

THE DRAGON TREE

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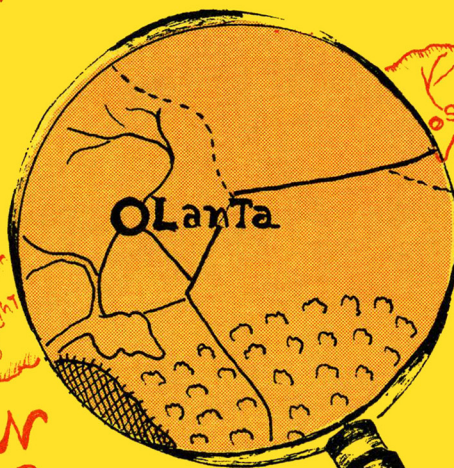
Epixae Islands Mysteries Number One

STONES OF THE SELT

Map of OLanta



The Shallow Sea

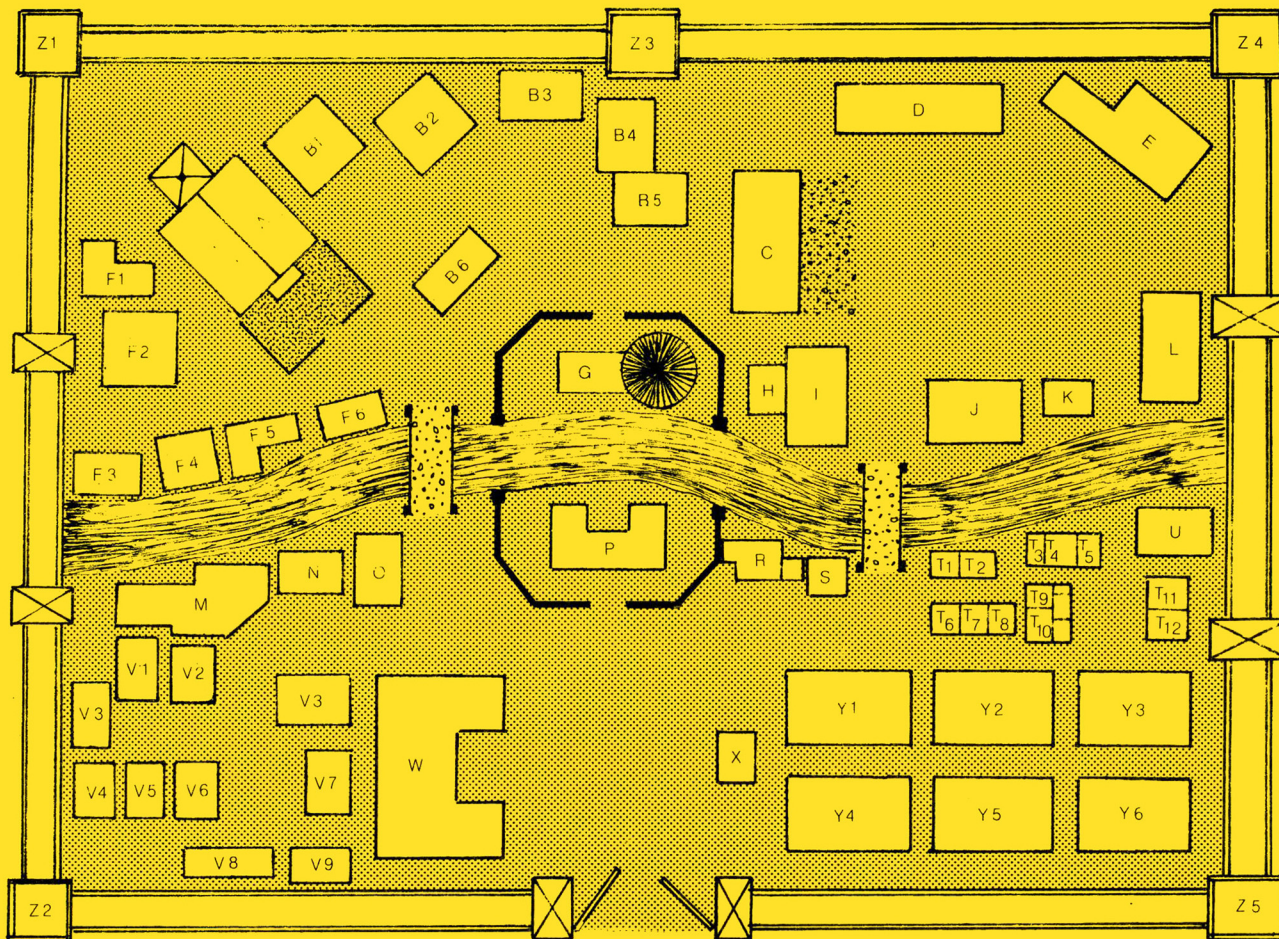


Naylor Straights

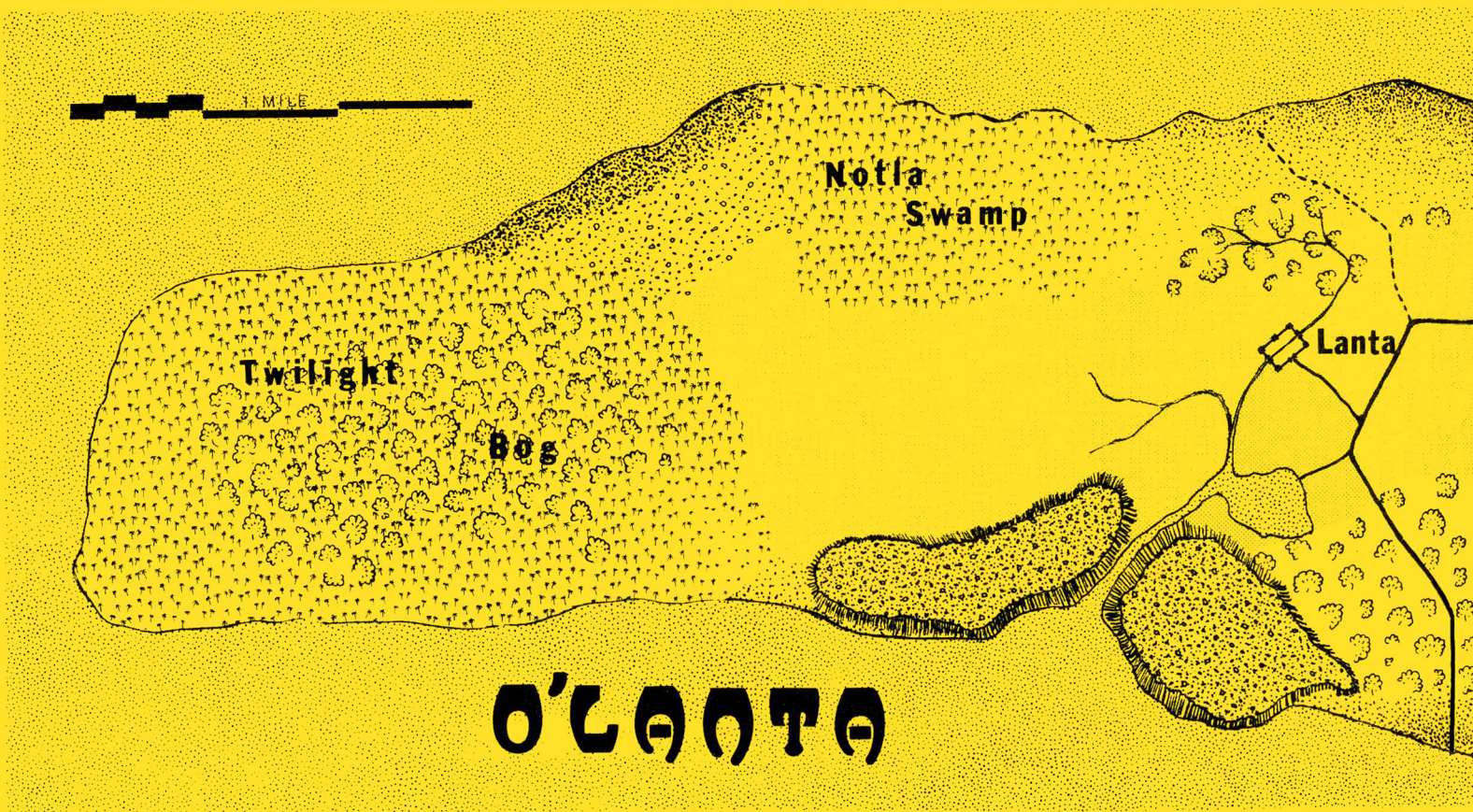


Naylor

\$5



- A) Temple of Odin
- B1-B6) Residences
- C) Command Post
- D) Armoury
- E) Barracks
- F1-F6) Residences
- G) Mage Gustalf
- H) Grey Fox Tavern
- I) Boarding House
- J) Artificer's Shop
- K) Supply Depot
- L) Noncom Quarters
- M) Blue Horse Inn
- N) Residence
- O) Burning Man Tavern
- P) Magistrate's Court
- R) House of Waters
- S) Blacksmith
- T1-T12) Shops
- U) Drygoods Warehouse
- V1-V7) Residences
- W) Shipwright's Guild
- X) Clerk's Offices
- Y1-Y6) Warehouses
- Z1-Z5) Guard Towers

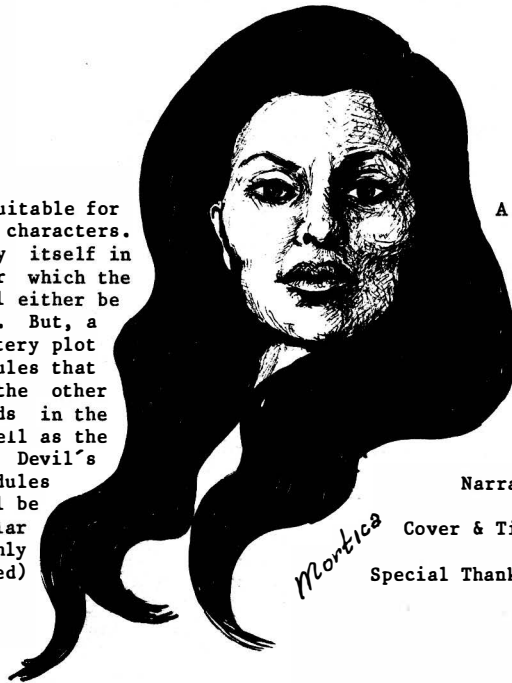


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Epxae Islands Mysteries Number One

STONES OF THE SELT

This module is suitable for 1st to 5th level characters. It can be played by itself in one evening, after which the the characters will either be dead or at liberty. But, a strong fantasy-mystery plot ties it to the modules that take place on the other seven Epxae Islands in the Shallow Sea as well as the the yet unexplored Devil's Sea area. Other modules in this series will be published at regular intervals. (Roughly one per month - ed)



A Fantasy Mystery by Tom Bell

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NOTES TO THE DUNGEON MASTER

Unlike most dungeon modules, this adventure does not consist of a series of caverns or rooms with monsters and treasures provided for the player-characters to encounter. To play this module successfully, it is recommended that the DM be thoroughly familiar with the situation, the settings and the actions and motivations of the NPCs.

To assist the DM, we have provided a narrative explanation of the occurrences which have provided the basic situation prior to the beginning of the adventure and a fictional example of what has happened to players in the past. This is provided to illustrate some of the possible scenarios resulting from this module and has been based on several adventures occurring during the testing of this module.

Detailed maps are provided of the island, the city and the other areas which may be involved in the adventure. A deck plan of the player's ship and details of armament, equipment and available forces are listed.

This is suggested for a group of 4 to 6 player characters from 1st to 5th level. Higher level characters may be used but are not necessary.

The editors have played in this module (and the following modules) and recommend this as one of the most challenging adventures which they have encountered. While some additional preparation is required prior to running this module, we believe that the results will be most satisfying to all those involved. These modules provide a unique type of fantasy adventure with an excellent and continuing plot but do not require the involvement of high level characters in the campaign.

One problem which we have noted and would like to mention here. THIS IS A MYSTERY - there are clues to be found throughout and questions for which answers need to be found if the player's characters are to survive. The problem is that few players are accustomed to this type of adventure and, unless they are aware of their objectives, they tend to overlook even the most obvious clues.

Not all of the clues will be used in this adventure and not all of the questions will be answered in this module. Many elements are included here which tie to other modules in this series and, in like manner, the answers to many of the questions arising here can only be answered in future adventures. This was the precise element which made this campaign interesting to your editors and we hope will also interest you.

Now, if you will excuse me. I have some unfinished business to tend to. There is this island to the north of Zeuta where . . .

GUSTALF THE WIZARD

Two months ago the Wizard Gustalf of O'Lanta, Loremaster of Epxae, received a packet of strange colored stones from his friend Alfred, a cleric at the Monastery of Odin on the neighboring island of Nicnon. With them was an ancient unreadable book. Alfred's letter said: "My friend, can you give us any light on what these stones may mean or be? I know little of their origin and can entrust less to writing at this time. I may only say that this book led us to their hiding place on Nicnon. We believe they may predate the Sinking of Lotana's Land and they may be of the Eld. We fear that some evil from that day too may seek them. Other relics of the Eld may be on Nicnon too and we shall begin to dig for them. Learn what you can by your art and better still pray us Odin's help."

Gustalf cast and augured for seven days but his arts found only that the power in the stones was great, old and alien. Nor in the book for all his arts he could scarcely read neither, save but a few scraps, for it was in the picture-writing of the ancient Selts which they had called Seltographs. On the seventh day, he ranged the stones about his crystal ball and scryed. Therein he seemed to see a Lady's face look out about his room and look at him and bare her teeth and smile. Her teeth were pointed like those of vampires. Then such a blackness seemed to fill the ball that it turned the surface dead and black as burnt coals and the ball shattered into a hundred pieces all stinking of death.

That night Gustalf took the Stones in a bag to the house of his mistress Adreinne with its yellow silk hangings and curly-legged chairs. There he opened a wall above the canopied bed where he placed the stones and the ancient book and Alfred's letter. From his robe he took a paper that had a magical Symbol of Life on it and folded the paper so that it hid the bag the stones were in, for to look upon a Symbol of Life may be death to a vampire. Then he sealed the wall again and with his arts made all look as before.

Leaving the stones alone, he betook to his books and read of Lotana and her Land that was sunk, as legend told, when she and the wizard Antonitas, standing on two mountains, fought with spells after both their armies were dead on the Plains of Praz. Only centuries later in that sea had arisen his, Alfred's and the other islands. No man now knew where those two mountains had stood. There was one old book which said Lotana was evil and leagued with demons and worse things. That when she first invaded and conquered the continent, it was written, Antonitas came from the South to drive her back and rescue the land to the gratitude of all. Gustalf smiled, for that book was written by a descendant of Antonitas. All the books agreed that Lotana had been fair but the face that smiled out of the crystal had hair and eyes as black as the night itself.

Likewise he read of the scaly Eld race and the giant Seltic men who the Eld created to serve them, all of them gone a thousand years.

So he read for three weeks and learnt much of no profit. But all that had happened and all that he thought he wrote in his journal. Then, on the day of the Harvest Moon, another letter from Alfred arrived. It said only, "In reference to the Excavation we have found what may be a Gate of the Eld. Please come at once if you can, leaving What I sent you in safety." Well into the night he worked preparing for the journey, then half an hour after moonrise he sat down and wrote: "to the Lady Adrienne, Jeroad House. My dearest, I fear there is nothing for it but I must go myself to Nicnon to investigate this discovery . . ." Then from the east he heard screams and a flapping of wings above. Through the open window came a few motes of white dust. One fell on his hand and he felt a great pang in his veins and was dead.

