



HARVEST OF OATHS



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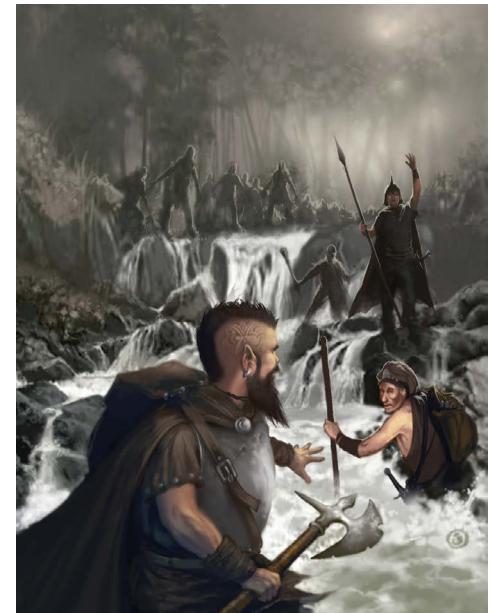
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Harvest of Oaths is designed for 3-5 characters in the mid-level range.

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HARVEST OF OATHS

Harvest of Oaths is designed for 3-5 characters in the mid-level range. It takes place in the Darkenfold Forest at the confluence of two rivers, the Mistbane and the Powder. It begins at or near Bent's Trading Post and takes the characters south, deeper into the forest.

This adventure combines overland travel to and from the Trading Post; it involves challenges both combat and role-playing. It is not a traditional adventure module that consists of one dungeon or one goal, but rather consists of a series of short adventures, which in turn offers the enterprising Castle Keeper the opportunity for numerous side treks and adventures. It is easy to port into any game and sections can be played or skipped over as needed. Though set in the official Castles & Crusades® world of Ahrde, and written with the adventures *Mortality of Green, Shades of Mist* and *Upon the Powder River* in mind, it is a complete stand alone adventure or can be used as a series of encounters. It can be adapted to any homebrew or published setting. As with *Upon the Powder River*, *Harvest of Oaths* consists of numerous, short-encounter areas. The first installment of which is *Where Rivers Meet*.

INTRODUCTION

The adventure begins either on the banks of the river, in a canoe or at Bents Trading Post, whichever fits best for the Castle Keeper. The Trading Post is quiet refuge in the wilderness, home to two retired adventurers, that allows for resupply and rest.

How and why the characters leave the Post is entirely up to them and circumstance, but the adventure carries them south into the River Basin country.

NOTE: The encounter in the previous adventure, *Upon the Powder River*, may have set the party at odds with the Green Wizard, however they should not be pitted against that formidable foe, for he is very powerful. This battle should be saved for a later day.

ABOUT THE DARKENFOLD

The Darkenfold Forest is a remnant of the ancient and vast Ethvold, a forest that spanned across the entire southern reaches of the Valley of Kayomar, from the Rhodope Mountains in the west to the Ardeen River in the east. It ran from the sea in the south to the Wilds of Gottland in the north. Little remains now but for two sprawling woodlands separated by the Danua River. The Eldwood, to the east, holds the heart of the Ethvold of old, but the Darkenfold, upon the west, holds its dark memories. The Darkenfold is an evil wood, filled with its own wild abandon and creatures of ill intent. Those who live there, know that the trees and the soil hold memories of their past glory and do not forget the axes of men, orcs, dwarves, and goblins that have plundered them of their wealth and life.

The Darkenfold is divided into region. The most trafficked are the Upplands where the town of Ends Meet stands. The Troll Glades to the east are wild and deep. The Millorian in the south and east and the Downs to the south mark the southern boundaries. But through it all lays the River Basin.

2 CASTLES & CRUSADES

The River Basis is a long, narrow stretch of river country carved out of the Darkenfold by the Mistbane River. It begins roughly where the Wachita River feeds into the Mistbane and ends with the confluence of the Powder and Mistbane Rivers. The river marks the southern boundaries, and the Inigg Gorge marks the northern. It is a wild country and home to all manner of creatures. It is said to be the haunt of the Og Aust god Let, that mighty stag, the lord of the ancient Ethvold. Few come here but those who desire to be forgotten by the world. It is dangerous and aside from the river, there is easy avenue to civilization. There are no roads, towns or villages . . . at least not ones that offer hope.

The Mistbane River serves as the only easy avenue of egress to this portion of the Darkenfold. Stalwart adventurers, traders, and travelers make their way along its slow moving course seeking to travel from Ends Meet in the west to Haverstraw in the east, or seeking a quick way into the heart of the forest said to hold so much wealth in ancient treasures.

The trees in the river basin are much like the other regions of the Darkenfold. Old oaks and beech, short, averaging about 60 feet high dominate the rolling valleys. Their wide, mountainous canopies carry into one the other to blot out the sun and moon and keep the forest in a perpetual shadow. Beneath the canopies, what little light filters down lances a soil enriched with thousands of years of deadfall giving birth to a carpet of thick of underbrush. Broad-leaved plants grow along a forest floor rent almost impassable by tree roots and tangle with long creeping, black-veined vines. These tangle with all manner of bushes and make for a rich, deep, green world.

There are many trails that tumble their way through the deep woods, but most of these are animal tracks and do not offer travelers easy passage. They crisscross the country, many leading to the river itself. Other roads, more often used by the knowledgeable lie in the multitude of creeks and small streams that wander their way through the wood before they end their babbling course to fall into the deep, green river.

ABOUT THE MISTBANE

The Mistbane River, or the Blue Creek, has its headwaters in the distant Rhodope Mountains, where it begins as little more than a trickle. It tumbles and flows, following many courses through the Shelves of the Mist, where it gains more strength from tributaries and earns its river name. It breaks free of those hills just north and east of the small town of Petersboro and the Darkenfold. The river widens here and slows its pace considerably, drifting down beneath the eves of the Darkenfold where it continues its southern journey. The river is slow, ranges from 80-120 feet wide, and is rather deep except in the few fords that breach its travel. Patches of light or heavy fog, which reduce visibility considerably, accompany the Mistbane's flow. Considered by many of the locals to be dangerous they avoid the fog at all costs. They speak of tales of ghosts who snatch the unwary from their roosts and carry them to the seas beyond.

The river continues its course through the Darkenfold by turning sharply west in the Millorian and passing through River Basin country, and on passed the Downs, an even more dank and deadly portion of the Darkenfold. The Wachita River eventually joins the Mistbane and then with increased strength it flows into the Danua River near Haverstraw and the sandy beaches of Lawn.

The banks of the Mistbane sport many wonderfully tall and full-bodied willow trees. These trees often reside on small grassy knolls at the water's edge allowing their branches and leaves to brush the water. They are vaguely sentient relatives of the older sentient trees and treants. These willows serve the river as guardians of sorts, offering refuge from the river or the forest, or both. For more on the mists, that actually house banshees, and the healing power of the Willow trees see the adventure *Shades of Mist*.

GETTING STARTED

Harvest of Oaths begins in and around Bent's Trading Post. The characters are set to cross the Darkenfold for any number of reasons of the CK's or their own choosing. Here are a few sample reasons to explore the Darkenfold's River Basin.

- 1) The Darkenfold is known for its rich history, where dwarves built ancient roads and men cities of gold. Here they worshipped the Val Eahrakun with magic and wealth. The danger is great, but the promise of treasure greater.
- 2) The characters are hired by the owners of Bent's Trading Post to carry a letter to End's Meet. The letter can be one of simple greetings, or one more complex explaining the growing powers of the Green Wizard.
- 3) Picking up from Upon the Powder River the characters are pursuing several of the Green Wizard's underlings. Whether they find them or not, dead or alive, is entirely up to the Castle Keeper.
- 4) They hear from someone at Bent's Trading Post of an old abandoned watch tower that lies upon the southern bank of the Mistbane River. It is reputedly the haunt of a wood spirit that none have mastered and hold a treasure that any would desire.

TRAVELING THE RIVER

There are several options for following the course of the Powder or Mistbane Rivers. One can go on either banks, or one can float down the river. Consult the appropriate rules to determine travel speeds. There are plenty of canoes at Bent's Trading Post, for sale or trade. Older canoes go for half the cost of that listed in the *Players Handbook*.

The confluence of the River is roughly 20 miles from Bent's Trading Post, see the map at the end of the adventure.

By BOAT

Travel downstream by boat is relatively easy. The wide, deep water makes passage fast. Traveling at a normal speed, the

boat can cover about 20 miles per day. This takes into account running into sand bars, and other normal stops and starts on a river. If the conditions are right, the characters can move much faster, up to 36 miles per day.

By Land

Traveling the banks of the Powder River overland is much more difficult. On trails or paths it is normal, but off trail it can be arduous. The country is old, broken, and filled with natural obstacles. These obstacles include fallen trees, deep ditches, huge thorn patches, creeks, etc. These hazards are not encounter areas, but do serve to slow the party down. The Castle Keeper should make the party aware of the difficulty and why their movement so slow. For example "The bramble catches on the shoulder strap of your pack and as you step forward it jerks the strap back, twists the pack around your torso and nearly pulls you off your feet." That and similar descriptions make the trek through the forest all the more real.

