

Quests of Doom 4

The Hunter's Game

By Tom Knauss



Swords
& Wizardry



FROG GOD
GAMES

Quests of Doom 4

The Hunter's Game

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The Hunter's Game

In my opinion, crocodiles sprang from the warped imagination of a deranged god on his worst day. Brutal and supremely cunning, these ruthless predators are the swamps' ultimate killing machines. Still, there is something about the beast's primeval savagery that belies a creature infinitely more fascinating than its outward appearance leads one to believe. While the primitive animal contorts its victim during a terrifying death roll, the cruel reptile's remorseless eyes pierce the mortal veil and callously watch as the soul slips its surly bonds, commencing the timeless journey to the Great Beyond, creating an intimacy unmatched in the animal kingdom.

— Brock Answin, Dyrgalas naturalist

The Hunter's Game is a *Swords & Wizardry Complete* adventure for 4th-level characters that leads them into the foreboding Dyrgalas Fens, a temperate swamp in the Harwood Forest nestled between the Wolf Hills and Low Hills. Dyrgalas Fens is overrun by an eclectic collection of malevolent monsters, xenophobic humanoids, and foul beasts. When some of the region's finest gentlemen and ladies never return from their excursions to the Answin Hunting Lodge, the characters must investigate their mysterious disappearances. The journey leads them into the figurative heart of darkness, taking them not only deeper into the dreadful Dyrgalas, but also plunging them into the harrowing abyss of hatred and greed.

Adventure Background

Brock Answin had long been fascinated by the crocodiles and other reptilian life of the Drijoc Delta as he grew up. His father, older brothers, and uncles were all fishermen of the nearby Tywyl Bay, but Brock's heart lay among the languid channels and still pools of the delta. As he sat at the knee of the local bokor, listening to his teachings about the world and the Loa, he learned that the Drijoc Delta was but a smaller reflection of the wetlands that were its source. For upriver in the depths of the Harwood Forest where the Drijoc River found its source was the great Dyrgalas, a vast wooded swampland through which the river flowed on its journey to the sea.

When Brock came of age, he resolved to make his way up the Drijoc and see the Dyrgalas for himself. But the journey upriver was perilous; it passed through the Coredor Belt, the stretch of land between the shore and the forest — a 50-mile-wide band of badlands inhabited by lawless men, diseased outcasts, and feral animals. It was no trip for a young man to be taking on his own. However, Brock was in luck because before long a holy man arrived in his tiny village. Quantinimus was a cleric of Sefagreth out of Cerediun Province. He had been hired to minister to the workers in the lumber camps of the upper Harwood and had taken ship to travel upriver to his new parish.

Unfortunately for Quantinimus, his frugality in hiring a ship out of the port of Banis had resulted in a ship's captain of less than exceptional skill. And when a storm on Tywyl Bay blew them off course, the holy man's ship landed at the mouth of the Drijoc River instead of the mouth of the Hyon River farther to the east as intended. Rather than wait for a ship making the long journey around Pruden Point back to the port of Tuller at the Hyon's mouth or making a danger-fraught overland journey along the long axis of the Coredor Belt, Quantinimus elected to hire a boat to take him upriver on the Drijoc instead. Its length past near the town of Carson's Mill where he was expected and would serve as a suitable secondary route. Finding no local boatmen planning on heading upriver any time soon, the cleric's gaze fell upon a young man who had recently outfitted a raft for just such a journey. Quantinimus liked the fire in the young man's eyes and hired him to take him upriver as far as the drop off near Carson's Mill. They would share the journey's dangers and the security of having an extra pair of eyes to watch for them.

Swamp or Fen?

The Dyrgalas Fens are technically a swamp rather than a fen. Much like the modern world, residents of the **Lost Lands** who have the chance to name geographic features often don't know, or care, about technicalities like the differences between a swamp, marsh, or fen. The distinction means little to the folk who are forced to live in its proximity and contend with the many challenges to survival it produces. However, the swamp is usually just referred to as *the* Dyrgalas anyway, so the discrepancy rarely comes up even in scholarly circles.

The trip up the Drijoc passed without major incident, though as Brock made passage through the Dyrgalas at last, he was awestruck by the waterlogged world he found and its infinite variety of animals, reptiles, and birds. At one point along the route, he spotted the perfect location to build a lodge that he could use as a base camp to study the amazing diversity of life he had seen. He talked of little else for the remainder of the journey, and when he finally dropped Quantinimus off on the forested bank, the two wished each other well and carried fond memories of their weeks spent traveling together through the amazing wetlands.

Brock never returned to the delta, choosing instead to establish his encampment at the spot he had chosen and begin his study on the swamp. Despite numerous close calls with vicious predators and aggressive humanoids over his tenuous first few months, he developed into a respectable naturalist. He honed his keen powers of observation, devised innovative survival techniques, and expanded his breadth of knowledge about his adopted habitat. Yet the burgeoning entrepreneur also saw an opportunity to share his passion for nature with others and simultaneously earn a handsome profit. Brock shrewdly forged an arrangement with a local band of lizardfolk he had maintained peaceful contact with for several years, offering them fresh meat, weaponry, and minor magical trinkets in exchange for their protection and cooperation with the monumental task of building a hunting lodge within the Dyrgalas.

With his labor force in place, Brock traveled to the cathedral city of Biltscrough lying at the border of the duchies of Mains and Saxe. There he managed to secure financing from an investor named Joffrey Ium, a local captal (one of the old noble families of Foere), landowner, and inheritor of a small fortune. The project broke ground less than a month later and, within ten months, Answin Lodge opened to tremendous fanfare and interest. Those interested in visiting the lodge could book their stay through Ium in Biltscrough and then make the journey through the Wolf Hills to the small village of Fornlar at the edge of the Harwood. From there, Brock had commissioned the building of a road leading into the forest and directly his lodge in the Dyrgalas.

For the next eight years, Brock's lodge flourished. Every week, his lizardfolk allies rendezvoused with the lodge's guests at the bend in the Loggers' Road where it forked off toward the Dyrgalas and escorted them to the hunting lodge proper for a formal tour and two nights' accommodations. Several years into his business, Brock found it useful to build several small enclosures on the property to house a bask of crocodiles and several other native beasts such as toads, lizards, snakes, and swamp rats. To further supplement his income, the explorer also offered personally guided safaris to an elite handful of clients, allowing them to hunt some of the wetlands' fiercest game. Despite an isolated mishap or inexplicable disappearance here and there, guests and their coins steadily poured into Answin Lodge.

Life in Hell

While Brock's fortunes were rising, the fates were not as kind to the traveling cleric who accompanied him. Carson's Mill^{GoD} turned out to be a rough, surly, oppressive place. A company town for the loggers of the forest, its mayor and local watch captain kept the peace with a harsh fist and kept the employees indebted through exorbitant rent fees and costs. The loggers, many of whom were little more than ne'er-do-wells, drunks, and ruffians, lived almost as indentured servants in the bleak place and cared little for Pastor Quantinimus and his messages of faith and perseverance through hard work. In fact, they rarely spoke to him except when in need of his healing gifts from the many, many hazards that presented themselves daily in their hardscrabble lives. The injuries were often too severe or too many in number for Quantinimus to keep up with, which only painted him in a darker light in the eyes of the loggers.

Finally, the term of the holy man's contract with the mining company expired, and he longed to return to his native Ceredium to seek some more peaceful and less-hostile parish to serve. Rather than take the dangerous log floats downriver to Tuller, he opted to travel overland back to the Drijoc River to seek passage down its languid length. He and Brock had exchanged correspondence over the years, and Quantinimus longed to see his old friend's dream of a Dyrgalas lodge in all its reality. To make the trip overland to the Drijoc and then secure a means of passage down its length, he turned to a pair of logger brothers, Ruland and Reginald Grayharst, who had recently quit their logging jobs, discharged their debts to the company, and were looking to travel to the Drijoc Delta (where they claimed to have family) rather than take the usual Hyon River route. They claimed to have already arranged passage down the Drijoc and allowed Quantinimus to accompany them for only a modest fee.

The short overland journey to the banks of the Drijoc was uneventful, and soon the brothers' means of transportation arrived in the form of a lizardfolk who was poling a raft along the river's bank. The party boarded the raft and set out downriver as Quantinimus regaled them with tales of his old friend Brock Answin and his marvelous Dyrgalas lodge. Unfortunately for Quantinimus, he never saw his friend again or his lodge. For what Brock didn't know was that the logger brothers were actually werecrocodiles and secretly members of a vile cult of the parasite god Rachiss that had set up operations in the abandoned ruins of an old asylum several miles upriver on the banks of the Drijoc^{GoD}. The brothers had not resigned their jobs and repaid their company debts, but had rather murdered their hated foreman and devoured his body. They were leaving town quickly before the disappearance was traced back to them but couldn't simply head downriver on the Hyon because they knew the town watch would never let them leave without first paying off their debts (which of course they lacked the funds to do).

When the Grayharst brothers overheard Quantinimus talking about his intentions to travel down the Drijoc, they quickly formulated a plan. They sent word to their cult mates at the not-too-distant ruins and arranged for another cult member, the lizardfolk bard Shashana, to pick them and another passenger up on the banks of the Drijoc and carry them down to the Dyrgalas. They had heard of Answin's Lodge before and thought this represented an excellent opportunity to pay a visit to the swamp interloper and teach him to know the wrath of Rachiss. Shashana picked them up as planned, and by the time the logging bosses noticed that the brothers were gone, they were already well on their way down the Drijoc and beyond the logging company's reach. Once they had pumped Quantinimus for all the information he possessed about the lodge, they revealed to him their crocodilian forms as well, and he soon joined their former foreman as a meal for the savage creatures.

As they neared the lodge, the trio ditched their raft and began their plan to infiltrate the lodge and destroy it from within in honor of their god, Father Host, whose parasitic children killed their victims in much the same way. Ruland and Reginald took on their crocodile forms and posed as troublesome reptiles infringing on the lodge's territory. The herpetologist did what came naturally to him and soon subdued the aggressive crocs to add to his exhibit. Shashana likewise found work among the other indigenous lizardfolk as a guide and escort. No longer outsiders, they could now move about the hunting lodge with impunity, granting them access to the business's wealthy clients.

At first, the trio acted in concert to abduct, rob, and kill their victims near the end of the guests' return trip through the Harwood Forest. They zeroed in on visitors from distant lands with no ties to the local communities. However, they soon realized they could double their profits if they sold these humanoids to the Dyrgalas' monstrous denizens as slaves, food, or to obtain ransoms from their distant families. Over the past 11 months, they have kidnapped 24 wealthy visitors. They initially exercised tremendous care selecting their targets. Yet avarice eventually trumps caution. They took more risks, leading to sloppy mistakes that now command the attention of distraught family members searching for missing loved ones, anxious government officials, and Brock's small but vocal legion of detractors. The greedy perpetrators also sense others have caught onto their murderous schemes, making the former prisoners even more unbalanced and impulsive. The adventurers investigating this delicate matter must sort through the clues and unmask the culprits behind these dastardly crimes. Only then can they save their unwilling captives from the clutches of the swamp's most depraved monstrous denizens.

^{GoD} See *Glades of Death* by **Necromancer Games** for more information.

^{QoD} See *Quests of Doom: Death in Dyrgalas* by **Frog God Games** for more information.

Adventure Synopsis

The cathedral city of Biltscrough to the north of the Dyrgalas is a logical starting point for this adventure, but any other locale in the region, including the towns of Lortsbar to the west, Fornlar to the north, and Tuller to the southeast, also fits the bill. Alternatively, with a few minor adjustments the Referee may set the adventure in any other location of his choice, though the primary scenes still take place in a swamp. Regardless of the Referee's decision in the preceding matter, the story begins when a worried family member or a government official contacts the characters and asks them to investigate the events transpiring at Answin Lodge within the Dyrgalas. The adventure's initial foray takes them toward the swamp, either via the Loggers' Road from Fornlar or an alternative overland route if necessary.

Based upon the information they gathered before leaving, the heroes may rendezvous with Brock's lizardfolk escorts, including the treacherous Shashana, just inside the Harwood, or they may attempt to find the hunting lodge themselves. Whether they go it alone or accompany the lizardfolk, the journey through the untamed wetlands proves difficult. The Dyrgalas teems with hungry predators and monstrous denizens who beset the adventurers and their guides. After enduring the arduous hike through the Dyrgalas, the characters arrive at Answin Lodge, where Brock Answin and his small staff await them.

The gregarious Brock eagerly greets the new arrivals, yet the characters' allegations regarding the unexplained disappearances perplex him and his employees. The renowned naturalist cannot explain these events and gladly offers his assistance in their investigation. Inquiries and clues gathered at the scene point toward the conclusion that at least several malevolent creatures infiltrated the hunting lodge. With the characters and Brock bearing down on them, the Grayharst brothers and Shashana act quickly to neutralize the threat. That night, Shashana uses her illusory magic to lure the characters into an isolated location where the vicious werecrocodiles await. To make matters worse, the natural lycanthropes recently spread their curse to two of Brock's lizardfolk employees. These werecrocodiles, led by Ruland and Reginald and joined by Shashana, descend on the characters, Brock, and his staff, who with their combined forces must fend off the assault.

In the aftermath of the vicious attack, the characters discover that the siblings and their associate did not act alone. The rapacious trio sold the captives to three of the Dyrgalas Fens' most sinister denizens: Grizzelda a vile annis hag, Berseus a swamp ogre outcast, and a pair of cruel harpy sisters. Using a crude map found among the conspirators' personal possessions along with Brock's knowledge of the terrain and rumors about the creatures' whereabouts, the characters venture deeper into the Dyrgalas, where they must liberate the unfortunate souls from their captors and return them to safety.

Starting the Adventure

The adventure begins with the characters in Biltscrough or some other suitable locale where they learn of the trouble in the Dyrgalas and are hired to investigate the matter. The cathedral city of Biltscrough is the most advantageous location to start the adventure. The sprawling city boasts a large population, giving the characters ample opportunities to gather information about Answin Lodge, the vast swamp surrounding it, and the man who built and oversees the wilderness operation. Down the Loggers' Road from Biltscrough is the town of Fornlar, which lies on the northern fringe of the Harwood Forest and provides the most direct route to the lodge in the Dyrgalas.

Hooks

The characters are likely drawn into the adventure's events in one of two ways. The distressing news regarding the disappearances from Answin Lodge worries its primary financier, Joffrey Ium, who fears any negative publicity about the business may jeopardize the long-term viability of his only profitable venture. Alternatively, one of the missing persons' family members contacts the characters and asks them to locate their loved one. With these interests in mind, the Referee may use one or more of the following hooks or create one of his own to set the adventure into motion.

