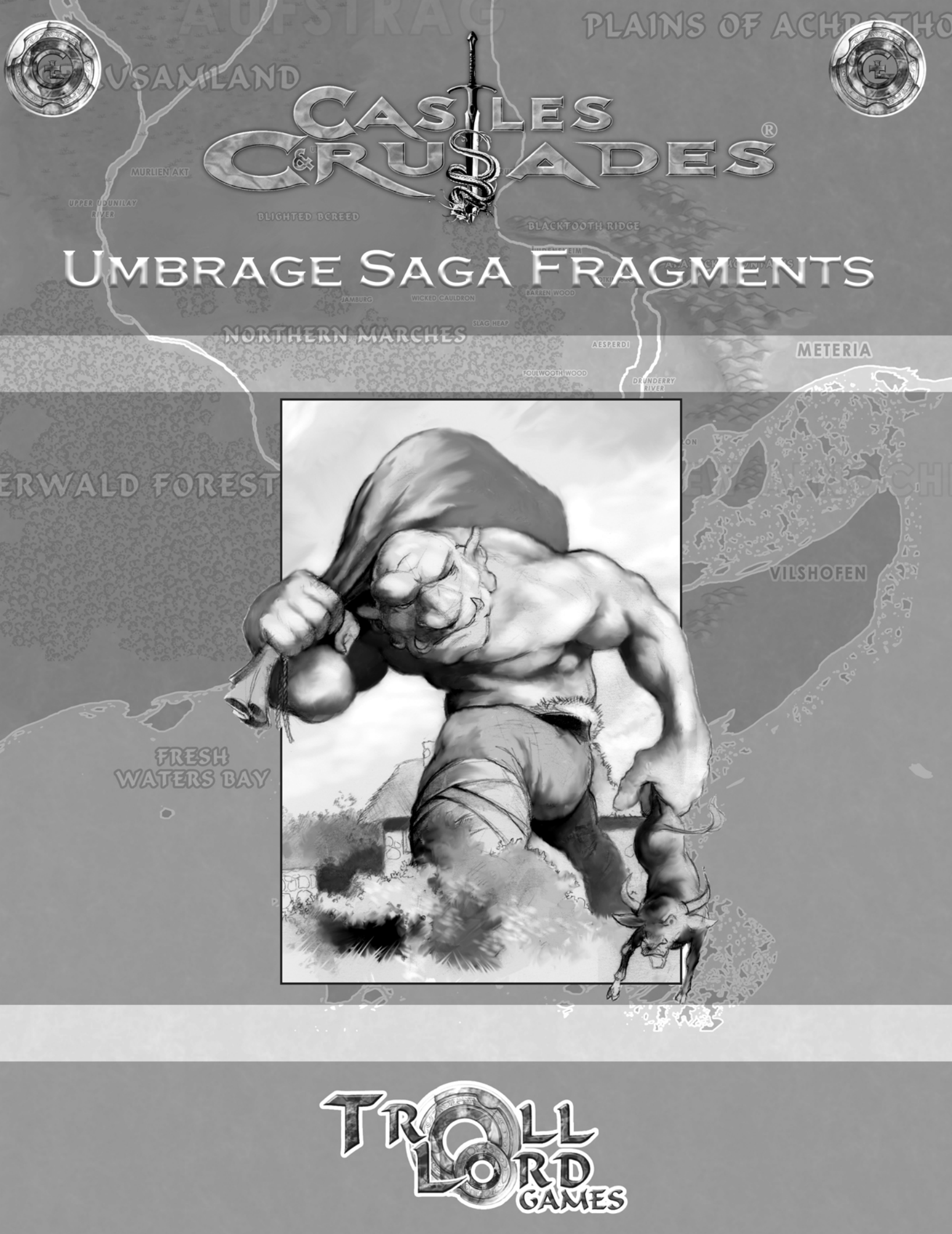




CASILES & CRUSADES[®]



UMBRAGE SAGA FRAGMENTS



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Printed in the United States of America

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This series of adventures are small one shot encounters that take place in and around the Blacktooth Ridge. Play separately or with other C&C adventures.



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THE FRAGMENTS

The encounters presented in this work were originally part of the A series modules, but were removed due to space requirements. We now offer them to you for use in further adventures along the Blacktooth Ridge and the Hreusen River area. These encounters can also be used independently of *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge* and placed in a campaign setting of your choice. They have been included as originally placed in the *Umbrage Saga Box* set now available from Troll Lord Games.

