

# DarkMoore RPG

1st level Adventure Module for Beginners



A low-level campaign setting located near the village of DarkMoore. This module is generically based on the map that was drawn by hand in pencil and later published in Castle & Crusades Society newsletter issue #13 in 1972.

Archaic Adventures



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**[Box text]** Read "the Hook" to the players:

The infamous DarkMoore Inn is closed! The doors locked, chained and magically barred by order of King Alangar of DarkMoore. Unfortunately, the inn-keeper, cook and 2 barmaids were found to be utterly missing after a brief search failed to locate even a hint of their whereabouts; the angry crowd outside almost rioting while pondering what happened to breakfast.

A massive manhunt being called off only after a ransom note was found a week later. It appears the entire staff has been kidnapped, with nothing more than a ransom note demanding a hefty sum of gold coin as the only clue; despite the lack of clues there is no shortage of rumors, plenty of rumors can be found floating around the Iron Dragon Inn; if you can believe half of what's being bantered about.

To make things worse, any attempt by the Royal Mage Peregrin and the royal spy network to locate the missing individuals have failed; they now fear the kidnappers have found a way to avoid detection altogether. Upon hearing the news, the King has by royal decree closed off the castle to all admittance; he has also manned the walls and doubled the guards.

The King has a month to raise a vast sum of money and has buried himself within his castle walls working his royal connections to achieve that very goal; despite these dire circumstances King Alangar never goes down without a fight and has placed his trust in his newly appointed Captain of the Guard Thaddeus Ugelcort.

Thaddeus not wasting a moment's notice has set-up a new base camp at a corner table in the Iron Dragon Inn, where he coordinates the business of the day in the King's absence. Thaddeus believes the hostages will be found not by some great magical means, but by simply following up on every rumor, examining every rat hole and scavenging the entire countryside.

Obviously, these tedious errands are not cut out for great heroes of renown who will find no glory at the end of the trail; instead it is the work of the inexperienced adventurer who needs to get paid.....the word is out, all you do is show up and talk to Thaddeus, receive an errand and get paid when you complete the task. What are you waiting for?

## Editor Notes:

The goal of this project was to create an adventure module loosely based upon a map drawn by hand....in pencil; one of the first RPG campaign maps ever created. (The one that started it all) Many artistic liberties were taken during the creation of this module:

1. The map was re-created in somewhat the same spirit as the original.
2. The original campaign was in some portions a very basic dungeon crawl; some were as simple as: "you are now in a 20 x 20 room with 2 skeletons in it." Obviously, this type of early dungeon crawl has little appeal contemporarily; therefore the campaign has been completely changed into a story-based adventure.

After having viewed the original (pencil) map, I personally wanted to adventure there just for the sake of nostalgia. There is an "old school" feel to this module and I have left it that way on purpose; things are meant to be in a raw format.

**Note 1:** These modules are written for both the experienced and inexperienced Game Masters. I have included most of the essential dialogue to run this campaign; it is intentionally designed for inexperienced GM's; just read the **[Bold Text]** to the players when it is warranted. Experienced GM's may opt to read the text dialogue beforehand and then come up with your own flavor as desired.

**Note 2:** I use the "comic sans font" because it is one of few codes that stand up to emulators, converters etc. I use it because it happens to make things simple and keep costs low; I value your ability to read the words vs. a more desirable font.

Welcome to DarkMoore!

Steve Jensen

If you are a player do not read beyond this point!

This adventure consists of multiple encounters that get increasingly difficult as the campaign evolves. Some of the encounters are designed to provide a clue or possibly a false trail to the adventuring party; it is up to them to determine the correct course of action. Do not help the party unless they become frustrated or stuck; even then provide only hints or suggest they pick up an additional errand from Thaddeus which might provide additional clues. Read this module in its entirety; make sure you are familiar with each encounter.

All high level NPC's are off limits to the players during this campaign. The King and his entire court are busy and are not to be bothered. The only high level NPC that the players will interact with is Thaddeus who will ONLY provide them with errands; he will not go adventuring with the party. To balance this restriction, the Iron Dragon Inn is filled with low level NPC's who are more than willing to hire on for the going rate, which is around 1 gp per day. These low level NPC's are "one hit wonders" who die at 0 hit points; they do not have negative hit points. Obviously these NPC's can be healed if they are not already dead.

The Castle Proper and the DarkMoore Inn are off limits; both locations are closed and heavily guarded. The community within the walls is patrolled by the City Watch, where generally speaking law and order should prevail. There is an active thief's guild who call themselves "the Cleft Hand" who operate within the city limits; unfortunately for them they are being systematically hunted down and destroyed by Kelton's Bandits; this war between thieves will occasionally spill out of the shadows and onto the streets. All thieves within the adventuring party will eventually encounter the Cleft Hand and be forced into servitude or be summarily executed.

Unbeknownst to the King, The bandit chief Kelton, the Wizard of the Woods, and the Serpent King (A human-size snake with arms) have formed a loose alliance in order to blackmail his Royal Highness. Kelton and a few of his finest bandits have successfully kidnapped the entire staff of the DarkMoore Inn. The innkeeper and the barmaids are being held in an abandoned tower in a forest controlled by the Wizard of the Woods.

They are being held in a lead-lined box within a secret room at the top of the tower; with the tower itself being cleverly disguised to appear empty and in ruins.

The cook is being held by the Serpent King within the confines of the Serpent Rock in an underground lair that was once mined for its lead-ore. The alliance thought it best to hedge their bets and divide the hostages into two groups in case one group of the hostages was found then the other could be used for blackmail; just long enough to grab the ransom money and skip town.

The weakest link in the alliance is the Serpent King whose only desire for money would be to buy sacrifices worthy of the snake gods he so worships. If defeated, the serpent king would divulge information about the other members of the alliance (if it would save his life); he does not know where the other hostages are being held.

Kelton and the Wizard of the Woods would never willingly rat on the alliance as they know that "spilling the beans" will never save them. Only Kelton and the Wizard of the Woods know the entire plot and the location of all the hostages.

While the Wizard of the Woods keeps an eye on the tower, Kelton is waging war against the Cleft Hand. He desires to have complete control of the city's underworld in order to sow the necessary misinformation that eventually infiltrates back to the King's spy network. Kelton also has the fear that somehow a clever thief might figure out his plans; therefore he plans to obliterate the entire guild.

The bandits under Kelton's command are incredibly loyal as he has promised them great wealth and they trust him to do so. These bandits do not check morale and will either fight to the end or attempt an escape to avoid capture. Like all thieves "they don't know anything" if captured. If tortured, they only know that someone is paying their bandit boss big money and they always refer to Kelton by an alias called "the Mark".

Kelton runs an actual farm northwest of town; he is well known in the DarkMoore community and is known for his fresh vegetables. His loyal farm hands

can be seen out in the fields working the land by day. By night, Kelton becomes "The Mark" and his ranch hands become bandits; and to further disguise the operation they leave no weapons or any type of bandit gear stored on the property; these are hidden elsewhere in a secret underground vault just west of the farm. Therefore, if the premises are ever searched they will find nothing but tools and farm equipment.

The bandits will use farming tools as weapons if necessary; they have made them sharp and extra sturdy for this purpose (They all do 1d4+1 damage). The farm hands always wear a leather jerkin that serves the same purpose as leather armor (AC 7).

The adventure starts off quickly with plenty of action, therefore it is advisable to give all PCs maximum hit points plus constitution bonus at first level; thereafter they must roll for hit points as they increase in levels. 1<sup>st</sup> level wizards should have magic missile in their spellbook at the very least. Allow the players to immediately level up when they have sufficient experience points.

There are no high level priests nearby that can raise the dead and the PC's could not afford one anyway, therefore if a PC dies, they simply roll a new one.

There are no random encounters within the city walls, all encounters within the city are pre-planned and you will initiate these at the appointed times. Outside the walls random encounters occur on a roll of 1 on a 1d4 dice. The dice is rolled for random encounters once during the day and another at night.

Random Encounters during the Day (roll 1d6)									
Creature type	# Appear	AC	HP	Save as	# Attacks	THAC0	Damage	Move	Notes
Peasant	1d4	10	2	F0	1	20	1d2	12	Friendly
Coyote	1d2	8	5	F1	1	19	1d4	15	50% will flee on sight
Deer	1d4	8	6	F1	1	19	1d4	15	Hunting option
Wild Boar	1d4	8	6	F1	1	19	1d4	15	Will attack if annoyed
Poison Ivy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Skin irritation 1d6 hours. save vs. poison
Brown Bear	1d2	6	16	F4	3	18	1d6	15	Will attack on sight.

Random Encounters during the Night (roll 1d6)									
Creature type	# Appear	AC	HP	Save as	# Attacks	THAC0	Damage	Move	Notes
Skeleton	4d4	9	6	F1	2	19	1d4	12	Immune: sleep, charm
Zombie	4d4	9	7	F1	2	19	1d4	6	Attack last in round
Ghoul	1d2	6	11	F4	2	19	1d4+1	12	Save vs. paralyzation or 1d4 rds. paralyzed
Apparition	1	4	1	F7	1	10	1d2+10	15	Hit by silver or +1 weapon or better
Giant Skeleton	1	6	28	F4	2	17	1d8+1	15	Immune: sleep, charm
Rust monster	1	5	16	F3	1	16	-	12	Any Metal object hit, save vs disintegrate

Award 100 XP divided among the players for every successful random encounter that occurs during the day. Award 800 XP divided among the players for every successful random encounter that occurs during the night. Award 0 XP if the adventurers flee from any encounter.

Random Encounters outside the walls during the day are fairly benign, but at night the tables turn as the Obsidian Obelisk of the Dead, Dying and Undead becomes active and fills the darkness with undead. As DM you have ultimate discretion to add or subtract monsters from any encounter, though it is advised to make the campaign challenging.

The PC's will quickly learn to bring as many NPC's to a fight as possible in order to increase the odds of survival. Eventually the PC's must use a bit of discretion as the ranks of the NPCs become thinned out and are NOT replaced.

### The Iron Dragon Inn

The party begins their adventure inside the Iron Dragon Inn; sketch out the inn on the battle-mat using the map provided. The Iron Dragon Inn is the most active part of the community, now that the Castle and the DarkMoore Inn have recently closed. When the PCs arrive, the Iron Dragon Inn will be nearly full of hungry customers and NPCs. (5d4 customers at anytime during the day) Thaddeus will be seated at a large table near the back of the inn. The Iron Dragon isn't much, but it serves hot food and a warm bed:

A room with 2 beds: 2sp/night or 1gp per week.

A complete meal including meade or ale: 3sp

Ale or meade: 1sp. Wine: 2sp

The innkeeper's name is Earl, a portly gentleman with a good sense of humor. If any players ask him if he has heard of any rumors, he will reply "too many" He will tell them to talk to Thaddeus as he controls all the rumors now. "It was kinda getting out of control".

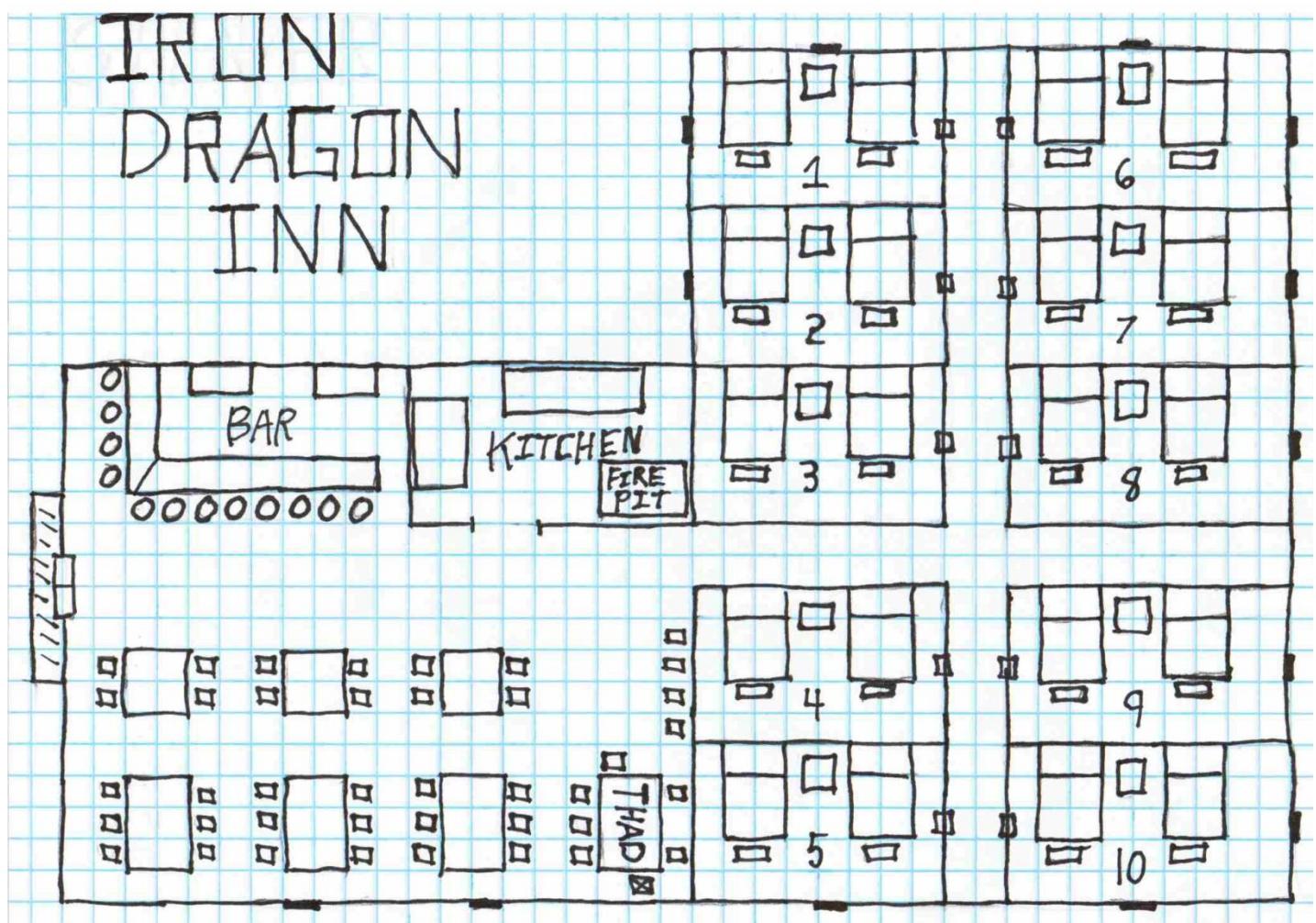
All townsfolk within the inn, except for the NPCs are considered 0 level characters with 3 hit points and have almost no fighting abilities. There are 8 NPCs loitering at the inn trying desperately to hook up with an adventuring party. (Going rate is around 1 gp per day)

These NPCs are ragged, inexperienced, and underequipped; nevertheless the lure of a gold coins is too much to refuse. It would behoove the PCs to better equip any NPCs that they hire, as no NPC has any armor better than leather.

