

THE GUILD

ADVENTURER



PUTTING ADVENTURES BACK INTO ROLEPLAYING

THE VAMPIRE'S BARROW

BY NICHOLAS HM CALDWELL

THE PARANOIA GAME

BY ROBERT
DEFENDI

THE FLYING TOADSTOOL

BY ALLEN MAHER

PRISONERS OF CHERIN KEEP

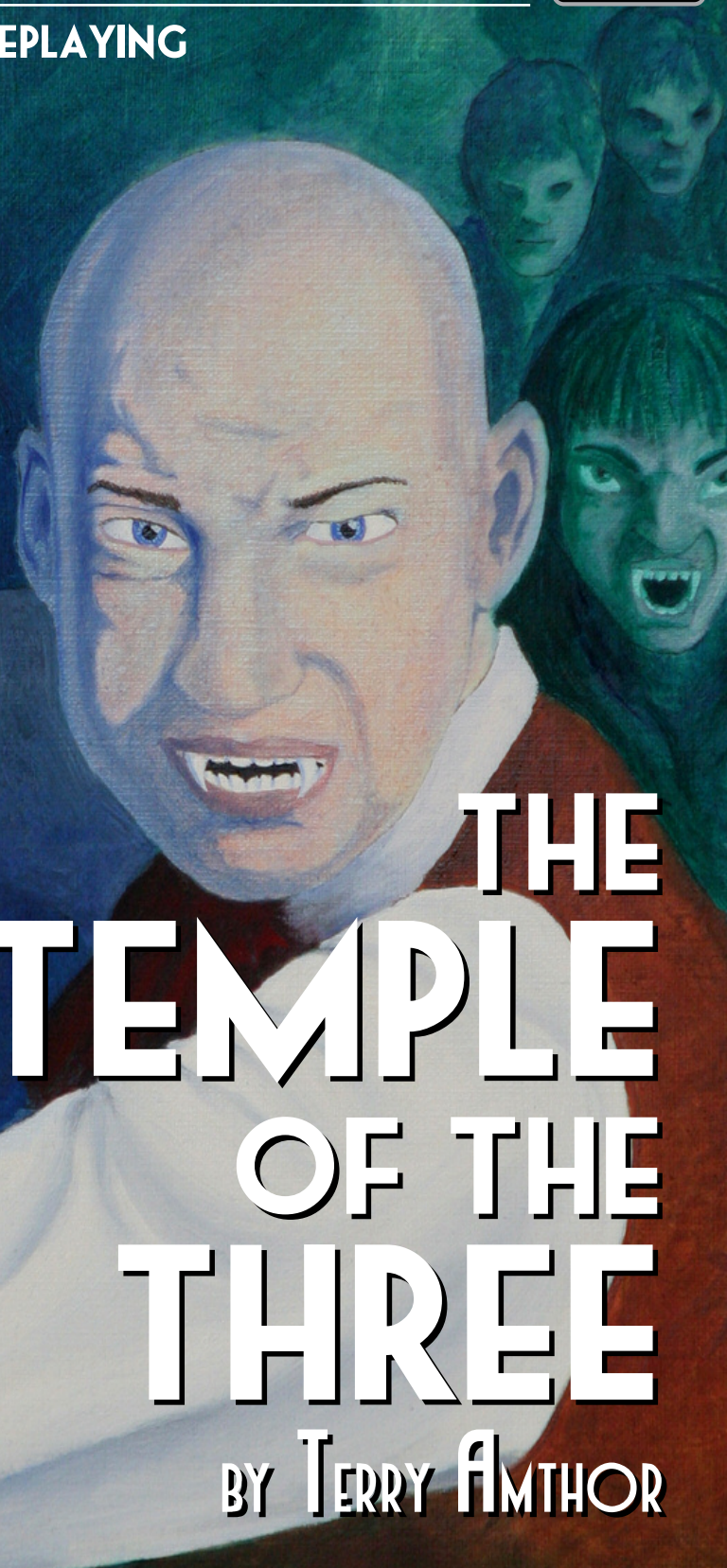
BY THE HARPERS
FORGE TEAM

THE RED HOODED TRAVELER

BY AARON SMALLEY

THE TEMPLE OF THE THREE

BY TERRY AMTHOR



WELCOME

To the very first issue of The Guild Adventurer, a new periodical dedicated to providing GMs with top-notch adventures and adventure material for Rolemaster, Spacemaster, Shadow World, and HARP. A stellar cast of contributors have worked incredibly hard to produce this premier issue – we hope that you will enjoy the fruits of their labour and we welcome your feedback so that we can strive to make future issues even better.

The Guild Adventurer also represents the successful application of a new publishing model, the "ransom" or "distributed patronage" model. We asked the community of ICE gamers if they were prepared to pledge their financial support to this project; a small army of Patrons stepped forward and pledged to buy one or more copies of this issue you are now reading on your monitor. Without the support of our Patrons, there would be no Guild Adventurer, and all of us who have worked on this project are sincerely grateful to all of our Patrons. Thank you for your support.

Best wishes,
Nicholas HM Caldwell



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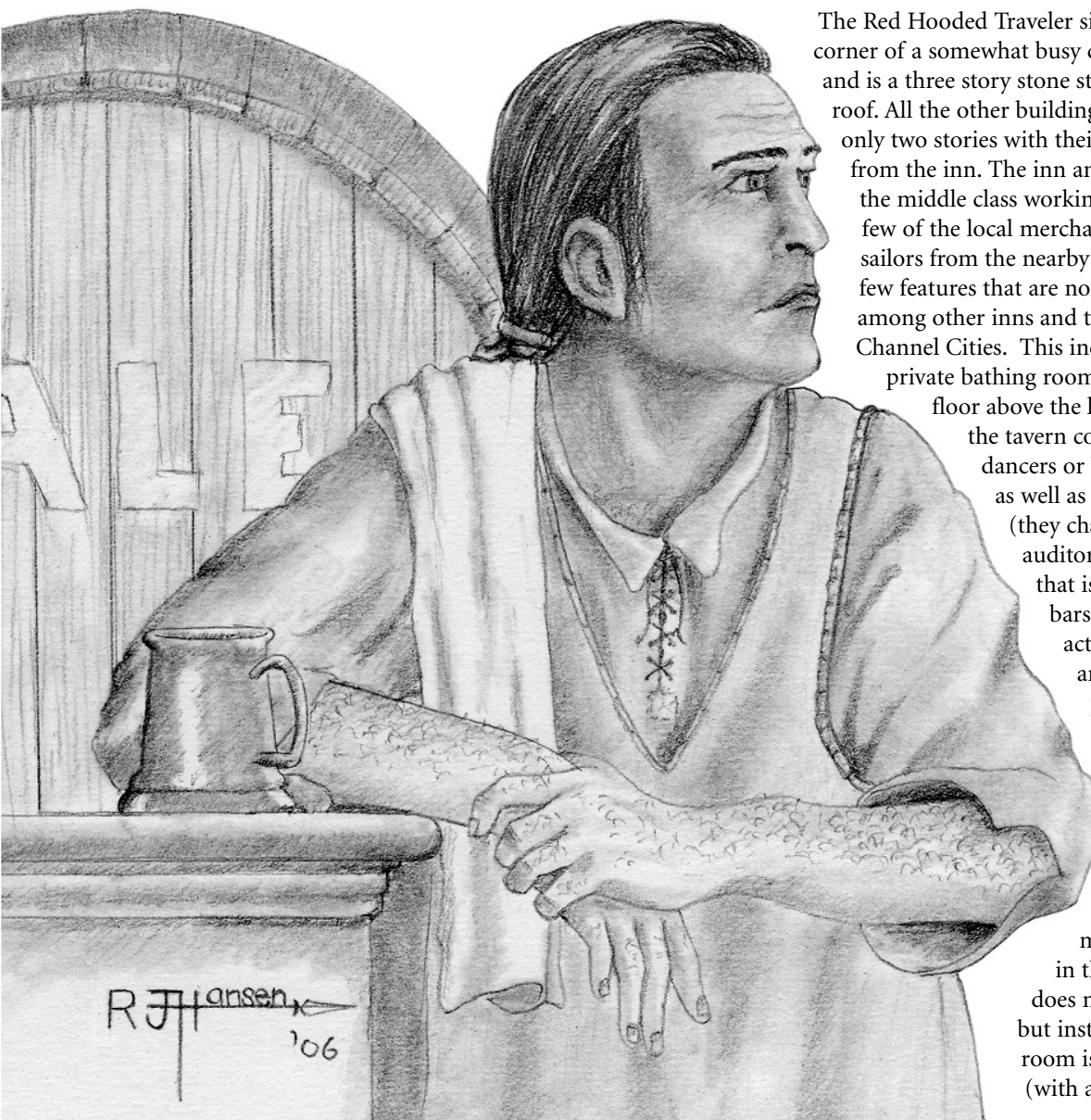
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THE RED HOODED TRAVELER

The Red Hooded Traveler is a very large inn and tavern located in the Black Swan District of the City of Martelain, the most run down of the five Channel Cities. It is just one of a couple of hundred such establishments in the Channel Cities area. The city of Martelain was once the second most powerful and wealthy of the five cities. Today after years of political tumult and defeat in the war against the Northern Empire, it is now dominated by empty buildings, economic hardship, and a state of disrepair. However the Black Swan District along the northwestern coast of the Channel still has a fair population present and is better than most other areas of the city.

The Red Hooded Traveler sits on an inside corner of a somewhat busy cobblestone street and is a three story stone structure, with a tile roof. All the other buildings surrounding it are only two stories with their roofs sloped away from the inn. The inn and tavern caters to the middle class working folk as well as a few of the local merchants and many of the sailors from the nearby docks. It boasts a few features that are not commonly found among other inns and taverns in the Channel Cities. This includes large heated private bathing rooms (on the second floor above the kitchen), a stage in the tavern common room for dancers or bards to perform on, as well as a limited access (they charge extra) auditorium with a stage that is protected by iron bars where more exotic acts and performances are held. The inn also possesses three “dunnies” that drop to the cities sewer system so the patrons don’t need to go outside to relieve themselves. Unlike many of the taverns in the Channel Cities, it does not have bar seating but instead the entire tavern room is dedicated to tables (with a seating capacity of



around 180 patrons at a time). There are 44 patron rooms available for rent for the night, as well as one large communal sleeping room for those who are on a tight budget. The rooms on the third floor have small windows near the ceiling that overlook the roofs of the buildings that abut the inn or overlook the street corner that the inn sits on. The windows are unglazed, having heavy shutters that latch in a secure manner. The owner Ramon reserves several rooms for staff members that need a place to stay (although at a fair deduction from their pay). There is a small stable within the main building but it only has 13 actual stalls. However there is a larger area where horses can be tied up out of the weather, and a couple of hitching posts just outside the building. The inn's prices are slightly above average, and their quality is also about average (the food is slightly below, but not by much, while their drinks are slightly above average in quality, and priced accordingly).

The common room has a large hearth set in the northeastern corner, near the door to the kitchen and with the stairs to the upper floors right next to it. All seating is at the various tables around the room, with enough of them that the place is a little on the crowded side. The kitchen area also has a huge four-sided hearth as well as a smaller one on the reverse side of the one that faces into the tavern common room. Both of the chimneys from these travel up to the next floor where smaller hearths are used to heat the water (as well as the entire room) for the six rooms that function as private baths for the inn's more discerning patrons.

The owner is Ramon Geranaldi, and the inn has been in his family for several generations now. He is of average height and build and in late middle age with shoulder-length and thick dark-brown hair. He is a man of few words but strong opinions. While he is rather quiet, when he has something to say he is not afraid to say it. He is very skilled with a dagger both in melee and at range, as well as being very skilled (and accurate) at throwing other objects (beer

mugs, plates, bowls, stools, and nearly any other object that can be picked up). Ramon is married and has three children, who all live in another part of the city above his wife's business where she runs a loom shop, where she and a few people who work for her produce cloth for the city's tailors.

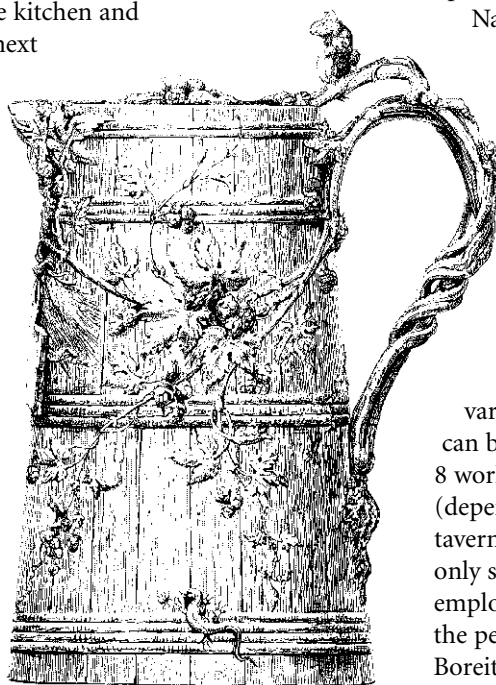
The stable hands include a tall, thin pale-skinned teenager named Mintho (he is very hard working and usually works the daylight shifts) and a thin balding elderly man named Edwag ("Ed" for short) who works the nighttime shift. Both men are good with the horses, especially Ed who been working as a stable hand here since Ramon's father owned the place.

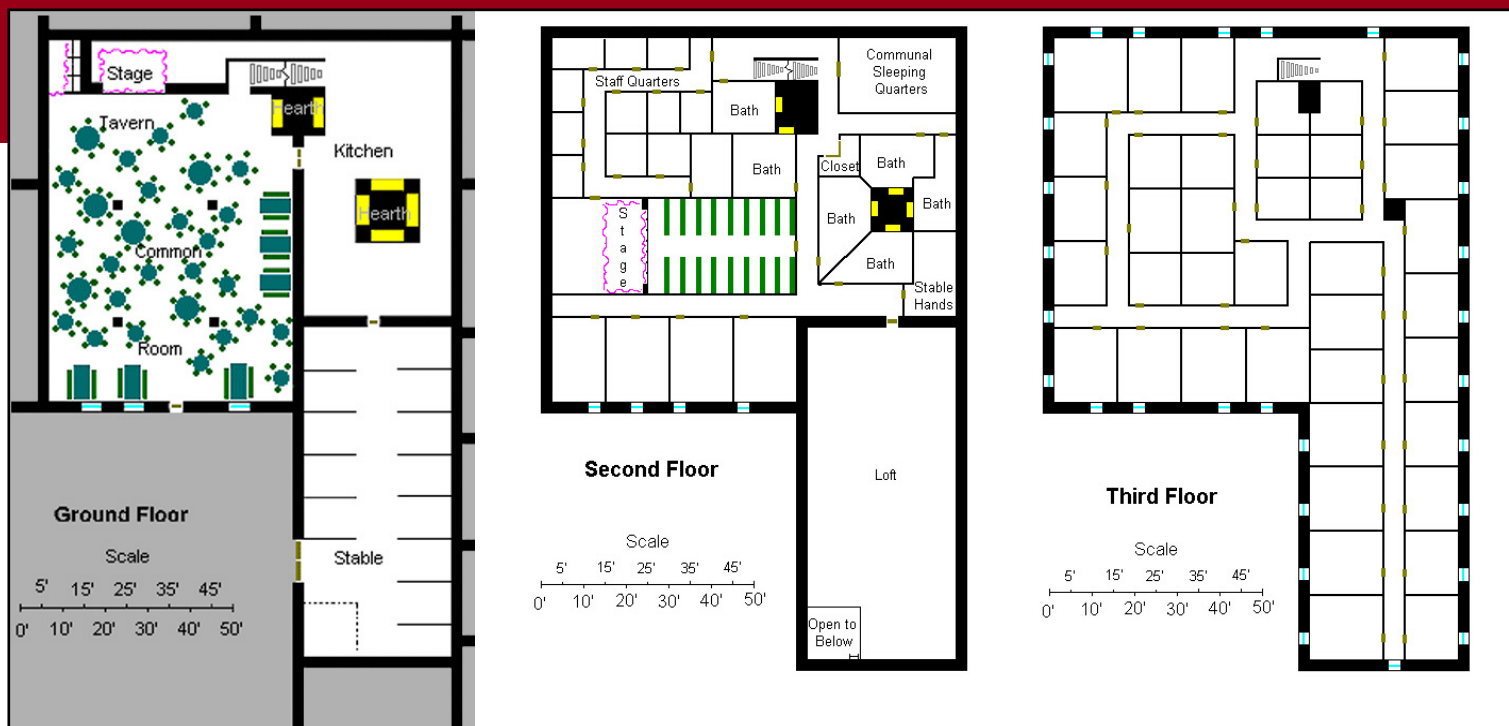
There are three cooks: Mariena, a heavy-set woman of late middle age, average complexion and long medium brown hair; Aligni, an elderly woman who is tall, somewhat thin and pale with very short black hair and a fiery temper when anyone slights the quality of her food (she is a very accomplished and experienced cook); and

Naren, who is a young woman of average build with medium length dark-brown hair who is still trying to perfect her trade (thus her cooking is the least good of the trio but yet is not bad by any means).

The waiting staff varies quite a bit, as there can be anywhere from 2 to 8 working at any one time (depending on how busy the tavern is) and many of them only stay on as Ramon's employees short term. Of the permanent waiters, Boreith, Kiara, Saria, and Sleanne are well known among the regular patrons.

Boreith is a middle-aged woman of somewhat heavy build, shoulder-length blond hair and a somewhat pale complexion. Her most distinguishing feature is her very loud, obtrusive voice. Her family is of Northern lineage, but she does not favor the





Northern Empire as her family has lived in the Channel Cities for several generations. Kiara is a fairly young and thin woman of average height with a very dark complexion (being from distant lands) and a very friendly and charismatic personality. Saria is a short and thin middle-aged woman with long dark-brown hair and a friendly but quiet personality; nevertheless she has a very quick and efficient manner. Sleanne is also late middle-aged and of medium build and height with very thick long black hair and a somewhat deep complexion (although not as tanned or dark as Kiara).

A small housekeeping staff comprised of two women named Serene and Ureial cleans the rooms



when needed as well as preparing the bath rooms for customers who are willing to pay for the luxury of a warm bath. Serene is a tall woman of medium build and short brown hair who rarely speaks. Ureial (often called “Ria”) is of average height and slightly heavy build with long dark brown hair and a friendly although sometimes fiery personality.

Among the common patrons of the Red Hooded Traveler are contacts for the Hydra, a burglary and espionage guild that operates out of Martelain. The Hydra members/contacts can be recognized by the grey and brown striped sashes they sometimes wear. On occasion members of the Northern Empire’s Patrol will stop in. Ramon tries to avoid creating any problems with them, serving them as needed to pacify them so they will go on their way. He is no supporter of the Northern Empire and will actually sometimes help out rebels, but not if doing so will endanger himself or his establishment.

