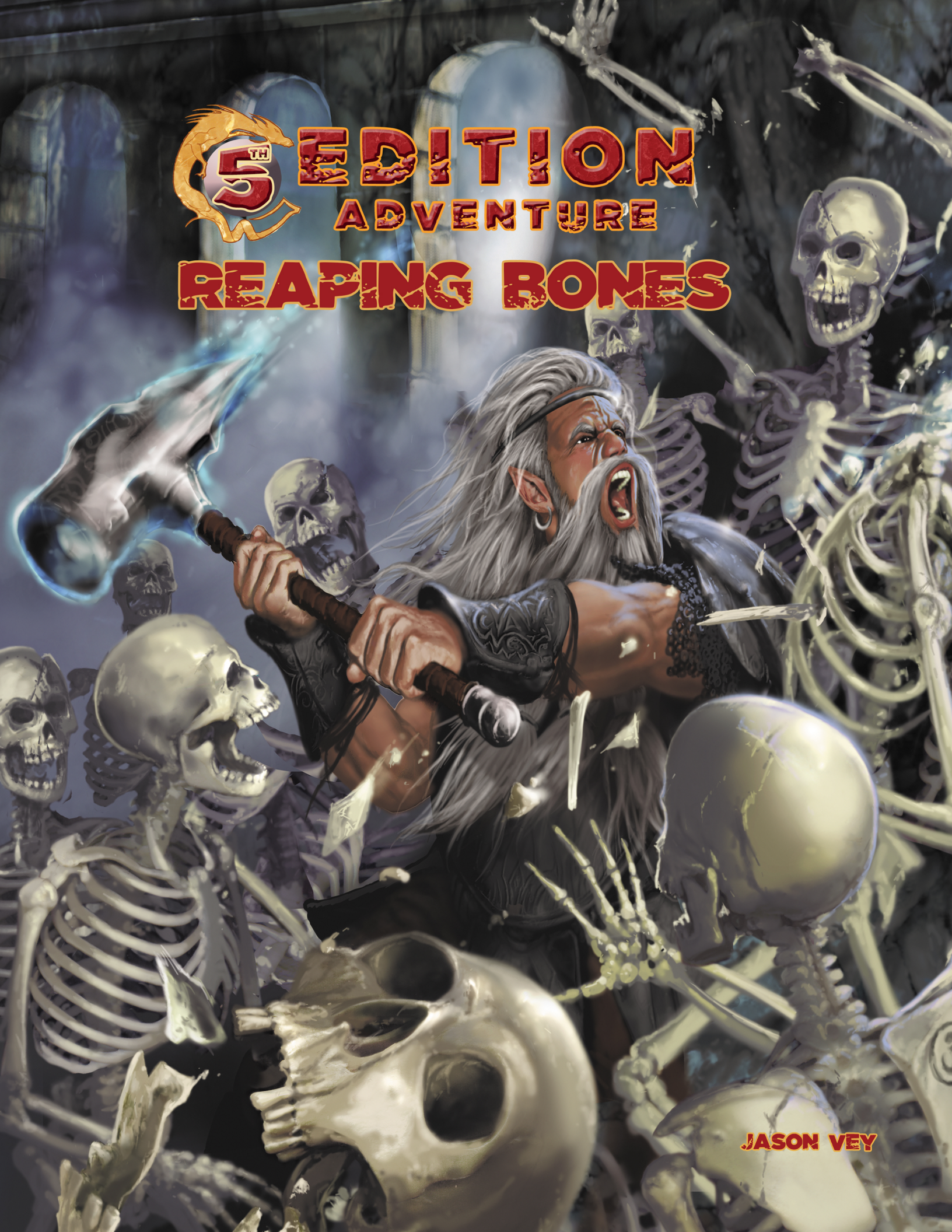


The cover art depicts a dramatic scene in a dark, gothic setting. A central figure, a man with long white hair and a beard, is shown in a dynamic pose, shouting with his mouth wide open. He wears a dark, patterned tunic and a headband. He holds a large, glowing blue hammer in his right hand, which is raised high. His left hand is positioned near his chest. He is surrounded by numerous human skeletons, some of which are in various states of disarray. A large, glowing blue sphere is visible in the lower right foreground. The background features dark, arched structures and more skeletal remains. The overall atmosphere is one of intense action and horror.

5TH EDITION

ADVENTURE

REAPING BONES

JASON VEY

5TH EDITION **ADVENTURE**

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BY JASON VEY

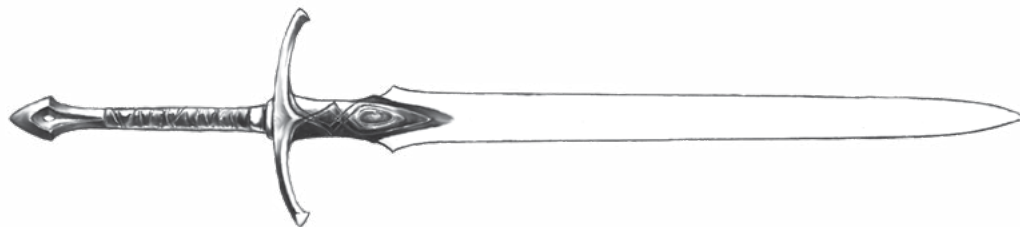
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Reaping Bones is an adventure designed for 3-5 characters of 4th-6th level characters. Players may find a ranger, elf or druid helpful, though their inclusion in the party is not necessary. The adventure is set in the world of Aihrde, but can be ported to almost any other setting, published or home-brew. If you are playing a campaign, do not feel compelled to consign the adventure to the Tar Kiln if your campaign is off world (in your own world) or in another part of the Lands of Ursal. The ruins of the temple port anywhere and the names of the players are universal, even Nunt.

Reaping Bones plunges the characters into the Tar Kiln, a wild region of broken forest, deep gulches, tar pits and felled beasts. Here the ancient world of the Ethvold once stood, where gods walked with men, but now, all that is past, and only echoes of those long-gone days remain. But they are echoes that haunt the living and such it is with Brian, Lord of Helliwell, for his young son has been stolen from him, taken by mercenaries of his errant King and hauled into the wilds. And as he turns south with his host to confront his lord, he sends men of his own, experienced adventurers after his boy. So the characters find themselves entering the Tar Kiln and the wilds whose echoes carry a terror that only the bold can face. For in them lurk monsters from the edge of nightmare.

INTRODUCTION

Brian, Lord of Helliwell, rules his people with benevolent neglect. He asks no more of them than their oaths require, nor does he give them any more than his oaths demand. However, he is very careful with those rights, never taking them away, nor

even threatening to, for he takes oaths seriously. So when the young King Eadore calls upon him to send all men of serviceable age to attend him in battle, including himself and his knights. Brian refused part of the request, for his people were not bound to the King in such a manner. He promised him only himself and the requisite knights and men at arms.

Protecting his people brought the wrath of the King upon Brian, and that young monarch played a heavy hand. Sending mercenaries to the north, he attacked Brian's castle while that Lord was on the hunt. They slew man of his guards and though ordered to slay the boy, they failed to do so, kidnapping him instead. They took him to the north where they knew orcs would pay a hefty sum for him.

But even as Brian was rallying men to his banner and planning his next move, the mercenaries met their own end.

In the wilds lay an ancient temple, built to Nunt, the god of death, fish and all things with scales. Here one of his servants, a 5-headed hydra, dwelt for countless years, lying in the ruins, feeding on the unwary. Of the five heads, one possesses a wicked intelligence, able to wield minor magics and sorcery.

Though Nunt's worship lay deep in the world's past, some still call to him, seeking the power that only one who crawls upon the Arc of Time can offer. So it was that natural, when Ribald found the hydra in the temple, for him to turn his worship to the god of death. Other came to him and they sacrificed wild beasts and wilder men to the hydra, feeding it, empowering it. So it has been for many years, these mendicant priests hunting the wilds for their master.

Through divination they learned of Brian's son and his kidnapping and when they informed the hydra of it, it struck a cord within him and he thought that if he could control a noble born boy, then that boy, once raised and corrupted in the temple, could lead him and his followers into the wider world and to greater power. So he instructed the clerics to meet the mercenaries at a crossroad, slay them and take the boy.

This they did. And now the boy lies at the feet of the hydra in the temple of bones in the Tar Kiln, far from aid.

Brian of course does not know this; he knows the boy is headed to the slave pits of the orcs on the far side of the Tar Kiln. He would pursue the boy himself but must first face the King and to do so has rallied all his available men and is heading south to press his case before the Lords and Ladies of the realm. For he knows if he does not himself go, the King will consider him having broken his oath. He will lose his lands, his people their lands, and everyone their rights.

It is up to the enterprising characters to find the boy, rescue him and return him to his father. This will allow Brian time to deflect the King's wrath and save the people.

REWARDS

Brian cares little for worldly wealth, but rather upon the rights granted to him through oaths and tradition. As such, he offers the characters similar rewards. But he is not blind to the machinations of the world and understands coin often speaks louder than land. So the following rewards are offered to the characters should they bring the boy back alive:

Land: Each member of the party who returns, or their designated heir should they not return, shall be granted 20 hides of land and the rank and title of Knight. They shall owe 30 days of service each year to Brian and his heirs for this land; however, the land shall be owned by the character and his/her descendants and cannot be taken away unless the oaths are broken.

Coin: Furthermore, each character will be given 1,000gp worth of coin or equipment.

Movable Goods: And lastly, each shall be given a riding horse with full tack and harness, a satchel with 15 days of food, sleeping gear, tinder box and two water flasks for the journey.

