

MONSTERS IN THE MIST

For Characters Levels 1st to 3rd



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The adventure that began in the village of Hogg Bottem has taken a strange turn. A simple quest that led the characters to an oddly quiet community, became an expedition in search of a missing priest, and more. As the intrepid explorers discovered, long forgotten dungeons and clues gave them hints to a presence in the marshes that could possibly be the cause of the lethargic condition of the villagers. Now, having investigated all the land locations they could, they turn their attention to the misty marshes. What will they find? Will they even return to tell the tale?

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INTRODUCTION

This is the 3rd module in the adventure trilogy involving the village of Hogg Bottem and the Minotaur Marshes. Characters that experienced the first two parts should be well into level 2, with some being level 3—or even 4—at the start of this scenario. While this installment is able to stand more on its own than the middle adventure, it is strongly recommended that if you (the DM) choose to run the it separately, that you utilize as much of the earlier modules as you can to provide the players/characters with as much assistance as possible. (This should not be an *issue*, as the previous adventures can be accessed as easily as this one.). To avoid repetitiveness, some maps included within do not have the accompanying text that appeared in the earlier modules. The full background and history behind the adventure is replaced with the summary.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The characters were commissioned by a third party, or motivated by personal reasons, to journey inland to a small, isolated village called Hogg Bottem. Upon arrival they found a community of pleasant, but absentminded folk; among them were the original founders of the village—centuries past! As they searched long abandoned buildings, they began to uncover not only the mystery behind a person they sought, but one deeper, perhaps the cause of the villagers' condition. The majority of the clues found pointed to some force, or thing, that might still be within the marsh.

NOTES FOR THE DM

It is possible that your players have benefited from unusual luck, and that one or more characters within their group are at 4th level—a cleric, druid and thief being the most likely. If such is the case, the adventure is designed to deal with this; you need not make it any harder than it already is. For, in fact, this last part of the series is likely to be the hardest for the characters (and their players). If it becomes necessary, you may allow one, or more, of the village residents to lend what assistance they can; possibly providing long forgotten scrolls or potions of healing, etc., that they just recently discovered among their belongings.

This adventure takes place, primarily, in the marshes; meaning, outside. It also requires the characters to spend much, if not most, of their time in or on the water. The rowboat provided for them in the previous adventure (N7) is still available for their use. But in this scenario, the characters will be venturing out onto deeper water as they explore the entire marsh. To assist you (the DM) and them in the procedural aspect of nautical movement, the following tables are provided first.

Move/Rowboat	Zone A	Zone B	Zone C	Zone D
Normal oar	9	8	7	6
Maximum oar	6	5	4	3
Normal sail	*	5	4	3
Maximum sail	**	4	3	2

The figures above indicate the number of Rounds required to move through/go the distance of, one hex in the marshes.

Move/Afoot (Swimming)	10"	(11")	(12")	(12")
Base 12"	10"	(11")	(12")	(12")
Base 9"	7"	(8")	(9")	(9")
Base 6"	4"	(5")	(6")	(6")

The following section deals with each zone.

Zone A

Examination of the map reveals that this zone is the outermost, running along the entire shoreline, and inward of up to distances of 2 hexes (2/10th mile); note that it also has two interior *lanes* that run the entire east-west axis mid-marsh, and from the center to the northern shore. On average, each (a) zone begins at a depth of 1 to 2 feet at the shore, increasing until reaching around 6 feet deep, where the next zone begins. While it may seem that the rate of 9/6 to go one tenth of a mile is rather slow, the sheer volume of moss, 3 to 8 inches thick, floating upon the top of the water, and the tall reeds and small trees reaching up from below, make passing through this very difficult. Thus, there is no movement rate for sailing in this zone (*/**). In places, the canopy of trees is thick, often mingling to produce a kind of *roof* above the water, with low hanging limbs and tree moss hanging down as far as the water level at times; such places are not marked on the map and you (the DM) will have to determine where they exist. (Determine randomly if need be.) 70 per cent of each hex in this zone is obstructed by growth and normal visibility during the day is 10 to 60 feet because of it.

Zone B

With water depths ranging from 6 to 9 feet, there are fewer small trees and reeds encountered here than the previous zone. The moss floating upon the water is less thick by 1 to 2 inches, and becomes patchier, with spaces of open water as small as a square yard to as large as a football field. The tall marsh reeds and trees that dominate the shoreline are replaced with larger trees, encountered alone or small clusters of 2 to 5 spread throughout the hex; these have few limbs capable of reaching the water, and their leafage lessens near their maximum height of 18 to 20' above the water; large swamp birds will be heard and sometimes seen nesting atop these, or flying to and from them. In open areas sailing is possible. 50 per cent of each hex in this zone is likewise obstructed by growth, with visibility being 30 to 90 feet in such spaces.

Zone C

This is where the *deep water* begins. On average, water depth per hex is from 9 to 15 feet. However, in some hexes, small islands rise sharply above the water like mountain peaks. These have no shore, and stepping off of one into the water immediately plunges anyone doing so straight down for 75 per cent of the water depth before the islet base begins to spread out. The open water of these hexes makes sailing under maximum conditions possible. Though patches of floating moss appear occasionally, drifting along, these are not thicker than 2 inches; the smallest of these being a yard square and the largest the size of a baseball diamond. While they pose no actual threat, they can hide floating logs and other debris beneath the surface that, when encountered, can wreak havoc with water craft; as well as large predators waiting to attack! 25 per cent of each hex in this zone contains growth as described, allowing visibility of 60 to 120 feet in such places.