The level ranges on the encounters range from low to high. Simple adjustments in the number of creatures encountered, hit dice, hit points and armor class should suffice to make these encounters more or less challenging.

Note if playing on the Blacktooth Ridge: few of these items are specifically placed. They are designed to be dropped in to play by the Castle Keeper when and where needed.

THE INENG TREE

The Ineng Tree is the single oldest creature living upon the Blacktooth Ridge; in fact, it might be the oldest creature in the whole region. Ineng was born into the order of Sentients, trees who mastered the Languages of Creation, those first creations of the All Father. But Ineng, like many of his kind, grew mistrustful of the All Father and his kindred and sought to follow his own path. He took a new shape, one that mimicked that of the All Father, but imperfectly, to become what later men called a Troll. It traveled the world as a troll for countless eons, but as with all old trolls, Ineng eventually stopped traveling. And eventually he rooted to the ground, bound to the earth by the weight of his life's evil deeds.

He rooted upon a high, barren ridge, over looking the Hreusen River, what later men called the Blacktooth Ridge. He overlooks a bend in the river, watching with his sightless eyes the ever moving flow below him.

In a wide bend of the Hreusen River, where the Blacktooth Ridge tumbles off to the north, dominated by layers of broken slate and rock stands an ancient tree, gnarled and weathered. This ancient thing seems as much a part of the landscape as the stone. It is huge, 15 odd feet in diameter, but not so tall, only 40 feet or so. Perhaps once its branches stretched further, but now it stands largely dead to the world, a short squat thing reminiscent of the days of old with only a few branches here and there. There is a vertical split in the tree, barely discernable, as if the tree had some old wound that closed in folds its bark.

The ground around it is rocky, covered in light vegetation and small scrub oaks. Some fields of grasses grow along the rocky edges and hosts of wild flowers grow everywhere. A single trail crosses in front of the tree, following the ridge.

At the foot of the tree, where the split enters the ground, water bubbles up. It is magical water that many others have learned possesses healing qualities. There were flowers too, small violet flowers that grow here,

mostly in the late spring and early summer. They push up through the snow and spread their petals, soaking in the sunlight.

The water is magical. If someone drinks the water they first realize how cool and reviving it is. They feel refreshed, but also a little sleepy. They must make a successful intelligence (CL 5) save or fall under the effects of a powerful sleep spell. Regardless of whether they fall asleep they heal 1d8 hit points of damage. Every drink of the water heals 1d8 but brings the danger of falling asleep. Each drink adds 2 to the challenge level, so the 2nd drink is CL 7; the third drink is CL 9 and so forth.

Anyone who falls asleep cannot be woken short of a *remove curse* spell and they stay asleep for double as many hours as hit points they healed. For example if they heal 4 hit points and fall asleep, they sleep for 8 hours. Anyone who sleeps at the foot of the Ineng Tree dreams the dreams of his memory. Use the story above or consult the expanded in the *Crusader Issue* 8–12, or invent your own. Remember to note that the Ineng tree was a troll and is 10s of thousands of years old.



OTTER TALK

Upon the banks of the Hreusen River there dwells an ancient and benevolent creature. It is a fey who long ago took the form of a giant otter. He dwelt in the lands of the Hreusen, hunting its bountiful currents even before the coming of the Dark. In those days, the elves and other fey of the Avishean Ridge paid him homage and called upon him when they needed intimate



BUGBEARS x 3 (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 17, 15, 13, AC 17. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by weapon and do the appropriate weapon damage. They have darkvision and are very able hunters and trackers.)

The greater of the bugbears wears a breast plate and carries a long glaive. He also has a Morningstar that he generally keeps hanging on a spike on his mail. He keeps the group's treasure in a bag inside his mail. The treasure consists of a +1 ring of protection, 65gp and a bracelet worth 25gp. The two remaining bugbears carry axes.

Assuming the characters rescue the otter they have made a very good friend. He will help them whenever he can. He knows all the water ways quite well and offers them a safe abode in his home. For stat purposes Boris has the spell-like abilities of a pixie.

knowledge of the River. The elves named him Beuren, but the dwarves and gnomes called him Tarouth, but the men called him simply Boris. It is that name he favored above all else for Boris saw men as the most noble of the creatures of the world for though their flaws were many, they never ceased striving to overcome them.