INVOLVING THE PLAYERS

- 1) If Reaping Bones is played at a convention, it is easiest to start the adventure after the journey has begun. Do not give the characters a choice to say no to Lord Brian. Begin the adventure on the road as the characters move north into the Tar Kiln, and then explain why they are there.
- 2) If the characters are part of an on going group, yet do not have any affiliation with Brian or any other lord, it is easy to place them in the town near Brian's castle at the time of the attack. Allow that the characters are traveling in one direction or the other, find themselves in the Two Tall tavern and inn, eating and resting. The talk in the tavern

is about the raid and the Brian's dilemma, how the Lord seeks someone brave and strong enough to retrieve his son so that he can save the county.

- 3) The CK may be running a party with no inclination to become involved in any adventure of search and rescue. Place the first encounter, the Crossroads, in the party's path and then position the temple itself in their path as well so that they cannot help but encounter the adventure as it is laid out. Once the baby is found, it is up to them to do something with him. Though all the lands about are abuzz with talk of the kidnapped child.
- 4) Rescuing the child may be too complicated a plot twist for a fast paced game. In that case, discard all the back-story and place the encounter areas on the path in front of the characters. Discard all mention of the child in the encounters or after them, distributing treasure as normal.

ENTERING THE TAR KILN

The temple lies about a week's travel north of the Lord Helliwell's land. It lies in the trackless wilderness of the Tar Kiln. The characters must travel up into the wilds, following the very clear trail of the kidnappers. The Castle Keeper should roll normal random encounters, or if they desire, one is written below for quick use.

The Tar Kiln is a wilderness area. It once served as the crown of an ancient forest called the Ethvold, though that forest is gone, and only a few vestiges remain. The Kiln is a dangerous region, for no civilized forces have conquered it in living memory.

The lands roll with gentle and wooded hills and are cut by many clear flowing streams and creeks. Small ponds and lakes are fed by deep clear springs. But these pleasant vistas belie the region's real dangers. The Tar Kiln earns its name, for it is littered with tar pits, constantly bubbling, oozing the ichor of the world's birth upon the green grasses. These pits are deadly dangerous for once snared, few escape them. They are the favored hunting ground of bull headed men and the Jolmuen, boar men with four arms (see Monsters & Treasure of Aihrede).

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

This chart details encounters that occur while traveling in the Tar Kiln. Roll a d10 for random encounters; a roll of one indicates an encounter occurs. Check for encounters twice during the day and twice at night. If an encounter occurs, roll a d20 to determine the type. Two of the encounters are weather or terrain related.

1. **Assassin Vire** (*Unaligned L Plant*) HP 53 (HD 6d10+18) AC 15 Spd 0. Str 18 Dex 16 Con 16 Int 5 Wis 12 Cha 5. Perception 13(+3). Stealth +7 (*Advantage*). Slam +6 (1d8+4). SA Multiattack (8) Constrict (*victim grappled, restrained escape DC 14 each round, automatic 1d6 damage/round*) Sneak attack (+1d8) Trunk defense (*advantage on attacks against those trying to attack trunk*) camouflage. Immune to lightning and all conditions, resistance to cold, fire and piercing from nonmagical weapons.

2. **Bandits, 2-12 Human** (CN Human) HP 5 (HD 1d6) AC 13 Spd 30ft. Str 12 Dex 14 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 10. Shortsword +4 (1d6+1) Light Crossbow +4 (1d8+2 80/320) 8gp in pouch.
3. **Bonespur (LE M Aberration)** HP 71 (HD 9d8+27) AC 18 Spd 40ft. Str 15 Dex 16 Con 16 Int 7 Wis 9 Cha 6. Perception +3. Multiattack 2 claw +7 (2d6+3). SA Darkvision 120ft. Damage resistance from non magic non silver weapons. Immune to poison.
4. **Ghouls, 1-4 (CE M Undead)** HP 22 (HD 5d8), AC 12, Spd 30ft. Str 13 Dex 15 Con 10 Int 7 Wis 10 Cha 6. Perception 10. 2 claws +4 (2d4 plus paralysis / 1 minute. DC 10 Con neg.) and bite +2 (2d6+2). SA: Immune to poison, charm, exhaustion; darkvision 60ft.
5. **Giant, Fire (NE H Giant)** HP 162 (13d12+78) AC 18 Spd 30ft. Str 25 Dex 9 Con 23 Int 10 Wis 14 Cha 13. Perception 16 (+6). Athletics +11. Saves Dex +3 Con +10 Cha +5. 2 Greatsword +11 (6d6+7) Rock +11 (4d10+7 60/240). SA Immune to fire. He carries a sack with 300gp, a healing potion, and a spell book with 5 1st level spells.
6. **Gnolls, 1-3 (CE M Humanoids)** HP 22 (HD 5d8) AC 15 Spd 30ft. Str 14 Dex 12 Con 11 Int 6 Wis 10 Cha 7. Perception 10. Bite +4 (1d4+2) Spear +5 (1d8+2/1d6+2 20/60ft). Longbow +3 (1d8+1 150/600ft). SA berserk.
7. **Jolmuchi 2 (CE L Aberration)** HP 76 (HD 9d10+27) AC 15 Spd 40ft. Str 17 Dex 11 Con 16 Int 8 Wis 9 Cha 11. Perception +2. Multiattack 2 longsword +6 (2d8+3) 2 hoof +6 (2d6+3) Gore +6 (2d12+3). SA Darkvision 60ft. superior sense of smell, trample. They each have 150gp in assorted coin and one carries a potion of flying he stole from one of his victims.)
8. **Mnotaurs, 1-2 (CE L Monstrosity)** HP 76 (9d10+27) AC 14 Spd 40ft. Str 18 Dex 11 Con 16 Int 6 Wis 16 Cha 9. Perception +7. Great axe +6 (2d12+4) Gore +6 (2d8+4). SA Charge, Labrynthine recall, Reckless. They often travel with saber tooth tigers. Carries 200gp worth of jewelry.
9. **Rogues, 1-6 (CE Human)** HP 21 (HD 3d8+3) AC 14 Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 15 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 13 Cha 10. Perception 13(+3). Acrobatics +6, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +6. Sv: Dex +4, Int +2. Short sword +5 (1d6+3). SA Sneak Attack +2d6, Cant, Cunning Action, Fast Hands, Second-Story Work. They wear leather armor, carry +1 short swords and 10-60 gp worth of jewelry and coin.
10. **Ogres, 2-5 (CE L Giant)** HP 59 (HD 7d10+21) AC 11 Spd 40. Str 19 Dex 8 Con 16 Int 5 Wis 7 Cha 7. Perception 8. Great club +6 (2d8+4). SA darkvision 60ft. They each have 10-60gp. Orcs 6-24 (CE M Humanoid) HP 15 (HD 2d8+6) AC 13 Spd 30ft. Str 16 Dex 12 Con 16 Int 7 Wis 11 Cha 10. Perception 10. Intimidation +2. Scimitar +5 (1d8+3) Heavy crossbow +5 (1d10+1 100ft/400ft.) SA Darkvision 60ft; Double move as bonus action. They each carry 1-6gp.
11. **Pixies, 2-12 (NG T Fey)** HP 1 (HD 1d4-1) AC 15 Spd 10ft/30ft (fly). Str 2 Dex 20 Con 8 Int 10 Wis 14 Cha 15. Perception 14 (+4), Stealth +7. Attack by spell. SA druid craft, magic resistance, innate spell casting (1/day: confusion,

dancing lights, detect evil and good, detect thoughts, dispel magic, entangle, fly, phantasmal force, polymorph, sleep.)

12. **Saber toothed tigers, 1-4 (unaligned L Beast)** HP 52 (HD 7d10+14) AC 12 Spd 40ft. Str 18 Dex 14 Con 15 Int 3 Wis 12 Cha 8. Perception +3. Bite +6 (1d10+5) Claw +6 (2d6+5). SA Keen smell, Pounce.
13. **Shadow Mastiff, 1-4 (NE M Fiend)** HP 28 (HD 5d8) AC 15 Spd 50ft. Str 15 Dex 16 Con 15 Int 4 Wis 4 Cha 2. Perception 10. Bite +5 (2d4 plus Trip (DC 13 Con neg.)). SA Bay (Flee in panic 1d6 rounds; DC13 Wis save or frightened instead) Blend (Invisible in darkness); Incorporeal (Attackers disadvantage), Damage Resistance (nonmagical); Sunlight vulnerability (Daylight destroys it).
14. **Spider, Wolf 1-4 (Unaligned M Beast)** HP 11 (HD 2d8+2) AC 13 Spd 30ft/climb 30ft. Str 12 Dex 16 Con 13 Int 3 Wis 12 Cha 4. Perception +3. Hide +7. Bite +3 (1d6+1) poison DC 11 Con save (2d6 poison) SA Poison, Spider climb, Web sense, Web walker.
15. **Storm:** (A violent storms whips up, dumping 4-6 inches of rain on the party. Shelter is hard to find and unless magical protection is sought or a cave or house entered, the party is soaked through to the bone. Any camp or journey in a small gulch or narrow defile is flooded and the characters risk losing equipment. Creeks and rivers flood. Crossing them requires necessary attribute Skill checks (CK's choice) with an additional +5 DC added to whatever the base DC is (depending on the body of water crossed).
16. **Tar Pit:** The characters enter a tar pit that is largely invisible, covered in weeds and moss. To see the pit they must make a successful wisdom Perception check (DC 16). Failing that, they enter the pit. The CK must roll on a d20 how many feet they enter before they become stuck, 1-20 feet. Once they are stuck the character begins to sink, very slowly. They must make a successful dexterity save (DC 14) to stop sinking. After that they must make a successful strength Athletics check to pull themselves out (DC 16) for every five feet of tar they must cross through before they escape. For instance, if they moved 10 feet into the pit, they must make two successful strength Athletics checks to get out. Regardless of the outcome of the strength check, each round a person is in the tar adds 1 to the DC of the strength check and they sink a further 6 inches. Once they sink beneath the tar, they die. Also each round one is in the tar pit, they suffer 1d4 points of burn damage.
17. **Troll, 1-4 (CE L Giant)** HP 84 (HD 8d10+40) AC 15 Spd 30ft. Str 18 Dex 13 Con 20 Int 7 Wis 9 Cha 7. Perception 11(+1). 2 claws +7 (2d6+4) bite +7 (1d6+4). SA darkvision 60ft, enhanced smell, regenerate.
18. **Will O' Wisp (CE T Undead)** HP 22 (HD 9d4) AC 19 Spd 50ft (fly). Str 1 Dex 28 Con 10 Int 13 Wis 14 Cha 11. Perception 12(+2). Shock +4 (2d8 lightning). SA Darkvision 120ft, Immune lightning, poison, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious, resist acid, cold, fire, necrotic, thunder, and bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical. Invisibility, consume life, ephemeral, incorporeal, variable illumination.

