The door may be opened by pulling on a tin of spices at the front of one shelf. A panel slides away to reveal a similar size room beyond, empty but for a sound proofed, iron banded trapdoor set into the floor.

The trapdoor is locked (Dravond and the thralls carry keys), but may be picked with a Dex (Traps & Locks) check, or broken apart with sufficient time and the right tools (obviously making much noise). Below is a pitch black, winding stone staircase that leads to Area 9.

Area 5 – Anora's Chamber

This 25 ft chamber is Anora's bedroom, and is richly appointed like the others, with a double bed, wardrobe and dressing table. Curiously there are no sentimental pictures, heirlooms or other knick knacks. A shattered hand mirror lies in the bottom drawer of the dressing table. If thoroughly searched, a secret compartment beneath the wardrobe contains a heavy crossbow, 8 bolts, trip wires and a child's doll. The doll is slightly singed and carefully wrapped in a blue blanket. It belonged to Anora's dead son, and is her prized possession.

Area 6 – Stair Landing

This landing has a large western facing window overlooking the lake. The heavy wooden door to Area 7 is locked (Dravond and the thralls carry keys). A Dex (Traps & Locks) check at a -2 penalty opens the door.

Area 7 – Study

This 55 ft by 30 ft chamber is a large study, lined with bookcases and a beautifully crafted desk of aging oak, inlaid with gold. Various reading notes and side tables are spread about the room, as are plush reading chairs.

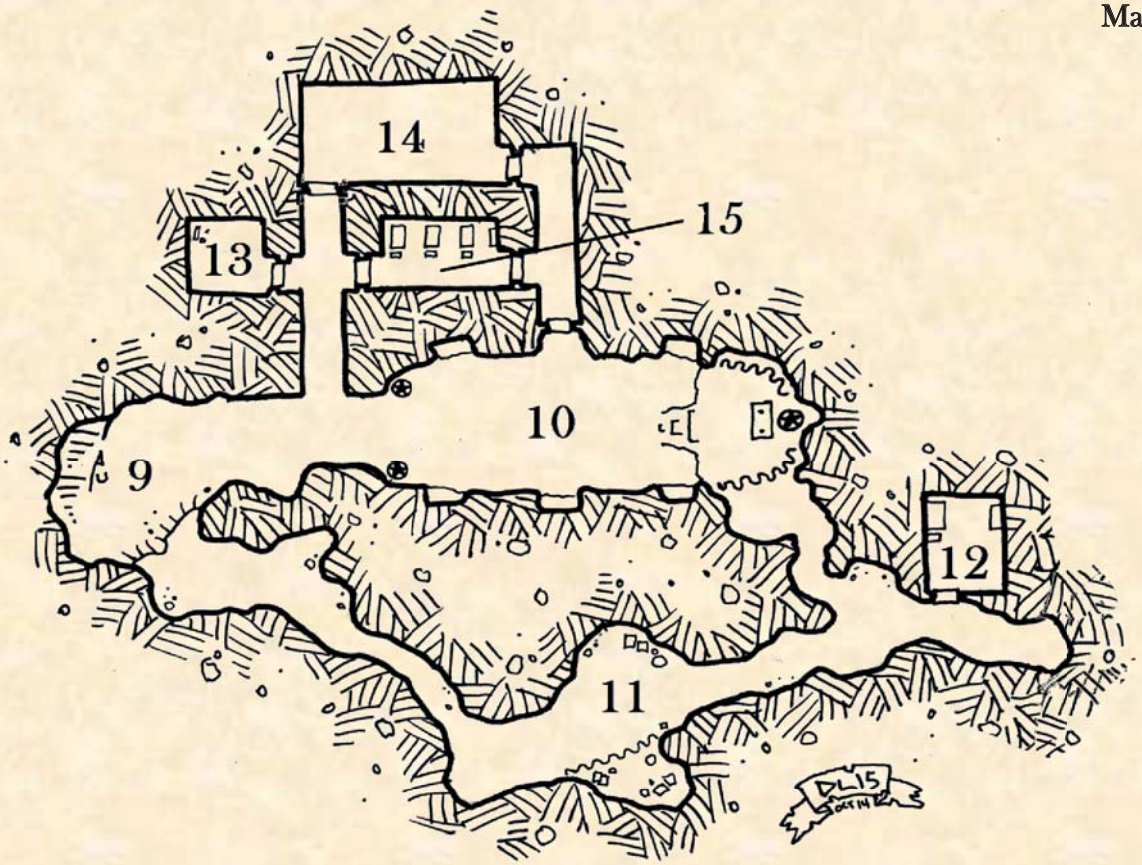
Dravond meets the party here in the morning if they have not already departed. He invites them to sit and rings a small bell, summoning Anora with a tray of decanters (juices, tea, spirits, water, bitter coffee). For himself, the sage downs an "invigorating blend" (something akin to a short black). All of the drinks are poisoned, but do not activate until the imbiber's adrenaline is raised.

Dravond continues the charade for several minutes, regaling the party with the answer to their question, or an awful tale of torture from his real past. He walks as he speaks, relishing the anticipation as he hobbles between the chairs. Eventually he settles behind his intended victim ... and sinks his fangs into their neck! At this time, Anora is outside the door and locks it.

Dravond, Vampire Lord, Boss Monster, AC 15, HD 9 (102 hp), Bite 1d12 + level drain, 19: the bite is especially potent, draining 2 levels instead of 1, S20 D19 C17 I16 P18 W17 Ch16, L10, Mv 30 ft or 60 ft in gaseous form. Supernatural gaze attack up to 10 ft as *Charm Person*, 30% recharge at the start of the vampire's turn.

Dravond is a *Boss Monster* with all the usual benefits (LFG p.95). He is immune to non-magical weapons, except those of cold iron, which affect him normally. He regenerates 1d12 damage at the start of his turn. Fire or acid suspends this regeneration for 1d6 rounds. If reduced to zero hit points, Dravond turns to mist and flees to Area 14, where he slowly regenerates over 1d4 hours. The only way to permanently slay him is to drive a wooden stake through his corpse's heart.

Map 2



Dravond may spend an action to summon a flock of bats, a swarm of rats or transform into *Dire Bat* form. His bite drains one level from the victim (a *Luck* (Will) save resists) until the end of the adventure. A creature reduced to zero levels by a vampire's bite rises as a thrall. Dravond finds the smell of garlic repugnant and does not cast reflections in mirrors (there are no mirrors in the manor, excepting the one in Anora's dresser). If the holy symbol of a good deity is forcefully presented to him, Dravond must make a *Luck* save or recoil for 2d6 rounds. As a vampire lord, Dravond finds direct sunlight painful, but can endure it for up to 1d4 hours before disintegrating.

If the vampire is defeated, Anora is compelled to delay the party as they make their way through the manor (for example by locking doors, taking pot shots with her heavy crossbow, setting traps, and rendezvousing with Norris in the catacombs), which might give Dravond time to regenerate. A trapdoor in the ceiling pulls down mechanical stairs to Area 8. Looting the study produces 1 x Carry Loot, 1 x Valuables, 3 x Trinkets & Curios and 2 x random Scrolls (LFG p.136, 141, 147, 152). The rare book collection is worth 2d4 x 500 gp to the right buyer.

Area 8 – Tower and Battlements

Access to the 20 ft square tower is via the trapdoor in Area 7. This chamber is Dravond's apparent bedchamber, though he rarely spends time here. The heavy curtains are drawn and the room dark. In recent years it has become more of a storage area, stacked with less valuable tomes, strange brick-a-brack and stolen gear (2d4 random items from the LFG equipment list). The vampire occasionally brings victims here to feed upon, evidenced by a number of careless blood stains.

A single locked and iron banded door leads to an outdoor landing and battlements. A table, chairs and some barrels provide seating, and offer a great view of the lake in all directions.

If Dravond has need to summon a flock of bats, they descend from the sky here, flying around the keep until someone opens a window or door to allow them in. The small bats are too little to cause any real damage, but impose disadvantage on those flighting in the midst of them (Dravond excepted). The flock will disperse after 30 hit points of notional damage is done to them. They also fear fire, and must make a *Luck* save (Luck 3) to swarm anyone holding an open flame (such as a torch, but not a lantern).

Area 9 – Stairs to Catacombs

These stone cut steps wind down approximately 200 ft before emerging into a large, cold cavern. The area is pitch black and adventurers will need their own light source to see. The ceiling here is 45 ft high, beyond the range of most torches, and is 20 ft wide at its broadest point.

The cavern extends about 35 ft east before revealing a manmade corridor to the north, while the main cavern continues to open to the east. A 5 ft rise to the south branches off into another natural tunnel. If Anora and Norris have not yet been dealt with, they are waiting here in ambush, and fire their heavy crossbows from the darkness (both thralls see as well in darkness as in light). The thralls continue to harass the party with guerrilla tactics until dealt with.

Area 10 – False Coffin

This 70 ft by 20 ft cavern has a 45 ft ceiling. Two lifelike statues stand in the northwest and southwest corners, one depicting Wodon, two headed god of justice, the other Soliri, the World Tree (but badly defaced and broken). Five shallow alcoves to the north and south hold raised iron braziers and sweet smelling incense holders, unlit for decades.

Stairs carved into the stone lead to a raised platform on the eastern side. An ornate hardwood coffin (decorated with studded gems worth 1d4 x 200 gp) is flanked by two 10 ft yellow curtains. The entire area is overlooked by an 8 ft idol to Baal, god of death (in this instance depicted as a rising murder of crows).

The coffin is trapped and opening it drops an iron chain net from above. The net covers the entire raised dais, causes 4d6 damage, and imposes disadvantage on attacks while entangled. The chain net is extremely heavy and requires a Str check at disadvantage to wriggle free. The net falls with an almighty clang, drawing the attention of the ghouls in Area 11 and/or any thralls.

Inside the coffin is a half decayed corpse (of similar proportions to Dravond, but the face is too decayed to compare) resting on grave dirt, with a golden dagger on its chest. Valuable baubles are also scattered about (1 x Valuables, LFG p.147).

Area 11 – Ghoul Den

This 20 ft cavern is scattered with flecks of bone and sinew. 2d4 *Ghouls* lurk here, sustained on the drained corpses that Norris delivers to them.

Depending on how loud the party has been, the ghouls may seek to ambush them. A decaying yellow curtain hangs across the southern wall, behind which are piles of human bones, matted flesh mats of small children, and a freshly splayed corpse arranged in hideous sacrifice to dark powers. The abject horror of it all imposes a minor madness on living observers (Willpower check resists). A search of the area turns up 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136).

Ghoul, AC 13, HD 3, Claw 1d6+1 and Bite 1d4, 19: the target is subject to the equivalent of a *Slow* spell for 1d6 rounds (*Luck* (Con) save resists), S16 D13 C12 I10 P13 W14 Ch8, L6, Mv 40 ft. Ghouls are *Undead* with the usual benefits (LFG p.95). A touch paralyses a victim for 1d6 x 10 minutes (*Luck* (Con) save resists).

Area 12 – Norris' Bedchamber

This 10 ft room is Norris' bedchamber. A small cot, wardrobe and side table adorn the room. It is bereft of sentimental items. A chest contains a heavy crossbow, case of 14 bolts, a *mithril* war hammer (of dwarven make) and 1 x Carry Loot (LFG P.136).

Area 13 – Ladder Room

This 10 ft room has iron rungs set into the western wall, which disappear into a narrow manhole that ascends 200 ft to Area 16. Various crates store fishing gear (nets, hooks, ropes, floats), some of which appear to have been untouched for years.

Area 14 – True Coffin

This 30 ft by 15 ft room has iron doors which are expertly locked (Dex (Traps & Locks) at -2 penalty to open). Inside are two very old but otherwise nondescript wooden coffins, lying long ways across the room, head to head.

The left coffin contains what must have once been a plush interior long since decayed. An incredibly fragile skeleton rests inside, so brittle as to turn to powder if touched. An intricate golden circlet with a star motif adorns the skull (1,000 gp).

The right coffin contains dirt from Dravond's original burial site, and if he has been defeated in combat, his body will be regenerating here (if he has had time to regenerate completely, Dravond intercepts the party earlier, or perhaps flees to a distant cave in Dire Bat form, at the GM's discretion). A stake plunged into the regenerating corpse destroys Dravond utterly, instantly transforming him to dust. The dust is worth 1d4 x 500 gp to the right collector. There is no other treasure in this chamber.

Area 15 – Ancestor Tomb

The iron banded doors to this 10 ft by 20 ft chamber are locked (Dex (Traps & Locks) opens them). The tomb within has a 30 ft cathedral like ceiling, elaborate flagstones and gold gilded walls. The skeletal ancestors of the *Romells* (the original owners of Eventide Manor) are sealed in three grey stone sarcophagi.

A number of valuable antiques stand on bronze pedestals about the room (urns, intricate ceramics, etc worth 3d4 x 100 gp). If the sarcophagi are broken into, a portion of the Romell family fortune is located inside (9 HD Lair Treasure, LFG p.140). The treasure in the middle sarcophagi is trapped via a weighted panel, which activates if the valuables are removed, triggering a 15 ft diameter barrage of bolts from the ceiling (4d6 damage and roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table; a *Luck* (Dex) save

halves the damage and negates the injury). Adventurers that study the panel or ceiling might spot the trap before it triggers (Perc (Detection) test at disadvantage if studying the distant ceiling, or normal vs the panel).

Area 16 – Secret Entrance

The oversized warning lantern that sits on this plinth of rock conceals a secret door (if searched, a Perc (Detection) check finds the hidden latch). If flipped back on its hinges, a small manhole is revealed. Iron rung holds disappear down into the darkness. The claustrophobic tunnel descends 200 ft before emerging into Area 13. Norris often uses this secret entrance to access the catacombs.

Norris the Fisherman

Norris is a 6 ft, white haired Karok albino, turned more than 20 years earlier and fiercely loyal to his master. He is convinced that Dravond is on the cusp of setting him free, and will do everything in his power to make that happen. Norris is often patrolling the waters around the isle on a small cog, steering away potential interlopers or scouting for potential meals for his master. He maintains an arrangement with a local thuel tribe to keep the area clear of most intruders. When the party arrive at the isle, Norris is out fishing. Depending on his master's wishes, he might sabotage the party's vessel while they are at dinner (jamming the rudder, requiring the boat to be drydocked to fix, a difficult and time consuming task) to delay their departure until morning.

Aftermath

If the vampire lord and his thralls are slain, the isle likely lays abandoned for a time, before being taken over by the local river clan. The party themselves might even care to take possession, continuing the arrangement with the thuels to keep the area mostly clear of intruders (or make other security arrangements).

If Dravond is ousted as a vampire and flees the isle, he takes up living in isolated caves and burrows, before heading back to his original tomb to procure a new coffin and grave dirt. Whether he resurfaces for revenge is a matter for the GM. If Dravond is slain but one or both thralls survive, they are freed of their master and eventually mature into full vampires, relocating to a nearby city to feed.

(4) HAUNTED MINE

Rumours & Hooks
On the southern cliffs overlooking *Lake Argos* is an abandoned mine, idle for generations. Recently sailors report seeing lights flickering at night, and the occasional humanoid moving between the outbuildings.

250 ft up the eastern cliffs adjacent to Lake Argos sits an old gold mine, originally a private operation that was abandoned when the veins ran dry. The mine shafts have been idle for decades, but recently a small tribe of *Urgot* have taken up

residence, accounting for the occasional ship sightings of torchlight and skittish humanoids.

Urgot, AC 11, HD 1+4, Club/Claw etc 1d6+1, 19: the target is cursed and loses 1 point of *Luck*, S13 D13 C16 I7 P9 W12 Ch6, L5, Mv 30 ft. Moan once/day, all creatures within 20 ft suffer a minor madness (*Luck* (Will) save resists).

The tribe's mutations are obvious and grotesque; half naked bodies with distended arms and fingers ending in talon like nails. The urgot's mouths are overlarge in caricature like fashion, and they mutter, moan or chitter constantly.

It is no coincidence that the mutants have made the dangerous journey here from across the mountains. Something dark and spiteful draws their cursed blood like moths to a flame; a thinning of the Veil that somehow eases their existence, bolstering their mood and inciting blasphemous and depraved rituals.

Out Buildings

When the party first becomes involved in this adventure, the urgot have been here for some months, repairing the outbuildings and exploring the mine.

A sentry is posted to the east and west, on lookout for any intruders. Anyone docking or climbing the cliff face immediately below the mine are automatically spotted, and large rocks dropped upon them (*Luck* (Dex) save or 2d6 damage, plus Dex check or fall). There are enough large rocks to keep this up pretty much indefinitely, making a frontal assault of this kind almost certainly doomed to failure.

Mooring a vessel further along the coast and walking back towards the mine is much safer, albeit at some risk of random encounters along the way (use one of the tables in the *Mountains & Hills* section).

If the party is spotted by one of the sentries, the urgot lets out a terrible screeching moan, alerting the remainder of the tribe. If the party deals with the sentry quietly, they may be able to take the other residents unaware.

There are three outbuildings, one double storeyed, constructed of dark grey brick and tile. The main double storey building contains 2d6+6 urgot, including the leader *Surd'Puz*, an *Urgozer* sorceress.

Surd'Puz, Urgozer, AC 11, HD 3+3, Dagger 1d4+2, 19: *Blister Rot* infection (*Luck* (Con) save or lose 1d4 Str overnight, loss persists for 1d2 months), S15 D14 C16 I12 P11 W16 Ch8, L7, Mv 30 ft. May choose from the following spells twice per combat: *Frighten, Speak with Dead, Levitate, Magic Missile (as 3^{d} level).*

Surd'Puz wears a bronze disc necklace that jangles as she walks, forewarning other tribe members that she is nearby. Most scuttle away to avoid her presence and frequent bouts of sudden anger. The witch carries a long, thin blade that she uses to spitefully prick her kin with, and carries a pouch of strange ritual components.

If Surd'Puz and her kin are defeated, 1 x Carry Loot, Trinkets & Curios and Valuables (LFG p.136, 141, 147) may be found.

The second and third buildings each contain another 2d6 urgot. The buildings are primarily living and sleeping quarters, with salted and fresh meats hung in the basements. There is a 50% chance of 1d3 barbarian captives awaiting their fate as sacrifices shackled to a structural beam in one of the back rooms. Various items of gear can be also found (2d4 random pieces of common equipment (LFG p.31), plus a suit of armour and a shield.

The Mines

The extent of the mines is subject to GM discretion and there is a 50% chance of a further 2d4+1 urgot within, either cleaning up after recent rituals or exploring the tunnels.

What appears to be buckets of blood have been splashed all over the wooden bridge entrance to the mine, staining it deep red and leaving it sticky and clustered with flies. The mine entrance is dark but lit by sputtering torches.

Exploring the mines eventually leads to a large natural cavern with several branching mine shafts. Much blood has been spilt here in abhorrent rituals to infernal powers. A character trained in Arcane Lore automatically senses a distortion in the air, and an Int check deduces the Veil here is gossamer thin (perhaps due to a ley line crossing, a celestial conjunction, the many sacrifices made by Surd'Puz, or some other reason).

A character capable of casting spells or activating a magic item feels an implicit desire to do so in this location, requiring a Will check to resist. If magic is used here, it automatically triggers a *Dark & Dangerous Magic* effect. In addition, the first character to invoke magic here rolls 1d6:

1. 1d3 *Lemures* (LFG p.105) materialize, oozing through the Veil in slow motion, pouring themselves into existence. The demons remain until killed or banished. They immediately set upon all living creatures, eager to feed upon their delicious souls.

2. *Wyrd Boon*: The character permanently gains 1 point to a random attribute.

3. *Shennog's Favour*: The character gains a moderate madness (LFG p.91).

4. *Artifice Infusion*: A random piece of gear carried by the adventurers (determine randomly, within 30 ft) gains a permanent magical ability (LFG p.152).

5. *Blood Taint*: The character's bloodline is cursed, any offspring he/she produces

automatically gain an incurable serious madness, and have a 50% chance of a strange mutation. A *Cure Malady* spell or similar removes the effect.

6. *Veilwalker*: the character may invoke a *Dimension Door* effect (targeting herself only) once every six months.

(5) SHIPWRECK

Rumours & Hooks
The *Windchaser*, a well armed merchant caravel, is ten days overdue at port. *Mithri Sirio* is keen to know the fate of her cargo and is offering a substantial bounty to find out what happened to the ship, and retrieve her goods as soon as possible.

Mithri Sirio, a middle aged Karok and trader in in wines, ales and other foodstuffs, was expecting a particularly valuable piece of cargo to be delivered to her via *Captain Gutha* of the Windchaser: a golden idol from the heart of the *Suurat Jungle*.

The idol was unearthed by explorers from an underground vault before being attacked by thuels, who killed all but one of them for defiling sacred ground. The last archaeologist fled to a nearby village and booked immediate passage on the Windchaser.

Unfortunately, the caravel became embroiled in a terrible storm, and was grounded on a shallow reef. Whilst trapped, the ship was attacked by *Argosan Stranglers*, who ate everyone aboard. The stranglers are still lurking nearby the wreck, expecting other humans to come looking for it, hoping for a second course.

As might be growing apparent, the idol is cursed, channelling catastrophic bad luck to anyone who comes into contact with it. Even if the party manages to reclaim the idol, they will have to defy fate to make it back alive.

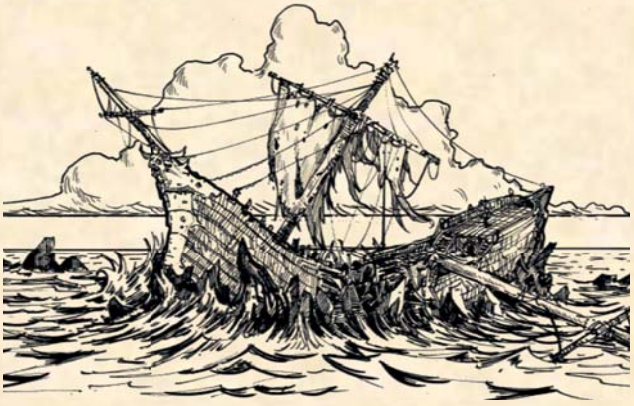
Random Encounters

Travel distance to the wreck is at the GM's discretion, or 1d2 days sailing in the alternative. There is a 30% chance of an encounter every 8 hours (use the 1d20 encounter table from *Silverfane Cove* p.243, or similar).

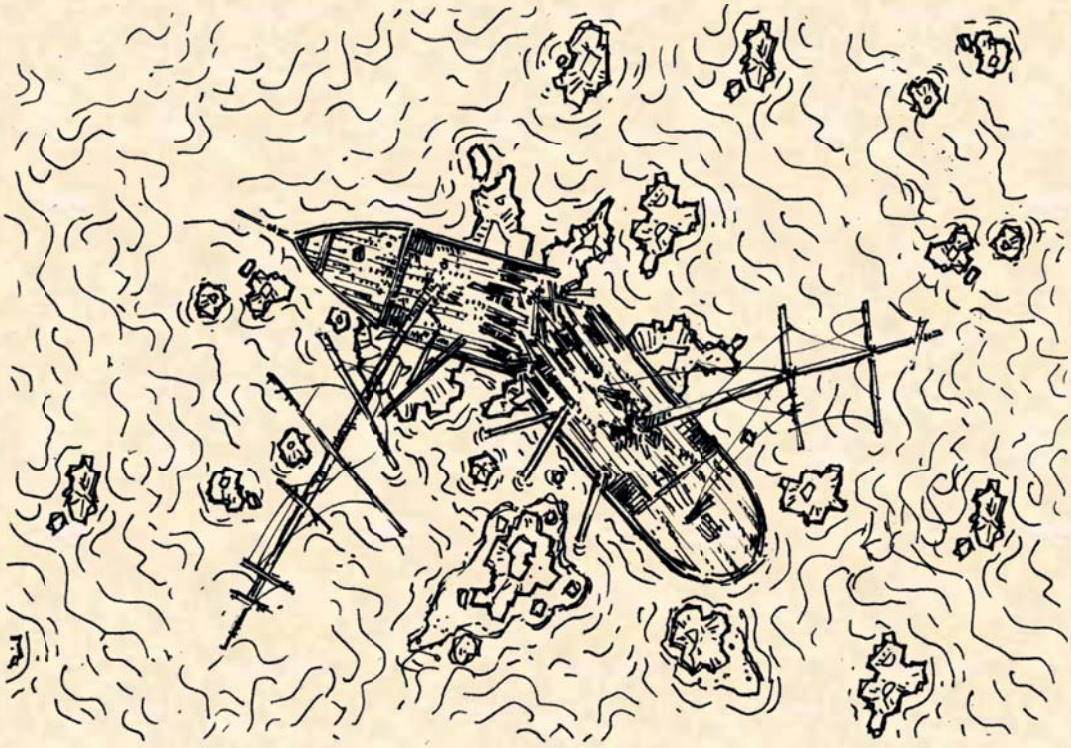
The Windchaser

The wreck of the Windchaser is wedged on a little known coral reef, half submerged, the stern beneath the waves. Curious splotches and lines of discoloured wood can be observed on parts of the raised bow (sticky residue of the strangers when they boarded the ship).

2d6+1 stranglers are within 250 ft of the wreck, hidden in coral caves, waiting in ambush. They watch until at least some of the party are on board before converging, approaching under cover of the coral (advantage on the Dex (Stealth) vs Perc (Detection) contest for any lookouts).



Argosan Strangler, AC 13, HD 4+1, Bite 2d6, 19: special, S19 D13 C14 I4 P10 W9 Ch5, L7, Mv 30 ft or 60 ft swimming. On a natural 19 target is strangled, automatic 2d6 damage per round on the monster's turn (opposed Str check to break free). Once per hour, spend an action to spray sticky acid from tentacles up to 30 ft (single target). A *Luck* (Dex) save avoids 1d6 damage per round for 1d6 rounds. See *Bestiary* for more details.



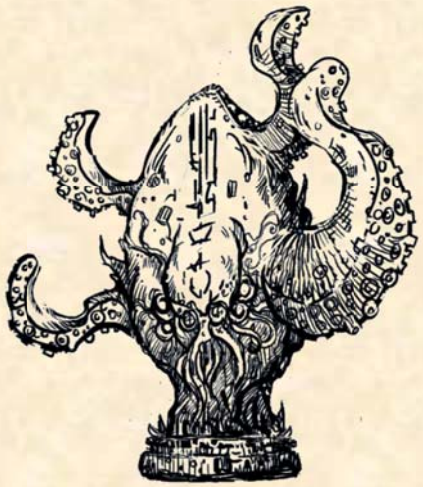
In this combat, some stranglers will attempt to grab the PCs and drown them in the water (see underwater combat rules LFG.159). The wreck is effectively impaled on the coral and cannot be freed without the aid of another ship and hours of work with the right tools. Exploring the interior reveals a few half eaten crew bodies and mostly soiled trade goods (ruined foodstuffs) but there are some salvageable goods (bolts of cloth, decorative plates and so on worth 1d4 x 300 gp).

The Idol

The idol is a 5 inch, egg shaped, tentacled carving of inconsistent dark blue stone, with images of an octopus like face inscribed in the centre. Strange runes from an another age (or perhaps another planet) are etched upon it.

The idol's curse lays dormant until someone moves it, whether by skin contact or otherwise. Anyone within 20 ft that observes the idol being moved suffers its lesser curse for 1d6 days: any time the character rolls a natural 1 on hit or damage rolls, or a natural 20 on *Luck* or attribute rolls, suffers a catastrophic failure (eg: weapon breaks or hits an ally, climber plummets to their doom, navigator becomes hopelessly lost, etc). Any magic a PC uses automatically generates a Dark & Dangerous Magic effect.

The last person to move the idol suffers its major curse: the adventurer suffers the minor curse effect on all failed rolls, the chance of random encounters is doubled, and hostile creatures attack the PC in preference to other targets where possible.



The idol's curse is not susceptible to *Dispel Magic*, *Cure Malady* or similar mortal magic. An Int (Arcane Lore) check by someone who studies the idol deduces the nature of the curse, and understands the only way to be rid of it is for the curse to be transferred to another person (by their moving it). A great success reveals the true secret of the idol: that by making blood sacrifices to an ancient power, the idol grants good luck instead of bad.

If the idol makes its way back to Mithri Sirio, she is overjoyed and pays the party the agreed fee. Naturally she takes possession, transferring the curse to herself. Sirio is a secret cultist of eldritch forces and understands the true nature of the relic.

Aftermath

If Sirio takes possession of the idol, within two years she has built her business in a mercantile empire, crushing her culinary competitors and amassing a small fortune. Her specialty foods become highly sought after and grace the tables of the most powerful families. What Sirio and her cult make of their new found power is left to the GM to determine.

(6) BABE ON THE WATER

Rumours & Hooks
The party are peacefully sailing along... when they notice activity around a small barbarian village on the shore up ahead...

This encounter occurs somewhere along the banks of Lake Argos, the Siltwater, the Fennorn River or similar. En route the GM might wish to roll for random encounters, using the *Lake Argos or Siltwater* encounters table, or tables from this section.

Whilst sailing down the waterway, the party happens upon a small thuel village. It is clear that the thuels are in the fight of their lives; engaged in a furious melee with a rival tribe.

The resident tribe, 6d6+10 *Stonehawks*, are obviously on the losing end and are going down quickly. The 8d6+30 *Yellow Sisters*, an all female tribe that mates with males before killing and sacrificing them, far outnumber their foes, and it is only a matter of time before the Stonehawks are decimated and the village razed.

Barbarians, AC 13, HD 1, Spear 1d6+1, Axe 1d8+1, Sword 1d8+1 or Long Bow 1d8, 19: as weapon, S12 D10 C13 I10 P10 W12 Ch11, L4, Mv 30 ft. 10% of the Stonehawks are berserkers, and 50% of the Yellow Sisters. Berserkers have S13, +2 bonus to attack, Spear 1d6+2, and never check for morale.

The leader of the Yellow Sisters is *Zulosh One Eye*, who is particularly ferocious (S17, Spear 1d6+3, HD 6, L8, *Off Turn Attacks*. May enter a Ferocious Rage like the Barbarian class ability for up to 4 rounds).

As the PC's ship approaches, a middle aged woman appears on the wharf, holding a baby out towards the adventurers with a pleading look.

If the party lands and tries to help one or other of the sides, either will accept their help in the heat of the moment. After the battle, the Stonehawks will be eternally grateful to the party, but the Yellow Sisters will immediately attempt to enslave any males, mate with them, and behead them.

If the party takes collection of the offered babe, the woman stammers "*Gunto, gunto!*" (go) before erupting into tears and running back to the battle (grabbing an axe on the way).

Immediately, a break away party of Yellow Sisters launches canoes from the shoreline, seeking to intercept the adventurers' ship. This is also the case if the party simply tries to steer on by and avoid the whole mess altogether! (Assuming there is at least one male on board which the tribe sights; if not, the Yellow Sisters ignore them).

1d4+4 canoes with four sisters in each takes up the pursuit. Resolve this as a chase (LFG p. 83) with the following modifications:

(1) The boats begin 500 yards apart. The chase ends if the boats become more than 1000 yards apart (escape), zero yards (boarded) or the legs end.

(2) The two leaders make opposed Int (Sailing background) checks. The winning side opens or closes the gap by 2d10 x 10 yards.

(3) Assaults with ballistae, onagers and other ship artillery the PCs might have may be made up to 250 yards. Such a battery requires a *Luck* save from the target ship's leader, or the attacker rolls to widen or close the gap. On a terrible failure, the target boat is incapacitated or sunk.

(4) Possible hazards might include lost paddles, torn sails, broken ropes, damaged rudder, adventurer overboard, reefs, fog, unfavourable currents or winds, giant crocodiles, *Argosan Stranglers* (see Bestiary), Varnori raiders or even a rare *Water Elemental* (LFG p.107). The "Large Crowd" result might be substituted with a possible mutiny (or a canoe abandoning the pursuit) instead.

If the ship is mainly crewed and captained by NPCs, the GM might prefer a group *Luck* check to resolve the escape.

The Babe

If the party escape with the babe (a young male infant), they will have some decisions to make about what to do with him, who should raise him, etc. The little boy has a distinctive birth mark on his left shoulder (comet shape). At the GM's discretion, he might be a secret tribal prince, a prophesized champion, or perhaps he is the last in a series of unique souls that *Nocratha* requires for a catastrophic blood rite (see Northgate).

(7) BATTLE FOR RIVERTOP

Rumours & Hooks

The frontier outpost of *Rivertop*, situated on the cliffs of *Lake Argos*, has dispatched an urgent messenger to the closest city. Reports suggest Rivertop's alliance with the *Thunder Crow* barbarian clan has come to an end, and the outlanders wish to bolster their numbers with mercenaries.

Broken Alliance

On a low cliff overlooking Lake Argos, the Midlander outpost of Rivertop has endured for several years, defying the surrounding wilds to carve out an unlikely sanctuary.

Occupied by frontier rangers, miners and explorers, the settlement previously held to an uneasy truce with the local *Thunder Crow* thuel tribe in return for quality steel. For almost a decade, the alliance was enough to ward off incursions by beastmen and other predators.

Unfortunately for all concerned however, the truce has come to an end. The daughter of *Chieftain Drommoc* died of disease two weeks ago, and the superstitious thuels believe the city dwellers somehow brought the sickness upon them. Overwhelmed by despair, Drommoc has withdrawn his people and departed, leaving Rivertop to its fate.

With the withdrawal of the Thunder Crows, the *Mortog* skorn tribe has decided the humans of Rivertop are long overdue for eating. *Karg Orok*, the tribe chief, has recruited the ogre *Sorgat One Eye* and his kin to assist in their assault.

The adventurers might become involved in this adventure by (i) being hired as mercenaries to protect the outpost, or (ii) being in the right place at the wrong time, boarding at Rivertop on their way to an another location.

Skorn, AC 11, HD 2, Club 1d6+1, 19: the target is clubbed in the head, losing its next action (*Luck* (Will) save resists), S15 D10 C13 I7 P12 W8 Ch8, L5, Mv 30 ft. Rudimentary dark vision, advantage when detecting danger or scents.

Karg Orok is an old but hulking halfman with dead eyes and broken teeth. He speaks snippets of common, learnt from past victims (mainly *No!* and *Argona save us!*). Orok has been infected with wolf lycanthropy for many years, but has spread the infection to only a handful of his best and most trusted warriors (see Area 3).

Werewolf, AC 13, HD 6+4, Bite 2d6, 19: *a wolf (60%) or dire wolf (40%) comes to the lycanthrope's aid*, S18 D14 C14 I8 P15 W13 Ch8, L8, Mv 30 ft. A werewolf is a lycanthrope with all the usual benefits (LFG p.95). By spending an action, werewolves may exert control and issue orders to wolves and dire wolves, which are compelled to obey. Skorn lycanthropy cannot be spread to non-skorn.

Rivertop

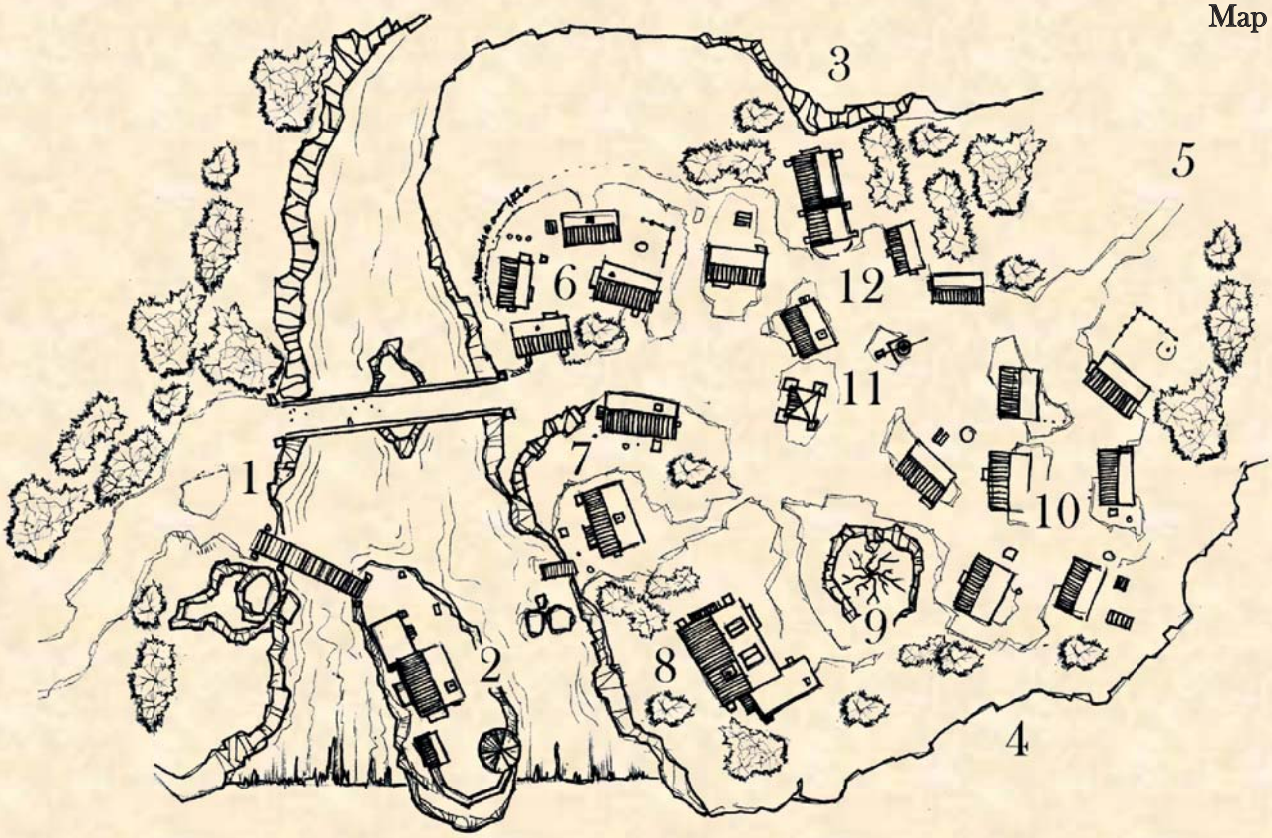
Rivertop is an isolated outpost of approximately 100 - 200 hunters, trackers, miners and guards (depending on domicile rolls, see later). The settlement consists of a score of wooden buildings, nestled beside the cliffs, with the powerful *Greygush* river hedging out the wilderness beyond. Two sturdy log bridges to the west are the only means of egress (excepting watercraft). The air here is crisp and cool, and the grounds littered with tall pines. The silver mine supporting the outpost is located beneath Area 8.

