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PAUL "WIGGY" WADE-WILLIAMS

HELLFROST

• ENCOUNTERS BOOK 1 •



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HELLFROST ENCOUNTERS BOOK 1

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INTRODUCTION



Designed with the busy GM in mind, this book contains 50 detailed encounters covering a variety of situations and locales.

Whether you're after a random encounter that's more than just a standup fight on featureless terrain, an exciting mini-adventure on the spur of the moment (to slow the party down while you finish writing the next heroic tale), something to break up the party's travels, or a starting scene for an adventure of your own devising, this book has something for you.

From the Hearthland's dark and ancient forests to the endless snows of the High Winterlands, in turbulent seas or crowded taverns, you can run the encounters presented here in any order, at any time, with almost any backdrop. Simply tweak the monsters and locales, or combine different elements from other encounters, and behold the wealth of gaming fun at your fingertips.

As players and GMs ourselves, we know nothing slows a game down like flicking through a book in search of a rule. The longer you take, the more atmosphere and tension the game loses. So to help speed up play, every encounter is designed as a single or double page spread containing all its pertinent information.

Each encounter begins with a suggested party Rank, based on the number and types of monsters, as well as specific terrain difficulties. But, because this can't allow for every individual party's strengths and weaknesses, GMs should be prepared to tweak each encounter for their specific party and campaign.

Expanding the encounters for higher Ranked parties couldn't be easier. Using the quickest method, add two Extras of the most common variety for each Rank that the party exceeds the suggested Rank. For purely combat-focused parties, the GM may wish to increase the listed amount anyway, so as to provide an interesting challenge. Where single monsters create a whole encounter, suggestions are given in the text for beefing up the encounter. Similarly, where other monsters could be used just as well, we provide examples for swapping foes.

Next comes the GM's introductory text. This text helps set the scene and fill the GM in on the backstory. Information designed to be read to the players is presented in italicized narrative text.

The monsters section lists the type and number of monsters, including important background information. Due to space restrictions it isn't always possible to include full monster stats for incidental characters, so you

might occasionally need the *Hellfrost Bestiary* open, as well. All the vital information is included, though.

Combatants have their tactics detailed. Some tactics have only a brief description, with details left to the GM. For instance, a group of orc archers and warriors may have their tactics listed as "the archers pin down the heroes while the warriors advance." In other cases, typically involving spellcasters or monsters with several important abilities, a more in-depth breakdown is provided. The old adage that no plan survives contact with the enemy remains true, and of course monsters should never be confined to just these tactics—they should react to the heroes' actions to the best of their abilities.

Whether it's the effects of the ambient lighting, a description of what counts as difficult ground, how much Armor is provided by obstacles when used for Cover, or an unusual hazard or feature (which perhaps one the heroes can use to their advantage), the terrain is detailed in the text. Except in a few cases, when the time of year in which an encounter occurs is specific, the placement of heavy snow drifts or ice patches is left to the GM.

Where necessary, encounters have keyed maps. All the terrain and monster starting positions are included, so you can lay out the battlefield on the tabletop. The maps give the GM a handy catalog for use in his own adventures.

While each encounter serves neatly as a standalone episode, it can also serve as an introduction to larger encounters or even complete adventures. Where suitable, the final section gives advice on how the encounter can be expanded or altered.

After the main encounters we present a quick way of generating military style missions. While *Hellfrost* is primarily about small groups of adventurers, the setting allows, and encourages, the heroes to become true leaders of men. For characters who want to make a difference in Veermark or who want to experience the highs and lows of running a mercenary company in search of glory and gold, this section provides the GM with a way of generating hundreds of mission combinations with just three die rolls. Examples created using the charts and a little imagination are also provided as a starting point.

To finish the book there is a quick encounter chart. Rather than involving actual monsters, the encounters concern the *threat* of monsters, highlight environmental problems, create a small mystery for interested parties to solve, and give the GM a quick adventure hook he can expand upon as he sees fit.

1. WHAT GOES UP

Rank: Seasoned.

The day is grim and dank. Low clouds hover less than a dozen yards above ground and constant drizzle has left the heroes soaked to the skin. All in all, it has been a miserable walk.

Through the gloom, the heroes spy three wagons, seemingly abandoned by the side of the road.

On closer inspection they realize there has been some sort of attack. The lead wagon is gutted by fire. The others are badly scorched but not totally destroyed. All the horses are dead, each pair incinerated standing. Large patches of ice nearby have melted and refrozen smooth.

A successful Tracking roll reveals eight sets of footprints leading in different directions away from the wagons. Four tracks end in charred corpses (GM's choice as to race), but the remaining four sets of prints simply stop, as if their makers vanished into thin air. More mysteriously, there are *four* sets of wagon tracks on the road. The fourth set of tracks end as suddenly as the footprints.

Checking around the site reveals no signs of any attackers or actual combat—there are no footprints in the surrounding landscape, no arrows or other missiles, and no blood save for a few drops here and there.

Any hero who investigates the burnt out wagon may make a Common Knowledge roll. With success,

he deduces the wood has been subjected to coldfire, not regular fire. Although no longer alight, the charred remains are still icy-cold to the touch. Of the scorched wagons, one contains sacks of grain with a base value of 4,000 gs (which weigh 4,000 pounds) and the other is stacked with bundles of reeds (value 1,000 gs, weight 2,000 pounds).

Give the heroes a chance to explore the remains and begin making assumptions about the likely cause of the attack. After a few minutes, the truth becomes all too apparent.

MONSTERS

The wagons were attacked by a juvenile Hellfrost dragon. Realizing a source of food regularly traveled this region, it began ambushing small wagon trains, devouring the horses and wagoners and stealing cargo of value to furnish its lair. Shortly before the heroes arrived it grabbed the fourth wagon, complete with horses, and carried it up into the clouds. Since then, it has been happily munching on its lunch while hovering above the area.

There are five dragon ages and five character Ranks. Depending on the party's makeup and combat abilities, you should adjust the dragon's age appropriately. Its tactics already give it an advantage, so be careful not to make it too powerful or a chance encounter will turn into a massacre.

Ⓜ Juvenile Hellfrost Dragon (1)

TACTICS

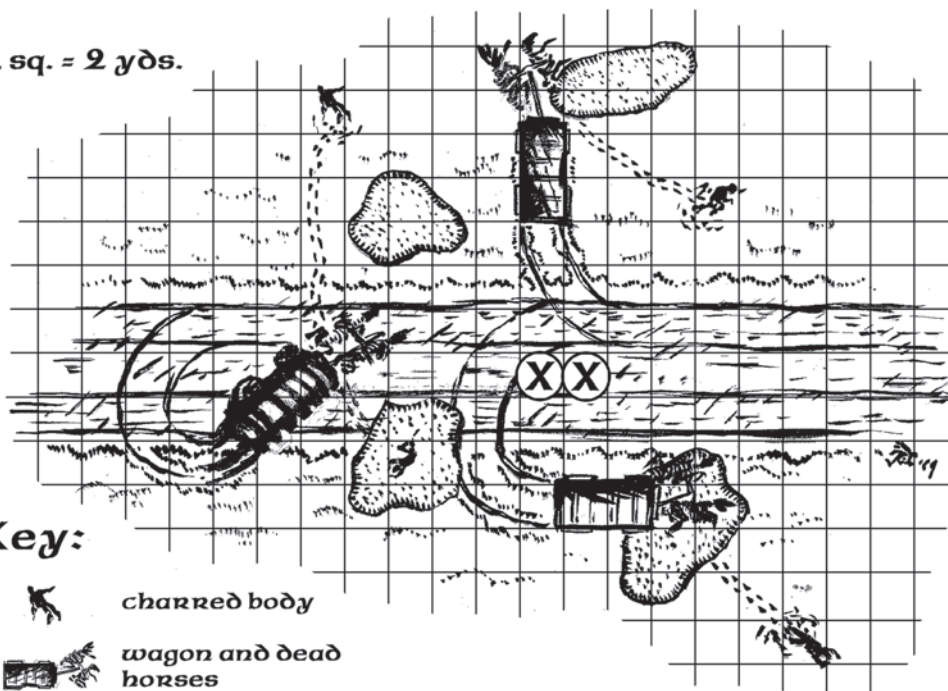
Once the dragon finishes its meal (whenever the GM is ready to continue), it releases the wagon, which plummets to the earth. It smashes to the ground at the points marked X on the map, but showers debris into all adjacent squares.

Have the heroes roll to avoid Surprise. Those who succeed may make an Agility roll at -2 to leap clear. Those standing on the X marked squares suffer 4d6+8 damage and are knocked prone if they failed the roll or didn't spot the falling wagon in time. Heroes in adjacent squares suffer 2d6 damage from the splintering wood.

The dragon is young (in dragon terms), but it's wily. It has no desire to engage in a fair fight while it has a distinct advantage over its potential meal.

On the round it releases the wagon, it invokes *deflection*. Impatient, it tries

1 sq. = 2 yds.



Key:

-  charred body
-  wagon and dead horses
-  ice patch
-  falling wagon

only once. Only when it has taken a wound will it retreat to the clouds and try a second time.

Once ready to attack, it uses its movement to swoop low from the clouds, launch a stream of coldfire, and then climb back to safety. The heroes thus need to be on Hold to have a chance of attacking it. The dragon never descends lower than 2" off the ground, meaning only attackers with Reach weapons or who are atop a wagon can use melee weapons against it.

The dragon has a Fear rating—when the fearsome beast breaks the clouds for the first time the heroes must make Guts rolls to avoid Terror.

Once the dragon takes two wounds, it must make a Smarts roll. With success, it realizes this is a losing battle and heads for home through the clouds. It troubles the heroes no more.

On a failure, it comes to the mistaken conclusion its tactics are faulty. Rather than continue swooping, it decides to enter melee in a bid to finish off its troublesome prey. It first attempts to invoke *armor* while safely hidden in the clouds, continuing to try until it succeeds or suffers the Siphoning. During this time, a wise party will be busy preparing spells of their own (or *healing* any wounds) in case the scaled monster reappears.

Once the spell is cast or the Siphoning occurs, it swoops down and uses its wings to knock prone as many foes as possible. On the next round, it settles on the ground, using its teeth and claws. It favors prone opponents first. Because, by this point, it is badly wounded, it doesn't use its Frenzy Edge.

Against tightly bunched heroes, it still resorts to its breath weapon, as this gives it the best offensive capability versus multiple foes.

TERRAIN

Lighting: The cloud and drizzle give Dim (–1) lighting conditions.

Low Cloud: The low cloud is a mere 8" from the ground. Visibility into the cloud counts as Pitch Darkness (–4).

Smooth Ice Patches: Smooth ice counts as difficult ground and characters cannot run on it. Agility rolls involving other movement (such as avoiding dragon breath) suffer an additional –4 penalty. If the roll fails, the character falls and is Shaken.

Wagons: The wagons have Toughness 10 (2). They can be used as Cover (+2 Armor). Moving beneath a wagon requires crawling. The dragon can flip a wagon over if it inflicts a wound with its claws.

CONTINUATION

The dragon has no treasure on its person, but it does have a lair stashed with two Treasure Troves. Very little of its treasure is in the form of coin or jewelry. Instead, its treasure is the remnants of cargo from the many wagons it has looted over the previous months. Transporting



JUVENILE HELLFROST DRAGON

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Spellcasting d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 14 (3)

Edges: Arcane Resistance, Concentration, Frenzy, Level Headed, Spell Finesse (d8 Wild Die, *deflection*)

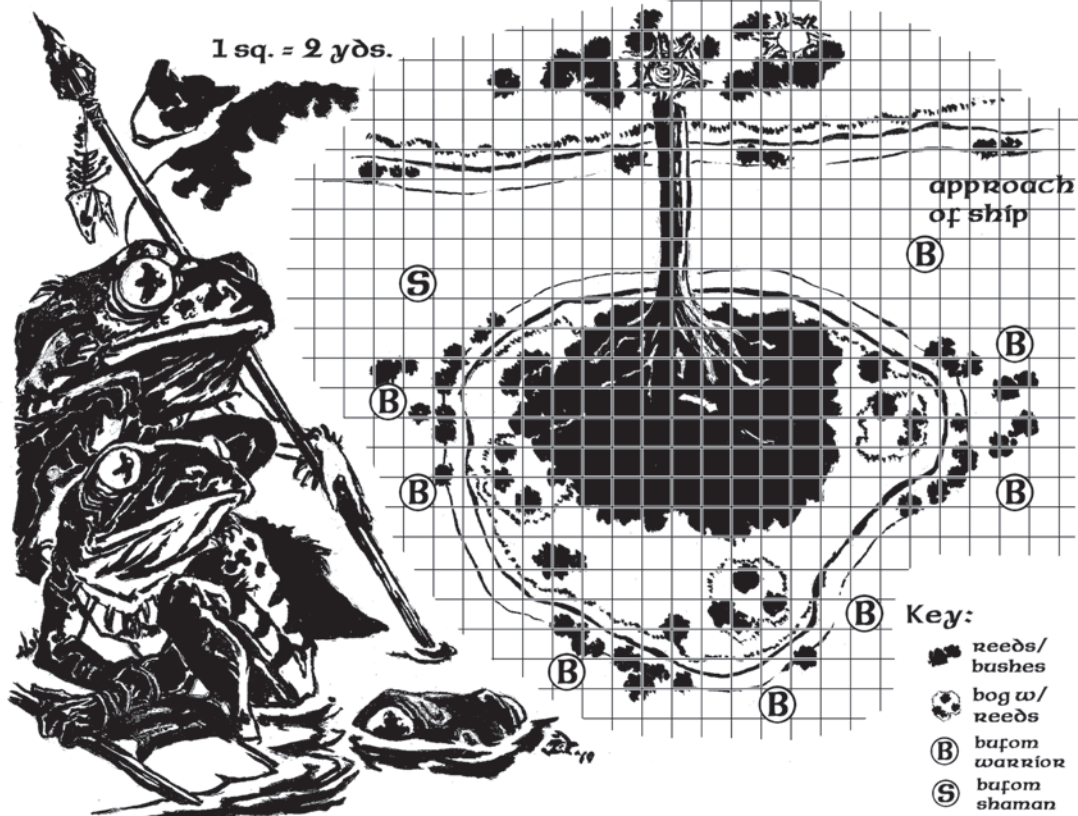
Powers: *Armor, deflection, detect/conceal*

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +3:** Thick scales.
- * **Bite/Claws:** Str+d6.
- * **Breath:** Hellfrost dragons breathe coldfire using the Cone Template. Every target within this cone may make an Agility roll at –2 to avoid the attack. Those who fail suffer 2d8 damage and have a chance of catching fire. A dragon may not attack with its claws or bite in the same round it uses coldfire breath.
- * **Fear –1:** Anyone who sees the dragon must make a Guts roll at –1.
- * **Flight:** Pace 18.
- * **Immunity (Cold):** Immune to cold and cold-fire attacks. Ignores background cold.
- * **Infravision:** Halves darkness penalties against heat-producing targets.
- * **Large:** Attackers get +2 to attack rolls due to the dragon's size.
- * **Size +4:** The dragon measures 25' in length.
- * **Tail Lash:** The dragon can sweep all opponents behind it in a 2" long and 4" wide rectangle. This is a standard Fighting attack, inflicting d12+2 Damage.
- * **Weakness (Fire):** Takes double damage from fire and heat attacks.
- * **Wings:** A wing buffet can only be used during round that the dragon makes no other attacks. Place a Cone Template facing forward from each wing. Every creature in a Template must make an Agility roll with a penalty equal to the dragon's Size. The target's Size applies to this roll as a direct modifier. On a failure, the victim is blown back 1d3" and falls prone. If the Agility roll is a 1 (regardless of Wild Die), the target is Shaken.

these goods won't be easy. Assume one-quarter of the treasure comprises items easily sold at full value. Selling the remainder requires the party to locate a buyer. Trade goods could include bundles of wool, sacks of grain, crates of pottery, cask of salted fish, or high value goods like tapestries.

The ease in finding the liar depends on whether the GM wants the heroes to find the loot. As a juvenile, the dragon may not be alone—it may have siblings, or worse, a parent, nearby.



2. AQUATIC AMBUSH

TACTICS

The warriors nearest the island clamber onto the bank and immediately begin attacking. Half use their Croak ability to stun the defenders, while the others attack at Reach 1 using long spears. Those nearer the ship swim over and climb the sides. Entering the boat requires an action, but no die roll—ships have low bulwarks.

The shaman casts *entangle* and *knockdown* against groups of heroes, careful to avoid his allies. Against obvious warriors or spellcasters (those in heavy armor or who display martial or magical prowess) the shaman prefers *entangle* to prevent these troublesome characters using their abilities against its comrades. Lesser foes are hit with *knockdown*.

Bufomi aren't known for their bravery. Have the warriors make a Group Spirit roll each time one of the following conditions is met: the number of warriors is reduced by 50% of the original force, the number of warriors is reduced by 75% of the original force, or a shaman is slain. With failure, they move to the water at best speed and dive in, quickly submerging. They don't bother the heroes again. The shamans only retreat if the warriors flee first.

TERRAIN

Bog: The low-lying island has several deep puddles of

mud and dense clumps of reeds which count as difficult ground.

Fallen Trunk: The trunk is 5' high and can be used for Cover (+8 Heavy Armor).

Foliage: The tree's foliage and larger branches are difficult ground through which no character can run.

One square of foliage between attacker and target (including the square the defender is in) provides Light Cover (-1), two squares is Medium Cover (-2), and three squares is Heavy Cover (-4). Beyond this visibility is blocked. Attacks that miss because of Cover are deflected away from the intended target.

Shore: River squares adjacent to the island are difficult ground and provide Medium Cover (-2) to man-sized creatures. Any further out and characters must swim.

CONTINUATION

There is a strong possibility the characters aren't the first to fall into the ambush. The savage toad-men may have prisoners that need rescuing, or stolen cargoes that could fetch a good price on the open market.

The location of the bufomi's lair, the number and disposition of the inhabitants and any prisoners, and the tribe's treasury is for the GM to determine. If any NPCs accompany the party in search of the lair, remember they are entitled to a fair share of any treasure.



BUFOM SHAMAN

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Faith d8, Fighting d4, Guts d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Swimming d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Gear: Crude long spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands, see below)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles)

Special Abilities:

- * **Croak:** If a bufom takes no other actions in a round, including moving, it can emit a deafening croak. Place the narrow end of a Cone Template in front of the bufom. All creatures within the Template must make a Spirit roll or be Shaken.
- * **Crude Spear:** If a bufom rolls a 1 on his Fighting die, regardless of Wild Die (for Wild Cards), he has damaged his spear. The spear's damage die is reduced one step. Below a d4, the spear shatters, leaving the bufom holding a few bits of stick.
- * **Powers:** *boost/lower trait* (Stealth and Swimming), *entangle* (long, sticky tongue), *knockdown* (croak), *leaping*, *summon herald* (a giant toad)
- * **Rotating Eyes:** The eyes of a bufom sit on top of its head, and can swivel to see behind it. This reduces enemies' Gang-Up bonus by one.
- * **Semi-Aquatic:** Bufomi can hold their breath for 5 minutes.
- * **Size -1:** Bufomi stand 4' tall.

BUFOM WARRIOR

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Swimming d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 4

Gear: Crude long spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands, see below)

Special Abilities:

- * **Bound:** A bufom warrior can leap 1d6+2" in a straight line to attack with +2 to its Fighting roll and +2 to damage.
- * **Croak:** If a bufom takes no other actions in a round, including moving, it can emit a deafening croak. Place the narrow end of a Cone Template in front of the bufom. All creatures within the Template must make a Spirit roll or be Shaken.
- * **Crude Spear:** If a bufom rolls a 1 on his Fighting die, regardless of Wild Die (for Wild Cards), he has damaged his spear. The spear's damage die is reduced one step. Below a d4, the spear shatters, leaving the bufom holding a few bits of stick.
- * **Rotating Eyes:** The eyes of a bufom sit on top of its head, and can swivel to see behind it. This reduces enemies' Gang-Up bonus by one.
- * **Semi-Aquatic:** Bufomi can hold their breath for 5 minutes.
- * **Size -1:** Bufomi stand 4' tall.

3. QUIET IN THE LIBRARY

NOVICE

Rank: Novice

Libraries are rare in Rassilon. Those that exist are most often found in temples of Hoenir (though virtually all temples maintain a specialist library) or in buildings run by the Lorekeepers. A small few are in the hands of rich citizens.

As Streetwise rolls require someone to talk with, so Investigation rolls require a source of information to peruse. Reasons the party may visit a library include trying to purchase or sell a tome, searching for information as part of an adventure, or preparing to gain a new Knowledge skill or increase an existing one.

MONSTERS

There is a single librarian present while the heroes are in the library. Other patrons include a cloaked figure seemingly browsing the books and six Extras of the GM's devising.

The attackers are servants of Niht. They seek only to destroy the knowledge contained in the library, and thus can be used in a standalone encounter—they need no other motive to raid the library.



PALADIN OF NIHT

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d6, Faith d8, Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Stealth d10

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10 (3)

Hindrances: Loyal, plus various others

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Block, Champion, Combat Reflexes, Disciple of Niht, Frenzy

Gear: Blessed armor (+3), long sword (Str+d8)

Powers: *Bolt* (spectral daggers), *boost/lower trait* (Agility, Climbing, Fighting, Shooting, Stealth, and Throwing only), *deflection* (concealed in shadows), *entangle* (shadows grab victims), *obscure*, *silence*, *summon elemental* (shadow only), *wall walker*

CULTIST OF NIHT

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: —

Gear: Leather armor (+3), short sword (Str+d6), four throwing daggers (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d4)

Although sample attackers are provided, the GM should feel free to change these to suit the needs of his campaign or open a new adventure for the heroes. Other suitable raiders include thieves, clerics of a different faith and their followers, or even jealous rivals. If the party is searching for a specific book as part of your campaign or for a future adventure, feel free to use an appropriate foe as part of the cohesive story.

M Paladin of Niht (1): If the party needs a greater challenge, perhaps because of its high Rank, the paladin should have a number of alchemical devices at his disposal. Defensive devices, like *armor* and *deflection*, increase the paladin's power level far more than a handful of one-shot offensive ones.

M Cultist of Niht (2 per hero): These are spread around the library's two floors when the attack begins.

M Librarian/Innocents (7): Treat as citizens (see the *Hellfrost Bestiary*). Alternately, give them d6 in all attributes, with no combat Traits or Edges. They try to flee once a fight begins.

TACTICS

Exactly what the attackers want and how they behave depends on their nature. Clerics or followers of Niht may simply wish to destroy a prized collection of manuscripts. Bandits or orcs may be working for a chieftain, searching for volumes concerning strategy and tactics. An evil organization, such as the Ashen Veil, the Seekers of the Black Key, or followers of an evil deity other than Niht may be trying to uncover a specific volume useful to their cause. The motive for the attack should directly affect the tactics of these foes.

While adjacent to a bookcase, those searching for a specific book may make a Notice roll at -2 as an action. Multiple searchers scanning the same bookcase do not make individual rolls—use the Cooperative rules instead. With success, they locate the tome. Pulling it from the shelf requires a dedicated action, but no die roll. On a failure, the book is not present on that shelf—no amount of searching will locate it there. It is possible that particular book is not in the library at all. Perhaps it is on loan to a patron of the library or out for repair. Maybe the attackers' intelligence is simply erroneous.

The followers of Niht seek only destruction of the books. The paladin (the cloaked figure) quietly invokes *deflection* before the attack begins. On the first round he casts *obscure* on the largest group of heroes.

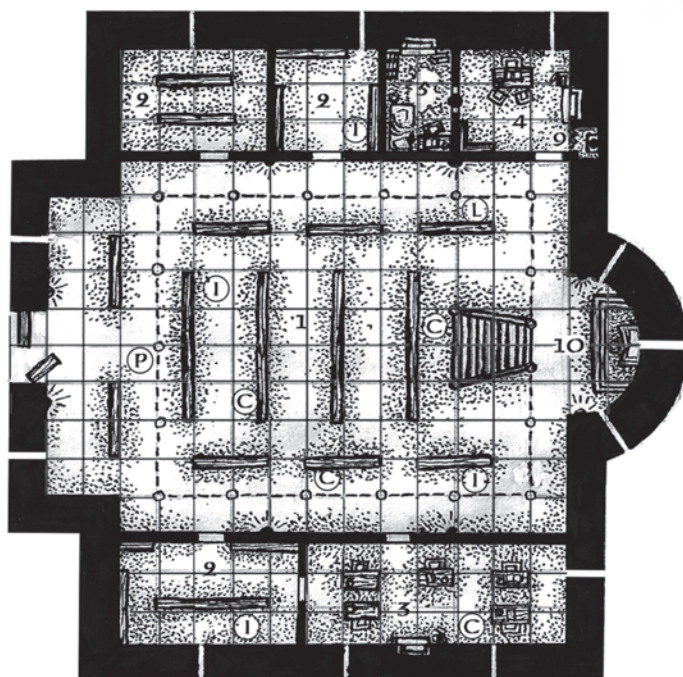
Other typical tactics include using *silence* to hamper spellcasters (cast on a coin and flicked toward them), *entangle* to thwart warriors and allow his minions to attack them with less chance of retribution, and *bolt* to hit distant foes. His *summon elemental* power should only be invoked if the party is having an easy time or if they are Veteran or above.

NOVICE

A chair used as a weapon requires two hands and

Tapestries: Tapestries can be pulled from their mountings as part of an Agility Trick. They cover a Small Burst Template adjacent to their hanging position. Make a single Agility roll for the trickster.

Defeating the initial attackers earns a reward worth no more than 100 gs per party member. A more fitting reward (as far as the librarians are concerned) is free access to the library or perhaps an invitation to view or copy “special” books.

[illegible]

- O support
- bed
- window
- curtain/tapestry
- C cultist
- I innocent

L	librarian	1. main library
		2. secondary library
P	paladin	3. reading room
		4. librarian's office
		5. librarian's chamber
		6. ink preparation
		7. book repair
		8. restricted section
		9. privy
		10. shrine to hoenir

4. FORDING THE RIVER

Rank: Seasoned

Rivers are natural obstacles that the heroes will face regularly. Since bridges are usually located only on well-traveled routes, and even then only across narrow expanses, travelers must make use of ferries (either rowed or cable ferries) or fords.

The party's current route takes them across a small river. The river level is raised due to recent rains, but the ford remains crossable.

The trail leads to the bank of a river, goes right through it, and continues across the far side. No bridge spans the rapid-flowing (or iced over) water, but a line of stones reveals the presence of a ford.

If checking for bridges, Appropriate Knowledge (Area) or Common Knowledge rolls are made at -2 (in addition to any other penalties), unless the heroes can reasonably argue they know the position of all the rivers and bridges in the area. With success, they know the next bridge is over 20 miles away. A failure means they have no idea where another crossing may be located, if indeed one even exists.

ORC WARRIOR

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Gear: Leather armor (+1), medium shield (+1 Parry), short sword, axe, or mace (Str+d6)

Special Abilities:

* **Size +1:** Orcs are slightly larger than humans.

WOLF

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d10, Tracking d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities:

* **Bite:** Str+d4

* **Fleet Footed:** Wolves roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.

* **Go for the Throat:** Wolves instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly-armored location.

* **Size -1:** Wolves are relatively small.

MONSTERS

A small number of orcs have set up an ambush at the ford, knowing full well it is the only route across the river for miles in either direction.

The orcs have had plenty of time to arrange the ambush and select good hiding positions. Notice rolls to spot them are made at -4. Even with success, the hero only sees the suggestion of movement, such as a bush rustling gently. A raise is required to spot something actually moving, and even then it cannot be clearly identified as an orc—it might just as easily be a wild boar foraging.

Ⓜ **Orc Warriors (2 per hero):** Instead of adding more warriors for higher Ranked parties, other options include an ogre-herd and ogre, one berserker, one elite warrior, or one rider and dire wolf mount per hero. In exchange for four warriors the GM could add an orc chieftain, drummer, or priest. All stats are in the *Hellfrost Bestiary*.

Ⓜ **Wolves (1 per hero):** Each wolf begins adjacent to one of the four orcs nearest the river.

TACTICS

Initially the orcs are equipped with bows, which they fire once the party is about to enter the halfway point of the ford (see below). On the first round, the orcs in the bushes fire from concealment and will very likely have the Drop. Check for Surprise once they release their missiles. Orcs hidden behind walls must reveal themselves in order to fire, and thus begin on Hold.

While the warriors have the heroes pinned down in the ford, their tactic is to fire from cover or stand up, fire, and then duck back down. The latter requires the heroes to be on Hold to even have a chance to counterattack with missile weapons. Only when the first party members have cleared the ford do those orcs closest switch to melee weapons (which takes an action) and attack.

If the heroes employ area effect spells, such as *blast* or *stun*, from the far side of the river, the orcs fall back in orderly fashion, staying low to conceal their positions. If line of sight to an orc is lost, remove it from the tabletop—the heroes cannot easily attack what they cannot see.

TERRAIN

Dense Vegetation: The undergrowth is difficult ground through which no character can run. One square of vegetation between attacker and target (not including the attacker's square) provides Light Cover (-1), Two squares is Medium Cover (-2), and three squares is Heavy Cover (-4). Beyond this, visibility is blocked. Attacks that miss because of Cover are deflected away from the intended target.

4. FORDING THE RIVER

Ford: The ford is tricky on foot and even worse for wagons. The river is 10' deep. The stones are slippery and loose. Any character crossing faster than half-Pace must make an Agility or Riding roll (-2 if running) or slip and fall at the halfway point or when his movement ends, whichever occurs first. Riding rolls for controlling a wagon are -2 if the vehicle moves at half speed or less, and -4 if faster than half speed. A failed rolls means the wagon tips over. The stones are an Unsteady Platform.

Ice: Depending on the season and location, the river may be coated in a layer of smooth ice.

Low Winterlands: Treat each square as thin ice (d6; Toughness 8) during spring and fall, and medium ice (d8; Toughness 12) in winter.

High Winterlands: Thin ice (d6; Toughness 8) in summer, medium (d8; Toughness 12) in fall and spring, and thick (d10; Toughness 16) during the long winter.

Hearthlands: Thin ice (d6; Toughness 8) in winter.

A hero who falls through the ice is submerged. He must make a Swimming roll to remain in place or be swept 1" downstream each round. Once away from the hole he created, a swimmer is in serious danger of drowning—he can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to his twice his Vigor die. After this, he must make a Vigor roll each round or gain a level of Fatigue.

He may try to break the ice above him as an action. Due

to being submerged, attack rolls get -2 and his Strength die is treated as being one step lower (this affects the damage die of his weapon as well, if appropriate).

Climbing out through a hole requires a Strength roll at -2 as an action. A bonus of +2 is added for having an ice pick or other suitable tool. Even with success, the character may fall straight back through the ice unless he reaches the bank.

Low Walls: Stand 3' high and provide Cover (+8 Heavy Armor). Crossing them is difficult ground.

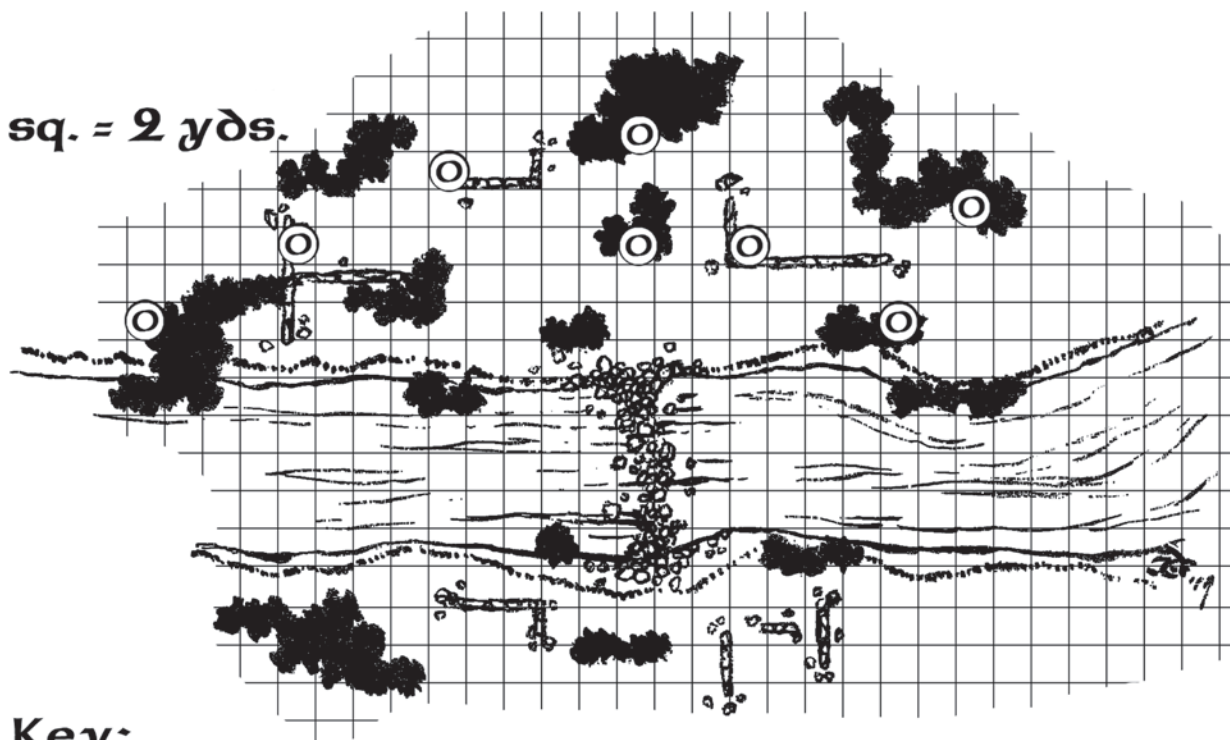
River: The river is fast flowing. Swimmers automatically move 3" downstream for each inch they move across the river. A Swimming roll must be made each round.

Smooth Ice: Smooth ice is difficult ground through which heroes cannot run. Agility rolls involving other movement (such as avoiding area effect spells) suffer an additional -4 penalty. Failure means the hero falls and is Shaken.

CONTINUATION

While orc raiding parties are commonplace, orcs setting up an ambush on a little traveled ford implies they have a camp nearby. That camp may contain captives (see Encounter 8) or stolen booty. Even if it doesn't, destroying it is a worthy deed.

1 sq. = 2 yds.



Key:



low wall



dense vegetation



ford



ORC WARRIOR

5. THE PRICE OF SIN

Rank: Novice

Sooner or later most clerics sin. This adventure can be used to forewarn a cleric starting down that path of the dangers that await if he does not alter his ways.

Shortly after starting the next leg of their current journey, the heroes come across a small camp. A lone figure wrapped head to toe in a traveling cloak is stowing a few belongings into a worn backpack and kicking soil over the remains of a fire. As the party approaches, the figure removes the cowl to reveal a not-unattractive woman in her mid-thirties.

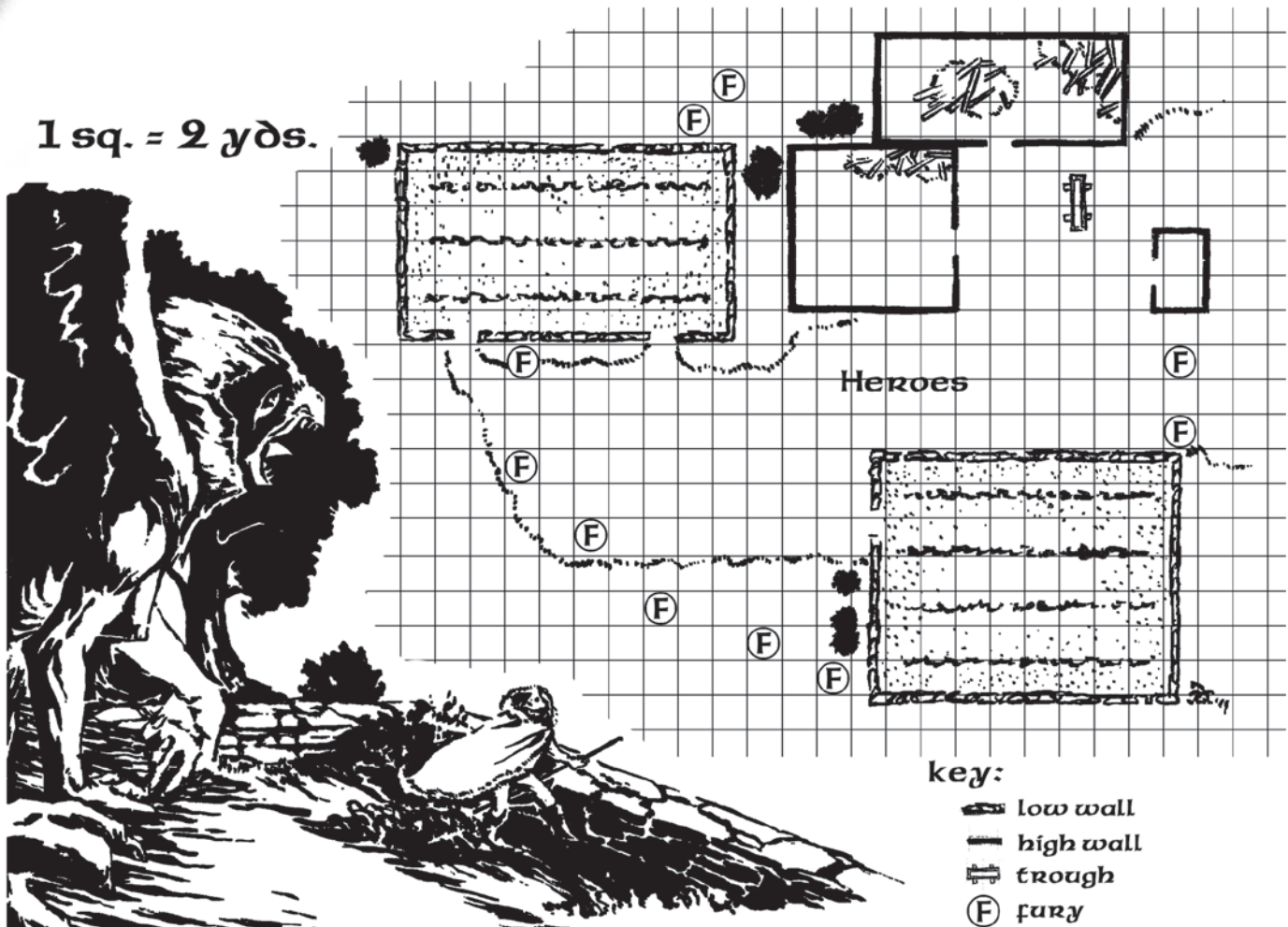
The woman introduces herself as Aud Hauksdohtor, an itinerant herbalist. If the party demands proof she shows them her herbalist kit and dried herbs. Should they be carrying any herbal brews, she offers to identify them as further proof of her profession.

Aud claims to be heading nowhere in particular, but would appreciate the company if she could walk with the heroes a while. In return for protection against any wild

beasts or bandits, she offers to use her herbalist skills as required. Should the party agree, she asks for a few moments while she finishes packing.

Any character watching her closely during this time can make a Notice roll at -2. With success, he spots a wooden holy symbol of Eira among her belongings. Characters who demand (for whatever reason) to search the pack automatically find the holy symbol. Questioned about this, Aud merely shrugs her shoulders—*"I am a healer of sorts. It makes sense to honor the patron of healers, don't you think?"*

Aud is not all she claims to be. She is actually a priestess of Eira. Several weeks ago she and some colleagues were attacked by orcs. Many of her friends, including her lover, a paladin of Eira, died, but the raiders were eventually defeated. Angered and distraught by the senseless violence, Aud snapped. The normally pacifist priestess killed a severely wounded orc, committing a mortal sin in the process.



As a result, she has been stripped of her powers and Disciple Edge. So far, shown no remorse.

To Aud, the slaying of one orc was a small deed compared to the loss of her lover and fellow clerics and weighed against all the good she has performed. Right now, she is angry at Eira for allowing her lover to die needlessly. Aud makes no mention of her disgraced status and sticks to her story of being an itinerant herbalist.

MONSTERS

Eira, goddess of healing and peace, only rarely unleashes her retribution, which comes in the form of furies—winged creatures sent to the mortal realm to punish wayward clerics. Aud may have been spared Eira's wrath had she shown remorse for her sins, but her constant refusal to accept the consequences of her actions and her lying to strangers requires divine punishment.

At some point during the trip, the snarling furies release their rage against the cleric and her traveling companions.

The furies literally appear out of nowhere, entering the mortal realm directly from Eira's realm.

M Furies (2, plus 2 per hero)

TACTICS

The furies, once unleashed, cannot be guided by Eira's hand. Although they know their target by instinct, furies are wild and savage, and anyone journeying with their prey is considered fair-game by association.

Two furies attack each character, more intent on preventing them from aiding the cleric than slaughtering them, while two focus on Aud.

Those facing the heroes only go Berserk if one of the pair is slain or a character is obviously trying to aid the sinner (e.g. casting defensive spells on Aud or using the Shieldwall Edge to intercept blows). Those fighting Aud go Berserk on the first round. This should make it obvious who the furies are hunting.

Aud uses only the Defend maneuver during combat. Her Block Edge represents her skill at parrying blows.

TERRAIN

The encounter with the furies can occur in any terrain the GM wishes. We have chosen to use an abandoned stead in order to provide some interesting terrain.

Debris: The roof of the stead has partially collapsed into the interior, and the spaces where the debris lies is difficult ground.

Field: The stead's small vegetable patches are plowed with deep ridges and furrows. Lateral movement across the ridges and furrows makes the area difficult ground. Characters following a ridge or furrow line are unimpaired.

High Walls: The stead's walls are 7' high. Crossing them requires a Climbing roll. There is no roof above the patches of debris.

AUD HAUKSDOHTOR

Aud cannot use her spells or Disciple of Eira Edge during this encounter.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d4, Healing d8, Knowledge (Alchemy) d8, Persuasion d8, Survival d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Loyal, Orders, Pacifist (Minor)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Block, Connection (Temple of Eira), Disciple of Eira, Hedge Magic

Spells: *Beast friend*, *boost/lower trait* (Vigor, Healing, Persuasion only), *dispel*, *healing*, *succor*, *stun*

Gear: Leather shirt (+1), staff (Str+d4, +1 Parry, Reach 1), herbalist kit, 2d4 doses of dried herbs (GM's choice), basic traveling gear

FURY

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Persuasion d6, Taunt d8, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +1:** Hide.
- * **Berserk:** Furies can become Berserk at will. They can also end their rage as a free action.
- * **Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Flight:** Pace 6.
- * **Improved Arcane Resistance:** +4 Armor against damage-causing powers and +4 on Trait rolls to resist opposed powers.

Low Walls: The low walls are 3' high and are difficult ground. They provide Medium Cover (−2) to a creature standing behind them.

Water Trough: The trough is full of stagnant rainwater. It provides Cover (+2 Armor) and can be turned over as an action for someone to hide inside of it. The space that the trough occupies is difficult ground.

CONTINUATION

Once the furies are defeated, Aud comes clean. Finally realizing that her sinful actions may affect the lives of innocents, she confesses her crime to the party and begs forgiveness for concealing the truth, swearing she had no idea furies were after her. She contritely asks the heroes if they will escort her to the nearest settlement with a temple to Eira, whereupon she will begin the lengthy process of penance. Her quest, given to her by a local cleric, could easily lead to a new adventure involving the heroes. Alternately, if a hero is a cleric of Eira, the GM might allow him to determine the nature of the quest.

6. CARAVAN OF TROUBLES

Rank: Seasoned

Many random encounters assume the party is the intended victim. This encounter has the heroes coming across someone in need of their help. They're simply in the right place at the right time.

As the sun begins to touch the western horizon, the party hears the unmistakable sounds of combat from up ahead. Those who speak the appropriate languages recognize cries in Orcish and Engro. With a few minutes of investigation, the heroes see the cause of the disturbance—an engro caravan is under attack by orc raiders. Whether or not the characters rush to aid the besieged engros is up to them.

ORC WARRIOR

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Gear: Leather armor (+1), medium shield (+1 Parry), short sword, axe, or mace (Str+d6)

Special Abilities:

* **Size +1:** Orcs are slightly larger than humans.

ENGRO BLUDGEONER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Survival d6, Taunt d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5 (1)

Hindrances: Orders, Outsider, Small

Edges: Bludgeoner, Connection (Bludgeoners), Luck, Marksman, Sneaky, Spirited

Gear: Leather armor (+1), small shield (+1 Parry), short sword (Str+d6), sling (Range: 6/12/24, Damage: Str+d4, Str+d6 at Short range)

ENGRO

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Taunt d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Orders, Outsider, Small

Edges: Luck, Sneaky, Spirited

Gear: Small shield (+1 Parry), short spear (Str+d6, Reach 1), sling (Range: 4/8/16, Damage: Str+d4)

MONSTERS

The map has been set up based on a four character party. The GM should place additional engro, Bludgeoners, and orcs as required by the party size.

The caravan comprises six engro covered wagons. Five of these have been drawn into a rough circle around the remaining wagon. The elderly and children (another 15 engro in total) are all crammed into that central wagon. The Bludgeoners among the clan are coordinating the defense, using their slings to pick off orcs. The other engro are blocking the gaps between the wagons as best they can. The mules ran off after having been cut free—the engro intend to find them later.

The orcs are not yet fully in position. Their first attack was stopped by the determined defenders, leaving just a handful immediately threatening the engro. A second assault wave is just about to launch when the party arrives on the scene.

The party begins anywhere to the south of the caravan circle, but can be no closer than 25".

Ⓜ **Engro Bludgeoner (1 per hero)**

Ⓜ **Engro (3 per hero):** These are a mixture of male and female adults.

Ⓜ **Engro Innocents (15):** Parry 2, Toughness 4, all Traits are d4. They will *not* join the combat.

Ⓜ **Orc Warriors (5 per hero):** Instead of adding more warriors for higher Ranked parties, other options include an ogre-herd and ogre, one berserker, one elite warrior, or one rider and dire wolf mount instead of two regular orc warriors. In exchange for four warriors the GM could add an orc chieftain, drummer, or priest. All stats are in the *Hellfrost Bestiary*

TACTICS

Create Ally Sheets for the engro and give control of them to the players. The engro should not be allowed to perform stupid actions, such as breaking the circle and charging the orcs in the open—they are trying desperately to defend their kin and are not highly skilled warriors.

The orcs currently engaged with the engro try to break through the thin line of defense. Those not yet in melee divide their forces once the party's presence is detected—half charge the party while the others focus on a single gap between the wagons, attempting to break the line as quickly as possible.

TERRAIN

Baggage Barricades: The barricades are difficult ground. Engro sized creatures gain Medium Cover (−2) standing behind one, while larger creatures benefit only from Light Cover (−1).