When on a trail, covering 10 miles a day is normal. Otherwise 5-6 miles is a good day. Roll 1d4+4 to see how many miles the party makes on any day's travel; this should give a fair average. The trails leading out from Bent's are few, and those that do exist are narrow. There is one southern trail that the Green Wizard's people use to move back and forth between their master's castle and the Post.

WHERE WATERS MEET

This is the first encounter area in the *Harvest of Oaths* adventur module. It begins at or around Bent's Trading Post and a journey downstream to the confluences of the two rivers. Walk Water Creek lies about 9 miles north of the confluence.

WALK WATER CREEK

The Walk Water slips into the Powder from the west. Its headwaters lie in the upper reaches of the Bolan Drops, a stretch of the River Basin dominated moss covered boulders, tangled grasses, large flat rocks jutting from the forest floor at one angle or the other and the usual spread of oak trees with a heavy dose of sycamore growing throughout.

The creek is shallow, rarely over a few inches deep, with a bed marked by smooth, round stones and sand. Sprinkled amidst the normal brown and gray rocks are bright green stones, prized in the far east for their beauty and magical qualities. When damp and held in the light they become luminescent and cast back a pale, greenish light. The captured light remains in the stone half as long as the stone was exposed to outside light source.

The Walk Water is long, stretching about 40 miles up into the River Basin country. The forest grows thick over head, often hanging down to within 3 or 4 feet of the water. Travel on the creek, by foot, is more difficult than in the forest for the overhanging branches and the loose rock.

It is rumored to harbor gold in the sandy soil that flanks the creek and lies beneath the water.

For this reason it is the haunt of an old dwarf, Craigbone by name. He has tramped much of the Powder River country, on both banks and has settled into panning the Water Walk. He works closely with another dwarf, a cousin of his, Beric Woodeneye (see Upon the Powder River), though Craigbone rarely leaves the Walk Water.

Craigbone is old, roughly 400 years old, but he has long since forgotten his age and his given name. He well remembers the Winter Dark, the Long Centuries, and is well traveled, though in truth the world has changed much since his youth so much of his information from the outside world is not terribly useful. He is friendly enough to strangers, unless he feels threatened in any way.

He has lived in the forest for close to 70 years and is in tune to its normal rhythms. He is fast to pick up on strange sounds, animal behavior, smells, and anything that might break the norm. For this reason sneaking around him, hiding in shadows, etc is difficult (CL 14). He speaks a variety of languages and knows a bit about the forest. He has many friends in the forest, most notably the Eschl (see **Shades of Mist**).

CRAIGBONE (*This chaotic good 7th level dwarven fighter's vital stats are AC 3, HP 70. His primary attributes are strength and wisdom. His extraordinary attributes are strength 17, dexterity 16 and wisdom 14. In battle he wields a +4 defender battle axe. He wears a +3 chain shirt, has a +2 ring of protection on at all times and has a +1 iron shield. He has a ring of invisibility.*)

Craigbone travels with an enormous backpack full of all manner of gear and equipment.

If the party befriends Craigbone he welcomes them to his camp, which is a few hundred yards up from the Powder beneath a large overhang of a rock. He offers advice freely. These are some of the tidbits he offers:

ABOUT THE MISTBANE: Be wary of that river, the mists that float its surface are haunted and the open water brings the attention of unwanted predators. If in trouble, or doubt, seek for the safety of the willow trees.

ABOUT THE CONFLUENCE: It's too open and there are too many predators. Be wary.

GREEN WIZARD: He's a bastard and a slaver. Avoid him at all costs or you'll end up in the pits.

THE WATCH TOWER: It's a strange place, haunted by some foul tempered spirit that is somehow connected to the Green Wizard, though he'll never go the tower nor send his men.

CONCERNING TRAVEL IN THE DARKENFOLD: Use the rivers for roads, it's the best way to get around, but be careful of the giant gar, they feed on almost anything that hits the water.

THE LAKE OF NUNT: There is a wizard that dwells there, Drusus by name. He is of the order of the Umbrian wizards, though he claims to have left those people and dwells now in

peace. He is not all that he seems, I cannot figure out what, but something is amiss with him.

WHERE RIVERS MEET

The Powder River narrows just before it meets the Mistbane. On the eastern bank of the River a low bluff, some 30 feet high, of porous rock hems the river in, and on the west bank a gigantic stone sits in the bend, the very end of Bolan Drops that begin far to the north. The water forced between these two stone walls becomes more violent as it spills into the Mistbane. But for its part the Mistbane consumes the Powder's flow, taming its mad rush.

Travelers on the Powder are often propelled across the Mistbane, slowing roughly at the river's center. Here they turn their craft east and to civilization or west, into the heart of the forest.

THE ROPE BRIDGE: A rope bridge exists east of the confluence; it stretches from the north bank of the Mistbane to the south. It consists of one lower rope to all upon and two upper ropes to offer balance. Crossing it takes some skill. It requires a four successful dexterity checks (CL 4) to get across. If one check is failed the unfortunate climber falls into the river below with all the unfortunate consequences such a swim may or may not include.

The river confluence is a favored hunting ground for perytons who come from the distant Rhodope Mountains to hunt people. They linger on the southern bank, just west of the confluence, where they can see any creatures coming down or up the Mistbane, as well as those coming down from the Power. It gives them the perfect vantage to spy anyone attempting to cross the Power on the Rope Bridge.

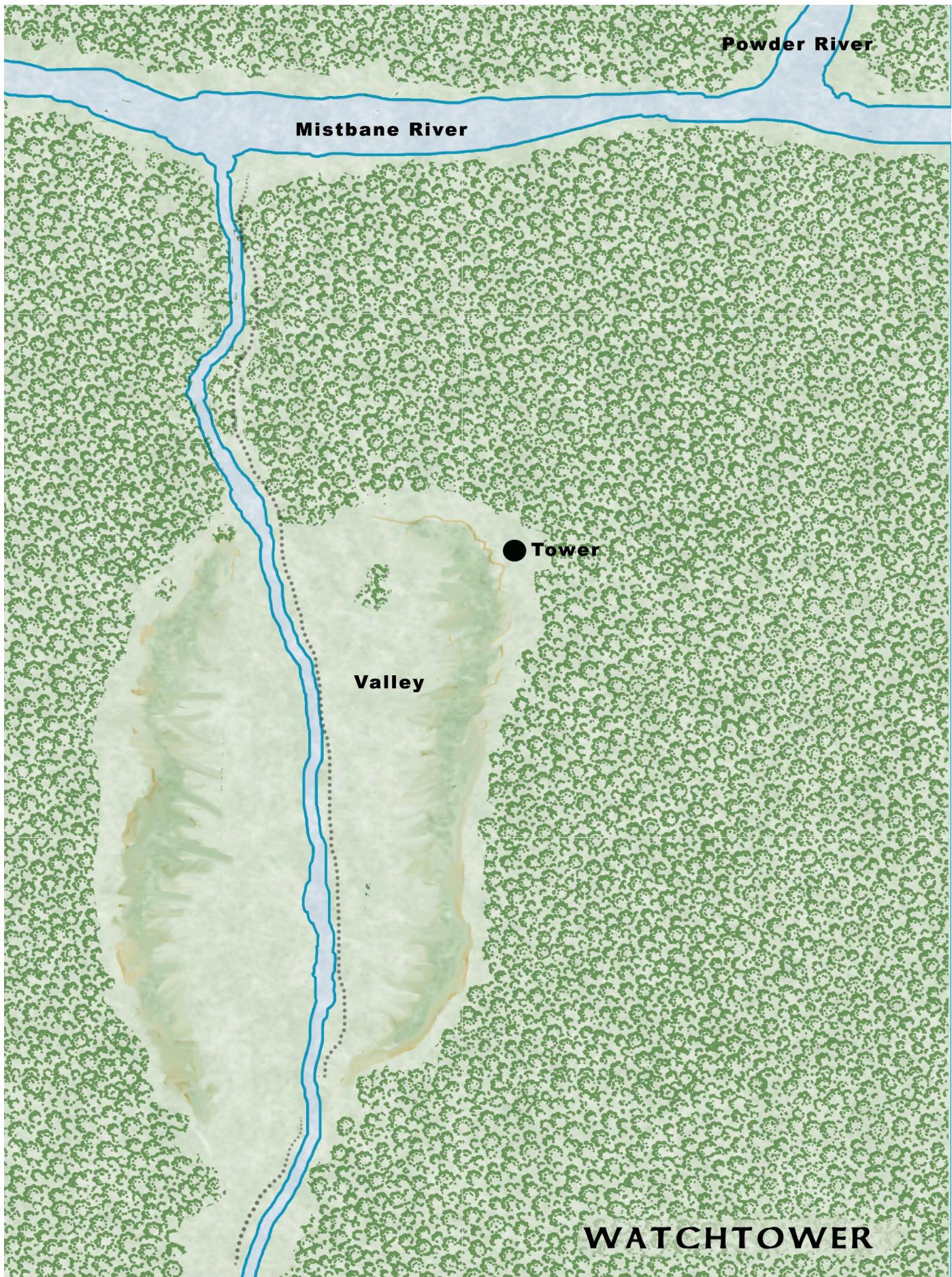
The perytons are perched along a low tree line and are somewhat visible from the river and the north shore. Upon a successful wisdom check (CL 5) they are spotted. Making out that they are anything other than a few deer, however requires another check (CL 5). Rangers and druids, experienced in forest travels have a better chance of both seeing the creatures and determining that they are not deer (CL 3).

