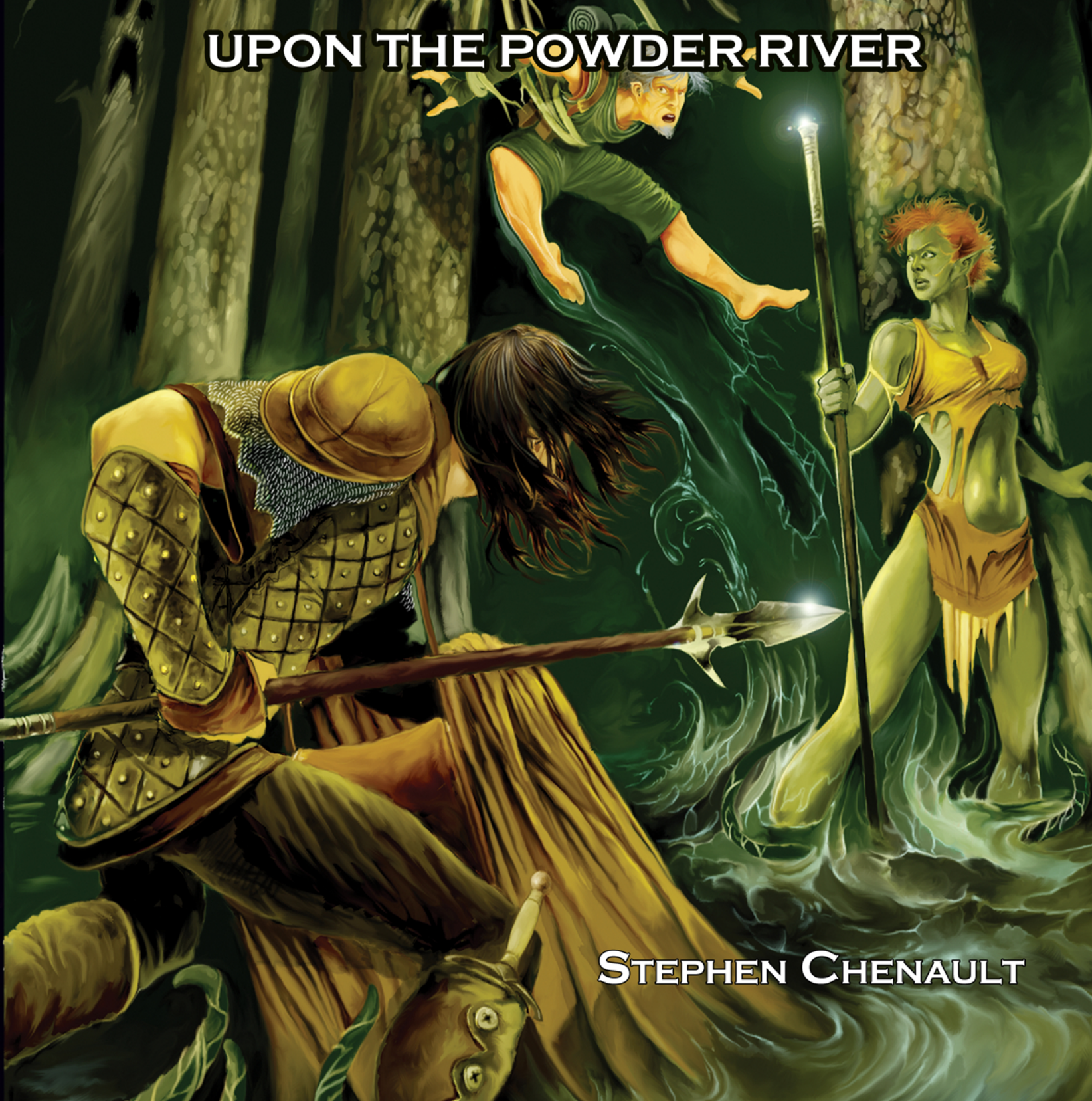


CASTLES CRUSADES

UPON THE POWDER RIVER



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UPON THE POWDER RIVER

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An overland adventure designed
for characters for 3-5 Characters
Mid-Level



OGL

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UPON THE POWDER RIVER

Upon the Powder River is designed for 3-5 characters in the mid-level range. It begins in the town of Elne and consists of a number of loosely connected encounters for the characters as they travel through the Darkenfold. They begin as soon as they characters enter the wood on their journey and lead them to and down the Powder River.

This adventure combines overland travel to and from the village of Willowbreak, it involves challenges both combat and role playing. It is not a traditional adventure module that consists of one dungeon or one goal, but rather consists of a series of short adventures, which in turn offer the enterprising Castle Keeper the opportunity for numerous side treks and adventures. It is easy to port into any game and sections can be played or skipped over as needed. Though set in the official Castles & Crusades® world of Aihrde, and a sister book to *Mortality of Green* and *Shades of Mist* it is a complete stand alone adventure or can be used as a series of encounters. It can be adapted to any homebrew or published setting. As with many of the adventure modules published by TLG, *Upon the Powder River* offers numerous, short-encounter areas. Included within are *To the Damenheit Bridge*, *Thorns for Beer*, *River Walk*, *Golden Shingles* and *Breaking Heads*.

INTRODUCTION

The adventure begins in Whale's Maw, a tavern that sits atop the Elne Bridge. It's a large, dirty establishment that perches over the river. It is filled with all manner of people, crowded in the common area, drinking, smoking, singing and carousing. The bridge itself houses scores of buildings, both living quarters and shops. Living here is cheap.

The characters have arrived by boat or road, either way they have landed in the tavern, on the bridge between the town of Elne and the Darkenfold.

ABOUT THE DARKENFOLD

The Darkenfold Forest is a remnant of the ancient and vast Ethvold, a forest which spanned across the entire southern reaches of the Valley of Kayomar, from the Rhodope Mountains in the west to the Ardeen River in the east. It ran from the sea in the south to the Wilds of Gottland in the north. The Eldwood, to the east, holds the heart of the Ethvold of old, but the Darkenfold holds its dark memories. It is an evil wood, filled with its own wild abandon and creatures of ill intent. Those who live there, know that the trees and the soil hold memories of their past glory and do not forget the axes of men, orcs, dwarves, and goblins that have plundered them of their wealth and life.

In the north and east, the edges of the Darkenfold are hemmed in by a ring of long, lean black-jack oaks called the Perth Timberland. These trees are small, 30-feet-tall on average, and possess tangled short branches covered in thick green leaves. In the autumn, the leaves cling to the trees for many weeks after the first frost and rustle in the never-ending wind that blows



through the forest. These branches hang to the ground to mingle with the thickly-tangled thorns and bushes growing in the rich, black soil. Travel here is not easy due to the thick bramble which oft times overgrows the few existing paths. The Perth Timberland makes entry to the forest arduous and maintains the dark, deep mysteries within. Travelers usually use the few entrances that roads provide.

Beyond the Perth Timberland lies the old wood. Here, giant oaks, heavy with foliage, mark the heart of the forest. These great trees tower above the moss-covered ground, their leafy canopies blotting out the light of the sun. These peculiar trees are native only to the Darkenfold and give it its name, for the mature trees have a grayish-black bark that absorbs light. A campfire's light, for instance, will not flicker off the trees, but rather vanishes into the bark, as if the trees drink the light. At night, the forest is dark beyond imagining cutting in half twilight vision and duskvision.

Grassy hills, open meadows, and slow-running brooks pocket the forest deeps and break the sinister visage cast by the old trees. Here, where the sun shines, lilies, daisies, daffodils and other wild flowers bloom. At night, the light of the moon and stars spill through, and when the evening is still, the fey come out to dance, sing, and play. The forest is thick with these creatures. Remnants of the Ethvold, they came here long ago, before the Wall of Worlds girded the earth from the trackless wastes of the Void. Sprites, nymphs, nixies and pixies as well as water lilies, blue bells, wood chips and the like abound throughout the

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deep recesses of the forest. There are darker fey as well,—boggarts, shadows, bullworts and carp snails. Indeed, many believe that the Darkenfold's nature derives from the Queen of the Unseelie Court who resides in the forest's southern reaches beyond the Downs in the Lilly Fair.

Two main roads cut through the forest. The larger of the two, the Old Post Road, begins in the Town of Elne in the east and meanders through the upper reaches of the forest, until it veers north just above Ends Meet, to emerge in the Broken Steppes south of Petersboro upon the edge of the Shelves of the Mist. The Southern Way, a spur of the Old Post Road, is overgrown and weeded with small trees and is slowly vanishing back into the depths of the Darkenfold. Both roads are vestiges of the Age of Winter's Dark, when the Empire of the Horned God stretched even to these distant reaches. The Old Post Road in particular rises several meters above the forest through which it cuts, being fashioned of several layers of gravel and topped by cobbles. There is enough slant to provide run off, and two long, shallow ditches run the whole length of either side of the road. In many places, the cobbles have cracked and slid away into the ditch, or the road itself has sunken into the moist ground. There were once way posts along the road, which the servants of the Horned God and other travelers used when traveling these dark eves. They were generally one or two-room stone buildings with wood shingle roofs. But those have fallen into ruin for the most part or vanished into the forest entirely.

The Southern Way was never paved, and its condition reflects that. Its track is still visible in most places, but in some, it has vanished into the wood, covered now in young growth trees and brush. The ungern began work on it at one point but gave up when the Winter Dark Wars began. The pile of rubble from the cobbles and equipment lies still where the Post Road and Southern Way join, though much of it is overgrown with weeds and the like.

The forest itself is huge and has many prominent geographic regions, divided into three: the Northern and Southern Plateaus and the Mistbane River Basin. A series of foothills, bluffs, and small lakes usually referred to as the Breaks, divide these two plateaus

GETTING STARTED

Adventure on Powder River begins in the town of Elne. The characters are set to cross the Darkenfold for any number of reasons of the CK's or their own choosing. Here are a few sample reasons to enter the Darkenfold.

- 1) The Darkenfold is known for its rich history, where dwarves built ancient roads and men cities of gold. Here they worshipped the Val Eahrakun with magic and wealth. The danger is great, but the promise of treasure greater.
- 2) The characters are hired to deliver a letter to Greely Ironpot in Willowbreak.
- 3) A merchant/town notable complains bitterly about a haunt that has occupied the Damenheit bridge and nothing can

get past it. He hires or challenges the characters into going to the bridge and freeing it of the monster.

- 4) An NPC in a tavern boasts of his own powers and how strong he is to survive in the Darkenfold. He challenges the players to travel into the Darkenfold, deep enough to see Bents Trading Post and return unscathed.

ELNE

The town of Elne is built upon the eastern bank of the Danua River. Its walls stand against the Perth Timberland, a region of the Darkenfold Forest. Two major roads intersect in Elne. The Post Road extends from the sea in the east where stand the town of Breilington in Kayomar, through the Eldwood to the town of Elne. There it crosses the Danua at the Elne Bridge and enters the Perth Timberland and the Darkenfold. It stretches the length of that mighty wood until it reemerges at the town of Petersboro in the distant west. The Lundtrecht Road goes south from Kayomar, through Elne following the course of the river. It passes through the edge of the Eldwood where that forest joins the Darkenfold. Beyond that the Lundtrecht Road ends in Havershaw.

Elne is a Free Town with no real government. It is wild and filled with boisterous peoples.

Elne sprawls along the two roads and river with no real discernible pattern aside from its apparent need to cling to either the river or the roads. Only a small section of the town, Ritter District, is walled, an area roughly 60 acres in size. The Ritter District houses several powerful merchants, a wizard, and several nicer taverns, inns, eateries and the like, as well as dozen or so wealthy families. It is cobbled as well.

The rest of the town consists of houses made of mud bricks and timber, with thatch roofs, or in the very lucky instance, wooden shingles. It is rather dirty, as none of the streets (aside from the Post and the Lundtrecht) are paved. The town experiences a constant flow of traffic, particularly during the Spring and Summer months when the merchants are carting goods north and south. Adventurers, brigands, rangers and other wild folk come here to step off on journeys into the forest in the west. During these seasons the town overflows with people of all descriptions, small bars and eateries spring up everywhere and the place becomes something of a wild road-house town. It is known for its open bars, rough crowds and good times.

Elne attracts the worst and best of all peoples. It serves as a major destination and kick off for people adventuring in the Darkenfold and Eldwood, both areas rich in plunder for those bold enough to explore them. As such many strange artifacts, jewels, gems and odds and ends are found in the bazaars of Elne. Mercenaries, freebooters, mendicants, traveling friars, wandering wizards and the like mingle with the locals. Merchants cart goods from Kayomar south or from the Vale of Oth and the City States of the south. Braying mules, oxen, carts, wagons and crowds of people fill the muddy streets during the day and crowd the bars at night.

ELNE

Total Population: 2000 (seasonal 6000)

Human: 5000

Gnome: 50 +/-

Halfling: 500 +/-

Dwarf: 100 +/-

Elf: 200 +/-

Government: The town is a Free City with no government. It has a council that employs (at their own expense) a mercenary guard.

Military: Elne boasts no true military. It relies upon Kayomar and the Lords of the North to keep them safe. They do have a town guard, however. It comprises 100 able bodied mercenaries. They are commanded by an 8th level fighter who is a member of the warrior guild, The Cult of the Swords. Many of the mercenaries are part of this cult as well. They are well equipped with scale mail, shields, pole arms, crossbows and bows and swords and axes.

Economy: The economy of the town thrives entirely on trade. It sits upon the north/south trade road that carries goods from the lands of Kayomar to the City States of the south. This route includes goods coming across the ocean and up the Danau River. The town boasts a large market for river boats and barges, wood being plentiful across the Elne Bridge and in the Perth Timberland.

Religion: There is no official religion. There is a small church to Ore-Tsar and a temple of the Aug Oust. This latter is little more than a cromlech built on the outskirts of town, but it is a considered a holy place by many who follow the old gods.

Language: All Languages, most commonly the Vulgate or Common.

Major Guilds: The Cult of the Swords has a heavy presence here. There are no active guilds with power. There are several informal merchant organizations. The most powerful merchant in Elne is Carrigan the Boatswain.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The Merry Gentleman: A two-story inn and tavern located inside the Ritter District. Fine foods and drink are available.

Murad Blacksmithy: A large establishment, next to the Merry Gentleman. Here Murad the dwarf employs 14 armorers and blacksmiths. They do a wide range of work and have a large assortment of armor and weapons available. All goods are priced as they are in the Players Handbook. Repairs to equipment range to 10-20% of the original value.

Whale's Maw: A tavern set upon the Elne Bridge. It's a dirty, run-down establishment, perched over the river. It's three stories and run by a retired fighter, Morg the Spleen. He's a dark haired, dirty fellow who welcomes one and all. He laughs a great deal.

Three Saddles Livery and Stable: Here all manner of livestock is available for purchase.

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The Mark: The Mark is the largest store in Elne. They specialize in all manner of equipment, from farming to dungeoneering. Almost anything is available here.