2d10+40 of the population are heavily armed guards, with full chainmail, shields, spears and swords. About half of the guards have access to heavy crossbows. All of the residents have weapons and armour of one kind of another, including hunting bows, axes and knives.

The outpost is controlled by *Antos Kreig*, a 6 ft, blonde veteran ranger who leads from the front and has earnt the respect of his men many times over. Kreig is convinced the departure of the barbarian clan means a beastman attack is inevitable, but is waiting to see whether enough mercenaries can be drawn from nearby cities before deciding whether to abandon Rivertop completely. He is extremely angry that the outpost's merchant investors are unwilling to pay for more guards in a timely fashion, and has taken matters into his own hands, sending messengers to nearby cities to recruit mercenaries. If the PCs come to Rivertop looking for work, he offers them payment in silver nuggets (taken straight from the mine, and out of his investors' pockets, much to his satisfaction).

Antos Kreig, AC 15 (hardened leathers, shoulder guards), HD 5, Sword 1d8+3 (two hands) or long bow (1d8+2), 19: Kreig slices off a limb (sword) or forces a morale check (bow), S14 D15 C13 I13 P13 W13 Ch14, L8, Mv 30 ft. Kreig may choose from the following Rangercraft talents three times per combat: *Sharpshooter, Veteran Scout, Nature's Venom* and *Cover Fire.* He gains advantage on all wilderness related checks.

Map



Guards, AC 16 (heavy chain and shield), HD 1, Spear 1d6+2 (two hands), Sword 1d8+1, Longbow 1d8+1, or Heavy Crossbow 2d8+1, 19: as weapon, S13 D10 C11 I10 P12 W10 Ch10, L4, Mv 30 ft.

Outpost locations

Note that Areas 1, 3 and 5 are dealt with under *Initial Assault* below.

Area 2 – Barracks

This 30 ft by 50 ft building is the outpost's barracks, with stores of rations, ammunition (bolts, arrows, 2d4 fire pots), weapons (swords, spears, crossbows, bows) and armour (hardened leather, chain, shields). 1d10+20 guards are on site here at any time, at least half of which are on sentry duty in Area 1. The barracks captain is *Teren*, 20's, a haughty but competent leader with a habit of tapping his helmet and declaring "*up here for thinkin*" (Str 15, Int 9, Will 15).

Area 4 - Cliffs

The southern cliffs drop hundreds of feet to a narrow plateau that recedes into further cliffs down to Lake Argos far below. Anyone falling or thrown off the edge must make a *Luck* (Dex) save or plummet to their doom. As a last resort, it might be possible to escape the attack by scaling the cliffs (ideally with climbing gear) and hiding in one or more shallow caves (15% chance of finding a shallow cave each minute of searching, doubling the chance with a successful Int (Wilderness Lore) or Perc (Detection) check.

Area 6 – Western Domiciles

These 20 ft by 15 ft domiciles house various frontiersmen such as hunters, trackers, miners and fishermen. The men are armed with basic weapons (knives, axes, bows, some swords) and armour (varied leather). 2d4+2 outlanders live in each building.

Outlander, AC 11 (leathers), HD 1, Axe 1d6, Short bow 1d6, 19: as weapon, S12 D11 C10 I10 P10 W10 Ch10, L4, Mv 30 ft.

Area 7 – Blacksmith and Fishery

These two larger buildings comprise a blacksmith (for forging mining tools, weapons and repairing armour) and fishery (storing fishing gear, salted catches, and so on). 2d4 men and women live or work here.

The blacksmith, *Chelsa*, is in her 40s, short, broad shouldered with grey hair and a roguish smile. Chelsa has always been drawn to the frontier and the unknown, and did a bit of adventuring when she was young (Fighter 3, Str 15, has a suit of heavy mail and a *silvered* sword out back). Chelsa kind of considers herself the "moma bear" of the outpost, and will join the battle wherever the fighting is thickest. The men respect her like no other, gaining advantage on morale checks as long as the blacksmith can be seen or heard.

Area 8 – Mine

This towering structure is at least 20 ft by 30 ft, two stories high and encloses the silver mine shaft below. The doors have locks but are generally left unlocked to allow the miners easy access. 1d10 + 20 miners are working and living on site at any one time. Approximately 5d100 + 1,000 gp worth of silver ore is stored here, ready for shipment.

The branching mine shafts are quite long, with a number of dead ends, loops and vertical pulley shafts. One tunnel was recently sealed off due to noxious gas concerns. If that particular tunnel is lit, the entire shaft explodes, causing 10d10 damage (*Luck* (Dex) save for half, but survivors are buried alive unless situated on the outskirts). Other tunnels might possibly be used for hiding. Most of the miners know the shafts well, and *Old Noddy* (50s, bald, slim corded muscles) knows them like the back of his hand, even in the dark.

Area 9 – Dead Tree

A large 60 ft pine tree stands in this area, long dead (by lightning strike, disease, or old age is hard to say), covered with moss and lichen. Some folk say a sky spirit is trapped within, imprisoned after a terrible storm, when lightning struck the trunk. They say the spirit can be heard straining against its physical bonds from time to time, when the old boughs creak and groan, despite nary a breeze.

Area 10 – Eastern Domiciles & Stable

These 20 ft by 15 ft domiciles are similar to Area 6, including the number of men and armaments etc. The eastern most building however is a stable of 2d10 strong, deft mountain ponies, that cart the silver ore back to the nearest city. One pony, *Gumble*, is particularly stoic and will fight alongside the humans if given the chance (as *Horse*, 14 hp, Mv 40 ft, advantage on morale checks).

Area 11 – Bell Tower & Well

A 20 ft tall, wooden bell tower is situated in the middle of the outpost, with a working iron bell to warn of impending danger. When the assault begins, a random resident rushes to the tower to raise the alarm, drawing everyone out of their homes with weapons at the ready. The tower is relatively narrow, with a wooden staircase and balcony, but provides an excellent vantage point for spotting and missile fire, plus three quarter cover (+4 AC). 2d4 archers and/or crossbowmen attend the belltower once the fighting begins.

Area 12 – Northern Domiciles & Mill

These 20 ft by 15 ft domiciles are similar to Area 6, including the number of men and armaments etc. The largest building however is a lumber mill and carpentry shed (2d4 woodsmen/carpenters inside). A recently finished skiff with oars can be found inside.

Initial Assault

When the assault commences, it becomes clear that there are three main areas of simultaneous

danger (Areas 1, 3 & 5) to contend with. The attack begins at first light, after the beastmen and their allies have had time to secretly position during the early hours.

Area 1 – Two Bridges

The two western bridges face one of the heaviest assaults, with 5d10+50 skorn screaming battle cries as they surge out from nearby trees to attempt a crossing. Of this warband, all wield clubs or jagged flinty knives, plus a javelin, and 50% also carry short bows. Accompanying the vanguard are 2d4+1 subjugated *Dire Wolves*.

Dire Wolf, AC 13, HD 3+4, Bite 2d4+1, 19: *a wolf (60%) or dire wolf (40%) comes to aid the dire wolf*, S18 D15 C17 I2 P13 W14 Ch6, L6, Mv 60 ft. Advantage when tracking and on attack rolls when flanking.

When the halfmen begin their crossing, they first release the dire wolves, which surge across the main bridge. Skorn with bows hang back to provide covering fire for their allies or shoot flaming arrows into buildings. About half of the skorn attack the small 50 ft by 10 ft bridge and barracks in Area 2, and the other half make for the main 100ft by 20 ft bridge, hoping to punch through into the outpost proper.

There are at least 10 guards on duty from Area 2, behind spiked wooden frames. Unless the PCs themselves were on watch overnight, the town's advance sentries were silently killed by skorn scouts before the attack begins. The assault from this direction is very loud, and intended to draw the attention of most of the outpost. Other guards from the barracks will assist in any fighting here, firing from windows or joining melee on the bridges. Being knocked into the fast flowing river requires a Str (Athletics) check at disadvantage to swim to a rock or shore, otherwise the character is swept off the falls to their doom.

If the PCs don't engage with the bridges, there is a 80% chance the NPC defenders are killed or otherwise overcome, and the beastmen pour into the outpost proper, slaying and looting.

Area 3 – Northern shore

From further up river, 2d4+4 large canoes carry 2d4 skorn in each, armed with short bows, flaming arrows and large clubs.

These beastmen attempt to quietly disembark on the northern shore, before loosing flaming arrows to set buildings on fire. Once spotted, they discard their bows, hefting large clubs and closing for melee with enthusiastic grunting and teeth gnashing. 1d4 are werewolf lycanthropes, the most fearsome, and revered, skorn warriors.

3d6+6 outlanders are nearby to defend the northern shore. If the PCs don't engage with this hot zone, there is a 90% chance the NPC defenders are overcome, and the beastmen take control of the northern quarter, razing the buildings in Areas 6 & 12.

Area 5 – Eastern Woods

From the eastern woods, having crossed the river with rafts, the other primary warband appears: 4d10+40 skorn, along with 2d4+1 ogre allies. When this force appears, a great cacophony of drums can be heard, emanating from the forest behind them.

The ogres are led by *Sorgat One Eye* (as *Ogre*, but *Boss Monster*, with 8 HD, Int 8), a vicious and (relatively) canny brute with a great metal sword that he stole from a giant's grave years ago. Sorgat has joined with the skorn on one condition: the ogres get first pick of the spoils (both treasure and manflesh).

Ogre, AC 12, HD 4+3, Spiked Club 2d8, 19: special, S19 D8 C15 I6 P7 W8 Ch7, L7, Mv 40 ft. When *staggered*, an ogre enters a murderous rage, gaining a free attack against every foe within reach. On a 19+ attack roll, the target rolls on the Injuries & Setbacks table (*Luck* (Con) save resists). 10 foot reach. *Sorgat* is a *Boss Monster*

with the usual benefits (LFG p.95, 8 HD, Int 8, Giant Sword 2d8+3).

There are 3d10+20 outlanders available to protect this area. If the PCs don't engage with the eastern woods, there is a 95% chance the defenders are overcome, and the buildings in Areas 10 and 12 are destroyed.

Battle Proper

Unless the party is able to repel the assault from all three directions (in which case, the battle is won, and the invaders slink away into the forest), the outpost becomes a whirling melee of outlanders, skorn, dire wolves and ogres.

As the PCs navigate the battlefield, each time they enter a new Area, or spend more than a minute or two idle in the same location, roll 1d10 and consult the table below:

1. *Miners under attack!* 2d4 miners are being mauled by 1d4 *Dire Wolves*. The PCs might be able to save them, but a delay here might cost lives elsewhere. If the PCs have already been kept busy by another encounter on this table, 1d100% of the miners are dead by the time the PCs arrive.
2. *Archer volley!* A mass volley of skorn arrows falls from the sky, causing 3d6 damage (*Luck* (Dex) save for half). About half of the arrows are alight, and cause any nearby buildings to catch fire, unless the PCs take preventative action.
3. *Ogre rush!* 1d4 *Ogres* appear from around a corner or copse of trees, roaring a bloodcurdling battle cry as they charge the PCs.
4. *Fire!* A nearby building is on fire, which is swiftly getting out of control. If the fire isn't dealt with, it will quickly spread to other buildings. The well at Area 11 might assist.
5. *Warband!* A warband of 5d6 *Skorn* come howling over a small rise or from behind a burning building, blood splattered and berserk, holding severed human heads like trophies!
6. *Sorgat*, the ogre leader, strikes down two men with savage swords blows and laughs horribly. Turning to look at the PCs, he points his blade at one of them and roars *"You next, fleshgrub!"*
7. *Smoke*. Thick black smoke fills the area, wafting from several burning buildings. Visibility is reduced to 20 ft as the sounds of men fighting and dying fill the air. There is a 50% chance 1d3 *Dire Wolves* leap out of the haze to attack; otherwise the captain, *Teren* (Area 2), is on the cusp of death, kneeling in a pool of blood alongside three dead skorn.
8. *Projectile wagon!* A burning wagon comes flying over a small building, crashing amongst the party (thrown by two ogres), causing 5d6 damage (*Luck* (Dex) save for half).

9. 3d4 guardsmen are fighting for their lives in a pitched battle with 3d10 *Skorn*. It's not clear who, if anyone, is leading the guardsman. Most of the humans appear shaken and exhausted. The PCs might be able to save them, but a delay here might cost lives elsewhere. If the PCs have already been kept busy by another encounter on this table, 1d100% of the guard are dead by the time the PCs arrive.

10. *Chelsa* (Area 7) or *Kreig* (p.2) is fighting desperately against *Karg Orok* (p.2) or *Sorgat* (Area 5), amidst 2d4 outlanders and twice as many skorn. If the PCs have already been kept busy by another encounter on this table, all of the guards are dead by the time the PCs arrive.

Centaur Stampede!

Unbeknownst to all concerned, a xenophobic centaur herd has also had its eye on Rivertop for many years, and seizes the opportunity to be rid of both the human and skorn squatters. Towards the end of the skorn assault, 2d10+20 centaurs suddenly appear from the western forest, thundering across the main bridge to kill everyone left in the outpost. These centaurs are the herd's most devoted, most fierce warriors, well armoured and wielding metal weapons. To be defeated by lesser races like men and skorn would be heinously contemptible. They will not retreat lightly (advantage on all morale checks).

Centaur; AC 12, HD 2, Kick 1d6 and Mace/Spear/Bow 1d6+1, 19: the target suffers an extra 1d6 damage and is knocked prone by a ferocious kick, S18 D14 C15 I8 P13 W13 Ch10, L5, Mv 60 ft.

Aftermath

If the assault is not repelled, Rivertop is razed to the ground and any humans slaughtered. Some outlanders might escape via the cliffs, the mine tunnels or the forest, but the prospect of stragglers making it back to a fortified city is poor. If the PCs prevail, they are likely heralded as heroes of the "*Battle for Rivertop*", earning fame and some fortune (treasure wise, most battles will result in 1 x Carry Loot, and the PCs will be rewarded with 1 x 4 HD Lair Treasure (LFG p.136, 140) by Rivertop's merchant investors). After such an attack, how much longer outlanders will remain in Rivertop is highly uncertain; there is every chance the outpost will be abandoned once the current miner's rotation is complete.

MOUNTAINS & HILLS

(1) PRISON OF YOL-UZARC-DREM

Rumours & Hooks:
Ancient prayer drums dating back to the Second Age make reference to the *Temple of Yol-Uzarc-Drem*, a spirit of strange forces, hidden in the *Ulgoth Foothills*.

An archaeologist researcher with *Northgate's College of Inquiry, Master Gideon*, believes she has discovered the location of a sacred temple of the *Suharthe* people, a nomadic tribe of the Second Age. She is seeking explorers to escort her to the site to investigate.

Deep in the Ulgoth Foothills, shiftings in the earth have unlocked the entrance to the *Prison of Yol-Uzarc-Drem*, an immortal demon of formidable power.

The temple is old enough that there are few references to it in known records. It was originally built as a place of blasphemous worship during a time of war and occupation, with cultists seeking wyrd forces to oust the invaders from their lands. Over time a handful of celebrated priests were buried in the complex, but ultimately the cult was purged, and the temple entrance sealed up against the world.

Recently earth tremors breached the binding door, allowing access to the temple for the first time in millennia. A tribe of urgot were drawn here, guided by whisperings beyond the Veil, interpreted with varying degrees of success by their demented urgozer, *Kofaal*. Kofaal wasted no time reinstating demon worship, and through diligent meditation and blood sacrifice, has managed to lure and enslave some demons from beyond.

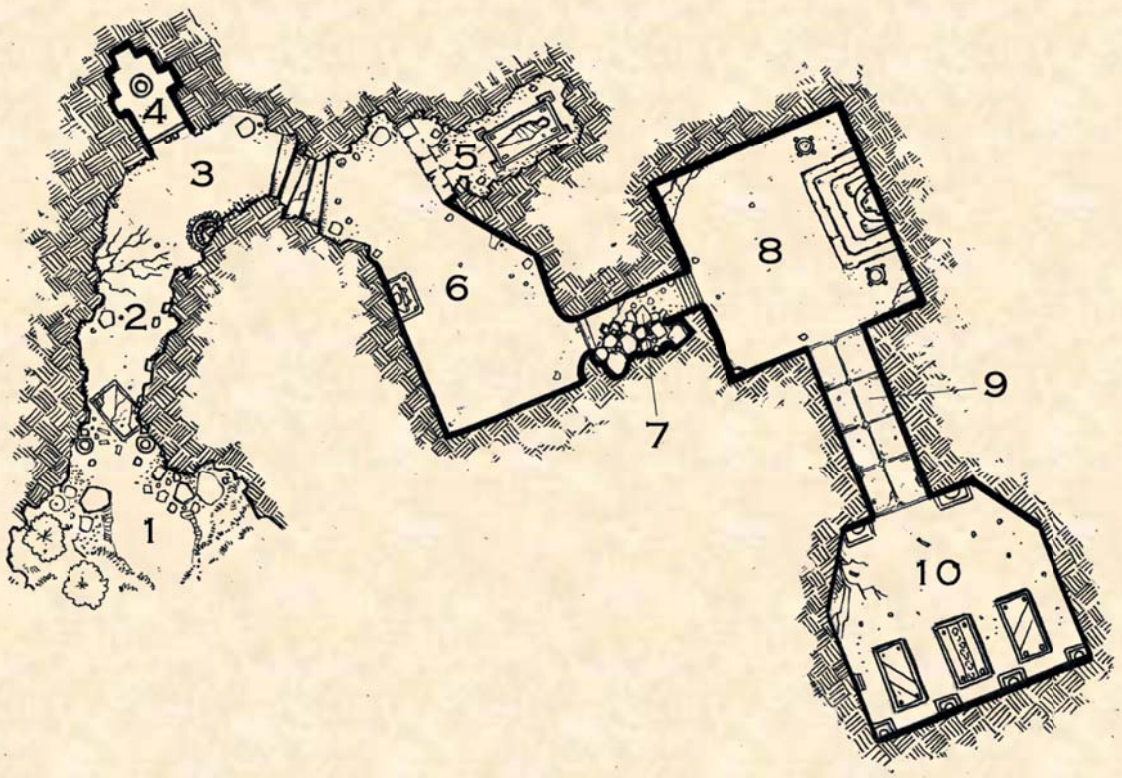
The urgozer dreams of nothing less than spreading daemons and devils from the Suurat Jungle to Varnor, and will slaughter anyone or anything in his way.

Kofaal, AC 11, HD 3+3, Dagger 1d4+2, 19: target suffers a minor madness, S15 D14 C16 I12 P11 W16 Ch8, L7, Mv 30 ft. May choose from the following spells twice per combat: *Thunderwave, Heat Metal, Mirror Image (as 3rd level).*

Area 1 - Entry

The entry tunnel to the temple is lit by hanging lanterns or sconced torches, which are used by the urgot to navigate the underground chambers (although the urgot have better night vision than humans, they are still blind in darkness).

The complex is carved from limestone and has a cool interior. Earth tremors still occur from time to time. A recent incident dropped large amounts of debris into some of the hallways, which are yet to be cleared. The floor is worked stone, but very crunchy and gritty, making it difficult to sneak (-2 penalty if moving silently).



The humanoid sculptures decorating the entry depict guardian spirits from the long extinct *Suharthe* nomads. An Int (Arcane Lore) check, or Int (General Lore) check at disadvantage, reveals that these entities protect *Ro* (mind) and *Saadu* (soul). They are meant as sombre warnings against entering the complex.

The broken door lies in pieces just inside the 10 ft wide entrance, marked with tarnished silver runes. An Int (Arcane Lore) check reveals the runes were once magical, but have turned dormant over time. A great success confirms the runes were intended to keep something sealed inside. There is a 60% chance of 1d4 urgot keeping watch either in the entry tunnel or in the brush near the entrance.

Urgot, AC 11, HD 1+4, Club/Claw etc 1d6+1, 19: the target is cursed and loses 1 point of *Luck*, S13 D13 C16 I7 P9 W12 Ch6, L5, Mv 30 ft. Moan once/day, all creatures within 20 ft suffer a minor madness (*Luck* (Will) save resists).

The urgot are the abominations of cursed bloodlines, in this case with noduled grey skin, stooped backs, and needle like teeth. They will seek to capture or kill the party, hoping to make offerings of them in the next sacrifice ceremony.

Area 2 – Crumbling Ceiling

About 30 ft into the passageway, large cracks can be seen in the floor, along with what looks like recently fallen boulders the size of bowling balls.

Anyone passing through this area has a 30% chance of setting off a rockfall. If triggered, large chunks of limestone drop from overhead, causing 4d6 damage (*Luck* (Dex) save for half), a thunderous noise, and a billowing dust cloud.

Area 3 – Kitchen

This 30 ft by 20 ft chamber has oversized steps leading down to the east, double stone doors to the northwest, and a large cook fire against the south eastern wall. A handful of jarred spices are spread around the firepit. Some sleeping furs also adorn the chamber.

The urgot eat many foods raw, but sometimes roast flesh or other delicacies on the main cookfire. If the party has been quiet, there is a 50% chance of 1d4 urgot cooking or arguing in this area, jabbing at each other with rusty knives. If the party's arrival has been noticed, 3d10 of the urgot from Area 6 are here to back up their brethren. They regard the party as food, scarred faces beaming at the prospect of human flesh.

Area 4 – Preparation Chamber

Entry to this chamber is via solid looking iron doors, with ornate handles and minimal rust. The doors are locked (the key is in Area 6), and decorated with imagery of fornication.

The stone of the 10 ft by 15 ft chamber has been carefully worked, straight edged and decorated with intricate mouldings. In the centre is 3 ft diameter baptismal font, deep enough for a person to stand in. The font is filled with water. Three small alcoves to the north, east and west are curtained off, concealing roughly made cloaks hanging on pegs. Pungent herbs and crude incense sticks are stacked in the corners.

Area 5 – Sarcophagus

This 15 ft by 25 ft chamber is unlit and very roughly worked, as if it is only half finished. In the centre is a 8 ft by 5 ft stone plinth, inscribed with geometric designs, on top of which lies a mummy.

The urgot do not enter this area, considering it a holy burial not to be disturbed. There are no footprints into this chamber.

The mummified priest remains are ancient, severely sunken and decayed, and infused with dread power. Anyone touching its threadbare bandages or fragile flesh must immediately make a roll on the DDM table. A thorough search of the chamber reveals a hidden compartment in the plinth, concealing 1 x Trinkets & Curios and 1 x Valuables (LFG p.141, 147).

Area 6 – Living Area

This 30 ft by 50 ft chamber has a 20 ft ceiling. To the northeast is the dimly lit corridor to Area 5, and on the western wall is a bronze statue of a cultist priest (human heart in one hand, knife in the other, eyes cast to the skies above).

Kofaal's urgot tribe use this room as their living area and sleeping quarters. Furs and woven blankets are spread about, along with wineskins, knives and clubs. Salted meats hang from hooks on the walls or lie in portable chests.

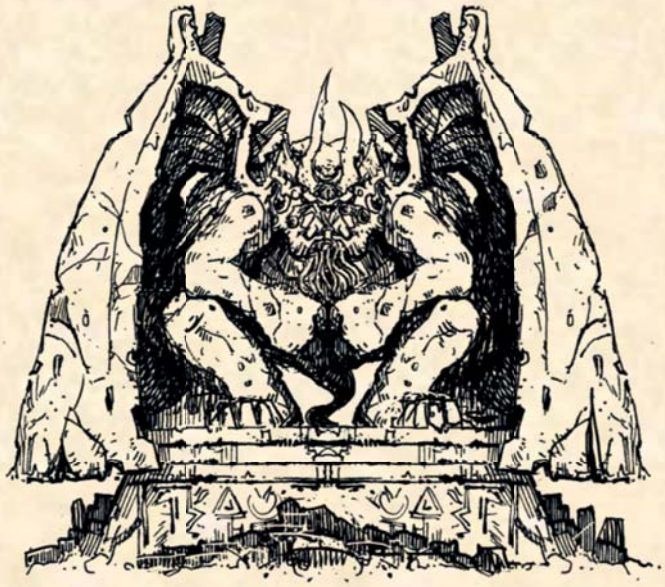
8d10 urgot are in this location at any time, including children. They are thralls to Kofaal and are completely indoctrinated to the worship of Yol-Uzarc-Drem. They might parley with the party for a time if not immediately attacked, but ultimately they wish to eat or sacrifice them, rather than trade. Looting this room garners 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136) and the key to Area 4.

Area 7 – Fragile Tunnel

This 7 ft wide corridor is almost entirely blocked by rubble dropped in a recent quake. There is not enough room for a large man in armour to squeeze past. The area remains in a fragile state. Anyone required to squeeze their way through has a 50% chance of setting off a further rockslide. If that occurs, the entire corridor becomes blocked with heavy rocks. A *Luck* (Dex) save allows the adventurer to choose which side of the tunnel they end up in. If the save is failed, determine randomly.

Area 8 – Worship Chamber

Much of the walls, ceiling and floor of this 35 ft square room are covered in a pustulent yellow ichor, making the floor slippery (any fighting in this chamber requires a Dex check each round to stay upright). A 10 ft obsidian demon idol (perhaps in the likeness of Yol-Uzarc-Drem) sits on raised steps, set against the eastern wall, flanked by twin flaming braziers. A 10 ft wide passage lined with very large flagstones extends to the south.



2d6 urgot are engaged in a macabre dance before the idol, to music only they can hear. At the sight of the party, they shrink back to the idol and release a chilling, simultaneous wail.

As long as at least one urgot is wailing, there is a 50% chance, increasing by 10% each round, that 1d4 spine demons emerge from the idol. The room grows noticeably hotter each round the wailing continues. If the idol is attacked or subject to damage, the demons automatically appear to defend it.

Spine Demon, AC 14, HD 7, Claw 1d8+1 and Spike (special), 19: the target is spiked (see below), S19 D12 C15 I10 P12 W13 Ch6, L9, Mv 30 ft. The demon's spines inflict *Unholy Rot*, causing a random limb (below the elbow or knee) to turn black and drop off over 1d6 hours (*Luck* (Con) save resists). Spine demons are protected by 60% *Magic Resistance.* See *Bestiary* for more details.

If only a single spine demon is summoned by the urgot, it has *Off Turn Attacks.* The treasure in this room are the two eyes of the idol which can be levered out with the right tools: twin peridot gemstones worth 900 gp each.

Area 9 – Trapped Corridor

This 10 ft by 40 ft corridor is expertly fashioned and sprinkled with ichor similar to Area 8. Of the eight large flagstones set into the floor, one is a pressure sensitive trap (determined by the GM, the urgot know which flagstone to avoid).

If the trap is triggered, deadly acid rains down from the ceiling throughout the whole corridor, causing 5d6 damage (*Luck* (Dex) save for half) and raising a plume of choking gas (Con check or lose 1d3 Dex). Examination of the ceiling might reveal the tell tale acid holes (Perc (Detection) test at disadvantage, unless the ichor is wiped clear).

Area 10 – Binding Chamber

This 35 ft by 35 ft chamber is covered with ichor similar to Area 8. Against the northern and southern walls are bronze urns filled with blood and jewels (worth 1 x 6 HD Lair Treasure, LFG p.140), sitting atop stone pedestals.

The room is dominated by three *cold iron* doors set into the earth and marked with eldritch schematics and drawings. The doors radiate abjuration magic and have no visible handles.

Knocking on the doors produces a dull thudding echo, as if there is empty space below. Listening at the doors reveals a very slight straining noise, as if the iron is flexing imperceivably (Perc (Detection) test at disadvantage).

The three doors bind Yol-Uzarc-Drem beneath the earth, in a prison beyond space and time. How the doors might be opened is left for the GM to determine. Any attempt to damage the doors inflicts an arcane migraine on everyone in the chamber that persists for several minutes (imposes a moderate madness, (*Luck* (Will) resists)).

(2) GAP OF GARRIOS

Rumours & Hooks:
There are reports of ogres venturing down from the mid mountains, disrupting mine workers on Karok borderlands. *House Tergoza* wants the ogre menace dealt with ASAP, and is willing to pay handsomely for assistance.

The adventurers might happen upon the pass whilst travelling the mountains for unrelated reasons.

The Gap of Garrios is a fortified mountain pass that allows passage through part of the mountains, except during winter, when it becomes blocked by ice and snow.

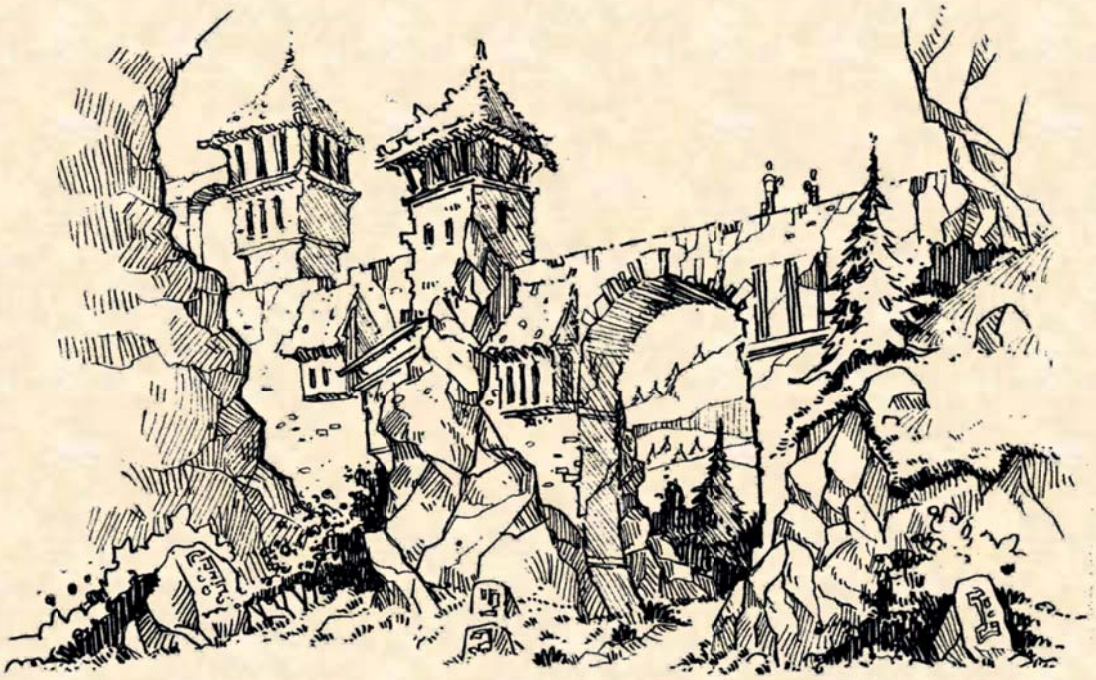
Built by the Karoks centuries earlier, its original purpose was to restrict access to a lucrative moonstone mine and quarry (see **(3) The Black Lake**), which was (and remains) owned by *House Tergoza*.

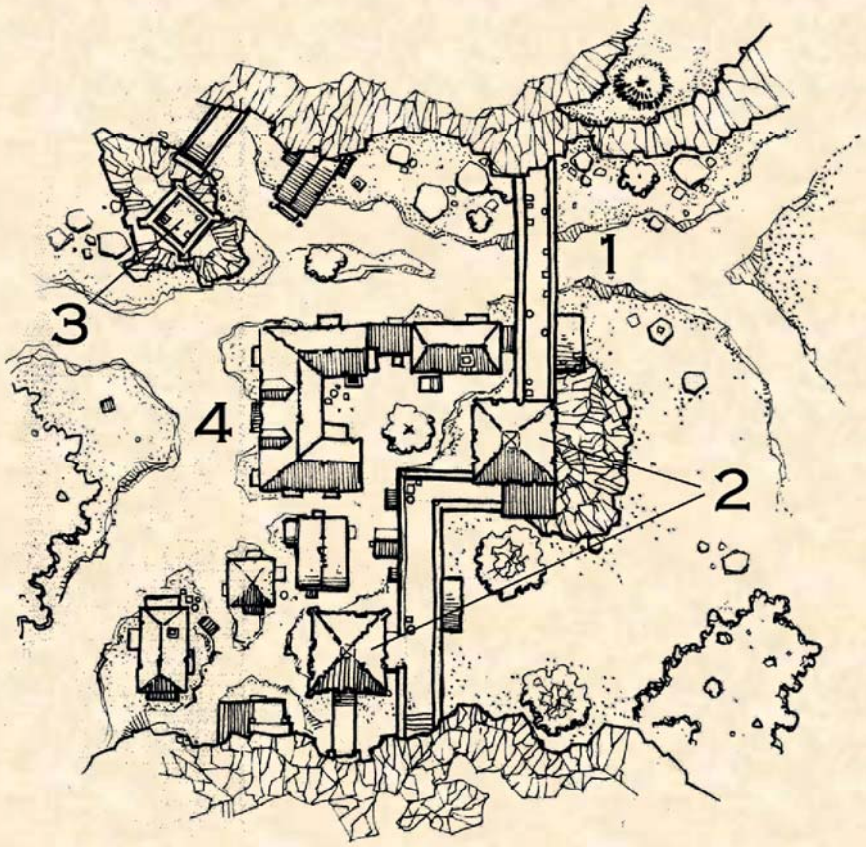
Over time the moonstone ran dry and both the fortified pass and mine were abandoned. Whilst the fortifications hold no value to House Tergoza anymore, they make an excellent lair for ogres and their pet wolves; spacious, dry and easily defended.

A clan of ogres and their pet wolves reside here, ruled by twin brothers *Gruk & Taarn*. The twins share a unique tri-horned helmet as a mark of their special authority, as decreed by their urgot master *Churloch* (who appears in the next adventure, see the Quarry).

Whoever wears the helm is "officially" in charge of the ogres and is generally obeyed. The ogres take the helmet mandate quiet literally, extending it to any living creature that wears it. If the adventurers study the ogres, they might deduce this, after one of the pet wolves steals the helm from a drunken Gruk, and the ogres do their to best "obey" the wolf for a time (howling in unison, mimicking it on all fours, and so on, until it gets bored and drops the headware).

The brothers have a general ogrish contempt for each other, and from time to time cook up plots to steal the helm. The remaining ogres are content to leave such squabbling to the twins (particularly as they are the biggest of the bunch, and eagerly work together to punish any disobedience from the others).





Ogre, AC 12, HD 4+3, Spiked Club 2d8, 19: special, S19 D8 C15 I6 P7 W8 Ch7, L7, Mv 40 ft. When *staggered*, an ogre enters a murderous rage, gaining a free attack against every foe within reach. On a 19+ attack roll, the target rolls on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table (*Luck* (Con) save resists). 10 foot reach. *Gruk & Taarn* have 30 hp and 28 hp respectively.

Wolf, AC 12, HD 1+2, Bite 1d4+1, 19: target is knocked prone, S13 D14 C15 I2 P12 W10 Ch6, L4, 60 ft. Advantage when tracking and on attack rolls when flanking.

Unless the party is being stealthy, the ogres in the towers will spot them as they approach. Tactics wise, they attempt to hit the party with thrown boulders from the rampart first, while bellowing out a challenge and alerting their fellows. The ramparts provide half cover (+2 AC). The remaining ogres will charge into the middle of the party with bloodthirsty roars.

The wolves have been trained to wait momentarily, then sweep around from the sides and rear, ganging up with one or more ogres to flank.

Taarn has a special soft spot for his pet wolves. If any of them are slain, he enters a truly terrifying, murderous rampage, gaining *Off Turn Attacks* for 2d4 rounds. At the end of this time he becomes utterly exhausted, and falls into deep despondency, suffering disadvantage on further attacks until slain.

Area 1 – Grand Arch

This 30 ft tall, 10 ft wide arch is big enough to accommodate two narrow wagons. The stonework is old but sturdy, easily capable of supporting ogres. On the walkway rampart above, there is a pile of 2d20 small boulders for

throwing or dropping (1d10+2 damage, 100 ft range), and 1d6 clubs and knives.

Area 2 – Guard Towers

These two towers are in relatively good repair, with only minor leaks during heavy rain. They have excellent views of the eastern approach. The interior is a mix of tables, fur pelts and straw, and both towers are occupied by 1d3 ogres at any time. A search of the towers reveals 1 x *Carry Loot* (LFG p.136).

Area 3 - Kennels

The top half of the western tower is no more, having toppled many centuries earlier, but the bottom half serves as a kennel for the camp's wolves. 2d6 wolves are present here.

Area 4 – Living Quarters

This large building houses 2d4 ogres and is filled with half empty wine and ale barrels, furs and straw. Along with the ogres, 1d4+4 wolves are in this building most of the time; snarling and laughing can be heard outside. In the south eastern corner is the "kitchen", containing animal carcasses, a fire pit and a broken window to let the smoke escape.

The north eastern quarter belongs to the twins, decorated with extra furs and scattered bones. A thorough search of this corner reveals some loose floorboards under the furs. Stashed below is the twin's 1 x 4 HD Lair Treasure (LFG p.140).

If the party explores other buildings in the complex, roll 1d6 to determine the contents:

(1) *Bone Pile*: Piles of skeletons and bones are spread about the floor and in small piles. On closer inspection, some of the bones are humanoid, with scraps of leather, wool and linen clinging to them. 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.141) may be found amongst the piles.

(2) *Trophy Room*: Skins, skulls and severed human heads are stacked on the floor and shelves here, displayed as ghastly trophies. 1d20 gp worth of earrings may be scavenged from the heads.

(3) *Food Store*: This area is a pantry of sorts, with several dead animals piled up in the middle. A couple of rough edged carving knives are thrust into the wall. The flies are buzzing thickly here, and the smell sickening.

(4) *Captive*: This building is occupied by two ogres, who are arguing about who is going to get to kill a terrified, bound up miner. If rescued, *Erion* knows how many ogres and wolves there are, and the purposes of the buildings. He also has a good working knowledge of the nearby terrain. Erion is no warrior and will stay out of any fighting if possible.

