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Dungeon Module JD2

Darkland Moors

by Jeff Dee
AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 3-5



A huge, monstrous presence rampages through the farms and villages of Darkland Moors, throwing the locals' formerly peaceful lives into turmoil. What manner of giant is responsible, where is it taking its captives, and what is their fate? To restore peace, our heroes must scour the misty Moors and track the beast to its lair!

This module was originally created as a stretch goal for Jeff Dee's Kickstarter project to re-create his lost paintings from the covers of the classic RPG adventures A1 Slave Pits of the Undercity, A3 Assault on the Aerie of the Slave Lords, and C2 The Ghost Tower of Inverness. The author wishes to thank all of his backers, whose support made this work possible.

Included are three alternate introductions to this outdoor adventure, stat blocks for the standard creatures which appear herein, complete stats for unique creatures especially designed for the adventure, plus GM and player maps.

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DARKLAND MOORS

This is an adventure for a party of 3rd to 5th level characters. It takes place in a sparsely settled rural area along the coast on the outskirts of the Kingdom. The area is called the Darkland Moors, and is famed for the heavy mists which cover it almost constantly.

A young Cyclops named Ampelios recently arrived in the area. He has hidden himself away in the small forest of Dracmere, and taken to hunting at night - carrying off local residents and their livestock to eat at his leisure. His attacks have also caused significant property damage. The local residents would have formed angry mobs to track him down and kill him (or try), but he has been using the region's pervasive mists to foil pursuers.

Many local people have been displaced and are fleeing these attacks. Meanwhile the region's criminal element has been taking advantage of the chaos to prey upon the refugees and loot their abandoned farmhouses. The orcs which were becoming a severe problem until some heroes eliminated their source of magical healing herbs (JD1: Cess-Pit of the Bog Mother) have all but fled, but there are other creatures to worry about out in the misty moors...

If the players do not put an end to Ampelios, it could spell the end for the local settlements!

INTRODUCTION

There are many ways to motivate the party to investigate this region. Here are a few suggestions:

Intro #1: The wizard Karos lives in a secluded tower on a nearby island. He appears to the party in a vision, promising them a reward of 8000 gold if they can end the threat to the Darkland Moors. He can't do it himself, as he is an invalid and a recluse.

Intro #2: One of the PCs grew up in the village of Silvershore (1). That PC receives a message from a relative in Silvershore, saying that locals have raised a reward of 8000 gold which they will pay to any party of adventurers who can put a stop to these attacks.

Intro #3: Notices posted throughout the Kingdom proclaim that the King offers a bounty of 8000 gold to

anyone who can find the beast terrorizing Darkland Moors, and bring him proof that it has been slain.

Regardless of their reasons for getting involved, the party arrive by boat in the village of Silvershore (1).

MAP MOVEMENT

The Darkland Moors terrain consists of flattish, somewhat rugged grasslands. The roads are useful more as guidelines than for fast travel, being made of dirt and full of ruts, scrub growth, mud, and so on.

The PCs can travel up 2 hexes per day on foot, or 4 hexes per day if mounted. The GM may reduce these distances if the PCs use up significant portions of the day doing other things besides travelling.

LIMITED VISIBILITY

The Darkland Moors region is extremely misty, and visibility is poor. From within each map hex the PCs can only see the contents of adjacent hexes – and only those things which appear as symbols on the GM's map. For example, from the town of Highbeach (7) the PCs can barely make out the coastline to the south, the tower (4), and the ruined castle in the swamp. They cannot see the refugees on the road (8) until they travel into that hex.

The most important details that are visible from sites on the Map Key are included in the site descriptions. Consult the GM Map to see what symbol-marked details are visible from within other map hexes.

GETTING LOST

When the PCs are not following a road, and they leave a hex which contains no major landmarks (features visible from its adjacent hexes), and travelling toward a hex which also contains no major landmarks, then they may become lost. Roll 1d12. If a 1 is rolled, the PCs arrive in the hex to the left of their intended destination. If a 12 is rolled, they arrive in the hex to the right of their intended destination.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

The GM should check for 3 random encounter chances per day: in the morning (from the moment the PCs awaken, to the late afternoon), evening (from late afternoon, to the moment the PCs go to sleep), and

overnight (from the moment the PCs go to sleep to the moment they awaken).

