



DRAGONSEED

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# THE BATTLE FOR GIBRUS



By Michael Haskell

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# Battle for Gib Rus

An AD&D Tournament Adventure Module for 6 characters of 5th to 7th level

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Proofreading: Dennis Hes

Layout: Chris Gonnerman

Cover Art: Joe Calkins

Interior Art: Joe Calkins, James Wesley Blair, and John Bingham

Cartography: Sir Clarence



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**Tournament Adventure from GrogCon I, October 2005**  
**Michael Haskell, Dungeon Master**

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*Note: A booklet of supplementary documents for this module is available as a separate download. It includes detailed monster and NPC listings as well as statistics for the original tournament characters.*

**INTRODUCTION**

This module was completed for and played at the first GrogCon, in October 2005, in Dayton, Ohio. It was written to be played by characters from the included roster, but it can be easily adapted for campaign play. No scoring system is provided here, but one could easily be developed if the Dungeon Master wishes to use this adventure in a tournament. In particular, parties should be rewarded for surviving with all characters intact; creatively overcoming the various challenges to enter Gib Rus; negotiating alignment-appropriate terms with the druids and the guardians of the tomb; and coming up with a creative strategy that takes advantage of the given terrains for the final battle.

The Dungeon Master will not need to do a great deal of work to adapt this module for campaign play. It can be set in any coastal region where the DM can place a small town cut off from a major regional center by intervening wilderness (the setting of most of the module) and unsettled areas. Note that the tournament game was played in a fantasy version of California. The names given herein are merely anagrams of Big Sur, San Simeon, Monterey, and San Francisco. A map of

California, therefore, could help the DM envision the locales for this adventure. Should a DM wish to develop any of these towns further, there are several Web sites that offer maps of towns in California from colonial and early American periods, as well as relief maps of the coastline.

Further, the DM may wish to adjust the treasures, mundane and magical, of the monsters encountered herein to fit campaign style. Also, it is doubtful that most DMs will want to leave the armor and sword of Serella bel Trajan in the campaign, so some compulsion to return them to her tomb should be included—or the characters may find themselves hunted by the very forces they fought to protect!

**Author’s Note**

GrogCon I took place over the weekend of October 14 through 16, 2005, in Dayton, Ohio. The entire convention—as well as the other gaming table—was organized by Dragonsfoot member Michael Martin, who did a great service to the Dragonsfoot community, the community of AD&D gamers, and, most of all, the people who came to GrogCon and enjoyed a wonderful weekend of AD&D and companionship. Michael also spent several

months before the convention motivating me through sincere and thoughtful advice, as well as well-placed kicks, to get this module complete and ready to run. I thank him for all the great work he did.

The bare bones of this module, as well as the two new monsters contained herein, came into being in the summer of 2004 over a great deal of wine in Lubriano, Italy. This adventure would never have existed without Richard Maxwell Armstrong, who not only thought of the basic plotline (even before the wine was poured), the haunt and the hangman tree, and the idea of a redwood cathedral but also thought to invite me to Italy and to pour the wine. You have the results; I hope they are as fun to play as they were to think up in the first place.

## **DM BACKGROUND**

Seven hundred years ago, a great battle was fought between armies of good and evil along the western coast. The forces of evil sought to sweep over the whole of the coast and then continue north to Tereymon and Ans Cranisfoc. This force was defeated mainly through the efforts of an elven knight, Serella bel Trajan, who unified all the disparate peoples of the central coast, raising a force of elves, dwarves, gnomes, and men from the young cities of Ans Cranisfoc and Tereymon. Her appeals even reached the predecessors of a band of druids, who joined the cause of good in order to save the land and restore balance. With them, the druids brought the creatures of the land itself to join the fight. At great cost, the evil force was defeated and the lands saved, but Serella received a mortal wound when she defeated the leader of the forces of evil, a fallen knight named Black Harry. Serella commended her remains to the druids and charged them to guard her relics against the return of evil and to keep the land around them wild so that they would not fall into the wrong hands. A tomb was built for the noble elf, and guardians appointed for her relics. And for seven hundred years the druids kept the area around them wild and pure—Gib Rus.

To the north of Gib Rus, Ans Cranisfoc grew into a major power because of its fine harbor and gentle climate. In the centuries of peace, it has grown soft and complacent and very wealthy. Tereymon is a smaller trading city with a fine deep-water harbor. South of Gib Rus, one of the nobles who fought on the side of good established a small castle. A town eventually grew around it, and the village of Ans Neomis knew relative peace and a simple prosperity for most of its history. Its lords, the family Hearst, ruled with varying degrees of justice, but the area was small and poor enough to never attract major forces of raiders or rebellion.

The druids of Gib Rus have long been tolerant of Ans Neomis and its lords. They felt that allowing the small civilization to flourish near the great wilderness of Gib Rus preserved the balance. The lords Hearst were always allies of the druids, joining together when the occasional band of humanoids or bandits grew too strong and threatened both locations. The druids granted the lords Hearst the right to move caravans of goods through Gib Rus along the ancient road, provided that the animals and wild lands were respected. But something has changed under the current Lord Hearst. He has made a pact with the same evil



powers that threatened the westlands 700 years before. Once again, the death knight Black Harry leads these forces, and they have powerful aid associated with both Acheron and the Negative Material Plane. Black Harry has dispatched one of these allies to maintain their hold over Lord Hearst and weaken any possible resistance—Prakshara the rakshasa, who seeks to possess himself of the relics of Serella bel Trajan and keep these powerful items from being used against the forces of evil.

Black Harry and Prakshara have promised great wealth to Lord Minder Hearst and have already begun to provide it, and the human lord has given out the story that he has discovered an ancient platinum mine to provide cover for his activities on behalf of the forces of evil. He further uses this story in deriding the druids for standing in his way as he tries to trade his wealth along the coast. Lord Hearst is not fully aware of the true evil nature of his new allies, or at least he does not admit it to himself, having blindly followed the rituals to contact them and even now partly believing that he acts for the glory of Ans Neomis even as he prepares his unwitting troops to assist Black Harry in the taking of Gib Rus. His eventual goal is to claim the town of Tereymon and its deep-water harbor, a facility that Ans Neomis lacks.

Prakshara seeks to bring the relics back to Black Harry before the invasion force enters Gib Rus. With Gib Rus neutralized and Ans Neomis holding the southern approach, the evil army will then march north on Tereymon and Ans Cranisfoc, ripping out the heart of the civilized lands of men and dividing the elves in the far north and the dwarves in the south. This will likely be the end of 700 years of civilization.

The druids of Gib Rus suspect and fear that the current Lord Hearst has formed a bargain with the same powers that once threatened the lands. Undead and other monsters have harried them for months, and this is proof to them that powerful forces once more seek to disrupt or destroy the area. They have allowed other monsters to flourish on the borders of Gib

Rus in order to protect their dwindling numbers and guard their borders. Unknown to them, Prakshara himself has infiltrated the band and causes destruction whenever he is able to further his and Black Harry's plans.

Prakshara has ordered Lord Hearst to find a band of adventurers powerful and good enough to retrieve the relics of Serella bel Trajan. He has instructed the lord to provide a cover story about the druids but does not believe that the party will simply accept this. That the party might figure out their plans and ally with the druids was an acknowledged risk, but Prakshara intends to kill them when they emerge from the tomb in any case, so the party's loyalty is not a serious issue to him. He and Black Harry are using Lord Hearst to bring about the ruin of man in the westlands, and they will soon no longer need him. They intend to use the entire population of Ans Neomis as slaves and sacrifices once Gib Rus is captured and the war on civilization is launched.

When the party reaches Ans Neomis, therefore, powerful and complex plans are set in motion, and only their own choices and their own courage and skill can decide which way the balance will settle.

(Note that much of the information above is repeated or amplified in individual encounter areas.)

## **Notes for the Dungeon Master**

THE BATTLE FOR GIB RUS is divided into several parts: Ans Neomis and Hearst Castle; the Walls of Gib Rus; Gib Rus proper; the Tomb of Serella bel Trajan; and the Battle for Gib Rus. The various parts offer wilderness and dungeon adventures and several opportunities for role-playing. A great deal of detail is given for each encounter because this module was originally intended for tournament play. The Dungeon Master should feel free, of course, to add or subtract to all encounters and adapt the given text to the needs of his or her campaign. In tournament play, the entire module was completed in roughly sixteen hours of gaming.

## 1. ANS NEOMIS AND HEARST CASTLE

This introduction may be given to the players in advance of play or read to them when play has begun. In nontournament play, the DM should use whatever device he or she wishes in order to get the PCs to Ans Neomis—preferably in need of funds.

The gales that blew your ship into the rocks just south of Ans Neomis still batter the coast a few days later. You were traveling north, up the shore, in a small coasting vessel when the storms blew up around you. The captain sent you below despite your offers to help, and that is where you were several hours later when you heard the mast snap off and the despairing moans of the crew. The storm broke several hours later, and the badly wounded ship continued to limp along on its smaller sails. For several days, the coaster moved along the deserted shore, the captain hoping to be able to make for the Tereymon peninsula and a safe harbor. But another gale blew up and forced your ship south and east until the horrible dawn when the cry went out to abandon ship and it broke up on the rocks. You barely had time to grab your gear and were able to save only a few precious items. Standing on the stony shore, you watched the ship go down—taking the chests carrying your treasure from past adventures with it. Unsure of what else to do, you followed the surviving sailors north along the coast until you reached Ans Neomis.

The town spreads inland along a shallow river toward the walled castle of the Hearst family. The Hearsts have controlled these lands for several fairly quiet centuries, enjoying the general peace that has held sway over the coast. The folk of the town—mostly fishers and farmers—lead quiet lives, as they made clear when they gathered to gape and gawk at you and the sailors as you staggered into town. The crowd—mostly humans, with a few halflings and gnomes—was dispersed by liveried guards from the castle, who questioned you and the sailors and soon took

the captain away toward the castle. The guards gave you directions to one of the few inns in town and hinted that you might be called on for more testimony. A few townsfolk trailed you to the inn, and the innkeep, a rail-thin, nervous man, agreed to terms with you for three rooms, where you retired to slump on the hard beds.

And that is when the reality of your situation hits you. You carry very little. You have your most precious magic items, true, but in a town this size, selling even one of them would be very hard. Almost all of your coin and gear sank with the ship and now, you have been told, has doubtless been hauled by the undersea currents out to the depths of the ocean. You have enough coin for a few days' food and lodging, but no way to restock the gear you have lost. And from the looks of the town, they are certainly not used to seeing adventurers come through.

You spend two days poking around, hoping to hear of a job that would get you back on your feet. You know little of the town, which is considered remote and provincial in the larger cities of the coast. It has no deep-water harbor, so most of the residents are content with farming and fishing, and little major trade moves through. You have never heard anything particularly bad about the lords Hearst, though it seems that when you were last in Ans Cranisfoc, there was some talk that he had somehow discovered a rich mine of some sort. You ask around and hear that no caravan has left for north or south in weeks and that traffic from the mine seems to have dried up. You are unable to get details on the mine itself; some say it is gold; one old drunk claims it is "dwarf metal"; and the official at the caravansary won't talk to you at all.

With sinking hearts, you watch your few coins dwindle. You fear that you will soon have to sell one of your precious belongings for a pittance just to eat. Some of you are

entertaining thoughts of less-licit ways to get along. Yet another meeting in one of your rooms is interrupted by the innkeep, who tells you in his morose voice that two guards from the castle are waiting for you below. You have been summoned for an audience with Lord Minder Hearst himself. You quickly make yourselves as presentable as you can and go downstairs, where the innkeep is nervously polishing a pewter tankard while two guards in the black-and-gold livery of the Hearst family wait near the door.

If the party questions the guards, they will be told only that Lord Hearst wants to see them. If they persist and receive a favorable reaction roll, they will be told that it "might have something to do with the mine and some trouble up north." The guards know no more than that, though.

You are led through the town, along the river toward the castle, which sits on a high hill, out of which the river springs and flows as a waterfall. The road leaves the town and switchbacks up the rugged hill. At its top, the walled castle is surrounded by more buildings. Within, the outer bailey is busy with guards and functionaries. The walls and outer buildings are centered on a high tower, easily 300' tall, which is where the guards lead you. At its base, a portcullis is raised over the broad entry. The guards hand you off to a liveried official, who merely says, "Come this way," and walks rapidly into the tower. He leads you through the busy lower floors and then up a spiraling staircase, seemingly at least halfway up the tower. You are escorted into a wide chamber. Open windows admit the cold air, but a huge fire burns in a fireplace and offsets the chill. Meats, cheeses, breads, and fish are laid on a broad oak table, with plates, knives, decanters of golden wine, and silver goblets. The functionary bids you to eat and assures you that Lord Hearst will join you soon. He then leaves.

You are left alone for perhaps half an hour. The room is comfortably appointed but not

sumptuous. The furnishings are of wood and woven cloth. Old banners, two shields bearing the arms of the house of Hearst, and a blackened two-handed sword, broken in two halfway along the blade, hang on the walls. A supply of hardwood rests near the fire. A servant enters, replenishes the blaze, and leaves. A moment later, Lord Minder Hearst enters. He looks to be in his early forties, with thinning blond hair and weak green eyes. His tunic and leggings are of black velvet, and a black and gold cloak bearing his arms is draped around his shoulders, fixed with a heavy gold clasp in the shape of a great helm. With him is another man wearing rich chain mail chased with silver. His cloak is dark gray and without device. He is enormously fat but moves with grace as he goes to stand before the fire. Lord Hearst moves toward you and introduces himself.

Minder, lord of Hearst Castle talks quite engagingly with you for several minutes. He asks each of you your name and background and is appropriately impressed when you relate some of your past exploits to him. He seems slightly distracted as he listens. The other man remains by the fire, and Hearst never introduces him. From time to time, you hear him murmuring to himself, but whenever you look at him, he smiles broadly and nods in a friendly way. After hearing your stories, Hearst finally comes to the point.

"I have heard enough to know that I made the right decision in asking you to meet with me today. Ans Neomis is a quiet town; we have no natural harbor or deep-water port, so few ships stop to call here. This has never been much of an issue for my people or my family, as we have never sought much trade with the outside world, and what we did need often came from caravans from the south and trade with the gnomes in the hills. Ans Neomis has never been a rich land, but we have always been able to care for our people. Recently, though, I have discovered a great source of wealth, one that, I hope, will make Ans Neomis an important force in the

westlands. I discovered a rich platinum mine in the hills east of town, one overlooked by the gnomes and even by the dwarves who used to live in this region hundreds of years ago. Of course, in Ans Cranisfoc, there is a great appetite for platinum, and so I have hoped that the future importance of my lands have been secured through the discovery of this mine. For a year, my caravans made it north to Tereymon and then by ship to Ans Cranisfoc with little trouble, and I was able to establish contacts in both cities who were happy to receive my business. But something terrible has happened that puts the entire operation at risk, as well as the peace and prosperity of my lands.

"In order to reach Tereymon, any caravans from here must pass through Gib Rus, a wild and beautiful area north of here where mountains come down all the way to the sea. There is no safe inland route, as the Bandit Lords still hold the trails that run near the Devil Mountains to the east. We have never been rich enough for them to bother before, but any caravan that attempted the inland route would be easy game for those bastards!"

Here Lord Hearst seems to momentarily flush with anger. His fists clench, but he draws a deep breath and makes himself relax. The other man watches him closely but still says nothing.

"I am sorry. Those lawless ones make me very upset. At any rate, our caravans used the coast road freely up until recently. The lands of Gib Rus, though they were long ago claimed by my family, have long been held by a group of nature priests, druids. We have always been friendly with them, letting them hold the land, as it is really too wild for building or farming. And the druids always allowed our people to move freely through, provided proper forms were observed. But then, six months ago, a caravan was lost on its way to Tereymon. No one came back, and my agent at the port communicated that no one ever reached the town. Well, I know that

the world is dangerous, so I never thought that these druids could have anything to do with it. But the next caravan was also destroyed. One man made it back to town, nearly dead of wounds and infection, and he told us that they had been attacked by men in brown robes, by the very animals of the forest, that the wagons were burnt and every living man killed outright! This was too much to be ignored, and I sent the captain of my guard with a troop of two hundred men north to investigate. When they reached the southern limits of Gib Rus, they were attacked by beasts and monsters. They struggled onward, following the old road, which for time out of mind was acknowledged as the right of way of my family and our people. But as they reached a place called the Valley of Peace, where the road, the mountains, and the sea all come together before the road begins to climb again, they were stopped by a massive wall of thorns. A single man in brown robes stood in front of this. He dropped a scroll to the ground and walked into the thorns as if they did not exist. Here is the note."

He hands the party a scroll:

"Hearst—

The balance must be righted. Know that these lands are now closed to you and yours. Any man entering the ways of Gib Rus will be killed by those who rightfully control and protect these lands. Know further that we have grown weary of the pollution of your lands and people. The balance demands that the lands return to wildness. Know then, that when the time is right, you will find the forest at the gates of your castle, the river rising up to drown your people, and the sea crashing in to wipe clean the filth of your kind.

"Leave these lands, Hearst. Your reign is over, and your lands reclaimed. Your time is short, for we have the power of the land, and what was given into our care will now strike you down. Flee, Hearst, or see your filthy kind erased from the land."

It is unsigned. Lord Hearst smiles weakly after you have read the note. "And so you see, these druids have clearly gone mad. And, well, I hoped that a strong group such as you could penetrate their defenses where a troop of guards could not and weaken them so that my forces could reclaim this land for civilization. I would reward you handsomely, of course, should you be able to do this. I mean, I have never hired . . . adventurers before, but I believe that 5,000 gold crowns each should be adequate, yes? And of course, you may keep whatever you find within the druids' area, except of course any goods that they have stolen from me. And then there are . . ."

Hearst trails off, and for the first time the other man speaks: "The relics." He moves away from the fire and stands behind Hearst, who smiles at you and says, "Yes, the relics. We fear that these druids have found and stolen the relics of a knight, a woman related to my family who liberated these lands hundreds of years ago. Her tomb is somewhere within the wilds of Gib Rus, and it was because of her that my family originally settled in this area. The druids may be using items of hers, or planning to use them. Or, at any rate, they have, we fear, found and stolen them. It is desperately important that you get these items back for me and out of their hands. If they have them, then I do not know that there is any way we can prevail against them, for they are supposed to have great and powerful enchantments laid upon them.

