

Play with The World Beyond RPG
or OSR fantasy levels 1 to 4

Shadow of the Haunted Keep

An Adventure in The World Beyond



written and illustrated by Jaap de Goede



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*Sangreal Games, Amersfoort,
The Netherlands*

www.sangrealgames.com
www.darkdungeon2.com

*This adventure is written to be played
with **The World Beyond**.*

*However, you can easily adapt it to
any OSR style game.*

*OSR stands for Old School
Renaissance and comprises both games
published within the Open Gaming
Licence (OGL) and other role playing
games with the soul of the games of the
seventies and eighties. Many of these
games may be found for low or no cost
on the internet.*





Shadow of the Haunted Keep

A pastiche of a classic adventure for **The World Beyond**

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The Haunted Keep was the example dungeon in the 1981 Moldvay edition of Basic Dungeons & Dragons. It was the first official adventure I played as a teenager.

As I write this, it is about thirty years later, and the art of role playing has developed and evolved into something very different. D&D is by now in its 4th edition (and playtesting its 5th!), most people do not play on table top but in virtual computer worlds named MMOs, and there are hundreds, if not thousands of new role playing games with different settings and rules. But some people also yearn for the simple wonders that D&D evoked in days gone by. Many of these folks have banded into a loose movement named OSR, or Old School Renaissance. With success they revive the old games and their terse rules with new materials, and hundreds of blogs.

My own games evolved too. I still play fantasy games, but instead of playing D&D, I usually play **The World Beyond**. A simple set of rules, but with more freedoms, more realism (as fantasy goes), and more story based play. D&D had dungeons and rooms filled with monsters to kill and loot. **The World Beyond** has exciting scenes, like a movie you improvise together. Both are fantasy role playing games, but the emphasis is different.

So, this is an interpretation of a classic D&D adventure for **The World Beyond**. It's a story toolkit version of a once seek, destroy and loot game. But, if I'm successful, it will now become an interactive story with the same kind of wonder as I felt while playing D&D for the first times. It's at the same time an ode to the old, and an embracing the new.

Read, play and enjoy.

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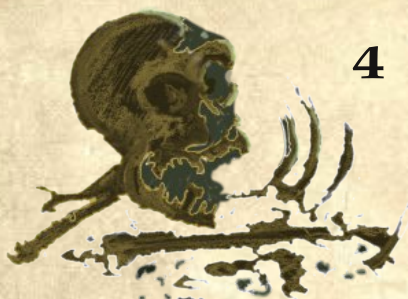


*This game was written for **The World Beyond**. Yet it's compatible with any fantasy role playing game you wish, if you do a little work. To make things easier, you'll find statistics for both **The world Beyond** and those typical for OSR games.*

However, do not expect to find a completely balanced adventure with stats and enemy numbers for every game here. Games may vary a lot, both with rules, the heroes in the group, and the ingenuity of your players. As a game master, you have to decide what is right for your particular adventure.

Always give smart players at least an even break. Adjust or decide on enemy numbers as you see fit for the effect you want to achieve. If you are not sure how to do this, experiment. Usually a group of enemies of the same size as the hero group is a good starting point. Use reinforcements for the opponents if you find they are too easily defeated, or let them surrender or run away.

And if the enemies are overwhelming, leave an escape route, or let the heroes be captured instead of slain. Fantasy Role Playing is about exciting story telling, not about total party kills.



How to Use this Module

This is not a module in the classic sense. It is more of a toolkit with components and ideas, which you as a game master, together with your players, can mold into an exciting story. Inside you will find maps, monsters, heroes, villains, objects, history and story scenes.

The first four chapters deal with the basic adventure. Chapters I-III with the warband of goblins who kidnap the relatives of the heroes, and what that leads to. Chapter IV is about the mysterious Rothmus family, who now live underground in an uneasy truce with the goblins above. Chapter V sketches the nearby city of Holmeston, and further venues of adventure. And in the back are seven readymade heroes for your players.

Skim through the book before you begin, then go ahead. The adventure is yours now, together with the players. And if they have read in the module, no monster overboard, you'll find ideas how to deal with that in chapter VI! Have fun!

The Story So far...

You and your friends live on the border lands of the empire. When you were children, these lands were protected by the proud Rothmus family, and the people prospered. But then one day, an illness befell the landlords, and a war shattered the land. When the war was finally over, all that was left of their rule was a ruined castle. A haunted keep. You were children then. Now you have grown up, and you talk about reclaiming the lands to the east, now plagued by goblins and the dark faerie folk. Perhaps you could stake out a territory of your own, and start a farm. Or you could find the legendary riches left by the Rothmus family.

On a summer eve with a nearly full moon, you, your friends and some family have gathered in a sacred forest grove to celebrate the coming harvest. Enjoying song, stories and dance, you are suddenly rudely interrupted. Guttural voices, shouts and screams. A pack of wolves pours out from between the trees. On their backs are gruesome little men armed with spears and jagged swords.

What could happen next? Here is a list of possible scenes.



The Raid that Starts it All

This is the beginning of the adventure, hopefully sparking player interest, and setting off a chase into the wilderness. You can stretch this part as long as you like, anywhere between just an hour or so up to a complete playing session. It's up to you as a game master to keep the pace and judge what the players need to make the game exciting.

Beginning #1: The Kidnapping

Friends Morgaine, Dirk and Rebecca, together with Silverhair and Fred Flint the Dwarf, have a picnic with brother Paul, sister Sophia (p. 13), and some of the other friends of the village: let's name them John, Thomas, Nash, Miriam and gramps Jacob. They have a great time in the evening, until John has a little too much to drink and starts to pick a fight with Tom about Miriam. When (and if) the heroes try to intervene, Sophia strays off saying she's seeing smoke coming from the village.

That's when the goblin raiders strike.

Make sure there are so many goblins and wolves that the heroes are likely to be overwhelmed by the enemy. However, the goblins are not out to kill the heroes or their relatives. Instead, they'll try to divert the stronger heroes long enough to kidnap their weaker friends and relatives. As soon as four or five are captured, the goblins will withdraw and disappear into the forest. Only if the heroes are very adamant on protecting their kin, and work very effectively together, reward them by having any surviving raiders leaving without captives.

Unless the heroes have been battered badly, proceed to scene #2. If they did really badly, give them a break, and skip to #3.



Goblin

Goblins are small humanoids with gruesome faces, big jaws, pointy ears and a grey, brown or green complexion. They stand about three or four feet tall (1m20). Some say they look like ugly little elves, but elves would definitely disagree. Goblins tend to meet the human world in pestering, warlike bands who roam the countryside, plundering what is in their path. Perhaps the goblins who stay at home are more friendly, but those who venture out into the world maintain a bad reputation.

Goblins speak their own guttural language. They are well organised, even if they are bit chaotic in appearance, and have their own shamanic religion. They dislike elves and elflings, and hate dwarves.

A patrol is typically 1d6+2 in number, a complete war band numbers 10d6.

The World Beyond:

STR 0, DEX 0, CON 0,
knife (skl 2, imp 2, spd 1)
club (skl 2, imp 2, spd 2)
spear (skl 2, imp 4, spd 5),
leather cuirass & helmet (armor 2)
2d6 coppers

OSR: HD 1-1, AC 7, dmg 1d6

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Goblin Wolfrider

The more cunning goblins sometimes domesticate large, strong wolves, and ride them. They then hunt in small packs, shooting from wolfback and letting the wolves jump their prey. A formation of wolf riders is 1d6+2 in number, each riding their own wolf. A raiding party will consist of two or three formations.

The World Beyond:

STR 2, DEX 2,
shortbow (skl 3, imp 4, spd 6),
shortsword (skl 3, imp 4, spd 3),
leather cuirass & helmet (armr 2)
ride wolf 3

OSR: HD 1, AC 6, dmg 1d6, can use shortbow for ranged attacks

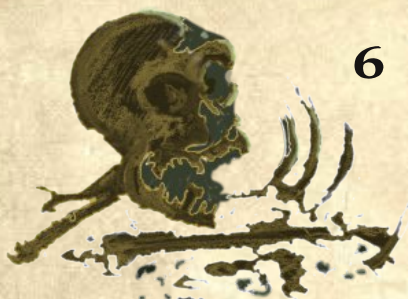
Wolf Mount

Gruesome gray wolves from the dark east are more aggressive than their western counterpart. And they are a bit bigger. Goblins often domesticate them, train them to ride, and fit them with armour.

The World Beyond:

STR 3, DEX 3, CON 3
bite (skl 4, imp 5, spd 3)
tough (armour 3)
or scale armour (armour 7)
swim 3, stealth 2

OSR: HD 3, AC 6, bite dmg 1d6



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#2 Optional: The Raided Village

While the heroes are away in the forest grove, their home village Cookville is also attacked. If your heroes reacted real quickly to Sophia noticing smoke from the village, they may even be in time to meet some wolfriders leaving with captives. However, it is also likely that they are too late for at least a number of fellow villagers. Reward the players if they were fast and effective, but don't be afraid to tell them they couldn't save everyone - nor could be expected to do so. If the heroes were slow, the heroes can only help the wounded who were left. Several farms are ablaze, giving off the smoke that Sophia saw. Villagers who tried to defend themselves were shot or hewn down. A wounded goblin was left behind, and may be interrogated.

#3: Tracking the Raiders

If the heroes make haste, and they should, they will follow the trail in the dark. Maybe old wise Tom (p. 33) can give them some pointers on how to go about it. Traversing the forest in the dark is excellent for scary scenes, even with just an owl flying over their heads. On the other hand they might encounter a group of wounded goblins straggling behind the main group. Use the encounter table on page 7 if you want to extend this scene.

Alternatively the party could wait for morning and then follow the trail. Be sure to both praise the party for playing it safe, and nagging them that they may be too late. If they use clairvoyance magick, they might see a relative being tortured or thrown down a hole. Suggest, but don't describe too much.

#4 Optional: Asking the Guard for Help

It might not be the first thing the heroes think of, but they could send for help from the guard at Holmeston. Morgaine has worked for them, and Rebecca knows them too. Still, Dirk and Morgaine do have a slightly bad reputation with captain of the guard Zemrent. Contacting the guard personally will probably waste too much time, but sending a letter or someone else might help. With luck, the guard will arrive in time for a reinforcement or rescue.



Encounters Outdoors in The Wild

- 1 dead body (1-4), undead body (5), ghoul (6)
- 2 wolves (1-3), wild cat (4), fox (5), rabid animal (6)
- 3 poachers (1), poaching snare (2-5), covered pit (6)
- 4 goblin patrol (numbering 1d6 +2)
- 5 wild swine (1-3), deer (4-6)
- 6 lone goblin taking a nap (1-2), lone adventurer (3-4), escaped prisoner (5-6)
- 7 area patrol (numbering 1d6 +1), (1-2) on foot, (3-6) on horseback
- 8 hunting party of nobles (1d6 in number on horseback, see "noble families")
- 9 stray picnic party (1-2, 2d6 in number, men and women), stray kids (3-4), beggar (5-6)
- 10 wood gathering party (1-2), herb & berry gatherers (3-4), lumberjacks (5-6)

Roll at least once on d10 for an encounter for both day and night.
For night encounters, subtract 2 from your roll.

Roll d6 to differentiate between outcomes.

7



Ghoul

Ghouls are undead, sickly grey creatures resembling human corpses crawling and walking with their knees and backs bent. Some can jump five to ten meters from standing position, and all can hide and sneak uncommonly well. Ghouls eat corpses of all creatures, but sometimes they also have a taste for freshly killed human flesh. Then, at night, they roam near the graveyards or battlefields and try to capture prey. By day they hide, underground in tunnels they dig, away from the sun that burns their bodies. Ghouls radiate fear for living creatures, and they often carry foul diseases. A roaming group usually consists of 1d6 ghouls.

The World Beyond:

WIL 2

Claw (skl 3, imp 1, spd 0)

bite 4 (skl 4, imp 2, spd 0)

jump 3, stealth 3,

radiate fear 3

When a ghoul first appears, all present must roll 6+ on willpower to avoid standing frozen in fear.

The effect wears off in 1d6 minutes, or once one is hit. Ghouls may be held at bay or scared away with Crosstian ceremony.

OSR: HD 2, AC 6, claw 1d4, bite 1d6, when hit save vs. poison or be paralyzed for 2d6 rounds

#5 Optional: River Crossing Problems

If the party moves fast in the right direction, or if they move too slow and you want some action, the heroes may encounter a party of sentries left at the old stone bridge over the river to the east. Unless the heroes move very carefully, the goblins will hide and ambush them once they are on the bridge. Captured goblins may reveal the location of the main group if interrogated.

