

SLUMBERING URSINE DUNES

by Chris Kufalik



A Labyrinth Lord Adventure for levels 2-4

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SLUMBERING URSINE DUNES

Run, play or splice up 65 pages of mayhem and weirdness in this Slavic mythic-inspired (with an acid fantasy-twist) mini-sandbox for Labyrinth Lord or the well-aged fantasy rpg of your druthers.

What You Will Find Inside:

- A 25-site pointcrawl of the otherworldly Slumbering Ursine Dunes region. Beyond the big ticket adventure sites you will find along the way a Polevik-haunted rye field, a Zardozy head-living hermit, bearling pilgrimage site, antediluvian beaver engineers and other assorted madness.
- Two separate “dungeons”, the bio-mechanical, lost-in-time Golden Barge and the faction-contested Glittering Tower, with enough detail and portability to be slotted into an existing campaign (as can many of the adventure nodes).
- The Chaos Index, a dynamic events system for modeling the mythic weirdness of the Dunes. Actions of the players in the sandbox will escalate or de-escalate the levels of events from blood-rain thunderstorms to an aerial invasion of magitech bubble cars.
- Four competing factions operating inside the Dunes, plus guidelines for their mutual interactions.
- Unique, “unlockable” player classes, spells and magic items compatible with Labyrinth Lord.
- 15 new and unique monsters, many drawn from Slavic mythology (with a twist or three, naturally).



Slumbering Ursine Dunes

A MINI-SANDBOX FOR LABYRINTH LORD LEVELS 2-4

BY CHRIS KUTALIK

Dedicated to the San Anto Home Group (Mack Harrison, Brad Everman, Monica Davila Harrison and Special Lady Friend Danna) and the ever-multiplying/shrinking Nefarious Nine (Robert Parker, Humza Kazmi, Cole Long, Michael Moscrip, Anthony Picaro, Evan Elkins, Mike Davison, James Aulds, Peter Robbins, Trey Causey, Jeremy Duncan, David Lewis Johnson, Rey Madriñan, Mikah McCabe and James Maliszewski) who stole the Barge back fair and square.

Inspiration Stew: Michael Moorcock's Golden Barge and Melnibonean battle barges, a Jack Vance ghost barge vignette, James Maliszewski Eld, trips up Michigan's Lower Peninsula, and a shaggy dog personal story of mine from a time I spent in Mexico with a girl.

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WELCOME TO THE DUNES

Slumbering Ursine Dunes is an open-ended, mini-sandbox adventure focused on exploration in a small, bounded area. It has been designed to work either as the framework for a short campaign in its home setting or (more likely in your case) as a slottable area along a short and secluded shoreline of the GM's druthers.

Extensive play in the region has found that the play balance works best with parties generally numbering 4-7 player-characters with combined levels ranging roughly 12-18. Smaller or weaker parties should be encouraged to pick up hireling help. A list of pre-generated NPCs for hire can be found on page 60. That said, the Dunes have a number of intentionally-placed areas of great danger that are deadly to even appropriately-powered parties. Depending on taste, the GM is encouraged to flag these areas with appropriate warnings (or not).

Gamemasters running the Dunes should familiarize themselves beforehand with two unique features: the pointcrawl - designed to produce focused meaningful exploration choices (guidelines on page 10) - and the Chaos Index (page 41), an optional subsystem for modeling the mythic weirdness of the Dunes.

FIRST APPEARANCES

Slumbering Ursine Dunes is known to the outside world for three things: the massive bulk of its red-sand beach dunes; the annual Yambor pilgrimage of soldier-bears; and Medved the hirsute godling who tenuously rules over its Weird-dominated reaches.

The scale of the dunes boggles the mind. Miles before one stands at their base, they can be glimpsed soaring above the scattered broadleaf groves like massive scarlet battlements. Up close and personal, they are even more daunting, with exterior dune faces precipitously rising up to 300-350 feet in height at dizzying 45-50 degree angles.

Climbing the dune faces without magical assistance is a Sisyphean and exhausting task: there is little traction in the fine-grained red sand and little of substance to hold onto. A determined climber, resting at half-hour intervals and blessed with a hearty constitution can clear a dune face at the molasses-slow rate of a 100 feet per hour on average.

Once over the outer dunes the interior plateau is more manageable—if one sticks to the base-hugging, twisty trail systems. Wind-blasted groves of twisted, leafless ironwood and patches of green-gray saw-grass break up the blinding, monotonous stretches of undulating sand. A strange timelessness hangs over the area; indeed, despite the season, the weather is uniformly that of late Spring once over the first dune-face, an outwardly visible manifestation of the Mythical Wilderness (called locally “the Weird”) the party has entered.

The Persimmon Sea with its sickly-sweet scent wraps around the Dunes to the south and west. The currents and winds run strong through the hull-smashing maze of sandbars. And if that wasn't enough to provide incentive to local mariners to give the region wide berth,

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

the imaginatively-named Misty Isles (three perpetually-fogged low one-mile-long islands) sit ominously at the seaward edge of the channel. These islands are rumored (quite correctly) to be gates into the Cold Hell itself.

How the Dunes Came to Be

It so came to pass that Marzana tired of her second life among the Foreign Gods. "My lover is feckless and my poses grow affected and languid," the Queen of Winter exclaimed with a great sigh. "I shall cover Zëm in the bitterness of my cold and start anew."

And so the great mountains of ice drove Pahr and his family from the fields of paradise. With horse and wagon, Pahr's clan divided amongst the three elder sons and wandered Zëm. Stanko, the youngest and most broke in the head of the three, reasoned that the cold of the Northlands must be like the darkness before dawn and must surely give out to warm lands of milk and honey. Thus his followers made great coracles from udders shorn from Velesh's cattle herd and crossed the World Canal.

But neither warmth nor milk nor honey was to be found. For one hundred years they fought the blueskins of the North and the fell creatures of the boreal forest, until at one great battle Stanko and all his kin but one were slain.

Sad and strong, the boy Mirko was left alone, and he said to himself, "I make peace with having no milk but warmth and honey perhaps are found with our kin to the south."

And Mirko wandered and wandered the hills of the south enacting great acts along the way. Finally he came to the shores of the sweet-smelling sea and being content, he rested.

Sleeping upon the sand, he was visited by Old Bear. Old Bear had a great hunger and seized upon Mirko's leg, swallowing it in a mighty bite. Mirko awakened and crying in pain, "Sweet Svat!" did battle with Old Bear, kicking up great mounds of sand in the struggle.

With his spear he pierced Old Bear and laid him down. Hungered, Mirko began to eat Old Bear. His belly full but saddened by having consumed such a noble foe, he was approached by Younger Bear. "Why have you eaten the flesh of Old Bear?" Younger Bear asked. "He is not unlike you in that he yearns for honey."

"Sometimes you eat the bear," Mirko replied. "And sometimes the bear eats you."

"Is that some kind of Northern thing?" Younger Bear asked, but Mirko only shrugged in answer.

Mirko was made sad again and though he had eaten and beaten Old Bear decided he would share what remained of his life with him as one.

So Mirko and Old Bear became Medved, the seeker of honey, ruling all bears and bearlings from the dunes thrown up in their battle until the world-dialectic turns again.

FACTIONS AND PERSONALITIES

Here in the Dunes, deep in the throbbing heart of a Weird-warped mythical wilderness, the four major factions represent a microcosm of competing otherworldly impulses.

JAROMIR THE OLD SMITH, LAWFUL GOOD

The Old Smith's current humble circumstances belie a heroic past. The predominant deity of humanity is the Sun Lord, a godhead that absorbs (or eats) fading gods and that is served by a number of hero-cults based around semi-divine champions. In a setting where leveled NPCs are rare, Jaromir's rise to 8th level as a fighter is notable, and all the more so for the colossal cock-up and underachievement of his career as one such aspiring hero.

While the Smith is the local representative of the ordering principle of human civilization, the mythical wilderness runs strong in these parts and he is deeply worn out, jaded and checked out in general from cosmic struggles. He wants nothing more than to tend to his little patch of the world and be a boring, annoying old coot. Only a direct and immediate threat to his family will shake him out of this apathy.

Gathered around him in recent years after tours of duty as mercenary pikemen are his wayward, mercenary sons: Pavol, Jiri, "Other" Pavol and Bohumil. They have transformed the Smith's nameless compound into the new and thriving hamlet of Kugelberg.

Relationship with Other Factions

The Old Smith and his sons see the Master as an irresponsible eccentric and a throwback to the older more chaotic (and pagan) way, but they are not overtly hostile to the Master and his more affable minions such as the bearling pilgrims and werebears. The notable exception being the centaurs who Jaromir will aggressively shoo following a number of recent chicken thefts and minor pranks such as painting dwarven penis runes on his barn.

Relationship to the Party

As a bored old man who enjoys hearing his own voice, Jaromir is mostly interested in the party as an audience. A broadly respectful party is however allowed to use the hamlet as a base of operations. The smith also drops 1-2 rumors from the Rumor Chart in among his ramblings per party visit, but avoids any direct questions about the Dunes by willfully and annoyingly misconstruing the party's statements ("*you say you want to go PLAY a TUNE? Whaaa?*").

On visits from especially friendly characters or those who make an active show of fighting with the Eld or Ondrj's Reavers he will rustle around in the junk that fills his farmstead and gift the party with a random piece of slightly off equipment such as a 60-foot coil of rope, nine-foot pole, two-headed torch, chocolate-covered caltrops, rusted hookah, etc. There is a 25% chance per visit however that he instead hands over a small crystal vial of tears of the atramentous lady (heals 1d6 hit points if ingested), a clerical scroll of bless, or a minor magic item of the GM's selection from his junk pile.

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

MEDVED THE MASTER, CHAOTIC GOOD

The Master or Medved considers himself to be the “benignly-neglectful” ruler and steward of the Dunes. (See *How the Dunes Came to Be* box for full background). Centuries of petty divinity have made him restless and distracted.

Any werebears, soldier bears, cave dwarfs, or centaurs encountered in the dunes are in his service. The first few groups serve his interests with verve and vigor, while the centaurs' love of lucre has driven them to skim money off the tolls and generally thumb their noses at Medved behind his hairy back.

Relationship with Other Factions

Medved is deeply concerned about the recent influx of malign, inimical forces into the Dunes thanks to the Eld's tampering with the veil between the worlds. While previously he turned a blind eye on Ondrj and his reavers, the wholesale rampages of the last year have upped his concern and convinced him that it'd be awfully nice for him to die. His inability to strike directly at him has only sharpened his concern and frustration.

Relationship to the Party

Medved views any non-hostile or overly-annoying party as a possible solution to some of his problems with the Eld and Ondrj. If he is pleased with the party's success in his first offered task (see **Glittering Tower Room 1**), he will continue to offer rewards for taking out his opponents: 500 gold pieces and a Classical Hyperborean scroll of erotic poetry with naughty pictures for taking out the Eld in the upper tower and another 500 for those in the lower reaches.

If the party seems to be making a good faith effort in taking on these tasks, he will allow them to rest on the first floor of the tower with the warning: “*as long as you keep out of my shit.*”

THE ELD, LAWFUL EVIL

The Eld presence in the Dunes precedes even that of the Master, the extradimensional elves having wrestled the Glittering Tower from the Hyperboreans back when their necromancer-king led-states began to crumble more than a 1,500 years ago and then lost it to Medved when he ascended to divinity in the area.

Several months ago, the Eld began organizing small recon teams to venture out of the alkaline wastes of the Cold Hell (one of Two Hells, called the Anti-Cantons by local wags) to the Dunes and elsewhere in the region in search of the Golden Barge, which has been drifting across pocket universes for centuries. When the party first enters the micro-region, the Eld in the area are mostly consumed with attempting to open a tear in the veil between the worlds large enough to bring in a flying vessel of sufficient size to levitate the barge.

Relationship with Other Factions

The Eld harbor an ancient hostility to the Master and his minions and attack these faction

members if they feel like they have a tactical advantage. As the scenario opens, the high degree of preparation and resource gathering necessary to rip open the veil prevents them from concentrating their forces to take (on taking) out local enemies.

While the Eld admire the casual disregard and contempt for sentient life of Ondrj, his wanton loose cannon ways are considered “off program.” They will kill him and his servants if they began to present an obstacle to their (the Eld’s) efforts.

The Eldish Overmind’s strict cost-benefit analysis of the dune situation has deemed Kugelberg’s presence to be offensive but not worthy of actual efforts to obliterate him at the moment.

Relationship to the Party

Most situations should have the Eld as hostile belligerents. It is conceivable that they may strike an alliance of convenience with a party who is openly fighting the Master’s faction. The Eld insist on a written compact for any such alliance, and while they would not dream of breaking the actual letter of such an agreement, they will try their damndest to bend clauses to their benefit after the party’s usefulness is at an end.

ONDRJ THE REAVER, CHAOTIC EVIL

Ondrj the Wereshark stands right on the threshold of actual divinity. Enjoying the furtive worship of mayhem-loving pirates, cutthroats, and tax collectors, his semi-divine body has been blessed with an immunity to aging and disease. Having drifted south a mere century ago in search of his distant cousin Medved (who more than a millennium past owed him a small herd of cattle for hush money), Ondrj has settled on the Dunes as a base of operations.

Gathered around him as servants are the symbiotic and disgusting remoras and a small band of bathing-averse corsairs. Fortunately for the surrounding areas, Ondrj’s utterly psychotic and erratic nature limits his ability to coordinate large-scale rampages with his band.

How the Cold Hell Do You Say This?

Medved “MED-vyed”
Oldrich “Old-RICK”
Ondrj “ON-Drey”
Jaromir “YAR-o-myr”
Captain Kůň “Captain KOO-nah”
Major Xhom “Major Zom”
Pahr “Par”
Polevik “Po-le-VIK”
Vlko “Vilk-O”
Vodnik “vod-NIK”
Zem “Zhem”

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

Relationship with Other Factions

Given half the chance, Ondrj would gladly kill, torture, and flay any other sentient creature in the three other factions. Because his forces are a bit weak, he exercises a bare level of prudence and has chosen to focus more on marauding against nearby human settlements than the others. A significant change in the balance of forces (one or more groups suffering serious casualties) changes that, and he and his servants will become increasingly more aggressive in the Dunes.



Relationship to the Party

Ondrj will gladly make common truck against the Master, promising the party the moons if they are successful, all the while attempting with all his mental might to restrain his natural impulse to kill them immediately. If the party is actively working for his interests, he may gift 20-200 gold pieces to them per visit as small incentive packages though there is 30% on each time that he just can't help himself and attacks.

Ondrj feels annoyed and threatened by the Eldish invasion of the Glittering Tower's dungeon level and may work with the party under the same conditions as against the Master above.

WHAT DO THE BIG TICKET NPCs TALK LIKE?

JAROMIR THE OLD SMITH

The Old Smith loves nothing better to hear himself talk. Favorite topics are far-fetched (and occasionally very much true) tall tales of his youth. His selective hearing is in high form when players attempt to steer the conversation.

"All the village girls said I was the best jumper in the Cantons. Why one night I almost cleared the peak on old Kitna Horda with a single leap. Would have made it too, if I wasn't carrying a cow on my back."

"What's that Runes?! There ain't such a thing around here, sonny. Now let me tell you about back in '42..."

MEDVED

The mythic timelessness of the Dunes has left the immortal Master of the Dunes somewhat self-absorbed and out of touch. While he is gracious and friendly to a party that is useful to his goals, he tends towards distracted small talk around long out-of-date human affairs or vaguely homoerotic queries.

"So tell me human is Humaka, the Bitch Queen of [Long Sunk] Outer Maarb, as fetching as always?"

"Do you like woodcuts about gladiators?"

ONDRJ

The wereshark leader is all politeness and smiles in tone, though a rather unsubtle air of menace is not to far off in every sentence he utters.

"Come sup and drink with me, as I grow bored and weary from my long voyage at sea."

OLDRICH

The hermit is a "holy fool," with the kind of "touched by the sun" brokenness that lets a human become a permanent fixture in a region dominated by the Weird. As such Oldrich's conversation is dominated by garbled religious rants about his god, the Sun Lord.

"Do not be temph to think His Supernal chariot only is driven by the lowness of two wheels."