Slim, 1 <sup>st</sup> level Human Fighter		Willard, 1 <sup>st</sup> level human fighter		Beryl, 1 <sup>st</sup> level Dwarven Fighter		Pricilla, 2nd level Pacifist Human Cleric	
AC	7	AC	8	AC	6	AC	7
HP	7	HP	10	HP	8	HP	11
Save as	F1	Save as	F1	Save as	F1	Save as	C2
Move	12	Move	12	Move	6	Move	12
# attacks	1	# attacks	1	# attacks	1	# attacks	none
THAC0	20	THAC0	20	THAC0	20	THAC0	20
Damage	1d6	Damage	1d4	Damage	1d4+1	Damage	-
Money	7sp	Money	1sp	Money	5gp	Money	12gp
A skinny, jittery 23 years old. Leather armor and a spear. (Never seen battle)		A burly poor farm boy, 19 years old. Padded armor + shield and a dagger (needs money badly)		Rotund dwarf, leather armor + small shield and a dwarven forged warhammer. Lawful good alignment.		A pacifist, no weapons. Will work for room and board + worthy cause. 3-1 <sup>st</sup> level spells per day	

Leith, 2nd level Elven Archer		Morierity, 2nd level Human Wizard		Thane, 1 <sup>st</sup> level Human Thief		Trugg, 1st level Half-Orc Fighter	
AC	5	AC	10	AC	6	AC	7
HP	14	HP	6	HP	4	HP	10
Save as	F2	Save as	M2	Save as	T1	Save as	F1
Move	12	Move	12	Move	12	Move	12
# attacks	2	# attacks	1	# attacks	1 or 2	# attacks	1
THAC0	18	THAC0	20	THAC0	20	THAC0	19
Damage	1d8	Damage	1d4	Damage	1d6 or 1d8	Damage	1d6+2
Money	31gp	Money	40gp	Money	13gp	Money	2gp
Leather armor, longbow and dagger. For hire 2gp per day. -2 AC for dex.		Dagger, spellbook: read magic, magic missile, detect magic, and grease. 2-1 <sup>st</sup> level spells per day		Leather armor, short sword, and short bow. Thieves tools. -1 AC for dex adjust. Too young to join guild (Chaotic)		18 strength, club and poor quality hide armor. Fearless in battle with little patience.	

If any NPC is killed for any reason, there are no replacements. Optional: It is up to the DM to allow NPCs to move up in level, if so the DM must track XP.



# Players Map



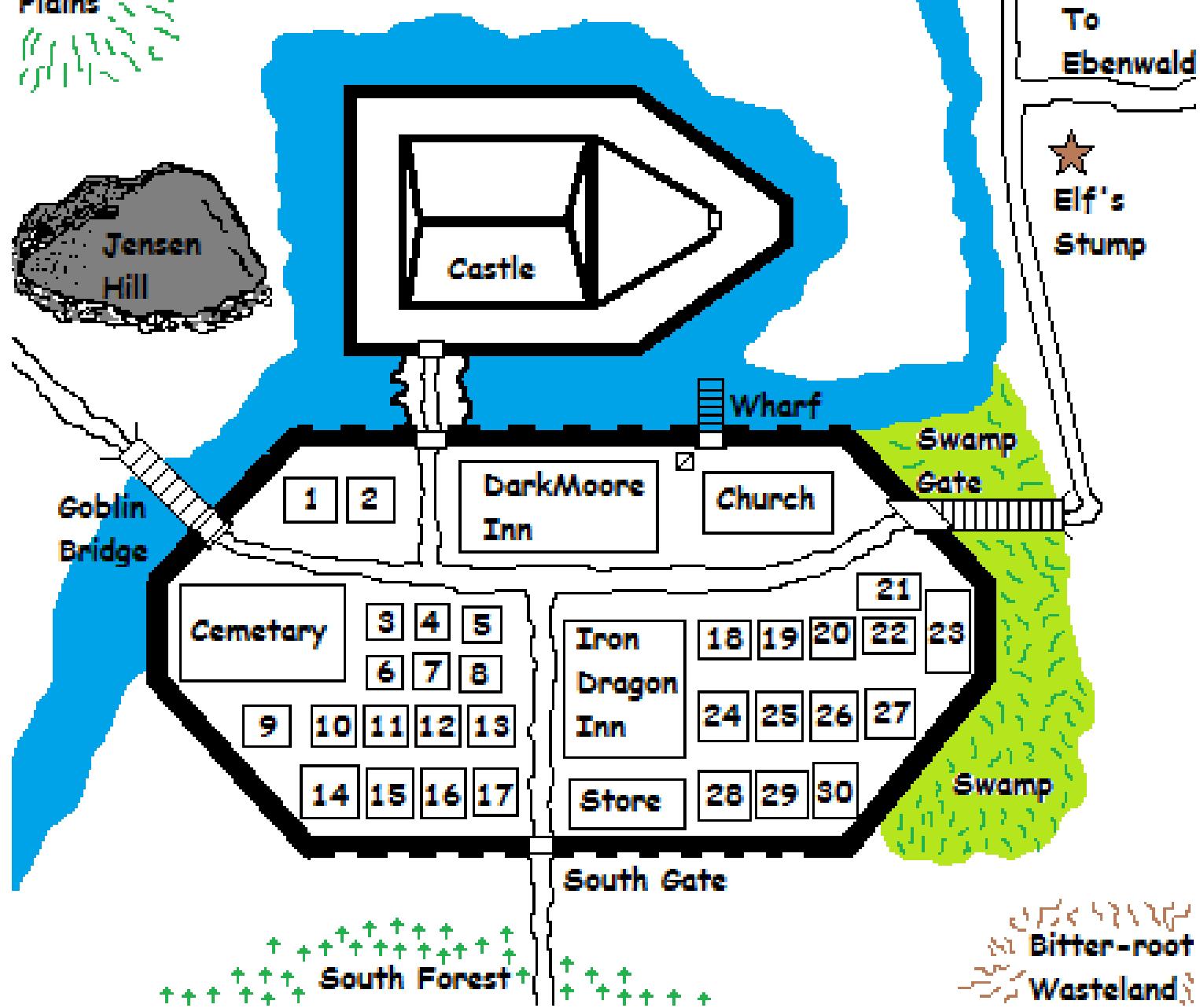
Serpent Rock

Ancient  
Ruins

Wizard of  
the Woods

Wolf's Head Pass

## The Village of DarkMoore



To  
Ebenwald



Elf's  
Stump

If you need to use the city guards during the campaign here are the stats:

The city watch will comprise 4 groups of 4 soldiers that patrol the streets during the day and night. The city watch reports directly to Thaddeus and he personally directs their activities. There are no regular patrols beyond the walls, nevertheless there would be scouting parties sent out to appraise any threats to the city if needed; these are done in a tactical manner.

There are 6 soldiers that guard the DarkMoore Inn and 12 soldiers that guard the immediate entrance into the royal castle.

City Guard, 2 <sup>nd</sup> level fighter	
AC	4
HP	15
Save as	F2
Move	12
# attacks	1
THAC0	19
Damage	1d8
Money	5gp
City Watch, chainmail + shield + long sword	

At dusk the city gates are shut and do not open until dawn, if the adventuring party finds itself outside the gates at night, they are effectively shut out until dawn - no admittance for any reason.

Thaddeus remains at the Iron Dragon between lunch and dinner; thereafter he retreats back to the castle to perform his many duties. The inn keeper has reserved the table in the back especially for him.

**[Introduction]** Read the intro to the players:

After hearing all the rumors and stories of fame and fortune that can be won in DarkMoore, you left your hometown of Westvale and set your sights down the long dusty road. You glance over at your companions all of whom you have known for years and feel a sense of security as there is safety in numbers.

After a long difficult journey you reach the village of DarkMoore and finally view the great stone walls for the first time; it was late afternoon when you crossed over the Goblin Bridge into the village. Tired, hungry and on your last leg you make your way to the Iron Dragon Inn; there you find it just like you imagined: full of townsfolk and mercenaries for hire, the smell of hot food and ale fills the air.

At once, you scan the room searching for anyone who looks remotely like a Captain of the Guard; there you find back in a corner a soldier with thick black hair

decked out in fine Chainmail. You immediately know its Thaddeus because there is a string of mercenaries waiting in line. Now for the difficult decision: Stand in line or get something to eat first; better yet! - eat, then sleep and worry about standing in line tomorrow.

### **[Encounter 1] Assault on the Line. Completion: 300XP divided among PC's**

Allow the player to decide their course of action when they arrive at the Inn; remind the players they are tired and hungry from the long journey. Don't allow them to wander out in the city for too long; remind them that Thaddeus is in need of adventurers and he pays when the task is complete.

This encounter begins when any of the PCs get in line to see Thaddeus. The moment any player gets in line a huge half-Orc enters the inn and goes directly to the back of the line and yells to everyone waiting in line;

**"Move out of the way or I will crush you like a bug! Move you slime buckets!"** Immediately remove all NPCs waiting in line off to the side, allow the players their own course of action.

If the players ask about Thaddeus's reaction, say "he is watching intently probably to determine what type of mercenary he is about to hire". If at any time the players cower and move out of line, the encounter immediately ends and the PC's get 0XP.

If the PCs stand up to the Half-Orc, then continue insulting them. **"Is your momma as ugly as you, didn't you hear me! I said move!"**

Feel free to come up with as many insults as you want, really go after the players. Bring the crowd into the action; tell the players they hear the crowd laugh when the half-orc gets in a good insult. Make it feel like the players are losing face.

If the players begin to insult back, the Half-Orc will immediately challenge them to a fight; **"I will kill you and all your friends, then take your gold and buy everyone a drink"** The Half-Orc will immediately attack. \*Note: No one

<b>Brutus, Half-Orc 2<sup>nd</sup> level fighter</b>	
AC	7
HP	12
Save as	F2
Move	12
# attacks	1
THAC0	19
Damage	1d6
Money	5gp
Poor quality hide armor + club.	

including Thaddeus will interfere or stop the fight, they become on-lookers. Brutus will fight to the death.

### [Errand 1] The Swamp Gate Trail. Completion: 1600XP divided among PC's

After the fight in the Iron Dragon is over, the Inn will go back to normal. If the players defeat Brutus, Thaddeus will say, "I am impressed; I have an important assignment for you".

If the players are cowardly and move out of the way, Thaddeus will say "Sort of weak in the Knees aren't ya fellas, I better give you an easy assignment."

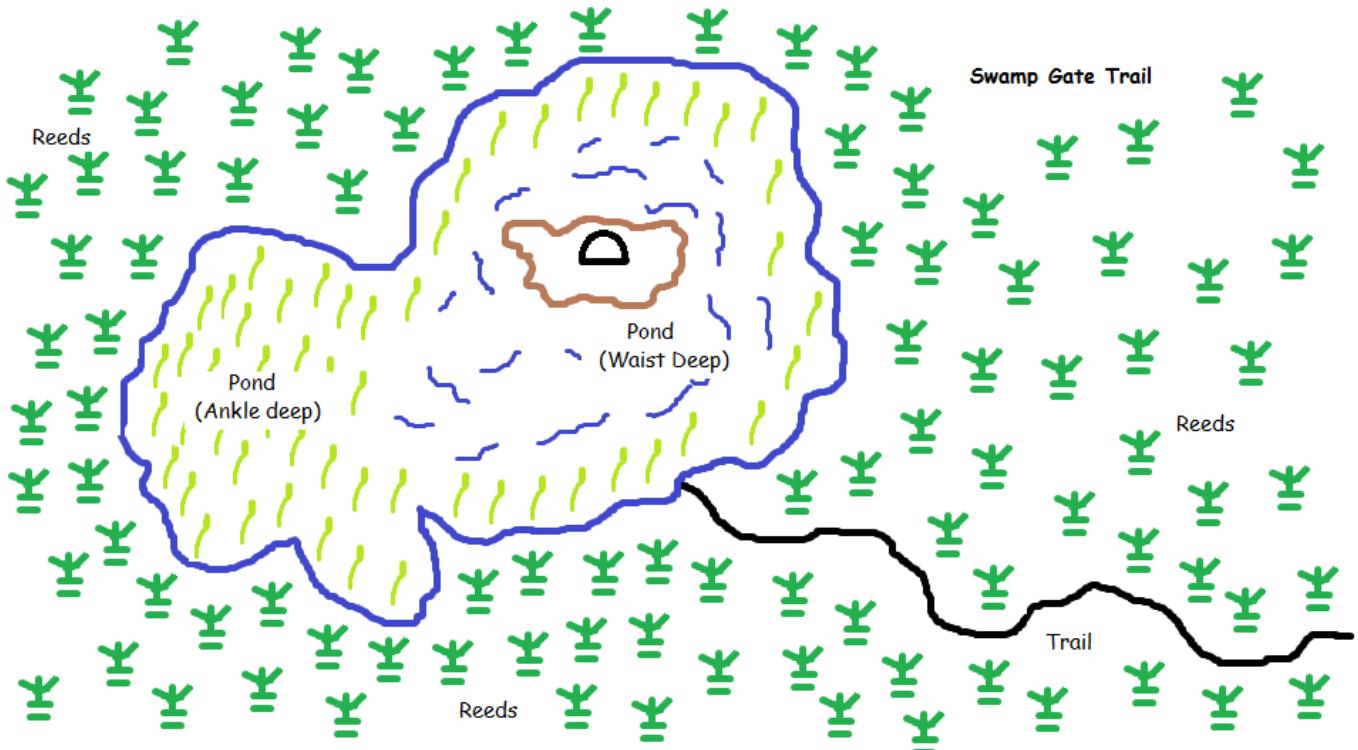
Regardless of the outcome of the fight, the next encounter will be the same. Thaddeus will say, "I assume you already know why you are here. So, I need you to gather your group together and pay a visit to Farly the harbor master, he resides in a shack next to the wharf; he claims he might know where the hostages are being held. I want you to follow up on any hunch Farly might have and then return and report.