Tongue: An area with a tongue (the wooden bar pro-

6. CARAVAN OF TROUBLES

jecting from the front of the wagon to which the mounts are attached) is difficult ground. Engro sized creatures gain Medium Cover (-2) while standing behind it, while larger creatures benefit only from Light Cover (-1).

Wagons: Wagons can provide Cover (+2 Armor). Movement through a wagon's space is possible only by crawling beneath it. Entering a wagon requires an action. Once inside, the cramped quarters count as difficult ground.

CONTINUATION

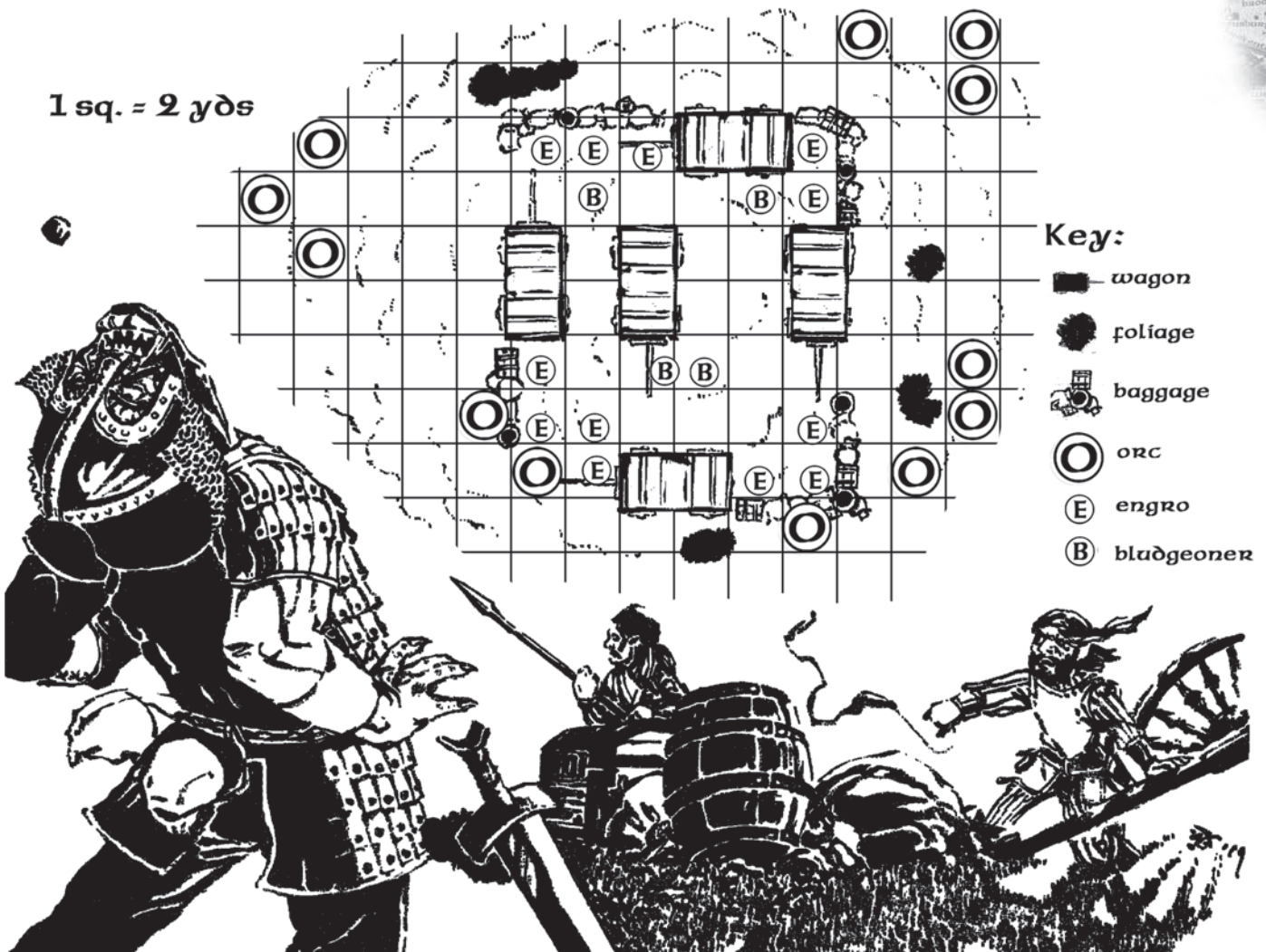
The elder of the engro clan, who goes only by the informal honorific "Pops", clambers down from the wagon once the fight is over, a pipe firmly clenched between his yellow teeth. He surveys the devastation stoically while the women begin bandaging the wounded and the remaining males see to the dead. He says nothing for several minutes. He then disappears into the central wagon and returns carrying a small box, which he presents to the heroes. Inside is 1,000 gs worth of alchemical devices. The GM should determine the exact contents based on his party and their style of play.

He then invites the heroes into the wagon for a drink. Once inside, he asks whether the party will help round up the mules (this takes two hours, or one hour if a Co-operative Notice roll is successful) and then asks them to provide armed escort to the next settlement.

If the party is en route to an adventure and seems reluctant to provide assistance (perhaps because the next settlement is out of their way), Pops asks where they are heading. He says he knows something of use to the heroes, which he'll reveal as payment for escort duty. Despite the engro reputation for trickery and subterfuge, he's being honest.

The information he departs should be useful but minor. For instance, if the adventure includes a rumor table, Pops has heard one of the stories. Otherwise, he knows a little of the background or the nature of the adventure. If the party is going nowhere in particular, Pops provides information that leads to a new adventure in the area.

Five of the engro females have Healing d6. Once the meeting the Pops is over (assume it takes ten minutes), they help tend the party's injuries.



7. A GRAVE ENCOUNTER

Rank: Seasoned

A long-forgotten graveyard stands at a crossroads, the marker stones crumbled and the grave mounds overgrown with rambling weeds. Perhaps it belonged to a lost settlement, erased from the landscape during the Blizzard War or the Saxa revolt against the Anari. Maybe it was hastily constructed to bury the dead after a fierce battle. Only through *grave speak* can the party learn when it was created and by whom.

By coincidence, it's also where the party has chosen to stop for the night. Without a thorough search, the graveyard's true purpose is invisible to the naked eye. The mounds are mere low hummocks, and the shape of the low walls is similar to a *plantie crub*, a stone enclosure designed to protect crops from the harsh wind and the privations of sheep. Such sights are fairly common and make ideal shelters for weary travelers. Rural born

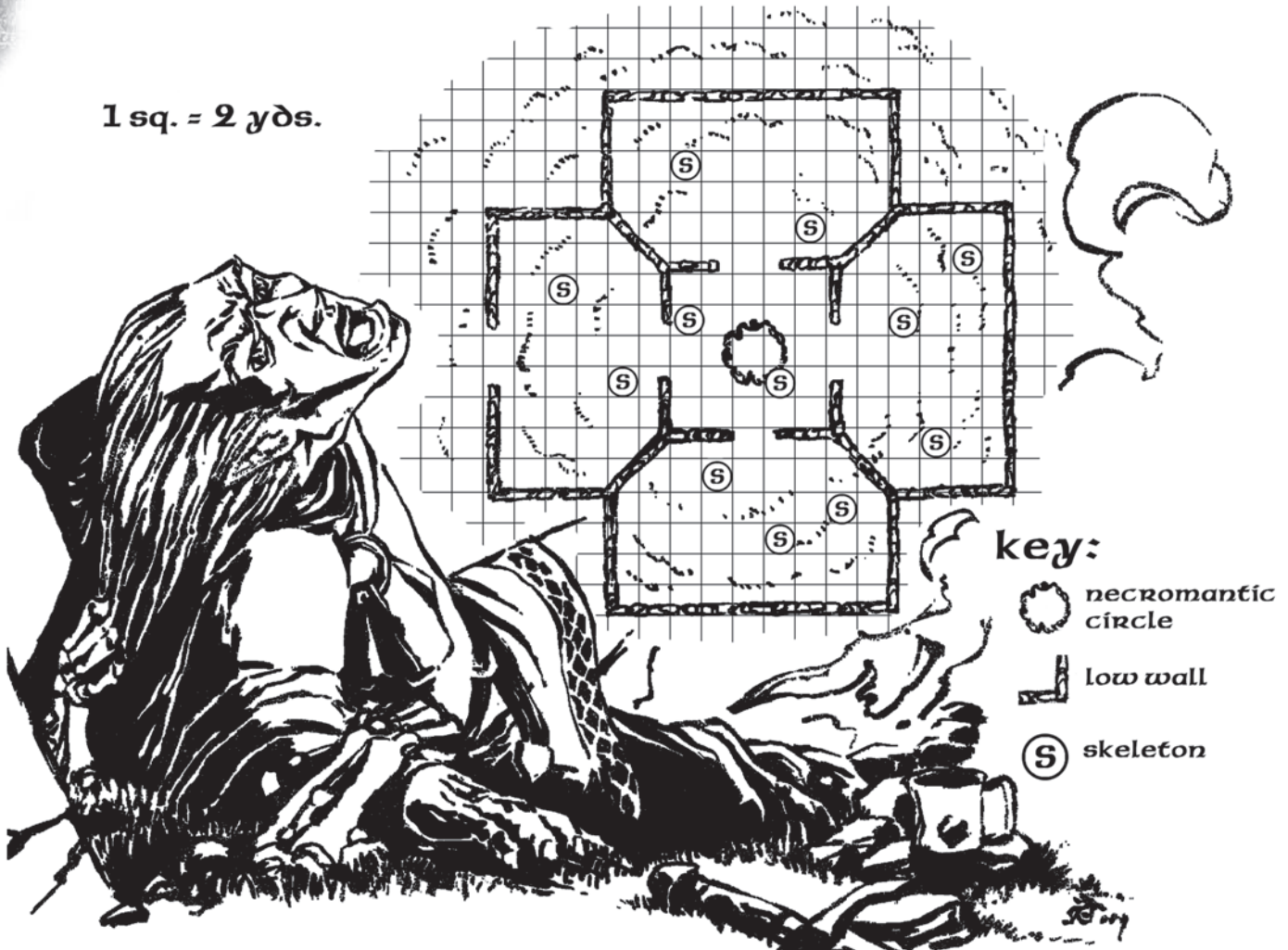
characters can identify the walls as a likely *plantie crub* without a die roll.

Set up the tabletop as per the map, but don't mark the graves! The party should decide where they are sleeping and place any miniatures and campfire accordingly.

The night passes peacefully until sometime shortly after midnight. Have whoever is on watch make a Notice roll at -2 (for the lighting conditions) to avoid Surprise. As the ground erupts around him, skeletal hands break through the soil and claw at the air. Simultaneously, a ring of blue fire begins to emanate from a concealed necromantic circle.

Rousing a sleeping comrade can be done with a shout or kick as a free action (assuming the sentry isn't Surprised). On the first round after waking, sleeping heroes are Shaken. After that, they may act normally (no roll to unShake is necessary). Remember, sleeping in armor is

1 sq. = 2 yds.



7. A GRAVE ENCOUNTER

very uncomfortable—sleepers are considered to be unarmored. It is impossible to don armor before the attack begins.

MONSTERS

The inhabitants of the concealed graves have slept peacefully for centuries, but now something has raised them. Unarmed and unarmored, they represent only a modest threat to a Seasoned party, even an unarmored one, if they heroes can keep them at bay. Once they get too close, Gang Up bonuses turn what would be a nuisance into a deadly threat.

M Skeletons (3 per hero): For combat-oriented parties, swap these for skeleton warriors (see *Hellfrost Bestiary*).

M Paladin of Hela (1): If the party is Heroic Rank or higher (or the GM believes the party can handle the threat at lower ranks), there is a paladin of Hela lurking out of sight. He enters the fray at the same time as the skeletons but begins 8" from any outer wall.

TACTICS

It takes the skeletons one complete round to rise from their graves. During this time they can take no actions, including movement, though they retain their full Parry. Lacking intelligence, their tactics once free of the earth are simply to swarm the nearest living creature, running if necessary, and attack. The skeletons avoid the necromantic circle if it is occupied.

TERRAIN

Campfire: If the heroes have a campfire it sheds good light in a 3" radius. Anyone stepping into the fire takes 2d10 damage and has a chance of catching fire.

Lighting: The ambient lighting is variable thanks to strong winds blowing clouds over the moon. The skeletons' action card determines the lighting on any given round. A black card indicates the lighting is Dark (-2), while a red card or Joker indicates it is Dim (-1).

Low Wall: The low wall counts as difficult ground and can provide Cover (+8 Heavy Armor). The wall is a foot wide and can support a character's weight. The character must make an Agility roll against any damage inflicted on him or fall prone. Additionally, a roll of 1 on an Agility roll or Agility-linked skill made while atop the wall causes the character to fall and become prone (no damage).

Necromantic Circle: Buried beneath a thin layer of soil and grass is an ancient necromantic circle formed of blood-stained stones. Equivalent in size to a Small Burst Template, the circle grants those inside a +2 bonus when casting *zombie* and also functions as a *warding* spell against undead.

When the skeletons rise, the stones' protective magic automatically activates. The *warding* appears as circles of (harmless) blue fire, which rise from the ground at

SKELETON

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities

- * **Bony Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Fearless:** Skeletons are immune to fear and Intimidation.
- * **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison.



PALADIN OF HELA

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d6

Charisma: -6; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 10 (3)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Loyal, Mean

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Block, Champion, Combat Reflexes, Disciple of Hela, Gravetouched, Frenzy, Improved Nerves of Steel

Gear: Blessed armor (+3), medium shield (+1 Parry), long sword (Str+d8)

Powers: *Armor* (bone), *aura* (necromantic energy), *fear* (touch of death), *smite* (object is shrouded with necromantic energy), *strength of the undead* (cadaverous appearance), *zombie* (dirge)

regular intervals, dissipating ten feet in the air. Removing any of the stones destroys the magic. A Knowledge (Arcana) roll made as an action is required to identify the fire as part of a *warding* spell. If the circle of stones is uncovered, a similar roll reveals its purpose—to boost a necromancer's power while simultaneously providing protection from undead.

CONTINUATION

A search of the surrounding area after the fight reveals a fresh set of footprints leading to and then away from the outskirts of the graveyard. These might belong to a cleric of Hela. He could have summoned the undead long ago and left them here until needed. When he saw the campfire, he awakened his army to "recruit" fresh corpses. If the paladin of Hela was used, these tracks may belong to a cowardly compatriot.

Alternately, the footprints may belong to a passing Roadwarden investigating the heroes' campfire. After watching the camp for a while, he realized the heroes were not orcs or bandits and departed without disturbing them. Whoever he was, his tracks can be followed, if the party is curious and brave enough.

8. ORC CAMP

Rank: Seasoned

The party spies a faint wisp of smoke from a small wood in the distance. Investigating, they hear guttural orc voices long before they see any creatures. Continuing, they see an orc raiding party's camp in a small glade at the bottom of a steep slope. The party can get within 24" without being seen. This is close enough to discern the general layout of the camp and the nature of its occupants.

Only the orcs outside tents are visible, though one or two others should make their presence known if the party watches for any length of time. Under no circumstances should the party be able to count the exact number of orcs in the camp.

If the heroes are reluctant to attack, have an orc drag a captive from one of the tents, kick him around the camp for a few minutes, and then drag him back inside—characters with the Heroic Hindrance are duty bound to rescue the prisoners, as are any adventurers who wish to be called heroes.

Should the party launch an attack during daylight, all the orcs are awake. Those on guard duty count as active sentries, while warriors in tents are inactive (though still armored and armed). A successful Stealth roll allows

the heroes to reach the edge of the forest undetected. Getting closer is next to impossible without magic or a suitable distraction.

At night, the situation is only a little better for the heroes (the orcs have wolves with them). A Stealth roll is again required to reach the edge of the camp at night. Due to the darkness, though, the heroes may make a second Stealth roll to move within 5" of a guard, wolf, or tent. While the sentries and wolves are still active guards, those in the tents slumber lightly. Hardy and always ready for battle, the sleepers are wearing their armor. If an alarm is raised, the slumbering warriors are treated as being Shaken for the first round. Next round, they grab their weapons (an action) and move to investigate the disturbance.

Until an alarm is raised, the party has the Drop on the orcs. This advantage should allow them to quietly eliminate the sentries and gives them a good chance of slaying other orcs before the boon is lost.

MONSTERS

After several days spent raiding the surrounding lands, the orcs are about to return to their tribe with prisoners and spoils (a Rich treasure spread between the tents). They are taking the opportunity to rest up for a few days before beginning the long march home. If the party decides not to attack and instead summons reinforcements from the nearest settlement, the orcs have departed before the heroes return.

The orcs also have a small number of wolves, which they use as guard dogs. The location of the orcs' wolves is not predetermined. During the day, they are dozing unseen inside a tent. At night, each wolf is paired with a sentry. The GM should place them where he sees fit.

Ⓜ Orc Warriors (5 per two heroes): Instead of adding more warriors for higher Ranked parties, other options include an ogre-herd and ogre, one berserker, one elite warrior, or one rider and dire wolf mount per Wild Card. In exchange for four warriors the GM could add an orc chieftain, drummer, or priest. All stats are in the *Hellfrost Bestiary*.

Ⓜ Wolf (1 per two heroes)

TACTICS

As the defenders, the orcs have no set tactics. Rather, they must react to the heroes' actions. Although experienced combatants, they are dumb brutes. In general, they charge the nearest visible foe. If no foe is visible, they seek cover and search for opponents.

If a priest is present, he casts *armor* on himself as soon as possible. He then uses his area effect spells (*fear* and *obscure*) while trying to avoid catching his allies in the template. Once his *obscure* spell has been circumvented,

ORC WARRIOR

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Gear: Leather armor (+1), medium shield (+1 Parry), short sword, axe, or mace (Str+d6)

Special Abilities:

* **Size +1:** Orcs are slightly larger than humans.

WOLF

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d10, Tracking d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities:

* **Bite:** Str+d4

* **Fleet Footed:** Wolves roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.

* **Go for the Throat:** Wolves instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly-armored location.

* **Size -1:** Wolves are relatively small.

he drops it—he isn't stupid enough to Maintain a spell unnecessarily. He employs *Bolt* against distant foes. Only if melee is unavoidable does he try *smite*. If the battle goes against the orcs, he summons an ice elemental.

TERRAIN

Campfire: The small campfires shed good light in a 2" radius. Anyone stepping into a campfire suffers 2d10 damage and has a chance of catching fire.

Light Vegetation: This vegetation is difficult ground.

Lighting: If the heroes attack at night, the lighting is Dark (-2).

Steep Slope: This slope is difficult ground. Anyone running downhill must make an Agility roll. With failure, they *must* move an additional 1d2" once they end their movement for the round. On a roll of 1, regardless of Wild Die, they slip and fall prone after the additional movement.

Tents: Toughness 8. The tents block line of sight and can grant Cover (+1 Armor).

Trees: The trunks can provide Cover (+6 Heavy Armor).

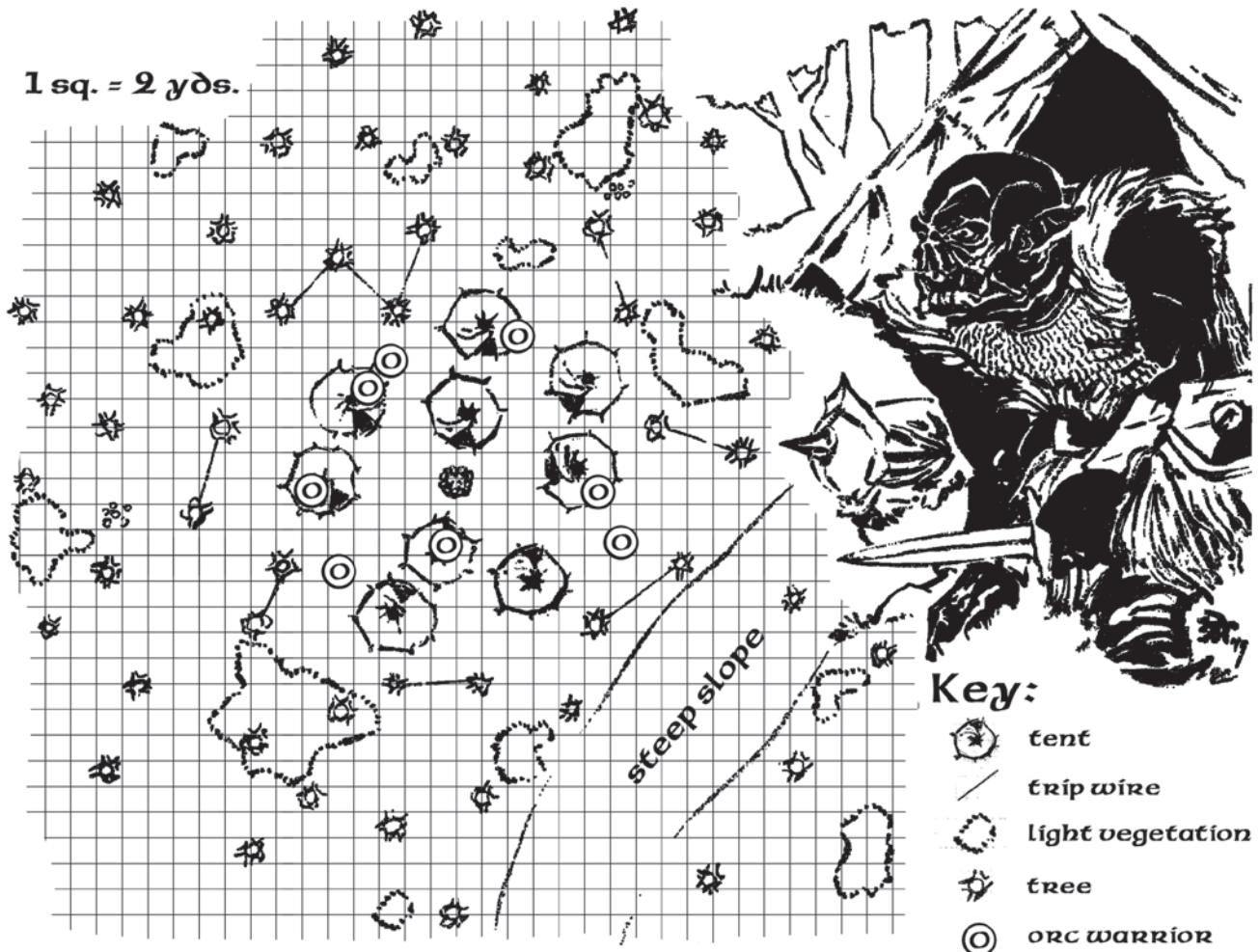
Tripwires: The orcs have strung thin tripwires between several trees. They know the location of each and can pass through the squares unimpeded. Heroes crossing a tripwire must make an Agility roll or fall prone. Running heroes roll at -2 and are Shaken if tripped.

Deliberately searching a 1" square requires a Notice roll and takes one complete round, as the character must rummage quietly in the undergrowth. Outside of combat (i.e. when the party is sneaking up on the camp), a hero who moves adjacent to a tripwire may make a Notice roll at -2 (not including any lighting penalties) as a free action to detect the wire.

CONTINUATION

The captives, who are unarmed citizens (see *Hellfrost Bestiary*), offer rewards based on their werigild if they are safely returned to their homes. The GM should determine their social class dependent on the size of reward he wishes to impart.

Unfortunately, they come from several different locales, forcing the heroes to make a long journey to claim their due reward.



9. WEIRD SISTERS

Rank: Seasoned

Following a trail or road through light woods, the heroes happen across a babbling brook which crosses their path. Kneeling beside the river, dressed in rags, is a maiden of apparent Saxa descent in her late teens or early twenties. Despite her worn clothes, dirty hair, and grimy face, it is apparent she could be a creature of beauty if suitably clothed and cleaned.

She is busy washing the inside of a deer carcass in the clear water. Startled by the party's presence, the youthful maiden suddenly leaps to her feet with a soft cry, dropping the deer into the brook with a loud splash. She begins to slowly back away.

If the party makes polite introductions or asks the girl her business, she replies as follows.

"My name is Griselda," the maiden replies. "I live in the woods with my two sisters, Helga and Ursula. Our parents died of plague many years

ago, but we were spared. We eke a living as best we can."

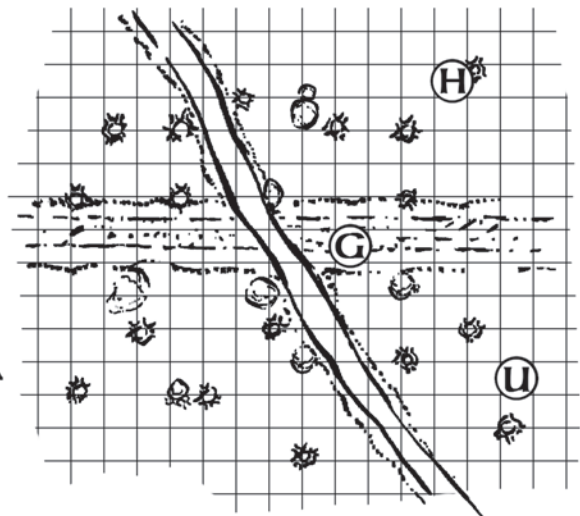
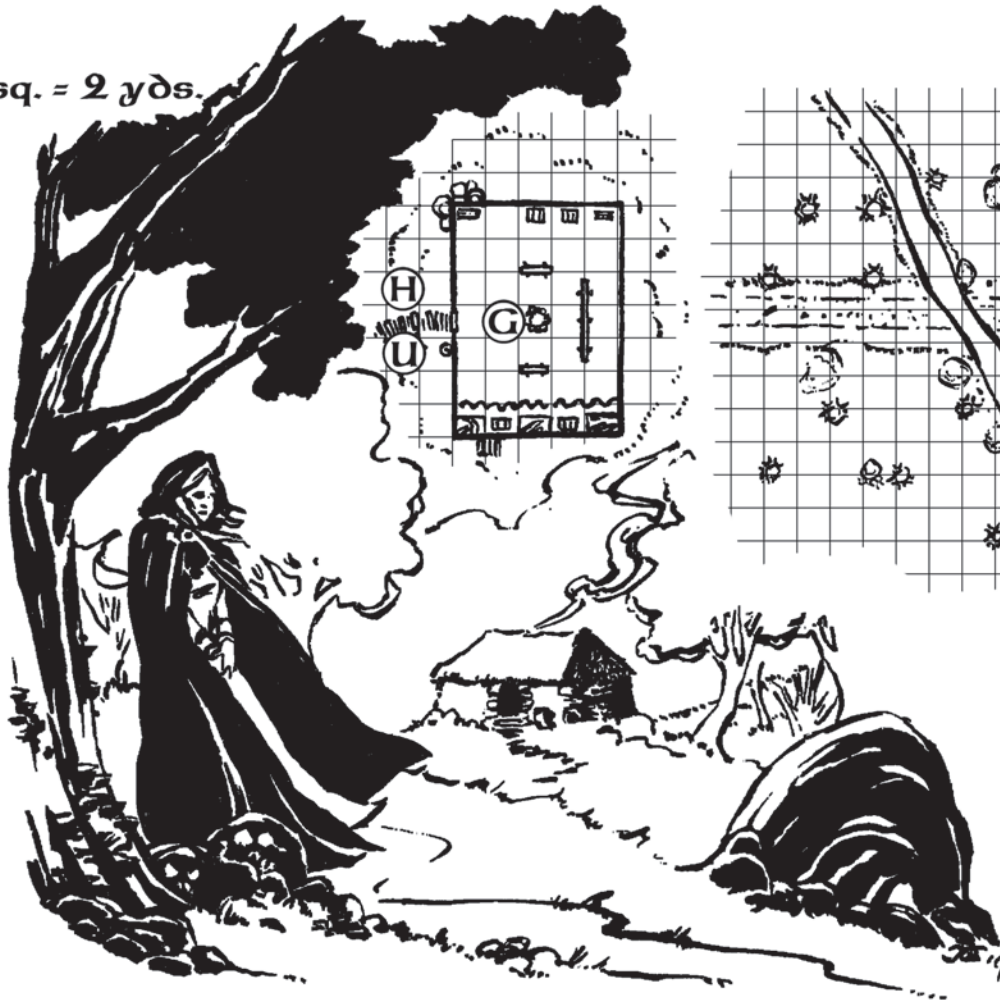
She indicates the carcass at her feet. "The forest provides well enough for us. We are far from wealthy, but we are happy here."

She glances at the dead animal and then back at you. "The laws of hospitality demand we provide strangers in our home with a place to rest and something to eat. There is enough for all of us."

Noble parties may not wish to take food from the waif's mouth, but Griselda insists. She pleads with the party not to shame her before the gods by refusing her offer of hospitality, which is given in good spirit and full knowledge that she and her sisters may have to go hungry for a day or two.

Should they remain adamant and continue to decline,

1 sq. = 2 yds.



Key:

- tree
- rocks
- brook
- bed
- door
- curtain
- fire
- bench
- chest
- table

Griselda at least ask the heroes to meet her sisters. If there is a cleric present who either tells Griselda his profession or wears an obvious holy symbol, the girl asks for a blessing for her and her sisters before the heroes go on their way—“*So the gods know we at least tried to honor guests and so the great powers hold nothing against us in the next life.*”

In this instance, the combat aspect of the encounter occurs outside. Griselda summons her sisters with a loud cry. They emerge from the woods one round later.

If the party accepts the invitation, Griselda leads them to her home, a small shack a half-mile from the brook. It is poorly furnished, lacking any luxuries or true comforts, but it is shelter from the weather.

The girl indicates that the heroes sit while she stokes the coals. Within minutes, the deep roasts over the fire. After some twenty minutes, two female voices are heard calling from just outside. Griselda replies loudly, “*Sisters, the gods honor us! We have guests for dinner!*”

MONSTERS

Griselda and her sisters are in fact hags. The weird sisters are much older than Griselda’s youthful appearance belies. Working as a team, the trio has haunted the forest for many decades, preying mainly on animals but supplementing their diet on sentient flesh when the opportunity arises.

Although there is always a risk when attacking a well-armed party, today is a chance to dine in style and the sisters are not about to ignore the opportunity!

Griselda’s introduction is a long-rehearsed lie designed to allay suspicions. The words “guests” is a code-word meaning sentient beings have been encountered.

M **Griselda:** Wild Card hag. She has a beautiful appearance (+2 Charisma).

M **Helga & Ursula:** Both sisters are Extras and of monstrous appearance (–2 Charisma).

If the party is Veteran, then Helga is a Wild Card as well. For Heroic or Legendary parties, both Helga and Ursula are Wild Cards.

TACTICS

Deal each weird sister a separate action card.

Griselda: Once her sisters appear, Griselda casts *armor* on herself. She then tries *puppet* on a character who looks like a warrior (heavy armor and a big weapon are tell-tale indications to the hag). Should she succeed, he is ordered to attack his comrades.

Even if she fails with *puppet*, her next action is to invoke *fear* to catch as many heroes as possible but without targeting her sisters.

Only if given opportunity does she cast *boost/lower trait*. Her first casting always targets a foe’s apparent strong-suit. For instance, if she sees a cleric in action, she casts *lower Faith*. Against a warrior she goes for whatever attack skill he is using, Strength, or more rarely, Vigor (GMs choice).

HAGS—GRISELDA, HELGA, & URSULA

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d12, Spellcasting d10, Taunt d8

Charisma: +2/–2; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

* **Claws:** Str+d6.

* **Powers:** The weird sisters know different spells.

***Griselda:** *Armor* (iron skin), *boost/lower trait* (blessing/curse), *fear* (hideous visage), *puppet* (persuasive words)

***Helga:** *Boost/lower trait* (blessing/curse), *deflection* (weapons bend away)

***Ursula:** *Fear* (hideous visage), *quickness* (superhuman reflexes).

Helga: Tries to cast *deflection* after hearing her sister’s call but before entering the fray. She tries this only once. If it fails, she rends with her claws and tries *boost Strength* on herself.

If she begins a combat round not engaged in melee, she tries *boost Fighting*, *boost Vigor*, and *boost Strength* (if the first attempt failed) in that order. When in melee, she always uses Wild Attacks.

Ursula: The youngest sister is the most bloodthirsty of the trio. Before joining the fight, she tries to invoke *quickness*. Even if this fails, she casts *fear* at the start of the second round and then launches into melee.

TERRAIN

Babbling Brook: The brook is difficult ground.

Chests: Toughness 8. Inside, amid gnawed bones of previous victims, is a Treasure Trove. This should not be in the form of coins and jewelry, however, but rather armor, weapons, and gear that belonged to unfortunates the sisters dined upon.

A few alchemical devices *might* be present, but remember, any sentient being can detect their magic with a touch and the hags are too intelligent not to use such finds to their advantage.

Furnishing: Treat the beds, table, and such as difficult ground.

Rocks: The rocks are difficult ground.

Trees: The trunks can be used as Cover (+6 Heavy Armor).

CONTINUATION

If the heroes fought the hags in the forest, the party should realize their lair is nearby—Griselda mentioned a home, for instance. Locating the shack is as easy or as difficult as the GM desires.

10. BANDITS

Rank: Seasoned

While Roadwardens patrol major highways and militias watch over the countryside surrounding their homes, vast stretches of Rassilon remain unprotected and unwatched. Even in the great kingdoms, some bandits and raiders operate with impunity, robbing the poor and rich alike. Trust is a rare commodity on the open road, for any armed party may harbor ill feelings toward fellow travelers.

In the dark forests, bandits set up roadblocks and ambushes to ensnare their prey. But in the open, they must either operate in large gangs or use clever tactics to secure treasure. This encounter takes the latter form.

Parked on the side of the road is a large, lone covered wagon. Two mules are grazing greedily nearby. Four men busy themselves by a campfire. One is stacking logs on the fire, another is skinning a rabbit, the third is cutting up vegetables, and the fourth is unpacking bedrolls. The men wave politely.

One of their number approaches, his arms spread wide to show he's unarmed and means no trou-

ble. A chain shirt glistens beneath his travelling cloak, common enough protection on unguarded roads.

"Ho there!" the man calls loudly in Trader. "Do you travel in peace or with violence in your hearts?"

Hopefully the heroes respond that they are simply travelers on the road. Hearing this, the man shows a wide grin and beckons them closer.

"That is good news! My companions and I have traveled long and hard today and we are in no mode for a fight. Will you join us for a bite to eat? We are preparing fresh rabbit and vegetable stew. We also have a little ale to warm your stomachs before the night's cold takes hold."

The party, whether through suspicion or general politeness, might enquire as to the men's business.

"How remiss of me," the man grins. "I am Coenwulf Dagmarsunu, a tinker by trade. My companions are Ulfgar, Sven, and Roderic. We're on our way to <insert name of nearest town> to sell our wares at the market. And what of you? What is your business on the open road?"

On approaching the campfire, the heroes see that all the men have crossbows placed nearby. Coenwulf, if he sees the party notice them or is asked about the heavy armaments, smiles another broad grin. *"These are dangerous roads and you might have been bandits. Only a fool walks unarmed."*

Coenwulf orders his companions to make room for the guests near the fire, as hospitality demands. While the stew is being prepared, he asks the heroes about themselves. He's trying to gain as much information on each party member as he can without raising suspicion. An astute observer, he'll ask appropriate questions based on whatever the heroes say. His primary aim is to identify spellcasters, since they are the greatest threat. Once he has learned enough, he stands and moves toward the wagon.

"I think it is time to drink to friendship in troubled times. Forget the ale," he smiles, "how would you like something special I've been brewing on the side? I call it 'crossbow bolt' because of its kick."

If the party declines, he goes to the wagon anyway, claiming he and his men need a warming drink. Once level with the door, he slaps the wagon hard. The side facing the campfire folds down to reveal a number of men armed with crossbows, all aimed at the party!



COENWULF DAGMARSUNU

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Throwing d8

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Greedy (Major), Mean, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Command, Strong Willed

Gear: Chain shirt (+2), battle axe (Str+d8), crossbow (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d6, AP 2)

BANDIT

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Mean

Edges: —

Gear: Leather armor (+1), typically short sword, mace, or axe (Str+d6), crossbow (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d6, AP 2)

MONSTERS

The men are bandits, intent on robbing the heroes. Stashed in the back of the wagon is the bandits' haul—three Rich treasures. Half of this is coin and jewelry and half miscellaneous gear or weapons. The gear the bandits are carrying is mostly stolen from victims, but is not counted against the value of the treasure.

M Coenwulf Dagmarsunu (1)

M Bandits (3 per two heroes): Note that only three men are visible around the campfire. The others are concealed inside the wagon. If the party contains more than four characters, then any additional bandits to those shown on the map begin inside the caravan. Having used this devious tactic many times, they know how to remain totally silent until the trap is sprung.

TACTICS

Have the party make Notice rolls to avoid Surprise. The bandits in the wagon begin on Hold. Those bandits outside are dealt cards as normal. Their first round is spent grabbing their crossbows and leveling them at the party. Although the heroes won't have removed their armor, their weapons are likely safely stashed, placing them at a serious disadvantage in the first round.

Coenwulf doesn't want to kill the heroes unnecessarily—he just wants all their gear and money. To that end, he offers them two choices—part with their valuables and walk away or be cut down where they sit. How the party responds is left to the heroes.

Once a fight starts (as it probably will), the bandits fire their crossbows. Regardless of how many spellcasters are in the party, a full half the bandits attack them—a lone spellcaster stands a very good chance of becoming a pincushion in the first round. The remaining bandits divide their shots among the other characters as equally as possible.

After firing, those outside the wagon drop their crossbows. Next round, rather than waste time reloading, they draw their melee weapons (an action) and engage. The bandits inside reload and fire, figuring it better to get extra shots off before their opponents close to attack.

Coenwulf has no wish to be captured, for his crimes carry a death sentence. If the fight turns against the bandits, he tries to flee, leaving his men behind to fend for themselves.

Should the party surrender, they are relieved of all their gear. They are then securely bound and gagged before the bandits quickly pack up camp and make good their escape.

TERRAIN

Campfire: The campfire sheds good light in a 3" radius. Anyone stepping into the fire suffers 2d10 damage and risks catching fire.

Lighting: If the encounter occurs during the evening, the lighting is Dim (−1). After sunset, it is Dark (−2).

Tongue: The area with the tongue (the wooden bar projecting from the front of the wagon to which the mounts are attached) is difficult ground. Creatures of Size −1 gain Medium Cover (−2) standing behind it, while larger creatures benefit only from Light Cover (−1).

Wagon: The wagon can be used as Cover (+2 Armor). Movement through a wagon's space is possible only by crawling beneath it.

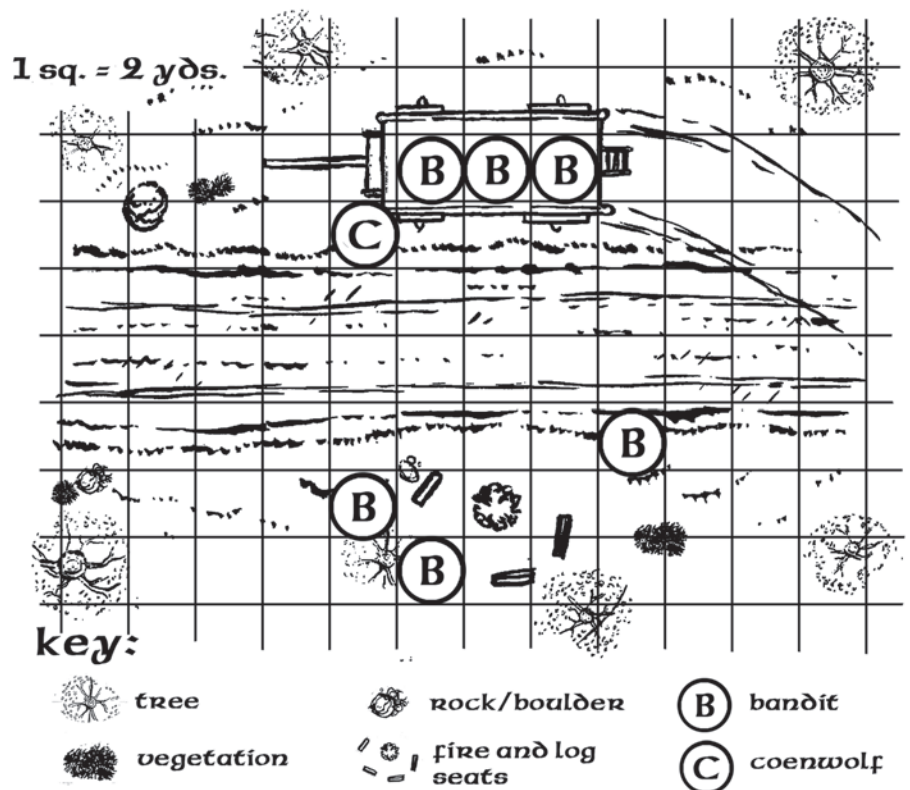
The folded down side panel provides Heavy Cover (−4, +2 Armor), as the bandits inside are kneeling.

CONTINUATION

Two different continuations can spring from this encounter with bandits.

If Coenwulf is forced to flee he vows revenge on the heroes. At some point the bandit leader should return to trouble the party. If the GM wants to make him a recurring villain, then the party gains the Minor version of the Enemy Hindrance.

The other continuation concerns the heroes surrendering or being defeated, and losing all their gear. If this occurs, they are likely to want revenge on the bandits. Whether they escape their bonds on their own or require help from outsiders depends on how well the knots are tied, something the GM must determine. The latter option is a great way to introduce new heroes or important NPCs.



11. ELF AMBUSH

Rank: Veteran

The elves of Rassilon do not tolerate intruders in their leafy forests, even civilized ones. Those wishing to journey through an elf-wood should make their intentions clear by asking permission before entering the forest. No reply will be given—not being shot within the first mile is generally proof enough the elves will allow the party passage.

Allowing passage does not give adventurers carte blanche to do as they wish. All intruders are monitored, not only by elves but also by wildlife. Those who abuse the sanctity of the forest or embark on destruction are hit hard, fast, and without warning or mercy. Few travelers make the mistake of offending the elves twice.

This encounter represents a typical elf ambush. GMs should note the word “typical” is important—if the elves are expecting trouble their numbers are augmented by clerics and other spellcasters, plus members of the Wood Wardens, wild beasts, and possibly even an animated war tree or two.

Heroes who have good relations with elves may be

invited to participate in an ambush against an orc raiding party or similar foe, allowing the characters to witness the ferocity and deadliness of elves in their home environment as well as help defeat a worthy opponent.

MONSTERS

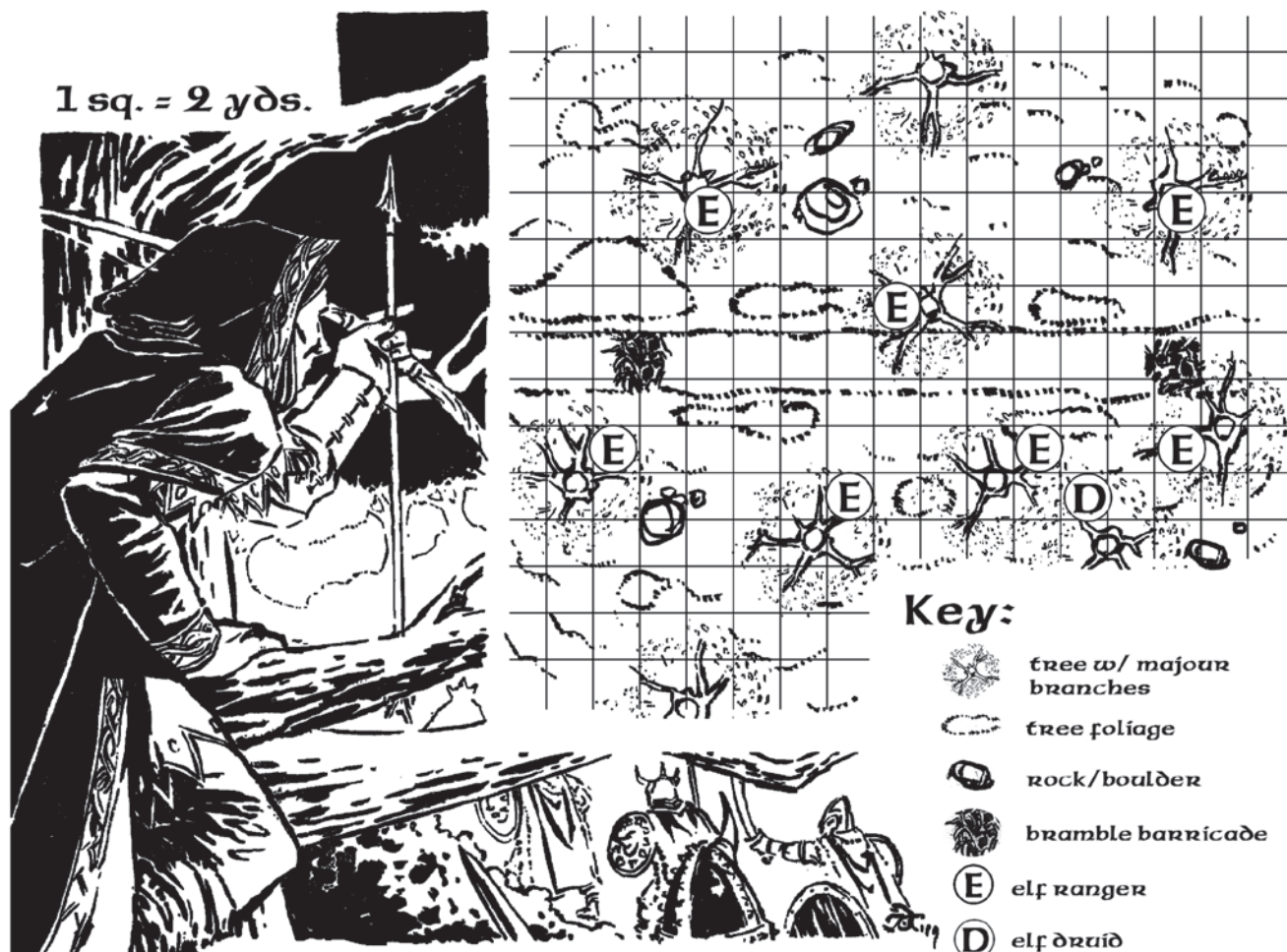
Lurking in the trees is a typical elf patrol. It comprises one or more druids and a number of skilled archers.

Ⓜ **Hearth Elf Druid (1 per four heroes):** If the party is heavily combat oriented, make one of the druids a Wild Card.

Ⓜ **Hearth Elf Ranger (2 per hero)**

TACTICS

If the party failed to ask permission to enter the forest but caused no trouble leading up to the ambush, the elves *may* fire warning shots to get the party's attention. They then interrogate the strangers as to their business (from the safety of their hiding places, of course). If the



party has valid business, the elves are likely to let them pass unmolested (though still discretely tracked).

