

# Chapter IV – The Primrose Revolt

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Telbor Zzazrek, High Lord of Loudwater was feeling gloomy. Over the past few months his relationship with his so-called partner, Gopher Proudfish, had severely deteriorated. Zzazrek had been with the Zhentarim long enough to know that this meant trouble, and he didn't like trouble. He just wasn't built for it.

From a young age Telbor had displayed a talent for manipulation. He excelled at pitting one strong opponent against another, until he himself emerged the sole victor. As he grew older this talent had been noticed by some powerful men and Telbor had been sent into politics. During those fine years he had acquired at least two towns for his Zhentarim masters. Not a single drop of blood was spilt during these transitions.

Loudwater had seemed his latest conquest, but since the Giant Wars the passes to the east had been cut off, leaving him without the support of his Zhentarim handlers.

Proudfish had seemed a valuable ally at first. Where the pudgy man lacked the finesse Zzazrek displayed, he was apt at the violence and blackmail sometimes needed for the Dark Network's business. Now that they were cut off, they were the two biggest hounds in the kennel and Zzazrek had no-one left to hide behind. He knew and feared that Proudfish would soon decide to stomp out all opposition. A certain Telbor Zzazrek would be first upon the fat man's list.

Gazing at the bottle of Zzar on the table next to him, he considered opening it for the umpteenth time. His troath was aching for its burning caress. His mind desired its sweet oblivion.

Zzazrek resisted. He needed to be ready. He poked the fireplace. Sparks flew off into the rafters of the library tower like so many fiery snowflakes.

Sighing he picked up the leather folder containing his notes and continued writing: *"Proudfish has the support of the militia, maybe I should..."*

A slight breeze caressed the nape of his neck... the windows had all been closed and bolted...

Zzazrek twisted in his chair just in time to see the dagger hurtling at his face. Blood splattered the pages forgotten on the armrest of his chair.

Scrambling to get up Zzazrek, now adorned with a broad gash across his cheek, looked his assailant straight into its beady eye. Across the room a small black-feathered humanoid squawked at him. The creature was left unarmed, its dagger making friends with the logs sputtering in the fireplace.

Rising to his full height Zzazrek put all the command he could muster into his voice. The result sounded way too shrill to be imposing: "Who are you! How have you bypassed my wards!"

The creature opened and closed its beak, before answering Zzazrek in the exact same voice, high pitch and all: "How have you bypassed my wards!"

The mimicry enraged Zzazrek, who only now reminded himself that if nothing else, he was still an accomplished wizard of sorts. A barked command sent glowing projectiles of pure energy crashing into the would-be assassin. The creature wailed, bouncing all the way down the iron-cast staircase to the floor below. There it fell silent.

"Really, Proudfish?", the wizard thought, "Is that all you can muster?" Relieved laughter burst forth from Telbor Zzazrek's giddy nerves as he sauntered towards the staircase. When his own laughter started to echo from the rafters above him, Zzazrek's leisurely pace turned into a frenzied dash down the stairs. Behind him several dark forms jumped to the cherrywood floor. Taking shelter behind a heavy desk the analytical part of Zzazrek's mind started selecting the best spell for the occasion: Fire? No... not in the library. A web? Too much to clean up. Lightning? Yes... the iron staircase...

Reaching for one of the strongest spells in his repertoire, Telbor Zzazrek, High Lord of Loudwater, fell into the thrall of spellcasting. The fraction of his mind not engaged in his art noted the descent of the stunted birdmen. Almost there... almost there... now!! With a crackle of blue light, the lightning bolt arced into the staircase, effectively grilling the screeching kenku like so many chickens.

But the wizard's triumph was short-lived. As he had remembered one property of his lightning spell, so had he forgotten another. The lightning bolt, unleashed in close confinement, started bouncing off the walls until it hit a heavy bookcase behind the cowering Zzazrek. Slowly, its guts spilling, the ponderous piece fell forward, crashing heavily on top of the helpless wizard.

Before everything turned black, he heard laughter - his own laughter - echoed back from the throat of one too many Kenku.

## Synopsis

Where the party returns victoriously to Grom's Bounty and builds up its reputation by helping the people of Loudwater. Where our heroes solve a murder, discover a dastardly plot to betray Loudwater, and set in motion events that will lead to the ousting of the Zhentarim occupation.

## Notes

### Descriptions

For descriptions of Loudwater's locations and people, see Chapter I.

### Chapter goals

In the course of this chapter a lot of attention will go to the description of the sociopolitical evolution of Loudwater. We will describe events that lead to frustration among the populace and their reaction towards the occupation. Gauntlet Proudfish will start using the Loudwater Militia as a whip to beat the people back into submission and will pass several pieces of legislation curtailing civic liberties. Escalation will be apparent and inevitable.

Initially, the players will be no more than bystanders. But due to clever maneuvering of the Gardeners, under leadership of Sam Boatwright, they will be cast into the role of heroic saviors and figureheads of the citizens' movement, culminating in their participation in the Primrose Revolt. Loudwater will once again be free from Zhentarim rule.

### Description and timing

After completion of each quest, there is an 'Aftermath' section. In this section you will find details on how the situation in Loudwater itself is evolving and how to communicate this to the players.

Events like this don't evolve overnight, nor during a single tenday. To enhance realism and give the players the chance to work on their own personal projects, the time that elapses between this quest and the one that follows it is also indicated.

If the players have no real agenda to fill this idle time, it is proper to fast forward once the aftermath section of each quest has been sufficiently illustrated.

### The evening primrose

The evening primrose was the favorite flower of Nanathlor Greysword, the most respected leader Loudwater has ever known.

In the last few years or so, it has become the symbol of the Gardeners and a sign of resistance against the Zhentarim occupation. The residents of Loudwater leave these yellow flowers at Greysword's statue as a sign of hope for better days.

### What about Nasreen and the Five Dragons?

During this chapter, the Five Dragons won't be heard or seen. They are preparing a massive assault on the Delimbiyr Vale, however, and are not out of the picture. In chapter V our heroes will again face the threat of the Five Dragons as they will need to prepare and fight a war in defense of the town.

## Ongoing quests and events

With the hostages returned to Grom's Bounty there are still a few ongoing quests that were probably picked up by the party in the previous chapters.

### Missing mages

Bobiandra Sweetsong and Lizbundo Lastvault are still in Grom's Bounty studying the writings of the sorcerer Malisander. If the party received the ring from Lizbundo in Chapter I – Underneath the Hall of Moradin, they can now finish the first leg of the Missing Mages quest by handing the ring to Osageor Thunderpelt at the Loudwater Apothecary.

The party will be able to solve the second part of this quest, when they enter the sewers later in this chapter.

If they haven't picked up this quest, the pamphlet requesting help will still be on the billboard in the Green Tankard

### Behind on taxes

When the adventurers return with the strongbox containing Grom's Bounty's taxes, they can finish this quest by handing it over to Gauntlet Proudfish at the Loudwater Militia Headquarters.

If the players have no adventuring license yet, they will need to fill out the form, as it was a reward for bringing back the lockbox.

Militia patrols will stop the party regularly to check their papers. If caught adventuring without them, the fine is 1000 gold pieces.

### The Perfumer's Child

After exiting the High Moor, the child of Alistair will receive a letter. **Handout 41 – Letter from Alistair**

This letter could be delivered by courier, be waiting for the party at the Green Tankard in Loudwater, or be handed to them by Grygus Steelfold in Grom's Bounty. Whichever is convenient.

The letter will prove that Alistair is still alive and will explain that he is investigating the true power behind Nasreen's actions.

He will promise to meet his child(ren) at the Green Tankard in Loudwater as soon as he has answers to his questions.

#### The Sibilant Fang

The Sibilant Fang (Chapter III – The Sibilant Repository) has hidden properties and will try to bestow a type of geas upon its wielder at certain intervals.

The first time this happens, is when the party enters Grom's Bounty to claim their reward. The wielder of the Sibilant Fang will feel fidgety and restless, longing for something to occupy his busy hands.

At this point the wielder must make a **charisma saving throw DC 17**; Upon success repeat the saving throw the next morning and every following day. Upon failure a part of the owner's personality is warped in a subtle way: The owner will feel the need to acquire woodcarving tools and start practicing his woodcarving skills on a daily basis.

After 4 days of regular practice the owner gains proficiency with woodcarving tools.

The influence of the Sibilant Fang won't stop here. It will again compel the wielder during the 'Monster!', and 'The Culling' quests.

Eventually this will lead to the player waking up at the All Faiths Altar in Loudwater with more questions than answers. If the party wishes to investigate they will be able to as described later in the chapter.

#### Removing the Sibilant Fang's influence

From this point on, treat the Sibilant Fang as cursed for the purpose of removing the wielder from its influence.

Only a *true seeing* spell, can discern the influence the Sibilant Fang has on the wielder. Upon casting, the spell will reveal a translucent snakelike being originating from the Sibilant Fang. The creature is curled around the wielder, with one coil tight around his neck.

After the character has failed its first save, he will resist being parted from the Sibilant Fang until he wakes up at the All Faiths Altar.

#### Destroying the Sibilant Fang

If research is performed in a sufficiently large historical library (such as Candlekeep or the library of Ssufaxuss in Chapter III) the party can discover the nature of the

Sibilant Fang. They can also learn the only way to destroy it is 'by drowning it in the blood of a god'.

As long as the dagger contains the essence of Sseth, stabbing an immortal being, such as gods or primordials even once, will destroy the Sibilant Fang after 1d20 rounds. During that time the Sibilant Fang deals 2d6 poison damage each round to the immortal being whether the dagger hits from that point on is irrelevant.