THE ELNE BRIDGE

The bridge that spans the Danua River is monstrous, almost 400 feet long. The slaves of Unklar's armies built the mighty edifice, designing it to withstand major floods and a tremendous amount of traffic. The bridge itself is 60 feet wide with a ledge almost 2 feet tall. The solid structure supports its own small town, many people building houses and even shops along the sides, into the water and even above the bridge itself. About 500 people live out their lives here. It is crowded and very dirty.

The western end of the bridge is a gate house and tower. The gate is almost always closed against denizens of the Darkenfold. A small troop of 8-12 guards from Elne occupy the tower. They do not charge any toll, allowing free traffic to any and all civilized peoples.

Once the gates are opened and travelers pass through, they are closed immediately. They are not opened at night unless under extreme circumstances, or well placed payments to poorly compensated guardsmen.

UPON THE POWDER RIVER

The adventure starts as the characters pass beneath the gate tower and through the Elne Bridge Gate. They hear the closing doors behind them.

THE PERTH TIMBERLAND

Many centuries in the past, the Darkenfold and Eldwood were one great forest, called the Ethvold. But many years of wars and human expansion destroyed the forest and split the wood into two. The Darkenfold retreated beyond to the banks of the Powder River. The land between the two, utterly spoiled, housed little in the way of life. But during the waning days of the Winter Dark when the Dark Lord's power began to fail, the Darkenfold began to spread to its old haunts. The lands between the Danau River and the Powder lay largely abandoned. In small starts, the forest began to return, trees growing along the banks of creeks, in small gulches, valleys and the like. Soon it spread up the sides of hills and crept out from the water ways. Within a hundred years, much of the land lay covered in a thick growth of young trees. Men called it the Perth Timberland for it seemed a separate wood, but it is very much a part of the Darkenfold.

As noted the trees here are younger, thick growing black jack oaks. Travel off the road is difficult, however, there are stretches where the Timberland is dominated by tall elm trees, here the country opens up and travel made easier.

The Perth Timberland is rich in game however, deer, antelope, and smaller game abound.

TO THE DAMENHEIT BRIDGE

If one follows the Post Road they have roughly 30 miles to cross

before they come to the Damenheit Bridge and the Darkenfold proper. The road is in decent shape and a well rested party that does not carry too much in the way of traveling gear can cover about 15 miles on a good day. Weather can slow this down as the Perth Timberland is subject to swollen water ways that often cover the road. Two days on foot or one day on horse should suffice.

Encounters are usually of the animal kind, but occasionally bandits, wolves, ogres and the like wander the road seeking easy prey. Roll a d20, six times daily. On a roll of 1 an encounter occurs, check the encounter table at the back of this book.

YELL VALLEY

Roughly 20 miles down the road from the Elne Bridge lies Yell Valley. Here the road gives way, slipping into twisted forests of the Perth.

The road tops a small rise before it dips into a long, broad valley. Trees grow thick along the valley floor and for the first time, little of the actual terrain is visible. It is a harbinger of the deeper forest beyond. The sounds of running water come to you from what must be a good sized stream hidden somewhere beneath the leafy canopy. Several miles on, across the valley, the road winds it's out of the dim valley and up the far ridge. A haze of warm humidity covers all you see.

The road winds through the valley. When it reaches the bottom however, it enters a thick patch of vines, covered in orange-white flowers. The patch is clearly visible to the traveling characters as they approach. The vines and flowers hang off the surrounding trees, growing across the ground, overlapping each other and twined around everything. A sweet smell pervades the whole country.

These are honey suckle vines. Their flowers are edible and when can sustain travelers for a short time. Normally such plants are harmless, but these are enchanted. The fey Gruble-Dir has placed an sleeping enchantment in the soil so that the honey suckle emits a scent that both pleases and causes drowsiness.

As soon as anyone enters the patch, following the road, the sweet smell engulfs them. It is not overpowering, but very pleasant, driving out even the memory of the foulest smells. Anyone who spends more than four rounds in the patch of honey suckle becomes distracted from their task at hand (charisma save, CL 4). They need only save once before they reach the stream. If they fail their save, a strong urge to stop and rest overcomes them. The CK should play this up; don't force them to stop. Mention things like: the flowers seem to offer a peaceful spot to rest that promise to heal you.

It takes about 12 rounds to reach the stream. Here a small foot bridge crosses the rock-filled creek. The vines are everywhere. Everyone must make a second charisma save. Anyone who failed previously must roll against a CL 8. For anyone who did not fail, the CL remains 4. If someone fails here however, the weight of their packs, the warmth of the sun, or whatever other

happenstance applies, forces them to lie down and rest. As soon as they do, they fall into a deep slumber; they are able to search for a spot off the road or under the bridge if they so desire. But the slumber comes on fast and remains.

Waking those who failed their save is impossible so long as they remain in the honey suckle. They must be carried out.

The trip from the stream to the far side of the honey suckle patch requires another 10 rounds, where characters must make a third saving throw; the CL remains 8 for those sleeping.

For any who remain in the patch their enchantment lasts for 2 days. They lie where the fell, sleeping. No animals molest them. However, the source of the enchantment, the faerie Gruble-Dir, robs them in their sleep. At no time does Gruble-Dir approach any characters awake or aware. He takes coin, gems and jewelry.

GRUBLE-DIR (*This chaotic neutral creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 33, AC 19. His primary attributes are mental. He does not do battle and possesses no particular weapons. If cornered he offers to buy his way out of whatever predicament he is in. He moves silently in the forest and leaves no track or spore behind. Tracking him requires a successful track check (CL 19). He is intelligent and will talk to characters if forced; however, he has a painful dislike of all demi-humans and humans. His treasure is hidden all over the forest around the brook. It consists of 350gp, 30 10gp gems and a magical +1 dagger with a gem encrusted hilt.*)

Character that succumb to the honey suckle, wake to a pounding headache. However, this stretch of honey suckle never plagues them again.

It is only a few miles of forested road before reaching the Damenheit Bridge and the Darkenfold.

DAMENHEIT BRIDGE

The Old Post Road crosses the Powder River at the Damenheit Bridge. The bridge itself is extremely old, built by slaves of Unklar during the long Winter Dark. Its stone arches, three of them, span the river. The bridge is broad, about 40 feet wide, rises gently to the center from both east and west and is roughly 160 feet long. A stone lip, 24 inches high, serves as a small rail for the bridge.

The bridge has one significant flaw: it's not quite long enough. The engineers who constructed it did not account for the seasonal rain fall. Both the Spring and the Fall in the Darkenfold are long and wet; the average rain fall in a given month exceeding 10 inches. The pools, brooks, creeks, and streams flood quickly, merging with the many small rivers that dump into the very large Mistbane and Powder rivers, both of which become flooded torrents. In short, though the bridge is well built and nearly indestructible, it is too short and is frequently under water.

The stone bridge looks much the same from either direction. Recent rainfall has made the river surge past its banks, but not so far as to block access to the bridge, but more than enough to lap up around the base of the bridge on either bank.

UPON POWDER RIVER 5

Any ranger, druid or anyone experienced in river craft will, upon a successful primary attribute check (CL 4) notice that the river is still surging and will not crest for several hours. At the rate the river is rising, it will cover the feet of the bridge within an hour or so.

The stone bridge is wide and long. Its thick, heavy stones seem a bulwark against the constant flow of the Powder River, but even so, the surging river, swollen with the recent rains, sends the waters lapping over the bridge's feet. Beyond it, the road twists off into the hazy forest where a mist clings to the branches and bowls of trees. A solitary figure stands upon the bridge's apex, using a long, curved dagger to hack and chop at something at his feet.

The creature is an allip, the undead spirit of the wizard Athul who killed himself by throwing himself into the river after his traveling companion Crel was slain by the Luvandgaurn (see below). The current swept his body into the foundation of the bridge where it remains, crumbled, torn, and wrapped in his magical cloak. Athul's unburied and unmourned spirit clings to the world of men. He has haunted the bridge these many months. Whenever the water surges, he crawls forth from the river and onto the bridge, where he attacks any living creature he encounters.

When the characters approach they notice the body of an elf lying upon the bridge. A crazed human with ghastly colored skin leans over the elf, hacking at him with a blood covered tulwar.

As the characters approach, Athul turns, babbles, and mutters incoherently. Somewhere in the mix he mentions the waters, drowning, the cursed bridge, the hated Darkenfold, and other references to his watery grave. Anyone who makes a successful intelligence check (CL 6) can pick up a strand of curing, that involves being cold, wet, drowned and buried with water.

He approaches the characters, babbling all the while. He stands in front of them for a moment, looking with a curious stare, he then attacks the characters with a wild abandon, hurling himself across the span at them, slashing with his tulwar.

The tulwar is a *wounding weapon*, dealing 1d6 points of damage upon a successful hit. Anyone hit loses one point of constitution. Further the allip is able to touch his victims, causing a temporary drain in wisdom. He fights until he is slain. If he is slain, he returns to his body, rising again when the waters surge. The only way to put a permanent end to the allip is to recover his corpse and bury it.

ALLIP (This neutral evil creatures vital stats are 4HD, 15 AC, 39 HP. His primary attributes are mental. He attacks with a touch attack, causing loss of constitution. He also babbles constantly, the inane ramblings acting as a hypnotism spell. The creature has treasure on his body, wrapped in his magical cloak. See Monsters & Treasure for full details.)

Beneath the bridge, upon the second pylon lies the wizard's body. It is wrapped in a *cloak of displacement*. On his person are mangled clothes, a satchel, and a belt with an empty tulwar scabbard on it. A small pouch holds 32gp and 71sp. His book is wrapped in leather cloth and has 5 first level, 3 second level and 1 third level spells in it. The book is titled *Athul's Traveling Compendium*; it is protected against water and other normal environmental conditions.

Assuming the characters dispatch the allip they notice the waters have continued to surge, and now cover at least the feet of the bridge, access to either bank is still easy enough to gain by a simple leap. However even a curious look over the side of the bridge reveals the body of the wizard, wrapped in his magical cloak. It bobs up and down in the water, grinding against the pylon. The body is in horrible shape, several weeks old at least,

but the cloak, a rich blue, lined in gold, is in perfect condition. With a successful intelligence check (CL 1) any viewer makes note that the die that would normally color such a cloak would have faded in such conditions, suggesting that it is more than a mundane item of apparel.

As this observation is made, they notice the body itself pulled violently under the water and then resurface; it happens again in rapid order. Something is tugging on the body, trying to bring it under the water. That something is an adolescent luvandgaurn, an aquatic beast that haunts these waters. The creature comes to the bridge whenever the rivers swell. The wizard's body attracts him immediately.

In order to get to the body, the characters are going to have to negotiate the bridge, the surging waters, and the river monster. All of these promise to be dangerous.

THE BRIDGE

The bridge itself is easy to climb up and down. Made of local stone, it consists of many smaller, cut pieces that are joined together; where they join they offer plenty of purchase areas. Anyone trying to go up or down them need only make a successful dexterity check (CL 3).



THE RIVER

The river is another matter altogether. Its normally slow moving waters are cresting over the bridge, rising an inch or so every few minutes. Anyone who enters the water is immediately battered by the sheer force of it. Assuming the characters are holding on to something, they still must make a strength check (CL 5) to see if they maintain their grip. If they do not hold on to something and attempt to wade into it they must make a dexterity save ever round (CL 2 at the beginning, CL 4 20 feet out and CL 12 in the middle of the river) or be swept downstream.

THE RIVER MONSTER

The luvandgaurn that hunts the bridge is about half of the size of a mature luvandgaurn. It is large, about 12 feet in length. The characters clearly notice, when it tugs the wizard's body under the water what the creature looks like.

The body bobs for only a moment and is then jerked violently underwater. The cloak, caught in the motion, swirls in the churning waters. Even as you watch, a huge fish rolls over and out of the water on top of the battered body. The beast has four flippers, two on each side; a short bull neck and a massive, wide snout filled with a hedge of fangs. Its tail slashes the water violently, trying to wrest the body from the pylon. At this point it pauses, its eye, exposed to the air looking up at you as if sizing you up.

The luvandgaurn is an aquatic beast that occupies many of the deeper portions of the river. This one has learned that the area around the bridge offers easy hunting, so haunts the area, searching for food. It is aware of the party and lingers, hoping the swollen river will crest over the bridge and allow him to drag them into the water.

LUVANDGAURN (This neutral creatures vital stats are 7d8 HD, AC 17, HP 50. Its primary attributes are physical. It has animal intelligence. The creature attacks with a single bite for 3d8 hit points of damage. It swims remarkably fast, moving up to 60 ft. in a round. The creature is not a normal animal and attacks until it has been killed. If it is killed, it yields only half the normal experience points, 1700x3. The creature is able to take short leaps onto land, grasping its prey in its jaws and thrashing about with its body until it reenters the water.)

The creature possesses little in the way of treasure, but did devour the wizard's companion, a maid called Crel, some weeks past. That unfortunate has long been returned to the river, all that is except for her pouch which hangs half embedded in the creature's gum. Made of leather of superior craftsmanship, it has survived the battering; it has 12gp, a ring worth 100gp, and a large stone worth 5000gp inside it. She was a rogue and stole the diamond from a noble in Petersboro, far to the west. It had been her and Athul's design to sell it in Elne. The stone has a small rune etched into its surface.

RUNE STONE: The stone is a magical rune stone, providing the wielder the ability to see brief distances into the future.

Anyone who holds it in their palm can see what is going to happen 1 round in the future for every point of intelligence they possess. The magic is very untrustworthy as it often proves false, as those who see into the future attempt to counteract what it sees as soon as they do so the future changes. Designed for spell casters, it can serve as a useful tool for assassins or merchants.

The noble who owned the diamond, Lord Eric of Grange Street, is the master of the Stone Mason's Guild in Petersboro. He is powerful and used the stone in his negotiations with the other guilds.

KARAGHI ROAD

On the western bank of the river, about 200 feet down from the bridge along the Post Road. This rough road heads due north, following the bank of the river. It has not signs of entry and seems an old abandoned track that peter's off fairly quickly. The road is a 25 mile track that leads to Castle Eastfold, where the ranger Ki leads a group of forest wardens.

The road itself is about 20 feet wide, with two deep ruts cut into the ground made by wagons or carts. Limbs, brush, piles of deadfall, and other forest debris litter the path. Small stumps, never properly cleared, dog anyone traveling on it. The path is kept in a poor state by the rangers of the castle. They leave it thus as a line of defense, using it rarely themselves, depending more on river traffic for supplies and the like.

On foot it is a two or three day trek up to the Longbranch River. A few hours north of that is the castle.

WILLOWBREAK WAY

The road to the town of Willowbreak is a few hundred feet further down the Post Road from the road to Castle Eastfold. It is clearly visible from that juncture.

The Post Road is clear of small growth and the trees seem pushed back from the road, a notable difference to your journey of previous days. Some small distance past the bridge you spy a sign painted on three boards nailed to a large post. The post is covered in weeds and a long vine hangs from an overhanging branch, clinging to the top of the sign. On the sign is written the word "Willowbreak." Beneath that is another word, "Beer." It points the way to a grass covered track that head south off the Post Road. The indents of a cart's wheels barely noticeable in the thick growth.

