

# CASTLES & CRUSADES

## TO KILL A KING



BRIAN N. YOUNG



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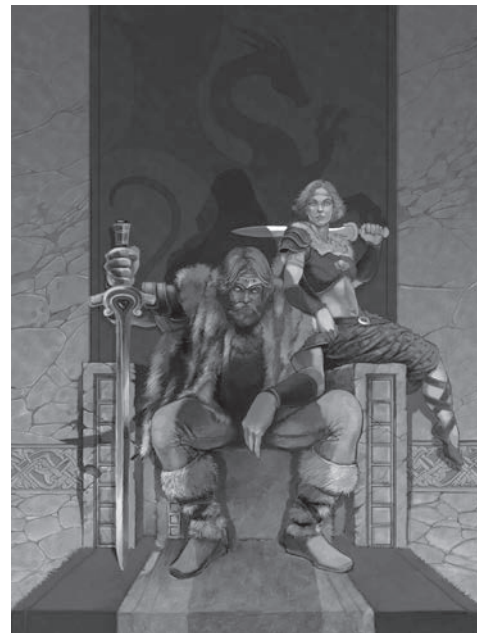
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This module is designed for 2-5 characters at 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> level or higher. There will be much spying, intrigue, and trickery so rogues would be helpful.

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# TO KILL A KING



he assassin moved throughout the dark and shadowed fortress of the king. He hoped to find his royal majesty of Penllyn asleep in his chambers, or even better, in a drunken state of slumber, brought on by the grand feast earlier. The feast honored victory over

Penllyn's foes from the seas, the Picts and Gaels that arrived in many ships and sought to enslave, terrorize, and destroy all in their path.

The queen assured the assassin that he would have a clean and undisturbed route deep into the fortress without any servants or guards in his way. She paid the assassin half the gold when the deal was made with the guarantee that he would receive the rest after the job was done. The king must die, she told him again and again in their private meeting in the back chambers of the feast hall. Why, she did not explain, only that it was urgent.

Brioc felt the weight of his role as a grubby little pawn in this malicious plot but he needed the money, and killing an old blue-blooded man shouldn't be difficult, even if he was protected by thick stone and timber walls, several hundred warriors, guards, druids' blessings, and the loyalty of his kingdom. How difficult could such a task be?

The queen assured him King Gwgon would be unable to defend himself, and it would take just a quick cut or stab with a dagger, preferably a Gaelic one, to do the work. The king had never done anything to endanger or harm Brioc or his family personally, except the taxes they must pay, but Brioc had a job to do and steeled himself against the endeavor.

Brioc had never been a cut-throat before, nor had he ever slain anyone before, but he had experience in stealing and finding his way in and out of homes and other structures. The queen had discovered Brioc when he was sitting in the King's jail for theft and gave him an ultimatum.

The would-be assassin had to study the king during his feast, know his mannerisms, his closest men, and any habits that might give Brioc an advantage in overtaking him. If King Gwgon were to be slain, so would be Brioc's crimes forgotten and pardoned; he would be paid the rest of the fee, and the deed never again spoken of, regardless of the chaos into which Penllyn might fall.

Brioc dashed to the shadowed door of the king's chamber and found no guards. The queen had been right so far. Slowly he pushed open the door with his black-gloved hand while holding his poisoned dagger tightly in the other and peered inside, his heart beating wildly...

## INTRODUCTION

In this complex adventure of court espionage and skullduggery, the adventurers, 2-5 at 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> level in experience, must slay a king at the request of the queen. There will be much spying, intrigue, and trickery in the court of the King of Penllyn's fortress and palace. With this plot, there are many layers of betrayal and backstabbing that the adventurers will have to endure and survive in order to move on.



## 2 CASTLES & CRUSADES

As with the other adventures in this series, this story is set in a semi-historical mythical Post-Roman Britain, in the North of Wales in the little kingdom of Penllyn ('Pen-thlin'), and contains strong elements of faery-folk and druidic magic. Compared to the previous modules in this series, the magical and supernatural beings and monsters are significantly fewer, but for good reason. This story is steeped in intrigue and regicide rather than fantasy adventures.

The inspiration behind this module comes from one of my favorite hard rock bands of all time, Richie Blackmore's Rainbow, and their song "Kill the King" from Dio's final album with them in 1978. This group's music was a major and monumental driving force in my gaming and academics, spurring me on to do what I do. This module honors that, and I hope everyone who plays it finds it just as fun!

This adventure is not for characters with a strong noble background or Good alignments, as it requires them to do unscrupulous deeds for money. The complex court dynamics and the plethora of NPCs in King Gwgon's ('Goo-gone') court form an ensemble around which the characters will need to smartly maneuver to get to their goal.

The adventurers will be pawns in this story, used, abused, and discarded by the flippant and cold-hearted queen. It will be up to them to merely survive once they dive into this seedy plot against the old sovereign. This module can easily be placed in the Aihrde world setting or any other with a change of names and places, or taken out of its historical and geographical settings and refitted for one of pure fantasy.

Tension should be the style of this adventure from the beginning to its unpredictable conclusion. There is a fairly linear direction that this story will go but there are so many variables along the way depending on which NPC the adventurers involve themselves with, options chosen and what happens to the king at the hands of the characters.

The CK should keep this adventure thick with intrigue and deception and make the adventurers unable to decide which way they should go at all times. To them, good luck!

## FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

Queen Adyna ('Ad-ee-na'), through three of her devious subjects (see below), will be making appearances in local taverns and places where people mingle to find a willing assassin. Though the nature of this job will not be apparent from the description they give, they will stress that it will be taking place within King Gwgon's fortress of Dinas Emrys ('Dee-nas Em-rees').

The following adventure hooks can be used to transition a party from an unrelated campaign into this series. These hooks can provide a sneaky angle into the court of King Gwgon if the CK does not have an idea on how this can occur logically.

**Hook #1:** While sitting in a tavern somewhere in the kingdom of Penllyn, a rogue or assassin in the adventuring party overhears word of a high paying, high risk 'job' in the fortress of Dinas Emrys. He might have heard this from a contact or

peer that was turned away because of inexperience. If pressed on the nature of this job, he was not given the details.

**Hook #2:** The adventuring party is allowed into the gates of Dinas Emrys to take part in a festival (see story) as guests, possibly stemming from the earlier modules in this series taking place in this kingdom. Possibly they were hired as lowly servants or laborers to some degree in their down time. However this occurs, their rogue/assassin character is approached by Queen Adyna's people about the job.

**Hook #3:** Fresh out of the previous module, *The Giant's Wrath*, the adventuring party was confronted because of their dubious reputations (if they have any). Queen Adyna's personal agents sought them out when they finally returned back to Penllyn or Prydain. Perhaps they were found on the road, at their camp, or another location

**Hook #4:** The adventuring party has been arrested by the King's warriors for the various crimes and offenses committed in his kingdom. They were dragged off to the holding cells in Dinas Emrys, soon to be tried by the judges, druids, and King Gwgon himself for their dodgy ways. The queen sends her men to make a deal with the adventurers that would 'pardon' them if they do this job for her.

## ACT 1 -THE PLOT BEGINS

### THE QUEEN'S PLANS

Queen Adyna sent her three secret agents and spies to find a worthy assassin to take down her husband, King Gwgon ap Gwron, for her own devious reasons. She plans to have the king murdered and blame it on the nearby rival kingdom of Lleyl (which is now inhabited by Irish settlers that have long since taken over the peninsula of Lleyl) to start a war between the northern kingdom of Gwynedd ('Goo-in-eth') and Lleyl ('Thl-eye-in'), meanwhile placing her new secret suitor on Gwgon's throne. Simplified, her plan is thus:

- 1 Hire assassin(s) to take out her husband King Gwgon when he is most vulnerable, after the feast.
- 2 Frame the assassins in garb that shows a connection to the kingdom of Lleyl and the Gaels to scare King Maelgwn of Gwynedd into supporting her.
- 3 While Gwynedd and Lleyl go to war over this incident, Queen Adyna keeps her kingdom Penllyn quiet, to place her suitor (see Aelfwig) on the throne with a new alliance. During the war between the two rival kingdoms, Queen Adyna will invade Gwynedd to conquer it with her new allies (through her suitor Aelfwig, son of Icil).
- 4 Adyna will use magical aid in her plans, along with some faery folk, to make sure the house of Gwron takes over the house of Maelgwn. Dark druids will aid her every step of the way.

*It is important to note that none of her plans will succeed unless King Gwgon is slain..*



## THE PROPOSITION

The adventurers, or more specifically, the assassins or rogues in the group, are confronted by the queen's agents. These three men are older, rough, and are unable to hide their shady characters. Their beady, dark eyes are always searching, and their garb is non-descript.

The leader, Marrog ('Mar-og'), comes forward to speak to them:

*"My master has a very important job and is willing to pay a noble's ransom for he who completes it. The only thing my master asks is that you do not demand many questions. You will need to be in King Gwgon's hall by tomorrow evening during the festival.*

*We will meet you again once you are there and lead you to your work. It is important that you do not let anyone know where you are going or what is going on; my master will be wrathful if the plans become public.*

*Only the best assassin could complete this job for my master and that is why we have looked for you and asked you to do it. Our master expects the job to be clean and with no bloody tracks, if you know what I mean.*

*If you cannot get into Dinas Emrys before the feast, tell the guards you work for Marrog the Dagger, they will call for me and I can get you into the hall. You must be there before the feast begins so that my master can go over what your job entails.*

*May the gods guard your every step and word until then friends. I will see you there in the King's hall at Dinas Emrys."*

Marrog and the other two men will leave swiftly, keeping their eyes on everyone as they do so. Once on their horses, they will ride speedily back to Dinas Emrys in the rain.

The weather in Penllyn is dark, overcast, and rainy, and it has been for days now. Wherever the adventurers are located when this first encounter happens, it will be a soggy and cold but eventless ride to Dinas Emrys.

## DINAS EMRYS - THE INFAMOUS FORT

Situated on a high hill, in a corner of Penllyn close to the borders of the kingdoms of Llein and Gwynedd, Dinas Emrys sits fairly tall. A small village is wrapped around its hill for protection by the king's men.

Dinas Emrys is made of grey stones with thatched roofs, high walls, and two large gates. This is the infamous retreat of Gwrtheyrn Thenau ('Goor-they-urn Thin-eye'), the king who was said to have first hired Saxon mercenaries into Prydain a hundred years ago. He fled here to avoid further uprisings by his countrymen and the predations of the Germanic mercenaries. It took the warlord Emrys Wledig and an army to oust him from within its walls.

Before Emrys and his armies arrived at the gates, however, Gwrtheyrn had other matters to tend. The fortress he built here (originally called Dinas Ffaraon Dandde) refused to remain standing, as each night powerful tremors caused it to collapse upon itself. This greatly irritated him, and feeling it a curse, he consulted his druids, who told him that only the blood of a fatherless boy, sprinkled on the foundation, would calm the trembling.

Seeking a child, they found a boy prodigy to sacrifice, Myrddin Emrys, who told them that sacrificing him was pointless, because two dragons, one red and one white, struggled under the hill each night, causing the tremors. Gwrtheyrn's men dug up the hill and found a pool where the two dragons fought. Myrddin told them the red dragon symbolized the Britons, while the white represented the invading Saxons, and the two would be locked in battle for a long time. Whereas the white dragon would appear victorious for most of the battle, it would gradually lose out to the red. The dragons were released to battle in another venue, and the fortress was rebuilt a final time.

With the fortress now stable and the trouble with the dragons over, Gwrtheyrn sought to regain control as king, until Emrys Wledig and his warriors arrived to bring justice to the corrupt and criminal king on behalf of the Britons.