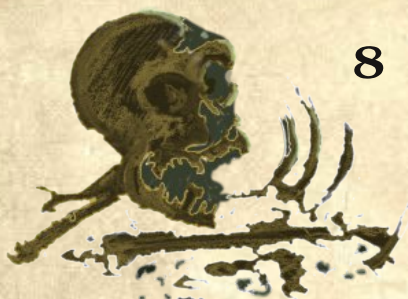
#6 Optional: The old Chapel

If you want to extend the adventure (or if you want to let your players explore the area), you may lead a trail to the old chapel of Saint Raphael and Saint Mary. Only ruins are left, and a desecrated graveyard. The place seems to be used by vagabonds, if observed from a distance. However upon closer investigation, the vagabonds turn out to be a group of goblins, led by the female shaman Rip-Ear "Who Knows" (opposite page). They have built a rat-like wooden statue behind the altar, as if it were their own saint. Just in front of the idol is a deep pit, leading into an underground cave system.

The goblins may be holding two or three captured humans. They are to be sacrificed to the rat-god, and thrown in the pit. If you feel like it, heroes sneaking in could observe such a ritual, and see someone is hurled down the pit. Or they could burst in and rescue their fellow men and women just in time.

#7 Optional: The Undead of the Old Chapel

Under the old chapel and its graveyard may live a pack of ghouls in their small complex of low tunnels. They are too small in number to dare attack the goblins, but they do devour any victims thrown into the pit near the altar. They will attack lone goblins or foolhardy adventurers. In their lair below lies remaining equipment and belongings of their many poor victims. Along with their bones.





#8 Alternative: The Ghoul Tunnels

The tunnels the ghouls dug connect all the way to the underground complex under the old Rothmus castle. If the heroes manage to fight their way through the ghouls, they may bypass the top levels of the "haunted keep" to #3 on page 17. If the heroes did not dispose of the goblins in and around the chapel, these may follow them and effectively trap the heroes inside.

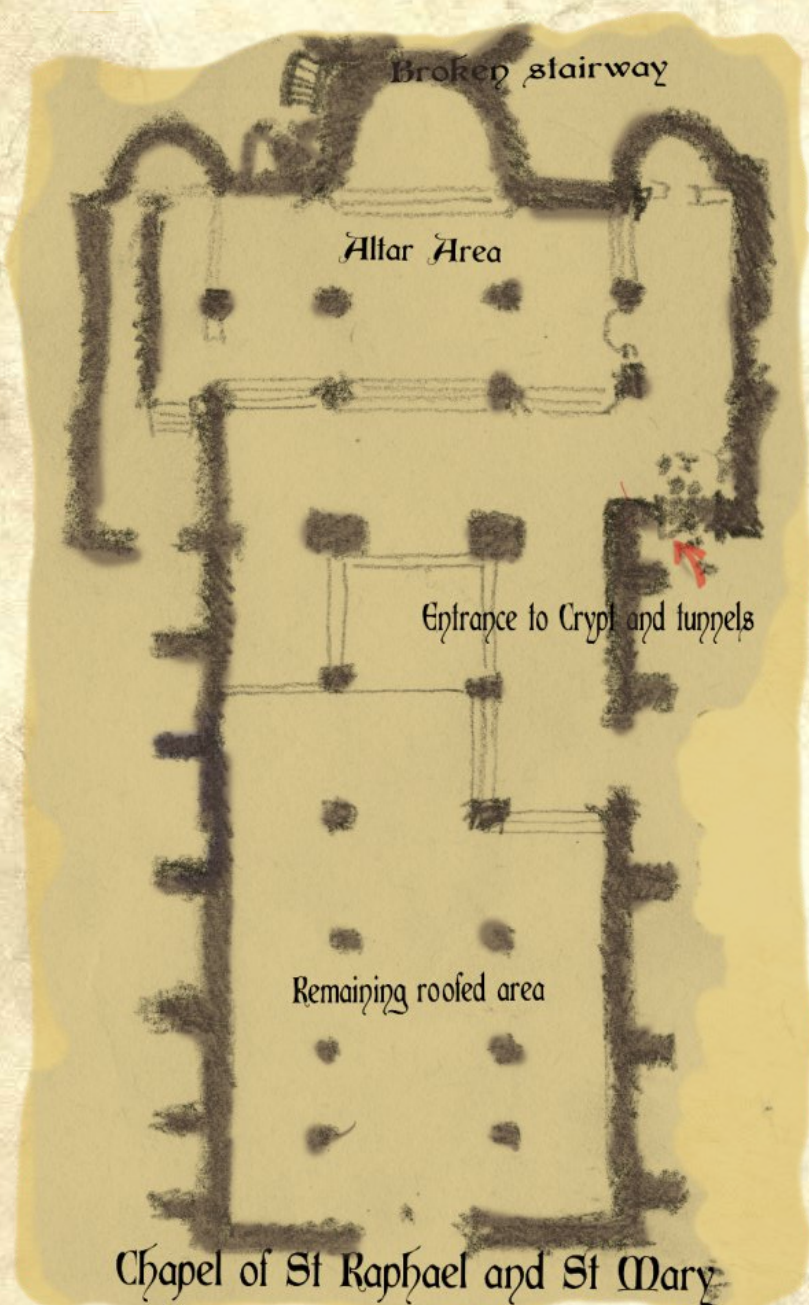
Rip-Ear who Knows

This hobgoblin Shamaness has convinced her fellow goblins, that the rat men of the haunted keep are a sort of demigods. Even goblin leader Blacktooth (p. 12) believes her, to a degree. She has made an effigy of a rat man in the old chapel, and regularly encourages the goblins to throw prisoners into the deep cave behind the altar. These poor victims are then either eaten by the ghouls or the dragon below. Maybe Rip-Ear believes her own stories, or maybe she has merely been charmed by Uomo Muris, the Rothmus rat people leader.

The World Beyond:

INT 3, WIL 3, read & write runes 3, charm magick 3, telepathy 3, dagger (skl 3, imp 2, spd 1)

OSR: magic user 3rd level, spells: ESP, charm person, sleep, 10 hp, damage 1-4

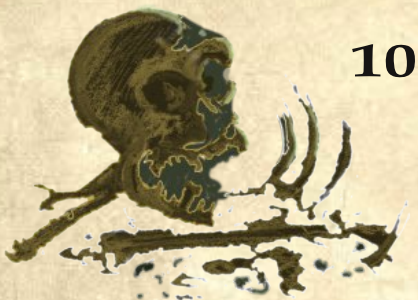


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East Tower of the Haunted Keep (Rothmus Castle)





The Haunted Keep

Eventually the heroes will be able to track the goblin raiders to the ruins of the Rothmus family castle.

This part of the adventure is most like a classical dungeon. The heroes may explore it room by room, using their wits, their ropes and their ten foot poles. You could use every room as a scene, or run the whole thing more loosely. The ruin is the main haunt of a goblin raider group, who are using it as a forward base. On the levels below, in the next chapters, the same goblin raiders wage an on and off war with the original owners of the place.

#9 The East Tower of the Haunted Keep

The Rothmus family castle is in ruins. Only the east tower is left partly intact above ground. The entrance of the east tower is blocked by a reinforced double door, clearly repaired recently.

Inside the tower is the main war band of goblins and hobgoblins, with a few of the prisoners. Use the map overleaf, and decide for yourself how the goblins are spread around the rooms. If you want to use some of the optional rooms listed below (#9A to #9E), assign and key them in the map as you find appropriate. The hobgoblins are probably in the back, with the prisoners. In all likelihood, the goblins will have alarm bells attached to the main doors. Also, they may have prepared a deep pit and covered it with canvas and sand to capture any intruders.

Pit: those falling down the pit may try to jump away on 9+ on dexterity. If they roll at least 6+, they will have avoided damage. Less, and they take two light wounds from the fall. Climbing out without rope or help may be a problem as the pit is ten feet deep.



Hobgoblin

The hobgoblin is the larger, tougher cousin of the goblin. Like goblins they have ugly faces, big jaws, pointy ears, and a grey green complexion. Whether they are just older and bigger or a separate strain is not clear. What is clear however that hobgoblin warriors are meaner, stronger and better trained. Hobgoblins often work together with goblins, taking the lead and bullying their smaller cousins.

There is actually some confusion about the term hob-goblin, as some believe that these are not bigger but instead smaller goblins. Hobgoblins typically call themselves Ork or Grue, meaning either "strong" or "people". They hunt in patrols of 1d6, and band in war groups of 4d6.

The World Beyond:

STR 3, DEX 2

sword (skl 3, imp 8, spd 6)

mace (skl 3, imp 7, spd 5)

brawling (skl 3, imp 3, spd 2)

scale cuirass & helmet (arm 2)

2d6 silvers

OSR: HD 2, AC 5, damage 1d8



Blacktooth Clamjaw

Is the half troll, half hobgoblin leader of the hobgoblins. His visage is even more frightening than that of his fellows, and his regenerative powers give him an edge over them. Blacktooth brought his raiding party to the haunted keep to pillage the treasures there, but found the Rothmus family too strong. Now he has struck an uneasy truce with William and Peter, and he delivers them human prisoners in exchange for favours. Blacktooth hopes one day to break the Rothmus' power and steal their treasure, but he fears the dragon they keep in the caves below.

DD2: Str 5, Con 6, Wil 3, battle axe 6, throw jagged daggers 4, scale armour & helmet (2), regenerate wounds (see: Trollgoblin p. 13)

OSR: level 4 fighter, AC 4, 22 hp, throw dagger 1d4+1, battle axe 1d8+1, regenerate 1 hp/rd

#9A Optional: Unused Rooms

Some of the rooms may be unused by the goblins. One could house one or more giant spiders for example. After one goblin was eaten there – its body will lay somewhere in a corner sucked dry – the other goblins left the spider well alone behind a closed door.

#9B Optional: Unused Rooms

Another room may be unused because there are scary sculptures of faces on the walls, making it look very uncomfortable. Further examination of the room may reveal a passage down, a trap with sleeping gas, and maybe even some sort of treasure.

#9C Optional: Unused Rooms

A third room may be unused because it's housing a horrible green moldy slime. The slime may be related to a kind of snail, or it may be a sort of mold. In any case it tends to hide on the ceiling and drop down on its prey. Then its juices start to devour whatever it dropped on, causing a Light wound each minute, and chewing through ferrous metal (chain mail, plate armour) in less than an hour. Gold and silver remain unaffected. The mold is very hard to remove, except by fire, or perhaps by oil. Victims not receiving aid will eventually turn into the mold themselves.

#9D Optional: The Wolf Pens

A few of the rooms may be used as stables for the Goblin riding animals. Once every while they are tossed some food like rats, sheep, rabbits. Or in a rare case a human victim. Even more rarely a goblin who has really screwed up among his associates. If the heroes are really lucky, a pen may be empty except for hairs, excrement and smell, with the wolves out hunting.



#9E Optional: Sleeping Rooms

The goblins themselves have to sleep somewhere. So if the adventurer raiding party is careful enough to make little sound, and if they can dispose of the sentries silently... then they might surprise a whole den full of goblins. These might be either sleeping, or playing dice games. In either case, surprise may end up in wholesale slaughter, or a quick capturing of all goblins.

#10: Rescue from the Hobgoblins

At least two of the human prisoners will still be held by a group of hobgoblins. If Sophia or Paul were also kidnapped, one of them will be here. The other, if also captured, is held by the Rothmusses downstairs. The hobgoblins are posted close to the stairs to the next subterranean levels. They will put up a fight, but if things go against them, they will retreat and leave the prisoners behind. Surviving prisoners may join the party, even if they are wounded.

This is where the first part the adventure could end. The heroes might withdraw with some saved prisoners to the civilized world and recuperate. If the players want to go to Holmeston and get reinforcements, let them. Although they will find new goblins when they return, and remaining prisoners on the lower levels will suffer longer.

Paul Wolfen

Morgaine's teenage brother is quite ugly, but also strong and capable fighter like his sister. Unfortunately, that will probably not save him from being kidnapped by goblins. He is wounded, possibly tortured, but willing to join and fight. If players think of it, he could wear hobgoblin armour to become a more effective member of the team.