The perytons have recently killed a human, a druid from the Green Wizard's motley crew, but are still on the look out for more, both to eat and bring back alive to their mates in the far off mountains.

The Castle Keeper should determine how many perytons there are based on the size of the party.

PERYTON (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d10, AC 13, HP varies. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks as a 6HD creature with antlers for 3-12 hit points of damage. They are able to understand the vulgate or common speech, but they cannot speak it. They are able to mimic a loud scream that sounds like a human in distress. The peryton casts the shadow of a human man, and smells as one too. It requires a +1 or better weapon to hit the peryton.*)

TREASURE: The peryton slew -- and have half eaten -- a druid. His body lies in the brush on the south bank where they



WATCHTOWER

HARVEST OF OATHS 5

perytons original were. It consists of the following: h+1 boiled leather armor (the perytons have eaten around this, washing it in the gore of their kill), a potion of cure critical wounds, 42gp in assorted coin, four sets of iron manacles with slave colors. The druid's clothes are an utter ruin, but his high hard boots are in good shape. A golden armband lies in the muck and blood next him. It sports a carved image of sickle upon it.

THE GREEN WIZARD

The symbol of the sickle is that of the Green Wizard, feared and hated by the denizens of the River Basin. The Green Wizard dwells in a castle further east upon the south bank of the Mistbane River. He dwells in a castle, reportedly one that floats upon the air, and from there operates a bustling slave trade. His minions search the forest for antiquities, and pay for the endeavor by capturing the unwary and the native eschl (the wild humans that live in the Darkenfold) and selling them into slavery in the east.

RIVER BANK ROAD

On the south bank of the Mistbane is the River Bank Road. It is a road in name only. It runs from the castle of the Green Wizard, about 5 miles east of the confluence, to about a quarter of a mile west of the confluence. There it ends. It is about 15 feet wide, open and allows for quick and easy passage for its whole length.

Close to the Wizard's tower, within a half mile or so, the road is watched by his minions.

THE PECKINSAW TRAIL: There is one spur off the road, a few hundred yards west of the confluence. It is fairly easy to find, noticeable from the River Bank Road or the river itself. It leads south to a long low valley over which the abandoned watchtower looms.

It is about a half day's walk to the watchtower.

The Peckinsaw Trail picks up on the southern end of the valley, leading into the Two Dogs River County and the Downs.

THE WATCHTOWER

The Watchtower was built on a rise, on the northern end of a north-south running valley. It was originally designed to keep an eye on the valley, one of the most and soil rich in the Darkenfold. Long years ago the valley was occupied by settlers, who planted crops and ran some livestock. They built the watchtower as a place of refuge, but also in a sign of strength. Though they have long since vanished, and the valley returned to its pristine state, the watcher tower and some few of their houses remain.

The tower itself is about 60 feet high and sits upon the eastern ridge overlooking the valley. The area around the tower is devoid of large vegetation. There are no trees in the immediate vicinity, only some shrubs and bushes. The tree line itself picks up about 100 yards south of the tower. Long ago there was a low wall at the tree line that blocked the forest from the tower itself, but that has fallen over and lies beneath the deep grasses.

There is a 30% chance that the hill giant is in the valley hunting, fishing or just wandering about. If he is he is easy enough to notice (CL 1). If for some reason he wanders into the valley while the party is at the tower, or they do not notice him when they first enter, he comes to the tower if there is any noise.

The trail gives way to a broad, open valley flanked by two ridges. The ridges rise suddenly, breaking free of the deep grass of the valley to push the forest floor up and arrest the approach of the Darkenfold, holding it back like a wall does water. The trail itself peters off into the loamy grass, but is replaced by a broad creek that meanders its way through, passing you by on its leisurely way to the river beyond. Above it all, on the eastern ridge stands the tower. Tall and gaunt, its gray stone seems out of place in the sea of greens, the grasses and trees beyond. Vines crawl up its flanks, slipping into its dark windows.

Though no forest spirit haunts the area, the tower is not completely unoccupied. A nefarious thief and rogue, escaping the hangman's noose in the town of Haverstraw fled up the river. By chance he stumbled on Peckinsaw's Trail and followed it into the forest, fleeing his pursuers, who, unbeknownst to him, had long since given up the chase. He found the watchtower and took up residence in it. It wasn't long before he discovered the hill giant and settled into the tower with no better guard he could imagine.



Soon thereafter, while chopping wood, he was bitten by a forest adder and died. His bones lie scattered about the wood pile where he was eaten by wolves. His belongings remained hidden in the tower, watched over by the one creature whom he trusted, a mimic.

THE GROUNDS: The grounds are barren as noted. There is a well, a small hobbled together cart and a stack of wood, neatly arranged. Though there are no tracks about, the wood in the wood pile is only a month old. The well has a bucket and pulley rigged over it allowing for use.

THE BONES: Not far from the tree line, just east of the tower lie the rogue's bones. They are scattered about in the grass. His axe remains stuck in a log that he had been chopping upon. His clothing is long gone, but on his hand is a magical ring of regeneration. If a detailed search of the area is made it is found on a successful wisdom check (CL 3), if the search is casual the check is much harder (CL 9). If a detect magic is cast on the area, the ring is easy enough to find. There is a battle axe in the grass as well. It lies not far from the hand; if it is found (CL 1 for active, CL 7 for casual) the searchers have a +2 to their checks in finding the ring.

THE TOWER KEYS: Sitting on the log with the axe in it is a large iron key. It opens the tower door.

THE DOOR: The door is locked, but it can be picked on a successful pick lock check (CL 4). The door itself is fairly stout, made of seasoned wood and bound with iron. Regardless it is old and can be kicked in with a successful strength check (CL 4) or destroyed if 60 points of damage is delivered to it.

FIRST FLOOR: The door opens to a dark, windowless room. The air is stuffy but not unbelievably so. The rogue rarely used them, only passing through it. There are bits and pieces of broken furniture along the walls, and some tattered pieces of clothing as well. The broken haft of a halberd leans against the wall.

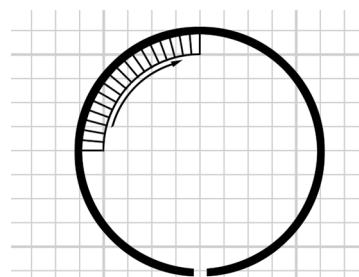
Steps lead up to an opening in the floor above the second floor.

SECOND FLOOR: The room is relatively clean, with three open windows, though some attempt at hanging curtains over them is clear for any to see.

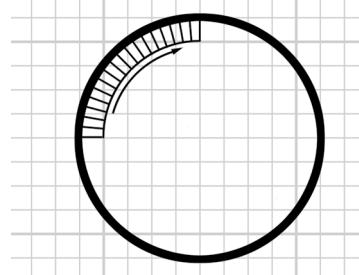
The rogue bedded down here. His pack and weapons lean against the wall and his sleeping mat, a bed of grasses, and blankets lies on the floor where he left it. Next to the bedding is a bottle of wine and two goblets. The wine is still good, if a little sweet. It is marked with the town symbol of Haverstraw. The goblets are empty, though worth about 5gp apiece.

The pack has clothes in it, neatly folded, flint and steel, a whetstone, a coil of rope 50 feet long with grapple. There are set of +1 magical thieves tools in there as well. There is a short bow, 12 arrows and thick-bladed knife by the pack.

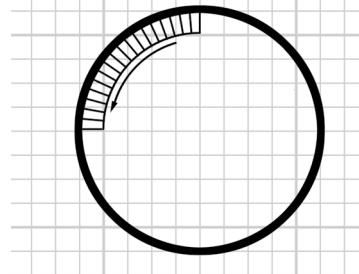
THIRD FLOOR: This floor is much like the second, with three windows, though the windows are not covered. It is open, and the air fresh and clean.



LEVEL ONE



LEVEL TWO



LEVEL THREE

Here lies the heart of the rogue's treasure, the item he stole that raised the town of Haverstraw against him. Hidden in a trunk beneath a pile of debris is a trunk, and within it the fruit of his skills.

However the trunk, and the debris, is not what it seems. It's a mimic, set here by the rogue to guard his treasure and paid in flesh for its service. It has remained here even after his demise, waiting patiently for its next meal. Though it suspects the rogue is dead (for he would not have left his treasure), he fears traveling in the open, so has remained in the tower.