Roll 1d6 for each check, and if a 1 is rolled then an encounter is indicated. The GM should make these checks at the start of each new day, doling out the indicated encounters where he deems appropriate during the PCs travels that day. Roll on the following table to see what is encountered:

d6	Random Encounter
1	3d6+1 Bandits (plus one Bandit Leader)
2	4d6 Goblins
3	2d6-1 Refugee(s)
4	2d6 Large Spiders
5	½d6+1 (round up) Giant Wasps
6	2d6 Wolves

If the same encounter occurs twice in a row, re-roll for a different result.

KEY TO DARKLAND MOORS GM MAP

1. This is the village of Silvershore. The locals inform the PCs that a 'giant' has been terrorizing towns and villages in and around the Darkland Moors. It even struck a farmhouse just west of here a few weeks ago, carrying off two of the farmers, but most recent reports come from farther north. Roads lead northeast and southwest from here.
2. There is an abandoned, damaged farmhouse here. It's as if a mighty blow had been dealt to one of its upper corners, knocking down one wall and part of another. Any valuables must have been looted, or taken away by the survivors of the incident, for none remain – just a few broken pieces of simple furniture. The PCs can see a distant stand of trees to the west, and a village to the east.

11 Large Spiders (5, 9, 4, 8, 3, 3, 2, 4, 9, 6, 2 hp) have colonized the wreckage of the farmhouse. There is a little treasure scattered about the web-festooned interior, fallen from the Spiders' victims: 509 copper pieces and 250 silver pieces.

3. A small grove of about 50 trees stands here. The grove is about 300' in diameter. Perhaps it is a remnant of a larger, ancient forest which used to cover this region before men cut it down to plant

their fields. The PCs can see a village to the west from here, and a distant tower to the southwest.

4. There is a short, 2-story tower here. It was once occupied by the son of the minor despot who controlled these lands before they were conquered by the Kingdom, and it has long been abandoned. A road leads northwest toward a village, and also southwest. A larger town is visible to the southeast.

16 Goblins (4, 5, 4, 1, 5, 2, 2, 3, 1, 2, 7, 1, 5, 5, 3, 3 hp) use the tower as their lair. They've moved into the area since the local Orc bands lost their patron, Mazagga the Bog-Mother. The Goblins haven't amassed any major treasure in their new home yet, but they carry 3d6 silver pieces apiece. They will attack any party that enters their hex at night as long as they outnumber them by 2 to 1, or in broad daylight if they outnumber them by 4 to 1.

5. This is the village of Whitby. If the party make inquiries, they learn that the 'giant' has been terrorizing towns and villages to the north recently. He struck farmhouses near the town of Waterbridge a couple of weeks ago, carrying off several victims. A small cluster of trees is visible to the east from here. Roads lead northwest toward a town (the locals can identify it as Waterbridge), and southeast toward a squat tower. If asked, the villagers say it has long been abandoned, but there have been rumors of firelight flickering there for the past few weeks.

6. An old, long-ruined castle stands in the midst of a small swamp along the coast. It was once occupied the minor despot who controlled these lands before they were conquered by the Kingdom. It has abandoned for many years. This was the site of adventure JD1: Cess-Pit of the Bog-Mother. A road leads west toward a town from here, and also off to the northeast.

10 Orcs (3, 3, 3, 2, 5, 2, 2, 4, 6, 2 hp) are encamped here, superstitiously trying to summon back the Bog-Mother, Mazagga the Sea Hag. They carry 2424 copper pieces between them, and their leader (6 hp) has a large bloodstone gem worth 500 gp. That was meant for a ritual sacrifice. He

also carries five of Mazagga healing herb pods. The Orcs in this adventure still have a few doses of Mazagga's healing herb - small, wrinkled pods from an uncommon swamp plant called Muckwort that have been treated with evil alchemy. Each pod instantly restores 2d6 hit points of damage to an evil demi-human who consumes it. They deal 2d6 hit points of damage to any human or friendly demi-human who eats it, at a rate of 1 hit point per round. A character may not fight, cast spells, or perform any other complex action on a round when they eat the herb.