The World Beyond:

STR 3, CON 2, APP -1 (low charisma runs in the family), sword (skl 3, imp 8, spd 4), short bow (skl 2, imp 8, spd 6)

OSR: Str 15, Con 13, Cha 7, fighter level 1, 8 hp

Trollgoblin



A trollgoblin is a rare crossbreed of goblin and a troll, usually indistinguishable from a hobgoblin. When the trollgoblin is wounded however, it recovers from wounds uncommonly fast. Light wounds close and heal in minutes, severe wounds within hours, and the creature even recovers from seeming death within a full day. Only the severing of all limbs and the head, or burning the dead body can kill it forever. Some sources say trollgoblins cannot bear direct sunlight, as it will turn them to stone. Trollgoblins are very rare and usually live in a group of normal hobgoblins.

Sophia Volmady

Rebecca's twelve year old sister has curly black hair and brilliant blue eyes. Sophia is wise for her years, but that will probably not save her from being kidnapped by the goblins and given to dabbling sorcerer Uomo Muris.

The World Beyond:

INT 2, DEX 2, APP 2, stealth 3

OSR: Int 13, Dex 13, Cha 13, thief level 1, 4 hp

13



Giant Spider



Going Down the Lower Levels

The enchanted monster spiders of the eastern mountains come in several shapes and sizes. The most common are the brown crab spiders, being about 2 feet in diameter, including legs.

Surely a size enough to freak out most people. Unlike their web spinning cousins they like to hide in damp, dark places and jump or drop onto their prey. They usually don't make webs like their cousins. But they are poisonous, and their bite may paralyze or kill. Usually they are solitary, but if you are particularly unlucky you may run into a nest of 2d6 smaller ones. They are very vulnerable to fire, easily burning to crisp.

The World Beyond:

Bite (skl 4, imp 2, spd 0)

jump 4, stealth 4

chitinous armor (arm 2)

Poison: if bitten roll 6+ on Con to avoid death, 9+ to avoid being paralyzed for d6 x 10 minutes.

Smaller spiders are less powerful, with poison that paralyzes at most.

OSR: HD 2, AC 4, bite 1d3, poisonous bite

You – or the heroes – may decide that they will first withdraw and bring back the rescued prisoners to the civilized world. In that case you may go to the city, detailed in chapter V, and play out how they are received as heroes. Maybe they can get some extra help to raid the place. If they do, be sure to repopulate the area above, so the heroes will have to do their raid all over again.

However, the heroes might also press on and go downstairs to get the rest of the prisoners out. They might even guess that the time is pressing, and their fellow villagers may end up in goblin soup! In that case, move on.

You may cut this part short with a simple chase scene into the next chapter, or you may extend it into a complete session of room to room exploration, dodging enemy encounters, and all out combats with goblin patrols.

You may use the provided tables and maps for instant inspiration as you wish.

#11: Stuck in the Caves

The heroes work their way past the goblins who have their quarters in the ruins, and find their way down into the chambers and tunnels below the old keep, starting at #1 on the map overleaf (p. 17). Once downstairs, they will hear how a group of goblins fills the rooms above. These might be the goblins the heroes left behind them, or they might be the group from the wolf pen returning from a hunt. By the sound, there are too many of them to break out easily. This means the heroes may be stuck down in these deeper tunnels, and have to find another way out.

Naturally, if the heroes were particularly effective, and you feel you should reward their vigilance, you may leave the exits free. Then you may block the exits only much later, once more reinforcements arrive from afar, and the heroes have come to scene #14.



14

12 Optional: Fighting off the goblins

The tunnels in blocks #1 to #13 are used by the goblin raiders as additional underground quarters. If the heroes are very effective, or aided by henchmen or freed prisoners, you may want to give them an extra challenge with some tunnel fighting. Some of the goblins could use bows too, for some ranged combat. To see what's in the specific rooms, you can use the Labyrinth encounter tables on page 16. Don't feel pressed to fill every room, unless the players insist on clearing the whole area.

13 Optional: The creature under the bridge

When crossing the bridge (#14) over the deep chasm and underground river, the heroes hear a rumbling below. If there are any goblins chasing them, these will break off pursuit. Something is crawling down in the deep, and a hollow rumble comes from below. The heroes could hurry on, escaping whatever comes up. Or they could explore down the stairs, or throw stones. In that case, the dragon that lives in the hidden caves might come for a look and an easy snack.

If things get really crazy, one of the good natured wererats of the Rothmus family might even rescue them from a bad encounter with this dragon.

Cave Dragon



The old Wyrms cave dragons are scaley, sickly green monsters with poisonous, corrosive breath. They can grow up to twenty meters long, but most specimens found are about six or seven meters from head to tail. Their wings are usually too small to fly, and their brains too weak to allow speech.

Unfortunately they are still fierce opponents with very foul tempers. Cave dragons hate the sunlight and prefer to hide in deep dank caves, where they sleep most of the time, slowly digesting their last meals. This way they can stay hidden for weeks or months, only coming out at night to hunt for sheep, pigs or even humans to eat. Folklore suggests that cave dragons sleep on a big treasure, but in practice this may not always be true. They are solitary except when mating.

The World Beyond:

STR 4, CON 4

Bite (skl 6, imp 6, spd 0)

claw (skl 5, imp 5, spd 0)

scale armor (arm 10)

on underbelly (arm 5)

breathe poisonous steam 4 (3x a day on a single target, or once a day filling a room affecting all in it)

Targets hit by the cloud must evade on DEX or be poisoned. The poison creeps under armour causing 1d6 Light wounds and terrible pains.

OSR: 5 HD, AC 3, breathe poison 5d6 (save vs poison) 3x single target or 1x cloud, damage 1d8 / 1d6 / 1d6

15



Encounters in the Labyrinth Chambers

The labyrinth chambers area is the main haunt of the goblins downstairs. But goblins are not very good in keeping their living quarters clean, so many rooms are a mess, or downright dangerously inhabited by large vermin.

- 1 Rats (1-4, normal type), lone goblin (5-6)
- 2 Glowing Fungi (1), Edible Fungi (2-5), Huge Stinking Fungi (6)
- 3 Trap (1-3 covered pit, 4 spiked pit, 5 alarm system, 6 spears or darts from wall)
- 4 Corpses (1 skeletons, 2-3 dead goblins, 4 recently dead prisoner, 5 ghoul, 6 animated undead)
- 5 Furniture (1-3 intact, 4-5 broken pieces, 6 containing an item of interest)
- 6 Remains of a camp fire (1 old, 2-3 recent, 4 with grubby food, 5-6 with food rations and packs)
- 7 Escaped prisoner (1), sleeping goblins (3-4), Goblins holding a prisoner (5-6)
- 8 Goblin patrol (1-4, 1d6 +2 in number), or goblin headquarters (5-6, 3d6 present)
- 9 Deep Rothmus Family patrol (4-6 in number - see next sections)
- 10 Traces of a dragon (1-4), The Dragon itself (5-6)

Roll d10 once entering each next chamber in blocks #1 to #13 that was unexplored so far. Specify further with a d6.

Encounters in the Caves

The cave complex area is not the favorite area for the goblins to visit, as it is often patrolled by the Rothmusses. However, the goblins suspect there are great riches downstairs, so they try to raid the area too. In addition, as the tunnels are wider, it is also a favorite hunting ground for the cave dragon.

- 1 Rats (1-4 normal, 5-6 giant)
- 2 Glowing Fungi (1-2), Edible Fungi (3-5), Exploding Fungi (6)
- 3 Pit (1-3 empty, 4 with spikes, 5 with a giant spider, 6 with alarm bells)
- 4 Dead body (1-3 skeleton, 4-5 fresh corpse, 6 undead)
- 5 Furniture (1-2 intact, 3-5 broken pieces, 6 containing an item of interest)
- 6 Remains of a camp fire (1-3 old, 4-5 recent, 6 with food rations and packs)
- 7 Escaped prisoner (1-2), sleeping goblins (3-4), lone goblin taking a p (5-6)
- 8 Goblin deep patrol (1d6 +2 in number)
- 9 Rothmus patrol (4-6 in number)
- 10 Traces of a dragon (1-4), The Dragon itself (5-6)

Roll d10 once entering each next chamber in blocks #15 to #25 that was unexplored so far. Specify further with a d6.



Cave Complex

Toward Chapel of Raphael and Mary

Labyrinth Chambers Area

Underearthly Slope Bridgeway

Hidden Cell Blocks

Deep Water Well

Rothmus Guarded Entryway

Collapsed Escape Route

Toward Upper Levels

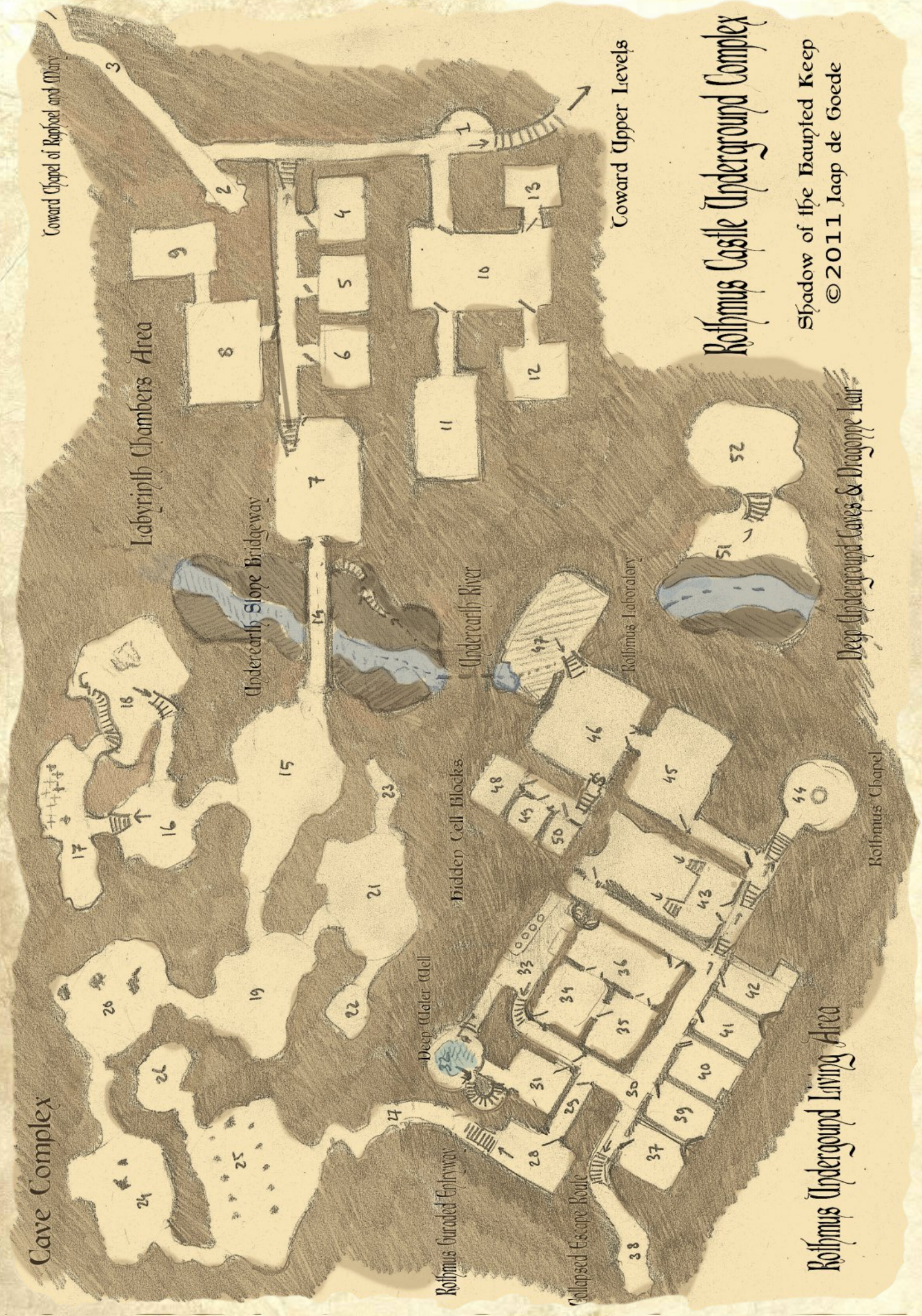
Rothmus Castle Underground Complex

Shadow of the Haunted Keep
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Deep Underground Caves & Dragonfly Lair

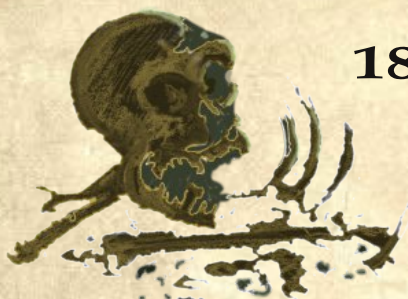
Rothmus Chapel

Rothmus Underground Living Area





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The Rothmus Family



Cave Rat

The cave rats are unusually large rats, sometimes a meter (three feet) long from head to tail. When hungry, they can be very vicious. They are found deep underground, in small numbers (1d6).