Boris the otter lives where Wizing Creek spills into the Hruesen River. There he has long had his residence, a series of tunnels and rooms. Some are much as one would expect of a giant otter, wet and muddy, but others he fashioned for visitors, plushy and comfortable. There are innumerable entrances to his home. He has hidden them well and designed them so that no one can easily surprise the otter and if they do, he can escape.

Boris is a major problem for Red Cap, Krugle and all the evil denizens of the river basin. He routinely interrupts their raids, by capsizing their boats and drowning the raiders. They despise him and have for a long while attempted to capture or kill him.

Unbeknownst to Red Cap, Boris has landed himself in a great deal of trouble.

Not long ago a small band of bugbears entered the area. Bugbears are not normally native to these regions, but upon hearing of the bounty of food and wealth that is available they took the long journey from the eastern steppes, crossed the Arratok Mountains and arrived in the river's valley. They have hunted for a few days but recently stumbled upon Boris' track. Bugbears are clever hunters and they lay a trap for the otter, thinking only that he would provide enough food for a few days. They lay and trap water trap and managed to snare Boris. Only then did they discover that it was more than an otter. They now have him pinned, debating what to do with him.

The bugbears are camped on the southern bank of the river (Castle Keeper's should feel free to move the encampment anywhere convenient on the river in order to allow the characters to stumble upon them). They have made little attempt to conceal themselves. A camp fire burns freely, sending black smoke up into the air and the area stinks of wet animal. The bugbears are filthy beasts. They are keeping the otter tied and blindfolded, hanging from a tree. The lead bugbear is constantly talking to the creature, trying to learn his secrets and if he has any treasure. The otter returns the conversation but tells him very little.

THE HOUSE THAT MEG BUILT

South, deep in the Barren Wood, along an unnamed creek that meanders through an equally unknown meadow stand the remnants of an old house. Shoddily built, the house has not stood the test of time. Its roof is gone and the walls little more than a row of planks sticking haphazardly from the ground. The whole meadow is dark and cobwebs hang from the surrounding trees and stretch across the ground. The grasses of the meadow have not grown in some time and the area looks more like a beaten down clearing.

A horrible stench hangs over the meadow and shadows pervade it all. The trees are old, the barks blackened with soot and the leaves, brown and clinging on more by the webs hanging from the trees than anything else. At the mouth of the only path that leads into the Meadow, where the creek enters it, hangs a long cylinder of web. It rocks gently in the breeze. Upon closer examination an old, gnarled, petrified hand protrudes from the web.

This is the house that Meg built.

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Meg. Meg was born into a farmer's family that dwelt upon the edge of the Barren Wood. They lived in the comforting shade of the Baron of Botkinburg, enjoying that Lord's protection. But Meg was different than most children, for she was mean, cruel, petty and vicious. She loved to tease her siblings and revel in the torment of animals. At an early age she displayed unusual abilities, able to cast petty spells and illusions. She used these abilities to ever greater mischief so that by her teenage years young Meg had become a living terror to her family, other farmers, and the farm's animals.

Meg's father was a stern man, not governed by the superstitions of many folk that dwelt in Botkinburg and threatened Meg with banishment if she failed to mend her ways. Many said it was the fey that made Meg touched and her mother made excuses for her. But Meg's father was unflappable and he said unto her: "Continue this behavior and you shall live out your days in the dark of the Barren Wood!"

Meg, tiring of her father's idle threats enchanted her father's work boots so that they gave her father boils whenever he wore them. In a rage he gathered up her few belongings, bound her and tossed

her over the back of his best mule. For four days and nights he traveled into the wood, cutting no trail but meandering through glen and dale, down animal tracks and across streams and creeks until at last he came to a lonesome meadow where a slow moving creek wandered through. Setting her and her satchel upon the ground he cut her bonds and spoke to her, saying only, "Meg. You're an evil child and you'll make a worse woman. You mean nothing but harm to those around you so I give you to the forest where the harm you do will pass unnoticed by the long years."

With that he turned and left her, never looking back.