* * * * *

Earlier, just at moonrise it was, an unlighted ship had sailed up to the northwest end of the island. It was manned by 100 true vampires of human size and shape under command of the Vampire Queen Morticia, who was she who had smiled on Gustalf through the crystal. Tall and strong like a human woman, she stood by the steersman and, setting course to 500 yards off the island, dropped anchor there. She then cried "Fly, and spread the dust!" Those vampires below the decks passed up heavy bags like bags of sand, those above took each his bag and crowded to the rail and, there changing to

their shape of bats but still man-sized, beat their giant wings and rose in heavy noisy flight. When they neared the land, they opened the bags and shook them. The winds carried the white dust ahead of them as they flew.

First they passed the ballista and its guards on the northmost hill of the island. Two guards there were filling lamps with oil from a keg. When the dust touched them, their skin turned instantly a dull white and they fell dead. As they fell, the keg rolled in the fire and a great flame went up. The invaders flew south and spread the dust over all O'Lanta. Every dwarf, animal, bird and insect it touched became white and died on the instant. The wind spread it in all the hidden places till none were left alive on the entire island. For the dust carried a plague that congealed their blood to powdery crystal. Morticia had learned the secret of making it and she called it 'leechdust'.

In a while, Morticia too flew bat-shaped to Lanta and came down in the street as near as she dared to the temple of Odin. Candles were still lit in the houses in the street and the holy flame in the yard of the temple though the keepers lay all white as the moon and dead. When Morticia was again woman-form, her long dress showed red as fresh blood in the firelight, dark red like ox's blood in the candlelight and black in the shadows, and her black hair hung loose to her waist. Neither she nor her true large vampires could enter on the holy ground.

It was just two hours since the dwarves of Lanta had died of the leechdust. Now they began to stir again though not with true life and Morticia felt their stirring in her heart and smiled wide. She spoke to their hearts and bade them come to her by the temple, bringing their tools with them. When many of her new dwarven vampires had come and crowded round her in the street, she commanded "Search me this temple for magical stones." For the dwarven vampires could go in where she could not as they were as newborn and so not yet fully evil. So all crowded into the temple and poked and scratched there, and her heart was full of their stirring. When they had searched well and found no stones, she called them out and threw fireballs and lightning bolts until the temple lay all burnt and broken on the ground.

Then she spied one dressed in Wizard's clothing and bethought her of the wizard she had seen through the crystal. Calling him, he came, and it was Gustalf. She flashed her teeth because now he would give her the stones or anything but he, himself, no longer knew of them nor knew where he had hidden them, for Gustalf was truly dead and his mind was as if newborn, except his hands and tongue remembered their arts. So she bade him, "Lead me your fellows to the Wizard's house and find me the stones." There they tore, dug and smashed but left the walls standing and the roof whole and they found naught. It chanced that Alfred's letter bidding Gustalf come to Nicnon and Gustalf's letter of farewell to Adrienne, with many other letters were left in a desk unharmed. But Gustalf's journal and other books were thrown about in the courtyard.

Then Morticia despaired of the stones and cried to the assemblage of her new vampires, "Find tools to build me a fleet of ships to invade the mainland". They gathered the tools from the Shipwright's Guild and other such places and took them to the forest at the north end of the island, near the mine where there was good timber but no passing ships might see them abuilding. And she made them take all navigation charts from the shipwright's stores and such useable fittings as pulleys and nails fittings from the blacksmithies also.

Then to some as had skills she cried "I need devices to steer the ships during the sunlight hours". Those whose new wings had unfolded and were dry, she took with her and flew to her own ship and showed them the device it had. Back at the Artificer's shop in Lanta, she set them to building with pulleys and levers and she laughed to see how, as the steerage pilot was assembled, it looked like a giant sundial.

To others she cried, "I need more bags for the leechdust" and made them collect all bolts of cloth, needles, thread and sewing gear from the shops in the town, the few barrels of rubber from the dock and take all the two warehouses. There they spread the cloth, cut it and sewed it. When they had made a bag they were to dip it in the rubber, for water spoilt the leechdust.

Then bringing her ship to the northern shore, they flew many barrels of leechdust to the top of the mountain, then took it down in the mine to be put in the sacks. Into the mine she took also a terrible great white monster she had brought with her on the ship. It was named a Guardian for it was to guard the dust.

Then to Gustalf alone she said, "I need a magick done," and they flew to the mouth of the river. There they made a magical ward, such that when next any ship sailed up that river, three hours after it passed the banks would topple down and fill the river behind it. But if any ship tried to sail out before the three hours, they would topple down at once to prevent it. This magic they made together, Morticia on one bank and Gustalf on the other.

Now at last it was near dawn so she took all her new dwarf vampires to dark hiding places deep underground. (For different vampires are hurt differently by the sunlight. The leechdust dwarven vampires could stand only a few minutes and found it very painful. The true large vampires it would kill but Morticia herself could go in it with no harm) As they flew, they found the other dwarves who had been elsewhere on the island when they turned vampire and took them all underground. Many hundred she hid in the mine to work on the ships, to go to the city and build steerage pilots for the ships, to sew sacks and carry the sacks back to put the leechdust in them. Some she put in the man-made cave under the golden tree in the Twilight Bog to get new

rubber from the rubber trees in the bog, for there was not enough in the city. Some who had been the island's militia when they were alive, she hid in a cave in the cliff over the river entrance to the island to keep guard and patrol at nights. This work she commanded them all to do each night thereafter and, as soon as they had finished each ship, 100 new vampires were to depart in it and sail it to the mainland coast. Once there, they were to let the dust fall on such towns as might be found.

With all this done, it very near dawn. Morticia and her 100 true vampires and Gustalf flew back to her own ship and sailed away. Three days later came the rains and, when the rain wet the bodies of all the animals, they melted and washed away. The bodies that were out of the rain stayed a little longer and then, in the mist and damp air, they dissolved too, likewise the leechdust that was left in the houses. So no living thing was left on O'Lanta save the trees and the herbs. And in the courtyard of Gustalf's ruined house the rain wet Gustalf's journal and spoilt most of the writing in it.

The dwarven vampires worked busily for one month, launched one ship for the mainland and had several more nearly finished. Two nights before the second and third ships were ready, Morgul (son of Morthias the King of the Orcs) and his fleet of 1000 orcs invaded O'Lanta to his woe. And on that same day the party of adventurers sighted O'Lanta from the sea.

Here ends the background material -- the following is a fictional example of the adventure -- module begins on Page 6.

Once upon a time in the city of Naylor in the dwarvish kingdom of Namdo there lived an Amazon woman named Gervaise who was a fighter and an explorer. She had led treasure searches and rescue missions and lived comfortably on the proceeds in a fine house with servants. One day the King's Minister summoned her to the Palace and said, "Word is long overdue from our colony island of O'Lanta northwest of here in the Shallow Sea. King Cromwell wishes you to head an expedition there to find what is the matter and solve it if you can. He will lend you a warship and crew and platoon of our Dwarven Marines and five ranger scouts. And further he will lend you his Order of the Golden Hammer, which you may use to take any goods you wish from any merchant in Naylor excepting only magical goods, and the Crown will pay for them. Have no doubt that if you succeed he will reward you well. Will you do it?"

Gervaise said "Yes." The Minister would have fastened on her upper arm the golden armband bearing the Seal of the Order but she stopped him saying, "I am vowed to the Queen of the Amazons to wear no jewelry fashioned by men. May I carry it in my pocket instead?"

The Minister said "Yes, but you must show it to the merchant when you would take goods," and he placed the Order back in its lacquer box and handed her box and all. Also he gave her charts of the Shallow Sea and maps of O'Lanta and books of the history and geography of O'Lanta and the other islands near by.

At home Gervaise spread out the books and charts and told all to her sister Stella and her brother Robin who lived with her. Then Stella and Robin besought Gervaise to let them come too, and at first she would not for they were not yet full grown, but at the last she agreed.

PIETRO RECRUITS HIS PARTY

Now Gervaise had a foolish manservant who overhearing this matter stole the Order and took it to the tavern where he bought ale with it, and told all to a band of jolly rogues whose leader was Pietro. Now this Pietro was a plump short man with black curling hair and mustacios and bright black eyes, and well he liked to sit at a table and dice and make jokes and talk schemes, and little he liked to work or to fight. So on hearing this Pietro schemed that they would steal the Order and use it to get them a ship not from the King but from some unknowing shipwright, man her with beggarly rogues and hedge-wizards and set sail for O'Lanta. "For say we solve this riddle mayhap we will get a reward and pardons beside from the King for all our past crimes," he encouraged them, "or say we find the the Dwarves of O'Lanta in revolt 'gainst the King we may join them, or mayhap we sail on to the island of Zeuta or Nicnon if the

weather be fair." For so respected was the King's Order of the Golden Hammer that who bore it need fear neither question nor muttering from the merchants were he beggar or thief or whatever.

To this all the company of cut-pursees, beggars, and raggle-taggle magicians and such in the tavern agreed. So next morning they did all speedily, many rogues going about to the merchants to choose goods and provisions and hire oarsmen and then Pietro with the Order to collect them. This way many needful goods were forgotten and others bought twice, and every single rogue of them all bought wine. Likewise many wrong goods were loaded and charged to the King, some by chance but more by greed of the merchants, among then chocolates and a crate of paste jewelry and horseshoes and chalk. Bewhiles they bought Peitro went to the shipwright where he used the Order to commandeer in the name of the King the only ship all caulked and ready to sail that day, the which was a galleon all silk-hung and provisioned with peacock's tongues and bananas and suchlike for the comfort of the Earl of Ninnian's wife. Herein the rogues loaded their quickbought weapons and goods in the galleon's cedarwood closets all jumbled together. Then out of the harbour of Naylor their oarsmen rowed them that same day before Gervaise should look in the lacquer box and find the Order gone, and outside the harbour they raised up their sails and set course for O'Lanta.

Meanwhile Gervaise suspecting nothing spent that morning consulting her comrades who would sail with her and wisely they planned and made lists of the stores they would need. Only the following day did she discover the lacquer box empty and her servant fled, whereupon she went to the King's Minister and told him all. The Minister sent out a cry among the merchants for the thief, but by then Pietro and his rogues were long sailed away. To Gervaise he said, "This comes by your folly. If I give you a new armband, will you wear it?" Gervaise said, "Yea, and I will make good the King's loss as well." So this was done, and late that evening she and her comrades took the carrick-ship the King had lent them and set sail for O'Lanta.

MORGUL'S FLEET ARRIVES

Now on this day also en route for O'Lanta was Morgul (son of Morthias the King of the Orcs), leading his thousand Orcs in their 20 warships to retake that island. For his hoggish ancestors had owned it long in the past before the dwarves took it from them for its rich gold mine and named it O'Lanta. From the north Morgul came, where was the island stronghold of the Orcs which no dwarves knew of. On the way meeting a dwarvish merchantship he sacked it and scuttled it, taking prisoner only those who might be useful

to him for their magical or healing arts, and sunk the rest. Then their Orc slaves rowed the 20 bireme-ships strongly day and night till they reached O'Lanta at dawn. There finding all the island empty Morgul's soldier Orcs looted some in the city of Lanta but found there more beer than gold, so soon they fell to drinking and carousing on the western beach. Except 50 soldiers who had heard of the gold mine on top of Gold Mountain set off in the cool of the morning to march there and see was there any gold left.

For an hour their road led through level rich fields gold with stubble of harvest. Then by the village of Korm with its full grain bins and baskets untouched by rats or birds they had a steep climb up a bluff 50 feet high, then an hour's walk down a pleasant wooded plateau that sloped to Sula Swamp, and two hours picking their way along the trail through the swamp itself. And then were they just at the foot of Gold Mountain, then half an hour up the long-neglected road rising 75 feet to the plateau. Thereon stood the empty ghost-town village of Yolana that had once served the mine till the dwarves abandoned the mine and it both a score years ago. And then up again they had an hour's climb around the steep peak of Gold Mountain on a trail beat out it seemed by donkeys but long long overgrown with elder bushes, and now it was high noon. (And at this same hour the lookout in Pietro's galleon-ship first sighted O'Lanta)

At the mouth of the mine the Orcs found in an old building an elevator that was no more than a platform with a rail all around and a roof, hung from a hempen cable that ran through a pulley into a room whose doors were swollen tight with age and damp. Both outside this building and in were gold nuggets scattered all clean and shiny and some in the cracks in the rough wood floor of the elevator. These nuggets the Orcs grabbed almost all, but left a few small ones in their hurry to get down the mine for more gold. All crowded at once on the elevator and one pulled the red rope that let it go down, for the only brake was on the pulley above the elevator's roof, and this red rope hung all the way down in the mine to pull on to open the brake whenever the miners wanted to go further down. So one orc held the brake-rope and pulled it gently little by little to let them down slowly. Two levels of tunnels they passed, collapsed and full of old dirt and no gold. 300 feet down from the top of the mountain the third level tunnel showed wide and clean with some gold glittering on it. The orcs ran picking up gold and shouting. past where the tunnel widened and the walls were fresh dug. Suddenly they came into a room where their torches showed on one side a hundred black barrels and on the other many hundred black sacks and on the fresh-leveled floor many traces of white dust and just inside the entrance more gold nuggets.

So tall was the roof that the light of their torches could not reach the creature lurking there above, the great white horrible undead beast which Morticia who made it named a 'Guardian'. As they stooped for the gold this creature dropped among them clawing and tearing and many it clawed fell paralyzed. Many orcs ran away into the room and one of these kicked up some white dust from the floor. and when a mote of it touched his skin that orc fell white and dead. For this was Morticia's leechdust that she had bade her new dwarf vampires put into the sacks they made every night in Lanta, and set her 'Guardian' to watch it.

Other Orcs stood and fought well. When the Guardian saw he had the worst of the fighting he picked up a bag of leechdust and dashed it against the wall. The dust billowed out to kill the orcs that were near it and the rest fled back down the tunnel. Nor did the Guardian follow them but stayed by his dust.

The fleeing orcs scrambled onto the elevator and one grabbed the brake-rope a good strong tug to go down. The platform dropped so suddenly that he could not let go of the rope in time and was pulled out of the elevator. Above it in the empty shaft he hung on the rope alone, and his weight kept the brake wide open so that the elevator fell and fell faster and faster. Fast as the windlass could unwind but no faster it fell. till it hit the bottom of the mine with a great jolt.

At the bottom they found but one clean new tunnel but no gold. Down this tunnel they went into a great room much larger than the circle of their torchlight so that they needs must walk well in to see aught. Then on its far wall and narrowing sides they saw coffin on coffin. four rows high of them, 400 in all. Each coffin lay open with its dwarven vampire sleeping in it. but now all the vampires began to open eyes and stir.

So slow the vampires woke that the orcs ran well ahead of them back to the elevator. But they had no way to get it up again for none had thought to stay above to pull it back up. Three orcs tried to climb the brake-rope but it broke under their weight at once, and down on top of them fell the poor orc who had been hanging above. The wiser orcs tried to climb up the hempen cable, but as they climbed the cable unwound more and then coiled around them and they saw the top end of it falling toward them down the shaft. Then the vampires caught and ate them every one.

[NOTE TO DM: For safety, the end of the support cable was normally tied to an iron ring on the bottom of the windlass it was wound on. But while the mine was in disuse this end section had got wet and rusted -- as would have been obvious at the most casual glance to anybody who had bothered to break into the windlass room to check the machinery before using it.

Had there been anyone above ground to wind the elevator back up they could have done it. for there were enough extra turns of cable around the windlass to provide traction if no one had unwound it all the way by trying to climb on it.]

Afterwards the Guardian climbed down the shaft with his long flexible arms like a great white spider monkey and carried the cable back up and wound it round the windlass. After he rested from this he turned the wheel until he had pulled the elevator back up to the top. Then he went back for gold nuggets to bait his trap again.

