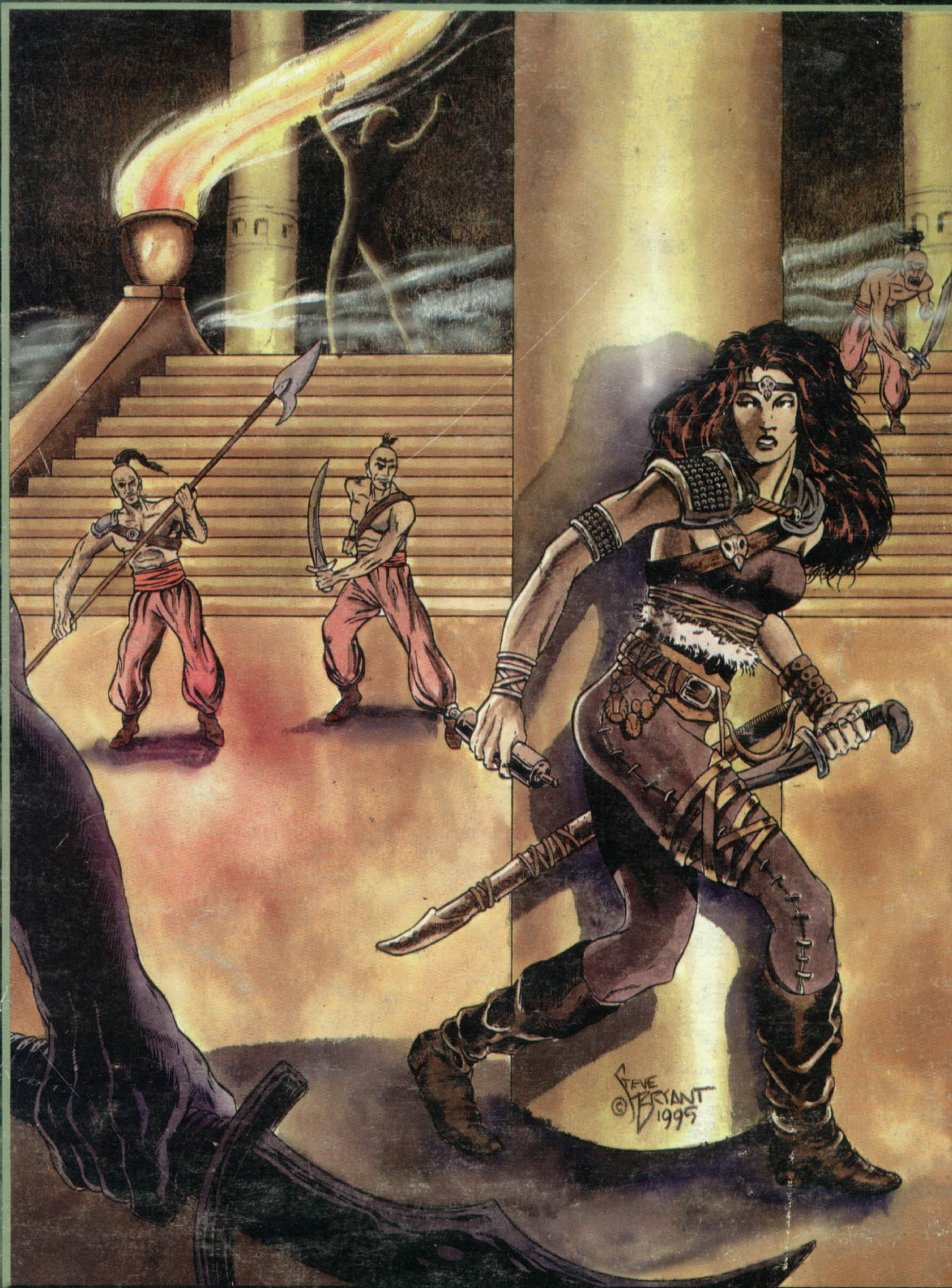


EARTHDAWN

JOURNAL

Vol. 3

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THE EARTHDAWN JOURNAL

**An Official
Publication
Devoted to FASA's
Earthdawn Fantasy
Roleplaying Game**

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Submissions: We are looking for good articles and illustrations for the Earthdawn Journal. When submitting manuscripts and artwork, enclose a stamped and self-addressed envelope with appropriate postage for return. We also would appreciate that submissions be presented on IBM compatible diskettes along with hardcopy. Electronic submissions are received at our internet address.

The Editor Speaks...

Greetings! Well Met! And Welcome to the third volume of the Earthdawn Journal! We trust that you all enjoyed the second issue and that's why you are back. If you missed the second issue, we still have a few left... If you missed the first, oh well... too bad... snooze you loose... and all that rot because they are all gone!

This issue's main adventure is by none other than Greg Gorden, one of the principle players in the creation of Earthdawn! We hope to have more from him in the future. As you will notice, the Earthdawn Q&A is missing from this issue. Due to space constraints and other problems, we were unable to get it in. But don't worry! Next issue Lou will be back answering all your pressing questions and confusions.

Well, guss that's all for now!
Later daze...

Kevin Knight

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How Are We Doing???

Please take the time to fill out this questionnaire. Each respondent will have their name placed in a drawing for free copies of the next issue. A lucky three will receive free copies of the Earthdawn Journal Volume #4.

Rate each article and artist on a scale of 0 to 5 with zero be not worth the ink it took to print it to five being fit for deification.

Anghali G'Hosteren	0	1	2	3	4	5
Bed of Thorns	0	1	2	3	4	5
The Spy	0	1	2	3	4	5
The Kiss	0	1	2	3	4	5
The Raven	0	1	2	3	4	5
The Grey Wolves	0	1	2	3	4	5
T'skrang Troubles	0	1	2	3	4	5
The Grounded Drakkar	0	1	2	3	4	5
Artwork (Steve Bryant)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Artwork (Grant Cooley)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Artwork (Alan Gillispie)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Artwork (Greg Fisher)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Overall Satisfaction	0	1	2	3	4	5

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Responses from the Earthdawn Journal Volume #2:

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Artwork (Bill Hincks)	3.17
Artwork (Steve Bryant)	4.83
Artwork (Greg Rothauser)	3.37
Artwork (Andrew Ragland)	2.50
Overall Staisfaction	4.17

Free copies of Volume #3 were sent to Lee DeBoer, Alistair Fraser, and Ian Reid for sending in their responses from Volume #2. We would also like to thank everyone else who sent in their responses and encourage everyone else to do likewise!

ANGHALI G'HOSTEREN

THE CHANGING CITY

Tarliman seems to be progressing south and east rapidly, perhaps a little too much so. I had rather hoped for a report from Kratas.

-- *Merrox*

Can you really blame him for skipping that dreadful place? Given a choice, I would also.

-- *Jerriv Forrim*

Anghali G'Hosteren translates literally from the Dinganni tongue as Gathering Place That Moves With The Wind. Note that the apostrophe is a glottal stop, and that the G and H should be pronounced separately to avoid arousing mirth in your Dinganni companions. As well, the first part of the name is ang-hali, not an-ghali. Referring to the city as Anghali is permitted, but will mark you as an outsider.

On the Origins of the City

Even nomads must have fixed places to gather for trade. Centuries ago, the nomadic tribes of the southwestern plains made treaties to establish a neutral meeting place for trade, for the seasonal horse fairs and to work out differences peacefully. All parties concerned sent Questors of Mynbruje to reside at the meeting place, to rule on intertribal problems and to govern the people who would live there. Anghali G'Hosteren was born.

Then came the Scourge. The inhabitants of the trade city went into kaers with their tribes. Agreements were made for the re-establishment of trade after the danger had passed.

The tribes emerged from their kaers to find the world radically changed. By dead reckoning from the kaer entrances, the signatory tribes were able to find where the trade city had been. The river that the city had formerly straddled was gone. Nearby, however, was a small lake, fed by underground springs, and on its shore Anghali G'Hosteren rose again.

Location of the City

Anghali G'Hosteren lies roughly in the middle of the southwestern plains of Barsaive. From Kratas, align point phi on the Sextant with Throal, and follow Floranus at sunrise. Anghali lies 6.5 days ride, 10 days walking away. From Vivane, align point E on the Sextant with Throal and follow Mynbruje at noon. The journey will require 22 days walking, 14 days riding.

On the Layout and Appearance of the City

Coming from from Kratas, the first view of the city is from a rise approximately a mile away. In the late afternoon, the sun glances off the lake and turns it to molten silver. Fringing the water to the west is a ragged arc of brightly colored tents, a few wooden and stone buildings at the center, set back from the lakeshore to avoid taking up space that is needed for water access.

Now, when the average Barsaivian hears the word "tent", the image of a small canvas or hide dome springs to mind, something that sleeps four dwarves, three humans or two trolls, and packs up small enough to



carry on a single horse. While there are a few of this type scattered here and there, they are lost amid the vast expanses of brilliantly dyed silk and wool that comprise the tribal tents of the nomads. Divided into sections for travel, each tribesman carrying a panel of fabric and some of the poles and rigging, the tribal tents are divided internally into many rooms, held up by a complex web of poles and lines, and decorated with embroidery that tells the story of the tribe, as well as pennons flying from the small poles and banners from the large. Watching one of these being set up is like watching a colony of spiders spinning a vast web. From the hilltop overlooking the city, the tent seems to bloom like a flower, tiny figures scurrying about it as it grows from bare earth to a fabulous blossom in only half an hour.

There are permanent buildings in the city, as mentioned previously. The problem is that there are no forests nearby. Thus, wood for building must be hauled great distances. Buildings are expensive to put up, thus few.

The Hall of Mynbruje is of stone, quarried in a nearby pit and packed across the plains by horse travois. Other than the Hall of Mynbruje, the three inns and the bath house, the Street of Merchants has most of the permanent and semi-permanent structures in town. Farriers, weaponsmiths, and other craftsmen whose equipment is not easily portable have taken up residence, as well as food-sellers, tailors, scribes and other services. The buildings, however, have been put up in whatever clear space was available among the tents at the time, so there is no organized plan. As well, some of the structures are only semi-permanent, wooden sheds with tents attached, which can be moved to another location if need be.

The size of the city and its layout both fluctuate with the seasons, as determined largely by the breeding of horses and other riding beasts. When the latest crop of foals have been broken to the bit and are ready for market, the city swells, incorporating corrals, auction rings, and all the trappings of a massive horse-fair. Entertainers wander the streets, and the taverns do a thriving business at all hours. In the off season, though, when the tribes are mostly out wandering the plains, the few lonely buildings sit forlornly in the middle of vast tracts of empty space, anxiously awaiting the arrival of travellers to fill the void.

During the high seasons, the streets teem with brilliant colors. The nomadic tribes don their finest to impress their customers, their rivals and even their friends. Scorchers who make their living as mercenaries or in other honest ways are welcomed, as long as they obey the strict laws regarding the peace. Their unit markings and standards add to the variety. Each merchant stand, each food-seller stall vies for the attention of passers-by. Fabric is embroidered and dyed. Ropes are braided, have contrasting cords woven in, pennons hung from them. Bare wood is painted, carved, inlaid. No surface is left undecorated. Travellers from the more conservative areas of Throal may find it all a bit too much. My Vorst guard shook his head and dismissed the entire city as not caring about their survival. T'Skrang and windlings, however, should feel right at home.

Lodging

Most people arriving bring their lodging with them, in the form of their tribal or individual tents. For those who arrive without such, or who prefer something a bit more solid, there are a number of possibilities.

First off, no Dinganni will ever refuse hospitality to an honest traveller. As long as there are fewer in your party than in their tent, and you follow their customs, there will always be space to spread a blanket, food and a fire. The polite traveller will of course make a guesting gift later in the evening. Too early and the host may feel insulted, that he is being offered payment for attending to a sacred obligation. After the meal and the first few stories told around the fire is the best time. Useful items with an interesting history make much better guesting gifts than simple donations of food or drink, although a flask of brandy or wine is always welcome.

There are other tribes that will also offer hospitality, but insist on more complex rituals, and adherence to more convoluted codes of behavior.

There are a number of taverns with rooms available, and three actual lodging-houses down near the Hall of Mynbruje. During the merchanting seasons, tent-hostels are set up by enterprising Name-Givers, offering private rooms, food and entertainment, but there are no doors in a tent, and thus no locks. While the proprietor of the establishment may be as honest as a newborn babe, there is no guarantee for the other guests, nor for the crowds thronging the streets. I myself stayed with the Biyazi clan of the Dinganni, and trusted my belongings to their honesty and their guards.

Sebkha's Lodging House

Closest to the Hall of Mynbruje, Sebkha's is the oldest of the three, put up a scant two years after the re-founding of the city. Sebkha Nairn is an enterprising dwarf originally from Travar, who heard a rumor of a new trading point and took a gamble. Loading everything he owned on wagons, along with construction materials, tools and a half-dozen hired workers, he set out overland, arriving shortly after the completion of the Hall of Mynbruje. Six months later, his lodging house opened just in time for a horse-fair, and has been doing a terrific business ever since. I asked Sebkha if he missed Travar. He nodded, saying that good stout was hard to come by this far out on the plains. But, he said, rubbing his fingers together with a gleam in his eye, he could afford to have it brought in from Travar and points further, and there was a brewmaster on his way from Throal even as we spoke. Watch, he said, in the next year the first dwarven brewery on the plains will be producing the finest ale outside of the mountain.

Constructed of wood on a stone foundation, the lodging house bears a sign as unimaginative as its name, a foaming mug over crossed keys. Fortunately, the kitchen is run by an inventive dwarven woman, a cousin of Sebkha Named Bria, who has obviously been discussing her chosen craft with the other Name-Givers who reside in the city and pass through it. Her cuisine features dishes not only of dwarven origin, but of ork, human, elven and even windling

traditions. Some of her own creations borrow from several schools of cooking, mixing the grilling techniques of orkish campfire cookery with elven spicing to a delightful result. Her rendition of the regional specialty, veroniki, makes a truly wonderful meal. The dumplings are filled with ground sausage, seasoned with sage and cinnamon, deep fried as usual, and topped with a light cream sauce of Dinganni origin but with a traditionally windling spice combination of orry, ginger and hamat. Be certain to arrive with a large appetite, as the portions are oversized for the guest's race. Prices vary from a few coppers for a simple plate of bread and goat cheese to ten silver for a three-remove feast featuring the house specialty.

Sebkha's is a Guild inn. Services available and the prices for them are at the customary levels. There is a bath house on the opposite side of the building from the stables. However, I have heard that the windows do not fasten properly, leaving easy access for thieves. If Sebkha does not take steps to protect the valuables (and clothing, for that matter) of his guests while they are bathing, he may find his Guild mark in peril.

Feathered Serpent

Located at the western edge of the city, the Feathered Serpent is probably the most tightly-run lodging house in Anghali. Hattri Aldathshemne, the proprietor, is as rugged a female windling as you'll see outside of the military. The occasional ork or troll who finds the words "rugged" and "windling" amusing when put together should know that a conversation I overheard indicated that she actually did see service with the Throalic Scout Corps during the Theran War. Her old unit mates still drop by every now and then to catch up on events. As well, she keeps a half dozen friends of various races on hand as reinforcements in case of trouble. There rarely is sufficient cause for Hattri to call them out, though, as she keeps a cynical eye on the main room and

the bar most of the day, and prefers to stop trouble while it's still small. This means a quiet place to have a meal, an ale and collect your notes. I spent several enjoyable evenings in the Serpent's common room, writing this record, relatively undisturbed. There was the one fellow who tried to collect a gambling debt, and was about to reach for his dagger to emphasize his demand, when one of Hattri's assistants clipped the miscreant across the back of the skull with a sap and tossed his unconscious body out the door. There were no further incidents the remainder of the week.

Meals here are ample, though they can be somewhat monotonous. I have a sneaking suspicion that Hattri's cook

is yet another of her old military acquaintances. It has been my experience that military kitchens can take the best ingredients, the choicest cuts of meat and the most delicate herbs, and produce something indistinguishable from unsalted porridge. While the food here is not that tasteless, it certainly lacks variety. The prices, though, are very reasonable. A tight budget can produce a remarkable tolerance for plain fare.

The rooms are utilitarian, lacking in decoration, but spotlessly clean. The locks on the doors are not only stout, but I strongly suspect enchanted as well. Room prices run a bit less

than Guild standards, but a bit more than an average hostel. Services available include valet, laundry and repair of weapons and armor. Private dining rooms are available, but not advertised. The bathing facilities are somewhat lacking, having no hot water and no attendants.

Overall, while the Feathered Serpent does not measure up to the Guild level, it does meet high standards for security of guests and their belongings, and provides good value for the coin.



Three Foxes

A relative newcomer to the city, J'hork Cablebraider established Three Foxes only five years ago. The massive troll, a former Sky Raider, claims he got thoroughly sick of the mountains and of the raiding life. He told me that he wished to settle down and spend the rest of his days gazing across long, flat expanses and doing nothing more strenuous than doing the accounts, pouring ale and breaking up the occasional barfight. There are few of those in his hostel, most people being intimidated sufficiently by J'hork and the huge crystal axe he keeps on the wall behind the bar.

The inn stands three stories high, the first being of stone and the remaining two wooden, the upper windows giving a good view of the lake and the town despite the iron bars across each opening. The Hall of Justice is somewhat distant, but not that far, and the Questors maintain a high presence. I suppose the life of a sky raider makes one cautious about defense of the home.

While the food is simple, even plain, the portions are troll-sized and the prices fair for the quantity. J'hork's ale varies according to who offered him the best deal on the last caravan, but is never bad. He told me that he would never serve anything he wouldn't drink himself. Apparently sky raiders, or at least this particular one, have decent taste when it comes to ale.

Room prices are commensurate with a decent inn, although less than Guild standards. There is no bathhouse. I was directed to the lake and told where I could obtain soap and a towel.

A rumor floating about is that J'hork either came here fleeing something terrible, or looking for someone remarkable. In either case, the rumor says that he is looking for the right person to whom to give his axe, to complete some sort of task. Plying the troll with his own ale did not loosen his tongue on the subject. Indeed, I am certain that no amount of ale could suffice to render J'hork incautious.

On the Populace

Like their dwellings, the people of the city do not settle for

anything quiet about their persons. Ornate chains and cuffs are worn about wrists, ankles, necks, waists. Ears and other locations are pierced for jewels. Every finger has a ring. Clothing is elaborate, designs woven in, painted or embroidered on. Skin is painted as well, tattooing being considered too unchangeable, too permanent for anything but clan markings, marriage emblems and other symbols kept for life. Every accessory is tooled, chased, engraved. All of this finery certainly presents a grave temptation for thieves. However, the emphasis there is upon the word "grave". The laws of the city are derived largely from the Code of the Dinganni, which has absolutely no tolerance for thieves. See my comments on Law further on in this record.

The population is predominately human and dwarven, with a scattering of orks including scorchers and settled craftsfolk and merchants. Windlings, trolls, elves and obsidimen are few, and t'skrang are practically nonexistent. The city's being so far from the nearest river might explain their absence.

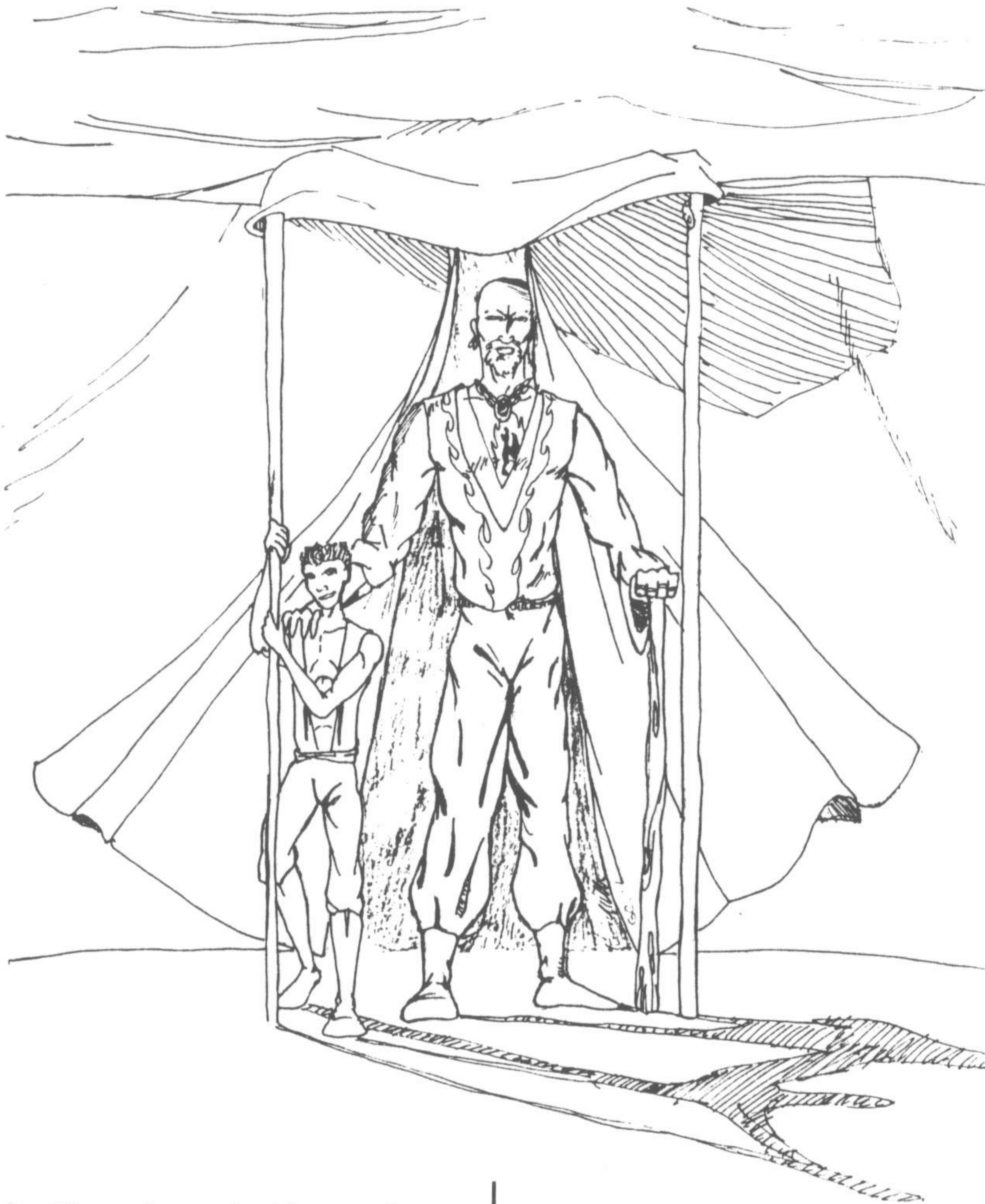
Shortly after my arrival, I had gone wandering through the city to take in a first impression, when a colorfully-dressed old human woman beckoned me over to her red-draped stall. Recognizing a fortune-seller when I saw one, I prepared to part with a few coppers in exchange for some vague predictions about long journeys in strange lands.

Instead, "You are a scholar," she said, pouring black tea into

gaudy red and yellow cups. "The different and the new draw you like a bee to pollen." She offered me fruit jelly for my tea. After a sip, I gratefully accepted. A mouse could have strolled across that brew without fear of sinking.

"I am that," I agreed. "What else can you tell me?"

Brushing a stray wisp of grey from her wrinkled face with a bejewelled, arthritic hand, she fixed me with a stare that must have sent hundreds reaching for their purses, certain that here was one who could tell them all, predict every act, warn of every danger and guide them to their greatest possible fortune. I stayed my hand, but felt a touch of frost up my spine.



"The red banner brings safety," she murmured, her voice deeper, rougher, maybe echoing a little. "The yellow banner brings pain, but with it, knowledge. You do not judge now, but once you throw stones. You will see the Golden Isle itself, and return to Throal before you die. Beware the dragon's wings, and be guided by the eye of the falcon."

She leaned back then, sipped her tea, hands wrapped closely around the handleless cup for the warmth, and favored me with a nearly toothless grin. "And if you keep going down this street to the farrier's tent, the one with the blue and yellow stripes, then turn left and find the stall with the sign of the fish, you'll be in for an excellent meal. My cousin makes the best veroniki on the plains."

I grinned at that. We spoke briefly about other sights in the city, I paid her fee and went on my way. As far as her other predictions, I don't know, but the veroniki were indeed excellent. And it is true, I try not to judge what I see, to write it down fairly. And I served with a catapult platoon in the war against Thera. It leaves one to wonder.



About the Government

Anghali G'Hosteren has no real government to speak of. Lacking most municipal services, such as road maintenance, street lighting and fire prevention, there are no taxes, and no administration to handle services and revenue. There are, however, city guards of a sort. As stated earlier, each signatory to the treaties that established the trading point

sends Questors of Mynbruje to the city to enforce the minimal laws.

The Questors are supported by their respective tribes. Gifts and donations to the Hall of Mynbruje are accepted, but are carefully considered as to whether or not they are intended to influence the judgement of the Questors. Anything even remotely resembling a bribe is flatly refused.

About the Law

The laws of Anghali G'Hosteren are simple and straightforward, like the Code of the Dinganni that formed their basis. Most of the city laws can be summed up in a few sentences:

1. Thievery will not be tolerated. Any Name-Giver caught stealing may be held for judgement. The penalty may range from a period of enforced work to exile to death.

2. Harming another Name-Giver is forbidden. Fighting in the city streets is not allowed. Vengeance pacts and blood feuds may not be pursued within the city. The penalty for killing a Name-giver in the city may range from payment of blood price to death.

3. Water being a necessity for life, no Name-giver will deliberately or through carelessness damage the lake. Access to the lake and to its water shall not be restricted, blocked or in any way denied.

Questors of Mynbruje from all treaty signatories patrol the city. They can command the help of any signatory tribe as needed, to arrest a lawbreaker, to carry out a penalty, or to assist them in the general performance of their duties. In practice, the questors expect the help of anyone in the city to be available, and become highly irritable when a non-signatory protests the demands.

In practice, the Questors become irritable over pretty much anything. I suppose if I were spending my life riding herd on a lot of fractious horse-traders, I'd be a bit grumpy too.

— MTekele Clouddrunner

Now, just because the city is neutral and heavily policed does not mean that it is quiet. When you set up a trading point and bring rival tribes to it, intrigue breeds faster than horseflies. The city is a hotbed of spies and information merchants. A great deal of hiring is done here for illicit purposes, a lot of pay is delivered for disreputable actions. Anghali is a reasonably safe venue for making hazardous deals with dangerous people. Every so often, bodies are found when deals go bad, but the Questors are relentless and find the guilty parties more often than not. Most of the time, when the guilty are not brought to justice by the Questors, it is because they left town abruptly after the deed, and their absence points to their probable guilt. If they ever return, they will be questioned. The Questors have long memories.

Concerning Business

The principal trade derives from the horse fairs, when the new foals are brought to market. Not only horses are brought in, however. All manner of riding mounts are offered for sale, ranging from mules to thundra beasts to the occasional griffin. As well, beasts are not the only things traded.