For a great while Meg wept; pulling at her hair, wailing and howling to the deepening dusk. Eventually she collapsed in a pitiful heap and lay thus for many long days and nights. She lay that way until a young hobgoblin came across her. So wretched was her condition that he took her for one of his own. But no sooner than he fed her did he realize that she was a human and then thoughts of eating her overcame him. But Meg, having recovered her strength, saw through the hobgoblin and bewitched him, taking him as her spouse.

And so, Meg dwelt in the forest with her hobgoblin husband for many years. Both of them grew more wretched and evil with each passing year and they haunted the lands around, terrorizing any and all creatures that came into their domain.

Meg bore 5 horrid sons to her hobgoblin husband before she slew and ate him. They were not human, nor goblin, but evil ettercaps that followed her everywhere and did as she bid them to. They built her a house of horrors there in the meadow and along the banks of the creek; mostly of spider webs that they spun themselves. Eventually Meg died and the ettercaps bound her in web and hung her from one of the trees on the edge of the clearing where they go to pay her homage and keen over her. Since those days two of the ettercaps have left, but 3 still remain in the house of their mother.



The ettercaps live in and about the meadow. They dwell in the trees mostly, living out their miserable lives in the dark cones of webbing that they themselves have spun. They are always hungry, extraordinarily evil, and likely to attack anything that comes into the clearing.

ETTERCAPS 3 (These neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP varies, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with 2 claws for 1d4 points of damage apiece and a bite for 1d8 points of damage. They are able to deliver a poisonous bite as well as an improved grab and web traps.)

In and about the meadow lies the accumulated treasure of Meg and her sons. There are 340gp, 750sp; there is a lyre worth 250gp in working condition, a box of mechanical dwarf toys, mostly marching soldiers and orcs worth 150gp; laying in the ruins of the house is a much corroded +2 battle axe (easy enough to knock the corrosion off) and a rod of wonder; in the cocoon where Meg hangs, upon her finger is a magical ring of evasion.

THE WEB OF LIFE AND DEATH

This portion of the Barren Wood is inhabited by a hive of large spiders. Upon entering the area, the trees appear to be dying and are covered in large moss-like growths and strands of silken material. An oppressive fetid smell permeates the woods and a silence, unlike the remainder of the forest, bodes ill. No animals are to be seen and no birds to be heard, only the swishing of the moss in a slight breeze.

A group of large spiders have built a warren in the branches of the trees. The warren extends for several miles and the trees toward the middle of the area are all dead and rotted. The spiders do not hunt in the warren; rather they travel outside it and bring their prey back. Generally, the spiders bring their prey back to the central area and place them in cocoons where they linger and rot for days or weeks before they are eaten. For the most part, the spiders only eat small prey but occasionally they bunch up into large hunting parties and grab something larger, something human sized if times are rough – as they often are during the winter months.

Although communal, the spiders generally do not act communally in hunts. They are individual or small group hunters. Thus, on the outskirts of the warren, the party usually only encounters 1d4 spiders once every hour. Once the characters begin to approach the interior of the warren, the number of spiders increases to 1d6 every half hour. Once near the center of the warren, the characters encounter 1d12 spiders once every half hour. For each encounter, there is a 1 in 10 chance of that encounter being a large hunting party looking for large prey. This will consist of 3d12 spiders.

SPIDERS, GIANT (These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 4, 5, 5, 6, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a poison bite that does 1d4 points of damage and requires a constitution save or the victim takes an additional 2 points of damage for the next 3 turns.)

The outlying area of the warren is scattered with dead trees but most are alive though in bad shape. Occasional large wads of

webbing can be found in the dead or dying trees. The center area of the warren is full of dead and dying trees covered in webs and mosses. The stench of decayed bodies and corpses is overwhelming and the ground is littered with the detritus of the spiders' feedings, in some places heaped as high as human is tall.

Every 15 minutes the characters are in the central area of the spider warren they have a chance of locating some interesting items piled on the ground. These are the remains of various people and creatures that have traveled in here and never returned. Roll a d10 for every 15 minutes of time passed. A 1 indicates a roll on the chart below. Then roll a d4 to determine the number of times rolled on the chart below then roll a d20.