Zone D

The smallest of the zones in dimensions, these hexes are 99 per cent free of the flora previously described. They are usually clear, open water of depths from 15 to 25 feet and are often cluttered with water fowl stopping to take rest before continuing their migratory process. In some cases, groups as large as 750 mixed types will be found. These areas harbor the largest of the deep-water creatures; though such are seldom encountered and, only on rare occasion, are seen as shadowy shapes moving about far below.

VISIBILITY

Local conditions contribute heavily to one's ability to see within the marshes. Even in open areas, overcast, time of day and air moisture will affect the character's ability to see clearly. The following table is offered as a general guideline, and you (the DM) should alter, expand and/or delete what doesn't work for you, to something that does. Note that the ranges given in the table reflect only the character's ability to *clearly define* what she/he is seeing at the distance shown; seeing something beyond the range noted (up to the character's maximum normal range) might still be possible.

TIME OF EVENT	CONDITION OF EVENT			
	OVERCAST*	RAINING*	FOG, THIN	FOG, THICK
Early Morning	100'	70'	40'	10'
Midday	110'	80'	50'	20'
Afternoon	120'	90'	60'	30'
Early Evening/Dusk	100'	70'	40'	10'
Night	80'	50'	20'	00'

* The above pertains to Zones **D** on the map. For each zone moving toward shore, reduce the figure by 10'. The ability of certain races to see with Infra-vision does not alter the above table.

RANDOM CREATURE ENCOUNTERS

The Minotaur Marshes is home to, and has been for many decades (even centuries), a variety of animals. Those that are considered to be *monsters*, however, are not typically treated as indigenous creatures. Yet many of these have actually resided within the marshes for quite a while; having evolved from manipulation described in the first module in the series. That being said, it is possible for other beasts and things to find themselves within the marshes at the same time as the characters. The table below represents only a cross-section of all the possible marsh-type encounters that might occur. You (the DM) should expand it, alter it or delete parts to customize it to your satisfaction. Use the standard 6 checks per day (morning; noon; evening; night; midnight; pre-dawn) to determine if an encounter occurs. A roll of 1 on a d10 indicates such is the case.

Creature/s Appearing	Zone a	Zone b	Zone c	Zone d	Information Found
Algoid (1)	2-4	--	--	--	Fiend Folio, p.11
Babbler (1-4)	5-6	2	--	--	Fiend Folio, p.13
Catoblepas (1)	7	--	--	--	Monster Manual, p.13
Crab, giant (1-6)	8-10	3-5	2-5	--	Monster Manual, p.15
Crayfish, giant (1-4)	11	6-7	6	2-6	Monster Manual, p.15
Crocodile, normal (1-12)	12-13	8-10	7-11	7-9	Monster Manual, p.15
Crocodile, giant (1)	14	11	12-14	10-16	Monster Manual, p.15
Frog, giant (2-20)	15-16	12-13	15-16	17-19	Monster Manual, p.41
Leech, giant (2-8)	17-18	14-16	17	--	Monster Manual, p.60
Lizard Man (1-10)	19	--	--	--	Monster Manual, p.62
Naga, water (1)	--	--	18	20-21	Monster Manual, p.72
Shambling mound (1)	20	17	--	--	Monster Manual, p.87
Snake, constrictor (1-2)	21	18-20	19	--	Monster Manual, p.88
Toad, giant (1-6)	22-23	21-23	20-22	--	Monster Manual, p.95
Turtle, snapping* (1)	24	24	23-24	22-24	Monster Manual/See Below

The number of creatures above (#) may differ from that given in the referred manual. This has more to do with the location of the Marshes than a general area. All technical information regarding each creature shown can be found in the *Information Found* source cited. Consult these works before conducting this adventure and have all pertinent data at hand before you begin the module. The exception to this is the last entry, noted with an *. It is because this creature has been recalibrated specifically for this adventure, that the information about it appears here. (See Table below.)

TURTLE, GIANT SNAPPING—

AGES	HP/HD	ARMOR CLASS	MOVE	DAMAGE	LENGTH*	WEIGHT**	XP VALUE
1. VERY YOUNG	1	4/7/ (5)	2"//3"	2-8	12'10"	1520/1460	469 +6/hp
2. YOUNG	2	3/6/ (5)	2"//3"	3-12	14'12"	1580/1520	670 +8/hp
3. SUB-ADULT	3	2/6/ (4)	3'//3"	4-16	16'14"	1640/1580	956 +10/hp
4. YOUNG ADULT	4	1/5/ (4)	3"//2"	5-20	18'16"	1700/1640	1365 +12/hp
5. ADULT	5	0/5/ (3)	3"//2"	6-24	20'18"	1760/1700	1950 +14/hp
6. OLD	6	0/4/ (3)	3"//2"	7-28	20'18"	1820/1760	2535 +16/hp
7. VERY OLD	7	0/3/ (3)	1"//2"	8-32	20'18"	1880/1820	3120 +18/hp
8. ANCIENT	8	0/3/ (2)	1"//2"	9-36	20'18"	1940/1880	3705 +20/hp

* male/female, length of carapace; ** male/female, weight in LBS.