Protecting My Investment

Eight years ago, the jocular Brock Answin convinced the young scion of the Ium family, **Joffrey Ium** (Neutral male human aristocrat 4) to make him a substantial loan in order to construct Answin Hunting Lodge. The unsavory rumors swirling around his prized investment greatly worry the debt-laden aristocrat. Using his influence, he arranges a meeting with the characters and approaches them with a tantalizing proposition. He offers the equivalent of one year of payments on Brock's loan note (1800gp), payable in three payments, in exchange for them venturing to Answin Hunting Lodge and resolving the controversy troubling the establishment. As a seasoned businessman, Joffrey is open to negotiating the fee with two caveats: If the characters demand more money, he agrees to repay them over a longer period of time, up to a maximum of 2700gp payable over 3 years. Conversely, Joffrey offers characters who insist on getting an immediate lump sum payment a smaller amount, beginning at 600gp — the amount of the first payment — up to a maximum of 1000gp. When the parties come to terms on their arrangement, the nobleman tells the adventurers that six noteworthy people that he is aware of have never returned from Answin Lodge. These guests included most recently one of the city's Listeners **Shanga Halfshin** (Lawful female halfling expert 3) and **Marafey Stadli** (Chaotic male human thief 3), the prodigal son of the sheriff at Fornlar. Joffrey directs characters who make further inquiries about either individual to Wangard Halfshin, Shanga's concerned father (see **Family Closure** below).

Family Closure

On the edge of entering his second century, **Wangard Halfshin** (Lawful male halfling cleric of Mick O'Delving 5), a well-known and beloved priest of the Halfling God, knows his mortal life is coming to a close. However, he cannot bear to think his precious daughter, Shanga Halfshin, four decades his junior, may depart this world before him. Though shaken in his faith, Mick's downtrodden servant offers the characters a divine scroll containing 4 1st-level cleric spells of their choice in exchange for finding out what happened to Shanga and returning her home, if possible. Wangard is willing to negotiate, of course, and offers as much as 2 3rd-level spells, 3 2nd-level spells, or some combination with a total number of spell levels not greater than 6. (For example, 2 3rd-level spells, or 1 3rd-level spell and 3 1st-level spells, or 3 2nd-level spells, and so on.)

If the characters have already struck a bargain with Joffrey (see **Protecting My Investment**), the venerable cleric reduces his initial payment offer to 2 spells instead of 4, with a maximum negotiated price of 4 total spell levels. If the characters attempt to fool Wangard

by concealing or otherwise lying about their arrangement with Joffrey, Wangard rescinds his offer in its entirety and tells them he plans to look elsewhere for assistance. He immediately becomes unfriendly toward the characters and refuses to discuss the matter any further unless they somehow can convince him they were wrong. He firmly believes they were trying to take advantage of him in his time of need and resents them for it. Wangard tells characters on good terms with him that Shanga left for the Answin Lodge about 2 months earlier and was scheduled to return 7 days ago. The 8 other visitors who accompanied her returned home safely without incident, though he quickly adds he does not personally know any of them well. After making several inquiries of them, they relayed the same tale. Shanga disappeared after they left the hunting lodge and before their arrival at the edge of the Dyrgalas Fens. None of her companions noticed anything out of the ordinary during the journey, and no one saw Shanga go off on her own at any point during the trip back.

Alternatively, if they begin the adventure in Fornlar, **Sheriff Olson** (Lawful male human fighter 3) may contact the characters to locate his missing son. His terms and conditions are identical to Wangard, but unlike his ecclesiastical counterpart, the sheriff can offer no details about his son's disappearance.

Part One: The Dyrgalas Fens

Located along the main thoroughfare between the duchies of Mains and Saxe, the cathedral city of Biltscrough sits in the epicenter of trade and information within the southern Kingdoms of Foere. Traveling merchants, loggers, miners, adventurers, and pilgrims bring a plethora of tales and stories ranging from the mundane to the ridiculous. These rumors freely circulate throughout the city (or any other suitable locale of the Referee's choice) on a constant basis. Merely conversing with Biltscrough's residents and visitors is sufficient to obtain 1d4 of these rumors per day spent asking around about the subject of the lodge.

- Since its creation eight years ago, roughly 1500 visitors have made the trek to Answin Hunting Lodge. Every week at dawn on Mootsdag (Wednesday), a contingent of lizardfolk guides lead guests from the road at the edge of the Dyrgalas to Answin Lodge. The journey lasts about 8 hours, and visitors remain at the hunting lodge for two nights before departing at dawn on Sisterstag (Friday).

- A stay at Answin Lodge costs guests 100gp. Brock charges 250gp for a private, one-day safari with him. Stays can be extended for a week for a considerable additional charge.

- Common game hunted at the lodge includes crocodiles, otters, giant frogs, and giant constrictor snakes. When escorting visitors on a private safari, the potential prey includes shocker lizards, slurks, goblin dogs, and goliath frogs.

- Brock will consider leading an expedition against other, more dangerous game within the swamp though he never hunts lizardfolk to avoid offending his workers.

- Lizardfolk, bugbears, and other vicious humanoids — including bands of outlaws — inhabit the Dyrgalas, though other foul denizens, most notably black dragons, also live there.

- Brock and his staff routinely beat their animals to make them docile for visitors. He even removes the crocodiles' teeth to make them harmless. (This is a false.)

- Six confirmed visitors never returned from Answin Hunting Lodge over the last several months, including the daughter of a prominent halfling cleric who also happens to be one of Biltscrough's Listeners, as well as the son Fornlar's sheriff. Many suspect the true number of disappearances is actually much higher.

- The Loggers' Road Branch is moderately maintained and sparsely traveled for the first part of the journey out of Fornlar. It quickly falls into disrepair when it reaches the edge of the fens.

THE HUNTER'S GAME

- The disappearances are a ruse perpetrated by rich families to conceal the fact their spoiled children really were sent to lumber and mining camps in the Harwood Forest to serve out sentences of hard labor for seditious intent against the government. (This is false.)

Greater Details

Biltscrough in particular bustles with rumors, but some tales require more legwork than others. Characters intent on gathering more detailed information may interact with the local residents or recall tales they overheard or personally experienced at some point during their adventuring career. The Referee must exercise judgment when doling out these additional details. The average citizen may be a good source of information about local establishments and famous people, but is less likely to know anything about the Dyrgalas and other adventuring locales. Characters can acquire this information from the locals in 1d3+1 hours for each rumor, and requires spending 1d3gp for each hour beyond the first to purchase rounds of drinks, grease palms, and so forth.

The Dyrgalas Fens

The characters may learn the following information about the Dyrgalas:

- Answin Hunting Lodge's crocodile exhibit attracts the most visitors. The ornery reptiles are kept inside a stone enclosure. As part of the show, Brock sometimes wrestles one of the massive beasts. The exhibit has proven popular enough that Brock now has a reduced-rate fee for those who wish to visit the lodge but forego the hunting expedition into the swamp.
- One of the swamp's resident black dragons does not take kindly to Brock keeping his distant kin prisoner for prolonged periods of time. He is gathering allies among the indigenous creatures to assault the hunting lodge and liberate his fellow reptiles. (This is a plausible rumor but false.)
- Brock Answin, the lodge's owner, is a handsome, talkative and friendly chap from the southern delta who flaunts a well-earned reputation for bedding some of the business's many female guests over the years. His roving eye has gotten him into trouble on a few occasions when he set his sights on the wives and fiancés of Biltscrough's most powerful figures.
- The accounts regarding the disappearances are universally consistent. In every case, the missing person left the hunting lodge on the return journey and then was nowhere to be found shortly after the group exited the Dyrgalas. Four lizardfolk accompanied them on this leg of the journey, and no one recalls seeing anything amiss about their behavior or actions during the trek. (This check requires 1d3+1 days, rather than hours, and requires the characters to specifically speak with those returning from the lodge during the fateful trips.)

Further Investigation

In addition to gathering some of the preceding rumors, thorough investigators may insist on speaking directly to one or more witnesses in the hopes of discovering something everyone else missed about the trip, Answin Lodge, and its inhabitants. The characters' success in this endeavor depends largely upon their starting point. Firsthand accounts are not hard to find in Biltscrough. The same cannot be said of any other locations in the Harwood Forest and beyond.

At the present time, five people are readily accessible to adventurers. They are:

- **Maximilian Pourell** (Chaotic male human thief 4), who can often be found at the Sleeping Dragon Tavern.
- **Miram Stumblefoot** (Neutral male halfling expert 5), who owns a textiles shop.
- **Jacques D'Amberge** (Lawful male human cleric of Mithras 3), an acolyte at the Temple of Mithras.
- **Penelope Trutess** (Lawful female human aristocrat 5), the daughter of one of the Archdeacon's closest advisers.
- **Haltarmie Spindlefest** (Neutral male halfling magic-user 3), who is fre-

quently found at the Temple of Dre'uain the Lame.

- Witnesses are much scarcer in outlying areas such as Fornlar or Lortsbar. These are:
 - **Cravan Kanaer** (Neutral male human warrior 2) one of Fornlar's guardsmen.
 - **Jenna Ezreki** (Neutral female half-elf expert 3) is currently performing in Fornlar at The Cloak and Candle Inn.
 - **Aven Hogledier** (Neutral male human druid 4) resides in a small glade just outside the town limits of Lortsbar in the Harwood Forest.

Each of the witness's statements, regardless of their alignment or outlook, follows an almost identical pattern. The four lizardfolk escorts met their party at dawn on the Loggers' Road Branch at the edge of the Dyrgalas Fens. The quartet led them into the swamp along a crude trail. They arrived at Answin Lodge shortly before dusk. Brock and his staff greeted them, led them to their accommodations, and met them the following morning for a tour of Answin Lodge before journeying into the swamp to hunt game. They shared dinner then retired to their quarters for the evening. At dawn the following morning, they mustered in the hunting lodge's courtyard. Brock bade them farewell, and they set out for the Loggers' Road Branch accompanied once again by their lizardfolk guides. It was not until they left the Dyrgalas and proceeded some way down Loggers' Road Branch that they noticed one of their party missing. By then, the lizardfolk were gone. A few daring visitors made a cursory effort to double back and search for the lost guest yet they found nothing.

Despite the nearly uniform similarities, a few pointed questions about Answin Lodge's details yield some useful clues. If asked about the highlight of their trip, the visitors universally agree the crocodile exhibit stood out the most, aside from the actual hunt, but they disagree about the number of crocodiles they saw. The majority are certain there were six reptiles in the enclosure. However, several others who ventured out to the exhibit at night or early in the morning counter there were only four. In addition, a few witnesses also report at least two lizardfolk staff members sported fresh wounds on their legs they attributed to the hungry beasts being "feistier" than usual. Estimates regarding Brock's staff also vary. Everyone distinctly remembers meeting the hunting lodge's owner and his business manager, **Bhanda Jasanapur**, though a few people recall briefly glimpsing a human assistant on the grounds during the early morning and late evening before he abruptly disappeared. When pressed for details about the fleeting encounter, no one provides more than a vague description of a burly, unkempt man. Though initially reluctant under direct examination, the female visitors also grudgingly admit Brock made unwelcome overtures during their stay. However, none made a major issue of his crude gestures and double-entendres because he quickly apologized and ceased his boorish behavior for the rest of the trip. The witnesses begin the inquiries as being indifferent to the characters' requests, yet if they manage to sway one to being helpful, there is a 50% chance the person tells them they experienced an odd tingle when interacting with one of the lizardfolk on the journey back as they neared the edge of the Dyrgalas Fens.

The werecrocodiles' assumption of their animal form during the daylight hours accounts for the disparate numbers seen in the enclosure. At night, the Grayharst brothers transform into humans, allowing them to climb out of their pen and escape into the surrounding wilderness to plan their next

Divination Magic

The characters may resort to some form of magic to aid in their search for clues, either during their initial information-gathering stage or later in the adventure. *The Hunter's Game* is low enough in level to make potential magic characters have available a useful tool for them, but not likely enough to ruin the buildup of the mystery behind the investigation.

ESP may allow a character to have an easier time dredging hidden information from an NPC, while *speak with animals* might allow for easier discovery of what happened to victims if a character happens to cast it near where an abduction occurred.

abduction and to strike a bargain with one of their wicked clients. The werecrocodiles also do not return to their pen on the morning when the visitors depart from Answin Lodge. Instead, they remain in the wilderness at a designated spot to abduct their next victim (see the upcoming section **Crime Scene and Clues** for further details). The odd tangle the witness experienced resulted from that individual resisting Shashana's *charm person* spell. To swell their numbers, they also deliberately bit Brock and two of the lizardfolk staff members in the hopes of infecting them with lycanthropy in order to tighten their grip over Answin Lodge. With each passing month, the brothers and their lizardfolk ally grow increasingly paranoid that Brock, Bhandu or Biltscrough's authorities are closing in on them.

Traveling to Answin Lodge

After conducting their inquiries with cooperative witnesses, gathering important information from the locals, and procuring the equipment and supplies necessary to delve into the foreboding swamp, the next stage of the characters' investigation takes them to Answin Lodge. The first leg of the journey takes them down the Loggers' Road to the hamlet of Fornlar in the Wolf Hills at the very edge of civilized lands. Most of the journey is through the pleasant rolling countryside of southern Foere, so no hostile encounters occur. Likewise, Fornlar isn't deep into the Wolf Hills, so no encounters are likely to occur.

However, once the party leaves Fornlar along the Loggers' Road into the Harwood Forest the way grows more treacherous. The characters will take the Loggers' Road Branch south from Fornlar into the forest. It runs parallel to the Drijoc River for much of its length and peters out near the edge of the Dyrgalas Fens where the lizardfolk guides are stationed to meet incoming groups. From there, Brock's poorly maintained extension leads the rest of the way to the lodge. This rough trail runs for another seven miles, where it culminates at the southern gate to Answin Lodge proper. Alternatively, the characters can follow the same route but forego the guides' assistance, which requires them to find the trail on their own. Finally, the characters can avoid the Loggers' Road Branch altogether and blaze an entirely new trail through the treacherous wetlands. With this option, the chances of encountering natural hazards in the wilderness increase significantly.

Events in Harwood Forest

The Referee may insert some or all of the following events to spice up the opening foray of the characters' expedition to Answin Lodge. These events lack the lethality of an encounter, and are instead designed to break up the monotony of the journey while providing some potentially valuable information to the characters on their hike to the Dyrgalas. The first two events detailed below take place only on Loggers' Road Branch out of Fornlar.

The Loggers

Four human loggers, **Bran Toltsky**, **Kristo Ubaltus**, **Wes Cerpay** and **Michael Youngsman** (Neutral male human expert 2), on their journey north to Fornlar tow 10 massive cypress logs on two horse-drawn wagons along the Loggers' Road Branch. The quartet of chatty fellows spent the better part of the last week harvesting trees from the Dyrgalas Fens' eastern edge. One of the men boasts about finding a monogrammed gold cufflink bearing the inscription "JRW" (25gp) atop a mound alongside the Loggers' Road Branch roughly 1 mile from the swamp's edge. The missing accessory belonged to Julius Robert Worthington, a traveling merchant of Tuller the werecrocodiles abducted 6 months ago. Because no one reported the foreigner missing with the local authorities, there is no chance of linking the jewelry piece to its missing owner unless the characters participate in the next event. The men refuse to allow the characters to examine the cufflink unless they purchase it for 30gp or are compelled by magic. Close scrutiny of the item uncovers the minute presence of dried blood on the object.

