

J1

Dungeon Module J1
The Beast of Geshtein

By Jon Thompson
An Adventure for Character Levels 1-4

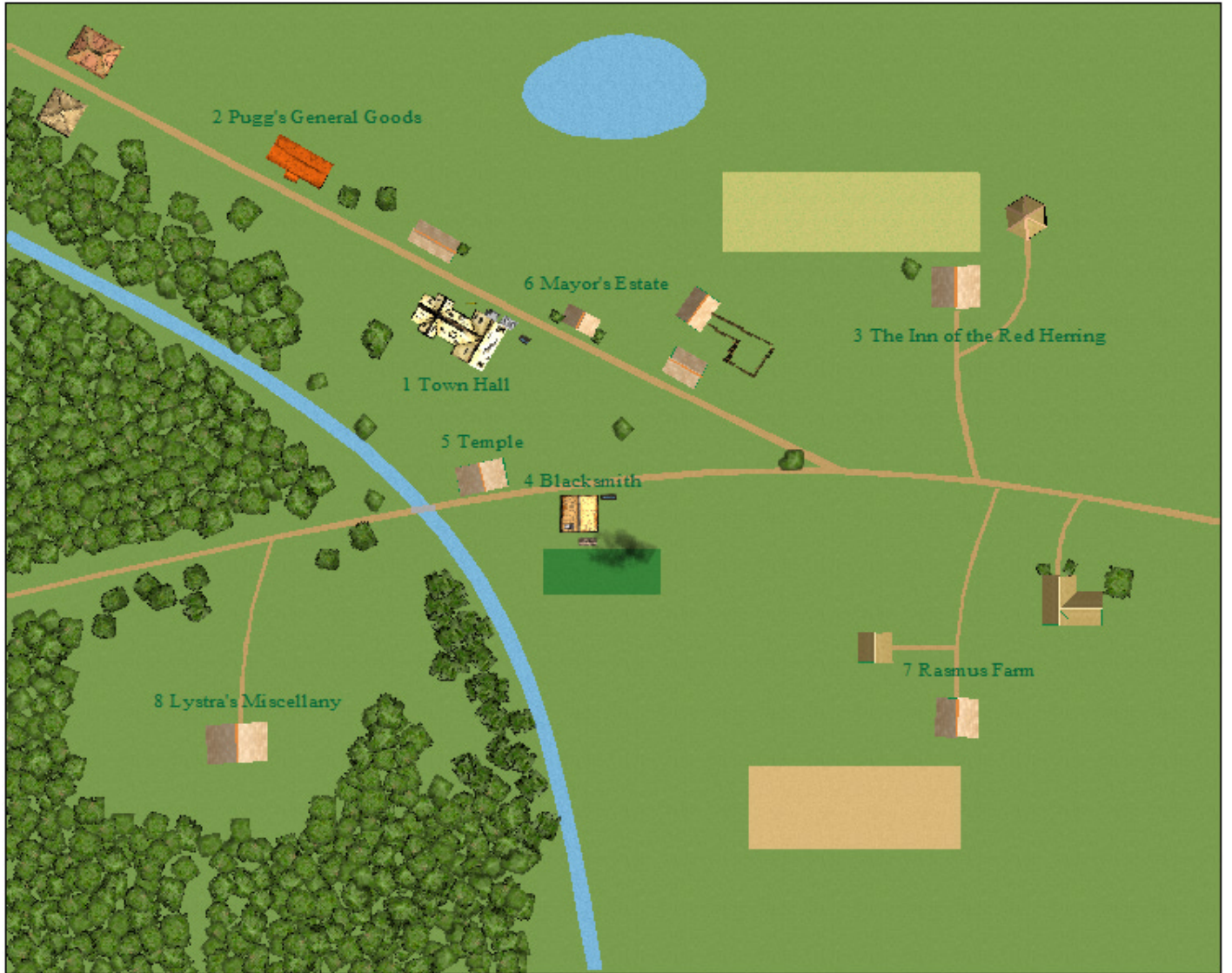
For
ADVANCED D&D
GAMES

A small farming community is plagued by thievery and the mayor is powerless to stop them! Who or what is behind these crimes? Brave and inquisitive adventurers are needed to solve the mystery and bring peace to the people of Bemuen.

Story by Jon Thompson

Designed for use with 1st Edition AD&D rules

The Town of Bemuen



Campaign Background for the Players

The town of Bemuen is a quiet farming community far removed from the hustle and bustle of such nearby urban centers as Port Joli. Nestled between Jerlea Bay and the Hellfurnaces, the town's fortunes have historically been linked with the welfare of the Sea Princes. Once a proud mining town, it supplied ore to Kalemesh, the Pirate King of Westkeep. The ore provided the King with a steady flow of armaments during the infamous War of Hool Marshes. When a royal mining expedition to Mount Geshtein happened upon the lair of a venerable dragon, the fate of the Westkeep was sealed.

The Pirate King was in a terrible strategic position. Should he redirect his forces to purge the mountains of the great wyrm, thereby weakening his already depleted front lines? If not, how would he secure the vast amount of ore needed to continue a war? Options were explored, but they proved fruitless. Trade from neighboring territories was out of the question; the principalities would not be dragged into open warfare for the sake of overly ambitious foreign aristocrats. At considerable expense, a small but powerful band of mercenaries was sent to end the "dragon problem". They never returned.

Ultimately, Kalemesh was forced to sue The Yeomanry for peace and was happy to do so. Nevertheless, the entire affair left the residents feeling defeated. While the more accessible areas of mountains and foothills were still capable of producing small amounts of raw materials, the demand was gone. Any resident who remained near Mount Geshtein soon moved into Bemuen proper or to Port Joli. Mining picks were traded for plows as residents adapted to a new economy. Bemuen had successfully evolved into a thriving agricultural community. However, one can still detect an air of woeful providence when speaking with the townsfolk.

Campaign Background for the DM

Spoiler Alert: If you are a player, it is advised that you do not read beyond this point.

This module takes place in the territory known as the Hold of the Sea Princes. It is part of the World of Greyhawk campaign setting and the DM is encouraged to familiarize himself with the region.

Krynos, the dragon, is of the copper variety and nearing the end of his life. While seemingly an unbeatable foe for low level adventures, he could possibly be defeated due to his age. The DM should urge the players to avoid combat – this would surely be their last battle! The beast is eloquent, brilliant, and depressed beyond all measure. The source of his despair is a woman named Ashara.

The dragon would occasionally take human form and discreetly mingle with townsfolk when matters of great importance were afoot. One such excursion occurred a century ago when he sought to assess the threat of the aforementioned war. During the mission, the dragon met and fell hopelessly in love with the woman. Burdened by his secret he revealed his true identity in a moment of great despair. Touched by his love, she promised to never leave him as long as he remained in human form. They committed themselves to each other with oaths and looked forward to many blissful years.

Sadly, as so often happens, fate intervened.

Upon hearing that a hostile band of mercenaries were en route, he had no choice but to fight in his true form. Waiting in ambush at the Pass of Galefall, the dragon struck just as the enemy crossed the rope bridge midway. A lone Burning Hands spell was all the terrified heroes could offer in defense. The party was killed to a man, most of them falling to their deaths as the bridge collapsed under the onslaught. For his efforts, the dragon lost the use of his front paw.

When he returned to the lair Ashara was gone. Injured and elderly, he could not embark on a long journey to seek her out. He has nurtured a great hatred for the aristocracy at Westkeep whom he holds responsible for his predicament. He will offer a reward for the adventurers to find her – although 100 years have passed. Crafty players will realize that Ashara chose her own fate long ago once it is revealed that the rope bridge was destroyed along with the mercenaries. Craftier players will realize that the brilliant dragon must know the truth, but he refuses to consciously acknowledge it.

Module Summary for the DM

This module will challenge the player's abilities to navigate conflicting personalities and difficult choices in creative ways. It is advised that the DM strongly encourage the players to accept the use of the NPC's provided in this module. The NPC's have been carefully crafted to accommodate this aspect of the adventure. However, a DM can also easily create or modify his or her own NPC's to fulfill this need.

The module is divided into two parts: *The Town of Bemuen* and *Journey to Mount Geshtein*. The Town of Bemuen encompasses primary quest assignments and NPC introductions. True adventure can be found within the city limits, such as a covert exploration of the Mayor's home or breaking into Town Hall. In *The Journey to Mount Geshtein*, players will leave town and explore the mountains to find the dragon's lair. Adventure will be found along the way via wandering monsters, rebuilding a lost bridge, or an exploration of an abandoned mining town.

The Shadow Syndicate plays a large role in the adventure. They are an organized gang of thieves and assassins based in Port Joli and have recently expanded their territory to include Bemuen. They manage to keep the Mayor in office by way of campaign fund contributions and outright intimidation. The investment has proven to be lucrative for the Syndicate. Despite guaranteed reelection, the Mayor is careful to play the part of respectable statesman. He maintains the nuanced vocabulary and solemn cachet of an elected official.

The adventure starts as Mayor Nusham hears of the strangers in town seeking adventure. He will wish to hire the party to investigate reports of missing livestock. The Mayor is responsible for covering up a network of cattle thieves associated with the Syndicate. False evidence has been planted by the Mayor to indict a dragon whose very existence is uncertain. Clues provided in this module will point players in the direction of the dragon along with several false leads. The mayor will provide the player characters a short list of houses which have been affected by missing livestock. Once Krynos is confronted, the players must decide whether or not to ally themselves to the dragon or to the Mayor, or to neither.

