

VER7-02

Storm the Dragon's Bastion

A One-Round Dungeons & Dragons® Living Greyhawk™ Verbobonc Regional Adventure by Ron Lundeen and Gregory Hanigan

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The Skyroads have the potential to bring wealth and power to those who control them. Rumors say that Lord Shannus of Glory refuses to participate. A new ally asks you to accompany him on a mission of diplomacy—or more—into the Iron Wood. This is adventure three of five in the Skyroad Series, which should be played in order. A one-round Verbobonc regional adventure for character levels 1-8 (APLs 2-6).

Metaorganizational Focus: Battirovka Family, Church of Trithereon, House Galans, House Haxx, Protectors of the Iron Wood

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® 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.

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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.

Preparing for Play

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D rule 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 PCs (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in Appendix 1. For your convenience, that appendix is split by APL

Along with this adventure you'll find a RPGA Session 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 PCs 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.

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	7	9	10	11

Sum the results of step 1 and 2, and divide by the number of PCs playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.

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 PCs 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 1st-level PCs 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 PCs to buy riding dogs to help protect them and fight for them.

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round Verbobonc regional adventure. All PCs native to Verbobonc pay 1 Time Units per round; all others pay 2 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. PCs 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 adventure.

A character that 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 DC 20

Survival check, 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

Magister Obble Har is an enigma. He came to Verbobonc City in 591 CY and doggedly founded a wizards school in the middle of a city known for fear and paranoia of wizardry.

Magister Har has developed a far-reaching plan that he hopes to bring to fruition in the next couple of years. First, he became head of the most powerful collection of wizards in all of Verbobonc by founding the Wrinkle Academy. Then, he was able to fashion a vast reservoir of magical power, a Spellpool, in the Wrinkle Academy's hidden halls. Magister Har is now working to activate an ancient system of aerial magical highways around Verbobonc, called the Skyroad. Precisely what Magister Har plans to do with the Skyroad once it is activated is a secret—for now.

In the first adventure of the Skyroad Series, VER 6-02 *Delve the Wizard's Dungeon*, the PCs assisted Magister Har in securing an odd arcane rod to the top of the Wrinkle Academy. The PCs then traveled on the Magister's behalf to a gnomish monastery in the south Kron Hills to recover an ancient elven map of Verbobonc showing the location of three anchors of the Skyroad, called the Pylons.

In the second adventure of the Skyroad Series, VER 6-07 *Ride the Merchant's Highway*, the PCs activated the Pylon near Taymouth and, at Lord Galans' request, rode the Skyroad at breakneck speed to the Pylon in the Kron Hills.

Now that Lord Galans has discovered how useful the Skyroad is, he wants to activate the Skyroad system in order to improve trade across the Viscounty. If he can be enriched by collecting tolls on the Skyroad, all the better; but even without his control, trade along the Skyroad will seriously harm his greatest competitor, Lord Willem Haxx (another noble whose holdings are based on trade along the Velverdyva River, Lord Haxx also serves as Viscount Langard's tax collector).

In the beginning of this adventure, two of the three Pylons have been activated, creating a single Skyroad from the Iron Wood to the Kron Hills. If the Pylon near Glory, in the Iron Wood, would be activated, then a triangle of Skyroads would be created. However, Lord Shannus refuses to activate the Pylon near Glory: he keeps it guarded by the dour and primitive Mist Children elves. The Mist Children have already slain the adventurers Magister Har sent to activate the Pylon.

Lord Galans will stop at nothing to see the Glory Pylon activated. He intends to bring loyal adventurer allies with him to convince Lord Shannus by diplomacy or, if necessary, force.

Other factions are at work as well. Lord Haxx is determined to stop Lord Galans. Magister Har, who needs the Pylons activated for his own purposes, intends to activate the Iron Wood Pylon with his familiar, the dust mephit Threnodee.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

The PCs will interact with four main NPCs in the course of this adventure. As these characters reappear throughout the entire Skyroad Series, it's important that they are roleplayed consistently by all Dungeon Masters (DM), so players will recognize these NPCs when they meet them again.

Lord Roland Galans: Lord Roland Galans, known as “the Grand” both due to his girth and his mode of dress, outwardly presents a jovial and welcoming personality. Those that make the mistake of not looking past this friendly exterior miss the cunning business mind he possesses. Lord Galans maintains two very distant holdings: fertile fields in the southern Viscounty, and an immense shipping yard in the northeastern tip of the Viscounty. Lord Galans stays very informed about the goings-on in both of his holdings, but he actually spends most of his time in Verbobonc City. Inside his lands, Lord Galans also has the nickname of “the Sampler” from those merchants who traverse his domain. Lord Galans will ‘sample’ a small portion of the very best the merchant carries; as recompense, the taxes the merchant pays are significantly reduced. This is a beneficial situation for all parties except the Viscount, who relies on the taxes. As yet, the Viscount’s investigators have been unable to uncover any serious corruption, and Lord Galans has become one of the wealthiest nobles in Verbobonc. Lord Galans is also well-known as a trader and breeder of high-quality horses. Most of the horses the Mounted Borderers ride are raised in Lord Galans’ southern holdings.

Lord Galans has taken full advantage of the Skyroad, an ancient magical highway connecting a tall tower in the Gnarley Forest to another tower in the Kron Hills. This highway is an incredible boon for Lord Galans, as he shuttles goods between his two holdings with ease and charges a small toll to others who use this fast, safe means of travel. Lord Galans sees farther than this, however, and he hopes to activate the entire highway system in order to improve trade throughout all of the Viscounty (under his watchful guidance, of course).

Lord Galans is a friendly, fiery man who possesses a keen business acumen and a good judge of character. He is friendly with the PCs through most of this adventure, both because he knows they are useful, but also because he genuinely likes adventure-seekers. If the PCs cross Lord Galans’ plans later in this adventure, he works to eliminate them swiftly. Lord Galans won’t let his affection for the PCs overcome his desire to activate the Skyroad.

Lord Shannus: A clan of primitive gray elves lives in the Iron Wood, formerly living in peace with the lycanthropes of that wood. These elves are called the Mist Children, although they have an older name now long forgotten.

Several decades ago, an elf named Shannus was born into this clan. Shannus was good in heart and talented with magic. Unlike many of his clan, Shannus left the Iron Wood to pursue his magic and to walk the path of the Dragon Disciple, awakening his latent draconic heritage. While traveling the wider world, Shannus learned that lycanthropes were, by and large, ruthless and evil creatures that delight in killing. Shannus became surprised and embarrassed that his people had dealt peaceably, if not closely, with the lycanthropes in the Iron Wood. His shock and shame built into a rage, and when he felt ready, Shannus decided to return to his home, the Iron Wood, and exterminate the evil creatures that infested it. Shannus was determined to make the Iron Wood a safe place for all.

Shannus discovered the inn in the center of the Iron Wood and realized that this central point would be a good place to begin reclaiming the Iron Wood. With his fortunes acquired over the years and his powerful personality, Shannus built up a small town around the inn. He called this town Glory, and rules it himself. With the natural bounty of the Iron Wood in exotic herbs and rare wood, Glory has become a populous boomtown. From this town, Shannus began his relentless extermination of the lycanthropes of the Iron Wood.

When the lycanthropes broke their peace with the Mist Children in 593 CY, Shannus convinced his people to

take up arms against the lycanthropes at his side. Now the enigmatic and atavistic Mist Children see Shannus as a powerful war leader, and are often seen in and around Glory.

In CY 594, in gratitude for making the Iron Wood a substantially safer place for trade and travel, Shannus was ennobled by Viscount Langard. The new Lord Shannus has not shown much interest in the politics of Verbobonc, however, and has instead concentrated his efforts in three areas: building up the town of Glory and its environs, hunting down any werereatures that remain in the Iron Wood, and calling to his side any half-dragons, draconic creatures, and people with draconic heritage or abilities.

Lord Shannus is now a half-brass dragon and a powerful sorcerer. Lord Shannus is quite polite and very well-meaning (he is Neutral Good), but he is obsessed by his own goals. Overseeing the town of Glory, gathering draconic allies, and his quest to exterminate lycanthropes are all he thinks about. Lord Shannus is usually very kind and merciful, but he has a hard and uncompromising edge that often comes to the surface. He is not used to being disobeyed, and expects his suggestions to be followed. Some PCs may like Shannus a great deal, while others find him insufferably driven and obsessive. This is fine; Shannus is a complex character.

Gurtom Starcheek: Gurtom Starcheek is a halfling warlock and freelance agent currently in the pay of Lord Shannus of Glory. Gurtom is in his late fifties, which is the far side of middle-aged for a halfling, but still spry. He's Chaotic Neutral, which means he's out for himself and doesn't mind if others get hurt along the way, although he won't really go out of his way to harm anyone. Gurtom thinks nothing of breaking his word. Gurtom is no fool, and he doesn't go anywhere without a clever escape plan in mind. He is often surrounded by thugs and goons, although he prefers attractive, sycophantic ones. Gurtom Starcheek gets his name from a livid purple birthmark across the left half of his face in the shape of a five-pointed star (Gurtom thinks it's evidence that his mother consorted with something unnatural, and believes that it's the source of his magical powers). Although the PCs may have run afoul of Gurtom in VER6-02 *Delve the Wizard's Dungeon*, Gurtom isn't their enemy in this adventure and shouldn't be played as a villain. Some of the PCs—particularly those who played VER6-02 *Delve the Wizard's Dungeon*—may not like or trust Gurtom Starcheek at all. However, the halfling bears them no ill will. As far as he's concerned, the events of that scenario (whether he got away with the map or not) are all water under the bridge.

Threnodee: Threnodee the dust mephit is the familiar of Magister Obble Har, the powerful head of the Wrinkle Academy in Verbobonc City. Threnodee looks like an ordinary dust mephit, but he wears a tattered brown cloak with holes cut into it for his wings. Threnodee has a morbid and depressing fixation with death. He always thinks any situation will turn out for the worst, probably in a way that will end up killing himself and everyone around him. He mopes a lot. Threnodee has all the statistics of a dust mephit from the *Monster Manual*, but he's practically invulnerable: he has an Armor Class of 27, improved evasion, spell resistance of 25, and several dozen hit points. Despite these qualities, Threnodee spends most days thinking he'll never live to see the next one, so what's the point? Although not a coward, Threnodee isn't particularly brave, either. Like Magister Har, he's Neutral in alignment. Threnodee speaks in a dusty rattle, and starts sentences with morbid thoughts like, "I know that it won't matter when we're jumped by bandits and left to die on the road, but..." or "Not that you're anything but dead men walking anyway, but I think..." or "...and then we'll all get killed and can rest in the peaceful sleep of the ages." Play Threnodee like a gloomy mortician.

The PCs may know Threnodee from the previous two adventures in this series, when he tagged along with them on Magister Har's behalf. In this adventure, the PCs only encounter Threnodee in the last encounter, when he completes a mission for Magister Har.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Encounter One: Forces Align

The PCs, attending the Midwinter Eve Gala held by Lord Rhynhurst, are enticed to accompany Lord Galans in his desire to activate the Pylon in the Iron Wood. The PCs also have the opportunity to gather important information at the gala.

Encounter Two: The Blockade

The PCs and Lord Galans travel into the Iron Wood and Lord Galans uses magical trickery to escape from Lord Haxx's thugs.

Encounter Three: Where Wolf? There Wolf

The PCs are attacked by a group of diseased wolves (but they don't have the disease the PCs think).

Encounter Four: Two Roads Diverged in a Wood

Lord Galans discusses his dilemma with the PCs: whether they should proceed to Glory or first go to the Pylon.

Encounter Five: Scouting the Pylon

If the PCs choose to go to the Pylon they are faced with overwhelming opposition and instructed to go to Glory. They learn of the presence and defenses of the Mist Children elves.

Encounter Six: Glory Be

The PCs investigate the town of Glory and notice that there are many dragonkin living openly in the streets.

Encounter Seven: Diplomacy is not an option.

Lord Shannus receives Lord Galans, but is unwilling to activate the Pylon. Lord Galans takes offense and storms out. Deciding to take matters in his hands, Lord Galans instructs the PCs to meet him at dawn and begins to gather his forces. The PCs are approached by both Gurtom Starcheek, an agent of Lord Shannus, attempting to sway them onto their side.

Encounter Eight: Assaulting the Pylon

If the PCs choose to assist Lord Galans, they assault the Pylon and the Mist Children elves that Lord Shannus placed there.

Encounter Nine: Defending the Pylon

If the PCs choose to assist Lord Shannus they defend the Pylon from Lord Galans' forces.

Encounter Ten: Strictly Neutral

If the PCs choose to remain neutral they still may be drawn into the battle.

Encounter Eleven: Inside the Pylon

The party must ascend the Pylon and quickly discovers that this interior stairway has been trapped.

Encounter Twelve: And the Winner is... Har!

The PCs arrive at the top of the Pylon to find Magister Har's familiar, the dust mephit Threnodee, activating the last of the switches and sealing off the controls from the PCs.

Conclusion:

Once the PCs have completed the adventure, the Pylon is up and running, and the PCs are rewarded (or punished) for the choices that they have made.

PREPARATION FOR PLAY

PCs that are members of certain meta-organizations or have played previous events in this series should be identified before play.

- **The Battirovka Family:** Identify PCs that are members of the Battirovka Family metaorganization, as this membership gives them further ability to gather information and instruction in **Encounter One: Forces Align**.

- **Church of Trithereon:** PCs that are members of the Church of Trithereon meta-organization as this membership gives them further ability to gather information and instruction in **Encounter One: Forces Align**.

- **Played *VER6-02 Delve the Wizard's Dungeon*:** PCs that played *VER6-02 Delve the Wizard's Dungeon* have met Gurtom Starcheek before, and probably don't like or trust the halfling warlock (although he bears them no ill will). This comes in to play particularly in **Encounter Seven : Diplomacy is not an Option** and **Encounter Eight: Assaulting the Pylon**.

Furthermore, PCs that have played *VER6-02 Delve the Wizard's Dungeon* have almost certainly seen the ancient elven map depicting the location of the three Pylons. Give these players **Map 2**.

- **Played *VER6-07 Ride the Merchant's Highway* or *House Galans*:** PCs that played *VER6-07 Ride the Merchant's Highway* or are members of House Galans are probably very well regarded by Lord Roland Galans. He tends to think more highly of these PCs throughout the adventure, and introduces them especially in **Encounter One: Forces Align**. PCs that have played *VER6-07 Ride the Merchant's Highway* may have seen the ancient elven map depicting the location of the three Pylons. If so, give those players **Map 2**.