The Daughter's Search

Susana Worthington (Neutral female human aristocrat 3), daughter of Julius Robert Worthington (see above), walks along the Loggers' Road Branch, along with her two escorts (Neutral male human warrior 3), searching for any signs of her father. She tells anyone willing to listen that her father left for a business trip to the lumber camps upriver from Tuller 7 months earlier and never returned. After hearing rumors of a rash of disappearances from the Answin Lodge, the 22-year-old Susana came to believe her father made the trip to the remote wilderness sanctuary. If the characters describe or show her the cufflink the loggers recovered, she confirms the accessory belonged to her father. With that information in hand, the brave-but-wise woman turns back for Tuller rather than proceed to the dangerous Dyrgalas Fens. However, she asks the characters if they would give her the cufflink as a sentimental piece and offers them a 100gp silver bracelet she wears in exchange for the item. Otherwise, she continues toward the swamp searching for physical evidence or statements from passers-by that may lead her to her missing parent.

Traveling Minstrels

Two halfling musicians, **Millamar** and **Vanalor Soredtoe** (Neutral male halfling expert 2), dream of starting a band called Two-and-a-Half Octaves. Millamar is the group's lute player while his younger counterpart plays percussion. They realize neither can carry a tune, thus forcing them to recruit a singer for their musical trio. The flamboyant pair gladly offers an audition to anyone with a high-pitched voice. The halflings always steer a wide berth around the Dyrgalas, especially in light of the strange rumors of events transpiring in the swamp's hunting lodge.

Encounters

Nearly all of the ancient Harwood Forest remains largely unsettled and little explored. The remoteness and isolation provide an ideal base of operations for bandits and marauding humanoids.

Loggers' Road Branch Encounters

1d6	Encounter
1-3	2d4 bandits
4-5	1d3+1 ghouls
6	Giant wasp

Bandits (2d4): HD 1; AC 7[12]; Atk short sword (1d6); Move 12; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15; **Special:** none.

Equipment: leather armor, short sword, 1d4sp.

Ghouls (1d3+1): HD 2; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), bite (1d4); Move 9; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 3/60; **Special:** immune to charm and sleep, paralyzing touch (3d6 turns, save resists).

Giant Wasp: HD 4; AC 4[15]; Atk sting (1d4 plus poison), bite (1d8); Move 1 (fly 20); Save 13; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** larvae (eat victim after paralysis ends, cure disease destroys), paralyzing poison (1d4+1 days, save resists). (*Monstrosities* 505)

At the Swamp's Edge

Characters who make their way from the Harwood Forest's border ultimately arrives at the edge of the ominous Dyrgalas Fens, an expansive swamp making up a swath of the region's southeastern expanse. Countless small streams bring runoff from the neighboring Wolf Hills and other surrounding areas into the low-lying basin. In addition, the Drijoc River feeds into the northeast corner of the swamp. Characters who arrive at this point face three options — rendezvous with Brock's lizardfolk escorts and accompany them to Answin Lodge, venture without the guides along

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road and find the trail leading to Answin Lodge on their own, or plow through the untamed wilderness and attempt to locate the hunting lodge without the benefit of any landmarks. When the characters reach this point, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description of this suffocating swamp.

The stench of decaying organic matter and the constant bubbling of pent-up natural gases seeping up from the wetlands' fetid bowels clings to the seemingly visible humidity in the air. Refreshing streams of pristine water pour into the depressed basin from a multitude of directions. Once in the Dyrgalas Fens' nauseating embrace, the pure waters turn into a morass that congeals into foul-smelling mud. Massive cypress trees tower over the inundated land below, basking the foreboding swamp in a perpetual eerie twilight. The sounds of snapping branches in the distance accompanied by the closer noises of splashing water and footsteps trying to escape the emulsified gooey floor steep the area in a shroud of continual gloom.

If the characters came here via the Loggers' Road Branch, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following added description.

The word "road" hardly befits an elevated earthen causeway built from a combination of raised mulch and sawn tree trunks. Though obviously easier to negotiate than the trackless expanses surrounding it, the road is more akin to a crudely made plateau than an actual thoroughfare.

Crime Scenes and Clues

The characters' information clearly points toward the fact that the missing people vanished at or shortly after they entered the Harwood Forest from the swamp. The culprits used Shashana's magic to carry out the abduction. The lizardfolk and her werecrocodile cohorts set up a rendezvous point approximately 1 mile from the spot where the Loggers' Road Branch re-emerges into the Harwood Forest. Shashana then isolated one of the guests by either deliberately lagging behind or wandering a short distance off the trail. While alone, she discreetly cast *charm person* on her designated victim and told that person to stay behind and walk toward a designated spot, using a barely plausible cover story about some unknown danger lurking ahead. When the hunting lodge party put some distance between themselves and the lone straggler, the Grayharst brothers quickly overpowered their victim. (This explains why some visitors reported seeing only four crocodiles in the enclosure the morning they departed Answin Lodge.) Meanwhile, Shashana rejoined the party disguised as the missing visitor, using *phantasmal force* to temporarily allay any suspicions. A few minutes after exiting the Dyrgalas Fens, the lizardfolk waited until an opportune time to slink away back to the swamp and dispel her illusion leaving the remaining travelers later scratching their heads at the disappearance.

Unlike the trail leading to Answin Lodge, finding the spot where the missing persons left Loggers' Road Branch proves virtually impossible. Too much time has passed on the marshy ground for tracks to remain. However, other clues may exist for diligent characters who are willing to search carefully off of the track. If a character actively searches the area 1 mile from the edge of Dyrgalas Fens (perhaps in response to the clue the loggers found in the **Events** section), that character discovers a torn piece of what appears to be a woman's coat, an ivory hairbrush worth 5gp, and a cracked, silver mirror bearing an etching of a candle in a cave near the edge of a swampy pool. The etching is Mick O'Delving's holy symbol. These items belonged to Shanga Halfshin and can be identified by her father back in Biltscrough. Further searches of this area produce no other clues.

Reptile Rendezvous

Adventurers who opt for the most straightforward path to Answin Lodge meet Brock's four lizardfolk guides at dawn on Mootsdag (Wednesday). A swaggering aristocrat named Lord Horatio Alastair Charlton (Lawful male human aristocrat 2) also waits for their reptilian guides to arrive for his own trip to the lodge. The gregarious nobleman is an avid follower of Kamien, the goddess of rivers, springs and streams. He waxes poetic about the beauty of the Dyrgalas Fens' gentle, rolling streams and pristine ponds despite its reputation as an abode for unsavory folk and insidious monsters. In the face of danger, the haughty man stands his ground if personally attacked, but shies away from taking the initiative and aiding the characters or lizardfolk escorts during a confrontation.

For their part, the **3 lizardfolk guides** and **Shashana** demonstrate their standard punctuality and arrive at the meeting point 15 minutes before dawn. Shashana acts as the group's fourth member, though she is really there to size up the guests and determine whether they are prime targets to rob or potential impediments to their scheme. The lizardfolk guides speak with a smattering of simple commands in common such as "go," "stay," "follow," and "wait." In the event the characters or their aristocratic counterpart want to converse with their escorts, Shashana steps to the forefront and acts as the quartet's informal liaison.

Lizardfolk Guides (3): HD 2+1; HP 15, 13x2; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), bite (1d6); **Move** 6 (swim 12); **Save** 16; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 2/30; **Special:** breathe underwater. (**Monstrosities** 302)

Shashana, Lizardfolk Shaman: HD 4; HP 28; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), bite (1d6), mace (1d6), +1 *light crossbow* (1d4+2); **Move** 6 (swim 12); **Save** 16; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 2/30; **Special:** breathe underwater, spells (3/2). (**Monstrosities** 302)

Spells: 1st—*charm person*, *magic missile*, *sleep*; 2nd—*invisibility*, *phantasmal force*.

Equipment: +1 *light crossbow*, 20 bolts, mace, *potion of healing*, crude map of surrounding area.

Development: If questioned, the three lizardfolk guides deny knowing anything about missing guests. They are adamant everyone left Answin Lodge together and arrived safely at the edge of the Dyrgalas before they turned back for the swamp. The accusation comes as a total shock to them. Shashana naturally tries to dodge the characters and may even resort to using her illusory magic to appear like one of the lizardfolk they already questioned. When pressed into a corner, the convincing liar gives the same answers as her kin, feigning no knowledge about missing visitors. If the characters confront her, she tries to flee into the Dyrgalas and meet up with her werecrocodile conspirators later that evening outside of Answin Lodge. She fights only when left with no other alternative. The Referee must also take into account that any physical altercation between the characters and a lizardfolk, regardless of their justification for doing so, is certain to provoke a full-scale melee with Brock's trusted escorts unless the characters produce ironclad physical evidence of Shashana's guilt or a confession, even if they coerce one out of her.

The lizardfolk guides lead their charges 7 miles down the track, which has degraded into a raised earthen causeway resembling a mound more than a viable thoroughfare. In general, it takes a moderately encumbered party of humans roughly 3 to 3-1/2 hours to traverse through the Dyrgalas.

Going It Alone

Characters who forego the preceding routine and opt to venture to Answin Lodge on their own via the Loggers' Road Branch and the trail leading to the hunting lodge or blaze a fresh path through the wetlands face several difficulties the conventional route avoids. For those who opt for the Loggers' Road Branch route, locating the trail leading off toward Answin Lodge poses the only significant obstacle. A non-ranger character has a 60% chance to locate the trail diverging from the Loggers' Road Branch and follow it to Answin Lodge.

Characters who stray from the trail and those who completely bypass any of the swamp's roads must backtrack to locate the correct path. In

any event, trekking through uncharted swampland always reduces the creature's Movement by half.

possibly rescuing some of the abductees from the clutches of four malevolent residents: a annis hag, an oafish swamp ogre and two sinister harpies.

Dyrgalas Encounters

Unlike the journey through the Harwood Forest, there are no events in the Dyrgalas. Characters traveling through the region via the Loggers' Road Branch and the trail leading to Answin Lodge have a 1-in-4 chance of an encounter each hour spent in the swamp. These adventurers largely avoid the wetlands' natural hazards with the exception of contracting a mosquito-borne or tick-borne disease (1d4 damage for 1d4+1 days, save resists). Characters who venture through the Dyrgalas' trackless terrain have a 2-in-6 chance of an encounter each hour spent in the swamp. The Referee is free to use any of the encounters presented below.

Blighted

Not all pests are created equally. The overwhelming majority poses no imminent danger to intrepid explorers, though this solitary carrion fly represents a significant exception to the general rule. Nine months ago, a fanatical worshipper of Rachiss died in a sickening morass within the Dyrgalas, releasing the gestating monstrosity feasting within him.

Carrion Fly: HD 4; HP 27; AC 7[12]; Atk 4 tentacles (paralyze) or spit (2d4); **Move** 3 (fly 18); **Save** 13; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 7/600; **Special:** acid (1d4 damage per round after paralysis), paralyze (1d4+1 rounds, save resists). (**Monstrosities** 56)

Tactics: In most cases, Brock's lizardfolk guides join the fight. However, the carrion fly's frightful appearance utterly terrifies the overmatched, reptilian humanoids, leaving it solely up to the characters to deal with the monster. **Treasure:** The carrion fly conceals its treasures roughly 20ft above the ground in the hollowed-out nook of a dead cypress tree 80ft west of the encounter site. The carrion fly keeps +1 chainmail and a pouch containing a divine scroll (*cure light wounds*, *purify food and drink*, *bless*) in this hiding spot.

Blood in the Mist

A solitary mist-man floats through the trees in its constant search for blood. (Characters accompanied by Brock's lizardfolk guides face 2 mist-men instead. The lizardfolk escorts battle against one of the monsters, leaving the other to the characters.) The amorphous creature passes through the tiniest cracks and flies between tightly packed trees and undergrowth with ease in its quest for prey, though it cannot move through water. Mist Man (1 or 2): HD 4; AC 3[16]; Atk fist (2d6); **Move** (fly 18); **Save** 13; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 5/240; **Special:** exhale mist (15ft cone, blinded for 1d4+1 rounds, save avoids). (**Monstrosities** 332)

Natural Hazards

The Dyrgalas Fens abounds with other hazards, though sticking exclusively to the Loggers' Road Branch and Answin Lodge's makeshift trail minimizes many of these dangers. Still, creatures passing through these areas are subject to mosquito-borne and tick-borne maladies (1d4 damage for 1d4+1 days, save resists). They might also run across areas of marsh gas (open flames cause explosion for 4d6 points of damage), and patches of quicksand.

Part Two: Answin Hunting Lodge and Vicinity

After completing their long journey, the characters finally arrive at their destination — Answin Lodge and the true beginning of their investigation. After the characters unmask the culprits and confront the lycanthropic brothers and their lizardfolk accomplice, their attention then turns toward

First Impressions

When the characters arrive at Answin Lodge, they set eyes upon a sprawling complex surrounded by a 5ft-high clapboard fence made from water-resistant cypress wood. An arched gate along the southern wall is the only visible entrance to the compound. The gate is typically kept open during the day and secured at night.

Unlike the typical perimeter barrier, the hunting lodge's wooden walls and gates are primarily intended to keep the resident animals from escaping rather than preventing intruders from getting in. The structure's posts and planks make it relatively easy to scale the walls and gate, though bursting through the gate or barreling over the walls proves more difficult.

When the characters gain access to the hunting lodge proper the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description.

The outer walls encircle a sprawling complex. Spread out throughout the southern half of the compound are four large buildings. Eight smaller cottages run parallel to the western wall, while two slightly larger structures and a crude, earthen mound stand adjacent to them along the north wall. Between them and the main buildings is a sizable pen teeming with small animals as well as numerous wild berries, several fruit-bearing trees, and legumes.

The attraction's centerpieces lie along the east wall. An enormous sunken pool of murky water spans much of the hunting lodge's southeastern corner. Numerous fish, crustaceans, and mollusks are visible in the torpid pool, while at least a dozen turtles and a giant tortoise leisurely bask along the pool's edges. A stone wall surrounds the perimeter of a steeply sloped, semi-aquatic exhibit that protects visitors from the crocodiles that roam the enclosure's bottom. The northeastern corner boasts a circular glass enclosure that features a collection of native amphibians. Despite the compounds obvious upkeep, the stench of rotting food and excrement hangs heavy in the stale air.

During the adventure's investigative portion, events unfold in response to the characters' actions rather than in accordance with a preset plan. It is critical for the Referee to read ahead and become familiar with how each of the main antagonists responds to what the characters do during their excursion to Answin Lodge. How Brock, Bhandra and the lizardfolk guides answer questions about the mysterious disappearances appears in the **Answin Lodge Review** section below. The next section addresses what happens to characters who partake in the hunting lodge tour, while the subsequent section details how Brock and his staff react to characters who arrive unannounced at Answin Lodge.

Answin Lodge Review

Answin Lodge features a diverse cast of characters who act in accordance with their own agendas. While Brock and Bhandra naturally want the best for their business, they can also be a little guarded about revealing the enterprise's inner workings. The lizardfolk trust and admire the hunting lodge's management team, though their attitudes toward strangers range from indifferent to hostile based upon the investigators' actions during their stay in the wilderness. This section provides additional details about these individuals, focusing on their responses to the current crisis at Answin Lodge. The adventure's antagonists, Shashana and the Grayharst brothers, appear in a later section, **Crocodiles Rock**.

