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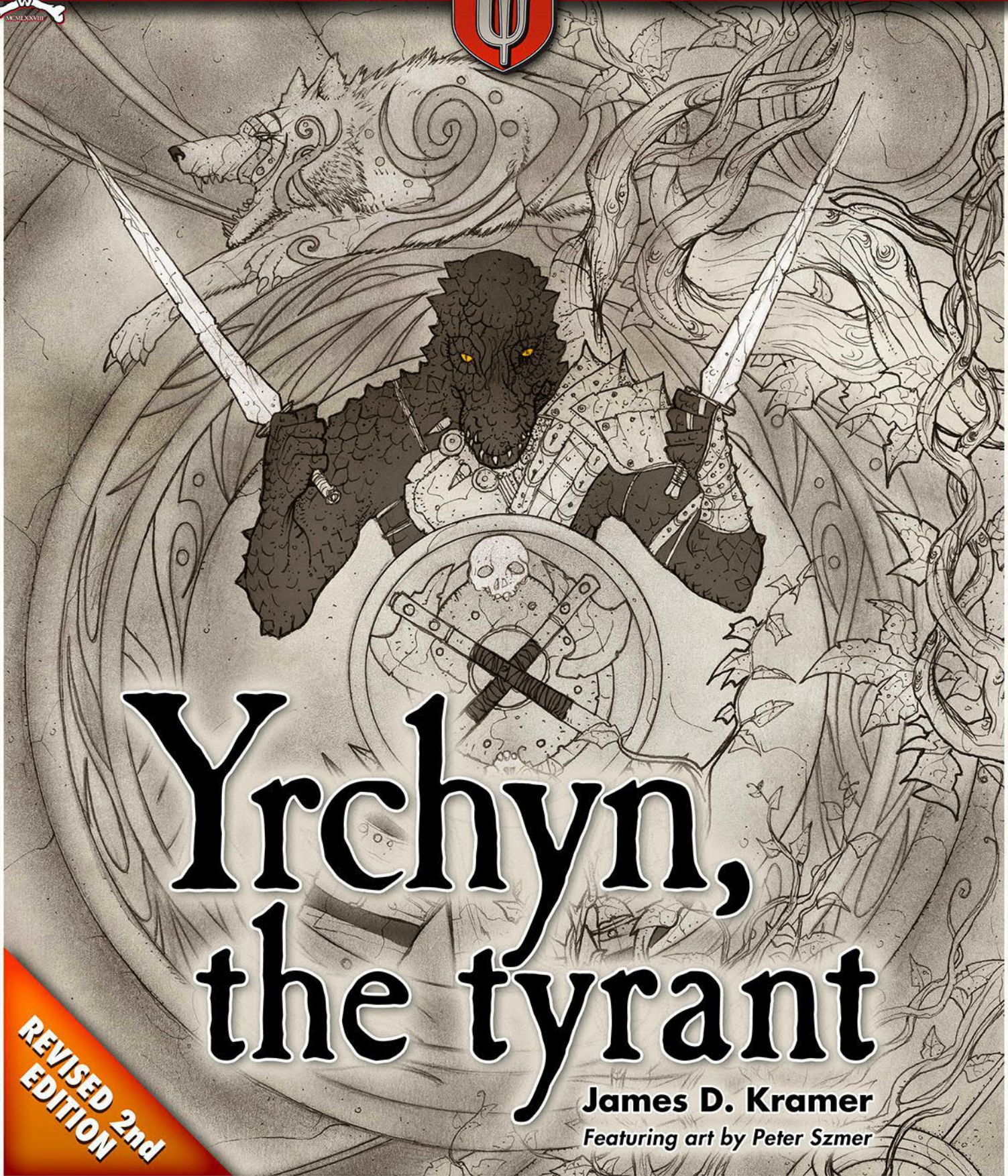
BHS 1



Book 1

The Bone-Hilt Sword

Play as the first of five parts of the Bone-Hilt Sword campaign, or, as a stand-alone adventure



Yrchyn, the tyrant

James D. Kramer

Featuring art by Peter Szmer

**REVISED 2nd
EDITION**

An Usherwood Adventure® for 4-7 characters, of levels 1-3
Includes Game Master's Adventure Log, detailed character sheet template, and new OGC material

BOOK 1

The Bone-Hilt Sword campaign

Yrchyn, the tyrant

James D. Kramer

An Usherwood Adventure for 4-7 characters, of levels 1-3

Designed for First Edition and OSRIC™ fantasy roleplaying game systems.

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On the cover: Yrchyri, the tyrant, by Peter Szmer.

Introduction

Conventions

The following abbreviations will be used throughout the text to denote specific kinds of information;

AC: *armor class*; the measure of a character's/monster's defensive abilities in combative situations, and situations to avoid physical contact.

CHA: *charisma*; the measure of a character's physical attractiveness, leadership ability, and personal magnetism.

CON: *constitution*; the measure of a character's general state of health and stamina.

d# or #d#: *dice*; a lowercase 'd' followed by a number (4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 20, %) indicates a specific die that is used for random number determination. Where preceded by number indicates the number of times to roll the indicated die (i.e., 3d6 indicates a required roll of three six-sided die, producing a random number between 3 and 18).

DAM: *damage*; the measure of damage inflicted by a given type of attack.

DDG: *Deities & Demigods*; refers to either the First Edition or Third Edition rules systems by the same names, a selection of divine beings and pantheons both fantastic and mythical.

DEX: *dexterity*; the measure of a character's agility, hand-eye coordination, reflexes, and balance.

DMG: *Dungeon Masters Guide*; refers to either the First Edition or Third Edition rules systems by the same name, provides detailed information to a GM regarding many aspects of conducting a successful game.

GM: *dungeon/game master*; the individual running a game through which a combination of players are adventuring.

EXP: *experience*; the measure of a character's skill within her class (also an award of points due a character for the accomplishment of a specific task).

FEADAD or First Edition: refers to First Edition fantasy-based roleplaying game system texts originally published c.1978-82.

FF: *Fiend Folio*; refers to either the First Edition or Third Edition rules systems by the same names, a collection of creatures most baleful.

HD: *hit die*; the number of die to be rolled to determine hit points (see below). Also, may be used to indicate the relative strength or toughness of a monster.

HP: *hit points*; the measure of the amount of physical damage a character/monster can sustain before unconsciousness or death will result.

INT: *intelligence*; the measure of a character's reasoning power (also, I.Q.).

MM or MM2: *Monster Manual, and Monster Manual II*; refers to either the First Edition or Third Edition rules systems by the same names, a collection of creatures, baleful and benign, arranged in two volumes.

OGC: *Open Game Content*; that portion of this work which may be used by publishers of content covered by the OGL (see below)

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OSRIC: *Old-School Reference and Index Compilation*; a compilation of rules based the First Edition fantasy-based roleplaying game rules system into a free, open license.

PC: *player character*; the persona adopted by player within a game.

PHB: *Players Handbook*; refers to either the First Edition or Third Edition rules systems by the same name, describing the process for players to develop personalities to use in the game.

STR: *strength*; the measure of a character's muscle and physical brawn.

TH: *"to hit"*; die score require to strike an opponent in order to do damage.

WIS: *wisdom*; the measure of a character's insight, willpower, commonsense, intuition.

Reader Aids

There a number of visual reader cues provided to convey specific types of information;

GM narratives provide you with text to read verbatim to the players in order to set-up specific situations throughout the module.

Creature stats blocks will provide you with basic information on the creatures and monsters encountered throughout the module. If First Edition and OSRIC stats differ, notations will be provided. An example of creature stats follows;

Kobold leader (1): AC 6; MV 6"; HD 1-1; HP 7; #AT 1; DAM 1d6 or by weapon; POS short sword, 15 s.p.

where: AC = Armor Class; MV = Movement Rate; HD = Hit Die (or relative strength); HP = Hit Points; #AT = number of attacks; DAM = damage inflicted on a successful To Hit attempt; POS = possessions (of the group of creature type encountered)

Miscellaneous information the GM may find useful is provided within note boxes.

Save vs. Attribute

Certain circumstances may require a Save vs. Attribute roll by the player. The method assumed by this text is as follows; the player rolls 3d6 vs. the indicated attribute (STR, INT, WIS, DEX, CON, or CHA). A result equal to or less than the character's attribute score indicates a successful save. A result greater than the character's attribute score indicates a failed save and the character suffers the appropriate penalty described in the encounter text. The required save may be adjusted to address a specific situation described in the encounter. A result of '18' will always indicate a failed Save vs. Attribute.

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Understanding the Module

GM's are advised to read through the module completely to understand the various encounters and module setups before beginning play. If you have any questions regarding the module — why certain encounters are written as they are, or, to point out where you feel improvements in the manuscript might be made — feel free to write the publisher at kramer@usherwoodadventures.com.

Publications and Resources

The following publications and resources are used in the preparation of this module;

- AD&D™ Players' Handbook (Second Printing, 1978)
- AD&D™ Monster Manual (Third Edition, 1978)
- AD&D™ Dungeon Masters Guide (First Edition, 1979)
- Usherwood Adventures Sourceweb;
<http://www.usherwoodadventures.com>

Alternatively, the module is also completely compatible with the OSRIC SRD.

Yrchyn, the tyrant

For many hundreds of years, the folk of the Usher Arm Peninsula have lived in peaceful coexistence. Humans, elves, half-elves, dwarves, halflings, and gnomes all going about their lives with seldom more than a trade dispute between them.

Incursions by evil forces of orcs, kobolds, goblins, and other humanoid races happened rarely, or not at all. Only the long-lived elves of the Peninsula have the dimmest memory of such attacks.

Within this setting the discovery of a small bi-pedal lizard-like humanoid brings fear to the citizens of the small community.

Incorporating This Module Into Your Game

YRCHYN, THE TYRANT is set upon the southern tip of the Usher Arm Peninsula, located on the southern coastline of the Northern Territories on the continent of Vermé, if you are playing within the Usherwood Adventures campaign setting. It may be used as a standalone adventure but was intended as the first mission of a five part campaign.

If playing in your own campaign setting, you may place the locales anywhere a human population (Usherwood) of low density (1,000 inhabitants or less), exists in relative closeness to elves, dwarves, halflings, and gnomes in peaceful coexistence. War should only be events which happen far away, or in history books. Druids and rangers would be relatively common, where clerics and paladins would be extraordinarily rare.

Re-leveling to suit your gaming group

This module is designed for characters just starting their career in adventuring, and is recommended for 1st, 2nd, or 3rd level characters. For large groups, or for groups with experienced players, the referee should consider doubling the number of creatures numbers for each encounter. As well, the GM could add additional stronger monsters, such as (dire) wolves, orcs, goblins, etc.

Races & Classes

Any of the standard character races available for First Edition and OSRIC fantasy roleplaying systems can be employed. GM's may include their own races and classes as they deem appropriate. Races and classes unique to the Usherwood Adventures campaign setting may also be included, with no special restrictions.

Setting up the Module

The following summary may be used to kick-off the adventure;

Rumor of increased kobold activity has reached the village of Usherwood (where your party members are currently visiting, or passing through). Additionally, some reports indicate more powerful creatures within the midst of the kobold bands.

The village of Usherwood has offered up a bounty on the head of the kobold chief to eliminate the threat to surrounding communities.

The following points may also be used to set up the party on their adventure;

- Kobolds are a force as yet unknown on the Usher Arm Peninsula, causing the citizenry to become fearful that their presence is indicative of the presence of a greater evil.
- The threat of the kobolds come at time of great celebration — being the time of the Mid-Summer Harvest — within the village of Usherwood, creating great fear and desperation among the populace.
- Only visiting dwarven dignitaries from far off Arnegelius Peak have encountered kobolds in the past, and they believed the race to have been exterminated.

Reward and Compensation

The GM should gauge the party's compensation based upon the success of their mission. Players may wish to negotiate

Notes:

for payment before setting out on the mission. If this is the case, GM's may use the following generalities as the basis of negotiation techniques;

- The village of Usherwood itself is not rich and the payment for the party's talents is expected to be only after full satisfaction of a job well done, property protected, and lives saved. If the party volunteers to pursue the mission with this expectation, GM's might offer bonus experience for the selflessness exhibited by the party members.
- The village is not beyond any monetary compensation. If the party presses for reward, 500 g.p. maximum to each (surviving) member may be offered.
- The party is of course welcome to retain any treasures they may find within the caverns.

The Journey

The party has the choice of two paths from the village of Usherwood to the reported kobold cavern complex; the Winter Road (which will take the party on the west coast of the Peninsula and through the halfling village of North Ridge), and the Summer Coast (which takes the party along the east coast of the Peninsula, avoiding direct contact with any of the known villages on the Peninsula).

Wilderness Encounters

GM's should create appropriate wilderness encounters for a temperate, lightly forested region, given they would be traveling some 100 miles north from the village of Usherwood to the reputed location of the kobold caverns.

A pair of sample encounters is here presented as the party travels north along the Peninsula.

Kobold War Party

As the party travels north they come across the unmistakable tracks of a large force traveling south.

Turning to follow the tracks leads the group some 10 miles south into the forest until they come across a group of 65 kobolds, they are in the midst of setting up a campsite within a copse of trees thickly overgrown with vines and brush.

The kobold band is headed by 1 leader and 2 guards.

See the map **KOBOLD CAMP** on page 26 for the layout of the encounter.

Kobold leader (1): AC 6; MV 6"; HD 1-1; HP 7; #AT 1; DAM 1d6 or by weapon; POS short sword, 15 s.p.

Kobold guards (2): AC 6; MV 6"; HD 1-1; HP 5, 5; #AT 1; DAM 1d6 or by weapon; POS (each) short sword, (each) light crossbow, 10 s.p.