- **Gnomish Spectacles** (from *VER6-02 Delve the Wizard's Dungeon*): In each adventure of the Skyroad Series, any character wearing the Gnomish Spectacles, available in *VER6-02 Delve the Wizard's Dungeon*, earns a special benefit.

In this scenario, PCs wearing the Gnomish Spectacles gain certain benefits in gathering information in **Encounter One: Forces Align** due to subtle promptings from the spectacles. Furthermore, PCs wearing the Gnomish Spectacles can see through the fog cloud (or sleet storm) created in the Pylon in **Encounter Eleven: Inside the Pylon**. The spirits in the Gnomish Spectacles (if asked) do not understand why they seem to have such a powerful connection to the Pylons and the Skyroad.

- **Missing Viscount:** As of *VER7-01 Cleanse Thy House*, Viscount Langard went missing while traveling through the Iron Wood to Veluna.

PCs may want to question Lord Shannus, Lord Galens, Lord Haxx, or others about this. The Viscount's disappearance is very recent, however, and rumors are all that are known. Do not allow PCs to go 'off-script' and begin a search for the Viscount. If they do, they receive a warning from an appropriate noble. If they ignore that warning, then they are arrested and charged with Disturbing the Peace, Interfering with the Representative of a Noble, and Trespassing. If they resist with lethal force, then they are charged with Sedition. Use your judgment on this, but do not let the PCs get away with flouting the authority of the nobility. see **Appendix 5: Laws of the Viscounty** for more information.

INTRODUCTION

The adventure begins with the PCs aboard a ship in the Velderdyva River. The ship the PCs are on is one of many drifting near the town of Rhynehurst for Lord Rhynehurst's Midwinter's Eve Gala.

The PCs have had several hours to relax and get to know each other, if they don't already, and should introduce their PCs to each other before play begins.

The regatta of ships bobs lazily in the slow current. Luna and Celene, both full and high in the sky, light the river enough to see the Celeb'vara River curving off of the Velderdyva and the Rhenee barge-town of Darkha'por where the two rivers meet. Your patron for Rhynehurst's Midwinter's Eve Gala tipsily steps aboard your ship, spilling a bit of his wine as he does so.

"Welcome!" Lord Roland Galans bellows. "Just the people I've been looking for—come with me. I want to introduce you to Wendell."

Lord Galans leads you across several other ships to the wheelhouse of a brightly lit ship, where Lord Wendell Rhynehurst is regaling a group of nobles with a story of his great uncle raiding a Keoish camp during the short war. His commodore's hat threatens to fall overboard as he pantomimes a horse chase.

Option A: If there are PCs who received the Galans Token in VER6-07 *Ride the Merchant's Highway* read the following (if not skip below to Option B), and then continue below.

Lord Galans loudly announces, "Wendell, I'd like to present to you the brave group who were so instrumental in my recent coup against that blowhard..." Lord Galans makes an act of noticing

one of the nobles "Oh, Hello Lord Haxx, so nice to see you out of your ledgers on this beautiful evening."

Option B: If there are no PCs with the Galans Token, read the following and then continue below.

Lord Galans loudly announces, "Wendell, I'd like you to meet the brave group who will deflate that blowhard..." Lord Galans makes an act of noticing one of the nobles "Oh, Hello Lord Haxx, so nice to see you out of your ledgers on this beautiful evening."

Continue with:

The unwelcoming look that Lord Haxx wore as Lord Galans spoke hardens into a scowl. "Lord Rhynehurst," Lord Haxx begins, his eyes never leaving your group. "Your standards for ale and entertainment are as always, excellent. I'm surprised though that you dropped them when you sent out your invitations."

Lord Galans' face flushes briefly and he turns stiffly to address Lord Rhynehurst. "My good Lord, I was hoping you may offer some advice," Lord Rhynehurst gives a slight bow, clearly unsure of where the conversation is heading. "Tomorrow I will accompany this brave band into the Iron Wood. Could you tell me what...obstacles..." Lord Galans pauses as his gaze shifts to Lord Haxx, "we may need to overcome?" With a frown, Lord Haxx turns on his heel and storms away.

Lord Rhynehurst clears his throat, warming to the subject. "Certainly. In my years, I've collected quite the eclectic repertoire of knowledge. What would you like to know about? Monsters? Men? Lost lore? The Iron Wood has them all in spades."

Tell us about Monsters. If the PCs ask what sort of creatures reside in the Iron Wood, Lord Rhynehurst says:

"The Iron Wood has a fair number of dangerous animals which take affront at intruders, but by far what you must be wary of are its lycanthropes." Lord Rhynehurst nods to the twin moons of Luna and Celene glowing full in the night sky. "Midwinter Eve is a time of celebration, but with both moons full the next several days are dangerous times as well. Carry silver weapons with you if you plan to enter that mist-haunted place. Plenty of shops in town can provide you such wares, but I recommend the Argentium along the Riverwalk or the Able Adventurer storehouse near the docks. Mostly because I own them, really."

Tell us about Men. If the PCs ask what sort of people reside in the Iron Wood, Lord Rhynehurst says:

“Among the trees live a tribe of reclusive, primitive elves, but they won’t bother you if you don’t bother them. The only town of note is Glory, right in the center along the Iron Road. Lord Shannus, an elven half-dragon, holds claim to Glory and, practically speaking, the entire Iron Wood. He can have it, as far as I’m concerned—his protection keeps the trade from Veluna rolling right in to my front door. Furthermore, Lord Shannus has a long history of opposing the lycanthropes in the Iron Wood. To be honest, before he arrived, my own Silver Guard ably kept the monsters within the Iron Wood, but Lord Shannus hunts the beasts in their very lairs. Any uninvited party in the Iron Wood may have to contend with his—pardon the pun—draconian laws regarding lycanthropic infections.”

Tell us about Lost Lore. If the PCs ask what sort of history or treasures reside in the Iron Wood, Lord Rhynehurst says:

“Very old tales speak of a time when the barbaric elves of the Iron Wood wove a great kingdom, but that was long ago. All that remains of it today is a network of passages—miles long, some say—that riddle the ground beneath the Iron Wood. Some few artifacts of their civilized days may also remain but, alas, I know of none. (Note that this last point is mostly a red herring, as the PCs won’t enter the passages beneath the Iron Wood in this adventure. However, the Pylons and the Skyroad *are* artifacts of those long-forgotten days.)

After the PCs have the chance to question Lord Rhynehurst as much as they’d like, Lord Galans escorts the party out of Lord Rhynehurst’s company. Move on to Encounter One.

ENCOUNTER ONE: FORCES ALIGN

Once Lord Galans has escorted the PCs back to their boat, he arranges some privacy for himself and the PCs and gets right down to business.

Lord Galans briefly summarizes the Skyroad running from the Kron Hills to Taymouth (if the PCs don’t already know about it) and explains that this fabulous conveyance is only one leg of a triangle of roads that could speed trade throughout the Viscounty. Two of the three Pylons supporting the Skyroad are active. If the third is activated, then all three roads become active, as well. The third Pylon is in the Iron Wood, about an hour north of the town of Glory.

Lord Galans explains that he sent messages to Lord Shannus about activating the Pylon. Lord Galans even offered to share in the tolls on the Skyroads with Lord Shannus. All of Lord Galans’ offers were curtly refused. Lord Galans heard that a team of adventurers were sent to activate the Pylon months ago, but haven’t returned. Lord Galans suspects that Magister Har sent the group, but he doesn’t offer this speculation unless asked directly. In any case, Lord Galans admits he didn’t send the group.

Lord Galans’ next plan is to venture into the Iron Wood and try to speak to Lord Shannus directly about the issue, offering further wealth and appealing to the good that the Skyroads bring to the Viscounty as a whole. The Iron Wood can be dangerous, however, so Lord Galans would like the PCs to join him. In addition to the dangers of the Iron Wood itself, Lord Galans suspects that Lord Haxx (whose stranglehold on river trade would be severely hampered if a Glory-to-Taymouth Skyroad were up and running) may seek to prevent the diplomatic mission. Lord Galans offers the PCs 50 gp times the APL played (100 gp at APL 2, 200 gp at APL 4, and 300 gp at APL 6) in order to accompany him. Lord Galans knows that adventurers can be expensive, but are often worth the cost. If the PCs haggle, Lord Galans increases the offer to 100 gp times the APL. Provided that the PCs agree, Lord Galans asks that they meet him on the west side of Rhynehurst in the morning to ride off to Glory (Lord Galans chuckles a little at this joke, still a tad tipsy).

If the PCs have any additional questions (regarding the Skyroad or the Pylons), Lord Galans insists that there will be plenty of time to answer those questions while traveling the next day.

The PCs are free to enjoy the Midwinter Eve Gala for the rest of the night. Feel free to invent whatever sort of opulent yacht-party events you’d like for the PCs. However, the PCs ought to know that a party is a prime place to pick up information on the current events and salacious details of Verbobonc.

Use the following Gather Information tables to give the PCs some extra details about the region and current events. Note any bonuses for each check, and use all that apply (that is, the bonuses stack). The results are cumulative; read the DC obtained and all lower results.

SHIP’S CREWS

Manning the ships and keeping them anchored are the ships’ crews. The crews are also in charge of fishing out party guests too drunk or clumsy to remain aboard. Most of these crews actually work for House Haxx.

Bonuses:

- PC owns a ship: +5 bonus.

- PC has 5 ranks in Profession (sailor) or similar: +2 bonus.
- PC is a member of House Haxx: +5 bonus.
- PC has a pair of Gnomish Spectacles upgraded with Knowledge (nature), Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (local: VTF): +2 bonus.

Results:

DC 5	You're standing on a ship, not a boat.
DC 10	The ships you're on are owned and operated by House Haxx, and are being lent to House Rhynehurst for the party.
DC 12	
DC 15	House Haxx's trade business has been suffering greatly due to the Skyroad running from Kron to Taymouth. Good thing there isn't one of them Skyroads along the river, or House Haxx would probably have to close down!
DC 18	
DC 20	Lord Haxx offered his ships to Rhynehurst to use for the party knowing that many nobles would be present, including Lord Galans.
DC 25	Lord Haxx instructed me to keep my ears open for the means of shutting off the Pylons. Do you know it?

PARTY GUESTS

Lord Rhynehurst extends his hospitality to many who travel in Verbobonc, and so there are a good number of wealthy merchants, clergy and adventurers present.

Bonuses:

- PC openly carries weapons or appears to practice magic: +2 bonus.
- PC is a member of the Wanderers of Coldeven, Twilight Falls Academy of Combat Mastery, or other meta-organization filled with adventuresome types: +2 bonus.
- PC has a pair of Gnomish Spectacles upgraded with Knowledge (nobility and royalty), Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (local: VTF): +2 bonus.

Results:

DC 5 Lord Rhynehurst throws a Midwinter

Eve party every year. This one is pretty good, although subdued due to the recent news of the Viscount's disappearance.

DC 10 That group of ramshackle buildings where the two rivers meet is Darkha'por. It's a Rhenee settlement that is marginally under the control of Rhynehurst.

DC 12
DC 15 Darkha'por is full of thieves, gamblers and harlots. *Add from adventurers:* No better time can be had in all the Viscounty. *Add from clergy:* No greater example of reprehensible decadence can be found in all the Viscounty.

DC 18
DC 20 Lord Shannus seems to be attracting odd sorts of people to his ranks. Creatures and people who are the spawn of dragons and people who worship dragons have been congregating in the town of Glory.

DC 25 Lord Haxx has spies trying to find a way of eliminating the Skyroad. But once the roads are turned on, there doesn't seem to be a way to turn them off.

PARTY STAFF

Wandering through and over the ships is the party staff. They serve drinks and food to guests and have been hired from Verbobonc City to cater the party.

Bonuses:

- PC is a member of, or has one or more influence points with, the Gentlemen of the Watch: +2 bonus.
- PC has a pair of Gnomish Spectacles upgraded with Knowledge (local: VTF): +2 bonus.

Results:

DC 5 The pastries stuffed with crab are excellent.

DC 10 The really good wine is served on the Commodore's ship (meaning Lord Rhynehurst's ship).

DC 12
DC 15 A dragon man was seen in Verbobonc City last week, it was said he was traveling to the town of Glory.

DC 18
DC 20 Construction around the Wrinkle Academy has gone into high swing—the place is practically bristling with metal

rods.

DC 25 There has been on occasion an odd lightning storm in Verbobonc. Fortunately the lightning didn't start any fires, since it struck the metal rods atop the Wrinkle Academy.

NOBLES

Minor nobles are in abundance at the party, with a few major nobles staying on the "Commodore's ship."

Bonuses:

- PC has a title: +4 bonus.
- PC is a member of a noble house meta-organization: +4 bonus.
- PC has at least one influence point with at least one noble house: +2 bonus.
- PC has a pair of Gnomish Spectacles upgraded with Knowledge (nobility and royalty), Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (local: VTF): +2 bonus.

Results:

DC 5	Your clothes are last year's fashion.
DC 10	I'm surprised that Lord Shannus is not in attendance. I heard he was invited. I was looking forward to meeting him, as he's quite reclusive.
DC 12	
DC 15	Lord Galans had asked Lord Rhynehurst to invite Lord Shannus on his behalf, but I hear that Lord Shannus refused.
DC 18	
DC 20	Lord Haxx and Lord Galans are often at odds with each other, but the rivalry appears to be escalating recently, especially in the wake of the Viscount's disappearance.
DC 25	Lord Galans is afraid that he'll lose face, and money, if he's unable to expand the use of the Skyroads. He knows one is in the Iron Wood, and will stop at nothing to turn it on.

TRITHEREONITES

Followers of Trithereon that start asking around soon realize, due to certain secret symbols and gestures, that several followers of Trithereon have insinuated themselves into the party. Only followers of Trithereon may gather information on the table below.

Bonuses:

- PC is a member of the Church of Trithereon meta-organization: +4 bonus.
- PC is divine spellcaster of Trithereon (cleric, favored soul, etc.): +2 bonus.
- PC is a member of the Mounted Borderers or other lawfully-aligned meta-organization: Subtract the character's number of promotion points in these organizations as a penalty.
- PC has a pair of Gnomish Spectacles upgraded with Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (local: VTF): +2 bonus.

Results:

DC 5	A fellow traveler greets you.
DC 10	This party is vile, and its food and drink are being served on the backs of the workmen who slave for a pittance.
DC 12	
DC 15	If you revere the Summoner, you should consider moving to Darkha'por. There are many of us living there and showing the Viscounty that truly free societies can exist.
DC 18	
DC 20	Haxx and Galans could be made to fight each other with enough prodding, which may loosen the grip the nobles have on the throat of the populace.
DC 25	There's something more sinister going on with the Skyroad. Money is flowing out of the Wrinkle Academy to activate these Pylons. This is bigger than just a trade squabble between Haxx and Galans.