Brock Answin

A cheerful-looking burly man with long sandy brown hair held in a topknot, a dark olive complexion, and broad shoulders and chest always

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approaches with his hand extended in greeting. A juvenile crocodile measuring 3ft from snout to tail waddles behind.

Brock Answin is a crocodilian hunter, and the small crocodile mirroring his every step is his pet **Vicejaw**. Answin Lodge's owner is a chatty fellow, especially in the company of attractive human, elf or half-elf women. In this case, he immediately shifts his attention from the group at large to his target audience. Brock comes on very strong, a trait that always raises one of Bhandas's disapproving eyebrows. Brock's animals and the Dyrgalas are his true passions, though. Even after 8 years of narrating the same exhibits and leading excursions, his enthusiasm never wanes. He is an animated speaker who uses signature catchphrases such as "closer than a croc's eyelash," "unholy death roll," "slower than a frigid turtle," and "toad slime" to keep his audience's attention throughout his presentations.

Brock Answin (Rgr5): HP 41; AC 6[13]; Atk dagger (1d4) or sling (1d4); **Move** 12; **Save** 10; **AL** L; **CL/XP** 5/240; **Special:** +5 vs. giants and goblin-types, alertness, tracking.

Equipment: +1 leather armor, dagger, sling, 20 sling stones, 16gp, keys to **Areas K1, K2, K3** and chest within **Area K3**

Vicejaw (Normal Crocodile): HD 3; HP 20; AC 4[15]; Atk bite (1d6); **Move** 9 (swim 12); **Save** 14; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 3/60; **Special:** none.

Development: Much to the characters' surprise, dismay, or disbelief, the affable hunter remains blissfully oblivious to the rash of disappearances plaguing his attraction. Indeed, the surprising news about the missing guests takes him aback and leaves the normally jovial Brock speechless. From the outset, he insists that he personally accounted for everyone during their stay at Answin Lodge. He adamantly avows that he saw every guest who arrived at Answin Lodge also leave. Brock rigorously defends his staff, particularly his lizardfolk allies, against any allegations they are somehow involved in nefarious deeds. Naturally, he wants to get to the bottom of the matter too, though he prefers to keep a tight leash on the characters' investigative activities. Questioning him, Bhandas and the lizardfolk is acceptable. Blatantly accusing any member of his staff without hard evidence angers him.

Nonetheless, Brock provides useful information if the characters ask him the right questions. He recalls names and faces with remarkable accuracy, so telling him the victims' names or descriptions prompts him to respond that a cunning predator would have targeted those people in preference to the others because of their size, naivety, lack of situational awareness, an infirmity, or various other plausible reasons. Inquiries about the number of crocodiles in the enclosure yields a baffled facial expression accompanied by a curt reply of "6." He cannot explain the accounts and rumors of witnesses seeing only 4 crocodiles instead of 6, though he suggests checking that evening to dispel the notion, which he describes as "dafter than a six-legged gator." The reports of mysterious men wandering the hunting lodge's perimeter also leave him at a loss, as he and Bhandas are the only humans in the area. Once again, Brock is open to aiding the characters in any surveillance operation.

Brock's most distressing feature is a scabrous wound on his left forearm made when Ruland Grayharst bit him while in crocodile form. Unlike his two lizardfolk workers, the seasoned outdoorsman shrugged off the curse, but he remarks that two crocodiles he adopted from the wild roughly a year earlier seem rather feisty lately, considering he and his staff suffered 3 bite wounds in the last 2 weeks while sustaining only around 10 or 12 over the last eight years.

Bhandas Jasanapur

An attractive woman in her mid-30s with long brown hair and an athletic build holds a ledger book in one hand and a quill pen in the other.

Bhandas Jasanapur (Lawful female human expert 3) is the Answin Lodge's meticulous manager and is the antithesis of her carefree boss. She oversees every aspect of the business with clockwork precision, ensuring that each tour sticks to a tight schedule and that every customer pays his share down to the last copper penny. Bhandas frequently shudders at Brock's outrageous antics and sometimes-ribald comments, but she also

respects him tremendously for his ambition and love of nature. Though she appears cold and standoffish in comparison to her over-the-top counterpart, the determined woman is a charming conversationalist who enjoys unwinding with several glasses of wine or other spirits after a hard day's work. Bhandas is the glue that keeps Answin Lodge together.

Development: Bhandas confirms Brock's account that every guest who arrived at Answin Lodge also departed. However, unlike her less-detailed counterpart, the business manager keeps spotless records concerning every guest's stay and each employee's designated tasks on a particular day. Bhandas trusts the lizardfolk employees far less than her naïve superior, so she keeps close tabs on their activities. If the characters provide her with a list of the missing people, she can match up their names with the lizardfolk who accompanied them on both trips. While Brock gives the impression that the same lizardfolk have been with him since the hunting lodge opened 8 years ago, 5 of the hunting lodge's 12 lizardfolk guides came on board within the last year. These junior employees are typically detailed to the less-desirable return trip. They include Gruk, Raza, Truz, Zara, and Shashana.

Four names appear on every return trip log. For each missing person the characters mention beyond the first, they eliminate one name from the next list. Thus, if the characters ask Bhandas to research who accompanied Marafey Stadli and Shanga Halfshin, they are left with three names appearing on both lists. Shashana is the common denominator on every return trip log where someone went missing. This method is likely to winnow the suspects down to a precious few and perhaps focus the characters' attention solely on Shashana who also escorted them from Answin Lodge. Bhandas is at a loss to explain the discrepancies in the number of crocodiles seen in the enclosure as well as the reports of a mysterious human around the hunting lodge's perimeter. She defers those questions to Brock.

Lizardfolk

The lizardfolk live in a crowded earthen mound along the hunting lodge's northern edge. Despite their deplorable living conditions — at least by conventional human standards — the lizardfolk who work here prefer their sedentary existence within the secure confines of Answin Lodge to the great outdoors. They are efficient employees who diligently perform their assigned duties, though they sorely lack interpersonal skills when interacting with anyone other than their fellow lizardfolk, Brock, or Bhandas. The reptilian humanoids prefer anonymity, doing their best to blend into the background and remain unseen in the company of guests. There are **11 lizardfolk guides** and **Shashana** residing here with a roughly equal mix of males and females. In order of seniority they are Azzat, Varet, Sira, Dresk, Kuar, Hulat, Zrig, Gruk, Raza, Shashana, Truz and Zara.

Lizardfolk Guides (11): HD 2+1; HP 16, 15x3, 14x2, 13x2, 12, 10x2; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), bite (1d6); **Move** 6 (swim 12); **Save** 16; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 2/30; **Special:** breathe underwater. (**Monstrosities** 302)

Shashana, Lizardfolk Shaman: HD 4; HP 28; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), bite (1d6), mace (1d6), +1 light crossbow (1d4+2); **Move** 6 (swim 12); **Save** 16; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 2/30; **Special:** breathe underwater, spells (3/2). (**Monstrosities** 302)

Spells: 1st—charm person, magic missile, sleep; 2nd— invisibility, phantasmal force.

Equipment: +1 light crossbow, 20 bolts, mace, potion of healing, crude map of surrounding area.

Development: Despite their exposure to civilization and admiration of Brock, their suspicion of other races still runs extremely deep. They do not take kindly to questions from outsiders. They respond to the characters' inquiries with furtive glances, quizzical scowls and veiled hostility. Even in the presence of Brock or Bhandas, the lizardfolk bristle at the possibility a misunderstood statement could harm one of their brethren. Nonetheless, if the characters can befriend the lizardfolk, the subject grudgingly admits Shashana frequently wanders off on her own at night and on their treks to

and from the rendezvous point. The guide further states Shashana seems to enjoy the company of humans more than her kin. The individual also adds that the wily Shashana often mumbles to herself, carrying on an entire conversation alone. If pressed, the lizardfolk reveals Shashana was noticeably absent when the lizardfolk parted ways with their guests after exiting the Dyrgalas. She caught up with them roughly 10 minutes later.

Like Brock, two of the lizardfolk — Dresk and Hulat — sport fresh wounds, though the werecrocodiles bit them on the upper thigh instead of the forearm, which allows them to partially conceal the injury. Characters have a 1-in-6 chance to spot the almost completely healed laceration. When questioned about the slash, each party laments being too slow to avoid a crocodile bite, but they dismiss it as a minor scratch that barely drew any blood. Though their injury was less severe than Brock's gash, they contracted the curse of lycanthropy. The fledgling werecrocodiles have not yet undergone the transformation into monstrous beasts, so they display no symptoms of their affliction yet. See the upcoming section **Crocodiles Rock** for details regarding their actions during the hunting lodge's climactic scene.

Scheduled Tour

Characters who arrive at Answin Hunting Lodge alongside Brock's lizardfolk guides on Mootsdag (Wednesday) evening receive a rousing welcome from the naturalist and his staff. Brock Answin and his business manager, Bhandu Jasanapur, enthusiastically greet the newcomers. Meanwhile, the hunting lodge's remaining lizardfolk attend to a variety of duties in the background. The gregarious Brock immediately bombards the characters with his sales pitch, telling the characters numerous facts about the animals living in the hunting lodge pens. However, the itinerary is highly regimented, so the polite yet assertive Bhandu typically pulls Brock away from the guests and collects the hunting lodge's entrance fee from each guest in addition to trying to upsell them a 250gp private safari with Brock. (The private safari takes place on Sisterstag unless all the guests agree to participate in the personally led excursion into the surrounding wilderness.) Nonetheless, the characters may freely wander about the compound on their own or interact with the staff and other guests until dinner is served.

Dinner begins 1 hour after dusk in **Area K2**. Conversation and wine freely flow during the evening's festivities with Brock and Bhandu. The meal consists of freshly picked swamp apples with a main course of crawfish accompanied by watercress and swamp cabbage. Dinner generally wraps up roughly 2 hours before midnight, when the lizardfolk guides escort the visitors to their individual or jointly shared guest quarters in **Area K5**. Bhandu gives each occupant a key to his accommodations. She and Brock then retire for the evening, leaving a contingent of **4 lizardfolk guides** to keep watch over the hunting lodge during the overnight hours. These guards take their duties very seriously, insisting the characters immediately return to their quarters. However, they reluctantly relent if the adventurers patrol the grounds with them, provided they do not wander off on their own.

Lizardfolk Guides (4): HD 2+1; HP 15, 14x2, 12; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), bite (1d6); **Move** 6 (swim 12); **Save** 16; **AL** C; **CL**/XP 2/30; **Special:** breathe underwater. (**Monstrosities** 302)

Manesdag (Thursday) morning commences with breakfast back in the dining hall, followed by a short stop at the exhibit hall, **Area K1**, where Brock gives a very animated and detailed tour of the current exhibits. Guides then take the prospective hunters off the grounds and into the swamp, where the group hunt smaller animals and birds. After returning a few hours later, the group returns to the dining hall for a light lunch. Brock then continues the exhibit tour with **Area K11**, the turtle exhibit. Here, Brock points out the variety of turtles and fish dwelling in the pond. The tour temporarily bypasses the adjacent crocodile enclosure and moves onto **Area K9**, the amphibian exhibit. Once again, the energetic Brock regales his subjects with remarkable details about these unusual animals.

The group then heads back into the swamp with the guides, this time specifically hunting crocodiles. After a few hours hunting the reptiles, the group returns to the lodge where Brock resumes his tour of the animal exhibits by showing off the crocodile display.

Did You Know?

The energetic Brock cannot stop talking, especially in the presence of young ladies he wants to impress. The Referee may use some of these obscure real world facts about crocodiles and the hunting lodge's other inhabitants to show off his knowledge.

Crocodile Facts:

- Crocodiles sweat through their mouths.
- Their teeth are designed to grasp and hold their prey rather than chew it. That is why they feverishly shake their victims in an effort to dismember them.
- The beasts actually swallow stones that remain in their belly and help grind up their food as well as act as ballast stones.
- Less than one percent of all crocodile hatchlings make it to adulthood. Other predators such as fish, birds, lizards and adult crocodiles eat most of the hatchlings.
- The expression "crocodile tears" comes from the fact that crocodiles wipe their eyes while feeding, not to express remorse for devouring their meal, but because their eyes bubble and froth when they eat.
- Crocodiles can exert tremendous pressure when biting down on an object, yet a thin strand of rope wrapped around its jaws is all it takes to prevent them from opening their mouths.

Frog and Toad Facts:

- A tiny speck of poison from the skin of a particular frog species has enough venom to kill 100,000 people. (Of course, that species is not kept here.)
- A frog sheds its skin once per week and usually eats the sloughed skin.
- When a frog swallows its prey, it blinks. This action pushes the animal's eyeballs onto the roof of its mouth, which aids in pushing the food down the frog's throat.
- Toads can change their skin color to match their surroundings.

Turtle Facts:

- The animal's shell is actually an extension of its spine and rib cage rather than an exoskeleton.
- Turtles can live for more than a century.
- Some turtle species can breathe through their skin.

During this portion of the tour at **Area K10**, Brock and his lizardfolk assistants feed the hungry beasts, hurling rodents, fish and carcasses found outside the gates into the stone enclosure. The daring Brock and one of his assistants then ventures down the steep walls and into the pen itself where the brave naturalist has one of the animals perform a variety of tricks. During this part of the show, Brock jokes that one of his captive beasts accidentally bit him about a week earlier, though he shows no obvious fear of the voracious reptiles. After the demonstration and his presentation, guests are given about an hour to clean up before Brock and Bhandu escort the visitors back to the dining hall for a farewell dinner and an extensive dialogue. The party winds down close to midnight, when Mootsdag's pattern once again repeats itself. The group then reconvenes again the following morning on Sisterstag at the dining hall for breakfast before setting out back to the Harwood Forest. On the other hand, if anyone paid for the private safari, that excursion takes place today, followed by dinner in the evening and a return trip home the next morning.

Impromptu Tour

Brock and his staff are unaccustomed to receiving visitors when there are no formal tours scheduled or special extended-length stays arranged, thus the activity level within the complex is substantially lower on days when the hunting lodge does not expect visitors. The lizardfolk guides, 11 in all plus Shashana, attend to the animals' needs and other daily chores such as cooking, cleaning the enclosures, and patrolling the grounds. Brock ventures out into the wilderness to forage for food and ensure no predators or monstrous denizens are encroaching onto the hunting lodge's grounds shortly after dawn. He generally returns close to noon to check on the animals' health and supervise their feeding until early evening when he shares dinner with Bhandra and then retires for the night. Bhandra stays on the hunting lodge's grounds at all times, where she reviews and maintains the attraction's books and records as well as preparing the guests' quarters for the next round of visitors.

If the characters show up unexpectedly, Brock (if he is on the premises at the time) and Bhandra express some obvious reservations about their unanticipated arrival. Neither is prepared to offer a full-scale tour of the facility or a hunting excursion, but the cagey Bhandra is never one to pass up a business opportunity, so she offers them one night of accommodations, meals and access to the hunting lodge's exhibits for 35gp each. Regardless of the motivation for their visit, Bhandra never budes on her demand that the characters at least make a modest donation of 10gp to the hunting lodge for merely setting foot on the grounds, despite Brock's objections. During the characters' stay at Answin Lodge, Brock, Bhandra and the lizardfolk guides take turns monitoring the guests' activities, making sure they do no harm to the animals or commit any other acts that warrant immediate expulsion from the hunting lodge or worse.

