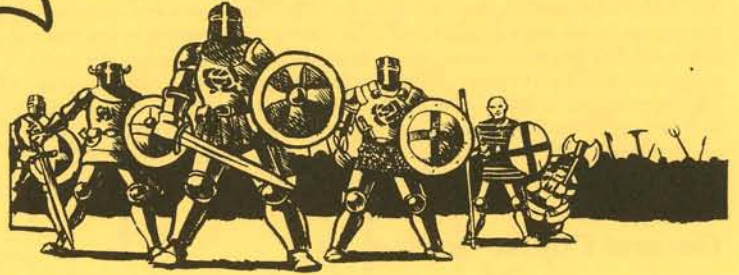


BLACK ROSES

An AD&D™ Mini-scenario for parties of 5-8 adventurers

by Mike Brunton



Introduction

If you wish to play in this scenario please stop reading here. The rest of the information is for the DM alone.

This scenario is intended for use with a party of adventurers which includes cavaliers, the new sub-class of fighter which can be found on pages 6-11 of this issue of IMAGINE™ magazine. It is not a typical 'dungeon' style adventure, because the cavalier class is not suited to such play.

Ideally, the party should include three or four cavaliers, a cleric, a magic-user and other specialist non-fighters. However, the scenario will still work if fighters are substituted for cavaliers.

'Black Roses' is designed so that it may be used with parties of varying levels. The section marked **General Course of Play** describes the adventure, but refers to encounters in general terms, eg the raiders. Exact details of the encounters are given at the end of the scenario. The Dungeon Master (DM) should determine the average level of the characters involved in the adventure and use the details listed under the appropriate level.

Where monsters or Non-Player Characters (NPCs) are described, statistics for them are presented in the following format:

Armour Class (AC); Movement Rate (MV); Hit Dice (HD) or Class/Level; hit points (hp); Number of Attacks (# AT); Damage caused by attack(s) (D); any other notes, eg Special Attacks (SA), Special Defences (SD), character abilities; Experience Points (xp); Alignment (AL); Size (S); Source: MM - Monster Manual, FF - FIEND FOLIO™ Tome, MM2 - Monster Manual II.

The Order of the Black Rose

The Village of Braeme falls within lands granted to the Black Rose, an order dedicated to the Rule of Law, which sees this duty as defending the Empire of Man. As a result of this policy the Order is now spread around the borders of civilization, pushing back the creatures of the wilderness. The Order is organised into five districts or commanderies, each under the control of a Senior Master. Each district is further subdivided into two or three preceptories — monastery-like establishments where 10-20 cavaliers of the Order live and train with their attendant men-at-arms. Attached to each preceptory are clerics, magic-users, rangers etc who perform specialised supportive tasks in times of crisis. Each preceptory is commanded by a Master of the Order. The entire Order is overseen by a Grand Master and a Council of the Senior Masters.

Players' Background

The DM should read the following at the start of the session:

When summoned to meet Master Christopher in the council hall of the preceptory, you lost no time in obeying. A servant of the Order of the Black Rose, you are trained to show unquestioning obedience to the orders of superiors.

In the hall, Master Christopher sits in his chair, fingering his sword hilt. Beside him stands a bedraggled peasant, obviously nervous in these surroundings. Master Christopher acknowledges your bows and begins to speak:

'Greetings, sirs. This man is Alfric, from the village of Braeme — some twenty miles south of here. The village is part of the Order's lands, and the responsibility of this preceptory.'

Master Christopher gestures to the peasant, who begins to speak in a hesitant and hushed voice.

'Masters. My village is in terrible danger. Fell creatures have come out of the south to threaten our women and children. They said that unless we gave them our harvest they would raze the village to the ground. Poor goodwife Judith's cottage was burnt down as a warning. They said that they would return when next the moon was full. Father Jeffrey — he is our priest, my Masters — told the Elders that the Black Rose Knights would help us. I was sent to beg your aid.'

Alfric wrings his hands and begins weeping. Master Christopher leans forwards and then speaks again:

'We have a duty to this man and his village. They have supported us for ten years, and have never asked for help. Now they need defenders, and I have chosen you for the task. Our Order is much-extended, fighting evil in many places, so I can spare no greater force. Your retinues must remain here in case of further attacks.'

'I charge you with the defence of Braeme. You must go to the village and protect it from these foul raiders, whatever they may be. Destroy these enemies of Man, and act with the bravery that becomes a member of this Order. You leave within the hour. Your horses will be saddled and waiting.'