PIETRO'S ARRIVAL

Three days out of Naylor Pietro's stolen galleon sailed. Then at high noon on the fourth day the little thief Nicolas spied from his crow'snest the east coast of O'Lanta with its wide river harbour between two high bluffs and just north from the northern bluff a sandy landing beach. But at the same time south over the water he saw a carrick-ship overtaking them, which was Gervaise's carrick the King had lent her. Pietro bade his oarsmen row fast as they could made for the shore, and at 2 o'clock they anchored off the sandy beach. Pietro and four of the rogues rowed ashore in two boats with 50 ruffians. Then leaving 5 to guard the boats they went along a good wide road into the forest northwestward.

This forest they found strangely silent and vacant with neither singing birds nor scurrying creatures nor buzzing flies nor gnats. Likewise looking on the foliage they saw that in the last month there had been rains and new growth and none of it marred by insects or grazing, but the older leaves had been eaten on in the usual way. They had not gone more than half an hour into the forest when they heard up ahead squeaky pig-voices chanting some Orcish drinking song. and rude cheerful Orc-shouts and belches. The rogues hid in the bushes till Nicholas the thief spied out the Orcs and saw it was a warparty of 50 well armed, but drunken and careless. The rogues fell on the Orcs as they passed, but instead of fighting the Orcs squealed and scattered into the woods. "Ah, what a brave adventure we are having!" said Pietro, and the rogues marched on northwest along the road to the lake and to Lanta.

Meanwhile 5 of the 50 Orcs went stealthily west through the forest and over the fields back to the western beach to warn their fellows, and 45 through the forest east to the eastern beach where Pietro's landing boats were. And there the Orcs surrounded the guards Pietro had left, killed them and burnt the boats. Then those Orcs hid in the forest next the beach and waited for Pietro to come back.

But Pietro and his band knowing nothing of this all the way on through the forest and came out of its far western edge. There they saw to the south half a mile a pleasant blue lake off the river with some few ships moored there and ahead to the northwest the gray stone walls of the city of Lanta, but no people or traffic anywhere on the roads. At the city they found the gates open but no people or beasts or smoke of cooking fires anywhere, except way to the west they could see a faint haze of blue smoke. which came from the campfires of the 900 Orcs on the western beach. But those Orcs they could not see, nor the Orc fleet in the western bay neither, on account of a high sedgy bluff that ran between Lanta and the beach.

Those shops that had closed before sundown on the night of Morticia's attack were all neatly locked and left. But in the houses and taverns where dwarves had been after dark the rogues found tools laid down and food rotted on the tables and paper money and small coins left in open cash boxes, as though all dwarves had walked away on an instant. Except in some taverns too the Orcs had been and taken beer and scattered things about, and in the brewery they had beat in the doors and rolled the barrels away to the beach.

The ruins of the temple and the shell of Gustalf's house the rogues saw too, but could make nothing of them. Still it chanced that as they passed near Jeroad House in the street the mage Beauhavoc cast him a spell to detect magic. so the spell led them to the house and to the Stones of the Selts, for that was the house of Gustalf's mistress Adrienne where he had hidden them in the wall over the bed. The Stones and all the papers hidden with them Beauhavoc took and puzzled at as the rogues walked on through the empty city, eager to know what powers these stones had and how he might use them.

Now the rogues came to the far wall of the city whereon was built an high tower for the guards to look out from. Up they all climbed on the wall looking out northwestward saw a vast army camped on the beach and five great ships floating in the bay. So much all the rogues could see from the wall, but Pietro climbed on up in the tower and took the telescope and turned it and then he could see that the soldiers were Orcs and the flags on the ships were Morgul's. And over the sedgy bluff they saw climbing a patrol of 300 Orcs, which those Orcs who had run from Pietro in the forest had summoned.

So down the rogues came in haste and pell mell out of the city and back to the eastern beach where they had left their landing boats. But there they found the guards they had left were dead and the boats burnt, and then the Orcs who were hiding there sprang upon them.

All fought but few fought to the death, for be an Orc or a rogue hurt he would to the forest and hide. So when the battle was finished, there in a hollow under the roots of a storm-fallen tree Pietro crouched with his companions and debated them what to do. For though they had seen their galleon riding high and safe on the water offshore, there were no more landing boats left on her, and few of the rogues could swim. So they made them a hasty plan, and Nicolas climbed to the top of the bluff by the river and flashed with mirrors to the ship to sail up the river speedily to fetch them and beware.

This the ship did and when all were safe on board they rowed back toward the river's mouth. But as they crossed the place of Morticia's ward again they heard between them and the sea a great thudding roar and earth and water shook alike and a great cloud of dust went up at the river's mouth, which was Morticia's ward causing the steep banks to topple down in an avalanche and block the river. For cunningly Morticia and Gustalf had devised that ward so that if some ship came up the river and stayed the banks would not topple for three hours in hopes of more ships following it so none of the fleet might escape. But as soon as a ship tried to sail back out to sea they would fall down at once.

Close up to this new dam of earth the rogues sailed and saw that it would take at best a whole day to dig through with all on board digging, suppose that they had shovels for all. So Pietro and Dion the illusionist murmured together then set out for Lanta for more shovels, but first Pietro gave Nicolas some orders for he had another plan beside. And while the others dug Beauhavoc still studied Alfred's letter and Gustalf's and Alfred's notes that were with the stones, and held the stones to see could he take them into his body as the notes said.

Up the river to empty Lanta Pietro and Dion and 10 ruffians went stealthily, then climbed over the grate in the wall where the river ran through. At the dry goods merchant's they found aplenty shovels and bundled them up on their backs. There the patrol of 300 orcs found them and ran toward them drawing their swords. But Pietro cried to the Orcs, "Well met, my good fellows! I have found a great treasure and need help to dig it up!", and he flung them a necklace of paste jewels that he had brought from the ship. So the Orcs followed him back to the mouth of the river, where by his orders Nicolas had buried more of the jewels in the dirt that was blocking the river's mouth, and there the Orcs fell adigging. And as fast as the Orcs dug down a ways Dion by her art put there a jewel for them to find.

Presently when the Orcs had dug out all the middle of the dirt leaving only dikes before and behind to keep water out of the pit where they were digging, Pietro and all got aboard their galleon then used their explosive coconuts to break down the dike on the river side. With great force the river water rushed in and broke down the far dike and swept the Orcs all out to sea, and Pietro's galleon rowed out also. Most of the Orcs drowned but some few that Pietro took prisoner. Then with naught betwixt them and the mainland save empty water the rogues set sail for home to tell the King that the Orcs had invaded O'Lanta, and though it was nearly dark still Pietro ordered no lights lit on their ship lest some Orcs see them and sail after.

HOW THE VAMPIRES ATTACKED THE ORCS

Now when it was full dark out from the cave over the river flew 25 marine vampires and seeing the Orcs' campfires on the beach flew there and saw the lights of their ships as well. Away they flew to fetch all the other vampires and when all were assembled some flew out toward the Orc's ships.

At this time Morgul the son of Morthias the King of the Orcs sat drinking red wine with his captain Orcs in his flagship. Between them was spread a great chart showing the Shallow Sea and the mainland and all the cities of the dwarfish nation, and in some places this map showed old bloodstains of his father's and uncles' blood when they had defended these places when the dwarves first took them from the Orcs. And now Morgul and his captains drinking carelessly spilt red wine on the map too as they gloated over finding the dwarves of O'Lanta as they thought fled away or hiding, and counseled where to invade next.

Now above them on deck the sentry in the crow'snest saw 25 dark bat-shapes fly at the ship and shouted alert. Morgul and his captains rushed up as the vampires landed and all fought on the deck. At first those vampires had the worst of it for vampires or not they had been dwarves first and still kept such a hatred of orcs that they would not stay to charm or use any tactics but fell on the Orcs lustily with teeth and nails only, but the Orcs used their polearms to beat them back. Except five vampires stayed above to bite the Orc in the crow'snest where no fellow Orc could help him, so he was soon dead.

But the other vampires beaten back by the Orcs' polearms changed bat-shape and flew to the rigging, then turned dwarf-shape and began charming any Orc who looked up at them. And the Orcs who fell under their charm they put to attack Morgul and to take fire and fire the ship, so presently many Orcs were struggling among themselves.

Then Morgul bethinking himself sent some to the galleys for garlic and his priests to drawing symbols of Gruumsh their god and between this and arrows and missiles the vampires all flew away for the moment. Then looking around to the other ships of the fleet he saw 7 afire already and in the light of those fires Orcs and vampires struggling on the decks and a great cloud of bat-shapes flying round over the fleet thick as wasps round their nest. So Morgul signalled "Retreat" then he and his captains all went below and sealed their hatches and made their slaves row to escape.

Yet again above them they heard the giant wings of the bat-shapes but no commotion of landing, only splash, splash, and a thud. And this again and again while they rowed, till Morgul crept above and saw that the vampires were dropping great rocks on the ship to try and sink her. Now in the brig of his ship Morgul had four human mages prisoner off of the merchant ship he had sunk, and them he had brought up to deck. "Save us from those rocks," he told them, "or we will all drown together." So the prisoners cast some spells and the rocks fell lightly or bounced from invisible cushions and the ship was saved.

Seeing their rocks were useless and the flagship like to escape, the vampires took a little of their precious leechdust and flew over low and dropped it over half of the deck. The four human mages all fell down dead from it and 29 Orcs, but Morgul it missed. Morgul had his bilge pumps wash the dust off the deck and when the water touched the Orc bodies they melted away, but the human bodies did not. So he had the human bodies taken back to the brig where there was a human cleric too who might help them, for they had served him well with the rocks.

THE SITUATION

The party has been commissioned by the Crown to investigate and report on the circumstances which have caused the colonies of O'Lanta and Nicnon to have been silent for nearly two months. The colonies normally communicate with the mainland at regular intervals via trading ships which make a loop from Naylor to O'Lanta to Nicnon to Naylor. At this time, two trading ships have failed to return on schedule.

The party has been provided with a ship (see TRANSPORTATION) and troops (see below) but are left to their own choice of procedures. The party has also been invested with the ORDER OF THE GOLDEN HAMMER.

ORDER OF THE GOLDEN HAMMER

The Order of the Golden Hammer is given by the Crown as a signet of a Royal Commission. The signet consists of an armband bearing a gold embossed dwarven hammer. The wearer is identified as being on the business of the Crown and may requisition any material or supplies required (which will be billed to the Privy Purse). [NOTE - this will not cover the acquisition of magical items - they should be rare in this area]

The party is free to equip themselves with such materials as they may desire. Provisions sufficient for a three month period have already been stored aboard the ship and the party will have two days to prepare for the mission.

TRANSPORTATION

The ship provided is a two-masted carrick, square rigged with a lateen sail forward. It is 98 feet in length and 35 feet in the beam with a raised deck both fore and aft. It is built wide in the beam for stability and mounts two ballista, one on the foredeck, the other aft. Two ship's boats are carried normally in an upside-down position on the upper deck between the palintonon. They are 15 foot boats with a normal capacity of twenty (maximum 30 in an emergency). Additional ship's boats may be carried if the party desires but they will be in the way in an emergency. (An alternative would be to tow one or two ship's boats behind the stern - this will slow the ship by 10% and, in case of a heavy rain or high seas, will slow the ship to 25% of normal movement as they become swamped)

The ship will normally sail (movement 10-20 knots with good winds, 5 knots tacking against the wind, +3 knots augmented by rowers) but may be rowed by the crew. The lower deck is open on the sides with oar-ports and will seat 90 oarsmen (15 rows of 3 per side).

SHIP'S CREW

The ship has a normal crew of 45 able-bodied seamen (oarsmen) plus the captain and ship's cook. Ships of this type are normally under sail with the oarsmen employed only to augment movement in difficult manouvers or when becalmed. The crew may be augmented by the marines to make a full complement of oarsmen.

The ship's captain is a 7th level fighter (30 HTK) - AC 4 - whose crew is composed of a mixture of races but is primarily half-elf as is the captain. The crew consists of 35 half-elves, 5 dwarves and six humans. Aside from the captain, the crew may be considered as 4th level fighters (4 HD - 16 HTK) - AC 5 - Move 12". They will use sword or pikes as personal armament and crew the ballista and palintodon.

TROOP CONTINGENTS

The King (or King's Prefect) will also supply the party with a contingent of Royal Dwarven Marines - five squads of ten marines, each headed by a sargent. A squad of Rangers may also be supplied, this being five rangers. Statistics follow.

ROYAL DWARVEN MARINES - 4 HD (4th level fighters - 16HTK each) armed with crossbows, hammers and short swords - AC 2 - Move 6" - +2 against Orcs - magic resistant and poison resistant (saving throws as 8th level) - infravision (does not function against vampires or pseudovampires, no body heat). These are the cream of the military forces and all can double as ship's crew.

RANGERS - 4+4 HD (4th level rangers - 20 HTK each) armed with bows and spears - AC 3 - Move 15" - charm and sleep resistant (90%). These are wood-elf rangers hired by the Crown and chosen for their expertise in woodlore. They are not good sailors.

Armament is provided by the two ballista (firing rate: 1 / 3 melee rounds), either of which may be used to fire any of the three types of projectiles carried: shot (iron balls), darts (wood shafts with heavy iron heads) and small shot (lead balls about 1 inch diameter). [50% chance to hit large targets - shot does 5d10 points of damage - darts (fired in clumps of 12) do 1d5 each - small shot acts as area weapon doing 1d6 with 10 foot diameter]

Further armament is provided by four palintonon (a type of mounted crossbow) mounted midships, two to a side. These are capable of hurling "coconuts" distances of up to 500 yards with 75% accuracy, 1000 yards with 60% accuracy (against larger targets - firing rate: 1 / 2 melee rounds).

"Coconuts" are standard equipment aboard military vessels in this area. Each "coconut" is an explosive bomb (shrapnel) which will do 4d10 damage on contact. A second type is an incendiary bomb which will do 2d10 damage on exploding but will also cause fires over a 10 foot square area (100 square feet). These are proximity fused with a five second delay. These have a center seam, the top and bottom halves must be given a 10 degree twist to arm the fuse. Ship's stores will normally carry 100 of the first type and fifty of the second. These are carried in a heavily protected locker and are padded to prevent accidents.

Given favorable winds and position, these vessels are also built for ramming with heavily reinforced bows. They are also well equipt for boarding with ramps, hooks and grapples.

Because of the danger of fire, the ships are also equipt with nozzle and pivot water pumps (hand operated), one being located on each the fore and the aft decks. These also double as bilge pumps when needed. (Note to DM - these may also be employed as weapons by the players - 75% to hit with a range of 100 yards - require a crew of three)

SIMPLE DICE ROLLING FOR LARGE GROUPS

MASS COMBAT WITH NPCs: The DM can roll individual attacks for NPCs vs NPCs in large numbers but the results are mathematically predictable - 4d10 points of boredom for the players, 8d10 + tennis elbow for the DM. Here are standard formulas for conducting mass combat among the NPCs in this module - these are based on statistical formulas and adjusted for AC, hit dice and other factors. We include die numbers for Orcs vs Pseudovampires though these will not normally be needed. Unless the players interfere with the battle on the beach, all the Orcs will be killed and 700 pseudovampires will survive. (Also included for Marines vs Marines, Orcs vs Orcs, etc - you never know!)

For each 10 NPC's attacking (round off fractions), roll the die specified below for the type of opponent. The result will be the number of opponents killed this round.

DEFENDING	Pseudovampires			
	Marines & Crew	Military PVs	Orcs	
A				
T	Marines & Crew	1d10--3d4--1d10--1d10		
T				
A	Pseudovampires	1d4--1d10--1d5--1d10		
C				
K	Military PVs	1d4--1d10--1d10--1d10		
I				
N	Orcs	1d5--1d10--1d10--1d10		
G				

This method gives the same results with or without initiative rolls. When player characters are involved in the melee, we suggest using normal initiatives and allowing the player characters to act first each initiative. When player characters are not involved it saves time to treat all attacks as simultaneous. In this case both rolls will be for the original number of combatants and those killed are subtracted only after both rolls are made.