Answin Lodge Locations

The following section details each of the locales appearing on the Answin Lodge map. There are 14 freestanding buildings on the grounds, one earthen mound, an enclosed livestock pen and three permanent exhibits. The freestanding buildings are all made from water-resistant cypress. The ceiling height in each building is 10ft. The doors are made from strong wood, and are always kept locked with the exception of **Areas K5** and **K6**, which are kept unlocked while unoccupied, and **Areas K1** and **K2**, which are left unlocked during the day and then locked from dusk until dawn.

K1. Exhibit Hall

Four circular, upright wooden pedestals occupy the center of a crowded room. Oversized teeth, preserved hides, reptilian skulls, and jagged claws rest atop each of these 3-foot-high stands. Five sealed glassed cases affixed to the walls display an assortment of insects, small lizards, amphibians, and tiny skeletons carefully pinned onto a cork backing.

Brock begins the tour in the exhibit hall, which includes an eclectic collection of crocodilian, reptilian, amphibian, and insect items. The pedestals contain crocodile teeth, claws, and skin harvested from animals that died at the hunting lodge. The southeastern pedestal supports an adult crocodile skull with the remainder displaying alligator, caiman, and gharial skulls in clockwise order. The glass cases on the wall are a haphazard display of indigenous insect specimens, small lizards, amphibians, and almost cartilaginous frog bones. Brock is less interested in these creatures, so he added interesting objects to the case without much forethought as to how to organize this exhibit. Nonetheless, the collection includes several noteworthy finds including enormous mosquitoes, dragonflies, midges and poisonous frogs. **Treasure:** The only items of value here are the three scraps of crocodile hide on the pedestals. Each is worth 25gp, though stealing any of them is certain to provoke outrage from Brock and Bhandra.

K2. Dining Hall

Plates, utensils, cups, and candles rest upon two long tables, each surrounded by ten chairs that offer plenty of space for each diner. A freestanding wooden bar between the far ends of the tables includes two chairs, a wine rack, and storage space for crockery, cutlery, and glassware. Two brick hearths that also double as grills occupy each of the far corners. Against the far wall stands a food preparation table with a single drawer. The tips of four sharp knives are embedded into the wooden cutting surface, allowing them to stand upright.

During dinner, Brock and Bhandra sit at the head of each table, allowing them to converse with a diverse variety of their guests. At least **3 lizardfolk guides** attend to the meal, with 2 prepping and cooking the food while the third waits on the hungry guests. The dinnerware is rather ordinary in terms of quality and its extensive use has taken a significant toll on the objects. Despite the warm temperatures, vents above the grills do an adequate job funneling heat and smoke out of the dining hall, keeping them comfortable throughout the meal.

Lizardfolk Guides (11): HD 2+1; HP 12, 10x2; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), bite (1d6); **Move** 6 (swim 12); **Save** 16; **AL** C; **CL**/XP 2/30; **Special:** breathe underwater. (**Monstrosities** 302)

Treasure: Brock's wine collection is the dining hall's most impressive feature. Currently 24 bottles of wine worth 2d6gp each are stored in the unlocked wine rack. Brock does not mind if a guest takes and drinks one bottle for personal use, but stealing his precious wine for the purpose of reselling it infuriates him. At best, he takes back his wine and permanently bans the offender. On his worst day he hurls the perpetrator into the crocodile enclosure, giving them a tasty treat.

K3. Brock's Personal Quarters

Brock always locks the door, regardless of whether or not he is inside at the time.

In stark contrast to the surroundings, these personal quarters exude style, sophistication, and luxury. An exquisitely carved, half-filled wooden bathtub sits in the near corner adjacent to a full-length silver mirror. A circular wooden table surrounded by four chairs rests in the other near corner, where it stands next to a dresser table with three drawers. The far wall features a comfortable, four-poster bed adorned with silk sheets and an exotic fur. A fine mesh net is draped over the bed. A locked iron chest and a wooden armoire flank the bed.

Brock spends little of his time in his personal quarters other than to sleep or entertain an interested guest. Brock is very protective of his private space, causing him to respond forcefully to unwanted intrusions. As a formidable grappler, he prefers to incapacitate a trespasser over outright killing him. Despite his rude upbringing and affinity for the outdoors, he also enjoys the finer things in life, which is reflected in his choice of furnishings and accessories. He stores his clothes in the dresser and the closed armoire. He keeps his share of Answin Lodge's profits in the locked, iron chest alongside his bed. When he does occupy his quarters, his animal companion Vicejaw typically sleeps in the bathtub.

Treasure: Brock took personal interest in the design and creation of his cypress bathtub, which lacquered on the inside to protect it from immersion and weighs 130 lbs. (775gp). The silver mirror adjacent to it is worth 50gp, though moving it is difficult because of its weight (25 lbs.) and delicate nature. When he is not out exploring the wilderness, Brock keeps chest waders, a pair of hip waders, two pairs of swamp boots

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(see **Chapter 5**), and three explorer outfits in the armoire. He stores his undergarments, stockings, four shirts and three pairs of trousers in the dresser. These pieces of apparel are worth 50gp. The bed's silk sheets are worth 100gp, while the moose fur is worth 125gp. The iron chest holds 1029gp, 855sp, and 4 *potions of healing*. Though primarily intended for his own use, Brock taps into his reserves of healing potions in an emergency situation. The meticulous Bhandra never forgets to add the cost to the guest's bill.

K4. Bhandra's Quarters and Management Office

Bhandra always keeps the door locked when she is not present.

The aromas of perfume and talc fill the air in these living quarters. The scents apparently originate from four decorative bottles that rest atop a vanity table against the far corner adjacent to a nearby mirror. Beyond is a cramped office with a wooden desk, two chairs and a bookshelf. A wooden dressing panel with inlaid mother-of-pearl partially obscures the near corner a few feet away from a bed covered with linen sheets and lace beneath a draping of fine mesh netting suspended from the ceiling above. The near wall's furnishings include a wooden two-drawer dresser and a wooden bathtub filled with clean water.

Unlike her supervisor, **Bhandra** can usually be found in her quarters when she is not occupied by hunting lodge functions. At most times during the day, she spends her time pouring over Answin Lodge's financial records and guest log book in an attempt to drum up new leads for potential visitors in Biltscrough as well as the major cities in neighboring duchies. She is currently drafting a broadsheet-style advertisement about the hunting lodge for prospective clients and a prospectus for investors for a major expansion that she has not yet discussed with Brock. Of course, Bhandra keeps a close watch over her records with the door always locked when she is not present.

Treasure: Bhandra enjoys pampering herself in the wild, so she frequently bathes in her cypress bathtub worth 600gp (130 lbs.) and uses perfumes and talc on her skin (worth 80gp total). The adjacent pewter mirror is worth 10gp, which is the same value as her linen beddings and lace. She keeps her three explorer's outfits, one noble's outfit and her prized royal outfit in the dresser's two drawers. Bhandra keeps the keys to all of the guest quarters in a small drawer in her desk, and the key to her chamber in her pocket at all times.

K5. Guest Quarters

A fine mesh canopy completely encloses a simple, yet comfortable bed. A cypress dressing table with two drawers rounds out the room's furnishings. A single unlit oil lamp hangs from a hook on the ceiling.

When not in use, Brock and Bhandra keep the guest quarters unlocked. The furniture is obviously worn and heavily used, rendering it valueless.

K6. Larger Guest Quarters

These are identical to **Area K5** but have two beds rather than one and are suitable for small groups or families.

K7. Animal Pen

The foul stench of damp earth emanates from behind a 3-foot-high clapboard fence that surrounds an inundated patch of soil overrun by swamp vegetation, a handful of fruit trees, and wild grains. Swamp rats and several other rodents scurry up and down the branches, while indigenous birds perch within the canopies of the tallest trees, which reach a height of 50 feet.

The low fence poses no obstacle to the swamp rats and other small wetlands animals that dwell within the pen. However, the abundance of food and hiding places within this sequestered area give the hungry animals little reason to leave their confines. Brock never eats the animals found here and only occasionally picks fruit from the trees or harvests the wild grains growing within the pen. Instead, he uses the swamp rats and other small animals to supplement the crocodiles' diet. Even for an experienced naturalist such as Brock, venturing into the pen presents a significant risk. For each minute spent in the pen beyond the first, there is a 20% chance that **1d4 giant swamp rats** or a **rat swarm** attacks the trespassers. Regardless of how much time the characters spend within the pen, intruders are not attacked more than 3 times over the course of any 24-hour period.

Swamp Rat, Giant (1d4): HD 1d4hp; AC 7[12]; Atk bite (1d3); **Move** 12; **Save** 18; **AL** N; **CL/XP** A/5; **Special:** 5% are diseased.

Rat Swarm: HD 3; AC 7[12]; Atk swarm (1d8 plus disease); **Move** 12; **Save** 14; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 3/60; **Special:** disease (1d4 damage per hour, save resists).

K8. Lizardfolk Lair

A low, oblong earthen mound covered with vegetation occupies a section of the northern grounds. A square piece of leather that acts as a crude flap serves as a makeshift entrance into the side of this mound. The odors of roasting flesh and bodily waste emanate from around this door flap.

Inside six heaps of damp rags and poorly tanned skins cover the bare ground in these crowded living quarters and serve as bedding. A circle of stones surrounds a sunken fire pit near the center of the dwelling. Tendrils of smoke belch and squeak off the charred flesh of a fat toad roasting on a spit over the open flame. The lizardfolk live here in apparent squalor, but the reptilian humanoids barely seem to mind. Brock's workers sleep in shifts, so 2 or 3 of them are asleep at any given time with another **1d4+4 lizardfolk guides** present during the night. Like their supervisor, they fiercely protect their abode against trespassers. They attack any creature who ignores their stern warning to immediately leave their mound. The lizardfolk, including Shashana, rush to the aid of their brethren regardless of their location or their current task at hand. At this point, even Brock and Bhandra cannot call off their assault, which continues until either side is no longer able to fight. Characters who pick a fight with the lizardfolk on their home turf find nothing of value other than the guides' personal possessions within the hut.

Lizardfolk Guides (varies): HD 2+1; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), bite (1d6); **Move** 6 (swim 12); **Save** 16; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 2/30; **Special:** breathe underwater. (**Monstrosities** 302)

Shashana, Lizardfolk Shaman: HD 4; HP 28; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), bite (1d6), mace (1d6), +1 *light* crossbow (1d4+2); **Move** 6 (swim 12); **Save** 16; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 2/30; **Special:** breathe underwater, spells (3/2). (**Monstrosities** 302)
Spells: 1st—charm person, magic missile, sleep; 2nd—

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invisibility, phantasmal force.

Equipment: +1 light crossbow, 20 bolts, mace, potion of healing, crude map of surrounding area.

(swim 12); **Save** 13; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 6/400; **Special:** +1 magic or silver weapons to hit, lycanthropy.

K9. Amphibian Exhibit

Numerous loud croaks, grunts, and calls arise from behind an 8-foot-high circular glass wall that surrounds a brackish pool of stagnant water teeming with overgrown vegetation. Several large shrubs grow along the barrier, partially blocking the view into the exhibit. Small frogs, toads and salamanders swim in the murky water, walk along the branches, feast upon the leaves and insects, or sleep within the enclosure.

Brock's amphibian exhibit boasts an impressive collection of indigenous animals that includes 30 species of frogs, 22 species of toads, and another 7 species of salamanders. The glass barrier has no door or ceiling and stands 8ft tall. Its design allows water and insects to enter the exhibit. Visitors peer through the glass, which rests upon a stone foundation. A creature who breaks through the glass wall takes 1d6 points of slashing damage from the shards.

Almost all of the specimens within the exhibit are very common in the region, though a handful qualify as rarities. None of the amphibians poses a danger to the adventurers with one notable exception — the enclosure's resident **rakklethorn toad** that aggressively attacks any creature larger than size Tiny that enters its lair. It sits quietly among the foliage.

Rakklethorn Toad: HD 2; HP 13; AC 8[11]; **Atk** thorn volley (1d6 plus poison), bite (1d4); **Move** 4; **Save** 16; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 3/60; **Special:** poison (1d3 damage, save avoids), thorns (50ft range). (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 450)

Kro. Crocodile Exhibit

The following description assumes a day viewing. At night, there are only 4 crocodiles present.

Murky water fills the basin of a steeply sloped enclosure. Grass and other aquatic plants grow along the stagnant water's edge and in the shallows. A 3-foot-high masonry wall surrounds the pen's outer perimeter, allowing observers a clear line of sight into the crocodile exhibit. From there, the stone walls descend 8 feet into the ground at a steep angle. Six crocodiles lounge at the bottom, with some resting in the water and others sunning themselves along the edge.

There are 4 crocodiles dwelling in this enclosure, and during daylight hours, the **Grayharst brothers** assume their crocodile forms and join them for a free meal when Brock and his lizardfolk feed the hungry beasts in the early afternoon hours. The brothers slip out of the exhibit shortly after nightfall and return before dawn (see **Crocodiles Rock** for more information on their tactics). Getting down to the bottom of the enclosure is easy enough, but climbing back out again requires a non-thief character to roll below his dexterity on 4d6 or take 1d4 points of damage from the failed effort. The water reaches a depth of 4ft near the center of the pool. The Grayharst brothers have hollowed out an elasmosaurus femur they found in the swamp and sealed it with a watertight cork stopper at one end. The 3ft-long, 4in-diameter bone blends into the pool's murky surroundings amid other smaller bones that protrude above the water's surface.

Crocodiles (4): HD 3; HP 21, 19x2, 18; AC 4[15]; **Atk** bite (1d6); **Move** 9 (swim 12); **Save** 14; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 3/60; **Special:** none.

Reginald and Ruland Grayharst (Werecrocodiles) (2): HD 4; HP 30, 27; AC 4[15]; **Atk** bite (1d6 plus lycanthropy); **Move** 9

Development: Brock trained these crocodiles to obey his commands, but the same does not apply to other humanoids. They attack any humanoids they do not recognize on sight. Killing Brock's beloved crocodiles earns his wrath and that of his staff. However, if the characters have spotted the unusual bone and seek Brock's assistance in retrieving it, he happily aids them, keeping the crocodiles at bay while they pull the bone from the water. The adventurers can also attempt to distract the aggressive reptiles on their own, by either offering food or using magic to placate or keep them at bay.

Treasure: Within the elasmosaurus bone, the brothers have stored their ill-gotten gains consisting of: 608gp, 9 pearls worth 100gp each, a *potion of plant control*, a *potion of gaseous form*, a *potion of fire resistance*, a jeweled dagger bearing the initials "MJ" on the hilt worth 450gp, and 16 +1 arrows.

Kri. Turtle Exhibit

At least fifty turtles of varying shapes, sizes, and coloration swim or rest within the shallow waters and along the edges of a gently sloped, roughly oval stone-lined basin. Aquatic vegetation grows from the waterlogged soil. Likewise, several varieties of long-whiskered fish root up mud and other organic matter from the bottom of the pool.