#### Player interaction

No matter the player's alignment he will have a stressing need to hide what's going on from the other players. He will not reveal anything unless they find him out and force him.

A player that wants to come clean of himself, can tell other players if he succeeds at a **charisma saving throw DC25**. Upon failure the player can attempt again after 1d6 days.

## Events in chronological order

### Monster !

**Quest xp:** Making the river safe again: 1500 xp to be divided among the party. **Reward:** 2500 gp. If the party negotiates; **charisma (persuasion) DC 18:** Highest offer is 3500 gp.

When the players arrive in Loudwater, following the letter they got from Alistair the town is in dire straits. In the last month there has been no word from Grom's Bounty and now a hydra is prowling the Delimbiyr four days west of Loudwater.

This means trade has come to a halt and the people are scared for the future. If the adventurers visit the docks before the hydra has been slain, it is obvious that all activity, except for fishery has ground to a halt. Most items that aren't produced in the town itself, can't be bought anymore. No products coming out of the Grom's Bounty's Pit Fiend Brewery are available anymore, which is noticeable in the taverns.

None of the people that saw the beast were able to discern its true nature. Those who saw its body surfacing, but not its heads, claim it was a giant crocodile. Those who saw its heads attacking from the water, claim it were several sea serpents attacking in concert.

When the players go to see Gauntlet Proudfish on their return his demeanor is curt, bordering on rude. He will berate them for being late with the dwarven gold and

will be barely listening to their account. It is plain to see he is not interested in their story, nor does he feel like he needs to applaud them for ‘doing their job’.

After transfer of the strongbox, he will tell them he has another job for them.

Since you are the only adventurers left in town and you have proven yourself somewhat capable handling the bandits that our incompetent neighbors couldn’t, I have another assignment for you.

There is a monster attacking trade ships to and from Secomber. I don’t need to tell you that trade with Secomber and the cities beyond is vital for the survival of the town and its residents. If nothing is done about this beast the people will be starving soon, and it will be on your head.

In Proudfishes’ mind, slaying monsters isn’t the job of the Loudwater Militia. The militiamen are needed to keep the streets safe and orderly. Keeping the monster population in check is a job for adventurers. Rampant monsters are an indication that these adventurers aren’t doing what they are supposed to, which irks him. Adventurers are responsible for this mess and now adventurers should clean it up.

He doesn’t expect the players to refuse on account of his behavior. Should they refuse anyway, he will try to appeal to their sense of decency. After all, they are adventurers, and adventurers don’t let the common folk starve.

If the players accept, the Gauntlet will send them to Oras Shimmerleaf, a half-elven riverboat captain who witnessed an attack and is now drowning his fears in the Watchful Turtle.

If the players ask about the nature of the monster, Proudfish shrugs, telling him he heard it was some sort of giant crocodile; **Intelligence (nature) DC 10:** Crocodiles are not native to the Delimbiyr and neither are the giant variety.

### The Watchful Turtle

If they ask around in the Watchful Turtle, the bartender can point them in the direction of Oras Shimmerleaf.

You find Oras Shimmerleaf sitting in front of a decent amount of cash, piled up on the apricot-colored velvet of one of the tavern’s gaming tables.

Shimmerleaf is a short Half-Elven male with a nervous streak. Even drunk, as he is now, he still doesn’t look entirely relaxed. Hanging over a

scarlet pair of bell-bottomed trousers, his faded green vest is just a bit too large.

Shimmerleaf’s boat, the River Horse, was the last to arrive in Loudwater unscathed, but not before watching another boat being capsized and torn apart by what he perceived as vicious river serpents.

This last trip was quite profitable so Shimmerleaf figures he can lay low in Loudwater until the monsters have been taken care of. He plans to do some heavy drinking and gambling tonight.

As things stand he will not be willing to take the players to the site of the attack.

Both Gauntlet Proudfish and Oras Shimmerleaf have a very different description of the monster in the river. Players that hear both descriptions are entitled to an **intelligence (investigation) check DC 20** to discern the creature might be the rare monster known as ‘hydra’.

### Reaching the site of the attack by boat

If the party goes by boat, they will not need to roll for random encounters on the way. It will take them four days to reach the site of the attack.

**Quest xp:** If the party is able to convince Shimmerleaf to take them to the site of the attack: 1500 xp to be divided among the party.

There are several ways of convincing Shimmerleaf to take them on his boat.

If they convince Oras Shimmerleaf to take them on his boat, he is willing to bring them to within ten miles of the site of the attack, where he will await their return.

### A substantial amount of money

Offering an amount of 300 gold pieces; **Charisma (persuasion) DC 20:** Convinces Shimmerleaf to take them along. Any increment of 100 gold pieces in excess of 300 gold pieces lowers the DC by 5. Raising the amount allows for a new attempt at persuasion.

### Gambling

Shimmerleaf is playing a game of Swords when the players find him (See the Watchful Turtle description in Chapter I).

If the players can make him gamble away all his money, he won’t be able to pay docking fees for much longer. He will be forced to resume his trading and accept the adventurers’ proposal. At the moment he has a total sum of 86 gold pieces on the table.

Oras Shimmerleaf is quite drunk and makes all checks related to gambling at disadvantage.

If he loses all his money, Shimmerleaf's asking price will drop 300 gold pieces; **Charisma (persuasion) DC 15**: bring the price down to 150 gold pieces.

#### Coercion

If the players wait long enough for Shimmerleaf to finish his night of carousing they can follow him to his boat. If the players threaten him with violence, they will be able to convince him to take them on his boat. Once delivered within ten miles of the site of the attack, Shimmerleaf will take his vessel back to Loudwater, even if he promised to wait for the adventurers.

#### Way of the Zhentarim

If the players mention to Proudfish that they are having trouble convincing Shimmerleaf, he takes care of this problem by sending a few Zhentarim to 'talk' to the half-elf. Come morning Shimmerleaf sullenly accepts their passage.

#### Reaching the site of the attack by way of the road

Alternatively, the players might choose to go by way of the road. In contrast to travelling by river random encounters should be rolled. Reaching the site of the attack on foot takes four days.

#### The site of the attack

#### Encounter

##### Battlemap J – Hydra Attack

##### Hydra, MM p. 190

Several river boats have been attacked in this area. Two of them ran aground and are accessible from the river bank. Several others were sunk near the center of the river. These wrecks are blocking traffic by water. In the tendays after the players dispatch of the hydra, locals will clear the derelict hulls, and business will continue as usual.

For the time being, however, the hydra has unintentionally created a trap for any ship passing by.

When the party investigates the river boats the hydra will attack from the center of the map.

The hydra is cunning enough not to go on land, but it will board the ships to attack the adventurers.

#### Navigating the terrain

Climbing aboard the stranded river boats requires an action, but no skill check. The boards of the ships are only four feet high.

The boats are firmly lodged into place and are considered normal terrain. If at any point the hydra needs to enter the ship's space, partly or entirely to

attack the nearest player; All players aboard that boat make a **dexterity save DC 12** or fall prone. The hydra is huge and doesn't need to take an action to clamber aboard and move into the ships' space.

The mast of one of the ships lies broken across the battle field. Where it extends over the water it is 20 feet from the surface and out of the reach of the hydra. Treat the mast as difficult terrain when moving around on it. A character walking on the fallen mast makes a **dexterity (acrobatics) DC 15** each round: on failure the player suffers the restrained condition for that round, while he struggles to maintain balance. Two consecutive failures mean the character falls into the water below.

#### Treasure

If the players search the boats, they will find the following items in the holds

**Boat 1:** Food (2000 lb.) If the players wish they can restock.

**Boat 2:** Contains the last transport of dwarven-made weaponry out of Grom's Bounty to pass Loudwater before trade was halted. The craftsmanship of these items is above average. They are worth 20% more than the average price listed in the PHB.

Chain shirt	(5)	Morningstar	(5)
Half plate	(2)	Handaxe	(10)
Chain mail	(20)	Light hammer	(5)
Full plate	(1)	Mace	(5)
Shield	(10)	Light crossbow	(5)
Dagger	(10)	Battleaxe	(10)
Glaive	(5)	Flail	(5)
Greataxe	(10)	Rapier	(5)
Greatsword	(5)	Shortsword	(20)
Halberd	(5)	Heavy crossbow	(5)
Longsword	(20)	Case of bolts	(100)

**Boat 3:** Empty.

**Boat 4:** Food and 3 casks of Lovely Coin Flame Beard. Each cask contains five gallons and is worth 46 gp each. Water damage has rendered the food unsuitable for consumption.

## Quest – The Sibillant Fang

During or after the battle, the party will encounter a few partially devoured corpses. The whiteness of the protruding bones will fascinate the owner of the Sibillant Fang. Have the wielder make a **charisma saving throw DC 17**; Upon success repeat the saving throw the next morning and every following day. Upon failure the owner feels the need to practice on other materials, particularly bone. He will try to acquire (animal) bones or skulls on a regular basis to further hone his or her skills.

After a tenday of regular carving the owner may double his proficiency bonus with woodcarving tools. His craftsmanship has become noteworthy in a short time and will even attract admirers. Each piece he carves will sell for at least 20 gold pieces, more for larger pieces.

### Aftermath

A tenday will pass between the conclusion of this quest and ‘The culling’.

In that time trade will pick up again. A few days after the resolution of this quest, the taverns will once again be stocked and items from outside of town are once again readily available.

By the end of the tenday a new piece of legislation will be the talk of the taverns. Copies of the ‘Border Tax Act’ are spread on billboards across the city. **Handout 25 – The Border Tax Act**

### The culling

**Quest xp: destroying the effigy of Juiblex:** 3750 xp to be divided among the party.

**Quest reward:** If the players accept Sam Boatwright’s offer, they earn 400 gold pieces.

One day travel into the South Wood a formless evil stirs, driving away the local fauna. The wolves of the area are unable to find enough prey to sustain themselves and have moved their hunting ground near to Loudwater. As a consequence, the herds grazing the Loudwater Commons are under constant attack by these predators.