Anyone approaching the debris and looking carefully discovers the mimic on a successful intelligence check (CL 7). The creature launches an attack if it thinks it can get an easy meal. If not, it will seek to bargain with the party. It bargains for food. It does not know much as the rogue brought it to the valley, but it does know of the hill giant and it does know that in all the many months they were here not a soul came to the tower.

MIMIC (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 7d8, AC 15, HP 35. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a slam attack for 3d4 points of damage. It has darkvision 60 feet, the ability to crush an opponent and mimic shape. Refer to the Monsters & Treasure book for details.)

TREASURE: Beneath the mimic is a small bag. Inside is a stone and 45pp. Ingrained upon the stone are five names. The names are as follows: Drusus, Utz Two Souls, the sisters Teadora and Telma and Ferenck. The stone itself belongs to the town of Haverstraw and bound the oath takers from exacting vengeance upon them for deeds beyond the understanding of the mimic or even the rogue. Oath stones are deadly to violate, but only if held by the one or ones who exacted the oath.

TOP FLOOR: This floor is home to only a few nesting birds, but gives a wondrous view of the whole valley and even a bend in the Mistbane River to the north.

THE VILLAGE

The village sits on the edge of the woods about a quarter of a mile south of the tower. It consists of four abandoned houses and a large communal barn. There is little left here but ruins. The roof of the barn is completely fallen leaving a mangled pile of splintered timbers and molded grasses.

Of the houses, two are burned out by fire and a third suffered the wrath of a falling tree that has virtually bisected it. The fourth is largely intact with a decent roof and walls. Its door is gone, though to where, none can say. But inside, it is in reasonable shape and the fireplace is intact and usable. The chimney however is clogged with bird nests. Any fire lit in the chimney before it is cleaned causes the nests to catch fire quickly. This in turn heats the old mud mortar, cracks and brings chunks of it down. This allows the fire to hope to the wooden walls and within a few rounds the whole house is engulfed in flames.

There is a well here with drinkable water, though way to get it. The water is about 50 feet down the well.

THE GIANT'S VALLEY

The valley is about a mile wide and several miles long. A creek wanders through it, until it tumbles into the Mistbane to the north. The valley itself is sparsely forested, with only a few copses of tress here and there. It is, by and large, dominated by open, grassy slopes. It is a favored grazing spot for any large number of forest herbivores, from board to deer. It attracts predators too, the most notable a hill giant.

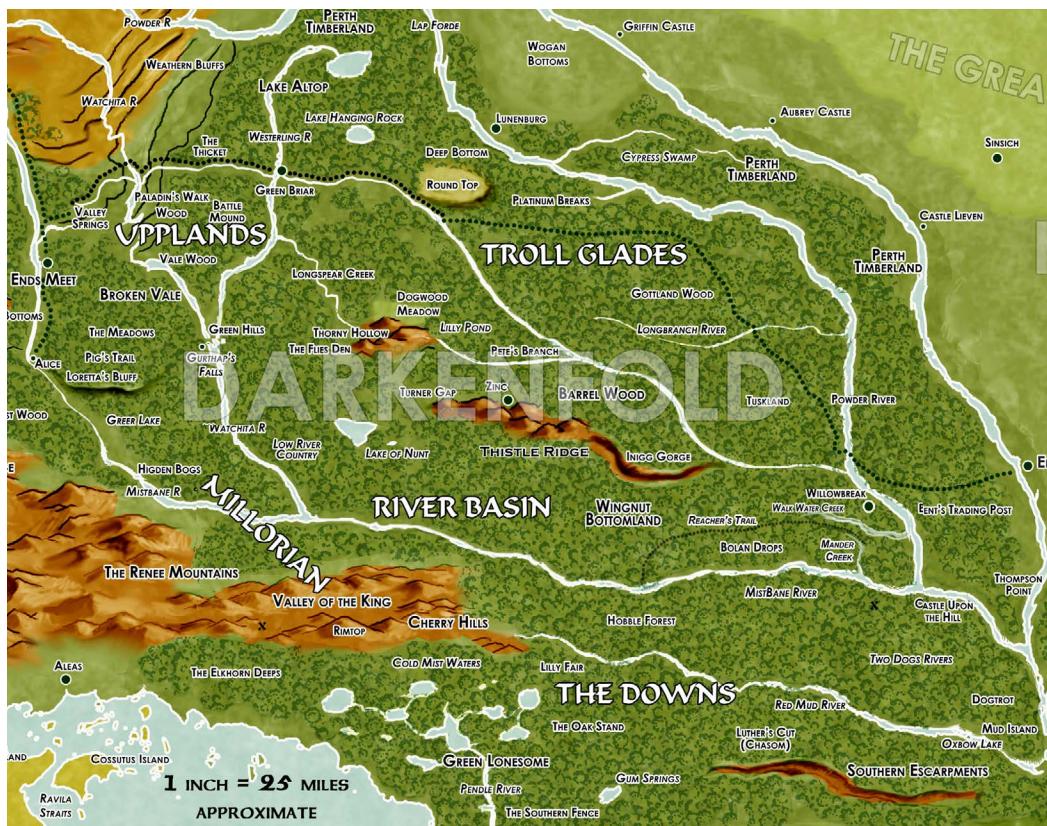
The giant comes lives on the western ridge about a mile down the valley; he wanders down to the tower end about once every 2 or 3 days. He usually comes to fill his water flasks, hunt, and lounge in the sun. He is extremely foul tempered and of an altogether evil disposition. If he spies people entering or moving through the valley he attacks them.

He has no lair, carrying his worldly goods on his back. He lives in a bed of rushes, beneath an old oak tree.

NOTE: Any loud noises at the tower attract his attention and he comes to investigate.

GIANT, HILL (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 9d8, AC 17, HP 54. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with 2 fists for 2d8 points of damage or a giant club for 2d8 points of damage. He is able to throw rocks up to 330 feet for 2d8 points of damage.)

The giant carries a large bag with him everywhere he goes. It is filled with rotten meat, roots, a bundle of dark stained blankets, a stone dagger and a golden circlet worth 500gp. The circlet is clearly of Ethrum make and old, dating from the time of the reign of the Tarvish Emperors.



HAVERSTRAW

The vast majority of trade from the Kingdom of Kayomar follows the Tarvish River in the north and the Danau River in the south. The Danau skirts the Darkenfold and tumbles down into Lake Volstagg at the small town of Crossed Fork. Beyond the mighty lake the river becomes impassable. Because of this, goods shipped down the river have traditionally been offloaded near the Red Mud River and ported to the Oth River, and carried on to the Bay of Lothian. Haverstraw was built on the banks of the Oth to accommodate this traffic.

At first it was a simple portage site. A few log structures, a tavern and inn, the Bend Back, and several piers. Raids from the Darkenfold led the pioneers to build a wall around their site. More people settled as the trade grew and the town began to sprawl out. The Maedrumaust Mountains supplied the young town with stone for their houses and cobbles for their streets. Soon the town was walled and watched over by stone towers. In order to keep back the Darkenfold, a low wall was built, the Running Wall. It stretched the length of the portage, from the town to the Danau River, some 14 miles long. It stood 10 feet high and 5 wide.

During the Winter Dark Haverstraw became a military outpost, one of several meant to hem in the Darkenfold. It was occupied mostly by men, but some orcs and ungnern as well. When the Long Centuries ended the garrison fled, many into the Darkenfold itself, to avoid being executed by the knights of Kayomar who were everywhere rooting out the evil of Aufstrag. The locals however gathered together, declared themselves independent of any overlords and created the Congress of Notables.

The town has since thrived, cornering trade from Kayomar and taxing anything that passes through the portage. The taxes are not unreasonable, so traffic continues to flow. But their wealth has put them in direct conflict with the other towns of the Oth River Valley, particularly Smythe and Hopkinsville. Several wars between the city-states have seen Haverstraw generally pitted against Hopkinsville and Smythe, but joined by the fiercely independent people of Pettigrew, Crossed Fork and New Edinburg, though the alliances are known to shift.

Recently the town ran into trouble with Drusus and the Four Magi. These Umbrians, magi from Aufstrag, attempted to seize control of the town, for what purpose few could guess. They were overthrown and jailed and forced to give their blood to an Oath Stone. The magi were driven from the town. Several fled into the Darkenfold (see below).

The town consists mostly of stone buildings with slate shingles and cobbled streets. There are four gates entering Haverstraw, all of which close one hour after the sun sets. The walls, 20 feet high, are punctuated by 40-foot high watchtowers. The streets are well lit at night and patrolled.

The main tavern and inn remains the Bent Back, but others thrive as well. The smaller Portage Way plays host to porters, bargemen and the like. The Underlime is a small dive that attracts nefarious characters and is generally a place to sell stolen goods. A halfling

tavern, the Skull's Cup, is more a gambling house than ought else, rough, but with good food and drink.

Total Population: 3000 +

Human: 2600 +/-

Gnomes: 100 +/-

Halflings: 150 +/-

Dwarf: 50 +/-

Elf: 100 +/-

GOVERNMENT: The town is ruled by a governing body of magistrates chosen from the merchant houses. The body is called the Congress of Notables. The congress consists of the leading tradesmen, guilds and other mercantile bodies in the town. It usually has about 15 sitting members of which one, the Justiciar, is chosen each year and given administrative powers over the Congress. The congress votes on all issues from taxes to war, to street repair to prices of commodities. The Justiciar delivers sentences and judgments in all criminal cases that do not involve members of the Congress. Those cases are settled by simple majority vote.