Kobolds (62): AC 7; MV 6"; HD ½; HP 1 (x15), 2 (x15), 3 (x15), 4 (x17); #AT 1; DAM 1d4 or by weapon; POS hand axe (x30), club (x32), light crossbow (x20), 240 c.p. (total)

The Campsite Invasion

The party comes across a stream flowing slowly toward the foothills where the kobold caves are reported to lie. A travel-worn path follows the stream on the opposite shore from the where the party now stands. The stream is shallow (about 4' deep) and narrow (about 15' wide), and should pose no significant trouble to cross. It is late in the day, night is falling and the party has been traveling all day. All of the party is tired, and in need of food and a bit of rest.

Should the party choose to set up camp:

The moss-covered forest floor proves to be good bedding for your party as you make preparations to camp for the night. Wood is dry and plentiful, and a small smokeless fire does not prove difficult to build. The normal sounds of the forest can be heard all around the campsite.

Sometime in the mid of the night, the braying of wolves can be heard coming from downstream, and all other sound in the forest stops. Over the next few minutes, the sound of the hunting pack is getting closer to your camp. Soon, a new sound can be heard over the barking and howling dogs; a bizarre, high pitched chattering comes from the north of the campsite.

The party's campsite has come to the attention of a force of kobolds wandering the lands about the entrance to the caves, which lie some 2 miles to the north. If the party opts not to establish camp, this war band of kobolds may still come across the party as they approach the cave entrance.

Refer to **CAMPSITE INVASION** on page 27 for the layout of the encounter.

Kobolds (12): AC 7; MV 6"; HD ½; HP 3 (x3); #AT 1; DAM 1d4 or by weapon; POS short sword (x6), hand axe (x6), light crossbow (x12), 125 c.p. (total)

Wolves (6): AC 6; MV 18"; HD 3+3; HP 24; #AT 1; DAM 2d4; POS —

The Complex

As the party follows the stream toward its source, the water becomes increasingly polluted. Within in a short time, they find the entrance to a cave where the stream flows in. The entrance is roughly 40' in diameter.

The Caverns

The caverns of the kobold lair are dank, musty, and dirty. As kobolds rely on infravision (60'), the caverns and chambers will not be lit. If the party can manage strong light (brighter than the normal torches they carry) they can effectively reduce the kobolds' ability to fight (-1 TH probability).

The halls and chambers are generally ill-kept. Bones and rats abound throughout the complex.

The Stream

The stream that winds its way through the complex is shallow, averaging ½ ft to 2 ft in depth. The cavern floor beneath the stream is coated with thick layer of moss and algae. PCs moving carefully (i.e., a normal walk) will be able to avoid slipping. PC's moving quickly will be at risk of slipping and falling (save vs. DEX).



As the stream approaches **area 15** past **area 11**, depth gradually increases to between 2 ft and 3½ ft depth and the speed of the water increases notably as well.

At **area 15**, the stream collects into a deep (8 ft) pool, where it drops into waterfall. Refer to the description of **area 15** for full details.

Murder Holes

The primary defensive mechanism employed by the kobolds is a series murder holes accessed by **crawl spaces** throughout the complex. Some of the crawl spaces are accessed by the kobolds through either a locked **access hatch**, or through a larger **access passage**. Refer to the descriptions hereafter.

Murder holes are primitively concealed niches in the rock, through which the kobolds use small (light) crossbows to fire bolts at intruders within range of the missile weapon. Each murder hole will be manned by a single kobold, and the kobold will fire at the party so long as they remain in sight. The holes themselves are difficult to detect, and generally cannot be located until a PC — searching actively — is within 2 ft of its location.

Crawl spaces are very narrow passages — 2 ft wide on average — and will accommodate (besides the kobolds themselves) creatures of similar height and proportion. Larger creatures will be forced to crawl on hands and knees, and wearing bulky armors and packs will not be possible. Creatures taller than 6 ft will be unable to maneuver in the tight quarters.

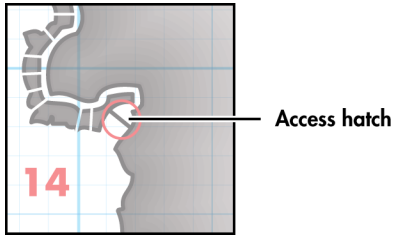
Access passages larger constructions than the crawl spaces — 5 ft wide and 5 ft high — access passages provide rapid movement to the hidden crawl spaces within the primary complex of the kobold chieftain (**areas 9** and **10**, and **24** through **28**).



Access hatches there are three of these locked and trapped small doors leading into some of the crawl spaces. These doors (hatches) are located near **areas 2**, **12**, and **14**. The trap in each case is a light crossbow bolt fired from directly

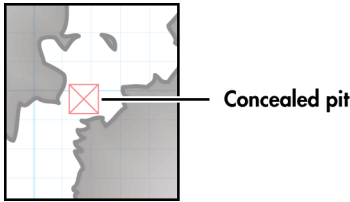
Notes:

above the door. The bolt is coated with a weak poison (+2 to save vs. poison). The poison is non-deadly, but will cause the victim to lose 1d4 points of CON and 1d4 points of DEX for a duration of 2d4 hours. A successful save halves these amounts.



Concealed Pits

There are three concealed pits through the complex. Each pit is 15 feet deep, and lined with 10 wooden spikes. Each spike will have a chance of impaling a falling PC (roll as an attack by a 1 HD monster), causing 1-3 HP of damage.



There is a 20% chance one of the spikes will be poisoned. The spike will be coated with a weak poison (+2 to save vs. poison). The poison is non-deadly, but will cause the victim to lose 1d4 points of CON and 1d4 points of DEX for a duration of 2d4 hours. A successful save halves these amounts.

Miscellaneous Encounters (areas 1 through 23 (but not including areas 9 and 10))

Roll for miscellaneous encounters (01-20 on d100) every 3 turns. Any combat situation has a 15% chance of attracting one additional encounter from this table. Each encounter may occur only once unless otherwise noted. Roll again if a non-repeatable encounter is indicated.

Table 1: Miscellaneous Encounters

1d12	Encounter	Notes
1 ¹	2d4 kobolds ² , 1-2 wolves ³	kobolds are armed with spiked clubs
2 ¹	1d4 orcs ⁴	armed with battle axe and heavy crossbow
3 ¹	1d4+1 kobolds ² , 1-3 wild boars	kobolds are armed with short swords and light crossbows

1d12	Encounter	Notes
4	6 kobolds ² , 1 halfling (captive)	The kobolds are escorting the halfling (see APPENDIX F: NPCs, Butch Meadhouse) to area 22 to be interrogated as spy by Yrchyn. If released, he would gladly assist the PC's in their mission.
5	1 orc captain ¹² , 4 kobolds ²	orc armed with battle axe, kobolds armed with hand axe and light crossbow See Campaign Note 1
6 ¹	1d4 large spiders ⁶	The spider webs will be spun on the ceiling of the cavern.
7 ¹	1d6+1 giant ants ⁷	The ants are emerging from a hole they have created in the cavern wall.
8 ¹	1d4+1 kobolds ¹	armed with short swords
9	1 kobold ⁸ , giant weasel ⁹	The kobold, armed with pair of short swords, is equal in strength to a goblin. What's more, it can attack with both weapons simultaneously, gaining two hit attempts per round against any one opponent.
10	4 goblins ⁸ , 2 kobolds ²	goblins are armed with morning star, kobolds are armed with spiked clubs See Campaign Note 2
1 ¹	green slime ¹⁰	The slime covers an area approximately 15' square of the ceiling above, and part of the wall.
12 ¹	1d4 piercers ¹¹	—

(1) Encounter may occur multiple times on this table.

(2) **Kobold:** AC 7; MV 6"; HD 1/2; HP 4; #AT 1; DAM 1d4 or by weapon type; POS see encounter notes

(3) **Wolf:** AC 7; MV 18"; HD 2+2; HP 16; #AT 1; DAM 1d4+1; POS —

(4) **Orc:** AC 6; MV 9"; HD 1; HP 8; #AT 1; DAM 1d8 or by weapon type; POS see encounter notes

(5) **Wild boar:** AC 7; MV 15"; HD 3+3; HP 24; #AT 1; DAM 3d4; POS —

(6) **Large spider:** AC 8; MV 6" * 15"; HD 1+1; HP 9; #AT 1; DAM 1d4 + poison; POS —

(7) **Giant ant:** AC 3; MV 18"; HD 2; HP 14; #AT 1; DAM 1d6 + poison sting; POS —

(8) **Goblin:** AC 6; MV 6"; HD 1-1; HP 7; #AT 1; DAM 1d6 or by weapon type; POS see encounter notes

(9) **Giant weasel:** AC 6; MV 15"; HD 3+3; HP 24; #AT 1; DAM 2d6; POS —

(10) **Green slime:** AC 9; MV 0"; HD 2; HP 16; #AT 1; DAM Nil; POS —

(11) **Piercer:** AC 3; MV 1"; HD 1 to 4; HP variable; #AT 1; DAM 1d6 or 2d6 or 3d6 or 4d6 (see HD); POS —

(12) **Orc captain:** AC 6; MV 9"; HD 1; HP 8; #AT 1; DAM 1d8 or by weapon type; POS see encounter notes

Notes:

Miscellaneous Encounters (areas 24 through 31)

Roll of 01-20 on d100 indicates an encounter. Each encounter may occur only once unless otherwise noted. Roll again if a non-repeatable encounter is indicated.

Table 2: Miscellaneous Encounters

1d6	Encounter	Notes
1	3 orcs ²	armed with scimitars
2 ¹	green slime ³	The slime covers an area approximately 15' square of the ceiling above, and part of the wall.
3 ¹	1d4+1 kobolds ⁴	armed with short swords
4	1 kobold ⁵ , giant weasel ⁶	The kobold, armed with pair of short swords, is equal in strength to a goblin. What's more, it can attack with both weapons simultaneously, gaining two hit attempts per round against any one opponent. (ignore this result if encountered from Table 1)
5 ¹	1d6 giant centipedes ⁷	—
6 ¹	1d4 large spiders ⁸	The spider webs will be spun on the ceiling of the cavern.

(1) Encounter may occur multiple times on this table

(2) **Orcs:** AC 6; MV 9"; HD 1; HP 8; DAM 1d8 or by weapon type; POS see encounter notes

(3) **Green slime:** AC 9; MV 0"; HD 2; HP 16; #AT 1; DAM Nil; POS —

(4) **Kobold:** AC 7; MV 6"; HD ½; HP 4; DAM 1d4 or by weapon type; POS see encounter notes

(5) **Kobold:** AC 7; MV 6"; HD ½; HP 4; DAM 1d4 or by weapon type; POS see encounter notes

(6) **Giant weasel:** AC 6; MV 15"; HD 3+3; HP 24; #AT 1; DAM 2d6; POS —

(7) **Giant centipede:** AC 9; MV 15"; HD ¼; HP 2; #AT 1; DAM 0 + poison; POS —

(8) **Large spider:** AC 8; MV 6"–15"; HD 1+1; HP 9; #AT 1; DAM 1d4 + poison; POS —

Chambers and encounters

1. Guard post

8 kobold guards armed with short swords and javelins are standing amid the slowly moving waters and are not particularly attentive to their duties. Next to them is a rather old-looking gong. Apparently it is the alarm to be rung in case of invasion. The gong itself is severely rusted.

If used to sound an alarm against intrusion the gong will be 50% likely to break free from its supports dropping into water. If it does not fall, the gong will dully resound alerting the guards a **area 2**.

Kobolds (8): AC 7; MV 6"; HD ½; HP 3; #AT 1; DAM 1d4 or by weapon; POS short sword and javelin (each), 18 c.p. (total)

2. Secondary guard post

10 kobolds armed with spiked clubs and light crossbows. If alerted to the party's presence the kobolds will be hiding behind the large natural stone columns to either side of the entrance.

Kobolds (10): AC 7; MV 6"; HD ½; HP 3; #AT 1; DAM 1d4 or by weapon; POS spiked club and light crossbow (each), 10 c.p., 3 s.p., 1 g.p. (total)

3. Storage cavern

The cavern is a disaster of decomposing food, animal carcasses, and rotting fruits and vegetables. The stores seem to be just scattered about the cave in no particular order. Rummaging around in the piles of stuff will reveal a small stash of coins of various mints (30 c.p., 15 s.p., 5 e.p., 1 p.p.), and one nondescript pewter ring (see the **PEWTER RING OF HALFLING-SENSE** on page 12). In order to find all these items, the party will be required to search for 9 rounds.

Roll from **TABLE 1: MISCELLANEOUS ENCOUNTERS** as appropriate while searching through the food stuffs. The party will also discover 9 giant centipedes hiding among the refuse.

Giant centipedes (9): AC 9; MV 15"; HD ¼; HP 2; #AT 1; DAM 0 + poison; POS —

OSRIC: In the OSRIC SRD, these creatures would be of the 'huge' variety.

4. Worship chamber to Nothjegg

This section of the chamber is filled with a disorderly array of crude wooden benches.

Upon a stone dais in the center of this alcove, is the rough hewn carving of what would appear to be a bipedal lizard-like humanoid sporting four arms. The statue is approximately 5' tall.

The figure is in fact that of **Nothjegg** — patron of kobolds in the Usherwood Adventures campaign setting. If playing the module outside the Usherwood setting, change this for a suitable lawful evil/kobold deity.

Above the statue, suspended from the ceiling by chains, is a trident of blackened metal. The blackened trident is in fact the holy symbol of Nothjegg's patroness; Archiopteris, goddess of all lawful creatures.

As the party investigates the chamber (or is being attacked via the 5 murder holes within the chamber), 6 kobolds enter the chamber from the east. The kobolds are armed with spiked clubs and spears.