And with that Master Christopher dismisses you all.

Dungeon Master's Background

'Black Roses' is concerned with the defence of Braeme against a group of marauding creatures who have emerged from the wastelands of the south, an area beyond human control. The exact nature of these raiders varies, according to the level of the adventuring characters involved.

The DM should realise that this scenario does not have a conventional structure. There are no descriptions of rooms or monsters in the text. Basically, the DM must take the part of a group of marauders and attack a position held by the party. This calls for fine judgement, because it is always possible to wipe out the defenders entirely. However, this does not mean that the DM should give the party as easy time. Ideally, a level of tension should be maintained during the adventure, with successive (and increasingly desperate) attacks being hurled against the village.

General Course of Play

Once the DM has read the Players' Background to the party, the players may select any equipment they wish from the lists in the **Players Handbook** or from the characters' possessions. Only that which could reasonably be carried on horseback with a man-sized creature can be selected. Each character will be given a horse unless he or she already possesses one, but pack or draft animals may not be used.

Once the equipment is selected, the party can set out to the village of Braeme, guided by Alfric. To conserve the horses' stamina, one night will be spent camping on the trail. The DM may feel free to create an encounter for the night, such as an attack by wolves.

Once at Braeme, the adventurers may take what defensive measures they feel are necessary. In general, the type of defensive work that may be undertaken is of a simple nature. The villagers may be employed as a labour force to dig ditches and implant stakes as anti-cavalry measures, 10 villagers being able to dig a ditch six feet wide two feet deep and 30 feet long with implanted stakes in one day. This will stop any cavalry charge.

The adventurers should realise from their prior military experience as cavaliers (ie the DM should give them hints) that they cannot defend the entire perimeter of the village. Primarily the villagers efforts should be directed towards channelling any assault into 'killing grounds' so that the number of attackers is no longer of great importance.

After 5-8 days the first signs of the raiders will be seen. Two of the raiders, mounted upon whatever type of riding beasts are listed below, will emerge from the forest to the east and approach the village along the track. As soon as the raiders spot any member of the party they will stop, and make off towards the forest. If they escape the raiders will be warned of the presence of the adventurers.

If the raiders are captured, they will give little useful information — general composition of the raiders' group — and vague reasons for attacking human settlements — food, fun, drive away human scum etc.

Regardless of whether the raiders are captured, killed or escape, the main body of raiders will arrive at dawn two days later.



The Villagers

The villagers of Braeme are, with two exceptions, simple non-adventuring folk — poor farmers, but proud of their links with the land.

In the description of the village the inhabitants of each cottage or hovel are not detailed. They are presented as a group for the convenience of DMs whose players use the villagers as aid in the defence of the village.

There are 101 villagers (AC 10; MV 9"; Level 0; hp as below; # AT 1; D by weapon type; AL LN/LG/NG/N) who are capable of taking part in combat. Normally none of the villagers are ever armed, but they have access to various farming implements (D 2-7), axes (D 1-6), knives (the equivalent of daggers, D 1-4), hunting bows (short bows), spears (D 1-6, but the villagers lack the experience necessary to set a spear to receive a charge) and hammers (D 2-5).

The villagers can be split into the following groups:

- 30 labouring males, 4hp each — only this group has access to hunting bows or spears and can use them effectively;
- 35 labouring females, 4hp each;
- 15 active males, 3hp each;
- 12 active females, 3hp each, -1 combat ability;
- 4 sedentary males, 1hp each, -2 combat ability — these particular villagers are the Braeme Council of Elders;
- 5 sedentary females, 1hp each, -3 combat ability.

None of the villagers has had military training, or is particularly brave. Unless they are driven to combat, they will flee 75% of the time. This percentage chance drops by 5% for each member of the party who is within 20 feet, and each time the village is attacked. The DM should check this every turn.

The DM should see the section on 'Typical Inhabitants' on p88 of the **Dungeon Masters Guide** for further details.

There are also 46 children (AC 10; MV 9"; hp 1 each) in the village, but they will take no part in combat whatsoever. However, the party may assign duties involved in the defence to them.

None of the villagers is wealthy. At most the adults will have 1-6cp each, and the children may (30% chance) have a copper piece each.