Convicting the Mayor

If the players side with the dragon, they can decide whether or not do expose (or depose) the Mayor and accept the dragon's quest. If sufficient evidence is gathered and presented to the city council to find the Mayor guilty, an additional reward of 500 gp will be offered for his head. *Important DM Note: It will require five pieces of evidence to convict the Mayor!* It is important that the DM does not openly declare what is or is not acceptable as evidence at trial. The players must determine whether or not a particular piece of evidence will be deemed plausible before the council. Once the players announce to the DM that they wish to present evidence to the council they *must wait six days* before the council gathers.

If the players side with the Mayor, they can present the evidence gathered and decided whether or not to wage war with the dragon.

Party Assassination Attempts

If the party intends to bring forth evidence of the Mayor's involvement in a scandal, attempts may be made on their lives. This assumes the Mayor has at least some reason to believe the party has turned on him. If questioned, the Mayor will undoubtedly deny any knowledge of the events described below. Each day the party remains in town there is a 50% chance one of the following events will occur. The same event will never happen twice:

1-3: "Warning Shot" – A non-lethal warning shot will be made by way of a crossbow bolt near the head. The assailant will have disappeared before the party can find him.

4-6: An anonymous letter delivered to the adventures will warn them "*Leave the town and never return. This is your only warning*".

7-9: Poison: An assassin (AC8; MV 12"; HD 1; 4 hp; #AT 1; D1-4; 9 sp) will attempt to get near a random party member and spike their drink with poison. The party has a chance to catch the assassin in the act. The DM must use discretion in determining when and where this takes place and the odds for success. For example, it may be an easy (75% chance of success) task for an assassin in a crowded inn if the party member is in attendance. It may be considerably more difficult to sneak into an inn at night, unlock a door, and spike a canteen (especially if the victim is awake!). Although he will wait for the best opportunity, the assassin will attempt to kill the party member even if the odds are against him. If the attempt is successful, the player must save vs. Poison or die (Ingestive Type D: +15% to smell, taste, see poison. +1 Save. Onset: 1 segment). If the assassin is subdued or killed a note will be found on his person -"*Otto, This deed will be done to heighten your esteem within our family. The mixture contains a Foxglove compound. Be extraordinarily careful!*" This can be presented as evidence against the Mayor.

10-12: Assault: A random party member will be attacked by two Fighters (AC7; MV 12"; HD 1; 5 hp; #AT 1; D1-6; 7 sp). The attack will not occur if the party member cannot be encountered alone. There is a 10% chance per hour of the party member realizing he is being followed. If confronted by more than one person, the assailants will claim innocence and refrain from further attempts.

13-15: Open warfare!: A group of six Fighters (AC7; MV 12"; HD 1; 6 hp; #AT 1; D1-6; 9 sp) will attack the party. They will do so even in broad daylight and in crowded conditions. If captured, they will claim to have been paid for the service by a man in a strange mask while in Port Joli. If the party asks for a sketch of the mask, it will match one of the tribal masks on the wall of the Mayor's home. This can be presented as evidence against the Mayor.

16-20: Character Assassination: The Mayor will publicly turn on the party and decry them as an evil band of thugs. False accusations of theft and assault will be leveled by strangers. The town crier will take up the smear campaign and relentlessly speak ill of party members. If the mayor has obtained any evidence of scandalous behavior by the party, he will use that to his advantage at this time. Unless the party has developed strong bonds with the NPCs and townsfolk, the consequences could be grave. Roll a D6:

1-3: Prices for all goods and services triple until the adventure is resolved.

4-5: Goods and services are not available from any NPC who hasn't joined the party until the adventure is resolved.

6: Witch hunt: 20-50 townsfolk greet the adventures with torches and pitchforks. The Mayor will step in and advise the adventurers to leave while they can. He cannot guarantee their safety! The party will either need to present their case to the townsfolk on the spot or leave. The DM should encourage players to avoid open battle or face certain death. The party may only return to Bemuen in a covert fashion. If they are recognized they will be chased out of town by an angry mob. The city council will still meet with party members and review evidence, if it can be arranged discreetly.

General Notes

Encounter descriptions are divided into boxed and open sections. The boxed section should be read aloud to players along with any general information, such as room dimensions. Information provided in the open section is for DM use only.

Map information will generally be provided in the Appendix at the end of the module.

For environment description and general role-play, the Town of Bemuen should be treated as a 14th century English farming community with approximately 150 residents.

Part 1: The Town of Bemuen

1. Town Hall

Bearing the architectural characteristics of a former temple, the town hall is a large white wooden structure in the heart of Bemuen. It is staffed night and day by two guards and a short, irritated clerk. The clerk sits behind a large desk, furiously filling out paperwork while simultaneously insulting the guards. The remainder of the building is hidden from view by curtains which cut across the width of the room. The room contains conference tables, shelves with miscellaneous documents, and historical artifacts significant to only to local residents.

The guard's (AC7; MV 12"; HD 1; 5 hp; #AT 1; D1-6) main duty is to mind town hall and its prisoners. They also function as the local constabulary at the direction of the mayor. There are four other guards (off duty) who can be summoned in a moment's notice (2-5 rounds), if necessary. The guards currently on duty (Olaf and Brutus) have routinely planted false evidence regarding livestock theft on behalf of the mayor. Their clothes are a bit too fine for citizens of their stature, indicating an alternate income. If actively searching the area or examining the guards the players can roll vs. Intelligence to gather this piece of evidence.

The City Council meets at Town Hall every Thursday at 1 PM to discuss town business. Formal statements or requests from the party will be recorded at this meeting. The City Council is unaware of the Mayor's involvement with the Syndicate and would move to oust him immediately if sufficient evidence were provided. Under no circumstances may this meeting be moved ahead of schedule, even for "emergency circumstances". *Remember, once the players announce to the DM that they wish to present evidence to the council they MUST wait six days before the council gathers.*

There is a letter opener in a locked drawer of the business office which is actually a **+1 Dagger**. The owners are completely unaware.

Another locked drawer contains police records for recent events. Curious players will find that approximately half of all police matters pertain to missing farm animals.

At the end of the staircase a row of jail cells line a long hallway lit with lanterns. The second cell appears to be occupied. Rats can be heard scurrying about. The air is damp and stale. There are no windows.

The jail's most well-known resident is making his weekly overnight stay in cell #2. Lucius Naff (Level 2 Human Thief; CN (E); AC 9; 6 hp; d 1-3 hidden ice pick, S10, I13, W7, D16, C8, Ch7) is a washed up farmer who spends his time begging and gambling at the inn. For a few silver pieces, he will divulge the secret history of the town Mayor and Reverend. For a few gold pieces, he will accompany the party up to the Pass of Galefall. However, he is 50% likely per day to partake in copious amounts of wine. When in such a state, all roles are made at -4 except for Fear checks (which are made at +2).

Additionally, he acquires a “challenging” personality when inebriated, often inciting arguments but rarely outright violence. It should be noted that Lucius is deathly afraid of heights and will only confront this fear in the most dire circumstances. Roll vs. Fear each round in such situations.

Lucius is the only person in town who definitively knows where the Pass of Galefall is located.

2. Pugg’s General Goods

The smell of the kitchen upstairs permeates this well-organized store. A barrel-chested man in overalls and a warm smile greets you from across the room. The sound of children playing can be heard from another room. A cat roams aimlessly throughout the store as if on patrol. The room is very well lit and smells of freshly baked bread.

The proprietor Kayne Pugg (Level 2 Human Fighter; LG; 16 hp; AC 6; D 1-6 mace/shield; S15, I10, W10, D10, C13, Ch12) is one of the town’s more successful businessmen. His father made a small fortune in the town’s heyday and opened up another store in Port Joli. Kayne dabbled in the art of war in his youth. Finding it too dangerous for his taste, he “retired” at 21 and returned home to work the family business. While profits have dwindled, there is some gold to be made in Bemuen and Kayne cannot bear to leave his childhood home. He is accompanied by his wife and three children. If the food is inquired about samples will be given, but not for gold.

Kayne carries a pouch of **Powder of Polymorph Other**. In the event of battle, Kayne will use this item on the cat (“Muffin”) and transform it into a small tiger (AC 7; MV 12”; HD 4 + 5; hp 20; #AT 3; D 1-3/1-3/1-6) for 2-5 rounds. He has only one pinch of this mysterious powder available.

Players can purchase supplies at standard rates. Virtually anything of a more mundane nature can be purchased, including the materials needed to build the rope bridge required in the latter half of this adventure. Bridge materials and climbing gear will cost the adventurers 50 gp. Mr. Pugg will be happy to explain the nuances of building such a bridge if asked. He will accompany the adventurers if requested, but will not be a party to any unlawful activity.

2b. Master Bedroom

The bedroom is small, but otherwise typical. Several chests with drawers are lined up one side of the room. A vanity mirror stands next to the chests. A large decorated bed occupies the opposite wall. A flail and shield hang over the bed.

A chest of drawers contains a jewelry box with pearls and garnets (75 gp). A small box in the closet contains gold rings and a sapphire lapel pin worth 200 gp. The flail and medium shield are non-magical.

3. The Inn of the Red Herring

This slightly antiquated country inn bustles with busy waiters, thirst customers, loud storytelling, and the occasional sing-along. There are apparently several rooms upstairs and four on the first floor, indicating the structure was built in days when Bemuen was something of a destination for travelers. The place is a bit dusty and the décor is outdated but otherwise clean.

The business is owned and operated by the Stryker family. She offers standard rooms at common rates. The rooms are now rarely occupied but the pub sees regular customers. The ale is made locally (Farmer Rasmus) and is quite good.