(5) *Cairn*: The floorboards of this building have been dug out, and the area turned into an ogre tomb. A badly decomposed ogre body lies beneath a shallow rock cairn. There is a 25% chance a hostile spirit curses any human that disturbs the

grave (a chill wind blows through the chamber, automatically reducing the adventurer's current *Luck* by 1 point). 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p. 136) is buried with the ogre.

(6) *Junk Room*: This building has been turned into the ogre's junk room; a mishmash of furniture, weapons, tools, sacks, clothing and other bits and pieces. The total value of the goods is 2d100 gp, but would take a wagon to transport.

(3) THE BLACK LAKE

Rumours & Hooks:
A reckless *House Tergoza* mithri is plotting to re-open an old moonstone mine in the high mountains. He wants the adventurers to scout and secure the area, then report back to him. He is willing to pay generously for this dangerous task.

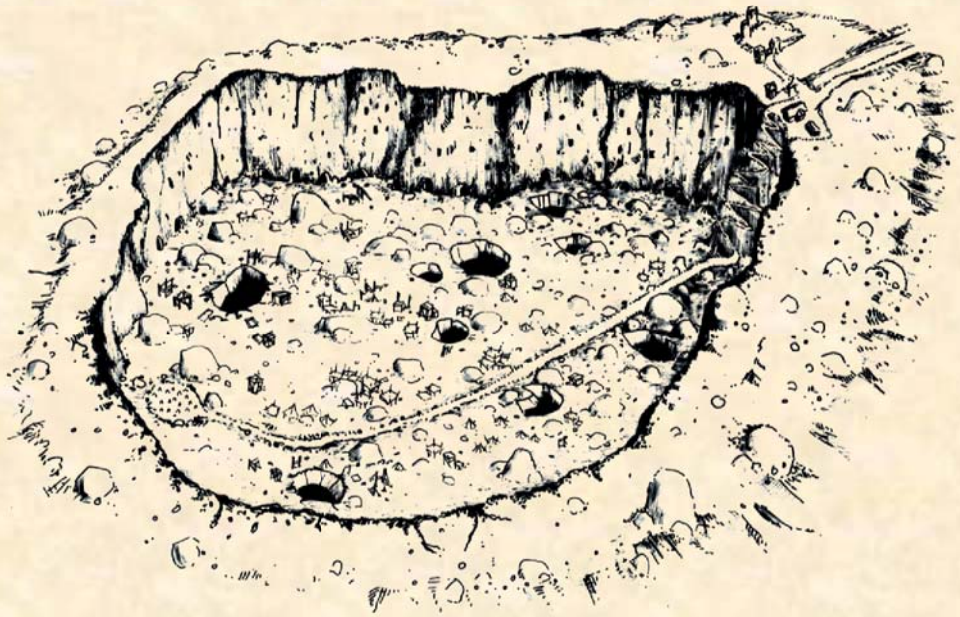
High in the *Ironhull Mountains* is the abandoned *Whitehorn* moonstone mine and quarry. Some say the mine wasn't closed because the precious stones ran dry, but for some secret reason that House Tergoza covered up.

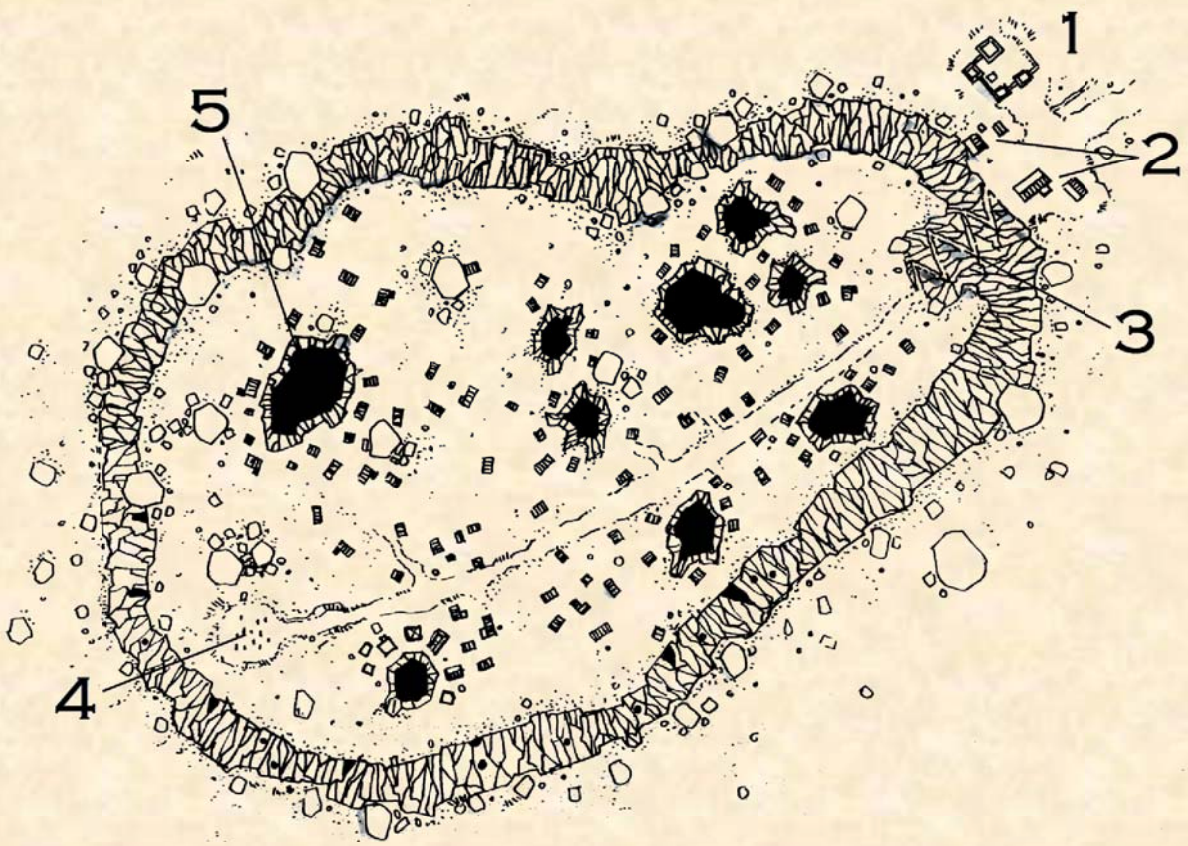
The Whitehorn moonstone mine and quarry in the Ironhull ranges has a chequered past. For many decades it generated great wealth for House Tergoza, but one day the miners discovered a pool of inky black water. The pool seemed odd, but apparently harmless, and the miners continued work around it.

It soon became apparent that the pool was very large, more like a small lake and wider perhaps than the whole quarry. After a time, miners began to go missing, and eventually it became clear that the men were drowning themselves in the black waters.

Work continued, with the miners growing increasingly spooked and discontent, calling for the mine to be closed. House Tergoza eventually yielded, but not until the mine overseer, Tergoza's third son, also drowned.

But that was thirty years ago. *Nertho Tergoza*, fifth in line to the house, has decided the old records are full of superstition and exaggeration, and wants to re-open the mine. He is offering 1,000 gp to scout, clear and secure the mines of any trouble (he expects there will be dangers of some kind, given the passage of years). The mine is high in the peaks, in remote giant territory; Mountain knows what might have moved in.





What has moved in is a tribe of *urgot*. The urgot are controlled by their priest and chieftain, *Churloch,* a cruel despot enamoured with blood magic and ritual perversion. Perhaps, many years ago, he genuinely meant to cure the tribe of their hellish taint, but the more time Churloch invested in the sorcery, the more corruption and madness filled him.

The tribe's patron is known only as the *Echo of Dust*, a malignant entity of reality bending power and depravity. The tribe believes that by releasing the demon into the world, they will rule the Midlands alongside their otherworldly master.

If Churloch is somehow warned by the ogres from **(2) Gap of Garrios** that the adventurers are coming, he takes precautions, including using *Ritual Magic* to ward the area against their intrusion. Additionally, he has 3d10 tribe members lay in wait to ambush the party in the wilderness.

Otherwise, if the party is not expected, the urgot will likely be taken by surprise. At the time the party arrives, they are either sleeping or mining for moonstone, piling it up in Area 4, preparing for Churloch's next ritual.

Area 1 – Miner's Barracks

This large domicile was used to house the miners on site, and now houses the urgot. Considering the age, the brickwork and roof are in good repair, as are the bunks and tables. Madness induced runic scrawl covers the inside walls, and a giant circle of dried blood marks the central space.

5d10 urgot are here at any time, including 25% children. Their corruption manifest as fleshy, lumpy growths and pervasive feelings of cruelty and sadism. Two locked chests (Churloch carries the key) contain the tribes scavenged riches (1 x 2 HD Lair Treasure, LFG p.140)

Area 2 – Outbuildings

These four outbuildings comprise an outdoor latrine, storage sheds for tools (some metal picks

and so on remain, worth 5d10 gp, albeit bulky to transport), a site manager building (ransacked and largely empty, but for some mice/vermin), and a very small, rusting, but still workable forge.

Area 3 – Quarry Ramp

The zig zag quarry ramp is 5 ft wide and poorly maintained, with much slippery scree and grit. Travelling along the ramp however is safe enough unless engaging in combat, in which case a fumbled attack, or suffering a critical hit, requires a *Luck* (Dex) save to avoid falling to the bottom. The quarry walls are 100 ft high at their uppermost point.

Area 4 – Quarry Floor

The quarry floor is approximately 200 ft long and up to 140 ft wide, littered with dark grey granite and gravel that crunches underfoot. But for the urgot tending this sacred site, it would be overgrown with all manner of weeds and plants. Scores of broken tent poles and rotting canvas dot the grounds. A wide path winds from the northeast to the southwest corner, where crates of moonstone shards are stacked (approximately 5d100 + 200 gp worth).

Area 5 – The Black Lake

Most strikingly, nine gigantic holes are dug into the quarry floor. The holes are approximately 20 ft to 40 ft in diameter, and 1d100 + 100 ft deep. The bottom of each hole is filled with inky black water, connected to a central subterranean lake.

The black lake is a natural conduit to the Veil, the dimension through which entities cross from one reality to another. Anyone who drinks or bathes in the lake, or who resides in close vicinity for a week, must make a Will check or suffer a minor madness. Churloch's years of sacrifices and wicked rituals have further weakened the Veil, allowing monstrous things to break through.

Eight of the nine holes has a 50% chance of containing a lurking *Maelheim.*

Maelheim, AC 13, HD 5, Tentacle (special) and Bite 2d4, 19: special, S18 D12 C16 I4 P15 W15 Ch3, L8, 30 ft flying. Maelheim are aberrant terrors with the usual benefits (LFG p.98). On a natural 19, the terror plants its tongue on the target, draining 1 point of Con, and forcing a Will check to resist a minor madness. The tentacle attack drains 1 level until the end of the adventure (*Luck* (Will) save resists). See the *Bestiary* for more details.

The ninth and final hole (150 ft deep) contains something wholly terrifying: a colossal, sinuous, scaled tentacle, slippery with water, almost 300 ft in length and 15 ft broad at its widest point. The tentacle has a malign intelligence, seeking only to crush or drown anything not aberration or urgot. It detects all living creatures within 300 ft. Thankfully the bulk of whatever the tentacle is attached to is not able to fit through the lake portal (yet).

Colossal Tentacle, *Boss Monster*, AC 15, HD 20, Crush 4d10 or Hurl Rock 3d10, 19: *the target is crushed to death (a Luck (Con) save at disadvantage resists*, S25 D13 C25 I- P15 W- Ch-L16, Mv 30 ft. The tentacle is a *Boss Monster* with all the usual qualities (LFG p.95). It cannot move out of the from the hole's edge but has a 150 ft reach. Depending on which area the GM has it emerge from, it can reach most of the quarry floor.

Urgot, AC 11, HD 1+4, Club/Claw etc 1d6+1, 19: the target is cursed and loses 1 point of *Luck*, S13 D13 C16 I7 P9 W12 Ch6, L5, Mv 30 ft. Moan once/day, all creatures within 20 ft suffer a minor madness (*Luck* (Will) save resists).

Churloch is an Urgozer, with 3+3 HD and may choose from the following spells twice per combat: *Hideous Laughter*, *Clairvoyance*, *Charm Person, Dispel Magic, Slow, Ritual Magic* (as 5th level). He carries the key to the chest in Area 1, and a random scroll (LFG p.152).

Churloch's rituals require constant offerings of moonstone, which are mined by the tribe and tossed into the lake. The waters hold 1 x 6 HD Lair Treasure (LFG p. 140) worth of moonstone shards, assuming the adventurers can figure out a way to scavenge them from below.

(4) CLOUDCRAG

Rumours & Hooks:
Legend has it that the tunnels beneath the peak known as *Cloudcrag* were excavated by ancient primitives, ruled over by a supreme being. The tyrant entity is said to have worn a silver mask that controlled all who gazed upon it. Some say the mask remains hidden within the mountain, waiting for the master to reclaim it.

Scouts report increasing numbers of skorn gathering at Cloudcrag, and not for the usual blood wars. A number of tribes appear to be working together, a scenario previously unknown and of grave concern to *Dol-Karok* authorities. The fortress city wants someone to investigate, and is willing to pay handsomely for answers.

Cloudcrag, a tall and lonely peak often shrouded in morning mist, is located in the eastern *Ironhull Mountains,* within the fringes of multiple skorn territories.

The centre of the peak is riddled with catacombs, a subterranean lair excavated in past millennia by primitive beastmen, guided by an alien entity of advanced power. Over time the peaks have seen many keepers, changing layout through labour or natural shifting. Currently, the *Ruknog* skorn tribe control the caverns along with their master; the last surviving heir of *House Borbarzu.*

The Borbarzu family was once a celebrated line of inventors dwelling in Dol-Karok, but were banished thirty five years earlier for crimes so serious their name was expunged from the history books.

The twelve Borbarzu survivors took up residence in Cloudcrag, but over the decades all have perished but for Bastine Borbarzu. Nine years ago, Bastine discovered the true purpose of the alien artefact in Area 7, and began siphoning knowledge from it.

The most important of his discoveries was the use of the subterranean mould *Xurrob* (a genetically engineered psychoactive mould from a distant world, transported here by the supreme master of the first skorn). Bastine distilled the mould (see Area 6) into a unique mixture, the effects of which transform the beastmen into compliant thralls.

The Ruknogs are heavily addicted to the xurrob drug, and conditioned to comply with their master's wishes. When Borbarzu walks by, the skorn prostrate themselves, pressing their foreheads to the earth in submission. Now in complete control of the tribe, the exile has begun exposing other beastmen to the effects of xurrob, intent on raising an army powerful enough to take Dol-Karok by force, and exact his long simmering revenge.

Journey Encounters

The journey to Cloudcrag is at least five days trek through the mountains, navigating increasingly steep and treacherous terrain. There is a 40%

chance of a random encounter every 12 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8 (add 1 during the last day of travel):

1. *Ghostspine*, an elderly, albino scaled wyvern (LFG p.130) with pitted spines is hunting at dawn or dusk, hungry for a meal. She is old enough to know that men that glint from the sun are hard on her teeth, and will target others if possible. Her plan is to snatch up a meal and fly away with it.

2. 4d6 *Skorn* sentries are guarding this narrow pass. Their cook fire can be seen burning at night. There is a 50% chance they are drunk and fighting amongst themselves.

3. At the base of a steep ravine is a crumbling stone archway. Ancient writing on the arch is largely worn away, but at the apex, a carving of a crested falcon with outstretched wings can still be made out.

4. *Boulder barrage!* 1d12 *Hill Giants* (LFG p.110) have been waiting in ambush higher upslope, and launch a barrage of head sized rocks at the party as they skirt a sheer rise. A successful Perc (Detection) check hears the giants snickering and grinding their rocks together before entering the ambush.

5. 2d4 *Ogres* (LFG p.120) are camped here, snoring loudly as they roll over in stained furs, scratching themselves. There are empty barrels of stolen wine and ale scattered about. If it is night, their campfire is beginning to gutter as the party approaches.

6. A dark and narrow cave opening is set into the mountainside. As the party passes by, a chorus of soft and lilting songs can be heard (single *Luck* (Will) save or *charmed* and drawn into the cave, where 2d6 hungry *Harpies* (LFG p.113) are waiting.

7. During the night, the weather turns deathly cold, the wind howling and threatening to extinguish the fire. The moment before the fire goes out, a striking but ghostly female appears on the periphery of the camp light; a *Banshee* (LFG p.99). *Lucidia* has come to claim one of the PC's souls.

8. *Fog.* Thick fog or low lying cloud rolls in, reducing visibility to 60 ft. There is a 70% chance of 1d4 *Dire Bats* (LFG p.100) swooping in out of the fog with a hideous screech. The bats carry *Thorny Pustules* disease, causing agony as infected spurs push through the skin (*Luck* (Con) save if injured by a bat, or suffer 1d4 Dex loss every 1d4 days). An apothecary with the right herbs can cure the disease.

9. 6d6 Ruknog *Skorn* (marked with dark purple tattoos and facial scars) have subdued 3d6 *Nordu* skorn (shaved heads painted yellow, with chest scars). The Nordu are being brought to Cloudcrag to be exposed to the xurrob drug.

Cloudcrag

The peak itself is a lofty and rugged mountain of sandstone and granite, riddled with natural and worked catacombs. The passages are crudely hewn or formed, often marked with primitive yellow, orange or blue paint, depicting scenes of tribal war and the subjugation of humans. Curiously, the most ancient drawings repeat an icon of a ringed planet with dual moons.

Some natural light manages to filter into Area 2, but beyond this the interior is dark or lit by skorn torches. The halfmen see well in moon light and have very rudimentary dark vision, but prefer to employ fire for light, warmth and occasional cooking (unless infiltrating or similar).

Lair Encounters

While the party is exploring the complex, there is a 20% chance of a random encounter every 15 minutes. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d6 (add 1 if the party has left any obvious signs of their passage).

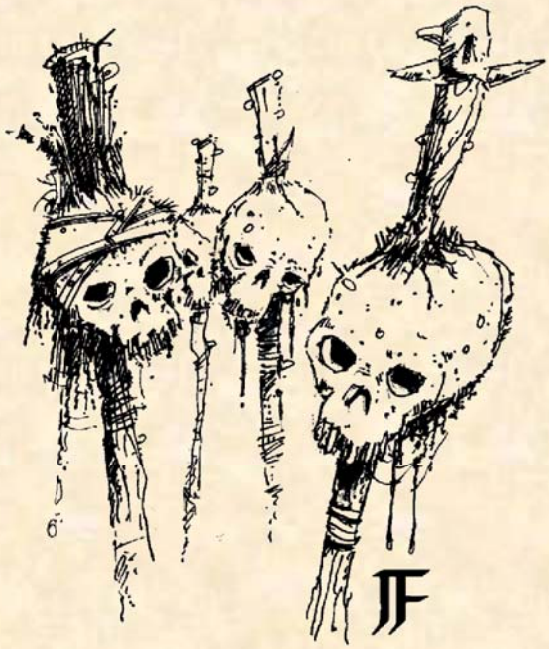
1. 1d6 *Skorn* from Area 4 wander up the corridor, having just eaten, carrying bowls of potent fermented grapes, which they sip or guzzle from as they approach.

2. A *Giant Spider* from Area 3 appears, crawling along the ceiling. It is a relatively new spider recruit, and is exploring the complex. It is quite hungry, and can tell a human from a skorn. It's not immediately sure whether it's supposed to eat the party, or not, and studies them curiously, chittering to itself.

3. 5d10 *Skorn* spill into the area, yelling and pushing each other. There is every chance major violence is about the break out between two different factions (the *Ruknogs* have purple war paint, the *Tugat* tribe have green).

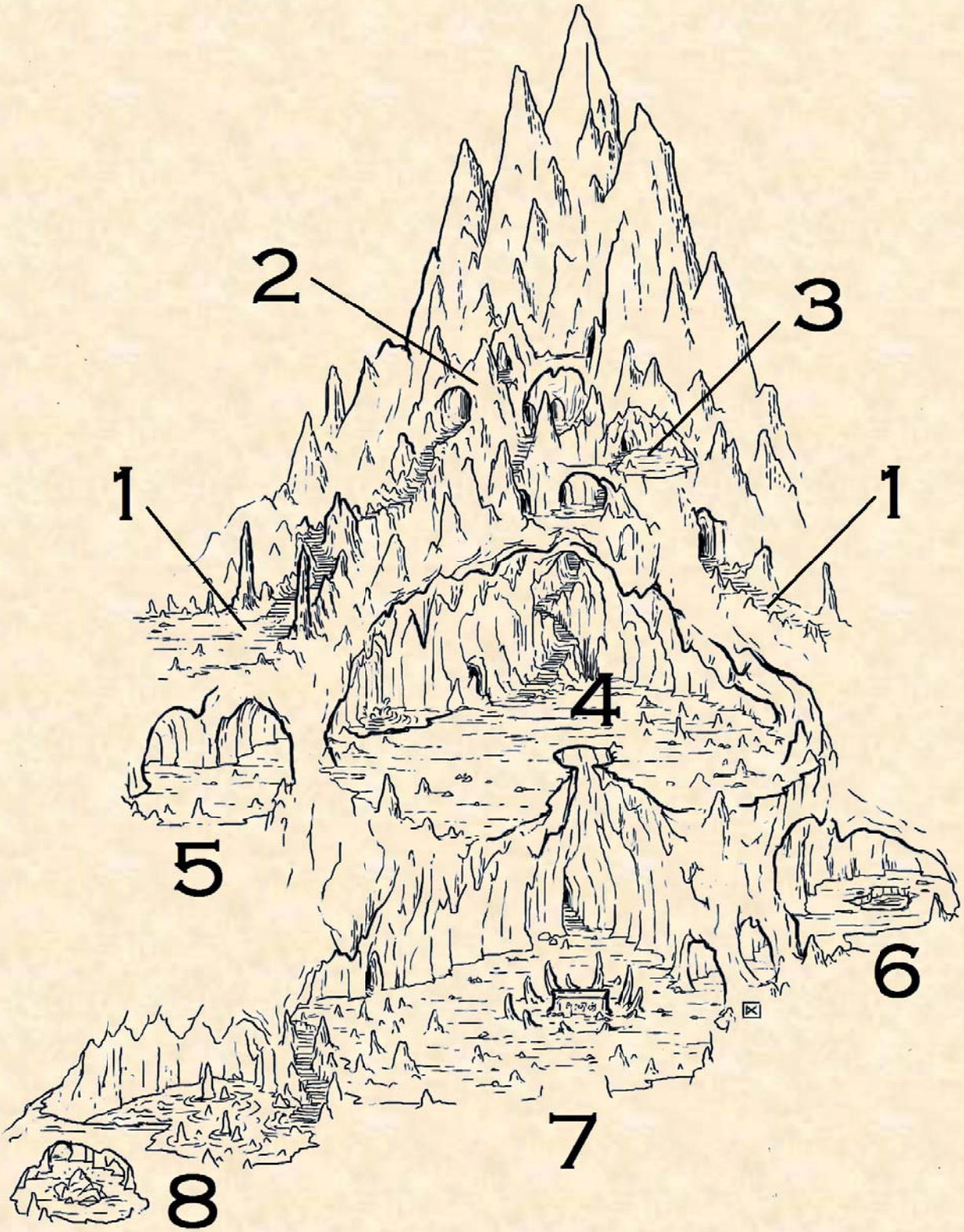
4. 1d6 *Vampire Bats* (LFG p.100) have taken up residence in the shadows of the ceiling. They generally prey on sleeping skorn, but are not adverse to taking a bite out an adventurer, if the opportunity presents itself.

5. A small *Skorn* child with red war paint appears from around a corner, looking scared, as if she's running from something. She freezes in place at the sight of the party, taken completely by surprise. A loud guttural yelling can be heard following up behind her.



6. The party finds a discarded metal cog, half buried under a grubby pelt. The cog has a number of large cracks in it, and is about the size of a person's outstretched hand. It is stained with what looks like soot.

7. *Borbarzu* (from Area 7) appears, his mechanical steps making a strange whirring and clicking noise as he approaches. He is making his daily patrol of the complex, on the lookout for vermin or rowdy skorn who need curbing. Needless to say, he is very surprised to see the party. He will attempt parlay first, seeking information about the outside world, and particularly Dol-Karok, before deciding whether to imprison them or feed them to the Ruknogs.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Area 1 – Entry

These stone steps are hand carved from the stony mountain, 10 ft wide and 150 ft long. Skull poles and stone pillars line the path, marked with primitive art depicting game hunting and the change of seasons.

Two skorn armed with clubs and javelins guard the twin entries (one east, one west) at all times. If they spot humans, they whoop and holler, calling for aid from Area 2 or 3.

Skorn, AC 11, HD 2, Club 1d6+1, 19: the target is clubbed in the head, losing its next action (*Luck* (Will) save resists), S15 D10 C13 I7 P12 W8 Ch8, L5, Mv 30 ft. Rudimentary dark vision, advantage to sense danger or detect scents.

Area 2 – Western Barracks

Carved into the mountain side here is a 30 ft cave, housing 3d10 skorn with clubs, slings and javelins.

For the most part they are sleeping, socialising, wrestling or fighting. They take turns being on sentry duty in Area 1, and are relieved every couple of hours by another shift from Area 4 or 5. If Area 1 calls for help, they respond (50% chance they are asleep at night, in which case they require a Perc (Detection) test to hear the alert and rouse themselves in 1d4 rounds).

Area 3 – Eastern Barracks

This 30 ft cavern contains 1d4+1 skorn spider handlers, and their 2d4 giant spiders (domesticated with the xurrob plant). The ceiling is lined with webs, spider eggs and baby spiders. Ceiling holes provide natural light into this chamber, which is particularly susceptible to fire due to all the webbing.

The spiders are generally feeding or training. The arachnids and their handlers are extremely loyal to each other and gain advantage on morale checks.

Giant Spider, AC 13, HD 2+2, Bite 1d6+1 + poison, 19: special, S14 D16 C12 I2 P12 W10 Ch4, L5, Mv 40 ft inc walls, ceiling etc. On a natural 19+ attack roll, target is webbed and helpless (*Luck* (Str) save resists). On its turn, a trapped victim may spend its action to break free (opposed Str check vs Str 17). A giant spider's poisonous bite causes 1d6 damage and 1 Dex loss (*Luck* (Con) save resists). 25% chance of harvesting 1d3 doses of poison from a dead spider.

Area 4 – Central Cavern

The 200 ft diameter central cavern is lit by sconced torches, the perimeter ringed with skull poles and walls painted with simplistic artworks.

Most of the paintings suggest hunting, fighting and natural disasters, but a recent marking depicts a squat, golem like humanoid with no head, being worshipped by skorn beneath the earth.

The floor is covered with furs, pelts and straw, scattered with pitted knives and crude bowls. A fast running underground stream and small pool are set against the western wall. One or more small cook fires are spread about, roasting flesh of various denominations, including human, the smoke wafting back up the tunnels or cracks in the ceiling.

The chamber is typically occupied by 10d10 skorn, including 20% children, engaging in all sorts of activities. The tunnel to the west leads to Area 5.

Needless to say, any obvious humans entering this chamber are in for a bad time. Ruknog savour the sumptuous juices of human flesh above all others, and are likely to kill and cook the party at the first opportunity. Some form of deception, distraction, or infiltration is probably going to be required to pass through this room unmolested.

The skorn present automatically gain a Perc (Detection) test to notice the smell of humans unless the party has taken precautions to guard against such (for example, wearing beastmen rags or furs).

Area 5 – Living Quarters

This western passage branches out into a myriad of living quarters for the remainder of the 5d100 beastmen (70% Ruknog), snaking deep into the underbelly of the mountain range.

The entry tunnel provides a useful bottleneck to keep the bulk of the skorn force at bay, if the adventurers find a way to block or hold it (temporarily or otherwise).

Area 6 – Xurrob Cavern

This 40 ft chamber is kept dark. In the centre of the room is a small 15 ft wide x 2 ft deep depression, inside which the crimson xurrob mould grows. Exposure to more than a few minutes of torch or sun light turns the mould grey, rendering it inert. Ingesting the mould in its purest form requires a Con check to resist a brief euphoria, followed by an emerging serious madness over 1d4 days.

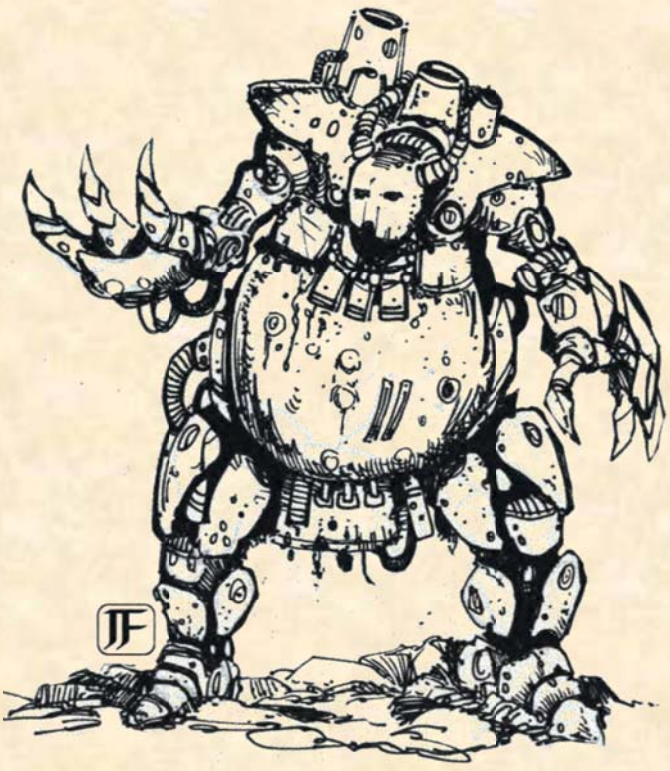
Area 7 – Workshop Laboratory

This 150 ft cavern is furnished with chairs, tables, books and bubbling glassware, a veritable laboratory of Renaissance flair. A number of anvils and smithy tools clutter one side, with various metals and ores stacked up beside the wall. The floor is bare stone, blackened and discoloured with heat and chemical stains.

In the centre of the room, encircled by a number of human size stalagmites, is a strange object indeed: an 8 ft tall, 5 ft wide and 20 ft long rectangular artefact, fashioned of jet black, polished metal (an interstellar alloy).

Both ends of the artefact have a dozen nodules protruding from it, which pulsate with a warm, golden glow. The whole object radiates with a barely perceivable hum if one or more nodules are touched. After years of dedicated study, the alien relic has imparted to Borbarzu knowledge of strange and advanced technologies, the likes of which are otherwise unknown across the Midlands.

Threatened by debilitating disease four years ago, Borbarzu entombed himself in a mechanical shell, using technology gleaned from the alien artefact. He now exists only as a man-machine hybrid, a living golem of steam, clockwork and canned lightning.



As might be expected, the toll on Borbarzu's mind has been extreme. He is mad, completely

obsessed with his triumphant return to Dol-Karok on the back of his growing horde of xurrob addled skorn. If the party does not immediately attack, he will parlay with them for a time, keen to learn of the outside world. But ultimately, their knowledge of him threatens his plans; they cannot be permitted to leave alive.

Clockwork Borbarzu, Boss Monster, AC 15, HD 7 (63 hp), 2 Fists 2d6, 19: everyone within 10 ft is scalded with steam, losing their next action (*Luck* (Con) save resists), S19 D10 C23 I17 P15 W18 Ch4, L9, Mv 30 ft. Borbarzu is a *Boss Monster* with all the usual benefits (LFG p.95). When Borbarzu reaches zero hp, he explodes, causing 2d6 damage to targets within 10 ft and destroying his mechanical body beyond repair.

The archway to the west leads to Borbarzu's store of valuables. He and his skorn have gathered a sizeable hoard worth 1 x 4 HD Lair Treasure (LFG p.140), as well as 2d4 doses of xurrob drug. Reverse engineering the drug to its constituent formulae is possible, but would take years of research by an Int 16+ apothecary. Meaningful activation of the alien artefact, and siphoning of its advanced knowledge, is a similarly long term endeavour. A *Speak with Dead* spell, or *charming* Borbarzu instead of killing him, etc, might shorten this period at the GM's discretion.

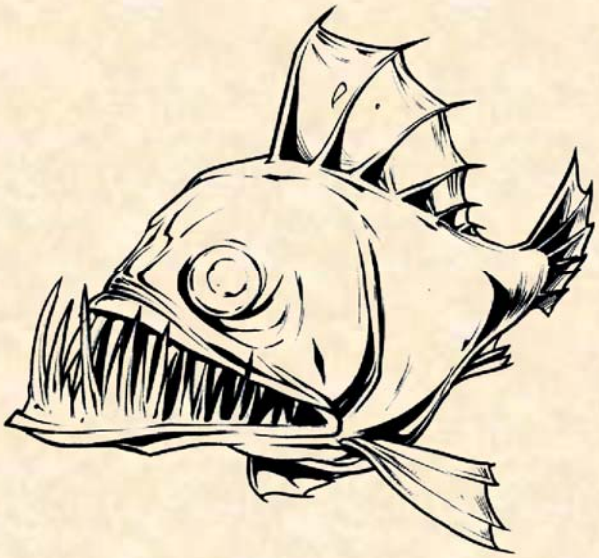
Area 8 – Water Cavern

At the bottom of the stone steps is a 40 ft cavern filled with dark water and stalagmites rising up from the depths. The middle of the chamber is divided by a narrow, east-west land bridge, beyond which is more water. A rocky protrusion of dark stone laced with green veins protrudes 15 ft out of the furthest pool.

The water connects to a large underground lake, which contains 2d6 five foot long *Ripper Fish*. Food in the underground is scant, the fish are ravenous and head towards anything moving in the water. Borbarzu sometimes feeds them with impudent skorn.

Ripper Fish, AC 12, HD 3, Bite 1d10, 19: special, S14 D13 C13 I2 P8 W10 Ch4, L6, Mv 30 ft swimming. On a 19-20 attack roll, the fish bites off a finger or toe (*Luck* (Con) save resists).

The murky water holds nothing but danger, but across the land bridge and in the pool beyond, is an outcropping of the rare mineral *Greendrake*, used in crafting the poison of the same name (applied by injury or ingestion, causes *Slow* (as the spell effect) for 1d4+1 rounds. *Luck* (Con) save resists). Adventurers might extract enough raw material for 2d4 doses of poison.



Aftermath

If Borbarzu is defeated, the remaining skorn are likely to remain at the peak, reverting to inter-tribal war. The halfmen do not understand the workings of xurrob mould and soon destroy it by accident. If the skorn are also removed, the party might take up residence in Cloudcrag, and/or seek to divine the secrets of the alien artefact (which cannot be removed from the mountain without breaking it). If Borbarzu repels the PCs, he grows his army of skorn until the time is right to invade Dol-Karok. The silver mask referred to in the original rumour either does not exist, has been lost, or might be part of Borbarzu's clockwork body (details left to GM discretion).

(5) DORNHOLD

Rumours & Hooks:
An old explorer's log refers to a small outpost, hidden in the high peaks of the *Ironhull* ranges, noted as an abandoned mithril mine.

A zoologist of the *College of Inquiry* in *Northgate* believes he has identified the likely den of a long dead dragon. The site is located near an abandoned mine in the Ironhull Mountains. He wishes to hire an escort to investigate.

Dornhold is a secret town set into the underside of a high peak in the Ironhull mountains. It is very old, but mostly empty, save for a handful of short humanoids; the last of the free dwarves.

Dwarves are not the only things living in this remote settlement however. Deep within the mountainside sleeps *Kormurta,* the *Purple Worm*, stumbled across by the dwarves in their mining endeavours centuries earlier.

So far, the thing yet slumbers, but dusty dwarven records suggest the last time it woke, it demolished an entire region before disappearing beneath the earth.

The dwarves consider it their solemn duty to prevent Kormurta from awakening, and maintain a constant vigil, driving away anyone or anything that draws too close.

Generally speaking, unless the adventurers can come up with a good reason to be allowed access to Dornhold, they are likely to be intercepted along the rising path and turned away.

As it happens, over the last couple of decades, the dwarves' resilience has begun to waver just a little, and they might entertain travellers under strict conditions.

Berek Grimfist is the elected leader of his kin, and will do any negotiating with the party. They dwarves are most interested in exotic foods and drink, rare metals and coinage, medicines and rare knowledge that could help them in their long suffering duty upon the mountain side.

In addition, the party will have to persuade the dwarves that they will keep Dornhold a secret, and not reveal its location to anyone, no matter the cost.

Finally, the adventurers will have to prove their worth to the longbeards, who are mostly impressed by feats of strength, endurance, bravery and honour. The regaling of a suitable tale over a few barrels might be enough, but more likely, the dwarves will want one or more of the company to demonstrate their "dwarfness" before embracing them.

In return, the last of the dwarves have much to offer. They are master forgers of weapons and armour, more than equal to the finest human, and have small caches of mithril and adamantine. The hold is actually built on a near exhausted mithril mine, which the dwarves tease out ever so carefully (overcome by racial goldlust, despite the obvious dangers).

Furthermore, the dwarves might prove lucrative employers, offering the party generous rewards for dealing with various threats that arise from time to time, including cyclopes, giants, rock eaters, skorn marauders and so on. If the party ever needs to place to lay low, the remote, isolated mine might be just what they need.

What else lies in the depths of the oldest shafts, and whether Kormurta awakens, is a matter for the GM. *Rock grinders* are not unheard of, and some of the oldest writings even hint at other dwarves, cut off in shafts lost generations before, eeking out a life beneath the stone, waiting to be set free.

A sufficiently high level party might even be able to defeat the purple worm, or at least drive it back into the earth to recuperate for another three thousand years. If the worm awakens, it remembers its old foes the dwarves, and goes out of its way to destroy them and Dornhold, before starting on *Dol-Karok* and other nearby cities.

Dwarven Guardians, AC 15, HD 4, Axe/Hammer 1d8+1 or Heavy Crossbow 2d8, 19: as weapon, S13 D10 C14 I10 P10 W10 Ch8, L7, Mv 30 ft.

Berek is a *Boss Monster* (LFG p.95), 8 HD (60 hp), AC 17, and causes 1d8+4 damage on a swing with his adamantine hammer.