The wandering tribes trade for metalwork and other finished goods, as well as delicacies that they cannot grow or find out on the plains. They offer wool, butter, cheese, smoked meat, and other products from their flocks of sheep and goats, as well as products of their craftspeople -- cloth, carved bone and wood, sturdy and colorful clothing, musical instruments, jewelry, and a host of other items too many to list here. While preferring to trade their products for useful items, the nomadic tribes are no strangers to honest coin.

As well, other merchants and craftsfolk have taken up residence in the city. As mentioned earlier, folk whose trade requires tools that are not easily portable have set up shops along the Street of Merchants. The air rings with the sounds of hammers, drills, augers, and shouting voices insisting that their products are better than any other. Not only metalworkers, but tanners, leatherworkers, scribes, food-sellers and others may be found here. A traveller passing through should have no trouble meeting any of his needs -- providing, of course, that he has sufficient coin.

During the horse fairs, the city does a thriving trade. In between, however, is when the wise do their shopping. During the slow times, the merchants are a little more eager to please, a little more anxious to make a sale that will help see them through to the next fair. Haggling for a fair price is not necessarily easier, but is certainly different when the merchant is looking at lean times and has longer to conclude the sale before going on to the next customer.

There being no taxes in the city, prices tend to be a bit lower than elsewhere. Some merchants, however, make regular donations to the Hall of Mynbruje or to other Passions and causes, and will tack on a surcharge to help support their patron. Checking for images of the Passions around the shop will help to warn the buyer of the possibility of higher prices.

North Horse-Ring

The arena to the north of the Hall of Mynbruje bears special mention, if for no other reason than its being the oldest in the city, and the most popular. Even in the off season, the ring sees a great deal of activity as an exercise yard, so much so that the ring owner, Burthold Govint, a dwarf from Vivane, posts a schedule on the gate as to when it is available and to whom.

During the horse-fairs, this ring sees the best of the stock brought in to trade. Food-sellers and other merchants cluster near the gates, and a lively time is had by all.

I suppose it may have something to do with the success of the ring and some Name-givers being jealous thereof. Any time that one person is more prosperous than his neighbors, whispers begin. Burthold does not help his reputation by being inaccessible except through layers of assistants, and reclusive in his own person. There are rumors, though, concerning the original source of his moneys, that they came

from a looted kaer, one that may still have been inhabited, or from illicit deals in horseflesh, or from other unpleasant sources. None of these are substantiated, and I include this mention only because the rumors are so prevalent and persistent.

I was able to verify one peculiar incident. On the first night of the month, during the time I spent in Anghali, Burthold and two of his assistants from the horse-ring, formidable-looking ork fellows, former scorchers from what I was told, took a foal down to the edge of the lake during the night. They dragged the protesting colt up to the edge of a cliff overlooking the still water, then hurled the young animal off the rocks into the lake. It swam for a moment, after surfacing, then abruptly vanished beneath the surface and did not reappear. I cannot reveal the Name of the witness to this senseless and barbaric act, but can attest to the reliability of same. There being no penalty for slaying your own beasts, no investigation is likely in the near future.

Schools and Collegia

There is only one school in the city, a literacy academy run by Varzil the Scribe out of the back of his shop. He teaches written Throalic to the children of the city and to anyone else who cares to pay his fee. Varzil has his shop at the northeastern end of the Street of Merchants, a large establishment for a scribe, even one who runs a school. I did find it odd that an ork scorcher would be attending his classes, and in the middle of the night, but thought that discretion was the better part of keeping mind and body together, and so did not ask about his late lessons. Apparently the school keeps whatever hours the customer desires.

Tarliman is usually sharper than this. Did he really miss the obvious, that this Varzil fellow is one of those information merchant types he spoke of earlier, or was he concerned about someone hearing of his observations?

-- *Jerrik Tavry*

Food and Entertainment

After two weeks of trail rations and Vorst cookery, Anghali was a true delight for the palate. I must confess that I have perhaps overdone it a bit -- my belt needs another notch cut to fit comfortably. It is so easy to indulge oneself, though, with so much good food so readily available.

Vorst cooking fills the belly without slowing the arm or distracting the mind. Food is meant as sustenance, not as entertainment.

-- *Hosten Shivak, guard to Tarliman Joppos*

Perhaps a brief review of the regional specialties would be in order before discussing the establishments which serve them. Like so much of Barsaive, the time spent in the kaers without influence from other peoples and traditions has resulted in the people of the area developing their own cuisine. Anghali has its particular styles and dishes, those of the tribes who wander the region, but also new inventions

resulting from these varied traditions being brought together in a cosmopolitan environment.

Primary spices used in the regional cooking traditions include garlic, pepper and vinegar, and the cuisine leans toward heavily spiced foods. I suspect an orkish hand in this, as orkish cookery tends to be similar. On the other hand, pepper and vinegar are decent preservatives, and will also cover up the taste of foods that are beginning to be dubious. That may explain their prevalence. Whatever the reason, the menu will tend to include a lot of peppered meat and pickled vegetables, occasionally spiced with hot peppers as well.

The dish that is perhaps best known is of course veroniki. These are small dumplings, deep fried and served in a variety of ways. As a meal, the filling is meat or vegetables, or a combination of the two, usually quite spicy and served with a light sauce, put on just before serving so that the crisp dumplings do not become soggy. As a dessert, the dumplings are filled with clotted cream or honeyed fruit and sprinkled with sweet spices. Travellers should be aware that these are quite filling, and what looked to be a dreadfully small portion may turn out to be more than can be consumed.

Another dessert that tends to stay with one for some time are medivnyki, honey cakes made with t'skrang spices. The sharpness of the kustiss prevents the honeyed wheat from cloying. Dried fruit is mixed into these when available.

No wonder he had to let out his belt. I'm gaining weight just reading this!

-- MTekele Clouddrunner

The nomadic tribes normally grill or roast their meat over an open fire, or boil it into stews. However, they prefer a different approach when in cities. There, meat is breaded with egg and herbed breadcrumbs, then fried. While a bit greasy, the result is quite tasty. Of course, this is a bit more expensive than a basic stew, and the latter is available for travellers with a smaller purse.

A useful word in Anghali is zakushi, meaning roughly "small bites". I do not know the origin of this term, but it is one that travellers seeking serious dining experiences should know. Zakushi are small portions of finger foods served on a platter set out in the center of the table. What is found on the platter varies from one establishment to the next, and from day to day, but is never dull. Zakushi range from sweet to spicy, from mild to blazing hot, and are fried, baked, rolled, stuffed, broiled, sauteed -- even raw. Beware of the hot pickled turnip, small off-white wedges with traces of purple rind and speckled with red. Two tankards of dwarven stout were required to kill the flames.

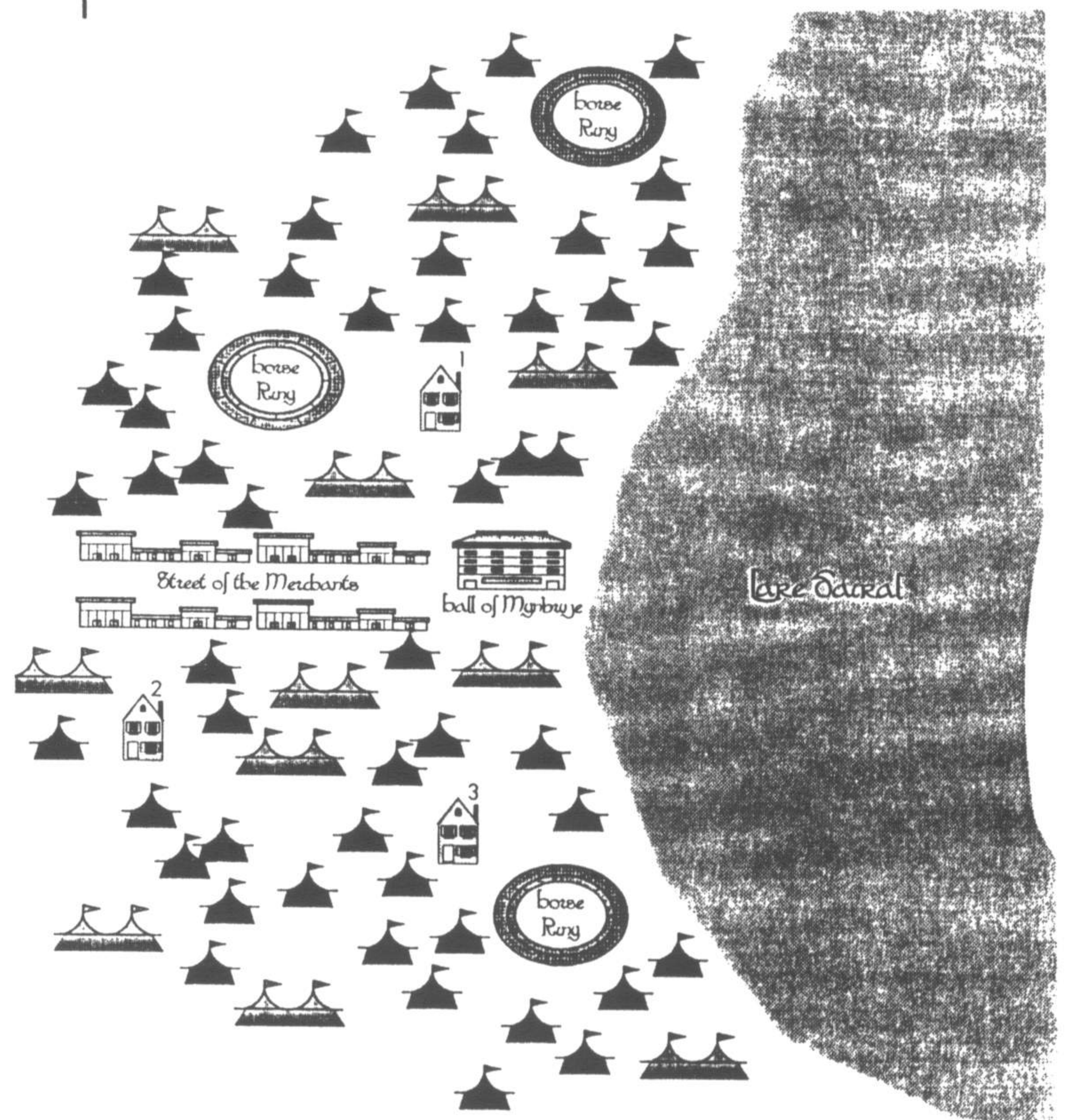
Blue Brithan

Located at the eastern end of the Street of Merchants, close by to the Hall of Mynbruje, Blue Brithan serves primarily Elven cuisine and Elven versions of regional specialties.

Zidrian Kmed, the owner and chief chef, is one of the most dour Elven women I have ever met. The pattern of scars across the left side of her face and across her hands are strongly reminiscent of a cousin of mine who tangled with a bramble bush. She refuses to discuss her origins and brusquely dismisses any advance from Name-givers who find her attractive.

Fortunately, her sour attitude does not extend to her work in the kitchen. Her restaurant is by far the best in the city, as far as quality and skill of preparation. Many of the city's top merchants and senior Questors dine here on a regular basis. Prices are steep, but the experience and the company is certainly worth it.

One word of caution: Blood elves should avoid this place. The last one who tried to get a table was chased out of the restaurant by Zidrian herself, waving a meat cleaver and shouting obscenities in Sperethiel. The Questors advised her that while she could refuse service to anyone she chose, they would prefer that she use words alone and leave the carving tools in the kitchen.



Anybale Jbosteren

map by Tarlman Jappos

Legend

- 1 Sebrba's
- 2 Feathered Serpent
- 3 Three Foxes

Sign of the Fish

Actually, this place does not have a formal Name. Apparently the old woman who owns it comes from a tradition that holds it unlucky to Name a business such as this. Some of the nomadic peoples believe that Naming a place of trade binds one to the spot, interfering with the

normal course of wandering. However, there has to be a way to identify the establishment, and so the proprietress has hung out a shingle in the form of a very lifelike fish, carved and painted to look as if it had just leapt out of the water and hung suspended before splashing back into its home. The locals refer to the place indirectly, out of respect to the owner, calling it the stall with the sign of the fish.

As I related earlier, the veroniki here are indeed marvelous. Light, flaky crust, and served either spicy-hot with sausage filling or piercingly sweet with fruit, they make the search for the tiny shop worth the while. The stall has little frontage on the street, and only six tables, squeezed in between the open front and the counter where the old woman rolls out her dough. A great deal of the neighborhood seems to pass through here during mealtimes, when seats at the tables are impossible to get, and carry off the major portion of the daily batch. During those times, the gossip flies thick and furious, as everyone who comes in trades the latest news in the few minutes between placing their order and leaving with their meal, packed in a small fried-flour bowl.

The second day I was there, the old woman (whose Name I never did learn) was in the middle of a blazing row when I walked in. The other disputant was an obsidiman, which struck my attention, in worn and threadbare magicker's robes. The subject seemed to be the nature of some sort of

spirit that dwelled in the lake, and whether or not it was angry, disturbed or about to leave. I didn't catch enough of the argument to know the whole of the matter, and the debate switched abruptly to a variant of the obsidiman racial dialect when they realized I was there. I did catch the word for Horror, though, and the word for deep or bottom, when the magicker was pointing out toward the lake. No one I questioned seemed to know anything about such a situation, or was willing to talk about it if they did.

Music and Dancing

Music is a major part of life for the nomadic tribes of the region. They sing while travelling, both to pass the time and to teach their children. They chant while riding into battle. The evenings usually see instruments produced, drums, flutes, stringed instruments and native inventions.

The last includes the kirila, a long, slender tube with a reed at one end and holes along the body. The instrument is played by placing the reed in the mouth and blowing, producing sound from the vibration of the reed, and is fingered like a flute. Its sound is surprisingly mellow, like the deep-throated call of a water bird. As well, there is a variant known as the kirillin, a set of kirila-like pipes connected to a leather bag (usually the stomach of a sheep), with a separate tube for blowing into the bag to inflate it.

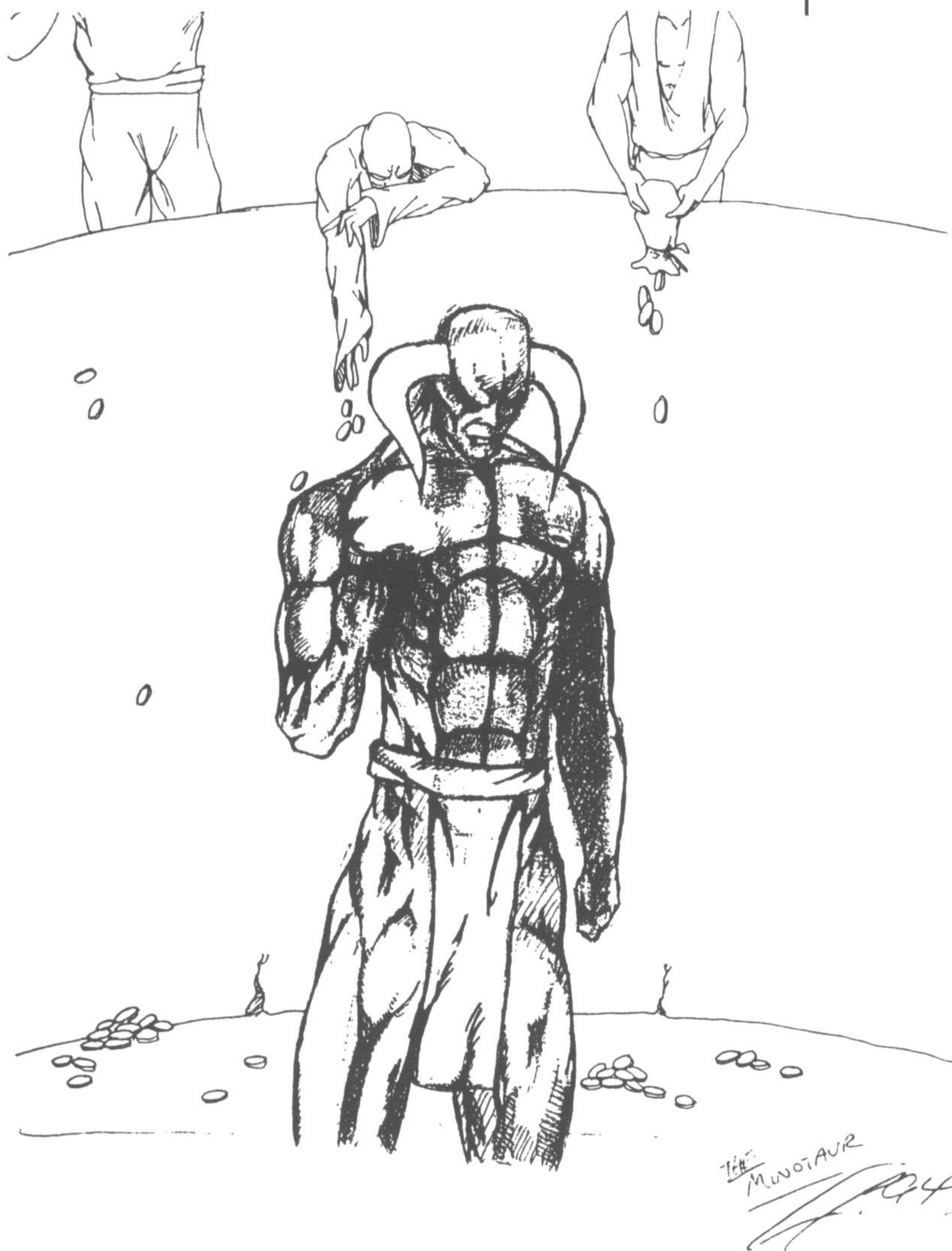
Most of the pipes are left to drone a single note, their reeds being driven by air pumped from the bag. A single pipe off the bottom is fingered to produce the tune. The sound is far stranger than the kirila, an eerie, haunting moan overlaid with the wild skirling of the higher-pitched tune-pipe. I hesitate to think what a troubador could do with one of those instruments in battle.

Anghali has no music halls, and few taverns with a stage or even a hearth with space for a bard, but it really has no need of such. During the evenings, the sound of rival clans announcing themselves with their sept anthems, and the fast, high, wailing dance-tunes of the tribes echo over the tents and through the dusty streets. The jingling of bells at the wrists and ankles of the dancers and tambourines, the skirling of the kirillin and the quick, intricate strumming of the stringed instruments blend into an overall rhythm that sets the pulse racing. As a farmer once said to me, why buy a cow when you get milk for free?

Trade, good food, music, and plenty of sources of information. What more could a dwarven scholar ask for? I may very well settle here in my old age.

-- Tarliman Joppos

By Andrew Ragland



BED OF THORNS

"No, Imri, I won't do it."

Corinna sat across the table from the warrior, her violet eye flashing angrily while the amber gem in place of the other flickered in the lantern light.

Hallian fluttered down from the rafters. The windling archer was not quite tall enough to be eye to eye with her, even standing on the table. "Come on, Cori, it's not like he's a Horror or anything."

Corinna gritted her teeth. "He might as well be."

They made an unusual trio. Corinna was an elfish wizard; tall and slim with long, pale lavender hair. Imri was a human; a few inches shorter with a stockier build. She wore her brown hair bound tight and her weapons openly. Hallian was only knee high to both of them, with bright green wings and matching hair. He sat cross legged on the table with his bow across his knees. "I've never been to the Blood Wood. I think it would be fun to go. Don't you want to see the elven court?"

"No!" Corinna snapped, trying not to lose her temper. "The blood elves have corrupted the Court, the Blood Wood and everything else they've touched."

"Corinna," Imri said laying a hand the mage's shoulder. "At least they survived."

"But they're evil, as bad as the Horrors themselves. They should have died instead of twisting everything. All the beauty and merriment is gone."

Imri sighed. "All right. If you feel that strongly, I'll tell him we won't be able to accept the job."

The elf chewed on her lower lip as Hallian's wingtips drooped. They did need the money and most travellers preferred that their guards look big and menacing which two women and a windling did not. It might be a long time before they got another chance.

She unclenched her jaw. "All right. We'll take the job, but we go no further than the edge of the Blood Wood. Once he's there, he's on his own."

"Done," Imri said.

The blood elf's name was Saevyl. Corinna tried hard to look past the empty grey eyes and thick thorns that pierced his flesh. It made her want to cry out in the pain he didn't seem to notice. "I appreciate this service," he said. "When my companions were slain by the marauders, I was concerned about travelling home alone."

Hallian was watching him with wide eyes. "Don't those things hurt?"

Saevyl gave the windling a tolerant look. "Yes, but my kind embrace pain for the strength it gives us."

"Lets go," Imri said leading three horses over. "I'd like to get some distance before nightfall."

Corinna winced as Saevyl mounted and several of his thorn wounds began to bleed. She looked away, wondering if she should have held her ground and refused the job. The Blood Wood was a nearly a week's travel away and the sight of Saevyl was already making her sick.

Hallian flew ahead to scout as soon as they left the town. They wanted to avoid meeting any of the

roving marauders that had killed the rest of Saevyl's party and, as long as the windling had places to rest along the way, he could scout all day.

"What brings you out of the Blood Wood?" Imri asked.

The elf's eyes kept straight ahead. "I am an emissary from the Queen to the King of Throal."

"The King didn't provide you with an escort home?" Imri asked.

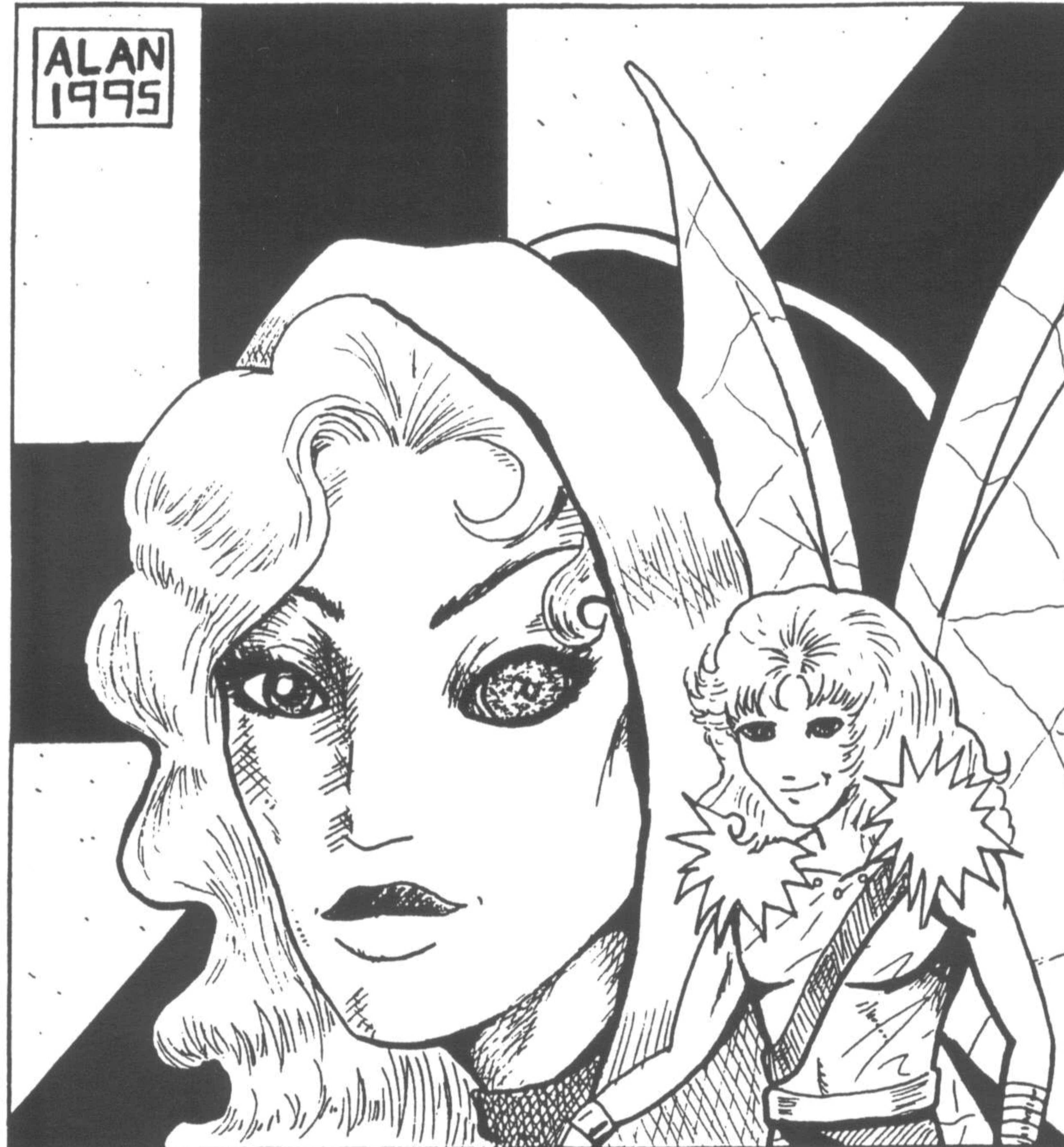
"At the time, we did not feel one was necessary."

The warrior shrugged. "Guess you were wrong."

"I have no doubt my late companions would argue with you even now," Saevyl said.

"The dead don't win many arguments, except maybe with nethermancers," she replied. "Are all your people so stubborn?"

"That very stubbornness is what allowed us to survive," he



told her. "Perhaps, if more of our kindred had chosen to stay in the Wood instead of fleeing underground like animals, we'd have fared better."

"You can't blame us for what happened," Corinna said.

The blood elf glanced over at her. "I place no blame, I merely speculate."

He was so calm, so cold and Corinna felt her temper burning. "You have no idea why those who fled to the Kaers chose to do so!"

"And you have no idea why those who did not, stayed."

"Okay, you two," Imri said nudging her horse between theirs. "We're all going to be together for awhile, lets talk about something else."

Corinna rode in silence until they camped.

It came as no surprise when Imri set the watches, that Corinna and Saevyl did not share one. Corinna shared the first half of her watch with Imri, and the second, with Hallian. She was sure that Saevyl was as pleased with the arrangements as she was.

She fed the fire as the others settled down to sleep.

"Can we come to some kind of compromise?" Imri asked.

"This trip will drag on forever if you're either silent or arguing."

Corinna sighed. "I don't know how to explain it to you so that you can understand. You have no idea what this is all about."

Imri put a hand on her friend's shoulder. "Cori, after all we've been through, can't you try? I don't think I've ever seen you so irritable.

"Remember the morning Hal stashed your clothes up in a tree? You laughed, took a half-hearted swing at him and that was it. Saevyl opens his mouth and you fly at him like an angry housewife."

"What Hal did was a joke. What Saevyl is, what his people have done is no joke. It's not in the least bit funny."

She sighed. "The blood elves' Court is so different from all the stories. Even after the Scourge, the elves in my village told of the grand and beautiful inhabitants of the Wyrn Wood. I dreamed of the Queen and her Court and of going some day to see what I'd only heard in stories."