They recently lost their patriarch, Arn Stryker, to illness. Mrs. Stryker now heads the business. Her two sons and two daughters all participate (Jeb, Seb, Matty, and Jenna respectively) in the family business. It is worth noting that Jenna is particularly gifted (L1 Human Fighter; NG; AC 9; 5 hp; D 1-4 meat cleaver; L1; S7, I14, W15, D12, C13, Ch16) and hopes for more exciting things from life than housekeeping.

Mrs. Stryker occasionally complains to Town Hall about stolen livestock. The last time a sow disappeared there was a large reptilian paw print found nearby. She was careful to keep the print intact. Careful observation will show that the impression is only four inches deep, too shallow for a beast of this apparent size. This was a false lead planted by the Mayor's lackeys to throw investigators off the trail.

Mrs. Stryker is a descendant of Ashara. Her daughter, Jenna, is the spitting image of Ashara. If the dragon was so inspired to destroy the village, Ashara may be the only person who can persuade the dragon to stop.

The players can expect to meet several patrons (3d4) on any given day or night. Pleasant conversation and a round of drinks may open the door for some gossip (roll vs. Charisma). Outright bribes will not go over well. This is not that kind of place! Roll to determine the particular information gained:

1. 01-25%: *"There certainly be dragons in the mountains. At least there used to be. We haven't seen a dragon scale in a generation 'round here. Then again, we don't venture into the mountains much. The last dragon in this village kidnapped a woman and took her hostage as collateral against the King during the war. She was related to the proprietors of this very inn, I believe. She was never seen again..."*
2. 26%-50%: *"I dunno about dragons, but the mountain is not safe. I myself have spotted hideous orange creatures with yellow eyes marching in the steppes. I don't know what they were but they were up to no good. And I hear there are even worse things lurking in the old village and trails. Did I really see them? Perhaps or perhaps not, but I WANT to believe!"*

3. 51-60%: *"The good reverend? A fine man. Had him for dinner once or twice I did. I hear tell of his involvement with some unsavory types from Port Joli. You know the type – organized crime. I've even heard he was making animal sacrifices in the Mayors house! I don't believe it. After all, he is a man of God!"*
4. 61-70%: *"Twenty years ago a brave man explored Mount Geshtein and returned. He got as far as a ruined rope bridge at the Pass of Galefall. It is impassible unless you rebuild the bridge. Not a hint of dragon to be seen, he said. I believe this gentleman's name was Naff."*
5. 71-80%: *"Yes, I saw the dragon but no one believes me! He flew off into the night carrying a sheep. There was absolutely no noise – you couldn't even hear crickets. I was terrified. Still, there was something about the beast... something awkward, uncomfortable."*
6. 81-90%: *"The Mayor is a crook and thief. No, really he is. For all of the fees and tithes what do I get in return? Where does that money go? I hear he and the Reverend are in cahoots. I know a carpenter in Hokar that built a secret door in the Mayors house. What does he have to hide?"*
7. 91-100%: *"This town....all zombies (hic). Every one of them, 'cept me."*

4. The Blacksmith

A square house coated with a layer of soot partially hides a second structure in the rear of the property. The acrid smell of ironwork stings with every breath. The hypnotic pattern of a hammer striking iron could be heard from a long way away. An unthreatening dog runs to greet you. Horses and goats roam in a corral nearby. A muscle bound dwarf furiously works the forge until he spots you. He offers a hearty greeting, while casually grabbing a sword and shield...

The burly fellow is a descendant of a former miner. Hugh Bazzalt (L2 Dwarven Fighter; NG; AC 6 Scale Mail; HP12; D1-8 Long Sword and Shield; S15, I11,W11, D9, C14, Ch9; 15 gp) He has a small forge behind the house and aside from basic ironwork, has dabbled in the making of armor. He proudly wears his own creation and is eager to discuss the finer points of metallurgy. He has two large and well trained dogs (Tyr and Loki; AC 6; MV 15"; HD 1+1; hp 5,6; #AT 1; D 1-4; iron spiked collars).

Inside the House of Bazzalt - The single level structure is unusually square. A rather nice suit of armor stands in the corner. A table and chairs in the open room will seat six. The entire home can be seen from the doorway: kitchen, wash area, hammock, etc. although no house function seems particularly segregated. There are toiletries next to the hammock and kitchen utensils adjacent to an open chest of clothes.

When examined closely, the armor is functional but of low quality. He will offer a variety of armor and weapons for sale. For fitted armor, there is only a 25% chance a particular suit will fit. Players

can have a suit custom made if they are willing to wait 1-12 months. A suit of chain mail forged by his grandfather sits on display near the front door. It is of superior quality and has a +1 enchant if Detect Magic is used. It is not for sale. A box under his hammock contains a bag of rubies and emeralds worth 300 gp. Hugh prefers a quiet life, but has always longed to see the mountains of his ancestors.

One thing alone keeps him away from the mountains and it's not the legend of the dragon. Hugh suffers from an acute fear of arachnids. If battling arachnids he suffers a -2 hit penalty. He will accompany the party with a little persuasion. The purchase of any of his goods will work in the party's favor. Additionally, cleaning out some small spider webs behind his forge would make him rather grateful.

5. The Temple

The unimpressive deteriorating exterior belies the opulent interior of this house of worship. A former general store, this building was remodeled and dedicated to the deity Daugava. The carpets, tapestries, and artifacts bathe the foyer in red and gold. A set of double doors open to a large hall used for worship. Several rows of pews are evenly set in front of the altar. The foyer and great hall contain seemingly valuable artifacts and furniture.

Two books are collectable. Revelations of His Holiness, the High Prelature of The Scarlett Brotherhood (50gp) and a 2nd edition Ecclesiae Sanctae: The Sacraments of Ascension written by St. Cuthbert (75 GP). A decorative bejeweled (but not usable for combat) mace hangs in the great hall (150gp). The mace handle depicts a growling wolf. Priests will recognize their value immediately. Other classes must roll vs. Intelligence. The foyer's drapery is of considerable quality and can fetch 100 gp from any respectable tailor.

The operation is run by the raspy voiced Rev. Konstantin Paulius (L3 Human Priest; NG (N); AC 5 Chain mail and shield; hp 14; D 1-6 Mace; S11, I11, W14, D12, C13, Ch10; 20 sp; Command, Remove Fear, Know Alignment). The Reverend carries a Scroll of Cure Light Wounds at all times. If questioned by the players he will not divulge the source of the revenue.

The Reverend will not attempt to convert players, as is the way of the followers of Daugava. Players must first ask before the details of the religion are revealed. Heresy will not be tolerated on the premises but more leeway is given outside of the building. Violators will be asked politely to leave.

Paulius is aware of the mayor's past but will not willingly divulge this information. Paulius is an active member of the Shadow Syndicate of Port Joli. See Mayor Nusham for more details on the Syndicate.

His association with the Syndicate began as a double agent. His attempt to rise within the organization to subvert their interests toward more noble goals has not gone well. He has recklessly compromised his faith for the cause of the mission. This is a considerable personal crisis for the Reverend and it occupies most of his thoughts and actions. He is on the verge of an alignment

change and has recently turned to woman and drink for solace. He may be persuaded to join the party if the mission is presented as a holy quest of personal redemption. Helping expose the Mayor may also persuade Paulius to join forces with the players. He will only testify against the Mayor if he is convinced of the sincerity of the party and overwhelming evidence is presented to the city council.

More on Daugava

Daugava is a nearly forgotten Greyhawk deity who is worshipped by a faction of Lawful Good werewolves known as the Ragana. For untold ages, the Ragana have been at war with their Chaotic Evil brethren until they were eventually overcome. They have been in hiding for centuries, slowly rebuilding their numbers. Long considered mythological by their evil counterparts, the Ragana have emerged to once more to wage open warfare. After centuries of targeted and very discrete outreach, an unlikely alliance of races are now firmly under the sway of Daugava. They will go to extreme lengths to promote the cause. Many of the Daugava faithful are not werewolves, although some have special items which allow them to transform into wolves. Daugava priests receive special spells and abilities at high levels.

6. Mayor's Estate

The well-to-do Mayor Pander Nusham (3rd level Thief; NE; HP 10; AC 7; D 1-6 (Club)) has seemingly always been the Mayor. He is a prominent member of the Syndicate and was once a formidable foe. However, his skill in battle has atrophied due to his sedate lifestyle.

The Mayor diverts part of the city revenue to the Syndicate. Another part goes into his coffers. Whatever is left goes back into the township. His highest priority is keeping his post; there is much less danger and higher profit as Mayor than there was as an adventurer. The Mayor is known within the Syndicate as Nusham the Ill. His frequent experiments with the creation of new poisons left him on the verge of death on several occasions. The Mayor is frequently bed ridden and "not doing well".

Within the Syndicate, he has a working relationship with the Reverend but remains highly suspicious of "religious types". Direct questioning about their relationship will avail the party nothing.

If a lone party member visits the Mayor he will attempt to spike their drink with a Potion of Truth or discretely use a Wand of Detect Magic (50/50).

The Mayor is well aware of the Syndicate's cattle rustling operation in town. He will do his best to throw investigators off the trail and direct suspicion toward the rumored dragon. It should be noted that the Mayor does not believe the dragon exists. He assumes the novice adventurers will die in the

mountains during their search as matter of course. However, if the party returns with evidence of a conspiracy or the dragon's innocence... other means of achieving their death may be pursued.

One guard (AC7; MV 12"; HD 1; 5 hp; #AT 1; D1-6; 2 sp) is posted on the front porch. He will be found asleep in a rocking chair when the party approaches. He will insist on the party's names and reason for their visit. There is a short wait while the Mayor prepares himself for guests. If the party overtly causes any trouble, he will blow a whistle alerting the Mayor and 3-4 additional guards will appear in 2-5 rounds.