Emrys Wledig claimed the fort over and it was renamed after him. Since Emrys' time over 60 years ago, many kings have ruled from Dinas Emrys, its power falling on either side of the borders, sometimes for Gwynedd and sometimes for Llein. Dinas Emrys finally fell into Penllyn's hands by the conquests of Gwron ap Cunedda Wledig ('Goo-ron ap Keen-eth-uh OO-led-eek') over 30 years ago.

Dinas Emrys' statistics are:

250	warriors
100	guards
300	servants
1,000	villagers
100	guests +50 servants

Once the adventuring party arrive at the large wooden gates they are greeted by a dozen guards on the walls and behind the door; they are grumpy and will be obstinate towards all non-royal-guest visitors that are a part of the festivities.

*Before you, standing tall with red dragon banners flying in the windy sky, is the legendary fort of Dinas Emrys. Its grey walls and stones stand barely noticeable against the backdrop of the overcast skies.*

*One narrow road cuts through the surrounding village of a thousand people, up to the gates. Dinas Emrys dominates the horizon and comes second only to the mountains nearby.*

*Black smoke clouds hang in the sky above the many structures within, funneling upward from the ovens and fires lit in preparation for the festivities. The kingdom of Penllyn's capital is here in this fortress which dates back only a hundred years.*

## 4 CASTLES & CRUSADES

*Two large solid wooden gate doors, banded in iron, with two stone guard houses greet you. Guards in iron helms and thick warm cloaks patrol the walls with spears and shields in hand.*

One guard, a gruff old bearded man looks out of the small door in the gate at them:

***“Only dignitaries and royalty are allowed in these walls so go away. We have plenty of servants and help to handle everything, so go away.”***

NOTE: If the adventurers fail to mention Marrog and are turned away, they will need to find a way into Dinas Emrys's walls and inside the fortress hall itself. To climb the rainy stone walls, it will take a CL: 5 X3. To do so and not get spotted by the many guards walking the walls and in the courtyard, it will take stealth and clever hiding with an average difficulty of CL: 2 (this can be asked as many times as needed by the CK).

If confrontations do happen, the guards will fight rather than ask questions unless the adventurers surrender (If this is done as an attempt to get inside the fort and in cells, Marrog will free them later).

GUARDS OF DINAS EMRYS X 50 (These chaotic neutral warriors' vital statistics are HD 4d10, AC 14, and HP 30. Their primary attributes are strength, constitution and wisdom. They attack by spear 2d6, sword 1d10, and bow 1d6 damage.)

(If Marrog's name is mentioned by the adventuring party, events will take the following course.)

***“Oh yes Marrog, him. Well by all means, come inside. You will find him in the corridors about the king's hall. We will send men to guide you there.”***

Two burly guards will escort the adventurers through the wet courtyard, past the many busy servants and into the main hall. They will be taken to the slightly dark foyer near the king's hall.

Marrog is skulking in the shadows impatiently, waiting for the adventurers to arrive. He is dressed in black and avoiding the hubbub and business of the festivities in the hall.

He will take the assassins to the side, away from the others, to speak quietly:

***“I see you have made it, and now you meet my master to know more about your job and your target. Tell your friends they are able to mingle at the furthest tables from the king in the hall, as guests of the queen. Now, follow me!”***

Marrog will take the assassins off to another corridor, where the king's personal guards linger in the shadows, watching the passersby and the hall. He will take them into a small stone room, lightly decorated and lit by a candelabrum. Marrog leaves for a time, and lets them sit alone in this windowless chamber with the wooden door closed.

After 10 minutes of waiting, the door opens and Marrog, with head lowered in respect, enters. Behind him is the Queen Adyna, dressed in a colorful and magnificent dress with red cloak and golden jewelry two rough-faced guards escort her. Adyna is beautiful, if slightly worn by stress and age. Her hair is long and straw-colored; piercing green eyes move about the room. The queen looks to the assassins with seriousness.

***“You are my assassin? Then good, the gods have chosen well. How much experience do you have in being a hired blade, stranger?”***

Hopefully the characters will respond favorably, possibly regaling the queen with boasts of great kills.

***“I need your considerable skills to serve me, assassin. My intended target will be the pinnacle of your dirty work, no other could rival this target, no one.”***

***I will, however, need to disguise you, to make you fit in with the many guests here, so that your presence is not suspicious. You will wear the garb of the envoys from the kingdom of Lleyrn, since we have given them the run of the place. We are forging an alliance with them and it would not seem out of place.***

***Before you do your work I want you to observe him. Study him; know his ways, habits, and weaknesses. You can participate in the feast in the main hall until the festivities conclude.***

***Your target is the king, my husband Gwgon ap Gwron. He has grown frail with old wounds and weak in mind, and does not allow his kingdom to flourish as it should. You will not slay him in the feast or thereabouts, but in his bedchambers tonight, when he is drunk on mead and tired from a long day. He will be most vulnerable at that moment.***

***Once you kill him in his bed, Marrog will meet you in the corridor and pay you, then you must leave here swiftly before the chaos begins.***

***I must warn you, if you betray me or reveal this plan in any way, my vengeance will stay on your heads until you are dead. Nowhere will be safe from my wrath and I will send your souls to the Otherworld.***

***I will see to it that you will be given a safe escort out of Dinas Emrys once you have done your job for me. No one will give you trouble on your way out of here. Do you have any questions?”***

Queen Adyna will give these extra tidbits of facts to the adventurers if asked:

- In the fort's pool is an escape route they can swim if needed. It leads out of Dinas Emrys in a drainage overflow tunnel, towards the river Glaslyn.

- In the west wall is a weak section of masonry that can be used to exit the fort if needed.
- The guards will refuse to let anyone leave the fort once the king is slain. They will seek out his assassin.
- The king's death is not a travesty; it is required to keep the kingdom of Penllyn intact. His death will unify it and solidify the peoples against its rivals.
- If pressed for some payment *before* the job, the queen will have Marrog hand the assassins golden jewelry (ear-rings and pendent) worth 1,000gp to hold them over.

Queen Adyna will leave the assassins and Marrog will hand them the green tunics of the people of Lley. An image of a spear is emblazoned on the fronts in white and the matching cloaks are in reverse colors.

Marrog will then take them into the grand feasting hall of King Gwgon of Penllyn. They will see:

A large wooden and stone hall, rectangle in shape with large ornate rafters overhead, houses the many banners of the tribes of Penllyn along the walls. The old grey-haired king sits on his fairly decorated throne before three rows of long tables filled with hairy men, warriors, and envoys from far and near. Torches and candles burn, illuminating the once rich hall of the warlord Emrys.

*The queen sits beside him. A blazing hearth fire burns behind them, topped by a stag sizzling on a spit. Slabs of it have been cut by servants and given to the guests. Guards stand in the shadows with a handful of the king's druids chatting and overlooking the gathering.*

*Music, laughter, and merriment fill the hall from everyone gathered. Queen Adyna gives you a glance, a nod, and then a smile before returning back to discussion with the king. Marrog takes you to the empty spots on a table, furthest from the king and queen, to sit.*

*This hall is comfortable and pleasant. Some of the gathering are quiet and brooding, but most are happy at the festivities. Well-dressed noble men dance about in a mock circle near the king, arm in arm, causing laughter and smiles from his highness.*

#### Plot Points:

- 1 If the first module in this series was played (*The Goblins of Mount Shadow*) and Prince Maelgad ap Gwgon was met but not slain in the adventure, he is here celebrating with his family. If there are any grievances between them, this would be the ideal place to air them after so long.
- 2 The adventurers could mingle with the people present (see descriptions given) and become entangled in the court intrigue. This could complicate the situation concerning killing the king greatly.
- 3 One of the warriors in the group could be singled out by another in the king's hall because of his reputation, and

challenged in a bout of boasting and egos. If a bard is present, he could be asked to perform for the gathering.

- 4 Any rivals, enemies, or NPCs with vendettas against the player characters could be present in the king's hall and spot them. They could attempt something against the players amidst the fun and frivolity in the hall.

Progressively, King Gwgon will become drunker as the night goes on. A goblet is always in his hand, or a drinking horn with alcohol. In his state of mind he will become clumsy and sleepy. The Queen makes sure he gets a constant supply of alcohol to keep him intoxicated.

## THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

Listed below are some of the many important figures that are present in King Gwgon's hall. These NPCs could quickly become involved in the player characters' time spent in the hall. Depending on how deeply the adventurers choose to get involved with the locals, this can alter the outcome of the assassination and those involved. The CK can really play these NPCs for what they are worth and make the assassins' time spent at Dinas Emrys... "interesting". *Statistics are given for NPCs where the chance of a violent confrontation is likely.*

### KING GWGON AP GWRON

A descendant of the great warlord Cunedda Wledig, Gwgon has ruled over Penllyn for 30 years now, strengthening the kingdom where it was once weak. Age and old battle wounds have had their effect on him but he is still a noble and wise king.

Gwgon has built up the might of his army and made the wilderness of his kingdom more difficult to invade or harm by his neighbors Gwynedd, Lley, and Powys.

His few faults are enough that his queen Adyna wants to exploit and turn them against him, but he is a good man. Gwgon has few enemies and has kept a strong bond with the chieftains amongst the many tribes in his land.

King Gwgon wants to someday gain more land back from his neighbors, but due to his ailing age and other daily affairs, he cannot concentrate on those ambitions. He would send his sons Gandwy and Maelgad with Ysgawyn and an army to take back some land from the people of Powys or Lley if he could.

*GWGON AP GWRON (He is a 8<sup>th</sup> level good fighter with vital statistics of HD 8d10, AC 18, and HP 75. His primary attributes are physical. See his personal treasury in the fort for magical items.)*

### QUEEN ADYNA FERCH GRALON

One of several daughters of King Gralon of the island kingdom of Kêr-Iz, Adyna was married into the House of Gwron early to keep her from causing trouble. Because of her faery blood, she has never felt akin to Human-kind as much as she should.

## 6 CASTLES & CRUSADES

Like her siblings, she is doomed to bring about misfortune to those she holds dear at some point in her life. Her many years as Queen of Penllyn have been spent in peace, without incident, but after three decades ruling, her resentments and grief over a dozen matters have come to a head.

She has secretly made a tryst with a Saxon prince, Aelfwig son of King Icil of Mercia, and she will put him on Gwgon's throne once the king is dead. Aelfwig's father plans on seizing the kingdom and cutting into the midst of the kingdoms of the Britons as part of their invasion. Aelfwig is secretly present in Dinas Emrys, hidden away (*see Dinas Emrys' Layout*), and will assume the throne on behalf of Mercia once the moment is ideal (*Aelfwig's brother Cnebba and 200 warriors wait nearby for the signal to move*).

Adyna is a sorceress and has been practicing magic her entire life, making her skills profound. She could have just as easily killed the king by spells, but it plays into her plans better if someone else does the dirty deed physically, and makes the murder untraceable to her (the druids are savvy to her magical ways).

If worse comes to worst in this plot and she is uncovered, she will summon the dragon that still lies hibernating beneath Dinas Emrys to cause havoc and destruction. Adyna will not care if the beast causes total destruction of Dinas Emrys, if all is otherwise lost (*See Adyna's Dragon*).

**ADYNA FERCH GRALON** (*She is a chaotic evil 8<sup>th</sup> level wizardess; her vital statistics are HD 8d4, AC 18, and HP 24. Her primary attributes are magical. She will attack with a 1d4 poisoned dagger. She has the spells from the wizard list and magical items in her personal chest.*)

### PRINCE GANDWY TWRGADARN

('Gand-oo-ee Toor-gad-arn')

Gwgon's eldest son, a great warrior and hero of the kingdom, he is revered in all of Penllyn for his skill and deeds. He is larger-than-life in personality, rugged and slightly arrogant because of his title and fame. Although he would take his father's place as king in Penllyn, his mother the queen has other plans for him. *She will send him to Gwynedd as an ambassador when the chaos erupts, to get him out of Dinas Emrys. If he returns he will find another on his father's throne instead, Aelfwig the Saxon.* Gandwy sits at the table closest to his father the king in the hall. He is a very serious warrior.