Note that elves in *Hellfrost* are not peaceful do-gooders content to ask questions first and shoot later—they are just as likely to fire a warning shot *into* a hero to get the group's attention. If anyone's been troubling the elves, such as orcs or loggers, the elves' first reaction is to attack any strangers without warning.

The elves have planned their ambush well. Those nearest the barricades begin by cutting the barricade's ropes. These fall in the positions shown on the map and serve to block the path in both directions. With dense undergrowth on both sides, the heroes are effectively hemmed in. The rangers simultaneously unleash volleys of arrows at the party. Only if knocked down, or if the heroes start scaling the trees, do the elves enter melee.

The druid has already cast his *armor* spell when the ambush begins and is Maintaining it. Either roll randomly (rerolling failures) or assume he was successful and give him +2 Armor. He attacks using his *bolt* spells, firing three at a single target each round. Should he suffer the Siphoning, he withdraws from the engagement.

The party cannot return fire at the elves until they spot the attackers (see below).

The elves retreat once they lose half their number, moving along the branches and using the vegetation for cover. Rest assured, they'll be back at some point, and in greater numbers. They won't give any warning shots, either.

TERRAIN

Bramble Barricades: The barricades are 6' high. Each section of barricade has Toughness 10.

Crossing the barricade requires an Agility roll as an action. With success, the hero treats it as difficult ground. Failure means he's ensnared. He must make an Agility or Strength roll (his choice) as an action to escape. Until then, he cannot move and all physical actions are performed at -2.

Branches: The large branches shown on the map are difficult ground (the elves ignore this limitation). Neither the heroes nor elves can run while using the branches.

Dense Vegetation: The undergrowth is difficult ground and characters cannot run through it. The first square of vegetation between attacker and target (not including the attacker's square) provides Light Cover (-1), two squares is Medium Cover (-2), and three squares is Heavy Cover (-4). Beyond this visibility is blocked. Attacks that miss because of Cover are deflected away from the intended target.

Elf Positions: The elves are seated 6" above the ground in the branches of the trees. The leaves provide them with Medium Cover (-2).

Detecting the archers requires a Notice roll as an action opposed by the elves' Stealth. Success locates the nearest currently undetected elf and a raise locates the closest *two* ambushers.

Lighting: During the day the lighting is Dim (-1) due to the heavy canopy.

Medium Vegetation: All unmarked ground squares contain medium density vegetation. These areas are difficult ground.

Trees: The trunks can be used as Cover (+6 Heavy Armor).

CONTINUATION

If the party is the subject of an elf ambush, then there is a very good chance they'll face another before exiting the forest. Unless the attack is a case of mistaken identity, the heroes have very little chance of establishing peaceful relations with the forest denizens. Flight and a strong defense is the party's best hope of survival.

HEARTH ELF DRUID

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Druidism d8, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Healing d6, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Tracking d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: All Thumbs

Edges: Agile, Arcane Background (Druidism), Beast Friend (hawk companion), Natural Realms

Gear: Leather armor (+1), antler staff (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands)

Powers: *Armor* (bark skin), *beast friend* (song of the wild), *bolt* (sharp wooden darts), *feast* (animals bring food), *healing* (herbs), *shape change* (possessed by animal spirit)

Special Abilities:

- * **Forest Born:** Hearth elves suffer no penalties for difficult ground in forests.
- * **Low Light Vision:** Elves ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

HEARTH ELF RANGER

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Tracking d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: All Thumbs

Edges: Agile, Combat Reflexes, Marksman, Woodsman

Gear: Leather armor (+1), long sword (Str+d8), long bow (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d6), camouflage cloak (+2 Stealth when hiding in deciduous forest)

Special Abilities:

- * **Forest Born:** Hearth elves suffer no penalties for difficult ground in forests.
- * **Low Light Vision:** Elves ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

12. BARROOM BRAWL

Rank: Novice

Taverns, alehouses, and inns are popular haunts for adventurers. A place to relax, to enjoy a hot bath and hot food, to quaff ale in copious quantities, to “liaise” with members of the preferred sex, to sleep in relative safety, to swap stories, meet patrons and find employment, and watch entertainment.

This encounter serves two purposes. First, it gives the GM floor-plans for a typical inn he can use whenever the heroes need a bed for the night. Second, it provides everything needed to turn a routine inn visit into an interesting nonlethal fight. Barroom brawls are a good way for heroes to let off steam without drenching themselves in blood.

Glory awarded for participating in a barroom brawl should, at the very most, be limited to a single point, and then only if the fight was truly memorable—characters do not become heroes beating up fellow drinkers. Adventurers who constantly start fights should lose a few points of Glory—no one likes a bully.

MONSTERS

The GM should alter the opposition as best suits the party’s experience and the location of the inn. The sample stats are for common citizens, the sort found in drinking halls up and down the continent. In a dockside tavern the patrons are more likely to be sailors (or possibly pirates or sea raiders), while a slum dive may be frequented by thieves or assassins. A fight against a hick farmer isn’t much of a challenge for hardened adventurers, but against a detachment of Hearth Knights on leave, or a squad of Tiw’s paladins, the heroes likely face a tougher time.

Fights can start any number of ways, and not all need involve the heroes. A local disagreement turned into full-scale brawl quickly spreads to encompass all the patrons.

Ways to involve the heroes directly include racial

abuse (directed against a different race or culture), accusations of cheating in a gambling game (true or not), spilling someone’s drink, talking to the wrong female (or male), mistaken identity, a general dislike of any outsider (based not on race or culture but whether one is local), and attempted mugging (probable if the heroes are in the wrong sort of drinking establishment).

Similarly, if a fight gets out of hand the local watch or militia should turn up and arrest everyone for public disorder. Typically the combatants get released after sobering up in the cells, but if weapons were used they may face charges of attempted murder or be forced to pay weregild.

Ⓜ **Bare-Kuckle Boxer (1 per four heroes):** These are patrons who have participated in a large number of brawls and have developed a powerful punch.

Ⓜ **Brawlers (3 per hero):** One brawler per player character should be treated as being on the heroes’ side.

TACTICS

Barroom brawls are governed by a cardinal unwritten rule—no deadly weapons. It’s considered acceptable to use furniture or unbroken bottles as weapons (typically these inflict nonlethal damage unless a hero decides otherwise), but drawing a weapon is both an excuse for the local militia to be called and for everyone else to draw weapons. There are no particular tactics beyond beating the nearest person into unconsciousness.

TERRAIN

Bottles: There are bottles on every table. Grabbing one to use a weapon requires an action. A bottle inflicts Str+d4 damage but smashes after one hit. Using a broken bottle also causes Str+d4 damage, but counts as a deadly weapon. Picking up a bottle using a Trick does not require two actions—getting the bottle is part of the stunt.

Doors: Toughness 10.

Fireplace/Fire Pit: Anyone entering the space with the fire takes 2d10 damage and has a chance of catching fire. Hot coals can be scooped up on a small shovel and “thrown” a range of 2/4/8. They inflict 2d4 damage if used as a weapon, though no damage is inflicted if this is part of a Trick.

Miscellaneous Items: From serving trays to fireplace irons, decks of cards to animal heads mounted on walls, bars contain a wealth of items usable in Tricks or as weapons. Most dealt Str+d4 damage and can be used one-handed.

Tables & Chairs: Space occupied by furniture is difficult ground. Furniture can give Cover (+1 Armor for chairs and +2 for tables or desks).

A chair used as a weapon requires two-hands and inflicts Str+d6 damage. A Fighting roll of 1, regardless of Wild Die, breaks the chair, rendering it useless as a weapon. Chair legs inflict Str+d4 damage.



BARE-KNUCKLE BOXER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Notice d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Mean

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Improved Frenzy

BRAWLERS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d4, Notice d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Edges & Hindrances: —

Gear: Knife (Str+d4)

1 sq. = 2 yds.

innkeeper's room

parlor

kitchen

small rooms

shared room

large rooms

common room

stables



Key:

-  fireplace
-  table
-  door
-  stairs
-  bed/chamber pot
-  barrel
-  chest
-  bed side table/candle
-  stool
-  window
-  support post
-  table and chairs

13. THE LIVING FOREST

Rank: Novice

Widely regarded with a mixture of superstition and terror, the forests of Rassilon give comfort only to the elves and fey who call them home.

MONSTERS

The forest is home to a number of wood wights. In recent weeks, their home has been despoiled by outsiders. Depending on where you run this encounter, the outsiders could be loggers trying to harvest trees, rapacious and destructive orcs, or perhaps a lone giant.

Though highly intelligent, wood wights have difficulty telling two-legged races apart (even the elves, a race they know well). Informed of the party's approach by the forest animals and trees, they prepare an ambush, mistakenly believing the intruders have come to wreak more havoc.

Once a wood wight is clearly visible, the heroes may make rolls in Knowledge (Folklore) at -2 or Knowledge

(Fey) as a free action. If they have encountered wood wights before (those who have completed adventure *N2: The Dark Seed* have had close dealings with a wood wight), there is no need to roll. With success (automatic or rolled), the characters know wood wights are defenders of the forest and peaceful unless they or their homes are threatened. Ideally, the heroes will endure several rounds of spells before catching sight of their attackers.

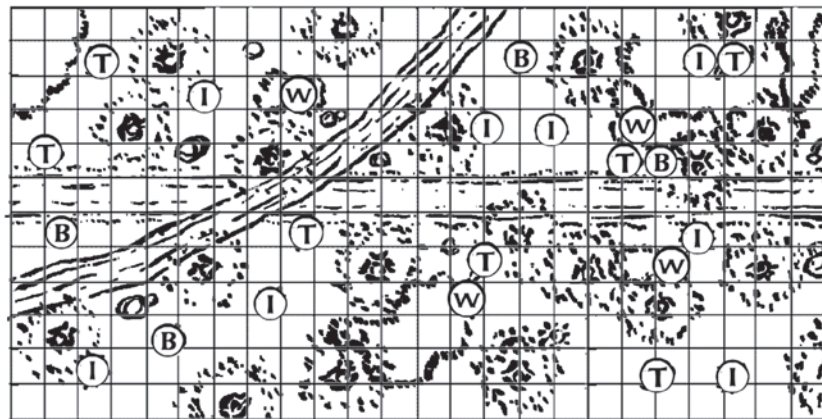
Ⓜ Wood Wights (1 per hero)

TACTICS

The fey begin well-camouflaged but have not augmented their Stealth through *boost* spells. They begin on Hold. Check for Surprise as normal.

The wood wights lack true offensive capabilities. They use guerilla tactics, launching *entangle* and *knockdown* in a bid to frustrate the intruders and drive them away. Their favored tactic is to remain in cover, cast a spell, and then scurry away deeper into the relative safety of

1 sq. = 2 yds.



Key:

-  stream
-  iron thorn
-  tangle vine
-  bind weed
-  dense vegetation
-  tree
-  wood wight

the undergrowth. On no account should they voluntarily enter melee combat.

During the fight they continually shout out, in Arboreal or Fey, things like, "That's for harming the forest!" and "Flee despoilers!" This is hopefully enough of a clue that the wood wights have mistaken the party for someone else. Thus, there is a chance to end the violence without bloodshed, and possibly earn a favor by helping the wood wights. Convincing the wood wights that the party means no harm requires a Persuasion roll at -2 as an action. Naturally, the speaker must be able to communicate with the fey. If any wood wights have been harmed or if any heroes have used fire spells in the encounter, there is a further -2 penalty. With success, the creatures remain in hiding but stop their attacks.

TERRAIN

Dense Vegetation: The undergrowth is difficult ground and characters cannot run through it. The first square of vegetation between attacker and target (not including the attacker's square) provides Light Cover (-1), two squares is Medium Cover (-2), and three squares is Heavy Cover (-4). Beyond this visibility is blocked. Attacks that miss because of Cover are deflected away from the intended target.

Lighting: The canopy makes the lighting Dim (-1).

Plant Patches: Among the ground vegetation are patches of bind weed, ironthorn, and tangle vine.

Stream: The stream is difficult ground. Stealth rolls made in the water are at -2.

Trees: The trunks can provide Cover (+8 Heavy Armor) and, along with the canopy, block line of sight.

CONTINUATION

If the heroes persuade the wood wights they are not here to cause trouble (this should be harder to achieve if the adventurers have killed any of the wood wights or have used fire magic on vegetation), the fey are willing to explain the reason for their aggression. If the party avenges the fey by dealing with the true interlopers, the fey offer a promise of safe conduct through the forest by a secret route (which cuts a day off the heroes' journey).

ALTERATION

Glimmerwings, while lacking much offensive capability, have a spell list ideal for this sort of encounter, and could become a real nuisance. If the GM wants to have a more violent meeting with the fey, the wood wights may have allies, be subservient to a higher-ranking fey, or perhaps may not be present at all. Bugganes make good opponents for combat-oriented parties, as they favor melee. Skogsra, while they have spells like *barrier* and *stun* to annoy the heroes, can also use *animate war tree*, which makes them suitable foes for high Rank parties. For a truly fearsome foe, an enraged Leshij can't be beaten.

PLANT PATCHES

Plant patches are static areas of harmful or hampering vegetation. Unlike other creatures, patches are treated as inanimate objects. They have a Toughness score and special abilities, but no other Traits. They do not draw action cards. Plant patches fill a single 1" square, though they are often encountered in larger clumps. In such cases, each 1" area is treated as a separate plant. All patches share a common base stat-block modified to a specific type of plant.

Toughness: 10

Special Abilities:

- * **Inanimate Object:** Parry 2. Damage rolls against them don't count raises on the attack roll, nor Aces. Unaffected by Tests of Will, Tricks, or arcane powers like *puppet*.

- * **Patch Abilities:** Each type of plant has a unique ability. Victims suffer effects immediately upon entering a patch.

- * **Bind Weed:** Characters treat each 1" of movement as 3". Elves and disciples of Freo suffer less—they treat each 1" of movement as 2".

- * **Ironthorn:** Creatures must make an Agility roll, -2 if running. Characters electing to proceed more carefully treat each 1" of movement through the patch as 2" and cannot run, but need not make the Agility roll. Failure results in 2d4 damage to their least armored location.

- * **Tangle Vine:** The vines make a grapple attack. They roll a d8 for any die roll related to grappling, including damage.

WOOD WIGHT

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d4, Guts d6, Notice d6, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d4, Survival d4, Tracking d4

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5 (1)

Edges: Woodsman

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +1:** Bark

- * **Camouflage:** When a wood wight stands motionless in a forest, it gains +4 to Stealth rolls.

- * **Forest Born:** Wood wights suffer no penalties for difficult ground in forests.

- * **Forest Folk:** Wood wights have Stealth, Survival, and Tracking at d8 in forests.

- * **Low Light Vision:** Wood wights ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

- * **Powers:** Wood wights know the following spells: *boost/lower Stealth*, *entangle* (vegetation comes alive), *healing* (animals only), *beat mask*, *knockdown* (nearby trees slap victims), *wilderness step* (forests only)

- * **Size -1:** Wood wights are similar in size to young human children.

14. GHOSTLY GUARDIANS

NOVICE

Rank: Novice

GM's Note: This encounter isn't a straightforward fight. Indeed, violence is simply not a viable solution. The only way the heroes can "win" this encounter is to flee or use *banish* spells.

The encounter can be used as an entire session filler, and is especially ideal if a player can't make the game—despite not actually possessing the power, you can rule

(secretly) that the wraiths have ensorcelled his hero to fall into a deep sleep.

This encounter requires the heroes to shelter in an old ruin. In order to prevent them from simply fleeing at the first evidence of haunting, the GM needs some way of keeping the heroes inside the derelict building. This could be a blizzard or storm, the threat of other monsters, a cold snap, the Hellfrost wind, etc. The party should consider leaving to be the greater threat—not the easy option.

For the purpose of this encounter, the ruin can have any history. Depending on where the GM sets this encounter, these broken walls and collapsed roof may be an old fort from the days of the Blizzard War (or earlier), a temple, an abandoned fortified stead, a noble's manor house, or a trading post. It's up to the GM whether or not he provides knowledge of its former use. While clues should keep the party interested, and perhaps lure them into searching for a way to defeat the ghostly inhabitants, this should not provide a solution to defeat the unearthly occupants.

WRAITH

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Intimidation d10, Notice d12, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d12+4, Taunt d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities:

- * **Immaterial:** Wraiths can pass through solid matter.
- * **Invulnerability:** Immune to all forms of attack except their Weakness.
- * **Powers:** *Fear, light, lower trait* (no boost), *nightmare, obscure, panic* (no bless), *puppet, silence, telekinesis, voice on the wind*.
- * **Unusual Sense:** Wraiths instinctively know when someone who should not be present enters the territory they guard.
- * **Weakness:** The only way to rid oneself of a wraith is *banish*.

GHOST

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d12+2, Notice d12, Taunt d10, Stealth d12+4, Throwing d12

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Thrown objects (Str+d4)

Treasure: None.

Special Abilities:

- * **Anchor:** Some ghosts have anchors which tie them to the world of the living. An anchor may be a building, a battlefield, the ghost's former body, or any other place or person that was important in life. Such spirits may not travel more than a mile from the anchor, though if the anchor moves, they go with it.
- * **Chill of the Grave:** A ghost may make a touch attack that deals 2d6 nonlethal damage. Only magic armor protects against this damage.
- * **Ethereal:** Ghosts are immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks.
- * **Fear -2:** Ghosts cause Guts checks at -2 when they allow themselves to be seen.

MONSTERS

Wraiths are spirits that chose not to venture to the afterlife. They are guardians, lurking unseen and unheard in the darkest recesses of towns, cities, temples, and castles. Bound to their chosen haunt, wraiths cannot move beyond its confines under any circumstances. It is rare to encounter only a single wraith—castles may boast a score, and large cities as many as a hundred.

Only when intruders make shelter in their lair do wraiths rouse. Their preferred prey is usurpers and conquering armies, though more aggressive wraiths target thieves and guests who breach the ancient laws of hospitality.

Completely immaterial, wraiths are more akin to sentient memories than ghosts. They appear only as shadows or moving objects at the corner of one's vision and, vanishing when looked at directly, are known only as whispering voices on the wind. They can only be harmed through the *banish* spell, which forces them to travel to the afterlife for judgment. The only way to placate a wraith is to leave its home.

Ghosts can be used instead of wraiths if the GM wants a more combat-oriented encounter.

Ⓜ **Wraiths (1 per 2 heroes)**

TACTICS

Once awakened, they use their powers to harass interlopers, slowly driving them mad through subtle spells or by "encouraging" them to take their own lives. Ageless and immortal, wraiths prefer slow assaults on the senses rather than a swift hammer blow; though, if the intruders appear not to be setting up long-term housing, a swift, all-out attack is often their only viable tactic.

14. GHOSTLY GUARDIANS

By slowly assaulting the heroes, the GM can build up tension over a period of time. We suggest you begin small and work up as the night passes. After all, a full-on, early attack might only encourage the heroes' resolve to leave. While this is what the wraiths want, it makes for a dull encounter. Since *voice on the wind* requires a name, the wraiths will watch and listen from the shadows until they have the information they want—it likely won't take long to learn at least one name.

Being in the wilds, the party is likely to set up a watch system. Begin with *light*, *obscure*, *telekinesis*, and *voice on the wind* spells against these sentries. Remember, the aim of the wraiths is to scare the heroes—their invocation of *telekinesis* moves small objects in the shadows; *light* creates the illusion of a torch somewhere else in the building; *obscure* smothers lights (if a sentry wakes his colleagues, the *obscure* is cancelled before they can see its effects), and *voice on the wind* contains menacing threats, such as "We're coming for you."

At least one wraith should use *nightmare* before a hero goes to sleep. Although this allows the player a Spirit roll, nothing in the rules says a player must know

when he is under attack from such a spell. Have a few players make Spirit rolls for no obvious reason throughout the encounter, just to up the paranoia.

As the night progresses, use *lower Trait* to affect the heroes' Spirit. Just before dawn, or if the heroes plan on leaving sooner, hit them with *panic* followed by *fear*. As a last resort, the wraiths use *puppet* to try and make the heroes commit suicide. Failure is just as good as success, for it allows the victim's comrades to try and stop him, and should increase their own sense of dread.

TERRAIN

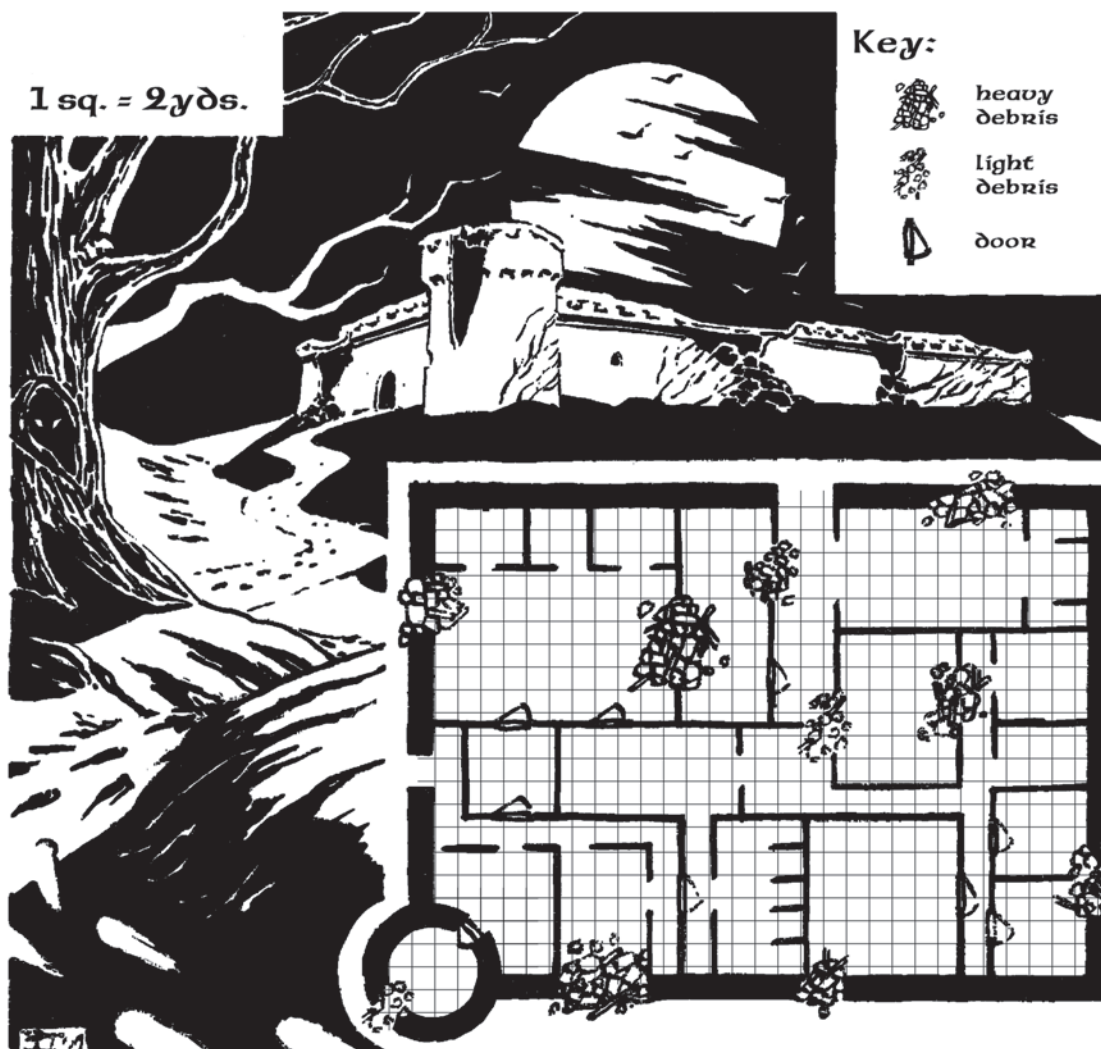
Doors: Toughness 10.

Heavy Debris: The heavy debris is difficult ground and characters cannot run through it.

Light Debris: The light debris is difficult ground.

Lighting: Campfires and torches shed good light in a 3" radius. In unroofed areas, the lighting is merely Dark (-2), thanks to the moon and stars, but it's Pitch Black (-4) in covered areas.

Walls: Interior walls are 10' tall per storey.



15. SEA RAIDERS

Rank: Seasoned

This encounter is designed for a party voyaging by ship. They might be on a short haul up a river or along the coast, making an overland trip by ice-rigger, or engaged in an epic overseas journey. If ship-bound between adventures, this encounter could serve to liven-up the heroes' journey. Or this encounter could be an additional scene in an adventure actively taking place on a ship.

GMs looking to expand the role of ships and the oceans in their *Hellfrost* campaign will find additional rules and Edges, places of interest, and new aquatic monsters in *Region Guide #8: The Ten Seas*, available from the Triple Ace Games webstore.

There are two ways to run this encounter. The long method involves using the Chase rules. For this, the pirates appear on the horizon and must close to weapon range. Use the Contact rules to bring the vessels to Close Quarters. Once this is achieved, each Range Increment represents 10". Place the pirates five Range Increments behind the heroes. If the party has access to siege weapons on their ship, so should the raiders.

The shorter method is to have the pirate ship emerge from a dense mist close enough for tabletop action to begin almost instantly. We suggest a distance of 10" between the ships when the encounter begins.

PIRATE/SEA RAIDER

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Swimming d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor)

Edges: Steady Hands

Gear: Leather armor (+1), pot helm (+3), medium shield (+1 Parry), axe (Str+d6), bow (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6) or throwing spears or axes (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d6)

SAILOR

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d4, Guts d6, Notice d6, Swimming d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: —

Gear: Dagger (Str+d4), long spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands)

The steady rise and fall of the ship, the whistling wind, and the cry of hungry birds have been your constant companions for many days. The trip has been uneventful until now, but that may be about to change, for a cry of "Black sail!" goes up from the watchman. A black sail? That can only mean one thing—pirates!

MONSTERS

Before the Anari conquered their lands, the Saxa were legendary sailors and raiders, cruising coasts and rivers in longships, plundering neighboring lands—whether they belonged to other cultures or fellow Saxa. These days the practice has all but died out, though coastal realms such as Angmark and Ostmark maintain a navy. The Anari of Alantaris Isle, though now only a shadow of their former glory, still maintain a strong navy to protect their island and merchant fleet, and many Tuomi tribes raid the Winterlands using ice-rigger ships. However, pirates from the Isles of the Seareavers are now the most common sea-raiders.

Both lightly-armored fighters and relatively unskilled sailors (in terms of combat abilities) are used as raiders in this encounter. For more experienced parties or for adventures set in and around the coast of Orcmark, Veermark, or perhaps even Midmark, the GM may wish to swap the pirate captain with an orc chieftain, the pirates themselves for orc warriors, and the sailors for runts.

No stats are given for the ships. The party's ship should already be known to you, and this will determine the number of Allied Extras present (sailors, lost likely). The total party strength determines the number of pirates present, thus allowing the GM to pick a suitable vessel.

If both sides are using large craft, such as busses, skeids, or snekkes, the GM may wish to use the Mass Battles rules instead.

Ⓜ **Captain:** Treat as a Wild Card pirate/sea raider with the Command Edge.

Ⓜ **Pirates/Sea Raiders (1 per hero):** There is one additional pirate for each Ally who could be regarded as a fighter (like a mercenary or huscarl). For non-combatant Allies (such as regular sailors), there is one additional pirate per two Extras.

As a quick rule of thumb, NPCs count as noncombatants if they have all of the following: an attack skill no higher than d6, armor no better than leather, and no more than one Combat Edge.

Ⓜ **Sailor:** One per party member, including Allies.

TACTICS

Regardless of whether you use the Chase rules or

head straight to the boarding action, the pirates begin unleashing missile weapons when within range. When the ships draw within 1", the pirates/sea raiders leap across and begin the assault.

As the two vessels touch, the pirates attach grappling hooks (an action) to prevent the enemy escaping. Once this is done, they use long spears to aid their comrades, stabbing and thrusting through gaps and over shoulders.

TERRAIN

Crowded Deck: The decks are strewn with seating benches, personal possessions, provisions, cargo, rope lines, etc, which makes them difficult ground.

Grappling Lines: There is one line with Toughness 6 per two enemy sailors. Until all are cut, the ships cannot pull apart.

Gunwale: The sides of a typical ship are not very high. They provide Medium Cover (-2) if crouched or sat behind, and standing behind them provides Light Cover (-1). Obstacle bonuses are equal to those of the ship's Armor but do not grant Heavy Armor bonuses. (The occasional spear thrust or axe swing through a section of planking is not capable of sinking a seaworthy vessel.)

Unstable Platform: The rocking ships are Unsteady Platforms.

TREASURE

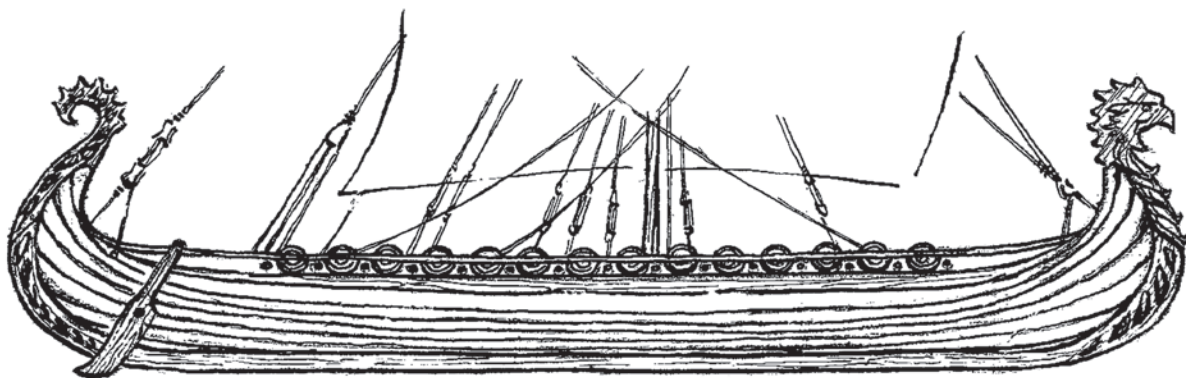
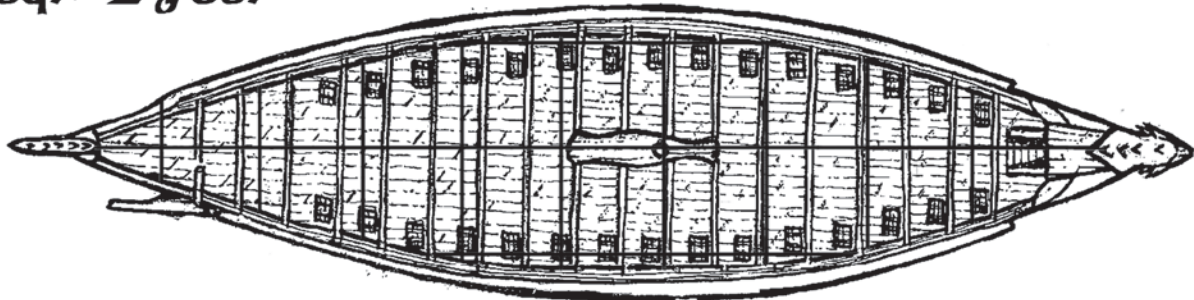
Sea raiders in *Hellfrost* aren't swashbucklers who bury treasure on remote islands—what they "earn," they spend. The pirates have treasure on board their ship in the form of valuable personal possessions, such as jewelry and coins, and stolen cargo.

The amount of treasure recovered depends on how easy the fight was. If the party suffered greatly, then a Treasure Trove wouldn't go amiss. Otherwise, a Rich reward should suffice. Any rewards must be divided between the entire crew, not just the heroes.

SHIP PLANS

GMs should note that the ship plans below are designed for game play, and are not intended to model real world vessels. *Savage Worlds* uses 1" (2 yard) squares to facilitate easy use of miniatures. This limits one characters to an area 6' by 6'. In the real world, two or three people could fit such as space. Even aboard ships, the standard defensive formation in *Hellfrost* is the shieldwall.

1 sq. = 2 yds.



16. CROP THIEVES

Rank: Novice

The heroes are in a small farming community's alehouse, sheltering from a storm or seeking beds for the night. The citizens have been respectful and polite, but all attempts at conversation have been rebuffed with a wall of stony silence.

The locals have obeyed the minimum laws of hospitality, providing bread and water and seating the heroes just close enough to the fire to feel its warmth.

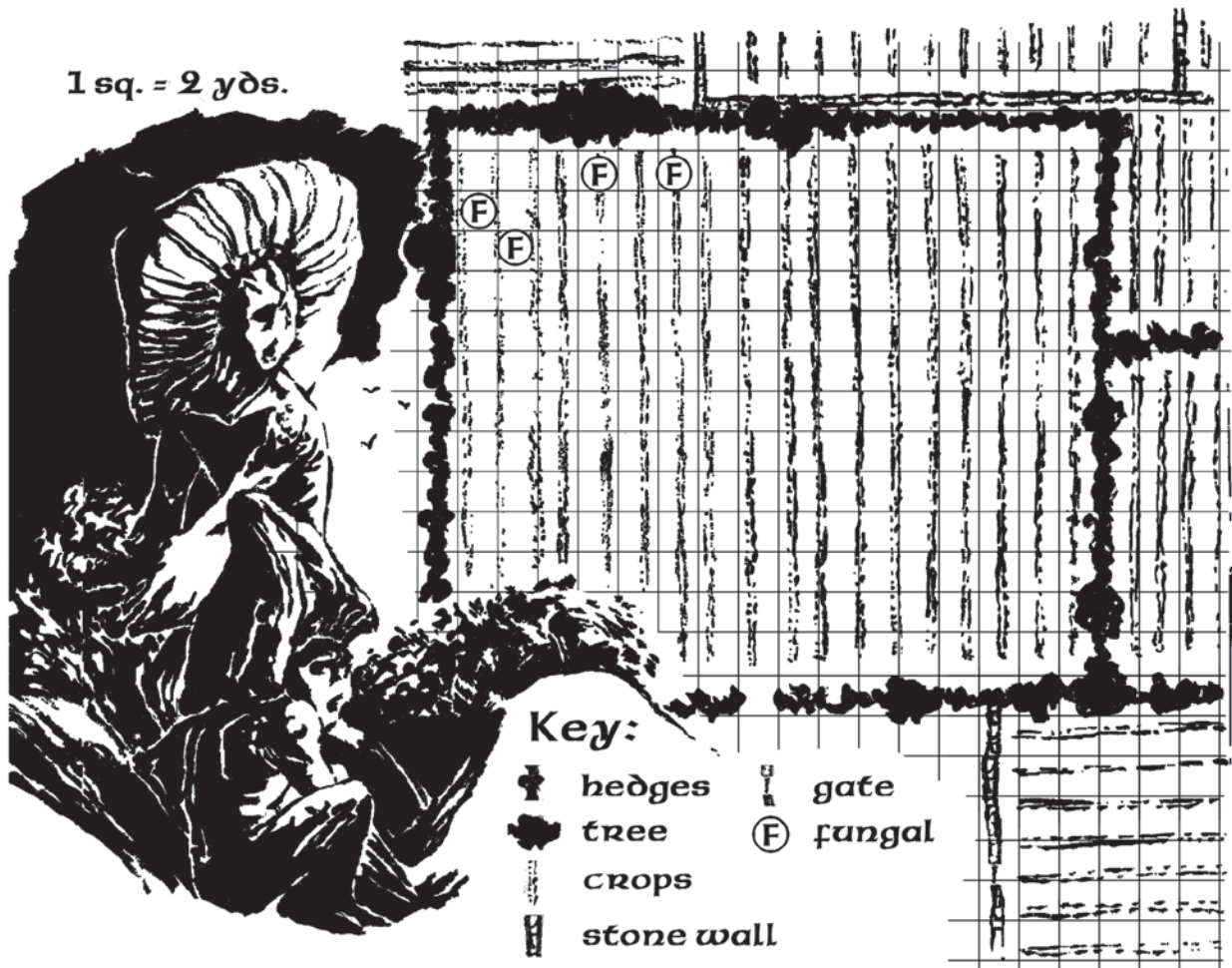
The door swings inward and a bleary-eyed man stomps toward the hearth. A black dog, its tail firmly between its legs, trots by his side.

Warming his hands, the man spits to no-one in particular, "They've been at my radishes! Almost had them as well. I heard noises in the radish patch so I unchained Knorr. He ran into the patch, barking and yapping, but then all was silent. I waited before following. Well, what a sight I saw! There's

my radish patch plundered to the last, and old Knorr is flat on his back!" The hound looks suitably ashamed. He looks across to the party with a start. "What's this? Strangers? By the gods, we're poor, not starving! Get these guests some broth." The man nods in your direction, then takes a seat by the hearth. The dog curls up at his feet.

If the characters want to know more, they have to act first. The man is Rodbert ap-Almswith, farmer by trade, and village headman by dint of no-one else wanting the responsibility

"Someone is stealing our vegetables. The culprits only come during a night when there's no moon. And it isn't giant rabbits, despite what some believe." He glances at several villagers, who quickly turn away. "At this rate, we won't have enough stores to provide for our families. We've tried guarding the fields, but we lack the manpower to



maintain a proper vigil. When we watch the cabbages, they steal the carrots. A real mystery it is."

Rodbert isn't going to offer a reward—parties who wish to investigate must make the offer out of kindness. They aren't bound to do so by the laws of hospitality, though they would be if Rodbert asked them to help. Asking for a reward causes Rodbert to snort loudly. The best he can offer is shelter and food for a few days. If they agree to help, Rodbert points the heroes to the radish patch—the scene of the recent crime.

The radish patch is part of a neat collection of small fields separated by low hedges and dry stone walls. The heroes automatically spot a large patch of bare soil near the field boundary. Even a casual inspection by a city-dweller reveals crops have been pulled from the ground in the last few hours.

On a successful Tracking roll (+2 for mud but -2 for poor lighting), the heroes locate a trail of circular depressions, each slightly less than a foot across. On a raise, the tracker finds four distinct sets of tracks. The trail leads over the wall and into the surrounding countryside. Following it produces no luck—rocky terrain a mile from the village obscures the tracks. Rodbert confirms these strange patterns were present after other crop thefts.

One option to catch the thieves is to stake out the village on a moonless night—the next one just happens to be tomorrow. Any hero who successfully rolls Survival can forecast heavy cloud during the next night. The villagers are keen to assist the party, but form their own pickets. Rodbert assigns the beet fields for the heroes to watch. Of course, fate conspires to ensure this is the crop-raiders next target.

MONSTERS

A small group of fungals sneak into the winter beet field several hours after dark and begin stealing the beets. Successfully rolling Notice allows the heroes to hear leafy beet tops rustling and the occasional plop as one is yanked from the wet soil. Wary of other races, the fungals count as active sentries. Rolling Stealth opposed by a Group Notice allows a character to move within 10" of the creatures, the minimum range necessary to see the fungals, due to the poor lighting. Covertly closing to within 5" requires another Stealth roll.

M Fungals (1 per hero)

TACTICS

The fungals are here to steal crops, not fight. Once the party's presence is detected, they immediately try to flee. If any characters are in range, the fungals release a cloud of spores while they hightail it out.

TERRAIN

Fields: The fields are plowed with deep ridges and furrows. Lateral movement across the ridges and furrows

FUNGAL

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: Sickle (Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

* **Plant:** +2 to recover from Shaken. No effect from Called Shots.

* **Spores:** Usable once per day. Fills a Medium Burst Template centered on the fungal and lasts until its next action. Any non-fungal in the cloud must make a Vigor roll. The nature of the affliction depends on the type of spore released. Pick one from below or roll a d4.

d4 Spore

1 **Paralysis:** Paralyzed for 2d6 rounds (Parry 2).

2 **Choking:** Shaken for 1d6 rounds.

3 **Blinding:** -6 to Trait rolls involving sight and Parry becomes 2. May make an Agility roll each round as an action to rub the spores clear.

4 **Berserk:** The victim goes berserk (as the Edge) and attacks the nearest creature with a Wild Attack. If there are multiple targets available, determine randomly. Calming down is as per the Edge.

makes the area difficult ground. Characters following a ridge or furrow line are unimpaired.

Lighting: The lighting is Dark (-2).

Low Hedges/Wall: The hedges and walls are difficult ground. Both provide Cover (+4 Armor for hedges and +8 Heavy Armor for walls). Both give Medium Cover (-2) to a man-sized creature standing behind them.

CONTINUATION

Fungals are a subterranean race, and aren't well-known outside the farming communities they raid. Identifying one requires a Common Knowledge roll from a druid or cleric of Eostre (-2 if Eostre Animalmother). Other heroes are stumped unless their past gives them a reason to know about the fungals. Rodbert, who heard of these creatures from his father, can identify them.

Should the fungals escape from bungling heroes, they return to the beet field in 1d4 nights, when cloud cover is again thick. Their numbers are doubled, as they require more crops to make up for failing on the last raid. The raids end only if an entire fungal raiding party is slain. Why do they want the crops and where are they taking them?

Alternatively, a solution without violence may include the party convincing the villagers to give the fungals a portion of the yearly harvests. This requires a Persuasion roll at -2. With success, the farmers agree to a 5% tax. This halts the raids for a year or so, but eventually the fungals return.

17. BEAR NECESSITIES

BEAR

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+3, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Notice d8, Swimming d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities:

* **Bear Hug:** Bears don't actually "hug" their victims, but they do attempt to use their weight to pin their prey and rend it with their claws and teeth. A bear that hits with a raise has pinned his foe. The opponent may only attempt to escape the "hug" during his action, which requires a raise on an opposed Strength roll.

* **Claws:** Str+d6.

* **Size +2:** These creatures can stand up to 8' tall and weigh over 1000 pounds.

BEAR, CAVE

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d810 Strength d12+6, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Notice d8, Swimming d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12

Special Abilities:

* **Bear Hug:** Bears don't actually "hug" their victims, but they do attempt to use their weight to pin their prey and rend it with their claws and teeth. A bear that hits with a raise has pinned his foe. The opponent may only attempt to escape the "hug" during his action, which requires a raise on an opposed Strength roll.

* **Claws:** Str+d6.

* **Large:** Attackers get +2 to attack rolls against these creatures, due to their size.

* **Size +4:** These creatures can stand up to 12' tall and weigh over 2,500 pounds.

TRAPPERS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Tracking d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5/6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: —

Gear: Leather (+1), pot helm (+3), long spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1). Half carry crossbows (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d6, AP 2)

Rank: Seasoned

While traveling through a forest, the heroes hear roaring through the dense trees. Successfully rolling Survival indicates the beast is a bear. On a raise, the hero knows the creature is in a great deal of pain. The party may want to investigate further due to simple curiosity, a desire to alleviate the animal's suffering, or as a method to acquire a bear skin.

After a mile the party reaches the cause of the disturbance. Amid the trees and undergrowth they spy a large brown bear. Its left rear leg is caught in a bear trap, a metal spring device comprised of two iron jaws clutching leg, preventing the bear from escaping. Any character with a hunting background or the Survival skill knows the traps often result in a broken leg. A Survival roll identifies the creature as female.

MONSTERS

The female brown bear's roars have alerted not only the heroes but also her near-adult sons, who are racing to the scene through the undergrowth. At the start of the third round, place the male bears at the indicated positions. Because of the female bear's enraged state, *beast friend* rolls suffer an additional -2 penalty throughout the encounter. Rolls to charm the male bears suffer a -1 penalty while the female remains in the trap.

If the party contains a particularly skilled spellcaster, the encounter may not be much of a threat. In this instance, the GM may wish to remove the male bears and replace them with trappers who believe the heroes are attempting to seal their catch. The trappers assault without warning. They appear on the third round in the same area the bears would have appeared.

Ⓜ **Bears (1 per hero):** One of the bears begins in the trap indicated on the map and is a Wild Card.

If the party is of high Rank or built purely for combat, the mother bear is a cave bear.

Ⓜ **Trappers (2 per hero)**

TACTICS

The trapped bear attempts to escape each round. Once successful, the enraged and wounded beast charges the nearest opponent and launches a Wild Attack.

Once they appear on the scene, the male bears run at the nearest character and attack using their claws (incurring a multi action penalty as appropriate).

Unless a benny is spent to negate the condition, each time a male bear is Shaken it must successfully roll Spirit to un-Shake before it attempts any other rolls. If the female remains trapped, the roll is made at +2. On a failure, the bear has had enough and tries to flee at best speed by the shortest route. The female fights to the death.

TERRAIN

Bear Traps: Anyone entering a square containing a bear trap must make an Agility roll at -2 (-4 if running) or activate the trap. Victims suffer 2d4 damage to a randomly determined leg and are pinned. Escape requires a Strength roll at -4 as an action. A trapped character may take other actions, but cannot move.

A character searching for traps makes a Notice roll as an action. A -2 penalty applies if the hero is moving above half-Pace. Running characters cannot roll. With success, the character detects all the traps on or adjacent to his line of movement. Once detected, a square containing a trap is considered difficult ground—the character must try to avoid setting it off.

Dense Undergrowth: The dense undergrowth is difficult ground and characters cannot run through it. The first square of undergrowth between attacker and target (not including the attacker's square) provides Light Cover (-1), two squares is Medium Cover (-2), and three squares is Heavy Cover (-4). Beyond this visibility is blocked. Attacks that miss because of Cover are deflected away from the intended target.

Light Undergrowth: Treat as Difficult ground.

Stream: The streams are difficult ground. Characters get -2 to Stealth rolls while moving in the stream.