Kobolds (6): AC 7; MV 6'; HD ½; HP 4; #AT 1; DAM 1d4 or by weapon; POS spiked clubs and spear (each)

5. Slip-n-slide

The stream flowing at this point is rather sluggish, but is moving at a downward angle. As a result, the streambed is overgrown with mossy sludge. PC's moving carefully (i.e., a normal walk) will be at risk of slipping and falling (save vs. DEX). PC's moving quickly make their save vs. DEX at -4. A failed save causes the PC to fall and slide the remaining distance into **area 5**, bumping and sliding over the rocks that line the floor.

6. Orcs in the house!

This chamber is occupied by a contingent of orcish guards stationed to support the kobolds. A pair of murder holes, one facing northeast and the other northwest, is available to the orcs for making surprise attacks against intruders. There are 8 orcs in all, each is armed with long swords of wicked manufacture. Four of the orcs are armed with heavy crossbows, which are used to fire through the murder holes.

This is apparently a long-term assignment for the orcs, as among the supplies provided at the back of this chamber are several barrels of dried food stuffs, and several kegs of a rather bitter tasting wine. There is no other treasure besides that which the orcs carry on their person. Combat here will alert the creatures at **area 7**.

The orcs themselves can be identified as being from a rather notorious tribe called the *Shattered Skull*. The location of this tribe's cavern complex is not currently known.

Orcs (8): AC 6; MV 9'; HD 1; HP 8; #AT 1; DAM 1d8 or by weapon type; POS long sword each, heavy crossbow (x4), 37 g.p. (total)

7. Hunt butcher chamber

Passing within 30 feet of this chamber will clearly reveal that it is used somehow in the storing of dead things. There is an over-powering odor of decaying meat and blood. In the middle of the room amidst a pile of animal carcasses of various species are 3 kobolds, each is wielding a butcher knife and is butchering a deer recently brought back from a hunting trip.

Combat here will attract the attentions of the creatures at **area 6**.

Kobolds (3): AC 7; MV 6'; HD ½; HP 3; #AT 1; DAM 1d4 or by weapon; POS butcher knife (treat as hand axe)

8. Main door

This is a single heavy, iron-bound oaken door. The wood itself, though still solid, is coated with a thick layer of moss and mildew. If the party checks the base of the door, they will see there is a good 3 inches of space between the door and the floor, allowing a significant flow of water to pass under the door.

The door is not locked, but is trapped. The trap involves the use of a disguised lever embedded in the cavern wall to the right of the door. If the party fails to remove the trap before trying to open the door, then upon opening the door (which pulls in toward **area 8**), the door will come off its hinges, and fall with a crash open anyone within 5 feet, causing 1d4 crushing damage (save vs. DEX applies to avoid damage).

9. Guarded chamber

This is the primary means of defense against intruders. There are no guards here (save those who lie hidden within the murder holes that line both sides of the chamber). The door at the opposite side of the chamber — which is apparently of sturdier and newer construction to that of the door leading in to this chamber — is triple locked, though not trapped. If the party checks the base of the door, they will see there is a good 3 inches of space between the door and the floor, allowing a significant flow of water to pass under the door.

If checked, the party will be able to hear the sound of water cascading down some sort of falls on the other side of the door.

10. Dangerous steps

Entering this darkened hall, it becomes immediately obvious this construction is not that of the primitive and natural caverns the party has explored to this point. Though old, this hall speaks of more sophisticated construction techniques, with precisely fitted stone work.

The stream here cascades down a long flight of steps, nearly 50 ft in length. At the far end, the sound of water draining into an unseen basin can be heard.

What the party does not realize is, beneath the stairs, the riser of each step has a murder hole disguised as an iron grate. As the party walks down the steps, they will make easy prey for the crossbow wielding kobolds below.

Further, the steps are slippery, as the caverns described previously. A slip here means a fall down the deadly flight of stairs.

11. A slimy problem

The length of this cavern's ceiling is covered in a green slime.

Green Slime (1): AC 10; MV Nil; HD 2; HP 16; #AT 0; DAM 0; POS Nil

12. Guard to egg chamber (area 13)

The kobold chieftain — Yrchyn — is terribly protective of the tribe's cache of eggs, which he covets even more than his treasures. For this reason he has placed a large portion of his tribe's strength at this location.

Herein, Yrchyn has positioned 20 kobold warriors, each armed with his best quality short swords (well, at least the weapons are not *as* rusty as those encountered elsewhere). Additionally, 10 of the creatures also carry light crossbows.

Combat here will alert the creatures are *areas 13* and *14*.

Kobolds (20): AC 7; MV 6"; HD ½; HP 4; #AT 1; DAM 1d4 or by weapon; POS short sword (each), light crossbow (x10), 175 c.p. (total)

13. Egg chamber

Hundreds leathery eggs are crammed into this chamber, and lie amid straw and stinking animal skins. Many years of old egg shards also line the floor, making quiet movement through the chamber all but impossible.

Tending the eggs are 5 kobolds armed with clubs.

Combat here will alert the creatures are *areas 12* and *14*.

Kobolds (5): AC 7; MV 6"; HD ½; HP 4; #AT 1; DAM 1d4 or by weapon; POS club (each), 35 c.p. (total)

14. Murdering kobolds!

This chamber contains 12 kobolds, currently passing into the crawl space at the access hatch indicated on the map. Each is armed with a spiked club and light crossbow.

Combat here will alert the creatures are *areas 12* and *13*.

Kobolds (12): AC 7; MV 6"; HD ½; HP 4; #AT 1; DAM 1d4 or by weapon; POS club and light crossbow (each), 55 c.p. (total)

15. Over the falls you go!

The stream here ends in a bottomless drop to the depths below the kobold caves. Should a PC be unfortunate enough to fall victim to the falls,...

- ...then if you are playing this module within the context of the **BONE-HILT SWORD CAMPAIGN**, the PC may be recovered — alive but injured — as a prisoner in *area 26* of **BHS2: THE SHATTERED SKULL**, else...
- ...you may opt to continue the PC's adventures in a subterranean encounter of your own choosing, or...
- ...bid the PC a fond fare-thee-well as they plummet hundreds of feet to the unknown terrors of the darkness beyond light.

16. Guard station to Yrchyn's private caves

At the bend in the passage, the party finds 6 of the largest kobolds they have encountered thus far. Each is equivalent in strength and armor class to a goblin, wields a pair of short swords (for a pair of attacks each round)

Kobolds (6): AC 6; MV 6"; HD 1-1; HP 7; #AT 2; DAM 1d6 or by weapon type; POS 2 short swords (each), 25 s.p.

17. Secondary guard to Yrchyn's chambers, and the kobold treasury

The kobolds and kobold chief would believe the orcs positioned here to be for the protection of the kobolds themselves. In reality, the eight orcs stationed here are an advanced guard for *areas 23, 21, 29, 30, and 31*.

Orcs (8): AC 6; MV 9"; HD 1; HP 8; #AT 1; DAM 1d8 or by weapon type; POS long sword (each), 45 g.p. (total)

18. Treasury chamber

The treasure is held in several open coffers, distributed in the two branching 'arms' of the chamber. The treasure includes many coins and four gems; 132 c.p., 38 s.p., 103 g.p., 200 g.p. Thaelmarthir Grindstone, 10 g.p. Eye Agate, 1,000 g.p. Sapphire, 100 g.p. Chrysoberyl.

Thaelmarthir's Grindstone is a semi-precious stone unique to the Usherwood Adventures setting. Details on its value and history can be found on the Appendixes. Replace with amber, or similar stone, if playing outside the Usherwood Adventures milieu.

19. Storage chamber

The room is filled with empty barrels and chests. Some contain the remains of some kind of moldering foodstuffs, or unknown

liquid substances. If the crates and barrels are disturbed, 12 giant centipedes will crawl out from the debris and rush forth to immediately attack the nearest characters. The insects will seek to crawl beneath the clothing and armor of the characters. If successful, the insects will repeatedly bite the victim (treat target as unarmored), until destroyed. In such a condition, any attack upon the centipede will inflict ½ the rolled damage upon the character as well.

If the debris is searched, the characters will locate a small cache of coins and a dagger among the crates and barrels.

Giant centipedes (12): AC 9; MV 15"; HD ¼; HP 2; #AT 1; DAM 0, poison; POS —

OSRIC: In the OSRIC SRD, these creatures would be of the 'huge' variety.

Dagger of the Omanthrid Guilds

This dagger is legendary among the people of the Verméan continent. Only in the Omanthrid Archipelago can the full properties of the blade be made known.

The blade itself is ancient. It is pitted and notched, and engraved with an elaborate pattern of swirling shapes intertwined with mythical beasts. The handle is bone (likely the antler of a deer), the cross-guard and pommel are of twisted steel. If checked for, a powerful magical aura can be detected. To non-thief characters, and thieves not knowing the command words, the weapon bestows a +1 AC, and +1 TH and DAM.

To a thief character who knows the command words, the weapon confers the following powers; +2 AC, +2 TH, +3 DAM. Further, it will grant a +5% bonus to each thieving ability, and permanently adds 1 point of DEX. Only within the powerful guild halls of Omanthrid can these powers, and their correct command words, be identified. But then, of course, the guild would most certainly desire to obtain the weapon for itself.



Traveling the Omanthrid Guilds with this weapon would most certainly attract the attentions of the guilds. This dagger is quite powerful for a 1st level PC. It would make discovery of the dagger too fortuitous to simply relate the properties to the PC. Therefore, upon identification, only relate the lesser powers (+1 AC, TH, and DAM scores). Make them travel to Omanthrid (see map of Vermé) in a separate sideline adventure to discover the major powers. This is a good opportunity to have them become embroiled in the back-stabbing politics of the Omanthrid Guilds during this quest for information.

This dagger is unique to the Usherwood Adventures setting. If playing in your own setting, you should alter this weapon's specifications in order to better suit your setting requirements. Also, disconnect the weapon's ties to the Omanthrid Guilds as described here. The GM may wish to alter the description in order to weave the dagger's background into his own campaign milieu.

20. Yrchyn's private quarters

As the furnishings in this room are rich by kobold standards (they are at least not rotting), one may only assume this to be the bed-chamber of the kobold leader. It has items such as a table, a few chairs, and a bed with a straw covered mat. The floor strewn with the predictable bones and throwaways from some forgotten meal. If the characters search the junk on the floor, they will find an old leather belt of approximately human size (see below).

If conducting a search, the party will attract the attention of the three wolves located in the back of the chamber. This area holds nothing more than leftover scraps of food and feces of the wild boars.

Wolves (3): AC 7; MV 18"; HD 2+2; HP 16; DAM 1d4+1; POS —

Belt of the Enion Guard

This human-sized belt is quite old and worn. The leather itself is approximately 3 in. wide, and of a length to fit a 34-38 inch waist. The middle of the belt is made wider, evidently to provide support for the lower back. The leather once held a design, but is now too worn to identify. The buckle is large (roughly 6 in. long and 5 in. high) made of electrum with gold inlay. The design is faint, but can be identified as a sword with

a hand-and-a-half hilt, below the cross-guard are two flanges protruding from the blade near the grip. The exact design of the grip cannot be made out. Behind the sword stands a man in robes with his hands outstretched, with lightning(?) arcing between them. Behind the man in robes is the panorama of large port city. If detected for, the buckle will emanate a strong aura of magic. Few on the Peninsula would be able to identify this item. Magic sources in the Imperium Vallis, Floclaid, and Cannabaudes would certainly be able to identify it for what it is, except for the curse that it contains.

The locales listed here pertain specifically to the Usherwood Adventures setting. If playing within your own campaign setting, such cities would have strong ties to magic using personalities, and will likely be of questionable governmental practices.

The belt's properties are: +2 to AC, and +1 to STR.

See Campaign Note 3

21. Kobold guard to orcish back door

The 8 kobolds assigned here are the final kobold guard before the orcish chambers beyond.

Combat this location will alert the creatures at **area 23**.

Kobolds (8): AC 7; MV 6"; HD ½; HP 3; #AT 1; DAM 1d4 or by weapon; POS short sword (each), light crossbow (each), 35 c.p.

22. Prison chamber

Lining the walls of this chamber are 11 sets of chains and manacles secured to the walls. Currently, there are four halflings secured here; one adult male, one adult female, and two female children. All are dead with the exception of the adult female, who will die within 1d6 turns if not healed.

As the female halfling dies, six kobolds, each armed with a club, enter the chamber and attack the party immediately.

If saved, the female halfling will request to be escorted from the caverns at once. She will not assist the party within the caves, and will wish to return to her halfling village immediately. Upon seeing her dead family, she will break down, and sob uncontrollably.

1d4 rounds after the party enters into the cavern, six kobolds will enter in behind them.

Kobolds (6): AC 7; MV 6"; HD ½; HP 3; #AT 1; DAM 1d4 or by weapon; POS spiked club (each), 10 c.p., 1 gem (Thaelmarthir Grindstone, 35 g.p.)

See Campaign Note 4

23. Orcs' back door

This chamber is the primary guard to the back entrance of the orc-controlled caverns beyond. Even the kobolds do not enter into this area for fear of being slain.

The secret door indicated on the map is locked but not trapped.

Orcs (8): AC 6; MV 9"; HD 1; HP 8; #AT 1; DAM 1d8 or by weapon type; POS long sword (each), 45 g.p. (total)

Combat at this location will alert the creatures at **area 21**.

24. Cross-fire!

The sole purpose of this chamber is to serve as means to pelt intruders with as many crossbows bolts as possible (left, right, forward, and back). The door indicated on the map is triple locked, but not trapped.

25a-c. Running the gauntlet

In addition to the murder holes, this chamber is guarded by 10 kobolds.

Kobolds (10): AC 7; MV 6"; HD ½; HP 3; #AT 1; DAM 1d4 or by weapon; POS short sword (each), light crossbow (each), 55 c.p.

26. Hidden kobold archers

This chamber holds 12 kobold crossbowmen who are defending **area 24**.