Willowbreak Way is an old track and is relatively clear. Though the villagers do not use it often, they do keep it in some state of repair. It is roughly 12 feet wide, and winds through the forest in a southerly pattern. It is easy to follow and promises plenty of shade.

It is only about 12 miles to Willowbreak.

THE ROAD TO WILLOWBREAK

Willowbreak Way is an old road winding its way south through

the Darkenfold Forest. Free of growth, shaded by the forest canopy, Willowbreak Way offers the traveler comfort from the sun, rain, snow or sleet. The track itself is narrow, only a dozen or so feet wide, hardly enough for a single cart, or a few horses. Though the villagers in Willowbreak do not use it often, they do keep it in some state of repair; they clear the scrub that tends to grow in such places, leaving behind deep green grass in the loamy earth. The track winds through the forest in a southerly direction, following the course of the river for the most part, though veering from time to time into the deeper woods.

The track opens up before you, winding through the dark green of the wood. To your right, the river moves sluggishly along its course. A few birds call in the distance; a murder of crows gather in the tree above you, cawing loudly at your unrequested presence.

It is only about 12 miles to Willowbreak, taking about a day's travel. If the characters force march they can reach it in 6 hours. One or two random encounters are possible, particularly if the characters move slowly.

Fishing the Powder

Several miles from the Post Road, the track winds up a small knoll that overlooks the Powder River. As the characters top the knoll they spy a canoe in the river, about 100 feet down river and about 60 feet out toward the river's center. The canoe is anchored in the water, pulled tight and turned around, rocking in the slow moving water. The figure of a man is plain to see. He's stretched out in the back of the canoe, so that he is facing the party, though his broad brimmed hat is pulled over his head and he appears to be asleep. A fishing pole hangs lazily over the canoe's side, more in the water than in his hands.

The man's name is Jared Hale. He lives on the outskirts of Willowbreak in a small cottage. He comes up the river to fish for

small mouth bass and cut-throat trout. Like all the denizens of this small forest community, Jared is cautious of strangers, but he does enjoy news of the wider world beyond.

He is presently sleeping in the canoe.

If the characters decide to pass him, by he wakes up as they are wandering down the knoll. He makes no attempt to hail them and once they have passed, he goes back to sleep.

If they characters call out to him he wakes with a start, pulling his hat back and instinctively reaching for the canoe's paddles. Taking them in hand, he shouts a greeting back to them. Jared is a slow talking, deliberative fellow. Despite his cautious nature, he is willing to talk with the characters. He speaks carefully, not knowing whether they offer good or evil to his friends and neighbors. He tells them how close they are to Willowbreak (only about 3 miles now) and answers any general questions they have.

At no point does he offer to bring the canoe into the shore. If pressed to do so he uses his line as an excuse.

If asked about an inn or tavern he says the following:

"Oh aye. That would be Greelys. Its a good place when opened, but young Greely Ironpot has it closed-up and the door locked these past few days. No one knows why. He's a slight of a young man, spooks easy, so I'm guessing he saw something and got riled up. I've not been to town for a few days so he may have opened it back up, though I don't think so. Now, if you need to wet your whistles, Heidi up by the hedge row gate brews a fare piece of beer and makes some sough dough bread you'll want to lathe with butter.

Jared will talk for a while; pressing a few questions to find out what the characters are doing here, where they are going and what they are after. He tells them any of the general questions

they ask about the town. However, after 15 minutes or so he begins to grow tired of the conversation and begins to talk about his fish. Within 20 minutes, he's messing with the line and wishing the party a good day.

WILLOWBREAK

Willowbreak is a small fortified town of roughly 300 inhabitants. Another 100 people live within a few miles of the town, in small forest cottages, or fortified houses. The Willowbreak Way ends at the double doors of Willowbreak's northern entrance. One main dirty road snakes through the town. Outside the wall, several trails lead off into the forest west and south, some to houses, and some to deep forest hunting trails.



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The village is partially walled with a mixture of hedge, stone and wood. The wall is built in a great arc covering the village north, west and south; the eastern side of the village is protected by the river itself. A hedge, called the Hedge Row, 12' ft. high and 8' ft. thick, protects the northern end of the village. It begins at the Powder River, winds around and arcs along the western flank of the village, opposite the river. The hedge connects to a rocky wall 10 feet high, cut by a small tower. The rocks join the last section of wall, a wooden palisade that stretches along the south western and southern part of the village, ending back at the river.

There are two gates. The North, or Hedge Row Gate, is a wooden structure with two doors built into the hedge. The South Gate is built into the palisade. Both doors are double, wooden affairs. The wooden palisade has catwalks, the rest does not.

The houses inside line the dirt road, with a few dozen built off the road, nearer the walls. All the houses are wooden, built of split rails or cut lumber. They are shingled for the most part, though some have thatching. They are arranged in no particular order, strewn haphazardly about. Chickens, cows, goats and the like are in the town, Some animals are fenced, others tied up.

The people are generally friendly. Like Jared, they are cautious of strangers, until they have learned their intent.

CURSED BY THE GODS

Entering town the character spy a few shops but only one noticeable inn, a large building with a sign hanging out front with a plate, fork, spoon and mug upon it. This is Greelys. However, when they approach it they cannot help but notice that there is no one outside, the windows are shuttered and the door closed. Even a cursory attempt to open it reveals that it is locked.

A few people, taking notice of the characters offer up the explanation that the tavern is closed, cursed by the river gods. If queried they offer up the information for a pint at Heidi's. For game purposes this can be Gil, Euric or any of the villagers named below.

In Heidi's tavern this following information is given if the characters choose to ask. The Castle Keeper should read or paraphrase the tale.

Greelys is locked. The doors are closed. The windows are closed and Greely himself and his sisters are nowhere to be found.

Several days previous to the character's arrival, Greely shouted curses at the river god Nunt. After a week of pulling foul fish from his nets, Greely yelled that the god Nunt was the "son of a motherless whore." He also shouted that he hoped that his river would run red with the blood of all those who paid him homage (which ironically, included himself).

Needless to say, Nunt was not amused with this cursing. Although the god was normally unaffected by the affairs of men, he decided to make an example of Greely. He sent a wicked minded fey, Oyvind Pal, to punish the inn keeper.

Oyvind Pal did just that. Upon arriving in Willowbreak, he came to the inn, and cast the doors wide. In the midst of much thunderous noise, he called upon all to leave that valued their lives. He then cast a *hold* spell on Greely saying only "You do not value your life, or so your speech has taught us." After all had left, he took up Greely and bound the doors and windows shut. He then lay a curse on the doors, stating that until Greely paid homage to Nunt, the inn would stay forever closed.

There's no pay offered to rescue Greely but promises that the town would be very grateful and heaped upon the characters, and no doubt Greely would pay something for his own rescue!

Total Population: 300 +

Human: 300 +

Gnome: 5+

Halfling: 5 +/-

Dwarf: 1 +/- (a prospector not in town)

Elf: 10 +/-

Government: The village has no government. The villagers gather in a Meet once a month to talk about upkeep for the wall and the road and setting the roster for the gate guard.

Military: Willowbreak has a town militia of about 80 able bodied men and women. They rely on bows for their defense, wielding their short bows as 1st level fighters. The militia has no real commander, however. There are several rangers in the town, experienced in trapping and they usually take charge. Bolthildr, an 8th level ranger, is their leader.

Economy: The people of Willowbreak make their living hunting, trapping, fishing, and trading with the wild tribes of the Darkenfold. Several peddlers come from Elne, bringing tools, some weapons and the like, carting back the pelts, etc. Bent's Trading Post down river is a major trade partner for the people of Willowbreak.

Religion: The Og-Aust are worshipped in and around Willowbreak. A large cromlech set up on the south side of town serves as their holy place. Here the wandering hermit Braelich visits from time to time.

Language: Vulgate or Common.

Major Guilds: There are no active guilds.

PERSONS OF NOTE

Area 1 Heidi Oddny: Heidi lives in a house close to the Hedge Row Gate, between the road and the river. Her house is very large, consisting of one common room, about 60 feet long and 25 wide, ending in a wide porch overlooking the river. Tables and chairs abound, set in no particular order. The common room often has several locals in it, drinking her very fine beer that she brews behind the house. One large fire place dominates the north wall. Her other room is her own living quarters, closed to the public.

She offers the following in her common room

Sough dough bread, by the loaf: 1cp

Fresh brewed butter, by the stick: 1cp

Beer by the mug, by the pint: 1cp.

Heidi is an attractive young lady, about 30 years of age, with thin dark hair and dark eyes. She is not particular about her appearance, though she is not unkempt. Very friendly, she loves to drink and is a very able drinker (possessing an 18 constitution). She gives information freely but is not particularly interested in news from the outside world. Heidi has lived her entire life in Willowbreak. Her parents are both dead, having died when she was very young.

If Greelys is mentioned she explains the following: "That damn fool boy. Cursed the gods and got it in the gut. Place is all closed up until he feeds the fish their just due." If pressed what she means, she says "Nunt, my fair faced patrons. The river god Nunt," and talks no more about it.

AREA 2 GILS SANDBURN: Gil lives in a house just off the road. It is a small house with only one room, a fire place, cook pot, bed and chair. He skins and prepares his meal from his single chair. He welcomes visitors, always anxious to learn what they may know.

Though young, only 22, he's an extremely skilled hunter, having spent much of his youth deep in the woods. Though he is not a trained warrior, possessing no fighting abilities beyond that of a 1st level fighter, he does have ranger skills equivalent to those of a 10th level ranger.

GIL SANDBURN (*This chaotic neutral human tracker's vital statistics are HD 1d8, AC 16, HP 7. His primary attributes are wisdom, dexterity, and constitution. His extraordinary attribute is dexterity 17. He wears a leather coat and a cloak; using a short bow and wicked looking long knife when on the hunt. He has a magic amulet that grants him a +4 on his AC. The amulet is hidden on a strap he wears beneath his shirt.*)

He hires himself out as a guide and ranger if necessary. He requires no money, only a share of whatever the forest yields. He is trustworthy and capable, knowing all the lands in and around Willowbreak. He is familiar with the country from Bent's Trading Post to the Inigg Gorge. He speaks elf and eshle fluently. If mistreated or maligned while working for anyone, he guides them though a circuitous route through the forest. He then leaves the party on the edge of the Wingnut Bottom Land, a particular foul and dangerous part of the wilderness.

AREA 3 STEINAR'S STORE: Eruc Steiner runs the only store in town. It's a small store, consisting of the front of his house. The store is lined with shelves and crowded with displays of all manner of items. Most normal equipment can be found here, tucked away, hanging in baskets from the ceiling, buried, or hidden in trays stacked all over the place. It's dirty and disorganized but Eruc seems to know where just about anything is located. Prices are normal as per the *Castles & Crusades Players Handbook*.

For weapons and armor, he has limited supplies, possessing a few suits of leather armor and ring mail. He also has one suit of dwarven chain mail and six wood shields. He does have plenty of bow strings, several stout hunting bows (short bows) and arrows in great quantities. He does not have any cross-bows. He does possess several swords (broad, long and short). He has one magical +2 two-handed sword that he keeps locked away. If any ask he will show it to them and sell it to them for 8000gp.

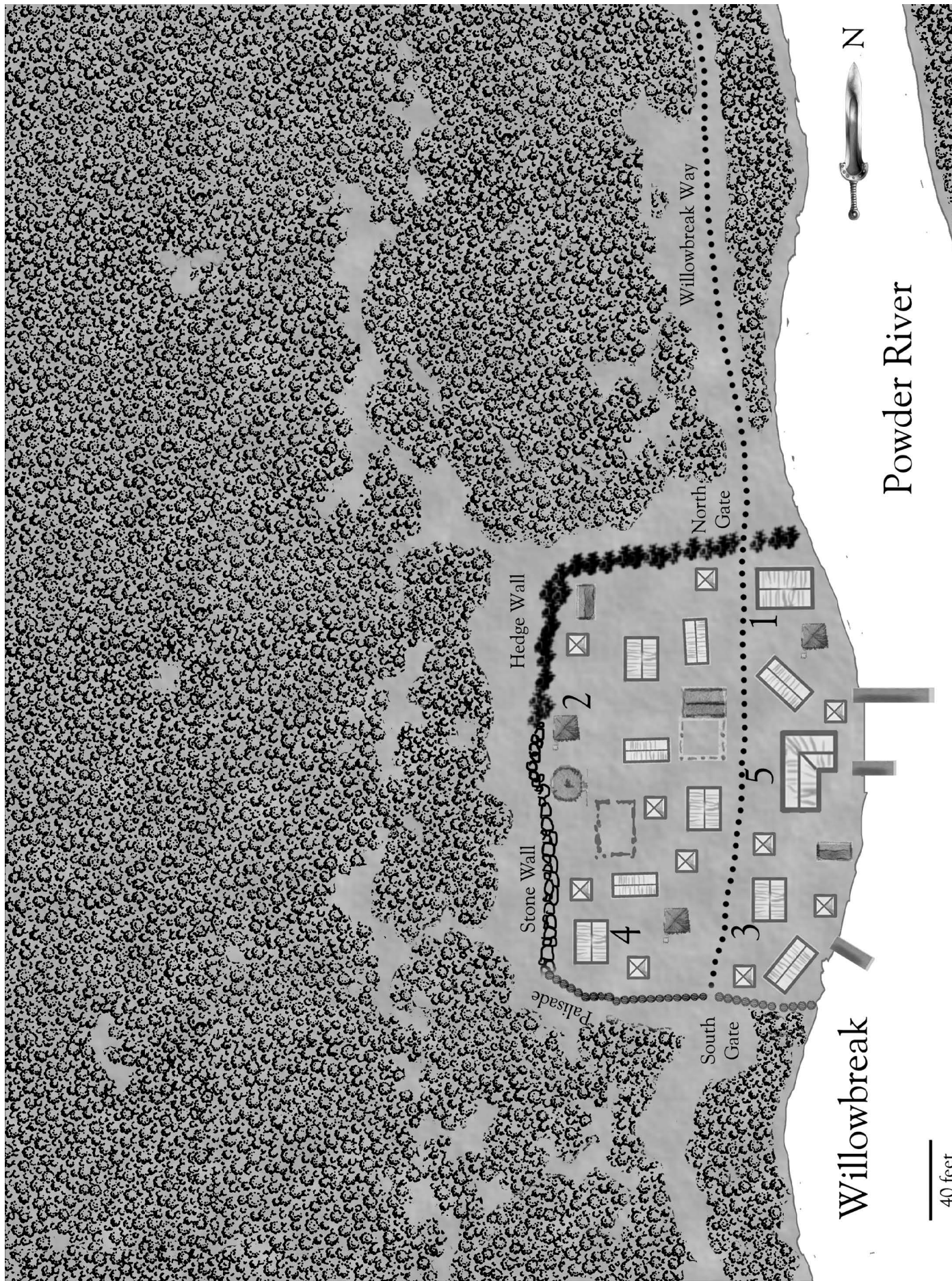
AREA 4 THE TINKERS: Arnmorth of Breilington is the town fix-it-all. His home and shop are by the west wall, near the tower. He is skilled at repairing armor, leather, wood, and most other substances. He can mount gems and set jewels as well. His prices vary for repairing equipment, generally charging 10% of the cost of an item to repair simple problems, 25% for more complex problems.

