

# OD&DITIES

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## Letters

Hi!

Allow me to present myself... A foreign lover of Mystara & OD&D. I found by luck your web page and read all of the five mags you wrote, amazed... It's truly enjoying and I'd have been very happy to help you in your task if my English wouldn't have been so light.

I've also made some stuff for Mystara (mainly for Norwold), all written in French (I'm French)... If you can understand it, have a look and feel free to get inspired as I was when I read yours... (the address is : [www.geocities.com/ruines2000/jdr.html](http://www.geocities.com/ruines2000/jdr.html) )

Mille Merci (thousand thanks)

Marcus,

*Thanks for your letter, Marcus. It's always nice to hear from a true fan. Hope you enjoy this issue.*

## Editorial

Well, it's been a while. This has truly been the winter of my discontent, to misquote the Bard. Still, OD&DITIES is here at last, and hopefully has been worth the wait. A good mix of adventures and campaign ideas in this issue, with some excellent features by James Mishler, Geoff Gander, and Jesse Walker, as well as our regular Getting Started feature, now looking at the basics of setting up a campaign.

It has recently struck me that it is about eighteen months since the first issue of OD&DITIES. A great deal has happened since its release. A new edition of D&D has arrived, and the teething troubles seem to be over. (Although '3E sucks!' threads are still common in various forums.) The explosion of material that has come out recently has been good for all of us – it has raised interest in the hobby. A Dungeons & Dragons movie, a dream that has been around since the early 80's, was released – and quickly turned into a nightmare. (Try reading the book of the movie!)

What will the next year bring, I wonder? Some predictions :

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- 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition will continue to predominate.
  - However, sales will begin to fall for two reasons. The first is that they have just greatly increased the cost of the main rulebooks. The second is that they seem to be making the same mistakes as they have always done, but releasing two much supplementary rules material – all those class rulebooks, and many more to follow.
  - The OGL will continue to flourish, but in a more limited way. A few good publishers will survive; the rest will sink. Regrettably, this will mean far fewer 'generic fantasy' products – still, conversion is quite possible.
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3E is here to stay – we must live with it. However, I would suggest that now is the time to start pushing OD&D, all the way. Take opportunities to introduce it to new players. This is important – although I have no figures, I suspect the age demographic is rising rapidly. Run games at conventions, expand gaming groups, buy your kid brother a copy of the Basic and Expert Sets for Christmas, and so on. There are still points in our favour:

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- Buying the Basic and Expert Sets at least is cheaper, far cheaper, than buying the 3E books. (Sounds mercenary, but works!)
  - The rules are easier to learn.
  - There is a lot of material out there for OD&D players. Direct them to this 'zine for 'Getting Started', or to other sites on the net.
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On a different note – keep the articles coming! We accept rules articles, articles on Mystara, or the City State, or any other world that was written for OD&D. In addition, articles on running or playing in a fantasy setting would be welcome. Short stories are welcome (look at part two of 'The Isle', for example.) Also, send in letters. I'm afraid my computer problems meant all the letters I received were lost, so no letters page this issue. This will not happen again, so keep on writing! Happy Gaming!

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Richard Tongue

## **Getting Started**

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**R.E.B. Tongue**

Last issue we looked at designing the initial adventure of a campaign. In many ways, I was putting the cart before the horse there, as before a campaign can begin it is usually necessary to design your campaign world, or at least to work out various basic assumptions. You can, of course, use a published campaign setting, such as Thunder Rift (recommended for beginners) or Mystara, but it can sometimes be more satisfying, and paradoxically easier for the beginner, to start with your own campaign setting.

Designing your setting is not such a difficult task as is often imagined. To begin with, you need to make certain assumptions about the campaign you are going to run. Are you going to use just the boxed sets, or do you have access to additional rules, such as the Creature Crucible series or some of the Gazetteers? Are there any scenarios you wish to use? How familiar are you with the rules?

If you are just beginning, it is probably advisable to only use the boxed rules to begin with. Only the Basic set is theoretically needed, but the Expert set is highly recommended (I am tempted to say indispensable). Of course, if you can pick up a copy of the Rules Cyclopeda is even better in many ways, as it adds greatly to the rules.

Although it has been known to start with a map of a whole world, with areas delineated, this approach is not really recommended as it will create much work for little real benefit – most of the material generated will never be used. It is far better to start with a small map. Take a piece of A4 squared or hex paper (you can use plain, but the squares or hexes are very useful for showing distance), and mark out terrain features.

The PC's will need a base of operations – but not a large one. Basing the PC's in a city can make for an exciting campaign, but for beginners it can be too complicated to run – but for players and DM's. A small base of operations will provide ample NPC's without overflowing the DM – it also requires less preparation. Put a point on your paper, about in the middle of the page.

What is this base? Several possibilities suggest themselves. A village is the classic one, with opportunities for much adventure, but there are others. A travelling inn is also a possible idea – many different NPC's can pass through here, equipment is not readily available but in wide variety, and numerous possibilities for adventures still remain. A small military garrison is also an interesting idea. When you decide upon your base of operations, work through adventure types in your minds. If you want to run military ideas, the garrison is a good idea. If you wish to try several different types of adventure, a village is an excellent idea, as it is easiest to incorporate different ideas into such a setting. All of these ideas have been used many times, so let's try something different. The base of operations on this map is a Dwarven Mine. This has several interesting opportunities for adventure. The mine itself can provide a multi-level dungeon, with the PC's base on the first level.

Now, we must design the rest of the local area. At this point, you need to work out a scale for your map. Let us say each square represents two square miles. On A4 squared paper, this should give you about 60 x 30 miles (vary the scale depending on the size of squares / hexes). Draw the scale on your map, so that you will remember it.

It is a good idea to put a trade route on the map – this means that the PC's have an obvious route out of the area that you can plan for. In a fantasy world, there are two main options: roads and rivers. Let us use a river. Place a river on the map, running from left to right. Place it near the Mine, so that the PC's can access it. Do not simply draw a straight line – make it jagged – look at real maps for guidance.

Are there any creature types you particularly want to use? If, for example, Lizard Men are to be common, a large swamp will be required. Centaurs will require Plains. Elves will require Forests. Orcs and Goblins will require broken badlands. Think about the options carefully, but remember you cannot have them all – the small map will look awfully crowded.

As we have a river on our map, swamps seem logical. Give the river a branch, and have it run into a swamp – mark this on your map. (The Expert Rules set has suggested terrain designations that you can use for this.) Make it about 10 by 10 miles, fairly large but not unrealistic.

Misty hills also seem appropriate to this setting. Add some ranges of hills on the map, on the banks of the river, near the swamp, and in the open terrain. Finally, put a small forest in one corner of the map, away from the other terrain features. You now have the start of a map.

Some finishing touches are required. The Mine will need somewhere local for trade, and you might want to have some different types of adventures, so add in a village, probably on the river. The area will presumably have a ruler – he needs a castle. A few other unusual terrain features should be added at this point. A stone circle, mysterious obelisk, series of caves, ruined fort, monastery, wizard's tower, ancient battleground, river rapids, all of these are possibilities. Select three of these and place them on the map in appropriate locations. For the purposes of the article, we will assume a stone circle, ancient battleground, and river rapids.

Now, your map is complete. All that are lacking are names, and we will select those later. You should be able to almost visualise the map in your mind. We have a bleak, forbidding wilderness, with a raging river running through the area. There is a dark swamp branching off the river, surrounded by fog-laden hills. There is a small forest near the edge of the area, filled with mystery. On the edge of the swamp is an ancient battlefield, where the bones are still visible through the muck. In the centre of the forest is an ancient stone circle, where Druids might still worship. There are two centres of habitation – a Dwarven Mine, and a small village.

Half the job has now been done. Easy, wasn't it! Now, I suggest you go back to the beginning of the article and run through again, this time designing your own map, remembering the steps in this article. Next issue, we shall deal with some of the paperwork – languages, religion, taxation, history and inhabitants. We shall, in fact, be writing the story behind the map. See you then!

## Pindor's Tower

A D&D™ Adventure for 4-6 players of levels 2-3, by Geoff Gander

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### **ABOUT THIS ADVENTURE**

This adventure was originally written in early 1996; it is set in the Grand Duchy of Karameikos, during the period covered by the *Gazetteer* series (i.e.: circa AC 1000) in the Mystara™ campaign setting, although DMs are free to place the adventure anywhere they wish in their own campaigns. Aside from some minor revisions for better storyline consistency, this module is largely unaltered from its initial version. The encounters are structured such that a party of 4-6 characters of levels 2-3 (for a total party level of 12) should be able to complete this adventure.

### **BACKGROUND**

Centuries ago, on the Denagothian Plateau, just north of the Known World, there existed the nation of Essuria. A succession of kings ruled the land from the great citadel of Drax Tallen, and under their rulership the fertile eastern plains of the plateau flourished. Essuria appeared to have a bright future ahead of it, until the last king, Landru, was corrupted by the power of the blackstaff, and all of Essuria became a twisted parody of itself. Before this darkened land could bring chaos and destruction to its neighbors, a motley army of lawfully-aligned heroes and creatures, led by the barbarian warlord Henadin, attacked Drax Tallen and in so doing put an end to Essuria. There the story would have ended, but for the events that transpired during the years before Landru was corrupted.

In that earlier time, before Essuria fell into darkness, Landru sought to spread Essurian influence throughout the known world (at least, the world as it was known to the Essurians at that time). Such an undertaking would have required a tremendous amount of preparation, but Landru felt that there would be time enough during his reign to accomplish it. Supplies were assembled, parties formed, and destinations selected – the goal was nothing less than to explore the lands in the four cardinal directions (north, south, east, and west), and establish contact with other nations, as well as colonies. Unfortunately, Landru, and his kingdom, fell under the influence of the blackstaff before this could come about. His dream, however, lived on through his four sons, who witnessed the slow corruption of their homeland and wished to preserve at least a part of Essuria, as they knew it. Thus, they left with their retinues and followers in four parties, each taking a cardinal direction and following it until they found a suitable location upon which to build a new home.

Their journeys were long and hard, and in two cases ended in disaster. Prince Werra and his entourage, who headed west, made it as far as the Adri Varma Plateau, and were slaughtered to a man by the indigenous humanoid tribes. Prince Bortan headed north, and his party suffered greatly in the harsh climate of Norwold, though some of his party split off from the main body, and settled in a wooded valley south of the Great Bay. The remainder continued north, and made it as far as Kaarjala, before running afoul of humanoid tribes living there –

Prince Bortan was among them. Prince Merthil headed east, and with the aid of the Heldanner clans to the southeast of Essuria managed to build a small fleet of ships, and he sailed across the Alphatian Sea. No one in the Known World, who knows of this saga, knows now what became of him, or of his people. Finally, Prince Pindor took his people south, heading through the Heldann Freeholds, Ethengar, Rockhome, eastern Darokin, and finally over the Black Mountains into what is now northeastern Karameikos. It is what happened to Pindor's expedition that concerns this adventure.

### **PINDOR'S COLONY AND ITS DOWNFALL**

After a perilous journey across most of the Known World, Pindor and his entourage located a suitable place to establish a new home. The location was a wooded valley, nestled between what are now Castellan and Duke's Road Keeps, where the soils were deemed good enough to support the colonists (who then numbered about 150 in total). Over the ensuing years, Pindor oversaw the construction of a small village, as well as his own keep – little more than a tower, but with a fairly extensive series of chambers underground, in which he and his court could take shelter should the situation demand it. So it appeared Pindor's domain would prosper, until, roughly 170 years ago, a horde of goblins, led by an enigmatic wizard, swept through the valley, destroying everything and killing Pindor and his people.

