



# BLOOD ON BRIGHT SANDS

## A One-Round D&D<sup>®</sup> LIVING GREYHAWK<sup>™</sup> Core Adventure

Version 1.0

by Creighton Broadhurst

**Circle Reviewers:** Paul Looby and Stephen Radney-MacFarland

**Additional Material:** Stuart Kerrigan

**Resources:** *Sandstorm: Mastering the Perils of Fire and Sand* by Bruce R. Cordell, Jennifer Clarke Wilkes, and JD Wiker; *Manual of the Planes* by Jeff Grubb, Bruce R. Cordell, and David Noonan; *Living Greyhawk Gazetteer* by Gary Holian, Erik Mona, Sean K Reynolds, and Fredrick Weining; *Rary the Traitor* by Anthony Pryor; *Greyhawk: The Adventure Begins* by Roger E. Moore; "More Regional Feats of Oerth" from *Dragon* issue 319 by Erik Mona; "Into the Bright Desert" from *Dungeon* issue 98 and "Denizens of the Bright Desert" from *Dungeon* issue 103; and "Enchiridion of the Fiend-Save (Third Report)" from *Living Greyhawk Journal* issue 3 by Sean K Reynolds.

War rages across the Bright Sands. Scouting the wastes at the behest of the paladin Karistyne the PCs are caught up in a battle between forces loyal to Rary and nomads yet free from his insidious influence. They must win free to reach their goal, the mysterious and dragon-infested pinnacle of Dagger Rock. The first adventure for the "Blight on Bright Sands" adventure arc. Only newly created characters for this adventure arc may be played in this adventure.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS<sup>®</sup> rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison. This product uses updated material from the v.3.5 revision.

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## RPGA SANCTIONED PLAY

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an RPGA even from the RPGA website, or you received it from your senior gamemaster. To play this adventure as part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign—a worldwide, ongoing D&D campaign set in the GREYHAWK setting—you must sanction it as part of an RPGA event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

To sanction an RPGA event, you must be at least a HERALD-LEVEL gamemaster. The person who sanctions the event is called the senior gamemaster, and is in charge of making sure the event is sanctioned before play, runs smoothly on the date sanctioned, and then reported back to the RPGA in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table Dungeon Master (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the senior gamemaster is also the table DM. You don't have to be a HERALD-LEVEL GM to run this adventure if you are not the senior GM.

By sanctioning and reporting this adventure you accomplish a couple of things. First it is an official game, and you can use the AR to advance your LIVING GREYHAWK character. Second player and DMs gain rewards for sanctioned RPGA play if they are members of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS program. Playing this adventure is worth two (2) points.

This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2006.

To learn more about the LIVING GREYHAWK character creation and development, RPGA event sanctioning, and DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS, visit the RPGA website at [www.rpga.com](http://www.rpga.com).

## PLAYERS READ NO FURTHER

If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*.

Throughout this adventure, text in ***bold italics*** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information for you, including special instruction on running the adventure. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in Appendix 1.

Along with this adventure you'll find a RPGA Table Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of

an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure Record (AR).

## LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportionate to the modified average character level of the PCs participating in the adventure. To determine this modified Average Party Level (APL) follow the steps below:

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.
2. If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (such as animal companions, familiars paladin's mounts) or the warhorse of a character with the Mounted Combat feat, use the sidebar chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum of step one. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.

Mundane Animals Effect on APL		# of Animals			
		1	2	3	4
CR of Animal	1/4 & 1/6	0	0	0	1
	1/3 & 1/2	0	0	1	1
	1	1	1	2	3
	2	2	3	4	5
	3	3	4	5	6
	4	4	6	7	8
	5	5	7	8	9
	6	6	8	9	10
	7	7	9	10	11

3. Sum the results of step 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round up to the nearest whole number.
4. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience and gold a PC can gain at the end of the adventure. If a player character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL at which this adventure is being played, that character receives only one-half of the experience points and gold for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either the PC was not challenged as much as normal or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Furthermore, a PC who is four or more levels higher than the highest APL supported by the adventure may not play the adventure.

LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Four or five 1<sup>st</sup>-level characters may find the challenge of an APL 2 adventure difficult. Suggest the following to these groups to help increase their chances of success:

1. Enlist a sixth player.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them.

## TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round Core adventure, set in the Bright Desert. Characters native to the Bright Desert pay one Time Unit per round, all others pay two Time Units per round.

Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12 gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50 gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100 gp per Time Unit. Characters that fail to pay at least Standard Upkeep will retain temporary ability damage until the next adventure, must buy new spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may suffer other in-game penalties (or possibly gain in-game benefits) as may be detailed in this scenario.

A character who does not pay for at least Standard Upkeep may also avoid the above-described penalties by living off the wild. If the character possesses four or more ranks in the Survival skill and succeeds at a Survival check (DC 20), the character will heal temporary ability damage as if he or she paid for Standard Upkeep, may refill spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may restock up to 20 arrows or bolts if the character has at least four ranks in Craft (bowmaking). The player is allowed to Take 10 on this roll.

More information about Lifestyle and Upkeep can be found in the "Lifestyle and Upkeep" section of Chapter 3 of the *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook*.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Bright Desert has long witnessed conflict. The conflicts wracking the region today have in part their roots in the older

### The Rise and Fall of Sulm

Two millennia ago, several Flan civilizations rose from barbarism in the arid grasslands that once carpeted the region. The greatest of these nations was Sulm.

At first a force for good, the Sulmites delved into ancient lore and declined as a people, embracing evil and conquest. One by one, the other kingdoms fell before Sulm's might until her last rival, Itar, was defeated in a cataclysmic battle.

In turn, Sulm fell, though not by the force of an external adversary but through the folly of its rulers. Sulm's last ruler, Shattados, called upon his dark gods to grant him a gift to combat the rising tide of civil unrest sweeping Sulm's conquered dominions. Within a day, Sulm had fallen. Shattados' gift had come with a terrible curse that transformed his subjects into hideously deformed creatures sharing the characteristics of scorpions and humans.

### Empire of the Bright Lands

Since the Greyhawk Wars, the Bright Lands have languished in the grip of Rary the Traitor and his infamous companion, Lord Robilar. Both gained almost unrivaled infamy when Rary sought to sabotage the Day of Great Signing by slaying the assembled ambassadors gathered to sign the Pact of Greyhawk. The Archmagi Tenser and Otiluke discovered their former friend's treachery and were slain. Simultaneously, Lord Robilar struck at their towers, destroying their clones and looting their treasures. However, the planned attack on the signatories of the Pact of Greyhawk had failed. Realizing that their plans were foiled, the pair fled to the Bright Desert.

Over the next several years, Rary and Robilar brought the majority of the Bright Desert under their control. By 595 CY, only a few tribes of nomads and the stubbornly independent desert centaurs still resist Rary's rule.

### Karistyne

Karistyne is a powerful paladin who, along with her adventuring companions, defends a fortress deep within the rugged hills of the Abbor-Alz. Karistyne is renowned for her hatred of evil dragons and is known to have slain several in her career.

She has learnt that a powerful ancient blue dragon named Voltarmarun (or Volintakulus in Geoff and Sterich legends) had been lairing atop a local landmark named Dagger Rock. Recent rumors also tell that this dragon was slain by Lord Robilar in 590 CY.

Since then Karistyne has dispatched several groups of adventurers to ascertain the truth of these rumors. None have returned.

Karistyne therefore determined that a local inhabitant was best suited to the task of penetrating the desert interior and scouting Dagger Rock. Thus, she sought out such a person. Only one man, a nomad of Suel descent named Firron, was brave enough to accept her task. He was dispatched some time ago to observe the forlorn rock stack and to ascertain if any draconic creatures yet dwell atop it.

Travel across the desert however is dangerous, even for one born and bred there. Thus, as part of the agreement Karistyne undertook to provide Firron with

an escort for the return journey. This is the task that has fallen to the PCs. (The escorts hired to travel with Firron to Dagger Rock never returned).

The adventure opens as a battle between two factions of desert dwellers comes to an end. To avoid the conflict the PCs have hidden in a small valley created by several steep-sided dunes and have taken no part in the battle.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Prior to beginning play, you, the DM, should randomly determine the order in which the encounters occur. Obviously, play always begins at the Introduction and finishes with Encounter 9: Karistyne's Castle. The means of randomly determining the course of the adventure is detailed below in "Encounter Order."

This adventure begins as a battle between forces loyal to Rary and the remaining free nomads draws to a close.

**Introduction:** In this encounter, the PCs emerge from their hiding place and survey the scene of the battle. Dead lie heaped about but in the distance the PCs can still hear the sporadic sounds of combat.

**Encounter 1—Detritus of War:** Leaving their hiding place, the PCs begin their journey back to their employer. Dead lie sprawled everywhere. The PCs have the opportunity to scavenge some equipment and supplies.

**Encounter 2—Evil Dead:** Here the PCs come across a fallen yugoloth and his slain enemies. His presence is positive proof of Rary's trafficking with otherworldly creatures.

**Encounter 3—Scavengers of the Wastes:** In this encounter, the PCs come across several nomad warriors loyal to Rary. They are scavenging among the dead, attempting to gather loot. None of them speaks Common.

**Encounter 4—Minions of the Traitor:** Traveling across the desert sands, the PCs encounter a small band of norkers, who they may parley or fight with.

**Encounter 5—Shrine of the Calm God:** In this encounter, the PCs come across a ruin, partly covered by the shifting sands. Shelter is to be had within the ruins. PCs who explore the ruins also come across a spellbook containing several new spells and will likely face an ashen husk.

**Encounter 6—Dagger Rock:** The PCs finally reach their goal and meet up with Karistyne's contact. Once contact is made the individual, Firron insists that the PCs take him to Karistyne.

**Encounter 7—Tunnels of the Ancients:** In this encounter the PCs discover a rubble-filled passageway at the base of Dagger Rock. Exploring further they discover strange wall carvings and paintings and may even encounter a few strangely colored kobolds. Further progress however is barred by another cave-in.

**Encounter 8—Amid the Broken Peaks:** Passing through the rocky and barren hills of the Abbor-Alz, the PCs are attacked by a hunting hippogriff. The beast attempts to slay the smallest PC present, or a packhorse

or other animal before making off with its victim's corpse.

**Encounter 9—Karistyne Castle:** Finally the PCs reach their employer, the paladin Karistyne. Arriving at her imposing castle, the PCs meet the lady herself and must report on all they have seen.

**Conclusion:** The PCs are honored with a feast. During the feast they receive a rousing speech from Karistyne exhorting them to stay true to the cause of good. They may also meet some of Karistyne's comrades and hirelings and interact with them.

## Encounter Order

Many of the encounters in this adventure happen in a random order. The adventure has three basic parts:

1. Travel to Dagger Rock
2. Dagger Rock
3. Return to Karistyne Keep

Each of the three basic parts has several encounters that must take place during that leg of the journey. Several of the other encounters however can take place either on the way to, or the way back from Dagger Rock. The timing of these encounters should be determined in a random fashion using the method detailed below.

### Travel to Dagger Rock

The following encounters must take place during this leg of the journey:

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Encounter 1: The Detritus of War
- ❖ Encounter 2: The Evil Dead

### Dagger Rock

The following encounters must take place during the time the PCs spend in the environs of Dagger Rock.

- ❖ Encounter 6: Dagger Rock
- ❖ Encounter 7: Tunnels of the Ancients\*

### Return to Karistyne Keep

The following encounters must take place during this leg of the journey:

- ❖ Encounter 8: Amid the Broken Peaks
- ❖ Encounter 9: Karistyne Keep

### Random Encounters

The following encounters can take place during travel to Dagger Rock or on the return journey to Karistyne Castle. They cannot take place however while the PCs are at Dagger Rock.

- ❖ Encounter 3: Scavengers of the Wastes
- ❖ Encounter 4: Minions of the Traitor
- ❖ Encounter 5: Shrine of the Calm God\*

\*If the PCs complete "Encounter 5: Shrine of the Calm God" before "Encounter 7: Tunnels of the Ancients" they don't encounter any creatures in the tunnels beneath Dagger Rock. Similarly if they complete "Encounter 7: Tunnels of the Ancients" before "Encounter 5: Shrine of

the Calm God” the shrine is empty—the PCs encounter an abandoned building.

### Encounter Timing

Before play commences randomly determine the order and timing of the three random encounters detailed above using the following procedure:

1. Determine the group's base speed (the speed of the slowest PC).
2. Determine, using the charts in “Traveling in the Bright Lands,” how long each leg of the journey is and the overall journey time.
3. Select a die with a number of sides greater than the numbers of journey days the PCs spend inside the Bright Desert.
4. Randomly determine by rolling the die on what day each of the encounters takes place. Encounters don't take place on any complete day the PCs spend lost. No more than one encounter may take place per day.

### Example

The PCs have base speed of 30 feet. Thus it takes three days to reach Dagger Rock from their start point. The return journey takes roughly four days to reach the Abbor-Alz hills and another two-and-a-half days to reach Karistyne Castle.

The PCs are therefore spending a total of seven days traveling in the Bright Desert, assuming they don't get lost.

Rolling a d8, you get the following results: 3, 5, and 6. These are the days that the three random encounters take place. Thus:

- ❖ “Encounter 3: Scavengers of the Wastes” takes place on day 3.
- ❖ “Encounter 4: Minions of the Traitor” takes place on day 5.
- ❖ “Encounter 5: Shrine of the Calm God” takes place on day 6.

This means that the PCs encounter nothing within the shrine if they investigated the tunnels beneath Dagger Rock. If they didn't investigate these tunnels then they face the ashen hulk and the scorpions lairing within the shrine.

## TRAVELING IN THE BRIGHT LANDS

Travel in the Bright Lands is perilous. Chief among those perils are the harsh landscape and unforgiving climate.

Full rules for travel in the Bright Desert are included in the *Sandstorm* accessory. However, to facilitate play the basics rules are presented in Appendix 3.