- 1: rusted armor, helmet, spear
- 2: leather armor, shield, spear
- 3: rusted sword, shield
- 4: long sword, large shield
- 5: bow, backpack, tinderbox, oil
- 6: quiver with 12 arrows
- 7: backpack/d12gp, lantern
- 8: sack/d20sp, d4gp, tinderbox
- 9: chain armor, helmet
- 10: backpack/d10gp, d20sp
- 11: backpack/chain armor
- 12: roll twice on this chart
- 13: roll three times on this chart
- 14: roll four times on this chart
- 15: spear, shield, sack with 2d20gp
- 16: helmet
- 17: sack d20sp, d12gp, d6sp
- 18: camp gear, d12sp, d6gp
- 19: bastard sword, shield
- 20: Victim- see below

There are four possible victims that can be located though more can be created at the Castle Keeper's discretion. Each is in dire straits and is awake inside a cocoon. They make noise as the characters approach.

Barthalemew is a known thief in Botkinburg and Ludensheim who ran away about two weeks ago and was headed to a place of safety.

BARTHALEMW (*He is a neutral evil 2nd level halfling rogue whose vital stats are HP 8, AC 14. His primary attributes are dexterity and intelligence. His significant attribute is dexterity 13. He carries leather armor, dagger, hand axe, pack/food, tinderbox, silver brooch worth 20gp, 22sp, 46 cp.*)

Alehium is a female elf looking for a lost artifact in the Barren Woods. She claims to have knowledge of a burial place of a fairy killed by the famed goblin Ezelweed. And her burial place holds waters of healing and rejuvenation that she needs to cure her of some disease that ails her.

ALEHIUM (*She is a neutral good, 3rd level, elf wizard whose vital stats are HP 9, AC 10. Her primary attributes are intelligence and constitution. Her significant attributes are intelligence 17 and dexterity 8. She carries a back pack, spell book, ring of protection +1, wand of sleep spells with 4 charges, 25gp and 32sp.*)

Mark the Squirrel is a hunter of some repute from the far south. He came to this region to locate and capture a rare owl. He intended, once capturing the owl, to sell it to a noble who wants it for his vast menagerie. He is ashamed to have been caught unaware by some large spiders but grateful for rescue.

MARK (*He is a neutral, human, 3rd level ranger whose vital stats are HP 21, AC 12. His primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence, and wisdom. His significant attribute is dexterity 16. He carries nothing at the moment.*)

Negrafon is a centaur who has lived in this region for some time. He dropped his weapons when the spiders caught him. He is grateful for the help they provided in saving him and offers to travel with the party for some time if they are kind to him. He may even, if the Castle Keeper cares to pursue it, bring the characters to the centaur home some 80 miles south and west of Botkinburg.

NEGRAGON (*This chaotic neutral centaur's vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 25, AC 14. His primary attribute is physical. He has all the abilities of a 4th level ranger. He carries a back pouch with three apples of healing that, when eaten, cure 1d12 hit points, some food and 30sp.*)

THE DREAD MIRE

The Dread Mire is an ancient battleground that has now become a swamp. Some millennia past, a local elfin lord aligned himself a human kingdom to battle against the onslaught of the Horned One's army. In the first clashing of arms, the human king betrayed his ally and fell upon the elfin rearguard as the armies of the Horned One weighed into the vanguard. The humans slaughtered all of the elves in a horrific battle. But Andual, a warrior priest and the last of the kindred to die, laid a curse upon these men: "May your treachery bind you to this earth! May it devour you and spit you back up as a shadow of yourself. Thirst now for a life you cannot have. I curse you and bind you here until the Damnum sakes your agony. Know no peace."

The men laughed at Andual and slew him, casting his body aside. But soon they found the elfin curse bore teeth, for they could not leave the ground upon which they stood, the battlefield of the elves. If they approached the edges of it a great terror overcame them and they fell back upon themselves, fighting for room. Eventually the men went mad from fear and raged against each other until they were all dead.

The Horned One, ever appreciative of deceit, despised the men for their treachery and left them to die.

The Dread Mire begins abruptly. The trees of the Barren Wood break onto an open, poorly drained pasture with numerous bogs, pits of quicksand, small creeks and thick, thorny undergrowth. The bleached trunks of long dead trees dot the landscape and a wispy mist shrouds the ground. The stench coming off the bog is horrendous and difficult to bear.

Anyone who enters the bog must make a successful constitution save (CL 3) or begin retching uncontrollably. The retching is violent and last for several minutes, causing 1 point of damage each time the character fails their save. This damage heals at one hit point every two hours.