There are 2d20+20 dwarves remaining in Dornhold, all of them veteran warriors, smiths and miners of between 50 and 150 years. The primary treasure of Dornhold is its expert smiths and caches of rare metals. The town has amassed a large fortune over the centuries, to the order of 1 x 12 HD Lair Treasure (LFG p.140), 2 x Valuables (LFG p.147) and enough adamantine to forge 1d4 weapons/shields and 1d3 suits of armour.

If the GM is including dwarves as a player race, a PC might originate from Dornhold. Perhaps the adventurer's mother smuggled them out, they were exiled, or sent forth on a secret mission of special importance.

Kormurta, Purple Worm, Boss Monster, AC 17, HD 20, Bite 3d12+3 and Stinger (poison), 19: special, S24 D8 C24 I3 P14 W15 Ch2, L16, Mv 90 ft slithering, swimming or burrowing.

Kormurta is a colossal, 200 ft column of rubbery flesh and a circular maw filled with row upon row of man sized teeth. It is a *Boss Monster* with all the usual benefits (LFG p.95). It detects prey through smell, ground vibrations and echolocation to a distance of 240 ft. The worm swallows prey whole on a natural attack roll of 18+, makes *Off Turn Attacks* and has a 15 ft reach. A swallowed target may attack the monster's guts with a small weapon such as a dagger, suffering 3d10 crushing and acidic damage on the monster's turn. In addition to the worm's dreaded bite, it has a poison tail stinger that instantly kills humanoid targets that fail a *Luck* (Con) save. If the colossi is killed, an adventurer has a 40% chance of harvesting 1d4 doses of poison.

Rock Grinder, AC 15, HD 6, 4 Claws 1d4+3, 19: special, S19 D10 C16 I3 P11 W12 Ch4, L8, Mv 30 ft or 5 ft burrow. On a natural 19 to hit roll, the target's limb is broken or fractured, crushed in a claw or mandible (see *Injuries & Setbacks* table, entry 2 or 3). See *Bestiary* for more details.

(6) TWIN HORNS PLATEAU

Rumours & Hooks:
Murtgurtle, an eccentric scientist and tinkerer in *Dol-Karok*, is looking to hire some capable explorers to assist him the *Ironhull Mountains*.

Murtgurtle is an eccentric scientist of the College of Inquiry in Northgate. He is a genuine genius, in his own way, working constantly in his laboratory, slowly uncovering one secret of the universe at a time. On occasions, he ventures out into the field, but the older he gets, the less he cares for traveling long distances, preferring to hire others to do the field work for him.

In this instance, "Murt" is offering 500 gp to track down and capture a strange and wonderful "critter", possibly a "thing" or "elemental anomaly", that is lurking in the vicinity of the *Twin Horns* (a plateau in the Ironhull Ranges, marked by two matching rock spires).

Rudimentary questioning from the party will quickly elicit that Murt doesn't really know what the thing is that he wishes to capture. He describes it as a short, 2 ft pile of earth and stone, that is able to move around of its own accord, and change shape. Most wonderfully of all

however, the "anomaly" demonstrates the curious ability to merge with the ground, not burrow into it, but rather meld with the earth, as if it were fog or water, leaving no trace of passing.

It is this last quality that has made capturing the thing problematic. Being a scientist however, Murt has engineered a solution: a 3 ft, portable box, lined with metal tubes filled with water.

Murt is fairly confident that the anomaly is not able to pass through water. During a brief, unplanned observation of the entity during a rare field trip, it did not attempt to cross streams and stayed well clear of them. He's 68% sure his special cage will be able to contain the thing.

All the adventurers have to do is get the critter into the cage, and the gold is theirs. How the party might go about doing so is completely up to them. It's what Murt's paying them for after all, and he doesn't have time to come up with all the answers. He has other more pressing experiments to be working on. But Murt is confident the companions will figure something out. It's just a 2 ft pile of moving rocks, how hard can it be?

Twin Horns

As it turns out, quite hard indeed. The first challenge is the for the party to venture into the mountains and make their way to the Twin Horns, a six day trek from Northgate, passing through some of the steepest terrain of the Ironhulls. Certainly no place for horses, and rockslides are not uncommon.

Random Encounters

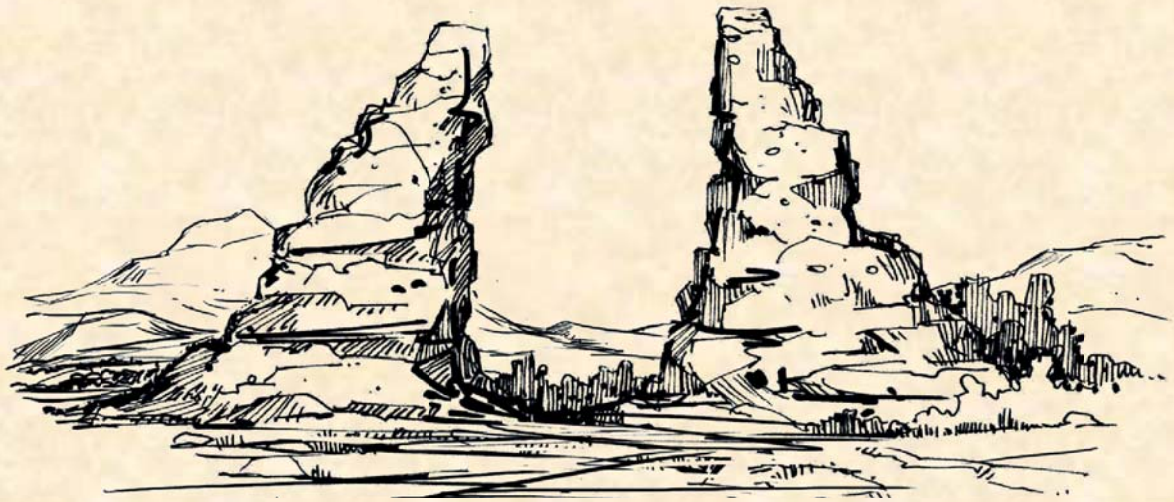
There is a 30% chance of a random encounter every 8 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d6:

(1) On a steep incline, part of the mountainside crumbles away, loosened by recent storms. Adventurers must make a *Luck* (Dex) save or be dashed away, battered by earth and rubble for 4d6 damage, before sliding to a stop against a large boulder.

(2) A flock of 2d6 *Giant Eagles* (LFG p. 106) appears in the distance overhead, hunting for a meal. Have they spotted the adventurers?

(3) A terrible downpour sets in, making the upward trek even more draining than usual. All party members must make a Con (Athletics) check or lose 1 point of Str due to exhaustion.

(4) *Avalanche*! A huge torrent of rock and mud suddenly becomes unstuck high above and plummets towards the party. Each adventurer must make a *Luck* (Dex) save or be buried in rubble and reduced to zero hp. It takes 1d4 hours to dig out a trapped PC. There is a 25% chance the PC is trapped in a pocket without sufficient air, in which case they begin asphyxiating after 1d4 hours (LFG p.159).



(5) 2d12 *Giant Centipedes* (LFG p.102) emerge from a nearby cave, scavenging for food. A dead thuel in the insects' nest has 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136).

(6) A sizable 5d6 *Skorn* warband is on the hunt, and have picked up the party's scent. Their drums can be heard on the downslopes below, quickly approaching.

Once at the Twin Horns plateau, the ground levels out substantially, and is dotted with trees and large boulders.

A Perc (Wilderness Lore) check will locate some signs of the mysterious entity's passage: drag marks that suddenly vanish into a boulder, veer away from large pools, or strange impressions in the earth or stone, as if something has moulded the rock like clay.

If the party is able to find tracks, they can position themselves in the areas most frequently explored by the entity, which appears in 1d6 hours. Otherwise the party will have to camp out for 1d4 days before catching sight of it.

The thing is a baby *Earth Elemental*, with 2 HD, Str 17, Luck 5 and Fists (2d4). It has animal intelligence, and being recently manifest, enjoys wandering the plateau, experiencing the different rock layers, the sun, the fleshy creatures, and so on.

It is not immediately hostile and will study the party if it spots them first, curious as to their nature. The only other human it has seen is Murtgurtle, and he was always quick to retreat once the elemental spotted him.

The primordial is interested in all things earth and might be tempted to come closer to the party by offering it gems or rare metals, which it will gladly absorb. If attacked, it will immediately seek to merge with the earth and disappear, never to return.

With patience however, the party ought to be able to tempt the elemental close enough that they can shove or trap it in Murt's box. One or more attribute checks might be required.

As might be expected however, things are not so simple. If the baby elemental is caught, an enormous 20 ft elder elemental (lurking deep below), immediately senses that the baby has vanished, and immediately comes to investigate. It takes 1d10 rounds for the adult to appear.

If the party suspect this complication, they might be able to hide or escape by taking appropriate action. Otherwise the elder elemental assumes that the fleshy things have something to do with the missing infant, and attacks.

Elemental, Earth, AC 19, HD 15, Fist 3d10, 19: the target is knocked prone and momentarily stunned, losing its next action (*Luck* (Con) save resists), S23 D10 C22 I3 P10 W16 Ch3, L16, Mv 40 ft inc burrowing. 10 ft reach, *Cause Injuries* on a natural 19-20 attack roll. Earth elementals may pass through earth like water or burrow and leave a tunnel. Immune to mundane weapons, except those of cold iron, which affect it normally. When staggered, the elemental gains *Off Turn Attacks*.

If the party defeat the elder elemental, its stony remains contain 1d6 raw cut gemstones worth 1,000 gp each.

(7) CAVERNS OF MELUSIAH

Rumours & Hooks:
There are rumours of a band of hardened brigands camping in a large cave complex in the mountains, preying on smaller trade caravans and outlying farms in the borderlands.

A historian named *Ebernook*, a resident of *Dol-Karok* is seeking the *Sceptre of Melusiah*, said to be buried in a shallow grave in a cave complex in the northern mountains. Ebernook is willing to pay generously for the sceptre's retrieval.

Overview

The *Caverns of Melusiah* are currently occupied by two distinct groups; a band of brigands and a colony of giant ants.

The brigands live in the western part of the complex, and have done so for some years. They generally keep the western side of Areas 7 & 8 covered in a unique herbal sludge (mostly glue, salt and vinegar), including on the walls and ceiling, which the ants find highly repugnant and stay away from. From time to time however, when the bandits wish to dissuade skorn, bounty hunters or other creatures from exploring too closely, they draw the barrier back to the southernmost passages of Areas 3 & 6, allowing the ants to scavenge outside and scare off any unwanted visitors.

The 3d10+20 brigands are led by *Brin Pentegast*, a long time outlaw and charismatic leader, negotiator and thief.

Pentegast is always on the lookout for a good mark, fully aware that her men will follow her only as long as she keeps providing opportunities for gold. Over the years she has amassed a small fortune, robbing smaller trade caravans and frontier farms.

The giant ant colony is comprised of workers, soldiers and a single queen. Only the tip of the hive is visible on the eastern map, the vast majority of its twisting tunnels can be reached via the large tunnel in Area 12. For the most part, the ants forage using openings spread further across the mountains, or hunt for food below ground.

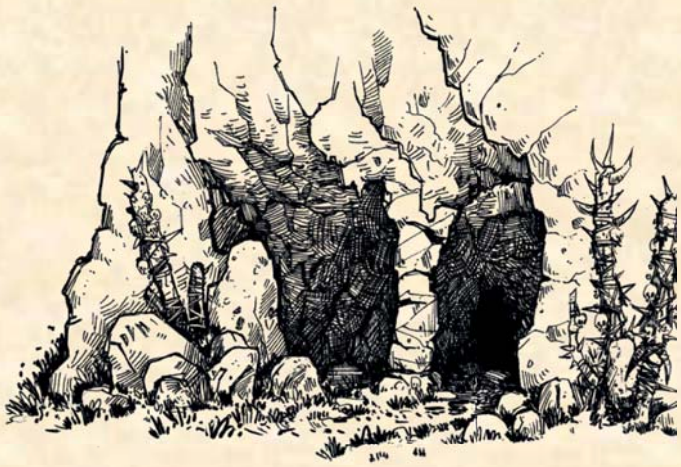
Area 12 however is favoured by the queen as a place to rest and lay her eggs, untroubled by the bustle of her hive.

Random Encounters (Western Caves)

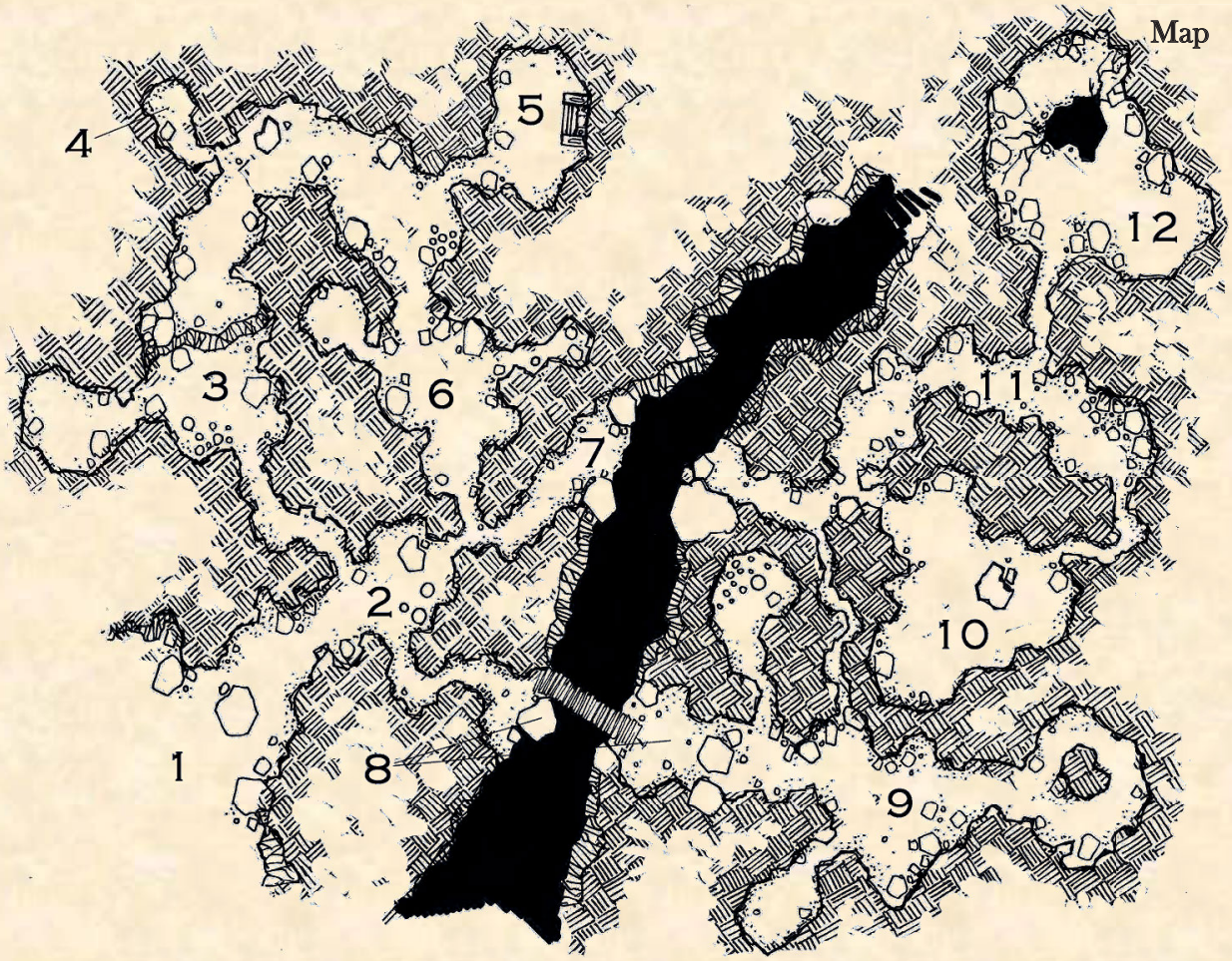
While the party is exploring the western caverns, there is a 20% chance of a random encounter every 15 minutes (or other time period as determined by the GM). If an encounter occurs, roll 1d6:

(1) 2d6 bandits from Area 6 can be heard joking and jostling, about to emerge from a nearby corridor.

(2) A strong wind suddenly blows through the corridor. The adventurers feel the hair on the back of their necks stand up involuntarily, but as quickly as it appears, the howling wind vanishes.



(3) 2d10+10 bandits return to base, carrying sacks of recent spoils! They are loud and cheerful, drinking stolen ale and feasting on stolen pies. They will take a very dim view of any adventurers slinking through their secret base.



(4) 2d4 bandits are arguing over loot or women. They are distracted and in a foul mood, either way.

(5) A heavily inebriated, snoring bandit, leaning up against a wall, empty flagon in his hand.

(6) A low, menacing chittering and chirping noise echoes through the complex (a giant ant, testing out the barrier, much to its displeasure).

Area 1 – Cave Mouth

The cavern entrance is marked with a number of beastmen poles adorned with wooden spikes and the skulls of animals and people. Pentegast finds the warning poles tend to keep most curious skorn, thuel or other folk away.

The interior of the cavern is dry but cool, loosely gravelled and mostly quiet. The occasional breeze filters through, breaking up the still air.

The entry is unlit and extends about 30 ft. Passages are generally 5 to 6 ft high, while the caverns are 10 to 15 ft tall.

Area 2 – Entry Chamber

This 20 ft natural cavern is decorated with dark stalagmites. In the north western corner are tucked three torches with flint and steel. Torchlight can be seen flickering in the northern passages. The narrow southern passage is completely dark and has a strange vinegar like smell. During the day, there is a 70% chance of a bandit sentry in the shadows beyond the daylight from Area 1. At night the bandits hole up in Area 3, 5 and 6.

Area 3 – Main Living Area

This oval chamber is approximately 20 ft wide, 35 ft long and 15 ft high. The middle is horizontally divided by a sharp 5 ft rise.

This living area is lit by lanterns placed on boulders, decorated with sleeping bags, crates of food (mostly salted fish, hard tack and other long lasting rations) and barrels of alcohol.

At least 10 bandits are here at any one time, sleeping, eating or socialising. They are wary of any intruders, but bolstered by numbers, and will call for help from Area 6 if required. A charismatic adventurer might be able to persuade the bandits to trade or exchange information, rather than attack (at least temporarily).

Bandit, AC 11, HD 1, Sword 1d8 or Bow 1d8, 19: as weapon, S12 D11 C11 I10 P10 W10 Ch10, L4, Mv 30 ft.

The bandits are armed with a mix of swords, maces and axes. All possess short or long bows, 15 arrows, a fire pot and a barrier flask (to scare off any rogue giant ants). They will spread out, take cover behind barrels or boulders, and fire on intruders. Any loud disturbance brings help from Area 6.

A search of the sleeping bags and general camping gear in this area produces 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136).

Area 4 – Melusiah's Cairn

This 10 ft by 5 ft niche is the ancient grave of a warlock named *Melusiah*, marked with a low, oblong shaped cairn of white rock. Inside the grave are fragile bones and a dirty elm sceptre with an orb at one end. The sceptre grants the user a *Stoneskin* effect once per week (no action), but the user suffers a moderate madness (a *Luck* (Will) check resists).

Anyone entering the chamber feels an immediate sense of unease; the hairs on their neck stand up and they shudder involuntarily. Pentegast's men are under pain of death not to disturb the grave, which they hold cursed.

Removing a single stone causes the air temperature to drop. Removing any more releases Melusiah's spirit. The ghost attacks anyone in the complex, seeking to drain their life utterly or drive them out. Once released, the spirit haunts Areas 1 to 7.

Melusiah, Ghost, AC 12, HD 8, Touch 1d4 + special, 19: the target ages twice as much as usual, S- D15 C- I10 P13 W17 Ch3, L9, Mv 30 ft flying.

Ghosts are *Incorporeal*, able to pass through objects, and are harmed only by magic or cold iron weapons. A ghost's awful caress instantly ages the target 3d10 years (no *Luck* save permitted) and requires a *Luck* (Will) save to resist suffering a serious madness. If a target is aged more than its expected lifespan, it dies a desiccated husk.

Melusiah is bound to the world by eternal hatred for his long dead son, who betrayed him to witch hunters. If the bones of his son (buried elsewhere in the mountains) are presented to him, he vanishes forever.

Area 5 – Pentegast's Quarters

This 15 ft by 20 ft cavern has a high 20 ft ceiling. The cave is furnished with a table, chairs, a low bunk and three 5 ft strongboxes. There is a 50% chance that Pentegast is in her quarters with 1d3 bandits.

The bandit leader is a canny, brave and formidable warrior. She is greedy at heart however, and would rather put her men on the line than herself. She is currently plotting to convert their loot to gemstones (or some other easily transported valuable), and steal away to *Crow's Keep,* leaving her men high and dry.

Brin Pentegast, AC 14, HD 4+2, Bow 1d8+3, 19: as weapon, S13 D18 C11 I14 P13 W14 Ch16, L7, Mv 30 ft. Pentegast has Backstab, Skirmisher and Finisher like a 4th level rogue, may choose from the following tricks up to twice per combat: *Hidden Blade, Quick Reflexes, Smoke Bomb* and *Unseen Whip.*

The bandit leader is armed with a short bow, 24 arrows and a hidden boot blade. She wields her bow like a club, and stabs with her arrows like knives, as if they were melee weapons at no penalty.

Pentegast might be willing to hire the PCs to do some work for her, particularly caravan scouting or skorn clearing. If her life is in danger, she is not above bargaining for it, offering for example the combination codes for the strongboxes, or *Baron's* story (see Area 10).

The three steel strongboxes have combination locks which only Pentegast knows the codes to. Failing to open or pick the lock activates a potent poison needle (*Luck* (Con) save, or suffer 1d6 damage each round for 1d6 rounds). The strongboxes can be broken open with sufficient time and the right tools. The boxes contain 1 x 4 HD Lair Treasure (LFG p.140), 1 x Potion (LFG p.150) and 1 x Valuables (LFG p.147).

Area 6 – Secondary Living Area

This 20 ft by 30 ft cavern has a 15 ft high ceiling. The cave is furnished similarly to Area 3, with sleeping bags, food, etc, but also some tables, chairs and even a bookshelf with some tattered looking tomes (various mundane topics, including languages, cooking and jewellery).

At least 3d6 bandits are here at any one time, socialising or sleeping. A search of the room turns up 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136).

Area 7 – Chasm

This 5 ft by 30 ft passage is unlit, and ends in a 15 ft wide chasm. The entire passage is lined with pungent barrier sludge, which repels the ants.

The chasm is pitch black and descends more than 200 ft. Whether the chasm joins up with the ant hive, or extends elsewhere, is a matter for the GM.

Area 8 – Chasm Bridge

This 5 ft by 25 ft twisting passage is unlit, and ends in a 20 ft wide chasm. The passage is coated in barrier sludge, which repels the ants.

A rickety looking, 5 ft wide wooden bridge spans the chasm. The bandits have not destroyed the bridge because they sometimes lure the ants across to deal with curious skorn or other inconveniences (the ants can of course climb up

the walls and ceiling, but also use the bridge). See Area 7 for the chasm details.

If the party cross the chasm, they find the eastern complex completely unlit. Strange clicking, scrabbling and chirping noises can be heard echoing further east, emanating from the darkness.

Random Encounters (Eastern Caves)

While the party is exploring the eastern caverns, there is a 50% chance of a random encounter every 15 minutes. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d4:

(1) 1d4+2 *Worker Ants* (Area 9) appear from the darkness, skittering about with food or on the way to check on the hatchery. They have detected the adventurers' scent, and they smell delicious.

(2) 1d3+1 *Soldier Ants* (Area 10) charge out of the darkness, intent on killing the adventurers by ambush! They have hard, shiny carapaces, and their hooked mandibles drip with foul, green fluid.

(3) A small *Flesh Eating Fungoid* (Area 11) slides into the torchlight, wobbling side to side as if being jostled by an invisible wind. The fungoid knows it is slow, and needs to lure prey to it, and will act accordingly.

(4) A deep, tunnel reverberating staccato echoes through the tunnels, then abruptly stops (the queen voicing a command, or warning, to some of her drones).

Area 9 – Main Hatchery

The entire southern part of the eastern complex, consisting of four large caves, are lined with 2 ft long, yellow white giant ant eggs. Some of the more developed antlings can be seen wriggling beneath the skin of their translucent shells.

There is no easy way (save climbing on the walls or ceiling, like giant ants do) to navigate through this area without risking disturbing a few of the eggs (a Dex check at -2 penalty is required).

Disturbing the eggs has a 50% chance of hatching 1d3 antlings, which are very hungry and try to eat the party, all the while making cute clicking and chirping noises.

Antling, AC 10, HD 1 hp, Bite 1d3, 19: the antling trips the target over by accident, but is squashed in the process, S12 D10 C8 I1 P7 W6 Ch4, L3, Mv 20 ft and may climb walls, ceilings etc.

2 ft antlings are yet to grow into full adulthood, whether that is as a worker or soldier. They are born with an instinctive understanding of their role in the hive, and the chemical signals of other ants.

If any antlings are triggered, or the party otherwise draws attention to itself, 1d4 worker ants emerge from behind the large pillar in the eastern most corner to investigate (they are otherwise sleeping/resting in the warmest corner).

Worker Ant, AC 13, HD 2, Bite 1d6, 19: the worker knocks the target prone, S16 D10 C16 I1 P10 W10 Ch4, L5, Mv 40 ft and may climb walls, ceilings etc. Workers may swarm a target, gaining +1 to hit for each additional ant beyond the first (maximum +4).

Area 10 – New Egg Hatchery

This 30 ft by 30 ft cavern houses the most recent batch of new eggs (only 1 ft long), 1d4+2 worker ants, and 1d4 soldier ant guards.

Soldier Ant, AC 15, HD 3+3, Bite 2d4 + poison, 19: the soldier spits acid on the target, causing 2d4 damage, S19 D12 C16 I1 P12 W12 Ch8, L6, Mv 40 ft and may climb walls, ceilings etc. Soldier ants have a venomous bite that requires a *Luck* (Con) save or the target loses 1d4 Con. Soldiers may swarm a target, gaining +1 to hit for each additional ant beyond the first (maximum +4).

Area 11 – Flesh Eating Fungoids

This 35 ft long oblong chamber has a tall 20 ft ceiling. In the north eastern corner are 2d3 *Fungoids*; sentient toadstools with teeth and jaws, mixed in with other man sized fungi. There are 50% adult and juvenile fungoids present.

The ants and the fungoids have formed a symbiotic relationship. The ants bring the fungoids food, and the fungoids shed viscous, brown spores that the insects find delicious.

In recent weeks, a rogue ant managed to cross the barrier and snatched *Baron*, the unlucky bandit on sentry duty in Area 2 at the time. Baron was delivered to the fungoids and swiftly devoured. All that remains is his chainmail shirt, a shield, and a *cold iron hammer* (bearing the sigil of *House Lorca* of *Dol-Karok*).

The fungoids are pretty much always hungry, and will attack any humans entering this area.

Fungoid, AC 10, HD 7, Bite 2d6+2, 19: special, S19 D5 C16 I1 P10 W8 Ch4, L9, Mv 20 ft and may climb walls, ceilings etc. On a natural 19, the toadstool blasts the target with toxic spores, causing 1 HD loss every 2d6 hours for 1d3 days. An apothecary with the right healing herbs may be able to neutralise the poison. See *Bestiary* for more details.

The juvenile fungoids have 1 HD, 1d6 damage, S13 and on a natural 19 they attach a sticky appendage to the target, preventing it from withdrawing.

Area 12 – Queen's Chamber

This 35 ft by 30 ft cavern has a 25 ft ceiling. The 10 ft hole to the north is a long tunnel to the hive proper, where 2d100 giant ants (not including larvae) live.

The Queen rests here from time to time, favouring the occasional surface breeze and relative quiet. Eggs that are laid here are carried to Areas 9 and 10 by workers (the queen cannot squeeze through the southern tunnel).

There is an 80% chance the queen is present. If so, there is a 50% chance she is asleep or resting, unless the party has made its presence known. The queen will not hesitate to exterminate any human intruders in her domain, issuing a deafening chittering to summon 2d10 soldiers to aid her (appearing in 1d4 rounds).

Giant Ant Queen, AC 16, HD 6, Bite 3d4 + special, 19: special, S19 D8 C19 I1 P15 W15 Ch16, L8, Mv 30 ft and may climb walls, ceilings etc. On an 18+ attack roll, the victim is crushed in the queen's mandibles, suffering 3d6 damage each turn until freed (the victim may spend their action to make an opposed Str check to escape). The Queen's stinger carries a potent poison causing 1d4 Con loss (*Luck* (Con) save for half).

The queen has no treasure as such, but adventurers able to gather up most of the live giant ant eggs, or antlings, might find buyers trading in exotic insects, foodstuffs or potion makers (to the value of 1d6 x 100 gp + 700 gp).

Aftermath

If the bandits are cleared, the ant colony eventually takes over (if Melusiah remains, his ghost haunts Areas 3 to 6, which the ants stay clear of).

If Pentegast survives, she quickly puts her final plans into action, converting most of the loot to gems and jewellery before fleeing. Her men fight over whatever baubles are left before disbanding shortly thereafter. One or more brigands might

stick together in an attempt to track down the party, and/or Pentegast, seeking revenge.

(8) PILLAR PASS

Rumours & Hooks:
A contingent of hill giants have descended from the high peaks and are lurking in the mid mountains, causing trouble for *Dol-Karok*. Workers from a nearby silver mine are refusing to go back to work until the giants are removed.

Rumour has it a band of giants from the high mountains have made camp two days trek from the mountain fortress of *Dol-Karok*. The Circle want someone to meet with the giants and find out what they want.

Note: This adventure framework includes a double cross while the adventurers are hip deep in angry hill giants. If the table is unlikely to enjoy such a twist, the GM might need to tweak things.

Stolen Goods

The *B'Yarg* hill giant clan has lived in the high mountains for centuries, largely keeping to themselves or skirmishing with rival giant and skorn tribes.

Recently however a thief named *Rupero* (Karok) infiltrated their camp and stole their most sacred object: a horned skull pendant fashioned of mithril, hanging from an oversized gold chain. The pendant belongs to the tribe's chieftain, *Rogg*, as a sign of authority and divine power.

Hill giants have a sense of smell similar to bloodhounds (a little known fact, since few can get close enough to study them), able to detect scents many days old. The tribe have possessed the pendant for so long that they can literally smell its fey metal tang, along with the spore of the thief.

The giants tracked the pendant and thief to the outskirts of Dol-Karok, and sent word to the Circle of their dilemma, demanding the return of both the pendant and thief (whom they intend to eat).

House Vorrox

House Vorrox, one of the five great houses of the Circle, has assumed control of the situation, but have no intention of handing over the pendant or the thief. *Mithri Milvara*, third daughter of the House, hired Rupero (a member of the *Bronze Hall* thieves' guild) to steal the amulet for her.

Milvara has however concocted a scheme to resolve matters. She intends to hire some dupes to meet with the giants, ostensibly to offer them gifts and find out what they want, and report back to her. In reality she plans to offer the giants a replica pendant, plus one of the dupes as the "confessed" thief, confident the dull witted oafs will take both and go away.

To ensure success, Milvara is sending her trusted ambassador, *Virene*, an underhanded but charismatic and engaging young lady, to execute the plan. In case things goes awry, Virene will be armed with a magical earring to enable her to turn invisible and escape (or so the pair believe).

House Vorrox offers the party 1,000 gp to accompany Virene as wilderness guides, guards and porters to the meeting. The cargo includes ale kegs, chests of hams, chickens, sturdy bowls and metal tools, and the replica pendant. If asked why House Vorrox's own guards cannot attend to this important duty, Milvara explains that the mission is simply too volatile/dangerous for her

men, and she wants someone capable, but expendable – which is where the PCs come in.

Virene understands the risks, but is willing to go to better her career and standing with House Vorrox. If there is trouble, Milvara expects the giants are least likely to eat her (as the official ambassador), plus she has the magic earring.

Milvara is very up front about this being a business deal, with very real risks attached, and that a commensurate payment is on offer (considering it's only a few days work). The meeting is scheduled to occur in three days time at *Pillar Pass* (a ravine, studded with large hoodoo rock spires), about two days trek from the fortress city.

Uncovering the Plot

If the PCs ask around about the giants, they might learn (with a Cha (Gather Information) check and a few ale rounds) that some giants have indeed been spotted in nearby mountains, causing the well armed mine guards much anxiety (so much so that they refuse to go back to work until the giants are dealt with). A great success on the check reveals that the giants are after something that was stolen from them, which may or may not arouse suspicion as this isn't mentioned by Milvara.

Alternatively the PCs might uncover the plot during the two day trek. If anyone unlocks the chests (Virene has the key) and carefully studies the "mithril" pendant, an Int check at disadvantage (unless the examiner has a background in appraising or jewellery) reveals it to be a fake; merely a nickel/mithril coating, which was only recently crafted in the last few days.

Finally, at some point during the trek, Virene attempts to plant drops of Rupero's sweat on the clothes of one of the adventurers (hoping the giants will smell it, and infer that the PC is the thief). The sweat is contained in a perfume bottle with a puffer, which if examined, exudes the unpleasant smell of perspiration.

During her time with the adventurers, Virene tries to ingratiate herself with them. She is warm and friendly, cultivating the appearance of a city dweller unused to the wilderness. She inquires about the party's prior deeds and exploits, interested to hear their stories (and glean any bones of contention between party members).

If any of the party flirt with her, she reciprocates in an effort to build trust and plant the thief's spore. When the time comes to reveal the "confessed thief", Virene nominates whichever character she is closest to (or whoever she is most upset with, if there has been a confrontation).

Random Encounters

Unless the GM determines otherwise, there is a 30% chance of a random encounter every 8 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d6:

(1) 3d4 *Wolves* (LFG p.129) are prowling the area, looking for a meal. They will target the weakest member of the party. There is a 50% chance the pack is led by 1d3 *Dire Wolves* (LFG p.130)

(2) A crazy prospector (*Ned*) with 1d4+1 dogs (LFG p.114, 129) are passing through, looking for rivers to pan or new veins to chase. If it is night they will be camped with a sheltered fire.

(3) 1d4+1 *Giant Eagles* (LFG p.106) are hunting here, their chicks hungry for food. They will be attracted to shiny metal humanoids.

(4) An *Assassin* named *Loc* is tracking the party for some prior misdeed; hired for revenge, justice or to tie up loose ends. AC 14, HD 7, S10 D17 C10 I15 P13 W10 Ch14, L9. Loc has Backstab, Skirmisher and Finisher abilities like a 7th level rogue*, Off Turn Attacks,* and may choose from the following tricks up to four times per combat: *Choking Dust, Hidden Blade, Rapid Dose, Smoke Bomb, Unseen Whip, Cat's Grace.* He carries dual short swords (1d6+3), a light crossbow and 2d4 doses of poison at the GM's option.

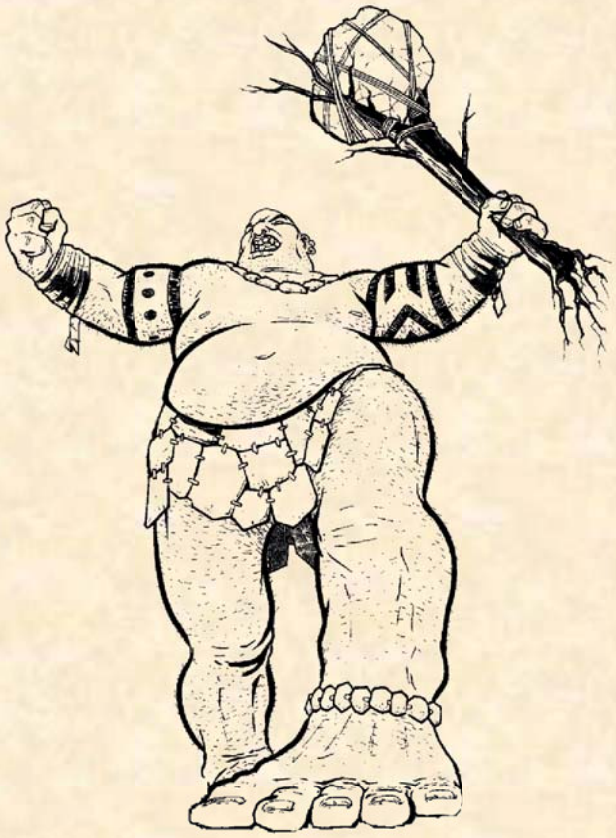
(5) 3d6 *Skorn* (see Bestiary) living in nearby caves are scouting this area for food or interlopers. They have claimed the region as their hunting grounds. If the hunters are driven off, they return to their caves before tracking the party with reinforcements (5d10 skorn with swords/knives/axes and bows).

(6) 1d6 *Giant Scorpions* (LFG p.121) are scavenging from a nearby cave, and would gladly feast on some PCs, their horses or hirelings. If the scorpions' den is searched, numerous humanoid corpses produce 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136).

The Meeting

Rogg is accompanied by 1d6+4 giants; a selection of his best hunters and the tribe's most fearless, bloodthirsty and menacing brutes.

Hill Giant, AC 12, HD 8+2, Oversized club 2d8+2, 19: special, S20 D8 C15 I6 P9 W12 Ch8, L9, Mv 40 ft. Giants hurl boulders, carts, barrels or humanoid creatures up to 120 ft for 3d6 damage. Hill giants have an acute sense of smell, gaining advantage on related checks. Rogg has the same statistics as the other giants, but has 57 hp and *Off Turn Attacks.*



When the meeting occurs, the giants are immediately suspicious. They listen while Virene offers the gifts and nominates one of the PCs as the thief; delivered to the giants "as agreed".

Of course, it all goes horribly wrong for Virene. The giants are initially confused about Rupero's scent, and might mistake the adventurer for the thief, but they have no doubt that the pendant "smells wrong" and fly into a rage, furious at the attempt to cheat them. Similarly, the party will probably be upset that Virene has doublecrossed them.

Unless the party is able to miraculously calm the situation, battle swiftly erupts, with the giants seeking to kill and devour all of the puny man things.

Virene takes the first opportunity to use her Earring of Invisibility (once per week, use an action to cast *Invisibility*). Whether she is killed before she gets the chance is another matter. If she does succeed in turning invisible, the

ambassador immediately flees and attempts to make her way back to the safety of Dol-Karok.

