



THE MERCILESS
MERCHANTS:

THE COVEY

BY
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AND
AARON
FAIRBROOK

AN ENCOUNTER FOR LEVELS 5-7.



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THE COVEY

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THE COVEY

INTRODUCTION

If you plan to be a player in this encounter then **please STOP reading now** as this encounter is for the Game Master's (GM) eyes only. Gaining insight about the adventure beforehand will ruin the surprise factor and your enjoyment.

"The Covey" is a short, random encounter for use with the For Gold and Glory rule set designed for 4-7 player characters of levels 5-7. **For Gold & Glory and FG&G are trademarks of Justen Brown. This work is not affiliated with Justen Brown.**

The encounter is designed to be used in the Dragonback Mountains campaign setting, but can be used in any setting that has a nearby forest or mountainous area. The GM is encouraged to rename towns, change encounters, change NPC's, or adjust monsters as the GM desires and use the encounter as a tool or guideline to fit in their current campaign setting or playstyle.

NOTES FOR THE GM

The Covey is a small family of hags that have lived here in the wilds for hundreds of years. The Covey itself consists of three generations of Hags consisting of the crone, named Aelgara, the mother named Helgara, and the maiden, Velgara. Aelgara appears as a blind and toothless hag who is always pawing at anyone nearby (she's not completely blind, but likes to get a feel of her food). Helgara is an older, seasoned mountain woman, with the typical looks of a hunter's wife, while Velgara plays the maiden, flirty and bold. They work together on chores but don't tend to deal with each other much except during the four high points of the year and a moot whose timing is a mystery to all but the hags.

They generally keep to themselves and their wicked ways by staying hidden, but they are always welcoming to those that are lost or stumble upon their abode, however, often as not, their guests end up in the stew pot! Handsome men may be kept around to increase the Covey or as entertainment, but are then either sent away into the wilderness drugged with herbs, or they are devoured. They tend to be kinder to women than men, but that doesn't mean they won't put them in the pot if they are rude! If the hags reveal their true nature, then any guest will be enslaved or eaten.

A few years ago, the Covey, led by Aelgara, had wiped out a dwarven forest-clearing crew who was getting too

close to their hut. They captured a nearly dead dwarf after the battle by the name of Balen. Realizing the potential in his mining and craftsmanship skills, the Covey nursed the dwarf back to health and enslaved him. He has been put to work expanding their living area by digging a cave complex in the hill that borders their hut. Helgara and Velgara also enslaved a small band of ogres, who are ordered to assist the dwarf and keep an eye on him. Aelgara eventually polymorphed the ogres into dwarves to make Balen more comfortable with his surroundings while he worked on their complex.

The hags can rarely be taken by surprise in their hut as they have animal servants to warn them of any approaching travelers as written below. To any large adventuring groups they use the tactics below. Note: Encounter 1 is not on the map.

1. The Chase: The animal trail has traveled through small glens, meadows, and over streams as it winds its way through the Wilderwood. The ground is still damp from the short rain shower that occurred a few hours ago and the air is brisk. The smell of wood smoke wafts through the forest and humming can be heard from within a small copse of trees.



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The humming comes from a tall, blonde maiden who is gathering kindling a couple hundred feet away. When she becomes aware of the party she immediately drops the kindling and flees at her full movement rate. The party can follow her to her hut located approximately 100 yards deeper into the forest.

If the party somehow stops her and captures her, she will feign being frightened instead of attacking, and will eventually invite them to the hut. If attacked, she will immediately flee to the hut.

Velgara the hag (Annis), in the form of a maiden: AC 0, Move 15, HD 7+7, hp 50, THACO 13, Attack: 3 (two claws 1d10 +3 to hit, +6 damage, 1 bite 1d3 +3 to hit, +6 damage). Size M, Morale 15, MR 20%, XP 2,000. If all 3 attacks score a hit, then the next round the opponent will be grappled until broken. Powers: *Change Self*, covey powers.

Items: Ragged furs, knife, belt, pouch, bone comb, 3 small squirrel skulls, **Ring of Chameleon Power**, a **Snatch Satchel** and a **Potion of Water Breathing**.



Artist: Jacob Blackmon

Snatch Satchel XP: 1,000

The **Snatch Satchel** is a black, leather bag that has a strap across one shoulder, with the option of attaching the bag to the belt by a loop. Silver stitching runs along the sides of the bag and a small silver buckle cinches the top down. Inside the satchel are five leather loops. When a potion is inserted into the satchel, no matter the size or shape of the potion, it will fit inside one of the leather loops, with a maximum of five potions. When a potion is desired, the wearer merely reaches into the satchel and thinks about which potion they want, and that is the one they retrieve. **Note:** Wearer must possess the potions, as the satchel merely makes it easier to snatch the correct potion that is desired.