This region is an exceedingly dangerous place as many undead live here. Within 1d4 rounds of entering the bog, the souls of the dead begin to moan, muttering strange curses in a forgotten tongue. After the first 4 rounds have passed from entry the first of the undead begin clawing their way out of the bog, rising from the dead.

The weakest of the undead, those barely clinging to the grave, rise first, followed by more powerful creatures. The first hour 1d12 skeletons rise; the second hour 1d8 zombies rise; the third hour 1d6 ghouls rise; the fourth hour, 1d4 ghouls rise. Their numbers are cumulative, so that by the third hour the party is encountering skeletons, zombies and ghouls.

These creatures are not all evil and bent on destruction. Some may be enticed to talk to the characters if the characters are able to distract them in some manner, i.e. sing a song of heroism or lost luck or something of that nature. They impart the nature of the curse if the opportunity arises.

They are particularly fearful of elves and refuse to fight them. Elves can, in fact, prevent any fighting whatsoever. If an elf is with the party, the undead may surround them, but will not attack.

SKELETONS (These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 1d12, HP varies. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with long swords doing 1d8 points of damage.)

ZOMBIES (These neutral evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 8, 9, 11; AC 11. They have no primary attributes. They attack with one claw that does 1d8 damage plus possible rot grub infestation.)

GHOULS (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 12 each, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with 2 Claws for 1d3 points of damage, and a Bite for 1d6 points of damage.)

GHOSTS (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 20 each, AC 17. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with 2 claws for 1d4 points of damage and 1 bite for 1d8 points of damage. Their special abilities include ghoulish stench, paralysis, ghoulish fever, and darkvision. They have a vulnerability to iron.)

There is no manner of clearing this land of the undead unless the curse is lifted. To do so one has to fetch water from the Damnum River and pour it into the swamp.

The Damnum River is one of the Seven Rivers that flow through Shindolay, the land of Fey where the elves originate. The Damnum intersects the Material Plane in the Twilight Wood through the Dreaming Sea. The god Utumno watches over its material spring. It is from this river that water must be drawn in order to cure these men of their curse.

OVERLAND ENCOUNTERS

This chart details encounters that occur while traveling in the region. Check for encounters twice during the day and twice at night. A roll of 1 on a d10 indicates an encounter. Then roll a d20 to determine the type.

d20	Encounter
1-2	Bandits (2-8) / ambush, after a raid, encamped
3-4	Goblins (7-12) / spying, raiding, stealing cattle
5	Lost traveler (1-3) / villager scared, hiding, fleeing
6	Mountain Lion (1) / tracking party, may attack
7-10	Herd Animals / deer, elk, oxen, boar, or other
11-12	Wolves (4-12) / eating, tracking party, moving
13	Giant Spiders (2-8) / nest area, with prey, moving
14	Brown Bear (1) / hunting food 1 in 10 with cubs
15-16	Fey (2-8) / pixies
17-18	Orcs (2-8) / raiding, scouting, lost, encamped, after fight
19-20	Ogre (1) / traveling, searching for home, raiding

THE BARREN WOOD

This chart details encounters that occur along the region of the Blacktooth Ridge. Check for encounters twice during the day and three times at night. Roll a d10 and a 1 indicates an encounter. Then roll a d20 to determine the type.

d20	Encounter
1-2	Goblins (7-18) / spying, raiding, stealing cattle
3-5	Orcs (3-12) / raiding, scouting, lost, encamped
6	Bandits (3-12) / ambush, after a raid, encamped
7	Hyenas (4-16) / hunting, around carcass, sunning
8-9	Wild Boar (2-6) / rooting around, relaxing at mud hole
10-12	Stirges (1-3) / hunting, with prey, flying overhead
13-14	Ogre (1-2) / hunting, traveling, looking for a home
15	Wolves (3-18) / eating, tracking party, moving
16	Bear, large (1) / aggressive male or female with cub
17-20	Herd Animals / deer, elk, oxen, boar, or other

GOT MILK

About a day's travel south of the town of Ludensheim, lies the small walled manor house belonging to the farmer Edward Buroface. Edward is one of the oldest residents of the area. He settled on this particular bend of the road when there was little road. He built his house next to a small stream that came from the Barren Wood and spilled itself into the Hruesen River. When he first built his house, Edward was a very young man and had no family. Stout and brave, he shrugged off the dangers of the area. Over the years the town grew in size and Edward in wealth. The dangers of the region of course grew as well. Red Cap's raids caused him great losses in livestock and the like. Further depredations from other raiders, from the temple to the west, caused him to build walls around his home and to fortify it. He set great dogs to guard his

livestock and his family—large and robust by this time—lived in increased comfort in their walled compound. He lived then for a great while in peace and grew prosperous for the lesser creatures of the Hruesen were no threat to him and his family.