**GANDWY AP GWGON** (*This chaotic good 7<sup>th</sup> level fighter's vital statistics are HD 7d10, AC 24, and HP 70. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks by his sword (+3) 2d4, axe (+2) 1d8, and dagger 1d4 damage. His armor is chain.*)

### PRINCE MAELGAD AP GWGON

('Mail-gad ap Goo-gone')

Arrogant and jealous, Maelgad lives in his brother's shadow and seeks to become the favorite of the peoples of Penllyn. Maelgad plots and schemes to gain the throne of the realm

however he can, so that his brother is eliminated and the rest of the kingdom made incapable to thwart him.

He has no respect for druids or authority, and wishes only to become king someday. His errant ways could benefit the player characters if they use them to their advantage. Maelgad is not as great a warrior as his brother and would rather use poisons and sneaky methods. Since the time of the *Goblins of Mount Shadow* module he has become increasingly sinister and bitter.

If his father is slain, Queen Adyna will place Maelgad in charge of maintaining control over the chaos that will erupt in Dinas Emrys. She knows about his ways and wants to have him in a position to be slain if possible, so he cannot interfere with her changes to come.

**PRINCE MAELGAD** (*He is chaotic neutral 5<sup>th</sup> level fighter and his vital statistics are HD 5d10, AC 21, and HP 50. He wears +3 scale armor and wields a broadsword (+4 Goblin Bane), and a +3 spear.*)

### PRINCESS GWERFYL FERCH GWGON

('Goor-vil ver-ch Goo-gone')

Petite, beautiful, and soft spoken, Gwerfyl is blissfully unaware of her family's devious ways and the goings-on in Penllyn. She only wants to live a peaceful life, find a good husband, and have a family of her own.

She will be useless as a mine for information about her family as she is utterly naïve about them all, being sheltered as she is. Her mother Adyna had made sure that she is not well educated about the outside world.

Gwerfyl will be quietly sitting in the hall during the festivities, not taking much part, and ignoring the attentions of the many hopeful men who want her hand or conversation. She will be difficult to talk to because she is hesitant about strangers.

*If her father is slain by the assassin, Gwerfyl will scream and panic. The queen will let her do what she will, not expecting any trouble from her. Eventually the queen will marry her off to a noble from a nearby kingdom to get her out of the court.*

### LORD MASEK AP NEYTHEN

('Maz-ek ap Ney-thin')

Masek was sent from the southern kingdom of Dewnans ('Devon') as an envoy and court retainer for King Gwgon as part of a growing alliance. Masek is used to the easier living along the coasts of the southern kingdom and life in this realm is a bit rough for his tastes. King Gwynek of Dewnans has him planted also as an informant on the politics of the northern kingdoms. Personally, however, Masek would aspire to greater things if given the chance, and shed his assigned role to become a noble or even king himself. He is a dandy as Britons go, dressed in fine Roman garb with careful tending to his hair and appearance. *Masek sits midway in the hall amidst the other visitors from foreign lands.*



**MASEK AP NEYTHEN** (*He is a 4<sup>th</sup> level chaotic good rogue with vital statistics of HD 4d10, AC 14, and HP 35. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks by dagger 1d4, or short sword 1d6 damage.*)

### **LORD ANIR GLAS AP CASNAR**

(‘An-eer Glass ap Cas-nar’)

Lord Anir hails from the kingdom of Deheubarth to the south. He is visiting Gwgon’s court for a time. Though noble and raised to engage in battle, Anir is a wizard by lifestyle. He has traveled to Penllyn hoping to find the hidden Cell Y Ddewiniaid (“Grove of the Wizards”) and divulge its secrets (see ‘The Grove of the Wizards’).

Anir is flamboyantly garbed, appearing almost as a wizard publicly. He and the king are on friendly terms and close. If the king is slighted or insulted in any way he would be the first to defend him, before even the princes. Anir will sometimes use his magic to protect the king, ignoring the king’s own druids’ or court wizards’ attempts at the same.

*If King Gwgon is slain, Anir will come to the queen’s aid, bravely seeking away to find the assassin. He will use his magic to do so and be a thorn in the player characters’ sides until they can lose him during the escape.*

**ANIR GLAS AP CASNAR** (*He is a chaotic good 4<sup>th</sup> level wizard with vital statistics of HD 4d4, AC 13, and HP 16. He will attack using a dagger 1d4, or dart 1d3 damage. He has seven spells from the wizard list to use.*)

### **YSGAWYN GAWR**

(‘Is-gaw-win Gow-er’)

Ysgawyn is a tall, well-built warrior, the “champion” of King Gwgon’s retinue. He is a burly man, half-giant by blood, with large ham hocks, a beard, and long braided dark hair. Ysgawyn’s mere size is enough to intimidate the weaker threats, but his skill with his battle-axe is far more formidable.

He stands at almost eight feet tall and wears only a cloak and checkered trousers. Ysgawyn will jump to defend the king at any turn if the princes cannot. He is the sworn champion of King Gwgon and will fight his battles for him if needed.

Ysgawyn sits at the front of the feast tables in front of his king. To feed his large gullet, he eats more than mere men on average. Few are foolish enough to challenge him for fear of ending up split in two by his axe.

*Once King Gwgon is slain, Queen Adyna will send Ysgawyn to deny people from leaving Dinas Emrys. He will be moved up to the captain of the guards instantly and be placed in charge of the other warriors of the king until ‘peace’ is maintained.*

**YSGAWYN GAWR** (*He is a chaotic neutral 8<sup>th</sup> level barbarian with vital statistics of HD 8d6, AC 20, and HP 48. He attacks with a bearded battle-axe (+4) 3d4, or spear 1d8.*)

### **LORD OL AP MAELGWN GWYNEDD**

(‘Ol ap Mail-goön Goo-in-neth’)

Lord Ol is one of the younger sons of King Maelgwn of the bordering kingdom of Gwynedd to the north. Ol was sent here on good terms to show Penllyn that the two kingdoms can exist in peace.

Unfortunately Ol has his own personal agenda here in the king’s court. He has spent a week here and has been trying to find the cracks in the strength and security so that he can exploit and prey on them. His goal is to seize control of Penllyn if there is a given chance.

Ol will happily play people against each other to get closer to the throne. He is doing this for his own sake and not his father’s; he wishes to possess his own realm, knowing that he may never take his father’s throne since he is one of seven siblings.

If the player characters really seek support in their plan, they can try to find a way to involve Ol. He will use his resources and wealth to aid them if needed, if he is assured that he can take the throne in the aftermath.

*Queen Adyna has no plans for Ol since she does not know his agenda or plans. When the chaos erupts, Ol will quickly try to take the throne with his attendants and retinue of 15 unless stopped.*

**OL AP MAELGWN** (*He is a chaotic neutral fighter, 4<sup>th</sup> level, with vital statistics of HD 4d10, AC 13 and HP 35. He will use a sword 2d4, dagger 1d3, or spear 1d6 damage.*)

### **LORD CELLACH MAC NOLIN**

(‘Cel-ach mac No-lin’)

The envoy sent from the Gaelic-ruled peninsular kingdom of Lleyn to the west is headed by this lord. Cellach and his band of 15 were given a special place of honor in King Gwgon’s hall for diplomatic reasons. Matters have been delicate between Lleyn and Penllyn for many decades, and Cellach’s presence is one of careful strategizing between both realms.

Cellach scrutinizes everything around him at Dinas Emrys, always looking for a problem or threat since he is still in the mindset that the Britons and their kingdoms are against their presence in the land. He is quick-tempered, expecting trouble, and will react violently if threatened.

Though he is the son of a noble from Lleyn, he represents the whole kingdom by being here. He knows that the Britons will cater to him and any of his requests, so he takes advantage of this fact.

The assassins wearing their garb will be treated wearily. Cellach will be told that these additions are “borrowed” subjects of Penllyn in the service of Lleyn. They are given the garb and colors of the kingdom to show that no ill-will is in mind.

*If King Gwgon is slain, Cellach will find a way with his retinue to take the throne. They will send a signal far into the hills to their men, that Dinas Emrys is vulnerable and can be taken by force.*

## **8 CASTLES & CRUSADES**

*They will fire a flaming arrow into the western hills if they cannot leave. The queen, however, has it planned that the king's death is their fault and will cause them unexpected grief.*

CELLACH MAC NOLIN (He is a 4<sup>th</sup> level chaotic neutral barbarian with vital statistics of HD 4d6, AC 15, and HP 24. He will attack with a sword 2d4, or dagger 1d3. He has a Cloak of Invisibility (3 charges, 1d6 minutes duration).

### **LORD CEITH AP MEDRAWD**

(‘Cei-th ap Med-ra-ood’)

A lesser and younger son of the northern warlord Medrawd, Ceith was sent from the court of Din Edin as a guest. Ceith's job in Gwgon's court is to spy on the strength of the kingdoms of this part of the island, and to gauge how powerful Lord Arthur Penddraig and his warriors really are.

Ceith is a nicely dressed young nobleman that wants to serve his father well, and will do whatever it takes to satisfy him. So far he has not uncovered any knowledge about Arthur's warriors, his ‘Dragons’, which is his main priority in Penllyn.

The plan is to be an itinerant noble, traveling and visiting all courts and realms friendly to Medrawd and his warbands-for-hire. As a person, he is quite boring and has little to talk about with others, except how cold the north is and the persistent problem of the Picts.

*If King Gwgon is slain, Lord Ceith will silently observe the aftermath and take notes for future reference. Queen Adyna does not have him in her plans, so he is spared a gory death or political entrapment.*

### **DOLAN MAC SLOAN**

(‘Do-lan mac Slo-ann’)

This guest is an elf from the Otherworld kingdom of the Three Kingdoms in Tír na nÓg. He is a Red Branch warrior, one of the many errant champions that have decided to travel and fight evil wherever they go. He sits quietly and feels a little out of place since the Otherworld presence at Dinas Emrys is not as strong as it once was (*due to the queen's influence over the years*).

Dolan is a valiant and brave warrior and finds human company a little disturbing at times, but he came to Dinas Emrys with the goal of being in the presence of the great king.

As one of the few Otherworldly guests in the court, he tries to not make his presence too bothersome or troubling because of the xenophobia. He and King Gwgon are good friends and he has been asked many times to join Ysgawyn's retinue but chooses not to. This is because he does not wish to be held down in one place for too long, since evil is everywhere.

*Upon the death of the king, Dolan will be the first to find his slayers. He will use his elfin wiles and abilities to hunt down the assassins. He will be a nuisance to the queen and her supporters if the plot is uncovered.*

## **THE FEAST OF KING GWGON**

This feast has been going on for many hours already before the adventurers arrive, and by this time in the evening most of the gathering are drunk and rowdy. Their presence is scarcely noticed (unless they make awkward or openly troublesome actions).

Plenty of food (breads, cheese, meat from the stag on the spit, vegetables, etc.) will be handed out by the many servants, and the king is giving out his own personal mead to the guests to drink. It is a typical Celtic feast among warriors and chiefs with boasting and loudness, excitable and energetic.