"And so I ask you—will you go into Gib Rus and take back these relics of my family? Will you weaken these druids so that my people can free these lands once again? Do this, and in addition to your reward, you will have my eternal gratitude—and soon I will be a very rich and powerful man indeed. It could serve you well to have such friends. If you go, we will be able to monitor you somewhat, and so you can signal us when you have found the relics. In the meantime, I will muster

my forces and prepare to take them into Gib Rus at your signal. Will you help me?"

Lord Hearst will be very close with any extra information. He will offer to supply the party with any weapons and gear they might need, though nothing better than splint mail and no magic items will be available. If asked about the other man, he will simply introduce him as the family priest and advisor. He will ask for an item of clothing from one party member, explaining that it will allow them to scry and see the party's signal when it is given. He advises them to follow the old road twenty miles north to the outskirts of Gib Rus, though they may need to find another way into the canyons themselves. He sets the time of their departure as the second dawn, assuring them that the castle stores will supply anything that they need and offering them a suite of rooms in the outer bailey rather than the inn.

Hearst will try to insist that the party stay in the castle, but he will not overly press the issue if they want to return to the inn. If the party wants to ask around in town for more information, they may learn the following things:

1. There is no temple or shrine of any sort in the town. If they ask about this specifically and receive favorable reaction rolls, they will be told that there had been a temple to Prail Danu, a good god of rivers and rain (or any similar god the DM wishes to use), but the old priest died two years before, and no one has replaced him. Most people worship in their homes or make offerings to the water, and they get by fairly well. No one knows why Lord Hearst has not found a new priest, but he never was very pious.

2. Other rumors include the following. On a favorable reaction roll, anyone the party questions is 50% likely to supply one of the following if asked about the general state of the town, the mine, or the druids of Gib Rus.

- 01–14 Elves have always coveted these lands and want to steal them (F).
- 15–26 The druids in Gib Rus were there before the town was founded and have always been friends to the townsfolk (T).
- 27–32 Lord Hearst is a demon worshiper and had the old priest killed (mostly T).
- 33–41 The Bandit Lords have allied with the druids against the town (F).
- 42–47 Townsfolk's children have been disappearing, and the druids are responsible (F).
- 48–56 Agents from Ans Cranisfoc are responsible for the town's troubles, as that city is jealous of the wealth that Ans Neomis will soon have (F).
- 57–63 The hills to the north are filling up with monsters and have become too dangerous. Hearst will do nothing about it (T).
- 64–71 The old Lord Hearst died under mysterious circumstances (T).
- 72–79 Graves in the hills and even in town have been found dug up, the bodies gone (T).
- 80–87 Hearst has told the town guards and militia that they will not need to muster this season (F).
- 88–92 A dungeon lies beneath Hearst Castle. In it, the lords Hearst meet their demon patrons (T).
- 93–96 Lord Hearst found the platinum mine with the help of his evil allies, and any wealth that comes out of it will be cursed (partly T).
- 97–00 A black horse breathing fire and bearing a black knight was seen racing away from Hearst Castle (T).

The DM should couch all of these in the language and experience of individual townsfolk, so, for instance, a drunk at the inn or tavern could supply the rumor about the fire-breathing horse in such a way as to make it seem a drunken hallucination.

There are three inns in town, each with a tavern. At any time, 0–9 customers will be in each, as well as an innkeep and serving maids. A harbor master at the docks supervises the fishing fleet, and there are always old men gathered there mending nets. Several general provisioners are in town, but the only weapons and armor smith is within the castle. A blacksmith in town makes knives and other metal implements, but all better weapons come from the castle, and the purchasers are recorded. A halfling bowyer/fletcher in town makes short bows for hunting, while another in the castle supervises his apprentices in making long bows and crossbows for the town guard and other paying customers, though again all of these purchasers are noted and reported to Lord Hearst. No other details are given here on the individual townsfolk, though the DM should feel free to develop them if the party spends any time investigating things in town.

At dawn on the second day, Lord Hearst sees the party off, wishing them luck and reminding them that he will attempt to scry for the person who gave him a piece of clothing every evening at sunset. When the party is ready for his troops to move in, that person should wrap a red cloth around his wrist.



## 2. THE WALLS OF GIB RUS

The road out of Ans Neomis clings to the coast for about five miles and then enters rocky wooded hills. Below the road, the sound of surf waxes and wanes from a dull murmur to a sharp crashing as the road wanders back and forth. For the first few miles, tracks that lead inland to small farms or timbering spots are visible. When the road enters the hills, though, these disappear, and the road moves in silence through what seems to be virgin forest. The air is loud with birdcalls, and you see many small animals, but nothing larger than a badger. In a few places, ancient paving stones have worked to the surface, but the road is mainly hard-packed earth. Sometimes caves open into the rocky surface of the hills, but other than some guano splashed on the rocks, you see no evidence of anything living in any of these. At last, the road crests a final mountain and begins to wind down back toward the coast. From here, you can see that the road moves a short way along the open coast and then climbs again up a steeper mountain, the side of which lines the shore in rows of serrated cliffs. The mountains are thickly wooded, and they come all the way down to the sea to the north, cutting off your view of the land beyond. The road rises from the beach and climbs the slope, dipping, you can see, into a saddle at its top. The sun is lowering toward the ocean, and the red light brings out the austere beauty of the place. When you reach the shore and begin to climb again, you will have entered the ancient, untouched lands of Gib Rus.

### 1. Lair of the Trolls

This encounter is marked on the Entrance to Gib Rus map. It occurs as the PCs make their descent from the hills to the beach that marks the line of Gib Rus proper.

Five **trolls** have moved into a cave near a bend in the coast road halfway down the slope to the shore, before it enters Gib Rus. The druid circle has allowed them to remain, as they provide another guard for the troubled

border, though the necessity is not one they like. The trolls wait in the cave and will attack immediately if anyone enters. Otherwise, they will wait until the party has passed the cave and then attack from the rear.

Trolls (5): AC 4, MV. 12", HD 6+6, hp 34, 38, 31, 43, 46, #AT 3, Dmg. 5-8/5-8/2-12, THACO 13, regenerate 3 hp/rnd. starting 3 rnds. after damage is taken. The bodies must be burned or immersed in acid to be fully killed, or the trolls will re-form and continue to attack.

Their treasure is beneath a loose stone (18/75 or a combined 25 STR to lift) near a stalagmite at the rear of the cave: 2,000 ep (in sacks), a **wand of conjuration** (8 chgs., command word carved onto handle in magical writing), **splint mail +2** (man sized), **potion of white dragon control** (1 dose).

Note that should the party return to this cave after defeating the trolls, they will find it is a safe, if smelly, place to rest.

### 2. The Entrance to Gib Rus

See Entrance to Gib Rus map.

The road descends to the same level as the beach, passing only a few hundred feet inland. The salt-bleached remains of old campfires show that this area has often been used as a resting point before entering Gib Rus, but nothing seems more recent than a couple of months. There are some indistinct and old tracks scattered around, but nothing that you can isolate. The road runs perhaps a third of a mile along this beach, with a wooded valley stretching inland on its other side. To the north, the road climbs the cliffs toward Gib Rus. The beach stretches another half mile or so north past that point before it is cut off by the sheer cliffs. In the waning light, you see what looks like a faint trail cut into the cliffs, running through switchbacks before cresting the rock wall, perhaps rejoining the road somewhere beyond the saddle you

glimpsed before descending to this beach. The only other approach over the mountains that you see is the old road itself, which climbs into the trees and disappears into the majesty of Gib Rus.

There are indeed only these two ways into Gib Rus, barring magical aid. Note that anyone attempting to fly over the mountains will surely attract the notice of Gib Rus's guardians, and at least 4 **giant dragonflies** will converge on the flyer. The road was once open and accessible, but it now leads to the wall of thorns at **Walls of Gib Rus Area 2.A.2 (The Crushing Bramble)**. The cliff trail is guarded by giant dragonflies. The beach area itself is watched by a band of 5 **marine trolls (scraggs)** that the druids have once more allowed to remain out of desperation. These trolls will attack any sleeping group, hoping to gain surprise. If the group leaves the

beach to camp, the trolls will attempt to attack from the rear, as they are greedy and hungry.

Scraggs (5): AC 2 (#1 is AC 1), MV. 3"/12", HD 6+12, hp 39, 37, 36, 34, 30, #AT 3, Dmg. 1-4/1-4/9-16, THACO 13, regen. 3hp/rnd. 3 rnds. after damage when immersed in saltwater.

They will emerge from their underwater cave and attack the party. If any of the trolls are severely damaged, they will do their best to withdraw to their saltwater retreat to regenerate and assault the party anew. Within their cave, which is the hollow middle of a rocky promontory a hundred yards offshore and can only be reached by a submerged opening, the party will find 500 pp (loose), a **helm of underwater action**, and a **potion of extra-healing** (2 doses).



**2.A. The Road Approach**

See entrance to Gib Rus map.

The road ascends from the beach, climbing up the side of a mountain at a grade that would slow any caravan almost to a crawl. It quickly enters a forest of massive trees, sequoias and redwoods and other, more rare species. The road twists and turns to accommodate the slope, and so it will take the party almost an hour to reach the saddle they saw from the other peak. Across this saddle, at what the druids have turned into the entrance to the Gib Rus forest, the terrain turns from mountainous to precipitous. To the right, a 200' cliff stretches up, and to the left, a 300' cliff ends in a jumbled ravine of rocks and trees that eventually leads back to the rock-strewn beach. The road forms a 15' wide ledge that reaches around the peak. As it starts its descent into the canyons of Gib Rus, it is soon obstructed by the wall of thorns, which stretches between two sheer cliffs.

**2.A.1. The Haunt and the Hangman Tree**

See entrance to Gib Rus and Haunt and Hangman Tree maps.

Just before the road reaches the saddle, a side trail leaves it on the left. This trail winds upward through a narrow rocky course, and it is clearly long unused, barely visible through the undergrowth. Fifteen feet off the road, two stone posts stand on either side of the trail. Between them, you can scattered pieces of ancient, weathered wood.

There is writing on the wooden slats, badly faded but still legible; however, the ancient barricade has been broken into many pieces. At one time, the same message was repeated in common, elvish, gnome, halfling, and other, more arcane languages: "EXTREME DANGER! TURN BACK AT ONCE!" If the party searches, they will find 2-12 slats large enough to still have writing on them. For each piece of wood examined, roll percentile dice once for the language and once for the content and consult the following table:

Roll	Language	Word or Fragment
01-35	Common	DANGER
36-48	Elvish	ONCE
49-61	Gnome	EXTREME
63-74	Halfling	TURN
75-90	Unknown	BACK AT
91-00	Nothing	Illegible

If the party passes the barricade, they find that the narrow path climbs the face of the cliff, winding back to overlook the road. The path is not well-traveled or worn, but overgrown and strewn with fallen rock. Should the party decide to explore this path, or come to it as a last resort after trying the other two entrances to the Gib Rus forests, they risk losing one of their number to a terrible resonance that has rung down the ages, but they may also gain a valuable clue. At the top of the cliff, there is a large clearing that is the lair of a very strong, 700-year-old **haunt** (AC 0, MV. 6", HD 5, hp 40, #AT 1, Dmg. drain 2 pts. DEX, THAC0 15, SD damaged only by silver or magical weapons, which do 1 hp per hit, plus magical bonuses; nonmagical fire does 1 hp per round; magical fire does full damage; AL NG). At one edge of the clearing, near the cliff face, grows a massive tree draped with looping vines. This is actually a **hangman tree** that has found a parasitic relationship with the haunt and has stuck around even though the pickings are sometimes slim.

The haunt is the manifestation of the soul of the unfortunate Marka Maspeth, human ranger and trusted lieutenant of Serella bel Trajan. At the outset of the onslaught of Black Harry's undead army seven centuries ago, Marka was posted at this point along the fortified border of the forest of Gib Rus. In those days, there was a particularly tall sequoia that stood alone at the top of this cliff. Marka was to watch for the approaching army and, upon sighting them, climb the tall tree and communicate the numbers and nature of the approaching army to a team of runners positioned to the rear. Sadly, he was felled by an advance scout, a low-level human archer armed with a bow and several arrows of slaying. The evil archer was, in turn, killed. The devastation wreaked by the

incoming army left no tall tree within range when the haunt formed. Thus, every being the haunt possessed simply wandered the area for days before dying of thirst.

The area is littered with old bones, but there are no newer ones because of a terrible coincidence. A hangman tree (AC 3, MV. 0", HD 6+100, 125 hp, #AT 3, Dmg. 1-3/1-3/1-3, MR 100%, THACO 13) wandered into the circle of haunting some hundred years ago. Victims of the haunt climb the hangman tree, fall into its trunk-stomach and are dissolved in acid. A century of easy pickings has allowed the hangman tree to grow huge. It has developed easily climbable knobs on its bark, in addition to its nooselike appendages. Its ability to release hallucinatory perfume like others of its kind has atrophied, however, and so it looks mostly like what it is—a tall tree (40') with nooselike vines hanging from its limbs and an easily climbed trunk. Effectively, though, the hangman tree is an acid- and spike-filled tower.

When the party reaches the shaded area on the map, the haunt will appear in will-o-the-wisp form 10'–60' from the lead party member, but it will revert to the ghostly image of its former self before attacking. In this guise, it is a human man in leather armor, his face torn by grief and rage, his ghostly eyes burning with shame. If the lead member's dexterity is reduced to 0, the haunt will take over his or her body, and in the next round, he or she will move at maximum speed toward and up the hangman tree. Upon the victim reaching the top, the tree will withdraw its climbing notches, making its bark difficult to climb (as a sheer wall). The victim will fall 20' into the acid on the next round and take 3–12 points of acid damage per round until death or until the haunt's task is completed.

The possessed victim will stand in the acid shouting seemingly random numbers and names of monsters. If the haunt reaches the end of its list, which will take five rounds, before the victim dies from the acid, the haunt's task will have been completed and the haunt will

disappear forever, but the victim will still have to be extracted from the acid. In order to extract the victim from the maw, the party must find a way to scale the tree and lift the victim vertically out of the acid because of the spiked walls of the maw. A possessed victim will not cooperate with the effort, though.

If the victim is saved from the acid, the haunt will still have possession and will do its utmost to get back to the tree to continue its recitation. If the victim dies before finishing the list, the haunt will leave the body and attack the nearest party member. If the party should somehow elevate a possessed victim above 30' through *levitation* or some other means, the haunt will complete its task and dissipate.

The party can also save the victim by casting *hold person* before he or she climbs the tree. The haunt must then save vs. paralyzation or be expelled from the body, though it then continues with its attack. If the party flees the area, the haunt will dissolve again and recommence its long wait. If the area is *exorcised*, the haunt will be dispelled forever.

The list of numbers and creatures rattled off by the haunt is actually an accounting of Black Harry's cohort from the original assault on Gib Rus, 700 years ago. The litany includes: "Five hundred skeletons in troops of twenty; two skeletal warriors in plate armor. I see litters to the rear! Their controllers must be within! Those massive undead hounds, at least a score of them. Ghouls: five divisions, ten in each, a ghost in each! A line of fomorians separates the undead from the orcs. Five hundred orcs, archers, spears, axes, pikes!" Only in the last round of the recitation will the haunt yell out, "The death knight! The death knight leads them! He rides a nightmare! It is Black Harry himself! Oh, Serella, my liege, Black Harry rides against us!" After this, the haunt will dissipate, appearing briefly once again, its look of grief now tinged with peace.

If the party manages to help the haunt discharge its task and gets its information without losing anyone to the hangman tree, they should be rewarded for the act.



Scattered in the thick detritus around the base of the trunk are 17 garnets of 50 gp value, 2 *beads of force*, and one diamond worth 3,000 gp. Among the bones littered around the haunt's area, the party will find the ancient remains of the evil archer. Only a few bits of bone have survived, held together by badly degraded **studded leather armor +1** (1,000 gp to clean and restore); among a mass of rot that was once a bow and a quiver, 2 **arrows of druid slaying** still survive. Any character destroying the arrows should get the experience bonus for the each arrow (250 XP) and will gain a +10% bonus on reaction rolls from all druids for one month, as the character will exude an aura of balance with nature. Any character keeping the arrows suffers a -20% penalty. The arrows have runes carved on the shafts that will reveal their purpose if a *read magic* or *comprehend languages* spell is cast. Also among the remains will be found a bone scroll tube with a clerical scroll with *heal*, *augury*, and *speak with animals*. Unfortunately, the party will find that this clearing does not provide any access to the canyons of Gib Rus; a 100'-high cliff lines the clearing to the north, and at its top, thickets of nonmagical brambles grow thickly for several hundred feet before another rock wall is reached.

### 2.A.2. The Crushing Bramble

See Entrance to Gib Rus map.

After crossing the saddle and beginning to descend toward the canyons of Gib Rus, the old road passes through a defile of sheer rock walls. Here the druids have erected a magical defense of the lands they protect.

The road begins to descend after curving around the far peak of the saddle. The terrain here shifts from merely mountainous to outright precipitous as the road passes through a defile of sheer cliffs and turns down toward Gib Rus proper. For the 100' of this stretch, both sides of the road are lined with thick masses of brambles. These thorny borders are a full 60' high, and they curve inward at the top, so that the road seems almost to enter a tunnel through the thorns.

If the party tries to go through the tunnel, a very powerful *warp wood* spell is activated. All normal wood, including cart wheels, arrows and bolts, and spear and axe handles become warped and unusable with no save permitted. Magical items that have a wooden component are allowed a save vs. crushing blow (11 base for thin wood, 8 base for thick, +1 for each plus of the item). The *warp* trap will also cause the tunnel to constrict within one segment, starting with the far end of the tunnel and moving toward the entrance, crushing all within for 6–60 points of damage if they do not retreat from the tunnel immediately. Any nonwooden objects left behind must save vs. crushing blow or be destroyed. Once the tunnel has constricted, the resulting wall of thorns is no longer mobile or magical, but it is still dangerous.