She stared into the fire. "When I heard what they'd done... to themselves and the forest, it was like part of me turned black, shriveled up and died."

"So you're angry at them because they don't live up to your expectations?" Imri asked.

"Yes... no... you just don't understand," Corinna replied. "Look, I'll behave myself. I just really don't want to talk about it."

Imri looked as though she might say something else, but never did. "All right, my friend. Whatever you say."

The next morning dawned grey and miserable and the threat of rain hung in the air as they rode. Corinna though it a perfect compliment to her mood. Hallian tried several times to cheer her, but even he had to give up.

She kept a few lengths ahead so as not to hear the conversation going on behind her. If she couldn't hear it, it

couldn't offend her.

Imri cornered her when they stopped for lunch. "I thought you said you weren't going to do this."

"I said I'd behave. This is the only way I feel I can keep my promise."

Imri sighed and let it drop as Hallian fluttered between them and landed on Imri's shoulder. "I'm thinking we should take a different route."

"Why?" Imri asked.

"Well, I scouted up the path further and there's a bunch of scorchers that seem to be following it. I know there's a less used path through the woods. It might add some time, but we wouldn't have to worry about the orks."

"They aren't necessarily raiders," Corinna said. "They might not bother us at all and I really don't need the delay."

"She's right," Imri said. "But if they are, trying to flee or fight a band of them would take a lot more time than Hallian's suggestion. I'll talk to Saevyl about it, but I'm for the path through the woods."

"He told me he's a wizard, like you," Hallian said as Imri went over to Saevyl.

"He may be a wizard," Corinna said. "But he's nothing like me."

The windling shook his head. "I don't understand you some times. How can what he looks like make that much difference?"

"It's not just the way he looks. It's what the way he looks represents."

"I guess..."

He flew over to where Imri and Saevyl were talking. Corinna wondered if she really was being as unreasonable as her friends claimed. Still, how could they understand the corruption of the elves from the Blood Wood when there was nothing in either of their races for them to relate it to.

The decision was made to take the route through the woods, Hallian flying ahead to keep them on the path which seemed little more than a game trail. They had to ride single-file, Imri in front and Corinna in the rear.

She tried to watch Saevyl from the back where his thorns were hidden by his clothing. He almost seemed normal. Then, she'd catch a glimpse of a hand or the side of his face and see the corruption. How could he not feel it? How could he not realize what his people had done to themselves?

There was a rustling in the bushes up ahead, followed by giggling. Two forms shot from the underbrush and into a tree. Imri pulled her horse to a stop. "What was that?"

A few minutes later, Hallian flitted down from the tree, his hair and clothing disheveled. A female windling followed him, her face flushed under white hair. "Uh, hi," he said.

Corinna watched as Imri tried to keep the smirk off her face with little success. "Is this how you scout ahead for us?"

Hallian shrugged. "Well, actually, Lilly and I were having a pretty heated discussion about the local hazards and what we could expect coming through this area."

Imri laughed, "I'll just bet."

Lilly landed on Imri's horse. "Our village isn't far. Hallian said you'd be looking for a place to sleep soon and we would be glad to have you. We don't have many tall people come

through this area."

Corinna nudged her horse up beside Imri's. "I've heard stories of what goes on in isolated windling villages and I'd love the distraction."

Imri glanced back at Saevyl. "It's your trip," she said. "You have a say in whether or not we go."

Lilly ducked behind Hallian as she noticed the blood elf. "You didn't tell me about him."

"Saevyl's not too bad," Hallian replied. "As long as you don't mind the fact that he has no sense of humor. Imri's right, though, if he doesn't want to stay, we can't stay."

The blood elf shrugged. "It matters not to me. Comfort or discomfort is the same."

Hallian smiled. "Great! Lets go make sure everyone knows we're coming."

He took the other windling by the hand and they raced deeper into the forest. "I guess they'll find us eventually and lead us there." Corinna said.

Imri laughed. "As long as Hallian and his friend remember to let them know we're on our way. I just don't understand how a little one like that..."

Corinna laughed with her for the first time since the trip began. "I don't either."

True to his word, Hallian made sure they had an escort. The air around them was filled with shimmering wings and bell-like laughter. While guardsman on lizards paced them on either side.

Their antics were enough to draw Corinna out of her depression. She watched them, fascinated by their acrobatics. It wasn't that windlings were uncommon, it was just that there were so many of them. Their escort stopped and then fluttered up into the trees. Corinna followed them with her eyes and saw the tiny dwellings built on sturdy branches.

Smaller windlings descended on them, obviously children. They kept a timid distance at first and then swooped in to touch, as fascinated by the horses as the riders. They left Saevyl and his mount alone. The boldest coming no closer than his horse's nose.

Hallian fluttered down, landing on Corinna's shoulder. "Off your horses, ladies. There's going to be a party you'll never forget."

Stuffed, slightly drunk, and weary from the day's ride, Corinna sat with her back to a tree, watching the fire they'd built. Windlings danced in the air all around the clearing while their minstrels played. Corinna could see Saevyl, just outside the fire's light, watching the display. He'd been visited briefly by only the bravest villagers and now sat alone.

Imri sat down beside her, her eyes also misted with drink. "I'm going to pull Hal's wings off one at a time," she said smiling.

Too full of food and wine to really care, Corinna asked. "Why?"

The windling music stopped suddenly and the dancers scattered to nearby branches. Only Hallian remained,

hovering just above the fire. "Now, just as I promised, my very brave and beautiful companions will show you how the tall people dance."

"We'll what?" Corinna gasped as Imri hauled her to her feet.

"Hal said it was the least we could do to repay their hospitality."

The windlings cheered as they stood in the clearing. Imri's eyes sparkled as she stripped off her weapons. "You ready, elf?" she said. "Whoever lasts the longest gets to yank Hal's wings off."

"Not fair," Corinna protested. "You've got a warrior's stamina."

"And you've got a wizard's grace."

"A wizard's grace? What's that supposed to mean?"

"It means you haven't had as much to drink as I have so be quiet and dance."

The music was starting and Corinna could feel the rhythm inviting her. It had been a long time. "All right, human," she said. "You're on."

The dance had started years ago as a challenge when they'd both had their eyes on

the same man. It seemed almost silly to do it without a target, but Corinna was drunk enough to not mind being a little silly.

She closed her eyes and tried to imagine a tall, fair haired elf sitting beside the fire, his eyes following her every move. When she opened them, she could see him, slightly out of focus, but there. The fire's light flickered across his face.

Now that her imagination had supplied her with a focus, she altered her steps to bring herself closer to it. Her feet pounded the rhythm and she spun just out of his reach, losing herself in the dance. The music wanted to control her and she let it. It dissolved the tension that had bound her all during the journey.

She smiled down at her faerie prince and beckoned him to join her. When he didn't respond, she beckoned again and held out her hand. The feel of warm, real fingers snapped her out of the magic of the dance. She could hear Imri's laughter as the musicians stopped. She thought she saw the hint of amusement in Saevyl's grey eyes as they shifted from



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her face to her hand where it rested in his.

Corinna could feel herself flushing. She was well aware that everyone in the clearing was waiting for her to react and had no idea what to do.

Saevyl stood and bowed to her. "I'm afraid I am not familiar with your style of dance," he said. "However, if you wish, I can teach you how we dance at the Court."

She could see Imri over the blood elf's shoulder, her eyes flashing with mischief and mirth. Corinna knew she'd never hear the end of it from her warrior friend if she refused.

The blood elf's eyes were unreadable. Did he want her to accept or refuse? The clearing was eerily silent. She met Saevyl's eyes and held them for the first time since they'd met. "I'd love to learn."

He took her other hand, but only their fingers touched. "Very well, I will begin slowly." Had Imri said it, Corinna would have been sure it was meant as a challenge, but the blood elves had no emotion, no sense of humor. In fact she was very afraid that this dance would be a gross mockery of the former beauty of the Court, but she was not going to let him make a fool of her by refusing. Instead, she smiled. "I learn very quickly."

The musicians watched at first, as he walked her through to get a feel for the rhythm. The steps were complex and the movements precise as if it was meant to be danced on some intricately patterned floor. They touched nothing but fingers, but the almost touching was more seductive than close contact. Corinna kept her eyes on her feet, partly to keep up with her partner and partly to keep from meeting his eyes. Once she felt comfortable with where her feet had to be and relaxed, it had a strange, fluid beauty and was not at all like what she had expected.

The dance ended and Saevyl bowed to her again. "You do catch on very quickly. Should you ever find yourself at the Court, you will be at no loss for partners."

He turned away and left her in the middle of the clearing. She could hear the windlings cheering and felt Imri slap her across the back. "Impressive, Cori, very impressive. Wonder if I can get him to teach me."

Hallian fluttered down and landed on Imri's shoulder. "Guess he's not a Horror after all," he said. "Everyone knows Horrors can't dance."

Corinna avoided Saevyl the next morning. It had been much easier to deal with him when she'd hated everything he'd stood for...or everything she though he'd stood for. Now, she was just confused.

Finally, she pulled abreast of his horse. "Why?" she asked. "Why what?"

"Why did you dance with me last night?"

"You did ask me to," he said. "Besides, I enjoy dancing."

"You enjoy dancing?"

"As much as I enjoy anything."

"I didn't think you could enjoy things."

"The thorns do not keep us from enjoying, they keep us from enjoying too much."

She didn't reply. His answers raised more questions...questions she wasn't sure she was ready to have

answered. With Imri's help, they managed to keep conversation going. Apparently Saevyl did have a sense of humor, it was just different. Even Hallian had to admit that when he let them catch up to him. As soon as they left the forest, he stayed with them instead of flying ahead.

He landed on Corinna's horse. "So, changing your mind about those evil elves from the Blood Wood?" he asked.

Corinna sighed. "Honestly? I don't know."

The windling grinned. "I think we should take him all the way to the Court."

She shook her head. "I don't think I'm ready for that. I was more than a little drunk last night and I'm not really sure what to think about what happened."

"Want to know what I think?" Hallian asked. "I think you think too much. You said you dreamed of the court. If it's not what you imagined, so what? It's somewhere you've never been and something you've never seen."

He sat backwards on the horse's neck so that he faced her. "Look, Saevyl's not the most fun person I've ever met, but that doesn't mean that I don't want to see what the Blood Wood is like, even if all the elves there are just like him."

He grinned. "Besides, I want to see a whole bunch of them doing that dance. That windling village will be talking about it for years."

His grin broadened. "You did make an interesting pair, though."

He launched himself off the horse just before her hand reached where he'd been sitting. He fluttered lazily above her head, just out of reach. "You two never learn, I'm just too fast."

"Just remember, you're not faster than magic," she reminded him.

He spiraled slowly upwards, the sun sparkling off his wings. Corinna watched him, slightly envious of his ability to fly. Sometimes, she found his sense of humor annoying, but most of the time, he brightened up a journey.

His spiral stopped and he zipped back in the direction they had come. He was not quite out of sight when he came speeding back. "Imri, we've got trouble."

Imri stopped her horse and Corinna and Saevyl moved up beside her. "What kind of trouble?" the warrior asked.

"A handful of scorchers," the windling said. "Riding this way fast. If it wasn't so hazy, you could see their dust."

"Could they be following us?" Corinna asked

"We've made no effort to hide our trail," Imri said. "Did you get close enough to see their mounts?"

Hal nodded. "Yup, it's a raiding party on thundra mounts. No way we can outrun them."

He landed on Imri's saddle and opened her saddlebag. "I didn't take time to count them, but I don't think we're outnumbered much more than 2 to 1."

"That's comforting," Imri said, sliding her sword free. "I hate fighting mounted opponents and thundras are as nasty and ill-tempered as their riders."

Corinna scanned the horizon for any sign of their persuers. "You'll want me to drop the mounts first, then," she said. "That will slow them down and split them up."

"And perhaps, once they realize that they're dealing with

higher magic, they'll retreat," Saevyl suggested.

Hallian pulled his bow and quiver from Imri's pack. "Depends on why they're after us. If they're just bandits, they'll probably run, but if somebody sent them..."

Corinna noticed the suspicious look Imri shot at Saevyl. "Was it scorchers that attacked your group?"

"They were orks, yes," he replied. "They ambushed us in the mountains outside Throal. My horse bolted and threw me into a shallow gorge. By the time I regained consciousness, my companions lay dead on the path. Our attackers must have believed my fall had killed me."

"That doesn't sound like bandits," Imri said. "That sounds like someone really doesn't want you to get back home."

She dismounted and pulled her armor out of her saddle bags. "Okay, Cori, you take the mounts, and Hal and I will see what we can do about the riders."

"I can help as well," Saevyl offered. "I will target mounts first and then riders."

Imri nodded. "How far, Hal?"



The windling archer took to the sky. "They've slowed down," he replied. "I think they know we're ready for them, but I can't imagine how they figured it out."

A high screech was followed by the windling's scream as an eagle raked its talons across his back. Corinna sent a bolt of magic after it to keep it from attacking again, but couldn't react in time to stop Hallian's fall. Saevyl flung up one arm and the windling slowed and settled gently on the ground. "Beastmaster!" Imri spat.

Saevyl grabbed a vial from his pack, just before dismounting. He unstopped it on the way to where the windling lay and poured its contents down Hallian's throat.

Imri shouted. "Corinna! forget the mounts and find that Beastmaster!"

Corinna closed her one eye so that she saw the world through the amber gem. A magically created smoke had obscured the raiders from normal sight, but with the gem's aid, she could see them clearly. One of them radiated magical power.

She concentrated, gathering the energy she needed for the spell and set it speeding toward her victim.

The beastmaster screamed, but stayed on his mount. He and his companions came closer. Corinna could feel the pounding of the thundra hooves. She attacked again and again until the ork finally slumped in his saddle and then slipped off his mount.

She saw Saevyl tuck the windling in a saddlebag and send the horses away. Then he turned his attention to the raiders. Together, they felled four mounts before the remaining four closed upon Imri.

Corinna kept her attention on the riders of the fallen mounts. Imri would have enough trouble fending off the four around her without having to deal with more coming up behind. They were easier than the beastmaster had been, but it still seemed to take forever for them to fall. She prayed that Saevyl was helping Imri. As good as the warrior was, she was no match for four mounted orks. Losing the windling archer may well have lost them the battle, but she could spare that only a passing thought as she hurled her deadly magic at their attackers.

Then it was over. Ork scorchers and their mounts lay strewn across the plain, their blood soaking into the ground. She saw Saevyl on his knees with his back to her, but did not see Imri anywhere.

She stumbled over bodies to get to the blood elf's side. He supported Imri's head with one hand and was pouring the contents of another vial into her mouth. He glanced up at Corinna's approach. "I am no expert in these things, but I believe that she will live."

Corinna grabbed her friend's hand. "Thank you," she whispered. She felt fingers on her shoulder. "Let's bind her wounds so that we can move her. I am hoping Hallian will recover soon and bring the horses back. We can't stay here."

Corinna ripped strips from her clothing and bound Imri's wounds while Saevyl gathered what he could from the dead. She envied him his emotionlessness as her hands began trembling.

He dropped a piece of parchment in front of her. "Can you read this?"

She picked it up. "I recognize it as orkish, but I can't read it. What is it?"

He shook his head. "I was rather hoping it was a clue to who sent these men."

"We can give it to Imri when she wakes. I think she reads it."

The sound of horse's hooves distracted her. She stood, weak from her earlier exertion and prayed it was not more scorchers. There was no way she and Saevyl could stand another battle like that. Hallian's green wings reflected in the light and the horses followed him. "Looks like I missed all the fun."

He landed next to Imri. "She going to be okay?"

Saevyl nodded. "I gave her the same thing I gave you, but her wounds are more serious and will take more time to heal."

He gazed back the way they had come. "I suggest we leave here soon. If these were an advanced scouting party..."

Corinna nodded. "Then we'll have to make sure we hide our trail this time."

With Saevyl's help, they bound Imri to Corinna's saddle. Corinna mounted behind her and kept her upright.

Hal led them to a spring the horses had found in a large copse of trees and Saevyl did what he could to obscure their trail.

Corinna rode in silence. The booster potions the blood elf had given her companions were not uncommon, but they were expensive. Again, his actions confused her and his motives puzzled her. She hoped once Imri was awake and could read the document, that some of the mysteries would be solved.

Imri woke as they made camp. She sat up slowly. "Where are we?"

"Not too far out of our way," Corinna replied. "Hal found us a wooded area to hide in. How do you feel?"

The warrior stretched. "Not as bad as I thought I would. Saevyl had more potions, huh?"

Corinna nodded. "Yes."

Imri grinned. "Real shame those blood elves are so corrupt and evil."

"We are his only protection."

"Of course, how silly of me to forget."

Corinna handed her the parchment. "We found this on one of the bodies."

Imri unrolled it and looked it over. "Looks like a contract for Saevyl's death. It doesn't mention him by name, but it does say that a particular blood elf should be sought out and killed. I don't recognize the name of the person who signed it, though. Elgin Firesight?"

She called over to Saevyl. "Does the name Elgin Firesight mean anything to you?"

"He is one of the Queen's advisors," the blood elf replied.

"Why do you ask?"

"Because he wants you dead."

Saevyl's expression did not change. "Yes, I suppose that would make sense."

"Why?" Corinna asked.

"Because he has advised our Queen against this journey from the beginning. If I do not return, he will use that as fuel to his arguments that we not deal with the dwarfish king. It is his wish that we be the rulers of Throal."

Imri handed him the scroll. "Well, you'll want to take this to your Queen then."

He took the parchment and tossed it into the fire. "It will avail me nothing to do so. It will only alert Elgin that I'm aware of his treachery. I prefer that he believe me innocent of this and I will find other ways to act against him."

"Don't you think the Queen should know that he tried to sabotage her plans?" Corinna said.

"I'm sure she already does. She is not sure that she wishes an alliance with the dwarfish king. She prefers for the two

factions in Court to do as they will and she observes their outcome. She would not interfere."

Corinna's jaw clenched tight. "You mean she probably knew your party was in danger and did nothing to stop it?"

"Most likely."

Anger filled her, but she bit back her acidic replies and walked away. She had no desire to confront him on the subject of his people again. They were not the elves of the Wyrms wood. They were another race entirely, no more related to Corinna and the Throalian elves than they were to the windlings.

She thought she heard Imri calling her name, but paid it no heed. She really needed to get away from Saevyl and the others at the camp. She needed to walk her mad off. Imri didn't need to have to mediate between her and the blood elf.

She ventured further from the fire, although she made sure to keep it in sight. It wouldn't do to have something happen to her while no one was in much shape to help. She considered just going back and trying to get along with Saevyl, but couldn't bring herself to do it.

Something caught her attention. It was an intriguing music, not too unlike what she'd heard in the windling village. She glanced back at the camp and debated whether or not to investigate. The tune seemed to be coming from close by and she was pretty sure she could find it and still not lose sight of the fire.

The music filtered through the trees. Perhaps, if she didn't startle them, they would let her just enjoy their celebration. It would help her get her mind off Saevyl and the corrupt workings of the Court.

She followed and didn't even notice when she lost sight of the camp. It beckoned to her, drawing her deeper into the forest. She ignored the thorns and brambles that scraped at her arms and the low branches that tugged at her hair. The music was the only important thing. It was everything.

Suddenly, her right hand was on fire. Sharp pain shot through her entire arm and snapped her out of her trance. Saevyl stood beside her, her right hand clenched tightly in his, the thorns piercing her flesh. His eyes met hers again. "Perhaps now you understand," he said letting go.

"It is the pain that makes us strong and keeps us from losing our senses, or our way." He indicated the stagnant pond she had been about to enter. Green slime swirled on top of the water and nothing grew on its banks. Bare bones littered the shore. She shuddered and pulled her hand away. "We'd better get back."

She walked in front of him, rubbing the spots on her palm where the thorns had drawn blood. Nothing made sense anymore. He was right that the pain had saved her, as it had saved his people from the Horrors, but it had awakened other things. It gave her a sick feeling, like she didn't really know herself any more.

When they returned to camp, Hallian fluttered down to her. "Hey, why'd you run off like that. We don't know what's here."

"I'm sorry," she said. "I was angry and I didn't want to trouble any of you with it."

"You okay, Cori?" Imri asked.

Corinna rubbed her palm again. "Yeah, I just wandered too far away, I guess. It's a good thing you sent Saevyl out to get me."

"We didn't send him," Imri said. "He said he thought you shouldn't be out by yourself and volunteered to go."

Again, the blood elf's eyes were unreadable when Corinna glanced back at him. He sat down beside the fire and did not mention what they had seen at the pond.

Imri stretched. "Well, I'm glad you're back. I sure hope the second half of this journey is less eventful than the first. I don't think I can deal with much more excitement."

Her expression sobered as she met Corinna's eyes. "Still, wishing we hadn't taken this job?"

Corinna sighed. "I honestly don't know."

The next morning dawned with the sun shining brightly above a clear blue sky. Imri's wounds were nearly healed and she insisted they ride at first light. Saevyl's potion had worked its magic and she did not seem to be in any pain as she rode.

Once they were back on the path, Hallian flew forward and returned saying he'd found no indication of other riders. He alighted on Imri's saddle. "I can even see the Blood Wood, the sky's so clear."

Corinna found that to be welcome news. Her sleep had been tortured by nightmares of the stagnant pond and the thing that must have been lurking under the water. Saevyl had been in all of them, sometimes saving her and sometimes pushing her in.

Finally, she edged her horse beside Saevyl's. He glanced over at her, his eyes as cold as always. "Because I need your protection," he said before she could ask him.

"How did you know that was what I was going to ask?" she demanded.

"Your eyes betray your questions," he replied.

She sighed. "I just don't understand you."

He shrugged. "Until you have a better understanding of the ritual of the Thorns, you never will. Until then, you will always see me as either a cruel monster or a poor tortured soul who would give all I have to be without my deformity. Neither observation is correct. I am what I am, Corinna. I have taken the ritual and I would not reverse that decision even if I could."

She shuddered. "But what about the pain?"

"We do what we must to survive and every bit of power we take has a price. We are not as different as you would like to believe. Take your amber eye for example. You willingly deformed yourself to gain the power of astral sight, didn't you?"

"It's not the same."

"Isn't it? The ritual of Thorns was created by a people desperate to survive. I would say that is a much more noble cause than something you can do just as easily with a spell."

She felt her temper flaring again. "You don't understand me any more than I understand you!"

"True, to a point. Your emotions are so strong and so obvious, that through them, I can almost read your thoughts. That is a dangerous weakness."

Corinna pulled her mount back, not wanting to get into yet

another screaming match, since she was the only one who ended up screaming. She rode again in silence, Saevyl's words gnawing at her. It was bad enough that he was changing the way she thought about his people, but he was making her question herself.

They reached the edge of the Blood Wood that night and camped in the fringes. Saevyl assured them that they'd be safe as long as he was with them. "What about Elgin Firesight?" Imri asked him.

"He does not dare show a hand of treachery inside the Wood," he assured her. "We will be safe here tonight and I will be on my way back to the Court tomorrow."

"Are we going?" Hallian asked.

Imri looked over at Corinna. "Well, Cori, I promised you that we'd stop here, do you still want to?"

Corinna searched their faces. Hallian really wanted to go, but Imri looked concerned. The Court had shown them treachery already, she had no desire to see any more. "Yes." She thought Imri looked relieved. Saevyl bowed and handed Imri a sack filled with coin. "This is the second half of the price I promised. Tomorrow, I will be on my way."

He held out a hand to Corinna. "If you choose some time to return to the Court, I will see that you are welcomed. You are strong, Corinna, it is a shame you are too old to take part in the Ritual."

"I appreciate the kindness, Saevyl, but I don't think I'm willing to pay that kind of price."

"As you wish," he said.

At dawn, they bid him farewell and the blood elf made his way through the forest. They watched him until he was obscured by the trees. "Well, Cori, what do you think?"

Corinna shuddered. "I think I'm glad I'm not one of them." Imri squeezed her shoulders. "I think I am too."

"I wish I'd gotten a chance to see the Court," Hallian said.

"Yeah, I'll bet," Imri said. "I've heard that part of the ritual of Thorns is to roast a windling over a camp fire."

For a moment, it looked as though he thought she might be serious, then he laughed. "Saevyl wasn't too bad, but he's just no fun at parties."

He zipped into the sky and they followed him, leaving Blood Wood and blood elf behind them.

by Vicki Kirchhoff-Martin

THE SPY

than any slave I have ever known."

-Kevelian, Master Spy (of supposedly Elven descent, though several sources disagree)

Spies are the envoys of political intrigue throughout Barsaive. Spies act as specialized information gatherers, and sometimes assassins. Their reputation is dark, making them only slightly more accepted than Nethermancers, and often far more feared by those in positions of temporal power. Most spies prefer to work alone, but they are anything but antisocial, being of the type who love interacting with people if for nothing more than to see how many lies they can get them to believe.

Though there are many involved in the art of spying, there are very few actual Spy Adepts in Barsaive. This rarity is partially due to the tremendous demands the magic has, both socially and physically, for those who wish to follow it. But more importantly is the secrecy which surrounds the magical arts of Spying. The Spy is taught never to reveal his secrets unless he is certain that the student will completely embrace the Way. Because such total devotion to a discipline is demanded, no Spy will ever attempt to add a second discipline to his studies without losing all Spy abilities forever.

Important Attributes: Dexterity, Perception, Willpower, and Charisma

Racial Restrictions: Obsidiman, Troll, T'Skrang

Karma Ritual: To perform their karma ritual, spies must sit quietly, preferably in a dark room, with their eyes closed, often blindfolded, and their ears plugged with wax. Once completely shut off from all normal sensory perceptions, the spy reaches out with magic to discern all details of his surroundings. Once the image and importance of all aspects of their surroundings are firmly grasped, the ritual ends.

Artisan Skills: Acting, Performing Arts, Writing

FIRST CIRCLE

Talents

Karma Ritual
Lock Picking
Melee Weapons
Read and Write Languages
Silent Walk*
Surprise Strike*

SECOND CIRCLE

Talents

Disguise Self*
Durability (6/5)
Evidence Analysis*



"You wish to know what it is to be a Spy? Then watch the shadows cast by the moon as they slither silently across the nightscape. Lie still in your safe, warm bed and listen to the sounds of the city as its dark denizens carry out deeds beyond speech, or even thought. It has been said that those who follow the way of the Spy belong to the night, and it is so...in the same way that our muscles and bones belong to the skin which covers them. The night gives us shape and distinction, but beware. For the night lingers during the day...in the form of shadows.

"I have walked unseen and unheard through the halls of Theran palaces, chuckling to myself as they discussed their plans for domination of Barsaive. Did I give that information to Throal? Such a question. I have offered some 'speculation' concerning the dealings of Thera and her allies to King Valarus III, himself--for a fine price, of course. But I have also spoken to Theran officials on matters concerning the resistance of Theran control in their 'unruly province'.