7. This is the town of Highbeach. The PCs overhear talk of 'giant' troubles up north. A road leads west from here, and also east along the edge of a small swamp. The PCs can see a short tower to the northwest. The townsfolk say it has long been abandoned, but there have been rumors of firelight flickering there over the past few weeks.
8. A road leads northeast from here toward a lonely tower, and east toward a town.

There is group of refugee fishermen travelling southeast along the road from the Waterbridge area (specifically, the small lake north of Waterbridge). There are four of them, a young husband and wife (Ursted and Marnya), their 8-year old daughter (Belka), and the wife's older brother (Nerry). The Nerry's wife Belka (the little girl was named for her) was taken by the 'beast'. He has suffered a head injury and is raving with fever. The couple warn the PCs about the Goblins residing at the tower in area 4.

9. The PCs can see a town to the west, a village to the southwest, and an isolated stand of trees to the southeast from here.

When the PCs enter this hex, they are visited by an astral projection from the wizard Karos (see Intro option #1), telling them that the 'giant' is in fact a rather young Cyclops, and urging them to hurry because several of the people he has carried off are still alive. Karos doesn't know precisely where the Cyclops' lair is, but he assures the PCs 'you are getting close now'. He cannot give them any tangible assistance because he is only a

projection, but he assures them he will be watching their progress and intervene if he can if they have dire need of him.

10. This is the town of Waterbridge. A large, ornate wooden bridge crosses a stream which runs from the northeast to the southwest, giving the town its name. If they ask around, the PCs learn that the 'giant' has been attacking farms and fishing shacks to the north, killing or carrying off many victims, and was last seen in the vicinity of Aelwick just a few days ago. One rumor says that a local farmer managed to blind the 'giant' in one eye with his pitchfork before being eaten. The road across the bridge leads toward a small lake to the northwest, and toward a distant village to the southeast.
11. There is a body of water here, which could be considered a small lake or a large pond. Fishing huts lines its shores. A couple of the huts along the northern shore have been destroyed, and all of the fishermen have fled. A road leads around its west side, heading off to the northwest and the southeast. The southwest road leads to a town.
- 5 Giant Wasps (24, 20, 26, 22, 21 hp) have taken advantage of the exodus, and made a nest in an abandoned fishing shack on a tiny island out in the pond. Players initially encounter only the first two of them, and the rest are in the nest. There are two gems in their nest: an excellent azurite stone worth 50 gp and a piece of lapis lazuli worth 10 gp.
12. This is the village of Astwick. If they inquire around town, the party learn that the 'giant' is in fact a small Cyclops. It attacked here just 2 days ago. The villagers think it lives in the Forest of Dracmere, and that it takes the people it carries off to eat at its leisure there. They've heard nothing from the villages up the road to the northeast in weeks, and none of their messengers to those villages have returned. Roads lead northeast into the forest, east past a marsh, and southeast.
13. The Forest of Dracmere. It is rather small, consisting of very large and ancient trees with very wide trunks, and densely overgrown with tall bushes making it difficult to pass through except by the road – which leads deeper into the forest to

the northwest, or to a village at the edge of the forest to the southwest.

As the PCs travel from this hex toward area 14, a herd of deer come bolting out of the mists – fleeing from the Cyclops. They hear him laughing and crashing through the undergrowth to the northwest, but they can't see him yet.

14. Ampelios the Cyclops (40 hp) dwells here, just to the east of the road, in a giant lean-to that he has constructed from several huge fallen trees. Within the lean-to he's dug a crude pit which holds six of his captives – one from each town and village on the Darkland Moors map - still alive and eager to be rescued! See the Forest of Dracmere description (area 13), and the map on p. 10 (the scale is 10 yards per square). Characters can only move at a crawl through the undergrowth, making a lot of noise, and not at all through tree trunks.

Ampelios is young but not naïve. He has set up crude but effective noise-making 'traps' in a 200' radius around his lair. Every PC who attempts to come within 200' of the lean-to must roll their Intelligence or less on 2d10 to see and avoid one of these hazards. Those with an ability to detect traps get that chance plus the Intelligence check. If a trap is detected, and disabled by a PC with that ability, then others may approach the lean-to from that direction without risk. But if any of the PCs set off a noise-maker, then Ampelios will be alerted and surprise will be lost. He will then begin hurling logs (he has 12 of them stacked up at his lean-to).