The rooms that are available to patrons who wish to stay the night vary in size and price, with three general classes of rooms. For those who are on a very tight budget, there is the “Communal Sleeping Quarters”, which is a large room with numerous small beds crammed into the room. There are no other amenities, and Ramon will not guarantee that sleepers will still have all of their possessions in the morning. It is very cheap – anyone wanting cheaper will find the only likely alternative is to sleep in an alley (and lose property and perhaps life to the footpads who prowl the night). The next class of rooms are located on the third floor around the

Setting Elsewhere

The Red Hooded Traveler's Inn can easily be modified and placed within any moderately large fantasy city setting. To use in other worlds, locate it on an inside street corner, or at the corner of a large market square or open courtyard area.

center of the inn and thus do not have windows. These rooms contain a somewhat comfortable bed, a small table with a chair, as well as 3 to 5 pegs on the wall from which to hang clothing and other possessions. A small oil lantern hangs somewhere near the center of the room from one of the beams, and a candle or two in stands will be left on the table for guests. The third class of rooms have more comfortable beds and extra amenities such as water pitchers, washing bowls and chamber pots; they also have the added benefit of windows with latched shutters that can be opened in fine weather.

Being only a few blocks from the coastline and close to several warehouses and shipping companies that still operate out of Martelain, sailors on shore leave tend to make up a fair portion of the clientele. Many of the warehouses elsewhere have closed or have been burned down during the occasional riots that are provoked by the various rebel groups trying to drive the Northern Empire from the city.

It is not widely known that the city sewer system that runs under the inn also has a small docking area hidden beneath the inn's cellar. This is accessed through a thin stone slab that can be lifted when one of the large barrels that rests on a rack is rolled slightly to one side. The concealing barrel is always left almost empty for ease of movement and is marked as "Red's Mead". Ramon will occasionally allow the rebels to smuggle items in through this connection to the sewers, as well as allow fugitives to escape from pursuit out this way (although only if there is no indication that the Northern Empire troops know that the person trying to escape has entered the inn, as he wants to avoid any unnecessary searches of his property). On the sewer side of this escape route, the dock is not obvious, as it is disguised as a downlet from dunnies above. The doorway, leading to the short tunnel from the cellar, is also hidden by a stone block covered with muck. This has a small plate that, when pressure is applied, allows one to push it into the wall and then slide the block to one side easily.

One bit of folklore about the area is the name "Black Swan District". This originated back when the city was still very young and small. The story goes that there was a rare breed of black swans that lived along the banks of this part of the channel facing

Half Moon Isle and what is now the thriving merchant city of Argentum. These swans lived along the coast for many years, returning each spring to hatch their young. Legend has it that a fisherman had a run in with them one fall and they caused his small boat to tip over and he drowned. Fearful that the swans would become a danger to other fishermen, a group of townsfolk started hunting these beautiful birds. Only a handful of the swans escaped the cull, migrating to the south when the weather started to cool for the winter. These magnificent birds were never seen in the area again. It is unknown if they found a new nesting ground or became extinct. However occasionally rumors surface that the descendants of these birds can sometimes be seen in the swamps far to the south of the city of South Shore.

NPC of Note

Ramon Geranaldi: He is of average height (5'10") and build (180 lb) and of late middle age (~45 yrs) with shoulder-length and thick dark-brown hair. He tends to be rather quiet, but yet is capable of being very outspoken on subjects that he feels strongly about. His primary concern is always for the well being of his establishment, even to the point of holding his tongue before saying too much if it will affect his business.

Profession: 7th lvl Rogue **Race/Culture:** Common Urban Man

Hits: 91 **DB:** +16 **Armor:** none **PP:** 11

St: 75 +5 **Co:** 85 +7 **Ag:** 80 +6
Qu: 90 +8 **SD:** 70 +4 **Re:** 60 +2
In: 60 +2 **Pr:** 50 +0

Initiative Mod: +10 **BMR:** 12

Skills: Thrown Dagger +77 Thrown Mugs/Dishes +75
Dagger: +73 Brawling: +71
Wrestling: +71 Disarm Foe +75
Climb/Swim: +56/+21 Stalk/Hide: +74
Contortions: +50 Lore/Craft (cooking): +68/+72
Duping/Trading: +37/+60 Streetwise/Trickery: +62/+39

Languages: Argentum ("common"), Balmast (regional societal language), Silent Tongue (thief-speak/signals), and Gorled (another appropriate neighboring regional language)

Spell Lists (to level): none

Equipment of note: typically wears a linen or wool tunic and pants with a leather belt and scabbarded dagger at his waist and soft leather boots.

THE VAMPIRE'S BARROW

PREREQUISITES:

This scenario requires access to HARP and Monsters: A Field Guide.

BACKGROUND:

This scenario is set in a quasi-medieval setting, reminiscent of England, but with real magic and monsters. To adapt to another world, simply alter the names to suit. The time of year is high summer. Drumaham is a village on the edge of the Bleak Hills, and is part of the fief of Earl Aldric. Drumaham's peasantry are crofters and sheep farmers. The Bleak Hills are known to harbour Ogres, Trolls, and other foul monsters; only adventurers have cause to venture deep into those forbidding highlands.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW:

Over the past couple of weeks, outlying farms have been attacked, leaving neither survivors nor corpses. Serfs tending flocks of sheep in upland pastures have vanished. The locals suspect marauding ogres grown bold. The heroes will be persuaded to help and will have the opportunity to investigate the scene of the latest attack. The adventurers may discover that this is no ogre raid – the trail will lead deep into the hills where an ancient barrow has been appropriated by a vampire and its spawn.

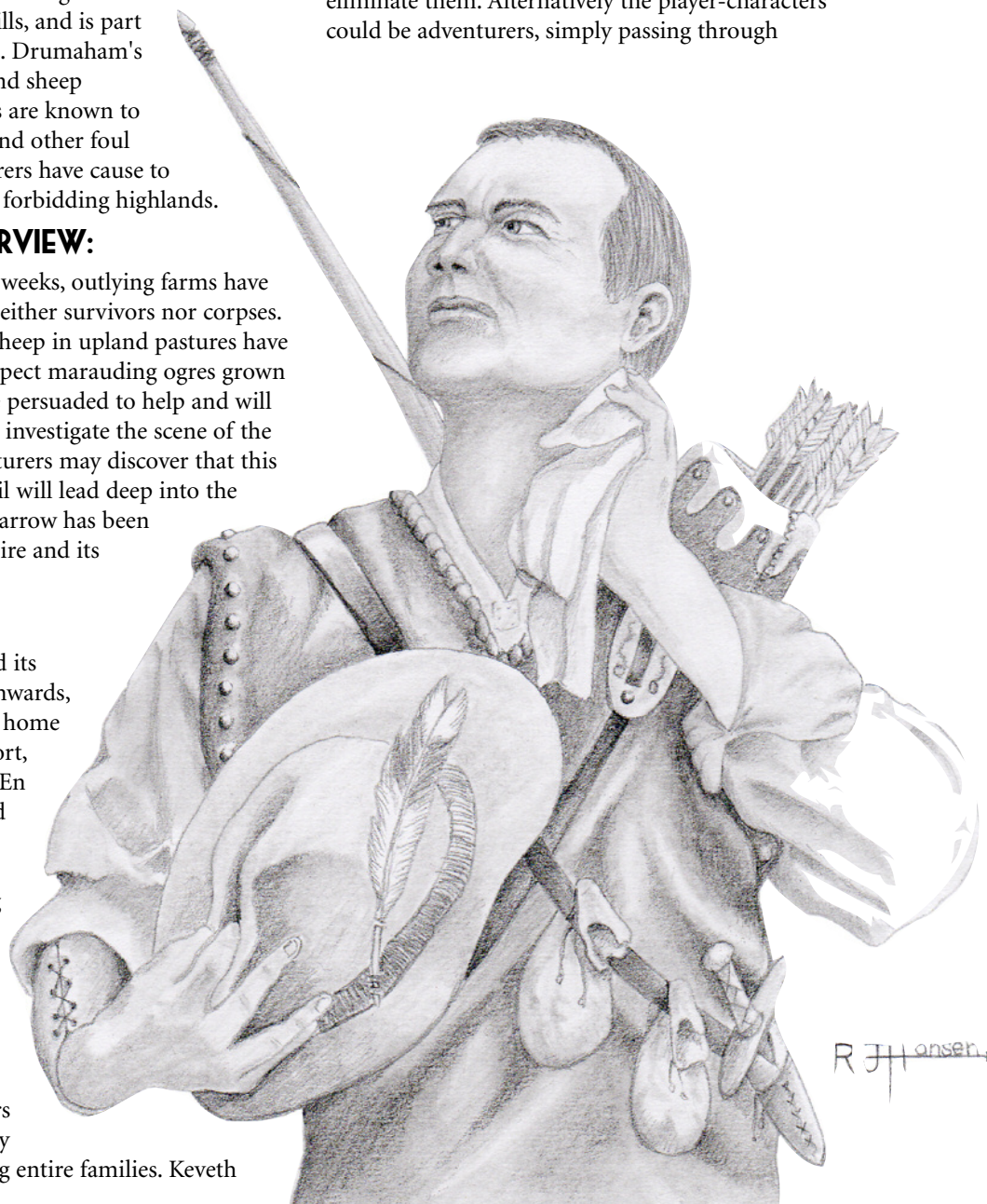
THE TALE

The vampire Keveth and its spawn are moving northwards, intent on finding a new home for themselves in Eastport, beyond the Bleak Hills. En route, Keveth discovered the barrow. He decided that this would be a suitable base for raiding the local populace so that he and his spawn would be at full power before entering Eastport. Initially Keveth was content to prey upon lone travellers and shepherds; now they attack farmsteads, killing entire families. Keveth

plans to remain near Drumaham for perhaps another week before embarking on the final stage of his journey to Eastport.

JOINING THE STORY

The player-characters may be feudal retainers of Earl Aldric, or indeed loyal servants of the King. If so, their visit to Drumaham could be part of a regular patrol to keep the peace, and their duty will be clear: determine the identity of the marauders and eliminate them. Alternatively the player-characters could be adventurers, simply passing through



Drumaham, enjoying the comforts of the local inn, the Three-Legged Wolf, for a night's stay or a hot lunch.

THE ADVENTURE

PART I: VILLAGE GOSSIP

If the heroes arrive on official business sometime in the morning or afternoon, a serving girl at the sheriff's house will inform them that the sheriff is out and they should await his return in the Three-Legged Wolf. If they arrive in the evening, the sheriff will escort them to the inn, where he'll have dinner with them. If the PCs are independent adventurers, they will find their own way to the Three-Legged Wolf.

The Three-Legged Wolf is a relatively small inn. The food is plain but filling, the beer isn't watered, and the rooms are cleaner than most establishments. The mood in the taproom is sombre and while a number of the villagers come in during the evening, most rush their pints and depart quickly.

If the heroes remark upon the atmosphere to any of the serving staff, they'll be referred to Tancred, the

innkeeper, who will mutter about "terrible trouble from the Bleaks". If the party are simply travellers, Tancred will ask them where they are going and what is their business. Any answer that involves skirting or passing through the Bleak Hills will be met with a stark warning:

"I'd stay well clear of the Bleaks. A bad place, it is, home to goblins, ogres, and worse that fled there when good king Almeric took the throne. They come down from the hills at night and kill honest folk minding their own business. You'll need sharp swords and strong spells if the devils find you."

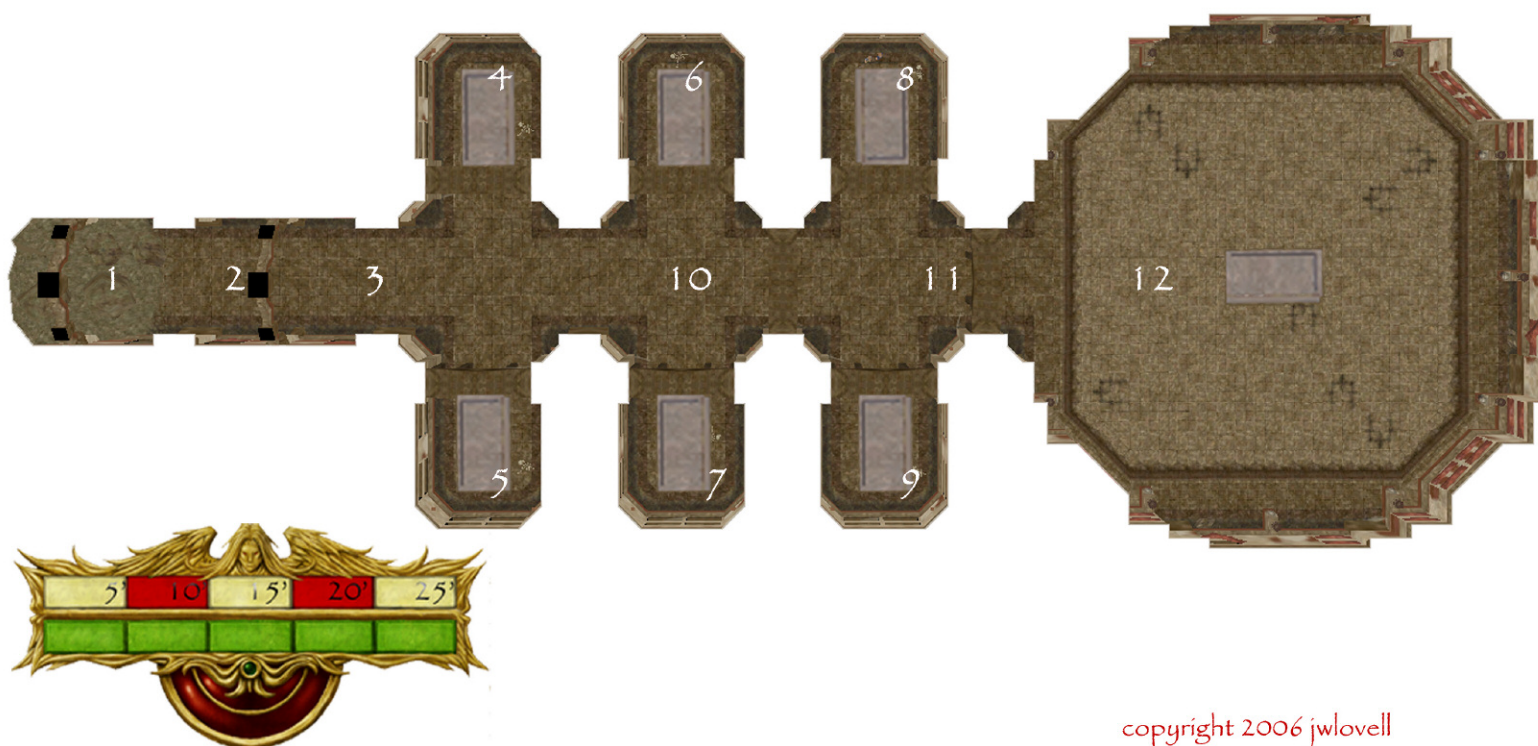
If pressed for detail, he'll explain that several shepherds went missing a couple of weeks ago and that the Locksleys farm was raided only four days ago. Door smashed in, fearsome signs of a struggle, and no sign of Freeman Locksley, his wife or his two lads.

PART II: RECRUITED

The sheriff, Peter Tull, will arrive in the Three Legged Wolf at some point during the evening.

He'll make his way over to the party immediately

The Vampires Barrow



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if they are crown servants or the Earl's retainers, "Praise be! Help at last for us."

If they aren't, he'll have a quiet chat with Tancred first and then come over, "We have need of bold folk with stout hearts, sharp swords, and strong magic – and we'll pay well for your services."

Tull will quickly narrate what has befallen the village in the last month.

"It started perhaps two and a half weeks ago when Donal, one of the serfs tending the sheep, failed to return in the morning. We found the sheep scattered but nary a sign of Donal. Niall, another serf vanished three days later, then Ralf two days after that. Like as not, it's ogres from the Bleaks with a taste for manflesh. None of the serfs will work the fields late in the evenings any longer, can't say I blame them. A week ago, old man Graeme's farm was raided. Place smashed up pretty bad and Graeme gone. His farm is closest to the Bleaks. Lost the tracks such as they were about half a mile into the hills. I've sent my deputy off to fetch help from the Earl and have taken to riding around the upland farms each day to check on folk. Four days ago, I found the Locksley's place had been hit. Door broken down, everything smashed up, and everyone missing. Wretched rain had washed out the tracks of the devils that did it. Reckon they'll try again tonight."

He wants the party to accompany him tomorrow on his patrol around the farms – and if an attack has been perpetrated to help him pursue the raiders. For adventurers interested in payment, he can offer ten gold pieces per party member for their services and a share in any treasure recovered. (GM's note: scale to suit campaign.)

PART III: THE DISAPPEARED

Tull will begin his rounds at six in the morning by checking on the safety of the residents of Drumaham itself. After an hour of reassuring both himself and the villagers that nothing is amiss, he'll be ready to set off on patrol in company with the adventurers. Tull plans on riding out; if the heroes have their own horses, he'll expect them to keep up with him. If the PCs are afoot, he'll slow his horse to a walk and use the extra time to observe the ground for unexpected tracks. Unfortunately there are no spare horses available.

Tull first visits farms due west of Drumaham and then sweeps round weaving his way west to east. The



most distant farms are some five miles out from the village. By noon, the group will have checked up on all of the northwestern holdings; Tull will be relieved and will suggest that if the afternoon north-east sweep proceeds without incident that they take a detour out to the Locksley Farm.

The Stratten's farm is just three miles north-east of Drumaham and only two miles south of the Bleaks, and the group will approach it from the south. Tull's loud hails will be answered with silence. Observant characters (Medium [+0] Perception maneuver) will note the lack of any sheep or other livestock in the nearer fields. Tull will dismount and draw his sword. He'll suggest that the adventurers either cover his approach or accompany him according to their martial skills.

The main farm building is a single-storey affair, constructed of rough-hewn stones with wooden doors and shuttered windows. The door has been smashed almost off its hinges; the window shutters at the back of the building have been forced inward with an extreme degree of violence. An examination of the doors and windows will suggest on a successful Perception roll (Medium [+0]) that this is the work of strong creatures – there's no sign of axes or other weaponry having been used by the marauders.

Freeman Edric Stratten, his wife Gillian, and their children Godwin, Lillian, and Samuel are nowhere to be found. The disarray of the furniture and possessions in the main bedroom suggests a significant struggle as does the unsheathed bloodied sword lying on the floor. Very careful examination (Very Hard [-40] Perception) will reveal that there is little blood on the floor now, but there may have been more earlier. The disruption in the children's bedroom seems more limited – Tull will note that Lillian and Samuel were only eight and six years old respectively and unlikely to pose much resistance to the attackers. A discarded dagger and blood spatter

near the third pallet suggests that the twelve-year old Godwin tried to defend his siblings.