The lethargic turtles lazily meander about the enclosure, often remaining out of the visitors' sight beneath the muddy water, which ranges in depth from a few inches along the edges to 5ft at the center of the pool. Unlike the crocodile enclosure, the walls descend only 3ft to the water's edge at a modest slope of 30 degrees. As in the case of the amphibians, all of the turtles and catfish are common, local varieties that Brock captured and added to the exhibit over the course of the last 8 years.

Crocodiles Rock

The characters and the crimes' perpetrators careen toward an inevitable collision, but how the confrontation unfolds depends upon the characters' actions during their trip to and stay at Answin Lodge. The encounter between the two sides has no set timetable. The Referee must weigh the available options and take the actions that make the most sense for Ruland, Reginald, and Shashana at the time. The appearance of characters who ask a lot of questions tells the trio that Biltscrough's authorities are likely onto their game, so they act quickly to neutralize the threat. Flight seems the most prudent option for the gang, but they already made a deal to deliver another sentient creature to the annis hag Grizzelda in 3 days' time. Fearful of incurring the crone's wrath if they renege on their bargain with her, they realize they must deal with the newcomers and somehow salvage a victim from among their ranks or abduct one of the hunting lodge's other non-lizardfolk guests or residents. With little time to spare, the group almost certainly attacks on the first evening while Brock sleeps off a hangover.

If the characters managed to kill or capture Shashana during **Part 1** of the adventure, the Grayharst brothers face their foes without their valuable spy, which prevents them from monitoring the characters' activities. Still, the wily predators have a few tricks left, most notably their crocodile allies and potentially the afflicted lizardfolk. In the early morning hours after the characters' arrival, the werecrocodiles free the crocodiles by lugging them out of the enclosure, giving observant characters an opportunity to catch the lycanthropes off guard if they conduct surveillance on the crocodile enclosure. In any event, Reginald and Ruland dispense with pretenses and bring the fight to their adversaries, assaulting them in their quarters or out in the open. They use their lycanthropic empathy and animal skills to command the already aggressive beasts to attack the characters. If the Referee wants an even more challenging combat, the full moon rises over the swamp that evening, causing the afflicted lizardfolk Dresk and Hulat to transform into werecrocodiles. Armed with reinforcements, the



quartet of bloodthirsty lycanthropes descends on the hunting lodge with unbridled fury, leaving a wake of destruction. Regardless of the situation, the Grayharst brothers always fight in hybrid or animal form. They change into their human form only to climb out of the crocodile enclosure and to move about the hunting lodge grounds. In the wilderness, they revert to their hybrid form.

On the other hand, if Shashana remains in play, her magical abilities become a powerful tool. She keeps a watchful eye on the adventurers, relaying information about current developments to her counterparts. More importantly, the spell *phantasmal force* allows her to impersonate Bhanda Jasanapur, giving her a multitude of options to deal with the meddling adventurers. For instance, if Shashana overhears the characters talking about the discrepancies regarding the number of crocodiles in the enclosure, she discreetly disguises herself as Bhanda and tells the characters to meet her there later that evening to investigate the matter. When the characters meet with Shashana, again disguised as Bhanda, the werecrocodiles lie in wait. The trio then attempts to push the unsuspecting adventurers into the crocodile pit, giving the beasts the opportunity for a surprise treat. Likewise, Shashana may use a similar ploy to lure the characters out of the compound during the middle of the night to investigate a mysterious disturbance in the surrounding swamp. She leads them into the middle of a shallow stream where the werecrocodiles wait in ambush. The trio is not averse to abducting and killing one of the lizardfolk to act as bait to further one of their schemes. **Tactics:** When combat breaks out, the siblings immediately fly into a rage, bolstering their already formidable natural attacks. The Grayharst brothers single out martial opponents, relying upon their damage reduction to lessen the impact of their foes' attacks. They direct their crocodile allies and their new lizardfolk compatriots, if they are present, against spellcasters and lightly armored foes. In stark contrast, Shashana avoids melee combat whenever possible, and instead peppers her enemies with her spells. If disguised as Bhanda before the battle, Shashana maintains the illusion until the lizardfolk arrive at the scene, at which point she dispels the glamor and reverts to her true form.

On the first night, it takes the intoxicated Brock 1d4 rounds to react to the din of battle. When he finally stirs, he engages either Ruland or Reginald, attempting to grapple one of the burly monsters. However, the hunting lodge's startled founder refuses to attack Shashana out of fear that an assault against a lizardfolk, regardless of the justification, may cause her kin to turn against him. Likewise, he shudders at the idea of adventurers killing one of his beloved crocodiles in the event that the brothers free them from the enclosure, so he insists on tackling them in nonlethal combat, leaving the characters to deal with the Grayharst brothers alone. For their part, Bhanda and the lizardfolk do not directly intervene in the combat. However, if Brock falls, Bhanda rushes to his side and administers a *potion of extra healing* to her stricken friend, regardless of the potential danger.

Development: Reginald and Ruland fight until slain or incapacitated. Shashana does not share their dedication. She surrenders if both of her werecrocodile allies fall. In exchange for her life, she barter the fate of those she and her friends sold into slavery or sacrifice to Grizzelda the annis hag, Berseus the swamp ogre, and the two harpies. She also provides a crude map of the area that details the locations of these respective lairs (**Player Handout**). Shashana can also be grudgingly made to reveal that they sold a halfling woman to the annis hag a few weeks earlier and had a deal to deliver another captive to the annis hag by the end of the current week. They have not delivered any prisoners to the harpies in a month and the swamp ogre within the last 2 months. She says the giant oaf and the harpies keep their slaves alive much longer than the annis hag, who tends to devour them or use them for some ghastly experiment within weeks of their delivery. If the characters subdue either or both of the Grayharst brothers, they initially refuse to cooperate but can be made to talk. In this instance, they turn over the crude map in their possession and relay the same information as Shashana. They can also be made to divulge that they hid their spoils in a hollow bone at the bottom of **Area K10**.

Characters who kill all three perpetrators must discover this information without the trio's assistance. However, one carries a crude map that bears three X's at particular spots on the map (**Player Handout**). The characters

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can show the map to Brock, Bhandra or one of the lizardfolk, provided they survived the encounter. The lizardfolk recognize one of the marks as the "ogre's copse," as they call it. Brock and Bhandra confirm that all three locations correspond to the abode of three of the swamp's malevolent denizens. Brock describes the creatures as "nasty business" and "crueler than a hungry snapping turtle." He tells the characters that anyone daring to venture there is "battier than a dank cave."

Brock and Bhandra express their sincere gratitude for aiding the hunting lodge and unmasking the culprits, but neither can accompany them into the wilderness to try to save the abductees from a horrific fate. Instead, he offers the characters some of the alchemical substances he stores in his chest as recompense for their services in this matter.

Reginald and Ruland Grayharst (Werecrocodiles) (2): HD 4; HP 30, 27; AC 4[15]; Atk bite (1d6 plus lycanthropy); Move 9 (swim 12); Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** +1 magic or silver weapons to hit, lycanthropy.

Dresk and Hulaf (Lizardfolk Werecrocodiles) (2): HD 4; HP 26, 24; AC 4[15]; Atk bite (1d6 plus lycanthropy); Move 9 (swim 12); Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** +1 magic or silver weapons to hit, lycanthropy.

Shashana, Lizardfolk Shaman: HD 4; HP 28; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), bite (1d6), mace (1d6), +1 light crossbow (1d4+2); Move 6 (swim 12); Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 2/30; **Special:** breathe underwater, spells (3/2). (**Monstrosities** 302)
Spells: 1st—*charm person*, *magic missile*, *sleep*; 2nd—*invisibility*, *phantasmal force*.
Equipment: +1 light crossbow, 20 bolts, mace, *potion of healing*, crude map of surrounding area.

Rescue Mission

With the culprits thwarted and Answin Lodge restored to normal, the characters' efforts now turn to saving those unfortunate travelers the trio captured. None of the three locales is more than 3 miles from the hunting lodge, but in the Dyrgalas, slogging through several hundred feet of soupy goo and tangled vegetation can slow even the most seasoned explorer to a figurative crawl. Once again, characters hacking through untamed swamplands face a 2-in-6 chance each hour of encountering one of the **Dyrgalas Fens Encounters** described in **Part 1** of this adventure. Likewise, they run across the same logistical travel difficulties they contended with in **Part 1** while moving across trackless terrain. The three lairs listed on the map are **Areas G, B, and H**.

G. Grizzelda's Lair

The annis hag's wretched abode lies roughly 2-1/2 miles west of Answin Lodge in a remote, desolate patch of swampland dominated by numerous bald cypress trees towering over tangles of thick weeds and small, muddy streams. She leaves no trail or other sign of her presence when moving through the surrounding area, so no paths lead to or from

The Swamps are Alive!

While the murky water in Dyrgalas is mostly stagnant, it's important for the Referee to remember that the biome itself is not. In outdoor areas in the below encounters, characters still must deal with natural hazards. They may stumble upon a hungry crocodile or other swamp creature. Play it by ear. Ultimately, these encounters should be dynamic and entertaining, allowing the characters to be the heroes who sweep in and save the captives, rather than a harrowing fight to the death. Use natural hazards and wandering animals to heighten the tension, not demolish the heroes.

her lair. Visibility is poor, so even with the assistance of the perpetrators' crude map Grizzelda's residence cannot be seen until the characters come within 100ft of it. The Referee may read or paraphrase the following description of her sickening residence.

Massive cypress trees, sluggish streams, and stagnant ponds emitting foul odors surround an oddly shaped structure crudely built from bundled branches, thatch, and mud. Puffs of smoke belch from two stone chimneys that protrude from what appears to be a bulb-shaped part of the building adjacent to a bizarre abutment that looks like a thick key. A swollen, wooden door is on the west face of the building. A palpable feeling of dread lingers in the motionless stale air.

Grizzelda eagerly looks forward to receiving her next victim from the Grayharst brothers. She remains at home until they and their captive arrive at her doorstep. Despite her impatience, the wicked crone never lets her guard down. Though the door presents the most readily accessible option for getting into Grizzelda's lair, bold adventurers may try to shimmy down the chimney or smash through her wooden walls. Characters attempting to climb down the stone chimney must make a saving throw to avoid plummeting into a boiling kettle beneath for 1d6 points of damage per round immersed. The chimney route otherwise deposits the character in the smoldering hearth found in **Area G2**. On the other hand, smashing through the wooden walls proves more difficult than it looks at first, as Grizzelda magically strengthened them.

Gr. Grizzelda's Antechamber

Brackish water bubbles up from the ground covering most of the dark, oblong-shaped chamber's floor. A cracked, bronze mirror hangs from the wall directly opposite the door. Thick layers of dirt, decaying vegetation, and vines cover a chilly, stone hearth that occupies the near corner. Two weathered and badly damaged paintings of demonic creatures devouring humanoid legs and arms cling precariously to knobs in the branches that make up the wall.

Grizzelda abandoned this dark chamber 5 years ago when the water table rose. The pond is now 2d4 inches deep in all spots other than the edges. In a fit of anger, the old crone smashed the mirror, leaving it as a reminder to all that beauty fades over time. Debris and vegetation overtook the hearth too, rendering it useless. Humidity and time took their toll on Grizzelda's tiny art collection, transforming the once vibrant oil paintings into moldy, faded memories. However, a character has a 1-in-6 chance to recognize the pieces as "The Demon Hordes Devouring Mitra," part of a once-valuable and controversial series of artworks made valueless by the hag's indifference. A door on the north wall connects this chamber to Grizzelda's living quarters.

Treasure: Spells such as *limited wish* and *wish* can restore the painting completely. In its current state, the painting holds no value; if a character repairs the physical damage to the canvas and frame, each painting is then worth 25gp to a collector despite the remaining damage. A character who gains access to higher-level magic and succeeds at restoring the artwork itself has a masterpiece worth 1000gp.

G2. Grizzelda's Living Quarters

Desperate sobs emanate from an iron cage confining a ragged halfling, while an emaciated middle-aged man in another iron cage remains silent. The flames from two hearths in the near corners illuminate and heat the room. An iron cauldron filled with a simmering black, viscous goo roils

over each fire. A cracked stone statue of a beautiful female warrior stands next to one of the hearths, and light reflects off the tarnished surface of a mirror, cracked and missing many shards, attached to the near wall. A group of vials rest atop a large, flat-topped table, while more than a dozen tattered books sit upon a crude shelf built into it. Four wooden posts driven into the earthen floor against the far wall support a rudimentary bed stitched together from flayed skin and leather.

Stagnant water and cypress trees encircle a small, elevated island. Two 10-foot-tall stone columns rise up from the soaked earth. Three badly sunburned men and one woman sit or meander aimlessly around the pylons, tethered to the structures by 20-foot-long iron chains attached to a metal hoop ringing around the columns' base. An uneven, 20-foot-high structure of roughly stacked stones stands behind them. A pair of massive wooden doors on the south face appears to be the only entrance.

Grizzelda turns invisible at the first sign of danger, but she cannot silence her captives. Shanga Halfshin, the imprisoned halfling, feverishly cries out to the characters as soon as they enter that the hag is still here and hiding somewhere in the room. The other captive, **Miro Dichambeurd** (Neutral male human expert 3), says nothing. A close inspection confirms that Grizzelda's sickening bed is made from flayed human skin and assorted pieces of leather. She keeps a locked wooden chest beneath it. The characters can identify the stone statue as a depiction of the goddess Mitra. The fourteen books in the table are moldy and worthless treatises on swamp poultices, folk remedies, and other assorted esoterica.

Grizzelda, Annis: HD 5; HP 33; AC 3[16]; Atk claws (1d8), bite (1d6); **Move** 12; **Save** 11 (+1, cloak); **AL** C; **CL/XP** 7/600; **Special:** hug and rend, polymorph (human form), spells (2/2). (**Monstrosities** 237)

Spells: 1st—*magic missile*, *sleep*; 2nd—*invisibility*, *pyrotechnics*.

Equipment: *cloak of protection +1*, key to cages

Tactics: Unless the characters devise a means to locate her, the annis hag patiently bides her time. She retreats to the corner behind her bed and casts a *pyrotechnics* spell at the hearth, filling the chamber with smoke. Grizzelda then waits 9 rounds for the smoke to finally dissipate or for a character to wander into her before she wades into combat, flailing her claws at her target. Grizzelda values her life more than her treasure. If possible, she flees into the swamp when reduced to 10 or fewer hit points. When retreat is impossible, she offers some of her treasures and her prisoners in exchange for her miserable existence.

Development: When freed, Shanga graciously thanks them and recounts her terrifying ordeal. She tells the adventurers Grizzelda repeatedly drew her blood, peeled off chunks of skin, and cut off her cuticles for some unknown purpose. Shanga confirms Shashana cast a spell on her and led her deeper into the swamp where the two crocodile men overpowered her and sold her to Grizzelda. The starving and dehydrated Miro is in far worse shape than Shanga. He can barely speak and is exhausted. Until the characters remedy his exhaustion, he is too weak and feeble to travel.

Treasure: The 8 vials atop the table include 4 potions: a *potion of animal control*, a *potion of diminution*, a *potion of fire resistance*, and *potion of levitation*. Grizzelda carries a pouch within her tattered robes that holds an emerald worth 250gp, a bronze ring worth 5gp, and an ivory comb worth 15gp. The locked chest contains 620gp and a pouch of *dust of sneezing and choking* (3 pinches).