The bramble is equivalent to a double-strength *wall of thorns*, 100' thick. Getting through it or recovering any items left behind will require the party to hack through the bramble at 1' per round. The bramble itself is a poisonous, thorny vine. Each person hacking at it will have to save vs. poison at +4 every round or become sickened as if by a *stinking cloud* (immobilized

for 2–5 rounds). Note that each person will only be able to make headway for himself only (i.e., two or more characters hacking side by side make a wider gap but does not speed the process). Normal fire has no effect on the wall. Magical fire causes the wall to burn for 1 turn before self-extinguishing, generating a billowing cloud of noxious smoke (equivalent to a *stinking cloud*) that spreads out from the wall at 1" per round. It will take 1 turn for the sea breeze to clear the cloud, and after it is cleared, the party will find the wall only 5' thinner. Even should a path be cleared through the bramble, the hacking will have attracted 1–4 **tree squids** (q.v.), which will be waiting on the far end of the bramble wall to ambush those who emerge.

### **2.B. The Treacherous Ascent**

See Entrance to Gib Rus map.

This path into the Gib Rus is more passable by far, but it is by no means attractive. If the party explores the rocky beach that the road passes before it ascends to **Walls of Gib Rus Area 2.A.2 (The Crushing Bramble)**, they will notice a thin path winding up the side of the cliff. This path will take them to a place on the old road just past the Crushing Bramble.

The path up the cliff into the Gib Rus forest is comparatively welcoming. The path ascends in four switchbacks, each 360' long. It is only 5' wide in most places, and often narrower, which allows room for fighting, but the party must ascend in single-file formation. Once they reach the second turn (50' up the cliff), they will be attacked by 4 **giant dragonflies** that appear at normal outdoor distance (4"–24", modified by surprise):

Giant dragonflies: AC 3, MV. 1"/36" (MC: B, hover), HD 7, hp 44, 43, 36, 25, #AT 1, Dmg. 3–12, THACO 13, +2 on initiative, w/initiative: cannot be hit hand-to-hand, -4 on missile attacks, w/o initiative: -2 on missile attacks, save as 16th-lvl. M-U.

The two largest dragonflies have phylacteries tied around their forelegs. These combine the

powers of a **ring of fire resistance** and a **ring of warmth** (+2 on saves vs. cold, -1 Dmg. per die; immune to normal fires, very hot fires do 1 pt./seg., exceptionally hot fires save at +4, -2 /die Dmg.)

On a "to hit" roll of 20, an attacking dragonfly will lift its target off the path and drop him to the rocks below 50' below for normal falling damage. A **ring of feather fall** or a *feather fall* spell will hardly ameliorate this situation, as at least one dragonfly will immediately attack the slowly falling character in midair. In this situation, normal aerial combat rules apply, but the character will not benefit from dexterity bonuses to armor class or damage or "to-hit" bonuses from strength.

When attacking the dragonflies while on the path with hand-to-hand weapons and with initiative, any character missing his "to-hit" roll by more than 5 must roll a save vs. petrification/polymorph (DEX bonus applies) or fall from the ledge, taking damage as above.

The giant dragonflies have been placed here by the druids to guard this narrow path. If the fight is clearly going against the insects, at least one will try to flee and report back to the druids. A party of druids will investigate the ascent a day later. If the PCs stay near it or have not progressed as far along the old road as **Gib Rus Area 3.1 (Fomorian Giant Ambush)**, they may encounter this party.

When the party finally crests the cliff or passes the wall of thorns and enters the forest of Gib Rus, they will find themselves in an idyllic coastal sequoia wood, with sun-dappled glades and rushing waterfalls. Canyons run from sheer-walled cliffs down all the way to the sea in some places, and the coastline is littered with massive rock formations against which the surf majestically breaks. The old road passes north over these canyons and winds around the feet of the mountains. Sometimes, an ancient stone bridge crosses a ravine. These bridges show obvious signs of upkeep, and the whole area around them is as pristine a wilderness as anyone in the party has seen.

### 3. Gib Rus

#### Random Encounters

Random encounters should be checked twice a day, at dawn and dusk, when the party is on the old road, four times a day (dawn, noon, dusk, midnight) when off the road. Only one check should be made between the party's entrance to Gib Rus proper and **Gib Rus Area 3.1 (Fomorian Giant Ambush)**. Because of the heightened activity in Gib Rus, checks should be made on a d6, a 1 indicating an encounter. Roll d8 and d12 and consult the table below for the type of creature encountered. Note that all natural Neutral or Good creatures will not attack the party if they have been given a token by the druids, and the more intelligent ones may converse with them. Encounters will be at 1"–21" distance (4d6 -3), less 1" per pip on surprise dice. In tournament play, the DM may forego random encounters.

2. Pixie
3. Pseudo-dragon
4. Wyvern/Wraith
5. Druid patrol
6. Ettercap
7. Tree squid
8. Manticore
9. Troll
10. Bear, brown
11. Wolf
12. Hieracosphinx
13. Lion, mountain
14. Fomorian giant
15. Porcupine, giant
16. Displacer beast
17. Brownie
18. Dryad
19. Hybsil
20. Treant

#### Encounter Descriptions

**2. Pixie** — #App. 3–12, AC 5, MV. 6"/12", HD ½, Lair 5%, #AT 1, Dmg. by weapon—dagger or arrows (+4 to hit), 2–5 (war arrows), sleep 1–6 hrs. (save vs. spells), total amnesia (exorcism to restore; save vs. magic), SA *polymorph self*, *illusion* (aud./vis.), *confusion* (by touch, save vs. magic), *dancing lights*, *ESP*, SD Natural *invisibility*, *dispel magic* (1/day, 8th lvl.), MR: 25%, AL: N. THACO 20.

**3. Pseudo-dragon** — #App. 1, AC 2, MV. 6"/24" (MC:A), HD 2, Lair 5%, #AT 1, Dmg. 1–3, SA Poison sting (save or catalepsy 1–6 days, die 25%), SD Chameleon power (80% undetectable), MR 35%, AL: NG, limited telepathy. THACO 16.

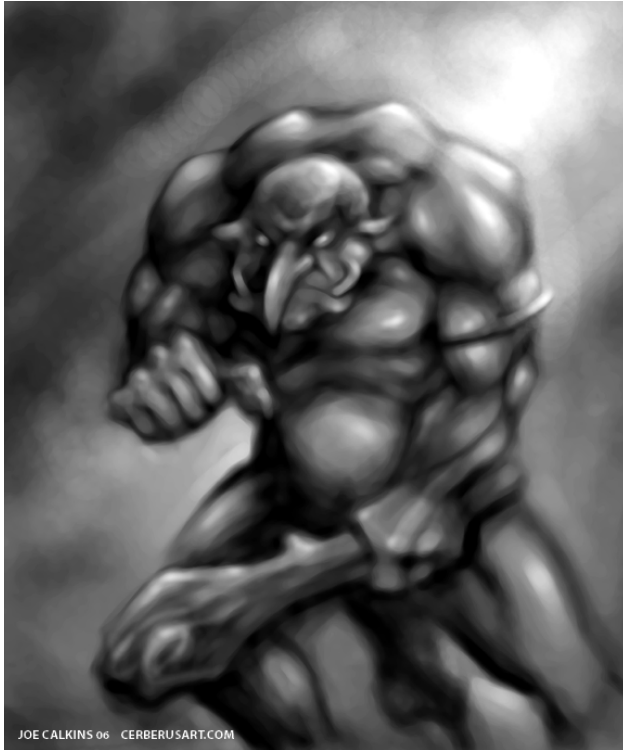
**4. (Day only) Wyvern** — #App. 1–4, AC 3, MV. 6"/24", HD 7+7, Lair 30%, #AT 2, Dmg. 2–16/1–6. SA Poison. THACO 12. Night—Wraith—#App. 2–12, AC 4, MV. 12"/24", HD 5+3, Lair 10%, #AT 1, Dmg. 1–6; SA Energy drain; SD Silver or magic to hit. THACO 15.

**5. Druid patrol** — 1 fifth-level, 2 third-level, 2 first level (plus 2 fourth-level if searching for party). AC 7. Spells. #AT 1, Dmg. by weapon (scimitar, spear, sling).

**6. Ettercap** — #App. 1–3, AC 6, MV. 12", HD 5, Lair 30% (traps), #AT 3, Dmg. 1–3/1–3/1–8, SA poison bite. THACO 15.

**7. Tree squid** — #App. 1–10, AC 1/2/4, MV. 1"/@18", HD 5+2 (+8X5, 2X10), Lair 10%, #AT 6 (or 4 and 1 beak), Dmg. 1–3 (X4)/2–12(X2)/(3–18 beak), SA Constriction. THACO 15.

**8. Manticore** — #App. 1–4, AC 4, MV. 12"/18", HD 6+3, Lair 20%, #AT 3, Dmg. 1–3/1–3/1–8, SA tail spikes (4 volleys of 6, 18" range, Dmg. 1–6 each). THACO 13.



**9. Troll** — #App. 1–8, AC 4, MV. 12", HD 6+6, Lair 40%, #AT 3, Dmg. 5–8/5–8/2–12, SA 3 at once, SD regen. 3/rnd., 3 rnds. after wounding. THAC0 13.

**10. Bear, brown** — #App. 1–4, AC 6, MV. 12", HD 5+5, Lair 0%, #AT 3, Dmg. 1–6/1–6/1–8, SA Hug on 18+ for 2–12. THAC0 13.

**11. Wolf** — #App. 2–20, AC 7, MV. 18", HD 2+2, Lair 10%, #AT 1, Dmg. 2–5. THAC0 16.

**12. Hieracosphinx** — #App. 1–4, MV. 9"/36", HD 9, Lair 20%, #AT 3, Dmg. 2–8/2–8/1–10. THAC0 12.

**13. Lion, mountain** — #App. 1–2, MV. 15", HD 3+1, Lair 10%, #AT 3, Dmg. 1–3/1–3/1–6, SA Rake w/rear claws if both claws hit 1–4/1–4, leap up 15', forward 20' to attack, SD Surp. on 1 only. THAC0 16.

**14. Fomorian giant** — #App. 1–4, AC 3, MV. 9", HD 13+2, Lair 10%, #AT 1, Dmg. 4–32, SA +2 on surp., SD Never surp. THAC0 9.

**15. Porcupine, giant** — #App. 1–2, AC 5, MV. 6", HD 6, Lair 0%, #AT 1, Dmg. 2–8, SA shoot 1–8

quills/rnd. (90%) for 1–4 at 30', SD Any attack w/in 6' takes 1–4 quills. THAC0 13.

**16. Displacer beast** — #App. 2–5, AC 4, MV. 15", HD 6, Lair 25%, #AT 2, Dmg. 2–8/2–8, SD -2 on opponents' attack dice, +2 on saves, save as 12th-level ftr., +2. THAC0 13.

**17. Brownie** — #App. 3–12, AC 3, MV. 12", HD ½, Lair 20%, #AT 1, Dmg. 1–3, SA spells (1/day): *prot./evil*, *ventriloquism*, *dancing lights*, *continual light*, *mirror image* (3), SD Blend to invisibility. THAC0 20.

**18. Dryad** — #App. 1–4, AC 9, MV. 12", HD 2, Lair 10%, #AT 1, Dmg. as dagger, SA *Charm* (3/day, -3 on save, always on males of CHA 16+), SD Slip into tree, dimension door to own tree, MR 50%. THAC0 20.

**19. Hybsil** — #App. 10–60, AC 7, MV. 15", HD 1–1, Lair 30%, #AT 1 wpn. daggers or arrows for 1–4), Dmg. 1–4 or weapon, SA Arrows cause sleep (save at -4), SD +4 to saves. THAC0 20.

**20. Treant** — #App. 1–3, AC 0, MV. 12", HD 10, Lair 10%, #AT 2, Dmg. 3–18, SA Arouse 1–2 trees (6" range, 3" mv., atk. 2/rnd at 4–24, 12 HD, SD Never surp., save vs. fire at -4, fire does +1/die. THAC0 10.

### 3.1. Fomorian Giant Ambush

See Gib Rus Overland Map and the interior map for this encounter.

This encounter occurs after the party has entered Gib Rus proper but before the next dawn or dusk of steady traveling.

As the old road winds through a canyon, you hear the sounds of fighting from ahead and to the right of your path. Cries and roars echo off the rock walls of the canyons. You can see a narrow defile about 90' ahead of you that winds off the trail and leads up the side of one of the hills. At the top of this twisting path, there is a flat clearing in front of a cave mouth about 50' above the level of the road. In this clearing, you can see brown-robed, man-sized figures engaged in desperate

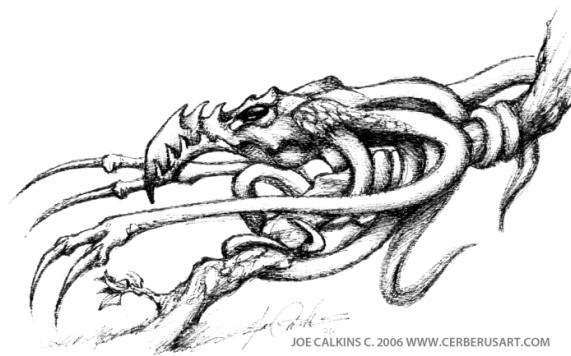
combat with three huge, misshapen giants. From where you stand, you can see several bodies on the ground, and the fight seems to be going against the humans.

Up a narrow defile from the main trail and in front of a cave mouth, 4 druids were attacked by 5 **fomorian giants**. Three of the surviving giants are fighting the druids, while the fourth (#3) waits near the road, ready to trigger a trap the giants laid or run to help his fellows if they call. This giant hides at the midpoint of the defile, where it doglegs sharply, watching the road. If it gains surprise on the party (base 5/6 chance), it will trigger an avalanche of boulders as the party reaches the base of the defile or once they have committed to climbing it. This fall of boulders will rush down the defile, and the only warning the party will have is a low rumble. All characters who fail a save versus paralyzation take 3–30 points of damage. Characters that make their save still take 1–6 points from throwing themselves onto the rocky borders of the path. Any PC declaring immediately on hearing the rumble of the boulders that he or she is leaping off the path receives +4 on the saving throw. After triggering this avalanche, the fomorian will retreat up the path to help his fellows.

When the party arrives at the clearing two of the druids and one giant are dead, and the situation is grim for the two remaining druids. If the party joins them they will bravely try to fight also, at least one of the druids should survive the battle to ask the party to come to the druid circle at the Redwood Cathedral. The battle has lasted some rounds, so hp in parentheses indicate current levels when the party joins the fight, and spells in parentheses have already been cast and are no longer available to the druids. The fomorians are: AC 3 (#1 is AC 1), MV. 9", HD 13+2, hp 81 (64), 58, 67, 68 (55), #AT 1, Dmg. 4–32, THAC0 9, cannot be surprised. The druids are: Flamor, lvl. 5, AC 5, MV. 12", hp 38 (22), #AT 1, Dmg. 1–8 (+2), THAC0 18; he carries a **scimitar +2 of blue dragon slaying**, **studded leather armor +2**, **ring of protection +1** (affects saving throws only because of armor), sling. His

spells are: (*entangle*), *pass without trace*, *purify water*, (*speak with animals*); (*charm person or mammal*), *cure light wounds*, *heat metal*; *call lightning*, (*summon insects*). Greel, lvl. 3, AC 7, MV. 12", hp 28 (18), #AT 1, Dmg. 1–8 (+2) or 2–16 (+3), THAC0 20; he carries a **scimitar +2 of giant slaying** and a **spear +1**. His spells are: *detect magic*, *faerie fire*, *pass without trace*; *cure light wounds*, *produce flame*, and *neutralize poison*.

If the PCs help the druids defeat the giants, the surviving druid(s) will wish to take the PCs to the Redwood Cathedral to their superiors. They will tell the PCs that attacks by various monsters have been increasing in frequency and ferocity throughout Gib Rus and that it is believed that this is connected to the dispute with Lord Hearst. They will ask the party, especially if the PCs reveal their mission, to come speak with the order's superiors at the Cathedral. If the druids all die or the PCs refuse to accompany them, the party must find the Redwood Cathedral on its own, possibly led there by a patrol of druids from the wandering monster table or through divinatory means. If at least one druid survives and PCs do not join them, the chance for encountering druid patrols will increase one day later. In this case, a druid patrol (with two extra 4th-lvl. druids) will be encountered when a 5, 11, or 15 is rolled on the random encounter tables; in addition, random encounters will happen on rolls of 1 or 2 on a d6. If both druids die and the PCs take any of their possessions, any other druids met will be disposed to negative reactions if these goods are in any way visible.



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## 2. The Redwood Cathedral

In the heart of Gib Rus stands the shrine of the druids, a huge stand of redwood trees, their branches interlocked hundreds of feet in the air. The trees serve to enclose an area some 80' across and 150' deep. This area is in turn surrounded on five out of six sides by another open ring of massive trees, these holding an area some 1,000' across. The ground within these rings is thickly coated with years of fallen needles, which muffle the sounds of footsteps. In the center of the Redwood Cathedral, young oaks hung with mistletoe grow beneath the only gap in the covering branches. It is here that the druid circle holds its conclaves and moots. A nearby rock formation with caves shaped by generations of druids provides their housing, as do huts scattered through the copses of trees south of the cathedral.

The spur trail winds inland through forests that grow in the canyons and valleys between the peaks of austere and beautiful mountains. The trail sometimes crosses stony areas where the spines of the mountains show through. After almost five miles of this rugged terrain, it slopes down sharply and passes into thick forests of ancient trees, picking a narrow way between two almost impenetrable masses of woods. After another five miles of this, the thick forests break into more widely spaced copses as the trail curves around from northeast to east. As you pass between the second rank of these copses, you see that the trail ahead of you is shrouded in mist that seems to roil up from the ground, spreading out on both sides of the way ahead. Pressing forward, you realize that the mist is caused by massive pools of water, some of which bubble and boil as you pass them. These hot springs fill the air with steam. You walk into the white mist, unable to see more than a few yards ahead of you. The smaller pools give way to a massive spring that must be many times this far across, for spanning it is a bridge of ancient stone, worked in ways you cannot guess to stretch over this almost-boiling water. You cross it nervously, unable to see far

ahead and scared for your footing on the smooth gray stone. You finally reach the other side, and the trail, now lined with stone posts to show the way, passes between two more enormous pools.