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

"It is better to suffer the eye of a rich man's horned camel than let heresy eat halushky [a traditional dumpling dish] another morn."

GHULS

Once engaged in combat the ghuls maintain a steady stream of locution about the urgency and inherent rightness of their doctrine until their dying breath. Their tone is one of surprise and great concern even as they hack away at the player-characters.

"Come here, brother (or sister), so that we may liberate you from the sins of the flesh."

"Your resistance is but a symptom of meat-demon corruption."

ELD LEADERS

All Eld - even those in a nominal alliance with the party - talk in an exaggerated space opera villain voice ripe with condescending taunts.

"You man-apes are only fit for the protein vats."

Rumor Table

d20 Roll Rumor (Italicized phrases are false in nature)

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Bearlings kill and stuff any who intrude on their holy sites. (False) |
| 2 | The servants of the "Master of the Dunes" inflict a <i>horrific</i> toll on all who enter the Dunes. (Mostly True) |
| 3 | <i>Peaceful respite</i> and healing sustenance can be found in a magical field of wheat nestled between dune ridges. (Somewhat Tru-ish) |
| 4 | <i>The Jewelled Codpiece of the Old God of Hospitality, Radegost, lies hidden in a pit somewhere in the Dunes.</i> (Utterly False) |
| 5 | Two spots of great danger and not-too-shabby riches lie at the end of each distant reflection on the Persimmon Sea-side of the Dunes. (True) |
| 6 | Covet not green pearls, <i>they carry the souls of evil men.</i> (Mostly False) |
| 7 | Avoid sleeping in the dunes at all costs. (Sensible if Vague) |
| 8 | The Slumbering in the name of the Dunes refers to the region existing wholly in the Weird and thus only bound by the fever-dream non-logic of the gods. (Dramatic and Pedantic but True) |
| 9 | Wake not the Dreamers, lest they finish the World-Dream. (Cryptic and Inscrutable but True in a General Sense) |
| 10 | The Master of the Dunes is a colossal perv and a boor to boot. (Libel and Slander of the Worst Sort) |
| 11 | Magic pecans are nutritious. (True but Absurd Non-Sequitur) |
| 12 | Beware the paths most traveled; they <i>always</i> lead to points of great danger. (Misleading but not Always False) |

13	<i>The most sensible way</i> to navigate the maze of trails in the Dunes is to always pick the left path. (Old Wives' Tale)
14	On a clear day standing high on the Dunes near the Persimmon Sea, one can see clear cross the channel to the Misty Isles, <i>a restful place where the slivovce [plum brandy] runs as rivers along the banks of kolache [sweet pastries] trees.</i> (True and then Dead Wrong)
15	Bulb-headed beings from <i>what old women call the cold dark void of space</i> haunt the Dunes carrying on strange missions with their dark machines. (The Important Parts are True)
16	Approaching the Dunes from the Sea is tough-going for even the most experienced of mariners. Sandbars and creatures foul are thick as flies. (Good Advice)
17	Speak not to pirates in the hoary cliched tongues of otherworlds, their coarse ways belie their privileged, educated upbringings among the banking houses. They will take violent umbrage. (Surprisingly True)
18	Beware that son-of-a-bitch of a pirate Ondrj and any deal he makes; he will kill you soon as look at you. (Very True)
19	Seek the hermit Oldrich, the only man to dwell within the Dunes, though tedious beyond measure he grants a safe harbor inside his head. (Also Surprisingly True)
20	Medved, The Master, and King Bear are all one and the same being and though divine he has not ascended into the Otherworld but leads a <i>spartan</i> life in a plain tower near the sea. (Substantively True)

Slumbering Dunes Wandering Critter Encounter Table

d12 Roll Encounter

1	1d4 Centaur Toll Collectors [AC: 5, Hp: 16, HD: 4, Attk: 3 (2 hooves 1d6, weapon), lance 1d6, sword 1d8, composite bow 1d6, <i>LL</i> p. 67]. See Point 4 below for details on toll. Attack anyone without up-to-date token.
2	1d3 Giant Ant-Lions [AC: 4, Hp: 19, HD: 4, Attk: 1 (mandible chomp 1d12), XP: 135]. Surprise on 1-3, dropping 1d4 party members into one of their conical sinkholes.
3	1d2 Giant Sand Snakes [AC:5, Hp: 15, HD: 3, Attk: 1 (bite 1d3, poison), XP: 65]
4	1d2 Pelgranes [AC: 5, Hp: 15, HD: 3, Attk: 1 (bite 1d8), p. 48]
5	1d3 Giant Hawk [AC:6, Hp: 14, HD:3+3, Attk: 1 (peck 1d6), <i>LL</i> p. 81]

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

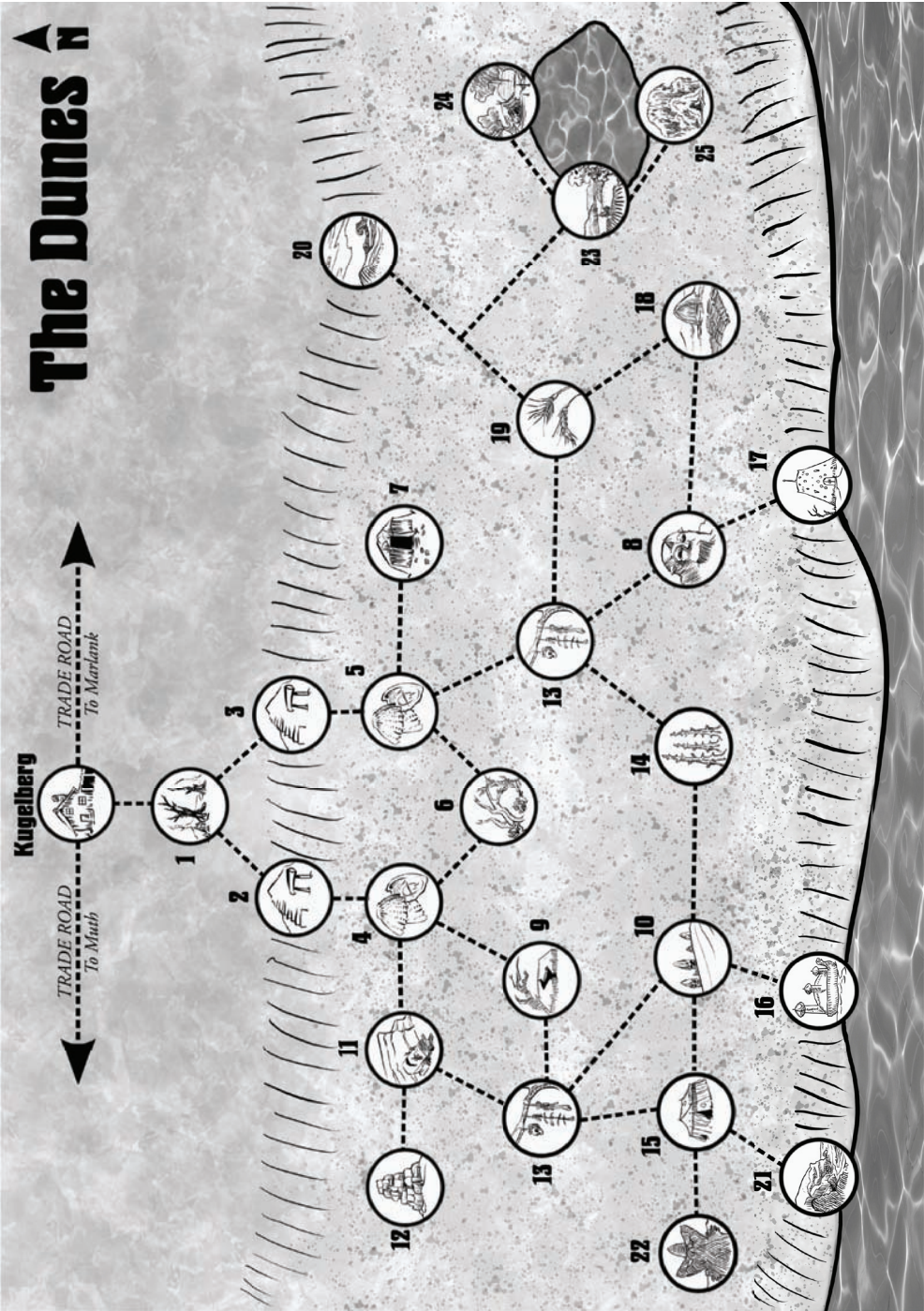
- | | |
|----|--|
| 6 | 1d3 Giant Lizards [AC:5, Hp: 15, HD: 3+1, Attk: 1 (bite 1d8), as <i>Giant Gecko</i> , <i>LL</i> p. 84] |
| 7 | 1d3 Werebears [AC: 2(8), Hp: 29, HD: 6, Attk: 3 (2 claws 2d4, bite 2d8), <i>LL</i> p. 85]. Disguised in human form as ragged beachcombers or circus performers. |
| 8 | 1d4 Black Bears [AC:7, Hp: 15, HD: 3+3, Attk: 3 (2 claws 1d4, bite 1d6), <i>LL</i> p. 64]. Only attacks if provoked or surprised at close quarters. |
| 9 | 1d6 Eld Recon Party [AC: 5 mesh armor, Hp: 12, HD: 2, Attk: 1 (weapon), compound bow 1d8, barbed short sword 1d6+1, p. 44]. Attempt to hide and follow party, setting up ambush if they find the Golden Barge. |
| 10 | 1d2 Mountain Lions [AC:6, Hp: 14, HD:3, Attk: 3 (2 claws 1d3, bite 1d6), <i>LL</i> p. 67]. Surprised only on a 1. |
| 11 | 2d6 Soldier Bear pilgrims [AC:6, Hp: 12, HD: 2+2, Attk: 1 (weapon), pole-arm 1d10+1, p. 49]. Only attack if provoked. |
| 12 | 1d6 Ghuls [AC: 5, Hp: 12, HD:3, Attk: 1 (weapon), battle axe 1d8+1, surprises on 1-4, p. 46]. Only encountered at night, otherwise roll again. |
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USING THE MAP

Although a small, traditional hex-map was originally used to run the Dunes in the Hill Cantons campaign, I have chosen to present the map as a pointcrawl, as I believe it does a better job at capturing the funneling nature of the near-unclimbable dunes and the easier-going paths that twist between them.

In a pointcrawl, the map emphasizes the focused choices of nodes and connections, as opposed to an all-directional hex-organized map. The lines that run between boxes represent paths, roads, staircases or what-have-you. They abstractly present the tedium of travel, the longer stretches of a journey that are just background. The boxes or points represent the interesting sites that break up a long trek. They might be full-on adventure sites such as a dungeon, a place for an encounter, or just an unusual landmark or piece of geography.

Points on the map represent encounter and site areas that are roughly spaced out 150-300 yards from each other. Connections between points along the lines represent the crude trail system that enters and exits each area in the rough compass direction they are depicted. GMs should note that in all cases travel times between points are universally 30 minutes in length. (The GM should halve or double these times for special conditions such as encumbered or Hasted characters.)



Slumbering Ursine Dunes

Flying or levitating characters can move freely on the grid at a rate of two minutes per smaller map square. Characters choosing to climb dunes should be limited to a grinding 30 minutes per map square when crossing dune faces, and climbing can only be attempted by characters with 15 and over CON. The GM should stress how draining such off-trail climbs are (though not prohibiting outright).

POINTCRAWL LOCALES

Kugelberg. A two-story, semi-fortified, junk-strewn farmstead stands here with four outlying, whitewashed cottages and a new barn. A single, worn trail winds its way south through goat pastures to the Dunes.

Jaromir [AC: 5 half plate if given time to kit out, AC: 9 otherwise, Hp: 46, 8th level fighter, Attk: 1 (weapon), maul 1d10, XP: 560], an old smith with a selective hearing impairment, welcomes all travelers with a pot of horse-meat stew, barley dumplings and shaggy dog stories of his youth (and he is not at all interested in mentioning his abortively-heroic past). **Jaromir's four sons** [AC: 5 half-plate, Hp: 8, 1st level fighters, Attk: 1 (weapon), pikes 1d6+1, long swords 1d8, XP: 10] and attendant families have recently retired from service with a mercenary landsknecht company and have set to clearing fields. A magically-immobile, gilded chariot (suspiciously similar to that of the predominant god of humanity, the Sun Lord) with an elaborate sun motif embossed on its front is hidden in the barn.

See Factions and Personalities (see pg. 3) for more on Jaromir and his sons.

1. Burnt Woods. Burnt-out, old-growth forest extends across this section of the woods. The pasture trail from Kugelberg splits to the southwest and southeast in the direction of low points in the dune wall. Horse hoof prints and shod boot tracks are readily seen on the southwest trail. Faint tracks and bear scat mark the southeast trail.

Blackened, jagged trunks and great piles of ash obscure visibility to roughly 100 yards.

2. Hitching Post and Magic Staircase. A stone-ringed, frequently-used fire pit and a four-foot rusted iron hitching post sit at the trail-head. Rising straight to the South behind the site over a relatively low saddle in the dunes (200 feet) is a magically-maintained, three-foot-wide staircase of packed sand which transverses the point north and south.

Though tiring, movement along the staircase connection is at the standard 30-minute rate between points in the pointcrawl. From sunset to sunrise, wandering monster checks are made at a 1-2 on 1d6 due to the site's high-traffic chokepoint use.

3. Magic Staircase. A secondary staircase nearly-identical to the one found in Point 2 is found here, though it is less trafficked. The dune face is considerably higher at 280 feet and takes an additional 10 minutes to traverse (40 minutes total).

4. Toll Collectors. Climbing up over the exhausting entry dune staircase, the party can see the undulating, blood-red plateau of the dunetops. Three trails branch off here just past the collection point. The western trail follows a tight, upward-climbing valley, its branch marked by a forlorn, sun-bleached, horned cow skull on a sagging driftwood pole. A well-maintained but narrow trail splits southeast (with faint horse hoof marks) and south, where the faint rank of spoiled meat can be smelled on the wind.

1d3 Centaurs [AC: 5, Hp: 16, HD: 4, Attk: 3 (2 hooves 1d6, weapon), lance 1d6, sword 1d8, composite bow 1d6, LL p. 67] are stationed here immediately behind the staircase ridgetop. They close with the party and “in the name of the Master” (Medved, see Glittering Tower section pg XX) attempt to collect a toll of 5 gp per party member per visit to the dunes (giving out date-stamped sea-shell tokens for verification). On a negative or neutral reaction roll, the collectors attempt to extort another 5 gp per member. Each centaur has a conch shell to use as a signal if attacked. 1d6 centaur reinforcements arrive within 2d6 rounds of such an alarm being raised.

5. Toll Collector. Climbing up over the entry dune ridge, the party can see both the dunescape as above and a bright metallic glittering on the horizon to the southeast. A heavily-used, horse-poo-laden trail heads east from here toward a dune valley. A wide, well-used trail snakes away to the southeast and a narrow path pulls off on a gentle slope westward.

A single **Centaur** [AC: 5, Hp: 16, HD: 4, Attk: 3 (2 hooves 1d6, weapon), lance 1d6, sword 1d8, composite bow 1d6] stands watch here ready to collect tolls. In all other respects, treat as Point 4 above.

6. Grove. The trail needles its way between a 70-foot-long ironwood grove and dense clumps of spiral-leaved, purple-stemmed bushes in a low point between two dunes. The trail runs up gentle slopes to the northeast and northwest from here.

Ideal bushwhacking territory: roll an extra Wandering Encounter check when PCs pass through this area.

7. Centaur Camp. Eight crude, driftwood lean-tos and a large, canvas yurt are arranged here in a circle around a central bonfire. The camp sits in a dune cul-de-sac with a single entrance/exit in the west.

15 Centaurs [AC: 5, Hp: 17, HD: 4, Attk: 3 (2 hooves 1d6, weapon), lances 1d6, swords 1d8, composite bows 1d6, LL p. 67], all of them male, are in various states of repose here. A dozen of the group gallop up to the party on their first entry into the point and attempt to extort a “special access fee of 100 gp--or whatever is in your pocket.”