THE FAMILY

Where there's money there's the Family. Members of the Family meta-organization that start asking around soon realize, due to certain secret symbols and gestures, that several Family members have insinuated themselves into the party. Only members of the Family meta-organization may gather information on the table below.

Bonuses:

- Add the character's affiliation score in the Family as a bonus.
- PC has a pair of Gnomish Spectacles upgraded with Knowledge Knowledge (local: VTF): +2 bonus.

Results:

DC 5	Good hunting tonight, friend.
DC 10	A fair amount to coin can be had by turning mercenary for Lord Shannus.
DC 12	
DC 15	Lord Shannus knows that Lord Galans wants to meet but has been biding his time. He's being very cagey, that one, and up to something.
DC 18	
DC 20	Lord Shannus is really gearing up for something big. Unfortunately, he isn't letting anyone in on his close secrets that isn't a dragon-type, which limits the amount of information we can get. We do know he's been working against those who would activate the Skyroads for a long time.
DC 25	There are rumors that Lord Shannus is hoarding silver. If you could liberate his coffers you could walk away a rich man.

Development: Meta-Org Ties: PCs that are members of the Family, the Church of Trithereon, House Haxx, House Shannus, or the Protectors of the Iron Wood meta-organizations receive a clandestine visitor sometime in the evening (disguised as a party guest, via a short invitation, or speaking from the shadows, as appropriate). In each case, the visitor knows that the character will be traveling with Lord Galans the next morning to Glory, in order to activate the Pylon.

- Members of the Family are told that the increased trade that the Skyroads would bring is a good thing. The Family member should ingratiate himself with Lord Galans and do his best to see that the Pylon is activated.
- Members of the Church of Trithereon are told that the Skyroad issue is not only causing a lot of strife between House Galans and House Haxx, but between Lord Galans and Lord Shannus as well. Strife among the nobles is a good thing. The character is instructed to do what he or she can in order to make sure the nobles are at each others' throats and report back on everything that happens.
- Members of House Haxx are warned to keep a low profile; Lord Galans likely doesn't know of their affiliation with his enemy, or doesn't think it's important. However, it's important to see that the Pylon is not activated, and to work against Lord Galans when possible. If the character determines how to shut down the Skyroads, that information is crucial to Lord

Haxx. (This is also something of a red herring, as no one knows how to shut off the Pylons.)

- Members of House Shannus and the Protectors of the Iron Wood are cautioned that the time is coming, and soon, when the character's loyalty to Lord Shannus will be tested. This will probably involve working against Lord Rhynhurst. The character must pass that test, and remain true to Lord Shannus, and let Lord Shannus' agents know of everything that's happened.

ENCOUNTER TWO: THE BLOCKADE

The next morning, Lord Galans has light horses or ponies for anyone without mounts. Lord Galans, several dozen of his guardsmen, and a bard retainer (a middle-aged Oeridian man named Darius) are also mounted and ready for the day's travel to Glory.

The next morning finds Lord Galans to be sullen and irritable as you ride toward the Iron Wood. Lord Galans grumbles about the noise of the horses, the heat of the day, and the brightness of the sun. His retinue of guardsmen, nearly forty men, fans out ahead as the noble slumps in his saddle. All signs of Lord Galans' previous night's festivities vanish when a guardsmen return with news of a group of House Haxx guards lying in wait ahead. Lord Galans immediately starts whispering instructions to his retainer, a pleasant-looking middle-aged man.

If any PCs want to eavesdrop, have them make a DC 15 Listen check. If they succeed, paraphrase the plan below to them. If the PCs do not succeed on the Listen check, or do not listen in, describe the action as it occurs.

Lord Galans has been expecting Lord Haxx to attempt something to keep him from activating the Pylon. He's pleased that it's something as straightforward as an ambush. Lord Galans instructs his bard to cast a *silence* and a widened *invisibility sphere* on Lord Galans and then use the *disguise self* spell to make the bard look like Lord Galans. The bard will then lead the Haxx Guards on a wild goose chase through the Iron Wood. The bard casts the spells and disguises himself to look like Lord Galans while the real Lord Galans requests all the PCs to keep within 20 feet of him. The bard then leads the remainder of the retinue up to where the House Haxx guards are stationed before veering off into the undergrowth. As the guards give chase, Lord Galans gleefully escorts the PCs down the road into the Iron Wood. The PCs can still see each other (per the

invisibility sphere spell description), but cannot hear each other until the spells expire, eight minutes later.

In this Encounter, the PCs may have some more specific questions for Lord Galans regarding their mission. Some questions the PCs may have for Lord Galans, and Lord Galans' answers, are as follows. Otherwise continue to Encounter Three:

- **What's a Pylon? What do they do?** The Pylons are massive towers of ancient elven construction. These Pylons create a magical conveyance above the ground and allow for very rapid travel between them. These conveyances are called the Skyroads.
- **How will we know the Pylon when we see it?** The Gnarley Forest Pylon was covered in an illusion of a tree. The Kron Hills Pylon had an illusion of a rock spire around it. This one most likely would also be disguised as a gigantic tree. (However, Lord Galans is mistaken: the illusion around the Iron Wood Pylon is already dispelled.) In its undisguised state, the Pylons look like a slim tower topped with a giant stone ball, forty feet across. A wide shelf sits under the ball. Lord Galans thinks they look like giant chess pawns.
- **How do we activate the Pylon?** The Pylon is a hollow tower. At the very top, inside the tower, are hundreds of switches that must be pulled in the proper order to turn on the Pylon. Trial and error seems to be the best way to find the proper order to flip these switches; without the proper knowledge (which Lord Galans doesn't have), it can take a hours to figure out the pattern. If the PCs played VER6-07 *Ride the Merchant's Highway*, then Lord Galans admits that they know as well as he does how to activate the Pylons.
- **Is the inside of the Pylon dangerous?** Honestly, yes. Both of the other Pylons had narrow, dangerous stairways ascending up through the tower and, in both Pylons, the stairs were trapped.
- **How do you turn a Pylon off?** Lord Galans is a little suspicious of this question—why would anyone want to turn one of them off while people are using them? Lord Galans admits that he doesn't know. Even flipping the switches back doesn't seem to shut the Pylon off. If there is a way to do it, Lord Galans doesn't know how and doesn't know of anyone that does.

- **What if activating the Pylon is bad?** It's not! The Pylons have allowed far greater trade to occur between Taymouth and the Kron. Everyone benefits from fast, safe trade routes.
- **How do we find the Pylon?** Lord Galans knows the general location, but seeing how the Pylon is a very large structure it should not be difficult to find, now that we know what to look for, even if it's covered in an illusion of a tree.
- **How do we get up to the Skyroad?** In VER6-07 *Ride the Merchant's Highway*, Lord Galans had his retainers build a giant crane to reach the top of the Taymouth Pylon. However, his mages subsequently discovered a levitative field next to the Pylon—sort of like a magical elevator—which allows carts, animals and people to be raised up to (or down from) the Skyroad itself quickly and safely.
- **What about the other two Pylons?** Both are working perfectly, allowing people to travel from Kron to Taymouth in a matter of hours instead of days. Lord Galans charges a small toll to use the road, but his people also help travelers along the road and regulate the flow of trade so there aren't any accidents.
- **Is anyone else looking for this Pylon?** Not likely, although clearly House Haxx is interested in keeping us from reaching the Pylon.

ENCOUNTER THREE: WHERE WOLF? THERE WOLF

Once the PCs have been on the Iron Road for several hours, read:

Hours pass in your journey. The thin mist of the Iron Wood whorls around your ankles, making travel along the Iron Road treacherous. The trees to either side of the Iron Road stand far apart, connected to each other by thin trails of mist like ethereal webs. You can see no more than a few dozen paces in either direction, except along the road, which is reasonably clear until the Iron Road bends out of sight ahead and behind you. You remember hearing that the mist in the Iron Wood has recently thinned, and that it used to be far thicker than this haze now present. But it is hard to imagine a forest more foreboding than this haunted place.

Lord Shannus' efforts to exterminate the lycanthropes have been very effective, and the population has thinned

and retreated to the south of the Iron Wood around the town of Validia. This has allowed many native predators to expand their range. A pack of rabid wolves has approached the road after hearing the party and are lying in wait. The wolves are dangerous and, due to their disease, quite aggressive. The trail is 15 feet wide here, and surrounded by underbrush which provides cover but does not seriously hamper movement. Have the PCs make DC 17 Spot checks to notice the wolves lurking in the underbrush to either side of the trail. PCs that succeed at this check may act in the surprise round as the wolves attack.

Describe the wolves as very large with yellowed eyes. These wolves act particularly aggressive as they attack. PCs may assume that these creatures are lycanthropes, particularly when they have to make Fortitude saves after each bite attack. Do not dissuade them of that assumption.

When the wolves attack, they do so with loud howls.

APL 2 (EL 3)

Wolves (3): hp 13 each; see *Monster Manual*. On a successful bite attack, a bitten mammal must make a DC 18 Fortitude save or contract rabies (see Appendix 2).

APL 4 (EL 5)

Wolves, Advanced (3): hp 20 each; see Appendix 1. On a successful bite attack, a bitten mammal must make a DC 18 Fortitude save or contract rabies (see Appendix 2).

APL 6 (EL 7)

Wolves, Advanced (6): hp 20 each; see Appendix 1. On a successful bite attack, a bitten mammal must make a DC 18 Fortitude save or contract rabies (see Appendix 2).

Tactics: The wolves have been driven mad with rabies and so continue to fight when they should run. If reduced to one-quarter of their hit points a wolf flees and attempts to elude pursuers.

Treasure: These wolves have no treasure. A PC examining a dead wolf may make a DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check to realize that these wolves were rabid.

ENCOUNTER FOUR: TWO ROADS DIVERGED IN A WOOD

After the wolves have been defeated, allow the PCs to take whatever precautions they wish concerning lycanthropy or healing. The PCs may seek out belladonna (or wolfsbane) to aid their companions. This herb grows wild in the Iron Wood, particularly in recent years as the lycanthropes haven't been able to destroy

patches of it. Locating such a patch of belladonna requires 4d20 minutes and a DC 18 Survival or Knowledge (nature) check.

Once the PCs have traveled several more hours, read or paraphrase the following:

Lord Galans mops the sweat from his face with a handkerchief and looks worriedly down the worn road toward Glory. "I must admit, I've had little dealings with Lord Shannus. His receiving his patents of nobility took us all a bit by surprise." Lord Galans looks off the road towards the north. "Here's my quandary. I know that the Pylon is north and a bit west of here. While I'm sure that Lord Shannus will welcome the increase in trade, I'm not sure if I should present my trade proposals to him before or after the Pylon is activated. Tell me, you've traveled these lands, should I approach Lord Shannus first and present my plan on bringing him wealth, or present him with the gift of the Pylon already activated?"

Lord Galans is genuinely interested in what the PCs suggest. The PCs may have knowledge that Lord Shannus is very opposed to activation of the Pylon.

As long as the PCs provide a reasoned answer, Lord Galans follows the PCs' suggestion. If the PCs seem divided, he follows whichever PCs make more sense.

If the PCs decide to turn on the Pylon first, continue to Encounter Five. If they chose to go to Glory first, skip to Encounter Six.

ENCOUNTER FIVE: SCOUTING THE PYLON

If the PCs chose to investigate the Pylon before going to Glory, read or paraphrase the following:

The Iron Wood Pylon is right where Lord Galans' directions indicated. Rather than being covered with any kind of illusion, however, the tower is plain to see as it thrusts up through the treetops. Were it not for the mist of the Iron Wood, you could probably see the Pylon from miles away. The Pylon is no more than a few hundred yards ahead of you.

The party may choose to sneak ahead, or just stride forward into the clearing. As soon as the PCs approach the clearing, however, they encounter a grisly sight.

The Pylon thrusts up out of a misty clearing just ahead of you, but a gruesome sight blocks your path. A long spear has been planted end-first into the ground, its point seven feet in the air. Mounted on the silvered head of the spear is a withered head,

which appears to have once been an elderly halfling. Behind, in the clearing, you can see several figures moving around through the haze.

This head belongs to one of the adventurers that Magister Har sent to activate the Iron Wood Pylon months ago (it belonged to a gnome halfling named Alden). The Mist Children Elves slew the adventurers and mounted their heads on spears throughout this area to warn away interlopers. The PCs may decide to take the longspear, once they have disposed of the head.

If the PCs take a closer look into the clearing, they can see several dozen grey elves moving about through the mist, sharpening weapons and keeping watch. The elves are all armed and armored, have wild, shaggy hair and bear talismans of bone, bark and leaves. A DC 10 Knowledge (local: VTF) reveals that these are Mist Children Elves, native to the Iron Wood. Unless the PCs are exceptionally sneaky (have each PC make a DC 25 Hide check and a DC 25 Move Silently check), the elves already know that the PCs are there. Generally, the Mist Children prefer to warn off, rather than immediately attack, intruders.

The PCs can also see a treehouse watchtower built at the edge of the clearing. The watchtower is twenty-five feet in the air and manned with archers.

Attack: If the players seem to be considering a frontal assault, warn them that there are many dozen elves present in the clearing. If the PCs insist on a fight, allow them every opportunity to break it off and escape. If necessary, use statistics from Encounter Eight.

Retreat: If the PCs want to retreat and go to the town of Glory, they may do so without confronting the elves. Go to Encounter Six.

Talk: If the PCs march into the clearing, the Mist Children Elves arrange themselves in a solid line between the PCs and the Pylon entrance. The PCs can see other humanoid heads placed on spears around the area. An elf wearing a golden circlet and a large elven courtblade steps forward to address the party in Elven. If none of the party speaks Elven, Lord Galans does. The elf with the golden circlet says ***"You are denied entry to this artifact of our people. The lord of the realm, the Dragonlord, will wish to speak to you – go to him now in the man-town called Glory."***

The elves do not parley further with the PCs, and threaten violence if the Pylon is approached. Lord Galans suggests caution and careful retreat when it's clear the Pylon is well-guarded and diplomacy will not suffice.

Lord Galans recommends either returning to Glory to open negotiations with Lord Shannus, or waiting for his

guardsmen to arrive and making an assault on the Pylon (go to Encounter Six or Eight accordingly). If for some reason the PCs decide to throw in their lot with the Mist Children elves against Lord Galans, Lord Galans attacks as soon as his guardsmen arrive: go to Encounter Nine.