The World Beyond:

DEX 3

bite (skl 3, imp 2, spd 3)

climb 3

OSR: HD 1/2, AC 7, bite 1d4

This is the main part of the deeper adventure. And if all goes well, it will be less of a typical dungeon bash or wilderness hunt. Instead, the heroes will become guests of the old Rothmus family who have hidden in the caves below. They are waging a war against the goblin raiders - or at least that is how it seems. And the heroes, as they are also stuck, are about to join them as their besieged guests. The only little thing that the heroes should not know, or at least be confused about, is that some members of the Rothmus family are... wererats.

Thus you should arrive in a series of connecting scenes, which will mostly be of the role playing or stealthy spying kind. Again, you can make this chapter as long as you like, even extending it to a full session or two.

#14: Meeting the Dwellers Below

Near the bridge (14 on the map) that connects the chambers with the caves, the heroes encounter a small group of humans. These two men and one woman are just as shocked to meet the heroes as the other way around. They look like adventurers, and tell that they are long hiding from the goblins down here. They saw how the goblins captured people and killed them for food. So they hid themselves. Furthermore, they claim to have freed several captives from the goblins. Family members of the heroes, obviously. If the heroes want, they can be reunited.

Perhaps then they can all work together to eventually escape to the surface.

"Oh yeah, almost forgot to introduce myself", the leader of the refugees says, "I'm William, William Rothmus".

Unfortunately, the heroes may not realize, William is a vicious wererat. A fact William will hide as long as possible. He will lead them to the Rothmus family rooms behind the small labyrinth of caves. The other two in William's raiding party are either henchmen or a brother and sister (see p. 22-23).

Michael

Is a strongman also serving as a guard for the Rothmusses. Despite his young muscular looks he also has grey hair.

The World Beyond:

STR 5, CON 5

sword (skl 4, imp 10, spd 4)

tough (armour 5)

OSR: Fighter 2nd level, Str 16, 14 hp, damage 1d8+2

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Wererat

When the dark armies from the east invaded, they also carried the curse of the wererats. The bite of these creatures carries a disease that sometimes kills, or otherwise turns the victim into a horrible shapeshifting monster. A human by day, and during the waning moon phase. A man-eating insane creature in the nights around the full moon. And sometimes on other nights too, as the disease progresses.

Wererats can take three distinct forms.

Their human appearance, indistinguishable from a normal man or woman. Except perhaps by their whitish body hair, or their reddish eyes, and a strong dislike of direct sunlight.

The second form is that of a huge rat, man-sized, angry, drooling and hungry for all flesh.

And the third is that of the man-rat, a humanoid form with the head of a rat, and the claws of a rat, with a tail protruding from their human clothing. In this last shape the wererat can be a very cunning adversary, setting traps and ambushes, using weapons and guile, and perhaps even magick.

- continued overleaf -



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The Rothmus Family

The Rothmusses are still alive, despite all rumors. But a curse has hit the family. In the war, one of the younger brothers was bitten by a horrible were-creature. Though he survived, he was infected by a disease that turned him into a ravenous rat man every full moon. Madness devoured him, and the efforts of his brothers to cure him were in vain. Eventually he bit his brothers, and they infected the rest of the family.

Those who did not die turned into monsters too. Light shunning humans most of the time. Psychopathic murderous rat creatures, when the moon waxes, or when blood flows. Nowadays the family literally hides underground and avoids social contact.

Sir Peter Rothmus

Peter is a scientist and a dabbling mage and alchemist, also using the name Uomo Muris ("Rat Man"). He is not only father to the others, but also the leader of the family. He can be charming and generous, as long as the cursed madness does not strike. His wife Wilhemina was killed by the curse.

Sir Peters quest is to find a way to undo the curse. Unfortunately most of his experiments to reach this purpose involve bloody human sacrifices and other disturbing rituals.

The World Beyond:

Human Shape: INT 4, WIL 4
speak latin, beguile 3,
fire magick 3, disease magick 3,

Rat Shape: STR 5, DEX 5, CON 5
bite (skl 5, imp 7, spd 5)
stealth 4, climb 4
tough (armor 5)

OSR: Human Shape: 4th lvl Magic User, hands of fire, charm person, suggestion, cause disease, Rat shape: 4 HD, 20 HP, AC 5, only hit by silver or magic

William Rothmus

Is the eldest surviving son. He is set on defending his family and his sisters, and tends to deny the existence of the curse. He will lie if necessary, and he may mislead the heroes by telling them that the family has to hide underground because they are hunted by goblins.

The World Beyond:

Human Shape: STR 5, CON 4, APP 2,
leader 3
sword (skl 5, imp 10, spd 4)
Rat Shape: DEX 6,
bite (skl 6, imp 7, spd 6),
climb 4. stealth 4, tough (armor 4)

OSR:

Fighter 4th level, 20 hp (human form)
or 4 HD monster (rat form)



Wererats are often accompanied by normal rats, or giant rats. They tend to live in small groups hiding their curse from mankind, usually underground in dark and damp places.

The World Beyond:

DEX 3, STR 3
bite (skl 5, imp 5, spd 3)
stealth 4, climb 4
May use weapons in humanoid form.

Someone suffering a bite of a wererat (with at least Light damage) must roll 3+ on constitution to avoid death within several days, and 6+ to avoid turning into a wererat within several weeks. One needs to roll only once for every individual wererat that bites, being immune for further infections from the same source.

OSR: HD 3, AC 5, bite 1d6, may infect target with lycantropy



Raccia Rothmus

Is the youngest surviving sister. She has many sudden fits of madness, in which she has killed more than once. She regrets these killings very much, but whenever she is reminded of them, she may turn into another rage. Most of the time she tries to be very friendly and in denial of any problems.

The World Beyond:

Human Shape: APP 4, seduce 4

Rat Shape: DEX 5

bite (skl 5, imp 2, spd 5)

climb ceiling 5, swim 4

OSR: Thief 2nd level, 12 hp,
Charisma 16 (human form)
or 3 HD monster (rat form)

John Reeves

Is the head of the staff. He is tall, slender, bald, and with a rather long grey face. He seldom speaks, but rather seems to enjoy being the perfect butler.

The World Beyond:

Human Shape: STR 3, cooking 5,

rapier (skl 4, imp 7, spd 4)

Rat Shape: DEX 5,

bite (skl 5, imp 5, spd 5)

swim 5

OSR: Fighter 2nd level, 12 hp,
rapier damage 1d6 (human form)
or 3 HD monster (rat form)

Ricardo Rothmus

Is the son that was originally bitten by the werecreature. He feels very guilty, and is constantly reminded of his failure by his sister Eliza. Often the guilt becomes too much for him, and his anger turns him into a raging, man killing rat. Sometimes his family members lock him up in a cage to prevent him from going out on a rampage in nearby villages.

The World Beyond:

Human Shape: STR 3, CON 3,

sword (skl 4, imp 8, spd 4)

Rat Shape: DEX 5,

bite (skl 5, imp 5, spd 5)

stealth 5, tough (armor 3)

OSR: Fighter 3rd level, 18 hp (human form)
or 3 HD monster (rat form)

Eliza Rothmus

Is the eldest sister. She regrets her cursed state, and tries to undo the curse by prayer. She has so far managed not to kill anyone in a rage this way. However, she has not dared to leave her brothers or father, and still is loyal to them. She is torn by her conscience when she sees that her father kills humans to try and undo the curse.

The World Beyond:

Human Shape: INT 3, WIL 3, APP 2,

faith St. Raphael 2

Rat Shape: DEX 3,

bite (skl 3, imp 2, spd 3)

climb 3, stealth 4

OSR: Priest 1st level, 7 hp (human form)
or 3 HD monster (rat form)



#14 Alternative: The Negotiators

The heroes observe how the top goblins are negotiating with a nasty ratheaded humanoid. The goblins seem to be selling two captives to the were-creature. One of the captives will be a relative or friend of one of the party. When (and if) the heroes try to intervene, rats appear from everywhere, and the wererat threatens to kill the captives unless the heroes drop their weapons. He might not be bluffing.

If the heroes surrender they will be disarmed and thrown in the Rothmus jail cells like the other captives. Only a lucky hero hiding in the shadows might escape, as the rats are in a hurry.

Notice that this is a capture scene, and it may not sit easily with you or your players to disarm and imprison your beloved heroes. If you think this is the case, and you still want to try this route, do one of two things: A. Let one of the heroes have a vision that they will be alright for the moment if they surrender, and that their gods will give them opportunity to escape later. Or B. tell your players that you pledge as a GM to give them a chance to escape later, and will not hurt their heroes before that point. Keep your pledge.

#15: Guest of the Rothmusses

If the first encounter with the Rothmusses is friendly (or at least seems to be so), the heroes are guided to blocks 28 through 44. Here they will be assigned one or more rooms, and treated as proper guests. They will not be introduced to the laboratories and cell blocks in 45 through 50 just yet. All Rothmusses will try to remain in human form, even if they might have some trouble keeping their tempers (it is around full moon). Peter Rothmus will arrange a special banquet, and spoil the guests, all the time apologising that he has only limited resources underground.

What will happen exactly while the heroes are guests is up to you - and what your heroes try to do. Page 25 lists a number of potential scenes, and you could roll or pick some of these. If the heroes want to explore, the list on page 24 should help. Always keep in mind that the Rothmusses are pretty schizophrenic, with a raging beast inside wanting to break out.



Erica

Is the corpulent but friendly gourmet cook. She may or may not approve of using either human or goblin meat in her kitchen. You decide. Erica somehow seems to have escaped the wererat curse. So far.

The World Beyond:

STR 3, CON 3, APP 2,
Cooking 6 (in human form)
frying pan (skl 0, imp 5, spd 0)
tough (armor 3)

OSR: Normal Human, 6 hp

Sandra

Is a petite room maid with a long state of service for the Rothmusses. She knows a lot of their history, and protects their honour if she can. She may have escaped the curse of the were-rats. Or maybe not.

The World Beyond:

DEX 2, WIL 3

OSR: Normal Human, 4hp

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Chambers of the Rothmus House Contents

- 1 old books with intriguing stories
- 2 a magick item (pick one from the list)
- 3 weapons (swords, daggers, axes, spears, shields, morning stars)
- 4 family portraits with an uncanny resemblance to a hero (1-2), jewelry (3-4), money box (5-6)
- 5 antique furniture with crafty or valuable inlays, chandeliers, metal mirrors with silver coating
- 6 exquisite yet outdated clothing (dresses, waist coats, shoes, hats...)
- 7 exquisite food (1-4), slightly rotting food (5), meat of unpleasant origin (human?) (6)
- 8 traces of relatives taken prisoner (clothing, letters, family heirlooms, jewelry, locks of hair, cut ropes)
- 9 traces of were-rats (hairs, bite marks, scratch marks, giant rat droppings, bloodied clothes, letters of remorse, experimental documentation)
- 10 armour (strong leather, plate armour, chain hauberk, helmet, high boots)

Making up Scenes

Once the heroes have made contact with the Rothmus family, it is likely that they will first become the guests of the Rothmusses. Make sure that unless the heroes become violent of their own accord, that the Rothmusses first try to be the friends of the heroes. The Rothmusses are hiding from the goblin raiders, and they are waging a war against them from the underground. So the heroes will be hailed as welcome allies and brought to the secured Rothmus living area. From here they can help fight the goblin enemies, free any other prisoners (prisoners not secretly held by the wererat Rothmusses that is), and perhaps even break out to the free world above again.

But what will happen once the heroes are inside?

That's up to you, as a game master (or mistress), to play the part of the various Rothmus family members. To help you out you can use the tables on these pages to jog your imagination. Roll for a scene to see what happens next on the scene table. You can surely have four or five scenes, maybe even ten or twelve, before a confrontation with the more evil wererats becomes inevitable. A second table on the left is to make up contents of the separate rooms in the underground complex. If heroes start searching you can use this table to tell them what they find. As always be sure to fill in details and use your own imagination!

Surely, and maybe slowly – maybe faster – the heroes will build up evidence against Uomo and his family, and this will lead to a confrontation. That confrontation will be (at least) one of the final scenes on p. 28-29.