If the PCs defeat the Cyclops, they can loot his lean-to for treasure (3200 cp, 800 gp, a 500 gp aquamarine, and a Potion of Human Control) and rescue the captives. Each of the captives' families will reward the party with 30-180 gp if the PCs deliver them safely home personally.

15. A road leads off into the Moors to the northeast and southeast. The party hear distant howling as they pass through this area, making it impossible to sleep if they try to camp here, but they never catch sight of a single wolf. Mysterious lights are seen sparkling in the distance to the northwest, however, even in broad daylight.

16. A town can be seen to the northeast.

9 Giant Lightning Bugs (11, 5, 13, 11, 9, 6, 15, 5, 6 hp) use this area for their breeding grounds. The twinkle of these creatures' flashing abdomens can be seen from adjacent hexes any time of day. Many of softly-glowing larvae are hidden amid the tall grass. There is treasure here, apparently collected as some part of their mating ritual and deposited with the larvae: a pearl (100 gp), a garnet (100 gp), a large piece of jet (200 gp), a moss agate (10 gp), a ruby (1000 gp), a small sardonyx (25 gp), a small topaz (500 gp), a small star rose quartz (25 gp), and a small onyx (25 gp).

17. This is the town of Eastburn. If they make inquiries, the PCs are told that the 'giant' has been attacking farms to the west, and was recently seen near Aelwick. Strange lights can be seen seen sparkling in the distance to the southwest, even in broad daylight. The locals warn the PCs about these 'fireflies', if asked – but also mention that there may be treasure there. A road leads off into the moors, either to the west or the southeast.

19 Bandits (4, 5, 1, 8, 2, 1, 5, 3, 8, 5, 6, 4, 1, 1, 5, 1, 4, 5, 8 hp) plus their Bandit Leader 'Falkon' (18 hp) are making a fast buck in this time of crisis. Operating from the cellar of the Club & Sword tavern, they go out in groups of 2-8 to strong-arm refugees on the road or in town to hand over their meagre valuables in exchange for 'protection'. If the PCs talk openly about ending the 'giant', the gang will attack them in force on the road soon after they leave town (or attack them in their beds at the inn, if they stay in town overnight). Otherwise, the PCs may learn of the gang from talking to the locals, and decide to do something about it. The Bandits carry 2d4 gold apiece. They also have 1000 sp and 900 gp in their lair.

18. These remote shacks are badly damaged and have been abandoned for several months. They used to be home to a group of penniless vagabonds who came south from the center of the Kingdom, hoping to find acceptance in Darkland Moors. Ampelios the Cyclops came through this area on his way to the Forest of Dracmere and scattered them. Nobody paid much attention at the time.

10 Wolves (16, 11, 10, 10, 14, 11, 8, 16, 16, 11 hp) have moved into the wreckage. There's a little treasure in the shacks: 141 cp, 16 sp, 63 ep, 37 gp, and 42 pp.

19. The road leads east, or west past a marsh. A cluster of ramshackle huts in great disrepair is visible to the northeast.

The PCs encounter 6 refugee farmers; 2 mature women from Aelwick with 4 children in their care. The women are the children's nannies, and they fled when the Cyclops attacked their prosperous farm two nights ago. They have no idea whether the parents are still alive. They're headed to Eastburn, where one of the women has family. They beg the players to let the people in Aelwick know where they've gone.

20. A streambed flows from the northwest toward the southwest. The edge of a marsh is visible to the northwest.

The party comes across a hand-drawn cart, which has become stuck in the mud at the edge of the stream and subsequently abandoned. There is no sign of the owners. The cart contains a few meagre possessions (chairs, bundles of clothing, etc.) and a simple lock-box holding 1 platinum coin.

21. There is a marsh here, just south of the road. The road runs east to west. The edge of a forest is visible to the northwest, with a town at its edge up the road to the west. A stream flows out of the marsh to the southeast.