AC is listed for shell/head, neck and limbs/ (head neck and limbs withdrawn)

Move is for land/swimming

The giant-snapping turtle is very similar to a dragon in regards to its ages and development. As it grows, its shell and skin become harder, it becomes able to withstand more physical attacks (hp, improved AC), and the damage it can inflict per bite increases significantly. Its major weakness due to aging is that it gets slower.

Note: for the encounter listed above, it is suggested that you *tailor* the strength of the creature to provide the best challenge for the characters, allowing them a reasonable chance of success at killing it or driving it away. Thus, only ages 1-3 should be considered.

Also, unless you decide otherwise, the creatures encountered from this process will not be carrying any treasure.

RANDOM EVENTS & HAPPENINGS

In addition to the sudden appearance of a, possibly hostile and aggressive, creature that the characters may come across, it is possible for *things* to occur as they explore the marshes. But even those deemed mundane under normal circumstances, will seem more startling to the senses of the characters, due to the intensity of the danger always lurking nearby. The list that follows is limited, but can easily be expanded and modified to enhance the experiences suggested.

01. A sudden force beneath the rowboat bumps it, causing the occupants to lurch. / Or, something within the water bumps into a character, nearly causing her/him to lose their footing and fall into the murky marsh.
02. A loud splash occurs nearby, causing ripples in the water felt by the characters.
03. The piercing scream of an animal disrupts a moment of calm.
04. The sound of buzzing insects becomes deafening, though none are to be seen.
05. A horrific stench of decay begins to overwhelm the characters. It dissipates after 1 round.
06. The sound of a child giggling can be heard.
07. The shadow (or shape, depending on time of event) of a large avian creature passes overhead.
08. During a period of heavy fog, the sound of a bell ringing can be heard periodically *.
09. The smell of smoke, as if from a campfire, fills the air for 1 round before being broken by the breeze.
10. The sound of wood cracking suddenly occurs.
11. The whispers of women talking float through the air.
12. A female party member feels an odd tickling on the back of her neck.

While the above are random events, you do not have to determine them by the roll of a die. The list is provided to give you an idea of the kinds of sensations you can attempt to stimulate within the players' characters during their exploration of the marshes. I strongly recommend you expand upon this concept to create even scarier, mysterious moments for the players. A good point of reference is the DMG p.217 under **Air Currents** and **Odors, Unexplained Sounds and Weird Noises**. Also, the event marked * can be associated with the bell ringer within the village, and you should make sure to utilize that material when the characters enter the marshes.

KEY TO THE MARSHES/SET ENCOUNTERS

1. THE CREATURE Upon entering this hex, characters will hear loud splashing occurring now and again. When/should they reach the center, they have a 25 % chance of spotting a large shape just beneath the surface before it closes on them and strikes. It is an immature version of its species, never allowed to progress to adulthood due to the magical contamination of the marshes. Complete information regarding it is found in MM2 (p.67) and should be studied thoroughly before conducting the encounter. It is a **Tadhemoth!** AC 4/body, 8/tongue; M 16" (swims only); HD 4 (20-24 hps only); ATK 1; D 2-16 (bite); AL Neutral; Size, M (6' long); XP 3240 + 4/hp. If the surrounding area is searched, there is a chance characters will discover the creature's lair (13% per turn). This appears similar to a beaver lodge, with most of the logs and materials submerged; though lacking the inner chambers of air. Loosely scattered within this is a rotted wooden chest that will dissolve upon being touched, revealing a pile of coins (1298 CP, 376 SP, 45 GP), an object covered in mud (+1 hammer), and a slender metal stick (*wand of Magic Missiles*). All being on the bottom of the marsh beneath 6 feet of water.

2. BUG PATROL Wandering about this hex is a group of creatures hunting for food. Their lair is actually five hexes northeast of here, at the base of an island. When/if they and the characters get within 60 feet of each other, the creatures will move with full speed to attack. They are **Marsh Beetles** (Water variant)! #APP 4; AC 5; M 3"//12"; HD 2 (15, 13, 11, 9 hps); ATK 1; D 1-10; AL Neutral; Size M (6' long). If the characters are in the rowboat, the creatures will attempt to surface beneath it to capsize it. They have no treasure. (You may allow them such at their lair, where 8 more will be waiting.)

3. DEEP WATER SHADOW A **Giant Gar** rules this zone and can be encountered within any full or half hex. It will attack the rowboat itself 70% of the time. It is AC 3; M 30" HD 8(40 hps); ATK 1; D 5-20; AL Neutral; Size L (21-30') Consult MM (p. 42) for details regarding its swallow-attack.

