

INTRODUCTORY MODULE

MASS FOR THE MISSING PRIEST

FOR 5-9 1ST LEVEL CHARACTERS

**by rc pinnell**

The village of Hogg Bottem has stood on the banks of the Minotaur Marshes for over two centuries. Founded when the murky depository was still a clear water basin fed by more than a dozen streams from the surrounding hills its generations of citizens has survived despite the drastic changes the loc has endured.

The small and peaceful community that once thrived on the plentiful products of the marshes has recently fallen upon hard times. Though they were devout worshippers of the goddess--Ghestal--something happened to turn the goddess's favor away from them and has left the village in despair. The church where she was revered stands empty, and no one has entered it in decades.

Fantasy Adventure

Mass for the Missing Priest

For 1st Level Characters

INTRODUCTION

The greater purpose of this scenario is to provide players and dungeon masters with challenges and rewards designed to advance characters of novice levels. Large groups of 1st level types can certainly explore the area involved, as can fewer, stronger characters, of 3rd level. But too large or few in a group (over 9 and under 4) is likely to create a necessity for the DM to expand-modify the material provided; so be prepared to do so (DM!) if such is the case. Its lesser purpose, is to expand the library of entry-level adventures.

DM NOTES

Characters beginning this adventure-setting should be 1st to 2nd level, as a general rule. A party of pre-rolled characters is provided after the adventure-text to assist you and the players.

The marshes are not located in a specific campaign-world and are, thus, generic to the countryside. That being said, a large map of the surrounding land is included that may or not fit into your existing world; with minor adjusting it should be easy to place. If you (the DM) wish to allow the characters to roam outside the provided area it is up to you to create terrain encounters, accordingly.

Only the basic of information is provided within the text regarding animals-creatures-monsters, etc. You should make notes for quick reference regarding special abilities of those listed. Animals/monsters appearing here for the first time will be fully described.

Lastly, you should attempt to keep strict account of time. The village located on the banks of the marshes is (should be) remote, days travel by horse, that it rarely receives shipments or visitors. Though it was renowned in the past for the crayfish meat harvested from the marshes and sent to the far reaches of the realm, such industry collapsed long ago and the area, more or less, forgotten. Thus, aid/help from outside the marshes would require time and some form of communication.

BACKGROUND

Centuries ago a wizard discovered the (then) lake and constructed a tower on the largest island in it. A mad-hermit type that loved to do spell research, his dabbling somehow attracted groups of Minotaur to the location, much to their misfortune, for he would immediately trap and conduct experiments upon the dim-witted creatures. After using them, the beasts were set free upon the lake, which quickly became spoiled and tainted by their foul use. It took decades to become the marsh it now is.

The village of Hogg Bottem was founded when a group of explorers discovered the marshes and the bounty of giant crayfish residing within. Harvesting the creatures, however, required more than the group had anticipated, as they encountered multiple bands of Minotaur roaming the marshes. After two years of constant battle the majority of the Minotaur were slain, with those not, forced to flee for their lives; never to return to the marshes again.

With the Minotaur threat gone, the intrepid group established their residence upon the south shore of the marshes, erected their homes and businesses and the great palisade across the peninsula, protecting their community from any overland threat. Unknown to them then was the tower upon the island, or the fact that the Minotaur, in retaliation for being the experimental slaves of the hermit wizard, had murdered him and pummeled the building to rubble shortly before the explorers eradicated the beasts from the marshes.

Fifty years ago, a young priest, Brother Filus, was sent to the region to find the ideal location to erect a new temple to the Goddess, Ghestal. Finding the community of Hogg Bottem lacking an established source of faith, he befriended the residents and was eventually allowed to refurbish a building to honor Her. As time went on, he succeeded in winning over the majority of the population, who became followers.

As the community grew and prospered many felt the goddess was pleased with their devotion to Her, and thus rewarded them with bountiful hauls of crayfish of gigantic size. They were unaware that the lake had been tainted by the magic concoctions released into it when the wizard's tower was levelled. They were also unaware that the crayfish, which they consumed on a daily basis, had mutated because of the wizard's pollution, and the meat of the descendants was filled with magical enzymes that, in simple terms, slowed their aging process considerably.

All seemed to be going well until twenty-five years ago, when a pair of strangers, women, wandered ashore from the swamp seeking the aid of a healer. Brother Filus responded as expected and, upon hearing their requests accompanied them into the swamp, despite warnings from the villagers that something did not seem, *right*. Weeks passed, until the cleric was finally sighted walking along the eastern banks of the marshes, oblivious to his condition—appearing half naked and dirty—his whereabouts, and the time. When questioned his responses were confusing, gibberish and completely inconsistent with his former self. Taken back to the village, many hoped his condition would improve and his state of mind would return. But it was clear, in time, that the man had lost his mind and was now nothing more than a simpleton—an idiot.

Whoever the women were the villagers never learned. Nor were they seen again. For many, their faith had been shattered as they questioned why the goddess would have allowed such to happen to one of her clerics. And though he was well cared for, Brother Filus was unable to conduct services and spent the majority of his time babbling about things that no one understood. Until one day, weeks later, he vanished, never again to be seen.

AS OF NOW (25 years later)

The village has more or less been forgotten by the surrounding realm. Though the giant crayfish meat was a great delicacy among the upper-class—and desired by alchemists and sages for its mysterious benefits—it has not been harvested since the disappearance of Brother Filus. With their faith in the goddess as low as their ambition to maintain the crayfish farming that kept them busy, the village folk have settled into a boring routine that would be considered by most of being, merely existing.

Since its founding the village has never lacked for sustenance to maintain its population. The marshes have provided all its basic needs. Fresh water is collected via wells dug around the perimeter, while protein and other supplements have been harvested from the variety of available fish—mainly crayfish—and vegetables in the way of roots and tubers. What the marshes couldn't provide, the villagers manufactured or farmed themselves.

But ask them why so few (or no) children are about the place, and the response will always be a perplexed look upon their faces.

THE PLOT AT PRESENT

Twenty-five years ago, a group of Sirens made their way up river and discovered the marshes. Wishing to escape the continual harassment they suffered from merchants and fishermen along the coast, the group—led by an extremely intelligent and charismatic figure—explored a river dumping directly into the sea. As they followed it, they discovered a tributary that led to the marshes; upon reaching this, they saw how remote and secluded it was and knew immediately they had found the sanctuary they were seeking. Upon discovering ruins on a large island, the group claimed it as their new home, believing the marshes were not occupied. It wasn't long before they noticed men commuting in the marshes and followed them, wondering if the men knew about them. But they quickly learned that a population of human land dwellers resided on a peninsula jutting out of the south shore, and used the marshes to farm the varieties of fish within, and that their presence had gone unnoticed.

Fearing that eventually they would be discovered, the leader among the sirens—Lucinda—devised what she thought to be a sure-fire strategy to avoid that. Knowing how persistent and strong willed a community of great faith can be, she set her sights on the village cleric, hoping to lure him away and render him senseless and unable to rally the villagers in some holy quest to drive the sirens out. Her plan succeeded, as told in the *Background* section.

After Brother Filus became afflicted, the mood of the village folk changed drastically. No longer ambitious, they were content to pass the time visiting and talking to one another, fishing on the docks and napping. They became more oblivious to the passing of time, or even sure of time itself—how long it had been since the founding of the village, when they were born, etc. Not one could state with surety his or her own age. During this time, they remained unaware of the sirens. But of late, reports of ghostly creatures being seen in the marshes has raised much concern.

GETTING STARTED

How the players' characters reach the marshes and what their purpose is upon doing so, is not prescribed by me. You, the DM, should use your creative imagination to determine how they do this, and for what reasons. If you have a working campaign/world, then inserting this scenario is best left to you. That being said, the following hooks are merely suggestions you may use, or ignore.

1. Having taken over the family business, a merchant, who remembers the delicious crayfish his father once served, asks (or hires) the characters to find out why the suppliers stopped shipping them.
2. The brother/sister/etc., of one of the characters, was hired by the merchant (above) for a job and never came back.
3. The sirens stole something long ago from a notable NPC and the group is hired to track it and them down.
4. The characters are on their way back from another adventure and happen to discover the marshes and the *strange* village of Hogg Bottem.
5. A High Priest of Ghestal is soliciting groups to investigate the disappearance of Brother Filus. Again!

REGIONAL MAP-LOCATIONS OF INTEREST

Dire Wood Travelers usually avoid entering this area as it is reported to be haunted; voices booming out of nowhere have sent many an intrepid explorer scampering away. The place is merely the home of a rather old and large Treant, that tends to the trees within its vicinity.

Gnome Vale Is rumored to be the home of a clan of gnomes. No proof of this has been established, but the source of its name provokes many to explore the area to find out.

Potters Pass Was a seasonal trail for creatures that once migrated from the coastal lowland to the interior highland times past. Discovered by an adventurer (Silas Potter) over a century ago, animals using the trail have decreased in numbers and appearances. Of late, other *nefarious* type creatures, roam it.

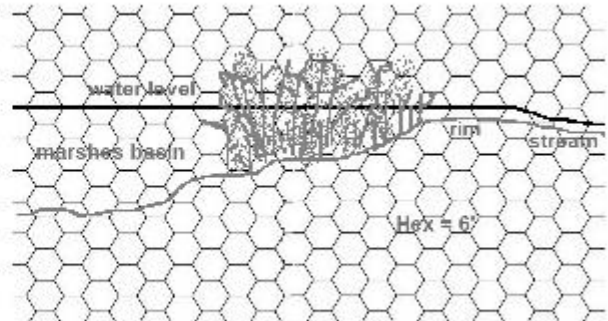
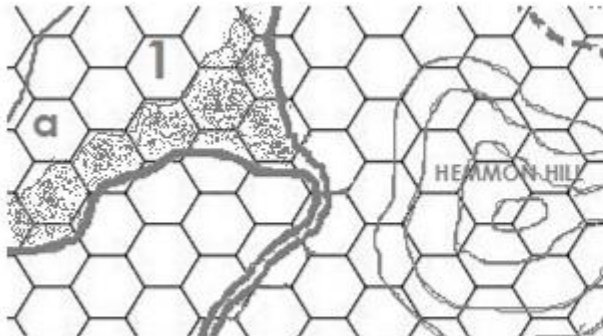
Rocs Roost Generally thought of as the highest mountain peak in the region, it is also rumored to be the home of some gigantic avian, as sightings of large winged creatures hovering about it have been claimed for decades.