## PREPARATION FOR PLAY

*COR5-06 Blood on Bright Sands* is the first part of the *Blight on Bright Sands* campaign arc. The arc heavily utilizes the *Sandstorm* supplement. This adventure serves

as the introduction to the campaign. To play in this adventure, you must bring in a newly created 1<sup>st</sup>-level character. This character can be one created using the normal LIVING GREYHAWK campaign rules, or it can be one using the special rules *Blight on Bright Sands Character Creation Supplement* found either in the same zip as this adventure, or on the RPGA website ([www.rpga.com](http://www.rpga.com)). Characters made with the special rules in that document must play this adventure first before they can play any other LIVING GREYHAWK adventure.

We've also created six fastplay characters for this and other “Blight on Bright Sands” adventures. Players who sit down at the session without a character can use these as their starting character. These characters were also included in the adventure zip file.

## INTRODUCTION

After player introductions, have each PCs roll a Spot check. Insert the name of the PC with the highest check in the appropriate spaces among the following read-aloud text.

*It is now twilight and the battle has raged for hours. Hundreds lie dead, scattered about the sands, deposited by the tides of war.*

*It is testimony to your skill and prudence that you were not caught in the conflict. [PC with the highest Spot check] noticed the approach of the two armies upon spotting approaching dust clouds on the horizon. Mindful of your mission, you sought to avoid the clash.*

*From your vantage point in a small valley between several steep-sided dunes it's impossible to tell which side prevailed. The fighting surged back and forth across the sands for many hours and you can't count the fallen. Most combatants were mounted making the battle a very fluid affair.*

*The clamor of battle has faded and only isolated skirmishes continue in the distance—evidently some combatants do not yet tire of the contest.*

No doubt the PCs will have many questions.

### What is our mission?

You were hired by Karistyne, a paladin of Heironeous dwelling in the Abbor-Alz, to spy upon the environs of Dagger Rock. Local rumor says a dragon may be using the rock pinnacle as its lair. Karistyne had arranged for you to meet a local contact—a nomad named Firron—who's hiding in the badlands surrounding Dagger Rock.

### Why were we picked?

Firron was escorted to Dagger Rock but his escorts never returned to Karistyne Castle. Their fate remains unknown, as does that of Firron himself. Assuming he reached his goal, Karistyne has persuaded you to travel to Dagger Rock to ensure his safe return. Karistyne said she picked you because you are of good heart, but it is more likely she was rushed in her need to support Firron, and you could be mobilized quickly.

### How do we recognize Firron?



Karistyne has given you a pass phrase that the nomad will recognize. He's been instructed to say "Danger must be faced with certainty and calm" to strangers he meets. You must reply with the following phrase: "Glory is the reward for defeating evil."

#### **Who is Karistyne?**

Karistyne is a powerful paladin who holds sway over Karistyne Castle. She's a famous dragon slayer. Along with her adventuring companions, she is credited with killing at least seven dragons!

#### **Where are we?**

You are to the north of Dagger Rock in the northern reaches of the Bright Desert. This area is part of the Empire of the Bright Lands, ruled over by the archmage Rary also known as "The Traitor." Karistyne has provided you with a map. For details of this map refer to "Appendix 5: Maps."

#### **What is Dagger Rock?**

Dagger Rock is a famous landmark of the northern Bright Desert. It is a single deformed pinnacle of cracked granite rising from the middle of a shattered landscape littered with boulders. Most shun this place, as travel here is very hard and dangerous.

#### **Who fought the battle that we just witnessed?**

The battle was fought between forces loyal to the Emperor of the Bright Lands and nomads who opposed him. It is unclear who won.

#### **Who won the battle?**

Unknown, though many nomads from each sides have fallen. One side had allies of obvious fiendish nature. These four-armed black-hued insectoid monstrosities wielded great tridents with devastating effect.

This describes the mezzoloth Rary binds to his cause. The PCs encounter the corpse of one such creature in Encounter 2. A successful Knowledge (the Planes) check DC 20 recognizes the creature as a powerful fiend from the Bleak Eternity of Gehenna.

#### **Where are we going?**

Currently you are roughly sixty miles north of Dagger Rock. You estimate that it will take you [number of days based on their movement scores] to reach the rock. You can either continue on your way to Dagger Rock or return to Karistyne Castle with news of the battle.

#### **Have we been given any special equipment?**

Yes, each of you has been given a desert outfit, which you may keep after the adventure finishes. In addition Karistyne has provided you each with 2 weeks of food and water. She has also lent you four two-man tents and a packhorse (with bit, bridle and saddlebags). These must be returned when the PCs return to the Karistyne Castle.

The Desert outfit is detailed in "Appendix 2: New Rules."

When the PCs ask about the area they are in read or paraphrase the following:

*The movement of the sands has created your hiding place. Several steep and high dunes have converged on this place to form a deep, narrow valley. Getting into or*

*out of the valley is difficult as the sand underfoot impedes movement on the steep slopes.*

*The valley itself is about 100 feet in length. To the east it ends in the flank of one of the dunes. To the west the winding course of the valley gradually reduces in height until it merges imperceptibly with the desert.*

Once the PCs have asked any questions they wish to read or paraphrase the following:

*You have two basic options. You can continue in the direction you were traveling before your journey was interrupted or you can turn around and return to Karistyne Castle with intelligence of this conflict.*

*Whichever course you take, the going will be difficult.*

**Development:** The PCs have two basic options. They can either set off now and attempt to travel through the night, or they can wait for dawn. Point out to the PCs that travel across the desert in the hours around midday is almost impossible; the temperature being unbearable hot for those not acclimatized to the region.

When the PCs indicate that they wish to leave their hiding place proceed to "Encounter 1: The Detritus of War."

**Troubleshooting:** It's possible that the PCs might have second thoughts regarding the mission and elect to leave the Bright Lands. There's no reason why they cannot do this, so don't dissuade them from such a decision. Determine the order of the random encounters as normal running any indicated as normal. Do not however run all the random encounters for the PCs—fleeing from the desert does not award all the possible XP and gp awards from this adventure.

## **ENCOUNTER 1: DETRITUS OF WAR**

When the PCs indicate that they wish to leave their valley hiding place, read the following:

*Everywhere you look corpses lie entwined in death. Many of the nomads' horses have also fallen and lie with their masters among the dunes of the Bright Lands.*

If the PCs investigate the corpses, read or paraphrase the following:

*The warring nomads are of two basic types.*

*The first are nomads of obvious Flan lineage. Without exception, they are deeply tanned and of stocky build. Their hair is long, lank and brown or black in color. Their faces are daubed with a number of significant symbols. They are dressed in dark-colored lightweight robes, many of which are soaked in blood. Beneath the robes, their clothing is primarily of buckskin.*

*More numerous among the dead are nomads of Suel descent, their red-hair and deeply tanned (and in some*

*cases sun burnt) skin proclaiming this lineage. They are dressed in a fashion similar to their foes, save they favor hooded robes and their faces are unadorned by symbols.*

*Almost no salvageable equipment remains on the battlefield; it seems that the victors pillaged the bodies of the fallen before leaving.*

*Here and there the corpses of small reddish-brown goblinoids lie scattered among the rest. Unarmored, these strange creatures have a very tough hide and three-inch long canine teeth. They are clad only with a simple loincloth. Broken and shattered clubs, snapped javelins, and the occasional ruined short bow, provide evidence of the simplicity of their arms during the battle.*

*All told, you estimate that at least 500 men and goblinoids lie dead among the dunes.*

PCs attempting to identify this strange variety of goblin must succeed a DC 11 (local – Core) check to realize that they are norkers, a particularly crude but hearty offshoot of the goblinoid race. A higher success yields more information:

Check	Information
16	Norkers enjoy swarm tactics. While they fight with crude weapons, they can also attack with their vicious bite.
21	A norker's skin is as tough as half-plate armor.

**Treasure:** Any treasure the PCs discover here is that scavenged from the battlefield.

**APL 2:** Loot 50 gp.

Any PC searching among the dead will notice that both the Flan and Suel nomads of the Bright Lands seem to favor ornamentation. Read or paraphrase the following:

*Searching through the slain for items of worth you realize that the different races of nomads prize different kinds of ornamentation. The Flan almost without exceptions wear bone or brass headbands decorated with colored beads. In contrast, slain Suel wear cunningly crafted brass armbands inlaid with mottled blue and black ornamental stones.*

**Development:** The PCs have two basic choices. They can head south, deeper into the desert and try to reach Dagger Rock, or they can turn around and return to Karistyne Castle with news of the battle they witnessed.

From this point on the remainder of the Bright Desert encounters can happen in any order. The exception is “Encounter 2: The Evil Dead,” which must take place before the PCs leave the battlefield.

“Encounter 3: Scavengers,” “Encounter 4: Norkers” and “Encounter 5: Shrine of the Calm God” can take place in any order before or after the PCs reach Dagger Rock. If the PCs head north out of the desert then these encounters all take place before they reach the Abbor-Alz.

## ENCOUNTER 2: EVIL DEAD

This encounter takes place as the PCs begin to move through the battleground.

If a PC has already succeeded its Knowledge (the Planes) check to recognize the mezzoloth, change the following information to better suite the PC's knowledge on the subject.

*The faint stench of brimstone hangs in the air as you approach an area that has obviously witnessed much combat. The corpses of many nomadic warriors litter the sands; all seemingly slain by some kind of weapon capable of delivering massive puncture wounds.*

*At the center of this circle of death lies a very strange beast, the likes of which you have never seen before. Its large, red, lifeless eyes stare blankly up into the desert sky. It is some kind of four-armed, insectoid creature; its body being completely covered in dull black scales. These scales are scored, battered and dented; wounds (many of them minor) crisscross its body.*

*This creature is definitely not native to the Oerth and is unlike any you have seen before.*

*It still clutches a large black-hafted trident in two of its claws. The upper half of the weapon's haft, along with its three evil-looking barbs, is covered in a thick layer of dried blood.*

Warriors who faced the yugoloth lie dead on the sands about it. All appear to have been normal nomad warriors and as such probably stood little chance against this extra-planar creature. In addition, all were slain by a three-pronged weapon.

It is likely that in the course of investigating this area, the PCs will wish to learn more about this strange combatant.

A DC 18 Knowledge (local – Core) check reveals that Rary is known to traffic with otherworldly creatures, many of which are said to serve in his armies. A subsequent DC 20 Knowledge (the Planes) check reveals these creatures to be mezzoloths—the common foot soldiers of yugoloth armies. Yugoloths are greedy selfish fiends from the Bleak Eternity of Gehenna, and serve as mercenaries for demons, devils, and other planar or even temporal powers who are able to pay their evil price. They delight in battle, misery, carnage and torture.

**Treasure:** The PCs can recover the following treasures from this area.

**APL 2:** Magic: +1 trident (193 gp).

**Detect Magic Results:** +1 trident (Faint Transmutation).

**Yugoloth Trident:** This large black-hafted trident is a fearsome and obviously otherworldly weapon. The top half of the weapon's haft, along with its three prongs, is covered in a thick layer of dried blood. This blood resists all attempts to remove it.

Obviously a weapon once wielded by one of Rary's extra-planar servants, nomads still free of Rary's rule will view the wielder with distrust and fear.

This weapon functions as a +1 *trident*. It may have other abilities, but these remain unknown.

Faint Transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, yugoloth heritage; 2,315 gp.

**Development:** All here are dead and most are of Suel heritage. Once the PCs have investigated the mezzoloth's corpse, they may loot any treasure they wish from the surrounding dead. Once they have done this and carried out any investigations they deem relevant, there is nothing else to do here.

## ENCOUNTER 3: SCAVENGERS OF THE WASTES

This encounter can take place before or after the PCs have ventured to Dagger Rock.

In this encounter the PC come across a group of nomads in the service of Rary. They have lingered here after the bulk of their fellows have moved off in the pursuit of the fleeing enemies. Their plan is to loot as many of the fallen as possible before returning before they are missed.

If this encounter takes place after the PCs have gone to Dagger Rock, it's possible that they will not travel back through the site of the battle. In this case, the encounter occurs at the site of a small ancillary skirmish fought as Suel nomads fled the battlefield.

The maximum range at which a Spot check can be successful is 6d6 X 10 feet. Beyond this range sand dunes and heat distortions make successful Spot checks impossible. In practice it more likely that this encounter will begin when the PCs are relatively close to the nomads. Before the nomads are aware of the PCs treat them as distracted, as they are searching for loot among the dead. This bestows upon them a -5 circumstance penalty to their initial Spot checks in addition to the normal penalty of -1 for every 10 feet of distance between the two groups.

Unless the PCs are immediately hostile, the desert warriors do not attack on sight. They are wary however of the PCs as they are obviously outsiders and they could be aligned against Rary. If they spot the PCs they knock arrows and mount horses.

If the PCs spot the nomads first, read or paraphrase the following.

*In the distance, the sands of the desert are stained red with the blood of the fallen. Strewn over an area perhaps 40 square feet lie the bodies of at least a dozen nomads and their mounts. Moving purposely among the dead, looting as they go, come three nomads. They are swathed in the traditional dress of the desert dweller and carry bows. Their horses follow behind, untroubled by the stink of death.*

If the nomads spot the PCs before they are spotted read the following:

*In the distance, the sands of the desert are stained red with the blood of the fallen. Strewn over an area perhaps 40 square feet lie the bodies of at least a dozen nomads and their mounts. In the midst of the carnage stand three mounted riders. From this distance you can only make out that they are human and wear the traditional garb of the desert. They are obviously aware of you. In addition, you notice two of them hold drawn bows, although these are not aimed directly at you. The third (a woman) strands slightly behind the first two and is watching you intently. One of the bow-wielders holds up a hand and shouts something in a harsh-sounding language.*

These nomads are of Flan descent. None of them speaks Common, knowing only their tribal language (Flan). Thus, meaningful communication may be difficult.

If the PCs do manage to speak meaningfully with the nomads they discover that they are surly, honor-driven and prone to violent outbursts.

### APL 2 (EL 3)

➤ **Bright Desert Nomad Warriors (2):** human (Flan) male Bbn1: hp 13, 10; see Appendix 1.

➤ **Ianna:** human (Flan) female Drd1: hp 8; see Appendix 1.

➤ **Vulture Animal Companion:** hp 7; see Appendix 1.

➤ **Light horse (3):** hp 19, 19, 19; see *Monster Manual* page 273.