Treasure:

Take the silver longspear with Alden's head on it.

All APLs: L: 15 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

ENCOUNTER SIX: GLORY BE

When the PCs arrive at the town of Glory, they see that the town has grown beyond its wooden palisade. The gates of the town remain open all day and night, and the residents of the town show little fear of lycanthropes or other monsters from the woods. Unlike in previous years, Lord Shannus has been able to tame the area, and this part of the Iron Wood is very safe.

Glory is a populous boomtown, where the residents thrive on trade of lumber and rare herbs. The place has the feel of a bustling frontier town. Because much of the town's growth occurred within the original wooden palisade walls, several of the buildings in the town are two to four stories tall.

Although the majority of townspeople are humans, there are a number of wild-haired grey elves dressed in handmade leather armor. These are Mist Children elves that have either "gone local" and moved into Glory from their woodland homes, or are just visiting. There are also several draconic and part-dragon creatures, such as dragon disciples and half-dragons. A few pseudodragons lounge about the town like proud tomcats, taking scraps of food from passersby and playing with children.

The architecture of Glory has taken on some of the draconic aspects of its inhabitants, as well. Many buildings sport tall, sweeping arches or mottled painting to look like scales. Although most signs are in Common, often a translation in Draconic is also included.

The centerpiece of the town of Glory is the Fallen Timber Tavern, the only building more than a few years old. In fact, the Fallen Timber Tavern has been in this spot in the Iron Wood longer than anyone can remember, and it remains the most popular establishment in Glory. It is also the site where Lord Shannus is most likely to be found (when he is in town and not out pursuing one of his obsessive quests).

In front of the Fallen Timber Tavern stand four large, iron cages big enough to hold a person. These cages are used to contain townspeople suspected of being infected with lycanthropy, in order to see whether they change in

the light of the full moon. Even though it is Midwinter and both moons are full, the cages stand empty. There has not been a lycanthrope attack in the area in many months, and the cages are now little more than a silent reminder of how bad things were before Lord Shannus came to Glory.

To the west of the town, along the road where the PCs arrive, is a large logging camp overseen by a simple man named Felton Grover. The loggers are a friendly lot whose recent hard work has made them reasonably wealthy men. New loggers arrive all the time to seek their fortunes. The PCs probably have no reason to visit the logging camp in this adventure, other than to meet the locals.

When the PCs approach the town, read:

The town of Glory has grown far beyond its wooden stockade, permanent buildings now pepper the surrounding woods, and a wide packed earth road leads to the center of the town. As you approach the town a pair of humanoids with clearly draconic heritage exits the building to your right, deep in discussion in a language that combines the fluidity of elven with harsh, almost reptilian hisses.

Elsewhere in the town, alongside the humans, elves and gnomes you'd expect anywhere in the Viscounty, you can make out other, similar creatures.

To any player who speaks draconic, and is an arcane caster, inform them that the two creatures are discussing the mechanics of maximizing an arcane spell without preparation. They eagerly engage any other similarly-inclined character in their esoteric conversation.

Any of the residents of Glory can tell the PCs that Lord Shannus is in the Fallen Timber Tavern. Almost everyone in the town thinks highly of their leader, despite his unusual and exotic appearance.

Development: I'm a Werewolf! The PCs may have heard rumors about the iron cages in Glory. If the PCs still think that they were attacked by werewolves previously in the adventure, they may be worried that they'll get stuck in the cages to test whether they are lycanthropes. As a result, bitten PCs may try to hide their "affliction" from the townspeople and Lord Shannus. However, the cages are not much used anymore, unless someone volunteers to spend time in one (to prove to friends or family that they aren't a werecreature) or are serving sentence for some sort of public crime (like brawling or drunkenness). No one is going to make any of the PCs stay in the iron cages in this adventure. Glory now has enough high-level clerics in residence that a *remove disease* or *remove curse* spell is the most efficient

way of curing lycanthropy. In fact, both of these spells are readily available at the prices listed in the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*. Clerics in Glory are pretty used to someone coming to them and saying, "I was bit by an animal and I'm afraid it's lycanthropy. Can you help?"

ENCOUNTER SEVEN: DIPLOMACY IS NOT AN OPTION

The Fallen Timber Tavern in the center of Glory is plainly the oldest building in the town. Four large iron cages stand in front of the building. Although the cages are reasonably rust free, it does not look like they've been used in some time.

Allow the PCs to prepare themselves as they wish and enter the Fallen Timber Tavern. Read or paraphrase the following.

A herald at the entrance ushers you into the main hall of the tavern and announces each of you, finishing with Lord Galans. The interior of this building looks very little like a typical tavern, and more like a Lord's great hall. The hall is well lit by numerous magic torches and filled with a sizable group of people, many of whom exhibit the same draconic ancestry. The crowd falls silent as a hundred eyes gaze at you.

Finally a deep voice rises from the far recesses. "What occasion could bring the Lord of Horses so deep into my wood?" Lord Shannus, his scales gleaming in the reflected light, strides forward.

Stepping forward slightly Lord Galans begins, "I would speak with you, Lord Shannus, of expanding your coffers and your influence in the Viscounty. May I speak with you alone?"

Lord Shannus nods slightly and gestures to the door to a side room.

PCs skilled in diplomacy may attempt to take part in the discussion with Lord Shannus. If they attempt to follow the two nobles, Lord Shannus' guards block the way into the side room and deny admittance. It is possible that these guards may be swayed though through the use of Diplomacy. The guards begin with an Unfriendly attitude to anyone trying to circumvent Lord Shannus' orders and will only admit the PCs if they are able to change their attitude to helpful (a DC 40 Diplomacy check). PCs that are members of the House Shannus meta-org or the Protectors of the Iron Wood need only succeed on a DC 10 Diplomacy check.

If a PC succeeds on this Diplomacy check, the two dragon kin allow the character (only) to enter the side room. Once there, both Lord Galans and Lord Shannus ask the PC to leave them to their discussions. The PC must make another Diplomacy check (with the same DC as above) in order to convince the nobles to let him or her stay. If the PC fails he is escorted out of the room.

IN WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS

Provided that the PC succeeds, take the player aside and provide a summary of the negotiations:

- Lord Galans promises the increase of trade and the potential of greatly increasing Shannus' coffers through the toll on the road.
- Lord Shannus points out that increased human presence in the Iron Wood is what allowed the Great Dire Dark (a vile evil behind the Glory series of adventures in 592 to 594 CY) to escape its confines.
- Lord Galans counters with the fact that adventurers, such as those he has brought with him, made the difference in revealing and defeating the Great Dire Dark. The use of the Skyroad brings with it those most capable of defending Glory.
- Lord Shannus states that Glory has no problem defending itself from either the lycanthropes in the wood or outside influences and would not welcome others meddling in his holdings.
- Lord Galans defensively attempts to claim that he has no interest in Lord Shannus' holdings; he only wishes to see Lord Shannus prosper in his recently granted title.
- Lord Shannus coolly states that the elves predate the human corruption in the land, that the Pylons are relics to that fact and he will not allow humans to tamper with them.

At this point negotiations break down, as Lord Shannus is unwilling to budge on this issue (with or without a character's assistance).

OUTSIDE THE NEGOTIATIONS

Any PCs who wait outside:

As the nobles discuss their business in rising tones on the other side of the door, a halfling strides toward you, a smile on his face and his hand outstretched in greeting, from among Lord Shannus' retainers. The middle-aged halfling has a birthmark in the shape of a star spread across his left cheek.

PCs that played VER6-02 *Delve the Wizard's Dungeon* recognize this halfling as Gurtom Starcheek, who attempted (and perhaps succeeded) in ambushing the PCs (twice) and taking Magister Har's map from them.

Gurtom greets the PCs warmly (by name, if they played in VER6-02 *Delve the Wizard's Dungeon*, adding that he bears no ill will against them and hopes the same from them). Presuming that the PCs are amiable, Gurtom can provide a fair amount of information to the PCs, while trying to extract the same from the PCs. Below is what Gurtom knows, and is willing to sell or trade to the PCs:

- **Gurtom offers:** Gurtom has worked for Lord Shannus for some time now. Lord Shannus tasked him to be sure that Magister Har's group of hired adventurers (the PCs, in VER6-02 *Delve the Wizard's Dungeon*) did not succeed.

In exchange for this knowledge: Gurtom wants to know how long the PCs have worked for Lord Galans, and what tasks they've done for him (particularly the events of VER6-07 *Ride the Merchant's Highway*, if the PCs played that adventure).

- **Gurtom offers:** Gurtom knows that Lord Shannus does not want the Skyroads turned on, although Gurtom is not sure why.

In exchange for this knowledge: Gurtom wants to know how the Pylons are activated, how best to get up to the Skyroad, and how fast travel on the Skyroad is.

- **Gurtom offers:** Lord Shannus has been gathering dragon kin to him. Gurtom isn't sure why, although they are powerful creatures and powerful allies are good.

In exchange for this knowledge: Gurtom wants to know as much information as the PCs can provide about the House Haxx/House Galans rivalry.

- **Gurtom offers:** Gurtom offers to sell the PCs a selection of unusual magic items that he's acquired. These items appear on the AR for this adventure as the *cloak of comfort +1*, *horizon goggles*, and *spellguard rings*.

In exchange for this knowledge: Gurtom wants to tap the PCs' sources of magic items, to perhaps purchase them for himself. Each PC interested in Gurtom's items must select three items (Gurtom doesn't care which, so long as all the items are different from all of the PCs) to which the PC currently has access on his or her

ARs and cross them off. This represents that the PC explains to Gurtom how to find and purchase the items.

In short, the PCs may gain access to the *cloak of comfort +1*, *horizon goggles*, and *spellguard rings* on the AR by crossing off three different items to which the PC has access on previous ARs. The PC has given up some access in order to get different access. If a PC can't or won't give up any previous access, then cross off the *cloak of comfort +1*, *horizon goggles*, and *spellguard rings* on the AR for this adventure. The PC cannot pick and choose; Gurtom offers access to all three items in exchange for three items, or no access at all (he won't make a one-for-one trade).

- **Only if his interaction with the PCs is going well does Gurtom offer:** Lord Shannus has been mining and buying large quantities of silver. His blacksmiths turn some of it into weapons, but Lord Shannus has a hoard of it stashed somewhere in his chambers. The right kind of group might be able to liberate some of that silver, when the time is right.
- **In exchange for this knowledge:** Gurtom asks the PCs to aid and protect him when he makes his move to acquire Lord Shannus' hoard. He admits that he plans to wait until the time is right, which may be weeks or months in the future. If the PCs promise to assist him, Gurtom promises a cut of the loot.

When the negotiations between Lord Galans and Lord Shannus are complete (and after enough time for the PCs' conversation with Gurtom to wind down) read the following:

Lord Shannus exits the side room, with Lord Galans following. Lord Galans' face is flushed with emotion as they walk "It's the opportunity of a lifetime—don't be a fool and squander this!"

Lord Shannus does not immediately answer, although the stiffness in his tone reveals his withheld anger. "I've told you my decision Lord Galans. It is late, and though I would not turn you out to the wood, I expect you will not tarry here come morning."

Lord Galans pauses for a moment and then strides out of the hall, gesturing for you to join him as he does. Lord Shannus' eyes sweep across your party as you turn and leave his hall.

CHOICES

Immediately after the PCs leave the Fallen Timber Tavern, read the following:

Lord Galans meets you outside. "My retinue will be arriving shortly; I need to meet with them. Get some rest, and then meet me at the gate an hour before dawn. We'll ride out to the Pylon in the morning. I need to see what other support I can gather." Lord Galans turns to walk off into town, a determined look on his face.

If any PCs express hesitancy Lord Galans levels his gaze at them and says *"Back me here and I will remember your loyalty. In fact, I will remember your loyalty either way."* Ask the PCs where they're staying and inform them of the numerous inns available.

At an opportune moment within an hour or so after the meeting in the Fallen Timber Tavern, read the following.

"Ah, there you are." Gurtom says as he approaches, his hands in plain view. "Lord Shannus has instructed me to find out what your intentions are. There's no reason to be coy, it's clear that Lord Galans isn't going to just leave the Iron wood. Lord Shannus just wants to know where you stand, and if he can perhaps get you to stand with him."

If questioned Gurtom makes the following offer:

- Lord Shannus is a rising star in the nobility, and far longer lived than any human. His influence will be felt for centuries.
- Lord Shannus has a fair amount of silver available to him. He is willing to pay 1500 silver to any who stand with him.
- As you may have noticed there are numerous dragon kin in Glory. Lord Shannus will allow any who stand with him to learn from these dragon kin.

Ask the PCs with whom they choose to stand. If the PCs choose to support Lord Galans, continue to Encounter Eight. If they choose to support Lord Shannus, skip to Encounter Nine. If they are determined to remain neutral in this conflict, skip to Encounter Ten.

Encourage the PCs to decide as a group, as the adventure becomes very difficult if the next fight is attempted by only a fraction of the party. However, if the PCs are insistent, you might run both Encounter Eight for one group and Encounter Nine for the other (although the PCs should, under no circumstances, be in a position to fight each other).

ENCOUNTER EIGHT: ASSAULTING THE PYLON

If the PCs choose to assist Lord Galans allow them to prepare their spells or themselves in whatever way they wish overnight. Before dawn, Lord Galans meets the PCs and praises them for having made the right decision on behalf of the people of Verbobonc. He rides out of town to where his men are camped. The men are already preparing weapons and mounting horses for a ride to the Pylon. Lord Galans intends to lead his men in a direct assault on the Pylon, hoping to buy enough time for the PCs to slip inside and activate it.

When Lord Galans' forces are in place, read the following:

Mist eddies around the hoofs of your horses as you join Lord Galans and his men as they ride toward the Pylon. Gurtom Starcheek also appears on your flanks, giving you a short shrug, "Galans pays better" is his only explanation for his presence.

Lord Galans rides up to your group. "My men and I will keep most of the guards occupied. You and your party make toward the tower itself, you should know more about what to expect inside."

Lord Galans will entertain any other plan so long as it involves getting the PCs through the entrance and into the Pylon; he knows the PCs are best equipped to handle whatever may be inside and activate the Pylon. Whenever the PCs decide to attack read or paraphrase the following:

Breaking through the tree line you can see the tower is guarded by dozens of elves and other draconic creatures. They draw weapons, hissing with anticipation of the upcoming battle.