Virene, AC 13 (leather), HD 2, Dagger 1d4+1, 19: as weapon, S9 D15 C11 I10 P10 W10 Ch16, L5, Mv 30 ft. Virene has the Bard abilities Silver Tongued (Deception) and Bardic Knowledge, and is also a skilled survivalist, gaining advantage on all Wilderness Lore related checks. In addition to her magic earring, she has 3 vials of rare, alchemical scent blockers (imposes disad on tracking by scent).

If the giants and/or Virene are defeated, the adventurers might find the magic earring, and the giants have 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136). Additionally, the Circle's gifts consist of food/ale worth 3d100 gp, 1 x Valuables (LFG p.147) and 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.141).

Aftermath

If the PCs survive, they might wish to chase Virene back to Dol-Karok, and/or confront their double crossing employer. Milvara for her part may or may not seek to tie up loose ends, at the GM's discretion. Either way, the events of Pillar Pass are likely to lead to further conflicts and/or schemes between House Vorrox and the adventurers.

Without Rogg, the B'Yarg clan are likely to be kept busy deciding a new leader, and fending off attacks from rivals who seek to take advantage of their disarray. Alternatively, the killing of a giant chieftain might just unite the other clans, setting in motion a plan to make an example of Dol-Karok.

PLAINS

(1) THE RUDDY ROOSTER

Rumours & Hooks:
Whilst resting at the *Ruddy Rooster*, assassins sweep in under cover of darkness to murder the adventurers for some past misdeed, or to settle an old score.

At some point in their adventuring career, the party will make powerful enemies. In this scenario, one such enemy has hired the *Duskers* (a secretive assassins' guild) to take out the PCs.

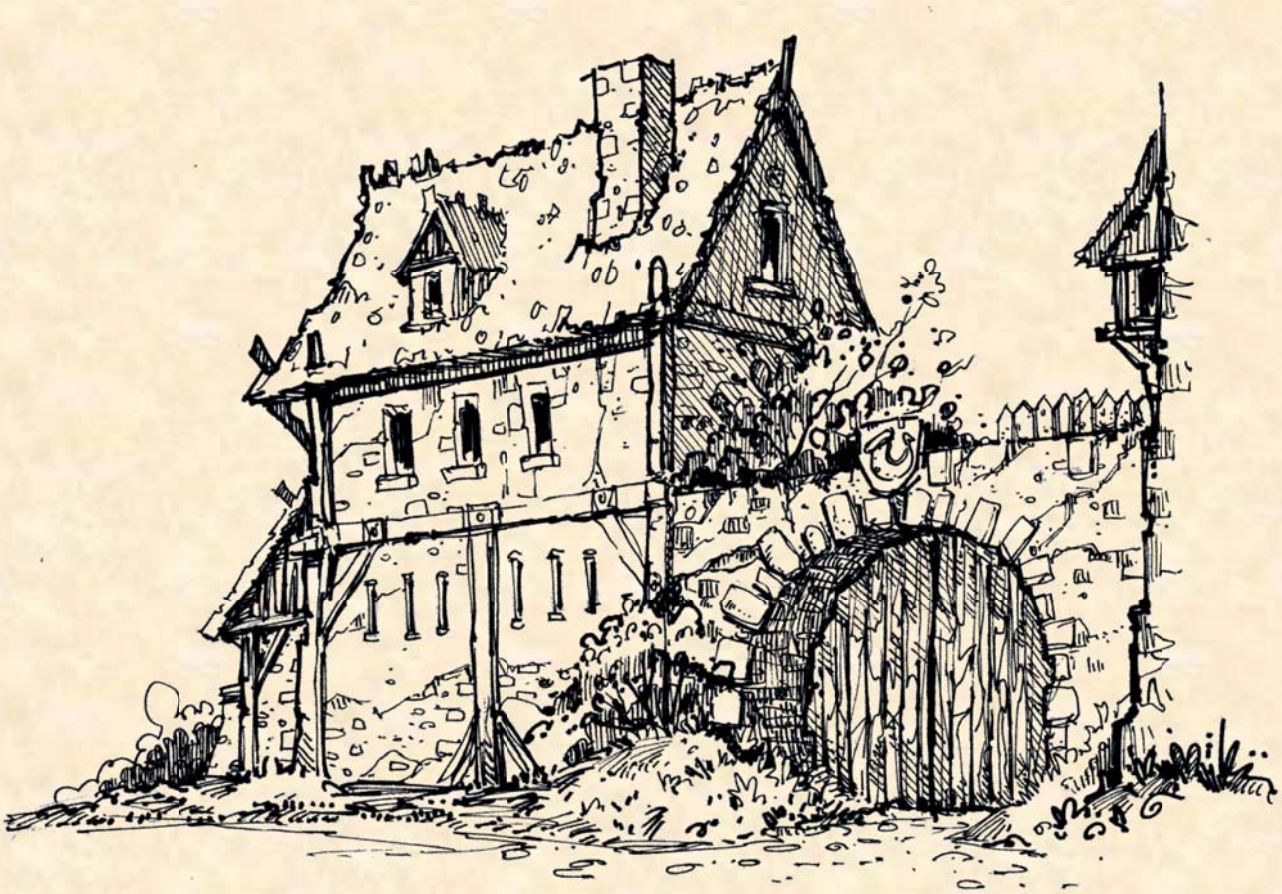
Rania, a high ranking member of the Duskers, has been appointed the task. She understands that the party is dangerous, and has brought 2d6+6 experienced recruits with her, outfitted with the tools necessary to get the job done.

Ambush

The ambush unfolds at the Ruddy Rooster frontier house, a fortified tavern, inn and stable house just outside the walls of *Port Brax*, in (relatively) safe patrolled territory.

Rania has been tracking the party for some time, and finally decides to strike while the PCs stop over at the inn (perhaps on the way to their next adventure, or on the return trip).

The ambush begins after midnight, with Rania and her crew scaling the buildings to reach the rooftops. One mercenary for each party member then attempts to break into their sleeping quarters via the closest window (Dex (Traps & Locks) check). Any that fail quietly smash the window instead (granting one or more PCs a Perc check to awaken or otherwise notice the intrusion).



Once inside, if the assassins have not yet been detected, they move silently into position (Dex (Stealth) vs Perc (Detection) test, possibly modified if the target is asleep), before attempting to cut the target's throat. If they are undetected at this stage, an adventurer receives a final *Luck* save to fortuitously wake at just the right moment (perhaps she hears the assassin's nervous breathing, a creaky floorboard, or is warned by a sixth sense). Otherwise the PC is reduced to zero hit points, with a 50% chance of emitting a cry of pain (possibly alerting allies).

Once one or more PCs are awake, combat proceeds as normal, most likely with a surprise round for the assassins.

If the party puts up anything resembling a fair fight, the Duskers flee out the windows, their allies above pulling them to safety with looped and knotted ropes.

Across the courtyard, on the far rooftops, other assassins let fly with crossbows at any pursuers.

Finally, Rania moves to deal with the most threatening adventurers, hoping to make quick work of them with her poison blades.

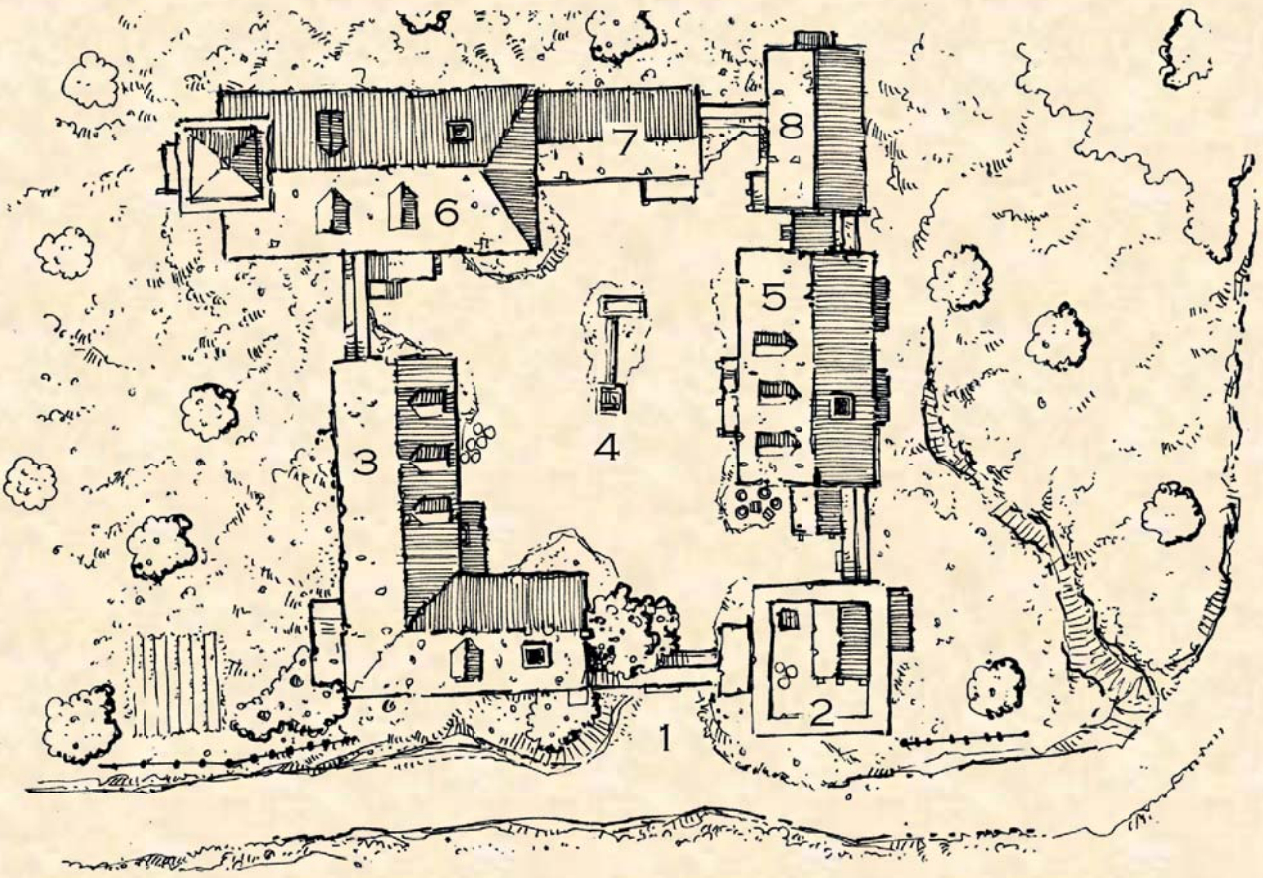
Rania, AC 14, HD 8, 2 Shortswords* 1d6+2, 19: Disarm, S14 D17 C10 I15 P16 W13 Ch10 L9, Mv 30 ft. Rania has Backstab, Skirmisher and Finisher abilities like an 8th level rogue, and may choose from the following tricks four times per combat: *Cat's Grace, Hidden Blade, Quick Reflexes, Smoke Bomb, Glue Pot, Rapid Dose, Blind Sense, Unseen Whip).* Rania has 1d4+1 doses of Ghoulsheen poison (applied by injury, *Luck* (Con) save or immediate paralysis for 1d4 rounds), caltrops (5 ft area, Dex check or half movement rate until short rest).

*In addition to the above, Rania is armed with the enchanted shortsword *Vaartu's Bane*, an ancient elven blade (considered cursed by the fey) with two levels of attunement: (i) once every 1d4 days, a struck target is rendered mute for 1d10 rounds (*Luck* (Will) save resists), and (ii) once per week, the user may summon an *Infernal Minotaur* (Vaartu, for 1d4 minutes or until slain).

Rania has raven hair, cat like grace and a cold killer's stare. She views this mission as just another job, and will take all steps necessary to complete it without mercy. If events get completely out of hand, she attempts to flee, using terrain and her rogue talents to escape if possible.

Duskers, AC 13, HD 3, Shortswords 1d6+1 or Light Crossbow 2d4+2, 19: as weapon, S13 D15 C10 I10 P11 W9 Ch10 L6, Mv 30 ft. Duskers may use the Rogue Backstab talent once per combat (as 3rd level).

The cutthroats entering via the windows are armed with knives, short swords and caltrops. The remainder are spread across the rooftops, armed with light crossbows (with three quarters cover when lying down to shoot, granting +4 AC),



swords, ropes, grappling hooks, torches, oil and camping gear.

Area 1 – Entry Gates

These 10 ft heavy wooden gates are the only formal entryway into the grounds. They are barred at night. A watch is usually set, but in this case, the sentry is murdered by Rania as the attack begins.

Area 2 - Supplies

This two storey, 25 ft square tower holds most of the inn's food and wine supplies, as well as acting as the watch tower. The sentry on duty this night is murdered by Rania as the assault begins. His throat has been cut and the body stuffed into a cupboard.

Area 3, 5 and 6 – Guest Houses

These two storey restrooms are primarily rooms for travellers. Some are more secure than others, with better quality locks or wooden bars available. Most rooms are 10 ft square, but double rooms (20 ft by 10 ft) are also available. There is a "Grand" room (20 ft by 30 ft) available on the top floor of Area 6. A large tap room takes up most of the lower half of Area 3.

The proprietor is barkeep *Master Hoggot*, a 6 ft, rotund fellow who invokes the gods at the drop of a hat ("*Baal's balls! Get that man a drink Liri, can't you see he's parched!*"). The serving wenches Liri, Suza and Robirra put up with his melodramatics because (despite appearances) he treats them well. He has a sturdy club under the bar for rabble rousers and rough nuts.

Area 4 – Tethering Pole and Water Trough

A tethering pole for animals, and a water trough for them to drink from is located here. The trough might serve as cover against ranged fire from the rooftops (it is very heavy, but can be

moved with a Strength check at half speed). The pole is 10 ft long and might serve as a makeshift ladder to help reach the rooftop, or thrown at enemies.

Area 7 and 8 - Stables

These two buildings are stables for horses, donkeys, dogs or other animals travellers bring with them. At the time of the assault, there are 2d6 dogs and 1d6 horses inside. They might provide cover, means of escape, or distraction if set loose. The mercenaries might scare the animals with fire and let them loose if they need to flee.

Aftermath

Tethered in the eastern trees are the mercenary's horses, which they will seek to escape with if necessary.

If Rania is driven off and escapes, she will try again at a later time, better prepared and with more men, poison, traps, hounds and so on. She has been paid handsomely to execute the PCs, and will do what it takes to prevent her reputation being sullied by failure.

If Rania and her crew are killed, they give up 1 x Carry Loot, 1 x Trinkets & Curios and 1 x random Potion. At the GM's discretion, Rania might also carry a note or other object that provides a clue as to her employer.

(2) YASHNARG'S GAMBIT

Rumours & Hooks:
Farm stock have been mindlessly slaughtered along the outskirts of *Port Brax's* borderlands. The outlanders are on edge, and want someone to investigate before they return to their labours.

A Port Brax outlander by the name of *Orben* swears a horned humanoid lurking in grasslands near his farm stole one of his bison. The farmer's guild has put a bounty on the monster's head.

In the patrolled fields west of Port Brax, livestock are being slaughtered or stolen by some kind of beast (or beasts). Bison, cows and sheep have been found torn apart, sometimes half devoured, sometimes left to rot.

So far, none of the outlanders have dared to track the beast to deal with it, and the single guard patrol that went looking never returned. A number of village folk have seen the aftermath of the attacks, including Orben, who lost a number of cattle on the outskirts a few days ago. Orben can show the party the site.

An Int (Wilderness Lore) check reveals tracks suggesting the beast can move on both two and four limbs (two hind hooves, and two clawed upper limbs). Further searching indicates a calf was carried away from the site (partly dragged, but then later carried).

The beast is in fact a *Minotaur*, and although it is hunting for food, it is also here for a more sinister purpose; to draw humans out of the patrolled borderlands for eating.

In fact, 2d6 minotaurs lair in small ravine, roaming at night and hiding away in caves during the day. Having only recently arrived in the area from the *Rock of Gorzat*, they are careful not to let their true numbers be known to the manwhelps nearby. The minotaur raiding the outskirts is known as *Yashnarg*, and is gifted with a sharper intellect than his cousins (Int 8).

Yashnarg's plan is to draw some humans out and lead them into an ambush in the low hills, where his clan are waiting.

It takes 1d4 days to track *Yashnarg* back to the ambush site, unless the party can win a contested Perc (Wilderness Lore) check against him at disadvantage (Yashnarg has been preparing for this staged retreat for some time, and has a number of precautions in place to prevent early capture, including stashed food and water. He

knows the quickest route back). If the party is successful however, they manage to catch him in 1d2 days, and he will have to face them alone.

Minotaur, AC 15 (armour), HD 5+4, Big Axe 2d8, 10 ft reach, 19: roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table (Luck (Dex) save resists), S19 D14 C19 I6 P14 W15 Ch7, L8, Mv 30 ft. Charge 60 ft, gain adv to hit for 2d8+2, target makes a Luck (Con) save or roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table.

Random Encounters

While the party is tracking the minotaur, there is a 30% chance of a random encounter every 8 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d6:

(1) A pack of 3d4 hunting *Wolves* (LFG p.129) appear and begin to follow the party. They will not attack unless an opportunity presents itself, but they are clearly hungry and desperate.

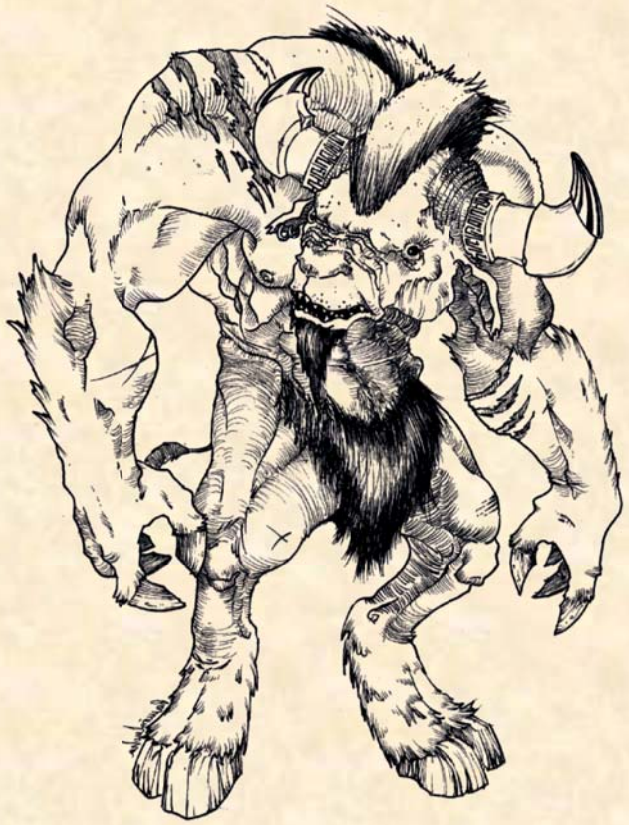
(2) 3d6 human hunters are making or breaking camp, depending on the time of day. They are happy to exchange stories and/or band together for increased protection overnight.

(3) The weather turns foul, with strong winds and heavy rain. The tracks are much harder to follow after this event, requiring a Wilderness Lore check (Int or Perc) to keep the path. If the trial goes cold, Yashnarg successfully loses the party (albeit by accident). The stock killings start up again in about a week's time.

(4) A huge warband of 8d6 *Skorn* raiders (Bestiary) can be heard beating drums in the distance. If the wind changes adversely (50% chance), the skorn try to chase down the party and eat them.

(5) Yashnarg leads the party through a thick growth of *Soruven Nettles*, a highly prickly and poisonous plant (the minotaurs thick hide is immune). Each traveller must make a *Luck* (Dex) save or lose 1d2 Dex due to severe swelling and discomfort. An adventurer skilled in Wilderness Lore or Apothecary makes the check at advantage.

(6) 2d4 *Giant Wasps* (see *Bestiary*) descend on the party from the sky, believing the humans to be perfect incubators for their larvae.



The Ambush

The ambush site is a 200 ft area of grass and tangled scrub, ringed by copses of trees. In the shadows of a central tree, Yashnarg pretends to devour a carcass, with his back turned to the party, assuming he knows where they are (if the wind is blowing the party's scent towards him, and/or he has had time to plan for their arrival).

On the flanks the remaining minotaurs wait in ambush. A Perc (Detection) contest vs the Minotaurs Dex check (at advantage, due to their carefully concealed positions) notices something is up; strange rustlings in the trees, quiet snorts, a horn poking out from a bush, and so on.

If the ambush is not detected, Yashnarg waits until the party is within charge range (or until someone triggers the pit trap, see below) before attacking, roaring for his kin to join him. Half of the minotaurs charge from the flanks, the others hurl large rocks or tree branches (for 1d8+3 damage, and forcing a Str check or the target is knocked prone).

At the GM's discretion, and depending on how much time the minotaurs had, there might also be a 10 ft wide, 15 ft deep pit trap filled with wooden stakes (causing 4d6 damage, *Luck* (Dex) check to avoid) near Yashnarg's position. If so, the minotaurs attempt to fling the adventurers into the pit.

Fleeing from the ambush is difficult; the twisted scrub makes running awkward for humans, but does not impede the minotaurs. The ranged minotaurs circle round to entrap the party as best they can. Party Retreat tests are made at disadvantage if the adventurers are still in the brush.

If the minotaurs are defeated, they carry 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.136, 141). In addition Yashnarg's horns are adorned with bronze circlets and caps inscribed with infernal runes. Attuning to the twin circlets increases the wearer's Into or Will by 2 points (max 19). Over time, the wearer of the circlets intrinsically understands there will be a price to be paid for their boon, but not until the time of the wearer's death. What this means for Yashnarg (if slain) and any possible PCs, is left for the GM to determine. If the PCs track down the minotaur's lair, a further 3 x Carry Loot is found.

(3) CHAMBER OF EIGHT

Rumours & Hooks:
Lowbrook Castle fell to ruin centuries ago due to plague and pestilence. Some say the crypt of the *Fenmor* family still remains untouched by thuels and skorn, who consider it cursed. They also say the family possessed not one, but two enchanted rings.

Gusterro the Improbable, an alchemist of moderate renown, is offering a generous bounty for cockatrice beaks. Rumour suggests a flock hunts around the ruins of Lowbrook Castle, deep in the *Ulgoth Foothills*.

In the Ulgoth Foothills, contested by thuel tribes and skorn, lie the ruins of Lowbrook Castle; an ill fated keep brought low by pestilence and disease. Persistent illness and death led to the complex being abandoned, razed by enemies, and slowly reclaimed by branch and root.

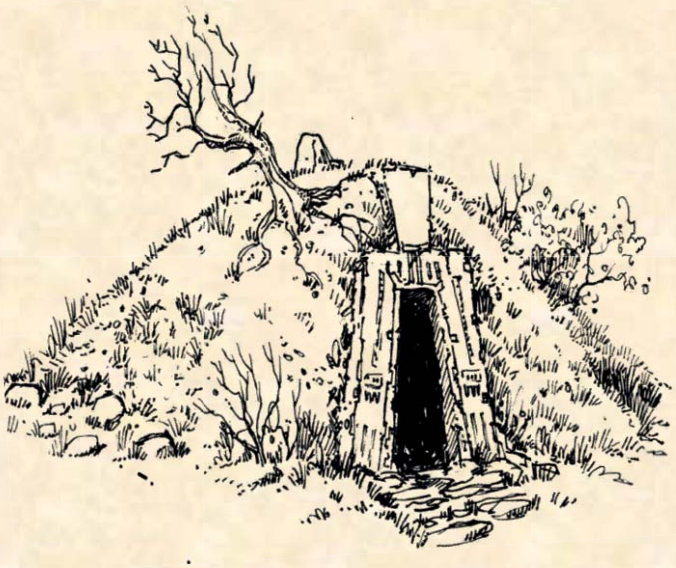
Precious little now remains of the keep proper, but in the quiet oaks of the outlying grounds the Fenmor crypt may still be found. Lord Fenmor held sway during the final years of Lowbrook, and he and his family were buried there. The vaults contains many valuable family heirlooms, in particular the *Twin Rings of Ishra.*

Unbeknownst to the lord, his wife *Lady Setine Fenmor* was a cultist of supernatural forces. The last of the Fenmors to succumb to plague, Setine and her sect consecrated the crypt with powerful necromantic rites, hoping to resurrect the family in the future.

The castle was abandoned shortly thereafter, and later destroyed by enemies. Skorn and barbarians now shun the ruins, believing them cursed and infected. After the party locates the grounds, it doesn't take long to identify the crypt's entry cairn.

Entry Cairn

The cairn is made of earth and granite, etched with prayers for the dead in old common. The wooden entry door that once stood here has long since rotted away.



Adventurers scanning the vicinity might notice the petrified remains of old cockatrice meals squashed into the grassy soil: petrified fingers, ears and toes (Perc (Detection) check).

Unless otherwise indicated, the crypt has stone walls, 7 ft ceilings, and chiselled, uneven floors. The air is cool but reasonably fresh (there is an odd fowl like scent, but air is able to circulate freely via the open corridor of Area 1).

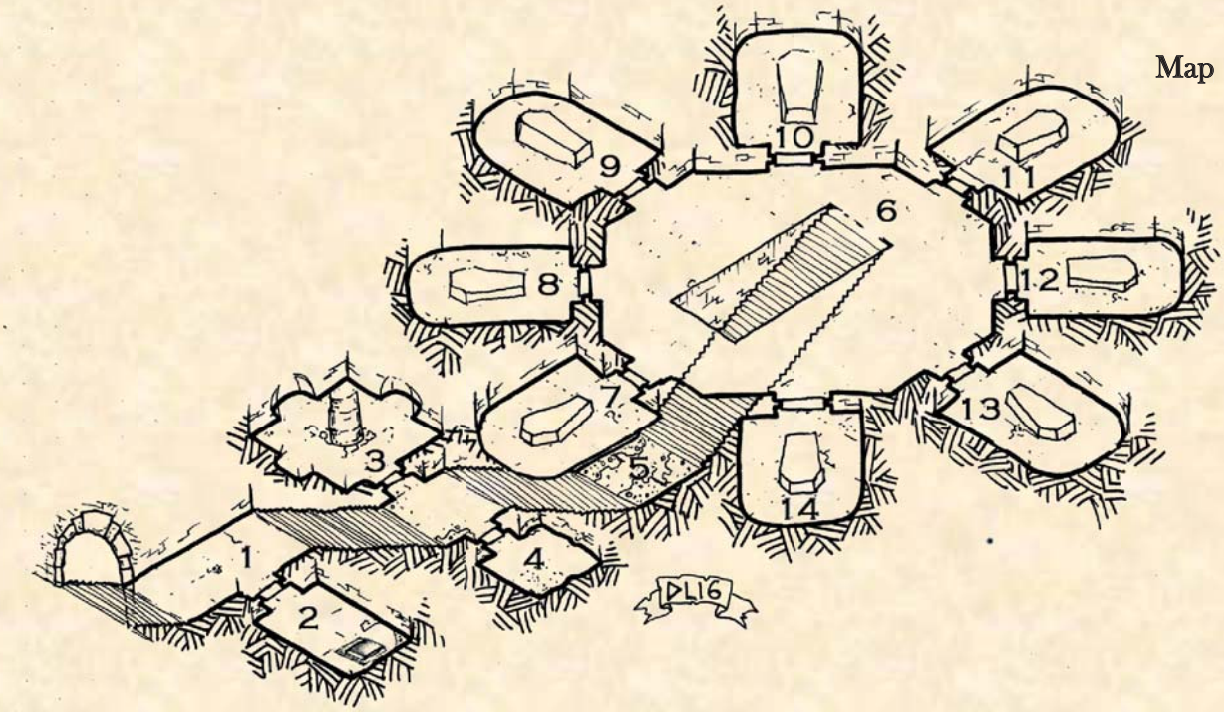
The tomb is quiet, but scratching and hissing noises might be heard if the cockatrice are awake inside (Perc (Detection) check at a -2 penalty). The interior beyond Area 1 is very dim, lit only by patchy luminescent moss, imposing disadvantage on vision related checks.

Area 1 – First Landing

The arched entry tunnel quickly opens up into a 10 ft wide stairway that descends to the first landing, which is 40 ft long by 20 ft wide. To the south east is a stone door, to the north east the stairs continue downwards.

On the walls of the landing are ancient shields and swords of the Fenmor family, rotted or rusted with age, but still serviceable, at least in the short term. A natural 1-3 attack roll with a rusty weapon, or an 18+ hit against a shield, sunders it. Faded tapestries and paintings can also be found, reduced to threads and scraps of parchment.

Map



The stone door to the south east has no lock, but is stuck, requiring a strength check to open by sliding it into the wall cavity.

Area 2 – Chapel

This is a 30 ft by 20 ft chapel, with a quartz altar along the south eastern wall. The wooden chairs and pews are old but still sturdy enough to sit upon. The chapel was originally dedicated to *Wodon*, the god of knowledge and truth, but Lady Setine subverted it to her dark cult before she passed.

Adventurers studying the altar notice a ring of golden runes inscribed at the base, recognizable as a dark blessing (Int (Arcane Lore) check). A golden chalice (800 gp) carved in the likeness of a human eyed vulture sits in the centre of the altar. The chalice is laced with rare psychotropic powder, anyone tasting the powder is subject to the equivalent of a *Confusion* spell (LFG p.67).

Area 3 – Pillar of Oblation

The stone door to this chamber is locked (the key no longer exists). Due to its age and rust, picking the lock requires a Dex (Traps & Locks) check at disadvantage. Failing to pick the lock jams it for good.

The 30 ft by 30 ft chamber beyond has alcoves in three of the walls, and a 5 ft radius pillar in the centre. The pillar is carved of dark granite and is set with hundreds of small agate, jasper and topaz stones (2d4 x 100 gp if pried from the column, a task occupying several hours).

In the three alcoves stand three guardian skeletons, animated by Lady Setine before her death. The skeletons are charged with protecting the gems, and will animate and attack those who attempt to remove them.

Guardian Skeletons, AC 14, HD 2+2, Sword 1d8+2, 19: a defeated skeleton reanimates to aid this one, S15 D7 C18 I- P12 W- Ch- L5, Mv 20 ft. These warrior undead wear patchy armour and carry shields and wield longswords. The guardians are extremely thorough, continuing to attack a target until it is destroyed, dismembering humans, splintering doors, and so on. The body of an adventurer reduced to zero hit points must be recovered from a guardian in one round or it is irretrievably lost.

If the guardian skeletons are defeated, their rusting armour and weapons might be salvaged for 1d100 gp, or used similar to the equipment in Area 1.

Area 4 – False Treasure Room

This 20 ft by 20 ft chamber is a false treasure room and trap. The stone entry door is unlocked (which might tip off the adventurers, given the room's apparent contents), but requires a Str check to slide aside. Inside are two iron and two wooden chests, ostensibly containing coins, necklaces and other baubles. The four chests are stacked alongside each other on the south eastern wall, on a polished section of the floor that is one inch higher than the rest of the room. The polished platform has just enough room for the chests to sit side by side, but not much more. The "valuables" are in fact counterfeit, painted with gold, set with false stones, and so on (if

carefully handled, might be detected with an Int check).

Anyone removing more than half of the contents of any chest sets off a weight sensitive trigger in the platform, which raises up another inch to release poisonous gas from newly exposed holes (a yellow cloud fills the room, causing 5d10 damage, *Luck* (Con) save for half).

An adventurer who studies the platform might spot hairline cracks that suggest it may be moved up or down (Perc (Detection) check). The trap can be disarmed by using metal spikes or similar to wedge the platform in place, or by keeping the weights constant (Int (Traps & Locks) check, or by player declaration).

Area 5 – Third Landing

This 20 ft square landing is littered with half eaten petrified flesh and large black feathers. If the party is being stealthy, there is a 50% chance 1d3 cockatrice are eating here. Otherwise 2d4 cockatrice are present, on their way to investigate the party's noisy intrusion.

Cockatrice, AC 13, HD 4, Bite 1d3 + special, 19: the target's weapon or armour (50%) is petrified (*Luck* save resists), S6 D17 C11 I2 P13 W10 Ch5 L5, Mv 30 ft. A bite turns the target to stone after 1d4 rounds (*Luck* (Con) save resists). The petrification may be reversed in the same way as a *Flesh to Stone* spell. At the GM's option the healers of the *Riverstone* clan (see the Forest encounters section) might have an exceedingly rare balm that also reverses the effect.

There is no treasure in this area, but cockatrice parts are worth 2d100+50 gp (per beast) to alchemists, herbalists and so on.

Area 6 – Chamber of Eight

This large octagonal chamber is approximately 80 ft wide, each wall containing a stone door. Sconced torches line the walls (some of which might still function if lit). The area is the nesting place of a flock of 3d4 cockatrice, littered with dug out holes, branches and plumage. One of the beasts is the alpha, an 8 ft behemoth with silver grey plumage, 7 HD and *Off Turn Attacks* (LFG p.95). If this fearsome brute is killed, the remainder of the flock will likely flee (Will check at disadvantage). There is no treasure among the petrified remains of the cockatrice victims.

The stone doors are inscribed with the Fenmor family crest (a wyvern) but do not identify which family member is entombed behind which door. The stone doors are not locked, but require a strength check to slide into the wall cavity.

Areas 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14 – Sibling Tombs

These six chambers are 30 ft by 30 ft and contain the stone sarcophagi of the Fenmor offspring, three brothers (*Beldass, Drelthar, Dorimer*) and three sisters (*Minera, Sarsan, Shari*). Three of the children were 7, 12 and 13 years of age when they died of plague, the others were adults.

The chambers are expertly cut and decorated with the crumbling keepsakes of the deceased, including paintings, jewellery, weapons and so on. Disturbing any valuables or the sarcophagi themselves awakens the spirits of the siblings, who rise as spectres. The spectres remember some of their former lives, but are tainted by

feelings of all consuming loss. They are outraged by the presence of the adventurers and will seek to drain their life force and transform them into servile wraiths.

Spectre, AC 15, HD 7, Spectral Sword or Touch 1d8 + level drain, 19: the Spectre and target vanish to a nightmare realm of dark sorcery to finish their duel. If the Spectre is destroyed, the target reappears, S1- D15 C- I13 P15 W15 Ch9 L9, Mv 30 ft in any direction. Spectres are *Incorporeal Undead* (LFG p.94) that pass through solid objects like water. A spectre's icy touch drains one level until the end of the adventure (*Luck* (Will) save resists). An adventurer reduced to zero levels dies, rising as a subservient wraith in 1d4 days.

Attempting to negotiate with the spectres is unlikely to succeed, but they might be stalled by discussion of the fate of the castle, their parents, and so on. Presenting a spectre with a keepsake from their personal sarcophagi has a 50% chance of ending their curse and causing them to dissipate immediately (otherwise the spirit flies into a rage, focusing its attacks on that adventurer exclusively).

Once any of the spectre siblings are woken, the remainder also wake and descend on the party. Every 1d4 rounds after the first spectre rises, another one appears (out of the wall, ceiling, floor, etc) to aid their brethren, until all six are reunited. Each of the sarcophagi contain 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136).

Area 9 – Lord Fenmor's Crypt

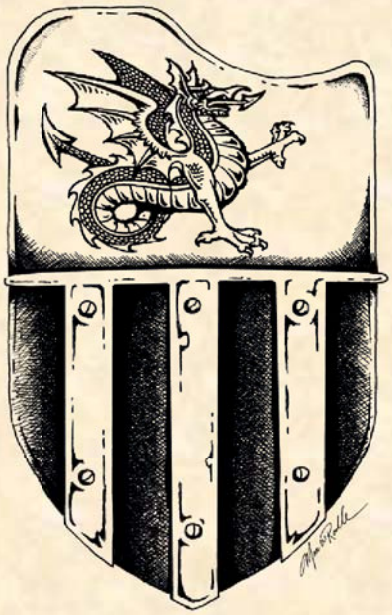
This crypt contains the sarcophagi of Lord Fenmor. The chamber is decorated more finely than the others, with large brass urns, gold gilding, gemstone insets and tattered rugs that crumble to dust when stepped upon. A complete looting of this chamber produces 1 x 7 HD Lair Treasure (LFG p.140).

Lord Fenmor's spectre rises if the sarcophagi or treasures are disturbed. He will attack the party as intruders, and will not be swayed by presenting keepsakes of his life to him, unlike his children. If confronted with Lady Setine, he flies into a fury, gaining *Off Turn Attacks*, and targets her mercilessly, seeking vengeance for her betrayal and curse.

Area 12 – Lady Setine's Crypt

This crypt contains the sarcophagi of Lady Setine. The stone door is not physically trapped, but passing through the entryway into the chamber activates a magical ward, subjecting the first entrant to a *Blindness* spell. A careful inspection of the doorway reveals a small arcane rune trap set into the apex (Perc (Arcane Lore) check).

This chamber is relatively sparse, with the usual Fenmor crest, a bookshelf full of yellowed and crumbling books, and the dust of long decayed clothes, flowers and other finery.



Lady Setine manifests as soon as someone passes through the runed entry way. She will not immediately attack, instead seeking to learn about why the adventurers are here and what other spirits have been released. Setine has no interest in the baubles that surround her. She wishes only to depart the crypt, but innately understands that she is bound here as long as Lord Fenmor exists (which she did not expect, and was not part of her plan). She is happy to assist the party in destroying his spirit, and offers her twin magic rings as payment. Any spellcasting ability Setine once had has been lost in her transition to undeath.

The dust and debris on Setine's rotten bookshelf conceals the enchanted Bands of Ishra, fashioned of silver and bone.

One ring allows the user to cast *Haste* once per week. The other ring allows the user to cast *Suggestion* once per week. If both rings are worn, the wearer immediately suffers a moderate madness that does not subside until 1d4 months after removing both rings.

A wearer of both rings hears occasional whisperings from Ishra, a genie like entity from another dimension. At the player's request, the GM may impart useful (but possibly cryptic) arcane or legendary knowledge to the adventurer once every six months. When this ability is used, a Will check is required to prevent the wearer's madness escalating to the next severity level.

Aftermath

If the cockatrice and spectres are removed, it is likely the crypt is taken over by some other beast, perhaps a pack of dire wolves, a giant serpent or similar.