If anyone in the party has the ability to cast Past Visions or equivalent magic with a temporal range measured in hours and some form of nightvision ability, they may eventually home in on a vision of the attack. Six dark robed humanoid figures advance upon the building shortly after three in the morning; two approach the front door, the others station themselves by the shuttered windows at the rear. They simultaneously burst through doors and windows. In the children's room, one of the figures appears to cast a spell – taloned hands are glimpsed. The other creature surges towards Godwin who has been awakened by the assault and is clutching a dagger. Moments later, Godwin appears unconscious, his right arm bent at an unnatural angle with the creature's head touching it. In the parents' bedroom, a night-shirted Edric is quickly locked in combat with two creatures, blocking their path to Gillian. The remaining two figures break into the bedroom and there's a glimpse of taloned hands as she is seized. Edric is temporarily distracted and talons rip through his chest. He falls, blood spraying out. The monsters descend upon him and his wife and they are hidden from view. The apparent leader of the beings reasserts his control and organises his minions into carrying the unmoving bodies out of the farm and away in the direction of the hills. If related to Tull, he'll be adamant that this is definitely not the work of ogres and he is anxious to pursue any trail that can be found.

PART IV: TRACKING TERROR

By now, it should be about mid-afternoon, unless the party have been particularly slack or efficient. Dusk will not fall until after eight o'clock in the evening, so there is plenty of daylight remaining. Tull will opine that the gathering clouds portend heavy rain later, which will most likely wash out any tracks.

If the PCs have any skill in tracking, then a successful Tracking maneuver (Medium +0 difficulty degree) will locate sets of humanoid tracks heading northwards away from the Stratten Farm and towards the Bleak Hills. Success at Hard degree or higher will reveal that one set of the tracks was made by someone wearing boots – the others are unshod. If the PCs lack any tracking expertise, Tull will offer his modest skills.

Slowed by the need to follow the trail, it will take two hours to reach the barrow, which is some six miles distant. The vampires' route is not direct, however, and they have attempted to obscure their trail at various points. The party must succeed at four Tracking maneuvers, one every half-hour along the route. The difficulty degrees are Medium (+0), Hard (-20), Hard (-20) and Very Hard (-40). If any maneuver is failed, the trackers can make a new roll after an extra half-hour of searching. GMs should make careful note of how much time the party loses in transit.



PART V: THE VAMPIRE BARROW

The trail will lead the party to the lower slopes of a small hill. Atop the hill are a few stunted trees and a low grassy mound – a stone doorway frames the entrance into a dark tunnel. Tull will be grim-faced.

"This is evil work indeed. That barrow upon the hill is the resting place of some pagan chieftain of ancient times. The villagers believe that its lord sleeps uneasily and avoid this hill. During the rule of the Earl's grandsire, they petitioned for the barrow to be sealed and craftsmen from the castle came and blocked the entrance."

Anyone looking at the hillside itself will notice that the ground has been recently disturbed (Light Perception [+20] maneuver). Further investigation will uncover a series of shallow graves where eight adult and two child corpses have been interred. Several of the corpses are seriously decayed; the freshest corpses will show fang and talon wounds. Tull will be able to identify the remains as being those of the serfs, the farmer Graeme, and the Locksleys. A successful Healing maneuver (Medium [+0] difficulty) will garner the significant detail that the corpses have been drained of blood.

There's a second salient detail – there aren't enough corpses to account for all the missing people. Even if the adventurers don't spot this, Tull will notice:

"The Stratten children aren't here. They must have been taken into the barrow – perhaps they are still alive. We must rescue them from these devils."

Hopefully, the heroes will have realized that they are facing one or more Vampires by this point. They may fashion improvised stakes by lopping branches from nearby trees.

(It is possible that the adventurers may decide that entering a barrow inhabited by an unknown number of vampires is too dangerous. Tull will insist that he must brave the barrow for the sake of the children and will appeal to the adventurers' honour to join him. If persuasion fails, Tull will light a lantern, unsheathe his sword and enter the barrow. Perhaps a minute later, there'll be faint sounds of battle followed by a scream and then silence. If the party tarry in the area until nightfall, the vampires will kill the children and then attack anyone camped outside the barrow. Otherwise the vampires will kill their captives and make good their escape.)

THE BARROW

1. Entrance: A weathered stone doorway (some 5' wide) frames the entrance into the barrow. The mound has been fashioned such that it overhangs the doorway increasing the shadows within. 5' beyond the entrance is the opening into a much darker downward sloping tunnel.

2. Tunnel: This tunnel slopes steeply downwards for some 20' into darkness – characters must either have Nightvision Talents or light sources to be able to see by this point. (Small patches of a phosphorescent fungus dot the walls providing sufficient glimmers of light for those with Nightvision, including the Vampire and its spawn.) Unless the characters can succeed in Very Hard [-40] Stalking maneuvers, they will be unable to descend the tunnel without causing a small but noisy cascade of falling stones.

3. Archway: A roughly hewn stone archway marks the outer sanctum of the tomb. Symbols in a forgotten language have been carved into the stone – perhaps praise of the buried lord, perhaps a warning to trespassers.

4–7. Side Tombs: Short passageways branch off the main tunnel (10) and lead through open doorways into small tombs. These were the burial places of the chieftain's principal retainers, whose skeletons once lay upon the low stone slabs in the centre of each tomb. The spawn have unceremoniously tossed the

remains onto the floor so that they could rest atop the stones. There is one spawn in each of the side tombs.

8. Side Tomb: The strongest spawn has established itself in this tomb. A heap of broken bones on the floor is all that remains of its original occupant. The three surviving Stratten children are bound together in a group in the far corner of the tomb. Godwin is deeply unconscious, while Lillian and Samuel are crying. (Medium Perception maneuver to hear from anywhere in the main tunnel.)

9. Side Tomb: Keveth the vampire now rests in this tomb. On one side of the burial bier are the remains of the retainer, on the other side, there is a neat pile of Keveth's own possessions: including longbow, quivers, money pouches, and various assorted items of mundane equipment (backpack, lantern, flask of oil, several changes of clothing, parchment, quill pen, rope).

10. Main Tunnel: At the near end of this 5' wide tunnel is the archway (3); at the far end is a stone door (11) leading to the inner sanctum (12). Six passages, three on either side, branch off from this tunnel leading to the side tombs (locations 4 to 9).

11. Stone Door: Symbols in an ancient runic script have been carved into the stone of this door. If they were ever magical, their enchantment has faded away over the centuries. The door can be opened in five rounds by the application of brute force (Extremely Hard maneuver for mortals).

12. Inner Sanctum: This room is some 25' across and is dominated by a massive stone bier (where the Wight normally rests). It is completely pitch dark in this room (no fungus has invaded this part of the tomb). Funerary treasures flank both sides of the bier: one hundred ancient gold pieces, a silver cloak clasp (worth 25gp), two golden armbands (worth 50gp each), and an electrum circlet with an emerald gem (worth 125gp).





VAMPIRE AND WIGHT TACTICS:

The party is unlikely to be able to enter the main tunnel without alerting the vampires – even if they can negotiate the outer tunnel without causing mini-avalanches, their light sources will give the game away. Keveth and his spawn will lurk in their respective chambers, hoping that the adventurers will spread out along the main tunnel. The children will be allowed to whimper in an effort to entice the adventurers deeper into the tomb. The confined spaces will make it difficult for the heroes to rush any single side tomb and the spawn will seek opportunities to turn the battle into a series of individual melees. Keveth himself will hang back, if possible, to use spells such as *Distractions*, *Fear*, and *Sleep* to weaken or temporarily remove opponents from the fray. Keveth may also use *Charm* on targets holding lanterns and other light sources, and if successful, will instruct his new allies to extinguish their illumination, plunging the battle zone into darkness, where any combatant without *Night Vision* will be effectively fighting blind (-100 to all attacks).

The desecration of the tomb by the Vampires has angered the Wight. It has been biding its time for a suitable opportunity to avenge itself upon the interlopers. At the GM's discretion, combat between the vampires and the adventurers may be that suitable opportunity. If so, it will heave open the door to its tomb (this will take five rounds and will be easily heard above the sound of fighting). Once the Wight exits the inner sanctum, it will attack whoever is closest, vampire, spawn, or mortal, and not stop until everything is truly dead within its tomb.

Note that Keveth, the spawn, and the Wight cannot pursue anyone who flees the tomb while it is still daylight. The Wight will not leave the confines of the barrow even at night.

PART VI: AFTERMATH

If the adventurers rescue the children but are compelled to flee the barrow, they should head towards Drumaham at best speed. The Wight (if alive) cannot pursue them; Keveth (if alive) will leave the area with any surviving Spawn as soon as night falls. If Keveth is killed but some of his Spawn still live, the Spawn will attempt to pursue the party after dusk, leading to a potential encounter in the open or a second battle in the village (where sheer weight of numbers should see the Spawn destroyed).

If the adventurers slay the vampires, they would do well to stake or behead their corpses to ensure they stay dead. If the Wight is still alive, it will behead any vampire corpses left in its tomb.

If Peter Tull has survived, he'll recommend that the party return to Drumaham, where any surviving children can be handed over to the care of relatives. He'll also petition the Earl to have the barrow resealed again.

REWARDS

Tracing Keveth and his spawn to the barrow should be considered a Minor Party Goal. Rescuing the children should be counted as a Minor Party Goal in its own right. Slaying the entire vampire coven constitutes a Major Party Goal. Slaying the Wight is only a Minor Party Goal (as it only poses a threat to anyone within the barrow).

GAME STATISTICS

WEAK VAMPIRE SPAWN (4)

Level: 3

Hits: 116 (PPs: 0)

Size: Medium

Movement: 12'

Initiative: +21

Defensive Bonus: 35 (20 stats, 15 Survival Instinct)

Attacks: 70 S-Puncture (fangs), 70 S-Slash (talons)

Special Abilities: Natural Weapons (fangs & talons), Enhanced Senses, Consumption (Blood), Night Vision, Regeneration (Major): Silver, Survival Instinct, Vulnerabilities: Frailty (Chest, Puncture [Wooden stake]), Frailty (Neck, Slash [Medium]), Repulsion (Holy Symbols), Sunlight.

Stats: St 75 (6); Co 75 (6); Ag 75 (10); Qu 75 (10); SD 75 (6); Re 75 (6); In 75 (6); Pr 75 (6).

RR: Stamina RR: 37; Will RR: 37; Magic RR: 37

Important Skills: Perception (12) 76, Climbing (12) 70, Stalk & Hide (12) 70, Ambush (12) 70

Treasure: None

Note: Class Two Undead

STRONG VAMPIRE SPAWN (1)

Level: 5

Hits: 128 (PPs: 0)

Size: Medium

Movement: 12'

Initiative: +21

Defensive Bonus: 45 (20 stats, 25 Survival Instinct)

Attacks: 82 S-Puncture (fangs), 82 S-Slash (talons)

Special Abilities: Natural Weapons (fangs & talons), Enhanced Senses, Consumption (Blood), Night Vision, Regeneration (Major): Silver, Survival Instinct, Vulnerabilities: Frailty (Chest, Puncture [Wooden stake]), Frailty (Neck, Slash [Medium]), Repulsion (Holy Symbols), Sunlight.

Stats: St 75 (6); Co 75 (6); Ag 75 (10); Qu 75 (10); SD 75 (6); Re 75 (6); In 75 (6); Pr 75 (6).

RR: Stamina RR: 47; Will RR: 47; Magic RR: 47

Important Skills: Perception (18) 88, Climbing (18) 82, Stalk & Hide (18) 82, Ambush (18) 82

Treasure: None

Note: Class Two Undead

KEVETH THE VAMPIRE

Level: 7

Hits: 200 (PPs 126)

Size: Medium

Movement: 14'

Initiative: +30

Defensive Bonus: 81 (46 stats, 35 Survival Instinct)

Attacks: 125 M-Slash (longsword), 115 M-Puncture (longbow) 78 S-Puncture (fangs), 78 S-Slash (talons)

Special Abilities: Enhanced Senses, Scholar, Natural Weapons (fangs & talons), Enhanced Scent, Consumption (Blood), Night Vision, Regeneration (Major): Silver, Survival Instinct, Vulnerabilities: Frailty (Chest, Puncture [Wooden stake]), Frailty (Neck, Slash [Medium]), Repulsion (Holy Symbols), Sunlight, Hunger

Stats: St 75 (21); Co 75 (21); Ag 80 (22); Qu 85 (23); SD 90 (9); Re 80 (7); In 80 (7); Pr 90 (14)

RR: Stamina RR: 107; Will RR: 83; Magic RR: 79

Important Skills: Perception (20) 96, Climbing (10) 92, Duping (15) 81, Stalk & Hide (10) 81, Ambush (7) 66, Power Point Dev (20) 126, Charm (10) 73, Dispel Magic (5) 48, Distractions (10) 73, Fear (10) 73, Past Visions (13) 79, Quiet Ways (5) 48, Sleep (12) 77, Study Target (4) 43, Tongues (10) 73

Treasure: +10 magical Longsword; Longbow and 2 quivers of arrows; Flute (+10 to Play Instrument, +1 spell adder). In 4 pouches: 200gp (total), 100 sp (total).

Note: Class Four Undead, originally a Human Harper





WIGHT

Level: 10

Hits: 150 (PPs: 0)

Size: Medium

Movement: 12'

Initiative: +17

Defensive Bonus: 137 (12 stats, 35 shield, 40 armor, 50 Survival Instinct)

Attacks: 135 M-Slash (longsword), 120 L-Puncture (spear), 70 S-Crush

Special Abilities: Constitution Drain, Death's Endurance, Dark Vision (Greater), Regeneration (Major), Survival Instinct, Vulnerabilities: Fetter (barrow), Sunlight,

Stats: St 75 (14); Co 75 (11); Ag 75 (6); Qu 75 (6); SD 75 (6); Re 75 (6); In 75 (6); Pr 75 (14).

RR: Stamina RR: 92; Will RR: 82; Magic RR: 82

Important Skills: Perception (20) 82, Stalk & Hide (20) 82, Ambush (20) 82

Treasure: +10 magical studded leather armor, +10 magical shield, +15 magical longsword, +10 magical spear. By side of bier: a hundred ancient gold pieces, a silver cloak clasp (25gp), two golden armbands (50gp each), and an electrum circlet with an emerald gem (125gp).

Note: Class Three Undead, originally a Human Fighter

PETER TULL (Sheriff for Drumaham)

Level: 3

Hits: 90 (PPs: 74)

Size: Medium

Movement: 10'

Initiative: +16

Defensive Bonus: 59 (14 stats, 25 shield, 20 armor)

Attacks: 70 M-Slash (broadsword), 70 M-Puncture (longbow), 21 S-Slash (dagger)

Special Abilities/Talents: Shield Training, Profession Adaptability, Bonus Skill Ranks (Stalking & Hiding), Skill Specialization (Healing)

Stats: St 75 (7); Co 72 (5); Ag 83 (9); Qu 75 (7); SD 71 (5); Re 67 (4); In 84 (9); Pr 78 (6).

RR: Stamina RR 50; Will RR 50; Magic RR 58

Important Skills: Climbing (3) 31, Healing (4) 43, Perception (6) 44, Power Point Dev (6) 74, Riding (4) 44, Stalking & Hiding (6) 44, Survival (4) 33, Tracking (5) 39. Spells: Find Shelter (3) 29, Locate Food (2) 24, Minor Healing (5) 39, Nature's Strength (9) 59, Traceless Passing (5) 39.

Treasure: No magical equipment. Broadsword, longbow, quiver with arrows, soft leather armor, dagger, money pouch (15gp, 30 sp), sturdy outdoor clothing, two days' hard tack, wineskin (full), waterskin, backpack, rope, lantern, oil flask, flint and steel. Ordinary light horse with saddle and associated tack, bedroll and tent carried by horse.

Note: Human Ranger

THE FLYING TOADSTOOL

The name of this coaching inn refers to an incident that passed from history to legend several generations back. The miller's daughter, in pursuit of her intended mate, had acquired a magic love token from the local mystic. After yet another rebuffing, the rather muscular woman hurled the toadstool at her beloved. He stumbled and fell from the balcony he was on.

The injuries he sustained addled him. With her constant attentions afterwards he grew to love and depend on her for everything, spending his diminished days in her care. The legend of course ends with a happily ever after, but in reality her father's mill was eventually sold to pay for the man's care, and the couple's final few years were spent in abject poverty. Strangely neither complained.

When Alehendra, the current owner, purchased the inn, it was already old and run down. Little has changed beyond staff members and some shuffling of the dirt. Business is slow and the staff lethargic and malnourished; the glory days of the inn are long in the past.

USING THIS INN

This inn can easily be used as a regular stopping place, or as a side adventure within a larger campaign, as there is a mystery to be solved here, should the characters choose to dig a little. The Inn is situated along a stretch of road pretty much anywhere. The only outside reference is to a mill that once existed somewhere nearby, and the north arrow on the map which can be easily ignored.

1.Road Marker

A large rock painted with a mile marking telling characters how far they have come from the last stop along the way. The opposite side gives the distance to the next stop along the road.

2.Front Door

Weathered, but once elegant, this door is only barred late at night after all hope of further patrons has been abandoned. A house maid is within ear shot

during the night (usually in the servery) and will summon the mistress should the need arise.

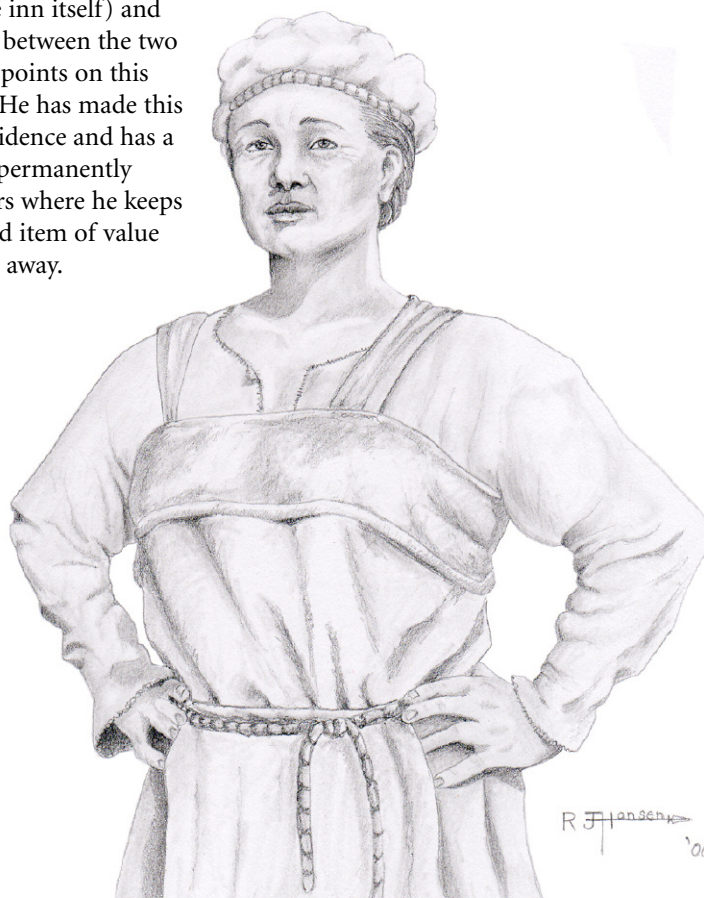
3.Ladies Parlor

Alehendra greets all patrons here, and works diligently on her paperwork here during the day. In the evenings, she plays the piano for noble guests, or those who tip well. Occasionally she will share a story.