2. The Hut: The scent of cooking bread is thick in the air and soon a log and mud hut with a thatched roof comes into view. The hut has two small windows, a stout door, and is backed up against a small hillside. Smoke is visible rising from a center hole in the roof. A raven begins to caw loudly from a nearby tree, but otherwise it appears quiet.

The raven is a trained bird of Helgara and caws whenever someone nears the hut to warn the hags, but is otherwise an ordinary bird. The raven has also been trained to deliver notes and letters to other hags throughout the region.



Artist: Patrick E Pullen

If the party goes to the hut, Helgara will welcome the party and invite them inside for food and rest, even offering to tend to their wounds with healing and herbalism.

3. Hut Interior: Dimly lit and smoky, the hut smells of cooking bread and herbs. A chime of silver hangs in front of the door and a boiling cauldron squats in the center of the room. A work table and shelves hold utensils, a couple of heavy tomes, drying herbs, bottles, knives, a stone mortar and pestle, as well as skinning tools. There is a small hearth fed by a low stack of wood along the northeastern wall. A fan of large eagle feathers hangs from a bone hook over the mantle of the hearth. More herbs and a few, small dead animals hang from the rafters. There are three log stools around the cauldron, each with a wooden bowl and spoon. A bear fur curtain hangs along the east wall.

If the party enters, **Helgara will offer them bread and water**, claiming that the stew she has boiling isn't finished. **Aelgara** will begin to **chuckle with excitement**, while **pawing blindly at anyone** who draws close to her, and **Velgara** appears to have found her courage and may even be **flirtatious to men** in the party with a high charisma.

The bread is poisoned.

If eaten the consumer must **save vs poison** after one round per constitution point or **fall into a deep sleep**. For example, characters with a 16 constitution would make their save vs. poison after 16 rounds. A successful saving throw allows the character to shake off the grogginess and may make them suspect something is amiss. Those who fail their saving throw cannot be wakened unless shaken aggressively. If awoken, those characters will still be groggy and have -4 to all rolls for 1d10 rounds. **The hags will eat the bread as they are immune to the poison.**

If all the **party** members **fall asleep**, the **hags** take their true form and begin to **attack** one victim, chosen at random, although **they will keep dwarves alive last**. If the first party member is slain, they will **attempt to slay a second one** before imprisoning the others. If the attacked party members are unable to wake their companions or are slain, **the rest of the party will find themselves in Room #7**, where the hags will either eventually eat them or put them to work helping Balen (see Room #7). **If the hags are having a hard time against the party, they will call for Throge, one of the 'dwarves' from Room #4.**

Helgara and Aelgara, green hags: AC -2, Move 15, HD 9, hp 57, 52, THACO 11, Attack: 3 (two claws 1d10 +3 to hit, +6 damage, 1 bite 1d3 +3 to hit, +6 damage), Size M, Morale 15, MR 35%, XP 2,000.

Helgara and Aelgara also may cast these spell powers at will: *audible glamor, dancing lights, invisibility, pass without trace, change self, speak with monsters, water breathing, weakness*. Covey powers: all hags must be within 10 feet of each other and no other actions can be taken. Usable 1x per day: *Curse, polymorph other, animate dead, dream, control weather, veil, forecage, vision, mind blank*

Both Helgara and Aelgara wear woolen robes and garments, belt, pouches, cudgel, and a knife. Helgara carries a **Potion of Fire Resistance**, and Aelgara carries a **Potion of Speed** and two keys. One key is for the shackles of Balen in Room #7, and the other key is for the chest in Room #8.

The silver chime near the door is magical and is actually a **Chime of Opening** (10 charges). The hammer for it lies on a shelf and has residual magic upon it if checked. The fan of eagle feathers over the hearth is actually a **Wind Fan**. The shelf is laden with jars, bottles, bowls, vials, and three flagons which are all made of wood and stone, and a **Potion of Treasure Finding**, and a **Potion of ESP**. The table also has an odd collection of potions, which most are mundane and used for healing or poison making and magical components. There is also a collection of quills, bottled ink, a **Tome of Understanding**, a scroll of **Protection from Undead**, and a large wood covered and spined tome with elvish script upon its face (spellbook).