They are lead by **Captain Kůň**, a particularly potent and aggressive member of the species [AC: 3 plate barding, Hp: 37, HD: 6, Attk: 3 (2 hooves 1d6, weapon), lances 1d6, battleaxes 1d8, composite bows 1d6, XP: 570]. Kůň, while not actively hostile, is a greedy

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

fuck and instantly eyes the party up as marks, attempting his damnest to extort, swindle or otherwise manipulate the party into giving over its wealth. In the Captain's yurt is a lockbox with 830 gold pieces (skimmed off the top from toll money), three bars of amber, each with a small black cyst in the center (warm to the touch, worth 100 gp each), and two carved, ivory phallic symbols (worth 150 gp each).

8. Statue Remains. Sections of a massive, rusted iron statue of what looks to have been an ancient Hyperborean ruler are strewn across a dune face, here. Campfire smoke lazily drifts out of the right ear of the statue's massive head. The metallic glint of the Glittering Tower can be seen down the trail to the southeast. Two other trails wind in tight, convoluted valleys to the northwest and east.

The morose-looking, crowned statue head has been uprighted, and **Oldrich** [AC: 8, Hp: 4, 2nd level cleric, Attk: 1 (weapon), staff 1d6, cure light wounds, purify food and drink, XP: 29], a half-mad religious ascetic, has taken up residence inside the hollowed head. He offers to cast his cure spell on a visibly wounded member of a friendly party in exchange for listening to his religious ranting for a turn. Any interruption leaves him in a pout.

9. Grue Pit. A small, dense copse of ironwoods and tanglebushes sits here between the dunes. An overpowering, stomach-churning smell of decaying meat hangs on the wind. Two crooked paths intersect at the copse and head north and west.



Exploration of the copse reveals a sandstone surface ripped with a three-foot crack. A short vertical shaft of 10 feet descends into a 20-foot-wide cave, the lair of a ferocious **Grue** [AC: 3, Hp: 32, HD: 6, Attk: 1 (**giant razor sharp teeth 2d6**), **perpetual darkness globe** (AEC p. 60), p. 47]. Hidden among the many bones in the cave is a silvery ball that induces an orgasmic sensation in the handler (worth 1000 gp if sold to a bawdy house or decadent fop).

10. Eld Ambush. The trail here narrows to single file and runs between two parallel, low dune ridgelines just to the south of the intersection of the east, northwest, and west paths. The dull gold reflection of the Golden Barge and the broad sea can be clearly seen on the trail leading to the south.

Unlike the taller, steeper dunes, these two ridgelines can be scaled in three rounds (the dunes are too low to provide a good line of sight out of the point, however). If the party has alerted the Eld in the area (*see both the Golden Barge and Glittering Tower write-ups pg. 20 and 30*), 2d6 Eld set an ambush here just behind the ridges, gaining surprise on a 1-4 chance, if the party doesn't take spoiling measures.

11. Rainbow Sandstone. The dune sands appear to have been metamorphosed into a brilliant-hued sandstone formation. Horizontal strata of every color have been pushed and twisted into hilly folds. Partially blocked by a pile of cut, sun-bleached ironwood trunks heavily marked with what looks to be large gashes, is a trail leading west. A narrow but unblocked path heads south and east.

Dune denizens avoid this site like the plague (roll for no wandering monster checks here) for no readily discernible reason.

12. Cairn of the Slothrog. Near the trail here is a 8-foot-high cairn of large, granite, stacked rocks. The only entrance/exit is from the east here back to Point 11.

Moving the rocks takes a combined STR of 25 and 4 turns to clear (2 turns if a combined STR of 50 is used). Clearing the rocks reveals a granite-mortared shaft, dropping 60 feet to a chamber, and a deep, gamey, animal smell. Twenty feet down are three narrow alcoves lining the shaft wall that hold the mummified remains of 6-foot-long sloths. Descending to the shaft bottom reveals a high-ceilinged 40 by 40 foot mortared chamber (the shaft enters the ceiling at the far west side). Upright on the eastern side of the room is what looks to be a sawed-off section of a massive, petrified, redwood tree. Nestled in the branches here is the dreaded **Slothrog, a black-furred, flashing red-eyed, giant sloth of demonic appearance** [AC -1, Hp: 14, HD:8, Attk: 1 (**weapon**) or 1 (**bite**), **fiery +1 bastard sword 1d8+3, whip 1d6, or bite 1d10, save vs. paralysis on hits with whip, Slow (LL p. 32) twice a day, p. 50.**] While deadly and hostile, the Slothrog has been greatly weakened by its millenium of sleep in this chamber. Hung with the guts of a bureaucrat from one of the branches is the desiccated corpse of a silver-plated knight of antiquity. His ornate tournament field plate (AC: 2) is worth 1000 gp if sold.

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

13. Ironwood Grove. The trail broadens out and cuts through a 50-foot-long ironwood grove to a central four-way intersection . Fine delicate human bones are tied with silk ribbons on a tree just off the intersection. A well-maintained trail with a split-log fence on its sides runs south from the intersection. Two narrow, unremarkable trails head north and southwest while the path to the east is faint and weed-choked.

The point is otherwise empty.

14. Petrified Pines. Three magenta-hued, petrified pine trees stand in a triangle just off the path here. The sweet, sweet smell of the Persimmon Sea wafts in on ocean breezes over the steep southern dunewalls. Narrow trails run northeast and west from here.

The point is otherwise empty.

15. Reaver Campsite. Observant party members may catch on a roll of 1-2 on a d6 (1-4 for Elves, Rangers or Druids) a small footpath leading into a tight hollow between two dune faces in this point. Two trails lead northeast and east through the dunes while a single file path leads sharply down to the visible sea in the south.

Camped in said hollow in a tattered (but once quite lovely) hot pink and white silk pavilion are **8 Human pirates** [AC: 6, Hp: 5, HD:1, Attk: 1 (weapon), trident 1d6, hand axe 1d6, LL p. 87] led by **Fooloo, a doughy, bug-eyed, greyish-skinned fighter reeking of fish** [AC: 4 giant alligator plate, Hp: 16, 3rd level Fighter, Attk: 1 (weapon), bohemian ear-spoon 1d10, jo stick 1d4, XP: 50]. Two pirates are on watch at all times and may only be surprised by actively sneaking or invisible characters. The pirates are members of *Ondry's Reavers* (see pg 38) and appear to act hospitable, offering a bowl of "wild pork" stew to party members while (naturally) preparing to slaughter them. Buried underneath the tent is a small chest filled with 63 gold pieces and a simple gold ring (worth 200 gp) inscribed with "*Eliška, you may be a psychotic blemish on humanity's record, but you are my blemish on humanity's record.*" Under no circumstance will they talk with the accent of a 17th or 18th century buccaneer of our world.

16. Golden Barge. See *Adventure Site 1 description pg 20.*

17. Glittering Tower. See *Adventure Site 2 description pg 30.*

18. Bearling Holy Site. A vast amphitheater is carved here into a flattened 150-yard patch of tan sandstone. At its back sits a small, deep-red marble shrine. A three-foot ruby-eyed, porphyry statue of Medved or King Bear standing in roaring bear form (worth 6000 gp) can be seen inside. A well-traveled, broad trail leads to the west and a narrower, bush-choked trail runs off to the northwest.

The shrine is attended to at all times by a color guard of **14 soldier-bears** [AC 4 breastplates and morions, Hp: 18, HD:2+2, Attk: 1 (weapon), polearm 1d10+1] with bardiche pole-

arms, gilded morions, and gleaming breastplates. Theft of the statue angers Medved sorely (*see the Glittering Tower*), forcing him to use his godling powers of Divination (AEC p. 34) to determine the culprit.

19. Magic Rye Field. Incongruously, a 100-foot-square field of lush rye grows in a flattened space nestled between protecting dunes ridge. Barely-visible and underused trails run west and northeast here.

Regardless of the time of year, the wheat is fully grown and abnormally tall at a 6-foot height and emanates magic if a detect magic spell is cast. Searching the field reveals nothing but a sense of supernal peace. Though no wandering monster checks are made while in this point, the magic field is haunted by **6 poleviks** [AC: 3, Hp: 8, HD: 2, Attk: 2 (2 weapons), sickle 1d6, disease touch] who attack anyone fool enough to camp and sleep in or around the field. Rye harvested from the fields, if ground and baked properly, makes loaves of bread that heal 1-2 hit points per stomach-filling portion.

20. Eroded Dune. The outer dunes here have eroded severely, providing a gentler and lower slope. The Dunes region can be entered and exited here.

The climb time is one hour and impassable to mounts and wagons or carts. A well-concealed path exits this point through the woods to the northeast, eventually hitting the trade road two miles to the east. This entry and exit point is only known to full-time dune inhabitants such as the centaurs and Medved.

21. Reaver Cove. The single-file path from the north breaks out of the Dunes to reveal the wide-open, sweet-smelling Persimmon Sea. A series of steep switchbacks drops down to a small, boulder-strewn cove.

A long canoe (holds up to 8), with outriggers and a central sailing mast dismounted and lying in the hull, is hidden among the rocks by a sand-covered tarp. An actively searching party may find it on a roll of 1-4 on a d6, while a casual tour stumbles upon it on a roll of a 1 on a d6.

22. Camp of Sir Eld. The single exit/entrance from the east ends in a snug little hollow with a high duneface overlooking the sea.

An **Eld noble**, “Sir Eld” [AC: 3 ceramic plate, Hp: 41, 6th level fighter, Attk: 1 (weapon), vibro-sabre 1d8+2 non-magical, XP: 1070] sits here reading and watching the waves on a shellacked human peasant twisted into the shape of a reclining chair. He is attended to by **6 Eldman (humans with artificial head-bulbs) slave-retainers** [AC: 7 leather armor, Hp: 6, HD: 1, Attk: 1 (weapon), short sword 1d6, weighted nets (save vs. paralysis or held 1d6 rounds on hit), XP: 10]. Though thoroughly unpleasant by human standards, Sir Eld is ridiculed as an incurable softy by his brethren. Thus he will only attempt to kill or enslave a weak-looking party and may even attempt to broker a temporary agreement of



alliance with a strong-seeming party on the outs with Medved.

A short coffee-table made from an elderly peasant woman has holds a dainty tea-set made from depleted uranium (worth 200 gp). Sequestered below the peasant-table is a bag of 300 gold pieces. The book Sir Eld is reading from is *The Altricious Cycle of Supernal Japery*, a cruelly satirical book of poetry written in Classical Eld Iambic pentameter by Jaasher, and is worth 200 gp if sold to a sage or bookdealer.

23. Diluvian Reservoir. A centuries-old dam complex here holds a V-shaped reservoir of the last floodwaters of the Great Deluge. The reservoir sits in the low point of a deep ravine. A birch forest here grows thick and ancient; the eldest trees stand like watchtowers around the dam. The paths are steeply sloped and choked with seedling birches; ascending out of the ravine to the paths heading northeast and southeast takes twice as long as entering.

The dam is maintained by a family of **6 giant beaver engineers** [AC 7, Hp: 14, HD: 4, Attk: 1 (bite or tail or weapon), bite 1d8 and save vs. rods or sunders wooden weapon, tail slap 1d8 and save vs. paralysis or knocked prone, auto-reloading crossbow 1d6]. They are of an unbroken lineage from the megafauna shipwrights who built the Borean Ark. Their lair is built into the dam. Its public areas include a reception desk, model architecture display room, aquarium viewing room, and store selling hand-held wooden analytic engines. Private areas include family sleeping area, reservoir access, workshop, food storage, and spillway control room.

If the spillways are fully opened, the entire ravine will be flooded, and the two sites accessible to the ravine will become marshland. Prehistoric marine life will begin showing up in waterways throughout the Slumbering Ursine Dunes region, and the Last Boreans will awaken beneath the ancient mud.

24. Vodník Pool. Coming around the ravine path from point 23, the reservoir broadens out into a swampy space between the surrounding dunes. Two petrified trees overhang the water, swamp moss drooping down. A half-sunken hut juts out from the middle of the pond, with occasional glints of radiance peeking out. A steep narrow path to the southwest runs up the ravine.

Zoltán the vodník [AC 4, HP 19, HD 4, Attk: 1d6 special (save vs paralysis or be dragged underwater, drown in 1d6+1 rounds)] can be found here, lounging on a rock and puffing away at a long-stemmed pipe. In contrast to most of his vodník brethren, he appears in mostly human form: long moustaches, once splendid but now waterlogged coat and hat, webbed hands, and flapping gills at the sides of his neck.

The hut contains a floating log that serves as Zoltán's bed, a piece of a ship's hull serving as a table, and a sunken chest (65 gold pieces, a carved bone cameo of Radegast worth 15 gold pieces, and an excellently worked sabre dealing 1d8+1 damage). On a shelf above the water lie Zoltán's tobacco pouch and nine small, ceramic cups containing the brilliant-white souls

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

of those who have drowned in the pond. Drinking a soul heals the imbiber of all damage and maladies, and gives them a +1 to all saves for eight hours.

Zoltán is not immediately aggressive, and is willing to trade news. The vodník takes a perverse pride in his gloomy demeanor and generally soggy outlook on life; he is willing to barter some of his stored treasures for tobacco, or the induction of a hireling “into the service of Vul” (drowning). If he hears about Oldrich the hermit, Zoltán will offer the sabre to the party if they can lure Oldrich to the pool so that a “religious debate” can ensue (drowning). Zoltán has a cordial relationship with Ondrj’s Reavers, who make it a point to execute deserters in the pool. Ondrj can’t make up his mind whether to keep courting the Vodník’s favor and weaken the Master’s grasp on the Dunes, or dive into the pool and devour the Vodník himself.

25. Tree of Hanging Rusalkas. A large willow tree looms over the southeastern end of the reservoir. (At night.) A weird, disharmonious crooning can be heard coming softly from the boughs of the tree. A single, steep path leads along the reservoir ravine to the northwest.

Three Rusalkas [AC: 2, Hp: 18, 13. 9. HD 3, Attk: 1 (strangle), 1d6, Undead, +1 or better weapon to hit] hang here in the boughs of the tree at night, while during the day they “sleep” in the lake bed below the tree. These are undead spirits, which take on corporeal flesh at night and strangle those which come too close to their willow. They appear to be drowned corpses with long hair resembling willow leaves, and they sway and sing eerily in the night.

Check for surprise if the tree is investigated at night. If the players are surprised, the Rusalkas leap from the tree, attacking with a +2 to hit. Once they make a successful strangle attack, they automatically deliver 1d6 damage each succeeding round, but may themselves be attacked with a +4 to hit. They may be turned as ghouls. Once their prey is dead, they are dragged beneath the lake to dance with their new wives. Male PCs are attacked in preference to female PCs. At the discretion of the GM, sacrifices of cakes or other grave goods may convince the Rusalkas to sleep at night, rather than sing, but maybe not. The Rusalkas are picky. 300 gold coins worth of grave goods are buried beneath the lake bed.

ADVENTURE SITE 1: THE GOLDEN BARGE

FIRST APPEARANCES

At first glance, the Golden Barge appears entirely too top-heavy, too low at the waterline, and altogether too clunky to be ocean worthy. Roughly 360 feet from bow to stern and 180 feet across, the oval(ish) main deck is gleaming, polished, white steel, bordered by low, metal rails that taper forward to the twin, hyper-stylized dragon heads that flank the bow landing ramp.

A great, golden dome rises to a height of 40 feet from the deck. The dull metallic hue of the dome shimmers and sparkles during daylight hours and produce a significant glare in the

intensity of a cloudless noonday sun. At night the dome appears more translucent with an eerie glow and blue lights appearing at intervals just inside the structure's walls.

The dome is pierced at several points by circular, onion-domed, metal-shafted towers. The largest tower is the 70-foot-high control tower at the aft (room 23a). The 50-foot towers marked 4b and 9 on the map appear from the outside to have their glassy, bulbous tops broken.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

The barge has been rammed a good 60 feet onto the beach (low tide exposes another 10 feet) and would take a herculean feat to unmoor. A massive dune face soars up a full 300 feet at a precipitous 60-degree angle a short distance from the narrow bank the barge is stranded on. From the top of the dunes, the barge must be approached obliquely by a switch-backed trail running a 100 yards to the south.

