



ADVENTURES

VOLUME I

Three fantasy adventures for GURPS

by J.C. Connors

DARKNESS UPON THE HILL

As war looms in the mountains, a greater threat quietly gathers strength from the bloodshed to come.

LEGEND OF THE FORGOTTEN FALLS

A town that disappeared ages ago due to a failed magical experiment calls upon warriors to prevent a repeat disaster!

SHADOWS IN THE MIDST

A man known only as Grimfinger builds an empire of assassins in the Domain's most militaristic city.

APPENDIX

New spells and elixirs for use in these adventures!

DARKNESS UPON THE HILL

Introduction

A long gust of wind swept through the Valley of the Dragon. The scattered trees swayed violently. Dead grass and leaves were easily tossed in the breeze. A small, grassy hill with a single dead tree on it was dwarfed by the ominous Dragonspire Mountains looming above it. Darkness quickly spread over the valley, leaving only two glowing red eyes upon the grassy hilltop. A few moments later, the eyes darkness vanished, and with it, the darkness...

Adventure Summary

The first in the series of Mystic Domain classic adventures suitable for 100-point characters. The Middle Realm has always been a place of danger and excitement. Heroes and mercenaries have always had to deal with city-state wars, creatures swarming from the tunnels of the northern mountains, and the occasional dragon swooping down from their high nests in the northern mountains. Despite these hazards, something *truly* sinister is going on.

The city of Shadowkeep, which has long held a bitter rivalry with the rest of the Middle Realm has supposedly raised a massive army against Raven Keep and her allies. In retaliation, Raven Keep raises her own forces and marches towards Shadow Pass, the gateway into the mountains that protects Shadowkeep. However, all is not as it seems in these tight mountain passages, for undead

soldiers have been appearing through these areas with alarming frequency. And as every mage knows, this could only mean a powerful necromancer, sorcerer, or something even worse...

Players' Introduction

The PCs are wandering through the grassy plains and sparse woodlands just outside the large city of Raven Keep. The city's walls just loom in the distance, but when they arrive at the bustling metropolis, they find it busily preparing for war.

Raven Keep is one of the strongest city-states in the Mystic Domain, both militarily and economically. It is raising militia to join its regular armu because news has been discovered that Shadowhold, Raven Keep's longtime adversary, is raising its own army and preparing to march towards the Middle Realm. Only Raven Keep stands in the way of Shadowhold's well-trained soldiers.

Unknown to the patriotic citizens of Raven Keep – and to the players – Shadowhold is *not* marching south towards Raven Keep, but east into the Dragonspire Mountains.

Any PC with military contacts can find out that Raven Keep is planning to merge its army with the smaller forces of the cities of Tarne and



Waterdrift in three days. An alliance has formed between these three towns, and Raven Keep hopes more settlements will follow their lead. From Raven Keep, the three armies will intercept the Shadow army near Shadow Pass, Shadowhold's fortified outpost that guards the mountain pass that leads to the larger city.

A History roll, or Area Knowledge-2 roll will reveal something odd about this plan. In the last eight Shadowhold offensives over the last two centuries, their army *never* march through ShadowPass. A Strategy roll will reveal the exact reason behind Shadowhold's decisions. For years, Shadowhold has avoided marching through Shadow Pass to attack because the rough ground would make it easy for a defending army to ambush them. Shadowhold has always marched past Shadow Pass, into the Valley of the Dragon, and then south towards the Middle Realm through Wayward Pass, a neutral merchant city that never puts up much of a fight. It would be foolish for Shadowhold to march through Shadow Pass and directly attack Tarne and Raven Keep, especially having given the Middle Realms so much advance notice of their march.

The PCs are encouraged to join the militia. Most of the trainees have little knowledge of the lands outside Raven Keep, so the PCs are encouraged to become advance scouts for the army. Raven Keep will pay the PCs a moderate amount for their services, and ask that they try to locate the exact position of the enemy army.

The Town of Tarne

The small town of Tarne is the first settlement between Shadow Pass and the Middle Realm. As a result, it is one of the most fortified towns in the Middle Realm. It has a long history of being conquered and retaken, and its citizens are tough and outspoken.

Tarne is a logical stopping point for the PCs as they journey into the mountains towards Shadow Pass. They will find several hundred archers manning the walls; the guards demand the identity from any visitors during this time.

The small town is bustling and preparing for the war. Blacksmiths pound away at new weapons and armor, and priests bless the many soldiers in training. Two mages practice hurling fireballs at each other, carefully dueling to get in shape for the upcoming conflict.

The Tarne army, recently joined by comrades from Waterdrift, is half the size of Raven Keep's – about 2,000 soldiers. At this point, many of them aren't armed with any more than pitchforks and long knives. Raven Keep, it seems, is the only town with regular infantry.

If the PCs need some more manpower in their party, two young men are eager to join up. One is Sebastian, a young priest of Huga, God of Strength. The other is Johanne, a warrior with a slight limp, which is why he hasn't been allowed to join the militia.

Any character with military contacts may discover that the advance scouts of Tarne still haven't seen Shadow soldiers advancing beyond Shadow Pass. Still, spies have confirmed a large army has moved out of Shadowhold and towards Shadow Pass, but not beyond the outpost.

At this point, the PCs can travel on to Shadow Pass, or wait for the army, which is planning on ambushing the Shadow army in the mountains near Shadow Pass.

On the Road

After traveling in the autumn wilderness for a few days, the PCs will spot and hear several men on horseback riding towards them. The men are screaming at the top of their lungs – not in a battle cry – but in fear.

A Heraldry roll reveals that their uniforms identify them as Rampant Warriors, elite Shadow Pass guard. Unknown to the PCs, these warriors are actually remnants of the Shadow army, which has recently been affected by a horrible, magical darkness. There are five of these warriors. Treat them as Berserk, who will attack savagely, not caring about their own welfare.

If the party is full of heroic warriors, the GM can make the Rampant Warriors a challeng-

ing fight. They will be skilled, well-armored, and vicious to any who does not bear their own colors.