Finally, the fog begins to thin, and as you emerge from the area of hot springs, you see a wondrous sight ahead of you. Centuries of care must have gone into the shaping of the area, for a ring of massive redwood trees, open at one end, demarcates an area some 1,000' across. Even with this great size, you almost feel that the ancient trees' branches meet overhead. This is, however, true of an area at the ring's center, where a smaller stand of tall redwoods encloses an area some 150' deep. The ground of the entire place is covered with years of needles and leaves and filled with a peaceful hush. You realize that what you are walking toward is not a simple ring of trees, but a cathedral of living wood. It must be here that the druid circle has its center of power. Behind the tops of the enormous trees, you catch a glimpse of a great escarpment of stone that rises against the sky. Its face is pockmarked by what must be the openings of caves, and the rear of the Redwood Cathedral almost reaches back as far as the ridge of stone.

Over the past two years, the numbers of the druids have been greatly reduced by the incursions of monsters and undead into Gib Rus. The druids know that this buildup is the precursor of an invasion of greater strength. They have improved the defenses around their lands as best they can, for they are more than just the stewards of a wilderness—they are the guardians of the tomb of Serella bel Trajan, and they are charged with preserving the balance in the area in order that the evil that she vanquished never return. They fear that that return is now upon them.

At any time, the following roster of druids is in or near the area of the Redwood Cathedral: fifteen first-level, 15 second-level, 8 third-level, 3 fifth-level, 3 sixth-level, 2 seventh-level, and 1 each of levels eight through 12. Others wander

through the canyons to defend Gib Rus from the creatures that threaten it. Both the archdruid and the Great Druid of this circle have been killed. The twelfth-level Druid is named Archan dan Kreeling, and he is the temporary leader of the circle.

How the druids initially react to the PCs depends on many factors. However, they are desperate for allies and full of dread at the portents they have seen. They will try to prove their innocence and advance their theories of Lord Hearst if the PCs accuse them of wrongdoing. They will not grovel or beg and will be greatly wrathful at any damage done to the area or to their company, but, within reason, they will listen to the PCs' story. The druids are both wise and charismatic and should be played as such. Clearly, their reactions will depend in part on reaction rolls modified a PC's charisma and by the plausibility of the PCs' story.

The druids deny having destroyed any caravans and claim that they have not even seen one attempt to pass through in months. Rather, they say that at about the time Lord Hearst claims his first caravan was destroyed, a small force of undead, mostly zombies and skeletons, along with fomorian giants, wyverns, and other creatures, attacked Gib Rus via the old road. These were led by a horrible blue-skinned giant riding an undead hound of tremendous size and power. The druids' spells seemed to melt off this giant, though it cast spells of its own during the fight. Its mount was killed, and the giant itself disappeared by the time the druids succeeded in defeating the band of monsters.

The druids met in council that night, and afterward, the Archdruid, Ramsin Turnel, was seen entering the quarters of the Great Druid, Krissa dan Tarwent. An hour later, Archan, the Druid, entered the Great Druid's quarters and found a scene of horror: there was no sign of Ramsin. Instead, he saw a creature 8' tall, grossly fat, covered with coarse fur, with fingers that curled away from the palm and ended in huge claws. This beast was slurping the brains

of the Great Druid out of her skull. The spells that the Druid cast at it seemed to have no effect at all, and after unhurriedly tossing the Great Druid's skull at the horrified Druid, the beast disappeared. The Druid felt it invisibly push past him, and then there was no further sign of it.

The druids have long been tolerant of Ans Neomis and its lords. They felt that allowing the small civilization to flourish near the great wilderness of Gib Rus preserved the balance. The lords Hearst were always allies of the druids, joining together when the occasional band of humanoids or bandits grew too strong and threatened both locations. But the druids have been in Gib Rus far longer than the Hearsts have held Ans Neomis. Seven hundred years ago, they tell the party, a great battle was fought between armies of good and evil. The forces of evil sought to sweep over the whole of the coast and then continue on to Tereymon and Ans Cranisfoc. This force was defeated mainly through the efforts of an elven knight, Serella bel Trajan, who unified all the disparate peoples of the central coast, raising a force of elves, dwarves, gnomes, and men from the then-new cities of Ans Cranisfoc and Tereymon. Her appeals even reached the predecessors of the druids, who joined the cause of good in order to save the land and restore balance. With them, the druids brought the creatures of the land itself to join the fight. At great cost, the evil force was defeated and the lands saved, but Serella received a mortal wound when she drove off Black Harry himself. She commended her remains to the druids and charged them to guard her relics against the return of evil and to keep the land around them wild so that they would not fall into the wrong hands. A tomb was built for the noble elf, and guardians appointed for her relics. And for seven hundred years the druids kept the area around them wild and pure.

The druids fear that the current Lord Hearst has formed a bargain with the same powers that once threatened the lands. The undead and other monsters that have harried them are the proof they rest on. Any revelations of the

bargain Lord Hearst formed with the party will prove to them that the lord has betrayed his family's ancient bargain with the druids. If the party does not vocally renounce their service to Lord Hearst, the druids will be very angry indeed with them and will ask them to leave Gib Rus immediately, escorting them south to the borders if need be. If the party then returns, the druids and their allies will give no quarter if the party is discovered. If the party agrees to renounce the bargain with Hearst, the druids will ask them to join them in their battle against the forces that threaten Gib Rus. They strongly suspect that the forces of destruction, if they are indeed returned, will try everything they can to obtain the relics of Serella bel Trajan. The druids will ask the party to journey to her tomb and make sure the relics are safe, bringing them back to the druids if the guardians there will allow it. The druids have sworn never to enter the tomb themselves and so will only direct the party to its location (three days' journey north into the canyons).

If the PCs ask, the druids will reveal that there have been mysterious deaths among their number, in addition to the attrition from the increase in monsters. They and their animal allies have also caught glimpses of a strange form in the woods, seemingly a fat human dressed in rich clothes, but no one has ever reported a better look. This is, of course, Prakshara the rakshasa, who often travels in the same guise that he wears when posing as Hearst's adviser, which he has already shown the party, as he gathers information in Gib Rus, spreads the forces of destruction, and preys upon the druids.

How the party reacts to the druids' revelations will determine the course of the rest of the adventure. A Good- or Neutral-aligned party should probably renounce their connection with Hearst and agree to join the druids. Otherwise, the party will find itself allied with the

forces of Evil in the coming battle! In any case, their next step is to voyage to the tomb of Serella bel Trajan, whether at the druids' urging or while hunted by the druids and their allies. Either way, Prakshara the rakshasa will be waiting for them when they emerge from the tomb. Prakshara is an ally and liaison of Black Harry—and the death knight's contact with the forces of Acheron, who are supplying him with many of his minions. Prakshara seeks to bring the relics back to Black Harry before the invasion force enters Gib Rus so that they cannot be used against him. With Gib Rus neutralized and Ans Neomis holding the southern approach, the evil army will then march north on Tereymon and Ans Cranisfoc, ripping out the heart of the civilized lands of men and dividing the elves in the far north and the dwarves in the south. This will likely be the end of 700 years of civilization. Prakshara is using a crystal ball to scry the party. In disguise, he was the "priest" present during the interview with Lord Hearst. He also used his powers of *illusion* and disguise to kill the Archdruid and the Great Druid and often mixes with the druids, killing one whenever he can do so in secrecy. Since a creature of evil could never take the artifacts of Serella bel Trajan from their guardians, he and Hearst hired the party to do so. That the party might figure out their plans and ally with the druids was an acknowledged risk, but Prakshara intends to kill them when they emerge from the tomb in any case, so the party's loyalty is not a serious issue to him. He and Black Harry are using Lord Hearst to bring about the ruin of man in the westlands, and they will soon no longer need him. They intend to use the entire population of Ans Neomis as slaves and sacrifices once Gib Rus is captured and the war on civilization is launched. If Prakshara is somehow captured, he will reveal this information as he bargains for his life. Otherwise, the party must figure it out on their own or through discussions with the druids or the guardians of the relics.

## 4. The Tomb of Serella bel Trajan

Serella bel Trajan was an elven cavalier who, 700 years ago, defeated Black Harry when he first tried to take control of Gib Rus and establish a base of power there. She rallied a force of elves, dwarves and knights from Sol Sanegel, and creatures of the forests to defeat the death knight's undead army, and she was mortally wounded in the process of vanquishing Black Harry. In her honor, a tomb was built by the remaining forces and given into the care of magical creatures. The druid circle, formally established soon after the battle, was entrusted with keeping the tomb's location secret and discouraging treasure hunters from seeking it out. A few have tried, but none has made it as far as the upper level.

The tomb itself is nestled in a clearing, abutting a hillside. The building is a hexagon, its four main faces each over 100' on a side. Its walls rise 100', and it is constructed of white marble and alabaster. Its outer walls are 10' thick. Only the first, lower level is a building in the traditional sense. Within, its walls are 1' thick and the ceilings rise to 25' vaults. Except where otherwise indicated, it is lit throughout by *continual light* spells cast on silver bowls that

rest in niches every 50' behind rosy quartz screens. These bowls and other fixtures within the tomb are protected by a curse that affects anyone removing them; the exact nature of this curse is left to the individual DM. The second, upper level is an open-air garden enclosed by high walls. From above, the open garden is hidden by a powerful illusion. Saves to disbelieve in this illusion are made at -4. All viewers who do not disbelieve see only a flat white roof. Any character who flies and lands on the "roof" will believe he stands on solid ground. The magic of the place will actually *levitate* these beings as long as they stay on the roof. The outer walls are smooth and so slick as to be almost frictionless; all climbing checks are made at -75%. It is here that Serella bel Trajan's tomb is actually located and guarded. The garden is tended by two **unicorns** and the tomb is also watched over by a **guardian naga**.

The clearing before the building is 200' across. When the party eventually emerges from the tomb, **Prakshara** will be waiting just within the trees in the guise of the Druid Archan del Kreeling.

### Encounter Key: Level 1

**1. The Doors.** Each of the massive double doors is 20' wide and 25' high. They are made of white marble bound in mithril and are impervious to physical damage and spells. Each door has a 1' X 1' X 1' niche carved in it. Across the doors, in elvish, is the following inscription:

**And as the light slew the darkness  
So did the darkness slay the light  
Yet the light endures  
And keeps the way**

To open the doors, *light* spells must be cast into the two niches, in any order. If a *continual light* spell is used in either, the doors will remain open while the caster is within (closing only if another group approaches from the outside and tries to gain entry). Otherwise, the spells must be cast again to leave, as identical

niches and the same legend adorn the doors' inner sides.

**2. Great Hall.** This 40'-wide hall stretches 50' before narrowing at an angle to a 20'-wide passageway with a row of 8 columns down its center, every 10'. The ceiling of the wider hall glows gently, illuminating frescoes on the walls along both sides. The frescoes on the left side show the gathering of a massive undead army led by a horrifying figure in black, burned-looking armor whose eyes glow an evil red; he leads this army into Gib Rus and begins to lay waste to the land. He is shown casting massive *fireballs*, erecting *walls of ice*, *summoning* demons, and killing with a gesture. On the right wall, the frescoes show a beautiful elven woman in white chain mail marshaling a force

of elves, dwarves, human knights, druids, unicorns, treants, and forest creatures to oppose the undead force. The final panels on the left, where the hall angles and narrows, show the final confrontation between the elf woman and the figure in black—she vanquishes him but is mortally wounded. The other angled panels show her body being carried in state to this building and the establishment of the druid circle to guard the area.

The 20'-wide hallway contains four 10'-deep pit traps, marked on the map. Any character falling into a pit is subject to attack by 1–4 crystal spikes that line the bottom. The spikes attack as 4 HD monsters and cause 2–12 points of damage in addition to the 1–6 for the fall itself. In the third pit, the skeleton of a thief is stuck to one of the spikes. There is a **ring of stealth** on its left hand (adds 30% to thief's hide in shadows and move silently abilities when worn).

**3. Ascent.** The secret door in the south wall of this room is so cunningly concealed on the hall side that it can be found only on a 1 in 12 (1 in 6 for an elf or half-elf actively searching). A false stone in the wall is pulled out and rotated to activate the door, but it fits almost seamlessly into the wall. The room is austere and beautiful, lit coldly by four *continual light* spells in crystal bowls hanging on mithril chains 15' above the floor. There are benches of white marble with black marble kneelers for prayer and contemplation. The stairs lead upward to level 2. There are no other furnishings in the room.

For those in the know, the trip to the tomb proper is easy, switching sides of the hallway and then triggering the secret door. However, most parties will miss this door and wander through the remaining areas of the first level before realizing that something is wrong...

**4. Boulder Trap.** PCs who have taken some care mapping will be able to tell that the door at the south end of the branching corridor is opposite the center of the building's northern wall. The door is richly decorated in bronze bas

relief. The carvings show trees and boulders coming to life to fight the undead army, the trees flinging the hideous forms away with strong arms, the boulders rolling down hillsides to crush the invaders. The door is also false and the trigger of a deadly trap. Any attempt to open the door or to see whether it is locked will set the trap in motion. A secret panel opposite the side tunnel's entrance will open, and a massive boulder up a steep 50' ramp will begin to roll toward the door, reaching it in less than a round. The trap can be detected and neutralized before the door is touched, but a thief attempting to do so suffers a -10% penalty. If the trap is triggered, any PC who *immediately* declares that he or she is escaping back into the main hallway upon hearing the grinding of the secret panel raising and the initial rumbling of the boulder gets clear of the trap. Any PC who hesitates, however, will be subject to 10d6 in damage from the massive rock (save vs. breath weapons for half damage). Any surviving PCs who were struck by the boulder must negotiate a way out around it, and the spaces are narrow, so armor might have to be removed and thrown, surviving sacks and packs might have to be abandoned, and so on. (Note that all items carried by characters who fail their saves must also make saving throws versus crushing blow.) The secret panel that conceals the boulder can be detected normally, but any attempt to open it will activate the trap. In this case however, damage is only 5d6, and a save vs. breath weapon (at +2) negates all damage as the character jumps clear.

**5. Altar Trap.** A rich altar sits at the north end of this room, draped in white silk and with candles burning upon it. The candlesticks seem to be made of platinum. Any molestation of the altar will trigger the trap. The floor 20' from the altar pivots and dumps all characters north of that line into a 25' pit (3d6 in damage). Characters south of the line but within 20' of it can make a save against petrification to avoid sliding into the pit along the sloping floor. The floor then immediately pivots back up. (The floor is cunningly cut out along the edge of the altar, which is actually anchored to the wall). This

trap can be detected before the altar is touched, but it cannot be removed without first triggering it (allow the thief to figure this out if he or she detects the trap). The fallen characters should be able to escape from the pit if they come up with a reasonable plan for doing so. The candlesticks on the altar are actually part of the marble itself, painted to resemble platinum.

**6. Altar Trap.** The room is identical to **5**, but the trap is a portcullis that lowers along the line shown on the map, trapping any PCs north of it. Two bend bars rolls (q.v.) are needed, or magical aid is necessary to create a safe escape route. The portcullis weighs in excess of 5,000 pounds.

**7. False Crypt.** The passageway widens into a room 75' long and 30' wide; 40' into it sits a raised bier. Above and 10' behind the bier hovers a round creature with a gaping mouth on its underside, a massive center eye, and four eye stalks, which looks attentively at the PCs when they enter. The **spectator** has been set to guard the false crypt. He does not know that it is false or that it is empty; he merely is to prevent all molestation of it. He will inform the party in conversation, however, that it is the "tomb of a warrior" and his responsibility for another six years. If not attacked immediately, the spectator will converse with the lead PC telepathically and try to convince the party to leave (using its *suggestion* power if necessary). If engaged in combat, it will use all of the powers of its eyes, including continuing to *suggest* to one PC per round that the PC leave in peace. The spectator: AC 4/7 (70% of attacks strike the body, 20% the eye stalks, and 10% the central eye; all hit points are in its body; a single hit destroys an eye; if all eyes are destroyed, it teleports to Nirvana), MV. 10" (MC: B), HD 4+4, hp 26, #AT 1, Dmg. 2-5, THAC0 15, SA eyes: (1) *cause serious wounds*, 60' range, 2d8+2, save vs. spells for half damage; (2) *paralyze*, 90' range, 5-20 round duration, save negates; (3) *telepathy with suggestion* to try convince the PCs to leave in peace; SD Central eye can reflect one spell per round back at caster if spectator makes save vs.

spells (12); MR 5%; Size L. Behind the tomb is the incidental treasure the seven spectators who have served here have amassed: 5 pp, 33 gp, 35 ep, 41 sp, 6 gems @ 50 gp, a **potion of growth**, **oil of slipperiness**, a **potion of hill giant control**, and 21 **+1 arrows**. If the party agrees not to molest the tomb, the spectator will offer them a meal, using its fourth eye to *create food and water*.

**8. False Crypt.** The room is the mirror image of **7**, but the bier is flanked 10' behind it by two rough statues with manlike forms. The "statues" are **stone guardians**, and they will attack as soon as anyone reaches the bier. A third is hidden *inside* the bier and will emerge and attack one round after the first two are engaged. They are: AC 2, MV. 10", HD 4+4, hp 30, 26, 31, #AT 2, Dmg. 2-9/2-9, THAC0 15, Size M, M, L. Take 1/4 damage from edged weapons and none from missile weapons; 1/2 damage from cold, fire, and electricity; they cannot be poisoned, held, charmed, paralyzed, or affected by fear; *stone to flesh*, *transmute rock to mud*, *stone shape*, and *dig* kill them instantly with no saving throw. The treasure these guardians have amassed from would-be thieves is in the bier in a jumble of bones and rusted gear: a **potion of water breathing**, a **potion of extra healing**, **leather armor +1** (man sized), a **dagger +1**, and a burned-out and gray **ioun stone**.

**9 and 10. Traps and Fountains.** The rooms off of the false crypts are bare of any furnishing. Each is lit by a *continual light* spell cast in a basin of thin lapis hanging from silver chains (5,000 gp value each). The rooms are filled with a bluish glow that makes them seem almost aquatic. The walls and ceiling are made of white marble. The pit traps located before the secret doors are the same as in area **2**, though the secret doors themselves can be detected normally. The traps can be found and disarmed (through wedging) before they are triggered if an attempt is made before the walls are searched. The secret doors are triggered by false stones set near the floor just north of the door, so they may be operated

and entered without triggering the traps if it is done carefully.