Stone Guard A single tower stands in this gap in the mountains. When it was built, and by whom, is unknown though many speculate it may be the work of dwarves. But such is just speculation, as there are no markings or signatures upon the structure that lay claim to its builder. It has no doors at ground level, and no windows, yet is measured at forty feet across, and estimated to rise two-hundred feet into the air. How it hasn't been toppled by earth quakes or other forces is but one of its mysteries.

If you (the DM) plan to utilize the larger area map, these locations should be expanded upon to include whatever you think interesting. Creating other locations and encounters is also recommended.

ARRIVING

Characters can reach the marshes from the south by following the stream, or overland by tracks and trails still used by animals in the region. These paths—from east, south and north—should be easy for the group to find and follow. If you wish to include travel to the location as part of the adventure you will have to provide encounter information accordingly. Following the stream should be treated likewise, however, should the group actually *use* it to reach the marshes, they will discover it becomes easier to fight the current, as it nears the actual basin of the marshes; it gets slower and slower. That said, it also becomes more difficult as the stream depth shallows drastically and vegetation impedes them more and more. The reason for this is twofold: first, the depth of the marshes where it spills over the basin into the stream is fairly shallow—a mere 1' to 3'; second, this *rim* is filled with thick and compacted vegetation and reeds growing along the perimeter. (Note: the stream width is far less than depicted on the map—ranging from 12' to 18' along its length for several miles—until it widens, deepens and gains speed as it nears the river it joins.)



THE ROAD TO HOGG BOTTEM

A single road leads to the village of Hogg Bottem. It is not maintained, nor has been for quite some time, but is still useable. It runs south from the village palisade, rising above the sunken fens on either side (east and west) by over a yard, before turning southeast after a couple of miles. When it nears the large mound named Hemmon Hill it swings truer east and splits, with one line turning true south and the other continuing east and north. (Where the two paths eventually end is shown on the large area map.)

Travel along the road is relatively easy and without incident during the day, but not completely; nor is it as undisturbed as the day grows longer and shadows fall. Use the tables below to (first) determine if an encounter has occurred according to time of day/night, then (second) what the encounter will be.

TABLE I A-B

Chance of Encounter on Road/Through the Fens

Roll d12	Dawn-Midmorn 1-6	Midmorn-Midday 1-4	Midday-Dusk 1-4	Night 1-10
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Overland/Wilderness Random Encounters

Roll d%	Type	Freq.	#App.*	AC	Move	HD	Atk.	Dam.	AL	Size
01-05	Crab, Giant	Rare	2-12	3	9"	3	2	2x 2-8	N	L(4' dia.)
06-15	Frog, Giant	Uncommon	5-40	7	3"(9")	1-3	1	1-3/1-6/2-8	N	S-M
16-20	Harpy	Rare	2-12	7	6"/15"	3	3	1-3/1-3/1-6	CE	M
21-30	Leech, Giant	Uncommon	4-16	9	3"	1-4	1	Drain blood	N	S-M
31-40	Snake, Giant	Uncommon	1-6	5	15"	4+2	1	1-3+poison	N	L
41-75	Toad, Giant	Common	1-12	6	6"(6")	2+4	1	2-8	N	M
76-85	Troll	Uncommon	1-12	4	12"	6+6	3	2x 5-8/2-12	CE	L
86-95	Will-O-Wisp	Uncommon	1	-8	18"	9	1	2-16	CE	S
96-100	Zombie	Rare	3-24	8	6"	2	1	1-8	N	M

THE VILLAGE OF HOGG BOTTEM

Whatever the reason the characters have for coming here will not/cannot be answered or solved simply by interacting with the residents. Exploration of the church, then the marshes, is the only way to do that. It is in the marshes that the goal of their quest eventually lay.

The rumor table (to follow) hints at some of the information the characters may be seeking, but you (the DM) are free to include any of the Background data you feel might expand upon what the residents reveal. That being said, the residents will never disclose the following:

1. That a wizard once dwelled on the large island and conducted experiments there.
2. That the Minotaur were experimental-slaves of the wizard, who eventually rebelled and killed him.
3. That a group of sirens has established their home in the marshes, and are responsible for what happened to Brother Filus.
4. That the giant crayfish in the marshes are the mutated generations of magical contamination. And that eating them seems to extend the life of the consumer.
5. How old they are, or when they were born. Or why there are no children among the villagers.
6. Where Brother Filus is, or went.

The reason they will not is simply because—they do not know. Their minds have become so foggy with the passing of time, their ability to remember even beyond a week or two past, is impaired and feeble. None of the merchants remember that they once *sold* their goods; sharing for the common good is the custom now. In this regard, the village has become a functioning commune, as their inability to retain thought has made them dependent upon one another beyond the point of friendliness.

RUMORS & BABBLE

1. I seem to recall a Brother such n' such. Who was he, again?
2. We still catch giant crayfish. But we just eat what we catch.
3. The abandoned church? Used to be someone lived there. Why do you ask?
4. You have to talk loud when speaking with the bell ringer.
5. The church? No one goes in there, anymore. I hear things moving within, though. Kind of odd, huh?
6. We *sold* our crayfish? If you say so. I don't recall.
7. Someone told me they saw a manlike stork in the marshes a while back. Now who was that?
8. Rats! Lately they're everywhere. Maybe you could find where they're nesting and rid us of them?
9. No one goes into the warehouses much anymore after (*) was attacked by those damn giant rats.
0. The marshes are haunted, that's for sure. I saw a ghostly horned figure in the mist three nights ago.

* Insert: name of one of the provided NPC or create one.

Before the characters interact with any of the village folk roll a d10 3 to 4 times against the table (above) to have some preestablished chatter at-ready for each resident when approached. If asked things not found from any of the above, use your own judgement as to what the resident might actually remember and know, and be able to respond with. Remember, the villagers are not idiots, as Brother Filus is, but that they are simply, extremely forgetful. In addition to those that are named, there are approximately three dozen more that will likely not play any kind of role; they are just farmer-fisher-trades types with a variety of household skills that contribute to the overall comfort of the community; how they came and why is left to you to determine. No additional resident has arrived in over 75 years save for Brother Filus. You should, create more information for other non-player characters for your own purposes.

VILLAGE ROSTER

1. Bell Tower (Fronk Luden: NM, AC8, 5 hps, 5'9", 165 lbs., NG)
2. Church of Ghestal (Abandoned.)
3. Blacksmith (Holden Isaco: F4, AC5, 32 hps, 6'4", 210 lbs., NG, S18/99, I10, W9, D12, C17, CH12)*
4. Boat-builder/carpenter (Lars Kronin: NM, AC7, 6 hps, 6'3", 203 lbs., NG)
5. Herbalist (Meia Dresbin: D3, AC7, 15 hps, 5'3", 103 lbs., N, S12, I14, W16, D14, C13, CH17)*
6. Inn-tavern (Veda Raonsen, NM, AC8, 4 hps, 5'8", 118 lbs., NG)*
7. Trader (Corbin Grizwal: NM, AC7, 6 hps, 6', 155 lbs., NG)
8. Net & Pole maker (Fenton Drake: NM, 7 hps, 5'10", 155 lbs., NG)
9. Warehouse (Abandoned.)

* These NPC have an additional information-table following this section.

VILLAGE NOTABLES & LOCATIONS

Bell Tower This unusual structure is two stories tall, atop which stands a scaffolding reaching a height of 40 feet from the ground. The upper third portion of the building is designed to support a huge bell suspended at the top, with a long thick rope that hangs down to the roof of the structure. From here the bell ringer, Fronk Luden, manipulates the device that sends a high pitched clanging (C5) that can be heard for miles. When the crayfish industry was at its peak the marshes were constantly deluged by thick mists for months at a time. The villagers attempted to use light to guide the boats back to the docks but the fogs were so bad that the range of visible light reaching into the marshes became unreliable. The sound of the bell, however, was discovered to work better, and the bell tower was erected. Fronk is quite deaf, now, though he hasn't rang the bell in years. Fronk was a hireling to the founding adventures of Hogg Bottem.

Church of Ghestal Though it is the largest building in the village, it has not been used in decades. When Brother Filus vanished its doors were closed and locked. No one has been in since. It is likely here that the characters will begin their investigation into the disappearance of Brother Filus. Upon doing so, they will find more adventure than they had likely anticipated. For it is here that much of their time will be spent dealing with the creatures they encounter within. (SEE CHURCH/DUNGEON)

Blacksmith Holden Isaco is the largest man in the village. He appears to be the resident-metal worker as his shop contains implements to suggest such. Though he does fix things for the villagers now and then, he does not spend a lot of time practicing his trade. He is also one of the founders of Hogg Bottem, though his youthful visage belies his true age—225! For the first decade of its existence the village depended on Holden to perform as its constable while the rules of civil behavior were being established. To this end, a guard post and day-jail were constructed for his use, along with a residence. Other than his abode, these structures sit idle, mostly. Though he seldom uses them, Holden has the following at his disposal, spread throughout his dwelling: +1 **splint** armor; +2 **shield**; +1 **flame-tongue** sword; +2 **mace**; 6 potions—Extra healing; 3000 CP/1500 SP/750 EP/500 GP. And though he is seldom called upon to don them, should a threat from the marshes appear, his inhibited memory of things past will not prevent him from defending the village. In addition to the possible *rumors & babble* Holden might provide, he (and other notable NPC as signafied) may have a wider range of clues and hints available to inquisitive visitors. (See table to follow.)

Boat-builder/Carpenter Lars Kronin is the second largest resident, which seems appropriate considering his trade. He is also, like Fronk, an original member of the founders' group of hirelings. Nearly as strong as Holden (with a STR of 18/93), Lars is capable of delivering potentially lethal damage from his over-sized tools that he wields (hammer, maul, etc.) when called upon to defend the village. Despite his size, he is a very gentle and friendly fellow and, if approached with like, might even accompany visitors on forays into the marshes; though his knowledge of it and anything within amounts to nil.