4 Fen Wolves (13, 17, 15, 18 hp) will stalk and ambush the party if they enter this area. They have a little treasure in their lair in the marsh: 400 ep, 100 gp, and 400 pp are mixed in with the gnawed bones of their victims.

Stat Blocks

Ampelios (Cyclops, Young) (AC 3, MV 15", HD 9, Club 4d6, IN Low, SZ L)

Ampelios is a young Cyclops, barely 14' tall. He left or was driven from among his own kind across the Eastly Sea, and has taken up residence in the Forest of Dracmere.

- **Hurl Log:** Cyclops delight in hurling boulders at their opponents, but Ampelios has to make do with huge, short logs. He can fling them up to 10", doing 3d8 damage.



Bandits (AC 7, MV 12", HD 1, Sword 1d8, IN Avg, SZ M)

These are locals who've reacted to the crisis by preying upon their displaced former neighbors.

Bandit Leader (AC 5, MV 12", HD 3, Sword 1d8, IN Avg, SZ M)

Fen Wolf (AC 6, MV 18", HD 3+3, Bite 2d4, IN Semi, SZ M)

Fen Wolves are a Dire Wolf offshoot who haunt the misty swamps.

- **Warm Fur:** The Fen Wolf's heavy coat gives it a +3 bonus on saving throws vs. cold. The coat of a Fen Wolf can be crafted into a suit of leather armor which provides AC 6 protection, and grants the wearer +3 on saves vs. cold.

Cyclops, Young (see Ampelios)

Goblins (AC 6, MV 6", HD 1-1, Javelin 1d6, IN Avg/Low, SZ S)

These Goblins live in secret underground cave complexes which dot the Moors. They usually keep to themselves, but they have recently begun to emerge to see what all the fuss is about and do a bit of pillaging.

- **Dayblind:** Goblins hate full daylight, and attack at -1 when in sunlight.
- **Infravision:** Goblins have 60' infravision.

Lightning Bugs, Giant (AC 5, MV 5" ground/10" flying, HD 2, Mandible 1d6+1, IN Non, SZ M)

Lightning Bugs are 4 ½ foot long flying beetles. They're rather territorial, attacking to defend their glowing larvae from all intruders.

- **Electrical Spark:** Lightning Bugs emit occasional flashes of bright green light from their abdomen. Roll 1d6 for each bug at the start of each new combat round. On a roll of 1 or 2, that bug's light glows during that round. The glow lights up an area 5" in diameter, centered on the bug, and can be seen from several miles away even during the day.
- **Photophilic:** Lightning Bugs are attracted to light. Each round, they move toward the closest light in the area that's brighter than the ambient light conditions – so at night they will move toward quite dim lights, while during the day it takes brighter light to attract them. If they reach a creature emitting or carrying light that attracted them, and it's not another Lightning Bug, then they attack it. If they reach another Lightning Bug that's being attacked in melee, then they attack its enemy. A bug that's glowing isn't attracted to other lights on that round.
- **Electrified:** An attacker who hits a Lightning Bug with a metal weapon in melee while it's glowing suffers 1d4 electrical damage.

Orc (AC 6, MV 9"/N", HD 1, Sword d8/Claw d4/Claw d4, IN Avg, SZ M)

Refugee (AC 9, MV 12", HD 1d6 hp, makeshift weapon 1d6, IN Avg, SZ M)

- This is usually a non-combat encounter. The refugee(s) are wary of strangers, but if approached peacefully and respectfully they'll repeat any news about the 'giant' that can be heard at the nearest town or village.

Spider, Large (AC 8, MV 6" ground/15" web, HD 1+1, Bite 1 damage plus poison, IN Non, SZ S)

- Wall-Crawling: These creatures can walk on walls and ceilings.
- Poison: If their bite hits, the victim must make a poison save at +2 or be paralyzed for 1 day.

Wasp, Giant (AC 4, MV 6" ground/21" flying, HD 4, Bite 2d4/Poisoned Sting 1d4, IN Non, SZ M)

- Poison: Victims of a Giant Wasp's sting must save vs. poison or be permanently paralyzed, and die within 1d4+1 days unless an anti-poison spell or antidote is applied.
- Abduction: It takes a wasp a full combat round to pick up a paralyzed victim, giving the party a chance to intervene. Victims are carried off to the wasp's nest (1 hex in a random direction, re-roll directions that don't make sense), to be eaten by the wasps' larvae at the end of that d4+1 day period.
- Flammable Wings: Any attack by flame burns a wasp's wings off, rendering it flightless.