There are two other inhabitants of the village. The first of these is a village priest, assigned to this out-of-the-way place for holding unconventional views. He is Father Jeffrey (AC 3; MV 9"; C 3; hp 17; # AT 1; D by weapon type; SA +1 to damage; SD spell use, **command**, **cure light wounds**, **light**, **cause fear**, **hold person**, **silence 15' radius**; S 16, I 12, W 15, D 9, C 12, Ch 11; AL NG) who wears banded mail and shield in combat and wields a footman's flail. Normally, his spells are those used in ministering to the villagers.

Father Jeffrey is nearly as poor as the villagers (he has 3-18sp). His only valuable possessions are his vestments, which are worth 120gp.

The other exceptional inhabitant of the village is Benbow (AC 3; MV 9"; F 2; hp 20; # AT 1; D by weapon type; SA +1 hit probability, +1 to damage; S 17, I 12, W 9, D 12, C 17, Ch 10; AL N), a dwarf. Benbow was exiled from his people because of alleged cowardice and chose to hide in Braeme rather than adventure in the larger world. Whenever he is called upon to enter combat, there is a 30% chance that Benbow's nerve will break and he will be unable to fight. In combat Benbow wears plate mail and wields a battle axe. He also possesses a pair of matched heavy crossbows with inlaid mother-of-pearl stocks (worth 150gp each), and three **crossbow bolts** +1. In the pouch at his belt are 15gp, 12sp, 4cp and three dead flies, carefully wrapped in a small piece of silk, which Benbow claims to have caught at the same time.

The Village of Braeme

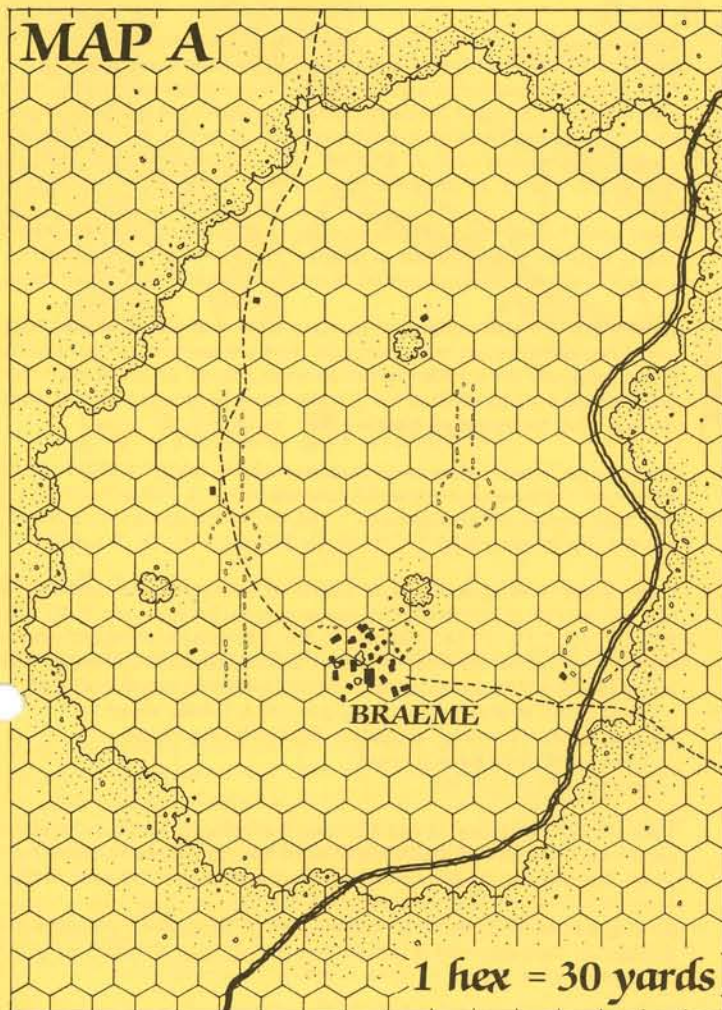
Braeme is located in a fertile vale, which has only come under human rule within the last thirty years. Although Braeme has a frontier position, and its fields and pastures are bordered by deep forest, the village has no recent experience of violence from the creatures of the wilderness. Only the oldest villagers have any recollection of the creatures that lurk to the south causing trouble.

Braeme is an unremarkable place, although it is ringed by the remains of stone circles and avenues, built thousands of years ago. Most have fallen down, been broken or used for building. The partial circle in one corner of the village is the most prominent of these remains.

The village is so small that it does not have an inn or tavern. Visitors — a rare occurrence — are entertained at the Priest's House (building 3), or housed in the Temple (building 1). The small cottages and hovels of the village are rude dwellings, constructed, for the most part, of wattle and daub, with one or two stones from the surrounding circles.