Gauntlet Proudfish has refused the people’s pleas to have the Commons guarded by militiamen, stating his men are soldiers, not shepherds.

To stop the wolf attacks the party needs to travel into the South Wood, find the temple of Juiblex, and destroy it.

### Quest Hooks

There are two ways to nudge the adventurers into this quest. You can use one of them or both in sequence, depending on the party’s actions.

## Quest Hook 1 - The hunters return

A column of men will pass by in the street, cheered on by gathered town’s folk. The column consists of common folk armed mainly with clubs, pitchforks and hunter’s bows. Three of them are carrying the head of a wolf on a spear. The column is led by Black Samson, the man who tasked the adventurers with killing the giant rats in chapter I. The people in the streets are tossing evening primroses at his feet.

If the adventurers enquire what is going on, local townsfolk can tell them about the nightly wolf attacks in the Commons and how Black Samson rallied some brave men and women to slaughter the devious animals. They can also tell them Samson has promised to go out each night until the menace is eradicated.

Questioning the townsfolk; **Intelligence (nature) DC 15**: There is no need for wolves to hunt this close to humans during springtime. Only a severe threat could drive the wolves from their hunting grounds and into civilized lands.

At this point the Loudwater militia will arrive on the scene. Two full patrols of twenty militiamen each will start dispersing the procession. The mood turns somber as the people return home. A hoarse shout of protest, calling the militiamen ‘Zhentarim dogs’ is heard from the back of the crowd.

### The ranger or druid approach

If any party members, such as rangers or druids, have a fondness of nature they may be appalled by this sight. If they seek to confront Samson they will find him at the Cooperworks, plying his trade.

Samson will explain he feels sorry for the animals. He has no choice, however, since he can’t let the shepherds starve. If the party can find a way to drive the wolves of without killing them, they are welcome to do so.

If the players ask where they should start, Samson will tell them the wolves are often seen in the Loudwater Commons these days.

### Quest Hook 2 - Boatwright’s note

A note, smelling of resin and sawdust, is left for the players in the Green Tankard.

### Handout 42 - Boatwright’s note

Sam will greet the players cordially. He will clear the saw dust of some three-legged stools and offers them coffee or cider. After introductions are made, he will make following offer:

You’ve probably noticed the wolf hunting craze going on. Wolves are attacking the herds grazing outside the town, threatening the livelihood of





**The hunters return, led by Black Samson**

many a family. With the Gauntlet refusing to handle the situation, you can imagine the townsfolk are starting to get a little nervous.

Now, there are some - my friend Samson among them – that seem to think the only way of handling this problem is with wholesale slaughter. I am not one of them. Violence has its place at times, but not if it happens without direction.

I represent a group of concerned townsfolk who are trying to look out for the welfare of our fellow citizens. They have authorized me to negotiate a reward, provided you kind folks succeed in finding out what's causing these attacks, and stop them.

If the players ask about the group of concerned townsfolk, Sam will mention they call themselves 'the Gardeners'. He warns them not to disclose their association with the Gardeners to the Gauntlet, since the Gauntlet has no fondness for their group.

If the players ask where they should start, Sam will tell them the wolves are often seen in the Loudwater Commons these days.

### The Commons

A pile of a dozen wolf carcasses can be found here; **Intelligence (nature) DC 10 or Wisdom (medicine) DC 10**: The animals appear near to starvation; their ribs are clearly visible through their thick coat.

If the players want to follow the tracks made by the wolves; **Wisdom (survival) DC 10**: You follow the tracks to the edge of the South Wood (See the South Wood section, Area 1 – Into the Forest).

### Aftermath

A few days will pass between the conclusion of this quest and 'The Missing Street Folk'. How long exactly depends on the progression of the 'Sibilant Fang' quest.

If none of the players is under the influence of the Sibilant Fang the DM can commence 'The Missing Street Folk' at his convenience.

Once the 'Culling' quest is completed the players are starting to get noticed by the populace. Not only have they been successful in eliminating some of the threats facing Loudwater and the Vale, the dwarves of Grom's Bounty are telling passing traders of the players' actions, their word travelling fast. On top of that the Gardeners are starting to realize these brave heroes might be an excellent figurehead for their movement, a banner under which the common folk might rally. For

this reason they are spreading word of the party's deeds among the locals.

### Quest – The Sibilant Fang

Back in Loudwater the wielder of the Sibilant Fang will start getting intoxicating dreams at night. In these dreams the wielder fashions a true master piece. A beautiful skull endowed with magical properties through the art of his carving. From half around the globe people will seek out this fabled artisan to marvel at his work. Commissioned pieces are made in exchange for exorbitant amounts of gold.

The wielder can only make this rare piece of art by carving a humanoid skull. He will have no choice but complete this work set before him. Each day he isn't working towards completing this goal, be it by carving, be it by trying to obtain the materials, the wielder must make a **wisdom saving throw DC 17** or gain a level of fatigue.

From this moment on, the wielder gains the benefit of a long rest every day he has worked to achieve his goal. Normal sleep has no effect anymore on fatigue, regaining of spells, etc.

The obtaining of the skull shouldn't be made too difficult. The player could obtain one at Garwan's Curiosities, from a grave digger, ... This is up to the creativity of player and DM.

Once the skull has been obtained it will take the player a single day to craft it.

### Budding heroes

The following attitude change will be noticed by the party:

- Children, young girls, women and old folk might try to give them an evening primrose, going so far as to want to pin it on the players' clothing. If asked about the motivation of the townsfolk, responses will consist of stammering hero worship, an admission that they are bringing hope, or a declaration of the importance of the party's deeds.
- Men will want to buy them drinks and ask to hear about their adventures. Bards capitalizing on this sudden fame, get advantage on all checks when performing in Loudwater's taverns or streets. If any Loudwater Militia pass their reaction will be either to stop, listen and applaud, or to ask the bard to leave, depending on their own personal feelings. (See the division within the Militia below)
- The Loudwater Militia will show a divided response. Some of them will nod and show

appreciation, others will spit and show derision. This divided response is an outward sign of the division in the Militia itself.

#### The division within the Militia

The Militia is splitting into two factions at this point.

#### The Loyalists

The first faction are loyalists. They are mostly hirelings, mercenaries or natives with no family left in Loudwater. They are not attuned to the difficulties faced by the local populace. These loyalists do not care about the rumors that the High Lord isn't in control anymore, they only know that the power is held by Gauntlet Proudfish and blindly follow his every decree. These are the true Zhentarim oppressing Loudwater.

#### The Doubters

The second faction is still on the fence. They believe order is necessary to sustain Loudwater's society, but they are also aware of the difficulties faced by the town's folk. Although they are willing to face outside threats, they are ordered not to, and are forced to see their friends and family suffer for it. They are aware of the fact that High Lord Zazrek hasn't made an appearance in months and that Gauntlet Proudfish has assumed total control of all of Loudwater's military assets.

### Missing street folk

**Quest xp: Eliminating the Yuan-ti kidnappers:** 4500 xp to be divided among the party.

There are two ways the characters can get involved in this quest.

If one of the characters took the Sibilant Fang and came under its influence, he will awaken one morning at the All Faiths Altar and could start asking around.

If the players didn't take the Sibilant Fang or got rid of it somehow, they will be sought out by Ambrose, the beggar.

Either way the party will find Ambrose, or he will find them. Ambrose is a very eloquent man suggesting he had a proper education before his luck turned and he ended up on the streets.

This elderly man has the look of someone sorely down on his luck, but refusing to give in. His velvet coat used to be of excellent quality, the same can be said of his leather breeches. Now they are both patched many times over and hang loosely around his thin, but proud frame.

Both paths are described below. In either scenario Ambrose will request the party's help.

#### Quest Hooks

#### A rude awakening

The wielder of the Sibilant Fang will awaken the morning after the completion of his master piece, freed from the dagger's influence. He will find himself in the open fore chancel of the All Faiths Altar with no recollection of the previous night. The skull will be gone from his possession and the Sibilant Fang's powers will be reduced to those of a regular *dagger of venom*. It will no longer be destroyed if used in the way described earlier in this chapter.

During the missing night, the character will have descended into the sewers to meet a yuan-ti cult of Sseth. He will have handed them the skull at which point a ritual was performed to transfer the fragment of Sseth's essence from the Sibilant Fang to the carved skull.

No further strange compulsions will drive the character, but he will retain his extraordinary expertise in wood and bone carving.

#### Asking around

Morning finds you wet, aching, battered, and smelling like raw sewage. Your head violently condemns you for having to deal with a massive hangover. As your mind struggles towards wakefulness, you notice you are not lying in your comfortable bed in the Green Tankard. Instead you find yourself huddled in a cold stone corner in the open fore chancel of the All Faiths Altar. Around you two unkempt individuals stir, their eyes dull with the hopelessness of those used to living on the streets.

One of the vagrants, a man called Hus, saw the character arrive with Ambrose, a beggar that frequents the House of Endurance. Ambrose wanted something from the character, the beggar doesn't know what.

Hus expects a reward for his information and with the desperation of the downtrodden, he will be quite insistent.

The players will find Ambrose praying to Ilmater at the small shrine in the lobby of the House of Endurance.

Ambrose will explain he was trying to talk to the wielder at the All Faiths Altar. There was no way, however, to get through, since the adventurer moved as in a trance and wouldn't even acknowledge his presence.