He was the one who found the ransom note, so he might know a thing or two. I will pay 100gp to each member of your party if you can complete this mission to my satisfaction, how does that sound?"

If the players agree, they will find themselves at the wharf where they find Farly fishing off the pier. Farly is a skinny elderly man who looks like he has been at sea far too long. Farly will easily recognize the party and say, "Well, looks like the King is finally getting around to me, no need for polite conversation I'll tell you what I know; you see, I was the one that found the note. I found it at the end of the pier; now who would do such a thing? Not hard to figure out, it's those mangy frogs I tell ya. Spittin frogs that walk on their hind legs! I followed them through the reeds; they didn't know I was behind them.

I found their little hovel; looked like a dome made out of reeds sitting out on an island. The water isn't too deep out there maybe go up to your waist. I bet they have the inn keeper in there; best you go after'em before they eat them alive. Go to the end of the Swamp Gate, there you will find my trail, I

stomped the reeds down flat it will lead you to the island. Be careful those swamp critters will sneak up on ya."



The PCs will find a small trail that leads through the reeds; they will be able to sneak up to the ponds edge without incidence; there they will find the island and a dome structure made out of reeds resting at its center.

\*note: Where the pond is shallow (Ankle deep) green reeds grow thick inside the pond; where the water is waist deep there are no reeds. (Waist deep water completely surrounds the island)

There are many places to hide; it is obviously a perfect place for an ambush and therefore no need to hide it from the players. When the PCs enter the pond their movements are slowed:

In ankle deep water the movement rate is  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

In waist deep water the movement rate is  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

Combat is not affected while in the pond, PCs can attack normally. The only hazard occurs if a PC becomes unconscious and then falls into the water and

drowns. If the players are clever they will return and look for a boat. Farly will lend them a small boat for a day for free.

If the PCs wade out to the island they will be attacked from all sides by 10 frogmen as soon as they reach the halfway point between the island and the shore.

If the PCs take a boat out to the island they will be attacked from all sides by 10 frogmen when they reach the shore.

Frogmen will always rise out of the water and spit slime in the faces of their enemies, and then attack with their sharp claws. They will never spit at the back of an enemy; they would always wait for the enemy to present a face. A victim that attempts to cover their face to avoid the spit is essentially blind and cannot attack.

If the PCs search the dome structure made of reeds they will find what appears to be a frog temple; within the temple is an effigy of a frog made out of green reeds with various offerings of food spread out before it.

There are no hostages or any evidence that would suggest hostages have been kept there. It appears to be a false lead. There is nothing of value within the temple. The frogmen do not check morale during the fight as they are defending their temple and are considered fanatics.

### **[The General Store]**

Eventually the PCs will earn a little money and go searching for the general store; it is the only store in the village of DarkMoore. The store is run by a dwarf named Arin Hammerhand along with several human attendants and a blacksmith. The General Store is well provisioned with everything from clothes to weapons and armor. The store also sells a good variety of magical items.

There are NO weapon/armor-smiths within the city, these are located within the Royal Castle and are closed to the public. The general store does provide basic

<b>Frogmen</b>	
AC	8
HP	5
Save as	F1
Move	8
# attacks	2
THAC0	20
Damage	1d3
Swim	14
Frogmen can spit slime 30' once per encounter, on a successful hit any victim is blinded for 1d4 rounds. (no save) Victims are -4 to attack rolls.	

blacksmith services and would be able to repair weapons and armor but not make new ones. (Weapons and armor are shipped into town)

The General Store will contain any non-magical item listed in a player's handbook, except for any armor better than plate armor; they do have at least one of every weapon including pole arms in stock. Basic items such as backpacks, rope, oil, pouches, etc. are all available and in stock; there is only 1 flask of Greek fire in stock and it is 20gp.

Magic Weapons	Magic Armor	Scrolls	Potions of	Special
Dagger +1 650gp	Padded Armor +1 400gp	Floating Disk 1,000gp	12 Healing 100gp each	Rope of Climbing 50' 6,000gp
Short Sword +1 1,000gp	Leather Armor +1 990gp	Shield 1,200gp	2 Regeneration 700gp each	Ring of Protection +1 12,000gp
Short Sword +1, +2 vs. Giants 3,300gp	Studded leather Armor +1 1,200gp	Read Languages 1,000gp	2 Fire Resistance 500gp each	Wand of Magic Missile (40 charges) Single Shot 3000gp
Mace +1 1,000gp	Chain Armor +1 1,900gp	Armor 1,200gp	3 Levitation 200gp each	
Mace of Disruption +1, +3 vs. Undead 5,000gp	Plate Mail +1 3,000gp	Hold Portal 1,000gp	6 Water Breathing 250gp	Bag of Holding (largest Size) 5,000gp
Club +2 4,000gp	Chain Armor +2 4,000gp	Magic Missile 1,000gp	3 Climbing 85gp each	Sold
Spear +1 800gp	Plate Mail +2 10,000gp	Invisibility 2,200gp	8 Antidote 100gp	Sold
10 Arrow +1 550gp	Medium Shield +1 2,000	Locate Object 2,100gp	2 polymorph self 650gp	Sold
Long Sword +1 1,100gp	Buckler +1 2,000gp	Web 2,800gp	1 Diminution 400gp	Sold
20 Arrows of fire +1d6 fire damage 1,000gp	Helm of Water Breathing 8,000gp	Detect Invisibility 2,200gp	2 Heroism 600gp	Ring of Monster Summoning I (Once per week) 2,500gp
Short Bow +1 1,800gp		Knock 2,200gp		
Long bow +1 2,500gp		Mirror Image 3,000gp		
War hammer +1 600gp				
2-handed sword +1 1,300gp				
Battle Axe +1 900gp				

Unless noted, there is only one of each magical item in inventory and when it becomes sold it is gone. You may optionally add more items if it becomes necessary.

\*Money management is very important in this campaign, as most magical items must be purchased. There is a good variety of magical items for sell. It is important to have the PCs roll for money when they create their characters in order for money to be in short supply; this is by design and is intended to motivate the players into action. Do not throw money needlessly at players, make them earn it. They will soon discover how important money is to their advancement, because of these restrictions you need track the players and warn potential cheaters.

**[Encounter 2]** A thief in the night. Completion: 1400XP divided among PC's.

Initiate this encounter any opportune night the PCs are sleeping at the Iron Dragon Inn. (Complete the encounter within the 1<sup>st</sup> week) The encounter occurs in the dead of night around midnight with a disturbance on the streets near the back of the Iron Dragon. It sounds like a street fight, the PCs can hear the scuffling of boots and intermittent clashes of iron and it sounds as if the commotion is moving towards the inn. Soon the PCs can hear shouting and more intense fighting closer to the inn; if they look out the west bedroom windows they will see cloaked figures running and fighting in and out of the shadows.

Ask the players if anyone is going to go out and investigate. The noise wakes the innkeeper Earl and the party can hear him exit his room and ramble about in the halls. Any Thief in the party who overhears the shouting will recognize that the cloaked figures are using Thief's Cant to communicate between factions. (The windows of the inn are big enough for a human to exit out and onto the streets)

If the PCs need motivation out the window have the innkeeper enter the room and plead with the adventurers, **"This is the only operating inn in the city; don't let them destroy it, save the Iron Dragon"** If the PCs hide in the inn and fail to join the fray, then the fighting will stop in a few minutes without incident and the party receives no XP. If the PCs decide to venture out, a few backstabbing rules apply:

1. If any PC ventures near a building (shadows) they have an 80% chance each round to be backstabbed, thereafter standard combat rules apply and the victim cannot be backstabbed again.

2. If the PCs avoid the shadows and stay in the middle of the street or in open areas, the bandits will stay hidden in the shadows and attack with throwing knives forcing the PC's to either flee or enter the shadows and fight.

In this encounter, when the PCs enter the streets the battle has nearly reached its end; Kelton's bandits have just finished dispatching 6 thieves from the local thief's guild "the Cleft Hand". (Place 6 bodies in and out of the shadows)

There are noticeable differences between the 2 factions:

1. **Kelton's Bandits:** They wear black cloaks over studded leather armor and fight with a long sword (melee) and a brace of 6 throwing daggers (ranged).

2. **The Cleft Hand (local thief's guild):** They wear dark gray cloaks over leather armor and dual wield with 2 daggers (with no penalty) they do not use range weapons, preferring to melee from the shadows. \*Note: The Cleft Hand is a petty crime guild specializing in purse snatching, small time theft, etc. They call themselves the Cleft Hand to warn each member what happens if they betray the guild.

There will be **5 of Kelton's bandits** remaining after the fight and they will be hidden randomly within the shadows. They will attack the PC's relentlessly and always from the shadows. If any bandit throws daggers, they no longer can backstab for the encounter.

Use this encounter to familiarize the PCs with the 2 fighting factions, give them descriptions of each. Remember if any bandit is caught alive, they will know

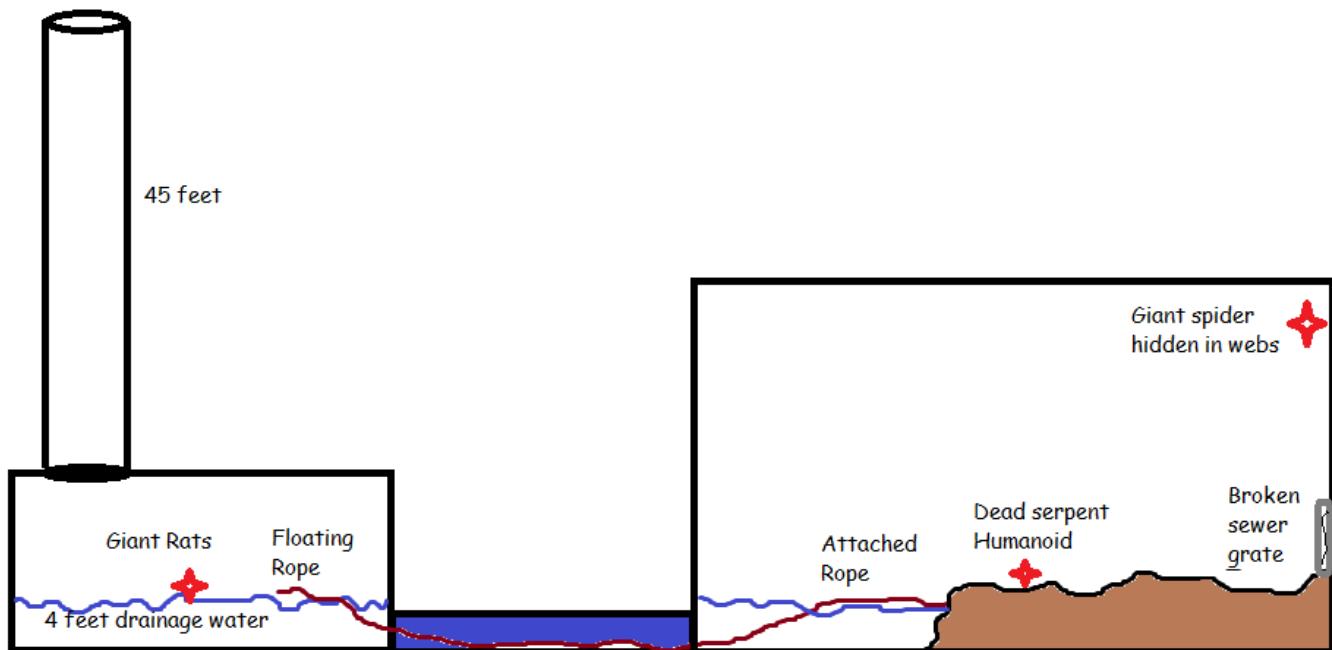
Kelton's Bandits	
AC	6
HP	4
Save as	T1
Move	12
# attacks	1 or 2
THAC0	20
Damage	1d8 or 1d3
Gold	20
Black Cloaks worn over studded leather armor; they melee with long sword or 2 attacks per round with short throwing knives. They all have thief skills at 1 <sup>st</sup> level of experience.	

The Cleft Hand (Thieves)	
AC	7
HP	3
Save as	T1
Move	12
# attacks	2
THAC0	20
Damage	1d4
Gold	20
Gray Cloaks worn over leather armor; they dual wield with 2 daggers. (no penalty) They all have thief skills at 1 <sup>st</sup> level of experience.	

nothing...if tortured they only know someone is giving big money to the one they call "The Mark"...he is the one who gives the orders. Never reveal to the players that "Kelton" is the bandit chief who is also known as "the Mark"!

**[Errand #2]** A spider hole to where? Completion: 1,800XP divided among PC's.

If the PCs complete the 1<sup>st</sup> errand; Thaddeus will give them a 2<sup>nd</sup> errand and send them to investigate a drainage hole next to the north side of House #1. "A few days before the kidnapping a few of the townsfolk thought they heard noises emanating from a drainage pipe near a house just north of the Goblin Bridge, I don't know where it goes; but I will pay you each 200gp to go check it out. How does that sound?"



When the players arrive at House #1; they will find a 4 foot diameter vertical drainage pipe on the north side of the house. The pipe is covered by an unlocked metal grate, the PCs must find a way down; if they rappel down with a 50 foot rope, they must save vs. strength or fall into the pool of water below. (The water breaks the fall, so no falling damage)

If any PC accidentally falls into the water they are unable to attack for an entire round as they orient and lift themselves out of the water. If a PC successfully rappels down the rope they suffer no disorientation.

Any PC that enters the water is immediately attacked by **4 giant rats** that are swimming on the surface. The pool of water at the bottom is 4 feet deep; the water is semi-transparent drainage water and not sewer water. The players will notice a rope floating on the surface, if they pull on the rope they will notice it is attached to something on the other side. If they reach down into the water they will discover that the rope continues into another pipe leading outward.

The pipe leading outward is only 3 feet in diameter, so large humanoids would not fit, especially wearing bulky armor. Using the rope, it appears to be easy to hold ones breath and pull themselves through the pipe to the other side. Note\* The PCs do not know how long the pipe leading outward is, so clever PCs will tie a rope around a foot of the 1<sup>st</sup> brave soul in order to pull them back if they get in trouble. The pipe is only 15' long, so no checks required.