Four long rows of low, tightly-packed pyramids of human bones are arranged on the fore-deck. At night, there is a chance of 1 on 1d6 of encountering three ghuls on deck assembling a fresh new pyramid. They exploit their near-invisibility to ambush from behind any party that approaches the front doors of the tower.

Repeated visits to the barge have the potential of drawing the attention of the Eld, its former masters. Each visit after the first, there is a 10 percent chance plus 10 percent for each prior visit that 2d6 Eld attempt to ambush the party on either their trip into or out of the barge (this ambush occurs only once). (Note: if the protective glyph on the staircases in Rooms 6 and 8 in the nearby Glittering Tower have been tampered with, there is a flat 25 percent chance each visit that the Eld have managed to free the barge, leaving only a 6-inch silvery disk that activates on touch and taunts the party with an image of the barge's liberation as a clue to its disappearance.)

SPECIAL INTERIOR CONDITIONS

Lighting

Rooms or passages that have a wall bordering the dome exterior enjoy shaded natural light from the semi-translucence of its walls. Rooms and passages further into the dome are only dimly illuminated during the day by the more opaque dome ceiling (any point of the dome above 20 feet). Here the shadows are so deep and the gloom so heavy that functional visibility is only around 20 feet without artificial lighting.

Valve Doors

While most interior doors are relatively normal, easy-swinging doors of polished ebony, certain doors in the vessels are valved metal pressure doors with a single spinning opening wheel in the center (appearing much like doors from WW2-era submarines). Sounds cannot be heard through such doors, and they may on occasion (1 on 1d4 chance) be rusty, forcing an Open Doors check and producing such a horrendous sound on opening that an instant wandering monster check must be made.

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

Ghuls

The primary residents of the barge are, despite outward appearances, neither undead nor properly among the living. The ghuls believe themselves to be the zealous adherents of a redemptive sect that cleanses the sins of the sentient living through the ritual consumption of their flesh--a doctrine they enthusiastically expound upon even during the throes of combat. In reality they are by-products of the vessel itself, antibodies of the barge's biomechanical system spawned in the sacs of Room 6.

As living extensions of the ship the ghuls have a dull awareness of its goings-on and can never be surprised while within the barge. They detect invisible creatures on a 1-2 on 1d6 each round they are in the presence of such a cloaked creature. Any combat inside the dome has a 1 in 6 chance per round of attracting 1d4 ghuls from the wandering pool (see below).

Flesh consumed by the ghuls is excreted into Room 7 and returned to the barge as energy for its dwindling power reserves.

Golden Barge Wandering Critter Encounter Table

d8 Roll	Encounter
1-3	1d2 Ghuls* [AC: 5, Hp: 13, HD:3, Attk: 1 (weapon), swords 1d8+1, surprises on 1-3, p. 46]. If undetected, shadows the party waiting for an opportunity to ambush.
4-5	1d6 Ghuls* [AC: 5, Hp: 12, HD:3, Attk: 1 (weapon), battle axes 1d8+1, surprises on 1-3, p. 46]. Attack immediately if equal or greater in number, otherwise as above.
6-7	Crawlers [AC:6, Hp: 14, HD:3, Attk: 2 (2 swarm 1d8), attacks disrupt spells as <i>insect swarm</i> (AEC p. 45), only takes 1hp damage from single target attacks, p. 46]. Single 10-foot-square mass.
8	Terrified victim [AC: 9, Hp: 1d4, 0-level human] runs in with 1d4 ghuls* [AC: 5, Hp: 10, HD:3, Attk: 1 (weapon), battle axe 1d8+1, surprises on 1-3, p. 46] in pursuit.

*Appearances of the ghuls on the wandering monster chart are limited by a pool of reserves maintained by the vessel. Once that pool is expended no further ghuls outside of static locations are encountered (treat as no encounter) until the ship has had time to spawn more. During the first visit to the barge, that pool contains only 6 ghuls. On the second visit (after the party spends a minimum of four hours away from the site) the barge's self-protection routines ramp up to repel foreign elements and the pool jumps to 12 ghuls and then to 18 ghuls on the third and fourth visits. After that, the system burns itself out and is limited to only 2 ghuls (the "excess" ghuls in the meantime having keeled over.) The system heals itself after six months of being down.

ROOM CONTENTS

1. Entrance Tower. The exterior entrance is a double-set of massive valved doors of gleaming, polished bronze. Scorch marks cover the floor. An open metal staircase winds its way up the north wall to a **trapdoor** to 1a.

1a. Weapon Tower. A massive, metal **cross-armed weapon** (think big-ass crossbow without a string) with an open loading chamber sits on a 360-degree pivot; steel hoses run from it to the floor. The membrane of the tower bulb is magically malleable, and a 2-foot-round hole opens in whichever direction the weapon is pointed (controls in Room 10). White steel racks for ammo-balls run on all sides with a single **glass ball** filled with a sloshing, amber liquid (if thrown, treat as fireball with 10' radius and 4d6 on impact) left.

2. Grand Foyer. Deep, dark scarlet rugs banded with geometric designs are piled over the floor. **Three ghuls** [AC: 5, Hp: 9, 10, 12, HD:3, Attk: 1 (**weapon**), **battle axe 1d8+1, surprises on 1-3, p. 46**] invite the party to “shed themselves of the corruption of their fleshy sin” before attacking. Obsessively sorted piles of the clothing of ghul victims are arranged in tight rows. A turn of searching reveals a gilded set of sandals (100 gp value)

3. Port Drawing Room. A long, polished mahogany table is set with three silver platters (50 gp value each) piled high with delicious-smelling, perfectly-grilled “long pork.” A **ghul** [AC: 5, Hp: 14, HD: 3, Attk: 1 (**weapon**), **large meat skewer 1d4+2, surprises on 1-3, p. 46**] is fastidiously arranging the meats in decorative shapes. Sounds of combat in Room 2 cause him to hide under the table and wait in ambush.

4. Starboard Drawing Room. A garishly-painted, out-of-place appearing wood cupboard of recent make **conceals the door** to the south. Silver flatware (value 150 gp) is inside. Otherwise empty.

5. Broken Tower. A tower shaft rises up 40 feet here with a winding staircase to a trapdoor. At the base of the staircases are **three burned skeletons** of humanoids with long, thin bones and high, elongated and slightly bulbed skulls (Eld). The tower bulb above is broken off and empty.

6. Spawn Room. Rows of **organic sacs** made of a veined, flesh-like material hang from short metal hoses here. If cut open, blood, gore, and a soft pinkish skeleton spills forth and two wandering ghuls arrive three rounds later to investigate. Destroying all 48 sacs decimates the ghul pool for 48 hours (after which time the ship regrows the sacs).

7. Internal Organs. Ceiling, walls, and floor of this room are covered in a thick, black tar-like substance with small, hard, grapefruit-sized nodules. **Light sources are diminished** to a one-foot radius. Attempts to cast any light-based effect spell cause 1d6 turns of blindness for all in the room. Attempts to violently hack at the substance cause the entire barge to shudder and all ghuls in the remaining wandering pool to converge here in a turn (60 hit points damage causes the room's supporting functions to die). A delicate, armless **alabaster**

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

statuette of a triple-headed goddess (500 gp value) is partially mired in the center of the room.

8. Backup Organs. Virtually identical to above, the light-absorbing and other effects only come into effect if room 7 has been destroyed. *Destroying both rooms ends all organic, powered functions of the barge.*

9. Tower Shaft. A tower shaft rises up 40 feet here with a winding staircase to a trapdoor leading to 9a. A **Ghul** [AC: 5, Hp: 15, HD: 3, Attk: 1 (**weapon**), **longsword 1d8+1, surprises on 1-3, p. 46**] lurks under the lower stairs here and stabs anyone climbing the stairs.

9a Vulture Tower. The tower has a broken bulb roof and a **Two-Headed Giant Vulture** (AC: 5, Hp: 33, HD: 6, Attk: 2 (2 **pecks 1d10**), p. 51] with a three-foot tumor on its chest has made a nest here. In the nest are an Eld skeleton and a foot-wide **copper Dimensional Gate ring** (1000 gp value, used to activate inter-dimensional gates like those found in Room 18).

10. Lord's Stateroom. A white egg-like, plushly-carpeted sleeping capsule dominates the room. A large redwood writing desk and a chair formed from a shellacked human peasant sit in the corner. Among the many deteriorating scrolls depicting complicated mathematical equations piled on the desk, there is a neat stack of 20 large **silver crescent coins** (60 gp value to antiquarian) and **magic-user scrolls of water breathing, spider climb and arcane lock**.

11. Attendants' Stateroom. Four spartan egg sleeping capsules are smashed open here. Otherwise **empty**.

12. Seneschal's Stateroom. Inside a plush egg capsule is the desiccated corpse of an Eld noble. A **silver dagger** with poison reservoir in the hilt (three charges left) has been plunged into his heart.

13. Galley. Three aproned **ghuls** [AC: 5, Hp: 8, 9, 9, HD: 3, Attk: 1 (**weapon**), **meat cleaver 1d4+2, surprises on 1-3, p. 46**], are artfully grilling and preparing human flesh plates here. White steel shelves and giant woks are arranged around the walls. **The odd, steel, strangely-fluted cooking implements** here have value (200 gp).

14. Burnt Stateroom. Burn marks cover the floors and walls. There are four lumps of twisted metal on the floor, otherwise the room is **empty**.

15. Pleasure Lounge. A large blackwood dance floor carved with intricate, interlocking worm designs dominates the center of the room. To either side are large piles of plush pillows. Underneath the pillows on the west side is an urn of narcotic **Grey Lotus powder** (10 doses, induces hallucinogenic coma for 1d6 hours) and a small brass panel with three knobs. Turning the **left knob** releases watered-down lotus gas throughout the room (save



Slumbering Ursine Dunes

vs. breath weapons or wildly hallucinate for 1d4 turns). Turning the **center knob** causes the worm designs to writhe. Turning the **right knob** causes a loud, discordant, bassy music to play (roll wandering monster checks each round it is playing). Shackles line the east wall.

16. Tower Shaft. An **empty** tower shaft rising (rises) 45 feet, with a winding staircase which leads to a trapdoor into 16a.

16a. Auxiliary Control Tower. An abnormally-tall metal **control throne** with a hose-attached steel skullcap dominates the room. Placing the cap on the head causes the wearer to fall into a reverie in which a monotone voice asks in Eld for the “command line.” If the controls in room 24 have been mastered, the weapon in 1a can be controlled and fired from here by rolling 4d6 under INT.

17. Crew Stateroom. 12 egg shaped sleeping capsules line the walls. Otherwise **empty**.

18. Assembly Chamber. Two hefty ghuls [AC: 5, Hp: 30, 28, HD: 6, Attk: 1 (weapon), Terminax 1d8+2 or sword 1d8+1, surprises on 1-3, XP: 570], one wielding the dreaded Terminax (as battle axe +1, +3 vs. giant insects) the other wearing a gem-studded deodand harness (300 gp value), are sermonizing about the liberatory joy of anthropophagy to 8 ghuls [AC: 5, Hp: 11 each, HD: 3, Attk: 1 (weapon), longsword 1d8+1, surprises on 1-3] here. Three glowing blue circles with empty indentations for copper gate rings are spaced out on the floor. (In the original, the gates led to Tekumel, Sigil and the “Summer Country”).

19. Baiting Room and Lavatory. A large pool of 8-foot-deep seawater takes up most of the room. A 3-inch-wide metal arm extends from the wall and a large green pearl (500 gp value) dangles from it just above the water. The pearl prevents a water spirit, a **Vodník** [AC:4, Hp: 23, HD: 4 Attk: 1 (d6 bite plus special drowning attack, see Appendix)], invisible in the water, from leaving the room but has no other powers (it appears magical if Detect Magic is cast on it). The Vodník ungratefully attacks anyone who attempts to retrieve the pearl.

20. Observation Lounge. Piles of plush pillows sit on the carved, orange wood floor here. Otherwise **empty**.

21. Crew Stateroom. Two ghuls [AC: 5, Hp: 12 each, HD: 3, Attk: 1 (weapon), hand axe 1d6+1, surprises on 1-3, p. 46] are tidying up this room of 16 egg capsules. A chest contains 40 **silver crescent coins** (120 gp value).

22. Engineering. Three large, indestructible, glass and metal hamster wheels are here. Inside are tiny homunculi standing or running on a looping treadmill. Only one wheel is currently in motion. All three wheels will be in motion if the Control Tower controls have been activated and mastered.

23. Tower Base. Unlike other towers the shaft is not open. A humming solid metal core

stands in the center with a 10-foot-wide circular staircase winding around it.

23a. Control Tower. A Four-Armed White Ape [AC: 6, Hp: 23, HD: 5, Attk: 4 (pummeling arms 1d6), barrels, XP: 350] waits attentively at the top of the stairs with a stockpile of eight stainless steel water barrels. Non-sneaky attempts to climb the steps are met with barrels rolling down the steps one at a time. Characters can elect to dodge or jump over the oncoming barrels by rolling 4d6 under DEX or attempt to smash them directly (treat as AC: 2, Hp: 9). A character struck by a barrel takes 1d6 damage and is knocked to the bottom of the stairs. Any other characters behind are knocked down along with the unfortunate sod. The ape can get off at least two barrels before the party makes it up the stairs (barring mishaps).



Slumbering Ursine Dunes

Standing 30 feet behind his mutant ape slave is **Major Xhom** [AC:6 **tattered silver suit**, **Hp: 24**, **HD: 4**, **Attk: 1 (weapon)**, **oversized vibrating and wickedly flanged axe 1d8+3 non-magical**, **XP: 245**], the sole survivor of the first of the recent Eld expeditions to the barge. Xhom is attempting to puzzle out how to reactivate the vessel while fending off the ghuls below. He is invariably hostile to the party unless they are in active alliance with the local Eld (and can prove it).

An imposing 8-foot-high **control throne** (with metal skullcap and attaching hose like the one in Room 16a) sits atop a 1-foot-high platform in the center. Featureless black **glass control panels** line the walls. One panel is broken revealing what looks like human flesh behind.

Placing **the control helmet on the head** produces an insane cacophony of power and data sensations in the mind of the wearer. The character must immediately save vs. spells or permanently lose 1d4 WIS from psychic damage and fall into a coma for 1d6 hours. Even if the save is made the wearer is inflicted with a strong sense of godlike potency, refusing to take the helmet off unless physically stopped. A monotone voice then asks in Eld for a “command line,” if that language is understood the wearer must roll 5d6 under INT to gain a small working idea of how to control the vessel. Only one attempt per level can be made.

If the barge is somehow freed from the strand, it can be clumsily piloted at a speed of three miles per hour. The barge can accommodate 20 tons of cargo and sleep 60 comfortably if fitted with more beds.

24. Officers Lounge. Long stuffed divans run along the walls. Underneath four **expensive throw-rugs** (value 150 gp each, encumbering) is a locked secret trapdoor. Inside is a lead box containing six heavy **dull-silver bars** (1200 gp value to an alchemist) that are warm to the touch. Handling them outside the box for more than two hours produces a virulent skin cancer that kills in 1d6 weeks unless treated with Cure Disease or Heal.

25. Cold Storage. Freezing cold locker with 60 human, cave dwarf (*see Appendix C*) and hobbit carcasses hanging from hooks. Crude Xs have been carved where the eyes were and their tongues arranged to hang out of their mouths.



Slumbering Ursine Dunes

ADVENTURE SITE 2: THE GLITTERING TOWER

FIRST APPEARANCES

As they wind their way through the dune paths, the adventurers may glimpse intermittently a bright but distant, glittering reflection emanating from a high point near the seaside. As they enter Point 12 they stumble upon its source: a 90-foot smooth yellow sandstone tower tapering up pylon-like from a square, red marble base. The tower's glittering effect emanates from two-foot-long semi-translucent mollusk shells embedded throughout the tower's exterior surface.

INTERIOR CONDITIONS

The interior walls, floors, and ceilings of the above-ground tower floors appear much the same as the sandstone exterior. Walls rise at a gentle, sloping curve to high 18-foot ceilings. A cool, evening-like luminescence emanates from walls, which exhibit no mortaring or cracking. Floors are spotless and featureless unless otherwise noted. No artificial lighting is needed in the upper structure.