4. THE CRAWLING WATER Being a hex within zone A, the depth of the marsh here ranges from 1 to 3 feet due to its closeness to shore. It is thick with reeds growing as high as 7 feet that often reach up and into the branches of small trees. Rowing or poling a boat would be the usual way of moving through the center of this hex, if not for the fact that it is full of creatures that make doing so a struggle; and attempting to walk through, nearly impossible. For slithering within the water and bumping against each other is a large colony of **Giant Leeches!** Congregating around a central hub are 48 1HD,32 2HD,16 3HD, and 8 4HD types; AC 9; M 3"; HD (as stated/roll hit points when needed); ATK 1; D 1-4 + drain blood; AL Neutral; Size S to M (1HD=1-2' long; 2HD=3-4' long; 3HD=5-6' long; 4HD=7' long) There is a 50% chance that a bite from one of these will cause disease that will be fatal in 2-5 weeks unless cured. If half or more of these are destroyed/killed, the bulbous hub around which the creatures encircle will rise out of the water revealing the Queen-Mother of this group. She is a **Colossal Leech!** Having 10 HD (60 hps) and doing 2-16 points of damage per her bite, she can be a huge threat to the entire party of characters. Fortunately, because of her tremendous size (12' long) she is rather slow, able to attack only once every other round as she moves about. Though not known for possessing treasure, because of the curiosity of some recent explorers to the marshes, the following may be discovered (15% chance/turn) if the area is thoroughly searched. 300 – 1800 PP; 20 gems (total value 5,000 GP); 12 pieces of jewelry (total value 11,000 GP); *wand of fire* (92 c.) Note: roll the chance to find per turn and if successful, one type of the treasure will be found (coins/gems/jewelry/item), until all is found, or the characters cease looking.

5. THE SOUND OF SILENCE When characters approach this hex in a small alcove of the marsh, they will be perplexed by the lack of insect sounds; an absolute absence of buzzing and annoying biting. The moment they enter the marked hex they will suddenly be overwhelmed by a thunderous croaking noise. Clearly made from the amphibian creatures dwelling within, this is the lair of a large colony of *mutated* **Giant Frogs!** AC7; M 3"//9"; HD 80x1HD, 60x2HD, 40x3HD (roll hit points when needed, or use median per type); ATK 1; D 1-3/1-6/2-8 (by HD type); AL Neutral; Size S to M (4'-5'-6' long per type). Read the MM (p.41) regarding their ability to leap (max. 18", height 30') and swallow ability. This *pad* (colony) is ruled by a larger than usual bull. AC5; HD7+3 (38 hps); D 1-10. If characters wade into it, attacking, the creatures will immediately act to defend themselves, otherwise, they will attempt to drive away intruders with their deafening croaking. They can maintain this ability for 3 Turns and, as a group, any invader subject to the noise must make a Save vs. Breath, or it will become completely deaf during this period and for 1 to 10 rounds after the croaking ceases. Under attack, the colony croaking is diminished as it defends itself, and only small groups of individuals will be able to continue while their brethren take up their defense; during this period all invaders have a bonus to their save of 2. Spell-casting intruders that rely on verbal components to their spells are subject to a penalty. This essentially means, the spell caster must make a successful check as if the frog-targeted has a MR of 20%. If the spell is an AOE type, failure means the spell simply didn't work. This penalty lasts until the deafness dissipates. In addition, the effect of the continuous croaking is disorienting to the invader, causing all physical attacks attempted to suffer a -4 to hit and damage as long as the croaking is in progress and should the intruder fail his or her save. These creatures are usually without treasure, but the marshes being what they are, the King of this Pad happens to have a giant, black pearl worth 3,500 GP in its gullet.

6. THE GRAVE & THE NEST A quick glance at the map reveals three small islands close together. The two northern most isles have a surface area of about 270 feet long by 180 feet wide; the smaller (southern) one being about 260 by 170. They each extend above the waterline from 1 foot at the marsh edge, to 15 feet, and are covered with trees, reeds and moss. If you (the DM) wish to, you may create detailed maps of each, adding slopes and flora for your intended purpose. On the north eastern island, hidden by thick overgrowth, is a gravesite. When the characters discover this island, there is a chance they will spot a swan swimming nearby (15%). If left alone it will ignore them, but will follow if they leave their boat and explore the island.



Exploring the south end of the island will reveal a grave. It will require 3 to 10 rounds to clear the growth from off the mound and headstone. Upon the latter is the inscription: **Unknown Man, may he Rest in Peace**. Beneath the mound are the bones of a human. If an attempt is begun to dig up the remains, a flock of 32 **male swan** will appear at the shore, honking loudly, as a human female steps out of the foliage, sword in hand, bow across shoulder. She is Valene, a **Swanmay/Ranger**, level 10! (S18/12, I14, W15, D18, C17, CH10), 93 hps, 5'8", 151 lbs., ATK 3/2 (sword) or 2 (bow), D 1-8/1-12 (+6) or 2 x 1-6 (+6 each, due to special bow built to her physique), AC 7(swan)/3(human), M 3"//15"(swan) or 15", AL Chaotic Good. She appears to be a mature woman with streaks of grey in her hair. (She is, in fact, 55 years old!) Her spells at-ready are: Animal Friendship, Speak with Animals(D); Shield (MU).

Swans: AC7, M 3"/18", HD 1+2, ATK 3, D 1/1/1-2, SA (See MM2, p.116), SD Surprised on a 1 in 10, AL Neutral, Size M.