What Happens while being Guests of the Rothmus Family

- 1 planning an attack on the goblins in the war room
(1-2 as a punishment mission, 3-4 as a display of power, 5-6 to break free)
- 2 having diner by candle light with the entire, brooding family (1-4) or playing cards (5-6)
- 3 a Rothmus flirts with a player character, and tries to charm or seduce him or her
(1-3 just for flirting, 4-5 for actual kissing or more, 6 ending in a violent killing spree)
- 4 the place is attacked! By the dragon (1), a deep patrol of $d6+2$ goblins (2-4),
a goblin attack force of $6d6$ goblins (5), or a rescue mission from Holmeston (6)
- 5 Uomo shows off his laboratory (1-5) or one of his family members does so (6)
- 6 sit with a glass of port wine the Rothmusses tell of their hey day, the war,
the other families, their lost family member Thomas (father of player hero Dark Dirk!).
If Richard (Dirk) is present, tell him about his father – and if he identifies himself,
there may be much rejoicing!
- 7 an unexpected "hypothetical" moral conversation with one of the Rothmusses
about prisoners, saving lives by taking lives, and experimenting on living creatures
to save one's own kin. In first instance the conversation will be theoretical,
but the Rothmus may also seem remorseful about something hidden
- 8 while they all sleep, one hero is approached by a junior Rothmus,
who whispers and tells about the prisoners and the horrible secrets
- 9 while asleep one hero has a horrid nightmare, in which the other heroes also participate.
Play out the scene as if it was a normal one, and make things worse and worse.
Only once one or several are killed or nearly killed let the dreaming party member wake.
Then tell all players that is was just a nightmare...
- 10 while asleep, the heroes are quickly attacked and taken prisoner by their Rothmus hosts,
and put in cells, to eventually serve as guinea pigs in Uomo's experiments



The Treasure Troves

Here you'll find several Special Objects Which May be found in this Adventure. Pick them at will whenever you feel the heroes deserve a break or a reward to keep them going, or generate one at random if a table asks for it. Surely the Rothmus family or nobles in the city may have a few of these in their possession. Some of the objects listed are good, some less so, but the proof is always in the using of the object unless maybe you can foretell the future.

An interesting way of choosing an item would be dropping a die on these open pages and see on which object description it lands. That will be your item.

Stench of Spider

Held in a small perfume dispenser, this fummy spray reeks sour and very unpleasant. However, someone wearing the stenchy perfume will not be attacked by any sort of spider, unless he attacks first. Without thorough washing the stench holds for about half a day. A dispenser has 2d6 charges.

Rags of the Shadows

This ragged and tattered cape is very unassuming until worn in half dark. Then it lets the wearer disappear into the available shadows, making him or her near invisible – as long as he makes no sound or smell. In full sunlight the wearer looks mostly like a beggar. Treat the rags as giving a +3 on any stealth checks involving hiding in shadows, if necessary.

Staff of Flesh Magick

This short staff transfers wounds from one person to another. It can absorb one severe wound, or three light wounds in its copper end. To do so, the user just touches the wounds, and they are healed almost instantly. But then a strong pulsating light builds up in the other end, and someone else must be touched within about ten seconds. If someone else is touched, he or she will then be inflicted by the same wounds that were taken away from the healed person. If no one is touched, the staff will return the wounds to the wielder. Or, if the wielder dropped the staff, to the next person touching it.

Book of Transformations

Unfortunately Uomo's version of this tome is incomplete. It can be used by a mage to teach himself (or herself) one level of transform into animals, if he studies the book for a month. Trying to use the spellbook untrained will cause a random transformation on a roll of 9+. On a roll of 1 an unfortunate side-effect will occur, like in normal spell use.

[Alternatively for other game systems, the book contains one useful shapeshifting type spell, which can be transcribed into one's spellbook.]

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Sword of Wolfslaying

His short sword with a simple hilt and unassuming looks, jagged at the edges, was given its powers when its former owner Sigursson vowed to avenge his kinsmen who were slain by wolves. It is a short sword for all normal purposes, with weapon class 2, but against wolves, werewolves and wolfkin it gives a +1 on attack rolls, and +1 on weapon class (so weapon class is 3 against wolves).

Dagger of Returning

This dagger looks like an ordinary throwing dagger. If it is thrown and misses target, it will loop in mid air and return to its thrower like a boomerang. Normally it can then be caught again, but on a fumble it will hit and injure the thrower.

Potion of Transformations

This potion was concocted by Uomo himself, and works almost instantly after swallowing a full flask. It transforms a wererecreature back from wererat to normal, or vice versa. On normal humans it does little more than cause a lot of hair growth, and a temporary change of voice – they'll start to growl.

Blood of Curing

Is held in a flask and mixed with elementary salts to keep it fluid. The origin of the blood is reportedly human and derived ritually. Drinking the blood may cure a severe disease or several severe wounds almost instantaneously. Once the drinker has swallowed a full bottle, a fever of several minutes strikes, and spasms may follow. After that the drinker must roll 6+ on Con. If succesful, up to three S wounds are cured completely, or one disease. If not succesful, the potion was just gruesome to drink. On a natural 1, the mixture instead inflicts three severe wounds, on head, chest, and guts.

Book of Confusions

Usually a tome of this sort has a name like "Booke of Ultimate Knowledge", or "The Compleat Enchantre". The tome intrigues the reader to the utmost, and makes him or her believe that he can do anything. Accomplish any goal, solve any problem. But the how is complex, and the more the reader reads, the more complex it becomes, until in practice the reader wastes all time and accomplishes nothing.

A casual reader must roll 6+ on WIL to avoid being sucked in by the book. A reader who takes the time to study the book must roll 9+ on WIL. One who tries to read it from cover to cover must roll 12+.

To break the curse of the book, it must be burned, which the reader will violently resist. Or the affected reader could be blessed on 12+ to be released for a day, (so the book can be burned), or 15+ to be released permanently.



Jennifer

Jennifer is the forty year old owner of Cookville Inn. She can cook well and wields a frying pan as a weapon in need. She is one of the possible captives of the goblins, or of Uomo.

The World Beyond:

STR 3, CON 3, WIL 2

frying pan (skl 3, imp 5, spd 0)

cook 6, swim 4

OSR: fighter 1st level, frying pan
damage 1d4, 7 hp

Suto Lore

Is a fine craftsman and painter from the hero village, who will probably be kidnapped by goblins.

The World Beyond:

DEX 2, INT 2,

painting artist 4, woodworking 3

OSR: normal human, 4 hp

#16 Optional: Prisoners of the Rothmusses

Once things go awry, one or more of the heroes can be imprisoned by the Rothmusses. **If you do this, pledge that the heroes will have their potential escape chance later on, and that you will not hurt the heroes seriously before this chance. Keep your pledge.** The heroes will then be kept at sword-point, disarmed, undone of armour and belongings, and thrown in the jail cells in blocks ... Peter Rothmus will glee over them while in half-rat state, and tell them he will go and do experiments on them. Some of the heroes relatives are also kept in adjoining cells.

If you feel in a particularly sick mood, you can capture the heroes at a banquet. In that case let the banquet be with meat from slain prisoners. Peter will then even tell the heroes where the flesh comes from, just before revealing his true nature and then imprisoning his guests after all. But do this only if your players are up to such vile gruesomeness.

#17 Optional: An unlikely Escape

If you can, try to have at least one hero avoid imprisonment, so that he or she can do a rescue attempt. If all are imprisoned anyway, let the Rothmus sisters visit them. The sisters might slip the heroes something that may help them to escape, like a knife, key, or a weapon or two. Unfortunately, as the sisters are also were-rats, any false move may send them into a killing rage later.

Grace Dancer

Is the former girlfriend and partner in crime of Dirk. She is a fine acrobat, but she will nevertheless probably be kidnapped by the goblins - or the Rothmusses.

The World Beyond:

STR 3, DEX 3, APP 1,

acrobatics 3, dance 3,

throw dagger (skl 4, imp 5, spd 7)

OSR: Thief 2nd level, 8 hp, damage 1d4 throwing
dagger



#18 Ending #1: The Dragon in the Oubliette

Uomo, the former Sir Peter Rothmus, has a Dr. Frankenstein-like facility built in rooms 45 through 50. These chambers contain all sorts of strange equipment, ranging from chemical distilleries to surgical instruments, to devices which could only be used for torture. There are holding cells hidden behind a secret panel, and a deep pit in the corner for disposal of failed experiments. Thus far, all of his experiments have ended in failure, usually prolonged and painful for the test subject. Uomo is not a very good scientist.

If heroes are imprisoned, Uomo will want to use them as guinea pigs. They will be bound to surgical slabs or strapped into sturdy chairs. Being the monster that he is, Uomo will first scare them witless by showing all sorts of scalpels, gruesome potions, hacksaws, and mutant leeches, and tell them of his previous work.

If (some of) the heroes are not imprisoned, they may sneakily observe Uomo performing his obscene deeds upon a prisoner they know. This could be Sophia or Paul. Or it could be a fellow hero. If Uomo found out that Dark Dirk is his relative and has clean blood, he will surely want to experiment upon him. Be sure to adjust your gruesome descriptions to the audience at hand.

And then there is the hole in the ground. At the bottom of the pit is the chamber where the cave dragon slumbers. While completely capable of leaving the pit, the dragon has found the steady supply of food (aka failed experiments) a perfectly acceptable situation. Uomo may throw something in the pit to show what may happen.

Naturally, there is no way the heroes will let the worst happen (or you as a GM for this matter). So the heroes will either have to escape first and then slug it out, or slug it out and then help their fellows or relatives escape. Your task is to make it a cool finale.

You must make sure that escape is possible - a loose latch, a knife or sharp object left too close to a PC prisoner, anything.

Remember that the heroes are heroes, and if you're going to capture them, you'd better make sure they get out again too.

If the heroes are really stuck, you will want to help them out. One of the Rothmus sisters could come in for example, and warn that the goblins are attacking the Rothmus quarters. Uomo would be angry, but the heroes would be saved for the moment, and maybe the sister could loosen one of the heroes to make an escape.

Nevermynde

Is a confused man captured by the goblins - and maybe sold to Uomo. When the heroes rescue him, he is bleeding from the head. If the heroes help him, he may turn out as an ally. Perhaps he is a dabbling mage. He might also turn out to be a source of trouble. His favorite line is "Never fear, Nevermynde is here", and he may offer help, often to ask money for it later. If there is trouble however he usually hides.

The World Beyond:

INT 3, WIL 3,
fire magick 3, Animal
Shapeshifting 3, latin 3, read &
write 3

OSR: magic user 2nd level, 6 hp,
burning hands, special spell 1st
level: shapeshift into to raven for
1d6 turns



#19 Ending #2: Defeating Uomo Navy Seal Style

The alternative is that the heroes cannot attack Uomo while he is experimenting, or they choose not to.

In that case they might burst into Uomo's bedroom Navy Seal style and shoot the crap out of Uomo. This could also be an interesting scene. Or a moral dilemma.

The Allies

During the adventure you may provide the heroes with a few allies. These may be player characters listed in the back which you play as non player characters instead, reinforcing their numbers. Or they may be prisoners the heroes manage to free from the goblins or the Rothmusses. But there may also be a few like the captain of the guard, who can really help them out with force in an hour of need.



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#20: The Escape

Once all prisoners are released, once the were-creatures are defeated, or once the heroes decide it's time to leave, they will still have to get past the new goblin reinforcements above. This will require some negotiation. Or they might find a map, and a secret tunnel to the grave yard, for example.

#21 Optional: Send in the Cavalry

If things get really hot, and they might, the guard from Holmeston comes to the rescue. Especially if Morgaine warned her former superior Zemrent, he will be there with a full team to get them out and slug the goblins back. He will come with horses and extra farmers as militia if necessary.

Captain Frank Zemrent

Is captain of the guard of the nearest town. He is not exactly impressed by Morgaine, her brother Paul or Dirk, whom he regards as upstarts and near criminals. Which in the case of Dirk may be correct. But Frank may come to aid if he finds out that a warband of goblins actually threatens the area. It will just take some time to convince him. And maybe even more time for him to gear into action with a heavy patrol. If the heroes are lucky, he may ride in as cavalry just in time. Or maybe just too late.

The World Beyond:

STR 4, DEX 3, CON 3, WIL 2, APP 2,

longsword (skl 6, imp 10, spd 7)

longbow (skl 4, imp 10, spd 9)

chain mail (arm 7), shield 4

ride horse 4, leadership 3

Frank commands a patrol of 5+1d6 fighting men with a sword skill of at least 3

OSR: Fighter 4th level, 26 hp, longsword +1: damage 1d8+1, chainmail and shield.

Frank readily commands a patrol of 5 + 1d6 1st level fighters, and may have a serjeant of 2nd level with him. If he comes to attack the goblins at the Haunted Keep, he will take a full patrol with him.