The dungeon level exhibits the same poured sandstone look but with a shabbier appearance. Dirt, mud, and dust cover the floors in many spaces, and occasional burn or smoke marks mar the walls. A persistent smell of soot hangs over the entire level, and the walls give off no light.

WANDERING CRITTERS

First Tower Floor

Wandering “monsters” on this level are all servants of the Master and as such only attack those who have actively angered him. They will move to prevent vandalism, theft, and other such mayhem.

Glittering Tower Wandering Critter Encounter Table

Tower First Floor

d6 Roll	Encounter
1-2	1d6 Soldier Bear Guards [AC: 6, Hp: 13, HD: 2+2, Attk: 1 (weapon), pole-arm d10+1, immaculate scarlet uniforms, p. 49]
3-4	1d4 Cave Dwarf Housekeepers [AC: 6 fur armor, Hp: 4, HD: 1, Attk: 1 (weapon), broom-club 1d4, p. 45] (See Appendix C for information on Cave Dwarves)
5	1d3 Drunk Centaurs [AC: 5, Hp: 19, HD: 4, Attk: 1 (weapon), sword 1d8, LL p. 67]
6	1d3 Black Bears [AC: 7, Hp: 15, HD: 3+3, Attk: 3 (2 claws 1d4, bite 1d6), LL p. 64]



Slumbering Ursine Dunes

Tower Upper Level

d6 Roll	Encounter
1-2	1d8 Eld patrol [AC: 5, Hp: 10, HD: 2, Attk: 1 (weapon), elaborately flourished Eldish polearm 1d10+1, p. 44]
3-4	1d3 White Ape servants of the Eld [AC: 6, Hp: 21, HD: 4, Attk: 4 (pummeling arms 1d6), XP: 135]
5-6	1d4 Eld technicians [AC: 5, Hp: 8, HD: 2, Attk: 1 (weapon), nasty barbed short sword 1d6+1, p. 44]

Tower Dungeon Level

d6 Roll	Encounter
1-2	1d8 Eld patrol [AC: 5, Hp: 9, HD: 2, Attk: 1 (weapon), elaborately flourished Eldish polearms 1d10+1, p. 44]
3	1d3 White Ape servants of the Eld [AC: 6, Hp: 21, HD: 4, Attk: 4 (pummeling arms 1d6), XP: 135]
4-5	1d8 Ondrj's Reavers, Human pirates [AC: 6, Hp: 5, HD: 1, Attk: 1 (weapon), trident 1d6, short sword 1d6, weighted net, LL p. 87; see Upper Tower Level Encounter 6 above for effect]
6	Two Remoras (lesser were-sharks) [AC: 3, Hp: 15, HD: 3, Attk: 3 (2 claws 1d3, bite 1d6), p. 54]

GROUND FLOOR

Foyer. A large plush carpet smelling vaguely of urine and wet dog covers the floor, and **Pan Orso**, an elderly, stump-legged, white-uniformed soldier bear turned major domo [AC: 6, Hp: 8, HD: 3, Attk: 1 (weapon), **Bohemian ear spoon 1d10+2, XP: 50**], uncurls himself from his perpetual nap to mumble quickly and ritually "Welcome to the domicile of Medved, King Bear, Lord and Master of the Dunes, Hirsute Lover of Men yadda yadda" before just as promptly curling up and going back to sleep.

1. Master's Chamber. An intensely cluttered room, packed wall to wall in the luxurious flotsam and jetsam of the centuries. Plush divans, long velvet couches, high-backed mahogany chairs, darkwood cassapanas (chest-benches with fabulously painted panels), delicate carved ivory screens, short teetering marble columns with bronze busts of famously bearded men, faded tapestries, and piles of embroidered pillows all chaotically vie for room here. The various bric-a-brac is worth 4,000 gp per wagon-load if carted up and hauled out (for a total of three wagon-loads). Hidden beneath a mildewed throw rug is a stout iron chest containing his toll money proceeds: 3042 gold pieces.

Medved [AC: -1(4), Hp: 105, HD: 14, Attk: 3 (2 claws 3d8, bite 4d6), **Magic Resistance 50%, only struck by magical weapons, can cast ESP and divination 3/day without vocalization, XP: 5100**], a hairy, buck-naked godling and his gender-ambivalent

werebear lover Yavo [AC: 2(8), Hp: 27, HD: 6, Attk: 3 (2 claws 2d4, bite 2d8), XP: 570] are found here in repose on a 1-4 on 1d6. Attempts to pick the locks on the doors arouse him grumpily from his reading or lounging to gruffly ask the party to state their business (a polite knock has him less grouchy). Medved transforms into a massive grizzly with a shining amber aura in combat.

When first encountered (if the party is not rude, threatening, or hostile), he banters a short while, brusquely asking for news of the day in “human parts.” Despite the small talk, he appears distracted and abruptly asks a favor of the party in ridding him of his troublesome, murderous second-cousin Ondrj (the wereshark pirate-captain in the Glittering Tower Dungeon Room 13) in exchange for 1000 antique (but functional) gold pieces and a spell-book with two unique first-level spells: *Kazimir’s resplendent couture and summon and bind minor sandestin* (see Appendix B)

If asked about why he is not willing to do the dirty work, he will vaguely mention the “protective glyphs placed by those damnable Eld” on the staircases (Glittering Tower Rooms 6 and 8) going down and up that bar him from entering the levels below and above.

2. Trophy Room. Beginning on the western wall with an odd mix of time-corroded metal, weirdly flanged tubes and Neolithic-era weapons and tools, the collection arrayed here moves clockwise through the ages of Bronze and Iron. It ends on the southern wall with contemporary weapons and craftsmen tools and a striking **20-foot-long tapestry** of a state-ly monarch being ceremonially blinded by priests amongst a vast assemblage of his subjects (this scene portraying the first ritual deposement of the Decade King of the semi-ruined metropolis of Kezmarok). Any weapon of mundane pre-industrial make can be found here but shows signs of age from countless eras (functionally striking and dealing damage at -2). One object, a thin, unadorned obsidian dagger on the western wall that an observant player may notice matches the blinding instrument in the southern tapestry is actually a magical **obsidian dagger +1, +2 vs. corporeal undead**.

Medved, not really a “details guy”, will fail to notice the disappearance of 1-2 items from the collection--any other thefts draw his ire.

3. Hoarders Room. This room is packed floor to ceiling with mouldering piles of books, scrolls, and pieces of loose parchment. A long, thorough search of 3 turns turns up a magic-user scroll of locate object. A search of 5 turns reveals a clerical scroll of remove curse. Each turn of searching has chance of an annoyed Medved wandering in to shoo the party out of the room on a 1 on 1d6.

4. Formal Dining Room. A long, red pine dining room table with 10 dark-stained, richly-carved high-backed chairs dominates this room. Hanging high on the wall is a campy feudal array of crossed arms, elaborately-painted heraldic shields, and pennons.

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

On closer inspection **four of the chairs** have **carved faces** in the center of each backing showing an exaggerated expression of one of the Four Temperaments: **Melancholic** (sad and despairing), **Phlegmatic** (calm but sluggardly), **Sanguine** (playful and cheer) and **Choleric** (hot-tempered). These four chairs are magically cursed and anyone sitting in them must save vs. spells. Failure creates the appropriate emotional state in the character, who will physically resist leaving the chair (a choleric cursed character in fact fights anyone who makes an attempt to unseat him).

5. Completely Empty Room. Not a shred of anything in this room. Utterly empty and without meaning or purpose.

6. Storeroom and Stairs Up. Great ceramic pots of honey, drying racks of fish, kegs of mead, and shelves packed with common foodstuffs line the walls. A single **centaur watchman** [AC: 5, Hp: 23, HD: 4, Attk: 3 (2 hooves 1d6, weapon), battle axe 1d8, LL p. 67] nervously guards the **stairs** in the northeast corner of the room. He allows anyone to pass who has sought the permission of Medved.

Midway up the staircase is a white steel plaque with a single green-glowing light embedded in the wall. This “glyph” (in reality a piece of magical technology installed by the Eld) prevents creatures of “abnormally high power” (5 hit dice and over) from ascending past the plane of the plaque. Attempts to fiddle with it produce an arcing electrical charge of 1d8 damage per round touched. 70 hit points damage renders it inert, a fact which Medved is surprisingly ignorant of.

7. Kitchen. Large cooking cauldrons command this room. Four **cave dwarf** cooks (bearded miniature neanderthals, see Appendix C) [AC:7, Hp: 6, HD: 1+1, Attk: 1 (weapon), crude bronze cutting implements 1d6, XP: 15] are preparing food with more zeal than skill.

8. Unused Storeroom and Stairs Down. Broken shelving, thick with dust, fills the room. A staircase in the northwest leads down to Dungeon Room 1. Midway down the staircase is a metal plaque identical to that in Room 6 above.

SECOND FLOOR

9. Shiny Boxroom. Two tall **15 foot by 5 foot white steel boxes** cluster in the center of the room. The boxes appear to be seamless with the only apparent feature being two shallow impressions in the shape of a humanoid hand with extraordinarily long fingers. Three **Eld soldiers** [AC: 5, Hp: 9, HD:2, Attk: 1 (weapon), Eldish sabres 1d8+1, p. 44] guard the stairs with utmost vigilance and cannot be surprised.

The boxes were recently installed by the Eld warriors occupying the tower and they are intended to harness the Tower’s ley line focus in order to rip open a veil between this world and their dread dimension (20% chance of success each month after the scenario begins at the GM’s option). A humming noise can be heard by any who press an ear to either. The

hand impression control features can only be manipulated by the Eld, other hands have no effect. Using a severed Eld hand can power the boxes off with a check of 4d6 against the character's INT, but the hand must still be warm (a turn without special handling conditions, no pun intended, renders it too cold).

If the party is fool enough to try and destroy the boxes, after taking 25 hit points damage total they explode causing 5d6 damage to all in the room. On the plus side this removes any chance of the Eld being able to bring in a vessel big enough to abscond with the Golden Barge.

10. Shrine. Three tall, angular, and distorted **humanoid statues** with featureless faces lord over the northern wall of this room. A stark black-and-white checkered tile floor is punctuated by a low black slate altar with two urn-like impressions. The left impression contains non-coagulating human **blood**, the right a fizzing purple liquid that if consumed has the same effect as a single dose of a **Potion of Gaseous Form** (LL p. 111).

11. Improvised Barracks. Arranged in neat rows around this room are 20 sleeping rolls made of a thin silvery material. **Seven Eld** [AC: 5, Hp: 8, HD: 2, Attk: 1 (weapon), Eldish sabres 1d8+1] are consumed by a hotly competitive gambling game of human-bone dice (and are surprised on a 1-2 on 1d6). The pot consists of an assortment of 74 contemporary gold pieces and 20 heavy silver crescent coins (worth 60 gp to a curio dealer). One Eld carries a **small bag of animal bone fetishes**, possession of which grants +1 to all saving throws. A steel ladder on the southeast wall leads up to the 3rd floor.

12. Energy Columns. Three glowing blue and white six-foot wide **columns of pure, crackling energy** take up the center of the room. Touching them with any object produces a six-foot arc causing 1d8 damage. A steel ladder goes up to the 3rd floor (room 13). A spellcaster who has mastered the diagrams in Dungeon Room 1 is able to power down the columns (which harness ley line energy into the shiny boxes in Tower Room 9).

13. Eld Workroom. Two white steel tables run along the north and south walls. Piled on top is a strange array of rubbery hoses, three-foot flesh sacs, transparent curving pieces of panelling, and weird curving silver-metal tools (30 lbs total, worth 200 gp if sold). Two **Eld technicians** [AC: 5, Hp: 7, HD: 2, Attk: 1 (weapon), nasty barbed short swords 1d6+1] are being berated by a verbally abusive **Eld officer** [AC: 5, Hp: 22, HD: 4, Attk: 1 (weapon), Eldish sabre 1d8+1, can cast silence 15' radius (LL p. 26) and darkness globe (AEC p. 60), XP: 300]. The officer attempts to use a **Tube of Integument**, a metal cylindrical weapon that encases an individual within 60 feet with a thick blue goo unless a save vs. paralysis is made. The goo encases such an individual indefinitely unless boiling water or a dispel magic spell is employed. This tube has 3 charges remaining. Two trap doors on the floor lead to Rooms 11 and 12 below, a third ladder going up in the center room leads to the roof (Room 14).

14. Tower Roof. This is unoccupied. A thick metal pole for mooring Eldish airships rises

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

from the center of the floor. The vista is quite impressive here with the seaward dune faces plunging dramatically to the narrow beach. The **Golden Barge can be distantly seen to the west**, and the **lip of the sandstone tunnel** at the waterline leading to Dungeon Room 11 can be seen to the south. Distantly on the southern horizon sits a set of perpetually fog-shrouded islands.

DUNGEON LEVEL

1. Antechamber. The barrel-arched brick ceiling here soars up to 30 feet over a dark-stained wood floor carved in geometric bands. A soft, pink, **golfball-sized gem** (worth 600 gp) glows faintly from a niche in the center of the ceiling. Removing the gem causes a 20-foot radius section of the ceiling to collapse (1d8 damage to all under it), revealing a number of intricate, silver-inlaid diagrams.

A magic user of INT 14 or higher may discern (after two turns of careful study) that the diagrams represent confluences (ley lines) and rents in the fabric of reality centering on the tower. The practical end of this knowledge is that the reader gains the ability to carry an extra 1st or 2nd level spell slot when inside the tower (standard memorization times still apply).

2. Storeroom and Trap. A cluttered storeroom with time-collapsed shelves and broken crockery. Flush on the western wall is a **brass-bound chest** with a crude-looking, water-smeared mosaic depicting vaguely human figures, rising behind. The mosaic is in reality a **weakened Mimic [AC: 7, Hp: 21, HD: 7, Attk: 1 (bite 3d4), AEC p. 131]** that will flop over and pummel any character that touches the chest. The chest contains an immense, gold-filigreed, long-rooted molar minutely carved with hellscapes (it is non-magical and worth 500 gp), two withered human fingers and a small, sable-lined pouch with two oblong, polished pieces of jasper and carnelian (worth 100 gp each).

3. Scriptorium. Honeycombed recesses line the walls. The center of the room is cramped tight between two parallel rows of high shelves. Inside the recesses and lying on the shelves can be seen **brittle scrolls and pieces of parchments** written in the blocky symbols of Classical Hyperborean. Careless handling of the documents destroys them on touch and even careful handling is risky (roll 4d6 under DEX). Many of the documents (if translated) pertain to astronomical matters so obscure and time-dated (the flipper oscillations of the World Turtle, debates on the exact matter of the middle layer of the heavenly firmament, gender-dynamics of the moons, etc.) as to be incomprehensible. There is, however, a chance of finding a similarly fragile scroll of ESP or locate object on a 1-2 on 1d6 each turn (maximum of two each).

4. Rags room. Great mounds of mouldering rags are piled up in the four corners of this room. Moving the piles reveals nothing more than a tightly arranged circle of 12 large rat skeletons with a single blocky symbol carved on their foreheads. The GM can opt to make the symbols meaningless or part of a greater mystery.

5. Boat and Cosmic Void. A 18-foot long, narrow-sterned reed boat stands in the center of this room, facing the western wall which appears to be a large, impossibly dark panel. Closer investigation reveals it to be the swirling chaos of the Outer Void; tiny far off stars glow dimly. Any object passing the plane of the wall is instantly covered in void-frost (1d6 damage per round of exposure). Attempts to enter the void inside the boat are marginally safer, all inside take only 1d6 damage. The boat floats along for 1d4 hours in the darkness of the void before appearing in a similarly outfitted room in an entirely different adventure site of the GM's design (in the author's case the boat appears in a section of the Undercity of Kezmarok called the Cerulean Vaults).

6. Urn Room. This room is filled wall-to-wall with **tight rows of lead-stoppered and sealed blood-red ceramic urns**. The urns contain an oily, amber-colored liquid, the distilled soul-juices of thousands of Hyperborean thralls. The urns, which total 60, are heavy but easily breakable, each of them weighing 15 pounds. Bankers or other evil-souled creatures (such as the Eld if an alliance has been made) may be convinced to pay up to 50 gp per urn. Any creature carrying an urn that has had the stopper removed suffers from a -2 to all saving throws until a remove curse spell is cast. Even carrying an untampered urn incurs a -1 saving throw penalty (which subsides when the urns are removed from possession).