Valene will intercede should the characters attempt to explore the grave. She will insist they leave it alone, and depart. If asked about it, she will convey only that it is the body of a man she found dying, long ago, in the swamp. That she tried to heal his wounds but was unable to prevent his death. She never learned his name, and assumed he likely came from the village on the south banks of the marshes, but being a recluse, she never investigated to verify such. Instead, she brought the man to the island (her winter home) and buried him. He has laid thus, unmolested, for over two decades. She knows nothing of the man, other than he was incoherent at the time she found him. She suspects he may have been the victim of the marsh *witches*, since those that encounter the creatures and survive often exhibit the mindlessness that he did. If asked about these creatures, she knows only that they came to the marshes a few decades ago, and that she—and her friends—stay clear of the big island; and will simply warn the characters to stay clear of the it, as she suspects it to be their habitat.

You, and the players that have experienced the first two adventures in this series, will immediately realize that the remains of the man are, most likely, those of the missing priest—Brother Filus. Should they feel obligated to take them back to Hogg Bottem, allow the characters to negotiate the case. Roleplay Valene, allowing the players to put forth their creative reasons that she should allow them to do so. The more reasonable they sound, the higher the likelihood she will agree. You may, also, simply allow a die roll based on the highest Charisma in the group, with a roll of that or less indicating success. Should they succeed, you may award them bonus XP for doing so. If they fail, and leave the remains untouched, you may have Valene offer to aid the group with her spell powers on occasion. If they are belligerent and ransack the grave, she, and the swans, will retaliate. In addition, if they are of non-evil alignment, each will lose XP!

Valene has a nest on the north side of the island where she usually stores her gear. She is only in the marshes during the Autumn-Winter months. Among her possessions is her spell-book: Friends-Mending-Read Magic-Shield.

7. AVIAN RETREAT Hiding among the tall reeds, here, is a flock of swans—pens and young—that complete the group of cobs found at area 6. There are 32 **adult female swans** (same stats as males given above) and 1-2 young per pair/of 16 adults; the cygnets being immature (but fully grown), will attack as having 1-1 HD. Though not collectors of treasure per se, if the area is searched for at least 3 Turns there is a 45% chance the characters will find an odd shaped figurine. Appearing to be a large fly (1" long), it is, in fact, a *Figurine of Wonderous Power/Ebony Fly!* It is worth 400 XP/4,000 GP. Details about it can be found in the DMG (p.144). After 3 Turns, each one thereafter spent searching decreases the chance of finding the item by 10%.

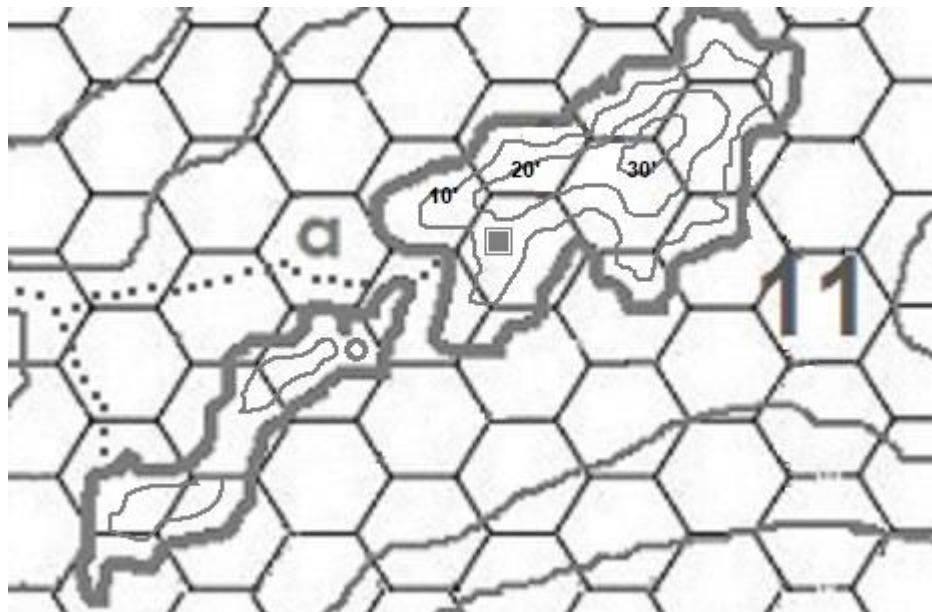
8. TRAILS Easy to spot and follow, several open tracks can be used by the party in this portion of the marshes. Averaging 6 feet in width, these paths can be traveled on foot by even short members of the group; the water depth being from 2 to 3 feet deep requires only the shortest of races—halfling and gnome—to be either ported on the boat, or carried on the backs and shoulders of their companions. On either side of these tracks the reeds rise high into the air, often as much as 9 feet; blocking the view of their right and left flanks. Upon reaching the location indicated on the map (#), there is a chance that they will encounter, and be attacked by, a group of creatures lurking about. An open, muddy clearing is located just 16 feet off the track, and characters that detect something *going on*, there, will gain the moment of surprise and act first. Otherwise, they will be attacked upon entering the clearing. Within the open space are 18 tiny, bipedal reptile creatures; they are **Muckdwellers**. AC6, Move 3"/12", HD 1/2 (1-4 hps ea.), ATK 1, D 1-2, SA Water-jet, AL Lawful Evil, Size Small. (Detailed information regarding them is located in MM2, p.93) Scattered about the clearing, in the mud, is their treasure: 432 CP, 324 SP, 216 EP, 144 GP, 108 PP, 8 Gems (total value 800 GP).