Ammorth comes from Breilington, a major port city. There he worked as a sculptor, serving the Duke of that place. He left after an affair with a powerful magistrate's wife with who he sired a son. Leaving the woman, son and sentence of death behind, he fled to the deeps of the Darkenfold where he took up residence. Arnmorth has grown very fond of the town and its people, having lived here for 17 years. He is in his mid 40s, strong, with dark hair and eyes. He is quick of wit and enjoys a good joke. Unknown to any but Gil, Arnmorth is the one who carved a large statue of Amenut the Frog God (one of the Og-Aust) on a rocky island further down the river (see below).

AREA 5 GREELYS: Greelys is the town tavern and eatery. A sign hangs outside the tavern; carved on a large wooden placard is a plate, a fork and knife, over which stands a beer mug.

The wooden building is made from cut and treated timber, the planks of it overlapping to make shingled walls. The roof too is shingled with wood gutters that gather and collect rain water in barrels spaced at each corner. Greelys is large, able to sit 100 people, crowded onto long tables. A huge central fire place, flanked by four pillars, dominates the center of the room. There is no bar, but a large back room serves as a kitchen and brewery. The walls are decorated with all manner of trophies, from swords and shields, to animal hides and heads. In normal times it smells of fish, beer and sweat. Windows line the walls, though these are usually closed. A large porch overlooking the river is accessed through a back door.

Greely's is run by Greely Ironpot. He's a young man who inherited the bar from its previous owner. He has run it for several years, putting great emphasis on the fish he sells. The trout, bass and other fish he serves are his pride and joy. Greely himself is jumpy, very religious, and scared of the dark. He is fast to anger but quick to forget. He never takes his anger out on any patron or potential patron. He usually hurls pots and pans all about and curses like a mad hatter. He is stout from doing almost all his work himself. His sisters, both very large and buxom lasses, run the place with him. They serve the beer and food he brews and cooks. Their names are Rjupa and Veny.



Greelys Menu

Meal with Fish	2cp
Meal with Fish and Bread	5cp
Meal with Fish and Pork	5cp
Meal with Fish and Beef	5cp
Bread, loaf	2cp
Mushrooms	1cp
Vegetables	1 cp
Fruits (seasonal)	1sp per piece (apple, orange, bundle plums, etc)
Beer, pint	1cp
Ale, pint	2cp
Wine (imported from Elne	1gp per glass

ENTERING GREELYS

Entering is almost impossible. Oyvind cast *wall of thorns* three times inside the inn and permanent on the walls. The resulting explosion of plant growth crushed up against the doors, windows, and shutters. Close investigation reveals plant growth everywhere inside the inn; thorn-laden branches protrude from beneath the door and window.

The characters can break their way in, but it won't be easy. The door must be pulled down in addition to the wall of thorns beyond that. The thorns are brown and brittle, the wall of them having died upon casting. Hacking through them is not impossible but it is hard work. Each round someone pushes into them they must make a dexterity check (CL 8) or suffer 1 point of damage.

Each person entering is allowed a wisdom check (CL 3); if successful they notice that the brambles and briars are slowly growing back again.

If anyone attempts to break-in and manages to hack into the center of the room, they find a small area, only a few feet wide, near the fire pit. Greely and his sisters are laying there, obviously in a charmed slumber. Waking them is only possible with violent assertions.

If awakened, they speak of the curse of Nunt and the binding. They beg the party to seek out Oyvind Pal and make recompense for them. In return, they shall have a lifetime's worth of free food and drink and a place to stay whenever they find themselves in Willowbreak.

They direct the party to go outside: "Follow the thread and it will take you to Oyvind Pal and there you'll find what pay he demands to lift this curse. That is what he told us."

They are much to afraid to venture into the water themselves and if the characters do not aid them they will abandon the inn and Willowbreak. For their part they begin clearing the tavern of bramble and briars.

In fact the god Nunt cares not what happens next, judging that any outcome sees Greely punished enough. Oyvind knows this but treats with the characters in hopes to get them to do some-

thing for himself; it is what he wants them to do, for he desires someone's help in his own schemes. If the characters call it a day, they can return to Heidi's later and have their well earned drink, if not they must find the thread.

FINDING THE THREAD

On the back side (of the inn), a trail leads down from the back porch to the river itself where a long net lies bundled and bunched up on the shore. Dead fish are scattered everywhere. A simple search of the area reveals a small golden thread that originates at the net and slips into the water, stretching across the wide river.

The thread is obviously magical, humming slightly at the touch. It cannot be broken and it cannot be reeled-in. Pulling it lifts it out of the water but it quickly floats back down. It is not tied to the net, but rather merges with it.

Several small fishing boats are pulled up on the bank in the general area and 2 canoes as well. These are clearly marked with the sign from Greelys. Oars are strapped into the boats.

If the characters choose to cross the river, doing so is easy enough if they take one of the boats. It takes only about 5-10 minutes to cross, following the thread they find themselves approaching the east bank of the river, toward a thick patch of bramble and briar.

As you search for an area to beach your boats a portion of the briar patch breaks free and a humanoid figure steps out and into the water. It has bark for skin but the creature is covered from head to toe in briars and thorns. His mouth is a gaping maw in the knotty tangle of vines and he seems to have no eyes, ears or any other human feature.

Paraphrase or read the following:

"How now? Who comes a-following the golden thread? Have you come to make amends for Greely and his poor tavern or just on your own curious?"

Oyvind treats with the characters and tries to convince them to travel down river to fetch an item from a giant who has taken up residence on the river. The giant, Radgar Brownshirt, dwells upon the river, fishing it and terrorizing men and beasts. He has many treasures in his possession but only one of value to Oyvind, a small amulet of a frog. He desires this, all else the characters can have. Once done he promises to remove the curse.

The characters are welcome to attack the fey. If so his stats are below. Doing so brings no wrath from the gods nor concern from anyone else.

OYVIND PAL, FEY (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are 6d8 HD, AC 18, HP 39. His primary attributes are physical and mental. He attacks by either shape shifting into a mountain lion and attacking with 2 claws for 1d6 points of damage and a bite*

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for 1d8 points of damage or by hurling briars and thorns from his body for 1d2 points of damage. He can send 4 thorns out in all directions. Oyvind Pal is made of wood, his skin is wood and his blood is the sap of trees. He possesses the following powers: charm animal 1/day, greater sleep, affecting twice the normal hit dice and that places the victim in a catatonic state for 10 days, speak with animals, barkskin 2/day, wall of thorns 3/day, summon magical beasts 3/day, animate plants 4/day. He cannot be surprised and has no 'back' being able to see in all directions.)

If the characters take up the quest the fey is very pleased they will have to decide how they leave Willowbreak, by boat or foot. If not after a week's time he grows bored and Greelys returns to normal.



RIVER WALK

The characters can take up the quest against the giant or move on about their way. Whether by trail or boat the Willowbreak Way leads to a trail that winds south into the greater Darkenfold, following the banks of, or upon the course of, the Powder River. If the characters choose not to take up the fey's quest, their journey should continue south, exploring the river bank for whatever reason they deem fitting. Or if the CK needs an adventure the townsfolk hire the party to clear out the cyclops.

LEAVING WILLOWBREAK

Once Greelys Tavern is cleared of debris, the town folk come out and celebrate. They all congratulate the characters and eventually begin congratulating themselves as well going around. Some cheers are reserved for the guard (for letting the adventurers in), the inn keeper himself for seeking the forgiveness of the gods, the villagers themselves for being a part of the great event, the cow in the pen, and so on and so forth.

Of all the people in the village, the tracker Gil Sandburn, is the most interested in what the characters plan to do. Though he has no interest in taking up the quest, he is more than happy to assist the characters with advice or pointers. He knows the forest well and has taken many trips up and down the river. Two of his good friends have been killed on the river by the cyclops (see below) and he himself once avoided one of his channel traps.

If the characters strike up a conversation with Gil that find that he is more than anxious to talk to them. He says the following:

I've been up and down the river scores of times for sure. Usually a fair and easy trip of a day and a half or two days down to Bent's Trading Post. But not no more. The river is held by that giant bastard now. He haunts a whole stretch of it. Slows us all down don't you know. He's been at it for month, not realizing we stopped using the river so much, travel down about 12 miles, beach our craft up above him and port the canoes to down below him. Its a hard walk and dangerous and takes too many days, but must be done. He's fixed up the whole river with his rapids. Built three channels into the river's course . . . as if we couldn't see that . . . hoping to slow and catch you. He's clever, but no so clever he can't be outwitted.

Gil answers any questions the party poses to him; he does so to the best of his ability. But he does not know about the elaborate trap that the cyclops has set for him. He actually doesn't know the giant is a cyclops as he has only seen it from afar.

He strongly advises the party to take the canoes, perhaps to beach them several miles before the rapids.

The rest of the townsfolk can offer little in the way of advice, but that does not dampen their desire to help the quest (so long that is, that they don't have to leave Willowbreak).

THE POWDER RIVER

The source of the Powder River lies in the Rhodope Mountains far to the west of the village of Willowbreak. It tumbles down from the mountain slopes and into the Shelves of the Mist, flowing through deep canyons and high bluffs. Here the river is swift, narrow and deep. It cuts its way through the bedrock of the uplands, then tumbles out of the Shelves just north of the Darkenfold. There it widens and slows. The river's course cuts a crown off the top of the forest, snakes through the Paladin Kingdom of Kayomar, and then dives south, reentering the forest. There it widens further and slows even more.

The Powder River is wide, averaging roughly 100 feet across. During the rainy season, the river swells its banks in the flatlands, widening up to 120 feet or more. The current is generally easy to manage and not too strong. In the west, near the Shelves, there are several difficult rapids. Further east and south the river is smooth flowing, offering the traveler little more than an open road. The water carries a great deal of silt down from the highlands to the west, gathering here and there, dotting the

river with sand bars. These sand bars come and go, depending on the amount of rain that falls.

There are islands sprinkled throughout the river. During the rainy season these often vanish beneath the river. The banks range from level with the water to a dozen feet or more above the current (such as at Willowbreak Village). The trees of the Darkenfold grow right up to the edge of the river, their leaves and branches dragging through the current, and their roots washed clean by the flowing water. The oaks are often crowded-out by willow trees whose thin, leafy, whip-like branches offer many places to hide.

A great many fish live in the river, offering plenty to eat. There are also larger animals as well, including river otters, beavers, and alligators (toward the Long Branch River). The alligators swim the river, but primarily keep out of the deeper, faster water. There are other creatures that occupy the water, including large predatory fish.

Travel on the Powder is usually done by canoe, though some small boats ply the water. There are a few establishments on the river. Willowbreak is the largest. A castle, Easfold, kept by the Rangers, is north of the village, as are several river-taverns; Bents Trading post is to the south of the village, and some few scattered homes dot the riverbanks.

There are many game trails that follow the river. The longest begins in Willowbreak and leads south for almost 15 miles before it ends in a large heap of rocks.

The river is in the wilderness, and though easy enough to travel for the wandering adventurer, it offers the same ease for wandering monsters.

MONSTERS ON THE POWDER

Roll a d20 six times a day for wandering monsters on the water. Roll a d12 six times a day for wandering monsters on the shoreline. Upon a roll of 1, consult the following:

NOTE: Scale monsters to fit level of party. Adjust the hit points and hit dice as needed.

On the Water:

- 1 **GAUNT** (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 6d8, HP 31, AC 17. Her primary attributes are physical & mental. She attacks with claws doing 1d4+6 points of damage plus an energy drain of 1 level with touch. Her special abilities are blood drain, energy drain, tree stride, and these spell-like abilities: entangle (2/day), charm person (2/day), sleep (3/day); only cold iron, mistletoe, or magic to hit.)
- 2 **ELEMENTALS, WATER, SMALL, 1-4** (This neutral creatures' vital stats are HD4d8, HP varies, and AC 16. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with slam for 2d6 points of damage. They have water mastery, so that if they are touching water and their victim is as well, they gain a +1 to all rolls. They can extinguish flames with a drench attack. They have normal vortex.)

- 3 **ASSASSIN VINE, 1-2** (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 29, AC 15. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with vines doing 1d4 damage each, with a failed strength save by the victim indicating constriction. Constriction means the victim blacks out in 3 rounds and will be strangled to death in 3 more, if not freed. Its special abilities are constrict, improved grab, camouflage and resistance to cold and fire.)
- 4 **LUVANDGAURN, YOUNG** (This neutral creatures vital stats are 7d8 HD, AC 17, HP 50. Its primary attributes are physical. It has animal intelligence. The creature attacks with a single bite for 3d8 hit points of damage. It swims remarkably fast, moving up to 60 ft. in a round. The creature is not a normal animal and attacks until it has been killed. If it is killed, it yields only half the normal experience points, 1700x3. The creature is able to take short leaps onto land, grasping its prey in its jaws and thrashing about with its body until is re-enters the water.)
- 5 **ABOLETH** (These lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 9d8, AC 16, HP 51. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with four tentacles for 1d6+8 damage each. The aboleth is highly intelligent and able to enslave creatures through a charm like ability. Victims must make a saving throw versus wisdom or fall under its control. They have spell-like abilities that they cast as a 16th level caster: hypnotic pattern, illusory wall, mirage arcane, persistent image, programmed image, project image, and veil. They also have a slime attack that morphs the victim into an aquatic creature and are able to surround themselves with a thick mucus cloud to confuse their enemy.)
- 6 **HARPY, 1-6** (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 23, AC 13. Her primary attributes are physical. She attacks with two claws for 1d3 points of damage or by weapon for 1-4 points of damage. She is also able to employ a captivating song to charm her opponent.)
- 7 **JACULUS** (These creature's vital stats are HD 1d4, AC 15, HP 4, 4, 3, 3, 3, 2, 2, 1. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack in flight with 2 claw attacks for 1d3 points of damage per claw. Their bite transmits a poison to the victim that can cause an additional 1d6 points of damage. A successful constitution save negates. They have the ability to spit their poison as well. A successful dexterity save negates; if struck with poison spit a second save, constitution, is allowed. If successful it negates the poison.)
- 8 **NYMPH** (This neutral good creature's vital stats are HD 3d6, AC 17, HP 11. Her primary attributes are physical. She has no attack ability, but can cast up to 7th level druid spells and has a charm ability through her divine beauty. She can dimension door once per day.)

On the Shoreline

- 1 **BUGBEARS 2-8** (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 17, 15, 13, AC 17. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by weapon and do the appropriate weapon damage. They have darkvision and are skilled

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hunters and trackers.)