6a.The Sitting Room

The door opens to a sitting room with a roaring fireplace that comfortably seats five. The decor is well kept and professional, but not opulent. Small personal touches can be found here and there and he appears to live alone. A collection of strange tribal masks decorates one wall.

The Mayor will greet the party here and offer refreshments. If more space is required, he will escort the party to the adjacent dining room. After some preliminary chit chat, he will explain his predicament involving the missing livestock. A reward of 500 gp will be offered to find the culprit, man or beast. No money will be given in advance. At no point will the Mayor seem shady or underhanded in his dealings.

6b.The Kitchen

A small non-descript kitchen area with various dry goods and utensils. Various shelves line the walls with such goods as jars of pickled beets, canisters of dried venison, vats of molasses, etc.

A closed jar on a shelf contains 50 gp. A player searching for hidden doors has a 1-6 chance of locating a hidden latch which swings open a shelf of various pickled vegetables. A small armory will be revealed if the latch is triggered. It contains the following:

- **+2 Leather Armor**
- **+1 Dagger**
- **Wand of Detect Magic (15 charges)**
- **Potion of Truth**
- **4 vials of poison**
- **Potion of Cure Poison**
- **Crossbow with 30 bolts**

6c.The Office

This small office is in immaculate order. A row of shelves contains miscellaneous documents relating to duties of office. Manuscripts, a sealed envelope, and a half written note lay on the desk. The note reads *“KP – I am sorry to hear about your recent denial for promotion. Your value to our family is immeasurable and it will only be a matter of time. Let’s discuss matters further at the inn ton”*

The unsealed envelope contains an undelivered coded message from the Mayor to the syndicate. See **Appendix IV**. Translated, the message reads:

“Council –

Things are going according to plan. No one is the wiser. I expect my fee by week’s end.”

The players will only be provided the coded message:

“Eqwpeko –

Vjkpiu ctg iqkpi ceeqtfkpi vq rncp. Pq qpg ku vjg ykugt. K gzrgev oa hgg da yggm’u gpj.”

This is a well-known rogue’s code and it works in the following manner. The letters intended are actually shifted two places to the right of the letters written. Thus, a written E should be decoded as a C. The number of places one needs to shift to the right is determined by the number of written lines in the letter. In this case, two lines of encoded message will indicate the gap between coded and decoded letter is two. Knowledge of this code may be used as evidence against the Mayor at trial.

The Mayor also appears to be something of a budding author. A partially written manuscript entitled *Curse of the Withered Radicchio* confirms the Mayor’s penchant for pulp mystery. It also confirms the Mayor’s wisdom in choosing his current profession.

Sitting openly on the desk is a pair of silver **Cufflinks of Persuasion** (+1 Charisma).

An adjacent storage room contains only non-valuables.

6d.The Bedroom

The opened door reveals a tidy bedroom with nicer than average furnishings and drapes. The portrait of an unidentified and suspicious looking man hangs on the wall.

The door to the bedroom has a 1-3 chance of making a loud creaking noise if opened. Anyone on the 2nd floor who is awake will hear it. If asleep, the chances are 1-8. A foot locker near the bed is armed with a poison trap. The poison will do 1-2 hp damage per turn for 2-5 turns if a saving throw vs. poison fails. The poison has the additional effect of turning the victim's face red as blood. The trap is simple can be easily disarmed by a Thief (+10 bonus to roll). The chest contains false identification documents of various consulates, temples, academies, and professional societies. There is a bag of diamonds worth 250 gp and 50 gp. There is also a magical **Potion of Cure Poison** shrewdly labeled as "Poison! Do not drink!" in the event the trap is accidentally sprung by the owner. This safeguard is common practice for Thieves and Assassins. Such classes will likely (80% + 1% per level) realize what the vial actually contains. Additionally, there is an alchemical diary which documents the process of cultivating plants and processing them into various poisons. Studying this manual for one month will allow a Thief or Assassin to manufacture poisons and one level higher than their current level.

Access to such poison, the manual, and the mislabeled potion may be used as evidence against the Mayor at trial.

6e.The Plant Nursery

An open doorway reveals a long narrow room filled with labeled potted plants and shrubs. Crab's eye, Wild Arum, Foxglove, and Corn Lily are just of the few varieties to be found. Window shutters are thrown open to ensure maximum sunlight and airflow reaches the plants. Nearby workbenches reveal many of these plants have been dissected and studied. The faint smell of something acrid almost escapes you.

This is Pander's alchemical workshop for the creation and study of poison. Thieves and assassins may roll vs. Intelligence to recognize these as highly toxic plants well known to practitioners of their craft. This may be used as evidence towards prosecuting the Mayor.

Any adventurer foolish enough to ingest the leaves of these plants must save vs. Poison or die.

7. No Harm, No Fowl

A grizzled, elderly man with a pitchfork approaches you. He is frantic and quite upset at your presence. He shows no fear.

A small, typical grain farm which also brews ale offered at the local inn. There are a few farm animals about, some of which occasional go missing. Poachers? Complaints have been filed with Town Hall. Last week a coop of 20 chickens was found empty. However, a large ruby was found where the coop was housed. This was indeed the dragon's work; he left adequate compensation for -the inconvenience all while maintaining complete anonymity.

The farm is somehow run by a sole elderly man named Ol' Rasmus (Level 0, LN, 1HD; 2 hp, AC10, D 1-2). He will question the party intently, but will easily open up and relax once the proper

assurances are made. Rasmus is a tough old goat and vows to kill the poachers if they return to his farm. The party will sense that this elderly gentleman poses no real threat to them.

There is nothing of value on the farm except a buried jar near the outhouse which contains 35 gp. The farm has been in his family for several generations. He is friendly with the Strykers and may relate the story of Ashara's abduction if ale is purchased (2 sp) and the history inquired about (75% chance).

8. Lystra's Miscellany

This shop on the edge of town is quite run down and filthy, but curiosities abound. Among the various shelves and tables one can observe a stuffed Owlbear, a live three headed newt, a crystal orb filled with a clear fluid (it contains a preserved eye which occasionally blinks), a suit of armor made out of scarab shells, and a shield made of what appears to be tempered glass. The building is so decrepit as to seem unsafe. Daylight can be seen through walls and roof. Molds and mildews thrive on floor and ceiling. Floorboards strain to maintain the weight thrust upon them. An ungodly stench fills this air. A flamboyant red haired woman greets you somewhat overzealously.

Particularly encumbered party members (scale, chain, or plate mail armor) have a 10% per turn of falling through the floor (2 feet) onto a subfloor. Roll vs. constitution to avoid 1-2 points of damage. In doing so, merchandise may be damaged if the characters were browsing or haggling at the time (25% chance). A casual look into the subfloor will reveal what appear to be cat skeletons. Closer inspection will reveal some of the bones to be human. The proprietor will claim no knowledge of these skeletons.

This shop is owned by Lystra the Foul (3rd level Magic User, 6 hp, AC 8, D1-4 (Dagger) (S7, I15, W9, D10, C11, Ch9) LE; Spells: Magic Missile, Light, Ray of Enfeeblement). None of the items for sale are especially powerful, but they are all interesting. She will "exaggerate" the features of each item and will attempt to sell them at a high price. The floating eye is a paper weight, the shield is a functioning shield of high density plastic with no bonuses, the armor is held together by magic but is treated as regular chain mail, etc. She will sometimes creep up on browsing patrons and scream "Don't drop that, it's collectable!" Occasionally, this causes a customer to drop and break an item. Howls and demands for compensation quickly follows.

Lystra wears a spirit ward around her neck made of various bits and pieces of carrion and sewage. While it affords her no special abilities, it wreaks havoc on the eyes, nose, and throat of those

nearby. If she accompanies the party, surprise rolls against monsters are made at a -1 penalty. Her personal effects include a **small Bag of Holding**, a **Wand of Light** (10 charges), and a **Ring of Protection +1**. She carries 10 gp and 10 sp on her person.

A small broom closet in the northeast corner of the shop doubles as a den for her familiar, a young large Wolf Spider named B'Daboh (AC 8 ; MV 6"/15 " ; HD 1+1 ; hp 5 ; #AT 1; D 1 + poison (save at +2)). Out of the several well used brooms and buckets in the closet, one item bears mentioning: a **Broom of Haste** (Doubles movement speed for one turn, once per day). Her spell book is also kept in the broom closet (Magic Missile, Light, Detect Magic, Identify, Ray of Enfeeblement, Fools Gold, and Scare).

Lystra had recently lost 40 chickens to the poachers and subsequently complained to town hall. The town's supply of fresh eggs will not go unnoticed, especially at the inn.

Part 2: Journey to Mount Geshtein

Ghost Town of the Steppes

This abandoned waypoint village is nestled at the base of Mount Geshtein. Forsaken by its residents over 100 years ago, several decrepit houses still remain upright. An old well in the center of town still draws fresh water.

The distance to the Ghost Town from Bemuen is 60 miles. Due to terrain considerations, it will take travelers two days if by horse.