9. MORE BELOW One of the deeper zones of the marsh is home to a small pack of creatures that once thrived in large numbers. It was these that the villagers once harvested, and shipped to various locations about the realm. Because of contamination from magical components that had seeped into the waters, these creatures aged slowly, growing to gigantic size, and their meat mutated by enzymes. Now but a few left, the group located here stays hidden in the depths most of the time. If a boat lingers too long on the surface, one of these creatures will surface to attack. **Giant Crayfish**, #APP 4, AC4, Move 6"/12", HD 4+4 (33-31-29-27 hps), ATK 2, D 2-12/2-12, AL Neutral, Size L (8'+ long).

10. THE SINKING ISLAND The second largest island in the marshes can be seen just north (about 600') of this location. While it looks to be stable, what appears from a distance to be a large portion of it, seems to be sinking and rising at this spot. As the characters get closer, they'll realize it is merely the shell/back of a large aquatic animal bobbing up and down in the water. If approached too close and/or quickly the creature will either dive to avoid them (70%) or turn to attack (30%). It is a **Giant Snapping Turtle**! This one is a sub-adult, having 30 hps. (See Random Creature Encounters for complete details regarding it.) On the floor of the marsh here, 12 feet below, are six large skulls with horns (Minotaur skulls!) that attracted the attention of the creature. If discovered and retrieved, rattling around inside one will be a *Gem of Brightness*! Allow characters a base chance to be curious enough to search the area, having just encountered the creature. Their chance of actually spotting the skulls, and retrieving them, is left to you (the DM) to adjudicate.

11. REMNANTS OF THEN Oddly, this location falls within the **A** zone; the shallowest within the marshes, and as described earlier, this channel runs the entire width (east to west) of the swamp, with another running north (overall forming an upside-down T). The zone itself has already been described, but as a reminder—it is possible for characters to walk within this, but such movement is treated on a hex by hex basis, as you will determine. At this specific spot, the big island (12) can be easily seen above the tall reeds, and between the small trees. But more likely to grab the eye of the characters is a group of strange looking, almost metallic appearing, creatures, mulling about. These are creations of a recluse-wizard that once resided on the big island. Whatever purpose they served is, and will forever be, a mystery. At present, they are merely strutting back and forth, and will respond to the characters' actions. Six (6) **Thork**, AC3; Move 6"/6"; HD3 (24,22,20,18,16,14 hps); ATK 1; D 1-6; SA Breath weapon (See Fiend Folio, p.88); AL Neutral; Size L (9' tall). They have no treasure.

12. THE BIG ISLAND The history/background regarding the marshes and this island are provided in the first adventure in the series (**N6 Mass for the Missing Priest**) and should be consulted and thoroughly read before the characters reach this location. The inset map (below) indicates two symbols; the square on the large island represents the ruins and the circle on the slender, southern one, the hut in which the current residents dwell. Note that the islands are located in zone **a**, and each hex represents 528'.



Currently residing on the southern island is a band of **Sirines**. This group is led by a strong, but chaotic, figure by the name of **Nyela** (y=long I; e=long E; a=short a/"uh" sound). Her group has been living here for over two decades after fleeing their former home along the coast. It is she, or one of her band, that caused the missing priest—Brother Filus—to lose his mind and eventually meet his demise in the marshes. Though the latter was never their intention. Since arriving at the marshes, and upon discovering the ruins on the big island, the group has been content remaining unknown to the villagers, and has kept their distance, preferring their own company, and the lifestyle they have chosen. But unseen by the humans in the village, the Sirines have been occupied for many years, guarding the ruins. Upon discovering the island and, exploring the ruins, they cleared and opened passages beneath the rubble that had been long blocked for more than a century and, unintentionally, set free dark forces and malevolent creatures they had not expected to find. When they are approached by the characters, the Sirines will be cautious, but open to conversation, especially should the visitors be willing to investigate the ruins and, perhaps once and for all, destroy what yet remains below. If the characters are not inclined, Nyela will not be offended; she will not, however, admit that she and her group were involved with the missing priest.

How the characters interact with the Sirines, and how the latter respond, *can* require a bit of time and game-play on the part of the players, and you. If this is the kind of thing you and they like, then you should expand the encounter. It is also possible for the characters to explore the ruins for additional game-play, encounters and experience. You can have them discover items informing them as to the nature of the ruins, who built them, and for what end. The information to do this must be drawn from the Background information in adventure N6, and you will likely need to expand upon it, as it also solves the mystery as to why the villagers are the way they are. You might even bring in other material to use as the ruins. It is also possible the characters will connect-the-dots themselves, realizing the Sirines were the cause of the fate of Brother Filus. They might even attack the Sirines, choosing that as their end goal. Be ready to do the work of a DM as this encounter approaches.