If the party is not prepared for a hard combat, the Rampant Warriors will be fatigued and wounded, and not put up much of a fight. In either case, the Warriors will fight to the death.

If the PCs attempt to talk to the Warriors, they will get only gurgling, inhuman sounding responses.

When the PCs inspect the men after the battle, they will notice that they have extremely sunken eye sockets, and that on their chest, parts of their rib cage push through their skin. This may call for a Fright Check!

An Armoury-2 roll (or Armoury +2 for a dwarf), History -4, or Blacksmith -2 roll will reveal that one of the men's breastplates bears the signature of the dwarven master-craftsman Duringard. This breastplate was crafted over a century ago out of an iron-mithril blend, and gives the armor an extra point of DR.

Shadow Pass

Shadow Pass is the only way through the mountains into the valleys that surround Shadowhold. Unless PCs are skilled at Survival and experts at mountain-climbing, they need to enter the Pass.

Shadow Pass is a fort, occupied only by well-trained guards and expert marksmen. There is no reason to dally inside the Pass, only to get past it.

For dramatic effect, the PCs should arrive at Shadow Pass at night. The small outpost is built into the side of two mountains, with a high wall and portcullis guarding the main pass. A Vision roll (-6 for darkness) will reveal dozens of men armed with crossbows guarding the pass.

The guards are on edge, having heard that a war is brewing from their commanders. They are looking especially close for spies and scouts, and will attack anyone who looks suspicious. If the PCs capture and interrogate a guard, they will reveal that the army has already passed by Shadow

Pass and is heading into the Valley of the Dragon, just as they have for the last two centuries.

Unless the PCs have an extraordinary plan, their best bet is to sneak past the guards and through the pass. Climbing the gate is easy (+3), but avoiding the patrols is a bit harder (their watchmen have IQ 12). After the PCs get through Shadow Pass, they'd better know which way to go. The valleys are twisted, and only a PC with Area Knowledge or Absolute Direction will know which way to go to get to either Shadowhold (west) or Dragon Pass (east).

The Skeleton Patrol

A night after crossing the Pass, a loud noise will awaken the PCs (Hearing +3 to wake up). An inhuman screech is all the warning the PCs will get before being attacked by rotting skeletal warriors (Fright Check, probably).

These six undead warriors once patrolled the area as guards for Shadowhold. Now they are tortured to walk for eternity as undead. Remember, crushing weapons do double damage against skeletons. Impaling weapons do -2 damage, and no bonus.

Skeleton Patrol

ST 10 **Move/Dodge:** 6/6
DX 12 **Skills:** Broadsword-12
IQ 8
HT 11

Equipment: Cloth armor (PD 1, DR 1), rusted broadsword (1d imp, 1d+2 cut), 10 silvers

Any mage making an IQ + Magery roll will suspect powerful Necromantic magic going on. These skeletons seem to have all been created at about the same time, which is a hard task for all but the most powerful of sorcerers.

A Heraldry roll will reveal that these were soldiers of Shadowhold, once. Their uniforms are current, though a bit tattered and rotted.

A Vision-4 roll will find a gold and diamond ring on the rotting fingers of the highest ranking skeleton warrior. On the inside, inscribed in Arcanian, the language of the southern lands, is "Azthonius' Ward." An Identify Magic spell will reveal that the ring is enchanted with a full-powered Blur spell (-2 to all attacks to hit the PC), but it must be twisted around the finger three times to start working, which takes a full second, and will last 5 seconds before the ward ceases.

An Area Knowledge-5 roll will identify the corpse as that of Captain Ibrimsham, a noted and wealthy tactician in the Shadowhold army.

Shadowhold

If the PCs visit Shadowhold, the city will be extremely unapproachable and hostile. It's locked shut, because the Shadows have gotten word of Raven Keep's own army. Guards and mages line the walls, prepared to detect and kill any stranger. Some of the mages will attempt to capture the PCs and use them for their own (city-sanctioned) experiments.

It is best the PCs leave adventuring in Shadowhold to another day.

The Valley of the Dragon

The farther the PCs travel to the east, the darker it gets. Soon, the sun disappears entirely, and the ambient light in the region slowly fades away, even in the middle of the afternoon! Lightning will occasionally light up the sky a bright, but crimson red.

A Tracking roll will reveal that an army did, indeed, move through this pass. The tracks are about four days old.

Eventually, the PCs will stumble across several skeletal bodies on the ground, accompanied by some rapidly-decomposing human bod-

ies nearby. It looks as if a skirmish of some sort occurred. The bodies have already been looted.

A Meteorology roll will reveal that it's about an hour away from a heavy rainstorm.

The Hill

The Valley of the Dragon will incline until it comes to a large, twelve foot embankment. Years ago, the dwarves of the mountains carved wide steps into the ledge so that entire armies could easily go over it. But peering over this embankment will reveal a terrible sight...

A thousand, armed skeletons, screeching in anger and terror surround a single desolate hill, atop which stands a brittle, dead tree. The skeletons move around the tree in horrible patterns, making their shrill cries. Soon the rain starts, drowning out only a bit of the horrible screams.

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The history behind this tree is strange indeed. A History-6 roll, or a suitable magic spell, will only reveal parts of it. For a thousand years, armies would stop at this tree and hang its traitors and deserters. Even the dwarves, years ago, used it to slay traitors and captives. These dead spirits inhabited the tree, their tortured souls twisting it and slowly killing it. In its own demise, the tree became a powerful artifact of evil. If such a thing were possible, the tree itself has become undead, and a powerful necromantic force.

The power of the tree is simple: Anyone killed in its vicinity becomes undead – and in the tree's control. The more undead it controls, the larger an area it can affect.

The tree, however, is not brilliant. In fact, it is barely sentient. It sees its undead soldiers as its seeds, which must be spread throughout the land quickly.

A good IQ roll or spell may figure some of this out. A botched IQ roll will make a character believe that the skeletons are merely enthralled by the tree.