Each of the triangular rooms beyond the secret doors contains a raised pool fed by a cascade of water from a carved spout near the ceiling. The pools and the spouts are made of the same white marble and alabaster as the rest of the room, though the bottoms of the pools seem to be made of lapis. *Continual light* spells have been cast under the inner rims of the pools, so the rooms are bathed in a shimmering silver-blue glow. The water flows down from the pools on the second level (area **3**) and is enchanted by exposure to the unicorns above.

**Area 9:** A drink from this fountain has three effects: (1) +2 to DEX (permanent, 18 max.); (2) a *friends* spell effects the imbiber for one week

(1" area of effect); (3) -1 to CON (1 week, with any attendant hit point losses).

**Area 10:** A drink from this fountain has two effects: (1) The imbiber is granted, immediately, the benefits of a *commune* spell (three questions can be asked of the PC's deity; the DM should role-play this as suits the deity in question); (2) as a consequence of (1), the PC loses all sense of direction and mapping ability for 1 week.

After one drink, each fountain loses all magical properties for a full year as the enchantment builds again. In no case will the same character be able to gain any enchantment from the pools again, and the effects of the magic will be different when it is restored.

### Encounter Key: Level 2

The upper level of the tomb is a meditative garden open to the sun and bounded by 75' walls of white marble. It is the lair of 2 **unicorns** and a **guardian naga**, the custodians of the tomb. Trails of pale sand wind through the trees and bushes. There are eight grassy open areas, three of which surround fountains fed by the circular stream. This stream is crossed by three alabaster bridges, and in the grassy area it bounds lies the true tomb of Serella bel Trajan. The trees and bushes grow close together, but not so close that progress between them is slowed. Rather, any character who wants to leave the path feels that he or she should not, that keeping to the trails and open areas is fitting and proper. If the PC persists in this desire, allow a save versus spells to allow him or her to wander through the growth. There is nothing to find among the trees, however, except one of the unicorn guardians, who will be less happy with the behavior of this character.

At any given time, there is a 10% chance that the two unicorns are together somewhere on this level. If they are, apply the percentages that follow in the area descriptions to the pair. If they are apart, the first one encountered will try to draw the PCs to **Area 5**, leading the way

silently along the trails. The other unicorn will be waiting by the tomb, and the guardian naga will appear from the stream the next round. If the PCs threaten the unicorn, the grounds, or the tomb in any way at any point, the other unicorn will immediately charge to the area, and the naga will again appear in the next round. The PCs will then have a much harder job convincing these guardians of their intentions, as the unicorns and the naga will bend their efforts to convincing the PCs to leave or, if necessary, defeating them.

The enchantments of the place allow the unicorns to include the tomb itself in their teleportation and to teleport up to five times each day if the relics are brought along. If any of the guardians feels the relics are in real danger, one unicorn will teleport the entire tomb into one of the secret fountain rooms on level 1 (**Areas 1.9** and **1.10**). If threatened there, the unicorn will continue teleporting the relics to what it thinks to be safe locations, finally using its last teleport to implant the treasure—and itself—deep inside the hill to the north of the crypt.

**1. Stairways.** The stairs emerge facing the outer walls of the level. The PCs see natural light and feel grass beneath their feet, but the exact nature of the place is not clear until they have fully emerged onto the areas that abut the stairheads on their southern sides. Then the calm beauty of the place is clear. Trees stand up to 70' high, just below the height of the marble walls. Birds move through the growth, and a soft breeze seems to be always moving. The area is hushed and tranquil. From the sandy areas, trails lead toward the interior of the level.

**2. Lawns.** These grassy lawns are at the ends of the sandy trails. The ground is soft and springy and invites one to sit on it and contemplate the area. Butterflies hover over flowers along the edges and birds hunt for material in the grass. There is a 25% chance that one of the unicorns will be in any of these areas when it is first entered by a PC.

**3. Small Fountains.** These fountains feed the pools on level 1. Drinking from them here conveys no benefits except making the character feel rested, as if he or she had slept a full eight hours (note that this allows the memorization of spells up to sixth level provided they are memorized before the caster engages in any strenuous activity, such as fighting or traveling). They are carved out of alabaster to resemble unicorns. There is a 10% chance that a unicorn will be drinking out of one these fountains when the PCs approach it (this is how the water acquires part of its enchantment).

**4. Bridges.** Either led by a unicorn or on their own, the PCs will eventually find their way to one of the three bridges that cross the circular stream. These are arches of alabaster that curl above the clear water, offering a view of small, colorful fish. The bridges are carved with bas-relief scenes from the life of Serella bel Trajan—all scenes of peace and charity, not war. When the PCs cross one of the bridges, the naga is instantly alerted. She will move into area **5** within a round of the PCs, summoning the unicorns if they are not there already.

**5. The Tomb of Serella bel Trajan.** This grassy glade contains the actual tomb of the heroic elven knight. The marble bier stands near the southern edge of the circle in front of a bright fountain in the shape of a rearing unicorn, the water spilling from its spiral horn. Her armor and weapons are folded on top of the bier. The first time anyone touches these articles without leave from the guardian naga (or if the naga has been killed) will be shocked for 10–60 points of damage. The naga will appear and address the PCs a round after they reach the glade. If the PCs are escorted by the unicorns, they will stand on either side of the bier to await the naga. Otherwise, they will move to that position if the naga summons them.

The naga: AC 3, MV. 15"/15", HD 12, hp 80, #AT 2, Dmg. 1–6/2–8, THAC0 9, AL LG, Size L (20' long); poison bite/constriction; can spit poison at one target at 30' (save or die); spells: 1—*detect evil, penetrate disguise*; 2—*hold person, silence 15' r.*; 3—*dispel magic*; 4—*neutralize poison*.

The unicorns: AC 2, MV. 24", HD 4+4, hp 30, 26, #AT 3, Dmg. 1–6/1–6/1–12, THAC0 15, AL CG, Size L; +2 "to hit" with horn; charge for 2–24 (no hoof attacks); immune to poison, *charm*, holding, and death magic; *teleport 36" 1/day* (or up 5/day); save as 11th-level MUs.

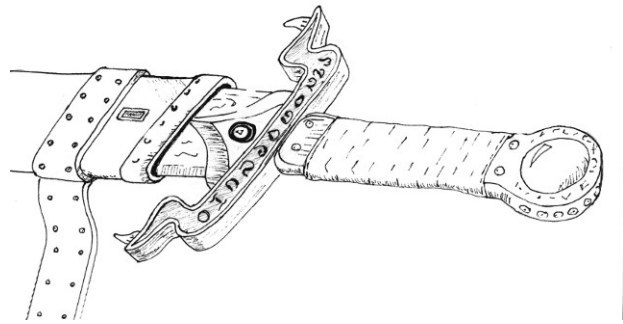
If it comes to combat between the party and the guardians, the naga will continue to insist that the party leave rather than die. If the party surrenders or convinces the naga that the fight is a mistake and that they are on a mission of importance, the naga and the unicorns will bestow *neutralize poison* spells on any PC that can still be helped. Any PC so healed will have only 1 hit point remaining.

The naga refers to herself as "the guardian." She must be convinced that the PCs are on a mission to save the area. She has guarded these relics for 700 years and will not part with them lightly. She will also demand an oath that the PCs not reveal the location of the shrine or its contents to anyone except for the druid circle. The players must role-play this encounter. The naga is dedicated to

preserving what Serella herself sought to preserve, but she must be convinced that the party's cause is the same. She will want to cast *know alignment* on them and will take it badly if they resist. If the players do not make the connection, the DM can have her guess that Black Harry may be behind the machinations of Lord Hearst. Once she becomes convinced of their veracity, she will offer the arms and armor of Serella bel Trajan to one of them. This character will, necessarily, be of Good alignment (Lawful, Neutral, or Chaotic). Elves, especially elven cavaliers, will be given first priority, then elven rangers, elven fighters, and elven mixed classes. After that, half-elves and humans (in the same order of classes) will be considered. She will give both items to one character. If the PCs have not figured out the background, the naga can provide them with information on the ancient force of evil, such as that they were lead by an undead horror—a death knight, the continuation of a powerful evil lord who had held the southlands in his grip for decades. In death, Black Harry, as he was known, proved even more dangerous, and from some hellish allies he had raised an army out of nightmares.

**Armor:** Serella's armor is +4 elven chain. It is enchanted with a powerful *anti-magic shell* that is triggered (max. 1/day) by spells coming from a source the equivalent of level 12 or higher. That is, a 15th-level MU casting *magic missile* at the wearer would trigger the protection, as would a death knight's *fireball*. The shell lasts for 1 segment and has a radius of 30'. It is triggered by spells aimed directly at the wearer and by area of effect spells that would affect the wearer. It has no effect on summoned or magic creatures. The other enchantments laid upon the armor cause the wearer to follow the same strictures in terms of treasure and magic items as a paladin (q.v.). If the wearer has more magic items than are allowed by this code when he or she first dons the armor, the PC will immediately feel the urge to give them away, perhaps into safekeeping with another PC until they can be donated to the wearer's church. The armor also repels shields and will not allow its wearer to bear

even a nonmagical shield into battle (of course, one may be kept to display the PC's crest). When a character wearing this armor is reduced to 0 or fewer h.p., the armor casts a *cure critical wounds* spell *instantly*, possibly raising the PC to positive hit points and, if so, allowing him or her to continue fighting or to withdraw (if the PC is still at negative hit points, no points will be lost in subsequent rounds to bleeding). This function is possible 1/week. The armor telepathically communicates its powers to its wearer when it is first donned.



**Sword: Lloradel** ("First Dawn") is an intelligent long sword +3/+4 vs. undead with several powers and a special purpose: to kill the undead. AL: NG, INT: 13 (empathy), EGO: 13. Primary ability: *detect evil*: 1" r. at will when the wielder grasps and concentrates; Extraordinary ability: Cast a modified *negative plane protection* on the wielder: 1/day, dur. 5 rnds., conveys *total* protection from level-draining attacks (no save necessary) for the full duration but causes no extra damage to attacking undead (cf. *negative plane protection*); Special purpose power: *disruption*, as the **mace of disruption** (q.v.), but with the sword's +3 bonus raised to +4 versus undead. As with the **mace**, any undead struck with the weapon must make a check as if a 12th-level cleric were attempting to turn it. Failure indicates the undead is destroyed. Even if not destroyed, though, the sword does double damage (i.e., 2-16+8 vs. small or medium creatures). Lloradel also grants a 5% chance of disrupting even those undead-like monsters that cannot normally be turned, such as death knight, banshees, etc. Any evil character touching the sword when it is not grasped by a good-

aligned character will take 5–20 points of damage. A neutral character may wield the sword, but only a +2 bonus is conveyed, not any of the special powers, and the sword will actively fight to get away to the extent it can. Lloradel is forged of pale white steel within which hints of gold and pink seem to swirl. It will impart to its new wielder a sense of its hatred for undead and a feeling that the bearer will be safer from them with it along. It will also communicate its ability to detect evil. If asked, the naga can provide a detailed accounting of Lloradel's powers.

#### 4.A. Ambush!

**Prakshara** awaits the party just within the trees, some 200' from the Tomb, accompanied by 4 **tree squids**. He wears the form of Archan dan Kreeling, the Druid of the circle, and he will tell the party that the army of Black Harry is upon the Redwood Cathedral and that he will take the relics back via a quick route that he can only travel alone (such as shapechanged into a swift bird). He will stay just within the line of trees, emerging from the shadows and hailing them when the party is 50' away. He will stay within the trees until the tree squids have attacked and then maneuver for best advantage, using his **potion of invisibility** if need be. He will demand the relics from the party member carrying them, and if that character resists, he and his tree squids will attack. These monsters await Prakshara's command in the trees. The rakshasa himself will focus all of his attacks on the bearer of the relics (including attempting to *hold* that character and then carry him or her away, possibly splitting up his potion to conceal this retreat), and he will attempt to flee with the relics as soon as possible, leaving the tree squids to deal with the surviving party members.

Prakshara: AC -4 (-5 w/ring), MV. 15", HD 7, hp 50, #AT 3 or 2, Dmg. 1–3/1–3/2–5 or 2–8+3/2–5, THAC0 13, SA spells, SD not harmed by spells below 8th level; magical weapons needed to hit; weapons below +3 do half damage; hits by crossbow bolt *blessed* by a cleric will kill. Spells

—as 6th level MU, 2nd level cleric. His memorized spells are: 1: *protection from good* (which he will cast as soon as the party emerges from the tomb), *cure light wounds*, *charm person*, *enlarge*, *magic missile*, *spider climb*; 2: *ray of enfeeblement*, *stinking cloud*; 3: *fireball*, *hold person*. On his person, he carries 50 pp, a **broadsword +3** (no claw attacks when used, though he can still bite), **ring of protection +1**, a **potion of invisibility**, and a **magic-user scroll** with the following spells: *locate object* (2), *strength* (2), *hold person* (3), *extension I* (4), and *phase door* (7). He will use all of these items to help him secure the relics.

If *enlarged*, Prakshara will be as strong as an ogre (18/76) and will receive an additional +2/+4 on all melee attacks. If he further casts *strength*, his strength will increase by 10–50 percentage points (d4+d6/2) up to a maximum of 19 (+3/+7).

With Prakshara are 4 tree squids that he has persuaded to join with him. These will attack when he does and retreat only if close to death or after losing five tentacles. Tree squids: AC 1 (body)/2 (2 lg. tentacles)/4 (8 small tentacles), MV. 1"/@18", HD 5+2, hp 22, 26, 28, 30 (plus 8 X 5, 2 X 10), #AT 6 (or 4 and 1), Dmg. 1–3 (X4)/2–12 (X2)/3–18 (beak), THAC0 15, SA constriction. These will fight from the trees and will not pursue anyone fleeing beyond their reach into the clearing. See **New Monsters** (q.v.) at the end of this module.

If Prakshara is killed, he will revert to his natural form, the apelike beast that Archan described. If captured, the cowardly rakshasa will part with any information to save its life, but he will fight to the death to try to capture the relics. If the party searches the nearby area, they will find a small cave that Prakshara has been using as a lair. Inside are several gnawed-clean skeletons arranged in gruesome poses, a few still wearing rags and tatters that identify them as druids. Two skulls have been fashioned into drinking goblets, and there is a small cask of strong spirits. A chest trapped with a poisoned needle holds 745 pp in small sacks and Prakshara's **crystal ball** and its stand.

## 5. The Battle for Gib Rus

The party's part in the final battle for Gib Rus will occur back at the Redwood Cathedral. When they return there from the Tomb, the real Archan will inform them that an army is on the march from the south, an army of undead and other monsters, with orcs and gnolls and giants providing much of the muscle. Once this force reached the southern edge of Gib Rus, Lord Minder Hearst brought his own force up from Ans Nimeos, and they hold the road. If asked, he says that he doubts the soldiers and officers in this army know why they are there or even know of the army of monsters they are supporting. The druids are already engaged all over the lands of Gib Rus, attempting to repulse the force, but it goes badly for them, as none of them can stand up to the power of the force's mysterious leader, who wears burned and blackened armor and possesses great powers of magic; their losses have been heavy. Indeed, there is almost no one left at the Redwood Cathedral.

Archan will ask that the party remain there, promising them that they will be summoned as soon as Black Harry himself appears, for the powers of the relics are made to fight beings such as this. He does not want to risk them and the party in general combat. When the leader is spotted, he will bring them to the location. It will be the job of the party to get the champion to Black Harry and hold off his minions while the champion attempts to defeat the death knight. Archan will leave the party in the Cathedral with Parian Theel, a half-elf Initiate of the Eighth Circle, who will maintain a watch for enemies and for signals from the other druids. Any wounds the party has will be healed, and up to 3 **potions of extra-healing** are available if the party asks for more aid. After answering any questions the party has about the area, the Druid will assume the form of a falcon and fly away to where the fighting is hottest.

Archan will not have the chance to summon the party to fight Black Harry because the death knight and a small force will slip past the

druids and make for the Redwood Cathedral itself. Not having heard from Prakshara, the death knight hopes to cut the druids off from their base, destroy the ancient groves, and use the place as a base himself until he can try to get his hands on the relics of Serella. He will recognize these instantly on seeing a PC wearing them, and he will drive toward the Cathedral and attempt to slay that character especially.

After Archan leaves, give the PCs the Players' Map of the Redwood Cathedral and ask them where they will wait. Parian Theel will patrol the area in the shape of an eagle. Two hours after Archan leaves, Parian will appear before the PCs and tell them that he has spotted the enemy—Black Harry himself, two wyverns, two massive hounds, one of which bears a rider, and a troop of skeletons. They are coming up the spur trail toward the Cathedral. He will ask the PCs what they want to do, for this battle will decide the fate of Gib Rus.

If the PCs cannot come to a decision about what to do, the DM can have Parian Theel point out three spots where ambushes can be staged on the approach to the Cathedral and advocate that they attempt to harass the enemy and kill as many as they can before a final confrontation. The ambush locations are detailed below. Use the first for any combat that takes place along the trail before the hot springs, the second for any combats along the trails in the hot springs area, and the third for combats near the Cathedral itself. The PCs can stage ambushes from any of these places, as they wish, or they can simply wait at the Cathedral for Black Harry and his forces to reach it. The enemy will reach the edge of the Redwood Cathedral area in three turns, so the party needs to set itself somewhere before that time.