As long as Galans' guardsmen can draw attention away from the entrance, the PCs only face a small contingent of Mist Children at the entrance to the Pylon, and then they can slip inside (once they do, go to Encounter Eleven).

APL 2 (EL 4)

Mist Children Defenders (4): gray elf Barbarian¹; hp 12 each; see Appendix 1.

APL 4 (EL 6)

Mist Children Defenders (4): gray elf Barbarian¹/Dragon Shaman¹; hp 18 each; see Appendix 1.

APL 6 (EL 8)

Mist Children Defenders (4): gray elf Barbarian¹/Dragon Shaman³; hp 38 each; see Appendix 1.

Tactics: The Mist Children defenders charge and rage at the first opportunity, relying upon their strength of arms to overcome their opponents. If wounded they will gladly step back from combat, draw their healing potions and drink them. At higher APLs, the Mist Children defenders cycle through their draconic auras as needed for best effect.

Treasure:

Loot the Mist Children defenders.

APL 2: L: 412 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *potions of cure light wounds* (4), 4 gp per character each.

APL 4: L: 552 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *potions of cure moderate wounds* (4), 25 gp per character each.

APL 6: L: 460 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *+1 breastplate* (4), 112 gp per character each; *potions of cure moderate wounds* (4), 25 gp per character each.

As the fight winds down, the Mist Children war leader shouts to the elven forces (in Elven) that something is happening with the Pylon (sure enough, the ball high atop the Pylon crackles with energy). Lord Galans shouts for the PCs to seize their opportunity to enter the Pylon and activate it (go to Encounter Eleven).

ENCOUNTER NINE: DEFENDING THE PYLON

This encounter is for PCs who side with Lord Shannus. Lord Shannus asks the PCs to aid the Mist Children elves in defending the Pylon, as he is certain Lord Galans will make an attack on the Pylon very soon. The encounter begins with the PCs and the various guards from Lord Shannus on watch in front of the Pylon. The war leader responsible for the PCs (a female gray elf named Allianara) positions the PCs near the entrance to the Pylon.

When the PCs are in place, read the following.

The mist in the Iron Wood lies thick and wet upon the ground as you wait at the Pylon. The leader of the defenders you tilts her head slightly before turning to you. In thickly accented Common she speaks. "They come now, prepare yourselves."

Allow the PCs three rounds to ready themselves before continuing. From the trees comes the eerie wail of a reed flute (this is Lord Galans' bard using his inspire courage

ability to bolster Lord Galans' men). After three rounds read or paraphrase the following:

From the tree line before you at least two score of men stream. Their blades wet with dew, they simultaneously give a shout and charge. From your own ranks the hiss of steel being drawn mingles with the draconic hiss from your forces.

As the battle rages around the Pylon, the PCs have to contend with a small section of the forces: eight of Lord Galans' guardsmen.

APL 2 (EL 4)

House Galans Guardsman (8): human Warrior1; hp 9 each; see Appendix 1.

APL 4 (EL 6)

House Galans Guardsman (8): human Swashbuckler1; hp 15 each; see Appendix 1.

APL 6 (EL 8)

House Galans Guardsman (8): human Swashbuckler2; hp 24 each; see Appendix 1.

Tactics: The House Galans Guardsmen are intelligent fighters. They begin combat by throwing tanglefoot bags at the PCs in order to slow them down, then charge. At higher APL's, the House Galans Guardsmen tumble into flanking positions. Lord Galans has outfitted his men with a great number of potions which they keep on their belts. If injured, the guardsmen gladly step back from combat, draw their potions, and heal themselves. The guardsmen flee if reduced to three or fewer guardsmen.

Treasure:

Loot the House Galans guardsmen.

APL 2: L: 408 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *potions of cure light wounds*(8), 4 gp per character each.

APL 2: L: 416 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *potions of cure moderate wounds*(8), 25 gp per character each.

APL 6: L: 250 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *+1 chain shirt*(8), 104 gp per character each; *potions of cure moderate wounds*(8), 25 gp per character each.

As the fight winds down, the Mist Children war leader shouts to the PCs (in Elven or Draconic if any PCs understand either language; otherwise, in broken Common) that something is happening with the Pylon. Sure enough, the ball high atop the Pylon crackles with energy). She sends the PCs up the interior of the Pylon to stop it (go to Encounter Eleven).

ENCOUNTER TEN: STRICTLY NEUTRAL

This encounter should be hard for the PCs to enter. If they give up on both sides and leave the area of the Pylon entirely, conclude the adventure at this time (let the players know that the Pylon was ultimately activated, but they don't know how) and delete both "Attacked the Mist Children Elves" and "Defended the Mist Children Elves" from the ARs.

If the PCs stay near the Pylon, it's likely one side or the other mistakes them for the enemy. If the PCs hang out near the Pylon, the House Galans Guardsmen may think they're defending it and attack (run Encounter Nine from the battle forward). If the PCs wait near Lord Galans and his men, the Mist Children may attack (run Encounter Eight from the battle forward).

If the PCs stay near the Pylon and remain genuinely neutral, it's up to the DM to engineer a way to get the PCs into the tower and on to Encounter Eleven. Perhaps the PCs notice that, in the chaos of battle, the entrance to the Pylon is left unguarded. Perhaps the PCs note the crackling energy of the Pylon being activated, and one side or the other shouts for the PCs to investigate. If the PCs just won't take the bait, conclude the adventure.

In any case, PCs who don't participate in fighting either side get no experience or treasure for this fight (but some experience for sticking to their commitment to neutrality) and earn neither "Attacked the Mist Children Elves" nor "Defended the Mist Children Elves," even if they later investigate the tower.

ENCOUNTER ELEVEN: INSIDE THE PYLON

Read or paraphrase the following once the PCs enter the Pylon:

The inside of the Pylon is dark and quiet compared to the clash of arms in the clearing outside. The center of the Pylon may have contained some wooden supports long ago, but now all that is left in the hollow center is a perilously narrow stone spiral staircase. The stairs, barely five feet wide, cling to the curved interior walls of the Pylon, and wind up into the gloom. High above you, the stairs end at a small landing. As you look up there is a small burst of arcane energy. Something is up there.

The interior of the Pylon contains narrow spiral stone stairs, winding up the interior wall of the tower. The Pylon is about 60 feet in diameter at its base, narrowing to only 30 feet in diameter at its top. The interior of the tower is about 110 feet from top to bottom, but the stairs themselves are about 165 feet long (there are 165 stairs, each about one foot wide and about one foot high).

To represent this winding stairway, and because positioning of each character on the stairs may be important, you may want to draw a spiral on a battlemat five feet wide and 165 feet long, like that found on Map 3.

Moving faster than a single move on the stairs each turn requires a DC 10 Balance check to avoid slipping. A character that slips can catch the edge of the stairs with a DC 15 Reflex save, and climb back up with a DC 10 Climb check. Failing the Reflex save (or failing the Climb check by more than 5) results in a fall.

A character knocked unconscious on the stairs may make an immediate DC 10 Balance check. Failure results in a fall off of the stairs.

If a character should jump or fall from the stairs, he falls about two-thirds of the distance up the stairs he was located (round down to the nearest 10 feet increment). For example, a character 90 feet up the stairs falls 60 feet straight down to the floor of the tower. A character 150 feet up the stairs falls 100 feet straight down to the floor of the tower. As usual, a fall results in 1d6 points of damage per 10 feet fallen.

The Trapped Stairs

Three of the stairs are trapped. One of the stairs contains a trap with a *fog cloud* spell. Near the top of the stairway, another of the stairs contains a trap with a *fog cloud* at APL 2 and 4, or a *sleet storm* spell at APL 6. Very near the top, another stair contains a *summon nature's ally* trap which summons one or more thoqqas back down at the base of the tower. The *fog cloud/sleet storm* traps automatically and immediately reset. The *summon nature's ally* trap resets after an hour.

A PC may jump over a trapped stair with a DC 5 Jump check. However, a DC 10 Balance check is immediately required, or the PC slips, as described above.

The three traps on the stairs are marked on Map 3, and are as follows:

- 45 feet up from the bottom of the stairs: a *fog cloud* trap fills the tower with fog, described below. However, PCs wearing the Gnomish Spectacles may see clearly through the fog if this trap is triggered.

- 145 feet up from the bottom of the stairs: another *fog cloud* trap (at APL 2 and 4) or a *sleet storm* trap (at APL 6) fills the tower with fog or sleet, described below. However, PCs wearing the Gnomish Spectacles may see clearly through the fog or sleet if this trap is triggered. This trap may be redundant with the first trap, but is present as a “backup” in case the first trap is disarmed or avoided.
- 160 feet up from the bottom of the stairs (very near the top of the tower), a *summon nature's ally* trap (varies by APL), as described below.

THE FIRST TRAP

ALL APLS (EL SPECIAL)

Modified *Fog Cloud* Trap: CR 3; magic device; touch trigger (stair); automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*fog cloud* spell, 13th-level druid; fog fills the tower for 130 minutes); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

EL Note: As this trap has no chance to kill the PCs, by itself this trap has no EL value and bypassing it earns no XP. However, if this trap is left in place, PCs may have a little bit more difficulty fighting the summoned thoqqas. Therefore, the presence of the *fog cloud* traps increases the EL of the *summon nature's ally* trap by one.

THE SECOND TRAP

APLS 2 AND 4 (EL SPECIAL)

Modified *Fog Cloud* Trap: CR 3; magic device; touch trigger (stair); automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*fog cloud* spell, 13th-level druid; fog fills the tower for 130 minutes); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

EL Note: As this trap has no chance to kill the PCs, by itself this trap has no EL value and bypassing it earns no XP. However, if this trap is left in place, PCs may have a little bit more difficulty fighting the summoned thoqqas. Therefore, the presence of the *fog cloud* traps increases the EL of the *summon nature's ally* trap by one.

APL 6 (EL 2)

Modified *Sleet Storm* Trap: CR 4; magic device; touch trigger (stair); automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*sleet storm* spell, 13th-level druid; blinding sleet fills the entire tower for 13 minutes); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

Note: While this spell is in effect, the Balance DCs required to navigate the stairs increase by 10. A character that takes only a 5 ft. step in a round need not make this Balance check, but even taking a single move on the stairs now requires a DC 20 Balance check. PCs on the floor of the tower are also affected, and have to make the usual DC 10 Balance check in order to move about the floor of the tower (see the spell description).

Furthermore, since PCs in a *sleet storm* are effectively blinded, anyone searching for traps has a -4 penalty to Search checks (which is one of the usual effects of being blinded).

EL Note: As long as the PCs are slow and careful, this trap is unlikely to kill or hurt the PCs. However, since this spell effect can dramatically increase the chance of a dangerous fall, it is the equivalent of an EL 2 encounter.

THE THIRD TRAP

APL 2 (EL 5)

Summon Nature's Ally III Trap: CR 4; magic device; touch trigger (stair); automatic reset (one hour); spell effect (*summon nature's ally III* spell, 13th-level druid; summons a thoqqua to the middle of the base of the tower; Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28).

Note: This trap summons a single thoqqua to the middle of the base of the tower. The thoqqua immediately attacks any character it can detect. Since this creature has tremorsense and a burrowing speed, it is not hindered by the *fog cloud* (that is, it does not have a miss chance) and can pursue creatures on the stairs with ease by burrowing through the walls and stairs (without making Climb or Balance checks).

EL Note: The EL of this trap has been increased by 1 due to the presence of the *fog cloud* traps.

APL 4 (EL 6)

Summon Nature's Ally IV Trap: CR 5; magic device; touch trigger (stair); automatic reset (one hour); spell effect (*summon nature's ally IV* spell, 13th-level druid; summons 1d3 thoqqas to the middle of the base of the tower; Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29).

Note: This trap summons 1d3 thoqqas to the middle of the base of the tower (roll 1d3 or choose a number based on the current combat capability of the party). The thoqqas immediately attack any PCs they can detect. Since these creatures have tremorsense and a burrowing speed, they are not hindered by the *fog cloud* (that is, they do not have a miss chance) and can pursue creatures on the stairs with ease by burrowing through the walls and stairs (without making Climb or Balance checks).

EL Note: The EL of this trap has been increased by 1 due to the presence of the *fog cloud* traps.

APL 6 (EL 7)

Summon Nature's Ally V Trap: CR 6; magic device; touch trigger (stair); automatic reset (one hour); spell effect (*summon nature's ally V* spell, 13th-level druid; summons 1d4+1 thoqqas to the middle of the base of the tower; Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30).

Note: This trap summons 1d4+1 thoqqas to the middle of the base of the tower (roll 1d4+1 or choose a number based on the current combat capability of the party). The thoqqas immediately attack any PCs they can detect. Since these creatures have tremorsense and a burrowing speed, they are not hindered by the *sleet storm* (that is, they do not have a miss chance or need to make Balance checks) and can pursue creatures on the stairs with ease by burrowing through the walls and stairs (without making Climb or Balance checks).

EL Note: The EL of this trap has been increased by 1 due to the presence of the *fog cloud* trap and the *sleet storm* trap.

TO THE TOP

Once the PCs reach the top of the Pylon, go on to the next Encounter.

ENCOUNTER TWELVE: AND THE WINNER IS...HAR!

Once the PCs arrive at the top landing, by whatever means, read the following:

*As you arrive the landing you spy a small grayish creature (add **through the fog** if a *fog cloud* trap has been activated). **The dusty imp-like creature flips a final lever into place with satisfaction.** (PCs that have played either of the previous adventures in this series recognize Threnodee the dust mephit, Magister Har's familiar.) **With a final burst of arcane power the top of the tower begins to hum. The winged creature waves his hand at the levers and a solid wall of stone seals off the controls. Turning to your party the creature gives a slight bow. "My master thanks you for your assistance, but felt he'd best take things into his own hands at this point." The dust mephit then twists a ring on his finger and, with a slight pop, disappears.***

CONCLUSION

At the end of this adventure, all three Pylons are activated and the Skyroad system connects all three far-flung areas of the Viscounty of Verbobonc. Lord Galans' forces claim the area around the Pylon, and soon a bustling trading post is set up. Lord Shannus does not make any immediate retaliation—for now.

If the PCs aided the Mist Children elves, Lord Galans coldly tells them to be on their way, as he has no further use for them. However, agents of Lord Shannus thank the PCs for their help, regardless of the unfortunate outcome, and offer the promised payment. The PCs earn "Defended the Mist Children Elves" on the AR.