Herbalist Though she appears to be in her late twenties, Meia Dresbin is the second oldest resident of Hogg Bottem (at 232 years!) A member of the founders as well, she participated in the eradication of Minotaur residing in the marshes, and played a major role in harvesting crayfish. Though once a practicing druid, she has more or less allowed her interest in casting spells to wane to the point that she can only recall off-hand 1 to 3 1st level spells. She occasionally attempts to *commune* with nature while strolling the perimeter of the marshes, but has not had serious mental contact with her deity or its minions in decades. She recalls enough of her training to maintain the practice of concocting elixers for the use and benefit of her village friends; these are of the most common known, for low level medicinal purposes. Hidden away in her home are the remnants of her adventuring days: +1 **cloak of protection**; **spear-staff** +1; **ring of animal friendship**; **boots of elvenkind**; 2350 CP/3450 SP/250 EP/375 GP. Like Holden, she will not accompany characters in their exploration, but might know more than other residents. (See additional *information* table to follow.)

Others The remaining listed villagers—Veda Raonsen, Corbin Grizwal, Fenton Drake—were all hirelings that accompanied the adventurers that founded the village. All are 0-level and have no extraordinary abilities or use to the players. With the exception of the following: the characters will be able to have use of the rooms at the Inn (for free), and meals; if they're willing to eat along with the usual gathering that attends meal times at the inn. The trader still has a sizeable amount of items stocked (see next page) for use.

Veda Raonsen is the oldest person in the village (240 years of age!) She was the personal attendant to one of the female adventurer-explorers that discovered the marshes. When the village was erected, and the community established, Veda asked that an Inn and wayhouse be built, where her cooking talents could be best utilized. She prepares communal meals for anyone to partake, and maintains the rooms she will allow outsiders to freely use.

The Trader, Corbin Grizwal, has not transacted with outsiders for years, and spends only a portion of his time in his shop, dusting the inventory and rearranging it from time to time. He keeps his stock ready in case one of his friends or a villager might suddenly be in need of something. Though he is not inclined to sell anything, it is likely he will just loan it to someone who needs it. (You may add more items as you wish.)

Fenton Drake was a hireling of the adventurers. His skills at net and pole making contributed greatly when the crayfishing industry was at its peak. He spends his time now fishing on the pier, chatting with friends, and taking meals at the inn.

TRADERS INVENTORY

Armor	in stock/d 20	sized to fit /out of 20				# on hand **	Weapons	Chance to have in stock (d 20)	Amount available
		Human	Dwarf	Elf	Halfling				
Banded	1-6	1-13	14-16	17-19	20	1-2/1/1/1	Arrow/bolt(quarrel)	1-3/1-2 : 20	1-12/1-8
Chain	1-8	1-14	15-18	19	20	1-4/1/1/1	Arrow, silver	1 : 20	1
Leather	1-12	1-12	13-15	16-18	19-20	1-8/2/2/2	Ax, battle	1-4 : 20	1-2
Padded	1-13	1-12	13-14	15-16	17-20	1-8/2/2/2	Ax, hand	1-8 : 20	1-4
Plate	1-5	1-10	11-15	16-18	19-20	1/1/1/1	Bardiche	1-2 : 20	1
Ring	1-10	1-13	14-17	18-19	20	1-3/1/1/1	Bow, comp. short/long	1 : 20	1
Scale	1-9	1-09	10-15	16-18	19-20	1-3/2/1/1	Bow, short	1-5 : 20	1-3
Splinted	1=7	1-14	15-17	18	19-20	1-2/1/1/1	Crossbow, light	1-2 : 20	1
Studded	1-11	1-10	11-15	16-18	19-20	1-3/2/1/1	Dagger	1-15 : 20	3-18
Helmet, small	1-12	1-14	15-17	18-19	20	1-4/3/3/2	Flail, footman's	1-7 : 20	1-2
Helmet, large	1-8	1-12	13-17	18-19	20	1-2/1/1/1	Hammer	1-8 : 20	1-3
							Mace, footman's	1-5 : 20	1-2
							Sling & stones	1-18 : 20	3-24
							Sling bullet(s)	1-2 : 20	2-7
							Spear	1-20 : 20	2-24
							Sword, broad*	1-8 : 20	1-3
							Sword, long*	1-6 : 20	1-2
							Sword, short*	1-12 : 20	2-5

* includes scabbard

Clothing

	Chance to have in stock (d 20)	Amount available
Belt	1-5 : 20	1-4
Boots, high, hard	1-4 : 20	1-2 pr
Boots, high, soft	1-8 : 20	1-4 pr
Boots, low, hard	1-10 : 20	1-2 pr
Boots, low soft	1-15 : 20	1-5 pr
Cap	1-12 : 20	1-7
Cloak	1-10 : 20	1-9
Coat, heavy	1-8 : 20	1-8
Coat, light	1-9 : 20	1-12
Girdle, broad	1-5 : 20	1-5
Girdle, normal	1-9 : 20	1-7
Hat	1-12 : 20	1-11
Pantaloon	1-10 : 20	1-8 pr
Robe	1-15 : 20	1-9

Miscellaneous Equipment

	Chance to have in stock (d 20)	Amount available
Backpack, leather	1-5 : 20	1-4
Box, small iron--	1-3 : 20	1-2
Case, leather scroll	1-3 : 20	1-2
Lantern, bullseye	1-5 : 20	1-4
Lantern, hooded	1-9 : 20	1-8
Mirror, large metal	1-3 : 20	1-2
Oil, flask of--	1-7 : 20	1-6
Pole, 5'-10'	1-12 : 20	1-10
Pouch, large	1-7 : 20	1-6
Pouch, small	1-9 : 20	1-8
Quiver, case	1-11 : 20	1-10
Rope, 30'	1-9 : 20	1-8
Rope, 50'	1-7 : 20	1-6
Sack, large	1-13 : 20	1-12
Sack, small	1-15 : 20	2-16
Spikes, iron*	1-7 : 20	2-12
Tinder box/flint&steel	1-5 : 20	1-4
Torch	1-11 : 20	1-10
Water/wine skin	1-9 : 20	1-8

FOUNDING MEMORIES

The table that follows should be used in addition to the **Rumors & Babble** table, with regards to the notable NPC as designated with an *. Being the eldest members of the explorer-adventurers at the time, their brains have had less exposure to the enzymes consumed in the crayfish meat than their younger comrades. But not all their memories will be completely intact; many will be faulty with misinformation or partial falsities. You (the DM) may choose which ones you wish the player-characters to hear, or roll randomly on the table, allowing each NPC to recall (per day, visit, etc.) varying amounts (roll 1 d12).

1. We've been here so long I don't recall when we arrived. But the marshes were filled with beasts, then.
2. The marshes were infested when we got here. Mobs of Minotaur roamed throughout.
3. We were all much younger then. Discovering the marshes was the highlight of our entire lives.
4. When Brother Filus arrived we were glad to accept him into our community. He brought much joy. We let him use an old building that no was occupying. Why was it empty? I don't want to talk about that.
5. All of us, myself especially, found much peace when we chose to follow The Lady.
6. The church stands empty, but there is something afoot going on within. I think it holds the secret to whatever happened to Brother Filus. We locked it up long ago, when our faith expired.*
7. I haven't seen Brother Filus in years. We've given up hope he will return. The poor soul.
8. We're content with how things are. Outsiders are welcome, but we do not desire leaving here.
9. This rat situation is getting serious. The old warehouses are dangerous places. Be careful in them.*
10. Old Fronk hasn't rang the tower bell in years. But if you go into the marshes, let him know, so he can chime it now and again to help you find your way back.
11. If you need gear or, whatever, see Simon. He has a good stock on hand, and might loan you something.
12. We don't expect anything from you, but if you do explore the marshes and happen to find Brother Filus, please, bring him back to us; whatever his condition.*

* These should always be provided by each of the Notable-NPC (blacksmith, herbalist, inn-keeper).

(Add whatever dialogue you feel these notable NPC might wish to convey, extracting the information from the sources already provided—Background, etc. keeping in mind not to divulge things the NPC would not know. You are a story teller, and this is how you can assist your players in creating their own adventure.)

DUNGEON-ADVENTURES

The two key areas of adventure for the player-characters will most likely be the Church and the warehouses. Since the former is larger, complex and detailed, it will come second in this section. The more, *generic*—warehouses—will appear, first.

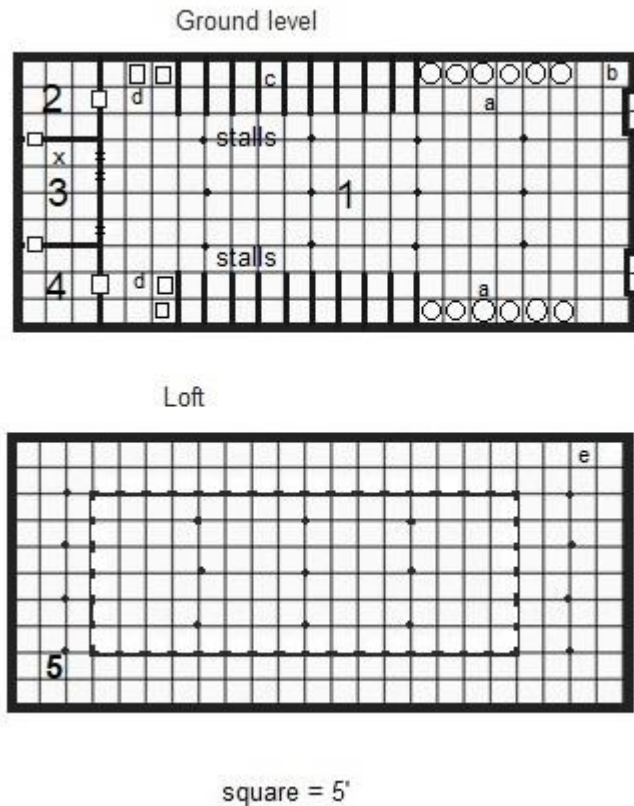
The Warehouses (#9) The three buildings are identical in size (115 x 50) and interior space. The one located in the center is the focus of this adventure and serves as a template for you (the DM) to then design the remaining two and fill them with things as you wish. The ground level of each contains barrels, crates and boxes, assorted hardware; stuff that has been collecting for over two decades. Stalls enough for 18 horse are located in this (the center) warehouse, where the ones north and south lack these in exchange for large open space, enough to house wagons, carriages, etc. (Note: those will have larger doors than the ones appearing in the center building.) A loft is accessible in each via ladder, with pulleys and ropes still in position to haul bales and other sundry items up. While an occasional outsider may have entered one or all of these at one time, the residents have stayed away from them. Thus, each is full of dust, cobwebs, bones of small animals and piles of dried excrement. The air is foul, and all doors are *stuck* closed.