19. Wolves, 2-12 (Unaligned M Beast) HP 11 (HD 2d8+2)
AC 13 Spd 40ft. Str 12 Dex 15 Con 12 Int 3 Wis 12 Cha 6.
Perception +3. Stealth +4. Bite +4 (2d4+2 trip DC 11 Str
neg). SA Keen senses.

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

Though there are no roads in the Tar Kiln, or none worth speaking of, there are many game trails. The ground here is damp, littered with bogs and tar pits as noted above and travelers, unless they take precautions, are likely to leave a trail. Such is the case with the mercenaries. They are 8 in number, mounted and riding fast.

A ranger can track them with a Wisdom tracking check (DC 12), determine how many there are in the group and that they are lightly equipped in armor and weapons. Signs along the road indicate the baby is still alive, small human excrement at several points along the trail (DC 14).

Non-rangers can follow the trail in the mud, but they cannot determine how many they are or any other information about them.

THE WILD MAN

Two days after leaving Lord Helliwell's land, the party finds themselves camped upon a flat, upland plateau. In the north, about a mile's distance is a long rocky bluff, roughly a dozen feet high. Several clefts cut the bluff where water runs off in the wet season and is running off now if it is Spring or raining.

To the east and west the country opens up, broken only by the occasional rocky outcrop or copse of trees.

In the early evening, after the sun has set, but before the moon or stars have come out to blanket the world in their silver light, you begin to settle in for the night. But before your bedrolls are warmed, a light flares up to the north, clearly perched upon the top of the bluff you noted earlier. It seems a bonfire at first, but the flames flicker, calm down and then seem to roll across the ground. A figure, small, and unclear at this distance walks between you and the flame, a staff of some sort in his hand.

There is no way the party can tell what the figure is or what he is doing unless they have some sorcery that allows them to see in the dark at great distances. To find out what he is doing, they must cover the ground between them and the fire.

The figure is one of the wild men of the Tar Kiln. They often travel with saber tooth tigers with which they have a symbiotic relationship. This wild man is no exception; he is in fact traveling with two. Presently he is unaware of the party, spending the early evening making a sacrifice to one of his many gods, by setting a tar pit, slick with oils, on fire. He walks around the tar pit with his staff, breaking the surface of the liquid, allowing more gases to range up and catch fire. This is causing the moving fire effect.

One of the saber tooth tigers lies near the tar pit, watching the human. The other is east of him several hundred yards, hunting for small game.

IGNORING THE WILD MAN

If the characters do not investigate the wild man, the hunting saber tooth tiger discovers their camp about midnight. It moves off into the dark and roars once, the sound of which carries for miles in every direction, no doubt alerting the watch. The roar's real purpose is to summon his hunting companion, and both attack the camp, attempting to drag out the weakest.

APPROACHING THE WILD MAN

Any number of routes of approach is available to the characters.

Approaching from the south, when they get within 500 feet or so, they can see the man clearly up on the bluff, moving about. They cannot see the saber tooth tiger.

The characters can approach from several different directions. They can attempt to sneak up on him from the the east. If they do this they run into the hunting saber tooth. If they come at him from the south, because he is still on the edge of the bluff, they will be beneath him, though hidden in shadow (Dexterity (stealth) checks can be made at advantage) But they will still have to climb the bluff.

If they approach from the west or the north, the road is open and the party has the chance of seeing the one saber tooth tiger laying down with a successful DC 17 Wisdom (perception) check. If they do spot the tiger, it is unlikely they will know what it is, as it's laying in the shadows. Unless the roll is extremely high (DC 20 or higher), remark that some "large beast lies upon the far side of the fire. Its head is huge, and its eye catches the light of the fire."

If they move to the east, the tiger is likely to hear them, unless they make a successful Dexterity (stealth) check (DC 13). If the saber tooth hears them it begins stalking them, angling for the smallest and the one it perceives to be the weakest. It waits until it is within pouncing distance and then leaps.

If the wild man is alerted to the presence of the party, he turns to run. If cornered, he turns to fight. The saber joins him in either situation. However, if the saber is hit at any time, it turns to attack its tormentors. The man will fight by the saber's side unless it looks like he might get killed. In that case he runs, calling to the saber tooth to follow with a series of whistles. It is up to the CK if the saber breaks off combat. If the first saber is engaged, the second one joins the fray.

Wild Men and Sabers: The relationship between the two species is not master to pet, but rather two creatures that find it advantageous to hunt and migrate together. They communicate via growls and whistles and body gestures. The man cannot command the tigers to do one thing or the other, but the beasts always defer to the wild men where other people are concerned. So for instance, he can whistle and the cat will leave off the attack. It will not, of course, ever stop defending itself.

Harlu, Wild Man (CG Human Ranger 6) HP 52 (HD 6d10+12) AC 17 Spd 30ft. Str 18 Dex 18 Con 14 Int 12 Wis 12 Cha 9. Perception +4, Athletics +6, Nature +4, Stealth +7, Survival +7. Sv: Str +6, Dex +7. Quarterstaff +7 (1d6+4/1d8+4) SA Favored Enemy (Orcs, Ungern), Natural Explorer, Dueling Colossus Slayer, Primeval Awareness, Extra Attack. Spellcasting: 1st lvl (4 slots) – Cure

Wounds, Ensnaring Strike, Hunter's Mark; 2nd lvl (2 slots) – Spike Growth. He wears a magical jade necklace that imparts +2 to AC. Harlu has tattoos that give him a +2 on his AC.

Saber Tooth Tiger, 2 (unaligned L beast) HP 52 (7d10+14) AC 12 Spd 40ft. Str 18 Dex 14 Con 15 Int 3 Wis 12 Cha 8. Perception +3, Stealth +7. Bite +6 (1d10+5) Claw +6 (2d6+5). SA Keen smell, Pounce.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE WILD MAN

If approached, cornered, captured or in some way engaged, the wild man freely passes along the information that he has to the party.

He gives his name, as noted, explaining that he was making sacrifices to Amenut of the Wild, a god as ancient as Nunt. He tells the party that the men they are hunting passed this way a little more than a day or so ago, but that an ambush waited them on the road. And by the signs of the buzzards he witnessed late the previous day they fell to it. If so, anything of value they had was carted north to the Temple of Nunt where the spirit of that god remains.

It is an evil place and houses the spirits of the dead, all the dead who have fallen upon the roofless house. I have never been, nor, gods willing, will I go for there is a beast there who knows the minds of men and can read what shall come to pass. It is evil and conniving and recently men have come to it and made sacrifice to it of flesh, both living and dead. It is those men that ambushed your horsemen and those who took whatever you are seeking back to the dark master.

He has no idea about the baby of course, but assumes they are after some treasure or the other. If asked kindly he'll join the party and guide them as far as the bluff that houses the temple. He will not under any circumstances climb the bluff, or enter the temple grounds.

GENTLEMAN TRAVELER INN AND TAVERN

About a day north of the bluff, following the trail of the mercenaries lays the Gentleman Traveler Inn and Tavern. It's a squalid hole built inside a low hill and flanked by a large sinkhole that contains a trash filled tar pit.

The land breaks up into a series of broad shallow gulches but the path of the mercenaries winds clearly in front of you. As evening falls you spy a column of smoke north of you. It's constant, with few billows or upsets and drifts lazily off in the wind. Topping a rise you spy the source, a small sod and thatched building set on the path. A second building, long and narrow sits behind it and a large sinkhole appears next to it, a mist of steam rising

from its depths. A sign hangs out front, gently creaking in the wind.

The inn consists of 3 buildings, the main inn, a long, narrow building that looks like a stall but in fact houses 8 rooms for travelers, and a small barn/slaughter house. A pigpen behind the inn houses a dozen or so grunting pigs and a few cows, all living in abject misery.

The sign is too washed out and old to reveal what it once —if anything — said.

The proprietor, Flint Long in the Tooth, greets any and all customers with a warm welcome of "Greetings my Gentleman (and Gentlewoman if necessary) Travelers! Welcome to my inn and tavern. Make yourselves at home."

Flint is a foul-mouthed, dirty little man about 5 and a half feet tall and weighing about 130 pounds. His skin is far too small for his frame, and his bones protrude everywhere, especially in his skull, where his eye sockets are sunk deep and his eyes shadowed by the brow of his skull. He wears filthy clothes, has never bathed (a fact he mentions frequently), and wears no shoes, exposing his yellowed, thick, toenails for all to admire. Over all this is a bloody apron, in such a state of disrepair and covered in such filth (animal tissue and other) that it too looks as if it were never washed. He wears a battered horn over his chest, tied off with strips of stained leather.

He is mean to boot, with a streak of cruelty in him that has set him in good company with almost anyone that comes to his tavern, be they humans, orcs or other creatures. He enjoys watching someone suffer, but only inflicts such pain if he knows it won't come back to haunt him.

He is fearful as well, watching his words carefully, complimenting strangers constantly, overmuch in some cases. If forced into battle he summons his demon with the horn at his side (see below).