At no time did Edward, older now, gray and a bit grizzled, turn to the town of Ludensheim for aid, for he rightfully suspects that the merchants themselves were in some way responsible for the ever-growing problems of the Hruesen River Valley.

But lately his problems have markedly increased. A giant has come to the roost. It has settled on the banks of a small pond a half mile or so from Edward's fortified house and from there it raids his livestock, picking the fittest of his cattle to feast. Recently, the giant has become a little bolder; daily he demands Edward turn over vegetables from his stores, bake him bread, and deliver fresh butter for the bread. Edward has had little recourse but to deliver the goods for fear of his family.

Edward is desperate to be rid of the giant and warmly welcomes the characters into his home in an attempt to convince them to aid him. He offers them food and shelter. If the characters manage to drive off or kill the giant, Edward and his family are very grateful. Assuming the characters are generous in their dealings with the farmer they may strike up a long lasting friendship with him and his family and find a warm house of refuge in the future.

STONE GIANT (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 10(d8), HP 54, AC 24. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a slam for 2d8 points of damage. He has no weapon per se, but does wield a cow with deadly proficiency, striking opponents for 2d6+6 points of damage. He is able to throw rocks, has twilight vision and dark vision.)



The giant is open to negotiation and leaves the area if the characters can convince him of richer hunting grounds further south, something that does exist in the Barren Wood around the Slag Heap. If they do not, he fights them ferociously. However, the giant does not suspect that the farmer would have acquired aid so that the first time he comes to the house Edward he is utterly surprised by the character's appearance. If the battle ensues he immediately grabs the nearest cow by the hind legs and begins swinging it as a weapon, smashing whichever characters come within reach.

TREASURE: The stone giant has a large sack within which he keeps all his valuables. He has a sleeping roll made of a large bear skin, somewhat threadbare and smelling horrifically; he has small bag of animal bones, charms for the giant; a ball of tangled rope, another small satchel with a 212gp, a scroll with detect snares and pits on it, a +2 dagger, 14 +1 arrows, rope of climbing, and a book titled: *Edible Herbs and Plants of Gausumland*.

GYPSY ENCAMPMENT

A caravan of gypsies have moved off road and set up camp for a few weeks while they decide their next destination. The gypsies have been persecuted in the south and recently moved north in hopes of a kinder reception. However, because their arrival is oft times viewed with displeasure they have taken care to stay out of sight, staying on the back roads and off the beaten track. One member of the group, Mellan Fostwyth, is planning to travel to Botkinburg and determine what the reaction of the villagers to the gypsies might be. Until such time as he returns, the gypsies have made a temporary camp about 5 miles off the road.

Once located, the gypsies are wary but cordial until they determine the intent of the characters. If they consider them friendly or at least not hostile, several of the gypsies offer to perform a play or some other form of entertainment for the characters. They also ask for gold, "to help us through the hard times," they claim. Virtually any amount makes them happy. If none is forthcoming, they do not force the issue but are certainly not well disposed to the characters in the future should they ever need aid.

Many of the members of this band are simply looking for a place to settle, others are escaping persecution in the south, some are wanted criminals but the core and leadership of the group resides with a band of traveling minstrels who perform for money and occasionally rob or pilfer from the "too wealthy" or "those who can afford to shed a few pounds". There are 28 of them in all, 8 females, 6 children, and 14 males over the age of 16.

The significant members of the band are:

Patka, the chief, is a wanted criminal in the far south. This is not for any petty crimes though. He is wanted for treasonous activities against a lord. It seems his songs were a bit too critical of the lord's rule. The lord has a 500gp bounty upon his head.

PATKA (He is a neutral good, human, 4th level bard whose vital stats are HP 16, AC 13. His primary attributes are charisma, dexterity, and wisdom. His significant attributes are dexterity 14 and charisma 15. He carries dagger, crossbow, short sword, leather armor, 2pp, 12gp, 120sp and owns a lyre of enchantment that allows a +2 bonus to all charisma checks.)