Ambrose can tell the adventurers that he saw the player emerge from a sewer drain that empties into the docks and that he followed him to talk. He will, however, not divulge this information until they talk to Mard, a dwarven beggar woman, who claims to have escaped from capture in the sewers. Ambrose insists they talk to her, since he takes her story seriously. Several other 'street folk' have gone missing in the past months.

Continue below with the 'Friends gone missing' section.

Ambrose

Alternatively, Ambrose will be passing time near the Green Tankard hoping to encounter one of the heroes he's heard so much about.

If he sees one of the adventurers he will address them, insisting that they accompany him to the House of Endurance to talk to his friend Mard. Mard escaped from the sewers after she was captured and held there. Several 'street folk' have gone missing in the past months, among them a few of Ambroses' friends.

Continue below with the 'Friends gone missing' section.

### Friends gone missing

Mard is a gruff dwarven woman who is used to living on the streets and wouldn't want it any other way. She spends her time tending the flowerbeds throughout Loudwater. In return the citizens of Loudwater keep her fed.

When the players encounter her, she is tending a bed of white roses in the garden of the House of Endurance.

Clad in a burlap sack and fingers covered in dark dirt, this unkempt dwarf woman still manages to look commanding. From her leather sling bag gardening implements and flowering branches peek out at the world.

Mard can tell the players the following:

A few nights ago, when she was walking towards the House of Endurance, she felt a sharp prick in the back of her neck. She then lost consciousness. When she came to, she was being dragged through the sewers. When her captors became temporarily distracted, she slipped silently into the water and escaped.

If the players ask about her captors, she can tell them they looked like humans, from what she could see, but they spoke a hissing language she hadn't heard before.

If the players ask more about her escape, she can only tell them she was near the mouth of the sewers in the docks when she escaped. She left the sewers through that exit.

If the players ask them about the other disappearances, Mard and Ambrose conclude that at least a dozen

people have disappeared over the last year. In the beginning they thought, those people had stowed away on river boats trying to get to a wealthier coastal city, but it would have been common for those people to talk about their plans and bid their adieus. With what happened to Mard, it seems obvious the beggars were kidnapped and taken into the sewers.

Mard will guide the players to the place she escaped the sewers from. Continue the Loudwater Sewers section in the Dungeons booklet.

### Aftermath

Proceed as described under 'Budding Heroes' in the Aftermath of 'the Culling' section.

Proceed immediately with the 'Carve in Stone' quest.

### Carved in stone

**Quest xp: Bringing Rolson back from the dead:** 2250 xp to be divided among the party.

**Quest xp: Defeating the Gorgons:** 4500 xp to be divided among the party. If the party seek to negotiate a reward, the Gardeners are willing to pay 500 gold pieces, provided the party return with at least one gorgon head.

A few months ago a man and his son were travelling along the Dawn Pass Trail when they decided to pick some edible mushrooms in the South Wood. On their way out of the forest they were beset by a gorgon, the man was summarily devoured and the boy left petrified. A trader found the boy's statue by the side of the trail and sold it to Zark, the proprietor of Garwan's Curiosities.

Upon your return to the Green Tankard a small scroll with an unmarked seal is awaiting you. As you crack the wax and unroll the paper, a yellow primrose falls out.

### Handout 23 – The Gardeners' invitation

When the players arrive at Garwan's Curiosities, the proprietor, a surly dwarf named Zark, will usher them into the back room. He seems like a person who is doing his best to be polite, but is so accustomed to being rude, that the whole thing is making him thoroughly uncomfortable.

When Zark leads the players into the back room he will clumsily offer them something to drink. He has tea, coffee and Black Bottom Ale on offer.

He will then leave the players to examine the beautiful lifelike sculpture of a young lad in his teens that graces the center of the room. Around the sculpture stand eight leather chairs. Against the far wall is a rectangular table.

**Intelligence (investigation) DC 15:** Someone recently put this statue here. The table that used to be in the center of the room was put against the wall to make room.

**Wisdom (insight) DC 15:** The statue has a truly unusual facial expression. It depicts the moment where surprise turned into fear.

Dwarves taking the time to investigate the statue automatically conclude the statue wasn't made by a sculptor, as there are no visible tool marks.

#### The Gardeners

Twenty minutes later a group of four people arrive. They are Elyse Whiteflower, innkeeper of the Green Tankard, Black Samson, the owner of the Cooperworks, and Sam Boatwright, owner of Sam's Boats. Black Samson has an evening primrose pinned to the lapel of his black vest. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, these are the leading members of the Gardeners.

With them is a pale looking woman in her forties. When she sees the statue in the middle of the room, she pauses and looks like she is about to faint. Clinging to Black Samson, she starts nodding and whispering vehemently before being led from the room.

If the characters haven't encountered Sam Boatwright yet, he will introduce himself. He will explain he and his associates are members of the Gardeners.

If the players aren't aware of the Gardeners yet he will tell them they are a group of concerned townsfolk, trying to improve the lot of Loudwater's people. He warns them not to disclose their association with the Gardeners to the Gauntlet, since Proudfish has no fondness for their group.

(See Chapter I for descriptions of Sam Boatwright, Black Samson and Elyse Whiteflower)

Yesterday, when I walked into the shop and saw the boy's statue, I reckoned he looked familiar. You just met his mother, Mara, a local fishwife who lives on the south bank, outside of town.

A few months ago, her husband and son went to the market and never returned. She thought them killed by bandits, until now. This ladies and gentlemen is Rolson, Mara's son. At least what's left of him. To be honest I am utterly puzzled as to what we should do with him.

#### Bringing Rolson back from the dead

Either the players pick up on this, or they don't. If they don't that's fine for the moment. They don't have a cleric powerful enough to bring the boy back and might want to wait for that moment.

They might decide to transport the boy to Grom's Bounty. If they do, Sam will hand them a bag containing 200 gold pieces to pay for the ritual needed. Kromdir Anvilsplitter will help the boy but refuse payment. He has not forgotten the dangers the adventurers faced for his kin.

If the players choose this course they are to spend two days in Grom's Bounty while Kromdir prays for guidance, before the boy is delivered safe and hale to the party's care.

They can use that time to reacquaint themselves with Grom's Bounty.

Only if they deliver Rolson back to his mother, will they receive the experience reward, along with Mara's undying gratitude. Mara's hovel is on the south bank of the Greyflow, a day travel east of Loudwater.

#### Defeating the gorgons

Before leaving the gathering in the backroom of Garwan's Curiosities, Sam makes a final important request.

The boy's statue, for lack of a better word, was found alongside the road, three days travel east of the town. We are going on the assumption that a creature capable of turning people into stone is stalking the South Wood. If this is true, it needs to be eliminated. You've proven yourself capable, would you consider tracking it down?

He concludes with:

Loudwater is experiencing a difficult period. People are afraid, their future unsure. If you would bring a trophy of your kill back to the town, it would go a long way to restoring hope to the citizenry. Its head would be nice. I know it's poor taste for me to ask you this, but people need heroes, now more than ever.

Once the players start investigating the forest refer to the South Wood section at the end of the chapter.

## Aftermath

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Three days will pass between the conclusion of this quest and ‘The Heist’

### Homecoming

During the players’ absence from the city, the Gardeners will have young lads on horses posted in the fields, awaiting their return. Once the adventurers are spotted, these lookouts will rush back to warn Sam Boatwright.

When the players arrive back at the gate with their trophy the streets will be lined with cheering people. Black Samson will be waiting for them. He will embrace them and take them to the High Lord’s Statue, where hundreds of people will have gathered to watch the heroes. Once there, he will climb atop a flatbed wagon, put there for the occasion, and invites the heroes up there with him. Then he will address the crowd.

My friends, a great deed has been done. These brave souls have gone out, for you, the people of Loudwater, to do what was needed. For this I call them heroes.

You have all longed for a day like this, a day where the Gods show us that heroes like Nanathlor Greysword still walk the Delimbiyr Vale. A day where the Gods tell the Zhentarim taxmongers: There is no place for you here!

Once the cheering has abated he continues:

Miss Whiteflower has brought some refreshments for the occasion, I suggest you eat, drink and make merry!

As if on cue people will be carrying tables and benches into the scene. Bread and cheese, dried fish and fruits are brought. The waitresses from the Green Tankard move among the crowd doling out full pitchers of Pit Fiend Ale.

Everyone wants to congratulate the players and before they know it evening primroses are pinned to their vests, gloves, capes and caps. The people see them as symbols of hope and there is no telling them differently.

While Black Samson is directing some carpenters to build a pole upon which to mount the gorgon head(s), a merry tune starts playing from the flatbed wagon, where Sam Boatwright is harping.

**Wisdom (insight) DC 15:** Someone has gone to an awful lot of trouble to organize this, seemingly spontaneous

feast. It is as if someone was awaiting your successful return and arranged everything beforehand. As your gaze falls on old Sam, his merry blue eyes give a wink in your direction, telling you, you guessed correctly.

### Party crashers

**Guard (see below), MM p. 347.**

An hour after the start of the celebration, shouts can be heard from nearby streets. The music stops, and Sam jumps from the wagon. A few moments later the sound of synchronized boots, stomping on cobblestones, reaches the square. The Loudwater Militia has come to interrupt this unauthorized gathering.

The atmosphere lurches from merry to grim in mere seconds. Sam tells the adventurers, this is not a good place for them to remain and takes them to his home nearby, where they can spend the night.

What follows is a riot, which will be beaten down fiercely. Luckily the militiamen seem instructed to use the butt end of their spears instead of the sharp end. Still it is a miracle only a few people are killed.

If the party wants to participate in the riot, Sam tries to convince them otherwise, telling them this isn’t the time nor the place.