7. Well to Hell. The ramp from the west ends at an open doorway blocked by a massive toppled pillar. A three-foot-high space allows for a person to climb over the blockage. Two **Eld warriors [AC: 5, Hp: 8, HD: 2, Attk: 1 (weapon), barbed shorts swords d6+1, p. XX]** are crouched on either side of the doorway in ambush. They surprise anyone crawling in on a 1-4 on 1d6 and gain a +2 bonus to attacks on that round due to the compromised position of the climber. Eight-foot wide sandstone pillars line the walls around a 20-foot-wide well which appears to be bottomless. Faint moans can be heard emanating from the bottom.

The well is in fact a gate to the Cold Hell of Zem. The Eld have gained entry into the dungeon level by way of a small transparent flying "bubble car" through this gate a few days ago (the Eld on the upper levels having entered this plane of reality from an exterior gate several weeks ago). The GM may elect to allow an (undoubtedly insane) party with sufficient rope (180 feet at the minimum) to lower themselves into this underworld (the bubble car is located not too far from the well floor and is controlled psionically by Xhongo in Dungeon Room 17).

8. Rope Storage. Great coils of nautical ropes of seemingly recent make are piled up to within a foot of the ceiling on the northern wall. A faint smell of the ocean can be picked up here, emanating from a secret trap door on the ceiling just above the rope pile in the northeastern corner of the room. The trap door leads to a steep downwardly-sloping corridor to Room 11.

9. Bypass Room. This previously empty room has been built as a bypass to the trap in 12. A trap door is situated in the center of the eastern wall and faced by two crystalline looking

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

half-domes crackling with electricity. The domes are in fact the backsides of two **crystalline turtle-guardians** [AC: 2, Hp: 16, HD: 3, Attk: 1 (electric arc 1d8), immune to electricity, XP: 65] that slowly turn to face intruders when they get within 10 feet of the trap door. A short ladder leads to a narrow tunnel to Room 14.

10. Hot Pipes. Running along the floor and ceiling from north to south are thick lead pipes that are hot to the touch. Puncturing them releases a spray of hot water, and the character must roll 3d6 under DEX to avoid being scalded for 1d4 damage.

11. Wereshark Cove. The smell and sounds of the Persimmon Sea are distinctly noticeable as the party descends the ramp to the room's moisture-swollen door (opens only with a successful open doors check). A graceful, beautifully crafted, single-masted 90 foot galley is moored here along a slick, narrow rock jetty. Leaning against plush pillows piled up on the aft-deck (this is facing the seaward exit) is **Ondrj the wereshark** [AC: 3(7), Hp: 47, HD: 8, Attk: 3 or 1 (2 claws 1d4, bite 2d6 or weapon) harpoon 1d6+3, +3 to hit with weapons from strength, lycanthropy, XP: 1560, p. 53].

Ondrj appears to be a tall, muscular man in silk pantaloons, chest-revealing doublet and foppish high-browed hat. His eyes have a black, dead look to them, and his skin has a slight greyish cast to it. Disturbingly he has two gray-skinned, hairless, lesser **were-shark halfings** [AC: 3, Hp: 15, HD: 3, Attk: 3 (2 claws 1d3, bite 1d6), XP: 65, p. 54], that he calls his "dear Remoras", noisily nuzzling and sucking off his chest.

In front of him is an elaborate silver samovar (tea urn, worth 500 gp) and a crystal decanter filled with red-purple pomegranate wine (worth 150 gp). Hidden in the aft-deck among bags of human remains is a locked chest containing 321 gold pieces and 2300 silver pieces).

Ondrj attempts to banter with the party at a distance, offering them 3000 gold pieces and two magic (but unspecified) treasures if they help him slay "his distant and villainous cousin Medved banished upstairs." He has no intention to pay, even if the task is completed, and surreptitiously palms a packet of combustible sleep powders as he talks. If he fails to convince the party, and they attempt to step onto the deck of the galley or take a hostile action, he hurriedly throws the sleeping powder into the fire of the samovar and hurls it at their feet (hit at AC:9, same effect as sleep (LL p. 39) spell in 20' radius). In the following round, he transforms into wereshark form and moves in for the attack with his Remoras in tow.

The galley can be rowed out through the sea tunnel at high tide (from midnight until 5 in the morning) but the strength of the current and unwieldiness of the vessel at this shallow depth requires a minimum of 10 rowers. The GM should stress the treacherousness of the sea around the dunes - one of many reasons this is not a common shipping lane. Sand bars and reefs are readily visible at low tide. A pilot lacking previous nautical experience has an 80 percent chance of beaching it irretrievably before making it to the open sea. If the party makes it back to the borderlands, the vessel can be sold for 8000 gp.

12. Darkness and Pit. This section of the corridor is covered by a continual darkness (LL p. 21) spell masking a 20-foot deep pit. The pit drops into the corner of Room 13.

13. Zombastadon Lair. The **animated, desiccated remains of a mastodon** [AC: 5, Hp: 28, HD: 9, Attk: 3 (2 tusks 2d6, trample 1d12), p. 54] slowly shambles to the attack. A low pile of skeletons is strewn about the northern section of the room.

14. Eastern Bypass Room. Broken uncomfortable marble furniture lines the walls of this room. A freshly-constructed trapdoor to Room 9 sits on the floor near the western wall. Otherwise empty.

15. Hidden Entryway. A tall dark-granite statue of a smooth, almost abstract proportioned human male with a featureless white porcelain face sits on a pedestal along the south wall. The right hand and arm juts forward accusingly. Pulling on the statue's finger is the only way to activate the secret door into Room 17.

16. Makeshift Barracks. Fourteen sleeping bags of a thin, silvery material line the walls tidily. **Five Eld** [AC: 5, Hp: 8, HD: 2, Attk: 1 (weapon), Eldish polearms 1d10+1, p. 44] are here taking turns sharpening the elaborate flanges of their polearms in the jagged rocky mouth of a diminutive, chain-bound **earth elemental** [AC: 2, Hp: 9, HD: 8, Attk: 1 (bite 1d8), LL p. 73]. The elemental offers an incomprehensible and terse word of thanks before melding into the floor if freed.

17. Forge. On opening the secret door the party is confronted with an alarm gong and the pitch blackness of a *continual darkness* (LL p. 21) spell. Beyond the darkness midway down the length of the room, **seven alerted Eld archers** [AC: 5, Hp: 7, HD: 2, Attk: 1 (weapon), compound bows complete with little brass rollers 1d8, p. 44] attempt to fire at -2 to hit at the front rank of the party if they gain a surprise round (chance of 1-4 on 1d6). **Xhongo, an Eld gentleman explorer and leader** [AC: 3 ceramic plate, Hp: 30, HD: 5, Attk: 1 (weapon), chain-sword 1d8+2 non-magical, XP:: 550] attempts to use his Mindbox, a glowing bulb affixed to a thin metal headband (useable only spellcasters with a total INT and WIS of 30, *Charm Person* (LL p. 28) twice a day) to charm any party members who move out of the darkness.

The chamber itself has high 25-foot ceilings, and along the soot-stained walls are plain stone built-in shelves with a large array of giant-proportioned smithing tools. Dead center is a massive, open **magical forge** filled with green-glowing embers that emanate a strong positive aura if a detect magic spell is cast on it. The broken tip of a magic black blade (the dreaded, if somewhat underwhelming, Fauxbringer, which can be found in the upcoming Cerulean Vaults undercity site or statted up and placed in a site of the GM's heart's desire) can be found in the ember ash. An identify spell (or Medved if asked) reveals that the forge was built as a sorcerous disposal system for the broken experiments of the Hyperborean Necromancer-Kings. It has the power to destroy any cursed, radioactive, or past-warranty item placed inside its fiery embrace. (Cursed items magically unhook themselves from the

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

body within two feet of the forge.)

A **low, 3-by-3 foot secret door** is hidden on the east wall, revealing a crawlspace tunnel of the same proportions. Midway down the tunnel, a pressure plate causes a weighted block to fall on the crawler if triggered. The victim of this trap must roll 3d6 under DEX or take 1d8 damage. Regardless of result, the party must haul the 300 pound stone cube out of the tunnel to make it passable.

18. Banner Room and Treasury. Smashed stone coffers yawn open here. Seven ancient electrum coins are all that remains. Behind one of the coffers sits askew an exquisitely-carved but broken mammoth tusk showing lewdly copulating animal gods (worth 100 gp).

Leaning forlornly against the back wall is a tattered, furled, and singed mauve-hued banner of crude manufacture. It is in fact the **Lesser Standard of the Old Pahr Wolf-King Vlko** from that people's migration period. All within eyesight and fighting on the side of the banner holder gain a +4 to saves against fear-based spells and effects. If the banner is burned completely an army of 20-120 **Old Pahr warriors on shaggy steppe ponies** [AC: 6, Hp: 7, HD: 1+1, Attk: 1 (weapon), composite bows 1d6, sabres 1d8, XP: 10] and 1-6 **war ocelots** (AC: 5, Hp: 8, HD: 2, Attk: 2 (spiked metal helmet 1d8, bite 1d6), p. 52] is summoned to fight for the banner holder for 1d6+1 rounds before disappearing.

OPTIONAL: CHAOS EVENT INDEX

The Dunes is a mythical wilderness infused with the Weird, a fever-dream logic that defies human ordering, but it also has its own rhythm dynamic, . What follows is an optional event subsystem to model that kind of rising and falling chaos.

Medved, though Chaotic Good (or Neutral in three-fold alignment system) and other-worldly has a foot, due to his mortal origin, in the human world and as such maintains a certain uneasy balance in the area, mostly by keeping the more inimical and reality-bending elements in check. Though Lawful (and thoroughly Evil) the Eld are creatures part and parcel of the human-hostile otherworld, and their local machinations have—paradoxically to their aims to subjugate humanity to a dreary, regimented slavery—made the Dunes more susceptible to rapid chaotic changes. (Killing their leaders will only increase the Index in the short run as they will use their sorcerous technologies to try open larger holes in the Veil Between the Worlds to move greater numbers of their forces into the area.)

As the scenario opens the Index is set to 1. At the beginning of each following session, the GM should roll 1d4-1 to determine how much the Index has risen because of actions by the Factions. Actions by the players, indeed the mere presence in certain areas, also affect the Index; add or subtract relevant actions (or others of the GM’s devising). Move the Index up and see the effect it has on the environment.

-2 or lower The Weird Ebbs. Normal seasonal weather conditions break the perpetual mild weather of the Dunes. Normal animals drift in and are seen. Wandering monster checks are only made once a day.

0 Equilibrium. The critters of the dunes grow languid and go to cover. Wandering monster checks made only every sixth hour or six points traveled.

1-2 The Weird is Rising. There is a tangible, mildly electric buzz in the air. Otherwise no effect.

3-5. Shit’s Getting Weirder. Roll once every day on the following chart

d12 Roll	Event
1-3	No Event.
4-5	Blood Rain. A thick red rain falls all day leaving pools of a sticky syrupy substance. Distantly above the thunder can be heard the distant moans of the Sun Lord as he is whipped by the silver chains of his estranged divine wife.
6-7	Phantom Pylon. A vaguely perceptible pylon appears that exists in the same space the characters are in now, but in a different plane or dimension. The party sees shadowy forms of themselves entering or exiting the structure.
8-9	Deep Fog. A pea soup fog covers all the points on the map. Visibility is no more than 60 feet.

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

- | | |
|----|--|
| 10 | Single Lunar Eclipse. One of the two moons eclipses in the night. |
| 11 | Double Lunar Eclipse. Both moons eclipse. Double the number of any wandering monsters encountered at night. |
| 12 | Comet Sighted. A long hot white comet is seen slowly streaking over the night sky for 1d6 days. Cold-based magic is doubled in intensity throughout this period. |

6-9. **Shit Got Weird.** Roll once every day on the following chart

d12 Roll	Event
1-3	Hallucinations. 1d4 party members suffer vivid hallucinations during the first hour in the dunes. Afflicted party members are unable to fight, move or cast spells for that hour.
4-6	Night Visitations. Deep disturbing nightmares haunt all party members who sleep in the region (including Kugelberg). Hit points are not regained and spells cannot be memorized.
7-8	Factions Skirmish. The party witnesses a battle between 2d6 soldier bears (p. 49) or 1d6 centaurs (LL p. 67) and 2d6 Eld warriors (p. 44) or human pirates (LL p. 87) serving Ondrj. Intervening on either side wins the respective party's good graces for the day, +2 to reaction roll.
9	Eld Bubbleships Arrive. High in the air, 1d4 10-foot-radius transparent soap-like bubble vehicles carrying three Eld warriors are seen flying out to the Mist-Covered Isles on the horizon. Any attempt to attack or otherwise gain their attention causes one such bubbleship to make a single strafing run with a fire-tube (equivalent to a 3d6 fireball (LL p. 31) spell). If the AC: 0 ship suffers 70 hit points damage it crashes killing all inside.
10	Object Appears. 1d4 random objects appear on the ground. They are of either contemporary but exotic make (from the Scarlet Sultanate for instance), from the distant past or are entirely made of a fleshy membrane.
11	Tesseract Opens. A mildly shimmering door appears in a random point the party is traversing. The gate connects to a random other point in the Dunes before disappearing at midnight.
12	Fickle Magic. Flip a coin. Heads all spellcasters gain an additional 1st level spell slot today only. Tails all spellcasters lose a 1st level spell slot today.

10-14. **Chaos Rampant.** Roll on the Weird Event table twice a day.

d12	Event
1-2	Kugelberg Attacked. A double-strength random monster (rerolling any soldier bear or werebear results) attacks the settlement. If the party is spending time there then the attack occurs during their stay. The Old Smith and sons naturally defend themselves and their families.

- 3-4 Pitched Battle between Factions. A large battle occurs between any of the relevant factions at the GM's discretion. For simple resolution roll 1d6 for each and have the higher result be the winner. Intervening on either side grants a +3 to reaction rolls for the week. (For further details see the Dunes Run Red mini-supplement.)
- 5-6 Otherworldly Vessel Marooned. A strange metal vessel either beaches itself on one of the coast points or crashes into a random dune point. The vessel is cylindrical and mostly a smoky ruin.
- 7 Godling Tourist Appears. A minor demi-god in disguise is encountered leisurely touring the area.
- 8-9 Magic Fertile. All third or higher spells double in effect, range, damage, etc.
- 10-11 Magic Ebbs. All third or higher spells half in effect, range, damage, etc.
- 12 The Veil Between the Worlds Rips. A single point on the pointcrawl of the GM's choice is replaced for the day by a locale from another plane of existence. From other points the location looks on the outside to be shrouded in a sheet of star-filled void. Stepping through this field reveals a tall pagoda with a single floor square building underneath sitting on a cold barren alkaline plane that extends for many miles in every direction. The GM can elect to detail this as an adventure locale or leave as an empty mysterious edifice. The party can move through the field at will for 1d3 days before the veil mends itself and the locale disappears (a party exploring inside the pocket plane at the time of the veil's mending is dumped back into the mundane world.)

15. High Chaos. The sun appears to be in perpetual eclipse and neither rises nor sets. Roll on the Chaos Rampant Weird Event table above twice a day. If a spell is cast, roll flip a coin: heads the spell is doubled in effect, tails it fizzles and doesn't work.

Party Actions that Have an Impact	Score
Kill Medved	+12
Kills the Old Smith, Ondrj	+6
Kills Eld Leader	+2
Destroys Eld machinery in the Tower	-5
First enters Barge, Glittering Tower, Slothrog cairn or magic field	+2
Kills 5 or more minor faction players	+1
Casts a 3rd level or higher spell	+1
Sleeps the night in the Dunes	-1
Spends a week away	-1

APPENDIX A: BESTIARY

ANTI-CANTONAL ELD

No. Enc.: 1d10 (2d10x10)

Alignment: Lawful (Evil)

Movement: 90' (30')

Armor Class: 3 to 5

Hit Dice: 2 to 6

Attacks: 1 (weapon)

Damage: As weapon

Save: E2 to E6

Morale: 10

Hoard Class: XVIII

XP: 2HD: 47; 3HD: 95; 4HD:
245; 5HD: 550; 6HD: 1070

Strange is the name of that ancient race, the Eldur. The tight-lipped followers of the Silent God are said to have coined the word, though its meaning, “where a God resides,” puzzles savants and sages throughout the Cantons to this day. Perhaps there is truth in the old folk tales of them as pitiless eaters of a long-forgotten deity, or perhaps it involves another of that race’s arcane cruel jokes.