Spellbook, elvish, traveling tome:

1st level: *Read Magic, Detect Magic, Cantrip, Unseen Servant, Spook, Hypnotism, Mount, Sleep, Wall of Fog*

2nd level: *Bind, Summon Swarm, Insatiable Thirst, Flaming Sphere*

3rd level: *Protection from Evil 10' radius, Flame Arrow*

There is also a **small carved box that holds several letters**. If the letters are inspected, the party may determine that the letters are from another hag who lives elsewhere by the name of Gretten. Most of the information in the letters is about gossip of the last moot, complaints of the seasons, failed potions, and troublesome adventurers.

Finally, the boiling cauldron will radiate a faint magic if checked for, that may be mistaken for residue from making potions. The cauldron is **Sibyl's Cauldron**.

Sibyl's Cauldron XP: 2,000

This sizable cauldron appears to be a typical black, dented cauldron, however it has several powers: 1. It can create a hearty stew once a day, similar to a *Create Food and Water* spell, that will feed up to 8 people. 2. Once a week, a healing broth can be called forth that will heal 1d6 damage for 5 people and will cure any sickness or disease. It also has a 66% to cure insanity. 3. The final power happens once a month during the full moon. Any bones of a creature put into the cauldron will re-attach themselves as they were in life and leap out of the cauldron, similar to a *Animate Dead* spell.



4. Passage Down: A heavy furred curtain made of bear hide drapes over the exit. Beyond it is a cavern that has a passage to the left that descends into darkness and to the right the cavern raises and opens up into a rounded chamber.

One of the polymorphed ogres is waiting here for the beck and call of the hags. **The ogres/dwarves will not aid the hags in battle unless called to do so.** The ogres cannot speak dwarvish and if attacked, will call for his brothers to aid him from Room # 6.



Throge, ogre, polymorphed into a dwarf: AC 5, Move 6, HD 4+1, hp 30, THACO 17, Attack: 1 (battle axe; 1d8 +3 to hit, +6 damage), Size S, Morale 14, XP 175.

Items include a helmet, hides, belt, pouch, knife, battle axe, 22 gp, 12 sp, 100 cp.

5. Hags Bedroom: There is a three foot high step up to the area. The air reeks of foulness and the floor is covered with flea-ridden rotting furs and hides. Several lumpy pillows of bright colors are scattered about and all seem drool stained.

This is where the hags sleep. There is nothing of value here.

6. Large Cave: The passage descends several deep steps and then opens into a larger chamber which is cool and smells almost fresh. The cavern is lighted by a gem of some sort hanging from the center of the room. Some furs are thrown haphazardly into a couple places and a pile of mining tools lay opposite a small pool of spring water. A small, three foot oak altar stand, carved of a woman holding something, rests near the pool. Several beautiful items and jewelry seem to be scattered all over the cavern.

Here is where the other polymorphed ogres reside.

Groge, Roge, Noge, the three "dwarves": AC 5 (1), Move 6, HD 4+1, hp 33, 33,32, THACO 17, Attack: 1 (various mining tools; 1d8 +3 to hit, +6 damage), Size S, Morale 14, XP 175.

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Items: helms, furs armor, belt, various mining tools, pouch, 4d10 gp, 2d10 sp, 1d100 cp each. Noge has an AC of 1 and uses **The Mountain**. They will fight to the death to defend the treasures here.

The Mountain XP: 1,500

Bards will recognize this large dwarven shield. Forged and fashioned by master smiths with alloys only known to them. It's battered surface is emblazoned with cliff faced mountain with a gate near its peak (Axeholme). Legends tell a tale of a dwarf warrior named Thorgren holding the line in the narrow tunnels under a mountain, against a goblin horde for hours while his wounded brethren escaped. **The Mountain** is a large dwarven forged metal **Shield +3**. The 'gate' is actually an opening to allow the wielder to peer through the shield while fending off blows.

Placed about the cavern are various and beautiful captured **treasures** of past travelers. They include an **elven silk gown** with jade hoops and hooks worth 130 gp, matching **slippers** of silk and jade 60 gp, an elven hand mirror of silver and gold worth 300 gp, and two ornate garnet elven earrings with silver worth 400 gp. Hanging near the entrance is a whip with a platinum wire handle that is studded with dark gems for a better grip, valued around 500 gp. The whip is a magical **Whip +1** that can extend eight feet and deliver 1d4+1 points of damage. **The glowing gem** is an amber carving of a rose that glows from a continual light spell and worth 300 gp.

The oaken altar stand is a **carving of the Earth Mother** and is about 3 feet tall. Her hands extend out holding a small carved bowl of rose quartz that is worth at least 300 gp. However, if it is returned to a place of worship to the Earth Mother, the individual returning it **will receive a permanent blessing of +1 to all saving throws**. The small pool of water appears to be fresh and relatively clear and water enters and leaves the pools from cracks in the wall. The pile of mining and smith tools look well-used and unremarkable.