Random Encounters In addition to the Set Encounters (described below) it is possible that the characters will run-across one or more of the following. A roll of 1-2 on a d6, checked per hour, results in such. Roll a d6 again, with 1 being for giant centipedes; 3-5 for giant rats; 6 for large spiders.

Creature:	#Appearing:	AC:	HD:	Move:	ATK/DAM:	AL:	Size:
Centipede, Giant	1-6	9	¼	15"	1/poison*	N	S
Rats, Giant	2-5	7	½	12"	1/1-3+disease	N	S
Spiders, large.	1-4	8	1+1	6"	1/1+poison**	N	S

*(+4 to Save allowed) **(+2 to Save allowed)

These creatures will rush out of the shadows, jump from walls or, drop from above onto the unsuspecting characters as they explore. None of them will be carrying any treasure.



GROUND FLOOR

1. A large, open space with wooden posts that rise up, passing through the loft, to support the roof. The western end of the structure contains three distinct chambers, walled off from this portion. If carefully examined, three holes in the wall near the floor of chamber 3 can be spotted at 10 feet; large enough for a small dog to pass through. The floor is packed dirt, but covered with layers of dust, straw and small bones. Animal stalls line the north and south midsection of the walls, as huge wooden barrels (a) and crates (d) are stacked or lined on either side. A ladder to access the loft (b) stands in a corner. The barrels contain fetid water, rotten meal and oats once used to feed the animals housed within; four of each. Currently residing within one of the barrels of oats is a pack of **Rot Grubs** (20, x 1hp each) AC9, Move 1". If examined, 2-7 of these creatures will attempt to burrow into anyone's hands or arms reaching to dig in and explore the barrel's contents. (Treat those with leather gloved hands/arms as AC8, those wearing mail gloves as AC4 for this purpose.) If an attack succeeds, the grub will burrow into the victim, killing him/her in 1-3 turns unless flame is applied to each wound; doing 1-6 points damage per application, thus killing the grub for 1hp of damage, with the remainder harming the character. Apparently the barrel was searched before, as a single leather glove rests on the bottom of it; if retrieved and combined with its missing mate (see later) this becomes a pair of magical *Gauntlets of Dexterity*. Inside one of the north stalls (c) is a rotted corpse. The size of a Halfling, the immediate assumption is that the person must have been an adventurer that entered the warehouse and was attacked by something within. The body is nearly mummified and its clothing dried and brittle to the touch. A half-dozen crates-boxes are stacked beside the stalls along the north-south walls (d). These contain mundane sundry items (tools and such) having little to no value to the characters; unless you wish to include something of your own design. (Note: it is very dim and dark within, as the only light entering comes from the doors in the eastern wall. There are hooks on the pillars to suspend lanterns that helped illuminate the chamber at one time; no lanterns are present now.)

2. This small 15' x15' room contains a cot, chest of drawers and a footlocker. All are in poor condition and on the brink of collapse. Hiding beneath the bed is a **Large Scorpion**, AC5, Move 9", HD2+2(10hp), ATK 3/DAM. 1-4/1-4/1 + poison sting (+2 to Save allowed.) There is nothing else of interest here.

3. A large room, 15' x 20'. It is notable for three things: (1) it is lined with burlap sacks from floor to ceiling; (2) 3 large holes in the wall near the floor are hidden by all the sacks; and (3) a hole in the ground behind a pile of sacks (marked X). The sacks are filled with rotted and/or calcified foodstuff—potatoes, mushrooms, roots, apples, walnuts, etc. There is enough space between these for small creatures to enter and exit the room through the holes. The hole in the floor will be discovered on a roll of 1-4 on d6 if casually looking around, but automatically if the room is intensely searched. Around the hole are claw marks and bits of fur that, if examined, could be surmised to be that of rats. Further examination will reveal the hole is the end of a tunnel (about 2' across) that descends deeper into the ground. It is too small for anyone but a Halfling or Gnome to crawl through, without magical aid. Should anyone enter the tunnel, it will either collapse on them (1-2/d6) or they will get stuck, requiring to be freed. If the characters remain in this room for 3 Turns, there is a 33% chance that from 1-6 **Giant Rats** will emerge from the tunnel. These will have 1-4hp each; use the **Random Encounters** section for the remaining information you may need.

4. A small room 15' by 15'. Wooden dowls, set at various heights, line the walls. Their purpose is evident as several animal bridles with reins still hang in place here and there (about 5). A table stands against the east wall in the north corner with several currying brushes and a hoof clipper atop it. A drawer beneath this is apparently locked and requires a thief to pick the lock in order to gain access to within. If the table is smashed the drawer's contents must make a Save vs. Crushing Blow or are destroyed. Hidden inside the drawer is a *Scroll of Protection vs. Ghouls*, and 3 potions—*Healing*, *Sweet Water*, *Water Breathing*. A thief is allowed only one attempt to pick the lock; failure means waiting until the character gains a level, when another can be made. Asleep on the ceiling, in its web in the southeast corner of the room, is a **Huge Spider** that will awaken when the room is entered. AC6, Move 18", HD 2+2(6hp), ATK 1, DAM. 1-6+poison (Saves against are +1). It will surprise the characters (leaping up to 3") on a roll of 1-5 on d6, unless they specify they look in every corner before entering.

LOFT

This area was basically a holding space for extra items. Piles of old rotted hay 3 to 5 feet deep stand all about the place. A large opening in the middle of the floor allows descent to below; usually by ladder. From the edge of this, most of the floor below can be seen. Attached to the posts and rafters supporting the roof are 3 hoisting devices (pulleys and rope), designed to raise things from below or lower them from here. (Their exact position is left to you to decide.) The roof is 8' above the loft floor along its center line and as low as 3' where it rests on the outer walls. The floor is covered with loose hay, little bones and the husks of some kind of creature. Crates, boxes, footlockers, barrels, sacks, empty and full, stand in groups with space between for walking. (Create what paths you wish and mark them on your map.) An enormous web fills the entire northeast corner of this area (d) and is the nest-home of 4 **Large Pedipalp*** (HP 9, 6, 6, 3) AC 7, Move 12" HD 1+1 ATK 1 DAM 1-8, AL N, Size S. They have an accumulated treasure of 24 GP and 3 gems (1 x50GP, 1x75GP 1x100GP) *Consult Monster Manual II for more details.

5. Hiding in this corner among all the stuff is an injured **Giant Weasel** (6hp/15) AC6, Move 15", HD 3+3, ATK 1, DAM 2-12 + drain blood, AL N, Size M. If approached normally it will take a defensive posture; if approached threateningly it will attempt to scurry past the characters and dive over the loft edge to the floor below seeking to escape; if approached with caution, using calm tones and (possibly) magic, there is a 33% chance it will allow characters to get near and even touch it. Anyone actually healing the creature has a 66% chance of it bonding with them, thus becoming a trainable pet.

As seen from the preceding information, it is possible to conduct multiple explorations into this warehouse. If the remaining two are mapped out and detailed, further adventuring is thus possible, and encouraged. Doing so could provide some characters with enough experience to advance to 2nd level before taking on the church; the cleric and thief being the most likely candidates. When this (and the other warehouses) has been exhausted, the characters should be more than capable of exploring the church; with better chance of success.

The Church (#2) Though listed as 2nd in the roster, this and the bell tower were constructed at the same time; at the founding of the village. At its beginning this structure functioned as a communal habitat; all the explorers dwelled within while working on other buildings that would in time become private domiciles. As more and more structures were erected the founders moved into them, leaving this to serve as their meeting hall. It had no upper story, and only the basement beneath. But as others moved out, one of the founders remained, a spell caster of their party. A second story was added, where she resided, along with a deeper level of chambers (see maps); the latter not being known to her companions as such was not easily seen, as was the second story. When the delicacy of the crayfish was discovered none were aware of the effect that would result from consuming the creatures. For everyone—but the spell caster—eating the mutated crustacean was beneficial; for her, the enzyme was toxic, and after some time, fatal. Her passing shocked the community, and they sealed up what had become her abode, never to enter it again. As decades, then a century and a half passed, their memory of her dimmed and vanished. Thus it has stood until fifty years ago, when Brother Filus came to Hogg Bottem.

After being allowed to use the structure, Brother Filus removed much of the interior, opening it up to create a proper chamber for worship and conducting his services, (Note: the original floorplan is included among the maps for your consideration,) and for twenty-five years served the community as its spiritual conduit to the deity, Ghestal. But unknown to the residents, the cleric discovered, among his many explorations of the chambers within, items and materials left behind by the former occupant; things of disturbing nature to the priest. And clues indicating the person may have been dabbling with dark forces and powers at the time of her demise.