"Do not waggle your self-righteous tongue at me. Allegiance is meant to be hard-earned, my naive young friend. And those who do not remember that fact suffer worse

THIRD CIRCLE

Talents

Book Memory
Book Recall

FOURTH CIRCLE

Karma: The spy may spend a karma point on any action using perception only.

Talents

Astral Sight
Thread Weaving (Spy Weaving)*

FIFTH CIRCLE

Social Defense: Increase the spy's Social Defense by 1.

Talents

Detect Trap
Lip Reading

SIXTH CIRCLE

Physical Defense: Increase the Spy's Physical Defense by 1.

Talents

Conceal Weapons
Steely Stare

SEVENTH CIRCLE

Spread Rumor: For the cost of 1 point of strain, the spy can begin a rumor, which can be infused with magic to spread. After taking strain, the spy makes a Charisma test against the first recipient of the "information". The level of success of the test indicates how far the rumor spreads. On a good success, the rumor affects a small group of people. At the GM's determination, each success level increases the size of the group in large multiples. A truly legendary success could put the rumor on the tongue of the entire population of a city.

Talents

Missile Weapons
Sense Poison

EIGHTH CIRCLE

Initiative: Increase the spy's initiative dice by 1 step.

Talents

Eagle Eye*
Orbiting Spy*

NINTH CIRCLE

Karma: The spy may spend a karma point on any one recovery test.

Social Defense: Increase the spy's Social Defense by 2.

Talents

Bardic Voice
Detect Falsehood
Memorize Image*

TENTH CIRCLE

Move Unseen: For 4 points of strain, the spy may pass unnoticed through a crowd of people. The spy makes a

Disguise Self test against a difficulty number determined by the GM representing how closely people are looking out for him. Success indicates that he and his actions seem nothing out of the ordinary and no one bothers to notice him. However, if asked later, members of the crowd may remember seeing the spy pass through, they just thought nothing of it at the time.

Talents

Multi-Tongue
Safe Thought

Rituals for Advancement

Much like thieves, Spies have no set rituals for advancement to the next Circle of power. The secrecy surrounding this ancient discipline does not allow for large gatherings or ornate ceremonies for one person to display their skills. When a mentor takes on a student, the training forms a strange bond between them, allowing the teacher to sense when their student is ready to advance. The mentor will suddenly appear shortly after the criteria for Circle advancement are filled and make himself available as a teacher. If the student ever locates a ghost master (the procedure for which is listed below), the mentor realizes his expertise is no longer required and gladly disappears...possibly forever.

Ghost Master Ritual

Much like the Karma Ritual, the ghost master ritual begins with the Spy seated in a pitch black room, completely separated from all visual or auditory input. After reciting a litany of desire for knowledge, the room's darkness seems to lighten, as the Spy is drawn deep into a maze of corridors within his own mind. The Spy makes his way through these corridors, avoiding foes and finding allies to guide him. When he has finally reaches his goal, the Spy will be in a room containing nothing but the ghost master. The Spy will then exit his subconscious and find the ghost master waiting for him in the actual room. The Ritual then proceeds as normal.

(*) Indicates discipline talent

Note: The Spy Adept can be especially effective in campaigns designed to thwart Theran efforts to overtake Barsaive. Spies are not always without moral convictions and can sometimes be convinced to work toward a worthy cause--such as freeing Barsaive from the threat of Theran oppression. Some Spies of legend have even been known to take up the way of the Lightbearer, using their talents to gain information which would be detrimental to the Horrors.

By Paris E. Crenshaw, III

Playtest Credits: Becky O'Brien and all the enthusiastic gamers at Coast Con 17 and WolfCon.

THE KISS

BY GREG GORDEN

spiritual and requires the magic of strong love (and a blood oath swearing fealty) to cure. Use your imagination to adapt the story to better involve your group.

Game Master Information

This adventure is written for 4 - 6 characters of circles 2 - 4. The central problem or puzzle of the adventure centers around undying love of two characters, a love which has been perverted by the Horror Whisper Pain. The intervening centuries have compounded the problem, leading to the death of a desperate wizard, the corruption of a trusted advisor, and a threat upon the life of the Prince of Throal.

Your players must unravel the puzzle through action as much as cogitation, for once the story starts it gathers momentum toward the conclusion. Once the adventure begins the gamemaster should put gentle pressure to keep the adventure moving, not allowing the players much more time than enough to catch their breaths. The adventure is designed to throw the players a curve or two; you can enhance the effect by keeping time tight in order to keep the players a little off balance.

At a theme level you can play the adventure as a classic fairy tale with a twist: True love is eternal, and such a love twisted can cause eternal pain. The external problems (Whisper Pain's presence in Barsaive, Sir Gutarag's betrayal of Throal, the attempt on the live of Prince Neden) can all be solved by restoring the natural course of the love between Herita and Tansion. That one of the lover's is dead and the other undead is a difficulty... but these things are never easy, are they?

If any of your player-characters have romantic connections or difficulties, you might want to think a moment about integrating that romance into this story line. The troubles your PC has with his romance can mirror on a smaller scale the problems between Tanison and Herita. As a true sub-plot these difficulties should wrap up before the climax of the main plot, and the resolution of the sub-plot should reflect the resolution of the main plot. Perhaps one of the PC lovers is cursed in Kaxilreth's tower. Maybe the wasting disease which killed the wizard is

PROPS: The gamemaster needs four identical earrings for this adventure. Also included are the death handouts for the entrance to Kaxilreth's Tower scene.

Adventure Background

As the Scourge began to roll across Barsaive, people scrambled for ways to defend themselves against the Horrors who boiled across the surface of the world. The City of Idis was one of the many city states consumed by the Horrors before Theran thaumaturgies could be employed to construct a protective Kaer. During the last days of glory in Idis, a

troubadour named Tanison fell in love with Crown Princess Herita. The attraction was mutual. Not realizing the full dangers of the Scourge, Tanison had earring fashioned from elemental materials and enchanted to provide protection from otherworldly dangers. The earrings were scant help when Whisper Pain emerged from Astral Space into the middle of the garden tryst between Herita and Tanison. The lovers were separated, never to see each other again as Whisper Pain grabbed Tanison and made him its servant. While searching for a way to rescue her lover, Herita was overwhelmed by the hordes of mindless, voracious Horrors which first scoured the land of life.

Whisper Pain drifted across Barsaive during the Scourge, causing small exquisite miseries rather than wholesale slaughter. As the magic of world began to ebb, the Horror began to formulate a plan which would let him stay in this world forever. It allied with Kaxilreth, a desperate magician seeking a

cure for the disease which consumed him.

Outwardly comforting the mage while secretly revelling in the taste of his agony, Whisper Pain engaged Kaxilreth in a plan to possess a being who was securely attached to this world through the threads of bloodlines, magic and responsibility. Noble houses offered the best range of choices. Sir Gutarag's misfortune landed him on



HERITA

Kaxilreth's island. Whisper Pain seized upon the opportunity, choosing Prince Neden as its target. The plan has moved inexorably forward, and nears completion.

Introduction

I recommend that give the players the introduction after they go through Setup: Landing on the Island. This starts the adventure with a slight adrenalin rush, drops them straight into the middle of the situation and then lets them know what it is all about. This is a sleazy storytelling trick called in media res, starting in the middle of the action rather than at the beginning of the story. Feel free to keep them in the dark until one of the characters hauls himself up from the charred surface of the island, spits pumice and asks, "What the heck are we doing here?"

The players were sitting in a finely appointed chamber in Bartertown, resting in overstuffed leather chairs placed beneath the painted gaze of long-dead dwarven merchants. The proffered wine is excellent and plentiful, and those little finger sandwiches are delicious if not filling. They are sitting here at the request of Lord Malban, a human who advises King Varulus III. As they are getting nervous over the quality of the service and the luxury of the surroundings (those dwarves know how to stage a last meal, that's for sure), Lord Malban enters the chambers, a tall man dressed in earth tones, a rich, red shirt over brown riding-breeches. His polished black boots match the slick, black hair capping his hawk-like feature. His gestures are deliberate, indicative of the depth of thought always going on behind those piercing eyes.

With him is Sir Gutarag, a dwarven champion who has served King Varulus for years. His body runs a little bit too much to fat these days, but a warrior would note with approval that Gutarag's crystal chain armor is not ceremonial, and the off-color links use to expand the armor to its more generous size were chosen for their strength, not their appearance. Gutarag is brusque toward the party, but never to the point of being rude. The old soldier does not like the idea of involving non-dwarves into such an important matter so early in the situation. But Malban has convinced him.

SETUP: Landing on the Islands

Start with wingboats on Kaxilreth's Island, in the northern portions of Death's Sea. Luckily they are landing during the day, when the updrafts are regular. Air sailing tests of 3 from everyone settles the boats on the rocks. Don't have air sailing? Bit tougher then: Willpower test of 5 will do it. Remember that number of successes must equal the number of passengers to keep the boat on course. See page 96 of the basic rulebook.

During the night the air elementals rebel against the constant torment of the day and cause furious and unpredictable currents. The wings are retracted when the characters land. The heat is stifling, the air clings to their lungs as if it were afraid to leave their bodies. The oblong rocky island has cliffs, 20 to 30 feet tall, but the fiery spray sometimes crashes over the lip of the cliff. The characters find themselves at

the tunnel leading to Kaxilreth's tower.

UP TO THE GATE:

All but one of the traps leading to the entrance has been sprung by Tanison, the keeper of the house and the male lover in the survivor's vision (See below.) The entranceway is a trench hewn from the cooled lava that forms the island. The trench is covered with huge basalt slabs weighing over 50 tons apiece. The gate to the tower is at the end of the trench. The only physical way to the gate is through the trench; a character cannot fly over the trench to reach the gate as it is blocked from above by the slabs. The tunnel is divided into four distinct sections, each of which was trapped.

Each trap can be avoided by speaking a phase of the moon, one per room, in this order: new moon, quarter moon, half moon, gibbous moon, full moon. Kaxilreth had an obsession with lunar phenomena, and he gave his real guests the passwords so they could enter his tower without being attacked. The players have almost no way of obtaining this information before they reach Tanison, but the tower was built to be used.

The Graves

There are four graves up-slope from the entrance to the tunnel. While there are four separate mounds, only one marker commemorates the dead. It reads:

Cynthia	
Vulman	Fine Sailors
Orbitus	Each and All
Leruth	

These are the remains of the sailors who reached the island with Sir Gutarag.

Pit Traps

Password[New Moon]

Characters can still see the weight-sensitive gears and cogs which moved the earthen covers of each of the three pits. Each pit is 10 feet across and spans the full 10 feet of the trench. The gears have been spiked with the pit covers partially open. Characters can see the preternaturally sharp spikes (Always hit if a character falls, but attack test with 9 steps for the purposes of determining an armor defeating hit; damage test 13.) Makeshift bridges span the pits, built from no-longer needed furniture from the tower: slats and side pieces from a bed frame, drawers and back pieces from an armoire, and the extra sections from an expandable dining table. Wooden pegs join the pieces. The bridges are rickety, but will hold up to 400 pounds. Obsidimen will have a problem.

Wall Bows

Password [Quarter Moon]

Magically aimed, armed and fired crossbows were hidden in niches in the walls. Now all six crossbows lie in a neat pile in the corner near the door, their bowstrings cut. The aiming ward is still active, the equivalent of mystic aim (rank

four, step nine, not that it really matters). The circles appear on the characters but no missile is fired, although three of the bows release and re-cock with each triggering of the ward. Play the effect for as much creepiness as you can get away with.

The crossbows are fashioned from polished maple inlaid with onyx. The stones have been meticulously cracked by Tanison, and so are not worth much. The whole lot is worth perhaps 30 silver pieces. The bows are thread items attuned to the pattern of the island (which in turn was woven with Kaxilreth's pattern.) They are worth perhaps 250 silver to a mage interested in theoretical magic, but they have no practical value. For the theoretical mages among the players, the problem for using them is as follows: The island has threads connected to the weapons. The enchantment on the island powers the crossbows. Attaching a character's thread to the weapon severs the threads to the island; the weapon then has no power.

Flaming Section

Password [Half Moon]

Detection runes line the door frame to this section, the ebony still polished and gleaming. The runes detect the passage of the namegiver races, and there is a rune for each of the main eight races. One round after passage fire runes flare in the four corners of the room. Ceiling nozzles hiss from the pressure of elemental air, but Tanison has removed the lamp oil which would otherwise fill the room with a flammable

mist.

Moving Door

Password [Gibbous Moon]

This oblong room is 15 yard long and a scant 5 yards wide. Tanison has been unable to affect the magic in this room. The entrance and exits start directly across from one another. However the exit moves (the dirt and stone and tunnel shift to reform the entrance in a new location. The door has initiative step 7. If the door wins initiative a DEX test of 8 or better is needed to get through the door. If a character wins a DEX test of 6 gets you through. In either case, a WIL test of 6 will allow a character to overcome the magic of the door and stagger through. Failure to move through the door results in a magical push which acts as a difficulty 10 knockdown test. A character who fails the knockdown test is pushed back into the room.

The rest of the room has six moving sections of stone, three on each side of the wall. The stone sections are five yards wide fitting together at seams less than a knife blade thick. The sections move asynchronously, making their patterns impossible to follow. DEX tests of 5 or more cross the room without being hit by a section. Failure indicates being hit by a block for 8 steps of damage (armor applies); a botch means the blocks slammed the character between them for 16 steps of damage.

Main Gate

Password [Full Moon]

There are 13 entrance slots in the cupola surrounding the main gate. There are hand marker for the left hand beside each slot. There are runes above each marker. Each rune is scarred and scraped. Tanison defiled the runes the best he could, but they retain most of their magic. The hand markers will slide, shrink or stretch to match the size of the character. Each time a character touches a hand marker, they make a spellcasting test (PER default). On a nine or better, nothing happens; the door doesn't open either. The door will not open until the password is spoken while touching the hand marker or the spell is unleashed. Opening when the spell is unleashed is an effect of Tanison's tampering, not part of Kaxilreth's original design.

Once unleashed all characters make WIL tests. All but highest total dies to the spell (The spell opens portals to Death's domain, which conducts a battle similar to undead struggle, only the domain of Death can never die. Bummer.) Their spirits continue play, using skills and abilities on astral

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objects, but limited to PER, WIL, and CHA against physical objects or creatures. The dead spirits can recreate physical items they owned by making WIL tests. The target number is the step of the item, three if the item did not have a step number. So a broadsword could be created with a WIL test of 5. The objects only work in astral space, where their spirits currently linger. Normally the spirits are whisked away to the afterworld or Death's domain, but the spell has been disrupted by Tanison, and Death's grip is weak here on Death's Sea.

A spirit has the same death and unconsciousness rating, wound threshold and recovery stats as the physical character. If a spirit "dies", he or she loses her grip on astral space and takes the long fall to Death's domain.

Opening The Door: The door is disk-shaped, rolling in its slot to resemble a waning moon as it opens.

The Tower

Tower is a misnomer, part of the lie Kaxilreth lived throughout his life. He used elemental powers to sculpt a huge stone edifice over 150 feet high, all shiny obsidian, smooth basalt and rough pumice. Many-limbed, bat-winged humanoids are carved into the upper half of the tower, as if they were trapped in molten rock which cooled around them. Inside the tower only has a few rooms, all on the first two stories. The rest is just a front to impress the occasional off-course airship who would return with reports of the mysterious tower. Kaxilreth had grand plans for completing the tower, but spent most of his magic fighting the disease which killed him.

Walls: The walls are elementally worked volcanic rock. They are impervious to physical attack for the purposes of this scenario. Given tools and a couple of hours you could dig through one of the inner walls. Unless noted walls resist astral passage (of the spirits) with a difficulty of 4. A WIL test of four or better is needed to pass through the walls. This difficulty applies to the astral lampreys as well as the player characters.

Windows: Made from heat-resistant crystal thicker than an ork's forearm. They are nearly as tough as the walls, having an armor value of 15, death rating of 25. An attack test of 20 or better is an armor defeating hit. Any attack test other than a botch hits the window.

Ventilation: Each room has an intake vent and an exhaust vent. These are magic portals which transport air, and only air, to the filtration room.

The rooms below have a listing for Physical Entrance and Astral Entrance. These list the difficulties and hazards for entering the rooms in body or spirit.

1) Anteroom

Physical Entrance: No problem

Astral Entrance: No problem

The anteroom has a portrait of Kaxilreth. He is a tall human, sallow skin, vague expression. He stands inside a gigantic brass contraption, an artist's brave attempt at rendering the planetarium mechanism without seeing it. Kaxilreth is wearing crisp orange robes with complicated loops in gold

thread. Across from the painting are a pair of brass cape racks. The floor is an orange and gold diamond-shaped tile mosaic. There are no windows in this room.

2) Tanison's Room

Physical Entrance: Locked 7, Break STR test of 12. One strain for the STR test.

Astral Entrance: 4

Neatly kept bedroom with a simple oak bed, night stand and an armoire that has been warped from the heat. Once the best a courtier could buy, Tanison's clothes are all thread-bare. The night stand lamp has a fire spell upon it, drawing energy from Death's Sea. The lamp ignites and brightens with the turn of a simple screw. The lamp is a magical curiosity worth 150 silver, counting as treasure. It is only useful in areas rich in elemental fire. There are no windows in this room.

3) Kitchen

Physical Entrance: No Problem

Astral Entrance: Warded against those darn lampreys which would nibble at the edge of the preservation magics. WIL test of 9 to avoid. The ward does 12 steps damage.

Five storage bins cluster along the west wall, preparation counters abut the southwest, while a 60-gallon water tank stands in the southeast. A sink stands next to the water tank, a tap running from the tank to the sink. The drain leads out the east wall. Next to the sink is the oven. Two eastside-windows and four light crystals illuminate the kitchen. The northern end of the kitchen is a water-summoning circle centered around a five-gallon pot. Only Kaxilreth knew how to use the circle.

China, cutlery, cooking ware and serving dishes are stored in the cupboards along the east wall. The storage bins preserve food through cold and air magics. The bins still hold food, enough meat, fruit and flour to feed the party for weeks.

4) Dining Room

Physical Entrance: No Problem

Astral Entrance: No Problem

Polished gray-granite tile reflects the bright light from the eight crystals which illuminate this room. The dining room is the most cheerful room in the house, with potted palms in the northern corners standing sentry on either side of a terrarium. The dining table is a slab of marble held aloft by a sky lattice spell. Eight slender chairs with gold-silk cushions sit neatly under the table. The cushions are worth 25 silver apiece, but do NOT count as treasure.

5) Reading Room

Physical Entrance: No Problem

Astral Entrance: No Problem

One large stuffed chair with cracked leather upholstery sits in the NW corner. Suspended on a brass chain above the chair is a light crystal. The bookshelves on the eastern wall hold nothing of great value. The books are common folk tales, collected works from obscure troubadours, and dozens of volumes of bad poetry written by Kaxilreth. Not all of the

poetry deals with the moon - just most of it.
Stairs in the southwest lead to the upper floor.

6) Parlor

Physical Entrance: No Problem

Astral Entrance: No Problem

The mood of this room is set by the large curved window which caps the western end of the parlor. The red glow from the death's sea washes the colors from the room. Two low set couches abut to form an "L" shape near the center of the room. A bar and liquor cabinet occupy the northeast. Brandy and port are what Kaxilreth had left. The parlor floor was sunk about four feet lower than the rest of this level, short stairs connecting the parlor to the reading room. The windows start about 12 feet above the floor. An accordion-like curtain, similar to the top of a roll-top desk, may be pulled by a rod to cover the window. The windows of the parlor are not quite as strong as the other windows, having been stretch and molded to form the curve. They have a death rating of 20, armor rating 15, and require an attack test of 15 for an armor defeating hit.

7) Filtration Room

Physical Entrance: Locked and Barred (13). One strain for the STR test, no strain for lock picking. Kaxilreth used a command phrase ["Dance of the New Moon"] to open the door. Tanison does not know the phrase.

Astral Entrance: Warded against those pesky lampreys who would foul up the magical works. WIL test of 9 to avoid. The ward does 12 steps damage.

Brass tubes and runes fill the room. The tubes model in miniature the way air circulates throughout the tower. Adjusting the flow in the model can increase or decrease the flow of air to any room.

Upper Level

8) Moonscape room

Physical Entrance: No Problem

Astral Entrance: Warded against astral presences. Kaxilreth was certain that others coveted his collection of paintings, and warded the room against even so much as an astral sensing. As far as anyone knows, the threat to his artwork existed only in Kaxilreth's raving imaginings. WIL test of 13 to avoid. Spell affect holds the astral presence until Kaxilreth comes to investigate, or a WIL test of 13 is made. Better hope for the WIL test, huh? Lampreys will come to nibble upon any stuck adventures.

Thirteen paintings crowd the walls, each a different painting of a night landscape featuring a full moon. The only identifiable landscapes are Sky Point and Travar. In each painting it is the moon that is the most vibrant, the most realistic. The rest of the painting exists to give the moon a context, something to shine upon. The paintings are well done, but averaging four feet high by six feet wide they are not particularly portable - particularly as they are painted on wood rather than canvas. But if some thief ... er, art lover happens to make off with them they are worth (d12+d10) x

10 silver pennies apiece. That's an average of 130 silver apiece.

9) Master Bedroom

Physical Entrance: Locked and Barred (difficulty 13). Lock picking is free, but STR test requires one strain.

Astral Entrance: WIL of 4.

Canopied brass bed large enough for an ogre, let alone a human. Built in closets with brass rods (What is with this guy, anyway? Hasn't he heard of, oh, iron or gold or platinum or tin for Chorrolis sake?) Kaxilreth has a variety of clothes; courtiers would envy his selection of vests, hose, shirts and shoes. Kaxilreth seems to have been the sort of magician who only wore robes for work. On the wall over the onyx night stand is an illusion -glass, a work of art which reflects an imaginary forest pool at which storm wolves stop to refresh themselves. In contrast with the other works of art in the tower, the pool is dappled with sunlight.



10) Baths

Physical Entrance: From the hallway locked and barred (difficulty 13). Lock picking is free, but STR test requires one strain. Hope your characters can hold it.

Astral Entrance: No problem from master bedroom as the inner door is ajar. WIL test of 4 from the hallway.

The privy squats in the northwest corner, white porcelain with brass fixtures. A curtain may be pulled for privacy. Three metal bath-basins suspend from rails in walls, additional support being given by rods hanging from the ceiling. The basins are porcelain lined with drains in the bottom, the pipes from which disappear into the floor. A single water tank with a flexible metal hose hangs along the south wall. Each basin has metal stair (yes, brass) and handrails to aid bathers getting in and out. One of the baths is copper, one silver, and one white gold. If the characters really want to go about disassembling a bath for the metal, the recover approximately 70 silver pieces worth of copper, 600 silver pieces of silver and 1,500 silver pieces worth of white gold. The metal is bonded to the porcelain, making removal difficult. This would be a tedious process, claiming about 10% of a bath's worth each hour of work.

Kaxilreth and His Notebook: His body lies in the white gold bath, mired in a partially-evaporated herbal muck. His orange and gold robes is neatly hung over a hand rail. Ink is splattered over the sides of the basin, a shattered ink bottle lying at on the bath floor. Stuck in the muck is Kaxilreth's notebook and a very soggy quill pen. From the notebook (read and write magic test of 5) the characters can discover that Kaxilreth was working on a means to possess Prince Neden. The magic was moon based, and required 7 years of casting over better than 90 full moons. Kaxilreth was working from hints given to him by a Horror. He has been working since 1499 (assuming the current year is 1506.) Spell is complete, and possession is to occur when the Horror's agent touches Prince Neden during the next night of the new moon.

The researcher also discovers that a planetarium setting was very important to a related bit of research Kaxilreth was doing.

On a Good success (9+) the researcher also discovers that Kaxilreth had been modifying a life-magic spell to extend his own life. The modifications assume the spell is being cast in the Death's Sea, drawing upon the elemental power present in the sea, and Death's relative impotence in the area. Based on a spirit summoning spell, it could resurrect the player characters. Now all they need is thread weaving or PER tests and the following ingredients: elemental fire, elemental water, brass incense burners, myrrh, and a summoning circle formed from moonbeams. Piece of cake, right?

On an Excellent success (11+) the researcher also discovers oblique references to the Yrithsar, suggesting that the ritual be performed only when the characters are ready for a hasty exit from the tower.

A researcher who spends another 4 to 5 hours with the book and makes a PER test 5 could also discover the information of a Good success, but Yrithsar information still requires an excellent success.

11) Observatory

Physical Entrance: No Problem

Astral Entrance: No Problem

The planetarium dominates the room, a collection of

spanning bars, gears, models, circles, tracks, lenses and mirrors, loops, handles and chains. The planetarium is a working model of the solar system, although only six planets are present: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. The model is geocentric, centered around the Earth in Ptolemaic fashion. The Moon is prominently display in its orbit around the earth. The Sun lies between the moon and the planets, while the constellations lie beyond the planets. Each planet, the moon and sun have two controls for motion (up-down, in a circle around the earth.)

Moving the planetarium is a tricky task for one person (DEX and PER tests of 11 each), less so for two are more (one makes a DEX test of 5, the other a PER test of 5). Tanison can provide the perception, but is a bit jerky in his undead form for the dexterity test. Spirits can provide perception if they can find a way to communicate with the physical world.

If the planetarium is set in accordance with Kaxilreth's notebook (see baths above), the walls will gradually lose tint, from black to smoky gray to clear. The lenses hum as light from the stars and planets strike them, and the gears move of their own accord as the enchantment adjusts itself. When all the lenses are in correct position all notes are in pitch. Moonlight reflects and then flares from the lenses, a flame which cools rather than warms. The lenses, mirrors and magic focus the moonlight upon the floor of the observatory, where it rises from the ground to form a summoning circle of pure moonlight.

12) Horror Guest Room

Physical Entrance: Locked, lock pick test 5 to open. STR test 8 also opens the door, but requires one strain.

