

ADVENTURES ON THE POWDER RIVER #3

CASTLES CRUSADES

RIVER WALK



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Peter Bradbury 2007 ©

RIVER WALK

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



RIVER WALK

River Walk is an encounter area for 3-5 characters in the mid-level range. It is designed as a plug-and-play encounter; either run by itself for a few hours of fun, or as an encounter inserted in an ongoing campaign. River Walk is part of an ongoing series of encounter areas, Adventures on the Powder River. River Walk follows Thorns for Beer and to the To the Damenheit Bridge encounter area, picking up upon the river itself. The river itself is portable to any locale but is designed for use in the Darkenfold Forest in the world of Aihrde. The encounter area serves as a good base of operations for the Adventures on the Powder River series, or as a plug and play for one night's use.

USING RIVER WALK

If this encounter area is being used separately, take up the journey on the river at any convenient point. Use the river stats below.

If leaving Willowbreak, north or south, the encounter area with the Cyclops can be used in either direction.

If the characters picked up the quest of the fey in *Thorn for Beers*, they must decide how to leave Willowbreak, by boat or foot.

LEAVING WILLOWBREAK

Assuming that the adventure starts in Willowbreak the characters can interact with the personalities of the village. Several of them are more than happy to help them.

NOTE: If playing this adventure without the *Thorns for Beer* encounter area, creating a few villagers on the spot is easy enough.

Once Greelys Tavern is cleared of debris, the town folk come out and celebrate. There are a great deal of congratulations going around; mostly directed at the party members. 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, he is 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, beech 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.

There is little more advice anyone else can give the party, but they are all eager 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 when it tumbles out of the Shelves just north of the Darkenfold, 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, widen-

ing 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 here and there on the river, though 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 oak forest is crowded-out by willow trees, and these areas 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, Castle East Keep, kept by the Hul 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 monster.

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 (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 (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 29, AC 15. Its prime 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 (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 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 abil-



ity. 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 (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 with her battle axe for 1d8 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, 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. They have the ability to spit their poison as well.)

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 x 3 (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 hunters and trackers.)

2 Gnoll (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP varies, AC 15. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a club or whip for 1d6 points of damage or a slam for 2d4 points of damage. He possesses 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 X5 (These chaotic evil creatures' 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 (These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 1d4, HP

7, leader HP 4, AC 16. Their prime 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 initiative save or lose all memories and skills/levels. 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 (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 save, as well as the ability to trip their opponents. They have darkvision 60 feet.)

8 Wolf Spider, Large (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 19, AC 14. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a bite, for 1d3 points of damage. His 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

Overland is much more difficult. 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. Make the party aware of why their travel is slow.

When on a trail, covering 10 miles a day is normal. Otherwise 5-6 miles is a good day. Roll a d2+4 to see how many miles the party makes that day; 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:

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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 then 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 depending on circumstances. Roll encounters as necessary.

EYE ON THE WATER

In the previous adventure, the feykknown as Oyvind Pal told the characters of a giant living upon the river whoterrorized 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 across 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 the area. He found 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, 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 walled-off with additional rocks (the **Pool** on the map). He then dug out the river bottom at the end of the first channel, "A" and created a deeper area in which he could sit. His sitting area hides all but the top of his head and eye (looking much like a rock in the river).