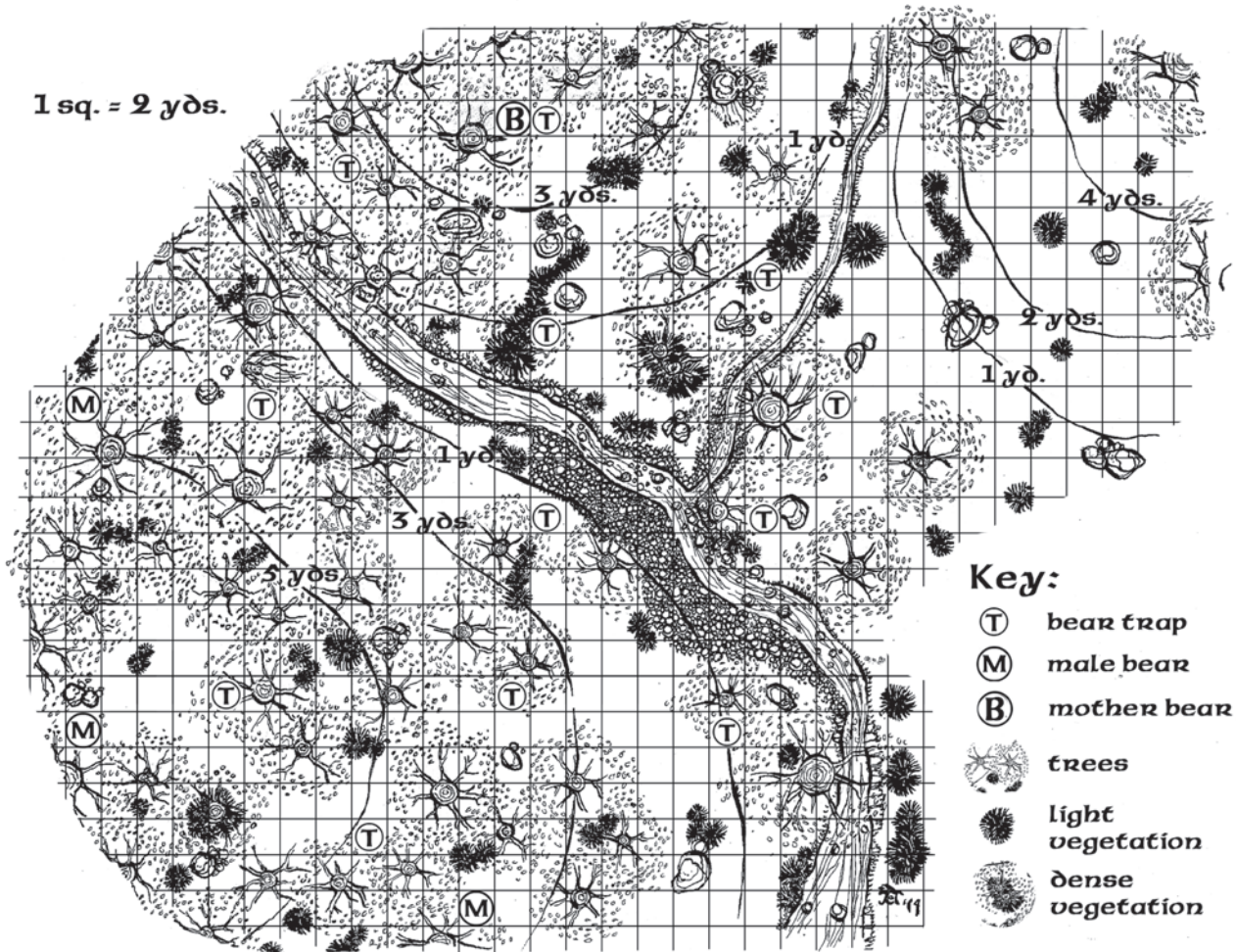
Trees: The trunks provide Cover (+8 Heavy Armor).

CONTINUATION

Certain heroes, such as clerics of Eostre Animalmother or Ullr, druids, or elves (and possibly even engros) may be opposed to hunting with traps. They may wish to track down the hunters and convince them of the error of their ways. A two-day old trail leads away from the area and ends at a small lodge a few miles away. Use the guidelines above for the trappers.

For GMs who prefer a more sinister continuation, the trappers might return to the scene a few days later. Unless there are bear carcasses littering the site, they use their tracking skills to determine that there was a bear in the trap, but now it has gone. They also pick up the party's trail.

Whether the bear is gone or dead, they figure the heroes were somehow involved, and begin eagerly tailing them. Over the next few days they close the gap on the heroes. Once they've caught up, they use their stealth and crossbows to enact a bloody revenge.



18. COME INTO MY PARLOR

Rank: Seasoned

Amid the dark canopies of Rassilon's forests lurk mischievous and malevolent fey, wild beasts, orcs, giants, and darker horrors—like Hela's minions. Unfortunately, the heroes' current route takes them straight through a stretch of woodland.

This encounter takes place in one of Rassilon's many woodlands. If the heroes are in a major forest, they find themselves in a region densely populated by spiders—avoiding it would require a detour of several days. In a smaller forest, the party might be able to circumvent this encounter with a shorter delay.

The trail ahead is blocked by a large spider-web spun between two trees. To either side, as deeply as you can see through the thicket, are more webs. A bleached skeleton dangles from a spider-silk strand, its bones long picked clean of flesh. Shreds

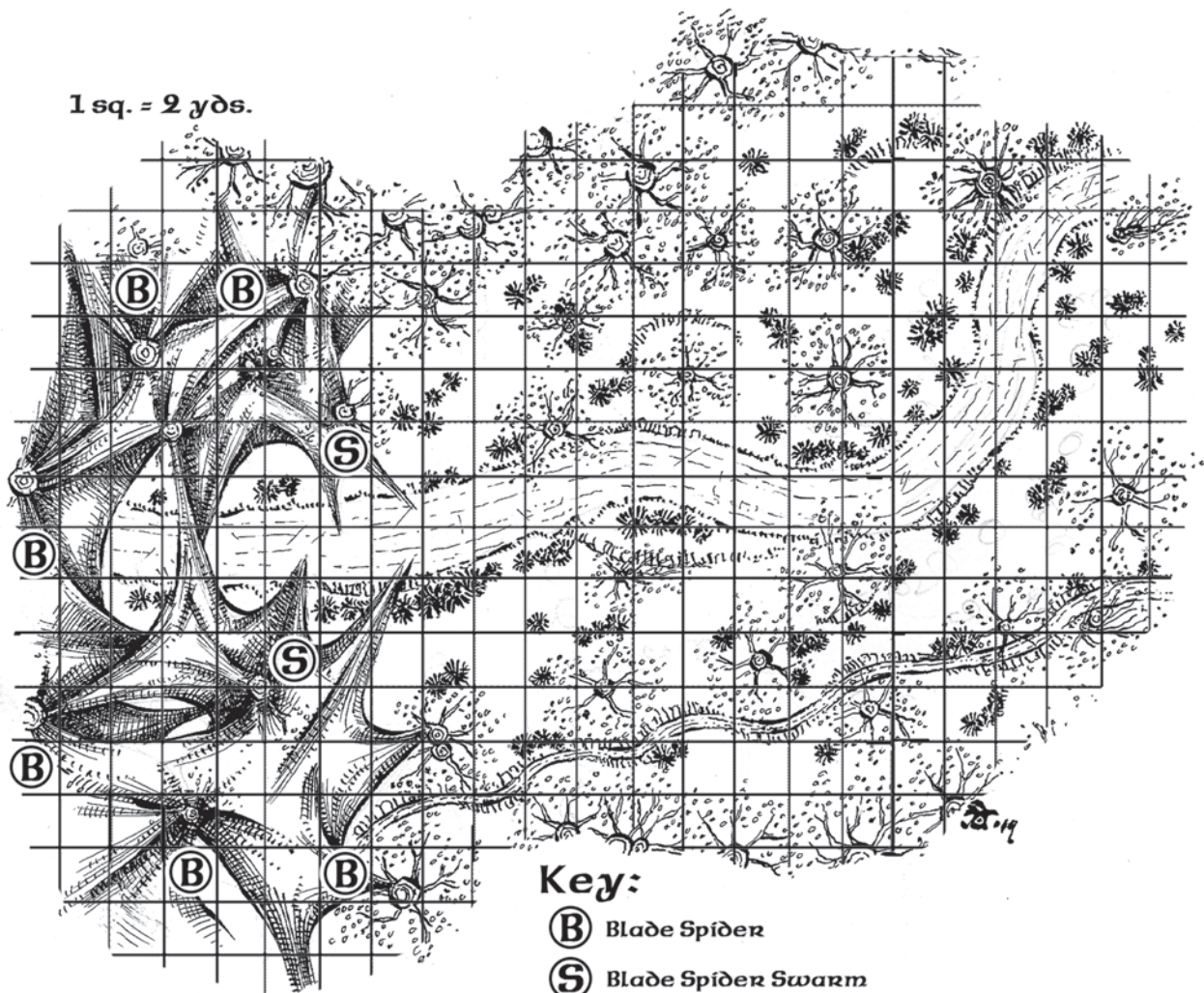
of leather hang loosely from its torso. A darkly rusted long sword and a leather backpack are fastened to the web.

Given the presence of the webs, the heroes are going to be expecting a spider attack, so there's no need to check for Surprise.

The webs cannot be avoided—they extend off the map. Off the trail, the vegetation quickly becomes very dense, thwarting movement. Hacking through the webs along the trail provides the best tactical option should spiders attack.

MONSTERS

Lurking in the thick canopy is a nest of blade spiders, voracious killers named for the long, bony spikes on their forelegs. Although blade spiders spin webs, they



18. COME INTO MY PARLOR

have no venom (they deliver a nasty bite) and cannot shoot webs out of their thorax.

While many spiders are content to spin webs and wait in ambush for prey to blunder along, blade spiders have been known to actively hunt animals, ambushing and then herding them into webs where they can be killed at leisure. Once a creature becomes ensnared in a web, the spiders hack it to death with their bladed legs and devour its flesh and juices.

GMs who own the adventure *V3 Web of Deceit* can swap the blade spiders for other species of giant spider. The immature spider swarm should be of the same species as the giant variety. Of course, the GM can further muddy the waters by using more than one species.

Ⓜ **Blade Spiders** (3 per two heroes)

Ⓜ **Immature Blade Spider Swarm** (1 per two heroes)

TACTICS

The spiders remain completely hidden until a web is touched or damaged. When this occurs they scuttle down from their concealed nests and attack.

Should the heroes wish to fire at the canopy, they must nominate a target square. Even if they guess correctly, all attack rolls are made at -6 due to the total concealment provided by the vegetation. The nests are 4" off the ground.

Although mindless beasts, blade spiders are adept pack hunters. Their typical tactic when faced with dangerous prey (such as the characters) is to Gang Up on the nearest creature and hack it with both leg-blades. Should the spiders be attacked by multiple foes, they cease tackling one creature and divide themselves to ensure each threat is faced as equally as possible.

Once half of their number is slain, each survivor makes a Spirit roll. With failure, they retreat at their best speed back into the canopy. Blade spiders are capable of using the Defend maneuver, and do so when disengaging from aggressive prey.

TERRAIN

Vegetation: Treat as difficult ground.

Lighting: The light beneath the canopy is Dim (-1) due to deep shadows.

Skeleton: A skeleton in shredded leather armor hangs from one of the webs. Clutched in its bony grasp is a long sword. Only the surface is rusty; a character can clean the weapon with a few hours' work. The other gear amounts to 200 gs worth of mundane equipment, and the backpack contains two alchemical potions of the GM's choosing. Removing these items from the web requires a Strength roll at -2 as an action. Searching the backpack enough to get an overview of its contents consumes a hero's entire turn, though he may move at half Pace.

Trees: The trunks can provide Cover (+8 Heavy Armor) and, along with the canopy, block line of sight..

Webs: Each 1" section has Toughness 12. Webs must

be cut or burnt—they cannot be damaged by bludgeoning or piercing attacks.

If a character rolls a 1 on his Fighting die, regardless of Wild Die, his weapon becomes ensnared in the web. A Strength roll at -2 as an action is required to free it.

A character deliberately touching a web, or who is knocked into one, is automatically stuck. Escape is as above. Stuck creatures cannot move, but may perform other actions.

BLADE SPIDERS

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Stealth d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- * **Bite:** Str+d6.
- * **Blades:** Str+d8 damage. A blade spider may attack with both forelimbs in that same round, but suffers a -2 penalty to both Fighting rolls. It may not use its blades during a round that it bites.
- * **Darkvision:** Hairs on the spider's body allows it to sense movement up to 3" away. It ignores all penalties for dark lighting (or *invisibility*) within this distance.
- * **Wall Walker:** A spider may move along any surface at its full Pace. It can also run without penalty, even when hanging upside down.

IMMATURE BLADE SPIDER SWARM

Each swarm fills a Medium Burst Template.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- * **Blades:** Swarms inflict hundreds of tiny slashes every round; they always hit automatically and cause 2d4 damage to everyone within the template. Damage is applied to a character's least armored location.
- * **Darkvision:** Hairs on the spiders' bodies allow them to sense movement up to 3" away. They ignore all penalties for dark lighting (or *invisibility*) within this distance.
- * **Mindless:** Unaffected by Tests of Will, Tricks, or arcane powers like *puppet*.
- * **Swarm:** Parry +2. Because the swarm is composed of potentially thousands of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his damage in Strength each round.
- * **Wall Walker:** A spider may move along any surface at its full Pace. It can also run without penalty, even when hanging upside down.

19. GUARDIAN OF THE BRIDGE

VETERAN

Rank: Veteran

This encounter takes place at a bridge over an otherwise impassable geological feature. The GM should alter the narrative text as required to fit the location. For reasons that will become clear, the bridge should be off the beaten-track rather than on a major thoroughfare.

The muddy trail ends in a long bridge spanning a mighty river. Turbulent white water and swirling eddies indicate the bridge was built here for a good reason. On the far side stands a huge wooden hut, 20 feet high and 60 feet long. A thin column of blue smoke swirls from its chimney.

If the party calls out or steps foot on the bridge, a hulking figure clad in leather armor exits the house brandishing a great axe. It squints at the party for a moment, then speaks in a deep, booming, yet nonthreatening voice (in Trader).

"I am Angvald Boughbreaker," the giant booms, "guardian of this bridge. If you wish to cross, you must best me in single melee combat. If you lose, I am sworn to kill you. Otherwise," he indicates downriver with his huge thumb, "there is another crossing three days march that way. Please make your choice quickly—my dinner is cooking."



ANGVALD BOUGHBREAKER, FOREST GIANT

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12+3, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Tracking d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 12 (1)

Hindrances: Pacifist (Minor)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Frenzy, Improved Block, Improved Sweep

Gear: Leather armor (+1), great axe (Str+d10, -1 Parry, AP 1, used one-handed due to giant's size)

Special Abilities:

- * **Forest Born:** Forest giants treat forests as normal terrain, not difficult ground.
- * **Forest Home:** Forest giants have +2 to Stealth and Tracking while in forests.
- * **Invulnerability:** Angvald is impervious to all attacks from foes not engaged with him in single combat. This includes magic, Tests of Wills, and Tricks.
- * **Large:** Attackers gain +2 to attack rolls against forest giants, due to their size.
- * **Size +4:** Forest giants are 15' tall.

Should the party try to cross the bridge, the giant is good to his word.

MONSTERS

Angvald is a forest giant. Centuries ago he killed a stag, not realizing it was the prized pet of a powerful Unseelie fey noble. Infuriated, the fey cursed Angvald.

Although not a pacifist, Angvald had deplored unnecessary taking of sentient life (he'd kill when he had to). Indeed, he was on good terms with the local Saxa village near his home, aiding the loggers and sometimes pulling a plow in return for a share of the hunters' catch and a portion of the annual harvest.

Knowing this, the fey noble cursed Angvald to guard this bridge and challenge all who cross to combat. The fey magic that prevents opponents from acting together also keeps the giant alive longer to endure his misery.

Angvald fully believes the only way to be free of his curse is to be defeated in single combat, but this is a ruse created by the malevolent fey.

In truth, Angvald can only be freed in an act of pure, spontaneous kindness by a stranger. Until that day comes day, he is cursed never to die by age, starvation, or sickness, nor to wander more than a few yards from his new home. Angvald has been a prisoner for 237 years.

Of course, the fey was careful to ensure that if Angvald ever learned the escape condition he could never speak of it. Thus, Angvald asks nothing from strangers.

While the curse forces Angvald to make the challenge and fight to the best of his abilities, he remains polite and is happy to talk to strangers, so long as they remain on their side of the river.

If asked, he glumly tells how and why he was cursed. What he cannot speak of is how to break the curse (not even the false belief that he must be bested in combat). It shouldn't be hard for the characters to work out the most likely (and erroneous) solution, though.

If he believes it will stop another bout of mindless killing, Angvald offers the party fresh bread and stew if they will find an alternate route. He won't invite them into his house, as that means they have to cross the bridge, and he'll be duty bound to attack them.

M Angvald Boughbreaker, Forest Giant

TACTICS

Angvald's curse forces him to slay his opponents as quickly as possible. To that end, he starts with Frenzy while he judges his opponent's mettle. Against an opponent he deems skilled (i.e. one he has trouble hitting), he switches to single attacks. Improved Sweep is used only if the heroes try to rush across the bridge en masse.

If Angvald Incapacitates his prey, he *will* deliver a Finishing Blow (the hero knew the risks in advance).

19. GUARDIAN OF THE BRIDGE

The only way to escape death is to withdraw to the other bank, where the giant cannot follow.

CONTINUATION

If Angvald is Incapacitated, he automatically drops to his knees, conscious but clearly defeated. The curse is not lifted, and the giant knows it. To make sure the heroes are aware of this, he cries out—*"You lied, the gods damn you! I am defeated but not freed of my torment!"*

This is an opportunity for the characters to break the curse by healing the giant. Note there is a catch—if the characters verbally offer assistance, Angvald refuses and the curse is not lifted. The party must heal the giant unbidden and without his permission.

If the party doesn't help (or kill) Angvald, they are free to cross the bridge unmolested and continue their journey.

Should Angvald ever be freed, his first instinct is to seek revenge on the fey noble who caused him so much torment. After a little thought, the giant changes his mind, albeit temporarily.

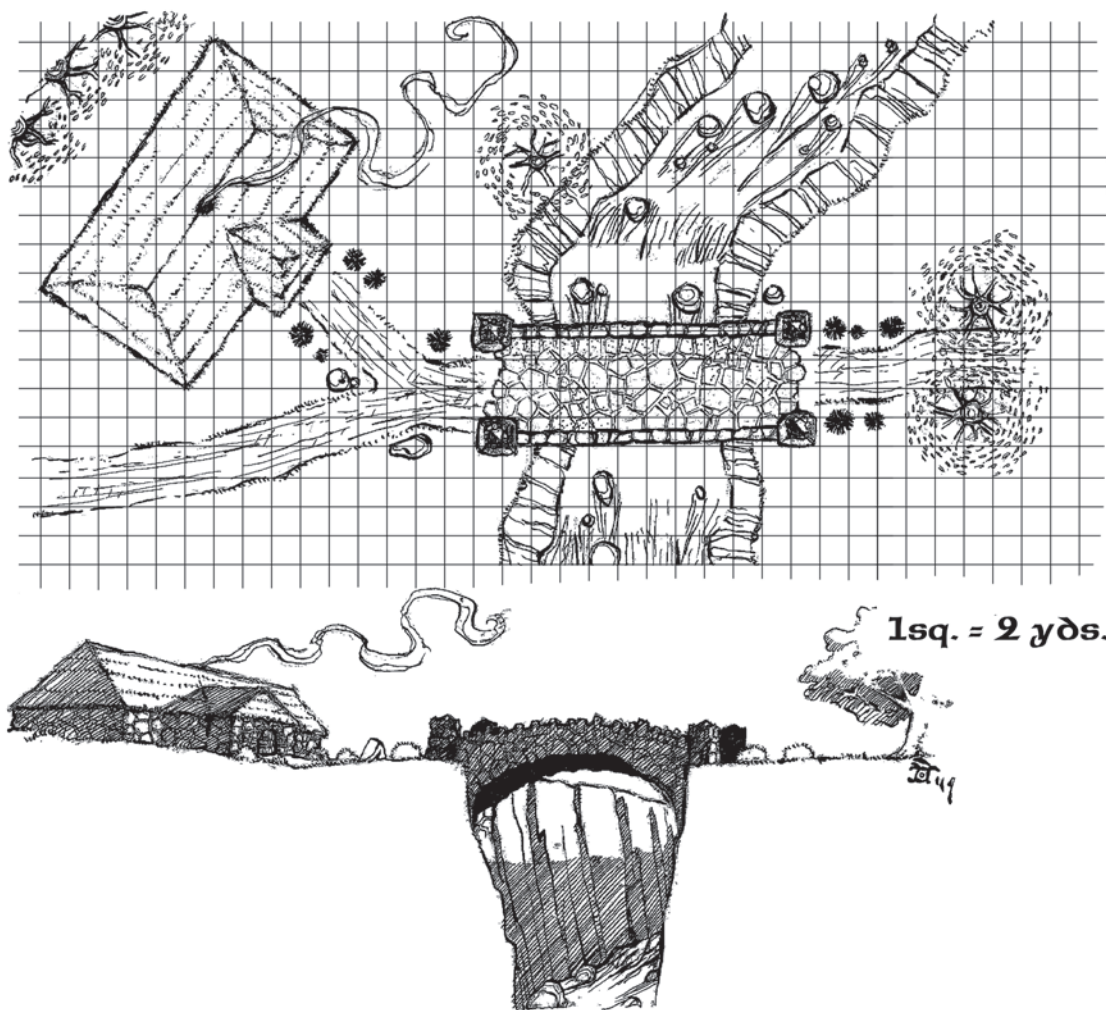
In return for freeing him, he pledges allegiance to whomever broke the curse (the character, not the party) for a year and a day. During that time, he offers to travel with the hero and fight alongside him in whatever causes he wishes. He gains the Loyal Hindrance while in service. Although he leaves after the allotted time, he offers the party a chance to come with him and share his vengeance.

TREASURE

Some parties may slay the helpless giant once he's Incapacitated. The curse does not prevent this occurrence (though Angvald would never have taken his own life given a choice).

After two centuries of defeating foes, the giant has amassed a sizeable collection of gear. Hidden in his house are weapons, armor, and mundane gear totaling 10,000 gs.

Stashed away amid the collection, long forgotten by Angvald, are six alchemical devices. The GM should determine their nature to best suit the party.



20. STORM FORCE

Rank: Veteran

The party has set up camp by a stream, perhaps for a meal break or maybe for an overnight stay. The area is lightly wooded, and there is little to no undergrowth.

Over the last few hours the sky has darkened steadily while the wind has picked up. As the party tucks into their rations, heavy droplets of rain begin to fall and the wind begins to howl. Within seconds the shower becomes a torrential downpour. The characters are soaked to the skin and the fire hisses and splutters. Brilliant flashes of lightning illuminate the gloomy sky. Thunor, it seems, is having one of his frequent temper tantrums. Most likely he has rowed with Eira, again.

Have the party set up their campfire and positions on the map. Then have each character make a Notice roll to avoid Surprise. Those who succeed spot a vast, winged creature with glistening blue scales descending from the leaden clouds—a storm dragon! Someone, or something, is mounted on the back.

Everyone needs to make a Guts roll to avoid Fear in the presence of the storm dragon.

MONSTERS

The dragon rider is Thunderson Lars Stormwalker, an insane priest of Thunor. Struck by lightning a year ago during a ceremony to honor his god, Lars' flesh was badly burned and his mind broken. The once mild-mannered priest became a psychopath, using the power of storms to wreak devastation across the land.

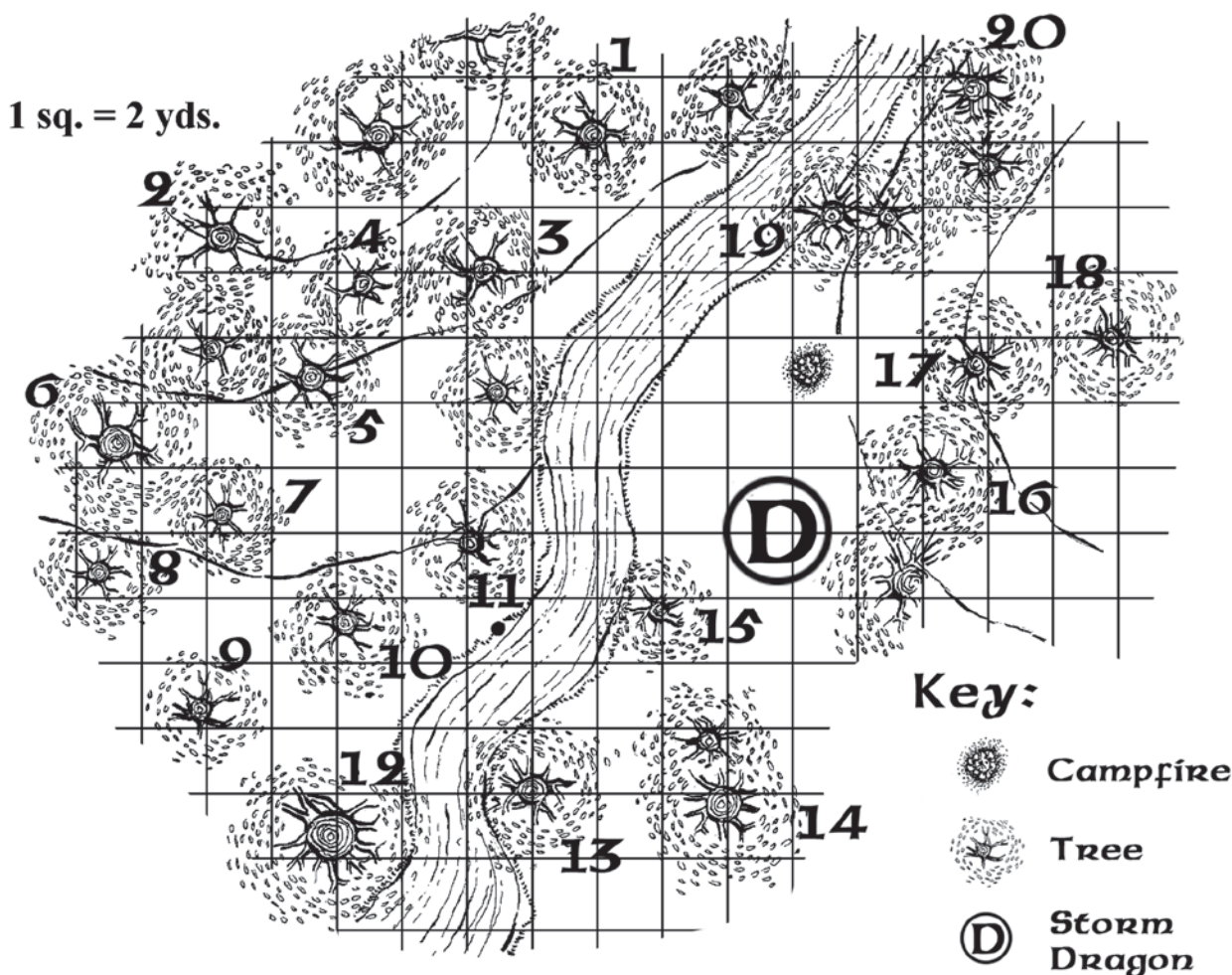
Although not a sinner (he has full access to his powers), Thunor clergy have put a bounty on Lars of 3,000 gs. The clergy pay in alchemical devices, not cash.

Any cleric of Thunor can recognize Lars with a Common Knowledge roll; his description has been widely circulated through *voice on the wind* spells and temples. Other heroes must make a Streetwise roll at -4 to see if they have heard rumors of the crazed priest.

Lars is mounted on a juvenile storm dragon which shares his love of destruction. Together, they are a formidable team.

Ⓜ Thunderson Lars Stormwalker

Ⓜ Juvenile Storm Dragon



TACTICS

The dragon remains airborne (it begins at a height of 12"). It swoops down using its phenomenal flying Pace (22") and blasts at foes with its breath weapon. It manipulates the area surrounding the heroes with *obscure*, creating spheres of darkness. Believing its opponents will prefer to stay in the light, the dragon employs spells to funnel prey into a narrow kill-zone for its lightning breath. Once an obscured area is being completely avoided, the dragon ceases Maintaining the spell.

The dragon departs if Lars is slain or it suffers two wounds.

The priest has already cast and is Maintaining *deflection* (-2 to attack rolls) and *energy immunity* (*electricity*) when the attack begins. He begins by launching *bolt* spells at anyone in range, summoning multiple bolts if multiple targets are visible.

If his mount is injured he leaps to the ground. He casts *wall of might* and, with his spear, engages in melee. When he has taken two wounds, Lars tries to cast *fly* and flee.

TERRAIN

Campfire: The party's campfire sheds good light in a 3" radius for three rounds, then is extinguished. Anyone entering the fire takes 2d10 damage. There is no chance of catching fire.

Lighting: Due to the storm the area is Dark (-2). However, frequent flashes light up the sky. If Lars' action card is a Heart, the lighting is Dim (-1). With a Spade, it's bright as daylight. These lighting conditions last the entire round.

Lightning Strike: Lightning strikes a tree whenever someone draws a Club suit. Multiple Clubs in the same round indicate multiple strikes. Strikes occur before any actions are taken.

Roll a d20 and find the rolled number on the map. Anyone adjacent to the lightning-struck tree suffers 2d8 electrical damage and is knocked prone. Those 2" away must successfully roll Agility or be knocked prone by the blast. The dragon is immune to these effects, but Lars is not.

Storm: During the storm, all terrain is difficult ground. Additionally, the storm inflicts a -2 penalty to most actions due to slipping, difficulty hearing, strong winds, etc.

Stream: The stream is difficult ground. Characters get -2 to Stealth rolls while moving in it. If lightning strikes a tree adjacent to the stream, everyone in the water takes 2d8 damage.

Trees: The trunks provide Cover (+8 Heavy Armor).

CONTINUATION

Should either Lars or the dragon be slain, the survivor flees into the storm; later returning to seek vengeance. Both are worthy foes, and will grow in power to stay roughly matched to the party's abilities.

THUNDERSON LARS
STORMWALKER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Faith d10, Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Riding d8

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Hindrances: Ugly, Wanted (Major)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Disciple of Thunor, Improved Concentration, Improved Dodge

Powers: *Barrier* (lightning), *bolt* (lightning), *deflection* (winds), *energy immunity* (air, earth, electricity), *fly*, *knockdown* (thunderclap), *sphere of might* (lightning), *whirlwind*

Gear: Chain hauberk (+2), medium shield (+1), short spear (Str+d6, Reach 1), two *potions of healing* (heals one wound)



JUVENILE STORM DRAGON

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12+3, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Spellcasting d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 13 (3)

Edges: Arcane Resistance, Frenzy, Level Headed, Quick

Powers: *Obscure*, *voice on the wind*

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +3:** Thick scales
- * **Bite/Claws:** Str+d6
- * **Breath:** Storm dragons breathe lightning using the Cone Template. Every target within this cone may make an Agility roll at -2 to avoid the attack or suffer 2d8 damage. A dragon may not attack with its claws or bite in the same round it uses a breath attack.
- * **Fear:** Anyone who sees the dragon must make a Guts roll.
- * **Flight:** Pace 22.
- * **Immunity (Electricity):** Immune to electrical and lightning attacks.
- * **Large:** Attackers are +2 to attack rolls due to the dragon's size.
- * **Size +3:** The dragon measures 18' in length.
- * **Tail Lash:** The dragon can sweep all opponents behind it in a 2" long and 4" wide rectangle. This is a standard Fighting attack, inflicting d12+2 Damage.
- * **Wings:** A wing buffet can only be used in a round in which the dragon makes no other attacks. Place a Cone Template facing forward from each wing. Every creature in a Template must make an Agility roll with a penalty equal to the dragon's Size modifier. The target's Size adds to his roll. On a failure, the victim is blown back 1d4" and falls prone. If the Agility roll is a 1 (regardless of Wild Die), the creature is Shaken, as well.

21. FAMINE

Rank: Novice

Because this encounter can be run anywhere, no specific names for people or settlements are given. Similarly, the peasants that the heroes meet can be of any race or culture. The GM should invent details as required to fit his individual campaign.

The heroes spy a ragged column of three dozen peasants heading in their direction. Thin, exhausted mules pull two wagons heavily laden with furniture.

As the group draws near, women and children scurry over to the heroes, pawing at them and begging pitifully for food. All are emaciated. A middle-aged man staggers up from the rear of the column, his face haggard with stress and hunger. He begins pulling the women and children away.

"Strangers," he says, "I apologize for the behavior of my family. We have not eaten properly in a long while, and hunger has robbed my kind of their manners. Please, have you any food or drink to spare? We have a little coin and some goods for trade."

The goods and coin amount to a measly 65 gs. If food is offered (or sold), the man carefully divides it among the peasants, favoring no one. He thanks the heroes profusely, and praises them for their charity.

GORTA WIGHT

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities:

- * **Emaciating Touch:** With a successful Touch attack (+2 to Fighting), a gorta wight sucks the life from a victim's body. The victim must make a Vigor roll, -2 if the wight scored a raise, or suffer a level of Fatigue. This Fatigue is removed as per the rules for hunger. Victims who die of this attack rise as gorta wights in 1d4 days.
- * **Insatiable Hunger:** A gorta wight which locates a source of food, such as a field of crops, herd of cattle, and so on, can devastate the resource. Each day, the gorta wight makes a Vigor roll. Each success or raise means it devours one-tenth of the resource.
- * **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison.
- * **Weakness (Food):** If a gorta wight is offered food, it must make a Spirit roll or immediately begin devouring it, ignoring all other events around it. A gorta wight can devour one pound of food as an action.

Questioned about the column's plight, the man replies as follows.

"Our village lies two days fast-march to the north. We are subsistence farmers, reliant on our neighbors for aid."

"But last month the food stopped. On investigation we discovered our neighboring village dead. All the stores were gone and the fields empty. Of the villagers we found but a handful, all gaunt and shriveled, like they had not eaten in months. Yet that could not have been the case, for the fields were full of healthy crops not six weeks earlier."

"We survived as best we could on our meager stockpiles and by cooking grass and weeds, but four days ago we discovered all the cows dead of starvation and the crop fields barren. Whatever killed our neighbors had obviously come to our village."

"We are farmers, not warriors or clerics. As headman, I ordered my kin to pack up and leave immediately. Something evil haunts our homeland. Better to die on the road or from hunger than be slain in our beds."

Hopefully the heroes are curious or brave enough to investigate. As the spokesman said, the village can be reached in two days' hard marching or three days at a more leisurely pace.

When the party arrives it is obvious the village is deserted. Doors and shutters bang in the wind, and the ever-present smoke-wisps of a living village are missing. With a Notice roll, the party realizes there are no animals. Not even rats or birds.

The village comprises five low cottages, a shrine to Eostre (in the form of a carved stone pillar), and a communal barn. Investigation of the pillar reveals it has been freshly damaged. Deep scratches, perhaps made by a clawed hand or bladed weapon, mar its weathered surface.

Small fields, devoid of any crops, are located a few hundred yards from the houses. The corpses of cattle, their ribs showing through taut, withered skin, lie nearby. No roll is required to deduce the cattle starved to death.

All the houses are empty, the owners having stripped them of furnishings and valuables. In the barn, however, are three creatures dressed in peasant garb.

MONSTERS

A pack of gorta wights is behind the famine. When they came across the prosperous neighboring village, they laid waste to it within days.

Their numbers greatly swelled with the slain villagers,

and the pack divided in search of more pickings. A few found their way to the peasants' settlement and began feasting on the already thin cattle and sparse crops. When the heroes arrive, the wights are scavenging for rats in the barn.

Ⓜ Gorta Wights (1 per hero)

TACTICS

Although undead, the wights appear as emaciated humans rather than walking corpses. Their eyes, glazed from hunger, nonetheless shine with intelligence. When the heroes find them, the wights shamle forward, their hands outstretched. The creatures beg openly for food in the local language, though they do not engage in other conversation. Their speech is fluid and precise like the living, not the stereotypical drawn out "braaaains" of B-movie zombies.

Once within 9" (or if the party instigates violence before then), the wights charge.

Despite their intelligence, the wights are driven by hunger and do not attack in a coordinated fashion. Each undead lashes out at the nearest living creature in order to draw sustenance from it. Any Gang Up bonuses are thus coincidental.

TERRAIN

Hay Bales: The bales are stacked four feet high, are difficult ground, and grant Cover (+2 Heavy Armor).

The bales are also flammable. Each round a bale stack is on fire, roll a d6. On a 6, the fire spreads to an adjacent stack. The fire causes 2d10 damage to anyone entering it and victims have a chance of catching fire. Burning hay also produces a great deal of smoke. See the rules for **Smoke Inhalation** in *Savage Worlds*.

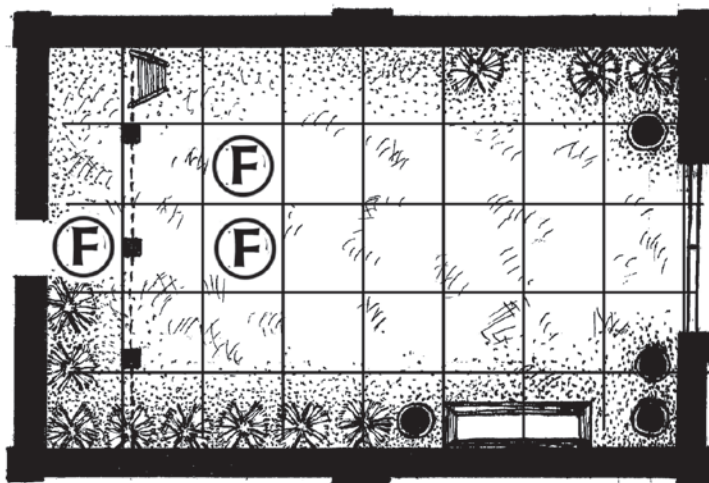
Water Trough: The trough is full of stagnant rainwater. It grants Cover (+2 Armor) and it can be turned over as an action for someone to hide inside of it. The space that the trough occupies is difficult ground.

CONTINUATION

Although the party must face only a handful of gorta wights, there are many more in the vicinity. Their constant hunger will drive the wights in search of other settlements. Left unchecked, the devastation could cause widespread famine in the region, endangering thousands of lives.

The party can track the wights back to the first village. From there, other trails lead off in various directions.

1 sq. = 2 yds



Ⓜ = gorta wights

Key

- hay stack
- barrel
- ladder
- wooden beam
- water trough
- door
- loft window



22. BURNING RACISM

Rank: Novice

Nearing a small village, the party notices a commotion in the main square. A man with a fiery red beard and a small group of torch-bearing citizens all wearing red robes stand before four stakes set into large piles of firewood. Tied to each stake is a frostborn—clearly evidenced in appearance. The robed figure is praying to Kenaz, calling upon the god to purge the sins of the “Hellfrost’s children” with purifying fire.

Should the party elect to stand and watch, the prayers continue for a few moments. At the leader’s signal, the mob throws their torches onto the pyres.

While some heroes may be keen to draw blades, others will realize the red-robed “monsters” are just ordinary people like them, scared and whipped into hatred by the cleric. It is possible to talk-down the Hearthkeeper and the mob to prevent a massacre. This negotiation requires an extended contest and the heroes must nominate a spokesman. The cleric speaks for the mob.

Deal action cards as normal. Each round, the spokesman may make a Persuasion roll at no penalty or an Intimidation roll at -2. Other party members may assist

through the Cooperative Roll rules. Jokers work as normal. Any frostborn (or himwisard who identifies himself as such) incurs a -4 penalty to his Cooperative Roll. The mob makes an unskilled Group Roll to assist the cleric.

Each success or raise earns the victor one token. Whoever reaches ten tokens first wins the argument. For the heroes, this means the mob backs down. The cleric, unwilling to light the fires himself in the face of such opposition, gathers up his robes, mutters a curse, and stomps away in search of other victims. Should the cleric win, the peasants begin throwing torches onto the wood.

Any attempt to free the frostborn during the arguments immediately ends the negotiation in favour of the cleric.

MONSTERS

The red robed figure is Halfdan Firebeard, an itinerant priest of Kenaz. A fanatical preacher, Halfdan speaks out against any creatures even remotely connected to the Hellfrost, labeling them incarnate evil sent to eradicate the Hearthlands.

A passionate speaker, the priest has rallied a mob to his cause, blaming the ills of the village (which are no worse than those anywhere else) on the frostborn. The unfortunate victims of his racism are four frostborn, all natives of the village. They have been tied to stakes set atop oil-soaked piles of wood.

M **Hearthkeeper Halfdan Firebeard**

M **Angry Mob (3 per hero)**

M **Frostborn (4):** None has Himwisardry.

TACTICS

If a fight breaks out, the mobs’ first action is to put the wood to the torch. Once a pile is alight, they attack the heroes. The Hearthkeeper casts *deflection* on the first round and *aura* on the second. He then engages the characters in combat. Should he be targeted by a cold-based spell, he uses an action to invoke the appropriate *energy immunity* and then returns the attack with *bolt*. Should there be frostborn or himwisards in the party, the priest uses *smite* and singles out those heroes with Wild Attacks.

TERRAIN

Stakes: The rope has Toughness 6. Untying the knots by hand requires an Agility roll at -2 as an action.

Wood Piles: The wood piles are soaked in lamp oil. If a burning torch is put to the wood pile (requires an action), the wood catches fire. On the round after ignition, the staked victims suffer 1d10 damage. Each subsequent round inflicts 2d10 damage.



HEARTHKEEPER HALFDAN FIREBEARD

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Knowledge (Arcane) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Delusional (Major; frostborn are evil), Vengeful (Minor)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Charismatic, Concentration, Strong Willed

Powers: *Aura* (fire), *bolt* (shower of hot coals), *deflection* (smoke), *energy immunity* (cold, coldfire, heat, fire, ice, and water), *smite* (heated weapon)

Gear: Blessed robes (+1), medium shield (+1 Parry), mace (Str+d6)

ANGRY MOB

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Guts d4, Knowledge (one Craft) d6, Notice d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: —

Edges: —

Gear: Assorted farm tools and one-handed weapons (Str+d6); burning torch (Str+d6; victims have a chance of catching fire)

23. SHOOT THE MESSENGER

Rank: Novice

Heading toward the party is a man clad in mud-splattered outdoor clothing. He's running at a fast pace, clutching a spear. Judging by his red face, staggered gait, and ragged breathing he's either been running for some time or is unfit. The man is a messenger trying to deliver a missive. A pack of vicious dire wolves chases close behind him. Formerly mounted, the man took to his feet when the wolves brought down his horse.

Ⓜ **Messenger (1):** He is Exhausted.

Ⓜ **Dire Wolves (3 per two heroes)**

TACTICS

At the start of the first round, only the heroes and the messenger receive action cards—the wolves are not yet visible. The messenger's only action is to run toward, and eventually past, the characters. Asked why he is running so fast, he gestures behind him without breaking his stride. He will not voluntarily stop running until the party is between him and the wolves. He hopes the party can fend off the dire wolves while he catches his breath.

At the start of the second round, the dire wolves receive a card, entering from the same map edge as the runner. The wolves don't much care what they eat, and so run toward the nearest character. Once in melee they bite savagely, only moving onto a new target when their current opponent is dead.

TERRAIN

Rocky Outcroppings: The outcroppings average 5" high and are flat-topped. Climbing onto one requires an action, but no die roll. The lower parts provide Cover.

Rocks: Difficult ground.

Slopes: Difficult ground.

CONTINUATION

Should the messenger be killed and the body searched, the party discovers a sealed letter. It is addressed to someone important in a location out of the heroes' way.

What does the message say? Is it encoded? Will the intended recipient reward those who deliver it or arrange to have them killed to cover up his activities?

DIRE WOLVES

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

* **Bite:** Str+d6.

* **Go for the Throat:** Wolves instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's weakest-armored location.

* **Fleet-Footed:** Dire wolves roll a d10 instead of a d6 when running.

MESSENGER

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Notice d8, Riding d8, Survival d6, Swimming d6

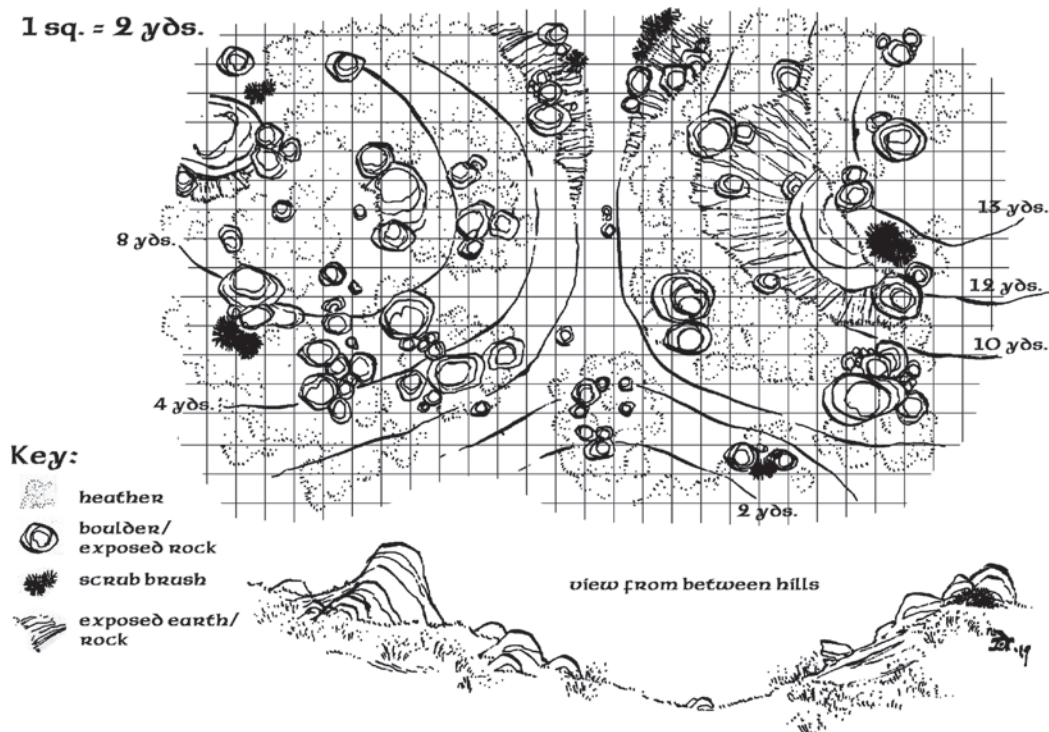
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Dodge

Gear: Leather armor (+1), short spear (Str+d6, Reach 1)

1 sq. = 2 yds.



24. HOLD THE LINE

Rank: Seasoned

Note: GMs should reread the mounted combat rules to ensure familiarity before the encounter begins.

Following the Blizzard War and the defeat of the Liche-Priest, the landscape of Rassilon was left dotted with many hundreds of ruins. From old sentry posts to razed cities, the crumbling walls of ancient buildings are common. While some are home to monsters, most are deserted.

The party has found an ideal spot to make camp—an old ruin situated atop a steep hill. Although it lacks a roof, it provides shelter from the wind and is a defensible position. Nearby are undulating hills and craggy slopes, but the hilltop ruin still provides the best option for spotting approaching foes.

At some point during the night, have everyone on sentry duty make a Notice roll at -1 (for the lighting conditions). With success, they spy a group of orcs mounted

on dire wolves bounding across the nearby hills straight toward the ruin. The orcs are 48" away, on the edge of visibility (see **Terrain** below). If the sentries fail their Notice roll, the orcs gain Surprise for the first round.