Encounter Tables

If camping outside at night there is a 5% chance per hour of encountering particular wandering monsters. The DM should roll for these wandering monsters from dusk till dawn once the party leaves Bemuen:

01-40% 3-5 Goblin scavengers – (AC 6; MV 6"; HD 1; hp 4; #AT 1; D1-6 (Spears) 10 SP each)

41-70% 5-10 Giant Rats – (AC 7; MV 12"/6"; HD 1; hp 3, #AT 1; D1-3 + 5% serious disease (saving throw vs. poison))

71-90% 1-2 Huge Spiders – (AC 6; MV 18"; HD 2+2; hp 10, #AT 1; D1-6 + 5% serious disease (saving throw +1 vs. poison); surprise on 1-5/6)

91-100% 1-2 Ogres – (AC 5; MV 9"; HD 4+1 ; hp 16, #AT 1; D1-10 Spear; 7 GP each)

During daylight hours, the following table should be used. Chances are 5% per hour of encountering these creatures:

01-40% Two Black Bears – (AC 7; MV 12"; HD 3+3; hp 10; #AT 3; D1-3/1-3/1-6)

41-70% 3-5 Bugbear Raiders – (AC 5; MV 9"; HD 3+1 ; hp 10, #AT 1; D1-8 Long swords; 7 GP each)

71-90% 1 Wild Boar – (AC 7; MV 15"; HD 3+3 hp 16, #AT 1; D3-12)

91-100% 3 Giant Bombardier Beetles – (AC 4; MV 9”; HD 2+2; hp 11, #AT 1; D2-12 (50% chance per round of using acid cloud: 3-12 damage + 20% chance to stun with 16’ radius (2-8 rounds)). There is a similar chance to cause deafness 2-12 rounds. Those who are stunned are also deafened 2-8 rounds after being stunned. Special attack every 3 rounds, only twice per eight hours))

9. Abandoned Estate

When approaching this house from the outside, careful players may notice humanoid tracks leading to and from the house. There is a 1/6 chance to notice the tracks per round of searching. Rangers roll at a +1 bonus per level and will also identify them as goblin tracks. Old and broken windows are not easily passable without much noise being made. Areas of the estate not identified here are inaccessible due to structural integrity.

9a.The Parlor

A stuck front door gives way to a former family residence. Now engulfed in mold and ruin, floorboards groan underfoot and bats can be heard in the chimney. A broken chandelier hangs askew from a rusty chain and gently swings in the torchlight.

The front door has to be forced open. This will alert the goblins in the kitchen and allow them to wait in ambush (first strike). Observant players will realize the door was barred from the inside (1/6 chance if searching the room).

Disturbing the chimney may cause the bats to evacuate in quick order (25% per turn), extinguishing any uncovered flame and causing a fair amount of commotion.

9b.The Kitchen

The door freely swings open into a large kitchen. From behind an overturned table, four goblins shout a battle cry and attack with spears!

The goblins (AC 6; MV 6”; HD 1; hp 6/4; #AT 1; D1-6/1-4; 9 sp each) frequent this abandoned home on their midnight excursions to the surface. It serves as a waypoint for the transport of loot back to their underground abode. The leader carries a short sword and sling and a 10 GP ruby. He also carries a black horn used to sound alarms (**Horn of Demonic Savagery**). Blowing the Horn will provide all party members in a 30’x30’ area +2 damage for 1-4 rounds. There is a 5% chance per use that all enemies caught in area of effect will suffer blindness for 1-4 rounds (Save vs. Breath Weapon). The horn radiates both a powerful magic and powerful evil, indicating this weapon may be even more powerful than it seems...

A locked chest in the corner contains 25 gp and 48 sp. A silver hand mirror worth 20 sp and an emerald hair pin worth 10 gp lie amid the coins, along with worthless jugs and pots.

9c. The Basement

A blast of damp and putrid air engulfs you as you open the door. You are nearly overwhelmed by the stench of rotting meat. The torchlight reveals a limestone staircase which descends into darkness.

A large rectangular room appears to have been a storage space for various goods. Several smashed casks litter the floor along with the remains of various crates, urns, and dry goods. In one corner of the room, the skeletal remains of several humans lie clustered together. A recently deceased goblin rests nearby on the floor. The goblin's remains are several weeks old and it appears to have been partially eaten. About one dozen greenish white eggs can be seen nestled in a thin membrane inside of the rotting corpse.

The door is intentionally sealed shut and one must roll vs. Strength to break down the door. The basement was intended for loot storage when the goblins first settled in. They didn't realize it was already occupied by a Carrion Crawler (AC 3/7; MV 12"; HD 3+1; hp 10; #AT 8; D Paralysis). Upon hearing the screams of their comrade, they sealed the door shut to starve the creature. The creature has made a home underneath crates in the back of the room. Disturbing the nest will cause the crawler to immediately attack. Otherwise, there is a 1/6 chance per round of searching to discover the creature and incite an attack.

The dead goblin has a pouch with six sp. Among with miscellaneous rusting weapons and armor, a **+1 Long Sword** rests atop the skeleton pile along with a **Potion of Flying**. Five gold pieces are scattered on the floor near the goblin corpse.

10. Abandoned Barn

This long abandoned barn still contains some rusted equipment hanging from the walls. Ancient bales of hay are strewn about haphazardly. A loft with additional hay is partially visible from the ground. Several stalls for horses or cattle are on your right. Some of the doors have been torn away from the stalls.

The area is infested with 13 Giant Centipedes (AC 9; MV 15"; HD 1/4 hp 1/2; #AT 1; D Poison (Save at +4 or 90% take 1-2 damage, 10% save at +4 or die)). Centipedes save at -1 for all rolls. They are clustered together in back corner of the barn under a bale of hay. They will attack anyone who walks within 6' of their nest. Searching the area will reveal small animal bones littering the floor.

The loft contains additional rusted farm equipment, soft hay, a rusty but functional covered lantern, and a sturdy 80' length of rope.

11. The Pass of Galefall

The rock strewn path rises ahead and gives way to a majestic chasm that cuts through Mount Geshtein like an open wound. White water crashing upon rock can be seen sixty feet below. The remnants of a rope bridge dangles from the cliff edge at either side of the gorge. A single rope spanning from one side of the bridge to the other is all that remains.

With respect to repairing the rope bridge, several opportunities have presented themselves to the party thus far. They will be summarized below along with their respective challenges and opportunities for success or failure. For the players, the real challenge will be working together as a team to accomplish the goal, particularly if the module NPC's are involved.

Important DM Notes

The emphasis of this section of the module is problem solving while faced with tough choices and difficult personalities. If played correctly, most of the solutions to repairing the bridge rely on teamwork between NPC's and player characters that don't normally get along. For example, Lucius is a drunkard but possess the greatest agility (if currently sober!) and must be persuaded to walk the tightrope – despite his fear of heights. Likewise, Reverend Konstantin must cast *Remove Fear* or *Command* to assist Lucius despite his disapproval of the Thief's lifestyle.

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The DM should encourage the players to act as mediators and creative thinkers in order to achieve mutual goals.

Once the character(s) have successfully crossed to the other side, securing the rope will not be an issue. Work can begin immediately on installing wooden slats necessary to finish a primitive bridge. It will take the characters 3-4 hours from this point to complete the bridge.

Wandering monsters are conspicuously absent on the far side of the gorge, along with mountain goats, wild boars, etc.

Falling damage

Use the following information if characters fall unsecured in any of the situations described below.

Characters that fall from the ledge or rope may roll vs. Dexterity to make a safe water landing. If successful, roll a 1D6 for damage. If the check fails, damage is 6D6 – certain death for beginning adventurers.

Ashara's Remains

Failed attempts to cross the chasm will generally result in players being washed downstream. When this occurs, there is a 1/10 chance per turn downstream that players will stumble upon Ashara's skeletal remains. Her locket can be discovered and shown to the dragon as evidence of her death. General searching of the downstream riverbank will also provide each character with a 1/10 chance per turn of uncovering her remains.

Bridge Building Options

Option 1: The Old Fashioned Way

If choosing this option, the proper supplies must have been purchased from Pugg's General Store. Characters can lower themselves down on rope and cross the river. The crossing is dangerous and if precautions are not taken a roll vs. dexterity must be made to prevent being swept downriver. 1-3 hp of damage will be taken and it will take 1-10 turns for players to get back upstream to continue the crossing. Once the river is crossed, players must scale the sixty foot cliff. Players may scale the wet, rough cliff and its various ledges at 12"/round (at 60" a total of 5 rounds of climbing is required). Non-thieves climb with a 40% chance of success per round. Any failure means the character falls and can never successfully climb that portion of the cliff face. Dwarves climb at a -5% penalty. Consult the Dungeoneer's Survival Guide for additional modifiers if necessary.

Option 2: The Direct Route

Approach A: A character may opt to cross the remaining rope like a tightrope walker while carrying the 2nd rope needed to complete the bridge. In this case, the following role modifiers should be considered:

The player must role vs. Dexterity each round to avoid falling. It will take six rounds of careful walking to cross the gorge on the rope.

- If rope walking is practiced for one day, the role will be made at +1. Two days of practice will confer a +2 adjustment but further practice will not improve the player's immediate performance.
- Using a long staff or similar device to improve balance will provide a +1 benefit.
- Characters may be strapped to a rope and harness to avoid significant falling damage. Injury may occur even if this precaution is taken. Due to distance of the near wall and velocity considerations, the closer they are to the other side the greater the chance for potential damage. Use the following grid to determine fall damage if harnessed:

<i>Distance from Start</i>	<i>Chance of 1-3 hp Damage</i>
10'	10%
20'	20%
30'	30%
40'	40%
50'	50%
60'	60%

Approach B: Characters can shimmy across the bottom of the rope with their hands pulling themselves forward. Their legs would be wrapped around the rope for support. In this situation, players must roll vs. Strength each round. If gloves are not worn, the roll must be made at -1 at 30', --2 at 40', -3 at 50' and -4 at 60'. Additionally, the dismount from underneath the rope to land will be particularly difficult. A saving throw vs. Dexterity must be made to dismount. Failure of any of these rolls results in the character falling.

Option 3: The Creative Approaches

Approach A: The easiest method: If the characters acquired it, they may imbibe the Potion of Flying and carry the rope across to the other side.