MILITARY: Haverstraw has a strong economy that allows them to field an unusually large fighting force, which they need because of their proximity to the Darkenfold. Generally there are 300 men under arms here. These are foot soldiers, with pikes, steel hauberks and helms. These are augmented by about 20 light horses. These are the sons and daughters of the Congress members and are equipped as their individual purses allow. In times of war, the town hires mercenary soldiers to flesh out their ranks, whose numbers range from 3-500, depending on their need.

ECONOMY: Haverstraw benefits from the southern trade that comes down the mighty Danau River from Kayomar. Because the river becomes impassable at the Valley of the All Father, river traffic stops where the Red Mud River enters the Danau. There it is ported to Haverstraw, loaded back on boats and sent down the Oth River and on to the sea. Haverstraw enjoys the revenue in the guise of boat and transport fees, taxes on movable goods, etc. It also has a small, but thriving slave market. As one of the border towns they also enjoy the wealth that is plundered from the Darkenfold by those able to bring it out.

Religion: The Congress makes regular sacrifices to the river goddess Tefnut, though there are a number of temples in the town to Ore-Tsra, Ealor and other gods. The worship of the Og Aust, the old Gods of the Darkenfold, has recently spread to the town, brought by proselytizing clerics from that wood.

LANGUAGE: The Vulgate is the most common language spoken here.

MAJOR GUILDS: The trade guilds are heavily represented here. The Cult of the Swords as well as many mercenaries find a home in the ever turbulent Oth River Valley. Muddles Inc. too thrives here.

DRUSUS AND THE FOUR MAGI

As a child Drusus joined the Paths of Umbra. At the time, upon the eve of the Winter Dark Wars, that sect enjoyed immense power. In his homeland, in the Punj, the Umbrian wizards ruled supreme. There he was schooled and joined the ranks of the initiates that were bound for the tower of Aufstrag. But this was even as Dolgan and the goblin Agmaur rose in rebellion and the Trench Wars began. Thus he found himself in the grueling battles beneath Aufstrag, which saw so many die and began the Winter Dark Wars. He proved himself clever and able to command men and his mastery of the sorcerous arts were extraordinary.

For this reason, after the Trench Wars, he was sent to Anglamay to help quell the growing unrest. In the city of Fiume he fought street battles, first with northern raiders, and then with citizens. He was instrumental in keeping order there, but soon after was shunted to the south where he served a variety of posts and rolls. His record was exemplary, and he fought well and hard, but the tides of history were against him and his people and the Winter Dark Wars ended in the banishment of his god and the destruction of his order. Those, like him, who survived, scattered to the four winds. They were a hunted people, and they lived in fear, for if they were found in almost any of the realms, they were burned at the stake.

At that time Drusus found himself in the town of Frieburg. His order outlawed, he went into hiding. He could not easily book passage on any ship and the east was aflame in war so he sought to disguise himself. He was found out and fled into the Gelderland where he lived for many years. He rose to power amongst the Othine orcs and lay claim over them as their chief Shaman and the mouth of Aufstrag. They served him willingly and to this day see him as the mouth of Unklar.

He built a tower and housed it with wicked sorceries. He mastered some few of the Blood Runes and lengthened his life by many years. He summoned creatures from the Wretched Plains and sought allies to bring back his dread master. But the Gelderland proved too wild and her people were never strong enough and he failed in all his attempts. It was here that he learned of the Darkenfold and that many of his master's people, that is, the servants of Unklar, fled to that dark place to hide from the many hunters of the world. He heard too of a series of powerful towns that were ruled by no lords and these soon occupied his mind.

He gathered four of his followers, Umbrians like himself and set off for the Oth River Valley. There was Utz of Two Souls, called thus for he had eyes of two different colors and his friend Ferenck. The two sisters, Teadora and Telma, powerful Umbrians bound to each other followed him as well.

If a few short months Drusus and his four magi found themselves in the town of Haverstraw. There they set about their foul purpose. Slowly they ingratiated themselves into Merchants. The cajoled, bribed, blackmailed and murdered to gain a say in the Congress. They convinced the Congress to include wizards in their ranks so that all five soon had a vote. Drusus was made Justiciar for life and the Umbrians found themselves in control of the rapidly growing Haverstraw.

10 CASTLES & CRUSADES

But as in all things he tried Drusus was on the losing side. A young warrior, son of a boat merchant, seeking to avenge his murdered parents, gathered a band of stalwarts about him and set about overthrowing Drusus and the magi. Ferenck they caught in the practice black arts and after taking him hewed off his hands and feet. They paraded him through the town and it rose against the magi. In a series of brutal battles over many weeks the magi were rooted out, their demon allies slain and their treasures taken. The magi themselves were bound and placed in irons.

But all feared to slay them, for killing a black priest of Aufstrag would surely bring a curse upon the town. So it was determined that the wizards would be bound by an Oath Stone, to never return to Haverstraw or to knowingly molest any of her people upon pain of judgment and death. All feared the Oath Stones, for these are made in the shadow of Corthain, and his word is judgment and law.

So Drusus was bound to it and his magi as well. When freed the sisters fled north. Utz too fled to the Darkenfold where it is believed he was slain in Green Lonesome by the halflings. Ferenck, mad as a hatter, was driven out and he crawled away. Tis said that he resides in Hopkinsville, completely insane, begging on the streets. But Drusus took what power he could away with him and vanished into the Darkenfold, where those in the know report he dwells still, upon the Lake of Nunt in the River Basin country.

The Oath Stone remained in Haverstraw for many years, until a thief stole it and took it into the wilderness, where he died, bitten by a poisoned adder. But few know of this, for the town fathers put a new stone in its place, to fool others, so that the rumor of it missing, would not leave the town. For it is feared that if the Umbrians found out, that they would return and visit their vengeance on the town.

ABOUT THE OATH STONE

The players should have found the Oath Stone in the Watch Tower. On it are carved the five names of the five Umbrian wizards. If an *identify* spell is cast upon it, the spell reveals what the stone is, but not the story behind it. The names on the stone are bound to it in some manner. It does grant the wielder a 2 SR.

If the characters encountered Craigbone the dwarf, they may have heard the name Drusus and know that he dwells upon the shores of Lake Nunt, otherwise the stone is a simple magical stone.

HAVERSTRAW AND THE OATH STONE

If perchance the characters determine the Oath Stone came from Haverstraw and return it to the town, there is a substantial reward, 5000gp and several very grateful townsfolk.

RETURNING TO THE RIVER

The characters should return to the Mistbane River at this point. However they maneuvered across the river previously, whether on the Rope Bridge or via canoe they find the river a bit more hospitable. Presumably they have slain or scattered the perytons. Now they find a small riverboat anchored in the center of the Mistbane.

ETHAN THE BOATSWAIN

Ethan has been plying the waters of the Darkenfold for many years. He trades goods he buys in Petersboro and Haverstraw with whomsoever he encounters on the river. His boat is well stocked with most supplies travelers would need: food, beer, packs, clothes, rope, etc. When he spies a potential customer he uses his ring of know alignment, determines their disposition and treats them accordingly.

Ethan engages the party, offering them wares from his store if they need or to ferry them over the river (if needed). He offers to join them for a meal as well (no matter what time of day it is) but does not wish to do it on the south bank of the river, as it is too dangerous due to the proximity of the Green Wizard.

ETHAN (*This neutral 14th level fighter's vital stats are HD 14d10, AC 24, HP 98. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity and wisdom. His extraordinary attributes are strength 18 and wisdom 16. He attacks with a +3 longsword, a heavy crossbow or his +2 mace. He wears +4 chainmail, a ring of protection +4 and a ring of know alignment. He is an expert swimmer, speaks the Vulgate, elf, dwarf, eschl and several halfling dialects fluently.*)

Just about anything from the equipment list, except arms and armor, is in his boat. He does carry plenty of arrows and bolts.

Ethan is particularly talkative and answers questions put to him as honestly as he can. He does explain that he is heading down river and up the powder in order to avoid the unusually thick mist that has gathered just up the Mistbane. These he explains are haunted by banshees and he strongly recommends that the party head up into the Bolan Drops, strike out on Reacher's Trail and bypass the mists. The trail, he explains, though dangerous, is easy to navigate and will and the party on the edge of the Wingnut Bottom Lands on the north bank of the river.