GROUP SAVING THROWS, ETC: There are a lot of NPCs in this module. To make them easier to handle, we have given them all approximately a 55% chance to do anything - rolling their dexterity, wisdom, etc; saving throws, hitting an opponent in battle, dropping rocks on ships or what ever else may come up.

When you have a group of X number of NPC and want to know how many succeed in doing something, roll 1dX. The result is how many succeed. (E.G. If 6 marines are trying to climb a slippery river bank, roll 1d6. The result is the number who climbed it. If 19 orcs must save vs poison, roll 1d20 or 3d6. If 45 pseudovampires must save vs illusion, roll 2d20 + 1d6)

CURRENT SITUATION

BEFORE PARTY ARRIVES AT O'LANTA --

The dwarf vampires have just launched their first ship for the mainland. There is a 2% chance that on the night before the Party reaches O'Lanta this unlighted ship will pass close enough for the pseudovampires to see the Party's lights and mount a surprise attack.

During daylight the day before reaching O'Lanta the Party has a 3% chance to see this ship, which will be on automatic steering and appear derelict. In daylight the pseudovampires will not attack above decks.

The pseudovampires are carrying no weapons except one thousand bags of leechdust, each weighing about thirty pounds.

DAY OF PARTY'S ARRIVAL

The Party will always sight land at noon, but cannot reach it before 2 pm. The Orc fleet arrived earlier (at dawn). They found Lanta empty, looted the town of beer and wine, and 900 Orcs have been picnicking ever since on the beach at the opposite side of the island, just west of the city of Lanta. There are 10 ships in the fleet, equipped with ballistas etc, and 50 Orcs have been left on them as guards. (The other 50 Orcs are marching to the north end of the island for gold)

The only places it is possible to come ashore are the eastern beach between the river and Sula Swamp, the river itself, and the western beach where the Orcs are, just west of Lanta. Even if the Party sails straight to the closest point (which will be the eastern beach) they still cannot get ashore sooner than 2 PM -- and they may choose to stand off a while or land elsewhere. Here is what the Orcs and the pseudovampires will do until the Party interrupts them:

DAWN:						
6-7	Orc fleet anchors, 100 come ashore, explore Lanta					
7-8	Signals to ship indicating Lanta deserted.					
	300 Orcs land on beach.	50 march north from	50 transport beer			
		Lanta to Korm	to beach			
8-9	350 drinking beer while	50 march north from				
	300 more land on beach	Korm to Sula Swamp				
9-10	650 drinking beer while	50 marching past				
	250 land on beach	Sula Swamp				
10-11	900 drinking. 50 standing					
	watch on ships	50 reach bluff				
11-12	" " " "	50 reach Yolanta				
NOON	" " " "	50 climb peak to mines				
1-2	850 sleeping. " "	50 enter mine by elevator	50 orcs march east to woods			PARTY'S SHIP SIGHTS O'LANTA
2-3	" " " "	Guardian reattaches rope	" " " thru woods			Earliest time party may land
		on elevator & returns	reach beach (unless they			on eastern beach or sail up
		cage to surface level	meet landing party)			river.
3-4	" " " "	Guardian rebaits trap	50 return from east beach			
			thru woods			
4-5	" " " "		50 reach lake, follow river			Earliest time party's ship may
			to Lanta			reach either end of island
5-6	" " " "		50 return to west beach			
			with more beer			
6-7	900 drinking on beach,					
	50 standing watch on ships					
7-8	" " " "					
8-9	" " " "	DUSK / SUNSET				Earliest time party's ship may
9-10	" " " "	Vampire patrol leaves	Vampires leave other caves			reach west beach area (Orc fleet)
		cliff caves, sights orcs,	400 fly from mine toward			FULL DARK
		fly to meet and warn	Lanta			
		other forces				
10-11	700 vampire-dwarves kill all orcs on beach with normal weapons,					
	rocks and direct attacks - burn orc ships					

FIRST TWO HOURS AFTER SUNDOWN:

The pseudovampires from the caves in the cliffs (X) patrol in formation in flights of 25. These pseudovampires are not armed with leechdust. These were previously the Marine contingent of the island and each has two hit dice (8 hit points). These will patrol the perimeter of the island at two hour intervals.

If a marine patrol finds a vulnerable party or a ship alone and unprotected by garlic, holy symbols, etc, they will attack immediately with crossbows and bare hands and teeth. If the ship or party looks too powerful or if they are driven off, they will fly away to get help. Then they will come back with more marines, all carrying boulders to drop to try to sink the ships. If that fails, the non-military pseudovampires from the mine will arrive with leechdust.

They will drop the boulders from about 100 feet in strafing runs of 6 to 10 pseudovampires in formation, each group carrying a boulder weighing about 50 lbs.

When attacking with leechdust, the attacks will be made by pairs of pseudovampires carrying a sack between them. The strafing runs are made at low level (40 feet) with a 55% chance of hitting the ship.

The leechdust will not penetrate below decks and can be washed off with water which will neutralize it. Anyone killed by leechdust will, after two hours, become a pseudovampire and join in the attacks. The pseudovampires can be destroyed by Holy Water, Blessing (area effect. 1d6 damage / level to all within area of effect) or other such attacks. If the dead bodies are blessed or sprinkled with holy water, they will immediately dissolve as will the pseudovampires. The pseudovampires communicate at short range by a limited telepathy - range = 100 yards.

On nights when they are not fighting Orcs, the working pseudovampires arrive at the city within one hour after sundown. They do not expect intruders and will not be searching for any unless something causes them to be suspicious. They are sure to notice the city gates being closed or their work areas disturbed. They have a 75% chance to notice other major clues to the presence of the Party.

Unless they become suspicious, they will go straight to their work areas (J-S-Y1-Y5) with only a 5% chance to enter other buildings (such as the building the Party is hiding in).

FOOTNOTE TO TIME-TABLE: If the orcs see the party they will scatter into the woods. Five will return to the western beach for reinforcements. The rest (45) will sneak to the eastern beach to attack any guards left by the party and sink the Party's landing boats.

ORC SOLDIERS (Lawful/Evil)

HIT DICE: 2 (8HTK) MOVE: 8 MPH (250 yards/minute) AC: 6
 ATTACK: 1 per round. They carry swords (1d8 damage), axes (1d8) and polearms (1d10) or fight barehanded for 1d8.
 A polearm is a spear with an axe type head and it is their favorite weapon.

DESCRIPTION: Normal orcs wearing leather armour with the insignia of Morgul, a war hammer crossed by a short barbed spear on a red shield.

DWARF PSEUDOVAMPIRES (Lawful/Evil)

HIT DICE: Normal - 1 (4HTK) Soldier - 2 (8HTK)
 MOVE: 5 MPH / 30 MPH (flight = 1000 yards/minute) AC: 4
 ATTACKS: 1 per round. 1d8 damage barehanded (teeth, etc).
 They can only use weapons in dwarf form. Will use leechdust only if other attacks fail as it is very expensive. They fight to the death and never take prisoners.

DESCRIPTION: When in dwarf form, they look like dwarves with dead white skin. When in bat form, they are still the size of dwarves (wingspan 4 ft); their bat-claws are used as hands. In either form, their attributes are: Str 18, Int 7, Wis 7, Cons 12, Dex 15, Char 0.

SPECIAL DEFENSES: NONE - All weapons do normal damage.

VULNERABILITIES: Holy Water does 2d4 damage / ounce. 'Bless' acts as an area effect weapon (1d8 / level). 'Cure Disease' does 1d8 damage.

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Polymorph to bat at will. Do not need food or drink (not even blood). Cannot go gaseous, go without breathing, drain life levels or energy nor turn others to vampires (except by using leechdust).

THE GUARDIAN (Lawful/Evil)

HIT DICE: 8+1 (49 HTK) MOVE: 5 MPH (165 yds/min) AC: 3
 ATTACKS: Two claws per round, 1d10 each. If hit, save vs paralysis or be paralyzed for 1/2 hour. He never takes prisoners. Only as a last resort will he use leechdust, by breaking a sack or barrel against the wall.

DESCRIPTION: This tall (7') white undead creature stands erect on two legs and has long flexible arms that move very fast. He looks very strange and unnatural and is often mistaken for some kind of daemon. He climbs like a monkey. His skin is tough and hairless and as white as any undead. His intelligence is low: he can set traps but not clever ones.

VULNERABILITIES: Holy Water does 4d6 damage / ounce.

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Although he is undead, he cannot be turned by clerics. He is not harmed by sunlight and will go out in the sun if necessary (but he dislikes it greatly).

LAIR AND HISTORY: He stays in the mine to guard Morticia's leechdust. She constructed him after seeing a similar creature which the Eld had designed to guard some of their places. He was brought with her on her ship. Such creatures are extremely rare.

LEECHDUST

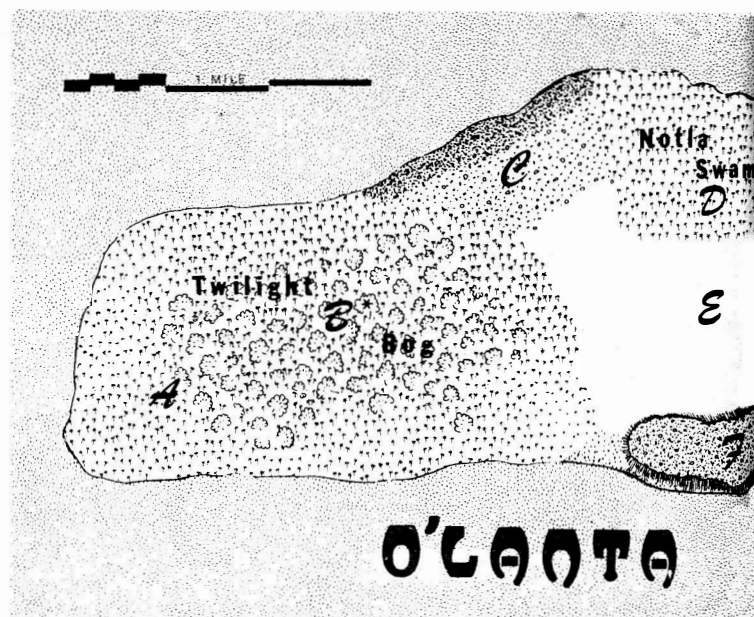
Water or even very damp air deactivates leechdust immediately. Once it has gotten damp, it becomes permanently harmless. (Sweat does not deactivate it. In the unlikely event that the characters try to handle leechdust safely, see MINE Level 3, Page 12)

Any touch of even one speck of this dust anywhere on the skin kill instantly: the victim will become dead white and, if cut, his blood will appear to have crystallized.

All orcs, phraints, animals, etc killed by it will dissolve when touched by normal water or damp air: they never turn vampire.

All humans, elves, etc killed by it will revive two hours later as pseudovampires under the telepathic command of other pseudovampires nearby. Their bodies can be dissolved during the 2 hours by 'Holy Water'. 'Cure' or 'Bless' on the bodies turns them to dust. (As pseudovampires, their strength will be 18:60, alignment L/E. Other attributes will remain the same as will their size, racial abilities, skills, spells, etc.

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Pseudovampires will try to sink the ship by dropping rocks on it. They will fly over in formations of 8*, each vampire carrying one 50-lb rock.

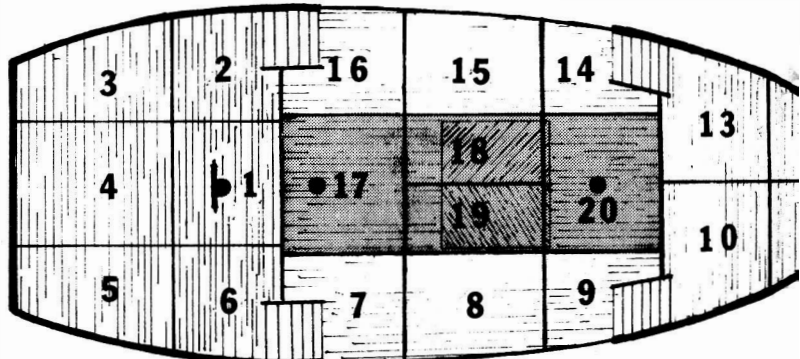
Roll 1d8* to see how many rocks hit the ship (thud). For each one that hit, roll 1d20 to see which sector. If it hits sectors 17-20, it will cause a leak. (DM option: hitting any sector may cause 1d20 damage to persons or property)

The ship's oar deck is normally 100" above the water. Each leak will cause it to sink 1 inch per 10 minutes if not bailed. It will require 10 people bailing constantly to compensate for each leak. When the oar deck has reached water level it will not sink any further. The center and two end decks will still be above water but the ship can no longer be rowed, sailed or steered.

We suggest the players not be told openly when a new leak starts or how far the ship is sinking each turn, just "You hear splash, splash, thud. The water is up to your knees now (those below decks)."

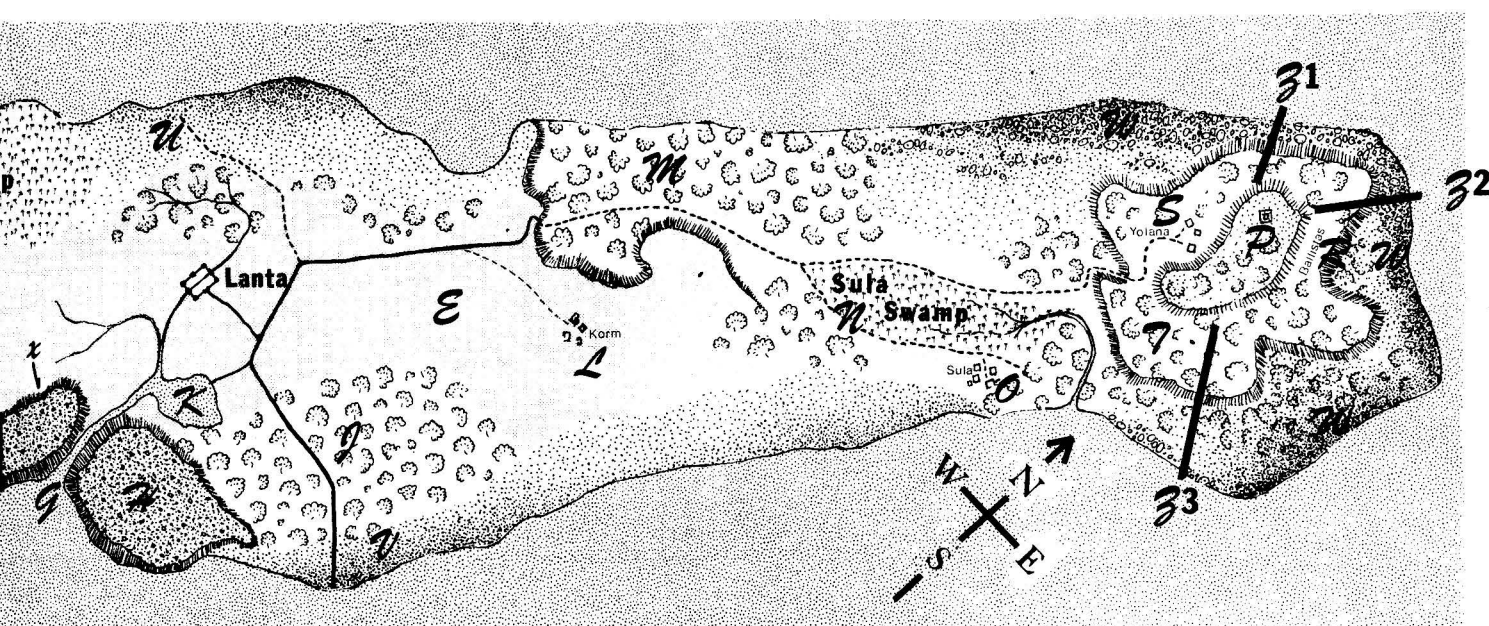
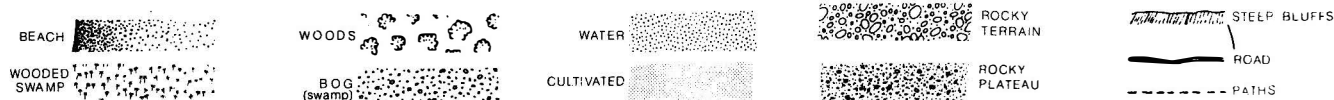
A full crew of 100 oarsmen can row the ship 100 yards a minute (3 mph). The pseudovampires can fly 1000 yards a minute (30 mph).