Approach B: Lystra's familiar may scale the walls with the rope with some ease (treat as 19 Dexterity), but crossing the river is another matter. The familiar may refuse commands to do so (50%). If the spider attempts to cross the river with the rope, it suffers the same risk of being swept away as the party (see Option 1 for details). Lystra is very fond of this familiar and will not willingly order the spider to make an attempt without a great deal of persuasion and assurance. Hugh Bazzalt, if present, will lobby very strongly for the beast to take up the challenge. His fear of spiders should be well known by now and his motives will be questioned quite strongly by Lystra.

The spider will not be able to walk across the existing rope without falling.

Approach C: Shoot/throwing a spear, arrow, ballista bolt, etc. across the chasm will not succeed. Only the jutting rocks and boulders will function as points to secure rope. The rocks will not be penetrated by simple arrows. Rock formations are too far away for a lasso or grappling hook for character levels 1-4.

If the remaining rope is cut at the near end to allow the character to swing to the other the side, the obvious result is they will smash into the cliff face. Make a climbing check at -5% per 10 feet of rope in order for the character to hold on when crashing into the wall. Damage from hitting the wall is 1D6 per 20' of rope between the character and the attached end (rounded down).

12. Facing the Wyrms

It will take the party approximately one hour to reach the lair by foot. Do not roll for wandering monster checks.

The entrance to a massive cave looms at the end of the perilous mountain trail. No noise can be heard from inside the cavern.

Lanterns, chandeliers, and braziers provide ample illumination for an extraordinary cave. More like a king's palace than a haven for bats, massive tapestries hang from floor to ceiling. Rich carpeting depicting scenes from exotic locales wash the floor in greens and yellows. Luxurious dining tables, chairs, vanities, privacy screens, and settees (all human sized) are all tastefully placed throughout the cavern. A portrait of a beautiful woman with a locket hangs on the wall. An old man in elaborate regalia sits on a throne and watches you. One arm holds a staff. His other arm is shriveled and black. He speaks in a booming voice: "I am Krynos, The Beast of Geshtein and Ancient Terror of Bemuen. Why have you come? Have you grown weary of life?"

Krynos (Copper Dragon; AC 5; MV 6"/18"; HD 10; hp 35; #AT 2; D 1-6/2-12; Spells: Magic Missile, Light, Levitate, Detect Invisibility, Gust of Wind, Protection for Normal Missiles, Fear, Polymorph Self) has polymorphed into a semi-permanent human state. He desires to remain in human form to await the "imminent" return of his beloved. He will return to dragon form only to hunt or to do battle.

If questioned about his dismal disposition, Krynos will tell the story of Ashara and insist she is still alive. He will offer a reward of 500 gp in rubies and diamonds to return her to him. If her locket or bones are presented as evidence (See section 10 *The Pass of Galefall*) he will graciously thank the party and provide the reward.

If Jenna Stryker is present, the dragon will appear to be in utter shock. He will question who she is and what she knows about Ashara. Her presence both calms and fascinates Krynos. However, nothing will convince the dragon of Ashara's death except evidence.

The dragon is responsible for some occasional poaching, but always leaves better than adequate compensation. Hunting is getting more difficult, but it's still a rewarding endeavor. If questioned about poaching the dragon will tell the truth and offer yet another quest to the party. He will provide 1000 gp to for the party to prove his innocence in Bemuen.

The dragon's treasure is encircled in the back of the cave by two hidden trap floors. Players approaching the treasure have a 19/20 chance of springing the trap. Falling damage is 1d6.

Treasure in the lair includes:

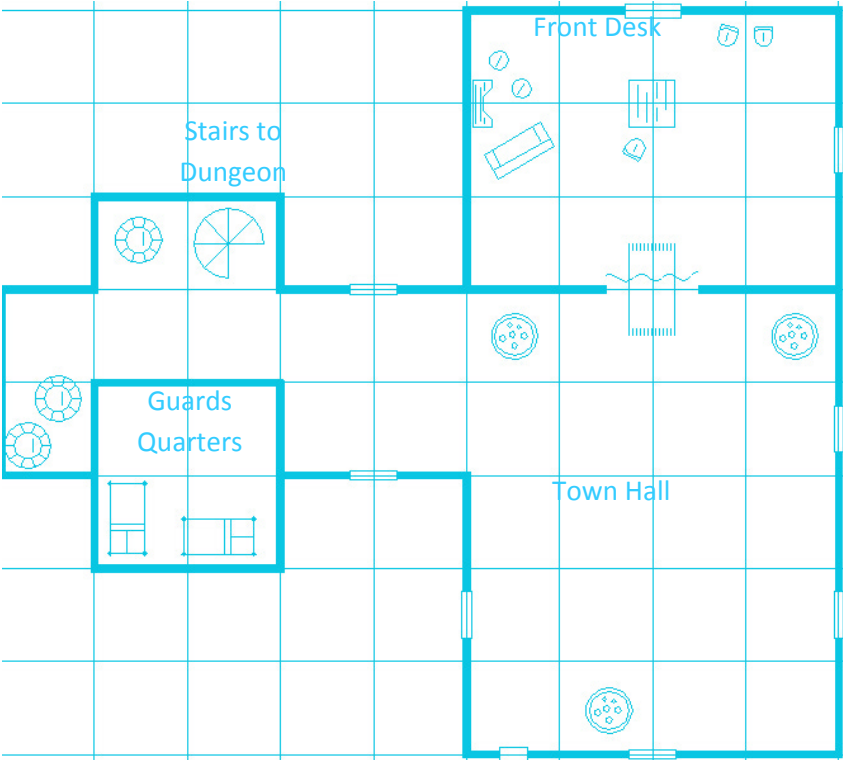
- 2,000 gp
- 3,500 sp
- 5,000 cp
- 10,000 gp miscellaneous gems
- **Wand of Magic Missiles** (13 charges)
- **Probalt's Bifocals of Illumination**

Attributed to the legendary Arch-Mage Probal, these lenses were rumored to have been created for his army of otherworldly researchers. His thirst for knowledge of all things arcane (most notably the forgotten magic of the ancients) compelled him to create a race of creatures which would locate and retrieve rare magical tomes and devices. To simplify their task, he crafted an unknown quantity of eye glasses which possess the following powers: *Identify* x1/day, *Light* x1/day, *Comprehend Languages* x1/day, *Detect Magic* x1/day

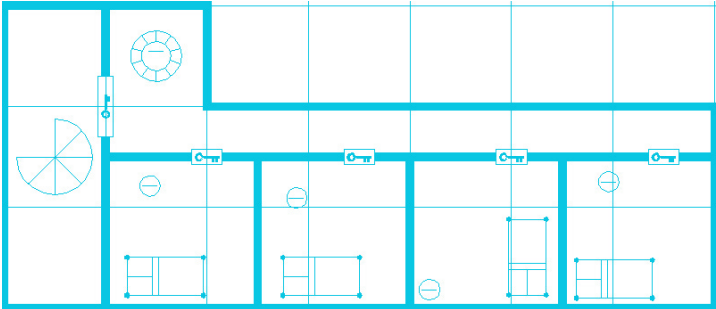
- **Crossbow +1**
- **Chain Mail +1**
Shield +1
- **Potion of Fire Giant Strength**
- **Scroll of Fireball**
- Magic User spell book: Magic Missile, Light, Levitate, Detect Invisibility, Gust of Wind, Protection from Normal Missiles, Fear, Polymorph Self