If the PCs aided Lord Galans' forces, Lord Galans greets them happily as they descend from the tower, the battle clearly his. Lord Galans warns the PCs that they are likely to meet trouble should they ever return to Glory or encounter the Mist Children elves again. For now, however, he's willing to travel along the Skyroad with them to his holdings near Taymouth while his men set up and defend a trading post in the clearing. Lord Galans also pays the promised amount to the PCs. The PCs earn "Attacked the Mist Children Elves" on the AR.

Your adventures done at last, you have time to rest from the events of the previous days. You soon hear that the entire Skyroad triangle is up and running, bringing speedy trade to the far reaches of the Viscounty. What further adventures the Skyroad holds for you, only time will tell.

The End

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.

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 One: Forces Align

The PCs learn at least some information about what to expect in the Iron Wood:

APL 2	30 XP
APL 4	45 XP
APL 6	60 XP

Encounter Three: Where Wolf? There Wolf

Defeat the diseased wolves:

APL 2	90 XP
APL 4	150 XP
APL 6	210 XP

Encounter Eight: Assaulting the Pylon or Encounter Nine: Defending the Pylon or Encounter Ten: Strictly Neutral

Defeat the Mist Children defenders or the House Galans guardsmen:

APL 2	120 XP
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APL 4 180 XP

APL 6 240 XP

Remain completely neutral without getting caught up in either side:

APL 2 60 XP

APL 4 120 XP

APL 6 180 XP

Encounter Eleven: Inside the Pylon

Survive, disable or bypass the *sleet storm* traps:

APL 2 0 XP

APL 4 0 XP

APL 6 60 XP

Survive, disable or bypass the *summon nature's ally* trap:

APL 2 150 XP

APL 4 180 XP

APL 6 210 XP

Story Awards

The PCs gave reasoned, well-thought-out advice to Lord Galans and carefully considered the options they were given:

APL 2 30 XP

APL 4 45 XP

APL 6 60 XP

The players enjoyed themselves and roleplayed well:

APL 2 30 XP

APL 4 45 XP

APL 6 60 XP

Total Possible Experience

APL 2 450 XP

APL 4 675 XP

APL 6 900 XP

TREASURE SUMMARY

During an adventure, PCs 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 PCs cannot take the time to loot the bodies, they do not gain this gold. If you feel it is reasonable that PCs 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), PCs may return to retrieve loot. If the PCs 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 PCs may want to use them during the adventure. Many times PCs 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 PCs total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate.

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

Encounter Five: Scouting the Pylon

Take the silver longspear.

All APLs: L: 15 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp.

Encounter Eight: Assaulting the Pylon

Loot the Mist Children defenders.

APL 2: L: 412 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *potions of cure light wounds*(4), 4 gp per character each.

APL 4: L: 552 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *potions of cure moderate wounds*(4), 25 gp per character each.

APL 6: L: 460 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *+1 breastplate* (4), 112 gp per character each; *potions of cure moderate wounds* (4), 25 gp per character each.

Encounter Nine: Defending the Pylon

Loot the House Galans guardsmen.

APL 2: L: 408 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *potions of cure light wounds*(8), 4 gp per character each.

APL 2: L: 416 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *potions of cure moderate wounds*(8), 25 gp per character each.

APL 6: L: 250 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *+1 chain shirt* (8), 104 gp per character each; *potions of cure moderate wounds* (8), 25 gp per character each.

Conclusion

Reward from Lord Roland Galans.

All APLs: L: 0 gp; C: 50 gp (or 100 gp if negotiated); M: 0 gp.

-or- Reward from Lord Shannus.

All APLs: L: 0 gp; C: 150 gp; M: 0 gp.

Maximum Possible Treasure

APL 2: 450 gp

APL 4: 650 gp

APL 6: 900 gp

ITEMS FOR THE ADVENTURE RECORD

👑 **Metaorganizational Access:** Members of the following metaorganizations at the time of this adventure receive Frequency: Regional access to items marked with their organization's symbol:

† - Protectors of the Iron Wood

‡ - House Galens, House Haxx

• - Church of Trithereon

* - The Battirovka Family

Item Access

APL 2-4:

❖ ‡ *Blessed Bandage* (Freq: Adv, HB, 10 gp)

❖ • **Boots of Striding and Springing* (Freq: Adv, DMG, 5,500 gp)

❖ *Bullet of Sound* (Freq: Adv, MH, 196 gp)

❖ ‡† *+1 Cloak of comfort* (Freq: Regional, CM, 3,000 gp)

❖ † *Elixir of Blindsight* (Freq: Adv (limit 1), DrM, 1,000 gp)

❖ ‡† *Everlasting Rations* (Freq: Adv, HB, 350 gp)

❖ *Rod of sure striking* (Freq: Adv, DMG2, 4,000 gp)

- ❖ *Spellguard rings* (Freq: Regional, CM, 4,000 gp)
- ❖ *Vest of resistance +1* (Freq: Adv, CArc, 1,000 gp)
- ❖ *Wand of cure light wounds* (Freq: Adventure, DMG, 750 gp, limit 3)

APL 6 (all of APL 2-4 plus the following):

- ❖ *+2 Ring of protection* (Freq: Adv, DMG, 8,000 gp)
- ❖ *‡Daern's Instant Tent* (Freq: Adv, HB, 9,000 gp)
- ❖ *†Horizon goggles* (Freq: Regional, CM, 8,000 gp)
- ❖ Masterwork Elven Courtblade (Freq: Adv, RW, 450 gp)
- ❖ *Shield of the Winged Crusade* (Freq: Adv, DrM, 3,170 gp)
- ❖ **†Survival Pouch* (Freq: Adventure, RW, 5,000 gp)

CArc – *Complete Arcane*

CM – *Complete Mage*

DMG2 – *Dungeon Master's Guide II*

Dr – *Draconomicon*

DrM – *Dragon Magic*

HB – *Heroes of Battle*

PH2 – *Player's Handbook 2*

RW – *Races of the Wild*

REWARD NOTES:

Attacked the Mist Children Elves: PCs receive this entry if they attacked the Mist Children in Encounter 8. PCs that receive this entry do not receive **Defended the Mist Children Elves**

Defended the Mist Children Elves: PCs receive this entry if they defended the Mist Children in Encounter 8. PCs that receive this entry do not receive **Attacked the Mist Children Elves**

Gnomish Spectacles Upgrade: PCs receive this entry if they have purchased the gnomish spectacles from *VER6-02: Delve the Wizard's Dungeon*.

Metaorganizational Access: PCs receive this entry if they are a current member of one of the listed metaorganizations at the time of this adventure.

APPENDIX 1: ALL APLS

ENCOUNTER SEVEN: DIPLOMACY IS NOT AN OPTION

GURTOM STARCHBEK

CR 6

Male halfling warlock 6

CN Small humanoid (halfling)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *see invisibility*, Listen +2, Spot +0

Languages Common, Draconic, Halfling

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 15

(+1 size, +4 Dex, +4 armor)

hp 38 (6 HD); **DR** 1/cold iron

Fort +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7 (+9 against fear)

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Ranged *eldritch blast* +9 touch (3d6)

Melee dagger +4 (1d3-1/19-20)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** -1

Atk Options *beguiling influence*, *eldritch spear*, *entropic warding*, *flee the scene*, *see the unseen*

Combat Gear *potion of invisibility (2)*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14

SQ detect magic, deceive item

Feats Extra Invocation (beguiling influence), Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device)

Skills Bluff +15, Climb +1, Concentration +6, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +2 (+4 to act in character), Hide +7, Intimidate +10, Jump +1, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Sense Motive +5, Use Magic Device +14 (may always take 10)

Possessions combat gear plus +1 *chain shirt*, *wand of charm person* (15 charges), dagger, traveler's outfit, 45 gp

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th):

At will—*detect magic*

Invocations (Sp): A warlock does not prepare or cast spells as other wielders of arcane magic do. Instead, he possesses a repertoire of attacks, defenses and abilities known as invocations that require him to focus the wild energy that suffuses his soul. A warlock can use any invocation he knows at will, with the following qualifications:

A warlock's invocations are spell-like abilities; using an invocation is therefore a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity. An invocation can be disrupted, just as a spell can be ruined during casting. A warlock is entitled to a Concentration check to successfully use an invocation if he is hit by an attack while invoking, just as a spellcaster would be. A warlock can choose to use an invocation defensively, by making a successful Concentration check, to avoid provoking attacks of opportunity. A warlock's invocations are subject to spell resistance unless an invocation's spell description specifically states otherwise. A warlock's caster level with his invocations is equal to his warlock level.

The save DC for an invocation (if it allows a save) is 10 + equivalent spell level + the warlock's Charisma modifier.

Finally, unlike other spell-like abilities, invocations are subject to arcane spell failure chance. Because the somatic components required for warlock invocations are relatively simple, a warlock can use any of his invocations while wearing light armor without incurring the normal arcane spell failure chance.

Beguiling Influence (Sp): You can invoke this ability to beguile and bewitch your foes. You gain a +6 bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy and Intimidate checks for a period of 24 hours.

Eldritch Blast (Sp): The first ability a warlock learns is *eldritch blast*. A warlock attacks his foes with eldritch power, using baleful magical energy to deal damage and sometimes impart other debilitating effects.

An *eldritch blast* is a ray with a range of 60 feet. (250 ft. for Gurtom, due to his *eldritch spear* invocation.) It is a ranged touch attack that affects a single target, allowing no saving throw. An *eldritch blast* deals 1d6 points of damage at 1st level and increases in power as the warlock rises in level. An *eldritch blast* is the equivalent of a 1st level spell.

An *eldritch blast* is subject to spell resistance, although the Spell Penetration feat and other effects that improve caster level checks to overcome spell resistance also apply to *eldritch blast*. An *eldritch blast* deals half damage to objects. Metamagic feats cannot improve a warlock's *eldritch blast* (because it is a spell-like ability, not a spell). However, the feat Ability Focus (*eldritch blast*) increases the DC for all saving throws (if any) associated with a warlock's *eldritch blast* by 2.

Eldritch Spear (Sp): This blast shape invocation extends your *eldritch blast* to great distances. *Eldritch spear* increases the range of an *eldritch blast* attack to 250 feet with no range increment.

Entropic Warding (Sp): When this invocation is activated, chaotic energies swirl about you, deflecting incoming arrows, rays and other ranged attacks (as *entropic shield*). You leave no trail (as *pass without trace*) and cannot be tracked by scent. (You can still be detected normally by scent, just not tracked.)

Flee the Scene (Sp): You can use *dimension door* as a spell-like ability, although the range is limited to short (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels). When you use this ability, you leave behind a *major image* of yourself in your place that lasts for 1 round. The image reacts appropriately to attacks as if you were concentrating on it.

See the Unseen (Sp): When you use this invocation you can activate great powers of vision, allowing you to see invisible creatures and objects (as *see invisibility*). You also gain darkvision out to 60 feet for a period of 24 hours.

Detect magic (Sp): Beginning at 2nd level, a warlock can use *detect magic* as the spell at will. His caster level equals his class level.

Damage Reduction (Su): Fortified by the supernatural power flowing in his body, a warlock becomes resistant to physical attacks at 3rd level and above, gaining damage reduction 1/cold iron. At 7th level and every four levels thereafter, a warlock's damage reduction improves by 1.

Deceive Item (Ex): At 4th level and higher, a warlock has the ability to more easily commandeer magic items made for the use of other PCs. When making a Use Magic Device check, a warlock can take 10, even if distracted or threatened.

ENCOUNTER EIGHT: ASSAULTING THE PYLON**MIST CHILDREN DEFENDER****CR 1**

Male gray elf barbarian 1

CN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +7, Spot +3**Languages** Common, Elf**AC** 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16

(+3 Dex, +4 armor, +2 shield)

hp 12 (1 HD)**Fort** +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1 (+3 against enchantment)**Speed** 40 ft. (8 squares)**Melee** masterwork longsword +5 (1d8+3/19-20) or silver shortspear +4 (1d6+2)**Ranged** masterwork longbow +5 (1d8/x3)**Base Atk** +1; **Grp** +4**Atk Options** Power Attack, rage 1/day**Combat Gear** *potion of bull's strength**, *potion of cure light wounds*

* already used; incorporated into the stats here

Abilities Str 13 (17), Dex 16, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10**SQ** elf traits, illiteracy**Feats** Power Attack**Skills** Climb +3, Jump +7, Listen +7, Search +2, Spot +3, Survival +5**Possessions** combat gear plus chain shirt, heavy wooden shield, masterwork longsword, silver shortspear, masterwork longbow with 20 arrows and 20 silver arrows, various trinkets of wood and bone**Rage (Ex)** while raging, the Mist Children Defender's stats change as follows:**AC** 17, touch 11, flat-footed 14**hp** 14**Fort** +4, **Will** +3 (+5 against enchantment)**Melee**** masterwork longsword +6 (1d8+6/19-20) or silver shortspear +5 (1d6+5)**Grp** +6**Abilities** Str 17 (21), Con 15**Skills** Climb +5, Jump +9

** 1-point Power Attack

ENCOUNTER NINE: DEFENDING THE PYLON**HOUSE GALANS GUARDSMAN****CR 1/2**

Male human warrior 1

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1**Languages** Common**AC** 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16

(+6 armor)

hp 9 (1 HD)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +0, **Will** -1 (+1 vs. charm or fear effects)**Speed** 20 ft. (4 squares)**Melee** masterwork greatsword +6 (2d6+3/19-20)**Ranged** javelin +3 (1d6+3) or tanglefoot bag +3 ranged touch (entangled)**Base Atk** +1; **Grp** +2**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds*, tanglefoot bag**Abilities** Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9**Feats** Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatsword)**Skills** Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +3, Ride +4**Possessions** combat gear plus splint mail, masterwork greatsword, dagger, 4 javelins, House Galans tabard**Inspired:** the House Galans Guardsmen are under the effects of the inspire courage ability of an 8th level bard. For the first five rounds of combat, they enjoy +2 to hit and weapon damage rolls, as well as +2 to all saves vs. charm or fear effects. These bonuses have already been included in the statistics above.