### Roster of the Enemy

- **Black Harry**, death knight
- 1 **nightmare** (Black Harry's mount)
- 2 **gravehounds**
- 1 **skeleton warrior** (mounted on the larger gravehound)
- 30 **skeletons**
- 4 **ghasts**
- human **cleric**, level 4
- human **fighter**, level 5

### Important Notes

- As long as the wyverns are alive the enemy can only be surprised on a 1, for the flyers are keeping watch on the larger area.
- Only one wyvern will fight. The other carries the controller of the skeleton warrior (the cleric) and his guard (the fighter). The wyvern will circle roughly 150' above the skeleton warrior for as long as it lives. If the skeleton warrior is killed, the cleric and fighter will land and attack or flee on the wyvern depending on the course of the battle. Their base chance of aiding **Black Harry** is 50%, and morale modifiers for henchman should be applied. If the wyvern carrying them is attacked and badly hurt, it will try to ascend out of range of attacks. If it gets more than 240' from the skeleton warrior, control will be lost until that range is again closed. If this happens, the skeleton warrior will immediately seek to kill the controller through any means it can, possibly attacking the other wyvern to subdue it and carry the fight to the sky! When loosed from control, the skeleton warrior moves at double speed (12") toward its controller. If the wyvern carrying the controller is killed in the air, the fall will do 15d6 damage to the humans. If the controller is killed, the skeleton warrior will immediately try to get its circlet from the corpse and release itself from its unlife. So killing the other wyvern would be a great idea for the PCs, but they will need to deduct the connection from the actions of the skeleton warrior and the wyverns in combat.
- The controller can do nothing but control the skeleton warrior. His guard will not use any

weapons as long as he is mounted on the wyvern.

- The ghasts are surrounded by the skeletons and will not reveal themselves unless the undead engage in melee. Attempts to turn must first deal with the ghasts.
- For tournament play, if Black Harry opens a gate successfully, only a **type I demon** will emerge.
- Parian Theel will follow any plan the party comes up with, only volunteering advice if they seem stuck.

### Enemies

- **Black Harry**, death knight: S 18/00, AC 0, HD 9 (d10), hp 69, MV. 12", #AT 1, Dmg. 1–8+8, SA +5 t.h. with sword; *fear* 5' r., at will: *wall of ice*; 2/day: *dispel magic*, *gate*; 1/day: *fireball*, any *power word*, *symbol pain/fear*, all at 20th; SD *Det. mag.*, *det. invis.*; MR 75% (11 or lower, reflect spell), AL CE, S M. THAC0 12. **Long sword +2**, **giant slayer**: (INT 16, AL CE, det. large traps 1", det. invis. 1", det. mag. 1"; common, fomorian, CE), ego 9. THAC0 12 (7).
- **Nightmare**: AC –4, HD 6+6, hp 40, MV. 15"/36", #AT 3, Dmg. 2–8/4–10/4–10, SA breathes cloud of smoke and flame in combat—save vs. spell or fight at –2; SD *fly*, go ethereal; AL CE, S L. THAC0 13.
- 2 **gravehounds**: AC 3, MV. 12" (9" with rider), HD 7+3, hp 51, 36, #AT 1, Dmg. 4–16, SA aura of putrescence: w/in 10', sv. vs. pois. or nauseated and retching, if distance increases, recover in 1–3 rnds. but –1 to hit 2–5 more rounds; fear, as dragon, vs. creatures w/ less than 3 levels/HD; charge with rider; SD +1 or better to hit. THAC0 13.
- **Skeleton warrior**: AC 2, MV. 6", HD 9+9 (d10), hp 70, #AT 1, Dmg. 1–10 (2-h sword), SA +3 to hit, SD panic all creatures below 5 HD, cannot be turned; MR 90%. THAC0 7 (4).
- **Skeletons (30)**: AC 7, MV. 12", HD 1, hp 3X5, 4X5, 6X5, 7X5, 8X10; #AT 1, Dmg. 1–6, SD edged

wpons. do half Dmg., no effect from cold, *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*. THAC0 19.

- Ghosts (4): AC 4, MV. 15", HD 4, hp 22, 23, 24, 25, #AT 3, Dmg. 1-4/1-4/1-8, SA stench (sv. vs. pois. or -2 on all to hit rolls w/in 10'), paralyze on claw hits, 5-20 rnds.; SD *sleep*, *charm* no effect. THAC0 15.

- Cleric 4: W 15, AC 2 (plate and shield), MV. 6", hp 22, #AT 1, Dmg. 2-7+1 (**flail +1**), SA Spells:1: *curse*, *command*, *cure light wounds*, *cause light wounds*, *sanctuary*; 2: *hold person* X2, *silence* 15' r. THAC0 18.

- Fighter 5: S 16, AC 2 (**chain +2**, shield), MV. 12", hp 40, #AT 1, Dmg. 1-8+2 (**bast. sword +1**). THAC0 16.

### Allies

- Parian Theel, 1/2 elf, druid 8: W 18 D 16 C 16 Ch 18, AC 5, MV. 12", hp 48, #AT 1, Dmg. 1-8+1, SA spells: 1: *det. snares/pits*, *entangle* (X2), *faerie fire*, *locate anim.*, *speak w/anim.*; 2: *barkskin*, *charm*, *clw* (X2), *feign death*, *heat metal*; 3: *call light.*, *neut. pois.*, *snare*, *summ. insects*; 4: *anim. summ I*, *disp. mag.*, *plant door*; SD +4 on mental saves; shape change (twice more, heal 10-60% Dmg. each time). **scim. +1** (**luck blade**, 1 wish), **dagger +2**, **sling/seek +2**, **wand/negate** (14 chgs.), **cloak/prot. +3**. THAC0 16.

If the DM feels the party may need strategic help, there are three other potential allies in the area that may offer their services when Black Harry's force is sighted or before. Victory or defeat should belong to the players, however, so the DM should carefully consider how these allies are used and should maintain control of them himself.

- **Treant**: AC 0, MV. 12", HD 10, hp 69, #AT 2, Dmg. 3-18, SA arouse 1-2 trees (6" range, 3" mv., atk. 2/rnd at 4-24, 12 HD, SD Never surp., save vs. fire at -4, fire does +1/die. THAC0 10.

- **Firbolgs** (2): AC 2, MV. 15", HD 13+4, hp 81, 66, #AT 1, Dmg. 2-20+10 (giant 2-h sword), SA *detect magic*, *dimunition* (double effect and

duration), *fools gold*, *forget*, *alter self* (at will, 1/day each); MR: 15%. THAC0 8.

### Ambush Areas

#### 1. The Forest Trail

Terrain: Open, road, forest

Cover/Distance from trail: South/forest 100'; north/forest 200'

Visibility: Either side, to woods; ahead, 30" to fog

Possible Enemy Responses: Death knight: *wall/ice*, *p.w. blind*, *gate* (use d6 to decide if necessary); gravehounds (1 w/skeleton warrior): charge; wyvern 1: attack pass; wyvern 2: circle; skeletons/ghosts: hold or surround party engaged in melee.

Time to Next Area: On road: @ 9", 4 ½ rnds.; @ 12", 3 ½ rnds. Under cover: @ 9", 15 rnds., @ 12", 10 rnds.

#### 2. The Hot Springs Crossing

Terrain: Open, road, hot springs, bridge

Cover/Distance: Fog

Visibility: 30' in fog

Possible Enemy Responses: Death knight: *fireball*, *gate*, attack on nightmare; gravehounds (and skeleton warrior): attack; wyverns: circle; skeletons/ghosts: attack behind gravehounds.

Time to Next Area: On road: @ 9", 4 ½ rnds.; @ 12", 3 ½ rnds. Under cover of fog, avoiding crossing pools, stream: @ 9", 20 rnds., @ 12", 15 rnds.

Special: *Gust of wind* will clear fog in area 1"/level of caster for 2-5 rnds. Fighting on the bridge: 30' wide. In melee, save vs. petri. each round or fall. spend 1 round to rise with no DEX or shield bonus on AC and +2 to be hit. If w/in 5' of edge, save again or fall in hot spring: Dmg. 2-12/rnd from heat.

#### 1. The Redwood Cathedral

Terrain: Open, rings of trees

Cover/Distance: Rings of trees. From outer ring to center = 15". Inner ring to center = 5"

Visibility: Back, 20" to fog; ahead, blocked by inner and outer rings of trees.

Possible Enemy Responses: Death knight: all out war. Will use all spells and fighting abilities to attack the champion wearing Serella's relics. All others except nightmare and any gated demon will fight to the death (or until the death knight dies). Nightmare will go ethereal if badly wounded, returning to deposit the death knight somewhere, then wait on the ethereal plane for the outcome of the battle. Any badly wounded demon will *teleport* away. Wyvern 1 will make 1 pass then land and fight. Wyvern 2 will circle, landing only if skeleton warrior dies and cleric and fighter decide to aid death knight.

Special: The ancient trees will not catch fire unless exposed to two *fireballs* (in the same place), to magical fire for 5 rnds., or to very hot normal fire for 1 turn. But the ground from 150' outside the outer ring all the way to the center is covered with layers of fallen needles that any source of fire will ignite. These fires will not spread, but thick smoke will fill the area exposed to flame, blinding anyone within it while the smoke lasts. Also, anyone in the smoke must save vs. poison or start coughing uncontrollably for the duration of the smoke effect. This coughing negates all DEX bonus to AC or reduce AC by 1 if there is no DEX bonus. Smoke effects will last 2–4 rnds. (d3+1).

## Conclusion

If the PCs defeat Black Harry's forces here, they will have dealt a major blow to the designs of the evil alliance. In a tournament game, they will have successfully completed their task and should receive their scores. In campaign play, much more is left open. Whether Black Harry survives in some form is up to the DM, but he could be used as a recurring villain. The druids will, of course, be very grateful, and could prove a powerful ally to the PCs should the party stay on their good side. Relations between them and the humans on Ans Neomis will still be highly strained—and there is still the issue of Lord Hearst. A projected follow-up adventure, called "The Siege of Ans Neomis," posits that the army of Ans Neomis rebels against Hearst when they learn what he has done. He holes up in his castle with those troops still loyal to him and begins to prepare for a ritual that will bring him even greater aid from the forces of evil—possibly from the plane of Acheron itself. The new commander of the forces of Ans Neomis approaches the PCs as they recuperate from the battle and tells them that the besieging forces have seen strange lights and fogs surrounding the castle, and they are worried that Hearst may be summoning aid. They show the PCs the entrance to a secret tunnel that leads up through the rock on which the castle stands, but the party soon realizes that since turning on the honor of his ancestors, Lord Hearst and his allies have done more than plot. A deadly dungeon guards the approach to the castle from below, and many of Hearst's evil allies and their guards and servants still dwell within. And the time of the ritual is getting closer...

Here ends **The Battle for Gib Rus**

## Optional Encounter: Babes in the Woods

This encounter can, at the DM's discretion, be inserted anywhere within Gib Rus or even along the road between Ans Neomis and the beach encounters. In tournament play, it was kept in reserve in case the group's progress was so fast as to leave unused time at the convention.

From the deep woods to one side of the trail, a high voice cries out in Common for aid: "Help! Help! Is anyone there?" It sounds like the voice of a child.

Should the party follow a narrow track, possibly made by animals, through the woods, they will find a small cave. Within, two human children, a boy and a girl, crouch next to the unmoving form of a man in brown robes (a druid?). When the party is visible, these children will wail with renewed vigor pleading for help. They are separated from the party by a wall of what seem to be massive rib bones jammed into the floor of the cave, so close together that even the children cannot squeeze through them. The cave itself is narrow, only 10' wide, and shallow. Only 5' of room exists beyond the barricade, and in this space the captives are crammed.

The entire set-up is a fake. The cave itself is nothing more than a few felled trees laid against a rock outcropping. It, the bars, and even the forms of those within are *illusions* cast by a **lamia**. The children and the man are all **leucrotta**. Another waits in hiding behind the rock outcropping with the lamia. On top of the outcrop lurks a **manticore**. If the party seeks to enter the cave, the "children" will try to entice them closer, and when the party is engaged in trying to free them, they will spring through the "bars" and attack. On the following round, the manticore will alight 50'–60' behind the party and begin unleashing volleys of tail spikes, which it will do for 3 rounds or until engaged in melee combat. When the fight is in full effect, the lamia will emerge (and cease concentrating on the *illusions*) and attempt to use her *charm* and *suggestion* powers to lure one of the male PCs away while her minions

finish off the others. Her preference will be for a human or half-elf.

Should the party attempt to circle around the "cave" before entering it first, they will find the lamia and one undisguised leucrotta. She will attempt to *charm* one of the PCs, as above, and tell the party that she and her "faithful hound" had also heard the cries and had come to investigate. The ambush from the other monsters will begin at her signal.

Manticore: AC 4, MV 12"/18", HD 6+3, hp 42, #AT 3, Dmg. 1–3/1–3/1–8, SA Tail spike in volleys of 6 (max. 4 volleys, range 6/12/18) AL LE Size L.

Leucrotta (4): AC 4, MV 18", HD 6+1, hp 37, 38, 40, 33, #AT 1, Dmg. 3–18, SA on 20 or 4 or more over to-hit roll, delivers a blow to the neck; opponent is unconscious and will die in 2–8 turns unless a CSW or better healing magic is used; rear kick for 1–6/1–6; jump on fallen foe for 4–16.

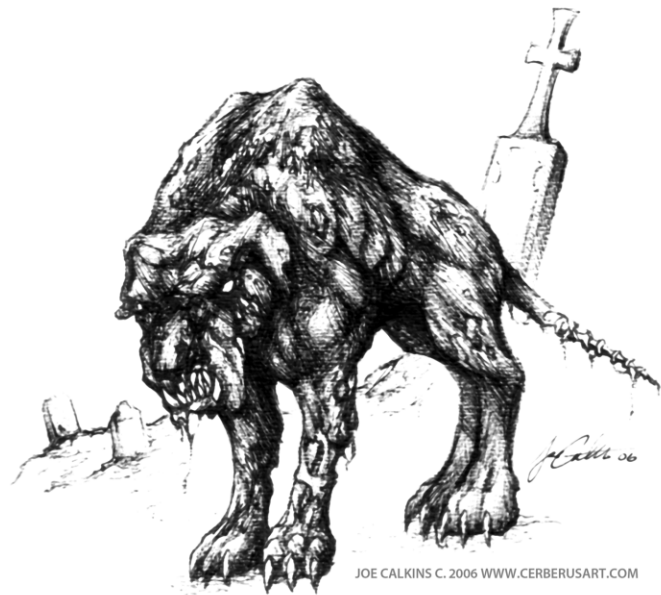
Lamia: AC 3", MV 24", HD 9, hp 53, #AT 1, Dmg. 1–4 (dagger), SA: touch drains 1 point WIS permanently; spells: *charm person*, *suggestion*, *illusion*, *mirror image*; AL CE; Size L. Note that the lamia has a 5% chance of detecting invisibility.

The lamia will attempt to simply lure the charmed PC to her lair for draining and killing and eating. Her lair is a cave 1/2 mile into the woods. There are fairly clear tracks leading there from the outcrop. Her treasure is: 2,000 gp, 16 gems @ 50 gp; 1 jewelry @ 300 gp; **magic-user scroll** of *Rary's mnemonic enhancer* (4); a **robe of blending**; a **potion of extra-healing**; and an **elixir of health**. The treasure is all in a locked and trapped chest. The chest is made out of more than fifty skulls of human and demi-human men. The key must be inserted into the mouth of the skull on the front of the chest, that of a human paladin still in his helm, or a poison powder will blow forth from his mouth, coating all within 5' (save at +2 or die). The lamia keeps the key on a chain around her neck. It resembles human finger bones (it is).

## New Monsters

### GRAVEHOUND

FREQUENCY: Very Rare  
 NO. APPEARING: 1–3  
 ARMOR CLASS: 3  
 MOVE: 15" (9" with rider)  
 HIT DICE: 7+1–4  
 % IN LAIR: 0%  
 TREASURE TYPE: Nil  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 4–16  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: +1 or better weapon to hit  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard  
 INTELLIGENCE: Low  
 ALIGNMENT: Neutral Evil  
 SIZE: L (8' at shoulder)  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil  
     Attack/Defense Modes: Nil  
 LEVEL/X.P. VALUE:  
     VII/1100 + 10/hp



Gravehounds resemble massive rotting mastiffs or wolves. These horrid undead beasts attack by biting with their massive jaws, doing so once per melee round. In addition, they constantly radiate an aura of putrescence; those within 10' of the gravehound must save versus, save vs. poison or become nauseated and immobilized while within this range (c.f. *stinking cloud*). If the distance between an affected creature and the gravehound increases (through the gravehound's movement or through rescue by a third party) to more than ten feet, the affected creature recovers in 1–3 rounds but is at -1 "to-hit" for an additional 2–5 rounds (1d4+1), assuming the distance is not closed again. Gravehounds also radiate fear, which affects creatures of 3 levels or hit dice or below as does the fear effect of dragons (creatures with fewer than 3 hit dice must save versus spells or be paralyzed with fear [50%] or flee in panic for 4–24 turns [50%]). Most evil creatures, especially those that have been exposed to these beasts (perhaps other servants of the same master) are not affected by these auras unless the gravehound attacks them. Weapons of +1 or better are required to hit a gravehound. They cannot be turned by clerics.

Gravehounds are horrible in appearance. Their fur is patchy, their skin is a gray-green putrescent fabric of decay, and their eyes glow a dull red. They are favored as steeds by certain powerful evil beings, including death knights, night hags, cambions, some demons and devils, some kinds of undead (especially liches), and, rarely, an evil cleric, magic-user, or fighter. Gravehounds bearing riders can charge as warhorses, allowing the rider, bearing the appropriate weapons, to gain the benefits of a charging mount.

**TREE SQUID** (*Architeuthis arboreus*)

FREQUENCY: Rare  
 NO. APPEARING: 1–10  
 ARMOR CLASS: 1 (body)/2 (lg. tentacles)/4 (sm. tentacles)  
 MOVE: 1"/@18"  
 HIT DICE: 5+2 (plus 8 x 5, 2 x 10)  
 % IN LAIR: 10%  
 TREASURE TYPE: E (treat 1000s of coins as 100s, only one type present)  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 6 (or 4 and 1 beak)  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1–3 (X4)/2–12 (X2)/(3–18; beak)  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: Constriction, draw to beak  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: None  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard  
 INTELLIGENCE: Low  
 ALIGNMENT: Neutral (evil)  
 SIZE: L  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil  
     Attack/Defense Modes: Nil  
 LEVEL/X. P. VALUE:  
     V/675 + 6/hp



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The tree squid is a horrible evolutionary wrong turn, particularly adapted to the arboreal realm in which it hunts. It possesses eight smaller (10') tentacles and two large (15') ones, and it uses these to navigate swiftly through the trees and to hunt for fresh meat, of which its diet entirely consists. The large and small tentacles can withstand 10 and 5 hit points of damage, respectively, without incurring damage to the body; after taking this damage, though, the tentacle becomes useless or is severed. Tentacles regenerate or grow back in 1–4 weeks. These tentacles surround an oblong central body covered in what is either a tough, barklike skin or an exoskeleton (this hard surface extends over the tentacles). From this mass protrudes the beast's mouth, a horrible beak with serrated edges for rending and tearing flesh. The creature's nostrils are at the rear of its beak, and tiny black eyes squint out above these. A tree squid's vision is poor, but both its hearing and its sense of smell are extremely sharp, and it can also sense vibrations through tree branches when in its arboreal habitat.