Attacks with leechdust require that the bags be brought from the mine at the northeast end of the island. (Assuming that the ship is within sight of either beach, this will take about 40 minutes round trip)



Normally they will fly over the ship in formations of 8*, each carrying a bag of leechdust, and open the bags over the ship and shake the dust out. Each bagfull has only a 55% chance to hit the ship at all, and can cover only one sector of the deck (nearly 200 square feet). Roll 1d8* to see how many bagfulls hit, then roll 1d20 for each hit to find which sector. Then of the total number of NPC's on deck, figure 5% were in each sector barring special circumstances.

*(DM OPTION: may be 6 or 10 in formation; if so, roll 1d6 or 1d10)



- A> TWILIGHT BOG - This is a dense marshy forest composed of mangrove swamps and rubber trees. In the center of the bog on a solid outcropping is a larger tree (B). In the area immediately surrounding this, many of the rubber trees show signs of having been tapped or of currently being tapped. This is not being done skillfully, many of the trees are already dying from excessive cutting. The entire area is very swampy and difficult to pass through.
- B> Tree in center of bog - There is a manmade cave below the tree which is used as a refuge during the day by a force of 200 of the pseudo-vampires. At night, they will come out to continue tapping the rubber trees for sap.
- C> This area of rocky coast bordering the ocean is, further inland, a region of dangerous quicksand pits.
- D> NOTLA SWAMP - Here is a low-lying salt swamp, dotted with scattered vegetation.
- E> The central plains area is devoted to agriculture. Numerous homesteads can be found scattered across the region, all appear to have been abandon.
- F> The south port bluff is a sharply rising (100 to 140 feet) outcrop with a relatively flat and rocky top. At the point (X), there is a small cave which, during the day, houses 100 pseudo-vampires. These were the Marine Garrison stationed on the island. After dusk, these will emerge to patrol (flights of 25 each) the island's coastal regions. Two patrols will be flying at any time, a complete patrol taking two hours.

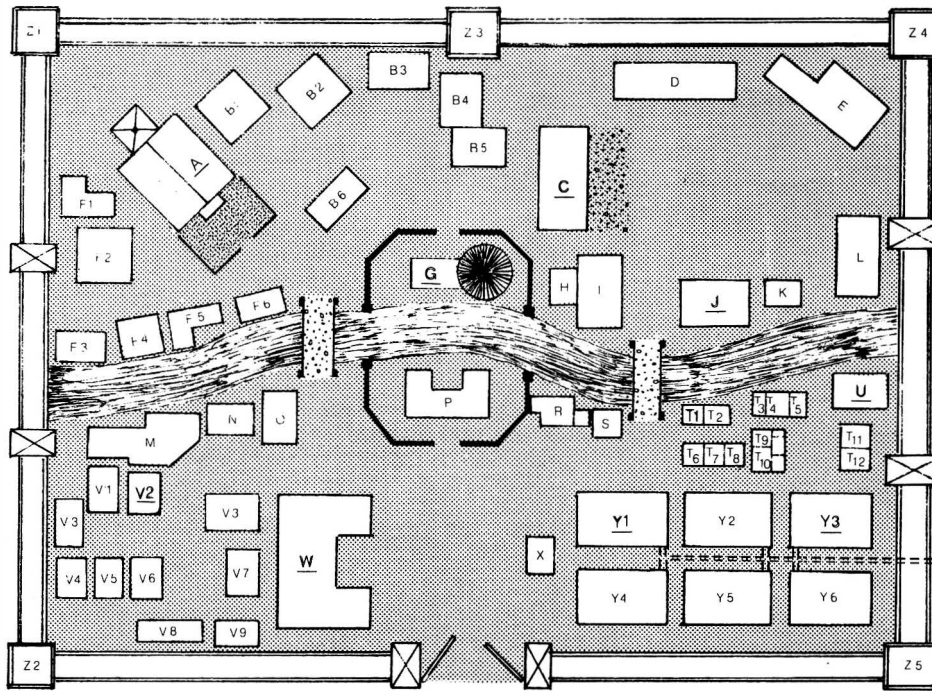
- G> This inlet leads to the inland lake and to the city of Lanta. At this time, the bluffs to each side have been trapped such that if a ship enters, the bluffs will collapse behind the ship thus blocking the return to the sea. Approximately 2 days labor by crew and marines would be required to clear a passage through the blockage.
- H> The north port bluff is a sharply rising outcrop matching (F).
- J> Forested area used to supply lumber for houses and shipbuilding. No signs of recent cutting or construction.
- K> Inland lake - used principally for ship construction by the Shipwright's Guild. It is bordered with work areas and hull cradles but no work is presently being done.
- L> KORM - A small agricultural village, abandon.
- M> North-west forrest - not used.
- N> SULA SWAMP - an empty bog area.
- O> SULA - A small village devoted primarily to fishing, abandon. A few small fishing boats will be beached near Sula. There are no docks.
- P> Old gold mine - see maps.
- R> Ballistas and fortifications - used as punishment detail for garrison personel - burned ruins several weeks old.
- S> YOLANA - Ghost town, long abandon.
- T> Ships being constructed, large forest areas cut for timber. Cradles for eight ships are present but one cradle is empty and skids lead down a gentle slope to the inlet creek below. Of the seven ships under construction, two appear to be almost completed lacking only rudders and minor parts (approximately 1 or 2 days (nights) work), the remaining five are in various stages of completion.
- U> Northwest beach area - not normally used - The bay to the north is the area where the orc landings will occur.
- V> Southeast beach area - docks at end of road - this is the normal landing area employed for ships calling at O'lanta. The beach extends north to near the town of Sula.
- W> Northern beach area, very rocky. steep approaches.
- Z1-23> Vent shafts leading into mine. These are located in areas where it is highly unlikely that they will be discovered except by accident (5% chance). Z1 leads to 1st to 3rd levels (1st & 2nd blocked). Z2 leads to 4th thru 7th levels (all blocked). Z3 leads to 8th thru 10th levels (8th & 9th blocked).

- continued from last page -

But their souls and personality are gone, including specific memories. IE, the DM should take their character card and play it as a monster. Although they still have their skills, they will now use them only as a last resort, preferring to bite; they hate normal people now and will never talk to them.

Any attempt to restore a player character killed by leechdust (whether turned vampire or not), will meet the same obstacle: Morticia has the soul in her power and, only when she is killed and her 'River of Life' destroyed, can there be a chance to free it. (If the players call on a god or do an augury, etc. they should be told this; if they try a wish or a resurrection, etc. they should be told only that it does not work, the soul seems to be trapped somewhere) Once Morticia is killed and the River destroyed, the success of future attempts may still require a constitution shock saving throw, 'Gathering of the Sheaves', etc. at the DM's option.

CITY OF LANTA



- A> TEMPLE OF ODIN - This will be found to be completely destroyed and burned.
- B1-B6> RESIDENCES - Normal dwarvish residences, apparently abandon.
- C> COMMAND POST - Military GHQ, daily log with final entries dated approximately four weeks earlier. Last report includes entry reporting lights toward the northeast and note of a patrol sent to investigate.
- D> ARMOURY - Weapons scattered (recent) but nothing particular missing (too small for orcs).
- E> MILITARY BARRACKS - Normal but abandon., little disturbed.
- F1-F6> RESIDENCES - Normal dwarvish residences, apparently abandon.
- G> MAGE GUSTALF RESIDENCE - Thoroughly ransacked, furniture and laboratory furnishings are torn apart, panelling torn from walls, grounds have been dug up. (Important item - letter to Gustalf from Alfred: "In reference to the excavation, we have found what may be a Gate of the Eld. Please come at once, leaving what I sent you in safety." This is on stationery from the monastery of Odin on Nicnon. Also unfinished letter from Gustalf dated night of the Harvest Moon: "to the Lady Adrienne, Jeroad House. My dearest, there is nothing for it but I must go to Nicnon to investigate this discovery" The letter breaks off here in a large ink blot. Also in the courtyard is Gustalf's journal, much water-damaged. The ink is smeared and can be read only with much difficulty, though it is in Common. This can be used to give the players further clues whenever they stop to study it, if the DM chooses.
- H> GREY FOX TAVERN - One of the better taverns on the island, the Grey Fox hotel has been partially ransacked on the ground floor, most of the ale and beer missing or spilled (recent - orcs) and no gold or silver. There are paper bills scattered on the floor behind the bar (value 97 GP). The rest of the tavern (rooms on second floor) is relatively untouched including an excellent wine cellar.
- I> TIMBAL'S BOARDING HOUSE - A three floored residential structure, apparently abandon.
- J> ARTIFICER'S WORKSHOP - This is one of the only three buildings which show any type of recent activity. Part of the workshop appears to be devoted to the construction of a strange device of which there are two (unfinished) devices. These appear to be large sundial devices but the base houses a complex geared mechanism.
- K> SUPPLY DEPOT - Records office, abandon.
- L> NONCOM QUARTERS - Apartment structure for married noncommissioned officers, abandon.
- M> BLUE HORSE INN - Tavern and second floor residential, stage and meeting house in rear, abandon. Beer and ale kegs missing (recent), no gold or silver, 123 GP in paper money.
- N> RESIDENTIAL - Private home, appears wealthy furnishings, abandon.
- O> BURNING MAN TAVERN - Tavern only, beer and ale missing or spilled, no gold or silver, 45 GP in paper money in small box on shelf behind bar.
- P> MAGISTRATE'S COURT - Principal governmental offices and magistrate's residence. abandon, little disturbed.
- R> HOUSE OF PEACEFUL WATERS - Tavern, bathing house and bordello, abandon.
- S> BLACKSMITH'S SHOP - Appears abandon. (close examination will reveal discarded parts of numerous pulleys).
- T1-T12> SHOPS - All appear abandon. (see special notes), no gold or silver except if noted, most have some paper money either left in till or scatter on floor (1d20 GP each store).
- 1> Tailor Shop - all cloth, needles and tread missing.
- 2> Cobbler - abandon
- 3> Toy Shop - abandon
- 4> Apothecary " "
- 5> Stationary " "
- 6> Cuttlery " "
- 7> Tinker " "
- 8> Empty " "
- 9> Bakery " "
- 10> Hatter " "
- 11> Grocery " "
- 12> Seeds Store " "
- U> DRY GOODS EMPORIUM AND WAREHOUSE - appears abandon. (close examination will reveal that all thread, needles and cloth are missing from emporium and warehouse)
- V1-V9> RESIDENCES - abandon. V2 is residence of Adrienne, mistress of Gustalf - this is the location of the Selt stones - see further notes.
- W> SHIPWRIGHT'S GUILD HALL - appears abandon but all tools are missing.
- X> CLERK'S OFFICE - abandon.
- Y1-Y6> WAREHOUSES - abandon - these have narrow windows set high in the walls and massive doors with provision for being barred from the inside. They appear to have been constructed such that they could be used as secondary fortresses if the city were invaded. The windows are glass with heavy interior shutters. Y1 & Y3 are being used as workshops to sew and seal cloth bags. The pseudovampires will return here at night to continue their work.
- Z1-Z5> GUARD TOWERS - abandon.

THE CITY OF LANTA

The city of Lanta is surrounded by high stone walls which are topped by guard walk-ways. Guard towers are found at the corners of the outer walls and in the center of the west wall. The city gates are located in the center of the east wall and a river flows from north to south through the city. The water passages are closed with huge steel grills. (DM Note - the north grill, upstream appears to be blocked by considerable debris indicating that it has not been cleaned recently - this is not sufficient to block the water flow)

To the right of the gates on entering are the warehouses, housing agricultural produce, principally grains and dried legumes. To the left is the shipwright's Guild and directly ahead, is the walled court surrounding the Magistrate's court and civic offices.

To the right and left of the Magistrate's court are bridges crossing the river. Directly opposite is a similar walled court enclosing the home and laboratory of the wizard, Gustalf. To the right, beyond the warehouses, is the central business district. To the left, beyond the Guild House, is a principally residential area with other residences across the river south of the south bridge. Also in this area is the Temple of Odin.

In the north-west quarter of the city, the island's military post is located. Surrounding the drill grounds are the barracks, armoury and the command post. Along the river in this quarter are found several boarding houses and community hotels as well as the Blue Horse Tavern.

Between the command post and the temple are found some of the finer homes in the city. Other favored taverns are the Sign of the Burning Man and the House of Peaceful Waters.

Most of the buildings in the city are designed in a similar manner. Due to the tropical climate, the buildings have large open windows and high ceilings in the rooms. These are not suitable for any type of defence position. The warehouses have been designed with a secondary function of fortification. Each warehouse has a single pair of doors on the south end of the building (opening outwards). The windows are narrow, set high in the walls and equipt with heavy shutters on the inside. The doors can be barred from the inside. (There is a system of tunnels connecting the warehouses and providing an emergency exit from the city - dotted line - but their existence and location have been long forgotten)

WIZARD'S MISTRESS'S HOUSE. (Stones and book are hidden here)

A pleasant house with stylized flowers drawn on the stucco round the doors and windows and neat painted window-boxes full of geraniums that have died from lack of water in the past month. The name JEROAD HOUSE is set in blue tiles over the door.

It appears undisturbed. The lock can be picked, but the character picking it will notice that it is much stronger and of much better quality than locks generally used on residences. Inside the house is neat and elegantly furnished with yellow wall-hangings and embroidered furniture. and upstairs is a fancy canopy bed. In the bedroom there are scraps of broken stucco on the floor.

"Detect Magic" anywhere in or near the house will lead to a secret compartment in the wall over the bed, where Gustalf hid the stones and the Seltic book that Alfred sent. This is simply a hole in the stucco wall with a thin sheet of stucco in front of it, magically camouflaged to match the rest of the wall.

THE COMPARTMENT CONTAINS:

SYMBOL OF LIFE: Anyone looking into the compartment by his own eyes or by "Wizard Eye" etc will see this, for the paper is folded to stand up. The SYMBOL will not affect any normal creature (unless it is injured or otherwise harmed - in such case, it will heal 4d8 points of damage). If seen by a vampire or other undead, it will do 8d8 points of damage (no save). This symbol cannot affect any creature twice! The symbol will vanish within ten minutes of the compartment being opened.

ALFRED'S SELTIC BOOK: A heavy leather-bound book studded with ivory. It is of primitive construction but was very carefully lettered and bound. It is oddly well-preserved - shows no wear or age at all - but no magic can be detected on it. (In fact, it is 3000 years old and has been preserved by technological means)

The book cannot be read by the characters by any means what-so-ever, as it is written in the Seltographic alphabet, a pictographic system of writing. All they can read are a few notes on a separate piece of paper which first Alfred and then Gustalf made in trying to translate the book. Alfred's notes are in High Elf, Gustalf's in Common. They say, "Stones = essences", "Language no matter" "Selt Lord Draconis", "River of Life", "Word of command", "3000 years", "Can be taken into body", "Gateway -- distinctive stone markers".

LETTER TO GUSTALF FROM ALFRED: "My friend, can you give us any light on what these stones may mean or be? I know little of their origin and can entrust less to writing. I may only say that this book led us to their hiding place on Nicnon. They may predate the sinking of Lotana's land and they may be of the Eld. We fear that some evil from that day too may seek them. Other relics of the Eld may be on Nicnon too and we shall begin to dig for them. Learn what you can and better still pray us Odin's help."

THE STONES

THE SELTIC STONES: These are large oval gem-like stones of the right size and shape to fit in the palm of a hand. They are semi-transparent (like obsidian) and radiate magic of neutral alignment.