His only company in the wilds, aside from the occasional traveler, is a young woman, Edguth by name, whom he bought from a caravan some few years ago. She cleans and cooks most of the food and serves any who come there. He beats her mercilessly whenever she makes a mistake, which at times may be simply looking at a patron. He will not part with her for anything less than 500gp. If the players decide to take her by force, Flint's statistics can be found below.

He only serves a type of honey mead, buttermilk and a variety of foods. All drinks are served in drinking horns and food served up on old plates with two-pronged forks.

Menu

Honey mead per horn	2sp
Buttermilk per horn	1sp
Bread, loaf	2sp
Meat*	3sp
Butter	1cp

Fruits 1sp/serving
Meal of all the above w/mead 6sp
* This is generally some type of wild game he has captured or bought from hunters. It consists of one of the following: deer, elk, beaver, rodent (weasel, rat, etc), rabbit, squirrel, turkey or duck. The CK should chose or roll.

WHAT FLINT KNOWS

On the previous day Flint served the mercenaries and if the characters talk about it at all, he quickly discerns what they are doing. He'll part with information for gold. For every piece of information he offers, he haggles them out of more money.

For a gold piece he tells them that there were 8 riders that passed through the day before, that they were lightly armed and not very talkative. He saw the baby they were carrying and it seemed in good health.

For an additional gold piece he explains that they were headed north along the Gully Trail.

If pressed he hints he knows more, so for additional gold he explains about the ambush.

For an additional gold piece he explains that it was probably the priests of Nunt that dwell in the Temple of Nunt to the north.

Another gold and he tells them that the priests worship some ancient snake god, and that god has taken form in the Temple.

Note: Any learned character may know who Nunt is; allow them to make an Int Religion, check (DC 16). If they are successful they know that Nunt is the god of death.

Flint Long in the Tooth (NE Human Rogue 7) HP 21 (HD 3d8+3) AC 16 Spd 30ft. Str 8 Dex 15 Con 12 Int 10 Wis 13 Cha 10. Perception 13(+3). Acrobatics +6, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +6. Sv: Dex +4, Int +2. Short sword +5 (1d6+3). SA Sneak Attack +2d6, Cant, Cunning Action, Fast Hands, Second-Story Work. He wears a +2 ring of protection in his left ear. He uses a +1 short sword. 10gp in a pocket. The greater part of his treasure is kept in a cask in the tar pit, in the sinkhole. He wears his horn of summoning at all times.

If he blows the demon horn, it summons a creature from within the horn. It appears the round after the horn is sounded.

Demon (CE M Fiend) HP 24 (HD 4d10) AC 18 Spd 30ft. Str 14 Dex 18 Con 10 Int 14 Wis 13 Cha 15. 2 Claw +6 (1d6+2) Bite +6 (1d4+2). SA Captivate: 20ft radius DC 12 Cha save or Charmed for 1d4 rounds. Regenerate 1 HP/round. Spell resistance.

Edguth (CG F Elf Ranger 2) HP14 (HD 2d10) AC 13 Spd 30ft. Str 14 Dex 16 Con 11 Int 10 Wis 13 Cha 14. Athletics +4, Perception +3, Stealth +5, Survival +3. Punch +4 (3). SA Favored enemy, Natural explorer, fighting style, spellcasting (3) 1st lvl. She has no weapons or gear.

Edguth is a half-elf. Her father was human, and her mother an



elf. Both served Brian of Helliwell long ago; her father, Edgar was a close friend of the paladin. Both parents were slain by raiders and she was captured when she was very young by an orc chief, who placed the rune of command upon her neck. She was later sold and used as an interpreter by a human merchant, but this only brought the wrath of elves she was speaking with. He escaped (though the rest of his caravan did not) with the slave and in frustration, sold her to Flint to be rid of her. Flint has kept her as a house slave, forcing all menial tasks upon her.

Edguth is bound to servitude by a rune of command placed upon her neck by the orc who captured her. It is this rune that keeps her from turning on her master. It can be removed with a dispel magic, remove curse, heal or any similar spell.

FREED EDGUTH: Anyone who frees or attempts to free Edguth gains the wrath of Flint. If freed she offers to aid the party in any way. She is a good hunter and tracker and knows the country well. She has never been inside, but has seen the Temple of Nunt. If she is returned to Brian's domain at the end of the adventure, the Paladin doubles the monetary award for all involved.

KILLING FLINT: If threatened or attacked, Flint sounds his horn and summons the demon, ordering it to attack immediately. He avoids battle hoping that the demon can do the necessary business. If forced to fight he does so, but if pressed and it looks like all is lost, he falls to his knees weeping and blubbering, begging for his life. He gives up the location of his treasure only as a last resort.

TAVERN: The tavern consists of two rooms, a large common room with a fireplace on the north wall. It has 10 long tables in it and a low bar propped up on four barrels. The room has only a few narrow windows, usually shuttered and is dark and musty. The heavy smell of soot and body odor dominates the room. It is lit by a series of candelabra set on the bar, in wall sconces and on the tables.

INN: This poorly constructed building consists of 8 rooms joined by a common roof and a covered walkway. Each room is 10 x 10 feet and has 2 cots. The walls are made of rough planks, split and joined. Gaps between them are filled with mud, though in many places the mud has fallen away leaving innumerable peepholes in each of the rooms.

The outside is dirty and run down and the inside not much better. Rooms rent for 5sp a night.

BARN: The barn is a small structure near the sinkhole with two entrances, one facing the courtyard and the other overlooking the sinkhole.

It serves as a slaughterhouse. The main room contains hooks hanging from the ceiling. The floor is covered in dried grasses. The whole place stinks of death and blood. There is almost always a fresh animal carcass or two hanging from the ceiling.

SINKHOLE: The sinkhole is large, about 50 feet in diameter and about 20 feet deep. The floor of the hole is covered in thick, black tar, mingled with the loose dirt and water that caused the sinkhole in the first place. Steam rises from the tar pit.

The hole reeks for Flint tosses the dead carcasses of whatever he kills into the sinkhole. Some if it vanishes in the tar, some of it lays on the surface, so the whole area shows bones protruding here and there.

Falling into the sinkhole is very dangerous as the victim suffers from both the burning, clinging tar, but also from the quicksand of the sinkhole itself. Anyone who falls into the pit, for whatever reason, must make a successful Dex save (DC 14) to keep themselves above the tar. After that they must make a successful Str save to pull themselves out (DC 16) for every five feet of tar they must cross through before they get to the wall. For instance, if they fell 10 feet into the pit, they must make two successful strength checks to get out. Regardless of the outcome of the strength check, each round a person is in the tar adds 1 to the DC. Also each round someone is in the tar pit, they suffer 1d4 points of burn damage.

FLINT'S TREASURE

Flint has amassed quite a treasure over the years, mostly from murdering and robbing his patrons whenever the opportunity presented itself. It is his hope to take the treasure to the south, buy a house on the sea, retire there and murder passersby.

He has hidden his wealth in a trunk that he has sunk into the tar pit, tied off on some old rope and hidden in the rim of the pit. Any close investigation of the pit reveals the hidden rope as it hangs down the side of the pit on a successful Wis Perception check (DC 18).

The trunk contains the following: 450gp, 600sp, 3 75gp gems, a +2 *dagger* with Edguth's coat of arms on it, a long bow. A quiver with 12 arrows, a set of +1 *chain mail*, two *potions of healing* and a *wand of magic missile*.

THE CROSSROADS

Several days further travel into the Tar Kiln brings the party near the Crossroads. From several miles off, they spy buzzards flying in broad circles. There is a great concourse of them, about 30.

The country is lightly wooded, the trail cutting up over a low ridge to a wide plateau covered with copses of trees, scrub brush and boulders jutting out of the ground. Just on top of the plateau is where the ambush took place.

INTERPRETING THE BIRDS

The buzzards are circling in such large numbers because they have not yet been able to fully engorge themselves on the feast below. This is because a cleric remains there, hidden in a cleft of rocks, watching the road. Allow a Wis Perception check (DC 15) to determine if the birds circling are natural or not. Upon a successful check they realize that it is too many birds for a day old battle, the birds should have been finished with the bodies within a few hours. The only reason this can be is that the bodies are too close to something living. Approaching the battlefield with or without caution reveals the same thing.

Just over the rise, the country levels out. Trees cluster in small copses in the midst of the deep grass and broken rocks that jut from the earth like giant fingers. The birds glide in lazy circles overhead, peering down at the trail that ends in the bodies of horses and men, all scattered haphazardly about, clearly having died fighting. A stench hangs over the area and the bloated corpses pushing up in their ruined armor are the obvious reasons. The men died violently, and quickly.

There is little of value on the battlefield, the clerics looted the bodies, taking coin, magic items and weapons and the few horses that survived. They took the baby as well. There are several sets of horse harnesses, saddles, etc. still intact and the men's leather armor that was left on them. The armor is decent but shows signs of wear and tear.

A survey of the battlefield indicates that the victors turned north and east, heading up into the Tar Kiln. A Wis Tracking check (DC 14) shows that three horses and nine men moved north, one of the horses was carrying a burden, a man either living or dead; it can not be determined. If the tracking check exceeds a 16, the ranger can determine that several of the men were wounded, one favoring one of his legs.

THE PRIEST LEFT BEHIND

There is a cleric here, hiding in a cleft of rocks not far from the crossroads. The hydra, using his powers of divination, has seen that someone is coming for the child and he seeks to waylay them on the road. The cleric only attacks if the party goes north and east, following the direction of the child. He does so by casting *raise dead* on the fallen mercenaries, summoning them to his aid. As they attack he leaps from the cleft and attacks.

If the characters do a thorough search of the whole area they have a small chance of finding the cleric, who himself is well

hidden, Wis Perception check (DC 19). If a ranger searches the area he has a better chance (DC 15) on his Wis Tracking check.