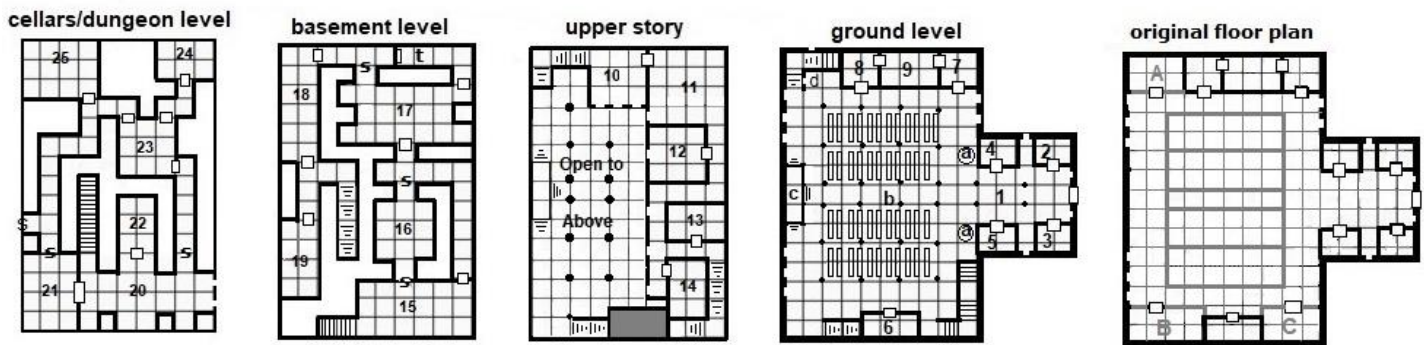
KEY TO CHURCH, GROUND LEVEL

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS Check every 3 Turns, result of 1-2 on d6 indicates an encounter. See below— (Choose or determine type randomly)

Creature:	#Appearing:	AC:	HD:	Move:	ATK/DAM:	AL:	Size:
Centipede, Giant	1-6	9	¼	15"	1/poison*	N	S
Rats, Giant	2-5	7	½	12"	1/1-3+disease	N	S
Skeletons, Animal(+)	1-6	8	1-1	6"	1/1-4	N	S-M
Spiders, large.	1-4	8	1+1	6"	1/1+poison**	N	S

*(+4 to Save allowed) **(+2 to Save allowed)

(+) These are typically the skeletons of giant rats, cats, dogs and even skunks.



1. ENTRY A large locked door leads into the church. (The key may be given to the characters upon clearing out the warehouses.) At 15' wide this corridor felt more open (see original plan above) before Brother Filus lined it east to west with 4" x 4" wooden beams going from floor to ceiling. The ones here appear to be more for the aesthetics, since they are similar to those in the main chamber where more actually serve to support the roof high above. Four small chambers (**2-5**) can be entered from this walkway. Originally they served as quarters for the founder's hirelings; now they appear to be little more than storage chambers filled from floor to ceiling in some by scores of miscellaneous sundry items of little to no value. However, hiding/trapped within #4 are two (2) **Giant Ants** (12, 9 hp) AC3, Move 18", HD 2, ATK 1, Damage 1-6, Neutral, Small.

MAIN CHAMBER Two statues (**a**) to the north and south of the entry stand upon pedestals; they are turned to face north and south, greeting those that enter. Each is only 5 foot tall, but being elevated, as they are, the tops of their heads nearly reach the ceiling 7 feet above the floor. These are formed in the likeness believed to be the Lady Ghestal. The north statue (facing south) depicts her in flowing hair and robe, her hands holding a large vase; the south statue (facing north) depicts her in royal attire with a crown on her head and a scepter cradled in her arms. It is unlikely the characters will know anything about this deity unless one of the clerics of the party is a worshipper. (You may use any goddess of nature as a template for Her, or make up your own information regarding Her dogma.) Stairs along the northwest/southeast walls of the chamber lead to the story above; those in the southwest descend to the basement. A large number of pews (**b**) fill the center of the room, deep in shadow as the windows of this chamber are covered over with thick grime and grease. The air within is heavy, and musty, as long silvery strands hang down from the rafters above, dangling like tentacles that slowly swing to and fro as the characters pass beneath. During the day there is a 45% chance that eight (8) **Animal Skeletons** (AC 8, Move 6", HD 1-1, HP 7-6-2x5-2x4-2x3, ATK 1, DAM 1-4, Neutral, S-M, see MM2 for more details) will be encountered among the benches; these will rush out and attack explorers surprising them on a roll of 1-4 on a d6. At night it is 25% likely they will be present; in addition, there will always be from 10-100 **Rats** as well (AC 7, Move 15", HD ¼, HP 1-2 ea., ATK 1, DAM 1, Neutral/E, Small) Along the midsection of the west wall is a platform (**c**); atop this stands an altar and podium. Examination of the stairwell in the northwest corner will reveal a hole (**d**) that, if investigated, leads through the stairs and the exterior wall to the outside. It is not large enough for even a halfling to negotiate, but is apparently how many of the creatures within have gained access. Three doors—one to the south and two to the north—apparently lead to interior rooms within the main chamber. (Note: chambers A-B-C on the original floor plan were the quarters of the founders of the village. These were removed, as explained earlier. Also, gray lines on the floor of the main chamber appear to line up with the 4"x4" posts that now stand within, and may have been interior walls.)

6. **STORAGE** This and the other three small rooms within the chamber may have had another purpose in the past but their current function is immediately clear upon entering. Stacked within this one are from 5 to 7 wood crates and boxes; most are filled with common items (7-12 each from DMG Dungeon Dressing Appendix I: Religious Articles and Furnishings/Miscellaneous Utensils and Personal Items; if item rolled is too large to fit within a container and/or clearly not suited to be stored thus, ignore and roll again or choose an item.) If the characters spend at minimum six Turns searching, they will discover an old tattered robe among the items that *feels different* than the others. That's because an illusion has been cast upon it to make it appear old and unwanted. When it is, in fact, a **Robe of Faithful Servitude**. A clerical item, that allows the wearer to Turn Undead as if 2 levels higher, and cast one additional spell, within the wearer's power, per day. Its exact appearance is left to you to design/describe. Also, this item is exclusive to this adventure, and you may or may not want to include it; you may substitute any *official* item that is available in the books that you prefer, one of your own making or, not have an item here at all.

7-8. **PANTRY** Shelves line the walls of these small rooms, filled with small jars, bottles, boxes and such containing various items of food and things associated with preparation and processing. (Included are things from the Condiments and Seasonings/Food & Drink tables from the above Appendix as well.) Hidden among all these (in #8) is a small tin box containing three silk packets; inside each is an unusual powder (**Dust of Appearance**). It should take the characters at least six (6) Turns of searching before they find this box, but you may allow them to do so before then on a roll of 1 on a d12 per Turn spent, at your option.

9. **KITCHEN** A table stands against the south wall of this room, as pots and knives and other cutlery hang suspended by leather straps on dowls on the others. As cooking was done (and still is by the residents) in outside hearths and stone ovens, then brought in, the room was meant for preparation only, before serving the meals. Dried and calcified clumps of—*something*—lay about the table, unidentifiable. Hiding beneath in a weak state is a **Huge Spider** (AC 6, Move 18", HD 2+2, HP 4/9, ATK 1, DAM. 1-6+poison, +1 to Save allowed, Neutral, S-M size)

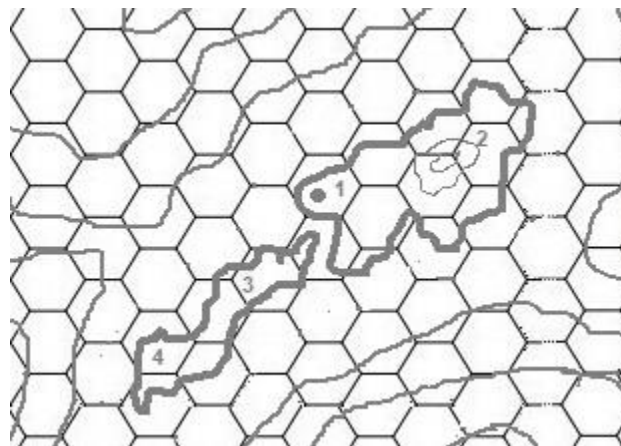
KEY TO UPPER STORY

10. **PARLOUR** This 15 foot square room at the top of the stairs contains two padded and covered chairs, one against the west wall and one against the east. Three windows in the south wall look out over the main chamber of the church below. Thick dust covers the chairs with noticeable cobwebs beneath each. Visitors would usually wait here if they had an appointment to see Brother Filus. (Only random encounters might occur within.)

11. **DINING HALL** When Brother Filus had guests he and they would take meals here. Whatever the previous function of the room was, is not evident now. A single table stands in the center, with six wooden chairs placed up to and under it. A cabinet stands against the south wall where shelves contain various items used for taking meals: plates, platters, cups, saucers, cutlery, etc. All are now covered with dust. A chandelier hangs directly above the table, with cups enough to hold nine candles. If examined, all will be occupied by what appear to be fresh or unused tapers. If *detect magic* is cast upon them, one will radiate as being magical. This, *one*, is a **Candle of Invocation**. It was placed here by mistake when Brother Filus took ill, and others came in and out, cleaning and what-not, for him. Someone apparently found this one and, thinking it of a normal sort, placed it here. It will only function for a Lawful Good cleric, as it was meant for Filus, who was of such alignment. (No set encounter occurs here unless you decide to do so. Otherwise, random encounters might take place.)

12. **LIBRARY** Shelves line the north, south and west walls of this room from ceiling to floor. Spaced one foot apart, there are thus six shelves per wall. These are full of books, or scrolls (folded or on dowls) and all are covered by layers of dust and cobwebs. While most (85%) are of a religious nature, a few deal with other subjects. Several large manuals, inches thick, appear to be a series of writings on the creation of the cosmos and the appearance/role of Ghestal. (There is nothing within of any real value to the characters, but extensive time spent searching might result in a random encounter awaiting them as they exit.)

13. **STUDY** The door to this room is locked and must be picked, or smashed open, in order to gain entry. A desk with 3 drawers stands against the north and east walls of the room, with a wooden chair positioned at it. A long drawer runs the width of the desk below the top, with the other two, narrower ones, built beneath the right side. All are locked. Atop the desk stands a lamp, while an unrolled scroll covers the majority of the plane. The scroll seems to be blank, with what appear to be dots of dried blood scattered across it. Attempting to pick the lock of the large drawer will trigger a poisoned needle trap; a slender shaft will shoot out striking the hand of the one doing the deed, causing 1 hp of burning damage; the poison is so old on it that no Save is required. Inside the drawer is a ring with 3 keys; two open the other drawers, and the third one, the door to chamber 22 on the dungeon level. Inside the other drawers are papers full of writings by Brother Filus, describing various things of mundane nature. (You could include his thoughts about being assigned to Hogg Bottem, his trip, his arrival, the greeting he received, etc. Nothing of great importance.) Among the papers is a folded sheet that, when opened, shows what appears to be an island. To the characters this may or may not be in the marshes, for there is nothing written upon the parchment. But as you (the DM) have read the background, you will suspect it is. In fact, it is the one that the magic-user built his tower on, centuries ago. (No set encounter occurs within. As above.)