Wolf (AC 7, MV 18", HD 2+2, Bite 1d4+1, IN Semi, SZ S)

CREDITS

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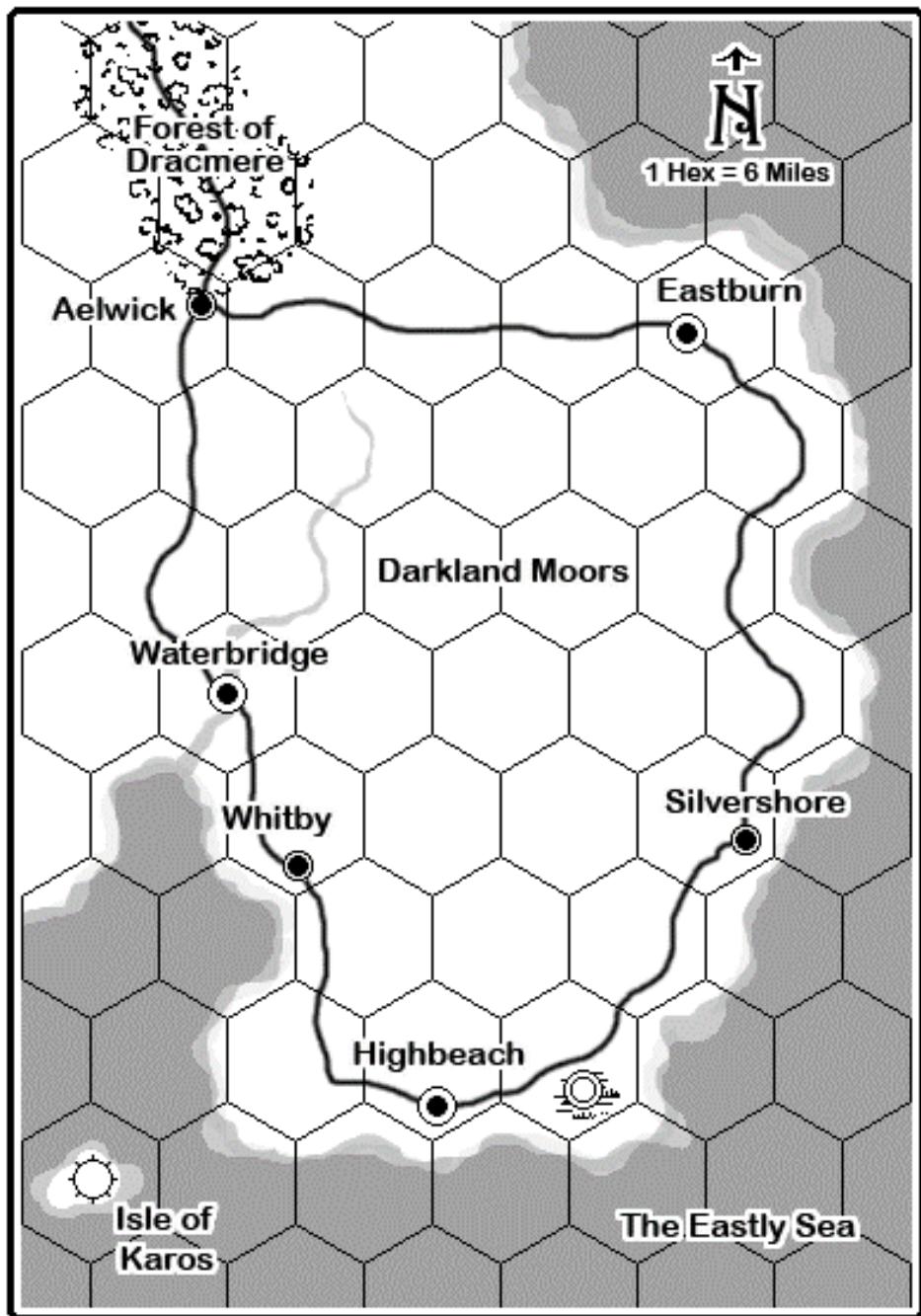
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