If Setine is released into the world, she slowly begins to recover her spell casting abilities, and seeks out thuel and skorn victims. Over time, she joins forces with a hidden necromancer, and together they work to convert local skorn and thuel tribes to their cult of undeath.

(4) OLD BENGART'S MILL

Rumours & Hooks:
Outlanders living along the patrolled fields of *Skegg End* have grown very sick, with an increased number of vermin in the fields. *Captain Loris* wants someone expendable to investigate.

Unusual numbers of sheep and bison are going missing from farms, dragged away and devoured by ferocious beasts. But the tracks suggest something other than wolves or bears... Solving this mystery is an opportunity to build goodwill with the local outlanders.

Skegg End is a series of patrolled fields catering to approximately 250 people, within Port Brax borderlands, covering about four square miles. Outlanders raise livestock and crops, falling back to fortified barricades or the walled city itself when threatened by barbarians or skorn. A standing guard and hardened militia help fend off hostile incursions.

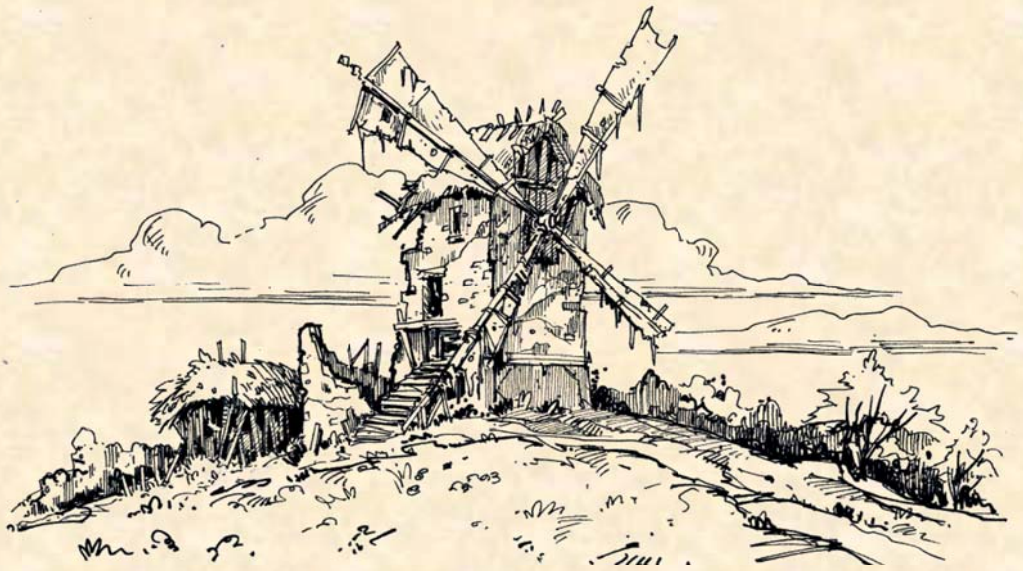
The *Bengart* farm fell into disuse years ago, ostensibly abandoned after shifting territories made it too dangerous to live in. In fact, Bengart fell victim to lycanthropy, and sent his family away. He is now a wererat, with precious little humanity left. He lairs in his old windmill, gathering vermin to him like a furry, disease ridden fog.

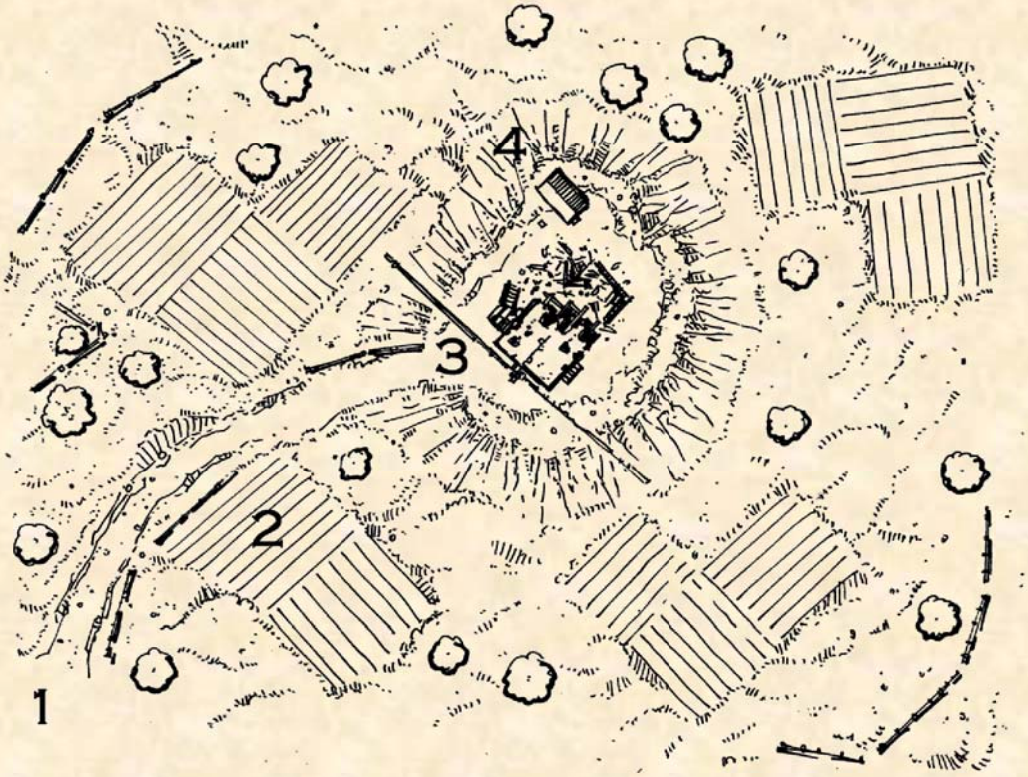
In the last few months, more than half a dozen farmers have contracted *Slough Pox* from the rats; a viral infection that causes the victim's skin to break out in sores and slough off. The disease is deadly in about 50% of human cases, but animals are immune. Those victims that recover are often badly scarred. Herbal remedies can alleviate the pain and scarring, but do not assist in fighting off the disease itself. Four outlanders have already died, and another three are in strict quarantine.

Captain Loris, a trusted and hardy ranger in her fifties, is willing to pay generously for some adventurers to determine the source of the plague, and either report back, or preferably deal with it. She suspects a large vermin nest somewhere on field outskirts.

Investigations

If the party makes inquiries, they might discover some other strange occurrences on in the area. Sheep have been going missing at an alarming rate, and tracks suggest something other than wolves or bears are responsible (Cha (Gather





Information) check). On a great success, one hunter by the name of *Motely* even suggests he saw what appeared to be enormous rat tracks nearby old Bengart's place.

If the party investigates some of the raided farms, it doesn't take long to locate tracks in connection with missing sheep. An Int or Perc (Wilderness Lore) check identifies giant rat tracks (cat sized), as well as one very large set of paw prints (a dire rat, with paws the size of a horse's hoof).

Tracking the beasts leads to Old Bengart's farm, and the windmill (the GM determines how long the trip takes to the farm, and whether to roll for any plains based random encounters).

When the party first approach, they immediately notice large numbers of mice and rats in the long grass (hundreds upon hundreds), that skitter away at the slightest provocation. The fields here are completely overgrown, having been abandoned for years.

Area 1 - Outskirts

Characters passing through the farm perimeter at this point notice the occasional sheep carcass lying in the tall grass or shrubbery. Anyone in the vicinity of the dead corpses must make a Con check or contract bacterial Slough Pox, which begins manifesting symptoms within 1d6 hours: lose 1d3 Str each day for 1d4 days, then make a *Luck* (Con) save. If successful, the disease subsides with no further deterioration over 1d6 months. If failed, the victim loses another 1d3 Str, and repeat). A character who survives the pox has a 50% chance of losing 1 point of Cha permanently due to severe scarring.

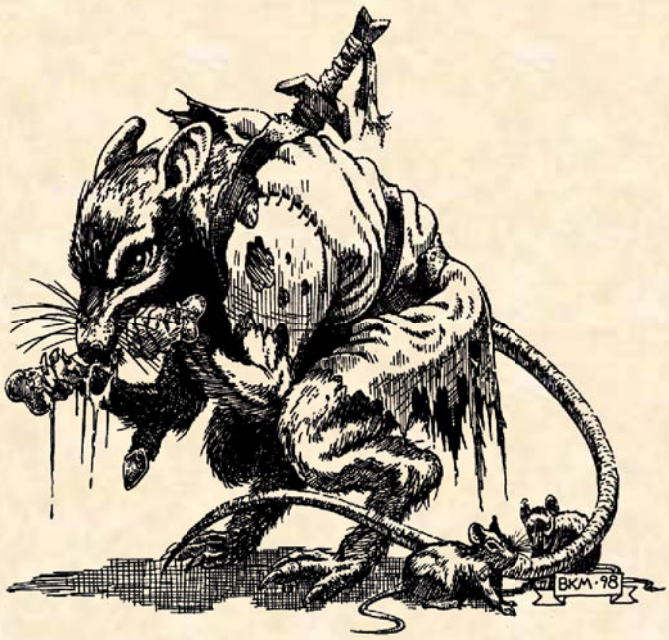
Adventurers that take precautions against infection, such as wearing face wraps or imbibing protective concoctions, gain advantage on the *Luck* save (or by employing multiple protections, might avoid the need for a *Luck* save at all).

Disturbing the carcasses, or physically touching them, requires a second *Luck* save (assuming the first was successful).

Area 2 – Overgrown Fields

At this perimeter point, unless the adventurers are being very stealthy (Dex (Stealth) vs Perc (Detection) contest), 5d4 giant rats are hiding in the overgrown fields, planning an ambush.

Giant Rat, AC 11, HD 1d4 hp, Bite 1d3, 19: If appropriate, another Giant Rat (60%) or Dire Rat (40%) comes to aid this Giant Rat, S3 D14 C8 I2 P13 W6 Ch4, L3, Mv 40 ft. 50% chance of exposing a bitten target to Slough Pox.



If more than half the rats are killed, the remainder must make a Will check at disadvantage or flee.

Area 3 – Old Windmill

The windmill is dilapidated and in a poor state, its blade rotted and mortar crumbling. The building has three stories, the exterior door long since fallen from its hinges. The lower entry level is generally inhabited by 1d4+1 dire rats. Dirty straw, fur and scattered bones litter the floor.

Dire Rat, AC 12, HD 2+3, Bite 2d4, 19: the target must make a *Luck* (Con) save or suffer a virulent disease, draining 1d4 Str over the next 1d10 minutes, S13 D15 C13 I2 P13 W9 Ch4, L5, Mv 60 ft. 50% chance of exposing a bitten target to Slough Pox.

A narrow staircase leads to the middle level, where Bengart resides. The second storey has enough holes in the floor that he can see (and hear) what is happening below.

The wererat and his dire rats retreat to this area if possible for fighting. All of the rat kin can climb the mortar here at their normal movement rate, and will flee out the windows and down the walls (a 20 ft drop) to escape if necessary.

While fighting on the middle level, scores of rats from the attic above drop through the rafters onto intruders, biting, scratching and generally going for the eyes. PCs fighting here must make a *Luck* save each round or suffer a -3 penalty on attack rolls, or spell interruption, due to dive bombing vermin.

Bengart, Wererat, AC 12, HD 3, Bite 2d3 and Sword 1d8, 19: if appropriate, a giant rat comes to Bengart's aid, S14 D18 C10 I13 P14 W10 Ch8 (Hybrid), L6, Mv 30 ft. Bengart is a lycanthrope with all the usual benefits (LFG p.95). By spending an action, he may exert control and issue orders to ordinary rats, giant rats and dire rats, which are compelled to obey. Wererats are extremely sneaky and gain advantage on Stealth checks.

Bengart is now more rat than man, but he retains aspects of his humanity. With the right prompts or pressure, he might be persuaded to show mercy, or offer his treasures (including those hidden in Area 4) in return for a truce and/or exile.

If the windmill is searched, 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136) is stashed in the attic, amidst rat detritus (exposing any who touch it to Slough Pox).

Area 4 – Rickety Shed

This 30 ft by 20 ft shed is almost in ruins, crumbling and unstable, with vegetation growing inside.

Bengart has hidden 1 x Valuables (LFG p.147) in the viney undergrowth of a rare *Jitter Vine*: anyone disturbing the brush sets off its flowery spores, causing the subject to flee in irrational fear for 5d4 minutes (*Luck* (Con) save resists). At the GM's discretion, an adventurer might harvest 1d2 spore pods that will keep for 1d6 weeks before turning inert (the plant produces spores only once per season).

Aftermath

Unbeknown to Bengart, when he sent his family away years ago, his daughter was already infected with early stage lycanthropy. Over time his entire family became lycanthropes (his wife, son and two daughters).

Recently the pack has heard tales of a vermin plague in the area, and a giant rat that walks on two legs. They are en route to investigate. If they find Bengart dead, they will seek vengeance against his killers if possible. Alternatively, if Bengart is alive, the family reunites and sets about infecting Skegg End.

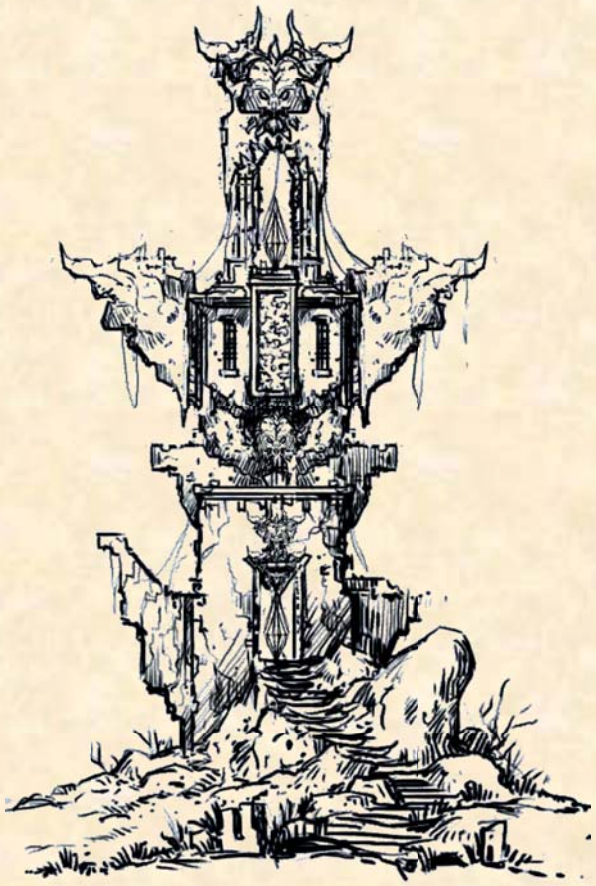
(5) GREEN CRYSTAL TOWER

Rumours & Hooks:
Deep in hostile plains, on a rocky outcropping, stands a crumbling tower topped with the likeness of a demon's skull. Legend suggests it was once the home of a powerful wizard.

A band of cyclopes have been seen hunting along the outskirts of *Port Brax* borderlands, scouting the area for potential raids. Authorities have issued a handsome bounty to deal with the threat.

In remote, hostile plains beyond the borderlands, on a bare rocky outcropping, rises an old and eccentric tower. Fashioned of stone and mortar, in long forgotten style, the strange edifice is topped with the likeness of a demon's skull.

Whatever cult or sorcerous power once dwelt here has long since departed, but the tower is not unoccupied. 1d3+2 *Cyclopes* have taken up residence on the second level and consider the ruin their home.



The lower level of the tower consists of pillars with a man sized, dark green crystal in the centre. The magic of the crystal has long since failed, along with its teleportation power, making climbing the only way to reach the second level.

Climbing up to a window is not difficult for a ten ft tall cyclops, but humans require a Str or Dex (Athletics) check to scramble up without misadventure (automatic success with ropes or enough time).

The second level is mostly crumbling furniture and furs, but 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.136, 141) may be scavenged. Hidden beneath a concealed trapdoor is a secret cache of 1d3 scrolls (LFG p.152). The compartment is magically warded against non-spellcasters that open it, unleashing a *Finger of Death* spell. If slowly opened, small runes can be seen around the inside edge of the trapdoor before it is fully opened and the ward triggered.

On the roof of the tower is a second man sized, dark green crystal, but this one pulsates with flickers of darkness from time to time (if the crystal is closely studied, a Perc (Detection) check notices such).

Climbing to reach the crystal requires another Str or Dex (Athletics) check, to avoid falling 25 ft to the ground.

Anyone touching the roof crystal senses a subtle welcoming, a kind of cosmic narrowing of attention upon them from distant reaches. The adventurer senses that *something* wants to impart a blessing, or perhaps understanding, upon them. An Int check (at advantage if skilled in Arcana) intrinsically senses that this blessing will be both boon and bane.

If the offer is accepted, the character is imbued with a whisper of forbidden lore, and gains the ability to cast one spell every 1d4 days (roll 1d6, 1-3: 1st level, 4-5: 2nd level, 6: 3rd level; determine the spell randomly). The adventurer also suffers a moderate madness that cannot be mitigated or removed (via magic or otherwise). The blessing functions only once for each character, and each use has a 75% chance of burning the crystal out permanently. If the crystal is burnt out, a wave of psychic energy pulses outwards, requiring a *Luck* (Dex) save to avoid being thrust off the tower.

Each of the cyclopes living in the tower has touched the crystal, felt its power, and are more unhinged than most of their kin. The cyclopes have each learnt a random spell as noted above.

Cyclops, AC 12, HD 7+2, Oversized Club 2d8+1, 19: special, S19 D12 C16 I6 P8 W10 Ch9, L9, Mv 40 ft. Lacks depth perception suffering disadvantage on ranged attacks. 10 ft reach and *Causes Injuries* on a natural 19-20 attack roll. Cyclopes retain vestiges of augural ability and gain a free attack on a natural 19 or 20 attack roll.

(6) WAYFARERS

Rumours & Hooks:
Rumours are circulating about a small band of adventurers scouring the *Low Plains*. Some say the company includes a wizard that turns people to stone. Whatever they're looking for, they've been searching for a week now, seemingly without success.

A band of well armed treasure hunters have set up camp in a nearby ravine. On one of the few occasions they've been spotted in town, the group were inquiring about the whereabouts of the PCs.

The *Wayfarers* adventuring company, consisting of *Gromwug*, *Langley* and *Farro*, and their six hirelings (three porters and three men-at-arms), have set up camp in the borderlands of the nearest city.

They are searching for... whatever the party is currently searching for! By luck or design, the wayfarers have gotten wind of the same treasure the party are after, and hope to beat them to it. Depending on the specifics, the rivals might have to track the PCs to the location or intervene more directly.

Alternatively the PCs might have already acquired the particular treasure, and the wayfarers are seeking the party to bargain for it (or steal it). In this case, they have been making inquiries, anxious to locate them, and ideally lure them into

the wilderness to negotiate (or otherwise). The parties might also simply cross paths in the outlands, either camped or trekking across the great plains.

Either way, the wayfarers are initially sociable and happy to swap tales and war stories. They regard the party as kindred souls, and are genuinely interested in their history and objectives.

The band are however very much of the hard hearted, mercenary kind, wandering from land to land in search of riches, power and glory. If the PCs reveals any obviously highly valuable goods, or the specific treasure(s), they immediately begin plotting the best way to obtain them. If the two companies do not come to blows, they might find opportunities to assist each other, or perhaps even join ranks on occasion to tackle particularly dangerous opponents.

Gromwug, AC 19 (heavy amour & shield), HD 7 (45 hp), 2 Spear 1d6+3, 19: target is tripped, S16 D15 C12 I13 P8 W13 Ch12, L9, Mv 30 ft. Gromwug has the Fighter Adaptable ability, with the Protector style. He may change styles twice per combat. He is Varnori, an ex-gladiator of Melek and well versed in a range of weapons, but favours the spear and shield. Gromwug is the least talkative of the wayfarers, and the most loyal. He is immune to fear related checks and may perform one automatic *rescue* per combat, an ability normally restricted to PCs only.

Langley, AC 13 (leather), HD 5 (30 hp), Staff 1d6+1 or Sword 1d8+1, 19: as weapon, S13 D16 C10 I15 P15 W17 Ch14, L8, Mv 30 ft. Langley is from *Port Brax*, sociable, and interested in hearing the exploits of the PCs. He has a long standing interest in ancient secrets and collects lore of all kinds. He may be able to divulge useful information to the PCs if they can strike a bargain. Langley is the most ruthless of the company and least likely to lose any sleep over

murdering them in their sleep for treasure. May choose from the following spells five times per combat (5th level): *Charm Person, Sleep, Detect Magic, Unseen Hand, Fog Cloud, Cure Minor Injury, Phantasmal Force, Locate, Levitate, Fly, Haste.*

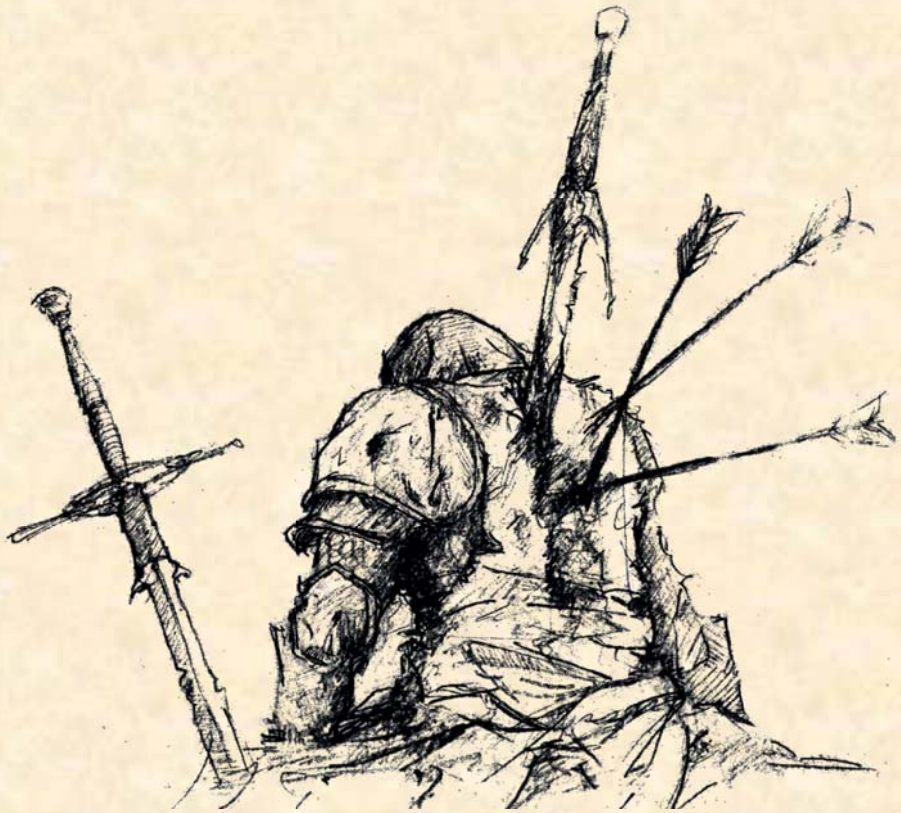
Farro Banderhall, AC 14 (leather), HD 6 (35 hp), 2 Dagger 1d6+3, 19: special, S15 D17 C13 I14 P17 W10 Ch15, L8, Mv 30 ft. Farro's daggers cause 1d6 damage instead of 1d4, and on a natural 19 to hit roll, the target must roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table (players may choose to make a *Luck* save to negate). Farro has Backstab, Skirmisher and Finisher abilities like a 6th level rogue, and may choose from the following tricks three times per combat: *Choking Dust, Hidden Blade, Quick Reflexes, Smoke Bomb, Unseen Whip.*

Farro is a midlander thief, a hard luck story from Northgate with a talent for blades and cards. She is happy enough to talk, and likes a good laugh, but her eye is always on the next prize. Unlike Gromwug and Langley, Farro's true loyalty is to herself, and she will not hesitate to flee a doomed battle, even if it means abandoning her comrades. She is not particularly blood thirsty, and prefers guile to direct conflict, but will not shy from danger provided the profit is clear.

Men-at-Arms, AC 14 (chain & shield), HD 1+3, Axe 1d8, 19: as weapon, S14 D10 C12 I10 P10 W10 Ch9, L4, Mv 30 ft.

Porters, AC 10, HD 1d6 hp, Knife 1d4, 19: as weapon, S10 D10 C11 I9 P9 W10 Ch10, L4, Mv 30 ft.

The wayfarers have 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.136, 141), and Langley, Gromwug and Farros each have a magic item of some kind (2 x One shot and 1 x permanent item, LFG p.150, 152).



(7) BETRAYAL AT SIRADORN

Rumours & Hooks:
Messenger birds have stopped arriving from *Siradorn*, an important iron ore outpost in the barbarous *Great Plains*. Merchants in the walled city of *Port Brax* want someone to investigate before they send out the next caravan in a few months.

Siradorn is a fortified outpost located in the Great Plains, amidst several hostile barbarian and beastmen territories. Founded on an iron mine, its grey smoke plumes can be seen for miles, constantly curling upwards from the fort's smelting furnaces.

Periodically, wagons of refined ore depart for Port Brax care of heavily armed caravans, before returning some months later for the next shipment. Guarding the wagons in either direction is dangerous but lucrative work, and for those planning to explore the plains more fully, Siradorn serves as a relatively safe stopover.

Danger Within

In this instance however, the outpost is under attack from within. *Mistress Kendra*, a saboteur and agent for the ruthless merchants of *House Tergoza*, has infiltrated the camp and is slowly poisoning its inhabitants. Disguised as a candlemaker, Kendra employs the rare alchemical concoction known as *Shennog's Veil*, a clear fluid with a slightly metallic odour that poisons the brain, slowly turning the victim mad (affects humans only).

Kendra's candles and lantern wicks (which she supplies to almost all residents) spread the toxin by scent, requiring some weeks of exposure before taking hold. Kendra has been poisoning the outlanders since the last ore shipment several months ago, and 85% of the population are now under its influence. Kendra herself carries an antidote that she imbibes daily to protect her against the effects.

Kendra, Boss Monster, AC 13 (leathers), HD 6 (49 hp), Knife 1d4+4 + poison, 19: As weapon, S9 D15 C10 I15 P13 W10 Ch10, L8, Mv 30 ft. Kendra may choose from the following Rogue tricks three times per combat: *Choking Dust, Hidden Blade, Quick Reflexes, Smoke Bomb.* She may apply poison to her weapon as part of her attack action, and is never without 2d4 poison doses of poison (half *Fireblood,* half *Ghoulsheen*; LFG p.33). Kendra wears a poisoner's ring with a dose of *Whisperfog* (LFG p.33, 34).

Additionally, Kendra carries a cache of trigger vials of a highly potent catalyst. A trigger vial may be thrown up to 50 ft and bursts in a clear 30 ft cloud that persists for 2d6 rounds. Any poisoned NPCs exposed to the cloud are instantly overcome by homicidal urges (no save) that last 1d6 hours, attacking or manoeuvring to ambush anyone nearby who is not similarly affected (they "smell" others who have "triggered", and do not target them).

Against those unaffected by Shennog's Veil (eg the PCs), the target rolls on the Madness table below instead (*Luck* (Will) save resists, immediate effect, lasts 2d6 hours). Kendra's unique alchemical perfume (smells like citrus and mortar) protects her in a 5 ft radius, causing

homicidal NPCs to pause dazedly before seeking out a different target on their next turn.

The PCs might become involved in this adventure by (i) being hired by Port Brax merchants to find out why messenger birds have stopped arriving, or (ii) wander into Siradorn whilst exploring the plains for unrelated reasons.

Great Plains

The fortified outpost is located at least five days trek into the Great Plains, an expanse of verdant grasses that grow three to four feet high. Adjacent land has been cleared as fields and the outskirts are patrolled, but beyond this rudimentary taming, the plains run unchecked.

There is a 30% chance of a random encounter every 12 hours whilst travelling to Siradorn. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

1. 2d4 *Giant Wasps* are buzzing low across the grasslands, searching for some humanoid sized prey. If they manage to paralyze a target, they will withdraw, carrying the unfortunate back to their hive (for eating and/or egg implantation).

2. A warband of 2d8 *Ogres* (LFG p.120) are clashing with 2d10 mounted thuels (50%, as *Berserker* LFG p.114) or *Skorn* (50%, see *Bestiary*). If either side notices the party, they attack them too.

3. In the distance a lone barbarian wearing an animal skull mask can be seen, raising her arms and voice to the sky (Shaman, Magic User 3). Moments later, a peal of thunder echoes overhead.

4. A *Western Panther* (70%, see *Bestiary*) or mated pair (30%, possibly with cubs) are hunting in the long grass, stealthily stalking the last member of the party.

5. 3d10 *Skorn* hunters are loping through the grasses here, on the trail for fresh meat. There is a 50% chance they are upwind of the party and hiding in ambush.

6. A *wild fire* erupts in nearby grassland, sweeping through the plains, filling the sky with smoke and embers. There is a 50% chance the winds blow the fire towards the party. If so, a group *Luck* check is required to avoid being caught in the flames and suffocating smoke, causing 4d6 damage and requiring a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table. Taking appropriate precautions grants advantage on the check (wearing a facemask, taking shelter in trench, rock formation or pool, etc).

7. A band of 5d10 xenophobic thuel riders (as *Berserker* LFG p.114) appear in the distance. The travellers might be able to hide from them, negotiate passage, or neutralize the encounter in some other way.

8. 5d4 *Giant Rats* (70%) or 3d4 *Dire Rats* (30%) are scavenging from a dead bison carcass. They might take their chances against a PC however, particularly if they can isolate a small or obviously wounded target.

Siradorn

Siradorn exists solely for the iron ore veins located beneath Area 20. Some 200 to 300 outlanders live and work here, mining, refining and preparing the ore for shipment to Port Brax every few months. A number of relevant businesses have sprung up within the fort, catering to the needs of the miners, guards and so on.

The wooden walls and parapets protect the outpost from skorn, thuels and on occasion more monstrous threats. At any one time there are 1d3+1 men in each of the nine towers or walking nearby palisades, keeping an eye out for gathering threats.

Each of the towers has a heavy duty ballistae on a rotating platform (range 500 ft, 4d6 damage or vs humanoids requires a *Luck* (Dex) save or

reduced to zero hp, reload as crossbow). Outside the walls, 5 ft wooden stakes form a perimeter against thuel riders, excepting the northern mound, which has sheer, 30 ft granite walls instead.

Guards, AC 16 (heavy chain and shield), HD 1, Spear 1d6+2 (two handed), Sword 1d8+1, Longbow 1d8+1, or Heavy Crossbow 2d8+1, 19: as weapon, S13 D10 C11 I10 P12 W10 Ch10, L4, Mv 30 ft.

The fields outside the walls supplement the outposts salted meat, hard tack and other shipped consumables. Six of the fields are lying fallow and another three were recently burnt by beastmen raiders. The remaining six are being harvested for wheat, beans and oats.

Kendra's Plan

The poisoner is under strict instructions to disrupt the mine operations as much as possible, or if need be shut it down completely. By sending most of the camp mad, Kendra has largely achieved her primary goal; ore harvesting has halved and communications with Port Brax have stalled. Very soon, the most paranoid and deluded outlanders will start killing each other, further reducing morale and productivity. For the most part Kendra is happy to keep things ticking along, waiting for her scheduled escort back to Port Brax.

When the PCs arrive, Kendra suspects they are agents of rival merchants, and will keep an eye on them. If she thinks they are getting too close to uncovering her plot, she accelerates plans, personally setting off trigger vials in crowded spaces (the Alehouse, Concora's, the barracks, mine, etc) or sending her dogs out, their collars soaked in the trigger chemical and setting off people on the streets.

If Kendra must flee the outpost, she first attempts to clear out her locked cupboard, then steals two horses from the stables. She drops trigger vials at the gate in an effort to delay any pursuit.

Uncovering the Poison

The poison is a clear fluid and invisible gas, but exhibits a faint metallic tang and scent. In the outpost however the fumes from torches, oil lanterns and the smelting furnace generally disguise the smell.

A blood or saliva sample from any of the mad may be analysed with the right reagents/herbs (which a PC skilled in apothecary might already have, or otherwise be obtained from Area 26).

An Apothecary check at a -2 penalty identifies the poison. The antidote however requires very specific, very rare ingredients, the only local source of which is Kendra's locked safe in Area 22. Testing the local water or food comes up negative. Testing the air near a poisoned candle etc, or the mouth/nostrils/lungs of a victim, may reveal the vector. If the party investigates Kendra's home, they may discover the store of poison in her locked cupboard.

Madness afoot

As noted earlier, most of the complex is labouring under the effects of Shennog's Veil, twisting their thoughts with insanity. When the PCs engage with any NPC, there is a 75% chance the character is affected, colouring everything they do. Some example madness traits appear below (roll 1d10):

1. *"The Red God demands a sacrifice, or Siradorn will surely fall to the beastmen horde. I must take one life to save all our lives."*

2. *"Have a care what you say in this place, brother. Trust no one, not even your closest ally. They are among us, always watching, ever scheming."*

3. *"Vile witch! You may have fooled the others, but I know the demon in your heart. Mob or no mob, I will burn the darkness from you."*

4. *"Silence! Your sycophantic fawning and mewling bootlicking sickens me. Be gone from my sight, lest I do something we both regret."*

5. *Ah, forgive my stare, I see you cannot hear my thoughts, as I hear yours.*

6. *"The stench of your illness is overwhelming; just standing near you I feel sullied by it. Leave this place, before you infect us all."*

7. *Surely you see him? By the side of smithy, the man with no face? Why does he follow me? Make him leave, I beg you."*

8. *It's the flames, you see. The fire. It warms us, cooks for us, gives us light. But it calls to them, the unnatural things, drawing them from beyond. Extinguish the flames wherever you find them, my friend. It's the only way to be safe.*

9. *There are cultists here; this place is infested with them. It's the wilds, you see, that turns men's hearts. Silas knows, yet does nothing. I've seen him slinking about, whispering in dark corners. Aye, I know what must be done.*

10. *It's the Alehouse, don't you see? They're poisoning us with their food, turning us against one another. But why, and to what end? I'll must have answers!*

Street Encounters post trigger

Once Kendra sets off her trigger chemicals, if the party travels the streets, there is a 50% chance of an encounter each trip. Roll 1d10:

1. 2d6 *Guards* come charging down the street, bellowing war cries and slashing at anyone they can catch. There is a 50% chance *Captain Ruby* (Area 2) is with them.

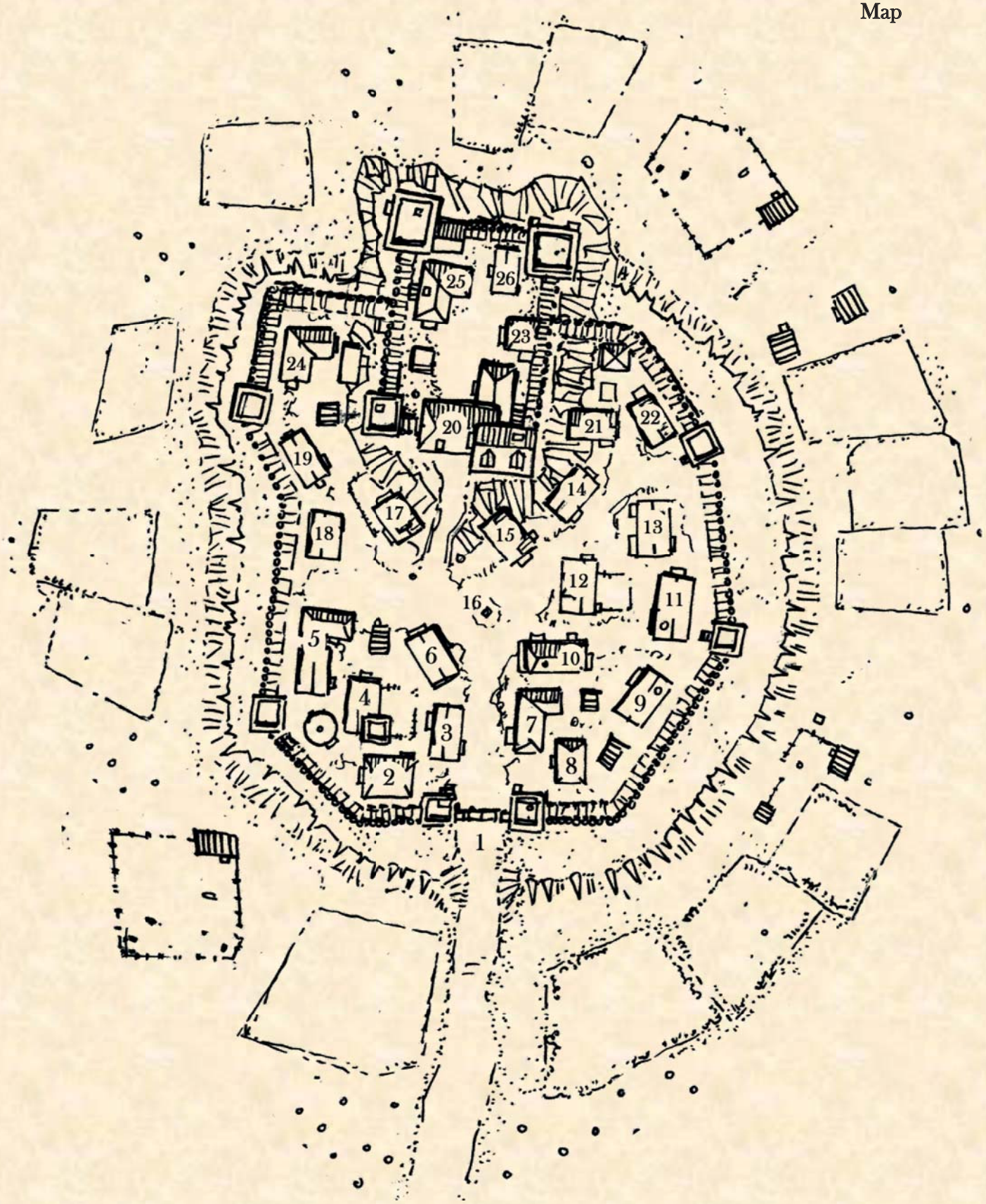
2. Mill workers *Edric* and his wife *Sara* (Area 7) are moving slowly through the street, eyes bulging, wringing their hands and making awful swallowing noises. They mean to snatch someone, drag them into an alley, and wring their neck.