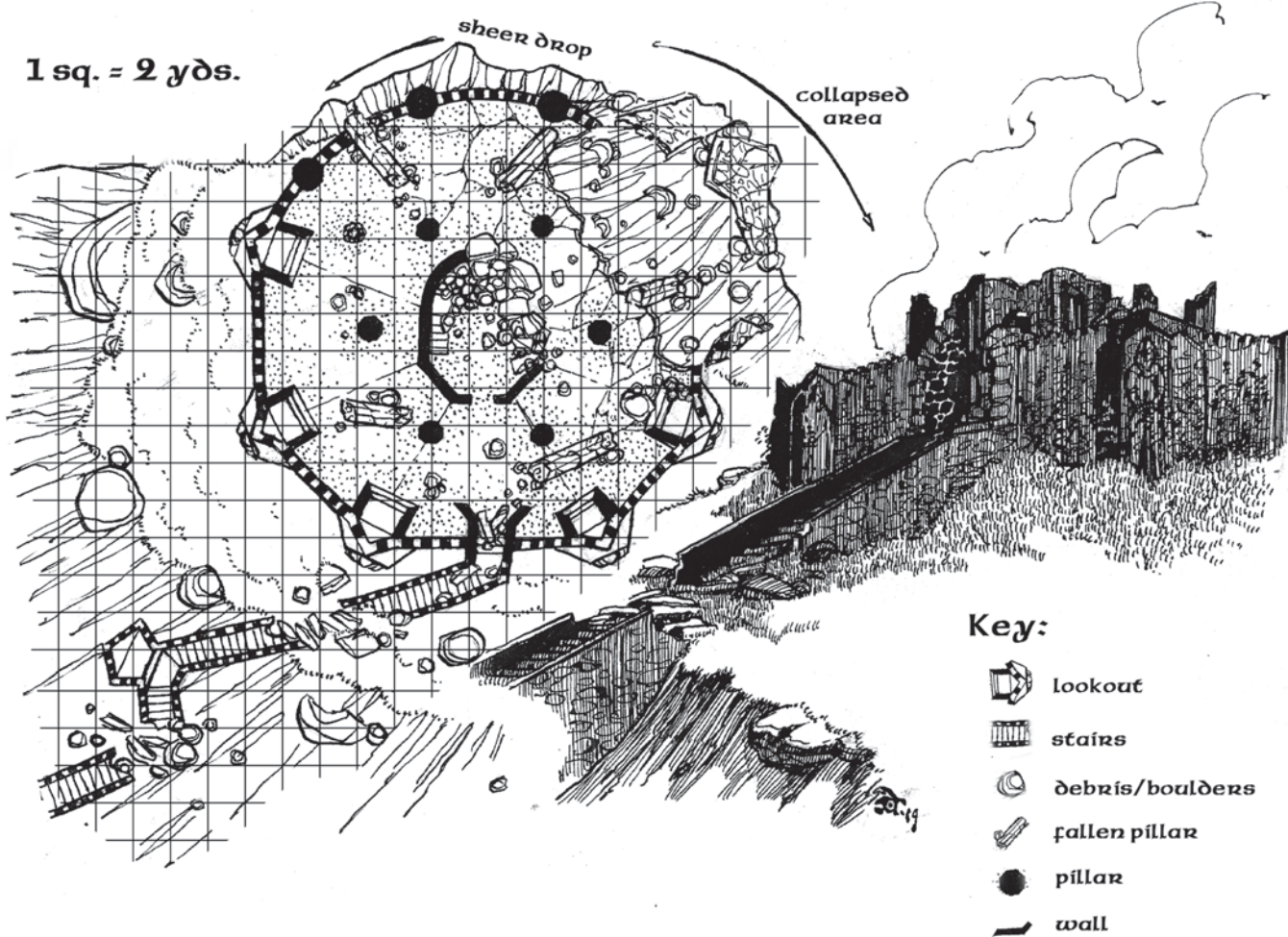
If the heroes are relying on a *sentry* spell, the orcs are only detected when they trip the spell—the party is likely to suffer heavy casualties.

Characters can rouse a sleeping comrade by shouting as a free action (assuming the sentry isn't Surprised). On the first round, the rudely awakened heroes are Shaken. After that, they may act normally (no roll to un-Shake is necessary).

Remember, sleeping in armor is very uncomfortable—sleepers are considered to be unarmored. Characters who insist on wearing armor while they sleep should be allowed to do so, but they begin Fatigued. It is impossible to don armor before the orcs reach the walls.

The party is greatly outnumbered, but has the ad-

1 sq. = 2 yds.



vantage of preparation time (a minimum of two rounds worth; likely three or four rounds) for spells and cover—and they probably have better ranged combat skills than the orcs. In this way, maximizing the use of cover and weakening the patrol with missile fire or spells gives the party the best hope of survival.

MONSTERS

The orcs are a roving patrol. Supposedly deployed in a scouting role, they are more interested in slaughter and looting, and feeding their mounts with fresh flesh, than gathering intelligence. They belong to a tribe of the GM's choosing.

M Orc Wolf Rider (3 per two heroes): For advanced parties, add one extra rider and mount per party Rank. The GM may swap two orc riders for a mounted elite orc warrior. In exchange for four riders, the GM could add an orc chieftain, drummer, or priest. All stats are in the *Hellfrost Bestiary*. In all cases, the orc's Riding die is equal to its Fighting die.

M Dire Wolf (1 per orc): These wolves count as trained mounts.

TACTICS

Divide the orcs into pairs for the purposes of action cards and running rolls.

The orcs begin by firing their bows while the snarling, running wolves carry them toward the ruin. They don't bother aiming—orc tactics favor high quantities of arrows over carefully placed shots.

If an orc is slain, its dire wolf continues advancing. Should a wolf be killed, its rider approaches on foot. The riders do not know the party's magical capabilities. As such, they remain in loose formation. Should a hero successfully hit them with an area effect spell, the orcs move further apart on their next movement to minimize losses on the approach.

Once they hit the steep slope, the orcs drop their bows (a free action) and draw melee weapons (an action). Half use long swords and half wield long spears. The wolves leap any low walls in their path to gain access to the interior. Once inside, the orcs remain mounted, hacking at the party while their mounts attack.

TERRAIN

Campfire: The campfire sheds good light in a 3" radius. Anyone stepping into the fire suffers 2d10 damage and risks catching fire.

Heavy Debris: The heavy debris is difficult ground and characters may not run through it.

High Walls: The walls block line of sight and provide Cover (+10 Heavy Armor).

They are a foot wide and can support a hero. However, any roll of 1 on an Agility or Agility-linked skill roll made while atop the wall causes the character to fall and become prone (no damage). Additionally, when a hero

takes damage atop a wall, he must successfully roll Agility or fall prone.

Light Debris: This debris is difficult ground.

Lighting: A bright moon and clear sky make the lighting Dim (-1). A low haze limits visibility to 48".

Low Walls: These walls are difficult ground and grant Cover (+8 Heavy Armor). Heroes can stand on these walls as detailed above.

Steep Slope: The slope is difficult ground. Anyone running downhill *must* make an Agility roll to the end of their movement. With failure, they move an additional 1d2" after their intended movement. On a roll of 1, regardless of Wild Die, they slip and fall prone after the additional movement.

CONTINUATION

As with other encounters with small bands of orcs, it is unlikely that they found the heroes far from their permanent lair or temporary camp. A typical orc patrol camp is detailed in Encounter 8. If the party easily defeats the riders, survivors of the assault may summon reinforcements. In this event the heroes may suspect a second attack is coming. Whether they stand and fight here, where the terrain favors them, or try to run is up to them.

ORC WOLF RIDER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Edges: Steady Hands

Gear: Leather armor (+1), long sword (Str+d8), long spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1), bow (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6), dire wolf mount, saddle

Special Abilities:

* **Size +1:** Orcs are slightly larger than humans.

DIRE WOLF

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Tracking d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

* **Bite:** Str+d6.

* **Go for the Throat:** Wolves instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly-armored location.

* **Fleet-Footed:** Dire wolves roll a d10 instead of a d6 when running.

25. THE DANK MARSH

Rank: Seasoned

The heroes are journeying through a bog or marsh. Rassilon's wetlands are dotted with ruins, and the party is likely to stumble across one or more at some point.

Stinking slime, dank streams of murky water, tall clumps of densely-packed rushes, and the occasional tree dominate the terrain. Clouds of tiny insects fill the air, as does the croaking of unseen toads and frogs.

Further on, low walls of badly weathered but obviously-worked stone begin to appear through the water. The deeper into the mire the party walks, the more intact the structures appear. A successful Common Knowledge roll from someone with knowledge of the marshes of Rassilon or a Knowledge (History) roll reveals the ruins are typical of those raised by the gatormen in ancient times.

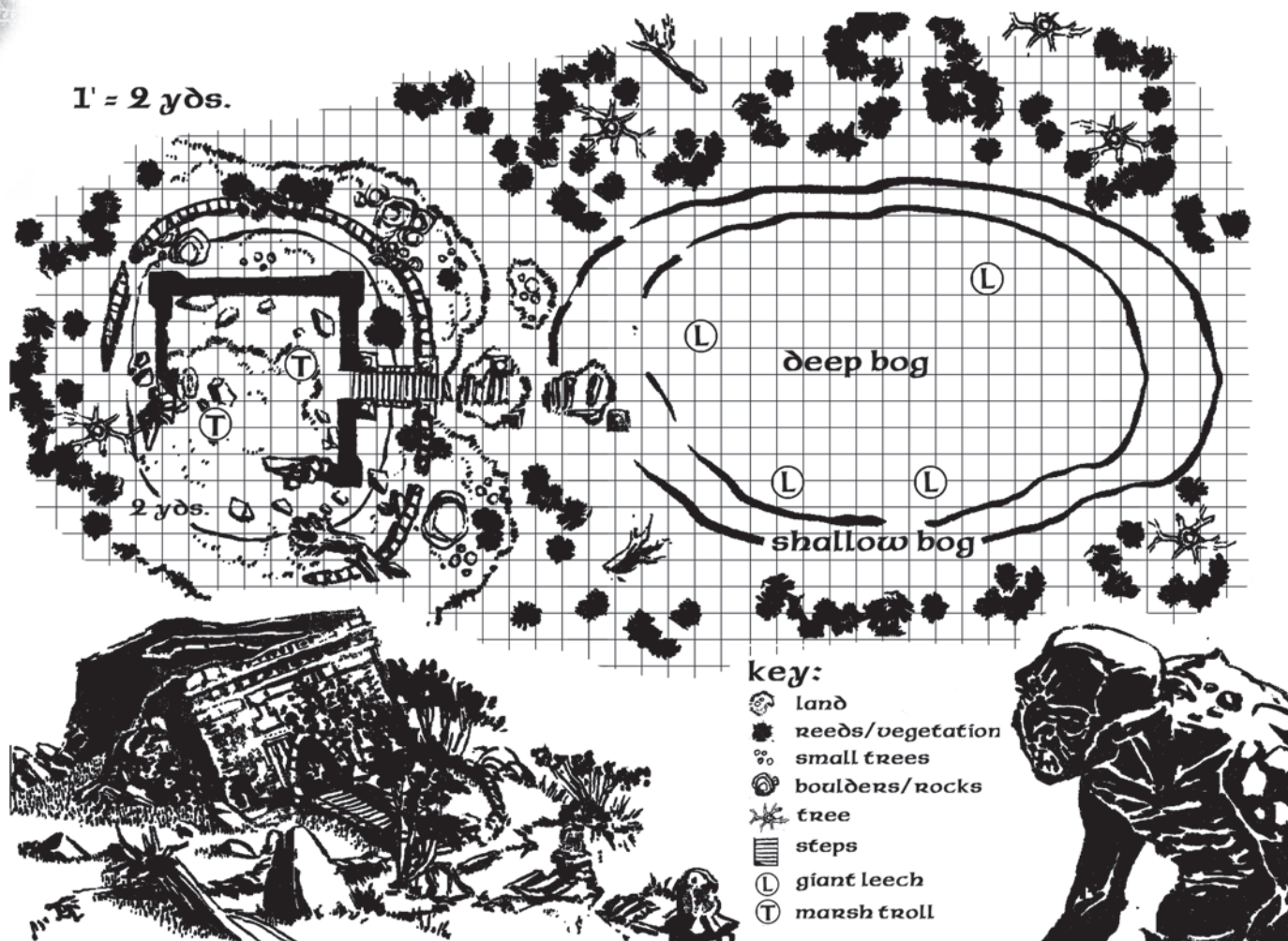
Set up the battlefield and have the characters position themselves anywhere on the eastern edge of the map.

Deal action cards as normal and let them proceed as they wish. No monsters are present, so dealing the cards now should get the heroes wondering what fate awaits them.

MONSTERS

Lurking in the vile water is a number of giant leeches—bloated, slimy, and fully concealed. The old building on the map is home to a small family of marsh trolls. Neither type of creature is visible when the encounter begins.

If the GM prefers, or if it better suits the marsh where the encounter occurs, he can swap the marsh trolls for gatormen, lizardmen, or bufomi, all common denizens of foul mires. Typically, there is one warrior of the chosen species per hero. Alternately, the GM may swap two warriors for an Extra shaman or priest, or four warriors for a Wild Card version.



- Ⓜ Marsh Troll (1 per two heroes)
- Ⓜ Giant Leeches (1 per hero)

TACTICS

When a character first enters the bog, the leeches move beneath the murky water toward the nearest creature. The leeches can swim through the bog and treat it as normal terrain.

Whenever a leech moves adjacent to a character, have him make a Notice roll opposed by the monster's Stealth. With success, the character detects the slimy creature and can use First Strike. On a failure, the leech gains +4 to its Fighting roll that round. Once the alarm is raised, the heroes can negate the First Strike by spending an action to cautiously move and check beneath the murky surface for leeches.

Once the leeches attack, the party is going to make some noise. This alerts the marsh trolls, who lumber from their lair to investigate the disturbance. The trolls enter the encounter during the round after the leeches' first attack.

Lacking missile weapons, the trolls seek melee engagement as quickly as possible to rend their prey with powerful, infected claws. Although marsh dwellers, the trolls' movement is affected by the bog.

TERRAIN

The encounter can easily be moved to moorland. Swap the reeds for exposed patches of rocks and the trees for large boulders.

Deep Bog: The deep bog is difficult ground through which no character can run. Its depth is 4' and provides Medium Cover (−2) to those wading through it. The heroes can swim through the mire.

Low Walls: The low walls are difficult ground and grant Cover (+8 Heavy Armor).

The walls are a foot wide and can support a hero. However, any roll of 1 on an Agility or Agility-linked skill roll made while atop the wall causes the character to fall and become prone (no damage). Additionally, when a hero takes damage atop a wall, he must successfully roll Agility or fall prone.

Reeds: The densely packed clumps of reeds are difficult ground. Crouching behind one grants Medium Cover (−2).

Shallow Bog: The shallow bog is difficult ground.

Tangled Vegetation: This vegetation is difficult ground.

Trees: The trunks provide Cover (+6 Heavy Armor).

CONTINUATION

The old building is the trolls' lair and contains their treasure haul—a lowly Worthwhile stash taken from previous victims. They rarely eat sentient flesh, and any gear their meals' formerly possessed has rotten away. All that remain are coins, jewelry, and *maybe* an alchemical

GIANT LEECH

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: —; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

- * **Aquatic:** Pace 6.
- * **Bite:** Str+d4.
- * **Blood Drain:** A giant leech that succeeds in a Fighting roll attaches itself to its prey and begins to drink blood. Each round the leech is attached, the victim must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue. Removing a leech requires an opposed Strength roll. Alternatively, the leech can be killed with weapons—a giant leech attached to its victim has a Parry of 2. Unfortunately, any roll of 1 on the attack die (regardless of Wild Die) strikes the leech's victim.
- * **Size −1:** Giant leeches measure 2' in length.
- * **Weakness (Salt):** A pound of salt causes 2d6 damage to a giant leech.

MARSH TROLL

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Swimming d6

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (1)

Gear: Spiked club (d12+d8+1)

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +1:** Rubbery hide.
- * **Claws:** Str+d6.
- * **Immunity:** Immune to poison and disease.
- * **Infection:** The claws of a marsh troll are caked in filth. Any creature Shaken or wounded by a claw must make a Vigor roll. On a failure, the wound becomes infected. All attempts to heal the wounds suffer a −1 penalty.
- * **Infravision:** Trolls halve penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets (round down).
- * **Regeneration (Fast):** Trolls make a natural Healing roll every round, even after death. They cannot heal wounds caused by fire or heat. This includes coldfire. Decapitation (a Finishing Move) also prevents regeneration.
- * **Size +1:** Marsh trolls are 7' tall, making them smaller than regular trolls.
- * **Stench:** Any creature moving adjacent to a marsh troll must make a Vigor roll or become Shaken with nausea.

device or two—the trolls are clever enough to recognize magic artifacts but too stupid to wield them. At the GM's discretion, the ruin could have partially flooded tunnels beneath, thus spawning an entire new adventure.

26. WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

VETERAN

Rank: Veteran

Ideally, this encounter should occur when the party is suffering inclement weather or is low on food. It needn't be a raging storm—light but constant rain should be enough to encourage them to seek shelter and a hot meal where it's available.

At some point during the day the party comes across a teenage girl traveling in the same direction (at a slower speed). She is wrapped in a green, weathered traveling cloak and is carrying a heavy wicker basket. On hearing the party approach, the girl drops the basket and grabs the hilt of a short sword hanging from her belt. She eyes the party warily, but makes no aggressive moves.

If approached openly or hailed from a distance, the girl demands to know who the party is and what their intentions are. Once convinced the characters are not bandits, she releases her short sword and picks up the basket. The girl then tells her story.

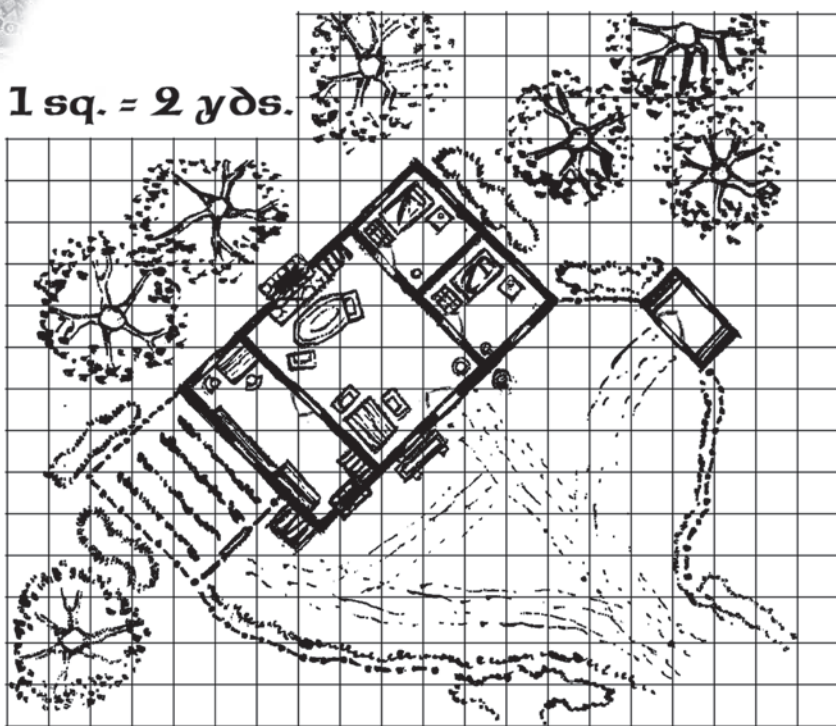
"My name is Hrefna, Hrefna Sigmundsdobtor. I live with my grandmother in a small cottage a few miles up the road. I've been into the village for supplies, but the basket is too heavy to easily carry." She looks up at the sky.

"Will you help me make it before nightfall? Many creatures haunt this land and I have no wish to become their supper. We offer a warm house and hot food. Grandmother is also a herbalist. I'm sure she has balms to soothe aching feet and tired muscles."

The basket weighs 10 pounds. It is covered with a red cloth. Any hero taking a peek inside discovers it contains only chunks of meat and cheese. If questioned about this, Hrefna claims she and her grandmother grow a few vegetables and have grain delivered by the sack since neither could carry such a load. They aren't hunters and they keep no goats, so meat and cheese is all they need to purchase.

With the party's help, the journey takes barely two hours. Hrenfa, who claims to know little of the wider world, asks the heroes to tell stories of their travels. In return, she reveals that her parents died when she was young, so her grandmother took her in. She admits she would one day like to travel, and perhaps marry a good man, but her grandmother is elderly and her first duty is tending to the matron's needs.

The thatched cottage is small and comfortable, though



Key:

- | | | |
|--------|---------------------|---------------|
| tree | hearth and firewood | bed and chest |
| fence | table and chairs | chamber pot |
| shrubs | bed table | trough |



26. WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

far from immaculate. The wattle-and-daub is flaking away in patches, the thatch is wearing bare, and weeds poke through a small crop of carrots and potatoes. Daubed on the door in faded paint is a holy symbol of Eostre Animalmother. If this is mentioned, Hrefna claims it is a protection against wild beasts.

On entering, Hrefna calls out, *"Granny, I'm home! Some kind travelers helped me with the basket. I've invited them for supper. I'll get the fire ready straight away."* The girl then turns to heroes and asks whether they prefer pork or beef.

MONSTERS

Hrefna and her granny aren't all they seem. Both are actually hamhleypas—in this case, leypawolves. They've become accustomed to living as humans, easily luring helpful souls into their trap. While in their human guise, treat them as citizens.

🐾 **Granny:** Granny keeps a battle axe under her bed (Str+d8).

🐾 **Hrefna:** Hrefna carries a short sword (Str+d6).

TACTICS

Once inside the cottage, Hrefna tries to divide the party without rousing suspicions. First she asks all but two of the heroes to go outside and gather firewood from a small shed at the rear of the cottage. Once they leave the house, she asks another to deliver the food basket to Granny (who is in the bedroom) for inspection. The last hero is kept in the kitchen to help prepare the meal.

When the party is suitably divided, both hamhleypas try to switch to their hybrid form. If they succeed, characters must make a Notice roll to avoid Surprise.

Granny's first action in hybrid form, whether this occurs on the same round she shape-changes or later, is to use her howl ability. The sound easily carries into the surrounding countryside, so the adventurers gathering firewood are equally affected. The old lady then grabs her battle axe (an action) and begins attacking the nearest hero. Hrefna, who is younger and less tactically-minded, simply attempts to bite her chosen victim.

OPTION

Instead of springing the attack immediately, the GM can draw the encounter out a little. The first dinner is just a regular meal. Hrefna and her grandmother talk politely and seem very friendly. They even offer the party a bed by the fire.

During the meal, Hrefna asks whether the party is in a hurry to be somewhere. She says she has supplies in the shed to fix up the house, but lacks the skills to perform the many tasks herself. For a few hours hard work, she offers another meal and night of comfort.

Hrefna works the party hard. When the time comes for the second evening meal, have each hero make a Vigor roll to avoid a level of Fatigue. Because they've been

working on the house all day, it is assumed the party is unarmored and not carrying all their weapons unless a player specifically states otherwise. With the party tired and ill-equipped, the vile creatures spring their attack exactly as written above.

TERRAIN

Bed: The bed is difficult ground. A hero is required to crawl in order to hide beneath it. The thin mattress and wooden slats provide Cover (+2 Armor).

Ceiling: The ceiling is 9' high.

Curtains: Old cloth sacks hang at each window. They can be pulled down and used as part of an Agility Trick.

Furniture: The furniture is difficult ground and grants Cover (+1 Armor for chairs and +2 Armor for tables or cupboards). A chair used as a weapon requires two-hands and inflicts Str+d6 damage. A Fighting roll of 1, regardless of Wild Die, breaks the chair, rendering it useless as a weapon.

CONTINUATION

If the GM wishes to expand the scene further, Hrefna and Granny do not live here alone. As night falls, the rest of family returns home from hunting. They are already in hybrid form. Their keen senses allow them to detect the party's presence long before they enter the cottage.

LEYPAWOLF

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Survival d10, Notice d10, Stealth d8, Tracking d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

Edges: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Fleet-Footed, Improved Frenzy, Quick

Special Abilities:

* **Bite:** Str+d6.

* **Go for the Throat:** If a leypawolf gets a raise on its Fighting roll, it strikes its opponent's least armored location.

* **Howl:** A leypawolf can use its entire action to howl at the moon. When it does so, each of its foes able to hear the chilling sound must make a Spirit roll or be Shaken.

* **Low Light Vision:** Leypawolves ignore lighting penalties for penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

* **Shapeleaper:** Leypawolves can change between any of their forms as a normal action by making a Vigor roll at +2. With a normal success, they can't take any other actions that round, including movement. With a raise, they can take other actions as normal.

* **Size +1:** Leypawolves stand around 8' tall.

27. A STEAMY ENCOUNTER

NOVICE

Rank: Novice

Folk in Rassilon rarely bathe, although personal cleanliness is an important trait. Instead of conventional baths, humans use saunas or steam baths. The sauna has been a traditional part of Saxa and Finnar culture for countless centuries, and the Anari adopted steam baths following their conquest of the Marklands. Frost dwarves, frostborn, and taiga elves wouldn't be caught dead in a sauna.

Virtually every human-dominated settlement has a sauna. Steads and villages typically have a small hut sauna, and only rarely is there a charge for using the facilities. In towns or cities, a sauna may comprise many rooms, some for public use and others for private patrons who don't wish to mix with commoners or who want to conduct business away from prying ears. Unlike village saunas, where patrons might run naked outside and roll in snow or dive into a cold stream after working up a good sweat, these facilities offer a cold plunge pool. Rates vary, but typically a donation of a silver scield or three is required.

Many saunas contain shrines dedicated to Eira, goddess of healing, and in the largest cities the saunas themselves might form part of a temple complex.

And saunas aren't just for cleanliness. The hot steam is a wonderful way to relax tired muscles and ease away

aches and pains. Heroes suffering Fatigue from Bumps and Bruises who spend an hour in a sauna knock six hours off their recovery time.

A LOCAL PROBLEM

Wherever the heroes are, a sign hangs on the door of the sauna proclaiming it out of use. Talking to the locals, the party learns the steam room is haunted. Several patrons have nearly choked to death on noxious fumes, one openly sports burns caused by hot-rocks flying at him across the room, and others report hearing strange sounds or seeing a gnarled old man lurking in the thick steam.

Everyone agrees on the cause of the problems—a bannik. Any hero who makes a Knowledge (Folklore) at -1 or Knowledge (Fey) roll at +1 knows a bannik only haunts a sauna when the building has been misused in some fashion.

The party may know that one way to get rid of banniks is to torch the sauna and build a new one some distance away. The locals will never accept this solution. Should the party go ahead anyway, they are arrested and charged with arson (a capital crime).

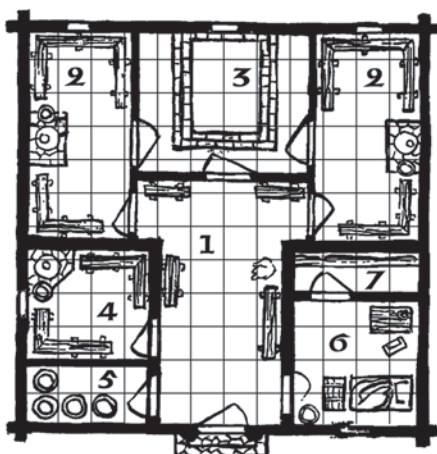
Invariably, the locals ask the heroes to help get rid of the creature. In a town or city, the local clerics of Eira

offer each party member a free *healing* potion (heals one wound) to find a peaceful solution—no payment is given if the fey is harmed. A single stead or small village cannot offer such extravagant rewards. At best, the heroes are offered free room and board for three days, plus a token lump sum of 100 gs.

The cause of the problem isn't really the bannik, but a local married couple. They committed the *faux pas* of having intercourse in the sauna, which enraged the fey.

Tracking them down requires either communicating with the fey (no easy task given its anger and inability to leave the sauna) or questioning the locals.

A Persuasion roll at -4 is required to get the bannik to talk. With success, the fey merely states someone defiled the sauna, but provides no details.



Key:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 waiting area | stove |
| 2 common sauna | bed and chest |
| 3 cold pool | table and chair |
| 4 private sauna | bench |
| 5 charcoal stores | shrine to eira |
| 6 caretaker's quarters | |
| 7 linens | |

27. A STEAMY ENCOUNTER

A Streetwise roll at -2 (one roll may be made once per four hours) leads the party to 1d4+1 people, couples, or families who used the sauna leading up to when the bannik began harming people. Among them is the adventurous couple.

A successful Intimidation or Persuasion roll is required for the couple to reveal their activities. Except for the married couple, none of the others have done anything wrong. The couple insists they had a quick scrub down and then left, but a Notice roll reveals they are lying. If pressed on the matter, they admit the truth.

Appeasing the fey requires the guilty parties to apologize to the bannik. This must be done inside the sauna. Their apology takes ten rounds, during which time the bannik unleashes its most harmful powers at the heroes—they are directly responsible for bringing the defilers back into the sauna.

MONSTERS

The bannik is a fey creature that haunts saunas. This mischievous spirit is said to look like an old man with long-nailed, hairy paws. Hiding behind the stove or under benches, it punishes disrespectful bathers who have intercourse, lie, boast, swear, sing too loudly, or talk excessively in a sauna. Banniks are also known to pick on visiting strangers and newcomers. A knowing Saxa or Finnar utters a quick prayer to Eira to protect him or herself from the bannik and never enters a bathhouse when they hear purring noises, a sign that a bannik is entertaining unnatural guests, perhaps even devils.

This particular bannik has lived in the sauna since it was constructed. It used to operate unseen, ensuring the sauna was left clean and tidy. It also kept vermin and disruptive elements of society away through subtle magic. Now it has been driven to drastic action to ensure the sanctity of the sauna is not further tarnished by filthy humans.

📄 **Bannik:** If the party is Veteran or above, the bannik is a Wild Card.

TACTICS

Sooner or later the party will enter the sauna to confront the beast. Should the party seem intent only on violence, the bannik shouts out things like, “Defilers!” or “No beasts with two backs!” to provide a clue that something has triggered its appearance. It speaks the local language.

The bannik is Maintaining *invisibility* as cast with a raise (-6) when the heroes enter. At first it seeks merely to drive away intruders, using *confusion*, *fatigue*, and *slumber* spells to annoy them. Should these fail, it switches to *puppet*, ordering any victims to leave.

If threatened or attacked, it invokes *telekinesis* and throws hot coals at the intruders, and *puppet* to force its foe to sit on the hot stoves (after stripping to bare skin). It uses its fear aura only if cold, coldfire, or ice spells are employed against it or if someone actually lands a blow.

BANNIK

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- * **Domain:** A bannik inhabits a single sauna and cannot pass beyond the threshold.
- * **Fear Aura:** A bannik causes all those who fail a Guts roll to flee and not want to enter or even look at another sauna for a week. Those who pass are immune for one week to additional fear auras generated by the bannik.
- * **Immunity (Fire):** Banniks are immune to background heat, and suffer no damage from heat or fire based attacks.
- * **Powers:** Banniks can use the following powers: *confusion*, *fatigue* (poison gas), *invisibility* (on self only), *lock/unlock*, *nightmare*, *puppet*, *slumber*, *speaking language*, *telekinesis*.
- * **Quick:** Banniks redraw initiative cards of 5 or lower.
- * **Weakness (Cold):** Banniks suffer double damage from cold, coldfire, and ice attacks.

Should an aggressive party later leave of their own free will, it fires off *nightmare* at them before they can escape as a last warning to stay clear of the sauna in future.

TERRAIN

Doors: Toughness 10.

Furniture: Space occupied by furniture is difficult ground. Furniture can give Cover (+1 Armor for chairs and +2 for tables or desks). A chair used as a weapon requires two-hands and inflicts Str+d6 damage. A Fighting roll of 1, regardless of Wild Die, breaks the chair, rendering it useless as a weapon. Legs inflict Str+d4 damage.

Lighting: Dark (-2) due to the thick steam. Visibility is limited to 5”.

Plunge Pool: Movement through the water is difficult ground. After a minute of immersion in the chilly water the bather must make Vigor roll to resist the effects of cold. Winter clothing or furs provide only half their usual protection (rounded down).

Stoves: Anyone touching a stove suffers 2d8 damage. Hot rocks inflict Str+d6 damage if thrown (Range 2/4/8), though the holder risks scolding his hands unless adequate protection is taken.

Temperature: The temperature inside the sauna's steam rooms is a stifling 176° F (80° C). Clothed or armored heroes must make a Vigor roll each minute outside of combat or at the start of every round in combat. This can lead to Incapacitation only. Entering (or being thrown into) the cold plunge pool removes one level of Fatigue per full round of immersion.

28. DEAD MAMMOTH

Rank: Novice

While exploring the Winterlands, the party spies a large, dark, lifeless shape in the snow. Once within 50 yards they recognize it as a woolly mammoth. It's evident that the mammoth did not die from wounds, as there is no blood on the surrounding snow. A dead mammoth not only means food, but the potential to harvest its coarse hair to make winter clothing.

MONSTERS

The mammoth died of blood loss and is infested with arctic ticks. After consuming the mammoth, the swarm went into hibernation. The ticks remain inactive and



ARCTIC TICK SWARM

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d8, Stealth d6

Pace: —; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +1:** Hard carapaces.
- * **Infection:** A victim in a tick swarm template must make a Vigor roll each round or become infested with ticks. Each day thereafter, the victim must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue from blood loss. Removing the ticks requires either immersion in very hot water (which causes 2d6 damage per round to the swarm while the victim makes a Vigor roll to avoid suffering Fatigue) or by removing them one at a time. The latter requires a Notice roll at -6 and takes 8 hours. This can be a Group or Cooperative Roll, but only one roll can be made per day.
- * **Hibernate:** Ticks not attached to a living host must quickly find a new host. After five rounds, ticks without a host make a Vigor roll each round or hibernate. In this state they cannot take actions, but retain their senses.
- * **Infravision:** Ticks can detect warm-blooded creatures to a range of 24".
- * **Leap:** Ticks move by leaping. They have a Pace of 10 and suffer no penalties for difficult ground.
- * **Mindless:** Unaffected by Tests of Will, Tricks, or arcane powers like *puppet*.
- * **Swarm:** Parry +2. Because the swarm is composed of potentially thousands of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his damage in Strength each round.

unseen until a warm-blooded creature moves within 10" (20 yards) of them.

GMs seeking a more deadly encounter may wish to have the mammoth be a living host to a frost mote swarm (see *Hellfrost Bestiary*). Use the stats for a woolly mammoth from the *Hellfrost Bestiary*, but increase its Spirit to d10. When the beast is slain, the frost mote swarm is unleashed.

Ⓜ **Arctic Tick Swarm (1)**

TACTICS

The swarm awakens from its hibernation 1d2 rounds after sensing warmblooded prey. It immediately leaps toward their potential new host. If the party has advanced with caution, perhaps fearing predators nearby or that an undead mammoth is about to go on the rampage, there is no need to check for Surprise—the heroes may not be expecting ticks, but they are expecting something. Less cautious groups must roll Surprise as normal.

The ticks have just five rounds to latch onto a new host before their energy reserves begin to deplete. Each time a hero is infested, this counter is reset—the ticks have drawn enough blood to provide another burst of activity.

TERRAIN

No map is required for this encounter.

Dead Mammoth: Fills an area 3" by 2". Movement over the corpse is difficult ground.

Snow: The entire area is blanketed in snow and counts as difficult ground. Given the location of the encounter, most parties will likely have donned skis or snowshoes long before discovering the mammoth.

CONTINUATION

Having been drained of blood by the swarm and then frozen, the mammoth's flesh is tough and foul tasting. It provides only half the dietary requirements per pound consumed. Heroes consuming more than a pound of the flesh in any 24 hour period must make a Vigor roll at -1 or suffer Vali's Revenge (see *Hellfrost Bestiary*).

With the swarm destroyed or dispersed, the fur remains usable in skilled hands. How the party intends to haul a corpse weighing several tons through snow is left to them, but any sensible plan should be allowed to work. If the corpse can be dragged to a suitable settlement, it can be turned into useful garments.

A clothier can make one set of winter clothing or two sets of furs for every two points of the creature's Size (Size+7 typically). The cost to manufacture these items is 50% of the listed price as the party has supplied the raw material. It takes one week per set of clothes or furs.

29. FULL STEAM AHEAD

Rank: Novice

This encounter occurs in a sauna. See Encounter 27 for background details on saunas in *Hellfrost*.

A young but talented elemental named Janos is the only other person in the sauna. The mage is annoyingly friendly and chatty, discussing anything from the weather to a hypothetical discourse on the nature of the elemental realms. He particularly latches onto any fellow elementals, asking question after question about their experiences and spell knowledge. He fawns over any mages of higher Convocation status, and practically worships Arkhwisards. The lad means well—he's just over-eager, immature, and socially inept.

After a suitable period, Janos leaves the party and retreats to another room, where he intends to summon a steam elemental (the sauna being an ideal venue for such a spell).

Unfortunately, something goes terribly wrong. Janos' spell works, but the elemental also suffers a particularly rare form of the Siphoning. Though unconscious from the backlash, his elemental nevertheless still exists (since Janos cannot Maintain the spell, the elemental would normally disappear). With no orders and no way to return to its native realm, the creature quickly becomes enraged. The party first learns all of this when the door to Janos's room flies off its hinges!

MONSTERS

Janos is unconscious and remains that way for the rest of the encounter.

M Steam Elemental: If the party is experienced, make the elemental a Wild Card.

TACTICS

The elemental is in an angry, destructive mood. It begins moving through the sauna in search of something to vent its rage upon.

It uses its steam blast to scold the heroes until they enter melee range. Once adjacent, it tries to envelop a character in its whirlwind and scold as many others as possible with its steam blast. This incurs a multi action penalty.

If the elemental is Shaken and close to a door, it tries to retreat to safety (at half its Pace). Closed doors are not airtight (though the walls are), so the elemental can seep through the cracks unhindered.

TERRAIN

This encounter uses the sauna map from page 54. The unconscious Janos and the elemental begin in any room not occupied by the heroes.

Doors: Toughness 10.

Lighting: Dark (-2) due to the thick steam. Visibility is limited to 5".

Stoves: Anyone touching a stove suffers 2d8 damage. Hot rocks inflict Str+d6 damage is thrown (Range 2/4/8).

Temperature: The temperature inside the sauna's steam rooms is a stifling 176° F (80° C). Clothed or armored heroes must make a Vigor roll each minute outside of combat or at the start of every round in combat. This can lead to Incapacitation only.

CONTINUATION

After the encounter, Janos can be awakened with a successful Healing roll. He naturally recovers after an hour if no one tends to him.

Janos has no stats because he needs none for this encounter. If the GM wishes to make him a recurring character, all that needs be included is his knowledge of the arts of fire and water. The rest of his stats are left for the GM to create to fit the nature of his campaign.

STEAM ELEMENTAL

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- * **Elemental:** No additional damage from Called Shots; Fearless; immune to disease and poison.
- * **Flight:** Pace 6. They may never "run."
- * **Immunity:** Steam elementals suffer no damage from nonmagical attacks.
- * **Steam Blast:** Steam elementals can send directed blasts of superheated air at foes using the Cone Template and a Shooting roll. Foes may make an opposed Agility roll to avoid the blast or take 2d10 damage (ignoring nonmagical Armor).
- * **Seep:** Steam elementals can squeeze through any porous gap as if it were difficult ground.
- * **Whirlwind:** During a turn in which it did not move, a steam elemental may attempt to pick up a foe. Make an opposed Strength check and if the elemental wins, then its foe is pulled into the swirling maelstrom of its steamy body. While trapped, the target is at -2 on all rolls including damage, to hit and Strength rolls to free himself, and suffers 2d6 damage per round. The elemental cannot move as long as it wants to keep foes trapped inside its form.

30. THE OUTCAST

Rank: Novice

The heroes come across a group of men beating a prone figure wrapped in a cloak. A Notice roll reveals rope has been tied around the cloak, preventing the figure from fighting back.

If hailed, the thugs tell the characters to continue on their way and not interfere. Should the heroes decide to help the figure, the men put up only minimal resistance—once two of them are defeated the rest flee. No special map or terrain is required for this skirmish.

Wrapped in the cloak is an elf. It's clear he's been badly beaten and is close to death. A successful Healing roll or *healing* spell revives the elf, though he remains extremely weak. He introduces himself as Calthelion, a druid, and asks for help.

"From what I can make out, around mid-winter a creature with a face like my own entered the village I call home. It claimed to be me, changed into bestial form by a hag, and that the true me was a simulacrum about to feed on their flesh while they slept. The whole thing was preposterous, but the

creature had a silver tongue and quickly stirred them into a frenzy by playing on their fears.

"I was away on travels, but when I returned I discovered my friends thought me a dangerous enemy. At first I was held captive, bound and gagged to prevent my use of magic. Then, just a few hours ago, they decided I had to be killed to rid the 'real me' of its curse. I remember being beaten, but quickly passed out. I guess that's where you enter this sorry tale."

Calthelion adds that he knows roughly where the beast lives, for his hawk companion ("Moonwing") tracked the beast into the hills. Unfortunately, he has no idea *what* the beast is. He won't join the party, even though doing so could save his skin from the mob. Unwilling to harm any beast, he plans to head into the woods and try to recover his strength. The creature lives in a small cave complex about five miles from the party's current location.

MONSTERS

During the winter months a mantichore with a face resembling a popular local druid, Calthelion Oakstaff, entered a nearby village and spun the villagers a harrowing story. That it lived near to Calthelion was a cruel trick of the Norns, for the odds of the two meeting would otherwise be near zero. The beast had watched patiently, studying the druid in secret, devising a cunning plan. When the druid departed to attend a religious festival, the mantichore went into action.

The beast had indeed claimed to be the real Calthelion, saying it had been cursed by a hag, who cast vile magics to trap him in this form. To fool the villagers, the hag created a simulacrum of Calthelion (this being the real Calthelion that the villagers had known and interacted with) and then drove his bestial form away.

It claimed to have wandered the wilderness for months, unsure whether or not his friends would turn him away because of his appearance. Recently it came across the hag again, and spied on a meeting between her and her simulacrum (the mantichore provided dates when the real druid was away for several days). Come winter, the beast said, the hag's minion would slaughter the villagers to the last. Finally, the creature claimed that it decided to aid its friends, whatever its personal risk.

Knowing the druid's mannerisms from its spying, and preying on villager's basest fears, it easily fooled the locals.

The real Calthelion returned from an extended trip to discover he was suddenly a much hated man.

The mantichore's plan was to have the villagers kill the real Calthelion, because his druid magic was the only real threat to its wellbeing, and then butcher the villagers and eat their flesh. Having just seen the druid



MANTICORE

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities:

- * **Bite/Claw:** Str+d6.
- * **Defensive Volley:** Rather than fire its tail darts at one target, the mantichore may launch them in a circular pattern. The mantichore makes a Shooting roll against all target within a Large Burst Template centered on the beast. Victims suffer 2d8 damage. The mantichore may take no other actions in the round it uses this ability, including movement. This ability may be used only once per day and uses all the darts in the tail. There must be at least 3 volleys of darts left for this ability to work.
- * **Improved Frenzy:** Manticores may make two Fighting attacks each action at no penalty.
- * **Size +2:** Manticores weigh over 600 pounds.
- * **Tail Darts:** Each round, a mantichore may fire a volley of darts at one target (Range: 4/8/16, Damage: 2d6). It may not fire its darts at the same target it attacks with its claws or bites during the same round. A mantichore can only fire 10 volleys in a single day.

beaten senseless and dragged away, the mantichore now believes that its plan is working flawlessly. As far as it's concerned, the druid is dead. It is currently living in a small cave complex near the village, but periodically visits the village headman to reinforce its story and beg to be allowed back in their homes.

M Mantichore: If the party is Seasoned, make the mantichore a Wild Card. At Veteran, he has a non Wild Card mate. For Heroic and above, the mate is also a Wild Card.

M Thugs (2 per hero): All Traits d6. Parry and Toughness 5. They carry clubs and daggers (Str+d4).

TACTICS

While it has the adventurers at range, the mantichore uses its tail darts. Once in melee, it employs its teeth and claws, savagely tearing at the nearest character with Improved Frenzy. Each time it suffers a wound, the beasts uses its Defensive Volley (assuming it has enough darts).

TERRAIN

Columns: Columns that fill a complete square block line of sight. Adjacent creatures can use them for Cover (+10 Heavy Armor). Thinner columns also provide Cover (+4 Armor).

Debris: The debris is difficult ground.

Lighting: Holes in the roof let in some natural light. Within the marked areas, lighting is normal. Within 3" of a light beam the lighting is Dim (-1). Elsewhere the gloomy shadows give Dark (-2) conditions.

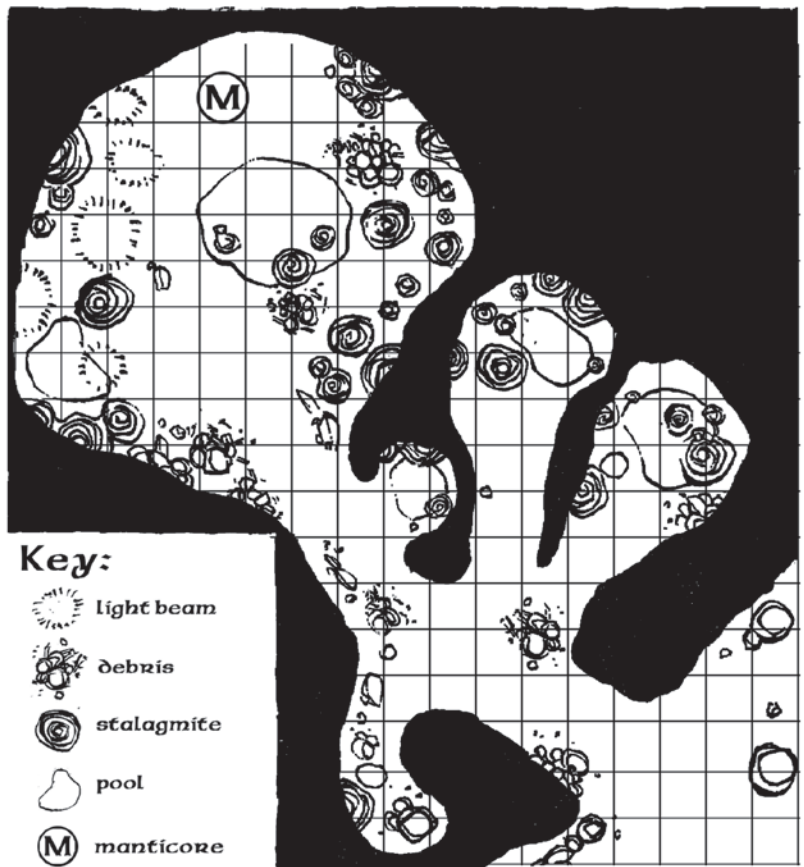
Pool: The water is only a few inches deep. Stealth rolls made while walking through the water are at -1.