B. Bruseus's Lair

Twelve years ago, the dimwitted Bruseus commandeered an abandoned waystation for pilgrims venturing to a ruined temple said to lie somewhere in the swamp. The oaf's stone residence lies 1-1/4 miles northeast of Answin Lodge in an extremely low-lying portion of the Dyrgalas Fens almost completely flooded. Indeed, cypress trees are the only plants growing above the water's surface, which averages 1d3 feet in depth. Bruseus' tiny island is the only exception, but even here the surrounding pool occasionally washes over the saturated soil. In the absence of pervasive vegetation, visibility is substantially better than in most parts of the Dyrgalas with a maximum range of 150ft. When the characters first spy the swamp ogre's island, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description.

The giant's slaves include **Rees Nollton** (Neutral male human aristocrat 4), **Terence Nightfoot** (Lawful male human cleric of Freya 3), **Lucius Albrecht** (Chaotic male human expert [slaver] 3), and **Stephanny Gustaloff** (Lawful female human aristocrat 4). The three men and one woman wade into the water and harvest mollusks, crustaceans, fish, and any other edible organic material they can find. They wear nothing other than tattered rags to retain what remains of their modesty, leaving them to bake daily under the glare of the midday sun. The quartet begs the characters to free them and rid the world of their jailor, the sadistic swamp ogre who dwells inside the converted residence. Naturally, the slaves are anxious to leave the dank wetlands and return home, but the opportunistic Lucius thinks he can profit from a fight between his oafish captor and the characters, so he deliberately causes a boisterous scene demanding his immediate release. He wants the combatants to slay each other or decimate one side, leaving him to pick through the spoils. Unless the characters somehow silence his racket, **Bruseus** and his 2 **pet cottonmouths** emerge from the abode 1d4+1 rounds after the ruckus begins. When this happens, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description.

Despite the impressive size and weight of their iron shackles, the swamp ogre overlooked the fact the omnipresent water would eventually turn the restraints to rust. Nonetheless, the shackles pose a formidable obstacle. The characters can attempt to unlock the manacles wrapped around the wearer's neck or use brute force (Open Doors check) to break the lock or sever the iron links. In the latter case, the noise draws Bruseus' attention bringing him out if he has not already done so. If the characters successfully unlock or shatter the manacles without alerting Bruseus, the slaves retreat into the swamp and await the characters' return after they leave or defeat the swamp ogre.

None of the humans ever set foot in the structure, so they can provide no intelligence about what lies within the walls. The swollen, wooden double doors granting entry require force to open (Open Doors check at -2).

Bruseus, Swamp Ogre: HD 6+1; HP 42; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6 each) and bite (2d6); **Move** 6 (swim 12); **Save** 11; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 8/800; **Special:** surprise in swamp (1-5 on 1d6), and swallow whole (bite, natural 20 to hit). (**Monstrosities** 357)

Giant Cottonmouth Vipers (2): HD 4; HP 24, 21; AC 5[14]; Atk bite (1d3 plus lethal poison); **Move** 12; **Save** 13; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 6/400; **Special:** lethal poison (save or die). (**Monstrosities** 440)

Tactics: Bruseus attempts to drive that opponent into the water. The snakes immediately capitalize on a chance to attack an opponent in the water but otherwise they fight at the giant's side. Bruseus is also not averse to using one of his slaves as a weapon. In this case, he grabs an iron chain and then swings it, dealing 1d8 points of damage on a successful hit. The slave affixed to the end of the chain takes half damage from the impact.

Development: Bruseus equates defeat with slavery. Therefore, he never surrenders. If the characters subdue him, they can compel him to speak. Bruseus admits he purchased 6 slaves from the "gatormen" and the lizardfolk over the course of the last year. He ate 2 of them, because he only had 4 sets of shackles. He has no other useful information.

Treasure: Bruseus carries the key to the iron chest in **Area B1** his waist pocket along with 3 pearls worth 100gp each and loose coins totaling 14gp and 33sp.

Br. Bruseus' Living Quarters

A wide, stone antechamber proceeds 20 feet and then opens into a large, spacious chamber with a 15-foot-high ceiling supported by a fluted, stone column near the room's center. An enormous tapestry depicting an epic battle between armored humans and a horde of demons hangs from the near wall. Despite the damp conditions, the artwork seems to have fared remarkably well through the years. Three large beds covered in linen sheets and straw pillows rest against the far walls. A locked iron chest sits on the floor between two of the beds. A bronze statue of an attractive woman sits against a curved wall in the back corner of the room adjacent to a wooden dresser with two drawers.

If Bruseus and the snakes did not already venture outside, the characters encounter them here. The belligerent swamp ogre flies into a mad fury, swinging at the nearest opponent. While indoors, he takes up a position, with his pets by his side, at the end of the antechamber in the middle of the corridor, effectively trying to bottle up the characters in that space. He reacts to adversity in the same manner as described in the preceding section.

Built as a waystation for passing pilgrims, the beds emphasized durability over luxury. Upon closer examination, holes and tears riddle the linen sheets and straw pillows making them valueless. Bruseus keeps his treasures in the iron chest abutting the far wall. The key never leaves his waist pocket.

The heavy tapestry hanging on the wall in the antechamber depicts an epic conflict during the ancient Battle of Tsar. Despite its value, the tapestry measures 30ft in width and 8ft in height. It also weighs 150 lbs., making it extremely difficult to transport through the Dyrgalas.

The bronze statue against the far wall once again depicts the goddess Mitra, the patroness of this temporary abode for her followers. It is also extremely heavy, weighing roughly 100 lbs. Tattered and foul smelling giant-sized clothing and undergarments fill the neighboring dresser. They are worthless.

Treasure: The iron chest holds 294gp, 448sp and 600cp in addition to a *potion of plant control*, a divine scroll (*detect magic*, *cure disease*, *find traps*) and a heavy mace. The tapestry and statue, if they can be transported, are worth 250gp and 150gp.

H. Sounds of Sadism

The monstrous humanoids dwelling amid this tightly clustered pocket of cypress trees roughly 1-1/2 miles southwest of Answin Lodge greatly benefit from the terrain. The dense vegetation limits visibility to a mere 50ft, which plays to the advantage of the 2 harpies who live here. The flying huntresses do not occupy an abode per se. Instead, they sit atop two rudimentary perches carved into the intersection of multiple branches roughly 15ft above the ground in two trees 20ft directly opposite from one another. This location gives them an improved vantage point over ground-based opponents, allowing them to see 70ft in all directions. The vicious monsters take great care to avoid being seen (1-in-6 chance to spot). Their human captive, suspended 5ft above the ground in a wooden cage, does not benefit from the same luxury. When the characters come within 50ft of the gruesome scene, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description.

Thick rope affixed to an enormous, overhanging limb from a neighboring tree supports the weight of a wooden cage, similar in shape to an ordinary birdcage. A filthy elf woman clad in rags lies in a semiconscious heap at the bottom of the cage, which hangs 5 feet above a pond of stagnant, foul-smelling water. Numerous small streams and brackish pools cover the soggy ground throughout the area.

The harpies delight in physically and mentally torturing their prize, **Selathior Vamani** (Neutral female elf aristocrat 4). After 3 weeks of starvation, savage beatings and cruel taunts, the exhausted woman teeters on the brink of death. The harpies use their captive as bait, hoping to lure curious creatures and do-gooders into their natural trap. The pond beneath Selathior is 1ft deep. Like a conventional birdcage, a wooden door is on one side.

Harpies (2): HD 3; HP 21, 19; AC 7[12]; Atk 2 talons (1d3) and mace (1d6); Move 6 (fly 18); Save 14; AL C; CL/XP 4/120;

Special: siren song (*charm person*, save resists).

Equipment: mace.

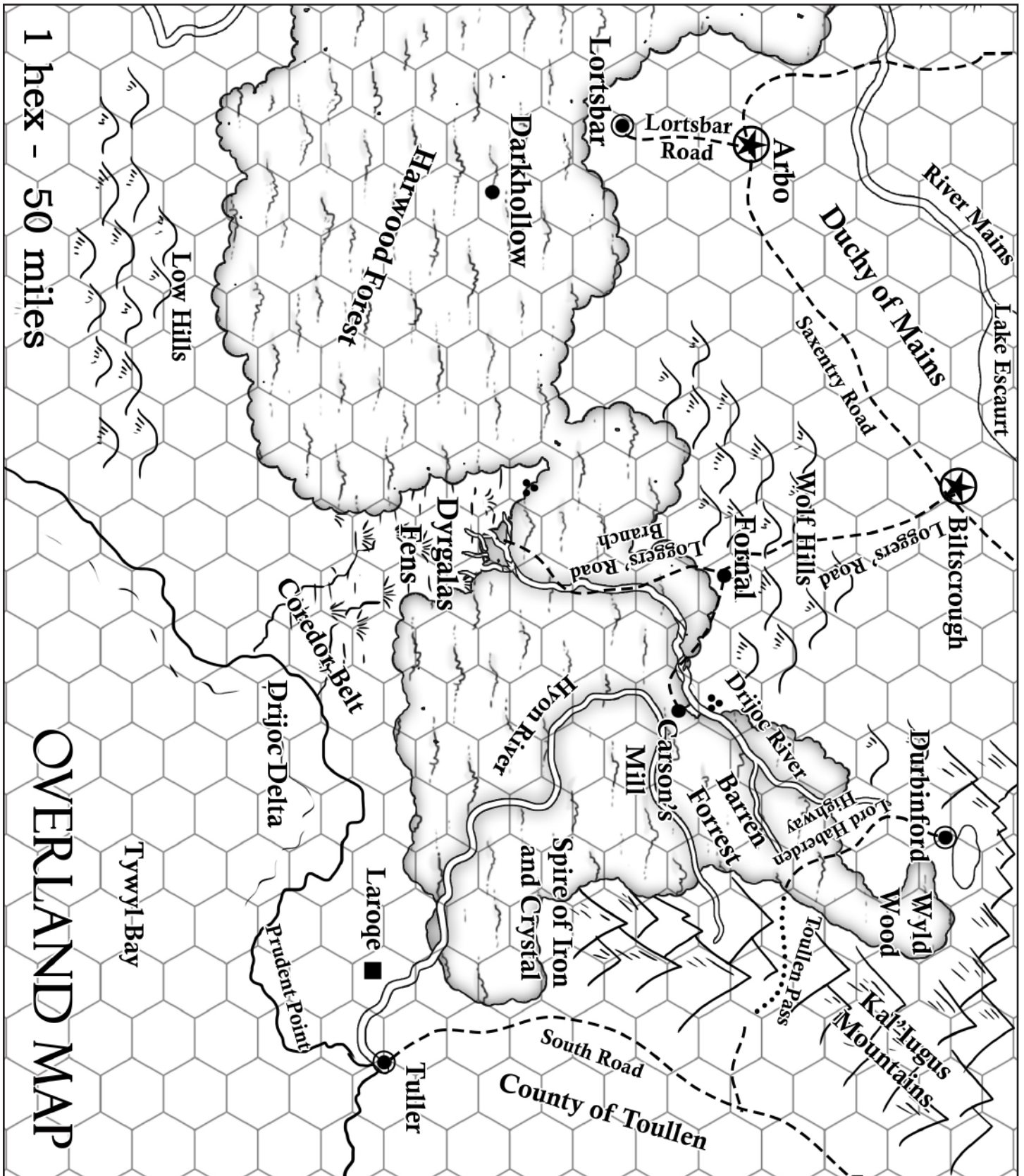
Tactics: The harpies carefully watch the characters' activities from the neighboring trees.

The harpies gloat and boast about the taste of their prey's flesh throughout the battle with the characters. However, the harpies are unwilling to die for a meal, regardless of how delicious it may be. When they are both reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, the pair or lone survivor attempts to fly off to safety somewhere deeper in the Dyrgalas, abandoning their treasures, which they stow atop their perches. **Development:** Selathior is too weak and traumatized to aid the adventurers in any way. When freed and cured of at least 1 hit point of damage, the battered elf tells the adventurers 2 crocodile men strong-armed her in the Dyrgalas on the return trip from Answin Lodge and then sold her to the cruel harpies nearly a month ago. The monstrous brutes devoured her predecessor, an older gentleman, almost immediately after her arrival. (Selathior's description of the individual matches that of Julius Robert Worthington, if the characters encountered his daughter Susana during the trek to the Dyrgalas Fens.) They then took their anger out on her, senselessly attacking and demeaning her. She tried to escape once, but the monstrous women pounded her into submission and returned her to the cage.

Treasure: One harpy keeps a pouch containing 4 pearls worth 100gp each and the key to the cage on her person at all times. The first perch holds 104gp, a light crossbow, and 16 +1 bolts. A *luckstone* and a *ring of protection* +1 are on the second perch.

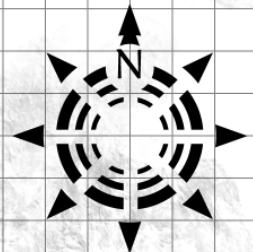
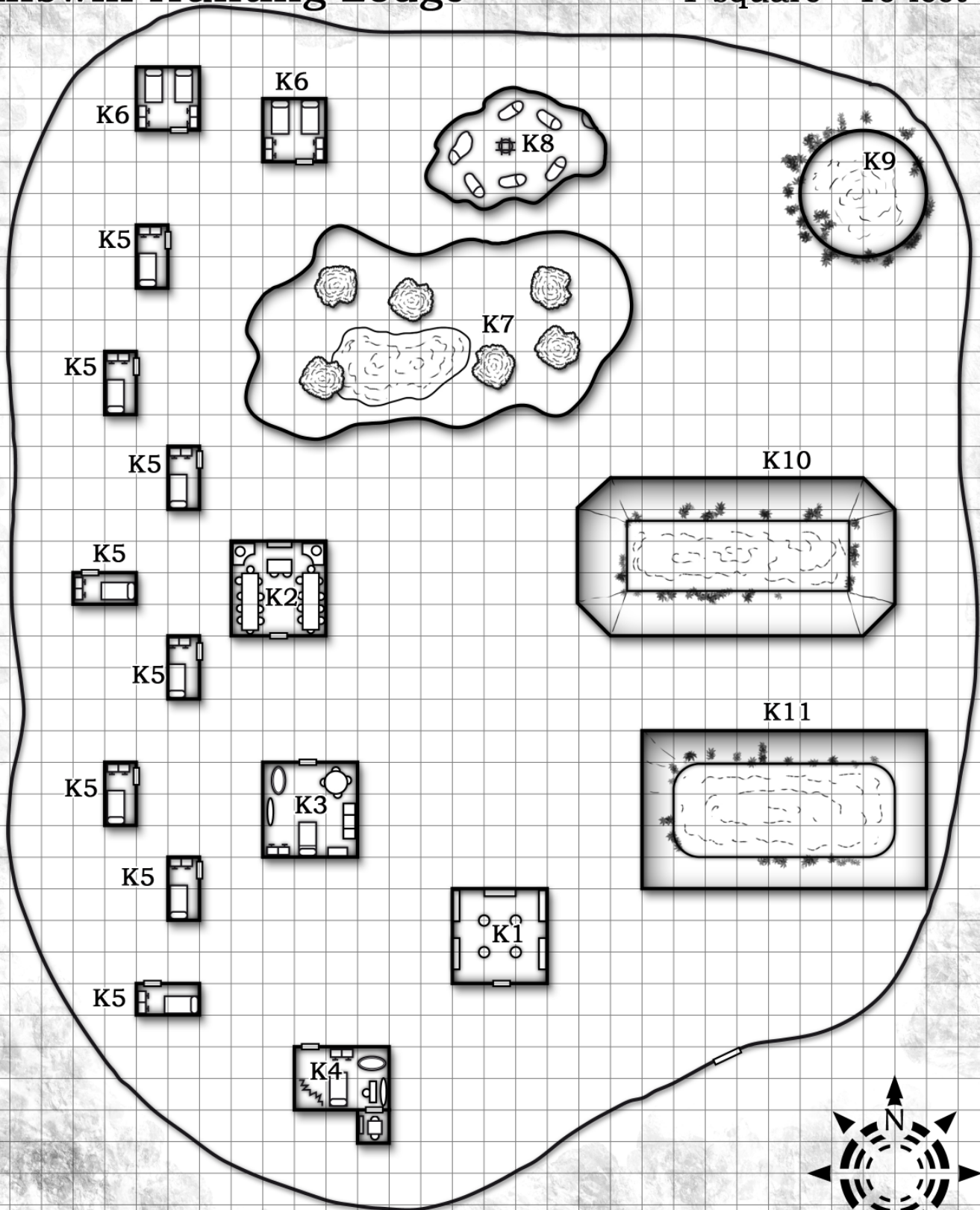
Concluding the Adventure