If they want to fight anyway, he insists there will be no killing, since the reprisals will be heavy if there is. Make them face waves of guards, starting with 1d6, then 2d6, then 3d6 and so on, until their resources are depleted, and they are required to flee and rest.

### Reprisals

The next day a dozen people will be put in the stocks. If the players killed any guards, three townsmen will be hanged.

One of the Gorgon heads has been rescued by Elyse Whiteflower and now hangs over the bar in the Green Tankard.

A new piece of legislation will be put up: **Handout 26 – Curfew.**

## The Heist

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The heist is a possible prelude to the ‘Murder of Black Samson quest’. Its purpose is to put the party’s rogue in a position where he can be blackmailed to solve the murder of Black Samson. At the same time, it is an opportunity for the rogue to act like a stereotype guild rogue, an occasion that doesn’t come along all too often. While the rogue is participating in the crime there will be a chance for him to obtain some useful information.

The following conversation in thieves’ cant will be overheard by the party’s rogue. If there is no person in the party who you could comfortably slip in this role, you can skip ‘The heist’.

It is advisable to play this section as a solo session between rogue and DM.

A man and woman are in conversation. The man is wrapped in a cloak adorned with dozens of dove feathers. The woman is rather plump for a half-elf, betraying her love for good food and wine. To the uninitiated, their words sound as gibberish. You, however, are far from uninitiated.

Esel: So, is all the cargo stowed?

Larma: No, we're still a rounder short. We still need one on the dub lay.

Esel: And what about the stuffing?

Larma: I got me an uncle who wouldn't mind eating his fill.

Esel: Don't know what to do about that third clank napper though. Nikra is staying in the guesthouse and Old Tom has gone legit.

Larma: We'll see what time brings, if it's just the two of us, we can stop all the flag waving and pick an easy racket.

Upon reading this conversation give the player **handout 44 – A conversation between rogues**.

### Signing up

If the party member in question addresses Esel and Larma, they are pretty suspicious at first, wondering what a high-'n-mighty adventurer would want with their little scheme.

If the roleplaying is decent, the party member can convince the two rogues easily enough - beggars can't be choosers after all.

They will take the player to Elyse Whiteflower, who will continue the conversation in the back room of the Green Tankard.

### Talking to Elyse Whiteflower

She will make clear that she doesn't have the support of the Gardeners in this endeavor.

The target will be the High Lord's Hall. The adventurer will enter the Hall together with Esel, while Larma will

act as a lookout. Everything they can lift, Elyse will take from their hands at three quarters of the price she can sell it.

They agree they will go through with the plan, in two more nights, when the new moon will make the night darker than usual.

Elyse will send Esel and Larma away, so she and the adventurer can talk in private.

### Private talk

The High Lord, Telbor Zazrek, hasn't been seen in quite some time. Elyse wants the player to confirm the absence of the High Lord, and if possible ascertain his whereabouts. Whiteflower will warn the player that Telbor Zazrek is an accomplished mage, so confronting him in any way, is out of the question.

She will also hand him a blanket-wrapped bastard sword, which is an exact replica of Nanathlor Greysword's weapon. She would like the player to swap the replica for the real Greysword, which is supposedly still in the High Lord's Hall. If the Gardeners have this weapon, they have one more symbol to rally the people with, when the time comes to overthrow Zhentarim oppression.

She will offer the player 500 gold pieces for confirmation of Telbor Zazrek's absence from the High Lord's Hall. Switching the swords is worth a 1000 gold pieces to her.

### Casing the High Lord's Hall

If the player decides to case out the High Lord's Hall, he can learn the following if he spends a night in observation from a nearby roof top.

Keeping an eye out for guard activity and/or patterns; two guards are present at the entrance to the high Lord's Hall. The best point of entry seems to be the garden. Which will mean climbing the ten-foot wall. **Wisdom (perception) DC 10:** Judging from the light moving through the garden and in front of the windows it takes the guards twenty minutes to make the rounds. They start in the garden, then do the ground floor, before moving to the first floor. **Beating DC 15:** They do not seem to enter the rooms on the second floor. They are just patrolling the hallways.

Keeping an eye out for the High Lord; **Intelligence (investigation) DC 10:** Except for the guards moving through. No lights can be seen on the second floor, confirming Elyse Whiteflower's suspicion on the High Lord's absence.

Keeping an eye out for any possible entry points; the main entrance is guarded by two guards. The windows on the ground floor are covered with iron bars. The windows on the first floor aren't covered. If the player picked a roof from which he can observe the garden, he

will be able to see two service entrances at the back of the High Lord's Hall. An iron gate leads into the garden from Copperstreet. On top of the roof are two brickwork chimneys that look large enough for a man to descend through.

### The last deliberation

You and your crew gather at the Green Tankard for a last moment of deliberation. It is soon agreed Esel will enter the building with you, while Larma will be the lookout. If there is trouble she will blow a whistle to indicate where the trouble is coming from. Your job will be 'the dub lay', the man on the locks. Now only one question remains: where and how to enter?

See 'the High Lord's Hall' section of the Dungeons booklet.

### Aftermath

No experience points are rewarded for this quest for several reasons, the main reason: it being unfair towards the other players.

When the player returns, Elyse is true to her word. She will pay the player according to their agreement and promises to have the money for all the stolen goods in a tenday's time.

## Rescuing the Summit Seekers

**Quest xp: Finding the Summit Seekers:** 6000 xp to be divided among the party. **Reward:** A pledge that the Anvilsplitters will craft a set of *Dwarven Plate*, worthy of a true hero, for one of the party (value 15000).

The dwarves honor the adventurers by proposing this. If the players don't agree to this reward, Grygus will be able to offer 5000 gold pieces instead; **Charisma (persuasion) DC 15:** Maximum of 6000 gold pieces.

The morning after the heist Grygus Steelfold will arrive to talk to the players.

Grom's Bounty owes you a great deal and I hesitate to impose on ye again. A few of our young lads have gone missing.

We assume they are in trouble up in the mountains. I beseech ye. Find them and bring them back.

### Futher information

The four lads that have gone missing are a group that call themselves the Summitseekers. They fancy themselves mountaineers and have no greater joy in life than to explore the mountains around Grom's Bounty.

Their names are Horlim and Rarefud Snowboulder, Ulik Copperhelm and Gragbum Stonedge. Ulik and Gragbum are still young and only sport the beginnings of a beard.

The last time they were seen was five days ago. Normally they aren't gone that long. The dwarves are convinced they are in trouble.

Elder Anvilsplitter is working on a way to divine the location of the four lads. With a little luck he will be able to guide the adventurers right to them.

For more information on the Summit Seekers see Chapter I – Grom's Bounty – The Tooth.

### Grom's Bounty

Elder Kromdir Anvilsplitter has enchanted a pair of old boots of Rarefud Snowboulder, one of the Summitseekers. The boots can be commanded to 'seek', at which time they will start retracing Rarefud's steps. Picking them up breaks the command and will make them go dormant until commanded to 'seek' again.

### Into the Greypeaks

On the way back of one of their treks the Summitseekers discovered a small camp of orcs and ettins a mere day's travel from Grom's Bounty. Before they could warn the town, they were ambushed by a flight of harpies and forced to take refuge in a cave. Plugging their ears with soft cheese, they resisted the harpies' song, but they are no match for the creatures and have no way to get back to Grom's Bounty.

Since the party will not be travelling far from Grom's Bounty no random encounters are required.

### The ledge

Following Rarefud's boots, your steps take you unerringly in the direction of the missing dwarves. Progress is not easy. The Greypeaks are harsh terrain and you often slip on the loose gravel covering the steep, icy slopes. Early in the afternoon the enchanted boots lead you up a narrow path flanked on one side by the mountain face and on the other by a steep and terrifying drop. An hour later the first notes of a heart catching song reach your ears. Seeking the origin of the tune, you gaze up, seeing the fast approach of a flock of winged women.



## Encounter

**Harpy (8), MM p. 181.**

The harpies will fly above the party to drop large rocks on top of them: **Rock**. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 30 feet straight down, one target. Hit: 12 (3d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Once they have dropped their rock, the harpies will start singing and engage the party in melee combat.

If the party forgot about the boots at this point, the enchanted footwear will continue on its own. The harpies in the next encounter will be fighting over the boots, allowing the players the element of surprise.

**Cave entrance**

As you continue in pursuit of the enchanted boots, the ledge broadens considerably, passing a crack in the mountainside. Several harpies are huddled under and in the branches of a stunted pine tree, peering into the cave. For a moment you think you can hear a challenging roar above the whistling of the cold mountain wind, then a harpy bursts from the narrow cave, as if fleeing whatever's inside.

## Encounter

**Harpy (6), MM p. 181.****Rarefud, use guard statistics, MM p. 347.**

Rarefud is equipped with a handaxe and a heavy crossbow instead of a spear.

If the harpies are occupied with the boots, the party can surprise them. A round after the battle has been engaged a young dwarf bellowing a furious war cry will exit the narrow cave to engage the harpies.

**The cave**

The Summitseekers are happy to see the party. Rarefud is the only one who wasn't hurt severely during their first encounter with the harpies.

Healing and rest are needed to get the dwarves back on their feet.

Rarefud will explain what happened to him and his friends over the past few days. He will describe the camp they saw and how they were forced to seek refuge in a cave, besieged by the harpies. He will offer to show them the camp come morning.

The camp is only an hour further up the trail and not so big. When the dwarves were watching it a few days ago, they noticed more orcs were arriving each day.

If the camp isn't eliminated it will become a threat to the safety of Grom's Bounty. While Rarefud is taking

the players to the camp, his friends will hurry down the mountain to warn Elder Anvilsplitter.