He supplies directions to Reacher's Trail but mentions that the country is hunted by a number of creatures, including bugbears. He has this to say specifically:

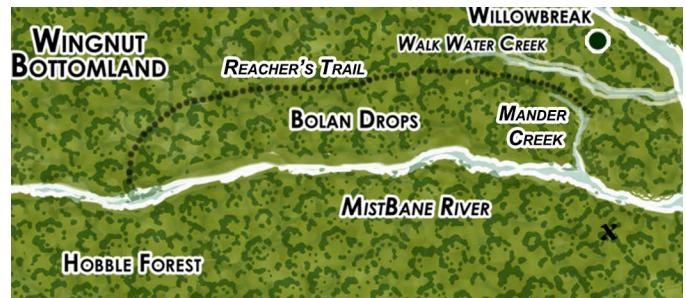
"It is an old part of the wood and little traveled but for the eschl, the wild men. Be on your guard for the forest is more aware than you know and it is thoughtful and in places filled with resentment, for the earth was once crowded with the voices of the trees when the Ethvold was young, and the forest here blames any and all for the loss."

HEADING UPSTREAM

If the party heads up river, avoiding the Bolan Drops and the trail, they quickly run into a fog bank, thick with banshees. For more information on the Mistbane and the banshees refer to the adventure module *Shades of Mist*.

BOLAN DROPS

As is known the Darkenfold is divided into two distinct geographic regions. The Northern Plateau consists of the Uplands, Troll Glade, and the Powder River Country. The Southern Plateau consists of the Millorian in the west and the



Downs in the east, both comprising the heart of the Darkenfold. It is not always easy to tell where one begins and the other ends as the forest floor is broken by many lesser features. Alice's Bluff is divides the two, but the bluff is only 25-30 miles long. But the line travels from the Bluff East to the Hollow, curves south to the long line of hills known as Mount Judy. These last mark the northern fence of the River Basin country, a low, flat region that stretches from Mount Judy to the Mistbane, known as the Wingnut Bottoms or Wingnut Bottomlands.

The Bolan Drops are part of this country. They are distinctive in the River Basin from the Wingnut because, where that region is flat, the Bolan Drops are not. They Drops are a series of ridges, each higher the further north one goes. The ridges themselves are roughly 40-60 miles long and run east and west, however, there are multiple shorter ridges that fan out in every north and south and along all points of the compass after that, making the entire country one of broken hills and ridges with general line of march on an east/west axis.

The ridges are cut and splintered by a host of deep gulches, carved out of the land by years of rain and run off. Near the top, along the ridgelines the gulches are filled with tangled scrub, brush and small, dried up trees that eke a living out of the sparse soil. Deeper in the gulches where the sun struggles to reach there are older trees, far older trees. These well-watered ents feed on the rich soil and the water and grow fat, their girth at times a dozen feet or more. Their canopies are broad and thick and hang low to the ground. Oak vines thrive here, crawling across the ground and coiling around the base of the old forest giants.

Travel in the gulches is a little easier, the ground is soft and water plentiful, but anyone passing through feels the ominous presence of the trees.

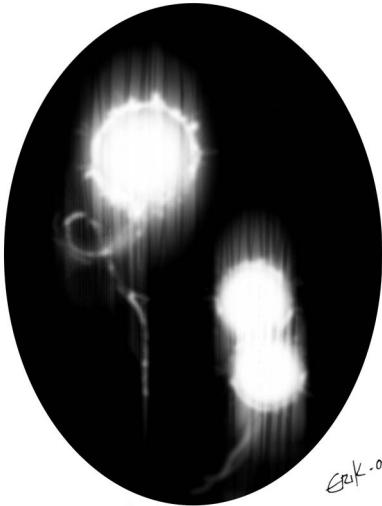
CREATURES IN THE DROPS

Roll regular wandering monsters for the overland journey. Consult the chart in the appendix for the River Basin.

Regardless of what is encountered, the nights are filled with strange noises and lights. Some of these are normal insects and other creatures who creep and crawl about the wood, but some will be will o' wisps. These are unforgiving and altogether dangerous.

MOVEMENT IN THE DROPS

Travel in the Bolan Drops is difficult unless one follows Reacher's Trail that snakes along a central ridgeline for some 40 miles. Leaving the hilltops finds one in thick, in hospitable environs.



If one follows Reacher's Trail movement is normal, about 15 miles a day. If one enters the gulches movement is effectively halved.

Once one leaves the trail the forest becomes hostile and a danger in and of itself.

THE LIVING FOREST: The forest is vaguely aware of the world around it. The roots of many of these trees are old and deep in the ground and they weave in and around one another in countless knots. They speak with each other through their roots and through the soil. They know vaguely what is passing on over them and when creatures they are not used to pass over them, particularly two-legged creatures the forest wakens. When it does it tends to bend its will to the land, shifting the contours of the land with their many roots, pushing here and pulling there, just enough to cause confusion and misdirect unwary travelers.

Within the wood, the trees are able to darken the forest within a 4 rounds, by turning their leaves inward and down. When they do this it causes a slight creaking noise, and the light fails, dimming noticeably. When this happens all visibility drops to a few dozen feet. Beyond that it is completely dark and only those who can see underground can see through the forest.

The trees darken areas to push and drive victims forward and down into the deep gulches where the old ents lives.

They also shape the land so that anyone attempting to track or find a trail must make successful check with a base CL 4 + 1 for every turn that has passed after leaving Reacher's Trail, up to a maximum CL of 14.

Once lost in the Drops the trees leave it to the will o' wisps and ents to finish off victims. Consult the **Castle Keepers Guide** concerning becoming lost.

REACHER'S TRAIL EAST END

Leaving the north bank of the Mistbane, one follows Mander Creek up into the Bolan Drops. After a day the creek vanishes beneath the flat slop of a hill. Reacher's Trail begins at the top of that hill.

The trail itself is long, crossing almost 40 miles of woodland. It is unpaved, consisting of a broad dirt path beneath the intertwining arched branches of the trees.

As you climb up the steep slope of the hill the tree line gives way to an open glade. On either side of the glade the trees pick back up as they crowd the top of the hill and push back down the hill's jumbled slopes. But on western edge a path opens up. Here the trees are pushed back in ordered ranks of two columns that wall in the path. Their branches grow in high and intertwine a dozen feet or more above the path, making perfect arches. It seems a tunnel, sculpted in the trees by unknown hands and one that offers passage through the forest.

It's a three to four day journey from the beginning of Reacher's Trail to where it ends in the Wingnut Bottomlands in the west. The journey is relatively easy, as the path is free of the normal twisted roots and oak vines that plague so many parts of the wood. In fact the stone of the hills has worn through in many places making travel down right easy.

Though the path continues beneath the arched trees for its entire length it is possible to leave it. The trees do not grow so close together that they prevent anyone from slipping off the trail. However, those that do, soon find it difficult to locate the trail again, for the Bolan Drops are haunted by deadly fey and, as I many places in the Darkenfold, the forest itself is alive.

WILL O' WISPS: The trail is however haunted by will-o'-wisps. They creep up from the gulches and lure victims into the darker forest where old, twisted oak live, ents of a foul disposition. There the wisps slay their victims and devour them as is their want.

Within one day of entering Reacher's Trail at least one will o' wisp spies the party and begins following them.

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

TREANT (This chaotic good creature's vital stats are HD 7d8, AC 20, HP 43. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 2 slam attacks for 2d8 points of damage each. It has the ability to blend and trample for a further 4d4 points of damage. This particular treant cannot animate other trees. It is vulnerable to fire.)

REACHER'S TRAIL WEST END

The trail ends abruptly, giving way to wide open slope that slides gently down into the forest again. From the trailhead here one can see west for some miles, looking over the treetops. These are the Wingnut Bottomlands. The shadow of the Rhodope Mountains loom in the distance, and the rise of the land to the north, Thistle Ridge, is noticeable. In the south, perhaps a mile away, is a large cut in the tree line, clearly a river of some size. It is the Mistbane.

WINGNUT BOTTOMLAND

The Wingnut Bottomland, or the Bottoms for short, extends from the Bolan Drops in the east, to the Lake of Nunt in the west. It abuts the Inigg Gorge and Thistle Ridge in the north and the Mistbane River in the south. As its name indicates, it is low lying area that is as much a swampland as it is a forest. The ground, as well as the flora is very different in the Bottoms than elsewhere in the Darkenfold.

The ground in the Bottoms is moist and rich in nutrients. It plays host to a wide variety of mosses, grasses and smaller wetland shrubs. The moss in particular grows everywhere, carpeting the ground, crawling up the boles of trees, and hanging in wads from the branches overhead. Silver maples dominate the Bottoms. These tall, silver-white trees, with high canopies and bright green leaves grow throughout, thriving on the ample water and rich earth. Only a few of the forest's more dour trees, the oaks, grow in the Bottoms, and most of these lie in the north, along the edge of Thistle Ridge. There the oaks represent an old stand of trees and are very large and deep rooted.

The Bottoms are open and going here is easier than in other sections of the wood. Elsewhere tree roots cling to the earth like gnarled fingers, coiled in and out of the ground, creating many pitfalls and snares for the unwary; here however, the wet earth allows the maples to sink deep and their roots are rarely exposed creating a largely flat expanse of bottom land. The aforementioned grass and moss creates an almost comfortable ground cover.

Despite this, the Bottoms are home to many thick-leaved bushes, berries and thorny vines. These grow wild and deep in the spring and summer, dying off in the fall. They are generally thin stalked and do little to impede movement, though they do restrict visibility due to their large leaves.