ENCOUNTER THREE: WHERE WOLF? THERE WOLF**ELITE RABID WOLF****CR 2**

N Medium animal

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +7, Spot +3**Languages** None**AC** 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12

(+4 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 20 (2 HD)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2**Speed** 50 ft. (10 squares)**Melee** bite +4 (1d6+1 plus disease (Fort DC 18) plus trip)**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Base Atk** +1; **Grp** +3**Abilities** Str 15, Dex 18, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6**SA** trip**Feats** Track^a, Weapon Focus (bite)**Skills** Hide +4, Jump +10, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Spot +4, Survival +2 (+6 when tracking by scent)**Trip (Ex)** A wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+2 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the wolf.**Disease (Ex)** An opponent injured by a rapid wolf may contract rabies (see Appendix 2).**ENCOUNTER EIGHT: ASSAULTING THE PYLON****MIST CHILDREN DEFENDER****CR 2**

Male gray elf barbarian 1/dragon shaman 1

CN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, Listen +7, Spot +3**Aura** Draconic aura +1**Languages** Common, Elf**AC** 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16

(+3 Dex, +4 armor, +2 shield)

hp 18 (2 HD)**Fort** +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3 (+5 against enchantment)**Speed** 40 ft. (8 squares)**Melee** masterwork longsword +5 (1d8+3/19-20) or masterwork silver shortspear +5 (1d6+2)**Ranged** masterwork mighty composite (Str +1) longbow +5 (1d8+1/x3)**Base Atk** +1; **Grp** +4**Atk Options** Power Attack, rage 1/day**Combat Gear** *potion of bull's strength**, *potion of cure moderate wounds*

* already used; incorporated into the stats here

Abilities Str 13 (17), Dex 16, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10**SQ** elf traits, totem dragon (brass)**Draconic Auras Known** energy shield, power, resistance**Feats** Power Attack**Skills** Climb +5, Intimidate +1, Jump +9, Listen +7, Search +2, Spot +3, Survival +6**Possessions** combat gear plus masterwork chain shirt, heavy wooden shield, masterwork longsword, masterwork silver shortspear, masterwork mighty composite (Str +1) longbow with 20 arrows and 20 silver arrows, various trinkets of wood and bone**Rage (Ex)** while raging, the Mist Children Defender's stats change as follows:**AC** 17, touch 11, flat-footed 14**hp** 22**Fort** +6, **Will** +5 (+7 against enchantment)**Melee**** masterwork longsword +6 (1d8+6/19-20) or masterwork silver shortspear +6 (1d6+5)**Grp** +6**Abilities** Str 17 (21), Con 15**Skills** Climb +7, Jump +11

**1-point Power Attack

Draconic Aura (Su) As a swift action, a dragon shaman may project one of the following auras. A dragon shaman can have an aura active continually; thus, an aura can be in effect at the start of an encounter before initiative is rolled. A draconic aura affects all allies within 30 feet (including the dragon shaman) with line of effect to the dragon shaman. The aura is dismissed if the dragon shaman becomes unconscious or is slain, but otherwise remains in effect even if the dragon shaman is incapable of acting.

Energy Shield Any creature striking the dragon shaman or its allies with a natural weapon or a nonreach melee weapon is dealt 2 points of fire damage. One of the Mist Children Defenders has this aura active at the start of combat.

Power +1 bonus on melee damage rolls. Two of the Mist Children Defenders have this aura active at the start of combat, so all enjoy a +2 bonus to melee damage rolls if they remain within range of the auras (this bonus is not included above).

Resistance to fire 5. One of the Mist Children Defenders has this aura active at the start of combat.

ENCOUNTER NINE: DEFENDING THE PYLON

HOUSE GALANS GUARDSMAN

CR 1

Male human swashbuckler 1

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1

Languages Common, Gnome

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14

(+4 Dex, +4 armor)

hp 15 (1 HD)

Fort +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** -1 (+1 vs. charm or fear effects)

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee masterwork rapier +9 (1d6+3/18-20)

Ranged javelin +7 (1d6+3) or tanglefoot bag +7 ranged touch (entangled)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Combat Gear *potion of cat's grace**, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, tanglefoot bag

* already used; incorporated into the stats here

Abilities Str 12, Dex 15 (19), Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10

Feats Toughness, Weapon Finesse^B, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Balance +7, Bluff +4, Escape Artist +7, Jump +4, Ride +6, Sense Motive +3, Tumble +7

Possessions combat gear plus masterwork chain shirt, masterwork rapier, dagger, 4 javelins, House Galans tabard

Inspired: the House Galans Guardsmen are under the effects of the inspire courage ability of an 8th level bard. For the first five rounds of combat, they enjoy +2 to hit and weapon damage rolls, as well as +2 to all saves vs. charm or fear effects. These bonuses have already been included in the statistics above.

ENCOUNTER THREE: WHERE WOLF? THERE WOLF**ELITE RABID WOLF****CR 2**

N Medium animal

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +7, Spot +3**Languages** None**AC** 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12

(+4 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 20 (2 HD)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2**Speed** 50 ft. (10 squares)**Melee** bite +4 (1d6+1 plus disease (Fort DC 18) plus trip)**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Base Atk** +1; **Grp** +3**Abilities** Str 15, Dex 18, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6**SA** trip**Feats** Track^a, Weapon Focus (bite)**Skills** Hide +4, Jump +10, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Spot +4, Survival +2 (+6 when tracking by scent)**Trip (Ex)** A wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+2 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the wolf.**Disease (Ex)** An opponent injured by a rapid wolf may contract rabies (see Appendix 2).**ENCOUNTER EIGHT: ASSAULTING THE PYLON****MIST CHILDREN DEFENDER****CR 4**

Male gray elf barbarian 1/dragon shaman 3

CN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, Listen +7, Spot +3**Aura** Draconic aura +1**Languages** Common, Elf**AC** 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16

(+3 Dex, +6 armor)

hp 38 (4 HD)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4 (+6 against enchantment)**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)**Melee** masterwork elven courtblade +8 (1d10+6/18-20) or masterwork silver shortspear +8 (1d6+3)**Ranged** masterwork mighty composite (Str +1) longbow +7 (1d8+1/x3)**Base Atk** +3; **Grp** +7**Atk Options** Power Attack, rage 1/day**Combat Gear** *potion of bull's strength**, *potion of bear's endurance**, *potion of cure moderate wounds***Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 3rd):At will—*endure elements* (self only)

*already used; incorporated into the stats here

Abilities Str 14 (18), Dex 16, Con 11 (15), Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10**SQ** elf traits, totem dragon (brass)**Draconic Auras Known** energy shield, power, resistance, vigor**Feats** Power Attack, Racial Weapon Familiarity, Skill Focus (Survival)**Skills** Climb +5, Intimidate +3, Jump +5, Listen +7, Search +2, Spot +3, Survival +11**Possessions** combat gear plus +1 *breastplate*, masterwork elven courtblade, masterwork silver shortspear, masterwork mighty composite (Str +1) longbow with 20 arrows and 20 silver arrows, various trinkets of wood and bone**Rage (Ex)** while raging, the Mist Children Defender's stats change as follows:**AC** 17, touch 11, flat-footed 14**hp** 46**Fort** +9, **Will** +6 (+8 against enchantment)**Melee**** masterwork elven courtblade +7 (1d10+15/18-20) or masterwork silver shortspear +7 (1d6+8)**Grp** +9

Abilities Str 18 (22), Con 15 (19)

Skills Climb +7, Jump +7

****3-point Power Attack**

Draconic Aura (Su) As a swift action, a dragon shaman may project one of the following auras. A dragon shaman can have an aura active continually; thus, an aura can be in effect at the start of an encounter before initiative is rolled. A draconic aura affects all allies within 30 feet (including the dragon shaman) with line of effect to the dragon shaman. The aura is dismissed if the dragon shaman becomes unconscious or is slain, but otherwise remains in effect even if the dragon shaman is incapable of acting.

Energy Shield Any creature striking the dragon shaman or its allies with a natural weapon or a nonreach melee weapon is dealt 2 points of fire damage. One of the Mist Children Defenders has this aura active at the start of combat.

Power +1 bonus on melee damage rolls. Two of the Mist Children Defenders have this aura active at the start of combat, so all enjoy a +2 bonus to melee damage rolls if they remain within range of the auras (this bonus is not included above).

Resistance to fire 5. One of the Mist Children Defenders has this aura active at the start of combat.

Vigor Fast healing 1, but only affects creatures at or below one-half of their full normal hit points. None of the Mist Children Defenders have this aura active at the start of combat, but one switches to this aura as soon as it is helpful.

ENCOUNTER NINE: DEFENDING THE PYLON

HOUSE GALANS GUARDSMAN

CR 2

Male human swashbuckler 2

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1

Languages Common, Gnome

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15

(+4 Dex, +5 armor)

hp 24 (2 HD)

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** -1 (+1 vs. charm or fear effects)

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee masterwork rapier +10 (1d6+3/18-20)

Ranged javelin +8 (1d6+3) or tanglefoot bag +8 ranged touch (entangled)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +3

Combat Gear *potion of bear's endurance**, *potion of cat's grace**, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, tanglefoot bag

* already used; incorporated into the stats here

Abilities Str 12, Dex 15 (19), Con 14 (18), Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10

Feats Combat Expertise, Weapon Finesse^b, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Balance +8, Bluff +5, Escape Artist +8, Jump +7, Ride +6, Sense Motive +4, Tumble +10

Possessions combat gear plus +1 *chain shirt*, masterwork rapier, dagger, 4 javelins, House Galans tabard

Inspired: the House Galans Guardsmen are under the effects of the inspire courage ability of an 8th level bard. For the first five rounds of combat, they enjoy +2 to hit and weapon damage rolls, as well as +2 to all saves vs. charm or fear effects. These bonuses have already been included in the statistics above.

APPENDIX 2: NEW RULES ITEMS

EXTRA INVOCATION [NEW FEAT] (FROM COMPLETE ARCANES)

You learn an additional invocation.

Prerequisite: Ability to use lesser invocations.

Benefit: You learn one additional invocation from the list available to you, choosing an invocation of one grade lower than the highest grade of invocation you know. For example, a 6th-level warlock could learn a least invocation, while a 16th-level warlock could learn any least, lesser, or greater invocation.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time, you gain an extra invocation of any grade (least, lesser or greater) up to one lower than the highest grade of invocation you can currently use.

IMPROVED WEAPON FAMILIARITY [GENERAL] [NEW FEAT] (FROM COMPLETE WARRIOR)

You are familiar with all exotic weapons common to your people.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1

Benefit: You can treat all the exotic weapons associated with your race as martial weapons rather than as exotic weapons. A weapon is treated as being associated with a race if the race's name appears as a part of the weapon's name, such as the elven thinblade or the dwarven urgrosh.

Normal: Without this feat, you must select the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat (or have the appropriate weapon familiarity as a racial trait) to eliminate the nonproficiency penalty you take when wielding an exotic weapon associated with your race.

Special: A fighter may select Improved Weapon Familiarity as one of his fighter bonus feats.

ELVEN COURTBLADE [NEW WEAPON] (FROM RACES OF THE WILD)

Exotic Weapon	Cost	Dmg (S)
Dmg (M) Crit Weight Type		
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>		
Sword, elven courtblade	150 gp	1d8
1d10 18-20/x2 6 lbs	Piercing	or
Slashing		

RABIES [NEW DISEASE]

Disease	Infection DC	Incubation	Period
Damage			
Rabies	Injury 18	1d4 days	
	1d4 Wisdom, 1d3 Constitution		

APPENDIX 3:

DM OVERVIEW OF THE SKYROAD

WHAT IS THE SKYROAD?

The Skyroad is a system of three magical, aerial causeways built to facilitate trade around the lands now known as Verbobonc.

Three massive stone towers stand in far-flung spots of the Viscounty. These towers are called Pylons. The Pylons have been obscured by powerful and ancient illusion magic for years, but the old illusions are easily disbelieved once interacted with. Each Pylon looks like an immense chess pawn: it is a thick tapering shaft crowned by a flat platform upon which sits a stone ball forty feet in diameter. The interior of the Pylon is an open area, like would be found in a tall tower or keep. The platform and stone ball are dozens or hundreds of feet off the ground. It is not easy to reach the platform (usually, it requires a long ladder, massive lifting cranes, or magic), but the platform of a Pylon is a safe place. The platforms are sixty feet square, providing plenty of room around the huge sphere attached to the center of the platform. Objects and creatures that walk to the edge of the platform experience a light but strong gust of air that gently pushes them back from the edge. This gust is not strong—a halfling could jump from the platform, if he really wanted to—but it's powerful enough to keep most objects or creatures from accidentally falling off the platform.

The ball is the center of the Pylon's power. Extending out in a straight line from the ball atop each Pylon is a column of magical energy forty feet wide. This beam of energy is arrow-straight over a hundred miles, connecting each ball to the others. Since there are three Pylons, each Pylon has two beams extending from it to the other two Pylons. These beams create a triangle of magical energy, like aerial ley lines, over the Viscounty.

These beams of magical energy are semisolid cylinders of air forty feet wide. These beams are normally invisible, but they show up clearly against mist or rough weather, as the air within the beams is always calm and clear. Items and creatures within the beams are subject to a magical effect much like the air walk spell, allowing them to move within the airy beams as though on solid ground. Creatures can walk up, down, forward or backward within the cylinder quite easily. Unattended objects generally hang in the air wherever they are placed, but they do have momentum; you could throw a rock at someone else while in the column, for example. Pushing into the beam is easy, but pushing back out again is more difficult. Creatures and objects attempting to leave the

cylinder experience a gust of air similar to, but more powerful than, the gusts that ward the edges of the platforms on the Pylons. Pushing out of a beam from the inside, or pushing an item out, requires a DC 12 Strength check.

The air within the beams is always calm, dry and slightly warm. Rain striking the beam rolls off its sides, keeping those within dry. Strong winds are deflected by the beam, as the air within is always calm. Unpleasant weather effects are an exception to the general rule that items can easily enter one of the beams. This weather-deflecting effect is why the beams are easy to discern in bad weather although they are normally invisible (as they are made of only air and magical energy). Weather effects created within the beams—such as from a gust of wind spell—work normally, but if the effect leaves the beam it cannot reenter.

TRAVEL ON THE SKYROAD

A traveler can easily walk any direction, including up and down, within the beam. Although he is walking on air a hundred feet or more above the ground, he feels firm ground beneath his feet, angled slightly down as though to make walking easier. Even animals can walk within these beams, although most require a little extra training or encouragement in order to overcome the unfamiliar sensation of being high above the ground.

Birds and other flying creatures can travel in the beams easily by simply flying, but the gusts of wind can keep very small and weak birds from leaving the beams. Travelers can trap birds captured within the beams fairly easily, and therefore travelers along the beams have a ready source of food while in the beams. Thrusting a hand or a cup outside the beams during a rainstorm allows a traveler to collect clean rainwater to drink.