Kobolds (12): AC 7; MV 6"; HD ½; HP 3; #AT 1; DAM 1d4 or by weapon; POS spiked clubs (each), light crossbow (each), 60 c.p. (total)

27. Guard to orc chambers

The locked door is guarded by 3 orcs.

Orcs (3): AC 6; MV 9"; HD 1; HP 8; #AT 1; DAM 1d8 or by weapon type; POS long sword (each), 25 g.p. (total)

28. Audience hall of Yrchyn, the tyrant

This room must serves as the central meeting hall. It is relatively large with a high ceiling. A carpet, which must have one time been red, but is now a dingy dark gray, runs the length

of the chamber. At the far end of the chamber sits a massive kobold upon a wooden “throne” carved with scenes of kobold conquest. To either side of him are four kobold bodyguards; two on each side. Seated on a bench before him are four goblins. Curiously, along the wall to his right sit two orcs in chairs of padded cushions, decorated with gold inlay and jewels. Between the two orcs is a larger, more ornate chair which is currently empty. Two wolves are lounging at the feet of the large kobold.

The orcs are not engaged in the current conversation taking place between the kobold and the goblins. The conversation seems to be switching back and forth between the goblin and kobold languages. In order to follow the conversation fully, a character would need to be fluent in both languages.

At the dialog’s conclusion the goblins rise to leave. If the characters are in the hallway and seen by the goblins, it is quite natural to assume that they will run back into the chamber to shout an alarm. Following the goblins’ departure, if they do not encounter the party, food will be brought to the chamber, the large kobold and the orcs will begin eating their meal.

The kobold seated upon the throne is Yrchyn, and he stands in excess of 5 ft. To either side of his throne are two sheathed short swords of fine craftsmanship. Though they carry no enchantment, the swords are of such manufacture, that they are considered +1 TH (but not to damage), and he can wield them simultaneously against a single opponent. Yrchyn is considered the equivalent of an orc for the purposes of combat.

Kobold chieftain, Yrchyn (1): AC 6; MV 9”; HD 1; HP 8; #AT 1; DAM 1d8 or by weapon; POS +1 TH short sword (x2)
Kobold bodyguards (4): AC 7; MV 6”; HD 1-1; HP 6; #AT 1; DAM 1d4 or by weapon; POS short sword (each), 15 s.p.
Orcs (2): AC 6; MV 9”; HD 1; HP 8; #AT 1; DAM 1d8 or by weapon type; POS long sword, 10 c.p., 15 g.p.
Goblins (4): AC 6; MV 6”; HD 1-1; HP 7; #AT 1; DAM 1d6 or by weapon type; POS mornings star
Wolves (2): AC 7; MV 18”; HD 2+2; HP 16; DAM 1d4+1; POS —

See Campaign Note 5

29. Orcs’ back door and the ceiling collapse

This hall is used to keep intruders — including curious kobolds — from entering the orcs’ hidden chambers. At each end of the hall is lever, both are in the “up” position. This position locks the trap in the ceiling for the length of the hall between the two levers (indicated on map).

If anyone attempts to traverse the hall without moving one of the levers into the down position, the ceiling will collapse for the entire length of the hall between the pair of levers.

The door at the west end of the hall is locked.

30. Orc chamber

This large chamber is either an area used by the orcs to dispose of all manner of vile waste or a barracks of sorts. To civilized folks, it’s likely both. The chamber is a disarray of broken furnishing, discarded food stuffs, spoiled rations, a keg or two of flat, bitter ale. Also here, are 6 orcish guards, each armed with a long sword. One of the orcs holds the key to the doors are **area 31** on a ring attached to his belt.

Orcs (6): AC 6; MV 9”; HD 1; HP 8; #AT 1; DAM 1d8 or by weapon type; POS long sword (each), 55 g.p. (total)

31. Entrance to caverns below

The door to this room is iron-bound and locked from the inside. There is a keyhole about four feet off the floor in the center of the door. The key to the door is located in **area 30**. The key hole itself is trapped. If the trap is not disabled, any attempt to pick the lock, or engage the proper key will release it. The trap is a small boulder suspended above the keyhole in the ceiling. When the trap is sprung, the boulder will drop.

The person working at the keyhole will suffer 3d4 DAM unless a successful saving throw vs. DEX is rolled. If the save is successful, the character will reduce this damage by half. Any damage in excess of one half of the PC’s current hit points will result in a broken limb (refer to the following table);

Table 3: Limb Breakage

1d6	Limb	Notes
1-2	left arm/ right arm	The limb is rendered useless. Infection will set in if the limb is not splinted. If attacking with a non-dominant limb (i.e., right-handed vs. left-handed), attacks will be at -2 TH/DAM.
3-4	left leg/ right leg	The limb is rendered useless. Infection will set in if the limb is not splinted. Attacks will be at -2 TH/DAM.
5	skull fracture	The character is rendered unconscious for 2d4 turns. They will be dazed and confused for another 3d6 turns. If they do not receive healing within 24 turns, they lapse back into unconsciousness. If no healing is administered with the following 3d8 turns, death will result.

1d6	Limb	Notes
6	rib cage	The character suffers 1d4 broken ribs. The PC can engage in melee combat at -1 TH penalty. If healing is not received before combat, it is 65% likely that the broken ribs will puncture a lung, inflicting another 1d4 points damage. If the PC suffers this injury, they will suffer 1-2 HP DAM every round thereafter due to internal bleeding unless healing is administered.

Once inside, the party will note that the room is unlit, and cool breeze blows in from the staircase. This adventure does not continue beyond this chamber. But if your party insists on heading to the unknown darkness below...

- ...if you are playing this module within the context of the **BONE-HILT SWORD CAMPAIGN**, continue with **BHS2: THE SHATTERED SKULL**, else...
- ...you may opt to continue the PCs' adventures in a subterranean encounter of your own choosing, or...
- ...allow the cavern to exit out into the mountains, as a kind of "back door" to the complex.

Appendix A:

Campaign Notes

Several encounters located throughout this module contain information specific to the Bone-Hilt Sword campaign. These notes are organized below, in tabular form;

Table 4: Campaign Notes

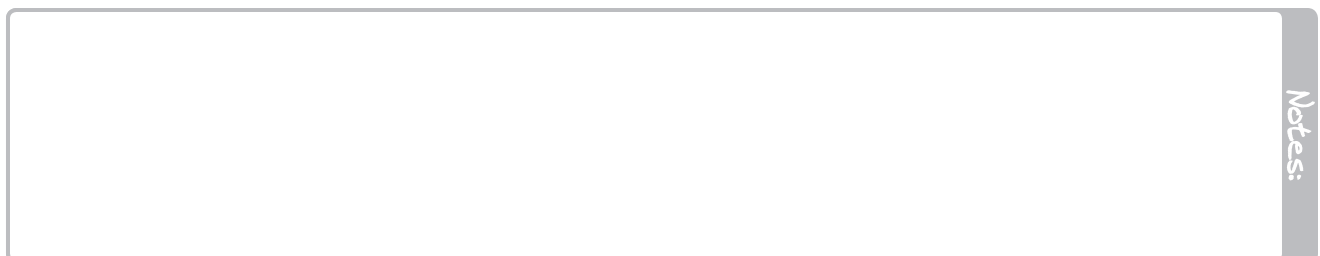
Note	Location	Notes
1	Table 1, page 4	The orc is bearing a communiqué from Yrchyn to the orc chieftain, Ignorick (see BHS2; THE SHATTERED SKULL). The missive is written in orcish. If translated, the letter reads; <i>Tell Valencia to send the ogre reinforcements before the next full moon. I will soon have The Blayde in my possession.</i> <i>All praise Xerksis the Ever-living, Yrchyn</i>
2	Table 1, page 4	The goblins, are part of a contingent visiting the kobolds to make an agreement about how to divide the spoils of Usherwood.

Note	Location	Notes
3	Encounter 20, page 8	The belt makes the wearer open to any suggestion made by Xerksis, the Mage King of Imperium Vallis, without a saving throw. In turn, if the wearer of the belt comes within 25 miles of Xerksis, the Mage-King will become aware of the character, and will call the character to him. The first contacts that Xerksis makes with the PC will be weak, and tenuous, seeming to be a dream. But as time goes by (36 hours, give or take), the calling becomes stronger and irresistible, until at last the PC cannot resist any longer, and will take any action required to answer the call. Even so far as to attack a companion.
4	Encounter 22, page 9	If the female halfling is questioned, the party can learn that she and her family were gathering mushrooms in the forest outside the cavern, when they were abducted by a band of kobolds. They were questioned by an orc wearing red chain mail. The questions will regard a bone-hilted sword belonging to the humans in the village of Usherwood. She indicates that of course she knows nothing about such a sword.
5	Encounter 28, page 10	The essence of the dialog seems to be a bargaining session between the two races. It would seem the goblins are attempting to engage the kobolds in a search for some relic believed to be present somewhere on the Peninsula. The goblins seem to be certain that the artifact, which they call the "bone-hilt" currently resides somewhere in the hills near the "human settlement." The debate at this time appears to be a disagreement over the amount and timing of the payment. What seems to settle the argument is when the goblins indicate that a change in the negotiation would displease "Her Ladyship." And that she may wish to have the kobold stronghold "put to the flame" for good.

Appendix B:

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Sylvan Plate Armor

Elven and half-elven PC's may opt for a new selection of armor available only to those races. It is wooden armor manufactured from the extremely hard usherwood tree growing in abundance within Thaelmarthir's Woods.

Ages ago, the elves discovered the means to shape the hardwood tree which grows in abundance on the Usher Arm Peninsula (but is otherwise rare elsewhere on the continent). The wood, when properly cured, is light and contains some properties in its sap which makes it semi-resistant to flame.

Through a process mastered only by the elves, they have acquired the ability to shape and carve the wood into a lightweight, effective form of plate mail armor. Typically, the armor is carved with sylvan images, and scenes depicting the life of the individual, or of the individual's clan, or tribe.

Properly made, the armor has the same protection rating as that of chain mail, with the movement properties of high-quality scale mail armor. The wooden plates offer the wearer protection against normal flame, so that all saving throws against non-magical fires are made at +1. Further, the wooden of the armor floats, causing the wearer to bob like a cork if moving through water greater than 3' deep. However, after several hours of immersion in water, the plates will become water-logged, and will draw the wearer down as would metal plate armor.

Damaged plates must be repaired by a craftsman within an elven village. Generally, such repairs cost twice the amount of similar repairs made to its metal counterpart.

Thaelmarthir plate armor costs double that of normal plate mail armor, and takes 6 months to create.

Pewter Ring of Halfling-Sense

This is an unadorned pewter ring, sporting no markings or gems. The ring itself has the appearance of having been worn for many years, as it bears scratches and nicks around its entire perimeter. If detected for, the ring will indicate a small magical enchantment. Only a halfling druid may be able to correctly identify the ring and its properties. It is legendary among the halfling races, having been in the property of a prominent halfling family for many years. The last known owner, Marigold Hedgerow, was an eccentric yet kindly widow when she suddenly went missing. It was assumed she left on one of her long walks in the country, and somewhere along the way fell victim to a wild animal, for her body was never found.

The properties of the ring depend on the race of the character. If a halfling wears the ring, he/she will gain a +1 bonus to STR and a +2 to CHA. They will also gain the ability to change pure water to berry wine, and cast an *animal friendship* spell (as the first level druid spell), each once per day.

If the character is a non-halfling, he/she will gain a +1 bonus to CHA. They will also gain the ability to change pure water to berry wine, and cast an *animal friendship* spell (as the first-level druid spell), each once per day. Non-halfling characters will also undergo a permanent and irreversible change.

Within one week of wearing the ring, if the ring is worn for more than 24 hours continuously, the character will begin to take on one of the familiar physical characteristics of the halfling; that is, their feet will grow quite large, grow a furry coat, and develop leathery soles. Within a week, the character will no longer be able to wear the normal shoes of their race as their feet will have effectively doubled in size. The feet will provide the characters with the same protection as low soft boots. During the period of this transformation, the character will be unable to walk under their own power due to excruciating pain. A *remove curse* spell will return the feet to normal size.

Thaelmarthir Grindstone

A rare gem stone similar in nature to amber. Created from the hardened sap of the usher wood tree, it has a hardness very close to that of a diamond. Acquired in the woodlands of Thaelmarthir's Woods near the elven village of Thaelmarthir, it gets its name from the humans who found that grinding the stone on their stone sharpening wheels, they could increase

the life of such grindstones. Further, the sap would cause the grindstones to become harder, and thus create a better edge on swords. Weapons sharpened on such a wheel will take on the pinkish hue of the usher wood sap.

Gem stones created from the sap are rare, and highly prized by collectors. They have a market value similar to that of amber.

Appendix C:

An Overview of Usherwood and the Environs of the Usher Arm Peninsula

If you are playing within the Usherwood Adventures campaign setting, this section will help to give you background upon which the region of the Usher Arm Peninsula was created, should your gamers opt to get off the track of the module manuscript. It also provides the necessary background in order to fully understand the relationship between the principal protagonist of the campaign — Mandrake Usher — and the principal antagonist — Xerksis, the Mage-King.

If you're playing outside the Bone-Hilt Sword campaign; this section may help to provide additional color, or act as creative suggestions as to how it might fit into your existing campaign setting. In either case, the following narrative is *not* required to the playing of the module.

Usherwood has maintained a constant human population of roughly 1,000. Occasionally, a dwarf or elf will decide to make the village their home for a time. But, as they have life spans significantly longer than that of the average human, they tend to get bored after a couple hundred years and move on. Its chief commodities are the honey and spices used by the dwarves of Arnegelius Peak, to manufacture a potent mead. Usherwood also deals a great quantity of jerked fish to the halflings of North Ridge (halflings, as you know, have no love of boats, and the community of North Ridge has developed an insatiable appetite for smoked salmon). The elves of Thaelmarthir, on the other hand, don't trade for Usherian goods, though they do have a love of the sweet dwarfish mead. Never wishing to admit this to the dwarves however, the elves have made an agreement with the human traders in Usherwood; in exchange for below market rates on the elves' wooden goods, the humans of Usherwood purchase enormous amounts of the

dwarven mead keeping half for themselves, and selling half to the elves. The arrangement led to the saying, "... that's a regular cord-a-barrel..." referring to a good trade to be had.