Once on the other side, they will surface to find a large chamber filled with cobwebs on the ceiling. If they crawl out of the water and onto the small rock outcrop they will notice a large dead snake with human-like arms holding a bow in its hands (+1 short bow).

They will also notice a broken metal drainage grate; with enough planks broken to allow a humanoid sized creature to fit through. If they look out the broken grate they will see the river outside the walls 30' down. (A way out!)

Wait for a good portion of the party to enter before introducing the giant spider, nevertheless attack when it is warranted. Clever PCs will light the webs on fire causing 1d8 damage to the spider, this will force the spider to jump out of the webs and onto a random adventurer. It

Giant Rats	
AC	9
HP	4
Save as	F1
Move	10
# attacks	1
THAC0	20
Damage	1d4
Swim	5

These rats do not carry disease.

Giant Spider	
AC	7
HP	18
Save as	F1
Move	12
# attacks	1
THAC0	18
Damage	1d4
Web	Move 12

If successfully bit: save vs. poison or die in 1d20 rounds.

Victim is totally incapacitated while poisoned.

is possible for the PCs to flee and jump through the broken grate into the river below (The water breaks the fall), but standard swimming/drowning rules apply. The river is 20 feet deep and about 60' wide. Hung from the ceiling are various cocoons, mostly rat cocoons with nothing of value.

**[Errand #3]** The Elf's Stump infestation. Completion: 1900XP divided among PC's.

When the PCs return and report, Thaddeus will barely believe the party...he will ask more than once: **"Are you sure there was a snake with arms down there?"** He will be disturbed to hear about the broken grate and the fact that there is a secret way out of the city. **"That must be how the kidnappers smuggled them out of the city, I will get someone to repair that grate by tomorrow."**

Thaddeus face will become very serious, **"if you found a serpent with human-like arms below, then somehow the Serpent King might be involved.... a grim prospect indeed. It does help to explain a problem we have been having near the crossroads on the road to Ebenwald.**

**At the crossroads there is an old tree stump we call the "Elf Stump" ever since the kidnapping that area has been infested with rattlesnakes, as a matter of fact there are so many snakes that the farm located just north cannot get their vegetables to market. It has sort of closed off the road to Wolfs Head Pass as well.**

**The snakes seem to come from everywhere. It might be where the next clue is found. I will pay you 250gp each to go and find out where those snakes are coming from and get rid of them, how does that sound?**

The PCs need to take the Swamp Gate Road out of the city to reach the Ebenwald crossroads. Once they reach the crossroads they will notice three strange stone pillars that are strategically placed to form a 60' foot triangle around the old Elf Stump. If detect magic is cast the pillars will radiate a strong aura of magic.

Upon the old stump is a large jade statue worth 500gp set as a decoy to lure the PCs into the triangle; therefore breaking the jade statue does nothing, except make it worthless. (The Serpent King sent his priests to raise 3 serpent stones

that conjure rattlesnakes when the perimeter of the triangle is breached; the purpose being to scare away intruders from Kelton's farm)

If the PCs break the invisible perimeter that surrounds the area of the triangle, it will summon 1d6 rattlesnakes every 3 rounds, this will continue unless the entire party leaves the confines of the perimeter. The rattlesnakes will appear next to each PC, in a location that allows the snakes to strike as many PCs as possible; they also attack in the very same round they appear.

If the PCs attempt to destroy the stone pillars they are AC 0 and have 20hp each; each time the pillars are successfully hit, they emit a 5' radius puff of poisonous vapor; victims within the area of effect must save vs. poison or suffer 1d4 damage. (It is possible to move outside the perimeter of the triangle and strike the pillars from a safe distance; but the players must be clever enough to do so)

After all 3 pillars are destroyed a giant pit viper slithers out from underneath the old stump and attacks the nearest PC.

If the pit viper successfully withers an appendage the effect is permanent unless the PC can find an antidote, spell, etc. The pit viper will not attack the same withered appendage twice; roll again to wither a different appendage.

\*It should be obvious to the PCs that magic is at work here. If the PCs cast detect magic it should be even more evident. You may want to hint to the fact that the pillars might have been placed as part of a plan and might warrant passing the info onto Thaddeus.

Rattlesnake (Natural)	
AC	10
HP	2
Save as	F1
Move	9
# attacks	1
THAC0	20
Damage	1d2
Swim	6
If successfully hit: save vs. poison or suffer 6 points of necrotic damage.	

Giant Pit Viper	
AC	7
HP	14
Save as	F1
Move	12
# attacks	1
THAC0	17
Damage	1d4
Swim	6
If successfully hit: save vs. poison or appendage becomes withered. Roll 1d4: 1. R-Leg 2. L-leg 3. R-arm 4. L-arm. Withered appendage is useless and will effect movement and fighting capacity as appropriate.	

### [Encounter #3] Thieves only. Informational only, no XP.

At an opportune time, during dinner at the Iron Dragon Inn have a young delivery boy secretly slip a note into the pocket(s) of any thieves in the party. (If there are no thieves, skip this encounter) The note will read in coded thief's script, "**meet us at House #10 at midnight, we need to talk...don't be late**"

Any thief will know it is usually a death sentence to not meet a guild when asked. If the thieves decide to go at midnight, they will be met by a cloaked figure just outside House #10 who flashes the guild call sign. He will enter the home and leave the door open.

Upon entering, the receiving room will be dark and they will be greeted by a low voice, "welcome, have a seat. We won't give you any names, you aren't one of us. The reason you aren't already dead is it seems you can be of some use to us. As you probably already surmise, we are at war with "The Mark". We are losing this war and are a bit short of desperate. We need an edge, we need information, we need an inside source.

It seems Thaddeus has you on the trail already. We need you to pass any useful information you gather back to the guild. Just send a coded note by any courier addressed to "water hollow", they know what to do.

You owe the guild 20gp, the price to operate within the city for a year. You have a week to pay us in full. If you are of use to us, we will help you out when we can...who knows you might be fit enough to become a cleft hand.

"The Mark" is not one of us, he has us on the run and we believe he seeks to destroy the guild entirely; we aren't going to sit around and let that happen. Go now and prove yourself...we have spies everywhere, don't betray us.

The front door opens behind them and the darkness of night beckons them to leave. If the thieves within the party do in fact pass useful information back to the guild; the guild can at times provide limited information, weapons, armor, thieving gear and a safe house when warranted.

If the thieves within the party do not cooperate, they will be warned. If they continue to refuse they will not hesitate to assassinate these rogue operators when the occasion presents itself. They will eventually send a hit squad of 1d4+2 thieves to hit the rogue(s) at night when they least expect it. As the GM, if the needs arise you may utilize the guild to supply missing elements that help move the campaign along.

**[Errand #4]** Priests, Premonitions and dark omens. Completion: 5300XP divided among PC's. When the PC's return and report to Thaddeus, he will agree with the players' assessment if the conclusion is the Serpent King is probably involved in the kidnapping.

"Some type of magic that summons snakes? It is disturbing to believe that the Serpent King is involved in such schemes, yet the evidence seems to grow in that direction. I would have you go and assault Serpent Rock while the sun still shines; but it seems our enemies are poised to strike first.

Malick our local Priest believes evil is ready to strike and strike hard. He believes we will be unprepared for the onslaught when it comes. As for myself, I believe him...our enemies are not going to sit around and just wait. We must change direction and go on the defensive; we must fend for the city now. Go to the church and find Malick, listen to what he has to say and then find this evil and root it out.

I will have the city watch on high alert throughout the night, sound the alarm if necessary. I know I am asking you much, so I will pay 900gp to each of you if you help us defend this city; how does that sound?

The Church comprises a simple building with a large hall filled with pews and an altar near the back. There are two small bedrooms behind the altar; one for the priest and the other for the three acolytes who maintain the chapel.

Malick is a 5<sup>th</sup> level priest dedicated to a lawful good deity. (You can select the specific deity depending upon your particular game system) Malick is the stereotypical bumbling priest, yet deep down is a descent man. He has available to him all spells allowed for a 5<sup>th</sup> level priest and will not hesitate to use them to help

anyone in need. Malick and his acolytes will not leave the church, so if the PCs need help, they must go to the church. The 3 acolytes are 1<sup>st</sup> level clerics.

When the PCs arrive, the door will be open and an acolyte will be working in the chapel. The acolyte will summon Malick when they enter the building. Malick will have a worried look about him.

**"I fear the worst my friends, my dreams are full of darkness; Evil is upon us. I saw a group of brave souls much like yourselves surrounded by darkness fighting hordes of undead. When all was nearly lost there was this priest with an outstretched hand at the center...you were near that thing...a very dark object. Your symbol glowing like the sun; a test of will perhaps and if you should fail.... you will find only death.**

**A premonition of things to come, a warning perhaps...I would hope we would have more time to prepare. Last night the gravedigger Effestus was confronted by a denizen from the grave, an ancient one. Effestus pinned it to the ground with his shovel until I could arrive and destroy it. The graves are no longer holding their dead. The ancient one spoke to Effestus, omens...dark omens. I don't believe the darkness will arrive soon; it's probably too late for that. I think it's already here. I don't know what else to tell you; I don't know what to do.**

**Effestus claims he knows what to do, that crazy old man is ready to storm the hillside! The ancient one told Effestus that he was the "Chosen One". But chosen for what? Riddles? I think that is where you start. I think evil will find Effestus whether he likes it or not. If you are brave enough you will be there with him on his journey. He is down there at the cemetery."**

The PCs will have many questions; he really doesn't know more than what he has already said; just answer, "I don't know" or "go ask Effestus" if they ask more questions than stated above.

When the PCs arrive at the cemetery they will find Effestus busy adding extra dirt on top of the graves. Effestus is a skinny man with a pallid white complexion and black orb-like eyes.

"This'll keep'em from coming out. A big one snuck up on me last night; scared me witless he did, said I was chosen to feed the darkness through me torment, that's what he said. So I hit'm square in the face with me shovel. The Priest then come and made ash out ov'him. So uhhh....Malick sent ya?"  
Allow PC response.

"Alls I know is that it's here, it's up thar on the hill I can feel it. It's not ready to show itself yet, the time isn't ready, but it wull. I ain't gunna hide in no hole, I'll show'em I ain't scairt of nuthin...the metal end of me shovel will put'em down for good. Let me finish me work here, comeback at sunset wull show these spooks ooze boss.

Allow the PCs time enough to go get supplies if they wish, but have them back at the cemetery at sunset. Draw out a large cemetery with graves in rows and several mausoleums on the battle mat. (See the main map for the cemetery layout)

Effestus will have his personal shack near the entrance. When the PCs return the battle will already be in progress, they will be able to hear Effestus yelling obscenities and swinging his shovel. The cemetery is filled with **20 zombies**; 4 of which are attacking Effestus.

If a cleric attempts to turn these zombies, they will instead burn the nearest 2d6 zombies to ash. Effestus will be in full fury attacking anything that gets near him.

Allow the PCs to engage in battle, and then soon thereafter describe a theatrical event that happens only to Effestus: **"Skeletal hands come out of the ground grab Effestus and drag him deep into the ground; while Effestus screams in horror!"** The PCs will not be able to help him, it happens too quickly. Allow the PCs to finish off the remaining zombies. If they send someone to sound the alarm 4 soldiers from the City Watch will arrive in 1d4 rounds.

Effestus the Caretaker	
AC	7
HP	10
Save as	F1
Move	12
# attacks	1
THAC0	18 (17)
Damage	1d6+1; +2
Gold	0
Wears a thick leather Jerkin (AC 7) and an extra strong magical shovel +1, +2 vs. undead	

Zombie	
AC	9
HP	5
Save as	F1
Move	6
# attacks	2
THAC0	19
Damage	1d4
Gold	0
Zombies always attack last in the round. Immune to sleep and charm spells.	

There is nothing the PCs can do to find or help Effestus in anyway..he is gone!

\*note: Thaddeus will not be available until lunchtime the next day. If they decide to return and visit Malick the priest he will say:

"The ancient one said Effestus was the "Chosen One" I don't believe we have seen the last of our beloved gravedigger. Riddles remember? I say go get a good night sleep and try to find Effestus in the morning. I think I will retire as well. See you tomorrow." The City Watch at this time is alerted and currently scouring the graveyard, so the party might as well get some sleep.  
(Everything is closed at this late hour)

In the morning if the PCs return to the graveyard they will find Effestus busy burying the remains of the zombies that were destroyed the night before. Effestus looks the same as he did yesterday, same clothes, no wounds.

"A wee bit of strange last night aye?, I can't rightly explain but I think I died; that's the best way to put it I suppose, the pain excruciating then I just up an' died. This morning found me self atop of Jensen hill. The dark thing is up there ya know, wait'n...wait'n for the night to come; I can feel it. I must go ya know, up ta Jensen's hill. If they tend to kill me again, I will take as many ov them spooks with me as possible. Best see if Malick has a bucket of holy water if ya plan on going; don't ya suppose? Meet me at sunset and off wull go.

\*Familiarize yourself with the **Obsidian Obelisk of the dead, dying and undead**; read the entire description in the Attachment. The obelisk is completely unrelated to the objectives of the campaign (A false trail) and is purely coincidental. The Obelisk only reveals itself at night and remains invisible during the day. (Effestus will know this instinctively) The obelisk becomes active at night and is able to raise a horde of undead at a moment's notice. The obelisk delights in the torment of the "chosen one" and regenerates energy each time Effestus dies. The soul of Effestus is tied to this powerful artifact; he is unable to travel more than a mile distant or he is immediately teleported back to Jensen's hill.

The obelisk contains a very powerful and dark spirit that delights in the torment of others. The spirit within the obelisk is not driven by madness to inflict maximum evil upon everything around it; on the contrary it acts primarily upon a whim. The spirit likes to amuse itself. As the GM, you should play the Obelisk accordingly; your job is to torment the players.

Nothing short of a major deity can destroy the obelisk; a wish will only stop it from functioning for 1d10 days. A dispel evil will force it 20d4 x 10 miles away where it will select another "chosen one".

The only realistic option the PCs have of banishing the obelisk is the cleric's holy symbol. (If the party doesn't have a cleric, then they should hire an NPC) The only way to complete this encounter is for a good cleric to outwardly wield his or her holy symbol and walk to the center of the darkness. The holy symbol will glow brighter and brighter the closer it gets to the obelisk.