Ena is a distant relative of Patka who decided to travel with him, as she was very dissatisfied with her life in the south – dissatisfaction derived primarily from an arranged marriage. She yearns now for a place to settle and call home, as travels through the wilder areas of the world have worn her out. It is not that she is averse to danger; rather it is the travel that is weighing her down.

ENA (*She is a lawful neutral, human, female, 5th level bard whose vital stats are HP 31, AC 17. Her primary attributes are wisdom, charisma, and intelligence. Her significant attributes are dexterity 18 and cha 15. She carries leather armor, short bow, short sword, dagger, diadem of charm resistance which allows a +2 save vs. charm spells or effects, gloves of defense which confer a +2 to her armor class, a harp 100gp and 350sp.*)

Garth Mangle is a vile little man with little to offer the lot of the group he is traveling with. However, he has put on a friendly face and acts nicely toward everyone as he is desperately in love with Ena. He has become aware that his amorous desires will never be returned so is now looking for a good way out of the band – perhaps at Botkingbirg or traveling with another group of adventurers will give him further opportunity. He is capable of great deception and more than willing to travel with someone for quite a time before abandoning him or her in a moment of need – even with their goods if possible.

GARTH (*Garth is a neutral evil, human 3rd level rogue whose vital stats are HP 13, AC 12. His primary attributes are dexterity, charisma, and intelligence. His significant attribute is charisma 14. He carries a dagger, short bow, leather armor, 20g and 45sp.*)

In addition to those characters described above, the caravan consists of two 2nd level fighters, and four 1st level fighters as well as three 2nd level rogues, one 4th level cleric and two 1st level barbarians and one 5th level ranger.

Within the wagon train are the following items: 300 days worth of food, rope, woodworking tools, clothing for winter and summer, many musical instruments, leather making tools, pots pans and various other materials. Of interest are two large kits used for costume making and make-up, a chest with 20gp, 50sp, and 256cp in it.

THE FLESH PITS

On the northern fringes of the Blacktooth Ridge, where that line of hills meets the Blighted Screed, are the ruins of a fairly modest laboratory – of sorts. Here, in a vast round chamber open to the sky sits a flesh pit. In it, some wizards of a particularly foul nature, dumped the remains of the dead, the dead and the near

dead. The pit was named the Flesh Pits after a time by the unger and orcs who lived in the region. It was avoided by all living things excepting those who were required to come and those foul priests.

The priests gathered what remains they could and with them built grotesqueries of nature – flesh golems. These golems were bid to their tiding or that of whomever they were giving. For a time the Flesh Pits produced many of these things and sent them out into the world.

However, as time moved on, the flesh pits were used less and less such that even during the waning year of Unklar's reign they were rarely producing golems. The Flesh Pits were essentially forgotten by all but those who remained there. With the fall of Unklar, the Flesh Pits fell into disuse as the priests who lived there moved on.

They left several flesh golems in their wake. The area around the flesh pits has several dozen flesh golems wandering around killing things and throwing them into the pits. The characters, should they happen upon the northern end of the Blacktooth Ridge, should encounter a Flesh Golem in the woods thereabouts, or even upon the escarpment above the ridge as it wanders in search of prey.

The flesh golems leave a trail of stink behind them that is easy to follow. They can also be smelled a fairly good distance off. They shamle and wander the wastes in search of any living thing to kill. They then bring it back to the Flesh Pits. They also travel in packs so more than one can be encountered. A trail back to the pits should be easy to follow as well.

The pits themselves consist of a large circular wall with one opening in it. Outside the wall are two broad stone buildings both completely abandoned. The entire area has the stench of a slaughterhouse to it. The golems do nothing but kill things and throw them into the pit.

It is up to the Castle Keeper to devise an appropriate number to be located at the pits when they arrive there and even the number encountered along the way. There is treasure in the pit of rotting flesh but it would be difficult to get as it is buried in decades worth of rotting bodies and animals.

GOLEM, FLESH (*This creature's vital stats are HD 7d10, AC 18 and HP 49. It slams opponents with its fists for 2–8 damage. It can be struck only by magical weapons with a +2 bonus or better. It is immune to nearly all magic; see M&T for specific details*)