Regardless, if anyone gets near his hiding place he begins casting animate dead on the fallen mercenaries. He also attacks if he in any way suspects that the party is going to pursue the baby.

He begins his attack by animating six of the corpses. He lets the dead attack, but looks for an opening to attack as well. He fights to the death.

Cleric **Cleric, evil, death domains** (CE human cleric 6) HP 33 (HD 6d8+6), AC 16, Spd 30ft. Str 11 Dex 14 Con 12 Int 16 Wis 14 Cha 18. Perception (+2). Deception +6, Persuasion +6, Religion +5. Sv: Cha, Wis. Dagger +4 (1d4+2 10ft/30ft). SA Channel Divinity (Control Undead, Deal extra damage (2+spell level) on cause wounds spells, Destroy life (as action, deal 20 damage divided among all creatures in a 30' area as she wishes; Wis save negates). Spellcasting (Save DC 12; +4 attack) Cantrips: guidance, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy. 1-level (4 slots) command, inflict wounds, shield of faith. 2-level (3 slots) hold person, spiritual weapon. 3-level (3 slots) animate dead, bestow curse. Channel divinity (2) command undead, smite good (+1d6 necrotic damage). Necrotic healer (regain 1/2 damage dealt on attacks with ceremonial dagger in hp). Destroy undead (CR 1/2). He carries a potion of healing, a scroll of fear, and 130gp in coin and jewelry.

Zombies x 6 (NE Medium Undead) HP 22 (HD 3d8+9), AC 8, Spd 20. Str 13 Dex 6 Con 16 Int 3 Wis 6 Cha 5. Perception 8(-2). Slam +3 (1d6+1). SA Immune to poison, Darkvision 60ft,

RELENTLESS FORTITUDE.

THROUGH THE GOD'S EYE

After the ambush, one of the clerics cast the through the god's eye. It has remained for 2 days and will do so for 2 more. The spell allows the caster to look up through a puddle on the ground. In this case the puddle lies astride the track leading northeast and anyone that passes over, following the track, alerts the caster back in the Temple of Nunt. They cannot help but know for certain that someone is following. For particulars on the spell, refer to New Spells below.

To this end they send the Mendicant Priest south to intercept the party. He moves quickly and intercepts the party one day south of the Temple of Nunt.

DISCOVERING THE SPELL

It is possible that the players discover the spell when they pass over it. Anyone detecting magic, detects the spell. Any cleric or druid that passes within a few feet of the spell must make a successful wisdom check (DC 13) in order to discover the magic on the ground. Though they may not recognize the spell, they do recognize it as a magic portal of some type. A ranger may notice the odd nature of the puddle by glancing at it Wis Perception check (DC 18) or if carefully looking at it Wis Tracking check (DC 14).

THE MENDICANT PRIEST

By now the hydra knows that someone is pursuing the boy, though he does not know who that is. In order to keep more careful tabs on the party, he sends his second in command to place a mirrored sending spell upon them.

The mendicant priest participated in the ambush; the blood of one of the mercenaries remains on his hammer and spattered on his dark cloak. He moves rapidly to watch the road and discourage any pursuit. He has a mirrored sending upon him, cast by one of his brethren. His secondary purpose, if he cannot discourage pursuit, is to allow the mirrored sending to attach itself to one of the travelers, their horses or gear.

The mirrored sending is coiled around his left wrist, hidden in his palm. For more on the spell, see New Spells below.

On the second day after encountering the wild man, the characters spy the mendicant priest coming down the path that the mercenaries followed.

You spy a bedraggled man coming back, down the pathway. He wears a heavy, wool, light-black cloak that reaches to the ground. Underneath the cloak he wears gunmetal gray chain mail. He is stout though possessed of a hungered look, lips drawn back, hair greasy and unkempt. He bears a war hammer in hand, decorated in dark red and black stains. Similar stains are splattered on his cloak. He smiles in greeting.

The mendicant shouts a greeting and proffers his right hand, dropping the hammer to hang by a noose on his wrist. To anyone who extends a hand, he takes it and shakes it, reaching over with his left hand where the mirrored sending lies coiled. With his left hand, he grasps the characters forearm, pats his horse or the man's back — in short, where ever he can reach forward to grab and allow the mirrored sending to move from his arm to the person of the character.

Anyone watching the exchange has a chance to detect the movement of the mirrored sending. Ask each character in turn to roll a Wis Perception check (DC 20). If successful, they notice one of two things, CK's choice:

- 1) The character notices a slight movement of mist around the man's wrist and palm. They see it clinging to the man, and seemingly move to the other player.
- 2) The character does not notice the movement, but does see a pool of mist stubbornly clinging to the other player. It does not slide down or break free, but rather crawls through the folds of clothing.

Note that if battle breaks out for any reason, and it is likely to break out, the priest's only concern is allowing the mirrored sending to go from his wrist to one of the players. With that in mind he will grapple with the nearest character, hoping to allow the mist time to transfer.

Mendicant Priest (CE human cleric 4) HP 17 (HD 4d8), AC 18, Spd 30ft. Str 10 Dex 16 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 16 Cha

12. Perception 13 (+3). Medicine +7, persuasion +3, religion +4. Sv: Wis +5. Warhammer +4 (1d8+2). SA Channel Divinity (Control Undead, Deal extra damage (2+spell level) on cause wounds spells, Destroy life (as action, deal 20 damage divided among all creatures in a 30' area as she wishes; Wis save negates). Spellcasting (Save DC 13, +5 attacks): Cantrips light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy. 1st lvl (4 slots) cause wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary. 2nd lvl (3 slots) hold person, spiritual weapon. He wears chainmail, +2 cloak of protection, +2 war hammer, scroll of curse, potion of healing, and 120gp worth of jewelry and coin.

USING THE SENDING

If the mirrored sending is successful and is attached to a character, then the high priest is able to see all that the party does so long as they are with the afflicted party member. He learns of their movements and what they are doing, who is their strongest and what weapons they carry. They cannot be surprised by secret movements.

DISCOVERING THE MIRRORING SENDING

The mirrored sending appears as a tendril of mist with the tiny face of a man. It clings to its mount with tenacity, looking around occasionally as its master dictates. It is not particularly noticeable but is extremely strange.

Allow every character a Wis Perception check (DC 18) twice a day for the chance of noticing the peculiar mist creature.

AMBUSH

It is a full day's travel from the encounter with the Mendicant Priest to the foot of a broad, tall, tree lined bluff, upon which sits the Temple of Nunt. A creek runs the length of it, shaded during most of the day by the jumbled rocks. The water is cool and shallow and crossing it is relatively easy.

A single trail leads up through the bluff; it is narrow, allowing people to move in single file only. The characters have but to lead their horses up it and mount the bluff. Going around the bluff in either direction adds a day's travel to the journey.

The trail enters the bluff, cutting up it in a gently rising, but very narrow gulch. The gulch itself consists of jumbled rocks, sagebrush and other detritus, but has a clear path moving up it. A large pile of rocks on the right-hand side show testament to someone attempting at one point to build a wall here.

If the priests know the party is coming, then the priests have set up an ambush here. It is their intent to keep the characters from mounting the bluff and attacking the hydra, their god.

If the Mendicant Priest was successful in attaching the mirrored sending to the party, then the hydra and his clerics know where the party is and what they are doing, at least they know where the party member who has the mirrored sending attached to him is. They plan the ambush accordingly, mirrored sending summoning all 6 priests to the gulch. Four lie in wait at the top

of the bluff, looking down on the trail, the other two are on the right side of the trail prepared to topple an avalanche of rocks down on the party.

If the mirrored sending failed or was discovered, then there are only two priests here, both of them at the wall of rocks, prepared to topple them down.

Any dwarf, gnome, ranger or experienced warrior has a chance of noting the odd nature of the rocky wall. On a successful Wis Perception check (DC14) they notice the rocks are precariously balanced.

The bluff is easy to climb Str Athletics check (DC 10).

The priests attack by toppling the wall down on the characters. Anyone in the path must make a successful dexterity save (DC 15) or suffer 2d8 points of damage. If mounted the save is at DC 17.

The battle is on.

Acolytes x 5 (CE Medium Human) (HP 10) (HD2d8) AC 12 Spd 30ft. Str 15 Dex 10 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 14 Cha 10. Perception 10. Mace +2 (1d6) SA spellcasting save DC 12 +4 spell attack. Cantrips light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy. 1st lvl (3 slots) bless, cure wounds, sanctuary.

The Priest (CE human cleric 9) HP 49 (HD 9d8+9) AC 19 Spd 30ft. Str 13 Dex 11 Con 12 Int 16 Wis 18 Cha 18. Perception 12(+2). Deception +5, Persuasion +5, Religion +5. Sv: Cha +7, Wis+7. Mace +4 (1d8+2). SA Channel Divinity (Control Undead, Deal extra damage (2+spell level) on cause wounds spells, smite good (deal 3d8 necrotic damage on a successful melee attack), Channel divinity (2; command undead, smite good (+4d8 necrotic damage on successful hit); Destroy undead (CR 1), Divine Intervention. Spellcasting (Save DC 15; +7 attack) Cantrips – guidance, light resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy; 1-level (4 slots) – Bless, bane, command, shield of faith; 2-level (3 slots) – aid, silence, spiritual weapon, hold person; 3-level (3 slots) – animate dead, cure serious wounds, dispel magic; 4th level (3 Slots) –freedom of movement, sending, death ward; 5th level (1 Slots) – flame strike, contagion. He possesses a cloak of spell resistance, +1 plate mail, wand of cure light wounds with 50 charges(1st caster level), wand of Cure serious wounds with 23 charges (5th caster level), 50 pp.

If forced to retreat the Priest flees back to the temple to confer with the hydra.