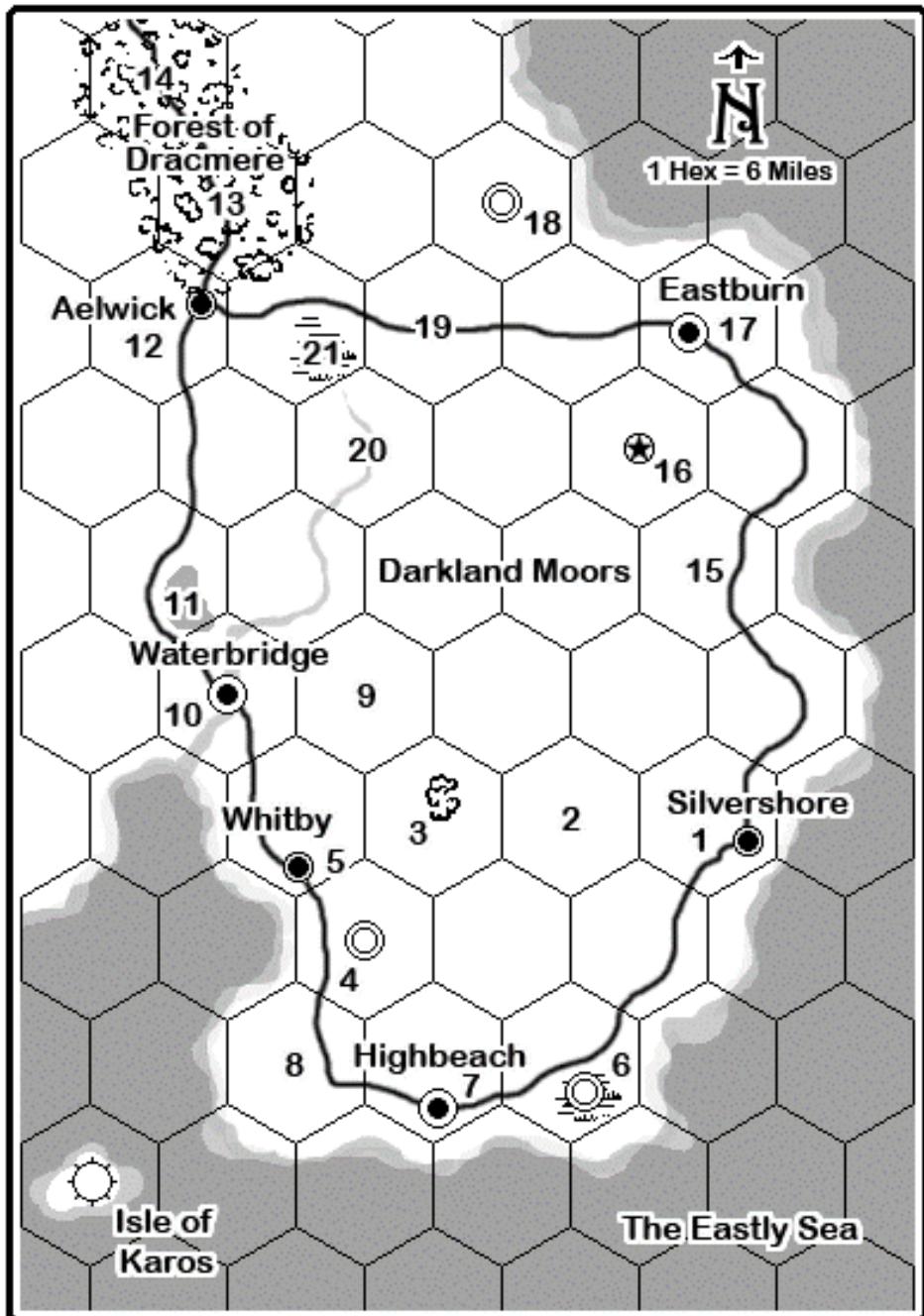
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JD2 Darkland Moors Player Map



JD2 Darkland Moors GM Map



JD2: Cyclops Campsite GM Map