4.Great Room

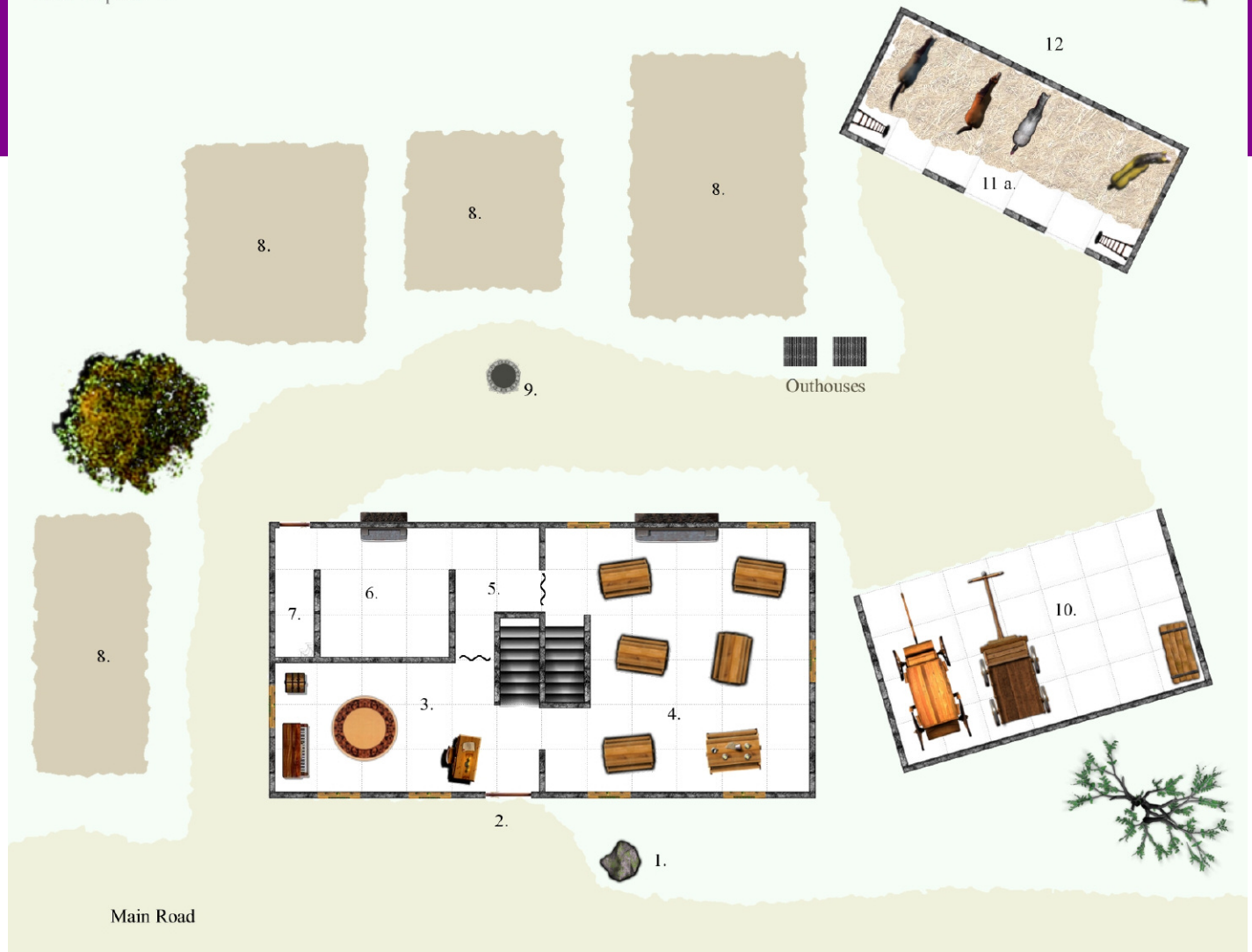
This large room with a great fire place at the far end is the most well trafficked in the inn. Patrons will be spread out over the various tables. Onsloti and Feor will often be found drinking together in the evening, singing bawdy songs loudly and poorly, finding some trivial local issue to argue over, or just discussing the latest rumors and gossip.

Jarni generally minds his own business while taking meals and having a few drinks in the evening. He can be drawn into conversations, and will even offer to do a limited amount of trading. His wagon regularly brings supplies (mostly for the inn itself) and curios between the two major points on this road. He has made this his residence and has a room permanently upstairs where he keeps the odd item of value locked away.



The Flying Toadstool Coaching Inn

Scale 1 square = 5'



Delori is very discrete, and approaches the other patrons cautiously with subtle grace. She has a dual purpose: to get the customers drunk in the hopes of rolling them, or to negotiate a more secluded encounter at reasonable rates. Those who opt for the latter will likely find items of value misplaced the next morning. Alehendra does not approve of her per se, but the added revenue Delori brings in encouraging patrons to drink justifies the blind eye where she is concerned.

5. Served

Berta glides in and out of the served, through the old curtains that serve as doors, to bring food and beverages to the patrons. A sink allows for the occasional washing of a glass for a good tipper. Shelves of plates, cups and flatware line the walls, most of it chipped. Berta and the housemaids will bed down here at night.

6. Kitchen

Dorana or Florani will be in here at different times preparing the simple and affordable meals served in

the great room. A large cooking fireplace warms the room from dawn to very late night.

7. Larder

Hanging meat and various other stored supplies fill the room. Nothing is of exceptional quality, but it is a fairly plentiful store, enough to sell provisions to needy travelers that happen through. Sales are made by the lady alone, though Gemeni will fetch anything required.

8. Garden

A well tended garden; it provides much of the herbs and vegetables for the inn. Without the food from the garden and the cheap indentured labor, it would be difficult to keep the inn open.

9. Well

An old well, deep but still providing water. Should a person have cause to descend to the water level, some searching would find assorted human remains long since turned to rags and bones.

10. Coach Shed

This three walled shed with sloped thatched roof holds several wagons or coaches and a simple repair bench where Anthin often works away, making wheels and other parts to repair the wagons of unfortunate wayfarers, for a substantial markup.

11. Stables

This long narrow building houses the horses of the inn and of the patrons on ground level (11 a). Ladders lead to simple spartan quarters in the loft; the male staff resides here (11 b).

12. Old Graveyard

A few markers lie broken in the ground, one of them Feor insists is the grave of none other than the legendary recipient of the Flying Toadstool himself. A space beside the grave has an unmarked stone.

13. Common Room

Modest lodgings consisting of a collection of cots. Sheets are reasonably clean and bedbugs are minimal compared to similar lodgings in other inns.

14. Economy Private Room

A simple room with chests for storage and two basic beds. Comfortable private lodgings. The windows overlook the main road.

15. Jarni's Room

Jarni uses this room as home and office storing any cargo of value here behind good quality locks in sturdy trunks. He is always willing to do business and charges fair rates on his better items. A journal of poor quality poems sits on the table beside the bed where he laments the loss of his heart's desire, and appeals to the heavens for the redemption of wayward women.

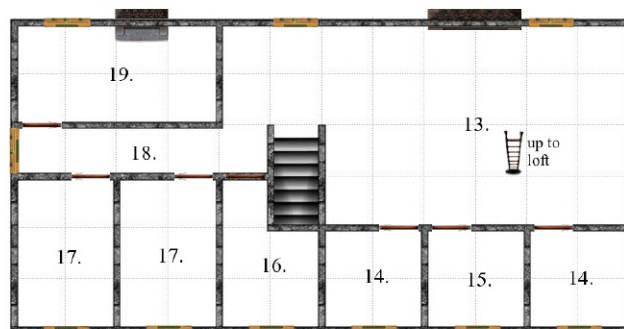
16. Blocked Room

A plastered over door and boarded up window are the only ways in or out of this room.

A spirit dwells in this room. In the last days of the miller's daughter and her beloved, they resided here. She tended him until his death, when he was buried in the back of the stables.

She toiled away in the inn for years afterwards earning her keep. Eventually marauders raided the inn, slaying her and the other staff, dumping the remains in the well to hide the evidence. The Inn was shunned for over a decade.

Flying Toadstool Second Level



Scale 1 square = 5'

When the inn was reopened years later, no one knew of the hidden remains. This room was a source of many complaints by patrons and was finally sealed off to prevent further rumors of ghosts.

The spirit still tries to communicate visions in dreams to inn patrons. She uses several different dreams: an old woman weeping over a dying old man, a nightmare of a violent raid on the inn, and finally a vision of darkness, cold and wet.

Should characters enter this room unwittingly, she will manifest and attempt to scare them off. If her remains are recovered from the well and buried alongside her beloved she will rest in peace.

17. Expensive Private Room

These good rooms have two decent beds and modest furnishings. They are kept clean and well tended by the housemaids.

18. Hall

Artwork once hung on the walls, but now only light colored rectangles in the dingy plaster mark their passing.

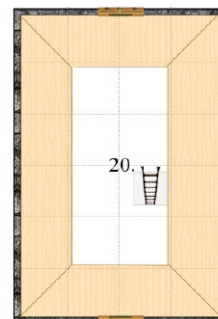
19. Alehendra's Room

Lost in her memories of lost suitors and better days Alehendra whiles away her few private moments here. Nothing of particular value is kept here. Except for the comfortable room she lives no better than the servants.

20. Common Loft

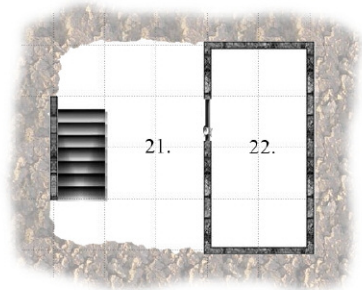
Seldom used, this common loft has a large communal bed. In busier times people would lay a simple mat out on the hard wooden frame that rings the room and lie cheek to jowl. Now it only sees use when military patrols pass through.

Flying Toadstool Loft



Scale 1 square = 5'

Flying Toadstool Cellar



Scale 1 square = 5'

1.Storage Cellar

Beer, salted meats, preserves and cellar vegetables line shelves on the walls. The dirt floor is kept free of debris. Only the staff and the odd mouse frequent this place.

22. Strong Room

The strong room is the last refuge in case the inn is attacked and serves double function as a storage place for valuables. Alehendra holds the only keys to the three Hard locks that bar the iron door. There is always food and water in here to last for a few days.

Very few things of any real value are stored here since the inn has fallen on hard times.

NPC'S

A table with HARP stats is provided at the end of this section, here is a quick list of characters with some GM notes.

HOST AND STAFF

Alehendra – The current owner, a middle aged woman of short stature. Her frayed clothing was once considered finery, and her glass jewelry conveys an image of a woman aspiring to better. She is very proper in her manners, but is tolerant of the great room rowdiness for the sake of the coffers.

Berta – The saucy serving wench, she is quick to flirt. Her best years are behind her and her children grown. She is ready with a retort, or a slap as needed.

Dorana and Florani – Both house maids, Dorana is in her last years, and Florani has yet to reach puberty. Florani is a passable cook, but Dorana is a master.

Gemeni – The House man, still strong of back and good in a fight, he serves as laborer and bouncer should the need arise. He is also sent to fetch Othor when he sneaks off.

Anthin – The Coach house man, a skilled craftsman well into his latter years. A man of few words and a distinct inner peace.

Othor – Stable boy, this young lad of thirteen years tends the horses and stables, but dreams of following wayfarers on a mission of derring-do. On occasion, he has been known to sneak out after them.

GUESTS AND PATRONS

Jarni – This simple merchant lost his drive for better things years ago, and he never discusses his former dreams. He eyes Delori with longing and sadness but never speaks to her. His wares are good, and his prices improve with knowing him.

Delori – An independent woman of questionable pursuits, she is witty and bold without losing her subtle graces. She is pretty after a fashion and dresses simply but revealingly. Her lavender perfume lingers behind her.

Onsloti – A local farmer, foul of humor and of visage, he learns what he can about people, always looking for an advantage. He would sell his mother for a handful of coins, and he likes her.

Feor – A local drunk, always willing to listen and then explain how he did it better in his day. He is an authority on the area and its legends and rumors. In his day he was a magistrate and is surprisingly learned when somewhat sober.

UNWELCOME PERSONAGES

Spirit – The malcontent soul of the miller's daughter. She longs for final rest beside her beloved. She is frightening but not aggressive and prefers to manifest in dreams. She will appear to anyone finding their way into her room unwittingly.

QUICK STAT TABLE

| Name | Lvl | Size | BMR | Init | DB | Hits | Attacks | Skills/Notes | Stamina | Will | Magics |
|----------------------|-----|------|-----|------|----|------|--|---|---------|------|--------|
| Host and Staff | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Alehendra | 3 | M | 8 | 8 | 8 | 35 | +10 Small Slash (Dagger) | Prof - Trader Perception (10) 60 Trading (12) 65 Duping (10) 60 Appraisal (10) 60 | 15 | 35 | 20 |
| Berta | 2 | M | 11 | 12 | 6 | 40 | +40 Brawling | Prof - Trader Perception (9) 55 Duping (6) 40 Appraisal (6) 40 | 20 | 30 | 25 |
| Dorana | 4 | M | 7 | 6 | 2 | 35 | +40 Small Slash (kitchen knife) | Prof - Urban Craftsman Cooking (18) 80 Lore – Local Region (10) 60 | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| Florani | 1 | M | 10 | 10 | 10 | 40 | +10 Brawling +10 Small Slash (kitchen knife) | Prof - Urban Craftsman Cooking (6) 30 | 25 | 15 | 15 |
| Gemeni | 4 | M | 10 | 14 | 35 | 70 | +65 Brawling +80 Small slash (short sword) | Prof – Fighter Perception (10) 60 Duping (8) 50 Tracking (6) 40 | 45 | 30 | 35 |
| Anthin | 3 | M | 6 | 5 | 4 | 45 | +20 Small Crush (hammer) | Prof - Urban Craftsman Craft – Wagon Repair (12) 74 | 15 | 30 | 30 |
| Othor | 1 | M | 10 | 10 | 8 | 45 | +30 Medium Crush (staff) | Prof - Rural Craftsman Animal Handling (6) 40 Stalk Hide (6) 40 | 20 | 15 | 15 |
| Guests and Patrons | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jarni | 6 | M | 10 | 12 | 55 | 80 | +40 Large Puncture (thrown spear) +50 Large Puncture (spear) +65 Small Slash (short sword) | Prof – Trader Perception (15) 75 Trading (20) 85 Duping (10) 60 Appraisal (10) 60 Lore - Local Region (10) 60 | 25 | 60 | 40 |
| Delori | 4 | M | 11 | 14 | 25 | 65 | +60 Small Slash (Dagger) +30 Brawling | Prof – Thief Perception (10) 60 Trickery (15) 75 Stalk Hide (9) 55 Locks and Traps (9) 55 Pick Pocket (15) 75 Streetwise (9) 55 Dirty Fighting (9) 55 | 35 | 45 | 35 |
| Onsloti | 2 | M | 8 | 10 | 10 | 45 | +15 Brawling | Prof – Scoundrel Perception (9) 55 Trickery (9) 55 Stalk Hide (9) 55 Singing (0) -20 | 15 | 35 | 20 |
| Feor | 3 | M | 7 | 6 | 4 | 35 | +10 Brawling | Prof – Scholar Perception (1) 15 Lore - Local Region (12) 74 Lore -Jurisprudence(12) 74 Singing (1) 8 | 15 | 25 | 30 |
| Unwelcome Personages | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spirit | 5 | M | 14 | 32 | 35 | 90 | +100 Small Slash *Aura of Fear *Constitution Drain | Undead Specter Tracking (18) 103 Climbing (18) 78 Stalk & Hide (13) 78 Ambush (13) 78 Perception (10) 87 *Only harmed by magic and elemental attacks *Major Regeneration | 45 | 65 | 75 |

PRISONERS OF CHERIN KEEP

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Prisoners of Cherin Keep is an adventure set for playing characters 4th to 6th level, usable with either HARP or any version of Rolemaster. It can be used as a stand alone adventure or as an add-on to a game already in progress.

The PCs are the next meal for a clan of Trolls. They need to escape from their prison and retrieve their gear, all while trying to avoid waking the Trolls. The PCs will need to rely on their skill, stealth and wits to save themselves from their captors.

Note to the GM: There are several options to explain why the PCs are now prisoners. This could be a result of being defeated in combat, drugged, ambushed, etc. However you wish to explain how they are now imprisoned is up to your imagination but the fact remains that they are captives and are going to be cooked if they do not escape.

SCENARIO

The PCs awaken groggy and confused in a dirty, stone cell. They are being held in the lower level of a forgotten keep now inhabited by Trolls. The upper level is marked only by the remaining entrance that leads down into the cell area. The stones from the top level have long been removed by local farmers to make walls and various other useful structures. The PCs have been stripped off their gear, armor and weapons. The only thing left is their basic underclothing. They are in one of six stone cells. Several are unusable due to fallen debris and broken doors. Another is filled with the bones of those who were not able to free themselves. The last thing the PCs may recall is camping near the Cherin river when a tribe of Trolls ambushed them. Now they are prisoners.

Your eyes are heavy and your head is throbbing. You awake finding yourself on a dirty, stone floor. The foul stench of rotten flesh dominates the stagnant air. Your weapons and gear are missing and a small cell is your new accommodation. How you came to be in this predicament is a fuzzy memory. The only image you can recall is that of Trolls.

Have the players make a secret percentile roll. Whoever has the highest roll has lost their favorite



weapon/item to the Greater Troll. But do not reveal this to the PCs at this time. See sections 2 and 4 for further explanation.

1. Prison Cells

There are six prison cells that are located at the bottom of an old keep. Only one torch lights the cell area just outside of where the PCs are held. They are guarded by a single lesser Troll who is dozing at his post

1a.) This cell is partially caved in and the barred door is open, barely hanging on its hinges.

1b.) This rat and bug infested cell holds the rotting remains of unfortunate victims of the recent past.

1c.) This cell holds the PCs. It's small and cramped. Outside the cell door sits a lone Troll sentry, who is falling asleep. The cell has a heavy wooden bar, reenforced with iron, sitting across the outside of its door. No lock is used to secure the door. In order to find their way out the players will have to use their wits. Magical manipulation may be an option for those who are skilled in the craft.