The true horror is that if the army from the Middle Realm arrives here, the combat that ensues will only result in a victory for the undead. For every man that falls, another will rise in his place on the side of evil.

The Shadowhold army was fully intending to raid the Middle Realm when they stumbled upon the tree. Now, their entire army lies in the tree's power.

The GM may allow a few survivors of the Shadowhold, particularly mages, to contact the PCs in the hills surrounding the tree. If the PCs have no way of knowing the history of the tree, one of these NPCs can impart his knowledge to them.

Devious GMs may have these Shadowhold mages befriended the PCs and then backstab them! After all, since Shadowhold's once-great army was wiped out, these mages would love for Raven Keep's army to have the same fate. Perhaps the mages are too short-sighted to understand the complications of having a huge undead army, twice the size of any army that has been seen in these mountains, existing in this valley.

The Darkness

To add some tension, a scout from the Raven Keep army will find the PCs, and tell them that Shadow Pass has fallen, and the army is only a day behind him. Raven Keep's generals heard that the Shadow army passed by Shadow Pass, and now hopes to attack them from the rear in this valley.

Furthermore, the scout will happily tell the PCs that dwarven mercenaries from Tower Point – just a little beyond Raven Keep – will arrive at this location any minute to help. Unfortunately, the dwarves will arrive on the opposite side of the tree, and have no knowledge what's going on, they may attack.

The tree has DR 8 and 32 hit points. The ultimate solution is to chop it down while distracting the skeletons. Once the tree is destroyed, all of its skeletons will turn to dust and blow away

in the wind.

However, with the destruction of such a powerful force, a lightning bolt from the heavens will surge towards it. Most mages will be able to figure this out. This magical backlash will do 5d damage to anyone within a hundred yards, destroy the remains of the tree and put a nice crater where the hill once stood.

If the PCs manage to destroy the tree, they will be rewarded by the army of Raven Keep. Alas, they will only be rewarded with standard scout pay – about fifty silvers.

Character Points

Each player should receive 1 to 3 character points for roleplaying and creativity. If the players managed to destroy the tree without the Raven Keep army suffering any losses, add another 1.

Legend of the Forgotten Falls

Introduction

The cool waterfall cascaded over the gray rocks as the gentle wind ran swiftly through the trees. The small stone tower on the top of the falls has been abandoned for decades, and parts of it can be seen crumbling into the falls. Every now and then, however, especially at dawn and dusk, a bright blue-green glow will emanate from the tower, letting all those nearby know that the magic that once inhabited this place has not disappeared entirely.

Adventure Summary

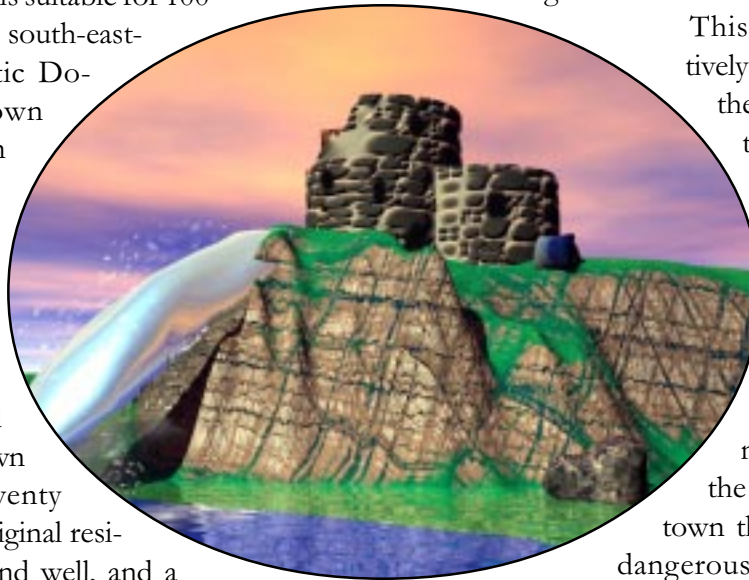
This adventure is suitable for 100-point characters. In the south-eastern part of the Mystic Domains lies a small town known as the Forgotten Falls. The original name of this serene forest town has long been lost since the town disappeared for an entire century, then suddenly reappeared one day. When the town reappeared – over twenty years ago now – the original residents were still alive and well, and a mysterious and magical waterfall formed itself outside the town.

However, the ruined tower of the sorcerer Mezwyn, the man thought to be responsible for the strange happenings, has recently been generating great surges of magic. No one has dared approach the tower, for it is rumored to contain dark magicks capable of hurling the town to another dimension once again.

However, now that the tower seems active again, the town council has declared that the

Grimoire of Mezwyn, supposedly one of the most complete and ancient of all magical tomes, must be recovered, for surely that is the source of the magical surges. By all accounts, the grimoire remains in the ruined tower. The town has declared that the tower of Mezwyn is open for explorers, adventurers, and rogues. They may keep anything they find inside the tower, except for the grimoire, which must be turned over to the town, who then plans to give the book away to a powerful wizard Mazarrian, who will safeguard it for eternity.

This adventure is relatively straightforward, and the GM is encouraged to add to it. Perhaps the wizard Mazarrian has just entered town and is still trying to convince the town council to recover the grimoire. He may enlist the help of the PCs to convince the town that the tower is still dangerous with the grimoire



inside.

The GM could run this adventure as a “race,” with the PCs trying to reach the tower and claim the grimoire before any of the other mercenaries in the area do. Or, perhaps the PCs are the only heroes actually brave enough to explore the tower.

Players’ Introduction

The PCs have wandered south into the Vast Plains for a few weeks now, occasionally vis-

iting the small lake-town fishing and farm villages. Soon, they find themselves at the banks of the beautiful Cascade River, which proceeds north into a forest inhabited by elves, and a little bit south to the Forgotten Falls.