**Bimbara's Camp**

See 'Bimbara's Camp' in the Dungeons booklet.

**Afermath**

Once the players arrive in Grom's Bounty they will find Kromdir Anvilsplitter and Grygus Steelfold in the Lovely Coin. Surprisingly they are in the company of Sam Boatwright.

If asked for their reward (the *dwarven plate*), the player who is to receive it, is told to report to the Smelters to meet with Gromson Anvilsplitter, who will take his measures. If asked when it will be finished, the cryptic answer will be: 'In time'. The making of a *dwarven plate* is different every time and the process cannot be rushed. For one reason or another, *dwarven plate* commissioned for a just cause is often ready, at such a time it is needed for a great battle. At least according to the dwarves. When exactly this will be is up to the DM.

Elder Anvilsplitter will send guards to investigate the camp site. When the dwarves arrive, any creatures left alive by the players will have vanished. If Bimbara was left alive, she will be leading her forces to join Nasreen in the vicinity of Llorkh.

Sam Boatwright will explain Black Samson was found murdered. (For more information, see below)

## Loudwater

Upon entering Loudwater, the party will be halted at the gate with the message that nobody is to enter. A young militia captain, called Dagonus, will interfere on their behalf. He will state that these laws were aimed at keeping undesirables out. As such they do not apply to the adventurers. They have proven themselves to Loudwater.

Signs of civil unrest are apparent in Loudwater. Broken windows and ruined furniture on the street are silent testimony of the hard-handed approach with which the militia deals with suspected revolutionaries.

Pamflets are glued to the facades of buildings forbidding the cultivation or wearing of the evening primrose. On other buildings a short verse is painted in bold yellow strokes, challenging the rule of Loudwater's Gauntlet, Gopher Proudfish:

"A Gopher gnaws on primrose fair

Demanding more than is his share

The Gardener says: ‘No more of that!’

And beats the gofer until he's flat

## The murder of Black Samson

**Quest xp: Bringing the murderers to justice:** 8000 xp to be divided among the party. **Quest reward:** If the players insist on a reward, Sam will offer them 2000 gold pieces.

### What really happened

Proudfish got tired of the Gardeners’ attempts at undermining his authority and had Samson killed by his kenku assassins. On the fateful night they broke into the Cooperworks and chased Samson to the roof. After a short struggle he fell to his death.

In Sam’s left hand a black feather was discovered. The authorities claim it came from the cloak of Esel, a local thief, but Esel’s cloak contains no black feathers. (See ‘The Heist’)

### What Sam knows

The day the players left for Grom’s Bounty, Samson was found murdered. An associate of the Gardener’s stands accused of murder. Sam wants the players to take up the role of the man’s advocate, allowing them to review all the evidence. The party enjoys a certain respect in Loudwater which will guarantee the authorities will think twice about not cooperating.

Elyse Whiteflower has vowed that the man, a thief called Esel, has nothing to do with the crime. She won’t tell Sam how she knows this, but maybe the players will have more success.

The man is kept in the Militia Headquarters. Only his advocates will be allowed to talk to him and review the evidence.

Sam has one final request for the players:

You may have noticed Loudwater is on the brink of violent conflict. This situation is the proverbial spark that can ignite a wildfire. It needs to be handled with the utmost care. I beg of you, if you find out who murdered my friend, come see me, so we can figure out our next move.

### Talking to Elyse Whiteflower

Elyse can tell the players Esel wasn’t involved with the murder, since he was on a mission for her at the time; **Charisma (persuasion) DC 15:** Will convince Elyse to explain the mission Esel was on. (See ‘The Heist’). She will not reveal the role any of the party played in this, unless this party member does so himself.

Elyse can tell the players that Samson used to keep a journal in his office in the Cooperworks.

### The suspect, the evidence and the body

These can be found in the Loudwater Militia Headquarters (See Dungeons – The Militia Headquarters for more information on the lay-out of this area). To gain access, the players must present themselves as the suspect’s advocates. They will be promptly briefed by Gauntlet Gopher Proudfish.

You are the murderer’s advocates? This surprises me. Here I thought you were upstanding citizens, seeking to serve Loudwater.

Never mind. What happened is obvious and these proceedings are a mere formality. If you make this more difficult than it has to be, there will be consequences. If on the other hand, you allow justice to take its course unhindered, you may find me a most generous patron.

Proudfishes’ point of view is narrow and obvious. A feather was found on the corpse, implicating Esel. The suspect has no alibi, confirming his guilt.

If the players ask too many thorny questions, or display the intention of digging, he will become irritated, confirm that in his mind guilt is already determined and dismiss them.

The players will now have access to the corpse, the suspect and the evidence.

### Talking to Esel

The players will be led down, into the dungeon. The cells are below the Militia Headquarters.

Esel will maintain his innocence. He doesn’t know what he is being accused of, until the players tell him. According to him, he has no motive for killing Samson and tells them they should find out who has.

If the players ask about the night in question, he says he was somewhere else and that Elyse Whiteflower can confirm this. If a player participated in ‘The Heist’, he will point and accusing finger, stating: “Ask him, he was there.”

If the players found the blood on the rooftop, they can verify that Esel has no wounds conforming to the amount of blood shed there.

### Examining the evidence and the body

Both the evidence and the body are kept in the morgue below the Militia Headquarters. The morgue is in a part of the cellar adjacent to the dungeons.

While examining the body and the evidence the players are supervised by a guard.

The evidence is contained in a wooden coffer. In it are the dove-feathered cloak of the suspect, the black feather found in Samson's hand and the report of the surgeon examining the body.

The body lies on a granite slab in the same room and is covered with a white sheet.

#### Cloak and feather

Examining the cloak and feather; **Intelligence (investigation) DC 10:** Esel's cloak is adorned with grey dove feathers. The feather found in Black Samson's hand looks more like an oversized crow's feather.

#### The surgeon's report

The surgeon's report mentions several bruises that tell of a fight. The cause of death is obviously blunt trauma from the fall. There are also a few long and fresh animal like scratches on the body, which the surgeon cannot explain.

#### The body

There are some fresh scratches on the body. There are three separate marks about ten inches in length and 3 inches apart; **Wisdom (medicine) DC 10:** These look like scratches made by a large bird.

### The crime scene

#### The rooftop

A narrow wooden staircase leads from the office to the flat rooftop of the Cooperworks. A sizeable amount of blood can be found, pooled around the edge.

If the players ask themselves whether the blood is the victim's and if they already examined the body; **Wisdom (medicine) DC 10:** The scratches on the body do not account for the amount of blood spilt here.

While searching the rooftop; **Wisdom (perception) DC 10:** Several black feathers can be found on the rooftop.

**Beating DC 20:** In the gutter you find a bloody black hilted dagger.

Elyse Whiteflower and Sam Boatwright can confirm the dagger belonged to Black Samson.

Searching for tracks; **Wisdom (survival) DC 10:** Scratches, claw prints and boot prints can be found in the dirt on the roof. Several large birds must have attacked Samson.

If the players find the dagger and the blood they can put one and one together: The blood didn't belong to Samson, as no dagger wounds were discovered on his body. Esel has no injuries either. This means the killer, or one of the killers is seriously injured.

### The office

A wooden staircase leads up from the ground floor to Black Samson's office. The office is spartan in nature, containing no more than a simple desk, a wooden stool and an archive cabinet. A door leads to an outside staircase going up to the roof. A large window is overlooking the abandoned work floor below.

The desk drawer is locked; **Dexterity (thieves' tools) DC 15, strength (athletics) DC 15, AC 15, 5 hp (2d4).**

Inside the drawer is the journal of Black Samson (**Handout 27**)

The journal will point the party towards the docks.

### The docks

At the entrance to the docks the party encounters the beggar woman Mirna (See Chapter I – Dock's Gate). It is possible the players encountered her before, at which point she already warned them about 'the birds'. If asked about the birds, she can show the party to 'the nest', provided the party pay their guide first.

Mirna takes you to a warehouse in the far corner of the docks. No activity can be seen outside or in. Although the building looks abandoned and in need of repair, a brand-new lock hangs from its ramshackle doors.

### Encounter

**Kenku (6), MM p. 194**

**Kenku pilferer (3), Mobs & NPC's**

**Kenku flock master (1), Mobs & NPC's**

As light shines through the many cracks and holes in walls and roof, the warehouse is dimly lit during the day and dark (heavily obscured) during the night.

The Kenku have seen the players approach and hide in the rafters and on top of the stacks of boxes and barrels. As long as the kenku have shadows to hide in, the players will only spot them on a **wisdom (perception) DC 15 at disadvantage**.

The Kenku will allow the players to reach the center of the warehouse unopposed. After which they will drop a heavy net on top of the players. The net is 25 feet wide and long. Each player in the area of effect makes a **dexterity save DC 14** to escape the effect. On failure the player is trapped as explained on p. 148 of the PHB.

At this point the Kenku will attempt a mind game with the players, using their gift for mimicry.

From the far side of the warehouse a deep throaty laugh can be heard. As you advance a woman's giggle echoes from the rafters to your left, followed by an angry voice to your right. The last voice is utterly familiar. You can almost picture the pudgy face of Gauntlet Proudfish as you hear his voice decree: "Kill Samson and don't let anyone get in your way. If those meddling adventurers should come upon your trail, put an end to them!"

At this point the Kenku will start attacking with their short bows, avoiding melee for as long as possible.

When all the party members are engaged, the Flockmaster will appear, repeating the Gauntlet's instructions: "If those meddling adventurers should come upon your trail, put an end to them!"

#### Treasure

Near the back of the warehouse, the players discover some sort of nest, built out of broken timber, nets and scraps of cloth. In the nest they find a sack containing 700 gold coins. The coins weigh exactly the same as a gold dragon and have a jeweled dagger stamped on them.