The Bottoms are not without their dangers however. Many fallen trees have submerged in the soil, tripping up those who move to fast and feeding a fierce species of tusked boar. But the ground is the real enemy, for the wet earth plays host to small grass covered ponds, sink holes, quick sand and mud pits. Many fall afoul of these water traps and are consumed by the Bottoms, their flesh adding to the soil's thick nutrients.

TRAVEL: Travel is somewhat faster in the Bottoms. On a good day 15 miles is possible. Of course if the region is flooded, as frequently happens, travel is much slower, about 5 miles a day, often through water several inches to a foot deep.

VISIBILITY: During the spring and summer months visibility is broken by the thick brush. Anyone attempting to hide in the warmer months gains a +2 to all hide checks. All spot checks suffer a -2 penalty.

THE ESCHL

The Bottoms are home to several bands of the Eschl. These wild men dwell in small groups throughout the Darkenfold, but the Bottoms are holy to them. Here, the many bands often come to trade goods, seek spouses, worship the Og Aust, exchange news, and muster for war.

They are a strange people, humanoids who dwell in the stone age. They are secretive, tribal and little inclined to trade with peoples outside their species. They are ruled by chieftains and shamans, and pay homage to the Og Aust, particularly Let, the Stag, but also Heth, Nunt and Kekki. They use magic in almost all that they do, from making weapons to growing crops and rely upon the Og Aust for much of it. Those who are strong rise to the top of the bands, and are able to guide, manipulate, or overpower their fellows.

The Eschl have suffered at the hands of slavers for many long years, scooped up when young and carted off to the east, most recently to Haverstraw upon the Danau River and for this reason rarely show themselves to humans. They have some dealings with the wood elves of the Milorian, further to the south.

They are a primitive people, looking upon iron and steel, and any metal as magic, and rarely use it, preferring the stone axe, spear, bow and blow gun to anything offered to them. Those who do master metals do so by shaping it into wild and exotic forms or use it to decorate their bodies. They are skilled hunters and able to move through the forests with ease. They do not however hold either sex less or greater than the other, and women fight along men and children as well after only a few years.



The Eschl wear little in the way clothing and armor, preferring to decorate their bodies with tattoos, arm bands (usually of some type of metal as noted above), earrings, and rings upon their tusks. Their most prominent feature is their hair, which they cut, grease with bear oil, and shape in many wild forms. It is a hairstyle that often marks a band.

HOLY LAND

As noted the Eschl look upon the Bottoms as holy land. Here, they say, dwells the Great Stag, Let, the god of Hope and securer of men on Aihrde. Also Nunt, the god of death lies in the lake of the same name. The Eschl come here to hunt the wild boar as a right of manhood and the bovine that dwell in the deeper portions of the forest. These are holy animals to the Eschl and are not hunted but on special occasions. They do not generally allow others to freely hunt the bovine or the boars in the Bottoms and if they find someone doing so, they often attack them, to punish them for their sins. Though at times they treat with the interlopers and demand payment in one form or the other.

For a complete write up on the Eschl, see *Monsters & Treasure of Aihrde*.

TERRAIN ENCOUNTERS

There are no permanent paths or trails in the Bottoms. The forest is open and does little to restrict the movement of animals, but beyond that the constant floods wash away any paths that do form. This creates an unusual danger in the Bottoms, for it is easy to stumble into a pitfall, mud pit or other such wetland danger, here referred to as quicksand.

For every 5 miles of terrain covered, roll a d6. If a one is rolled, the characters stumble across or into a hidden bog.

Any quicksand encountered requires a wisdom check by the lead member or members of the party. A failed save means the advance members of the party fall into the quicksand and immediately begin sinking. A successful save means they notice the quicksand before they stumble into it. If the characters are wary, and looking out, using a ranger to seek out a path or something similar, the chances of them stumbling into the quicksand are very small (CL 1). However, if they are rushing through the Bottoms, or traveling without heed to what lies in front of them, the chances are much greater (CL 8).

PITFALL/QUICKSAND

If one falls into quicksand, they begin sinking immediately. To stay afloat they must make a successful dexterity save (CL 4). To escape from the bog they must make a successful strength check (CL 2-8, determine randomly or decide strength of pit). If successful, they pull themselves free. For each round they remain in the quicksand the CL increases by 1, until they slip beneath the quicksand. They sink in 6-12 rounds.

Once submerged a character can hold their breaths for a number of rounds equal to their constitution. Two checks are

required now to survive and escape the quicksand. They can continue to make strength checks as outlined above, but they must make a drowning save as well. To avoid drowning requires a successful constitution save (CL 0). Each round the character is submerged the CL increases by 1. If they fail a save, the character is immediately reduced to -7 hit points, suffering a further 1 hit point in damage a round until dead.

ENCOUNTERS

Roll normal encounters in the Bottoms. Any deer or other herbivores should be considered wild boar or the large wild cattle that populate the Bottoms.

The following encounter should occur at least 15 miles into the Bottoms.

THE ESCHL CHILD

Illpah is a child of the Eschl. She is young, six years old, but was gifted with 'the sight' by Nunt and she can see onto the Arc of the Time and to the Endless Pools. She is a holy child to her people, but recently she and her mother have become separated from their band and have wandered alone in the Bottoms for several days. Her mother was only recently killed by a giant boar. Illpah stands by, watching the beast devour her mother.

The underbrush gives way and you spy a wide clearing beneath the might bole of a gigantic maple tree. The ground here is slightly elevated and seems to avoid the normal flooding the region most certainly suffers. Leaf fall covers much of the ground making it unusually barren of grass, so that the sandy soil of the earth is exposed. Standing in the clearing is a young child, perhaps six years old. The child is dark skinned, with long black hair. Behind her, lying on the ground, is the body of a woman. Next to her is a long spear, broken in half. Feeding upon the corpse is a gigantic boar.

BOAR (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 6d8, AC 17, HP 41. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a gore attack for 2d6 points of damage. He delivers a bite as well for 1d8 points of damage. He has twilight vision. He is able to trip an opponent upon a successful hit. Anyone struck with a tusk attack must make a successful dexterity save or be knocked off their feet. All attacks on the prone opponent gain a +4 to hit.)

The boar does not immediately attack. Being a temperamental beast it slew Illpah's mother for no other reason than to show its dominance. It is not actually feeding on the corpse, it only appears to be doing so. It is continuing to gore the body however, and is slowly disemboweling it.

If anyone comes within 20 feet of the boar it attacks, rushing to gore and trip its opponents before it savages them with its tusk.

During any battle with the boar Illpah does not run away, nor cower. She fully expects to be slain by the boar and join her mother on the Arc of Time so she moves to prepare her mother for the after life.



AVOIDING THE CHILD: If the party avoids the child and boar and moves on, the girl remains near her mother. The boar does not kill but eventually grows tired of the body and moves on. About dusk a nakal dragon enters the clearing, sees the child and attacks and devours her.

RESCUING THE CHILD: Illpah evinces no surprise upon seeing the party. She doesn't move or speak until the boar is engaged. Once the party attacks, the child walks over to the body of her mother and begins preparing her for her journey. She lays her out, rolling her over on her back, straightening her legs, and placing her arms at her sides. She collects thorns from the brush and pins her mother's eyes open. All the while she does this speaks to her in soft tones. If any can understand her speech she is reassuring her mother with the following words:

"Momma, have no fear for I have set you right in the world and you will not walk with broken step. Momma, have no fear for I have put your arms to rest and Nunt may not grab you. Momma, have no fear for I have pinned your eyes Nunt will not deceive you with his lies. Momma, have no fear for Heth will take you and guide you upon the River of Erde."

Anyone who engages the child she speaks to them in clear, concise tones. However she only speaks the eschl tongue. Unless someone in the party speaks eschl, a *comprehend languages* is cast, or the party has some other means of interpreting the child's language, they cannot understand her, nor she them.

If she is engaged while she is preparing her mother's body, Illpah stops, holds up her hand and speaks in her own tongue asking

the party to stop. She then continues her work. When she is done, she walks away from the body and sits down. She will follow the party if she is asked or appropriate non-threatening gestures are made for her to do so. She has no fear of them if they are good, otherwise she refuses to go.

ILLPAH (*This chaotic good female human's vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 10, HP 4. Her primary attributes are wisdom, intelligence and charisma. Her significant attributes are wisdom 18. She has no weapons, nor any skills to fight. She is able to run as fast as any adult, but for only half the time. She speaks her own language. She has an inherit ability to detect anyone's alignment. She can also see into the other planes and as a result can, once per week, contact other planes as per the spell. The planes she can contact are limited to the Wretched Plains, Endless Pools, and Stone Fields. When contacting other planes she is communicating with the god Heth.*)

Illpah belongs to the Manute people, a small band of about 80 men, women and children. They are presently in the vicinity, several miles from the tragic scene. They are unaware of the mother and child's absence.