The Forgotten Falls is a small, but prosperous town. The entire place is high mana, which led to more than one wizard and mage moving into the area for research purposes. The town itself holds a weapon and armor shop, horse stables, a small inn (the “River Dragon”), an alchemy shop, and an equipment store (which is expensive, at least 20% higher prices).

An Area Knowledge roll will reveal the odd and magical history behind this town. A good roll, or specific knowledge of this town, will show the PCs the exact location of the falls, Mezwyn’s tower, as well as the best places to shop. Apparently, many of the resident wizards will happily sell some minor magical items and salves to anyone willing to pay them. While these mages do not own shops, most will welcome someone who politely knocks on their door and inquires about their wares.

Most of the resident wizards make their homes outside the town center. The mages prefer this for privacy, and the town prefers it in case any accidents should occur.

When the PCs enter the River Dragon, they will find a small crowd of adventurers, mercenaries, and heroes-to-be gathered around an old bard bearded man who is strumming a mandolin of some sort and telling a story. He tells of the tower atop the falls that none dare enter because of the magical bursts of energy that disintegrate all strangers, and the fierce creatures that live atop the falls. The old bard will wink at one of the PCs. A good reaction roll here will find the PCs the directions to the tower.

Talking with the natives will reveal the town’s new policy regarding the tower. Where it was off-limits for years, it is now being explored by dozens of brave warriors. Naturally, several of these warriors have not yet returned.

The PCs may encounter Meeladd, a rogueish fellow who visited the tower, but fled.

Although he makes it sound like a great dragon drove him away, it was actually the steep climb up the falls that scared him. That, and the existence of troll droppings.

The Events Prior to the Tower

The area around the falls is heavily wooded and thorned, and no easy paths can be seen leading up to the top of the falls. There are

Fish Trolls

ST 27	Move/Dodge: 5/6 (8/8 in water)
DX 12	Damage: Claws (2-hex reach)
IQ 8	1d+3 cut
HT 12/22	

Equipment: Rags and half-eaten fish bones

Note: Fish trolls regenerate 1 hit every third turn.

several adventurers already in the woods, also looking for a way into the tower, and the PCs may run across some of them at this point. Some of these men may ally themselves to the PCs, while others will be jealous and dangerous.

Even more dangerous, there are four fish trolls living near the falls. Odd creatures with gills and fish scales, these trolls are nasty and extremely protective of their land.

One of the trolls has an IQ 9 – he’s the leader and will brandish a heavy tree stump as a weapon (3d+2 crushing). He likes to take wild swings at his foe’s head.

The troll leader also has an amulet around his forehead (it won’t fit around his neck). The gold and silver amulet – marked with a moon – is inscribed in elven: *Through the magic of the high and exalted elf lord queen, Liring XII, the wearer shall bear the protection of the queen against those who opposed him during her reign.*

A History-3 roll will recall the fact that Liring XII was plagued by lycanthropes during her reign. As such, this amulet is enchanted with Fortify +4 against a were-beast!

The Forgotten Tower

Ahead of the PCs is the top of the great waterfall. Built over the waterfall, on some large rocks, is Mezwyn's ruined tower. Getting across will be a trick, as the rocks are slippery with algae (Climbing-4), and the distance from the shoreline to the tower is about 15 yards.

The tower has a single door, which is singed and burned, and single window about five stories up. Technically, the PCs can climb up the tower, but the climb is extremely dangerous, as the tower is crumbling. All Climbing rolls are at -2, and anyone heavier than 200 lbs. is at an extra -2!

The door to the tower is ajar, but magically trapped. Any careful inspection will reveal two small jewels, one in the side of the door, the other in the frame. A soft light passes between the magical gems, and if anything interrupts this light, a 3d Deathtouch will burst from the door at the nearest victim! The jewels can become disenchanting, or they may both be smashed at precisely the same time to disarm the trap. A Traps-2 roll will reveal this particular way of disarming such a trap.

The Brownie Fountain

The tower opens up into a large fountain room, now dried up. In the middle of the fountain is a model of this very tower. If anyone thinks to look into the tower's window, they'll be in for a treat. Brownies have taken residence in this small tower, and will cast their Knack of Absent-Mindedness on the PC (skill 15). He'll have the disadvantage for 20-HT days.

The brownies will laugh and poke their toothpick-sized swords at the PCs. They mean no real harm, but they will plague the PCs in an attempt to play every practical joke they can think of.

The brownies are easy to scare off, but this should be roleplayed.

The spiral stairs that lead up are also crumbling, and require a Climbing roll to climb, or else a person will fall 1d yards.

At the top of the tower is another door, marked "Enter the Laboratory only when the green gem is lit."

The green gem is smashed to pieces, and its pieces lie worthless on the floor.

The GM could add another clever trap here, if the PCs haven't had much trouble with the first trap or the brownies. More likely, however, the door is Magelocked.

The door opens into a laboratory of some kind. Most of the materials here are shattered and broken, though a few, minor alchemical formulas might still remain.

Sitting atop a pedestal of some sort is a large and ornate tome. Surely, this is Mezwyn's grimoire.

Anyone that comes within three yards of the grimoire will receive a nasty surprise. The pedestal is trapped with a Flash spell, and will probably blind most PCs. Suddenly, a black robed, and red-eyed figure appears, hisses, and curses at the PCs.

This undead nightmare is the lich of Mezwyn. He was hiding, invisible, in his tower when he heard the PCs enter. Cursed by his own



experiments, he has been trapped in his own tower for years, and yearns to find a way to inhabit the body of one of the invaders.

The lich will probably threaten the PCs, demanding that they leave. He fully realizes that he is immensely more powerful than them, and is in no rush to blast them into ashes... not yet.

If asked, Mezwyn will explain that he was intending to open a portal in the Forgotten Falls, a portal which would let merchants and traders visit the town freely from any part of the Domain. Unfortunately, his spell backfired, and the entire town vanished for centuries.

Mezwyn has since been driven mad by his imprisonment, though this is not immediately obvious. He is highly possessive of his grimoire, which he hopes to use to restore himself. His restoration spell, however, requires a living body, not an undead one.