**Intelligence (religion) DC 15:** The coins are stamped with the symbol of Abbathor, an evil dwarven god who is known as the Great Master of Greed. **For Dwarves the DC is 5.**

If the players delivered Grom's Bounty's taxes to Gopher Proudfish, they will recognize these coins.

#### Aftermath

If the players confront Proudfish, he will laugh at them. Nothing they bring is admissible as evidence. The court has already convened and Esel has been found guilty. He will hang tomorrow at noon.

If the players go to Sam, he will tell them Esel has already been judged and will be hanged tomorrow at noon.

Once they explain to him what they discovered, the old bard's face will turn grave:

"That's it then. No way around it now. Proudfish is guilty and must be stopped. Power must be returned to the citizens of Loudwater. I will gather the people, tomorrow at dawn and we will occupy the square in front of the Militia Headquarters.

I ask of you, seasoned warriors, to go in to retrieve Esel and arrest the Gauntlet. My people will make sure none of the militia outside the Headquarters will interfere."

With a grave face the old boatwright retrieves a small cigar case from beneath the wood chips on his work bench and opens it. Inside are a dozen dried primroses. He approaches each one of you in turn and pins one of the flowers to the lapel of your shirt.

## The Primrose Revolt

**Quest xp: Arresting Gopher Proudfish:** 6000 xp to be divided among the party.

**Quest xp: Convincing Dagonus:** 3750 xp to be divided among the party.

If the party is insistent on getting paid, they can negotiate a reward of 2000 gold pieces.

Come morning a blanket of tension has fallen over the city. It is the trepidation of common men and women gathering to fight for an uncertain future. Sam Boatwright and Elyse Whiteflower meet you in the street along with a few hundred people. During your march on the Militia Headquarters, more and more people join you. Some of them are bearing candles, others pitchforks and clubs. All of them are displaying the yellow flower that has become symbol of the revolt. Now and again you encounter a patrol of militiamen. Some of them slink away in the alleys, but more than a few join the mass of people marching to reclaim their city.

A silent mob has gathered on the square in front of the Militia Headquarters. They are faced by a young militia captain in shining armor, and two patrols of militiamen.

The militia captain is Dagonus, the same captain that allowed the adventurers to enter the city not so long ago. So far, he hasn't displayed any aggression and has ordered his men to sheathe their weapons.

Dagonus is aware that things are amiss in the town. He has noticed the High Lord has gone missing and does not agree with the oppressive policies of Gopher Proudfish. But he is a man of honor, who will not abandon his post without good reason.

If the players negotiate with him, the following arguments hold enough power to let him stand down and allow the players in to arrest the Gauntlet:

- The High Lord is missing from the High Lord's Hall. He has been kidnapped or murdered several tendays ago. The library shows signs of a fight and a large puddle of dried blood.
- Proudfish himself ordered the death of Black Samson. The party uncovered a den of assassins in the docks and heard their confession before slaying them.
- The party discovered part of the tax money sent by Grom's Bounty was used to pay the assassins of Black Samson. Only Proudfish has access to this gold.

Dagonus will ask for time to confirm these statements and will send men to the docks and/or the High Lord's Hall. Upon the return of these men, he will agree to let the party enter to arrest the Gauntlet. He will demand they use as little violence as possible and will ask they give their word of honor they will not assassinate him.

#### Encounter

**Guard (19), MM p. 347**, treasure: none, the corpses will be looted by the civilians.

**Dagonus, use knight statistics, MM p. 347**, treasure: none, the corpse will be looted by the civilians.

**Commoner (10+1d4 per round), MM p. 345.**

If the party decides to fight their way through the militiamen guarding the Militia Headquarters, all hell will break loose as the citizens join the fight.

Have the party fight in an area of 50 feet wide and 40 feet deep. Each round 1d4 commoners will enter the fray on the side of the party, provided there is room.

Dagonus will have his men form up in a double row, with him in the back, where he will use his leadership ability for as long as possible.

Once the fight is over, consider all militiamen defending the entrance to the Militia headquarters subdued.

## The Militia Headquarters

See the Dungeons Booklet.

## Aftermath

### Loudwater and the Gardeners

Now that Loudwater is free, the people are calling for new leadership. Sam Boatwright and Dagonus are proclaimed Gauntlet's of Loudwater. They will work towards restoring the peace. Telbor Zazrek will remain High Lord in name, until a suitable successor is chosen from among the populace.

If Dagonus was killed by the party, another dissenting officer of the Loudwater Militia will be chosen as second Gauntlet. We will keep on referring to him as Dagonus, but it might be necessary to change the name.

### Proudfish

If he was spared by the party, Gopher Proudfish is banished from Loudwater, with naught more than the shirt on his back.

He will be driven out through the High Forest Gate, all the while pelted with fish offal.

Proudfish will try to reach Zhentil Keep. The attempt will cost him his life. This doesn't mean he's out of the picture though. We will encounter his depraved and treacherous soul, when visiting the Nine Hells later on.

### Telbor Zazrek

Telbor Zazrek, former high Lord of Loudwater, has lost all sanity and all purpose. He will become a permanent resident of the House of Endurance in the care of the sisters Tamata and Donra, clerics of Ilmater.

Unbeknownst to the adventurers and their allies, Telbor Zazrek's broken fingers haven't impeded his gift for magic.

In the years to come his personality will split into two separate entities. People at the House of Endurance will know him as Telby, the kind and blandfaced simpleton, who likes to entertain anyone with beautiful tricks of magic.

His hidden part, the Broken Lord, will start a diabolical scheme to destroy Loudwater and finish what the giants' bombardment started all these years ago.

### The massing army

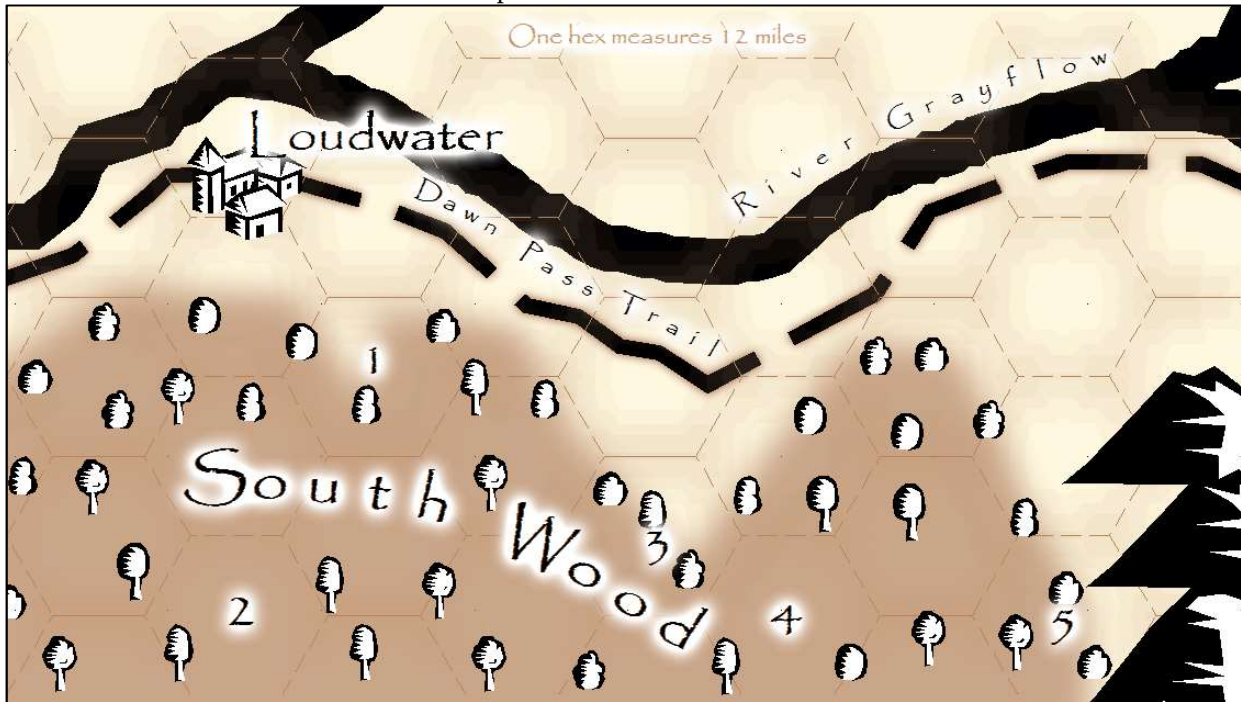
The party has had the possibility of learning of Nasreen's army throughout the chapter.

The first piece of the puzzle is less than obvious. In the sewers the party finds signs of a duergar scouting party. They were there to find weaknesses in Loudwater's defenses.

The second piece of the puzzle is discovered while saving the Summit Seekers and attacking Bimbara's Camp. These badly burnt orders, speak of Ssufaxuss' forces being only part of a larger army and of an impending attack on Loudwater.

The third piece of the puzzle is a scouting report, found on the Gauntlet's desk. It reveals that an army of a few thousand warriors, several giants and a dragon, is gathering in the ruins of Llorkh, to the east.

If the players don't figure this out on their own, a messenger from Grom's Bounty will arrive soon after, to confirm the existence of the army.



## The South Wood

### Handout C – South Wood

A few months ago, a goblin tribe - worshippers of Juiblex - managed to summon a servant of their God, a demon named Garzee. When this demon appeared, a madness came over the tribe, causing them to slaughter and consume each other. From the remnants of the tribe Garzee summoned oozes and jellies to spread the corruption of his faceless lord.