Note\* the holy symbol remains inactive until it is actually placed in the cleric's hand and wielded with an outstretched arm. When properly wielded, the undead will ignore the cleric and he or she is free to walk to the obelisk unharmed.

When the holy symbol confronts the obelisk it becomes a test of wills between the good cleric and the evil spirit. (If an "EVIL" cleric confronts the obelisk, the spirit will grant the cleric's dying wish and transform him or her into a NPC vampire: no save)

Once confronted, the good cleric and the evil spirit are locked together in a test of will until the obelisk is banished or the cleric dies. In order to banish the obelisk, the cleric must roll a successful save vs. spells and a wisdom check in the same round. If the cleric fails any roll, he or she permanently loses a point of wisdom. (Only an angel or higher entity is capable of restoring this wisdom loss)



The cleric must continue to roll each round, if at any time both rolls in the same round are successful, then the obelisk is banished from the prime material plane for 1d6 months, and upon its return will select another "chosen one" at a different location.

If unfortunately the cleric continues to fail his or her dice rolls and eventually arrives at zero points of wisdom, then the body of the cleric dies and the soul returns to the embrace of a lawful good deity where they become an angel; for they have been faithful until the end. (They cannot be raised or resurrected)

\*Note: The obelisk is not banished if the cleric dies. Also don't give the PCs too many hints, allow them to figure out how to banish the obelisk on their own, remember Malick's dream gives the players plenty of hints already.

If the PCs return and report to Thaddeus, he will ask them to go and follow Effestus and root out the evil; go and save the city! The PCs must banish the obelisk in order to complete this errand; they get no gold or XP either.

When the PCs return to the cemetery at sunset Effestus will be waiting at the entrance with his sturdy shovel in hand. The party will exit out of the city by way of the goblin bridge and make their way to Jensen's hill. They will immediately notice that the top half of Jensen's hill is enveloped in absolute darkness. Effestus will immediately charge into the darkness with or without the party.

No light source of any kind will function within this absolute darkness, except for a properly wielded holy symbol; it cancels all forms of light spells, fire, lanterns etc. All PCs will slightly glow within the darkness, likewise any undead that are summoned by the obelisk will be visible to the PCs as they glow with the same faint brilliance. In short: good and evil can faintly see each other in the darkness....no other forms of light function, except a holy symbol.

The cleric's ability to turn undead does not function within the darkness, but when the holy symbol is wielded outwardly it begins to produce a faint light and nearby undead will begin to ignore the cleric. (If the cleric puts away his or her holy symbol, the effect vanishes) \*Note: "Protection from evil" spells have no effect within the darkness.

When the PCs enter the darkness they will be attacked by a horde of undead. (Evil PCs or NPCs are not attacked by the hordes of undead) Effestus will immediately yell a few obscenities and attack with his shovel. Any night the PCs decide to fight on Jensen's Hill; select from the following hordes:

Jensen's Hill Undead Horde Encounter (Select one)									
Creature type	# Appear	AC	HP	Save as	# Attacks	THAC0	Damage	Move	Notes
Skeleton	30	9	6	F1	2	19	1d4	12	Immune: sleep, charm
Zombie	30	9	7	F1	2	19	1d4	6	Attack last in round
Giant Zombies	2	7	28	F4	2	17	1d8	9	Attack last in round
Giant Skeleton	2	6	25	F4	2	17	1d8+1	15	Immune: sleep, charm

The goal is to torment the PCs and not kill off the party. Each night Effestus MUST go to Jensen's hill and die; he is either slain by the horde or skeletal hands reach out of the ground and drag him deep underground. Effestus never leaves Jensen's Hill alive!

PCs that happen to die in the darkness simply vanish and cannot be found by any means; yet in the morning they will find themselves lying face down on Jensen's hill with full health. (If the PCs die outside the darkness, they are not revived the next morning)

If the PC's are successful in destroying the undead horde, the darkness will vanish along with the Obelisk; only for it to return again the following night. Remember: the spirit of the obelisk does this for the sport; it's a game!

If the PCs decide to flee while in the darkness, they only have a 40% chance each round to find a way out and escape; the entire undead horde will not follow an individual out of the darkness, nevertheless 1d4 undead will break free and continue the chase.

Effestus will continue to go back to Jensen's hill each night, the only way to break the foul curse is to banish the Obsidian Obelisk. If the PCs become frustrated have Malick the Priest re-iterate the original story. Thaddeus will not give the party a new errand until they save the city from this evil. You may want to run a few side encounters during the day to break up the boredom of repeating the Jensen's Hill episode every night.

**[Encounter #4] Hired Mercenaries.** Completion: 2100XP divided among PC's.

At any opportune time after the 1<sup>st</sup> week, a courier will deliver an un-coded sealed message to the party that reads:

**"We have been hired to take you out. Our employer prefers it done in the dead of night while you're asleep, but I prefer to do the job right. No reason to skulk around, I say may the best team win. Come ready to fight, there are 3 of us so it gives you an advantage.**

**At noon tomorrow travel out the south gate towards the forest, we will be out in the open...no tricks, just a fair fight. If you don't come, we will come after you when you least expect it."**

Kelton's Hired Mercenaries								
Mercenary	AC	HP	Save as	# Attacks	THAC0	Damage	Move	Notes
Henrik 2 <sup>nd</sup> level human fighter	3	16	F2	1 or 2	18	1d10+1 or 1d8	12	Plate mail, 2 handed sword and long bow
Gaurn Ogre	6	36	F3	1	18	1d12+4	12	Hide armor and giant size club
Zarius 2 <sup>nd</sup> level human Wizard	9	6	W2	1	20	1d4	12	Dagger as last resort. He will use spells.

The Mark (Kelton) has hired a few mercenaries to take out the adventurers, this encounter is nothing more than it seems; instead of fighting in the shadows Henrik the mercenary is calling the party out for a fair fight. They will be waiting out in the open just like the note said.

Zarius has magic missile x2 memorized. His spell book contains the following spells: read magic, detect magic, burning hands and magic missile. Henrik will have his long bow already nocked with an arrow and the ogre will have 6 large rocks to throw for 1d10 damage on a successful hit. The mercenaries will not start the fight with range weapons, but will wait until the PCs enter melee range to fight; nevertheless if the PCs start firing range weapons the mercenaries will return fire

until the ogre runs out of rocks and then charge the PCs directly with melee weapons.

Zarius will target any wizard in the party with both magic missiles. Henrik will use tactics and attack the biggest threat first. The Ogre will target those with the lightest armor first. Henrik and Zarius both have a healing potion. Zarius will attempt to flee if the battle goes sour.

They know nothing about kidnappings or any plot; they only know that someone called "The Mark" paid them to kill the adventurers. (By now, the PCs should suspect that these bandit types that keep trying to kill them might be somehow involved with the kidnappings)

### **[Errand #5] Burning down the house. Completion: 1300XP divided among PC's.**

When the PCs finally banish the obsidian Obelisk of the dead, dying and undead, Thaddeus will thank them for saving the city, and if the PCs complain a bit he will add another 100gp to the reward to make them happy. In the meantime Thaddeus will receive information that claims house #26 is a bandit safe house and the hostages are being kept on the second floor within a secret compartment. In reality, the house is really one big trap that is designed to burn down around anyone foolish enough to enter the premises.

Thaddeus will say: "I received information about a possible bandit safe house within the city limits, it is questionable but the hostages might be in there. The information also includes a rumor about a secret compartment located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> story of the house. If it is a bandit stronghold, you best be ready to fight. The house number is 26 on the southwest part of the city. The information came through the spy network, I don't know how reliable it is; but I need you to check it out anyway. If you can catch at least one of those bandits alive, we might be able to interrogate a bit of information out of them. I will pay you each 350 gp to go and turn that house inside out; how does that sound?"

When the PC's arrive at house 26 they will see a 2 story complex with shuttered windows. The door will be locked. Draw a 90' x 90' square on the map with a single door facing east and a single window on each side of the house on both the 1<sup>st</sup> and second level. All the windows are completely shuttered and it will be impossible to see into the house from the outside.

There are no bandits in the house. If the PCs attempt to go through a shuttered window they will find them locked from the inside and impossible to open quietly. If they attempt to listen for noise, the results will always be: "**You hear only silence**".

If the door is picked and they enter the house they will find it mostly empty on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor; except for a table and 4 chairs next to the stairway to the 2<sup>nd</sup> level. The stairs to the second level are located on the opposite side of the house away from the front door. There is a lit lantern on top of the table and another lit lantern on the side of the stairs. There are no traps on the 1<sup>st</sup> level.

If they decide to search the 2<sup>nd</sup> level, they will find two 150 gallon wooden casks in the back of an otherwise open and empty room. (The casks are located at the opposite end of the room away from the stairs)

It also appears that there might be a small room just behind the casks. (Draw a small 10' x 10' room). The trap is triggered by one of two ways:

1. Any attempt to touch the spigots in order to determine what is in the casks, will result in the large spigot completely falling out and releasing a 150 gallons of whiskey in a massive gush. The whiskey will flow to the stairs and create a whiskey waterfall that is ignited by either the lantern on the table or the one on the wall.
2. The small compartment has a secret door at one side; the secret door is locked and trapped. If a thief fails to Remove Traps or opens the secret door it will open a false door underneath one of the casks releasing the 150 gallons of whiskey in a massive gush. The whiskey will flow to the stairs and create a whiskey waterfall that is ignited by either the lantern on the table or the one on the wall.

If the PCs were clever or lucky enough to extinguish the two lanterns by the stairs, then it will effectively disarm this trap; unless perhaps there is another open flame elsewhere in the vicinity.

If the PCs extinguish only one of the lanterns, then the trap is still fully functional. It will take 1 round for the whiskey to flow to the stairs and ignite; thereafter the house becomes a living inferno.

The PCs will discover that the shutters over the windows are not only locked from the inside, but are also nailed shut. The shutters have an AC 9 and have 20 hp in order to break them open. Desperate PCs may also attempt to run and ram through the shuttered windows on a successful strength check with a -5 penalty taking 1d4 damage from the impact and 1d4 damage from the fall. Failure to ram through the shutters results in 1d4 damage and the shutters remaining intact.

The fire always burns victims at the beginning of each round, before any players are allowed to act. Because the floor is covered in whiskey and slippery, movement rates are reduced to zero unless a successful dexterity check is made; even then the movement rate is reduced by half. If any PC attempts to run out of the building at any speed greater than their normal movement rate there is a -5 penalty to their dexterity check.

If any dexterity roll fails while navigating any portion of the stairs, then the victim essentially falls down the stairs landing prone at the bottom doing 1d4 points of damage. When the house ignites on the 2<sup>nd</sup> round, all victims anywhere on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2nd floor will take 1d4 points of fire damage per round while they remain within the house.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> round after the house ignites, the other full cask will explode like a fireball dealing 5d6 damage to all victims caught on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. (Save vs. magic wands for  $\frac{1}{2}$  damage) The house will burn for 20 rounds before it is reduced to ash and rubble.

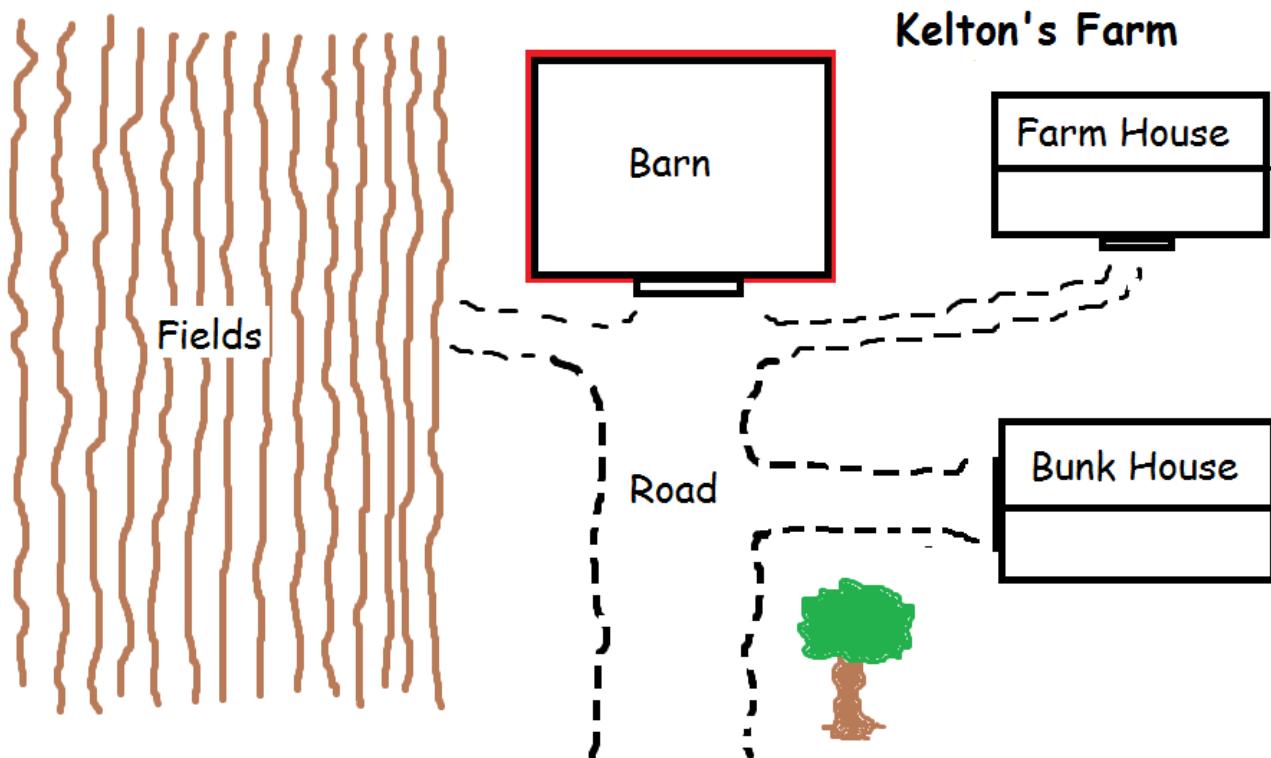
**[Errand #6]** We got one! Completion: 1200XP divided among PC's.