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If's Not Over Yet

Mother Helennia

Is the matron of the local cloister, with a chapel dedicated to Saint Raphael. Mother Helennia was the one who took Reverend Rebecca under her wings, and she will help Rebecca and her friends if asked. Potentially she could even help and bring someone back from near death if they deserved so. Helennia might even try to help undo the curse of one or several of the Rothmus family – if they would care and dare to ask. However, she will also demand that all life will be spared and saved, and that the Rothmus in question would be deserving. Which only leaves Eliza with some chance.

The World Beyond:

INT 4, WIL 5, preach 5, Crosstian Ceremony 6, faith St. Raphael 7, first aid 4

OSR: Priest 6th level, 23 hp, mace +2: damage 1d6+2

The heroes may get out. In between the adventure, or at the end, with or without help. And in that case they will probably go to the civilized world. Like the nearby town Holmeston. They might get help there, or they might look for new trouble. Or they might run into new venues of adventure. What follows below is the start of a sandbox, which you may either integrate in your own world or use as the springboard of a whole new campaign. Have fun!

As a note, if you wish to run explorations of the wilderness to the east, you can use the encounter tables in chapter one as a starter.

#22: A Wererat in the Family

If one of the heroes was bitten too often, or experimented with too often, he or she can be infected with the Rothmus wererat curse. This will give new problems in the months to come. Slowly, the hero will start to feel lust for flesh, have nightly memory lapses, and grow nasty tempers. Naturally, during these lapses he or she will have ripped and devoured a few locals. Unattentive players may be rudely surprised.

Alternatively if the heroes are not affected, one of their relatives may be. They were underground in the Keep for too long anyway.

#23: Undoing the Curse

Once the heroes figure out that a relative, or one of their group, is turning into a dangerous, murderous wererat, they may want to take action. The best way to go about it is ask help from the cloister of St. Raphael, where mother Helennia may indeed pray to undo the curse. Of course she will ask something in return. For example, she might ask the party to seek the lost statue of St. Raphael, that once stood in the chapel on the Rothmus estates.





#24: The Legacy of the Rothmusses

Once the Rothmusses are defeated – even if that takes more than one adventure – the rights to the estate should go to the last living family member. And that might be Dark Dirk. If the players don't figure that out for themselves, an official from Holmeston may tell them – as he is looking for Richard Rothmus.

And that's Dark Dirk.

Inheriting the Rothmus estate will also mean inheriting quite a few problems. There may still be monsters down there. A curse may yet rest on the place. It is a keep on the borderlands, open for attacks by goblin armies from the east. Holmeston may demand some old compensation, or ask for protection against the goblin attacks. And most of the castle is a ruin. But... it is also a large estate, which could be rich once again. So if Dirk becomes the new Sir Rothmus, his friends might help him out and have their place in the estate as well.

Village Elder Thomas Volmady

Old Tom is the uncle of Reverend Rebecca, and one of the wisest men around. He remembers the old times, can tell of legends past, and warn for all sorts of dangers. Tom may have a long beard and look like an old geezer, but if the heroes are smart, they may find much useful information with him. And perhaps Tom can do some healing too.

The World Beyond:

INT 3, read & write 5, legends & myths 4, history 3, first aid 4

OSR: Priest 2nd level, 9 hp

#25: The Armies from the East

And what if the goblins on the Haunted Keep outpost are not defeated? Or what if they return in greater numbers? Or what if the heroes learn from a captured goblin spy that armies are planning a large scale invasion?

That would be a whole new adventure too...



City Locations of Interest

roll d6/2 for tens,
and d10 for single digits

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Merchant House |
| 2 | Moneylenders |
| 3 | Church |
| 4 | Cloister (1-2 for nuns,
3-4 for monks,
5-6 lay house) |
| 5 | Shop
(1-5 general,
6 aulde magick shoppe) |
| 6 | Market |
| 7 | Warehouse |
| 8 | Orphanage |
| 9 | Closed off building / ruin |
| 10 | Blacksmith |
| 11 | Coach House |
| 12 | Stables and Courier Service |
| 13 | Jeweler or Alchemist |
| 14 | Inn |
| 15 | Tavern |
| 16 | Brothel |
| 17 | Guild Hall |
| 18 | City Hall |
| 19 | Weigh House |
| 20 | Crafter |
| 21 | Artisan |
| 22 | Guard Post |
| 23 | Castle |
| 24 | Boat House |
| 25 | Garden |
| 26 | City Hall |
| 27 | Wall House |
| 28 | Traboulet
(indoor alleyway) |
| 29 | Butchery |
| 30 | Bookshop or Library |



Lord David Sarneon

He is the Lord and master protector of Holmeston, elder warrior, in his late fifties. He is usually withdrawn, smiling sardonically and only speaking of times gone by. But he also is a good ruler, and still a fighter to be reckoned with, should it come to a confrontation. He will not quickly address newcomers, but true heroes he will recognize and welcome for a visit to laud them.

The World Beyond:

STR 3, CON 1, INT 4, WIL 4,
leadership 6, etiquette 4,
longsword (skl 7, imp 9, spd 5)
longbow (skl 5, imp 9, spd 6)

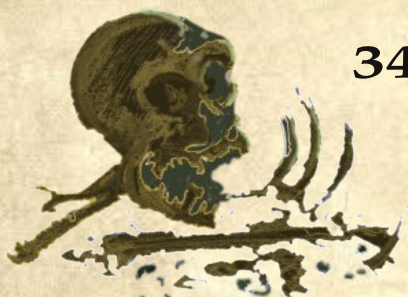
OSR: Fighter 6th level, 32 hp,
longsword +1: damage 1d8+1

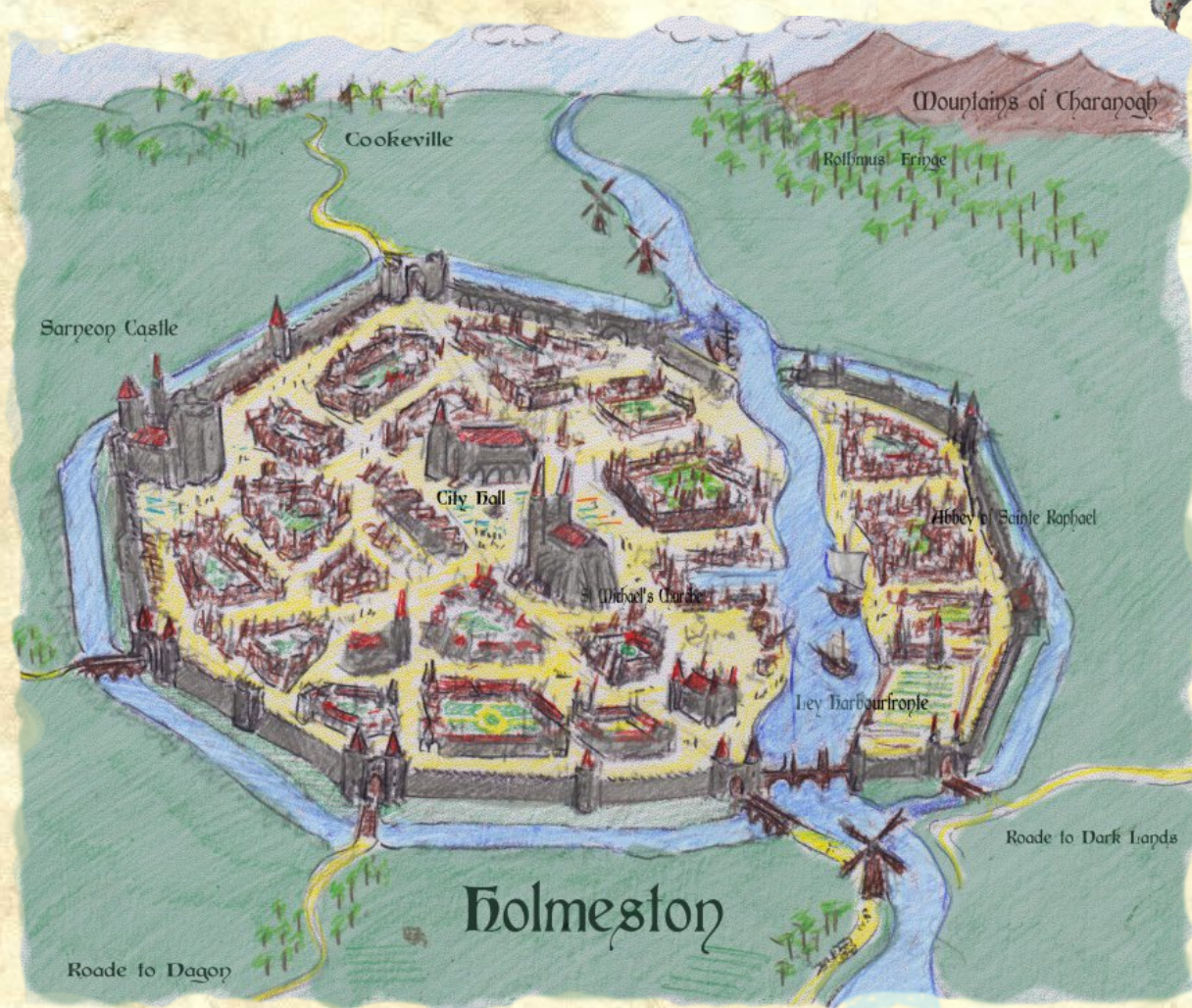
Holmeston

This stonewalled town on the borderlands of the older empire lies on the river Ley, not far from the lower Eastern Mountains of Tharanog. Trade with the far northern seaports and the settlers in the fringe lands has made it relatively prosperous. About a thousand families live within the walls, or some three thousand adults and a thousand children. Most of them are human, but there are some elflings, dwarfs, elves, and halfbreeds too.

The town was named after the honorable late herr doctor Holmes, who first built a settlement here (the blue house). The city is protected by the Sarneon family, who have their keep on the west side of the town. It is the closest city to Cookville, and home to several of the adventurers. Captain Zemrent commands the city guard, and once hired Morgaine Wolfen and Richard Rothmus (Dark Dirk). The city mayor Costa is married to Anna, the eldest daughter of the Sarneons.

Holmeston may well turn out to be a city you want to use. After, before or in between visits to the Haunted Keep. The heroes can find help for their quest here, and new venues of adventure. The map of Holmeston is left mostly unkeyed in order to give you the greatest flexibility in its use. To give you someplace to start, you'll find a city encounter table and a table to generate places of interest. As with everything included in this kit feel free to use, adjust, or discard these as best fits your game.





City Encounters for Holmeston

- 1 stray monster (1), undead (2), dead body (3), disguised goblin raiders (4-5), stray dragon (6)
- 2 hookers (1-2), tipsy damsel (3), stray damsels (4-5), charity worker (6)
- 3 guard dog (1-3), escaped exotic animal (4), stray dogs (4-5), angry stray cats (6)
- 4 pickpockets (1-4), robbers (5-6)
- 5 policing city guard (1-3 on foot, 4 on a boat, 5-6 on horseback)
- 6 circus artists (1-2), harlequin (3), herald (4-5), con artist (6)
- 7 fellow adventurer (1-2), angry old rival (3-4), mysterious patron offering a job (5-6)
- 8 beggars (1-3, 1d6 in number), pickpockets (4), begging children (5-6)
- 9 salesmen (1-4), with a fantastic deal (5), with a true rip deal only seeming fantastic (6)
- 10 noble with henchman (1-2), noble lady in carrying coach (3-4), party of nobles (5-6)

*Roll at least twice on d10 for an encounter for both day and night.
For night encounters, subtract 2 from your roll.
Roll d6 to differentiate between outcomes.*

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Rothmus Family

The Rothmus family was once the most influential family on the fringe lands. They owned their own double keep, which has now fallen to ruin. They had their own chapel, and protected a dozen villages on the east side of the river Ley. After the third war of destruction however the family fell into disrepute, money was lost in the wars, and eventually a curse wiped out their power. Only a few distant relatives of the family are left, but none has dared to claim the family legacy.



Unexpected Variations

This story presupposes that the Rothmus family, or at least a number of them, are the villains, but you don't have to play it that way. Especially if you suspect that the players have read this booklet, or know about the original Haunted Keep adventure this module is lightly based upon... then you may turn the tables.

Variant 1

The Rothmusses are indeed keeping the prisoners, and Uomo is working in his laboratory trying to find a cure for their were-rat infection. However, their curse is actually held in place by a demonic entity to which they have to make sacrifices. A demon in the form of the dragon, below in the pit.