14. **SLEEPING CHAMBER** This modest room was the sleeping chamber of the priest. It contains a bunk, a wardrobe, footlocker and a single chair. There is nothing unusual or out of the ordinary about any of it; but for the layers of undisturbed dust, it all seems to be in fair condition. (As the door—like most throughout the building—is stuck, nothing should have gotten inside. Thus no set encounter should occur. As above.)

KEY TO BASEMENT LEVEL

All the chambers on this level have low ceilings (6') where the planks and rafters above are easily seen. The floors and walls are similar—hard wood, and creaky. Dust and cobwebs cling to everything. In the larger rooms (15 & 17) can be seen two iron hooks fastened to the walls where lamps or lanterns may have been suspended, as the wall and ceiling above these locations shows evidence of smoke having saturated the wood. The variety of sundry items found within these rooms is too voluminous to go into specific detail of everything; just about anything can be found, from broken furniture to soiled clothes, tangled and useless fish nets, straps of leather, buckles, wooden bowls, and so on. How deep you want to get into describing each chamber is left to you, as the following only reveals if the area has a set encounter or is currently home to a monster-creature, or not.

15. **BASEMENT** Stairs descend into this chamber. Along the north wall (15 feet apart) are two doors. The first (going east) is a Secret door that can only be found by searching; or, more easily, by an elf. The other leads into a narrow passage going north. Currently hiding and residing among the refuse is a large pack of eighteen (18) **Humongus Rats**; their bodies about the mass of a mid-sized dog, with 6 foot long tails. They are not afraid of light and will rush to attack intruders bearing torches and lanterns; if struck by a torch, they will retreat for one to three rounds (1-3) before returning to attack. They are AC8, Move 12", HD 1-1 (HP: 3x7, 3x6, 6x5, 6x4) ATK 1, DAM. 1-4 + disease(35% chance), Neutral/evil, S-M, Treasure: None.

16. **SECRET ROOM** Built by the founders initially as a last resort/safe room for their children should the village be under siege, in time it became just another storage room as offspring never seemed to appear. It is currently occupied by the only thing within the room, what appears to be a stone statue that *slightly* resembles Ghestal. It is, in fact, a **Mimic!** AC7, Move 3", HD7/24 hp, ATK 1, DAM. 3-12, SA glue, SD camouflage, INT. average/10, Neutral, Large. This creature can actually communicate—speaking the common tongue and dwarf—if it feels inclined to. While it has no treasure, it does have knowledge that might be of interest to the party: having somehow managed to discover the chambers beneath the church long ago, it remembers a time when the deepest ones were under construction, supervised by a woman (the founder previously mentioned), as various creatures, including lizard like men, worked feverishly under her command. It remembers entering through a secret tunnel, and avoiding detection by use of its natural skills, until the work was done, and the creatures were gone. It remembers surviving off of crayfish meat that the woman left laying about. It last remembers seeing her exit the dungeon through the secret tunnel and never seeing her after that. How long ago that was, it cannot recall. It remembers when *the man* first appeared—Brother Filus—some years ago. The man was always searching for things. If approached with caution, and if offered food, it will gladly tell the characters all of this; it also knows the general layout of both the basement and dungeon levels. Otherwise, it will remain hidden.

17. **BASEMENT** It is filled, more or less, with the same as the other basement (15). The secret door (**S**) and trapped corridor (**T**) were added by the founding spell-caster, as well as the remaining two chambers on this level, after the others moved out. Finding the secret door will require searching as described in the other basement (chamber 15). The door to the trapped corridor is not hidden and easily spotted. If this is entered and followed to its end a false door will be discovered; the door-trap is broken and useless now, but a portion of the floor (**T**) that was part of the mechanism can possibly be detected through casual investigation and, if opened, will allow characters access to the chamber below (24). While no set encounter is indicated here, you may still design one if desired.

18. **SECRET CHAMBER** This secret room and the other on this level (as well as the entire floor below) were added by the founding spell-caster; only she—and later, Brother Filus—ever entered them. That is, aside from the creatures that have, over the decades, discovered the secret passages and managed to find their way in. What purpose this, and the other chamber, may have served is not evident from the volume of debris and mundane items now filling them. Dozens of hours can be spent searching this chamber but, unless you decide to include something of your own design, there is little of interest or value within to the characters.

19. **SECRET CHAMBER** Similar in content to the previous chamber, this one is filled with *things*. With two major additions—a **Giant Spider** dwells within, AC4, Move 3" in web/12" on floor, HD 4+4/18 hp, ATK 1, DAM. 2-8 + poison, CE, Large; clearly evident by the enormous web that fills the entire room from end to end. Scattered around the chamber on the floor is its treasure: 1000 CP, 500 SP and a leather glove; it is the mate to the one in the warehouse in the village and combined, make a pair of *Gauntlets of Dexterity*.

KEY TO DUNGEON LEVEL

These chambers (along with 18 & 19 above) were constructed after all, but one, of the village founders moved out. The spell-caster that remained had her own plans. Always the most curious one of her companions, she spent her free time exploring the marshes (note the cover art), whereas the others remained on shore building the village, once the Minotaur threat had been removed. During one such expedition she discovered the big island, and tower ruins. And venturing further into them, found chambers below filled with objects and items familiar to her trade. Those she could salvage she brought back to the community hall—now her abode—and began intensive study of the materials. When the others moved out she was free to experiment openly with her discoveries and continued doing so until her premature demise.

This level is deep beneath the church, and at—and sometimes below!—the water level of the marshes; at various times in the past murky marsh water easily found its way into the dungeon chambers and the layers of muck on the floors and walls is the result. Nearly everything in the chambers has been fouled by the invading waters; save for that which was on shelves or other devices that kept items above the water. The air is thick with moisture; torch smoke will rapidly fill a chamber in 1 d4+4 rounds, reducing visibility to a mere 3' and causing eyes and nose to burn. Because of the layers of muck, all doors are swollen and stuck tighter than normal, requiring a d10 to be used instead of the standard d6 when attempting to open. Like the basement level (above), the ceilings are wood with rafters (being the floor to chambers above) and a mere 6' from the floor; the walls, like the floors, are wooden planks attached to posts/beams. These (and nearly everything within the chambers) are so saturated by wetness that they cannot be set ablaze; should oil be rubbed or dumped on them the fire set will only consume the oil available, causing a suffocating smoke in the process.

There are no random/wandering encounters on this level save for instances described below.

20. CHAMBER Though it is at the same depth below ground as the others of this level, the floor of this chamber is thicker with grime and muck—from 1' to 2' deep. This is due to the holes in the east walls near the floor (see previous maps). The holes lead to tunnels that crisscross beneath the village that eventually end at the warehouse (#9) or the embankment at the west fens to the south. Dug by vermin and other creatures over the passing decades, these tunnels have allowed marsh water easier access to the dungeon when the water levels was higher than usual. (Note: the tunnels are not, uniformly, wide enough for the characters to negotiate, and while a halfling or small gnome might be able to squeeze through portions, they will eventually find sections where they will either get stuck trying, or have to backtrack.) It is from these holes/tunnels that random creatures *can* gain access to this chamber, in addition to the Set encounter to follow. Investigation of the chamber will also result in finding the two doors shown; an intensive search is required before characters *might* discover the secret door. The chamber is more or less littered with broken and collapsed crates, barrels and unidentifiable objects, covered with muck and fungus.

Hidden amongst the filth and muck are two (2) **Megalo-Centipedes!** AC5, Move 18", HD3 (21, 18 hps), ATK 1, DAM. 1-3 + poison (see MM2) Neutral, S-M (5' long). If these are damaged to the point of losing half their hps or more they will attempt to escape through the holes in the wall previously described. In addition, for every 3 Turns spent within the chamber there is a 1 in d6 chance that from 4-16 **Giant Leeches** will enter through the holes. These will be AC9, Move 3", HD 1-4 (HP: 1-8,2-16,3-24,4-32), ATK 1, DAM. 1-4 + drain blood, Neutral, S-M. These will always be a mixed group, so it will not be unusual to encounter, in even the smallest group, one having 2 or more HD. Or from 5-20 **Giant Rats!** AC7, Move 6", HD ½ (1-4 hps ea.), ATK 1, DAM. 1-3 + disease, Neutral/E, S-M. None of these nor the centipedes have any *treasure*.

21. LABORATORY A table 6' long x 4' wide stands against the south wall with the west and north covered by shelves from floor to ceiling; varying from 8 inches to 12 spaced apart. Atop these can be found scores of items generally associated with a magic-user. (Consult the DMG under **Magic-user Furnishings**, for the variety of things you can place here.) Anything from a beaker, cauldron, chalk, funnel, jug, mortar & pestle, quill, tongs, can be found among the multitude of objects. A secret portion of the shelves in the north wall will actually swing inward, allowing passage into the corridor beyond, if discovered. This requires the usual successful check to occur. There is nothing of actual value or use within that would benefit characters. But currently nestled on the top shelf in the middle of the western wall are three (3) **Cerebral Parasites!** Since these can only affect/harm psionic characters, consult the appropriate sources to run this encounter.

22. **CHAMBER** Whatever purpose this room served is not evident at present. All that appears to be within at the moment is a strange skeleton, sitting in the northeast corner, its skull drooping. Even casual inspection visually should alert the characters that it is not a *normal* skeleton. Since its head is bovine, with a horn jutting out from each side, and the torso more or less human, the conclusion that it may have been at one time a Minotaur, will be correct. But two rounds after the door to the room is opened, the skeleton will animate and rise to attack. **Minotaur-skeleton**, AC7, Move 12", HD6 (30 hps), ATK 1, DAM. 2-7+3(*flail*), Neutral, Large. It is Turned as if it were a ghoul, and is immune to sleep, charm, hold and cold-based spells. Sharp/edged weapons do half-damage against it; fire scores normal. The weapon it wields is a **magical**, +1 **flail**.