THE TEMPLE OF NUNT

Years ago, when the world was younger, a great forest spread its boughs from the seas far to the south and to the rolling plains of the Gottland in the north. This forest was full and deep and called by the Ethvold by man. The forest was home to many creatures, great and small. The greatest of all was Tefnut, a goddess of the Val Eahrakun who came to the world from beyond the Wall of Worlds. Many of her people followed her, and they settled in her shadow within the forest, and there they thrived for years.

Some were good, others were evil, but most concerned only with their own happenstance, or perhaps, the forest in their immediate vicinity. Like all creatures they had concourse with one another and like all creatures, they loved and hated, fought or lived in peace as was their want.

Of all these, one possessed a peculiar knowledge of the paths of the dead. A disciple of Toth, the All Father's reflection, this god saw the River of Time and understood the idea behind the arc of it, how all things living must follow the Arc to the Endless Pools where all things lie waiting for the Gonfod, the end of days and the war between the Red God and the Maker of Justice. His name bore no reflection of sound that men could hear, but rather carried the echo of a darkness that signaled the end of things. But later, when dwarves and men walked the world, they called him Nunt, for no sound of theirs could match the horror of his stature.

When the Ethrum, a tribe of men, came to the Ethvold they settled and built towns and villages far and wide. They called upon the gods as men are wont to do, and they turned to them for their needs and desires, and for their fears. They did not discern between good and evil, and paid homage to those gods who best cast a web of power to aid them.

Nunt was no exception. Men called upon him before they passed from the world and wandered the Arc of Time, seeking the Endless Pools. And he heeded their calls and gave them aid, removing their fear and replacing it with hope. And those who didn't call on him, he punished, afflicted them with the terror of oblivion. So men clung to his hope as they crossed over and they built temples to him throughout the Ethvold.

The temples reflected the god to which they paid devotions, for they were large, with many columns, and a roof of stone. They carved friezes of Nunt and all those he gave aid to on all the stonework and he thrived on their adoration. But many temples were built with a great dungeon beneath and wide stairs set in the temple floor leading down to the dungeon. They channeled water through the dungeon as a symbol of the River of Time and Nunt loved it and blessed his priests and those who paid him homage and respect.

Here the priests dwelt and the dead were laid to rest before being anointed in the holy water. And Nunt came to gather their souls and guide them beyond to the Endless Pools, the Stone Fields or wherever he thought best.

But in time, the tribes of men grew large — the Aenochians most of all — and they warred upon the Ethrum for many centuries. Eventually they defeated the Ethrum, and the Ethvold became a wasteland so that the Aenochians started despoiling it. The gods of the Ethvold could do little for the Ethrum for the Aenochians worshipped no god but their Emperors, or so they claimed. For it was little known in those days that the God Emperors were bound to the Red God.

So the Ethvold decayed and fell away and the power of Nunt and all his kindred waned, passing into legend. The temples

were abandoned and the Val Earhrakun of that realms vanished into the dust and dirt of the world. And the temples fell, ground slowly into memories of wasted stone and lost dreams.

COMES THE HYDRA

In that high place in the Tar Kiln stood one such temple. It was large and stood the test of time better than most. But in its depths lay its true magic, for there, left by Nunt centuries ago, was an egg. It sat in the sand of an underground river for all those years, until at last it hatched and the hydra came forth.

A dark blue, stained with crimson all along its underside, the hydra lived in quiet solitude on the banks of the river in the dark dungeon, feeding on fish and other sundry animals that passed down the river. It grew and grew, slowly reaching out into the wilds to hunt bigger game.

The temple proved the perfect lair of this minion of Nunt, and here he dwelt for long years, hunting the wilds. Of the four heads, one proved wiser than the others and he commanded them all, and the other heads, in their ignorance, obeyed him. Filled with a wisdom unbecoming to his kind, he learned many things as he grew and in time came to speak the common tongue of men.

So it was that followers of Nunt came to him. Whether drawn to him by the power of their god, or by fate, none could say, but they came and they worshiped him as the son of Nunt. They made sacrifices to him, dwelling in his shadow. They ranged out, hunting for food and brought it back to feed the hydra. They gathered worldly treasures and heaped them at the hydra's feet. They called upon Nunt to serve them with the power of the hydra and for them all was good and they were properly served by their god.

For his part the hydra did not care for the priests, nor for Nunt, of whom his knowledge was little and distant. But he allowed the priests their dreams of power for they fed him fresh meat, taken from beast, man, elf or dwarf.

In time, the hydra's wiser head learned their craft and mastered the speech of prayer and he too commanded the powers given priests by their Nunt. And it came to him that the world was larger than he thought and that men were weak and fearful. He thought that they must bow to a many-headed Son of Nunt. And he cast about for a way to command them and learned of the boy stolen and carried into the wild.

THE TEMPLE GROUNDS

The temple consists of two main floors. The temple proper, called the House of Nunt, and the dungeon, called the Cave of Nunt. The men dwell in huts built outside the House of Nunt. The hydra dwells in the Cave of Nunt, upon his bed of bones and treasure. The hydra has no fear of the day or night and if he hears commotion above, he comes forth to investigate and attack if threatened.

NOTE: The hydra has never been wounded by any creature, and is filled with the idea of its own power, fed to it by the priests. If and when he sees the party, he attacks without any delay or fear.

As you top the bluff, the country opens before you in a broad, grassy plain that climbs to a low range of hills in the north. A creek tumbles off to your left, vanishing into the ground just before it reaches the bluff. Trees cling to the rocky earth in small copses. But the entire world shrinks before the sprawling ruin before you. Giant columns flank a cobbled floor, many knocked over, some still clawing their way to heaven. But all are weathered, bleached white by the sun, ground away by wind and softened by the rain. They stand in stark contrast to the marble blue of the sky. Beyond are a series of small, squalid huts. The ground, too, draws your attention, for there, all across the floor of the ruins, are bones, bones and more bones.

THE HOUSE OF NUNT

The temple itself is a large, flat pad of cobbled stones, surrounded by 32 columns of stone. The columns held a roof up long ago, but that has long since fallen. Many of the columns are wasted away, ground down by rain, wind and water. Most are roughly 10-20 feet high, and only a few remain in their original state, 40 feet tall.

If any of the clerics have survived, they have fled to the temple and are presently bowing before the stairs calling upon the Son of Nunt to come forth. Regardless of the clerics however, the hydra knows who is coming by the mirrored sending that hangs upon one of the characters, assuming of course it has not been discovered.

If the cleric survives, he makes a final stand in the temple grounds. The hydra does not come out until the cleric is dead.

Even then the hydra remains in the cool dark. As the characters approach, passing through the field of bones, the hydra casts animate dead from the Cave of Nunt below. Instantly the bones begin to rattle, lifting themselves from the floor, scooping up weapons and shields. The first wave should be 10 skeletons.

Skeleton, 10 (*Skeletons (LE Medium undead)*): HP 13 (HD 2d8+4), AC 13, Spd 30ft. Str 10 Dex 14 Con 15 Int 6 Wis 8 Cha 5. Perception 9. Short sword +4 (1d6+2) or short bow +4 (1d6+2; 80ft/320ft). SA bludgeoning vulnerability, immune to poison, exhaustion, darkvision 60ft.

When about half the skeletons are dead, he animates second wave of 10. When that wave is driven back he animates a third wave of 10. His hope is to batter the characters down.

NOTE: The skeletons are mindless and in no way are the able to attack in an organized group, but rather 1 and 2 at a time. If more than that come close to a character, they become entangled with each other, all suffering a -5 to hit and anyone swinging at them gains a +5 to hit.

Now the hydra attacks. He charges out of the cave entrance quickly, all five heads bellowing and growling. They fall upon the nearest character and then turn one by one to fend off other characters as they attack. The intelligent head does not overly

expose himself to danger. If he feels they are targeting him, he pulls back, directing the other heads to intervene. If they hydra is hard pressed, it retreats into the cave. At no point does the hydra attempt to harm the child hidden below. Once in the cave it has no wear to go, but uses its twilight vision to effect, attacking the characters in the dark.

If pressed further, it fights to the death, as it has no understanding of its own mortality.

Hydra (*Unaligned huge monstrosity*) HP 172 (15d12+5) AC 15 Spd 30ft/30ft (swim). Str 20 Dex 12 Con 20 Int 2 Wis 10 Cha 7. Perception 16(+6). Bite +8 (1d10+5) SA multiattack (1 bite per head); darkvision 60ft; hold breath (1 hour); multiple heads (as long as has more than 1, advantage vs. blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, unconscious; 1 head dies with 25 damage; end of each turn grows 2 heads per one that died unless took fire damage; regains 10 hp per new head); Wakeful (while sleeping 1 head is awake).

THE HUTS

There are four huts clustered on the north side of the temple ruin. They are made of cut sod, timber roofs laced with thatch. Two are very small; these served the acolytes. The two larger ones served the Mendicant Priest and the High Priest.

The huts are built in a rough square with one entrance to the courtyard. A foul stench rises from the area reeking of human excrement, filth and general uncleanness. There are bones everywhere, mostly animal, and all inexpertly skinned. Clearly the people who lived here were not bred for the wild.

Entering the huts brings bile to one's mouth and turns the stomach. Anyone who spends more than a few minutes in the huts must make a successful constitution save or vomit for 1-2 rounds.

The larger hut served the High Priest and here he built a makeshift altar to Nunt. The sign of the fish has been carved on a wooden plaque and hung on the wall. A rug of sorts is on the ground before it. Beneath the rug, the Priest has dug out a small space and set a wooden box that holds five golden bands. If anyone of neutral or good alignments wears one of the bands, they gain a +1 AC.

In the courtyard is a large stack of cut firewood, two large barrels of beer and a makeshift table and benches and a dozen or so wooden mugs and platters. The beer was purchased from the Gentleman Traveler and is decent, if a bit warm. There is else little of value here, the clerics keeping their worldly possessions on themselves.