Using Perception skill (RM: Extremely Hard, HARP,



Very Hard), the PCs can notice a faint message inscribed on the wall on the lowest row of stone bricks that reads, “Six over and up just one. Better luck to you for I am done.” It’s a clue left behind to find an old escape tunnel; six stones over and one row up from the location of the message.

The loose stones can be found without the aid of the message with a Perception maneuver (RM: Sheer Folly; HARP: Extremely Hard) if they are prepared to doggedly search everywhere – the GM should permit multiple rolls if the characters are willing to keep looking. After removing these stones, the adventurers will find a tunnel large enough to crawl through. It runs to a storage room at the end of the hallway leading to the common area. Some old building materials such as steel bars, stone hammers, etc. are available to use as temporary improvised weapons should the PCs wish.

1d.) The remaining cells are heavily damaged with debris and have no doors making them useless for any practical needs.

The walls are crafted from large stone blocks with a solid stone ceiling hanging low above. Torch light filters through a barred window on the heavy wooden door to your cell.

2. Hallway to Common Area

The hallway leads between the prison cells and the

common area. It is dimly lit by a fading torch mounted on the wall. The Troll guarding them is resting on the floor. They can attempt to dispatch this Troll. An outright attack risks alerting the Trolls in the Common Area. If it takes longer than one round to kill the single guard, give each of the Common Area Trolls a Perception maneuver (RM: Very Hard, HARP: Hard) to hear the fight, every round.

If they wish to quietly retrieve their gear from the storage room without waking the Troll, they must make a Skill versus Skill maneuver, pitting the Troll’s Perception versus the PCs’ Stalking and Hiding skill. If the party are successful, they are able to retrieve their gear and weapons. The PCs must make Stalking and Hiding maneuvers when they don their gear as well.

2a. The Hallway Storage Room

A solid wooden door secures the entry of the storage room that sits just west of the prison cells. This dusty 10x5 room holds the PCs’ armor and equipment. An old shelf rack stands against the far wall. At this time the player who lost their gear will notice the weapon/item missing.

Other mundane items and scattered coins may be found in here as well from previous victims. Searching through the additional items and collecting the coins may make enough noise to alert the Troll. Assiduous rooting around in the detritus will gather 25 sp and 5 gp.

2b. Escape Tunnel

This tunnel leads from the cell, 1c, to the Storage Room, 2a. It is roughly 3ft tall by 3ft wide. A shelf rack has kept the hole concealed but can be moved with a little effort. If the players use this as their escape route, it can also be used as a retreat should they be discovered since the Trolls are too big to fit in it.

3. Common Area

The common area is where the Lesser Trolls eat and sleep. In this room, four Lesser Trolls lie sleeping on makeshift bedding spread out randomly around the room. See the map of the common area for exact placement of the Trolls. One seems to be a bit

restless. Allow the characters to make a Perception maneuver (RM & HARP: Medium) to notice the restless Troll. He will finally settle after a few minutes provided nothing draws his attention.

Shadows dance on the walls from the flames of the fire pit that sits in the center of the room. The PCs have two new possible directions; they can escape up the staircase or explore room 4 which is the Chieftain's.

Should they decide to leave, they will have to once again make a Skill versus Skill roll against the sleeping Trolls. Remember to apply armor penalties to the stalking rolls of the PCs.

Read the following:

The common area is dimly lit with the flickering of a dying fire. Four Trolls snore heavily on their bedding.

The stench of rotten flesh is stronger in this room. Bones from their last meal lie scattered around the fire.

3a. The Staircase and Portcullis Entrance

The staircase up from the common area leads to a portcullis that has been jammed halfway open. It was once the entryway that separated the prison area from the rest of the keep, which is now in ruins.

4. The Chieftain's Abode

This room is home to the Chieftain of the tribe. His chamber is a little better kept than the common area. He has taken care to create comfortable bedding as well as a trophy wall. Skulls and items of worthy adversaries of past encounters sit on old, wooden shelves. A Perception maneuver (RM: Easy, HARP: Light) reveals the weapon/item of the PC



who rolled the highest percentile in the Scenario section. It is amongst the various items the Chieftain has collected. If the PCs go directly into the room, they will be attacked immediately by the Greater Troll. He is awake; eating the remains of his last cooked victim. The other four Trolls will awake and attack as well if they are still alive at this point.

In terms of treasure, the GM should make one roll per PC on the appropriate money and item treasure

tables (RM & HARP use the Normal columns for both money and equipment), rerolling any result that is too potent.

Cherin Keep Area

Once the PCs escape the lower prison area, they will find themselves standing on a large hill roughly one hundred feet high. The portcullis is the only reminder that anything once stood here. The keep



itself lies in ruins with bits of rubble scattered here and there. Most of it is too small for any cover. A few sections are man sized offering “Half Hard Cover”.

A well traveled path, outlined by guide stones, leads down the north side of the hill. At the base of the hill, it wraps back south towards the Cherin River and a collapsed bridge. The surrounding area is forested land. Should the PCs cross the river or make it to the woods, they will have successfully escaped.

TACTICS

The PCs may escape from their cell by removing the stones in the wall, sneaking through the tunnel and retrieving their gear. They may also use magical manipulation to move the bar that secures their cell or escape with short-range teleportation spells.

Next, they must move through the hallway to the common area without notice or risk waking the four sleeping Trolls. Here they can choose to leave or eliminate the Trolls. Each attack risks drawing the attention of the Greater Troll in the adjoining room.

An assassination attempt (coup de grace) may be an option on the sleeping Trolls. A failed attempt will immediately wake the Troll and the other nearby Trolls the following round.

After clearing the common area, they can enter the Chieftain's Abode. He will be awake and ready for a fight.

There is an option to avoid most of the fighting by creating a diversion. This can be as simple as drawing the Trolls out of the lower level while one PC scavenges for loot or lost items.

CONCLUSION

If the characters escape, hopefully they will have found or fought for all of their gear. They can always attempt to sneak in again but the Trolls will be on high alert for several days.

If one or more of the PCs die, they will be dinner for the Trolls and their gear tossed in the storage closet with an item or two added to the Chieftain's trophy shelves.

Rolemaster Encounter Table

| | Lvl | Base Rate | Max Pace / MN Bonus | Speed MS / AQ | Size / Crit | Hits | AT (OB) | Attacks | Perception |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----------|---------------------|---------------|-------------|------|---------|----------------------|---------------|
| Chieftain (Greater Forest Troll) | 10 | 80 | FSpt / 10 | MF / MD | L / II | 175 | 11 (10) | 85 LClaw 75 LBite | 50 Perception |
| 5 Lesser Forest Trolls | 6 | 80 | FSpt / 10 | MF / MD | L / II | 150 | 11 (10) | 70 LClaw 60 LBite | 30 Perception |

HARP Encounter Table

| | Lvl | Size | BMR | Init | DB | Hits | Attacks | Skills |
|---------------------------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|---|---|
| Chieftain (Greater Troll) | 10 | L | 16 | 15 | 100 | 250 | 125 L-Crush, 110 L-Slash, 90 L-Puncture | Stamina RR 100, Will RR 75, Magic RR 75, Perception 90 |
| 5 Lesser Trolls | 5 | M(L) | 14 | 15 | 75 | 180 | 95 L-Crush, 80 L-Slash, 75 M- Puncture | Stamina RR 100, Will RR 75, Magic RR 75, Perception 70 |

THE TEMPLE OF THE THREE

Located in Thanor in northeast Emer, this Temple of the Three was a hidden shrine to a trio of gods, sibling deities among the old Thanorian pantheon of dozens of gods and spirits. While definitely not the only temple to these gods, it is one of the better preserved, and has some unique features. It also houses some powerful magical items, and a sleeping surprise. The Three were rivals—and later, enemies—of the powerful Charón gods Klysus and Akalatan.

This particular shrine was central to the priests of the Three, for reasons that will be revealed later.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The adventurers could learn of this temple in a number of ways, either by chance, or seeking items to help protect them against the increasing threat of Akalatan and Klysus in Northeast Emer. They might also be sent on this journey by others who are seeking weapons to use against the twins Sendar and Sendil, who are awakened and seeking the Heart of Agoth. Items of the Three gave protections against powers of priests of Akalatan

1. An odd triangular box found in another adventure or by some other means. It is locked, and contains three items: a map, a bundle of dried herbs, and a triangular amulet. See below for details.
2. Find just the amulet, which has mysterious hieroglyphs on it. The adventurers could investigate the purpose of the amulet through dreams and research.
3. Discover a peculiar triangular dagger, which is actually a key. This item alone, however, won't provide many clues. And it might be better for the adventurers to not come into possession of this item until some later time, as will be revealed later.

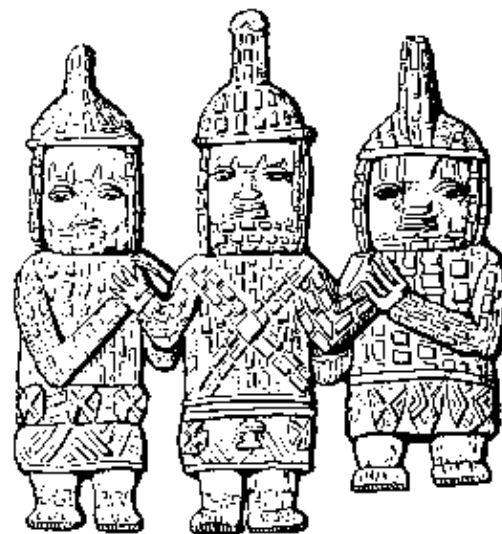
THE STARTING ITEMS

The Box: A triangular box of preserved mahogany, it is about six inches on a side, three inches tall. One side is hinged; the other two sides have small locks set in them. It is fairly clear after examining the box with any care that it is double-hinged, and that one lock opens one side, then the box could be closed, flipped over, then the other lock would open the 'bottom' side.

The Map: In the top compartment is a parchment artfully folded into a triangle so that it fits into the box. The parchment is a crude map of Silaar, indicating the location of the temple. It is very brittle and faded. The writing on the upper right is a more 'common' Thanorian alphabetic writing from Second Era Emer (not the hieroglyphs used for important religious purposes) that translates basically to *They sleep within the temple of the Three*.

The Herb: Also in the top compartment, in a small cloth pouch, is a dried herb, including leaves, stems, and seeds. The pouch is magical, preserving the potency of any herb placed inside it, up to 3 doses. Analysis of the herb reveals that it is a mild hallucinogenic, and has some other, unidentifiable property. Its origins are northern Silaar and Tai-emer.

The Amulet: In the other compartment, set into a special padded niche to keep it from shifting around, is an amulet of the Cult of the Three. It is a golden





triangle, three inches to a side, with a gold chain. On the face are hieroglyphs of the Three. This is an amulet of a high priest, primarily aligned with Arakal. It has three powers:

1. Wearer is immune to the powers of the Sentinels.
2. Can cast Prayer III once per day (+15 to RRs and Maneuver rolls, duration 3 minutes, can be applied to up to 3 people). RR's are only effective against attacks by servants of Akalatan or Klysus.
3. A Detection ability similar to Mentalist Presence, where the wearer can concentrate and detect any follower of Klysus or Akalatan within 300'. Wearer also gets general direction and approximate distance and number (roll).

The Dagger: with a long, three-sided blade and large triangular guard. The blade and guard are of a golden alloy, and the tip and edges of the blade are sharp, though it seems to be useful only for stabbing. The guard has designs on it similar to those on the amulet. The dagger was used to draw blood for offerings to Arakal but its main purpose was as a key to the Three's Portal system.

HISTORY

For a period in the Second Era, the Thanorians once controlled virtually all of Silaar, and even had large colonies in eastern Tai-emer. The Thanorian society

arose in the power vacuum that ensued when the reign of the Masters of Emer collapsed.

In the earlier period, when Thanor was more of a collection of city-states (c. SEI 3700 – 4000), the Three (“Paukapira”) were openly worshipped along with dozens of other gods by a variety of cults. The Thanorian ‘pantheon’ was much less cohesive than the Lords of Orhan, and in fact these gods often competed and even fought amongst themselves for followers.

At first the various priests—who were also often the government administrators of these city-states—had a fairly inclusive philosophy. But as a few Thanorian priest-kings conquered their neighbors and consolidated their powers, they also began to demand that the populations follow a more restrictive religious dogma. Many gods fell out of favor, were marginalized and even banned. Many continued to worship these banned deities, however; they were just forced underground in order to do so. Because of this, hidden temples were constructed in remote locations where followers could gather in secret (This one is typical in many ways, and one of the best preserved ones. It also contains some unique treasures.) The Three were by no means the only gods to meet this fate, but they were among the most popular with the warrior caste.

Polytheistic cults such as this suffered even further under the rule of the twins Sendar and Sendil. Sendar was a powerful warrior-mage who was on the verge of overthrowing the last old priest-king of Thanor, and his sister Sendil brought the Cult of the Cobra to Thanor, a religion devoted almost exclusively to Akalatan.

Though the Thanorian Empire was not particularly long-lived in comparison to some of the other Kulthean governments of the Second and Third Eras, seven centuries was sufficient for it to grow powerful and aggressive enough to be seen as a threat by the Dragonlord Voriig Kye. If he had not marked Thanor for destruction, who knows how long they might have thrived. As it was, however, Voriig unleashed his full wrath against Thanor, and by SEI 4200, the once-proud empire is in ruins, her population wiped out.

People

Thanorians were of the Jaaderi race (similar to the Lankani of present day), with thick black hair, coppery-brown skin, full lips, a prominent nose and high forehead. Tall, striking in appearance and often powerfully built, the Jaaderi are an imposing race. With their impressive appearance, however, has always apparently come a greater ego and ambition. It meant the downfall of the Thanorians in the Second Era, and it could spell trouble for the Lankani.

THE NATURE OF THE THREE

The Three were not the mightiest in the extensive Thanorian pantheon of deities, but they were patrons of warriors and warrior-priests. They were two brothers, Arapu and Arakal, and a sister, Ipata. Each embodied an aspect of the warrior: mind, body and soul, and their nature was likened in many rituals to the fluids of the body. Arapu represented the physical body, and his symbolic fluid was sweat. Arakal was of the heart, and his fluid was blood (Thanorians believed that the soul resided in the heart). Ipata was of the mind, and higher thoughts. Her fluid was tears (tears come when the mind is in pain, and they believed that tears were from the mind; they understood that the intellect was housed in the brain).

Like many of the gods of Thanor, the Three were demanding deities, requiring daily prayers, frequent offerings, and adherence to the tenets of their

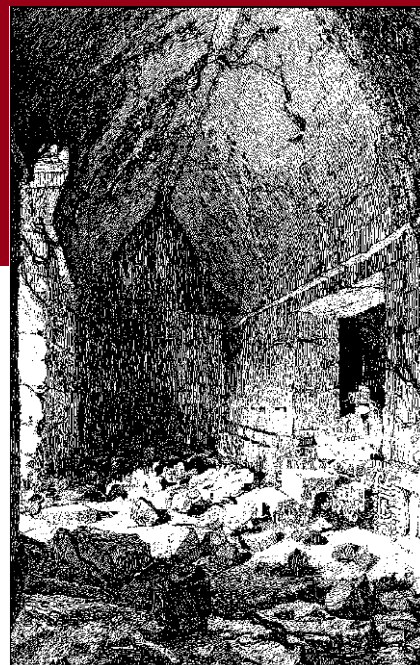
religion. And in the later period, as they grew more marginalized and desperate (local gods need followers as much as followers need them), of their more elite believers—and in more private ceremonies—they required no less than human sacrifices. Though that price was usually paid by victims captured by the followers. The high priests and their inner circle were called upon to make human sacrifices to the Three, in a gruesome ritual that involved removing the heart and brain of the victim.

In appearance the Three were depicted as being of the Jaaderi race, as can easily be seen from sculptures, reliefs, and the few surviving paintings and books. They most frequently appeared thusly:

Arapu: Of the Body, he was taller and more powerfully built than either sibling. In 'life-size' statues he is often more than eight feet tall. He is usually shirtless but wears a knee-length kilt, a collar or torque, wrist bracers and a relatively simple headband. His hair is long and in dozens of beaded braids. He is usually carrying a spear or bladed staff and a gé.

Arakal: Of the Soul, Arakal is usually depicted as barely taller than his sister, fit but not muscular like Arapu. He is also shirtless and wears a kilt, but around his neck he wears an elaborate collar made of links or scales that drapes across his chest and back. The area over his heart is open, surrounded by a ring. He is often depicted with his right palm over his heart. Arakal wears a high headdress and often has oddly-shaped knives slung on his belt. His hair is relatively short and in a small ponytail, but in paintings and colored reliefs he appears to wear bright red paint on his cheeks and black around his eyes.

Ipata: Of the Mind, Ipata is a beautiful, voluptuous woman. She is usually depicted as topless, and wearing a kilt like her brothers, but it is longer and slit up the sides. She is portrayed as a sensuous young woman, but her eyes always have an intense look. She wears a torque and bracers, and a



different sort of headdress: It is like a wide headband, with dozens of slim, curving rods sticking out of the top, each rod with a flat oval head. They almost look like peacock feathers, but with the feather part stripped off the shaft. It was said that these were the “Eyes of Ipata” that could look into the minds of men. She also usually has a Chakram on her belt.

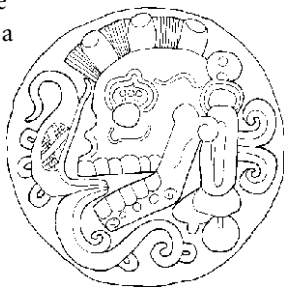
GETTING TO THE SHRINE

No route to the Shrine will be without perils. The way by water is littered with barriers, and the way by land is fraught by dangers.

BY SEA

One glance at a map, and it would seem that the easiest way to reach the shrine is by water. One need only set out from Sel-kai and sail south on a journey of less than four hundred miles, most of the trip along coastline. Unfortunately, it is not that simple. Except in the very center, the Sea of Tears is quite shallow, with many hidden shoals and plateaus that rise to just below the ocean surface. It is also very calm, with little wind. Portions of this body of water are clogged with clinging seaweed that can also be a sailing hazard. It would be almost impossible to hire a ship willing to approach the western coast of Thanor because of the rocky coastline.

The PCs could buy a boat and try to make the journey themselves, but it would be extremely dangerous even for experienced sailors.



BY LAND

Northern Silaar is mostly a temperate, windswept prairie covered by scrub grasses. The plain is punctuated by rocky outcrops and a few clusters of stunted coniferous trees. The western coast has marsh and patches of beach to the north, giving away to broken cliffs further south as the Rust Mountains take hold. The western peninsula (south of the Sel-kai islands; an area known as Vurthanor) is warmer and some of the northwest shore is marshy grassland.

Second-era ruins (generally little more than tumbled piles of stones) dot this generally bleak landscape; there are few human inhabitants except along the northern coast. A road leads from the tip of

the peninsula opposite Sel-kai City down to the plain before splitting to follow the coast east and west. The peninsula, controlled by Sel-kai, is fairly well populated by farms and plantations down as far as the road-split. Sel-kai soldiers also patrol this area, but further south is wild lands.