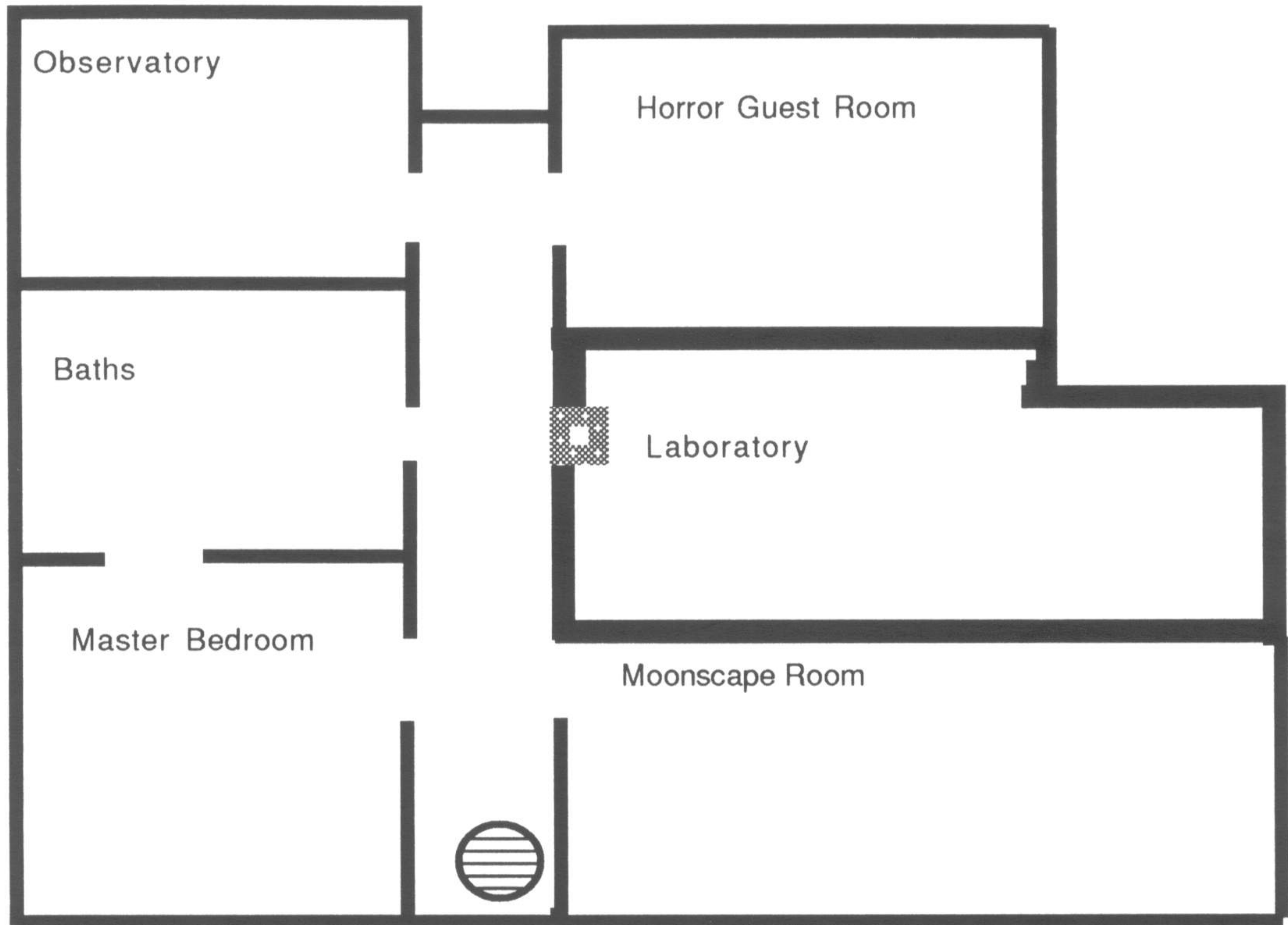
Astral Entrance: Heh. More fun than running across pits of red-hot coals carrying buckets of lamp oil, that's what we say about getting in astrally. Any astral presence can see that the room is surrounded by corrupted energy. The room contracts, expands, seems to dip and dance and twist to unseen forces. The whole things looks less stable than a soap bubble sitting on a razor. WIL test of 7 to enter. On an excellent success (15 +) the character enters without a problem.

A good success alerts Whisper Pain that something more interesting than astral lampreys is entering the room. It comes to investigate, arriving in a minute or so. Whisper Pain observes the characters in the hopes one will provide additional nourishing pain. This observation may include mental conversation to find out who these adventurers are, with perhaps a bit of taunting. Whisper Pain will not reveal who it is. It wants to annoy, not severely damage, taste the stress of the adventurers, not kill them. He stays far enough away in astral space to never appear as more than a ill-defined presence in the polluted murk.

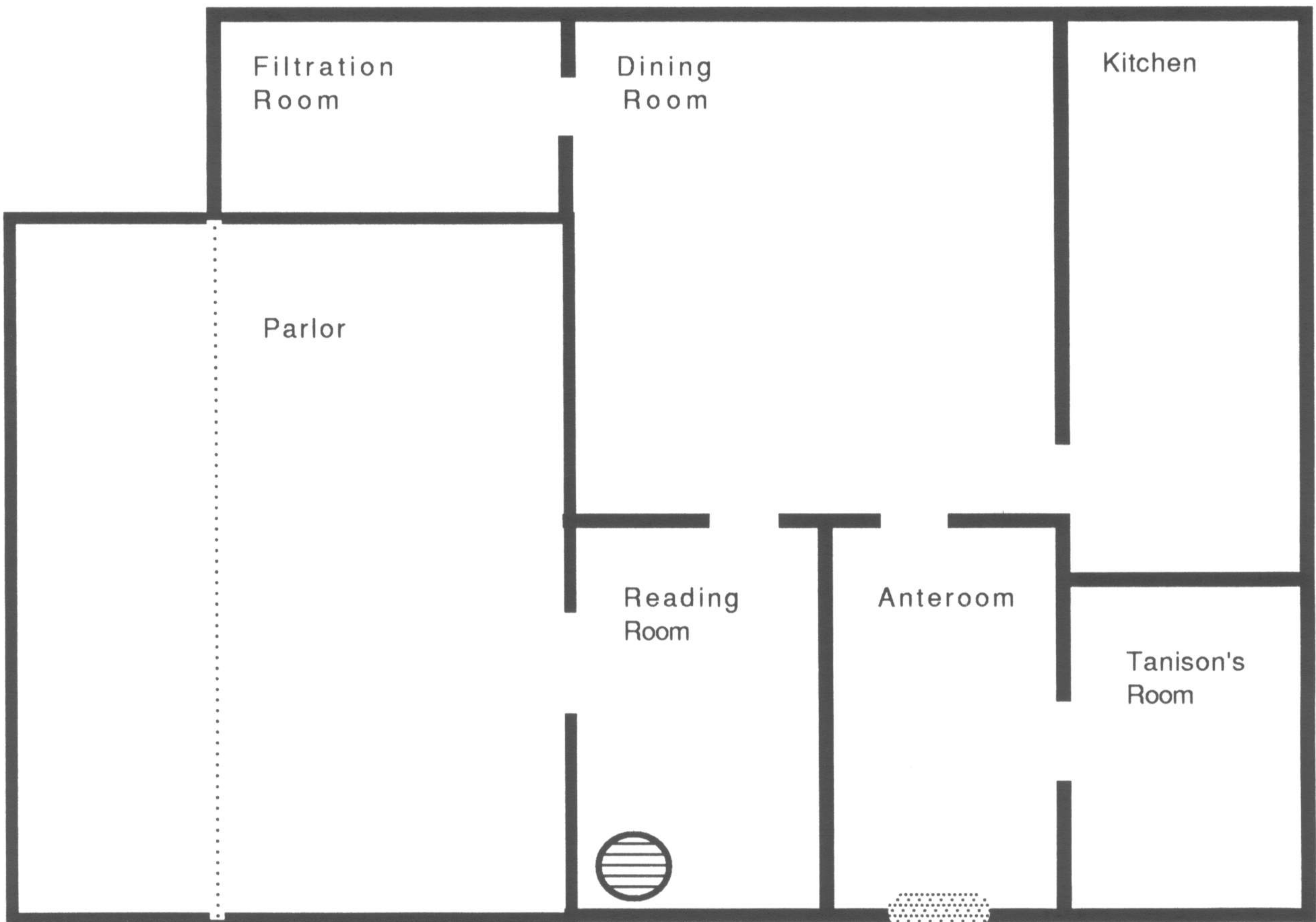
Normal success tangles the character in the astral structure of the room. Step 6 damage before the character works himself free. Failure tangles the character in the room. Step 9 damage each round until she frees herself with a WIL test of 7 or better.

The room has a single bed with yellow sheet and blankets, and a simple pine dresser-drawer. They are scarcely

Kaxilreth's Tower
2nd Floor



First Floor



noticeable for the scrawl on the walls, ceiling and floor. The scrawl is in different languages, different styles and sizes, and chaotic jumble of words etched in orange in

black on black walls. The words are ranting doggerel such as, "soft glowing lumescence of pain rises and breaks upon the soul, ragged breath hissing as waves, jagged gleaming edges of consciousness cuts the night, the time of dreams, slices so thin you read the wishes right through them, vain wishes, prayerful wishes, with no one to hear them except me." A PER test of 5 will find several references to "Whisper Pain."

A second PER test of 5 will find the phrase "tried to sleep Sir, tried to sleep poor Gutarag, steaming sweat Sir, screaming sweat poor Gutarag, matted hair, sticky beard champion, ship's hull breached, crews' bones bleached, fallen softly, crying softly, with no one to hear him except me." The phrase has been overwritten a number of times, indicating that it was an early scrawl.

The room feels as foul as it looks. No matter how hard your lungs work you can never seem to get enough air. The walls seem too close, the floor tickles. The only safe spot seems to be the bed. A place to sleep. A time for Whisper Pain.

13) Laboratory

Physical Entrance: Secret Door. PER test of 15 to sense. Lock Pick test of 9 to open. STR test of 12, requiring one strain. The secret door to the laboratory can be easily seen by characters in spirit form.

Astral Entrance: Warded just enough to keep all but the hardiest lampreys from poking their luminescent worm-essence where they were not welcome. WIL test of 9 to avoid. The ward does 12 steps damage.

The walls are scarred from some of Kaxilreth's more interesting experiments. The lab table in the northeast has a hole burned through it, and large divots were blown from the thick rock in the corner wall. The north end has the tables, with parchments diagrams hanging haphazardly from hooks in the wall. The eastern end is a scroll case containing the record of all of Kaxilreth's experiments (most of which failed.) Not the most exciting reading in the world.

Also against the south wall is a set of shelves with tools: metal tubes, glass beakers, brass incense burners, filters, corks.

Against the south wall stands two supply cabinets. One holds the more mundane supplies, charcoal, iron dust, sulfur (15 sp), mercury (50 sp), silver (25 sp), white gold (25 sp), foxglove (30 sp), cinnamon (15 sp), saffron (150 sp) and myrrh (75 sp).

The other is enchanted to safely hold more magical supplies. The cabinet is in need of replenishing, but there are still two Kelix's poultice (25 sp resale), one healing potion (175 resale), one jar elemental earth (300 sp, counts as treasure), one small sealed container elemental fire (500 sp, counts as treasure), one flask elemental water (300 sp, counts as treasure). The cabinets contain enough supplies to perform the life magic mentioned in Kaxilreth's notebook, and return the spirits of the player characters to their bodies.

EVENTS

The events described below can occur any time after the adventurers reach the tower. They are given in the order they are most likely to occur, but then you know how adventurer's are.

Talking to Tanison

Tanison needs help, and so wants to trust the player characters. He has felt the influence of Whisper Pain for years, and is reluctant to drag others into his nightmare. These two conflicting emotions can lead him to be an erratic conversationalist, sometimes warm, at times cool, still other times catching himself in mid-sentence rather than say too much. His desire to help Herita will win out, and so he finally opens up to patient adventurers. See Tanison's entry for more on the ex-troubadour.

Performing the ritual

1) *Setting the Moon Summoning Circle*

Mentioned in the observatory section, repeated here for convenience: Moving the planetarium is a tricky task for one person (DEX and PER tests of 11 each), less so for two are more (one makes a DEX test of 5, the other a PER test of 5). Tanison can provide the perception, but is a bit jerky in his undead form for the dexterity test. Spirits can provide perception if they can find a way to communicate with the physical world.

When set in accordance with Kaxilreth's notebook (see baths above) the walls will gradually lose tint, from black to smoky gray to clear. The lenses hum as light from the stars and planets strike them, and the gears move of their own accord as the enchantment adjusts itself. When all the lenses are in correct position all notes are in pitch. Moonlight reflects and then flares from the lenses, a flame which cools rather than warms. The lenses, mirrors and magic focus the moonlight upon the floor of the observatory, where it rises from the ground to form a summoning circle of pure moonlight.

2) *Igniting the Myrrh*

The Myrrh must be placed in the incense burners and ignited to form a triangle inscribed in the summoning circle. There is only enough incense for five (or perhaps a couple more) rounds. During the time the incense is lit, the invoker must make a thread weaving or PER test of 8 to form the incense smoke into the lines of the triangle. Once the lines are formed the temperature in the room takes a noticeable drop. Shadows flit on the walls, the first sign of the approach of the Yrithsar.

3) *Applying the elemental fire and water*

This dangerous procedure must be performed inside the summoning circle, but outside the triangle. First apply the fire to the top of the moonbeam circle; DEX test of 5. Invoker has five rounds (and five chances) to apply the fire, needing three successes to apply an even layer of fire to the whole circle. A good success counts as two success, and excellent or better success counts as three successes.

The shrieks of the Yrithsar can be heard in the distance as soon as the fire is applied. They are getting closer.

The water is applied to the bottom of the summoning circle. A PER or thread weaving test of 5 and the water flows around the circle, contrary to the pull of gravity. As above invoker has five rounds (and five chances) to apply the fire, needing three successes to apply water around the whole circle. A good success counts as two success, and excellent or better success counts as three successes.

Once the water is applied pieces of the planetarium begin to pop and explode off the structure; mercury whizzes by the right ear of the invoker. The lenses vibrate and the chains rattle. The voices of the Yrithsar can be heard inside the metal of the planetarium itself.



LORD MALBAN

4) *Invoking the moon*

The bodies of the player character must be inside the triangle in order to be infused with life. The invoker makes a PER or spellcasting test of ... oh, heck if the poor player character has gone through all that effort to put the spell together it should work, right? So let it work. If you need a difficulty, say its 7. Give him a couple of chances; if he comes close let it go. Maybe you make him spend a karma. Don't get hung up on the dice rolls at this point. Make him

pay strain by the amount he missed, whatever, but let the spell work.

The summoning circle fills with the image of a full moon. The triangle breaks apart into tendrils of smoke, one for each character given life. The smoke pours into the chests of the deceased. Each deceased must make a TOU test; on a four or better the character immediately regains consciousness. Otherwise they can make another TOU test in 3 rounds (or less if you are a really kind GM.) Right now however, the Yrithsar are breaking through.

On the first round after the ritual the planetarium begins to bend and the observatory wall begins to crack. Time to leave.

On the second round talons puncture one of the brass rails from the inside, and the walls bend and distort as though made from a thin rubber sheet. Now its REALLY time to leave.

On the third round...oops, too late. The Yrithsar break into the physical world with a howl like an angry storm.

Wingboat Event Stack

Presumably the adventurers are running. Your job is to make their lives a living he... er, you could make their escape memorable if you want. Use as many or as few events as you want from the stack below. Make up your own if you want to...come on, you are the GM.

Elemental Firestorm Erupts

As the adventurers beat feet downstairs remind them that flying a wingboat is somewhat tough, but they ought to be able to get away as long as the weather is good. Uh-oh. Apparently the invocation messed with Mother Nature (or maybe its just that time of day?) An elemental firestorm is roiling over the horizon toward the island.

Beating Yrithsar to the boats

This one should be no problem as long as the adventurers went straight from the observatory to the boats, not stopping to pass Go, not collecting 200 silver pieces of loot et. cetera. Boy, sure hope they talked Tanison into giving them the password (Gibbous Moon) to the moving door room. Could get sticky otherwise. Failing that they could try to break out of the parlor, but that could take some time.

Launch of boats and failure to catch updraft

All aboard that's going aboard. As the last set of boots crunch off the pumice to launch the boat, a splintering crash resounds behind them as the Yrithsar crash out of the parlor window. Fly time. Air sailing tests of 4 keep the boat up, or WIL tests of 6. Tanison's WIL is d10... d12 if you are feeling helpful. Hey its a sleazy GM trick, so what? The air is rougher this time, you know. Unfortunately there is no significant updraft, so the boat goes into a...

Wild spiral over death sea, lava touch

If the group made enough air sailing successes to completely lift the boat, void this step. If they missed, the boat plunges toward the lava sea, pulling up just in time - oops, not quite in time. For each missing success, the ship takes 3 steps of

damage as it touches the lava. You don't have to roll now, just let the players know that the hull is smoking a bit.

Yrithsar give shrieking pursuit

Oh yeah, those guys. They fly at the same speed as the wingboat (150 yards full move). That assumes that the wingboat is moving full speed. Remember it hovers in the air at 1/4 success; I say it only goes speed 75 at half success, full speed at 3/4 success, and can maneuver like the dickens at full success. So at 3/4 or better the Yrithsar who are not already on the boat can only chase the boat, as the boat is traveling faster than their combat speed.

Ship catches fire

Now roll the damage from the lava touch. The result is the difficulty to put each fire out (DEX test with blanket, bucket, whatever, made while hanging on somehow). If the players are really unattentive, roll again to increase the size of one of the fires. If all the fires aren't out after three rounds its time for the...

Damaged wing

This event can also happen if an Yrithsar and an adventurer are locked in combat on the vessel. First of all a damaged wing looks ugly, holes where wing ought to be and wires flopping loose where control cables used to be. But wait, there's more: the air sailing test is now 5 and the WIL test is 7. And the ship lurches into a flat spin, causing

Man overboard

Everyone makes a DEX test. Character rolling tests of 1 or 2 are thrown from their seats, to grab frantically at a strut or wing or tail. DEX tests of 7 get them back inside; DEX tests of 4+ add a step to their next DEX test to climb into the boat. This is cumulative, so they should make it back into the boat. Except that when they botch, the slide all the way back down to where they started. If they botch where they started, they make an immediate DEX test as they claw air. On a 3 or better they hang on. Otherwise deep fry time in the Death's Sea.

Flying through elemental firestorm

Yrithsar behind them, storm in front of them. Eventually they have to go through the storm. The Yrithsar are not so foolish ... er, so courageous that they are willing follow the adventurers through the storm. They pull up as the wingboat dives toward the roaring sheets of fire.

Passing through the elemental firestorm requires fast and accurate flying. Air sailing tests of 6 or WIL test of 8 are needed. The ship must be able to climb and maneuver toward a calm spot in the storm, which requires 3/4 success. Kindly GMs are advised to allow players to spend Karma, as long as they come up with a dramatic reason for how their characters are tapping their inner power. Yeah, sometimes I play fast and loose with the Karma rules, but anything that keeps the characters alive AND makes them spend legend points to do so is just fine with me.

Each round they spend in the firestorm subjects each

character, and the ship, to possible damage. The firestorm "attacks" with a spellcasting of 12 steps, and does 6 steps damage. Allow characters who are using shields or other forms of cover to add the cover to their mystic armor rating. The spell defense of the wingboat is 8; if the firestorm scores an armor defeating hit then fire burns through the hull. The size of the hole is proportional to the damage done, each point of damage burning out roughly one square foot. Seven points of damage is enough for a hole about three feet in diameter, just the right size to fall through. Fun, huh?

Once they make it through the storm, they have a nice 10 - 14 day voyage back to Throal. If the ship is undamaged its 10 days, if it is a battered hulk, make it 14. Choose a value in between if the ship is only partially damaged.

Now its time to deal with the plans of that pesky Whisper Pain.

Dealing with Whisper Pain Seeing Sir Gutarag

If they try to talk to Sir Gutarag his social secretary, a puffy dwarf named Beekro, acts under orders to wine, dine, flatter and stall them. Beekro will apologize for his master's tardiness, offering to run any errands or to take any messages to anyone with whom the adventurers need to talk. Beekro will put them up in luxurious quarters for the night, offer to get them properly outfitted for the Dance of the New Moon, anything to keep them under his watchful eye. He reports any and all character actions to Sir Gutarag. If the adventurers are about to revolt, Beekro will make one last plea and informs Sir Gutarag he can do nothing more. The knight meets with them in this case, bending the adventurer's story toward a successful conclusion, declaring the threat to Neden ended. If the adventurers insist, Sir Gutarag will allow them to attend the Dance of the New Moon. Sir Gutarag's goal in this scene is to mollify and delay the adventurers from taking effective action.

Seeing Prince Neden or King Valurus III

Yeah, yeah like their Royal Highnesses have nothing better to do than talk to a bunch of singed adventurers. Prince Neden knows nothing of their mission, and the King has turned the matter over to his trusted advisor Sir Gutarag. That is the whole purpose of underlings after all.

Meeting Lord Malban

If the players remember Lord Malban's advice to their characters they will seek him out first. His social secretary (a hard, lean human named Peliv - he looks more assassin than secretary) will be skeptical until they mention their mission at which time they will be rushed to see him. They interrupt a solitary meal, Malban eating while considering the written reports of his intelligence sources. Gallantly offering to share his meal, Malban discretely obscures the sensitive documents while listening to the adventurers.

If Tanison is present or if they mention the enchantment and the earrings, Malban will wave them silent while considering things. Unless the players rudely interrupt his thought, Lord Malban decides to give the earrings to the player characters.

He warns them that Sir Gutarag has shown a strong interest in this sort of Jewelry. Lord Malban wants the business cleared up before the dance. Tanison suggests they try to save Herita right now. All they need to find is a setting like the one in which Tanison first made his promise.

The Garden and the Kiss

The hanging gardens of Throal are the nearest thing to the Gardens of Idis for several hundred miles and a few hundred years. Lord Malban can suggest the gardens if he is available for advice.

Just like in the fairy tales (which are nothing more than distorted legends from the time of Earthdawn) all that Herita and Tanison need to break the curse on them is to kiss. Unfortunately Herita does not have a body... she needs one of the adventurers to loan her theirs. Herita can possess a body if the owner allows it (i.e. reduces her or his spell defense, p. 152 of the basic rulebook.) Herita can only possess a body which is wearing the earrings which house her spirit. The heroes have four earrings ... time to try them on.

But first Sir Gutarag (actually Whisper Pain) can sense the earrings once they leave Sir Malban's protected apartments. You bet he is interested in checking them out. He will meet them in the gardens in time for the big finale. Whisper Pain will attack the characters trying on the earrings, trying to get them or at least knock them over into the city below. The characters' job is to handle Whisper Pain long enough for the Kiss to happen.

Once the right earrings are on a character, the Kiss starts. What, you think over five centuries of romantic frustration could be dissolved in a little one-round peck? Au contraire, mon amis... this is a kiss for the ages, a kiss of legend, a kiss of which ordinary lovers can only dream. No rules for the Kiss, but a couple of suggested special effects:

¥ On the first round energy sparks and flies from the earrings around the head of the lovers. The host character feels an intoxicating rush of vitality; fatigue and pain are washed away.

¥ On another round wind starts to rustle the leaves in the garden. The wind is especially intense near the lovers. The host character sees a vision of the city of Idis, hears banners snapping in the breeze, tingles from a long ago kiss on a parapet, smells the coming rain, feels the certainty of the love between them.

¥ On the final round ethereal fire rises from the heads of the lovers, flames consuming a blackened coil which is the thread binding Whisper Pain to this world. Tension on the coil increases. With a groan like a foundering ship, the coil snaps. If he is still conscious, Sir Gutarag screams as the pulpy, syrupy corruption of Whisper pain is pulled from his spirit back to the astral land of the Horrors.

The Dance of the New Moon

The bad news is that if the adventurers make it to this scene they have probably lost the adventure. Their invitations place them in the lower level of the ballroom, with the other

wannabes and have-to-invites. The upper level has the nobles and ambassadors, including Neden, Malban, and Sir Gutarag. The middle level has plenty of functionaries and guards (including trained griffins to handle crowds and pesky fliers) to prevent the lessers from bothering their betters without express permission. Once Gutarag touches Neden, the Prince is possessed. Gutarag begins the dance at the side of the King, and the Prince pays his respect to his father near the beginning of the dance. The players have very little time to get to Gutarag. A kind GM could rule that if the players rushed to the garden RIGHT NOW, they might be able to panic Gutarag in reacting to them. But only if you are a kind GM.

Wrap Up

Defeating Whisper Pain moves the heroes up in the eyes of Lord Malban, who will certainly use them for future mission. They promptly receive the 300 silver piece a person fee, plus a 150 silver per person bonus. If they defeat Whisper Pain and do not kill Sir Gutarag (which is killing the incarnation in Sir Gutarag) the King Varulus will look favorably upon the group. They are entitled to a large favor from the King (see p. 239 of the basic rulebook.) which they may collect any time.

Adventure Awards

- 1) Defeating Whisper Pain -- 125 points per character, or 1,300 legend points for the group if they defeat Whisper Pain's incarnation before the Kiss is complete.
- 2) Reuniting Tanison and Herita - 125 points per character.
- 3) Points for defeating the Yrithsar and the Eels, as long as it does not exceed 125 points per character.
- 4) Points for treasure gathered from Kaxilreth's tower. No limit for the treasure.
- 5) Additional 125 points for the host of the Kiss. Other role-playing and heroics bonus as the GM sees fit.

Characters

Herita

Tanison's beloved. Now nothing more than a spirit trapped in the earrings, she was Crown Princess of Idis, a human city that vanished during the Scourge. Her love for Tanison is still strong, and the misery she feels is part of the force which anchors Whisper Pain to this physical world.

In life Herita was an expert rider and athlete, competing for her city in the royal festivals held throughout Barsaive. She was renown for her iron will and her fierce desire to compete. She had dark hair, flashing eyes, and troubadours crumpled pages of parchment in frustration at their inability to adequately describe her brilliant smile. Her noble position, joy of life and her love for Tanison made her a target for Whisper Pain, one of the intelligent Horrors who early in the Scourge managed to slip through to the physical world.

She and Tanison were separated during the appearance of the Horror. She persisted in her search for him, but heard rumors that Whisper Pain had killed and animated her lover.

She instructed her sorcerers to find a way to free Tanison from the HorrorOs grasp, then embarked on a quest to discover a way to destroy Whisper Pain. Herita was consumed in the conflagration of the early Scourge, when the hordes of mindless Horrors first ravaged the land. Her spirit and life-force were protected and held by the earrings. She continued to exist, trapped in a prison. Her powers did not completely desert her, for her spirit managed to attract people to carry her and convey her to her eventual goal, Throal and the court magicians of the Dwarfen Kingdom. The earrings emanate a faint aura of power, but the wearer has strong feelings of confidence and well-being as long as his or her actions conform with Herita's wishes.

Goal: Escape her prison, reunite with Tanison, learn of the fate of her people.

Kaxilreth

Human elementalist who dabbled in nethermancy on the side. An occult disease lay claim to him in early middle age, and he spent his remaining years trying to cure it. His unremitting magical pain attracted Whisper Pain, who seduced the tormented mage into accepting his help. Kaxilreth died just a few days ago, while stewing in yet another useless herbal bath.

Goals: Rid himself of his disease, to prove his love to the vital force of the moon and to wed her ... so he was a basket case with big dreams. Now that he is singing the worm sonata it doesn't matter quite so much.

Lord Malban

Human advisor to King Varulus III. He is diplomatic, engaging, and certainly knows his politics. He resembles Basil Rathbone from the old Sherlock Holmes movies, dark hair, sharp features and sharp wit. He dresses well in fashions notably tailored to human form, a bit audacious in the heart of the Dwarfen court. He wears jewelry of silver and white gold, with gemstones to match his clothes. He is the advisor to the King on matters concerning the "other races" a position he takes seriously with a healthy dose of humorous cynicism "You know I was feeling particularly trollish this morning. Let's talk about the sky raiders."