3. The smith *Mord* and his apprentice *Sharn* (Area 24) are breaking into a nearby house with their hammers, smashing through the door. Their faces are locked in grim, froth covered rictus'.

4. 2d6 *Hunters* (Area 4) swarm the street, firing their bows at anyone within range. They sound their hunting horns in short, frenzied blasts as they go. Some have bite wounds on them (they slaughtered their hounds in their kennels). There is a 50% chance *Damir* is with them.

5. 3d6 miners (as *Outlander*) are lurching down the street, soot and blood stained. They attempt to swarm a target, pinning them to the ground before puncturing them with picks or smashing them with hammers. Their purple neck and forehead veins throb horridly. There is a 50% chance *Furnace Master Rogirus* (Area 20) is with them.

6. 2d4 *Outlanders* with barstools and broken glasses or steel mugs are breathing heavily, bashing or stabbing an already mangled corpse in the middle of the street. There is a 50% chance *Gudvarr* and his two cooks are with them (Area 5).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7. 3d4 scantily dressed brothel workers (as *Outlander*) and *Concora* (Area 17) appear at the end of the street, gripping knives. Silently, they move forward purposefully, breathing in a disturbing, hyperventilating manner.

8. 1d3 *Guards* on duty in a nearby tower (see earlier) fire a ballista at the party, hooting and crowing as they do so.

9. The weavers *Amende*, his wife *Meri* and children *Arlo* and *Cidia* (Area 10), are hiding in a nearby alley, gripping braided cords in both hands. They intend to sneak up on and garrotte the next passer-by.

10. The Overseer, *Silas* (Area 25) emerges from a nearby building covered in blood. His jaw is clenched with such force that the grinding of his teeth can be heard. Raising his battle axe in a white knuckled grip, he surges towards the party making primal grunting noises.

Outpost Locations

Area 1 – Entry Gates

Large wooden entry gates are set into 12 ft log walls, barred with two sturdy beams. 2d4 guards are on duty at the gate at all times. Humans are generally admitted with minimal questioning, subject to any madness complications.

Areas 2 & 7 - Barracks

These moderately sized barracks contain up to 3d6 men, most sleeping in bunks or hammocks. Up to 50% of them have access to heavy crossbows and shields. They are otherwise armed similar to the tower guards and police the streets if not on wall duty or field patrol. The guard captain is *Ruby*, a fearless red head with twin shortswords (with spring loaded spike pommels) and uncanny speed (Fighter 3, Dex 17, advantage on initiative checks). The deeply insane falconer, *Henmok* (see Area 21) is shackled here in the watch house cells.

Area 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 19, 21 - Domiciles

3d6 outlanders live in each of these dwellings, on small bunks or hammocks, most miners or labourers. All have access to basic weapons, leather armour and 50% have short bows.

Outlander, AC 11 (leathers), HD 1, Hammer/Axe 1d6 or Short bow 1d6, 19: as weapon, S12 D10 C12 I10 P10 W10 Ch10, L4, Mv 30 ft.

Area 4 – Hunter's Hall & Kennels

3d4 hunters armed with short bows, knives and short bows sleep on bedrolls or hammocks in this small hall. The western kennels house 3d4 loyal and ferocious hounds. The best tracker is *Damir* (Ranger 3), a short but agile Midlander with a battered cloak, mighty beard and loyal falcon friend, *Wix*.

Hunter, AC 12 (leathers), HD 1, Knife 1d4+1 or bow 1d6+1, 19: as weapon, S11 D13 C10 I10 P13 W10 Ch10, L4, Mv 30 ft.

Hound, AC 12, HD 1+2, Bite 1d4+1, 19: knocked prone, S13 D14 C15 I2 P12 W10 Ch6, L4, Mv 60 ft. Advantage when tracking or flanking.

Area 5 – The Alehouse (Tavern)

The *Alehouse* is an "L" shaped wooden tavern, single storey, with a large common area and handful of tiny rooms. The walls are roughly cut and two hounds sit by a hearth fire. The food is cheap and hearty, the ale brown and bitey (house favourite is *Bloodgut Stout,* see Area 18). A few bottles of wine might be found out back for the right price.

The proprietor is a blonde haired hulk with a handlebar moustache named *Gudvarr*, a hard but brave soul "making his fortune" in the wilds while his family remains in Port Brax. He is assisted by two cooks, *Illa* and *Karsen*. 3d4 patrons are typically present, along with 1d3 of Concora's escorts (Area 17).

Area 7 – Mill & Potter

The small mill and pottery is operated by a slim, middle aged man named *Edric* and his depressed wife *Sara*. Their children died of disease two years ago, after which they decided they could live in the port city no longer, and are now making a life for themselves as outlanders. Their handcrafted pots are somewhat amateurish, but they get better each season.

Area 10 – Weaver

A Karok family of weavers make their home here, spinning thread, sewing and mending garments for the outpost. Like all Karoks, *Amende*, his wife *Meri* and children *Arlo* and *Cidia* are all albinos. They wear the best clothes in the outpost, highly functional and excellent quality, with hints of the latest city stylings.

Area 12 - Stable

This small residence and stable houses 1d4+1 horses at any one time, usually messenger steeds. The stablemaster is *Leighton* (40s, athletic, bald but likes wearing brightly coloured skull caps), assisted by his young son *Yarwin* (17 yrs, already taller than his father, excellent rider and horseback archer, Ranger 1).

Area 15 – Borglemont's (General Store)

This general store supplies food provisions, ropes, blankets, basic tools, etc. The owner *Borglemont* (not his real name, Rogue 3) is a short, dark skinned Nydissian with a wheezing laugh, and thievery brands on the left side of his neck. His house guard, a pale 6 ft Varnori named *Amgotha* (Barbarian 3, hates Karoks), is always on duty here.

Area 16 - Well

The outpost well is clean with a deep water reservoir. With the madness of recent weeks, a guard (usually *Darreth*, young Midlander who enjoys pipeweed) is always stationed here to ensure no-one messes with the water supply.

Area 17 – Concora's (Brothel)

3d4 dancers and prostitutes operate here under the watchful eye of *Concora*, a 6 ft dark skinned Nydissian ex-bouncer (Fighter 4) who brooks no violence against her workers. She broke the wrist of the last man who injured one of her male courtesans (a surly labourer, *Jax*, who still holds a fierce grudge). One of the brothel workers, *Sedira*, is an accomplished pilferer (Rogue 1, advantage on sleight of hand tests). She is growing weary of her lot in Siradorn, and might make a good hireling or henchmen, if her 200 gp debt to Concora can be resolved.

Area 18 – Harbrin's Brewery

The brewer's cottage is owned by *Harbrin*, 50s, a squat, round bellied fellow, with wild salt and pepper locks. The entire outpost is in awe of Harbin's various brews, in particular *Bloodgut Stout*, *Old Smashface, Moontime Mirth* and *Bisonback Pale Ale.*

The brewer is respected as much (if not more) than the overseer himself. Inhabitants have long treated the brewery as "neutral ground", a safe place where no man may draw arms or engage in fisticuffs. The captain enforces the neutral ground policy studiously, sometimes using it to resolve quarrels peacefully, and imprisoning those who break with custom for 7 days (no questions asked, and no appeal to the Overseer).

Area 19 – Three Shrines

This dwelling has the shield and star motif of Argona carved into the top of the door lintel. The resident priestess, *Yora*, early 20s, is a natural beauty despite her scarred chin, and well liked by all. Her ministrations usually keep the fort in good spirits. Yora's healing skills are mediocre at best however, and she remains oblivious to Kendra's poisons (in fact, Kendra has cultivated a close friendship with Yora as part of her plot). The shrine includes a central altar to Argona, with secondary prayer rooms containing shrines to *Graxus* and *Fenrir*.

Area 20 – Iron Mine

These three connected, double storey buildings are on a small hill overlooking the rest of the outpost. The iron mine entrance is here, with numerous shafts and passages dug from the earth below. 6d10 miners are working here at any one time, swapping day and night shifts. Miners who are not working are generally spending their time elsewhere in the outpost or sleeping upstairs. A second building includes the furnace for smelting and slag, and the third building stores refined ore (worth approximately 1 x 5 HD Lair Treasure, LFG p.140).

Furnace Master Rogirus (Nydissian, 40s, towering, bald and slim, branded with the skull & eel icon of the infamous *Longdusk* pirate ship on his left forearm) controls the entire operation and is normally ruthless about meeting schedule deadlines. The miners are armed with picks, hammers and similar tools, but wear minimal clothing (the physical work and furnace heat are taxing).

The mining shafts have recently connected with some unexpected natural passageways, but the workers have not been game to explore them as the iron veins don't go in that direction. They have boarded up the junction instead.

Area 21 - Aviary

The falcon mews and raven messenger aviary is relatively large and intact, but all of the birds inside are dead, seemingly hacked to pieces with a bloody hatchet, still on the ground. The owner, *Henmok*, a lanky barbarian with red chops, is imprisoned in the barracks in Area 2. He is quite mad, mumbling incessantly about the "Devil Bird" that is slowly but surely circling inwards, coming to devour his soul.

Area 22 – Candlemaker (Kendra's home)

Kendra lives in this reasonably sized wooden home, crafting the candles and wicks that she doses with Shennog's Veil. A small locked cupboard in a back room secures 3 doses of Shennog's Veil, 2 x Valuables (LFG p.147) and an assortment of illegal alchemicals/rare ingredients (worth 1d6 x 100gp to the right buyer). Additionally, small vials contain 1d2 doses of *Whisperfog*, *Giant Centipede venom* and *Fireblood* (LFG p.33). A Dex (Traps & Locks) check at -3 penalty opens the lock. Three loyal hounds guard the home.

Area 23 – Provisions Lockup

This secured building is used to store the overseer's and guards' official food requisitions, including grain, ale barrels and salted meat. Some spare swords, breastplates and shields are also secured here, as well as 1d6 fire pots. A Dex (Traps & Locks) check allows entry through the front door (no windows or back door).

Area 24 - Smithy

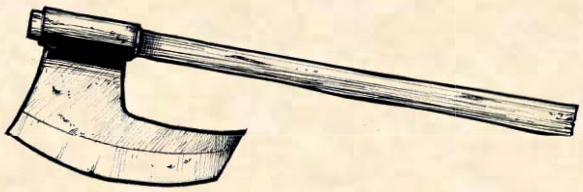
The smithy, responsible for making and maintaining most of the outpost's tools, weapons and armour, is run by *Mord*, a stocky and very quiet man who rarely strings two words together. He enjoys birdwatching in his downtime, and

often sketches them in his precious notebook. His apprentice, *Sharn*, 19 yrs, is a broad shouldered powerhouse with great endurance (Str 15, Con 15) and a naive longing for adventure. He has been training with hammer and shield for years, and is eager to go fortune hunting in the wilds. The right party member might find him a useful hireling or henchmen, provided he/she can obtain Mord's blessing first.

Area 25 – Overseer's Residence

The Overseer Silas' residence is relatively large, with quality furniture but the same roughshod timber walls as the rest of the fort. A safe containing 1 x 5 HD Lair Treasure is bolted into the basement (Dex (Traps & Locks) check at disadvantage to open). There is a 50% chance Silas is conducting business with 1d6 outlanders or guards if visited here.

Silas is an ex-soldier, missing one eye care of an old battle with some *Red Tusks* barbarians when he was young. He has since adapted to his injury, but sometimes feigns vulnerability on his right side, baiting his foe before viciously counterattacking.



Silas Redback, Boss Monster, AC 16 (partial plate, shield), HD 5 (45 hp), Battle Axe 1d8+2 or Throwing Axe (1d6+1), 19: As weapon plus 1d4 *Guards* come to Silas' aid, S15 D13 C15 I13 P9 W14 Ch13, L8, Mv 30 ft. Silas is a *Boss Monster* with the usual benefits (LFG p.95). He has the Fighter Adaptable ability, with the Charger style. He may change styles twice per combat. Silas breaks the usual NPC rules and may perform a single Major Exploit once per battle (does not reduce his *Luck* score, PCs may make a *Luck* save to resist).

Area 26 - Apothecary

The apothecary's home has been locked up tight (Dex (Traps & Locks) check to open) since *Tundle* was secretly poisoned by Kendra when she first arrived (he almost certainly would have ruined her plans). The outpost believes he died of stroke. Various healing herbs, bandages and other useful healers gear may be found here.

Aftermath

If the plot is uncovered and the outpost saved, the PCs become local legends and are paid a sizable reward by the iron merchants back in Port Brax. A PC displaying special leadership might even be invited to take over as overseer or watch captain. Further work may be forthcoming for paid patrols of the nearby wilderness. In any event, the PCs might be able to use Siradorn as a base or secure stepping point to other more distant outlands. House Tergoza likely holds a grudge, and may seek revenge later.

If Kendra's plans prevail, the fort falls into ruin within a few months, most of the miners abandoning it as cursed. Shortly thereafter, the mine is acquired by House Tergoza, who ships their own workers out to manage the site. Within a year, the mine is fully operational again, strengthening Tergoza's position as the largest supplier of iron in the region.

SWAMPS & MOORS

(1) IZRANORAE'S TREE

Rumours & Hooks
Rumpod, a portly and avaricious merchant, seeks a prophecy from the hags of the *Trackless Moors*. He is willing to pay generously for some adventurers to escort him.

A pair of prophetic hags are known to lair within a colossal tree in the *Trackless Moors*. It is said the hags enchant the eyes of their victims, transforming them into valuable gems.

On the outskirts of the *Trackless Moors* stands a mouldering, long dead tree trunk of colossal size, a giant skeleton of calcified branch and bark; *Izranorae's Tree*.

The Hag Coven

Named after the hag that originally discovered it, the Tree has been home to an unbroken line of malevolent hags, and is presently occupied by a coven of two: *Ixna* and *Fernelgren*.

The hags are sisters of a kind, hideous and malformed, bound by dark rituals and fey connections mortals cannot fully comprehend. It is enough to know however that the hags are incapable of directly injuring one another, but may do so via third parties.

Years ago, the Tree was also home to a third hag, *Wompra*. Over time the three discovered that Izranorae's Tree was more than just a lair. The Tree is also a vessel of mystic convergence, such that the power of any hag killed in the vicinity is trapped inside its branches for centuries to come. More importantly, any living hags residing in the Tree may draw on the trapped power to enhance their own abilities.

Wompra was the first of the three hags to be murdered, care of a deadly doublecross by her sisters and some vengeful thuels. Wompra's essence is now trapped, and counts as the third hag of the coven as long as Ixna and Fernelgren remain in the moors.

The sisters both reside in the Tree, Ixna on the northern side and Fernelgren the south. They are filled with hate and resentment for each other, and bicker constantly, pining for the day of the other's demise. Unfortunately for the hags, they require a third party to do their dirty work for them.

Ixna & Fernelgren, Hags, AC 13, HD 6, 2 Claws 1d6+1, 19: the target is cursed and loses 1 point of *Luck*, S19 D15 C10 I14 P14 W15 Ch4, L8, Mv 30 ft.

A trio of Hags is known as a *Coven* and multiply their powers. If all three hags are within the same geographic region (forest, mountains, plains, etc), each gains the ability to cast spells as a 6th level magic user. If two hags are in the region, they are 3rd level magic users. A single hag in a region has no spell casting ability. Once per lunar cycle, a

coven may perform a 1d4 hour ritual to gain limited powers of prophecy. Hags may enchant the eye of a victim into an *Evil Eye*, transforming it into a precious stone the hag can see through as if under the effect of a *Clairvoyance* spell. Hags sometimes gift the *Eyes* as pendants, turning the wearer into an unwitting spy. They are protected by 30% *Magic Resistance*.

Rumpod's Offer

Rumpod (early 60's, mirthless, with a poor memory, fond of pretzels), a wealthy pewter merchant, is about to be married. He is highly superstitious, ridiculously greedy, and dearly wishes to know if his impending marriage is a smart match. He has heard of the seer like powers of the hags, and is willing to pay 500 gold for an armed escort to meet them.

Rumpod, AC 12 (leather), HD 1 (4 hp), Longsword 1d8, 19: disarm, S9 D10 C7 I13 P8 W14 Ch9, L4, Mv 30 ft. Rumpod carries a longsword for protection, although he does not expect to have to use it. He has a bag of gems worth 5d100+800 as a gift/payment for the hags.

Random Encounters

Izranorae's Tree is located about 4 days travel into the swampland moors. The moors are muddy and humid, filled with spot pools, low lying water areas, and flying insects. There is a 25% chance of a random encounter every 8 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d10:

1. 5d4 *Projectile Leeches* (LFG p.116) are lurking in muddy pools, ready to launch themselves at passers by.

2. One of the adventurers has wandered into a small but deep quicksand pool. A *Luck* (Dex) check is required to grab onto a nearby log/vines/edge, to prevent sinking. A sinking victim vanishes beneath the liquid sand in 1d4 rounds (at which point they begin asphyxiating, LFG p.159). A Str contest vs Str 16 allows the character to claw their way out.

3. A loud, buzzing swarm of 3d10 *Stirges* (LFG p.126) descend on the party, eager to siphon their blood. Fire will keep them at bay for a time.

4. A chilling, high pitched shriek can be heard echoing across the moors, repeated back by others from time to time. Unless the party take preventative measures, 5d6 *Urgot* (40% chance of an *Urgozer* accompanying them, LFG p.128) track the party, waiting until nightfall to attack.

5. The dark water here rises to thigh height. 2d4 *Giant Crocodiles* (LFG p.103) are hiding just below the water line, only their nostrils visible. Any adventurers carefully scanning the surface gain a Perc (Detection) vs Dex (Stealth) contest to spot the reptiles waiting in ambush.

6. In a small expanse of bald cypress trees, trudging through one foot of brackish water, are 1d12 *Trolls* (LFG p.127). They have caught the party's scent, and are on the hunt for juicy manflesh.

7. Poisonous bog fumes are wafting across this region, causing dizziness and blurred vision. A *Luck* (Con) check avoids 1d4 Perc loss.

8. The party's rations have spoiled, infested with strange creepy crawlies and/or their eggs. Perhaps the party was unlucky, or perhaps something more sinister is at work.

9. A solitary *Will o' Wisp* (LFG p.129) appears out in the fens, flittering playfully across the landscape. Occasionally it assumes the form of a glowing child. It attempts to lure one or more adventurers into a quicksand bog (per Encounter 2), at which point 2d4 other *Wisps* also converge on the hapless traveller, zapping them with their Shock attack.

10. A single *Bloodroot Treant* (LFG p.127) is here, disguised amongst a number of mundane trees. It has been slumbering for years, but will be awoken by the succulent aroma of sentient flesh. It is has been a long time between feeds.

The Tree

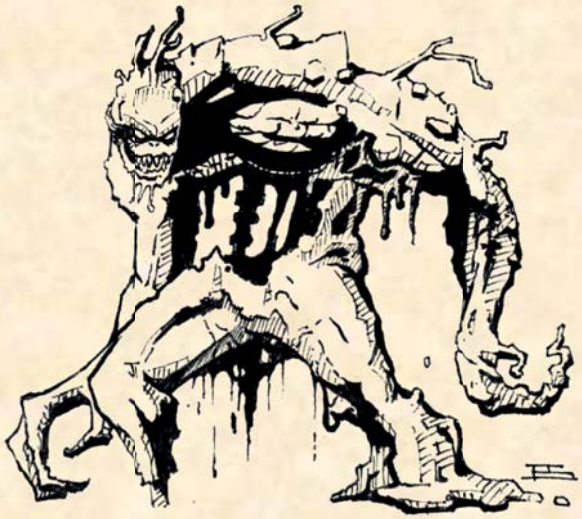
When the party finds the Tree, the hags are initially friendly, and not surprised to see them (they foresaw such in a past divination, albeit only in the vaguest terms). They are happy to offer the adventurers foul smelling gruel or to read their fortunes in carnival style fashion. If the party are with Rumpod, the hags will divine a true prophecy for him (about his bride to be, a new business venture, and a bastard son he is not aware of). But before they do so, the party must perform a task for at least one of the hags.

Ixna's Task

Some weeks ago, Ixna, the elder of the two hags, created a monstrous plant golem with a blood ritual, intending to set it upon Fernelgren.

Unfortunately for the hag, "*Slorgunt*", as the thing has taken to calling itself, refuses to co-operate. Instilled with a basic intelligence, the plant golem is torn by feelings of hatred, loathing, fury and intense sorrow; at its core it doesn't wish to destroy or maim, but it labours under an irresistible compulsion to do so. As a result,

Slorgunt lurks in nearby moors, hoping for an opportunity to confront and then slay its pitiless creator. Ixna's task is to track down and destroy Slorgunt as soon as possible - before Fernelgren gets wise to its existence.



Slorgunt, Plant Golem, AC 16, HD 9+2, Claw 1d8+2 and Bite 1d6+1, 19: Sorgunt sprouts another clawed arm, which attacks once per round, S19 D12 C16 I6 P14 W15 Ch4, L10, Mv 40 ft.

Sorgunt is a 9 ft humanoid of dead wood, thorns and vines, bound together by forbidden magic. Unlike most golems, Sorgunt is intelligent and of free will (much to Ixna's surprise and dismay). Slorgunt enjoys the usual Golem traits (LFG p.111), has 55% Magic Resistance, and *Off Turn Attacks.*

Fernelgren's Task

Fernelgren has a long standing, spiteful feud with the *White Fang* barbarian clan, arising out of her jealousy of their many beautiful, raven haired daughters.

Fernelgren wants the clan gone from the moors. She doesn't care if the adventurers kill, cajole or trick them into leaving, just as long as they go and never return.

The clan is several days trek away, residing in their stilt hut village. They are hunter gatherers for the most part, subsisting on small mammals, eels and a variety of large insects. *Papa Ronnog* is the Chief, and is more likely to imprison or kill the party than agree to move his people. On the other hand, he despises the hags, and might be convinced to help slay them.

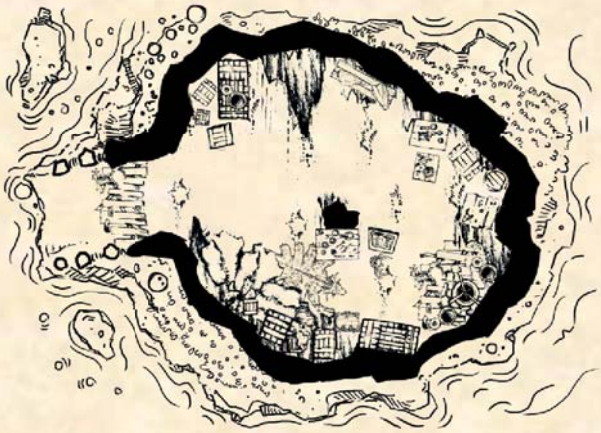
3d100 *Barbarians,* AC 13, HD 1, Spear 1d6+1 or Long Bow 1d8, 19: as weapon, S12 D10 C13 I10 P10 W12 Ch11, L4, Mv 30 ft. 10% of the barbarians are berserkers with S13, +2 bonus to attack, Spear 1d6+2, and never check for morale.

The Prophecy

If the party completes one or both of the tasks, the hags will conduct the ritual for Rumpod's prophecy.

Before that occurs however, they explain that they require the party (and Rumpod) to spend the night inside the Tree, for "attunement" purposes.

During the night, each hag attempts to persuade the party to kill her "sister". They will go to any lengths required, resorting to bribery, promises, threats or any other tactics they think might be successful. The hags can offer spell casting services, prophecy, 1 x 6 HD Lair Treasure (LFG p.140, hidden in one of their crates, including a few gems), rare lore or other incentives as determined by the GM.



If the party attempts to slay one of the hags, the other is unable to assist them in any way, including indirect spell casting. If they are successful, the remaining hag may or may not keep their promise. Depending on how vulnerable the party is, she might seek to eat them instead.

If the PCs don't agree to slay one of the hags, the sisters still perform the ritual as desired, and even gift one adventurer with a simple chained quartz gemstone (an *Evil Eye*, LFG p.113). One other adventurer (the one they like the least) will be cursed the day after they depart (*Luck* (Will) save resists, imposes disadvantage on *Luck* rolls for 1d4 months, ends if the hags are slain).

If both hags are slain, in addition to the 1 x 6 HD treasure, a bundle of 1d3 random scrolls are concealed on Fernelgren's person.

Aftermath

The GM determines the fine details of any prophetic reading (whether for Rumpod and/or the adventurers), and whether they come to pass.

If only one of the hags remains, she takes sole possession of Izranorae's Tree. Ixna turns her thoughts to expanding her influence beyond the moors, and begins perfecting her plant golem blood rituals. If Fernelgren lives, she gravitates towards clearing other thuels from the fens, driving men from her domain completely. Travel through her moors is punished with torture, suffering and death.

If any of the adventurers retain the Evil Eye pendant, the hags use it to spy on children and elderly in nearby settlements, targeting them for kidnapping and eating, should the opportunity arise.

(2) DEAD TREE GROVE

Rumours & Hooks:
Six months ago, a scout named *Yarrick* stumbled across a grove of dead trees on the edge of the Trackless Moors. In the middle of the grove was a skeletal body, a silver sword protruding from its chest. The ranger left without investigating further; something about the grove unsettled him.

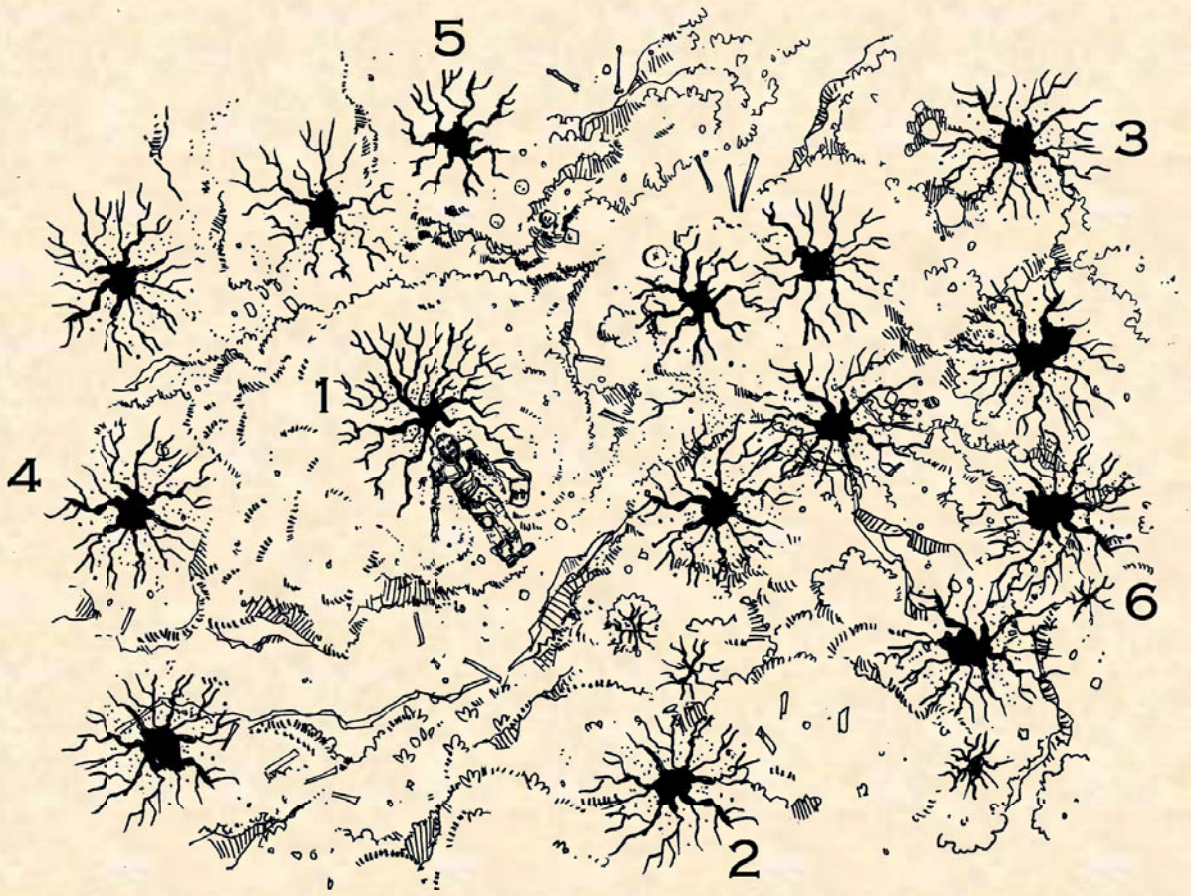
On a small rise in the fens, a grove of dead trees reaches for the sky, their spindly branches riddled with rot. In fact, the grove harbours 2d3 *Bloodroot Treants* (at locations numbered 1 – 6 on the map), who currently stand atop the buried bodies of recent victims.

The body of one of their victims, a mail clad warrior, has been left propped up against one of the bloodroots as a lure for curious animals, skorn, barbarians... and adventurers.

Bloodroot Treant, AC 17, HD 11, 2 Batter 3d6, 19: special, S22 D10 C20 I3 P13 W17 Ch4, L11, Mv 20 ft. Bloodroots *Cause Injuries* on a natural 19-20 attack roll and have a 10 ft reach. They are particularly susceptible to fire which causes double damage.

Bloodroots look like any normal tree until they attack, battering their foes with powerful limbs before digging them down into the earth and rooting themselves atop the still warm corpse. In this instance, an adventurer who specifically studies the trees gains a Perc (Detection) check, at disadvantage to detect a slight but clearly unnatural swaying in the branches.

If the bloodroots are defeated, the mail clad warrior wears rusted, but serviceable platemail, and the sword embedded in his chest is silvered. A weathered leather satchel contains mould and 1 x Valuables (LFG p.147).



If the adventurers dig up the corpses beneath the bloodroots, they find 2 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136) and 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.141). Alternatively, the party locates 34 gp, a diamond ring worth 1,000 gp, and a root encased (but otherwise untarnished) bronze helm on a decomposed female skeleton. The helm has been imbued with the essence of the bloodroot grove. Once per week, the user may cast *Speak with Plants*. Whether the helm manifests any further powers is left to GM discretion.

(3) VAULT OF GRAXUS

Rumours & Hooks
Lord Calder, a winter warrior of advanced years and genuine devotee of *Graxus*, is on his death bed. He wishes to be laid to rest in a hidden shrine to the *Iron God*, and is willing to pay handsomely to find it.

In chance loot, the party discovers a weighty tome; *Litanies of Blood & Iron,* a prayer book dedicated to *Graxus*. On the back of one page is a hand scrawled entry that refers to a hidden shrine in the *Trackless Moors*.

The Iron God

Beneath a stony rise, out in the distant fens, lie a series of cold tunnels dedicated to *Graxus*, the Midlander god of war, struggle and glory.

In the Second Age, amidst years of conflict and suffering, a wealthy priest commissioned the construction of a secret shrine to the Lord of Battle; a holy place of ritual offering to win the deity's favour.

In a great arena, beneath the sacred visage of Graxus himself, fervent devotees fought and died in gladiatorial combat, sacrificing their lives to entreat victory and end the war. Whether Graxus answered his faithful, and what became of the warring peoples, is unknown, but the Halls of the Iron God still remain.

The adventurers might learn about the ancient halls through obscure historical texts, by wandering into the area while exploring the moors, or on retainer for Lord Calder (an elderly, ex-mercenary captain with a wet cough, on his death bed, who hopes to be entombed within the hallowed complex).

Random Encounters

The halls are approximately five days trek into the damp, bug infested fens of the Trackless Moors, albeit in this case one of the drier regions, atop a small rise. There is a 20% chance of a random encounter every 6 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8 (plus 2 during the last day of travel):

1. 10d6 *Skorn* (Bestiary) have made their home here on dry hill. Their drums can be heard during the day. There is a 50% chance a sentry is downwind from the adventurers, and rallies a hunting party.

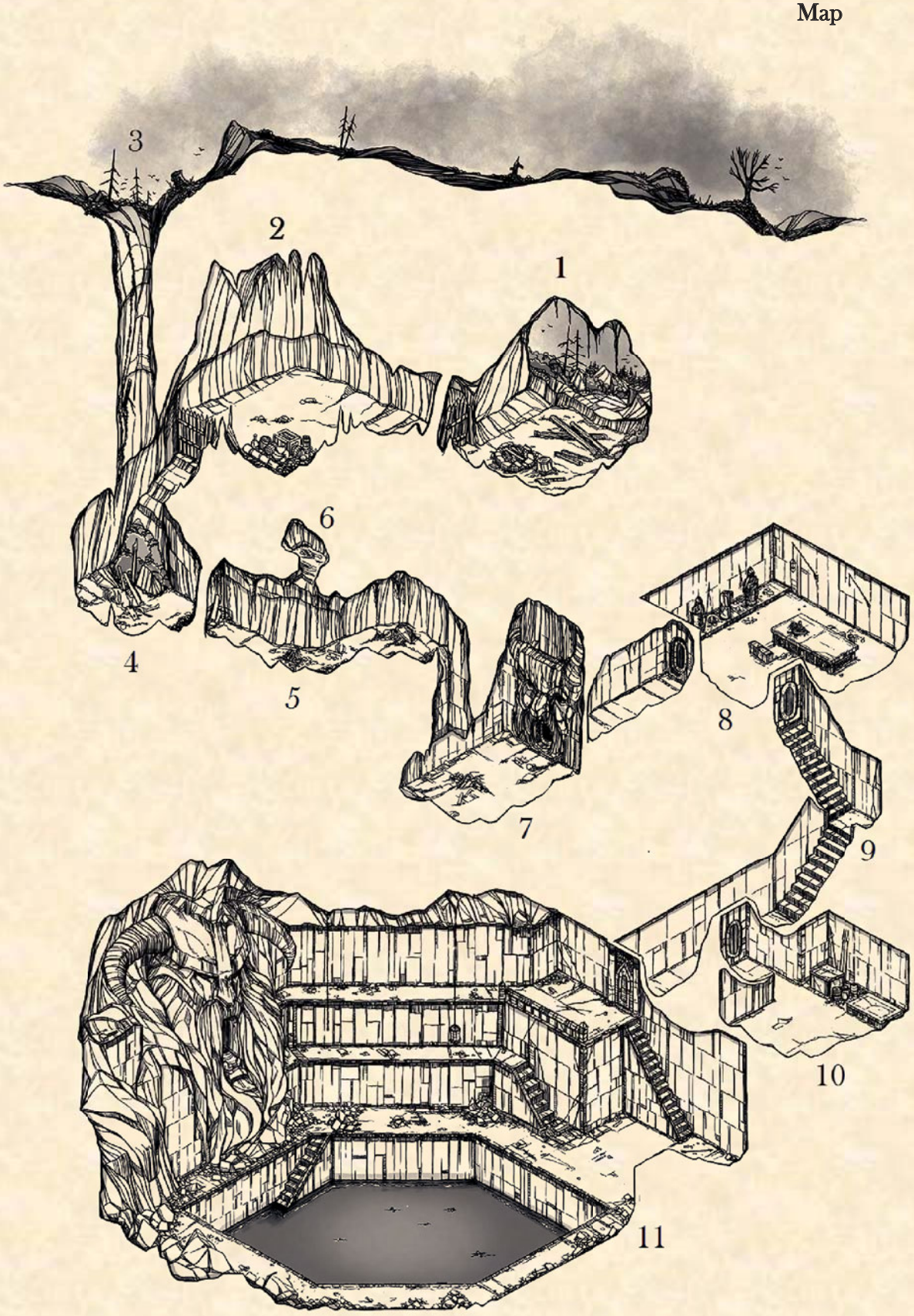
2. The adventurers wander into a boggy marsh, requiring a Str (Athletics) check to wade through. The area is infested with mosquitos, making things particularly taxing. A failed Str check causes 1 Str loss due to exhaustion.

3. 1d4+2 *Giant Serpents* (LFG p.122) have formed a nest nearby, with 1d6 eggs near to hatching. They will defend their territory against all comers.

4. 2d4 *Ogres* (LFG p.120) are rampaging through this area, roughhousing, snarling and generally making an awful ruckus. The ogres are arguing over dinner: bear or beastman? If they spot the party however, everyone agrees human tastes best.

5. *Downpour*! Whilst navigating a long stretch of puddles, the weather turns to heavy rain until dawn or dusk. The weather slows travel by half a day, and leaves the party soaked. But at least it clears out the bugs for a time.

6. A lone *Hag* (LFG p.113) is waiting for the adventurers. Her coven, able to divine the future, foresaw their arrival. The hag might have a message for the party (possibly: humans are her favourite meal).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7. 1d6 *Giant Spiders* (LFG p.125) can be heard chittering to each other in a damp glade. They appear to be zeroing in on the party's location.

8. A *Wyvern* (LFG p.130) from a distant hilltop is gliding overhead, casting its long shadow across the earth. It is either hunting, or returning to its den to mate (50% chance).

9. 2d6 *Urgot* from Area 1 are on the prowl in nearby territory. A bone chilling, simultaneous howl forewarns of their approach.

10. *Smorc & Runk*, the *Ettin* from Area 2, appears from a copse of trees. He has picked up the party's scent and is salivating for manflesh.

Area 1 – Cave Mouth

This 20 ft by 20 ft cave is open on the north eastern side, and contains a campfire and numerous logs for fuel. 4d6 *Urgot* (LFG p.128) are living here and in Area 2. There are always 1d3+1 of the mutants on sentry duty.

This particular tribe is accursed with elongated heads, noduled skin and clawed, malformed limbs. They employ ritual scarring on their chest to demonstrate tribal standing.

Technically, the urgot are led by the *Urgozer Norp'Lu*, but the entire tribe has pledged itself to *Smorc & Runk*; a massive, 13 ft ettin that lords over them. Perhaps surprisingly, the urgot and ettin have developed a close kinship, based on mutual hardship and physical oddity.

Urgot, AC 11, HD 1+4, Club 1d6+1 or Bite 1d6+1, 19: as weapon, S13 D13 C16 I7 P9 W12 Ch6, L5, Mv 30 ft. A group of urgot may issue a simultaneous howl or chitter once/day, causing creatures within 20 ft to suffer a minor madness (*Luck* (Will) save resists).