A brief history of the region

Being the first installment in a lengthy 5-part campaign, it may be important to understand the history behind the region, and some potential motivations for the party to engage in the long-term goal, which won't become clear to the players until the second module; **THE SHATTERED SKULL**.

...of Mandrake and Alonéz

Usherwood, so it is said, is named for the ranger, Lord Mandrake Usher. Legend has it that Lord Mandrake was originally from the great city state of Imperium Vallis. His family was born into the feudal society wherein it is preordained that certain families would be committed to the protection of the ruling family. Mandrake's father was assigned duty as part of the palace's highly regarded Enion Guard. The Enion was a separate specially trained army unit which was specifically assigned to guard the palace and the royal family (picture a French Musketeer unit). As it happened, due to his frequently being on the palace grounds, Mandrake befriended Alonéz Engenouf, first in line to the Imperium throne. As Mandrake received his teachings in the ways of the military, Alonéz was receiving his teachings in politics, economics, society, and the arts.

Alonéz and Mandrake had it all worked out between them; Alonéz would be king, and Mandrake would be the trusted general and advisor. They would play games along this line that usually resulted in the two boys fighting the terrible foe side by side to glorious victory (to the ever present adorations of the young damsels of the king's court). As the boys grew older, they became favorites of royal banquets and balls. Their antics and way with the ladies never ceased to entertain the court.

What they did not foresee was the court intrigue that was to bring the downfall of the ruling structure of the Imperium Vallis.

Alonéz's father, the beloved King Ector, had many enemies. As do most kings; whether good or evil. One of these was the Arch Mage of the Wizards' Council. Xerksis — who by anyone's recollection had been old since even the very eldest citizen could recall — had been long biding his time on the sidelines, waiting for his chance to usurp the throne, establish a magocracy, and set himself up as king. He knew

though that he could not simply murder the king then assume the throne. He would have to ensure that someone the people trusted would name him to the throne. In Alonéz he saw his opportunity.

Enlisting the assistance of the assassins' guild in Imperium Vallis, the king was killed in a "hunting accident"—two arrows through the back—both poisoned. Further, the king's head had been brutally hacked from his shoulders. The weapon that had inflicted the killing blow appeared to have been so hot as to have cauterized the wound immediately, even as it cut through his neck, burning the skin and surrounding tissues black.

Xerksis publicly proclaimed the king's death to have been committed by a band of highwaymen, and indeed even supplied the men for public execution. He then made immediate preparations to have Alonéz crowned king. The ranks of the Enion guard became suspicious because there was no official investigation, but kept silent as popular opinion demanded swift justice. However, the guard continued their own investigations in secret.

Xerksis suggested to Alonéz that the Imperium could not be without a king, not even for a day of mourning. He began his manipulations almost immediately, and so delicately did he work Alonéz, the stunned young man had no idea what was happening. When given the opportunity, he had willingly allowed Xerksis to begin unburdening him of the more mundane responsibilities were required of a king as Alonéz sank deeper into depression over the loss of his father.

...of the departure of Mandrake

Mandrake saw very little of his friend following the death of the king. In time, he saw him not at all. But he, along with the rest of the state guard, resented the ever-present Arch Mage. Resented even more being told by a mage how armor and weapons should be polished, or how a bow should be strung. Within 24 months of the king's murder, Alonéz had not been seen by any of his subjects in many months. Even the annual court balls Alonéz had previously so enjoyed, had been postponed time and again, and finally, outright cancelled by edict of the mage.

On the seventh anniversary of the death of the king, Xerksis' herald read a proclamation ostensibly from Alonéz, granting the mage full power of stewardship of the state until such a time as Alonéz, or other heir, was capable to resume the throne. The fact Alonéz had received no visitors, not even a courtly maid who might make a queen to the king, in the

years since his father's demise escaped no one. An heir would not be forth coming. And many began to believe Alonéz himself no longer drew breath.

Mandrake needed to know the truth. Needed to see for himself how Alonéz fared.

He knew of the secret passages through the castle leading to Alonéz's room. The two had used these same passages to spy on the maidens and castle staff during their youth.

In the mid of the night, under a full moon, he stealthily made his way to his friend's bedchamber. Entering the room through a panel behind the large bed, Mandrake was not ready for what he saw.

The room looked as if it had not been used in a century let alone seven years. A thin layer of dust and cobwebs covered everything. And it smelled of death. Rancid and putrid, the air of the once plush chamber was so thick with the odor of decay he felt he could cut it with a knife. But what caught his attention most fully was the bed. Upon the bed was the mummified husk of Alonéz, dressed in his sleeping gown, the entire front of which had a black stain; thick and crusty as of dried blood. Indeed, his neck had a large wound that almost severed the head from the body. The skin surrounding the wound was blackened, as if the blade making the deadly cut was heated in a blacksmith's forge.

Mandrake's first instinct was to report what he had found to his Enion captain. Making his way silently back out of the castle through the secret passages, he approached the barracks from a riverside path. Upon reaching the barracks gates, he noticed immediately not all was as it should be. The guard house lights were extinguished, and as he approached the gates, he was not challenged by the sentry. He continued on to the officers' quarters. Here, the candles were lighted; indeed, there was yet a fire burning in the hearth, and a half eaten dinner at the captain's table.

Looking hard and long at the captain's dinner, Mandrake noticed something that struck him as odd. The captain was apparently having steak for his dinner, but there was no knife amid the flatware on the table.

It was when Mandrake reached the main barracks house that he got his last shock of the night. Bodies of the entire Enion company, were strewn all about the barracks hall.

All of them run through with swords. In the far corner, he found the body of the captain. In his hand he clutched the missing dinner knife. The knife and his hand covered in the blood of his attacker. The captain's head, nearly severed from his body by a cut surrounded by the burned flesh of his neck.

Next to the captain, he found the body of his father. His father's head rolled below table after having been severed from his neck; the flesh there burned, and smoking.

...of the settlement of Usherwood

Needing to escape the horror, Mandrake quietly gathered some meager supplies and made his way to the wharf area, found a small but sturdy craft, and quietly headed out into the Sea dar de Imperium. In the small craft he was able to move swiftly through the ocean until after a week's travel he came at last to a foreign shore. He found he had sailed directly into a small sheltered inlet which contained a small fresh water spring whose runoff lead directly into the sea. With his military training, he was well equipped to establish a small camp for himself, and set about making a new life. He taught himself how to speak with the woodland creatures, and soon gained their trust. He used the animals to keep up with the happenings in the forest around him. He soon had minor dealings with the elves, dwarves, gnomes, and halflings of the peninsula.

Several years after his arrival, he heard a sound in the forest that was not of the nature he had grown to know and love. These were the sounds of wheels crunching over the forest floor, horses huffing through strained effort, and human speech. It had been so long since had seen another human, he had almost forgotten what he himself looked like.

He now understood why the elves said mortal man had *"a stink to offend even the sensibilities of god,"* the dwarves said that humans *"groomed themselves no better than the uncouth hill giants of the Pinnacle of Candac,"* the gnomes said that the human language was like *"the scratching of one's fingernails across a writing slate,"* and the halflings said that a human's feet were too small for their great height (halflings are not known for the wasting of words in colorful similes).

He could tell that these humans had been traveling for quite a long time. Many appeared to be sick, several had limbs wrapped in bandages, all were filthy and indeed had enough stink to offend even the sensibilities of their god. He shadowed the caravan for several days as they drew near to his encampment. One girl in particular caught his attention.

She was young, perhaps 17 summers. She was apparently quite ill for they stopped frequently in order that one of the older men in the group (apparently her father) could check on her. His face was graven with age and worry. All in the caravan deferred to his directions, so he further assumed this man to be in charge, or at least held some position of respect within the group. Each time they stopped, he would check on the girl, dribbling water into her mouth, wiping her forehead, trying to make her eat some food.

On the sixth day that he followed their progress, the caravan came upon his camp.

Taking this as a sign they could go no further, a halt was called, and they set up their own camp next to Mandrake's. The afternoon sky was the color of darkened steel, and the wind coming in off the sea was full of brine. Mandrake could see that these wretched souls were in for a punishing storm that they were not in a position to deal with.

Knowing his presence would not likely startle the caravan (they had after all set up their camp right next to his camp), he cautiously entered their midst and began meticulously giving instructions on how to prepare for the threatening storm. The members of the caravan were nonetheless skeptical of Mandrake until their leader, without a word, began doing as Mandrake advised; lashing down wagons, cutting boughs from trees to create shelter, digging pits in the ground for sheltered fires. With his assistance the caravan survived the night with nothing more than a few bruises from a tree limb that been torn loose by the wind.

In the morning, never having said a word directly to anyone all the night long, Mandrake was preparing to leave when the girl's father asked if Mandrake could help his daughter. She had developed a wasting sickness following their encounter with a party of hostile goblins some weeks past. He assumed the dart that struck her must have been poisoned, for the cut she received was very small, yet she immediately began this decline into a near comatose state. He carefully examined her wound. Without a word, Mandrake pulled from his supplies a small dried weed. The weed had a small yellow flower, very similar to a dandelion. His instruction was to steam the weed over boiling sea water until the weed regained some moisture, crush the weed against the wound, and pack the weed against the wound with a paste mixed from the bark of the unusual pink trees which grew on the peninsula. With that, he left.

The caravan felt he had left for good, for none saw him again for more than a week's time. What the people of the caravan did not know is that Mandrake, having become enamored of the young woman, visited her secretly in the dead of night when all else were asleep. He would check her wound, gauge her progress, and then slip back into the night.

After several days time, the girl regained consciousness. In a few more days she began eating under her own power again. Five weeks and three days after arriving in Mandrake's camp, the girl was back to her previous strength, even helping with some of the chores.

At this time, Mandrake returned to the camp. The girl's father greeted him as a hero. Praising him to all the others, promising Mandrake whatever he had was Mandrake's.

Mandrake stated simply that as the ranger of this forest, it was his responsibility to provide what aid he could.

He then related his tale from the time he met up with the elves who dwelled in the forest with him. The elves instructed him in the ways of the forest; how to speak with animals, identify the flora and fauna by both site and smell. And to care for all who dwell in the forest. Mandrake had spent the last 23 years learning all there was to learn about the forest. He also knew the presence of the human caravan would unsettle the balance in this region. Much as his heart desired to keep the girl near him, whose name he now learned was Gwyneth, he had to persuade the caravan to depart back whence they came.

The people of the caravan then related their own story of how several years ago, in their small village of Menlon, a caravan of militia from a 'great southern city' had rolled into their town square. In their midst was a man dressed in vermilion robes. At his side he carried a most unusual sword. The man in robes proclaimed himself to be an emissary from the court of Xerksis. And he had come in order that the people of this small village could pay homage to the greatness of Xerksis. They knew not where this Xerksis was located, but never before had they been forced to pay tribute to another city. The people refused, causing the militia to begin rounding up citizens. As proof of the seriousness of his intent, the man in the vermilion robes pointed his hands, fingers splayed, at the largest building in town — a tavern called the Golden Hippocampus — uttered a few incomprehensible words, whereupon bolts of flame shot out from his finger tips and exploded on the side of the building. It immediately erupted into flames. At this time, the mage pulled the mysterious sword from his belt, and the blade of the sword began to glow and emit a scorching heat that could be felt even several yards distance. By morning, the entire village would be burned to the ground. The mage called the lord constable of the village forward, forced him to his knees, and to make an example of him, cut his head from his shoulders. The wound left behind on the stump of his neck smoldered as an old log, the flesh around it charred and smoking.

The militia and the mage left the village with most of the villagers' valuables. Mandrake knew he had to provide a means for the people of this caravan to make a new start. He met with the king and queen of the elven community at Thaelmarthir to explain the situation. The elves would only

agree to the establishment of a human colony on the peninsula contingent on three requirements: that Mandrake train them in the ways of the ranger; that they dedicate their lives to the forest and the creatures that dwell there; and that their population never exceeds 1,000 souls.

And so it was that the members of the caravan established the human settlement of Usherwood (named for their ranger savoir). And they were very committed to the ways of the ranger.

...of the disappearance of Mandrake Usher

Some years after the founding of Usherwood, a series of events occurred which, even today, remains a subject of debate among the populace of the village. As an offer of their gratitude for assisting them in establishing the village, the villagers fashioned a sword for the ranger. The blade was of length and width typical of most long swords, but the grip was carved from usher wood; a full hand-and-a-half. When the blade was sharpened, a blacksmith named Karl van Goetz needed a grinding wheel, as his old one had been lost during the flight from Menlon. But after the months of travel, a wheel suitable for the sharpening of the blade could not be found. On a foray into Thaelmarthir Wood, van Goetz found an usherwood tree covered in sap. The sap had dried, and formed an extremely hard outer crust on the smooth bark. He managed to cut the tree down, slice off a wheel-shaped wedge of the trunk, and fashioned it into a grinding wheel. He found that by attaching the wood to his grindstone pedestal, he could generate sufficient friction to sharpen the steel blade. In addition, this gave the blade a pinkish highlight due to the sunlight reflecting off the sap particles which had become embedded within the metal. The sap became known as *Thaelmarthir Grindstone*, and became a popular form of jewelry.

...of the Death of Mandrake

During one of his excursions into the forest, Mandrake began to climb one of the nearby mountains in a desire to find a meditative place of serenity. After so many years, he had still not forgotten about the mage Xerksis, and his dead friend Alonéz. And the realization that the Mage-King yet lived brought a darkness over Mandrake's moods.