**Tactics:** The nomads are scions of a brave warrior tradition. However, they would prefer to flee this encounter instead of risking death for little gain. If the PCs look particularly weak or seem generally uncertain however they will risk combat in the hopes of gaining more loot.

**Important Rules:** While the nomads' horses are a stout and desert hardened, these particular ones are bred more for speed than combat (hence they are not warhorses). For the Flan nomads to control their mounts in combat, they must succeed a DC 20 Ride check a move action. Failure means they can do nothing else for that round.

**Treasure:** If the PCs slay or drive off the Flan nomads they can loot the bodies lying among the dunes. However, much of the equipment is damaged or broken.

Like their brethren, these Flan nomads wear bone or brass headbands decorated with gaudy colored beads. Similarly the slain Suel wear brass armbands inlaid with mottled blue and black ornamental stones.

**APL 2:** Loot 150 gp; Magic scroll of waste strider (2 gp), scroll of cloak of shade (2 gp), scroll of sunstroke (13 gp).

**Detect Magic Results:** scroll of waste strider (faint transmutation), scroll of cloak of shade (faint abjuration), scroll of sunstroke (faint necromancy).



## ENCOUNTER 4: MINIONS OF THE TRAITOR

This encounter can take place before or after the PCs have ventured to Dagger Rock.

In this encounter the PCs come across a band of six norkers loyal to Rary. They have fought hard during the recent battle but recognize that the PCs are obviously not part of Rary's forces. Subsequently, they attack in the desire to expand their kills and loot.

### APL 2 (EL 2)

🔥 **Norkers (5):** hp 10, 9, 9, 6, 3; see Appendix 2.

🔥 **Voouk:** male norker adept 1; hp 6; see Appendix 1.

**Tactics:** Norkers prefer to swarm their enemy, overwhelming them through sheer weight of numbers. Thus, the norker warriors first attempt to flank and kill any obvious warriors among the PCs. Voouk, an adept of Maglubiyet, uses first his spells and then his shortbow to engage spellcasters seeking to aid their companions.

**Treasure:** The norkers carry little in the way of treasure but have scavenged some equipment from the battlefield.

**APL 2:** Loot 105 gp.

**Development:** Norkers are greedy. If the PCs offer a bribe of at least 20 gp in coin, gems, or jewelry for free passage, the norkers accept. Keep in mind the norkers only speak Goblin, so such negotiations must be done in that language, or successfully pantomimed.

## ENCOUNTER 5: SHRINE OF THE CALM GOD

In this encounter the PCs come across a ruined building partially submerged beneath the ever-shifting sands of the Bright Desert. Once a small shrine set on one of Sulm's trade routes, it is now all but buried in the shifting desert sands.

*Ahead of you, partially buried on the reverse slope of a dune, stands what could be the remains of a building jutting forlornly above the sands.*

*A shattered colonnade of pillars marches toward the dune, ending in a partially visible wall and entranceway. From this vantage point, you cannot make out anything of the interior.*

*No doubt this ruin would offer welcome relief from the merciless sun, but nameless terrors may lurk within....*

Until the PCs move closer, they are unable to make out nothing else about this structure.

This structure was a small shrine dedicated to Rao, once honored throughout Sulm before that nation's slide

to evil. Since the fall of that foul realm, it has been periodically covered and uncovered by the shifting sands of the desert. The shrine was originally built onto a hillside and so that major chambers are actually located beneath the entranceway.

Recently, another traveler sought refuge from the sun and heat within its shade. But the traveler died of thirst when his water ran out. He rose as an ashen husk; an undead monstrosity that seeks to slake its eternal thirst with the blood of the living. He waits within the ruined temple hoping for others to make the same mistake he did.

*The colonnade of pillars is a shattered remnant of what it once was. None of the pillars now stand higher than four foot but the broken masonry at your feet indicates that they once stood much higher.*

*The entranceway to this ruin stands at the head of the colonnade. Barely five feet wide a series of sand covered steps lead inside. Within, darkness reigns.*

To individuals with darkvision add:

*Immediately beyond the entranceway, a small room, its floor covered in sand, is visible.*

### Area 1. The Antechamber

This is the first part of the shrine that the PCs encounter.

*This small chamber appears empty except for the sand that lies heaped about the portion of the room closest to the doorway. Opposite the entranceway, a staircase disappears down into darkness.*

**Creatures:** When the PCs enter this area a pair of monstrous scorpions who use this area as their lair become aware of them and move to attack.

### APL 2 (EL 1)

🔥 **Small Monstrous Scorpions (2):** hp 8, 4; See *Monster Manual* page 287.

### Area 2. Stairs Down

These steps lead from the Antechamber to "Area 3: The Chapel of Rao."

*This stairway is narrow, barely five feet in width. The ceiling however is high, at least eight feet above the stairs themselves. The stairs are obviously very old as they are worn and pitted. The desert has penetrated this area, depositing a thin layer of sand over the stairs.*

*Above the stairway and carved into the lintel, you can just make out some faint carvings. Centuries of accumulated sand and dust however make them unreadable.*

In addition once the lintel is cleared off the PCs will automatically spot a symbol carved into the rock.

Read or paraphrase the following:

*Now the sand and dust are cleared away from above the door you can make out a line of text carved into the lintel. Below that you can just make out a small carving of a heart-shaped mask depicted with a calm expression.*

To fully make out the inscription the lintel must be cleaned off. The inscription is written in Flan. Only individuals able to read that language, or who possess other magical or mundane means that allow them to read languages can understand it.

A *comprehend languages* spell, a DC 20 Decipher Script check or a speaker of Flan can reveal that the inscription reads:

***"Bear no blade and bring no evil to the Hall of Serenity."***

The symbol below the text (the heart-shaped mask set in an expression of calm) is that of Rao, the lawful good greater Flan god of Peace, Reason and Serenity. A DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check reveals this fact. Any follower of Rao automatically knows this information.

PCs using a *detect magic* on the carvings discover that they radiate a faint enchantment aura. The carvings are an integral part of the calm emotions trap detailed in "Area 3: The Chapel of Rao." If the PCs wish to detect and disable this trap refer to that section for more information.

### **Area 3. The Chapel of Rao (EL 3)**

This area can only be reached via the stairs in area 2. This is the area where the devoted came to pray to the Calm God.

Read or paraphrase the following:

*After a descent of about thirty feet, the stairs open into a larger area. The room beyond is dark. Sand shifts beneath your feet and you are suddenly acutely conscious of the tons of sand and rock above your heads.*

Once PCs get to the bottom of the stairs, add:

*There is indeed a room at the end of the stairs; roughly twenty-five feet square, its vaulted ceiling reaches a height of twenty feet above the room's very center.*

*Shattered and petrified pews lie broken along the walls of this chamber. Affixed to the far wall and directly opposite your position stands a large burnished metal sculpture in the shape of a heart. Flecks of white paint still cling to its surface but it has obviously been beaten out of shape.*

*Movement to your right catches your eye. Rising from among a scattered pile of burnt-out torches, sunken water skins and other mundane equipment, a desiccated, almost skeletal human male staggers to its feet. Still dressed in tattered clothes, it moves toward you, a dry rasping sound issuing from its throat. About it the air shimmers as if the infernal heat of the desert surrounds it.*

This shrine is very old and the magic that wards it has faded with passing centuries. Followers of Rao (or those who succeed a DC 15 Knowledge [religion] check) recognize this place as an ancient temple to the Calm God. They know that it is a sin to draw a weapon in such a place with the intent of harming another creature.

Despite its age the shrine is still protected by the wards of Rao. Any living creature that attacks with the intent to deal lethal damage or who casts an attacking spell whilst in the chapel is targeted by a modified *calm emotions* spell cast as a 3<sup>rd</sup>-level wizard. The ashen husk is immune to this ward as it's undead. Note that PCs subject to this affect may still defend themselves. Leaving the chapel area terminates this affect immediately.

The *calm emotions* spell has been modified so that it only affects an individual; it does not have an area of affect like the normal version of the spell.

↗ **Calm Emotions Ward:** CR —; magic device; circumstantial trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (modified *calm emotions*, 3<sup>rd</sup>-level wizard, DC 13 Will negates); Search 27; Disable Device 27.

### **APL 2 (EL 3)**

➡ **Ashen husk:** hp 19; See Appendix 2.

**Important Rules:** Before this combat starts, familiarize yourself with the rules for dehydration, which can be found in "Appendix 3: Weather Hazards of the Bright Lands."

**Tactics:** The Ashen husk moves toward the largest visible concentration of foes and attacks. Once it has slain at least one person, it allows the others to flee without hindrance. It cares only for the sustenance a freshly slain foe can provide it.

**Treasure:** While the ashen hulk has not collected any treasure, it did have some items of value when it died. Scattered about the floor are the remains of this unfortunate's equipment, including a darkwood buckler. A pouch holds a couple of coins.

**APL 2:** Coin: 5 gp; Loot: 6 gp; Magic: Spellbook (17 gp), darkwood buckler (17 gp).

**Spellbook:** The pages of this book are protected by covers crafted from the skin of a horned lizard. The book has 96 empty pages and contains the following spells:

1<sup>st</sup>—*locate water*; *parching touch*; 2<sup>nd</sup>—*scimitar of sand*.

**Development:** The PCs can rest here, nothing else will beset them; most desert dwellers shun such ruins, believing them cursed.

## **ENCOUNTER 6: DAGGER ROCK**

In this encounter the PCs reach the environs of Dagger Rock and meet their contact. Although the PCs may initially wish to push on to the rock itself, the DM should discourage them from doing so. More information on this is contained within the "Troubleshooting" section below.

*For some time, the shattered spire of Dagger Rock has risen over the horizon as you slowly toil across the seemingly endless sea of dunes.*

*This deformed pinnacle is ugly and jarringly sharp. Rising out of the ubiquitous heat haze of the desert like some lost giant from an elder time it is a strangely disconcerting sight. The top of the spire has an indefinable wrongness about it. It is particularly broken and pitted; from this distance it almost looks like a network of towers, battlements and other buildings dot its peak.*

*As you draw closer, the tumbled and shattered landscape that surrounds the lonely granite tower rises out of the heat haze. At the outer boundaries of the devastation, the rocks are little more than shards or pebbles. Closer in however, the rocks grow dramatically in size and quantity. Boulders and a great mass of rock fragments likely make the footing treacherous.*

If the PCs enter the boulder field, read or paraphrase the following:

*Once you enter the boulder field proper, your visibility is drastically reduced. Boulders and great chunks of rock tower up out of desert sands creating a confusing labyrinth of pathways. Smaller rocks litter these thoroughfares.*

If the PCs approach this area during the day, Firron marks their approach across the sands and moves to intercept the PCs. He assumes for the moment that the PCs have been sent from Karistyne, but seeks some proof or token of this before revealing himself.

If the PCs approach at night, Firron sees their torches and move to intercept. As above, he attempts to observe them in the hope of finding evidence that the PCs come from Karistyne.

At first, he is loath to reveal himself to the PCs, preferring to parley with them either from the darkness or from cover. When he is certain that the PCs are not a band of nomads he challenges them with the pass phrase given to him by Karistyne. The PCs must reply with the second part of the code. If they do not, he flees.

**Firron:** "Danger must be faced with certainty and calm."

**PC:** "Glory is the reward for defeating evil."

Once he is assured of the PCs' intentions, he joins them.

### **Karistyne's Contact**

Karistyne's contact is a brave, but unsavory Suel nomad named Firron. Firron is one of the only people brave (or stupid) enough to seek the secrets of Dagger Rock.

Firron has camped in the rock-strewn wilderness surrounding Dagger Rock for almost a month now. During that time, he has seen almost no one.

♣ **Firron:** human male (Suel) Bbn1/Rog1: hp 17; see Appendix 1.

**Appearance:** Desert-worn but unbowed, Firron is an imposing sight. He stands 6 feet tall and has a proud and cruel mien. His skin is deeply tanned and his red hair is closely cropped. Gray eyes stare out from a face crisscrossed with wrinkles and scars.

**Personality:** A born survivor and child of the wastes, Firron is an unsavory individual who has few friends and trusts fewer still. He is a man of few words. Firron cares only for his own vendetta and his promised pay. He is extremely reluctant to aid the PCs in defeating any of the denizens of the desert they face on their return journey; it is their job after all, not his.

**Background:** A member of a tribe recently all but wiped out by forced led by Lord Robilar, Firron has nothing to lose. He lives to wreak vengeance on the erstwhile Lord of Greyhawk.

**What Firron Knows:** He has been here for about three weeks. His escorts left him here and they have not returned. He has seen practically no one in that time. He has however, witnessed another group of travelers enter this area. Shortly afterward they disappeared. He has not seen them again and assumes that they must have found one of the secret tunnels said to riddle the pinnacle's interior. He has also found a small rubble-choked cave at the base of Dagger Rock.

He has also observed no activity at the crest of Dagger Rock. His one attempt to climb the rock ended in failure (and a nasty fall). He has not reattempted the climb. He believes now that the dragon is dead and that lingering here longer would be a waste of time. He is anxious to return to Karistyne to make his report (and to receive his pay).

**Troubleshooting:** It is possible that the PCs may seek to explore the surrounding area in more detail, or they may seek to explore Dagger Rock itself.

If this is the case, point out through Firron that it is rumored that a thousand-year-old dragon lurks at the top of the spire; only extremely skilled individuals like Karistyne should even contemplate confronting such a creature in its lair. And while Firron thinks the dragon is dead, who would really want to chance such a meeting?

If this doesn't deter them, describe to them the long climb that would be needed to reach the summit. The spire is over 800 feet high. The condition of the rock and the steepness of its sides mean that a DC 25 Climb check is required to make any progress whatsoever. Firron talks about his own spill from Dagger Rock, using hyperbole to punctuate his warning—after all he is a skilled climber. Climbing Dagger Rock would therefore be an extremely slow and dangerous process, and would likely get the PCs killed.

**Development:** Once the PCs have made contact with Firron, they have little to do here but return to Karistyne. In this instance, run any of the desert-based encounters not yet run before the PCs reach the foothills of the Abbor-Alz.