In combat, a tree squid will anchor itself to the trees with four small tentacles (its larger tentacles are unsuited for this, ending in sharp double claws), allowing it to attack each round with four small and two large tentacles. These attacks can be directed against up to six different foes, though the squid will rarely do this, as prey is its ultimate goal. The two large tentacles will generally attack one foe, hoping to latch on and draw the squirming morsel to the squid's beak. The smaller ones may seek to hold off other combatants until the primary prey has been incapacitated and the beast can retreat safely into the trees to devour the unlucky victim.

If a tree squid hits with a large tentacle, it will grab hold of its victim in addition to damage from the tentacle's claw and its serrated inner edge. When a human, demi-human, or humanoid

creature is struck successfully by either of the tree squid's large tentacles, roll percentile dice for immobilization of upper limbs (cf. squid, giant; 01–25: both limbs pinned; 26–75: one limb pinned [victim attacks at -3 "to hit"; determine randomly]; 76–00: both limbs free [-1 "to hit", tentacle around upper body]). At this point, the squid will continue to attack that victim with its other large tentacle (roll again for limbs pinned). Once both large tentacles have hit and grabbed hold, the squid will draw its prey toward its maw, attacking with its savage bite on the next round. In addition, while grasped by both large tentacles, a victim will take 1–6 points of damage per round from abrasion. When only one large tentacle is attached, the victim takes no extra damage from constriction and cannot be drawn to the creature's mouth (though he is subject to attacks from all the other tentacles). If a tree squid has only one large tentacle remaining, it can use two smaller ones to aid in drawing its victim to its beak (if both smaller tentacles score hits in the same round), but the prey will again take no constriction damage.

Note that any creature closer than 20' or 25' of a tree squid at the beginning of a round can be meleed that round, as it can close to the length of its tentacles and attack. Multiple creatures can be attacked if they are all within range of the central body.

If a tree squid loses the four smaller tentacles it uses in combat, it may continue to fight by using its remaining large tentacles and one of its small tentacles, leaving it with only three small tentacles as its anchor; this will result in the squid suffering a -2 penalty "to-hit" with the remaining attacking tentacles. If the tree squid is reduced to this number of tentacles while it has a victim in its grasp, however, it would rather flee, carrying its hapless prey with it into the deep woods. Once the tree squid begins to flee, the victim no longer takes damage from constriction or the beak, and the tree squid's movement rate is one half normal (9"). If reduced to fewer tentacles than cited above, the squid will always attempt to flee, but if it has five or fewer tentacles (of whatever types) remaining, its move rate will be greatly reduced, even unburdened: 15" at 5, 12" at 4, 9" at 3, 6" at 2, and 3" at 1. Note, though, that the squid will take advantage of all three dimensions when attempting to flee.

If brought out of the trees somehow, a tree squid's power is greatly reduced, and it will try as hard as it can to get back up. Its move will be reduced to 1" (though it can grab any tree within 10 or 15' and ascend the next round). It will be able to attack only with its large tentacles, which will not attempt to hold or constrict, and these attacks will be at -4 "to hit." Note that when anchored by four tentacles, only great strength could bring a tree squid down (frost giant or better).

The origins of this horrible species are mysterious. Whether they evolved naturally or were helped by eldritch means is unknown. It is possible that they are related to whipweed and to ropers, but the truth is unclear. It is not even sure if they are animal, vegetable, or some strange mix of the two. Their color is a dull and nauseating brown over most of their tentacles and body. Their beaks are a glinting ochre-yellow, and their small eyes are dull black, as are the claws at the tips of their longer tentacles. These creatures live in most wild forests except those that qualify as sylvan. Their treasure type is from items dropped by prey brought back to a family group's central "lair" of tightly interlocked trees. They are voracious hunters and will turn to cannibalism outside of small family groups if other food is scarce. There have been stories of fallen druids and other evil woodland beings controlling tree squids and using them as hunters and fierce attack squads, though how long this relationship could be maintained is unknown.



# GIB RUS OVERLAND MAP

## MAP KEY



Forest



River



Contour Line



Road

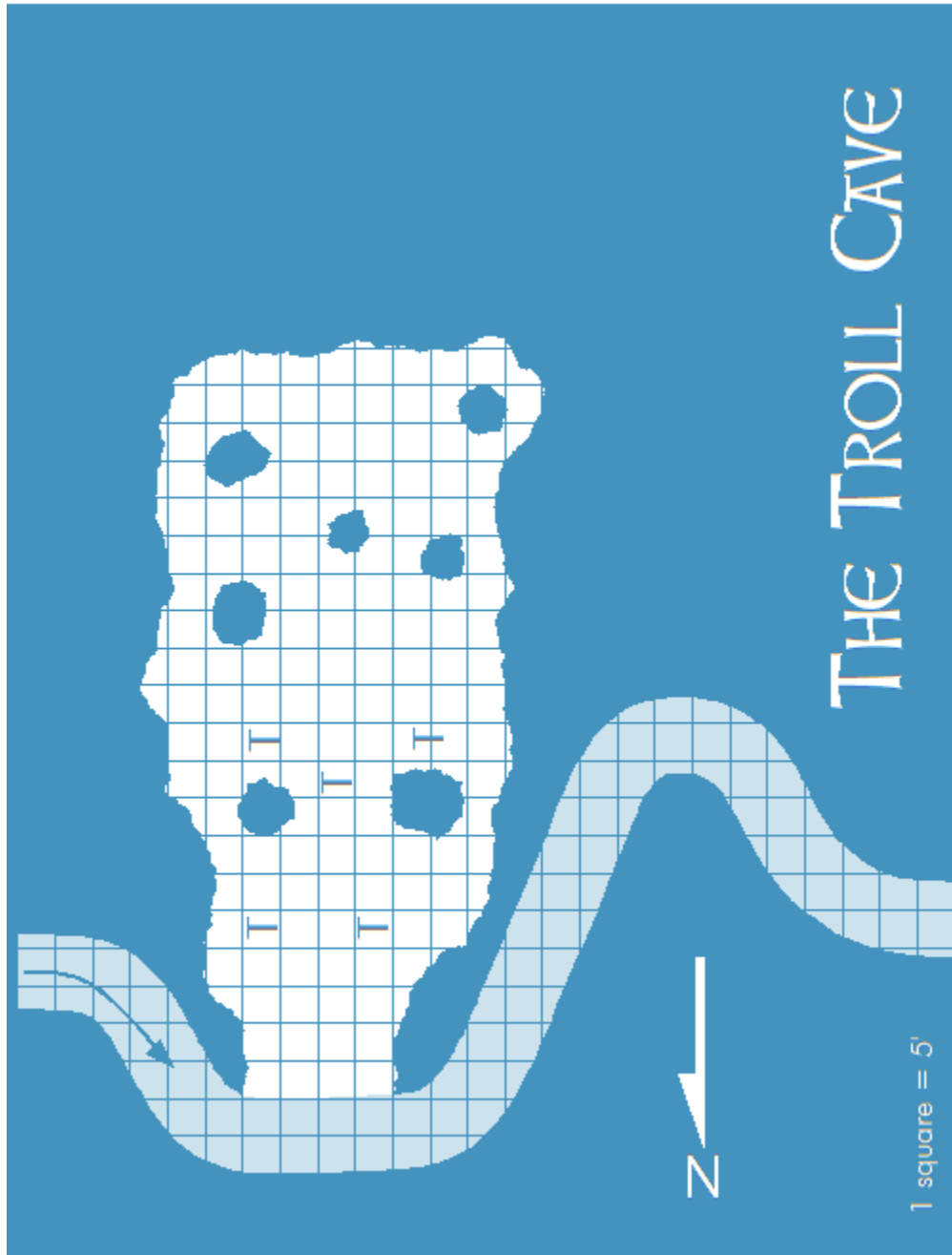


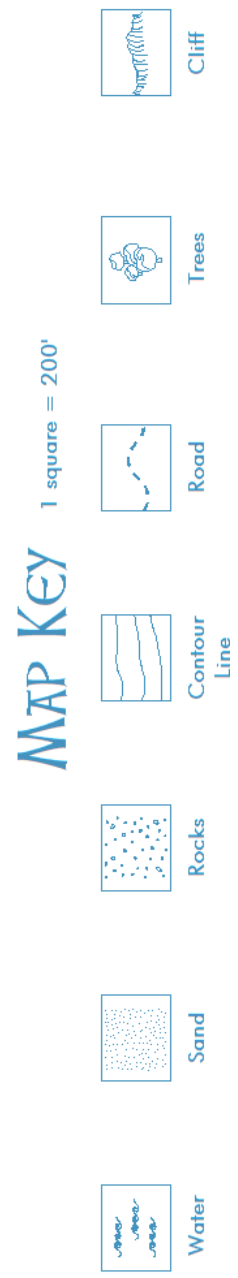
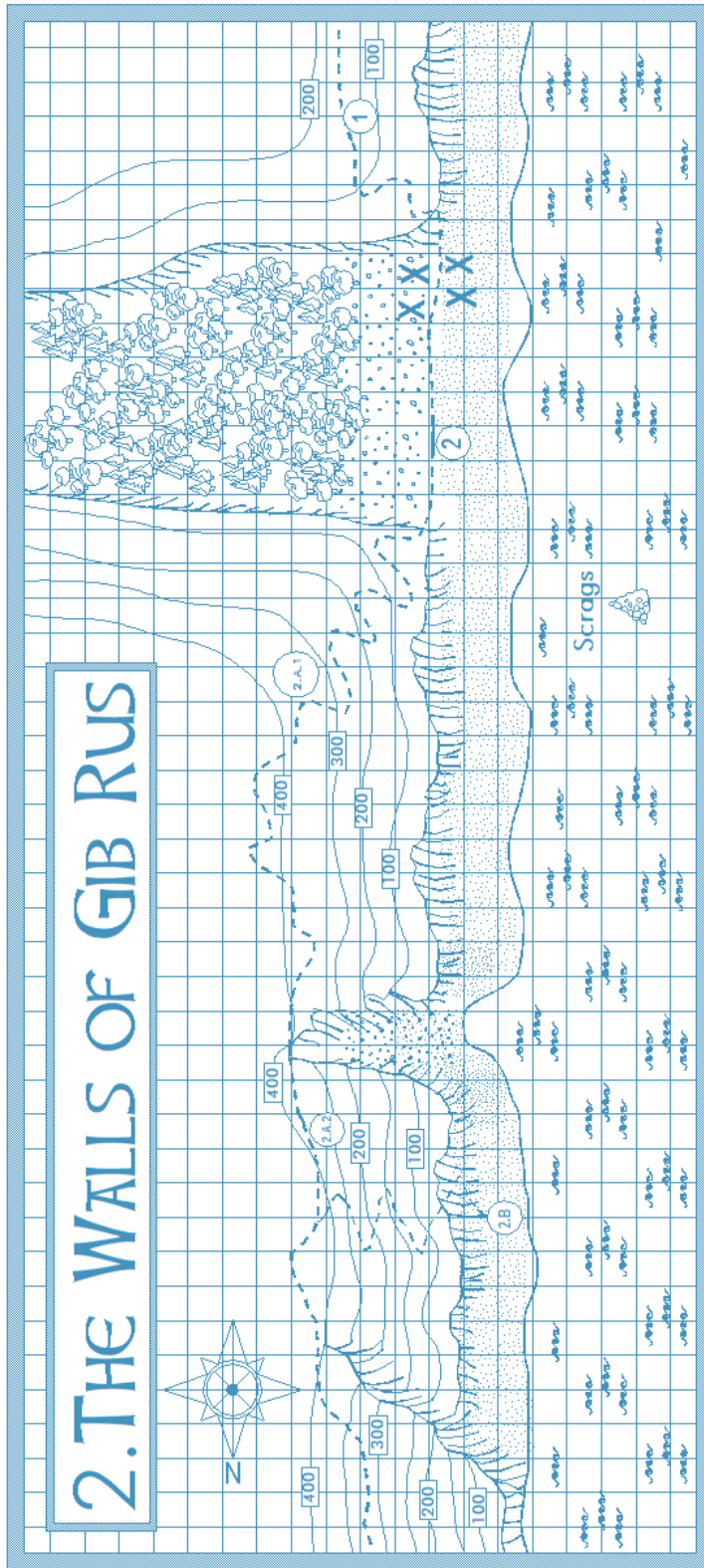
Water



Town

1 Hex = 10 miles





# THE HAUNT AND THE HANGMAN TREE

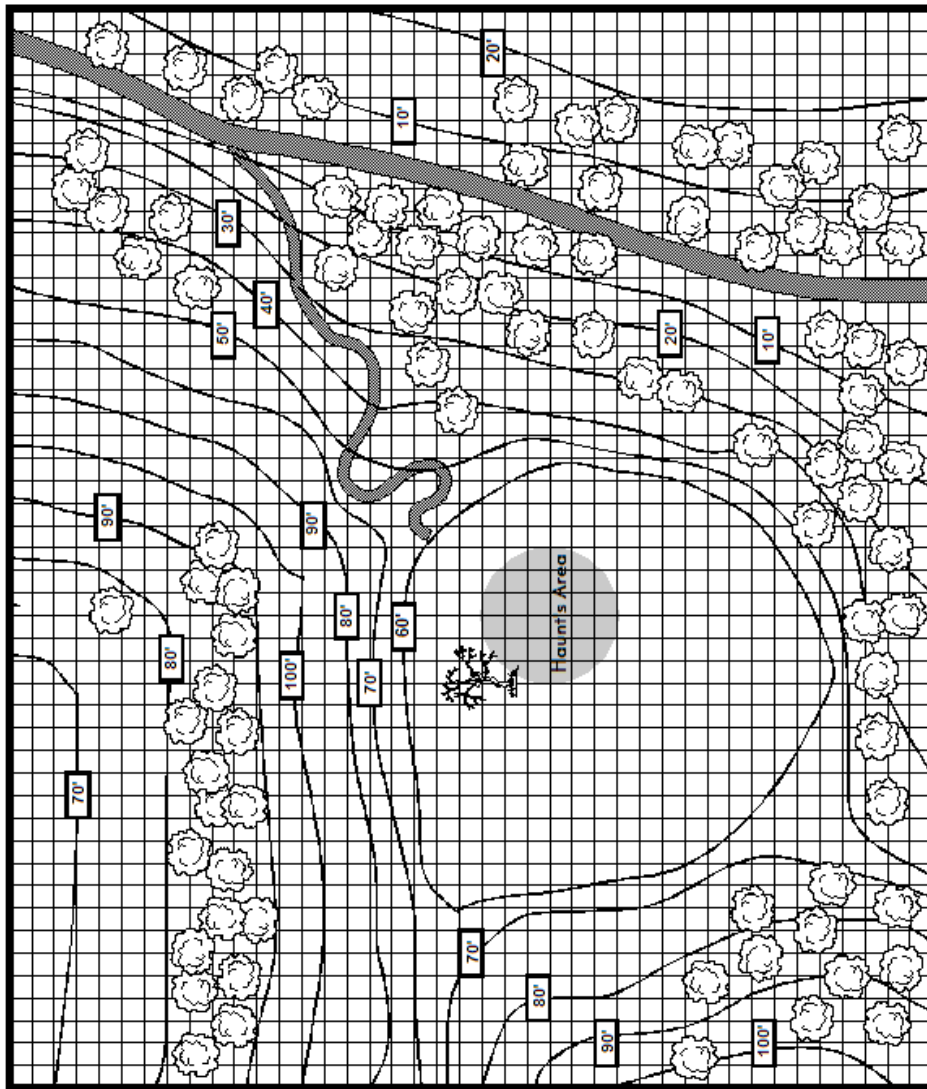
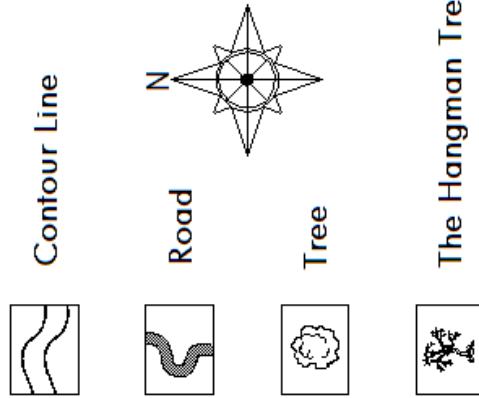
Contour Line