He happened upon a large opening on the far side of the mountain and entered in with the hopes he would be able to make it to a secret place of refuge. Immediately upon entering the cave, he could sense a great and terrible evil about the place. The air was hot and putrid, and contained no signs of any living creature within.

He felt whatever lay inside was a threat to the entire peninsula, so he chose to seek out the source of evil that lay within, and attempt to drive it to other lands, or to destroy it utterly. How long he wandered the dimly lit caverns no story now relates, but eventually, he came to a great opening within the depths of the mountain. Far above him, the cavern opened to the snow tipped peak of the mountain. From somewhere deeper within, he heard a low rumbling, and the shifting of some great weight about the floor.

From out of the gloom, the head of a great battle-scarred red dragon emerged; its hot breath and stench said to be the only thing in this world to have ever caused Mandrake Usher to know fear.

A terrible rage was on the beast at having been awakened from a centuries-long slumber. Knowing the dragon to be far beyond his ability to vanquish alone, Mandrake ran back down the corridors he had just come; fire leaping at his heels as the great beast spewed blast after blast down the tunnel after him. Upon emerging from the mountain, Mandrake found the dragon had left his hiding place, and was even now, soaring on the air currents high above him...heading directly toward the village.

As quickly as he could, he ran back to village, trying to get there before the dragon could fall upon the unsuspecting villagers. When he reached the outskirts of the village, he witnessed the result of the dragon's wrath. Half the village lay in ashes. Many bodies lay strewn about like discarded children's toys. Indeed, many of the bodies were in fact children. As he looked around the survivors began gradually emerging from the surrounding woods, many of them appeared beyond understanding of what had happened. A few turned on the ranger. "Where were you when the creature attacked?" they demanded of him. "In our time of greatest need, you're nowhere to be found," they accused. Otho van Nuys, the one man Mandrake could call a true friend, turned on him, "My child. The monster has taken my Gwyneth." He related how, after setting flame to most of the town, the dragon swept down and picked up two of the villagers right off the ground. One, a man of about 20 years old, it bit in half, throwing the remains deep into the woods. The other was Gwyneth.

Then, an anger that frightened all who saw it fell onto Mandrake Usher's face. He turned, and hiked back to the dragon's cavern to exact his revenge. On his return, he found the dragon had hung the girl by her wrists about 20' off the cavern floor where he looked her in the eyes. The monster was questioning her about the warrior who awakened it from its rest. It was then that Mandrake stepped from the shadows to

confront the dragon. Forgetting his odds of successfully combating the dragon, Mandrake stepped forward, the unusual pink-bladed usher wood sword drawn, to make his challenge.

The battle that ensued lasted for hours on end. Neither gaining an upper hand over the other. The dragon had apparently expended all his fire in his raid on the village, for he never used this weapon during the battle. In one lucky moment, the dragon raised its large head up and to the side to avoid a cutting sweep of the ranger's sword. In that instant, Mandrake saw his chance. He brought the weapon around in a great arc that cut deep into the beast's throat. As the sword sliced through the dragon's neck, it struck the bone and the blade broke off at the hilt. Three feet of steel blade remain lodged in the great neck. The blood-covered usher wood grip skittered across the floor and came to rest in a corner of the dragon's horde. In its pain, the dragon gurgled what would have otherwise been a tremendous bellow of pain and outrage. It threw itself away from Mandrake in a futile attempt to get away from the terrible biting sword. It threw its head blindly into the side of the cavern.

Bone crunched and blood sprayed. And then, it lay still upon its back. The sun shone brightly upon the creature's belly through the opening in the top of the cavern.

Oblivious to the pain and blood caused by his wounds suffered in the fight, Mandrake released Gwyneth from her bonds, and returned her to the village. He silently returned her to her father, took his leave, and then disappeared into the woods.

In the weeks after the battle, a group of the village men climbed the heights to see the dead creature. When they arrived, they saw the great beast lying lifeless in a dark corner of the large cavern. A great gash in its neck, an enormous pool of crystalline blood about its body. In the light, one of them caught the familiar coloring of the usher wood grip of the ranger's sword. Leaving the dragon's horde, they took the sword grip back to the village as a trophy of his victory. After leaving the cavern, the party of men created a rock slide to seal the cavern. The blade itself escaped discovery.

Mandrake was never seen alive again by anyone from the village. Anyone that is, except for Gwyneth. She followed him into the woods, only to return several weeks later saying she never found him, and became lost. A month later, her father arranged her marriage to Adolf Gunderson, son of the farmer who plowed the areas north of the village.

Eight months later, Gwyneth gave birth to the first of her five children, a girl who they named Gwen.

However, the birth of this child was clouded in controversy. The daughter was born just short of 8 months following their marriage. The early birth convinced many that Adolf was not the father. Indeed, many felt that Gwyneth had indeed found Mandrake, and that he was the father. Gwyneth denied this accusation until her death at the age of 42.

...of Usher Hall

When next Mandrake was eventually found, it was in the dead of winter, sitting at a small camp some 20 miles north of the village. His body was frozen solid. The villagers took him back to Usherwood and constructed a large burial chamber for him at the north end of town. The mausoleum became known as Usher Hall. His casket was carved from a single piece of usherwood. Upon the lid, a niche had been carved for the sword grip, the remainder of the blade carved into the lid in bas-relief giving the impression that the sword was forged anew. The casket's lid was then sealed with the sap from the usherwood tree. Only the rangers, on special permission from the great druid, can gain access to the mausoleum.

Governance

Management of the village itself falls to the Constabulary, which is headed by the Lord Constable. Traditionally, this has been handed down to the eldest child or closest relative of the sitting Lord Constable. In this epoch, it is Ewan van Nuys; a 7th level ranger who is a descendent of Otho van Nuys; leader of the company who first wandered into Usher's camp. The Lord Constable retains all powers traditionally held by a mayor, but he manages the militia (a small force of arms in Usherwood), and is chairman for a body of elected citizen representatives. This body is comprised of 10 individuals. Once a month these representatives, and the Lord Constable, meet in a clearing at the north end of the village. Therein have been set eleven large stones which have been carved into chairs with high backs. It is in this forum that concerns, petitions, and grievances are heard, voted on by the representatives, and judged by the Lord Constable.

The Usher Arm Peninsula

The Peninsula is a narrow spit of land located on the south coast of the Northern Territories.



Notes:

Its position removes it from any form of control of any of the five kingdoms which vie for control of the continent. Here, the five races of the Peninsula have learned to live (mostly) in peace with one another, as none of the communities seeks control or domination of the other.

Iron Mountains: The primary geographical formation, and that which shapes the peninsula, are the Iron Mountains. This narrow rise of rocky peaks extends from the peninsula's north-most boundaries, until it crashes into the storm-tossed seas at its southern terminus near Fioonghuala. The mountains are rich, primarily, in iron ore. But they also contain veins of copper, tin, silver, gold (in lesser amounts, so its discovery is greeted with great celebration when encountered), and many gem stones of lesser value (diamonds and the like are rarely encountered).

Thaelmarthir's Woods; A woodland, renowned for a specific species of tree which is known to grow only in this location; the usher tree. Named for the famed ranger lord of old, the tree is long-lived, and produces the hardest wood known to exist. Cured properly, the wood is so hard in fact, that the elves of Thaelmarthir have even discovered how to fashion plate armor from it.

North Ridge: There are two strains of halfling that make up the population of this little hamlet; tallfellows and stouts. Being rather clannish by nature, the two strains tend to stick together, even within their own community.

Halflings of the tallfellow bloodline, live mostly in the above ground dwellings in the north-end of the village, which is named Tawkee. The tallfellows prefer more active lives than their shorter, rounder cousins, the stouts. Therefore, a halfling of tallfellow persuasion is more likely to be a farmer, hunter, trapper, etc.

Stouts live primarily in the traditional below ground burrows more common to the halfling race. These dwellings can be mostly found in south-end of the village, called Stoutmoor. Stouts tend to prefer more docile labors, such as gardening, brewing, baking, inn keeping, etc.

All halflings, regardless of bloodline, admire hard work, and detest laziness. Though, they do like the traditional seven square meals a day, broken up by three naps. But when not eating or napping, they are industrious indeed.

The halflings migrated to the Peninsula sometime after the dwarves, but well before the humans. They get along fabulously with all the other races, but most especially with the elves, who shower them with attention. Trade between

halflings and the other races is brisk and well received throughout the year. Halflings can be found living in all the other communities (except with the gnomes, whose underground dwellings they consider to be just too untidy and unkempt for civilized folk).

Arnegelius Peak: The dwarves of Arnegelius Peak are governed by a patriarchal body of 5 dwarves. The head of the ruling fathers, known as the Thane Chief, is responsible for maintaining order among the other four thanes; Hammer Thane (smithing), Ale Thane (trade, food, and beer), Axe Thane (defense and law), and Stone Thane (mining and gem trading).

The dwarves came originally from the mountainous region north of the Usher Arm Peninsula, near the village of Ice Berg.



On the Road to North Ridge

Notes:

After a prolonged struggle against kobolds and goblins, their cavern complex was rendered somewhat uncomfortable for the dwarves.

The constant warring, both above ground and below, had left the dwarven complex there a dangerous place to keep a “civilized” community. Rumor today says their once powerful nation has become a haven for many dark subterranean creatures.

Today, the dwarves of Arnegelius Peak enjoy a quiet and peaceful existence on the Peninsula. Their only conflict comes from the elves who resent the dwarves for encroaching on their ancient kingdom of Thaelmarthir. Though the conflict between the races has never lead to violence, the tension between the two nations comes awfully close.

The dwarves enjoy a close bond with the halflings of North Ridge though. This bond manifests itself with much trade between the communities. In fact, some dwarves opt to make North Ridge their home for many years, and earn their keep excavating new homes and shoring up older construction for the halflings.

West Hills: West Hills is a rough community of kind-hearted gamblers and rogues. The ratio of inns and taverns to the rest of the businesses is quite high. Men of West Hills tend to have thick beards with a single hair braid at their right temple. Women wear leather breeches, usually dyed in greens or earth tones. Men and women are both always more apt to laugh at others’ misfortune, and sympathize with others’ pain than are their counterparts in Usherwood.

The town of West Hills lies due west of Usherwood about 5 miles distant. The two communities are tightly knit, and even consider themselves as one large ‘city,’ although their town leadership structures remain separate. Usherwood is governed by a stewardship, headed by the Lord Constable. West Hills, however, is governed by the best at fighting in bare-handed combat. Each year, the town holds a celebration called the Homecoming Brawl.

It’s a tradition handed down from Karl van Goetz himself. Legend has it that after a particularly long drunken spree he went out in the woods with a group of like-minded carousers (lasting for an entire month), he returned home to find his wife had removed his belongings from their home and placed them in the yard to be ruined in the weather. In the argument



The north face of Arnegelius Peak

Notes:

that ensued, Heather, Karl's wife, began beating Karl about the head with her broom. She demanded that he fight back to give her some satisfaction. And fight back he did. The two of them ended up throwing each other about in the mud all through the town square.

Finally, Karl got Heather with a good upper cut; she went down hard in the mud.

Karl was able to revive Heather after 10 minutes of being out cold in the mud. Heather looked admiringly at her husband, and said, "Welcome home darling. Now what would 'ye like for supper?"

After Karl's death, the citizens of West Hills began to hold the Homecoming Brawl in his honor each year (June 17) to determine who should be the head of the town for the next twelve months. Anyone may challenge the current leader during the week-long celebration; man or woman, adult or child. The requirement is that no weapon or magic of any sort may be used. Bare fists and feet only may be used (head butting was outlawed when a large bald contender killed one participant). Town Brawlers (as the victors come to be known) who serve consecutive terms wear their scars of battle as trophies;

adorning the larger scars with jewelry and/or tattoos. There have even been several women to serve as Town Brawler. However, the Town Brawler is not the final authority in West Hills. Retired Brawlers are obligated to serve at least ten years as a town regent after their term is concluded. These regents act as a check-and-balance system for the Town Brawler. They can even have him/her removed from their post if they feel the Brawler is not living up to the standards established by Karl van Goetz. There are always at least 3, and never more than 7 regents serving the community at any given time, and always maintain an odd number.

Most Children of Usher (this is what natives of Usherwood call themselves) do not participate in the Brawl, but they do see it as an opportunity for sport.

Betting pools are common for the folk of both communities.

Thaelmarthir: The elven community is by far the eldest among the inhabitants of the Usher Arm Peninsula. In fact, they originally chose the area because of its isolation from the expanding city-states of human kind found on the southerly portions of the continent.



Notes:

The other races can enjoy at best a condescending attitude of acceptance from the elves, who believe the other communities to exist on the Peninsula at their discretion, and by their permission.

Only the halflings enjoy a relationship with the elves based on mutual respect. This is due in part to the halflings' general love of nature, and their genuinely non-capitalistic attitudes toward community. Also, local legend relates that in the long distant past, a sheriff of North Ridge sacrificed himself in order to save the life of a noble elfin child.

Thaelmarthir is located in the Thaelmarthir's Wood, south of Arnegelius Peak, and east of North Ridge. The community is lead by a coalition of six noble families. Together, responsibilities are shared by the eldest male and female of each family group. Power plays between the families are not uncommon, but generally are limited to nothing more than idle gossip in order to make a particular individual fall out of favor.

Fioonghuala: No one is quite sure when or how the gnomes of Fioonghuala appeared on the Usher Arm Peninsula. All that is certain is that life on the peninsula has not been the same since.