- 2 **GNOLL, 2-8** (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP varies, AC 15. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a club or whip for 1d6 points of damage or a slam for 2d4 points of damage. They possess chain hauberk, shield, whip, club, pouch with 18gp and 32sp).
- 3 **CHIMAERA, LESSER (1-2):** (These neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP varies, AC 14. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with a bite for 1d6 points of damage, 2 claws for 1d4 points of damage, and a tail for 1d3 points of damage. The tail has a poison stinger that causes loss of 1-2 points of dexterity in the round after being stung and 1d4 points of strength in the next round. A successful constitution save negates the poison).
- 4 **YELLOW MOLD** (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 0, HP 0, AC 10. It has no primary attributes. It attacks by discharging a spore spray; any within its range must save vs. constitution at -3 penalty or take 1d6 temporary constitution damage. No other attacks.)
- 5 **OGRES x 5** (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 4, AC 16, HP 13, 17, 22, 22, 28. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a weapon for 1d10+3 points of damage or their powerful fists for 1d10 points of damage (one attack, one damage). They have dark and twilight vision.
- 6 **PIXIES, 1-8** (These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 7, leader HP 4, AC 16. Their primary attributes are mental. Their special abilities are polymorph self, permanent illusion (1/day), know alignment, confusion (permanent duration unless removed with remove curse), dispel magic (8th level effect) (1/day), dancing lights (1/day), detect thoughts, and sleep (1/day). They attack with 3 types of special arrows: Type I does 2-5 damage, Type II requires a constitution save or sleep for 1-6 turns, and Type III which requires an intelligence save or lose all memories and skills/levels for 1-6 turns. Each pixie has 4 arrows of each type and gain a +4 BTH to hit with them. Their spell resistance is 6.)
- 7 **SHADOW MASTIFF, 1-4** (This neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 23, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a single bite for 2d4 points of damage. They are able to blend with darkness, have a bay attack that can cause fear for those who fail their charisma save, as well as the ability to trip their opponents. They have darkvision 60 feet.)
- 8 **WOLF SPIDER, LARGE** (These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 19, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a bite, for 1d3 points of damage. Their special abilities are jumps 30 feet, and bite delivers poison. A constitution save must be made or the person bitten is paralyzed for 48 hours.)

TRAVEL ON THE POWDER

There are several options for following the course of the Powder River. One can go on the west or east banks, or one can float down the river. Consult the appropriate rules to determine

travel speeds.

The den of the cyclops is 17 miles south of Willowbreak on the Powder River.

BY BOAT

Travel downstream by boat is relatively easy. The wide, deep water makes passage fast. Traveling at a normal speed, the boat can cover about 20 miles per day. This takes into account running into sand bars, and other normal stops and starts on a river. If the conditions are right, the characters can move much faster, up to 36 miles per day.

BY LAND

Traveling the banks of the Powder River overland is much more difficult. On trails or paths it is normal, but off trail it can be arduous. The country is old, broken, and filled with natural obstacles. These obstacles include fallen trees, deep ditches, huge thorn patches, creeks, etc. These hazards are not encounter areas, but do serve to slow the party down. The Castle Keeper should make the party aware of the difficulty and why their movement is so slow. For example "The bramble catches on the shoulder strap of your pack and as you step forward it jerks the strap back, twists the pack around your torso and nearly pulls you off your feet." That and similar descriptions make the trek through the forest all the more real.

When on a trail, covering 10 miles a day is normal. Otherwise 5-6 miles is a good day. Roll 1d4+4 to see how many miles the party makes on any day's travel; this should give a fair average. The trails leading out from Willowbreak are few, and those that do exist are narrow. The main southern trail ends entirely after about 8 miles or so.

Read or paraphrase the following for the characters, whether they are on the river, or following its course. In either event, the river view opens:

The river comes into full view. Its dark waters moving slowly south, following banks lined with old trees, thick grassy knolls, moss-covered, rocky outcroppings, and other forest vegetation. The river is clearly deep, as its surface is smooth. Through the sun's haze, insects whirl haphazardly, bouncing across the surface, taunting the fish that must surely lie beneath the water. The river is silent here, moving slowly in its course, only the occasional bird call or distant splash of jumping fish break the silence. In the distance, down the west bank, a deer looks up at you; it watches for a moment and it carefully, almost casually, turns and vanishes beneath the eaves of the wood.

As noted, the journey to the Cyclops den is 17 miles from Willowbreak. On the river, this should take just under a day. If going through the forest it should take 3-4 days. Roll encounters as necessary.



EYE ON THE WATER

In the previous adventure, the fey known as Oyvind Pal told the characters of a giant living upon the river who terrorized those who passed through. Oyvind makes no distinction between giants and did not tell the characters that the creature is in fact a cyclops named Radgar Brownshirt

This large, relatively intelligent giant came to the river several months ago. Wandering out of the dense forest to the west, where his own home had been invaded by harpies, the cyclops stumbled upon a merchant canoe, slew the boatswain, and looted the contents. He decided then and there to make this river his new haunt.

Hunting the Powder did not prove as easy as he had hoped. The next two canoes that came south avoided him through skill and speed. The frustrated Radgar then set about creating a trap. He explored up and down the river until he found an area with shallow water. Taking large rocks, he tossed them into the water, and created a set of rapids. These he tailored, moving the rocks to create three separate channels through the water. He assumed that the channels would slow anyone passing through, allowing him to pelt them with rocks, kill them, eat them, and take their goods.

It proved more difficult than he thought, for the folk who travel the river are well-versed in its course and are able to negotiate many of its hazards. He scored one good kill, a lackluster group of non-forest-dwelling adventurers, who traveled out of Elne on

a hunt for gold and glory. He slew them, cooked them, ate them, and added their goods to his small treasure horde.

Radgar then created a more elaborate trap. He carefully arranged the river into a wider area that he then walled-off with additional rocks (this is the area marked as the Pool on the map). He dug out the river bottom at the end of the third channel, and created a deeper area in which he could sit, mostly beneath the water. When he sits down he is completely submerged except for the top of his head and eye. He looks very much like a rock in the water.

Any canoes that go down the channels to the left and center of the river end up in the deep pool. Anyone attempting to get out of the pool must climb out of their canoe and mount the rocks, pulling their canoes. While they are doing that, Radgar leaps out of the water and charges across the river, attacking his prey.

That is his plan. When the characters come down stream, he is in the pool of water just before channel A.

Radgar Brownshirt (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 6d10, AC 19, HP 51. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a large, broad-bladed spear for 1d10 points of damage. He wears magical bracers of defense that give him +2 on his AC, (this is already factored in). He also carries a stone axe, if needed).

Radgar uses his long spear in battle, attempting to keep anyone from harming him. The cyclops is an evil creature, but does not want to die. He attempts to kill or capture one person and then he retreats, hoping the rest of the party leaves. If he sees a great deal of wealth in the canoe, he fights harder. If the opportunity presents itself, he will parley and demand payment to leave the party alone. He will not leave the area, however. If defeated, he offers up his treasure to the party.

NOTE: Some adjustments to Radgar's hit dice and hit points should be made if the characters are lower or higher level.

SPRINGING THE TRAP

The cyclops is a giant and a hardy giant at that. He takes up residence in the water in the early morning, hiding next to channel A. He stays there for the better part of the day. Only after evening does he rise and retire to the land. Not far from the river bank is a mound where he rests, eats, and keeps his treasure.

NOTE: If the characters search the forest carefully, they have a good chance of coming across the path to the giant's lair.

AREA 1: CHANNEL A AND CYCLOPS

This is a rapid channel that forces the canoe to move much faster than the pilot's desire. Keeping the canoe upright requires a successful dexterity check (CL 6) from whoever is steering the canoe. If the steersman has absolutely no river experience the CL is 10. If the check fails, the canoe turns over, dumping everyone and the contents out.

The canoe, turned over or not, comes out into the deeper pool where the cyclops lays hidden. Seeing him is very difficult as he is almost completely submerged. His head and face are above the water, but they are blended-in with the rocks behind him. He can only be spotted on a successful spot check (CL 10). He attacks the first canoe that comes into his reach. He attempts to surprise the party, gaining a +3 on his surprise roll for a total of +9 (considering his hit dice).

AREA 2: CHANNELS B & C

These are rapid channels that force a canoe to move much faster than the pilot's desire. Keeping the canoe upright requires a successful dexterity check (CL 3) from whoever is steering the canoe. If the steersman has absolutely no river experience, the CL is 7.

AREA 3: POOL

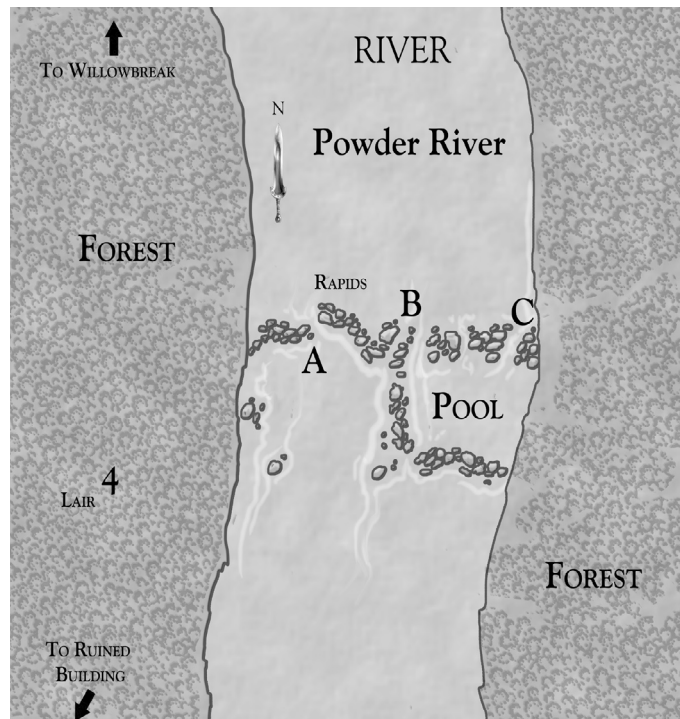
Coming out into the pool, the water immediately slows and the canoe drifts to a halt. The water here is about 15 feet deep. The rocky wall of the pool averages 10 feet wide and offers no escape. Exiting the canoes and moving to the rocky wall takes 5 rounds, during which the cyclops attacks.

The rocks are extremely slippery and standing on them is difficult. Anyone attempting to stand and fight on the rocks must roll a dexterity check (CL 6) every round to maintain his or her footing.

AREA 4: LAIR

Several hundred feet from the rapids, along a winding, hidden path, lays the cyclop's lair. Finding the path is not easy. Unless the characters see the giant move up the path, they only notice it on a successful track check (CL 6) or spot check (CL 8). It leads to his lair deeper in the wood.

Several hundred feet into the forest the cyclops has built his lair in a clearing under a massive elm tree. The old and gnarled tree



has deep, tangled roots, spreading dozens of feet from the bole of the tree and a broad, thick canopy that shadowing all. He has dug his lair into the roots and under the tree. He has set a door in the tree of broken limbs.

In the clearing, in the midst of the roots, just outside the door is a fire pit, artfully covered. Anyone coming within a few hundred feet of the clearing, and with a keen sense of smell has a chance to detect the scent of burnt wood (CL 5).

THE LAIR

Inside the lair are two rooms, the main room and a small room where Radgar sleeps and keeps his treasure. The door is not locked, but is heavy and bulky. Opening it requires a successful strength check (CL 5) or it must be broken down. It can take up to 10 points of damage before breaking.

AREA 4A MAIN ROOM

The main room is large, about 40 feet in diameter, torn roots hang from the dirty ceiling. It has a large mound of furs along one wall. A rough-hewn table sits against the other and a chair lays empty in the middle of the room. Next to the chair is a basket filled with yarns. There is nothing of value in the room.

AREA 4B BEDROOM

Deeper in the recesses of the knotted roots lies another chamber; access is gained by a small downward ramp and door. Even the giant must duck to enter the room. The small cave itself is 12 feet in diameter, and its walls and floor are made of tightly packed dirt. Here is another mound of furs that the cyclops uses for a bed. Beneath them, in a well-concealed hole (spot CL 4) is his treasure.

Treasure: Radgar possesses 2 small magic items (roll or at the CKs discretion), 90gp, 140sp, and 250cp. He has two amulets in his possession. The first is a small black stone carved into the shape of frog (this is the one Oyvind Pal desires), the other is a reddish stone carved into a buck deer.

THE ROAD

Just south of the tree is a cobbled path. The path is 4 feet wide, consisting of flat cobbled stones. It winds off into the forest, going south and west.

Wrap Up

The characters, if they return the amulet to Oyvind Pal. Once given the amulet, he remarks:

Tis a good deed you've done here, giving up this amulet to me. It is a totem to the Frog God Amunet. He will welcome its return. You have made a friend in me, call me, and if your need is great enough, I'll come if I may.

Oyvind Pal is good to his word and comes when the party calls (if they are in dire need).

GOLDEN SHINGLES

Golden Shingles stands on its own as a simple encounter area designed to plug into your ongoing campaign. The adventure takes place in the woods. Any wooded environ serves the Castle Keeper for this purpose. Simply skip over to the section titled Cobbled Way and begin playing.

If you are coming from River Walk and the quest of Oyvind Pal the Cobbled Way begins about 1 day south of the village of Willowbreak. The adventurers may have discovered the cobbled roadway in their encounter with the cyclops, or if not they can learn about it in the town at Greelys. The characters, assuming they have rescued the amulet and returned it to Oyvind Pal, and rescued Greely from his curse are welcome in the tavern where they have been rewarded a lifetime's worth of drink and food.

GREELYS

If the characters know about the cobbled way to the south they may ask about it at Greelys. If they do not, allow them to overhear about it in the tavern. Gil is in the tavern, as he usually is when not on a hunt, and is speaking of his many adventures, he mentions the cobbled way and the Stair to Nowhere to one of the other villagers, or the characters themselves. He answers questions about the cobbled way if asked.

Read or paraphrase the following:

"Oh Aye. I've been down that cobbled road a few times. She leads to an old ruined building. They say it was a temple once, built to the forest gods, the Og Aust. To none other than Nunt Lord of Waters and Master of Fish whom you and Greely have become acquainted with. It was mighty once, had a roof of gold. But that was long ago, all that's left is the shell of the main building and the stair."

If asked about the stair:

"The stair? I've never been to it, nor even seen it, but from afar. It juts out of the forest tops, easy to see from any rise or tree top. It just sits there, always has, always will I suppose. The odd thing is the gold. The staircase, the top of it leastwise, shines in the sun, reflects gold. Like to be the building's last golden shingle. That's what draws men to it.

But it's a cursed place don't you know? Any that have ever climbed it have never come back. I've been told by the water hags that dwell along the river banks that it is a stairway to the gods. But it leads men only to their doom."

Gil Sandburn gives these directions to any who ask.