The PCs might be best off to follow this road westward to the Lurnen River, then cross and continue southwest, skirting the foothills of the Rust Mountains. Traces of an ancient road along that route still remain, though it is mostly eroded away or covered by shifting earth.

Crossing the river will present its own challenges, as this wide, shallow waterway is flanked on both banks by nearly a mile (more in the spring and summer) of marshland, inhabited by grabbing razorgrass, giant mosquitoes, numbing leeches and hemafies. Worse, since much of northern Silaar was a great battlefield between the forces of the Dragonlord and the Thanorians, the swamps are haunted with Corpse Candles.

Once across the river, the travelers have a choice between the coast with more stretches of marsh, or inland, which is broken, treacherous terrain populated by trolls, wyverns, wolves, and other predators.

LAND INHABITANTS

The land route will take the adventurers through a region that hosts a variety of wild creatures. While the Sel-kai peninsula is (for the most part) settled and safe, once one reaches the main Thanorian steppe, it is a wilderness. The following flora and fauna may be encountered; detailed descriptions of the more generic creatures can be found in the Shadow World Master Atlas or Creatures & Treasures, or Creatures & Monsters.

Grabbing Razorgrass: this is a relative of Razorgrass that lives in marshy soil, especially in the coastal fens where water covers the land most of the year. It has the additional ability of grappling the victim as he moves through it. If enough leaves get hold of him, the grass can pull him down and drown him. The decomposing body provides nutrients for the grass.

Numbing Leeches: Bite attack delivers a 2nd lvl nerve poison (Mild effects only).

Solev Kirik: Critical means proboscis is inserted, injects a 2nd lvl Circulatory poison and the creature

will drain 1-10 hits of blood/rnd until stunned, killed or sated (10-50 hits).

This giant mosquito is found in the marshy floodplain of the Lurnen River, and all along the northwest coast of Vurthanor. The female is over four inches long; when filled with blood her translucent abdomen is as large as a plum. The male is slightly smaller and harmless.

Hemafly: (giant flies) Also found in the Lurnen Marsh, and along the coast, and near stagnant ponds along the base of the Rust Mountains. Not unlike a common horsefly in form, though adults often reach 6' in length. The loud buzzing of their wings is a warning, which can be heard hundreds of feet away when they swarm.

Bore-burrs: Small shrubs found in hilly regions sprout these shiny brown burrs, which catch on the clothes or hide of a passing man or animal. They can sense body heat, and if not removed within a few minutes, the tiny organism inside sprouts. It will burrow into the flesh (the host may feel a sting), making a home in muscle or fat tissue. Once the burr 'bites,' it requires a deep incision to remove it, otherwise the burr drains one hit the first day, two the next, three the third, etc., as it grows. After 10 days the only way to stop it is to remove the limb or major surgery by a Lay Healer. Left unchecked, the burr will grow, making the affected area swell and deform, until the host lapses into unconsciousness and eventually dies. If a host is bitten by several burrs at once he may die within a few days. Found only in the hilly regions at the base of the mountains.

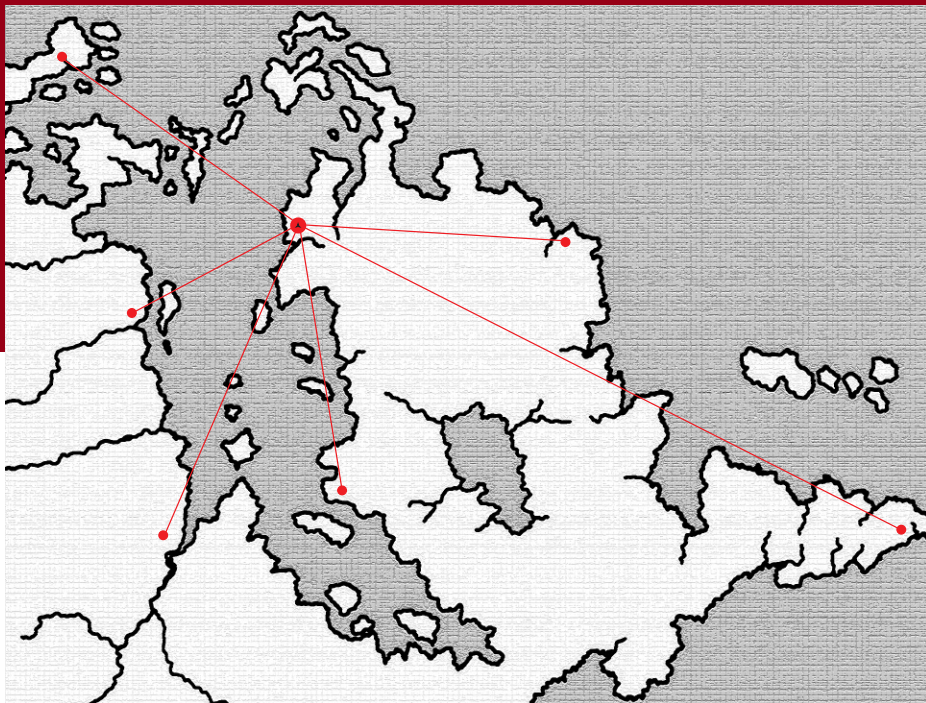
Hill Trolls: All along the Rust Mountain hills, these common Trolls delve their caves in rocky clefts. They come down out of the hills at night to look for prey.

Mountain lions: These cats, though capable of killing a man, usually seek out smaller prey like rabbits and other mammals.

Wyverns: A few land wyverns live in the rocks here, though mostly along the coast south of the Henuak River.

Night wolves: These enchanted beasts normally hunt in small packs of 5-10. The Night Wolves have glowing green eyes and a poisonous breath weapon.

Giant trap door spiders: Giant spiders that, rather



than spinning a conventional web, live in a burrow adjacent to a path or animal trail. They spin a roof or 'trap door' to cover their hole, and lay out several nearly invisible threads that act as sensors. When prey approaches, they spring out of the trap and bite the target with their paralyzing venom (6th level muscle poison). They then drag the victim back into their hole, where they inject a 6th level reduction poison, and dine on the liquefied innards at their leisure.

Corpse Candles: Class III Undead: trance on sight (RR), victim rolls RR each rnd to wake before death; its gaze drains 4 Con pts/rnd (RR).

These are flooded graves of Thanorian warriors fallen in battle against Voriig. Illusion cloaks the actual appearance of the corpse, giving it a whole and fair (if moist) appearance. The image seems to float just below the surface of the water, cupping a beckoning light in its hands. Those attracted by its glamour fall into a trance from which they may never awake.

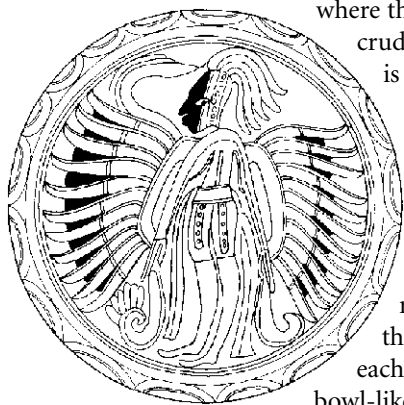
OUTER SHRINE

1. Outer Entry: Reddish rocks, folded almost vertical in places, mark the northern portions of the Rust Mountains. There are many clefts and shallow caves in this region; some are home to trolls, wyverns and other creatures.

2. Entrance Cleft: The entrance to the shrine is hidden in a narrow cleft of rock easily missed by anyone traveling the little-used coastal road. This entry cannot be easily distinguished from the many others until one is almost right in front of it, so the adventurers are going to have a bit of a time locating the entrance. The bas-relief (3) over the door can be glimpsed from some distance away if one approaches from due west. At near noon in the summer months, sunlight filters down from above and shines on the relief.

3. Bas Relief: Once at the rock cleft, the actual entrance to the shrine is revealed. It appears to be a natural opening except for a triangular bas-relief carved into the rock above the entry. The relief itself depicts the Three, with Arapu standing in the center facing out, and Arakal and Ipata kneeling on either side facing him. It is badly worn, with a few chinks missing.

4. Outer Shrine: A passage varying between three and five feet wide goes for about twenty feet before opening into a small cave. The passage and cave appear to be completely natural—including an uneven floor—except for the very center of the cave, where the floor appears to have been crudely leveled. Set on this area is a large table.



5. Table: This is an altar: a triangular stone table about eight feet across and three feet high. It is basically a thick slab set on a low base, roughly hewn of the same reddish stone. In the top of the stone, about a foot in from each side, are three shallow, bowl-like depressions; and a fourth in the center of the table. Each is about six inches across, perfectly smooth and round, as if they were the resting places of three large orbs. Between each of the outer three depressions and the edge of the table is a Thanorian hieroglyph, each the symbol for one of the Three. The bowl in the center of the table is blackened at the base, as if something was burned there many times. A closer examination will reveal a few partly burned, dried remnants of an herb.

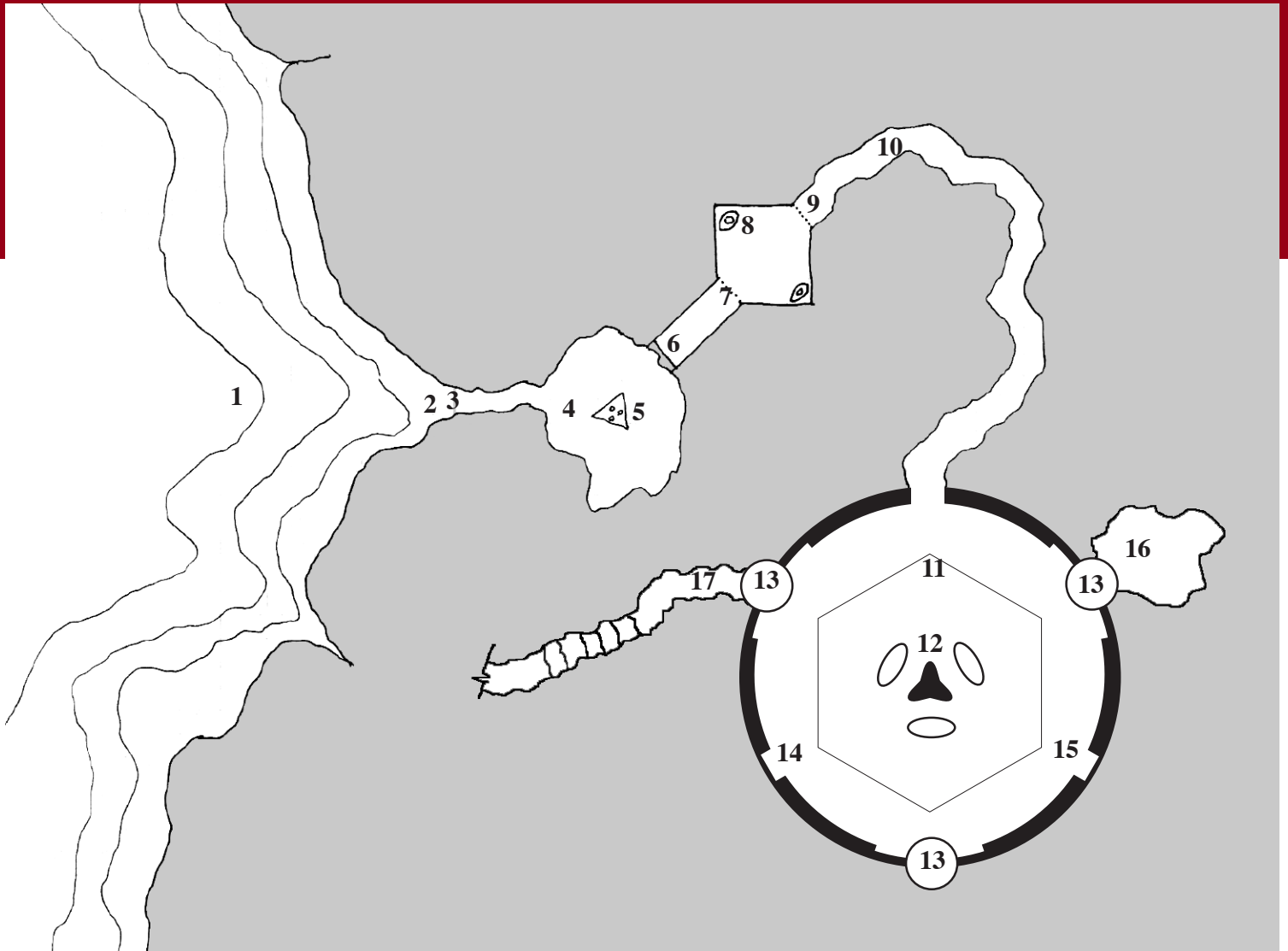
This outer shrine is where the followers of the Three usually gathered to pray and worship. Three priests would stand at the altar table, and each would contribute a small amount of the god's associated fluid (sweat, blood, tears) into the designated bowl. The herb was burned in the center, and a few drops of each thrown onto the burning herb. The combination would create a green-gold smoke that wafted through the room, and—because of a constant draught of air being pulled deeper into the cave—towards the secret door.

6. Secret Door: Disguised as part of the natural rock wall, the door is Very Hard (–20) to locate (only Medium (0) if the herb is lit and the smoke can be

seen flowing through the cracks). Pressing on a rock to the right of it opens the door. It swings inward away from the room, and may need to be pushed because it has not been opened in ages. Once open, it will swing back shut but can be jammed fairly easily. Also there is an obvious lever to open the door from the inside.

7. Portcullis: A short corridor of set-stone walls leads to a diamond-shaped room. Hidden in the doorway is a metal portcullis, Medium (0) to detect if the characters examine the doorway; Extremely Hard (–30) if they are not paying attention. In the right wall of the corridor, about ten feet away from the portcullis, is a secret panel, Very Hard (–20) to detect, which conceals a lever. This lever raises and lowers the portcullis.

8. Anteroom/Sentinels: This chamber, also of set stones, is empty except for two statues placed in the corners opposite each other. The statues are mirror images of each other, and depict Arapu, Arakal, and Ipata standing together, their backs to a pillar so that they are all fused in one statue. Arapu faces the outer doorway, Ipata faces herself across the room, and Arakal is turned toward the inner doorway. The statues are about ten feet tall and made of some light brown stone. They are in fact Sentinels, magical guardians of the inner temple. Two things can disable the Sentinels: Either the herb is burned in the ritual as described above (with blood, tears and sweat) and the smoke wafts down and renders the Sentinels harmless for 25 hours, or anyone wearing the Amulet will not be attacked. Otherwise the Sentinels attack as follows: A moment after amulet-less person enters the room, a male voice booms in ancient Thanorian “Suffer the Curse of Arapu!” and the first two people (each gets attacked by one statue of Arapu) must make a RR vs. 15th level Channeling or suffer Arapu's Curse: they begins to sweat profusely; within seconds they are soaking wet, cannot hold anything in their hands, and their clothing is unwearable. They must drink a gallon of water every ten minutes or become severely dehydrated, and will lose consciousness in about 10 minutes, and die within an hour. Others can enter the room unharmed, but once one person passes between the statues of Ipata, a female voice says in ancient Thanorian “Infidels face the punishment of Ipata!” everyone in the chamber must make an RR vs. 20th level Mentalism or suffer a Shock D. Arakal does not attack people coming into



the temple, but anyone walking from the inner passage (10) into the chamber and not wearing the amulet will trigger this attack: the outer and inner portcullis (9) drop down three seconds after the first person passes through (enough time for others to enter the room, but not enough for anyone to get to the opposite passage). From the statue an echoing voice booms in ancient Thanorian “Beware the wrath of Arakal!” and from tiny holes in the walls spray dozens of darts, all tipped with a circulatory poison. Fortunately for the characters, the poison has become weakened over the ages and the worst effect is Moderate severity, and the attack level is now only 3rd level. The portcullis can be opened from inside the room by placing an amulet on the matching indentation on the large collar/pectoral the statue of Arakal wears.

9. Portcullis: Identical to the one in the outer doorway, this one can be operated by a lever set in the passage wall about ten feet from the chamber.

10. Passage: another crude passageway like the outer one, it descends about twenty feet as it wanders through solid rock and finally opens into the inner shrine; there is no door, just an open arched doorway.

11. Inner Temple: This is a circular chamber with expertly set light brown stone, polished smooth. The walls are about fifteen feet high, with a domed roof. The floor is also set stones, with a pattern that indicates a large hexagon. The hexagon is a trigger for a trap: as soon as 100 lbs or more is exerted on the hexagonal area, the three golems are released (see #13). The trap is Very Hard (–20) to detect, Extremely Hard (–30) to disarm. The walls are decorated with horizontal bands of carved hieroglyphs telling the history and nature of the Three. Each hieroglyph is square and about four inches on a side.

12. Central Statue/Shrine: In the center of the room is a large pillar, fifteen feet high with a shallow stone bowl about eight feet across set on top. When someone enters the chamber, a magical stone set in the bowl glows with a soft yellow light, illuminating the dome and indirectly lighting the room. Set in three niches in the pillar is another trio of statues, again depicting the Three. They are each about ten feet tall and facing outward. Each is holding a shallow metal bowl in their left hand, and their headdresses are enhanced by several clear cabochons of various colors (they are not valuable). Set in front

of each statue is a low oval platform of stone about eight feet long. They are of dark stone and appear to be stained (it is blood, from ritual sacrifices). Running around the base of each pedestal is a narrow slot in the floor. As one enters the chamber, Arapu can be seen on the left side, Arakal on the right; Ipata is hidden on the far side. The statue/pillar conceals a secret magical suspension chamber, which can be opened by simultaneously pressing on a certain cabochon on each of the Three's headdresses. This is Very Hard (–20) to detect, and pressing just one or two of the three will trigger the golems (#13). If operated correctly, the pedestal (except for three pillars at the outer points, which remain to support the bowl at the top) splits in three pie-sections, each one with one of the Three on it. The sections slide apart about eight feet, and from the now open center rises a triangular pillar. At first it appears to be of some frosted glass with a metal frame, but a closer examination reveals that it is also hollow, and after one minute the glass turns clear, and inside behind each pane of glass is a person. These three (two men and a woman) are priests of the Three, placed in suspended animation thousands of years ago. They awaken, and will be able to see the characters. If one is obviously wearing an amulet, they might not be hostile right away, but they will expect the characters to obey them. The Ipata Priestess will use her mental powers to determine the motivations of the characters, and communicate with the others. They will most likely then attempt to slay these intruders.

13. Pillars. These appear to be stone pillars built into the wall, but they are hollow. When the floor trap is triggered, the pillars rotate 180 degrees, revealing the Brass golems inside. The golems will attack anyone not wearing an amulet if triggered. If the priests are awake, the golems will obey the priests' commands, but they cannot leave the room. If they defeat the intruders, they return to their chambers. If they are damaged but not destroyed, they return and regenerate their damage.