23. **ROOM** There is a 6' x 3' x 2' chest in the southwest corner of this room. Standing in the center of the chamber is a stone figure that will attack anyone attempting to investigate the chest; it is 20% likely to attack even if the chest is avoided. The figure is a **Stone Guardian**, AC2, Move 10", HD4+4 (24 hps), ATK 2, DAM. 2-9/2-9, immune to normal missiles, edged weapons do ¼ damage, cold-fire-lightning attacks do ½ damage, immune to poison, Hold spell, charm and paralyzation, Neutral, S-M(6' tall). The chest contains an assortment of items including male apparel, shoes, a *walking stick*, scroll case, flint & steel and a small bag with 5 gems—1x500 GP, 2x250 GP, 2x125 GP. The "walking stick" is actually a **Staff of Striking**.

24. **ROOM** A trapdoor in the ceiling (at the north wall) of this chamber can be released, thus opening it and allowing those within to climb up (and out) into the corridor above. The room has an assortment of boxes, crates, chests and barrels containing various sundry items of common use. Anything from cloaks, hats, stuffed birds, etc. might be found. Inside one of the chests (unlocked and resembling the rest) is a small wooden case, 18" long by 12" wide by 2" thick, with a latch holding it closed. Inside are approximately nine (9) feather-quills of various birds and bird-like creatures. Amongst these feathers are several having belonged to unusual creatures: a cockatrice(tail feather), demon—Vrock, harpy, and peryton. While the others appear to be some type of goose (or other avian) feathers, the four notable ones require understanding and knowledge of each creature in order to identify their source. Each of these holds certain value to the right buyer, as their use is necessary for the making of scrolls and in other arcane writings. You should determine such value based on your own campaign economy/ies. Finding these should take no less than 3 full Turns of searching; spending less will yield the characters nothing.

25. **SECRET STUDY** Once this chamber was completed the former occupant (the village founder/magic-user) furnished it as her private study. Though it appears to be sparsely filled now—having nothing more than a desk and chair, a chest against the west wall, a bookcase against the south wall, and a large stuffed chair in the northeast corner. While Brother Filus entered the chamber many times after having discovered it, he was unable to remove the cat-creature standing atop the chest and eventually gave up; once it ignored him as much as he avoided it. Inside the chest is some common female garments and a large book. This tome was the magic-user's diary; of which some passages are still readable (see below). Getting to this will require defeating the creature standing atop the chest. A **Guardian Familiar**, AC8, Move 12", HD1 (up to 9), ATK 3, DAM. 1-6/2x1-4, the creature has 25% magic resistance, Lawful Neutral, S-M. The creature grows larger as it attacks until it resembles a bobcat; reverting to normal if assault against it is suspended. Upon death it will instantaneously be reborn, gaining 1 hit die (and hps), increasing move by 2" and its AC by 1, and adding 1 point of damage to each of its attacks. It will do this until it reaches 9 HD; death after that is final for it. It will not pursue should attackers cease hostile actions against it and move away.

THE DIARY, EXCERPTS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER— (The following is intended for you/the DM to flesh out if need be, build upon, insert original material, in order to expand the information for the characters, of the general story of the founders and their past. Much of the writing is personal and boring, reflecting the author's thoughts. What is provided consists of the more important pieces of the puzzle.)

Entries 1 through 8 describe how the founders' group was formed of Holden, Meia, and herself (Drucilla). How, along with their hirelings, they left the port town of Deav's Cove and headed west after being hired by the cove's town council to follow the river west in search of its origins; possibly a lake. To make maps and blaze trails others could follow, and return with the information.

E9. We came across some marshes today. We've made camp on the eastern banks. It appears to be brimming with wildlife; enough to sustain us until we decide to continue our expedition west, or turn south. I already miss Kala. I know she is safe back in Deav's cove; I just can't help but worry.

E10. We hadn't been camped out a whole turn of the moon when the creatures first began attacking us. Huge beasts that walked like men, with the heads of steer came out of the marshes and set upon us. The first fortnight we slew two dozen; easily enough as they came in small groups, but we suspect they may have been scouts.

Entries 11 through 20 are smeared and unreadable as bits and portions of the paper are torn and missing.

E21. Its hard to believe its been two full years of fighting to clear the marshes of those beasts... But it's done. We only lost Janon, our mule and pack handler, but he'll be missed. Once we had time to catch our breath we buried him in the southwest corner of a peninsula where we have decided to set up a more permanent camp. Our spirits are not into going any further at this point; I don't know if we will ever go further west. But that suits me fine, since I intend to explore these marshes more, and make a trip back to Deav's Cove, before Kala begins to think me dead.

Entries 22 through 60 are more personal thoughts of Drucilla, having doubts about the group's desire to build a town, and her own desire to return to Deav's Cove.

E61. Its astounding how fast the great hall went up. I have found it to be far more comfortable than the tents we used to occupy. But I am small, and not a builder, so while they erected our first structure, I was able to continue searching the marshes. I found a large island deep within it, and what are the ruins of a tower that once stood upon it. I think there are cellars beneath.

E62. I have descended beneath the ruins and have found treasures I had not expected. Too many to make a casual entry in a journal, I am going to catalogue everything! Oh, joy, at last something to show for all the efforts we have made, and suffering we have felt. As I write, Holden, Meia and the others have already erected four more buildings and made their own discoveries—giant crayfish reside in the marshes; huge and succulent, their meat gives us all renewed strength and spirits. Perhaps we may, some time soon, go further west as obligated.

Entries 63 through 90 are more personal reflections, but little to no information regarding the discoveries Drucilla has made on the island. Her health appears to have taken a downward bend.

E91. I am dying, I cannot fight the truth. I am weak, and it takes all my strength to put quill in hand and press ink upon the parchment. While the others are healthy and strong, something inside has turned against me. The others know. I try to tell them, 'do not weep. Do not despair.' But they do. I hope to make the trip back to Deav's Cove, and to my beloved Kala, before I pass. I will leave instructions for the others what to do with my possessions, of their locations, and hope they may benefit from their use. Perhaps I dabbled too much with them, and unleashed arcane forces I was not prepared to handle. I do not know. Whatever the case...

There is nothing more in the diary. When Drucilla died is not documented. Did she live long enough to make the trip back to Deav's Cove and see her beloved Kala one last time? Or was she buried alongside Janon, the only other fatality among the expedition to be mentioned? Perhaps these questions will be answered, but for now...

CONCLUSION

There is a small alcove in the corridor running between chambers 21 and 25 on the west side; continuing south leads to the back wall of the bookshelf in area 21. The alcove leads to a tunnel and a series of caves beneath the village. This is part of the next adventure. If you do not wish to continue the series, have it exit from the western bank, into the marshes.

Upon completing exploration of the church and the levels beneath the characters may wish to report their findings to the village founders. Holden and Meia will slowly begin to recall Drucilla, and offer the following.

FOUNDER MEMORIES

1. Oh, Drucilla! I have not heard that name since... for a long time.
2. She was a manipulator of magic, if I recall. Helped us vanquish some marsh beasts long ago.
3. Drucilla was always going off on her own, exploring. Don't know if she ever found anything of interest.
4. You say there are levels beneath the church? And strange creatures? I had no idea.
5. But you didn't find Brother Filus down there? Perhaps he is in the marshes, still.
6. Thank you for all your efforts. You're welcome to stay and explore the marshes if you wish to continue your search for Brother Filus. We would like to find closure for him, if possible. Only then can we give him the proper mass, if such is warranted.

Use any, or all, of the above, and create any other dialogue you feel the founders might provide for the characters based on all the information at your disposal. As clearly indicated by all the characters can find, Brother Filus is still nowhere to be seen. Is he even alive? Are his remains in the marshes? Did he discover the island and its ruins, retracing the footsteps of Drucilla?

This ends the adventure N6 **Mass for the Missing Priest**. But the story continues in the next module, N7 **Mystery Beneath the Church**, to be concluded in N8 **Monsters in the Mist**.

INTO THE MARSHES?

After determining that their ultimate goal lies somewhere within the marshes, the characters will likely want to investigate them. You will have to decide how best for them to do so, for that is a quest left for the next adventure-module in this series. A map of the marshes is included and will assist you should you wish to allow them to explore. You may need to develop another story-plot, if you wish to create your own adventure from here on out. Note: the story presented here will be continued in future installments and may not *agree* with what you create on your own. So be prepared to do a bit of editing if you wish to use the N7 and N8 in your campaign.

EXPERIENCE POINTS & LEVEL ADVANCEMENT

After reading through the adventure you (DM) will see that it does not contain a large amount of treasure in the way of coins, jewels, gems and magic items; in fact, it is quite *chintzy*. In order for some of the characters to advance a level you may feel it necessary to add more than what is provided. You may, of course, do so, but such isn't necessary if you adopt the following: a reward based paradigm. This should be easy to embrace, since the characters might likely have been hired (see "hooks" earlier) by an individual or institution to go to Hogg Bottem and perform a service. If you allow this, it is easy enough to reward each character that survives 750 XP for completing the task. In addition, clearing out the warehouse as asked by the villagers is another quest that can earn the characters a reward; 250 XP each per warehouse is not unreasonable. And lastly, exploring the church and discovering all its secrets is the major quest of the adventure, and could reasonably gain each character 500-1000 XP. This system of experience-earned is strongly recommended, as it not only discourages players from roaming about randomly slaying anything they see to gain XP here and there, but shows them that group effort, and goals reached are as important. If you adopt this procedure, remember to include any XP the characters actually earned from slaying the creatures they encountered, and any treasure they may have found. This will result in more *realistic* XP totals, and not appear uniformly rounded to the point of suspicious.

READY TO PLAY CHARACTERS

Players should be encouraged to roll up their own characters. This aspect of the game has always been one of the cornerstones of the entire roleplaying experience and teaches the players the value of choice. Use whatever system for doing so best suits your approach.

But there are always cases where time is an issue, or the appearance of an unexpected player showing up can slow the process down. And times when a character's premature death requires a quick replacement. To deal with such instances, it is a standard practice for the DM to have pre-rolled characters on hand.