Mezwyn will first try to convince a PC mage to read the restoration spell. The spell is insanely complicated, but an IQ+Magery -5 roll will reveal that the spell will actually slay the reader's soul and allow the lich to take possession of his body!

If the PCs refuse to help him, he will resort to using his full range of mind control and body control spells to achieve the same effect.

If, by some chance, Mezwyn is restored, he will be a surprisingly nice, if not overly-ambitious man. More than likely, however, Mezwyn will angrily attack the PCs.

The GM may decide that Mezwyn's death will collapse the tower. If the tower starts collaps-

ing with the PCs in it, they can attempt to run out of the tower. All PCs with a Move of 6 or higher may make a DX roll to flee the tower in safety. If they don't have a high Move, or fail the DX roll, they will take 6 dice damage from the crumbling tower, and have a 50% chance of ending up buried under the water.

The best solution for most PCs is to leap out the window. The fall is 15 yards (15d-30 damage), but a Swimming roll will halve the damage. Cold and wet, the PCs will probably head back to town.

The Finale

The GM has a few options here. He can let the PCs recover the grimoire, which will probably include several powerful spells, or introduce a plot hook that will keep the PCs busy for a long time to come. However, Mazarrian will demand the grimoire back, and probably not give the PCs enough time to study its powerful magic. He may reward the PCs, however, with a spell or two from his own library, or one of the "harmless" spells from the grimoire. See the Appendix for descriptions of several new spells and elixirs that would be appropriate.

Better yet, the PCs can have the book stolen right out from under them. The following plot hook was used in the original adventure.

The old bard telling the story in the tavern was actually the disguised brother of one of the adventurers. His name is Hathan, and he is a ruthless and villainous mastermind. He told the story to get young adventurers to recover the grimoire, so he could steal it without endangering himself, or his brigands.

Hathan's brigands are ready for the PCs. Armed with nets and spears, with bowmen hidden in the trees, they'll demand the grimoire. Once they get it, Hathan will introduce himself, apologize for his sibling's lack of apparent intelligence, and then flee.

Mezwyn the Lich

ST 16	Move/Dodge: 7/7
DX 14	Damage: See below
IQ 16	Advantages: Magery 3, Extra
HT 10/35	Fatigue +10

Note: Mezwyn attacks with his undead grasp. It bypasses armor and causes 2d fatigue damage.

Hathan has a boat ready for him on the Cascade falls, to take it south to Arcania, where he will then travel to the coast in search of another artifact – the Dragon Rock.

Mazarrian will know doubt be frustrated that the grimoire was stolen. He mutters something about the power of the grimoire only capable of evil, despite the fact that Mezwyn was, in his time, a decent person.

Character Points

Each player should receive 1 to 3 character points for roleplaying and creativity. If the players managed to destroy (or rescue!) the lich and recover the grimoire, add another 1. If the Hathan subplot was used, add another point for the players' trouble.

SHADOWS IN THE MIDST

Through the darkness and eerie silence a figure was seen. Dressed in a blue robe that matched the night sky, he stealthily glided through the moonlit court, steel flashing occasionally in his hand. The figure stopped under a doorway and climbed up the stone building. Suddenly, he was climbing into the sky, as if the air itself was his ladder! Within moments, he had vanished leaving only the wind whistling through the town.

Adventure Summary

The rich son of a famous general is organizing a scheme to turn a militaristic city's Thieves Guild into a highly-efficient Assassins Guild. By sending waves of killers into the city, he hopes to become filthy rich and control the nobles through fear and manipulation.

So far, his plan is working...

Warhass Kom: An Overview

Sages debate whether Warhass Kom is truly a city, or rather a fortress. In any case, the walled settlement is very militarized. The Caetors, heavily armed and armored elite guards, patrol the streets in groups of nine. They do not take kindly to strangers, violent outbreaks, or even suspicious glances.

Each of the three entrances to the city is defended by several dozen crossbowmen. Entrance

to the city is free, though exit costs 10 silvers.

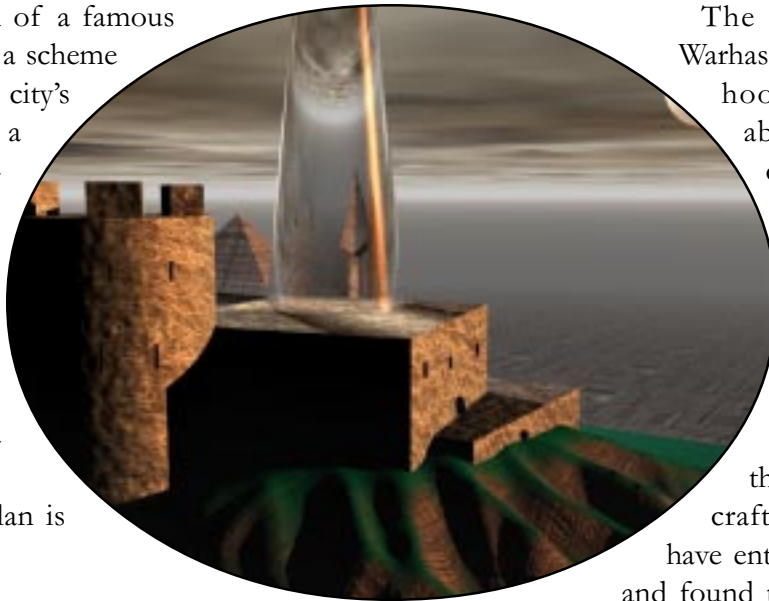
As heavily guarded as the city is, it does not prevent a large Thieves Guild from operating. Rogues and brigands make a fortune lifting merchants' purses. The town guard seems to look the other way, unless the offender is not a member of the Guild. Then, punishment is swift and often deadly.

Players' Introduction

The PCs have entered Warhass Kom, in all likelihood knowing little about its militaristic culture and current situation. They might have taken shelter from a harsh winter, or sought out some of the fine weapons and armor that the city's blacksmiths craft. In any case, they have entered the walled city and found their way to one of

the many inns.