During the period in which Pindor's domain existed, there was little contact with the surrounding Traladaran peoples; thus, the sudden destruction of his realm was hardly noticed at the time, and has been forgotten by the people of Karameikos today.

### **SETTING THE SCENARIO**

There can be any number of reasons why the PCs might be traversing this portion of the Karameikan wilderness: they could be delivering important messages between Castellan and Duke's Road Keeps, protecting a prospector as he surveys the surrounding mountains and hills, or they might even have heard about a ruined tower, hidden somewhere in the wilderness. If the latter is the case, or if the PCs are passing through the area anyway, they might have heard one or more of the following rumours (choose as many as deemed appropriate, false ones are marked with an "F"):

- Local legends state that long ago, before the founding of Karameikos as you know it, there was a mighty magical kingdom straddling the Black Mountains. (F)
- Somewhere in the wooded foothills of the Black Mountains, there is a ruined tower, whose builders are now long forgotten.
- Local lore has it that, long ago, there was a noble from a far-off land who established a refuge somewhere in the northern hinterlands of Karameikos.
- There are ruins near the northeastern keeps of Karameikos that contain much lost lore of Blackmoor. (F)
- A dragon rules the hills near Duke's Road Keep, and he employs a small army of humanoids to do his bidding. (F)
- Along one of the trails between Duke's Road Keep and Castellan Keep, there are a series of stone markers along the northern side of the trail. No one knows what their faded inscriptions mean.

Regardless of what sort of information they have obtained, the PCs notice something interesting along their route:

Walking along the trail, you see what appears to be a stone marker of some kind. It is clearly not a natural rock formation; the stone itself is too rectangular in shape, and even from here you can see that the corners were sculpted, and you notice faint etchings in the stone's surface.

Closer examination will reveal the marker to be roughly six feet in height, and measuring about 18 inches on a side, tapering slightly towards the top. It is covered with many years' growth of moss, lichen, and other small plants, among other debris. There are inscriptions of some sort on the southern face of the marker, which, if analyzed with the aid of a *read languages* spell, will read, "Beyond lieth the Domain of Pindor, Prince of Essuria". The inscription cannot be read any other way, unless one or more of the PCs happens to know the old Essurian language.

This stone marker demarcated the southern frontier of Pindor's domain, and in fact the ruins of his tower are only four miles to the north, along a long-overgrown path. It is not likely that the PCs will clue in to the fact that they are not far from the tower; if they progress along their current path, they will spot another such marker about a half-mile along the trail, bearing the same inscription. If they conduct a concerted search, they will find more such markers (most of which are still intact). Depending on how persistent the PCs happen to be, there is a chance they could discover all of the markers (which ring Pindor's tower to a distance of four miles). If they do this, they should realize that something lies beyond the markers. Otherwise, the PCs might learn that the markers have been placed in a circle, if they

specifically ask about them at the keeps, or question any trappers or lone farmers about them.

Regardless of how they obtain their information, the PCs should be able to approach the tower without too much trouble. The lightly forested territory surrounded by the markers contains no trace of the village that once surrounded the tower; the wooden structures were burned to the ground when Pindor's domain was destroyed. While roaming Pindor's former territory, there is a 1 in 3 chance, per hour of travel, that the PCs will encounter a band of hobgoblins, who have a lair not too far from this location. Their statistics are as follows:

Hobgoblins (8): AC 6; HD 1+1; hp 9, 8, 6, 8, 7, 8, 6, 7; MV 90' (30'); # Att 1; Dmg 1d8 (sword); SV F1; ML 8; AL C; XP 15 each. The hobgoblins each carry 1d6 sp and 1d4 ep.

## THE TOWER

Eventually, the PCs should make it to the tower. When they do so, read:

Pushing your way past the surrounding vegetation, you come upon a clearing of sorts. Up ahead, you can clearly see the remnants of a stone wall, with some portions being as much as ten feet in height and over two feet thick. Most of the wall appears to be covered with vegetation. Beyond the wall, you can see what appears to be the remnant of a tower.

Should the PCs pass beyond the walls into the courtyard, read:

You enter what must have been a fortified place at one time. Amidst the small shrubs and grasses sprouting around your feet you see the edges of flagstones, signifying that

this must have been a courtyard. The structure that grabs your attention, however, is the ruined tower that, even in its state of decay, looms above you. Its walls are intact to a height of roughly 20 feet, and it must measure about 30 feet in diameter at its base. At various intervals along its walls, the tower sports arrow slits, but, as you can see sunlight through those apertures, it is obvious that the tower's interior is open to the elements.

There is nothing of value here; anything of value was either taken when Pindor's domain fell, or has been discovered since that time by local humanoids or roving hunters, who sometimes come this far. A quick look inside the tower (the doors have long since rotted away) confirms that there is nothing inside except fallen interior walls. If the PCs search the ruined tower carefully, they have a 1 in 6 chance of discovering a stone trapdoor, partly buried under some debris next to what remains of the staircase (which only goes up ten feet before ending abruptly). The trapdoor is unlocked, but it is so heavy that a combined strength of 40 is required to lift it. Underneath is a winding stone staircase, leading down into darkness.

### THE CATACOMBS

Pindor had a series of tunnels and chambers carved out of the rock beneath his tower, in order to better protect his wealth, and to provide an emergency shelter should a catastrophe befall his domain. He had guard posts, armories, storerooms, a kitchen, a dining room, a library, a magical laboratory, living quarters, and even a modest throne room built

The catacombs of Pindor's Tower are dank, pitch black, and filled with the smell of mold. Although the walls, floors, and ceilings are all dressed stone, the dampness

of the surrounding soils has seeped into this subterranean complex, with the result being that there are pools of stagnant water in many places, and the telltale dripping of water seepage can be heard everywhere. The tunnels and rooms themselves, unless otherwise noted, are 10 feet high. There are no light sources anywhere. The room descriptions given below assume that the PCs have light sources.

### WANDERING MONSTERS

As the PCs explore the catacombs, the noise they make as they go about their business may attract the attention of a number of the local inhabitants. The DM should roll 1d6 every six turns, and after every fight, in order to determine if the PCs attracted any attention. A roll of 1 indicates that something on the table below was encountered. If this is the case, the DM should then roll 1d6 again to determine what comes across the PCs.

1-2	1d4 Fire Beetles: AC 4; HD 1+2; hp 9 each; MV 120' (40'); # Att 1; Dmg 2d4; SV F1; ML 7; AL N; XP 15 each. Fire beetles are unlikely to attack the PCs unless cornered, preferring to scavenge what they can, instead.
3	1d6 Goblins: AC 6; HD 1; hp 6 each; MV 90' (30'); # Att 1; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); SV F1; ML 7; AL C; XP 5 each. The goblins are wandering the catacombs in search of easy plunder; each of them has 2d10 sp, 2d8 ep, and 2d4 gp so far.
4-5	1d4 Giant Centipedes: AC 9; HD ½*; hp 3 each; MV 60' (20'); # Att 1; Dmg poison; SV NM; ML 7; AL N; XP 6 each. Giant centipedes will normally not attack the PCs unless disturbed.



6	1d2 Crab Spiders: AC 7; HD 2*; hp 12 each; MV 120' (40'); # Att 1; Dmg 1d8 + poison; SV F1; ML 7; AL N; XP 25 each. These spiders are rather hungry, and see the PCs as a potential meal.
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### 1. Staircase Room

This room measures roughly 30 feet square with arched passageways leading to the north, south, east, and west; only the eastern passage seems to contain an intact door. The center of the room is dominated by a winding stone staircase, which leads up to the surface. Heaped along the walls are many piles of rubbish, most of which is so old that it would be impossible to find out what they once were.

If the PCs search the rubbish, there is a 1 in chance each turn that one of them will find a moldering sack containing 50 tarnished silver pieces. Additionally, for every turn spent searching, there is a cumulative 1 in 6 chance that the six skeletons from (4) will enter the room, alerted by the disturbances.

### 2. Old Storage Room

Once the first PC enters this room, a minor rockfall will occur. Each PC inside the room or in the passageway must make a saving throw vs. Death Ray to avoid the falling rocks, or take 1d6 damage. Once they are inside, however, the following description can be read:

Once the dust clears, you notice that you have entered a rather large, roughly rectangular room, measuring over 50 feet in width at least. Towards one side of the room, there appears to be a collection of dusty barrels and crates – evidence that this must have been a storeroom at one time. Piles of debris, presumably the remains of

other barrels and crates, are scattered along the other walls.

There is nothing else of value in this room; the barrels contain stagnant water and vinegar (formerly wine), and the crates contain the remnants of leather and cloth, most of which would crumble upon being touched.

### 3. Guard Room

The door to this room is unlocked, but decades of accumulated moisture have caused the oak door to swell within the doorway. An Open Doors roll of 1 is needed to open it. Once the door is open, the DM should read the following description:

This is a square, spartan room, measuring roughly 30 feet on a side. Attached to the walls at regular intervals are corroded iron sconces, presumably to hold torches, although nothing is in them now. Judging by the remaining furnishings – three single beds, a rotting table, and two stools – this room was a guardroom or barracks of some sort. The beds look to be intact, but signs of rot are evident, and the tattered blankets are covered in mould. The remainder of the room is occupied by more debris.

The bed immediately to the right of the PCs as they enter this room is occupied by a mould-encrusted skeleton – the worldly remains of one of the guards. A search of the debris will reveal that there were once six beds in this room, one of which held another skeleton. There is nothing of value here.

### 4. Armory

The rotting remains of wooden weapons racks line the walls of this oddly shaped

room. In the far corner, a couple of long tables hold what must have been suits of armour, for you can clearly make out a rusted breastplate or two. Clearly, this was an armoury – and a well stocked one at one time.

If the PCs did not encounter the skeletons in (1), they will find them here:

Also in this room you notice seven moldering skeletons, clad in the remnants of armour and wielding corroded swords, which begin to approach you jerkily upon your entrance.

Skeletons (7): AC 6; HD 1; hp 7, 6, 8, 5, 4, 6, 7; MV 60' (20'); # Att 1; Dmg 1d8 (sword); SV F1; ML 12; AL C; XP 10 each. The skeletons have nothing of value.

The racks contain rusted spearheads (the wooden shafts long since rotted away) and scraps of metal, while the tables hold the remains of three suits of plate mail (none of which is usable anymore). A careful search of the debris scattered around the racks will reveal two silver spearheads (each worth 10 gp), which could be attached to spear shafts and used. The only other interesting feature of this room is a carefully concealed secret door, located along the southeastern wall. The door may be located normally, and it swings inwards to reveal a dusty passageway, leading to (5).

### 5. Secret Armoury

A 20-foot long tunnel heads southeastwards into this room. Just at the threshold, there is a pit trap (a regular Find Traps roll is sufficient to locate it), which, if undetected, will give way as the first PC steps over it. A save vs. Death Ray is required to avoid it, otherwise the victim falls 10 feet, taking 1d6 damage. There is a ledge about one foot

wide on each side of the pit – sufficient for two people to cross at a time. Once the PCs have bypassed the pit, read:

You are in a square room, measuring roughly 20 feet on a side. The southern and western walls are lined with stone shelves, each running the length of the wall and being one foot deep. Although most of them are bare, you can see the glint of metal in a few places along their lengths. Aside from that, the floor is covered in dust and scattered piles of detritus.

You are not alone, however – the stale odor of dried leather wafts about the room, and you notice, from the corners of the room, several shuffling forms approach you. When seen by the light, they are clearly long dead, for their dried flesh hangs from their bones, and some of them still bear the wounds that must have killed them long ago. Losing no time, the former men raise their tarnished weapons, and engage you in battle!

Zombies (4): AC 8; HD 2; hp 10, 8, 13, 9; MV 90' (30'); # Att 1; Dmg 1d8 (sword); SV F2; ML 12; AL C; XP 20 each. The zombies have nothing of value.