CONTINUATION

If the party kills the mantichore and take the corpse straight back to Calthelion's village, the villagers accuse the characters of "killing Calthelion." The only ways to convince the villagers of the beast's real intentions is to take it alive and force a confession from it in front of the villagers, or persuade the villagers that Calthelion has been cured of his ills. The former is not easy, as the villagers will not let the troupe harm "Calthelion". Assuming the adventures can get a confession (an Intimidation roll opposed by the beast's Spirit), someone also has to make a Persuasion roll at -2 to convince the villagers the confession is truthful. If successful, the villagers demand the death of the beast and apologize profusely to the druid for mistreating him.

Convincing the locals without a confession requires a Persuasion roll at -4. The locals didn't witness Calthelion's "transformation" back to elf form, so they're suspicious that the druid is his doppelganger and this is all a cunning ploy to outfox them.

1 sq. = 2 yds.



31. KEEP YOUR HEADS DOWN

Rank: Seasoned

Many parties will be used to fighting large numbers of orcs, typically in melee combat. Unless the party has been exceptionally lucky, they probably have a healthy respect for this most hateful of races.

In this encounter, a lone orc Extra shows just how dangerous it can be under the right circumstances. GMs should make sure to play the orc wisely—the players are going to butcher it very quickly if it simply stands up and fires.

Despite trees being marked on the map, the encounter needn't take place in a forest. The map could easily portray a valley in hilly terrain, or a mountain range's lower slopes. The trees could be replaced by large boulders and the light vegetation by scree or small boulder-fields. Similarly, the exact nature of the dense vegetation is not predetermined, so it could be dense bushes on a moorland or tall grass on the edge of a marsh.

Ask the players to position their characters anywhere on the trail within 3" of the eastern edge of the map.

MONSTERS

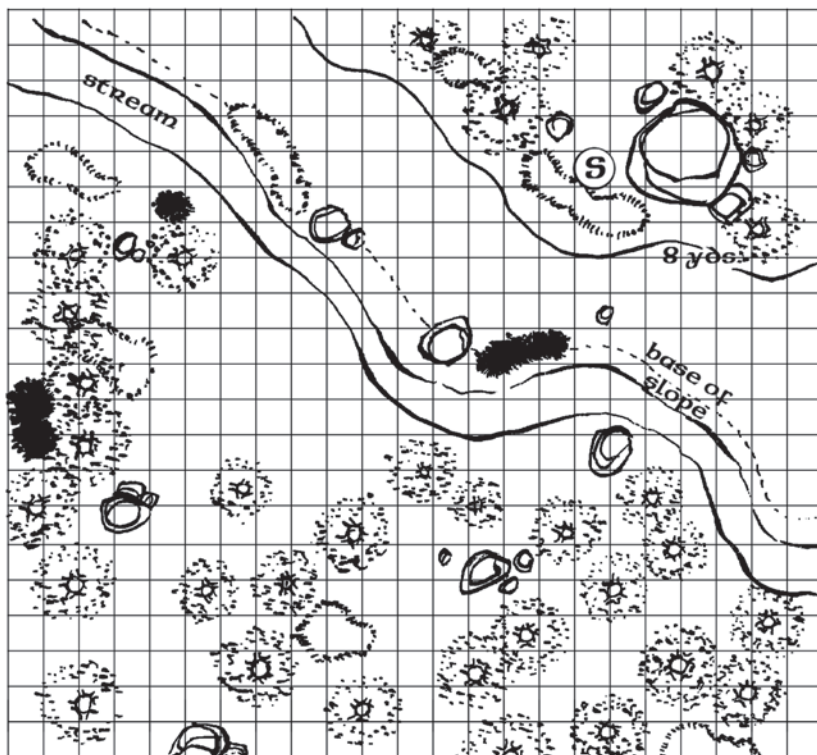
Hiding in the undergrowth by the trail is a lone orc sniper. Well-trained in stealth and marksmanship, the opportunist killer has positioned himself by the trail to target passersby's.

M Orc Sniper: There are several options for making this encounter deadlier.

For advanced parties, you can either add more snipers or make an existing sniper a Wild Card. For instance, a Heroic party might face two additional snipers, or one additional Extra sniper and a Wild Card. Another option is to swap the orc sniper for a hearth or taiga elf wood warden captain defending an elf forest from intruders.

Other alternatives for beefing up the threat include giving a lone sniper alchemical devices, such as *quarrels of obscure* (produce a cloud of smoke on impact), a *potion of stealth* (+1 die to Stealth) or *potion of teleport* (range 20"). Or even, for particularly high-Ranking parties, a *potion of invisibility*. Don't go overboard, though!

1 sq. = 2 yds.



Key:

- | | | | | | |
|---|----------|---|------------------|---|------------|
|  | tree |  | light vegetation |  | orc sniper |
|  | boulders |  | dense vegetation | | |

31. KEEP YOUR HEADS DOWN

Although the orc is a lone Extra, he could end up killing multiple player characters if given too many boons.

TACTICS

The initial encounter occurs at Medium Range, the sniper has Marksman, and he's well-camouflaged. He opens fire on the most visible character once miniatures are placed on the map. He has the Drop on his first shot. Note that although the party may not detect the orc for some time, a successful first shot clearly indicates there is a sniper present. Hence, the Drop continues to apply only if the sniper can outflank the heroes and attack from a direction they are not expecting. Even if he misses with his first shot, have the party check for Surprise.

The sniper typically takes a full round to reload, thus taking advantage of his full Marksman bonus. He will only reload and fire in the same round if he feels threatened or if there is a clear shot at an exposed target.

The sniper isn't stupid—he's heavily outnumbered and only has the advantage so long as he remains unseen. Fortunately, when the attack begins, he's concealed in a hollow beneath a rock with a bush in front of him. This provides him with Heavy Cover (−4 to attack rolls and rolls to detect him). He remains in his current position until spotted.

While the orc is stationary, a hero must have line of sight *and* make a Notice roll at −4 (plus any other appropriate modifiers) as an action to detect him.

Once it is clear he's been detected (evidenced by the characters firing back, launching spells at him, or someone pointing straight at his position), he moves to a new location. He crouches (+1 to Stealth rolls), doesn't run, and makes best use of available Cover. He makes a Stealth roll each round he moves. Every hero capable of seeing or hearing him may make an opposed Notice roll as a free action to detect him. Note that if the orc is ever stationary behind total cover, he cannot be detected.

Cautious heroes who spot the orc may not reveal the fact. Instead, they may play the sniper at his own game, making use of Cover to sneak up unseen. Unless a character has disappeared behind an obstacle which blocks line of sight, this is impossible—the orc can see him, so Stealth is pointless. After a character vanishes from his view, though, the orc must make an opposed Notice vs. Stealth roll as normal to spot the character.

The GM may limit the encounter by having the orc fire a handful of shots and then withdraw. Unless the party tracks him down, they will likely never discover who attacked them.

TERRAIN

Dense Vegetation: The dense vegetation is difficult ground and characters cannot run through it. The first square of vegetation between attacker and target (not including the attacker's square) provides Light Cover (−1), two squares is Medium Cover (−2), and three squares is Heavy Cover (−4). Beyond this visibility is blocked. At-

ORC SNIPER

The orc has the Woodsman Edge. His Stealth bonus is included in his stat block for quick reference as it's a skill he'll likely use multiple times.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8+2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Edges: Marksman, Woodsman

Gear: Leather armor (+1), short sword (Str+d6), crossbow (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d6, AP 2, 1 action to reload)

Special Abilities:

* **Size +1:** Orcs are slightly larger than humans.



WOOD WARDEN CAPTAIN

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d8, Druidism d10, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d10, Survival d10, Tracking d10

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Loyal, Orders

Edges: Agile, Arcane Background (Druid), Combat Reflexes, Command, Command Presence, Connection (Wood Wardens), Coordinated Firepower, Level Headed, Marksman, Tactician, Wood Warden, Woodsman

Gear: Leather armor (+1), long sword (Str+d8), long bow (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d6), camouflage cloak (+2 Stealth when hiding in deciduous forest)

Treasure: Worthwhile

Powers: *Barrier* (thorns), *beast friend* (song of the wild), *bolt* (sharp wooden darts), *entangle* (thorns), *healing* (herbs), *silence*, *summon elemental* (wood only), *voice on the wind* (messages carried by animals).

Special Abilities:

* **Forest Born:** Hearth elves suffer no penalties for difficult ground in forests.

* **Low Light Vision:** Elves ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

tacks that miss because of Cover are deflected away from the intended target.

Light Vegetation: This vegetation is difficult ground.

Steep Slope: The slope is difficult ground. Anyone running downhill *must* make an Agility roll at the end of their movement. With failure, they move an additional 1d2" after their intended movement. On a roll of 1, regardless of Wild Die, they slip and fall prone after the additional movement.

Stream: The stream is difficult ground. Stealth rolls to move quietly in the stream are at −2.

Trees: The trunks provide Cover (+6 Heavy Armor).

32. RAIN OF STONES

Rank: Seasoned

This encounter takes place at a travel tower, and can be run almost anywhere in the Hearthlands.

Travel towers are the backbone of the Hearthlands' trade network, providing shelter for weary travelers, a safe place to sleep, and basic provisions for the needy. In return for free access, the Roadwardens, who operate and maintain the towers, ask only that visitors leave a small donation. All travel towers contain a lock-box with a slit in the top firmly embedded into an inner wall for this purpose.

While the outside terrain may vary, travel towers are constructed to a standard design. Hence, the interior map can be used for any travel tower.

Another tiring day of travel draws to a close. The sun has yet to hit the horizon, but the temperature is already quickly dropping. Indications point to a cloudless night, meaning there will likely be a frost by morning. Ahead you spy the outline of a most welcome sight—a travel tower.

Judging by the thick plume of smoke belching from the chimney, not only is someone already making the place home, but they have a roaring fire going.

Have the party position themselves anywhere within 3" of either end of the map (their choice). Each hero must then make a Notice roll. Those who succeed see hulking figures, over a dozen feet tall, emerge through the smoke onto the roof. Deal the giants and characters who spotted them an action card. Other heroes must wait until the next round before receiving cards.

MONSTERS

The hulking figures are cliff giants. They wandered

onto the road by accident and followed it out of sheer curiosity. They came across the travel tower several hours ago. A mixture of interest and desire for somewhere warm to sleep caused them to venture inside. Finding the tall but cramped "cave" to their liking, they promptly gathered up large stones from the surrounding land and stuck them on the roof, ready to use against would-be "cave thieves."

Since their arrival, they've managed to devour all the supplies, including a large quantity of ale (not enough to get a giant drunk, though). Finding the fire already lit by a previous occupant who, thanks to the Norns, left an hour before the giants arrived, and knowing the principal that fires burn things and create warmth, they promptly threw everything combustible into the hearth.

❶ **Cliff Giant (1 per 2 heroes)**

OPTIONS

For more advanced parties, the giants may be replaced with larger numbers of orcs or goblins. Have the defenders fire bows through the narrow windows to grant them Heavy Cover (−4), thus forcing the party to make a dash across open country or suffer withering volleys of arrows.

TACTICS

Too stupid (and slightly tipsy) to wait until their opponents are at optimum range, the giants rushed up the stairs to the roof as soon as they spied the party.

Each round, they grab a rock (a free action) and chuck it at the nearest hero, thinking nothing of range, poor lighting, or aim. The rocks aren't as large as the giants normally prefer, and so inflict less damage. However, they travel farther!

The giants begin standing, and thus have reduced Cover. The giants crouch behind the battlements only after being Shaken (assuming they don't go berserk).

If a giant goes berserk for any reason, it forgets about throwing stones and leaps off of the roof, ripping its club from its belt as it falls. It takes no damage from the short drop (by giant standards), though this counts as an action.

Once on the ground, it wades into melee widely swinging its club. Although as dumb as mud, non-berserk cliff giants know to avoid a comrade's club and thus they rarely fight side-by-side in the open. However, a berserk giant forgets about this. Thus, there is a good chance the idiots will accidentally club each other to death. A hero wishing to lure a giant into his comrade's club-arc can make a Taunt roll. With success, the giant moves toward him, placing itself adjacent to the character in a square of the hero's choosing.

Should the heroes gain entrance to the tower, the gi-

CLIFF GIANT

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Swimming d8, Throwing d6, Tracking d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

Gear: Club (Str+d6), thrown rock (Range: 6/12/24; Damage: Str+d6)

Special Abilities:

- * **Berserk:** As well as going berserk when Shaken or wounded, cliff giants go berserk if they are victims of a successful Smarts Trick.
- * **Clueless:** −2 to Common Knowledge rolls.
- * **Fearless:** Cliff giants are too stupid to be Intimidated or subjected to Fear.
- * **Improved Sweep:** Cliff giants can attack all adjacent foes at no penalty.
- * **Size +3:** Cliff giants average 12' in height.

32. RAIN OF STONES

ants remain on the roof, throwing stones at anyone venturing onto the summit. Only when engaged in melee do they snatch up their clubs and strike back.

Note the giants are unable to use Sweep on the stairwells due to the length of their arms.

TERRAIN

Chimney: The chimney stands 2" (12 feet) above the height of the roof. It can be used for Cover (+4 Heavy Armor). A standing giant gains Medium Cover (-2) from the chimney.

Doors: The door to the tower has been barricaded from the inside with a pile of rocks. If trying to force it open, its Toughness is effectively 14 (Toughness 10 for hacking it down). All other doors are Toughness 10.

Lighting: Twilight is nearing and lighting conditions are Dim (-1).

Smoke: The column of thick, black smoke fills a 1" square and rises some 30' before it dissipates. Any attacks through the smoke are made at an additional -2 penalty.

Stairs: The giants treat as the narrow stairs as difficult ground. Human-sized heroes suffer no penalty.

Travel Tower: A low wall surrounds the roof. This

provides standing giants with only Light Cover (-1) but confers Medium Cover (-2) to a crouching giant.

CONTINUATION

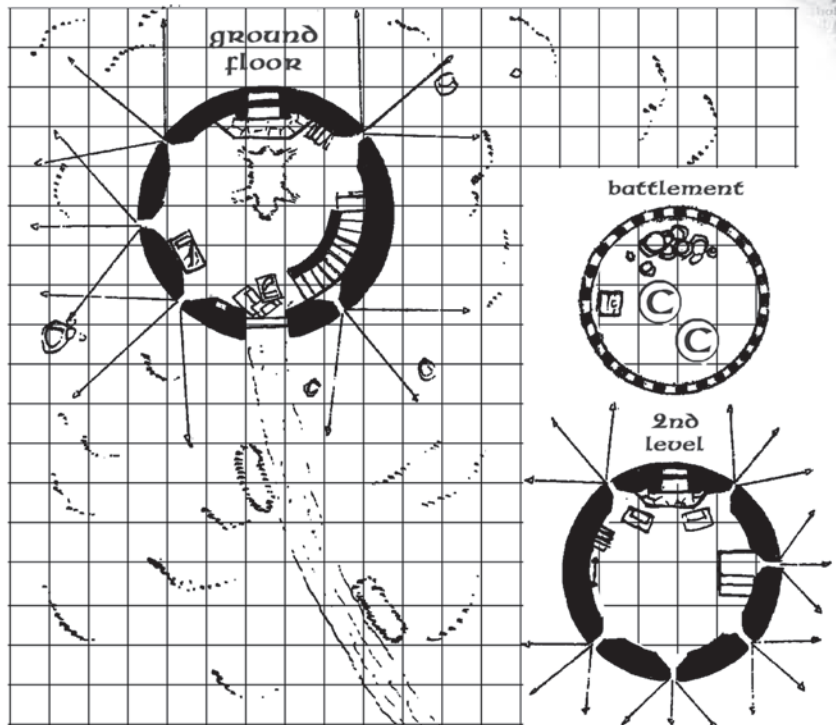
Once the giants are defeated, the heroes quickly discover there are no provisions in the tower, nor any usable furniture. The raging fire dies down after an hour, though the temperature remains comfortably warm all night if the door wasn't destroyed in the battle.

Fortunately there are no other corpses, meaning the giants haven't slaughtered any innocent travelers during their brief occupation.

This particular travel tower is a frequent base for a Roadwarden. The Roadwarden returns an hour before dawn. On seeing the giants' corpses (assuming the heroes dumped them outside), he enters and demands to know what happened. Once informed, he asks the characters if they'll help him scour the surrounding land for any more giants. Whether there are others nearby, perhaps searching for the few the party killed, is up to the GM.

Heroes who make a donation of more than 200 gs to the Roadwarden to help repair the tower earn +1 Glory. They also make a friend they can call on in the future.

1 sq. = 2 yds.



Key:

- | | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|----------|--------------|
| ⊙ cliff giant | 🛏 bed | 🪑 chair | 🚪 trap door |
| 🪨 rocks | 🗄 storage cabinet | 🪜 ladder | ➔ arrow path |

33. COLD REVENGE

Rank: Novice

Seated on the road, his face buried in his hands, is a heavy set human male. His build and clothing mark him as a Saxa. A short spear is stuck point first in the ground beside him.

On being hailed or if the party approaches, he slowly rises to his feet, using the spear for support. A patch of dark red is clearly visible on his tunic. If questioned, he tells the party his story.

"My name is Hrolf Haraldsunu, and I'm a farmer. Orcs attacked my stead two days ago. My wife and children were slain before my eyes, then I too was stabbed. Perhaps the orcs thought me dead, perhaps the gods spared me. All I know is that I awoke several hours later, outside in the freezing rain. Much to my shame I ran away, unable to fight back against such a board. Now, while I sit here, the orcs defile my family's remains and my home.

"Are you men of valor and honor? Will you help this farmer drive off the orcs so he can bury his

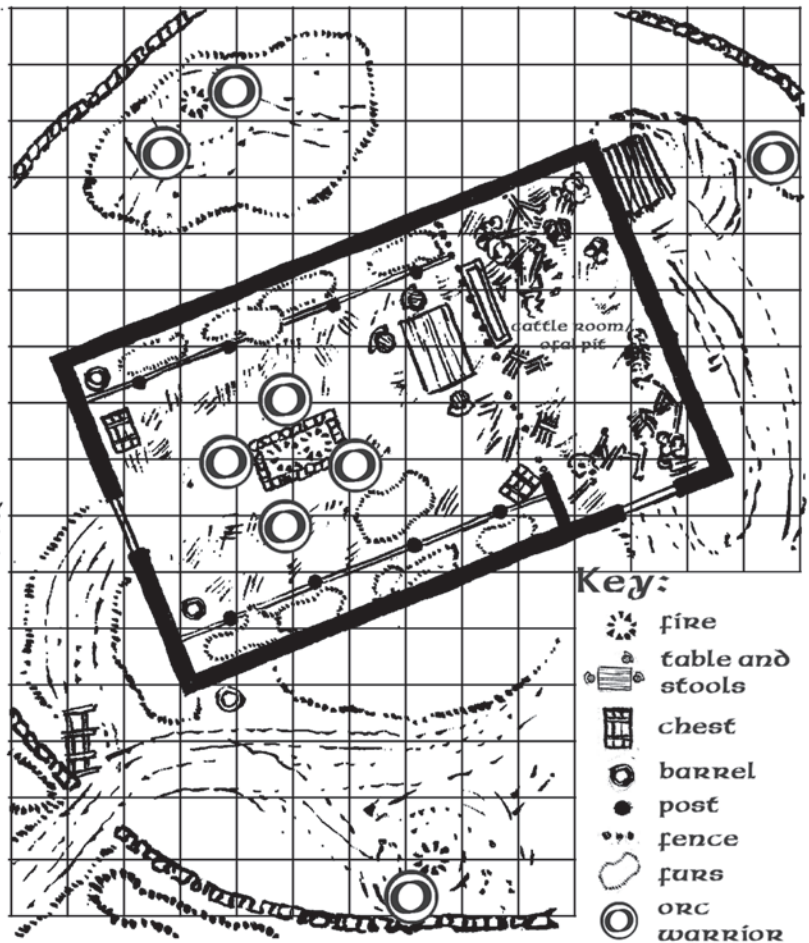
kin with the respect they deserve? I am not a rich man, but my home is my own. If you will swear an oath in the gods' names to kill the orcs and help bury my family, I will bequeath you my farm. It is, or was, prosperous enough to support a family, and would earn you a comfortable living. I cannot reside within those walls again."

Anyone checking Hrolf's injury discovers it is still fresh and seeping blood. A Healing roll fixes up the wound, which though deep is not apparently life-threatening.

While performing the healing, the character notices a silver amulet in the shape of Thunor's hammer hanging from Hrolf's neck. He says it is an heirloom. If no one gives Hrolf first aid, then he should take out the amulet and kiss it ("for luck") before the attack begins. Whatever happens, the party must see the token.

Once patched up, Hrolf draws a sketch in the mud of the stead layout. Naturally, he has no idea how many orcs might be present, but he claims there are no more than a dozen raiders.

1 sq. = 2 yds.



MONSTERS

Hrolf is almost who he says he is. He and his family did indeed live in a small stead, and the stead was indeed attacked by orcs. But the raid did not occur a few days ago—it happened three years ago. Angered that his family's bones remain unburied, Hrolf has returned as a genganger—a form of undead seeking to set right a wrong. Gengangers have no ties to Hela and are not considered evil (though the superstitious masses avoid them like the red pox nonetheless).

Although the attack occurred many years ago, the isolated location of the stead encouraged the orcs to remain and use it as a base of operations for other raids.

Ⓜ **Hrolf Haraldsunu, Genganger:** If the party is Veteran Rank or higher, Hrolf is a Wild Card.

Ⓜ **Orc Warriors (2 per hero):** Instead of adding more warriors for higher Ranked parties, other options include an ogre-herd and ogre, one berserker, one elite warrior, or one rider and dire wolf mount per Wild Card. In exchange for four warriors the GM could add an orc chieftain, drummer, or priest. If the GM wants to up the number of foes without dramatically changing the threat level of the encounter, swap two orc warriors for three goblin warriors. All stats are in the *Hellfrost Bestiary*.

TACTICS

Four orc warriors are on guard outside the stead. All are bored stiff (no one ever comes to the stead) and so count as inactive sentries. A stealthy party can easily get the Drop on them.

The remainder of the band is indoors, taking shelter from the weather and enjoying roasted rabbit. Again, they are inactive, being thoroughly engrossed in their dining. If the sentries are killed quietly, the party can gain the Drop and Surprise on the dining orcs. Should an alarm be raised, though, the orcs grab nearby weapons (an action) and rush to investigate.

Hrolf's major useful power is his ability to summon mist, which he uses to best aid the party. He passes this off as an effect of the relic he inherited—the silver amulet he wears.

It is **very** important that Hrolf disappear from the heroes' sight and doesn't return before they discover the skeletons! Should he be killed, his remains vanish the *instant* they are out of the characters' field of vision.

TERRAIN

Doors: Toughness 10.

Fire Pit: Anyone entering the pit suffers 2d10 damage and has a chance of catching fire.

Furniture: The furniture counts as difficult ground.

Perimeter Walls: The walls are 4' high and can be used as Cover (+8 Heavy Armor). Jumping them takes an action (but no die roll). A running hero may make an Agility roll to hurdle them as a free action. If he fails he is Shaken.

CONTINUATION

The party can find no sign of Hrolf until they check the back room of the house. Several skeletons gather dust in the corner—two adults and three children. The largest skeleton wears a silver amulet in the shape of Thunor's hammer. If the heroes bury the bones as promised, Hrolf rests in peace. Should they renege, Hrolf returns as a genganger to haunt them. Since he can't truly be slain, he's a low level but persistent foe.

Hrolf's farm now belongs to the party (the word of a genganger is valid in law), whether they want it or not. It requires 500 gs of work to make it habitable and clear the fields of weeds, but once done it generates 500 gs of income per year, so long as someone is present to tend the crops and such like.

If the new owners accept tenant farmers, they earn 300 gs a year for doing absolutely nothing. This income is additional to any from the Rich or Filthy Rich Edges. Selling the farm nets a one-off payment of 2,000 gs.

HROLF HARALDSUNU, GENGANGER

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Gear: Short spear (Str+d6, Reach 1)

Special Abilities:

- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Mist:** A genganger can summon a mist to conceal it passing. This functions as the *obscure* power. The genganger's vision is not affected by the mist it summons.
- * **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison.
- * **Vengeful:** So long as its vengeance goes unsated, a revenant cannot be truly slain. No matter what damage its body takes, the thing returns 1d6 days later to carry on its quest. Once it has finished its task, however, it disappears in a cloud of mist. A genganger can be *banished*.

ORC WARRIORS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Gear: Leather armor (+1), medium shield (+1 Parry), short sword, axe, or mace (Str+d6), bow (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6)

Special Abilities:

- * **Size +1:** Orcs are slightly larger than humans.

34. PAYING THE FERRYMAN

NOVICE

Rank: Novice

From the mighty rapids of Crystalflow to tranquil streams a foot wide, Rassilon has many waterways. Some of these are bridged, others forded. Numerous ferry services operate along the banks. Of these, few are private businesses. Local villages or, in more remote areas, the local noble's representative run most ferry services. The party's route requires them to cross a river.

En route to the river, a lone, mounted Roadwarden hails the party. He asks if they have seen any riders in the last few hours. The characters have seen no one. Queried about his interest in horsemen, the Roadwarden states that there are orcs in the vicinity. He has sent word to several comrades, who should be meeting him here before dusk.

Before the party departs, he asks which way they are headed. When told, he replies that route takes them to the ferry. He asks them to tell the ferryman to expect riders who will require immediate transportation by nightfall.

A few miles later, the party reaches the river. The only sign of habitation is a small shack. A thin column of smoke drifts lazily from the chimney. Sitting outside, smoking a long-stemmed pipe, is a gnarled old man. A short spear rests across his lap. As the heroes approach, he nods in recognition of the customers but makes no verbal greeting. Nor does he rise to his feet.

The ferryman, who goes by the name of Sigmund Ox-Arms, charges 5 silver scields for bipeds and 2 gold scields for mounts (10 gs for pygmy mammoths). His rates are non-negotiable, as payment goes to the local landowner and any shortfall is taken from Sigmund's wages. If the encounter occurs in the Hearthlands, the noble has an agreement with the Hearth Knights and Roadwardens to provide them free transportation. The characters must first prove they are members of either organization and then sign a register to verify their claim.

Should the characters protest about the cost, Sigmund points downriver and smiles. "There's a bridge

about three days' walk, if you can't afford the ferry," he says humorlessly.

If told to expect riders, he mumbles quietly. *"Always someone wants a trip across the river at night."*

The ferry is simple wooden platform with no sides or safety measures. Sigmund warns the characters not to stray too near the edge. A long rope stretches across the river, passing through two iron loops firmly fixed to the ferry. There is one positioned at each end. Movement across the river is accomplished by hauling on the rope. Under Sigmund's power, the ferry moves a steady 1" (2 yards) per round. He refuses all offers of aid.

Once the heroes are ready, Sigmund ushers them onto the ferry. He grabs the rope and begins pulling. Foot by foot, the ferry begins its short journey. Sigmund doesn't lead an interesting life, so he has little to say about his affairs, and is more interested in hearing about the wider world.

He mentions in passing that he has a daughter, Ethel, who lives in the first village across the far bank, whom he doesn't get to see as often as he likes. For the curious, he's been operating the ferry all his life, as his father did before him, and his father before him. The gods gave him two daughters, so there's no one to carry on the family business when he dies.

As the ferry reaches the halfway mark, Sigmund slumps to the deck, clutching his throat. A long, black-shafted arrow has passed through his neck. The old ferryman is dead. On the far bank, the heroes can see a number of orc warriors brandishing bows. It's time to deal action cards.

MONSTERS

The far bank is occupied by a small band of orcs. Their arrival here at the same time as the heroes is not entirely coincidental. After hearing from spies that a band of Roadwardens was operating in the region and actively hunting down marauding orcs, they put two and two together to make five, and assumed that the party is actually the Roadwardens. The orcs think that striking now, with the heroes in the middle of the river, will prevent the party from following hot on their heels if they make it to the far bank.

M Orc Warriors (2 per hero): Instead of adding more warriors for higher Ranked parties, other options include an ogre-herd and ogre, one berserker, one elite warrior, or one rider and dire wolf mount in place of two additional warriors. In exchange for four warriors the GM could add an orc chieftain, drummer, or priest. All stats are in the *Hellfrost Bestiary*.

TACTICS

The orcs begin by firing their bows at the exposed

ORC WARRIORS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Gear: Leather armor (+1), medium shield (+1 Parry), short sword, axe, or mace (Str+d6), bow (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6)

Special Abilities:

* **Size +1:** Orcs are slightly larger than humans.

34. PAYING THE FERRYMAN

passengers. If the party has shields, the orcs take the time to Aim. They're overconfident and don't bother seeking cover until a quarter of their number are slain.

When the ferry gets within 4" of the far bank, one orc equipped with an axe runs toward the ferry's rope, intent on severing it. Should he succeed, the ferry drifts 3" downriver each round. If it collides with a rock, everyone onboard must make an Agility roll at -2 or fall into the river. The ferry is smashed in the impact.

TERRAIN

Bog: The bog is difficult ground.

Cable Ferry: Moving the ferry requires a Strength roll as an action. Only one attempt per round may be made, but multiple characters can work together using the Cooperative Roll rules. This is achieved by Holding and then acting with the lead character. Each success or raise moves the ferry 1" across the river, to a maximum of 3" per round.

Low Boulders: These provide Cover (-1) to standing orcs. The low boulders are difficult ground.

River: The water is deep and fast flowing. At the end of his movement, a swimmer is automatically swept 2" downstream. Anyone swept into a rock suffers 2d6 damage.

River Banks: The banks are steep and slippery and are difficult ground except where noted by the rocky cutting. When a swimmer moves adjacent to the bank he may make an Agility roll as a free action to grab onto a clump of weeds or a rock. With success, he may haul himself up the bank. On a failure, he remains in the river and is swept 2" downstream.

Rope: The thick rope has Toughness 12.

CONTINUATION

The party may wish to visit the nearby village (a two hour march) and pass on the news of Sigmund's death to his daughter.

Naturally, the woman is distraught by the news, but thanks the party for telling her. She's a skilled herbalist, and rewards each party member with a healing salve. In addition, she provides the heroes collectively with two regenerative balms.

1 sq. = 2 yds.



Key:

	dense vegetation		bog		raft
	boulders		shack		ORC WARRIOR

35. THE STRANGER

Rank: Novice

Late one afternoon the party encounters a terrified peasant on the outskirts of a small village. He cowers at the party's approach, seemingly rooted to the spot with fear. A successful Notice reveals the cause of the man's terror is the appearance of the party.

If assured the heroes mean no harm, he blurts out, "*The stranger! The stranger has stolen my child!*" If the characters calm the man down he tells the following story.

"For years a mysterious figure has haunted my village. It speaks to no-one, and cannot be found abroad in daylight. We live in fear of it, calling it only 'the stranger.' We don't know if it's mortal, spirit, or demon. Every few years, the stranger steals a child or two. Infants are not taken, nor are those nearing adulthood. The children disappear, never to be seen again, and now it's taken my son!"

The village has thirty buildings (including a temple to Eostre), one hundred inhabitants, and several herds of livestock.

If the party investigates, they are given a slightly different account of the story. The local peasants know of the stranger all right, but are quick to add that it has not taken any of their children. "*Only the bad 'uns,*" they say, "*what's not quite right. And good riddance to bad*

blood. It's kinder this way, so's they don't....." The voices trail off at this point.

Some peasants say the stranger is Death, a servant of Scaetha, and that he takes the sick when they are going to die. Others have similar fanciful tales to tell.

It's clear the peasants are nervous of any line of questioning regarding the stranger. The peasants are also very quick to make sure everybody knows their family isn't one of those that has been visited. Any hero making a Smarts roll can quickly work out that the peasants all admit children have gone missing, but *none* of the families claim to have lost a child. Something doesn't add up!

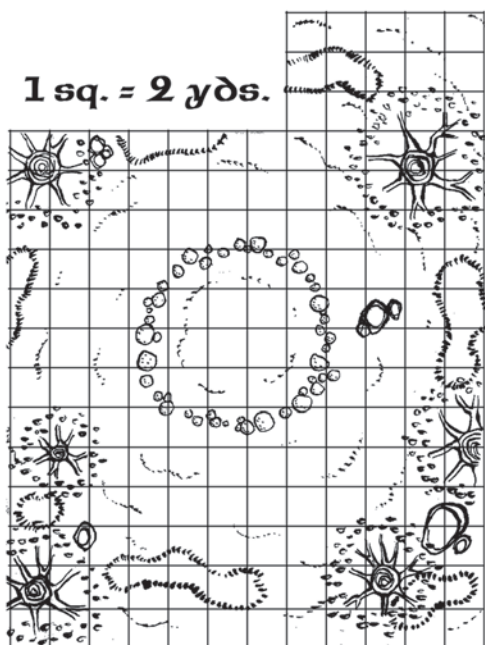
Intuitive characters sense there is some problem afoot that the villagers don't want the characters to know about. Detecting this requires a Notice roll at -2. With success, the hero realizes the villagers are trying to make it appear that everything is under control, when the opposite is true. Under all the evasions lies the ugly truth. A dozen years ago, a madman (actually a renegade fey who disguised his appearance with magic) came to the village from parts unknown. He was happy to aid anyone who came into his shack, whether they wanted a cure for a cough, sage advice, or just a roll in the hay (he was a very attractive smooth-talker). Over the years he fathered a number of children, some to unmarried girls, others to women who initially let their husbands think they were their new baby's father. After five years in the village, the madman suddenly disappeared.

Everyone in the village now knows what the madman's "activities" were, just as they know that the children being taken are those he likely fathered. But no-one wants to admit the scions of the best families in the village are bastard sons of a lunatic, and no-one is exactly sure which children he fathered. The villagers simply want to forget the whole thing.

The problem is, many of the madman's bastard children are strange. They are fine for a time, but as they near puberty, they begin displaying strange powers and acting erratically without warning. If the stranger takes them before this madness sets in, so much the better.

The peasant whom the

1 sq. = 2 yds.



Key:



heroes met on the road has lost two daughters already. The first went mad. She could make animals fall over like they were dead, and she once made everyone in the village fall asleep for a week. Nobody talks about the dreams they had during that supernatural slumber. The stranger took the second daughter before she evidenced any powers, and everyone was glad. But now the man has lost his only son, who was almost eight and hadn't gone mad. The man can't bear to let his son go, too. He didn't tell the party the whole truth out of shame, and the rest of the village desperately wishes he hadn't said anything to outsiders.

Learning any of the truth should require roleplaying or frequent Streetwise rolls. The latter suffers a penalty of -2 to begin with, but as the heroes learn more, the villagers are forced to open up. Each successive Streetwise roll to learn a new piece of important information has a +1 bonus, to a maximum of +4.

MONSTERS

Ⓜ The stranger (Fey Knight)

The stranger haunting the village is a fey knight. He was originally sent by the local faerie noble to track down the renegade and bring him back to face justice. After capturing the renegade, the knight discovered the fey had fathered children and so returned to claim them. He seeks only those who display fey traits. The children are taken to the fey realm to be raised properly and trained in their gifts. None of the children are harmed.

The knight does not know the local language, and avoids communication with the villagers. Furthermore, he does not fully know what the renegade did in the village (besides father children), so he avoids revealing himself to the villagers for fear of being killed out of retribution for some heinous crime.

ALL REVEALED

A lengthy search of the nearby woods reveals a circular growth of mushrooms. Any hero making a Knowledge (Folklore) roll at -2 or Knowledge (Fey) roll knows it is a faerie circle. Should no character have the skill, the local priest of Eostre can identify it based on its description.

Legends regarding faerie circles vary. Some claim they are entrances to the fey realm, activated by walking widdershins around the circle three times. Others say they are mysterious spots where faeries can watch the mortal world unseen. Walking widdershins forces the fey to reveal its form. In this particular case, the latter is true.

Should someone walk around the circle three times in an anticlockwise direction, the fey knight suddenly appears before the party in his radiant glory. If the heroes are friendly and quickly open dialogue, he is willing to relate his story. If they immediately decide violence is the best option, he responds in kind.

He would rather not kill all the mortals, especially since they could be useful to him. Instead, he seeks to bind one character to him through his Force Servitude

THE STRANGER (FEY KNIGHT)

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d12, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d8, Riding d12, Taunt d10

Charisma: +6; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 11; **Toughness:** 9 (3)

Hindrances: Code of Honor

Edges: Attractive, Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Improved Arcane Resistance, Improved Block, Improved Frenzy, Improved Sweep, Level Headed, Noble

Gear: Plate mail (+3), closed helm (+3), long sword (Str+d8), medium shield (+1 Parry)

Special Abilities:

- * **Force Servitude:** Fey knights can use the *puppet* power, with Spirit as their arcane skill. They have the Spell Finesse (Arcane and Range) Edges for this purpose only. A knight uses its power to acquire a squire, but may only have one squire at a time. The victim is bound to obey the knight's every command, gaining no rolls to escape if forced to perform a task he considers morally wrong. A squire may try to break free only once per year, on the anniversary of his forced servitude. Killing the fey (which the squire cannot do) immediately frees the squire.
- * **Righteous Fury:** If an opponent successfully uses a Trick against a fey knight, the knight gains +2 to Fighting rolls against the opponent for the rest of the encounter.

power, and kill the rest. The party can end the bloodshed at any time by surrendering, at which point a bound character is released from service.

THE END

A further nine children were fathered by the rogue fey, though until they begin to show signs of their heritage the knight cannot say for sure which are fey-born and which pure human. One solution is to escort the fey knight to the village so he can inform the locals of what has transpired. He demands the party swear an oath to protect him from retribution before agreeing to this.

Although somewhat shocked, the villagers are also relieved to discover the truth. While giving up their children would be abhorrent to most parents, the villagers are quite happy for the fey to take any that display fey blood, provided the knight promises that the children will not be harmed. Quick thinking heroes may decide the citizens require restitution for their loss. After some thought, the fey agrees. He offers to speak to a glaistig, a type of female fey that watches over and protects cattle and herders, with the intent of securing her services. In return for their children, the villagers' herds will prosper and the families benefit financially.

36. THE HAUNTED TOWER

Rank: Novice

This encounter is best set in the northern or central Hearthlands. The party can begin this encounter one of two ways. First, they seek shelter in an abandoned tower for the night. Second, they are hired by villagers living near an old tower to investigate the rumors of its haunting. The locals want to demolish the tower and reuse the stone, but are afraid of offending any ghosts.

Many different stories exist regarding the tower, but all agree on one point—the place is haunted. Some say that the ghosts of Saxa who died in the Blizzard War dwell there, some say that the dead Anari who conquered this land inhabit it, and a few even mention spirits preying either of those cultures. Brave villagers have entered the tower before, but all fled after seeing strange things and hearing weird noises. No-one has stayed the night there.

The aim of this encounter is to confuse the party and lead them to believe the tower is indeed haunted. Since there is no actual ghost to offend, the tower can be safely torn down and the stone reused. However, since the stones have memories, ghostly visions may be seen in the new buildings.

MONSTERS

The tower is haunted, but not by a true spirit. Having endured centuries of existence and been involved in several key points of history, the tower has developed a sort of psyche, memories of all that have gone before, but memories that can interact with the living. The tower is not alive, nor does it have any stats.

THE AGES

The tower was occupied in four important historical periods and consists of five alternate reality levels. These are referred to as layers. The rooms have a simple keyword title on the map dependant on the time period. The GM is left to describe the actual contents of each chamber and its occupants.

Layer One: The first is the modern age. The tower is abandoned and deserted.

Layer Two exists at the time of the Saxa Rebellion, when it served as a headquarters for the local Saxa army. Sample occupants include nobles, military commanders, huscarls, and messengers.

Layer Three is set around the time of the Blizzard War, when it was occupied by a frost giant general and his orc commanders. Other monsters may include any sentient Hellfrost beast.

Layer Four goes back to the time of the Liche-Priest. Clerics of Scaetha used the tower in this era. Clerics and paladins are the most common occupant, but there may be healers and nobles present as well.

Layer Five relates to the Convocation of Elemental-

ists, who raised the structure shortly after their founding. Mages of varying grades will be present.

The five layers are held in the tower's psyche and exist simultaneously. At regular intervals those of weak will can slip between realities. This is where it gets a little complicated. Try to imagine the layers as a dream state rather than actual physical realities.

Each time a hero ascends or descends a flight of stairs secretly make a Spirit roll for him. With failure, he slips through time. Draw a card from the action deck. A red card indicates he moves forward one layer (to a minimum of the current age). If he is already in the modern era, then he stays in Layer One. A black card moves the hero back an age (to a maximum of the Convocation era). If already in this age, he moves forward to Layer Four. On a Joker, the character moves forward or backward two layers—draw a second card to determine which way. A second Joker shoves the character three layers—a third card must be drawn to determine the direction. Heroes shifting through time have no indication anything has happened to them. If a victim leaves the tower from any layer he is automatically transported back to Layer One.

RULES FOR LAYERS

Anyone who enters a layer is not physically transported through time. Instead, only their senses enter the alternate era. The victim sees, hears, tastes, smells, and feels only what exists in the specific layer he has entered. A victim can be perceived by another character only if that character is in the same layer as the victim, or in Layer One, which the “victim” never physically leaves.

OCCUPANTS

Within each era the tower is occupied by appropriate creatures as determined by the GM, who will need the *Hellfrost Bestiary* to determine stats.

Creatures within a specific layer can interact only with a hero in that layer. This may cause those in Layer One some confusion as they hear half of a conversation or see their friend (who is ignoring them completely) fighting an invisible and apparently intangible opponent.

Unless the occupants are automatically hostile to the heroes, such as in Layer Three, they assume the heroes are visitors, messengers, part of their army, etc. A hero is very much real to them, and they should interact in a believable way. For instance, if a Saxa warrior enters Layer Two, he may be questioned on how a battle goes, asked if he is a volunteer, or confused with a commander they are expecting to help devise a battle plan. An Anari, on the other hand, is probably going to be arrested as a spy (or maybe a collaborator).

The characters may meet historically important figures or learn facts of use in later adventures, but they

36. THE HAUNTED TOWER

cannot alter history. The layers are only memories, and events have already come to fruition.

OBJECTS

Anyone who takes an item from Layer One retains the item in a different layer, but the reverse is not true. Items in alternate layers disappear when an adventurer switches layers.

Characters in Layer One can be harmed by heroes in different layers only by accident and then only by gear the hero took with him from Layer One. Weapons or other objects in an alternate layer exist only in the bearer's mind. Thus, if the adventurer picks up a short sword from Layer Two and stabs an area containing a friend (who he can't see, remember), no harm is caused. The only thing the character on Layer One sees is a friend play acting an attack. But a swing with the trusty long sword he brought into the tower would cause normal damage.

Items that exist in multiple realities (a door, for example) can be affected by people in any layer. Whilst those in Layer One see a character moving the object, those in an alternate layer may think that the place is haunted, for

they see the object seeming to move by itself. However, if the victim chops the door into pieces it has no effect on the mundane world unless he uses an object from Layer One. The destroyed object exists only in the mind of the characters in the alternate layer.

INJURIES

If a hero in a different layer is hurt by those in Layer One, he sees no wound (the physical wound being in the real world, as it were). He does, however, feel the blow and may be otherwise affected by it (e.g. knocked over). He also suffers wound penalties as his brain registers the pain (but not blood loss or the cause of the pain).

If a victim takes damage from an occupant of an historical layer (imaginary or a fellow player character), characters in Layer One see him flinch or knocked back, but they see no evidence of wounds or what caused the distress. The victim can discern his wounds and takes wound penalties as normal. These are induced by his mind, which is telling him he is hurt. If a character "dies" whilst in a layer other than Layer One he falls unconscious as if he rolled a success on the Incapacitation Table and is automatically returned to Layer One.



1st floor



2nd floor



3rd floor



4th floor



5th floor

Key:

Room	Layer 2	Layer 3	Layer 4	Layer 5
1	Guard Room	Guard Room	Stores	Study Hall
2	Officers' Quarters	Orcs' Quarters	Paladins' Quarters	Apprentices' Quarters
3	Planning Room	Temple to Thrzym	Clerics' Quarters	Study Hall
4	Shrine to Tiw	Planning Room	Shrine to Scaetha	Shrine to Maera
5	Commander's Quarters	Frost Giant's Quarters	Planning Room	Maegisters' Quarters

37. CHILDREN OF THE CORN

Rank: Seasoned

On the distant outskirts of a village are fields of towering corn, stalks heavy with ripening cobs. A farmer carrying a pitchfork (treat as a long spear) is seen by the edge of the field, calling out the name Gorm. Cautiously, the man steps into the corn and disappears from view. Moment later, his pitchfork comes flying out and embeds itself in the ground. The man does not reappear.

If the party enters the corn in search of the farmer, they discover his body a few yards inside. It has clearly been hacked to death by a bladed weapon. A dog's corpse lies deeper in the corn.

MONSTERS

During the summer months, a fungal colony tunneled into the center of the cornfield, safe in the knowledge their presence would not be detected before harvest. There they patiently waited for the crops to ripen, whereupon they intended to steal the lot and carry it to their subterranean lair.

Unfortunately, the farmer who owns the field was out walking his dog when the hound bolted into the field, snapping and growling. Most fungals are passive, quick to flee if disturbed, but the presence of a spore priest has

given these particular specimens a martial bent and they zealously protect "their" bounty.