Illpah is small, about 3 feet high with long, black hair. Her eyes are bright green, an unusual trait in her people. Her skin is a dark olive color, bordering on brown. She is a comely child, though rarely smiles or laughs. Humor in the child is so rare that it terrifies her people when she does laugh.

ILLPAH'S FATE: Illpah has no idea where her people are. If asked she waves vaguely in a westerly direction. They are in fact north of

her, working their way toward Thistle Ridge and the Bolan Drops. A ranger in the party can attempt to backtrack the child. They can pick up her and her mother's trail on a successful tracking check (CL 4). Keeping the trail is not easy however. The eschl are known for their abilities to move and hide in the forest. Every three hours a fresh tracking check must be made (CL 6). Failure means the trail is lost. If there is no ranger in the party they can only guess at the direction the eschl have traveled.

The band is presently about 10 miles north and west, though the trail leads any trackers on a wild circuitous route that covers almost 12 miles of forest, requiring roughly 15 hours of travel and five tracking checks.

If anyone in the party offers to take the child, she joins the party and follows them wherever they go, whether after her people or with the party on their adventures.

If told to stay and she is abandoned, she remains behind. She does not look or act disappointed, only watches intently as the party leaves. If she is left behind, as noted above, a nakal dragon attacks and kills her at dusk.

ILLPAH RETURNED TO HER PEOPLE: If the party manages to take the child back to her people by backtracking her trail, they first encounter a band of warriors who begin to flank them. They are seen on a spot check (CL 7). If they see the girl they shout to her by name, without coming out. Illpah then communicates that the people are kind and bringing her back to the band.

At this point one of the chieftains emerges and engages the party. Upon learning of their good intentions he'll offer them food and rest with the band, inviting them to their camp. There the party is surrounded by the tribe, who come out to see the strangers that have rescued Illpah.

The path you are on gives way to a wide-open space beneath the trees. A stream tumbles through the camp of lean-tos and rough built yurts. The wild looking people come from all over, climbing out of hammocks, out from yurts, and from the surrounding forest. The light plays on their skins, casting them in a dark green. They are largely naked, wearing arm and leg bands, and are covered with tattoos. Their hair stands out above all else, being shaved clean on the scalp but for a long shock of hair, braided or hanging loose that starts above the left ear and drops to the shoulder or below. They carry a variety of weapons, mostly stone age tools. They are grinning and friendly.

The eschl welcome the strangers and feed them a wide variety of roots, fruits, berries and cooked meats. They continually thank them for returning Illpah to their band and offer to tattoo the party with bands markings. Anyone who accepts the tattoo gains a permanent +1 on all forest related checks.

The eschl allow the party to stay with them as long as they like, but they are moving west, toward the Bolan Drops in the next few days.

ILLPAH AS A COMPANION: Illpah does join the party if offered and she is not returned to her people. She is quiet, makes no disturbances, obeys almost any command (so long as it doesn't cause her any harm) and follows directions as best she can with the limited forms of communication that may or may not be available.

She is a quick study and is able to pick up languages rapidly. After a month of being with the party she is able to communicate with almost anyone in the Vulgate or Common speech.

Once she can communicate she does not hide her abilities, explaining to anyone curious that she is a holy child and has the Sight of Heth and is able to talk to the dead. She uses her ability to *contact other plane* if requested.

She stays with the party, treating them as her new band, as long as they will have her.

THE PATH AHEAD: If at any point Illpah is asked about the forest ahead she imparts what information she knows. She has little practical knowledge beyond gathering roots and berries. Though she traveled extensively, as is the want of her band, she doesn't have a clear layout of the land, being aware of the Mistbane and the Bottoms a little. However she warns them about the Lake of Nunt if she is able.

The Lake of Nunt lies beyond the point of the northern ridge but before the small river and you must not go there. It is a black place where Nunt dwells, sleeping in the mud of the river. It houses the evil that resides in his belly. To drink the water of the lake is madness. To fish the lake is death. Do not go to the Lake of Nunt.

Despite her own warning, she will follow the party if they continue on to the Lake of Nunt and the Low River Country.

BEYOND THE BOTTOMS

The Bottoms end just south of the Lake of Nunt. Here the Low River Country begins. This is a dangerous place within the Darkenfold, sandwiched between the evil that resides in the Lake of Nunt and the distant Gulthap Falls that mark the beginning of the Upplands.

The character's path should lead them out of the Bottoms and into the Low River Country.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

OATH STONE: These stones are blessed by the god Burol. They must have been in a stone giant's possession at some point and been purchased or stolen from the giant. Anyone who binds themselves to the stone via an oath is bound to that oath or they will be cursed. To bind someone to an oath via an Oath Stone the name of the oath taker must be carved into the stone. The oath taker then spits upon their name and covers it with their hand, saying the oath allowed. They are then bound to the stone, so long as the stone remains in the hands of whoever administered the oath, the oath giver. For example, if a King wants to bind a Duke to him. He carves the Duke's name into the stone. The Duke spits upon it, grasps the stone and the recites the oath. The King takes the stone and safeguards it. If he loses the stone, its magic is broken and cannot be restored until the stone is returned to him. Anyone cursed by breaking an oath to an oath stone ages 1 year for every day they are alive, until they die of old age.

WANDERING MONSTERS OF THE DARKENFOLD

TABLE 1.1: CHALLENGE LEVEL MID-RANGE

Encounter	Upplands/ Troll Glades	Millorian/ Downs	Powder Basin	Mistbane River
Alligator	—	—	01-02	01-04
Allip	1	1	—	05-06
Ankheg	2	—	02-03	—
Assassin Vine	3-5	2-3	04-06	07-10
Barghest	—	4	—	11-12
Basilisk	6	5	—	—
Bear, brown	7-9	6-8	07-10	13-15
Behir	10	9	11-12	16-17
Blink Dog	11-13	10-11	—	—
Boar	14-16	12-14	13-16	18-20
Centaur	17	15-16	17	—
Chimera	18	17-18	18	21-22
Cockatrice	19-20	19-21	—	—
Demi-Human	21-23	22-23	19-22	22-25
Dragon	24	24	23	26-28
Dryad	25-26	25-26	24-25	29-31
Ettercap	27-28	27-2	—	—
Ettin	29	29-31	26-27	—
Frog, Giant	30-31	32-33	28-30	32-34
Fungus, Violet	—	34	31-33	35-37
Giant	32-33	35-37	34-36	—
Gorgon	34	38	—	—
Hag, Night	35	39	37	38-39
Harpy	36-37	40-41	38-39	40-42
Herd Animal	38-40	42-44	40-41	—
Human	41-43	45	42-45	43-46
Humanoid	44-46	46-48	46-47	
Hydra	—	49-51	—	—
Jaculus	47	52-54	48-49	—
Lamia	—	55	—	—
Lammasu	—	56-57	—	—
Lion	48-50	58-60	50-51	47-49
Lizard Folk	51-52	61-63	—	50-53
Lycanthrope	53-54	64-65	52	54-56
Manticore	55-56	66-67	53-54	—
Naga, Dark	57-58	68	—	—

Nymph	59-60	69	55	57-60
Orge	61-63	71-71	56-58	61-62
Owlbear	64-65	72-73	59-61	63-65
Pseudodragon	66	74	62-62	—
Satyr	67-6	75-76	63	—
Shambling Mound	—	—	64-65	66-68
Snake, Giant	69-71	77-78	66-67	69-72
Spider	72-73	79-80	68-71	—
Sprite	74-75	81-82	72	73-75
Stirge	76-77	83-84	73-75	76-78
Tick, Giant	78-80	—	76-79	—
Toad, Giant	81-83	85-86	80-82	79-81
Treant	84-85	87-88	83-84	82-84
Troll	86-88	89-90	85-87	—
Troll, Lord	89	91	88	—
Undead	90-92	92	89-91	85-89
Unicorn	93	93	92	90-92
Will-O'-Wisp	94-95	94-95	93-94	93-94
Wolf	96-98	96-98	95-97	95-96
Wyvern	99-100	99-100	98-100	97-100

TABLE 1.1: CHALLENGE LEVEL 4-6

Encounter	Upplands/ Troll Glades	Millorian/ Downs	Powder Basin	Mistbane River
Dragon				
Dragon, Copper	01-20	05-15	01-20	01-25
Dragon, Green	21-50	16-30	21-50	26-100
Dragon, Nakal	51-99	31-89	51-99	—
Dragon, Red	100	90-100	100	—
Giant				
Cloud	—	01-10	—	—
Hill	01-50	10-50	01-50	01-100
Stone	51-75	51-75	51-90	—
Fire	76-100	76-100	91-100	—
Demi-Human				
Dwarf	01-25	01-05	01-25	01-05
Elf	26-30	06-60	26-30	06-35
Gnome	31-75	61-80	31-75	36-60
Halfling	76-100	81-100	76-100	61-100
Undead				
Banshee	—	01-10	—	01-100
Ghost	01-05	11-25	01-05	—
Skeletons	06-25	26-35	06-25	—
Shadow	26-35	36-45	26-35	—
Shadow Mastiff	36-50	46-66	36-50	—
Wraith	51-75	67-87	51-75	—