Dancing girls will come out and spin, dive, and move seductively around the guests. They will dance on the tables and shove themselves into men's laps and hands while they do so. *The CK can embellish as much as he or she wants with lots of unexpected elements and situations in this feast. The story can be complicated further if the NPCs are entangled in some way.*

At one point in the feast, the kingdom's top bards will come forward and recite their honorific poems, naming some of the prominent guests and their deeds. They will also lampoon certain cowardly warriors and nobles in Penllyn, but more so in other kingdoms distantly related (to the far north).

By the end of the bards' time spent in the feast, King Gwgon has become too drunk and tired to keep upright and Queen Adyna has to help him. She and his guards will help him stand to leave. The whole court stands and bows in respect of him, pledging their loyalty and honor.

As the two princes come to help carry their father away, the queen glances in a dark corner of the hall and nods and then sits back on her throne to mingle and drink with her daughter Gwerfyl and some of the wives present.

Marrog will emerge from the shadows and give the assassins a nod and direct them to follow him. He will lead them out of the loud smoky hall, past the guards and into the shadows. He doesn't say a word as he goes swiftly.

The feast is left behind as Marrog takes the assassins to their destination to find the king. There is no going back at this point for the assassins, as they enter a more private part of the hall. Guards are now commonly seen, walking the corridors and standing on watch.



## ACT 2 - TO KILL THE KING

### FINDING THE KING IN THE HALL

The princesses carry their father, with an escort of five guards, down the corridor away from the hall to his chambers within the keep. The brief walk between the hall and keep is muddy from rain but the number of guards is fewer in number.

With Marrog as their escort to the keep, the assassins will not be stopped by guards since they are in his company. Entering the keep of Dinas Emrys normally would be very difficult to do, but thanks to the queen's assistance this is far simpler to do. He will take them into the front entry way, past the guards and into the main corridor.

Once they are inside the torch-lit stone fort beyond the hall, Marrog will take them to a shadowy corner and tell them:

*"Now it is your turn to do what you were hired to do. Your payment for this job sits inside a white horse's saddlebag out in the stables. You have been paid 2,000 gold and some gifts to help you on your way."*

*The queen thanks you from the bottom of her heart for the job you will do, she grieves over what must be done, but in the course of future events it has to be so.*

*King Gwgon's chamber is on the second floor. He has four guards that stand at his door at all times and there are always fifty or more present in the keep. His Majesty should be so drugged and drunk that he cannot put up a fight in his bed.*

*Seek him out, do your work, and retreat to the stables where the white mare is tied to a post. You can leave, I assure you, before the pandemonium erupts in Dinas Emrys. Guards check on His Majesty once every half-hour, so keep hidden and aware of this.*

*Once the alarm is given, Ysgawyn Gaur will stop all traffic at the gates for as long it takes to find the murderer. Now I must leave here and go back to the hall or my absence will be enough to arouse suspicion among the nobles. May the gods bless your stroke of the blade tonight!"*

Marrog smirks and bows and then leaves back out of the keep into the rainy night. The assassins are left alone to carry on the job from here.

NOTE: If other characters that are not assassins or rogues are in the adventuring party they can be involved in the matters of the feast while the assassins go forth. It will require the effective running of two games at the same time for a while, but the characters not involved in the killing of the king can build an interesting situation with the NPCs and queen.

### SNEAKING ABOUT DINAS EMRYS

(See Dinas Emrys' Layout) Noting the position of the guards and other people within the keep of Dinas Emrys, the assassins will need to be stealthy at an average CL: 3. There are



## 10 CASTLES & CRUSADES

many chambers in which to hide if needed, but they are not limitless, and can form a trap for anyone caught.

Guards patrol the corridors in pairs, moving back and forth from one end to the other every 20 minutes. They change their shift after every two hours with fresh guards. These guards generally are the lesser of the fighters kept within Dinas Emrys and form the basic force to protect the royal family. If matters become too out of their control they will call for the king's warrior retinue under Ysgawyn Gawr to come to their aid.

**GUARDS OF DINAS EMRYS X 50** (These 4<sup>th</sup> level chaotic neutral warriors' vital statistics are HD 4d10, AC 14, and HP 30. Their primary attributes are strength, constitution, and wisdom. They attack by spear 2d6, sword 1d10, and bow 1d6 damage.)

If the alarm is given a struggle is had, but the basic guards cannot do the job, men will be sent to request Ysgawyn and the king's retinue. If this occurs, it will take 1d10 rounds before they assemble and make their way into the keep.

**YSGAWYN'S WARRIORS X 100** (These chaotic neutral 4<sup>th</sup> level fighters' vital statistics are HD 4d10, AC 15, and HP 35. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by spear 1d6, broad sword 2d4, and axe 1d8.)

Due to the rain and storm outside the keep, the atmosphere is dreary and drab; it is damp and noisy from the water pouring down the gutters in the walls. A few torches are lit in the corridors to provide some illumination.

An even riskier method of getting to the king in his chamber is by climbing the outer wall of the keep on the ledges. The chance of being spotted by the guards is much less but it is far more dangerous due to the rain-soaked stones. It would take many climbing rolls across the stone surface at an average of CL: 4 for each daring move on the slim ledges and few handholds. Going by this method, it will take longer to reach the king's chamber and any mistakes will quickly cause an alarm. To get into the king's chamber, the assassins will have to unlock the shuttered window. To do this (without making any noise to wake King Gwgon or alert the guards outside his chamber) requires a CL 6.

### FINDING THE KING IN HIS CHAMBER

The assassins will find King Gwgon in his rich chamber, nestled in his bed and dressed in his brightly colored Celtic patterned nightgown (See 'The King's Chamber'). He will be asleep, snoring and vulnerable for attack. He will be unable to defend himself for a time but every blunder or mistake that the assassins make will stir and sober him to defend himself at his full skill.

The easiest way to assassinate the king in his sleep would be by cutting this throat or stabbing his heart; this would not allow Gwgon to struggle or resist much, only slowly die. If the king is given a chance, he will sound the alarm and fight back to the best of his ability, considering his condition. There is a pull cord near the bed that he can reach if needed to sound the alarm in the keep. If he does, it will take the guards 1d8 rounds to reach his chamber, when 2d20 will arrive with more to come.

King Gwgon has been put in a cursed bed robe that will weaken him further. It is a gold-threaded, black and red Celtic-styled garment with the shapes of red dragons intertwined on its surface. This robe will put the king at a -10 towards his strength and knowledge making him frail and unable to resist the assassin.

The fate of the king and subsequent events depend on what the assassins choose to do once they are in his presence. Act 3 gives the two possibilities that can occur, based on what is done to His Majesty.

### DINAS EMRYS' LAYOUT

The fortress of King Gwgon is laid out in detail here to provide the CK with knowledge for this entire scenario. The assassins will be able to sneak, hide, or explore the king's keep thoroughly. Guards and servants will be everywhere and it will take some caution and patience to do the job correctly.

Dinas Emrys is a promontory fort (250 feet above the surrounding river), located on the bend of the meander of the Afon Glaslyn that covers a few hectares to encompass a few large enclosures. It is protected by a univallate (one-walled) system of ramparts on the hilltop.

The gate is a hollow-way that leads directly into Dinas Emrys with a road that goes down to the village below. There are two guard houses to either side of the main eastern gates with room for archers and slingers to stop any small siege force.

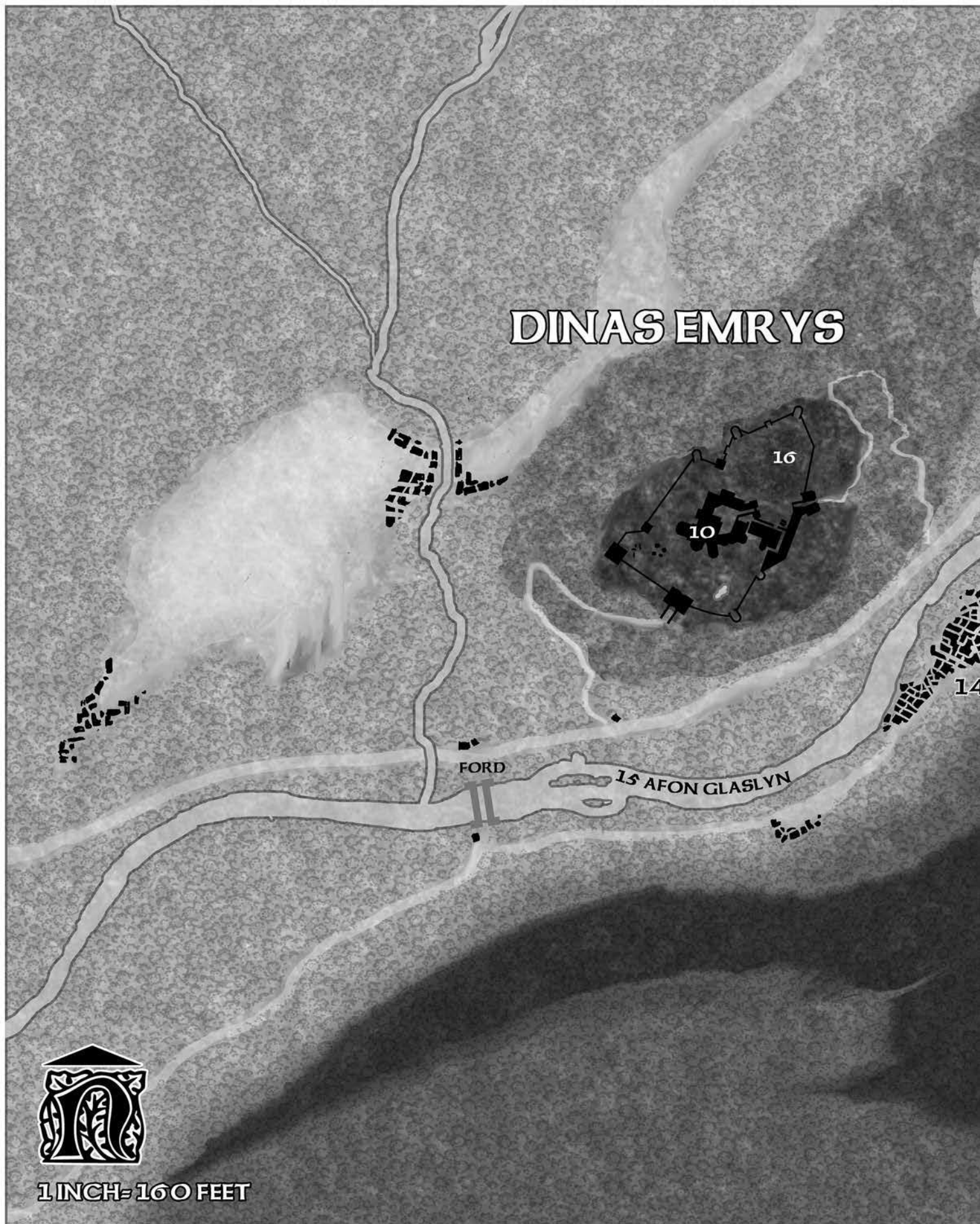
*The medieval keep, or the Mote and Bailey, did not exist in Post-Roman Europe as yet. The actual forts, for the most part, are an unknown factor archaeologically, almost invisible in the record. Evidence shows that many were built out of timber, wicker and thatch while others used unmortared stone, but their form and layout is not well understood. Dinas Emrys as depicted here is mythical and fantastic and hypothetical as far as history is concerned.*

### OUTSIDE LOCATIONS

- 1 **Walls** – These are approximately 35 feet high, stone, with no cement to hold them together. Structurally strong and built well by Gwrtheyrn's architects, in the rain it would take climbers a CL: 15 per roll to surmount them. At any one time there are many pairs of guards patrolling the top, with a total of an average of 30 covering the whole expanse.
- 2 **Gatehouses** – Constructed of stones with wooden frameworks, these two small houses sit to either side of the gates. They each have one side entrance (on the inside of the gate) and a view port to see on-comers and defend if necessary. Each contains a sitting stool and a torch in a sconce. There is usually one guard in each, but if an alarm is given another will come.
- 3 **Gate** – Entrance is gained through two large oaken, iron-bound doors with a double-bound locking plank to hold them closed. They require a couple of men to pull on the bronze rings to open them from the inside. They must be pushed closed.