The PCs may however wish to explore the area before they begin their return journey. In this case Firron tells them of a small cave entrance he discovered several days ago. The entrance is choked with rubble and he

dared not clear enough away to crawl inside. He can direct the PCs to this entrance but will not go inside. He believes nomadic superstitions of nameless horrors lurking within.

Dagger Rock stands almost exactly due south of Karistyne Castle. If the PCs travel in a straight line from Dagger Rock to the castle, they need to cross roughly 45 miles of desert before gaining the shelter of the Abbor-Alz. From there, the PCs must travel 30 miles through the arid hills to reach their final goal.

## ENCOUNTER 7: TUNNELS OF THE ANCIENTS

If the PCs take the opportunity to explore their surroundings this encounter takes place after “Encounter 6: Dagger Rock.” If PCs do not explore the base of Dagger Rock ignore this encounter.

If the PCs have already explored the Shrine of the Clam God in Encounter 5 they do not encounter any creatures in this set of encounters. Allow them to explore the tunnels and discover signs of inhabitation but not to actually fight any of the occupants.

*Moving through the shattered landscape surrounding Dagger Rock you can easily understand why few choose to tread these paths. Going is extremely difficult, your progress continually hampered by boulders, rocks and areas of dangerously shifting scree.*

*Dagger Rock itself is a beautiful, yet disturbing sight. Rising from the desert floor its unbroken surface reaches hundreds of feet into the desert sky. While wide at its base the pinnacle swiftly narrows as it reaches its distant zenith. In several places far up the broken, shattered spire you can make out what appear to be cave mouths. All are far out of reach.*

If Firron is leading them, the PCs swiftly find the cave entrance. He refuses, however, to explore the interior.

If they are investigating on their own then it takes several hours of searching to discover the cave. Read or paraphrase the following:

*Ahead of you, at the base of the spire and almost completely obscured by fallen rocks, is a cave entrance. A tight path between large stones of the slide is the only passage into the deeper cave.*

The rock-obscured entrance is the only cave mouth that the PCs find in the area.

The rockslide makes entrance into the cave difficult and movement in the crawl space beyond difficult. The

movement difficulty is based on the size of the characters, and the type of armor they are wearing.

Size Medium Characters	Escape Artist DC
No Armor	DC 5
Light Armor	DC 10
Medium Armor	DC 15
Heavy Armor	DC 20

Size Small Characters	Escape Artist DC
No Armor	DC 0
Light Armor	DC 5
Medium Armor	DC 10
Heavy Armor	DC 15

Succeeding a check allows a character to crawl at one half speed down the winding crawl space. Failure indicates the PC can move no farther that round. Failure by 4 or more indicates that the PC is stuck, and must free themselves with a DC 15 Strength or DC 20 Escape Artist check before moving.

Any dwarf or other PCs who succeeds at a DC 10 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check can tell that forcefully trying to widen the crawlspace may trigger a collapse.

PCs ignorant of the tunnel's instability, or those gutsy enough to chance it, can spend 10 minutes per 5-foot section widening the crawlspace. Successfully widening the crawl space allows all Medium and Small creatures to crawl through the area with no need for Escape Artist checks.

To determine if the PCs successfully widen the area, have the primary digger PC make a Wisdom check. A DC 10 success indicates there is no collapse—the PCs had the good sense to avoid unstable spots. A failure brings down enough rocks to do 2d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 15 for half) on the primary digger (the one in that 5-foot section), and shunting that PC (if still alive) to the closest square in the cave entrance's direction. It also makes the entrance into the deeper Tunnels of Ancients impassible without 20 minutes of digging with a similar chance of further cave-in. PCs with ranks in Knowledge (dungeoneering) or Profession (miner) can make the checks using one of those skills instead of Wisdom.

Eventually the area widens to a place where the PCs can stand or slouch, and walk normally.

*Crawling over the rubble you gradually enter the cave beyond. Beyond the tunnel's mouth you discover a narrow, low passageway barely five feet high and five feet wide. A scattering of small rocks lies strewn across the uneven floor. Ahead of you the passageway leads off into the darkness.*

A PC with the Track feat may, with a successful DC 15 Survival check, discover a few tracks leading off up the passageway. They appear to have been made by Small, barefooted, reptilian creatures. A character with Knowledge (local) who examines the tracks, can determine that they are kobold tracks with a DC 15

check. The number of tracks present indicates that at least three such creatures were present. The tracks are relatively fresh, and were made in recent days.

### **The Dreaming**

Characters with levels of sorcerer that enter the tunnels honeycombing Dagger Rock suffer a strange effect. Such individuals suffer a very mild form of claustrophobia. In addition they will be certain that something or someone is watching them, although no amount of Search or Spot checks uncover any hidden watchers. As they explore deeper into the cave complex such individuals will start to hear a low chanting emanating from somewhere deep below their feet. No amount of disbelief can vanquish the glamer.

If the PC has the Draconic Heritage feat from *Complete Arcane* these effects are particularly pronounced. The claustrophobia is so bad, that they must succeed a Will saving throw DC 12 every minute or suffer the effects of being squeezed (see *Player's Handbook* page 148), as the PC feels like the walls and ceiling are bearing down upon him or her.

### **Area 1: The Passageway (EL 1)**

*The passageway burrows deeper into the heart of Dagger Rock. Twisting and turning as it progresses into an obviously natural space. Imperceptibly to all but dwarves at first, the passageway begins to climb. After one hundred feet or so the passageway is broken by a series of natural downward steps. By the time it takes to reach the bottom step even the tallest among you can stand upright without hitting your head on the ceiling.*

*At the base of the step, the passageway opens into an even larger space, perhaps twenty feet long and 10 feet wide. To your right another passageway pierces the rock wall of the cavern.*

When the PCs enter the chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

*This chamber is obviously of natural origin, although at some point in the past some attempt has been made to level the floor somewhat. Of an irregular size and shape the chamber is the largest place yet encountered within Dagger Rock.*

*Strange carvings and hieroglyphs have been carved into the wall and although much faded can still be made out.*

*The carvings seem to tell a story. The first carving closest to you shows a stylized boat with several robed occupants. They are beset by terrible storms and are represented praying.*

*The next picture shows the same group of men walking through grasslands. Two of their number carries a pallet above their heads atop which something indistinct, but which is depicted as radiating light, rests.*

*The third picture shows a battle between the men and a group of strangers. The strangers are losing, cut down by the spells of the original group who strike with their arms wide as if bestowing an unholy benediction.*

*The final picture shows the travelers depleted in number approaching a single spire of rock.*

Individuals closely studying the pictures may be able to make out a few details all but obscured by the passing of ages.

It's obvious that the rock in the final picture is Dagger Rock.

A DC 15

Knowledge (local or history) check gleans that the travelers depicted in the pictures are probably of Flan origin.

A DC 18 Search check indicates that the PC has noted a symbol carved into the rock above the representations of the object carried by the travelers. A subsequent DC 18 Knowledge (arcana or religion) check indicates that this symbol means "holy."

Allow the PCs a moment to study these pictures if they so wish. Their presence however has disturbed a pair of monstrous scorpions who lair in this chamber.

The kobolds bypass this area by throwing the creatures small scraps of meat. If the PCs do not do so, the scorpions attack.

### **APL 2 (EL 1)**

➡ **Small Monstrous Scorpions (2):** hp 9, 5; see *Monster Manual* page 287

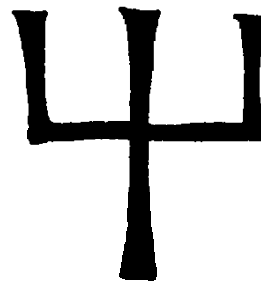
### **Area 2: Creatures of the Dark (EL 3)**

In this encounter the PCs run into a small patrol of kobolds. The kobolds are coming down the passageway on a short patrol to make certain no creatures have entered their layer.

Their scouts have made them aware of the presence of a human (Firron) in the surrounding area and so they are slightly more alert than normal. They are not however, expecting to be attacked this deep into their lair, so determine surprise as normal. If they become aware of the PCs first they attempt to strike from ambush, using a natural bend in the passageway to their advantage. Having struck the lead character, they will immediately retreat to the next bend and so on. If they are forced back to the cave-in detailed in area 3, they attempt to hold the PCs off while calling for reinforcements, but do so in vain, as no heed their call.

When the PCs first encounter the kobolds read or paraphrase the following. Modify the following text if the PCs ambush the kobolds.

*As you round the corner a small, blue-colored humanoid stabs a small spear at you. The creature is barely the size of a gnome or halfling and has a blue-tinged scaly hide. A small tail protrudes from its rear and it has a doglike head with two small horns.*



*Behind it several other similar creatures are making ready to fire their slings at you.*

**Creatures:** A DC 10 Knowledge (local) check, recognized the creatures as kobolds, but also recognizes that these creatures usually have rusty brown to rusty black scaly skin. The spawn of the ancient blue dragon Voltarmarun, that once made Dagger Rock its domicile, these kobolds have picked the dragon's coloration.

#### APL 2 (EL 3)

➤ **Kobolds (4):** hp 8, 7, 3, 2; see *Monster Manual* page 161.

➤ **Volt-zuul:** male kobold War4: hp 30; see Appendix 1.

**Treasure:** The bulk of the treasure here is found on Volt-zuul. Although not a spellcaster he has discovered a small spellbook and kept it for himself.

**APL 2:** Loot: 23 gp; Magic: Spellbook (17 gp).

**Spellbook:** The pages of this book are protected by covers crafted from the skin of a horned lizard. The book has 96 empty pages and contains the following spells:

1<sup>st</sup>—*locate water, parching touch*; 2<sup>nd</sup>—*scimitar of sand*.

#### Area 3: Cave-in

*Ahead of you the passageway finally ends. A massive rockslide has all but sealed the way forward.*

PCs investigating the rockslide discover that the passageway is not totally blocked. An unarmored size Small individual would be able to squeeze through near the top. If the PCs start to consider this make a DC 5 Listen check for each PC present. When a PC succeeds at the check read the following:

*What was that? Beyond the rockslide you start to make out the not-so stealthy movements of several creatures.*

It should be plain to the PCs that proceeding beyond the rockslide would be dangerous in the extreme. If they persist the kobolds beyond (ineffectually) hurl several sling bullets at anyone trying to climb through.

PCs persisting in fighting here should be informed that they suffer a -8 penalty on all attack rolls and AC while fighting in the area of the rock fall. In addition they will be able to move at a maximum speed of half their normal movement.

Once the PCs have exhausted all the possibilities of these tunnels they have nothing to do but return to the surface.

## ENCOUNTER 8: AMID BROKEN PEAKS

In this encounter, the PCs finally reached the arid foothills and comparative safety of the Abbor-Alz and are nearing the conclusion of their trek.

The Abbor-Alz lies in a great horseshoe of rugged hills that buttress the margins of the Bright Desert. In the main, this range consists of rocky and craggy hills. However, in the west the hills rise to form a small mountain range that links the Abbor-Alz to the Cairn Hills to the north. In many places the hills are so broken and rough that mounted travel or the movement of large bodies of men is impossible.

Portions of the range are claimed by several powers, most notably the Duchy of Urnst and the Domain of Greyhawk. Small enclaves of dwarves and gnomes also dwell among the rocky peaks, as do wild human hillmen who drive off outsiders with little mercy.

While traveling through the Abbor-Alz, the PCs are unfortunate enough to catch the attention of a hunting hippogriff. Its lair is nearby and it has young to feed. Thus, it attacks the PCs without provocation in search of food.

When the PCs first enter the hills read or paraphrase the following:

*Your first sight of the Abbor-Alz is glimpsed as this rocky and craggy range of sun-blasted hills juts on the horizon. The hills are famed for the harshness with which they treat travelers. In many places the terrain is so broken that mounted travel is impossible. Many monsters as well as bandits, groups of humanoids, and mountain men dwell among its peaks.*

*Entering the range is a blessed relief. Here, the shade protects you from the worst effects of the sun and you are protected from the incessant winds of the Bright Desert.*

*Although you are still two days or so from your goal, Karistyne's castle is nevertheless now almost within reach.*

Allow the PCs to make any additional preparations for traveling through the Abbor-Alz. During the second day of travel the PCs are attacked by a hippogriff.

*The powerful cry of what sounds like an eagle suddenly shatters the laden silence of the hills. High above in the sky and diving directly toward you is what you first identify as a huge bird.*

*As it plummets down toward you at breakneck speed it quickly becomes obvious that this is no eagle! The creature has the body and hindquarters of a horse but the forelegs, wings and head of a giant eagle. Its large beaked mouth opens in a shriek and it extends its wickedly clawed forelegs toward you as it remorselessly bears down upon you.*

#### APL 2 (EL 1)

➤ **Hippogriff (1):** hp 25; see *Monster Manual* page 152.

Resolve the PCs' surprise normally. The hippogriff has spotted the party but particularly swift thinking PCs may get to act before it makes its first attack.



**Tactics:** The hippogriff has no interest in killing the entire party; it requires only food for its young. Thus it attempts to attack and kill the smallest individual in the group. It repeatedly dived at its target, slashing with its powerful, clawed forelegs until its target is incapacitated.

Once it has slain its target, it tries to carry its prey to its lair. If the PCs have with them any animals larger than a dog, the hippogriff may attack that in preference.

The hippogriff is a powerful and aggressive predator that is not easily driven off. If however it suffers more than 20 hit points of damage it attempts to flee.

**Development:** Once the PCs have either slain the hippogriff or beaten it off they have nothing to do but continue on their way.

When the PCs finally approach Karistyne Castle read or paraphrase the following:

*Several miles ahead of you and at least half a day's travel distant stands Karistyne Castle. Set atop a great plateau the castle has a commanding view of the surrounding area. Behind the castle rise some of the highest peaks in the Abbor-Alz.*

*At this distance you can make out little more detail however.*

*A pathway cut into the rock itself snakes up the flank of the plateau.*

## ENCOUNTER 9: KARISTYNE CASTLE

This is the final encounter. Once the PCs have reached this stage little remains to do but to report to Karistyne. Once the PCs come within sight of Karistyne Castle read or paraphrase the following:

*Eventually after several hours of hard climbing you crest the plateau. The pathway you followed up the plateau was rough in places and barely wide enough for a cart. To your right the pathway ends abruptly as the side of the plateau falls away. Straying off the pathway would undoubtedly spell instant death or at the least severe injury. To your left towers the rock of the plateau itself. Little vegetation grows here apart from some sturdy varieties of grass and moss; only they seem to be able to withstand the baking heat and winds of the hills.*

*Ahead of you now stands Karistyne Castle. Sun glints off the armor of patrolling men-at-arms manning the walls and several pennants hang limply from the castle's towers.*

*At your approach the gates begin to slowly open, driven by some machinery hidden within the gatehouse.*

Once the PCs enter the castle they enter the central courtyard of the place. Karistyne herself, who was warned of the PCs approach by her soldiers, meets them.