Road


Tree

The Hangman Tree


1 square = 10 feet




# THE FOMORIAN GIANT AMBUSH




Contour Line




Fomorion Giant




Dead Giant



Druid

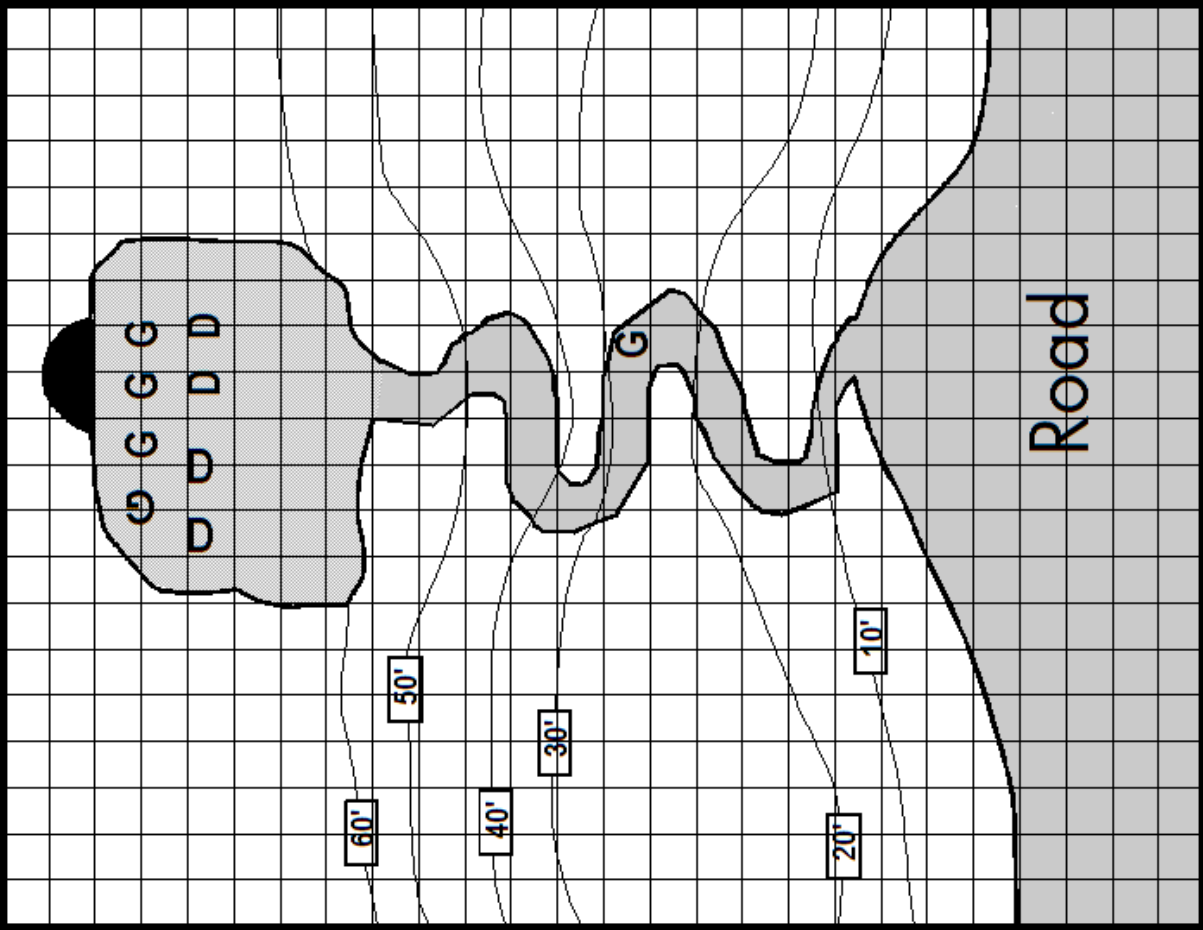


Dead Druid



N

1 square = 5 feet



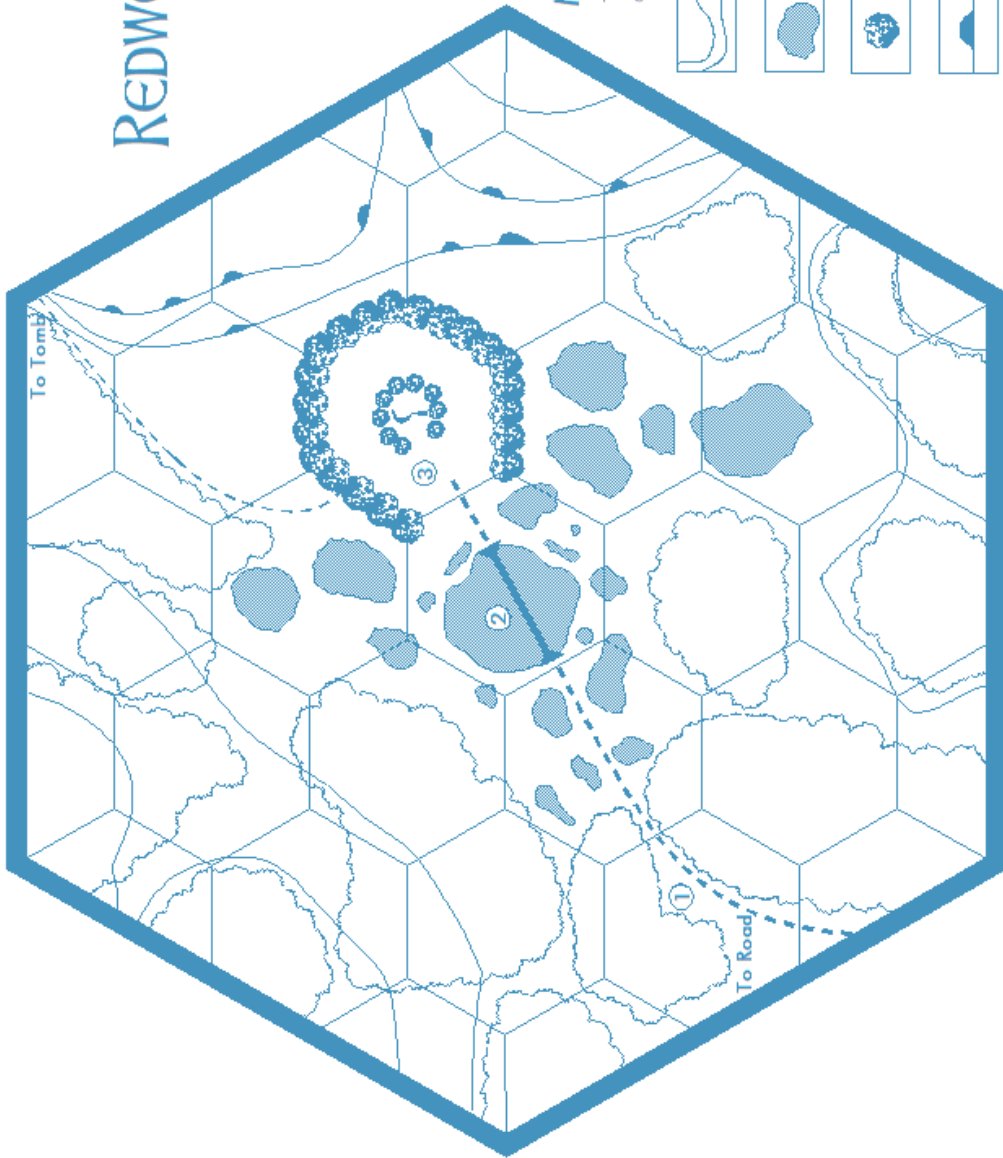
# THE REDWOOD CATHEDRAL

DM's Map

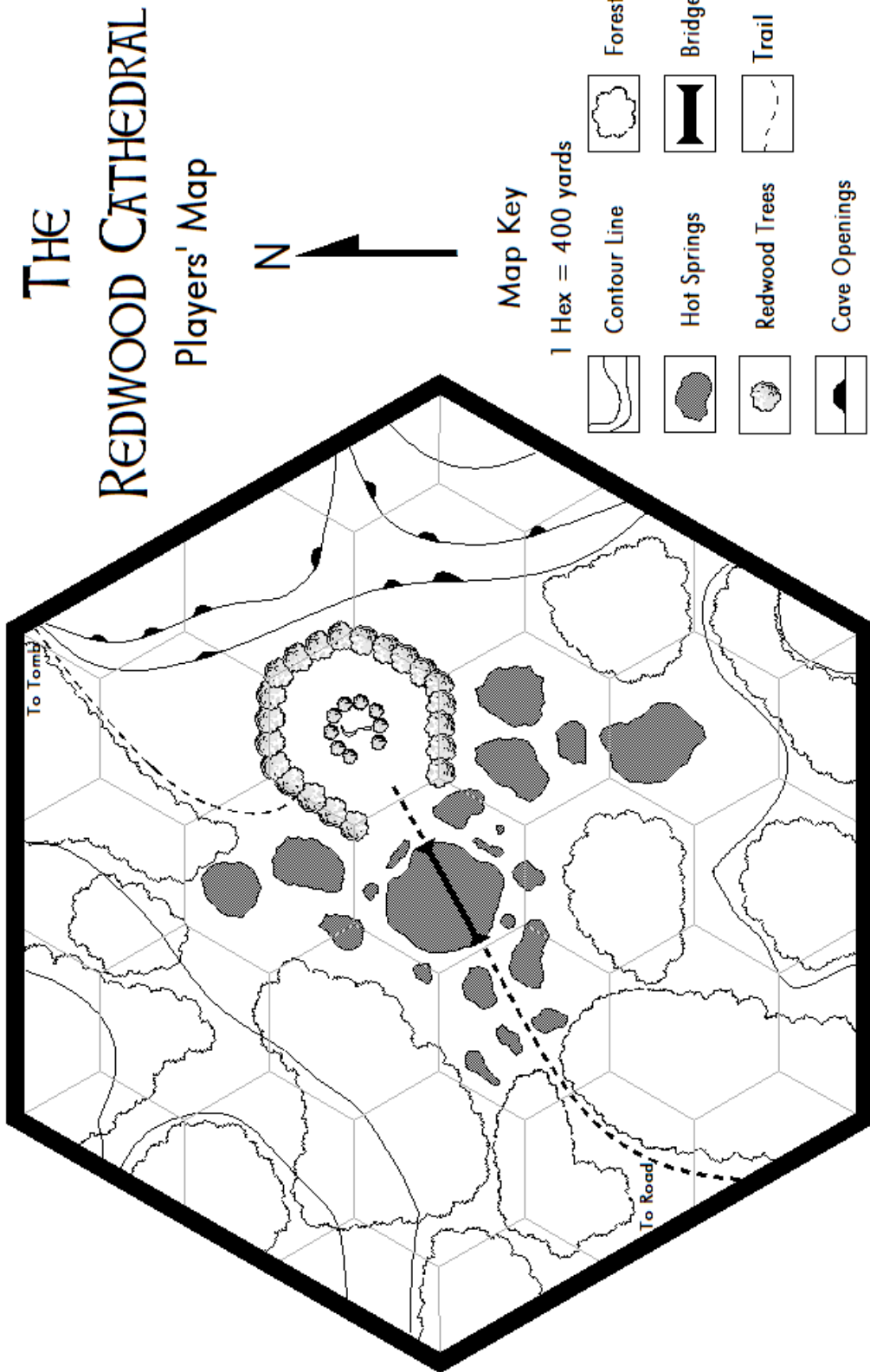


Map Key 1 Hex = 400 yards



















The numbers on the map refer to the ambush areas in the last chapter of the adventure



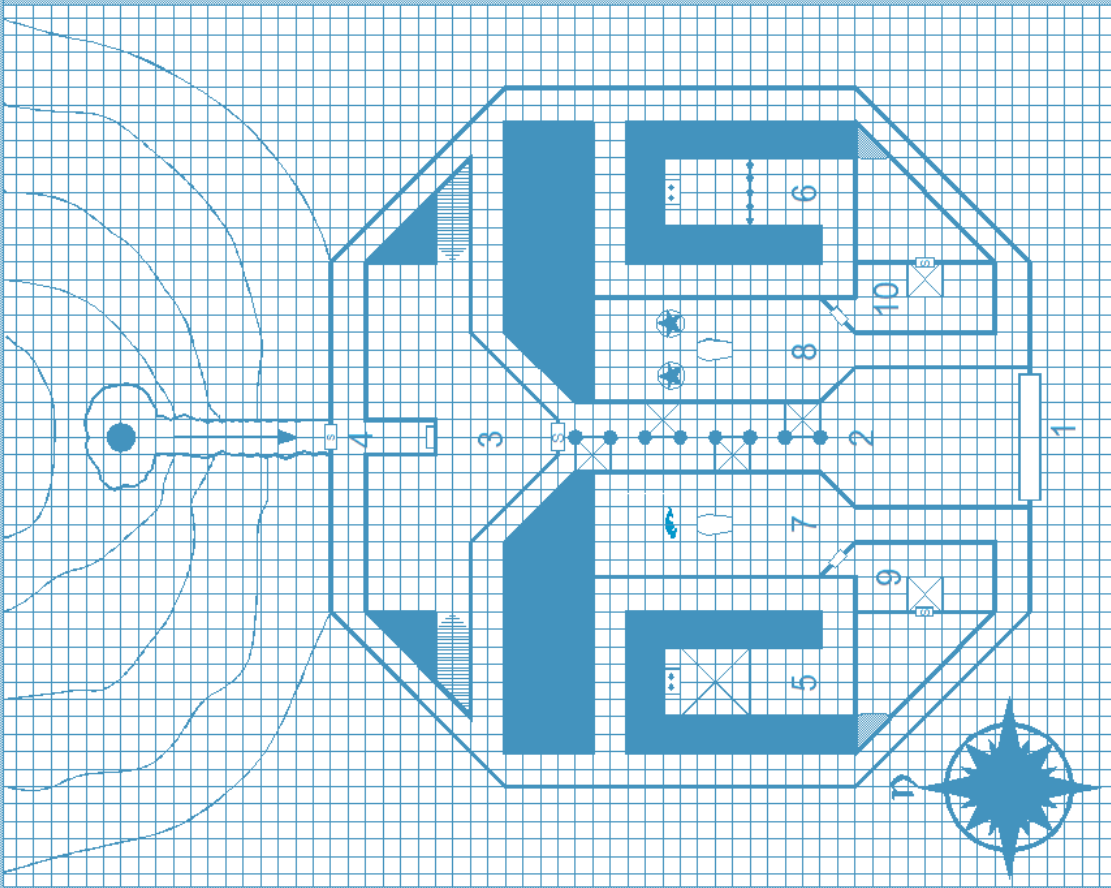
- |  |               |  |        |
|--|---------------|--|--------|
|  | Contour Line  |  | Forest |
|  | Hot Springs   |  | Bridge |
|  | Redwood Trees |  | Trail  |
|  | Cave Openings |  |        |

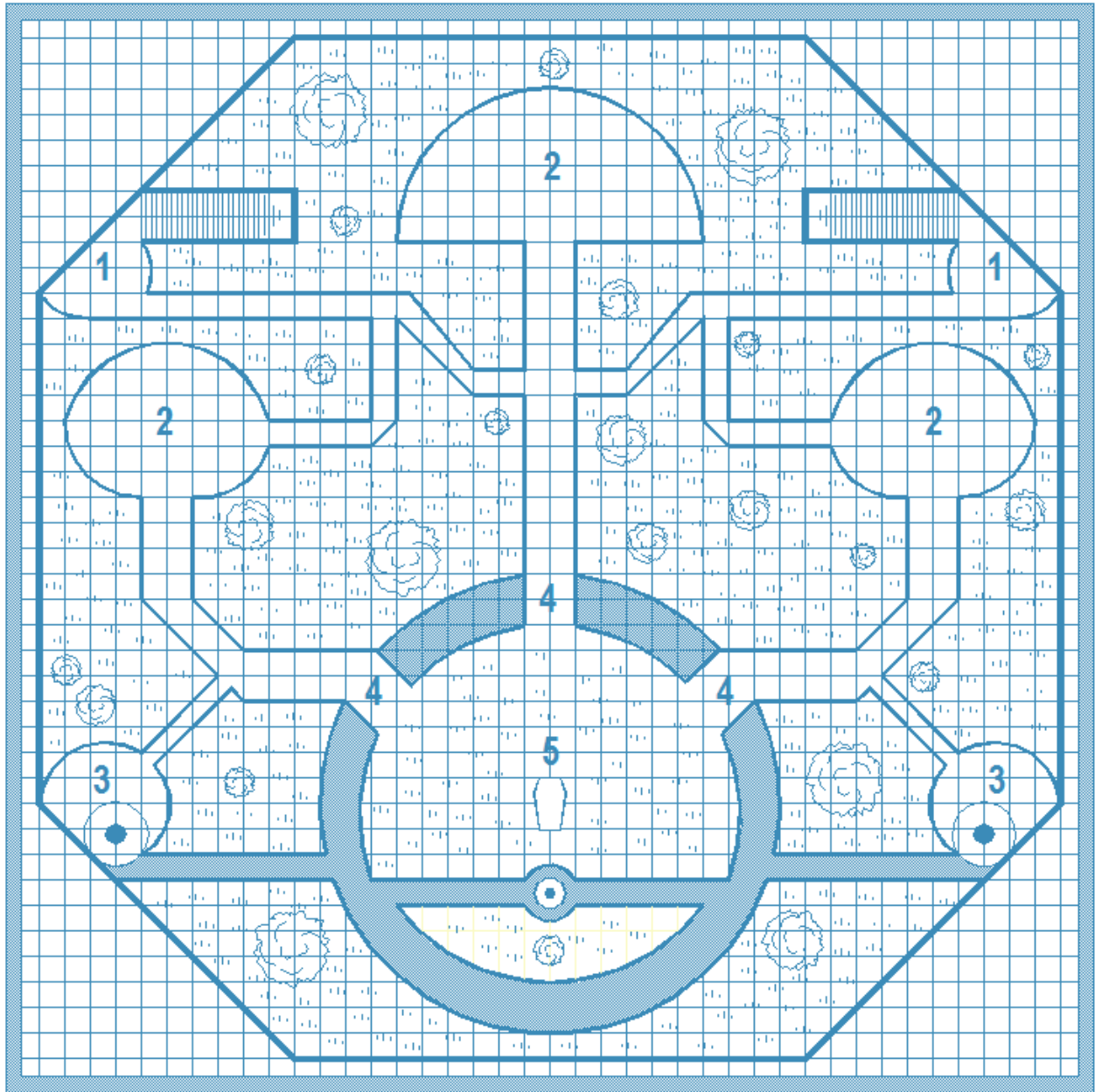


# THE TOMB OF SERELLA BEL TRAJAN

1 square = 5 feet





*Hearst-*

*The balance must be righted. Know that these lands are now closed to you and yours. Any man entering the ways of Gib Rus will be killed by those who rightfully control and protect these lands. Know further that we have grown weary of the pollution of your lands and people. The balance demands that the lands return to wilderness. Know then, that when the time is right, you will find the forest at the gates of your castle, the rivers rising up to drown your people and the sea crashing in to wipe clean the filth of your kind.*

*Leave these lands Hearst. Your reign is over, and your lands reclaimed. Your time is short for we have the power of the land, and what was given into our care will now strike you down.*

*Flee, Hearst, or see your filthy kind erased from the land.*

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**The Battle for Gib Rus**

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