# DINAS EMRYS



1 INCH = 160 FEET

# KINGDOM OF PENLLYN

LLYN DINAS

FORD

TREFEMRYS

17

THE GROVE  
OF THE WIZARDS





- 4 **Stables** – These two stable houses hold all of the steeds for the royal family and their nobles in residence, as well as for guests and visitors. Long wooden buildings with straw covered floors, each can hold a dozen steeds in the stalls.
- 5 **Courtyard (Inner Ward)** – Lined in stone walkways and paths, this vast space is the thoroughfare for all traffic and activity at Dinas Emrys. Extra horses, wagons and other vehicles from guests, etc., are usually parked here. During the spring and summer months, court is held here for the king or his nobles to judge cases and hear pleas by the commoners.
- 6 **Pwll Gwrtheyrn (“Gwrtheyrn’s Pool”)** – This large pool is lined in stone tiles and treated with the greatest of respect by the new kings because it was the location of the battling dragons uncovered by Myrddin Emrys long ago. The hill was long since cleared away and the pool given space. *Located under the lip of the stones at the top is an overflow drain tunnel (can fit Human-sized individuals if needed) that drains out of Dinas Emrys down to Afon Glaslyn. A metal grate blocks the way, however, and it must be opened or broken to get free.*
- 7 **Livestock Pens** – Fenced sheep, chickens, pigs, and goats are kept here at all times. They have shelter, though shabby, to protect them from the weather.
- 8 **Servants’ Quarters** – These thatch-roofed round houses are where the many cooks, cleaners, and other laborers for the king and queen stay. Their families are also here, making these houses crowded and always busy.
- 9 **Feast Hall** – *See Interior Description of the hall.*
- 10 **The Keep** – *See Interior Description of the keep.*
- 11 **Granaries** – These silos stand above ground and hold the grains and important crops for use by the servants of the keep to feed the royal family and others.
- 12 **Smithy** – This is the workshop and home of the king’s blacksmith, Ffodyr Gof. It is small and barely has enough room for him and his family.
- 13 **Carpenter** – Medyr Hen, the king’s carpenter, resides and works here. It is small and full of wood and tools. Medyr is an old man and lives alone.
- 14 **Trefemrys (“Trev-em-rees”, “Ambrosious’ Village”)** – These many small clustered gatherings of peasants live in

the shadow of Dinas Emrys hoping to gain the protection, and in some cases, the favor, of the king and queen. They work the fields, supply extra labor and serve their lords day to day. A thousand people live in this village total.

- 15 **Afon Glaslyn (‘Avon Glas-lin’)** – A river that flows from the lake of Glaslyn around Yr Wyddfa (Snowdonia) and empties into Llyn Gwynant. This river, if followed, courses through the forested pass between the mountains, the Aberglaslyn.
- 16 **Gwrtheyrn’s Barrow** – Even though he was despised by the Britons for his actions, Emrys gave him an honorable burial within the walls of the fort because he was a king. *Under the barrow is a hollow where a dragon sleeps in hibernation. Only Queen Adyna knows about this and has a spell readied in case she needs to awaken the angry beast and set it free (see ‘Adyna’s Dragon’ in Act 3).*
- 17 **The Grove of the Wizards** – This oaken grove not far from Dinas Emrys is an ancient holy place used by the druids for the past several thousand years, well into the farthest prehistory. The efforts of the Roman Missionaries have failed to wipe rid of the place for fear of causing a violent uprising among the locals. Gwrtheyrn’s druids divined and held their private councils here, as do King Gwgon’s now. There is a small round stone house near here where the chief druid, Brathach, resides and tends to the holy site. According to locals, he keeps a collection of books and scrolls with old spells in them, and many magical items in his house. The grove is a portal to the Otherworld and its presence is strong. *Aelfwig’s Saxon army is camped a few miles away in a valley; only the smoke from their fires can scarcely be seen. They will kill Brathach and burn his home and the grove on their way to Dinas Emrys if given a chance.*

### THE KING’S FEAST HALL

- KF1 **Entryway:** A large cloak room, an anti-chamber, is immediately within the two richly decorated doors. There are always two to four guards stationed here, whether or not a feast or court is being held. Two torches sit in sconces to illuminate the hardwood room.
- KF2 **The Hall** – Six richly and elaborately carved wooden columns are spaced in this long hall. Two long tables sit close to the king and queen’s thrones, where guests are seated. Banners and other tribal symbols hang from the strong oak rafters above. A large hearth pit sits near the thrones, cooking food and warming the

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hall. Many torches line the walls, but the king's druids and advisors mingle in the shadows on either side of the room. The king holds his most private celebrations here, as well as Winter Court. Usually after a good feast or a gathering of the king's warrior retinue, the warriors will sleep where they fall after hours of sumptuous eating, drinking, and whoring.

**KF3 Servants' Prep Rooms** – The servants fill the many tables in these rooms with their goods to keep the feasters happy. The foods, drinks, and other items taken out of the store rooms in the keep are brought here first before they are taken into the hall.

**KF4 Resting Chamber** – This is a temporary bedchamber for the king and queen or esteemed guests, used for rest or for other purposes. This is a richly decorated, Romanesque style room, fit for royalty. Fine cloth hangs along the walls and above the bed, and the room is filled with luxurious furniture (dressers, etc.).

**KF5 Ale Store** – A dozen kegs of mead, beer, and ale are stored in this large room for exclusive use of the feasters. A door opens up into the main hall, one enters from the servant's prep chamber, and another leads outside.

## DINAS EMRYS' KEEP

Engineered with Roman inspiration, this large drab grey keep was originally built by Gwrtheyrn Thenau after he fled the south of Prydain from the Saxon threat and unhappy countrymen. He brought with him the finest engineers and architects to make for him one of the finest of forts in this part of the island. The structure has two floors and a strong foundation (unless Queen Adyna's dragon stirs below the barrow). The fort is a crude imitation of a Roman villa, without the open air fountain or atrium.

## FLOOR 1

**(A) Entryway** – One large solid door with a plank of wood to bar it from the inside is the "proper" entrance into Dinas Emrys' keep. Six stone steps lead up to the door. Two guards stand on watch on either side of the doorway at all times. The chamber within is a small place to dry off, hang cloaks or capes, and await entrance into the rest of the keep. Two doors give access into the rest of the keep. There are two kill-holes on each wall for spearmen and archers if invaders try to force entry.

**(B) Court** – This is an old courtroom used by a hundred years of kings since Gwrtheyrn, built in a Roman style. Carpets and tattered old tapestries hang with candleabras throughout. A large fireplace stands against the far wall. Many sets of antlers and boar tusks are mounted on the walls. Sitting near the fireplace is an old worn granite throne, carved with Roman and Celtic designs. The three long tables are falling apart and have been unused for many years, since King Gwgon wishes to hold his gatherings in the feast-hall instead.

**(C) Kitchen** – This large, though decrepit, kitchen chamber is able to handle three cooks and their small army of servants. There are many ovens and furnaces here, and counters to cut and prep food. Many cooking utensils and knives are stored in here as well. During an event such as a feast, the kitchen is a busy and bustling place.

**(C1-3) Store** – These small rooms have the supplies needed for both the kitchen and for the myriad other needs of the king and queen. Extra tools, sewing goods, and other crafts for the servants are in these rooms.

**(C4-5) Larder** – These two rooms hold the food supplies for the whole keep. Seasoned meats, cheeses, spices, herbs, and many other ingredients are here for use by the servants and cooks.

**(D) Armory** – Guarded by four of Ysgawyn's personal warriors, this large room has many weapons and armor for use by the king's warriors and guards.

**(E) Dining Room** – For guests and visiting family, this Roman-looking old room has a long table and chairs to seat a dozen people. It is a luxurious room lit by candles lamps.

**(F) Gallery** – This corridor has the many aged remains of the line of Cunedda, from the previous century when Rome left, to Gwron and Gwgon's line. Banners, helmets, personal effects, etc., sit on tables and in niches in the walls to honor the Cunedda line.

**(G) Pantry** – Close to the kitchen, the pantry is where the royal family can find prepared foods any time of day or night. Breads, cheeses, and seasoned meats are available, as well as sauces and spices in jars.

**(H) Ysgawyn's Chamber** – This chamber is for exclusive use of the king's champion, which in this decade of King Gwgon's reign is the half-giant Ysgawyn Gawr. It is a simple room used to store his belongings. Items of worth that may be found here include: 500 gold coins spread across five bags, an Axe of Puncturing which can be used three times a day to take 1d6 from an enemy's constitution by draining blood with a successful hit, and a dragon-styled dagger. The *Axe of Puncturing* may be kept on Ysgawyn's person rather than unattended in his room.

**(I) Custodian's Chamber** – The royal custodian of the king and queen, Amhar ap Dryw ('Am-har ap Dree-oo'), lives here and manages the many servants and slaves in Dinas Emrys. He and his family occupy this chamber.

**(J) Cellar** – (Under area C) Down a few stairs is found a cellar where many kegs of ale, beer, and mead are kept. Many other supplies may stored here as well.

**(K 1-3) Holding Cells** – Bare stone cells with a thick iron and bronze door, these three small rooms are the unpleasant home of prisoners of the king. Damp, cramped, full of pests and smelling of waste, it is not an enjoyable place to be held. An average of six to eight guards is always present here.

(L) **Captain of the Guard's Room** – Eliadar ('El-lea-dar'), the Captain of the Guard, lives here. The room is simple and functions for Eliadar's needs. His possessions are few and he lives alone in this almost-bare chamber.

## FLOOR 2

(M) **Guard Room** – Guards stand watch at the top of the stairs, keeping a careful eye on who comes and goes from floor to floor. They will be aggressive and stop anyone they feel is acting suspiciously.

(N) **Queen's Servants** – The many attendants and personal aids to Queen Adyna reside here, communally. These clustered rooms are quaint and have distinctly feminine character. There is nothing worth taking in these rooms except for clothing, if needed for a disguise. A total of nine women live here, of all ages, and they daily tend to the queen's personal needs, whereas the other servants do not or are not allowed.

(O) **Marrog's Room** – The queen's private attendant lives here with his two minions, Garym and Gethin. The room is nicely arranged and decorated in a Roman style. The door is trapped with a deadly scythe and cord (CL: 4 to spot). It will do 4d10 damage to the fool that sets it off. In a chest at the foot of Marrog's bed are his treasured items, but the chest is trapped as well (CL: 3 to spot) with a poison dart (1d4 damage and Level III poison) which will fire from the door. Inside the chest Marrog has 1,000 gold, 1,200 silver, 6 gems, a Bag of Holding (Type I), an Amulet of Mighty Fists (+3 damage bonus if worn), a Cloak of Resistance (+1 Magic Resistance bonus), and a small bottle of Dust of Disappearance with two uses left in it which will make anything it covers invisible for 2d6 rounds.

(P) **Prince Gadwy's Room** – Plastered walls with faded Romanesque frescoes on the surface show Mediterranean scenes. Gadwy has a large, richly made bed, and closets for his wardrobe and belongings. To reflect his prominent warrior lifestyle he has extra swords, spears, and shields on the walls, along with three severed trophy heads in a chest by the window (Irish and Saxon heads). His candle-holders and other items in this room are worth 2d20 X 100 gold each.