Hidden amongst the debris is a leather pouch containing 20 gp. Searching amongst the shelves will find a useable shield.

### 6. Grand Hall

A great tunnel stretches east to west before you – this could very well have been a major thoroughfare of this complex when it was first built. At regular intervals are iron sconces that might have contained torches. There are side tunnels to the north and south (the northern exit being closer), and this passage ends at a pair of wooden double doors.

The northern passage leads to a cave-in after roughly 70 feet; the rocks are simply too massive for the PCs to move. The southern passage leads to (7). The double doors show no signs of rot, and are securely locked. The lock itself is relatively simple (a regular open locks roll is all that is needed to open it) to open. Behind the doors is another rock-fall, which can be cleared in 2 hours, minus 15 minutes for every PC helping to clear the rocks beyond the first one. The PCs will note that the passage continues further if they clear the rubble.

## 7. Kitchen

This room was very likely a kitchen at one time. You can see a fireplace at one end of this rectangular room, while the other side is dominated by three worm-eaten wooden counters, some of which still have the remnants of food on them – although what you see certainly is not palatable! There is a wooden door, seemingly intact, set in the west wall.

The door is not locked, and leads into (8). If the PCs search the fireplace, they will find that the chimney, which must have opened to the surface somewhere, has long since collapsed, though now it is the ideal home for a gray ooze, which will either attack the first PC who looks into the chimney, or it will flow out of its lair after two turns, having sensed that there is food available.

Grey Ooze (1): AC 8; HD 3; hp 22; MV 10' (3'); # Att 1; Dmg 2d8; SV F2; ML 12; AL N; XP 50. The gray ooze has no treasure.

## 8. Dining Hall

Upon entering this room, your senses are assailed! Where the rest of this place has been cold, grey, and dead, here you see vibrant tapestries hanging from the walls,

basking in the warm glow of many torches mounted along the walls, and by several candles on the table before you. And what a table! Silver platters heaped with steaming meats and vegetables, bread fresh out of the oven, and crystal goblets of fine wine complete the picture before you. Along the southern wall stand four magnificent pillars, whose surfaces are carved with bas-reliefs depicting what appear to be hunting scenes. The visible exits are a set of double doors to the west, and a single door to the east, both of finely polished oak.

Even as you take this in, you see the people seated around the table. At one end is a young, strong-featured man, whose brow is adorned with a circlet of fine gold. His finery and manner betray nobility – a man accustomed to rulership. To his right and left, down the table, are seated other men and women, all well-dressed and of fine spirits. Opposite him, however, at the other end of the table, is seated a woman of incomparable beauty, whose own clothing is equally magnificent as the nobleman's, and who also wears a circlet of gold.

Before your very eyes, the scene ripples and darkens. The food seems to rot in seconds, and the tapestries fade and disintegrate until they are no longer recognizable as works of art. The sconces corrode rapidly, while their torches are snuffed and crumble. The table itself rots and warps in places, until the scene before you is utterly changed. Where once there was life and laughter, now there is the cold, brooding death of a tomb. You are not alone, however, as there are two ghostly forms seated at table, going through the motions of eating something that has long since ceased to be.

The scene that the PCs have just witnessed was a phantom image of the dining hall

during the height of Pindor's power, when the future seemed bright

The ghosts are the spirits of Jondar and Velon, Pindor's court wizards, whose earthly remains are located in (10). They will take no notice of the PCs unless attacked or spoken to. Should the PCs be foolish enough to attack them, the ghosts will be content to drive them from the catacombs. If the PCs attempt to speak to them, they will cease "eating", and turn to face the speaker. Jondar will ask the speaker, in Essurian, why he or she is disturbing their meal. Since it is unlikely any of the PCs speak Essurian, Jondar will then switch to an archaic dialect of Thyatian. Provided the PCs do not attack either ghost, and provide a reasonable explanation for their presence, Jondar will seem pleased, and become more congenial. Both he and Velon will then be willing to answer the PCs' questions about the tower and the catacombs, but the information they provide will concern the area as it was before its fall. They will know nothing of the monsters now inhabiting the catacombs. For this conversation, DMs are free to provide the PCs with information from the adventure background, as they see fit.

Should the PCs ask the ghosts about any treasure hidden in the catacombs, Velon will tell them that Pindor did indeed hide some wealth in the family crypt (he will tell the PCs where the crypt, area 11, is located), and that he knows the secret phrase that must be uttered before entering the room in order to bypass the traps safely (the magical traps he created, in fact, but he will not tell them this). Velon does impose one condition: the PCs must go to the laboratory (area 10), and retrieve both his and Jondar's remains. Once they have done so, the PCs are to carry the remains to the surface, and bury them in the tower cemetery, which is

on the other side of the courtyard from where the PCs entered. Only then, says Velon, will he tell them the phrase. Both he and Jondar loved the open air, and they would like their mortal remains to be removed from the damp, moldering prison the catacombs have become. Neither of them will relate the circumstances of their deaths.

Should the PCs do this, after burying the remains in the cemetery, they will hear Velon's voice in their heads, singing the following phrase, "Forth I go, luck abound, gold and magic to be found". Additionally, the PCs should each be awarded an extra 200 XP at the end of the adventure if they perform this good deed.

The ghosts' statistics are as follows:

Ghosts (2): AC -2; HD 14\*\*\*\*; hp 90 each; MV 90' (30'); # Att 2; Dmg aging/paralysis; SV Special; ML 10; AL N; XP 5,500 each.

## 9. Library

You almost gag on the amount of dust stirred by your footsteps in this room, cluttered as it is with rotting bookshelves encrusted with mold. You cannot guess the size of this room from where you stand – the shelves fill the room entirely, leaving narrow rows between them with hardly enough room for one person to move normally. The only exits you can see are a tunnel leading north, and a set of double doors leading east.

Nothing happens immediately, though there are seven ghouls hiding between the shelves. They will not attack the PCs until they move further into the library:

Suddenly, a noise from the further recesses of the room attracts your attention! Out of

the gloom, their desiccated forms still laden with dust and mold, shamble several foul creatures towards you! Their rotting faces stare at you blankly, yet their intent is all too obvious...

The ghouls' combat statistics are as follows:

Ghouls (7): AC 6; HD 2\*; hp 12, 15, 15, 14, 11, 16, 13; MV 90' (30'); #Att 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d3 + paralysis; SV F2; ML 9; AL C; XP 25 each. Anyone touched by a ghoul must save vs. paralysis or be paralyzed for 2d4 turns. The ghouls carry no treasure.

None of the remaining books here are usable, although one of them contains a scroll of *protection from evil*, which can be found on a roll of 1 on 1d6. Hidden amongst the debris in one corner is a small gold cameo with an ivory relief of a woman in profile, framed in silver (worth 1,000 gp).

## 10. Laboratory

The door to this room is intact, but unlocked. Just behind it is a pressure plate, which triggers a sleeping dart trap if anything weighing more than 40 lbs. (or 400 cn.) is placed upon it. The darts are fired from tubes embedded in the wall to the immediate right of anyone entering this room. The first person to enter the room must save vs. Poison or fall asleep for 1d4 turns.

The scene you see before you is one of utter destruction. Titanic energies must have been released here at some time, for the walls themselves are cracked and black with soot, and they even appear to have melted in a few areas! Parallel to the wall to your right is what could have been a bookcase of some kind, though it is hard to tell given that it has long since been reduced to charred wood and cinders. Against the wall across

from the entrance is a heavily charred wooden table. The center of the floor shows the most damage, however; for, heaped in the middle of the room is a twisted pile of melted, corroded metal and rotting wood. This was likely the focus of whatever explosion destroyed this room.

Crawling amidst the debris are several large insects – they appear to be giant, grayish-brown grasshoppers.

The giant locusts do not attack the PCs; they seem content to nibble at patches of mold that can be seen growing on the walls.

Giant Locusts (6): AC 4; HD 2\*\*; hp 13, 13, 14, 12, 15, 14; MV 60' (20') or 180' (60'); # Att 3; Dmg 1d2/1d4/special; SV F2; ML 5; AL N; XP 30 each. In addition to biting and bumping an opponent, giant locusts may also spit at them. The spittle does no damage, but smells terrible – victims must save vs. poison or be unable to do anything for one turn due to the smell. The giant locusts have no treasure.

Lying near the wreckage in the center of the room are two charred skeletons – the worldly remains of Jondar and Velon. If the PCs have spoken with their ghosts in area 8, then they should realize that these are the skeletons they are to transport to the surface and bury. There is nothing of value on the skeletons. The two wizards were conducting research when the rogue spellcaster and his goblinoid minions attacked Pindor's realm, and were killed with a powerful *fireball* before they could defend themselves.

Aside from these features, there is nothing else of interest in this room.

## 11. Crypt

This room is hidden by a secret door, which can be found by rolling a 1 on 1d6. Unless the secret phrase is learned from Jondar and Velon, and is uttered before entering this room, four jets of magical flame will erupt from the doorway as the first person enters the room, bathing the first two people in searing flames. Anyone burned in this manner will take 2d4 damage, though they may make a save vs. dragon breath to take half damage. Additionally, the zombies lying dormant in this room will be aroused by the commotion, and will arise from their sarcophagi in one round. If the trap is not triggered, the zombies will remain dormant until disturbed.

This roughly rectangular room is fairly large, but much of its space is taken up by six sarcophagi – large stone coffins containing the earthly remains of a long-dead inhabitant of this complex. Engraved into the lid of each sarcophagus is lettering unfamiliar to you. The walls are unadorned, although there are a few iron sconces set into them at intervals that were likely used for holding torches. The air here carries a faint musty smell, although the room itself is quite dry.

Five of the six sarcophagi are occupied by zombies, who will attack anyone disturbing their rest. Once one sarcophagus is opened, the commotion raised by that zombie's attacks will awaken the others, who will arise from their own tombs during the next round. Their statistics are as follows:

Zombies (5): AC 8; HD 2; hp 10, 8, 13, 9, 11; MV 90' (30'); # Att 1; Dmg 1d8; SV F2; ML 12; AL C; XP 20 each. The zombies have nothing of value.

Each of the sarcophagi requires a strength of 20 to be opened. Their contents are as follows:

- a. This sarcophagus contains a zombie as well as 54 gp. The inscription on the lid reads (if translated), "Ferazar, Loyal Advisor, Aged 53 Years".
- b. This sarcophagus contains a zombie and two small but high-quality pieces of quartz (worth 40 gp each). The lid's inscription reads (if translated), "Durgan, Fearless Explorer and Prospector of Our Realm, Aged 32 Years".
- c. This sarcophagus contains a zombie, but no treasure. If translated, the lid's inscription reads, "Demora, Dutiful Lady-in-Waiting, Aged 26 Years".
- d. A zombie occupies this sarcophagus, as well as 52 gp. If translated, the lid's inscription reads, "Olmger, First Treasurer, Aged 60 Years".
- e. This sarcophagus contains a zombie, as well as 22 gp, 45 ep, and 27 sp. The lid's inscription (if translated) reads, "Hyrrmor, Beloved Cousin to the Prince, Aged 18 Years".
- f. This sarcophagus has no occupant, and its inscription (if translated) reads, "Pindor, Prince of Essuria". It contains a gold necklace inlaid with aquamarines (worth 1,000 gp), a *potion of giant strength*, a *potion of delusion (levitation)*, and a scroll with *charm person* and *hallucinatory terrain*.

## 12. Throne Room

This room, obviously a throne room in better days, is a complete shambles. The carved pillars that line the way to a dais are cracked

and blackened, and the carpeting underfoot, where it still exists at all, is severely burned. There is evidence that fine tapestries once hung from the walls, no doubt depicting great deeds and heroic legends, but little remains of those now – all that you can see are scorched stone walls.