THE CAVE OF NUNT

The hydra took the baby inside the cave and has kept him there, nestled in a heap of gold and gems. The hydra has been able to cast create food and water for the child and thus has kept him decently fed. The child is old enough to fend for himself, but not old enough to recognize the hydra as a monster, particularly since it has been taking care of him.

The steps go down 30 feet into the cool, damp dark.

The cave is not a cave at all, but rather a chamber built off an underground stream. It is cobbled and walled with a ceiling above.

When the party enters the cave, they hear a momentary shout of joy, then silence. The baby isn't sure what is going on, for he was expecting the hydra and not these people. He dives back into the treasure that is heaped in a disorganized pile near the stream.

If they explore the cave, they find it is 100 feet by 300 feet, largely empty with only a single chamber in the back where an ancient prayer room to Nunt is located.

Treasure: There is 5000gp in assorted coin in the treasure heap. In addition there are the following magic items: +2 shield, a javelin of lightning, potion of giant control, scroll with 12 wizard spells on it, a Dwarven thrower, and a periapt of wisdom.

COMPLETING THE ADVENTURE

Once the child is secure, the characters can turn back south and return him to Brian. Upon their arrival at Lord Brian's castle they found the paladin only recently returned. His troops are exhausted and show signs a difficult travel.

When he spies the child, he rejoices immediately offering the characters wine and food and orders the necessary amount of gold brought forth, 1000gp per sack, and given to the

characters. He furthermore offers them oaths of service for the land promised right there in the yard.

I, Brian, Lord of Helliwell, for your service to me and my son, and all the people of this Barony, grant you title and rights to 20 hides each of land. Swear fealty to me and promise to grant my heirs or me 30 days of service for each year or a surrogate and this land passes from me to you, so long as you obey the laws of your people.

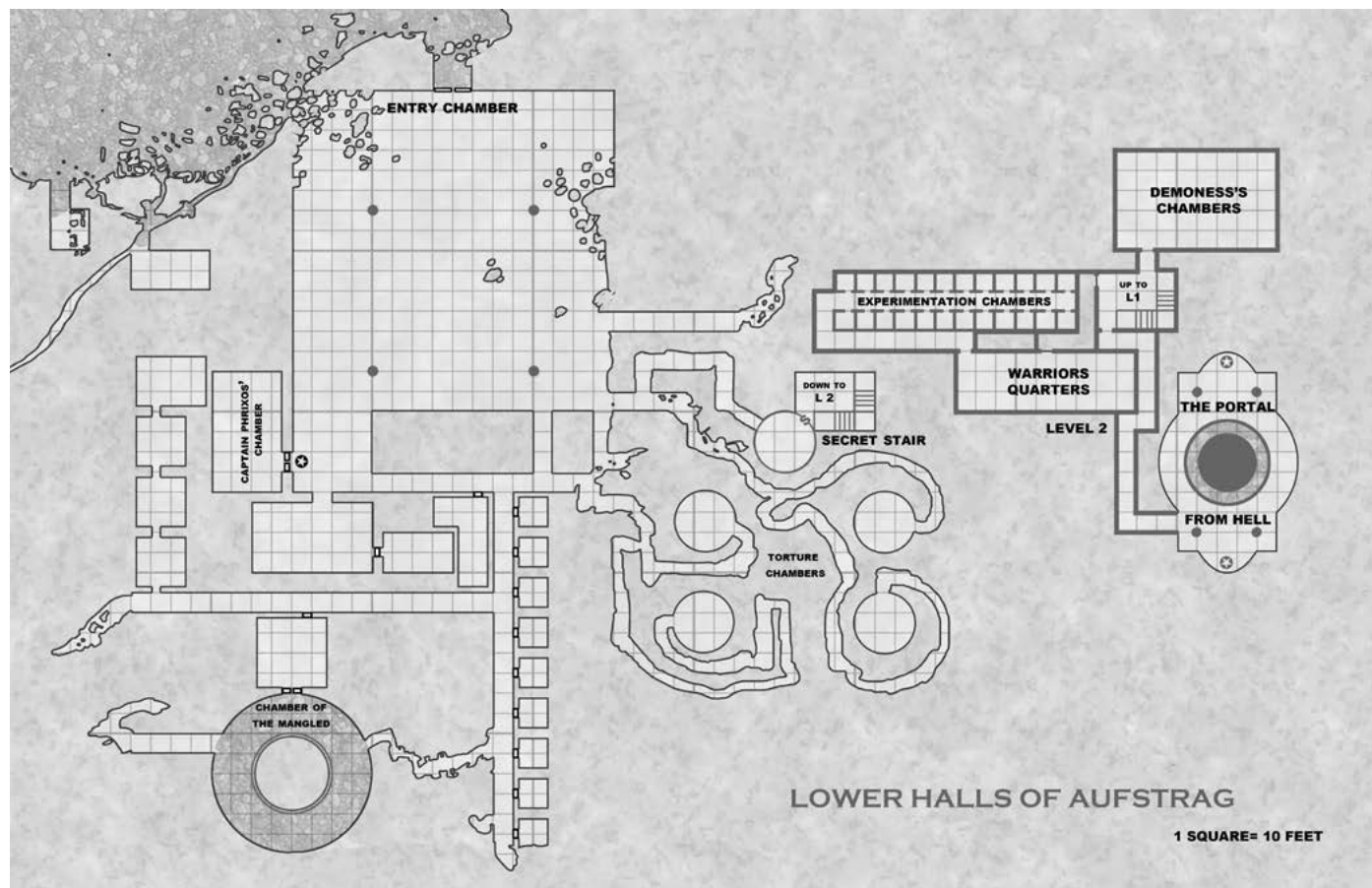
There is much rejoicing. The character should have more than enough coin to build small compounds or keeps upon the northern border and begin their life as property owners and join Brian in the day-to-day battles with the monsters that creep forth from the Tar Kiln.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Later, as all the captains and characters are gathered over the feast, he explains to the interested party that the King has moved against the northern Barons, the Marcher Lords, and even now gathers an army to launch a punitive campaign. It will take him a month or more to raise his army.

For their part, the Barons themselves are meeting in two weeks time in order to prepare, in order that they may make their claims to the King upon the field of battle.

But there is troubling news. Brian has learned that the King has stirred up trouble in the Tar Kiln once more. He has sent rangers into the wilderness with the purpose of rousing the



giants for plunder and war. The Barons will be caught between the King in the south and the giants in the north.

If only the Marcher Lords could convince someone to go north, slay the King’s agents, and kill or at least disrupt the march of the giants!

APPENDIX A: NEW SPELLS

Mirrored Sending

Level 3 divination
Casting Time 1 action
Range: 1 mile
Components: V, S, M (holy symbol)
Duration: 1 day

With mirrored sending, the caster is able to pull out a small portion of their subconscious and send it on a mission. The mirrored sending appears as a small tendril of mist. It moves at the same speed as the caster, but is telepathically linked to the caster. The caster can see, smell and hear through the sending, though they cannot speak or feel any physical sensations through it. They do not need to concentrate on the sending and can leave it ‘free’ for as long as they desire. Only one such mirrored sending can exist at any one time, however; if the caster uses this spell while a mirrored sending already exists, the original is canceled (with no ill effect to the caster) and the new one appears.

The caster need not concentrate on the mirrored sending to see through it.

Each sending spell represents a physical part of the caster. If the mirrored sending is destroyed, the caster’s maximum hit points are reduced by 4. The sending itself has 4 hit points and an AC 10. It cannot actively defend itself, though the priest may direct it to flee. It can be dispelled with a dispel magic or similar spell, which counts as destroying it. It can only be struck with magic weapons.

At higher levels. When this spell is cast using a spell slot higher than level 3, the range is increased by 1 mile, or the duration is increased by 1 day (caster’s choice) for each level above 3.

This spell is on the bardic, cleric, sorcerer, and warlock spell lists.

Through a God’s Eye

Level 1 divination
Casting Time 1 action
Range: touch
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 day

When casting the spell, the priest must have standing water. By etching the holy symbol into the water and muttering the prayers and incantations, the cleric opens an ocular tunnel between himself and the water. The priest can see anything passing over or near the water. The priest does not need to concentrate on the water, but rather sees what is going on in the back of their mind.

The spell does have severe limitations as the water has no peripheral vision and the area affected is limited to a 36-inch diameter circle. It does not work upon moving water. There is no saving throw against being seen; however, those who possess spell resistance may make a charisma saving throw at advantage to negate the effects of the spell.

At higher levels. When this spell is cast using a higher level spell slot, the duration increases by 1 day per spell level above first. Alternately, if a caster has this spell active elsewhere, casting it at level 4 allows for a second simultaneous location to be viewed, and casting at level 8 allows a third simultaneous location.

This spell is on the bardic, druid, and warlock spell lists.

APPENDIX B: NEW MONSTERS

BONE SPUR

Medium aberration, Lawful Evil

Armor Class: 18 (Natural)

HITS POINTS: 71 (9d8+27 HD)

SPEED: 40ft.

STR:	DEX:	CON:	INT:	WIS:	CHA:
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	9 (-1)	6 (-2)

DAMAGE IMMUNITIES: Poison

CONDITION IMMUNITIES: Poisoned

DAMAGE RESISTANCE: bludgeoning, piercing or slashing from non-magical or non-silvered weapons.

SENSES: darkvision 120ft., Passive perception 13

SKILLS: perception +3

LANGUAGES: Abyssal, Common (understand but not speak)

CHALLENGE: 5 (1800 XP)

ACTIONS

MULTIATTACK: The bone spur makes two claw attacks.

CLAWS: Melee Weapon Attack. +7 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: 9 (2d6+3) slashing damage.

MIRROR WALK: The bone spur can travel between reflective surfaces. This ability functions at will and is in all ways like the dimension door spell, except the bone spur must step into a reflective surface (mirror, polished shield, still pool, etc.) and emerge from another reflective surface within range. It can do this as part of its move action, with each mirror walk comprising 10ft. of total movement.