(Q) **Prince Maelgad's Room** – This room is sloppy and poorly maintained by the erratic prince. He has a Roman style wardrobe filled with his nicely made clothes thrown in it without care. His bed is a mess and matches the rest of his room. Only one candle-holder sits on a stand by his bed to light the room. Whatever wealth he has is hidden elsewhere beyond Dinas Emrys, or on him at all time (*see statistics*).

(R) **Princess Gwerfyl's Room** – Meticulous and very feminine, Gwerfyl's room perfectly emulates a Roman royal lady's chamber, down to the last detail. Her clothing is well organized and rich, and hangs in a wall niche with a sliding door. Delicate glass oil lamps from the East hang

in the room. Great expense has gone into decorating Gwerfyl's room, but she does not possess any magical items nor weapons, aside from a small dagger (1d4 damage).

(S) **Royal Treasury** – Three of Ysgawyn's warriors keep watch on the locked door (CL: 6). Inside, stored in many chests, is 10,500 gold (coins, jewelry, etc.), 12,500 silver, and 100 gems. The king's weaponry is in here as well; most of it is typical in make, though rich old heirlooms and inherited items may be found. His prized spear, *Dant Angau* ("Death Tooth") is held here when he does not have it on him. The spear is an elven-made +4 Dragon bane weapon, and gleams golden with rubies. In racks are the many scrolls of property rights and other important documents.

(T) **Library** – This small room has a collection of many Latin and Greek texts and scrolls dating to the time of the Empire. One reading desk with a lamp sits in the middle of the room. The books are various historical works, biographies, and other assorted classical manuscripts.

(U) **King's Advisors' Rooms** – Like with the queen's attendants, the king's personal servants live in this small grouping of three rooms. They are close at hand when he needs them. All are elderly men, and they serve his every need for scholarly work and matters of state. Their rooms are plain and unexciting.

(V) **Master Bedroom** – "The King's Chamber," is a large, well-worn, and aged bed chamber, and is the most extravagant in the keep. Its former Roman style has fallen away in time, with cracked and powdery plaster and faded colors. A large wooden panel partition for changing clothes sits in one corner of the large chamber. Lamps hang from golden chains, and rich but moth-eaten tapestries are strung from the ceiling. The canopied bed is in the middle of the luxurious room. Two guards are always on watch outside the door in the corridor. *If the assassins dare to enter here before the attack, there are only three places to hide (behind the partition, under the bed, and in the walk-in wardrobe).* The king will be laid in his bed after the feast, drunken and barely conscious, extremely vulnerable to attack. There is a large shuttered window in this room which could serve use for an escape. The king and queen have an alarm cord by the bed that can be pulled if needed; it will ring bells below in the Captain of the Guard's and Ysgawyn's rooms, simultaneously.

(W) **Guest's Chamber** – A sumptuous Roman style room with a canopied bed, wardrobe, and desk. It can maintain a small family visiting Dinas Emrys.

(X) **Well** – Specially built by Gwrtheyrn to keep his private water from being poisoned, this well is in a room dedicated to supplying the royal family with fresh water. *This is another escape route out of Dinas Emrys unbeknownst to Marrog or the queen. The assassins would have to take a 40-foot dive into dark, cold waters, and swim out deep into the hillside. The dragon's lair is near here, unbeknownst to everyone. The waters here lead, via a small tunnel, out to Afon Glaslyn.*

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## ACT 3 - BLOODY AFTERMATH

### OPTION 1: IF THE KING IS SLAIN

This is the following aftermath that will occur if the king is assassinated and what will likely happen to the adventurers.

#### THE ALARM IS SOUNDED

Unless the assassins take longer to kill the king and bungle up the situation, it will take some time before the king's dead body is found by guards doing their periodic checks on him (every 30 minutes). Once they do find him, alarms will be sounded throughout the keep and fort, and guards will scramble in all directions. *The various events planned by the queen will begin to take effect.*

Ysgawyn and his warriors of the king's retinue will be foremost amongst the search parties in Dinas Emrys looking for the assassins. Matters will become complicated quickly as each of the royal guests in the hall will begin planning their actions to seize the opportunity, now that the king is slain and Penllyn is weak.

Servants will rush about the keep and every structure within the walls, gradually setting torches and candles alight by which to see, and to help the guards and warriors look for hidden people. It will become increasingly difficult to sneak and hide as Dinas Emrys goes into high alert after Gwgon's death.

Ysgawyn Gawr will be at the gates, personally checking everyone and denying anyone in or out until the situation is resolved. The rain and mud won't deter the large champion from his job; using the gates to leave will be impossible, thus making the queen and Marrog's words about doing so a lie.

There will be a 5-in-8 chance that the adventurers will encounter 1d10 guards anywhere in Dinas Emrys at this point. It won't take long until every square inch of the fort is populated by men and search dogs to find them.

#### QUEEN'S BETRAYAL COMPLETE

Queen Adyna does not merely have a "reward" waiting for them in a white horse's saddlebag in the stables; she also has a dozen of the king's elite guard hiding in the stable, waiting to catch them. The adventurers will see:

*In the dark stable you see a large white horse tied onto a post. Shadows are everywhere, and outside, beyond the clatter of the rain, are the shouts of search parties and their dogs in the main ward of the fort.*

*The horse's black leather saddlebags are full and there is a glimmer of something golden from within. It is calm in the stable; the other horses are slightly disturbed by your presence and the noise outside.*

*Opening a saddlebag you see golden goblets, old Roman coins, and many other treasures stuffed in the bag to the brim. This is the queen's reward for your bloody deed.*

*A horse snorts from the side, and then the shine of iron blades and*



mail armored men emerge from all sides around you; they are the king's elite guard. They come forward with anger and grimaces on their faces under their iron helms.

One man whistles and the nearest search party outside comes closer, their dogs barking and baying. Shouts erupt from group to group within seconds in the rainy night, as you have been caught and betrayed by the queen.

**ELITE KING'S GUARD X 12** (These chaotic neutral 6<sup>th</sup> level fighters' vital statistics are HD 6d10, AC 17, and HP 55. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with sword 2d4, piercing axe 1d8+1, and spear 1d8 damage.)

In minutes, 2d20 guards will arrive to surround the assassins and adventurers until Ysgawyn Gawr and his warriors finally come to try to take them alive, in shackles, to the queen in the court within the keep for their punishment.

If the adventurers want to fight their way out of this, it will be extremely difficult to do as more and more guards and warriors come to take them down, preferably alive, to be brought before the queen. This battle could end their lives and the adventure quickly if hasty decisions are made. Sometimes it is better to surrender to live longer!

If the adventurers smartly drop their weapons and give up the fight, however, Ysgawyn will pummel them each in the face and have them shackled, then dragged by force inside the keep to the court.

As they enter they will see Prince Gadwy donning his cloak and hood and leaving in a hurry (to go to the kingdom of Gwynedd following his mother's orders). Prince Maelgad and Princess Gwerfyl will be to either side of Queen Adyna's throne, sobbing.

*Queen Adyna sits quietly, with her eyes dark and red from sobbing. On either side stand Gwerfyl and Maelgad, both intensely sad and the prince angry; his grey eyes glare at you in rage.*

*The court is filled with warriors, advisors, and servants, all tired and wet from the rain and searching for you. You are pushed and dragged to the foot of her throne. Servants light the coals in the fireplace, and torches light the large old room as all eyes fall on you.*

*The queen says: Look at their clothing! They are with the Irish envoys from Lleyrn, no surprise. What do you have to say for yourselves? Are there any plots or conspiracies that you feel you need to air before we execute you?*

**NOTE:** Unless the players possess a very gifted skill of rhetoric and convince the assembly gathered, there is little that they can say or prove that puts Queen Adyna to blame for what happened. They will be caught red-handed, literally, by the guards in the act of this crime. If however, the players are able to show and prove the queen's hand in this, she will resort to calling on Aelfwig the Saxon to arrive in court, much to the shock of all, and summon her dragon to bring ruin to Dinas Emrys.

The queen continues:

*"Have them beaten, unarmed, and thrown into the cells for the night. The crime for killing a king is great, and so tomorrow you will be burned alive in the courtyard for all to see.*

*Send word to the envoys from Lleyrn that their plot was uncovered, and then send the heads of all but Cellach back to their lands as a warning of our intentions.*

*I have sent Prince Gadwy to Gwynedd to act as ambassador and let them know that our kingdom is still strong, and that the eldest son they greet is our next ruler until I can find another husband to take the place of Gwgon.*

*Take them away and I will see them burned alive tomorrow for their crime against our kingdom and people. These outsiders have no respect for natives it seems. Savages!"*

Ysgawyn and his warriors will take the adventurers away (subduing them if necessary by force) to the cells and throw them into the same room. Six warriors will be posted outside their cell at all times and they will not tolerate any misbehavior.

## THE IRISH SIEGE BEGINS

With chaos now in Dinas Emrys, Aelfwig will signal his Saxons to make their way from the woods beyond Trefemrys to Dinas Emrys, and begin the siege to claim it for King Icil of Mercia. Unknown to them, the Irish envoy Cellach will also signal for his supporters to do the same. He will fire a flaming arrow from his window to the western hills before the queen's men come for him.

The Irish will enter Dinas Emrys by the drainage tunnel out of the hill slowly, in a few hours. Thirty warriors will enter up through the pool route and then create chaos within the walls, followed by six wizards to help battle against the druids or royal wizards.

Cellach will be arrested, along with his retinue, and placed in a cell next to the adventurers. They will protest loudly at this outrage.

Fighting will break out in Dinas Emrys between the warriors of the queen and the Irish. Bloody battles will be everywhere, and the thatched roofs of buildings and other wooden structures will be set aflame by the Gaels. It will be in this time that escape from the cell will be the most likely.

If Cellach is befriended and freed, he and his men will assist the adventurers in getting them free from Dinas Emrys. Otherwise he will be set free by his own men and then he will fight his way to the queen and her children to exact revenge and try to gain control over Penllyn. If the adventurers stand in his way, he will be ruthless and have them cut down.

**IRISH WARRIORS X 30** (These chaotic neutral 3<sup>rd</sup> level barbarians' vital statistics are HD 3d12, AC 13, and HP 30. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by spear 1d6, broadsword 2d4, or by short composite bow 1d8 damage.)

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IRISH WIZARDS X 6 (*These chaotic neutral 4<sup>th</sup> level wizards' vital statistics are HD 4d4, AC 12, and HP 16. Their primary attributes are magical. They each have a dagger 1d4, and possess an average of 12 spells from the wizard's list.*)

The players can choose to aid the Irish against the evil queen if they wish, or to plan an escape from the hell that is now rampant in Dinas Emrys. If they choose to fight against the queen with the Irish, it will be a doomed situation, for between these factors they are cursed:

- 1 Ysgawyn and his warriors.
- 2 Queen Adyna's magic.
- 3 Outnumbered by the guards.
- 4 The confining corridors of the keep.

By the end of this first part of the long night, the queen's army in the fort is still standing, though less in number (perhaps as low as 50 men, including Ysgawyn and his warriors). Unfortunately others at court will also have their plans (See 'Cast of Characters').

The queen will execute all of the envoys from Lleyn by having them beheaded and placing their heads on spikes on the walls as a warning to others.

The CK can play the extra elements as he or she sees fit in the story, if ever. Timing, sometimes, is crucial in setting the stage for these unexpected situations and can off-put the players' own plans.

## THE SAXON SIEGE STARTS

Two hundred Saxon warriors have been encamped and hidden not far away from Dinas Emrys for a time, waiting on word from their prince Aelfwig Icilson. Due to the queen's corruption and bribes, she has managed to pay off her kingdom's scouts and guards who have seen them. Aelfwig assured her that these warriors are a "gift" to aid her if matters become out of control once the king is slain. In reality, they sent by King Icil to rid any resistance in Penllyn and gain dominance over the kingdom.