The finest buildings are the Temple, the Priest's House and the Smithy (building 4). All three are built of stone, with timber roofs.

No more than a simple hall, the Temple serves as a place of worship, hostelry, council hall and pound for stray animals, furnished with simple wooden benches and brackets for torches. It also has a 40' high tower (2), which was originally intended to take a bell until the Elders decided that it was too expensive. The tower gives an excellent view of the surrounding countryside — and a good field of fire.



The Temple deity should be appropriate to the campaign background.

The Priest's House, where the adventurers will be housed during their stay, is a two room building. It is warm, clean and comfortable, but poorly furnished. Father Jeffrey also uses his house for the important business of storing the village's supply of salt (used for preserving meat during winter). The Smithy is also a two room building. The larger of the two rooms is the forge itself, and the back room is the living quarters for the blacksmith and his family.

Each cottage in the village, regardless of size, looks much like any other, home to 3-6 adult villagers and 1-3 children (to a total of 101 adults and 46 children). If the players ask for a description the DM should make one up, emphasizing the overcrowded, cramped conditions, the squalor and the damp. Life as a peasant is not easy.

Buildings 9 and 10 no longer exist as complete structures, only heaps of ash and blackened stones. They have been burnt to the ground by the raiders as a warning. The former occupants have been rehoused.

Buildings 11, 13, 15 and 17 are barns. At present they are all but empty, awaiting the fruits of the harvest. These four buildings are the winter food store for the village, and the seed store for the following spring's plantings. The barns and other buildings dotted throughout the surrounding fields and pastures are fodder-stores and winter shelters for cattle and sheep.

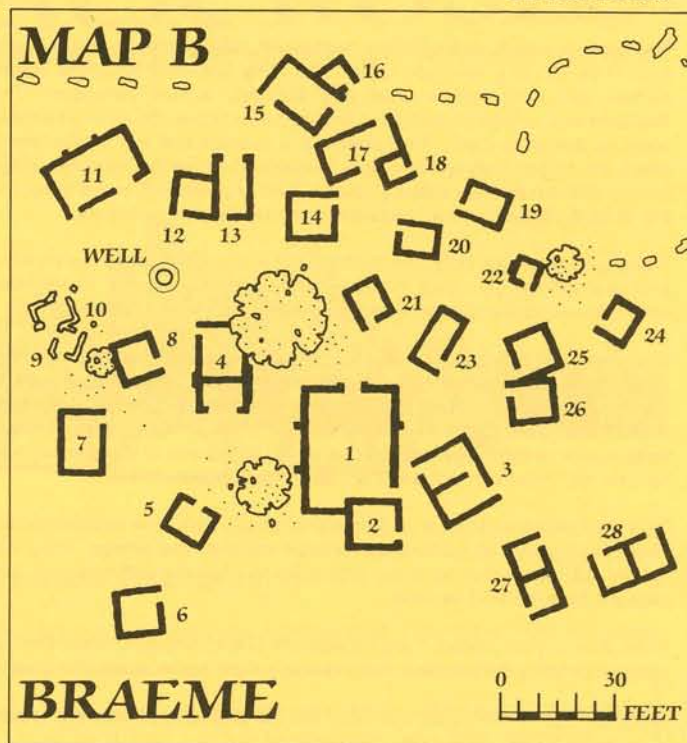
Building 22 is the village smoke-house, used during the autumn months for curing meat.

Buildings 27 and 28 are double cottages, constructed entirely of stones from the circles around the village. Father Jeffrey and Benbow built these cottages, with help from the villagers, and intend to rebuild Braeme to the same standard.

The pastures around Braeme are good quality farming land, quite flat and well drained — and entirely suitable for mounted operations.

The DM may give players photocopies of the maps of the area around Braeme (Map A) and the village itself (Map B). IMAGINE™ magazine grants permission to photocopy these maps for personal use.

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KEY: MAP A

- Trail
- Stream
- Woods
- Buildings
- Stones

KEY: MAP B

- Building (incl doors)
- Stones
- Tree



The Raiders' Strategy

The main body of the raiders will appear from the forest to the north of Braeme at dawn, on the village side of the stream. They will advance in open order across the fields. Once they realise that the village is defended, or if the scouts escaped, a spokesman (listed in the relevant section below) will come forward from the main group, bearing a flag of parley. Once within hailing distance of the village he will shout (in Common) the following:

'So, these ungrateful peasants have got help. We should not have been so lenient last time! See, you leave a man a little something because you feel sorry for him and this is how he thanks you.'