These stones were made by the Eld to lend special powers to their human servants the Selt. When a person holds a stone in his palm and speaks (or thinks) the command "Absorb", the stone vanishes and its power goes into his body.

Holding such alien power puts great strain on the body. Five rounds after absorbing a stone (except the green stone) the character will begin to feel weak. From then on he must save on his constitution each round. If the save is failed, the character's constitution will drop to zero and he will fall unconscious. When the constitution reaches zero, the stone will become "unabsorbed" but the body is at 0 hit points and must be cured within three rounds or they will be dead. If a cure is done, the body will regain its normal constitution at 1 point per melee round.

If the character tries, he will find that he can "Unabsorb" the stone (which causes it to reappear in his hand) and he loses the power and stops having to save on constitution. It can be absorbed and unabsorbed as often as desired and will never run out of power.

The constitution strain can be avoided if a person first absorbs the Green Stone (Skin Invulnerability). This will give him the constitution of a Selt (30) and allow him to retain the stone indefinitely. (Should any one person be greedy enough to absorb all the stones at one time, he will be changed into a Selt - ie, will immediately grow to eight feet tall with a muscular build, green skin, and eyes like dark open space. He will then get a preoccupied look on his face as though listening to something -- and fly away [another Seltic power] toward the east leaving an orange vapor trail. His further adventures will take place on another island in a forth-coming module: he is permanently out of the current game.)

When a character absorbs his first stone, it will immediately start operating at full power! He will have only 5% per round (cumulative) to be able to turn it off. Once he makes this roll, he will not have this problem any more with any of the stones. (More characters have been killed by these stones than by the Orcs. See fictional narrative, PIETRO IN THE WAREHOUSE.)

As long as a stone is absorbed it will change the color of part of the body. Here are the colors of the stones and their powers:

RED -- LASER BEAM: Ability to emit a laser beam from the hand which had absorbed the stone (the fingernails of this hand turn red). The laser has a range of 1000 yards and does 4d10 damage. (Treat all armour classes as AC 10)

BLUE -- LIGHTNING POWER: Ability to emit a lightning bolt from the hand that absorbed the stone (the fingernails of this hand turn blue). The lightning bolt has a range of 300 yards and does 6d10 damage. Metal armour does not provide protection from lightning, it attracts it! For "to-hit" purposes, figure AC as 15 minus normal AC (AC 3 becomes AC 12, AC -1 becomes AC 16, AC 9 becomes AC 6).

GREEN -- SKIN INVULNERABILITY: Skin turns light bluish-green and becomes AC -20. (No bonus for dexterity or other armour) This also raises the character's strength to 20 (with appropriate bonuses) and his constitution to 30 (same as a Selt). This will also allow other stones to be absorbed without any danger of constitution drain.

CLEAR -- MASS VORTEX, BLACK HOLE: The person's eyes look like dark open space. This stone allows the absorber to create and control a small mass vortex (black hole). This can be controlled to perform delicate tasks of destruction or used as a directed weapon. The vortex can be any size up to 1/2 inch diameter and will be directed as desired by the user (range 200 yards). A save vs dexterity may be allowed (at -5) to avoid the black hole but no other saves are allowed. All armour classes are treated as AC 10.

ORANGE --SPEED - FLIGHT: This stone enables the absorber to run at a movement rate of 12" or fly at 36", leaving an orange trail behind (like a vapor trail). His toenails turn orange.

The white and black stones must be absorbed together (one in each hand) or they will not work.

(DM OPTION: If absorption of either stone is tried alone, there is a 5% chance that the god Ra (white) or the god Set (black) will appear)

WHITE -- KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD LIFE-FORMS:

BLACK -- KNOWLEDGE OF EVIL LIFE-FORMS:

These stones are the essences of the gods Ra and Set. Together, they grant the absorber a complete encyclopedic knowledge of all lifeforms. This includes knowledge of both strengths and weakness and will assist in the identification of lifeforms. PLEASE NOTE -- this will not provide information about specific individuals - only about types of creatures. Thus the user cannot find out that the paladin Jonn Deau has a severe craving for chocolate covered cherries but can find out that the species Orluck is very fond of catnip. Alternatively, in some cases an individual is sufficiently unique to qualify, e.g. Morticia, the vampire queen, differs from common vampires and pseudovampire. Since she is genera unique, information relating to her would be available (but is not included in this module - she will appear in a future module).

THE GOLD MINE

The mine is located at the northeast end of the island on top of a steep mountain top. First level of the mountain is approached by a moderate slope to a height of 75 feet above the coast. The second ridge is extremely steep, rising 125 feet to a relative flat rocky top.

The mine consists of ten levels (only levels three and ten are accessible - the others are blocked by collapsed ceilings and debris) located at intervals of 100 feet. These can be reached by the elevator via the main shaft. (DM NOTE - air shafts connected the various levels and exit at the map locations Z1, Z2 & Z3 - these are concealed in the wooded and brushy areas and will not be normally seen from the surface except if a careful search is being made - they can easily be found from below)

A large but ramshackled building covers the old mine shaft. The shaft is 25 feet by 25 feet. The shaft opening is filled by a large elevator platform (examination will reveal a heavy cable running from the roof through a pulley mechanism to the adjoining part of the building).

The adjoining section is closed. Access is through two large double doors which appear to have sagged with age. To open either of these will require a combined strength of 30 to lift the door so that it can be swung open. All windows have been boarded shut.

This consists of what appears to be a large work area with rock crushing machines and other equipment. One part of the floor has a deeply worn circular rut (20 foot diameter) surrounding a vertical post. The post has six spokes 10 feet long at a height of four feet and, at the top, disappears into the second floor.

The second floor consists of a series of drive shafts and pulley belts which appear to have been used to drive the machines on the floor below. There is also a large drum (windlass) with a heavy (hemp) cable wrapped around it, the end of the cable disappears in the direction of the mine shaft. The cable is wrapped in several layers around the drum. In the center of the drum, the other end of the cable is hanging loose. Examination will reveal that, at one time, it was attached to an iron ring which has rusted out leaving it hanging loose. When the elevator is all the way down, there will still be sufficient cable wrapped around the drum to allow hoisting.

The elevator housing is open except for a broken rail (gate) across the front. The elevator consists of a large railed platform (with a roof) which will hold fifty passengers. A few gold nuggets have been left on the floor of the elevator (value about 10GP) by the Guardian. When the elevator is entered, a single rope (dyed red but covered with dirt - appears a reddish-black) will be found hanging at the left of the elevator as the party enters. When this rope is pulled, a bell can be heard to clang from inside the building. Tension on the rope will release the brake allowing the elevator to descend. Releasing the rope brakes the descent. On one occasion, a passenger grabbed the rope and pulled heavily on it. This released the brake suddenly.

allowed the elevator to drop sharply and jerked the holder out of the elevator. (He was able to hang on to the rope - a dexterity roll at -4) His weight hanging on the line kept the brake released and allowed the elevator to descend rapidly (although the automatic brakes located on the main drum prevented the drop becoming terminally precipitous).

The automatic brakes are old and have not been serviced in recent years but will provide sufficient breaking to slow the elevator to a less than disastrous rate of descent. In this event, the passengers will halt suddenly at the bottom (10th level) with sufficient force to sustain 3d4 points of damage each. If the mechanism above has not been manned or if the equipment should malfunction (15% chance), the main hoist rope will come loose from the winch and fall into the main shaft landing in a large heap around the elevator cage.

At this point, (recall the man hanging on the brake rope) one of the party attempted to climb the brake-rope. The added weight was sufficient

If the descent has been made at a more normal rate of speed, the question remains whether anyone (atleast 6 people required) has been left on the surface to hoist the elevator back again. If not and the party members should try to climb the main cable, there is a 50% chance that the brake will have failed and the drum will turn freely until the remaining cable has payed out and will come loose from the drum. If they attempt to climb the brake rope, there is a 10% chance per 20 feet climbed (multiplied by the number of people climbing) that the rope will break.

The tunnels are 10 feet in width and 6 feet tall, ending in large excavated cavities from which the actual gold ore was removed. The tunnels leading to all but the 3rd and 10th levels have collapsed blocking access to these levels.

The shaft at the third level has been freshly cleared. Several gold nuggets will be found in the tunnel (these have been planted by the Guardian to entice intruders down this tunnel). This leads to the area used to store and bag the leechdust. Here is where the Guardian may be found (90%) during the day. At night, he will assist by powering the winch to lift filled bags for stowage in the completed ships. This level of the mine is relatively dry (but is 100 feet below sealevel). The tunnel from the shaft is 10 feet wide and 6 feet high. The tunnel runs fifty feet and then opens into a larger chamber. The roof rises to a height of 80 feet and the room is roughly 100 feet by 200 feet.

Against the far wall stand 100 rubber coated barrels and, near by, six rubber coated sacks which have already been filled with leechdust and sealed. Anyone running or meeleing in this room has a 10% chance per melee round of raising enough dust to touch his skin and kill him. The air here is very still and the dust will not spread. If any of the bags or barrels are damaged (as in a melee), the dust will spread only about 10 feet and will settle in about 10 minutes.

On the ceiling above, out of reach of torches, the Guardian will be clinging, watching for intruders. If the Guardian deliberately spreads the dust (by throwing a barrel or bag against a wall, etc), it will spread over a 30 diameter (15 foot radius) and take a half hour to settle. It

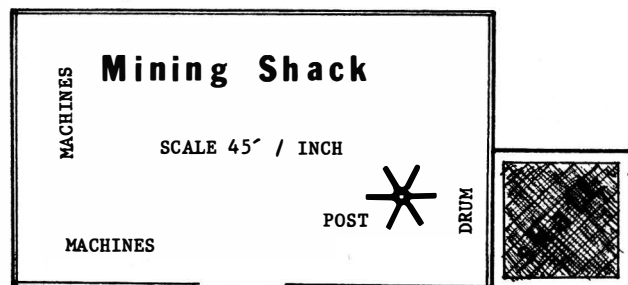
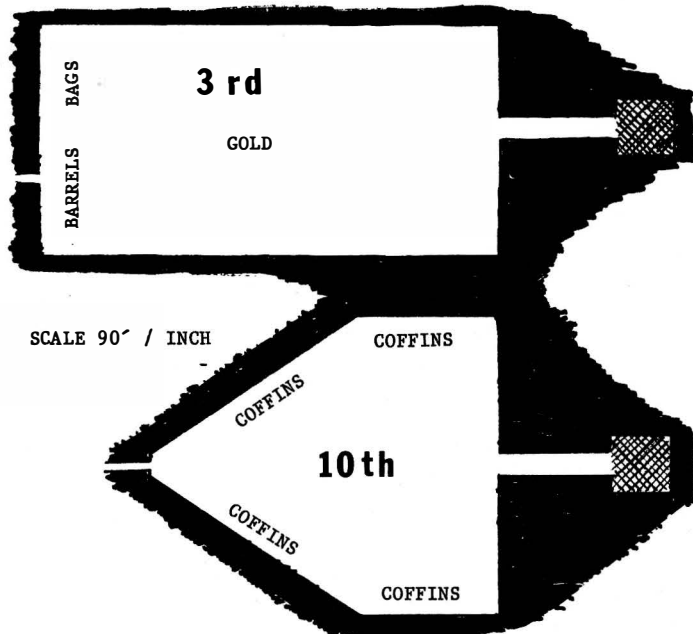
will not drift into the tunnel unless it is deliberately thrown there. (The Guardian will use this only as a last resort - Morticia does not like it to be wasted. Spillage is swept up and saved)

The venilation tunnel (exiting at Z1) is located at the back wall at a height of 20 feet. It is small, about 4 feet x 4 feet and rises at a steep angle. Exit from this level would require about 30 minutes for a man. 20 for a pseudovampire.

On the tenth (bottom) level a freshly cleared tunnel runs roughly 50 feet south to a large chamber with a roof 30 feet high. This was where most of the gold ore was removed. The area is shaped roughly like a Christmas tree, with the tunnel to the chamber being the trunk. To see anything the Party will have to advance well into the room, as torchlight cannot reach to its far walls. Then they will see that the walls on the top half of the tree are lined with rows of open coffins, and the pseudovampires in them are beginning to wake.

It will take the pseudovampires 10 minutes to wake fully and engage with the Party; if the party runs at once. they can get to the elevator and people above can raise it into the shaft before the pseudovampires reach them. Then some pseudovampires will squeeze up by the sides of the elevator and others will go up the airshaft and come down from above. They can also clear old tunnels as needed.

Note - Emergency exit is possible from the 3rd or 10th levels via the air ventilation shafts which can be found easily from the inside. These are narrow shafts which slope sharply upwards to emerge at the points indicated.



*** FICTIONAL NARRATIVE ***
*** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5 ***

And calling the rest of the Orcs below they sealed hatches against more dust, and the next dust that the vampires dropped did not penetrate below the decks. So the vampires wasted no more dust but harried them again with more rocks and several hit well amidsthips and the ship sprung a leak and Morgul must take half his galleyslaves off their oars and set them to bailing and pumping instead. And loud they complained for their chains they wore hampered them, but there was no time to unchain them.

In the brig the cleric Brother Giles blessed and prayed to Vidar to resurrect the human mages, but withal they stayed white and dead. And he had but a few drops of holy water left in his vial, but he took it all and sprinkled it on the body of one of the mages who had been his friend. And that body dissolved away to naught when the holy water touched it, then fearing greatly Brother Giles resumed his prayers.

And meanwhile on the beach too the vampires had lit thick as bees defending their nest and gone at the Orc soldiers there, most with their teeth but a few with swords or daggers for old times sake. And when an Orc was dead often a vampire would eat him all or part, but when a vampire was killed he turned to dead dust on the instant, and whatever armour he wore fell empty to the ground. And as the Orcs ran away to their rowboats and launched them into the water the vampires dropped rocks on them too and sank them, and ever the rest of the Orcs they herded closer to the water's edge.

Now looking around at the fleet Morgul saw only one other ship of his 20 still afloat and it burning, and as he watched that burning ship it broke apart and the water poured in and a great cloud of steam rose up booming and hissing from where it had been. And now it was just two hours since the leechdust was dropped on the flagship, and below in the brig the three dead white bodies got up. And first they killed and ate Brother Giles and then using their new vampire strength bent the bars of their prison and came into the room where the slaves in their chains were bailing and pumping. Long and narrow was this room and down it the new vampires came eating some slaves but killing all they passed, and because of their chains the slaves could neither fight them nor run. Hearing their screaming Morgul and his captains came down and fought the new vampires and killed two, while the water on the floor rose ever deeper and deeper around them, red and foamy with the slaves' blood, for there were not enough slaves left alive to pump and bail. And when the water was to their waists all who were not in chains left off fighting and climbed above, and the ship sank under them. It sank till the galleyslaves were all drowned in their chains and the water was near level with the low central deck, but the two end decks still stood up above. Then back the vampires came with more leechdust and burning brands from the other ships to drop on the high decks. Then Morgul mad with rage climbed to the crow'snest to revile them, and gladly they flew down and grappled with him there teeth against sword, and he killed 8 of them before he died. Then the one new human pseudovampire who was not killed in the fighting flew away with the other vampires when they spoke to his heart.

Thus did Morticia's vampires destroy the Orcs fleet and all the Orcs which the Orken King Morthias had sent to invade O'Lanta, save only for the prisoners that Pietro had taken. (And well it was for Pietro and Gervaise that they lit no lights on their ships that night, for had the vampires discovered them they would have dealt with their ships as they did with Morgul's)

Now during all this battle Pietro and his rogues on their galleon were still in sight of land and beyond the black horizon of the island they saw the flames shooting up from the Orcs' burning ships. Pietro questioned well the Orcs he had took prisoner and they told him all that they knew, to wit there were no dwarves nor other enemies left on O'Lanta. "Ah, then, it must be a mutiny," said Pietro, and turned his ship round and sailed back and anchored off the south end of the island to watch, but still he lit no lights.