"It's easy enough to find on the land. It's about 30 miles south on the western bank. Follow the trail along the river south for about 15 miles. It'll end in a great heap of rocks. Skirt the river for a few more miles until you get to the rapids, those the giant made. From there look for his trail that leads inland, it's only a few hundred feet in, follow it until you find his old tree and cellar. The cobbled way begins there. Now it'll end in a washed out

gulch about even with the wagon. When you get there, just skirt around the gulch and pick up the cobbled path again."

If they ask about traveling by river these are the directions:

"You can take the river as easy as the trail, a bit easier I might add. Follow it down by canoe until you get to the giant's rapids. That should be mid day of your first day out. Keep following it for another half day or so until you come to the ruins of an old wagon. The wagon is in the middle of the river . . . Some fool tried to cross it in the shallows and got buried up and broke an axle. But where the wagon is, the bank is easy to climb and the forest is open. Follow the open terrain until you come to some bottoms. From the bottoms you can look up and see the stair."

TRAVELING SOUTH

The characters should already be familiar with the terrain leading to the rapids and the giant's lair. Traveling from the lair to the bottoms and the location of the ruins by land takes several days or if by river, another day to get to the wagon in the middle of the river. If by chance the characters do not return the amulet to Oyvind Pal and continue traveling south, they easily spot the stair from either the wagon on the river or the trail as noted below.

THE WAGON

The wagon sits in the middle of the river, impossible to miss. It is a huge wagon, 18 feet long, with a wide wheel base and four iron rimmed wheels. It took a great number of ox to pull it. It entered the water on the eastern bank, heading toward the bottoms on the west bank where an opening in the forest must have invited the wagon master to cross. But the wagon never stood a chance. The river bottom proved too rocky and the rear axle broke.

The wagon itself sits fairly high, just above the water line. When the river runs very high, it surges over the top of the wagon, though it is normally dry inside. The cover is long gone and all that remains are the high walls of the wagon and the water barrel.

If anyone investigates the wagon, they discover broken off arrows in the back and side. The wagon master was running from something. Anyone experienced in wood craft, tracking or weapons might be able to determine (CL 3) that these arrows belong to the wild men of the Darkenfold (the Eschl). They pursued the wagon and killed the wagon master.

COBBLED WAY

By following the direction the wagon is pointed, the characters can discern an opening in the forest, the bottoms. It lies along the base of a gentle rise, is about 30 feet wide and heads north by north west into the trees. It leads without much fuss through a wet bog a few hundred yards wide (this alone would have stopped the wagon) before it begins to rise. After a few hundred feet the opening ends with a boxed-in gulch. This gulch once housed the cobbled road that ran from where the giant's lair is further north and on to the south at the ruins. The ground gave way, creating the gulch, and the ruins of the cobbled road are laying about

the ground around the western end of the gulch. A quick search reveals some of these cobbles laying in the dirt and grass (CL 4).

Climbing out is not difficult and an opening on the western side invites the character; a successful dexterity check (CL 5) brings one to the top. If the party searches, a deer trail is easy enough to find (CL 2).

At the top of the cliff is the Cobbled Way. It is clearly visible on the north and south ends of the boxed-in gulch.

South of the gulch the road begins quite abruptly. The path is 4 feet wide and consists of flat cobbled stones. It begins in the ruin caused by the roots of an old tree. The tree clearly grew up in the middle of the road, destroying it. North of the tree the path vanishes into the gulch; it can be picked back up with a simple search of the northern side of the gulch (CL 3 for a ranger, CL 6 for anyone else). A trick of fate left the south bound path clear and the Cobbled Way winds through the forest for many miles.

Twenty miles of uninterrupted cobbles lead from the tree to a ruined building. Occasional trees grow over the path. Some of the road is rippled by tree roots, but for the most part, the road is smooth and easy enough to walk on. Many creatures use it as a path way to move up and down the river banks.

ENTISH VINES

Some distance down the road, the characters come to a massive patch of vines clinging to a monstrous tree. Here the path snakes very near the shore so that the tree itself grows in the water and on the banks. The vines themselves are all over the place. What the characters have encountered is a treant besieged by a host of assassin vines. The tree is old and rooted to the ground. The vines are fast growing, and slowly choking this father of the forest.

Note: Where this encounter occurs is entirely up to the Castle Keeper. If placement is needed, then choose the morning of the second day's travel.

Before you looms a massive vine covered tree, its roots tangled in the soft earth of the river bank. Near the river, the roots have been exposed by water erosion. The tree itself appears to be very old, squat, and extremely thick. Much of the tree is covered by a monstrous growth of vines that hangs from the tree, crawls across the ground, snakes up the path, and slips into the water. Passage around the vines is almost impossible as they hang from the far flung branches of the tree, grow through the water and all across the path."

There are three assassin vine stems near the treant. The vines have been working on the treant for some time and have weakened the creature tremendously. The vines are very hungry and welcome the character's passage.

The characters encounter the vines whether they are on the road or in a boat. Unless the characters have encountered as-

assin vines before, the chances of them being surprised are 7 in 8, they are not allowed a perception check.

The vines attack aggressively, pulling characters in to their stems, across the ground or if they are on the water, the vines coil up around the boat and attempt to pull them out. Each vine has 4 attacks per round, which translates to a total of 12 vines holding the treant.

If the characters divert or destroy 8 of the 12 vines holding the treant then the treant groans, shakes, and attempts to break free from the assassin vines holding it and move into the river. The treant is allowed a strength check (CL 4).

If it breaks free, it immediately sets to pounding the vines with its massive trunk-like limbs, shouting curses in its ancient tongue and the Vulgate. It does not attack the characters. It aids which ever character is in the worst predicament.

ASSASSIN VINE X 3 (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 29, AC 15. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with vines doing 1d4 damage each, with a failed strength save by the victim indicating constriction. Constriction means the victim blacks out in 3 rounds and is strangled to death in 3 more if not freed. Its special abilities are constrict, improved grab, camouflage and resistance to cold and fire.)

YOWLINGWOOD, TREANT (This chaotic good creature's vital stats are HD 7d8, AC 20, HP 43. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 2 slam attacks for 2d8 points of damage each. It can instead choose to trample for 4d4 points of damage. This particular treant cannot animate other trees due to its current state of exhaustion. It is vulnerable to fire.)

Once the vines are smashed to pieces the treant relaxes. It turns to the characters and offers them a mighty thank you. It asks if there is "ought I can do for you in compensation."

The characters may ask it questions. It knows a bit about the ruins. He knows the history of the House of Anduel and recounts it as written below. He offers them protection if they seek it, but the treant will soon need to go into the deeper wood for healing. Once done, Yowlingwood takes his leave and lumbers west into the wood.

THE HOUSE OF ANDUEL

Mithelex the priest built the house long ago, even before the Age of Men. He paid homage to the old gods, but his specific patron was Anduel, the eagle Spirit of the Air. Mithelex built and dedicated his House to Anduel. He constructed a great hall for all those of like mind as a place to gather and feast. But the Ethvold (the great wood) was a dark and hidden realm and no place for the Lord of Air. So Mithelex constructed a stair that wound up from his hall through his chambers and high above the House. He employed dwarven craftsmen to construct the stair; they made it of iron, scribed with the rune magic of keeping that only the dwarves understand.

The forest tops were breached so that Mithelix and his acolytes could climb the stair, see the open sky, and call to Anduel. They named the stair the Eagle's Walk.

Eventually, the house of Mithelix died, and his people fell, and the house stood empty until it too fell into ruin. Now only the stair remains. It shines when the sun hits it, but few have seen it because it is high above the forest tops and the way up is blocked by wild spirits and keepers of the old ways.

THE OPEN

Whether the characters walk down the Cobbled Way or canoe down the Powder Rive, they come to the Open. The Open is quite large, about two or three hundred feet long and thousand feet wide; it runs parallel to the river. It is bottom land and very rich in grass where no trees grow. It is open to the sun and moon. The Cobbled Way winds its way through the Open until it hits another rise, upon which the forest grows thick as before. The House of Anduel is upon that rise.

Note: If the game session is in need of some action, an encounter in the Open is a perfect place for an ambush and/or a running battle. A hunting monster, or a tribe of humans, or a tribe of humanoids would be appropriate.

On the far side of this open area the forest looms upon the rise in front of you, dark, still, brooding. Branches tangle with thick leaves and blacken bark already dark. The sky contrasts sharply with the folds of darkness. Breaching the gloom however, silhouetted against the heavens, stands a circle of iron. A stair that winds itself up and out of the wooden host.

It is about an hour or two trek from the Open to the House of Anduel

HOUSE OF ANDUEL

The Cobbled Way gives way a dozen or so feet from the ruins. Whatever it connected with is long gone. The first thing the characters encounter is the porch. It once graced the north and east (river facing) sides of the building, but now stands attached to a mangled ruin.

The House of Anduel was a four walled structure but all of the east and north walls are gone and most of the south wall. Only the east wall remains intact. It joins the remnants of the south wall in a battered L shape ruin and some remnants of the second floor remain attached to these walls.

The House was large, almost 100 feet long and 60 across. It had at least two floors when it flourished, perhaps three, but none of the higher walls remain. A huge tree grows up in the middle of the floor now, its trunk has made a mockery of the floor, pushing up flag stones, crushing others, and absorbing some into the soil. The stone work of the collapsed walls lies buried in the forest soil. Digging reveals only a few blocks. Otherwise there is little left.

AREA 1 THE FIRST FLOOR: The old beach tree is 6 feet in diameter with a massive canopy that pushes into the remains of the south wall and covers the remnants of the second floor. Bark flakes and lies about the ground.

There is evidence of the building everywhere however. When the upper floors collapsed, some of them landed in this hall. Whatever wood bound them together is long gone, but the remnants of stone floors and walls lie in heaps. Only about 30 square feet of the ceiling (the floor to the second floor) remains in the south-west corner.

AREA 1A THE STAIRS: The stairs stand in the south-west corner. They are iron, black and circular. They coil up into the remnants of the ceiling above to what remains of the second floor. What lies on the second floor is impossible to see without magic or at least climbing the tree, to look over at the ceiling/floor. The stairs are solid; they do not shake or move. They have neither rust nor any signs of age. If there is a dwarf or a rune mark in the party, they might detect very small runes, written into the stairs everywhere (CL 5). If a *detect magic* is cast upon the stairs, the stairs radiate magic and the runes are revealed.

AREA 2 SECOND FLOOR: There is little left of the second floor of the building, just 30 square feet of floor in the south-west corner through which the stair climbs. The remains of a stone shelf mark the western wall just to the right of the spiral stairs that continue to coil up beyond the wall and into the overriding forest above.

If the characters take a close look, they might discover how completely clean the remains of the floor are. There are no leaves, sticks, or even dirt. It is as if something has swept it. A successful spot check (CL 8) is required to notice this, unless they ask direct questions such as "Is the floor clean?", or something of that nature.

The second floor is clear of debris because the sylph that guards the stairs above cleans it regularly.

AREA 3 THE EAGLE'S WALK: The stair coils up above the wall and into the foliage of the beach tree and beyond. The tree does not touch the stair or impede it.

Standing on the second floor, looking up, you can see the coiling, black-iron stair rise into the tree above. It is free of any limbs or leaves, vines or other growth. It coils up another 70 feet. The steps climb up, clinging to the center pole, until they abruptly end just beyond the rooftop canopy.

The Eagle's Walk is 90 feet high from the ground to where it ends. It has one iron pole at the center to which all the steps are joined. It is black, solid, and does not move nor bend in the wind.

A sylph guards the stair. She haunts the area around the stair, invisible to all. She keeps the stairs clean and keeps any and all from climbing to the top. She served Anduel and serves the memory of him still. She does not take kindly to interlopers or any that she sees that do not pay homage to the Og Aust in general and Anduel in particular.

YARALLA, SYLPH *(This chaotic neutral creature's vital stats are HD 8d8, HP 56, AC 19. Her primary attributes are physical. A sylph's primary form of attack is an electrical charge that causes 2d8 points of damage, dexterity save for half. A sylph can cause a windblast, shape change, remain incorporeal and draw the air out of a target with air drink. See end of this book for full monster description.)*

Yaralla is not evil, but she does attempt to stop any who climb the stair. Before she attacks she says the following: "Stop now. Come no further. This stair is not for the likes of you. Go back now. Do not force my hand."

She uses her windblast first, attempting to stop the intruders by pushing them off the stair. If they persist or survive the wind blast she becomes corporeal, appearing as a woman in long, flowing robes, with hair blond, thick and long.

Yaralla has no intention of allowing them to pass to dishonor the Basin above. However, there are several ways the characters can pass Yaralla without a fight:

- 1) If any of the characters worship the Og Aust she lets them pass.
- 2) If they are able to present the statue of the stag found in the cyclops' den Yaralla gives way, seeing them as true believers.
- 3) If they call upon Anduel, she becomes confused and must roll a wisdom check (CL = to the one who called on Anduel). If she fails she gives way as she believes they are true believers. If she succeeds, she questions them to learn their motives.
- 4) Any mention of the treant above and his rescue convinces her that they are agents of the Og Aust; again she will let them pass.

Otherwise Yaralla fights the characters on the stair, one at a time if she can; she does everything she can to stop them from getting to the top and the holy basin.

TREASURE: Yaralla has little of value, most of what she has, she has taken from those she has killed or driven off. These items she has set upon the platform at the top of the stair. They are there for anyone's taking. They consist of the following: a gem worth 500gp; a +2 shortsword; a scroll case with designs of elementals upon it (within is a scroll of elemental control), a talisman of the boar (when worn grants the wearer a +1 to his to hit rolls, armor class, and any strength and dexterity checks), a hunter horn with the likeness of all kinds of animals carved into it (sounding the horn summons one of the creatures, allowing the hunter easy prey).

AREA 4 THE GOLDEN SHINGLE: The Eagle's Walk ends in a small platform made of the same metal from which the stair itself is constructed. The characters are now standing 30 feet above the roof of the forest. The platform is about 6 x 6 feet. Standing upon it is a simple stone basin. The edges and inside of the basin are lined with gold and filled with collected rain water.

Anyone standing on the platform can see the Darkenfold tumbling away as far as the eye can see in every direction. Specifically:

To the West: The forest tumbles for many miles, becoming ever darker and foreboding. In the distance a large rise in the land gives evidence to some hills.

To the East: The river is plain to see. Beyond that, the forest is much younger, rising in gentle slopes and hills until it climbs higher than the western Darkenfold.

To the North: Faint smoke trails of Willowbreak spiral above the forest, some miles beyond that, the Post Road cuts a gap through the forest, trailing west as far as the eye can see.

To the South: Across the river, several miles down, columns of smoke trail into the sky. Near it, a dock juts out into the river. The roof tops of several buildings mark a clearing in the forest. Many miles further on the Powder River spills into another river, the Mistbane. Not far beyond the confluence, a castle, tiny in the distance, juts out of the forest; its walls are green, though no flag or symbol flies from its high tower.