'If you surrender now we will let you go with your lives; otherwise you will die. Are these lowly filth worth your lives?'

If the adventurers surrender at this point the raiders will strip them of all their equipment, and escort them to a point some distance from the village, where their equipment will be returned — minus the odd item of jewelry. They will be warned never to return. Were they to do so, they would find their enemies embarking on their first attack.

If they do not surrender the spokesman will begin again:

'Now we will kill you all and trample your hovels into the dirt. Your fields will be burnt, your cattle killed. The dust will blow over your unmarked graves.'

After shouting this the spokesman will withdraw to the main body of the raiders, and the first attack will commence.

The first attack will be little more than a test. The raiders will charge forward as a group, in an attempt to reach the village. However, once two casualties have been sustained the raiders will withdraw to the treeline. If followed they will greet their pursuers with a hail of missiles.

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The second attack will be more organised, taking place several hours later. The 'cavalry' will ride forward to draw fire, then the bow-armed raiders will concentrate upon any similarly armed defenders. The 'footsoldiers' will be in reserve, carrying burning brands, until a suitable opening presents itself. If an opening is spotted and the 'footsoldiers' reach the village they will burn any hovels within reach. Once the village is fired the remaining raiders ('cavalry' and archers) will move in for the kill. If 25% casualties are sustained the raiders will withdraw.

If the second attack fails, the raiders will again fall back to the treeline and deal with any pursuit in the manner described above. The raiders will then withdraw deeper into the forest until the following day.

Next morning the raiders will adopt a policy of sniping at anybody who appears, in an attempt to goad the adventurers out of the village to where they can be attacked with overwhelming numbers. Assuming that all the cattle and sheep were taken into the village, the raiders will keep to this pattern of attack for two days. At the end of this period their rations will have run out and they will attack again.

This final attack will be an 'all or nothing' affair, with little sophistication. The entire group of raiders will charge towards the village. They will ignore all casualties in their attempts to slay the adventurers and capture Braeme and its food.

If the flow of play makes it practicable the DM may care to have the last raider ask 'Why did you do it, men like you, fighting for scum like these?'

Once the last of the raiders is dead the adventure is effectively ended.

The Raiders

LEVEL 1: 24 xvarts (AC 7; MV 6"; HD 1-1; hp 4 each; # AT 1; D by weapon type; xp 9 each; AL CE; S S; FF) armed with short swords (D 1-6). Eight of the xvarts are 'cavalry', mounted on giant rats (AC 7; MV 12"; HD 1/2; hp 2 each; # AT 1; D 1-3; SA Disease; xp 9 each; AL N; S S; MM) and armed with spears (D 1-6) as well. Eight of the 'footsoldiers' are armed with short bows (D 1-6) in addition to their short swords. They are led by a xwart magic user (AC 7; MV 6"; HD 1-1; hp 6; # AT 1; D 1-4; SA spell use, **magic missile**, **shocking grasp**; xp 32; AL CE; S S; FF) who is armed with a dagger (D 1-4).

The xvarts are accompanied by Selkin, a wererat (AC 6; MV 12"; HD 3+1; hp 14; # AT 1; D by weapon type; SA surprise on 1-4; SD silver or +1 weapons to hit; xp 206; AL LE; S M; MM) in human form, armed with a long sword (D 1-8). Selkin will do all the talking for the group, and is in apparent command. He will only reveal his true nature if forced to do so in order to flee or survive.

The xvarts have 2-8gp each, the magic user has an inlaid dagger (worth 50gp) and two doses of a **potion of human control**. Selkin's long sword is of high quality (worth 125gp)

LEVEL 2-3: 20 gnolls (AC 5; MV 9"; HD 2; hp 9 each; # AT 1; D by weapon; xp 46 each; AL CE; S L; MM), armed with battle axes (D 1-8).

Six of the gnolls are mounted upon minimal elephants (AC 8; MV 12"; HD 2+6; hp 16; # AT 5; D 2-5/2-5/1-4/1-3/1-3; xp 173; AL N; S special; MM2). Minimal elephants are similar to normal elephants, but are the result of magical dwarfism — they are half normal height (c 8' tall) and 1/8 normal weight.

Four of the gnolls on foot are armed with heavy crossbows (D 1-8) in addition to their battleaxes.