Norp'Lu, Urgozer, AC 11, HD 3+3, Big Claw 1d8, 19: knocked prone, S12 D14 C16 I12 P11 W16 Ch8, L7, Mv 30 ft. Norp'Lu may choose from the following spells twice per combat: *Hold Person, Charm Person, Slow, Phantasmal Force.*

Norp'Lu is a hunched, elderly urgot with one hand replaced with a hulking claw. His common is patchy at best, and he shouts in a rare tribal dialect (all but extinct beyond the fens). Norp'Lu might offer to let most of the party pass if his kin get to eat the fattest of them. He is generally friendly towards *Smorc & Runk*, but will flee if seriously injured, ettin notwithstanding.

Area 2 – Sleeping Cavern

This 25 ft by 25 ft cavern has a very tall ceiling lined with sharp stalactites, and is the main sleeping area for the urgot and ettin. Dim light makes its way into this chamber via Areas 1 and 3.

A wooden door to Area 4 is barred to prevent access (the ettin and urgot are aware of the scorpion nest, and do not venture there). Stacked in the southern corner are most of the group's goods (1 x 3 HD Lair Treasure, LFG p.140), looted from ruins, skorn and thuels.

Smorc & Runk, Ettin, AC 13, HD 10+3 (59 hp), 2 Big Clubs (2d10), 19: target is knocked prone and mercilessly mocked by both heads, S19 D10 C15 I8 P9 W14 Ch8, L10, Mv 40 ft.

Smorc & Runk is 13 ft tall, with long hair, large incisors and a sizable gut. As far as ettins are concerned, he is a genius, and his common is quite reasonable. Smorc & Runk likes his urgot "slaves" well enough, but will not hesitate to maim or kill them if he must in order to demonstrate who's boss. He likes to bellow "Man go splaaaat now!", "One head scob!" and "Manflesh smell eatey!" when he fights.

Area 3 – Chasm Entry

Surrounded by rough scrub is an alternate entryway to the halls; a 5 ft wide chasm that drops 60 ft straight down. Light from above filters into Area 4.

The walls are fairly steep, but riddled with large handholds and ledges to cling to. A Str (Athletics) check is required to free climb the descent. An adventurer with climbing gear automatically succeeds. Like most of the fens, the earth here is wet and loose, imposing disadvantage on free climbers and requiring a check for an assisted descent. A failed check results in a drop of 1d6 x 10 ft before striking the ground.

Area 4 – Scorpion Nest

This 15 ft by 15 ft chamber connects via a barred wooden door to Area 2, and a 5 ft wide tunnel (cool and dark, naturally formed, with an earthy scent) winds away to the east. Rubble and scattered bones litter the area.

A nest of 1d6+1 giant scorpions live in the damp tunnel, freely moving between Areas 3 to 7 (they have no difficulty navigating the chasm).

Giant Scorpion, AC 15, HD 6, 2 Claws 1d8 and Stinger 1d4 + poison, 19: caught in a pincer, the target suffers automatic damage each round (Str contest to break free), S19 D13 C15 I1 P10 W14 Ch3, L8, Mv 40 ft. 10 ft reach. The stinger's poison causes 1 Con loss every hour until death (*Luck* (Con) save resists). An apothecary with the right healing herbs may be able to delay or neutralise the poison.

Area 5 – Skeletal Remains

No natural light penetrates this far into the underground complex. From this point on, adventurers will need to carry their own light source.

This section of tunnel includes a large pile of animal bones, and to the east, humanoid bones scattered beneath a steel shield. Strewn within the bones are 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136). The shield is somewhat dirty and well dented, but silvered and fully functional.

Area 6 – Scorpion Nursery

This compact chamber is the scorpion nursery, currently home to 1d100 baby giant scorpions (about six inches long). They are freshly birthed, only days old, feeding on a small wolf carcass.

The hatchlings have no interest in leaving their chamber, unless the adventurers disturb them. If disturbed, 1d100 of the arthropods surge out. The leaping, stinging torrent of baby scorpions cause 1 point of poison damage per scorpion (*Luck* (Dex) save for half, or on a great success nil damage).

Area 7 – Mask of the Warrior

This 15 ft wide, 20 ft long chamber's most striking feature is the massive 25 ft high carving of a warrior's face on the north eastern wall. A jet black ballast stone door is set into the face's open mouth. It is stained with dust, dirt and what looks to be dried blood. Left over scorpion meals (animal bones and a decaying carcass) also occupy this room.

The door has no handle, lock or other obvious means of opening it. A secret pull ring is hidden in both the left and right eye sockets, about 10 ft

off the ground. Climbing up the face is relatively easy, there are many handholds to do so.

Pulling the right ring causes the door to open, raising itself upwards with a loud grating noise that echoes throughout the chamber. Careful inspection of this ring reveals more scratches and marks on it than the left ring (might require a Perc check, depending on lighting/time spent).

Pulling the left ring causes poisonous gas to issue from secret compartments hidden inside the nostril cavities. The poison causes 4d6 damage and imposes a serious madness (LFG p.91): *"Truly I speak unto you; I am the one scion of the Iron God made flesh. Test not my patience, mortal!".* A *Luck* (Con) save halves the damage and resists the madness.

Beyond this door, the remainder of the halls are fashioned of straight cut stone blocks and smooth floors. Torch and lantern brackets line the walls (empty of torches or fuel). The air within is cool, dusty and dry, the corridors completely dark and silent. Sounds are magnified and just walking produces an echo.

Area 8 – Guardian's Tomb

The north eastern door to this 25 ft square chamber is stuck but not locked, requiring a Str check to force open. The door to the south is similarly wedged.

Inside is a long, 10 ft sarcophagus, inlaid with silver and gold, with heraldry (twin falcons on a shield) of a long dead Graxus fanatic (his name is not recorded). Next to the sarcophagus is a 2 ft high step for sitting or kneeling beside, careful examination of which reveals a faded anvil and skull icon. Along the north western wall are three statues of spear & shield guards (human), one of which is heavily damaged (missing pieces lie on the floor). A steel inscription on the back wall reads "The Iron God Cometh" (in a long dead dialect, a Midlander speaker studying it might allow an Int check to decipher the gist of it).

Within the sarcophagus is a *Sentinel*; the undying corpse of a Graxus devotee who sacrificed his life to safeguard the halls for eternity. The sentinel has lain dormant for centuries, but will animate and attack if anyone attempts to open the southern door without first offering a prayer to the Iron God.

A person who sits or kneels at the step and prays or makes some other offering to Graxus has a 50% chance of restoring 1 point of *Luck*. Praying to a god other than Graxus has a 50% chance of draining 1 *Luck* point instead.

Sentinel, AC 17, HD 8+3 (45 hp), Axe 1d8+4, 19: as weapon, S19 D10 C18 I- P16 W- Ch-, L9, Mv 30 ft. The sentinel is immune to ranged piercing weapons, has *Off Turn Attacks*, 50% Magic Resistance and *Causes Injuries* on a critical hit.

The magic sustaining the sentinel has weakened over time, causing its flesh to smell and rendering the guardian prone to confusion. There is a 40% chance (per attack) the sentinel mistakes a statue for a foe and targets it instead of a PC (resulting in a shower of rubble) until all three are destroyed. The sentinel cannot leave the halls. If

defeated the sarcophagus contains 1 x Valuables and 1 x Trinkets & Curios (LFG p.140, 141).

Area 9 – Trapped Staircase

This steep stone staircase is trapped. Anyone stepping on the landing has a 50% chance of setting off a trapdoor (the centre is rigged, the outer 6 inches of the landing is solid). Triggering the trapdoor requires a *Luck* (Dex) save to avoid plummeting 30 ft down onto metal spikes, causing 6d6 damage and a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table.

The round after the trapdoor is activated, a horrible grinding noise can be heard from above. Each player turn thereafter (roll initiative to determine order), if there is a PC in the pit, requires a *Luck* save by the active player to avoid approximately 1 cubic metre of sandstone dropping from the ceiling into the pit, reducing anyone below to zero hit points. Digging out a trapped adventurer is possible but extremely time consuming, assuming the right tools are on hand.

Careful checking of the staircase might reveal hairline cracks in the floor or ceiling (Perc check at disadvantage, or without penalty if specifically studying the floor or ceiling).

Area 10 – Preparation Chamber

The iron banded door to this room is locked (the key is lost). A Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens the lock. Alternatively the door can be broken down with enough time.

This 25 ft square chamber has racks of weapons, armour and other combat paraphernalia lining the north eastern wall. The items are ancient and tarnished, but still in serviceable condition. One of the weapons or armour (GM discretion) is enchanted (LFG p.152), marked with an anvil & skull rune. The remainder of the chamber is empty (originally used as warm up space before combatants entered the arena).

Area 11 – Sacred Arena

This enormous underground chamber is 80 ft in diameter, wider than the light emitted by most torches and lanterns. The air here is especially still, and the echoes deeper.

A 10 ft deep, 50 ft wide hexagon arena has been built into the floor, with tiered walls and platforms on the northern and southern sides. The western wall is carved in the likeness of an awe inspiring, 30 ft warrior's head roaring a battle cry. The warrior's mouth is actually a tunnel, leading to a treasure trove of sanctified offerings (1 x 8 HD Lair Treasure, 1 x Potion and 1 x Scroll; LFG p.140, 150, 152).

The arena is not undefended. Filling the bottom 10 inches of the pit is a *Colossal Grey Ooze*; a unique monstrosity of elder years, spawned deep underground during the Second Age. Centuries ago, the horrifying abomination burbled its way up through cracks in the arena floor before

settling into stasis like hibernation. The ooze resembles a pool of dark grey, non reflective liquid.

1d4 rounds after any warm blooded adventurers enter the chamber, strange popping and slurping noises can be heard as the ooze awakens. The next round it attacks, overcome with voracious hunger.

Colossal Grey Ooze, Boss Monster, AC 13, HD 15 (124 hp), Tunnelling Pseudopod 2d10 + special and Emotion Burst 19: a psychic lash inflicts *Confusion* (as the spell, *Luck* (Will) save resists), S20 D12 C18 I4 P16 W17 Ch1, L15, Mv 40 ft.

The 50 ft ooze is a *Boss Monster* with all the usual benefits (LFG p.95) and a 15 ft reach. It is more liquid than ooze, a fast flowing and terrifying amoeba that feeds on the thoughts of living creatures. It attacks by surging into an adventurer's mouth, nose and ears, tunnelling its way to the victim's brain which it absorbs. Victims suffer 2d10 damage and lose 1d4 Int (*Luck* (Will) save for half) on each successful attack.

The ooze has rudimentary intelligence and limited psychic abilities. It can project an Emotion Burst once per round; an overpowering wave of fear, stupefying awe or insane mirth up to 120 ft (1d4 targets, *Luck* (Will) save or lose next action and 50% chance of suffering a moderate madness). If seriously injured, the ancient and malevolent grotesque flees, pouring back down through the cracks in the arena floor or other accessible exit.

Aftermath

If the adventurers were tasked with locating the halls, they succeeded, and may report back to Lord Calder. If cleared, he is particularly happy, and pays them a generous bonus. At the GM's discretion, he might include further benefits for the PCs in his will; especially if they offer to ensure he is buried at the shrine.

If the party is driven off by the colossal ooze, the horrible thing soon makes it way to the surface, and begins feeding on neighbouring inhabitants. If not dealt with, it eventually goes into procreation mode; splitting off baby oozes that venture further and further abroad.

(4) GIFT OF THE SILENT GOD

Rumours & Hooks

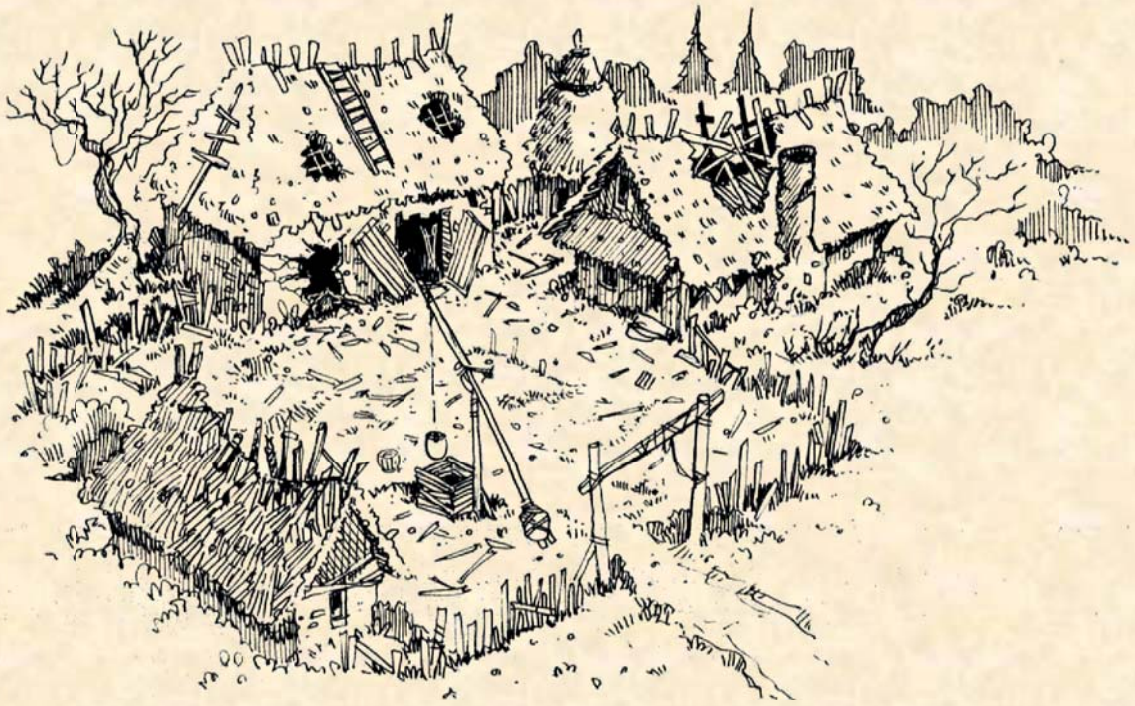
A week ago, from the borderlands of Crow's Keep, a party of twelve outlanders ventured into the moors, hoping to take down the owlbear menace known as *Big Beak*. The party are now a week overdue, and their families are anxious to know their fate. As a reward, the hunters guild are offering one year's tracking and path finding services, plus a small fee.

Big Beak, an enormous and spiteful owlbear, has been rampaging through the outer fringes of the borderlands, disrupting caravans and foragers. The merchant's guild is offering a generous bounty to deal with the beast, which is said to lair near the ruins of an old hermit's lodge.

As the first rumour suggests, a party of twelve trackers and hunters did set off into the moors, but not all for the same reasons.

Six of the group, *Arran, Horne, Ethan, Darak, Larwig* and *Rudgar* are secret cultists, and have orchestrated the trip to isolate and murder the other six hunters in bloody sacrifice to the supernatural entity known as *Ulnek-Sûl, the Silent God.*

Of the six, Rudgar is the leader, and has acquired an ancient and corrupt text on strange and long forgotten beings. He and his cabal believe that by offering sacrifices, Ulnek-Sûl will bend reality to reward them with riches and unnatural luck. Rudgar has already been touched by the spirit's power; a boon that allows him to see in darkness as in light.



As planned, the hunting party camped at a ruined farmhouse (an old hermit's home, long since lost to skorn and abandoned), two days' trek into the fens. There, five of the six oblivious hunters were murdered, their hearts cut out and offered up on an accursed altar hidden a further day's travel deeper within the moors. The bodies of the five were left outside Big Beak's cave, to be eaten by the owlbear, which would serve as a convenient excuse later.

Unfortunately for the cultists, things did not go to plan. One of the ambushed hunters, *Farric* (in his 20's, powerfully built but with a surprisingly quiet step), escaped the attack and now hides in the moors nearby. He has a serious leg injury, knows he cannot outrun the cultists, and is hoping for a miracle - or to at least take as many of the backstabbing curs with him as he can. So far Farric has managed to avoid being caught, but it is only a matter of time before he is killed, his heart extracted, and Rudgar's ritual completed.

Random Encounters

As the adventurers trek through the marshes to reach the hunters, there is a 30% chance of a random encounter every 8 hours or so. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8 (plus 2 during the last day of travel):

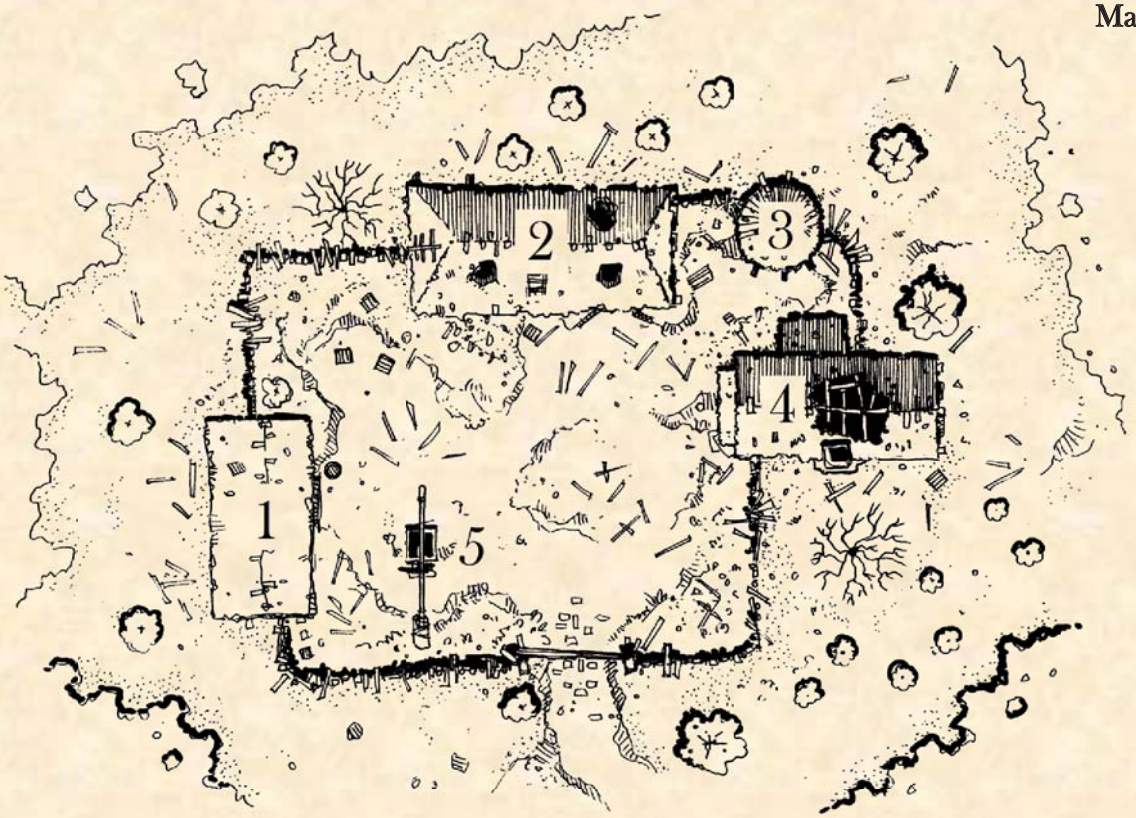
1. For the next few hours, a thick mist rolls in, obscuring vision beyond 60 ft. There is a 50% chance of 2d4 *Will o' Wisps* or 2d4 *Dire Wolves* (LFG p.129, 130) stalking the party.

2. 5d10+100 Thuels (as *Berserker*, LFG p.114, only 10% have berserker abilities) are moving through this area, searching for a lost child.

3. 4d6 *Skorn* (Bestiary) are sleeping here in a copse of trees. 1d4 sentries keep watch and will wake the others if given the opportunity.

4. A colossal 10 ft *Giant Trapdoor Spider* (LFG p.125, but 8 HD, S18 and poison causes 1d4 Dex loss) is hiding beneath a circular trapdoor made of earth and moss, hoping the adventurers will draw close enough to pounce.

Map



5. 2d6+2 *scouts* (as Guardsmen LFG p.114, but with short bows and short swords, led by a 3 HD sergeant) from Melek cross paths with the adventurers.

6. A 15 ft deep pit trap, lined with 2 ft wooden stakes, is concealed here, likely set by thuels hunting something large and dangerous. A Perc (Detection) test notices branches hidden beneath the undergrowth covering. A person walking on the trap must make a *Luck* (Dex) save or suffer 5d6 damage, and a Con check to avoid rolling on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table (LFG p. 54)

7. 2d12 *Giant Centipedes* (LFG p.114) are feasting on a fallen bear carcass, procreating and laying eggs.

8. 1d12 *Wild Boars* (LFG p.101) are skirmishing here, hoping to earn a mate. Their snorts, squeals and thundering hooves can be heard well before they are seen. There is a 50% chance the boars are downwind and detect the party. Any humanoid intruders must be driven off before the males can continue their contest.

9. *Arran* (if day) or *Rudgar* (if night) appears from the trail up ahead, looking for Farric. He is surprised to find the adventurers here, and attempts to warn them off with claims that the perilous Big Beak is nearby. Rudgar does not carry any light source with him if encountered at night. If queried, he simply says his family has always had exceptional night vision.

10. *Farric* appears from nearby scrub, limping with a clearly bloodied leg. He is overjoyed to see the adventurers, and

asks for help to kill Rudgar and his evil crew.

When the adventurers arrive on the scene, the cultists are not expecting them, and they are nervous. The inside of the ruined farmhouse was cleaned after the murders as best it could, but there are tell tale signs that something untoward has gone on.

The cultists are standoffish, but feign welcome, explaining that the other six hunters were killed by Big Beak and they need the party's help to slay the beast. They have two sentries set at all times, ostensibly for the owlbear, but actually on the lookout for Farric.

If the adventurers do some scouting of their own, they might find signs of a humanoid (Farric) lurking nearby the farmhouse (a Perc (Wilderness) check is required). There are no signs of owlbears.

Area 1 – Chicken Coop

The western building was once an enclosed chicken coop, and is one of the more intact structures. The inside is overgrown with mould and foul weeds, and littered with small animal bones.

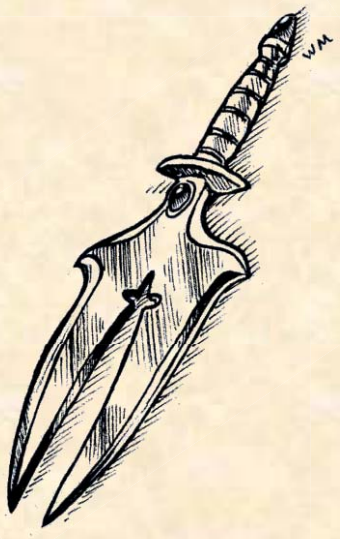
Area 2 – Barn

The northern barn is the biggest of the four structures and in a poor state. Hooked chains hang from the beams lined with recent deer and boar carcasses, and thin strips of salted meat are lined up on side tables or stowed in backpacks.

A general examination of the area does not reveal anything untoward, but a thorough search locates a twin bladed, *cold iron* knife with a bloodstone gem inside a leather satchel, hidden at the bottom of the one of backpacks of cured meat. The knife was used in the ritual to cut the hearts from the victims, but is immaculately clean now. An Int (Arcana) check suggests it is a ritual blade of some kind.

The corpses were on hooks when their hearts were cut out. Blood still stains the floor, but is mixed with animal blood, with no obvious way to tell the difference. In between two floorboards however, where a wide crack has developed, is a black signet ring with a twin stag motif. A Perc (Detection) test at a -2 penalty notices the ring.

The ring slipped unnoticed from the hand of one of the corpses, and was trod upon, lodging it firmly between the floorboards. A bard or adventurer with the General Lore skill and familiar with the hunters guild, or the families, recognises the ring as a valuable heirloom of *Tennan Greyson*, one of the missing hunters.



Area 3 – Smokehouse

The smoking hut is actually the most intact of all the buildings, and still functions as a smokery to preserve meat. A number of carcases are hanging here for that purpose, and a slow fire burns in the kiln. There are no windows in the hut, and the door still operates.

Closer examination of one of the drying carcasses reveals several chunks of meat have been hastily cut from its back (which faces the wall). Farric snuck into the hut and quickly stole himself some food the night before.

Area 4 – Farmhouse

The eastern building has holes in the roof like the rest of the structures, but the shutters and doors are secure, and the chimney works. Inside are the cultists' bedrolls, utensils and other personal items.

Contrary to Rudgar's orders, the greedy Horne kept a number of the victims' valuables. Stashed in his socks in the bottom of his bedroll are a plain silver necklace, an ivory ring and an ornate bronze bracelet (total 170 gp). If the party spoke with any family members before setting out, they might recognise these keepsakes.

Area 5 - The Well

The well is workable and draws water. The cultists replaced the rope when they arrived. If Rudgar suspects the party are onto him, he poisons the well, hoping to kill or weaken the adventurers.

The Cultists

After the party settle in, the cultists implore them to deal with the owlbear, Big Beak, as soon as possible. At least three of the cultists will accompany them, on the lookout for Farric, while the others will remain behind at the farmhouse. Once the fight with the Owlbear begins, the cultists turn on the party, hoping the beast will help finish them.

There is a 20% chance every few hours that Farric makes himself known, either on purpose or by being found by one or more of the cultists. The cultists attack immediately, hoping to silence him and conceal his body for later heart extraction. Farric on the other hand does his best to attract attention, and accuses the cultists of murder most foul. If the party appears to believe Farric's account, the cultists attack.

Cultists, AC 11, HD 1, Short sword 1d6 or Bow 1d8, 19: as weapon, S12 D11 C11 I10 P10 W10 Ch10, L 4, Mv 30 ft.

Rudgar, Boss Monster, AC 11, HD 3 (30 hp), Short sword 1d6+2 or Bow 1d8+2, 19: weapon, S12 D11 C11 I10 P10 W10 Ch10, L 4, Mv 30 ft. Rudgar lost his family years ago in a thuel raid, and the years following turned him cruel and selfish. He is the first of the cabal to receive *Ulnek-Sûl's* blessing*,* and can see as well in darkness as in light (an ability he will use to his advantage, if possible). Rudgar is a Boss Monster with all the usual benefits (LFG p.95). The cultists possess 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136).

Big Beak's Cave

A Perc (Wilderness Lore) check tracks down Big Beak's cave a few miles distant. The mighty beast greets interlopers with a ferocious assault, enraged that such puny bipeds would dare to encroach on her domain!

Big Beak, Owlbear, AC 13, HD 6+3, 2 Claws 1d6+2 and Bite 2d4, 19: bear hug, S19 D12 C16 I3 P10 W15 Ch4, L8, Mv 40 ft. A hit with both claw attacks draws the victim into a crushing hug, forcing the victim to roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table (a *Luck* (Con) save resists). Big Beak causes 20 hp damage on critical hits and has a 10 ft reach. The cave contains loot from old victims (1 x 4 HD Lair Treasure, LFG p.140).

There is a 50% chance Big Beak has eaten the corpses of the murdered hunters, leaving only a few scattered weapons behind. Otherwise, the bodies are still here; obviously murdered and absent hearts.

The Hidden Altar

About a day's trek further into the moors is a grim altar, hidden within an overgrown copse of trees. The altar is set into a dead trunk, decorated with a horned skull, bones and a bronze bowl. Fourteen humanoid skulls lie at its base. The five hearts of the woodsmen sit in the bowl, untouched by animal life in the area. The altar is not magical in itself.

Adding a sixth heart to the bowl from a person known to the supplicant unwittingly completes Rudgar's ritual, granting a permanent supernatural gift (roll 1d6):

1. The blessed now eats only stones and drinks sand or fine dirt. Normal food and drink provide no sustenance.

2. The blessed's bones become preternaturally hard, granting a +3 bonus when rolling on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table.

3. The blessed's flesh heals unnaturally swiftly at night, restoring 1 hp per hour between dusk and dawn.

4. The blessed gains +1 Perc permanently, and unerringly senses impending ambush (cannot be surprised).

5. The blessed may extinguish small fires such as torches and lanterns within 60 ft by making a Will check.

6. Once per month, the blessed may touch a target to impart a *Charm Person* effect (as the spell).

Anyone blessed by Ulnek-Sûl develops a moderate madness (LFG p.91) over the next month. If the madness is cured, the blessing ends.

Aftermath

Rudgar has not brought the forbidden tome with him on the hunt; he has committed the unholy rogations to memory and performs them by rote.

The book is hidden in Rudgar's home in the borderlands, concealed in an empty barrel in his cellar. It is worth 5d100+500 gp to the right buyer. The book is not magical in itself, but details genuine, cruel and disturbing rituals, which if properly performed, might invoke Ulnek-Sûl's favour at the GM's discretion.

If Rudgar and his cult are not killed, they soon recruit more cultists, and slowly seek to infiltrate positions of outlander authority.

(5) POND OF THE MOON PIXIES

Rumours & Hooks

Legend has it there is a certain pond, in a certain swamp, where the moon pixies gather once a year on the night of the vernal equinox. Some say the meeting is for dancing and cavorting, but others suggest the gathering also venerates their mercurial goddess. A lover of all things beautiful and mysterious, the faerie mother is appeased by casting shiny jewels and mysterious trinkets into her secret mere; the *Pond of the Moon Pixies*.

Somewhere in the Trackless Moors, the last of the pixies gather during the night of the spring equinox to pay homage to their trickster deity. Finding the pond is no easy task; the fens are full of bogs and other shallow waters, and a person

could spend a lifetime visiting them all. But if the party investigates the fens during the night of the equinox (and perhaps a few days before), they might cross paths with one or more pixies making their way to sacred gathering pool.

Swamp Encounters

As the party searches the moors, roll 1d6 and consult the encounter table below every 2 hours (or other appropriate time period as the GM determines), adding 1 to the roll after each encounter.

1. 2d12 *Giant Centipedes* (LFG p.102) are sifting through the muck, looking for something to eat. They will spread out and attempt to overwhelm the party with numbers. They are afraid of fire.

2. 3d4 *Wolves* (70%) or 2d4 *Dire Wolves* (30%) (LFG p.129) are on the hunt, and have caught the party's scent. Their gathering howls can be heard before they appear. Normal wolves might be deterred by fire and steel, but the dire wolves are fiercely hungry and will not give up easily.

3. 4d6 *Skorn* (50%, Bestiary) or 2d6 *Urgot* (50%, LFG p.128) are camped in this area with 1d3 sentries on duty. They are tracking a bear for its pelt, but will not hesitate to skin the party instead.

4. A massive brown bear is scavenging for food and will attack the party if goaded. She is being hunted by those in entry 3 above. Alternatively the party might encounter 3 & 4 at the same time.

Brown Bear, AC 11, HD 4+2, 2 Claws 1d6+1 and Bite 2d4, 19: bear hug, S19 D8 C15 I3 P12 W15 Ch7, L 7, Mv 40 ft. If hit with both claw attacks, the target is caught in a crushing hug, requiring a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table (*Luck* (Con) save resists).

5. The weather turns gloomy and a thick fog rolls in, reducing visibility to 120 ft. Strange howls can be heard on the wind, but they are distant. For now.

6. In a flash, a small flying creature (not a bird) wizzes overhead. A Perc (Detection) test notices the direction it went before it disappears. On a great success, the observer can tell it is a small humanoid with wings (a *Pixie Sprite*, LFG p.125). If the party heads in that direction, add 1 to subsequent table rolls.

7. 1d3+1 *Pixies* (winged *Sprites* LFG p.125) flitter by between distant trees, moving swiftly just within vision or torchlight range. They spot the party and stare at them curiously for time, noticing any

shiny or beautiful objects the party carries (and speaking enthusiastically about such in their fey language, which has a rapid, musical quality to it). They don't mind if the party follows them (they might want to "borrow" the humans' "shiny" for the faerie goddess later).

8. The party have arrived at the mystical pond. The lilting speech and fluttering sound of the gathered (or still gathering) pixies can be heard clearly as the humans approach.

The Moon Pond

But for the pixies flittering about the vicinity of this pond, there does not appear to be anything particularly special about it: a cloudy pool ringed by a few dead (or simply leafless) trees, replete with biting insects and crawling parasites.

By midnight, approximately 6d6 pixies have gathered, hovering above or nearby the pond as some drop small shiny objects into it (which disappear with a plop).

If the party becomes known to the sprites, there is a 50% chance they will attempt to pepper them with sleep arrows, and steal their shiny trinkets to drop into the pool. Otherwise they treat the humans as unlikely curiosities, asking them in lilting common why they have come, are they lost, why are they so slow and ugly, why do they wear so many clothes, and so on.

Party Crashers

In any event, this year's gathering is destined to be rudely interrupted. 2d6 *Trolls* have been hibernating within the pool, and are woken shortly after midnight by the rain of trinkets. At this point, the trolls burst from the mere, snatching pixies as snacks or charging at the party for more fulsome meals (assuming they know about them). The trolls have been in a torpid state for months and are utterly famished.

Most of the trolls are unarmed, but the leader *Faarg* carries a primitive looking, *cold iron* blade (substitute one Claw attack for 1d10+3 damage).

Troll, AC 13, HD 7, 2 Claws 1d4+1 and Bite 1d8+1, 19: if the target is accompanied by a pet or henchmen, the pet/ally is eaten by the troll (or has a limb torn off), S19 D12 C17 I6 P7 W8 Ch7, L9, Mv 30 ft. Trolls regenerate all damage at the start of their next turn, or in 1d6 rounds if reduced to zero hit points. Damage from fire or acid is not regenerated. A troll reduced to zero hit points and completely burnt or buried does not regenerate. 10 ft reach.

When the trolls appear, the pixies immediately flee and do not return, leaving the party to fend for themselves (they know their tiny arrows and blades cannot pierce troll hide). If the trolls are defeated, the pond contains 1 x 7 HD Lair Treasure (LFG p.140).

The pond has no genuine mystical connection to the pixie's "faerie goddess" or any other supernatural power (or perhaps just no connection that humans can discern).

(6) RUIN OF THE NINE SKULLS

Rumours & Hooks
Two decade ago, the *Nine Skulls* barbarians of the Trackless Moors were massacred by a hydra during a ceremony on the open marshes. Their abandoned stilt village still stands and might yet house the tribe's most valued treasure: the *Stormspear*.

On a small rise above the fens, the decaying remains of an abandoned village looms. Eighteen years earlier, the *Nine Skulls* tribe that attempted to settle this region was decimated by a monster of devastating power: an elder *Hydra*.

For a time, the clan attempted to placate the beast with sacrifices, but the hydra's hair trigger rage could not be contained, and one fateful night the thuels were devoured during a ceremony on the open moors. Those few that survived fled to other regions to be subjugated by larger clans or perished by skorn (or worse).

The stilt village still remains, slowly sinking into the expanding mire, with the hydra taken up residence in a nearby burrow. Thuel and skorn consider the area extremely dangerous and keep away, but from time to time sacrifices or witless fools add to the hydra's bone pile.

The party might become interested in this area by hearing about the *Stormspear*, a bronze bladed magical weapon of antiquity. The spear was in the clan's possession for generations until the hydra attack, but is thought to be lying somewhere in one of the huts.

The location of the stilt village is at the GM's discretion, and may require a number of random encounter checks during the trek to reach it (using the swamp table, or adapting other tables in this section).

Stilt Village

The village consists of 1d6+10 stilt huts, most in a state of steady decline, marred with rot and/or slowly beginning to sink or tilt into the rising mire. The huts are generally safe to explore however, with sufficiently sound foundations.

As the party explores the huts, roll 1d10 to determine what might be found:

1. 3d6 *Man Eating Monkeys* (LFG p.117) have made this hut their home, decorating it with leaves, partially eaten meals and monkey faeces.

2. *Stilts collapse!* This particular hut is rotted more than most, and collapses if more than two humans enter, causing 4d6 damage (*Luck* (Dex) save for half).

3. This hut contains 1 x Trinkets & Curios in a box made from a skorn skull (LFG p.141).

4. 3d10 *Stirges* (LFG p.126) are using this hut as their nest, and will angrily defend their home. They are frightened of fire.

5. 2d4 *Yellow Mould* (LFG p.131) have spawned on the walls and ceiling of this hut. They have been dormant for months, but will awaken in 1d4 rounds if humans approach within 60 ft.

6. This hut once belonged to the tribe shaman, and includes 1d2 random potions in sealed clay jugs (LFG p.150).

7. This old hut contains loot stolen from Midlander or Nydissian scouts, stashed in a large bronze urn (1 x Carry Loot, LFG p.136).

8. 1d3 *Giant Serpents* (LFG p.122) are hibernating in this hut. The party might be able to surprise them if they approach stealthily.

9. This hut contains basic tools, bowls and so on. There is a 50% chance of a random weapon.

10. This was the hut of the tribe's best warrior, and is decorated with mouldy pelts and 1d6 gold idols (worth 100 gp each). The *Stormspear* is leaning against one corner.

The hydra's 50 ft den is dug into the ground where several stilt huts used to be, including the chief's home (demolished by the monster). If the den is searched, 1 x Valuables and 1 x Carry Loot may be scavenged from the remains.

The elder hydra is 40 ft long, with dark green, almost black scales. It has nine heads with spined fins, and four enormous clawed legs. An ancient monstrosity now hundreds of years old, the elder hydra fears nothing and no-one, and will eagerly eat the party if given the chance. If things go poorly for the ancient reptile however, it is canny enough to attempt an escape.

Elder Hydra, Boss Monster, AC 17, HD 20 (95 hp), 9 Bites 1d10+1, 19: special, S23 D7 C21 I4 P15 W17 Ch4, L16, Mv 50 ft. The Elder Hydra is a Boss Monster with the usual benefits (LFG p.95). On a natural 19, the target is torn apart by two heads (instant death, costs 1 extra Bite attack, *Luck* (Dex) save negates). Severed heads by virtue of major exploits or similar grow back in one round unless the stump is sealed with

fire, lightning or acid. *Cause Injuries* on a 19-20 attack roll, 10 ft reach.

The Stormspear

This magical hardwood spear is ornately carved and topped with a bronze spike shaped head. The original creator is unknown and it appears to date from the Second Age. The weapon is in pristine condition as if fresh from the forge, sharp and gleaming. The first attunement grants the wielder +2 Str (max 19). The second attunement allows the wielder to throw the spear, transforming it into a *Lightning Bolt* spell (10th level, usable once per week; the spear reappears in the owner's hand at the end of the same round). Any further attunements are at the GM's discretion.

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