GERVAISE REACHES O'LANTA

Now Gervaise upon sighting the island that same day soon after noon had given her crew orders to swing wide to the north then come up on its far western side. Pietro's ship they glimpsed but knew not whose it was. This wide swing round took Gervaise most of the day so when they sailed up on the west side it was near night and they saw from far off the lights lit on the Orc fleet in the bay. Well away to the northwest Gervaise bade them lay off with their own lights unlit and watch. They saw the Orc ships burn in the bay but could not see who burnt them. All night they kept dark, then early next dawn Gervaise and her friends and 40 marines and 5 rangers came in cautiously by rowboats to the western beach, leaving the ship far away for its safety.

No enemies could they find alive but many dead Orcs on the beach, some bloodily hacked by swords and some eaten. Nor was there any sign of the Orcs' foes save some dwarf-sized swords and daggers and suchlike about and some empty dwarfish armor. Nor were there any vampire bodies on the beach for the vampires killed had turned at once to dead dust.

Wondering greatly they went in the city and wondered the more at what they found there. First to the military headquarters they went and looked through the telescopes. then read in the log book, wherein the last entry was dated just after moonrise the night of the Harvest Moon and said: "Tall flame sighted near Gold Mountain ballista. Sent 15 marines to investigate."

At the Wizard Gustalf's house Gervaise said. "Someone has been searching this place" so she searched it too and found the Alfred's letter to Gustalf that said "Keep What I sent you in safety", and also the letter Gustalf had written his mistress Adreinne that had her address on it. Jeroad House. So to Jeroad House they went and found it broken into and the hole in the wall open and the stones gone, for Peitro and Beauhavoc had them.

At the warehouse where the sacks were made they found the rubber for dipping them still fresh, but all the needles were dwarf-sized and the Orcs could never have used them. "Let us hide here to see who comes to work," said Tomas. "Mayhap it is leprecauns. and we should leave them a saucer of milk. . . ."

Gervaise said, "Some shall hide, but no milk nor any other clue that we have been here." So in the next warehouse but one she stationed two rangers, for its shutters were already drawn and locked. And lest the workers come and find someone about the island, she and the rest of her party went back to the carrick-ship at once and it not yet noon, and there all day rested. And all day on the ship Andrea played with Tomas' owl that was his familiar and made friends with it so it would ride on her shoulder and she could whisper secrets to it and Tomas would hear the secrets through its ears, and when the ship captain called Tomas for council on some important matter Andrea stayed far off and whispered such things as made Tomas blush. Then for still another night Gervaise' carrick-ship lay far off the northwest shore shore with no lights.

PIETRO'S SECOND DAY ON O'LANTA

When Pietro and his rogues awoke on that morning the sun was already full high, for they had drunk late the night before questioning their prisoner Orcs. No sign of the orc fleet they saw. Back to the eastern beach Pietro bade sail and again went ashore, and found all as before but no Orcs. So he and his band of 50 rogues went back to the city of Lanta to find what loot the Orcs might have left, arriving just after Gervaise and her party had gone back to their carrick-ship. All day they searched there and drank wine and ate dried sweetmeats from the confectioners', and some few jewels and small hoards of coins they found in some houses, and whatever books were in the houses Beauhavoc looked through, still hoping to learn somewhat of his Stones.

When it was near dark one of the ruffians who had been a captain in army said, "To be safe for the night let us camp in a warehouse I have seen, for it has the fewest windows and the heaviest shuttered of any building in this town. And further it stands alone so none may come at us over roofs, and inside we can be all together."

"Aye, friend," said Pietro, "and now I think of it let us shut and bar these city gates as well and post sentries

on the walls, for when adventuring one can never be too cautious." All this they did, and Nicolas opened the lock of the warehouse and they went in, and this was the warehouse where Gervaise' two rangers were hid.

Now when the two rangers heard these drunken rogues opening the door they went and hid behind some barrels of turpentine where they could still see out a window to the other warehouse. But there in a while one of the rogues discovered them and all the rogues fell upon them and stunned them and bound them hand and foot.

And now it was full dark and the 400 vampires flew to the city from the mine and landed on the wall. And seeing that the gates were closed they began to search for the intruders, and after a while they found them and began to try to break in the windows. And the rogues seeing so many were much afraid, but they stood at each window and door to fight whoever came in, except Beauhavoc who was still trying to find what magic word would tap the power of the stones. For he said that they could never fight so many otherwise.

The windows were so heavily shuttered that only after many minutes could one be broken, and so narrow that only a few vampires could come in through it at a time when it was open. So for a long time the rogues were able to hold them off, and all the time Beauhavoc spoke words to the stones, and finally when he was holding the red stone he tried the word "Absorb".

With this the stone seemed to melt into his hand and he felt a great power shaking his body. The nails of the hand that had held the stone turned red, and a red beam of light shot out from it. "Hurrah!" he cried, "we're saved", and waved his hand, and 28 ruffians who were standing in a row by a window fell dead when the beam of red light touched them, and a smoke and smell of burnt meat filled the room. Beauhavoc threw up his hands in surprise, and the red light burnt through the ropes that were hanging a dozen hams from the rafters above so that they fell and one hit Dion and knocked her unconscious. Beauhavoc jerked his hand down crying all the time "Stop, stop, turn off I say!", but it would not, and the floor by his feet began to smoulder where the light shone on it. And with none to stop them now the vampires poured in through the window, clambered over the roasted bodies of the 28 ruffians, and came at the rogues.

Then Nicolas grabbed the orange stone and cried "Absorb", and he shot up leaving an orange trail from his feet and bashed his head on the ceiling, so Brother Bertram who had just healed Dion of the blow she had got from the ham must run to heal him too both of the bash on the head and a broken foot he got when he fell back down to the floor. Beauhavoc waved his hand at the window again and 23 vampires who had come in all died of the red light and turned to dust, but next to the window were the kegs of turpentine that the rangers had hid behind and these the red beam set afire. Quickly then he brought the beam back across the floor where it cut a deep smoking groove, but he didn't stop quite in time and singed his boots. Then crying out in disgust a shameful curseword he thrust his hand in his pocket. . . .

Meanwhile Sylvia the druid had absorbed the clear stone and in front of her hand sprung up a tiny black hole, and the air around began rushing into it like a strong wind. She ran and pointed it at the vampires just as Beauhavoc's red light cooked them and turned them to dust, and all the dust was sucked into the little hole. But now the turpentine kegs were afire too and one split its side and the turpentine sprayed out in little drops and they caught afire too as they came rushing toward Sylvia's hand. At this Sylvia turned to run away but the burning drops followed her and set her hair afire.

Now with the smoke and the turpentine fumes none could see nor fight for coughing. Pietro grabbed up the blue stone and ran for a window. There he stuck his head out to breathe, and one hand with the stone in it and pointed it away from himself and said "Absorb." With a crack of thunder that near burst his ears, from his hand shot blue lightning and the whole warehouse where the vampires had been sewing their sacks was outlined in lightning, then crumpled to black ruins. Steeling himself not to move his hand while more and more bolts poured out of it at that same ruin, he looked about for vampires, but now all were flying away in terror. So he kept the bolts aimed at that same growing pit in the ground where the other warehouse had been and tried and tried to turn off the thunder and lightning.

Beauhavoc cried out in agony and doubled up and fell with a great hole burnt out of his belly, and had Bertram not been there to heal him at once would have been dead. But when he was healed there was no more red light from his hand, and Bertram saw next to Beauhavoc's hand the red stone was lying whole again. So quickly before Beauhavoc should revive Bertram hid the stone in his own pocket, then cried in a great voice, "They can come out! Unabsorb them!"

Sylvia heard him and tried and the stone came out at once, so in and out she took it here and there till the room was clear of smoke and fumes. Then they could see Pietro's backside as he leaned out the window still chucking his lightning bolts at the pit nor able to hear what Bertram said for the thunder they caused, so they went and shouted in his ear and he unabsorbed too.

So they had of the ruffians 34 dead and many wounded, and the vampires had killed 6 and the stones had done the rest. And all agreed that they had seen well enough of O'Lanta, so back they marched through the night, and some vampires harried them from the air but Pietro would absorb his bolt and thunder them away. And so they rowed to their galleon and sailed away, still carrying Gervaise' two rangers bound hand and foot.

And because the letter Beauhavoc had found with the stones spoke of more relics of the Eld on Nicnon they set sail for that island in search of like treasures.

GERVAISE AT THE MINE

Next morning having gotten no signal from her rangers who were supposed to watch the warehouse where the bags were being sewn, Gervaise and her other three rangers rowed ashore to find them. The gates they found open and where the sewing warehouse had stood naught but a pit and some ruins like those of the temple of Odin. And in the warehouse where they had left the two rangers they saw much destruction to puzzle at, and 28 dead ruffians half-cooked and like to spoil, and no sign of their rangers at all. "I mislike this city," said Gervaise. "Let us clear our heads with some country air." So they signalled their friends and the marines to come ashore, then left their landing boats on the western beach and walked north to inspect the villages of Korm, Sula, and Yolana and the Gold Mountain mine and to see what had made the tall flame at the ballista.

Five hours they walked and found the villages empty as Lanta. But on the southern bluff of Gold Mountain they found the ships that the vampires were abuilding, and two of them near ready and one with a device on it rigged up to steer the rudder, which was like the device they had seen at the Artificer's. Then to the ballista they went and found it unfired and the last entry in the log there read "Harvest Moon rose all clear" and on the floor were lamps and the oil keg all charred in the fireplace.

Up the peak of Gold Mountain then they climbed on a zigzag donkey trail greatly overgrown but with some recent careless hacking at the bushes that the Orcs had done. At the mine-house they found all bushes carefully cut away and tracks of marks where rubber-coated barrels had been set in the building and on the elevator.

Also there they found gold nuggets scattered round inside the building and out and on the elevator, and they saw on the elevator the fresh bloodstains from yesterday's Orcs. "Someone wants us to come down the mine," said Gervaise, "and it were shame to disappoint such hospitality. . . ." But first they followed the elevator's cable to the next room and broke down its door to see how the machinery worked. There they found the end of the cable hanging loose and retied it for safety and wizard-locked the knot and let the elevator up and down a little to see could they be donkeys and turn the axle well enough and they could. So Tomas and 16 others stayed above but Andrea carried Tomas' owl down in the elevator so that whatever the owl heard or saw Tomas would know and know when to pull them up. And those who went down were Gervaise and Andrea and Robin and Gervaise' sister Stella who was soft-footed like a thief and 40 marines.

At the third level where the nuggets were Gervaise said "No, this trap becomes altogether too simple. Let us down further." So down they went softly tugging the rope and stopped the elevator just before it could touch bottom and softly Stella got out and crept down the tunnel to the great triangular room where the 400 vampires slept in their coffins. There she looked with a glass of infravision that

she had but could see naught for the vampires were cold and dead as the rock all around, so she must light lamp and proceed. Thus despite Gervaise' caution the vampires awoke. Back to the elevator Stella ran and told the owl "Up!" so Tomas listening above wound them up speedily. But still some vampires attacked from below while others flew up through the air vents and came back down from above, for they could clear the blocked tunnels speedily whenever they chose. There the vampires hacked at the cable but could not cut it. So a great lump of vampires sat on the elevator's roof to weight it down and delay it while others squeezed by its side and came in and bit and ripped the party with their teeth and long fingernails. But since it was still daylight outside the vampires dared not follow the elevator above the second level.

Thus when Tomas and his men had finally wound the elevator back to the top Gervaise and Andrea and Robin were still alive in it though wounded; but 9 others who had gone down were dead, and one of them was Gervaise' sister Stella. So with tears on her face Gervaise said "We must save our oil to burn their ships," and pushed the bodies into the shaft to smash on the bottom lest they turn vampire. For all still supposed these dwarves to be true vampires, not knowing that leechdust pseudovampires can do nothing worse to their victims than kill and eat them. So below the pseudovampires feasted on Stella and the others.

Now there were dark stormclouds gathering above and darker yet in the east, so scarce time to trek back to where they had left the carrick-ship before the vampires could come out. But looking down from the tall mountain peak into the ocean Gervaise could see where one good deep-bottomed channel came up near to the rocky west coast, so she formed a bold plan. First she sent Andrea and the Sergeant with all their oil to fire the vampires' ships that were abuilding before the rain could come, and bade them afterwards meet her on the rocky coast. As before Andrea took with them Tomas' owl, but Tomas stayed with Gervaise and the others to listen to what the owl should hear. Then Gervaise signalled the carrick-ship to sail up to the coast which it did quickly alongside a good east wind, while she and the others went down the mountain to meet it.

Andrea and the Sergeant climbed down the east side and spread all their oil on the two ships that were nearest ready and fired them, then started northwest around the foot of the peak toward Yolana on their way to the meeting place. But scarcely a quarter mile had they gone when rain came and dampened the fire. Andrea looking back saw all smoke and no flame and ran back to try and start it again with a flaming hands spell that she knew. Into the frame of a half-burnt ship she climbed searching for dry kindling matter and the Sergeant after her calling her to come out and when she put weight on the center beam the frame collapsed around them and the fire sprang back up for a while. But Tomas' owl flew away free and circled the burning ship crying and crying.

When Gervais' own ship came close as it dared to the rocky west shore the Captain tied a rope to some empty kegs and let all float to the rocks. Gervaise swam out and fetched the end of the rope back to shore and fastened it well. Light misty rain was now falling but no worse weather yet and plenty of light still from the west as with many of their own ropes looped for safety they all swam out to the ship.

Tomas was the first pulled on the ship and put to rest, and while the others were still in the midst of this crossing he looked through his owl's eyes. Thus he saw the Sergeant lying in the ruins of the half-built ship and Andrea on the ground sobbing, and then she tried to stand up but fell all crooked and he saw her leg was bad hurt. And some of the ships were burnt but not all and a steady rain falling over them. And whilst he watched Andrea dragged herself by her hands to one unburnt ship and laid her hands on it and tried to burn it with her spell. But her hands were all bloody so it sizzled and stank and then she wiped her hands and tried again.

Tomas waited till all were safe on board the ship with him and Gervaise had climbed aboard last and stood drying her hair before he told her what the owl had seen. "I fear they are as good as dead and vampires already," he said, "for the vampires will be flying out and find them by their ships long before we could get there by any means."

Gervaise said, "Could they live through the night where they are, failing vampires?"

Tomas said, "Andrea could, but the Sergeant may be dead already for ought the owl knows."

Now the light rain ceased and the wind slackened a moment, and Gervaise stood measuring the mountain with her eyes. To the captain she said, in a voice as soft and lilting as a woman asking for wine at a feast, "Load me an exploding coconut in the forward ballista." And when it was done, none daring ask why, she pointed to a spot where the foot of the bluff met the water and said, "Fire it there." They did and a great mass of dirt and mud flew up and left a great new hole there for the sea to fill. "Again," Gervaise said and they did. Again and again she so ordered, until the holes blasted out formed a canal straight into the low plateau that circled the mountain and the oarsmen must row them in the canal itself to be in good close range of the end of it to fire again.

Half a mile straight into the plateau they blasted and rowed till the banks of Gervaise' canal rose even with their mast on either side with the yellow western sky behind them and the slate stormclouds before. and the ship and everyone on it black and slick with mud. When Tomas dared question her thinking her mad with grief, she answered "I shall flood that mine and drown those vampires."

Then true to Gervaise' plan another hundred feet in from the shore the end of the canal met a giant chamber of the mine and let the water in. But so much of the chamber wall collapsed that a great hole opened under the end of the canal of a size to suck down ship and all and the sea water poured down it in a strong current. "Reverse oars!" cried Gervaise and the rowers did and rowed strongly but could scarcely hold against the strong fast current and slowly little by little the current bore the ship towards that great dark hole where the water plunged down into the mine.