*"Greetings!" calls Karistyne as she strides toward you "my servants have warned me of your approach.*

*Karistyne is a well-built woman of obvious Oeridian descent. Well into her thirties she is deeply tanned with shoulder-length blond hair.*

If Firron is with the PCs she continues with the following:

*"I see you have been successful."*

*As she finishes speaking she comes to a halt in front of you and waits expectantly for a reply.*

If Firron is not with them.

*"Where is Firron?"*

*As she finishes speaking she comes to a halt in front of you and waits expectantly for a reply.*

At this stage the direction the encounter takes depends to a great extent on the PC's actions. Karistyne is eager for news of Dagger Rock and its inhabitants (if any). She is also very interested in any stories the PCs might have regarding their adventures in the Bright Lands. She is particularly interested in stories involving Rary's minions and discusses these and what they could mean for the region at great length.

If the PCs have performed well and have brought Firron to her, Karistyne bestows her favor upon them. In this case each PC gains the "Hospitality of Karistyne Castle" listed on the AR.

If PCs didn't bother to meet Firron, slew him, or otherwise catastrophically failed the mission, then they do not receive this award. In addition, any PC who acts in an evil fashion, worships Hextor, blasphemes Heironeous, threatens Karistyne or her retainer does not receive this favor.

➤ **Hospitality of Karistyne Castle:** This PC has served Karistyne and has earned her favor. In subsequent adventures in which the PC works for Karistyne she will bestow upon the PC a gift. At the start of each adventure the PC may choose from one of the following:

**Free Standard Upkeep:** The PCs equips himself from Karistyne Castle's stores.

**One scroll of endure elements:** She does not expect this to be returned if it is not used.

**Desert Equipment:** Karistyne provides the PC with non-magical equipment up to the value of 25 gp. This equipment can be drawn from that allowable listed in the *Player's Handbook* and *Sandstorm*. She does not expect this equipment returned.

Assuming that Firron is with the PCs, at some point Karistyne directs a man-at-arms to escort the PCs to visitor quarters so that they might recover from their ordeal. She debriefs Firron in private.

Before the PCs are lead away however she says the following:

*"My thanks once again brave comrades for entering the Bright Lands on my behalf. In your honor I have ordered a feast prepared for this evening; I trust you will attend?"*

Assuming the PCs agree continue:

*"Good. I may have need of your services again. I suspect that there is more to Dagger Rock than is first apparent even if Voltarmarun is indeed dead. I sense that this place plays some part in The Traitor's schemes to dominate the region. As such we must do all we can to deflect his schemes!"*

☛ **Karistyne:** human female Pal15 - Heironeous; hp 129.

**Development:** Once the PCs have finished their report to Karistyne proceed to the conclusion.

## CONCLUSION

Once the PCs have finished giving their report read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The trials of the Bright Lands and the Abbor-Alz are behind you. After reporting to Karistyne, you are shown to chambers and allowed to wash the cloying dust of the desert from your sun burnt skin.*

*That evening, Karistyne holds a feast in your honor. The feast is held in the Great Hall and you are accorded a place of honor.*

*The hall in which you sit is particularly impressive. Easily one hundred feet long and forty feet wide, three great stained glass windows dominate it, reaching almost from the floor to the ceiling forty feet above. In the center of the opposite wall stands a ten-foot wide fireplace within which is set a roaring fire.*

*Banners hang from the ceiling and the walls are decked with trophies from Karistyne's many campaigns in the service of good. Most imposing, however, is the collection of severed heads set into the wall behind the top table. Manticores, wyverns hippogriffs and other more mundane animals are all represented there. Chief among this display of martial prowess are two blue and one red dragon heads! Rumors have often said that Karistyne and her band have slain seven dragons but until now you discounted these whispers as little more than tavern gossip.*

*You are seated on the table nearest Karistyne's own. Piled high with food and drink, there is enough here for even those with the greatest appetite. The centerpiece of the banquet is roasted goat washed down with vast quantities of a very strong wine made from a local berry that grows in profusion among the hills.*

Five other individuals are seated on the table with the PCs. Four of these are normal men-at-arms who have been given places of honor close to Karistyne. Without

exception they are extremely loyal to Karistyne. They can provide any information found in Appendix 4: Castle Karistyne at a Glance.

The fifth individual at the table is one of Karistyne's comrades: Helena Stanmaer a follower of Fharlanghn. A born wanderer she has seated herself with the PCs ostensibly to learn more of the Bright Desert and its inhabitants. Of course, she is also here at the behest of Karistyne to learn more about the PCs and to determine if they can be truly trusted.

### All APLs

☛ **Helena Stanmaer**, female human Clr12 – Fharlanghn.

☛ **Karlann**, Maranefel, Barlen, Quiral; male human men-at-arms.

☛ **Helena Stanmaer**, female human Clr12 – Fharlanghn.

*Appearance:* Helena Stanmaer is a short, unassuming Oeridian woman with olive colored hair and a weathered countenance. She favors green and grey clothing and a quarterstaff. Her face expresses little emotion and to some she can seem like a gruff individual.

*Character:* Helena is taken with the wanderlust that grips so many of her faith. She uses Karistyne's castle as a base of operation for her exploration of the Abbor-Alz and the Bright Desert. Helena and a small cadre of her brethren tend a small shrine within Karistyne. She believes Karistyne to be an unwitting servant of the Dweller on the Horizon.

Helena is somewhat fascinated by the Bright Desert, viewing its harsh treatment of travelers as an encouragement to explore its sands rather than a deterrent. She detests Rary the Traitor due solely to the fact that his dervishes and norkers have made the desert even more inhospitable than it once was.

Once the PCs have interacted with the other people at their table (or have indicated that they do not wish to do so) read or paraphrase the following:

*At the feast's climax, Karistyne stands and bids the entire company toast your deeds. With a roar the other revelers, leap to their feet and shout your names before quaffing deeply of the wine they seem to love so much. Your host holds her hand up for quiet and gradually the room falls silent.*

*"My friends," she shouts, "today you have done a great service to me and the cause of good which I serve. Today we know more of the one known as the Traitor and his plans to dominate the Bright Lands. One such as him, so perfidious, so steeped in evil and darkness, must not be allowed to continue without challenge. I charge you all to stand ready to meet this challenge for a day of reckoning is coming and on that day I will need brave companions to stand beside me. What say you?"*

Allow the PCs to voice their assent or dissent to this before continuing.

*"It gladdens my heart deeply to see that all/so many of you are dedicated to the ideals of good. To those unsure of themselves I say this: know you that Rary tried to assassinate all who attended the Day of Great Signing. If he had succeeded, there would have been no peace. The Flanaess would have been plunged into many more years of war, death and suffering. Countless thousands would have lost their lives. Still more would be mutilated, driven mad by their ordeals or forced to flee from their homes. Were it not for the brave sacrifices made upon that day his legacy to the kingdoms of the Flanaess would be their utter ruination. For those of you undecided, think long and hard on this matter, for in your hands could rest the future of civilization itself!"*

*The hall is abuzz after Karistyne's rousing speech. Many of those you eat with seem almost frenzied in their devotion to their mistress. Her comrades, those honored enough to sit with her at the top table, seem particularly vocal in her support. Several times during the feast, one or more of them calls for a toast in her honor.*

*Eventually the feast ends and you stumble to your bed, satisfied but "exhausted." Falling asleep, the horrors of the desert fade from your mind; perhaps entering that forsaken place again would not be so bad....*

## **The End**

*Blight on Bright Sands continues in  
COR5-09 Gateway to Bright Sands*

## **CAMPAIGN CONSEQUENCES**

*COR5-06 Blood on Bright Sands* is the first part in the *Blight on Bright Sands* campaign arc. As such events within this adventure will directly relate to subsequent adventures. Please email the answers to the below questions to [creighton@greyworks.fsworld.co.uk](mailto:creighton@greyworks.fsworld.co.uk).

1. Did Firron survive the adventure?
2. Did any of the PCs gain the Hospitality of Karistyne Castle?
3. Did any of the PCs fail to gain the Hospitality of Karistyne Castle?
4. Were any of the PCs targeted by the *calm emotions* ward in the shrine of Rao?
5. Did the PCs discover the hieroglyphs in the Dagger Rock tunnels? Did they describe these to Karistyne?

## EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the experience award. Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

### Encounter 3: Scavengers of the Wastes

Slaying the nomads  
APL2 90 XP

### Encounter 4: Minions of the Traitor

Slaying the norkers  
APL2 90 XP

### Encounter 5: Shrine of the Calm One

#### Area 1: The Antechamber

Slaying the scorpions  
APL2 30 XP

#### Area 3: The Chapel of Rao

Destroying the ashen hulk  
APL2 90 XP

### Encounter 7: Tunnels of the Ancients

#### Area 1: The Passageway

Slaying the scorpions  
APL2 30 XP

#### Area 2: Creatures of the Dark

Slaying the kolbolds  
APL2 90 XP

### Encounter 8: Amid Broken Peaks

Slaying or driving off the hippogriff  
APL2 60 XP

### Discretionary role-playing award

APL2 90 XP

### Total possible experience:

APL2 450 XP

## TREASURE SUMMARY

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a "treasure" section within the encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter's treasure.

The loot total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if the foes are plundered of all their earthly possessions. Looting the bodies takes at least 10 minutes per every 5 enemies, and if the characters cannot take the time to loot the bodies, they do not gain this gold. If you feel it is reasonable that characters can go back to loot the

bodies, and those bodies are there (i.e., not carted off by dungeon scavengers, removed from the scene by the local watch, and so on), characters may return to retrieve loot. If the characters do not loot the body, the gold piece value for the loot is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

The coin total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if they take the coin available. A normal adventuring party can usually gather this wealth in a round or so. If for some reason, they pass up this treasure, the coin total is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the adventure. Many times characters must cast *identify*, *analyze dweomer* or similar spell to determine what the item does and how to activate it. Other times they may attempt to use the item blindly. If the magic item is consumable (a potion, scroll, magic bolts, etc.) and the item is used before the end of the adventure, its total is subtracted from the adventure totals below.

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate. Because this is a Regional scenario, characters may spend additional Time Units to practice professions or create items immediately after the adventure so this total may be modified by other circumstances.

L = Looted gear from enemy; C = Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables; M = Magic Items.

### Encounter 1: Detritus of War

APL 2: Loot 50 gp.

### Encounter 2: Evil Dead

APL 2: Magic: +1 *trident* (193 gp).

**Detect Magic Results:** +1 *trident* (Faint Transmutation).

❖ **Yugoloth Trident:** This large black-hafted trident is a fearsome and obviously otherworldly weapon. The top half of the weapon's haft, along with its three prongs, is covered in a thick layer of dried blood. This blood resists all attempts to remove it.

Obviously a weapon once wielded by one of Rary's extraplanar servants, nomads still free of Rary's rule will view the wielder with distrust and fear.

This weapon functions as a +1 *trident*. It may have other abilities, but these remain unknown.

Faint Transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, yugoloth heritage; 2,315 gp.

### Encounter 3: Scavengers of the Wastes

APL 2: Loot 150 gp; Divine scroll of *waste strider* (2 gp), divine scroll of *cloak of shade* (2 gp), divine scroll of *sunstroke* (13 gp).

**Detect Magic Results:** *scroll of waste strider* (faint transmutation), *scroll of cloak of shade* (faint abjuration), *scroll of sunstroke* (faint necromancy).

#### Encounter 4: Minions of the Traitor

**APL 2:** Loot 105 gp.

#### Encounter 5: Shrine of the Calm One

Area 3: The Chapel of Rao

**APL 2:** Coin: 5 gp; Loot: 6 gp; Magic: Spellbook (17 gp), darkwood buckler (17 gp).

❖ **Spellbook:** The pages of this book are protected by covers crafted from the skin of a horned lizard. The book has 96 empty pages and contains the following spells:  
1<sup>st</sup>—*locate water, parching touch*; 2<sup>nd</sup>—*scimitar of sand*.

#### Encounter 7: Tunnels of the Ancients

**APL 2:** Loot: 23 gp; Magic: Spellbook (17 gp).

❖ **Spellbook:** The pages of this book are protected by covers crafted from the skin of a horned lizard. The book has 96 empty pages and contains the following spells:  
1<sup>st</sup>—*locate water, parching touch*; 2<sup>nd</sup>—*scimitar of sand*.

#### Total Possible Treasure

**APL 2:** Loot: 331 gp; Coin: 5 gp; Magic: 144 gp - Total: 560 gp

#### Special

❖ **Yugoloth Trident:** This large black-hafted trident is a fearsome and obviously otherworldly weapon. The top half of the weapon's haft, along with its three prongs, is covered in a thick layer of dried blood. This blood resists all attempts to remove it.

Obviously a weapon once wielded by one of Rary's extra-planar servants, nomads still free of Rary's rule will view the wielder with distrust and fear.

This weapon functions as a *+1 trident*. It may have other abilities, but these remain unknown.

Faint Transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, yugoloth heritage; 2,315 gp.

☛ **Hospitality of Karistyne Castle:** This PC has served Karistyne and has earned her favor. In subsequent adventures in which the PC works for Karistyne she will bestow upon the PC a gift. At the start of each adventure the PC may choose from one of the following:

**Free Standard Upkeep:** The PCs equips himself from Karistyne Castle's stores.

**One *scroll of endure elements*.** She does not expect this to be returned if it is not used.

**Desert Equipment:** Karistyne provides the PC with non-magical equipment up to the value of 25 gp. This equipment can be drawn from allowable items listed in the *Player's Handbook* and *Sandstorm*. She does not expect this equipment returned.