Ⓜ Fungal Spore Priest (1 per four heroes)

Ⓜ Fungals (3 per two heroes)

TACTICS

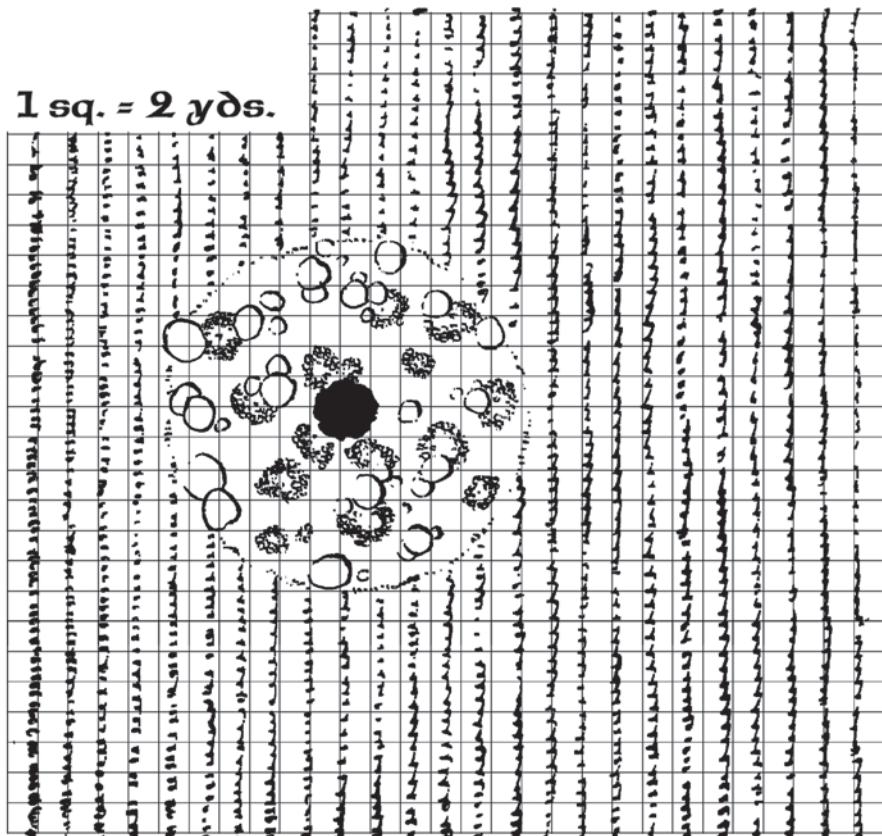
The colony is currently above ground, the spore priest surrounded by several guards. When sounds of combat reach him, he launches his armor spores as an action. Next round he uses his heightened reflexes spores. Suitably prepared, he then orders his guards to hunt down and kill the intruders. He moves to Cover behind one of the towering mushrooms.

If attackers enter his field of view, he casts *stun*, quickly followed by *entangle* the next round. He then moves to within 1" of a foe and attacks using his sickle staff.

The fungals may be belligerent, but they're not suicidal. Once half the fungals are incapacitated, the priest issues a general retreat. He tries to activate *barrier* to prevent the attackers reaching the entrance to the fungal tunnel. Once enough fungals are in range, he fires off his heightened speed spores to aid their escape. He then flees into the tunnel, sealing it with another *barrier* spell.

Initially, the fungals nearest the heroes flee back to-

1 sq. = 2 yds.



Key:



fungus



hole



mushroom



corn

ward their lair. When they see the priests' guards coming the other way or they reach the clearing, whichever occurs first, they turn and head back the other way to engage the characters in combat.

Each fungal has one use of spores per day, and should use it wisely. For instance, a lone fungal that is outnumbered might use berserk spores and then run away, leaving the enraged victim to turn on themselves. If escape seems unlikely, or if reinforcements are close at hand, then paralysis spores are a better option. Those trying to escape use choking or blinding spores to thwart their pursuers.

TERRAIN

Corn: The corn stands 10' tall and is difficult ground. The corn is flammable. In the event an area catches fire, roll a 1d6 at the start of each round. On a 4+, all adjacent squares ignite. Anyone entering a fire takes 2d6 damage and risks catching on fire. The wind blows from the south. Place the thin end of a Cone Template in the middle of each area of fire with the wide end oriented north. This represents smoke. Attacks through the smoke are at -2.

Giant Mushrooms: These stand 6' tall and provide Cover (+4 Armor).

Mushrooms: Difficult ground. A hero who rolls a 1 on his running die in the patches slips and falls prone.

Tunnel Entrance: The hole is 12' across and the tunnel slopes sharply downward.

Visibility: Defenders have Medium Cover (-2, +2 Armor) from attacks through a single line of corn. Attacks through two lines grant Heavy Cover (-4; +4 Armor). Beyond this, visibility is blocked as if the defender had total cover.

CONTINUATION

With the fungals defeated on the surface, the party may wish to follow escapees down the tunnel or simply see where it leads. This could open up a whole new adventure of spongy, fungus-lined tunnels and caverns full of towering mushrooms (not to mention some spore-producing patches of fungi).



SPORE PRIEST

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Gear: Sickle-staff (Str+d6, Reach 1, 2-hands)

Special Abilities:

* **Plant:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called Shots do no extra damage; immune to piercing attacks; ignore wounds penalties.

* **Powers:** *Barrier* (wall of fungus), *boost/lower*

trait (unique spores), *disease* (fungal infection), *entangle* (sticky strands of fungus), *fatigue* (spores), *stun* (spore cloud).

* **Size +1:** Spore priests average 8' tall.

* **Spores:** Three times a day fungal priests can release a more potent cloud of spores than their lesser kin. The spores fill a Medium Burst Template centered on the fungal. Only fungals within the template are affected. Each cloud contains only one type of spore. The effects last for five rounds. The fungal need not remain in the template to retain the bonus. GMs may either pick the type of spore or roll a d4 and consult the table below. Spore priests are unaffected by these spores. Effects are non-cumulative.

PRIEST SPORES

d4 Spore

1 **Heightened Reflexes:** Fungals redraw action cards of 5 or lower.

2 **Focused Mind:** Fungals become immune to Smarts Tricks and Tests of Will.

3 **Armor:** The spores stick to fungals and harden rapidly, granting +1 Armor.

4 **Heightened Speed:** Fungals gain +2 Pace and roll a d8 running die

FUNGAL

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: Sickle (Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

* **Plant:** +2 to recover from Shaken; no effect from Called Shots; immune to piercing attacks.

* **Spores:** Usable once per day. The spores fill a Medium Burst Template centered on the fungal and lasts until its next action. Any non-fungal in the cloud must make a Vigor roll. Pick one from below or roll a d4.

FUNGAL SPORES

d4 Spore

1 **Paralysis:** Paralyzed for 2d6 rounds (Parry 2).

2 **Choking:** Shaken for 1d6 rounds.

3 **Blinding:** -6 to Trait rolls involving sight and Parry becomes 2. May make an Agility roll each round as an action to rub the spores clear.

4 **Berserk:** The victim goes berserk (as the Edge) and attacks the nearest creature with a Wild Attack. If there are multiple targets available, determine randomly. Calming down is as per the Edge.

38. BURY THEM DEEP

Rank: Seasoned

On the edge of a small copse a man with a shovel (Unroth ap-Perion) is patting down soil on three mounds. With a heavy sigh, he steps back to survey his work. The man is startled if the heroes call out or approach quietly.

"By the gods!" he exclaims. "You gave me a fright. How can I help you? You don't look like you'll be needing a warm bed in the earth any time soon."

If the party asks what he's doing, the man's shoulders slump and he hangs his head.

He indicates the three mounds. "One each for my wife and two children," he murmurs. "Taken before their time by the spite of Vali. Our village lies yonder, over the next hill. Red pox broke out, carried by rats. Before the healers could do their work my family was infected. Fear not," he adds quickly, "Eira's blessing has removed the taint from us now. My wife loved this spot, and her last request was to be laid to rest here."

"Strangers," the man says, straightening, "now my task is done I must fetch the priestess to bless the graves. Would you wait here until I return? Strangers you may be, but until Scaetha's heralds come I would prefer someone was at my family's side. I should be gone no longer than an hour."

If a cleric in the party (of any benevolent deity) suggests he might perform a blessing, the man is overjoyed.

GRAVE WOLF

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities:

- * **Fleet Footed:** Wolves roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
- * **Go for the Throat:** Wolves instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's least-armored location.
- * **Immunity:** Immune to disease and poison.
- * **Infected Bite:** Str+d4. Anyone wounded by the bite must make a Vigor roll or suffer infection. Infected wounds can be healed only through natural Healing.
- * **Size -1:** Wolves are relatively small.

He promises the party hospitality at his house for three days as reward for the kindness.

MONSTERS

Whether a character begins the ceremony or the man jogs back to town, the heroes barely register the sound of wolves before the shaggy pack bursts through the copse. Have each character make a Notice roll. Those who succeed recognize them as grave wolves, carrion eaters whose bite carries vile infections. The freshly interred corpses have attracted the pack.

Unroth is only present if a hero is performing the blessing. He fights using Wild Attacks in a frenzied bid to protect his family's earthly remains.

Ⓜ **Grave Wolves (3 per two heroes)**

Ⓜ **Unroth ap-Perion:** All Traits d6 (Parry 5, Toughness 5). He is armed with a hand axe (Str+d6).

TACTICS

The pack is starving. While they have no desire to dine on the heroes' flesh, the party stands between them and their next meal. The wolves base their judgment of foes on size and strength. Hence, heroes with high Strength or who are Brawny or Obese are selected as the most dangerous opponents. At least two wolves maul each hero in a bid to bring them down quickly.

TERRAIN

The wolves are already out of the copse and into open ground by the time the heroes can react. They begin 12" from the heroes. Aside from a few small shrubs and the grave mounds, neither of which hampers movement, the terrain is open.

CONTINUATION

Unroth, if he survives the fight or returns with the cleric to see the wolf corpses, thanks the heroes profusely. He invites them back to his village. The local priestess of Eira brews a batch of regenerative herbal balms to help soothe the party's infected wounds.

While in the village, the priestess tells them of the red pox infection. She is convinced the rats were deliberately sent into the village; for, while small, it lies on a local trade route and many traders pass through its gates. Had she not returned early from visiting her superiors in the nearest town and quickly moved to isolate the infected, the plague may have spread further.

She believes a cleric of Vali is operating nearby. She offers the party 1,000 gs of alchemical devices (their choice of Seasoned or lower spells from Eira's spell list) if they bring the cleric to justice.

38. BURY THEM DEEP/39. WHAT PRICE MAGIC?

39. WHAT PRICE MAGIC?

Rank: Seasoned

Stage this encounter after a mage suffers the Siphoning. Instead of using the Siphoning Table, tell him nothing happens. This should cause a mixture of elation and trepidation, for magic comes at a price in Rassilon. Within 24 hours he is visited by a dangerous opponent.

Because this encounter can occur anywhere, no map is provided. Use a map provided in this book that best fits the party's current location or draw a quick sketch.

A gray, faceless humanoid with wispy, multi-colored threads of magic trailing from its body like a tattered cloak blowing in the wind materializes 12" from the mage and immediately attacks. Ideally, the party mage should be isolated from the group when the creature appears, though his comrades should be able to come to his rescue once an alarm is raised. Roll for Surprise.

MONSTERS

The creature is a mage bane. Stories abound regarding mage banes' origins. Some claim they are the spirits of mages who never fulfilled their potential in life. Others insist they are servants of Maera tempted to misuse her gift of magic. A few say they are elementals, drawn from the realm of magic, while others speak of them as physical manifestations of the Siphoning.

One growing theory is that they are gray riders whose physical form has been slain. It is certainly true the two entities share many traits, and mage banes, like gray riders, were unheard of before the Siphoning began.

Mage banes appear as gray, faceless humanoids, with wispy, multi-colored threads of magic trailing from their bodies like a tattered cloak blowing in the wind.

M Mage Bane (1)

TACTICS

The mage bane seeks to rob the mage of his magical power using its *magic drain* Touch Attack. With its invulnerability to magic and automatic dispel abilities, coupled with the power to enhance the Siphoning if the mage does manage to fire off a spell, it effectively negates a mage's most potent weapons.

On the first round, the mage bane invokes *entangle*. If there are multiple mages in the party and they are standing close enough together, it increases the template size in a bid to ensnare multiple foes. On the same round, it moves as close as it can to the mage without resorting to running. On subsequent rounds, it uses its Touch Attack against the mage, whether he is entangled or not.

Should non-magical creatures come to the mage's aid, the creature fires off multiple 2d6 damage *bolts*, incurring a multi action penalty as it continues to use *magic drain*. If 2d6 damage proves ineffective, it increases its next volley to 2d8, and then to 2d10 if required.

If the mage bane succeeds in reducing the arcane skill die of all present mages to below d4, it tries to *teleport* away. Although corporeal and intelligent, the creature will not flee while there is an untapped mage present. Should it be slain, the creature vanishes in a kaleidoscope of magical energy.

MAGE BANE

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Arcana) d12, Notice d6, Spellcasting d12, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- * **Absence of Magic:** Cannot be detected by *detect* spells.
- * **Automatic Dispel:** Any time a mage within 24" of a mage bane successfully casts a spell the mage bane may cast *dispel* as a free action. The spell need not be targeted at the mage bane.
- * **Backlash:** Mage banes are immune to the Siphoning. If they roll a 1 on their Spellcasting die, regardless of Wild Die, they are Shaken. On a critical failure, they suffer a wound.
- * **Elemental:** No additional damage from Called Shots; Fearless; immune to disease and poison.
- * **Enhance Siphoning:** Within 12" of a mage bane, Siphoning occurs whenever a mage fails to cast a spell. Roll 2d6 and consult the Siphoning Table. A roll of 1 on the arcane skill die, regardless of Wild Die, causes the mage to roll 3d6 and take the lowest two. On a critical failure, he rolls 4d6 and takes the lowest two.
- * **Invulnerability:** Mage banes are immune to spells cast by characters who suffer the Siphoning. This affects all wizards except hrimgisards, relics which use an arcane skill die other than Faith, and monsters with the Spellcasting skill.
- * **Magic Drain:** On a successful Touch Attack (+2 Fighting) against a mage, the mage bane reduces the victim's arcane skill die (all of them for a rune mage) by one die type unless the victim succeeds in an opposed Spirit roll. An arcane skill dropping below a d4 means the mage has lost access to his magic. Lost dice return at the rate of one die step per day.
- * **Magic Sense:** Mage banes use *detect arcana* as a natural sense.
- * **Powers:** Mage banes know the following powers: *bolt* (raw magic), *entangle* (foe is bound by magical filaments), and *teleport* (splits into rays of magic).

40. CATTLE RAIDERS

Rank: Novice

While passing through farmland, the party is accosted by a man dressed in mud-stained clothes of good cut. He explains he is a local landowner with a herd of prize cattle. Over the last few weeks, someone has been stealing his cows. His herders blame the problem on ghosts and are afraid to venture into the high pastures at night. Word has been sent to the local temple of Eostre, and paladins have been dispatched to investigate. Until they arrive, he is looking for brave souls willing to watch over his cattle at night. He is offering 50 gs per person per night no cattle are taken, and 20 gs if any cows go missing.

If the party accepts, the man gestures toward a distant hill, atop which stands a small stone hut. The party is to gather there before dusk and begin their duties. There are 30 cows in the herd, but the owner neglects to mention this—the characters will need to ask the man or count the beasts when they reach the animals.

Arriving at the hut, the party realizes someone is already there. Inside is Ogram the Bull, a paladin of Bolverk the god of cattle raiders (see the free download **Cattle Raiding**). Ogram is a hireling like the heroes, and arrived only a few hours before them. He was on his way to the nearest town to buy supplies but has taken a detour to help out here, where his “special skills” are required.

For the next two hours, the adventurers must endure Ogram’s behavior (see below), by which time the party should be ready to throttle the annoying fool.

As the sun sets, a fog begins to drift up onto the hilltop. The cattle raiders are about to make an appearance.

MONSTERS

Ogram isn’t called “the Bull” because of his strength or stamina—it’s because he’s bull-headed. He makes himself out to be a powerful paladin and leader of numerous successful cattle raids, but he actually has very little practical experience.

The raiders are pucas—small, mischievous fey with a talent for shape changing. In their natural form they appear as small children with long noses, large ears, and huge feet. Later on, the party may encounter Jerren Greenteeth, a Seelie water bogie whose frightening appearance and demeanor belies his more gentle nature.

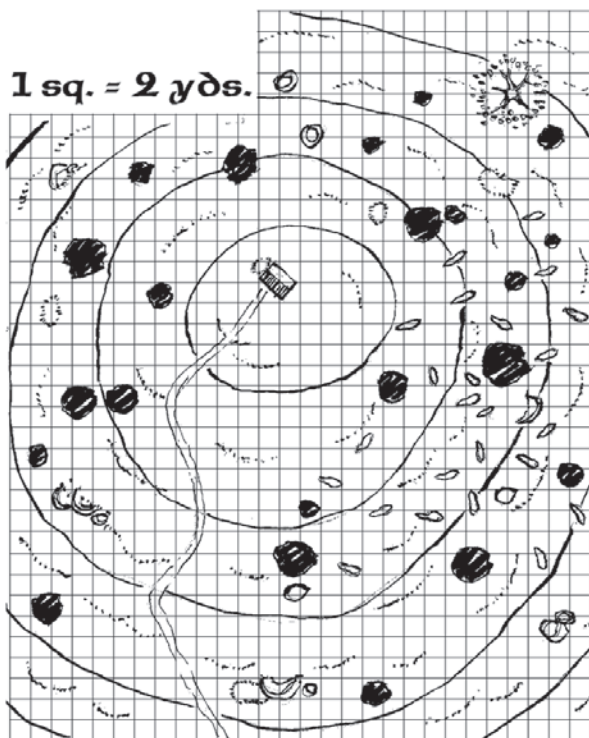
Ⓜ **Ogram the Bull (1)**

Ⓜ **Pucas (1 per hero):** One of the pucas is Maintaining fog cloud.

Ⓜ **Jerren Greenteeth, Water Bogie (1)**

TACTICS

Heroes on sentry duty as the sun sets may make a No-



Key:

hut

vegetation

dung patch

cow

Note: there are 2 yds. between each ring.

tice roll. With success, they spy a small number of cattle (one per hero) wander up from the far slope of the hill. If the party counts the cows on the hill, they discover there are more than they began with! The animals are actually shape changed pucas. The herd ignores the beasts.

If left alone, the new “cows” wander toward the shack. Once within 12” of the entrance, they change into their natural form. Parties who spotted the cows and have been watching them are not Surprised. Those who failed to spot the cows or realize too late that there are additions to the herd must check for Surprise as normal.

On the first round, one of the pucas casts *barrier* across the entrance to the shack. It does this without knowing if anyone is inside—it prevents unseen reinforcements arriving. The others fire off *confusion* at any sentries, each targeting one hero. If there are fewer heroes than pucas, the remainders begin invoking *beast friend* on the herd.

Once the defenders turn violent, as they surely will, the pucas respond with *bladebreaker*, *confusion*, and *lower trait* spells, targeting those considered most dangerous. When half the pucas are slain, the remainder cancel any Maintained spells (a free action), cast *speed*, and flee into the gloom.

TERRAIN

Dung Patches: These areas contain concentrations of cow dung. They are difficult ground and are slippery. Any hero who rolls a 1 on his running die slips and falls. The unfortunate also suffers -2 Charisma until he has a good wash.

Lighting: The lighting is Dark (-2).

CONTINUATION

Merely defeating the fey isn’t enough to stop the raids. Unless the party follows up the attack, the raids continue after a few days. Following the puca’s trail requires a Tracking roll. With success, the party follows the prints down to a small marsh. The prints end at a wide and deep pool of stagnant water. Thick slime covers the surface, and the stench of decay is overpowering.

If the party calls out or disturbs the water, a tall creature with sharp claws of bronze, hair like rotting weeds, and sickly green teeth rises up from the slime. The creature demands to know, “Who has disturbed the rest of Jerren Greenteeth?” The being’s breath smells worse than the surrounding swamp. He is arrogant and rather annoyed at having being woken up. A Knowledge (Folklore) roll at -2 or Knowledge (Fey) roll reveals the creature is a water bogie, a type of fey closely related to grindylows.

If the party is hostile, the creature casts *stun* and sinks back into its pool. It will only surface if suitable recompense is made for the insult. Treated with respect, Jerren is happy to talk with the party. He knows about the cattle raids—the pucas are his servants. For years his pucas have watched over the herd, protecting them from

predators and raiders. Events have recently forced him to take a few cows as payment for his services. Queried about his reasons, the fey says his pet catoblepas (a cow-like creature with noxious breath and a deadly gaze) needs to mate. In return for taking a few cows every now and then, the fey is willing to continue protecting the main herd. If the party agrees to the terms, the herder is initially angry, but quickly sees the sense in having a fey watch over his livestock. Should they return to their patron and inform him of the offer, he accepts.

OGRAM THE BULL

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Throwing d6

Charisma: -1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Habit (Minor; boastful), Overconfident, Stubborn

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles)

Powers: *Beast friend* (cattle only), *speed*

Gear: Leather armor (+1), medium shield (+1 Parry), short spear (Str+d6, Reach 1)

PUCA

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d8, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d8, Taunt d8, Throwing d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

* **Dung Flinging:** Range 3/6/12. Pucas can fling dung with great accuracy. Anyone hit must make a Spirit roll at -2, -4 if the attack was a raise, or be Shaken. This counts as a non-physical attack.

* **Low Light Vision:** Pucas ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

* **Powers:** *Barrier* (earth bank), *beast friend*, *bladebreaker*, *confusion*, *fog cloud*, *lower trait* (no boost), *shape change*, *speed*.



JERREN GREENTEETH

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

* **Aquatic:** Pace 10.

* **Claws:** Str+d6

* **Powers:** *Barrier* (decaying weeds), *environmental protection* (water), *smite* (sharpens claws), *stun* (foul stench)

41. FALSE FAITH

Rank: Novice

A ruddy faced man comes sprinting up the road in the party's direction. He stares wide-eyed at them for a moment, before shouting, "*Help me! I'm a cleric of Var and bandits are trying to steal this!*" He holds up a set of gold merchant scales with one hand while gesturing behind him. Not far off, the party can make out a group of armed men. There's no time to talk further.

MONSTERS

The "bandits" are in fact temple guards. Several miles away is a village with a small temple to Var, god of merchants, in the marketplace. The "cleric" is actually a thief who has purloined a holy object.

● **Temple Guard Commander (1 per four heroes)**

● **Temple Guards (1 per hero)**

TACTICS

On seeing the thief converse with the heroes, the guards leap to the conclusion they are the thief's accomplices. They set their spears and charge.

Still begging to be saved, the "cleric" begins running past the heroes. He quickly disappears from sight.

The guards' commander takes advantage of his Tactician Edge on the first round and uses any bonus initiative cards to the best of his abilities. His men set upon the characters with their spears.

TEMPLE GUARD COMMANDER

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Various

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Tactician

Gear: Leather armor (+1), medium shield (+1 Parry), short spear (Str+d6, Reach 1)

TEMPLE GUARDS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Various

Edges: —

Gear: Leather armor (+1), medium shield (+1 Parry), short spear (Str+d6, Reach 1)

Trying to defuse the situation by demanding the bandits leave the "cleric" alone only infuriates the guards. However, during the fight, the commander shouts things like, "Kill the thieves!" and "A reward to the man who recovers the idol!" to spur on his men. This should give the party reason to doubt all is as it seems.

If that doesn't work, have a hero who is engaged in melee with a guard make a Common Knowledge roll to spot a small amulet each wears. The design is that of Var's holy symbol.

Should the party surrender, perhaps in a bid to learn the truth of the situation or after realizing they are fighting innocent men and not bandits, they are disarmed. The temple commander immediately charges them with theft from a holy site.

TERRAIN

No map is provided for this encounter. The terrain is relatively flat and uninteresting. Start the "cleric" 10" from the party and the guards a further 16" behind him.

CONTINUATION

If the party doesn't work out that they've been mistaken for someone else and they defeat the guards in bloody combat, one of guards remains conscious but badly wounded. With his dying breath he curses the heroes for being thieves. This is their final clue.

Arrested heroes are dragged back to the village and presented to the local priest. He demands the return of the idol. Protestations of innocence result in him casting *detect truth*. Satisfied they are not thieves, he requests they tell him their side of the story.

On learning the truth, he orders the heroes released. He makes no apology, nor does he offer to pay recompense for injuries his men inflicted on the characters.

If the GM wants to expand the encounter further, the cleric offers the party a reward of 500 gs (to share) for the capture of the real thief and recovery of the gold idol. A short follow up might involve an extended chase across the countryside. For a longer adventure, the thief has a good lead and has already fled to a town by the time the heroes catch up with him. Hunting him down in the back alleys requires Streetwise rolls and encounters with unsavory characters.

Should the truth fly over the heroes' heads, the village is on their route. A large crowd has gathered in the marketplace after hearing of the theft.

The heroes are quizzed as to whether they saw a man being chased by temple guards, and if so, what became of them. Honesty is not necessarily the best policy at this point! Depending how the scene unfolds, the party may be hired to find the thief or arrested and charged with murder.

42. DRINK UP

Rank: Novice

The heroes are in a settlement with only a single inn. The innkeeper is polite and attentive, the food is adequate, the hearth warm, and the ale strong. The party's fellow patrons are friendly and keen to hear stories of the wider world, and ply them with free drinks in return for tall tales.

Later that night, once the patrons have left or retired to their rooms, a loud, mournful wailing begins, followed by equally loud banging. As the party goes to investigate, they find the innkeeper outside their room holding a flickering candle. He's as white as a sheet and manages to mutter only one word—ghosts—before fleeing back to his room. It's up to the party to investigate the disturbance.

Creeping downstairs, the first strange sight the party sees is the landlord's cat. It is walking up the stairs, zig-zagging and pitifully meowing. Any hero closely examining the cat can make a Notice roll. With success, he smells alcohol on its breath. The cat hasn't actually been drinking—the smell is a side-effect of the intruder's *fatigue* spell, which it cast on the unfortunate feline.

MONSTERS

The wailing is in fact the drunken singing of a clurichaun. The last time the innkeeper was in the neighboring town to arrange beer supplies, he accidentally insulted the brewer's resident clurichaun. The mischievous fey finally tracked down the innkeeper and decided to make his life miserable.

It has already consumed every drop of alcohol in the taproom, but like all its kind is desperate for more strong drink. It is drunkenly trying to batter down the door to the storage room.

Once the party spies the creature, have the heroes make Knowledge (Folklore) rolls at -2 or Knowledge (Fey) rolls to recognize the creature. A raise reveals its weakness.

Ⓜ **Clurichaun (1):** If the party is especially powerful, then the clurichaun may have friends along for the fun.

TACTICS

Drunk as a lord, the clurichaun is spoiling for a fight. Rolling its fists into balls, it wobbles on the spot, calling out, "Come on them! I'll take you all on!"

It has prestigious strength and is more than happy to attack the party with chairs or thrown bottles (Range: 4/6/12, Damage: Strength) if they start a fight. Otherwise it taunts them repeatedly.

It take a multi action penalty each round as it discretely casts *fatigue* on the heroes, slowly getting them drunk through magic.

If a party member closes to melee, the clurichaun will

at some point try a grapple. As it wraps its arms around the hero, it slurs out, "You're my best friend in the whole world!" Assuming the grapple is successful, it then begins crushing its victim for Strength damage each round.

TERRAIN

Use the inn map on page 27 for this encounter.

Lighting: Unless the party has light, the only illumination is the dull glow of the dying fire.

CONTINUATION

Killing the clurichaun is certainly one option for ending the haunting, though it might lead to repercussions if other fey learn of the unnecessary slaying.

Less violent means involve luring it from the inn (which can only be done by using alcohol) or trying to discover the reason it is here (requires a Persuasion roll at -4 as the ale-filled creature has absolutely no interest in engaging in conversation).

Heroes who solve the problem without resorting to bloodshed should be rewarded in some manner (such as a bonus XP or a benny, or a +1 Glory reward).



CLURICHAUN

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Riding d8, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d6, Taunt d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- * **Annoying:** An angry clurichaun gets revenge by making loud noises all night. Anyone in the same building as the irate fey must make a Spirit roll at -2 or be unable to sleep.
- * **Powers:** Clurichauns know the following spells: *boost/lower trait* (blessing or curse), *fatigue* (target becomes drunk), *jinx* (curse), *speak language* (the universal language of drunks), *voice on the wind* (drunken song).
- * **Size -1:** Clurichauns are the size of human children.
- * **Strong-Willed:** +2 to perform Intimidation and Taunt Tests of Will; +2 to resist such tests.
- * **Weakness (Alcohol):** Clurichauns offered alcohol must make a Spirit roll to stay focused or immediately head for the alcohol and begin drinking. They can quaff a quart in one action. They also suffer from the Habit (Major) Hindrance with regard to alcohol.

43. BRIDGE OF SIGHS

Rank: Veteran

While journeying through the mountains the heroes come across a deep gorge. The only way across is via a long stone bridge created by frost dwarves. The bridge is extremely narrow and has no railings. Strong gusts of wind sporadically howl through the mountains.

The party's narrow path loops up a flight of steep steps (worked from the rock) leading to a raised terrace from which there is no other exit. Frost dwarf sentries are sometimes stationed here to watch over the bridge. Today, however, it conceals ice goblins. The goblins are not visible from the lower path or bridge until unless standing at the edge of the terrace.

Their infravision allowed them to spy the party against the cold backdrop of the mountainside with enough time to arrange an ambush.

The party doesn't have to kill all the goblins to be successful—all they need do is reach the other side of the gorge and disappear around the edge of the mountain. Having lost the tactical advantage, the goblins do not pursue. Instead, they scale the mountain to avoid being counterattacked by the party.

This encounter can also be reversed, with the heroes having spied the goblins and arranged the ambush. In this instance, increase the number of goblin warriors to three per hero.

MONSTERS

While the goblins are an easy foe to defeat in the open, their advantageous position, not to mention the difficulty of crossing the bridge or ascending the steep steps, increases the danger level.

M Ice Goblin Shaman (1): For higher Ranked parties, the GM may swap four additional goblin warriors for a Wild Card shaman, or two goblin warriors for a non Wild Card shaman.

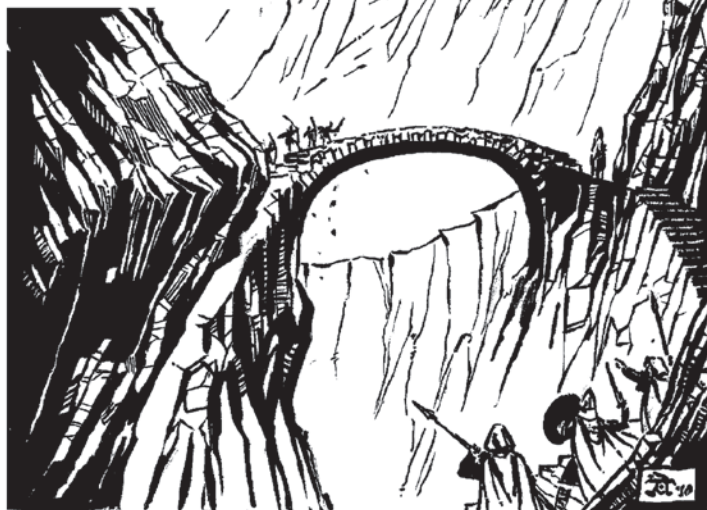
M Ice Goblin Warriors (3 per two heroes)

TACTICS

Ideally, the goblins wait until one person has crossed the bridge. They hope this will encourage the others to make the journey. When the second person reaches the halfway point, they step to the edge of the terrace and unleash a volley of arrows. Divide the attacks equally between all visible characters.

The shaman's first act is to cast *obscure* on the bridge with the aim of splitting the party. Any character moving through the template at speeds greater than 1" per round while upright must make an Agility roll or fall. Crawling characters are unaffected as they can feel both edges, though the party must work this out for themselves.

1 sq. = 2 yds.



Key:



statue



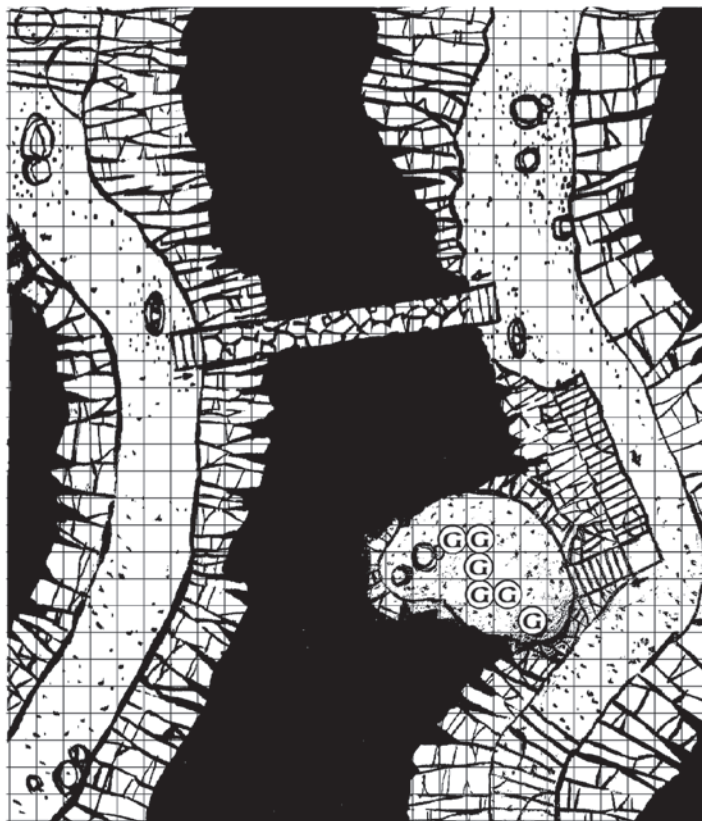
rough ice



narrow stairs



ice goblin



The shaman then spends a complete round identifying the most dangerous threat. This is likely to be a spellcaster or archer. On the following round, he targets them with *fear*. After this, he fires off a single 2d10 damage *bolt* each round. Characters on the bridge are his primary targets.

Should the party decide to investigate the terrace first, the goblins attack once someone is halfway up the steps. Two goblins snipe at the climber, while the others fire at the other heroes to keep them occupied.

The shaman's tactics alter little, and he casts *obscure* on the steps. Due to the unsure footing, any hero running through the template automatically slips, slides, and falls prone.

TERRAIN

Bridge: The bridge is not as stable as it first appears. Constructed long ago, it has fallen into disuse and is in a poor state of disrepair.

At the end of a hero's movement, draw a number of cards from the action deck based on the character's Pace: If he ran, draw three cards, moving at his full Pace requires two cards, moving at half Pace or less requires one card, and stationary heroes do not require cards.

If a black suited Jack through Ace is drawn, the square immediately behind the hero collapses, stones tumbling into the void. If multiple royal cards are drawn, then multiple squares, working back from the hero, collapse.

Should a character be standing in a collapsing square, he can automatically leap backward or forward 1" (his choice), though this leaves him balancing on the edge of the precipice. The hero is treated as being Shaken, but uses Agility to recover, not Spirit (Combat Reflexes is of no help here, though Acrobat is).

If the hero cannot reach safety, perhaps because other squares have already collapsed, he must make an Agility roll to leap to safety. A hero can drop hand held objects as a free action before he leaps, but if he doesn't or can't, such as if he's holding a shield, he has -2 to the roll. Success allows him to move 2", but leaves him clutching the edge and any objects in his hands. A Strength roll is required as an action to haul his weight back onto the bridge.

A hero who has to move more than 2" to reach a safe square automatically falls and suffers 12d6 damage.

Ledge: The elevated ledge provides the goblins with Medium Cover (-2) from attackers lower than them.

Narrow Steps: The steps are narrow and steep and are difficult ground. Any running hero who rolls 1 on his running die slips, slides back 1d4", and is left prone.

Rough Ice: This ice is difficult ground. Agility rolls involving other movement on the ice suffer a -2 penalty. If the roll fails, the character falls and is Shaken.

Statues: At each end of the bridge stand two life-size statues of frost dwarf warriors. They can be used as Cover (+6 Heavy Armor).

Any hero sheltering behind one automatically sees faint runes, carved long ago in the Dwarven script. Clear-

ing away the lichen requires an action. Once done, the text reads, "Here you shall see succor." Further investigation of the statue requires a Notice roll. Success reveals the eyes can be depressed.

When this is done, a small panel in the base of the statue pops open. Concealed inside are two *potions of succor* (each removes one Fatigue level) and a *potion of healing* (cures one wound). Dwarves leave hidden caches here to aid comrades in distress.

Wind Gusts: If a deuce is dealt to the goblin warriors, a strong gust of wind blows across the mountainside. All ranged attacks are at -2 for this round. Furthermore, heroes on the bridge or who are flying must make an Agility roll or be Shaken as they try to retain their balance. This roll is made at the start of the round, before any actions are taken.

ICE GOBLIN WARRIOR

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d4, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d10, Taunt d6

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Gear: Short spear (Str+d6, Reach 1), bow (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6)

Special Abilities:

- * **Improved Snow Walker:** Treat ice and snow as normal terrain.
- * **Infravision:** Goblins halve penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets (round down).
- * **Size -1:** Goblins stand 3-4' tall.
- * **Warm Blooded:** +2 to Vigor rolls to resist the effect of cold.



SHAMAN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Faith d8, Fighting d6, Guts d4, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d10, Taunt d8, Throwing d6

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Gear: Short spear (Str+d4, Reach 1).

Special Abilities:

- * **Improved Snow Walker:** Treat ice and snow as normal terrain.
- * **Infravision:** Goblins halve penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets (round down).
- * **Powers:** Shamans typically know *bolt* (icicles), *fear* (howl), *obscure* (snow cloud), and *smite* (icicles form on weapon).
- * **Size -1:** Goblins stand 3-4' tall.
- * **Warm Blooded:** +2 to Vigor rolls to resist the effect of cold.

44. BLOOD IN THE WATER

SEASONED

Rank: Seasoned

This adventure takes place along a stretch of coastline. With a little work, and by changing the name of the monsters to “dragon eels,” it can be set along a river bank instead.

Fishing is an important way of life for coastal and river communities. While some harvest enough fish to export (typically salted, smoked, or dried), most fish solely to feed hungry mouths. Fishing for sport is virtually unknown.

During their travels, the party happens across a group of fishermen. Rather than using rod and line or nets, they stand waist deep in the water, stabbing at large fish with spears. It’s not an occupation for those of weak constitution, especially in colder months. Those who practice the art scoff at fishermen who use boats so close to shore.

Seated on the shore are a group of women around a large fire; the fishermen’s wives and daughters. They are preparing a basic stew for their men folk and performing their share of the work—gutting the catch. Of hospitable nature and curious as to the characters’ business in the

area, the women invite the heroes to join them by the fire. When the final catch is hauled in, the speared fish will go into the pot to finish the meal.

If members of the party are interested in a little romance, or just a casual fling, several of the younger women are moderately attractive. Of course, in these rural communities just looking at a girl the wrong way can lead to her father grabbing his spear and forcing the would-be suitor to the temple to tie the knot. At the conclusion of the adventure, some fathers may even offer their daughters as reward (for marriage, of course, not a brief affair).

The wives are great gossips. The party quickly learns any scandal or rumors concerning the surrounding villages (which could lead to a new adventure). Naturally, the party is expected to join in and share juicy information, no matter how remote the victim of the wagging tongues.

Shortly after the party gets comfortable, a cry goes up from the water. Looking out to sea, the party sees one of the fishermen screaming and flapping his arms wildly. Suddenly, he disappears under the water. While a red stain begins to expand on the surface, the other fishermen panic and break for the shore, but something unseen stops them, forcing them back into deeper water. The fishermen hurriedly cluster together for safety, but they are armed only with daggers. As one, they begin calling for help.

BLOOD EEL

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: —; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities:

- * **Aquatic:** Pace 8.
- * **Quick:** Redraw initiative cards of 5 or lower.
- * **Size +2:** Blood eels grow to lengths of 20 feet but are rarely more than 6” in diameter.
- * **Twisting Bite:** Str+d6. If the attack hits with a raise, the eel begins to spin, tearing away great chunks of flesh. This inflicts 2d4 damage rather than the normal d6.

TYPICAL MAN-EATER SHARK

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d12

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

- * **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- * **Bite:** Str+d6.
- * **Feeding Frenzy:** Once there’s a significant amount of blood in the water (usually one wound), all the sharks present go into a feeding frenzy and add +2 to their attacks and damage for the rest of the fight.

MONSTERS

The attackers are giant blood eels—long, slimy predators with mouthfuls of razor-sharp teeth. They are named for their dark red coloration.

If the GM wishes, he may swap the blood eels for cold water sharks (most shark attacks occur in 3’ of water or less). Sharks have a lower Toughness than blood eels, so increase the number to one per hero. They retain the same tactics as the blood eels.

Ⓜ **Giant Blood Eels (1 per two heroes)**

Ⓜ **Fishermen (2 per hero):** All Traits d6. They are armed with daggers (Str+d4), but are too scared to use them against the blood eels.

TACTICS

The giant blood eels are initially both cautious and curious. Humans are not part of their regular diet, though blood eels are not picky eaters. The splashing of fishermen keeps them at bay.

Whenever the eels draw a red card or Joker, they attack the cluster of fishermen. Otherwise they swim lazily back and forth, sizing up their prey just out of spear range. That is, until the heroes enter the water.

Lacking strength in numbers, the party is a consider-

44. BLOOD IN THE WATER

ably easier meal for the voracious eels. Unlike the heroes, the eels suffer no penalties in water, and are far more maneuverable.

The fishermen are initially paralyzed with fear. Getting them to act requires an Intimidation or Persuasion roll at -2 as an action. With success, half the total number responds to the hero's orders and can be counted as Allies. A raise (or second successful roll) spurs them all into action.

If the party has any sense, or compassion, they will order the fishermen out of the water—they aren't skilled fighters, even with strength of numbers on their side.

TERRAIN

Rowboat: A rowboat can be hauled 1" for each success or raise on a Strength roll. Only one roll may be made per round, though multiple characters can cooperate. Once in the water, a rowboat has Acceleration 1 and a Top Speed of half the rower's Strength die in inches.

Each rowboat requires one oarsman and can safely carry four passengers. If the number of passengers exceeds this, the rower must make a Boating roll each round. A cumulative -1 penalty applies for every two passengers above four. A roll of 1 or lower, regardless

of Wild Die, means the boat tips over, disgorging its contents in the water.

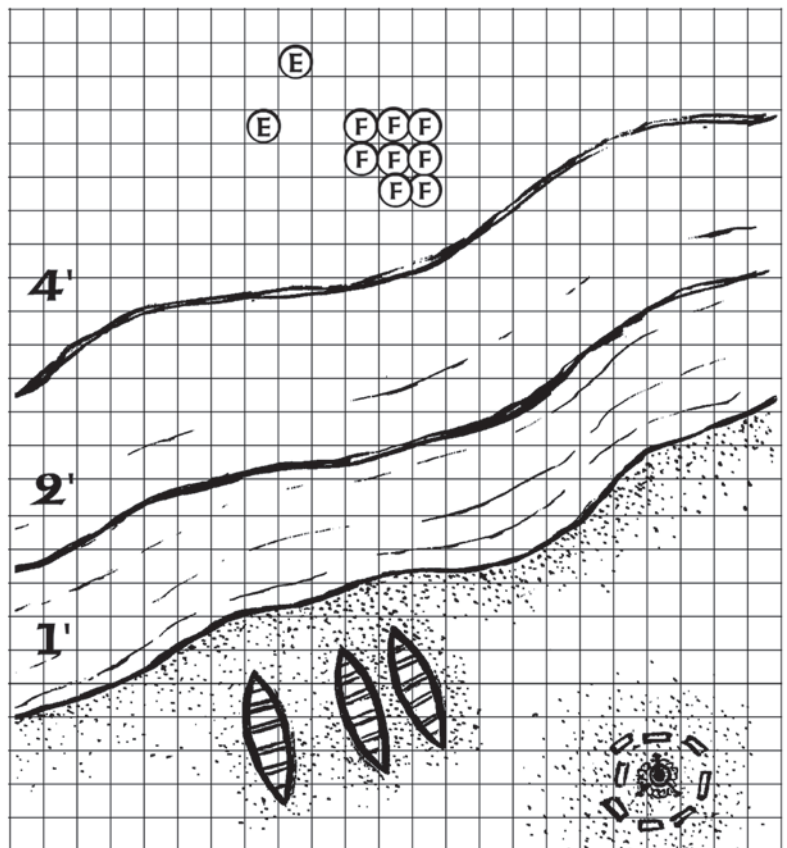
Water: At 1' deep the water counts as difficult ground for human-sized creatures. At 2' deep, all movement is halved and characters cannot run. At depths of 4', characters can move a maximum of 2" per round. Beyond this, heroes must swim. Creatures of Size -1 treat the water as one level deeper for movement purposes.

The blood eels have Light Cover (-1) in 2' of water and Medium Cover (-2) in 4' of water.

CONTINUATION

The fishermen aren't wealthy, but between them they can rustle up 300 gs as a reward. They also invite the party back to their village, where the local herbalist will help tend their wounds (Healing d8 plus healing salves).

Giant blood eels lurk in reefs, submerged wrecks, and sea caves—they do not hunt the shoreline. Something has driven them closer to land, but exactly what is up to the GM. Perhaps they are being controlled by a renegade cleric of Neorthe or a water elemental. Maybe they were shepherded here by kreana. Or maybe the reason is more mundane—their usual prey is in short supply and they seek more fertile grounds.



45. LOVE STRUCK

Rank: Seasoned

The encounter can begin in a village or stead or on the open road close to a settlement.

It starts with the heroes hearing a woman repeatedly calling a man's name. A short while later, they happen across the source of the cries—a plump Saxa woman dressed in fine garb. Her eyes are red and puffy and her voice is hoarse from shouting for hours on end. On seeing them, she runs toward the heroes.

"Sirs, oh, kind sirs!" the woman cries. "Have you seen my son, Otkil, perchance? He is fourteen summers old, with shock white hair. Please sirs, tell me you've seen him! Tell me he is safe and well!"

The party has encountered no one matching that name or description. On hearing this, the woman bursts

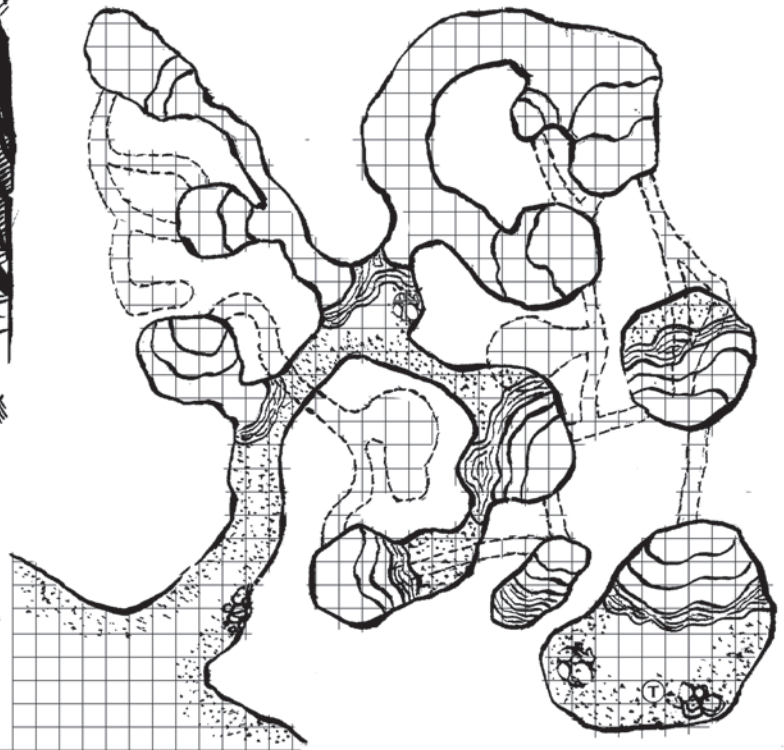
into tears. Getting more information from her requires gentle coaxing or promises of aid.