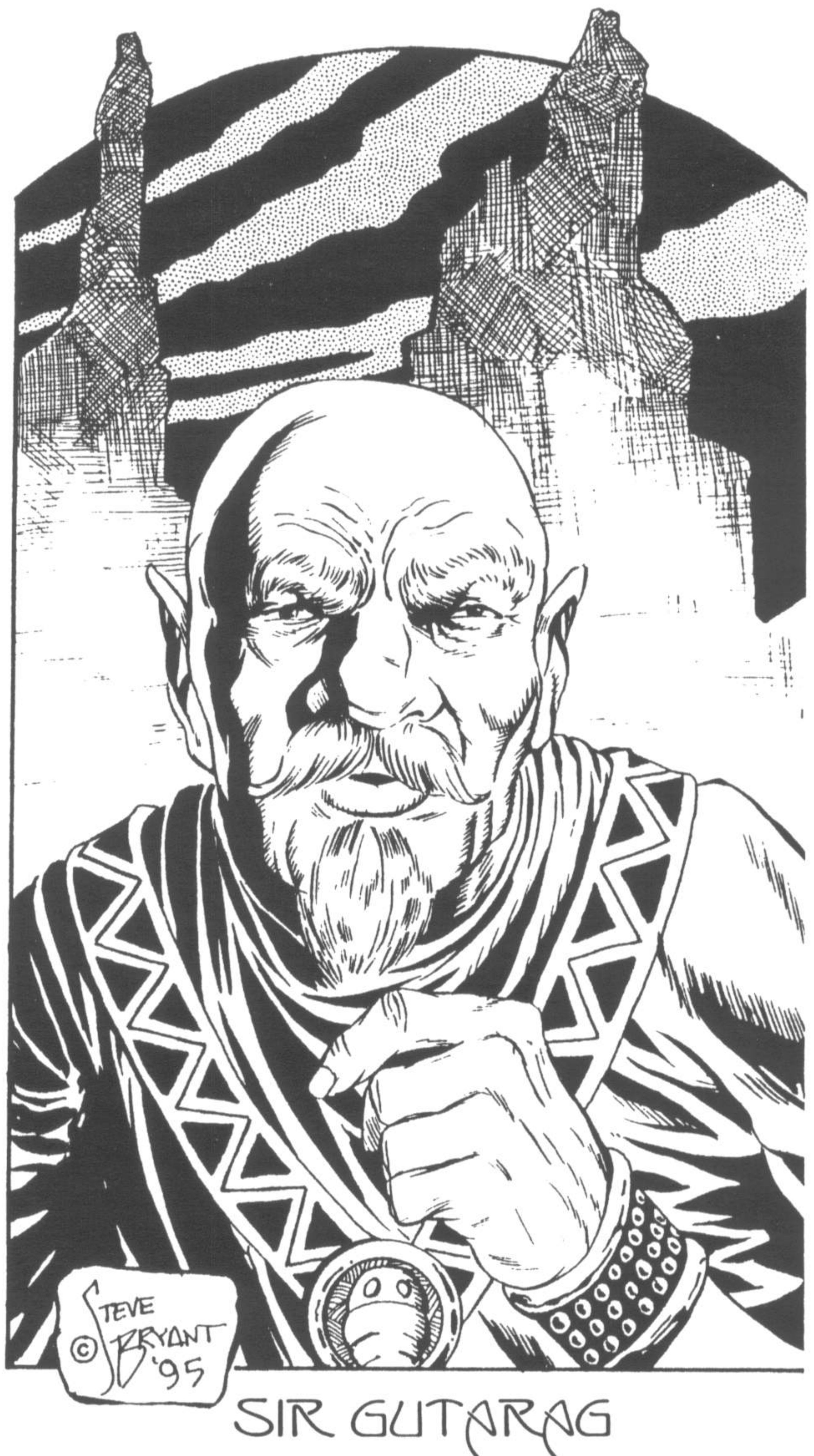
Lord Malban's sources told him that Sir Gutarag was searching for a set of earrings. Using his contracts with adventurers he obtained them first... two sets in fact. He has little chance of determining which set is genuine - at least not without using Dwarfen specialists who might have ties to Sir Gutarag. Both seem magical, and both are thread items. Lord Malban decided to hang onto to both sets until he could at least determine what Sir Gutarag wanted with a set of ancient human earrings.

Goal: Prevent harm from coming to Prince Neden. Keep relations between the Dwarfen Kingdom of Throal and the other races on an even keel.

Sir Gutarag

A former champion of Throal, Sir Gutarag went into politics reluctantly. He eschewed power that did not come from his own arms, a fact that made him a bit of a liability at court.

King Varulus responded by making him an "ambassador without portfolio", a roving one man intelligence agency. Sir Gutarag took the job with blustering bravado, proving useful



more than once. His downfall came when he was surveying the area around Death's Sea. A elemental storm embroiled his airship, tossing many of the crew and Sir Gutarag overboard. Four sailors and Sir Gutarag landed on Kaxilreth's Island. The sailors did not make it through the traps, and are now buried on the island.

At Whisper Pain's urging, Kaxilreth healed Sir Gutarag, making sure the healing took some time. After several attempts Whisper Pain managed to take possession of Sir Gutarag. The plan for possession of Prince Neden began then. Whisper Pain continued to hold possession on the hapless knight, but at a very deep and subconscious level. He molded Gutarag's desires and altered his memories. When the old dwarfen champion was deemed safe, Kaxilreth had elementals transport him to the edge of the death's sea, complete with a fabricated tale of an elemental kingdom in which Gutarag had spent the last few months. Gutarag wholeheartedly believes this version of events.

His experiences on the Death Sea expedition supposedly

cured him of his adventuring appetite. In reality, Whisper Pain needed him to stay in Throal. Sir Gutarag eventually developed a keen interest in pre-scourge human jewelry, a quirky hobby no one begrudged him. But his obsessive interest in earrings from the vicinity of the lost city of Idis piqued at least one courtier's curiosity: Lord Malban.

Sir Gutarag appears the model of a retired dwarfen soldier, breast coat buttons still polished and boots that could blind you in the sun. Only his eyebrows, wild bushy unkempt tufts of hair on an otherwise perfectly groom face, indicate that he has loosened up at all. His manner is gruff by civil, and the mean-nothing diplomatic chit-chat which fills court conversations still sends a shiver up his stiff spine. He is completely unaware that he is a pawn of a Horror. Consciously he is still a loyal servant of King Varulus III.

Goal: Save Prince Neden from danger. Too bad Whisper Pain has another idea.

Prince Neden

See Page 29 of the Barsaive Gamemaster Book. In short he is a skilled warrior, overconfident, a good guy who believes he should accomplish the impossible.

Goal: Make it out of the Dance of the New Moon with a few conversations with dull courtiers as possible.

Tanison

A man who died nearly five hundred years ago, yet remembers none of the intervening centuries so vividly as he recalls his few short months with Herita. They met at the Royal games sponsored by Landis, where he was a troubadour and scribe hired to right glowing poetry on the feats of Landis champions. Instead he was awed by the prowess and grace of Herita, princess of rival Idis. His stirring paeon to the princess got him the boot from Landis, but gained him popular acclaim and an invitation to the court of Idis. Tanison's romance with Herita was filled with the promise of new love, made more delicious and unbearable by the fact their differing social positions doomed their love from the start.

The first stirrings of the Scourge sent tremors through Idis. Tanison sensed that Herita was imperiled and sought out a blood sorcerer. Tanison sacrificed a third of his life in order to provide the blood magic which pulses through the earrings.

Dreams haunt Tanison, convincing him the Whisper Pain never found Herita or her earrings. As long as Whisper Pain does not possess the earrings, it is possible the Herita may be released. With the emotional anchor to this world weakened, Whisper Pain would be forced back into the astral plane.

Tanison was gifted to Kaxilreth by Whisper Pain. Now that Kaxilreth is dead, Tanison is free for the first time in two dozen generations. Tanison wears well-preserved linens and silks of his troubadour past. The yellows and blues had faded, leaving them as faint counterpoint the browns of his jerkin. Tanison no longer has any of his Troubadour talents, although his songs are still strong and he has his knowledge.

His pattern has been warped through all the years of Whisper Pain's manipulations. Perhaps time could restore the pattern. Perhaps not.

Tanison only knows that Whisper Pain's plan involve Prince Neden. He also suspects that the pain he (and he presumes) Herita feel over their lost love is an important part of the magic connecting Whisper Pain to this world. Should they be reunited, perhaps Whisper Pain would be forced back into his astral hole.

Goals: Learn if the player characters are trustworthy. If the players seem at all trustworthy he will try to recruit them to aid him in finding the earrings. He wants to reunite with his love, and release Herita's spirit.

Whisper Pain

Whisper Pain enjoys the quiet, durable emotional pain over the crude physical distress cause by the sadist or torturer. Love frustrated for an eternity is a delicacy Whisper Pain had only tasted in its imagination before it slipped through the boundaries between astral space and this world. The strength, the legendary possibility of Tanison and Herita's love drew it like a bee to a blossom. The pain of their love could sustain Whisper Pain long after the Scourge ended.

Whisper Pain is a Horror who planned to wreak most of its havoc after its less-imaginative brethren were forced from the world by the decline of magic. For Whisper Pain's favored form of suffering is best served in a peaceable and optimistic setting. Whisper Pain most enjoys the isolated, individual pain, the lone sufferer adrift amid a sea of contented neighbors. The pain which lets you see the edge of madness without succumbing to its comforting psychoses.

But Whisper Pain's tethers to the world shall soon be insufficient to hold it to this world. The love of Tanison and Herita is still strong, but even it cannot withstand the full shift in magical energies which has occurred. The Horror must have more pain. It has chosen Prince Neden, another strong will target capable of much suffering, capable of becoming an empty soul presiding over a court over brimming with emotion. Kaxilreth was the first means to an end. Sir Gutarag is the next. With the ritual of possession in readiness, Whisper pain is waiting only for the new moon to take possession of the prince.

Goal: Possess Prince Neden. Secure the earrings to insure its link to the world until the ritual of possession can be performed.

Attributes in form of Sir Gutarag

DEX: 7	STR: 4	TOU: 9
PER: 13	WIL: 13	CHA: 10

Initiative: 8	Physical Defense: 8
Number of Attacks: 2	Spell Defense: 10
Attack: 12	Social Defense: 12
Damage: 11 (ax)	Armor: 9
Number of Spells: (2)	Mystic Armor: 6
Spellcasting: 15	Knockdown: 5
Effect: See Below	Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 90 Combat Movement: 32
Wound Threshold: 10 Full Movement: 65
Unconsciousness Rating: 78

Karma Points: 15 Karma Steps: 7

Powers: Damage Shift 10, Horror Mark 15

Legend Points: 1,300
Equipment: NA
Loot: NA

Whisper Pain's Horror Mark power is a special version of the power. It can temporarily remove the mark from a victim, for a period of up to 24 hours. This is done to thwart magical means of identifying a victim as Horror touched. During that 24 hours Whisper Pain may reattach the mark at will by making a Horror Mark test. Whisper Pain may only make one test an hour to reattach the mark. If more than 24 hours pass, the Horror Mark permanently fades away.

Whisper Pain uses two combat spells in his current form:

Forked Lightning

Threads: 1 **Weaving Difficulty:** 10/na
Range: 60 yds **Duration:** 1 rnd
Effect: Willforce + 3
Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense

Forked lightning strikes two separate characters. The target characters may not be more than 20 yards apart. Roll only one spellcasting test comparing it to the spell defense of each target.

Pervert Armor

Threads: 2 **Weaving Difficulty:** 10/na
Range: 60 yds **Duration:** 10 rounds
Effect: Willforce + 2
Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense

Pervert armor reverses the armor rating of armor, increasing the amount of damage from a blow. For example a successful pervert armor on ring mail (armor rating 6) would increase by six points the amount of damage done by a blow. Once the spell is successfully cast, make an effect test against the armor rating of the target armor. Success means the armor is perverted

Creatures

Astral Lamprey

Attributes

DEX: 5 STR: 4 TOU: 4
PER: 7 WIL: 7 CHA: 2

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: NA Spell Defense: 9
Attack: NA Social Defense: 10
Damage: NA Armor: 3
Number of Spells: 1 Mystic Armor: 3
Spellcasting: 10 Knockdown: 4
Effect: See Below Recovery Tests: 1

Death Rating: 25 Combat Movement: 32
Wound Threshold: 8 Full Movement: 65
Unconsciousness Rating: 20

Karma Points: NA Karma Steps: NA

Legend Points: 50
Equipment: NA
Loot: NA

Commentary

Astral lampreys look like translucent versions of their normal cousins. Their clear skin is filled with the soft yellow and orange glow from the light forms which take the place of their organs. Near the head is circle Astral lampreys can only feed on beings or constructs in astral space. They pose no threat to beings who are wholly in the physical plane. A few more daring of the creatures have tried to drain life force from astral constructs such as spell matrices. Scholars have noted that this sometimes results in the loss of a spell, requiring reattuning the matrix. The astral discharge almost always sends the lamprey elsewhere.

Astral lampreys are more often nuisances rather than mortal dangers unless nests are threatened. The lampreys mouth can slowly suck life from a person, but they usually detach after eating their fill. Roll spellcasting to attach. Armor defeating hit attaches the lamprey. They can bore through astral defenses, a glowing diamond collar whirling as a drill bit; armor-defeating hit represents successful drilling by the lamprey. Their hunger is d10; roll for hunger upon attachment. Damage when attached is d4-1; no damage is done otherwise. When damage total equals or exceeds hunger, the lamprey stops eating. Astral lampreys will circle the spirits of the dead characters, feeding upon those which do not move on to the afterworld.

If their young or their nests are threatened they will continue to drain life from their targets until the threat has been defeated, or they themselves are defeated. Astral lampreys usually travel in small schools of 4 to 10 lampreys.

Their legend points are low for their stats because they rarely fight to the death, willing to look for other food if a meal becomes too feisty to handle.

Yrithsar

Attributes

DEX: 7 STR: 6 TOU: 11
PER: 6 WIL: 8 CHA: 9

Initiative: 7 Physical Defense: 10
Number of Attacks: 2 Spell Defense: 9
Attack: 9 Social Defense: 11
Damage: 12 Armor: 8
Number of Spells: (1) Mystic Armor: 4
Spellcasting: 8 Knockdown: 7
Effect: 10 Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 50 Combat Movement: 75
Wound Threshold: 13 Full Movement: 150
Unconsciousness Rating: 42

Karma Points: 2 to 4 Karma Steps: 7

Legend Points: 250
Equipment: NA
Loot: NA

Commentary:

Yrithsar means "Death's Sky" in the old language. They are winged creatures whose dimensions seem to shift and shimmer, from the size of a gargoyle to a thinner, more demonic looking form. The word "form" is inaccurate; a Death's Sky appears as a wavery silhouette of shape filled with the stars or clouds of an alien sky. Their bodies are three-dimensional portals to another world, Death's world. The stars are more numerous, brighter. The sky is greener or redder than Earth's sky, the clouds thin and roiling. Their talons and wing tips gleam coppery in, the only portion of their form which seems solid. They will gate victims once they lock their gaze upon the victim. The victim need not be looking to fall prey. A spellcasting success locks the victim in an Yrithsar's gaze. The victim must make a WIL or Willforce test against 10, the effect of the gaze. The Yrithsar must concentrate to maintain the gaze. If knocked down the concentration is broken. If the gaze is unbroken for three rounds, the Yrithsar makes another spellcasting test against the victim. If successful the victim is transported to Death's domain. If the spellcast fails, the process continues until one of three things happens: concentration is broken, the victim make a WIL test, or the Yrithsar spell casts successfully.

Yrithsar prey upon those whom Death feels has cheated her. Death's exile has weakened her grasp upon the upper world. Yrithsar have been created to help Death reclaim her rightful role in the world. Resurrected characters are prime targets for Yrithsar, as they represent obscene rejection of Death's authority. They are often found around Death's Sea, for Death's grip is even weaker here than in other places of the world. The legend points are high because of their gaze power and their high movement rate.

One yrithsar appears for each character who has been resurrected in this adventure, fewer if the Gamemaster is feeling lenient or the characters have really had a hard time of it so far.

Player's Handout

Please remain silent while reading this. You have died, but you are still in the game as a spirit. Most of you will be spirits and there are definitely things for spirits to do in the adventure. If the survivor can find a means to resurrect you, then you may return to your body. Now lets make your exit from this mortal coil a dramatic one. I will raise my hand. When I drop it, give me your best death scream. Make the survivor REALLY nervous about being the only one left alive. Thanks for your role-playing.

The Vision

You feel a buzz on your fingertips. Your spine itches half a heartbeat before a searing pain slowly rolls up your back, as if every hair were transformed into a red-hot nail then pounded in at impossible speed by a demonic blacksmith. Tears blur your vision as you stagger from the wall. You blink. The wall wavers. You stand in a flowering garden colored in the washed grays of the light before dawn. Bows of rose bushes are bent into the shape of gazebo. A breath gives you the wet must of humus and the cleanliness of air after a light rain. The fragrance of the flowers hovers as a suggestion, a hint of beauty added to fresh air.

In the gazebo stands a young couple, he a tall angular human of nearly elfin appearance, she shorter and more athletically proportioned. He whispers to her, hands her two small points of light. She shakes her head in objection, he insists. She turns her head, placing one point of light upon right ear; her hand trembles as she places the second point on her left ear. He hugs her gently, she snuffles and snuggles closer. They kiss softly, holding the kiss as their passion grows. An image of a white rose floats over the vision of the lovers. The flower brightens as drops of red run from the stem, streaking the flower. The petals are a deep red when the kiss ends.

The vision wavers, the garden disappears as the lovers are thrown apart like flotsam on a storm-wracked sea. The rose trembles, twists, and you feel a sympathetic cracking from your wrists as the flower snaps free from the stem. Both the flower and the stem vanish, leaving you staring at the wall and the hand slot glowing above you.

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THE RAVEN

BY DAVID CARALEY

The Raven is an inn located in a low-rent neighborhood in Kratas. It is a rambling two story structure made of stone. It was once an old town watch building, but Klevis, the owner, took over the building during some local gang wars. He then converted it to an inn, but the tavern and the rooms do retain the atmosphere of a stone jailhouse. A feature that attracts certain clientele.

When you enter, you step down onto a stone floor. There are several heavy wooden tables with benches for seats, and a bar against the far wall (where the cash box is kept, containing 4D6 x 10 silvers in assorted coins). A stone stairway leads up at the left wall, and a hall leads deeper into the building at the rear. The crowd is quiet, sitting in groups, talking in hushed tones, playing cards or dice, and drinking ale or wine. They don't appear even remotely interested in you. There are two women serving drinks and trays of bread and cheeses. The man behind the bar looks you over. He stands about 5' 10" and looks busy. Cleaning glasses and mugs, wiping down the bar, serving customers, constantly on the move. He has shaggy brown hair hanging in the way of his dark brown eyes. "What can I do for you?"

The Raven is a "cheap inn" where it costs 5 coppers to stay in the common room overnight, and 1 silver to have one of the private rooms. The private rooms have one large bed that can sleep three people, and a large trunk. The doors can be barred from the inside, and the windows still have bars on them from when this was a town watch building. There are hasps on the outside of the doors that a patron could put his own lock on if he wished to keep the room secured when he was out.

The Raven offers average ale for 5 coppers, and good ale for 1 silver. It serves both simple meals of cheeses, breads, and fruits for 3 coppers and average meals of fatty meat or pork, bread, cheeses, fruit, and a mug of average ale for 1 silver.

The tavern closes at two in the morning. At this point, Klevis will take the day's cash and head home, using the darkness of night as a cover. Harris will bar the doors from the inside, and the guests can get some rest. Harris will then lay out his bedroll behind the bar. Upon occasion Harris has been known to let people in past closing, for a fee of a few silvers, of course.

The Staff

Klevis - The Owner

Third Circle Thief Adept

DEX: 16: 7/D12 STR: 10: 5/D8 TOU: 10: 5/D8
PER: 16: 7/D12 WIL: 13: 6/D10 CHA: 13:6/D10

Initiative: 7/D12

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 10/D10+D6

Surprise 9/D8+D6

Damage: S. Sword 9/D8+D6
or 16/D20+D8 by surprise

Dagger 7/D12

Number of Spells: NA

Spell Casting: NA

Spells: NA

Physical Defense: 9

Spell Defense: 7

Social Defense: 7

Physical Armor: 2

Mystic Armor: 1

Knockdown: 5/D8

Recovery Tests: 2@D8

Death Rating: 46

Wound Threshold: 8

Unconsciousness: 36

Combat Move: 38

Full Move: 75

Legend Points: 300

Loot: 1D12 x 10 silvers

Equipment: Short sword, dagger, padded cloth

Talents:

Avoid Blow 2: 9/D8+D6, Climbing 3: 10/D10+D6, Durability 3, Fence 4: 10/D10+D6, Karma Ritual 2, Lock Pick 3: 10/D10+D6, Lock Sense 2: 9/D8+D6, Melee Weapons 3: 10/D10+D6, Pick Pockets 3: 10/D10+D6, Silent Walk 3: 10/D10+D6*, Surprise Strike 2: 9/D8+D6

Skills:

Appraise Goods 4: 11/D10+D8, Read/Write 3: 10/D10+D6 (Dwarven, Human, Orkish), Speak Language 4: 11/D10+D8 (Dwarven, Human, Orkish, Troll), Streetwise 3: 9/D8+D6, Tale Telling 2: 8/2D6

Commentary:

Klevis is a man in his mid-fifties. He stands 5' 8" tall and is of average build. He has dark brown hair going gray, and quick brown eyes. He had been a rising young thief who managed to make one very good score. Good enough to pay Garthik One-Eye for the right to open The Raven. For a while, Klevis was happy, living in retirement and running his small inn, but eventually he began to feel the need to get his hands back into the game, and started to operate a fencing ring that buys stolen goods and sells them to merchants and traders that take them out of the city. He does a good business, and is happy once more. While at the inn, he plays at being a bartender, but really just hangs out and socializes with his friends while waiting for his next business deal.

Gorlis - Ork Bartender

DEX: 8: 4/D6 STR: 12: 5/D8 TOU: 11: 5/D8
PER: 12: 5/D8 WIL: 7: 4/D6 CHA: 9: 4/D6

Initiative: 4/D6 Physical Defense: 5
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 6/D10 Social Defense: 6
Damage: 5/D8
Number of Spells: NA Armor: 0
Spellcasting: NA Mystic Armor: 0
Effect: NA Knockdown: 5/D8
Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 32 Combat Move: 25
Wound Threshold: 8 Full Move: 50
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Legend Points: 40
Equipment: Bar things, dog...
Loot: 3D6 x 10 silvers

Skills:
Conversation 4: 8/2D6, Legends and Heroes 2: 7/D12,
Local Lore 3: 8/2D6, Music: Flute 1: 6/D10, Speak
Languages 8: 13/D12+D10 (Dwarven, Elf, Human,
Obsidiman, Ork, Troll, T'skrang, Windling), Unarmed
Combat 2:6/D10

Commentary:
Gorlis is a quiet Ork that comes in, does his job, and leaves
when his shift is over at sunset. He knows that the entire city
is filled with thieves, but prefers to do an honest day's work
for honest pay. He is sure that Klevis is still involved in
illegal activity, but Gorlis wants to know nothing about it.

Harris - Human Bartender

DEX: 9: 4/D6 STR: 9: 4/D6 TOU: 10: 5/D8
PER: 12: 5/D8 WIL: 9: 4/D6 CHA: 10: 5/D8

Initiative: 4/D6 Physical Defense: 6
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 6/D10 Social Defense: 6
Damage: 4/D6
Number of Spells: NA Armor: 0
Spellcasting: NA Mystic Armor: 0
Effect: NA Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 31 Combat Move: 24
Wound Threshold: 8 Full Move: 48
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Legend Points: 40
Equipment: Bar things, dog...
Loot: 3D6 x 10 silvers

Skills:
Conversation 4: 8/2D6, Legends and Heroes 2: 7/D12,
Local Lore 3: 8/2D6, Music: Flute 1: 6/D10, Speak
Languages 8: 13/D12+D10 (Dwarven, Elf, Human,
Obsidiman, Ork, Troll, T'skrang, Windling), Streetwise 2:

7/D12, Unarmed Combat 2: 6/D10

Commentary:
A slick operator who stands about 5' 10" with dark features,
Harris knows about all of the illegal doings in the tavern, and
can arrange a meeting with Klevis to fence stolen goods. He
is trusted by Klevis, and makes a little money on the side
by keeping Garthik One-Eye, the magistrate of Kratas,
informed of anything interesting that passes through the inn.
Harris is the evening bartender, coming in at sunset and
working until closing.

Marla - Female Human Cook

DEX: 12: 5/D8 STR: 11: 5/D8 TOU: 11: 5/D8
PER: 13: 6/D10 WIL: 10: 5/D8 CHA: 13: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8 Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 6/D10 Social Defense: 7
Damage: 8/2D6
Number of Spells: NA Armor: 2
Spellcasting: NA Mystic Armor: 0
Effect: NA Knockdown: 5/D8
Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 32 Combat Move: 29
Wound Threshold: 8 Full Move: 57
Unconsciousness Rating: 24

Legend Points: 50
Equipment: Craft tools (including something used as a club),
padded cloth armor
Loot: D6 x 10 silvers

Skills:
Appraise Food and Drink 3: 9/D8+D6, Cooking 3: 9/
D8+D6, Melee 1:6/D10, Trading 3: 8/2D6

Commentary:
Marla is a middle aged woman who makes her living
cooking at the inn, and then goes home to her husband, a
mundane thief. She watches the patrons of the tavern, and
will sometimes suggest marks for her husband to prey upon.

Nevvi, Hannah - Human Barmaids

DEX: 11: 5/D8 STR: 9: 4/D6 TOU: 10: 5/D8
PER: 11: 5/D8 WIL: 10: 5/D8 CHA: 14: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8 Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 6
Attack: 6/D10 Social Defense: 8
Damage: 4/D6
Number of Spells: NA Armor: 0
Spellcasting: NA Mystic Armor: 0
Effect: NA Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 31 Combat Move: 27
Wound Threshold: 8 Full Move: 45
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Legend Points: 50
Equipment: Clothes, smile
Loot: 2D6 silvers

Skills:

Bartending 2: 7/D12, Flirting 3: 9/D8+D6, Singing 1: 7/D12, Unarmed Combat 1: 6/D10

Commentary:

Nevvi is a dark haired beauty with mysterious eyes. She is sultry and quiet. She does her job, and if she spots someone who is attractive, and the person seems to have money, she is willing to suggest a "private" meeting in the person's room for more discreet entertainment. The cost of that type of entertainment is usually 2 silvers for an hour, or 5 silvers for the night.