Dominating the room, however, is the stone dais at the far end. Upon it rests a slightly blackened throne, its carvings and other adornments still largely intact. Upon it sits a withered skeleton, dressed in what might have been finery at one time. A large hole has apparently been blasted through its ribcage.

The skeleton is all that is left of Pindor. He was killed by the evil wizard as he led his horde through the complex on its murderous rampage. There is nothing of value in this room.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

After the PCs have finished exploring the catacombs, they can consider this portion of the adventure over. There are, however, a number of activities they can undertake, based upon what they have learned here.

Further subterranean exploration: Not all of the catacombs have been explored. The large rockfall north of the main hallway conceals another portion of Pindor's lost realm. Any number of interesting things could lie hidden there, waiting for the PCs to uncover them. Although the PCs cannot move the rocks on their own, they could employ the help of others to do so, now that this portion of the catacombs has been cleaned out.

Learning more about Essuria: Provided the PCs managed to translate any of the inscriptions that they have seen, or if they

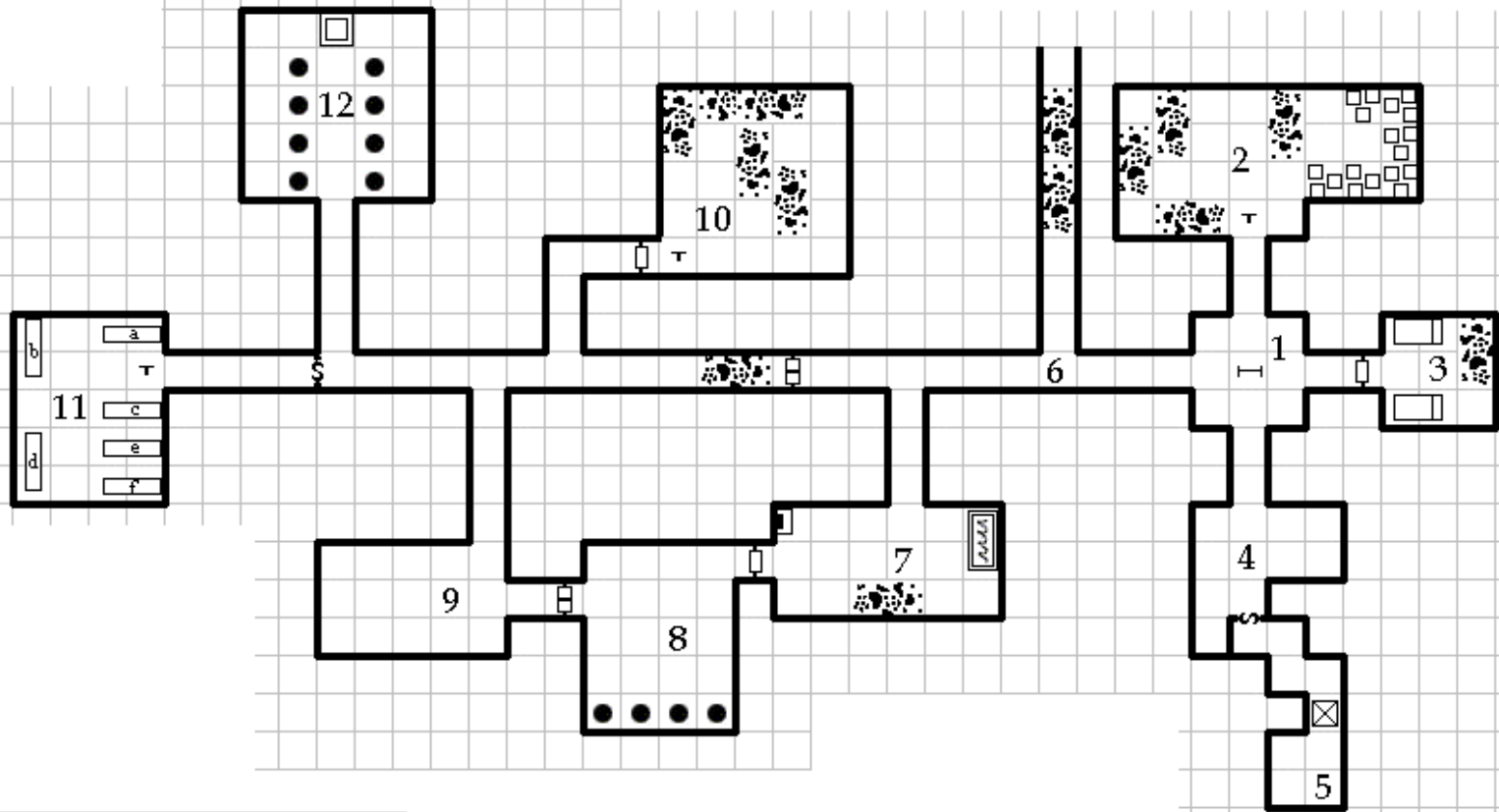
have spoken with the ghosts, they will have learned about a mysterious nation to the north, known as Essuria. They might be curious enough to brave the journey northwards to see whether that nation still exists, and what secrets it might contain. Depending on how long the PC take to reach the Denagothian Plateau, DMs might find it possible to run *XII: Saga of the Shadowlord*, if the party has reached the appropriate level by that time. The interesting twist here would be that the PCs would have some knowledge of what the region was like before the rise of the Shadowlord.

Tracking the other expeditions: Depending on what the ghosts tell the PCs, it is possible that they have learned about the other three princes of Essuria, and their expeditions. If this is the case, they might be interested in finding out what happened to them. This is the type of quest that would take the PCs all over the northern fringes of the Known World, as well as northern Skothar, in search of their goal. There would be many opportunities for side adventures to test the PCs' mettle, and to expose them to interesting cultures and scenarios.

Dominion-building: Although the PCs are not sufficiently advanced in their adventuring careers to found dominions of their own, the remnants of Pindor's tower and catacombs may strike one or more of them as a desirable place to settle down in the future – all they would need to do is repair the damage and possibly rebuild the tower entirely, probably using the old tower for building materials. A dominion established in this manner might cost a little less initially in terms of building materials and time.

# Pindor's Tower - Catacomb Level

Scale: One square equals 10 feet



Cartography by Geoff Gander, 2001  
Courtesy of Dungeon Crafter (TM)



## Mixing Modules

R.E.B. Tongue

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Like most long-time OD&D players, I have gathered a fairly large collection of OD&D modules over the years. These are almost all designed to fit into the campaign world of Mystara, the world that would later be further developed in the Gazetteer series. If you wish, you can use the world of Mystara, and your load as a DM will be lessened in one sense. However, using a published setting has disadvantages as well as advantages. The primary disadvantage is materials. Mystara was covered in 14 Gazetteers (plus three for the Hollow World), three boxed sets, and no less than forty-three adventures, of which I would say three or four were essential. (X11, B10 and M5 stand out amongst these.) Gathering all of these together can be a difficult, time-consuming and expensive process.

There is a ready alternative – customize the modules to fit in your own campaign, an option that most DM's will use. Normally, the modules are changed to fit into a campaign, but this article will look at a different approach – combining a string of modules together to form a campaign. For the purposes of this article, I will use as demonstration three readily available modules. B1: In Search of the Unknown, B2: Keep on the Borderlands, and X1: Isle of Dread. It is likely that you will already possess two of these, and the other is easy to find, and useful for the novice DM.

First, carefully read through each module, and work out terrain features are used. B1 is a dungeon adventure, so no specific terrain features are required. B2 is set in rough, mountainous terrain, and X1 is set on a tropical island. Also, B2 provides a base of operations: the Keep.

Next, you must do any fleshing out that the adventures require. B2, for example, will require names to be given to each character. Any inconsistencies should also be noted at this point, and corrected – the modules given do not have any major problems, but be watchful. One thing that must be done is to draw in a coastline, near the bottom of B2's map. To provide a jumping-off point for the PC's, I will place a small harbour on the coast, noting that the Keep runs it.

Once you have done this, you need to fill in the blanks. If the adventures you have selected leave out an element that is essential to the campaign, then fill it in. These three modules really provided everything required – base of operations, suitable patrons, and adventure potential. If, for example, no suitable base of operations is obvious, then you will need to create one, either by designing one yourself or adding in another module that provides one. (Of the easily available D&D modules, B2 and X3: Curse of Xanathon, both provide good bases of operations.) Now that you have done this, draw a map. It must contain all the required factors. In this case; a coastline, a tropical island, and a hilly area. For these three modules, the map would have to be large scale, so I just draw an arrow at the bottom of the map marked 'to the Isle of Dread'. I have selected locations for the Keep, the Caves of Chaos, and the 'Quasqueton' dungeon.

Next, links between the adventures will be required, to string them into a campaign. B1 has a player handout that is related to the PC's background, so I shall make it their first adventure. The notoriety they gain from this leads them to be asked by the Castellan of the Keep to investigate the Caves of Chaos. When the end of that adventure nears, then a travelling merchant will arrive with a selection of documents, including maps, that he will offer the PC's at a bargain price. As well as containing a map of the local area, and various untranslatable documents, the fragment of the Captain's Log from X1 will be included, as well as his map. This should make the PC's interested. Once they have defeated the monsters at the Caves of Chaos, the Castellan will owe them a favour, and so they may borrow the Keep's small patrol craft to investigate the map.

Where will the campaign lead from there, you ask. Well, that is up to circumstances. By this time, the campaign will have been going on for several weeks – the players should have become attached to their PC's, and further goals can be worked out from the PC's desires, as with any good campaign. One possibility is for them to take over the Isle of Dread, and rule it as their own province.

All that remains after that is to work out a few brief notes on history, religion and government. For the campaign being described, as indicated in B1, barbarians, driven out by Zelligar and Rogahn, once ruled the campaign area. Those two heroes, who defended the region until their deaths in battle, then drove them away. Upon their death, the King commissioned the building of a Keep to defend the area, which has now become infested by monsters again. (X1's background is not really significant enough to be a major feature.) The area is ruled by the Castellan of the Keep, who is a minor noble. Religion is totally up to the preferences of the DM. In the sample campaign, I will use a standard religion based on early British Christianity – a small church worshipping the 'True Faith', following the tenets of 'the Lord's Book', with missionaries travelling the lands, small churches, and no established authority.

Why design your campaign this way? There are two advantages. The first is speed. Following this procedure provided you know the adventures reasonably well, will probably take less than a day, and will result in a well developed campaign setting. In addition, you have all of your adventures planned and ready. This system is ideal for someone who has little spare time, and wishes to spend most of it gaming instead of in preparation.

In addition, smaller adventures can be slotted in fairly easily. For example, 'Pit of Shadows' in OD&DITIES 1 requires only a small farm to be added to the map. If you make Jonas a contemporary of Rogahn and Zelligar, 'The Star of Kolaador' from OD&DITIES 2 can be used. Care must be taken with this not to make radical alternations to your setting – for example, to use B7: Rahasia, you need a forest on the map, as well as a tribe of Elves. However, X6: Quagmire, where the PC's explore a far-off coast, sounds like an ideal extension from X1. Of course, your own little touches, such as minor encounters and NPC's can and should be added to the mixture, but this style of campaign design is for those who want to design their world quickly, but still make it a good one.

## **Ka-Boom!** **R.E.B. Tongue**

This article will cover a much-maligned possibility in fantasy gaming – firearms. Most gamers will at one point have involved them in their campaign at one point. New Infinities even published a ‘generic fantasy’ module (but easy to convert and highly recommended) called ‘The Acolyte’, which involved a cache of laser guns in a fantasy kingdom! So most will have tried it at one point – but dropped it. They will either have discarded them as unrealistic, or because they jeopardized game balance. This article will not cover game mechanics, but will rather cover historical justification, and the possible use of cannons and muskets in the game.