Within the mine the vampires had just awakened and some few gone to the leechdust room on the third level or started toward the surface when the water broke into that giant chamber on the third level. All through the third level it poured, spoiling the leechdust and affrighting the vampires there so that they flew up the shaft or out the air vents to safety. Then it poured down the air vents to the lower levels and filled the vents so none could come up, and down the shaft it poured and filled the bottom tunnel while most of the vampires were still sleeping there in their coffins. So Gervaise got the most of her wish, for of the 390 vampires in that mine 324 were drowned and only 66 escaped.

But those who escaped flew out and saw the canal and the ship and its rowers fighting the current. So in the dying dusk light they lined the banks and staring at the rowers they used their vampire power of charm to chant over and over, "Jump. Jump."

Robin and another dwarven sargeant grabbed up crossbows to fire on those vampires but to aim they must look first, and the sergeant met the eye of a vampire was lost and jumped and was carried under the dark sea water. Thus minute by minute some oarsman or archer would drop oar or weapon to jump, and his neighbor drop his to struggle with him. Soon so many oars fell unmanned that Gervaise and her friends and officers and all must row but still some oars hung loose to spoil the stroke, while quicker the water pulled them toward the pit. Then Gervaise cried "Let them jump if they must. Shut eyes and row or we are all lost!" And even when beside her she heard Robin throw down his oar and jump she kept her own eyes shut while she pulled her own oar and never broke the rhythm of her stroke.

After Robin had obeyed the command to jump in the canal, the vampires' charm was fulfilled and had no more power over him, and there in the swift water he came to himself and swam strongly for shore. At the side of the canal the current was less strong than in the center so he was able to reach the bank and climb up, albeit some ways downstream from the ship. Up through the line of vampires he fought while they were intent on their task of charming, then staggered away wounded and fell senseless in the mud and rain.

Eyes shut Gervaise and the others rowed hearing chanting and splashes and the roar of the waterfall ahead of them, and the rhythm of the oarstrokes halted and jerked with each one who jumped. Then whether the noises grew softer or the rain fell heavier and drowned out the noises

Gervaise never knew, but a few minutes later she felt a great thud as the ship's stern rammed the east bank of the canal. For at last the mine was filled level with the sea so there was no more current pulling them, and for the last few minutes they had been rowing the ship bassackwards with their eyes shut.

"Oars forward and fend off," she cried, "but keep eyes down!" For daring to look she had seen vampires flying next to the ship and making their charming motions still. So blindly all fended and rowed while she alone kept eyes open to direct them. And she took the gritty mud on her hands and rubbed it in her eyes to make them water and blur so that she could see where the bank was but could not see the eyes of the vampires.

Thus they got the ship loose from the bank and rowed her backwards toward the shore, for the canal was not wide enough to turn her. Then the vampires seeing that they would no more be charmed fell on them with teeth so some must fight while others rowed. Just as they neared the sea more vampires came flying from the other caves and picked up rocks from the shore to drop on them, but out they got at last and turned the ship and put up sail and fled away, leaving Andrea and all their other friends on the island for dead. For they did not know how few vampires were left. And truly their first duty was to warn the King.

HOW THOSE LEFT MAROONED ESCAPED

When Robin came to himself next morning he set out for the ships that the vampires were building, thinking therein to find dry shelter for the day while he smashed them, for through the coming night he never expected to live. But on the way he met the sergeant who had jumped and Father Joeseeph and some others, and they planned that they would steal the one unburnt ship that could be sailed, and perhaps escape with their lives after all.

That same morning Andrea awoke with the one remaining sailable ship above her still unburnt and sheltering her from the rain. Tomas' owl was nowhere to be seen, and she remembered that she had dreamt during the night that he had flown away and she had heard a terrible screech. Weak and feverish she raised her hands to the ship and spoke her charm again to burn it. But when the others reached the ships they were able to put out the little fire she had finally started and heal her leg and hands. And they took parts from all the ships to make this ship as ready as they could, then smashed the rest good and proper. Father Joeseeph blessed the sergeant's dead body who had tried to save Andrea from the burning ship last night and packed it well to bring home, and they set sail for Naylor that same day.

Five days they sailed and finally near the mainland came in sight of a warship of the King's fleet, whose captain was a dwarf named Balaan. Now Gervaise had arrived back at Naylor 2 days before and given the warning, so Balaan was on special alert for vampire invasion and knew this for the kind of ship the vampires were building. Balaan bade his men prepare to fire, but first he signalled to the strange ship to identify itself.

The vampire ship was not fitted with signals, nor had anyone any shiny metal to flash with, for all had shed their armour in the canal and Andrea wore none for the sake of her magic. "Whatever signal they give," said Robin to the steersman, "you must steer right. steer left. steer straight."

This they did amany times and Balaan held his fire and boarded them instead. Thus came safely home to Naylor 14 on this ship and 53 on Gervaise' ship out of the 162 which Gervaise had taken to O'Lanta.

The King rewarded all with gold and forgave Gervaise for losing her armband to Pietro. And the wounded and dead that they brought back his royal physicians and clerics revived, though some died again from the shock of it. but the sergeant who had helped Andrea survived.

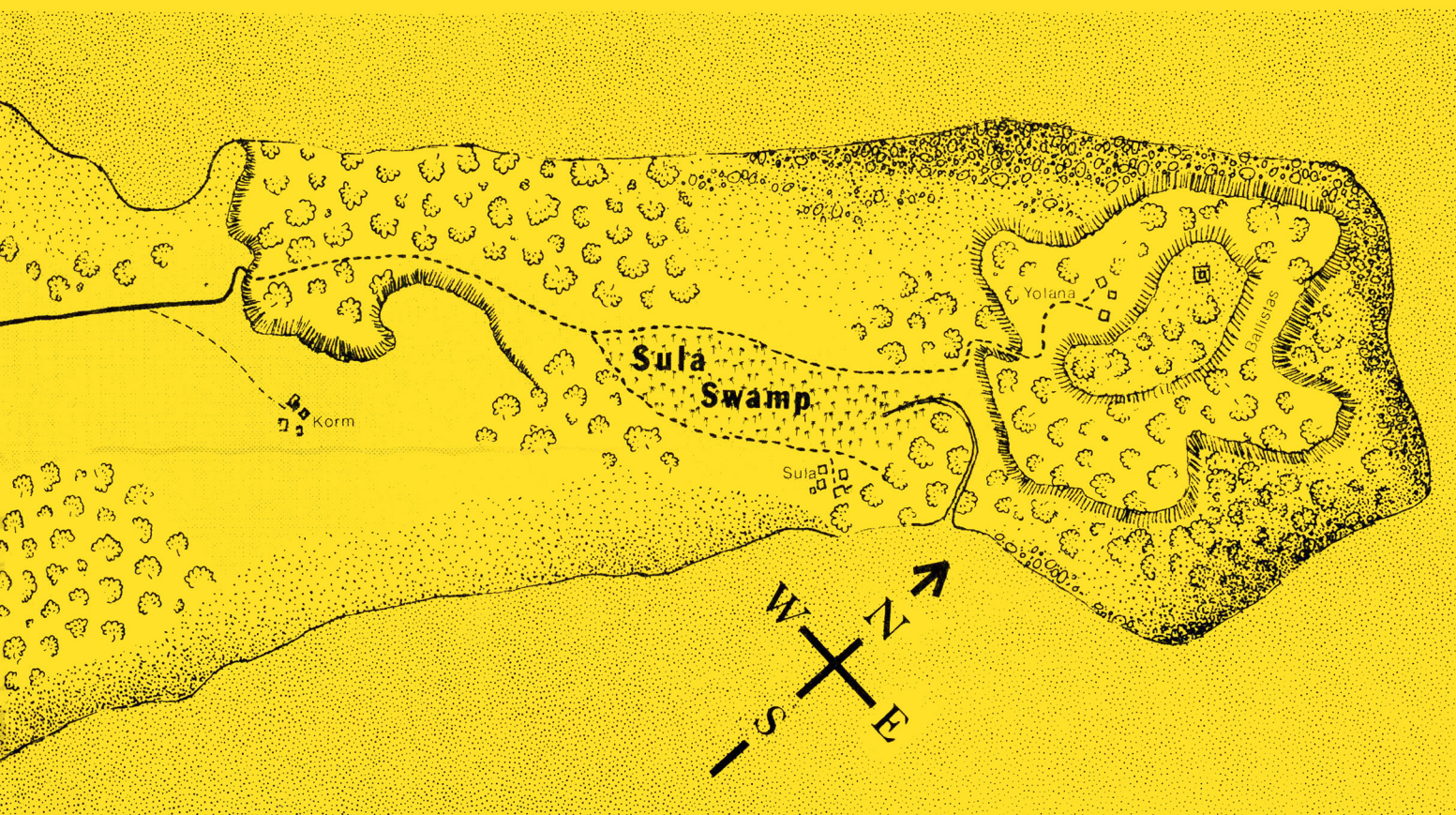
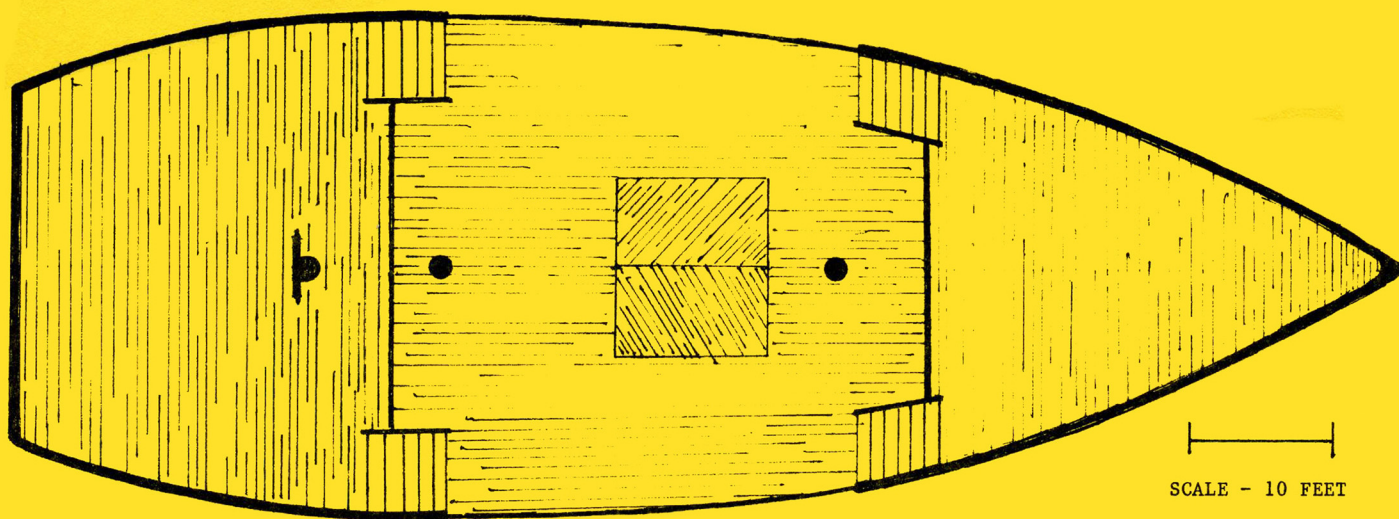
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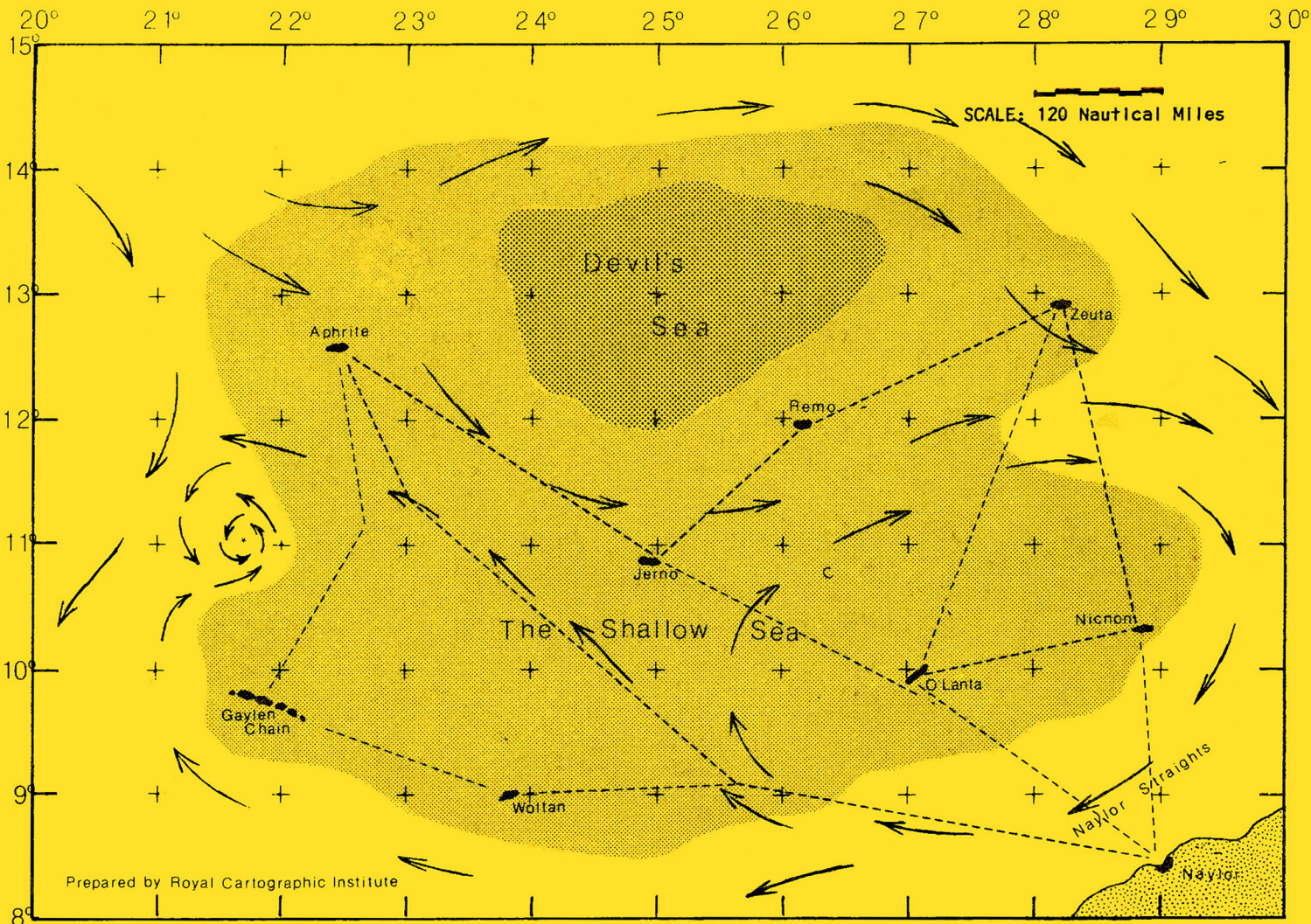
See 'Hall of the Eld'
Release date Sept 81

DECK PLAN - TWO MASTED CARRICK - MILITARY
Scale - 98 Foot Length - 35 Foot Beam

Palintonon - 4 - mounted midships - 2 each side - range
500 yards at 75% accuracy, 1000 yards / 60% accuracy
maximum accuracy / minimum range = 85% / 250 yards
Munitions (Coconuts - two types)
explosive (contact) - shrapnel - 4d10 - 15 foot area
incendiary (proximity) - 2d10 damage + fire - 10 foot
diameter area

Ballistas - 2 - mounted fore and aft - range 2000 yards
with 60% accuracy, +10% / 500 yard reduction in range
maximum accuracy / minimum range = 90% / 500 yards
Munitions
shot (iron balls) - 4d10 - large targets
darts (wood shafts / iron heads) - 1d5 each - fired
in clumps of 12
small shot - area weapon - 1d6 / 10 foot diameter





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