7. Dank Pit: The cavern wall opens and steps down 10 feet into a small chamber. A wooden ladder provides access to the first depression. The passage continues another six feet before dropping another 10 feet into a dank pit. A coil of 25 feet of rope rests near the edge. The clank and scrape of metal on stone can be heard below as a shirtless dwarf with shackles and chains around his ankles chips away at the wall with a mining pick. Heavy woven baskets are filled with rubble against the wall.

This is Balen the Engineer and the only survivor of his foresting crew. The dwarven treasures spread about the hut and cave complex belonged to him and his crew. They fell against an ambush set by the Hags years ago and he has been enslaved to dig a larger cave complex for the hags.

Despite being miserable as a slave for several years, **Balen takes great pride in his work**, which feels like his only escape.

Balen the Engineer, Mountain Dwarf: S 16, I 15, W 14, D 12, C 13, Ch 8, AC 10, Move 6, 3rd-level Fighter, hp 15, THACO 18, Attack: 1 (by weapon; or dwarven crossbow 1d6+1 damage, dwarven hammer 1d6+1) Size S, Moral 12, XP 65.

Balen has non-combat skills including engineering, stonemasonry, blacksmithing, and armorer.

8. Secret Cavern: The secret door swivels to reveal a fresh hewn passage. The passage turns to the right and opens into a small chamber. An iron bound chest sits against the northern wall.

This chamber was one of Balen's first assignments. He will let the party know about the secret door and **he will want his gear returned to him**, including **The Mountain** that Noge the ogre/dwarf used in Room #6.

The **chest** is locked and **trapped** with a **poison needle**. Those who fail to remove the trap must roll a saving throw vs. poison or fall into a deep sleep for 24 hours. Inside the chest is a folded, large, leather sack that's actually a **Bag of Devouring**, 2,160 gp, 4,670 ep, **+1 dwarven chain mail** (dwarf sized), dwarven crossbow, and a quiver of 24 bolts.

CONCLUSION

If the party frees Balen, he will pay a reward of 100 gp if they escort him to the nearest town. News may

reach other hags of the party's deeds and some may attempt to hunt the party down for revenge.



Artist: Kimagu



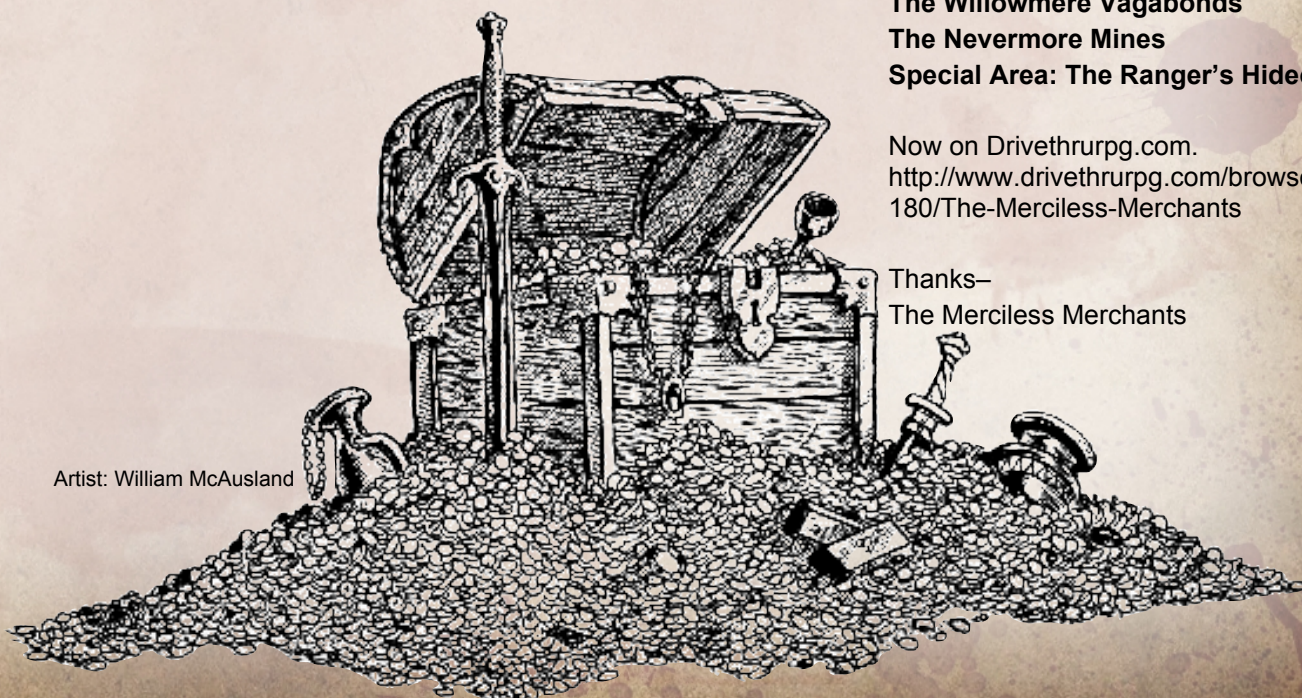
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THE COVEY