Gunpowder has been used for far longer than is commonly known. The Chinese were using small gunpowder rockets for display as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. Cannon and muskets soon followed. By the 14<sup>th</sup> Century in Europe, cannons were beginning to be manufactured on a large-scale. Indeed, James IV of Scotland met his death due to an exploding cannon at a siege. It is even possible that cannon were present at the Battle of Crecy.

Cannon’s effect on the battlefield was really not that great. Although it could deliver a fairly powerful shot, it was very unreliable, and prone to frequent misfires and explosions. Although many nations had them available, they were only really useful for siege warfare, and in this role they were employed, with some success. It took two centuries for the cannon to develop into a really effective weapon, and the results of this are well known.

The musket took a little longer to emerge. The first real evidence of use comes from an Italian province that ordered a hundred ‘hand cannons’, in the early 15<sup>th</sup> Century. Within a few years, they were in more frequent use. Swiss regiments used it as their primary weapon, and many armies began to have units of musketeers. Again, the lack of reliability, and accuracy, was a problem. A man armed with a longbow could have a fire rate three or four times better than a man armed with a musket, and hit his target far more frequently. So why were they employed?

The answer is the fear effect. Amongst peasant militia, the sight of men armed with longbows firing at you was frightening, but familiar. The sight of a group of men armed with tubes that spurted flame was not, and regiments would break and run. Ornate designs would be employed on these weapons for this purpose – the fear factor. Again, it would take a few centuries for the musket to become an effective weapon, but most of the armies of Europe would agree that it was worth the wait.

So, gunpowder is in fairly common use throughout Europe in a period that is covered by the OD&D game, the Late Middle Ages. There is plenty of historical justification for the use of such weapons in the game, but how can they be used, and how can you limit the effect such weapons might have on the game?

The introduction of such weapons into a campaign in progress is simple – invention. Have the PC's come across a Dwarven inventor who has just discovered the uses of gunpowder. This could be an adventure all by itself, as the PC's protect the invention from those who might exploit it. The weapons can slowly spread across the local area, and the effect can begin to be seen – nobles start duelling with hand cannons instead of swords, and a new unit of guardsmen armed with these weapons routs an orc invasion. Of course, there is a danger that the campaign will become too focused on these weapons, but with care, this can be handled. It is probably easiest to start the campaign with these weapons available, but provide only limited access to them, both in the campaign world and in the rules system. (If the rules for Weapon Mastery are used, then have the Arquebus as a weapon requiring at least 'Skilled' proficiency to use, for example.)

In the campaign world, you can limit the range of the invention. They might be very expensive, and only used by the nobility as a duelling weapon. Only one specific group might have access to them. An example might be a Dwarven Clan, living high in the hills, which use the weapons to stay alive against terrible odds.

The technology might be in the hands of a clerical order, which foresaw the dangers such weapons could bring, and resolved to prevent the outside world from knowing about them. It is possible to string a whole campaign around firearms – an example of such a campaign is below.

- The PC's are exploring a ruined keep from the Golden Age of the Kingdom, when they come across a rack of muskets. They will not know what they are, but experimentation might come up with the answer.
- When the PC's return with them to civilisation, a clerical group tracks them down, who first attempt to reason with the PC's to give them the weapons, and then decide to kill them to keep the secret.
- The PC's are forced to flee to the hills, where they come across a small Dwarven Clan using similar weapons. In exchange for their help in fighting of the Hobgoblins that infest the hills, the Clanmaster demonstrates the use of their weapons, and they can train in their use. Here, the PC's can see the possible uses of such firearms.
- The PC's return to civilisation and infiltrate the Clerical order. When they find that they possess such weapons, they take some as evidence to the local ruler. When he is told the full story, he assumes the Clerics are planning a takeover, and has them arrested or killed. The High Priest is brought in, and he explains the reasons for their actions, which will no doubt alarm the PC's. It will then be up to them – such firearms be used to advance the Kingdom's goals, or should they be abandoned as a hazard to civilisation?

It should always be remembered that firearms were a rare item, and hard to maintain. Misused, they can disrupt game balance, so make sure limitations are employed. They should, on occasion, misfire. Gunpowder should be hard to come by. Muskets and cannon can bring a great deal to a campaign, but they must be used with caution, lest they come to dominate it.

**The Isle (part 2)**  
**James John Gregoire**

"How cheer ye, fore and aft?", shouted Captain Jalik from the forecastle of the Amanda. A terrific shout went up amidships where the crew and nineteen of the armoured Blades stood assembled. At attention behind the Captain were his officers: First Officer Pierce Leven; Boatswain (Bosun) Jackson, a gorilla of a man in charge of cordage, boats, and rigging aboard the Amanda; Navigation officer Windholm; and the newly appointed Artillery Officer Melnair. Melnair had been recently promoted from within the ranks of the Blades based on his sheer proficiency with the Amanda's new light catapult. One-step left of the Captain was the leader of the Blades, Delimer. Behind him stood the Blades financial officer, Drongo, and myself, Jider, lead mapper of the fine adventuring group before us.

The Captain addressed all present, with his naturally robust voice piercing the thick morning fog: "All hands, ahoy! We have the Spring Tides! May the wind's eye fill our sails and keep our course true. The Amanda's way is clear and her beams are solid and strong. She will not labour or founder. We will landfall at the Isle of Dread within a fortnight of this offing. Let us seize our fortune and return home all wealthy men!"

Delimer stepped forward and spoke next, "To the Amanda's new brothers-in-arms, the Amanda's new officers and crew, the Blades wish you a friendly welcome!" A hearty cheer followed, and Delimer raised his gauntleted hand to quiet the men. He continued, "As our noble captain explained, we will land at the Isle of Dread within a fortnight. Our strategy once there is a simple one. Dividing the Blades into three shore parties, we will launch a series of quick, decisive raids on the interior of the island. It is the central city that holds the main treasure hoard. It is critical that this goal be reached. This interior city also holds the Black Pearl of 'the gods' and other valuable artefacts. Once this city is relieved of its riches, the shore parties will return to the Amanda. We will not be in contact with any of the native human populations on the Isle. This is important, as we learned from past forays, it is hard to control any invisible threat in our ranks either: lycanthropic, vampiric, or doppelganger. Once back at the Amanda we will set off for home, returning in two weeks, with our hold filled with gold and jewels!" The ship exploded with shouts and the stomping of feet and all the officers smiled except one, our navigator Windholm.

"First officer Leven, stand by to unmoor! Bosun Jackson, man the yards, stand by to back the sails!" shouted the captain. The Bosun pulled a silver whistle from his jerkin and blew into it. The sailors amidships jumped into action, belaying the buntlines, and climbing a-loft into the fog shrouded rigging. First officer Leven shouted, "Here there! Nippers to the capstan, stand by to heave in the cable!" Two sailors stood ready near the capstan, a massive wheel fitted with hand cranks on the quarterdeck. The captain nodded to first officer Leven. The first officer then shouted, "Weigh the anchor!" "Anchors a-weigh", shouted both sailors, furiously cranking on the capstan. The Bosun then bellowed, "Launch, Ho! Haul home the staysail, quickly now lads!" The large sailing ship drifted, slowly at first, away from the dock and into the morning fog. "Furl the

mainsail, ready about there!" cried the Bosun. The bow of The Amanda turned slowly toward the gap in the city breakwater. "Aloft make sail to lee", shouted the Bosun. The captain then announced, "Shift the helm, set course fast south!" Thus consisted of the Amanda's departure from the city of Specularum, and it was without much ceremony or fanfare.

For the readers of this account, I must explain a few things:

Most people believe that ocean travel is a romantic and swashbuckling affair. This is an untruth. Long distance travel aboard a sailing ship is a tedious, miserable, and cramped existence. The closest comparison I can make for someone who has never been at sea, is to imagine living with five people in your local privy. Now add the continuous violent pitching of the ship and the constant smell of horse dung. These accommodations would probably be enough to put most people off of long sea travel. However, this is only one of the uncomfortable states that someone at sea must endure. Another is the constant chill of the wind and ever present, lingering dampness. Everyone who has been aboard a sailing ship knows too well of the deep, clinging cold that penetrates the bones of a man. At sometimes the hanging ice and piercing winds can be as dangerous as a monster's jaw. Captain Jalik was correct when he said we had "The Spring Tides". These winds, while fine for our rate of progress, made the sea churn and roll with large swells. Not one day passed when we didn't have strong winds in our sails. Most of the Blades were stricken with the sickness of the sea, some suffered as soon as we set sail. Most of us became used to this horrible state within the first week, but a handful never did.

We quickly became used to our new "at sea" watch duty schedule aboard the Amanda. All watches were four hours in length: mid watch (midnight to 4 am); morning watch (4 to 8 am); forenoon watch (8am to noon); afternoon watch (noon to 4pm); first dog watch (4 to 6pm); second dog watch (6 to 8pm); and first watch (8pm to midnight). During each watch there were no less than 5 blades topside, usually more taking extra watches during the day. During the daylight hours, most of the sailors were on deck or in the rigging, as well as the captain and first officer. During a normal day, Windholm and I kept to the daylight hours to plot course and navigate. At least two Blades and officer Melnair manned the light catapults at all times during the day. At night the catapults were not manned, due to darkness and bitter cold. Regular oil lamps were the first, mid, and morning watches only way to keep warm and spot any approaching monsters. Most Blades slept uneasily because of this, ready to arm themselves at the instant of an alarm.

We sailed due south through the patrolled waters of the Grand Duchy of Karamaikos and entered the Minrothad Guilds at the end of our first day. We were making good time and were on a true course and heading when I crawled in my hammock in the navigation cabin that first night. No one slept well our first night, and my fitful dreams were plagued with the feeling of despair I felt when we cast off from Specularum harbour.

At the start of the second days travel we had a terrific strong breeze at our backs and a clear, crisp morning. The sailors were eager to set upon the sails that day, and the first

officer and captain were also wholeheartedly engaged. What happened next was to be one of the fiercest battles in Blades history.

"Captain! Sail sighted off the port bow!" shouted the morning watch lookout in the crows nest. Everyone aloft and on deck immediately looked out to the southeast and saw a single ship on the horizon. It was only a tiny swath of brown colour against the dark blue waters of the expansive sea. Anyone looking a little closer, however, could see the unknown vessel was at full sail and closing on the Amanda. I was at my station in the navigation cabin when the first cry went up. I didn't have my plate mail or sword ready.

"All Blades topside, full battle ready!" yelled Delimer. A general disorganization followed after that. Sailors clambered about in the rigging, lashing themselves fast to wherever possible. Then there was a headlong rush of off-watch armoured Blades from below. These men caught the captain, first officer, and a few sailors by surprise and many were knocked off their feet and to the deck. I collided with one of my compatriots in a bone-shattering crunch when I ran from the navigation cabin.

The Amanda cut through the choppy water, turning to face her unknown enemy. After our initial confusion, all aboard the Amanda fell into battle positions on decks. I stood beside First Officer Leven on the foredeck, near the front mounted light catapult. The ship on the horizon soon was close enough to identify it. "Captain she's a large sailer, no mates topside, flying no colors!", cried the crows nest lookout. "Officer Melnair fire a warning over her bow!", shouted the First Officer. Easily within our range, our newly fashioned steel shot whistled through the air just missing the front bow of our unknown adversary. There was no response from the dark ship for what seemed hours, but actually was only a couple minutes. We all watched as a bright flash of red light and a small ball of flame shot forward from the enemy vessel. "Incoming Fire!", yelled Bosun Jackson as soon as he sighted the flaming missile. It flew in a lazy arc across the couple hundred yards between the closing ships, leaving a trail of black smoke behind it. We realized that this was no flaming catapult shot. The fireball spell struck the Amanda amidships, and exploded in a dull roar.