Hailing from beyond the Veil that hangs between our world and the dark, fell place where life runs on rigid iron rails along great and horrible paths of adventure, the Eldur (often just called the Eld) are said to rule over vast estates piled high with tower-manses, monoliths, slave pens, protein vats and baroque, gargantuan gleaming metal vessel-machines

In this world the few who have witnessed—and survived—their incursions note that their appearance rarely seems by chance. They invariably are seen performing strange, determined missions in the furthest corners of the Weird.

Of what moves their constant machinations inside of machinations, little is known, but reports do consistently match up around their physical appearance: pale-whitish skin, long backward-sloping skulls, delicate digits; and heights around seven feet. They also favor bright, single colors and enameled armor.

The Eld heavily favor long, ultra-slender sabres; short, nastily-barbed stabbing swords; and elaborately-flourished polearms. Expert craftsmanship gives such weapons +1 to damage. There is a 25% chance for each group encountered over seven in number that one of the Eld carries a piece of eldritch technology such as a Tube of Integument, Mindbox, or Inter-fogulator (details in the upcoming free supplement Live Weird or Die).

All Eld are immune to the effects of sleep, charm, suggestion, and acid-based attacks.

A big nod of indebtedness to James Maliszewski for direct inspiration and a smaller one to GW for its old line of Melnibonéan figures that aesthetically inspired this species.

CAVE DWARF

No. Enc.: 1d8 (4d8)

Alignment: Neutral or Chaotic (Good)

Movement: 90' (30')

Armor Class: 6

Hit Dice: 1

Attacks: 1 (weapon)

Damage: 1d6+1 or weapon

Save: D1

Morale: 9

Hoard Class: XVI

XP: 10

On Zem as elsewhere, humanity suffers from the “narcissism of small differences.” Bigotry, absurd stereotyping, and quibbling is rife (though less murderous than our own world). Bad enough among the varying human peoples, it reaches a boiling point in the attitudes toward the so-called “demi-humans.” Feeling the sharp end of this racism these races tend to withdraw deeper into the wilds and the earth, the cave dwarf being a prime example.

Cave dwarfs are the deep-dwelling, untamed, neanderthal-like cousins of the more common dwarf. Their skin ranges from deep tan to light brown, with bright eyes which are almost never blue, ruddy cheeks and brown, black, or gray hair. They are slightly taller and more wiry than their more domesticated cousins (ranging up to 4'8 and 160 pounds on the average).

Cave dwarfs are invariably dressed in dirty hide or fur armor (AC:6) and make use of a small array of crude, but effective weapons such as flint mallets, stone clubs and atlatls (treat as javelin d6+1 for damage).

Groups of 15 or more are accompanied by a war chieftain. Roll a d6+1 for level (see Cave Dwarf class description on page 56).

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

CRAWLERS

No. Enc.:	1d3 (1d3)
Alignment:	Neutroa
Movement:	60' (20')
Armor Class:	6
Hit Dice:	3 (10' square) or 6 (20' square)
Attacks:	2 (swarm)
Damage:	1d8 x2, and special
Save:	F3 or F6
Morale:	10
Hoard Class:	none
XP:	3HD: 80; 6HD: 820

Crawlers are 10 or 20 foot square swarms of small cyborg-like beetles, the barge's clean-up crew. Their two swarming attacks disrupt any spellcaster as per an insect swarm (AEC p. 45) spell whether or not they hit.

Because of their small size and composite nature, most weapons only inflict a single hit point of damage. Area effect spells or weapons affect the creatures at full damage.

GHULS

No. Enc.:	1d6 (5d6)
Alignment:	Lawful (Evil)
Movement:	90' (30')
Armor Class:	5
Hit Dice:	3
Attacks:	1 (weapon)
Damage:	As weapon +1
Save:	F3
Morale:	11
Hoard Class:	XXI
XP:	65

Ghul flesh is wholly composed of a near-invisible translucent goo leaving only a dull pink skeleton to view. Because of this translucence in shadowy environs they surprise on a 1-3 on 1d6 and are near invisible if not in motion.

Though they are in truth merely antibody extensions of the Barge, Ghuls believe themselves to be the practitioners of the Illuminated Doctrine of the Septuagint Anthropophagite

(Authentic). By liberating (eating) human and demi-human males of their flesh—women are believed to be inherently too corrupted and hobbits a delicious veal-like delicacy—they believe that they are making the lands around the Barge a spiritually uplifted place. Resistance is seen as a corrupted mental trick of the meat-demons and is dealt with by an upright and furious force.

TheGhuls are highly intelligent and are inordinately fond of debating amongst themselves and others the fine points of their doctrine—even in the midst of a forcible liberation. Once engaged in combat, Ghuls maintain a steady stream of locution about the urgency and inherent rightness of their doctrine until their dying breath.

GRUE

No. Enc.:	1d3 (1d3)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	90' (30')
Armor Class:	3
Hit Dice:	6
Attacks:	1 (bite)
Damage:	2d6
Save:	F6
Morale:	10
Hoard Class:	XXI
XP:	570

Part rare floon, part ocular bat, part huduk, the Grue is all fearsome. Lurking in its aura of perpetual darkness (as darkness globe) few have actually seen the creature—and even fewer have lived to tell of it. What is known is that it strikes with a large maw of razor sharp teeth and that it has the look of a perverted small woodland beast blown up and distorted into demonic form.

Grues tend to accumulate small hoards of shiny baubles from their hapless victims, periodically gulping them down to help digestion in their rock hard gullets. Cutting open a grue, while laborious (1d3 turns), yields 65% of the time 1d4 gemstones of 50-200 gp value.

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

PELGRANE

No. Enc.: 1d8 (1d8)

Alignment: Neutral

Movement: 450' (150')

Armor Class: 5

Hit Dice: 3

Attacks: 1 (bite)

Damage: 1d8

Save: F3

Morale: 8

Hoard Class: XX

XP: 65

Pelgranes are a flying, semi-sentient race with a most unpleasant and aggressive demeanor. Displaying crested, polished black beetle-like heads--complete with beak and fangs--they can make for a formidable nuisance to air-borne travelers.

Like birds of prey, pelgranes prefer to circle at great heights waiting to dive down on unsuspecting victims. As such they surprise on a 1-3 on 1d6 when outdoors. Pelgranes failing to achieve surprise often converse with their intended prey before attacking them.

Polevik

No. Enc.: 1d8 (1d8)

Alignment: Lawful (Evil)

Movement: 120' (60')

Armor Class: 3

Hit Dice: 2

Attacks: 2 (sickless) or Special

Damage: 1d6 x2

Save: E2

Morale: 8

Hoard Class: XIX

XP: 47

In the corelands of Zem the grain field is simply and drearily a place of endless toil; in the borderlands it can also be a place of terror for the unwary. Old Pahr peasants whisper tales of millennia ago when a mysterious devil called The Man introduced the Poleviki, dread spirits of the field, into the world as a gift to the lords of the land.

Often only a bloodied work blouse remains behind as a sober reminder of vigilance. Once a decade or so during high summer, when the field-demons fidget with boredom, they will also lead a stray individual into the fields to their doom.

Beyond the short sharp shock of their sickles, Poleviki are also known to attack by a disease-ridden touch (hit at AC9). Without a successful save vs. spells those so touched are afflicted with a virulent and dangerous yeast infection that without treatment spreads over the whole body before killing the victim in 2-7 weeks.

Some savants maintain that a Polevik can be appeased by tossing a sack containing a rooster, a jug of white gravy, a frog and a pork chop into a hole in the field, but old wise women discount such newfangled theories of science.

SOLDIER BEARS

No. Enc.:	1d6 (3d6)
Alignment:	Neutral or Chaotic (Good)
Movement:	120' (40')
Armor Class:	6
Hit Dice:	2+2
Attacks:	2 (claws) or 1 (polearm)
Damage:	1d4 x2 or 1d10+1
Save:	F3
Morale:	9
Hoard Class:	XIX
XP:	35

The creeping influence of the Weird has made the border cantons of the Overkingdom world-famous for their quirks and eccentricities. The chilly northern Marches of Nur are no exception and one of their sharper peculiarities is an undue fondness for military companies entirely staffed by anthropomorphic bears.

Nurian Soldier Bears are direct descendants of the mad experiments of that sadly misguided naturalist and wizard Muyr. That he was ultimately mauled and eaten by the beast-kin he so lovingly raised from animal brutality failed to dissuade the Nurians from keeping them in service. For surely only a heart made black by jaded calcification could not be moved to great sentiment by a lumbering column of these creatures drawn up in tight parade ranks.

Soldier Bears, when the pre-hibernation wanderlust is on them, often part from their barracks-dens for tours and adventures around the Hill Cantons. As such they can be encountered paw-fishing in local mountain creeks or taking hiring odd-job positions in the Guild of Condottieri, Linkboys, Roustabouts and Stevedores.

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

Though considerably smaller than their feral counterparts, Soldier Bears are fierce fighters with their much-beloved polearms, gaining a +1 to damage when employing them.

THE SLOTHROG

No. Enc.:	1-2
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Alignment:	Chaotic (Evil)
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Movement:	40'
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Armor Class:	
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Hit Dice:	8
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Attacks:	1 (sword, whip, or teeth)
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Damage:	1d8+3, 1d6, or 1d10
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Save:	F8
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Morale:	10
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Hoard Class:	X
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XP:	1,820
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When Overgod begat the Little Gods in his great and long slumber, the first generations little resembled today's humans or the beasts of field and forest. These First Beasts were distorted creations walking tall and massive. The great molding hands of Overgod, (never much of a details kind of god) slipped on occasion, and he was quite displeased with his sloppy, early efforts. Overgod began to reshape his imperfect children, yet some resisted and even evaded his reworking.

Thus while Lazy Sloth became shorter (and more adorable) his brother Angry Sloth instead fled to the deepest folds of the new world. There, seething in his unbridled anger issues, he became unhinged, demonic even in countenance. From the sullen thoughts of this banished First Beast were spawned lesser beings bearing his likeness, and also his hatred for all of creation: the Slothrogs.

A Slothrog appears much as the giant sloth of our world's Ice Age with the noticeable exceptions of a shaggy black-as-night fur-covering and a great fog-shrouded face in which only two red burning eyes can be glimpsed.

When raised from its demonic stupor, the Slothrog can be a formidable foe. It may elect to use either its fiery magical bastard sword +1, its nasty barbed whip (save vs. paralysis when hit or entangled), or its sharp incisor-like teeth in a combat round. The Slothrog can cast *Slow* (LL p. 32) twice per day and can only be hit by magical weapons.

TWO-HEADED GIANT VULTURE

No. Enc.: 1d4 (1d4)

Alignment: Neutraol

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 5

Hit Dice: 6

Attacks: 2 (pecks)

Damage: 1d10 x2

Save: F6

Morale: 8

Hoard Class: XX

XP: 570

A large winged, ill-smelling and Weird-mutated member of the vulture family. A natural 19-20 rolled on a pecking attack impales and fixes its target for 1d4 rounds unless a save vs. paralysis is made. Such a victim attacks at -2 and takes an automatic 1d8 damage per round impaled if the creature has sufficient room to smash him or her on a nearby hard surface.

VODNIK

No. Enc.: 1-2

Alignment: Chaotic (Evil)

Movement: 120' (40')

Armor Class: 4

Hit Dice: 4

Attacks: 1

Damage: 1d6 Special (see below)

Save: F4

Morale: 10

Hoard Class: XIX

XP: 190

It is said among the Old Pahr people that a pessimist is someone who thinks that things couldn't be any worse--and that an optimist believes that it can! Pushing aside the old wives tale that a surfeit of strong drink drives men to melancholy, learned men attribute this pervading culture gloom to the overabundance of malevolent spirits and faeries in that people's mythology.

A particularly nasty example of the inimical Pahr spirit is the vodník, a male water nymph of a particularly sour and murderous nature. Vodník often lurk at the edges of lakes and

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

rivers waiting for lone wanderers or small groups of village folk.

Vodník are invisible in the the water before they strike, but rise as a translucent serpent when they do. Each strike does 1d6 damage but worse is that the spirit serpent attempts to drag the victim down to a watery doom. Failure to save vs. paralysis means that the victim is dragged into the water.

Once the Vodník has a victim under water it shifts into its true form, a pot-bellied old man covered in slimy scales, and concentrates on drowning the hapless victim. It drowns a person in 1d6+1 rounds, a process that can only be stopped with the creature's death.

The Vodník only takes one hit point of damage from piercing or slashing weapons, but takes full damage from blunt weapons as normal. Fire magic has no effect on the monster. Electrical magic is doubled in intensity. Casting *Purify Food and Water* (LL AEC p.37) on the creature kills it outright.

The Vodník becomes strangely mellow (read: non-murderous) for 1d6 turns after the witching hour, often appearing on rocks or floating on the water smoking a carved pipe. Fishermen as such often leave offerings of pipe weed to placate local Vodníki.

WAR OCELOTS

No. Enc.:	1d10 (1d10)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	150' (50')
Armor Class:	5
Hit Dice:	2
Attacks:	2 (bite, helmet spike)
Damage:	1d6 / 1d8
Save:	F2
Morale:	9
Hoard Class:	None
XP:	20

When the Boreans threw down their spears

And sprinkled Zem with their tears

Did Svat smile his work to see?

Did He who made the flumph make thee?

- **The Ocelyt by Vilem of the Lake**

The twin brother-heroes of the Old Pahr, Vlko and Romuilak the Lupine were the first to bring the dreaded cats of the steppes to this part of the world. With their horde of druzhi-

nas, reverse centaurs and, yes, war-ocelots they carved a kingdom into the black peaks of the South a thousand years ago. With such an entrance the war-ocelot demurely snarled into the pages of collected history—before vanishing anew.

Centuries of selective breeding by Pahr nomads of their most beloved semi-feral ocelots had raised the adorable spotted critters into a bellicose, semi-intelligent companion. Bigger boned and wiry, their feline frames were increasingly capable of sporting first elaborate harnesses and later full armored arrays complete with long piercing horn.

War-ocelots are rarely encountered without their humans who they look upon as gullible marks dishing out food and providing the empty boxes that make for prime napping in exchange for so little.

WERESHARK

No. Enc.:	1d4 (1d4)
Alignment:	Chaotic (Evil)
Movement:	120' (on land) / 180' (water)
Armor Class:	3
Hit Dice:	6
Attacks:	3 (claw, claw, bite)
Damage:	1d4 / 1d4 / 2d6
Save:	F6
Morale:	10
Hoard Class:	XX
XP:	570

Old salts tell of the subtle signs of the human-formed wereshark: a slight greyness of skin, a deadened, hard cast to the eye, a hint of razor among the teeth, a tendency to take positions in the banking guilds.

The monsterish version is inescapably obvious, rearing a full 8 feet tall with the pronounced snout of a shark, sharp-toothed grin, dorsal fin and muscular clawed arms. They are as fleet in the water as their fishy brethren. In this form, they can only be harmed by silver or magical weapons.

Despite their bestial rapaciousness weresharks are drawn to soft luxuries in their off hours. Treasure hoards inevitably take the form of soft, exquisitely-woven silks, velvet cushions, choice wines, fine silver dinnerware, and the like, as opposed to straight cash.

Those unfortunates bitten by the wereshark themselves become victim to lycanthropy on a 30% chance (Remove Curse to lift). On a full moon—at high tide—there is a 90% chance

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

that the victim transforms into his new form and seeks out others of his kind in the murky depths.

WERESHARK, LESSER (REMORA)

No. Enc.:	1d4 (2d4)
Alignment:	Chaotic (Evil)
Movement:	120' (on land) / 180' (water)
Armor Class:	3
Hit Dice:	3
Attacks:	3 (claw, claw, bite)
Damage:	1d4 / 1d4 / 1d6
Save:	F3
Morale:	9
Hoard Class:	XX
XP:	65

Lesser Weresharks, popularly referred to as Remoras, are literal hangers-on to their Wereshark masters. In their stunted, grey-skinned halfling form, they can often be found nuzzling or cleaning the bodies of Weresharks or tidying up with dust brushes and brooms when their betters are absent.