❖ **Spellbook:** The pages of this book are protected by covers crafted from the skin of a horned lizard. The book has 96 empty pages and contains the following spells:

1<sup>st</sup>- *locate water, parching touch*; 2<sup>nd</sup>- *scimitar of sand*.

☛ **The Dreaming:** This individual has fallen prey to the Dreaming. Email [creighton@greyworks.fsworld.co.uk](mailto:creighton@greyworks.fsworld.co.uk) for more information.

## ITEMS FOR THE ADVENTURE RECORD

#### Item Access

**APL 2:**

- ❖ *Darkwood buckler* (Adventure; 205 gp; DMG).
- ❖ *Spellbook* (Any; 40 gp; see above).
- ❖ *Yugoloth Trident* (Any; CL 5<sup>th</sup>; 2315 gp; see above).
- ❖ *Scroll of waste strider* (Any; CL 1<sup>st</sup>; 25 gp; S).
- ❖ *Scroll of cloak of shade* (Any; CL 1<sup>st</sup>; 25 gp; S).
- ❖ *Scroll of sunstroke* (Any; CL 1<sup>st</sup>; 25 gp; S).

# APPENDIX 1: NPC AND MONSTER STATISTICS

## APL 2

### Encounter 3: Scavengers

☛ **Bright Desert Nomad Warriors:** human (Flan) male Bbn1: CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d12+2; hp 13, 10; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk and Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar) or +2 melee (1d8+1/x3, lance); +3 ranged (1d8/x3, composite shortbow); SA rage; SQ fast movement; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +3, Listen +4, Ride +6, Spot +2, Survival +4; Desert Fighter<sup>†</sup>, Mounted Combat.

*Languages:* Flan.

**Rage (Ex):** 1/day—hp 15, 12; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Grp +4; Atk and Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+3/18-20, scimitar) or +4 melee (1d8+4/x3, lance); +3 ranged (1d8/x3, composite shortbow); SV Fort +6, Will +2; Str 17, Con 18; Lasts 7 rounds and then fatigued.

*Possessions:* Desert outfit, studded leather armor, light wooden shield, scimitar, lance, composite shortbow, 20 arrows.

<sup>†</sup>This feat is a Greyhawk regional feat from *Dragon* issue 319; it grants a +2 dodge bonus to AC when fighting in desert terrain, which is already reflected in the above statistic block.

☛ **Ianna:** human (Flan) female Drd1: CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d8+1; hp 9; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0, Grp +0; Atk and Full Atk +0 melee (1d6/18-20, scimitar) or +2 ranged (1d4, sling); SA spells, spontaneously cast *nature's ally* spells; SQ animal companion, nature sense, spells, wild empathy; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +5, Knowledge (nature) +5, Handle Animal +2, Ride +6, Survival +6; Desert Fighter<sup>†</sup>, Heat Endurance<sup>‡</sup>.

*Languages:* Flan.

**Druid Spells Prepared:** (3/2; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*create water*, *cure minor wounds*, *resistance*, 1<sup>st</sup>—*cure light wounds*, *sunstroke*.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, light wooden shield, scimitar, sling, 15 bullets, desert outfit, divine scroll of *waste strider*, divine scroll of *cloak of shade*, divine scroll of *sunstroke*.

<sup>†</sup>This feat is a Greyhawk regional feat from *Dragon* issue 319; it grants a +2 dodge bonus to AC when fighting in desert terrain, which is already reflected in the above statistic block.

<sup>‡</sup>This feat is from *Sandstorm*; it grants a level of temperature protection, and a +2 bonus on saving throws against fire effects.

☛ **Vulture Animal Companion:** CR —; Small animal; HD 1d8+3; hp 7; Init +2; Spd 10 ft., fly 60 ft (average);

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp -5; Atk and Full Atk +0 melee (1d4+1, bite); SQ low-light vision, resistance to disease, scent, link, share spells, tricks (attack, defend, seek, down); AL SV Fort +5, Ref 4, Will +2; Str 8, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4.

*Skills and Feats:* Spot +6, Survival +10; Track.

### Encounter 4: Minions of the Traitor

☛ **Voouk:** male norker adept 1; CR ½; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d6; hp 7; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20 touch 13, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +0; Grp -5; Atk and Full Atk -1 melee (1d6, club) or +3 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +5, Heal +6, Listen +2, Spot +4, Survival +6; Alertness.

*Languages:* Goblin.

**Adept Spells Prepared** (3/2; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*ghost sound*, *purify food and water*, *touch of fatigue*, 1<sup>st</sup>—*bless*, *sleep*.

*Possessions:* club, shortbow, wooden holy symbol of Maglubiyet, 20 arrows

### Encounter 6: Dagger Rock

☛ **Firron:** human (Suel) male Bbn1/Rog1: CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d12+1d6+4; hp 19; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk and Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar) or +3 ranged (1d8/x3, composite shortbow); SA rage, sneak attack +1d6; SQ fast movement, trapfinding; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

*Feats and Skills:* Climb +3, Handle Animal +4, Hide +7, Intimidate +4, Jump +3, Move Silently +6, Ride +6, Spot +0, Survival +4; Desert Fighter<sup>†</sup>, Endurance.

*Languages:* Ancient Suel, Common.

**Rage (Ex):** 1/day—hp 24; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Grp +4; Atk and Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+3/18-20, scimitar) or +3 ranged (1d8/x3, composite shortbow); SV Fort +6, Will +2; Str 17, Con 18; Climb +5, Jump +5; Lasts 7 rounds and then fatigued.

*Possessions:* Desert outfit, studded leather armor, light wooden shield, scimitar, composite shortbow, 20 arrows, 1 week rations and water, 50 ft. rope, sleeping furs.

<sup>†</sup>This feat is a Greyhawk regional feat from *Dragon* issue 319; it grants a +2 dodge bonus to AC when fighting in desert terrain, which is already reflected in the above statistic block.

### Encounter 7: Tunnels of the Ancients

☛ **Volt-zuul:** male kobold War4: CR 2; Small humanoid (reptilian); HD 4d8+8; hp 30; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +1;



Atk and Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+1/x3, spear) or +7 ranged (1d3+1, sling); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Craft (trapmaking) +3, Climb +5, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +5, Jump +4, Listen +2, Profession (miner) +2, Search +3, Spot +2; Alertness, Dodge.

*Languages:* Draconic.

**Light Sensitivity (Ex):** Kobolds are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, darkwood buckler, spear, sling, 10 sling bullets, spellbook, darkwood buckler.

### **New Spells**

All of the following spells are from the *Sandstorm* supplement.

#### **Cloak of Shade**

Abjuration

**Level:** Cleric 1, druid 1

**Components:** V, S, DF

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** Creature touched

**Duration:** 1 hour/level (D)

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

The subject is wrapped in an envelope of perfect shade. Inside the cloak, the temperature is one band lower than the actual temperature (see Heat Dangers) but the spell has no effect on unearthly or hotter heat, nor does it offer any protection against fire damage. The target is treated as though it is in shade, thereby protected from sunburn, able to begin recovering from sun glare, and able to begin healing nonlethal damage taken from exposure to heat. *Cloak of shade* has no effect on *light*, *daylight*, *sunburst*, and similar magical light effects, and it offers no protection from damage that creatures vulnerable to sunlight might take from the sun.

#### **Locate Water**

Divination

**Level:** Cleric 1, druid 1, ranger 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

**Components:** V, S, F/DF

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

**Area:** Cone-shaped emanation

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 min./level

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

You sense the direction of a substantial body of water. The amount of information revealed depends on how long you search a particular area.

*1st Round:* Presence or absence of water.

*2nd Round:* Number of water sources in the area and the rough size of the largest one present.

*3rd Round:* The size and location of each source of water; see below. If the water source is outside your line of sight, then you discern its direction but not its exact location.

*Size:* For purposes of this spell, the size categories of water bodies are as follows:

## **APPENDIX 2: NEW RULES**

**Small:** A small pond or pool (200 cubic feet or fewer) or a brook (5 feet across or smaller).

**Medium:** A large pond or small lake (up to 20,000 cubic feet) or a good-sized stream (up to 30 feet across).

**Large:** A large lake (up to 10 million cubic feet) or a broad river.

**Vast:** An ocean or inland sea.

Creatures cannot be found by this spell. The spell ignores small quantities of water, such as filled bottles and skins. The spell reveals nothing about the quality of the water or how easy it is to reach.

The presence of fire or magma within the spell's area blocks it.

*Arcane Focus:* A forked hazel wand.

### **Parching Touch**

Necromancy

**Level:** Sorcerer/wizard 1, Thirst 1

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** Living creature or creatures touched (up to one/level)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial; see text

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

Your hand glows with a dull, ruby light, and your touch drains moisture from the body of a living creature, dealing 1d6 points of dehydration damage. A plant or elemental of the water subtype instead takes 1d8 points of dehydration damage. The touched creature also takes 1 point of Constitution damage and is dehydrated unless it makes a successful Fortitude saving throw. You can use this melee touch attack up to once per caster level.

### **Scimitar of Sand**

Evocation [Earth]

**Level:** Druid 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

**Components:** V, S, M/DF

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** 0 ft.

**Effect:** Scimitar of grinding sand

**Duration:** 1 min./level (D)

**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

A curved, 3-foot-long blade of sand springs forth from your hand, screaming and churning like a caged sandstorm. Attacks with the *scimitar of sand* are melee touch attacks. The blade deals 1d6 points of damage +1

point per two caster levels (maximum +10). The blade is not solid, so your Strength modifier does not apply to the damage. You can use the *scimitar of sand* without penalty even if you lack proficiency with a normal scimitar. In addition to being dealt damage, a creature struck by your weapon must succeed on a Fortitude save or become dehydrated.

*Arcane Material Component:* A pinch of sand, salt, and iron filings.

### Sunstroke

Necromancy

**Level:** Druid 1, sorcerer/wizard 1, Summer 2

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Target:** One living creature

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** Fortitude partial; see text

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

You cause a living creature to experience the effects of heat stroke. The target takes 2d6 points of nonlethal damage. If the subject fails a Fortitude save, it immediately becomes fatigued, or exhausted if already fatigued. Since this spell causes heat stroke, the damage and fatigue dealt can only be healed after that condition is treated properly (see "Treating Heat Stroke" in the *Sandstorm* supplement).

### Waste Strider

Transmutation

**Level:** Druid 1, ranger 1, Sand 1

**Components:** V, S, DF

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Touch

**Targets:** One touched creature/level

**Duration:** 1 hour/level (D)

**Saving Throw:** Will negates (harmless)

**Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

The subject can move through desert environments without hindrance, ignoring movement penalties and penalties on skill checks for all types of desert and waste terrain. This spell does not grant a subject immunity to other ill effects of waste environments, such as heat and sun.

### New Equipment

The following equipment is from the *Sandstorm* supplement.

#### Desert Outfit

This outfit consists of loose, billowy clothing to keep the wearer cool and protected from the sun while in

hot, dry desert terrain. It includes a caftan, turban, scarf, loose pantaloons, and sandals or high cloth boots. This outfit counts as light clothing and offers limited protections against some waste hazards. The protection it offers against heat is negated if the wearer also dons armor.

### New Monsters

The Norker is from the article "Into the Bright Desert" from *Dungeon* issue 98. The ashen husk is from the *Sandstorm* supplement.

#### Norkers

**Small Humanoid (Goblinoid)**

**Hit Dice:** 1d8+2 (6 hp)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 20 ft.

**AC:** 19 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +7 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 18

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +2/-2

**Attack:** +2 melee (1d6, club), +2 melee (1d4, bite) or +3 ranged (1d6, javelin)

**Full Attack:** +2 melee (1d6, club) and -3 melee (1d4, bite) or +3 ranged (1d6, javelin)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** None

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 8

**Skills:** Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Spot +3

**Feats:** Alertness

**Climate/Terrain:** Temperate and warm land and underground

**Organization:** Gang (4-9) or band (10-40 plus 50% noncombatants plus 1 3<sup>rd</sup>-level boss per 20 adults and one leader of 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> level.

**Challenge Rating:** ½

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Usually chaotic evil

**Advancement:** By character class

Norkers are related to goblins and hobgoblins. They forsake armor because their hide is incredibly tough. They are unreliable troops and tend to quarrel with each other, which keeps their numbers low compared to goblins.

Norkers resemble goblins, except that they have three-inch long canine teeth and no hair. Their skin ranges from reddish brown to dark gray. A norker usually wears only a loincloth and belt, tying it favorite possessions and trophies on its belt.

Norkers speak a dialect of Goblin. Those with Intelligence scores of 12 or above also speak Orc.

Most norkers encountered outside their homes are warriors; the information in the statistics block is for one of 1<sup>st</sup> level. (See page 39 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more about the warrior class).

### Combat

Norkers enjoy swarming tactics. Their weapons are simple and crudely made, but they are not adverse to taking better weapons from their fallen foes. When bullied into submission by hobgoblins, they can use basic military tactics, but they lapse into their old ways when not supervised.

### Norker Society

Norkers are tribal, although the leader's influence only extends about as far as his reach. This means their tribes are much smaller than a typical goblin tribe. They raid and steal from other humanoid, as they are too busy to do their own hunting.

Their lairs are usually caves, old ruins or villages taken by conquest. They can't cooperate well enough to build anything more than a fence around their lair, perhaps with a gate and a narrow walkway. A lair has one and a half times as many females as males and twice as many young as males.

Different tribes of norkers rarely meet, but when they do the conflict often becomes bloody, with the victors taking the fangs of the losers as trophies. These conflicts rarely result in the complete loss of males on one side, as they occur to establish who is the dominant leader.

When powerful groups of hobgoblins command norkers, they often equip their lesser cousins with scale mail and shields. In these situations the norkers are used as shock troops, absorbing the brunt of enemy attacks while the hobgoblins use their superior intelligence, tactics, and equipment to break up the enemy forces.

Norkers worship Maglubiyet, the god of goblins and hobgoblins.

### Norker Characters

A norker's favored class is rogue, but norker leaders tend to be fighters. Norker clerics worship Maglubiyet and can choose two of the following domains: Chaos, Evil and Trickery.