"My son has been gone for days. He began seeing a girl a few months ago. I think he said her name was Thorkatla. He never brought her to the house. All he would say is she lived alone in the wilds and was a thing of great beauty. He said he loved her more than anything in the world. Otkil began spending more and more time away from home, and then he failed to return for supper last night."

The woman is a skilled crafter's wife. If the party is uncharitable and seeks reward for their services, she offers a flat 200 gs.

She goes on to explain that her son is something of a dreamer, inclined to artistic tendencies, which has alienated him from his hard working father. As far as the

1 sq. = 2 yds.



Key:



thick slime

underwater
tunnel



debris



thorkatla

father is concerned, Otkil has ran away to take up a life of singing and poetry rather than following in his footsteps by earning an honest living.

A search of the surrounding wilderness finds faint tracks heading toward a patch of rugged ground. A Tracking roll (made every four hours) leads the party to a cave entrance, whereupon the footprints vanish on hard rock. Calling out elicits no response, though it does alert the cave's occupant to potential trouble.

MONSTERS

Otkil fell in love with an Unseelie nykr he stumbled across while walking in the wild, musing about his future. At first the fey flirted with the lad for amusement, unsure whether to charm him or not. As it turned out, there was no need for magic, for Otkil quickly became infatuated with the unearthly beauty of the fey. Although she cares nothing for the mortal, regarding him as a momentary distraction and amusing plaything, the wicked fey has decided to keep the youth around a little longer, figuring he might make a useful servant.

In order to prevent his rescue, the nykr keeps him in a partially submerged cave reachable only by swimming.

Otkil totally believes the "girl" loves him. Thorkatla has lied about her true form, and claims to have been unfairly bewitched by an ugly hag who was jealous of her beauty. The love struck boy has been making plans to free his beloved of her curse so they can be wed.

M Thorkatla the Nykr

M Otkil: Treat as a citizen.

TACTICS

Thorkatla is a sly creature and avoids a straight fight. She knows the tunnels linking her pools like the back of her hand and makes best use of them.

Her preferred tactics is to surface, cast a spell, and then dive back into the murky water, thus preventing counterattacks. When she submerges, remove her miniature from the table—the wily fey swims through the tunnels to another pool before surfacing to attack again.

Her tactics vary depending on who is within range of her spells. Relatively safe from melee attacks in the water, she uses *entangle* against spellcasters and archers. *Blast* is used when the heroes are grouped together. *Bolts* are fired at disparate targets or when the nykr attacks a lone target.

If Thorkatla is Shaken and fails her Spirit roll, she uses her available Pace to slide beneath the surface. She remains submerged until she unShakes.

If wounded, she again submerges, this time in order to use her *healing*.

If seriously wounded, the fey dives into one of the tunnels and heads for the concealed cave. She then uses *barrier* across the entrance, so as to afford her some protection while she tries *healing*. These tactics make her a dangerous opponent. She also tells Otkil that agents of the hag have learned of his existence and are trying to kill

him, so as to rob her of his company. This immediately turns him hostile toward his would-be rescuers.

TERRAIN

Debris: The debris is difficult ground.

Lighting: The lighting in the cave is one level worse than the outside conditions.

Pool: The squares around the outer edge of the pools are coated in thick slime. Any hero entering a square must make an Agility roll, -2 if running, or slip and fall prone into the water.

The water adjacent to the edge is 2' deep and is difficult ground. The second square in is 4' deep, is difficult ground, and prevents characters from running. Elsewhere the water plunges to a depth of 15'.

The tunnels lie at the bottom of the pools and cannot be seen from the surface.

The murky pool reflects lantern light like a mirror, preventing the characters from seeing into the depths. Treat attacks aimed below the surface as occurring in Pitch Darkness (-6).

CONTINUATION

If Otkil is told of Thorkatla's death, he becomes totally distraught, calling the heroes murderers and vowing revenge (he might reappear in their lives a few years later, a more hardened warrior). Should the lad be rescued first and witness Thorkatla's demise, he turns on the heroes, using Wild Attacks as he lashes out with fists and feet.



THORKATLA THE NYKR

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d10, Swimming d10

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

- * **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- * **Arcane Resistance:** +2 to Trait rolls to resist magic and +2 Armor against damage-causing arcane effects.
- * **Attractive:** Nykr resemble beautiful human females.
- * **Pool Bond:** Nykr share their soul with a particular pool, river, or similar small body of water. They must remain within 36" of the water or their magic does not work. If the pool is polluted, the nykr must make a Vigor roll each day or suffer a Fatigue level until the taint is cleared.
- * **Powers:** Nykr know the following powers: *barrier* (wall of water), *blast* (water blast), *bolt* (watery bolts), *entangle* (smothered in water), *healing* (pours water on wound), *invisibility* (assumes a watery, translucent form).

46. THUNOR'S WRATH

Rank: Novice

Travel by ship risks many dangers, including attacks by aquatic pests, rogue waves, or violent storms. This encounter details the latter. Note that a simple *becalm* spell can end this encounter very quickly.

THE LONG METHOD

This method directly involves the party in saving the stricken ship.

The turbulent sea and high winds make the ship an Unsteady Platform. Note that even flying characters suffer this penalty due to the high winds. This, combined with the lashing rain, gives Climbing rolls a -2 penalty.

A typical storm rages for 1d6+3 increments of 30 minutes. For each two hours a character is exposed to the weather he must make a Vigor roll to avoid a level of Fatigue.

CUTTING THE SAIL

The only way to save the ship is to scale the mast and cut loose the sail. These tasks must be completed within ten rounds or the mast snaps.

Climbing: A total of three Climbing rolls are required to reach the top of the 30' high mast. A climber who takes a full round to fasten a safety line gets a +2 bonus. Any Climbing result of 1 or lower results in him falling.

For ease, assume each roll carries the hero 10 feet up the mast. If the hero fails the final roll, he must make an Agility roll at -2 or fall into the raging sea.

Cutting: Once he reaches the top, a character can cut loose the sail. The ropes are Toughness 6. A total of four successful rolls are required, though not all need be made by the same hero.

A Fighting roll result of 1 or less means an unsecured character risks falling. He must make an Agility roll at -2 or plummet 30 feet into the water.

Once the sail is cut, the character may either climb down or secure himself and stay put.

Failure: Failure to cut the sail loose in time causes the mast to snap. It falls to the deck. All those on the deck must make Agility rolls at -2 (make Group rolls for blocks of 10 Extras on larger ships). With failure, the poor sap takes 3d6 damage and is knocked overboard. A success inflicts 2d6 damage but the victim remains on the deck. On a raise, a hero escapes unscathed.

Anyone lashed to the mast at this time automatically suffers 3d6 damage. They must make an Agility roll or be dragged into the sea by the mast.

MAN OVERBOARD

Heroes lost overboard must make Swimming rolls every round or suffer a level of Fatigue. They have no hope

of swimming back to the ship. Each round, the ship is blown 5" away from the swimmer. Without appropriate magic being invoked to save him, the unfortunate soul is doomed to drown.

BAILING

Even if the sail is cut, the ship risks being flooded by the torrential downpour and the waves breaking over the gunwale. For each 30 minutes that the storm continues, the ship takes an automatic wound. This isn't physical damage; it represents the hull filling with water. The ship sinks after taking four wounds. This "damage" can be Soaked only by bailing.

If a hero is leading the task, this is handled as a Cooperative Strength roll. Otherwise, make a Group Strength roll for each group of five Extras. Each roll represents 30 minutes of hard work. Success removes one wound and a raise two wounds. These rolls have no effect on any other damage the ship might suffer.

THE QUICK METHOD

First roll 1d6+3 30 minute increments to determine the length of the storm. The GM then draws a card for each increment to determine the ferocity of the storm for that period.

The captain makes a Boating roll each round and subtracts the penalty shown on the table below from his total. The crew makes a Group Boating roll at the same time, adding +1 to the captain's total for each success and raise. Add Handling bonuses or penalties to both rolls.

The penalty to the roll, and the damage the storm inflicted if the roll is missed, depends on the storm's intensity for the 30 minute period. Storm damage is applied to the ship's base Toughness, ignoring armor.

Note that while using the quick method, no bailing roll is allowed. This is instead covered by the Group Boating roll.

If the captain fails a boating roll, each character must make an Agility roll (add +2 if tethered). The GM can roll for crewmen as well (use groups of ten for larger ships). Those who fail are washed overboard and must make Swimming rolls every other round to avoid drowning. A critical failure indicates the character has been hit by driftwood and suffers 2d6 damage.

STORM SEVERITY

Card	Penalty	Damage
2	-4	4d6
3-10	-2	4d6
Jack-Ace	-1	3d6
Joker	+2	3d6

47. IN NAME ONLY

Rank: Novice

This encounter works best if there is a cleric in the party. Traditionally the job of performing a marriage ceremony is left to clerics of Eira, though any cleric has the legal right to perform the ritual.

Not far from the next village the heroes encounter a young couple by the side of the road. Although they speak under their breath, that they are arguing is apparent. The girl suddenly breaks down in tears, but is quickly comforted by the young man. Should the heroes enquire as to what is transpiring, the youth glumly tells his story.

"My name is Grim and this charming beauty is Marushka. We seek to be wed, for we are deeply in love. Alas, Marushka's father, an ogre of a man, forbids it because I am of low birth, naught but a humble acrobat and tumbler. We are both legally old enough to wed, but he plans to marry her off to a rich merchant of advanced years in return for trading concessions. The village priest is Marushka's uncle and will not marry us, so we have eloped. I don't..." The youth pauses. "I don't suppose any of you could legally perform the ceremony?"

Asked what the argument was about, Grim says Marushka was upset because she didn't think she'd be able to marry the man of her dreams before her father caught up and dragged her back to a loveless relationship. Grim was trying to tell her the gods work in mysterious ways, and smile upon those blessed by true love.

Grim will do whatever it takes to arrange a hasty marriage. He'll drop to his knees and beg, kiss the cleric's feet, and hand over all his money (125 gs) if it helps "secure the eternal bond of the gods on his vows of love."

Grim is in fact Ulfnyr Skallagrimsunu, a priest of the Unknowable One. Marushka is indeed due to be wed against her wishes to a rich merchant. In fact, the priest kidnapped her not two hours ago, shortly before the wedding was due to take place! He planned to marry the girl to teach her father a lesson that it is wrong to force marriage on someone (and then have it annulled so the girl isn't forced to stay with him against her will). The poor lass has been subjected to a *puppet* spell to keep her from revealing the truth. If questioned, she confirms Ulfnyr's version of events.

However, upon learning one of the party is a cleric, Grim's devious mind races into action. He decides to kill two birds with one stone—the old phrase marry in haste repent at leisure can just as equally apply to a cleric who marries a couple without thoroughly checking their background. Ulfnyr knows full well a marriage conducted under false pretences is invalid. In fact, he's counting on that.

The marriage takes five minutes to perform. Unfortunately, when there are just 10 rounds remaining in the ceremony, Marushka's father and an angry mob appear

on the scene. Grim begs the party to hold them back until the ritual is complete, but not to kill anybody—he doesn't want that taint on his soul for the rest of his life.

MONSTERS

If anyone casts *detect arcana*, Marushka registers. Should the caster mention this, Ulfnyr sidles up to them and whispers in their ear—"She's wearing a chastity belt with a *lock* spell on it, courtesy of her uncle." Naturally, he forbids anyone to verify his claim by peeking.

● Ulfnyr Skallagrimsunu (1)

● Angry Mob (3 per hero)

TACTICS

The mob begins 24" from the party. Marushka's father cries out, "There he his! Get him!" and the mob surges forward, brandishing pitchforks and other improvised weapons. Unlike the heroes, who have been asked to use nonlethal methods, the mob is bent on shedding blood (kidnapping is a serious crime and Marushka's father has the legal right to impose justice as he sees fit).

If a member of the mob is slain, or the ritual is completed, or it becomes apparent the party cannot hold back the tide, Ulfnyr raises his arms and shouts, "Okay, okay, that's enough. It's over!"

He then admits the truth. When he's done, he asks both Marushka's father and the player character cleric what they have learned from today. If the cleric thumps Ulfnyr (not tries to kill him), he should get a benny purely for his reaction.



ULFNYR SKALLAGRIMSUNU

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Religion) d8, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d6, Taunt d10

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Overconfident, Pacifist (Minor)

Edges: Acrobat, Arcane Background (Miracles)

Powers: *boost/lower trait, charismatic aura, confusion, luck/jinx, puppet, shape change, silence*

Gear: Dagger (Str+d4), one Norn charm

ANGRY MOB

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d4

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances & Edges: —

Gear: Improvised weapons (Str+d6)

48. A TOUCH OF RUST

Rank: Veteran

The Golem Uprising signaled the end of golem manufacturing in Rassilon. In the year 341, golems across Rassilon suddenly went on the rampage, breaking free of their creator's control en masse and engaging in widespread slaughter and destruction. What signaled the start of the five year campaign remains a mystery, and with research into golems forbidden, the truth is likely to remain hidden for the foreseeable future.

Many battles were fought during the Uprising, and not all were recorded. In some cases because the golems were victorious, for they left no survivors. In other instances, the battle was considered a minor skirmish not worth recording for posterity. The party has stumbled across ancient ruins, the sight of one such engagement.

As the golems rampaged across the land, a small force laid siege to this fort. The defenders were prepared, and their ranks comprised hardened mercenaries backed by elementalists and clerics. For two days the battle raged, the defenders unleashing thousands of arrows and hun-

dreds of spells, the latter flooding the land with magical energy. Eventually the golems were defeated, but at a terrible cost of life.

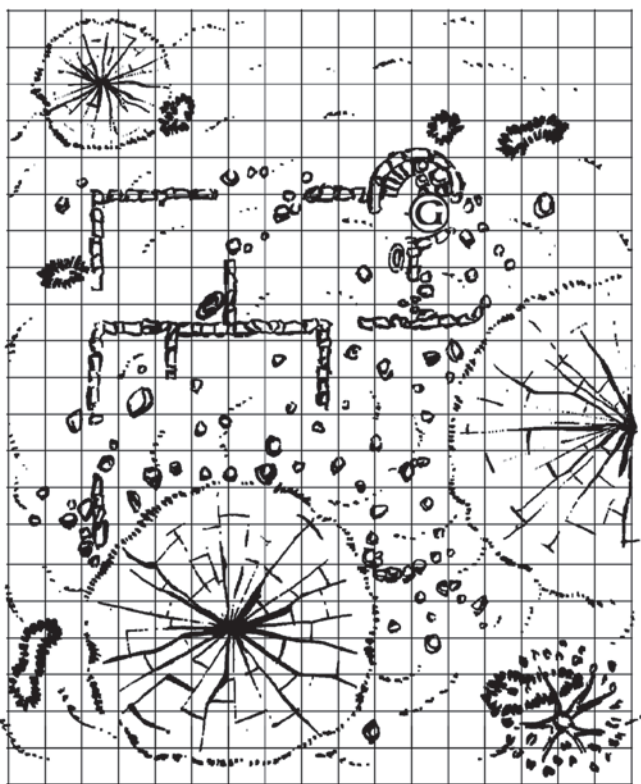
By the time the humans emerged victorious, their walls were reduced to rubble and their numbers whittled down to a score of battle weary survivors. The war moved on and the battlefield was largely forgotten.

While knowledge of the Golem Uprising is quite common (the threat of golems snatching naughty children is a common parental tool even today), knowing that this ruin is tied to the events requires a Knowledge (History) roll at -4. Success allows the hero to recall that a bloody battle was fought here. Details are scarce, but he remembers the golems were defeated. On a raise, he knows that colossal amounts of magical energy were expended.

MONSTERS

The human victory was not total; a lone metal golem survived. Forged from iron, it has lain exposed to the

1 sq. = 2 yds.



Key:

○ debris

— low wall

⊗ statue

⊗ uneven ground

elements since the conflict ended. Over the centuries, the creature, warped by the amount of magic unleashed in the area, has slowly rebuilt itself by absorbing the rusted weapons and armor of its former foes. Now it is something entirely unknown.

The golem begins buried in the earth at the point marked on the map.

Ⓜ Corrupted Metal Golem (1)

TACTICS

Let the heroes move around the map as they wish. Once within 12" of the golem, it erupts from the ground. Check for Surprise.

The golem isn't a genius, but it has above-animal intelligence. It is also a victim of its altered programming and seeks only to kill. With an unearthly grinding of joints not used in two hundred years, the beast lumbers toward the nearest target and begins laying into him with its oversized fists.

It has enough knowledge to recognize spellcasters, but due to its resistance to magic it does not consider them much of a threat and focuses on slaying warriors. Originally the golem was programmed to eliminate mages and clerics first, since they were the greatest danger to the golem armies, but its altered form has also affected its mind.

While it does not consciously know it can regenerate damage by rusting metal, its subconscious is guiding it.

TERRAIN

Debris: The debris is difficult ground.

Low Walls: These 3' high obstacles are difficult ground. Both provide Cover (+8 Heavy Armor) to a creature standing behind it.

Magical Flux: So many spells were cast during the battle that the ground was saturated with mystical energy. A mage forced to roll on the Siphoning Table may reroll one d6 of his choice each time, but he must take the second roll, even if it is worse.

Detect arcana spells are of no use here—the amount of latent energy blocks out everything else.

Statues: Each stands 8' tall and can be used for Cover (+6 Armor) and have Toughness 15.

Uneven Ground: Scarred centuries ago, the land has never fully recovered. Treat these areas as difficult ground.

CONTINUATION

Hundreds died on the field of battle. While most of the corpses were taken away or have now crumbled to dust, the alchemical devices they were carrying may remain, buried in the earth. The only way to locate these is to dig pits and hope.

The GM should create two alchemical devices per hero. For each four hour period spent digging, a hero may make a Spirit roll. With success, his perseverance

has paid off and he locates a randomly determined device. A raise uncovers two alchemical devices.

If the GM wishes, this is an ideal location to place a single permanent relic.

ALTERNATE GOLEMS

Instead of the metal golem, the GM can use regular or corrupted stone golems.

The use of stone golems allows parties of lower Rank (one per two heroes at Seasoned is advisable) to tackle the encounter and can provide experienced parties with multiple foes.

A corrupted stone golem can regenerate damage if it ends its turn adjacent to a section of wall. It makes a Vigor roll, with success removing one wound (if a Wild Card) or eliminating the Shaken condition for Extras. It does this by drawing the stonework into its body to patch up injuries. Remove an adjacent 1" section of wall each time this ability is used.

Because the Golem Uprising occurred so long ago, the GM can also make golems more unique by giving them Hindrances that reflect physical damage. Bad Eyes, Lameness, One Arm, One Eye, One Leg, and Small (representing loss of body mass) are all well-suited for damaged golems. Alternately, he can alter the creatures' Agility (perhaps it is lopsided and unbalanced), Strength, or Vigor (again, this would be a general loss of mass).



CORRUPTED METAL GOLEM

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d12+3, Vigor d12+1

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 15 (5)

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +5:** Magically hardened metal.
- * **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison.
- * **Fearless:** Golems are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Improved Arcane Resistance:** +4 Armor against damage-causing arcane powers and +4 on Trait rolls to resist opposed powers.
- * **Rust:** If a victim Shaken or wounded by the golem's slam is wearing metal armor, its Armor Protection in that location is automatically lowered by one point. When it reaches zero, the armor rusts away to nothing. For each point of Armor Protection rusted in this manner, the golem may make an immediate Vigor roll. Success heals one wound.
- * **Size +2:** Metal golems stand over 10' high and weigh 6,000 pounds.
- * **Slam:** Strength damage.
- * **Sweep:** Metal golems may attack all adjacent creatures at no penalty.

49. THE JOKE'S ON YOU

Rank: Novice

Late one afternoon, while the party is camping in the wilds, a fey knight appears at the edge of camp. He asks permission to approach and speak with the heroes. His bone white armor and cloak mark him as a Seelie

FEY JESTER

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Riddles) d10, Notice d8, Stealth d10, Taunt d10

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: Jester's stick (see below)

Special Abilities:

- * **Acrobat:** +2 to Agility Tricks; +1 Parry.
- * **I'm the Jester:** Immune to Smarts Tricks and Taunts.
- * **Jester's Stick:** Victims of a Touch Attack (+2 to Fighting) must make a Spirit roll or suffer the effects of a *confusion* or *jinx* spell (jester's choice) for an hour. Successive blows increase the duration.
- * **Joker of the Pack:** If a creature within 6" of the jester draws a Joker, swap it with the jester's action card. This power does not function if the jester also draws a Joker.
- * **Killer Joke:** As an action, a jester may tell a joke. This affects all victims under a Medium Burst Template placed whether within 12" of the fey. Those who fail succumb to uncontrollable laughing and are Shaken for 1d6 rounds. Only after this duration may they try to recover. A critical failure causes the victim to literally die of laughter. Use the rules for heart attacks on the Fear Table. Fey are immune to these jokes, having heard them all before.

ICE GOBLIN WARRIOR

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d4, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d10, Taunt d6

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Gear: Short spear (Str+d6, Reach 1), bow (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6)

Special Abilities:

- * **Improved Snow Walker:** Treat ice and snow as normal terrain.
- * **Infravision:** Half penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets (round down).
- * **Size -1:** Goblins stand 3-4' tall.
- * **Warm Blooded:** +2 to Vigor rolls to resist the effect of cold.

fey. The knight, who gives no name, tells the heroes a strange story.

Several months ago, a powerful Unseelie faerie called the Lord of Pain attacked the knight's queen, the Unicorn Maiden. During the skirmish, the queen's jester was kidnapped. A long search revealed that the jester escaped his captors into the mortal realm, but in doing so suffered some sort of amnesia. The knight has located the missing jester in a small village not far from the party's current location, but due to an ancient oath cannot enter a mortal settlement. As such, the party is needed to enter the village and kidnap the jester so he can be returned to his rightful home.

In return for their services, the knight offers each party member a fey token. These work exactly like a Norn charm. He's desperate, although he won't reveal this, and can be haggled up to a maximum of 3 charms per hero. If they accept the deal, the party is told to bring the jester back to this spot.

When the heroes reach the village, they discover a wedding had taken place that day. An all night party is being held in the ale hall to honor the happy couple. As guests in the village, the heroes are invited to attend the celebration. Providing the entertainment is a short, hunchbacked creature.

The party can talk to the village headman during the festivities. If told of the jester's true nature, the headman admits he thought there was something "unnatural" about the jester. He grants the party permission to speak with the jester about returning to his true home, but not until the festivities have ended (sometime around dawn). Until then, he forbids the party to interfere.

To extend this encounter, the GM can roll a few times on the Allies Personality table and let the players enjoy some roleplaying. As the party dies down, the heroes may approach the jester. Before they get chance to explain things, the door to the ale house crashes open and a band of ice goblins surge in. They have been hired by the Lord of Pain to find the jester and recapture him.

MONSTERS

The jester, suffering near-total memory loss, blundered into the settlement by accident. The locals took pity on the wretch. On discovering his talents for juggling, satire, and humor, they adopted him, believing him to be a mad priest of the Unknowable One.

By the time the fight starts there are only a handful of guests left in the ale hall. They quickly vacate or hide, thus playing no part in the fight.

If the party elects to storm the ale house and liberate the jester from the locals, then you can ignore the goblins. Instead, the party must face the revelers as their foes. The jester suffers no crisis on who to trust (see below), automatically siding with his friends.

49. THE JOKE'S ON YOU

NOVICE

- Ⓜ **Fey Knight (1):** See Encounter 35 if required.
- Ⓜ **Fey Jester (1)**
- Ⓜ **Ice Goblin Warriors (3 per hero)**
- Ⓜ **Revelers (3 per hero):** All Traits d6. Armed with daggers (Str+d4).

TACTICS

The goblins are just as shocked to see the heroes as the party will be the goblins. Don't roll for Surprise. Half the ice goblins attack the heroes (the only armed people in the place) while the rest lunge for the jester. They use lethal force against the party and rain nonlethal blows on the fey with the butts of their spears.

The jester, unsure what is happening, suffers flashbacks of his kidnapping. Unsure who to trust, his crazed mind causes him to swing back and forth between who he counts as allies and who he attacks. If his initial action card is red, he attacks the party. A black card or Joker indicates he turns on the goblins. If the party catch on to this, a hero may make a Persuasion roll as an action. With success, the jester sides with the heroes until his next action card is drawn.

Against adjacent foes, the jester uses his stick. The GM can decide which spell he casts; *confusion* has the advantage of imposing a flat penalty, whereas *jinx* increases the likelihood of a critical failure. If there multiple adjacent opponents, he tries an Agility Trick against one and uses his stick against another. Should his enemies for the round be suitably grouped, he tells a killer joke instead.

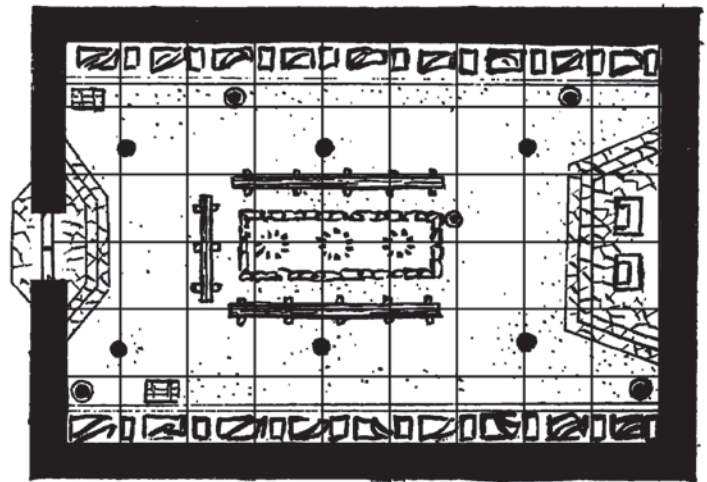
TERRAIN

Fire Pit: Anyone entering the pit suffers 2d10 damage and has a chance of catching fire.

Furniture: Furniture filled areas are difficult ground.

CONTINUATION

When the party defeats the ice goblins, the jester scurries into a corner and curls into a ball. He begs not to be returned to "the dark place." Convincing him the party wishes him returned to his true home requires a Persuasion roll. Once convinced, he says farewell to the villagers and accompanies the party to the rendezvous point. The fey knight pays the heroes the promised reward.



Key:

- | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|
| chest | pot | high seat |
| beam | bench | |
| bench/bed | double door | |
| fire pit | stone stair/
platform | |

50. THE LURE OF METAL

SEASONED

Rank: Seasoned

Lying face down in the middle of the trail is a frost dwarf. A brief examination shows he has multiple fresh injuries, several of them fatal. Suddenly he opens his eyes and whispers, "Comrades... attacked... tried to save myself... dishonor... forgive me." With that he expires. No healing, magical or mundane, can prevent his death.

If *gravespeak* is used to communicate with the dead dwarf, he can reveal the following facts, but only in response to specific questions.

- * His name is Ljot Forgefrost.
 - * He is from the dwarven city nearest to where the encounter takes place.
 - * The dwarf was part of a wagon train heading to the nearest human town.
 - * They were transporting iron ingots.
 - * The wagon train comprised five wagons, ten mules, 5 waggoners, and 30 guards.
 - * They were attacked three hours ago by scavengers (the dwarf knows how many, but the figure is variable based on the party strength).
 - * He has no idea if the scavengers are still present.
- If the party continues up the trail in the direction they

were headed, they eventually crest a hill. Below them, the party sees a train of five covered wagons.

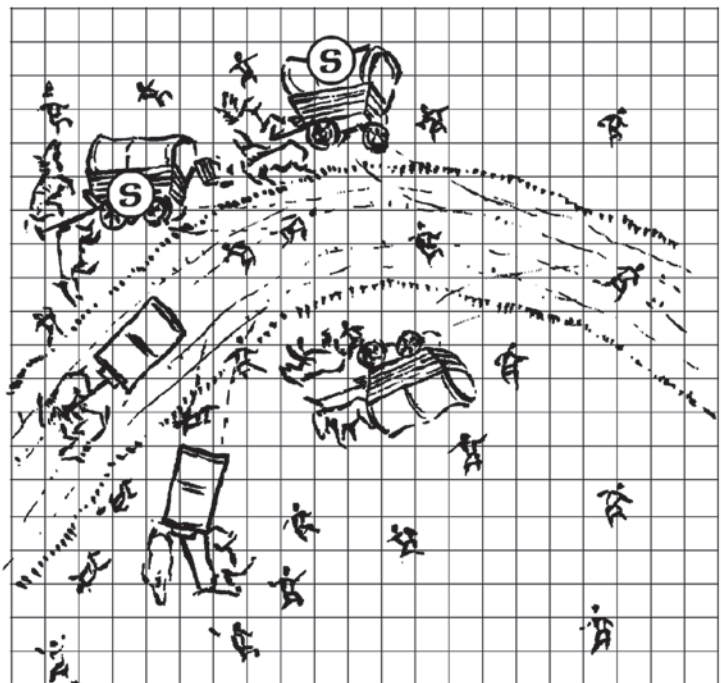
Three of the wagons have been tipped over. Some terrible fate has obviously befallen the dwarves, for surrounding the wagons lie two dozen frost dwarf corpses plus the carcasses of slain mules, the latter still strapped into their harnesses.

Closer examination reveals the dwarves met a bloody end. Each corpse and carcass is near mutilated, bearing numerous deep cuts and puncture wounds. Many of the dwarves have lost limbs and been disemboweled or decapitated. Unless the party has previously witnessed such savage butchery (GM's call), they must make a Guts roll to avoid Fear.

Unless a hero specifically asks about the dwarves' gear, the party does not initially realize something is amiss—none of the bodies has any metal on it. After a few minutes investigating the corpses, the heroes are allowed a Notice roll. With success, the characters suddenly realize this unusual fact.

Lying at the rear of one upturned wagon are pieces of a smashed packing crate. The dwarven word for "iron" is written on a large fragment.

1 sq. = 2 yds.



Key:



dwarf corpse



mule corpse



scavenger

If the characters know or suspect there are scavengers in the area, they may decide to rid themselves of their armor and weapons. In order to avoid becoming a target for attack, the heroes must dump *every* single piece of metal. A belt buckle, a cloak clasp, a single coin, or a finger ring is enough to attract the scavengers' attention.

Unless the dumped gear is more than 48" away from the scavengers (a distance the adventurers won't likely know), the creatures will head straight for the stash and begin collecting it.

MONSTERS

The attackers were not orcs or giants, but scavengers, the mysterious metal-seeking race. Irresistibly lured by the wagons' cargo of iron ingots, they attacked without mercy. The dwarf warriors protecting the caravan put up a valiant defense, but they were no match for the merciless creatures. A few dwarves managed to flee, and they have kept running ever since.

The scavengers are currently in the two upright wagons, hurriedly devouring the last of the precious cargo. Their unusual senses detect the party at 48", but for the moment the iron ingots are a more valuable prize. The scavengers make their presence felt if anyone investigates the rear of the upright wagons or after the party has spent two minutes exploring the site.

The party had advanced warning the wagon train was attacked. Unless they are being particular incautious, they need not roll for Surprise when their foes appear.

❶ **Scavengers (1 per 2 heroes):** Add one additional scavenger per party Rank above Seasoned.

TACTICS

Scavengers are lured by metal, and head for the nearest metal-bearing character. It makes no difference how much metal a hero is carrying. Once in melee, a scavenger slashes and tears at its victim with its deadly tools. If there are multiple adjacent foes, the creature divides its attacks.

When the victim is dead, the scavenger pause to collect his metal items. It requires one action for them to loot 10 pounds of metal. Assume 50 coins weigh a pound for these purposes. During this time, a scavenger may only make a single Fighting attack per round. Only when all of its victim's metal has been safely stored does it proceed in search of new targets.

The Taunt skill can be used by a character to make himself the immediate target of a scavenger, who then ignores its current target. For this to work, the taunting adventurer *must* be carrying more pounds of metal than the current victim. If not, the taunt has no chance of working, no matter how high the die roll. A scavenger's senses are keen enough it instinctively knows exactly how much metal a hero within 48" is carrying. This is an extremely dangerous tactic, and any hero who works it out should be rewarded in some small way for both his bravery and his cunning.

TERRAIN

Tongue: The area with the tongue (the wooden bar projecting from the front of the wagon to which the mounts are attached) is difficult ground. Creatures of Size -1 gain Medium Cover (-2) standing behind it, while larger creatures benefit only from Light Cover (-1).

Wagons: Wagons can provide Cover (+2 Armor). Movement through a wagon's space is possible only by crawling beneath it. Entering a wagon requires an action. Once inside, the cramped quarters count as difficult ground.

CONTINUATION

If the party travels to the dwarves' city to report the massacre, the inhabitants declare a day of mourning. They offer no reward, but word gets out about the heroes' honorable actions.

Award each party member +1 Glory for the notable deed. This is in addition to Glory for defeating the rampaging scavengers.

SCAVENGER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Stealth d8, Tracking d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (3)

Special Abilities:

- * **Arcane Resistance:** +2 to Trait rolls to resist opposed arcane powers and +2 Armor against damage-causing magic.
- * **Armor +3:** Metal shell.
- * **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison.
- * **Explode:** When a scavenger is Incapacitated, it explodes, causing 3d6 damage to everything in a Medium Burst Template. The scavenger's core is fused into a solid ball of molten slag.
- * **Immunity:** Scavengers are immune to acid and electrical attacks.
- * **Improved Frenzy:** A scavenger may make two attacks each round with no penalty.
- * **Tools:** Str+d6, AP 4. Scavengers have four arms, fitted with a variety of oversized drills, saws, picks, and spades. These are Heavy Weapons.
- * **Sense Metal:** Scavengers can detect metal at a range of 48", regardless of how well it is hidden. A scavenger moves toward the nearest source of metal, scooping it up and placing it inside its shell. Metal carried on a living target is removed once the carrier has been slaughtered.
- * **Weakness (No Metal):** Foes devoid of *all* metal are never consider a threat, even if they attack the scavenger.

● MERCENARY ADVENTURES ●

Hellfrost focuses primarily on the adventures of small bands of heroes rather than rampaging armies. That said, the game not only allows but actively encourages the heroes to lead armies through Leadership Edges and the Glory system, so it is only fitting that some degree of large-scale military action is possible. This is especially true if the characters are leaders of men (having invested in Followers or in Leadership Edges) or control a mercenary company.

Several regions are ripe for this sort of adventuring. Orcmark and Veemark, for example, have been at war for two decades. Although the fighting has ground to a stalemate, raids are still carried out by both sides. Similarly, the city of Ostvik is besieged by marauding lizardmen and in dire need of heroes to lead the defending armies. These conflicts are great for both hero-only adventures and those involving lots of Extras, whether on the tabletop or through Mass Battles.

While designing and stocking a “dungeon” takes time, it is a relatively easy process—pick some related monsters (or unrelated ones if you prefer that “Old School” feel) and place them amongst the rooms and corridors. However, GMs without knowledge of military strategy may have slightly more trouble designing interesting military adventures that aren’t just set-piece battles.

For those who want a little help (or maybe just a few ideas to kick-start their own fertile imagination) designing military scenarios, here is a very simple adventure generator. Roll once on each table below to determine the basic mission and add details as necessary to weave an exciting battle. For more complex or larger scale missions you can roll multiple times, combining the results.

The actual entries have been left deliberately vague so as to allow the GM full creative control. For instance, receiving destructive magic support might involve a handful of mages or alchemical devices, but it could just as easily mean catapults are on hand to fire blazing *prolonged blast* potions attached to ammunition. This gives the magical support far greater range, but at the expense of the accuracy and versatility. Never let the die rolls constrain your imagination!

TABLE 1: BASIC MISSION

d20	Result
1	Battle! The characters engage or are engaged by an enemy force
2	Capture enemy fortification or settlement
3	Capture important person (enemy leader) or information (battle plans)
4	Capture important terrain (ford, bridge, pass, hill)
5	Capture prisoners for interrogation
6	Construct bridge or road (or guard engineers on such a project)

7	Defend allied commanders or important information
8	Defend allied supply camp or baggage train
9	Defend allied fortification or settlement
10	Defend important terrain (ford, bridge, pass, hill)
11	Deliver orders to allied unit
12	Deliver supplies to allied unit
13	Destroy enemy supplies or baggage train
14	Destroy enemy siege equipment
15	Liberate prisoners/allied force (or individual) in trouble
16	Patrol duty
17	Reconnoiter enemy fortification or settlement
18	Recruit and train soldiers
19	Track down deserters or enemy spies
20	Double duty. Roll twice on this table (re-rolling further results of 20)

TABLE 2: COMPLICATIONS

d20	Result
1	Allied army pulls back (to engage enemy or because of growing enemy numbers) without telling the heroes
2	Allied commander or other NPC is a traitor
3	Nearby allied unit asks for aid in their own mission
4	Ambushed by enemy force
5	Bad intelligence (the objective is not where it should be, is heavily guarded, doesn’t exist)
6	Bad weather (as storm spell)
7	Communication failure leads to erroneous orders
8	Mistaken identity (heroes mistake objective, or allied troops attack them in error)
9	Natural obstacle (impassable terrain, river) causes heroes to detour through enemy territory
10	New orders received during mission
11	NPC commander, guide, or other ally is incompetent
12	Objective is in bad terrain (dense forest, high mountains, swamp)
13	Rival allies on the same mission want the glory
14	Support troops fail to materialize, leaving the heroes to complete the mission alone
15	Support units desert at crucial moment
16	The heroes become lost and end up deep in enemy territory
17	Trapped behind enemy lines by enemy troop movements
18	Very bad weather (as per storm with a raise)
19	None. Everything goes according to plan for a change

20 Disaster! Roll twice on this table (ignoring further results of 20)

TABLE 3: SUPPORT & ALLIES

d20	Result
1	Raw recruits (treat as town watch)
2	Artillery, diversion or to cover extraction
3	Artillery, on demand (generally through voice on the wind spells or at a set time)
4	Artillery, constant barrage
5	Common mercenary infantry
6	Common mercenary archers
7	Common mercenary skirmishers
8	Common mercenary cavalry
9	Veteran mercenary infantry or common huscarls
10	Veteran mercenary archers
11	Veteran mercenary skirmishers
12	Veteran mercenary cavalry
13	Unusual combat troops (elf rangers, frost dwarf huscarls, pack of war dogs, paladins of Scaetha)
14	Unusual support troops (assassins, road wardens, thieves)
15	Knight Hrafn of the Lower House
16	Healing magic (alchemical devices or clerics)
17	Insertion magic, such as <i>boost Stealth</i> , <i>fog cloud</i> , <i>fly</i> , <i>obscure</i> , <i>teleport</i> (via alchemical devices, mages, or clerics)
18	Extraction magic, such as <i>boost Stealth</i> , <i>fog cloud</i> , <i>fly</i> , <i>obscure</i> , <i>speed</i> , <i>teleport</i> (via alchemical devices, mages, or clerics)
19	Hampering magic, such as <i>entangle</i> , <i>obscure</i> , <i>storm</i> (via alchemical devices, mages, or clerics)
20	Destructive magic, such as <i>blast</i> , <i>bolt</i> , <i>burst</i> , <i>prolonged blast</i> (via alchemical devices, mages, or clerics)

EXAMPLE #1

The GM rolls three d20s and scores results of 2, 18, and 17. From this we see the heroes are expected to capture an enemy fortification or settlement. Since the campaign is set around the Veemark–Ostmark war, the GM decides the heroes are an advanced party sent across the river to secure a beachhead before a major assault.

The complication, a bad storm, is going to hamper both the attackers and defenders. On a more positive note, the darkness and lashing rain better suits the heroes, as the noise and gloom will help in their crossing the river by boat.

To aid them, the local commanders have rustled up some magical support. Realizing the river crossing could make for an interesting encounter, the GM decides to forgo magical aid such as *fly* and *teleport*. Instead, he hands out single potions of *obscure* to the party, to help in their initial landing and to confuse any enemy rein-

forcements. Given the heroes have no troops to back them up, this mission is best suited for parties with Followers at their disposal (or a mercenary company of their own).

EXAMPLE #2

This time the GM rolls 14, 8, and 19. The orders are to destroy enemy catapults bombarding allied positions from across the river before they wreak too much devastation on forward troops.

Unfortunately, the complication is mistaken identity, meaning the heroes attack the wrong positions. The GM decides that the insertion will take place on a dark night. Unbeknownst to them, the heroes will drift downstream and be faced with a different set of artillery positioned further back from the frontline. They won't realize their error until they attack and deduce the catapults are at too great a distance to reach the far shore.

Aiding the assault are veteran mercenary archers. It's up to the heroes how best to use their support troops, but the archers' commander suggests they stay back and snipe at any enemies to keep the heroes from confrontation while they do their job. The size of the archer contingent is up to the GM. Seeing as this is a quick raid and not a grab for territory, the GM opts to give each player character five Extras to control.

EXAMPLE #3

For the third and final mission, the GM rolls 5, 5, and 14. Desperate to know the disposition of enemy troops before attempting a major assault, the allies need to capture a senior enemy commander and interrogate him. Whereas most adventures involve killing the enemy, this time the party has to keep a prisoner alive at all costs, a task easier said than done. The first goal is to actually identify the commander.

On a previous mission, a group of scouts located what they thought was a command post and reported it as such, but it was actually a different type of camp. The GM decides the site the heroes are about to infiltrate is a transit point for troops soon to be sent to the front lines. Although they have officers present, they know nothing of the larger battle plan. They do, however, know where the command post is located (which automatically leads to a second adventure).

Assisting the heroes are some unusual support troops. Although combat capable, they are not the best warriors in the world. Given that the job calls for stealth, the GM decides that the local thieves' guild has sent troops to act as scouts (in return for sizeable recompense, of course). The thieves are to guide the heroes quietly through enemy lines to the officer's location. Because this is a stealthy mission, the GM decides the fewer involved the better. Each player controls just a single thief. Had the mission called for an assassination, he would have swapped the thieves for assassins or Roadwardens.

● QUICK ENCOUNTERS ●

You can use random encounters to highlight environmental issues, to hint that monsters *might* be present, or to show that not everything the heroes stumble across can be easily explained. If the characters wish to investigate, these seeds could spawn an entire adventure.

1) A Sword in the Ground: A sword is rammed point first into the ground. Is it a sign from Tiw? Was it dropped? Does it mark a grave, or an orc tribe's lands?

2) Bad Winter: Wolves trail the heroes. They don't attack; they just maintain a close presence and watchful eye for several miles.

Shouts and missile fire drive them off, but they return after an hour. Eventually they tire of stalking and slink off into the wilds. The characters know that a bad winter approaches when wolves brazenly follow an armed party before the snows.

3) Burning Stead: The heroes come across the remains of a stead. It might be a burnt out ruin or still smoldering. There are no signs of blood or bodies. Did the inhabitants give up trying to eke a living and move elsewhere, or is this the work of raiders?

4) Crop Marks: From a hilltop, the heroes gaze down on worked farmland. In the middle of a field of cereals is a crop mark (perhaps a circle, or something more elaborate like a holy symbol of one of the gods). The locals claim it wasn't there last night.

5) Easy Fishing: While at a river or lake, the party notice dead fish floating on the surface. There is no sign of injury or contaminants in the water. All the fish taste fine. Possible causes include fishing using expensive *blast* alchemical devices or a storm dragon using its breath to electrocute the fish. A similar encounter could involve dead sheep or cows.

6) Footprints: A mass of footprints and blood indicate the site of a fight. A set of footprints and a blood trail head off into the wilds. Do they belong to a wounded victim of the attack or one of the attackers?

7) Free Money: The heroes discover a gold scield lying the road. Further ahead is another, and another. Were the coins dropped by a traveler or bandit, or are they luring the party into a trap?

8) Frozen Corpses: While adventuring during winter the characters happen across frozen bodies. The corpses may be huddled together, as if desperately trying to shelter from a blizzard. They might just as equally be sitting around the remains of a campfire, their ice-covered earthly remains indicating they were frozen very quickly.

9) Help from Above: Someone or something has used stones to write the word "help" in huge letters. Such a message could only be seen in entirety from above. Who made the signal and who, or what, were they trying to alert to their plight?

10) Signal Horns: The party hears the sound of horns in the distance. Are they hunting horns, perhaps of a nobleman's party, or those of warriors or raiders?

11) I Hear You: One member of the party hears voices. This could be a *voice on the wind* spell gone awry (it was meant for someone of the same name) or a monster's lure. It may be a one-off event, or keep repeating over the course over a long period. Whether for good or ill, what message does the voice carry to the hero?

12) Inquisitive Bird: A storm raven, a bird sacred to Thunor, begins tailing the party. It lands if scraps of food are offered and displays inquisitive behavior, such as tilting its head as if listening as the party talk among themselves. After a few hours (or maybe days), the bird suddenly takes to the northern sky with a loud squawk and promptly drops dead. It is frozen solid.

13) Dead Animals: The party spies a dead cow or sheep. There is no sign of injury. Further up the road is another, and another. Who killed the animals, and for what purposes? Is there disease involved, or is the power of magic being invoked?

14) Missing Parts: The heroes stumble across one or more corpses. All were slain violently and all are missing the same body part. Is this evidence of trophy collecting? What happened to the missing parts?

15) Noises in the Night: Something begins snuffling around the heroes' camp at night. Is it a hungry animal, a fey, a phantom sound, or something dangerous?

16) Pile of Skulls: Something has stacked a pile of skulls into a pyramid. The skulls could be from the civilized races or monsters. A successful Survival roll indicates the lower tiers are much older than those on the top. Something has obviously been adding to the collection over many years, possibly even decades.

17) Skittish Horse: A mount or pack animal suddenly begins rearing and snorting. It refuses to go any further. Is there some unseen danger ahead, or it the animal just having a funny turn?

18) Standing Stones: Ahead is a circle of standing stones, some 100 feet in diameter. Within the circle the temperature is two levels higher (to a maximum equal to the Hearthlands in summer).

The stones are marked with elemental runes of fire or the holy symbols of Sigel and/or Kenaz. After a few days, whatever magic they held fails, and the temperature rapidly returns to normal.

19) Unclaimed Crops: In the middle of nowhere stands a crop field, full of ripening vegetables or cereals. There are no steads on the visible horizon. If the party investigates, they find a weathered statuette of Eostre half-buried in the mud.

20) Weird Buzzing: Out of nowhere the distant sound of buzzing, like a swarm of angry bees, fills the air. And yet, there is no sign of any bees (not to mention it may be too cold). After a few minutes, the sound abruptly stops. Some folk claim such noises are attributed to fey moving between the mortal realm and their own lands, but could something else be responsible?



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