Unlike their masters', their bites do not inflict lycanthropy on their victims, however they may only be struck by magical or silver weapons and suffer from the same aversion to wolvesbane.

ZOMBASTODON

No. Enc.:	1d3 (1d3)
Alignment:	Chaotic (Evil)
Movement:	120' (40')
Armor Class:	5
Hit Dice:	9
Attacks:	3 (tusk, tusk, trample)
Damage:	2d6 / 2d6 / 1d12
Save:	F9
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	None
XP:	1,000

Though colloquially called “zombastodons” by feckless wags who care not for life and limb, the Mammut Morbidium is a reanimated spirit-demon of the more mundane mastodon.

It is said that Kosteĵ the Deathless himself had a hand in the base sorcery that first revived the lifeless corpses of the wooly elephantine pack animals so very much beloved by the northern rump-states of the Hyperboreans in the long glacial age that ended their civilization.

Whatever their origin, Zombastodons have been imbued with a relentless fury at two-legged mammals--and a cold, undying semi-intelligence to sustain that rage over the centuries. They appear as shattered shells of their former robustness, mangy hide splitting, exposed rib bones, and a demonic red glow to their eyes.

Zombastodons have the same range of magical protections as do the more human-appearing undead. They can be turned by clerics as per their hit dice (or as “vampires” in some systems).

Though their tusks are somewhat desiccated and gnarled by the ravages of time, each is still able to fetch 1d4 x 100 gp from collectors of curios and the arcane.

APPENDIX B: UNIQUE SPELLS

KAZIMIR’S RESPLENDENT COUTURE

Magic User Level 1

Duration: hour/level

Range: touch

The renowned popinjay and mage of Ostrovo, Kazimir the Hair-Handed, was never at a loss for being on the edge of foppish fashion no matter what the occasion or time. Local gossips whispered of eldritch magicks and unholy compacts.

They were correct for once.

Touching a piece of otherwise dull apparel, the mage creates raiments of daring refinement instantly out-dazzling any other garment in the room in it’s audacity. For the length of the spell it’s the new black and the clothing adds 1d6 Charisma (max 18) to the bearer among civilized folk. Any ruining of the garment, a stain or tear, negates the enchantment.

SUMMON AND BIND MINOR SANDESTIN

Magic-User Level 2

Range: 10’

Duration: Special

Sandestins of lesser-stature are summoned and bound by casting this spell formula as part of a ritual. Ritual materials fluctuate in cost at 1d4 x 100 gp. Only one sandestin can be

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

bound into service for each five levels of the mage.

Once per day, the sandestin can be called upon to act as an unseen servant. Once a week, it can also produce the effect of an extra first-level spell (this spell must be specified before the session begins). Once a month, it can produce an extra second-level spell (again this must be specified beforehand).

As perennially lazy creatures, sandestins are constantly seeking to work to rule. At the beginning of a session the DM should secretly roll 4d6 against the magic-users INT (this roll can be modified to reflect good/bad roleplaying by the player for wheedling and negotiating with the sandestin). If the roll is above the INT score roll 1d6 and consult the following mishap chart:

- 1 Escape. The sandestin finds a loophole in its contract and breaks free. The magic user must attempt to summon and bind a new sandestin.
- 2 Major Bending. The sandestin has managed to find a work around its spell obligations almost completely. No second-level spells can be cast. First level spells are ignored by the sandestin or on a 1 on 1d4 are reversed in effect, double back on the caster, or ignored. As an *unseen servant* the sandestin may lie and not complete tasks if out of eyeshot.
- 3-6 Minor Bending. No second-level spells can be cast. As an *unseen servant* the sandestin may lie and not complete tasks if out of eyeshot.

APPENDIX C: UNIQUE CLASSES

The Dunes exert a powerful pull on denizens of the Weird and the Borderlands—not all of whom are wholly inimical to humanity. The GM can opt to allow a party who has established good relations with the Master to recruit leveled henchman from among his Cave Dwarf and Soldier Bear servants and worshipers. An indulgent GM may also allow players in need of new or starting characters to “unlock” both classes for PC use.

CAVE DWARF

Requirements: CON 11

Prime Requisite: CON

Hit Dice: 1d8

Maximum Level: 12

[Based on an earlier Feral Dwarf class co-created with Scott Moberly.]

Cave dwarfs are the deep-dwelling, untamed, neanderthal-like cousins of the more common dwarf. (See the Cave Dwarf monster description above for physical description.)

Because of their background as deep cavern dwellers, they can detect by concentration within 10' any grade or slope or new construction (1-4 on 1d6), sliding or shifting walls or rooms (1-4 on 1d6), and large stonework-type traps such as pits and deadfalls (1-3 on 1d6). They can also detect with concentration depth underground (1-3 on 1d6). Cave dwarfs have 60 foot infravision.

Sadly however, they are unfamiliar with new-fangled civilized weaponry and armor. Cave dwarfs tend to choose simple weapons such as spears, hammers, axes, clubs, and javelins (though once in civilized environs they can employ any weapon they choose). Because of their unfamiliarity and lack of comfort with heavy armor they can only wear leather, padded, studded leather, or hide/fur (AC:6).

Living on the primitive edge is a hard life, thus cave dwarfs gain the ability to forage for food and water in hilly and mountainous environments. At 1st level they can do so successfully 30 percent of the time. This improves by 3% per each additional level. They also have the ability to start a fire in any environment without the use of flint and steel at the same level of success skills.

Example: Mogg is a third-level cave dwarf. He can successfully scavenge for food in the Big Rock Candy Mountains at a chance of 36%.

Cave dwarfs do not receive starting money as other characters. Instead they start with a flint mallet (treat as a mace), hide/fur armor, and 10-40 gp of simple equipment (food, torches, bedrolls, etc). In addition they start with a small horde of raw gemstones, 1d6 gems worth 10 gp a piece and 1d4 worth 20 gp.

Despite these differences, cave dwarfs fight and save on the same tables as the Dwarf. When a cave dwarf reaches 9th level he becomes a clan chieftain and can attract 10-60 cave dwarf followers once he has found a suitable cavern.

CAVE DWARF LEVEL PROGRESSION

Experience	Level	Hit Dice (1d8)
0	1	1
2,200	2	2
4,400	3	3
8,800	4	4
17,600	5	5
36,000	6	6
70,000	7	7
140,000	8	8
280,000	9	9
400,000	10	+3 HP only
540,000	11	+6 HP only
660,000	12	+9 HP only

Slumbering Ursine Dunes

WAR BEAR

Requirements: STR 13, CON 14
Prime Requisite: CON
Hit Dice: 1d10
Maximum Level: 8

The Nurian Soldier-Bear stands alongside the Ostrovan pikeman, Kozak horse-archer and Amazon sword-and-buckler as one of the most renowned examples of soldiery in the world of Zem. Lesser known are the wayward bears who strike out on their own in the world in search of quantitatively measured experience, the proud bearers of the appellation “War Bear.”

War Bears can wear no armor other than a helmet and instead have a base armor class determined by level (a DEX bonus can be added). Magical devices can be used but must be able to fit around the large-sized limbs of the War Bear.

Though outside the comforting phalanx of soldier life, the War Bear retains the deep, obsessional love of polearms, including the traditional +1 to hit and damage when employing it. Indeed a War Bear who has been parted from the sight of such a weapon for longer than a day sickens with dejection and beyond a constant audible and dramatic sighing also loses 3 points of Wisdom until he or she grasps it again.

At level 6, the War Bear can invent and name a polearm of his own design at a cost of 500 gp and two weeks of intense concentration. Such a weapon is +2 to hit and damage only in his own paws and can even strike those creatures only harmable by magic weapons. At level 8, the War Bear has reached such fame that he can automatically attract a warband of 50 soldier-bears on the creation of a comfy underground den complex of no less than 2000 square feet (and two latrines).

War Bears save as Dwarves and fight as Fighters of the same level.

WAR-BEAR LEVEL PROGRESSION

Experience	Level	HD (1d8)	Armor Class
0	1	1+2	6
2,300	2	2+2	6
4,600	3	3+2	5
9,200	4	4+2	4
18,400	5	5+2	4
36,800	6	6+2	4
73,600	7	7+2	3
147,200	8	8+2	3

Marching Song of the War-Bears

*March, March, Ye Karhus and Grizzlies
Why, my cubs, don't ye form up in order?
March, March, Ye Brerbears and Issili!
All the War-Bears are over the border.*

*Many a banner flutters above your head,
Many a hero that is famous in story
Count and make ready then, cubs of the forgotten dead,
Fight for your Hetbear and old Medved's glory.*

*Come from the hills where the black goats are grazing,
Come from the Dunes of the buck and hirsute law;
Come to the crag where the beacon is blazing,
Come with the glaive, the bill and the paw.*

*Trumpets are sounding, beornlings are bounding,
Stand to your polearms and march in order;
The kozaks shall many a day, tell of the bloody fray,
When the War-Bears came over the border.*



APPENDIX D: PRE-GEN HIRELINGS

Down at the Hiring Hall of the Guild of Condotierre, Linkboys, Roustabouts and Stevedores a number of fine accredited hirelings in good standing await your contract. Remember, no one loves a scab.

d10 Roll MEN-AT-ARMS FOR HIRE (0 Level combatants)

1	Arsus of Ultima, Hp 5, loincloth (AC:9), bear hat, spear. Has no tongue, smells like ass.
2	Brown Tomas, Hp 5, studded leather (AC:7), morion helmet, arquebus (doesn't work), scimitar. Stands in your personal space.
3	Hedviga the Harridan, Hp 4, half-plate (AC:5), battle axe, Erol Otus helmet. Hates your hat.
4	Jorl El the Jakes-Farmer, Hp: 3, leather (AC:8), spear, slick combed back hair, long dredging tool.
5	Kochka, Hp 5, leather (AC:8), hand axe, dagger. Claims amazon-descent, a known member of the criminal association the One-Armed Jiri's League of the Free-Handed.
6	Kracki the Hooded, Hp 3, half-plate (AC:5), pike, nunchucks. Laughs at all your jokes.
7	Lardikus, Hp 4, half-plate (AC:5), saminite helmet, trident, net, dagger. Greases his hair with pig fat, pretends to be gladiator.
8	Mohac the Wanderer, Hp 3, studded leather (AC:7), quarterstaff, elaborate great helm. Has never left town.
9	Old Blue, Hp 4, scale mail (AC:6), battle axe. Somewhat hulking, bearish man-at-arms. Seeks the knowledge of "Man's Red Flower."
10	Voga the Vain, Hp:3, leather (AC:8), man-catcher, silver mirror, dagger. Eild woman and pleasantly chaotic (that is until she sticks you with a knife).

d12 Roll OTHER HIRELINGS FOR HIRE

- 1 “Chunky” Konrad, Hp 1, stevedore/teamster, khopesh. Claims to be a descendant of the Hyperborean space god “Oneg the Prober”. Will bring wagon team for an additional 30 gold piece surcharge.
- 2 “Mad” Mox, Hp 3, torchbearer, nunchucks. Aspiring “Chaos Monk.” Fond of the expression “fucking anarchy and shit.”
- 3 Alezbta, Hp 4, journeyperson porter, club. Strong as a mule this woman is, smells like one too.
- 4 Elder Juri, Hp 2, linkboy, ten resin torches, broom handle. Callow youth, deeply pious lay priest. The Sun Lord has granted him the ability to cast “Predict Weather”. Fated to die horribly. Hp 1.
- 5 Flamm, Hp 2, Harp, short sword. Valet/Minstrel. Lanky blond-headed, freakishly honest man-servant and amateur skald. Good voice with a tendency to extemporize.
- 6 Gigurg, Hp 4, man-beast porter. Long gangly armed and covered in a thick, leaf/twig-covered pelt. Talks in rhymed couplets.
- 7 Haristo, Hp 2. Wasted youth and torchbearer/valet, has the tell-tale grey pupils of a hruz-hruz addict (hallucinogenic mollusc paste). Fears nothing and leaves no garment creased..
- 8 Kraccus, Hp 3, dogsbody and professional sycophant. Dagger. Is lying to you now.
- 9 Kruluzax, Hp: 3. porter, completely bald, pot-bellied, dark-skinned man. Unclear what land he hails from but whispers of blasted deserts, dinosaur-demons and psychic gods of the past-future.
- 10 Malinka, Hp 4, executive assistant, whip, club. Will get you to the dungeon on time.
- 11 Pavol, Hp 2, padded armor (AC:7), dagger. Claims to be a duly-elected “Master Torchbearer”, will carry two light sources at once, but complains about his back the whole time.
- 12 Puutra, Hp 2. Hourai/torchbearer. Dark soulful eyes, will not sleep with you. Lantern, garotte, dagger..

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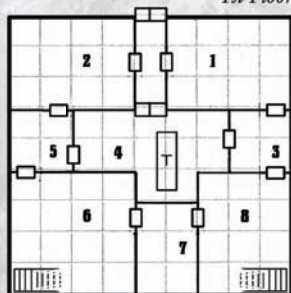
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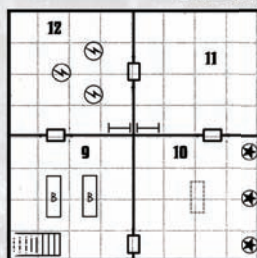
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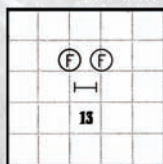
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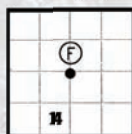
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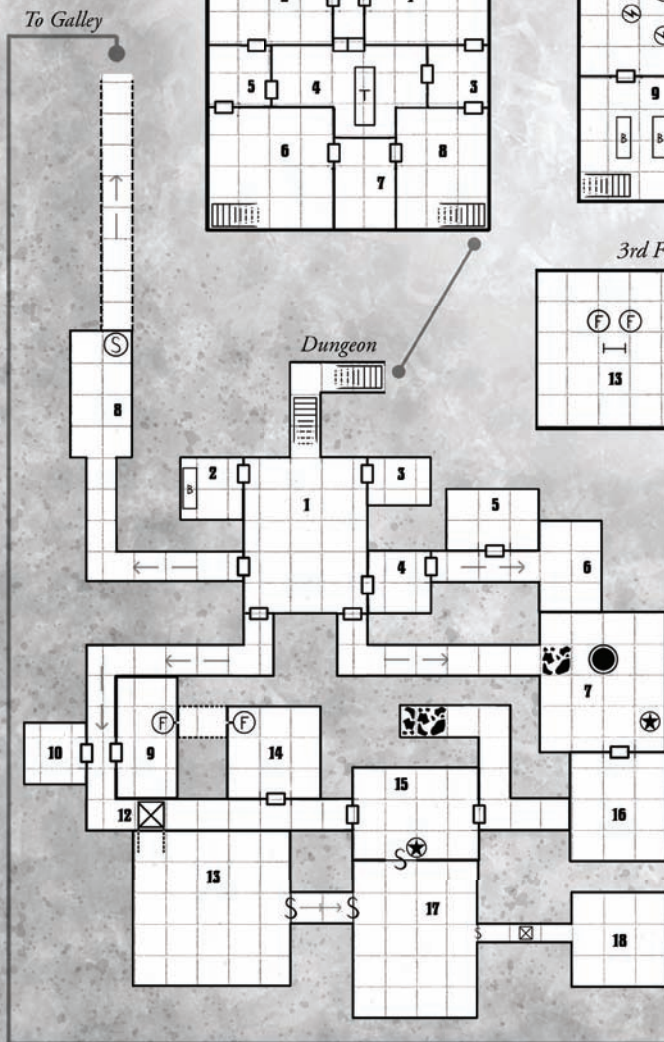
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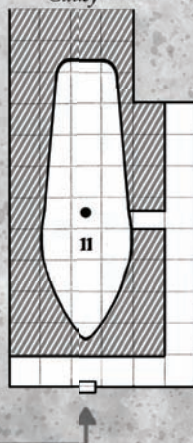
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Dungeon



Galley



The Golden Barge