Variant 2

The Rothmusses are were-rats, but they are actually vegetarian and very much afraid of the light. The only one that keeps prisoners is Uomo, who is helped by one of the servants. You should make sure that the evidence initially is against the poor Rothmusses.

Variant 3

The Rothmusses are effectively held prisoner by the goblins. They may be were-rats, but Uomo has made potions that help against the rage. The goblins are really the ones that are keeping the humans prisoner, to sacrifice these to their gods, to the ghouls or to the dragon below.

Variant 4

As variant 3, but the goblins are a scouting force, and the prisoners are to be brought into the mountains, as hostages and for intelligence gathering. So the kidnapping is a prelude to an all out military attack on Holmeston!

Variant 5

Some of the Rothmusses are thoroughly evil, and were-rats. But so is Zemrent the captain of the guard, and together they are planning a coup against the Sarneon rulers.

Variant 6

As variant 5, and to make things worse, even mother Helennia is one of the were-rats. And maybe so is the city mayor.





Sarneon Family

The Sarneon family has long been a protector of Holmeston and the county of Tesarre. Their small family castle lies within the walls of Holmeston. Current mayor Costa has married into the family, with young lady Anna Sarneon de Tesarre.



Gayr Gyag Family

The Gayr Gyags' lands and estate lie further north of Holmeston. At one time their relationship with the Sarneons was a strong one, including marriages between lesser members of the line. But during the third war of destruction the Gayr sided with the eastern forces for a while, as they had family relations with the eastern folk of the mountains too. The Sarneons have not forgotten that the Gayr were enemies then, and still look at their neighbours with distrust.



The Heroes

The following pages contain descriptions of potential player heroes, to be used straight away in **The World Beyond**.

OSR stats are not provided here, but you may generate these fairly easily for your favorite OSR game.

Consider all characters to be of second level of advancement, or alternatively roll a d6: 1= 1st level, 2-5 is 2nd level, 6 is 3rd level.

For ability scores typically add 10 to the value, and vary by allowing 12 extra points to be distributed among the stats.



Morgaine Wolfen, female mercenary



Morgaine is a natural blonde, blue-eyed, strong built, in her early twenties.

Strength 5
Dexterity 3
Constitution 4
Intelligence -1
Willpower 0
Appearance -1

long sword (skl 6, imp 11, spd 8)
dagger (skl 4, imp 7, spd 4)
brawling (skl 5, imp 5, spd 3)
short bow (skl 5, imp 9, spd 9)
shield 5

Swimming 2
combat tactics 2
hunting and tracking 2
leader 2
survive rural 2

Ringmail brigantine & light helmet (armour 8)
Longsword, Dagger, Shield
Short bow & a dozen arrows in quiver
Leather boots
Backpack with food & flask of wine
Money worth 80 silvers (3 in gold and 20 in silvers)

silver arrow, torches, iron spikes, fifty feet of rope

Morgaine Wolfen served in the city guard of the nearest large town, Holmeston. There she held the rank of assistant Serjeant. But after a conflict with her superiors, such as captain Zemrent, things went wrong. She was associated with the thief Dirk, and even spent a short time in jail. After that she quit the guard and went to work for the highest bidder. Now Morgaine returns to her home hamlet Cookville, to solicit for the position of assistant sherrif. Morgaine has a brother Paul.



Fred Flint the Dwarf

Fred is a very strong, but short (about 4 feet or 1m20) young dwarf with a reddish beard.

Str 5
Dex 1
Con 3
Int 1
Wil 2
App 0

Battle Axe (skl 5, imp 11, spd 5)
Brawling (skl 3, imp 5, spd 1)
Throw Dagger (skl 3, imp 7, spd 5)
Shield 5

Night Vision 3
Mining and Tunneling 1
Jewelrysmithing 3
Weaponsmith 3

Full Helmet (armor 9)
Chain Hauberk (armor 7)
Battle Axe, Six Throwing Daggers, Shield
Sturdy Clothes and boots,
Backpack with food and a keg of beer,
50 silver coins

Fred is a good friend of Silverhair and also Sophia Volmady (who happens to be close to his own height). He is fond of making jewelry,

and is also a decent weaponsmith, though not nearly as competent as his uncle Fili Forgemaster. Unlike many dwarves, Fred finds he actually enjoys the company of some humans.



Silverhair, male elfling



Silverhair has flowing silvery sparkling hair, dark grey eyes, and splash of freckles across his delicate beardless face.

Strength 1

Dexterity 5, very nimble and agile for optimum Legolas effect

Constitution 1

Intelligence 3, observant and sly

Willpower 1

Appearance 1, above average in everything even if it's just a bit

Short Bow (skl 6, imp 5, spd 11)

an excellent shot as would befit an annoying elf(ling)

Short Sword (skl 4, imp 5, spd 8)

Buckler Shield 4

Excellent Hearing 3

Night Vision 3

Stealth and Sneaking 5

Swimming 2

Search 3

Singing 1

Green clothes,

Leather Jacket, Helmet and Boots (armor 3)

Short Bow with a dozen arrows in quiver

Short Sword, Dagger, Buckler

Backpack with food and a flask of water

And 50 silvers in assorted coin

Silverhair is an elfling, and elflings live longer than humans. Silverhair is not clear about his age, but he is probably in his late thirties. Even if he looks like a skinny preteen human with pointed ears, and acts like one too - full of exuberance and lacking in focus. One of his favorite playmates is the twelve year old sister of Reverend Rebecca, Sophia Volmady.

Silverhair also knows Fred Flint the dwarf, who is one of his better friends, and even smaller than Silverhair himself. Which gives the elf ample opportunity to make fun of the dwarf.

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Reverend Rebecca Volmady, priestess of St Raphael

Rebecca has deep brown hair and large brown eyes. She is slender and short.

Strength 0
Dexterity 1
Constitution 1
Intelligence 3
Willpower 4
Appearance 3

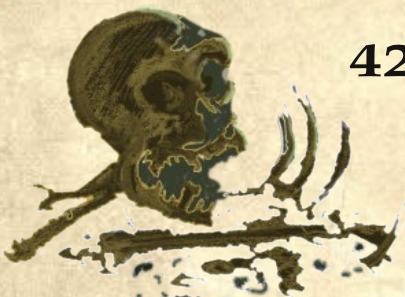
Faith, Saint Raphael 6,
Crosstian Ceremony 4,
Latin 3,
Read & Write 3,

Saint Raphael also requires that Rebecca keeps her faith. She may not kill or severely hurt anyone, which may put her at odds with the rest of the party. On the other hand she will receive even more supernatural aid if she rescues someone from certain death, while staking her own life.

Brawling (skl 3, imp 0, spd 1)
Mace (skl 2, imp 4, spd 5)
Preaching 3
Poison Lore 2
Swimming 2
First Aid 3

Leather helmet (armour 3 on head, 1 on body)
Grey Robes & Clothes,
Crucifix & Bible, Mace
Bandages & Healing Herbs for First Aid,
Candles & Tinder Box
Backpack, Food & Wine Flask
And some odd coins amounting to 30 silvers worth

Rebecca is very young, only 17, but unusually strong in faith. She already learned of her gift when she was four, when she saved her mother from death with a prayer to Raphael. Her faith was noticed by the matron of a local cloister, who took her in and taught her how to become even stronger. For some time Rebecca worked in a hospital in Hardby, where she met Morgaine.



Dark Dirk (aka Richard Rothmus)



Dirk is broadshouldered and has crewcut black hair.

Str 3,
Dex 4,
Con 2,
Int 3,
Wil 0,
App 0

Stealth and Sneaking 4,
Intrusion and Picking Locks 6,
Picking Pockets 3,
Rock Climbing 3,
Acrobatics 3,
Search 3,
Swimming 3,

Throw dagger (skl 4, imp 5, spd 8)
Club (skl 2, imp 6, spd 7)

Leather boots and jacket (armour 4 all over except on the head),
Sturdy black clothes, cloak,
Pouch with food and flask of fine wine,
Six throwing daggers, Heavy walking stick (usable as club!),
Rope, Lock Picks
Fifty silvers in assorted coin

Dark Dirk was Richard's stage name in the circus where he performed as an acrobat. However, Dirks lack of natural charisma did not help in making his act a success. Instead he could earn more on the side as a burglar. That's where he met Morgaine the mercenary, and that's how he ended up in jail. After being released due to lack of evidence he and Morgaine became friends, and Dirk was able to turn his talents to scouting.

Dirk is actually one of the last of the Rothmus family, but from a branch without money. To avoid being pestered with his heritage, he continues to use his stage name.



Yolanda Mirabilis, female Sorceress

Yolande is in her early thirties, with curly black hair and blue eyes.

Str 0
Dex 3
Con 0
Int 4
Wil 3
App 2

Fire Magick 3
Lightning Magick 6
Invisibility 3
Telekinesis 3
Clairvoyance 2
Read & Write 3
Latin 3

Staff fighting (skl 3, imp 3, spd 8)

History 3
Occult Lore 1
Swimming 1

Staff, Dagger
Impressive, Beautiful Red & Black Robes
Silvered bracers
Magickal Powders, herbs and small amulets
Spell Books
Pouch with food & Skin with Watered Wine
Coin worth 100 silvers (4 gold, 20 silver)

Yolande Mirabilis is a student of the arcane arts, schooled for many years in the foreign academies of Dagon and Samaris. She knows Morgaine and Paul of the time when she was a young teenager, and they were toddlers. Cookville was where she was born, and now she has returned, to see what is left. So far her experience is mixed, as many people are fearful of magi and witchcraft. But the elfling, dwarf and elf she knew as a kid still are there They don't look a year older, and treat her as an old friend.



Argentofolius, male elf



Arg, as his friends call him, is a tall, slender man with long pointy ears.

Str 1
Dex 4
Con 1
Int 3
Wil 3
App 1

Charm Magick 4
Clairvoyance 4
Read & Write 3
Latin 3
Speak Elfish 5 (free skill)

Shortbow (skl 5, imp 6, spd 10)
Staff fighting (skl 4, imp 5, spd 9)
Hunting and Tracking 3
Swimming 2
Stealth 3
Dancing 1
Excellent Hearing 3

Leather cuirass, bracers, high boots & Helmet (armor 3)
Beautiful moss green clothing
Camouflage Patterned Cloak
Shortbow, Quiver with 12 arrows and three silvertipped arrows
Staff with heavy bronze ends
Pouch with elven bread and flask with elven wine

Arg's young face is framed with flowing golden hair with a silver streak, which he usually keeps in a ponytail. He never talks about his age, but he looks twenty, and remembers things of a hundred years ago. Most humans think him aloof, or arrogant – indeed he seldomly seems emotionally involved at all. Maybe he is not: elves live long, and ages pass before them.

But Arg does have an interest in little Fred, Silverhair, and the young Rebecca. If something is important to them, he may join in, be it dance, play, or dangerous adventure.

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*Here then ends this adventure kit for **The World Beyond** (or for any other game you wish). Somewhat to my distress this simple project which began somewhere halfway 2011 grew and grew. It made me learn Scribus (the DTP program used to lay out this kit), forced me to make drawings for the first time in years again, and took many hours of work. However, I hope that you like what came out of it, that you think it a worthy and altogether different approach to an ancient adventure, and that you find the pdf at least worth the price.*

The adventure is yours now. Make of it what you will and enjoy!