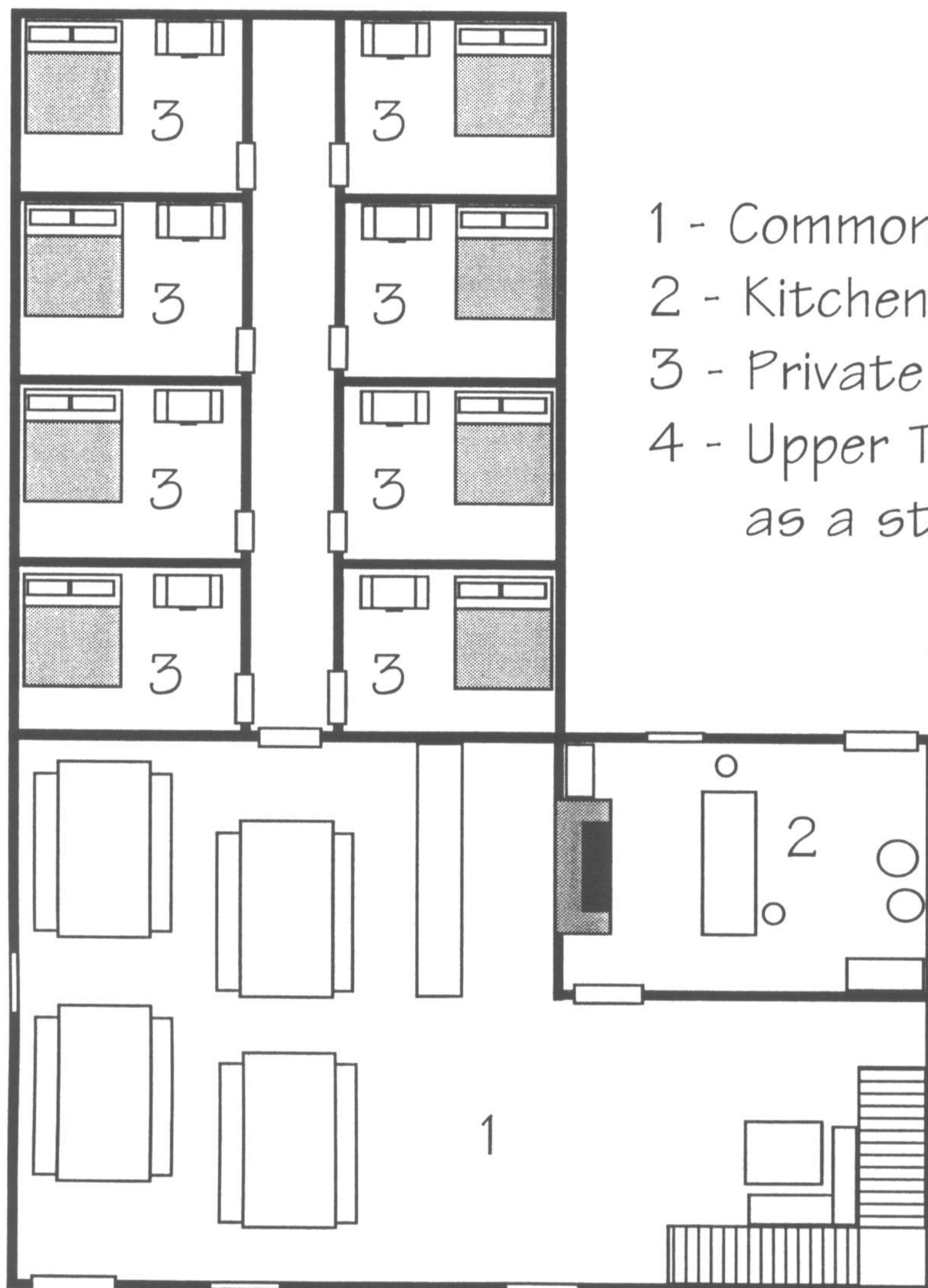
Hannah is a blond haired, blue eyed girl who seems filled with energy. She flirts openly with the customers, She is also

willing to make "arrangements" with customers, but will just as often go off with someone for fun as for profit. Roll a CHA test against her Social Defense. With a normal success, she will charge 2 silvers, with a Good success she will go for nothing.

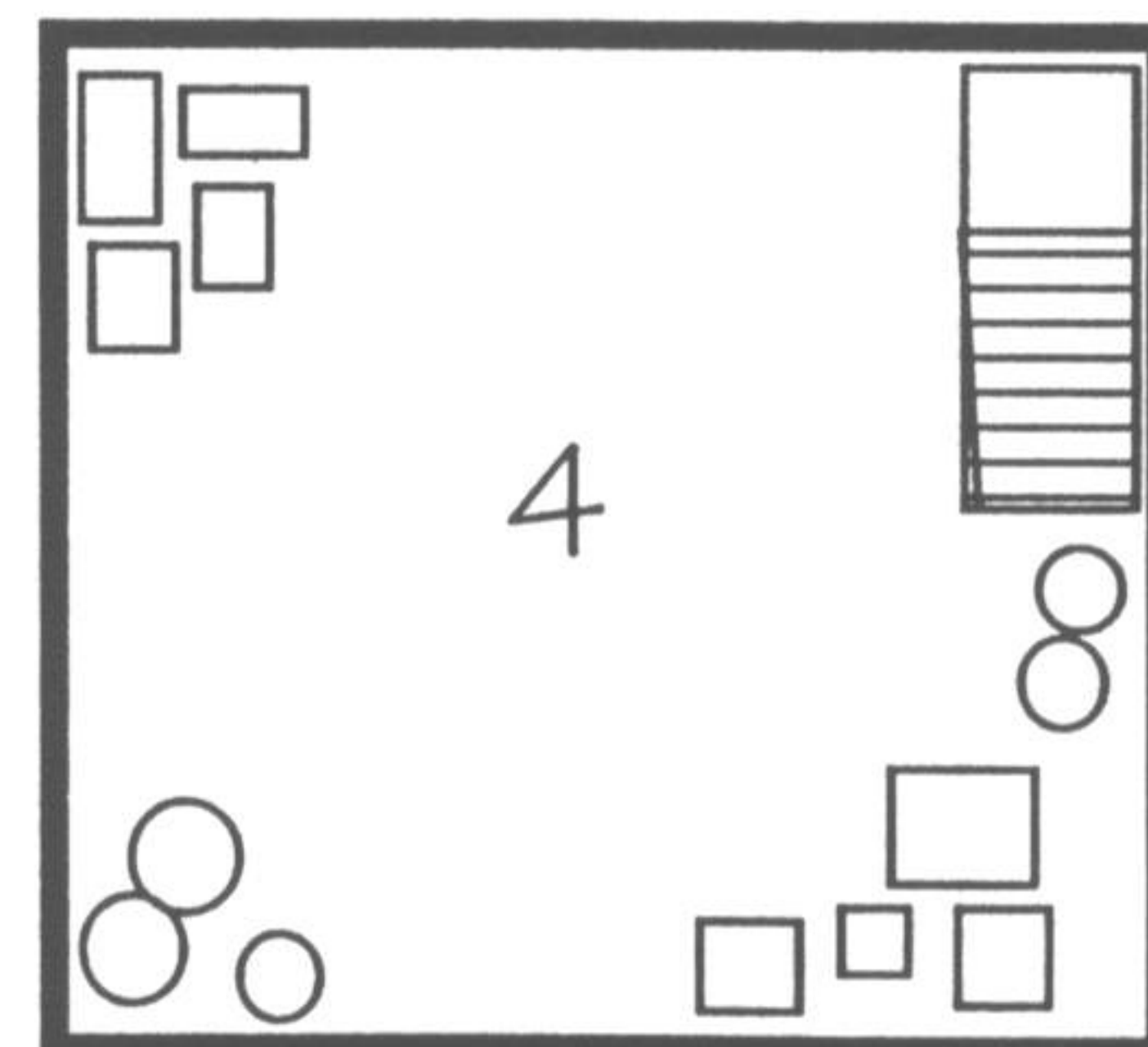
Adventure Seeds

1) A new gang in Kratas is slowly taking over the block. They are trying to muscle in on The Raven, and Klevis is trying to remain independent. After a few violent incidents at the tavern, and a ruined beer and ale shipment, Klevis is ready to hire some help to raid the stronghold of the gang. He can identify a few of these new gang members, and is willing to pay a flat 1000 silvers for someone to teach these ruffians a lesson.

2) Klevis has come into the possession of an item of value and has a buyer in Travar. He is willing to pay for adventurers to take the item to Travar and deliver it. He also knows that a business rival may try to liberate the item before it can be delivered. You can make this as dangerous as you wish, with creature encounters, a pursuing gang trying to take the item, and even the buyer trying to avoid paying.



- 1 - Common Room
- 2 - Kitchen
- 3 - Private Rooms
- 4 - Upper Tower, uses as a storeroom



THE GREY WOLVES

BY BILL HINCKS

Introduction

"I'm afraid I have some bad news for you." rasped the hunched up man in the alley. "Your friend's been taken into the Smalls by the Wolves, you'll not be seeing him again."

"The Wolves," she asked. "And who are they that you think we cannot rescue our friend from their grasp. We've faced many a group of bandits before, many even adept at their trade. Of what nature are these Wolves that we should fear them?"

"The Grey Wolves are not men my friend, not anymore. For men possess souls and hearts. The Grey Wolves have neither, they are nothing more than a black sheet of death awaiting their calling!"

"What nonsense is this you talk old man, speak clearly!"

"Ahhh ahhh ah. Don't lose your temper with me girl, you'll

not be clearing my head with threats. I simply wish to see to it that I am taken care of in my old age."

"All right old man, here's another 15 silver. There, you've emptied my purse, I've no more to give you, so speak now and tell me what you know of these Grey Wolves."

"Yes lass OK. I'll tell you what I know. I'd hate to see such a lucrative deal end so abruptly, so perhaps you can call it an investment on my part."

"They came from the south about two years ago, Dinganni, a score of them, traveling on foot. Their furs bore the dust of many roads and they had smell of a hunted animal upon them. They equipped themselves at Torgak's and then without even a backward glance they entered the ruins, headed for the Smalls. No one ever questioned that they were running from something. But like all fools who enter the

ruins so hastily they were soon forgotten. It wasn't until three weeks later that a war party of Dinganni entered the city. They had but one purpose, they were on a Blood Hunt. They were looking for a renegade Dinganni Shaman called the Grey Wolf. They spoke with Torgak and he assured them that the only Dinganni that had been through here had entered the ruins and not come out for weeks. It was assumed that they had died somewhere within the ruins. The war party made a short venture into the ruins, but were driven back by a swarm of undead in the Smalls. Realizing the lethality of Parlainth the war party returned to their homeland to resume their peaceful ways. The hunt had been completed to their satisfaction. No one gave the renegades a second thought until a year ago when five of them emerged from the ruins and walked right into the center of Haven.



They were no longer the scared and hunted men that had fled into certain death. They were the renegade Dinganni warriors that had returned puffed up with pride from having lived and survived for so long in Parlainth. They purchased many items from Torgak, furs, steel, bloodcharms, healing, and food. Then without so much as a second thought they returned to the ruins unmolested.

After a few months, more Dinganni began to walk the streets of Haven. They came from both the ruins and from the southern plains. Renegades, all of them. Many of them even had brands on their arms marking them as exiles of the Dinganni nation. Soon they began causing trouble within the city. Bar fights and the like. Torgak imprisoned three of them, but that very night the jail was broken into, the men freed, and the jail torn to the ground. Torgak lost five of his men in that fight, all of them trained fighters. After that he hasn't had much of a heart for imprisoning them. He's not concerned for his own safety, but he doesn't want innocent townspeople and guardsmen dying at the hands of these renegades.

Ahhh, but the real story is just beginning. Three months ago one of the Dinganni came from the ruins. He was a magnificent looking man. He stood about six foot four, and he was built like a draft horse. On his right arm he wore three shafts of steel attached to his forearm and wrist, like some kind of weapon. Only they were real fancy. They had a glittering edge, looked like glass or crystal to me. He wore about him the pelt of a giant grey wolf, and his eyes...his eyes were different colors, one was blue like a crystal and the other one was golden. He made his way directly to Agramen's Import/Export. I don't know what went on there, but whatever it was, when he left he carried with him a big sack of coins. Then he made some more purchases from Torgak, smiling all the while, and returned to the ruins.

So you see they've been sort of a fixture here for the past few years. We don't like 'em. No one does. But there's not much we can do about them either. So, we go on. You see, if they do have your friend, and my sources say that they do. You can forget about him. If you do, it will be a lot easier on him and you."

"That's it? That's all you know? Can't you tell me anything more about them. perhaps why they came here, or what they did to become exiles?"

"Well, there is a bit more I could tell you but.....say, that's a lovely ring you got on your finger there. Silver?"

"All right, all right old man, take the damn ring, but tell me what else there is to know."

"Well then, to continue my tale. About a month ago another Dinganni entered Haven. Walked past me on his way to Torgak's so I took the liberty of following and listening in. This one looked different from the rest of them and he caught my interest.

He introduced himself as Magus Ursus, a Dinganni Shaman, who sought to hunt down and kill the renegade known as the Grey Wolf. He was unlike any Dinganni I had ever seen. He was proud and strong, like they all are, but he carried himself with a air of pride and honor that even the leaders of the war party did not possess. For he was not hunting the

Grey Wolves for blood or revenge. He was dealing their retribution. He requested that Torgak give him permission to kill any Grey Wolves found within the walls of Haven. When Torgak inquired as to just what their crimes among the Dinganni people were Magus explained.

Grey Wolf was once the Shaman of the largest of the Dinganni tribes. He held a position of honor and power among the people. He practiced both the arts of wizardry and elementalism, and was regarded as a seer. One night for an unknown reason he turned on the tribal chieftain and slew her in her sleep. He then stole the Talon of Kro'arn'lesh. A magnificent weapon edged with crystal and forged as a badge of rank and passed from chieftain to chieftain for generations. He then fled and in his flight killed many of what were once his people. He traveled as a hunted man from town to town and city to city, meeting with other exiled Dinganni along the way. Most were rabble unable to resist the temptation of theft, others were cold blooded murderers. All were exiles. Eventually Grey Wolf named his band after himself and with a Dinganni war party on their heels they fled to here. The Grey wolves have come to be called the shame of the Dinganni nation, and Magus had come to purge all Dinganni of their shame and to reclaim the Talon of Kro'arn'lesh.

Torgak, wishing to see Haven free of the Wolves, granted Magus free right to hunt the Grey Wolves within the very walls of Haven. A few days later a battle broke out near a candle makers in the New City. Magus and five Dinganni warriors fought a fearsome battle in the city streets, and in the end The Grey Wolves numbered five less and Magus was severely wounded. He left the city fearing a repercussive strike against him while he was wounded. He hasn't been seen since, but he'll be back. Witnesses to the battle said that he's more than simply a man, that he's a plague called down on all renegade Dinganni to purify the nation. It's even reported that while they were fighting his face changed and turned into a visage of death as he cut their throats and dealt them their retribution.

"So you see, if even an avenger of death cannot take on five of the Grey Wolves, how do you and your rag-tag bunch ever plan on freeing your friend from them. That is assuming that your friend is even still alive."

"Thank you old man," she said, "I hope your new found wealth serves you well. And don't fret, for we shall return, and with our friend intact as well. For if one man can survive a fight with five of these outlaws, my band will fair just fine. It will just take a little planning, that's all."

With that the girl stood and looking down at the old beggar she took her leave.

The beggar stood and straightened out his long frame. "By the Passions I'm getting tired of the poor old man bit, " He swore to himself," But, I got a full purse and a nice little silver ring to show for it." Ah well, he thought to himself as he wiped the makeup from his face and turned into the alley, I guess it's off to the Troll to get a bit of ale and some good roast mutttt.....What?...Ugh!

Slowly the rogues body slumped to the ground as three gleaming silver and crystal blades covered with blood

withdrew from his shattered sternum. A moment later a figure peered out from the mouth of the alley. His one golden eye twinkling in the moonlight.

"Yes little girl, come looking for your friend. We'll be waiting." He smirked. "After all, you are the one we wanted in the first place."

Background

The Grey Wolves have been designed as a game master's aid for adventures set within Parlainth and Haven. The Grey Wolves are a well organized band of renegade Dinganni, numbering nearly thirty. All have broken laws which the Dinganni nation consider sacred (For more information on the Dinganni people see *Denizens of Earthdawn Vol. 1*). As a result of their crimes they have been exiled from the Dinganni people. Over time they collected in small groups, a few here and there. It was not until Grey Wolf found these small bands that they began to join together and form a people of their own.

All members of the Grey Wolves are loyal to Grey Wolf and would gladly lay down their lives for him. The Grey Wolves have abandoned all Dinganni codes and laws and no longer consider themselves a part of the Dinganni people.

They have established a base of operations in Parlainth. They get much of what they need to survive by ambushing well equipped adventuring parties and other groups of adventurers which are returning from the ruins with treasure in hand. What they cannot find or steal they will buy from Torgak who will grudgingly sell to them since they are glad to pay his prices and since he really doesn't want any more trouble than necessary within his city. Torgak also does not act against the attacks made on adventurers exiting and entering the ruins because as far as he's concerned they should be able to take care of themselves.

The Grey wolves make their homes in the ruins of the Smalls. (If you possess *Parlainth - The Forgotten City* boxed set, *Vardeghul's Trove of Lore* contains a map of the Small that indicates the area in which the Grey Wolves may be found, or you may place them yourself.) They have cleared out enough of the area to make them feel safe, and to give them a buffer against the rest of the city. The Grey Wolves have also studied many of the traps common to the Smalls and have criss-crossed most of the entrances to their domain with traps of many different varieties, all lethal. They are fierce fighters and have trained their skills so that they can fight very effectively in small skirmish settings.

The Grey Wolves

DEX: 7 STR: 8 TOU: 8
PER: 6 WIL: 5 CHA: 5

Initiative: 6/d10 Physical Defense: 9
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 7
Attack Step: 10 Social Defense: 7
Damage Step: 11 Physical Armor: 6
Number of Spells: 0 Mystic Armor: 2
Spellcasting: n/a Knockdown: 12
Effect: n/a Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 43 Combat Movement: 38
Wound Threshold: 12 Full Movement: 75
Unconsciousness Rating: 35

Skills: Avoid Blow (2):9/d8+d6, Melee Weapons (3):10/d10+d6, Tracking (3):9/d8+d6, Riposte (2):12/2d10

Equipment: Hide Armor (wolf hide), Buckler, Talon (3) :11/d10+d8, Medium Crossbow (4):12/2d10, 10 bolts, 2d10 silver, miscellaneous odds and ends (whetstone, flint, etc....)

Legend Point Value: 200 each

Notes:

The Grey Wolves prefer to fight in hand to hand combat and will only use their crossbows when closing with an opponent or when facing an opponent they cannot reach easily.

When engaged in hand to hand combat they make full use of the combat options, particularly, going inside a shield, defensive stance and aggressive attack (If they outnumber an opponent they will nearly always go aggressive, taking the strain gladly.)

Grey Wolf -- 5th Circle Wizard

Dex (14):6/d10 Str (18):7/d12 Tou (16):7/d12
Per (18):7/d12 Wil (17): 7/d12 Cha (14): 6/d10

Initiative: 5/d8 Physical Defense: 11*(boots)
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 10
Attack Step: 9 Social Defense: 8
Damage Step: 14 Physical Armor: 5
Number of Spells: *spec* Mystic Armor: 4
Spellcasting: 12 Recov: 3 (d12)
Effect: see text

Death Rating: 44 Combat Movement: 33
Wound Threshold: 11 Full Movement: 68
Unconsciousness Rating: 36

Karma: Current: 40 Die: d6

Talents: Karma Ritual (4), *R&W Languages (3):10/d10+d6) *Dwarven, Elven, Ork*, *R&W Magic (5):12/2d10, *Spell Casting (5):12/2d10, Spell Matrix (5), Spell Matrix (5), *Wizardry (5):12/2d10, Durability (5), *Evidence Analysis (5):12/2d10, *Book Memory (4):11/d10+d8, *Book Recall (4):11/d10+d8, *Arcane Mutterings (4):11/d10+d8, *Astral Sight (5):12/2d10, Lip Reading (1) :7/d12, Will Force (2), Versatility (3), Melee Weapons (3) :9/d8+d6, Elementalism (2):9/d8+d6, Avoid Blow (3):9/d8+d6
(*Denotes Discipline Talent)

Skills: R&W&S Dinganni (1):8/2d6, Speak Human(1):8/2d6, Creature Lore (1):8/2d6, Horror Lore(1):8/2d6, Tactics (2):9/d8+d6, Wilderness Survival (2):9/d8+d6, Tattooing (3) :9/d8+d6

Equipment: horror fend, death cheat, desperate spell, desperate spell, absorb blow, absorb blow, grimoir (etched in hide), hide armor (Made from a large grey wolf), 106 gold, 200 silver, 1 elemental earth coin.

Special Equipment:

Kree'lyn's Boots (Magic Boots, See ED Companion) Rank 4 thread, +3 physical defense, +1 step to all climbing tests Talon of Kro'arn'lesh. Steel and Crystal Talon improved 4 times to rank 7

Shield Candle (5) -- A candle infused with elemental air and orichalcum flakes. When burned it will create an astral haze with a spell defense of 20. Anyone attempting to locate or direction arrow anyone within the haze must beat a 20 to penetrate the haze. The haze is invisible, but has a light cinnamon odor. It extends to a radius of 100 yards from the candle. 1 candle will burn for up to 24 hours.

Grimoire:

1st Circle

Astral Sense, Crushing Will, Dispell Magic, Flame Flash, Iron Hand, Mind Dagger, Earth Blend, Earth Darts, Boil Water

2nd Circle

Astral Shield, Dodge Boost, Vines, Puddle Deep

3rd Circle

Combat Fury, Levitate, Shatter Lock

4th Circle

Dust Devil, Inventory, Relax, Thorny Retreat

5th Circle

Counter Spell, Invigorate, Mage Armor, Makeshift Missile, Solo Flight

Notes:

Karma on any Charisma only test

Has a fondness for bood magic, and will use it freely.

Wears his charms like ornamentation (forehead, neck, back of hand)

Gm should place spells in matrix before party first encounters Grey Wolf

Grey Wolf will not hesitate to flee and fight another day should things go bad.

He makes a great continuing antagonist to the party.

Reasons for Treachery

It is not known why Grey Wolf broke the Dinganni laws and became what he did, but these are a number of possible reasons.

--He was casting raw magic and a horror infested his mind and corrupted him. He has since beaten the horror back, but now he cannot return to his people because they will not believe that he was not in control of himself.

--He never beat the horror and is still possessed.

--He went mad!

--He decided that the Dinganni Nation was weak and decided to create his own nation and needed the Talon of Kro'arn'lesh as a symbol. With it he has been gathering people to his way of thought and building up power and

when he is ready he plans to take over the Dinganni tribal lands.

Grey Wolves Options:

--The game master may find these to be a little boring or under powered for their game. You are encouraged to make some of the common warriors adepts. The most common disciplines would be Beastmasters, Warriors, and Elementalists. They would not commonly be over the 2nd circle though a few may be 3rd.

--It is possible that the Grey Wolves have developed a group pattern and some of the adept Grey Wolves and Grey Wolf himself have woven to it and enhanced some of their abilities.

--If the game master wishes Grey Wolf may have made a pact with a Gharmek (Parlaint -- The Forgotten City). He will supply the Gharmek with victims and in turn the Gharmek will offer protection for the Grey Wolves. If you decide to use this option become familiar with the Gharmek's strength's and weaknesses before players encounter it. The Grey Wolves keep this pact a closely guarded secret so that people will not anticipate meeting a horror when they go after the Wolves.

--When Grey Wolf visited Agramen they made a deal. Grey Wolf would search the ruins for Agramen and turn over and Theran artifacts. It has been learned that they Grey Wolves are in possession of an important Throalic artifact and the party had been hired to recover it before it is turned over to Theran hands.

--The Grey Wolves have been performing a service for Agramen. He kidnaps someone close to the party (or politically important) for a variety of possible reasons (They know something about an important Theran artifact, they have learned of Agramen's treachery, he wants to use the person as a bargaining ship, etc....) Agramen transported the victim to the Grey Wolves (by way of the eastern catacombs, in a hay cart going into the ruins, over the wall at night) and they have been holding the victim captive awaiting Agramen's orders. The party must free the victim before it is too late. Grey Wolf has been using his Shield Candles to prevent magical detection of the victim.

--The Grey Wolves are forming their own Nation (see Reasons for Treachery)

T'SKRANG TROUBLE

BY DEVON SCHILLER

"Never be trustin' a thief Adept. They'll bring ye trouble every time. If it's a t'skrang as well, I say run 'em through on sight. Believe me, I should know. I married one."

Varina, Human Swordmaster Doddul, 1506 TH

T'skrang Trouble is a brief mini-adventure, a set of two encounters which Game Masters may interject into any campaign or other module. This can add a touch of interest or a different flavor to increase the pleasure in any such game. This side track may also be used to start up a campaign or adventure. Enough background material is provided for this purpose. T'skrang Trouble is presented in the same fashion as *Mists of Betrayal*, *Terror in the Skies*, and *Infected* published by Fasa Corporation. These encounters are best suited to a group of six characters from 3rd to 5th Circles.

Overview

These encounters may take place while the PCs are traveling across Barsaive; preferably an uninhabited region with sparse vegetation. The first encounter occurs right after the PCs have set camp for the night. A strange t'skrang appears, attempting to steal the PCs' weapons and money. He is interrupted, however, by a band of ork scorcher from whom he relieved certain valuables. This is the second encounter.

Encounter 1, Travelling Thief

Setting the Stage

Read the following once the PCs have set camp but before they enter the realm of sleep. Adjust this as necessary for the PCs' position in Barsaive.

You hear it before you see it. It is not your imagination's conjuring this time. Now, as the stars are beginning to speckle the night sky, you are sure that the darkness of

Barsaive has spawned some foul beast. A glow glimmers to life not five feet from you. The green foliage gleams with color in the sparse light. And there, draped in the shadows of night, you see it. Its eyes sparkle with mischief and humor; those dark orbs shifting from person to person within your party. Its body is still hidden by the trees but you can hear the tinkling of gold.

It is a t'skrang. He pushes his way through the greenery to stand in your small clearing. His voice rings loudly in your ears: "Ho, there, fellow Name-Givers! It's about time I found some form of companionship in this cursed land."

Themes and Images

In this encounter the PCs should be haunted by the dark and forbidding wilderness, only to find boisterous fellowship in the manner of a t'skrang. Their senses should be picking up subliminal indications that something is wrong but little of this should be manifest. Vivacity and mirth can often obscure darker motives. The PCs should be caught up in the magnetic personality of the t'skrang.