THE SIRINES

The following is provided should you need to have quick access to information when the characters and Sirines meet.

The Group:	HD (hps)	AC	MR	AL	ITEMS/TREASURE
1. Nyela	7 (49)	0	35%	CN	Sword*; dagger. 5EP, 7GP, 1PP, 3 gems (500GP; 2x100GP)
2. Hannen	6 (42)	1	30%	NN	Sword; dagger. 4EP, 7GP, 6PP, 2 gems (500GP; 10GP)
3. Tabit	5 (40)	2	25%	CN	Sword; dagger. 10EP, 6GP, 5PP, 1 gem (500GP)
4. Grezen	5 (35)	2	25%	NN	Sword; dagger, 7EP, 5GP, 2PP, 3 gems (2x100GP; 10GP)
5. Minerly	4 (32)	3	20%	NN	Sword; dagger. 9EP, 3GP, 5PP, 3 gems (500GP; 100GP; 10GP)
6. Jekana	4 (28)	3	20%	LN	3 javelins. 12EP, 3GP, 5PP, 3 gems (2x100GP; 50GP)
7. Fayda	4 (24)	3	20%	LN	3 javelins. 12EP, 2GP, 1PP, 3 gems (100GP; 2x50GP)

* +1 magic short sword, NSA



MOVE: 12"/24"

ATTACK: 1

DAMAGE: BWT (1-6/1-8, sword; 1-4/1-3, dagger; 1-6/1-6, javelin)

INTELLIGENCE: High (13-14) to Genius (17-18)

SPECIAL ATTACK/DEFENSE: All save as 11th level Magic Users; +2 bonus vs. Poison; immune to (all) gas. Sirines may perform a Charm Person/3" range; Polymorph-self; Fog Cloud; Improved Invisibility, once per day of each, one at a time, at will. Their *Touch* (save vs. Poison) lowers the victim's Intelligence by 2, causing them to become an Idiot; this can be removed by a Sirine at will, or via a Dispel Magic.