APPENDIX I – The Houses of Bemuen

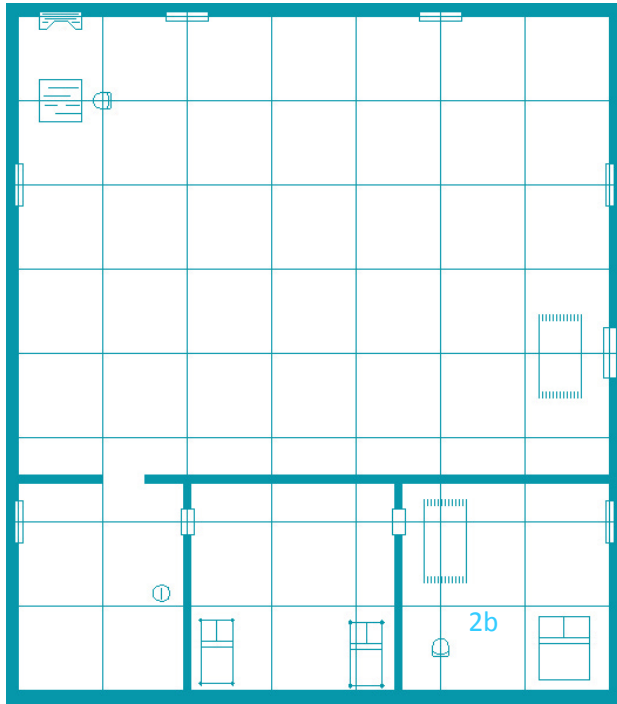
1.0 Town Hall



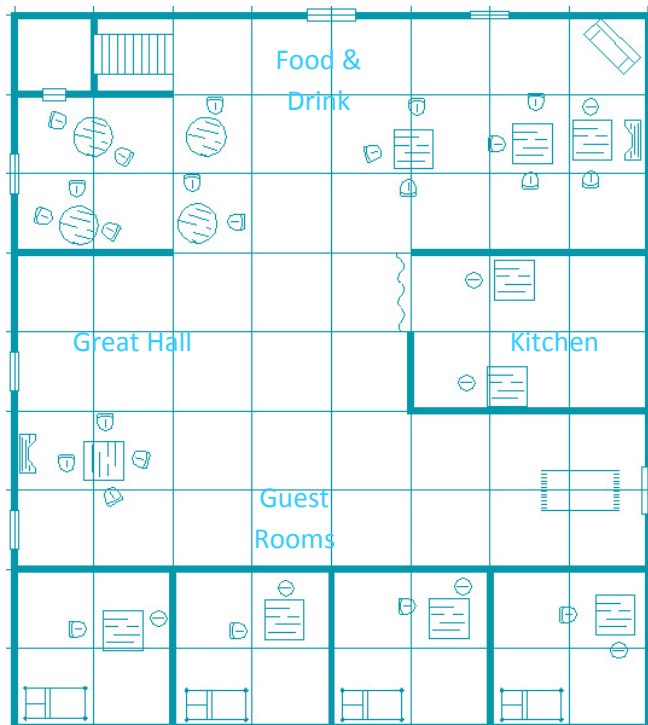
Town Hall Dungeon



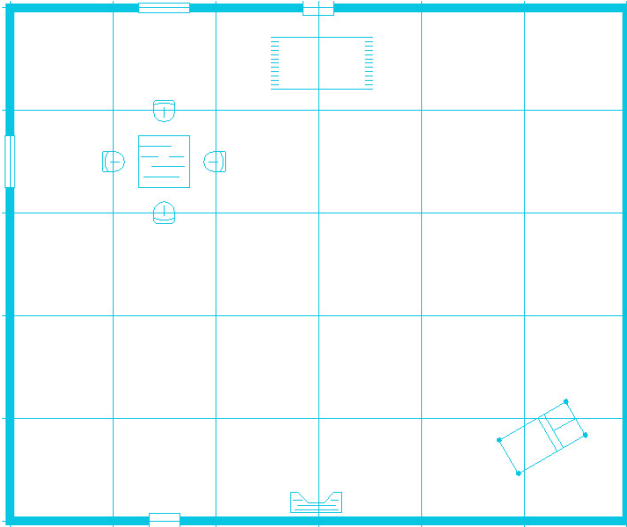
2.0 Pugg's General Goods



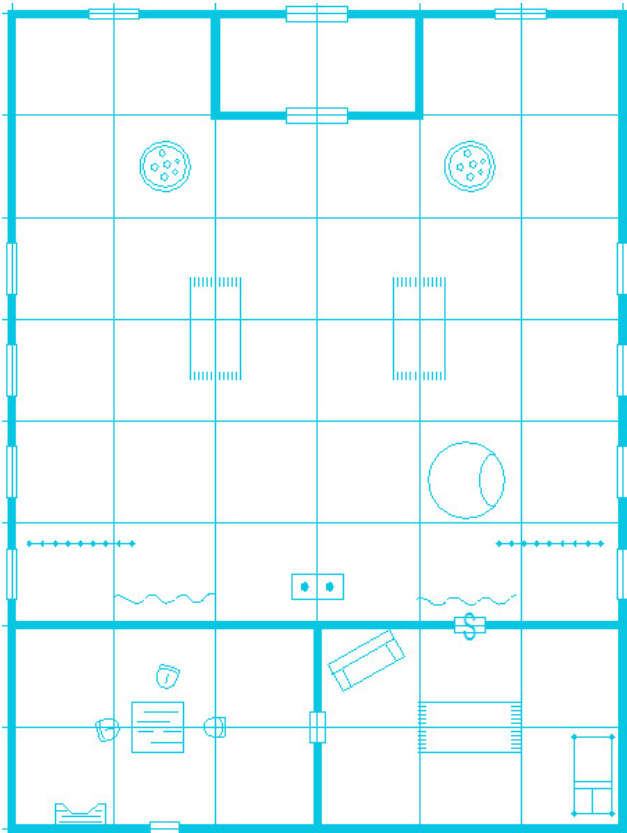
3.0 The Inn



4.0 The Blacksmith

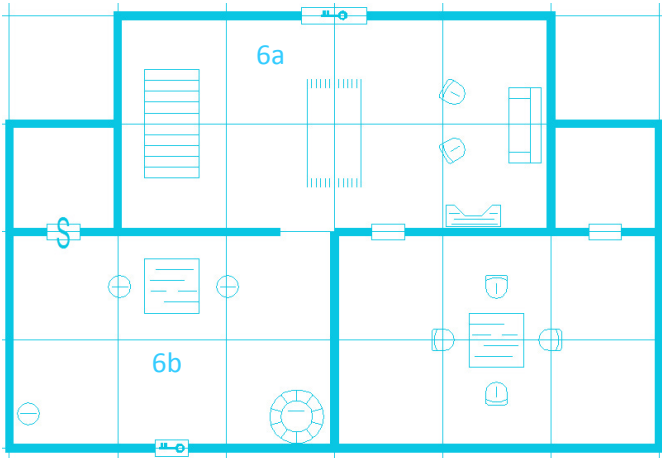


5.0 The Temple

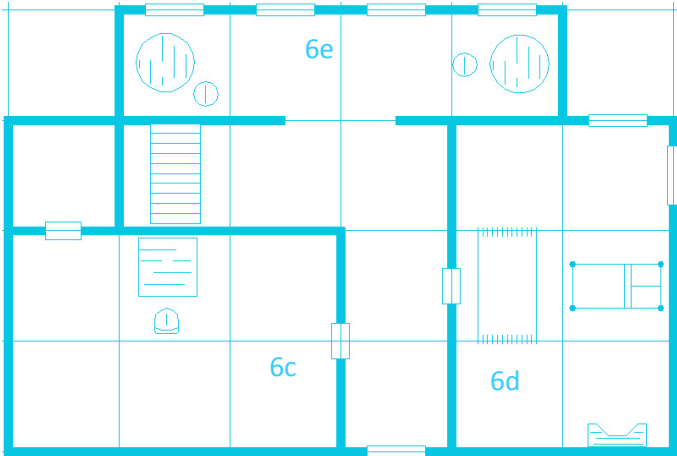


6.0 Mayor's Estate

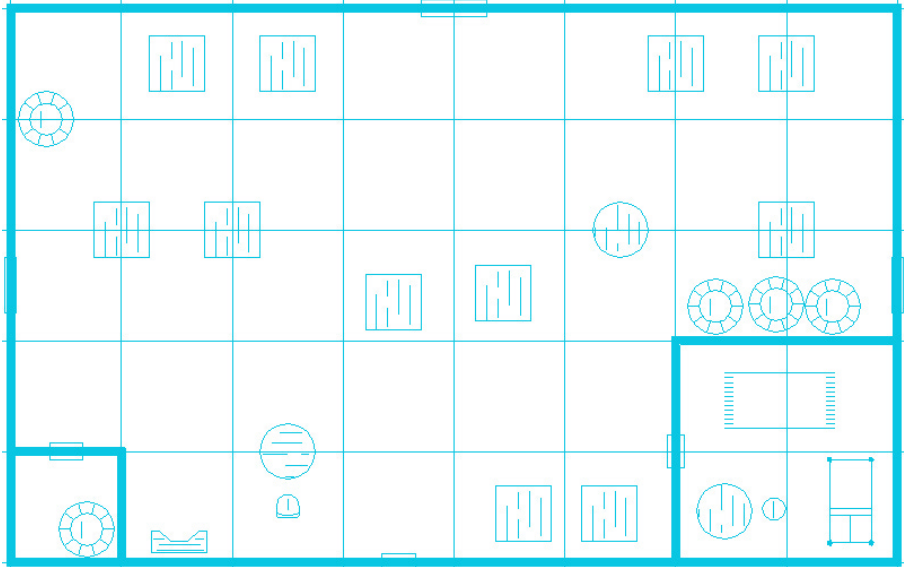
1st Floor



2nd Floor