Wagons and carts are particularly easy to use in the beams, since the slight downhill grade makes pulling them easier. Reduce the weight of a wagon, cart, or anything carried inside a wagon or cart by half for the purposes of pulling it, to reflect the ease in pulling it along in the beams. More impressively, a four-wheeled vehicle—such as a wagon or carriage—given a good shove will roll on its own along the beam, picking up speed as it goes. The gust of air is generally sufficient to nudge a wagon straying near the edge of the beam back on track. A wagon will quickly pick up speed over about fifteen minutes until it reaches a top speed of about 30 miles an hour (or 300 feet per round). Any conveyance had best have good brakes, or the wagon is sure to smash

into splinters against the ball at the other end of its journey.

One of the Pylons is found in the Gnarley Forest, several miles east of the town of Taymouth. Another is found high in the Kron Hills, in the isolated hills between the town of Kron and Gallow's Corner. The third is deep in the Iron Wood, several miles northwest of the town of Glory. The beams are perfectly straight and perfectly horizontal, so the Pylons anchoring the beams to the ground are of different heights. The Pylon in the Gnarley Forest is the tallest, at just under two hundred feet. It rises above all but the tallest trees of that vast wood. The Pylon in the Iron Wood also rises above the mist-shrouded trees of that wood, just over one hundred and fifty feet tall. The Kron Hills Pylon is the shortest, as it is set high in the hills, and is only seventy feet above the ground; the ball is larger than the tower it sits on, making this tower look like a huge stone ball on a tall, round base.

Traveling the beams is safe and fast. Bandits, rough terrain and bad weather pose no difficulty. At a moderate walking pace, a journey of 100 miles along a beam (from one end of the Viscounty to the other) takes a walking man only four days. In a wagon rolling along on its own, but kept to a reasonably safe speed of 10 miles per hour by regular braking, the journey can be made in a single day. For all these reasons, the beams are popularly called the Skyroad.

WHO MADE THE SKYROAD?

The Pylons and the Skyroad were built by elven artificers long before the coming of man to the region now called Verbobonc. The elves would lift themselves and their cargo to the tops of the Pylons with a kind of mystic elevator, a modified version of Tenser's floating disk.

The Skyroad was used for generations by the elves, but resistance to its use grew over time. Elven druids saw the artificiality of the Skyroad as a danger, as the Skyroad disrupted natural weather patterns. Worse, some terrible tragedy occurred to the Skyroad system. Perhaps an evil creature siphoned off the immense energies powering the Skyroad and enacted some terrible, long-forgotten ritual. Perhaps the druids sabotaged the Skyroad, causing catastrophic failures (and many deaths by falling). In any case, the Pylons were shut down by the elves and trapped by the druids to prevent anyone from reactivating the Skyroad again. The Pylons were concealed by powerful illusions.

In time, knowledge of the Pylons and the Skyroad faded. The once-proud elves retreated into isolated communities. Only a few of their number now remain as the Mist Children elves of the Iron Wood. Their

ancestral legends speak, but only in the vaguest terms, of the danger the Pylons represent.

The Pylons have stood for hundreds of years, thought by most that have discovered them to be just three more of the mysterious elven ruins that dot the forgotten places of the Viscounty of Verbobonc. None remembered their interconnectedness and significance as the anchors of the Skyroad.

MAGISTER HAR AND THE SKYROAD

Forty years ago, a young gnome wizard working in a secluded library in the Kron Hills learned of the Skyroad from an ancient elven text. This gnome, named Obble Har, had been performing experiments in collecting the residual magical energies of Verbobonc for years. Obble Har had already discovered that three immense beams of magical energy had been seared through the skies of Verbobonc, centuries old but now powerless. He learned of the Skyroad, the Pylons, and the boon to travel they had been. The clever gnome also realized the Skyroad might have another effect as well, but he kept all of this lore to himself. Perhaps, after many years of preparation, Obble Har could empower the Skyroad again and set his plans into motion...

APPENDIX 4: ILLUSTRATIONS

LORD ROLAND GALANS



LORD WENDELL RHYNEHURST



LORD WILLEM HAXX



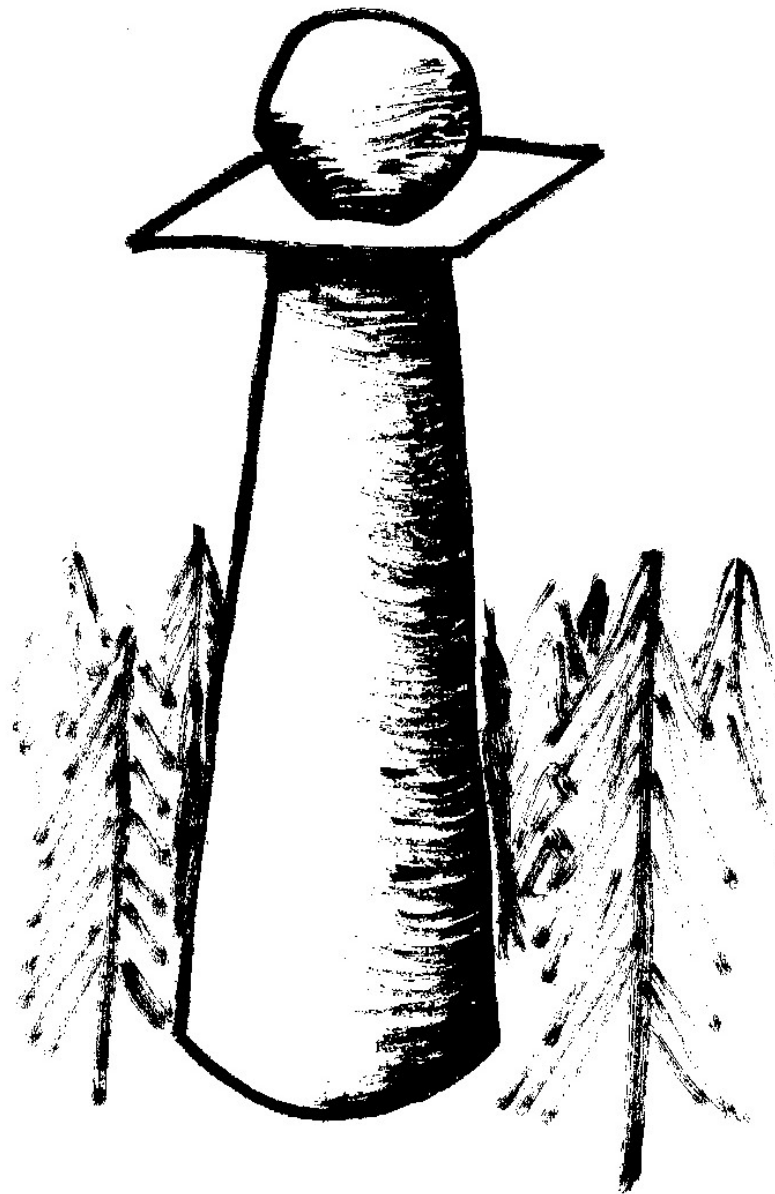
GURTOM STARCHEEK



LORD SHANNUS OF GLORY



IRON WOOD PYLON



APPENDIX 5: LAWS OF THE VISCOUNTY

The following is a summary of crimes and penalties in Verbobonc. For more information, refer to the regional campaign document: *Laws of the Viscounty: A Guide to Justice in the Viscounty of Verbobonc*. This document is available for download on the Verbobonc website at <http://www.verbobonc.net>

Crime	Class	Penalty
Arson	High	500 gp +, 1 TU
Assault	Low	50 gp OR 1,000 gp, 2 TU
Banditry	High	Forfeiture of all possessions, 1 TU per 100 gp of stolen goods.
Battery	Low	200 gp OR 2,000 gp, 10 TU
Blackmail	High	90% of wealth, 26 TU
Blasphemy	High	Public whipping
Burglary	Low	200 gp, 2 TU OR 1,000 gp, 10 TU
Destruction of Noble's Property	High	Cost of repairs, 1 TU per 1,000 gp of damage
Disturbing the Peace	Low	Up to 450 gp and/or 1 TU
Extortion	High	90% of wealth, 26 TU
Forgery	Low	Confiscation of all possessions, 13 TU, loss of finger
Fraud Against a Noble	High	Forfeiture of all possessions, 26 TU OR death
Grave Robbing	Low	Confiscation of carried goods, 1,000 gp, 5 TU OR confiscation of carried goods, 5,000 gp, 13 TU
Impersonation of a Noble	High	Forfeiture of wealth and all possessions, 52 TU OR death
Interfering with the Representative of a Noble	Low	Up to 300 gp, 4 TU
Kidnapping	High	Confiscation of goods carried, 1,000 gp, 26 TU OR confiscation of goods carried, 10,000 gp fine, 104 TU, and loss of eye and hand.
Magical Assault	High	Confiscation of spellbooks, 500 gp, 4 TU OR confiscation of spellbooks and goods carried, 2,000 gp, 13 TU, and loss of ear.
Malicious Mischief	Low	Up to 1,000 gp, up to 4 TU, and full reimbursement of property value
Manslaughter	High	Forfeiture of all equipment, property, and wealth, 52 TU.
Murder	High	Death
Negligent Use of Magic	High	Confiscation of spellbooks, 500 gp, 4 TU OR confiscation of spellbooks and goods carried, 2,000 gp, 13 TU, and loss of ear.
Ownership of Illegal Goods	Low	Varies
Perjury	High	600 gp, 8 TU
Piracy	High	Confiscation of all wealth, 500 gp, 10 TU OR confiscation of all wealth, 2,000 gp, 26 TU, and loss of eye.

Robbery	High	Confiscation of goods carried, 1,000 gp, 10 TU OR confiscation of goods carried, 5,000 gp, 26 TU, loss of hand
Sedition	High	13 TU
Theft	Low	Confiscation of goods carried, 200 gp, 5 TU OR confiscation of goods carried, 1,000 gp, 12 TU, loss of finger
Treason	High	Forfeiture of all possessions, property, and wealth, and death by hanging, draw and quartering, or stoning.
Trespassing	Low	20gp – 500 gp

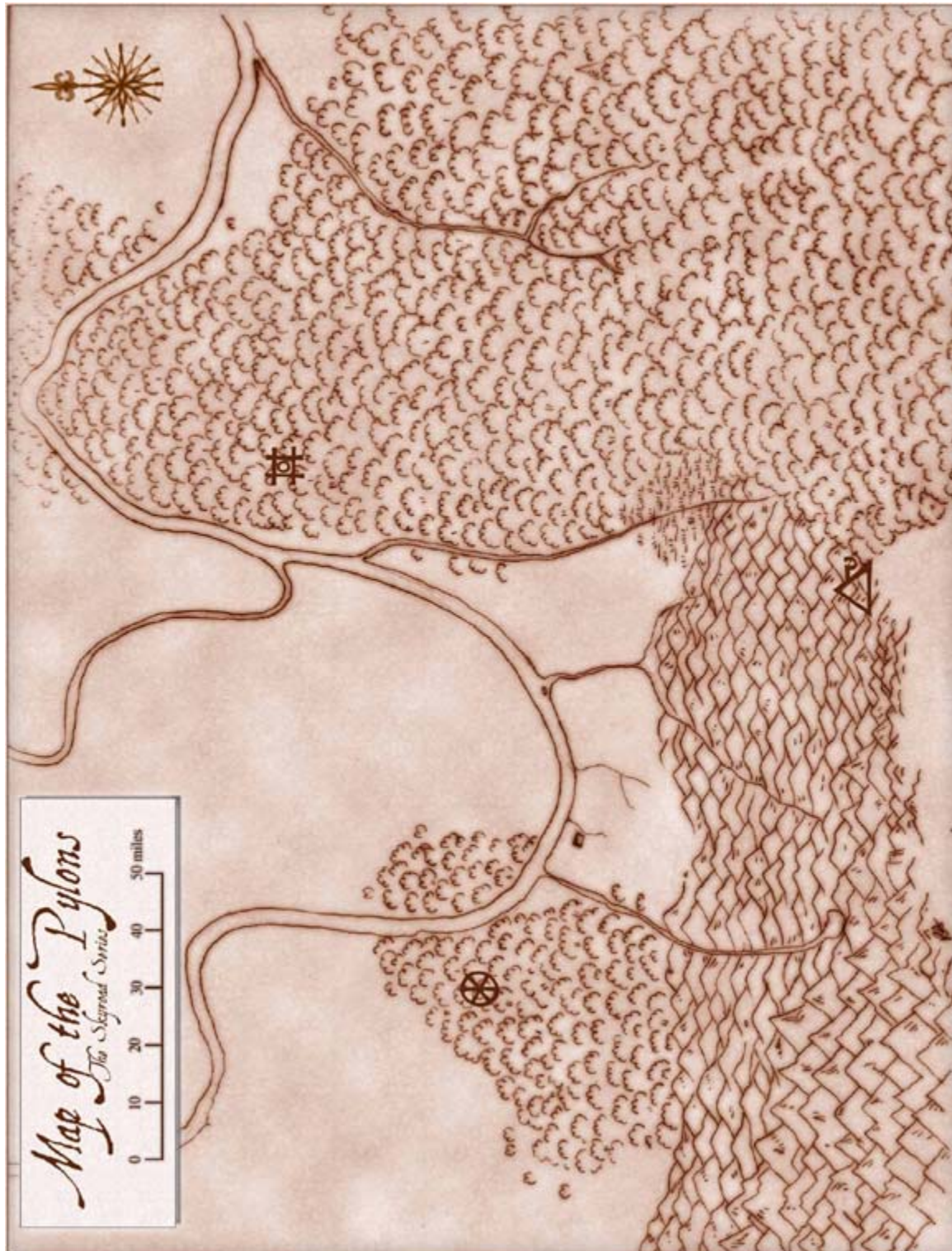
MAP 1: MAP OF VERBOBONC

This map shows the layout of the central and western portions of the Viscounty of Verbobonc. The adventure begins near Rhynehurst, and ends north of Glory. The road from Rhynehurst to Glory is approximately 30 miles long.



MAP 2: PYLONS MAP

This map shows the locations of the three Pylons. On this adventure, the PCs travel to the Pylon in the Iron Wood.



MAP 3: INSIDE THE PYLON

A setup like this can help you keep track of which character is where on the stairs winding up the inside of the Pylon. This map helps with positioning only; the interior of the Pylon is circular and spirals around above itself. The *fog cloud* trap ("FC"), the *fog cloud/sleet storm* trap ("FC/SS") and the *summon nature's ally* trap ("SNA") are indicated on this map. If a character should jump or fall from the stairs, he falls about two-thirds of the distance up the stairs he was located (round down to the nearest 10 feet increment). For example, a character 90 feet up the stairs falls 60 feet straight down to the floor of the tower. A character 150 feet up the stairs falls 100 feet straight down to the floor of the tower.