Behind The Scenes

This t'skrang, by the name T'retia, is running from a band of ork scorcher from whom he stole a sizable sum of elemental coins. By trade he is a thief of both great skill and great ego (not to mention his fair share of panache). He wishes to bed down with the PCs for the night so as to



conclude a deal he made with his traveling companion, Argh Belarh. This ork is a leader in the ranks of the scorcher. This twosome planned to evade the orks and gather a touch more useful loot. Just before dawn T'retia intends to steal all of the PCs' valuables then run east towards Parlainth. Argh's job is to arrive just at the right moment and allow both of them to escape with enough of the coins to last ten lifetimes. This will also throw the orks from their trail. T'retia will eagerly provide his name and any other information about which the PCs inquire. However, he will not, under any conditions, reveal that he is a thief. He will tantalize them with a story of glory in which he destroys a ravaging Horror some leagues away. The rest of his party was killed so he requires assistance and companionship for the evening. This should dazzle the PCs with untruths and bluster. This tale is told in the truly t'skrang manner, exaggerated (even though it is false) to the point of ridiculousness. T'retia will also inquire as to the PCs' business, trying to be as friendly as possible. This should provide an interesting role-playing opportunity. If there are any female t'skrang in the party then he will, of course, do everything in his capabilities to seduce one. Read the following melodramatic story when you feel it is appropriate for T'retia to relate it. Adjust it as need be and add flavor to personalize it for the group of PCs. "Well, I do lead a dangerous life of glory and passion, as any intelligent Name-giver would desire to do. I fight to destroy the wretched evils that plague this desolate land. In my time I have battled Therans, dealt cold death to beasts, and shed the blood of more Horrors than I can possibly recall. My name is infamous across the land as are those of my poor companions who were maimed cruelly in our last encounter. We sought a Horror by the name of Falsathith. Oh, did he taste the harsh power of my blade! It was a mighty, wondrous battle of triumphant good. You would have cherished the sight of it. My sword caught the moonlight, hurling it outward to pierce the dark night. Blood stained my clothing and scales. Oh, yes.! It was a great battle. I hope that the Library of Throal is gifted with a tale of it some day. Aye, that is what brought me here. And now I travel towards the epic ruins of Parlainth to seek my budding fortune. There I hear tale that the Horrors are as numerous as t'skrang on the Serpent River! That city will shake with the power of my deeds. Well, enough of me. What brings you to this desolate region?!" The t'skrang will engage in a meaningful dialogue with the PCs until it is time to retire for the evening. Near dawn, T'retia will execute his plan. He will wait until approximately one hour before dawn for this attempt. If the PCs have stationed a watch, he will appear to sleep and then strike the guard (Silent Strike, attempting merely to knock him or her unconscious). He will grab up all that he wishes to steal and begin to leave camp. This is when Encounter 2 begins. If the PCs use him for one of their guards during the night he will take the opportunity at that time. The GM will have to move Encounter 2 forward slightly so that it still interrupts his activities. T'retia will silently apologize at length to any female t'skrang in the party for his thievery. T'retia will only take things of extreme value, i.e. magical items, gold or gems, or unique pieces. The requisites for

T'retia follow to be used when combat with the ork scorcher begins (or if otherwise needed). Some background is also included so that the GM may provide detailed and challenging role-playing for the PCs.

T'retia Male T'skrang 5th Circle Thief

This flamboyant t'skrang is bedecked from head to toe in flowing silks of radically vibrant hues which stun the eye. His snout is thin and elegant, and his body lithe and toned with fine muscle. T'retia's scales are of a light blue hue. Flames of pink run up his crest and down his prehensile tail. The dark orbs of his eyes sparkle constantly with mischief and appear to find all humorous in the world. T'retia cherishes life and pleasures himself at every invigorating moment. In his own twisted circle of thieving friends he is known as "The Risk Taker." He never backs down from bet, dare, or commission. Resembling many such Adepts, his word is his bond. T'retia is honorable, however, he also understands the occasional necessity of lies and masks. This t'skrang grew up in a small aporagoi in the southern regions of the Serpent River. He was a constant menace to his family, searching at a young age for freedom and revelling in thievery. At age ten he vanished from home, heading out on a small merchant vessel. It was upon this ship that he found a thief Adept who trained him. In the next five years, he sailed as a pirate, learning many things and experiencing many wonders. His name became quite well known. An important dwarf from Throal found him and offered a commission when he was fifteen. That man's name was never known to T'retia. But he accepted, thinking it an invigorating challenge. He traveled to Vivane where he attempted to infiltrate a Theran house and steal certain documents concerning their government. However, he was caught and imprisoned. It was in that prison cell, where T'retia rotted for nearly a decade, that he met the ork Argh Belarh. Argh had traveled to Vivane in the attempt of finding his lost parents. But when it was discovered that he was a scorcher (adopted due to his warrior prowess) he was also thrown into the dungeon. Both men hungrily sought freedom. It became the most important thing in their lives. And one day they managed to escape and flee back into Barsaive. The ork returned to his tribe and the t'skrang to his home waters. Before this painful separation they took a Blood Oath. They swore that all of the unlawfully imprisoned Name-givers in Vivane would one day be free and the Therans burned to the ground. Today the two have reunited and are attempting to gather the necessary equipment to aid them in their singular attempt. Thus, they have created a detailed plot to steal the elemental coins from the marauding ork scorcher. Although T'retia is not aware of the exact details, he knows that the orks came upon the coins in one of their deadly raids.

Attributes

Dex(19):8/2d6 Str(10): 5/1d8 Tou(12):5/1d8
Per(15):6/1d10 Wil(12): 5/1d8 Cha(16):7/1d12

Initiative Dice: 8/2d6 Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: 1* Spell Defense: 9
Attack Step: 17 Social Defense: 9
Damage Step: 9 Armor: 2
Number of Spells: 0 Mystic Armor: 3
Spellcasting: n/a Recovery Tests: 2
Effect: n/a

Death Rating: 74 Combat Movement: 45
Wound Threshold: 9 Full Movement: 90
Unconsciousness Rating: 58

Talents: Climbing (5): 13/1d12+1d10, Karma Ritual (4): NA, Lock Pick (6): 14/1d20+1d4, Melee Weapons (9): 17/1d20+1d10, Picking Pockets (12): 20/1d20+1d8+1d6, Silent Walk (7): 15/1d20+1d6, Surprise Strike (9): 17/1d20+1d10, Durability (8), Lock Sense (6): 13/1d12+1d10, Avoid Blow (3): 11/1d10+1d8, Fence (5): 12/2d10, Trap Initiative (4): 12/2d10, Detect trap (2): 8/2d6, Thief Weaving (4): 11/1d10+1d8

Skills: Acting (4): 11/1d10+1d8, Flirting (3): 10/1d10+1d6, Streetwise (8): 15/1d20+1d6, Thera Politics (2): 9/1d8+1d6, Court Dancing (5): 12/2d10, Read/Write Dwarven (1): NA, Read/Write T'skrang (1): NA,

Karma Dice: 1d6 Points: 25

Equipment: Padded Armor, Dagger (Damage: 7/1d12), Scimitar (Damage: 9/1d8+1d6), silk garb, pouch containing various gems (worth total of 900 gp), 15 gp, large expandable sack, thieves picks, Legend Book (containing detailed information of all T'retia's successful endeavors), pouch of elemental earth coins (10) stolen from the ork scorchers.

Troubleshooting

There are two conceivable difficulties. These are: if the PCs do not allow T'retia to join them at the campsite, or if they catch him stealing. The former will require some extensive and theatrical role-playing on the part of the GM. T'retia will say absolutely anything to join them. He will also use his basic charm to best advantage. At the extreme, he will resort to openly weeping in front of the PCs and begging for their help, claiming to be emotionally damaged in his imaginary confrontation with the Horror. The latter problem can easily be solved by interjecting Encounter 2 at the moment of discovery.

Encounter 2, The Scorchers Return

Setting the Stage

Read the following when the PCs see T'retia making his move (after he has already bagged their equipment) or when T'retia has finished. The mists of sleep slowly evaporate from your chilled body, the tantalizing light of dawn just beginning to warm the earth upon which you sleep. As your eyes flutter towards wakefulness, you see the strange

t'skrang heading for the edge of your campsite. A large bag not present the previous evening, hangs over his shoulder. Your mind races, stumbling over obscure facts. You reach for your weapon to comfort yourself and find that it is not there. Any action which you had hoped to take is suddenly interrupted as the entire clearing fills with activity. Harsh snorting fills the air, as does the clanking of metal and the sharp hiss of orks. Your eyes dart around you to find large, gray-skinned beasts, horns shimmering white in the early dawn and saliva dripping from their maws. Thundra beasts! Upon each one is a mightily clad ork, his muscled, dark-olive skin lathered in sweat. Their weapons are drawn. You see the t'skrang stop in his tracks, an unreadable emotion crossing his face. But you can see him set his stance, his hand flying towards the scimitar at his hip. One ork rides towards you. His gravelly voice fills the air. "So, Argh Belarh finally finds the thief. I told you we would!" He looks at T'retia and spits to his left. "And look, he has his group of thieves with him. So be it. We'll just have to kill them as well. You, t'skrang, come here!" T'retia puts his hands in the air obligingly, the large pack still clinging to his body. He steps forward slowly. The leader snorts disdainfully and barks, "Get on the beast, scum! My tribe will have the pleasure of dining on your sour bones. Now then, the rest of them." He looks at his men and shouts, "Kill them!"

Themes and Images

The characters should be feeling frightened. Even with their ample powers, they are surrounded by a band of ork scorchers who would seem to want their lives. They also don't have any of their powerful weapons. Also, if they are well-versed in orkish culture, they should sense that something is extremely wrong. Action should be moving quickly now, as a myriad of thoughts whirl through their heads.

Behind the Scenes

T'retia and Argh Belarh intend to allow the orks to busy themselves with the characters as they make their getaway. The ork scorchers want the t'skrang dead, and are looking forward to killing him at their camp. They are also hungry for revenge because their most prized possession has been stolen by this cunning t'skrang. They don't realize what role Argh had in this. They will obey Argh and will rush in for the attack. T'retia and Argh will fight together, defending themselves under any circumstances. It was for this purpose that Argh left T'retia's hands unbound. Two rounds into the combat, once there is sufficient havoc and chaos, they will charge out of the clearing and move at full speed for Parlainth where they intend to search for some magical treasure which may aid them in their purpose.

Argh Belarh, Male Ork 5th Circle Liberator

This heavily muscled ork is in his mid-thirties, having spent nearly half his life in the slave-pits or dungeons of Thera. His scar-marred skin is dark ebony in color as is his waxy mass of hair. A slight tongue of gray reaches back from one of his horns. Numerous rings and bands of steel and gold

decorate his tall form. Blood stains his travel-worn clothing. He is unmindful of his general appearance but pays special attention to his weapon and armor. He carries a large battle-axe, its handle wrapped in Espagra leather and studded with gems on its pommel. Argh refers to this monstrosity simply as "Marr." His armor has seen numerous battles but he has only acquired it recently. (after returning to his adopted tribe) Chips, dents, and rude repairing keeps it in a constant state of griminess.

Argh is a rough ork, having spent his youth alone and most of his life doing unbearable labor to benefit cruel masters. Yet he also fought for the dream of Hrak Gron and continues the vision of the Ork Uprising. But once seen in light of his past it is possible to look beyond such superficialities. In the company of his true friends he is as compassionate as any loving mother. However, the only friends that remain alive are T'retia and a few folk still in Vivane. Those he fights to free. He will do everything in his powers to free their young souls before the end of his life (which he now realizes draws inexplicably near). He never knew his parents. They were taken by Therans near Skypoint shortly after his birth. He was adopted by hospitable ork scorchers who recognized his skill (even at an early age). But his there was insufficient time for his loyalty to grow strong prior to his enslavement. He commands his fellow orks confidently but coldly. He does whatever is necessary. And he will betray them to fulfill his promise and purpose.

Attributes

Dex(15):6/1d10 Str(17): 7/1d12 Tou(17):7/1d12
Per(12):5/1d8 Wil(18): 7/1d12 Cha(13):6/1d10

Initiative Dice: 6/1d10	Physical Defense: 10
Number of Attacks: 1	Spell Defense: 7
Attack Step: 16	Social Defense: 7
Damage Step: 14	Armor: 13
Number of Spells: 0	Mystic Armor: 1
Spellcasting: n/a	Recovery Tests/Day: 3
Effect: n/a	

Death Rating: 89
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 74

Talents: Freedom Search (5): 10/1d10+1d6, Karma Ritual (5), Melee Weapons (10): 16/1d20+1d8, Mind Blade (6): 6/1d10, Mind Armor (4): 11/1d10+1d8, Ritual of Atonement (7): 14/1d20+1d4, Durability (8): NA, Free Mind (4): 10/1d10+1d6, Unarmed Combat (5): 11/1d10+1d8, Heart of Freedom (3): 10/1d10+1d6, Shackle Shrug (5): 11/1d10+1d8, False Shackles (4): 10/1d10+1d6, Freedom Weaving (7): 12/2d10, Lion Spirit (2): 9/1d8+1d6
Movement Full: 80 Combat: 40

Skills: Acting (6): 12/2d10, Streetwise (5): 10/1d10+1d6, Theran History (4): 9/1d8+1d6, Orkish Racial Lore (5): 10/1d10+1d6, Read/Write Dwarven (1): NA, Read/Write Orkish(1): NA

Karma Dice: 1d8 Points: 40

Equipment: Plate Mail, Battle-axe (14/1d20+1d4), Dagger (9/1d8+1d6), Traveller's Garb, 16 gp.

Ork Scorchers (12)

Attributes

DEX: 5	STR: 7	TOU: 6
PER: 5	WIL: 6	CHA: 4

Initiative: 2	Physical Defense: 6
Number of Attacks: 1	Spell Defense: 6
Attack: 7	Social Defense: 6
Damage: 10	Armor: 10
Number of Spells: NA	Mystic Armor: 1
Spellcasting: NA	Knockdown: 6
Effect: NA	Recovery Tests: 1

Death Rating: 32	Combat Movement:30
Wound Threshold: 8	Full Movement: 60
Unconsciousness Rating: 24	

Legend Points: 50

Equipment: broadsword, footman's shield, chain mail

Loot: 1d4 sp per ork

Troubleshooting

The possible outcomes to this combat are infinite. The PCs may role-play their way out of the situation, putting Argh and T'retia together and attempting to influence the orks' intentions. At this point Argh will use his persuasive abilities. Or, if the PCs are absolutely compelling, then Argh and T'retia will attempt to escape. They may defeat the orks and chase down the two thieves. If this occurs the two villains will attempt to weasel their way out of their predicament, even willing to return the goods they stole from the PCs. In their minds, the PCs caught them and it would only be fair. On the other hand, they 'outwitted' the orks. The PCs may also desire to join the two compatriots on their quest. In this case, the GM may have a campaign on his/her hands. Simply insure that the outcome is believable. Remember that the two thieves should be able to role-play their way out of almost anything.

THE GROUNDED DRAKKAR

BY DAVID CARALEY

You walk through the sooty streets of Jerris, looking for a place to wash the dust from your throats, when you come upon a faded, two story wooden building with a single mast and rotted rigging mounted on the roof. A faded and peeling sign showing an small airship embedded into the ground. As you approach, you have to walk around two men fighting in the streets with shortswords. Other passersby ignore them and continue on their ways, and you decide to do the same. You push open the door and head inside.

Your eyes get accustomed to the dim light of the old light-quartz lanterns that used to hang on various airships from long ago. You see a wooden and brass trimmed bar behind which stands a large troll. The other patrons of the inn sit in small groups, talking quietly, while various serving girls move about the tables carrying drinks and food. In the corner, a single musician plays a lute while whistling sailing tunes.

There are rope ladders and netting hanging on the walls, old brass ship bells and other brass ship fixtures make up the rest of the decorations. A barmaid, dressed in tight pants and a loose shirt tied at the midriff strides up, looks you over, and says, "Need a table, mates?"

The Grounded Drakkar is a cheap inn offering simple meals of cheese, bread, and fruit (3 cp), and average meals of fatty meat, bread, cheese, fruit, and a mug of average ale (1 sp). For drinks it serves average ale (5 cp), and bottles of wine (5 cp). The only oddity it serves is yarg (1 sp a glass), a powerful liquor favored by air sailors and crystal raiders.

As for lodging, hammocks are available in the common room (5 cp a night), or small private rooms with a bed, a trunk, and little else (1 sp). Two people can sleep in the bed, but any more would be a little crowded.

The inn is owned and run by Borig Mastmender, a former crystal raider from the Twilight Peaks. His ship crashed years ago in the Wastes, and he barely managed to survive and stagger into Jerris. Once he arrived, he never managed to leave. He opened the Grounded Drakkar back in 1501 and has never thought twice about trying to return to the mountains.

The inn opens an hour after sunrise when Borig manages to stagger down from his room, rouse some of his "crew", and unbar the door. It closes at midnight when the last

patrons are kicked out, hammocks are strung up, and people retire to their private rooms.

1) The Common Room - This room is done in wood and brass, with old fixtures and rigging from various dead airships. There is a wooden stairway with no railing heading up to the floor above, and a long bar trimmed in brass behind which stands a large, battle-scarred troll, Borig, the owner. There are several tables and benches throughout the room, and a wooden stairway without a railing heading up. In one corner is a raised platform where a single entertainer provides background music. The cash box is kept under the bar (it usually contains 2D6 x 10 silvers in assorted copper and silver coins). At the end of the day, Borig carries it upstairs to his room.

2) The Galley - This room is the small kitchen where the small amount of cooking goes on. It is the domain of Cyrus Hook, an ex-air sailor who lost a hand and now works as the cook for the Grounded Drakkar. In one of the cabinets containing cooking supplies is Cyrus' shortsword.

3) The Storeroom - This room contains extra hammocks, chairs, ale casks, food stuffs, canvas, and anything else Borig feels like tossing in there. This has included members of his "crew" he has been displeased with.

4) Captain's Quarters - This is Borig's room. It has a large bed, a sea trunk, a large wardrobe, a round table with two chairs, and a small cabinet. Borig keeps the cash box under his pillow when he brings it upstairs at the end of the day. The cabinet has a small ale cask, three bottles of yarg, and large pewter mugs. The trunk is locked (needing a 7 to open) and has what is left of his raiding days, a chipped trollsword, leather armor, and a single Healing Potion. In a secret compartment (needing a PER Test with a target of 8 to find) is a small wooden box with

a rough map leading out into the Wastes, and a small bag with a D8 gems worth 3D6 x 10 silvers each. The wardrobe contains an extra pair of boots, and two extra sets of clothes.

When Borig is downstairs, he keeps the door to this room locked (needing an 8 to open).

5) Private Rooms - These rooms all have simple locks (needing a 6 to open). Inside are rope beds, and a simple trunk. They have plain wooden floors, and plain wooden walls. The beds are much more comfortable if the patron has a bedroll to spread out over it.



The Staff:

Borig Mastmender - Troll Tavern Owner

DEX: 13: 6/D10 STR: 17: 7/D12 TOU: 15: 6/D10
PER: 8: 4/D6 WIL: 11: 5/D8 CHA: 10: 5/D8

Initiative: 6/D10 Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 5
Attack: 9/D8+D6 Social Defense: 6
Damage:
Fist 7/D12
Club 10/D10+D6
Troll Sword 13/D12+D10
Number of Spells: NA Armor: 0 (3)
Spellcasting: NA Mystic Armor: 1
Effect: NA Knockdown: 7/D12
Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 38
Wound Threshold: 10 Combat Move: 30
Unconsciousness Rating: 29 Full Move: 60

Legend Points: 65
Equipment: Troll sword (kept in his room), club, dagger, leather armor (kept in his room)
Loot: 2D6 x 10 silvers

Skills: Air Sailing 3: 8/2D6, Great Leap 3: 9/D8+D6, Local Lore 2: 6/D10, Melee Weapons 4: 10/D10+D6, Streetwise 2: 6/D10, Tale Telling 3: 8/2D6, Unarmed Combat 3: 9/D8+D6, Wilderness Survival 3: 7/D12

Commentary:

Borig served upon a troll drakkar that was exploring the Wastes when a freak magical storm caused it to crash, killing everyone on board. Everyone except Borig.

Borig was seriously injured, but managed to make his way out of the Wastes, cross the Poison Forest, and stagger into Jerris. Cyrus Hook found him wandering the streets, took the troll in, and nursed him back to health.

When Borig recovered, he opened the Grounded Drakkar. No one knows where he got the money to start the inn, and rumors flow like water. If anyone knows the truth, it would be Cyrus Hook.

Cyrus Hook - Human Cook

DEX: 13: 6/D10 STR: 13: 6/D10 TOU: 13: 6/D10
PER: 13: 6/D10 WIL: 10: 5/D8 CHA: 10: 5/D8

Initiative: 6/D10 Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 9/D8+D6 Social Defense: 6
Damage:
Fist 6/D10
Club 9/D8+D6
Short Sword 10/D10+D6

Number of Spells: NA Armor: 2
Spellcasting: NA Mystic Armor: 0
Effect: NA Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9 Combat Move: 30
Unconsciousness Rating: 27 Full Move: 60

Legend Points: 65
Equipment: Short sword, club, dagger, leather armor
Loot: 1D6 x 10 silvers

Skills: Air Sailing 2: 7/D12, Cooking 2: 8/2D6, Physician 2: 8/2D6, Melee Weapons 3: 9/D8+D6, Navigation 2: 8/2D6, Streetwise 2: 8/2D6, Unarmed Combat 3: 9/D8+D6

Commentary:

Cyrus Hook was an air sailor who lost his left hand during a battle with a Theran airship. He was grounded, and served in the air docks of Jerris until one fateful day when he came upon the battered body of Borig Mastmender.

After he nursed the troll back to health, the two became fast friends. When Borig opened the Grounded Drakkar, he asked Cyrus to join his crew and serve as cook. Cyrus took the job and has been happy with his life ever since. He lives in the inn, stringing a hammock in the kitchen.

Carina Ridley - Human Barmaid?

DEX: 16: 7/D12 STR: 10: 5/D8 TOU: 10: 5/D8
PER: 13: 6/D10 WIL: 10: 5/D8 CHA: 16: 7/D12

Initiative: 7/D12 Physical Defense: 9
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 10/D10+D6 Social Defense: 9
Damage: 4/D6
Shortsword 9/D8+D6
Number of Spells: NA Armor: 0
Spellcasting: NA Mystic Armor: 0
Effect: NA Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 31 Combat Move: 38
Wound Threshold: 8 Full Move: 75
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Legend Points: 60
Equipment: Clothes, smile, shortsword (hidden in the common room)
Loot: 2D6 silvers

Skills: Acting 4: 10/D10+D6, Avoid Blow 3: 10/D10+D6, Bartending 2: 7/D12, Flirting 3: 10/D10+D6, Lock Picking 2: 9/D8+D6, Melee Weapon 3: 10/D10+D6, Silent Walk 2: 9/D8+D6, Singing 1: 8/2D6, Streetwise 3: 8/2D6, Unarmed Combat 3: 10/D10+D6

Commentary:

Carina is hardly the typical barmaid found in taverns and inns throughout Barsaive. She is a complete scoundrel who is convinced that Borig has a fortune hidden away somewhere in the inn. She searches whenever she gets a chance, and is biding her time, waiting for Borig or Cyrus to slip up and mention where they have the treasure hidden.

Carina is a beautiful dark-haired young woman in her early twenties. She is dressed identically to the other barmaids, in tight pants, and a loose shirt, and cuts quite a dashing figure. She sleeps in a hammock in the common room at night.

She is a flirt who is always looking for an angle to riches. She actually has become quite fond of the inn, and will fight to defend it, though she will only use her short sword as a last resort. Her shortsword is hidden behind a loose board in the common room.

Livia, Siri - Human Barmaids

DEX: 11: 5/D8 STR: 9: 4/D6 TOU: 10: 5/D8
PER: 11: 5/D8 WIL: 10: 5/D8 CHA: 14: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8 Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 6
Attack: 6/D10 Social Defense: 8
Damage: 4/D6
Number of Spells: NA Armor: 0
Spellcasting: NA Mystic Armor: 0
Effect: NA Knockdown: 4/D6
Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 31 Combat Move: 27
Wound Threshold: 8 Full Move: 45
Unconsciousness Rating: 22

Legend Points: 50
Equipment: Clothes, smile
Loot: 2D6 silvers

Skills: Bartending 2: 7/D12, Flirting 3: 9/D8+D6, Singing 1: 7/D12, Unarmed Combat 1: 6/D10

Commentary:

Livia and Siri are two sisters who enjoy the rowdy crowd that frequent the Grounded Drakkar. They think that there isn't much life to the city of Jerris, and what little life and excitement there is can usually be found among the adventurers and air sailors that patronize the Drakkar.

Livia has dark, curly hair that tumbles down past her shoulders, while Siri's dark hair is straight and cut short. They both look ravishing in their tight pants and loose shirts, and they tie their shirts off at the midriff.

Brooz Sprungstring - Dwarven Musician

DEX: 12: 5/D8 STR: 13: 6/D10 TOU: 14: 6/D10
PER: 13: 6/D10 WIL: 10: 5/D8 CHA: 13: 6/D10

Initiative: 5/D8 Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 6/D10 Social Defense: 7
Damage: 9/D8+D6
Number of Spells: NA Armor: 0
Spellcasting: NA Mystic Armor: 0
Effect: NA Knockdown: 6/D10
Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 36 Combat Move: 24
Wound Threshold: 10 Full Move: 48
Unconsciousness Rating: 28

Legend Points: 55
Equipment: Craft tools (including something used as a club), padded cloth armor
Loot: D6 x 10 silvers

Skills: Appraise Music 3: 9/D8+D6, Local Lore 3: 8/2D6, Melee 1: 6/D10, Play Instrument 3: 9/D8+D6, Tale Telling 2: 8/2D6, Trading 3: 8/2D6

Commentary:

Brooz is a dwarf who spent his entire life sitting around the air docks of Jerris, listening to tales, and picking up bits of folk songs and air shanties. When the Grounded Drakkar opened, Brooz wandered in, started playing, and has become part of the regular staff. He lives off of tips and whatever food and drink Borig will give him. At the end of the day, he sleeps in a hammock in the common room.

Brooz is a balding dwarf approaching the tail end of middle age. His brown beard is trimmed, and he wears bright and colorful clothing that looks out of place in a city like Jerris.

Adventure Seeds:

1) Borig has a map to where the drakkar he was serving on crashed. The ship was on its way back from looting an abandoned kaer out in the wastes, and was loaded with treasure. Borig managed to take some of the easily transportable items, gems and jewelry, which is how he paid for the inn, but the bulk of the treasure is still out there.

Borig might be convinced to sell the map for a share in the profits, but he would expect the characters to take a Blood Oath to insure their honesty.

The treasure could have almost anything, but it should have at least one magical item of note. Remember, it is in the Wastes, and anything can happen out there.

2) Carina has numerous money making schemes, some of which require help of various sorts. She can be used to drag characters into all sorts of trouble. She can also play the poor, endangered female to the hilt, in case one of her schemes goes wrong, sometimes enticing characters into schemes to help her out of a jam.

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