Jaap de Goede, february 2012

*You are now holding the new color version of **Shadow of the Haunted Keep**, which has been updated with new stats for **The World Beyond**. This adventure kit was formerly published for **Dark Dungeon 2nd edition**, which is basically the former edition of **The World Beyond**. I hope you enjoy the updated artwork and the softcover print version!*

Jaap de Goede, march 2015





*This adventure kit was prepared with
OpenOffice 3.0 and Scribus 1.4.0.
Artwork was prepared with help of
Pixelmator 2.0.1, GIMP, Inkscape,
an Intuos Pro M, 4B gray pencil and
high grade grey pastels on black and
white papers.*

*All texts and artworks by
Jaap de Goede, © 2011-2015.*

*Vigilant Proofreading
and Creative Commenting by:*

*David Brawley of
Tower of the Archmage
towerofthearchmage.blogspot.com*

*Tom Sullivan of Pack of Gnolls
Packofgnolls.blogspot.com*

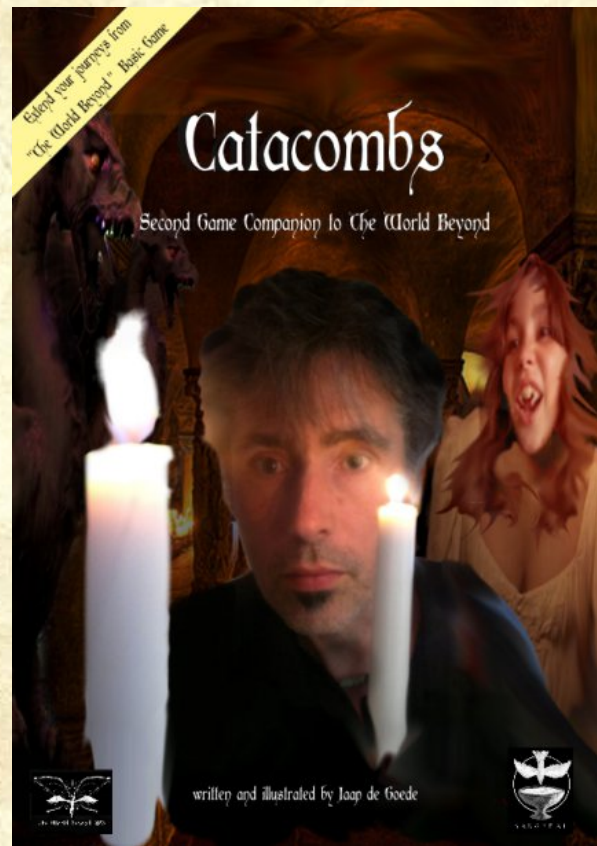
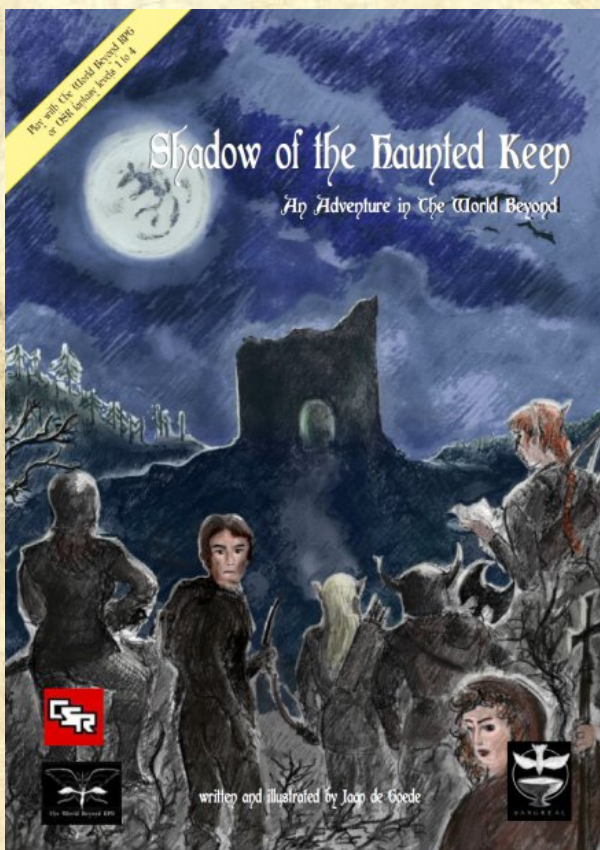
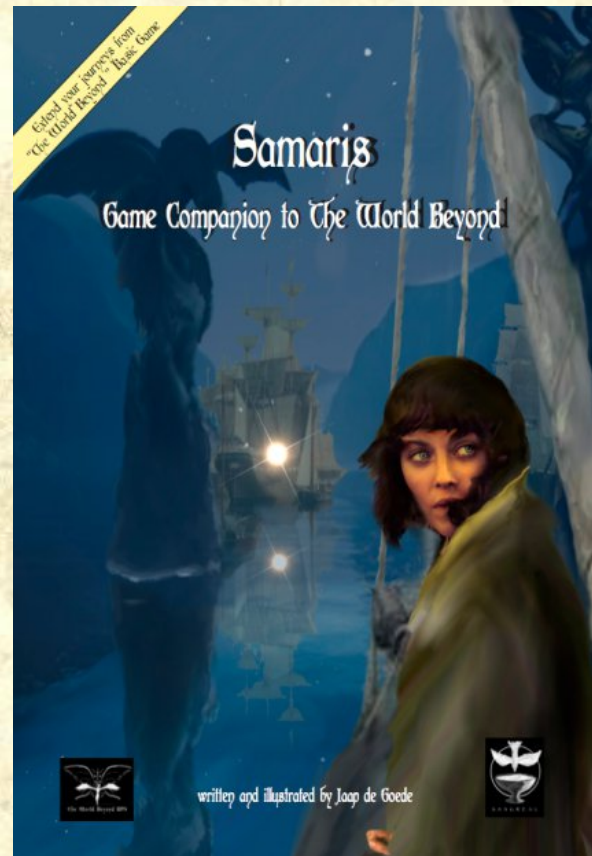
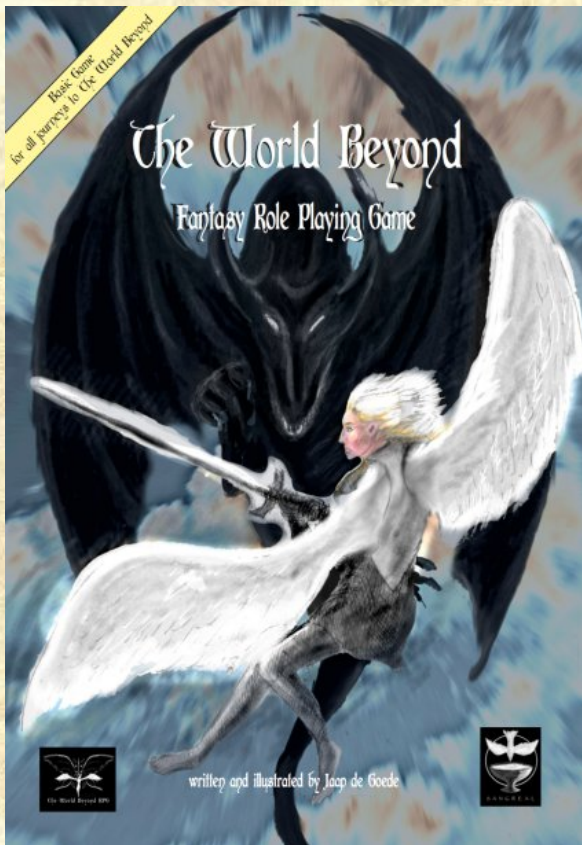
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*With special thanks to Tom Moldvay,
Doctor Holmes and Gary Gygax.
May they rest in peace.*

*May Tom's sister Rebecca live long
and prosper, and Frank Mentzer's
efforts be remembered with joy.*

*More special thanks to Tim Snider of
The Savage Afterworld
savageafterworld.blogspot.com*





The World Beyond - Basic Game

is available in print and PDF on DriveThruRPG.com, LuLu.com, and Bol.com

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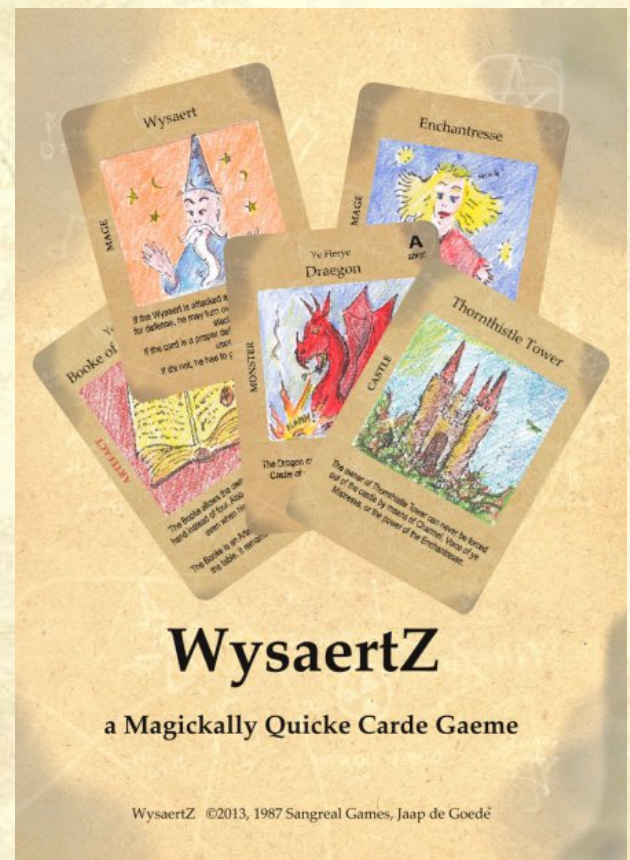
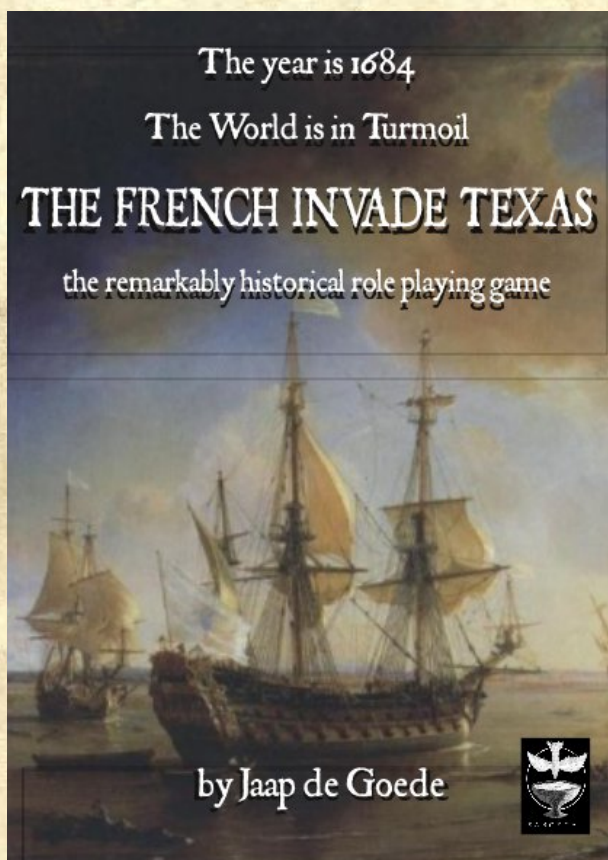
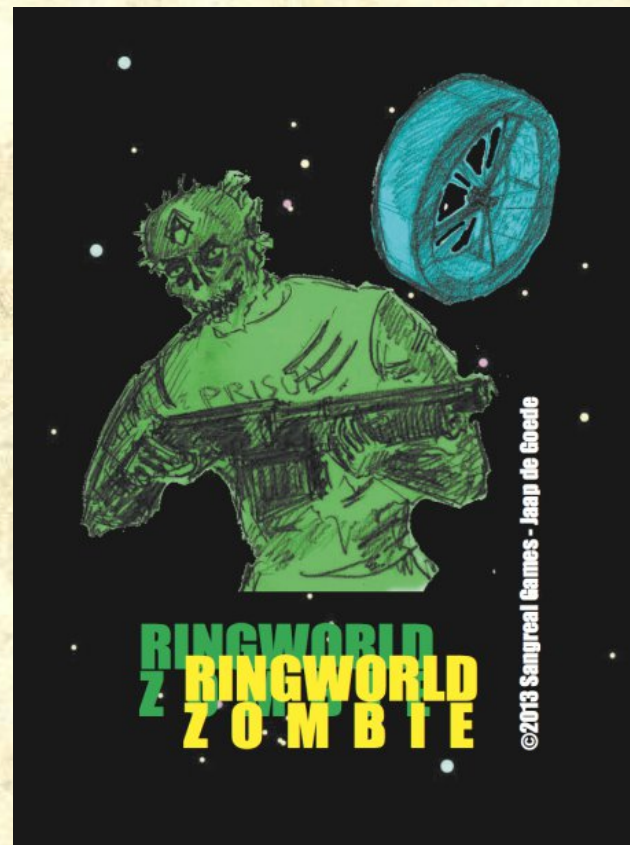


AND THE TREASURES OF OBLIVION

A PLAY-ANYWHERE ROLE PLAYING GAME
BY JAAP DE GOEDE

Santiago Joe (cc) 2009 Jaap de Goede, Netherlands

- 1 -



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Shadow of the Haunted Keep

On a summer eve with a near full moon, you, your friends and some family have gathered in a sacred forest grove to celebrate the coming harvest. Enjoying song, stories and dance, you are suddenly rudely interrupted. Guttural voices, shouts and screams. A horde of wolves pours out from between the trees. On their backs are gruesome little men, armed with spears and jagged swords

Adventure in the spirit of a classic. Written for The World Beyond, but usable in any game system.

Statistics for The World Beyond and generic OSR games provided.



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