During the period that followed, the oozes and slimes started to attack and consume all wildlife in the area. Fleeter animals fled nearer to the forest's edge, where they became easy prey for predators.

With their natural prey nearly depleted, the wolves of the South Wood, facing starvation, moved their hunting ground to include the grazing ground of the Loudwater Commons.

The adventurers will need to destroy Garzee and the Effigy of Juiblex if they want to stand any chance of saving the South Wood and its wolves.

If the players went through the sarrukh Portal in Chapter III, they will have been to the South Wood before.

The South Wood has a separate section on random encounters later in this chapter.

### 1. Into the forest

Ancient as its sister forest to the north, the South Wood is a foreboding place. As you travel inside, you get the distinct feeling you are unwelcome.

**Wisdom (survival) DC 15:** From the tracks found in the area you deduce that the wolves didn't just rush out of the South Wood in a straight line. It appears they shifted their hunting ground over the course of a few tendays. Tracking the direction they originally came from is impossible.

### 2. The Temple of Juiblex

Once the players destroy the effigy of Juiblex, the wolves will migrate deeper into the forest again.

See the Dungeon booklet.

### 3. The Sarrukh Portal

Under the shadowy boughs of a crooked willow, an ancient crumbling ruin of strange origin is losing the battle with the ages. In the center room of the small ruin you find an ancient vine covered portal. The portal is intact and hums softly. It is obviously magic in nature.

This portal links to one of the portals in the Dark Ziggurat and can only be activated with the Scepter of Chssar Musstan. (Chapter III - Portal Room)

### 4. The abandoned cabin

A few years ago, a ranger, locally known as Macer, lived here with his family. At some point a band of werewolves moved into the area. When they started slaughtering for sport Macer intervened. He killed two werewolves and sent the last one running.

Sadly, the pack exacted their revenge later that night. They killed Macer and his family, dragging the corpses off to be put on display.

A log cabin stands in a shadowy clearing. No smoke comes from the chimney and the door stands ajar.

As you enter you conclude that the cabin has been abandoned for quite some time, but not before becoming the site of a vicious fight. Furniture has been shoved aside and the ground crackles with broken glass.

Underneath dust and dirt are large smears of blood on the walls and the floor. Splatters of gore are visible as high as the ceiling; **Wisdom (perception) DC 10:** Beneath the wreckage you discover a burlap doll, covered in old blood.

Looking for clues; **Intelligence (investigation) DC 15:** In between the splinters of the doorframe you find a tuft of black hair. It is probable the aggressor was covered in fur. **Beating DC 20:** The wanton carnage, the disappearance of the bodies, and the tuft of fur at shoulder height convince you that you are dealing with at least one werewolf, probably more.

Looking for clues; **Wisdom (perception) DC 15:** Underneath a loose floor board you find a leather doeskin bundle.

#### Treasure

The doeskin bundle contains a white wooden bow with silver inlay, **Handout 24 – Silvershot**.

#### Encounter

If the players spend a night at the log cabin the werewolves attack

**Werewolf (4), MM p. 211**, treasure: The leader of the werewolves carries a *bag of holding* containing 325 cp, 154 sp, 240 gp, 3x Bloodstone (worth 36 gp each), *Potion of Climbing*, 3 x *Potion of Healing*.

## 5. The Gorgon Meadow

This dense forest suffers from a strange phenomenon. Eight-foot-wide lanes of destruction are crossing this area, small trees are splintered, shrubs uprooted and everything but the largest trees trampled.

**Wisdom (survival) DC 15:** a large animal caused this. From the partial hoof prints you judge the creature to be bovine in nature, weighing at least 6000 lbs.

**Intelligence (investigation) DC 15:** The lanes of destruction follow a regular pattern, if you head to the areas where the pattern is denser, you will probably encounter the creature. **Note:** If the players fail this check they cannot find the gorgons this day. Make the check again in the morning.

#### Finding the gorgons

Travelling along the path of destruction you quickly near the area where the monster must be lairing. As you continue you come across a large clearing, that looks like it has been ripped open by a giant plow time and again. The clearing is lined with stone statues of deer, a few whole, most demolished. The reek of cow dung and urine is overpowering.

Once the players enter the clearing or investigate the statues they will hear a loud and hoarse bellowing and both gorgons will canter into the clearing.

If the players apply stealth it is possible to find the gorgons and surprise them; **Dexterity (stealth) DC 14** for an individual, the check becomes a **group effort** if more than one adventurer decides to use stealth.

#### Encounter

**Gorgon (2), MM p. 171.**

One of the gorgons, the cow, is heavily pregnant, her movement speed is reduced to 20 feet and she cannot use her trampling charge ability.

#### Treasure

**Wisdom (perception) DC 15:** You see something glistening in a heap of gravelly dung.

If the players investigate they discover a *Ring of the Ram* in the feces of the gorgons.

## Random Encounters

#### Riverside encounters

Encounters along the riverside will be played out using the encounter tables of Chapter I. The party has become allot stronger since then, so this should only be a minor hindrance. The idea behind this is to allow the party to feel the difference between the safer Delimbiyr Vale and the other more dangerous areas, such as the High Moor and the South Wood.

For encounters along the riverside see Chapter I - Delimbiyr Vale Mechanics.



## The South Wood

### random encounters

Each hex on the map represents 12 miles. I.e. a day's travel through difficult terrain when in the South Wood and half a day's travel through normal terrain outside the South Wood.

Each day the party will roll a d20 for random encounters. This happens once during the day and once at night. (Table 9: South Wood Random Encounters)

Two sets of tables exist for the South Wood. Tables 10A and 10B are used before the players rid the South Wood of the menace posed by the Temple of Juiblex and tables 11A and 11B are used after.

For examples on the use of these random encounter tables, see previous chapters.

### Note on survival

If the party is led by a character with **the wisdom (survival) skill**, they can attempt to avoid random encounters.

The DC of this skill check is 5 + the roll made to determine the exact encounter on tables 10A, 10B, 11A or 11B.

**Table 9: South Wood Random Encounters**

1d20	Situation
1-16	Nothing happens
17-20	Encounter: Table 10A & 10B or 11A & 11B: South Wood

**Table 10A: Random encounters:  
Ooze Infested South Wood by day**

1d20			Max encounter value
1	1d4+6	Goblin	1250
2	1d4+6	Wolf	1250
3	1d3+1	Brown bear	1600
4	1d3+1	Bugbear	1600
5	1d4+4	Gray ooze	2000
6	1d4+4	Worg	2000
7	2	Displacer beast	2100
8	1d4+2	Giant spider	2400
9	1d4+2	Dire wolf	2400
10	1d2+2	Ankheg	3600
11	1d2+2	Gelatinous cube	3600
12	1d2+2	Ochre jelly	3600
13	2	Shambling mound	5400
14	2	Troll	5400
15	1d2+4	Ochre jelly	5400
16	1d2+2	Owlbear	5600
17	1d2+2	Werewolf	5600
18	1d2+1	Black pudding	6600
19	1d2+3	Phase spider	7000
20	1d2+3	Werewolf	7000

**Table 11A: Random encounters:  
South Wood by day**

1d20			Max encounter value
1	1d4+6	Goblin	1250
2	1d4+6	Wolf	1250
3	1d3+1	Brown bear	1600
4	1d3+1	Bugbear	1600
5	1d4+4	Giant wasp	2000
6	1d4+4	Worg	2000
7	2	Displacer beast	2100
8	1d4+2	Giant spider	2400
9	1d4+2	Dire wolf	2400
10	1d2+2	Ankheg	3600
11	1d2+2	Awakened tree	3600
12	1d2+2	Ankheg	3600
13	2	Shambling mound	5400
14	2	Troll	5400
15	1d2+4	Ettercap	5400
16	1d2+2	Owlbear	5600
17	1d2+2	Werewolf	5600
18	1d2+1	Wereboar	6600
19	1d2+3	Phase spider	7000
20	1d2+3	Werewolf	7000

**Table 10B: Random encounters:  
Ooze Infested South Wood by night**

1d20			Max encounter value
1	1d4+6	Zombie	1250
2	1d4+6	Wolf	1250
3	1d3+1	Ghouls	1600
4	1d3+1	Bugbear	1600
5	1d4+4	Shadows	2000
6	1d4+4	Worg	2000
7	2	Displacer beast	2100
8	1d4+2	Giant spider	2400
9	1d4+2	Dire wolf	2400
10	1d2+2	Banshee	3600
11	1d2+2	Gelatinous cube	3600
12	1d2+2	Ochre jelly	3600
13	2	Wraith	5400
14	2	Troll	5400
15	1d2+4	Ochre jelly	5400
16	1d2+2	Wight	5600
17	1d2+2	Werewolf	5600
18	1d2+1	Black pudding	6600
19	1d2+3	Phase spider	7000
20	1d2+3	Werewolf	7000

**Table 11B: Random encounters:  
South Wood by night**

1d20			Max encounter value
1	1d4+6	Zombie	1250
2	1d4+6	Wolf	1250
3	1d3+1	Ghouls	1600
4	1d3+1	Bugbear	1600
5	1d4+4	Shadows	2000
6	1d4+4	Worg	2000
7	2	Displacer beast	2100
8	1d4+2	Giant spider	2400
9	1d4+2	Dire wolf	2400
10	1d2+2	Banshee	3600
11	1d2+2	Awakened tree	3600
12	1d2+2	Awakened tree	3600
13	2	Wraith	5400
14	2	Troll	5400
15	1d2+4	Ettercap	5400
16	1d2+2	Wight	5600
17	1d2+2	Werewolf	5600
18	1d2+1	Banshee	6600
19	1d2+3	Phase spider	7000
20	1d2+3	Werewolf	7000