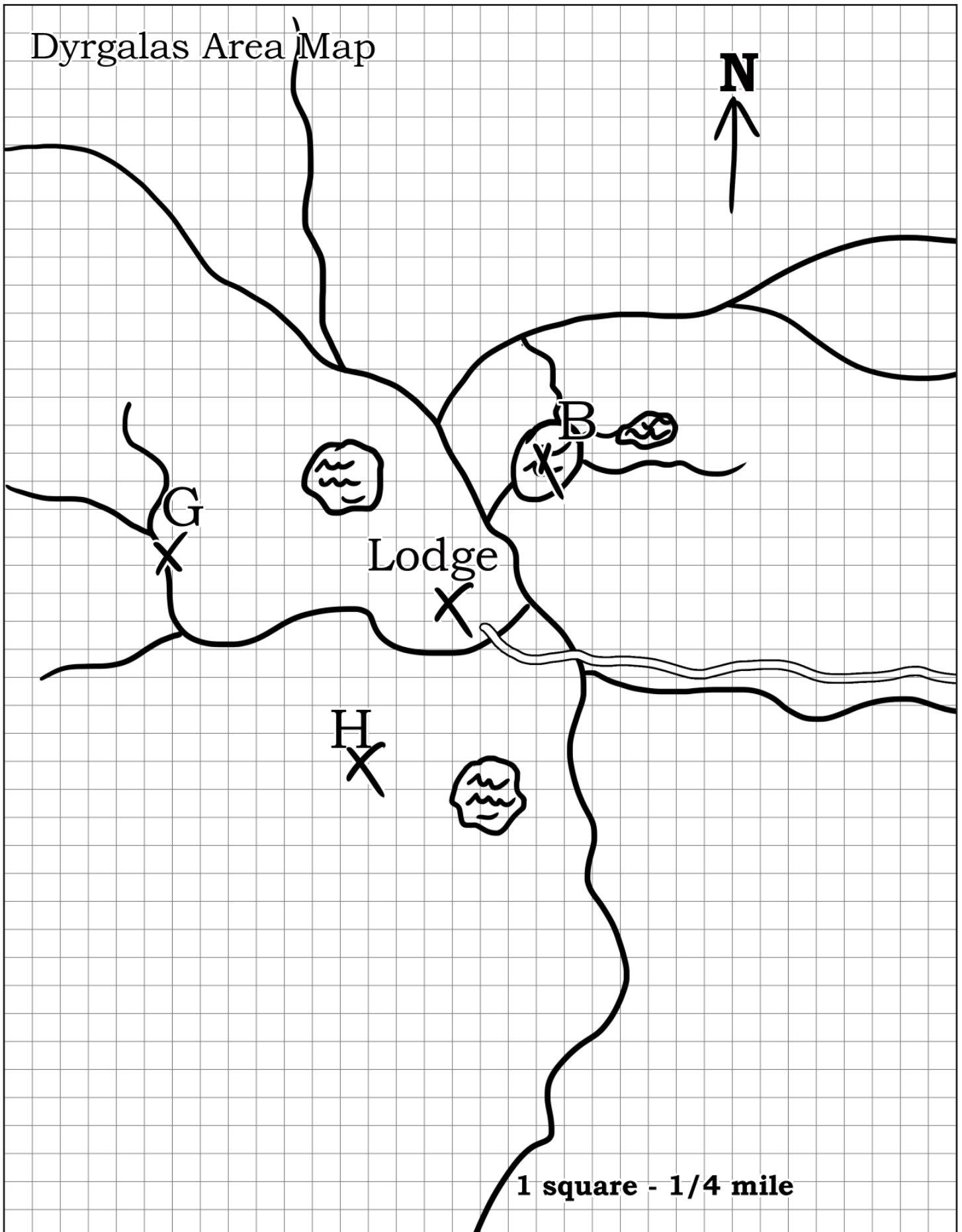
With order restored to Answin Lodge, the hunting lodge resumes its normal activities within several weeks after the characters' intervention. The grateful Brock and the reluctant Bhandia offer the characters free accommodations and tours for the next 10 years. Even the lizardfolk express their reserved gratitude toward the adventurers, offering to escort the victims back to Loggers' Road Branch. Though the characters failed to account for all of the missing guests, the survivors can piece together the fate of those who did not make the return trip home. If the characters return to Biltscrough with Shanga Halfshin, the jubilant halfling holds a public ceremony where she gives each party member a key to the city along with the title of "Honorary Listener." If the characters wish to continue adventuring in the Dyrgalas, their exploits at Answin Lodge may lead them to investigate the old insane asylum now inhabited by cultists of Rachiss (see *Glades of Death, Timber Rivalry* by *Necromancer Games* for more details) or to search the swamp for any of its rumored monsters, including a black dragon. Likewise, if you'd like the characters to have a chance to rescue more of the kidnapped victims, perhaps some of them are being held by the brigand Gavriil at a ruined hostel in the northern reaches of the fens (see *Quests of Doom, Death in Dyrgalas* by *Frog God Games*). The possibilities for adventure in the watery depths of the Dyrgalas are limitless.



Answin Hunting Lodge

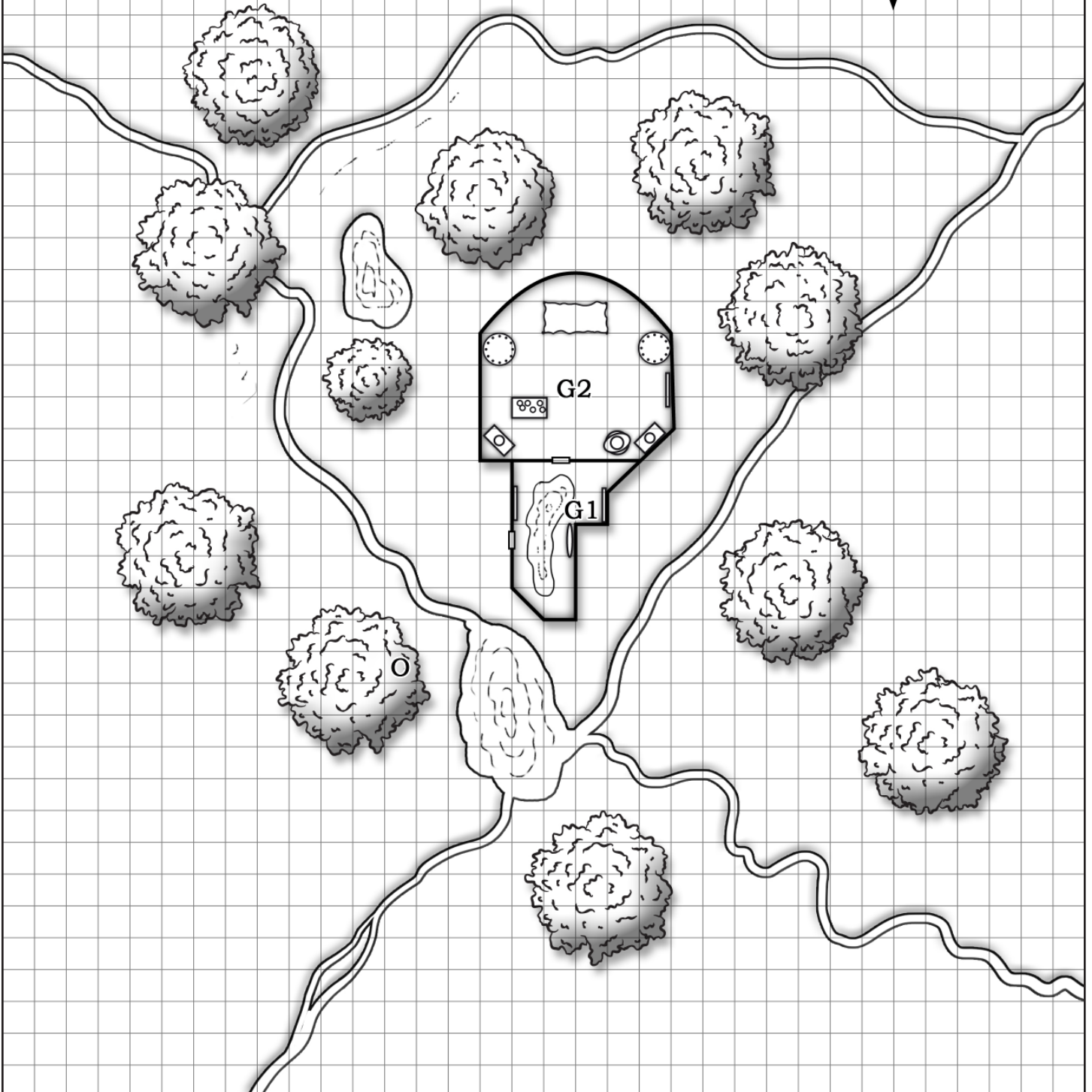
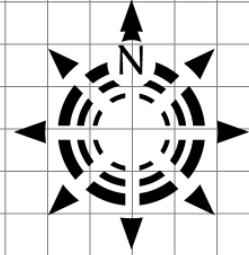
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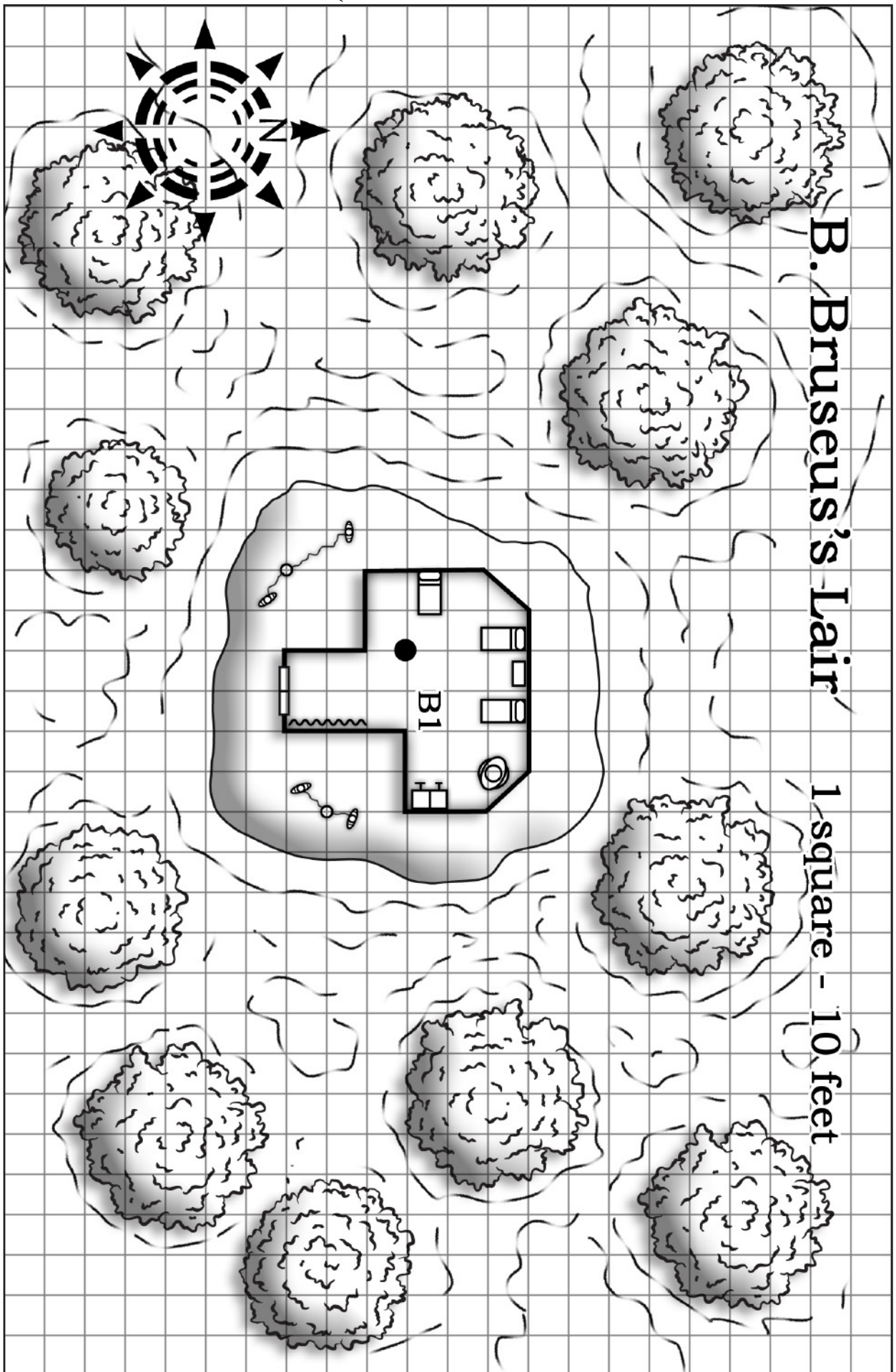




G. Grizzelda's Lair

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Quests of Doom 4

The Hunter's Game

The Hunter's Game is a 4th-level adventure that leads the PCs into the foreboding Dyrgalas Fens, a temperate swamp in the Harwood Forest nestled between the Wolf Hills and Low Hills. Dyrgalas Fens is overrun by an eclectic collection of malevolent monsters, xenophobic humanoids, and foul beasts. When some of the region's finest gentlemen and ladies never return from their excursions to the Answin Hunting Lodge, the PCs must investigate their mysterious disappearances. The journey leads them into the figurative heart of darkness, taking them not only deeper into the dreadful Dyrgalas, but also plunging them into the harrowing abyss of hatred and greed.



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