Anyone who has experienced a fire of any sort knows the deadly power of such an attack. The idea of being burned alive is too much for a man, and causes him to think of only one action: to get away. This will cut the morale of any group of seamen, causing general chaos in the ranks, not to mention the distraction of fighting the fire itself. This is what happened aboard the Amanda that terrible day. Men were screaming and rushing around all decks, some leaping into the sea below. The blast itself caused minor damage to the fore and aft cabins, however they immediately caught fire. The captain ordered, "Fire At Will!" The ring of Blades positioned on the foredeck emptied their heavy crossbows at the closing ship with no visible targets. Those quarrels hit the vessel low and high, thudding into the planks with no real damage. The rear catapult fired a steel shot over our heads, which smashed into the enemy's aft cabin. Three sailors, who were engulfed in flames, fell from the high rigging and bounced off the Amanda's deck. We hardly had a chance to take cover before the next fireball was cast toward us, this time at a much closer range. I could see a robed figure stand up and wave his arms right before

the flaming death left the ship. This fiery missile hit the Amanda on the aft decks, obviously targeting the aft catapult. I will never forget the screams of the men who died in that explosion. Several Blades were thrown overboard, splashing in the water below. We were ablaze, and we had only seen one enemy who had quickly ducked behind cover after releasing his spells.



**The Bestiary**  
*James Mishler*

**Gargoyle, True**

Armour Class:	6
Hit Dice:	3+1 (L)
Move:	90' (30')
Flying:	120' (40')
Swimming:	120' (40')
Burrowing:	30' (10')
Attacks:	2 claws/1 bite/1 horn
Damage:	1d3/1d3/1d6/1d4
No. Appearing:	2d8 (5d4)
Save As:	F3
Morale:	7
Treasure Type:	C
Intelligence:	7
Alignment:	Chaotic
XP Value:	50

*Monster Type:* Humanoid (Rare)

True gargoyles, unlike the construct of their namesake, are living, breathing, and fleshy creatures, not native to this world. These creatures were summoned here millennia ago, during the Sundering War that destroyed the first human civilizations. Since that time, when they were freed from their servitude, the gargoyles have spread across the world, and fit into every ecosystem imaginable, from subterranean to deep sea to aerial.

Gargoyles have a humanoid form, with horns, wings, claws, and great, bat-like wings. Skin coloration varies, but it is universally reptilian in nature; gargoyles are completely hairless. Forest gargoyles have smooth green or bark-like brown skin, the better to blend in with their wooded surroundings; the northern forest tribes have a deep green, heavily scaled skin, the better to hide among the heavy pines and evergreens. Cavern gargoyles are a stony, slate-grey or black colour, with rough, rock-like skin, and can burrow like moles through loose earth or even rock with their oversized claws (which do 1d6/1d6 instead of standard damage). Sea gargoyles (known as *kapoacinth*, have smooth, whitish-blue skin, and swim with their powerful finned wings. Desert gargoyles have a tan, sandy skin, rough as sandpaper, and can burrow through sand at their full normal movement rate. In their own, natural environment, gargoyles have the *move silently* and *hide in shadows* abilities of a 3<sup>rd</sup> level thief. All gargoyles have 60' infravision.

Gargoyles are territorial in nature, and hunt in packs. The leader of the pack, the most powerful male, will have 4+3 hit dice. Some gargoyles are more intelligent and wiser than their brethren, and can become shamans (maximum 6<sup>th</sup> level) and/or wokani (maximum 6<sup>th</sup> level). Such spellcasters are usually, but not always, rule their tribes in the stead of a warrior chieftain. A few tribes are even ruled by their magical, constructed cousins, which are immune to the claws, bites, and horns of their mortal namesakes. A gargoyle lair will contain a number of females equal to the males (medium-sized, 2 HD

each, bite for 1d3 damage), and a similar number of immature gargoyles (small, 1/2 HD, has no effective attacks, and cannot yet fly).

There will also be a number of gargoyle eggs equal to three times the number of males. A viable (1 in 3-chance) gargoyle egg, if properly warmed and cared for, hatches in 1d3+3 weeks; the young gargoyle will impress on the first being it sees as its "mother." Gargoyle heart blood, particularly that of the shamans and wokani, is required for the magical ritual to create gargoyle constructs. Eggs can be sold for 100 gold on the black market. Gargoyles value only gems and jewellery for treasure, but keep coins and other such treasures, as they know that it will tempt humans and others into searching out their lairs.

Gargoyles are on par culturally with Neanderthals and can make only rudimentary tools and items. They rarely use weapons, as their natural weaponry is more than sufficient, though some tribes have been known to use spears, javelins, and nets. They despise humans and all humanoids, and view them as prey, to be eaten and toyed with. Gargoyles can speak their own language of hoots, shrills, and clicks, and some can speak a few words of Common (though most can mimic it quite readily, and often do, with grim amusement).

There are rumours of a more advanced race of gargoyles, deep within the earth, that have risen above the intellect of their cousins and founded an empire. This empire is rumoured to stand deep within the plateau of the Glow-Worn Steppes, beneath the Majestic Mountains, or under the Ered Demivand, south of Viridistan.

*Terrain:* Any, specific to environment.

### **Alicorn Beast [Rogue]**

Armor Class:	3 [2]
Hit Dice:	4+1* (L) [6+2**]
Move:	120' (40')
Attacks:	1 weapon or 1 horn
Damage:	By weapon +3 or 1d8 [2d4 + poison]
No. Appearing:	1d4 (2d6) [1]
Save As:	F6 [F9]
Morale:	9 [11]
Treasure Type:	B [A]
Intelligence:	8 [5]
Alignment:	Neutral [Chaotic]
XP Value:	200 [950]

*Monster Type:* Monster (Very Rare)

Alicorn beasts are a magical infusion between ogres and unicorns; whether this was done by a random magical mutation, a purposeful creation by an ancient sorcerer, or on the whim of a mad Immortal, none knows. These creatures appear in form much like that of an ogre, an 8' to 10' tall humanoid, however, their lower portions are that of a horse (though only with two legs, as a satyr). They also have a great horsetail, a vaguely horsy-looking head, replete with flowing mane, and a great alicorn jutting forth from the forehead. Most are white furred, though some are roan, and a very few are black; the alicorn is always an ivory white.

Alicorn beast clans consist of the males, females equal to half the males (many die in childbirth), and children equal to the number of males. Females have 3+1 hit dice, fight as bugbears, and gain a +2 to hit and damage when defending their young. Children have 1 hit die, fight as orcs, and do only 1d4 damage with their horn attack.

Alicorn beasts may become shamans (maximum level 8) and/or wokani (maximum level 4). A clan is always led by the most powerful spellcaster. Alicorn beasts are quite xenophobic, and prefer their solitude from the other races, especially ogres. Alicorn beasts can teleport, once per day, to a location within 120', while shamans and wokani can teleport up to 360'. Alicorn beasts are usually armed with large spears or clubs, or, more rarely, cast-off weapons of other races.

Every once in a while an alicorn beast goes rogue, and slays his clan and anything else he can get his hands on (only males go rogue). After a time, the beast calms down (somewhat), but will remain bloodthirsty throughout the rest of its life. Such a rogue has the ability to exude poison from his alicorn, such that when he hits with it, the victim must make a saving throw versus poison or die in 1 to 6 turns. Rogues can be found working with ogres and humanoids, either as a leader or as the lieutenant of the leader. They often ally with sorcerers that provide them with fresh human flesh, which they crave.

It is said that the alicorn of an alicorn beast has powers and uses not unlike that of a unicorn, only less potent and oft times more dangerous, especially those of a leader or a rogue.

*Terrain:* Woods, Hills, Cavern.

### **Golem, Assassin Spider\***

Armor Class:	0
Hit Dice:	6***
Move:	120' (40')
Attacks:	1 bite
Damage:	2d4 + poison
No. Appearing:	1 (1)
Save As:	F3
Morale:	12
Treasure Type:	Nil
Intelligence:	6
Alignment:	Neutral
XP Value:	950

*Monster Type:* Construct, Enchanted (Very Rare)

These intricate golems are usually created for a specific mission: assassination. Some are also used to guard treasure chambers and harems. They are constructed out of crystal, steel, and gemstones, and look like 3' wide, 1' tall giant spiders. These golems do not manufacture webbing, though they can walk upon any solid surface, including walls and ceilings. They *move silently* with a 95% chance and may *hide in shadows* on a 95% chance. Like other golems, only magic or magical weapons may damage them, and they are immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, as well as all gases and poisons.

Their bite is poisonous. An assassin spider golem will contain enough venom for three bites however venom is only expended in a successful attack. They magically regenerate one dose of venom every three turns. Their venom is as toxic as that of the giant black widow spider; victims must make a saving throw versus poison or die in 1 turn. They also magically regenerate 1 hit point per hour, unless reduced to zero or fewer hit points, at which point they are destroyed permanently.

An assassin spider golem does not speak any language, though it may understand any language that its creator can speak. It is slightly more intelligent than other golems, as it often has to go out on its own and hunt down its prey.

*Terrain:* Variable.

Load: 3,000 cn at full speed, or 6,000 cn at half speed.

### **Draconian Gargoyle**

	White	Black	Green	Blue	Red
Armor Class:	4	3	2	1	0
Hit Dice:	4+3* (L)	5* (L)	5+3* (L)	6* (L)	6+3* (L)
Move:	90' (30')	90' (30')	90' (30')	90' (30')	90' (30')
Flying:	180' (60')	180' (60')	180' (60')	180' (60')	180' (60')
Attacks:	All: 2 claws/1 bite/1 horn or by weapon type				
Damage:	1d4/1d4/ 1d6/1d8	1d4+1/1d4+1 1d8/1d8+1	1d6/1d6 1d10/1d10	1d6+1/1d6+1 2d6/2d6	1d8/1d8 2d8/2d8
	or by weapon type +3				
Appearing:	1d4	1d4	1d3	1d3	1d2
Save As:	F4	F5	F5	F6	F6
Morale:	7	7	8	8	9
Treasure:	A	A	A, I (no pp)	A, I (no pp)	A, I (no pp)
Intelligence:	8	8	9	9	10
Alignment:	NeutralChaotic		Chaotic	NeutralChaotic	
XP Value:	200	300	400	500	650

*Monster Type:* Monster (Very Rare)

Draconian gargoyles result either from a physical union between the largest of gargoyles and the smallest of dragons (indicating a distant relationship on some level), or from the magical infusion of a gargoyle egg with dragon's blood by a magic-user or cleric. In either case, these creatures are usually considered abominations by dragons and kings by gargoyles.

Draconic gargoyles that are born into a gargoyle tribe invariably rise to rule their tribe, and often also gain levels as a shaman and/or wotan (maximum level of twice their hit dice in either). Those that are created by a spellcaster invariably serve their creator as guardians, of body, lair, or treasure.

In addition to their powerful natural attacks, a draconian gargoyle may make a breath weapon attack up to three times per day. These attacks are identical to those of their dragon parent, except the dimensions of the attack are halved, and damage must be rolled each time the attack is used (i.e., damage is not automatically current hit points). Some draconian gargoyles have been known to use large weapons, such as halberds and two-handed swords.

Draconian gargoyles are usually sterile, though a few have been able to breed true with normal gargoyles. The results of such unions have always been normal, if slightly more intelligent and stronger gargoyles with the draconic parental coloration.

Treasure held will only be found with free draconian gargoyles, and will take the place of a tribe's normal treasure; draconian gargoyle servants will not have their own treasure.

Draconian gargoyles speak Gargoyle, Dragon, and Common.