After hearing about the trapped house, Thaddeus will be sorrowful and apologetic.

"It seems our spy network is compromised, I am sorry it took such a foul trap to make us aware of the situation. You are getting the tough assignments and it appears you must be a serious thorn in the side of our enemy for them to go to such an effort.

I do have another assignment that we might be able to exact a bit of revenge. Kelton a local farmer that grows vegetables outside the city has sent word that he has caught a bandit red-handed. He has the thief tied up in the barn, I need you go and detain him and bring him to me where we will interrogate him.

I need you to move fast; don't let yourselves be caught out in the open. Don't get jumped and lose our prisoner. Take the Swamp Gate out of the city and you will find Kelton's farm to the north. I will pay you 200 gp each to deliver the prisoner to me; how does that sound?"



On the Swamp Gate Road toward Kelton's farm they will encounter a wagon full of straw accompanied by 4 peasants who seem to be resting along the roadside near the Ebenwald crossroads. When the PCs pass by the wagon it will seem the

peasants are going about their business, they don't seem to be too interested in the adventurers.

They will greet the PCs if they stop to talk to the peasants; they will bring up a conversation about the weather, etc. The peasants are unarmed, with nothing more than a few farming tools mounted on the side of the wagon. If they are asked what they are doing: "**delivering a load of straw to the stables in the city**". If the PCs get really paranoid and search the wagon, they will find nothing buried in the straw. The peasants won't like it at all.

When the PCs arrive at the entry road into Kelton's farm they will notice 20 or more farm hands working in the field. The road ending at a large red barn and what looks like 2 farm houses to the west. (See map above)

They will be greeted by a farm worker who will step out of the barn and wave them forward. "**He is in here, you the ones supposed to take him away?**

Wait for response. "**A fast one he is, we caught him trying to break into the boss's cash box. I am sure Thaddeus will want this one. We sent word to the city guards this morning.** The PCs will find the prisoner bound with a leather cord; he has been beaten heavily and is wounded.

**Prisoner:** AC 10 and 3hp remaining out of total of 5 hp. The PCs may heal him if they wish. The prisoner will flash the guild sign of the "Cleft hand" to any thief in the party if given the chance. The prisoner will say nothing while in the barn, he looks like a man who knows he is about to die.

A few more farm hands enter the barn and greet the adventurers and look interested in the situation. They are very interested in the adventurers gear and ask a few questions like: "**That sword you carry is it magic? Looks like a fine weapon.**" "**I bet you could hit a sparrow from a mile away with that bow, can I have a look at it. Sure looks nice.**" Or they might ask the wizard: "**are you really a wizard? Can you bring that fire down on people?**"

As the GM ask a few questions as needed about the PCs equipment, when the PCs feel a bit uncomfortable about it, then end the conversation and have the farm hands leave saying: "**Thanks for your help, we gotta get back to work**".

As the PCs leave with the prisoner he will say nothing until they are back on the main road; as soon as they begin to travel south the prisoner will speak in a low tone with his head down. **"You know they are going to kill us right?"**

If the PCs ask who is going to kill us? **"The Mark", he will have men who are watching us now. I know I am a dead man, untie me and at least let me fight. Don't look over your shoulder then they will know."**

Allow the PCs to keep the prisoner bound or to untie him. If they untie him, he will escape if given the opportunity. Have the group decide where to tactically position themselves as they walk down the road. Eventually they will travel near the Ebenwald crossroads and the same peasants with the wagon will still be waiting along the side of the road.

The prisoner will say **"see, they are waiting...more will come. Be ready."** When the PCs come within 30 feet of the wagon, then a cloaked humanoid will step out onto the trail about 170 feet down the road in front of them, he will produce a wand and aim it at the party and fire a magic missile at the prisoner; the missile will automatically hit and deliver 1d4+1 damage.

Any PCs with range weapons at the ready can return fire at the cloaked individual in the same round. If the PCs were clever enough to heal the prisoner before leaving Kelton's farm, then he might have a good chance to survive, otherwise it is completely left up to the dice roll.

The cloaked humanoid has an AC 5 and 10hp; if the players successfully kill him on the initial round they will thereafter determine that he is a thief from the "cleft hand" with a wand of magic missile (12 charges remaining) It appears the prisoner's own guild wants him dead so he can tell no tells.

He also has a potion of invisibility in his cloak; if they don't kill him on the 1<sup>st</sup> round, the cloaked humanoid will drink the potion and become invisible on the 4<sup>th</sup> segment of the next round and flee.

The peasants with the wagon full of straw are merely decoys and will not engage in any fighting. (They work for "The Mark") They are there to spy on events and will not blow their cover.

Dead or alive the PCs must bring the prisoner back to the Iron Dragon Inn to face Thaddeus:

**\*If the prisoner died Thaddeus will have a stern look on his face and ask "What Happened?" He will listen intently "Well, we have no choice but to move on; your next assignment comes from the King. Now is the time to assault the Serpent King in his lair." He will pay them reluctantly.**

**\*If the Prisoner survived, then Thaddeus will thank them and pay them. "We will interrogate this one, take him away! (The city watch will take the prisoner away) Listen, I have a new assignment from the King. Now is the time to assault the Serpent King in his lair."** By now the PCs should feel that bandits seem to be everywhere and seem to know too much. It should raise their suspicions even more.

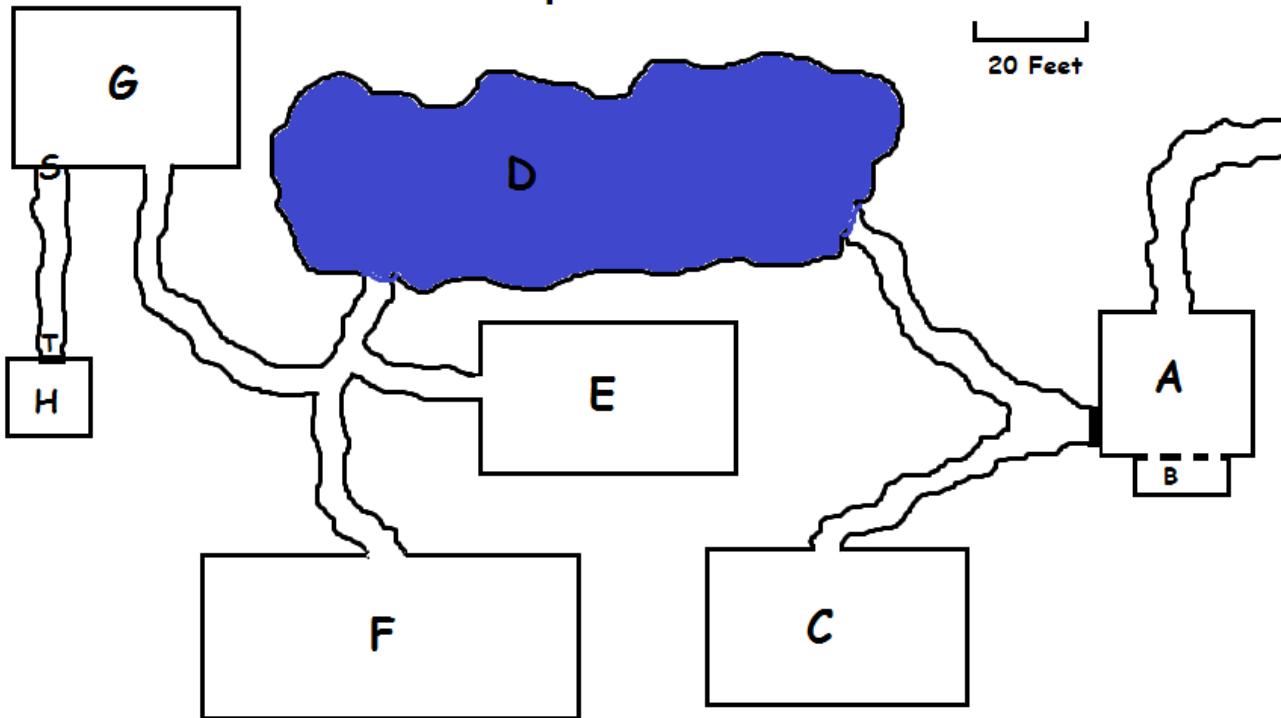
**[Errand #7]** Open assault on Serpent Rock! Completion: 3800XP divided among PC's.

By now the PCs should all be 2<sup>nd</sup> level and above, if not give them enough to become 2<sup>nd</sup> level. There should be some that are 3<sup>rd</sup> level; those that are almost 4th level should be given enough XP to move up. Have the PCs upgrade their characters before this encounter.

Thaddeus will explain their new assignment "You are to assault Serpent Rock and force the Serpent King to surrender; turn that hole in the rock upside down if you have too, but find those hostages! The Serpent King must be made to tell us his involvement in the kidnappings, give him a chance to come clean; if he doesn't then he is to be brought to the castle for interrogation and all of serpent-kind will be forced from these lands. Give them the King's demands!

Let them know the king is ready to dissolve the treaty that has been in place for generations. The King has let me offer you \$1200gp each for your efforts, are you willing?"

## Serpent Rock



**Serpent Rock Entrance:** Guarding the entrance will be 2 **serpent-folk Guards** whose duty is to warn the guards in Room A of an impending attack. If the PCs discover a way to silence the sentries beforehand, then it is possible to sneak into Room A and gain surprise.

The terrain surrounding the Serpent rock is more or less an open grassy field; therefore it will be difficult to sneak up on the sentries. Every  $1d2+1$  hours, one of the sentries takes a stroll around the perimeter of the rock; this takes about 30 minutes to complete.

**Room A&B:** Rooms A&B are essentially a tactical trap.

Room A contains 2 **serpent-folk guards** armed with melee weapons while Room B contains 2 **Archers** who find cover behind narrow wall-slits (-2AC from both range and melee weapons while they remain within room B) The gaps in the wall in room B are about 2 feet wide.

Serpent-Folk Guard	
AC	6
HP	10
Save as	F2
Move	10
# attacks	1 or bite
THAC0	19
Damage	1d6
Swim	12
Short sword and wooden shield. They may also bite: save vs. paralyzation for 1d4 rounds on a successful hit and 1d2 damage.	

The tactical plan is for the snake-archers to fire at the enemy from room B while the PCs are engaged in melee with the guards in room A. Do not hesitate to do a -4 to hit "Called Shot" to hit any PC who hides behind one of the serpent-folk guards.

The door in Room A is made of sturdy wood and is barred from the other side. (The door has an AC of 9 and 30hp) There is a sentry posted on the other side of the wood door who will run to **Room C (The Barracks)** to raise the alarm.

**Room C:** There are a total of 10 serpent guards who reside in these barracks; when the alarm is raised 8 of the guards will arrange themselves into a tactical column and march to the wooden door and enter the fight in room A. The remaining 2 serpent guards will make their way to **Room D (The Lake)** where they will remove their shields and swim underwater to the center of the lake and lie-in-wait to ambush the PCs.

**Room D (The Lake):** This underground lake fills the entire cavern, the cavern height is 50 feet and the depth of the lake is 20 feet. At the shore near the entrance is a row boat tied by a cord to a rock outcropping. The boat is made of wood and appears to be sea worthy; there are 2 oars in the boat.

Room D is a trap, if the PCs do not realize that snake-folk are proficient swimmers who have no need for a boat, they will fall prey to a simple but deadly ruse. The only hint the PCs will get is to mention: "**There appears to be 2 short swords and 2 wooden shields down by the shore**"

The 2 serpent guards in the middle of the lake will wait until the PCs row out and then simply capsize the boat sending the occupants splashing into the water where normal swimming and drowning rules apply. (Those in heavy armor sinking to the bottom) The serpent guards have a 90% chance each round to capsize the boat, the boat has a handle built into the keel and can be capsized from underneath. Thereafter the 2 unarmed serpent guards will attempt to bite the victims in order

Serpent-Folk Archer	
AC	7
HP	10
Save as	F1
Move	10
# attacks	2 or bite
THAC0	19
Damage	1d6
Swim	12
Short Bow and 12 arrows. They may also bite: save vs. paralyzation for 1d4 rounds on a successful hit and 1d2 damage	

to paralyze and then drown them. At the far end of the lake there appears to be a passageway out of the cavern. The passageway leads to a 3-way crossroads.

**Room E (Mushroom Fields):** Room E appears to be a place where mushrooms are farmed? The mushrooms are in rows and seem to be confined to several fields; there are 5 unarmed serpent-folk who appear to be farming. (They will attempt to escape and will bite if threatened) The mushrooms are black and smell of freshly cut hardwood. They mushrooms are poisonous to humans, but not to serpent-folk who use them as food. (A paralyzation poison might be brewed from these mushrooms if properly researched)

**Room F (Living quarters):** The entrance to room F has been hastily sealed by the emplacement of rocks that fill the portal, except for a small 1 foot opening at the top. A glance through the small opening will reveal a living quarters filled with female serpent-folk and children. They will hiss at the party in an attempt to make them leave, they will cower away from the rock barricade if the PCs come to close. They will not attack the party unless they are attacked.

**Room G (Serpent King's lair):** The Serpent King will be surprised to see that someone was able to get through all of his defenses. The Serpent King speaks a broken form of the common language and will engage the PC's with speech in order to avoid any fighting. (He already knows he has lost) He will attempt to bluff the PC's into believing they have attacked his home for nothing and he is innocent of any charges against him. He will NOT fight; he will offer to surrender first. "**Halt! Halt! Why are you attacking us? Why are you here?"**

Allow the PCs to deliver the Kings demands. "**The king sent you? You have been sent on a fool's errand; do you see any hostages here? We are a peaceful race, we have not violated our pact with King Alangar, but you may have destroyed any chance for peace by your reckless acts of violence! I demand the King send one of his diplomats to remedy the situation!"**

Allow the PCs to respond. If they cast detect evil on the Serpent King, he will radiate evil; nevertheless the PCs would be unaware of the natural alignment of the snake-folk species in general. If they cast detect lie, they will know the serpent king is lying. If needed, the serpent king will ask, "**What evidence would**

lead you to believe we are involved in some plot against your kind?" the serpent king will always deny or attempt to laugh off any accusations. Hereafter the PCs have basically 2 choices remaining:

1. Go back to the city and ask that a diplomat be sent to remedy the situation. When Thaddeus hears this he will say, "**You searched the entire cavern system, right?**" If the PCs have failed to search, then Thaddeus will push them out immediately. "**Go search it now; they are probably moving the hostages as we speak!**" If the PCs return to Serpent Rock, the hostage will not have been moved.
2. If the PCs are clever and do not fall for the Serpent King's bluff, they might ask if they can search the entire caverns for the hostages. The Serpent King will bluff again, "**go ahead and search, you won't find any hostages here...you are wasting your time.**" The serpent king will hope that the PCs will give up the search and leave. He hopes that with a diplomat they can get the hostage out of the caverns without being detected.