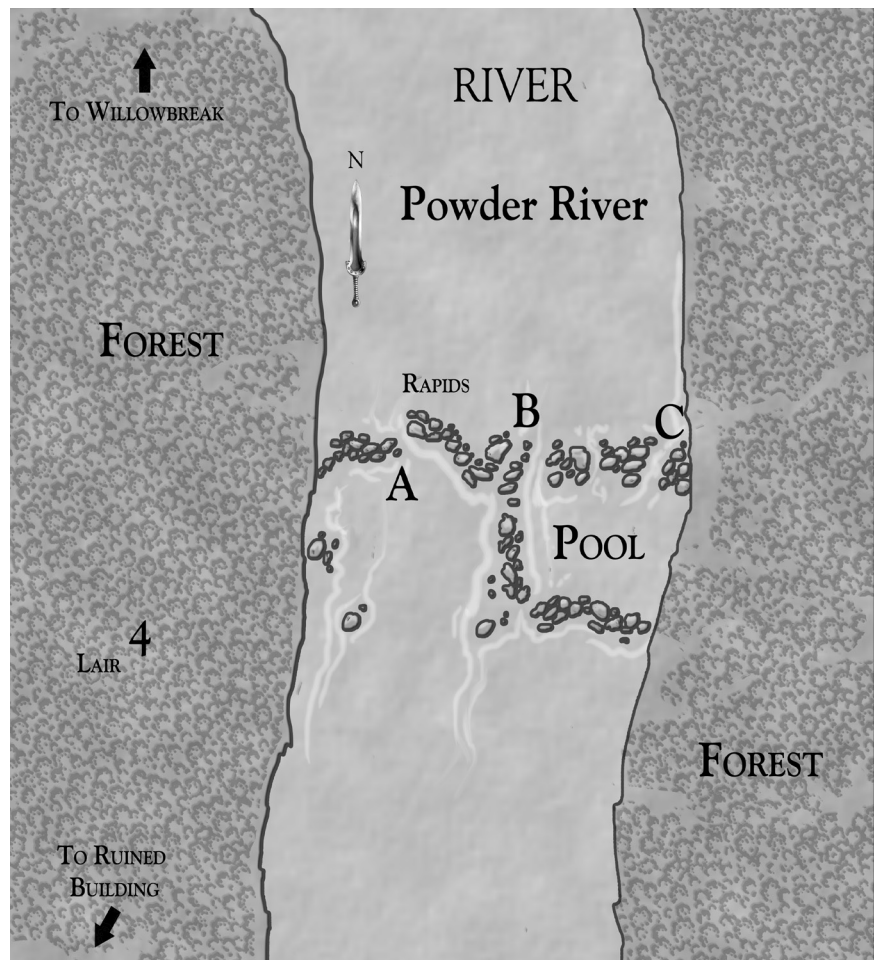
Any canoes that go down channels **B** and **C** end up in the deep pool. Anyone attempting to get out of the pool must climb out of their canoe and mount the rocks, pulling their canoes. While they are doing that, Radgar leaps out of the water and charges across the river, attacking his prey. If, on the other hand, they come down channel **A**, he is right there where their canoe comes through. He attacks the first canoe through.

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

Radgar Brownshirt (*This chaotic evil creatures 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).*

In Battle: 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 someone and then he retreats, hoping the party will leave. 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 giants lair.

Area 1 Channel 1 and Cyclops: This is a rapid channel that forces the canoe to move much faster than the pilots desire. Keeping the canoe upright requires a successful dexterity check (CL 4) from whoever is steering the canoe. If the steersman has absolutely no river experience the CL is 8. 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 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 Channel B & C: This is a rapid channel that forces the canoe to move much faster than the pilots 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 troll 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, lies the cyclop's lair. He has built it under a massive oak tree that has a canopy of over 50 feet. The old and gnarled tree has deep, broad roots. 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).

Just outside the door is a fire pit, artfully covered. Anyone with a keen sense of smell has a chance to detect the scent of burnt wood (CL 7) if they come within a few hundred feet of the place.

THE ROAD

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

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THE MOUND

Inside the mound 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. 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 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, a well-concealed hole (spot CL 4) is his treasure.

Treasure: Radgar possesses 2 small magic items (roll 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. There is also a small wooden cup. The cup has no stem and no decoration upon it. It radiates magic. Anyone who drinks water from the cup is cured 1d8 points of damage. The water must be from a water source Darkenfold or Eldwood Forests and it can only be used three times a day. The cup is called the **Drink of Amenut**. They were common in the days of the Ethvold, but many have been lost in time. This cup was Radgar's most prized possession.

WRAP UP

The characters, assuming they followed the quest as set out in *Thorns for Beer*, should return the amulet to Oyvind pal. They can of course do this at any time, carrying the adventures on to Part 4 and even Part 5 before they do so.

Once given the amulet, Oyvind 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).

FOREST ROADS

The road that the part discovered near the lair leads south and offers the next installment of *Adventures on Powder River, Part 4 Shingles of Gold*.

The Overland Adventure Continues in the next Adventures on the Powder River . . .