An Area Knowledge roll will reveal that Warhass Kom is known for its huge army, many tolls, and secret police. Likewise, a Streetwise or Area Knowledge roll will tell a PC to watch his step while in the city, for the harsh justice system is especially cruel to strangers. In Warhass Kom, sedition is the ultimate crime, and in the eyes of the elite Caetors, strangers are all the more likely to commit it.



The Old Dwarf's Beard

This inn is pretty typical of those in Warhass Kom. Most gentlemen and ladies stay away from these establishments, preferring the elegant dining halls in the center of the city. Rather, this inn is filled with grizzled craftsmen, men escaping from their angry wives, and, of course, rogues of every sort.

Unless the PCs pick their seat carefully, their purses are in danger. Each PC should make an IQ roll against Pickpocketing-14 to notice that some of their items or money may have disappeared.

The serving wench, Shanna, is a jovial, talkative sort, and is easily impressed by heroic-looking strangers. She encourages the PCs to enjoy the fine ale and dwarven singing that permeates this hall. Her father, Ulf, runs the tavern and will keep a wary eye on any strangers Shanna befriends. Many have taken advantage of his daughter, and he keeps a heavy club behind the counter for anyone who would try again.

Tavern Talk

A successful Carousing roll will let a character blend in and get chatty with the local clients. They routinely talk about the "Unseen Tyrant," and jokingly toast this mysterious person.

Talking more to the inn crowd will reveal that the "Unseen Tyrant" is a man known only as Grimfinger. He has some association with the Thieves Guild, though he is a newcomer to Warhass Kom. Both the guards and rogues of the town openly dislike Grimfinger, though it is clear he demands quite a bit of respect.

The Caetors

Later that night, shortly after midnight, a group of Caetors enters the inn. They demand that the inn close up for the night, as there have been several reports of robber in the vicinity. Travelers are advised to rent a room upstairs; locals are told to go home.

The Caetors can be depicted in several ways. GMs who feel their PCs need a good fight

can have the Caetors pick one, or perhaps a fight can break out over Shanna. Her father Ulf will quickly leap to the rescue, smashing the skulls of anyone who threatens her.

On the otherhand, if the PCs are law-abiding, heroic types, the Caetors can befriend them. Perhaps they will have a drink with the PCs before advising the inn to close down for the night. If pressed The Caetors will explain that Grimfinger has infiltrated the guard and they believe him to be behind several assassinations. Worse, the assassinations have been targeting high-ranking Caetor captains and lieutenants. They'd offer a reward for his capture, but are afraid that such an action would incur the wrath of Grimfinger and his able assassins.

Grimfinger's Five

Shortly after the PCs go to sleep for the night, they will be approached by five of Grimfinger's assassins. They steal into the PCs room through a secret entrance in the fireplace.

The assassins were directed towards the PCs by their actions in the inn – whether befriend- ing the Caetors or fighting them.

The five assassins chief goal is to recruit the PCs. Four of the assassins have their tongues cut out. The leader offers decent pay, but demands complete subservience to Grimfinger. He informs them clearly that refusal into Grimfinger's service means death.

If the PCs agree to help, they will receive their first assignment. A scroll demands the death of the innkeeper Ulf and his daughter. No explanations is given. The real reason – which the PCs may never find out – is that a local noble, Tyron More, is infatuated with Shanna. Grimfinger plans on assassination Tyron more, but not before he hurts him deeply with the death of Shanna and her father. The pay for this job is 500 silvers each; 700 if they can do it in a particularly gruesome fashion. Half the money is paid up front.

If the PCs refuse the job, they'll have a fight on their hands.

Assassins

ST 12 **Move/Dodge:** 6/7
DX 13 **Skills:** Shortsword-16, Knife-15
IQ 11 Knife Throwing-15, Stealth-16
HT 11 **Advantages:** Combat Reflexes,
Night Vision

Equipment: Leather armor (PD 2, DR 2),
shortsword (1d+2 cut, 1d-1 imp, Parry 9),

The Fireplace

The mantle of the fireplace holds a secret entrance to a cavern network below the city. Opening the mantle requires a Traps-2 roll to find and unhitch the door.

If the PCs didn't notice the assassins entering the room, the GM can allow everyone to make a Hearing roll when the last assassin falls. His weapon clatters to the floor near the fireplace and makes a strange, *hollow* echo. If they fail to notice the sound, the GM can point out that the windows look undisturbed, and the door to the room is still locked.

There's a long shaft that leads down into darkness. PCs must make two Climbing rolls to scurry down. If they fail the first, they fall 8 yards to the rock floor for 8d-16 damage. If they fail the second, they fall 5 yards for 4d-12 damage. Acrobatics can't be used to lessen fall damage, since there's no room to maneuver. A successful ST roll, however, will slow the fall down and reduce the fall by 3 yards.

The Caverns

Dark and damp, it is difficult to tell whether this cavern network is natural or artificial. A Geology roll will reveal that it is actually partially carved – it was as if someone was going to carve a tunnel network, but stopped long before completion.

A Tracking roll will allow the PCs to track the assassins back to their origin point. Fortunately, the cavern floor is muddy and shows their bootprints fairly clearly.

If the PCs fail the Tracking roll, they will wander around for several hours without any luck. They may encounter some of the bugbears that call this underground network their home. Or, if the PCs are itching for some combat, they can meet the bugbears anyway. If the PCs agreed to the assassins' deal, and followed them back into the fireplace, there's a good chance the assassins will ambush them, demanding to know why they are being followed.

Bugbears

ST 18 **Move/Dodge:** 7/8
DX 12 **Skills:** Polearm-12, Stealth-12
IQ 7 Tracking-10
HT 14 **Advantages:** Combat Reflexes,
Night Vision, Alertness +3,
Toughness (DR+1)

Equipment: Tattered leather armor (PD 1, DR 1),
cheap bill polearm (1d+5 imp, 3d+3 cut, Parry 7,
one turn to ready after swing, see p. CII29).