If the PCs search **Room G (The Serpent Kings lair)** they will find the Kings living quarters and all his personal effects (3200gp in emeralds in a leather bag, +1 wooden shield, an ion stone of +1 intelligence and a +2 short sword). If the PCs look at the ceiling they will notice a vein of ore that looks grey and looks like the metal lead. There is a secret door in the north east corner; the standard rules apply for any attempt to find this secret door.

If the secret door is found, it leads down a narrow hallway to a locked door at the other end; there is a construction trap set in front of the door. It is a construction type trap and is detectable by dwarves. (A thief will miss it) The trap consists of a false floor that will shatter when significant weight is placed upon it allowing a leg to fall through and be punctured by poisoned sharpened sticks below: The sharp sticks do 1d4 damage (no save) and the poison: save vs. poison or 1d6 damage from the toxin.

The door into **Room H (The hostage)** is locked, but not trapped. The door can be picked on a successful roll by any thief. The door is made of wood has an AC 9 and 30 hp if they need to smash down the door.

**Room H (The hostage):** Inside this small room they find the cook bound and gagged on the floor; he appears tired, but looks more or less unharmed.

When confronted with the truth, the Serpent King will surrender and confess: "I surrender! No need for more bloodshed. I will confess! We took the hostages so we could blackmail King Alangar for money. Please spare our lives. Take me to the King's palace."

If pressured by the PCs to know who else is involved in the plot, "Others are involved, The Mark and his gang were the kidnappers, they are taking over the city and you don't even know it. There is also a Wizard of sorts; I met him only once....The Mark knows him."

If they pressure the serpent king for more information: "I don't know where the other hostages were taken, I suppose "The Mark" has them. I don't know anything about the Wizard, like I said I only met him once. The Mark hides his identity, but I suspect he operates out of Kelton's farm because they asked me to close off the area near there a while back. The plan was to divide the hostages into two groups in case one was found, then the other group of hostages could be used as blackmail.

I am sure only The Mark or that skinny wizard are the only ones who know where the other hostages are located. The Mark will use this to his advantage I suppose. I am truly sorry for my actions. Please take me to King Alangar where I will place myself and my people at his mercy."

The Serpent King doesn't really know more than this, if asked additional questions the typical response will be "I don't know". The Serpent King is at the mercy of the PCs who can decide a course of action; whether to leave the king here or take him back to the city for interrogation. If interrogated the serpent king doesn't really know anymore than what he has already said.

If the PCs happen to remember the incident at Kelton's farm when the farm hands asked too many questions about their personal equipment while in the barn; this might raise a few suspicions.

The cook will be happy to be free and will thank the PCs over and over again. He doesn't know much as he had been blindfolded when they moved him around. He knows the men that kidnapped him were bandits of sorts and he doesn't believe they are foreigners; they knew the local lingo and had no foreign accent. He will want to return to the city as fast as possible. (He will take up work at the Iron Dragon Inn)

When the PCs meet with Thaddeus he will be overjoyed to see the hostage, if the PCs brought the Serpent King he will hear what the Serpent King has to say and then have the City Watch escort him to the King's Palace for interrogation. (He will repeat more or less the same thing he already told the PCs back at the lair.)

If the PC's left the Serpent King back in his lair; then Thaddeus will send a squad of soldiers to bring him to the King's Castle. He will pay the PCs for their excellent work as well. Thaddeus will ask the party to report and will sit down to listen to everything that the PCs have to say.

After hearing the report, he will say, "There is a lot of what the Serpent King said that is hard to believe. For one, there just aren't that many wizards in DarkMoore; so who would this mysterious skinny wizard be? A low level mage? Probably not, it would take an experienced mage to know how to hide the hostages from the royal wizard's magic. Could it be that our royal mage Perregrin has turned against us? I doubt it; his loyalty is without question.

The only other wizard with that amount of experience would be the Wizard of the Woods, but that's just a bedtime story. He died ages ago in some tower deep in the forest and if I remember the tale correctly there were tales of virgins, sacrifice and evil deeds so the story goes.

It is also possible that these bandits hired a mage from a distant land; but those types of transactions are very difficult to hide from a spy network. This does not bode well, if the bandits have a powerful mage at their disposal that would be a big problem indeed.

And what of those bandits; is Kelton's farm compromised? I haven't seen Kelton for at least a month; those bandits could have him imprisoned for all

we know. It's time for you to pay Kelton's Farm another visit; this time to find Kelton and root out these bandits before the farm is completely over-run.

Those farm hands won't last long against a bunch of shadows and a knife in the back. You need to leave now; before the word gets out. The King will offer you 1200gp each, how does that sound?

If the PCs bring up the lead-ore found in the ceiling of the Serpent King's lair; Thaddeus will say they probably used it to foil the Court Mage's scrying magic. More evidence that a mage with experience is behind the plot, this is not common knowledge for a bunch of low-life thieves; someone is supplying the brains behind the operation.

**[Errand #8]** Lockdown at Kelton's Farm. Completion: 2800XP divided among PC's.

When the PCs arrive at Kelton's farm they will notice that no farm hands are working out in the field. When they reach the turn in the road that enters the farm they will notice a farm hand waiting by the side of the road. He will wave and walk towards the adventurers; it appears he wants to talk to them.

The farm hand will say, "I am so glad to see you, we have a big problem on our hands and we could use your help. It seems some of our fellow farm hands lead a double life and are bandits in disguise. We have had a few unexpected deaths recently; all of them stabbed in the back.

Kelton has tried to remedy the situation, but it appears to be getting worse. Kelton is in the barn now trying to talk some sense into the bandits who are hidden among us. It could break out into an all out war. Maybe if you were there it will calm things down. Will you help?"

If the PCs agree the farm hand will lead them inside the barn where **12 farmhands** are gathered near the center; it looks like they are waiting for someone to arrive.

<b>Kelton also known as</b>	
<b>"The Mark"</b>	
<b>4<sup>th</sup> level thief</b>	
AC	4
HP	11
Save as	T4
Move	12
# attacks	1
THAC0	17
Damage	1d6+1
Gold	850
Black Cloak worn over studded leather armor; he will melee with short sword +1 and shield (buckler). He has standard thief skills at 4th level of experience.	

(Draw out a large barn on the battle-mat with the farmhand minis gathered near the center.)

The farm hands will definitely notice when the PCs enter the building and will greet them with a smile and a slight bow to the head. All the farm hands are wearing a thick leather jerkin and are each holding a farm implement such as a shovel, pitchfork, pruning blade, wooden mallet, etc.

As soon as the PCs are inside the building a man in a black cloak will jump up on a large bale of hay in front of the farm hands and motion the crowd forward.

If the PCs move a bit closer they will notice that the man in black is also wearing a mask. **"Welcome everyone! Now is the time to come clean. Now is the time to rid ourselves from all those that seek to oppose us! We cannot have traitors among us anymore! It must end now and I will put an end to it if I have too!"**

At this time the PCs will hear the barn doors close behind them and a chain being locked into place. (Unless the PCs have spoken up and stated a course of action; it is assumed they were all watching the show and did not notice the barn doors closing quietly behind them)

When the PCs finally figure out what's going on; have all the farm hands turn and look at the PCs. **"It's time to settle this once and for all....Attack!"** The farmhands will surround the PCs and attack; the fight will be to the death.

The man in the black cloak and mask is Kelton in disguise; he will attack in a tactical manner going after the most deadly enemy first. They will fight to win, they will not surrender preferring to either to die or escape if the battle is lost.

Kelton will fight to the death! Allow the PCs to monologue while the battle is in progress; Kelton will tease the PCs with information, **"You fools really think you will get the hostages without paying the money!"**

Kelton's Bandits Disguised as Farmers	
AC	7
HP	4
Save as	T1
Move	12
# attacks	1
THAC0	20
Damage	1d4+1
Gold	20
They wear thick leather Jerkins that provides AC7 and fight with farming tools. All have thief skills at 1 <sup>st</sup> level of experience.	

If a PC tries to intimidate The Mark he will say "**I say always kill the mouthy one!**"

If the PCs continue to ask questions, Kelton will tease them a bit more: "**Don't you understand? You will never find the hostages. Surrender now and we will make your death painless. Give the hostages a chance to live. If we live the ransom can be paid and the hostages released; by your actions you are killing them!....surrender!**" Allow the fight to finish; if the PCs are victorious and kill all the bandits they will learn that Kelton is the bandit behind the mask. (They may have to bring the body to Thaddeus to identify the man behind the mask if they have not met Kelton in person yet.)

If the PCs struggle with the battle allow an escape route up a ladder and out an upper loft window. Encourage the party to regroup and finish the fight; for when they return the barn door will be open and the fight will continue out in the open. \***Kelton will fight to the death. (Do not let them take Kelton alive, if they capture him he will apply contact poison to his skin and die.)**

If the PCs search the farm after the battle they will find nothing unusual. In fact it looks like a stereotypical farm. They will find nothing but hay, farming tools and crates of vegetables in the barn. The farm house will have all the furniture and items that you would expect to be present in an old farm house. (If they search the desk they will find a leather pouch filled with 480gp and gold pendant worth 200gp) The Bunk house is devoid of any treasure. There are no secret doors found anywhere on the farm property. The farm property appears to be laid out almost too perfectly, like it was planned that way. No hostages here!

Thaddeus will be surprised to learn that Kelton was a bandit and even more surprised that Kelton is "The Mark". Allow the PCs to return to Thaddeus and report. (He will pay the PCs as well)

**"This is alarming news. I find it difficult to believe myself, but nevertheless here we are. We are being betrayed from within; by our own citizens. It will be decades before anyone trusts the royal spy network again. It appears the only information the royal spies have been able to gather is misinformation.**

It's a grave thought, but we may have doomed our fellow inn keeper and barmaids to a slow and untimely death. It makes sense that "The Mark" wouldn't keep the hostages at the farm; the farm was just a front for his illegal activities. So, where do we go from here? Allow the PCs to come up with whatever course of action they can devise.

**[Errand #9]** Wild Goose Chase. Completion: xxxx XP divided among PC's.

From here, allow the PCs to come up with their own theories and pursue them. As the DM you must more or less "Wing It". You must create the scenario, monsters, NPCs and the environment for whatever the PCs can devise and then play it through to completion. Give the PCs XP and/or money for every encounter created.

**[Errand #10]** Wolfs Head Pass. Completion: 4000XP divided among PC's.

Trigger this encounter when the PCs begin to ask questions about the possible link to an unknown wizard that might be involved with the plot. Remember: the Serpent King mentioned a Wizard was somehow involved and Thaddeus himself knew of a few old stories about the Wizard of the Woods. If they mention anything about finding this wizard to Thaddeus:

"It's probably a wild goose chase, but we are running short on time with almost no leads to go on. I will tell you what I would do, you see the woods to the north are just too big and dense to try and find anything within it.

I believe an easier way would be to climb to the top of Wolfs Head Pass on a bright sunny day and look down upon the forest with a bird's eye view; there you might find a hovel resting in some clearing or better yet an old tower rising above the tree tops.

It is probably a long shot, but I would venture some of the King's money to find out. Wolfs Head Pass is an arduous climb with arctic temperatures at the summit. The mountain is filled with wild game and from the stories I hear from our local hunters there are more than a few brown bears up there. You best be on your toes. I could go as high as 800gp each, how does that sound?

Allow the PCs to buy winter gear and supplies before they go. Describe in detail their slow ascent up the side of the mountain pass. The slopes will contain small valleys and steep side hills covered in shrubs and trees. There are various wild game trails that traverse the entire mountain at random locations; they will find abundant elk and white tail deer herds in the valleys. (Hunting opportunities) The PCs will most likely follow the game trails as they wind slowly up the mountain.

The 1<sup>st</sup> encounter occurs when the PCs enter a steep valley and they notice **3 brown bears** that have caught their scent about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile down below. The bears are advancing towards the party; they can be heard as they move through the brush and at times they will get a short glimpse of the bears.

Allow the PCs to devise a course of action; they could attempt to ambush them, a druid could try and befriend them, etc. The bears are hungry and will attack the party; it is possible they may go after a horse first.

If the party had harvested wild game previously they could use it to feed the bears in order to make their escape. The bears will track the party by scent so it would be fruitless to try and hide.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> encounter occurs when the PCs reach higher elevations; the terrain gradually becomes rocky and the trees and shrubs begin to thin out. Eventually the trees and shrubs give out entirely and only rocks and boulders become the new terrain. The first evidence of snow on the ground becomes evident at this altitude and begins to increase as they near the summit. The PCs will arrive at a 150 foot cliff face that stands as an obstacle between them and the summit. The PCs must successfully climb this cliff face as there is no other way around; use standard climbing rules and proficiencies to adjudicate the climb. If the PCs were clever enough to bring climbing gear, then add bonuses to the climbing results.

After the climb, the party will enter arctic conditions as it is very near the mountain summit. The snow is 3-5 feet in depth and the wind begins to blow at 10 miles per hour. (Movement in the snow is  $\frac{1}{2}$  normal movement)

Brown Bear	
AC	6
HP	24
Save as	F4
Move	12
# attacks	2 claw + bite
THAC0	17
Damage	1d4 & 1d6
Swim	8
Bears can use scent to track their prey.	

During daylight hours a humanoid will die of exposure in a time equal to a PCs constitution score in hours without winter clothing; thereafter the individual becomes a frozen block. (Winter clothing negates these effects during the day)

During the night the temperatures become even colder and the party must find /build a shelter or freeze to death in the subarctic temperatures; spells and/or a fire will aid in the quest to stay warm.

At night, those without winter clothing can survive 10 minutes before freezing to death without shelter.

At night, those with winter clothing can survive 1 hour before freezing to death without shelter.