DESCRIPTION: Reflected pain. The bone spur appears much like a shattered bone. Its torso is long, dirty white and consists of multiple layers of thick bone like skin. It crawls upon four thin legs that protrude from the body, much like an insect. These legs end in scythe-like apertures that make for poor feet, giving the beast a stilted gait when it walks. Its true form however is

very different, for it is little more than reflected stain possessed of an intelligence that allows it to hunt.

For this reason the bone spur is only found in a reflective surface, a mirror, a highly polished shield, within a jewel, a piece of silver and so on. Their reflection has no particular size, so their lair may be any item of any description.

Creatures of Malice. The bone spur is a creature of utter malice, dwelling in the filth of their own evil. They are semi-intelligent, following simple directions with ease. They desire direction in all their actions, seeking some affirmation in almost any task they undertake. For this reason they are often used as guardians by magi, evil paladins and the like. Once set in a role, they remain there until destroyed.

Mirror world ravagers. In combat the bone spur rises upon its hind legs and falls upon its victims with its fore legs, slashing with the jagged ends. If they are in danger of losing a fight, they will passwall from the material world into a reflective surface.

THE BONE SPUR IN AHRDE

The bone spur is an ancient creature, of the order of the Val-Eahrakun, created as they were in the Void long ago. Tis said by those knowledgeable that the bone spur came to be when splinters of the All Father's tools caught the reflection of his manifest thought. Being a reflection, the image of the thought turned, and the bone spur knew no goodness, but only evil. But because they stood in the presence of the All Father they longed for his direction, something he never gave.

So the bone spurs came to dwell in the deeps of the Void even at the beginning of time. They are summoned from time to time, hunted, captured and traded by those who are skilled in crossing the Wall of Worlds and able to plunder the wealth of the Void.

As guardians they are unmatched for their fearsomeness and desire to follow simple commands. within a jewel, a piece of silver and so on. Their reflection has no particular size, so their lair may be any item of any description.

JOLMUEN

Large Aberration, Chaotic Evil

ARMOR CLASS: 15(natural armor)

HIT POINTS: 153(18d10+54)

SPEED: 40 ft

STR:	DEX:	CON:	INT:	WIS:	CHA:
17(+3)	11(+0)	16(+3)	8(-1)	9(-1)	11(+0)

SKILLS: perception+2

SENSES: darkvision 60 ft, passive perception 17

LANGUAGES: Common

CHALLENGE: 6 (2300 XP)

SPECIAL QUALITIES

SUPERIOR SMELL: The Jolmuen has an amazing sense of smell. It has advantage on all perception checks that involve scent.

ACTIONS

MULTIATTACK: The Jolmuen can make 4 weapon attacks, 2 weapon attacks and 2 hoof attacks, one gore attack or attempt a trample.

LONGSWORD: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 12(2d8+3) slashing damage.

HOOF: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 10(2d6+3) bludgeoning damage.

GORE: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft, one target. Hit: 16(2d12+3) piercing damage.

TRAMPLE: If the Jolmuen can run at least 10 feet towards a target, it can attempt to trample them. The target must make a Dexterity save (Dc 15). If the target saves, they dodge the charge without further effect. If they miss the save, the target immediately takes 22(3d12+3) piercing damage and is knocked prone. In addition, the Jolmuen can make 2 hoof attacks on the target with advantage.

Description: These strange creatures are mix between a boar and a giant; with the body of a boar, and the upper torso of a dwarf. They have four arms, thickly muscled from which they wield weapons of stone or iron. Their bestial faces are thick, flat and round, four huge tusks sprouting from the horizontal gash that is their mouth. A thick coarse hair covers much of their torso, almost as thick as the boar's body; this affords them a simple armor. Their eyes are small as are their ears, but their noses are broad and flat and very sensitive. They usually wear some type of harness in order to manage their weapons.

The Jolmuen are fierce fighters, attacking most of everything they encounter. They are carnivorous and require a great deal of food to sustain them. They do not nest up or have lairs, carrying everything they own or value on their backs in the form of satchels, packs, barrels, and the like. They are nomadic, but are very migratory, visiting the same seasonal locations as food waxes and wanes.

THE JOLMUEN IN AHRDE

Creations of the Ichlun the Goblin Sorcerer, the jolmuen served to flesh out the ranks of the goblins in their eternal wars with the dwarves. The first recordings of them come from the annals of the Alanti when the goblins lords used them to batter down the walls of their coastal towers. The creatures proved difficult to slay and their brute power became a terror to the common ranks of the dwarves. But, as with all things born of ill design, they were flawed. Unable to follow directions, nor to stay on task, the jolmuen fell easy prey to the highly organized dwarves . . . at least when the dwarves marched in such numbers as to weigh them down.

In the end, the wars ground to a halt for both races of dwarf

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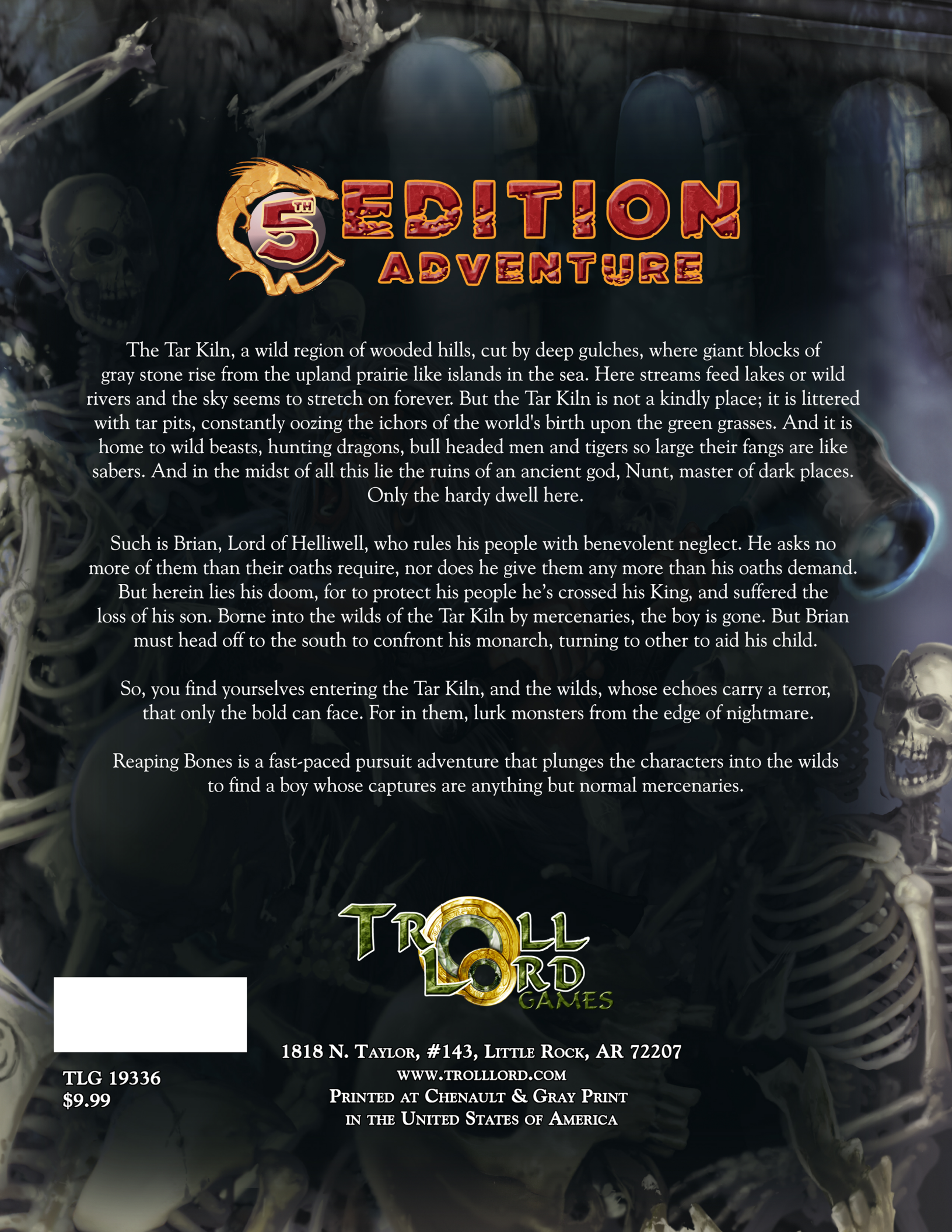
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5TH EDITION ADVENTURE

The Tar Kiln, a wild region of wooded hills, cut by deep gulches, where giant blocks of gray stone rise from the upland prairie like islands in the sea. Here streams feed lakes or wild rivers and the sky seems to stretch on forever. But the Tar Kiln is not a kindly place; it is littered with tar pits, constantly oozing the ichors of the world's birth upon the green grasses. And it is home to wild beasts, hunting dragons, bull headed men and tigers so large their fangs are like sabers. And in the midst of all this lie the ruins of an ancient god, Nunt, master of dark places. Only the hardy dwell here.

Such is Brian, Lord of Helliwell, who rules his people with benevolent neglect. He asks no more of them than their oaths require, nor does he give them any more than his oaths demand. But herein lies his doom, for to protect his people he's crossed his King, and suffered the loss of his son. Borne into the wilds of the Tar Kiln by mercenaries, the boy is gone. But Brian must head off to the south to confront his monarch, turning to other to aid his child.

So, you find yourselves entering the Tar Kiln, and the wilds, whose echoes carry a terror, that only the bold can face. For in them, lurk monsters from the edge of nightmare.

Reaping Bones is a fast-paced pursuit adventure that plunges the characters into the wilds to find a boy whose captures are anything but normal mercenaries.



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