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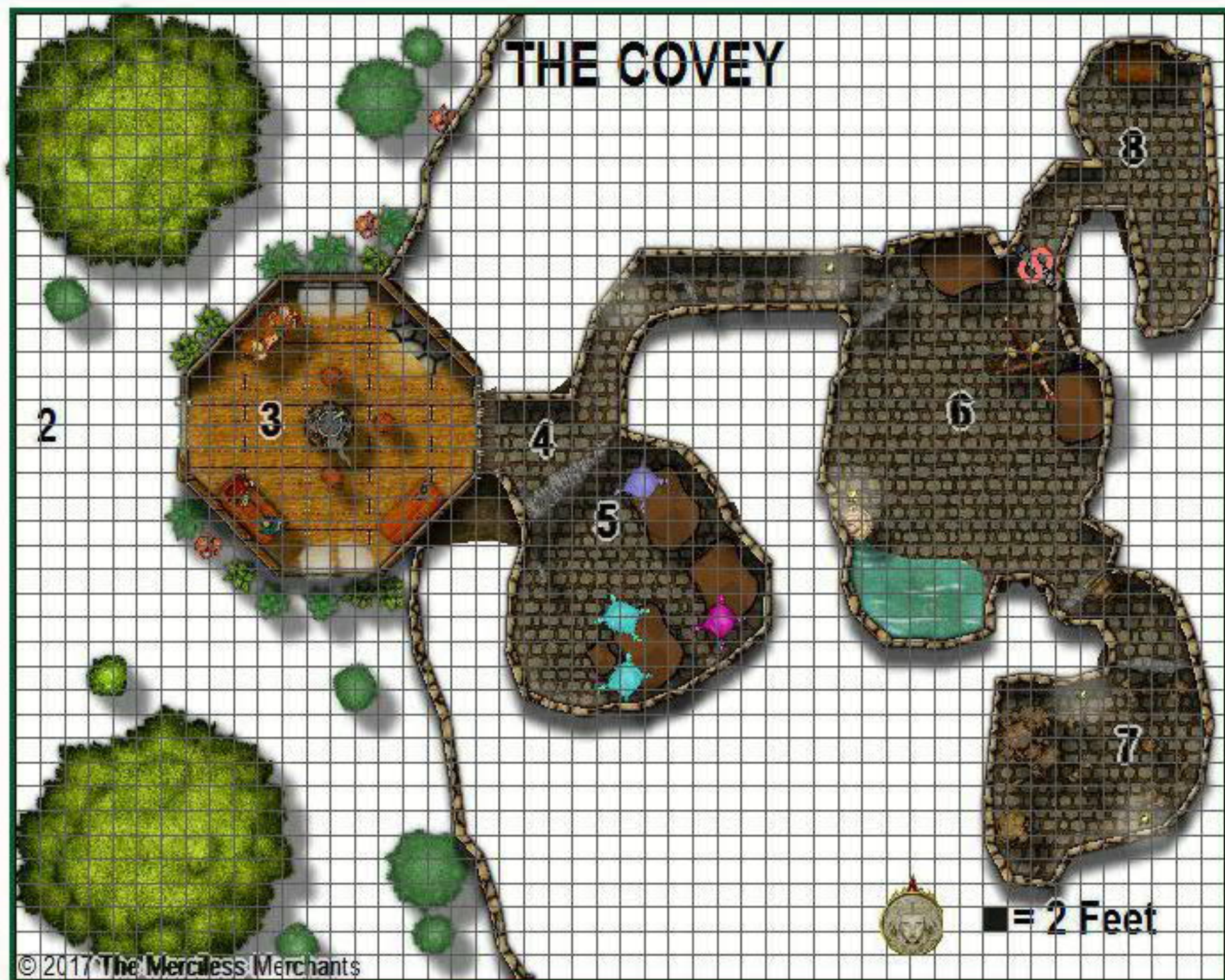
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■ = 2 Feet



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THE COVEY

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