14. Portal: pressing a certain combination of hieroglyphs on the wall in sequence (Very Hard (–20) to detect) will cause stone panels covering 14 and 15 to rise up. These are booth obviously some kind of doors, but they are heavy slabs of stone; bypassing the hieroglyph trigger to open the doors would be is Sheer Folly (–50) to do, and would only open the one panel being worked on. This doorway

appears to open into a solid, mirrored surface. The portal is inactive until the dagger key is inserted into the Map (#15). The portal connects to six other temples of the Three, all secret and underground. They have different layouts and are in various conditions. They are all much more simple than this one, most just containing a place similar to the outer temple, and a secret door leading to a small chamber with the Portal and a slot for the key dagger. They do not have a map, because these spoke locations only transport you to this central hub. Inserting the key at that location just opens the portal to this location (and causes the slabs here to rise).

15. Map: behind this panel is a stone bas-relief map, very similar to the parchment map. However, this one has six red crystal inlays, connected by thin red lines, radiating out from a larger red inlay with a small triangular hole in the center. When the dagger is inserted in this hole, the central inlay glows, as does one line and the connected dot (it is random which one lights first). The Portal is then activated and changes from a mirror to pure black. Twisting the dagger switches the portal connection, indicated by the changing light. When the dagger is removed, the portal stays active for about fifteen seconds, and then deactivates and the panels slide back down.

16. Treasury: Behind this false pillar is hidden the Temple treasury. It is fairly simple to get to (assuming the golem has been dispatched): one stands inside the tube and weight on the floor triggers it to rotate 180 degrees back, allowing access to the treasury. To get back out, you just cycle back through. Inside, in several chests and boxes, is 1500 silver, 200 gold, and an additional 3000 gp in jewelry and cut gems. There are three +10 chakrams and four bladed staves (use the polearm table), one of which is +10.

17. Passage: Accessed the same way as the Treasury (#16) this opens to a passageway. It is protected by another portcullis, with a lever ten feet in toward the temple, and hidden so it cannot be seen from anyone coming up the passage. This is another natural tunnel (cleared and widened in a few areas) that leads deeper underground to a natural cavern complex. One route leads several miles west to a grotto. Another passage eventually goes down to the Ash Lairs.



BEASTS & MONSTERS CHART

| Type | Lvl | Base Max Pace/ | | Speed | Size/ | AT | | | # | |
|------------------------|-----|----------------|----------|-------|-------|------|--------|-------------------------------------|------|--------------|
| | | Rate | MN Bonus | MS/AQ | Crit | Hits | (DB) | Attacks | Enc. | Outlook(IQ) |
| Razorgrass | 1B | -- | --/-- | --/-- | M/-- | 20A | 3(0) | /20SCL per 10 traversed | var | Passive (NO) |
| Bore-burr | 1C | -- | --/-- | --/IN | T/-- | 2A | 4(0) | 20Ti (1x/rnd until removed or crit) | 1-10 | Passive (NO) |
| Corpse Candle (III) | 7H | - | -/- | -/- | M/I# | 100A | 1(30) | Spell/Special(4 Con pt/rnd) | 1 | Cruel (LO) |
| Wyvern (land) | 8F | 180 | Dash/50 | BF/VF | H/LA | 200G | 19(35) | 70LCL/110HSt/poison†/80LBi/poison† | 1 | Hungry(LO) |
| Night Wolf | 5E | 140 | Dash/20 | VF/FA | M/— | 80G | 4(30) | 60MBi/60GBreath | 1-10 | Bellig.(NO) |
| Numbing Leech | 0A | 1 | Walk/0 | CR/IN | T/— | 2A | 1(20) | 0TiBite/Poison | 1-10 | Hungry (NO) |
| Hemafly | 1A | 60 | Dash/+30 | VF/VF | T/— | 5A | 1(70) | 10TiSt100 | 5-50 | Hungry (NO) |
| Solev Kirik | 1A | 70 | Dash/30 | FA/FA | T/— | 8A | 1(50) | 10TiSt100/Poison | 1-4 | Hungry (NO) |
| Giant Trap Door Spider | 8F | 80 | Spt/20 | MF/FA | M/I | 160F | 4(40) | 70LPi/75LSt/poison/Special | 1 | Hungry (LI) |
| Large Cat | 5D | 100 | Dash/30 | FA/MF | M/— | 100E | 3(40) | 40MCL40/60MBa60/60MBi\$ | 1-2 | Aggres.(NO) |
| Hill Troll | 10E | 60 | FSpt/0 | MD/MD | L/LA | 175F | 11(20) | 95LBa/85LCL/50We/60ro | 1 | Hostile(LI) |
| Bronze Golems | 10H | 70 | FSpt/0 | MD/MD | M/LA | 150G | 20(10) | 150MBa/50MGr/150LCr† | 3 | Varies(NO) |

* = Special; see text.

\$ = If the attack on the left has attained a non-Tiny critical, this attack will occur in the **same** round of combat after the attack which obtained that critical.

† = If the attack on the left has attained a non-Tiny critical, this attack will occur in the **next** round of combat after the attack which obtained that critical.

NPC CHART

| NAME | LVL | HITS | AT | DB | SHLD | MEL OB | MSL OB | MM | CHARACTER NOTES |
|-----------------------------------|-----|------|----|----|------|--------|--------|----|---|
| Xunil , Priest of Arapu | 15 | 120 | 17 | 50 | Y* | 180pa | 110gé | 15 | Fighter. Items: +20 magic pole arm (bladed staff) Of Slaying all who worship Akalatan or Klysus, +10 gé, headdress, protects as full helm, collar, bracers and belt together protect as AT 17; left bracer also protects as a +10 full shield. Skills: Ambush±5; Climbing25; Perception20; Swim5. Leadership35; Meditation5; PublicSpeaking40; Seduction40; Singing15; Strategy&Tactics15; StunManeuver20; Subdual40. Stats: SD 78, Co97, Ag99, Me67, Re85, St100, Qu97, Pr66, In79, Em45. |
| Sydar , Priest of Arakal | 14 | 75 | 13 | 70 | Y* | 120ss | 50da | 10 | Cleric. Items: Headdress, protects as full helm and adds +100 to RRs vs spell attacks by priests of Akalatan or Klysus, x3 to Channeling spells, collar and belt protect as AT 13, +15 curved long knife (as ss but only slash and puncture crits), +5 shield. Spells: Channels 20/Protections 20/Concussion's Way 10/Life Mastery 10/Muscle Law 10/Bone Law 10/Purifications 10/Creations 5. Skills: Climbing15; Perception20; Staves&Wands15. 1stAid50; HerbLore25; PublicSpeaking55; RopeMastery35; StarGazing30; WeatherWatching50. Stats: SD89, Co97, Ag98, Me87, Re75, St96, Qu100, Pr93, In98, Em81. |
| Kitri , Priestess of Ipata | 12 | 70 | 1 | 55 | Y* | 75da | 80chak | 0 | Mentalist. Items: Headdress, protects as full helm, adds +100 to RRs vs spell attacks by priests of Akalatan/Klysus & adds +100 to attacks vs same, can shield wearer's mind from all detections, x3 to Mentalist spells, transforms to headband; +15 curved dagger; +15 returning Chakram. Spells: Cloaking 10/Brilliance10/Mind's Door 10/Mind Control 15/Mind Attack 10/Presence 15/Mind Merge 10/Attack Avoidance 10. Skills: Climbing5; Rune15; Stalk&Hide20; Swim5. Acting30; Astrology25; Dance45; HerbLore20; PoisonLore25; PowerPerception30; PublicSpeaking45; Seduction70.Stats: SD76, Co69, Ag85, Me84, Re71, St66, Qu98, Pr97, In82, Em75. |

Notes: An * indicates enhanced clothing or armor adds to DB, or in the case of the shield column, a Y* indicates that the person in question utilizes either a magic shield or a shield spell. PP Power Points i+i and ixi symbols preceding magic item descriptions refer to its spell adding or PP multiplying capabilities. For spell list summaries; the list is given, followed by the level which the list is known; lists divided by i/fs. Certain aged, gifted or special NPCs may deviate from the usual rules regarding access to lists.

NPC CHART (RMSS/FRP)

| NAME | LVL | HITS | AT | DB | SHLD | MEL OB | MSL OB | MM | CHARACTER NOTES |
|-----------------------------------|-----|------|----|----|------|--------|--------|----|---|
| Xunil , Priest of Arapu | 15 | 120 | 17 | 53 | Y* | 177pa | 112gé | 15 | Fighter. Items: +20 magic pole arm (bladed staff) Of Slaying all who worship Akalatan or Klysus, +10 gé, headdress, protects as full helm, collar, bracers and belt together protect as AT 17; left bracer also protects as a +10 full shield. Skills: Ambush (5) 38; Awareness18; Climbing30; Leadership38; Meditation7; Observation56; PublicSpeaking43; Seduction43; Singing23; StunManeuvering22; Subdual40; Swim38; Tactics19. Stats: SD 78, Co97, Ag99, Me67, Re85, St100, Qu97, Pr66, In79, Em45. |
| Sydar , Priest of Arakal | 14 | 89 | 13 | 69 | Y* | 113ss | 53da | 10 | Cleric. Items: Headdress, protects as full helm and adds +100 to RRs vs spell attacks by priests of Akalatan or Klysus, +3 Channeling spell adder, collar and belt protect as AT 13, +15 curved long knife (as ss but only slash and puncture crits), +5 shield. Spells: Channels 20/Protections 20/Concussion's Way 10/Life Mastery 10/Muscle Law 10/Bone Law 10/Purifications 10/Creations 5. Skills: Attunement34; Awareness39; Climbing31; 1stAid54; HerbLore24; Observation68; PublicSpeaking54; RopeMastery33; StarGazing30; WeatherWatching50. PPs: 96. Stats: SD89, Co97, Ag98, Me87, Re75, St96, Qu100, Pr93, In98, Em81. |
| Kitri , Priestess of Ipata | 12 | 79 | 1 | 56 | Y* | 77da | 77chak | 0 | Mentalist. Items: Headdress, protects as full helm, adds +100 to RRs vs spell attacks by priests of Akalatan/Klysus & adds +100 to attacks vs same, can shield wearer's mind from all detections, +3 Mentalist spell adder, transforms to headband; +15 curved dagger; +15 returning Chakram. Spells: Cloaking 10/Brilliance10/Mind's Door 10/Mind Control 15/Mind Attack 10/Presence 15/Mind Merge 10/Attack Avoidance 10. Skills: Awareness25; Climbing20; Acting33; Dance48; HerbLore21; Observation59; PoisonLore26; PublicSpeaking49; Rune29; Stalk&Hide19; StarGazing26; Seduction69; Swim15. PPs: 97. Stats: SD76, Co69, Ag85, Me84, Re71, St66, Qu98, Pr97, In82, Em75. |

Notes: An * indicates enhanced clothing or armor adds to DB, or in the case of the shield column, a Y* indicates that the person in question utilizes either a magic shield or a shield spell. PP Power Points i+i and ixi symbols preceding magic item descriptions refer to its spell adding or PP multiplying capabilities. For spell list summaries; the list is given, followed by the level which the list is known; lists divided by i/is. Certain aged, gifted or special NPCs may deviate from the usual rules regarding access to lists.

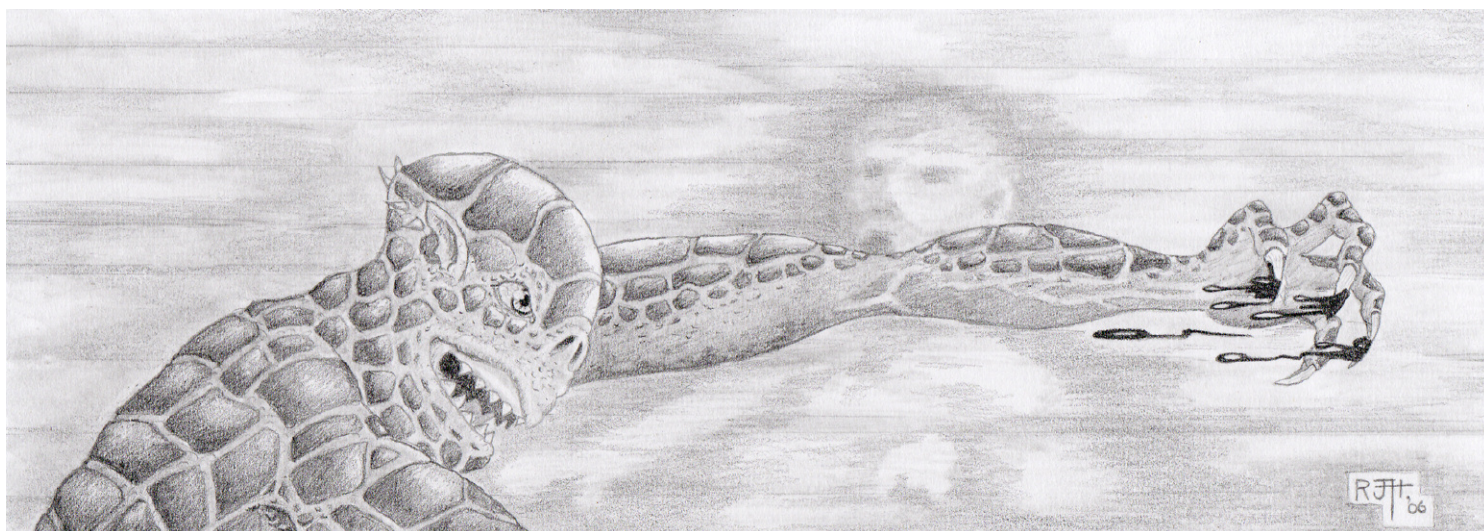


THE PARANOIA GAME

The Paranoia Game is a Spacemaster adventure for multiple characters of around 5th level. There must be multiple players as well and the more the better. When things break down, the more people the players can distrust, the better.

The Paranoia Game will require a great deal of finesse and roleplaying to execute. The adventure site is actually very simple, it's how the GM escalates the tensions between players that is key here, and how the players interact with one another.

There are two adventures to run here, concurrently. There is the fake adventure, which is the one the players think they are playing, and the real one, which is what the GM covertly orchestrates in the background. It's vitally important that the players willingly give in to the roleplaying experience of the game. If they just blithely continue on, ignoring the fact that one of them is an assassin, this won't be a very fun adventure at all.



THE FALSE ADVENTURE

The party, presumably a group of privateers but any group with their own ship and an entrepreneurial spirit will do, hears a distress signal. They investigate and find a Jeronan research base, completely deserted. As they investigate, they find evidence of great violence, as if the people in the outpost began killing one another.

First their fellow crewmembers begin acting strangely, although everyone thinks that they themselves are unaffected. Then with work they begin to unravel the computer records of the

base, discovering that it was the site of some aggressive genetic experiments. Then the monsters begin attacking.

The first attacks are random, attacking separated groups, individuals where at all possible. Next the attacks escalate, and the party discovers that there are creatures in the surrounding woods. Creatures hungry for prey.

It is only then they realize the truth. The creatures are the former scientists. They can change form, and they've infiltrated the party.

And then the fun really begins.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

All of that is what the party thinks is happening. What is really happening is something far more insidious.

The base in question actually produced a psychotropic bioweapon, intended for use against ISC citizens. The effects on the test animals were quite successful, turning a creature that avoids combat into one that hunts voraciously. The effects on sapients were more varied. They all had mood-changing and hallucinogenic changes to their minds, but the changes seemed based on background and culture. Many fierce Jeronans became very docile and loving under the effects of the drug. Through research and experimentation, the oorts of the facility became fairly sure they could predict the effects on all seven races when their origin was ISC. Still, they needed a test, and the drug takes some time to build up in the system for proper effect.

So they set a honey trap.

THE REAL ADVENTURE

The real adventure takes a little finesse to run, and it's going on below the surface the entire time. The creatures in the woods are really just the prey animals that the research base used for their initial testing. All the information in the computers is fake. The original memory cores aren't onsite any longer. Everything else is a sham.

As the party investigates the place, they find all sorts of things worth stealing: high-tech medical equipment, weapons, even a shuttle with a broken power generator. Only the weapons are easily portable. Everything else will need some fixing or dismantling to move off site. This should keep the party breathing heavily and taking in the gas until they reach the breaking point. Then it's every man for himself.

Hopefully, the party will figure out something is wrong before there are a lot of hats on the floor. Once the party realizes they are under the effects of a psychotropic, and convince one another, then the adventure is more or less run. Some simple RRs can save them if they know the trick. On the population in general, even knowing would probably not be enough, but player characters are made of sterner stuff than your common Joe Kagoth. Once they figure it out, it's over.

A WARNING ABOUT RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE

There is little less fun than having your free will taken away. The trick to running this adventure is to get the players to do everything needed to escalate the adventure. Never have them fail a saving throw and make them do something they don't want to do (stuff they do in a blackout is the exception, as they don't find this out until after the fact). That might be acceptable for a single encounter, but not a whole adventure. If you do that, the players won't really be playing anymore. You'll just be ordering them around, telling a story without their permission.

So they must think that everything is their own idea. Much of this adventure will be handled with notes. You can start by slipping notes explaining that certain characters have stopped exhibiting habits. Perhaps a soldier cocks his head every time he draws a weapon, or perhaps a medic always clears his throat before giving a diagnosis. Whatever the clues, they should mount slowly throughout the game so that the players begin to stop trusting one another. If that's enough to let things go, great. If not, you might have to start slipping notes saying, "You know for sure that at least one party member has been replaced by an imposter. Out of character, I can't tell you whether or not it's you."

So the goal is to escalate the group's tensions slowly. Encourage good behavior (such as locking yourself in a store room surrounded by guns or marching down halls singing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" while tossing grenades into random doors). If the players really get into it, they might start adding crazy little details like this on their own. If they start shaving their heads and wearing bandanas, you'll know you've got them.

THE PLANET (DESIGNATED 348592294-F)

The outpost is located on a small, fertile planet in a nondescript system. Initial scans show that the planet teems with life, but there's no civilization. It seems that this planet never developed intelligent life.

A quick search on the datanet shows that the planet was discovered and surveyed about fifty years ago and it has a priority flag for future colonization,

but some of the mineral wealth of this world is so valuable that fifteen corporations and sixty planets have placed claims before the ISC government. It seems likely that the matter will remain in the courts for many years to come, or it would have if the war hadn't engulfed this world.

An Absurd Sensor Analysis will reveal the cause for the lack of civilization. Seven craters mark the planet's surface, each of them long since covered by flora and erosion. A Medium Astronomy maneuver reveals that from the rotation of the planet and the spread of the craters, a single huge comet hit the planet in seven pieces over a five-hour period. Entire sections of the plant kingdom seem to have died off, assuming this planet once had all the life that the Architects seed.

A Hard Sensor Analysis will reveal other details. There are some fifteen ruined settlements scattered across the planet. All of them were destroyed by bombardment. A Medium Planetology maneuver reveals that the bases were all destroyed shortly after the war began. It shouldn't take much for the characters to realize the planet housed a thriving criminal element, probably pirates or smugglers. Planets in litigation collect smugglers like swarms of moths.