Half of the Saxon warriors will march up the road through the village of Trefemrys to the gates, armed with a battering ram and ladders to take Dinas Emrys. They will fire flaming arrows and aggressively begin the attack while the second half will go around to the western side of the fort and try to breach the walls.

While the siege begins, what is left of the queen's forces will defend Dinas Emrys. Maelgad will lead them against the Saxons, unaware of his mother's involvement. *No one in Dinas Emrys will be able to explain how the Saxons suddenly appeared and at the gates.*

The players will be trapped in Dinas Emrys now while the Saxons attack. The village will be plundered and burned by the warriors to draw the warriors out from the gates.

For every round (or so) the players stand outside amidst the siege, they risk a chance of getting hit by arrows sent by the Saxons. There is a 3-in-6 chance of getting hit by 1d10 arrows, each doing 1d8+4 damage.

During the Saxon siege, Aelfwig will gain control of the throne room and bar the way from others as he gains control over Penllyn; he will have princess Gwerfyl hostage and shackled by his side as his warriors outside try to gain ground in the siege.

The Saxons will have two trolls in their army, and use them to try to break the gates. The overwhelmed forces of Dinas Emrys will not be able to resist this siege for long.

The players will have only a few options left to them, considering what is available:

- 1 Escape Dinas Emrys during the chaos by one of the hidden means (via the well on second floor of keep, the drainage of Gwrtheyrn's Pool, etc.) and be on their way.
- 2 Join the queen, unfortunately, to stop their common foes the Saxons, and be instrumental in stopping the siege and driving away the invaders, thereby becoming heroes in the eyes of the people of Penllyn in the process.
- 3 Ask to join the Saxons and help them to gain entrance of Dinas Emrys (kill off the gatekeepers and defenses, etc.).
- 4 Rescue Princess Gwerfyl from Aelfwig and find a way to leverage her against both the Queen Adyna and Prince Aelfwig.

It will take the Saxons 1d4 hours to gradually win the siege of Dinas Emrys. In this time the adventurers can figure out what they plan to do, given the options.

**AELFWIG** (*He is a chaotic evil 6<sup>th</sup> level barbarian with vital statistics of HD 6d12, AC 19, and HP 78. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a +3 broadsword (2d4), and bearded axe (3d4).*)

**SAXON WARRIORS X 200** (*These chaotic evil 4<sup>th</sup> level barbarians' vital statistics are HD 4d12, AC 14, and HP 40. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with spear (1d6), battle-axe (1d8), Throwing Axe (1d6), broadsword (2d4) and dagger (1d4).*)

**TROLLS X 2** (*These chaotic evil creatures' vital statistics are HD 6d8, AC 16, and HP 45. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by two claws (1d4), bite (2d6) and battle-axes (1d8). They have regeneration 2, twilight vision, rend, and darkvision (60 feet) abilities.*)

The Queen will call upon her dragon to end this siege if need be, but this also depends on what the adventurers choose to do in this bloody chaos. If the siege is not lifted nor the Saxons driven away somehow, she will resort to this and claim (for propaganda) that "the Red Dragon of the Britons arose to defend its peoples against the people of the White Dragon". If matters do come to a head and the CK wishes to bring forth her dragon, go to the next section in this act.

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If Aelfwig and his Saxons win the siege, they will quickly occupy the fort and place the queen's warriors into cells, and prepare to execute their leaders (Maelgad, Ysgawyn and Eliadar) soon unless they are stopped or delayed. Aelfwig will claim Penllyn in the name of Mercia and King Icil.

Aelfwig will begin the process of Anglicizing Penllyn in earnest by forcing the people to accept new language, customs, and laws, and outlawing the native. He will keep the princess for his own wife and use Queen Adyna (if she isn't dead by now) as ransom to her father Gralon.

Because it is late at night and during rainy weather in the late summer/early fall, few will come to Dinas Emrys' aid so soon. It will take a few days before the tribes can assemble and allies can muster forces to take Penllyn from Aelfwig's men. The player characters must figure out where they stand in this.

## OPTION 2: IF THE KING IS SAVED

### NOT SLAYING KING GWGON

If the adventurers find that the king is a good man and not worth the nightmare of having him slain to earn their reward by the shady queen, the entire scenario will change.

How they wish to save or inform King Gwgon is up to them of course, or they may even take a more silent route and not reveal it to him but find a way to uncover Queen Adyna's plot against him. This can go many different ways depending on how they interact with the NPCs during the feast: as contacts, acquaintances, or enemies.

Listed are several possible ways that the adventurers can handle this:

- 1 Confess to the king or find his advisors or druids and tell them the whole story and reveal why they are at Dinas Emrys.
- 2 Place the queen in a position that she forces her hand and reveals her intentions, perhaps in the feast among her own children and the king's supporters.
- 3 Stall slaying the king and hide in the keep until he awakes and then go to court and confess the entire situation while the queen is present.

Not killing the king, the whole basis for the module, is not a profane idea, but it does create a complicated new angle to everything.

Queen Adyna will hire other assassins to kill the king if the players do not, and to hunt the adventuring party down to have them killed for betraying her. She will use magic, monsters, and assassins against them unrelentingly, outlawing them throughout the kingdom of Penllyn as traitors and enemies of the throne.

*Unless the queen is stopped, she will be a thorn in the adventuring party's side from game to game in some way. She will not rest until they are dead or completely beyond Penllyn's borders.*

NOTE: If the princes or princess are told about what their mother is doing they will not believe it. Only Gadwy is closest to being convinced of the three children.

### ADYNA'S DRAGON

Resting deep under Gwrtheyrn's Pool is a young adult Red Dragon named *Uchdryd Goch* ('Uch-drid Go-ch' - "Red Uch-dryd"). In the centuries between when the two dragons were buried here by the Fey kings Llefyls and Lludd and then uncovered by the young Myrddin Emrys, they bred.

The seven eggs resulting from the mating were removed, save one, and this was kept tucked away in a rocky niche for many more decades until Adyna one day discovered strange growls and scratches from under the stone pool. This was early in their reign as king and queen of Penllyn, and no one else noticed.

Adyna took the hatchling and raised it, feeding it peasants, criminals, livestock, and whatever else she could find to keep it healthy. After 20 years of her care, Uchdryd Goch was large enough, and then with magic she placed it into hibernation.

Slaves secretly dug out a large cavern below the pool, deep inside the hill where Dinas Emrys sits, for the dragon to comfortably rest. After they were done, she fed them to her pet dragon to dispose of witnesses.

To release the dragon, Queen Adyna simply has to toss her pinky ring (gold with an emerald) into the pool's waters. She can do this quickly from the upper floor of the keep if needed, such as being taken captive. *Only one druid, Duach, knows of this ring; he helped her make it to control the dragon.*

This is the process by which Adyna's dragon will come awake during game play:

- 1 It will take 1d10+2 minutes for the dragon to awaken.
- 2 The ground will shake and tremor wildly, agitating the pool, causing waves and splashing.
- 3 Cracks will split from the epicenter of the pool outwards in all directions in the courtyard, making the animals panic and people scream.
- 4 As it nears time for Uchdryd Goch to be free, deep thunderous roars will rattle Dinas Emrys. Smoke and steam will issue forth from the cracks around Gwrtheyrn's Pool.
- 5 Explosions of earth, stone, and boiling water will shower down around the pool in all directions, putting a -3 to all action rolls.
- 6 Eventually Uchdryd Goch will fly free and begin terrorizing everyone present. It will sense out Adyna and seek to rescue her from her captors, killing them in the process.

The adventurers will witness this unfold as Uchdryd Goch crawls forth from the ground:

*Fiery explosions fly upwards from around the boiling and quaking pool, followed by black smoke and hissing steam. Earth and stones*

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shower down from the sky, propelled out of the giant sinkhole in the courtyard of Dinas Emrys.

*A deafening and thunderous roar erupts from the hellish pit as a large red-scaled, horned dragon crawls out by its bat-winged hands. Sizzling fire spits from its toothy mouth and a sentient rage rumbles from its gut.*

*Terror strikes the people around it as they scream and flee. Many warriors try to bravely charge forward with their weapons, each hoping vainly to slay the beast, but they are either crushed under taloned feet, swept aside by the spiked tail, or worse, immolated alive by the dragon's flames.*

*The arrival of the beast brightens up the dark night for miles around. Its roars echo across the hills and valleys near Dinas Emrys. A fiery doom has come to Penllyn and must be stopped before it is too late!*

King Gwgon possesses a spear for slaying dragons in his private treasury on the second floor of the keep. This would help in the battle against an angry and protective dragon where little else can, except teamwork and fortune.

Once the dragon is free it will cause the typically-associated horror one expects from a dragon attack. If it finds the queen dead, the dragon will go berserk and be even more terrifying.

### **UCHDRYD GOCH, THE QUEEN'S DRAGON**

*UCHDRYD GOCH The chaotic evil dragon's vital statistics are HD 14d12, AC 25, and HP 168. His primary attributes are magical. He attacks with two claws (1d8), wing (1d10), tail (1d10) and bite (4d10) damage. The dragon has 3<sup>rd</sup> level magic abilities in the wizard list of spells to use; three 1<sup>st</sup> level, two 2<sup>nd</sup> level and one 3<sup>rd</sup> level spell. Its abilities are breath weapon (3d10 damage), spell-like abilities, and immunity to fire (full).*

The dragon has no treasure hoard since it had no chance to gain any in its time in hibernation. In its cavern lie the thousands of bones from the many animals and humans that were fed to it since its hatching 30 years ago.

Uchdryd Goch will only fly away from Dinas Emrys if the queen is safe and tells it to do so (for some reason). Otherwise it will remain and slaughter every last man, woman, and child present. The dragon will do what it can to protect the queen if she still remains alive after everything in the module thus far.

The CK can give the dragon damage by attrition from the arrow, spears, and general attacks by either the king's men, Irish, and/or Saxons around it. Each round these other attacks can cause extra damage to Uchdryd Goch, ranging from 1d12 to 1d20 per round, for example.

Once the dragon is slain (and if the queen is still alive), she will have nothing left in her favor to use against her enemies. She would be the last obstacle the adventurers would have left to contend with, but her magic is powerful.

### **THE QUEEN'S NEW ASSASSINS**

If the assassins have refused to kill the king, Queen Adyna will send out word for more help. Marrog and his two underlings will hire any rough and morally lacking blade they can find in Penllyn.

Within a day, she will have the situation set up again; another night of feasting will provide the new assassins a chance to slay him. She will also send for slayers to hunt the adventurers down.

By chance, if the adventurers are somehow able to remain in Dinas Emrys, and avoid the queen's wrath, they can try to catch the new assassins in the act and thwart the queen's plans. The plan will be the same: to intoxicate the king and place him in his chambers where the murderers can kill him outright. (If the previous attempt is made known to the king, he will triple the guards around him.)

### **THE NEW ASSASSINS OF ADYNA**

#### **BUDOC THE ACIDIC ONE**

From the land of Llydaw (Brittany), Budoc ('Boo-dock') is a stocky man, hairy and dark with a fondness for poisonous weapons (Poison level III). He has no morals and no problem killing any target that he is given, if the pay or benefits are good.

Budoc is the captain to a band of 15 other mercenaries and cut-throats that all will serve the queen. He is a tough man, able to handle more than most, and his mood is always a strange mix between hedonistic and brooding.

He will bully Marrog around and make sure that there is work for bloodletting and pay for doing it. He has enough personal honor to not try to exploit the royal family and plunder their treasury, but if chaos breaks out in Dinas Emrys he will send his men to do so, and he will quickly overwhelm any other claimants and plotters to the throne, being always a step ahead.