The gnomish community established itself at the very tip of the Usher Arm Peninsula known as 'the Knuckle.' The governing body of the gnomes is made up of a 'Duke' and his endless mass of hangers-on (each holding a grandiose title, usually bestowed by themselves, upon themselves, as long as the Duke finds it 'cool', and 'neato'). The 'Duke' is a hereditary position which passes from father to third son. Where a third son is not available or able to serve as Duke, then the second son of the Duke's older brother is appointed to the position. Where this individual cannot serve, or does not exist, then the husband of the eldest daughter of the sitting Duke's



The southern approach to Thaelmarthir, with the south face of Arnegelius Peak looming



The broken landscape of the Isle of Valencia

Notes:



Entrance to the Fioonghuala caverns

Sister-in-Law becomes the next in line. And so on the line of inheritance goes until each and every gnome is accounted for.

Gnomish culture centers on the premise that the gnomes were a hereditary offshoot of the dwarves. A favored Fioonghualan legend says that the first gnome was born of the union of a dwarventhane and an elven maiden (this tale of course causes great controversy among both the dwarf and elf races).

Gnomes from Fioonghuala generally regard themselves as close cousins of the dwarves, to the never-ending irritation of those denizens of Arnegelius Peak. If traveling in the company of dwarves, a gnome will undoubtedly make a complete nuisance of himself.

No task would be too lowly for a gnome to take on for a dwarf. Further, a dwarf would go to whatever length they must to rid themselves of the gnome in question. If given a chance, a Fioonghuala gnome would be completely self-sacrificing to a dwarven compatriot.

Isle of Valencia: A chain of volcanic islands west of the peninsula. Reputed to be the home of an ancient evil. But no explorers have ventured there to determine the truth of this claim.

The island itself is a dead wasteland of broken lava fields, where little vegetation grows. Wild beasts of fantastic nature and ill-temper roam the plains, and poisonous fumes vent throughout the landscape.

Notes:

Appendix D:

Maps

The legends provided will detail sufficient highlights of the following maps for the GM to play the game elements described elsewhere within the module. GM's are encouraged to define other areas within the maps as required for their gaming group's needs.

Village of Usherwood

1. **Constabulary;** All members of the local force of constables reside, train, and hold court within this large structure. Prison cells are located in the basement.
2. **Residence of the Great Druid;** the name of this building is somewhat misleading since the great druid makes his actual residence in a secluded grotto at the base of a waterfall several miles to the west.
3. **Druid Grove;** the place of mysterious ritual upon the full moon. Only druids are ever permitted to enter within, and they never speak of the rites that take place. Other secret groves are located deep in the forests several miles distant from the village.
4. **Usher's monument;** statue of the ranger that founded this settlement, and the village's namesake; Mandrake Usher. The statue is facing south, holding a sword pointed forward in gesture of warning.
5. **The Second Supper;** a locally famous tavern, and favored watering hole for adventurers. The 'Supper' is run by a highly respected halfling, and known for its prize-winning mushroom stew.
6. **McSweeney's Warehouse;** the warehouse is actually a front for the Peninsula's only thieves' guild. Called the *Silent Obtrude*, it is run by an elven thief and his top lieutenant; a rather roguish bard.
7. **Usher Hall;** where the remains of famed ranger Mandrake Usher are interred.
8. **Public market;** open air market available to any one with something to sell. Almost anything can be found here.
9. **Temple of Sol, goddess of good neutrality;** the largest and most lavish temple in the village. Though far from being grand in any sense, it does enjoy the largest following in the area.
10. **Temple of Caelis, goddess of lawful neutrality;** second only in religious power on the Peninsula to the Temple of Sol. The followers of Sol view the followers of Caelis with some level of suspicion due to Caelis' legendary rivalry with Sol, over Sol's consort, Lilubré.
11. **Temple of Orvite, goddess of chaotic goodness;** a richly accented façade and comfortably appointed interior set this temple to the goddess of chaotic good apart from the other temples in the village.
12. **Temple of Bolc, god of chaotic neutrality;** this is a crude log cabin where the temple's representative in the village resides. The actual temple is located deep in the forest to the west. It is rumored that the Silent Obtrude actually provides much funding to the temple, but these accusations have not been proved.
13. **Temple of Avitori, god of lawful goodness;** the lawful good community in the region is small, but growing.
14. **Temple of Id, god of absolute neutrality;** the structure is but a shell sitting over an excavated cave system dedicated to the god of neutrality.
15. **North Road;** 5 miles northwest to the human settlement of West Hills. Some 100 miles further north is the halfling village of North Ridge, dwarven kingdom of Arnegelius Peak, and elven domain of Thaelmarthir.
16. **South Road;** 30 miles to the gnomish village of Fioonghuala.
17. **Sacred Circle;** forum wherein concerns, petitions, and grievances are heard, voted on by the representatives, and judged by the Lord Constable.
18. **Cemetery;** though open to any Usherwood citizen, most of those buried here are exclusive to the merchant class and constables. Rangers and druids are all interred or cremated in the forests of the outlying area.
19. **The Great Hall;** gathering place and meeting place of the ranger forces that use Usherwood as a staging area for the efforts to protect the north lands of the Verméan continent.
20. **Gunderson's farming co-op;** the rich farmlands located north of the village are tended all the Usherwood populations, but has been long managed by the Gunderson family.

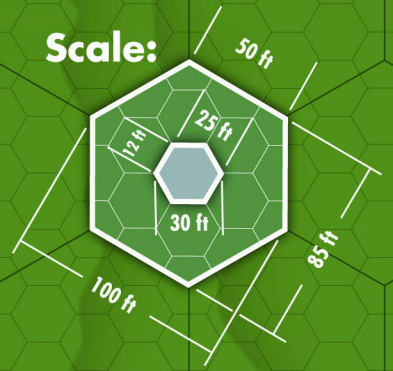
Village of Usherwood



party's approach

shallow stream

Scale:



gentle slope down (75 ft)

steep slope down (75 ft)

bon fire



leader and guard tents and fire



light forest

dense forest

Kobold campsite
(page 5)



kobolds' approach

shallow stream

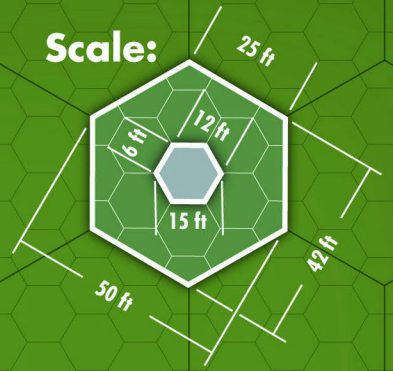
light forest

dense forest

party's original approach

party's campsite

Scale:

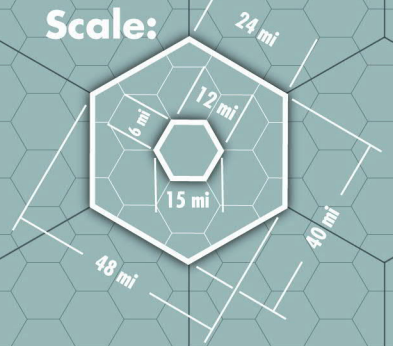


Campsite Attack

(page 6)

Usher Arm Peninsula

Scale:



Midway Island
Pelican Bay

Valencia's Cauldron

McSweeney's Folley

Thane Landing
Greater Thane
Bay of Dermitage

IRON MOUNTAINS

Location of the kobold lair

Summer Coast

Arnegelius Peak

Tallfellow Coast

North Ridge

Stoor Coast

Thaelmarthir

Thaelmarthir's

Woods

Bay of Usher

Gwen's Rest

West Hills Usherwood

Risf and Knuckle Peaks

Fioonghuala

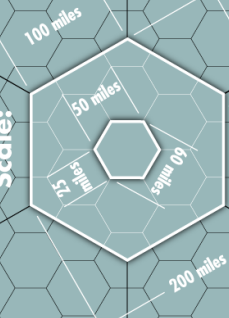
Winter Coast

SEA DAR DE IMPERIUM



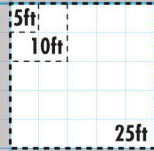


Vermé



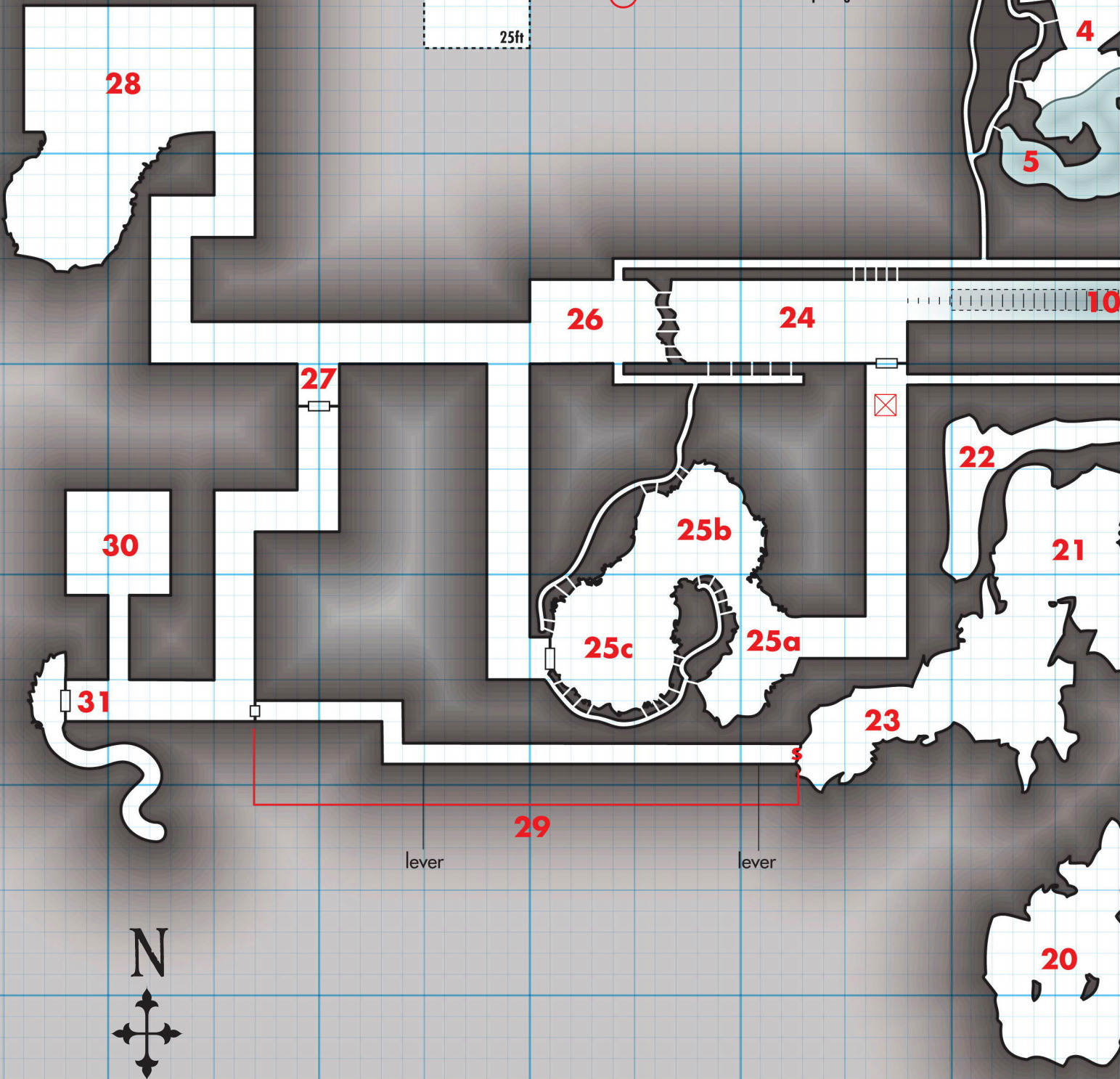
Kobold lair

Scale:



⊠ Spiked pit

○ Locked door into murder hole passages





Appendix E:

NPCs

Ewan van Nuys

Lord Constable of Usherwood. Human, male, **ranger**, lawful good, 10th level, **HP** 63, **STR** 16, **INT** 14, **WIS** 14, **DEX** 16, **CON** 15, **CHA** 17. **AC** 5. **Spells**; **druid**, first level; *animal friendship*, *speak with animals*; **magic-user**, first level; *mending*. **Weapons**; long sword, light crossbow. **Armor**; ring mail.

Murra'ahn Greenleaf

Fighter of the Rosemadder half-elf tribe. Half-elf, female, **fighter**, chaotic good, 3rd level, **HP** 19, **STR** 14, **INT** 12, **WIS** 11, **DEX** 13, **CON** 12, **CHA** 11. **AC** 4. **Spells**; none. **Weapons**; long sword, long bow. **Armor**; sylvan plate (see the description in **APPENDIX B: OPEN GAME CONTENT**). Other; none.

William 'Willy' din Johar

Human, male, **ranger**, chaotic good, 2nd level, **HP** 13, **STR** 15, **INT** 12, **WIS** 11, **DEX** 15, **CON** 13, **CHA** 9. **AC** 7. **Spells**; none. **Weapons**; long sword, light crossbow. **Armor**; leather. Other; none.

Sister din Vonyal'aireyev

Human, female, **druid**, neutral good, 3rd level, **HP** 15, **STR** 11, **INT** 12, **WIS** 14, **DEX** 12, **CON** 13, **CHA** 11. **AC** 8. **Spells**; first level; *entangle*, *faerie fire*, *shillelagh*. **Weapons**; club, sling (w/ bullets—two score). **Armor**; leather. Other; none.

Cynfer Dianaarsh

Gnome, female, **illusionist**, lawful good, 2nd level, **HP** 7, **STR** 12, **INT** 14, **WIS** 11, **DEX** 12, **CON** 12, **CHA** 9. **AC** 10. **Spells**; first level; *color spray*, *phantasmal force*. **Weapons**; club. **Armor**; none. Other; none.