*Terrain:* White: Cold regions; Black: Swamp, Marsh; Green: Woods, Jungle; Blue: Desert, Open; Red: Mountain, Hill. Any: Subterranean.

## The Magic-User Richard Tongue

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(This is the first in a series of articles examining the primary character classes of OD&D. They are designed to combat the problem of character uniqueness: how do you make one character different from another of the same class. These articles will attempt to provide some possible solutions, specific to each class. There are of course possibilities that apply to all characters, but these are specific articles.)

When it comes to creating distinctive characters, the Magic-User has it easy in many ways. The class has an individual distinction to begin with: the variety of spells available. There are thirteen available at first level alone, and this variety increases as the levels grow. However, there is a disturbing tendency to sometimes always select the same spells. How many starting magic-users begin the game with *Magic Missile*?

One good idea, and one which can define your character, is to specialize. For example, you could make a magic-user that specialized in archaeology – his starting spells to be *Read Languages* (to decode ancient documents), *Detect Magic* (to find artefacts, and *Light* (to illuminate search areas). He would be older than most starting wizards, and have different connections – he would be more likely to have a Sage for a mentor than a Sorcerer. Another possible type would be a Thief – a wizard trained by a Thieves Guild (see the article *Why Can't My Character Join the Thieves' Guild*, in OD&DITIES 2). His starting spells would be *Ventriloquism* (to distract guards), *Floating Disc* (to carry away loot), and *Detect Magic* (to locate magical traps). You can see the possibilities.

Another idea might be to make your magic-user a member of an Order of Wizards, with a specific agenda, and naturally, an enemy. This would require working with your DM, but as long as it is a small group, it should not imbalance the game. Your character might be the apprentice to a magic-user who is part of the 'Order of the Cross', a magical order fighting the Undead, and Necromancers. He would have to prove himself, and attempt to qualify for membership. His game priorities would be different from another character.

Making slight changes to the magic system is also possible. In Dragon 200, there was an article explaining how to personalize your spells. Be cautious before using it however, as it can create a great deal of work. It could be used in connection with the 'Order of Wizards' idea, to create a 'signature spell' for your group.

As your character rises through the levels, the possibilities for distinctiveness increase. If you are playing a specialist character, aim for specific spells. The Archaeologist would eagerly anticipate *Locate Object*, or *Contact Outer Plane*, whilst the Thief would desire *Phantasmal Force*, *Levitate*, and *Invisibility*.

The whole object is to make your character unique, and this should always be kept in mind as you develop your character. It can also provide an interesting challenge, as well – playing the Archaeologist would certainly be an interesting experience, and could serve as the starting point of many adventures.

# The Dragon's Cage

A most important mission, indeed!

## An OD&D Game Adventure for 3-6 Characters, Levels 1-3

by Jesse Walker

'The Dragon's Cage' is a short **original D&D®** game adventure designed for a small or relatively low level band of adventurers of about 3-6 characters of 1st to 3rd level (about 6 total levels). The numbers and strength of the NPCs and creatures can of course be adjusted to accommodate stronger or weaker parties.

The adventure takes place in and near Hobarton; a small trading town nestled on the banks of the Derwynt River. Tied to no particular campaign world, the scenario could easily be adapted for use in any campaign with only a few minor alterations.

The following self-contained adventure should provide most of the necessary information about the challenges that the heroes face, although copies of either the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia* or *Basic* and *Expert* sets wouldn't go astray.

### Adventure Background for the DM

Many centuries ago a mighty red dragon, named Agmaer, lived high in the mountains to the west of Hobarton. Feared and respected across the Kingdom, Agmaer's renown was unrivalled among all the great dragons of the world, and although his fiery breath has long been extinguished, the flame of his legend has never died. Scholars still pour over ancient texts and continue to search for precious items and artefacts to gain new insights into the life of the Great Wym.

One such scholar, Hircar Kettleworth, an excitable and eccentric halfling, has devoted his life's work to the study of Agmaer. From his large home in Hobarton, Hircar has gathered together the finest collection of scrolls, artefacts and objects associated with the life of the legendary dragon in all the Kingdom. In fact his collection has become so expansive he hardly has time to carefully study every item.

The crowning glory of Hircar's great collection is Agmaer's near complete skeleton. After his death, at the sword of a brave knight, Agmaer's bones were claimed as souvenirs by noblemen and common folk alike. Hircar has spent many years searching the length and breadth of the Kingdom collecting and reassembling the mighty dragon's huge skeleton, but his work is not yet complete. Occasionally pieces still continue to turn up from time to time.

Not all interest in the legendary red dragon is as scholarly as Hircar's, however. Many an enterprising individual have sought to profit from Agmaer's memory.

Amongst these profiteers is an elf by the name of Perinon Lorh. Once a friend and former colleague of Hirgar's, the greedy elf now makes a comfortable living by gathering what few bones of Agmaer's are left on the open market, and using them as the prime ingredient in his *Lorh's Amazing Elixir of Potency* - a foul potion which he sells to gullible villagers by falsely claiming that it gives its drinker great virility. To Hirgar, such usage of Agmaer's bones is an affront to the mighty dragons memory, and he and Lorh remain bitter enemies.

In the following adventure the heroes are hired by Hirgar to collect a newly discovered rib bone from an associate who is waiting for them in a small cottage in the forest. However, Hirgar is concerned that his rival, Lorh, may have learned about the new item's location. The race is on for the heroes to safeguard the 'precious item' and bring it safely to Hirgar's care.

### **Beginning the Adventure**

The adventure begins in Hobarton; a small town nestled on the shores of the meandering Derwynt River. How the heroes become involved in the adventure is left to the DM to best suite his campaign. The PCs could hear rumours that Hirgar seeks adventurers for an important mission or perhaps Hirgar approaches the PCs directly, inviting them to his home later that day.

If the heroes decide to investigate the rumours or accept Hirgar's invitation, they do not find it difficult to locate his large home in the centre of town. PCs new to Hobarton can of course ask a local for directions, as the eccentric dragon scholar is well known to the good folk of Hobarton.

Hirgar's house was once a large meeting hall, which he converted into a home, as it was the only building in Hobarton that was large enough to house Agmaer's enormous skeleton. When the heroes are ready to enter, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The door swings open to reveal a balding, middle-aged halfling wearing a long red robe. Distracted, the halfling is holding an open book, which he appears to be reading through the small round eyeglasses perched at the end of his nose. On the floor is an elaborate carpet depicting a red dragon in full flight. The walls of the small, tastefully decorated entrance hall are lined with oak panelling and paintings of what appear to be the same red dragon.

When Hirgar realises that his visitors are adventurers he becomes very animated, profusely thanking the PCs for coming. The halfling ushers the PCs in before introducing himself (if the they have not met him previously). As he leads the party through his home, Hirgar explains that he is a scholar, "of some renown", who has devoted his life to the study of a great and noble red dragon named Agmaer. Hirgar promises the PCs an



important mission to complete. First, however, he insists on giving the heroes a tour of his "museum" before answering any of their questions or even telling them of what their mission might be.

Hirgar's collection, carefully sorted and displayed on crowded shelves and tables throughout the lower floor of his home, includes; the singed armour of the first knight who attempted to slay Agmaer, a piece of his egg, the mighty dragon's first tooth and a cast of his claw-print. Of course there are many other items as well, such as scrolls, tomes and tapestries dedicated to Agmaer. If the PCs question the authenticity of any of the items, they will be very quickly shown the door unless they hastily make amends with the appropriate apologies!

If the heroes show the slightest interest in any item, Hirgar launches into the convoluted story of how he recovered the particular object by saying, "Actually, it's rather an interesting story..." If the PCs do not bring Hirgar back to the subject at hand he will go on forever.

Eventually, the halfling grandly leads the PCs to an ornate set of double doors which lead into the great hall containing the assembled bones of Agmaer, though he does not tell the PCs what they are about to see - he lets the bones tell their own story. As they approach, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Hirgar grandly opens the set of double doors to reveal a spacious and well-lit hall. As you enter an amazing sight strikes you; looming over you is the skeleton of an enormous dragon! An elaborate and ornate structure of wrought iron delicately lifts the bones high towards the vaulted ceiling. The dragon's ancient wings stretch out; as it's enormous mouth releases a silent roar from beyond the grave and across the centuries.

With the PCs now suitably impressed, the grand tour is complete. Hirgar leads the party to a small table in the corner of the great hall. Once the heroes are settled, Hirgar offers the party tea (briefly disappearing to make some if they accept), before explaining the mission he is proposing for them:

The halfling scholar leans forward and excitedly whispers to you, "I have for you my friends a most important mission, a most important mission indeed."

"As you have seen I am a great collector of artefacts relating to the noble wyrm, Agmaer. The masterpiece of my collection, as you can imagine, is the great skeleton you see before you. I have spent many years collecting and reassembling Agmaer's skeleton and my work is almost complete - but occasionally small pieces still continue to be uncovered. Recently, such an item was discovered by an old associate of mine, a dwarf named Thorik."

"Sadly, a villainous elf named Perinon Lorh, who was once a friend and former colleague, defiles Agmaer's memory by using his bones as the prime ingredient in a foul snake oil called *Lorh's Amazing Elixir of Potency* - a potion which he sells by falsely

claiming that it gives its drinker great virility." Hirgar snuffs in indignation before continuing.

"I am most concerned that Lorh has discovered that I have recently located the last of Agmaer's smaller ribs and may have already sent his thugs to obtain it. I ask of you that you go to Thorik and fetch this most precious item so that I may add it to my collection and safeguard it forever."

"My friends, I offer you a unique opportunity to rescue an item of great importance - for a generous reward of course." Hirgar sits back and intently waits for your response, "Well my friends, how say you?"

Little does Hirgar know that Lorh has indeed learnt of the recently discovered rib bone. What's more, Lorh has already located Thorik and dispatched a party of brigands to recover it for him.

If the heroes ask about their 'generous' reward, Hirgar offers the heroes 50 gp each for completing the mission. If the PCs ask about the last missing piece of Agmaer's rib cage, Hirgar says that it is about five feet long and weighs about 15 lbs. If the PCs are foolish enough to ask where the bone came from, Hirgar launches into another one of his long and complicated stories. The DM is free to create his own fantastical tale. If the PCs ask for more information about Lorh, Hirgar will say only that he is "a disgrace to the honourable profession of scholarly pursuit."

If the heroes accept the task, Hirgar gives the PCs directions to Thorik's cottage. The route is perfectly simple; follow the old road heading north from Hobarton for about three miles, there they will see an overgrown trail leading into the forest. Follow the trail for another six miles until they come to a small, gently sloping hill. Thorik's cottage is about half way up the hill.

When the PCs are ready to leave, Hirgar shows them to the front door, wishes them luck, and waves the PCs goodbye, before returning to the study of his book.

**Hirgar Kettleworth:** AC 9; MV 60' (20'); H3; hp 4; #AT 1 weapon; THAC0 19; Dmg by weapon type; Save as H3; S 8 I 16 W 15 D 13 C 9 CH 9; AL L

## **The Journey**

By the time the heroes leave Hobarton it should be mid afternoon. The initial journey along the road is uneventful, although, the DM may wish to add an encounter with a travelling merchant to allow the PCs to stock up on any items they might have neglected to obtain in Hobarton. Once the PCs reach the forest trail, the following additional random encounters may be included as the PCs move through the wilderness.

## **Random Wilderness Encounters**

Roll 1d4 once every five hours. On a roll of 1, an encounter occurs. Either choose the most appropriate event or roll 1d6 to pick randomly.