Budoc will have Ysgawyn murdered if and when matters fall into pieces after the king's death, after taking over as the queen's champion, assuming that Aelfwig's own warriors do not do so first if given a chance.

*BUDOC THE ACIDIC ONE (He is a chaotic evil 6<sup>th</sup> level barbarian with vital statistics of HD 6d12, AC 19, and HP 72. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a +4 Bearded Axe (3d4) and +2 Long Spear (1d8). He has a Brooch of Shielding which absorbs Magic Missiles up to 101 points of damage, a Ram Ring identified by the ram symbol on the ring, with 50 charges: one charge does 1d6 damage, two does 2d6, three does 3d6, and so on. It can shatter open doors at a strength of 18 with one charge, two charges at a strength 20, and three charges equal to strength 22.)*

#### **TORETH ANNEDWYDD**

('Tor-eth An-ed-oo-eeth')

Toreth is a stark and bleak-minded rogue from one of the lost eastern kingdoms. Toreth is a cut-throat to the highest degree

with no sense of morals; only the grim and dirty deed is in mind at all times.

She is Budoc's second in command and sometimes lover, but she is a meaner leader than even Budoc. She does not tolerate cowardice or inability to do one's work and will quickly "demote" one of the members of their group by killing him.

Toreth is allegedly bitter and foul tempered because she lost her family and peoples to the Saxons in the east of Prydain not long ago. She does not like the mention of those lands or its new peoples and hates the Saxons with an almost crazed fanaticism. More often she has to be restrained by Budoc or kept away from Saxons, if they are near and she cannot harm them due to politics.

She is wanted by many of the border kingdoms nearest to the lost lands of Lloigyr for her thieving, murdering, and other illustrious actions. Although she is a Briton, she doesn't have any qualms with treating her people the same.

**TORETH "THE UNHAPPY"** *(She is a chaotic evil 5<sup>th</sup> level rogue. Her vital statistics are HD 5d6, AC 19, and HP 30. Her primary attributes are physical. She attacks by dagger (1d4), spear (1d6), and long bow (1d6) damage. She has Boots of Teleportation which allow the user to teleport to any location three times a day, Dust of Illusion which acts as the Alter Self spell on those upon which it is sprinkled for 2 hours at a time, and Gloves of Dexterity (+4).*

## SITHNY THE GOURGY

Sithny ('Sith-nee') is a rogue, cursed with lycanthropy. He comes from the kingdom of Dewnans in the south and lives a troublesome life. His curse derives from the revenge of a wizard from whom he once stole. Now he exists to further emphasize his curse and take advantage of it.

Sithny is a very hairy young man and eats raw meat often to satisfy his curse. His company is often very hard to endure because of his animal-like and reactive nature; he has long since lost his human instincts.

As a member of Budoc's group, Sithny is a cut-throat more than a thief owing to his lack of self-control. Sithny is a danger because of his lycanthropy and only Toreth can keep him under control. *It would be left to him to slay King Gwgon when the time comes, and he will do so transformed as a werewolf.*

**SITHNY "THE DOG MAN"** *(He is a chaotic evil 4<sup>th</sup> level rogue. His vital statistics are HD 8d6, AC 16, and HP 48. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks by bite (2d4), dagger (1d4) and battle-axe (1d8). He has the curse of lycanthropy, wolf empathy, trip, alternate form, twilight vision, protect, and regeneration 2.)*

## CAERWYN DDU

('Cae-ar-win Thee')

"Black" Caerwyn is a typical rogue. He dons black from head to toe and lives to benefit himself at others' expense along the way. He is wanted by nearly every one of the great kings and

lords of the Britons for his misdeeds, from the far north to the southern kingdoms.

Caerwyn has no friends, not even the others in his band of rogues and assassins, but he works with them to help his own goals. In his few years with Budoc and his band, Caerwyn is the swiftest and most able of the thieves and is used to help the rest gain access to difficult places and impenetrable forts; this is his function in the group.

Like many plunderers and raiders, he stores his stolen goods in caches around the country, hidden in clever spots (in tree hollows deep in groves, under certain stones, etc.). Caerwyn is not a murderer by nature, and will refuse doing so, saving that task for the rest of the band of rogues.

**CAERWYN DDU** *(He is a 5<sup>th</sup> level chaotic neutral rogue. His vital statistics are HD 5d6, AC 16, and HP 30. His primary attributes are physical. He uses a dagger (1d4) with level 2 poison to attack, preferably. He has a Ring of the Chameleon which adds +10 to hide in surroundings when worn, and a Necklace of Adaption which makes the wearer immune to Cloudkill and Stinking Cloud spells and other harmful air, vacuum and underwater settings.*

The other 11 rogues in the band, all function as minor pick-pockets, spies, and cut-throats when needed. They will swarm their targets to take them down if so ordered, but normally they will be in disguise and linger around their four leaders.

**BUDOC'S ROGUES X 11** *(These chaotic neutral 4<sup>th</sup> level rogues' vital statistics are HD 4d6, AC 15, and HP 24. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with dagger (1d4), short sword (1d6), short composite bow (1d8), and sling (1d4). They have back attack, cant, climb, decipher script, hide, listen, move silently, open lock, pick pockets, traps, and sneak attack abilities.)*

## A THIRD (UNFORESEEN) OPTION

- 1 There is a chance that a combination of events may transpire that will, together, make for a very unusual outcome or aftermath. This would be if King Gwgon is assassinated as planned by the queen, but:
- 2 Queen Adyna is dead somewhere along the way and unable to summon her dragon Uchdryd Goch to stop the Saxon advance into Penllyn.
- 3 The Saxons are now invading the kingdom with few to stop them for a time until allies of Penllyn come to save it.
- 4 With Aelfwig and his Saxons now at Dinas Emrys and word sent to Mercia to his father the King Icil to send a larger army to completely occupy the region, it will take a week or two before a decent sized army is mustered (800 to 1,000+) and on its way into Penllyn.

In the meantime, the player characters can choose to liberate the kingdom if they feel some allegiance to Gwgon's legacy in some way. Considering the previous modules in the series, by this time the adventurers *should* be heroes in Penllyn for their deeds.

## 22 CASTLES & CRUSADES



Aelfwig will have his warrior bands roving the countryside, trying to stomp out any clear signs of rebellion or protest. They will do this by making bloody examples of any who resist.

The village of Trefemrys will be restored enough to satisfy the needs of the warriors. The small tavern will be their hangout from day to night as they await the arrival of King Icil's forces. The village will be renamed Aelfwigton ("Aelfwig's Town") by the Saxons.

A Dark Age equivalent to a police state will be put into effect by Prince Aelfwig, and simple travelers in the region will be checked and harassed by his men. The druids of Penllyn will leave to the surrounding kingdoms and seek to build a defense by encouraging the nobles and warlords to attack.

*The only defense of Penllyn left is in the hands of the tribes. These hardened peoples living around the mountains and in the hills will join with the adventurers if they are presented with a decent proposal.*

## DUACH THE QUEEN'S DRUID

The queen had the assistance of the old wizened druid Duach ('Dee-ach'), a cousin to Brathach, the caretaker to the Grove of the Wizards. Duach aided her in her magic and the learning required while mastering her ability. He also helped her find her heritage of Faery blood and taught her to honor it.

Unfortunately, Duach also angered her by interfering in her family's lives due to visions of their downfall, a downfall that led to the events which have now occurred. Because of this, she threatened Duach to leave and never be seen again, an action unheard of due to the sanctity of druids.

Duach left the region immediately, staying close to Dinas Emrys, quietly watching the doings of the royal family from afar. Prior to the hiring of the adventurers, Queen Adyna's magical abilities surpassed Duach's own and she shielded her family from his prying "eyes".

Considering the chain of events, if it leads to this option, Duach will search out the adventurers and tell them about the queen's dragon ring so they can find it and summon Uchdryd Goch from the pool. It is the CK's decision as to how long it takes before Duach finds them, *and* as to the fate of the queen and her ring.

## BUDOC'S ROGUES

Another possibility in this scenario is the adventurers meeting up with Budoc and his rogues in a less threatening environment, since the queen will be unable to hire them. The two groups could join forces and use their skills and abilities to oppose Prince Aelfwig.

It would take considerable skill of conversation and even bribes to have Budoc and his rogues join them, if they have any level of decency, morality, or honor at all.

If the player characters did their work well in this, they should have these means in their favor to assist in the opposition to Aelfwig and his small army:

- 1 Tribal support. They might gain one-to-three tribes' aid with warriors (200+ each tribe).
- 2 Duach's knowledge of the queen's ring to summon the dragon. An alliance with the surrounding kingdoms (except maybe Lleyn) and a request to send armies into Penllyn (it would take two to three days before any arrived, but each would bring an average of 1,200 warriors to siege Dinas Emrys).
- 3 Budoc's Rogues to help get into the fortress to target the Saxon prince and/or find the queen's ring.
- 4 Join with one or both of the princes, Gadwy and/or Maelgad, to save their kingdom.

The CK might have a lot on his hands managing this part of the module, since it involves many factors, but the end effect and epic nature of the story will be worth it when it concludes. No amount of hard work is too much, if the gaming experience is well-rewarded by a fun time and good memories.

## A DARK SEASON LOOMS

In the midst of this chaos in Penllyn, one of the adventurers is visited by a messenger sent by a family member in the north. The message is given to them unopened in a scroll canister and reads:

*"I give this message to you on behalf of our family. We have the seasonal fall celebrations coming in a couple of weeks and need you with us. Dark matters have come as of late; before the Three Nights of Goblin-Night, your skills would help us greatly.*

*By the time you reach the realm of Gododdin more untold terrible events will have transpired. We await you and hope the gods bless your travel here."*

The messenger will ride on without a word; it is clear that he has ridden for weeks. He and his horse are ragged and worn out.

The CK can choose to alter how this message gets to whichever player character as he sees fit. However this happens, it will set the stage for the next module in the series, *Goblin Night*.

From here the adventurers will need to find a way to make the long journey of hundreds of miles to the north, past the Wall, into the region ruled by the Gwyr Y Gogledd (Goo-eer ay Gog-leth') or the "Men of the North".

# DINAS EMRYS

1 SQUARE = 10'





# CASTLES<sup>®</sup> CRUSADES

## BEYOND THE COMFORTS HOME LIE WORLDS OF EPIC ADVENTURE

Queen Adyna is unhappy. Her King is not her lover and her lover is not the King and such accidents of fate often need a guiding hand. The goodly King Gwgon ap Gwron has ruled the realm for many years but he has not ruled his wife and it is her design to bring him low and the character's task to do it.

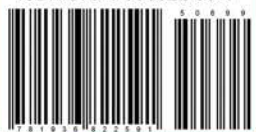
In this complex adventure of court espionage and skullduggery, the adventurers must slay a king. To do so is no mean feat, for they must track him, watch him, weaver their way through the forest of court intrigue to unseat him and even then it is best to be wary. For hired assassins are often loose ends that themselves need tied. To Kill a King is an adventure of betrayal and backstabbing; a story steeped in intrigue and regicide!

Those noble born and good of heart may shy from the task at hand for a certain, there will be blood tonight!

Set in a semi-historical mythical Post-Roman Britain, in the North of Wales in the little kingdom of Penllyn ('Pen-thlin') and has the strong element of the faery-folk and druidic magic about it. This module can be easily placed in the Airhde world setting or any other with a change of names and places and taken out of its historical and geographical settings and refitted for one of pure fantasy.



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FOR 2-5 CHARACTERS WITH  
A CHALLENGE LEVEL OF 3-5.  
OVERLAND, CASTLE.