Because of the inconvenient size of their weapons, the bugbears will not attack in a narrow corridor. Instead, they lie in wait for the PCs in the more expansive cavern rooms. They particularly like to ambush people coming out of a narrow, one-yard crawlspace – it's easier to cut their prey in half as they crawl out on their hands and knees! And if the prey refuses to come out, they use the hooks on their polearms to drag them out!

The lead bugbear has IQ 9 and Magic Resistance +3.

The bugbears do have some valuable items nearby, buried in a heap of giant beetle shells and animal remains. There are even the remains of an assassin that the bugbears have been eating – he's missing both his hands, so PCs can surmise he didn't accidentally stumble upon the bugbears.

Buried in the lair is a nice pothelm (too big for the bugbears) inlaid with some small rubies (worth about 500 silvers) and a matching jeweled dagger (too big for the bugbears) with a fine blade.

The Ornate Door

As the PCs are tracking the assassins, a Vision roll will spot an ornate door carved in the ceiling. It is at least ten yards above the cavern floor.

The PCs will have to come up with a clever way to get up there. A Vision-4 roll will reveal a piton hammered into the stone near the door. A rope could be attached to it.

The door is locked. It requires a Lockpicking roll (-3 if the rogue is hanging upside down) to pick. A Traps-5 roll will also discover a hidden magical alarm on the door.

The Library

The trap door leads into a library, presumably deep in the basement of one of the many noble manors strewn throughout the city.

The library does not have many books, though it has a significant amount of maps that detail the city, the underground cave network, and other nearby settlements. There is a large heap of scrolls, most of them assassination contracts. Another ornate door – with a peephole – leads out of the room into a long, stone corridor.

A Research roll will give a PC the general gist of the information here. Grimfinger is establishing a first-rate Assassin's Guild from the elite of the Warhass Kom Thieves Guild. He is offering it services to any noble, guard, or even peasant with the right amount of pay. He is becoming fantastically rich, and is slowly spreading his tendrils to other cities.

Before the PCs can do thorough investigation, they'll hear several footsteps coming their way – assassins!

The assassins are heavily armed and accompanied by a mage, who discovered that the alarm to the door had been tripped. If the PCs avoided the magical alarm, the assassins will not be accompanied by the mage,

but will be on their way to the cavern system to carry out a mission.

The PCs can fight the assassins, but they are assassin elites: highly trained and equipped with poisoned blades. Their best bet is to escape!

If the PCs defeat the assassins, they will discover that they were on their way to assassinate Prince Saian, an elf noble noted for pushing Warhass Kom towards democratic rule. Saian has many enemies, but no one has dared move against him since it is rumored he has many elven allies.

Beyond the corridor lies a hidden door that leads into a wine cellar. The library is located in a noble's basement, unknown even to him.

Cavern Escape

If the PCs dash into the caverns, they'll have to make an IQ-3 roll to remember which way to go – there are many paths leading in different directions.

If the PCs get lost, they'll end up on a precarious ledge that dangles over an underground lake. Assassins hot on their tails, they can jump into the lake to escape!

The ledge is a 30-yard fall (30d-60 damage). If the PCs make a Swimming roll, they can halve the damage. Swimming rolls are made at +3 if they enter the water intentionally.

The archers will rain arrows down upon the PCs, but will most likely miss. In any case, the PCs will be swept by the lake tide into a tight cavern system, where eventually they will be dumped out through the sewers in a dirty lake outside the city.



Discovering the Plan

If the PCs grabbed any amount of material from the library, and did not defeat the assassins, they'll discover that the assassins' next target is the elven lord, Prince Saian. Otherwise, they'll have to go back to the library, where they can discover the location of Grimfinger's secret base – the so-called “Tower of Shadows.”

Sneaking Back Into Town

If any assassins were left, they contact the mage Daxus who informs the crooked guards at the gate that the PCs are notorious bandits.

If the PCs try to enter town through the main gate, the nervous guards will stop them. If the PCs don't leave immediately, the guards will hatch a scheme to capture, or kill, the PCs. The most common trick is to lure them into the gateway arch with an unsuspecting guard acting as lure, where both portcullises are slammed down, trapping the PCs. Crossbowmen will quickly aim at the PCs and they'll be told to strip down and prepare for their arrest.

If the PCs don't escape, the GM can imprison them where they'll await torture and questioning, probably by the nefarious mage Daxus, Grimfinger's assassin henchman.

The best way to sneak back into town is to climb over the wall at night, swim back through the sewers, or disguise themselves going through the main gate. No matter what they choose, it won't be easy. If they befriended the Caetors at the beginning of the adventure, the noble guard will help them stay hidden for a while.

Prince Saian

Prince Saian lives in a villa on the third hill of the city. He is a kindly old elf, though he is highly suspicious of strangers since the waves of assassinations began.

The assassins plan to slay him in his sleep by putting a deadly snake in his sheets. Since the PCs interrupted the original assassination group, Grimfinger sends one of his elites to take care of the job:

Zad Ylel, High Assassin

ST 14	Move/Dodge: 7/8
DX 16	Skills: Buckler-18, Knife-20
IQ 13	Knife Throwing-18, Stealth-18
HT 12	Advantages: Combat Reflexes, Acute Hearing +3, Strong Will +2

Equipment: Black leather armor, enchanted with Fortify +1 (PD 2, DR 3), hellblade knife (1d+2 imp, magically bypasses all PD and DR)

It is highly likely that Zad Ylel's knife is poisoned with a rare snake venom (Type A, 3d damage). After one hit, the venom will be gone.

Zad Ylel also carries three pouches of Disappearance Dust, a unique magic item that, when thrown up in the air, makes him invisible for 1d seconds.