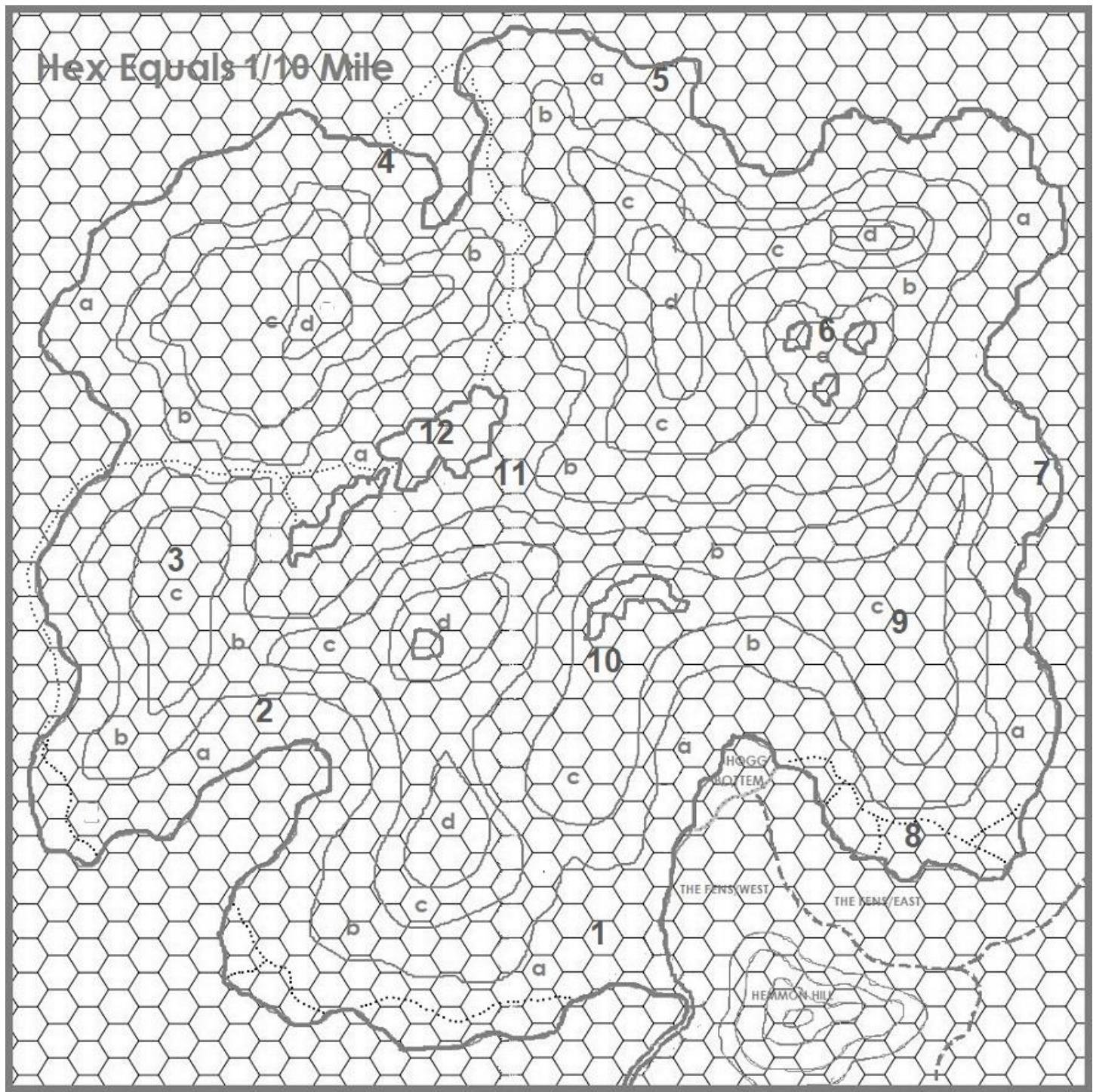
CONCLUSION

There is much left blank and, for you (the DM) to expand upon. Certainly, the ruins on the big island can be developed into their own, dungeon adventure, requiring the characters to explore deeper and defeat even tougher enemies. But even the islands themselves are capable of supporting an encounter, as are other portions of the marshes. Not to forget the larger map of the realm, and what adventures might be had should characters extend their explorations of it. But for now--

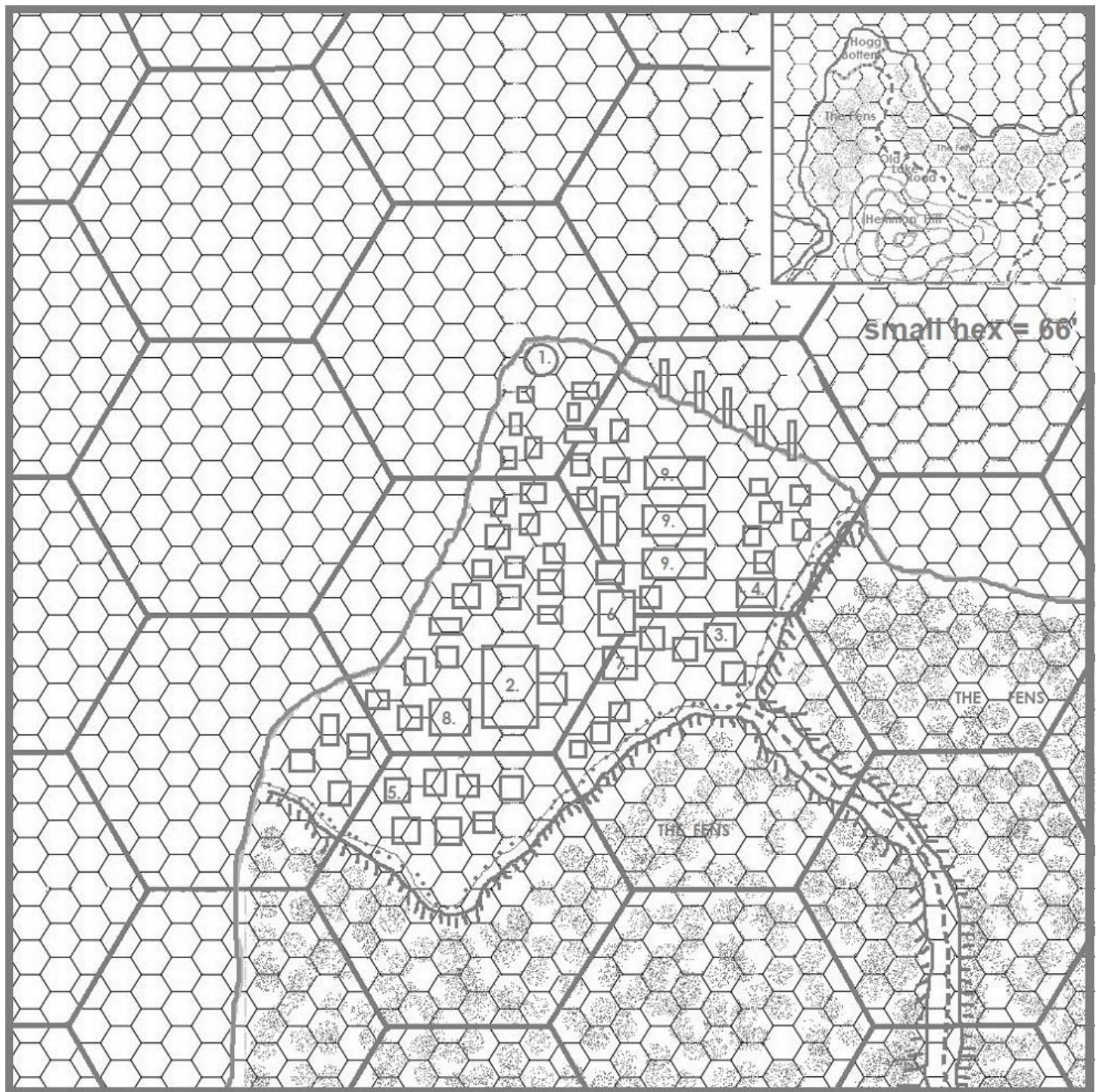
This ends the adventure module **N8 Monsters in the Mist**.

MAPS

THE MINOTAUR MARSHES



THE VILLAGE OF HOGG BOTTEM



EASTERN PORTION OF THE KNOWN REALM