\*Note: The party must spend at least 1 night on the summit in order to reach the side that provides a good view of the forest below; thereafter they can descend back to the cliff edge and below arctic conditions on the same day.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> encounter occurs when the PCs attempt to sleep the night on the summit. During the 1<sup>st</sup> watch a pack of winter wolves will begin to howl from a few miles away. An hour later the pack arrives and attacks the party. The pack consists of **5 wolves** who will tactically hunt the party; they will especially target a single PC if he or she becomes separated from the group. This pack of wolves will check morale.

Early the next morning the PCs can trudge over the summit to the other side and view the forest below: "**Where indeed they see a tower sitting in a clearing just a bit north of the very center of the forest.**"

The PCs will be able to make a quick map sketching a few landmarks that will help them keep direction while traveling in the forest below. When this is complete, the party is able to descend down the mountain without additional encounters. Nevertheless the party must successfully climb down the 150 foot cliff face below to make it back to the city.

Winter Wolf	
AC	6
HP	10
Save as	F2
Move	12
# attacks	1
THAC0	17
Damage	1d6
Pelt	80gp
The best winter clothing is made from the pelt of a winter wolf.	



**[Errand #11]** The Wizard of the Woods. Completion: 4000XP divided among PC's.

When the PCs return and report to Thaddeus, he will send them to find the tower.

"You already know that time is of the essence, you must go immediately and find that tower; what better place to keep hostages. If it is the Wizard of the Woods....I mean if he happens to still be alive then caution is of the essence. These are all bedtime stories, so I don't know what to expect: but who else has the power and knowledge to hide the hostages up till now.

I would say get in fast and get out. I don't know how wise it would be to take on a wizard in his own backyard; but maybe you won't have a choice. If I had proof I could probably convince the King to send half the city watch with you. I say you plan for the worst, so I will give you each 1500gp now to go and equip yourselves for the worst, how does that sound?

Allow the PCs to level up to at least 3<sup>rd</sup> level; those that are near 4<sup>th</sup> level should be moved up as well. (Be generous here)

It is assumed that the PCs will follow the landmarks they observed while on the mountain summit and plot a trail to the tower in the woods.

The 1<sup>st</sup> encounter occurs about half-way to the tower while trudging through the dense woods. The PCs will enter a portion of the woods where the trees and shrubs begin to thin out a bit; here they will notice what seem to be 4 very dark objects about 300 feet up ahead.

The dark objects appear to be waiting in the shadows of a few large trees. Immediately thereafter these objects will rise from the ground on 4 legs to somewhat resemble 4 large dogs. The 4 dog-like beasts light out after the party at frightening speed and will be attack the party in 2 rounds.

On closer inspection these dogs look like large hounds with a black shiny coat and black orb eyes. These Pit Hounds have an over-sized maw filled with sharp teeth. Since these hounds have such a high movement rate as they dash in and out of the trees /shrubs it would be impossible to target them with ranged weapons that require a roll to hit.

The **4 pit hounds** will close the distance quickly and will attack the party at melee range. These dogs are not undead; if the party attempts to observe these hounds closely they appear to be demonic in nature. These pit hounds are summoned by the Wizard of the Woods in order to warn him when intruders are in the forest. The hounds will howl in unison just before the chase begins. Pit hounds are immune to fear and will always fight to the death.

Pit Hounds	
AC	5
HP	18
Save as	F5
Move	20
# attacks	1
THAC0	16
Damage	1d12
On a natural 20 a Pit Hound does 3d12 damage. Pit hounds are immune to fear.	

The 2<sup>nd</sup> encounter will occur about a mile north of their current position; here they will find a large clearing with a decrepit old man seated upon a small hill. The man appears to see the PCs even if they hide back within the cover of the

forest and he seems to be waiting for them. The man is dressed in dirt covered rags with what looks like a worn out robe around his shoulders.

If the PCs go near the clearing he will beckon them closer with a wave of his hand. If the PCs attempt to target the old man with magic spells or ranged weapons they will either automatically miss or completely dissipate as if the area had an invisible shield around it.

The old man will not attack and will continue to beckon the PCs to come closer. If the PCs decide to entertain the old man and walk to the hill; the old man will welcome them. **"Welcome my brave friends, yes you are very brave. No need to be frightened as my days are numbered and my strength will leave me soon. Yes, I am the Wizard of the Woods. Centuries ago I was once ruler of a kingdom that covered these very lands and beyond.**

I believe there have been many a tale told about me that are intended to scare children home at night. Oh yes, I have heard them all. The truth be told these stories are a bit more pleasant than my horrific past. I have one more story to tell, yes a tale to remind men of their mortality; in ages past an arrogant mage confronted a demon named Komareus who sought to drag him into the deepest depths of the netherworld.

The mage resisted and was able to banish the demon before the shackles chained him within the pit. As the mage prepared to escape this dark realm the demon left him with a gift. Yes, a gift that resides in him to this very day; his spirit. This mage's strength wanes now, as the dark spirit fights for control.

**It is not the wish of this regretful mage to unleash this demon upon the world, so he would leave it for the bravest of souls to vanquish. The demon is weak now, but left to its own devices will become strong in time. In return I will give you a final gift; yes they are still alive!"**

Describe the following scene to the characters: The old man begins to split apart before them in a gore of splintering flesh and bone; from out of this frail mortal

form arises a sleek dark-red demon with a near perfect physique. The demon has the body of a man with legs and feet similar to a chicken.

The eyes and hair are coal black; the arms appear to be limp and it seems apparent that the demon is unable to use them. The hands end in sharp black claws that are designed to tear flesh. (In its weakened state the demon cannot use its arms/claws yet.)

The mouth of the demon is still covered over in flesh and the PCs will watch as the demon attempts to open its mouth and howl but to no avail. (It should be evident to the PCs that if the demon could use its arms and if the flesh did not cover its mouth that it would be an extremely formidable opponent.)

Despite this weakened state, the chicken legs of the demon are not frail and are capable of 30 foot jumps from a standing position and 45 feet if the demon runs before it jumps. The chicken feet end in sharp black talons that the demon uses to rake its opponents in battle. The demon will jump towards an opponent and rake the victim from the head on down to the feet. The talons are capable of destroying armor; for every successful strike on a victim; the AC of the victim's armor is reduced by 2. (The armor can be repaired)

Komareus has a 5% resistance to magic and can only be hit by magical or silver weapons. Because of the swiftness and ferocity of each jump, Komareus does not trigger a free attack when breaking melee contact with an opponent (Jumping only). Komareus is extremely fast and will always go first in any round. (No initiative roll can beat his natural ability)

The PCs will not be able to outrun this demon; so the only option is to fight. By this time the PCs should have magical weapons in their inventory. Komareus is intelligent and will target the biggest threats first. If Komareus's mortal form dies; his spirit will return to the abyss.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> encounter occurs when the PCs arrive at the Wizards Tower at the center of the forest. Show the picture of the tower to the players to view. The tower is old and falling apart; there are holes in the wall and rubble littering the grounds.

Draw out the base of the tower on a battle-mat along with an open doorway and a hole in the wall at a different height and location. When the PCs look inside the tower they will find that the first few floors have collapsed and created a pile of rubble below.

It does appear that the top floor 80 feet up is still intact; if the PCs look closely they can still see the remnants of stairs partially winding upwards into the highest level. The stairs on the lower 80 feet have completely collapsed and have become rubble. The PCs will find nothing if they search the rubble at the base inside the tower.

Eventually the PCs must devise a way to climb or levitate up to the stairs 80 feet up; there they will be able to enter the top floor. When the PCs enter the top floor they will find that the inner walls that once formed the rooms have collapsed creating rubble all over the top floor. (The place looks a mess) A quick search through the top floor will yield nothing of value.

There is too much rubble to forensically determine if someone has previously made it to the top floor and walked around. (Tracking skills will yield nothing; likewise looking for disturbances in the dust will yield nothing) There are NO secret doors on the top floor.

If a dwarf is on the top floor he or she will immediately notice signs of new construction on the eastern wall. (No roll required) Any dwarf will immediately notice that the top floor is not dimensionally accurate as it should be; someone has made the walls on the eastern internal wall slightly thicker so the dimensions of the top floor are off-set.

If no dwarf is in the party, then the PCs must be clever enough on their own to figure it out. If the PCs ask about the dimensions or any type of measurement with regards to the top floor, then tell them that the top floor appears to be dimensionally off-set; the eastern internal wall seems to be thicker.

If the PCs struggle with the tower encounter; remind them that the Wizard of the Woods said something to the effect that the hostages are alive. Where else would

the Wizard of the Woods keep the prisoner if not for the tower? If they go back to Thaddeus even he would think that the tower must be the key.

If the PCs attempt to create a hole in the eastern wall; after 2 feet they will encounter a void between the walls. If the hole is big enough to crawl through they will enter a very narrow room between the walls; at its center there appears to be a large gray box. If the PCs inspect closer they will find that the box is made of lead; if they lift the heavy cover they will find the inn keeper and the 2 barmaids tied up below.

\*Note: The wizard of the woods would teleport into the narrow room, which is why there are no secret doors.

The adventuring party will be able to return to the city with the hostages in tow without accruing additional encounters; they will enter as conquering heroes.

Thaddeus will be overjoyed, give them accolades and pay them 2000gp each. They will get an audience with the King as the palace re-opens; the king will be congratulatory. It will be a while before the DarkMoore Inn is open for business as the staff will require plenty of rest and recuperation. There will be a celebration at the Iron Dragon Inn with plenty of ale, yells and tales.

The adventure will continue in the 2<sup>nd</sup> module: "**The Fall of Ebenwald**".



## Attachment:

# The Obsidian Obelisk of the Dead, Dying and Undead (Greater Artifact)



**The Obsidian Obelisk of the Dead, Dying, and Undead** contains the essence of a spirit that was thought to be permanently banished. In an age long ago this unholy spirit wandered the mortal realm tormenting those creatures that served the Gods of righteousness. It was said that Spirit's power with the dark arts was unmatched; with but a single touch it could bring death to its victims. It was also said that no entity could match such a twisted personality or an equal penchant for dark humor.

This spirit had a name long before it escaped into the mortal realm, that name was Thazul. (He will go to great lengths to keep his name hidden.) It was Thazul's incredible aptitude for raising the dead that brought the forces of good to ultimately banish him from the mortal realm forever.

Great spells were invoked to bind and banish Thazul back to the abyss; however fate would have it different as a portion of his powerful essence was allowed to remain. The essence eventually became bound within a monolithic slab of obsidian and through its unholy will alone it caused the obsidian bedrock to shatter, thus creating the artifact that holds and maintains its existence within the mortal realm to this very day.

Thazul is not driven by madness to inflict maximum evil upon everything around it; instead it delights in the continual torment of others and prefers nothing more than to prolong anguish. It would rather keep a victim alive so they can live to suffer another day.

When the Obelisk is forced to a new location it will select a new "Chosen One". The maximum range of its power is limited to a 1 mile radius; beyond this it has no power. The "Chosen One" must be of good alignment and Thazul usually selects some sorry sap as the target. It is believed that Thazul honed in on the evil entity contained within the Wizard of the Woods when selecting DarkMoore as its next target; then when it arrived it found poor Effestus the Caretaker an unwilling victim to torment.

Thazul will send an undead messenger to call the "Chosen One" and anoint him or her to this horrific position to which they are bound. Hereafter the chosen one is bound to the obelisk and cannot escape; as any attempts to flee more than a mile away will teleport him or her back to the obelisk.

Thazul derives his power from the "dying" of the Chosen One and delights in the nightly horrific sacrifice they must endure. At night, Thazul may summon a globe of darkness up to 800 feet in diameter around the obelisk; the darkness extinguishes all light sources except a properly wielded Holy Symbol. The darkness is of such power that "Protection from Evil" spells fail to function.

All PCs will glow slightly within the darkness, likewise any undead that are summoned by the obelisk will be visible to the PCs as they glow with the same faint brilliance. In short: good and evil can faintly see each other in the darkness...no other light source will function, except a holy symbol.

Evil creatures are not attacked by the undead horde within the darkness and may wander wherever they desire. If they happen to wander within sight of the obelisk they will be immediately transformed into an NPC vampire: no save. After Thazul has granted these evil-doers their dying wish, they must remain in gaseous form for an entire month before acquiring the ability to coalesce into a human form.

Thazul has limited power during the daytime; it is only at night that he is able to summon undead and invoke the globe of darkness. (During the day the obelisk is invisible) The Chosen One knows the general location of the obelisk at all times and is compelled to go to it when summoned; upon arrival they are swarmed by undead who eventually kill the Chosen One. Despite the gruesome nightly events, the Chosen One and any other living creatures that die within the globe of darkness will find themselves alive without injuries lying face down the next morning.

If the PC's are successful in destroying the undead horde that is summoned, the darkness will vanish along with the Obelisk; only for it to return again the following night.

Nothing short of a major deity can destroy the obelisk; a wish will only stop it from functioning for 1d10 days. A dispel evil will force it 20d4 x 10 miles away where it will select another "chosen one".

The only realistic option the PCs have of banishing the obelisk is the cleric's holy symbol. (If the party doesn't have a cleric, then they should hire an NPC) The only way to complete this encounter is for a good cleric to outwardly wield his or her holy symbol and walk to the center of the darkness. (The holy symbol will glow brighter and brighter the closer it gets to the obelisk)

Note\* the holy symbol remains inactive until it is actually placed in the cleric's hand and wielded with an outstretched arm. When properly wielded, the undead will ignore the cleric and he or she is free to walk to the obelisk unharmed. When the holy symbol confronts the obelisk it becomes a test of wills between the good cleric and the evil spirit.

The good cleric and the evil spirit become locked together in a test of will until the obelisk is banished or the cleric dies. In order to banish the obelisk, the cleric must roll a successful save vs. spells and a wisdom check in the same round. If the cleric fails any roll, he or she permanently loses a point of wisdom. (Only an angel or a greater entity is capable of restoring this wisdom loss)

The cleric must continue to roll each round, if at any time both rolls are successful, then the obelisk is banished from the prime material plane for 1d6 months, and upon its return will select another "chosen one" at a different location.

If unfortunately the cleric continues to fail his or her dice rolls and eventually arrives at zero points of wisdom, then the body of the cleric dies and the soul returns to the embrace of a lawful good deity where they become an angel; for they have been faithful until the end. (They cannot be raised or resurrected) \*Note: The obelisk is not banished if the cleric dies.