1. The party discovers a wolf print in a patch of soft ground.

**2. Giant Centipedes (2):** AC 9; HD 1/2 (S); hp 3, 3; MV 60' (20'); #AT 1 bite; THAC0 19; Dmg Poison (special); Save as Normal Man; ML 7; INT 0; AL N; XP 6 each. RC/163

3. The PCs hear a wolf howl nearby.

4. The party encounter a hunter, named Erith, who has been hunting deer in the woods for some days. Erith is suspicious of strangers, however, he will talk to the party if they seem friendly. Erith mentions to the PCs that they are the second group of travellers he has seen in recent days; an elf, dwarf and two humans.

**Erith:** AC 9; MV 120' (40'); Normal Human; hp 3; #AT 1 weapon; THAC0 20; Dmg 1d6 (short bow); Save as Normal Man; ML 9; AL L

**5. Giant Bees (4):** AC 7; MV 150' (50'); HD 1/2 (S); hp 3, 3, 2, 2; #AT 1 sting; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d3 + special; Save as F1; ML 7; INT 0; AL N; XP 6 each. RC/160

6. The PCs encounter a small pack of wolves. The wolves circle around the PCs, watching wearily. If the PCs do not attack, the wolves will eventually move off without attacking the party.

**Wolves (3):** AC 7; MV 180' (60'); HD 2+2 (M); hp 8, 12, 9; #AT 1 bite; THAC0 17; Dmg 1d6; Save as F1; ML 6; INT 2; AL N; XP 25 each. RC/212

## Glump

Unless the DM includes any other encounters, the PC's journey along the road passes quickly by and it is not long before the heroes reach the overgrown path leading into the forest. After the party has journeyed down the path for about an hour or so read or paraphrase the following to the players:

You emerge from the forest into a large clearing, some 60' across. At the centre of the clearing sits an ogre munching noisily on a haunch of raw venison, with the rest of the unfortunate creature's remains lying nearby. The ogre seems so intent on his bloody meal he appears not to have noticed you.

In recent weeks the ogre, named Glump, has been attacking lone travellers as they move along the trail. However, Glump is not especially spoiling for a fight with a band of well-armed adventurers, and so will attempt to talk his way out of the situation, although, if the PCs decide to attack immediately, Glump will fight to defend himself. When

Glump's Hit Points are reduced by half he will attempt to flee.

Seeing that the PCs are adventurers, Glump nervously assumes that they have been sent to stop him. Not the sharpest sword on the rack, even for an ogre, Glump tries not to give away what he has been up to. If the PCs decide to talk to him, at the end of sentences Glump can't help himself but say things like, "and meez 'aven't b'n attackin' any nicey human peoples" and "Glump likey peoples. Glump never, *ever* attackses nice peoples". Of course, the PCs know nothing of his recent activities.

**Glump (Ogre):** AC 5; MV 90' (30'); HD 4+1 (L); hp 19; #AT 1 club; THAC0 15; Dmg 1d4+2 (club); Save as F4; ML 10; INT 6; AL C; XP 125. RC/198

Glump carries no treasure, however, if the heroes make a search of the surrounding area they find the ogre's lair, which consists of a large single chambered cave set into the side of a nearby hill. Within the cave the PCs find, amongst the ogre's filthy possessions, an old, cracked earthenware jar containing; 23 gp, 112 sp, 654 cp, an ornate cygnet ring (valued at around 250 sp) and a *ring of animal control*. These items are, of course, the proceeds of Glump's recent attacks.

## Thorik

Following the encounter with Glump, evening should be fast approaching. If the PCs wish continue, the DM should warn the players that the path is difficult to follow in the dark. If the PCs push on regardless, movement is reduced by half as they pick their way along the trail. The slow going should mean that the PCs would not reach Thorik's cottage until sometime the following morning.

As the PCs continue towards the rendezvous with Thorik the following day, they come to the base of the small, gently sloping hill as described by Hirgar. As the PCs climb the hill read or paraphrase the following to the players:

As you reach about half way up the hill, you see a small stone cottage standing some 20 yards from the path. At first glance it seems peaceful enough, but then you notice that the door has been smashed and the thatched roof has been damaged by fire.

The PCs have arrived to late. The brigands have already been and gone several hours' earlier, stealing Aagmaer's rib. When the heroes reach the door they see an old dwarf sprawled on the floor with a nasty wound to his head. The room looks as though there has been a struggle, with smashed and overturned furniture littering the room. The area surrounding the fireplace is also badly damaged by fire.

If the PCs check Thorik, they discover that he is not dead, but has been merely knocked unconscious. If the PCs attempt to revive him, the crotchety, grumbling dwarf awakens quickly. At first he is wary of the PCs, but will eventually accept their help once it is explained that Hirgar sent them.

As the PCs attempt to speak with Thorik, he complains that they're "not speaking clearly", and insists that the PCs talk into his "good ear" (human and elven PCs will of course need to stoop down to do so). If a PC shouts, Thorik only becomes irritated, growling; "I may be old, but I'm not deaf!", before poking the offending PC in the leg - each an every time they raise their voice to speak with the grouchy, half deaf dwarf.

If the PCs ask what happened, Thorik explains to the heroes that he was attacked by four bandits; two humans, a dwarf and a nasty looking elf (who appeared to be their leader). They smashed in the door and attempted to steal the rib bone. In the scuffle that ensued, a log was knocked from the fireplace causing some of the damage that the PCs see around them. Thorik was struck and fell to the ground heavily. The four brigands then stole the rib bone, leaving Thorik for dead, believing that the old dwarf had been killed.

Despite appearances, Thorik will be happy to answer any other of the PCs questions (though, that wont stop him from grumbling!). If the PCs ask Thorik if he knows where the brigands are headed, he tells the PCs that before passing out he saw them head north along the trail. If the PCs ask, Thorik is more than willing to join the party to help recover the bone.

**Thorik:** AC 7; MV 60' (20'); D3; hp 12; #AT 1 weapon; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6 (warhammer); Save as D3; AL L. Thorik wears leather armour and wields a large warhammer. Thorik carries 24 gp in a small purse on his belt and wears a gold ring worth around 15 SP.

### **In Hot Pursuit**

The PCs should have little difficulty in following the brigand's trail as they make no effort to disguise where they are headed: the brigands don't know the PCs are following them and they think that the old dwarf is dead. The DM should tell the PCs that they find footprints and peanut shells along the path. The peanuts belong to the brigand's elven leader, Meras, who crunches on them continuously.

The brigands are on their way to meet with Lorh, who is travelling back from a nearby town where he has been selling his elixir to the local inhabitants. The brigands have reached the rendezvous point well before Lorh and so have set up camp to wait for their employer to arrive.

There are no planned encounters for this part of the adventure, although, encounters from the **Random Wilderness Encounter** table, may of course be inserted at this point in the scenario. Alternately, the encounter with Glump could be placed here, rather than in the period before the PCs meet Thorik.

As the morning lengthens, the heroes notice a column of smoke curling up from the trees in the distance. It takes the PCs until early afternoon to reach the area near the

column of smoke. As the PCs approach they see that the smoke is emanating from the brigands camp. Scouting the camp should not be difficult, as the brigands are not taking any special precautions against attack. If the heroes approach cautiously (the DM may choose to require a *Dexterity* check), the PCs may conceal themselves if they wish.

As the PCs watch, the brigands lazily go about their business; an elf (Meras) is sitting by himself munching on peanuts, a human (Davig) is cooking a pot full of stew over the small fire, another human (Gurth) is stuffing his face with stew, and a dwarf (Belfin) is sharpening his battle-axe on a whetstone. The rib bone is not in sight, but is wrapped in cloth under a pile of bags and equipment lying in the centre of the camp.

If the party decide to attack immediately, the brigands vigorously defend themselves. If the PCs approach the brigands more cautiously and attempt to speak with them, Meras will rudely tell the PCs to go about their business. If Thorik is amongst the party, the brigands will attack at once - Meras bitterly cursing the old dwarf for "not being dead".

### **Battle Ensues**

The brigands fight well as individuals, but mutual distrust and loathing stops them from working well together as a group. Meras is insufferably arrogant and throughout the battle constantly barks orders at the other three; commands which they largely ignore. Belfin is particularly uncooperative, in fact, often doing the complete opposite of what the elf orders. Belfin barely tolerates Meras' leadership, only doing so at Lorh's directions - and only while the pay continues. Davig is not particularly bright, and often clumsily gets in the way of the others, much to the annoyance of his companions. Gurth is a competent fighter, making up in brute force what he lacks in refined fighting style.

If the PCs get a chance to interrogate any of the brigands they remain tight-lipped. Only with persistent questioning, even after the bone is recovered, will they eventually confirm that they are working for Lorh and were sent by him to steal Agmaer's rib from Thorik.

**Meras:** AC 9; MV 120' (40'); E2; hp 8; #AT 1 weapon; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); Save as E2; AL C; short sword, a small pouch containing 35 gp; *magic missile*, *sleep*.

**Belfin:** AC 5; MV 60' (20'); D2; hp 10; #AT 1 weapon; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6 (battle-axe); Save as D2; AL C; chain mail, battle-axe, a leather pouch containing 20 gp.

**Gurth:** AC 7; MV 120' (40'); F1; hp 7; #AT 1 weapon; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d8 +1 Strength bonus (normal sword); Save as F1; S 15; AL C; leather armour, normal sword, a small leather pouch containing 7 gp.

**Davig:** AC 10; MV 120' (40'); F1; hp 4; #AT 1 weapon; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); Save as F1; I 7 D 8; AL C; short sword, a pouch containing 12 gp.

Whether Lorh arrives during the battle, or not at all, is left to the DM. If he does, Lorh won't reveal himself to the PCs instead staying outside the camp, watching the battle in secrecy. If the PCs successfully defeat his henchmen, Lorh will retreat - the PCs have a new enemy. If the PCs are defeated and captured, only then will he feel safe enough to reveal himself, full of praise for Meras, Belfin and the others.

Perinon Lorh is a charming, if somewhat pompous elf, who uses his smooth manners to manipulate those around him. Gaunt and rather taller than the average elf (6'), Lorh cuts a striking and impressive figure in his elaborate (and expensive!) robes.

It was the promise of quick wealth, which turned this once diligent, middle-aged scholar into a greedy and opportunistic con artist (Lorh's early lecture tours on the "exciting world of third century spoons" were not the great success he had hoped). Always on the lookout for new money making opportunities, Lorh is rumoured to have an 'interest' in most of the local schemes and rackets - one way or another. Whenever Hirgar's name is mentioned Lorh's right eye begins to twitch.

**Perinon Lorh:** AC 8; MV 120' (40'); E3; hp 12; #AT 1; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); Save as E3; S 9 I 15 W 11 D 14 C 8 CH 14; AL C; dagger; *ring of protection* +1; *charm person, sleep, ESP*. Lorh carries the takings from the recent sales of his elixir; 87 gp, 12 sp, 54 cp.

## Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs are successful in recovering Agmaer's rib bone, the journey back to Hobarton should be relatively safe and simple. Hirgar will be exceedingly pleased if the PCs managed to retrieve the bone and will be most willing to pay the heroes their reward - in fact he is so pleased with their efforts that he offers them a small bonus of an extra 15 gp each for completing their task.

Although Hirgar is mostly concerned with his studies of Agmaer, he nevertheless may provide the heroes with a wealth of information about other local legends, ruins or any additional artefacts that the heroes might discover. The excitable halfling may also be a good source of new and future assignments for the PCs (for example, the exact location of Agmaer's lair has never been found) or at the very least, put the PCs on to colleagues and contacts for other missions.

Finally, the DM is free to develop any other adventure hooks, which might arise from the adventure. For example, the cygnet ring found in Glump's lair might have belonged to an important nobleman who recently went missing in the forest. Are the heroes accused of his murder or thanked for finding out what happened to him? Lorh, if the heroes defeated his henchmen, may of course be plotting his revenge against them - after all, they've robbed him of a chance of some easy gold pieces!