The following are provided for you (the DM) to use if your players do not have enough characters to build a party of their own; you can use them as NPC henchmen or hirelings if necessary. Note that there are class and race combinations not normally found in 1E; this is due to the extended material found in Unearthed Arcana. If you prefer not to allow these, simply alter the aspect you do not want for one that is preferred.

#	Class	AL	Race(Sex)	Age	Hgt/Wgt	STR	I	W	D	C	CH	HPS+
01.	Cleric	Any	HU(m-f)	22	5'2"/151	14	10	18	14	15	13	8
02.	Cleric	Any	D, M(m-f)	276	3'10"/134	16	09	17	12	16	12	8
03.	Druid	N	½-ling(m-f)	40	2'9"/69	13	12	17	13	14	17	8
04.	Bbn.	*C	HU(m-f)	17	6'3"/185	18**	08	12	16	16	10	16
05.	Cav.	*G	E,G(f)	44	5'3"/96	17**	13	13	16**	15**	14	11
06.	Ftr.	Any	D, M(m-f)	51	4'4"/151	17	11	10	15	17	11	13
07.	Rgr.	*G	½-E(m)	30	5'9"/145	18**	15	16	14	16	12	20
08.	F/T	*N	½-Orc(f)	24	5'6"/122	17	13	09	14	16	10	10
09.	MU	Any	HU(m-f)	31	6'0"/150	12	17	12	13	10	09	4
10.	I/T	*N	G,H(m-f)	100	3'5"/77	10	16	11	16	13	14	5
11.	MU/T	*N	½-E,D(f)	46	5'4"/100	11	16	09	15	11	15	5
12.	Thf.	*N	½-O(f)	24	5'2"/105	14	14	10	17	14	12	6

*C/G/N =any chaotic/good/neutral allowed

** % dice should be rolled for these stats;

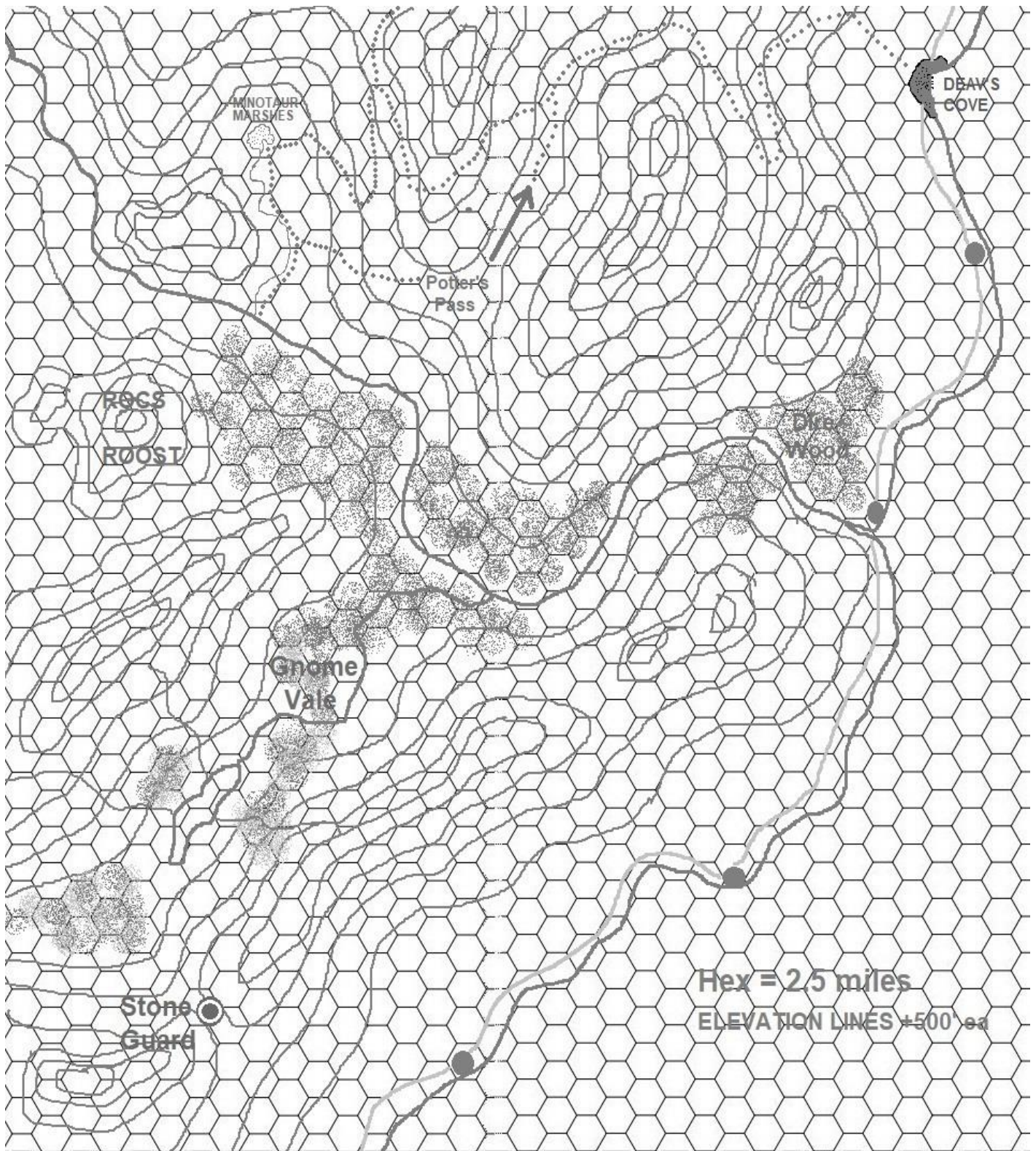
+ You may roll these, or allow the players to roll them if you wish.

HU= human; D,M= dwarf, mountain; ½-ling=halfling; E,G= elf, gray; ½-E = half-elf; ½-orc=half orc; G,H= gnome, hill, ½-E, D= half-drow elf.

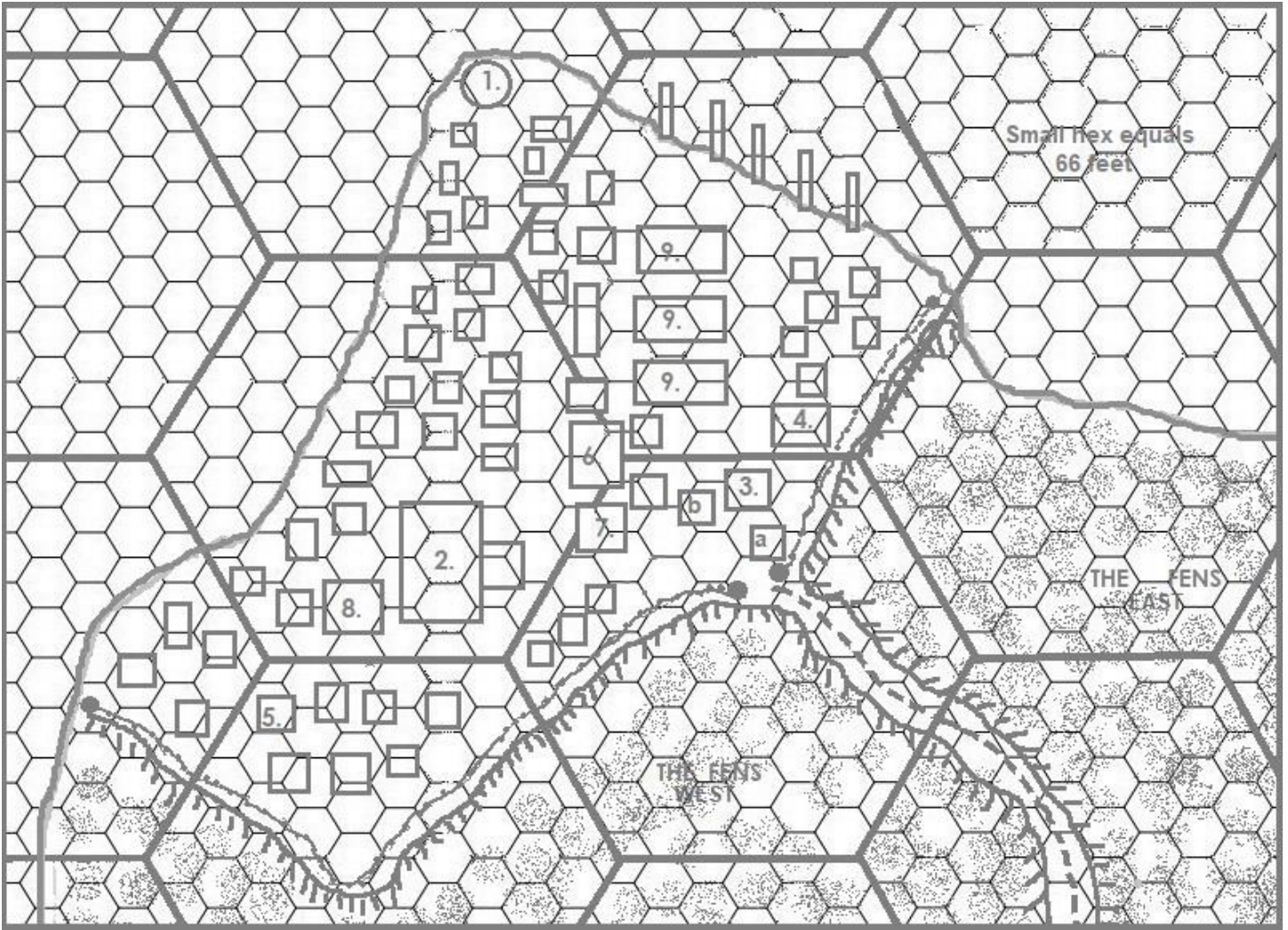
STARTING MONEY, SPELLS, etc.

You may allow the characters to begin with half the maximum amount possible, then have them roll 5 d10 and add the resulting % to this sum to create a reasonable figure for players to outfit the characters. Have magic-users roll to determine available spells or choose them, as you wish.

MAP OF THE REGION/WILDERNESS



VILLAGE & MARSHES MAPS



Hex Equals 1/10 Mile