### Ashen Husk

#### Medium Undead

**Hit Dice:** 2d12+7 (20 hp)

**Initiative:** -1

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares; can't run)

**Armor Class:** 11 (-1 Dex, +2 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 11

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/+5

**Attack:** Slam +5 melee (1d6+6)

**Full Attack:** Slam +5 melee (1d6+6)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft

**Special Attacks:** Create spawn, dehydrating aura

**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, unholy toughness

**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 15

**Skills:** —

**Feats:** Toughness

**Environment:** Any warm

**Organization:** Single, pair, or caravan (3–18)

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral evil

**Advancement:** 3–6 HD (Medium)

**Level Adjustment:** —

*This animated corpse is bone dry, its flesh so desiccated that it appears nearly skeletal. The air around it wavers with a dry, sucking heat, as if the corpse brings with it the soul of the waterless desert.*

Ashen husks lost their lives to unquenchable thirst. The evidence of their dry death is obvious as a supernatural deliquescent aura.

Ashen husks stand just shy of 6 feet tall, but in their dehydrated state, weigh only about 140 pounds.

Many ashen husks died of exposure in the open desert when they became lost without water. Sometimes entire caravans go lost, and many of these unfortunate creatures might be seen years later as stumbling corpses with a thirst born in hellish heat.

### Combat

Ashen husks slam their foes with bone-hard limbs, but they expose their real threat against living creatures caught in their dehydrating aura.

**Dehydrating Aura (Su):** An ashen husk gives off a 10-foot-radius emanation of dehydrating heat, a deadly threat for creatures that must drink to survive. A living creature within 10 feet of the ashen husk takes 1d4 points of nonlethal damage from heat each round unless it has at least heat protection level 1 (see page xx), and must make a DC 13 Fortitude save or be dehydrated (see the dehydrated condition on page xx). A creature that makes its save gains immunity to that ashen husk's dehydrating aura ability for 24 hours, although it might still take the nonlethal damage from other sources of heat. The nonlethal damage from heat becomes lethal damage for a creature that is dehydrated. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Create Spawn (Su):** Creatures killed by an ashen husk's dehydrating aura rise after 1d4 days as free-roaming ashen husks. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

**Unholy Toughness (Ex):** The ashen husk gains a bonus to its hit points equal to its Charisma modifier times its Hit Dice (already figured).

## APPENDIX 3: WEATHER HAZARDS OF THE BRIGHT LANDS

During a typical day the desert goes through a radical series of temperature changes.

During daylight hours the temperature in the desert is generally in the “hot temperature” band. Around midday, however, and for two hours afterward, the temperature climbs into the “severe heat” temperature band. At night, the temperatures swiftly plunge into the “cold” temperature band. Thus, travelers must be ready to combat a number of temperature-challenges.

Most intelligent beings avoid traveling around midday and the two hours directly afterward, breaking their journey to get into some shade.

### Distances and Travel Times

Travel through the sandy wastes of the Bright Desert is slow; the PCs’ speed is cut in half. Even when the PCs leave the Bright Desert and enter the Abbor-Alz they are unable to travel any faster. This means that the PCs inevitably spend several days traveling through the region.

The following tables list the modified movement rates of individuals and their mounts moving through the Bright Desert and the Abbor-Alz.

**Outward Journey:** When the adventure starts, the PCs are half way to their destination. They are sheltering in a valley roughly 10 miles inside the bounds of the Bright Lands. To reach Dagger Rock they must traverse another 35 miles of desert.

**Example:** A party whose base unmodified movement is 30 ft. per round will take almost three days to reach Dagger Rock from their start point.

#### PC and NPC Movement Rates

	20 ft.	30 ft.	40 ft.
<b>One Round</b>			
Walk	10 ft.	15 ft.	20 ft.
Hustle	20 ft.	30 ft.	40 ft.
Run (x3)	30 ft.	45 ft.	60 ft.
Run (x4)	40 ft.	60 ft.	80 ft.
<b>One Minute</b>			
Walk	100 ft.	150 ft.	200 ft.
Hustle	200 ft.	300 ft.	400 ft.
Run (x3)	300 ft.	450 ft.	600 ft.
Run (x4)	400 ft.	600 ft.	800 ft.
<b>One Hour</b>			
Walk	1 mile	1 ½ miles	2 miles
Hustle	2 miles	3 miles	4 miles
<b>One Day</b>			
Walk	8 miles	12 miles	16 miles

#### Mount Movement Rates

	30 ft. <sup>1</sup>	40 ft. <sup>2</sup>	50 ft. <sup>3</sup>	60 ft. <sup>4</sup>
<b>One Round</b>				
Walk	15 ft.	20 ft.	25 ft.	30 ft.
Hustle	30 ft.	40 ft.	50 ft.	60 ft.
Run (x3)	45 ft.	60 ft.	75 ft.	90 ft.
Run (x4)	60 ft.	80 ft.	100 ft.	120 ft.
<b>One Minute</b>				
Walk	150 ft.	200 ft.	250 ft.	300 ft.
Hustle	300 ft.	400 ft.	500 ft.	600 ft.
Run (x3)	450 ft.	600 ft.	750 ft.	900 ft.
Run (x4)	600 ft.	800 ft.	1,000 ft.	1,200 ft.
<b>One Hour</b>				
Walk	1 ½ miles	2 miles	2 ½ mile	3 miles
Hustle	3 miles	4 miles	5 miles	6 miles
<b>One Day</b>				
Walk	12 miles	16 miles	20 miles	24 miles

1: Donkey, mule

2: Riding dog, pony, war pony

3: Heavy horse, heavy warhorse

4: Light Horse, light warhorse

**Homeward Bound:** Dagger Rocks stands almost exactly due south of Karistyne Castle. If the PCs travel in a straight line from Dagger Rock to the castle they will need to cross roughly 45 miles of desert before gaining the shelter of the Abbor Alz. From there the PCs must travel 30 miles through the arid hills to reach their final goal.

**Example:** A party whose base unmodified movement is 30 ft. per round will take almost six and one half days to travel from Dagger Rock to Karistyne Castle. Four of these will be spent in the Bright Desert and another two and a half will be spent traveling through the Abbor-Alz.

### Getting Lost

Traveling through the trackless wastes of the desert is a challenging proposition. Not only do the PCs have to contend with the severe temperatures but they must also guard against getting lost.

The chances of PCs getting lost is covered in detail in chapter 3 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. However, in brief:

**Poor Visibility:** If the PCs can see less than 60 ft. due to poor visibility (such as darkness, a sandstorm etc.) then they must make a successful DC 14 Survival check to avoid getting lost. A character with at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local – Core) gain a +2 bonus to this check.

**Check Frequency:** Make a check every hour or portion thereof.

**Effect of Being Lost:** Characters lost move in a randomly determined direction. Check for the direction they move every hour. This continues until

the PCs either realize they are lost or blunder into an unmistakable landmark.

**Recognizing Being Lost:** Once per hour of travel each character may make a DC 20 Survival check to realize they are lost. The DC of this check increases by 1 for every hour of random travel. Obviously, some circumstance may obviate this check, such as seeing a prominent landmark.

**Setting A New Course:** Each character may make a DC 15 +2 per hour of random travel, Survival check to determine the correct direction. Of course, characters several characters could disagree on the right direction.

## Heat Dangers

For game purposes, air temperature falls into one of nine following temperature bands. Temperatures relevant to play in the Bright Desert are listed below.

### **Temperature Bands**

-20° F to 0° F	Severe cold*
1° F to 40° F	Cold
41° F to 60° F	Moderate
61° F to 90° F	Warm
91° F to 110° F	Hot
111° F to 140° F	Severe heat

\*Extremely rare temperature, not dealt with in detail here.

Temperatures in the hot band (or hotter) can be hazardous to unprepared characters. Characters can take damage from such extreme heat, a condition generally referred to as heatstroke. At lower temperatures, this starts off as nonlethal damage while the character is still conscious, but it becomes lethal damage to those already knocked unconscious by heatstroke (with no saving throw allowed). A character who takes any nonlethal damage from heatstroke is considered fatigued.

A character with the Survival skill can receive a bonus on saving throws against heat and dehydration damage, and can apply this bonus to other characters as well. See the skill description on page 83 of the *Player's Handbook*.

The levels of protection described here refer to a character's protective measures against heat (see Protection Against Heat below). The relevant heat bands are also described below.

**Cold:** Unprotected characters must make successful Fortitude saving throws each hour (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. Characters wearing furs, or other warm clothing or protected by an endure elements spell are considered protected against this level of cold.

**Hot:** Unprotected characters must make successful Fortitude saving throws each hour (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Characters wearing heavy clothing or any kind of armor take -4 penalties on their saves.

Characters whose protection against heat is at least level 1 or higher (such as with the Heat Endurance feat or carrying a parasol) are safe at this temperature range and need not make the save.

**Severe Heat:** Unprotected characters must make successful Fortitude saving throws once every 10 minutes (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Characters wearing heavy clothing or any kind of armor take -4 penalties on their saves.

In addition, those wearing metal armor or coming into contact with very hot metal are affected as if by a *heat metal* spell (which lasts as long as the character remains in the area of extreme heat).

A character must have protection level 3 or higher to be protected against extreme heat. Level 2 is considered partial protection, and such characters take damage and make saving throws once per hour instead of once per 10 minutes. Level 1 provides no protection.

## Protection Against Heat

Few people venture into the waste without some form of protection against heat. Most travelers dress appropriately in flowing, light clothing or staying near shade and water. In addition Magical protection further improves the chance to survive hot, dry climates and other special devices and alchemical concoctions can aid desert travel.

A character's protection against heat dangers is described by level of protection, which ranges from 1 to 5 or more. Such levels of protection do not confer any special fire resistance—a red dragon's breath still does the same damage. However, equipment that provides a bonus on saving throws against heat dangers contributes its bonus whether it is complete, partial, or ineffective protection against that degree of heat. Thus, even though keepcool salve is not sufficient to offer even partial protection against extreme heat, a character with keepcool salve (described in *Sandstorm*) still adds the item's +1 circumstance bonus on saves against nonlethal damage dealt by an extremely hot environment.

To determine your protection level, begin with your base protection level as determined on the table below and then add any applicable equipment modifiers from the second table.



#### Base Protection Level Against Heat

- 0 Creature with no heat adaptations
- 1 Creature with Heat Endurance feat
- 1 Nondesert cold-blooded animal or vermin
- 1 Monsters native to hot climates
- 2 Desert animal or vermin
- 2 Monsters native to waste terrain
- 3 Creatures with *endure elements* spell or effect

**Heat Endurance Feat:** Creatures with the Heat Endurance feat.

**Nondesert Cold-Blooded Animal or Vermin:** Creatures native to temperate or warm climates with a variable body temperature that lets them function well in heat approaching that of human body temperature (such as insects, lizards, snakes, tortoises, and toads).

**Monsters Native to Hot Climates:** Creatures whose Environment entry includes a warm terrain.

**Desert Animal or Vermin:** Animals with variable body temperatures or special adaptation to hot environments, such as heat dissipation or water conservation (camels, scorpions, sidewinder snakes, and so on).

**Monsters Native to Waste Terrain:** Monsters normally found in regions of extreme heat (including natives of fire-dominant planes) belong in this group.

**Endure Elements:** Creatures currently protected by an *endure elements* spell or similar effect.

#### Equipment Modifier to Base Heat Protection

- 0 No special equipment
- +1 Armorbright
- +1 Desert outfit
- +1 Keepcool salve
- +2 Hydration suit
- +3 Improvised shelter

**Armorbright:** A special alchemical item described in *Sandstorm*.

**Desert Outfit:** A special clothing item described in *Sandstorm*.

**Keepcool Salve:** A special alchemical item described in *Sandstorm*.

**Hydration suit:** A special clothing item described in *Sandstorm*.

**Improvised Shelter:** This bonus applies to characters who are not attempting to travel, but instead stop and seek shelter by digging into the sand, erecting a tent or windbreak, tapping water from desert vegetation, or the like.

**Resistance to Fire:** A character with a spell or effect granting resistance to fire applies this resistance to both lethal and nonlethal damage from hot temperatures. For example, a creature with resistance

to fire 5 subtracts 5 from the 1d6 points of lethal damage dealt per 10 minutes by extreme heat (and therefore might take 1 point of heat damage, if a 6 is rolled) and 5 from the 1d4 points of nonlethal damage dealt.

### Treating Heatstroke

Nonlethal damage from heatstroke (including the accompanying fatigue) cannot be recovered until the character gets cooled off—by reaching shade, surviving until nightfall, getting doused in water, being targeted by *endure elements*, or the equivalent. Once the character is cooled or reaches a cooler environment (a temperature band of fewer than 90 degrees), the character responds normally to healing that removes nonlethal damage. When the character recovers the nonlethal damage taken from heatstroke, the fatigue penalties also end.

### Dehydration

As noted on page 304 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, a character must consume 1 gallon of water per day to avoid dehydration. In particularly hot environments (those above 90° F), characters need more water, requiring double the normal amount. The amount of water required to avoid dehydration increases by 1 gallon per heat band above hot (so 3 gallons in severe heat, 4 in extreme heat, and so on). Characters can go without water for 1 day + a number of hours equal to their Constitution scores. After this time, a character must make a successful Constitution check each hour (DC 10, +1 for each previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. In particularly hot environments (those above 90° F), the time a character can go without water before making Constitution checks is reduced, as described on the table below.

#### Dehydration Times

Temperature (Band)	Time Before First Con Check
91–110 (hot)	12 + Con hours
111–140 (severe heat)	6 + Con hours

### Being Dehydrated

A lack of sufficient water introduces a new condition—dehydrated.

**Dehydrated:** Characters who have taken nonlethal damage from lack of water are considered dehydrated and become fatigued. In addition, if a dehydrated character would take nonlethal damage from hot conditions (such as those described in this book or on page 303 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), that damage instead becomes lethal damage.

A character who falls unconscious from nonlethal damage due to thirst begins to take the same amount of lethal damage instead. Damage from thirst, whether

lethal or nonlethal, cannot be recovered until the character has been treated (see below); not even magic that restores hit points heals this damage.