A Routine Sensor Analysis reveals the location of the outpost.

THE OUTPOST ENVIRONS

The area around the Outpost is clear out to three hundred meters, where the grass gives way to thick forest. The grass is all a uniform one-inch length, kept trimmed by nano-mowers.

Two hundred meters from the outpost, a shuttle lies crashed. A ten-meter furrow in the grass behind it is the only mar on the lawn.

The forests team with the "Creatures." They avoid large groups of sapient, but they watch and if they see a group of two or less, they will stalk and attack, usually hitting in groups of two to three. Very Hard Tracking maneuvers will spot the "Creatures" passage, but the creatures are quite hard to track and actually catch. Most likely, hunters will see spoor, but lose the trails quickly. Have the creatures make an opposed roll with the tracker. Assume the "Creatures" have a skill of +100 in hiding their tracks.

"CREATURES"

Level: 10E **Size:** L **MS/AQ:** BF/BF

Base Move: 50Max **Pace:** DashMM **Bonus:** 50

Hits: 200G **Crits:** L **AT (DB):** 4(100*)

Attacks: 100 Large Claw

*The "Creatures" are incredibly fast. They receive this bonus only when on open ground. In confined areas, their DB drops to 50.

THE SHUTTLE

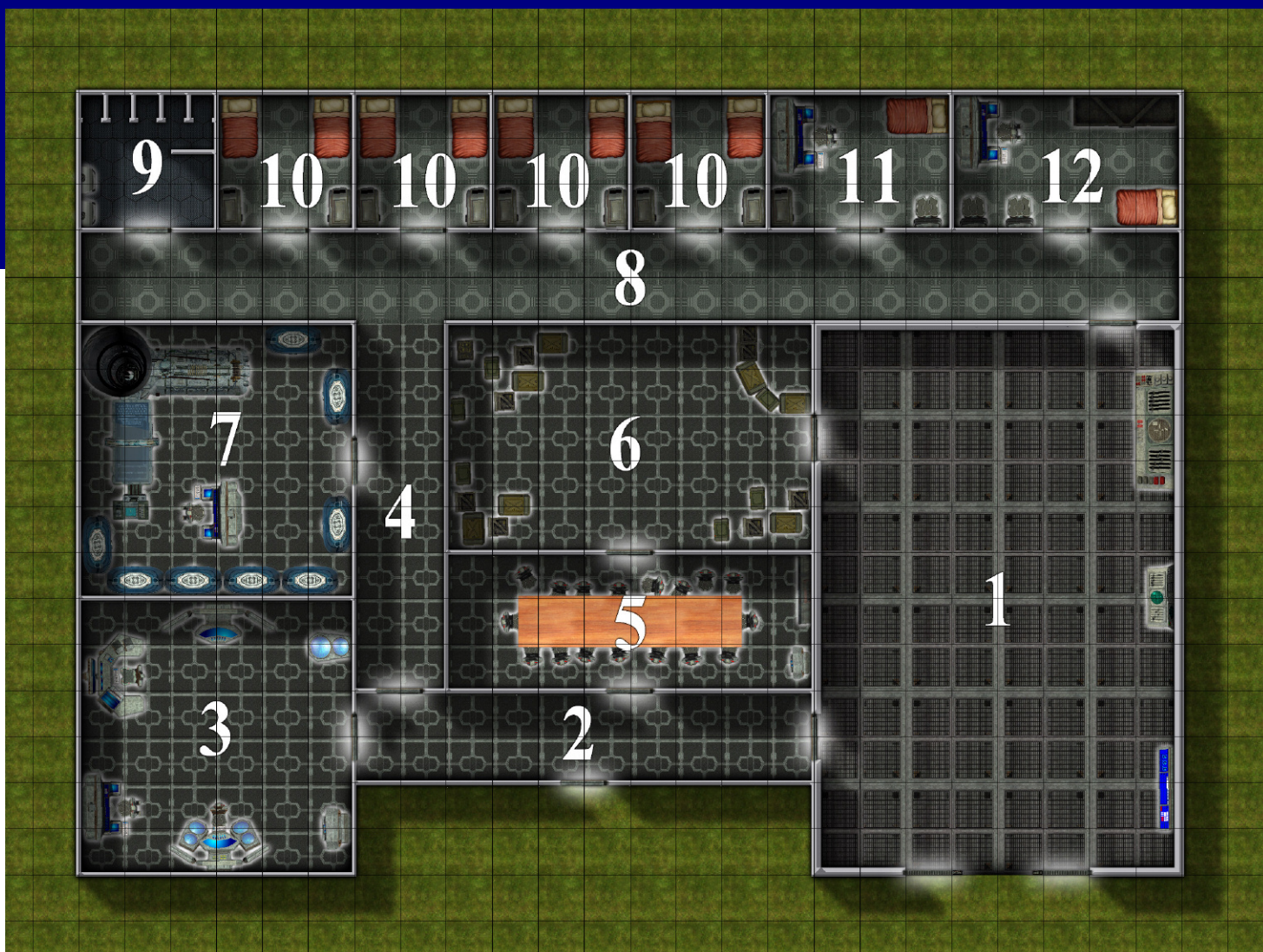
The shuttle is actually a mockup. To any real investigation, it will appear to be in working order except for heavy structural damage and a blown vacuum power generator. It appears that with serious repairs, the shuttle could fly again, although the pilot would need a space suit just to be safe. If the characters don't have a ship that could hold the entire shuttle, a better solution might be to dismantle it for the engines and other control components. A cursory appraisal places the value of the salvage at 40K if they can fix up the entire shuttle, 30k for parts. It will take about two days for either option, but it will take much longer than that for a Jeronan ship to arrive. If the party is vigilant, they have plenty of time.

To discover the truth about the shuttle, the character working on it must make an Absurd Science • Technical maneuver; just keep track of any maneuvers that a character performs of this type while working on the shuttle, comparing them to an Absurd difficulty. Only an Unusual Event, Unusual Success, or a Spectacular Success results in the additional info that the shuttle is a mockup. After 24 hours of work dismantling or repairing the shuttle, this drops to a Medium maneuver. After 48 hours, a Routine maneuver. After 72 hours, any success will reveal the truth.

The truth is the shuttle is actually worth about 5,000 in parts.

THE OUTPOST

The outpost appears to have been a research facility with a small guard contingent. Below are listed the encounter locations of the outpost. After that you will find a probable outline of events. Unless otherwise noted, everything in the outpost is in working order.



1) Hanger

The Hanger has a large door, which is currently open. There is a smaller door built into the hanger door, but it's not visible unless the hanger is closed. When the characters enter the hanger, read or paraphrase the following:

This large hanger has a grated carbon floor, dusty, but is otherwise clean of breaks or stains. The room appears cavernously empty, but with the crashed shuttle inside it would probably be quite cramped. Two doors stand closed on the left wall, far apart. A third door stands closed on the back wall, toward the right. Diagnostic equipment and tools line the right wall.

A body lies in the middle of the room.

The body is human, in a Jeronan security jumpsuit. He was killed by a stab to the chest. Fifteen minutes and a Medium Autopsy maneuver reveals that the man died stabbed by a crude sword. Splinters from the sword are made of bone.

2) Corridor

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This corridor is smooth and in good condition,

but filthy. Some substance has covered the walls and floors, drying brown. Two doors lead out to the right and one leads out at the end. A larger door stands in the middle of the left wall, likely leading outside.

The brown stains are blood. A Routine Autopsy or Medium Evidence Dispersal maneuvers, along with a lab or medical scanner, reveals the blood to be falar in origin. The door to Command is locked. It requires a Medium Security Bypass maneuver to open.

3) Command

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

Light from dozens of panels and holographic monitors flicker, bathing the room in a staccato illumination. Communication and sensor panels line the wall. In one chair, a dead oort lies sprawled.

A Medium Autopsy maneuver reveals the oort was killed by a snapped neck. Whoever did it was the size of a human, but had the strength of a kagoth.

A Routine Computer Technology (Jeronan) maneuver shows that the computers here have been

thoroughly wiped by a Defense-Ministry-Grade erasure program. The program is still writing and rewriting junk data in permanent storage. A Medium maneuver stops the program. An Absurd Maneuver can bring up bits of the commander's log. This takes five hours of hard work:

"... tells me that the first experiment is ready for implementation. We will see if..."

"... all the subjects have vanished. The bastard oort says that the subjects might have..."

"... seals broken. The subjects have been found, dead. What is killing..."?

"... evacuation, but I belayed that order. I will destroy this base. I will... who's in that shuttle?!"

The characters can find no other data.

4) Corridor

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This corridor is eerily empty. A single yellow light flashes alert, illuminating the corridor with a flashing strobe. A door leads out to the left. At the end, the corridor branches in a T with a door in the opposite wall.

There is nothing special about this corridor. The light was triggered by the events, which transpired in medical.

5) Lunch Room

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This room sets in darkness. The lights flicker alive as they sense your presence, illuminating a fine wooden table and high-tech chairs. To one side sits a food dispenser and food prep unit. On the far side of the room, a door leads out.

This room has nothing unusual about it. The food is a terrible paste that the preparation unit can reform into many different forms of synthetic meat. Why they don't combine these into one machine is an answer not even the Jeronans know.

6) Storage

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

The lights in this room are bright, strangely

cheerful. Crates fill the room. Someone has formed them into an impromptu barricade to one side. To the other, a door leads out. A strange metallic smell fills the air.

Nano scent suppressors have kept the smell neutral in other rooms, but here they were fried by a distortion grenade. The falar use these suppressors on worlds where they fear attacks by the knighthood, as they feel they have the advantage over tulgur when noses are out of the picture.

Behind the barricade lies a body. Someone has shoved a shirt into the man's mouth and held his jaw and nose shut. He died of suffocation.

There are all sorts of equipment in the storeroom, most of it food. There are five Jeronan Kathrack Rrrng Assault Carbines, three Marrrif Tock Plasma Pistols, and twelve grenades. The entire contents are probably worth 5k on the open market.

7) Medical

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This is a mid-sized medbay and research lab, by the look. A large diagnostic table takes up one side. Tanks line the walls, their purpose not immediately evident. A workstation stands in the middle.

This is the center of the fake mystery, the place where the "dirty deed" took place. The workstation computer here had the data destruction program run as well, but no amount of work can get any data from it (there was never any to begin with). The buffer on the diagnostic bed, however, still has data residue inside. A Medium Medical Technology check reveals the last scan of the machine. A genetic scan, it shows genetic molecules in the middle of a radical change. A Medium Medical Practice or Genetics maneuver will puzzle any medical person. This type of genetic alteration should kill the host, and yet the scan seems to be from a living host.

A Routine Medical Practice maneuver reveals that something large, falar-sized at least, was once in the holding tanks. This is deduced from the level of the blue fluid inside. A falar subject would raise the level to just about the top.

A Medium Alertness or Evidence Dispersal Maneuver spots tracks near the tank. The dried fluid there is in the shape of one of the "Creatures" footprints. The "Creatures" were kept here at one

point, while awaiting tests by medical personnel.

While there are no records to be found, a Medium Genetics or Medical Practice Maneuver is enough to realize that all the chemicals and equipment in this room are used in attempting to alter the genetics of a living host.

8) Corridor

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This hall has blast marks up and down its length. Chunks of charred organic matter cling to some of the walls. Some sort of firefight took place here, quick but gruesome. Doors line one side of the hall. A door and a corridor enter from the other.

There is nothing more to be learned here, but feel free to fill in details of the firefight from Evidence Dispersal maneuvers.

9) Lavatory

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

Urinals line one wall. Toilet stalls and a shower area line the others.

A dead oort is propped up in one of the stalls, her legs are up so that she can't be seen without opening the stall. A Medium Autopsy maneuver puts the cause of death as "fright" (a heart attack, specifically).

10) Room

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

Two bunks fill this room. All the occupants' possessions fill two foot lockers.

The second room has a stash of foodstuffs under the bed, all poisoned. A Medium Medical Practice or Pharmaceuticals maneuver will reveal the taint if the character has a medical scanner or a lab for testing.

11) Doctor's Room

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is nice for a Jeronan room, with only a single bed and a tall foot locker. A datacenter stands on one side, shattered by plasma fire.

The doctor's bones, thoroughly cleaned, lie under the bed. He was an oort.

12) Commander's Room

When the characters enter this area, read or

paraphrase the following:

This room is opulent for a Jeronan outpost. A soft bed sits in one corner. A ruined datacenter and desk are against a wall. On the far side is a cabinet that seems to be a wardrobe of sorts.

The commander was falar. There is no evidence as to what happened to him.

AN ADVENTURE TIMELINE

Don't get too wrapped up in running this adventure in any one given way. This section shows an outline of how you might run it, but expect to have to throw out the timeline once things begin to develop, especially if the players really begin to get into the paranoia aspects, so allow the adventure to take on a life of its own.

Zero Hour:

The characters land. The outpost's real computer, deep underground and undetectable, notices the character's presence. The computer begins a countdown of three hours until it releases the drugs, but the SI is fairly bright. It will watch the characters and try to judge whether or not to release the drug. If the characters talk about testing the air repeatedly, but don't do it for some reason, the computer will give them time to test the air and find it good.

+3 Hours:

The gas releases in the base and the shuttle, as well as through vents in the lawn. Anyone in the area will begin to feel the effects. There's no way to resist the drug itself, it simply works. RRs only come into play if the characters realize what's going on and can "talk themselves down." Even then, they will still feel the effects, they are just assumed to be strong-willed enough to act of their own free will despite them.

+6 Hours:

The first effects of the drug begin. While the characters can't make an RR against the drug effects, they do get RR's as to how they respond to them. At this point, begin allowing the characters to make a Poison RR every hour. The first RR is a 1st level attack, the second is a 2nd level, etc. Every failure takes the character to a new level of paranoia. If the character succeeds in multiple tests, they might begin to get hints as they hallucinate without the paranoia. See below for details.

+11 Hours:

By now characters should be feeling the effects of the hallucinogens. About the same time, the “creatures” should get bold, attacking the first of the characters they can separate, perhaps making an assault on the shuttle.

+18 Hours:

The character should be really feeling the effects now. If they haven’t connected the medlab and its tanks to the “Creatures” yet, have one or more characters see one “shape shift.” Essentially, one character will hallucinate seeing the creature turn into one of the seven races, briefly. When he tells the others, their minds, under the effects of the drugs, will either see the same thing or edit their recent memory so they thought they saw it too.

+24 Hours:

By this point, the characters should be in full on “Lord of the Flies” mode. The adventure should either resolve with a character figuring out what’s going on or with a total party kill.

THE DRUG

When the drug is in the air, it’s fairly subtle. A doctor scanning the air for pathogens and the like will only find the drug if they would have succeeded with an Absurd Medical Practice maneuver. If they scan for drugs, the maneuver is Hard. Researching what the drug does is an Absurd Maneuver. A partial success will show that it is psychotropic.

FAILED RRS

The drug simply works. Characters will eventually begin having hallucinations no matter what. However they make RRs to determine how negatively the drug affects them. The number of failures a given character has made determines how paranoid they’ve become:

1 Failure: The character begins to pick up little twitches and mannerism changes. They see the same in others. Pass the character a note and say something like “The soldier always stands with his thumbs in his belt. He’s stopped for some reason.”

2 Failures: The character will begin to become slightly paranoid. Pass them a note or two mentioning how they’ve seen other characters giving them strange looks when they think no one is looking.

3 Failures: The character becomes more paranoid.

Let him know that someone is following him. He might see evidence of someone tracking his hacks or messing with his equipment.

4 Failures: The characters are much more paranoid now. They will begin to see things that fit into their paranoia. Perhaps they see someone sabotaging their gear. They might see data on the computer that’s been deliberately erased (it wasn’t there to begin with, but they would have sworn they’d seen it).

5 Failures: A character will hallucinate a scene where some unknown person tries to kill them. Hopefully players are passing notes back and forth by now, so the player doesn’t know who.

6 Failures: A character will begin to break equipment and destroy data and samples, but he won’t remember doing it. He’ll likely chalk this up to more work against him.

7 Failures: The character will enter a fugue state where they actually perform deadly sabotage on their own gear. They’ll always find this before it kills them as their subconscious knows what they did, but they won’t remember it and they’ll likely suspect others.

8 Failures: The character will commit another act of deadly sabotage. This time they have to make the normal skill checks to discover it in time.

9 Failures: The character begins to hallucinate fully, seeing whatever is necessary to cause them to begin killing one another. If all else fails, slip them a note telling them they know that at least one of the other characters is a shape-shifting “Creature.” If there hasn’t been enough note activity to suspect another player of being in collusion, or if they are the type that might sneak looks at each other’s notes, feel free to tell them that it might even be them, but they should play as if it wasn’t.

FIGURING IT OUT

Characters will likely figure it out through routine medical examinations. Some groups might come to the realization through brute-force brain power. Whatever the reason, the characters must know it’s the case to get new RR’s. To be fair to the players, do not use hallucinations to actually stop them from reading the data. But use them as much as possible to distract the players from that form of investigation.

Once a character finds the drug and identifies it, or proves its existence in some more clever way, he may make an RR. The level of the poison is equal to the number of failures he's made previously. If the character's evidence is very compelling or if someone is talking him through the RR, give a +10 to +50 bonus based on how good the evidence or compelling the person telling them that everything's in their head.

THE CREATURES

The "Creatures" are actually genetically bred prey from the hunting preserves of a minor Jeronan noble. He felt that hunting slaves wasn't exciting enough and created a creature that was harder to kill than a normal sapient, cunning with massive physical abilities.

The "Creatures" have become incredibly violent with the introduction of the hallucinogen, and it's affected them permanently. Now they have become hunters themselves, guarding the woods around the outpost and killing anyone who strays from the fold.

The "Creatures" are particularly dangerous outside the outpost, but if the level of tension inside the base isn't high enough, feel free to have one get in and start trying to kill people. Assume they have a stalk and hide of +100.

The "Creatures" are two and a half meters tall with glistening black hide and roughly humanoid form and features. They hunch forward and they have long, curved claws. They can move so quickly on open ground that they seem to blur.

CLIMAX

If the final moments of the adventure are very dramatic, then allow the adventure to end with the characters evacuating the outpost. If the final revelation and RRs are more mechanical in nature, then a final battle is probably in order, to liven things up.

Have a number of "Creatures" attack equal to the number of party members. Do this when the characters are trying to evacuate. If this fight is too much for the players at this stage, turn it into a running battle with them trying to make it to the safety of their own ship. If they trounce the creatures, have a final swarm of the things come out of the woods, a number overwhelming enough to force them into that running battle. Have them make maneuver checks to run across open ground. A trip or two will only heighten the drama.

The adventure ends when the characters lift off from the planet, hopefully with samples of the drug for ISC scientists.