8.0 Lystra's Miscellany

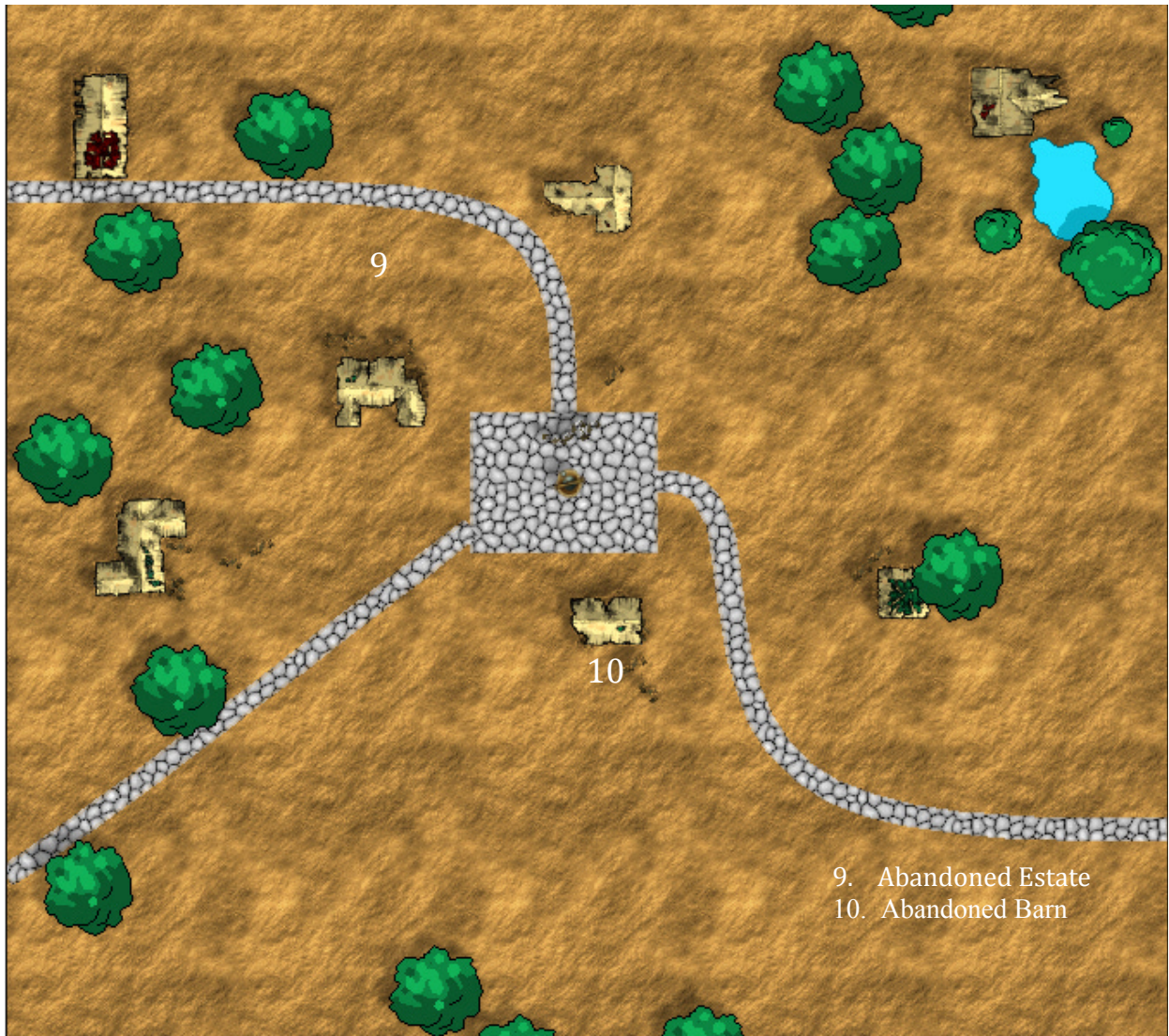


APPENDIX II – Journey to Mount Geshtein

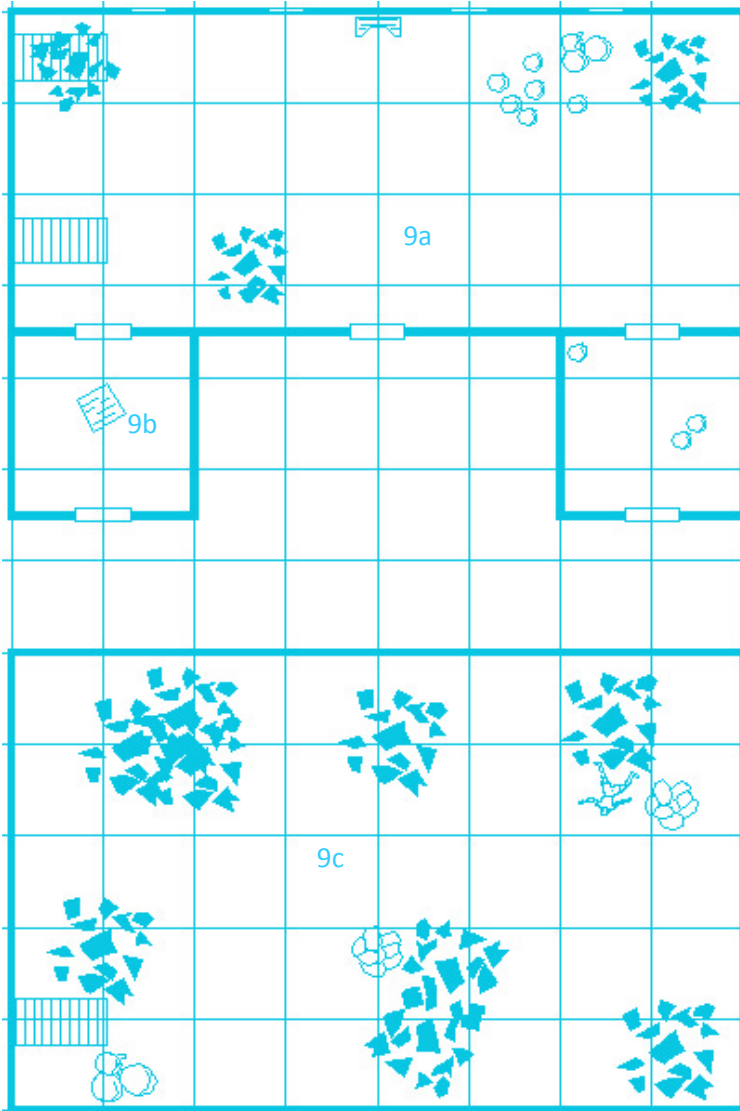
Overland Map



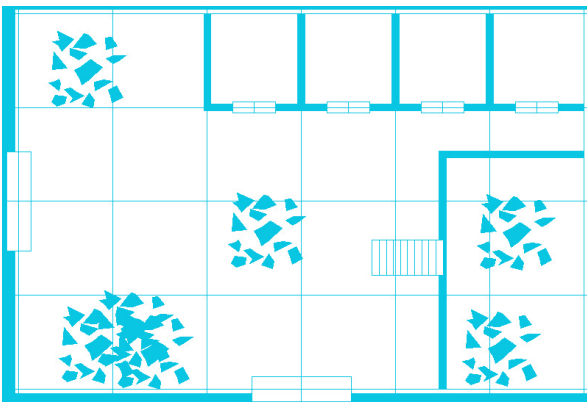
Ghost Town of the Steppes



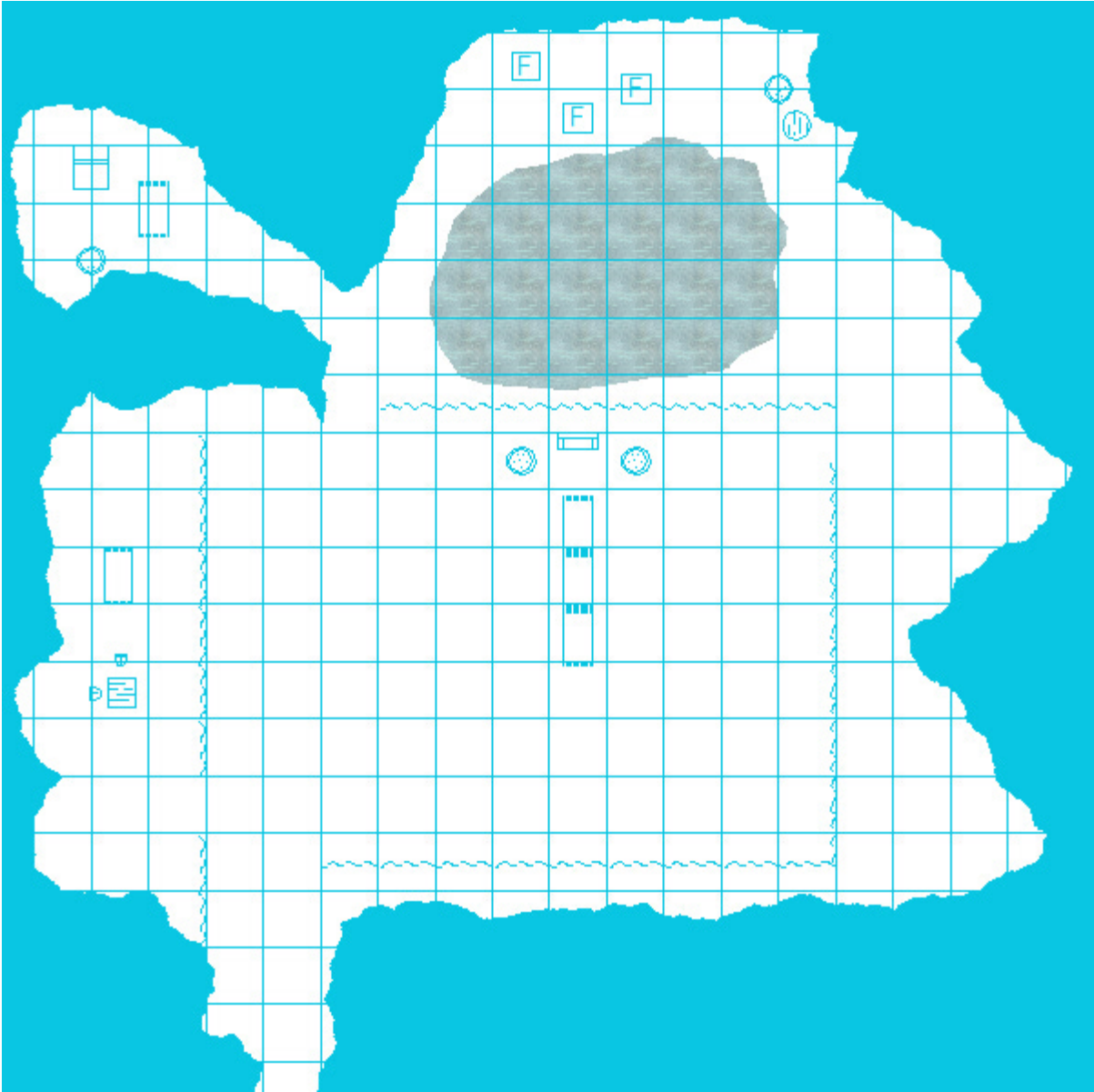
1. Abandoned Estate – 1st Floor & Basement



2. Abandoned Barn



APPENDIX III – Lair of Krynok



APPENDIX IV – Coded Message

*Eqwpeko -Vjkpiu ctg iqkpi ceeqtfkpi vq rncp. Pq qpg ku vjg
ykugt. K gzrgev oa hgg da yggm'u gpf.*