The whole group is led by Earbiter, the raiders' spokesman, a flind (AC 5; MV 12"; HD 2+3; hp 17; # AT 1; D 1-6 or 1-4; SA disarming; xp 86; AL LE; S M; FF), accompanied by a gnoll shaman (identical to the above gnolls plus except HD 3; hp 10; SA spells, **darkness**, **cure light wounds**, **chant**; xp 125), who is armed with a **mace +2** (D 1-6+2). Both are mounted upon medium warhorses (AC 7; MV 18"; HD 2+2; hp 12 each; # AT 3; D 1-6/1-6/1-3; xp 71 each; AL N; S L; MM).

Each gnoll has 4-16gp each, and may (50% chance) have an item of booty, such as a gem, piece of jewelry, weapon etc, worth 20-40gp. Earbiter and the shaman have 40-60gp each, but nothing else of value.

LEVEL 4-6: 15 gnolls (identical to those described above, except 12hp and 52xp each), seven mounted upon medium warhorses (identical to those ridden by the flind and gnoll shaman above). All are armed with scimitars (D 1-8). In addition the 'cavalry' have spears (D 1-6) and those on foot have heavy crossbows (D 1-8).

They are accompanied by seven bugbears (AC 5; MV 9"; HD 3+1; hp 16 each; # AT 1; D by weapon type; SA surprise on a 1-3; 199xp each; AL CE; S L; MM) armed with halberds (D 1-10); and three ogres (AC 5; MV 9"; HD 4+1; hp 24 each; # AT 1; D 1-10; xp 210 each; AL CE; S L; MM).

Their leader and spokesman is Kadric, a human magic user (AC 4; MV 12"; Mu 7; hp 22; # AT 1; D by weapon type; SA spell use; S 10, I 16, W 12, D 13, C 10, Ch 14; 1045xp; AL NE; S M) who is mounted upon a medium warhorse (identical to those described above). He is armed with a **dagger +2** (+3 vs paladins), and has the following spells available:

First Level: **charm person**, **magic missile**, **shield**, **sleep**

Second Level: **darkness 15' radius**, **ESP**, **stinking cloud**

Third Level: **hold person**, **slow**

Fourth Level: **wall of ice**

Kadric's only treasure consists of two travelling spell books, each of which can hold up to 6 spells under third level and 4 spells under sixth level. The DM should determine the exact contents of the spell books.

Each gnoll has 5-20gp, each bugbear has 6-36gp and each ogre has 5-50gp. In addition there is a 60% chance that any individual will have an item of value similar to those listed for the gnolls above.

LEVELS 7-9: 24 gnolls (statistics identical to those listed for Levels 4-6), twelve of whom are mounted upon giant lizards (AC 5; MV 15"; HD 3+1; hp 18 each; # AT 1; D 1-8; SA double damage on a '20'; xp 197 each; AL N; S L; MM) and armed with spears and scimitars. The remainder are on foot, armed with heavy crossbows and battleaxes.

They are accompanied by ten bugbears (identical to those above), five ogres (again, identical to those above) and Kadric, a 7th level human magic user (see above for details).

Their spokesman and leader is Talmyn, a spriggan, (AC 3; MV 9"; HD 4; hp 35; # AT 1; D by weapon type; SA spells, thief abilities; 1350xp; AL CE; S S; MM2), who is armed with a **dagger +1**. He can use the following spell-like powers one at a time, one per round: **affect normal fires**, **assume giant size**, **scare** at -2 on saving throws due to ugliness, **shatter**. He also has thief abilities equivalent to an 8th level gnome thief with a dexterity of 18. While giant size (AC 5; MV 15"; HD 8+4; hp 35; # AT 2; D 2-8/2-8; S L) Talmyn cannot use any of his abilities.

He is followed everywhere he goes by his younger brother, Lupa (identical statistics, save for 32hp and 1320xp).

Treasure for the raiders is identical to that given for them at lower levels. Talmyn has a **medallion of ESP** (he doesn't know what it is) and a belt of gold links (worth 500gp). Lupa has never been allowed to keep any.

Designer's Notes

By now, you may have realised that this scenario is a bit like a film nearly called 'The Splendid Halfdozen-ish'. You are not mistaken. It's up to you, as DM to decide whether or not the raiders wear big, floppy hats and have Mexican accents. In either case, the film (and the original film **The Seven Samurai**) provides a good guide to the way the adventure should flow. Have fun, and remember, 'only the farmers have won'!

Credits

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