This is the Castle of the Green Wizard. Anyone looking at it for long attracts his attention. He casts out with his own magic to see who is watching. Upon a successful intelligence save (CL 7), the one who has captured the wizard's attention realizes that they themselves are being watched.

THE GOLDEN SHINGLE: Any rain water that collects in the Golden Shingle becomes magically enchanted. Any who drink the water, even a small portion, become suddenly translucent and able to walk upon the wind. The affect lasts for 10 turns. When it wears off, the enchanted wind walker descends rapidly to the ground (roughly 60 feet per round) until they are safe. The affect acts much like the spell wind walker.

There is presently enough water in the Golden Shingle for 10 uses. The water can be put in a container and used later, acting as potions of wind walking.

If the party befriended Yaralla and then wind walks, she joins them in the skies above, inviting them high into the heavens.

BREAKING HEADS

The view south from the Golden Shingle revealed a clearing with several roof tops. This is Bent's Trading Post, it lies about 12 miles south of the ruins. Travel is easiest by canoe or boat, which the characters may already have, or by traveling along the banks and crossing the river at the ferry. Its about a half day by river travel and 2 days by foot.

BENT'S TRADING POST

The post was founded by two retiring adventurers, Karl of Nagel and Gotthold Kratz. Both began their careers in the east, in and around the Olgdon River. Their travels carried them through many lands and countless dangers; they plundered dungeons, rooted out monsters from dens of stone, they retrieved magic from wizards, slew priests, and plundered the treasures of forgotten kings. After many years, they called it quits. It is told by some that in the end, they unearthed a sleeping dragon. This large blue creature burned the air around him with electrical energy. The battle raged for hours, beneath the earth, upon the slopes of a long low hill, and finally upon the shores of an unnamed lake. All of their comrades and hirelings had fallen to crushing fang, sharp talon, bone-crushing tail, or burning electrical fire. Only Karl and Gotthold stood against the beast. In the end they slew it, Karl hewing the beast's head from its neck with a long-hafted bearded axe. With grievous wounds, Karl lay down, leaving Gotthold (wounded himself) the task of burying their dead.

Whether it was this, or just a life-time's worth of adventure, the two decided it was time to throw in the towel. Castles and towns, all the haunts of man, had no appeal to the two, so they took themselves into the wilderness to find a place removed from the noise and clatter of lesser men. The small village of Willowbreak, nestled in the deep forests on the bank of the Powder River, offered them a welcome respite from the toils of their adventures. The people proved friendly. No hand of King or Knight, priest, or coven ruled the village, or the hundreds of miles of wilderness around it. So they called this place home. Gotthold took a wife, Eline, and they built a small house outside the village. But Karl felt crowded by even these sparse surroundings and they began looking further afield.

They moved south, wandering along the banks of the river until they found a broad open field that proved too much for Gotthold's wife. She called on them to build there and so they did. Soon they discovered some traffic in hunters, trappers, the wild men of the woods, the Eschl and the occasional adventurer. The two built a home that soon morphed into a trading post. Eventually they expanded it to include a barn and smithy. Gotthold took over the anvil where he labored on items great and small. Karl ran the post, trading, buying, and selling items to whoever crossed their path. Eline took to growing food and running some few livestock. Trade with the wildmen brought in wolf pups and these soon flourished, so that at any time there were a half dozen, very large, stocky wolves roaming about.

Bent's Trading Post became a refuge in the middle of the wild and on the banks of the river. Men came for protection from the

dangers of the wild. They bought and traded goods, swapped stories, and rested. Eventually, Karl extended the post, including a small tavern and a bunk house. The fights that frequently broke out were forbidden and any that fought on the grounds were answerable to Karl, Gotthold and their pack of wolves. They killed any who broke the rules.

Eventually the Post became a safe haven, where men of all stripes, good or evil, hunted or hunters, could rest. So long as they had coin or goods to trade and paid for the Post's hospitality, they could remain. When their goods ran out, they had to leave, forcefully or otherwise. All came to respect the refuge, even the wildmen.

So it has been for many years. Karl and Gotthold run Bent's Trading Post. They welcome all; treat them with kindness and respect, but rule the compound with an iron fist.

THE POST

Bent's Trading Post sits upon about 4 acres of elevated land on the banks of the river. The post itself abuts the river, about 12 feet up a steep bank. The compound is not walled. It consists of 6 buildings: the main store and tavern, bunk house, warehouse, barn and smithy, Gotthold's house, and an outhouse. A large stone-ringed well dominates the compound's central yard.

The compound is usually muddy, as it frequently rains and snows in the Darkenfold. The ground is trampled and no grass grows anywhere, though weeds cling to the sides of buildings, wood piles and the like. Karl and Gotthold are not clean caretakers and items are frequently tossed aside or left about the compound. For this reason, there are broken tools leaning against buildings, an anvil next to the well, a large fire pit with half burned materials heaped about it, an upturned boat, and other sundry items scattered about. The post is not walled as the two retired adventurers have little fear of creatures of the night; the wolves warn them of any danger and they know that the wild men keep the post somewhat protected.

Gotthold and his wife live in the small house, but Karl lives in the main store in the back, near the kitchens. It is here that mead is brewed and meats cooked. The mead here is simple and a little flat. The meat often over-cooked on the outside and raw on the inside.

KARL (*This chaotic good 14th level human knight's vital stats are HD 14, HP 102, AC 12/24. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and charisma. His extraordinary abilities are strength 17, dexterity 16, constitution 18, charisma 16. In battle he wields a long sword of puncturing and a +4 dagger. He usually fights two handed. He possesses +6 chain mail. Karl has all the abilities of a 14th level knight. In a treasure trunk beneath the floor boards of the Mercantile building lies his treasure, 12,000gp in coin and gems; another 4,000gp in jewelry.*)

Karl is very friendly, calm, quiet and easy to get along with. He welcomes most travelers and often give the first round of their dark mead "on the house".

GOTTHOLD (This chaotic neutral 15th level human ranger's vital stats are HD 15, HP 98, AC 13/19. His primary attributes are strength, wisdom and dexterity. His extraordinary attributes are strength 18, wisdom 16, and dexterity 15. In battle he wields a huge 2-handed, +5 vorpal bearded axe. He wears +5 leather armor. He also possesses a helm of brilliance. Gotthold possesses little in the way of treasure, much of what he owns he's given to his wife and they both have little use for or desire for coin. He has collected silver over the years and hidden in the forge are hundreds of fine strands of silver which he weaves into armor. The silver is worth about 4,000gp.)

Gotthold is more reserved, though friendly enough, talking when spoken to or telling the occasional story.

They have a simple set of rules that they expect all to follow and they rule the compound by the axe. Violators of the law are killed and their bodies fed to the wolves. Those who die in the compound for other reasons are buried just outside the compound. The compound's laws are posted on a wooden placard by the well. They read as follows:

KARL'S LAW

Offense	Punishment
Fighting	Death
Thieving	Death
Burning Things	Death
Busting Things	Death
All Spell Use but healing	Death

RIVER SIDE

There is a ferry that connects the east bank of the Powder River, where Bent's Trading Post stands, with the west bank. It is in good working order. The ferry itself is on the west bank.

Assuming the characters are coming to the post, overland, on the western bank, read the following:

The forest track gives way to a wide ledge of loamy earth and soft grass. A large post, 18 inches in diameter, dominates the little clearing. It looks as if a giant drove a peg into the ground. A rope, looped around the post and set in a metal runner, runs across the clearing to a wide flat-bottomed boat that rests in the current. The rope emerges on the far side of the river where it is tied off on a similar post, set back off the river. The walls of a log cabin overlook a long dock, jutting out into the water. Beyond are several more buildings.

The river here is about 120 feet wide, very slow moving and still, the water's movements barely noticeable. The forest grows hard onto the banks, with roots, slipping out of the ground and into the water. The river is deep here, easily over 15 feet. Large fish swim in the cool currents.

The post has a rope tied to it and hammered into the top. It

runs across the clearing, to the boat, through a few eye-bolts, and then into the water where it vanishes. It emerges on the far side, where it is tied to a similar post.

To cross the river, the characters need to use boats or the ferry. There is no one operating the ferry and no charge for its use, they simply have to get in the boat and pull themselves across.

THE COMPOUND

The Compound is the central courtyard of the Bent's Trading Post. The well is here; all the buildings face the compound, creating a partial wall in buildings around the place. The wolves lounge about the area, drinking and eating. Several trapper frames hold various animal pelts. Stacks of used goods, barrels, buckets, and tools sit haphazardly about.

Log walls, wooden shuttered windows and a slightly elevated roof with wood shingles stands before you. It's tall, about 10 feet before the roof begins and built with logs and packed with clay and dried mud. It seems fairly tight. The windows have awnings as does the large porch that stands out front. The windows are open and the smell of fresh bacon wafts through the air. Out front, jutting out from the main porch awning is a long pole; hanging from the pole is a sign with the letters "K" and "G" burnt into it and over each other. Beyond that is a broader, muddy, compound, surrounded by several buildings. A large man with dark hair leans on a well; around him half a dozen wolves are lounging about. Laughter peals out from somewhere near the store, raucous and grating.

THE WELL

The well is wide, about 12 feet in diameter. It has a ring of rough stones stacked around it serving as a wall. The water is only a few feet down. Stacks of buckets, some with ropes attached, lay about the well.

MERCANTILE

The Post's main building is the Mercantile. This long, narrow building abuts the river, with a wrap-around porch, allowing Karl and Gotthold to sit in the back and watch the river, or in the front, facing the compound. The Mercantile is exactly what its name indicates; it's a general store with all manner of supplies within.

The Mercantile consists of 3 rooms. The main hall is the entire front of the building. The back of the building, overlooking the river is a kitchen and another room. This third room is where Karl lives.

There are always 2-3 wolves in the Mercantile. They generally watch anyone walking about, if someone makes to steal something the wolves stand up and begin growling. Their growling summons Karl from where ever he is. He kindly asks them to return whatever they took and will forgive them this once.



The main room is filled with goods, hanging on the walls, from the rafters, on shelves and racks, or stacked on the floor. There are finished goods, such as tents, grappling hooks, ropes etc as well as frontier articles beaver and bear cloaks, leather shields etc. They are well stocked. Just about anything found in the general equipment list of the Players Handbook can be bought at the Post. It is the same cost as listed in the book.

Specialty items, such as a bear cloak, cost a little more.

As for weapons and armor, there are precious few in the Mercantile. There are a few sets of studded leather, a chain shirt, some leather or rawhide shields, spears and arrows and short bows. However, there is a smithy on the Compound and Gotthold is a very skilled blacksmith. He'll repair most damage to equipment for 10% of the original price for light damage and half the original price for heavy damage.

There are healing poultices in the Mercantile; these range from the simple healing of 1d4 hit points (about 20gp per 4 application jar) to salves that heal 1 hit point (5gp per 5 application jar) and even some simple poultices that allow some to heal 1 hit point without rest (5gp per 5 application jar).

Other magic in the Mercantile would be rare. However they do possess several items they have picked up over the years and are willing to part with.

Feather-Edged Bastard Sword, 8000gp

Pipes of the Sewers, 7500gp

Ring of Animal Friendship, 2000gp

Scroll with 4 spells (CK choice), varies

Elvin Mandolin, 100gp

As with all such stores they take trade as well as coin.

THE TAVERN

The tavern adjoins the Mercantile. A door leads to it from the south side of the store. It is small, only about 40 by 50 feet, with 4 tables and one long bar consisting of split boards set on large barrels. The only drink available is mead and some thick (though potent) beer, served in wooden mugs at 1cp a mug. There is always a platter on the bar's end with a slab of cooked meat, wild forest berries, bread, butter and some fruits upon it. A shake of salt is offered for those who ask, for no charge. Cost of partaking is a 1sp per portion.

They do have a regular menu and the amount of food offer up per serving is monstrous, large enough to make a halfling smile.

Menu

Sunday: Rabbit roasted in lemon juice, cooked wild apples with brown sugar sauce, rye bread, with mounds of butter and mead or beer. 4sp.

Monday: Deer marinated in apple cider, wild greens, fruits, black bread, butter, jams and mead or beer. 6sp

Tuesday: River trout grilled with nutmeg sauce, greens, rye bread, butter and mead or beer. 4sp.

Wednesday: Buffalo steaks seasoned and grilled with wild rosemary, cheese, sour-dough bread and beer or mead. 6sp.

Thursday: Baked turkey stuffed with fruits and greens, wheel of cheese with butter, breads, mead or beer. 4sp.

Friday: Wild Boar on the spit, filled with dried fruits, caked in honey glaze with black bread, butter, and beer or mead. 6sp

Saturday: Catch of the day, grilled fish with wild turnips, cheese, butter milk and beer or mead. 3sp

For breakfast there are hard breads, jams, mead and beer. For lunch usually a stew with the remnants of the previous evenings meal in it, spiced up with forest greens, a block of cheese and beer or mead.

Though the tavern has no windows, the upper part of the south wall opens up and opens the room to air and light. It is almost always open. The tavern has a wood floor.

Karl is often in here and if not, he is rarely far.

STOCKYARD

The stockyard is a wide, fenced area. It holds the Post's stock as well as any horses, mules, ox that travelers may want to leave. It has several cross fences to separate animals. The fence itself is a rough palisade 7-8 feet tall. It has one gate and a long low ditch behind it, facing the forest.

Within the stockyard are an old milk cow, 2 light riding horses, and an ox.

LIVING QUARTERS

This is Gotthold's house. He lives here with his wife, Eline. No one is allowed in unless they are invited.

This small building on the edge of the compound is the cleanest of the lot. It has two floors, a stone chimney and front porch. The logs of the walls are sealed with white daub and clay. Two windows look on the compound; both have glass and shutters. A stout wooden door fronts the compound as well. The first floor is one room with a kitchen and eating area as well as a place to sit by the fire. The upstairs is no more than a loft where the Gotthold and Eline sleep.

There are always wolves lounging around on the front porch. If anyone approaches the building, they watch them carefully. If they go up on the porch, the wolves rise and begin snarling. The snarling brings the rest of the pack, as well as Eline. She is friendly enough but unless she knows the visitors, she does not invite them; she directs them on to the Mercantile. If they become pushy, she shouts for Gotthold. He comes from where ever he is.

Eline (*This neutral good 0 level human female's vital stats are HP 4, AC 18. Her primary attributes are physical. Her extraordinary attributes are dexterity 18, intelligence 17 and wisdom 16. Her possessions are those in her house, but she wears a +5 ring of protection at all times. She also possesses a globe given to her by Tolvar, a wizard who roams the Darkenfold. The globe is worn on a necklace about her throat. If she breaks it, Eline is immediately teleported to Willowbreak. Tolvar knows this immediately, and if able, he comes to see what is up with his friends at the Post.*)

Eline comes from Willowbreak, her parents live there still. She met Gotthold about 12 years ago and they were married beneath the forest eves. She has lived at Bent's since they settled there. She is very friendly, though a little distant, mistrustful of many that come through. Once visitors have proven themselves kind and courteous, she warms to them remarkably.