The Location of the Tower

If Zad Ylel is captured and interrogated, he'll reveal the location of Grimfinger's tower – the Tower of Shadows. It's an invisible tower mounted on top of one of Sir Udhain Fince's manor. An Area Knowledge roll will reveal that Udhain Fince is Warhass Kom's most notorious general. If pressed, Zad Ylel insists that Udhain Fince is unaware of the tower, and that the entrance is in his mistress' bedroom closet. This is all true.

Getting to the Tower

Udhain Fince has used Grimfinger's services quite regularly, so mentioning any sort of association between the two is bad diplomacy. PCs good at deception, or stealth, or even fast-talking can find away into Udhain Fince's manor. Optionally, the GM could make it easy for the players and assume Udhain Fince is not home, but camping with his army to the south.

The Tower of Shadows

This is Grimfinger's grand achievement – an invisible tower in the middle of the city where he can run his assassination business. One day, he hopes to rule the town as a puppeteer, but for now he's content to make an extraordinary amount of wealth.

The tower is utterly tall – about two-hundred feet, although it actually has only three floors.

The First Floor

This floor is a meeting room, where Grimfinger associates with a few, high-ranking assassins. A large table is here, along with a granite chalkboard. A locked door leads up winding stairs into the second floor.

The Second Floor

Located midway up the tower, this floor provides living quarters for Daxus, Grimfinger's mage, and the man who created this enchanted tower. Daxus is loyal to Grimfinger, though he is wary of his ambitious master.

The GM may make Daxus present to soften up the PCs if they approach the tower too strong. He is primarily an enchanter, however, and not a master battle mage. He will quickly flee any dangerous situation, turning himself invisible then levitating out of the tower. Before he leaves, however, he will warn Grimfinger that the PCs are coming.

The Top Floor

This is Grimfinger's quarters, with an expansive balcony that overlooks the city. When the PCs enter, the quarters will be empty – Grimfinger is waiting outside on the balcony, ready to slam his opponents and knock them all 200 feet to the marble hard roof of Udhain Fince's manor.

Grimfinger is a fast fighter, armed with Disappearance Dust and a fine, but normal sword. An ornate gold mask hides his face, for in his business, identity is everything. In reality, he is Moldane, the son of Udhain Fince. Despising his father's

direct and blunt military ways, Moldane decided that he would gain control of the city and then use his father and his army as a puppet. It's not a terribly bright plan, but Moldane is a hardened warrior and a skilled assassin. And he won't let any meddling adventurers reveal his secret. He'd sooner plummet to the city streets before allowing himself to be captured.

The GM is encouraged to design a 100 to 150 point character to represent Grimfinger, and to play him as an intelligent, wealthy, and cunning villain. The following are only general guidelines.

Grimfinger

ST 15	Move/Dodge: 6/7
DX 13	Skills: Shortsword-15, Knife-16
IQ 13	Knife Throwing-14, Stealth-16
HT 12	Advantages: Combat Reflexes, Alertness +3, Strong Will +1

Equipment: Black leather armor, enchanted with Fortify +1 (PD 2, DR 3), golden mask (DR 3), fine shortsword (1d+2 imp, 2d+2 cut, Parry 8), four pouches of Disappearance Dust.

Loot

The GM may allow the PCs to collect some of the wealth from the tower. Mostly, the wealth is in the form of fine vases, rugs, and china. It can be pawned for several thousand silvers, although pawning it in Warhass Kom might identify them as Moldane's slayer, which would earn them enemies of General Udhain Fince!

The GM can also provide them with the alchemical formula for Disappearance Dust. See the appendix for details.

Character Points

Each player should receive 1 to 3 character points for roleplaying and creativity. If the players managed to unmask Grimfinger and discover his identity, add another 1.

Appendix

New Earth Spell

Mezwyn's Mirror

Regular

Creates an illusionary duplicate of the subject at his extreme right, or left. Anybody watching the subject may make an IQ roll to remember which is the original, and which is the illusion. The illusions match the original's movements exactly. If an illusion is attacked, it will disappear.

Duration: 1 minute.

Cost: 2 per duplicate, maximum 2. Duplicates must be adjacent to the caster. The cost to maintain this spell is equal to half the cost to cast.

Prerequisites: Simple Illusion.

Item: An amulet or ring. Energy cost to create: 500 + 250 per maximum number of duplicates.

New Fire Spell

GM's Note: This is a cinematic spell, intended for high-fantasy campaigns where wizards, with the right ancient knowledge, can sling deadly spells with ease!

Fire Sphere

Missile

An extremely powerful version of fireball. Powerful mages from an age long past have been known to take down castle walls with this spell, or to incinerate a man with one blast!

Cost: Any amount from 5 to 10. The Fire Sphere does 1d damage for each energy point.

Time to cast: 3 seconds.

Prerequisites: Magery 3, Fireball.

Item: Staff or wand -- bolt is fired from end of item. Energy cost to create: 2,000; must include a ruby worth at least \$1,000. Usable only by a mage.



New Protection and Warning Spell

Mana Shield

Regular

Creates a whirling shield around the caster. The shield has hit points that only protect the caster from magical, spell-based attacks, such as fireballs, lightning, ice spheres. When the shield loses all of its hit points, it is destroyed.

Duration: 1 minute.

Cost: 1 to 5. Each point gives the shield 5 hit points.

Prerequisites: Magery 2.

Item: Staff, wand, or jewelry. Energy cost to create: 800.

New Alchemical Elixirs

Mezwyn's Potion of the Flame Dragon

This sparkling red potion must always be kept in glass, or else it will eat right through the container. When this elixir is taken, the user may breathe fire (which requires the Magic Breath skill to be completely effective). This will do 3d damage at a range of up to 5 yards. Potion only. \$350 in materials, 6 weeks to make, -2 to skill. Cost \$1,250/\$2,500. A Critical Success while making this potion increases its damage to 3d+3.

Disappearance Dust

This crystalline powder must be thrown on the ground to be effective. The dust will make whoever is in the hex temporarily invisible! The invisibility, however, lasts only 1d seconds.

\$500 in materials, 6 weeks to make, -1 to skill. Cost \$1,000/\$2,000.