**Treating Dehydration:** A character who has taken nonlethal damage from lack of water must be treated with long-term care (see the Heal skill description on page 75 of the *Player's Handbook*) to recover. This requires 24 hours of care and double the normal amount of water required per day for the conditions (for instance, 2 gallons of water for normal conditions). If the character has also taken lethal damage from lack of water or from a hot environment, add +5 to the Heal DC and double the time required to recover (to 48 hours). Once this Heal check has succeeded, the damage taken by the character can be restored through the normal means.

Alternatively, certain spells can be used to rehydrate a character in place of the recovery time, water, and Heal check. The *hydrate* spell (see *Sandstorm*) accomplishes this function, as does the *heal* spell.

### **Bright Blindness**

Bright Blindness is a condition that afflicts those traveling the white sands of the Bright Desert without adequate eye protection during the day. At first the vision of those afflicted becomes indistinct, with colored flashes and shapes appearing in their field of vision. Their eyes then begin to ache, becoming red and inflamed before finally the individual loses his vision for a number of days. Prolonged exposure can lead to permanent blindness.

Anyone traveling the white sands without protection must make a DC 15 Constitution check every four hours of travel. The DC of subsequent checks in a days travel increases by one. Failure means the character is temporarily blinded for 1d4 days.

Characters suffering from Bright Blindness should also make these additional checks unless they have been completely blindfolded. If a character suffering from Bright Blindness fails a subsequent Constitution check their eyes are damaged beyond repair and they are permanently blinded.

A successful DC 15 Heal check and the complete blindfolding of the afflicted character's eyes halves the duration of the temporary blindness. *Remove blindness* will remove both temporary and permanent Bright Blindness instantly.

## APPENDIX 4: KARISTYNE CASTLE AT A GLANCE

**🏰Karistyne Castle (small castle):** Conventional; AL LG; 200 gp; Assets 1,740 gp; Population Mixed (human 78, half-elf 7, elf 2.)

**Authority Figures:** Karistyne (LG human female Pal15 – Heironeous).

**Important Characters:** Aaron Marander (LG human male Ftr13 Caralin Arvendis (LG half-elf male Ftr3/Clr7– Labelas Enoreth); Helena Stanmaer (LG human female Clr12–Fharlanghn); Shianne Stormhanded (LG female human Wiz(E)15; Gasharin Hefloranis (LG elf male Ftr9; Ambara (LG human female).

**Faiths:** Fharlanghn, Heironeous, Labelas Enoreth.

Karistyne's Castle sits upon a great plateau nestled below some of the highest peaks of the Abbor Alz. This well-fortified and defended five-towered castle is home to the paladin Karistyne and her loyal companions.

In addition to the plethora of highly skilled adventurers who make the castle their home, the castle is well defended. Forty well-equipped and motivated men-at-arms are to be found here along with almost two-dozen specialists.

Karistyne herself is an extremely devout follower of Heironeous. She believes it is her duty to root out and destroy any and all evil creatures lairing in the Abbor-Alz. In this she has generally been very successful. No fewer than seven dragons have fallen before the combined might of Karistyne and her comrades. As a result, they are generally considered to be incredibly wealthy and extremely well equipped.

**Rulership and Law:** Karistyne rules her castle and the territory within a 10-mile radius of it. Technically, this part of the Abbor-Alz falls into that territory claimed by the Free City of Greyhawk. However, a tacit agreement exists between the paladin and the Mountaineer Militia granting the lands to her, in return for her aid against the denizens of the Abbor Alz.

**Trade and Commerce:** The folk of Karistyne's Castle do not partake in any industry; they are too busy defending their home and slaying evil creatures. Much trade is carried on with the hillmen of Marstefel. From them, the garrison gets fresh meat and a powerful local wine made from bitter berries. Most other trade goods come here by way of the Duchy of Urnst or the Domain of Greyhawk. Historically, no trade is carried out with the denizens of the Bright Desert; with the rise to power of Rary the Traitor this is doubly true.

**Rumors and Whispers:** Generally the inhabitants of Karistyne Castle are well disciplined and do not engage in idle gossiping. However, several of the guards claim to have seen a great winged beast flying high above the citadel on moonless nights. A few others (if sufficiently in their cups) may speak of seeing a mysterious cloaked stranger in earnest conversation with Karistyne. No one has seen this person enter or leave the castle; magic is suspected.

Rumors also circulate among the garrison of alliance with Hardby.

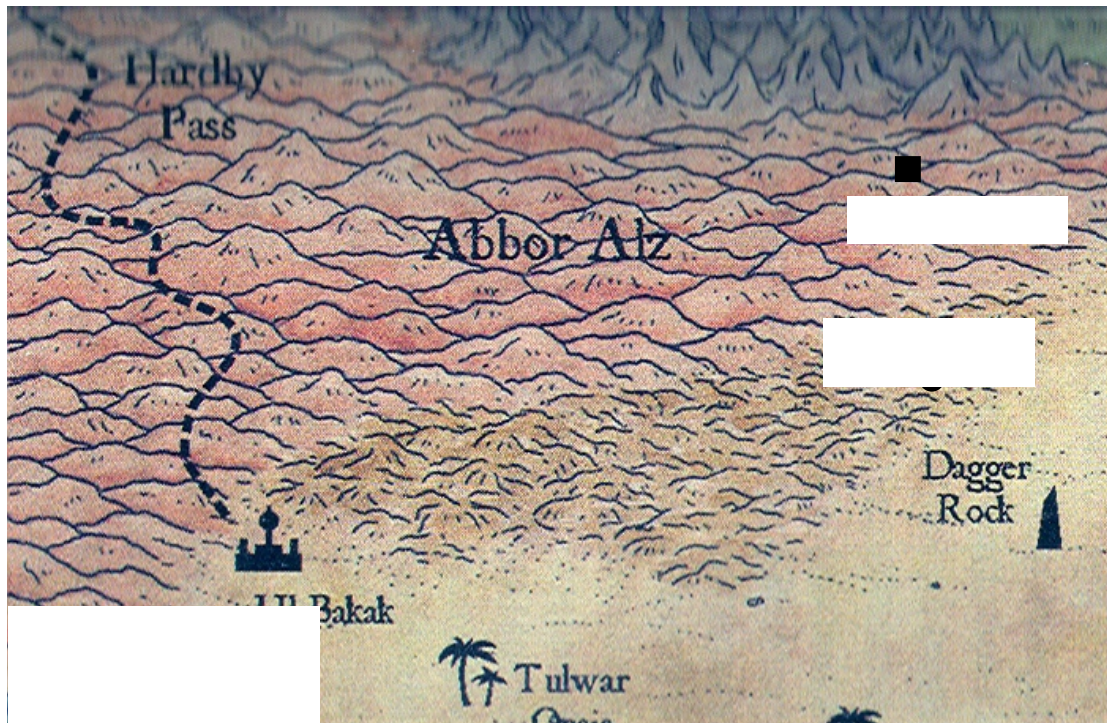
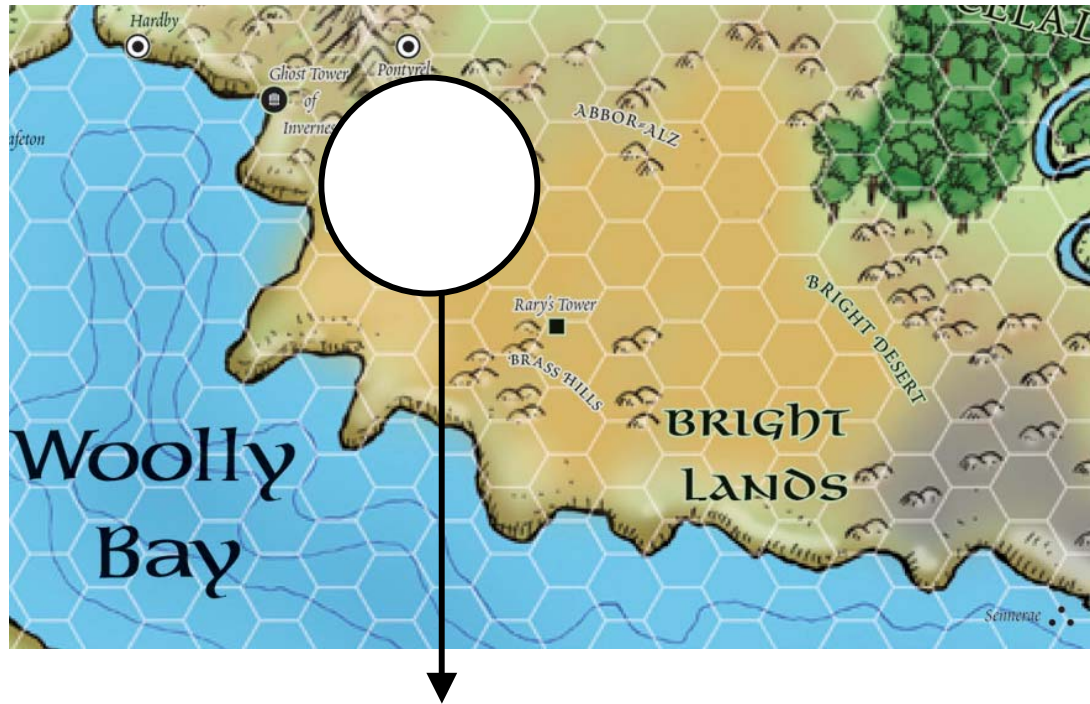
**NPC Spellcasting:** Although Karistyne is a relatively small settlement, PCs can call upon spell casting services not normally found in a place of this size. The PCs can call upon Caralin Arvendis, Helena Stanmaer or Shianne Stormhanded to cast spells on their behalf. In these instances all applicable normal rules from the *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook* and the *Player's Handbook* apply.

## APPENDIX 5: DM'S MAPS

### The Bright Lands

Wide Area Map: originally presented in *Dungeon* issue 120. Artwork by Robert Lazzaretti.

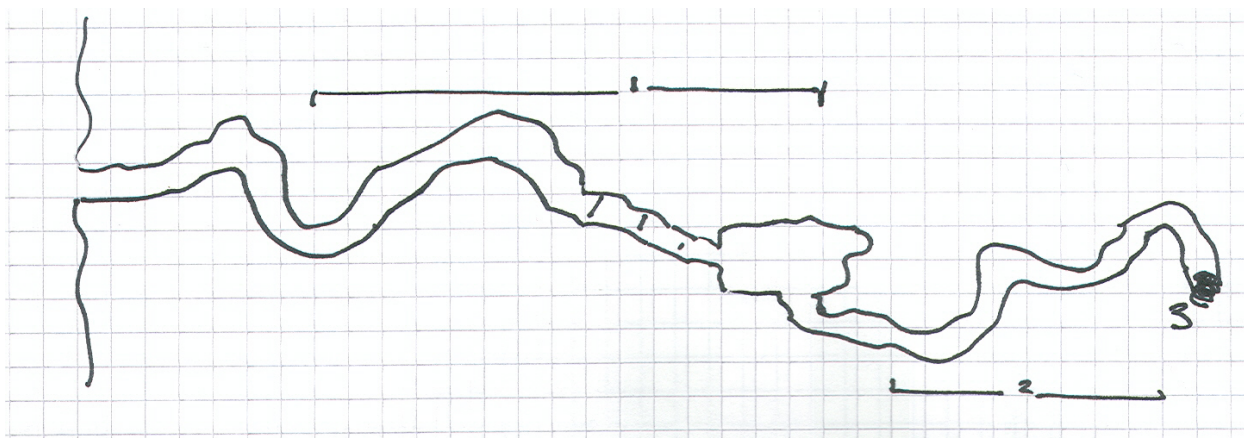
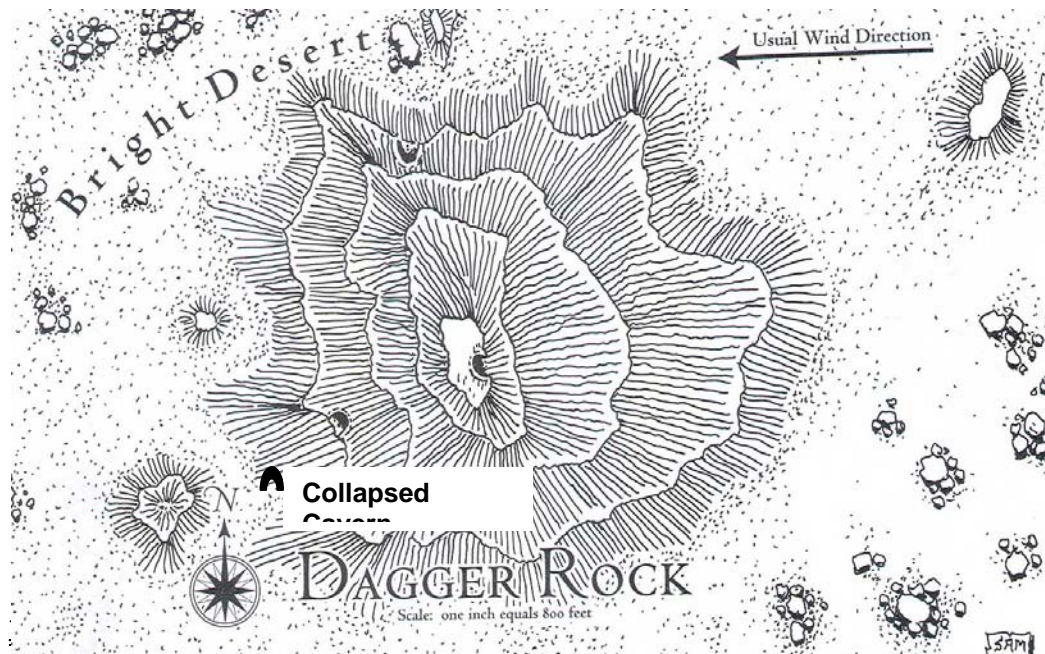
Dagger Rock/Karistyne Castle Environs map first presented in *Dungeon* issue 98. Artwork by Craig Zipse





### Encounter 6: Dagger Rock

Original map presented in *The Adventure Begins*. Artwork by Sam Wood



### Encounter 5: Shrine of the Calm God