BARN AND FORGE

The barn is large, almost 70 feet long with a loft. It is split into two buildings, a barn and smithy.

The barn houses livestock, with six stalls, and storage for hay and other foods. Most goods are ported into the Post from Willowbreak or further down the Powder where that river dumps into the Mistbane. There are also tools, tack-and-harness, a small cart, and other odd and ends.

The smithy lies on the west side of the barn, facing the river and the corral. One large bellows and a fire pit sit under the awning. Here Gotthold does most of his work as evidenced by his pile of coal, wood, and scrap iron. Several large rain barrels and a small army of buckets lie about as well. A tool room just inside the shed houses most of his tools; a second room, generally locked, houses his good iron and finished projects.

Gotthold is an able smith. He can repair most armor and weapons to almost as good as new. He can also make nails, iron rings, horse shoes, etc. In the shed, he has several suits of chain armor, a craft he long ago perfected. His prize and joy is hidden in an iron box located in a secret door beneath the stone works of the fire pit. Finding the secret compartment is not easy, actively looking (CL 12), or if standing near it (CL19). Within is a full suit of silver chain mail, complete with gloves and leggings, laced with gemstones, worth about 3,000gp. It is not as hardy as normal metal mail, giving only an AC 14; however, the suit of mail is beautiful and designed more for show than function. Gotthold crafted the chainmail himself.

WAREHOUSE

This building has two entrances, one on either end. It is large enough (about 25 feet wide) to allow a wagon to enter and leave. The floor here, unlike the barn, is wooden, made of planks split from logs. The trade goods the two have stored up over the years are within. There is little organization; sacks, barrels, crates, boxes, buckets, leather bags lie heaped about everywhere.

Within the warehouse is almost everything one could imagine, from food like wheat, barley, dried meats to skins and hides. Coils of rope, blankets, boxes of candles, jars of beeswax, tools, even parchment, ink in small casks, steel bars, and other items are also here. Much of it is old, but still in serviceable condition.

Hidden in the recesses of the warehouse is a small catapult, a mound of iron, round iron balls, barrels of pitch, and igniters. Next to it is a ballista with 48 iron bolts. The ballista bolts strike for 1d12 points of damage, the catapult for 4-16.

OUTHOUSE

This large four seat outhouse is set apart from the compound. It stands over a deep hole through which a small wash runs. It is usually flowing, but sometimes clogs around the outhouse, raising all manner of stink. However, any decent rain washes the filth away and down into the river south of the Post.

BREAKING HEADS

The compound possesses a number of visitors when the characters arrive. A dwarven prospector, a trapper who runs lines down Walk Water Creek, a band of surly-looking fighters, and a druid have come from the south to buy supplies and to drink.

The toughs from the south are in a mood for a fight. They spend most of their days in the service of the Green Wizard in the south, terrorizing slaves as the wizard digs for treasures beneath the earth. They travel in large groups and fear no one. At the moment, they have one of the Green Wizard's druidic minions with them. This emboldens them even more.

The toughs, as well as the prospector and the trapper, are all in the tavern with Karl. They have been mouthy all morning. They have only gotten louder as the day progressed. They know well the rules of the Post but as the drink washes away their sense, they have begun barking at Karl.

When the characters arrive Gotthold has moved to the well where he can listen to what is going on in the tavern. He's placed his large bearded axe at the well. The wolves have moved up and around him, waiting on his command. He answers any questions the characters have in a friendly manner, directing them to wherever they need to go. He does politely point out that there are rules and for the characters to "please abide by them."

The characters are free to go anywhere except for Gotthold's residence. If they go to the Mercantile, Karl comes in from the tavern, greets them very kindly and asks them if they need any help. Once done, he passes into the back and then comes out, belting on a well worn sword. He tells the characters if they should need him, he'll be in the tavern.

THE TAVERN

Approaching the tavern, the characters hear a great deal of laughter at shouted ribald jokes. When they enter, they see a room crowded with men, wearing heavy cloaks, thick boots, with weapons belted to their sides and a hodge-podge of armor. Five of them are brutes; their thick knuckles grasp heavy wooden mugs, their limbs look like tree stumps and scars cover their bodies. Seasoned men, their tanned skin stands out; about them is a cruelty that is almost palpable. One is a foul mouthed gray bearded man, another is a short, stocky man that continually says "do it twice."

Beric Woodeneye is in the room as well; the dwarf is sitting in the corner drinking from a huge mug. He's quiet, barely noticed by the men and their shouts.

When the characters enter, the men pause in their humorless jokes; and one of them points at one of the characters (any one will do) and shouts "Like that one!" All the men begin laughing again at each other and the characters.

The toughs make little room for the characters and when they move to and from the bar they don't hesitate to bump into them, curse at them under their breath and what not.

Once the characters have settled in to eat or drink the men start taking more notice of them. After a few minutes the biggest of the lot, called Tom Tumbledown walks over, looms over them, looks at one, and gesturing at the smallest in the group says the following: "**Can I dance with your woman?**"

If this does not immediately start a fight, one of the other men says: "**Her mouth is too pretty for you Tom!**"

If this does not start a fight, Tom says, "**Well if she can't dance, tell her to take herself to the kitchen, and cook us up something to eat!**"

If this does rile them up, Tom heads back to his table, laughing. Then one of them says: "**There's no use messing with those no account, thin skinned, doe-eyed, snotlings!**" There is much laughter that follows.

Whatever the case, if/when the fight starts, Karl leaps up from behind the bar. Gotthold and the wolves are there quickly. Karl says the following: "**Fight as you will, but not here, not anywhere on the Post. Take it out of the compound.**" He gives no threats, those he assumes are well known.

The old gray-beard remarks, "**We'll take 'dem outside da post and skin 'em. You can have their skins to trade with the forest folk as like to decorate themselves with it.**"

The toughs with their leaders see only easy killing and easier plunder and they begin gathering their gear and weapons and heading out across the compound. They have no reason to quarrel with Karl and Gotthold and their pack of wolves. They head out the east entrance, pointing to a stump about 200 feet up the trail. "We'll fight there," they inform the characters.

They don't wait that long however, when they are 100 feet removed from the compound's front entrance they turn on the characters in a murderous rage.

BETHLUDUNE GRAYBEARD (This 6th level neutral human druid's vital stats are HD 6d8, AC 15, HP 39. His primary attributes are wisdom, charisma, and constitution. His extraordinary attributes are wisdom 15. He carries +2 silver hand axe. He wears +1 leather armor. He has 5 magic wooden cubes that when thrown on the ground transform into 1HD earth elementals. The druid carries an ivory pipe and a pouch of tobacco. He has a ring of protection +2 as well. He carries the money purse for the gang, within it is 125gp.

He has a number of spells memorized: 0 first aid, detect poison, light, purify food and drink. 1st magic stones, obscuring mist, shillelagh,

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pass without trace; 2nd barkskin, produce flame, warp wood; 3rd meld into stone, cause disease.)

Bethludune is a foul looking human, older with gray mangy hair and a scraggly gray beard. His dark, deep-set eyes and narrow face make him look like a staff more than a man. His skin is leathery as well. He has a wicked temper and a foul mouth, cursing constantly. He has no desire to die and if the fight goes against them, he tries to flee into the forest, using pass without trace or meld into stone to hide himself.

TOM TUMBLEDOWN (This 5th level chaotic evil human fighter's vital stats are HD 5d10, AC 17, HP 43. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. His extraordinary ability is strength 18. He attacks with a large +1 hammer for 1d8+3 points of damage. He wears a patchwork of armor, chain, scale and boiled leather. Tom is evil, foul tempered and merciless. He fights to the death, even if offered quarter, he does not yield. He is able to take tremendous punishment without falling; his sheer ferocity gives him a +4 to all saves vs. poison. He carries a silver wrapped jade ring worth 50gp; the silver is worked into the shape of a snake.)

Tom is tall with a flat face and wide eyes. His nose is wide and bent, no doubt from being broken multiple times. His hands are massive, as are his arms and torso.

MERIC (He is a chaotic neutral, 6th level human rogue whose vital stats are HD 6d6, AC 15 and HP 23. His primary attributes are dexterity, intelligence, and wisdom. His significant attributes are strength 15 and dexterity 17. He wears +1 studded armor and carries a short sword conferring +2 to initiative rolls, sundry gear, and has 75gp worth of goods and coin hidden on his person. He drinks whiskey from a golden flask worth 35gp.)

Meric is short and squat, with small legs and a long torso. His shaggy brown hair is always a mess. He wears his armor undone and loose. He is surprisingly quick for such a wide fellow. He suffered a head injury in the past and continually says "do it twice." He hasn't the sense to surrender and will fight to the death.

TOUGHS (4 OR AS NEEDED): (These neutral to neutral evil human's vital stats are HD 4d10, AC 17, HP 30 each. Their primary attributes are physical. Their significant attributes are strength 17, dexterity 14, and constitution 14. They attack with a variety of pole axes, swords. They have mixed ensembles of armor, pieces taken from here and there that they hobbled together like gladiators. One has a +1 chain shirt in his ensemble and all carry master work swords and axes that give them a +1 to hit and damage. Any other weapons and equipment is normal. They each have 50gp in coin.)

OTHER NPCs

BERIC WOODENEYE (This chaotic good 4th level dwarf fighter's vital stats are HD 4, AC 16, HP 34. His primary attributes are strength and wisdom. He has no exceptional abilities. He wears a suit of chain mail under his cloaks and furs. He carries a heavy short sword that deals +2 on its 1d6 damage. He also has 4 throwing daggers and a light crossbow +1 with

20 bolts. His treasure is not much, only what he's panned out of the creeks, 120gp in gold dust.)

Beric Wooden Eye is an old dwarf who fought in the Winter Dark Wars as a young man. In those battles he lost 2 fingers and his left eye, which he replaced with a wooden one. He forsook the path of war and took up wandering the world, finding that panning for gold gave him the most happiness. He spends his days wandering the rivers and creeks of the Darkenfold with his pans and sifters looking for gold dust. He has met with some success, enough he says, "to carve a living out of the world so it don't carve one out of you." He's known to most everyone along the Powder River and its tributaries.

Beric offers the party any information he is privy too (and that is a great deal) for the cost a few mugs of beer.

THE GREEN WIZARD

Bethludune and company work for the Green Wizard, an evil mage that dwells in a castle further south, past where the Powder enters the Mistbane River. The Green Wizard is well known through these parts, making most of his wealth through the slave trade. The Green Wizard is evil and strives to gather ever more arcane power about him.

His castle is built upon a promontory overlooking the river. From below, it looks as if it is floating above the ground. In truth it is not, but this plays into the rumors that abound about it being a castle that floats on the clouds.

The Wizard will not take kindly to his minions' demise. Though whether he ever knows that the party did them in is anybody's guess. If asked, Beric will advise the party to track and kill any of the druid's gang that escaped. He says they are likely to "come a-hunting" with the Green Wizard behind them!

NEW MONSTERS

SYLPH

NO. APPEARING: 1

SIZE: See Below

HD: 6

MOVE: 50 ft. (fly)

AC: 15

ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL: Air Drink, Electrical Charge, Incorporeal, Shape Change, Wind Blast

SAVES: P

INT: High

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Neutral

TYPE: Elemental

TREASURE: 9

XP: 750+8

The sylph is an incorporeal creature. They dwell in the open air, generally avoiding underground or even surface level habitats. They have no form that is easily recognizable, though when they move, it turns the air a slightly bluish tint. However, the sylph is able to change form into that of a waif-like human, male



or female, or into that of a bird. The bird form is restricted to one specific type of bird per sylph. For instance, a sylph able to turn into a mocking bird is not able to turn into a blue jay. In their human form, they are uncommonly beautiful, and always adorned in blue and white clothing. They appear to possess a weapon, a long spiked whip.

The sylph is a form of air elemental found on the material plane. They are highly intelligent, immortal creatures. Because of this, they are able to speak a variety of languages. They prefer the tongues of fey and elves over others. The sylph is extraordinarily envious of humans and elves, desiring their corporal forms

and longing for the touch of the corporal world. For this reason, when they shape change, they change into shapes that please them.

COMBAT: The sylph attacks from her incorporeal form first. They approach an intended target until they are almost upon them. Then they strike with air drink, attempting to disorient the victim. They follow up with a battery of wind blasts and electrical charges.

Air Drink: Once every three rounds, the sylph is able to suck the air out of a creature. The victim is momentarily dizzy and lightheaded. The target must be within touching range of the sylph. Once struck, they are entitled to a constitution save; if successful the air drink attack has no affect. If they fail they suffer a -2 from all combat related rolls and attribute checks for 1d4 rounds.

Camouflage: While the sylph is incorporeal, so long as she moves through the air and not through something such as fire, the creature is extremely difficult to see. When incorporeal they gain a +5 to their hide checks and a +6 to their surprise rolls.

Electrical Charge: The sylph's primary attack is an electrical charge. A chain of electrical energy arcs through the air in a 20 foot line, 2 feet wide. Anyone in the line is struck. It does not stop upon hitting the first target. Victims must make a successful dexterity save or suffer 2d8 points of damage. A successful save reduces the damage by half. When a Sylph assumes their physical form, this electrical charge appears as a spiked whip.

Shape Change: The sylph's natural shape is incorporeal air. However, it is able to assume a more physical form when it chooses. Once a day, the sylph can change into its human form and back again,, and once a day it can change into its bird form and back. When in these shapes (bird or the human form) they cannot interact with the physical world.

Wind Blast: The sylph is able to strike with a wind blast, allowing it to knock targets over, move items, etc. The sylph chooses the intensity of the attack. Creatures of medium size or smaller must make a dexterity save to see if they are moved.

IN AIHRDE

These creatures are the spawn of the god Anduel.

CASTLES CRUSADES

BEYOND THE COMFORTS HOME LIE WORLDS OF EPIC ADVENTURE



Tis said of that ancient brooding forest that even before the world grew accustomed to the light of day, that her stems were grown high and her eyes already dark and contemplative. If ever those ancient trees have pondered, however, then it was in silent expectancy, brooding on a bent that only they and perhaps a few others may know, for it has never been theirs to speak with vocal tongue. Mayhap they ponder simple things, or maybe they wonder on the many creatures which have come to crawl the earth since those days before days, for all manner of beasts and monsters have come from the outlands to slip into obscurity underneath the shadowy vale of the Darkenfold

All roads through the Darkenfold are dangerous, and the tracks to Willowbreak are no exception. From the beginning travelers must hazard a number of dangers, from the flooded river and submerged bridge, to lonely foot paths, ensorcelled bar keeps, giants in the water and eagles that burn. Upon the Powder River offers six loosely linked adventures that pit the characters, their wits and brawn, against a number of deadly encounters, both magical and mundane.

Upon the Powder River explores the eastern reaches of the Darkenfold, from the Perth Timberland, to the Damenheit Bridge, to the town of Willowbreak and beyond to the wild and dangerous Bent's Trading Post.

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