Frances 'Frank' Howard

Halfling (stout), female, **fighter/thief**, neutral good, 2nd/2nd level(s), **HP** 1, **STR** 13, **INT** 10, **WIS** 9, **DEX** 15, **CON** 12, **CHA** 9. **AC** 7. **Spells**; none. **Weapons**; short sword, sling (w/stones). **Armor**; padded. Other; none.

Butch Meadhouse

Halfling (tallfellow), male, **fighter**, neutral good, 3rd level, **HP** 18, **STR** 17, **INT** 9, **WIS** 10, **DEX** 15, **CON** 15, **CHA** 8. **AC** 9. **Spells**; none. **Weapons**; none. **Armor**; none. Other; none. Butch is encountered within the kobold lair as part of a wandering monster encounter.

Xoau'ao

Elf, male, **magic-user**, chaotic good, 2nd level, **HP** 6, **STR** 10, **INT** 16, **WIS** 12, **DEX** 13, **CON** 11, **CHA** 13. **AC** 10. **Spells**; first level; *magic missile*, *sleep*. **Weapons**; quarter staff, dagger. **Armor**; none. Other; none.

Appendix F:

Pre-generated PCs

The templates presented here provide only basic character information. Use the character sheet hereafter to flesh out the remaining details of each PC.

Karshem

Human, **cleric**, 1st level, **HP** 6, **STR** 10, **INT** 11, **WIS** 14, **DEX** 12, **CON** 13, **CHA** 9. **AC** 4. **Spells**; *command*, *cure light wounds*, *protection from evil*. **Armor**; chain mail, small shield. **Weapon**; mace. **Wealth**; 45 g.p.

Darlean

Half-elf, **druid**, 1st level, **HP** 8, **STR** 12, **INT** 9, **WIS** 14, **DEX** 10, **CON** 9, **CHA** 15. **AC** 8. **Spells**; *animal friendship*, *pass without trace*, *speak with animals*. **Armor**; leather. **Weapon**; club. **Wealth**; 25 g.p.

Stu'yrt

Dwarf, **fighter**, 1st level, **HP** 10, **STR** 14, **INT** 9, **WIS** 10, **DEX** 12, **CON** 12, **CHA** 9. **AC** 4. **Spells**; nil. **Armor**; chain mail. **Weapon**; hand-axe. **Wealth**; 50 g.p.

Richard

Human, **paladin**, 1st level, **HP** 8, **STR** 16, **INT** 9, **WIS** 13, **DEX** 9, **CON** 9, **CHA** 17. **AC** 3. **Spells**; nil. **Armor**; plate mail. **Weapon**; bastard sword. **Wealth**; 30 g.p.

Gondars

Human, **ranger**, 1st level, **HP** 12, **STR** 13, **INT** 13, **WIS** 14, **DEX** 12, **CON** 14, **CHA** 10. **AC** 8. **Spells**; nil. **Armor**; leather. **Weapon**; long sword. **Wealth**; 20 g.p.

Aaonae

Elf, **magic-user**, 1st level, **HP** 4, **STR** 9, **INT** 14, **WIS** 10, **DEX** 10, **CON** 9, **CHA** 12. **AC** 10. **Spells**; *read magic*, *shocking grasp*, *write*. **Armor**; nil. **Weapon**; quarter staff. **Wealth**; 15 g.p.

Græydon

Gnome, **illusionist**, 1st level, **HP** 3, **STR** 8, **INT** 15, **WIS** 10, **DEX** 16, **CON** 8, **CHA** 9. **AC** 8. **Spells**; *dancing lights, read magic, write*. **Armor**; nil. **Weapon**; dagger. **Wealth**; 20 g.p.

Gordo

Halfling, **fighter**, 1st level, **HP** 5, **STR** 9, **INT** 10, **WIS** 12, **DEX** 14, **CON** 9, **CHA** 10. **AC** 8. **Spells**; nil. **Armor**; padded. **Weapon**; short sword. **Wealth**; 30 g.p.

Snargu

Half-orc (orgre), **assassin**, 1st level, **HP** 8, **STR** 14, **INT** 11, **WIS** 8, **DEX** 14, **CON** 14, **CHA** 8. **AC** 4. **Spells**; nil. **Armor**; none. **Weapon**; broad sword. **Wealth**; 25 g.p.

Joahan

Half-hordling (blue), **monk**, 1st level, **HP** 5, **STR** 15, **INT** 9, **WIS** 15, **DEX** 15, **CON** 11, **CHA** 9. **AC** 5. **Spells**; nil. **Armor**; none. **Weapon**; bo sticks. **Wealth**; 20 g.p.

*refer to the Usherwood Adventures Sourceweb for details on the half-hordling PC race.

Whilem

Human, **racaraid bard**, 1st level, **HP** 8, **STR** 12, **INT** 12, **WIS** 12, **DEX** 13, **CON** 12, **CHA** 15. **AC** 7. **Spells**; nil. **Abilities**; charm 8%, friendship 10%, decipher legend 6%, decipher writings 2%. **Armor**; studded leather. **Weapon**; long sword. **Instrument**; lyre. **Wealth**; 20 g.p.

*refer to the Usherwood Adventures Sourceweb for details on the racaraid bard PC class.

Junee

Human, **lorist priest**, 1st level, **HP** 6, **STR** 9, **INT** 12, **WIS** 15, **DEX** 9, **CON** 9, **CHA** 13. **AC** 7. **Spells**; *bles*. **Abilities**; charm 5%, friendship 6%, decipher legend 6%, decipher writings 2%. **Armor**; studded leather. **Weapon**; long sword. **Instrument**; harp. **Wealth**; 20 g.p.

*refer to the Usherwood Adventures Sourceweb for details on the lorist priest PC class.

Greenleaf

Human, **lorist ovate**, 1st level, **HP** 10, **STR** 9, **INT** 12, **WIS** 15, **DEX** 9, **CON** 9, **CHA** 15. **AC** 7. **Spells**; *invisibility to animals*. **Abilities**; charm 5%, friendship 6%, decipher legend 6%, decipher writings 2%. **Armor**; nil. **Weapon**; club. **Instrument**; mandolin. **Wealth**; 20 g.p.

*refer to the Usherwood Adventures Sourceweb for details on the lorist ovate PC class.

Edelbrock

Human, **lyrist veteran**, 1st level, **HP** 8, **STR** 15, **INT** 12, **WIS** 12, **DEX** 10, **CON** 9, **CHA** 12. **AC** 5. **Spells**; nil. **Abilities**; charm 5%, friendship 6%, decipher legend 4%, decipher writings 2%. **Armor**; nil. **Weapon**; mace. **Instrument**; cittern. **Wealth**; 20 g.p.

*refer to the Usherwood Adventures Sourceweb for details on the lyrist veteran PC class.

Smithee

Human, **sonneteer magician**, 1st level, **HP** 8, **STR** 9, **INT** 15, **WIS** 12, **DEX** 9, **CON** 9, **CHA** 12. **AC** 8. **Spells**; *magic missile*. **Abilities**; charm 8%, friendship 10%, decipher legend 4%, decipher writings 8%. **Armor**; leather. **Weapon**; scimitar. **Instrument**; harp. **Wealth**; 25 g.p.

*refer to the Usherwood Adventures Sourceweb for details on the sonneteer magician PC class.

Vinzini

Human, **sonneteer trickster**, 1st level, **HP** 8, **STR** 9, **INT** 15, **WIS** 15, **DEX** 15, **CON** 9, **CHA** 9. **AC** 7. **Spells**; *hypnotism*. **Abilities**; charm 8%, friendship 10%, decipher legend 4%, decipher writings 8%. **Armor**; padded. **Weapon**; short sword. **Instrument**; lute. **Wealth**; 15 g.p.

*refer to the Usherwood Adventures Sourceweb for details on the sonneteer trickster PC class.

Buckley

Human, **jongleur magsman**, 1st level, **HP** 8, **STR** 9, **INT** 12, **WIS** 12, **DEX** 15, **CON** 9, **CHA** 12. **AC** 7. **Spells**; nil. **Abilities**; charm 8%, friendship 10%, decipher legend 4%, decipher writings 2%. **Armor**; nil. **Weapon**; long sword. **Instrument**; violin. **Wealth**; 20 g.p.

*refer to the Usherwood Adventures Sourceweb for details on the jongleur magsman PC class.

Clint

Human, **jack-of-all-trades**, 1st level, **HP** 8, **STR** 10, **INT** 11, **WIS** 14, **DEX** 12, **CON** 13, **CHA** 9. **AC** 8. **Portfolio**; **fighter**, **ranger**, **thief**. **Feats**; combat; **fighter**, weapon; **thief**, armor; **thief**, magic item; **thief**; saving throw; **thief**. **Armor**; leather. **Weapon**; bastard sword. **Instrument**; violin. **Wealth**; 30 g.p.

*refer to the Usherwood Adventures Sourceweb for details on the jack-of-all-trades PC class.

Summary Matrix

ID	Character	Class	Race/Sex	Lvl	EXP	Attributes		H.P.	A.C.
						S/I/W/D/Co/Ch			
01									
02									
03									
04									
05									
06									
07									
08									
09									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									

Weapons Matrix

ID	Str Mods.		Dex Mods.		Race/Class Mods.		Weapon in Hand	Weapon Mods.		Damage	
	"To Hit"	Dam.	Attack	A.C.	"To Hit"	Dam.		"to Hit"	Dam.	S-M	L
01											
02											
03											
04											
05											
06											
07											
08											
09											
10											
11											
12											
13											
14											
15											

Combat Matrix

ID	Enemy				ID	Enemy				ID	Enemy			
	Creature	A.C.	vs. A.C.	Dam.		Creature	A.C.	vs. A.C.	Dam.		Creature	A.C.	vs. A.C.	Dam.
01					04					07				
02					05					08				
03					06					09				

Name:	Exp*:	Age:	Weapon in Hand:
Class(es):	HP:	Height:	Secondary Weapon:
Alignment:	AC:	Weight:	Missile Weapon:
Race:	Lvl*:	Sex:	Additional:
*Multi-classes:			

ATTRIBUTES	MODIFIERS				
STR:	To Hit:	Damage:	Weight Allow.:	Open Doors:	Bend Bars:
INT:	Add'l Lang.:	Know Spell:	Min. Spells/Lvl.:	Max. Spells/Lvl.:	
WIS:	Magical Attack:	Spell Bonus:	Spell Failure:		
DEX:	Attack:	Defence:			
CON:	HP:	System Shock:	Resurrection:		
CHA:	Max. Henchmen:	Loyalty:	Reaction:		
Notes:					

SAVING THROWS																					
Paralyzation:	Polymorph:	Death Magic:	Staff:	Breath Weapon:	Notes:																
Poison:	Rod:	Petrification:	Wand:	Spell:																	
TO HIT vs. AC:	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
Unadjusted d20 roll:																					
Notes:																					

WEAPONS & ARMOR																	AC
Armor:		Shield:					Other:										
Notes:		Damage					Range					Weight (in g.p.)	Firerate/Length	Speed	Space Required		
																S	M
Weapon in Hand:																	
To Hit adjustment vs. armor-wearing	Opponent AC:	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	Notes:						
	Adjustment:																
Secondary Weapon:																	
To Hit adjustment vs. armor-wearing	Opponent AC:	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	Notes:						
	Adjustment:																
Missile Weapon:																	
To Hit adjustment vs. armor-wearing	Opponent AC:	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	Notes:						
	Adjustment:																
Other:																	
To Hit adjustment vs. armor-wearing	Opponent AC:	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	Notes:						
	Adjustment:																
Misc. proficiencies:																	
Notes:																	

CAMPAIGN SETTING NOTES

Deity:

Region of origin:

Racial notes:

CLASS ABILITIES NOTES

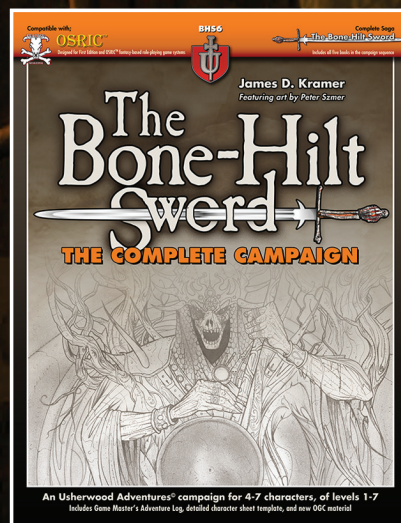
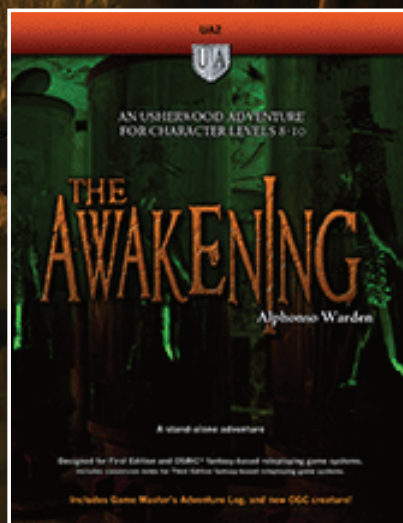
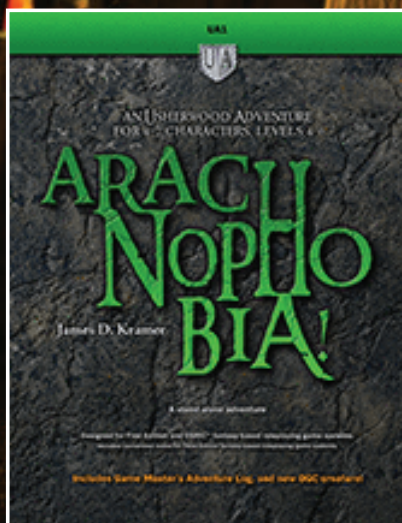
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